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Walking with Christ

National Eucharistic Pilgrimage visits Diocese of San Angelo

Texas prisoners' witness of faith makes prison visit 'a highlight' of Eucharistic pilgrimage

By Maria Wiering
OSV News

The eight young adults traveling the full route of this year's National Eucharistic Pilgrimage had expected to witness their faith to inmates of James Lynaugh Prison Unit near Fort Stockton, Texas, during their June 9 visit. Instead, those inmates showed their faith to them.

"That was probably a highlight of the pilgrimage," said Ace Acuña, one of the "perpetual pilgrims" journeying with the Eucharist from Indianapolis to Los Angeles.

The pilgrims began the week of June 8 in the Texas dioceses of San Angelo and El Paso, before entering the Diocese of Las Cruces, New Mexico, June 11. They planned to visit the Diocese of Gallup, New Mexico, June 12–13 before heading to California, stopping first in the Diocese of San Bernardino June 14–16.

The pilgrims did not have many details about their state prison visit before their mid-day arrival, Acuña told OSV News June 11. They were told the inmates had committed serious crimes, and the pilgrims were given a list of what not to bring inside, such as mobile phones and watches.

"It was exactly what you would imagine a high-security state prison looks like in the movies, like high watch towers, bar fences, several extensive security checkpoints," Acuña said. "We're going into this very prayerfully. We know we're bringing Jesus into this place, and we're still pilgrims of hope. So, even if we're a little anxious, we're going to step into this, because Jesus ... wants to liberate the captive and visit those in prison."

The pilgrims had hoped to have conversations with the men, but once they arrived, a prison chaplain told them to avoid extended interactions with the inmates. No names, she said. Don't shake hands.

Unsure of what to expect, they processed with the Eucharist in a monstrance into the prison's gymnasium, where around 100 men were seated. The pilgrims were directed to an opposite wall, unable to interact with the inmates. The monstrance was placed on a temporary altar, and a holy hour began.

After initial prayers, two priests and Bishop Michael J. Sis of San Angelo began hearing confessions. About 60 men lined up, Acuña said.

"First I thought they were getting up to



LORETTA FULTON

Leading the procession from the Abilene Convention Center to Frontier Texas are left to right Travis Masga of Abilene, Joshua Basse of Odessa, and Cameron Moore of Abilene.

Procession a blessing for Abilene-area Catholics

By Loretta Fulton

"This is an extraordinary moment in the church's history, which you are living right now."

With those words, Bishop Michael Sis set the tone for the day Saturday, June 7, when the National Eucharistic Pilgrimage came to the Diocese of San Angelo.

It was an extraordinary moment in Abilene, too, when participants walked from the Abilene Convention Center to Frontier Texas, an interactive museum.

"It is such a blessing," said Michelle Velez, a member of Abilene's Sacred Heart parish and a member of the diocesan Eucharistic pilgrimage committee.

"We never thought the Eucharist would come through Abilene."

There was plenty of amazement all around as people from across the diocese gathered, first for a Mass at the convention center, followed by the procession to Frontier Texas and a final blessing before buses took participants back to the convention center. Along the three-quarter-

mile route, water stations were set up, an ambulance was close by, and officers with the Abilene Police Department blocked intersections so that the procession went smoothly. They also provided security in case any protests erupted. Thankfully, that did not occur, much to the relief of Bishop Sis.

"There were more people than we ever expected and it was more peaceful than we ever expected," the bishop said.

The National Eucharistic Pilgrimage began in Indianapolis on May 18 and ended in Los Angeles on June 20. Events were scheduled each day through June 22, concluding with a Mass, Eucharistic procession, and a festival on the 22nd.

Maria de Jesus Juarez and her son, Josue Juarez, 14, were among the approximately 10 people who came for the festivities from Roscoe, located about 50 miles west of Abilene.

"Because I love Jesus and to be strong in my faith," was the motivation behind the trip, she said. "I am so excited."

Maria, her son, and several hundred others who walked from the convention center gathered on the parade grounds of Frontier Texas for a final blessing from Bishop Sis before boarding buses back to the convention center.

The logistics for the day's events were numerous, and the diocesan planning committee first met on Jan. 13 to start the sorting process. Among them was Kevin Pantoja, district deputy for Abilene in the Knights of Columbus. His many duties for the event included ensuring that enough knights were available for the day's events, securing permits, contacting the Abilene Police Department, and renting Frontier Texas and the Abilene Convention Center.

"We have been looking to have something like this in Abilene for some time," he said.

The Mass and pilgrimage concluded a weekend of diocesan events in Abilene, with Bishop Sis attending both. The

From the Bishop’s Desk

Called to Flourish: Pastoral Plan 2025–2028

The Catholic Church is a precious gift given to us by Jesus Christ. It is the mystical body of Christ and the universal sacrament of salvation. Our local diocese and parish communities are called to flourish and grow into our full potential in Christ. For this to happen, we must continually seek to build upon the foundation we have received and increase the effectiveness of our ministry.

As an expression of our shared desire for our church to thrive, we have created a new diocesan pastoral plan for the Diocese of San Angelo. This plan provides a vision and priorities for our ministries for the next three years, from the summer of 2025 through the summer of 2028.

The Process

A pastoral plan is a way for us to work together to discern where God is calling us as disciples of Jesus Christ, and to set goals to move in that direction. Over the past several months, we have consulted the members of our Catholic family around the diocese to determine the needs and the hopes of the people of God in West Texas. We distributed surveys, held public listening sessions at different locations around the diocese, and met with smaller focus groups that highlighted the diversity of our people throughout the vast territory of our diocese. The feedback we received was extremely helpful.

The diocesan Pastoral Plan Committee was instrumental in the consultative process that led to the development of this plan. The members of this committee were Alison Pope, Brenda Maiman, Father Mike Elsner, Bob Moore, Deacon José Gallegos, and Leticia Gallegos.

Catholics from throughout the diocese participated in a Pastoral Plan Leadership Summit in Midland on April 17, 2025, in the gymnasium of Holy Cross Catholic High School. Based upon the compiled input from the consultative process, the participants in this summit reflected on common themes that were emerging from the feedback we received. The reflections from that summit became the foundation for the final plan document, which was prepared by our Pastoral Plan Committee.

The title of our 2025–2028 pastoral plan is “Called to Flourish: Growing into Our Full Potential.” As we take on this plan, we are inspired by the words of St. Paul to the Philippians: “The one who has begun a good work in you will continue to complete it until the day of Christ Jesus” (Phil 1:6).

Mission Statement

The plan includes a new mission statement for our diocese: The mission of the Diocese of San Angelo is to be faithful to Jesus Christ, seek the salvation of souls, build the kingdom of God, and help the Catholic faith to flourish in West Texas.

Vision Statement

The newly revised vision statement of our diocese reads as follows: “We envision the Diocese of San Angelo as a Church with vibrant, welcoming communities in which people understand their identity as children of God, encounter the love of Jesus Christ, support one another in learning and living the Catholic faith, become servant leaders, and reach out in missionary discipleship.”

Pastoral Priorities

Through a summary of the input and feedback received from around the diocese, we have determined four areas as pastoral priorities for the next three years. We will work together to help our diocese, our churches, and our ministries to grow through specific initiatives in each of these areas. The succinct wording of our four priorities is as follows:

- Faith Formation
- Spiritual Renewal
- Vocation Vision
- Effective Communication



Bishop Michael J. Sis

Diocese of San Angelo

Here I will highlight a few of the initiatives to be promoted in each of these four priority areas. The complete chart of initiatives for each of the upcoming three years can be found in the text of the Pastoral Plan on the diocesan website.

Faith Formation

In the first priority, Faith Formation, the goal is to help people of all ages to grow in faith by deepening their relationship with Jesus Christ and by growing in their knowledge of the Catholic faith. The diocese will make available a variety of resources that can be used in parishes and at home. Parishes will advertise and encourage participation in local and diocesan faith formation opportunities. Parishes will also be asked to implement an evangelizing formation program, such as ChristLife or Alpha. We will develop and encourage participation in small Christian communities. We will also foster various intergenerational learning events that bring together families, children, youth, and elders.

Spiritual Renewal

In the second priority, Spiritual Renewal, we will nurture opportunities for spiritual growth through a variety of offerings. The diocese and parishes will distribute information about current offerings for retreats, days of prayer, and other means for spiritual growth and renewal. The diocese will seek to offer formation to train people how to evangelize as missionary disciples, bearing witness to the beauty of knowing Jesus Christ, and helping others to discover the joy of the Gospel.

We will develop a series to teach people how to pray, including various forms of prayer. We will encourage silent preparation before Mass, Eucharistic adoration, the Liturgy of the Hours, local pilgrimages, home prayer spaces, and spiritual book clubs.

Vocation Vision

In the third priority, Vocation Vision, our plan is to cultivate vocations by developing leaders and fostering support for local vocations. Our diocese will partner with the Scanlan Foundation and its Texas 100 initiative to develop a strategic plan to increase vocations to the priesthood.

We will offer training for the development of vocation teams at each parish that will promote all vocations. We will create digital and print resources for all vocations, featuring videos, testimonies, and social media campaigns. In our parishes, we will seek to support the vocation of marriage by implementing marriage enrichment programs such as Choice Wine, Teams of Our Lady, or Two Years After Forever. Our diocese will create a workshop that offers guidance to parents on how to foster openness to God’s call in their children.

Effective Communication

In the fourth and final priority, Effective Communication, we will seek to develop effective avenues of communication at all levels, utilizing a variety of resources and technology, supplementing personal interaction. At both the parish and diocesan levels, we will seek to modernize and update our websites, making them more user-friendly and easier to navigate. We will seek to utilize more effectively such tools as Flocknote, faith development apps, and social media platforms.

We will establish and utilize clear feedback channels for questions, ideas, and concerns in the parishes and the diocese.

We will seek to develop internal channels of communication for various parish ministries to share important updates with each other. We will foster skill refinement and leadership development of parish volunteers, staff, and clergy.

We want all parishes to assess their parish signage, both on the property and on streets or highways, improving or adding signs as needed for clarity, visibility, and attractiveness. We will assess the experience of visitors to the parish, making adjustments as needed to increase an atmosphere of welcome and to facilitate involvement of newcomers in parish life.

Those are the four main areas of focus in our new diocesan pastoral plan: Faith Formation, Spiritual Renewal, Vocation Vision, and Effective Communication. There are, of course, many other areas in the ministry of the church that are not specifically mentioned in this plan. This does not mean that those other areas are unimportant. The goals of this plan represent areas where we will intentionally focus particular energy for the next three years, seeking to grow into our full potential as a diocese. Future pastoral plans may focus on other areas.

Formula for Success

Carrying out this plan will involve much work from dedicated people throughout our diocese. To help the process, there are several things we will be mindful to develop as we pursue these goals. The success of this pastoral plan will rely heavily on two things: an intentional adoption and focus by the people of the diocese, and the approach in implementation by those in leadership, both clergy and laity.

Implementation

Since parishes are by far the most prevalent way Catholics encounter their faith, our Pastoral Plan places primary focus on parishes as the place where the plan is implemented. Parishes are asked to take the four priorities of this diocesan plan and incorporate them into their own local pastoral planning and ministry in the parish.

The following steps are essential for the effective implementation of this pastoral plan:

- Led by the pastor, each parish council shall review the pastoral life of the parish in the light of the diocesan pastoral plan. This review may be done by the pastoral council, or by a committee of that council, or by a pastoral plan implementation committee established by the pastor and reporting to the parish council.
- The parish council shall suggest ways for the diocesan pastoral plan to be applied and implemented in their specific community.
- The council shall assess the progress of the parish regarding all aspects of the implementation of the diocesan pastoral plan.
- A tool shall be developed for parishes to report regularly on how they have implemented this pastoral plan. Reporting shall be done at least once per year.
- In collaboration with relevant diocesan staff members, the diocesan presbyteral council shall assess the progress of the diocese regarding all aspects of the diocesan pastoral plan.

Complete Document

I encourage all Catholics in the Diocese of San Angelo to read the entire eleven-page Pastoral Plan document, “Called to Flourish: Growing into Our Full Potential,” on the diocesan website at www.sanangelodiocese.org. It should be revisited regularly over the next three years, to get the full benefit of its many wonderful ideas.

As we set out upon this journey of growth, let us pray with the words of the concluding prayer from Morning Prayer, Monday Week I, in the Liturgy of the Hours: “Father, may everything we do begin with your inspiration and continue with your saving help. Let our work always find its origin in you and through you reach completion.”

Catholic immigration advocate decries high court ruling allowing third-country deportations

By Kurt Jensen
OSV News

WASHINGTON — A leading Catholic immigration expert expressed outrage over the Supreme Court's June 23 ruling allowing the Trump administration to remove immigrants who lack legal authorization to live and work in the U.S., to countries not specifically identified in their removal orders — known as "third-country removals" — without advance notice.

"It is rather shocking that the court would approve of the removal of a person to a country they do not know and is nowhere near their home country, especially without due process," J. Kevin Appleby,

senior fellow for policy and communications at the Center for Migration Studies of New York, said in a statement to OSV News.

"The countries they are being sent to, such as South Sudan and El Salvador, are dangerous and unstable," he said. "These are still human beings who will be exposed to harm and left stranded in precarious situations."

The brief unsigned order pauses an April ruling by Brian Murphy, a U.S. District Court judge in Boston, which temporarily prohibited the government from sending immigrants to "third-party countries" unless it had ensured that the immigrants would not face torture there. It did

not address the merits of the case.

The plaintiffs, eight men, are all unauthorized immigrants with deportation orders.

These deportations could begin immediately, said Tricia McLaughlin, assistant secretary of the Department of Homeland Security.

"If these activist judges had their way, aliens who are so uniquely barbaric that their own countries won't take them back, including convicted murderers, child rapists, and drug traffickers, would walk free on American streets. DHS can now execute its lawful authority and remove illegal aliens to a country willing to accept them. Fire up the deportation planes."

On June 24, Solicitor General D. John Sauer asked the Supreme Court to "make clear beyond any doubt that the government can immediately proceed with the third-country removals of the criminal aliens from Djibouti."

In a June 23 dissent, Justice Sonia Sotomayor, joined by Justices Elena Kagan and Ketanji Brown Jackson, wrote that the majority was granting the government "emergency relief from an order it has repeatedly defied."

"Apparently," Sotomayor wrote, "the Court finds the idea that thousands will suffer violence in far-flung locales more

Llamados a Florecer: Plan Pastoral 2025–2028

La Iglesia Católica es un don precioso que nos dio Jesu-cristo. Es el Cuerpo Místico de Cristo y el sacramento univer-sal de salvación. Nuestras diócesis y comunidades parroquiales locales están llamadas a florecer y desarrollar todo nuestro potencial en Cristo. Para que esto suceda, debe-mos buscar continuamente construir sobre el fundamento que hemos recibido y aumentar la eficacia de nuestro ministerio. Como expresión de nuestro deseo compartido de que nuestra iglesia prospere, hemos creado un nuevo plan pastoral diocesano para la Diócesis de San Ángelo. Este plan ofrece una visión y prioridades para nuestros ministerios durante los próximos tres años, desde el verano de 2025 hasta el verano de 2028.

El Proceso
<p>Un plan pastoral nos permite trabajar juntos para discernir adónde nos llama Dios como discípulos de Jesucristo y es-tablecer metas para avanzar en esa dirección. Durante los úl-timos meses, hemos consultado a los miembros de nuestra familia católica en la diócesis para determinar las necesidades y las esperanzas del pueblo de Dios en el oeste de Texas. Dis-tribuimos encuestas, realizamos sesiones de escucha pública en diferentes lugares de la diócesis, y nos reunimos con gru-pos focales más pequeños que destacaron la diversidad de nuestra gente en el vasto territorio de nuestra diócesis. Los co-mentarios que recibimos fueron sumamente útil.</p> <p>El Comité Diocesano del Plan Pastoral desempeñó un papel fundamental en el proceso consultivo que condujo al de-sarrollo de este plan. Los miembros de este comité fueron Ali-son Pope, Brenda Maiman, el Padre Mike Elsner, Bob Moore, el diácono José Gallegos, y Leticia Gallegos.</p> <p>Católicos por toda la diócesis participaron en el Taller de Liderazgo del Plan Pastoral en Midland el 17 de abril de 2025, en el gimnasio de la Escuela Secundaria Católica Holy Cross. Con base en las aportaciones recopiladas durante el proceso de consulta, los participantes reflexionaron sobre los temas co-munes que surgieron de los comentarios recibidos. Las reflex-iones de ese taller sirvieron de base para el documento final del plan, preparado por nuestro Comité del Plan Pastoral.</p> <p>El título de nuestro plan pastoral 2025-2028 es “Llamados a Florecer: Desarrollando Nuestro Máximo Potencial”. Al em-prender este plan, nos inspiran las palabras de San Pablo a los Filipenses: “El que comenzó en ustedes la buena obra, la per-feccionará hasta el día de Cristo Jesús” (Fil 1:6).</p>

Declaración de Misión
<p>El plan incluye una nueva declaración de misión para nuestra diócesis: La misión de la Diócesis de San Ángelo es ser fiel a Jesucristo, buscar la salvación de las almas, construir el reino de Dios y ayudar a que la fe católica florezca en el oeste de Texas.</p>
Declaración de Visión
<p>La declaración de visión recientemente revisada de nues-tra diócesis dice lo siguiente: “Visualizamos la Diócesis de San Ángelo como una Iglesia con comunidades vibrantes y acogedoras en las que las personas comprenden su identidad como hijos de Dios, encuentran el amor de Jesucristo, se apoyan mutuamente en el aprendizaje y la vida de la fe cató-lica, se convierten en líderes servidores, y se extienden en el discipulado misionero”.</p>
Prioridades Pastorales

Tras un resumen de las aportaciones y comentarios reci-bidos de toda la diócesis, hemos definido cuatro áreas como prioridades pastorales para los próximos tres años. Trabajare-mos juntos para impulsar el crecimiento de nuestra diócesis, nuestras iglesias, y nuestros ministerios mediante iniciativas específicas en cada una de estas áreas. La redacción sucinta de nuestras cuatro prioridades es la siguiente:

- Formación en la fe
- Renovación espiritual
- Visión Vocacional
- Comunicación eficaz

A continuación, destacaré algunas de las iniciativas que se impulsarán en cada una de estas cuatro áreas prioritarias. El cuadro completo de iniciativas para cada uno de los próximos



tres años se puede encontrar en el texto del Plan Pastoral en el sitio web diocesano.

