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WEST TEXAS ANGELUS



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Catholics converge on capitol to advocate values

By Brian Bodiford
West Texas Angelus

The Texas legislature meets only once every two years, which allows for limited time for the public to weigh in on any proposed legislation. The Texas Catholic Conference of Bishops (TCCB), the public policy arm of the collective bishops of Texas, works hard year in and year out on influencing public policy that supports Catholic teaching. For one day each legislative session, though, they are joined by a large contingent of the church ready to make her voice heard.

Texas Catholic Advocacy Day, held this year on March 28, saw more than 3500 Catholics from around the state of Texas gather on

the lawn of the state capitol building for a lunchtime rally. While this sea of faithful is clear to any passerby, smaller groups were in meetings all day with their local representatives and senators.

This year, to save money, the diocese did not organize large crowds to ride busses to the rally, opting instead to send only couples who would also be directly meeting with elected officials.

This year, the delegates from the Diocese of San Angelo were: Ed Brandecker and Roberta Kalafut, who met with Rep. Stan Lambert; Deacon Tom and Pat Collier, who met with Rep. Tom Craddick; Maurice and Theresa Fortin, who met with Rep. Drew Darby; Deacon Dan and Phyllis Shannahan,

who met with Rep. Dustin Burrows; Larry and Stephanie Socha, who met with Rep. Ken King and Sen. Kevin Sparks; and Cody and Stephanie Wilson, who met with Rep. Brooks Landgraf. Deacon Freddy and Maria Medina coordinated diocesan efforts.

Deacon Tom and Pat Collier’s meeting with Rep. Tom Craddick began with the married couple handing their state representative a folder containing a breakdown of bills that the Texas Catholic Conference of Bishops have determined should be supported or opposed based on biblical teaching. The collegial meeting spanned those topics as well as the wealth of history on display (the former speaker of the Texas house of representatives has in his office, among other historically important pieces, one of three extant desks from the original set of furniture from the house floor and a bronze statue that once adorned Ronald Reagan’s oval office). Culminating in a quick walking tour to the house chamber and back, the Colliers’ visit merged with Rep. Craddick’s next meeting: San Angelo’s Bishop Michael Sis and Bishop Emeritus Michael Pfeifer, accompanied by Jennifer Carr Allmon, executive director of the TCCB.

Bishop Sis and Allmon led what now amounted to the second half of one long meet-

ing. Bishop Sis explained the reasons for the Texas bishops’ support or opposition to certain items of pending legislation. Allmon displayed the work of the Texas Catholic Conference of Bishops, letting Rep. Craddick know that another representative had agreed to pull an odious element of one bill — an action which brought the bill into the favor of the TCCB and earned it another look from Rep. Craddick.

In their meeting with Rep. Drew Darby, Maurice and Theresa Fortin said they predominantly discussed school choice. The Catholic bishops of Texas support public funding for tuition at private institutions, with preferential treatment given to the poor and underprivileged.

Maurice Fortin went on to describe that it is important as a Catholic to take an active role in the political sphere. “We have an obligation to our faith to be out here doing this,” he said. “At least that’s the way I see it: we have an obligation ... to stick up for the values of our faith.”

To learn more about the work of the Texas Catholic Conference of Bishops, to review the legislative priorities of the Texas bishops, or for information on how to contact your legislators, visit www.txcatholic.org.



WEST TEXAS ANGELUS

State Rep. Tom Craddick, whose district includes portions of the Diocese of San Angelo in Martin and Midland counties, was one of the lawmakers to host advocates of the bishops’ legislative priorities. On Tuesday, March 28, Rep. Craddick hosted (left to right) Bishop Michael J. Sis of the Diocese of San Angelo, Jennifer Carr Allmon of the Texas Catholic Conference of Bishops, Pat Collier and Deacon Tom Collier of St. Ann Parish in Midland, and Bishop Emeritus Michael D. Pfeifer of the Diocese of San Angelo.



Thousands of Catholics rallied at the Texas State Capitol March 28 for Texas Catholic Advocacy Day.

From the Bishop’s Desk

Key terms about the Eucharist

There are many events taking place in the next several weeks that will focus on the gift of the Eucharist. Many will join the church as new Catholics at the Easter Vigil in our parishes, receiving the Eucharist with us for the first time. During the Easter season, many children will make their First Holy Communion. On June 3, Catholics from around our diocese will gather in Odessa for the Diocesan Eucharistic Congress. On the weekend of June 10–11, we will celebrate the Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ. Events such as these present us with many informal opportunities with family and friends to talk about the Holy Eucharist. In those conversations, when we seek to articulate our Catholic belief in the Eucharist, it is important to have a familiarity with some of the basic concepts.

Eucharist

The word “Eucharist” comes from a Greek word *eucharistia*, which means “thanksgiving.” In the Last Supper, when Jesus took the bread and the cup of wine, he gave thanks for them before he declared that they were his Body and Blood (see Mt 26:27; Mk 14:23; Lk 22:19). The word “Eucharist” is used to refer to the ritual, sacramental action of thanksgiving to God which constitutes the primary liturgical celebration in the Catholic Church. In the Mass, we give praise and thanks to God the Father for his saving action through Jesus Christ. We also use the word “Eucharist” to refer to the consecrated elements which have become the Body and Blood of Christ in the sacrifice of the Mass.

Transubstantiation

One of the most important Catholic doctrines regarding the Eucharist is transubstantiation. This is a central teaching of Catholicism. We believe that the Eucharist is not just a symbol of Jesus Christ, and it is not merely a memorial action in remembrance of him. In the consecration of the Eucharist, the bread and wine are actually changed into the Body and Blood, soul and divinity of Jesus Christ. Christ is really, truly, and substantially present in the Eucharist.

The word we use to describe the change that happens is “transubstantiation.” It is a change of substance. The sacred species continue to have the observable properties of bread and wine (taste, feel, smell, size, shape), but their substance, their true identity, is transformed into the Body and Blood of Christ. This substantive change happens at the consecration in the Mass, and it continues as long as the appearance of bread and wine remains.

Real Presence

Christ is present in many ways in our world, but Christ’s presence in the Eucharist is unique. It is a substantial presence in which Jesus Christ — God and man — makes himself wholly and entirely present. We commonly refer to this as the Real Presence. When we receive Holy Communion, we are not just receiving a “wafer.” We are receiving Jesus Christ himself, the eternal Son of God. The Real Presence of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist has been a consistent Catholic teaching, from the time of Jesus himself until today.



Bishop Michael J. Sis

Diocese of San Angelo

Epiclesis

In the Eucharistic Prayer of the Mass, there is a brief but important prayer called the *Epiclesis*. In that moment, the priest prays: “May this same Holy Spirit graciously sanctify these offerings, that they may become the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ” (*Roman Missal*, Eucharistic Prayer IV). This prayer expresses the fact that it is by the divine action of the Holy Spirit that God changes the bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ.

Concomitance

This is an important word that many Catholics have never heard. The official Catholic doctrine of concomitance teaches that when we receive Communion only under the form of the consecrated host, or only under the form of the Precious Blood in the chalice, we receive the Body and Blood, soul and divinity of Our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Therefore, if one receives Communion under one species, nothing is lacking in that reception. St. Thomas Aquinas teaches that “the whole Christ is present under either species” (*Summa Theologiae*, III, q. 80, a. 12, ad 3).

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* states: “Since Christ is sacramentally present under each of the species, communion under the species of bread alone makes it possible to receive all the fruit of Eucharistic grace. For pastoral reasons this manner of receiving communion has been legitimately established as the most common form in the Latin rite. But ‘the sign of communion is more complete when given under both kinds, since in that form the sign of the Eucharistic meal appears more clearly.’ This is the usual form of receiving communion in the Eastern rites” (*CCC*, no. 1390).

For a variety of reasons, a person might receive Communion under one species alone. For example, some are unable to receive the host because of allergic reactions to gluten in the wheat bread. Some are unable to receive the Blood of Christ because of their reaction to alcohol. Sometimes, due to various communicable diseases, we have not made the Precious Blood available in our churches. Nevertheless, by the doctrine of concomitance, we know that, under each species alone, Christ is truly present and we receive all Eucharistic grace.

Biblical basis for eucharistic teaching

The key biblical passages that provide a scriptural witness to our faith in the Eucharist are as follows:

John 6:32–35, 48–59

In the Bread of Life Discourse of John 6, Jesus says,

“Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you do not have life in you. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life” (Jn 6:53). Immediately after this discourse, many of his disciples found his teaching to be hard and shocking, so they no longer followed him (Jn 6:60-66). If he had intended his language to be merely symbolic, he had the opportunity in that moment to say, “Wait, come back, I was only speaking metaphorically,” but he did not.

Matthew 26:26–28

At the Last Supper with his disciples, “Jesus took bread, said the blessing, broke it, and giving it to his disciples said, ‘Take and eat; this is my body.’ Then he took a cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, ‘Drink from it, all of you, for this is my blood of the covenant, which will be shed on behalf of many for the forgiveness of sins.’” (Mark and Luke also have parallel passages at Luke 22:17–20 and Mark 14:22–24.) We believe that Jesus meant what he said in the Last Supper. He did not say, “This is a symbol of my body,” or “This is a symbol of my blood.”

1 Corinthians 10:14–17, 11:23–29

St. Paul writes to the early Christian community in Corinth about the celebration of the Eucharist. He says, “The cup of blessing that we bless — is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break — is it not a participation in the body of Christ?” Through these rhetorical questions, St. Paul is emphasizing the fact that we participate in the Body and Blood of Christ when we celebrate the Mass.

Patristic sources

The ancient Christian authors, also known as the Patristic writers, were very clear in their teaching about the reality of the Eucharist. For example, St. Ignatius of Antioch wrote in A.D. 110, “Heretics abstain from the Eucharist and from prayer, because they do not confess that the Eucharist is the Flesh of our Savior Jesus Christ” (*Epistle to the Smyrnaeans*, chapter 7).

St. Justin Martyr wrote in A.D. 150, “not as common bread nor as common drink do we receive these, but ... as we have been taught, the food which has been made into the Eucharist by the eucharistic prayer set down by him, and by the change of which our blood and flesh is nourished, is both the Flesh and Blood of that incarnated Jesus” (*First Apology*, 66). There are many other similar examples in the writings of the various Patristic authors.

Thus, we see clearly in the Bible and in the Patristic writers that the ancient and original Christian understanding of what happens in the eucharistic prayers is that the elements of bread and wine truly become the Body and Blood of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

Seeking deeper faith

A mystery so profound as the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist is not always easy to grasp. When we have doubts about the reality of the Eucharist, or any truth of our faith, it is good to pray to God like the father of the boy with epilepsy in Mark 9:24, “Lord, I believe, help me in my unbelief.”

The gift of the Holy Eucharist is at the core of being a Catholic Christian. It is a precious treasure. We should never take it for granted.

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Kate Scanlon is a national reporter for OSV News covering Washington. Follow her on Twitter @kgscanlon.

Assisted suicide, euthanasia an 'incredibly slippery slope' in the West, says CUA panel

By Kate Scanlon, OSV News

WASHINGTON (OSV News) — The reality of legalized euthanasia often doesn't correspond to hypothetical debates over the practice, according to a panel of experts convened at The Catholic University of America.

CUA's Institute for Human Ecology hosted a March 28 panel titled "What is Euthanasia Doing to the West?" examining where so-called "medical aid in dying" laws have been adopted, and where they have not, and how Catholics can respond to arguments in favor of these practices.

Panelists included Ross Douthat, a columnist at *The New York Times* and a media fellow for the Institute for Human Ecology; Ari Schulman, editor of *The New Atlantis*; and Leah Libresco, Catholic writer at the "Other Feminisms" substack; as well as Charles Camosy, a professor of medical humanities at the Creighton University School of Medicine.

Camosy listed a series of Western nations or jurisdictions that have enacted medically-assisted euthanasia or medically-assisted suicide laws, including 10 U.S. states and the District of Columbia.

"Once you permit it, it's very difficult to keep it

where it was originally intended," Camosy said, because once permitted it is difficult "medically, legally and morally" to stay within the intended limitations.

Schulman said data shows the adoption of the practice can be a "slippery slope," calling Canada "an incredible slippery slope."

Canada first legalized physician-assisted suicide and physician-assisted euthanasia in 2016 for adults with terminal illness. In physician-assisted suicide, a physician prescribes lethal medication but the patient administers the medication. In physician-assisted euthanasia, the physician administers the medication prescribed to kill the patient.

Canada expanded its law in 2021, permitting those with serious or chronic physical conditions to undergo a medically-assisted death, even if their condition posed no threat to their life. Earlier in 2023, Canada's Liberal government delayed its plans to permit mental health issues as a permissible category for requesting medically-assisted death amid international criticism.

Canada has one of the West's most permissive laws on the matter, panelists said.

A report by the Canadian government found that in 2021, there were 10,064 Medical Assistance in Dying, or

MAID, provisions reported in Canada, accounting for 3.3% of all deaths in the country that year. The same report found that the number of cases of MAID in 2021 "represents a growth rate of 32.4% over 2020."

"All provinces continue to experience a steady year over year growth," the report said.

Schulman said that California legalized assisted suicide the same year as Canada, but after the latter's expansion, there was a stark difference between the two jurisdictions with similar population sizes.

"In 2021, there were 500 people who received assisted suicide in California," he said. "In Canada, that number was 10,000. So 20 times more."

Schulman said debates on assisted suicide often center around giving people who are suffering a choice in their final days, but people who elect the practice are often vulnerable, lacking family or other social support. Those vulnerabilities could leave people in poverty or with disabilities susceptible to being coerced into ending their lives.

Términos claves sobre la Eucaristía

Hay muchos eventos que se llevarán a cabo en las próximas semanas que se centrarán en el don de la Eucaristía. Muchos se unirán a la Iglesia como nuevos católicos en la Vigilia Pascual en nuestras parroquias, recibiendo la Eucaristía con nosotros por primera vez. Durante la temporada de Pascua, muchos niños harán su Primera Comunión. El 3 de junio, católicos de toda nuestra diócesis se reunirán en Odessa para el Congreso Eucarístico Diocesano. El fin de semana del 10 al 11 de junio celebraremos la Solemnidad del Santísimo Cuerpo y Sangre de Cristo. Eventos como estos nos presentan muchas oportunidades informales con familiares y amigos para hablar sobre la Sagrada Eucaristía. En esas conversaciones, cuando buscamos articular nuestra creencia católica en la Eucaristía, es importante familiarizarse con algunos de los conceptos básicos.

Eucaristía

La palabra “Eucaristía” proviene de la palabra griega eucharistia, que significa “acción de gracias.” En la Última Cena, cuando Jesús tomó el pan y la copa de vino, dio gracias por ellos antes de declarar que eran su Cuerpo y su Sangre (véase Mt 26:27; Mc 14:23; Lc 22:19). La palabra “Eucaristía” se usa para referirse a la acción ritual y sacramental de acción de gracias a Dios que constituye la principal celebración litúrgica en la Iglesia Católica. En la Misa, alabamos y damos gracias a Dios Padre por su acción salvadora a través de Jesucristo. También usamos la palabra “Eucaristía” para referirnos a los elementos consagrados que se han convertido en el Cuerpo y la Sangre de Cristo en el sacrificio de la Misa.

Transubstanciación

Una de las doctrinas católicas más importantes con respecto a la Eucaristía es la transubstanciación. Esta es una enseñanza central del catolicismo. Creemos que la Eucaristía no es sólo un símbolo de Jesucristo, y no es simplemente una acción conmemorativa en recuerdo de él. En la consagración de la Eucaristía, el pan y el vino se transforman realmente en el Cuerpo y la Sangre, el alma y la divinidad de Jesucristo. Cristo está real, verdadera y sustancialmente presente en la Eucaristía.

La palabra que usamos para describir el cambio que ocurre es “transubstanciación.” Es un cambio de sustancia. Las especies sagradas siguen teniendo las propiedades observables del pan y el vino (sabor, tacto, olor, tamaño, forma), pero su sustancia, su verdadera identidad, se transforma en el Cuerpo y la Sangre de Cristo. Este cambio sustancial ocurre en la consagración en la Misa, y continúa mientras permanece la apariencia del pan y el vino.

Presencia real

Cristo está presente de muchas maneras en nuestro mundo, pero la presencia de Cristo en la Eucaristía es único. Es una presencia sustancial en la que Jesucristo — Dios y hombre — se hace total y enteramente presente. Comúnmente nos referimos a esto como la Presencia Real. Cuando recibimos la Sagrada Comunión, no estamos recibiendo simplemente una “hostia.” Estamos recibiendo al mismo Jesucristo, el eterno Hijo de Dios. La Presencia Real de Jesucristo en la Eucaristía ha sido una enseñanza católica constante, desde la época del mismo Jesús hasta nuestros días.



Obispo Michael J. Sis

Diócesis de San Ángelo

Epiclesis

En la Plegaria Eucarística de la Misa, hay una breve pero importante oración llamada Epiclesis. En ese momento, el sacerdote reza: “Que este mismo Espíritu santifique estas ofrendas, para que se conviertan en el Cuerpo y la Sangre de Jesucristo, nuestro Señor” (Misal Romano, Plegaria Eucarística IV). Esta oración expresa el hecho de que es por la acción divina del Espíritu Santo que Dios cambia el pan y el vino en el Cuerpo y la Sangre de Jesucristo.

Concomitancia

Esta es una palabra importante que muchos católicos nunca han escuchado. La doctrina católica oficial de la concomitancia enseña que cuando recibimos la Comunión solo bajo la forma de la hostia consagrada, o solo bajo la forma de la Preciosa Sangre en el cáliz, recibimos el Cuerpo y la Sangre, el alma y la divinidad de Nuestro Señor y Salvador, Jesucristo. Por lo tanto, si uno recibe la Comunión bajo una especie, nada falta en esa recepción. Santo Tomás de Aquino enseña que “Cristo entero está presente bajo ambas especies” (Summa Theologiae, III, q. 80, a. 12, ad 3).

El Catecismo de la Iglesia Católica afirma: “Puesto que Cristo está sacramentalmente presente bajo cada una de las especies, la comunión bajo la sola especie de pan ya hace que se reciba todo el fruto de gracia propio de la Eucaristía. Por razones pastorales, esta manera de comulgar se ha establecido legítimamente como la más habitual en el rito latino. Sin embargo, ‘la comunión tiene una expresión más plena por razón del signo cuando se hace bajo las dos especies, ya que en esa forma es donde más perfectamente se manifiesta el signo del banquete eucarístico.’ Esta es la forma habitual de comulgar en los ritos orientales” (CIC, núm. 1390).

Por una variedad de razones, una persona puede recibir la Comunión bajo una sola especie. Por ejemplo, algunos no pueden recibir la hostia debido a reacciones alérgicas al gluten del pan de trigo. Algunos no pueden recibir la Sangre de Cristo debido a su reacción al alcohol. A veces, debido a diversas enfermedades contagiosas, no hemos puesto a disposición la Preciosa Sangre en nuestras iglesias. Sin embargo, por la doctrina de la concomitancia, sabemos que, bajo cada especie sola, Cristo está verdaderamente presente y recibimos toda la gracia eucarística.

