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WEST TEXAS ANGELUS



Serving Catholics in the Diocese of San Angelo, Texas

Volume 44, No. 2

February 2024

10 years shepherding the Diocese of San Angelo



WEST TEXAS ANGELUS PHOTOS

Bishop Michael J. Sis celebrated the 10th anniversary of his ordination as bishop with a Mass at the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart in San Angelo Jan. 28. Bishop Sis was installed as the sixth Bishop of San Angelo Jan. 27, 2014.



From the Bishop's Desk

Calling for new deacons

The Diocese of San Angelo was one of the first to ordain deacons after the permanent diaconate was restored by the Second Vatican Council. The first ordination of permanent deacons in the Diocese of San Angelo was by Bishop Stephen A. Leven in August of 1976. I plan to ordain our current formation class in 2026. We will soon begin conducting informational sessions for those who may be called to form the next class, whose diaconal ordination should take place in 2029.

As our current deacons pour out their lives in generous service, we must always be planning for the needs of future generations of the church in West Texas. There are many parishes, missions, and entire areas in our diocese that have no deacons. This is an opportunity to make good progress toward filling those gaps in the ministry of the church.

Over the years that I have served as priest and bishop, I have seen firsthand the tremendous good that is done by deacons. My own father was a permanent deacon, and I have worked alongside wonderful deacons in every place where I have been assigned in ministry.

While deacons are often unsung heroes in our communities, they have a vital place in the life of the Catholic Church. The first person to die a martyr's death because he was a follower of Jesus Christ was the deacon St. Stephen in the first century. Some other canonized deacon saints were St. Philip, St. Lawrence, St. Ephrem, and St. Vincent. One of the most venerated religious figures in history, St. Francis of Assisi, was likely a deacon.

Our deacons touch thousands of people's lives. They help win souls for Christ. They build up the community of the church. They make a tremendous positive difference, and I am very grateful for their ministry.

Deacons function in a variety of ministries. They help equip fellow members of the church for service to the poor, the sick, the grieving, the imprisoned, the immigrants, the forgotten, and the abandoned. They reach out to people who otherwise might not be reached with the good news of Jesus Christ.

Permanent deacons have the potential to serve as



Bishop Michael J. Sis

Diocese of San Angelo

essential bridge-builders in the community, building bridges between cultures, between different groups in a parish, and between Catholics and non-Catholics. Because of their unique position as permanent deacons, they can also help build bridges between the secular world and the religious world, between the marketplace and the kingdom of God, between the ancient truths of the Catholic faith and the contemporary challenges of our society.

As ministers of the altar, deacons proclaim the Gospel, prepare the offertory gifts, and distribute the Lord's Body and Blood to the faithful in Holy Communion. Deacons share in the responsibility of evangelization and catechesis. They preside over prayers, administer baptism of children, witness marriages, bring viaticum to the dying, and preside at some funeral rites without the Mass. In a parish, the deacon is supervised by the local pastor, and the pastor determines the extent to which a deacon will preach in the liturgy.

Deacons can lead Communion services and Sunday Celebrations in the Absence of a Priest. They can preside at quinceañeras. They bless houses, vehicles, and religious objects. They help prepare couples for marriage. Some are field advocates for the marriage tribunal, assisting those who are seeking a declaration of nullity. Among other things, they are often involved in sacramental preparation, RCIA/OCIA, youth and young adult ministry, adult faith formation, prison ministry, works of charity, pro-life ministry, and visitation of the sick.

Diaconal ministry in the church is typically under-

stood to be part-time volunteer service, and it typically involves about ten to fifteen hours per week. Permanent deacons usually have a regular full-time job in the secular world. They must be gainfully employed in their own profession in order to take care of their own financial needs. In a few rare cases, deacons may have full-time employment in a parish or a diocese.

A deacon is assigned to the ministry and parish where the need is most critical. While most deacons serve at the parish level, there are some who also function in other ministries outside the parish as designated by the bishop. A deacon's assignment can be changed at any time according to the changing needs of the church. He will not always be assigned to his home parish.

A man becomes a deacon not out of personal desire, ambition, or self-interest, but rather for the common good of the church as determined by the bishop. When a man enters the diaconal formation process, it is not certain that he will become a deacon. The discernment process in the formation program is a two-way street; that is, the candidate himself must discern God's call, and the church must also discern whether this man is called to ordained ministry or to the lay apostolate. This discernment process takes place through reflection, prayer, assessment, and dialogue.

If you know anyone that you think might make a good deacon, please point it out to them, and let them know that we will soon form a new class in our diocese. Please pray for those who are considering this call.

Those who are interested in being considered to join this next class should speak first with their pastor as soon as possible. In order to be allowed to join the formation class, they need the endorsement of their local pastor.

In another article in this edition of the *West Texas Angelus*, Deacon Freddy Medina explains our formation process and the basic requirements (see Page 6). Anyone who would like more information about the ministry of permanent deacons or the upcoming formation class should contact Deacon Freddy Medina, Director of the Office of Diaconal Ministry, at 325-651-7500 or at fmedina@sanangelodiocese.org.

Spiritual oasis: Year of Prayer a needed rest stop on journey to jubilee

By Carol Glatz
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY — With little fanfare, Pope Francis officially opened the Year of Prayer after Mass for the church's celebration of Sunday of the Word of God.

"Today we begin the Year of Prayer; that is, a year dedicated to rediscovering the great value and absolute need for prayer in personal life, in the life of the church and in the world," he said, after praying the Angelus with visitors in St. Peter's Square Jan. 21.

The pope called for the special year last February to help prepare Catholics worldwide for the Holy Year, which begins with the opening of the Holy Door in St. Peter's Basilica Dec. 24.

Preparing for the jubilee is not just about the huge construction projects underway throughout Rome to help welcome and facilitate the flow of an estimated 35 million pilgrims expected for the Holy Year 2025.

The year 2024 also should be about rebuilding and renewing spiritual pathways and practices so that the spiritual significance of the jubilee can "emerge more clearly, something which goes far beyond the necessary and urgent forms of structural organization," said Archbishop Rino Fisichella, pro-prefect of the Dicastery for Evangelization's section for new evangelization, which is coordinating the Holy Year.

Speaking at a news conference Jan. 23 about the Year of Prayer, the archbishop said 2024 is about preparing the groundwork so the jubilee "spiritually enriches the life of the church and of the entire people of God, becoming a concrete sign of hope."

The jubilee must be "prepared for and lived in individual communities with that spirit of expectation which is typical of Christian hope," he said, unveiling several resources the dicastery is providing to help bishops, dioceses, parishes, families and religious com-

munities rediscover the value of and need for daily prayer.

Unlike other years designated by the pope, "this is not a year marked with particular initiatives," Archbishop Fisichella said. Rather it is a time to get back to basics: to discover how to pray and how to educate people in prayer "so that prayer can be effective and fruitful."

"It will not be a year which hinders initiatives of the local churches; rather it should be seen as a period in which every planned initiative is supported effectively, precisely because it has prayer as its foundation," he said.

When asked how the year can complement the U.S. bishops' National Eucharistic Revival underway, Msgr. Graham Bell, undersecretary of the dicastery's section for new evangelization, told Catholic News Service, "We are well pleased that the American bishops want to call attention to what Vatican II calls the source and summit of Christian life because it must be the foundation of every renewal."

Therefore, the revival initiative "is very appropriate in view of the 2025 jubilee," he said.

The dicastery will release ideas, suggestions and resources as the year continues, starting with an eight-volume series of booklets titled, "Notes on Prayer," that "delve into the various dimensions of the Christian act of praying, signed by authors of international renown," Msgr. Bell said at the news conference.

As the translations are done, the series will be made available to the world's bishops' conferences, the archbishop said.

The first volume, titled "Praying Today. A Challenge to Be Overcome," was released Jan. 23 and was written by Cardinal Angelo Comastri, retired archpriest of St. Peter's Basilica, with a preface by Pope Francis.

"Prayer is the breath of faith, it is its most proper expression. Like a silent



CNS PHOTO | LOLA GOMEZ

Pope Francis prays as he celebrates Mass for Sunday of the Word of God in St. Peter's Basilica at the Vatican, Jan. 21, 2024.

cry that comes forth from the heart of those who believe and entrust themselves to God," the pope wrote.

The other texts, to be released over the next three months, will carry titles such as "Praying with the Psalms," "The Prayer of Jesus," "Praying with Saints and Sinners," and "The Prayer Jesus Taught Us: The 'Our Father.'"

The dicastery also will send out texts and guides digitally for dioceses to integrate, modify and distribute as they see fit, Archbishop Fisichella said. The different texts will cover many possible aspects of a Christian's prayer life, including spiritual retreats, shrines and the priesthood.

In addition, he noted, Pope Francis' 38 general audience talks on prayer, given from May 6, 2020, to June 16, 2021, are available online, reflect on the various forms of prayer and contain many useful suggestions.

Pope Francis will set up a "school of

prayer" for 2024, he said. It will be similar to the pope's "Fridays of Mercy" initiative during the extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy in 2016, when he visited people on the "peripheries," including babies in a neonatal unit, a center for the blind, and a housing project.

"This will be a series of moments of encounter with specific groups of people to pray together and better understand the various forms of prayer: from thanksgiving to intercession; from contemplative prayer to the prayer of consolation; from adoration to supplication," the archbishop said.

There is "a profound need for spirituality," he said. And the Year of Prayer is meant to be "a way of fostering the relationship with the Lord, offering moments of genuine spiritual rest."

"It is like an oasis sheltered from daily stress where prayer becomes nourishment for the Christian life of faith, hope and charity," the archbishop said.

Llamado para nuevos diáconos

La Diócesis de San Ángelo fue una de las primeras en ordenar diáconos después de que el Concilio Vaticano Segundo restableciera el diaconado permanente. La primera ordenación de diáconos permanentes en la Diócesis de San Ángelo fue realizada por el Obispo Stephen A. Leven en agosto de 1976. Planeo ordenar nuestra clase de formación actual en 2026. Pronto comenzaremos a realizar sesiones informativas para aquellos que puedan ser llamados a formar la próxima clase, cuya ordenación diaconal se llevaría a cabo en 2029.

A medida que nuestros diáconos actuales derraman sus vidas en servicio generoso, siempre debemos estar planificando por las necesidades de las generaciones futuras de la iglesia en el oeste de Texas. Hay muchas parroquias, misiones, y áreas enteras de nuestra diócesis que no tienen diáconos. Esta es una oportunidad para lograr un buen progreso para llenar esos vacíos en el ministerio de la iglesia.

A lo largo de los años que he servido como sacerdote y obispo, he visto de primera mano el tremendo bien que hacen los diáconos. Mi propio padre era diácono permanente, y he trabajado junto a diáconos maravillosos en todos los lugares donde he sido asignado en el ministerio.

Mientras los diáconos son a menudo héroes anónimos en nuestras comunidades, tienen un lugar vital en la vida de la Iglesia Católica. La primera persona que murió como mártir por ser seguidor de Jesucristo fue el diácono San Esteban en el siglo primero. Algunos otros santos diáconos canonizados fueron San Felipe, San Lorenzo, San Efrén, y San Vicente. Una de las figuras religiosas más veneradas de la historia, San Francisco de Asís, probablemente era diácono.

Nuestros diáconos tocan la vida de miles de personas. Ayudan a ganar almas para Cristo. Edifican la comunidad de la iglesia. Hacen una tremenda diferencia positiva y estoy muy agradecido por su ministerio.

Los diáconos funcionan en una variedad de ministerios. Ayudan a equipar a los miembros de la iglesia para el servicio a los pobres, los enfermos, los afligidos, los encarcelados, los inmigrantes, los olvidados, y los abandonados. Llegan a personas a las que de otro modo no se les llegaría las buenas nuevas de Jesucristo.

Los diáconos permanentes tienen el potencial de



Obispo
Michael J. Sis

Diócesis de
San Ángelo

servir como constructores de puentes esenciales en la comunidad, construyendo puentes entre culturas, entre diferentes grupos en una parroquia y entre católicos y no católicos. Debido a su posición única como diáconos permanentes, también pueden ayudar a construir puentes entre el mundo secular y el mundo religioso, entre el mercado y el reino de Dios, entre las antiguas verdades de la fe católica y los desafíos contemporáneos de nuestra sociedad.

Como ministros del altar, los diáconos proclaman el Evangelio, preparan las ofrendas, y distribuyen el Cuerpo y la Sangre del Señor a los fieles en la Sagrada Comunión. Los diáconos comparten la responsabilidad de la evangelización y la catequesis. Presiden oraciones, administran el bautismo de niños, presencian matrimonios, llevan viático a los moribundos, y presiden algunos ritos funerarios sin la Misa. En una parroquia, el diácono es supervisado por el párroco local, y el párroco determina hasta qué punto un diácono predicará en la liturgia.

Los diáconos pueden dirigir los servicios de Comunión y las celebraciones dominicales en ausencia de un sacerdote. Pueden presidir quinceañeras. Bendicen casas, vehículos, y objetos religiosos. Ayudan a preparar a las parejas para el matrimonio. Algunos son consejeros de campo para el tribunal matrimonial ayudando a quienes buscan una declaración de nulidad. Entre otras cosas, a menudo participan en la preparación sacramental, RICA/OICA, ministerio de jóvenes y adultos jóvenes, formación de fe para adultos, ministerio para encarcelados, obras de caridad, ministerio provida, y visitas a los enfermos.

El ministerio diaconal en la iglesia generalmente se entiende como un servicio voluntario a tiempo parcial y, por lo general, implica entre diez y quince horas por

semana. Los diáconos permanentes suelen tener un trabajo regular de tiempo completo en el mundo secular. Deben tener un empleo remunerado en su propia profesión para poder atender sus propias necesidades financieras. En algunos casos raros, los diáconos pueden tener un empleo de tiempo completo en una parroquia o diócesis.

Se asigna un diácono al ministerio y parroquia donde la necesidad es más crítica. Mientras la mayoría de los diáconos sirven a nivel parroquial, hay algunos que también funcionan en otros ministerios fuera de la parroquia según lo designado por el obispo. La asignación de un diácono puede cambiarse en cualquier momento de acuerdo con las necesidades cambiantes de la iglesia. No siempre será asignado a su parroquia de origen.

Un hombre se convierte en diácono no por deseo personal, ambición o interés propio, sino más bien por el bien común de la iglesia según lo determine el obispo. Cuando un hombre entra en el proceso de formación diaconal, no es seguro que llegue a ser diácono. El proceso de discernimiento en el programa de formación es un camino de doble sentido; es decir, el candidato mismo debe discernir el llamado de Dios, y la iglesia también debe discernir si este hombre está llamado al ministerio ordenado o al apostolado laico. Este proceso de discernimiento se lleva a cabo a través de la reflexión, la oración, la evaluación, y el diálogo.

Si conoce a alguien que crea que podría ser un buen diácono, dígame y hágale saber que pronto formaremos una nueva clase en nuestra diócesis. Por favor ore por aquellos que están considerando este llamado.

Aquellos que estén interesados en ser considerados para unirse a esta próxima clase deben hablar primero con su párroco lo más antes posible. Para poder unirse a la clase de formación, necesitan el respaldo de su párroco local.

En otro artículo de esta edición del Ángelus del Oeste de Texas, el diácono Freddy Medina explica nuestro proceso de formación y los requisitos básicos (véase Página 6). Cualquiera que desee obtener más información sobre el ministerio de diáconos permanentes o la próxima clase de formación debe comunicarse con el Diácono Freddy Medina, Director de la Oficina del Ministerio Diaconal, al 325-651-7500 o a fmedina@sanangelodiocese.org.

La ira destruye las relaciones y le echa la culpa a los demás, dice el Papa

Por Carol Glatz
Catholic News Service

CIUDAD DEL VATICANO — La ira es un "vicio particularmente tenebroso" que destruye las relaciones, echa toda la culpa en los demás y sólo empeora con el tiempo, dijo el Papa Francisco.

"Es capaz de quitarnos el sueño y de hacernos maquinara continuamente en nuestra mente, sin que logremos encontrar una barrera para los razonamientos y pensamientos" porque la ira nubla completamente el pensamiento claro y se acumula incesantemente sin piedad, dijo el Papa el 31 de enero en su audiencia general semanal en el Aula de Audiencias Pablo VI.

Continuando con una serie de catequesis sobre los vicios y las virtudes, el Papa reflexionó sobre el vicio de la ira.