Formación en la Fe
<p>En la primera prioridad, Formación en la Fe, el objetivo es ayudar a personas de todas las edades a crecer en la fe, profun-dizando su relación con Jesucristo y creciendo en su conoci-miento de la fe católica. La diócesis pondrá a disposición diversos recursos que podrán utilizarse tanto en las parroquias como en casa. Las parroquias promoverán y fomentarán la participación en oportunidades locales y diocesanas de form-ación en la fe. También se les pedirá que implementen un pro-grama de formación evangelizadora, como ChristLife o Alpha. Desarrollaremos y fomentaremos la participación en pequeñas comunidades cristianas. Asimismo, promoveremos diversos eventos de aprendizaje intergeneracional que reúnan a famil-ias, niños, jóvenes, y personas mayores.</p>
Renovación Espiritual
<p>En la segunda prioridad, Renovación Espiritual, fomen-taremos oportunidades de crecimiento espiritual mediante di-versas ofertas. La diócesis y las parroquias distribuirán información sobre las ofertas actuales de retiros, días de ora-ción, y otros medios de crecimiento y renovación espiritual. La diócesis buscará ofrecer formación para capacitar a las per-sonas en la evangelización como discípulos misioneros, dando testimonio de la belleza de conocer a Jesucristo, y ayudando a otros a descubrir la alegría del Evangelio.</p> <p>Desarrollaremos una serie para enseñar a orar, incluyendo diversas formas de oración. Fomentaremos la preparación en silencio antes de la Misa, la Adoración Eucarística, la Liturgia de las Horas, las peregrinaciones locales, los espacios de ora-ción en casa, y los clubes de lectura espiritual.</p>
Visión Vocacional

En la tercera prioridad, Visión Vocacional, nuestro plan es cultivar vocaciones mediante el desarrollo de líderes y el apoyo a las vocaciones locales. Nuestra diócesis colaborará con la Fundación Scanlan y su iniciativa Texas 100 para desar-rollar un plan estratégico que aumente las vocaciones al sacer-docio.

Ofreceremos capacitación para el desarrollo de equipos vocacionales en cada parroquia, que promoverán todas las vo-caciones. Crearemos recursos digitales e impresos para todas las vocaciones, incluyendo videos, testimonios, y campañas en redes sociales. En nuestras parroquias, buscaremos apoyar la vocación matrimonial implementando programas de enrique-cimiento matrimonial como Choice Wine, Team of Our Lady, o Two Years After Forever. Nuestra diócesis creará un taller que ofrecerá orientación a los padres sobre cómo fomentar la apertura al llamado de Dios en sus hijos.

Comunicación Eficaz
<p>En la cuarta y última prioridad, Comunicación Efectiva, buscaremos desarrollar canales de comunicación eficaces a todos los niveles, utilizando diversos recursos y tecnologías que complementen la interacción personal. Tanto a nivel pa-roquial como diocesano, buscaremos modernizar y actualizar nuestros sitios web, haciéndolos más intuitivos y fáciles de navegar. Intentaremos utilizar con mayor eficacia herramien-tas como Flocknote, aplicaciones para el desarrollo de la fe, y plataformas de redes sociales.</p> <p>Estableceremos y utilizaremos canales de retroalimenta-ción transparentes para preguntas, ideas, e inquietudes en las parroquias y la diócesis. Buscaremos desarrollar canales de comunicación internos para que los diversos ministerios parro-</p>

quiales compartan actualizaciones importantes. Fomentaremos el desarrollo de habilidades y el liderazgo de los voluntarios, el personal, y el clero de la parroquia.

Queremos que todas las parroquias evalúen la señaliza-ción de sus parroquias, tanto en sus propiedades como en calles y carreteras, mejorando o añadiendo letreros según sea necesario para mayor claridad, visibilidad, y atracción. Eval-uaremos la experiencia de los visitantes de la parroquia y hare-mos los ajustes necesarios para crear un ambiente acogedor y facilitar la participación de los recién llegados en la vida pa-roquial.

Estas son las cuatro áreas principales de enfoque de nues-tro nuevo plan pastoral diocesano: Formación en la Fe, Ren-ovación Espiritual, Visión Vocacional, y Comunicación Efectiva. Por supuesto, existen muchas otras áreas del ministe-rio de la Iglesia que no se mencionan específicamente en este plan. Esto no significa que estas áreas carezcan de importan-cia. Los objetivos de este plan representan áreas en las que dedicaremos un esfuerzo especial durante los próximos tres años, buscando alcanzar nuestro máximo potencial como diócesis. Los planes pastorales futuros podrían centrarse en otras áreas.

Fórmula para el Éxito
<p>Llevar a cabo este plan implicará un gran esfuerzo por parte de personas dedicadas de toda nuestra diócesis. Para fa-cilitar el proceso, desarrollaremos con atención varios aspec-tos a medida que perseguimos estos objetivos. El éxito de este plan pastoral dependerá en gran medida de dos factores: la adopción y el enfoque intencionales de la comunidad dio-cesEña, y el enfoque en la implementación por parte de los líderes, tanto clérigos como laicos.</p>
Implementación
<p>Dado que las parroquias son, con mucho, la vía más fre-cuente para que los católicos se encuentren con su fe, nuestro Plan Pastoral se centra principalmente en ellas como el lugar donde se implementa. Se les pide a las parroquias que adopten las cuatro prioridades de este plan diocesano y las incorporen en su propia planificación pastoral y ministerio parroquial local.</p> <p>Los siguientes pasos son esenciales para la implementa-ción efectiva de este plan pastoral:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Dirigido por el párroco, cada consejo parroquial revis-ará la vida pastoral de la parroquia a la luz del plan pastoral di-ocesano. Esta revisión podrá ser realizada por el consejo pastoral, por un comité de dicho consejo, o por un comité de implementación del plan pastoral establecido por el párroco y que informe al consejo parroquial.El consejo parroquial sugerirá formas para que el plan pastoral diocesano se aplique e implemente en su comunidad específica.El consejo evaluará el progreso de la parroquia en todos los aspectos de la implementación del plan pastoral di-ocesano.Se desarrollará una herramienta para que las parroquias informen periódicamente sobre la implementación de este plan pastoral. Los informes se presentarán al menos una vez al año.En colaboración con los miembros del personal dioce-sano pertinente, el consejo presbiteral diocesano evaluará el progreso de la diócesis con respecto a todos los aspectos del plan pastoral diocesano.
Documento Completo
<p>Animo a todos los católicos de la Diócesis de San Ángelo a leer el documento completo del Plan Pastoral de once pági-nas, “Llamados a Florecer: Desarrollando Nuestro Máximo Potencial”, disponible en el sitio web diocesano <i>www.sa-nangelodiocese.org</i> . Deberían revisarlo periódicamente du-rante los próximos tres años para aprovechar al máximo sus numerosas y maravillosas ideas.</p> <p>Al emprender este camino de crecimiento, oremos con las palabras de la oración final de la Oración de la Mañana, Lunes de la Semana I, de la Liturgia de las Horas: “Dios Padre Nues-tro, que todo lo que hagamos comience con tu inspiración y continúe con tu ayuda salvadora. Que nuestra obra siempre tenga su origen en ti y por ti alcance su plenitud.”</p>

Defensor católico de la inmigración denuncia fallo de la Corte Suprema que permite deportaciones a un tercer país

Por Kurt Jensen
OSV News

WASHINGTON — Un destacado ex-perto católico en inmigración expresó su in-dignación por el fallo de la Corte Suprema del 23 de junio que permite al gobierno de Trump expulsar sin previo aviso a inmigrantes sin autorización legal para vivir y trabajar en EE.UU. a países no identificados específica-mente en sus órdenes de expulsión --conoci-dos como "expulsiones a terceros países".

"Resulta bastante impactante que el tribu-nal apruebe la expulsión de una persona a un país que no conoce y que está lejos de su país

de origen, especialmente sin el debido proceso", dijo J. Kevin Appleby, investigador principal de políticas y comunicaciones del Centro de Estudios Migratorios de Nueva York, en una declaración a OSV News.

"Los países a los que se les envía, como Sudán del Sur y El Salvador, son peligrosos e inestables", añadió. "Siguen siendo seres hu-manos que estarán expuestos a daños y aban-donados a su suerte en situaciones precarias".

Esta breve orden, sin firmar, suspende un fallo de abril emitido por Brian Murphy, juez de la Corte de Distrito de EE.UU. en Boston, que prohibía temporalmente al gobierno en-viar inmigrantes a "terceros países" a menos

que se asegurara de que no serían torturados allí. No abordó el fondo del caso.

Los demandantes — ocho varones — son inmigrantes no autorizados con órdenes de de-portación.

Estas deportaciones podrían comenzar de inmediato, declaró Tricia McLaughlin, sub-secretaria de Asuntos Públicos del Departamento de Seguridad Nacional (DHS por sus siglas en inglés). "Si estos jueces activistas se salieran con la suya, extranjeros tan brutales que sus propios países no los aceptarían, in-cludiendo asesinos convictos, violadores de menores y narcotraficantes, andarían libres por las calles estadounidenses. El DHS ahora

puede ejercer su autoridad legal y expulsar a los inmigrantes indocumentados a un país dis-puesto a aceptarlos. ¡Que se pongan en mar-cha los aviones de deportación!".

El 24 de junio, el Procurador General, D. John Sauer, solicitó a la Corte Suprema que "aclarara más allá de toda duda que el go-bierno puede proceder de inmediato a la ex-pulsión a terceros países de los extranjeros delincuentes (que actualmente se encuentran en) Yibuti".

En una opinión discrepante del 23 de junio, la Jueza Sonia Sotomayor, junto con las

CALENDARS

Please pray for our clergy



July

- 2

Rev. Bernard Degan, CM (2001) – D
- 2

Deacon Floyd Frankson (D — 1992)
- 2

Rev. Jeevan Kamalapuram (B)
- 4

Rev. Msgr. Charles Dvorak (D — 1963)
- 4

Deacon Michael Kahlig (B)
- 5

Rev. Ray Wilhelm, OMI (D — 2006)
- 5

Rev. Joseph Ogbonna (B)
- 6

Deacon Gary Rhodes (B)
- 7

Deacon Alex Sosa (B)
- 10

Rev. Emil J. Gerlich (D — 1969)
- 12

Rev. Michael Udegbumam (O — 1981)
- 14

Deacon Joél Gutierrez (B)
- 14

Deacon Bobby Wright, Jr. (B)
- 17

Deacon Andrew Davis (B)
- 17

Rev. Tony Franco (B)
- 17

Deacon Enrique Martinez (B)
- 17

Rev. George Varakukala (D — 2020)
- 18

Deacon Gerald Schwalb (D — 2022)
- 19

Rev. Msgr. Andrew Marthaler (D — 1984)
- 19

Bishop Michael Sis (O — 1986)
- 21

Rev. Michael Rodriguez (B)
- 22

Bishop Thomas J. Drury (D — 1992)
- 25

Deacon Abel Campos (D — 2002)
- 26

Deacon José Rosales (D — 2000)
- 27

Rev. Joe Barbieri (B)
- 27

Rev. John Kuehner (O — 2003)
- 27

Deacon Victor Lopez (B)
- 27

Deacon Scott Randolph (B)
- 28

Rev. Frank Chavez (B)
- 29

Deacon Jesus Napoles (B)
- 31

Deacon Ignacio Villa (B)

August

- 2

Rev. Francis Njoku (O — 1997)
- 4

Rev. Michael Rodriguez (O — 1990)
- 4

Deacon José Villagrana (B)
- 7

Rev. Andrew DeMuth (D — 1969)
- 10

Rev. Michael Barbarossa, OFM (D — 1981)
- 11

Rev. Francis Mysliwicz, OMI (D — 1975)
- 12

Rev. David Herrera (O — 1989)
- 12

Rev. Ted McNulty (D — 2006)
- 13

Deacon Sergio Cedillo (B)
- 14

Rev. Bernard Binversie (D — 1992)
- 15

Rev. Sam Homsey, CPPS (D — 2004)
- 15

Rev. Fabian Rosette, OCarm (O — 1980)
- 15

Rev. Johnrita Adegboyega (O — 2000)
- 17

Deacon Orlando Mendoza (B)
- 17

Deacon Daniel Vaughan (B)
- 18

Rev. Serafin Avenido (B)
- 19

Rev. Msgr. Arnold A. Boeding (D — 1989)
- 21

Deacon William Callan (D — 1988)
- 21

Deacon Encinencio Samaniego (D — 2008))
- 22

Rev. Charles Larue (D — 2005)
- 22

Deacon Enrique Martinez (O — 1976)
- 22

Deacon Jesse Martinez (B)
- 22

Deacon Robert Selvera (D — 2023)
- 23

Rev. Raymond Gallagher (D — 2010)
- 23

Deacon Eufracio Hernandez (D — 1998)
- 23

Rev. Charles A. Knapp (D — 1978)
- 24

Deacon Edward Gonzalez (B)
- 24

Rev. Bernard Verbrugge, OMI (D — 1996)
- 25

Rev. Arokiadoss Arokiasamy (B)
- 27

Deacon Mike Medina (B)
- 28

Deacon Mario Calderón (D — 1998)
- 29

Rev. Msgr. Francis X. Frey (D — 2014)
- 30

Deacon Mike Hernandez (B)

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

July 2025

- 5–6

MIDLAND, Our Lady of Guadalupe, weekend Masses
- 7–11

SAN PEDRO SULA, Honduras, Diocesan Hermanamiento Partnership Assembly
- 12

SAN ANGELO, Holy Angels, Confirmation Mass at 5:30 p.m.
- 13

CARLSBAD, St. Therese, Confirmation Mass at 9:00 a.m.
- 15

SAN ANGELO, Diocesan Pastoral Center, Vocation Team meeting at 1:00 p.m.
- 17

SAN ANGELO, Diocesan Pastoral Center, Liturgical Commission meeting at 1:00 p.m.
- 26

SAN ANTONIO, Final Profession Mass of Sister Christina Chávez, CDP, at 2:00 p.m.
- 29

SAN ANGELO, San Rafael Expeditions board meeting at 4:00 p.m.
- 31

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

August 2025

- 4–6

SAN ANGELO, Christ the King Retreat Center, Seminarian Summer Gathering
- 4

STANTON, St. Joseph, Mass of 35th anniversary of ordination of Fr. Michael Rodriguez at 6:00 p.m.
- 6

MIDLAND, Bush Convention Center, Benefit Concert

- 7

for Project Rachel at 7:00 p.m.
- 7

ODESSA, St. Mary’s Central Catholic School, Day of Reflection at 9:00 a.m.
- 9

LAREDO, Celebration of 25th anniversary of diocese at 10:00 a.m.
- 10

SAN ANGELO, Christ the King Retreat Center, Mass of diaconate formation at 11:00 a.m.
- 10

MIDLAND, St. Stephen, Convocation Mass for Holy Cross Catholic High School at 5:00 p.m.
- 12

SAN ANGELO, Diocesan Pastoral Center, Catholic Charitable Foundation Board meeting at 10:00 a.m.
- 14

SAN ANGELO, Diocesan Pastoral Center, Priest Personnel Board meeting at 10:30 a.m.
- 17

STANTON, St. Joseph, Confirmation Mass at 12:00 noon
- 22

SAN ANGELO, Christ the King Retreat Center, Mass for deacon retreat at 7:00 p.m.
- 23

SAN ANGELO, Christ the King Retreat Center, Mass for deacon retreat at 11:00 a.m.
- 24

SAN ANGELO, Christ the King Retreat Center, Mass for deacon retreat at 11:00 a.m.
- 25

SAN ANGELO, Christ the King Retreat Center, Diocesan Mission Council meeting at 4:00 p.m.
- 26

SAN ANGELO, Diocesan Pastoral Center, Priestly Life & Formation Committee meeting at 11:00 a.m.
- 29–31

PIEDRAS NEGRAS, Mexico, Tex-Mex Border Bishops meeting



Christ the King Retreat Center

July 2025

- 4

CKRC Closed in Observance of Independence Day
- 10–13

Women’s Walk to Emmaus
- 14

Heart of Mercy Prayer Group
- 16–20

Small Town Teen ACTS
- 23

DOSA Staff Meeting
- 24–27

Boys’ Chrysalis
- 28

Heart of Mercy Prayer Group

August 2025

- 1–3

Engaged Encounter
- 3–6

Seminarian Summer Gathering
- 8–10

Deacon Formation
- 11

CRE/CYM Meeting
- 11

Heart of Mercy Prayer Group
- 14–17

Men’s Walk to Emmaus
- 22–24

DOSA Deacon Formation 1
- 25

Heart of Mercy Prayer Group

Special Collections

July 20, 2025
Honduran Partnership Dioceses

This annual collection in the Diocese of San Angelo benefits the two Honduran dioceses that are part of our diocesan Hermanamiento partnership: the Archdiocese of San Pedro Sula and the Diocese of La Ceiba.