Base bíblica para la enseñanza eucarística

Los pasajes bíblicos clave que brindan un testimonio bíblico de nuestra fe en la Eucaristía son los siguientes:

Juan 6:32-35, 48-59

En el Discurso del Pan de Vida de Juan 6, Jesús dice: “Si no comen la carne del Hijo del Hombre y no

beben su sangre, no tienen vida en ustedes. El que come mi carne y bebe mi sangre vive de vida eterna” (Jn 6:53). Inmediatamente después de este discurso, muchos de sus discípulos encontraron dura y chocante su enseñanza, por lo que ya no lo siguieron (Jn 6:60-66). Si hubiera tenido la intención de que su lenguaje fuera meramente simbólico, tuvo la oportunidad en ese momento de decir: “Esperen, vuelvan, solo estaba hablando metafóricamente,” pero no lo hizo.

Mateo 26:26-28

En la Última Cena con sus discípulos, “Jesús tomó pan, pronunció la bendición, lo partió y lo dio a sus discípulos, diciendo: ‘Tomen y coman; esto es mi cuerpo. Después tomó una copa, dio gracias y se la pasó diciendo: Beban todos de ella, esto es mi sangre, sangre da la Alianza, que es derramada por muchos, para el perdón de sus pecados’”. (Marcos y Lucas también tienen pasajes paralelos en Lucas 22:17-20 y Marcos 14:22-24). Creemos que Jesús quiso decir lo que dijo en la Última Cena. No dijo: “Este es un símbolo de mi cuerpo,” o “Este es un símbolo de mi sangre.”

1 Corintios 10:14-17, 11:23-29

San Pablo escribe a la primera comunidad cristiana de Corinto sobre la celebración de la Eucaristía. Él dice: “La copa de bendición que bendecimos, ¿no es una participación en la sangre de Cristo? El pan que partimos, ¿no es una participación en el cuerpo de Cristo?” A través de estas preguntas retóricas, San Pablo enfatiza el hecho de que participamos del Cuerpo y la Sangre de Cristo cuando celebramos la Misa.

Fuentes patrísticas

Los antiguos autores cristianos, también conocidos como escritores patrísticos, fueron muy claros en sus enseñanzas sobre la realidad de la Eucaristía. Por ejemplo, San Ignacio de Antioquía escribió en el año 110 d. C.: “Los herejes se abstienen de la Eucaristía y de la oración, porque no confiesan que la Eucaristía es la Carne de nuestro Salvador Jesucristo” (Epístola a los de Esmirna, capítulo 7).

San Justino Mártir escribió en el año 150 d.C.: “... no como pan común ni como bebida común los recibimos, sino... como se nos ha enseñado, el alimento que se ha convertido en la Eucaristía por la oración eucarística establecida por él, y de cuyo cambio se nutre nuestra sangre y nuestra carne, es a la vez Carne y Sangre de aquel Jesús encarnado” (Primera Apología, 66). Hay muchos otros ejemplos similares en los escritos de varios autores patrísticos.

Así, vemos claramente en la Biblia y en los escritores patrísticos que la comprensión cristiana antigua y original de lo que sucede en las oraciones eucarísticas es que los elementos del pan y el vino se convierten verdaderamente en el Cuerpo y la Sangre de Nuestro Señor Jesucristo.

Buscando una fe más profunda

Un misterio tan profundo como la Presencia Real de Cristo en la Eucaristía no siempre es fácil de captar. Cuando tenemos dudas sobre la realidad de la Eucaristía, o alguna verdad de nuestra fe, es bueno orar a Dios como el padre del niño con epilepsia en Marcos 9:24, “Señor, creo, ayúdame en mi incredulidad.”

El don de la Sagrada Eucaristía está en el centro de ser un cristiano católico. Es un tesoro precioso. Nunca debemos darlo por sentado.

El suicidio asistido y la eutanasia son un 'terreno increíblemente resbaladizo'

Por Kate Scanlon, OSV News

WASHINGTON (OSV News) — La realidad de la eutanasia legalizada a menudo no concuerda con los debates hipotéticos sobre esta práctica, según un panel de expertos reunido en la Universidad Católica de América (CUA). El Instituto de Ecología Humana de la CUA organizó el 28 de marzo un panel titulado "¿Qué está haciendo la eutanasia al Occidente?", en el que se examinó dónde se han adoptado las llamadas leyes de "ayuda médica para morir" y dónde no, y cómo pueden responder los católicos a los argumentos a favor de estas prácticas. Entre los panelistas se encontraban Ross Douthat, columnista de *The New York Times* y becaria de los medios de comunicación del Instituto de Ecología Humana; Ari Schulman, editor de *The New Atlantis*; y Leah Libresco, escritora católica del boletín electrónico "Other Feminisms"; así como Charles Camosy, profesor de humanidades médicas en la Facultad de Medicina de la Universidad de Creighton. Camosy enumeró una serie de naciones o jurisdicciones occidentales que han promulgado leyes de eutanasia médicamente asistida o de suicidio médicamente asistido, entre ellas 10 estados de Estados Unidos y el Distrito de Columbia. "Una vez que se permite, es muy difícil mantenerla

donde se pretendía originalmente", dijo Camosy, porque una vez permitida es difícil "médica, legal y moralmente" mantenerse dentro de las limitaciones previstas. Schulman dijo que los datos muestran que la adopción de esta práctica puede ser una "pendiente resbaladiza", y calificó a Canadá de "un terreno increíblemente resbaladizo". Canadá legalizó por primera vez el suicidio asistido por un médico y la eutanasia asistida por un médico en 2016 para adultos con enfermedades terminales. En el suicidio asistido por un médico, un médico prescribe medicamentos letales, pero el paciente administra el medicamento. En la eutanasia asistida por un médico, el médico administra la medicación prescrita para matar al paciente. Canadá amplió su legislación en 2021, permitiendo a las personas con enfermedades físicas graves o crónicas someterse a una muerte médicamente asistida, incluso si su enfermedad no suponía una amenaza para su vida. A principios de 2023, el gobierno liberal de Canadá retrasó sus planes de permitir los problemas de salud mental como categoría permitida para solicitar la muerte médicamente asistida, en medio de críticas internacionales. Canadá tiene una de las legislaciones más permisivas del Occidente en esta materia, expresaron los panelistas. Según un informe del gobierno canadiense, en 2021 se

registraron 10,064 casos de asistencia médica al morir/asistencia médica en el morir (MAID por sus siglas en inglés) en Canadá, lo que representa el 3.3% de todas las muertes ocurridas en el país ese año. El mismo informe encontró que el número de casos de MAID en 2021 "representa una tasa de crecimiento del 32.4% con respecto a 2020". "Todas las provincias continúan experimentando un crecimiento constante año tras año", dijo el informe. Schulman dijo que California legalizó el suicidio asistido el mismo año que Canadá, pero después de la expansión de este último, hubo una gran diferencia entre las dos jurisdicciones con tamaños de población similares. "En 2021, hubo 500 personas que recibieron suicidio asistido en California", dijo. "En Canadá, esa cifra era de 10,000. Así que 20 veces más". Schulman dijo que los debates sobre el suicidio asistido a menudo se centran en dar a las personas que sufren una opción en sus últimos días, pero las personas que eligen la práctica a menudo son vulnerables, y carecen de familia u otro apoyo social. Estas vulnerabilidades pueden hacer que las personas pobres o discapacitadas sean susceptibles a ser coaccionadas a poner fin a sus vidas. - - - Kate Scanlon es una reportera nacional de OSV News que cubre Washington. Síguela en Twitter @kgscanlon.

CALENDARS

Please pray for our clergy



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Deacon Lazaro Sevier (D — 2009)
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Deacon Andres Hernandez (D — 2013)
- 4

Deacon Hector Mendez (B)
- 4

Rev. Jim Nugent, CSsR (D — 2012)
- 7

Deacon Jerry Treviño (D — 2017)
- 10

Deacon Apolonio Gutierrez (B)
- 12

Rev. Patrick Akpanobong (B)
- 13

Rev. Innocent Eziefule (B)
- 16

Deacon Eliseo Carrillo (D — 1989)
- 17

Deacon Daniel Holguin (B)
- 17

Rev Msgr. James Plagens (D — 2015)
- 17

Rev. Lee Zimmerman, CM (D — 2000)
- 19

Rev. John Lavin (D — 1983)
- 20

Deacon Claudio Sanchez (B)
- 21

Rev. Thomas Leahy, SAC (D — 1969)
- 22

Deacon Jesus Vasquez (D — 2018)
- 23

Rev. Louis Droll (D — 2006)
- 23

Deacon Walter Hammons (B)
- 24

Rev. Msgr. Fred Nawarskas (B)
- 24

Rev. Balachandra Nagipogu (O — 2006)
- 25

Deacon Dwain Hennessey (B)
- 25

Deacon Marcos Mata (B)
- 25

Deacon Juan Muñoz (D — 2007)
- 29

Deacon Robert Daigle (D — 1986)
- 30

Rev. Gilbert Rodriguez (B)
- 30

Rev. Joe Barbieri – (O — 1988)

May

- 1

Deacon Eduardo Castillo (B)
- 1

Deacon Leslie Maiman (O — 2015)
- 2

Rev. Russell Schultz (D — 2004)
- 2

Deacon Luis Villarreal (B)
- 4

Deacon Robert Selvera (B)
- 5

Rev. Clifford Blackburn, OMI (D — 2005)
- 7

Rev. Msgr.Kevin Heyburn (D — 2001)
- 8

Rev. Mamachan Joseph (O — 1986)
- 8

Deacon Stanley Sienkiewich (B)
- 9

Deacon Juan Arguello (D — 2019)
- 9

Rev. Tom Diab (D — 2007)
- 9

Rev. Leo Diersing (D — 1999)
- 13

Deacon Leslie Maiman (B)
- 13

Rev. Bhaskar Morugudi (O — 1999)
- 14

Deacon Manuel Luevano (D — 2019)
- 15

Deacon Wayne Rock (D — 2006)
- 18

Rev. David Herrera (B)
- 18

Bishop Michael Pfeifer (B)
- 18

Deacon Clemente Villa (B)
- 19

Deacon Ronald Stegenga (B)
- 20

Deacon Robert Moreno (B)
- 21

Deacon Ricardo Torres (B)
- 22

Deacon Michael LaMonica (B)
- 22

Rev. Emilio Sosa (B)
- 22

Rev. Kevin Lenius (O — 2021)
- 24

Rev. Msgr. Benedict Zientek (O — 1958)
- 25

Rev. Tom Barley (O — 1991)
- 25

Rev. Terry Brenon (O — 1991)
- 25

Rev. Martin Hubbs (O — 2012)
- 25

Rev. Balachandra Nagipogu (B)
- 26

Rev. Msgr. James Bridges (O — 1962)
- 27

Rev. Charles Greenwell (O — 1982)
- 27

Rev. Msgr. Fred Nawarskas (O — 1967)
- 27

Rev. Mark Woodruff (O — 1972)
- 28

Rev. Francis Hynes, CM (D — 1996)
- 29

Rev. Msgr. Bernard Gully (O — 1962)
- 30

Rev. Adam Droll (O — 2015)
- 30

Rev. Felix Archibong (O — 2015)
- 30

Rev. Ryan Rojo (O — 2015)
- 31

Rev. Joey Faylona (O — 2003)
- 31

Rev. Gilbert Rodriguez (O — 1974)
- 31

Rev. Rodney White (O — 2003)

B = Birthday | O = Date of Ordination
D = Date of Death



Bishop’s Calendar

Please contact the bishop’s assistant, Lupe Castillo, for information about the bishop’s calendar.
325-651-7500 | lcastillo@sanangelodiocese.org

April 2023

- 2

SAN ANGELO, Cathedral of the Sacred Heart, Spanish Mass at 12:00 noon
- 2

WALL, St. Ambrose, Seder Meal at 6:00 p.m.
- 4

SAN ANGELO, Cathedral of the Sacred Heart, priest gathering at 9:30 a.m.
- 4

SAN ANGELO, Cathedral of the Sacred Heart, Chrism Mass at 11:00 a.m.
- 6

SAN ANGELO, Cathedral of the Sacred Heart, Mass of the Lord’s Supper at 6:30 p.m.
- 7

SAN ANGELO, St. Margaret, Good Friday Procession at 10:00 a.m.
- 7

SAN ANGELO, Cathedral of the Sacred Heart, Service of the Passion of the Lord at 3:00 p.m.
- 8

SAN ANGELO, Cathedral of the Sacred Heart, Easter Vigil at 8:30 p.m.
- 11

SAN ANGELO, Holy Angels, Teaching Mass at 6:00 p.m.
- 12

GARDEN CITY, St. Lawrence, Confirmation Mass at 6:00 p.m.
- 14–21

ROME, North American College, Seminary visit
- 22

SAN ANGELO, Angelo Catholic School, Diocesan Schools Commission meeting at 9:30 a.m.
- 22

SAN ANGELO, Cathedral of the Sacred Heart, Marriage Jubilee Mass at 4:00 p.m.
- 23

ABILENE, Sacred Heart, Confirmation Mass at 11:30 a.m.
- 24

SAN ANGELO, Diocesan Pastoral Center, Foundation Board meeting at 10:00 a.m.
- 25

SAN ANGELO, Diocesan Pastoral Center, Priestly Life and Formation Committee meeting at 10:30 a.m.
- 26

WINTERS, Our Lady of Mt. Carmel, Confirmation Mass at 6:00 p.m.
- 27

ABILENE, Holy Family, Confirmation Mass at 6:30 p.m.
- 28

SAN ANGELO, Diocesan Pastoral Center, Liturgical Commission meeting at 1:00 p.m.
- 28

WALL, St. Ambrose, Confirmation Mass at 6:30 p.m.
- 29

SAN ANGELO, Holy Angels, Confirmation Mass at 5:30 p.m.
- 30

SAN ANGELO, Cathedral of the Sacred Heart, Mass at 10:00 a.m.
- 30

MIDLAND, San Miguel Arcángel, Confirmation Mass at 5:00 p.m.

May 2023

- 2

ELDORADO, Our Lady of Guadalupe, Confirmation Mass at 6:30 p.m.

- 3

ODESSA, Holy Redeemer, Confirmation Mass at 7:00 p.m.
- 4

ODESSA, Our Lady of San Juan, Confirmation Mass at 7:00 p.m.
- 5–7

DALLAS, Knights of Columbus State Convention
- 8

MIDLAND, St. Ann, Confirmation Mass at 7:00 p.m.
- 9

MIDLAND, St. Stephen, Midland-Odessa Deanery meeting at 12:00 noon
- 9

ODESSA, St. Joseph, Confirmation Mass at 6:00 p.m.
- 10

WALL, St. Ambrose, San Angelo Deanery meeting at 11:00 a.m.
- 10

MIDLAND, Our Lady of Guadalupe, Confirmation Mass at 6:00 p.m.
- 11

BALLINGER, St. Mary Star of the Sea, Confirmation Mass at 6:30 p.m.
- 12

SAN ANGELO, Diocesan Pastoral Center, Finance Council and Presbyteral Council joint meeting at 11:00 a.m., Presbyteral Council meeting at 2:00 p.m.
- 12

ODESSA, Marriott, Catholic Charities of Odessa Banquet of Hope at 6:00 p.m.
- 13

ODESSA, St. Mary, Confirmation Mass at 10:00 a.m.
- 13

MIDLAND, St. Stephen, Confirmation Mass at 5:00 p.m.
- 14

SHEFFIELD, Good Shepherd, Mass at 9:00 a.m.
- 14

OZONA, Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Confirmation Mass at 11:00 a.m.
- 15

TUSCOLA, Connolly Game Ranch, Rural Life Mass at 5:00 p.m.
- 16

ABILENE, St. Francis of Assisi, Confirmation Mass at 6:30 p.m.
- 17

SAN ANGELO, St. Mary, Confirmation Mass at 6:30 p.m.
- 20

PFLUGERVILLE, Knights of Columbus leadership meeting
- 21

BRADY, St. Patrick, Confirmation Mass at 10:30 a.m.
- 21

ABILENE, Wylie High School Field, Kickball Game
- 23

SAN ANGELO, Christ the King Retreat Center, Diocesan Mission Council meeting at 6:00 p.m.
- 24

SAN ANGELO, Angelo Catholic School, Mass at 8:30 a.m.
- 24

ODESSA, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, Confirmation Mass at 7:00 p.m.
- 26

MIDLAND, Holy Cross Catholic High School Graduation at 7:00 p.m.
- 27

FORT STOCKTON, Our Lady of Guadalupe, Confirmation Mass at 5:30 p.m.
- 28

ANDREWS, Our Lady of Lourdes, Confirmation Mass at 10:30 a.m.
- 28

SAN ANGELO, Cathedral of the Sacred Heart, Confirmation Mass at 6:00 p.m.
- 31

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



Christ the King Retreat Center

April 2023

- 7

CKRC Offices Closed in Observance of Good Friday
- 10

Diocesan Staff Easter Picnic
- 14–16

DOSA Deacon Formation
- 21–23

St. Ann’s Confirmation Retreat
- 24

Heart of Mercy Prayer Group
- 28–30

Engaged Encounter w/ Natural Family Planning

May 2023

- 3

DOSA Staff Meeting Mass & Lunch
- 4

Day of Reflection Office of Evangelization & Catechesis
- 8

Heart of Mercy Prayer Group
- 19–21

Project Rachel Team Retreat
- 22

Heart of Mercy Prayer Group

Special Collections

Pontifical Collection for the Holy Land

April 7, 2023

A collection for support of the Holy Places, but above all for those pastoral, charitable, educational and social works which the Church supports in the Holy Land for the welfare of their Christian brethren and of the local communities.

Catholic Home Missions Appeal

April 30, 2023

The Catholic Home Missions Appeal supports dioceses throughout the United States and its territories where distance, difficult terrain, small or widely dispersed Catholic populations, and local economic or cultural challenges mean that those dioceses need outside financial help to minister to the faithful who live there.

Catholic Communication Campaign

May 21

Through websites, social networks, television, radio, and print, the Catholic Communication Campaign (CCC) helps the Church spread the Gospel message through the media locally and nationally. Half of all donations to the CCC collected in our diocese stay in our diocese to support our local communications needs.