"Si nace de una injusticia padecida (o considerada como tal), a menudo no se desata contra el culpable, sino contra el primer desafortunado con el que uno se encuentra", dijo, poniendo como ejemplo a personas que "contienen su ira en el lugar de trabajo", pero luego la desatan en casa contra su cónyuge y sus hijos.

La ira "destruye las relaciones humanas. Expresa la incapacidad de aceptar la diversidad del otro, especialmente cuando sus opciones vitales difieren de las nuestras", afirmó.

Cuando alguien está dominado por la ira, dijo el Papa,

"siempre, siempre dice que el problema está en la otra persona; nunca es capaz de reconocer sus propios defectos, sus propias faltas".

San Pablo recomienda a los cristianos afrontar el problema de inmediato e intentar la reconciliación antes de que acabe el día, dijo el Papa, citando la Carta del apóstol a los Efesios (4, 26) "No permitan que la noche los sorprenda enojado".

"No hay que entregar la noche al diablo", dijo el Papa, repitiendo que es importante que cualquier malentendido se gestione antes de que acabe el día, ya que este vicio nos puede mantener "despiertos en la oscuridad, rumiando nuestras razones y los errores incalificables que nunca son nuestros y siempre del otro".

"En el Padre nuestro, Jesús nos hace orar por nuestras relaciones humanas, que son un terreno minado: un plano que nunca está en equilibrio perfecto", dijo.

"Todos somos pecadores, todos", con deudas pendientes o "delitos" cometidos y experimentados a lo largo de la vida, dijo.

"Por lo tanto, todos tenemos que aprender a perdonar" en la medida de lo humanamente posible, dijo. "Lo que contrarresta la ira es la benevolencia, la amplitud de corazón, la mansedumbre, la paciencia".

Sin embargo, dijo el Papa, "no todo lo que nace de la ira es malo".

"No somos responsables de la ira en su surgimiento,

pero sí siempre en su desarrollo", afirmó.

A veces "es bueno que la ira se desahogue de la manera adecuada", dijo. "Existe una santa indignación", especialmente ante una injusticia, pero no es ira.

Jesús la sintió varias veces en su vida, pero "nunca respondió al mal con el mal", dijo el Papa.


Cuando entró en el templo y expulsó a los mercaderes y volcó las mesas de los cambistas, Jesús "realizó una acción fuerte y profética, dictada no por la ira, sino por el celo por la casa del Señor", dijo.

"Debemos distinguir bien" que es la santa indignación, dijo, de lo malo, que es la ira, y rezar para gobernar correctamente las propias pasiones, "educarlas bien para que se dirijan hacia el bien, y no hacia el mal".

El Papa recordó también que el 31 de enero es la fiesta de San Juan Bosco.

En sus saludos a los visitantes en otros idiomas, el Papa destacó la obra del santo italiano del siglo XIX, diciendo que ayudó a muchos jóvenes en sus dificultades y, con su celo apostólico, los llevó a Cristo. "Seamos también nosotros testigos ante los jóvenes de que Cristo quiere entrar en nuestras vidas para llenarlas de la alegría que sólo Él puede dar".

Invitó a imitar al santo, "educando a los jóvenes en la fe y formándolos en las distintas ciencias y profesiones, para un futuro mejor en el que la humanidad pueda gozar de paz, fraternidad y tranquilidad".




**Misa de Obispos
de la Frontera Tex-Mex**

Jueves, 29 de febrero de 2024 - 6:30 p.m.
Catedral del Sagrado Corazón
20 E. Beauregard Avenue
San Ángelo, Texas

Vengan a una Misa en español con los obispos católicos de las diócesis de la frontera de México y Texas. Todos son bienvenidos.

Para más información:
Lupe Castillo a 325-651-7500
lcastillo@sanangelodiocese.org



CALENDARS

Please pray for our clergy



February

- 1

Deacon Dan Shannahan (B)
- 2

Rev. Francis Onyekozuru (B)
- 2

Deacon Pedro Sanchez (D — 2013)
- 5

Deacon David King (D — 2006)
- 5

Deacon John Rangel (B)
- 6

Deacon Ignacio Cisneros (D — 2016)
- 7

Deacon Pete Madrid (B)
- 8

Deacon Thomas Flores (B)
- 9

Rev. Albert Fuytinck, CSSR (D — 1997)
- 10

Rev. Terry Brenon (B)
- 10

Rev. Leo E. Lavoie (1978) – D
- 11

Rev. Bernardito Getigan (B)
- 11

Deacon Ray Smith (D — 2014)
- 14

Rev. Martin Hubbs (B)
- 15

Deacon Victor Belman (B)
- 15

Rev. Frank Colacicco (D — 2006)
- 16

Rev. Msgr. Larry Droll (B)
- 19

Deacon Bobby Porras (B)
- 20

Deacon Mark Reeh (D — 2005)
- 20

Deacon Sador Sotelo (B)
- 22

Rev. Francisco Lopez (D — 1994)
- 22

Rev. Ed DeLeon, OMI (D — 2017)
- 23

Rev. Kizito Okhuoya (O — 1996)
- 26

Rev. Mamachan Joseph (B)
- 28

Rev. Lawrence Underdonk (D —2004)
- 29

Rev. Msgr. Bernard Gully (B)

March

- 1

Deacon Johnny Rodriguez (B)
- 3

Rev. Joshua Gray (B)
- 5

Deacon Antonio Gonzales (B)
- 7

Deacon Victor Ramirez (B)
- 10

Rev. Arockiaraj Gali (D — 2021)
- 10

Rev. Stephen Kennelly (D — 2017)
- 10

Deacon Charles Lambert (B)
- 10

Deacon Bonifacio Rodriguez (D — 2017)
- 11

Deacon William Brady (B)
- 11

Deacon Albert Libertore (D — 1977)
- 12

Deacon Fred Greene (B)
- 14

Rev. George Fey CPPS (D — 2013)
- 15

Deacon Cosme Ureta (D — 2011)
- 15

Rev. Msgr. Benedict Zientek (D — 2023)
- 17

Deacon Allan Lange (B)
- 21

Deacon Frank Trudo (D — 1992)
- 23

Rev. Paul Kodakarakaran (B)
- 25

Rev. Anthony Sloan (O — 2000)
- 26

Deacon Audon Saldivar (D — 2000)
- 26

Rev. Serran Braun (D — 1999)
- 26

Rev. Kevin Lenius (B)
- 26

Deacon Steve Zimmerman (B)
- 27

Rev. Prem Thumma (B)
- 28

Deacon Alexander Perez (B)
- 30

Rev. Freddy Perez (B)
- 31

Deacon Alexander Chick (B)
- 31

Deacon Harry Pelto (B)
- 31

Rev. Santiago Udayar (O — 1989)

B = Birthday | O = Date of Ordination
D = Date of Death
(Dates of birth and ordination given for living clergy; date of death for deceased.)



Bishop’s Calendar

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

February 2024

- 1

SAN ANGELO, Diocesan Pastoral Center, Presbyteral Council meeting at 11:00 a.m.
- 2

ODESSA, Marriott, Catholic Charities Banquet of Hope at 6:00 p.m.
- 3

BIG SPRING, Holy Trinity, SEARCH Retreat at 8:15 a.m.
- 3

MIDLAND, Petroleum Club, St. Ann’s Mardi Gras at 6:00 p.m.
- 4

CARLSBAD, St. Therese, Installation of Pastor Fr. Joe Barbieri at 9:00 a.m.
- 4

SAN ANGELO, Newman Center, Mass at 12 noon
- 5–7

IRVING, National Catholic Bioethics Center Bishops’ Workshop
- 8

SAN ANGELO, Diocesan Pastoral Center, Liturgical Commission meeting at 1:00 p.m.
- 9

MIDLAND, St. Ann, Knights of Columbus Clergy Ap-
preciation Dinner at 6:30 p.m.
- 10

ODESSA, Marriott, Knights of Columbus Casino Night at 7:00 p.m.
- 14

MIDLAND, Dollye Neal Chapel at Midland College, Ash Wednesday Mass at 12:30 p.m.
- 14

ODESSA, Multipurpose Room in Mesa Building at UTPB, Ash Wednesday Mass at 3:00 p.m.
- 17

ABILENE, Holy Family, Diocesan Men’s Conference
- 18

SAN ANGELO, Sacred Heart Cathedral, Rite of Elec-
tion at 2:30 p.m.
- 18

SAN ANGELO, Christ the King Retreat Center, Project Andrew Dinner at 6:00 p.m.
- 19

SAN ANGELO, Christ the King Retreat Center, Diocesan Mission Council meeting at 4:00 p.m.
- 20

SAN ANGELO, Diocesan Pastoral Center, Priest Per-
sonnel Board meeting at 11:00 a.m.
- 21–22

BOERNE, Catholic Leadership Institute meeting for bishops
- 24

MIDLAND, St. Ann, Mass at 5:00 p.m.
- 24

MIDLAND, Petroleum Club, Meeting of Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre at 6:30 p.m.
- 25

MIDLAND, St. Stephen, Mass at 10:00 a.m.
- 25

MIDLAND, San Miguel, Rite of Election at 2:30 p.m.
- 28–March 1

SAN ANGELO, Christ the King Retreat Center, Tex-Mex Border Bishops meeting

March 2024

- 4–8

SAN ANGELO, Christ the King Retreat Center, Annual Priests’ Retreat
- 7

SAN ANGELO, McNease Convention Center, Guada-
lupe Radio Network Fishers of Men Dinner at 6:00 p.m.
- 8–10

SAN ANGELO, Christ the King Retreat Center, Dia-
conal Formation weekend
- 14

SAN ANGELO, Diocesan Pastoral Center, Presbyteral Council meeting at 11:00 a.m.
- 16

GREENWOOD, St. Rita of Cascia, Dedication of new church at 10:00 a.m.
- 16

SAN ANGELO, St. Margaret, Mass at 5:00 p.m.
- 17

SAN ANGELO, St. Margaret, Masses at 8:00 a.m. (Spanish) and 10:00 a.m. (English)
- 18

SAN ANTONIO, Mexican American Catholic College, Texas Catholic Conference of Bishops Spring meeting
- 21

SAN ANGELO, Diocesan Pastoral Center, Priest Per-
sonnel Board meeting at 11:00 a.m.
- 21

MIDLAND, St. Ann, Adult Confirmation Mass at 7:00 p.m.
- 22

SAN ANGELO, Diocesan Pastoral Center, Finance Council meeting at 11:00 a.m.
- 22

MIDLAND, The Way Retreat Center, Project Andrew Dinner at 6:00 p.m.
- 23

SAN ANGELO, Sacred Heart Cathedral, Palm Sunday Procession and Mass at 4:00 p.m.
- 24

SAN ANGELO, Sacred Heart Cathedral, Palm Sunday Procession and Spanish Mass at 12:00 noon
- 24

SAN ANGELO, Holy Angels, Seder Meal at 5:30 p.m.
- 26

SAN ANGELO, Sacred Heart Cathedral, Chrism Mass at 11:00 a.m.
- 26

SAN ANGELO, Diocesan Pastoral Center, Deans’ meeting at 1:30 p.m.
- 28

SAN ANGELO, Sacred Heart Cathedral, Mass of the Lord’s Supper at 6:30 p.m.
- 29

SAN ANGELO, St. Margaret, Procession and Stations of the Cross at 12:00 noon
- 29

SAN ANGELO, Sacred Heart Cathedral, Service of the Passion at 6:30 p.m.
- 30

SAN ANGELO, Sacred Heart Cathedral, Easter Vigil at 8:30 p.m.
- 31

SAN ANGELO, Goodfellow Air Force Base, Mass at 9:00 a.m.
- 31

SAN ANGELO, Sacred Heart Cathedral, Easter Sun-
day Spanish Mass at 12:00 noon



Christ the King Retreat Center

February 2024

- 9–11

Deacon Formation
- 12

Heart of Mercy Prayer Group
- 16–18

Engaged Encounter
- 18

Natural Family Planning
- 18

Project Andrew
- 22–25

Men’s Small Town ACTS
- 26

Heart of Mercy Prayer Group
- 28–Mar 1

Tex Mex Border Bishops

March 2024

- 4–8

DOSA Priests’ Annual Retreat
- 8–10

Deacon Formation
- 11

Heart of Mercy Prayer Group
- 13

Pastoral Staff Lenten Day of Reflection
- 14–17

Men’s Walk to Emmaus
- 20

Staff Meeting, Mass & Lunch
- 22–24

Engaged Encounter w/ NFP
- 25

Heart of Mercy Prayer Group
- 29

Closed in Observance of Good Friday

Special Collections

Aid to the Church in Central & Eastern Europe, Latin America, and Solidarity with Africa — Feb. 14, 2024

Your gift to the Collection for the Church in Central and Eastern Europe makes a difference for those living in former communist countries.

Catholics in the United States will have an opportunity to show solidarity and share their faith by giving to the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops’ (USCCB) annual Collection for the Church in Latin America next month. Last year, the collection delivered more than \$6.5 million in grants to help people who reside in regions where poverty, political and religious persecution, and other hardships make it difficult for the church to support itself.

Catholics in the United States have an opportunity to support spiritually vibrant ministries in some of the world’s most impoverished regions through the U.S. bishops’ collection for the Solidarity Fund for the Church in Africa. This annual collection helps African bishops’ conferences and regional associations of conferences expand pastoral ministry and evangelization, improve church administration, prepare more people for church leadership, and even to help end conflicts.

Black & Indian Missions/Catholic Extension Society — Feb. 18, 2024

Mandated by the III Plenary Council in 1884, the National Collection for Black and Indian people continues as the embodiment of the church’s concern for evangelizing the Black and Indian peoples of the United States. The funds are distributed as grants to dioceses throughout the United States, supporting and strengthening evangelization programs which otherwise would cease.

Catholic Extension works in solidarity with people to build up vibrant and transformative Catholic faith communities among the poor in the poorest regions of America.

Operation Rice Bowl, sponsored by Catholic Relief Services — Lent, Feb. 14 – March 28

Be sure to pick up a Rice Bowl from your parish to collect donations for Catholic Relief Services during Lent.

Annual awards banquet to be held April 14

The Office of Evangelization and Catechesis for the Diocese of San Angelo will be hosting the Annual Diocesan Awards Banquet at Sacred Heart Parish in Abilene on April 14, 2024, from 12:30 to 3:30 p.m. This banquet recognizes the commitment and dedicated service of catechetical and youth ministry leaders and young people of the diocese. The event will include a meal, a speaker, and the presentation of awards and certificates. The cost per person is \$30. All participants are invited to attend the 11:30 a.m. Mass at Sacred Heart Parish in Abilene.

A certificate of appreciation will be presented to the director of religious education, coordinator of religious education, coordinator of youth ministry, and scout leader from each parish/mission present.

The Office of Evangelization and Catechesis will recognize one catechetical leader and one youth ministry leader with the Companions on the Journey Award for their commitment and service to their ministry. Adults can be nominated by pastor, parish staff, or parishioners. Nominations must be endorsed by the pastor.

One youth (grades 7–10) will be recognized with the Timothy Award for their exceptional witness of the faith and leadership in their communities. One youth (grades 11–12) will be recognized with the Christus Vivit award for the ways they have helped bring Christ to life in their parish, school, and local community. Youth must be nominated by pastor, DRE, CRE, or CYM. All youth nominated for the Timothy Award and the Christus Vivit Award will receive a certificate of recognition.

Any religious awards or emblems earned by any young person participating in Scouting will be presented. Scout leaders should contact the office as soon as possible to ensure medals/patches/emblems are obtained in time for the event.

Registration and nomination forms have been emailed to pastors, directors of religious education, coordinators of religious education, and coordinators of youth ministry. If you need the forms emailed again, please contact the Office of Evangelization and Catechesis at evangelizationcatechesis@sanangelodiocese.org. The deadline for registration and nomination submissions is April 5, 2024.

The Catechist Corner on Lent

By Alison Pope
Director of Evangelization and Catechesis

Lent is a 40-day season of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving that begins on Ash Wednesday and ends at sundown on Holy Thursday. It is a time of preparation to celebrate the Lord’s resurrection at Easter.

Fasting is not just about abstaining from meat on Fridays during Lent but is also a call to practice self-discipline and fast in other ways. For many, this means giving up something during Lent. Some will give up chocolate or soft drinks. Others will give up listening to the radio in the car or using a pillow. No matter what we sacrifice, we must remember that this act is not about losing weight but is about removing something from our lives that takes away our focus and dependence on God.

