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WEST TEXAS ANGELUS

Serving Catholics in the Diocese of San Angelo, Texas

Volume 45, No. 8

August 2025



Faithful spring to action after historic July 4 flooding

Local churches, charities, and faithful respond generously to July 4 flooding



WEST TEXAS ANGELUS
Top: Men and women from the San Angelo Fire Department attended an interfaith prayer service in San Angelo July 24. Bishop Sis was one of the prayer leaders at the service.
Left: Bags of goods waited to be distributed by volunteers from Catholic Charities, Odessa, in the parish hall of St. Margaret of Scotland in San Angelo July 18.

By Brian Bodiford
Editor, West Texas Angelus

SAN ANGELO — The early morning of July 4, 2025, saw torrential rains unleashed on sleeping Texans, leading to devastating flash flooding and loss of lives. The hardest hit areas were in the southeast, but the people of the Diocese of San Angelo were not spared. Communities like Junction, Wall, and Mereta saw property damage. The northeast side of San Angelo was hit particularly hard, with 14 inches of rain recorded in the area. As the water made its way to the Concho River via the East Angelo Draw, many homes were left waterlogged and people displaced.

One person in San Angelo, Tanya Burwick, lost her life. Also killed that morning was Steve Edwards, a parishioner of Holy Angels in San Angelo who was vacationing in Kerrville. The floods also claimed Kyndall, Joel, and Tasha Ramos, who received a Catholic burial from Father Bala Anthony Govindu in Midland. At least 135 people perished across the state.

When the sun rose, Catholics in the Diocese of San Angelo got right to work helping their brothers and sisters.

For one San Angelo priest, the need was close to home. “I was personally affected in having my mother’s house and my brother’s house damaged by the flood,” said Father Freddy Perez, pastor of St. Margaret of Scotland Parish in San Angelo. Being amid the chaos helped him to think of others, he said, as friends and parishioners offered to help. “I was privileged in being helped,” Father Perez said, and he wanted to make sure as many people as possible benefitted from the generosity he saw.

The parish of St. Margaret helped the community how they could, keeping in mind other local efforts. “Knowing that Catholic Outreach focuses primarily on adults,” Father Perez

said, “we focus on used clothes for children” as well as toys and necessities like baby strollers. These services were offered through St. Joseph’s Closet, a ministry that has been active at St. Margaret for about a year and a half.

“I would like to thank the parish of St. Margaret’s, the friends and family who have helped,” Father Perez said. “I look forward to see, after the chaos of this flood, what God will create for us.”

The parish also offered their fellowship hall as a staging ground for Catholic Charities, Odessa, who came to San Angelo in the aftermath of the July 4 storm to assist with immediate needs like bills, cleaning supplies, and clothing.

On July 5, Bishop Michael J. Sis called for a special collection in all churches of the Diocese of San Angelo to benefit the victims of the July 4 flooding in our diocese and in Kerrville.

The collection was to be taken up on the weekend of July 6 or July 13. As of Aug. 1, contributions to the special collection from individuals and parishes totaled \$52,997.54, a number which is expected to grow as parishes continue to submit collected donations to the diocese. Bishop Sis has decided that the collected funds will be split between two organizations assisting with flood relief, with 75% going to Catholic Outreach Services of San Angelo to assist those in our diocese, and 25% being given to Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of San Antonio to assist those affected in Kerrville.

Catholic Outreach Services normally offers their services to those in need in Tom Green County, where San Angelo is the county seat. The money earmarked for flood relief, however, will be available to those affected in other parts of the diocese, including people in Sonora who saw a significant rainfall event the week following the widely-covered July 4 floods. “I’ve already been in contact with Kimble” County, said

Wanda Gully, Director of Catholic Outreach Services. “We are going to help Kimble, Coke, and McCulloch Counties as well as Tom Green.” Anybody affected by the floods can go to Catholic Outreach for help. “We have a really good amount of money to help people with,” Gully said. In the initial days, they were helping people with hotel rooms but are now working to help with rental deposits and first month’s rent or funding for home repairs. Also available are supplies like food, clothing, bedding, cleaning and hygiene supplies, and Walmart gift cards.

Gully said donations are still welcome for those looking for a way to help, noting that all money goes directly to victims, with no administrative fees. Catholic Outreach also always has a need for volunteers to assist with their regular free meal program.

In an interfaith prayer service in San Angelo July 24 for those impacted by the flooding, Bishop Sis said that while disasters like this happen in an instant, the recovery takes time and feels more like a marathon than a sprint. Thanks to the generosity of the people in West Texas, the victims of this disaster will have a helping hand in reaching the finish line.

St. Margaret of Scotland Parish understood the need for long-term relief as well, rescheduling their parish fall festival to instead utilize the planned Aug. 30 concert as a flood relief benefit. Headlined by Latin Grammy nominee Gary Hobbs for only a \$5 cover charge, the money raised by the concert will go to flood relief efforts at Catholic Outreach and the San Angelo Area Foundation. The party starts at 1:00 p.m. and goes until midnight, with Saturday vigil Mass at 4:00 p.m.

“We continue to be a hub” for people who want to give, Father Perez said of his parish. “People want to help, but they don’t know where to go.” Like any time people don’t know where to go, the local Catholic church is a good place to start.

From the Bishop’s Desk

Why go to Mass?

In today’s world, people work longer hours, spend more time online, and take fewer vacation days than ever before. Our schedules get so full, it is understandable how some people feel they don’t have time to go to church. Some got out of the practice of attending Mass for whatever reason and have not yet found their way back. In this article, I would like to offer a variety of good reasons to come to Mass.

A matter of justice

I believe the most important reason to attend church is because it is a matter of justice — God deserves our worship and our thanks. God created and sustains all that exists, and God gives us 168 hours of life every week. The least we can do is to give him back one or two hours of worship each week in church. Weekly church attendance is actually an expectation of God. In the Ten Commandments, God tells us to remember the Sabbath day and keep it holy (Ex 20:8). In our faith tradition, this includes attending Mass every Sunday and holy day.

Example of Jesus

As Christians, our desire is to follow the example of Jesus Christ. He had the practice of participating in the regular worship of his faith community at the weekly Sabbath service in his local synagogue. Thus, if we follow his example, we will also participate in the regular worship of our faith community, the community founded by Jesus himself — the Catholic Church.

Do this

Furthermore, a person who believes in Jesus seeks to follow the commands that Jesus gives. At the Last Supper, When Jesus offered bread and wine in the first Eucharist, identifying them with his own body and blood, he commanded his followers, “Do this in memory of me” (Lk 22:19). To participate in Mass is simply to follow this instruction of Jesus. To skip Mass is to ignore his instruction.

What really happens

When we realize what is taking place in every Catholic Mass, we have a deeper appreciation for why it is important to be there. The Mass is actually a direct, bodily encounter with Jesus Christ, the Son of God, in the flesh. Jesus Christ is present in the Eucharist in a more powerful way than in anything else we do. What we are receiving in Communion in our Mass is the true presence of Jesus Christ himself.

The bread and wine really are transformed into the Body and Blood of Christ. It’s not just a symbol. Our Mass is more than just a memorial of a past event of the Last Supper. It’s more than just a community meal of fellowship. It’s also a participation in the sacrificial death and resurrection of Christ. In the Eucharist, we participate in and apply the sacrifice of Jesus Christ to our needs today. The more we appreciate this profound truth, the more committed we will be to coming and receiving him.

Balanced life

There is more to life than work. Attending church helps us to strike a healthier balance between work and life. It gives us a chance to step off the treadmill of our work routine and simply be. Without the need to perform, produce, or accomplish tasks, we can just bask in the presence of God, who accepts each one of us unconditionally. It strengthens us to face the stresses and struggles of life. It gives us a sense of purpose and meaning. It helps us to put our pains in their proper perspective. It reminds us of our ultimate goal of eternal life in heaven. Just as God rested on the seventh day after all the work he had done in creating the world (Gn 2:2), we imitate God in our observance of Sunday as a day of rest and prayer.

Our work schedules sometimes make it very difficult to get to church. In the pursuit of profit in a highly competitive environment, employers often ignore the basic human right to practice one’s religion. I have a high regard for those companies who respect their employees’ desire to go to church. This is good for people’s well-



Bishop Michael J. Sis

Diocese of San Angelo

being, and it is good for the family.

Prayer

The Mass is an encounter with Jesus Christ. Coming to Mass opens ourselves up to union with God and the entire communion of saints. Our participation in the Eucharist gathers us more and more into the body of Christ. It transforms us spiritually. It helps us to let go of our self-pity and our tendency to ask, “Why me?” It helps us to count our blessings in gratitude to God. It helps us to examine our conscience, ask for God’s forgiveness, and forgive ourselves. It reminds us of the importance of forgiving one another. The Mass also includes prayer of praise, where we simply glorify the greatness of God. Every Mass is also an opportunity to express our prayers of petition. Coming to Mass reminds me that I need God, and that God is on my side.

Networking

Attending church provides a social support network. At church we can meet people and form new friendships. All sorts of helpful connections happen when we take part in a community. It gives us a break from the loneliness and isolation that are rampant in contemporary life. We have a chance to converse with other people who are sincerely trying to be good. My best friends in this world are people I met in church. I have known many married couples who met one another at church. The common bond of shared faith provides a much more trustworthy basis for marriage than the mere physical attractiveness of meeting a stranger at a bar.

Family unity

Going to church helps spouses to connect better with one another. In our faith tradition, we say that a couple that prays together stays together. This was certainly true for my parents. They went to church together every Sunday and holy day, and their Christian marriage lasted almost 70 years before my father passed away. Shared beliefs and values help to reinforce the bond of matrimony.

Those in need

Going to church puts us in a position to learn about opportunities to volunteer in good causes to serve our community and help those in need. At Mass we regularly hear about situations that need helpers, such as a family whose house burned down, a person who lost their job, someone in the hospital who could use some encouragement, or perhaps a group that is planning a medical mission trip to a developing country.

Mutual encouragement

When we come to the church for Mass, we strengthen those around us in their journey of faith. We are not there just for ourselves. Our presence at Mass provides support and encouragement for the faith commitment of the others who are gathered there.

Singing

Singing together in prayerful song lifts our heart to God and feeds our soul. St. Augustine of Hippo said, “The one who sings prays twice.” What he meant was that, besides praying the words of the song, the very use of our voice in singing is itself an act of love for God. Music has a way of opening our hearts to God. If we will look at the words of the congregational hymns and try to sing along

prayerfully, there will be some words that will occasionally connect to our hearts in a powerful way.

Scripture

The three-year Sunday lectionary cycle gives us the opportunity to encounter God’s holy word from all parts of the Bible, not just the parts we are personally familiar with or comfortable with. God is actually present to us in the proclamation of his word in the liturgy. Each one of us will have a more powerful experience of his word proclaimed in Mass if we will read and reflect on the Mass readings at home beforehand.

Don’t blame God

Sometimes we stay away from church because we are mad at God. When life gets hard and this world is unfair to us, it is easy to blame God. However, God never promised us a rose garden. He never promised that life will be easy. God is with us in our pain, healing us and giving us strength. In fact, going to church helps us to find God’s presence and guidance in our times of struggle. It helps us to learn from our experience and to practice healthy coping skills when life gets difficult.