New clergy assignments to begin this summer

For the benefit of the people of God in West Texas, Bishop Michael J. Sis announces the following clergy assignments, effective July 1, 2023:

- Deacon Mike Elsner as parochial vicar of Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish in Midland
- Father Francis Onyekozuru as pastor of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish in Odessa
- Father Bala Anthony Govindu as pastor of St. Stephen Parish in Midland
- Father Mamachan Joseph as pastor of Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish in Eldorado, St. Peter Mission in Mertzon, and Immaculate Conception Mission in Knickerbocker
- Father Tony Franco as pastor of St. Mary Queen of Peace Parish in Brownwood
- Father Reggie Odima as parochial administrator of St. Charles Parish in Eden, St. Philip Benizi Mission in Eola, and Our Lady of Guadalupe Mission in Millersview
- Father Joe Barbieri as Judicial Vicar of the Diocese of San Angelo
- Msgr. Larry Droll as rector of the Cathedral Church of the Sacred Heart in San Angelo
- Father Rodney White as pastor of St. Ann Parish in Midland
- Father Lorenzo Hatch will begin a leave of absence
- Father Tom Barley will retire

Effective Aug. 1, 2023, Father Kevin Leinius will begin two years of study at The Catholic University of America in Washington, DC, in pursuit of Licentiate of Canon Law degree.

Msgr. Benedict J. Zientek, 90, of Brenham, Texas, passed away on March 15, 2023. Father Z, as he was lovingly known, was born Dec. 28, 1932, to the late John J. and Frances (Bilski) Zientek.

He was born in Brenham and grew up on a farm where he and his six siblings worked at picking cotton, milking cows, and raking hay. He was the sixth of seven children.

Msgr. Zientek attended grade school at St. Mary Parish School in Brenham, then studied for the priesthood at St. John’s Minor Seminary in San Antonio, Texas; St. Mary Seminary in La Porte, Texas; and St. Mary Seminary in Houston, Texas. He was ordained a priest on May 24, 1958, for the Diocese of Austin at St. Mary’s Cathedral in Austin, Texas.

After his ordination, he began his priestly ministry at St. Mary Parish in Brownwood, Texas, where he was serving when Brownwood became part of newly established Diocese of San Angelo in 1961. Over the years, Msgr. Zientek served at St. Mary, Brownwood; St. Joseph, Rotan; St. Mary, Odessa; Sacred Heart Cathedral, San Angelo; St. Joseph, Rowena; St. Charles, Eden; St. Boniface, Olfen; and his final assignment at St. Mary, Brownwood, where he had originally begun his priestly ministry. On Jan. 23, 2003, Msgr. Zientek was named monsignor by Pope John Paul II.

He retired on Jan. 27, 2003, at the age of 70. Upon his retirement, Msgr. Zientek returned to live in his hometown of Brenham, Texas. He lived on his family farm for about 10 years and remained active at St. Mary Parish in Brenham. Eventually he became a resident of Kruse Village in Brenham. Msgr. Zientek was a member of the Knights of Columbus for 70 years, as well as a member of the Lions Club in San Angelo, Rowena, and Brownwood for 54 years.

Msgr. Zientek was preceded in death by his parents, John and Frances; his brothers, Julian, Stanley, Aloysius “Alois”, and Msgr. Boleslaus “Boli” Zientek; and his sisters, Mrs.



Mary Januszewski and Sophie Zientek. He is survived by his niece, Cindy Longhofer, and her husband, John.

Msgr. Zientek was interred in the priests’ section of Calvary Catholic Cemetery in Brenham. A memorial Mass for Msgr. Zientek’s many friends was celebrated by Bishop Michael Sis on Wednesday, March 29, 2023, at 6:30 p.m. at Sacred Heart Cathedral in San Angelo.

Medically changing person's sex characteristics to those of opposite sex 'not morally justified,' say bishops

By Julie Asher

WASHINGTON (OSV News) — Surgical, chemical or other interventions that aim "to exchange" a person's "sex characteristics" for those of the opposite sex "are not morally justified," said the U.S. bishops' doctrine committee in a statement released March 20.

"What is of great concern, is the range of technological interventions advocated by many in our society as treatments for what is termed 'gender dysphoria' or 'gender incongruence,'" it said.

The statement urged "particular care" be taken "to protect children and adolescents, who are still maturing and who are not capable of providing informed consent" for surgical procedures or treatments such as chemical puberty blockers, "which arrest the natural course of puberty and prevent the development of some sex characteristics in the first place."

Technological advances that enable the cure of "many human maladies" today and "promise to cure many more" have "been a great boon to humanity," but there are "moral limits to technological manipulation of the human body," it said.

"The human person, body and soul, man or woman, has a fundamental order and finality whose integrity must be respected," the committee said. "Because of this order and finality, neither patients nor physicians nor researchers nor any other persons have unlimited rights over the body; they must respect the order and finality inscribed in the embodied person."

The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Administrative Committee March 15 approved release of the 14-page statement by the USCCB's Committee on Doctrine, chaired by Bishop Daniel E. Flores of Brownsville, Texas.

The doctrine committee acknowledged that "many people are sincerely looking for ways to respond to real problems and real suffering."

"Certain approaches that do not respect the fundamental order appear to offer solutions. To rely on such ap-

proaches for solutions, however, is a mistake," it said. "An approach that does not respect the fundamental order will never truly solve the problem in view; in the end, it will only create further problems."

"Any technological intervention that does not accord with the fundamental order of the human person as a unity of body and soul, including the sexual difference inscribed in the body, ultimately does not help but, rather, harms the human person," the committee added.

It noted that "a range of pastoral issues" needs to be addressed regarding "those who identify as transgender or nonbinary," but said these issues "cannot be addressed in this document."

Catholic health care services, the committee said, "are called to provide a model of promoting the authentic good of the human person."

"To fulfill this duty, all who collaborate in Catholic health care ministry must make every effort, using all appropriate means at their disposal, to provide the best medical care, as well as Christ's compassionate accompaniment, to all patients, no matter who they may be or from what condition they may be suffering," it continued. "The mission of Catholic health care services is nothing less than to carry on the healing ministry of Jesus, to provide healing at every level, physical, mental and spiritual."

Medical intervention that uses available technology to repair defects in the body, "usually when it has been affected by some injury or ailment ... shows respect for the fundamental order of the body, which is commendable," the committee said. "In fact, each of us has a duty to care for our bodies."

The benefits of such intervention also must be "proportionate to the burdens involved," it said, and must be undertaken "with the correct intention and in the correct circumstances."

The committee's statement quotes numerous Second

See DOCTRINE, Page 6

Stay Connected with the Diocese of San Angelo

DOSA Mail

The official Flocknote of the Diocese of San Angelo. Receive texts or emails with important news, updates, and messages from the diocese.

Two ways to join:
1) Text DOSA to 84576
OR
2) Visit <https://app.flocknote.com/dosamail>

Social Media

Diocese of San Angelo on Facebook:
<https://www.facebook.com/DioceseofSanAngelo>

Bishop Michael Sis on Twitter:
[@SABishopMike](https://twitter.com/SABishopMike)

On the Web

www.sanangelodiocese.org

Reporting Sexual Abuse

The Catholic Diocese of San Angelo is firmly committed to creating and maintaining the safest possible environment for our children and vulnerable adults. If you or someone you know has been sexually abused by anyone who serves the Church, and you need a place to talk with someone about your feelings of betrayal or hurt by the Church, we are here to help you. To report incidents, call Lori Hines, Victim Assistance Coordinator, 325-374-7609 (cell), or write Diocese of San Angelo, Victim Assistance Mini-

stry, PO Box 1829, San Angelo, TX 76902. If the incident occurred outside this diocese, our Victim Assistance Coordinator will assist in bringing your concern to the attention of the appropriate diocese. Please keep in mind that one always has the right to report abuse to civil authorities, and civil law requires that any abuse of a minor must be reported. To report about a bishop, the Catholic Bishop Abuse Reporting Service can be accessed by visiting ReportBishopAbuse.org or by calling 800-276-1562 (national hotline).

Reportar Abuso Sexual

La Diócesis Católica de San Ángelo está firmemente comprometida a crear y mantener el ambiente más seguro posible para nuestros niños y adultos vulnerables. Si usted o alguien que usted conoce ha sido víctima de abuso sexual por cualquier persona que sirve a la Iglesia, y necesita un lugar para hablar con alguien sobre sus sentimientos de traición o herido por la Iglesia, estamos aquí para ayudarle. Para reportar incidentes, llame a Lori Hines, Coordinadora de Asistencia a Víctimas, 325-374-7609 (celular), o escriba a la Diócesis de San Ángelo, Ministerio de Asistencia a Víctimas, PO Box 1829, San

Ángelo, TX 76902. Un intérprete de español está disponible. Si el incidente ocurrió fuera de esta diócesis, nuestra Coordinadora de Asistencia a Víctimas le ayudará a traer su preocupación a la atención de la diócesis correspondiente. Por favor, tenga en cuenta que uno siempre tiene el derecho de reportar el abuso a las autoridades civiles, y la ley civil requiere que cualquier abuso de un menor de edad debe ser reportado. Para reportar sobre un obispo, se puede acceder al Servicio de Reportes de Abuso de Obispos Católicos visitando ReportBishopAbuse.org o llamando al 800-276-1562 (línea directa nacional).

Fundraising underway to restore historic church

In November 1899 the Catholics of Menard completed construction of their new church. Named Sacred Heart, it was located one block south of the business district on property donated by J. J. Callan in 1872. It was constructed of stone quarried a few miles north of Menard.

The congregation used the church for services until March 1955 when Sacred Heart relocated several blocks south, to 609 Ellis Street. Old Sacred Heart was named a Texas State Historical Landmark in 1984.

Between 1955 and the present, the building was used for a variety of activities. Now the congregation wants to restore the building and use it once again as a “sacred space.” According to Father Mark Woodruff, Sacred Heart’s current pastor, plans call for a Mass there once a week. The church will also be available for weddings and funerals upon request.

Bishop Michael J. Sis is encouraging the congregation to restore the church.

A committee of parishioners has been drawing up a list of needed repairs. Over the years the building was not adequately maintained, although according to an assessment by the Texas Historical Commission, it is “in remarkably good shape.”

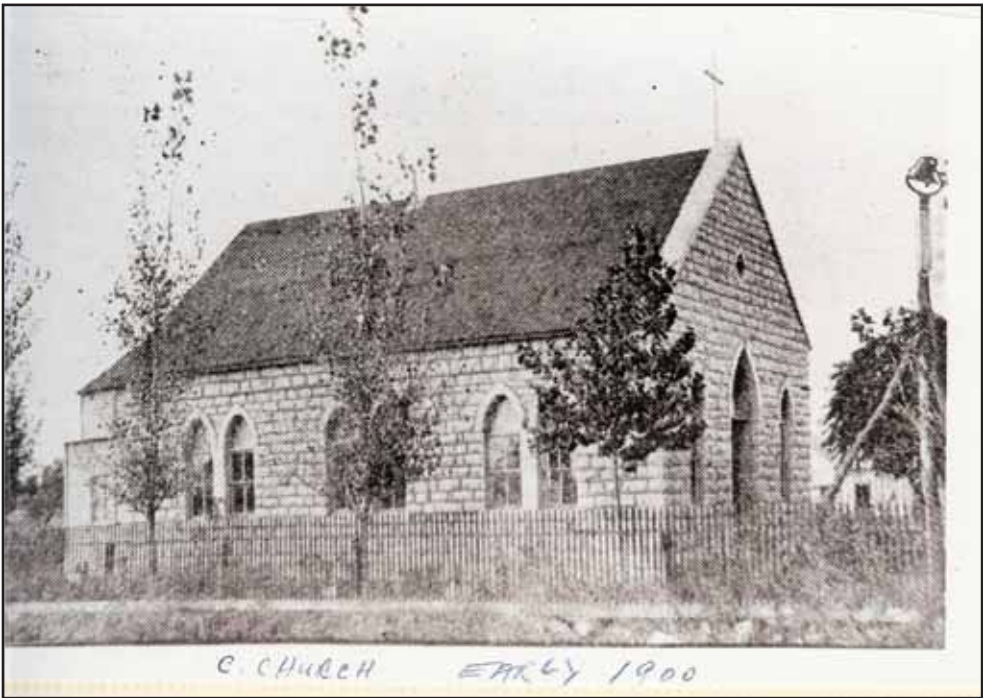
The committee estimates the cost of repairs to be between \$75,000 and \$100,000. Parishioners hope the restoration will begin in the summer.

Sacred Heart’s congregation has begun fundraising. A parish commitment drive is underway, and a raffle is being planned. A 2023 Polaris 4-passager ATV worth \$20,000 with a trailer has been donated and will be raffled off in the months ahead. Grants from two foundations have been applied for. According to Father Woodruff, “Due to the congregation’s small size, funds from outside the parish will be needed to complete the project.”

While the congregation wants to preserve its own religious history, the restoration of the old church is preserving our diocesan historical heritage as well. It is the second-oldest surviving church in the Diocese of San Angelo, after St. Joseph’s in Fort Stockton (1875).

If readers of the *West Texas Angelus* wish to assist the congregation, donations may be sent to Sacred Heart, P. O. Box 788, Menard, Texas 76859.

A generous donor has issued a challenge grant matching every dollar donated with another dollar.



COURTESY

A photo from 1900 shows Old Sacred Heart Church in Menard. The parish, which has worshipped in a new space since 1955, is raising funds to restore the historic church building for renewed use as a sacred space.

Spiritual healing through a very special Mass

By Heather Patterson

My name is Heather and I have a beautiful daughter named Emma Rose. When my daughter Emma was born, she began experiencing unexplained seizures. This resulted in months of shuffling between hospitals. Ultimately, we found out that our sweet Emma has a rare mutation in her KCNT1 gene, which is the cause of her epilepsy. No one prepares you for the level of grief you experience when you receive a diagnosis. As most parents get excited for the coming of their new child, that excitement faded as we were told our child would never walk, never talk, never do those things we had so looked forward to experiencing with our new daughter. In a blink of an eye, I quickly became so much more to my child than I ever could have anticipated! I became her nurse, her

caregiver, her voice.

After our diagnosis, Emma would still join us at church in her little carrier. Then, when she began requiring frequent suctioning due to her vomiting and spitting up with seizures, it became a very awkward situation during Mass. The looks of disapproval from those sitting near us were just too much. Then COVID happened and attending Mass virtually through a camera became our way of fulfilling our spiritual needs.

By the grace of God, a very special priest became the chaplain for our local police department. Through Father Joe Barbieri, my family went back to attending church in person again. This time in a very special way! Father Joe Barbieri got to talking with my husband at the police station about our little Emma Rose. Soon after this, I was attending a meeting to discuss the need for a Mass focusing on

families with special needs children. This began our Disabilities Ministries at St. Elizabeth Ann Seaton of Odessa.

Emma Rose always enjoyed going to church with us as an infant. I will never forget how her eyes lit up during our first special needs Mass. During the introit her little eyebrows relaxed, and she had a smile of pure contentment. This was when our spiritual healing began for my family! I did not realize how much we were missing being present in church. Being able to attend Mass as a complete family has reminded us of Christ’s love! Experiencing this special needs Mass brought us closer to our church family again. This very special Mass has shown my family how our experience with Emma is an experience in our faith. We have met some incredible families in our journey. Families who sympathize with us in our challenges, but also celebrate

with us. The most rewarding thing of all is the Godly love we feel during Mass. We see in our children how they to feel the presence of Christ in church. It is because of this special Mass that I have begun to heal on a new level. A healing I did not know I needed. It was by God’s grace that Emma Rose was brought into my life. As a special needs parent, we bear a cross that is not understood by all. This Mass has brought together parents and children who carry similar crosses. During this Mass, we are all accepted, regardless of the disability a person has!

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Heather Patterson is a parishioner at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish in Odessa.

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Note: You can read more about St. Elizabeth’s Disabilities Ministry in the March 2023 West Texas Angelus.

DOCTRINE

Continued from Page 5

Vatican Council documents, other church documents and the teachings of several popes, including Pope Francis and his encyclicals *Laudato Si'* and *Amoris Laetitia*, on the goodness of the natural order of men and women being created differently, the importance and the meaning of sexual difference "as a reality deeply inscribed in man and woman."

"In our contemporary society there are those who do not share this conception of the human person," the committee said. "Pope Francis has spoken about an ideology that promotes 'a personal identity and emotional intimacy radically separated from the biological difference between male and female.'"

The committee referenced Pope Francis' teaching that "young people in particular need to be helped to accept their own body as it was created, for 'thinking that we enjoy absolute power over our own bodies turns, often subtly, into thinking that we enjoy absolute power over creation. ... An appreciation of our body as male or female is also necessary for our own

self-awareness in an encounter with others different from ourselves.'" Among the reaction to the doctrine committee's statement was a response from the ethicists of the National Catholic Bioethics Center in suburban Philadelphia, who said they joined the U.S. bishops "in unequivocally reiterating that Catholic anthropology and moral teaching are incompatible with medicalized mutilations that hide behind the misnomer of 'gender-affirming care.'"

"The body-soul union and human sexual differentiation are principles of human anthropology, whose validity has been demonstrated time and again by medical science," the ethicists said in a March 20 statement.

"By promoting incorrect gender identities, so-called transitioning interventions tear away from reality and reject the dignity of the body," they added. "They put patients on the road to heartache, leading to only apparent happiness with deeper suffering and, for many, a lifetime of destructive chemicals and surgeries."

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Julie Asher is senior editor at OSV News. Follow her on Twitter at @jlasher.

Catholic Medical Association brings faith and fellowship to healthcare

West Texas Angelus staff

The Catholic Medical Association (CMA) is the largest association of Catholic physicians and healthcare professionals in the United States. Some of our Catholic medical professionals in the Diocese of San Angelo are members. Established in the early 1900s, CMA brings together Catholic physicians and other healthcare professionals to strengthen members’ faith, to promote fellowship, and to support the church. CMA works at both the national and local level to provide services that benefit the entire Catholic healthcare community and the surrounding culture.

The CMA is a national advocate for the views of Catholic physicians and healthcare professionals. They defend the conscience rights of Catholics in health care. The CMA builds national and local communities (guilds) of physicians and healthcare professionals who want to learn about and live their Catholic faith. They provide continuing medical education at their annual conferences.

CMA helps make the church stronger and more successful in witnessing to Christ in the complex world of modern medicine. The *Linacre Quarterly* is their official bioethical journal, published since 1934. It provides a forum in which faith and reason can be brought to bear on analyzing and resolving

ethical issues in health care, with a particular focus on issues in clinical practice and research. They also publish a magazine called *The Pulse of Catholic Medicine*.

In recent years, CMA broadened its outreach to medical students by initiating a Student Section. They offer an annual Medical Student Boot Camp, an intensive four-day immersion in prayer and the study of church teachings and medical ethics as well as medical professionalism. The next Boot Camp will take place at Ave Maria University in Florida on June 11-18, 2023.

CMA membership is comprised of the following groups: active physicians; retired physicians; residents; fellows; clergy; religious; seminarians; all other doctoral degrees including D.D.S. and D.M.D.; C.R.N.A., P.A., N.P., and C.N.M.; students; nurses and allied health professionals; friends and supporters.