We are also called to focus more intently on giving alms during Lent. This means donating money or goods to the poor and performing other acts of charity. There are countless ways to offer your time, talent, and treasure to needy individuals and organizations. You can participate in the CRS Rice Bowl, volunteer with a local Catholic charitable service or St. Vincent de Paul society, or give generously to any of the special collections taken during the Lenten season.

During Lent, we should be more intentional about prayer and even increase our time spent in prayer. We should especially be spending time praying for the individuals who are preparing to come into the church through the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults.

As catechists, we should especially be taking advantage of this liturgical season to encourage our families to fully enter into Lent at home. We can share with them a variety of Lenten resources. We have already mentioned the CRS Rice Bowl. If your parish does not already offer these, you can visit <https://www.crsricebowl.org> to find more information on how to participate.

The USCCB (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops) has a variety of Lenten resources available, including a daily Lent Calendar in both English and Spanish. All of their resources can be found at <https://www.usccb.org/prayer-worship/liturgical-year/lent>.

Do you have a way to communicate with all the parents of your students? If so, you could send out a daily Scripture verse taken from the daily Mass readings and encourage them to read the verse as a family and spend time praying together. You can find the daily Mass readings at <https://bible.usccb.org/readings/calendar>

Another option for encouraging families to pray and reflect together is to provide them with a copy of a resource such as Celebrating Sunday for Catholic Families. This is available in both English and Spanish. It has the Gospel for each Sunday (September–August), as well as a reflection and discussion questions for each week. For this resource, visit <https://www.ltp.org/products/details/CSCF24/celebrating-sunday-for-catholic-families-2023-2024>

As a parish, we can also use Lent as an opportunity to welcome those who have fallen away from the faith. Rather than get annoyed when our parking lots and pews are filled for Ash Wednesday and angry that somebody has taken “our” spot, we should celebrate the fact that somebody new is seeking out a connection to the faith.

As catechists, we should especially strive to help our families to live in a rhythm that follows the liturgical year. Lent is one of those seasons that lends itself well to helping families to make a connection between their daily life and the liturgical season.

The Catechist Corner is a social media initiative of the Office of Evangelization and Catechesis with the goal of providing weekly content focused on prayer and reflections, highlighting publishers and partnered organizations, providing updates on upcoming and ongoing events, and introducing resources to help catechetical and youth ministry leaders in their respective ministries.

We would also like to encourage you to take an active part in The Catechist Corner by contributing the following if you are interested and able:

- *A Prayer and Reflection to be released on the second Wednesday of each month. Submissions for each month are due on the first Friday of the month.*
- *Any upcoming or ongoing events happening in your area that fall under catechetical or youth ministry. These announcements will be released every Friday on the week that they are submitted.*
- *Any photos or videos of events that happened in your area that fall under catechetical or youth ministry. These will be released every Monday in the week following their submission.*

You can submit any of the above content contributions by emailing us directly at evangelizationcatechesis@sanangelodiocese.org or by messaging us through our social media pages at:

- *Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/dosaoec>*
- *Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/dosa_oec/*

It is our hope that The Catechist Corner can help to create a collaborative space for everyone taking part in catechetical and youth ministry and provide a glimpse for leaders of parish life across the diocese.

Meet the keynote speaker: Kevin Pantoja

Kevin Pantoja grew up in the small town of Roscoe, Texas, and attended Mass at the Immaculate Heart of Mary Church in Sweetwater. After high school, Kevin attended Abilene Christian University where he majored in accounting, business management and financial management. From there he earned his master’s degree in public administration from the University of North Texas. Currently Kevin is the Staff Accountant and Supervisor for the Grants Team at the Abilene-Taylor County Public Health District.

Additionally, Kevin is a member of Holy Family Parish in Abilene where he serves on the parish council, serves as the founding Grand Knight of the newly established Holy Family Knights of Columbus Council and serves as the District Marshal for the Our Lady of Guadalupe District of 4th Degree Knights of Columbus. Kevin enjoys volunteering in his community with several non-profits including the Abilene Hispanic Leadership Council and serves as a sponsor for the Frater Sodalitas social club at ACU.

Kevin loves and is proud of his Catholic faith. He enjoys teaching and introducing others to Catholicism, praying the rosary, learning about the saints, and studying Eastern Catholicism and traditions of the church.

Roman Catholic Diocese of San Angelo

Office of Evangelization and Catechesis

Directors of Religious Education

Coordinators of Religious Education

Coordinators of Youth Ministry

Youth

Scouts

Diocesan Annual Awards Banquet

April 14, 2024

12:30-3:30 p.m. | Mass @ 11:30 a.m.

Sacred Heart Parish, Abilene

Keynote Speaker

Kevin Pantoja

Keynote Speaker



Awards for Nomination

Companion on the Journey Award (Adult Leaders)

St. Timothy Award (Grades 7-10)

Christus Vivit Award (Grades 11-12)

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).

The permanent diaconate

By Deacon Freddy Medina

Since the beginning of our church, deacons have fulfilled the ministry of service. The original disciples discovered early on that the Hellenist widows' needs were overlooked in the daily distribution. "Therefore, the apostles stopped what they were doing, gathered as a group, prayed, and invented deacons" (Pope Francis, 2015). The Holy Spirit inspired the apostles to establish the Order of Deacons, then inspired "the whole multitude" to determine whom to select, and finally inspired the seven men asked to serve as "deacons" to accept the task of serving those in need.

Deacons, like presbyters (priests), have been selected after much prayer and discernment by the individual and the community they will serve. In 1 Timothy 5:22, the presbyters are told, "Do not lay hands too readily on anyone."

In the Diocese of San Angelo, the formation process consists of two three-year stages: the Inquiry/Aspirancy stage and the Candidacy stage. In each stage, the four dimensions or specific areas in formation — human, spiritual, intellectual, and pastoral — are always essential. One who will serve as a deacon requires a formation that promotes the development of the whole person. Therefore, the four dimensions, during formation, should be so interrelated that each participant's objectives should be integrated into their life and ministry.

The Inquiry/Aspirancy stage is the initial phase where one focuses on discerning his calling to serve in the church. Often, individuals display a sense of service in their parish and to others in their community. As a result, their pastor, friends, or even their spouse may ask if they have considered becoming a deacon. The Inquiry/Aspirancy stage aims to help them discern where they are being called to serve within the vineyard of the Lord. It is important to note that while many men may feel called to serve the Lord, it may not necessarily be in the permanent diaconate.

The church recognizes two sacraments of service: holy matrimony and holy orders. It is crucial to understand that neither sacrament should conflict with the other. Therefore, if a man undergoing formation is married, he must continue discussing with his wife how the formation process affects them both. The continued dialogue will help ensure a successful process and prevent any negative impact on their relationship.

Moreover, the wife needs to attend the formation alongside her husband so that they may grow equally in all aspects of the formation, especially in the human and spiritual dimensions. Together, the couple will discern if the man is called to the permanent diaconate.

During the Inquiry/Aspirancy stage (years 1–3), the couple must attend one Saturday a month in formation. The emphasis is, of course, inquiry of the permanent diaconate, discernment, and the tools necessary to discern one's calling. This initial stage prepares them for the following years of more intensive study of sacred Scripture and its content as the source of doctrine and Catholic living, as well as a more profound knowledge of the faith and the Word of God.

During the Candidacy Stage (years 4–6), the setting changes from a single day to a weekend at the retreat center. The man confirms his diaconal vocation and prepares for ordination. His wife, who is highly encouraged to attend monthly, will have several required weekends yearly.

As a candidate, the man advances into and through the ministries of lector and acolyte in preparation for ordination. Throughout the stage, he is provided the tools necessary to prepare himself to serve our Lord and the people of God. Each of the three years is dedicated to one of the threefold ministries of the deacon: Word, liturgy, and charity.

The candidates are formed by prayer, knowledge, and a hands-on practicum in each ministry.

Throughout the six years, the individual, and to some extent his wife and family, are observed, evaluated, and scrutinized to assist them in their discernment of the calling.

Deacons and their wives best describe diaconal formation as a period of discovery, fellowship, joy, and struggle. They recall it as a period of immense spiritual growth and entry into a family with solid and lasting ties

forged as they journeyed together to discern God's calling. Couples who determine that their calling lies elsewhere in the vineyard of the Lord describe the period as one of growth in understanding each other and the Lord and increasing their knowledge of the church's teachings and their abilities to serve the church and others.

Our diocese has 45 parishes and 21 missions. We have 66 active deacons serving in 28 parishes, which leaves 17 parishes without a deacon. Of the 66 active deacons, eight are older than the retirement age of 75. Like the early church, we find ourselves in need of more ministers to serve the people. Therefore, the goal of the Office of Diaconal Ministry is to start a new class every three years.

If you want to inquire about the permanent diaconate, you should first speak with your wife (if married) and decide if it is a good time to ask about it. If you agree, you should schedule an appointment with your pastor to discuss the possibility of being called to the permanent diaconate. If he agrees, you should contact the Office of Diaconal Ministry and fill out an Inquiry Registration Form, found at <https://sanangelodiocese.org/diaconal-ministry>.

The first gathering for inquirers of the Deacon Class of 2029 will be at 10:00 am on March 9, 2024, at Christ the King Retreat Center in San Angelo; the first session of the Inquiry Period for the Class of 2029 begins at 10:00 am on April 11, 2024.

The basic requirements to be accepted into formation are:

- Have the willingness to make a life-long commitment to service in the church. The applicant will be asked to assure that, if he is ordained, he will serve in the diocese for the foreseeable future.
- Be in good standing in the church, having been a member for not less than five years and lived within the Diocese of San Angelo not less than five years.
- Have the support of his wife and his pastor in writing.
- Be between the minimum age for an applicant, 30, and the maximum age of 55.
- If single, be committed to celibacy after ordination.
- If married, be committed to celibacy after ordination should his wife die before him.
- Be a citizen of the United States of America or a Permanent Resident holding a valid "Green Card."
- Have stable employment and a fiscally sound financial history.
- Be without a criminal record.
- Be of sufficient mental and physical health to complete a minimum of six years of formation and, after ordination, serve in an active capacity for at least ten years.
- Possess a minimum of a high school diploma and be capable of college-level studies.
- Be able to read, write, and speak the English language. During formation, papers may be written and submitted in Spanish (if approved) if the applicant's first language is not English.
- Marital Status: Married or single men are eligible. If married, they must be validly married by the church for a number of years, be living examples of the sacrament, and provide evidence of a stable and growing marriage. The bishop determines individual cases. They must also understand the commitment to celibacy if single, or if they are married, the commitment to celibacy if their spouse dies.
- If any annulments are required (for the applicant or wife), they must have been received before applying for admission to formation.
- If widowed and not remarried, at least three years must have elapsed before admission into the formation program.
- If divorced and not remarried, at least five years must have elapsed, and you must obtain an annulment before admission into the formation program.
- If applicable, must be current on any child support payments.
- Provide their families with adequate quality time as husbands, fathers, and sons (without burdening their wives) during formation.
- Possess a significant history of active parish pastoral ministry participation.
- Be committed to serving the Diocese of


I AM A DEACON.

¿De qué manera el vivir la vida de un diácono trae gozo a usted y a sus seres queridos?

“ El mayor gozo en mi vida de Diacono es saber que mi familia participa y que a través de mi servir, toda mi familia es bendecida, también es muy importante para mí, saber balancear mi vida de Diacono, de Esposo y de Padre. Sabiendo que mi ministerio principal es: mi Familia. ”


JOEL GUTIERREZ
St. Lawrence
Garden City

AND A CONSTRUCTION WORKER



ARE YOU CALLED?


FOR MORE INFORMATION:
Office of Diaconal Ministry
Deacon Freddy Medina • 325-651-7500
deaconoffice@sanangelodiocese.org



ARE YOU CALLED?

DISCERN THE VOCATION OF

DEACON



“ How does living the life of a deacon bring joy to you and your loved ones? Being a deacon brings joy to EVERY aspect of your life. It makes me a better father, husband and friend. Being a deacon brings you into contact with more of God's people, this is a wonderful gift that exposes you more to the beauty and joy that is God's family. ”

DIOCESE OF SAN ANGELO | OFFICE OF DIACONAL MINISTRY


DEACON FORMATION

ABOUT US

God calls every person to a vocation. Deacons are empowered to serve the People of God. The ministry of the deacon is service. That service is exercised in three distinct areas: Word, Liturgy, and Charity. Discerning whether you have a vocation to the diaconate is a multi-year process because it takes time to understand what God is calling you to do with your life.

The discernment process involves learning about the ministry of the deacon, growth in prayer life, continued reception of the sacraments (Eucharist and Penance), meeting with a spiritual advisor, demonstrating the qualities of being a deacon, informed consent by your spouse (if married), and support of your pastor.

CONTACT US
Deacon Freddy Medina • 325-651-7500
deaconoffice@sanangelodiocese.org
www.sanangelodiocese.org/diaconal-ministry



The newest deacon candidates for the Diocese of San Angelo



WEST TEXAS ANGELUS

Bishop Michael Sis accepted 12 men as candidates for holy orders during a Mass at the Cathedral Church of the Sacred Heart in San Angelo Jan. 6, 2024. The men will continue to discern a call to the diaconate over the next three years. Back row: Alvin Navarette of Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish in Midland, Juan Gallegos of Holy Redeemer Parish in Odessa, Deacon David Workman, Bishop Michael Sis, Deacon Freddy Medina, Javier Lopez-Morales of St. Stephen Parish in Midland, and Mike McEligot of St. Margaret of Scotland Parish in San Angelo. Middle row: Cody Wilson of St. Thomas Mission in Midkiff, Barry Triche of Holy Family Parish in Abilene, Steve Klein of St. Joseph Parish in Stanton, and Jimmy Hernandez of Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish in Fort Stockton. Front row: altar server (and son of Cody Wilson) Zachary Wilson, Phillip Ward of Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish in Midland, Stephen Valdez of Sacred Heart Parish in Abilene, Randy Hunt of St. Ann Parish in Midland, and Jerry Jimenez of St. Ann Parish in Sonora. Not pictured is Ed Brandecker of Holy Family Parish in Abilene, who was not present and will be officially accepted into candidacy at a later date.

A divine connection: Sterling and Laci’s journey at Angelo State University’s Catholic Newman Center



Laci and Sterling Eckert

COURTESY

By Mercedes Rassi

In the heart of Angelo State University (ASU), Sterling and Laci Eckert found more than just academic pursuits — they discovered a profound sense of purpose and love at the ASU Catholic Newman Center. Their journey, rooted in faith and community, serves as a compelling testament to the transformative power of Catholic organizations on college campuses.

Choosing ASU and the Catholic Newman Center

Hailing from Nazareth, Texas, Laci chose ASU for its smaller, close-knit community, seeking a balance between distance and familiarity. During orientation, her parents introduced her to the ASU Newman Center, a decision that would shape her college experience. Sterling, a San Angelo native, was drawn to ASU for its renowned physical therapy program. Eventually, he found his way to the Newman Center through family recommendations and a curiosity about deepening his Catholic faith.

Meeting Through Faith

The ASU Newman Center became a beacon for spiritual growth for both Laci and Sterling. Laci found a close group of friends who would encourage and accompany her as she grew in her faith through the sacraments offered at the Newman Center. Sterling found intellectual stimulation and motivation to understand his faith in a more profound way, surrounded by men who also sought knowledge and truth.

Providentially, the Catholic Newman Center became the meeting ground for Sterling and Laci. Their paths officially crossed at the SEEK conference in Indianapolis in 2019, facilitated by the FOCUS missionaries. As they delved into talks, adoration, confession, and daily Mass, a deep friendship blossomed between Sterling and Laci. Eventually, both young adults discerned that the

Lord was leading them toward an exclusive relationship that would eventually blossom during the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Discerning Marriage

Given all they had learned at the Newman Center, the couple approached dating with a profound sense of purpose and discernment. The Newman Center instilled a deep understanding of virtue in Sterling’s life, and because of this he was able to understand and pray about his specific role in marriage as a Catholic husband. Similarly, Laci, after a mission trip in 2020, discerned Sterling as her future spouse during an enlightening moment in the adoration chapel where she felt God whisper to her, “he is the one.” Both credit the Newman Center for fostering an environment where prayer and discernment were integral to their relationship and its development into a Catholic marriage.

Spiritual Growth Beyond College

As graduates and newlyweds navigating the real world, Sterling and Laci continue to reap the benefits of their Newman Center experiences. Sterling, equipped with a strong connection to prayer, emphasizes the importance of seeking Christ regardless of life’s twists and turns. Laci values the lasting friendships and solid Catholic community she found, providing a support system and a source of wisdom in challenging times. Essentially, the Newman Center helped these two young people enter adulthood with a firm foundation of faith and prayer that continues to support their marriage and professional decision making.