Travel

It is good to get out of town sometimes for vacation, visits to friends and family, or just a change of pace. Weekend schedules are sometimes very full of activities, such as out-of-town travel for sports competitions. I have found it to be enlightening and enjoyable to discover the Catholic churches in places where I travel. There is a very handy resource for finding Mass times in our travels. Just look up *masstimes.org*. Many parishes have Masses on Saturday night, Sunday morning, and Sunday evening, making it more feasible to attend a Mass when we are traveling.

The struggle to get ready

We all know how hard it can be to get everybody on the same page, get dressed, get the children ready, get in the car, and get on the way to Mass. It is even more difficult when some of the family members are resistant to going. I have found that the families who go to church consistently are the ones who teach their children that it is simply a non-negotiable and it is a part of our identity as believers.

Sunday obligation

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* offers a helpful explanation of the Sunday obligation at numbers 2174–2188. It also makes it clear that we do not have an obligation to attend Mass if a serious reason makes it physically or morally impossible (for example, if we are ill, or we are taking care of an infant or someone who is ill or homebound, or if our travel makes it impossible, or if no Mass is available, or we don’t have sufficient mobility or transportation). In those circumstances, missing Mass is not a sin.

Conclusion

My days are very full of an amazing variety of interactions with people, but the most important thing I do each day is the Mass. The Eucharist is the source and summit of the entire Christian life (*Lumen Gentium*, no. 11). This means that all our activity is ultimately directed toward the Eucharist, and all we do flows from the Eucharist like water flowing from a spring. The more you understand what is really happening in the Mass, the more motivated you will be to come and participate in it.

The more you truly appreciate Jesus Christ, the more you will want to be united with him in the Eucharist. His words in the Gospel of John summarize the great value in coming to Mass: “Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you do not have life within you. . . . Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me and I in him. Just as the living Father sent me and I have life because of the Father, so also the one who feeds on me will have life because of me” (Jn 6:53-57).

How to support flood victims

The recent tragic flooding in Texas, including in parts of our own diocese, has led people to ask where they can make donations to Catholic organizations who are helping in the recovery process.

The Diocese of San Angelo organized a second collection to support flood victims, taken the weekends of July 6 and July 13 in the parishes of the diocese. The money collected will be distributed between Catholic charitable organizations in the Diocese of San Angelo and Archdiocese of San Antonio.

For anybody wishing to make a contribution directly

to organizations helping in the Texas flood recovery process, Bishop Michael J. Sis of the Diocese of San Angelo has recommended the following:

Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of San Antonio
<https://ccaosa.ejoinme.org/helptoday>
Counties Impacted: Bandera, Bexar, Comal, Gillespie, Guadalupe, Kendall, Kerr

Catholic Charities of Central Texas
<https://ccctx.org/donate/>

Counties Impacted: Burnet, Caldwell, Llano, Mason, San Saba, Williamson, Travis

Catholic Outreach Services of San Angelo
Mail checks to:
Catholic Outreach Services of San Angelo
410 North Chadbourne
San Angelo, TX 76903
325-617-7292
Counties Impacted: Coke, Kimble, McCullough, Tom Green

¿Por qué ir a Misa?

En el mundo actual, la gente trabaja más horas, pasa más tiempo en línea, y se toma menos días de vacaciones más que nunca. Nuestras agendas están tan llenas, es comprensible que algunos sientan que no tienen tiempo para ir a la iglesia. Algunos dejaron de asistir a Misa por alguna razón y aún no han vuelto. En este artículo, me gustaría ofrecer varias buenas razones para ir a Misa.

Una cuestión de justicia

Creo que la razón más importante para asistir a la iglesia es porque es una cuestión de justicia – Dios merece nuestra adoración y nuestro agradecimiento. Dios creó y sustenta todo lo que existe, y nos da 168 horas de vida cada semana. Lo mínimo que podemos hacer es retribuirle con una o dos horas de adoración cada semana en la iglesia. La asistencia semanal a la iglesia es, de hecho, una expectativa de Dios. En los Diez Mandamientos, Dios nos dice que recordemos el día Sabático y lo santifiquemos (Éx 20:8). En nuestra tradición de fe, esto incluye asistir a Misa todos los domingos y días santos.

Ejemplo de Jesús

Como cristianos, nuestro deseo es seguir el ejemplo de Jesucristo. Él solía participar en el culto regular de su comunidad de fe durante el servicio semanal del Sabbath en su sinagoga local. Por lo tanto, si seguimos su ejemplo, también participaremos en el culto regular de nuestra comunidad de fe, la comunidad fundada por el mismo Jesús – la Iglesia Católica.

Haz lo siguiente

Además, una persona que cree en Jesús busca seguir los mandamientos que Jesús da. En la Última Cena, cuando Jesús ofreció el pan y el vino en la primera Eucaristía, identificándolos con su propio cuerpo y su sangre, ordenó a sus seguidores: “Hagan esto en memoria de mi” (Lc 22:19). El participar en la Misa es simplemente seguir estas instrucciones de Jesús. El fallar a la Misa es ignorar su instrucción.

¿Qué sucede realmente?

Cuando comprendemos lo que sucede en cada Misa católica, comprendemos mejor por qué es importante estar allí. La Misa es, en realidad, un encuentro directo y corporal con Jesucristo, el Hijo de Dios, encarnado. Jesucristo está presente en la Eucaristía con mayor fuerza que en cualquier otra cosa que hagamos. Lo que recibimos en la Comunión de nuestra Misa es la verdadera presencia de Jesucristo mismo.

El pan y el vino se transforman realmente en el Cuerpo y la Sangre de Cristo. No es solo un símbolo. Nuestra Misa es más que un simple memorial de un evento pasado de la Última Cena. Es más que una simple comida comunitaria de confraternidad. Es también una participación en la muerte y resurrección sacrificial de Cristo. En la Eucaristía, participamos en el sacrificio de Jesucristo y lo aplicamos a nuestras necesidades actuales. Cuanto más apreciamos esta profunda verdad, más comprometidos estaremos a venir y recibirlo.

Vida equilibrada

Hay más en la vida que el trabajo. Asistir a la iglesia nos ayuda a lograr un equilibrio más saludable entre el trabajo y la vida. Nos da la oportunidad de desconectar de la rutina laboral y simplemente ser. Sin la necesidad de realizar, producir, ni completar tareas, podemos simplemente disfrutar de la presencia de Dios, quien nos acepta incondicionalmente. Nos fortalece para afrontar las tensiones y las dificultades de la vida. Nos da un sentido de propósito y significado. Nos ayuda a poner nuestras penas en la perspectiva adecuada. Nos recuerda nuestra meta final de vida eterna en el cielo. Así como Dios descansó el séptimo día después de toda la obra que realizó al crear el mundo (Gn 2:2), imitamos a Dios al observar el domingo como día de descanso y oración.

Nuestros horarios de trabajo a veces dificultan mucho ir a la iglesia. En su afán de lucro en un entorno altamente competitivo, los empleadores a menudo ignoran el derecho humano fundamental de practicar la propia religión. Tengo un gran respeto por las empresas que respetan el deseo de



Obispo Michael J. Sis

Diócesis de San Ángelo

sus empleados de ir a la iglesia. Esto beneficia tanto al bienestar de las personas como a la familia.

Oración

La Misa es un encuentro con Jesucristo. Asistir a Misa nos abre a la unión con Dios y toda la comunión de los santos. Nuestra participación en la Eucaristía nos reúne cada vez más y más en el cuerpo de Cristo. Nos transforma espiritualmente. Nos ayuda a dejar de lado nuestra autocompasión y nuestra tendencia a preguntar: “Por qué a mí?” Nos ayuda a contar nuestras bendiciones con gratitud a Dios. Nos ayuda a examinar nuestra conciencia, a pedir perdón a Dios, y a perdonarnos a nosotros mismos. Nos recuerda la importancia de perdonarnos unos a otros. La Misa también incluye una oración de alabanza, donde simplemente glorificamos la grandeza de Dios. Cada Misa es también una oportunidad para expresar nuestras oraciones de petición. Asistir a Misa me recuerda que necesito a Dios, y que Él está de mi lado.

Redes

Asistir a la iglesia nos brinda una red de apoyo social. En ella podemos conocer gente y forjar nuevas amistades. Se crean todo tipo de conexiones útiles cuando participamos en una comunidad. Nos da un respiro de la soledad y el aislamiento que abundan en la vida contemporánea. Tenemos la oportunidad de conversar con otras personas que sinceramente se esfuercen por ser buenas. Mis mejores amigos en este mundo son personas que conocí en la iglesia. He conocido a muchas parejas casadas que se conocieron en la iglesia. El vínculo común de la fe compartida proporciona una base mucho más confiable para el matrimonio que el mero atractivo físico de conocer a un extraño en un bar.

Unidad familiar

Ir a la iglesia ayuda a los cónyuges a conectar mejor. En nuestra tradición religiosa, decimos que una pareja que reza unida permanece unida. Esto fue especialmente cierto en el caso de mis padres. Iban juntos a la iglesia todos los domingos y días santos, y su matrimonio cristiano duró casi 70 años antes del fallecimiento de mi padre. Compartir creencias y valores fortalece el vínculo matrimonial.

Los necesitados

Ir a la iglesia nos permite conocer oportunidades de voluntariado en buenas causas para servir a nuestra comunidad y ayudar a los necesitados. En la Misa, escuchamos con frecuencia sobre situaciones que requieren ayuda, como una familia cuya casa se incendió, una persona que perdió su trabajo, alguien en el hospital que necesita apoyo, o quizás un grupo que planea un viaje de misión médica a un país en desarrollo.

Estímulo mutuo

Cuando asistimos a la iglesia para la Misa, fortalecemos a quienes nos rodean en su camino de fe. No estamos allí solo por nosotros mismos. Nuestra presencia en la Misa brinda apoyo y aliento para el compromiso de fe de quienes se reúnen allí.

Cantando

Cantar juntos en un canto de oración eleva nuestro corazón hacia Dios y nutre nuestra alma. San Agustín de Hipona dijo: “Quien canta, ora dos veces.” Lo que quería decir era que, además de orar la letra del canto, el uso mismo de la voz al cantar es en sí mismo un acto de amor a Dios. La música tiene una forma de abrir nuestros cora-

zones a Dios. Si observamos las palabras de los himnos congregacionales y tratamos de cantar con oración, habrá algunas palabras que, ocasionalmente, conectarán con nuestro corazón de una manera poderosa.

Sagrada Escritura

El ciclo trienal del leccionario dominical nos brinda la oportunidad de encontrarnos con la santa palabra de Dios en todas las partes de la Biblia, no solo en las que conocemos o con las que nos sentimos cómodos. Dios está realmente presente en la proclamación de su palabra en la liturgia. Cada uno de nosotros experimentará con mayor intensidad su palabra proclamada en la Misa si lee y reflexiona previamente sobre las lecturas de la Misa en casa.