The 92nd Annual CMA Educational Conference will take place on Sept. 7-9, 2023, in Phoenix, Arizona. It provides educational and networking opportunities, as well as opportunities to earn continuing medical education units. The theme of the conference will be “Be Not Afraid: Courageous Catholic Medicine.”

More information about the CMA is available at www.cathmed.org, telephone 484-270-8002, or info@cathmed.org.

Human composting, alkaline hydrolysis not acceptable for burial, say U.S. bishops

By Gina Christian

(OSV News) — Two new alternatives to burial and cremation fail to comply with the Catholic Church's teaching on respect for the bodies of the dead, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Committee on Doctrine said.

In a March 23 statement, the committee said it had evaluated human composting and alkaline hydrolysis, and concluded that both "fail to satisfy the church's requirements for proper respect for the bodies of the dead."

The methods, which rapidly accelerate decomposition, have gained support in recent years as "eco-friendly" forms of treating human remains.

In human composting, the body of the departed is placed in a metal bin with plant material to enable microbes and bacteria, along with heat and oxygen, to break down bones and tissues. The resulting mixture is then offered for lawn or garden use.

Alkaline hydrolysis dissolves the body in some 100 gallons of water and alkali under high temperature and pressure. Within hours, the body is dissolved, except for

some bone material which is then dried and pulverized.

Unlike flame-based cremation, which uses intense heat to reduce human remains to ashes, human composting and alkaline hydrolysis do not "show adequate respect for the human body, nor express hope in the resurrection," said the bishops in the seven-page document that accompanied their statement.

Burial is "the most fitting way to express faith and hope in the resurrection of the body," wrote the bishops, quoting the 2016 instruction *Ad resurgendum cum Christo: regarding the burial of the deceased and the conservation of the ashes in the case of cremation* by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. The congregation is now the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith.

According to the 2016 instruction, flame-based cremation is permissible, so long as the ashes are gathered and laid to rest in a sacred place, rather than being stored at home, distributed among loved ones, encased in jewelry or scattered broadly.

In contrast, both human composting and alkaline hydrolysis leave nothing that could be properly interred, said the U.S. bishops.

Following alkaline hydrolysis, "there are about 100 gallons of liquid into which the greater part of the body has been dissolved, and this liquid has been treated as wastewater," they wrote. "At the end of the human composting process (there is) ... nothing distinguishably left of the body to be laid to rest in a sacred place."

Currently, six U.S. states — California, Colorado, New York, Oregon, Vermont and Washington — permit human composting. The Maryland Senate is currently considering similar legislation.

Katrina Spade, founder and CEO of Seattle-based Recompose, the self-described "first human composting company in the world," said in a 2021 video interview that "you're not human anymore at the end of this process."

Alkaline hydrolysis is legal in several states as well, with the Cremation Association of North America having expanded its definition of cremation in 2010 to include the method, which also is known as "water" or "chemical cremation."

Gina Christian is a national reporter for OSV News. Follow her on Twitter at @GinaJesseReina.

National Eucharistic Revival aims to form disciples on mission with new Easter series

WASHINGTON (OSV News) — The National Eucharistic Revival announced it will release what it called the "first-of-its-kind" mystagogy series of weekly catechetical reflections throughout the Easter season to "invite all Catholics deeper into the mysteries of Christ by reflecting on the truth, goodness and beauty of the Mass," a news release on the series said.

"Mystagogy" is an intentional deepening of a disciple of Jesus Christ's understanding of the faith following the reception of the sacraments. The term also refers to the period between Easter and Pentecost, following a new Catholic's reception into the church at the Easter Vigil, where he or she reflects more deeply on the sacraments and this new life of following Christ.

The new series, titled "Beautiful Light: A Paschal Mystagogy," is being offered through the Heart of the Revival Newsletter, a weekly publication of the National Eucharistic Revival, which was established in June 2022 to provide resources to reaffirm and deepen the Eucharistic faith of Catholics across the country.

It begins April 13, the Thursday before Divine Mercy Sunday, and runs through May 25, which is the Thursday before Pentecost.

Seven prominent Catholics are writing articles for the series: Archbishop Charles C. Thompson of Indianapolis; Sister Maria Miguel Wright of the Dominican Sisters of Mary, Mother of the Eucharist; biblical scholar and author Jeff Cavins; Archbishop J. Peter Sartain of Seattle; Canadian priest and author Father Harrison Ayre; Kately Javier, coordinator for Adult Formation and Hispanic catechesis for the Washington Archdiocese; and Archbishop Timothy P. Broglio of the Archdiocese for the Military Services, USA, who is president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops.

The newsletter (accessed at eucharisticrevival.org/heart-of-the-revival-newsletter) offers various resources, videos, stories and reflections from voices in every corner of the church. It also is a channel to communicate events, special announcements, and highlights from grassroots developments throughout the United States in support of the National Eucharistic Revival.

"Whether you are just joining the church at Easter Vigil this year or have been Catholic your entire life, this series is for you," said Sister Alicia Torres, a Franciscan of the Eucharist of Chicago, who is a National Eucharistic Revival executive team member.

"Each and every one of us is not a static being — we grow and develop. So, too, does our faith," she said in a March 20 statement announcing the new series.

"At every age and stage of life, Jesus invites us to discover the joy of friendship with him. For Catholics, this happens in a most special way during Mass — 'the source and summit of the Christian life,'" Sister Alicia said.

"Many of us haven't had the chance to really explore the beauty and mystery God invites us into at Mass. That is the goal of 'Beautiful Light': to give every Catholic a chance to go deeper this Easter season."

Often associated with the Order (formerly Rite) of Christian Initiation for Adults, or OCIA, "mystagogy" comes from the Greek word meaning "to lead through the mysteries."

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* describes mystagogy as a "liturgical catechesis that aims to initiate people into the mystery of Christ" (CCC 1075).

In a Feb. 14, 2019, address Pope Francis said, "Mystagogy: this is a suitable way to enter the mystery of the liturgy, in the living encounter with the crucified and risen Lord. Mystagogy means discovering the new life we have

received in the people of God through the sacraments, and continually rediscovering the beauty of renewing it."

"The National Eucharistic Revival involves an intentional effort to both evangelize and catechize, predicated on the long-standing Catholic belief in the Real Presence of Jesus Christ — his Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity — in the Eucharist," Archbishop Thompson, who is the author of the first reflection in the "Beautiful Light" series, said in a statement.

"Rooted in the invitation to a personal encounter with Jesus, every baptized person is called to a life of holiness and mission as a missionary disciple in him," he said. "This mystagogy series provides a special opportunity to link our Catholic faith in the Eucharist with the daily lived experience of Christian witness and service to others."

The Archdiocese of Indianapolis is the host of the upcoming 2024 National Eucharistic Congress, the culmination of the three-year National Eucharistic Revival.

Notes: To access "Beautiful Light: A Paschal Mystagogy," subscribe to the Heart of the Revival Newsletter; <https://www.eucharisticrevival.org/heart-of-the-revival-newsletter>.

ARISE — A joy-filled, rejuvenating retreat



COURTESY

Vallimar Jansen was one of the featured speakers at the ARISE Catholic Women's Conference held March 3-4 at The Way Retreat Center in Midland.

By Kelly Wahlquist

It was a Holy Spirit-filled day as 200 women from all around the country came together to experience the boundless love of God in so many different ways!

We were blessed by the beautiful Mass celebrated by Bishop Sis, the powerful and heartfelt talks of our speakers: ValLimar Jansen, Deb Hadley, music by His Own and the humor of our emcee (who traveled 19 hours and 19 minutes) Alyssa Bormes, the generous hospitality of the West Texas WINE group and The Way Retreat Center, and all the wonderful volunteers and priests who gave us their time and talent to make the day an unforgettable encounter with the love and mercy of God.

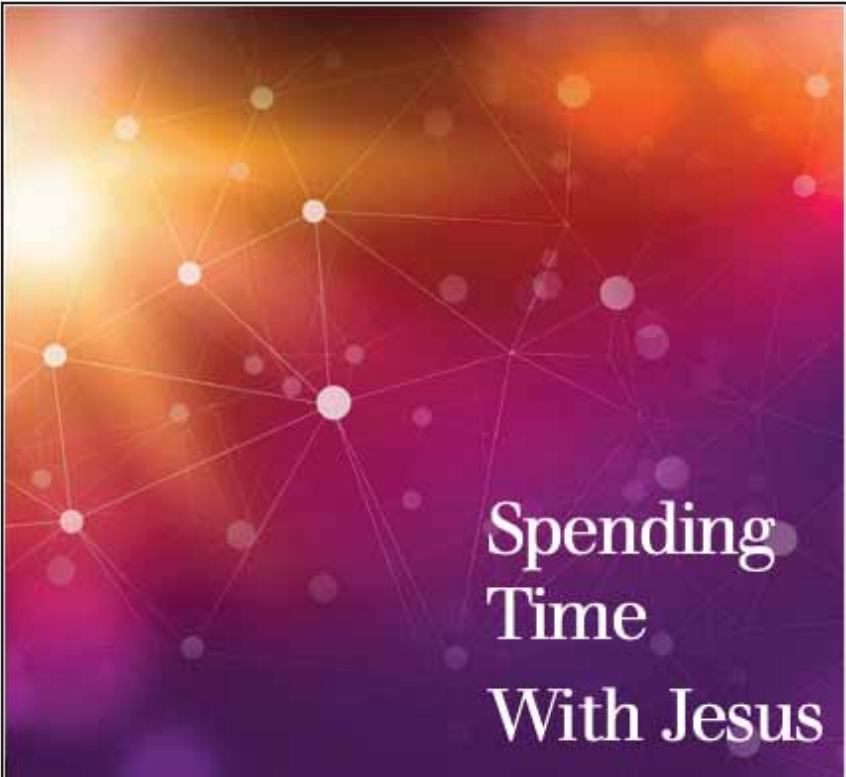
This wonderful day was possible because of the generosity of our WINE conference sponsors and the WINE members who graciously support WINE each month.

On behalf of all who were blessed at the "Arise, The King is Calling Your Name" retreat, THANK YOU! Without our members, we'd have no WINE. If you were blessed by your time with WINE and would like to be a part of blessing others, become a WINE member (www.catholicvineyard.com) today and help us share the Good News!

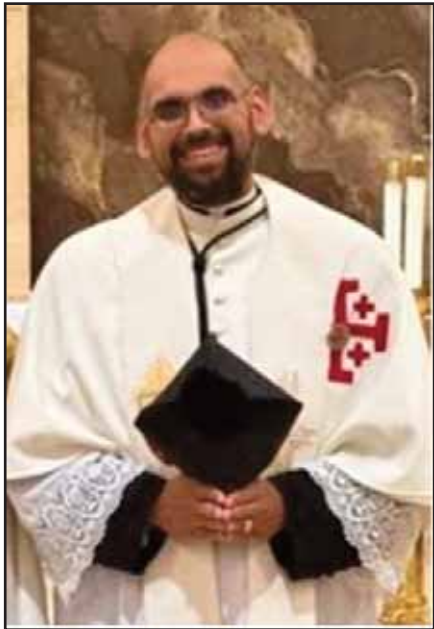
The women of WINE labor joyfully in the vineyard of the Lord — and we'd like to invite you to be part of that JOY!

Above all, we thank all those involved for their continued prayers and support of the WINE ministry and for joining us on this journey. Working alongside you in the vineyard is a pleasure, and we hope to see you at more WINE events!

Kelly Wahlquist is the founder of WINE (Women in the New Evangelization). Learn more at <http://catholicvineyard.com/>.



- Gabriel Castillo**
- Director of Youth Ministry at St. Theresa Catholic Church in Sugar Land, near Houston
 - Founder and producer of **True Faith** TV
 - Videographer and Catholic Lay Evangelist



- Fr. Ryan Rojo**
- Vocations Director of the Diocese of San Angelo
 - Designated **Eucharistic Preacher** by USCCB
 - Leads pilgrimages to holy places such as the Holy Land where Jesus walked.

A Eucharistic Adoration Conference
Sat., April 29, 2023
9:00 AM – 3:00 PM
St. Margaret of Scotland Parish Hall
2619 Era St., San Angelo, Texas

Mary and the Eucharist



**Sacred Heart Cathedral,
San Angelo, TX
May 6, 2023
8:00AM – 3:30 PM**



Fr. Lihn Nguyen



Fr. Ryan Rojo



Amy Perez



Deacon Freddy Medina



Sarah Fellona

Cost \$25
Priests and Religious Free
Lunch and Snacks provided
Scan the QR code to Register



<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/mary-and-the-eucharist-registration-579355426677>

Beware of fraudulent emails and texts

Parishioners and ministry leaders in the Diocese of San Angelo and around the country continue to find themselves the targets of scams. One frequent tactic used by criminals to defraud the faithful is to utilize text messages or email to impersonate a pastor and ask for the purchase of gift cards. The person claiming to be the pastor will claim they need gift cards for some charitable reason, but say they need the person receiving the text messages or emails to purchase the gift cards and share the validation information.

Please be aware of these scams. Your pastor will not contact you to purchase gift cards for him. When the scammers are successful in these endeavors, it is almost impossible for the victim to recover their lost money.

According to a March 1, 2018, press release from the office of Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton, the scammers are using information found on churches' website or in churches' online bulletins to trick members of the church into sending them gift cards. To report suspected fraud to the attorney general's Consumer Protection Division, call 1-800-621-0508 or file a complaint at <https://www.texasattorneygeneral.gov/consumer-protection/file-consumer-complaint>.

Papal message to focus on people's right not to migrate

By Carol Glatz

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Reflecting on people's right to remain in their country of origin, share in the common good and live in dignity will be the focus of Pope Francis' next message for the World Day of Migrants and Refugees.

The pope chose "Free to choose whether to migrate or to stay" as the theme for the 2023 world day, which will be celebrated Sept. 24. The Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development released the theme of the message March 21.

The pope chose this theme to foster "renewed reflection on a right that has not yet been codified at the international level: the right not to have to migrate or, in other words, the right to be able to remain in one's own land," the dicastery said in a communique.

The fact that many people "are forced to migrate demands a careful consideration of the causes of contemporary migration," it said.

"The right to remain is older, more deeply rooted and broader than the right to migrate," the dicastery said. "It includes the possibility of sharing in the common good, the right to live in dignity and to have access to sustainable development."

"All of these rights should be effectively guaranteed in the nations of origin through a real exercise of shared responsibility on the part of the international community," it said.

Catechesis of the Good Shepherd

CATECHIST TRAINING

April 24-27, 2023

9am-4pm

Cost: \$90

The cost of formation covers all 4 required sessions.

Level I catechist formation is for adults seeking to serve children who are three to six years old.

Training will take place over 4 sessions: Spring/Fall 2023 and Spring/Fall 2024.

Training is open to all!

For more information please email:
re@sanangelocathedral.org



SAN ANGLO

May 2, 2023

Show your love for ACS

by donating during San Angelo Gives

Your donation helps provide:

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- Christ-centered education
- Security enhancements
- Curriculum updates
- Technology upgrades
- Extra-curricular programs

To donate visit
<https://www.sanangelogives.org/AngeloCatholicSchool>
or call our office at 325.949.1747 to arrange a donation



April 24-27

Level 1 Catechist Training

Cathedral of the Sacred Heart, San Angelo

All are welcome to join Sacred Heart Cathedral as we host Catechesis of the Good Shepherd, Level One Catechist training April 24-27. CGS is a common religious experience involving children and adults in which the religious values of childhood, primarily those values of contemplation and enjoyment of God, are predominant. This experience is shared in a place particularly prepared for the religious life of children called the Atrium.

Catechist training is hands-on and will continue over 4 sessions (approx. 90 hours). The training is multifaceted and the catechists will experience practical lesson training, spiritual retreat, and theological background.

Please contact Tricia Gonzales with any questions and to sign up: re@sanangelocathedral.org

April 29

Cemetery Cleanup

Calvary Catholic Cemetery, San Angelo

On April 29, cemetery personnel will remove all flowers as well as all unauthorized items. The cemetery gates will be closed from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. Please remove any items you wish to keep before 6 p.m. April 28. See announcement on Page 20.

May 6

Asian and Pacific Islander Pilgrimage

Washington, D.C.

The 20th Asian and Pacific American Marian Pilgrimage will take place on Saturday, May 6, 2023, at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, DC. The annual Marian Pilgrimage is a special time for Asian and Pacific American Catholics in the U.S. to celebrate their unique cultural and religious gifts of piety and devotion. The Asian and Pacific Catholic Network (APCN) annually hosts this pilgrimage. They can be found on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/people/APCNetwork/100064491128400/>

All are welcome.

May 15

Rural Life Mass

Connolly Ranch near Tuscola

The Diocese of San Angelo's annual Rural Life Mass, celebrated by Bishop Michael J. Sis, will take place on Monday, May 15, 2023, the feast day of St. Isidore the Farmer, at the Connolly game ranch near Tuscola.

August 12-13

Lady in Blue Commemoration

San Angelo

Historic Beginnings of San Angelo commemorates Sor María de Jesús de Ágreda, the "Lady in Blue" who brought Christianity to the Jumano people of the Concho Valley in the 1600s. Join us for a variety of events in San Angelo to celebrate, honor, and dedicate Sor María de Jesús de Ágreda and the Jumano people as part of our Historic Beginnings. More information to come.



Magnificat Prayer Breakfast

Hosted by San Angelo, TX Chapter "Our Lady of Fatima"

And He said to them all, "If you want to come with me, you must forget yourself, take up your cross every day, and follow me." Luke 9:23

Date: Saturday, April 22, 2023

Time: 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. Doors open at 8:00 a.m.

Location: St. Margaret Catholic Church Parish Hall

2619 Era Street, San Angelo, TX 76905

Guest Speaker:

Bridget Costello



Bridget Costello is a cradle Catholic. She is actively involved in the pro-life movement and has coordinated, animated, and directed countless retreats, pilgrimages, mission trips, youth rallies, and conferences. She is a contributing author at Church Pop, and her work has been featured by EWTN, ANS-Agenzia Info Salesiana, The Christian Circle, and more. She is a member of the Association of Salesian Cooperators(ASC), is proficient in the Preventative System of St. John Bosco and is a full time missionary.

Tickets must be purchased in advance. Tickets will not be sold at the door. Ticket sales end April 20, 2023. Tickets cost \$20 per person. Tickets can be purchased:

- Online: www.eventbrite.com (\$20 plus fee)
- Mail in: Magnificat, 1629 E. Harris, San Angelo, TX 76903 (payable to Magnificat)
- Contact: Vickie (325) 812-3852; Betty (325) 650-1154; Elvira (325) 315-5978

Tickets for priests, deacon, religious brothers and sisters are complimentary, reservations are required. Contact Mary: (325) 245-6663



ALAN TORRE | APTORRE PHOTOGRAPHY

A SEARCH for Christian Maturity Retreat for high school students was held at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Church in Odessa March 3–5. It was the first SEARCH Retreat held in the Diocese of San Angelo since before the COVID-19 pandemic.