August 4, 2025
Diocesan Priests’ Retirement

The priests of the Diocese of San Angelo give a lifetime of service to the people of God in West Texas. This special collection lets you give back by ensuring the diocese is able to support the needs of our diocesan priests in their retirement.

Hermanamiento update:
A season of mission and solidarity

By Vince Mangano

This is a remarkable season for our Hermanamiento team. As this article goes to press, some of the most exciting developments are taking place on the ground in Honduras. Though our deadlines arrive before the mission concludes, we’re pleased to share this timely update.

The Diocese of San Angelo’s first-ever medical mission to Honduras is currently underway. A team of 21 dedicated volunteers from across the diocese is providing much-needed medical care to two rural communities. The mission’s first phase is centered in Roatán, an island known for its cultural mosaic of Indigenous, African, European, and mestizo influences. The second phase continues in Esparta. Esparta offers a glimpse into the heart of Honduras’ history and its resilient people. Established in the 19th century during an era of agricultural expansion, the town flourished as part of regional efforts to cultivate fertile lowlands and connect inland settlements to Caribbean trade routes — many of which were shaped by American fruit companies during the early 20th century.

As the medical mission concludes, the Hermanamiento Asamblea delegation from San Angelo will arrive in San Pedro Sula for the annual gathering of four dioceses. This tradition, initiated in 2001 in response to St. John Paul II’s call to deepen communion among dioceses, continues to inspire a shared commitment to faith, evangelization, and solidarity. Together, our dioceses strive to keep the flame burning in faith, communion, mission, and solidarity.

The people of Honduras — in the mainland and the islands — are defined by their strength, hospitality, and deep-rooted family and community bonds. Despite ongoing challenges, they remain proud of their cultural heritage, working to preserve their traditions while striving for a better future. The communities of Roatán and Esparta exemplify the enduring spirit and resilience of the Honduran people. I look forward to sharing the experiences of our missionaries in an article soon.

This July 19th & 20th, our diocese will once again hold its annual second collection in support of our sisters and brothers in Honduras. We invite you to give generously and join us in strengthening these ties of faith and fellowship.

219,150 hours with Jesus: Abilene chapel celebrates 25 years of adoration

By Loretta Fulton

June 29 is a special day in the life of the Perpetual Adoration Chapel, located next door to Sacred Heart Catholic Church in Abilene.

On June 29, 2000, the chapel was dedicated, with Bishop Michael Pfeifer presiding and Father Robert Bush, pastor at the time, adding his prayers. Bush said he looked forward to the day when the chapel would be used by all Abileneans.

“We hope to be a blessing to the whole town,” he said.

Bush, who was at Sacred Heart long enough to see that blessing come true many times over, died on Jan. 17, 2025, at age 81.

The chapel is located in what was once Green Electric Shop. After extensive renovation, it opened for its new purpose in 2000 and has been a beacon since then. Fast forward 25 years to Sunday, June 29, 2025, when current Bishop Michael Sis presided over a Mass at Sacred Heart, followed by a procession to the chapel for benediction, and a dinner in the parish hall, complete with multiple forms of entertainment.

In the Mass, Sis urged everyone to sign up for an hour or two each week to pray in the chapel. The chapel is open 24 hours a day, seven days a week for adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. Sis reminded young people that the chapel is a good place to sit and ask a question about their future. Just as St. Francis of Assisi once asked what God expected of him, young people today must ask the same question, Sis said.

“Lord, what do you want me to do?” Sis quoted St. Francis.

Among the guests for the activities was Margarita Argumaniz, who has visited the chapel since it opened in 2000 and has been volunteering the past five years to pray in the chapel one to two hours at a time, three days a week.

People who come to the chapel to pray or meditate frequently tell her about the good things that have happened to them after their visit. She, too,



LORETTA FULTON

Bishop Sis, clergy, and altar servers stand outside the Perpetual Adoration Chapel next to Sacred Heart Catholic Church in Abilene. The chapel was dedicated on June 29, 2000, and was the site of solemn exposition and benediction on its 25th anniversary June 29, 2025.

knows the value of sitting quietly in the chapel.

“We have a lot to be thankful for,” she said. “We are blessed to have the chapel here.”

Father Albert Ezeanya, a native of Nigeria, was appointed parish priest at Sacred Heart in 2019. He began his first day on the job in prayer in the chapel. An article in the *Abilene Reporter-News* told about his prayer life and how much the chapel meant to him and others who sought a quiet place for prayer.

“When they come to the chapel, they are healed,” he said.

Charlotte Starbuck of Merkel took special interest in the joyous ceremonies in late June. She created the leaded stained-glass windows for the chapel, with assistance from Irene Lopez, a member of Sacred Heart.

Starbuck learned the process when her church in Merkel, Our Mother of Mercy Mission, was located in a temporary metal building. She didn’t like the plain glass windows and heard the voice of the Lord speak to her — she needed to do something about those windows.

“When the Holy Spirit moves you, you must pay attention,” she said.

So she took a one-week class in how to make leaded stained-glass panels and outfitted the 12 windows in the metal building. Since then, the congregation has moved into a larger, permanent building.

When Starbuck created the windows, first for the Merkel church and next for the adoration chapel, she did the work in a furniture store that she and her husband owned. No matter where she worked, Starbuck kept feeling the Holy Spirit nudging her to complete the work.

“I just knew I had to do that,” she said.

‘World’s smartest man’ professes Christian faith on social media

By Amira Abuzeid
Catholic News Agency

The man with the “highest reported IQ in the world” has gained attention worldwide after publicly proclaiming his Christianity on social media.

On June 17, South Korean scientist YoungHoon Kim, who claims he has an IQ of 276, the highest IQ ever recorded, posted on X: “As the world’s highest IQ record holder, I believe that Jesus Christ is God, the way and the truth and the life.”

His post received 14 million views and a quarter-million likes as of Thursday, June 19.

Kim, responding to the tremendous popularity of his original post, said in another X post on June 19 that he “will

use this opportunity to lead many souls to God.”

“Amen. Christ is my logic,” Kim, 36, said in another response to a commenter on X.

According to Kim, his claim to being the world’s highest IQ record holder has been verified by organizations such as World Memory Championships, World Memory Sports Council (both of which Kim is affiliated with), the Giga Society, Mensa, and Official World Record (not affiliated with the Guinness Book of World records, which stopped recognizing the “Highest IQ” category in 1990, citing the unreliability of IQ tests for designating a single record holder).

However, some have questioned Kim’s credentials and claims, saying there are no accepted IQ evaluation pro-

ocols that allow for an IQ of 276 and that Kim is associated with several of the organizations that purportedly identified him as the “world’s smartest man,” even writing some of the IQ tests himself.

Kim stated in February on X: “God exists. 100%,” and recently suggested: “Our consciousness is not just brain activity. It may be quantum information — something that continues after death.”

The Catholic Church teaches that God’s existence can be known through reason alone, as stated in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (No. 36): “God, the first principle and last end of all things, can be known with certainty from the created world by the natural light of human reason.”

This doctrine, rooted in Vatican

Council I’s *Dei Filius*, emphasizes that human reason, by observing creation’s order, can ascertain God’s existence, affirming that “God ... can be known with certitude by the natural light of human reason from created things.”

Kim is founder and CEO of NeuroStory, an organization dedicated to finding “AI-powered brain health solutions” and backed by the South Korean government.

He also founded the United Sigma Intelligence Association and is on the board of Lifeboat Foundation, which promotes scientific advancements while mitigating human risks from technologies like AI.

- - -

Amira Abuzeid is a senior editor at Catholic News Agency.

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 Angelo 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 Angelo, 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).

Final vows: How I got here

By Sister Christina Chávez, CDP

Sister Christina Chávez is a sister with the Congregation of Divine Providence of San Antonio, Texas.

I am from the Diocese of San Angelo and graduated from Crane High School. Though I am the product of a devout Catholic family that is active in the local parish, I did not have the religious life on my radar as an option for my future. I grew up attending faith formation classes for my sacraments and continued until high school graduation. In college at Texas Tech University, I participated in the Catholic Student Association of my campus, eventually joining in on the Raider Awakening retreat. Only then did the thought of “becoming a nun” begin to surface, though I didn’t believe that this was something a person could do in today’s world.

I was unfamiliar with the religious life and had only an impression of sisters from stereotypes in movies or on TV. So, initially I didn’t attempt to pursue the calling — rather, the calling pursued me. I found the CDP Sisters just by picking up an information card at St. Stephen Parish in Midland. That was in 2013, and it’s when I met Sister Elsa Garcia, Sister Joyce Detzel, and Sister Estela Guadalupe for dinner in Midland *the day* Sister Elsa was moving into town. Shortly after, she invited me to join her when she returned to the convent so that I could visit the place and get to know some of the sisters. After a few visits, I knew I wanted to know more about these CDP sisters and religious life, so in 2013 my formation for religious life began.

First, I became an affiliate (some congregations call this a candidate) shortly after I moved from Crane to San Antonio to live alongside the CDPs. The next phase of entry is the pre-novitiate, which some communities refer to as the postulancy. During those two years I was a middle school math teacher at a San Antonio Catholic school and was able to live and pray in community with the sisters. These phases help for the discerner to get to know the congregation as well as for the community to get to know the discerning woman. After these two years, I felt called into the next step, to deepen my commitment to the religious life by entering the novitiate. This is the phase where I was no longer working or earning my own money. The novitiate is when I fully immersed myself into the history of the congregation, learned about the vows and what it means to live a life as a vowed person in religious life — it is also when I began going by “Sister.” The novitiate includes lots of time for reading and reflection, and of course — prayer! While I was a novice, I deepened my connection to the congregation by serving in new ways, such as a sacristan once a week for our liturgies as well as a cantor for our larger Masses. I was also given the opportunity to live with our

sisters in our Mexico region during the novitiate. For three months, I was able to shadow every one of our sisters’ roles and came to find a love for working with young adults.

As I finished the novitiate, I requested some time to intern at the campus ministry of our university, Our Lady of the Lake University, which is on the same grounds as our convent. That semester was a time of great enrichment and growth, and I truly felt I had found a calling to work with college students. The next step is for one to commit to professing vows for the first time. That’s a big decision that comes through evaluation — for myself as well as my novice director, plus an interview with the superior general to receive approval. It was 2018 when I got to this point and I said my first vows that summer. This time for a sister is referred to as “temporary profession” because the sister’s vows are said for one year at a time and will expire at the end of that year. This means every year, the sister lives her vows and will evaluate whether or not she feels called to continue in the religious life. Every year that I chose to continue, I would follow the procedure again — self-evaluation, formation director, superior general — in order to request to renew my vows. Once again, in this process, the community is also discerning whether I am a good fit for them as well. After several years in temporary profession, a sister is able to make a permanent, life-long

commitment with a “perpetual profession,” also known as “final vows,” to which she professes to live for the rest of her life. For me, after twelve years in this formation process, this is the step I will be taking this summer. In the month of July, Sister Melissa Cessac and I are both preparing for our final vows by returning to the convent for a month of “sabbatical.” After my perpetual profession, I will return to serving as campus minister for Midland and Odessa and live in community with Sister Kate Fitzgerald.

I have worked for the Diocese of San Angelo for two years as the campus minister serving college students in Odessa and Midland. I enjoy serving young adults in this critical time in their lives. I strive to create welcoming spaces where students are encouraged to build community and grow in faith.

Sister Christina’s Mass of Perpetual Profession will be on Saturday, July 26, 2025, in San Antonio. St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish in Odessa will also host a Mass of Thanksgiving with her family on Aug. 23, 2025.

If you plan to attend, please RSVP at <https://bit.ly/CDPVows-srccch>. If you plan to attend and are a young woman interested in a possible vocation to the religious life, also let Sister Christina know at 432-940-3714.

Sisters of the
Congregation of Divine Providence
joyfully announce the
Perpetual Vows of
Sister Christina Chávez, CDP

Mass of Religious Profession
July 26, 2025
2:00 pm
Sacred Heart
Conventual Chapel
San Antonio, TX

We will also celebrate in
West Texas:
Mass of Thanksgiving
August 23, 2025
5:00 pm
St Elizabeth Ann Seton
Odessa, TX

Charismatic Corner: A Pentecost to remember!

By Dee Halbert
DOSA Catholic Charismatic Renewal
Service Committee

Deacon Ralph Poyo’s dynamic talks at our recent Diocesan Charismatic Conference, “Clothed with Power from on High,” held at Abilene’s Sacred Heart Parish were definitely anointed. They provided practical and understandable clarity as to the working of the Holy Spirit as related to our body-soul-spirit.

Based in solid Catholic theology, he was able to help us visualize and offer solid advice on how to be more effectively guided by the Holy Spirit in our everyday lives, most especially in our Christian mandate to evangelize; also, how the Holy Spirit builds our faith, and the importance of baptism in the Spirit.

The Charismatic Mass Friday evening celebrated by Bishop Michael Sis with Father Albert Ezeanya as co-celebrant was full of the joy of the Lord. The bishop’s homily and teaching on the different types of love and the love between Jesus and Peter cut us all to the heart. We were all encouraged and “inebriated in the Spirit” by the end of Mass.

Saturday was spent with Deacon Ralph instructing us on going deeper in hearing the voice of the Lord in the power of the Spirit; also, how important sacramental confession is to remove sin that blocks the Holy Spirit. Repentance and confession keep the door of our hearts open to the Spirit to grow in love and in intimate relationship to the Holy Spirit, Lord Jesus, and the Father. He encouraged us to live heaven now! To become one with the Lord and one another through the Holy Spirit and the Eucharist.

Before concluding, we had the opportunity to lay hands on those in need of prayer and ask for healing and deliverance and renewal in the Holy Spirit. The Lord heard our prayers and answered them. It was a beautiful time of grace for all. We concluded in time so that many were able to participate in

the beautiful National Eucharistic Pilgrimage Mass at the Abilene Convention Center and Eucharistic procession. It was definitely a Pentecost weekend to remember!

Thank you to Father Albert and Abilene’s Sacred Heart Parish for hosting the conference. To Lidia Escobedo and The Vacations Committee, who supplied greetings and refreshments on Friday evening; Mary Soliz and The Women of Sacred Heart, who supplied greetings and refreshments Saturday Morning; Tony Rosales and Sacred Heart Knights of Columbus, who supplied our delicious lunch; Hearts of Praise provided praise and worship. Thank you to all the DOSA Charismatic Renewal Service Committee Members for their time and effort in organizing and staffing the annual conference.

Some of the prophetic words and responses to the Charismatic Conferences were:

“Friday evening during worship I received a word from the Lord. It came during one of the songs, the words, ‘This time is in his hands.’ My sense was the time at the conference for each attendee was God’s plan, but even larger. The ‘time’ of our lives, no matter what phase we are in is truly in his hands. It was a message of hope and confidence in the presence of Jesus, by the power of the Holy Spirit, walking with us in all circumstances.

“Deacon Ralph is an experienced speaker with good humor. I enjoyed his presentations. I also appreciated Bishop Sis’ description and sharing on the exchange between Peter and the Lord, ‘Do you *agape* love me?’ ‘I *phileo* love you Lord.’

“It was a wonderful experience for me to see old friends and make new ones. During the time to receive prayer the Lord gave me the opportunity to share a deep concern I have and be prayed over by Catherine Morrow. It was a blessing to me.

“The food was excellent and plentiful!