No culpes a Dios

A veces nos alejamos de la iglesia porque estamos enojados con Dios. Cuando la vida se pone difícil y este mundo es injusto con nosotros, es fácil culpar a Dios. Sin embargo, Dios nunca nos prometió un jardín de rosas. Nunca prometió que la vida sería fácil. Dios está con nosotros en nuestro dolor, sanándonos y dándonos fuerzas. De hecho, ir a la iglesia nos ayuda a encontrar la presencia y la guía de Dios en nuestros momentos difíciles. Nos ayuda a aprender de nuestra experiencia y a practicar habilidades de afrontamiento saludables cuando la vida se vuelve difícil.

Viajar

Es bueno salir de la ciudad de vez en cuando para vacaciones, visitar a amigos y familiares, o simplemente para cambiar de ritmo. Los fines de semana suelen estar repletos de actividades, como viajes fuera de la ciudad para asistir a competiciones deportivas. He encontrado enriquecedor y agradable descubrir las iglesias católicas en los lugares donde viajo. Hay un recurso muy útil para encontrar los horarios de Misa durante nuestros viajes. Simplemente busca masstimes.org . Muchas parroquias tienen Misas los sábados por la noche, los domingos por la mañana, y por la noche, lo que facilita asistir a Misa cuando viajamos.

La lucha por prepararse

Todos sabemos lo difícil que puede ser poner a todos de acuerdo, vestirse, preparar a los niños, subir al coche, y salir a Misa. Es aún más difícil cuando algunos miembros de la familia se resisten a ir. He comprobado que las familias que asisten a la iglesia con regularidad son las que enseñan a sus hijos que es algo innegociable y que forma parte de nuestra identidad como creyentes.

Obligación dominical

El *Catecismo de la Iglesia Católica* ofrece una explicación útil de la obligación dominical en los números 2174-2188. También aclara que no tenemos obligación de asistir a Misa si una razón grave lo imposibilita física o moralmente (por ejemplo, si estamos enfermos, cuidamos a un bebé o a alguien enfermo o confinado en casa, o si nuestro viaje lo impide, si no hay Misa disponible, o no tenemos suficiente movilidad o transporte). En esas circunstancias, faltar a Misa no es pecado.

Conclusión

Mis días están llenos de una increíble variedad de interacciones con personas, pero lo más importante que hago cada día es la Misa. La Eucaristía es la fuente y la cumbre de toda la vida cristiana (*Lumen Gentium*, núm. 11). Esto significa que toda nuestra actividad se dirige, en última instancia, hacia la Eucaristía, y todo lo que hacemos fluye de la Eucaristía como el agua que fluye de un manantial. Cuanto más entiendas lo que realmente está sucediendo en la Misa, más motivado estarás para venir y participar en ella.

Cuanto más aprecies verdaderamente a Jesucristo, más querrás estar unido a él en la Eucaristía. Sus palabras en el Evangelio de Juan resumen el gran valor de asistir a Misa: “Si no comen la carne del Hijo del Hombre y no beben su sangre, no tienen vida en ustedes ... El que come mi carne y bebe mi sangre permanece en mí y yo en él. Como el Padre, que es vida, me envió y yo vivo por el Padre, así quien me come vivirá por mí (Jn 6:53-57).

Cómo apoyar a las víctimas de las inundaciones

Las recientes y trágicas inundaciones en Texas, incluyendo partes de nuestra diócesis, han llevado a la gente a preguntar dónde pueden hacer donaciones a organizaciones católicas que están ayudando en el proceso de recuperación.

La Diócesis de San Angelo organizó una segunda colecta para apoyar a las víctimas de las inundaciones, que se realizó los fines de semana del 6 y el 13 de julio en las parroquias de la diócesis. El dinero recaudado se distribuirá entre organizaciones caritativas católicas de la Diócesis de San Angelo y la Arquidiócesis de San Antonio. Para quienes deseen contribuir directamente a las organizaciones

que colaboran en el proceso de recuperación de las inundaciones en Texas, el Obispo Michael J. Sis, de la Diócesis de San Ángelo, ha recomendado lo siguiente:

Caridades Católicas de la Arquidiócesis de San Antonio
https://ccaosa.ejoinme.org/helptoday
Condados afectados: Bandera, Bexar, Comal, Gillespie, Guadalupe, Kendall, Kerr

Caridades Católicas del Centro de Texas
https://ccctx.org/donate/

Condados afectados: Burnet, Caldwell, Llano, Mason, San Saba, Williamson, Travis

Servicios de Alcance Católico de San Ángelo
Envíe sus cheques a:
Catholic Outreach Services of San Angelo
410 North Chadbourne
San Angelo, TX 76903
325-617-7292
Condados afectados: Coke, Kimble, McCullough, Tom Green

CALENDARS

Please pray for our clergy



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 Mysliwiec, 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. Johnnrita 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)

September

- 1

Rev. James Delaney, OMI (D — 2007)
- 2

Rev. Albert Ezeanya (O — 2005)
- 2

Rev. Hilarin Lapinski (D — 1994)
- 4

Rev. John Busch, OMI (D — 2003)
- 5

Deacon Jesus Mercado (D — 2009)
- 6

Rev. Vincent Daugintis (D — 1990)
- 6

Rev. Reggie Odima (B)
- 10

Rev. James Franchi (D — 1969)
- 10

Rev. Leo St. John, OMI (D — 1976)
- 10

Rev. Ryan Rojo (B)
- 12

Rev. Robert Baden (D — 2018)
- 14

Rev. Kizito Okhuoya (O — 1996)
- 15

Rev. Peter Vergauwen (D — 2003)
- 19

Bishop Joseph Fiorenza (D — 2022)
- 20

Rev. Timothy Hayter (B)
- 21

Rev. Kumar Jujjuvarapu (B)
- 21

Rev. Felix Archibong (B)
- 23

Rev. Herman Valladares (D — 1997)
- 23

Rev. Michael Moore, OMI (D — 1992)
- 25

Rev. William Lensing (D — 1978)
- 25

Deacon Felix Segura (B)
- 26

Rev. William Cadigan, MSC (D — 1971)
- 26

Rev. Joey Faylona (B)
- 26

Deacon David Workman (B)
- 27

Rev. Carlos Felipe Rodriguez (O — 1997)
- 28

Deacon Leonard Hendon (B)
- 28

Deacon Paul Ramos (D — 1990)
- 29

Rev. Richard Regan (B)
- 29

Rev. Alan Brelivet, OMI (D — 2001)
- 30

Rev. Johnnrita Adegboyega (B)
- 30

Rev. Nilo Nalugon (B)
- 30

Deacon Ray Ramirez (D — 2017)

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

August 2025

- 4–6

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

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

MIDLAND, Bush Convention Center, Benefit Concert for Project Rachel at 7:00 p.m.
- 7

ODESSA, St. Mary’s Central Catholic School, Day of Reflection at 8:30 a.m.
- 9

LAREDO, Celebration of 25th anniversary of diocese of 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, Holy Cross Catholic High School Convocation Mass at 5:00 p.m.
- 11

SAN ANGELO, Sacred Heart Cathedral, Educational Endowment meeting at 12:00 p.m.
- 12

SAN ANGELO, Diocesan Pastoral Center, Catholic Charitable Foundation Board meeting at 10:00 a.m.
- 12

MIDLAND, Our Lady of Guadalupe, Mass of anniversary of ordination of Fr. David Herrera at 6:00 p.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

September 2025

- 4

SAN ANGELO, Diocesan Pastoral Center, Presbyteral Council meeting at 11:00 a.m.
- 5

ODESSA, St. Mary’s School, Mass at 10:00 a.m.
- 6–7

SAN ANTONIO, Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre meeting
- 8

MIDLAND, Tipi Loschi young adult meeting at 6:00 p.m.
- 13

SAN ANGELO, Diocesan Women’s Conference Mass at 10:00 a.m.
- 13

WALL, St. Ambrose, Mass at 5:00 p.m. and blessing of renovated hall
- 14

McCAMEY, Sacred Heart, Confirmation Mass at 11:00 a.m.
- 14

CRANE, Good Shepherd, Confirmation Mass at 3:00 p.m.
- 18

ROUND ROCK, St. William, Installation Mass of Bishop Danny Garcia at 2:00 p.m.
- 19

SAN ANGELO, Diocesan Pastoral Center, Finance Council meeting at 11:00 a.m.
- 20

MIDLAND, St. Andrew’s Men’s Conference
- 22–25

CHICAGO, Catholic Extension Mission Bishops’ Conference
- 27

ELDORADO, Our Lady of Guadalupe, Centennial Mass at 6:00 p.m.
- 28

CARLSBAD, St. Therese, Mass at 9:00 a.m.
- 30–Oct 2

DENVER, SPES Bishops’ Conference



Christ the King Retreat Center

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

September 2025

- 1

CKRC Offices closed in Observance of Labor Day
- 5–7

3rd Order Carmelites
- 8

Heart of Mercy Prayer Group
- 10

DOSA Staff Meeting
- 12–14

Deacon Formation
- 18–21

Lubbock Deacons’ Retreat 1
- 22

Heart of Mercy Prayer Group
- 26–28

Engaged Encounter

Special Collections

August 31, 2025
College and University Campus Ministry

Support the work of campus ministers sharing the Gospel with college and university students. Your donation helps current ministries in San Angelo, Midland, Odessa, and Abilene.

September 28, 2025
Diocesan Seminarian Education

Thanks to an abundance of vocations, the diocese currently has 12 seminarians discerning a call to the priesthood in the coming school year. Your donation to this collection helps pay the cost of tuition for these young men answering God’s call.

Please support the work of campus ministers sharing the Gospel with college and university students in our diocese

AUG 31, 2025
SECOND COLLECTION

WEST TEXAS
CAMPUS MINISTRY



Sister Christina Chavez, CDP
432-215-8169 or
cchavez@sanangelodiocese.org



Mission accomplished: Sharing the healing power of God’s love in Honduras

By Vince Mangano

San Rafael Expeditions, a Catholic missionary organization rooted in West Texas, has joyfully returned from its inaugural mission trip to serve the people of Honduras. Our team of 21 dedicated missionaries offered seven days of medical care to communities with limited or no access to health services.



The journey began in Midland, Texas, with a vigil Mass and a special blessing at Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish. At dawn on Sunday June 29, the missionaries departed for Roatán, Honduras, united in prayer and guided by the Holy Spirit.

Roatán, the largest of the Bay Islands, carries a rich and complex history — from its indigenous Paya roots to European colonization and Afro-Caribbean heritage. In 2024, a devastating fire destroyed the island’s only hospital, leaving many without essential medical care. At the invitation of the Diocese of La Ceiba, the Diocese of San Angelo responded generously by sending this medical mission to Roatán.

The team’s first clinic was in Punta Gorda, a Garifuna community renowned for its vibrant traditions and deep cultural pride. Amidst heat and humble conditions, our team set up a clinic in a local schoolhouse, serving over 175 patients in one day. We witnessed God’s grace in abundance as we encountered each patient, reminding us that Christ himself is present in every person we serve.

The second day took us to Coxen Hole, where the mission team established a clinic behind the island’s main Catholic church. Despite space constraints, the team adapted creatively — using the church as a pharmacy and transforming storage areas into examination rooms. Over 125 patients received compassionate medical care, reflecting Christ’s healing love.