ALAN TORRE | APTORRE PHOTOGRAPHY

Adult Confirmation at St. Stephen Parish in Midland, March 23, 2023.

Construction continues in Greenwood



COURTESY



COURTESY

The building of St. Rita of Cascia Catholic Church in Greenwood is beginning to take shape. The newest faith community in the diocese is a mission church of San Miguel Arcángel Parish in Midland under the leadership of pastor Father Patrick Akpanobong. The community of St. Rita is currently celebrating Mass in a school house.



COURTESY

The Knights of Columbus Council #10985 in Ballinger held a successful Lenten fish fry Feb. 24, 2023. The Knights wish to thank all those who supported the council and parish community.



COURTESY



ALAN TORRE | APTORRE PHOTOGRAPHY

Students at St. Mary's Central Catholic School in Odessa were given the chance to interact with a relic of Blessed Michael McGivney, the founder of the Knights of Columbus, March 7. The relic also visited Sacred Heart Cathedral in San Angelo and Holy Redeemer Parish in Odessa.

The Knights of Columbus Council #10985 in Ballinger held a Baby Bottle Project in support of the Pregnancy Help Center in San Angelo. The Knights are thankful to the generous people of St. Mary, Star of the Sea Parish in Ballinger (left), Our Lady of Guadalupe Mission in Robert Lee (right) and St. James Mission in Bronte.



COURTESY

On the church’s pastoral care of the sick and dying

By Michael R. Heinlein

(OSV News) — When someone is sick, elderly or dying, Catholics tend to automatically think of sacramental anointing. But we don’t tend to think about the sacrament consistently. Some only think it is for those who are actively dying, while others think it ought to be received without serious reason. Sacramental anointing seems to be one of the more underappreciated, misunderstood, under-utilized and least talked about of our seven sacraments.

Some of it is a matter of poor catechesis, some of it is a growing shortage of priests and diminished availability, and some of it is a matter of the culture and our own self-reliance rather than our reliance on God, particularly in times of vulnerability. But whatever the reasons that anointing of the sick doesn’t seem to get its proper due, we can be sure it is an important opportunity to receive Christ’s grace and make his life our own.

The sacrament, in fact, conforms us more clearly to

Christ, especially to his passion and death. Through his presence and grace in the sacrament, we are reminded we are not alone, that our struggles, pains and sufferings are not isolated; that we can lean on the crutch of the cross amid our illnesses, infirmities and approaching death to make sense of it all and find strength, purpose and hope.

Anointing of the sick is explicitly mentioned in Scripture, in the New Testament's Letter of St. James (5:14-15), which also identifies it as a ministry of the priest. Through him, Christ is able to encounter, accompany and strengthen those who receive the sacrament. Jesus can bring physical healing to the person, of course, as he brought the same to so many during his public ministry. But as those cures were meant to herald the coming of the Kingdom of God, our prayers for healing now originate mostly from a desire for spiritual healing in the face of illness and death. Christ conquered sin and death, and, through his grace, we share in the victory of his passion, death and resurrection. We experience in this sacrament Christ's peace, assisting us to face the difficulties ahead, as well as his courage and determination to embrace the will of God for our sanctification and for that of the whole world.

We do not need to be at the point of death to receive the sacrament, a fact sometimes confused in the minds of many. The sacrament is for all those seriously ill, so some discernment is needed to determine applicability.

Celebration of anointing of the sick

Anointing of the sick is only administered by a priest or bishop. It may or may not include the sacrament of penance as well, depending on the circumstances. At a minimum, reconciliation is made available for the recipient, if possible. The Liturgy of Anointing itself, during the celebration of the sacrament, involves principally the laying on of hands and the anointing with oil. The laying on of hands recalls Christ's healing of the sick through the same gesture, and offers a sign of the Holy Spirit's presence. The oil of the sick, often itself having been blessed by a bishop at a Chrism Mass in advance of the previous Easter, is applied to the forehead and hands of the person being anointed. The use of oil in Scripture is both remedial, comforting and restorative.

There are times during the year that parishes might offer communal celebrations of the sacrament, either within the context of the Mass or as a separate celebration. The sacrament is available for those whose health is seriously impaired, discerned without scrupulosity, and should not be administered indiscriminately and without prudential judgment. Those to be anointed include the elderly and those preparing for surgery. It can be repeated if the illness returns, if the same illness worsens or has become chronic, or when requested and determined by the minister's pastoral judgment to be warranted.

Timing for anointing

The Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick does not consist exclusively of what is commonly referred to as the "last rites" of the church. It is a sacrament to be celebrated early in illness and may be repeated as a condition worsens or death is thought to be approaching. What constitutes "last rites" would consist of "viaticum" and the Commendation of the Dying ritual prayers.

Part of overcoming this common misunderstanding of the sacrament's timing is to encourage the celebration of the sacrament outside of preparation for death itself. Many priests say privately, but would do well to announce more regularly in the pulpit or elsewhere, that the faithful should not wait until death seems imminent to request sacramental anointing. With fewer priests, and more faithful under their charge in many places, it has become increasingly difficult for priests to be available at a moment's notice. But waiting also keeps God's grace from the person needing it. It is important to see to it that a person in need of the sacrament can receive it as soon as reasonably possible.

Visits to the sick

Anointing of the sick itself is far from the only opportunity for spiritual care of souls, and the church envisions that we are regularly to be offering those who are sick, elderly or dying. There are a variety of rites and prayers available from the church's liturgical treasury that help us to minister to the vulnerable among us. In addition to the rites for celebrating anointing, these are all contained in the rites of Pastoral Care of the Sick, and they should be made more widely known and available.

Visits to the sick may use a ritual centered around Scripture and prayer. An important aspect of these visits is to help the sick person be able to pray, as prayer can at times be difficult when ill. The visits are also meant to accompany, encourage and strengthen the sick. These visits should also be pointing toward and flowing from visits in which Communion is received by the sick person. There are also rituals for the administration of Communion to sick persons in ordinary circumstances or for those in institutional care facilities.

Viaticum

Each illness is different, just as is each death. In the case of the latter, with the help of medical professionals, we try to read the signs of approaching death so that we can be as present and attentive to the person's needs.

Christ said, "Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my

See CARE, Page 19

Jesus became man so I could become God?

Q: I'm reading the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* and have a question about ccc 460. Can you please fully explain the lines: “For the son of God became man so that we might become God” and “... might make men gods.” I am to become GOD? That doesn’t seem right.

A: No, Catholics do not believe we literally "become" God in the sense of becoming beings with the capacity to create universes out of nothing, by means of pure will; or that we become radically all-powerful or all-knowing; or that we ourselves become worthy of the worship due to God alone. There is and can only ever be one God. And even in the heavenly life of the world to come, we retain our human nature. We can’t even change our nature to become angels, as is sometimes popularly supposed.

So, how should we understand this line in the *Catechism*? There is helpful clarity by looking at the opening of the very paragraph you cite. CCC 460 begins by telling us that “The Word became flesh to make us ‘partakers of the divine nature.’” That is, because we are united to Jesus and become like him through baptism, we “partake” — i.e., share in — Jesus’ own life as the son of God. Sharing in this divine nature means, among other things, that we are able to enjoy eternal life and that we become God’s children by adoption.

It might also be helpful to note some overall context. Paragraph 460 is situated in the middle of a discussion on the mystery of Jesus’ Incarnation — that is, how the “Word became flesh” (Jn 1:14), or how Jesus remained fully God while being born in our human nature. The specific passage in question here was not actually written by the drafters of the *Catechism*, but is rather a quote from a Church Father, St. Athanasius, from his book *On the Incarnation of the Word*.

This idea that Jesus, the Word of God, took on our human nature in order that humanity might be enabled to have some share in his divine nature is a theme that actually runs throughout our faith tradition. Even during the Mass, when the priest mixes a drop of water into the wine which is soon to be consecrated, he prays quietly to himself: “By the mystery of this water in wine, may we



Jenna Marie Cooper
OSV News

Question Corner

come to share in the divinity of Christ, who humbled himself to share in our humanity.”

Q: The priest who helped with my conversion said that when we arrive before Mass we should be respectful to the people around us — to pray and sit quietly until Mass begins. Has the process changed or are we still asked to be quiet? In my church people speak very loud before Mass and the priest is the biggest offender.

A: Courtesy and common sense strongly suggest keeping a reverent, silent atmosphere in church.

Our church buildings are meant to be sacred spaces where people can come to be in the presence of God in an especially focused way. Before Mass the faithful are encouraged to recollect themselves in preparation for Mass. After the dismissal people often stay, to extend their time of thanksgiving after receiving the Eucharist.

If we find ourselves occasionally bothered or distracted by other people’s talking in church, sometimes the best thing to do is to recall the “little way” of St. Therese of Lisieux and use the noise as an opportunity to grow in patience and charity. For instance, we might try to assume that the “offending” priest was aiming to cheer up a lonely parishioner who is going through a challenging time.

- - -

Jenna Marie Cooper, who holds a licentiate in canon law, is a consecrated virgin and a canonist whose column appears weekly at OSV News. Send your questions to CatholicQA@osv.com.

GRN RADIO PROGRAM SCHEDULE

GUADALUPE RADIO NETWORK

Radio for your soul can be heard on:

- Abilene - 91.7 FM, KQOS
- Midland-Odessa - 1180 AM, KLPF
- Midland-Odessa – 90.9 FM (Español)
- San Angelo - 91.5 FM, KPDE

POPULAR ENGLISH PROGRAMS

6:00-7:30 AM – GRN Catholic Drive Time

7:30 AM – Holy Mass - The Society of Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity

8:00 AM – Catholic Connections - Teresa Tomeo

9:00 AM – More 2 Life - Dr. Greg & Lisa Popcak

10:00 AM – Women of Grace - Johnnette Williams

11:00 AM – Take 2 - Jerry Usher & Debbie Georgianni

12:00 PM – The Doctor is In - Dr. Ray Guarendi

1:00 PM – Called to Communion - Dr. David Anders

2:00 PM – EWTN Open Line

3:00 PM – A Life Lived Joyfully with The Divine Mercy Chaplet

4:00 PM – Monday & Friday – The Catholic Current - Fr. Robert McTeigue, S.J.


Tuesday - Thursday – Kresta in the Afternoon

5:00 – 7:00 PM – Catholic Answers Live

8:00 PM – EWTN Nightly News

To promote your business & events, please email Josh Reyes at: josh@grnonline or Call: 432-682-5476

For a complete schedule or to listen live, go to our website at: GRNonline.com. Download our free Apps for English or Spanish programming.



The Guadalupe Radio Network is a proud Affiliate of the EWTN Global Catholic Network



St. Zita’s life of service

Zita was a young, uneducated girl living with her family in Montesagrati, Italy, when her parents brought her to work as a servant for the wealthy Fatinelli family in Lucca.

She was 12 years old and learned to make her work as a domestic servant a blessing for this Italian wool and silk-weaving merchant and his family. It was a large household and Zita learned to perform her domestic duties with diligence. Father Clifford Stevens writes in *The One Year Book of Saints* that she crept out of the house early every morning to attend Mass, as well as rising during the night to pray.

This behavior did not endear her to the other servants. They looked upon her diligence as a form of snobbery aimed at them. They disliked her because she worked hard, prayed, went to Mass daily and gave away food and clothing. She received ill treatment from many of them and even from some of the Fatinelli family. Zita believed that her work was part of her religion.

For almost 50 years, Zita spent her days doing ordinary things extraordinarily well and came to be known for her sunny demeanor and work ethic. After many years, she was appointed as head housekeeper and put in charge of the children of the house.

In her new position, she treated all with kindness and became respected by the whole household.

At this time in her life she began to experience some



Mary Lou Gibson
Speaking of Saints

miracles. Rosemary Guiley describes one of these in *The Encyclopedia of Saints*: “Zita had stayed in church too long one day and was late starting her baking. When she arrived home, she found loaves of bread prepared and neatly laid out in rows in the kitchen, ready to be baked.”

Another story describes her distribution of bread to the poor. Zita was smuggling bread from the Fatinelli home when a fellow servant told the mistress what she was doing. When the mistress stopped her, Zita pulled open her apron that she had filled with bread, but only flowers fell to the ground.

Sean Kelly and Rosemary Rogers write in *Saints Preserve Us!* that she received all kinds of help from the angels. When she was caught in the rain, angels kept her dry with their wings. When she gave her master’s fur

cloak to a beggar, an angel brought it to her door the following day. In the city of Lucca, that door is still called “the Angel’s door.”

Zita visited prisons, the sick, and the poor, and became a familiar figure in Lucca. She was also the only one in the house who could subdue the violent temper of Pagano di Fatinelli, head of the household. After many years, Zita had more free time to visit the sick, the poor and the prisoners. Editor Michael Walsh writes in *Butler’s Lives of the Saints* that she had a special devotion to criminals under sentence of death, on whose behalf she would spend hours of prayer.

On the night she died, April 27, 1278, a bright star shone from her attic window, illuminating all of Lucca. Her fame spread, becoming closely associated with the town of Lucca. The poet Dante mentioned her in his *Divine Comedy: Inferno*, 21, v38, in which he designated the city of Lucca simply as “Santa Zita.” She was buried in the Church of St. Frediano in Lucca.

She was canonized in 1696, and in 1935 Pope Pius XI declared her principal patron saint of domestic servants. Every year on April 27, citizens of Lucca bake bread and bring flowers to San Frediano in celebration of her feast day.

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Mary Lou Gibson writes about the saints for the West Texas Angelus from her home in Austin.

A sense of worth

The “worth” of something may be determined in many different ways. For example, often it is associated with unique rarity such as famous works of art. Sometimes, it is so difficult to tell the difference between an authentic painting and a forgery that it may take several experts to discern, yet one is declared “priceless” while the other is “worthless.” The same thing holds true for rare diamonds and many other things. Their value lies in having something special that no one else can have. It is doubtful that many people would pay a dollar for a small piece of cardboard, yet someone paid millions for one because it was a rare Mickey Mantle baseball card and only one person could have it. I can’t imagine how much a cat would be valued if it were the only one in the world.

Sometimes, the worth of something is highly personal. I have many things that I would not part with for all the money in the world because of their “emotional relationship to a loved one.” Adult children often ask their parents “Why are you keeping all that junk?” The answer they often get is “Because it belonged to your grandparents” which may, in turn, be countered by a “So what, it’s still junk!” An old sewing machine can be of extraordinary value if it is one that a woman remembers as the very instrument her grandmother used to make the first dress for the granddaughter who watched with great anticipation and marveled at the cloth and thread as it began taking form. Without the emotional connection to a person, many things are of little or no value and easy to discard.

In addition to rarity of something or the emotional relationship that we have with something, a third way we determine the worth of something is by what it costs us. Paper plates are typically not washed and reused. The more something costs, the more likely it is to be



James R. Sulliman, PhD

protected and closely guarded.

But what about us? From where do we derive our sense of worth? Often it is owning “things,” especially the ones that we acquire because we believe they “raise our status.” It could be a car, a home, or any possession that we obtain that, at least in part, creates a feeling of being “above” others. And, it does not have to be an object ... sometimes it is the accolades of other people that becomes the basis for our worthiness, and sometimes it is just one person.

Whenever a person attempts suicide, one of the first questions that is asked is “Did they just break up with their girlfriend/boyfriend or are they going through a divorce?” Young people are especially vulnerable in their adolescent years, when their “worth” may be established by the standards of their peer group. A young man rises to unimagined heights as the prettiest girl in his high school dates him, for a while, only to free fall into bottomless despair when she leaves him for someone else.

There is only one source that is the source of one’s worth. Surpassing even the rarest of “things” that man may make, God has created each of us to be “one of a kind.” No one else can be “us.” From an “emotional”

standpoint, “God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but might have eternal life” (Jn 3:16). And just as we guard “things” of great cost, Jesus’ love for us cost him his life and we are protected with the help of our guardian angels. While such worth is guaranteed, we must also respond in ways that reflect his love to those we meet throughout this life’s journey.

But is it enough to say “God will always love me but I need more than that ... I want people to think I’m special”? We must remember and emphasize this: “One’s self-worth cannot be measured by other’s perception of accomplishment, but only by God’s knowledge of that person’s spiritual well-being and acceptance and obedience to God’s laws. Those with connections only to this world seek praise and rewards that bear no fruit. Unless one relinquishes a stranglehold on worldliness and the “pleasure” it has to offer; then the spirit and soul cannot yearn for its true reward ... eternal life with the Heavenly Father.”

It is clear what our response to unimaginable love must be ... to emulate Jesus and Mary. It is why we are here. “Forgiving” is something extremely important to practice but we must also find ways “for giving” ourselves to others. And when we have emptied ourselves of all things temporal ... when we have lived with Jesus and Mary as our models ... “When you have done all you have been commanded, say, ‘We are unprofitable servants; we have done what we were obliged to do’” (Lk 17:10). In so doing, we may feel a sense of worth.

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Dr. James Sulliman has 50 years’ experience in individual, marriage, and family therapy. He is also the Abilene-area pro-life coordinator for the Diocese of San Angelo.

Endless filth needs transparency, truth, tiers and tears

It was terrible to learn that Jean Vanier — whom so many Catholics had looked up to as the saintly, heroic founder of L’Arche — had been manipulating and abusing women who came to him seeking spiritual direction.

We needed to learn about it, though, and that we have is due to the admirable full-on, deep investigation that L’Arche undertook when informed of the abuse, and its transparent release of findings.

It had to be immensely painful and difficult for the community, but they did not shirk their responsibility to the victims of abuse, to their communities and supporters, and to the church. Having discovered that their body was carrying an illness — one that, if permitted to fester, might turn into an incurable and fatal sepsis — the organization addressed it with the potent antibiotic of the truth, which did set it free. L’Arche is now progressing in its recovery, rebuilding and strengthening its international community of service. It is easy to wish them well at it, and even to offer support.

How L’Arche handled this difficult episode should be a model for the rest of the church: put no limits on investigations of abuse but pursue the truth — through time, beyond statutes and into its ugliest depths — make a full and comprehensive report to the whole world and then work to rebuild. Rebuilding, of course, requires a steady restoration of trust — the very fruit of thoroughness and



Elizabeth Scalia
OSV News

transparency and truth.

We, the church, deserve no less, but we are not getting it yet — not quite, not fully. For over two decades we have been watching as the sins of church leaders have been uncovered, diocese by diocese, with more filth — seemingly more, endlessly more of it — ever on the horizon. We understand that this body, the church, has been ill for a very long time; we know it will never recover, never be healed if we continue to treat its massive infection pus-tule-by-pustule, applying endless smelly plasters of equivocation and opaque mists of obfuscation that further weaken a body crying out for real healing.

As we saw with L’Arche, the truth heals.

Currently, we are watching the Diocese of Santa Rosa declare bankruptcy in the face of as many as 200 abuse

claims. Another diocese is preparing for about as many as 600 such cases.