Why Their Testimony Matters

The ASU Catholic Newman Center is a non-profit organization that runs off the generosity of donors who see the value in helping young adults stay Catholic, grow in their faith, or find the

See **NEWMAN**, Page 8

Charismatic Corner: JESUS CHRIST IS LORD!

By Cardinal Raniero Cantalamessa, OFM^{Cap}

In July 1977, a lady of Milan offered four tickets, all inclusive, to go to the United States and attend a Charismatic ecumenical rally in Kansas City. One of these tickets was offered to me and as I had to go to the States to improve my English, I accepted. After a week, I was thinking, it will all be over and I shall go to Washington and spend three months there in the Franciscan Capuchin fraternity. At the meeting there were around 40,000 people: half were Catholics and half were many other Christian denominations, especially Pentecostals. (Pentecostals would say, equally rightly, half were Pentecostal and half were every other Christian denomination!)

I remember in particular, one evening, during a time of prayer, Ralph Martin took the microphone and started saying, “You bishops, you pastors, you people, mourn and weep because the Body of my Son is broken.” He kept repeating these words, addressing the different categories of the church. I began to see people falling on their knees all around me, until this huge crowd seemed one heart and one body, sobbing and repenting because of the divisions in the Body of Christ.

During all this, above the stadium a huge sign proclaimed, “JESUS IS LORD!” It was a prophetic vision. I said to myself, “If one day all the Christians shall be reunited in one body, it will be like this, when we are all on our knees, repenting under the great Lordship of Christ.” Years later I had the opportunity to mention this event in my preaching to the Pontifical Household in the presence of Pope John Paul II.

It was for me the beginning of a new understanding of the Lordship of Christ, from which my book *Life in Christ* (originally *Life in the Lordship of Christ!*) was born. My prayer for you, at the occasion of the JESUS 2023 Conference of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal in Kansas City, is that the Holy Spirit will lead you to a renewed awareness of

the Lordship of Christ. St. Paul says, “No one can say ‘Jesus is Lord’ unless he or she is under the influence of the Holy Spirit” (1 Cor 12:3) and in another passage, “If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved” (Rom 10:9).

This title is so important because, when you say, “Jesus is Lord,” you are proclaiming the whole paschal mystery. You confess that, “He died for our sins and rose again for our justification” (see Rom 4:25). Secondly, when you say, “Jesus is Lord,” you are making a personal decision. Indeed, the decision for your life! It is like saying to the risen Lord, “You are my Lord! I surrender to you. I acknowledge you as my leader, as the meaning and the joy in my life, as the One who has every right upon me, having ransomed me at such a high price.” St. Paul exhorts us, saying, “For if we live, we live for the Lord, and if we die, we die for the Lord; so then, whether we live or die, we are the Lord’s. For this is why Christ died and came to life, that he might be Lord of both the dead and the living” (Rom 14:8–9).

In the life of almost every person there is a moment or an event which divides life into two parts. Married people say, “Before my marriage – after my marriage.” We priests say, “Before my ordination – after my ordination.” In reality, for every person there is only one event which divides life into two parts and it is, “Before knowing Jesus as my personal Lord and after knowing him in this way.” The life of every human being is divided in the same way human history is divided and that is, “Before Christ – After Christ.”

When we speak about the Lordship of Christ we should be careful not to be mistaken. The title Lord is a translation of the Greek *Kyrios* and Latin *Dominus*, words which in human language always evoke dominion, oppression, and submission. The Lordship of Christ is something altogether different. Usually, people in power send their servants to die for them; Jesus died for us! We should always remember what he said at the time of the Last Supper to his disciples,

“I no longer call you slaves, because a slave does not know what his master is doing. I have called you friends” (Jn 15:15).

Cardinal Raniero Cantalamessa, OFM^{Cap}, is the Ecclesiastical Assistant of CHARIS. He has been the Preacher of the Papal Household since 1980 and was named Cardinal on Nov. 28, 2020, by Pope Francis. He has been a frequent speaker at international and ecumenical conferences and rallies.

Reprint from Pentecost Today Magazine 2023, Issue 2, National Service Committee of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal of the US @ www.PentecostTodayUSA.org.

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Visit the DOSA Charismatic Service Committee at **CatholicCharismatic.com** for more information.

NEWMAN

Continued from Page 7

Catholic Church while they study in college. In advocating for support, Sterling and Laci highlight the importance of investing in the future of the church. By contributing to the Newman Center, donors are nurturing the next generation of Catholic leaders, ensuring that students’ vulnerable college years are guided by a strong Catholic community. As Sterling and Laci attest, without the Newman Center, their ability to contribute to the Catholic community and remain steadfast in their faith would have been significantly impacted.

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Witnessing for life

January was a month of prayer and solidarity with the unborn



West Texans for Life marched and prayed outside Abilene City Hall Jan. 21.

COURTESY



Catholics from the Diocese of San Angelo joined pro-life advocates from around the state for the Texas Rally for Life, held at the state capitol in Austin Jan. 27.

COURTESY



Deacon Steve Zimmerman read a passage from the Gospel of John during a Holy Hour for Life at the Cathedral Church of the Sacred Heart in San Angelo Jan. 18. The holy hour was livestreamed and made available across the country as part of the National Prayer Vigil for Life, which offered holy hours from different dioceses overnight from Jan. 18–19.

WEST TEXAS ANGELUS

Members of the Knights of Columbus led a procession in downtown San Angelo Jan. 22 before a diocesan Mass for Life at the cathedral.



Men and women gathered at the steps of the Tom Green County Courthouse in San Angelo at noon Jan. 22 to pray for life and the unborn. Jan. 22 is the anniversary of the *Roe vs. Wade* decision legalizing abortion nationwide. Though that Supreme Court decision has since been overturned, the date is still important to the pro-life movement as they pray for an end to abortion now that the decision of abortion's legality has been returned to the states.

WEST TEXAS ANGELUS



WEST TEXAS ANGELUS

Ash Wednesday's significance

By D.D. Emmons
OSV News

Among the beautiful, meaningful, and solemn ceremonies of the Catholic Church is the gathering of the faithful on Ash Wednesday.

This special day begins our Lenten journey. It is the start of 40 days of prayer, penance, and almsgiving as we prepare ourselves to celebrate the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ on Easter Sunday. But why does Lent begin on a Wednesday, and what is the significance of ashes?

Ash Wednesday was added to the liturgical calendar well after the 40-day penitential season of Lent became the norm throughout the Latin Church. Lent, in turn, was universally established only after the early church sorted out the date of Easter. The issue was clarified at the famous Council of Nicaea in 325 where "all the Churches agreed that Easter, the Christian Passover, should be celebrated on the Sunday following the first full moon (14 Nisan) after the vernal equinox" (*Catechism of the Catho-*

lic Church, No. 1170). The vernal (spring) equinox generally falls on March 21, thus the date of Easter in the Western Church can occur anytime between March 22 and April 25.

The word "Lent" is from an Old English term meaning "springtime," and by the second century the term was being used to describe the period of individual fasting, almsgiving, and prayer in preparation for Easter. Among the Christians of the first three centuries, only those aspiring for baptism — the catechumens — observed a defined period of preparation, and that time lasted only two or three days.

The idea of Lent being 40 days in length evolved over the next few centuries, and it is difficult to establish the precise time as to when it began. Among the canons issued by the Council of Nicaea, the church leaders, in Canon Five, made reference to Lent: "and let these synods be held, the one before Lent that the pure gift may be offered to God after all bitterness has been put away, and let the second be held about autumn." The language of this canon seems to validate that Lent, in some fashion, had by the fourth century been established and accepted by the church. While the exact timing and extent of Lent both before and after the Nicaea council is unclear, what is clear from historical documents is that Christians did celebrate a season of Lent to prepare themselves for Resurrection Sunday and used a variety of ways to do so.

That Lent evolved into a period of 40 days in length is not surprising, as there are numerous biblical events that also involved 40 days. Moses was on Mount Sinai receiving instructions from God for that number of days (see Ex 24:18); Noah and his entourage were on the Ark waiting for the rains to end for 40 days and 40 nights (Gn 7:4); and Elijah "walked forty days and forty nights to the mountain of God, Horeb" (1 Kgs 19:8).

Mostly, though, the 40 days of Lent identify with the time our Lord Jesus spent in the desert fasting, praying and being tempted by the devil (Mt 4:1-11). "By the solemn forty days of Lent the Church unites herself each year to the mystery of Jesus in the desert" (*Catechism*, No. 540).

There is, therefore, evidence that by the end of the fourth century Christians were participating in a 40-day Lent before Easter. The dilemma now became how to count the 40 days. In the Latin Church, six weeks were used to identify the Lenten period, but one doesn't fast on Sundays, so six Sundays were subtracted and there remained only 36 fasting days. In the early seventh century, St. Pope Gregory I the Great (pope from 590-604) resolved this situation by adding as fast days the Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday before the first Sunday of Lent. Thus the Lenten 40-day fast, or the Great Fast as it was known, would begin on a Wednesday.

Initially, people fasted all 40 days of Lent. They ate

one meal a day and only an amount of food that would sustain survival. But the church taught, and people believed (then as now), that fasting is not about what we eat, it is about changing hearts, interior conversion, reconciliation with God and others. It's about living in an austere way, giving from our abundance to the poor. St. John Chrysostom (347-407) explained it this way: "Do you fast? Give me proof of it by your works! ... If you see a poor man, take pity on him! If you see an enemy, be reconciled to him! If you see a friend gaining honour, envy him not! If you see a handsome woman, pass her by!" (Homily on the Statutes, III.11).

The church has long used ashes as an outward sign of grief, a mark of humility, mourning, penance and morality. The Old Testament is filled with stories describing the use of ashes in such a manner. In the Book of Job, Job repented before God: "Therefore, I disown what I have said, and repent in dust and ashes" (42:6). Daniel "turned to the Lord God, to seek help, in prayer and petition, with fasting, sackcloth, and ashes" (Dn 9:3). Jonah preached conversion and repentance to the people of Nineveh: "When the news reached the king of Nineveh, he rose from his throne, laid aside his robe, covered himself with sackcloth, and sat in the ashes" (Jon 3:6). And the Maccabees army prepared for battle: "That day they fasted and wore sackcloth; they sprinkled ashes on their heads and tore their garments" (1 Mc 3:47).

Ashes were imposed on the early catechumens when they began their preparation time for baptism. Confessed sinners of that era were also marked with ashes as part of the public penitential process. Other baptized Christians began asking to receive ashes in a manner similar to catechumens and penitents. Christian men had ashes sprinkled on their heads while ashes were used to trace the cross on the forehead of women. Thus the use of ashes as the sign of penance, in readiness for Easter, was becoming a churchwide practice.

During the papacy of St. Gregory the Great, the practice was further expanded and is mentioned in the sixth-century Gregorian Sacramentary. Around the year 1000, Abbot Aelfric of the monastery of Eynsham, England, wrote: "We read in the books both in the Old Law and in the new that men who repented of their sins bestowed on themselves with ashes and clothed their bodies with sackcloth. Now let us do this little at the beginning of our Lent, that we strew ashes upon our heads, to signify that we ought to repent of our sins during the Lenten feast." This same rite of distributing ashes on the Wednesday that begins Lent was recommended for universal use by Pope Urban II at the Synod of Benevento in 1091.

So when we go to that early Mass on Ash Wednesday morning and receive the blessed ashes on our forehead,

See ASH WEDNESDAY, Page 19

Can Catholics married outside the church take Communion?

Q: My son is dating a Protestant girl. If my son married outside of the Catholic Church, is he not permitted to take the Eucharist? I am praying that the girl consents to have a Catholic matrimony, but that is uncertain for now.

A: For the most part, Catholics who do not abide by the church's marriage laws are not permitted to receive holy Communion. But there are a lot of considerations involved in inter-faith marriages, and so the upshot is that your son's life of faith within the church is certainly not a lost cause due to his current relationship.

For general background, Catholics and only Catholics are required by canon law to be married in a Catholic ceremony, what canon lawyers refer to technically as "marrying according to canonical form" (See Canon 1117 of the *Code of Canon Law*). A person is bound by this uniquely Catholic obligation if they were ever Catholic at any point, since the rule of thumb is "once a Catholic, always a Catholic." So, if a person was baptized Catholic as an infant but later drifted away, and even if they eventually committed to practicing another religion, they would still be considered bound to canonical form.

Canonical form is an important concept to understand and be aware of because if a Catholic does not marry according to canonical form — say, if a Catholic decided to get married by a justice of the peace — this marriage would be considered not only illicit, but also invalid.

However, it is possible in some circumstances for a Catholic to receive a "dispensation from canonical form" in some situations. This is a special concession from the local diocesan bishop which allows a Catholic to marry in a non-Catholic ceremony, typically due to serious pastoral concerns involving a non-Catholic spouse-to-be (See Canon 1127, 2).

Very strictly speaking, canon law technically requires Catholics to marry only other Catholics (See Canon 1086, 1 and Canon 1124).

Still, it's common knowledge that Catholics do sometimes marry non-Catholics. If a Catholic is seeking to marry a non-Catholic who is nevertheless a baptized Christian (for example, a Christian baptized in a Protestant denomination that uses a Trinitarian baptismal formula, such as an Anglican or Lutheran), in canon law this is called a "mixed marriage." A Catholic



Jenna Marie Cooper
OSV News

Question Corner

would need permission from the bishop for a mixed marriage in order to marry licitly, even in a Catholic ceremony. Similarly, if a Catholic seeks to marry a non-baptized person, this situation is called a "disparity of cult." A Catholic would need a dispensation from disparity of cult, once again from the local bishop, in order to marry a non-baptized person validly.

All of this might sound rather complicated, but typically this can all be discussed and worked out with the Catholic party's parish priest during Catholic premarital preparation. Parish priests usually take care of requesting whatever dispensations or permissions might be necessary, and in the United States the paperwork involved in these kinds of issues is very routine for most diocesan chancery offices.

Circling back to your son's case in particular, let's assume for the sake of argument that he and his girlfriend do eventually get engaged, and your son appropriately consults his parish priest about his upcoming wedding. Further assuming that your son's Protestant fiancée was validly baptized, the priest would request permission for a mixed marriage on the couple's behalf. If the fiancée was willing to marry in a Catholic ceremony, there would be a discussion of whether a Catholic wedding service outside of a Mass might be more appropriate and pastorally sensitive. But if the bride had strong feelings about having a non-Catholic service, the possibility of a dispensation from canonical form would likely be considered.

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.

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Biblical math, UFOs, and faith

Very early in our lives, before we ever start school, we begin to learn how to count from one to ten. Soon, often with the help of fingers, we learn how to add, which is then followed by subtraction, as a mom or dad asks something like “If you have three apples and you take one away, how many do you have left?” At some point, a schoolteacher may continue this development by teaching multiplication, before all three are combined in division, to round out the quartet of “mathematical operations.”

We also see these operations very early in both the Old and New Testaments. In Genesis (1:1–31, 2:1–3) we are given a day-by-day “count” of creation, with each day adding to what had been created before.

God gave man everything imaginable ... but there was one “subtraction” ... “everything except the tree of knowledge of good and evil. From that tree you shall not eat; when you eat from it you shall die” (Gn 2:17). And after God created the first male and female, “God blessed them and God said to them: Be fertile and multiply” (Gn 28). But it was not long (Gn 3:1–13) before division entered the world as a result of Eve and Adam choosing self-will over God’s will. It is this exact type of division that Evil relentlessly tries to “create” ... not the creation of life which is a reflection of God, but its opposite ... the “creation” of death.

Just as the first book of the Old Testament reflects the four math operations, so too does the first book of the New Testament ... on steroids! Similarly, the Gospel of Mathew begins by counting the ancestors of Jesus and concludes with, “Thus the total number of generations from Abraham to David is fourteen generations; from David to the Babylonian exile, fourteen generations; from the Babylonian exile to the Messiah, fourteen generations” (Mt 1:17). Multiplication is taken to a new level in Mathew 14:15–21:

“When it was evening, the disciples approached him and said, ‘This is a deserted place and it is already late; dismiss the crowds so that they can go to the villages and buy food for themselves.’



James R. Sulliman, PhD

“[Jesus] said to them, ‘There is no need for them to go away; give them some food yourselves.’ But they said to him, ‘Five loaves and two fish are all we have here.’