After two fruitful days on Roatán, the team traveled by ferry to La Ceiba, a vibrant city on the mainland known for its history and warm hospitality. Hosted at the bishop’s retreat center and local rectories, our team was graciously cared for by devoted religious sisters who nourished us with both meals and prayer.

From La Ceiba, we ventured to Esparta, a rural community marked by agricultural life and deep faith. Though only 40 miles away, the journey took nearly three hours over rough roads. In Esparta’s new municipal medical facility, we were able to serve over 300 patients across two days, offering much-needed care and witnessing the resilience and steadfast faith of the local people.

Throughout this mission, the support and leadership of our Honduran partners were indispensable. We extend heartfelt gratitude to Fathers Rene Flores Pineda, Oscar Del Cid, Justo, Norberto Morroquin, and Denis Lopez, who coordinated local logistics and spiritually prepared their communities.

Special thanks goes to my dear friend Alex Perdomo Orellana, whose tireless dedication ensured smooth navigation through governmental regulations, and to Liz, our extraordinary pharmacist, who meticulously managed and distributed the many medications with precision and care. We also recognize the invaluable contributions of interpreters Alex and Charlie, as well as Dr. Cecilia and her family, who supported the Esparta mission.

Our West Texas team — under the seasoned guidance of Janelle and Dennis O’Connell — included physicians specializing in family practice, pediatrics, neurology, respiratory therapy, OB/GYN, and internal medicine, along with physician assistants, nurses, and a dedicated spiritual leader, Father David Herrera. Representing communities from Abilene, Midland, Odessa, and San Angelo, each member embodied Christ’s call to serve “the least of these” (Mt 25:40).

We also give thanks for our "West Texas missionaries" — those who prayed for us, provided financial support, and ensured our safe passage. Truly, this mission was a display of the body of Christ working together.

As we reflect on this journey, we recognize the hand of God in every encounter and every healing moment. We invite each of you to consider how God might be calling you to serve — whether on a future mission trip or in other acts of charity and solidarity with our brothers and sisters around the world. May the Holy Spirit continue to inspire and guide us as we strive to share the healing power of God’s love.



The team gathered outside the building that would serve as their impromptu clinic during their time in Punta Gorda.

COURTESY



A storage area served as an examination room in the mission trip’s second stop of Coxen Hole, Honduras.

COURTESY



Missionaries worked to help sort and distribute pharmaceuticals in Esparta, Honduras.

COURTESY

Reporting Sexual Abuse

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

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

Reportar Abuso Sexual

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

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

Charismatic Corner: Clothed with power

By Bishop Scott McCaig

When we look at the promises of Jesus and the life of the early Church, one thing becomes clear. Dr. Mary Healy wrote, “Jesus Christ did not die and rise from the dead for a powerless Church unable to cope with the cynicism, brokenness, and spiritual emptiness that surrounds us. He died and rose to form a people alive in Him, filled with joy, walking in the gifts and the power of the Holy Spirit, and bearing witness to his victory over sin and death.”

You and I, as disciples of the living and risen Lord Jesus, are not supposed to be white knuckling it through life, just getting by, clenching our teeth, and hoping to survive the onslaught of a broken and wounded world. We’re meant to be taking the world for the kingdom of God. Our very lives are witness to his victory and permeated by the graces, love, power, and joy of the Holy Spirit.

Kingdoms rise and fall, and they will continue to do so until the Lord comes. Our first allegiance is to the kingdom of God. Our hearts yearn for the life of God. The Holy Spirit is meant to empower us for mission, convict us, correct us, lead us, equip us, and build the kingdom of God through us. We should never settle for less.

In baptism, we became adopted sons and daughters of God. Original sin — alienation from God — was destroyed in us, and we became temples of the Holy Spirit. Every time we receive a sacrament, the Holy Spirit increases within us and strengthens us.

Here’s the question we need to answer: If we have received the Holy Spirit in extraordinary ways, and his presence and power is permeating our lives, why do so many of us act exactly as we did before we knew him? Where is that transfiguring power? Where are those graces that are given and poured into our soul in baptism, strengthened and anointed in confirmation, and added upon through the Eucharist and the other sacraments? Why do many who have received the sacraments get captured by the world and get sucked away from the life of God?

This problem is not new to us. Jesus rose victoriously from the dead, and the apostles hid in fear (Jn 20). They’d been with the Lord for three years and had seen people raised from the dead — and they hid in fear. They had no idea what to do. So, they went back to fishing (Jn 21) — to the lives they were leading when Jesus first found them; nothing seemed to have changed.

Jesus did not immediately send out his apostles to the world. He knew they were not ready. After his death, he appeared to

them over forty days, spoke to them about the kingdom of God, and enjoined them “not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait” (Acts 1:4). He promised them something more — and they received the Holy Spirit. They were ordained priests in the upper room — and they went out from there preaching.

As Jesus said, the apostles needed to “be baptized with the Holy Spirit” (Acts 1:5). Don’t you think that is also the case for you and me? The whole Church needs it. Baptism literally means to be drowned in, immersed in something. In sacramental baptism, we are immersed in the waters that the Lord transforms so that we become grafted onto him. It has many wonderful effects. Baptism in the Holy Spirit is another washing in the Holy Spirit. It’s not a sacrament, but it’s also an immersion, a washing in the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit is already within us through the sacraments, but he needs to be unleashed in our lives. Let me use an analogy. Imagine it’s Christmas morning, and someone gives you a beautifully wrapped present. You receive it and go home with the gift. Do you have it? Yes. Have you fully received it? No.

What if you put that present on a shelf and never looked at it again?

It belongs to you, but you’re not using it. You must tear off that wrapping paper, open the box, take it out, and start using it. That’s how you fully receive the gift.

When that is gift unleashed in our lives, we should expect to see three things:

1. **A new awareness of the reality and presence of Jesus in our lives.** When I was my religious community’s director of formation, many of our seminarians had never been on a roller coaster. They had heard about them, but one day, I took them on a roller coaster. On the way there, they said, “This will be interesting.” And then, halfway through the ride, their faces filled with utter terror, their eyes bulged out, their hair blew back, and they screamed at the top of their lungs. It was a whole different reality! In the same way, it’s not enough to just know about Jesus — we must know Jesus and experience his presence, love, mercy, correction, power, and immense goodness.

2. **The presence of charisms — spiritual gifts — in the lives of believers.** The gifts of the Holy Spirit mentioned in Isaiah 11 are for you! They allow you to go where the Spirit wants you to go. The charisms, however, are given for the good of others and the building up of God’s kingdom. When a charism is operative in our lives, something comes alive inside of us. It gives us grace, power, and courage for the specific work God created us for. When you discover your charisms and

begin using them, your life will take on new meaning. Your head will pop off that pillow in the morning. When the Holy Spirit is operating within you, it’s supernaturally anointed, and it makes an impact. Charisms are not badges of holiness. They’re gifts for service, proof of love, and power from on high for the building up of the kingdom. (Learn more about this in my book *Clothed with Power from on High*.)

3. **Power for sanctification.** The Holy Spirit eliminates sin and sin patterns in our lives, brings our lives into God’s order, and draws us into deeper communion with God. Baptism in the Holy Spirit flips our priorities. We start looking differently at what matters and what doesn’t matter. Prayer becomes more attractive, and the spiritual world opens up. It brings about a deep maturity. It does not replace the need for receiving sacraments or practicing virtues but empowers those things and gives them fuel.

The gift of the baptism of the Holy Spirit is the watershed of any life. I converted to Catholicism because I started reading the Church Fathers and realized the early Church was the Catholic Church. That was great! But weeks later, I stumbled into the meeting of a group that was

praying with freedom, joy, and love that burned in my heart. These people knew him in a way I did not. As I prayed with them, I tentatively raised my hands, and my heart ached for what they had. God heard that silent prayer and poured out that grace upon me — and it changed the trajectory of my life. When I consider that day, I want to weep for God’s goodness in stepping into my life in such a profound way, immersing me in his Holy Spirit, and unleashing those graces within me.

Even if we’ve already received baptism in the Holy Spirit, we can ask for more. We can ask for the gifts to be stirred up again. God is generous. We can never ask for too much of the Holy Spirit in our lives; he wants to fill us and set us ablaze.

This article is condensed from a talk given at the 2025 Lift Jesus Higher Rally in Toronto, Ontario, Canada.

Reprint from Renewal Ministries Catholic Renewal & Evangelization Newsletter June 2025 Issue @ www.renewalministries.net.

Go to CatholicCharismatic.com to find San Angelo Diocesan Prayer Groups and Events.



October 10-12

Houston, TX

HOLY SPIRIT 2025

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New law will help families access America's Catholic schools

By Bishop David M O'Connell
OSV News

Earlier this month, the president signed into law the first federal school choice tax credit in our nation's history. This new landmark legislation, led by Sens. Ted Cruz, R-Texas, Bill Cassidy, R-La. and Tim Scott, R-S.C., was modeled on the Educational Choice for Children Act (ECCA) — which aimed to expand parental choice in education to an estimated 2 million children across the country.

For years, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) has endorsed this bill because it aligns with our Church's teaching that parents are the first and primary educators of their children and, therefore, have the right to select the best educational environment for them.

The groundbreaking new law deserves accolades for its recognition of the rights of parents, but there are significant questions about how it will be implemented at the federal and state levels. The potential success of this law depends on what happens next. Ensuring that the greatest number (and the neediest) of children can benefit from this opportunity will require vigilance and discernment during the implementation and rulemaking process.

One challenge will be ensuring that states "opt in" to the new federal opportunity so that children in each state can access scholarships. For example, my own state of New Jersey currently has no state-level private school choice program. This new federal law could, for the first

time, bring new resources to the children and families who wish to attend Catholic schools in our state.

In the Diocese of Trenton alone, we have tens of thousands of students who could benefit from such scholarships, and nearly 40 Catholic elementary and secondary schools to serve them. Lawmakers have the power to unlock millions of dollars in new education funding for students without adding a single dime to their budget or shifting any funding away from public education.

Ensuring that our religious liberty and private school autonomy are respected also remains an area where church leaders, parents, and legislators must be particularly vigilant. Canon law is crystal clear that Catholic schools must be centered on the principles of Catholic doctrine. Our Catholic identity is too important to ever jeopardize. Promoting the urgency of affirming our rights to religious freedom and autonomy is a crucial priority of the bishops' conference during the rulemaking process.

The USCCB has made clear that the Catholic community has a responsibility to support parental choice in education. For years, state Catholic conferences and the Catholic laity have been deeply and tirelessly engaged at the state and federal level promoting laws that empower parents and strengthen communities — and I applaud these efforts. As a result of this work, more than 1.3 million children across the country are benefitting from school choice today.

As bishops, we have a particular responsibility to promote policies that support families in their choice of

education. Canon law says that, as pastors of souls, bishops have a special duty to do all they can to make sure the faithful can avail themselves of a Catholic education. As a lifelong educator, I believe deeply in the value of a rich, authentic Catholic education, and as the chairman of the USCCB's Committee on Catholic Education, it is my responsibility to encourage my brother bishops to promote policies that support parents in their liberty to pursue the education of their choice for their children — but particularly a Catholic education in a Catholic school.