Currently, we are watching the Society of Jesus fumble about, seeming not to understand that their “star artist” Father Mark Rupnik seems another Vanier — a cult-like guru accused by at least 25 women of abusing his clerical power (and sexual abuse is always about power, never forget), and at least once grievously misusing his own priestly gifts in the process. His victims deserve to have their accusations investigated, even beyond statutes of limitations. Words like “transparency” are on offer, but so is the stinkingly ripe bandage of qualified excuse-making. Apparently Father Rupnik did concelebrate at a public Mass recently, but that was really a Mass for and with the community, which ... made it OK?

It does tempt one to wonder whether Rupnik’s case is being taken less seriously than it should be because his victims were “only women,” and not children or seminarians. As though victims come in tiers, rather than tears.

Currently, one U.S. diocese is battling legislation that seeks to waive all statutes of limitations in civil lawsuits against accused abusers within the church, with a higher cap for damages than those set for suits against public entities. Its bishop noted, quite rightly, that such waivers,

The adventures of classical morality

On this eighth anniversary of the launch of Bishop Barron’s beloved collection of essays, Seeds of the Word, we share an essay found on pages 249-252, titled “The Adventures of Classical Morality.”

One of the most significant fault lines in Western culture opened up in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, when what we now know as the “modern” world separated itself from the classical and medieval worlds. The thinking of Descartes, Spinoza, Leibniz, Kant, Newton, Jefferson, and many others represented a sea change in the way Western people looked at practically everything. In almost every telling of the story, this development is presented as an unmitigated good. I rather emphatically do not subscribe to this interpretation. It would be foolish indeed not to see that tremendous advances, especially in the arenas of science and politics, took place because of the modern turn, but it would be even more foolish to hold that modernity did not represent, in many other ways, a severe declension from what came before. This decline is particularly apparent in the areas of the arts and ethics, and I believe that there is an important similarity in the manner in which those two disciplines went bad in the modern period.

Classical philosophy and science sought to understand things in terms of Aristotle’s four causes: material (what something is made of), formal (a thing’s essential structure), efficient (how it got the way it is), and final (its purpose or destiny). The founders of modernity became suspicious of our capacity to know form (for things seem to be in constant flux) and finality (for it just wasn’t clear where the universe was going). Accordingly, they put a great stress on the remaining two Aristotelian causes, the material and the efficient. And this is precisely why the distinctively modern sciences — with their exclusive focus on what things are made of and how they got in their present state of being — developed the way they did.

But this elimination of formal and final causality and the hyper-stress on material and efficient causality had profound effects outside of the physical sciences. A classical sculptor, painter, or architect was trying to imitate the forms that he found in nature, and thereby to create



Bishop Robert Barron

Word on Fire
Ministries

something objectively beautiful. It is by no means accidental, for instance, that architects from the classical period through the High Renaissance designed buildings that mimicked the dimensions and features of the human body. One reason that Michelangelo’s architecture is so deeply satisfying to us is that it was grounded in that artist’s particularly profound grasp of the body’s rhythms and proportions. Thomas Aquinas defined art as *recta ratio factibilium* (right reason in regard to the making of things), and the rectitude he had in mind was none other than an understanding of the forms that God had already placed in nature. But a modern artist, unconvinced that objective form ought to provide a norm for her work, tends to see art as the objectification of subjectivity. The self-expression of the artist — the efficient cause of the work, if you will — is more important than any conformity of that work to a formal norm. This approach was beautifully and succinctly summed up by the Dadaist painter Marcel Duchamp: “Whatever an artist spits out is art.” With that statement, we have reached the polar opposite of *recta ratio factibilium*.

The marginalizing of final causality had a deep and deleterious effect on the way moderns tend to think about morality. Classical moral thinkers — from Plato and Aristotle to Augustine and Thomas Aquinas — considered the ethical act in terms of its purpose or finality. What made an act good was its orientation toward its proper end. Thus, since the end of the speech act is the enunciation of the truth, speaking a lie is morally problematic, and since the end of a political act is the enactment of justice, unjust legislating is unethical, etc. If art is *recta ratio factibilium*, then ethics, for Aquinas, is

recta ratio agibilium (right reason in regard to action), the rectitude of the reason in this context coming from conformity to finality. But with final causality relegated to the margins, morality became a matter of self-expression and self-creation. The extreme instance of this attitude can be found in the writings of Friedrich Nietzsche and Jean-Paul Sartre. The nineteenth-century German Nietzsche opined that the supreme morality — beyond good and evil — was the ecstatic self-assertion of the superman, and the twentieth-century Frenchman Sartre held that the “authentic” person is the one who acts in accord with his or her own deepest instincts. Sartre famously argued that existence (unfettered freedom) precedes essence (who or what a person becomes). And that is the polar opposite of a *recta ratio agibilium* ordered to objective finality.

If you think that all of this seems hopelessly obscure and irrelevant to the contemporary situation, then think again. Even the most radical ideas of the moderns in regard to morality have trickled down, through a network of professors, teachers, script writers, television personalities, singers, bloggers, etc. to reach the ordinary person today. And this, I would submit, is what makes the Catholic position on ethics so hard to understand. The modern person instinctually says, “Who are you to tell me what to do?” or “Who are you to set limits to my freedom?” And the Catholic instinctually says, “Order your freedom to an objective truth that makes you the person you are meant to be.”

It would be the stuff of another chapter to explore, even with relative adequacy, the manner in which this dilemma might be resolved, but might I suggest that the fundamental problem with modern ethics (as with modern art, generally speaking) is that it is boring. The self-asserting and self-expressing ego never really gets anywhere, never breaks out of its own clean, well-lit space. But the human subject, enraptured by the objective good, sets out on a journey away from the narrow confines of the self and becomes an Adventurer.

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Waiting for the angel to come

The night before he died, Jesus struggled mightily to accept his Father’s will. The Gospels describe him in the Garden of Gethsemane, prostrate on the ground, “sweating blood”, and begging his Father to save him from the brutal death that awaited him. Then, after he finally surrenders his will to his Father, an angel comes and strengthens him.

This begs a question: where was the angel when, seemingly, he most needed it? Why didn’t the angel come earlier to strengthen him?

Two stories, I believe, can be helpful in answering this.

The first comes from Martin Luther King Jr. In the days leading up to his assassination, he met angry resistance and began to receive death threats. He was courageous, but he was also human. At a point, those threats got to him. Here is one of his diary entries.

“One night towards the end of January, I settled into bed late, after a strenuous day. Coretta had already fallen asleep and just as I was about to doze off the telephone rang. An angry voice said, ‘Listen, nig., we’ve taken all we want from you; before next week you’ll be sorry you ever came to Montgomery.’ I hung up, but I couldn’t sleep. It seemed that all of my fears had come down on me at once. I had reached a saturation point.

I got out of bed and began to walk the floor. Finally, I went to the kitchen and heated a pot of coffee. I was ready to give up. With my cup of coffee sitting untouched before me, I tried to think of a way to move out of the picture without appearing a coward.

In this state of exhaustion, when my courage had all but gone, I decided to take my problem to God. With my head in my hands, I bowed over the kitchen table and prayed aloud. The words I spoke to God that midnight are



Father Ron Rolheiser

still vivid in my memory.

‘I am here taking a stand for what I believe is right. Now I am afraid. The people are looking to me for leadership, and if I stand before them without strength and courage, they too will falter. I am at the end of my powers. I have nothing left. I’ve come to the point where I can’t face it alone.’ At that moment I experienced the presence of the Divine as I had never experienced him before” (*Strive Toward Freedom*).

Notice at what point in his struggle the angel appears. In her autobiography, *The Long Loneliness*, Dorothy Day shares this story. As a young woman, along with the man she loved, she had been somewhat militant in her unbelief. Indeed, their reluctance to enter the institution of marriage was meant as a statement of their non-acceptance of traditional Christian values. Then she conceived a child and its birth was the beginning of a radical conversion for her. The joy she felt holding her baby convinced her that there was a God and that life had a loving purpose. She became a Roman Catholic, much to the chagrin of the man she loved, the father of her child. He gave her an ultimatum: if you have this child baptized, our relationship is ended. She had the child baptized and lost that re-

lationship (though they continued as friends). However, she now found herself a single mother with no job and no real vision or plan as to where to go now in life.

At one point, she became desperate. She left the child in the care of others and took a train from New York City to the Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, D.C. In her autobiography, she describes how she prayed that day, how desperate her prayer was. Like Jesus in Gethsemane and Martin Luther King in Montgomery, her prayer was one of raw need and helplessness, of an admission that she no longer had the strength to go on. Essentially, she said this to God: I have given up everything for you and now I am alone and afraid. I don’t know what to do and am lacking strength to carry on in this commitment.

She prayed this prayer of helplessness, took the train back to New York, and not long after found Peter Maurin sitting on her doorstep, telling her that he had heard about her and that he had a vision of what she should now do, namely, to start the *Catholic Worker*. That set the path for the rest of her life. The angel had come and strengthened her.

Notice at what point in these stories the angel makes its appearance — when human strength is fully exhausted. Why not earlier? Because up to the point of exhaustion, we don’t really let the angel in, relying instead on our own strength. But, as Trevor Herriot says, “Only after we have let the desert do its full work in us will angels finally come and minister to us.”

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Sunday Scripture reflections for April 9, Easter Sunday

By Jem Sullivan

April 9, 2023
The Mass of Easter Day
Acts 10:34a, 37-43
Ps 118:1-2, 16-17, 22-23
Col 3:1-4
1 Cor 5:6b-8 (Alternative)
Jn 20:1-9

Christ is risen, Alleluia! He is truly risen!
The discovery of the empty tomb is

the biblical record of the historical event: Jesus’ bodily resurrection. No witnesses saw Jesus as he arose from the dead. But what they did see was Jesus’ passion, crucifixion, and the empty tomb. So, how did the disciples come to believe that God raised Jesus from the dead? And how is an artist to depict this central mystery of Christian faith?

In a 19th century masterpiece titled, “Two Disciples at the Tomb,” Henry Ossawa Tanner captures the dramatic moment described in the Gospel proclaimed

on Easter Sunday morning. The remarkable painting invites us to enter into the Easter mystery with the same joy, hope, and faith of Mary of Magdala, Peter and John — the first witnesses to Jesus’ resurrection.

We are told that Peter and John “ran” to Jesus’ tomb. Before them, Mary of Magdala had run to Peter and John to announce what she had found there. We might wonder why these Gospel figures are running — why they are in such haste at this pivotal moment on which the his-

tory of the world turns. Their eagerness evokes the deep longing of humanity for freedom from sin and despair. After Jesus’ crucifixion the disciples recoiled in fear and abandonment. Mary’s witness offers a first glimmer of hope. She — called the “apostle to the apostles” by St. Thomas Aquinas — is a fearless messenger of hope to the disciples, who will in turn bear their witness to Jesus’ resurrection to the known world.

Esperando a que venga el ángel

La noche antes de su muerte, Jesús luchó denodadamente por aceptar la voluntad de su Padre. Los Evangelios lo describen en el Huerto de Getsemaní postrado en tierra, “sudando sangre” y pidiendo a su Padre que lo libre de la brutal muerte que le esperaba. Luego, después de rendir finalmente su voluntad a su Padre, viene un ángel y lo conforta.

Esto postula una pregunta: ¿Dónde estaba el ángel cuando, aparentemente, más lo necesitaba? ¿Por qué no acudió el ángel antes para confortarlo?

Dos historias -creo yo- pueden ser útiles para responder a esto.

La primera procede de Martin Luther King Jr. En los días previos a su asesinato, encontró airada resistencia y empezó a recibir amenazas de muerte. Era valeroso, pero, a la vez, humano. En cierto momento, esas amenazas le llegaron a su persona. He aquí una de las anotaciones de su diario:

“Una noche, hacia finales de Enero, me acosté tarde, después de un día ajetreado. Coretta ya había caído dormida, y justo cuando yo estaba a punto de quedarme somnoliento, sonó el teléfono. Una airada voz dijo: ‘Escucha, neg..., nos hemos llevado todo lo que queremos de ti; antes de la próxima semana estarás lamentándote de haber venido a Montgomery’. Colgué, pero no pude dormir. Parecía que todos mis temores habían caído a la vez sobre mí. Había llegado a un grado de saturación.

Me levanté de la cama y comencé a caminar por el piso. Finalmente, fui a la cocina y me preparé un bote de café. Estaba dispuesto a rendirme. Con mi taza de café aún sin tocar ante mí, intenté pensar en la manera de desaparecer de escena sin mostrarme cobarde.

En este estado de enervamiento, cuando mi ánimo casi se había consumido, decidí confiar mi problema a Dios.



Padre Ron Rolheiser

Con la cabeza en las manos, me incliné sobre la mesa de la cocina y oré en voz alta. Las palabras que dirigí a Dios en esa medianoche aún están vivas en mi memoria:

‘Aquí estoy tomando una posición por lo que creo que es correcto. Ahora me encuentro con miedo. La gente piensa en mí en busca de liderazgo, y si me sitúo ante ellos sin fortaleza ni ánimo, ellos también titubearán. Estoy al final de mis potestades. No me queda nada. He llegado al punto en que soy incapaz de afrontarlo solo’. “En ese momento experimenté la presencia de lo Divino como nunca antes lo había experimentado”. (*Stride Toward Freedom – Paso de gigante hacia la libertad*)

Notad en qué momento de su lucha aparece el ángel. En su autobiografía, *The Long Loneliness (La larga soledad)*, Dorothy Day nos cuenta esta historia: De joven, juntamente con el hombre a quien amaba, había sido algún tanto militante en su increencia. En realidad, su desgana a entrar en la institución matrimonial era entendida como una declaración de su no aceptación de los valores cristianos tradicionales. Después concibió un hijo, y su nacimiento fue para ella el comienzo de una conversión radical. El gozo que sintió al acoger a su bebé la convenció de que había un Dios y que la vida tenía un proyecto

amoroso. Se convirtió en católica romana, para disgusto del hombre a quien amaba, el padre de su hijo. Él le dio un ultimátum: Si decides que este hijo sea bautizado, nuestra relación se acaba. Ella hizo que el niño fuera bautizado y perdió esa relación (aunque continuaron como amigos). Pero entonces se encontró madre soltera, sin trabajo y sin verdadera visión, ni plan a donde encaminarse en la vida

En cierto momento, se desesperó. Dejó al niño al cuidado de otros y tomó un tren de la ciudad de New York al santuario de la Inmaculada Concepción de Washington, D. C. En su autobiografía, describe cómo oró ese día, qué desesperada fue su oración. Como Jesús en Getsemaní y Martin Luther King en Montgomery, su oración fue de cruda necesidad y desamparo, reconociendo que ya no poseía la fuerza de continuar. Esencialmente, dijo esto a Dios: He abandonado todo por ti y ahora estoy sola y temerosa. No sé qué hacer y estoy falta de fuerza para continuar en este compromiso.

Rezó esta oración de desamparo, tomó el tren de regreso a New York y, no mucho después, encontró a Peter Maurin sentado en el umbral de su puerta diciéndole que él había oído noticias de ella y que tenía claro lo que debería hacer ahora, a saber, iniciar la publicación del *Catholic Worker (El Trabajador Católico)*. Eso fijó el camino para el resto de su vida. El ángel la había visitado y confortado.

Observad en qué momento de estas historias hace su aparición el ángel: cuando la fuerza humana está enteramente agotada. ¿Por qué no antes? Porque hasta el momento de agotamiento, en realidad no le permitimos entrar al ángel, confiando a la vez en nuestra propia fuerza. Pero, como dice Trevor Herriot, “Sólo después de que hayamos permitido al desierto hacer todo su trabajo en nosotros, los ángeles vendrán finalmente y nos servirán”.

¡Tu iglesia te está esperando!

Hay un lugar donde eres bienvenido y encuentras paz, es un hogar espiritual, esa es tu iglesia. Por eso, la Diócesis de Rockford, en Illinois, creó una campaña difundida a finales de febrero, con el fin de "dar a los católicos un empujón para que regresen a casa, especialmente ahora que comienza la Cuaresma", como lo plantea un mensaje emitido por la oficina de comunicaciones diocesanas.

Las comunidades católicas continúan sintiendo los efectos de la larga pandemia de COVID-19, durante la cual muchas personas dejaron de asistir en persona a la Misa, a la adoración al Santísimo y a otras actividades de la comunidad parroquial. Una parroquia está congregando a gente por medio de una invitación continua.

El párroco de St. Patrick, en St. Charles, monseñor Daniel Deutsch, en coordinación con Nicholas Frank, director de visión y evangelización, han desarrollado campañas de bienvenida y acogida a sus feligreses, explicó Maddy Barr, coordinadora de comunicaciones de la parroquia.

Barr recuerda que se sintió aludida con la invitación cuando llegó por primera vez desde Michigan a su entrevista laboral. Al ir a Misa y leer el aviso en inglés que decía "Pertenece aquí, empieza aquí un nuevo capítulo", sintió que "era un recordatorio extra de que estaba en el lugar correcto".

Esas frases han motivado tanto a católicos no practicantes como a católicos practicantes a regresar a la Iglesia de una manera más activa. Otro de los carteles de invitación en los muros de la parroquia dice "Descubre tu Hogar aquí".

El padre Lisandro Cristancho, vicario parroquial de St. Patrick, se sorprendió gratamente cuando una persona "dijo que era nueva en el área y estaba buscando un sitio donde ir a Misa", cuando vio el letrero, expresó "aquí me estaban esperando, este es el lugar". La pancarta afirmó "lo que ella estaba buscando", dijo el padre Cristancho.

Otra de las ideas puestas en práctica en St. Patrick fue el implementar el conocido programa ALPHA, un curso de 9 semanas que explora "la vida, la espiritualidad y la fe cristiana en un ambiente divertido y sin prejuicios", según la página web de la parroquia.

"Es difícil de explicar la sensación, pero me sentí... como entrar en tu propia casa después de un largo día de trabajo. Sentía, esto es lo que se supone que



Margarita Mendoza
OSV News

debo hacer", indicó Crystal Villagómez, quien participó en el curso. "Durante las clases de ALPHA aprendí mucho sobre mí y lo que he estado buscando todo este tiempo".

"No era solo la iglesia que necesitaba ... Era Dios", continuó, agregando que necesitaba de las personas que pudieran ayudarle a comprender que el Espíritu Santo había estado llamándola. "Dios quería que lo sirviera y no solo para vivir la vida sino, para vivir la vida para el Señor", expresó Villagómez. Ella y su esposo tienen cuatro hijos, actualmente es voluntaria en la parroquia.

La obligación de ir a Misa los domingos, que fue mayormente dispensada por los obispos durante la pandemia, continúa siendo vital por varios motivos.