Thanks to the Knights!”
— Shirley Rocha

“An Episcopalian minister, Dennis Bennett, taught distinction of body, soul, and spirit way back in the ‘70s. I believed it then and I believe it now! The soul has been mistakenly thought of as the spirit! I was so thankful to hear Deacon Poyo speak this truth. Thank you all for your wonderful preparation for our conference, everyone working together. We were truly blessed to have you at Sacred Heart. I’m looking forward to discerning where we go from now!”
— Gail Waldmann

“A quote from Deacon Ralph: ‘you don’t know what you don’t know.’ Our growth in knowledge is greater than our growth in faith. A great invitation to know who is calling us to greater faith.”
— Sandy Seidel

Go to CatholicCharismatic.com to find San Angelo diocesan prayer groups and events.



October 10-12

Houston, TX

HOLY SPIRIT 2025

National Leaders Meeting

Register Today and Save!

Learn More & Register at www.PentecostTodayUSA.org

Awards given to exemplary ministers and disciples

By Alison Pope

Our words have power. They can tear people down or build them up. One of the ways we can build people up is by recognizing their contributions. While there are times that a simple “thank you” is not enough, it is still necessary for us to utter those simple words often and generously.

Every spring, the Office of Evangelization and Catechesis offers an opportunity for people of the diocese to be recognized with a little more than a simple “thank you.” Parishes are asked to nominate youth, young adults, and adults to be recognized for the ways they contribute to their parish and civic communities, as well as the larger church. While a certificate or an award may not seem like much, it is still a way we can affirm those who choose to contribute to the life of the church. This year, awards and certificates were presented at the recipients’ home parish.

This year, Alice Ramirez of St. Mary’s Parish in Odessa was awarded a certificate of appreciation for her work as a catechist.

Certificates of recognition were awarded to youth and young adults who have been identified as admirable examples of somebody who is demonstrating leadership in their communities and setting an example in how they live out their faith. The following youth and young adults were recognized:

- Nayheli Briones (St. Joseph, San Angelo)
- Brinin Nethery (St. Ann, Midland)
- Ava Ramos (Holy Family, Abilene)
- Miriam Mata (St. Joseph, San Angelo)
- Kaitlynn Chick (St. Ann, Midland)

In addition to certificates of appreciation and certificates of recognition, we presented five awards this year: two youth

awards, one young adult award, and two adult awards. The Timothy Award is presented to one youth in the diocese, grades 7–10, who exhibits leadership in their parish, school, and civic community settings, demonstrates Gospel values through service to others, and witnesses to their faith by living as a disciple of Christ, setting an example in Catholic morals and integrity. The 2025 Timothy Award has been awarded to Daniel Sanchez from Holy Family, Abilene. As shared by the person who nominated him, “Daniel displays great faith and leadership through both his words and actions. He is always willing to help others in need, often putting others before himself without hesitation. His deep relationship with Christ is admirable, and his desire to follow him is truly commendable. Daniel’s love for Christ and strong faith make him a true disciple of Jesus.”

The Christus Vivit Award is presented to one youth in the diocese, grades 11–12, who exhibits leadership in parish, school, and larger community settings, demonstrates Gospel values through service to others, and lives and models what it means to be a missionary disciple in the world today. The 2025 Christus Vivit Award has been awarded to Emma Mendoza of St. Mary’s, Odessa. As shared by the nominator, “Emma is a concrete example of a young person who wants to be like Jesus, using him as her model and source of inspiration as a young servant. She is seen as a source of hope and potential.”

This year we added a new award to our lineup. The Blessed Chiara Award is awarded to one young adult from the diocese, ages 19–35, who lives and models what it means to be a missionary disciple in the world today and exhibits leadership in both faith and civic community set-

tings. The 2025 Blessed Chiara Award has been awarded to Elijsha Hernandez of Holy Family, Abilene. As shared by the person who nominated him, “Elijsha is a true example of what it means to live as a disciple of Christ. Through his consistent service, leadership, and humility, he inspires others to grow in faith and live with purpose. He gives generously of his time, talents, and resources, always putting others before himself.”

The Companion on the Journey Award for Catechetical Ministry is presented to an adult or couple who has shown excellence in catechetical ministry as reflected in the Directory for Catechesis, shows a commitment to ongoing education and formation, and shows outstanding leadership at the local, diocesan, and/or national level. The 2025 Companion on the Journey Award for Catechetical Ministry has been awarded to Ron and Christe Gasser of St. Ann, Midland. As shared in their nomination, “Ron and Christe have spent over 30 years faithfully living out their Catholic faith and serving their parish community with open hearts. Time and time again, they’ve said “yes” to helping others, generously giving their time and energy across countless ministries. Ron and Christe truly embody what it means to be the body of Christ, bringing the love of Christ to so many, and their presence continues to be a bright and inspiring light in our parish.”

The Companion on the Journey Award for Youth Ministry is presented to an adult

who has shown excellence in youth ministry leadership as reflected in Renewing the Vision, shows a commitment to ongoing education and formation, has a longevity in ministry, and shows leadership and participation at a local, diocesan, and/or national level. The 2025 Companion on the Journey Award for Youth Ministry is awarded to Oscar Masga of Holy Family, Abilene. As shared in his nomination, “Oscar is a dedicated individual to not only living out his faith but to teaching the faith to young people. His desire to help young people find Jesus for themselves is evident in all the ways he shows them Jesus is present for them, never leaving. Oscar builds a relationship with his students, leading them closer to Christ.”

Congratulations to the 2025 award recipients and thank you to those who took the time to recognize those who were nominated.

For more information on nominations for future awards, contact the Office of Evangelization and Catechesis. Nominations are accepted in the spring and awards are usually given out near the end of the academic year. While the youth must be nominated by their parish DRE, CRE, CYM, or pastor, adults can be nominated by anybody from throughout the diocese.

- - -

Alison Pope is the director of the Diocese of San Angelo’s Office of Evangelization and Catechesis.



COURTESY

Top: Daniel Sanchez, Oscar Masga, and Elijsha Hernandez received their awards at Holy Family Parish in Abilene.

Right: Alison Pope (center) presented awards to Ron Gasser, Kaitlyn Chick, Christe Gasser, and Brinin Nethery at St. Ann Parish in Midland.



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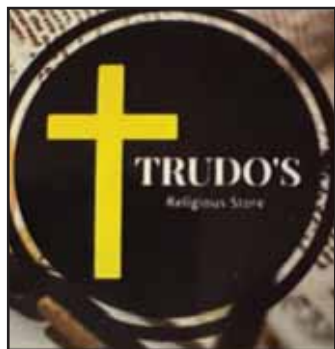
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Basic Formation utilizes a combination of VLCFF (Virtual Learning Community for Faith Formation) through the University of Dayton and our own locally produced Zoom sessions through the Office of Evangelization and Catechesis. The Basic Formation process consists of a total of 120 clock hours. Participants have three years from when they begin the Basic Formation process to complete the Basic Formation process for a certificate. Basic Formation is offered in both English and Spanish.

We encourage any adult who is interested in growing in their foundational understanding of the faith to register for this Basic Formation program. The first session of English Basic Formation will be on Sept. 7, 2025, and the first session of Spanish Basic Formation will be on Sept. 7, 2025. Registration for Year Two (2025-2026) is due on Aug. 14, 2025. To register for Basic Formation and to access a full schedule and syllabus, please go to <https://sanangelodiocese.org/basic-formation>.

Advanced Formation is a good follow-up for those who have completed Basic Formation. Many of the content areas are addressed in greater detail and depth. However, adults who have not attended any previous formation sessions are welcome to attend. They are good opportunities for adult faith formation. Those desiring to earn the Advanced certificate are required to complete all the sessions.

We encourage any adult who is interested in exploring the faith in-depth to register for this course. The first session of Advanced Formation will be on Sept. 20, 2025. Registration for the first session or the full year of Year Two (2025-2026) is due on Sept. 6, 2025. To register online for Advanced Formation and to access a full schedule and syllabus, please go to <https://sanangelodiocese.org/advanced-formation>.

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Walking with Christ

National Eucharistic Pilgrimage visits the diocese

Following the June 7 activities in Abilene, the National Eucharistic Pilgrimage continued to San Angelo on June 8 and Fort Stockton on June 9 and 10. A story recounting the experiences of the Perpetual Pilgrims during a prison visit in Fort Stockton is on Page 1.

The morning of June 8 began with Stations of the Cross at Christ the King Retreat Center in San Angelo, followed by a lunch and an opportunity to meet the Perpetual Pilgrims who traversed the entire National Eucharistic

Pilgrimage from Indianapolis to Los Angeles.

Later in the afternoon, a Eucharistic procession began at the San Angelo Museum of Fine Arts in downtown San Angelo, crossing the Concho River on San Angelo's Celebration Bridge, and continuing through the downtown area to the Cathedral Church of the Sacred Heart. Pilgrims, procession participants, and parishioners gathered in the cathedral for the Mass of Pentecost, followed by another meal and an opportunity to meet the Perpetual Pilgrims.



WEST TEXAS ANGELUS

Bishop Michael J. Sis started the morning by leading the praying of the Stations of the Cross at Christ the King Retreat Center in San Angelo June 8, 2025..

Bishop Sis carried the Blessed Sacrament for the Eucharistic procession in San Angelo June 8.



WEST TEXAS ANGELUS

The afternoon's public procession crossed the Concho River while traversing downtown San Angelo between the Museum of Fine Arts and the Cathedral Church of the Sacred Heart.



WEST TEXAS ANGELUS

PROCESSION

Continued from Page 1

annual Diocesan Charismatic Conference began Friday evening, June 6, at Sacred Heart Catholic Church and ended just before the Mass at the convention center began on Saturday.

The convention center annex was filled to capacity for the Mass. Officials said 500 chairs were set up but many, many more were brought in. In his homily, delivered in both English and Spanish, Bishop Sis cited three things that account for the current "extraordinary moment in the church's history." The church just elected its first American pope, it is wrapping up the three-year National Eucharistic Revival, and it has recorded historically high numbers of new Catholics.

The Mass on Saturday occurred on the eve of the Feast of Pentecost. In honor of that, the bishop focused on the connection between "two awesome realities" — the Holy Spirit and the holy Eucharist. They are connected in five ways:

- Epiclesis, which is the power of the Holy Spirit that allows the bread and wine to become the Body and Blood of Christ;

- Unity through the power of the Holy Spirit;
- Sanctification — the Holy Spirit sanctifies those who receive the Eucharist;
- The Holy Spirit empowers people to become Eucharistic missionaries;
- The Holy Spirit helps us to pray.

"The Holy Spirit is a catalyst that makes things happen in the Catholic Church," he said.

A special moment in the Mass came when children from Abilene who had received their first Communion this year were ushered to the front to be presented to the bishop and the congregation. The children, dressed in white, were gently shepherded by Lori Hines of San Angelo, who is the chair of the diocesan liturgical commission, and Michelle Velez of Abilene.

Kevin Pantoja, a member of the diocesan planning committee, was among the Knights of Columbus who endured the 92-degree heat in full regalia during the pilgrimage to Frontier Texas after the Mass. As the event ended on the parade grounds, he summed up the experience. He could have been speaking for everyone who took part.

"It was a great blessing to be a part of this," he said.



LORETTA FULTON

Maria de Jesus Juarez kneels and takes a photo at the end of the National Eucharistic Pilgrimage that took place in Abilene June 7.

The June 8 Eucharistic procession in San Angelo concluded at the Cathedral Church of the Sacred Heart. After an hour of adoration, the bishop and a full church celebrated the Mass of Pentecost and a had a sandwich dinner with the chance to meet the National Eucharistic Pilgrimage's Perpetual Pilgrims.



WEST TEXAS ANGELUS

Five ways to prepare for Mass

By Fr. Ralph W. Talbot Jr.
OSV News

Most events in life require preparation. When you go on a trip, you get to the airport early so you can get through security. When you go to a concert or sporting event, you arrive early to find your seat. When you host a party, you make sure you have all the right food and supplies.

Preparation is important for a successful day at work, at school, or even at the gym. Getting in the right mindset, anticipating what might happen, and setting goals for what you want to achieve is a recipe for success. It helps you feel a sense of security, readiness, and satisfaction.

The same holds true for Mass.

For some people in the parish, taking time to prepare for Mass is absolutely essential. Your parish priest prepares a homily. Lectors spend time reviewing the readings. Music directors select hymns that tie into the readings. The choir practices. The sacristan readies the vestments, the hosts and the wine. Liturgy committee members make sure altar linens are

pressed, banners are hung, and flowers are arranged. Staff members make sure bulletins are ready for distribution. Someone cleans the church.

Most Catholics would agree that these kinds of preparations are important for a prayerful liturgy. But what most Catholics don't realize is that it is also important for the people in the pews to prepare for Mass.

Here are five simple things you can do to prepare for Mass. They aren't difficult or time-consuming. But they are guaranteed to help you enter more deeply into the celebration of the Mass and achieve a more intimate union with Christ and the other members of the worshiping community.

1. Know why you are there. The Mass is a liturgy. The word liturgy comes from a Greek word meaning "the work of the people." You come to Mass not as a spectator but as a participant. You join with other members of the parish community in prayer, worship, thanksgiving, and communion. You are no longer just an individual. You are an important part of the body of Christ.

Take a few minutes each week to think about your place in the body of Christ. It will give you a deeper appreciation of who you are. It will help you recognize the unique gifts and talents that you were given. It will give you a deeper appreciation of the other people in your parish community.

2. Reflect on the readings. Set aside a few minutes on a specific day each week to read the first reading, the psalm, the second reading, and the Gospel for the following weekend. Let the words penetrate your mind and your soul. How do these readings apply to your life? What is the Lord saying to you in these readings? Is there something that you are being asked to do? Is the Lord leading you in a new direction?

Finding the weekly readings is easy. You can purchase a Sunday Missal, or subscribe to a magazine like *My Daily Visitor*, *Magnificat* or *The Word Among Us*. You can also check out readings in many online sources, among them www.usccb.org.

As you become accustomed to reviewing the readings ahead of time, you will begin to look forward to going to Mass. During the Mass you will have a deeper awareness of how the introductory prayers tie into the theme of the readings. When you hear the readings proclaimed and listen as the priest gives the homily, the insights you receive will be more profound, and you will have a heightened spiritual awareness.

3. Think about your offering. When you come to Mass, you bring everything that you are to the altar as an offering to the Lord. It's a good idea to spend a little time throughout the week thinking about what you will offer to the Lord.

What joys will you share? What sorrows would you like to unburden? How have you used the gifts that you have been given? What anxieties or tensions are troubling you? Do you want to offer up any pain or suffering you have experienced? Do you have questions or doubts that you want to give to

God?

Think also about the state of your soul. Are you ready to give yourself to God entirely? Are you holding anything back, carrying any anger or resentments? Do you need to forgive someone or seek the forgiveness of someone you hurt? Do you need to seek the Lord's forgiveness in the sacrament of reconciliation?

It's also a good idea to think about what you want to ask God. Is there something or someone that you want to pray for? Do you need guidance in some area of your life? For what are you grateful?

4. See yourself as part of the community. Your experience of the Mass begins the moment you arrive at church. Plan to get there a little early.

Outside of the church, smile and speak to the other people who are arriving, keeping in mind that everyone in the parish community is part of the body of Christ. You might take a moment in the parking lot or vestibule to introduce yourself to someone you don't know. A friendly hello makes everyone feel wanted and welcome.

As you enter the church, bless yourself with holy water. Making the sign of the cross with holy water is a reminder of your baptism, which made you a part of the body of Christ. It is through your baptism that you can participate in the fullness of the Eucharistic celebration.

You might try sitting in a different pew every once in a while. It will give you a new view of the altar and a chance to interact with different people. Be sure to genuflect or bow before entering your pew. We do this as an act of reverence and an acknowledgment of God's presence.

5. Enter into God's presence. Spend some time in silence before Mass begins. Quiet your mind. Let go of any tensions or anxieties that you brought with you.

Think about how you purposely avoided food for an hour before Mass. One reason for this fast was to create in you a feeling of hunger for the Eucharist. Allow your soul to yearn for the Lord. Ask God to fill all of the empty places inside you.

Invite the Holy Spirit to speak to you in the readings, the music, the homily, the prayers of the Mass, and your Communion meditation. Everything that you think and do in these final moments before Mass instills in you a joyful anticipation for your encounter with the Lord.

When you take the time to prepare for Mass, your attitude begins to change. The Mass becomes much more than something that you do every weekend. Your mind discovers a deeper appreciation of the mystery that you experience during the liturgy, your heart becomes more open to God's love, and your soul becomes more receptive to the graces that God is bestowing upon you.

Father Ralph Talbot is pastor of St. Hubert Catholic Community in Chanhausen, Minnesota.

What is the Catholic Church's teaching on miracles?

Q: One of the Protestant churches I attended in the past said that when the Holy Spirit came at Pentecost, it came to every believer in Jesus, including down to today, which they said meant we all ought to be able to do miracles. Another church taught the Holy Spirit came to the Apostles only, and that the ability to perform miracles ceased with the last of them. All we can do today, they said, is pray, hope for the best, and leave it with God. What is the Catholic Church's teaching on this?

A: I think the best answer is that, as Catholics, we would reject both these extremes. We believe in the reality of past miracles and the possibility of miracles occurring in the future. But we also hold that almost by definition miracles are not something that the vast majority of Catholics will be able to work — and that the non-working of miracles is not a problem or a sign of weak faith.