The new federal law offers the chance to unlock educational opportunities for millions of children across the country — but there is still more work to be done. Over the next several months, state Catholic conferences, parents, pastors, school leaders, and all the Catholic faithful will have a special role to play to ensure that the law benefits the greatest number of children possible.

President John F. Kennedy once remarked, "children are the world's most valuable resource and its best hope for the future." We owe it to them to provide them with the best education possible. I urge the Catholic faithful to continue to pray for parents and to support their efforts to fulfill their God-given right and obligation to direct their children's education and for our elected leaders that they affirm the same.

Bishop David M. O'Connell of Trenton, New Jersey is the chairman of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Committee on Catholic Education.

Vatican: Dialogue, 2-state solution must end long-running Israeli-Palestinian conflict

By Gina Christian
OSV News

"Only through patient and inclusive dialogue" can "a just and lasting conflict resolution can be achieved" in the long-running conflict between Israelis and Palestinians, said the Holy See's permanent observer to the United Nations.

Archbishop Gabriele G. Caccia delivered a July 30 statement at the U.N.'s "High-Level International Conference for the Peaceful Settlement of the Question of Palestine and the Implementation of the Two-State Solution."

The conference, led by co-chairs France and Saudi Arabia, took place July 28–30.

The Holy See established diplomatic relations with the U.N. in 1957, representing the Vatican City State as well as the supreme authority of the Catholic Church,

including the pope as bishop of Rome and the head of the college of bishops.

In his statement, Archbishop Caccia — pointing to the "profound anguish and terrible human suffering that has befallen the region" — said the Holy See "reiterates its unequivocal condemnation of the heinous terrorist attack" launched by Hamas on Oct. 7, 2023, against Israel, in which some 1,200 Israelis were killed and 251 hostages taken.

Currently, 50 remain in captivity, with only 20 of them believed to still be alive, and 83 of the hostages confirmed killed to date. More than 100 were released later in 2023; eight were rescued by Israeli forces.

"Terrorism can never be justified," said Archbishop Caccia.

At the same time, he said, "the Holy See emphasizes that the right to self-defense should be exercised within the traditional limits of necessity and

proportionality."

Since the start of the Israel-Hamas War, which was sparked by the latter's attack, more than 60,000 Palestinians have died, according to the Hamas-run Gaza health ministry.

"The Holy See remains gravely concerned by the worsening humanitarian crisis in the Gaza Strip," said Archbishop Caccia, noting that "the devastating impact on civilians, especially the number of children killed, has been compounded by the destruction of homes, hospitals, and places of worship."

He highlighted the July 17 Israeli attack on Holy Family Church, Gaza's only Catholic parish, which killed three and wounded more than 10 — including the pastor, Father Gabriel Romanelli, who sustained a light leg injury. The Israel Defense Forces said the strike was the result of a misfired munition.

Archbishop Caccia said the strike on the church further scarred "an already distressed community" and was "deeply concerning given that Christians in the region have long played a vital role as a moderating and stabilizing presence, promoting dialogue and peace."

In his statement, the archbishop also lamented "the mass displacement of families, the breakdown of essential services, growing famine, and widespread deprivation," which he said "require an immediate, coordinated response from the international community."

"Therefore, the Holy See urgently calls for an immediate ceasefire, the release of all Israeli hostages, the restitution of the bodies of the deceased, the protection of all Palestinian civilians in accordance with international humanitarian law, and

See DIALOGUE, Page 11

60 Years of the reformed Eucharistic liturgy: An appreciation

I still remember — 60 years later — the Sunday the Mass changed! A few years earlier the bishops of the Second Vatican Council had called for the reform of the Mass, and now the first changes were being implemented on the parish level.

The changes were jarring! A free-standing altar suddenly appeared in the sanctuary! During the Mass the priest faced the congregation! The Sunday readings were proclaimed by a layman in English! In fact, most of the Mass prayers were in the vernacular! And the congregation, silent for centuries, now prayed out loud — right here in church!

The years that followed were bumpy to say the least. Change is never easy. Ritual is repeating familiar actions. We were not repeating things! Some parts of the Mass seemed downright new. Actually, they were not. They often dated back to the earliest days of the liturgy, long neglected but now revived.

Nonetheless, by the time I was ordained a priest in 1972, things had smoothed out nicely. The reformed Eucharistic liturgy — officially the Missal of Pope Paul VI — was the Mass I have been privileged to joyfully celebrate for 53 years.

People today do not realize that 99 percent of the Masses we pre-Vatican II Catholics attended in our parishes were Low Masses. Pretty stripped down. No music generally. Very quiet, very solemn. Trouble was that most people did not know what was going on in the sanctuary. Encouraged by my fifth-grade religion teacher, I bought a *St. Joseph's Daily Missal* — Latin on the left, English on the right — and I am proud to say that even at ten years old I could follow the Mass, deftly moving ribbons, etc. When we children “played Mass” at home, it was a pretty good rendition of the Tridentine Mass.

But now that I could follow the Mass, it concerned me that most of the people around me at Mass, my family included, were not following the liturgy as I was. Most of the people in the pews were reciting rosaries, praying novenas, and if there was a second priest available, going to confession! My father, a Catholic for 30 years, never knew the Our Father was recited as an integral part of the Mass until the changes came about! I always knew there was a Gospel reading, but until I started using my missal, I had no idea there was an epistle reading too. Since it was in Latin and the priest read it in very low voice, only the handful of us with missals were reading the epistle. Too many others were not hearing the Word!

In my opinion, the reformed Eucharistic liturgy following Vatican II has provided the Church with very moving liturgy. It draws everyone in the congregation into full, active, conscious participation. The congregation, the priestly people of



Father Mark Woodruff

Diocese of
San Angelo

God by baptism, are no longer passive spectators but perform essential work during the Mass. They confess sins. They present gifts of bread and wine (their sacrifices). Their gifts are consecrated by the effusion of the Holy Spirit and the words of institution and become the Body and Blood of Christ, his sacrifice of Christ on the cross. These gifts are given in praise and thanksgiving to God's honor and glory. And the people say “amen.” They receive the Eucharist. They leave the assembly blessed to bring Christ to the world.

In my humble opinion, the ceremonies introduced by the reform are magnificent! Some say the new Mass is less solemn or less reverent than the pre-Vatican II Mass. The reformed Eucharistic liturgy has its own kind of solemnity, different certainly from the silence of the Tridentine liturgy! You have only to witness the liturgies of Pope Leo XIV and our own bishop to realize the power and majesty of the reformed Eucharistic liturgy.

For example, take the entrance procession. In my youth, the priest and two acolytes (I was often one of them) walked a few steps from the sacristy to the foot of the altar. In the new Mass, a procession led by a cross bearer and two candle bearers (and perhaps even two servers bearing censer and incense), are followed by concelebrating priests if there are any, by a deacon holding aloft a magnificent *Book of the Gospels* (a symbol of Christ), and then the presider, in persona Christi, as the congregation sings an appropriate hymn. Pure solemnity!

For example, take the confession of sins. In my youth, the priest and servers whispered the confiteor as the congregation knelt silently, possibly not knowing what was being prayed in the sanctuary in their name. In the new Mass, the entire assembly — priest and laity — confess together!

Another example: on Sundays in pre-Vatican II days the priest prayed the gloria, in Latin as the congregation knelt, not necessarily knowing what he was praying. In the reformed Eucharistic liturgy, the entire congregation, standing (the most respectful liturgical posture), joins the priest and prays — and more often sings — “Glory to God in the high-

est.” It's the supper of the lamb from the Book of Revelation here and now!

Another example: the Gospel procession. In my youth, the priest walked a few steps to what was called “the Gospel side of the altar” to read the Gospel quietly, not from a lectionary or Gospel book but from the altar missal. He read it quietly in Latin. He would later have to read it a second time from the pulpit in the people's language so he could preach on it.

But in the new Mass we have a magnificent Gospel procession. It begins with the presiding priest blessing the deacon; the deacon raises the *Book of the Gospels* aloft and processes to the ambo accompanied by two candle bearers (and possibly even incense), while the entire congregation sings multiple alleluias! What a reverent greeting of the Gospel and of Jesus about to speak to us! Can anything be more solemn or more reverent?

Another example, and the one that is perhaps the most powerful to me: the doxology and amen. The Roman Canon, then and now, ends with a doxology. In my youth the priest rapidly made five crosses with the consecrated host over the chalice and corporal and then elevated the chalice and host slightly (it was called “the minor elevation”) while praying the “*per ipsum*.” He would conclude the doxology with an amen. According to St. Ambrose and St. Augustine, that amen rightfully belongs to the congregation, but the priest said it himself. Again, we could hardly see or hear what was happening at this pivotal point in the Mass.

In the reformed Eucharistic liturgy, the ceremony is changed, though the words are the same. The priest holds up the paten with the Body of Christ and the chalice with his Blood praying (or even chanting), “Through him . . . ,” and at the conclusion, the people say or sing, “Amen.” In fact, the musical setting used may have multiple amens. In Augustine's day, the pagan neighbors complained that the Catholic congregation was too loud when singing the amen at this point in the Mass. It woke them up. I find this moment of the reformed Eucharistic liturgy deeply powerful, and the doxology giving honor and glory to God along with the people's amen touches me deeply.

The success of the reformed Eucharistic liturgy depends on two factors: the dedication of the priest-presider and the full, active, conscious participation of the congregation. When we have both, the promise of the Mass of Paul VI is fulfilled.

Father Mark Woodruff is pastor of Sacred Heart Parish in Menard and St. Theresa of the Child Jesus Parish in Junction.

Parish Festivals

Aug. 23, 2025
Midnight Masquerade benefitting St. Rita of Cascia Mission in Greenwood held at Fiddlesticks Farms

Sept. 13–14, 2025
Kermesse at St. Stephen, Midland

Sept. 14, 2025
St. Mary, Star of the Sea, Ballinger

Sept. 20–21, 2025
Family Fair at San Miguel Arcángel, Midland

Sept. 27, 2025
Family Fair at St. Ann, Midland

Sept. 27–28, 2025
Sacred Heart, Abilene

Sept. 27, 2025
St. Margaret of Cortona, Big Lake, held at Reagan County Park

Sept. 28, 2025
St. Theresa of the Child Jesus, Junction

Sept. 28, 2025
Our Lady of Guadalupe, Eldorado

Oct. 5, 2025
Holy Redeemer, Odessa

Oct. 5, 2025
St. Patrick, Brady, held at the Brady Civic Center

Oct. 10–11, 2025
Jamaica Family Festival at Our Lady of Lourdes, Andrews

Oct. 12, 2025
St. Mary, San Angelo

Oct. 12, 2025
St. Boniface, Olfen

Oct. 18, 2025
St. Ann, Colorado City

Oct. 19, 2025
St. Ambrose, Wall

Oct. 25, 2025
St. Stephen, Midland

Nov. 1, 2025
Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Ozona

Nov. 2, 2025
St. Margaret of Scotland, San Angelo

Nov. 9, 2025
St. Joseph, Rowena

More information at
sanangelodiocese.org/fall-festivals



12th Annual

West Texas

'Fishers of Men' Dinner

25 years

Fellowship

Eucharistic

Engaging

Honoree: Fr. Bala Anthony Govindu

Speaker: Fr. Craig Vasek

GUADALUPE

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NETWORK

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DOORS OPEN 6:30PM

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Midland, TX 79705

tickets:GRNOnline.com

(432)682-1485

Flood Victims Relief

Benefit Concert, Saturday

August 30th

St. Margaret of Scotland Church

60th

Diamond Jubilee

Celebrating 60 Years of Ministry 1965-2025

GARY HOBBS

The Band CERDAFIED

Willie Alvarado

First Responder San Angelo, TX

First Responders get in free with ID/Badge

Tristan Ramos

Rita Capuchina y Animo

DJ PEREZ

DJ PEREZ

Ann & Jeremy Hernandez

1827 Freeland Avenue

San Angelo Tx 76901

trudosrs@gmail.com

(325)653-8011

\$5.00

Suggested Donation

Proceeds from Saturday's concert will benefit the

San Angelo July 4th Flood Victims

thru Catholic Outreach and

the San Angelo Area Foundation.