El primero es porque Dios lo ha pedido, y como el *Catecismo de la Iglesia Católica* afirma, "La Eucaristía del domingo fundamenta y confirma toda la práctica cristiana. Por eso los fieles están obligados a participar en la Eucaristía los días de precepto, a no ser que estén excusados por una razón seria (por ejemplo, enfermedad, el cuidado de niños pequeños) o dispensados por su pastor propio. Los que deliberadamente faltan a esta obligación cometen un pecado grave".

Segundo porque el ser humano es ser de comunidad. Tercero porque es importante para las familias, sobre todo para que los niños tengan una formación en la vivencia de la fe. La iglesia es un lugar dedicado para la oración y alabanza a Dios, el centro de vida de cada persona. Qué mejor que dedicarle un tiempo especial a Dios, con toda la disposición de escuchar su Palabra y enriquecerse de su mensaje.

La pandemia ya pasó, ya no hay excusa para seguir solamente la Misa en internet y no regresar a la iglesia. ¡Ánimo, tu casa espiritual te espera!

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Margarita Mendoza es editora de El Observador, el periódico en español de la Diócesis de Rockford.

Conociendo a los migrantes con los que caminamos

En nuestro debate nacional sobre inmigración, abunda la información errónea sobre los inmigrantes, ya que a menudo se los caracteriza de manera negativa. Pero son seres humanos con aspiraciones como el resto de nosotros. Es importante saber quiénes son los inmigrantes y cómo contribuyen a nuestra sociedad, saber con quién caminamos.

Hay casi 45 millones de inmigrantes en los Estados Unidos. Con el 13 % de nuestra población, se encuentra en los niveles más altos desde 1890, cuando era casi el 15 %. De este grupo, aproximadamente 20.8% son indocumentados, es decir, que no tienen un estatus legal oficial en los EE.UU.

Cuando observamos la población inmigrante total, un poco más del 45% ya obtuvo la ciudadanía estadounidense. Algunos ven esto como una amenaza a nuestra democracia porque el 14% de los ciudadanos estadounidenses no son nativos, pero la verdad es que los inmigrantes han hecho una contribución significativa a nuestra sociedad en el pasado, como lo hacen en el presente.

Los nuevos inmigrantes están bien integrados en nuestra sociedad y en la fuerza laboral. Alrededor del 65% de todos los inmigrantes están en la fuerza laboral, principalmente en trabajos esenciales como agricultura, construcción y servicios. Entre los indocumentados, la participación en la fuerza laboral llega al 94%.

El porcentaje de niños nacidos en Estados Unidos en familias inmigrantes es aproximadamente el 25% de los nacimientos en Estados Unidos en un año determinado. Más del 50% vive en California, Texas, Florida, Nueva York e Illinois, pero los inmigrantes se encuentran en todos los estados.

Durante la reciente pandemia, aprendimos de primera mano sobre la necesidad de los llamados trabajos esenciales, ya que los inmigrantes ayudaron a mantener la economía en marcha en muchas industrias. Mostró cómo nuestra sociedad difícilmente puede existir sin ellos.

Los trabajadores de la salud, los empleados de supermercados, los trabajadores agrícolas y muchas otras ocupaciones son verdaderamente esenciales para el bienestar de la población estadounidense. Estas son funciones esenciales de nuestra sociedad.

Algunos, sin embargo, se preocupan por el desplazamiento de los trabajadores nacidos en Estados Unidos por trabajadores extranjeros, pero los trabajadores inmigrantes complementan en gran medida la fuerza laboral estadounidense, trabajando en trabajos que los estadounidenses pueden no querer, excepto quizás donde compiten con los que no llegaron a completar la escuela secundaria.

Los inmigrantes hispanos son el mayor porcentaje de nuevos inmigrantes, lo que incluye a aquellos que podrían ser indocumentados. Una mirada más cercana a este grupo nos da una mejor indicación de su integración y contribuciones a nuestra sociedad.



Obispo Nicolás DiMarzio
OSV News

Caminando con Migrantes

Holding the line on brain death

How do we determine that someone has died? The Uniform Determination of Death Act (UDDA), which has been an important part of the medical and legal landscape in the U.S. for more than 40 years, states:

"An individual who has sustained either irreversible cessation of circulatory and respiratory functions or irreversible cessation of all functions of the entire brain, including the brainstem, is dead. A determination of death must be made in accordance with accepted medical standards."

The UDDA, originally drafted in 1981 by a special Presidential Commission, was designed to serve as a legal standard and a uniform framework for determining that someone has died, as well as to provide a clear legal foundation for declaring someone dead by means of "neurological criteria," also known as "brain death."

Since that time, the UDDA has served as an important benchmark for the medical profession, and a point of reference for legislative standards adopted throughout the United States, with all 50 states relying on language borrowed from the UDDA in their legal definitions of death.

Clearly defining and ascertaining when someone has died is important for a number of reasons: grieving can begin; burial arrangements can be made; and organ procurement can take place if the person had indicated a desire to become a donor. Most importantly, establishing that someone has not yet passed on helps us provide appropriate care and medical treatments until the time of death.

Recently, a group of physicians, ethicists, and lawyers recommended revising the wording of the UDDA. Their proposal adjusts the definition of brain death from whole-brain death to less-than-whole-brain death.

Whenever brain death assessments are done today, physicians carry out a series of bedside clinical tests. They check whether the patient can gasp or initiate a breath when taken off the ventilator (known as an "apnea test"). Any attempt at taking a breath would indicate that the person's brainstem is still functioning, and that he or she is still alive. Physicians also check for other reflexes and responses mediated by the brain: Do pupils of the eye respond to light? Is there any reaction to, or withdrawal from painful stimuli? Is there any gag reflex when an object is placed in the back of the throat? If such reflexes are present, the individual is still alive.

For somebody to be deceased, then, there needs to be evidence of a catastrophic neurological event that has caused their brain to become irreversibly non-functional. One type of brain function that is not routinely assessed by doctors when carrying out brain death testing involves the hypothalamus. This important region of the brain coordinates with the pituitary gland to enable the secretion of hormones and small molecules that regulate the function of the kidneys and other organs, and helps control salt and water balance in the body. Sometimes a person can pass all the tests for being brain dead, but still have hypothalamic function.

If a patient has continuing hypothalamic function in this way, it seems clear that he or she does not manifest "irreversible cessation of all functions of the entire brain" as delineated in the UDDA.

Regrettably, some are now proposing that a person in this situation should still be considered brain dead, and they are seeking to revise the wording of the UDDA to reflect this, substantially lowering the standard for a declaration of brain death. They declare, without compelling support, that the persistence of neurosecretory function by the hypothalamus is consistent with brain death.

In cases of genuine brain death, when all functions of the entire brain have ceased, the bodies of these individuals can typically continue to function on a ventilator only for a matter of hours or perhaps a few days before their various subsystems, like blood pressure, electrolytes, and fluid balance become erratic and dysregulated, leading to cardiac arrest.

Meanwhile, some brain-injured individuals who have retained hypothalamic functioning have survived for months or years on a ventilator after losing both their brain-mediated reflexes and their ability to breathe. Even though these patients suffer an extremely severe central nervous system injury, they are clearly still alive.

Even to be "slightly alive" is still to be alive. If the language of the UDDA ends up being changed to allow for a declaration of brain death even with continued hypothalamic functioning, individuals who are not-quite-dead will be treated as if they were already dead.

Rather than revising the language of the UDDA and seeking to lower the standards for declaring brain death, the battery of routine reflex and apnea tests used for ascertaining brain death needs be expanded to include tests that can verify the loss of hypothalamic function.

Such improvements in testing will help ensure that people are not declared deceased prematurely. It will also help strengthen public confidence in the life-saving work of organ transplantation.

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 and www.fathertad.com.



Father Tad Pacholczyk
Making Sense of Bioethics

Catholic Voices

At the consecration, my kids had something to say about Jesus

When you bring young children to Mass your heart rate goes up, your blood pressure rises, and sometimes you find yourself in fight or flight mode from the moment the opening hymn sounds until you hear the words "Go in peace." Even if your parish has gone to great lengths to make families feel welcome (as mine has), there is always a spike of anxiety when your little one starts to make noise.

With the babies, there is babbling or crying. Sometimes there is an unmistakable noise signaling an imminent diaper change, and these things are not unexpected. But with older kids the game changes. They can talk.

For me, nothing is more unnerving than the over-loud chatter of my 4-year old during Mass.

So, imagine how flustered I was when both our 4-and-5-year-olds started talking during the elevation — that beautiful moment when the priest holds up the consecrated Eucharist and everyone bows in reverent silence. It's a moment of profound silence, when many silently acknowledge, "My Lord and my God."

And then there were my kids. Talking. Loudly. At first, I didn't even realize what they'd said; I'd simply heard their voices and registered "volume." I anticipated in dread the looks I'd be getting from the people around me. You know the looks. But when I turned to apologize, I was surprised.

One woman had tears in her eyes. Another man smiled and nodded in a childlike and almost giddy way. Another fought back tears and buried his head into his hands, returning to deeper prayer. A teenager quietly said, "Whoa, that's cool."

Suddenly, it sunk in, what my children had said. As the priest held up the host, both of them had said, "I love you, Jesus!"

They were loud enough for people around us to hear, and sincere enough for hearts to be convicted of a profound reality affirmed from the mouths of children. We hear the priest say, "This is my body," and "This is my blood," but overfamiliarity can render us disconnected from those words and the reality they pronounce.

But in that moment, my children reminded all of us of who we were there for and what that God-man — Jesus Christ — was offering us: a gift of love, a



Joel Stepanek
OSV News

gift of his body, blood, soul and divinity.

Too often, we parents are so busy trying to keep our kids focused, or wrangling 6-month olds, that we adults get distracted; our minds wander and we lose sight of the love poured out for us at Mass. We flub our responses to that love. This is why Jesus desires revival for us; he wants us to fall in love again. He wants us to, with childlike faith and full hearts, be with him, and to welcome him in the Blessed Sacrament and say, "I love you, Jesus."

After Mass, I learned that my wife had taught our children that simple prayer, so they could begin to learn the lifelong lessons: that the Eucharist is not merely a symbol but truly "is" Jesus Christ, and that in the Blessed Sacrament Jesus initiates a dialogue. When the priest holds up the consecrated host, there is Jesus saying to us, "I love you." My children, learning to speak to Christ, responded in the very best way by saying, "I love you" in return.

My blood pressure lowered that day, and I was convicted of my need for a savior, and to fall in love again. I was convicted by my own children who, by the grace of God, were loud at Mass instead of quiet. I was convicted by those around me who encountered the Lord in a new way that day.

It was a moment of revival and, if we can remain childlike in our faith, I believe the Eucharistic Revival moving across our country will occasion many more like it — becoming something transformative for our families, parishes and our world.

Joel Stepanek is chief mission officer for the National Eucharistic Congress Inc. and is responsible for guiding the teams that empower and energize the grassroots efforts of the Eucharistic Revival.

'Sacrifice': A word wholly connected to the Holy Eucharist

One of the most quoted descriptions of the Eucharist is from the Second Vatican Council's Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium*, which calls the Eucharist the "source and summit" of Christian living.

But what is sometimes overlooked is the specific context of that famous line — that of sacrifice. "Taking part in the Eucharistic sacrifice, which is the source and summit of the whole Christian life," the line reads, "they ("the faithful") offer the Divine Victim to God, and offer themselves along with It" (No. 11).

The intrinsically sacrificial nature of the Eucharist is reinforced, too, at the very start of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church's* section on the Eucharist, which states that we "participate with the whole community in the Lord's own sacrifice by means of the Eucharist" (No. 1322).

In short, sacrifice is at the heart of the Eucharist, the source of our living. "The bread that I will give is my flesh for the life of the world" (Jn 6:51).

What does this mean for us? At the end of Mass, we often hear the familiar words "Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by your life." It seems to me this instruction contains a blueprint for how to live Eucharistically, and therefore sacrificially. We give God glory in offering our lives as Christ did. This is to live as St. Paul, in his letter to the Romans, instructed Christians: "Offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God, your spiritual worship" (12:1). Each one of us is called to live a life of sacrifice in imitation of Christ.

Not one of us is without the burden of our own crosses in life. In some way, we each know suffering and selflessness. But what we do with these realities is what defines our lives of discipleship. Jesus said to take up our cross and follow him. He also told us to lay down our lives for others.

When we offer our lives for God and others — joined through the Eucharist to the pattern of Christ's sacrifice — our struggles, anxieties, fears, difficulties, pains and sufferings are all transformed and given their meaning and purpose. And Jesus' sacrifice was rooted in love for others. He told us, "No one has greater love than this" (Jn 15:13). In short, "whoever wishes to save



Michael Heinlein
OSV News

his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it," says the Lord (Mt 16:25).

In the Eucharistic sacrifice, where we encounter and receive Jesus Christ, we are conformed to the only way of life worth living and given the grace we need to sustain our efforts in doing so. The sacrament shows us how to offer our lives to God with Christ and draw from the source of all life as the means to gain life forever.

At Mass, we are drawn up into the sacrifice of the Lord who died to set us free. We lay down our very selves with him. Bread and wine are changed and transformed, but so too are our lives and sacrifices — into something good and life-giving.

As the late Cardinal Francis E. George, O.M.I. once said, "The freedom Christ gives us with himself in the Eucharist is more than freedom to do; it is also freedom to give ourselves totally, even to the point of self-sacrifice, as Christ gave himself to death on the cross."

Like Jesus, if we accept and carry our crosses well — allowing the Eucharist to reveal what must be the heart and goal of our lives — then they will bring nothing but good things. By offering ourselves with Christ, we can transmit his abundant graces and blessings for others in their quest for conversion, sanctification and friendship with God. The Eucharist shows us how, by making a sacrifice of our lives — in union with Christ's, we can carry God's life to ourselves and others.

Michael R. Heinlein is author of *Glorifying Christ: The Life of Cardinal Francis E. George, O.M.I. and currently in formation for the Association of Pauline Co-operators.*

'What should I let my kids read?': Guiding our young readers

When people discover I have a master's degree in children's literature, they tend to corner me with one impossible question: "What books should I let my kids read?"

These are primarily loving, caring parents with the best of intentions. They've been hearing, however, that most of today's popular Young Adult (YA) novels include immoral characters, inappropriate situations or gratuitous vice, and they are looking for some Catholic literary guru to pronounce the "safe" YA titles that won't corrupt young readers through subtle seductions.

As a parent and an author, I do sympathize, and I am quick to point out that some Catholic-specific YA literature resources do exist. The Catholic Writer's Guild has its YA "seal of approval" list; more than a dozen curated blogs (such as Catholic Teen Books) likewise have indie titles to recommend; and, of course, Our Sunday Visitor has options for young readers, too.

Parents should be warned, however, that — without discrediting those resources — such exclusively Catholic options will never fully address their concerns, nor best serve the children who will, inevitably, become adults. Preventing them from choosing books on their own may then prove to have been a grave disservice to their growth, maturity and judgment.

Instead of asking which books we should PERMIT our children to read, parents would do well to wonder: "How can I help my kids better discern what to read, themselves?"

When I was a teenager, one of the best things my dad ever did for me was to read the same books I'd brought home and then discuss them with me. He'd listen to my thoughts and share his own, casually pointing out what he found good and bad, positive and pernicious. He was curious before he was critical and, in this way, he subtly validated my ability to choose books while also teaching me to hone my standards.

My dad would never disparage my preferences outright, only critiquing stories after he'd read them and never belittling my own thoughts. As a prolific and more experienced reader, he helped me to interpret the subtler elements that I didn't yet have the maturity to decipher on my own. I knew how to read, of course — but my father taught me how to see what I was reading, in fullness.

When parents are too quick to negatively



Christina Eberle
OSV News

judge a book based solely on form, not content, children aren't being taught to judge rightly or well. Worse, when we dismiss our reader's preferences outright, we too may miss out on something that shines with the beauty, goodness and truth we want them to encounter.

I know a parent who rejected Kelly Barnhill's fantasy novel, *The Girl Who Drank the Moon*, because the back cover copy mentioned magic and therefore could only be a gateway to the occult. (Tolkien and Lewis sob from their graves!) Another parent frowned upon Gene Luen Yang's graphic novels, *Boxers and Saints*, believing them to be "low art" that mocked the Catholic Church — the tragic irony being that Barnhill and Lang are both faithful Catholics and award-winning authors. They're quite brilliant at presenting timeless Gospel truths in richly poetic ways, but — much like Jesus' parables — the truth is folded within the storytelling: you must unwrap the prose before you can receive it.

So, my advice to concerned parents is to take a breath, and then take a page out of my dad's book: read along with your young readers. If you haven't the time for that, you can still encourage them to discuss what they're reading. What's it about? Who's their favorite character and why? How do they think the story will end? A parent's genuine interest will mean the world to them, and their passion and questions will be met with insight and guidance. This is how we leave the door open for future conversations where, over time, our young readers will know how to recognize wheat from chaff.

Christina Eberle earned her Master of Arts in children's literature in 2010. Her young adult fantasy novel, *Brio* (published under her pen name "Chris Cross" in February 2022), is available on Amazon.

Renewing an old approach to welcoming newcomers

The Biden administration is currently using its authority to grant humanitarian parole to newcomers through processes devised for five countries: Ukraine, Cuba, Haiti, Nicaragua, and Venezuela. The common elements among these countries are political instability, violent conflict, and widespread persecution of certain individuals. The aim of these parole programs is to increase access to humanitarian relief while seeking to minimize irregular migration. These processes rely on an old and tested system of welcoming newcomers: private sponsorship.

This program is only part of a larger admiring policy shift to allow Americans — citizens and permanent residents — to welcome refugees not only from the above-mentioned countries but also from other countries whose cases have been approved for resettlement in the United States.

Immigration law has long included the possibility of individuals in the U.S. offering support to would-be migrants — usually either relatives or friends. In this case, the government, working with national refugee resettlement agencies and other organizations, is asking groups of at least five or more individuals to join in on what is called a "sponsor circle" that will take responsibility for welcoming newcomers into their community. For its part, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops has launched the Welcome Circle Program to help develop and support sponsor circles.

These sponsor circles can stem from existing groups, such as parishes or other organizations, as well as previously unrelated individuals who join for this purpose. The groups are asked to assist in welcoming the migrants and integrating them into their local communities, and providing needed financial support for the duration of their parole. The first and most key step in integration is finding an appropriate job for the individual, as well as housing. Fortunately, the beneficiaries — single people or members of families — will be eligible to apply for work authorization.

Severe conditions in Ukraine, Cuba, Haiti, Nicaragua, and Venezuela have driven many to our nation. A legal and systematic approach will best serve their needs and the needs of our country, especially as it grapples with widespread labor shortages, in part due to a lack of employment-authorized immigrants. Americans have never been outdone in their generosity to those most in need.

These programs allow religious groups, community groups, and interested individuals to offer sponsorship to those who need immediate relief. Like every immigration initiative, these programs have their naysayers. Some are concerned about the possible financial burden on local municipalities and states, while anti-immigration groups see it as a back-door approach that has no congressional authorization.