“Then he said, ‘Bring them here to me,’ and he ordered the crowds to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up to heaven, he said the blessing, broke the loaves, and gave them to the disciples, who in turn gave them to the crowds. They all ate and were satisfied, and they picked up the fragments left over — twelve wicker baskets full. Those who ate were about five thousand men, not counting women and children” (Mt 14:15-21).

Satan’s incessant pursuit of division reached a pinnacle when the very people who hailed his entry to Jerusalem with palms and jubilation became willing participants in his crucifixion just five days later. But it was a division that would backfire on Evil and unlock the door to eternal life and unity with God when Jesus took away our sins through his love, forgiveness, and sacrifice! In so doing, Jesus dealt a death blow to death but only if we believe and have faith, especially at the most difficult times in our lives. It is then that we are most vulnerable to Satan’s attacks and its goal of separating our unity with God and others.

Our country is now experiencing a greater divide than at any other time since our civil war and each election year seems to polarize us more and more. And it’s not just our country, but throughout the world where wars rage on.

And now it appears that another potential force for dividing us from God is literally and figuratively, on the horizon.

A House Oversight Committee held a hearing on Unidentified Flying Objects on Jan. 24, 2024, to address the increased number of “sightings” and the credibility of the people who are doing the reporting, including highly respected military personnel. No one knows what they are. What we can expect is for Evil to use these many reports to create even further division around the world. Scientists, philosophers, and others will undoubtedly make strong and convincing statements that our Christian faith is no more than an extension of ancient mythologies. That, “in fact,” we are merely a colony of some alien entity that check up on us from time to time. That there is, “in fact,” no God. And if there is no God, then there also is no “God’s will,” only our own. And no life after death ... the case that Satan tried so hard to make and Jesus proved false.

With all the chaos going on, one might not be surprised to find that “devout Catholics will be brought to their knees by Satan’s attempts to demoralize and devalue our church.” We must grow stronger in the face of adversity and remember a different “UFO”:

Undeterred Faith Overcomes!

While algebra, geometry, trigonometry, and calculus can be complex, Biblical math is much easier. We only need to count to three ... the Blessed Trinity. Our Father who has added us to his list of children ... Jesus who has taken away our sins through his death and resurrection ... the Holy Spirit who multiplies God’s love through each of us who loves like Jesus ... the Blessed Trinity, three in one, who puts an end to division as we all strive for oneness with God!

- - -

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.

Sts. Constantine and Methodius: Early adopters of vernacular

The use of the local vernacular language in the Catholic Mass was formally introduced during the Second Vatican Council (1962–1965) and promulgated by Pope Paul VI in 1969. Until then, the traditional Latin Mass was used, but there were some earlier efforts to celebrate the liturgy in the tongue people understood.

The brothers Constantine (827-869) and Methodius (815-884) made some serious efforts to celebrate the liturgy in the tongue people understood in the ninth century when they were missionaries.

They were born into a prominent Christian family at Thessalonica, Greece, in 815 and 827. Constantine, who later changed his name to Cyril, went to study at the imperial university at Constantinople at an early age. He was ordained there and became an accomplished scholar known as “the philosopher.”

Methodius became a governor of the Slav colony in Opsikion Province and later became a monk. Because many Slavic people had settled in Thessalonica, it is assumed that Constantine and Methodius were familiar with the Slavic language (Catholic Online Saints & Angels).

They were both in a monastery on the Bosphorus in 861 when Emperor Michael III sent them to minister to and convert the Khazars in the Dnieper-Volga regions of Russia. They were immensely successful in their work. In 863, at the request of Prince Rastislav, they went to evangelize Moravia, a Slav kingdom (now part of the Czech Republic). Like the rest of the Slav princes, Rastislav was struggling for independence from German influence and



Mary Lou Gibson

Speaking of Saints

invasion and he wanted Christian missionaries from the East to replace missionaries from Germany. This would help Rastislav consolidate power in his own country, especially if the missionaries spoke the Slavonic language.

Jenny Schroedel writes in *The Book of Saints* that the brothers learned the local tongue and they also created the Slavonic alphabet so that they could begin the rigorous task of translating the Gospels. Because of this and because of their use of the vernacular in preaching, they were resented by the German clergy. The German bishops firmly believed that the official language of the church should be Latin and refused to consecrate Slavic bishops and priests.

When Constantine and Methodius traveled to Rome to present their case before Pope Adrian II, he gave them his complete support and announced that they would be ordained bishops. Constantine never returned to Moravia.

He died in Rome just 50 days later after assuming the monastic robes and the name Cyril on Feb. 14, 869.

Methodius couldn’t return to Moravia because of political problems there, but the pope allowed him to continue saying Mass and administer baptism in the Slavonic tongue. He was consecrated bishop and assumed the see of Sirmium, near Belgrade.

The German bishops accused him of infringing on their power and imprisoned him in a monastery. This lasted until Germany suffered military defeats in Moravia. At that time the pope intervened and Methodius returned to his diocese. The pope had told him that he could not celebrate the liturgy in the vernacular.

He was summoned to Rome in 879 to answer German charges that he had not obeyed this restriction. He defended himself against charges of heresy and upheld his use of the Slavic liturgy. He explained how important it was to celebrate the liturgy in the tongue people understood. He was vindicated of all charges and Pope Leo XIII gave him permission to use Slavonic in the Mass, in Scripture reading, and in the office.

Methodius died in his cathedral in 884. He and his brother are called the “Apostles of the Slavic Peoples.” They were declared co-patrons of Europe with St. Benedict in 1980 by Pope John Paul II. Their feast day is Feb. 14.

- - -

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

Courage to be faithful

Courage International first came to our attention through our priest spiritual director of many years. He was a practicing homosexual in high school and continued that life style in San Francisco where he lived with a partner. He had been raised in a faithful, prayerful Catholic family and continued his practice of praying the Liturgy of the Hours.

In God’s mercy, through the graces of his Catholic formation and prayer and the fervent prayers of his family, he realized that he was living in sin and was determined to amend his life. When he returned home, his dad, a clinical psychologist, said, “Joe, I’m partly responsible for your decision to be a practicing homosexual because of the way I related to you all your growing-up years. Please forgive me. I want to walk with you through the healing process because I need healing, also.” He and his dad participated in Courage/EnCourage International’s program and together witnessed to God’s healing power by speaking at Courage conferences around the country.

As stated on their website, Courage International, Inc., is an apostolate of the Catholic Church which offers pastoral support to men and women experiencing same-sex attractions who have chosen to live a chaste life. Founded in 1980 by Father John Harvey, OSFS, at the request of the late Cardinal Terence Cooke, it has since



Father Knick and Sandie Knickerbocker

expanded to over 175 Courage chapters worldwide.

On Nov. 28, 2016, Courage International received canonical status in the Roman Catholic Church as a diocesan clerical public association of the faithful, making it the only canonically-approved apostolate of its kind. It is rooted in Father Harvey’s profound personal relationship with our Lord Jesus Christ and inspired by the Oblates of St. Francis de Sales’ devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Therefore, the spirituality of Courage reflects the motto of St. Francis to “Live Jesus.”

“These men and women testify to the power of grace, the nobility and resilience of the human heart,” writes Cardinal Robert Sarah, as quoted on the Courage website. They are inspired to pursue chastity by the Gospel call to

holiness and the Catholic Church’s teachings about the goodness and inherent purpose of human sexuality. Through this apostolate, people who experience same-sex attraction receive pastoral support in the form of spiritual guidance, community prayer support, and fellowship. They are guided and supported in a program similar to the 12-Step program of AA. It is a recognition that same-sex attraction is a trial, like any other disordered sexual inclination or any other pervasive temptation, and can be overcome only by the grace of God that strengthens our will to do God’s will — to be fully who he created us to be through the graces of our baptism.

EnCourage members are parents, spouses, siblings, and friends of people who identify as LGBTQ, etc. They are looking for help to keep the faith and keep their family bonds intact. EnCourage members work together to understand the experiences of their loved ones and to respond to them with compassion. They know that it is possible to express love for someone even if we cannot support all their choices or actions. They find spiritual guidance to grow in their relationship with Christ, and community support from other members that helps them remember that they are not alone on this journey.

Breaking faith with each other

Is this new or are we just more aware of it? Hatred and contempt are everywhere. They are in our government houses, in our communities, in our churches, and in our families. We are struggling, mostly without success, to be civil with each other, let alone to respect each other. Why? Why is this happening and intensifying?

Moreover, on both sides, we are often justifying this hatred on moral grounds, even biblical grounds, claiming that the Gospel itself gives us grounds for our disrespect — *My truth is so right and you are so wrong that I can disrespect you and I have biblical grounds to hate you!*

Well, even a cursory look at Scripture should be enough to enable us to see this for what it is; rationalization, self-interest, and the farthest thing from Jesus.

Let’s begin with something already taught long before Jesus. In the Jewish Scriptures, we already find this text: “I have made you contemptible and base before all the people, since you do not keep my ways, but show partiality in your decisions. Have we not all the one Father? Has not the one God created us? Why do we break faith with one another?” (Malachi 2,8-10). Long before Jesus, Jewish spirituality already demanded that we be fair and never show partiality. However, it still gave us permission to hate our enemies and to take revenge when we have been wronged — “an eye for an eye.”

Jesus turns this on its head. Everywhere in his person and in his teaching, most explicitly in the Sermon on the Mount, he challenges us in a radically new way, telling us that, if we want to go to heaven, our virtue needs to go deeper than that of the Scribes and the Pharisees. What was their virtue?

The Scribes and Pharisees of his time were very much like the church-going Christians of our time. They were sincere, essentially honest, basically good people, who kept the commandments and practiced strict justice. But, according to Jesus, that isn’t enough. Why? If you



Father Ron Rolheiser

are a sincere person who is honest, keeps the commandments, and is fair to everyone, what’s still missing? What’s still missing lies at the very heart of Jesus’ moral teaching, namely, the practice of a love and forgiveness that goes beyond hatred and grievance. What exactly is this?

In justice and fairness, you are still entitled to hate someone who hates you and to extract an appropriate vengeance on someone who has wronged you. However, Jesus asks something else of us: “You have heard that it was said, ‘Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children of your Father in heaven. ... If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? And if you greet only your own people, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that? Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect” (Matthew 5, 43-48).

This is the very essence of Christian morality. Can you love someone who hates you? Can you do good to someone who wishes you evil? Can you forgive someone who has wronged you? Can you forgive a murderer? It’s this, and not some particular issue in moral theology, which is the litmus test for who is a Christian and who

isn’t. Can you love someone who hates you? Can you forgive someone who has hurt you? Can you move beyond your natural proclivity for vengeance?

Sadly, today we are failing that test on both sides of the ideological and religious spectrum. We see this everywhere — from the highest levels of government, from high levels in our churches, and in public and private discourse everywhere, that is, people openly espousing disrespect, division, hatred, and vengeance — and trying to claim the moral high ground in doing this. Major politicians speak openly and explicitly about hating others and about exacting revenge on those who oppose them. Worse still, churches and church leaders of every kind are lining up behind them and giving them “Gospel” support for their espousal of hatred and vengeance.

This needs to be named and challenged: anyone who is advocating division, disrespect, hatred, or revenge is antithetical to Jesus and the Gospels. As well, anyone supporting such a person by an appeal to Jesus, the Gospels, or authentic morality, is also antithetical to Jesus and the Gospels.

God is love. Jesus is love enfleshed. Disrespect, hatred, division, and revenge may never be preached in God’s or Jesus’ name, no matter the cause, no matter the anger, no matter the wrong. This doesn’t mean that we cannot have disagreements, spirited discussions, and bitter debates. But disrespect, hatred, division, and revenge (no matter how deeply they may in fact be felt inside us) may not be advocated in the name of goodness and Jesus. Division, disrespect, hatred, and vengeance are the Anti-Christ.

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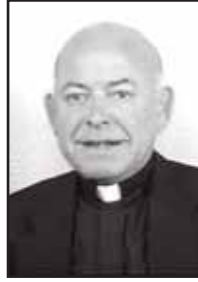
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The most common ‘death chamber’ for killing the unborn

The fastest growing common death chamber in our country for murdering the precious unborn is not a clinic or a hospital but the family home. Our home, which should be the sanctuary for the caring and protection of children, has now, with the easy availability of abortion pills, become a major center for abortion. Various statistics show the rapid increase of this deadly place, and the Guttmacher Institute states that over 50% of abortions now happen by way of the abortion pill. According to ACU Council, “more unborn babies are killed every year through chemical abortion pills than by any other type of abortion. President Biden is intentionally violating federal law by expanding the use of these deadly drugs — including sending them through the mail.” As we deal with the rapidly increasing death chamber in our homes, more than ever pro-lifers need to stress, especially with young women, the divine dignity, the sacredness and beauty of the unborn they carry in their wombs. We need to remind them verbally and visually of the brutal reality of abortion. Both St. Pope John Paull II and Pope Francis have clearly stated that abortion is murder. Pope Francis has also stated the hard, shocking comparison that abortion is like hiring a hitman to kill a totally precious innocent child. Our Christian belief about the sacredness and humanity of the tiny unborn person is based on the holy Word of God and has been confirmed over and over by recent scientific research that reaffirms our biblical belief that human life truly begins at conception. Every person should know and understand the science of when life begins. Imagine how many civilization-wide problems we would solve if we could all acknowledge reality. Abortion destroys the precious little unborn child of the primary right to life which is central and fundamental to every other human right. According to the World Health Organization, every year abortion globally destroys 73 million unborn children. For the sake of the good of humanity, and the divine commandment “you shall not kill,” we need to work more fervently to abandon this death procedure of abortion. Linked to this cruel and disgusting killing of precious unborn children is the fact that the abortion industry had been caught red-handed chopping apart the children they have murdered and selling them for profit. This frightful information, obtained from SURVIVORS reveals that the lab involved is a National Institute of Health (NIH) Contractor. The SURVIVORS have investigated and obtained invoices through the California Records Act. What makes this even more despicable is that our tax dollars are involved here. According to another contract from NIH, the University of California, San Francisco, is required to “obtain the necessary human fetal tissues for use under contract consistently and reliably.” All pro-lifers need to take radical action to stop NIH funding of harvesting precious baby body parts.

Chemical Abortion

Sadly, this brutal process of destroying the precious unborn is becoming more and more common with chemical abortion which happens in our homes. The chemical abortion pill regime is causing the abortion rate in Amer-



Bishop Emeritus Michael D. Pfeifer, OMI

Diocese of San Angelo

ica to skyrocket. This is why it is urgent that all pro-lifers take action to abandon this death pill that now can be acquired very easily through mail order. The White House, Planned Parenthood, and Big Pharma are attempting to saturate America with these death pills. These pills don’t heal, they kill. These abortion pills are created to torture and murder millions of innocent, defenseless preborn babies by starving them to death in their mothers’ wombs at home. It is a nightmare. The current administration, supported by abortion and drug industries, has radically loosened rules on chemical abortion. And now a woman is no longer required to have medical supervision to receive these deadly abortion drugs. This flood of death pills are, or will be, unleashed at our neighborhood drug stores like CVS, Walgreens, and other centers. Retail pharmacies could soon be handing out deadly abortion pills with a prescription along with other drugs like antibiotics. These deadly pills are also easily acquired by mail, available for online orders. These killing drugs are marketed as safe, simple, and relatively painless, but hide the terrible reality that they brutally kill God’s unborn children. Sadly, in the past several months, the Biden Administration, working with Secretary Beccera of HHS, is proposing major changes in TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families), that will cancel funding for Pregnancy Centers and alternatives to abortion, thereby denying free assistance to women, babies, and families in their moment of need.

No greater enemy to our children and mothers

In the next two paragraphs, I share with you some reflections on the terrible effects of abortion from two wonderful pro-life leaders, Kristan Hawkins and Lila Rose. There is no greater enemy to our children, their mothers, and our nation than abortion. Abortion leaves a terrible legacy and shatters lives and, in most cases, leaves lasting negative marks on mothers. Pro-lifers, based on facts, have been stressing for years that women who have undergone an abortion are more prone to depression and other mental health issues. But pro-abortion radicals, for years, have tried to hide these statistics as they attempt to normalize abortion. Planned parenthood doesn’t want people to know that a survey taken earlier this year that shows 55% of women who call themselves “pro-choice” struggle emotionally after an abortion. Abortion kills tiny children made in the very image and likeness of God, and studies prove that women who have had an abortion often have severe psychological and sometimes physical reper-

cussions that last their entire lives. Abortion pills are burdening public health systems because emergency rooms across the country are being flooded by women victimized by the dangerous abortion pill. Supporters of chemical abortion often stress that the abortion pill is as safe as Tylenol. But pro-abortion research group Gynuity shows evidence that this claim is totally false. The National Pro-Life Alliance reminds us that Planned Parenthood is the nation’s largest abortion provider, destroying more than 332,000 innocent lives each year, while receiving more than \$500 million in tax-payer funding.