\$5.00 Suggested Donation.

Mass at 4 pm at St. Margaret's Parish, 2619 Era Ave.

Bring your lawnchairs.

**No coolers or outside drinks/food allowed.

To be a sponsor, or set up a food truck or booth at this event

contact the Parish office @ 325-651-4366

or via email at

sanangelo.stmargaret@sanangelodiocese.org

Come enjoy the Food Trucks & Drink Booths

Line-Up

1 PM-Joanna Rae y Regrezzo

2:30 PM-Rita Capuchina y Animo

4 PM-MASS

5:30 PM-The Band Cerdafield

7 PM-Willie Alvarado

8:30 PM-Tristan Ramos

10:30 PM-Gary Hobbs

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Basic Formation

Advanced Formation

Trudo's Religious Store

Ann & Jeremy Hernandez- Owners

1827 Freeland Avenue

San Angelo Tx 76901

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(325)653-8011

Advent & Christmas Planning Checklist for Church and Home

Make sure needs are where they need to be, when they need to be there. (Especially for Advent by Candle Light; Christmas programs; and Holy Masses on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day).

Advent candles (hand-held & wreath) | Wreaths | Nativity scenes | Fontanini Statues | Ornaments | Banners | Communion Hosts | Offering envelopes | Advent Prayers | Gifts

Meet with your parish people SOON to find out their needs. Availability & delivery take a while now, so let us know your needs by October 1, 2025, so we can place orders.

BY STARTING NOW, we can all enjoy this magical season and the true spirit of Christmas!!

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más bella
que la que
tiene a
Cristo en su
corazón.*

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de Mujeres
4 de octubre 2025

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y concluimos a las
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www.sanangelodiocese.org

SUPPORTING PROJECT RACHEL OF THE DIOCESE OF SAN ANGELO

**CONCERT
FOR
LIFE**
2025

MIDLAND

FR. DAVID MICHAEL MOSES, FR. KEVIN LENIUS,
FR. MIKE ELSNER & ALL-PRIEST BAND

SCAN



Wednesday, August 6th
7:30 PM - 9:00 PM

Bush Convention Center
105 N Main St. Midland, TX 79701

Happy birthday, Father!



COURTESY

The parish of Our Lady of Lourdes in Andrews celebrated with a birthday party for their pastor, Father Joseph Ogbonna, on July 6, 2025.

Happy birthday, America!



COURTESY

St. Patrick Parish showed up in red, white, and blue with a float for the July Jubilee Parade in Brady.

DIALOGUE

Continued from Page 7

unhindered access to humanitarian assistance," said Archbishop Caccia.

More broadly, he said, "The Holy See remains convinced that the Two-State Solution, based on secure and internationally recognized borders, is the only viable and equitable path toward a just and lasting peace."

The solution, first advanced in the U.N.'s 1947 partition plan for the region, initially sought to create both Palestinian and Israeli states, with Jerusalem internationalized. The state of Israel declared its independence the following year.

Over ensuing decades of wars, conflicts and geopolitical tensions, efforts to advance the plan have both continued and faltered, with the U.S., the European Union, Russia and the U.N. — known as the Quartet — releasing a road map to the two-state solution in 2003.

Hamas' armed takeover of Gaza in 2007 led to several rounds of fighting with Israel over the years, punctuated by internationally mediated talks.

The current Israel-Hamas war has led to increased polarization among several nations, particularly in the West, on the recognition of Palestine as a state, with Britain, France, and Canada recently indicating support for the solution, and the U.S. under President Donald Trump firmly insisting on its opposition to such recognition.

Archbishop Caccia said in his statement that "the Holy See has already taken meaningful steps" in support of the two-state solution, having "formally recognized the State of Israel through the 1993 Fundamental Agreement and the State of Palestine through the 2015 Comprehensive Agreement."

The latter document followed the signing of the 2000 Basic Agreement between the Holy See and the Palestinian Liberation Organization.

Archbishop Caccia noted in his statement that the Holy See "continues to uphold the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including the right to self-determination," and "supports their legitimate aspirations to live in freedom, security, and dignity within an independent and sovereign state."

Highlighting that Jerusalem "is sacred to Christians, Jews and Muslims alike," Archbishop Caccia said the city "requires a status that transcends political divisions and ensures the preservation of its unique identity," and reiterated the Holy See's "longstanding call for an internationally guaranteed special statute" that would ensure the rights and safety of inhabitants and heritage alike.

The archbishop stressed that such an accord "must ensure the protection of the Holy Places," while guaranteeing unhindered access to and worship at them.

In particular, Archbishop Caccia called for the preservation of the Status Quo — an informal agreement by which Israel provides overall security of the Temple Mount, while the Islamic Waqf religious trust administers the site and stewards its religious and cultural heritage.

"In Jerusalem no one should be subjected to harassment," he said, adding that "it is regrettable that Christians feel increasingly threatened in the Old City of Jerusalem."

One final meeting of the year



COURTESY

On May 13, 2025, members of the Altar Society at St. Ann Parish in Midland met for the final meeting for the 2024–2025 year. A covered dish/potluck lunch followed the meeting and installation of officers. The St. Ann's Altar Society was officially established in July, 1933.

Where no priest has gone before ...



COURTESY

Father Joe Barbieri, pastor of St. Therese in Carlsbad, was inducted into the University of Texas at Austin McDonald Observatory and Department of Astronomy Board of Visitors July 26. the board's website describes it as "a supporters' group for the Texas Astronomy Program. It includes business people, educators, attorneys, scientists, artists, architects, and engineers, from throughout Texas and the United States" and now, for the first time since the board's inception in 1969, a Roman Catholic priest.

Our Lady of the Snows: An unlikely patron in August

By Michael R. Heinlein
OSV News

In addition to the local celebrations that commemorate the dedication of a diocesan cathedral or a parish church, the universal Church liturgically celebrates the dedication of four Roman basilicas: St. John Lateran (Nov. 9), those dedicated to Sts. Peter and Paul (Nov. 18) and St. Mary Major (Aug. 5). The Basilica of St. Mary Major is the largest church dedicated to Mary in Rome and one of the most ancient shrines honoring the Mother of God. It contains a variety of ancient mosaics that date back to the fifth century. It is also home to a variety of important relics, especially a wooden fragment from the crib of Christ's nativity. Also there rest the remains of several popes and the tomb of St. Jerome.

Mary Major's history dates back to the fourth century, when a church was constructed on its present site under the direction of Pope Liberius. While the original church lasted only about 100 years, work commenced on the current edifice in the fifth century. Today, much of it remains intact — although

it has been amended and enlarged at several junctures. The optional memorial of the Dedication of St. Mary Major, celebrated on Aug. 5, recalls the importance of Mary in the life of the Church. But it also calls to mind the Marian title of "Our Lady of the Snows." According to a legend, Pope Liberius was involved in the church's initial construction because of a rich couple who were without heirs and wanted to give their fortune to honor the Blessed Virgin Mary. After asking in prayer how they could honor her, Mary appeared to them in a vision. Afterward, on Rome's Esquiline Hill, seemingly in answer to their request, snow fell from the sky — miraculously so, since snowfall on a Roman August day would be extremely abnormal. As a result, the couple determined a church must be built to honor the Blessed Virgin on the site where the miraculous flurries fell. The legend has not necessarily stood the test of time. No mention is made of anything supernatural behind St. Mary Major's construction before the year 1000.

Whether the legend is true or not, devotion to Mary under the title Our Lady of the Snows has endured. Several basilicas, shrines, and churches are named in honor of this title throughout the world. Its popularity reiterates Mary's status as a beacon of hope for Christians who turn to her in times of trial, perhaps when it seems that a miracle is needed and when it looks like all hope is lost. Through Mary's mediation, recourse to God's mercy is sought when it appears that there's no way — embodied in the legend of the miraculous snowfall in the Roman summer.

Devotion to Mary under the title of Our Lady of the Snows is primarily fostered in the United States in Belleville, Illinois — just across the Mississippi River from St. Louis — at the National Shrine of Our Lady of the Snows under the direction of the congregation of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate.

The construction of this shrine seems fitting and appropriate to have been started and operated by missionaries since they understand, perhaps more than anyone, the importance and need to implore Mary's aid amid often difficult and seemingly impossible circumstances.

The Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate congregation was founded by French bishop St. Eugene De Mazenod in 1816. The founder placed his new missionary order under Mary's maternal protection and care. The Oblates came to North America not long after their founding, and they are known for their work in remote locations throughout the continent.

The Our Lady of Snows shrine in Belleville traces its origins back to the 1940s, inspired by German Oblate Father Paul Schulte. Known as "The Flying Priest," Father Schulte was a pilot and had the distinction of being the first priest to celebrate Mass while airborne — in the Zeppelin airship Hindenburg just a year before its explosion.

Father Schulte put his talent as a pilot to work delivering medical supplies to Oblate missions, typically near the Arctic

Circle. He once risked death himself while carrying out a life-saving medical mission to rescue a brother Oblate priest who was on the brink of death. Flying through extreme weather, Father Schulte credited the success of his heroic ministry to Our Lady of the Snows — to whom he already had devotion and reportedly "when he was afraid of an imminent crash during a snowstorm, he promised Our Lady to spread her devotion under that title if she came to his aid and saved him in this emergency." He did just that after his transfer to the Oblate's now-closed St. Henry Preparatory Seminary in Belleville, alma mater of Chicago's late Cardinal Francis E. George, who was also with the Oblates. Father Schulte was sent there during World War II because he was German and some suspected him of being a Nazi spy. He was ordered not to travel and was kept under FBI surveillance. This gave him the opportunity to deliver on his promise to Mary.

In Belleville, Father Schulte commissioned an image of Our Lady of the Snows to be painted, which depicts Mary and the child Jesus surrounded by the aura of the Northern Lights, under which is found a missionary and an airplane making a sick call to an Inuit mission. It remains at the shrine in Belleville today. A perpetual novena was established in 1943 in honor of Our Lady of the Snows, and as devotion to her grew, the Oblates inaugurated construction of a shrine to honor her in 1958.