The fact is Congress provided the humanitarian parole authority for



Bishop
Nicholas DiMarzio
OSV News

Walking with Migrants

The mental health crisis crosses all boundaries and ages

It was hard to find joy in the day. Rain pelted the morning windows incessantly. I burrowed under the covers and, grasping for gratitude, told myself it was good we were getting needed moisture.

After the rain came unrelenting gloom, strong winds and falling temperatures. When baking cinnamon rolls brought no respite from my sour feelings, I was consoled by the fact that I was experiencing what we all do occasionally: a temporary down day. A bad "mood" that would pass.

Then I thought of John Fetterman. This freshman U.S. senator from Pennsylvania checked himself into Walter Reed National Military Medical Center in Bethesda, Maryland, on Jan. 15 for the treatment of clinical depression.

Fetterman, 53, had suffered a serious stroke right after winning his Democratic Party primary in 2022. According to the American Stroke Association, depression is a common byproduct of stroke.

We should all applaud Fetterman for acknowledging his illness and for being so upfront and candid. "Transparency" is something urged upon us -- upon the church, the government, all our institutions -- and yet it's often in rare supply. Fetterman was candid, not just about this recent depression, but about his past episodes of depression.

We're frequently reminded of the mental health crisis in our country, especially among our youth. It's hard to measure, but the Centers for Disease Control's parent survey suggests that 15% of youth ages 12-17 had experienced a major depressive episode in the time preceding the 2018-19 survey. 36.7% of these youth had persistent feelings of sadness or hopelessness.

Also from the CDC, more concrete evidence of crisis: Suicide was the 12th leading cause of death in 2020, and, I read with horror, the second leading cause of death for children ages 10-14.

Beyond these numbers are real people, and a hopefully changing attitude toward mental health issues.



Effie Caldarola
OSV News

Feeling It

It's been 50 years since George McGovern's choice of a vice presidential running mate was jolted by revelations of mental illness. Thomas Eagleton was a Missouri senator who, only after accepting the nomination, revealed he had been hospitalized for depression years before and had received electric shock treatment. These revelations crushed his candidacy. Mental illness was an unacknowledged issue back then, covered up, like being gay or having an extramarital affair.

My own dad was hospitalized about the same time as Eagleton, and he too received electroconvulsive shock treatment. I was too young to understand the stigma of mental health treatment then, and how tough it must have been for Dad, a Midwestern farmer, to seek help.

One group of young people struggling right now are those who are coming to grips with their gender identity. Gay, lesbian and transgender youth often fall prey to isolation, marginalization, depression and suicide.

Being a teenager is challenging under any circumstances. Imagine how much harder it can be for a teen experiencing gender issues.

In his essay on synodality, Cardinal Robert McElroy talked about "radical inclusivity" and quoted the Italian synod report: "The church-home does not have

See CALDAROLA, Page 19

Cartoon Corner



He absolutely has a point. An alarming amount of sexual abuse takes place in the public schools — we see the headlines. If statutes of limitations are to be

lifted, why not for public schools, as well — are their victims only half-hurt, only 3/5 victims? Please. Their abuse has scarred them as deeply and lastingly as any victim of clergy sexual abuse, so why should their abusers — and the teachers, principals, superintendents and unions that protect them — not face the same scrutiny, and the same accountability, as Catholic clergy and their bishops?

But the church needs to do all of that while continually applying the antiseptic of the truth, at any cost — through time

and distance, beyond statutes, offering their findings with clarity to the whole world — if she is ever to be free, if she is ever to be healthy and whole, and strong enough to serve Christ and the world.

Elizabeth Scalia is culture editor for OSV News. Follow her on Twitter @the anchoress.

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Grandkids & Great grandkids

On behalf of the family of Adan Balde Villafranco, we would like to give our sincerest and most grateful thanks to some people who have been with us during this time. Our dad suffered a stroke the week before Christmas, and this has been one of the most challenging times for my family. There is no doubt we could not have made it through without all the support and prayers.

We want to give a very special thank you to the St Joseph's Knights of Columbus – Council # 12798 in San Angelo. The Knights graciously provided the remodel of a handicap shower that allows ability and ease for my dad during his recovery. It had been very difficult to maneuver as this stroke left him without the ability to use the left side of his body. This remodel has made such a huge difference and was a great blessing for our dad. No words can express our gratitude to the Knights of Columbus for making this happen.

Also a special thank you to Deacon Andy Gonzales for providing the most beautiful and sacred sacrament of the Holy Eucharist during his time in inpatient rehab and has continued to do so during his home health therapy. This most sacred sacrament is what got our dad through some tough times. Thank you to Mr. & Mrs. Ruiz for also coming by inpatient rehab to give the Holy Eucharist and offer prayer as well.

Thank you to Mr. Art Rangel, who graciously came to our home a few times to give our dad a haircut. It's the little things that sometimes make a big difference in his day.

And a very special thank you to Mr. & Mrs. Tito & Sylvia Garcia, who have been by our side since day one and who have comforted, supported, visited, prayed, and who continue to check on him during this time. Mr. & Mrs. Tito and Sylvia Garcia have always been there for both our parents for many years, but through this challenging time, they have gone above and beyond.

We thank everyone for their support and all those all those who have called or visited and especially for all those who have prayed. We ask for your continued prayers as our dad continues on his journey through rehab with God's grace and one day at a time.

Our sincerest thanks,
The Family of Adan Balde Villafranco

DiMARZIO

Continued from Page 17

this very purpose — to allow foreign nationals to enter the United States for urgent humanitarian reasons on a case-by-case basis.

As we look at the situations of these countries and the individuals making dangerous journeys, we recognize an appropriate use of our president’s power. There are others who would argue that the responsibility taken by these groups will depend on one individual signing an affidavit of support, which has more of a moral than legal consequence.

My experience as a diocesan resettlement director in the 1970s in the Archdiocese of Newark amid the

resettlement of Vietnamese, Haitian, and Cuban migrants was that groups, specifically parishes, that took responsibility were stellar in making sure that the migrants were resettled in a proper manner.

There is much to be said about this program, for it is truly an American approach to assisting newcomers in finding a welcoming hand in a country that has been built on the energy and enthusiasm of immigrants.

For more information on the USCCB’s Welcome Circle Program, please visit *usccb.org/welcomecircles* and sign up for an information session.

Bishop Nicholas DiMarzio, Ph.D., D.D. is the retired bishop of the Diocese of Brooklyn, New York. He writes the column “Walking With Migrants” for The Tablet and OSV News.

CALDAROLA

Continued from Page 17

doors that close, but a perimeter that continually widens."

As Catholics, we have the opportunity to follow our first law of love, while without denying church teaching. We're all called to love unconditionally, to be the Prodigal's father welcoming with open arms, to open our doors to a wider perimeter.

Remember that old saying, "Be kind. Everyone you meet is

fighting a hard battle."

That's true whether we're just having a bad day, or whether we're silently fighting the throes of depression or other mental illness. We need each other, whether we're a freshman U.S. senator or a 13-year-old freshman in high school.

Effie Caldarola is a wife, mom and grandmother who received her master's in pastoral ministry from Seattle University.

MIGRANTES

Continúa de Página 15

La población hispana total en los EE.UU. es de aproximadamente 62.5 millones, lo que representa aproximadamente el 19 % de la población total de los EE.UU., y los mexicanos constituyen aproximadamente el 60 % de esa población. El porcentaje mexicano de la población está disminuyendo principalmente debido a una menor inmigración y una mayor emigración (o retorno) a México. Las nacionalidades que están aumentando en EE.UU. son de Venezuela y los países centroamericanos.

Texas, California y Florida vieron aumentar su población hispana en más de un millón de personas entre 2010 y 2020, pero hay una cantidad significativa de inmigrantes hispanos en todos los estados.

La adquisición del idioma inglés también ha aumentado para todos los hispanos, especialmente entre los niños nacidos en los EE.UU. Este es otro factor importante en la integración de los inmigrantes, ya que los niveles de logros educativos también han crecido continuamente a medida que más inmigrantes hispanos llegan con niveles más altos de educación y luego continúan su educación una vez en los EE.UU. Casi la mitad de los inmigrantes indocumentados de 25 a 64 años tienen al menos una educación secundaria.

Esta revisión demográfica y estadística de nuestra población inmigrante en los EE.UU. quizás nos abra un poco la mente a la función esencial que desempeñan los inmigrantes en nuestra sociedad actual. En general, contribuyen a nuestra economía y cultura, y se integran con éxito en nuestra sociedad. A veces, los hechos pueden anular los prejuicios y las impresiones que se crean a través de la desinformación y el nativismo, que continúan plagando a nuestra nación

El obispo Nicholas DiMarzio es el obispo jubilado de la Diócesis de Brooklyn, Nueva York. Escribe la columna "Caminando con Migrantes" para The Tablet y OSV News.

CARE

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blood has eternal life, and I will raise him on the last day" (Jn 6:54). It is, therefore, ideal for a sick, elderly or dying person to be regularly receiving Communion as far as he or she is able. To ensure this, care should be taken to contact the local parish, or the spiritual care staff if at a nursing or medical facility, early in the stages of incapacitating illness or infirmity. Often there are care facilities at which Mass is regularly celebrated or where Communion is distributed, but in some cases it must be specifically requested. If not, one's pastor can be asked to permit the family to bring Communion to their loved one.

The time for an individual's final Communion before death is called "viaticum" — meaning food for the journey — and it unites the dying person with Christ in his passover from death to life. Again, it should be arranged with attentiveness to the person's condition when there is at least a little time to spare. Sometimes as death approaches, it becomes very difficult for the dying person to receive holy Communion. In those cases, it is a consolation to remember that the fruits of the last Communion we’ve received do not have an expiration date and remain living, effective and fruitful still. A spiritual communion might be recited for the person to join in or hear at that time. The most important thing is to not wait until the person is unable to receive the sacrament for whatever reason.

It is fitting that the baptismal profession of faith is also part of the rite for viaticum, tying together the individual's beginning in the life of grace that now draws to a close and prepares for birth into eternal life.

Apostolic pardon

Usually along with viaticum, but not typically when celebrating the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick (unless in emergencies or other rare exceptions), the priest will offer the Apostolic Pardon. This is a blessing with a plenary indulgence attached to it, which forgives temporal punishment due to sin.

Commendation of the dying

The prayers offered for use when the time death is near is meant to assist the union with Christ established in viaticum. The church makes clear we have the responsibility to assist the dying person with our prayers for mercy and hope. Priests and deacons are encouraged to lead the prayers of this rite when possible, but any laity are also encouraged to make use of these prayers — the texts of which should be "readily available," as the rite says — for the good of the person

dying.

The ritual contains a variety of options for use, and any or all can be used, depending on the circumstances. There are a number of short texts from Scripture and other pious invocations. The passages remind us of the salvation won for us through Christ's paschal mystery, our trust and dependence on him, our hope for the future. The passages, often familiar selections from the gospels, New Testament epistles or psalms, can be recited one or several times. The line, "Father, into your hands I commend my spirit" (Lk 23:46), Christ's words of obedience and oblation, can be a great consolation.

There also are longer readings from Scripture provided in the ritual, from both Old and New Testaments. Since the Word of God is always living and effective, hearing familiar passages came alive afresh, with new meaning and significance at such a poignant moment in our lives. It helps to situate a loved one's death within the only context of death that matters for a Christian: to see his or her story absorbed into Christ's story, finally and completely, sealing what began at baptism. It is encouraged, drawing upon the connection of baptism, to also trace the sign of the cross on the dying person's forehead.

To expand this reality, a litany of saints is also provided. Calling upon holy men and women of every time and place is a great consolation. Not only are they in heaven, and praying for our loved ones as they prepare to cross over to the life of the world to come, but these were also men and women who suffered and died, too. There is a special peace that comes in seeking their intercession. The instruction invites invocation of special saints, particular personal patrons of the dying person, the family or of the parish to be included.

When death appears to be imminent, there is the prayer of commendation. There are several options, all of which are among the most beautiful prayers in our liturgical and spiritual patrimony. At that difficult and vulnerable moment, we do not cling to the dying person, but with our prayers bid their soul to "go forth" in the name of the Blessed Trinity. We pray for the dying person's peace, for his or her home to now be in heaven with God, with Mary, Joseph and all the angels and saints.

Finally, the ritual includes prayers to be recited after death. Here the angels and saints are invoked to come to the aid of the recently deceased and usher them into paradise. There is also a psalm and closing prayer. Additionally, at the end, there are a few brief prayers of consolation and hope for family and friends. These can all be useful prayers as the family might spend time with the deceased as funeral home staff comes to retrieve the body.

Michael R. Heinlein is editor of OSV's Simply Catholic. Follow him on Twitter @HeinleinMichael.

SCRIPTURE

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Tanner captures the moment when Peter and John stand before the empty tomb as they come to see and believe in Jesus’ resurrection. A warm golden light radiates from the dark tomb onto their astonished yet thoughtful faces. Just as they are bathed in the divine light of God’s power, so are we on this Easter day. The disciples’ gaze at the empty tomb is like our awe-filled contemplation of the mystery of Jesus’ resurrection.

God’s desire that we share in the divine life is the miracle of Easter morning. In the light of this supreme grace we become courageous witnesses, like St. Peter in the first reading.

Human beings can forgive and receive forgiveness from each other. Only God can forgive the sins of all humanity, in every time and place. This is the good news of Easter. Bathed in the radiant light of Jesus’ resurrection, we receive nothing less than divine life itself. Sin no longer has the last word on human existence.

Easter is the “feast of feasts,” when we join our voices to the church’s joyful celebration of Jesus’ victory over sin and death. Jesus’ resurrection is the pattern of the newness of divine life we are invited to live in every day. As the joyful hope of Easter echoes within us, we become loving witness of the risen Jesus to a wounded world, as we pray with Easter faith, “speak to me, Lord.”

— Question: How are you called to witness to the resurrection of Jesus?

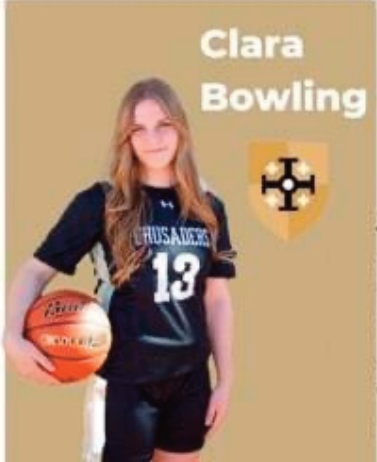
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Congratulations to Holy Cross Catholic High School All-District Basketball honorees

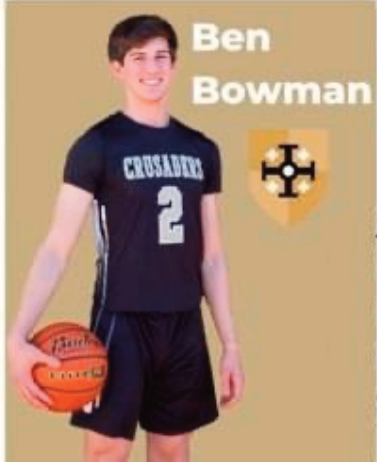
ALL-DISTRICT
Honorable Mention

TAPPS 1A District 1



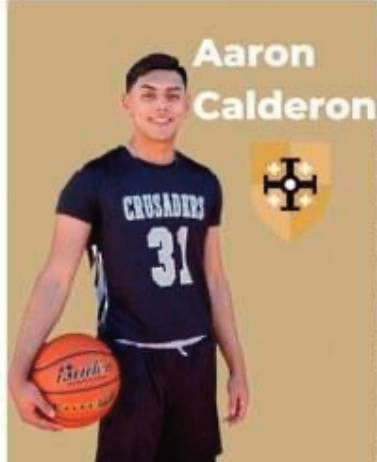
ALL-DISTRICT 1st Team
ALL-STATE Academic
OFFENSIVE Player of the year

TAPPS 1A District 1



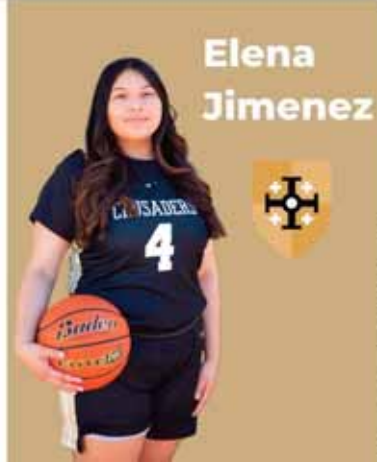
ALL-DISTRICT
1st Team

TAPPS 1A District 1



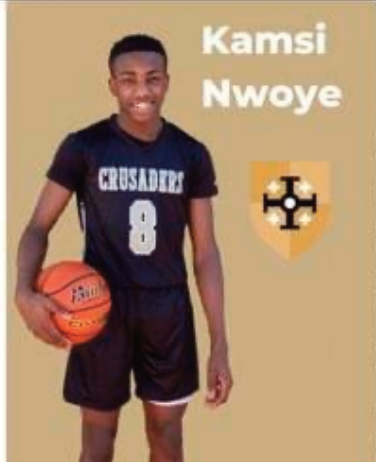
ALL-DISTRICT 2nd Team
ALL-STATE Academic

TAPPS 1A District 1



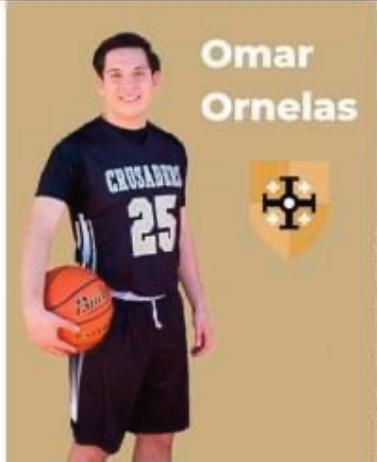
ALL-DISTRICT
2nd Team

TAPPS 1A District 1



ALL-DISTRICT
1st Team

TAPPS 1A District 1



ALL-DISTRICT 2nd Team
ALL-STATE Academic

TAPPS 1A District 1



Spring Cleanup

Calvary Cemetery

On April 29, 2023, there will be a cleanup of Calvary Cemetery in San Angelo. Cemetery personnel will remove ALL flowers as well as ALL unauthorized items, including items in vases, on or around graves and items placed in trees. Examples include, but are not limited to: borders, bricks, gravel/rocks, garden ornaments, solar lights, rosaries, wind chimes, statues, unauthorized benches, etc.

The gates to the cemetery will be locked on this day from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. Please remove anything you do not want discarded by 6 p.m., April 28, 2023.

All items that do not conform to cemetery rules will be permanently removed and disposed of without notification. We ask that you please take time to read the rules of the cemetery posted at the main entrance or on our website or Facebook page.

Calvary Cemetery
325-651-7500
sanangelodiocese.org/calvary-cemetery