As at-home abortions are rapidly increasing, women need to see the humanity of the babies they are tempted to kill. A mother’s womb should be a safe haven, a place of nourishment and love, but with easy access to the pill, it has become a war zone in which innocent babies are annihilated with the backing of government leaders. Because the unborn cannot speak for themselves, many of the born pro-abortion groups trample on their rights using euphemisms that cloak the brutal reality of abortion. They disguise abortion killing with ambiguous terms like “reproductive healthcare,” “woman’s rights,” “the right to choose,” and “bodily autonomy.” It is ludicrous to claim that healthcare includes the right to harm a child, even kill a child. More and more we need to challenge public officials, candidates, and others who support abortion about what abortion is called, and the clear fact of what it causes — the killing of an unborn child.

Helping pregnant mothers

There are many pregnant mothers right now who don’t feel they can afford another child, and many others are being pressured into abortion against their wishes by someone close to them, even a family member. Others have a career goal or dream they think a child will sabotage, but there are other pregnant women who have legitimate health concerns and are being told falsely that an abortion is needed. This is where many more pro-lifers, especially women, are needed to help guide and assist these pregnant mothers. To overcome these negative pressures, there is a Christ-like need to overwhelm these expectant mothers, who might be contemplating an abortion, with love, compassion, and personal support for babies and raise them in love by helping them to attain the resources they need so that they can give birth to beautiful babies. Every parish, or parish teaming with other parishes nearby, needs to have women prepared who can help these pregnant women. There are clear visual means of helping these women by reviewing with them videos, films, ultrasounds, and movies that show the true reality, beauty, and sacredness of the little ones in their wombs. And to also depict the harsh reality of the brutal means that are used to destroy these innocent little children of God, true human persons. One of these strong visuals is Olivia. Another is Live Action’s Window to the Womb, an interactive website that shows the unprecedented clarity and state-of-the-art depictions of a medically accurate

Vivir nuestra historia católica en el año 2024

Por Arzobispo José H. Gomez
OSV News

Cada nuevo año marca un nuevo comienzo, una oportunidad para empezar de nuevo. Este es un pensamiento es-peranzador y muy "católico".

Nuestra vida de fe es siempre una obra que requiere volver a empezar siempre de nuevo.

El hecho de seguir a Jesús, de llegar a ser aquellos que Dios quiso que fuéramos, es el proyecto de toda una vida y lo llevamos a cabo en nuestra lucha diaria contra el egoísmo y contra la debilidad. Nosotros cometemos errores, per-de-mos de vista lo esencial y tomamos caminos equivocados, pero siempre empezamos de nuevo.

Lo que hace posible todo esto es el gran amor que Dios nos tiene.

Reflexioné mucho sobre esto durante la temporada na-videña. Pensé especialmente en cómo nosotros, como cató-licos, pertenecemos a una gran historia de amor, a esa historia de la salvación que es lo que les da sentido y propó-sito a nuestras vidas.

A grandes rasgos, la historia trata de esto:

En un determinado momento de la historia de la human-idad, el Dios vivo, el Creador de la vida, descendió a su creación para vivir entre nosotros en Jesús, que es una per-sona plenamente divina y plenamente humana. Dios vino como un bebé y reveló su verdadero rostro de Padre que ama a cada persona como a su propio hijo o hija.

Por medio de su vida, de su muerte y resurrección de entre los muertos, Jesús nos mostró las profundidades del amor del Padre, revelándonos el destino de nuestra vida hu-mana, haciéndonos saber que fuimos creados para compartir la propia vida divina de Dios, así como Él compartió nuestra vida humana.

Por medio de sus enseñanzas, Jesús trazó el camino que

debemos de seguir como hijos de Dios, y nuestras vidas son ahora un recorrido de amor dentro de su Iglesia, recorrido que nos lleva más allá de la muerte, hacia la vida eterna que viviremos con el Padre en el cielo.

Esta es la hermosa historia que hemos heredado como católicos, y hemos pasado a formar parte de ella por medio de nuestro bautismo.

Esta historia nos hace saber quiénes somos, para qué es-tamos aquí y cómo debemos vivir. Nos dice de dónde veni-mos y hacia dónde vamos, nos enseña lo que debemos valorar y lo que verdaderamente importa.

Nuestra historia católica les proporciona a nuestras vidas las "raíces" que nos hacen pertenecer a la familia espi-ritual que llamamos la Iglesia. Es la fuente de nuestras ora-ciones y de nuestro culto divino, de nuestras enseñanzas y de todo lo que conocemos como nuestra tradición y cultura católicas.

Estamos viviendo un tiempo en el que se está recha-zando la historia católica y la historia judeocristiana más amplia que estableció las bases de la civilización occidental. Son muchas las razones de esto, pero podemos ver sus con-secuencias en la crisis de falta de significado de la vida, que se está extendiendo a través de toda la sociedad.

Esto es también un desafío para nosotros como católi-cos, ya que nos dificulta el poder hablar de nuestra historia y vivir de acuerdo con nuestras creencias.

Por eso creo que es importante que ahora que empeza-mos el nuevo año, recordemos nuestra historia católica y re-flexionemos sobre ella, para ser renovados con su verdad y sus promesas.

La historia que hemos heredado es una historia de amor maravillosa y personal.

Dios no desea nada "de nosotros" más que nuestro amor. Él creó a cada uno de nosotros para el bien personal de cada uno, simplemente porque nos ama; es como si no

podiera imaginar el mundo sin nosotros.

Dios no quiere controlarnos ni "tratarnos con prepoten-cia". Él sencillamente quiere vivir con nosotros y ser nuestro amigo.

La promesa que Dios nos hace es ésta: si nosotros acep-tamos y creemos en su amor, si amamos a Dios como Él nos ama a nosotros y si amamos a los demás como Él los ama, podemos entonces llegar a ser como Él. Y si seguimos su camino de amor, Él nos promete que podremos conocer esa alegría que Jesús llamó tener vida en abundancia.

En este año que está comenzando, pidamos la gracia de profundizar en la fe que tenemos en la solidez de nuestra historia católica, en la verdad de Jesucristo y en su amor por nosotros.

Y podemos revitalizar de una manera práctica esta his-toria en nosotros mismos a través de una devoción cada vez más profunda a la Eucaristía.

En cada celebración de la Eucaristía, nosotros oramos con las oraciones de nuestros antepasados, escuchamos sus historias, tomadas de las Escrituras y escuchamos las pala-bras de Jesús. Cada plegaria eucarística vuelve a narrarnos la historia de su sacrificio de amor, el cual ahí se nos comu-nica.

Así que, este año, propongámonos nuevamente hacer de la celebración de la santa Misa y del encuentro con el Dios vivo que tenemos en el pan y en el vino, el centro de nuestra vida.

Oren por mí y yo oraré por ustedes.

Y pidámosle a nuestra Santísima Madre María que ella nos ayude a transmitir a los demás —muy especialmente a nuestros jóvenes— la historia de su Hijo con una nueva ale-gría, confianza y valentía.

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El arzobispo José H. Gomez lidera la Arquidiócesis de Los Angeles, la comunidad católica más grande del país.

Cinco eventos para ayudarnos a ser mejores católicos en 2024

Por Gretchen R. Crowe
OSV News

Al cambiar el calendario al 2024, debo admitir que la idea de los próximos 12 meses me llena de cierto temor. Entrar en otro año electoral, con todo el drama político relacionado, puede provocar ansiedad, por decir lo menos.

Afortunadamente, como personas de fe, sabemos que nuestra esperanza no se encuentra en los partidos políti-cos ni en sus candidatos, sino en Jesucristo y su Iglesia. Entonces, en lugar de temer el primer martes de noviem-bre y el inevitable polémico período previo, aquí hay cinco eventos que los católicos pueden anticipar con ale-gría este año calendario.

El Congreso Eucarístico Nacional y eventos rela-

cionados

En el improbable caso de que no se haya enterado, el primer Congreso Eucarístico Nacional en los Estados Unidos en casi 50 años se llevará a cabo en Indianápolis en julio. El evento incluirá oradores reconocidos a nivel nacional, oportunidades para el culto y la adoración eu-carística, y mucho tiempo para profundizar la compren-sión y el amor por la Eucaristía. El comité organizador ha tomado varias medidas para que el evento sea más ase-quible para las familias en los últimos meses, incluida la opción de comprar pases de un día. Previo al evento na-cional se realizarán cuatro peregrinaciones, con salida desde diferentes puntos del país. Y las parroquias contin-uarán planificando y realizando eventos como parte del año parroquial del Avivamiento Eucarístico Nacional, eventos en los que los católicos deben hacer todo lo po-sible para participar.

El Sínodo sobre la Sinodalidad, Parte 2

En octubre tendrá lugar en Roma la segunda parte del Sínodo sobre la Sinodalidad, que consta de dos partes. Después de la primera ronda en octubre pasado, tenemos una idea más clara de qué esperar este año. También tenemos un documento de síntesis que podemos seguir digiriendo. Y tenemos más ideas sobre cómo podríamos incorporar la sinodalidad en nuestras comunidades parro-quiales y en nuestras vidas en general. Siempre es un buen momento para escucharnos y aprender unos de otros, especialmente en el contexto de la fe, pero hacerlo en 2024 es particularmente oportuno en la vida de la Iglesia.

Véase CROWE, Página 19

Compromiso: Un elemento esencial de la política

Debido a que el tema de la migración evoca respues-tas dispares de diferentes sectores del electorado, nunca podrá ser resuelto a menos que haya compromisos, los cuales son un elemento esencial de nuestro sistema políti-co. Después de muchos años de experiencia en tratar la migración como un problema de política social, me gos-taría ofrecer algunas ideas sobre cómo podría resolverse este problema social de alta carga política. Al hacerlo, vuelvo a mi experiencia durante los esfuerzos de legali-zación a finales de la década de 1980 cuando trabajé en Washington durante seis años en la Conferencia de Obi-spos Católicos de Estados Unidos (o USCCB, por sus sig-las en inglés), desempeñándome como director ejecutivo de Servicios de Migración y Refugiados. Si no fuera por compromisos y la existencia de asociaciones y coaliciones improbables, esa legislación histórica, que se aprobó en 1986, nunca habría tenido éxito.

Las coaliciones son instrumentos poderosos e impor-tantes que ponen de manifiesto la complejidad e inter-conexión de los problemas sociales ante los legisladores.

El sector empresarial puede ser parte integral de una coalición. Por ejemplo, hoy en día, el sector agrícola de Estados Unidos necesita trabajadores inmigrantes, la mitad de los cuales no tienen documentos. La industria de la construcción, especialmente, necesita trabajadores inmigrantes de nivel inicial, mientras que las industrias de alta tecnología requieren trabajadores extranjeros más experimentados y educados. También es importante el trabajo organizado en casi todos los aspectos sociales y sectores laborales, como el sector de la hospitalidad. Desde una perspectiva moral, los líderes y las organiza-ciones religiosos pueden añadir una voz importante a una coalición.

Durante mi tiempo trabajando en la USCCB, las co-aliciones incluían a un grupo diverso de miembros, desde la USCCB hasta la Unión Estadounidense de Libertades Civiles. Gracias a una coalición de personas dispuestas a trabajar juntas por el bien común, pudimos encontrar puntos en común y se lograron avances urgentes.

A pesar de las afirmaciones de que primero se debe



Obispo
Nicholas DiMarzio
OSV News

Caminando con
Migrantes

abordar la frontera, la mejor manera de solucionar nues-tro sistema de inmigración quebrado es examinarlo de manera integral y reparar todas sus partes. Esto incluiría la seguridad fronteriza y también otros problemas, como la legalización de los indocumentados y mejoras en nues-tro sistema legal de inmigración.

Un tema que no se discute con tanta frecuencia es el cumplimiento de la seguridad en el lugar de trabajo y el establecimiento de un sistema que permita a los trabaja-dores inmigrantes legales entrar al país y trabajar en in-dustrias importantes. Actualmente, nuestro mercado laboral es tan vasto y esencialmente no controlado, con industrias necesarias dependientes del trabajo indoc-umentado. En el proyecto de ley de 1986, el compromiso para obtener el programa de legalización fue imponer sanciones a los empleadores que contrataran a trabaja-dores indocumentados, una parte del proyecto que nunca se implementó de manera efectiva. Hoy en día, gracias al mundo digital, los empleadores pueden utilizar el sistema E-Verify para contratar empleados autorizados.

En una columna anterior, mencioné que, debido a que es más beneficioso para algunos empleadores, mu-chos no quieren corregir el sistema de contratación de empleados. La mayoría de los migrantes vienen a traba-jar, trabajan arduamente, y no reciben beneficios so-ciales. En otras palabras, son mano de obra maleable y pueden ser explotados en el lugar de trabajo. Estas prácti-cas deben detenerse.

Una vez que controlemos el mercado laboral, la ad-

ministración de la frontera será más fácil. Las naciones tienen derecho a controlar sus fronteras, pero deben gui-arse por el bien común internacional y la preocupación por la humanidad de aquellos que desean ingresar. Las fronteras de Estados Unidos solo pueden controlarse desde ambos lados, lo cual es cierto tanto para México como para Canadá. Necesitamos una mejor relación con nuestros vecinos, especialmente con México, edificando sobre la base de nuestros lazos económicos ya fuertes. Las iniciativas recientes con México son un paso en la dirección correcta, siempre que no se utilice la fuerza o la coerción contra los migrantes.

El próximo problema que debe abordarse es la legali-zación, no la deportación, de aquellos que ya están aquí y han desarrollado equidad trabajando y contribuyendo a nuestra sociedad. Hay más de 11 millones de personas que se encuentran en esta categoría. La legalización debe extenderse a tantos como sea posible. La lección apren-dida del último programa es que una legalización incom-pleta fue una invitación para más entradas indocumentadas. También, es necesario resolver el pro-blema de los beneficiarios de la Acción Diferida para los Llegados en la Infancia (DACA).

Después del COVID, los mercados laborales en Esta-dos Unidos se debilitaron, ya que muchas personas aban-donaron el mercado laboral o redujeron su tiempo de trabajo. Hoy en día, hay 9 millones de empleos sin cu-brir. Si bien no todos podrían ser ocupados por mi-grantes, serían beneficiosos en ciertos sectores, como la agricultura y la construcción.

Si los políticos analizaran más cuidadosamente nues-tra situación de inmigración y se formaran más coali-ciones, descubrirían elementos de compromiso que beneficiarían a nuestra nación y a los inmigrantes. El compromiso basado en la verdad y el interés mutuo con-stituye el elemento faltante en la política hoy en día.

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Surrogacy and child trafficking

At the start of 2024, Pope Francis offered strong public criticism of surrogate motherhood. His willingness to speak out on this important topic has helped to pull surrogacy out of the shadows, where it has often been relegated, and shine some much-needed light on the children at the center of the process and their rights.

Surrogacy is often framed as a generous act, since the surrogate mother seeks to offer her own body to help another woman unable carry a pregnancy. Judith Hoechst, who hired a surrogate to have a son, was quoted in a *National Catholic Register* article as declaring: “There’s nothing more selfless and more loving than a woman who says, ‘Let me share my uterus with you. Let me do for you what you cannot do.’”

When you examine it more deeply, however, surrogacy offers only the veneer of a selfless act. It relies on evil means to achieve a good end. It tends to be driven by the selfish slant of “entitlement thinking.” It often involves a coercive financial angle, as wealthy individuals offer significant remuneration to secure poor women as “volunteers.”

Pope Francis cut through much of the duplicity around this issue when he provocatively observed that surrogacy involves a form of “trafficking” of children, implying that children are being bought and sold, treated as property, and often transported across international borders, which, all in all, sums up many contemporary aspects of surrogacy.

The whole process of surrogacy typically begins with the creation of children for implantation through *in vitro* fertilization (IVF), a practice that itself raises numerous moral objections.

Most fundamentally, IVF misappropriates the generative powers we have received from God that are ordered to procreating new life.

The powers we have are not meant be used any way we wish. For example, we have the power to use our hands to pick things up, to write, and to reach out to help others. But that same power in our hands can be used in reckless and improper ways to hit people, to choke them, or to otherwise harm them.