The shrine, one of the largest outdoor shrines in the United States, is a place of pilgrimage, attracting around 350,000 visitors annually. As with all its counterparts, the shrine is primarily a place of prayer, conversion, and healing — particularly through encounters with Mary's son in the sacraments.

Those who honor Mary under the title of Our Lady of the Snows, or any other title, are asking Mary to beg God to make a way out of no way, to bring his grace into their lives no matter the circumstances, and to find peace and happiness in the will of God.

Those who honor Mary seek, and hopefully find, what she had in her heart some 2,000 years ago when she said "yes" to the Lord's plan as a young peasant girl. What those who pray to Mary long for and receive is the hope that inspires the daring, intrepid missionaries who spread the Gospel with confidence that she will intercede for them.

Through Mary's "yes" to the Lord, she made what seemed like a way out of no way — her "yes" brought salvation to a world awaiting it in darkness. Ultimately, those who turn to Mary are turning to her son — as has been clear since the earliest days of Marian devotion. Mary makes Jesus present to the world. And she teaches us to glorify him with our thoughts, words and deeds as members of his mystical body, the Church.

Michael R. Heinlein is author of Glorifying Christ: The Life of Cardinal Francis E. George, OMI.

Why is the Church allowing my brother to marry again after annulling his prior union due to alcoholism?

Q: My brother is an alcoholic and has already had one failed marriage because of it. He recently got an annulment and is now planning his second wedding. How can the Church let him marry again when it seems obvious that his second marriage is going to fail as well?

A: Naturally I cannot comment on your brother's specific case here. I don't have all the information, and even if I did, I would still refrain from commenting for the sake of respecting your brother's privacy. However, I can share some observations about these kinds of situations in general.

First, it is possible that you might not have all the information yourself. Unless your brother was sharing all the paperwork he received from the marriage tribunal with you, you don't know for sure exactly why your brother's first marriage was declared null. It might have been for some other reason besides a psychological impediment related to his alcoholism. For example, the union might have been declared null because of some impediment on your former sister-in-law's part.

While alcoholism and drug addiction are, objectively, serious problems for people's lives, in specific instances they might not always be of such a nature or severity so as to render a particular marriage invalid.

The Church does not declare marriages invalid because of alcohol or drug addiction per se. Rather, a marriage might be declared null for reasons related to substance abuse because the misuse of such substances caused the person to suffer from a "grave lack of due discretion of judgement" (see Canon 1095, 2 of the *Code of Canon Law*), meaning that they were unable to rationally evaluate the prospect of marriage as applied to themselves; or because their chronic substance abuse left them "incapable of assuming the essential obligations of marriage," (Canon 1095, 3) meaning that they were unable to do the basic things married people need to be able to do, such as being able to care for children or remaining faithful to a spouse.

But assuming for the sake of argument that your brother's first marriage was declared invalid for reasons directly related to his alcohol abuse, the Church does acknowledge that it is possible for people to overcome such problems. At the same time, the Church — and certainly tribunal staff as well — are not naïve about such things. And



Jenna Marie Cooper
OSV News

Question Corner

so often, if a marriage is declared null because of issues related to substance addiction, the tribunal will place what is called a "*vetitum*" on the affected party.

A *vetitum* is a liftable restriction on marrying. Usually for cases of nullity related to addiction, the *vetitum* will be something along the lines of the affected party needing the tribunal's permission to marry, with the tribunal consulting mental health experts in determining whether to grant that permission.

Practically, this means that the affected party will need to see a psychologist or similar professional who will advise the tribunal on whether the person is sufficiently healed so as to now be able to contract a valid marriage.

But underlying all these considerations is a perhaps surprising but still foundational principle in the Church's understanding of marriage: Namely, that human beings have a fundamental right to marry.

Of course this is not an absolute right, and a priest can and should refuse to marry a couple when there are obvious impediments, like if someone is already married. But for the most part a pastor cannot refuse to witness a marriage in more ambiguous scenarios, such as when there are possible but not totally indisputable psychological issues.

Even if the priest has his own personal doubts, he is still obliged to celebrate the wedding — though he might put a discreet note in the marriage file "just in case" it should ever land on the desk of the marriage tribunal in the future.

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

GRN RADIO PROGRAM SCHEDULE

GUADALUPE RADIO NETWORK

Radio for your soul can be heard on:

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

POPULAR ENGLISH PROGRAMS

6:00-7:30 AM – *Morning Joy* (877-757-9424) - Keith Downey, Adam Blai & Debbie Georgianni

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

8:00 AM – Catholic Connections - Teresa Tomeo

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

10:00 AM – *Women of Grace* - Johnnette Williams

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

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

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

2:00 PM – *EWTN Open Line*

3:00 PM – Beacon of Truth with The Divine Mercy Chaplet - Deacon Harold Burke-Sivers

4:00 PM – The Quest (877-757-9424) - Live call-in show for questions/comments

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

8:00 PM – *EWTN Nightly News*

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Diocese seeks Chancellor

The Diocese of San Angelo is seeking candidates for the position of Chancellor. The Chancellor is the chief officer of administration and operations for the Diocese of San Angelo and has the responsibility and authority for overseeing the day-to-day administration and supervision of the staff and operations of the diocese. Responsibilities of the Chancellor include developing, implementing, and evaluating policies and procedures for the strategic, administrative, and financial management of the diocese. The Chancellor ensures compliance with local, state, and federal reporting requirements and canonical aspects of diocesan operations, as well as the standards of practice established for financial management by the USCCB.

Applicants should have a minimum 10 years’ administrative experience in business management or organizational leadership, preferably in the Church, with a minimum of 5 years’ experience of proven executive leadership in a non-profit organization, the Church, a private sector company, government, or the military (as the CEO, CFO, COO, or similar position).

MBA, MSCM, current CPA, CGMA, or CDFM credentials is required. Must be a practicing Catholic in good standing. Job duties and other information regarding the position are available at the Diocesan website, www.sanangelodiocese.org. Resumes should be sent to Mike Wyse, Chancellor, at P.O. Box 1829, San Angelo, Texas 76902-1829, or emailed to mwyse@sanangelodiocese.org by August 20.

See the full job description at <https://sanangelodiocese.org/employment>.



St. Maximilian Kolbe: A holy life cut short in WWII

Raymond (Maximilian) Kolbe had a vision when he was 10 years old. Biographer Tom Cowan describes it in *The Way of the Saints*: “Our Lady stood before him holding out two crowns, one white, the other red, and asked him to choose between them. He took both. When he told his mother about this, he explained that white meant that he would remain pure and red meant that he would be a martyr.”

Raymond Kolbe was born on Jan. 7, 1891, and was the second of five sons whose parents were poor, piece-meal weavers living in Russian-controlled Poland. He was a fun-loving and independent child. The Franciscans recognized his intellectual potential and accepted him at age 13 into their boarding school in the Austrian zone of Poland. He was an honor student who excelled in math and physical sciences and loved to play chess.

Raymond joined the Franciscan novitiate in 1910 and received the name of Maximilian. He was sent to Rome where he studied for two doctorates at the Gregorian University. While he was a student, he contracted tuberculosis and suffered with this throughout his life.

Paul Burns writes in *Butler’s Lives of the Saints* that this was also when Maximilian became interested in how the Church’s message could be spread. He was zealous in his devotion to Our Lady and recruited fellow students for his “Militia of Mary Immaculate.” The Catholic Church in Poland had made Mary a national symbol.

He was ordained in 1919, returned to Poland, and spent the next few years as a professor of theology at the Cracow Franciscan Seminary. Writer Patricia Treece de-



Mary Lou Gibson
Speaking of Saints

scribed him in *A Man for Others* as having a spectacular ability to influence others and draw them to the spiritual life.

In 1927, Father Kolbe, his brother, Alphonse, and four Franciscan brothers began to build a friary about 40 kilometers west of Warsaw. This friary called Niepokalanow, or The City of Mary would become the largest friary in the world, housing some 800 religious.

Maximilian and a group of seminarians had taken vows as Knights of the Queen of Heaven and dedicated themselves to work for the salvation of souls through prayer and apostolic work.

Father Kolbe begged money to start a magazine, and the first issue appeared in January 1922. The friary became a bustling workplace with members working on 11 publications, including a daily newspaper. Before World War II Niepokalanow had a radio station and was preparing for television. In the early 1930s, Father Kolbe went to Japan to found a mission and to train Japanese

seminarians. His friars there also published a Japanese-language magazine.

When Hitler invaded Poland on Sept. 1, 1939, Father Kolbe advised most of the community’s brothers to disperse. He remained at the friary and was arrested on Sept. 19 when the Germans arrived. He was freed shortly after that. Malcom Day writes in *A Treasury of Saints* that Father Kolbe continued to publish his journal. When he refused German citizenship, he was arrested again in 1941 as an “intellectual” and sent to Auschwitz.

In July a prisoner escaped from this death camp. The Germans selected 10 men to be executed in retaliation. One of the men, Francis Gajowniczek, sobbed that he had a wife and children and begged to be spared. Father Kolbe stepped forward and told the German officers he would take the man’s place.

With nine other prisoners, Father Kolbe was placed in a starvation unit and deprived of food and water. Father Kolbe and three others were still alive after two weeks. The Germans injected these prisoners with lethal injections of carbolic acid. Father Kolbe died on the eve of the Assumption, Aug. 14, 1941.

In 1982, the Polish pope, St. John Paul II, whose former diocese of Cracow included Auschwitz, canonized Maximilian Kolbe. Present at the ceremony was the Polish sergeant whose life Father Kolbe had saved.

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

The loss of a child

All too often, we hear about the tragic loss of a child’s life through disease, killings, natural disasters, suicides, wars, drownings, and other accidental deaths. These significant disruptions to the “cycle of life” bring enormous sorrow to parents, family members, friends, and, sometimes, to millions of others who have no direct relationship with the family at all. If we love others as Jesus asks us to, then it is not possible to be unaffected by the sufferings of others, as Jesus himself is, along with his mother. It is not easy to find words that offer the slightest degree of comfort. Throughout the years, I have seen many parents who have experienced this kind of tragedy. Indeed, my paternal grandmother lost a two-year-old girl to disease, one young son in Iwo Jima, another in Korea, and my dad at age 45. In speaking with parents who have lost a child, I have found an imaginary analogy that takes away absolutely no pain but that offers hope.

When Walt Disney World opened on Oct. 1, 1971, there was a tremendous amount of publicity, excitement, and worldwide anticipation as millions of people made plans to see this magical “Eighth Wonder of the World.” It was not just Americans who were pouring in, but individuals from countries great distances away. The “imaginary analogy” that I share with parents goes like this:

Suppose there was a family of five: mom, dad, and three children ages 10, 8, and 6. They had saved up for a year to make this a trip they would remember forever, but only had a three-day weekend and a long drive from Texas to accomplish the feat. After driving all day Friday, Saturday was to be the day they had been waiting for! Disney World had only been open for a couple of months. Saturday morning, they awoke early and went to the park an hour before it opened, only to find cars backed up for what looked like a mile.