Miracles are instances when God intervenes in an extraordinary way, i.e., in ways that supersede or "break" the laws of nature.

We might talk about certain awe-inspiring things in our normal human experience as being "miracles" in a poetic sense, such as when we call the birth of a baby a miracle of new life. But (at the risk of sounding like a wet blanket) such things are not truly miracles technically speaking.

We believe that when God created the universe, he did so in a marvelous way where all parts are well-ordered down to the smallest detail. The natural world thus reflects God's splendor and glory, which is why we might feel a sense of awe when, e.g., gazing at a starry night sky or looking out at the vastness of the ocean. As human beings we are a special part of this creation, since we are made in God's image and likeness and endowed with free will and rationality.

Because of our rational nature, through hard work and study human beings can come to know how the natural world is ordered and then make use of this knowledge to our advantage. For example, the whole of medical science is an attempt to understand how the human body works so that diseases and injuries can be healed. So if someone recovers from a serious illness, most often this is simply the human body healing as it was designed to do, possibly



Jenna Marie Cooper
OSV News

Question Corner

with human assistance using natural scientific means. A true "medical miracle" would be a case where a person's recovery had no possible natural explanation at all.

There are scenarios where the Catholic Church specifically looks for miracles. In particular, verified miracles are part of the canonization process for new saints. That is, the church looks for miracles as a sign that the would-be saint actually is in heaven enjoying the beatific vision in the presence of God.

Yet, for the most part, God seems to want and expect us to live our lives using nature as he designed it, as opposed to regularly relying on extraordinary signs or favors. Even in canonization processes, the church is only interested in posthumous miracles; whether or not the potential saint had miracles associated with them while they were alive is not at all relevant to the church's estimation of their personal sanctity or degree of closeness with God.

And we know that Jesus — who while he walked the earth was certainly not shy about working miracles! — complained about those who would seek the miraculous in inappropriate ways. For example, in John's Gospel, Jesus laments how some sought him out not for proper spiritual reasons, but because he fed them miraculously with the multiplied loaves and fishes (See Jn 6:26). And in Mark 8:12, Jesus "sighed from the depth of his spirit and said, 'Why does this generation seek a sign? Amen, I say to you, no sign will be given to this generation.'"

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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Escaping death just the beginning for St. Christina the Astonishing

Her name says it all. For more than 700 years, she has been known as “St. Christina the Astonishing.” Every biographer calls her that.

Christina was born in Brustheim, near Liege, Belgium, in 1150. She was the youngest of three sisters and was orphaned when she was 15. Nothing remarkable or memorable had happened to Christina before then.

Her life began to unravel when she had an epileptic fit when she was about 21. As was the custom then, she was presumed dead and her open coffin was carried to the church. During the Mass for the Dead, right after the *Agnus Dei*, according to an account in *Butler’s Lives of the Saints*, Christina sat up in the coffin and soared to the rafters of the church.

Everyone in the church fled except her elder sister and the priest. They coaxed her back down and she told them she took refuge in the rafters because she could not bear the smell of sinful human bodies.

Biographer John J. Delaney writes in the *Dictionary of Saints* that Christina told the priest that she had been to hell, purgatory, and heaven and was allowed to return to earth to pray for the suffering souls in purgatory.

She also told the priest that she recognized many friends in hell and had seen many more friends in purgatory. Tom Cowan in *The Way of the Saints* calls Christina “a holy and somewhat embarrassing fool for God” and believes that she had what we today call a near-death experience. But that was just the beginning of a life that was truly astonishing.

There are many incredible stories told about Chris-



Mary Lou Gibson
Speaking of Saints

tina. Because she could not tolerate the odor of human beings, Delaney writes, she escaped contact with them by climbing into trees, hiding in ovens, and even jumping into rivers.

Author Phillis McGinley (*The Encyclopedia of Saints*) believes there is some truth to some of the stories. She writes, “who could invent a character like Christina the Astonishing?” But McGinley cannot understand Christina’s aversion to being around humans who were unwashed — after all, this was the Middle Ages, and everyone was mostly unwashed.

Woodeene Koenig-Bricker (*365 Saints*) doesn’t think Christina would have made it through the modern canonization process. She writes, “there are some saints who, if they lived in the 20th century, would probably be declared insane, and Christina would certainly be one of them.”

For the rest of her life, Christina terrified and amazed people by her bizarre behavior. She is supposed to have

prayed while balancing on a hurdle or curled up into a ball. She could handle fire without injuring herself and would often hurl herself into the river during the coldest weather.

Some people thought she was insane or that she was possessed. However, a few venerated her and even respected her. One biographer, Cardinal Jacques de Vitry, was the most credible witness to many of the extraordinary events in Christina’s life. He said that she was given the chance to return from death so she could spend her years of purgatory on earth.

After her near-death experience, Christina spent many years living a homeless life, begging for alms. She was also particularly charitable and served the poor and ill with devotion.

She spent the last years of her life in the convent of St. Catherine of Saint-Trond, where she died at the age of 74. She achieved respectability later in life and many people sought her wise advice. Her feast day is July 24. Prayers are traditionally said to Christina for those suffering from mental illness and for mental health workers.

Sarah Gallick writes in *The Big Book of Women Saints* that Herbert Thurston, the great Jesuit expert on mystic phenomena, conceded that Christina was blessed. He believed that it was the only way to account for the veneration in which she was held by the many sincere and intelligent people who knew her.

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

Agony in the garden? What agony?!

In the three synoptic gospels, we find detailed descriptions of the emotions that Jesus experienced in the “garden” of Gethsemane. In Mathew 26:26–30, the end of the Last Supper concludes with these words:

“While they were eating, Jesus took bread, said the blessing, broke it, and giving it to his disciples said, ‘Take and eat; this is my body.’ Then he took a cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, ‘Drink from it, all of you, for this is my blood of the covenant, which will be shed on behalf of many for the forgiveness of sins. I tell you, from now on I shall not drink this fruit of the vine until the day when I drink it with you new in the kingdom of my Father.’ Then, after singing a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.” Quite a tranquil ending to the most significant of all meals.

A few passages later (Mt 26:36-46), Jesus’ “agony” in the garden is described this way: “Then Jesus came with them to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to his disciples, ‘Sit here while I go over there and pray.’ He took along Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to feel sorrow and distress. Then he said to them, ‘My soul is sorrowful even to death. Remain here and keep watch with me.’ He advanced a little and fell prostrate in prayer, saying, ‘My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; yet, not as I will, but as you will.’ When he returned to his disciples he found them asleep. He said to Peter, ‘So you could not keep watch with me for one hour? Watch and pray that you may not undergo the test. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.’

Withdrawing a second time, he prayed again, ‘My Father, if it is not possible that this cup pass without my drinking it, your will be done!’ Then he returned once more and found them asleep, for they could not keep their eyes open. He left them and withdrew again and prayed a third time, saying the same thing again. Then he returned to his disciples and said to them, ‘Are you still sleeping and taking your rest? Behold, the hour is at hand when the Son of Man is to be handed over to sinners. Get up, let us go. Look, my betrayer is at hand.’”

Mark gives us a similar account. First, the Last Supper: “While they were eating, he took bread, said the blessing, broke it, and gave it to them, and said, ‘Take it; this is my body.’ Then he took a cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, and they all drank from it. He said to them, ‘This is my blood of the covenant, which will be shed for many.



James R. Sulliman, PhD

Amen, I say to you, I shall not drink again the fruit of the vine until the day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God.’ Then, after singing a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives” (Mk 14:22–26). Once again, we read of a beautifully unifying event that concludes the Eucharistic meal ... a hymn.

And second, in the garden (Mk 14:32–42): “Then they came to a place named Gethsemane, and he said to his disciples, ‘Sit here while I pray.’ He took with him Peter, James, and John, and began to be troubled and distressed. Then he said to them, ‘My soul is sorrowful even to death. Remain here and keep watch.’ He advanced a little and fell to the ground and prayed that if it were possible the hour might pass by him; he said, ‘Abba, Father, all things are possible to you. Take this cup away from me, but not what I will but what you will.’ When he returned he found them asleep. He said to Peter, ‘Simon, are you asleep? Could you not keep watch for one hour? Watch and pray that you may not undergo the test. The spirit is willing but the flesh is weak.’ Withdrawing again, he prayed, saying the same thing. Then he returned once more and found them asleep, for they could not keep their eyes open and did not know what to answer him. He returned a third time and said to them, ‘Are you still sleeping and taking your rest? It is enough. The hour has come. Behold, the Son of Man is to be handed over to sinners. Get up, let us go. See, my betrayer is at hand.’”

It is in Luke 22:39–46, however, that we are given a far more emotionally intense description of Jesus, and the one we are most likely to remember ... the one where “agony” is exemplified: “Then going out he went, as was his custom, to the Mount of Olives, and the disciples followed him. When he arrived at the place he said to them, ‘Pray that you may not undergo the test.’ After withdrawing

about a stone’s throw from them and kneeling, he prayed, saying, ‘Father, if you are willing, take this cup away from me; still, not my will but yours be done.’ And to strengthen him an angel from heaven appeared to him. He was in such agony and he prayed so fervently that his sweat became like drops of blood falling on the ground. When he rose from prayer and returned to his disciples, he found them sleeping from grief. He said to them, ‘Why are you sleeping? Get up and pray that you may not undergo the test.’”

It is significant that while few methods of dying are more painful than crucifixion, it is Jesus’ mental state that is in “agony.” It is completely understandable, given that he knows what lies ahead in just a matter of a few hours. And to make it worse, he knew his death would be in vain for so many. But, perhaps, there was another “agony” that greatly intensified his mental anguish that seems to have been overlooked. Luke (22:21–23) also describes how the Last Supper ended but his final sentence is far from the depiction of a hymn of togetherness: “Then an argument broke out among them about which of them should be regarded as the greatest” (Lk 22:24). What a devastating “farewell gift” for Jesus to see and hear as he starts on the road to Calvary! Absolutely unimaginable anguish! Not exactly what the greatest teacher of all time would hope to hear from his eleven hand-chosen pupils.

For three years, the message that he relentlessly taught in his words and through his actions was to love God and others, to forgive others, to serve others, and to sacrifice for others. And as he is leaving to pray, his students are showing him very clearly that they have learned nothing and are consumed with self-interest. The torment of the mind is often greater and more “agonizing” than the torment of the body.

Perhaps those words from the cross, “Then Jesus said, ‘Father, forgive them, they know not what they do’” (Lk 23:34) did not just refer to the people supportive of his execution, but perhaps they also referred to his apostles who caused him far more pain than they could ever realize by being self-centered instead of Christ-centered. Perhaps, those words referred to us ...

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

'We are in this together': Recent Supreme Court rulings support parents in their vocation

By Bishop Robert E. Barron
OSV News

Three recent decisions by the Supreme Court of the United States reflect the need to protect children when it comes to issues of human sexuality, now more than ever.

We are all keenly aware of the reality of the secular world and the pervasive distortion of human sexuality, but it is also encouraging to know that despite these contemporary circumstances, there are legal efforts to push back and that should be encouraging news to families.

From laws protecting children from medical interventions that accompany gender dysphoria and encourage bodily mutilation to fit those distortions, to age verification requirements on pornographic websites, to schools denying parents the right to opt their children out of

"LGBTQ story time," the Supreme Court has encountered the downstream effects of our present culture, which has distorted the truth of human sexuality.

There are many more examples, of course, but the fact that the court addressed three cases that touch upon human sexuality during this most recent term indicates that, for parents, these challenges are a lived reality as they raise their children.

As Bishop Kevin Rhoades, chairman of our bishops' Committee on Religious Liberty, commented in response to the decision in the case of parental rights in education, "parents do not forfeit their rights as primary educators of children when they send their kids to public schools."

This right is especially true when it comes to matters that touch on faith and morals, such as human sexuality. These are priorities which we bishops take seriously as we

commit ourselves to the truly American notions of proper religious liberty for all, and for the right of families to choose effective schools that best serve their children's needs.

And in the case of requiring pornographic websites to implement age-verification measures to protect children, the court's decision is a welcome step in the effort to help parents safeguard young minds from the scourge of pornography in today's digital age.

We must all pay urgent attention to the use of artificial intelligence to produce and disseminate an epidemic of sexual exploitation through "deepfakes" and "virtual child pornography." By itself, pornography destroys families, harms vulnerable individuals and perpetuates the

Catholic Voices

Are you a practicing Christian?

The Acts of the Apostles says that it was at Antioch that the followers of Jesus were first called “Christians.” I once heard a challenging homily where the priest asked: “If you were put on trial and accused of being a Christian, would they find enough evidence to convict you?” An interesting question, without a simple answer. How exactly would we be judged? What might constitute hard evidence that we are Christians?

I grew up in a Roman Catholic culture that had certain agreed-upon criteria for what made you “a practicing Catholic,” namely: Do you go to church regularly? Are you keeping the sixth commandment? Is your married life in order? More recently, both Roman Catholics and other denominations have become fond of judging your Christian standing by your stance on certain moral issues like abortion or gay marriage.

What about Jesus, what did he teach in terms of what makes for a practicing Christian? There is no simple answer. Jesus, the Gospels, and the rest of the New Testament are complex. For example, when teaching how we will ultimately be judged, Jesus doesn’t mention attending church, keeping the sixth commandment, or how we stand on abortion or gay marriage. He has only these criteria: Did you feed the hungry? Give drink to the thirsty? Welcome the refugee? Visit the sick? Visit prisoners? What would the verdict be if these were the central criteria by which a jury judges us? Then there is the Sermon on the Mount. Counselling us as to what it means to be his disciple, Jesus asks: Do you love those who hate you? Bless those who curse you? Do good to those who harm you? Forgive those who have hurt you? Forgive the one who kills you? Do you love beyond your innate instincts? Have you ever really turned the other cheek? Do you radiate God’s compassion which goes out equally to everyone, good and bad alike?



Father Ron Rolheiser

Again, how would our discipleship of Jesus stand up to judgment vis-à-vis these criteria? However, there are other critical criteria about what does or does not make us practicing followers of Jesus. One such criterion has to do with community. The Scriptures tell us that God is love and whoever abides in love abides in God and God abides in that person. The word used here for love is “agape,” and in this context it might also be rendered as “shared existence.” God is shared existence, and everyone who shares his or her existence in community lives in God.

If that is true, and it is, then whenever we live inside of family and community, we are a “practicing Christian.” Of course, this may not be simplistically equated with explicit ecclesial community, with going to church, but it does hint strongly at belonging to a graced community. So, does going to church make me a practicing Christian?

Finally, there is another critical criterion. The earthly Jesus left us only one ritual, the Eucharist. On the night before he died, he instituted the Eucharist and told us to continue to celebrate it until he returns. For 2000 years we have been faithful to that invitation, we have kept the Eucharist going. According to the theologian Ronald Knox, this constitutes “our one great act of fidelity,” in that we haven’t always been faithful in other ways. Sometimes we

haven’t turned the other cheek, haven’t loved our enemies, haven’t fed the hungry, and haven’t welcomed the refugee, but we have been faithful to Jesus in one critically important way: we have kept celebrating the Eucharist. We have been practicing Christians in at least one important way.

So, facing a jury set to judge whether we are a Christians or not, could the most telling evidence of all be that we regularly participate in the Eucharist? Could this single action convict us as being a practicing Christian? Among all these potential criteria, which one makes for a practicing Christian?

Perhaps the more fruitful path toward an answer is not to weigh these criteria against each other to try to discern which is most important in determining what makes for a practicing Christian. Perhaps it is more fruitful to focus on the verb “practicing.” To practice something doesn’t imply that you have mastered it, that you are proficient at it, not alone that you are perfect at it. It only means that you are working at it, trying to master the skill.

Given human nature, all of us have certain shortcomings in terms of measuring up to the demands of Christian discipleship. Like someone struggling to master a musical instrument or an athletic skill, we are all still practicing. Thus, to the extent that we are trying to get better at feeding the hungry, at welcoming the stranger, at loving our enemy, at radiating God’s wide compassion, at sharing our existence in community, and at being habitually at the table of the Eucharist, we are in fact practicing Christians.

Oblate Father Ron Rolheiser is a professor of spirituality at Oblate School of Theology and award-winning author. He can be contacted through his website: www.ronrolheiser.com. Follow on Facebook: www.facebook.com/ronrolheiser.

The truth about transitions

When I first birthed a baby without drugs, I was convinced I was dying. Pain climbed in waves, contractions piling on top of each other so quickly I could barely breathe. "I can't do this," I wailed to my husband. But then I saw the spark in my midwife's eyes. "You're in transition," she said, her gaze steady. "This baby is almost here — believe me."

Transition is the stage between active labor and pushing, when contractions come fast and furious. (Google defines transition as "a challenging but crucial stage of birth," which is like calling the epic Easter Vigil a "slightly longer liturgy.") Transition is the peak of the mountain climb, the last mile of the marathon, the grueling final exam after a week of all-nighters.