Just because we have the power to do something — or the fact that science may open up a new power to us — does not automatically mean we should utilize it.

Our power to procreate is a very special gift, meant to be shared in collaboration with God and our spouse in an exclusive manner. That we have the technical prowess to take hold of our sex cells and manipulate them to manufacture a new life constitutes a misuse of our God-given powers. We fail to respect our children’s dignity when we turn them into “projects” to be engendered in laboratory glassware and implanted into third party carriers. By such an approach, we end up twisting the designs of human sexuality and turning what is meant to be an act of love into an act of production.

Yet many people today have accepted the notion that children are a kind of “entitlement” or even a “right” to be claimed for themselves. This flawed thinking enables a facile movement into the twin evils of IVF and surrogacy, and ultimately encourages the trafficking of unborn children. Clearly, a child — or any person — is never a “right,” or a possession, or a piece of property to whom we are entitled.

The only “entitlement” or “right” operative here would be the right of the child to be conceived uniquely through the marital act. Rather than being summoned into being in glassware and implanted into surrogates by fertility clinic employees in exchange for valuable consideration, children have the inalienable right to be conceived through the one flesh, body-to-body spousal communion of their parents’ marital embrace.

Having a sense of “entitlement” about children and imagining that I “deserve” a child corrupts the delicate order of our receptivity toward the mysterious gift of new life in marital sexuality.

Whenever we turn to IVF and surrogacy to satisfy the desire of adults for offspring, we override that delicate order of receptivity and arrogate to ourselves the right to control and even dominate our children. We pay to have them implanted into strangers who act as “gestational carriers.” We impose on them a multitude of “parental-role figures,” ranging from the surrogate mother who becomes pregnant, to the woman who receives the baby afterward, to the third-party egg donor. We multiply father-role figures, depending upon the source of the sperm. We trap our left-over embryonic children, potentially for decades, in the wasteland of frozen orphanages connected to fertility clinics. We carry out genetic testing and discard less-than-perfect embryos. We selectively reduce children when multiplet pregnancies arise.

The use of the term “deplorable” by the pope is not excessive, but spot-on when it comes to describing these offensive aspects of surrogacy. His observations help refocus our attention on the run-away train that IVF and surrogacy have become and invite us to push back against the problematic-but-widely-endorsed approach that seeks to satisfy adult desires for children while largely ignoring the consequences to the kids.

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 Senior Ethicist 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

Five reasons why I'm still marching for life

While pro-lifers rightly view the landmark *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization* decision as a significant judicial victory, attending the national March for Life is more important now than ever. Here are five reasons why I think every Catholic should still be committed to the national March for Life.

1. Witness to the sanctity of life:
Showing up to the March for Life is a public declaration of our belief in the dignity and worth of every human life, from conception to natural death. The U.S. bishops recently reaffirmed their commitment to fighting abortion, saying, "The threat of abortion remains our pre-eminent priority because it directly attacks our most vulnerable and voiceless brothers and sisters and destroys more than a million lives per year in our country alone." In a society often clouded by the fog of moral relativism, our collective witness is a beacon of truth, affirming the sanctity of life from conception to natural death. This public witness is vital in continuing to build a culture of life, especially in a post-*Dobbs* era where the truth that every life is sacred is fiercely contested.

2. The need for continued advocacy:
While *Dobbs* represents a monumental shift, it is not the end of the fight. The decision decentralizes the abortion debate, shifting it to state legislatures. The national March for Life inspires and encourages those working in grassroots efforts at the state levels by building a network to exchange ideas and reinvigorate local movements. Now more than ever, we need to be actively involved in advocating for life-affirming policies and supporting leaders who uphold the dignity of life at every level of government.

3. Promoting a culture of life:
Our participation in the march fosters a culture of life. It goes beyond the legal aspects of working to end abortion and touches hearts and minds. We march not only in protest but also in love, aiming to inspire a change in attitudes toward the sanctity of life, motherhood and the family. Every year, I’m touched by the women I see with signs saying they regret their abortion, or by the young mothers with a child in tow, sharing that they almost chose abortion but didn’t.



Father Patrick Briscoe
OSV News

4. Ecumenical solidarity:
Prayer is an important aspect of the march. Catholics gather the night before for a Mass and Vigil at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception. Seeing so many seminarians and young religious inspires young Catholics to think about their vocation. And while plenty of attendees are Catholic, many are not. The march brings together people of different faiths and walks of life who share a common belief in the intrinsic worth of every human life. Standing with our Protestant and Orthodox brothers and sisters — and even alongside non-Christians — is a powerful witness to the world and provides a model for exchange and collaboration.

5. Educating the next generation:
By participating in the March, we also educate and inspire the next generation. In a world where our young people are bombarded with conflicting messages, the March gives a clear and compassionate response. The March for Life has always been a movement of young people. Youth rallies before the March, like Life Fest, hosted by the Sisters of Life and the Knights of Columbus, connect young people to their peers, assuring them that they are not alone and inspiring them to stand up for their pro-life beliefs.

In the wake of the *Dobbs* decision, the March for Life is not just a celebration but a rallying call. It’s a reminder that our work is far from over. The national legal victory is just one facet of a much broader, ongoing mission to uphold the dignity of life at all stages. Our presence at the march reaffirms our commitment to this mission, serving as a visible sign of hope, solidarity and unyielding support for life.

Father Patrick Briscoe, O.P., is a Dominican friar and the editor of Our Sunday Visitor.

A Eucharistic Word: Tabernacle

While praying in our pew after Communion during a recent Sunday Mass, our 6-year-old son decided to administer a pop quiz to his willing little sister. “What was the first tabernacle?” he asked. “I have no idea,” she replied. “Mary, of course! Her tummy held Jesus for the first time,” he answered. “But what was the second tabernacle?” she shot back. My son then looked at me, tables turned on him from trying to stump his sister to now being stumped by her. “Do you know?” he asked me.

Of course, I could have gone a variety of directions with this. But as I raised my eyes, I was drawn immediately to St. Joseph in the creche, as we were still in the Christmas season. “St. Joseph’s arms were,” I blurted out without much thinking.

That got me thinking, then, of what the subsequent “tabernacles” might’ve been. The manger itself? Maybe the arms of the innkeeper’s wife? Maybe a shepherd? No matter who or what might’ve held Our Lord next, we know it was an unworthy place for the Lord of the universe.

But what of the tabernacles today? We have beautiful receptacles crafted of precious metals in churches and chapels. Our tabernacles contain the Eucharistic species remaining after Mass, especially reserved for the sick and dying and for both public and private worship, and adoration outside of Mass. The glowing sanctuary lamp next to the tabernacle tells us Jesus is there. When we recognize his presence, we are drawn to show reverence to Christ’s sacramental presence in our midst. By gestures and prayers we make clear our faith in his Real Presence and show him our love and devotion.

As my mind wandered about tabernacles, I thought of how each of us, too, in a sense becomes a tabernacle. We are members of Christ’s body by baptism. We are temples of the Holy Spirit.

When we receive Holy Communion, Christ’s body, blood, soul and divinity dwells within us just as the Word was made flesh and came to dwell among us in Mary’s womb at Nazareth so long ago. As the bread and wine lying in the altar are changed by the Holy Spirit into Christ’s Eucharistic flesh and blood, so, too, ought we be changed by receiving the sacrament.



Michael R. Heinlein
OSV News

But as the beauty and location of the tabernacle reveal what it contains, as the sanctuary lamp announces it is indeed the Lord, what heralds to the world Christ’s presence in us?

Christ in us is holiness. And as with any saint, we come to know Christ dwells in them by how they live, by the evidence of virtue in their lives. This means ensuring that we do our part to allow God’s grace to nourish and grow the gifts he’s already given us. When struggles and difficulties come, how do we respond? When life unfolds differently than planned, how do we react?

When God wants us to be his tabernacle, what do we do?

The short answer is, of course, is to live as Christ did. The Eucharist contains the grace we need to live Christ and give Christ. The Eucharist is our roadmap to virtue, the blueprint for holiness. The Eucharist is the key to open up the tabernacle of our hearts and let Christ live in the world.

While I’m not sure what -- or more likely who -- was the second tabernacle, I know it’s a calling for each of us. Will we stretch out our arms, open our hearts, give him room?

And what will be the effect? Will the world come to know Christ by our letting him make his dwelling anew in us? If we more faithfully accept our calling to be tabernacles in the world, might the world come to believe?

Michael R. Heinlein is author of Glorifying Christ: The Life of Cardinal Francis E. George, O.M.I. and a promised member of the Association of Pauline Cooperators.

An outpouring of grace: An invitation from Bishop Cozzens

As 2024 began, I was in a hermitage in northern Minnesota doing a Holy Hour before Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament from 11:30 p.m. Dec. 31 until 12:30 a.m. Jan. 1. For several years I have been awaiting the calendar to turn to 2024, because I knew that this year, the three-year Eucharistic Revival would reach its summit in the 10th National Eucharistic Congress. I believe this event and the National Eucharistic Pilgrimage leading up to it, will have a generational impact on our country, and I was in prayer begging the Lord to make it a success.

Planning for the National Eucharistic Revival began in the spring of 2021 by meeting with evangelistic and pastoral leaders from around the country in listening sessions. A clear theme we heard was that the Catholic Church in our country needed a moment of unity to express our faith, especially our faith in the Holy Eucharist.

If this Eucharistic Revival was to become a national movement it had to be going somewhere, a pilgrimage toward a national moment. We needed a gathering of the whole church with her bishops to celebrate the gift of the Eucharist and to ask God to send his Holy Spirit upon us to renew the church in the United States, so we might be sent forth with new missionary fire.

This longing from the church inspired us to convoke the 10th National Eucharistic Congress. It was a big proposal to make to the U.S. bishops in November 2021, but when I proposed it, well over 90% of the bishops voted in favor. Now, the bishops of the United States are calling the whole church to gather in Indianapolis from July 17-21.

While working on the Revival plan, I had the big idea that we should attempt to pilgrimage across the country with the Blessed Sacrament. It was the supreme knight from the Knights of Columbus who suggested to me that we should make a cross with our procession across this coun-



Bishop Andrew H. Cozzens
OSV News

try and end it at Indianapolis for the Congress.

This big idea had many logistical barriers, and at first I did not think it was possible. But with the encouragement of many priests and others, and the collaboration of a group called Modern Catholic Pilgrim, we were able to bring the dream of our National Eucharistic Pilgrimage a reality.

Thus, beginning May 19 at the four edges of our country we will begin a pilgrimage with Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament, as much as possible on foot, to the 10th National Eucharistic Congress. Beginning from the west at the cathedral in San Francisco; from the south at the border in Brownsville Texas; from the east at the tomb of Blessed Michael McGivney, founder of the Knights of Columbus in New Haven, Connecticut; and from the north at Lake Itasca State Park, the headwaters of the Mississippi River in the Diocese of Crookston, young adult pilgrims, accompanied by priests and seminarians, will pilgrimage every day from parish to parish on the way to Indianapolis.

Each day they will stay at a parish and begin with Mass for the parishioners and whoever else wants to join, and then the first mile will be a major procession that ends with benediction. Those who desire can continue to join the perpetual pilgrims who will walk between 10 and 20 miles to the next parish stop.

On various days, there will be major

See COZZENS, Page 19

Nighttime conversations with children and God

By Rita Buettner
OSV News

The story of God calling out to Samuel when he's sleeping always makes me think of parenting a young child in the middle of the night.

Samuel keeps getting out of bed to come to Eli, who's fast asleep, to ask why he's calling for him. Again and again, Eli tells him he's not calling him and to go back to bed.

It reminds me of one of my favorite children's books, *Bedtime for Frances*, where Frances keeps coming to her parents' room with concerns and requests when she is supposed to be asleep. Every parent has been Frances' father, trying to be patient through the exhaustion, wondering whether the child will ever stop asking for a drink or another kiss and actually rest.

The wonder of the Bible reading might be that -- even though he's tired and half-asleep -- Eli realizes that God is calling Samuel and tells him how to respond the next time he hears the voice. Eli tells Samuel to say, "Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening."

Finally, Samuel goes back to bed, and the next time he is awakened, he follows Eli's instructions and speaks with God directly.

Eli probably doesn't get enough credit for being able to think straight and with the clarity of faith in the middle of the night. Parents know how hard it is to think clearly at that hour.

I remember when our children reached a certain age, it felt like an incredible gift to get into bed knowing you probably would get to sleep until the morning.

When I was growing up as one of six children, we didn't go to our parents' room unless something was

wrong. If we woke up and couldn't get back to sleep, we were supposed to look at the "happy sign" on the wall next to our bed.

We all had happy signs -- posters we had made for ourselves at our mother's direction. They were covered with pictures that were supposed to bring us comfort. I don't remember mine well, but I imagine it had kitten and puppy stickers, probably a unicorn and a rainbow, and maybe other pictures I had clipped out of magazines and catalogs.

The truth is that when I woke up in the middle of the night, I could barely see my happy sign in the darkness. But I knew it was there. It is only years later that I realize that the happy sign might have been less about making me happy and more of a gentle reminder that I should only wake up my parents in a real emergency. Eventually I would fall back to sleep. I always did.

These days when I wake up during the night, it's not usually because someone else woke me. And when I wake up, I try to remember that maybe someone needs my prayers. I think about the intentions I'm carrying for others -- those who are sick or sad or troubled or dying -- and hand them over to God. There is always someone who needs prayer, and intentions come easily to mind in the stillness of the house.

Perhaps that is why God comes to Samuel then -- and why God invites us to meet him there, too, when sleep is elusive in the darkness and quiet of night. You can almost hear him say, "Speak, your Father is listening."

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Rita Buettner is a wife, working mother and author of the Catholic Review's *Open Window* blog.

The poor you have always with you

It was a crisp morning a few years back, and the streets were largely empty. I was early for a meeting downtown and I planned to pick up a coffee on my way.

I had forgotten to bring cash. And then I noticed a man on the corner. Did he have a sign? Or perhaps it was his clothing and demeanor that suggested he wasn't heading to a meeting, but instead was probably unhoused, facing another day on these streets.

I hurried by. I didn't even have a couple of bucks to give him. But my softly nagging conscience suggested I could ask him if he'd like some coffee. I could pay for it with the same credit card I would use for mine. But instead, I journeyed on and put him out of my mind.

But I didn't really put him out of my mind, did I? Because all these years later I still wish I had paused and done that simple deed.

Here's another. My daughter and I were once visiting a university she hoped to attend. We went out one evening to a pizza place someone had recommended, and later, making our way down the few short blocks to our hotel with a pizza box, we saw an old man sitting against a building, surrounded by his possessions.

"Let's give him our leftover pizza," we said. He accepted and we headed home.

When would we have eaten those leftovers anyway? What bothered me later was that we



Effie Caldarola
OSV News

simply handed him the pizza and walked on. Could we have spared a few moments to talk to him as one person to another? We had time, we were not in a dangerous place, and he, an old man sitting on the street with a pizza box, was hardly a threat.

Pope Francis once said we should give to everyone who asks. This was in response to someone that suggested money might be used on alcohol, cigarettes or drugs. The pope implied that simple humanity overrode those judgmental concerns.

But if you live or work in a big city, you're probably overwhelmed by need at every street corner, every intersection. We become inured to need. People become invisible, part of an unhoused "problem," or part of an immigration "crisis," not individual human beings with unique life stories.

In the Gospels of Matthew, Mark and John, Jesus utters the words "the poor you have always with you."

Some people interpret this to mean, "Yeah, there will always be

poor people around." But others see Jesus' emphasis differently. Jesus tells his disciples they must always be with the poor, one with them. That's where a disciple belongs.

It's easy, living in the suburbs or a quiet neighborhood, to forget this.

We can't all go to our Southern border and help the Catholic agencies assisting immigrants. It would be unrealistic to hand money to every person on the street. We individually cannot solve the housing crisis.

But somewhere in your community, there is a chance to be present to those who struggle. A parish near me hosts lunch for people on the streets three days a week. Many parishes have St. Vincent de Paul societies which provide direct outreach to people in need.

Sometimes I wonder what prevented me from buying that man a good coffee and a croissant. What did I fear? How much would his humanity and my own humanity have benefited from that gesture? He forgot about my passing by immediately, but I remain with the knowledge that it wasn't an opportunity he had missed, but an opportunity I had missed.

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

Cartoon Corner



Bishop Seitz: End human trafficking by tackling root causes collectively

By Gina Christian
OSV News

Ending human trafficking requires collective action in addressing the conditions that cause it, said a U.S. bishop.

"It is incumbent upon all of us to unite in promoting efforts that prevent the evil of human trafficking," said Bishop Mark J. Seitz of El Paso, Texas, chairman of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Committee on Migration, in a statement released Feb. 1.

On Feb. 8, the Catholic Church will mark the International Day of Prayer and Awareness Against Human Trafficking. The observance coincides with the feast of St. Josephine Bakhita, who was born into slavery in 19th-century Sudan and eventually gained her freedom in Italy, where she became a Canossian sister. Since her canonization by St. John Paul II in 2000, she has become the patron saint of human trafficking survivors.

The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops will collaborate with The Catholic University of America in celebrating a Feb. 8 Mass for the occasion, as well as an ecumenical prayer service as a panel discussion on the issue. Details about the event can be found on the website of Justice for Immigrants, a network of Catholic organizations and institutions spearheaded by the U.S. bishops to advocate for immigration reform.

The USCCB Committee on Migration also has supported legislation and policies to protect victims and prevent trafficking, and has urged Congress to pass the Frederick Douglass Trafficking Victims Prevention and Protection Reauthorization Act of 2023. Named for the internationally renowned U.S. abolitionist who himself had escaped slavery, the act would allocate \$241 million annually from 2024-2028 for domestic and international anti-trafficking measures and victim support.

"We ... recognize the important role of governments in addressing the conditions that lead to trafficking, and we remain committed to working with our own government and fellow members of civil society to develop and implement anti-trafficking efforts," said Bishop Seitz in his statement.

In 2021 alone, some 50 million individuals worldwide were in a form of modern slavery, according to the United Nations' International Labor Organization.

The two most common types of human trafficking are forced labor (including sex trafficking) and forced marriage.

In 2021, the Washington-based non-profit Polaris, which operates the U.S. National Human Trafficking Hotline, received more than 10,350 reports involving over 16,550 individual victims — numbers representing "likely only a fraction of the

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CHOSEN
for life

PFEIFER

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animation of pre-born children through every day of gestation. The wonderful truth is that a human being comes into existence at the moment of fertilization. All of the changes that humans experience in utero, all of the miraculous developments, do not change but enhance our humanness. These visuals are windows into the womb that show the development of the unborn child and the brutality of abortion. Human development — life — is a miracle. Various reports indicate that many women who review these terrible visuals of the brutality of abortion of little babies ripped from their mother's womb, change their hearts and minds, that they are altered forever. Abby Johnson, former Planned Parenthood director, strongly points out, "The abortion industry depends on covering up the horrors that take place within its doors. Seeing is believing, and abortion is so horrific that many people simply cannot comprehend the sheer brutality of a baby being dismembered in its mother's womb." A mother who sees the developing baby in the Window to the Womb is the closest a mother can get to the feeling of viewing an ultrasound image outside of a clinical setting. Lila Rose of Live Action stresses that as pro-lifers we must give special

attention to helping parents when they learn that the unborn may have a serious medical condition that could threaten their life and cause suffering. Sadly, in our culture, there is a deep-seated prejudice against children with disabilities. Many hold a sinister belief that it is somehow more humane to destroy these little lives rather than giving them a chance to breathe, grow, and receive the proper medical care they need. The deadly notion that they are better off aborted reflects a shocking disregard for the inherent value of each and every human being in God's eyes irrespective of their physical and cognitive differences. It also reveals a lack of knowledge about the brutal process of abortion itself. We must face a divine truth that all human life is invaluable regardless of medical challenges or diagnoses. We need to applaud and support the recent efforts of 19 attorneys general who have filed a legal brief with the Supreme Court asking the members to uphold the ruling from a federal appeals court that banned mail-order abortions and protects women from then dangerous abortion pills.

A God-given moment for all pro-lifers

This is a God-given moment for all pro-lifers, bishops, priests, deacons, religious, and faithful laity to work together to stop the spread of the deadly abortion pills that are becoming more prevalent and easier to attain, even by

mail. And this is a wonderful pro-life moment guided by the Holy Spirit to show compassion and love by reaching out to mothers, and fathers, who are struggling with an abortion decision. In this radical community of new pro-life efforts, all our actions must be based on prayer and the solid teaching of our Catholic church about the true meaning of human life and the respect that must be shown by all followers of Jesus for one another. This is indeed a God-given moment for all pro-lifers of all religions to unite in love, and Catholic organizations like the Knights of Columbus, Catholic Daughters, Guadalupanas, Knights and Ladies of the Holy Sepulchre, young adult groups, and many others, to be in radical solidarity in prayerful pastoral action guided by the Holy Spirit. Let us not wait to speak clearly and loudly in solidarity that we know that God's Word and his moral law, confirmed by the latest science, considers the unborn as true human persons. We especially need the active presence and participation of pro-life leaders to work with our government officials to promote good human, moral legislation, and to prevent the increase of evil means, like the abortion pill, that promote and protect human life from its very beginning until its natural end as determined by God. God created the human person in the divine image and likeness as the pinnacle of all creation. Human life is a magnificent gift from God and is sacred and invaluable.

ASH WEDNESDAY

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we are repeating a somber, pious act that Catholics have been undergoing for over 1,500 years. As *The Liturgical Year, Septuagesima*, by the Benedictine Abbot Gueranger, written in the middle decades of the 1800s, puts it: "We are entering, today, upon a long campaign of the warfare spoke of by the apostles: forty days of battle, forty days of penance. We shall not turn cowards, if our souls can but be impressed with the conviction that the battle and the penance must be gone through. Let us listen to the eloquence of the solemn rite which opens our Lent. Let us go whither our mother leads us, that is, to the scene of the fall."

D.D. Emmons writes from Pennsylvania.

COZZENS

Continued from Page 17

events along the way with larger processions and Masses at cathedrals, as well as opportunities for service, fellowship and witness talks. It is a pilgrimage of prayer and adoration for our country and an opportunity to witness to the truth of Jesus Christ’s presence among us. This has never been done before, and I believe it will have a profound spiritual impact.

A revival is a work of the Holy Spirit. In a time of revival, as we see in the Old Testament and even at Pentecost, the Holy Spirit comes upon people and brings repentance, conversion, healing and fire for evangelization.

We already see this renewal of the Holy Spirit flowing from the Eucharistic Revival across our country, but July 17-21, 2024, will be a very special moment of grace. Those days will be filled with beautiful, reverent liturgies; inspiring speakers and testimonies; and beautiful opportunities for prayer and adoration.

It will be an encounter, not only with Christ in the Eucharist, but also with the entire U.S. church in all its beautiful diversity. Most of all this will be a moment of mission, when those who attend are inspired and equipped to go back to their parishes and share the beauty and truth of the love of Jesus Christ present in the Eucharist.

Check out the incredible schedule on our website. Since we began planning the National Eucharistic Pilgrimage and the National Eucharistic Congress, I have had in my heart an image I received in prayer. It is an image of Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis filled with tens of thousands of people. And then Jesus Christ, the Lord of the universe, the Lord of our country, truly present in the Blessed Sacrament, is processed in and everyone kneels. As we kneel before him, we beg the Lord to send renewal to our church and our country.

We live in dark times, and Jesus Christ the Light of the World calls us together to set us on fire so we can bear his light to our country. Will you come and show your love for Jesus in the Eucharist? Just think of the graces that will be poured out upon us.

Jesus promised, "When I am lifted up I will draw all people to myself" (Jn 12:32). Come to these Eucharistic Congresses to help us lift up Jesus Christ so all may come to know him.

Bishop Andrew H. Cozzens of Crookston, Minnesota, is the chairman of the National Eucharistic Congress, Inc.

CROWE

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Reapertura de la Catedral de Notre Dame en diciembre

El próximo mes de abril, serán cinco años desde que el mundo se detuvo en seco cuando las llamas devoraron partes de la histórica y querida Catedral de Notre Dame en París. Fue un evento que unió a las naciones en tristeza. El 8 de diciembre de 2024, el mundo se reunirá una vez más, pero esta vez con alegría por la reapertura programada de la catedral. “Nunca nadie ha visto Notre Dame como la veremos nosotros”, dijo a OSV News el padre Olivier Ribadeau Dumas, rector-arcipreste de la catedral, en una entrevista reciente. Es suficiente para que quieras reservar un vuelo a la Ciudad de la Luz para celebrarlo.

10 años de la santidad

El 27 de abril, la Iglesia cumplirá 10 años desde la canonización de los Santos Juan Pablo II y Juan XXIII. Este hito nos ofrece la oportunidad de hacer una pausa y reflexionar sobre estas dos figuras monumentales del siglo XX. “Conocieron sus tragedias, pero no se abrumaron”, dijo el Papa Francisco en la Misa de canonización. “En ellos, Dios fue más fuerte; fue más fuerte la fe en Jesucristo Redentor del

KNICKERBOCKERS

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“Love and sacrifice are closely linked, like the sun and the light. We cannot love without suffering and we cannot suffer without love.” – St. Gianna Beretta Molla (Courage International website).

Chastity, also known as purity, is a virtue related to temperance. It is the holy and habitual self-control of sexual impulses. The mutual attraction of men and women is by God’s design, and the desire of marital relations is a gift to fulfill God’s command to be fruitful and multiply. However, original sin distorts this holy attraction, and the devil exploits man’s sinful inclinations with sexual temptations. Chastity is God’s remedy. By the light of faith we discover chastity as a supernatural virtue (Catholic Culture). “Do you not know that your body is a temple of the holy Spirit within you, which you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you have been purchased at a price. Therefore glorify God in your body” (1 Cor 6:19-20).

Why should someone choose a chaste lifestyle rather than act on their desires and urges for persons of the same sex? The *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 2357, states the following: “basing itself on Sacred Scripture, which presents homosexual acts as acts of grave depravity, tradition has always declared that ‘homosexual acts are intrinsically disordered.’ They are contrary to the natural law. They close the sexual act to the gift of life. They do not proceed from a genuine affective and sexual complementarity. Under no circumstances can they be approved.”

Homosexual acts are disordered love, like other offenses

TRAFFICKING

Continued from Page 18

actual problem," according to the organization's website.

During fiscal year 2022, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security opened 1,373 human trafficking investigations, an increase of more than 260 cases over the previous fiscal year.

The State Department's 2023 Trafficking in Persons Report highlighted three key trends in trafficking: an increase in forced labor, a rise in the use of online scams to target victims and growing numbers of boys and men among those trafficked.

Traffickers typically prey on individuals made vulnerable by economic distress, forced migration, domestic instability or a history of being sexually or physically abused. U.S. Immigrations and Customs Enforcement notes the "complex nature" of trafficking, with perpetrators operating under the radar and victims,

hombre y Señor de la historia; en ellos fue más fuerte la misericordia de Dios que se manifiesta en estas cinco llagas; más fuerte, la cercanía materna de María”. Este año es el momento perfecto para aumentar la devoción a estos dos santos que tuvieron tanto impacto en la Iglesia.

Un nuevo año jubilar

Finalmente, el inicio del año jubilar ordinario 2025, tiempo de gran gracia para la Iglesia, comenzará el 24 de diciembre de 2024, con la apertura de la Puerta Santa en la Basílica de San Pedro. El Papa Francisco ha pedido que los católicos de todo el mundo se preparen para el año jubilar estudiando los documentos del Concilio Vaticano II, especialmente sus cuatro constituciones. El Papa también ha pedido que los católicos inicien un año de oración preparatoria en 2024. Con ese fin, el Dicasterio para la Evangelización publicará próximamente una “serie en profundidad” llamada “Notas sobre la oración” que promoverá “la centralidad de la oración, personal y comunitaria”, según el arzobispo Rino Fisichella, pro-prefecto del dicasterio.

Puede que este año nos enfrentemos a una temporada electoral polémica, pero nunca podremos olvidar cuánto tenemos que esperar con ansias. Que tu 2024 esté lleno de alegría.

Gretchen R. Crowe es la editora en jefe de OSV News.

against chastity: lust, adultery, masturbation, fornication (the sexual act outside of marriage), pornography, prostitution, and rape. These sins are disordered because they are not according to God’s plan, God’s order, for sexual love. They disregard the inherent dignity of persons created in the image and likeness of God and do not contribute to their salvation.

The church, in the name, the person, and the power of Jesus Christ, offers forgiveness, healing, and wholeness through the sacrament of reconciliation. Then through Jesus’ precious Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity in the Eucharist, we are nourished and strengthened to live according to God’s Order.

If you are trying to find purpose, meaning, and love in your life as a practicing homosexual but instead find only confusion, doubt, and emptiness, or if you are discouraged and weary from dealing with your same-sex attraction, or if you are a friend or family member of a practicing homosexual or one who has same-sex attraction and need guidance, prayer, and support, consider calling or emailing one of the Courage and EnCourage contacts in the Diocese of San Angelo. All inquiries are confidential.

Father Mark Woodruff, 432-202-0336, mwoodruff@sanangelodiocese.org

Father Freddy Perez (English and Spanish), 432-520-7394, fperez@sanangelodiocese.org

Father Knick Knickerbocker is a retired priest of the Diocese of San Angelo and the spouse of Sandie Knickerbocker. Father Knickerbocker was ordained in the Catholic Church under the Pastoral Provision, which allows married former priests from Anglican traditions to become Catholic priests.

who often blame themselves, rarely reporting their enslavement. Some victims are mistakenly identified as criminals or undocumented migrants, the agency also said.

In a video message for last year's day of prayer and awareness on the issue, Pope Francis said the "shameful scourge" of human trafficking "disfigures dignity."

"It is incumbent upon all of us to unite in promoting efforts that prevent the evil of human trafficking," said Bishop Seitz in his statement. "I join our Holy Father in inviting the faithful and all people of good will to uphold and affirm human dignity and grow in solidarity with those who are vulnerable to exploitation and have been impacted by this terrible evil of modern-day slavery. Inspired by St. Josephine's life, may we accompany them in the pursuit of justice."

Gina Christian is a multimedia reporter for OSV News. Follow her on X (formerly Twitter) at @GinaJesseReina

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Children from Gaza arrive in Rome for medical treatment

By Cindy Wooden
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY — Ten children from Gaza in need of medical attention arrived in Rome on a military plane late Jan. 29, the first group of young patients who will receive treatment in Italy thanks to the lobbying of the Franciscan Custody of the Holy Land and negotiations involving the governments of Italy, Israel, Palestine and Egypt.

The 10 children and a young man, described as being just over 18 years old, were taken from Rome's Ciampino military airport to the Vatican-run Bambino Gesù pediatric hospital for an initial assessment, Vatican News reported.

The patients include children seriously injured in the ongoing war between Israel and Hamas as well as chronically ill children who can no longer receive the necessary treatment in Gaza because of the war.

Four of the patients will stay at Bambino Gesù while the young man will be treated at St. Camillus Hospital in Rome and the other children will be cared for at hospitals in Genoa, Bologna, and Florence.

The flight was met at Ciampino airport by Father Ibrahim Faltas, vicar of the Franciscan Custody of the Holy Land, along with Italy's foreign minister and the army general who coordinated the airlift.

Awaiting the arrival of the plane, Vatican News said, "Father Faltas did not hold back his emotion at what he described to the Vatican Media as 'a first sign of peace. Peace that needs listening and humility.'"

Gen. Francesco Figliuolo, head of the interforce coordinating team, told reporters at the airport that the Italian government and armed forces studied the possibility of setting up a field hospital in Gaza, but the security situation made that impossible.

The first group of patients, and the parents or guardians accompanying them, crossed from Gaza into Egypt at the Rafah crossing and were taken to a hospital in Cairo in preparation for the flight.

Initial plans are for 100 Palestinian children, who are in dire need of medical care that cannot be provided in Gaza, to be brought to Italy. The Italian military hospital ship, Vulcano, was to set sail Jan. 31 with another 50 to 60 children and their guardians. Another airlift is expected in February.

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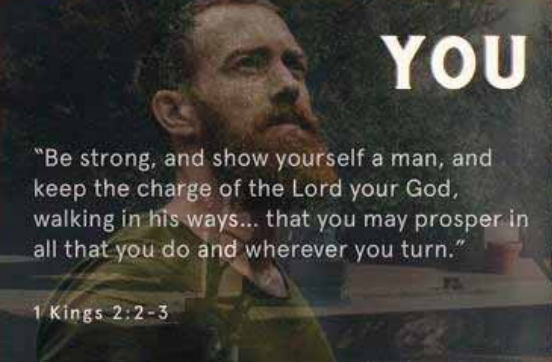
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2024
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