In transition, you are certain that you cannot do it. You cannot go one minute more. But these exact words of despair signal to every professional in the room that you are about to have a baby.

Here is another story about transition. Right before I left for college, I sat on the front step of my parents' porch and wept. I didn't want to go; I couldn't wait to leave; I didn't think I could do it; I didn't know what came next. My mother sat down next to me and talked me through. She recognized the signs of transition, having already launched my sister and brother. She knew that overwhelm was part of the process: Not the sign of a wrong choice, but a confirmation that a big change was about to happen.



Laura Kelly Fanucci
OSV News

Faith at Home

This summer your family may be celebrating a graduation, a new baby, a wedding, an ordination, a move, or another transition recognized as a rite of passage. But what about the shift from one school to the next — from elementary to middle to high school? What about the sea change that comes with leaving for college, deployment, or a first job? What about the unexpected grief of empty-nesting, retirement, or downsizing? So many transitions deserve to be named and noticed.

Transitions are hard. But transitions are also holy. They don't last forever; they lead to what comes next. And the passage deserves to be honored.

The Catholic *Book of Blessings* offers prayers for transitions that are often unknown among the faithful: Blessings for an engaged couple, for expectant parents, for a mother before or after birth, for adopting a child, for new homes, for new parish councils and public officials, for welcoming parishioners or blessing departing

ones. The sacred nature of such changes is honored by the church, and we can ask God to bless these turning points through prayer. Here is a final story about transition. At the end of the Gospel of John, Jesus and Peter sit on the lakeshore together. Jesus announces a sacred turning point in Peter's life: "Amen, amen, I say to you, when you were younger, you used to dress yourself and go where you wanted; but when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will dress you and lead you where you do not want to go" (Jn 21:18). As for Peter, our life of discipleship — a continual "follow me" — will bring transition after transition. We will be asked to go through changes we never would have chosen. But as in birth, something greater awaits us on the other side of suffering and sacrifice. Every time I gave birth, I swore to myself during labor that I would never do this again. But every time I held a brand-new baby in my shaking arms, the pain evaporated into euphoria. Life asks us to say yes through the pain. Jesus asks us to follow where we do not want to go. But the transitions we face do not have to be feared. In the light of faith, they can be blessed.

Laura Kelly Fanucci is an author, speaker and founder of Mothering Spirit, an online gathering place on parenting and spirituality.

Comfort my people: Unexpected surprises in life

By Archbishop Shelton J. Fabre
OSV News

For many reasons, certainly among them challenges that I have been recently called upon to address, I have been reflecting again upon when things in life unexpectedly arise and demand our attention and our focus.

Though there are many variations to it, and I am not sure who first stated it, I am reminded of the saying which in some manner states, "Life is what happens to us when we are involved in or planning for something else." The basic idea of this quote is that some of the events of life are either wonderfully surprising or terribly interrupting, and do not occur according to our own personal plans.

We have all had the experience of planning to do one thing, and then something else quite suddenly demands our attention and energy. And the older we get, the more likely it is that we forget what we first set out to do anyway! It is certainly true that sometimes our plans are interrupted by a pleasant surprise, and we willingly set aside our scheduled activities to relish the joy that comes with being surprised. However, we also know that there are interruptions in our lives that are not always joyous occasions or pleasant surprises. There are other times when things occur that require us to rearrange our entire schedule to address the important need or responsibility that is suddenly made known. The thing that most of us probably find most challeng-

ing is that in it all we are ultimately called to endurance and patience, and to humbly and attentively seek to accomplish what sets itself before us. Though we may be initially taken aback by it all, when the surprise is not pleasant, I think we all know that our energy is better spent taking care of what needs to be done rather than being put off and simply complaining about the occurrence of the unexpected. Nonetheless, it can be a challenge to overcome these emotions. In the end, endurance, patience, and action will win the day. As previously stated, life is what happens to us when we are involved in or planning for something else. This is a dynamic that Jesus must have ultimately known very well because it is such a part of our lives. With his full human nature, I am certain that Jesus knew what it meant to be interrupted by the various and many concerns of life, most notably the needs of others. The Gospels proclaim the many times that Jesus was unexpectedly approached by someone with a need, or even someone with a challenge or question. However, in contrast to my usual reaction, it is clear from sacred Scripture that Jesus always responds to these interruptions and other concerns with only patience, compassion, and a desire to respond to whatever needs attention or to accomplish whatever needs to be done. How great it would be if we could all respond to life's more challenging interruptions with the patience that Jesus shows to so many. It is emotionally and spiritually benefi-

cial to us to remember that when the unexpected cares and concerns of life impose themselves on us despite our plans, we can nonetheless be patient and kind in our efforts to work ourselves and others through some of these concerns, just as Jesus did. We continue to rejoice in the election of Pope Leo XIV as the successor of St. Peter and vicar of Christ! Let us continue to pray for him as he serves in this important role of shepherding the universal church. I have somewhat followed the discovery of his genealogical connection to New Orleans and Louisiana. I am aware that New Orleans is taking great pride in their connection to the new pope. Further, I was recently informed in a phone call with a friend and genealogist from New Orleans that as genealogists, who are fascinated by a pope born in the United States, now further trace parts of his family tree in Louisiana in the mid-1700s to Pointe Coupee Parish in Louisiana. This is the parish (county) in Louisiana where my home city of New Roads is located. I know that Pointe Coupee Parish will take great pride in having been a part of the lineage of Pope Leo XIV. I offer sincere congratulations to all those who are graduating from high school or college! God bless you as you celebrate your accomplishments and enter the next stage of your life. I hope that the summer months afford all some time for leisure and relaxation. Let us hold one another in prayer!

Un nuevo diálogo sobre la inmigración

Por Arzobispo José H. Gomez
OSV News

El desfile militar que tuvo lugar en la capital del país el día 14 de junio dio inicio a una serie de eventos conmemorativos del 250º aniversario de Estados Unidos, que culminará con la grandiosa celebración del año que entra, en conmemoración de la firma de la Declaración de Independencia, que tuvo lugar el día 4 de julio de 1776.

Son los ideales expresados por la Declaración, y no nuestro poderío militar, los que siempre han hecho que Estados Unidos sea un gran país.

Nuestra nación es la primera en haber sido cimentada sobre principios arraigados, tanto en las Escrituras judías como en las cristianas, sobre esa verdad que afirma que todos los hombres y mujeres son creados iguales, con una dignidad y unos derechos otorgados por Dios y que ningún gobierno puede negar.

Los fundadores de Estados Unidos describieron estas verdades como "indiscutibles". Y a lo largo de los años, el compromiso de nuestros líderes ha convertido a esta nación en un faro de esperanza para quienes buscan la libertad y un refugio contra la opresión.

Basándose en estas realidades, esta nación ha llegado a ser la más próspera y la más diversa, así como también una de las naciones más esperanzadoras, innovadoras y generosas que el mundo haya visto jamás.

Pero el compromiso histórico de nuestra nación con estas verdades se ha visto confrontado recientemente por los enfrentamientos acerca de la inmigración ilegal que se han estado desarrollando en Los Ángeles y en varias ciudades, a todo lo largo y ancho del país.

Me han consternado profundamente los informes sobre agentes federales que han estado deteniendo a personas en lugares públicos aquí en Los Ángeles, sin aparentemente mostrar órdenes judiciales ni pruebas de que aquellos que han quedado bajo custodia se encuentren sin autorización en este país.

Estas acciones están promoviendo el pánico en nuestras parroquias y comunidades.

La gente prefiere quedarse en casa, sin asistir a la Misa ni ir al trabajo. Los parques y las tiendas están vacíos, las calles de muchos vecindarios están silenciosos pues las familias, por miedo, opta por permanecer a puerta

cerrada.

Esta situación no es digna de una gran nación como la nuestra.

Podemos estar de acuerdo de que, en Washington, la anterior administración fue demasiado lejos al no asegurar nuestras fronteras y permitir que ingresaran demasiadas personas a nuestro país, sin una evaluación previa adecuada.

Pero la administración actual no ha ofrecido ninguna política migratoria más allá de estipular el objetivo de deportar a miles de personas cada día.

Esto no es una política sino un castigo, y sólo puede ocasionar resultados crueles y arbitrarios. Actualmente estamos ya escuchando historias de padres y madres inocentes que han sido deportados injustamente y sin posibilidad de apelación.

Una nación eminente, como la nuestra, puede tomarse el tiempo y la atención necesarios para hacer distinciones y para juzgar cada caso según sus méritos.

Se estima que hasta dos tercios de aquellos que se encuentran en el país de manera ilegal llevan viviendo aquí cerca de una década o más. Por lo que respecta a los llamados "Dreamers", que fueron traídos aquí de pequeños, por sus padres indocumentados, éste es el único país que han conocido.

La gran mayoría de los "extranjeros ilegales" son buenos vecinos, hombres y mujeres trabajadores, personas de fe, que están realizando importantes contribuciones en sectores vitales de la economía estadounidense, como la agricultura, la construcción, la hostelería, la atención médica y muchas cosas más. Ellos son padres y abuelos activos en nuestras comunidades, organizaciones benéficas e iglesias.

Un estudio conjunto publicado a principios de este año por los obispos católicos de Estados Unidos y por varios grupos protestantes reveló que 1 de cada 12 cristianos que residen aquí es susceptible de ser deportado o vive con algún familiar que podría serlo.

La última reforma que hubo en nuestras leyes de inmigración tuvo lugar en 1986. Es decir, ha habido dos generaciones de negligencia por parte de nuestros líderes políticos y empresariales, y no es justo castigar por esa negligencia únicamente a los trabajadores comunes.

Ha llegado el momento de desarrollar un nuevo diálogo nacional sobre inmigración, un diálogo que sea real-

ista y que haga la necesaria distinción moral y práctica sobre aquellos que se encuentran en nuestro país de manera ilegal.

Quiero sugerir algunas propuestas iniciales para este nuevo diálogo; unas propuestas basadas en los principios de la doctrina social católica, que reconozcan el deber que las naciones tienen de controlar sus fronteras y de respetar el derecho natural que las personas tienen de emigrar, buscando una vida mejor.

En primer lugar, podemos aceptar que quienes sean conocidos como terroristas y criminales violentos, deben ser deportados, pero de una manera coherente con nuestros valores, es decir, respetando su derecho a un debido proceso.

Podemos reforzar la seguridad de las fronteras y utilizar tecnologías y otros medios para ayudar a que los patrones puedan verificar la situación legal de sus empleados.

Deberíamos reformar las políticas de inmigración legal para garantizar que nuestra nación cuente con los trabajadores cualificados que necesita, manteniendo, a la vez, nuestro compromiso histórico por unir a las familias a través de nuestra política migratoria.

Deberíamos restaurar nuestro compromiso moral de proporcionar asilo y un estatus de protección a los refugiados genuinos y a las poblaciones en peligro.

Finalmente, y lo más importante, deberíamos encontrar la manera de ofrecer un estatus legal a quienes han estado en nuestro país durante muchos años, empezando por los Dreamers.

Estas no son ideas nuevas, sino un intento de iniciar un nuevo diálogo, pues ya es tiempo de que volvamos a hablar nuevamente y de que detengamos los pleitos en nuestras calles.

Oren por mí y yo oraré por ustedes.

Y pidámosle a María, nuestra Santísima Madre que ella ore por nuestro país, para que podamos renovar nuestro compromiso con las verdades que hacen de Estados Unidos una gran nación.

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El arzobispo José H. Gomez es el arzobispo de Los Ángeles, la comunidad católica más grande del país. Fue presidente de la Conferencia de Obispos Católicos de los Estados Unidos entre 2019 y 2022.

Consuela a mi gente — Sorpresas inesperadas en la vida

Por Arzobispo Shelton J. Fabre
OSV News

Por muchas razones, entre ellas, los desafíos que se me han presentado para abordar, he estado reflexionando nuevamente sobre cuándo surgen imprevistos en la vida que exigen nuestra atención y concentración. Aunque tiene muchas variantes, y no estoy seguro de quién lo dijo primero, me viene a la mente el dicho que, en cierto modo, dice: “La vida es eso que sucede mientras nosotros nos ocupamos de otra cosa.” La idea básica de esta cita es que algunos eventos de la vida son maravillosamente sorprendentes o terriblemente disruptivos, y no ocurren según nuestros planes personales.

Todos hemos tenido la experiencia de planear una cosa, y de repente, otra cosa exige nuestra atención y energía. Y al volvernos más mayores es más probable es que olvidemos lo que nos propusimos hacer. Es cierto que a veces nuestros planes se ven interrumpidos por una grata sorpresa, y voluntariamente dejamos de lado nuestras actividades programadas para disfrutar de la alegría que conlleva ser sorprendidos.

Sin embargo, también sabemos que hay interrupciones en nuestras vidas que no siempre son ocasiones alegres ni sorpresas agradables. Hay otras ocasiones en que ocurren cosas que nos exigen reorganizar toda nuestra agenda para abordar la necesidad o responsabilidad importante que de repente se hace presente.

Lo que probablemente nos resulta más difícil a la mayoría es que, en última instancia, estamos llamados a la perseverancia y la paciencia, y a buscar con humildad y atención lograr lo que se nos presenta.

Aunque al principio nos sorprenda, cuando la sorpresa no es agradable, creo que todos sabemos que es mejor invertir nuestra energía en ocuparnos de lo que hay que hacer que en postergarlo y simplemente quejarnos por lo inesperado. Sin embargo, puede ser un desafío superar estas emociones. Al final, la perseverancia, la paciencia y la acción triunfarán.

Como se mencionó anteriormente, la vida es eso que sucede mientras nosotros nos ocupamos de otra cosa. Esta es una dinámica que Jesús debió conocer muy bien, ya que forma parte integral de nuestras vidas. Con su plena naturaleza humana, estoy seguro de que Jesús sabía lo que significaba ser interrumpido por las diversas y tantas preocupaciones de la vida,

especialmente las necesidades de los demás.

Los evangelios proclaman las numerosas veces que alguien se acercó inesperadamente a Jesús con una necesidad, o incluso con un desafío o una pregunta. Sin embargo, a diferencia de mi reacción habitual, las Sagradas Escrituras demuestran claramente que Jesús siempre responde a estas interrupciones y otras preocupaciones con paciencia, compasión y el deseo de responder a cualquier necesidad o de lograr lo que sea necesario.

¡Qué maravilloso sería si todos pudiéramos responder a las interrupciones más desafiantes de la vida con la paciencia que Jesús muestra a tantos! Nos beneficia emocional y espiritualmente recordar que, cuando las preocupaciones inesperadas de la vida se imponen a pesar de nuestros planes, podemos ser pacientes y amables al esforzarnos por superar algunas de estas preocupaciones, tanto nosotros como los demás, tal como lo hizo Jesús.

¡Seguimos regocijándonos por la elección del Papa León XIV como Sucesor de San Pedro y Vicario de Cristo! Sigamos orando por él mientras desempeña este importante papel de pastor de la Iglesia Universal. He seguido de cerca el descubrimiento de su conexión genealógica con Nueva Orleans y Luisiana. Sé que Nueva Orleans se enorgullece de su conexión con el nuevo Papa.

Además, recientemente, en una llamada telefónica con un amigo y genealogista de Nueva Orleans, me informaron que, como genealogistas fascinados por un Papa nacido en Estados Unidos, ahora rastreamos partes de su árbol genealógico en Luisiana, a mediados del siglo XVIII, hasta la parroquia de Pointe Coupee, en Luisiana. Esta es la parroquia (condado) de Luisiana donde se encuentra mi ciudad natal, New Roads. Sé que la parroquia de Pointe Coupee se enorgullecerá de haber formado parte del linaje del Papa León XIV.

¡Mis más sinceras felicitaciones a todos los que se gradúan de la escuela secundaria o la universidad! Que Dios los bendiga al celebrar sus logros y comenzar la siguiente etapa de su vida.

Espero que los meses de verano les brinden tiempo libre y la relajación. ¡Oremos los unos por los otros!

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El arzobispo Shelton J. Fabre es el arzobispo de Louisville, Kentucky.

Papa León: Nuestras ciudades deben liberarse no de los marginados, sino de la marginación

CIUDAD DEL VATICANO (CNS) — Demasiado a menudo, en nombre de la seguridad, se hace la guerra contra los pobres, dijo el Papa León XIV.

El Año Santo indica, en cambio, que la seguridad se encuentra en la cultura del encuentro, dijo. El Jubileo "nos pide la restitución y redistribución de las riquezas injustamente acumuladas, como camino para la reconciliación personal y civil".

El Papa hizo estos comentarios durante una reunión para conmemorar el Día Internacional de la Lucha contra el Uso Indebido y el Tráfico Ilícito de Drogas, el 26 de junio. Decenas de invitados asistieron a la reunión en el Patio de San Dámaso del Vaticano, entre ellos funcionarios del gobierno italiano, personas en recuperación por abuso de sustancias y quienes les ayudan.

"Hoy, hermanos y hermanas, estamos comprometidos en una batalla que no se puede abandonar mientras, a nuestro alrededor, haya quien siga preso en las diversas formas de adicción", dijo el Papa León.

"Nuestra lucha es contra aquellos que hacen de la droga y de cualquier otra adicción -- pensemos en el alcohol o en el juego -- su inmenso negocio", dijo. "Existen enormes concentraciones de intereses y organizaciones criminales generalizadas que los Estados tienen el deber de dismantelar".

Sin embargo, dijo, "es más fácil luchar contra sus víctimas".

"Con demasiada frecuencia, en nombre de la seguridad, se ha librado y se sigue librando una guerra contra los pobres, llenando las cárceles con quienes son sólo el último eslabón de una cadena de muerte. Aquellos que tienen la cadena en sus manos, en cambio, logran tener influencia e impunidad", expresó.

"Nuestras ciudades deben liberarse no de los marginados, sino de la marginación; no deben ser limpiados por los desesperados, sino por la desesperación", afirmó el Santo Padre.

"La lucha contra el narcotráfico, el compromiso educativo entre los pobres, la defensa de las comunidades indígenas y de los migrantes, la fidelidad a la doctrina social de la Iglesia son considerados subversivos en muchos lugares", dijo.

"El Jubileo indica la cultura del encuentro como el camino hacia la seguridad", dijo, y los desafíos deben afrontarse juntos.

"El mal lo vencemos juntos. La alegría se encuentra juntos. La injusticia se combate juntos. El Dios que creó y conoce a cada uno de nosotros — y es más íntimo de mí que yo mismo — nos hizo para que estuviéramos juntos", afirmó.

"Por supuesto, también hay vínculos que duelen y grupos humanos que carecen de libertad", dijo el Papa. Pero también éstos sólo pueden superarse "juntos, confiando en aquellos que no se aprovechan de nuestra piel, en aquellos a quienes podemos encontrar y que nos atienden con atención desinteresada".

"La droga y la adicción son una prisión invisible que ustedes, de distintas maneras, han conocido y combatido, pero todos estamos llamados a la libertad", dijo el Papa León a su audiencia.

The fisherman and the pharisee

Although it hasn't been a holy day of obligation in the United States since 1840, the solemnity of Sts. Peter and Paul is as close as we can get to that, without declaring it one. The feast is observed annually on June 29, which fell on a Sunday this year.

Peter and Paul could not have been more different from each other. But the liturgical wisdom that brought these two towering saints together in a shared feast underscores the fact that the church needed both the fisherman and the Pharisee — and still does.

Christ Jesus has always called ordinary workers and natural leaders, people with hearts that are quick to commit themselves fully and shoulders that are willing and able to bear the weight of responsibility. But God also calls people who take things more deliberately, minds that grapple with the truth and then offer themselves in service to it; energetic souls who don't hesitate to go to the ends of the earth in every respect.

The readings for the Mass that commemorates them are instructive. In Acts 3:1–10, we see Peter and John on their way to Temple prayers when they encounter a man who had been crippled from birth at the gate begging for alms. Peter takes the man's needs — and his request — seriously, then challenges the man to see that they did not possess what he was asking them to give.

But instead of ending the encounter there, Peter offers something better: "I have neither silver nor gold, but what I do have I give you: in the name of Jesus Christ the Nazorean, rise and walk." I suppose Peter and John could have kept walking in good conscience. They chose not to. Luke tells us that Peter took the man "by the right hand and raised him up." At that moment, the beggar's feet and ankles were healed. After leaping up to his feet and walking around, the man joined Peter and John and went into the Temple with them.

Paul is unquestionably the greatest evangelist of all time. In the second reading, Galatians 1:11–20, however, we hear the apostle describe his life before he encountered Christ: "You heard of my former way of life in Judaism, how I persecuted the Church of God beyond measure and tried to destroy it."

Everything, of course, changed after Paul met Jesus on the road to Damascus. And yet, Paul did not respond hastily or alone: "When God, who from my mother's womb had set me apart and called me through his grace, was pleased to reveal his Son to me, so that I might proclaim him to the Gentiles, I did not immediately consult flesh and blood, nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were Apostles before me." Paul did



Jaymie Stuart Wolfe
OSV News

Called to Holiness

See WOLFE, Page 17

A cry for unity

Pope Leo has assumed the Petrine ministry as old ecclesial divisions have reared up anew and as heightened polarization has weakened the church's unity and mission.

His actions have manifested a return to non-ideologized traditions — such as donning the papal red mozzetta for the announcement of his election and on numerous occasions since — which others had made polarized under Pope Francis' tenure. But, more, his words have redoubled the impression that Leo's exercise of the papacy is primed to foster unity.

Speaking at his first appearance as pope, Leo began to stress the importance of unity. He spoke of God's love for all, and the need to "move forward, without fear, together." He also spoke of our relationship to Christ, who "goes before us" and whose light "the world needs."

"Humanity needs (Christ) as the bridge that can lead us to God and his love. Help us, one and all, to build bridges through dialogue and encounter, joining together as one people, always at peace," Leo added.

In a June 1 homily, Leo explained that "God has always desired to draw all people to himself" and that in Christ divine life is bestowed upon us which "makes us one, uniting us with one another."

As a priest and former prior general of the Augustinian order, Leo often quotes the great St. Augustine in many of his homilies and speeches, the saintly father of the church who so often stressed that our unity with Christ is the means to peace in the church and throughout the world.

In his "Rule," which the former Robert Prevost lived by as a professed religious, St. Augustine urged unity, "oneness of mind and heart."

In an interview nearly two years before his papal election, Leo reiterated this: "Unity and communion are part of the charism of the Order of St. Augustine and also of my way of acting and thinking ... promoting unity and communion is fundamental."

So with unity admittedly at the center of the pope's own intentions, we can more clearly understand the choice of his episcopal motto — "*In Illo uno unum*," which is Latin for "In the One, we are one" — drawn from one of St. Augustine's sermons. In examining Psalm 127, St. Augustine explains, "When I speak of Christians in the plural, I understand one in the One Christ. You are there-



Michael R. Heinlein
OSV News

Papal Words

fore many, and you are one; we are many, and we are one."

Leo's words to date have revealed a heart which longs for unity and a desire to make fostering it a key part of his mission. In his June 1 homily, unity is ultimately a gift given by Christ. Leo is making clear through his words that we must avoid false starting points of unity — and embrace our true starting point that can be found in Christ alone.

"In a divided and troubled world, the Holy Spirit teaches us to walk together in unity," Leo said at a June 7 celebration on the vigil of Pentecost. "The earth will rest, justice will prevail, the poor will rejoice and peace will return, once we no longer act as predators but as pilgrims. No longer each of us for ourselves, but walking alongside one another."

Interestingly, he situates this renewed and refreshing reality in the context of synodality, a term itself regrettably polarized in recent years, making it synonymous with the less divisive communion.

"God created the world so that we might all live as one," Leo said on June 7, adding, "'Synodality' is the ecclesial name for this. It demands that we each recognize our own poverty and our riches, that we feel part of a greater whole, apart from which everything withers, even the most original and unique of charisms" — a reality written into nature," Leo said. "All creation exists solely in the form of coexistence, sometimes dangerous, yet always interconnected."

Let us pray that through the words and witness of Leo, our pope, Christ may continue to unite the many branches of his church anew.

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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.*

Defending freedom through faith and solidarity

By Lucia Corbea
OSV News

Imagine being a Catholic student on Good Friday, pressured to eat meat by people who don't share your faith. This is a small, but meaningful, example of religious freedom being threatened. In moments like these, we face a tough choice between avoiding conflict and staying true to our beliefs. Unfortunately, situations like this are still common for many religious communities across the country. Religious freedom is the right to practice and express one's beliefs without interference or persecution. It allows people to worship freely and live according to their values as long as it's done peacefully. Whether it's bans on Muslim headscarves in schools or legal battles over conscience protections in healthcare, not everyone is living as freely as they should be. As Catholics, we are called to defend the dignity of every person, no matter their faith. Christians have a responsibility to respond to this issue, and the church must help lead the way.

One of the most powerful ways to respond is by living out the virtue of solidarity. Solidarity means standing together as a community to protect the rights and dignity of all people, regardless of religion or culture. It's not enough to defend only our own values — we are called to stand up for everyone. In the Gospel, Jesus commands us to "love your neighbor as yourself" (Mt 22:39). This love becomes real through action. We can get involved by joining interfaith groups, writing letters to lawmakers, and using social media to amplify voices that are often ignored. A great example of this was when Christian clergy stood beside a group of Muslim leaders to protest a school district in Washington that attempted to ban the hijab. Rather than staying silent, the clergy supported their Muslim brothers and sisters. That act of unity didn't just protect one group, it strengthened everyone's freedom.

Even though Christians are called to reflect God's love and goodness, there have been times when we've fallen short. Some people have had negative experiences with Christians who were intolerant or dismiss-

ive of their beliefs. In certain moments, actions taken in the name of Christianity have caused harm. That's not what Jesus taught us. We are not meant to use God's words to justify division or disrespect. Instead, we're meant to live as Jesus did — with compassion, mercy, and love for all. The church should guide us on that path. Rather than creating more separation between communities, the church should bring people together. All faiths need to unite and look beyond politics and differences. Instead of getting caught up in endless arguments, we should focus on protecting the basic right of every person to worship and live according to their beliefs. Doing this helps move us away from the negative stereotypes that sometimes surround Christianity, and instead lets us be a source of hope and unity.

Taking that first step can feel uncomfortable. It's easier to speak up when we're personally affected, but we're called to act even when we're not. Jesus didn't only help those who believed in him. He ate with tax collectors, spoke with Samaritans, and showed mercy to outcasts. Many people disliked him, yet he continued to love and defend them. That's what we are meant to do too. Our actions shouldn't only benefit ourselves — they should serve the greater good. When injustice happens, whether it's a synagogue being vandalized, a Muslim coworker being mocked, or a classmate being judged for their beliefs, we can't stay silent. Even a small act like sharing a message of support online can make a difference. Whether it's through educating others, peacefully standing up for what's right, or simply listening with empathy, there is always a way to show up for others.

As the world grows more divided, the church's role becomes even more important. It must be a bridge — not a barrier — between people. Pope Francis often spoke about this, describing the church as "a field hospital," a place for healing, not judgment. That's why the church should always protect freedom of conscience and advocate for the rights of believers everywhere. The goal is unity built on faith, justice, and love. While religion and politics do sometimes overlap, the church should not take sides politically. Staying impartial al-

lows the church to remain a moral compass, encouraging people to defend not just their own freedoms, but those of others, too. Sister Norma Pimentel is a great example of someone who did just that. A Catholic nun and the director of Catholic Charities of the Rio Grande Valley, she worked with migrant families at the U.S.–Mexico border. She offered aid and support while standing up for their dignity. Even though her work was considered politically controversial, she chose to act out of faith and compassion. She didn't let politics get in the way of what was right. Her story reminds us that protecting religious freedom sometimes means challenging what's comfortable in order to serve what's just.

Religious freedom isn't just a law or a concept — it's a sacred truth based on the dignity and worth of every person. As Christians, we are not only asked to live our faith, but also to protect others' right to do the same. In a time of deep division and misunderstanding, we need to live out God's teachings with humility, courage, and love. Let this generation — and the ones to come — rise above fear, stereotypes, and division. Let us walk together in the light of Christ, building a world where freedom is defended through justice and peace for all.

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Lucia Corbea is the winner of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' 2025 Religious Liberty Essay Contest.

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Catholic Voices

Why we need a new conversation on immigration

By Archbishop José H. Gomez
OSV News

The military parade in the nation's capital June 14 kicked off a series of events to mark America's 250th anniversary, ending with next year's grand celebration of the signing of the Declaration of Independence on July 4, 1776.

The ideals expressed in the Declaration, not our military power, have always been what make America great.

Ours is the first nation founded on principles rooted in the Jewish and Christian Scriptures, the truth that all men and women are created equal, with God-given dignity and rights that can never be denied by any government.

America's founders called these truths "self-evident." Over the years, our leaders' commitment has made this nation a beacon of hope for those seeking freedom and refuge from oppression.

Based on these truths, this nation has become the most prosperous, most diverse, and among the most hopeful, innovative, and generous that the world has ever seen.

But today our nation's historic commitment to these truths is under fire in the confrontations over illegal immigration playing out in Los Angeles and cities across the country.

Here in Los Angeles, I have been deeply disturbed by the reports of federal agents detaining people in public places, apparently without showing warrants or evidence that those they are taking into custody are in the country illegally.

These actions are causing panic in our parishes and communities.

People are staying home from Mass and work, parks and stores are empty, the streets in many neighborhoods are silent. Families are staying behind locked doors, out of fear.

This situation is not worthy of a great nation.

We may agree that the previous administration in Washington went too far in not securing our borders and in permitting far too many people to enter our country without vetting.

But the current administration has offered no immigration policy beyond the stated goal of deporting thousands of people each day.

This is not policy, it is punishment, and it can only result in cruel and arbitrary outcomes. Already we are hearing stories of innocent fathers and mothers being wrongly deported, with no recourse to appeal.

A great nation can take the time and care to make distinctions and judge each case on its merits.

It is estimated that as many as two-thirds of those in the country illegally have been living here for a decade or more. In the case of the so-called "Dreamers," brought here as small children by undocumented parents, this is the only country they have ever known.

The vast majority of "illegal aliens" are good neighbors, hard-working men and women, people of faith; they are making important contributions to vital sectors of the American economy: agriculture, construction, hospitality, health care, and more. They are parents and grandparents, active in our communities, charities, and churches.

A joint study published earlier this year by the U.S. Catholic bishops and several Protestant groups, found that 1 in 12 Christians here are vulnerable to deportation or live with a family member who could be deported.

The last reform of our immigration laws was in 1986. That is two generations of neglect by our political and business leaders. It is not fair to punish only ordinary working men and women for that neglect.

It is time for a new national conversation about immigration, one that is realistic and makes necessary moral and practical distinctions about those in our country illegally.

I want to suggest some starting proposals for this new conversation, based on the principles of Catholic social teaching, which both recognize the duty of nations to control their borders and respects the natural rights of individuals to emigrate in search of a better life: First, we can agree that known terrorists and violent criminals should be deported, but in a way that is consistent with our values, that respects their rights to due process.

We can tighten border security, and use technologies and other means to help employers verify the legal status of their employees.

We should reform legal immigration policies to ensure that our nation has the skilled workers it needs while continuing our historic commitment to uniting families through our immigration policy.

We should restore our moral commitments to providing asylum and protective status to genuine refugees and endangered populations.

Finally, and most importantly, we should find a way to offer legal status to those who have been in our country for many years, beginning with the Dreamers.

These are not new ideas, but they are the start of a new conversation. And it is time that we start talking again and stop fighting in our streets.

Pray for me and I will pray for you.

And let us ask our Blessed Mother Mary to pray for our country, that we may be renewed in our commitment to the truths that make America great.

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Archbishop José H. Gomez is the Archbishop of Los Angeles, the nation's largest Catholic community. He served as President of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops from 2019-2022. Originally published at <https://angelusnews.com/voices/ice-raids-immigration-conversation>.

WOLFE

Continued from Page 16

eventually present himself to Peter in Jerusalem, but only after three years of prayer and preparation.

Today, Christ is still looking for missionaries who have zeal for the salvation of souls, and for ministers who care for fellow disciples in self-sacrificing love. The Christian life usually challenges us to embrace both of these dimensions of discipleship at some level and in some way.

With the solemnity of Sts. Peter and Paul, the church provides us an opportunity to contemplate both mission and ministry in fullness. There are seasons of our lives that will involve more ministry than mission, and others that will be more mission than ministry.

As disciples of Christ, we will be called to care for others, to give them what we can give — the Jesus we have received. But there are also times when we will be called to what may feel like the ends of the earth, sent to those who don't even know they need the Gospel we can so easily take for granted.

The final words of the Gospel, John 21:15–19, show us that we need to do both: "Follow me."

Christ's question to Peter after the Resurrection is posed to every one of us. "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" If we love Jesus, we will feed his lambs and tend his sheep. And if we love Jesus, we will allow ourselves to be led where we may not want to go. If we love Jesus, we will follow him.

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Jaymie Stuart Wolfe is a sinner, Catholic convert, freelance writer and editor, musician, speaker, pet-aholic, wife and mom of eight grown children, loving life in New Orleans.

Jesus doesn't leave us alone in the night

Four-year-old Alice is brushing her teeth before bed. Mom and Dad went out for the night, and big sister is at a friend's house.

So, my husband and I came for pizza, books, and play with Alice. She's an easy kid to be with. As she spits her toothpaste into the sink, she looks up at me.

"When are you and Grandpa leaving?" she asks.

"We'll go home when your mom and dad come home," I reply, wondering what's behind that question. I hasten to add, "We would never leave you here alone."

"Well, I wouldn't know," she says matter-of-factly. I think of her, lying awake in her dark room, wondering if Grandpa and Gram are heading out to the car. I add emphatically, "Alice, we would never leave you here alone."

Despite my faith, or lack of it, sometimes that fear of being left alone comes over me at the end of the Easter season. I know that God is with me. Jesus sent his Holy Spirit to us on Pentecost, energizing his faithful. Jesus promised to be with us to the end of time.

But there's something in me, on the day we celebrate his Ascension, that always cries out, "Don't leave yet." Those Gospel stories of encounters with the risen Christ are so wonderful. I want Jesus to cook fish for me on the shore at the Sea of Galilee. I want to hear Christ call my name in the garden.

I'm a bit like the little boy in the old story who is afraid during a bad storm. He runs to his mom's bedroom in the night in fear of the wind and pelting rain. Mom assures him that God is with him in the dark. He's safe in his own room.

I know God is here, he says, "but I want someone with skin on."

Maybe that's all of us sometimes. We want the Jesus who cured the sick, healed the lame, even brought Lazarus back from the dead. Like Thomas, we want to put our fingers in those wounds. We want that Jesus with skin on.

When I feel that yearning, I remind myself that that same Jesus is with me when I pray. I've been stu-



Effie Caldarola
OSV News

Feeling It

dying the Psalms, and the text I'm using is *Psalms for All Seasons* by John Craghan.

There are 150 Psalms, the same 150 that Jesus himself knew from Hebrew Scripture. They were a deep part of his prayer life. As he suffered on the cross, both Matthew and Mark have him exclaiming, from Psalm 22, the words, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"

Jesus going away to a quiet place to pray reminds me that I, too, am not alone when I pray.

"At prayer," writes Craghan, "we are invited to listen to the inaudible but real God." Inaudible, intangible, but nevertheless real.

But you still want "skin on"? Yeah, me, too, and that's why Jesus left us a communal faith. If I barely know the people sitting around me at Sunday Mass, I'm missing a big part of the story. Community is at the heart of being a Catholic.

There are faith-sharing groups out there that beckon us. There are food banks and Catholic charities serving the unhoused and the migrant that need our help. In those people who serve, and in those marginalized who need our help, we encounter Jesus — the Jesus with skin on.

The more we act out of love with others and for others, the more we learn that Jesus doesn't leave us alone in the night.

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

Cartoon Corner



PRISON

Continued from Page 1

leave," he said. "But then I realized that they were all going to confession. After they would receive absolution, they would kneel in front of the Blessed Sacrament — like, right in front of it — and pray. We weren't able to talk to them, but you could see that the Lord was talking to them."

The men looked "very rough," Acuña said, "but you slowly realize that that's the exterior. Their hearts are so sincere."

He said some men prayed rosaries, and others kissed their Bibles or prayed prostrate on the gymnasium floor. He saw one man kiss the monstrance, and another moved to tears after confession.

"What struck me is looking at them in their white uniforms," he said. "I was immediately reminded (of) baptismal gowns, because I'm looking at souls that have been washed as clean as the day of their baptism."

He felt "convicted" by the men's faith, he said, while being reminded of the sinful woman, recounted in Luke 7, who washed Jesus' feet with her tears and hair. "I was just thinking about Jesus' response: 'Who has been forgiven much, loves much,'" Acuña said. "And it was really humbling for me, and I'm sure for other pilgrims. ... You think you're coming in to serve people, but they're actually the ones witnessing to you."

The prison visit followed a restful Pentecost weekend, where the pilgrims took a break from participating in Eucharistic processions scheduled in the Diocese of San Angelo. Several pilgrims had been ill the week prior, and ongoing harassment from Protestant protesters during public processions had required extra fortitude.

Acuña said pilgrimage organizers wanted the pilgrims to refresh for the final two weeks of the pilgrimage, which culminated with Mass, Eucharistic adoration and

a celebration in Los Angeles on Corpus Christi Sunday, June 22. He said it was a chance for the pilgrims to "spiritually recharge."

The pilgrims met the people of the Diocese of San Angelo at Mass and during meals, and found them to be especially excited about the pilgrimage passing through their towns. Then, in El Paso, about 1,000 people, including Matachines dancers, joined a June 10 Eucharistic procession, Acuña said.

As they walked for 3 miles between Mount Carmel Catholic Church to the diocesan pastoral center, people came out of their homes to see what was going on and ended up joining the procession, he said.

Acuña said that after their weekend break, the pilgrims brought renewed passion to that procession. "Even more than our first week, when we were fresh, we were just kind of bouncing off the walls, like talking to people on the street," he said.

While the protesters returned with their megaphones and slanders against Catholic beliefs, "honestly, the protesters didn't even matter," he said. "The streets of El Paso were just filled with singing."

Amid the protests, "I think our team is just really experiencing the peace of Christ that the world cannot give," Acuña said. "It's never easy to hear those things said about the Eucharist and Mary and the church, but we're keeping our eyes on Jesus even more. It's all a reminder of what we're doing."

As they prepared to arrive in the Archdiocese of Los Angeles June 20, the pilgrims were also praying for the people of Los Angeles as crowds there protested recent federal immigration raids.

"I think that it's very apt that LA is our final destination, and to bring Jesus into a place of suffering and also division — I think it's just so needed," Acuña said. "And who better to solve these social afflictions than the Lord?"

RULING

Continued from Page 2

palatable than the remote possibility that a District Court exceeded its remedial powers when it ordered the Government to provide notice and process to which the plaintiffs are constitutionally and statutorily entitled. That use of discretion is as incomprehensible as it is inexcusable."

"In matters of life and death, it is best to proceed with caution," she wrote. The government "wrongfully deported one plaintiff to Guatemala, even though an immigration judge found he was likely to face torture there. Then, in clear violation of a court order, it deported six more to South Sudan, a nation the State Department considers too unsafe for all but its most critical personnel."

The Massachusetts court's "timely intervention only narrowly prevented a third set of unlawful removals to Libya."

The Massachusetts ruling was made after immigration officials put migrants from Myanmar, Vietnam, and Cuba on a plane to South Sudan, though they later were taken to a U.S. naval base in Djibouti, where they remain. All had been convicted of serious crimes in the United States.

"These individuals are pretty bad actors," Andrew

"Art" Arthur, the resident fellow in law and policy at the Center for Immigration Studies in Washington, told OSV News.

The Massachusetts judge "just made those standards up," he said of the District Court ruling. "There's nothing in the law that requires that."

DHS is bound by law not to remove someone to a country where there's a legitimate fear of torture, but "that's a determination for DHS to make. It's not a determination for anyone else to make."

"These individuals voluntarily came to the United States, and by doing so, ran the risk of being removed, not back home, but to a third country."

And although the law prohibits the removal to a country where torture is a risk, "we're not under a moral obligation to remove you to a country you're most comfortable in," said Arthur.

Sotomayer's dissent claimed flaws, saying that the government "obfuscates the issue by asserting that some (perhaps 'many') members of the class should be treated as if they never entered the United States. Yet even if that were true as to some class members, it could show at most that the class might be too broadly defined, not that the Government is likely to succeed on the constitutional merits."

mar, Vietnam y Cuba en un avión con destino a Sudán del Sur, aunque posteriormente fueron trasladados a una base naval estadounidense en Yibuti, donde permanecen hasta ahora. Todos habían sido condenados por delitos graves en Estados Unidos.

"Estos individuos son muy malos", declaró Andrew "Art" Arthur, investigador residente en derecho y políticas del Centro de Estudios de Inmigración en Washington, a OSV News.

El juez de Massachusetts "simplemente inventó esos estándares", dijo sobre el fallo de la Corte de Distrito. "No hay nada en la ley que lo exija".

El DHS está obligado por ley a no expulsar a nadie a un país donde exista un temor legítimo de tortura, pero "esa es una decisión que le corresponde al DHS. No es una decisión que deba tomar nadie más".

"Estas personas vinieron voluntariamente a Estados Unidos y, al hacerlo, corrieron el riesgo de ser expulsadas, no de vuelta a casa, sino a un tercer país".

Y aunque la ley prohíbe la deportación a un país donde exista riesgo de tortura, "no tenemos la obligación moral de deportarlos a un país donde se sientan más cómodos", dijo Arthur.

La disidencia de Sotomayor alegó fallas, argumentando que el gobierno "oscurece el asunto al afirmar que algunos (quizás 'muchos') miembros de esta categoría deberían ser tratados como si nunca hubieran entrado en Estados Unidos. Sin embargo, incluso si eso fuera cierto en el caso de algunos miembros de esta categoría, podría demostrar, como mucho, que la clase podría estar definida de forma

"Similarly," she added, "the Government relies on precedent about the wartime transfer of detainees to assert that the Executive’s determination that 'a country will not torture a person on his removal' is 'conclusive.'"

"There is no evidence in this case that the Government ever did determine that the countries it designated (Libya, El Salvador, and South Sudan) 'w[ould] not torture' the plaintiffs.

"Plaintiffs merely seek access to notice and process, so that, in the event the Executive makes a determination in their case, they learn about it in time to seek an immigration judge’s review.

Jeff Joseph, president of the American Immigration Lawyers Association, said in a statement that the Supreme Court has given "essentially a green light to secret deportations, including to countries considered dangerous."

"This decision is not only deeply troubling in itself, it is part of a broader pattern of the administration denying basic legal protections to vulnerable individuals," he said. "As judicial checks continue to erode, it is imperative that Congress act and assert its constitutional role. Protecting due process is not optional, it is the backbone of our democracy."

Kurt Jensen writes for OSV News from Washington.

DEPORTACIONES

Continúa de Página 3

Juezas Elena Kagan y Ketanji Brown Jackson, escribió que la mayoría de los jueces de la Corte Suprema otorgaba al gobierno "un alivio de emergencia de una orden que ha desafiado repetidamente".

"Aparentemente", escribió Sotomayor, "la Corte considera más aceptable la idea de que miles de personas sufran violencia en localidades lejanas que la remota posibilidad de que una Corte de Distrito se excediera en sus facultades correctivas al ordenar al Gobierno que proporcionara la notificación y el proceso a los que los demandantes tienen derecho constitucional y estatutariamente. Ese uso de la discreción es tan incomprensible como inexcusable".

"En asuntos de vida o muerte, es mejor proceder con cautela", escribió. El gobierno "deportó injustamente a un demandante a Guatemala, a pesar de que un juez de inmigración determinó que probablemente sería torturado allí. Luego, en clara violación de una orden judicial, deportó a seis más a Sudán del Sur, una nación que el Departamento de Estado considera demasiado insegura para todos, salvo para su personal más crítico".

La oportuna intervención del tribunal de Massachusetts "sólo evitó por poco una tercera serie de deportaciones ilegales a Libia".

El fallo de Massachusetts se dictó después de que funcionarios de inmigración embarcaran a migrantes de Myan-

demasiado amplia, no que el gobierno tenga probabilidades de prosperar en cuanto a los méritos constitucionales".

"De igual manera", añadió, "el Gobierno se basa en precedentes sobre el traslado de detenidos en tiempos de guerra para afirmar que la determinación del Ejecutivo de que ‘un país no torturará a una persona al ser deportada’ es ‘concluyente’".

"No hay pruebas en este caso de que el Gobierno haya determinado alguna vez que los países que designó (Libia, El Salvador y Sudán del Sur) ‘no torturarían’ a los demandantes", dijo.

"Los demandantes simplemente buscan acceso a la notificación y al proceso, para que, en caso de que el Ejecutivo tome una decisión en su caso, se enteren a tiempo para solicitar la revisión de un juez de inmigración", añadió.

Jeff Joseph, presidente de la Asociación Americana de Abogados de Inmigración, declaró que la Corte Suprema ha dado "básicamente luz verde a las deportaciones secretas, incluso a países considerados peligrosos".

"Esta decisión no solo es profundamente preocupante en sí misma, sino que forma parte de un patrón más amplio de la administración que niega protecciones legales básicas a personas vulnerables", declaró. "A medida que los controles judiciales continúan debilitándose, es imperativo que el Congreso actúe y haga valer su papel constitucional. Proteger el debido proceso no es opcional, es la columna vertebral de nuestra democracia".

Kurt Jensen escribe para OSV News desde Washington D.C.

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BARRON

Continued from Page 13

trafficking and exploitation of countless persons.

As we face exposure to social media and other digital platforms at earlier ages than ever before, Catholic families are called to come together to form healthy habits for young people and lead them toward a culture of encounter in the body of Christ, the church.

We bishops recently issued an updated pastoral letter addressing the scourge of pornography, "Create in Me a Pure Heart: A Pastoral Response to Pornography." A document like this guides the wider church's efforts to raise awareness of the issue and help those addicted to pornography, and our social justice efforts to bring a complete end to human trafficking of youth and adults.

The court's final decision of import credited the sound reasons for preventing children from undergoing irreversible, life-altering procedures when they reject their God-given bodies.

We can only imagine the heartbreak and anguish that parents live through as they help their child with gender dysphoria to grow to accept their bodies, but that undertaking is of vital importance as a parent.

Whether it is the protective and formative role of parents, or the proper understanding of how God created each of us with a sexual reality, these decisions of the Supreme Court are to be applauded not because they reflect some partisan political perspective, but be-

cause they reflect the best fundamental principles of our American Constitution and our freedoms therein.

It is fitting that two of these court decisions were released on the feast day of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, in which we're all called to draw our own hearts closer to him, praying for ourselves, our families, and the whole of society, "Create a pure heart for me, O God; renew a steadfast spirit within me" (Ps 51:10).

We must not rely solely on the judicial system as a fix for what ails our culture, but we should be encouraged that the court recently acknowledged the need for parameters. As Christian faithful, we have a duty to uphold the common good and speak up when the opposite is perpetuated in society.

As Catholic bishops, we remain committed to supporting parents in their vocation to raise their children in the faith that upholds the church's teaching on marriage, family life, sexuality, and the vocation to chastity.

At the parish level, this means the church should support parents in their vocation to raise their children in the faith through strong, viable parish and diocesan youth ministry programs and lay ecclesial movements of the church which partner with and accompany parents to carry out the church's mission of evangelization. We are in this together.

Bishop Robert E. Barron of the Diocese of Winona-Rochester, Minnesota, is chairman of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Committee on Laity, Marriage, Family Life, and Youth.

Pro-life scholarship awarded



COURTESY

Gisselle Rodriguez is the recipient of West Texans for Life's \$1,000 Paula Russell Matchen Pro-Life Scholarship. Gisselle is a sophomore at Franciscan University.

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Pope Leo XIV names California bishop as new bishop of Austin, Texas

WASHINGTON (OSV News) — Pope Leo XIV has appointed Bishop Daniel E. Garcia of Monterey, California, as the bishop of Austin, Texas.

The appointment was publicized in Washington July 2 by Cardinal Christophe Pierre, the apostolic nuncio to the U.S.

Earlier this year, on Jan. 20, Bishop Joe S. Vásquez, who was serving as the fifth bishop of the Diocese of Austin since March 8, 2010, was named by Pope Francis as archbishop of Galveston-Houston, where he was installed on March 25.

Bishop Garcia was born Aug. 30, 1960, and grew up in Waco and Cameron, Texas. He is bilingual in English and Spanish and has three younger sisters. He was ordained a priest for the Diocese of Austin on May 28, 1988.

He earned arts degrees from Tyler Junior College in

1982 and University of St. Thomas in Houston in 1984, while attending St. Mary Seminary. He went on to receive a master of divinity in 1988, earning a master of arts in liturgical studies from St. John’s University in Collegeville, Minnesota.

According to the diocesan website, throughout his ministry, Bishop Garcia served in numerous parishes and leadership roles. His first assignments were as associate pastor at St. Catherine of Siena Parish, Cristo Rey Parish, and St. Louis King of France Parish, all in Austin.

In the mid-1990s he served in the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston at St. Mary Magdalene Parish in Humble and was named the founding pastor of St. Vincent de Paul Parish in Austin, where he guided the community through its formation and multiple building projects, including the construction of a permanent church and sanctuary.

Beyond parish ministry, Bishop Garcia held several diocesan roles, including service in the vocation office, priests’ personnel board, and the presbyteral council, where he also served as chair.

In 2014, he was appointed vicar general and moderator of the curia for the Diocese of Austin by now-Archbishop Vásquez. The following year, Pope Francis appointed him auxiliary bishop of Austin.

In 2018, Pope Francis named Bishop Garcia the bishop of the Diocese of Monterey.

Bishop Garcia has served on the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops’ Committee on Communications and the Committee on Divine Worship. He is also a member of the board of directors for Catholic Relief Services.

The Diocese of Austin is comprised of 21,066 square miles in the state of Texas and has a total population of nearly 3.8 million, of whom 678,545 are Catholic.

Newly confirmed in Winters



Parochial Administrator Father Thomas Kalambadan, CMI, Bishop Michael Sis, and members of the Knights of Columbus joined the combined confirmation classes of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Parish in Winters and Sacred Heart Parish in Coleman June 11. The confirmation Mass was held at Our Lady of Mt. Carmel in Winters.

COURTESY

ACTS in Odessa



ALAN TORRE | APTORRE PHOTOGRAPHY

The participants of a women’s ACTS Retreat held at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish in Odessa the weekend of June 27–29.