A man in a golf cart drives down from the entrance, puts a cone in front of the family’s car, comes to the opened driver’s window and informs dad that they will not be able to get in because the park will be at capacity with the car ahead of them. Dad is enraged and begs the guy to let them in, but the guy tells him he can’t do it. He says, however, that he will give dad a pass, as well as everyone behind him, so that tomorrow he can come early and go through a special gate. The father tells him they can’t do that. This is the only day they have because he will lose his job if he is not back early Monday morning. The Disney World employee says he’s sorry, but mom



James R. Sulliman, PhD

joins in with the pleading and the man relents. He tells them that he can’t let them in immediately, but they can wait outside until people leave and when they do, he will come out a side gate and let them in. They are ecstatic and appreciative but are forewarned that it might be a while before someone leaves. They understand, but their excitement and appreciation are not diminished.

An hour goes by and it is 9:00 a.m. ... then 10:00, and soon 11:00. They have become dejected by the amount of time that has gone by, but just then the man comes out the side gate and says he has good news! A man has just left the park to play golf so one of them can come in! “How is that good news?” the mom asks. Dad says, “I don’t want to go in by myself, my wife doesn’t, and we can’t let one of the kids go in alone!” The man explains that their son would never be alone. This same thing has happened several times before. He explains that as soon as their son goes in, he will choose two Disney characters and they will serve as his “bodyguards.” He will be taken to the gift store where he will be given a number of souvenirs, and then have lunch with Cinderella at her centerpiece castle. Afterwards, he will ride down Main Street on a very large horse-drawn carriage and have boxes and boxes of items to throw out to everyone lined up on other side of the route. The man opens a picture album and shows them the overwhelming joy in the faces of the other kids who have had this same experience. The three sons are jumping up and down, wanting to be the one to go in! Mom doesn’t like the idea and asks, “What if he wants to come back?” The man tells her that all he has to do is say so and he will be out within five minutes. The kids are pleading with mom and dad, who talk about it and tell the oldest to remember he can return to them almost immediately any time he wants. He tells them he understands.

They watch their son go through the gate, which closes behind him, and immediately have doubts about what has just happened. They have given complete control of their son to someone they must trust not to hurt him! They each accuse the other of being the one to have created this anxiety-evoking situation, and talk about how they do not deserve to have children because they are so stupid for trusting a person they do not even know!

An hour and a half of self-persecutions, intermittent spouse blaming, and general condemnations goes by accompanied by fear for the unknown welfare of their child before the gate opens again. They are invited in and rush through. Upon entering, they see their son atop the carriage, looking indescribably happy with a glow on his face unlike anything they have ever seen before. Their son sees them and asks the driver of the carriage if his mom, dad, and brothers can join him and he is told, “Yes ... we have been waiting for them.” The carriage stops, and the family is reunited in an experience they never could have imagined!

If it is agonizing for a parent to “lose” a child for a few minutes, how much more so for a parent that suffers the death of a child. But they have not entrusted their child to a stranger, but to God, who loves them far more. The day will come, although maybe not for many, many years, when they will experience a joyous reunion beyond description. When that happens, they will be thankful that he called their child to be with him as soon as he did, but we must wait to be called and not attempt to “crash the gate” by hastening our own death.

God could easily have spared the pain of Mary by ending her life on earth before the crucifixion of her son but he did not. She is the model for all parents who have lost a child. As she was united with her son, so shall we be with our loved ones in the body of Christ. The excruciating, yet “temporary” earthly pain of a Good Friday will give way to the eternal heavenly joy of an Easter Sunday. Like the oldest son in the Disney World analogy, no one who enters ever wants to return and knows all their loved ones will be with them in what will seem like a split second, as soon as they are called by God to enter.

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.

The impact of DOGE cuts on migrants and refugees

The funding cuts initiated by the current administration, launched by the new and powerful Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE), have indiscriminately affected many vital programs, especially those that impact migrants and refugees.

There is no one who would not want efficiency in government, especially when it comes to tolerating fraud and waste. However, as a former director of the U.S. Bishops' resettlement program from 1985 to 1992, I can state that cuts are endangering the lives and welfare of some migrants and refugees.

For example, the abrupt halt to the United States' refugee resettlement program happened in the midst of many bona fide and vetted refugees awaiting entrance into the country.

Refugees who qualify for this program must first be vetted by staff from the United Nations and then by Department of Homeland Security (DHS) officials. The United States employs rigorous regulations and thorough background checks to ensure it resettles individuals in need of protection, rather than persons who pose a threat to national security.

Many refugees themselves are fleeing security threats, and those approved for entrance into the U.S. are now languishing overseas in difficult circumstances.

The recent approval of 59 South African Afrikaners as refugees is highly questionable, as they do not meet the definition of refugees, who must show a threat of persecution, bodily harm, or even death, which adheres to refugee qualification requirements.

Tragically, millions of bona fide refugees who are deserving are not being considered for refugee resettlement to the U.S., as the administration has virtually shut down the program, except for a recent judicial order allowing 10,000 approved refugees to enter if the government follows the ruling.



**Bishop
Nicholas DiMarzio**
OSV News

Walking with Migrants

Domestic impacts of funding halts have also been severe.

Nonprofit resettlement agencies have lost funding for services already rendered, forcing the Migration and Refugee Services office of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) to lay off hundreds of staff both at headquarters and in dioceses.

The USCCB had to sue the federal government for millions for services already rendered under contract.

Vice President JD Vance criticized the U.S. bishops when he said, "And I think that the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops needs to actually look in the mirror a little bit and recognize that when they receive over \$100 million to help resettle illegal immigrants, are they worried about humanitarian concerns? Or are they actually worried about their bottom line?"

In fact, the U.S. Bishops do not use federal money to help the undocumented, and do contribute to the refugee resettlement program. The incorrect statement was never publicly acknowledged or withdrawn. As a result, the USCCB was forced to stop the Church's refugee resettlement work, with no plans to resume.

Hopefully, this vital program will be restored during the current or next administration.

The refugees involved come from various countries,

including Afghanistan, Somalia, Iraq, Sudan, Syria, and Myanmar, among others. Many have been waiting for as long as five years to come to the United States, and many were affiliated with the United States in various ways. For example, in Afghanistan and Iraq, these people were employed by the U.S. forces.

The USCCB is committed to identifying new methods to support refugees and unaccompanied minor children, whose programs have also faced reductions.

Additionally, further programmatic cuts in the United States immigration system will impact family reunification, naturalization, and most low-end worker visas. It appears that visas for some high-tech workers and the proposed "gold card" for individuals who have invested \$5 million or more are exempt from these reductions.

There is, however, some good news.

Legislation has been introduced to help religious workers obtain permanent status by remedying delays and expanding the usefulness of the program. This disruption occurred because the U.S. Department of State erroneously placed the allocation of green cards in this visa category among other immigrants.

The United States has always led the way in the world in resettling refugees through a generous resettlement program. Just last year, the U.S. resettled over 100,000 refugees; this year, only about 160 refugees have been resettled, other than the controversial 59 Afrikaners from South Africa.

The loss of the refugee program is another example of how the United States has relinquished its first place among nations in humanitarian assistance.

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Bishop Nicholas DiMarzio is the retired bishop of the Diocese of Brooklyn, New York. He writes the column "Walking With Migrants" for OSV News.

Kids need lots of people who love them

I was sitting at work, eating my lunch alone, when I overheard a line from the next table: "Kids need lots of people who love them."

At the time I was still far from parenthood, working at Catholic Charities as an intern for the Catholic Campaign for Human Development while I was in graduate school. But my husband and I were hoping for a baby, trying for a baby, and praying for a baby. Every day, my thoughts were consumed with children, even if my life was still far from them.

So, when I heard the social worker at the next table pronounce this truth aloud, my ears perked up. She was talking about the children she worked with in foster care, many of whom lacked a consistent, healthy adult presence in their lives. When they connected with someone who could fill in where their parents were unable to provide, it brought such balm.

An attentive teacher, a supportive coach, a loving grandparent, a welcoming neighbor, or an encouraging mentor — any of them could change the life of a child. But none could do it alone. Kids need a constellation of caring adults to help them flourish.

For whatever reason — the longings of my own heart during infertility, the clear wisdom of a seasoned professional, or most likely the workings of the Holy Spirit — the words I heard that day in the lunch room became a refrain that never left me. I've shared them with friends (or spoken them again to myself) a thousand times since.



Laura Kelly Fanucci
OSV News

Faith at Home

Kids need lots of people who love them.

This truth brings relief for overworked parents, especially in today's era of intensive parenting when we're supposed to be, do, and provide everything for our kids. Parents cannot do it all, despite what social media might tell us. What's more, we were never meant to live this way.

Humans thrive in community, and we need the proverbial village to help us raise a child.

But as a mother, I often have to remind myself that I cannot be the end-all, be-all for my children. I'll confess that a twinge of jealousy pricks my heart when one of my kids delights in a special activity or relationship with an aunt, uncle, grandparent, or sitter. I secretly long to do everything fun and memorable with them myself.

That's when I remind my all-too-human heart: "Kids need lots of people who love them."

This wisdom also reminds the Christian community

to love the children in our midst. Each one of us is called to be an adult who cares for children, whether or not we raise them.

Loving children might mean praying for the family with the fussy baby behind us at Mass instead of glaring with annoyance. Loving children might mean volunteering to teach faith formation classes long after our own kids have grown. Loving children might mean smiling at rambunctious toddlers in our pew, inviting children to participate in the parish ministries we lead, or praying for teenagers we see at Mass, trusting that God is working through their lives, too.

Kids need lots of people who love them: at home, at school, and at church. If Jesus took a child upon his lap, against his disciples' protests that kids distracted from their "real work," are we not called to heed his words and welcome each young one in his name?

From lifelong commitments to the children we love, to volunteering with kids who need extra support, to simply opening our hearts to the delightful (if sometimes distracting!) presence of the young Church with us at Mass, God gives us many ways to care for the children in our lives.

May we never forget our calling to love the youngest faces of Christ in our midst.

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

Mahmoud v. Taylor: A Supreme Court victory for parents and for freedom

In a momentous decision that has far-reaching implications for the future of public education and religious liberty in the United States, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in *Mahmoud v. Taylor* that parents, not the state, hold the primary right to direct the upbringing and education of their children.

Although the case centered primarily on a dispute involving a public school's curriculum and a Muslim family's objection to certain classroom content and their ability to opt out of that portion of the curriculum (the court ruled that they could opt out, based on the coercive pedagogical methods related to the content), its implications affect every family concerned about the moral and spiritual formation of their children — including Catholic parents.

At the heart of the ruling was a clear rejection of the notion that a child is, as one justice put it, a mere "creature of the state" to be indoctrinated at will. The court reaffirmed a fundamental truth that resonates deeply with our Catholic faith: Children are entrusted to their parents, and it is the family — not the government — that is the primary school of virtue, identity, and faith.

This decision is consistent with the church's long-



Jason Adkins
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Catholic in America

standing teaching, beautifully articulated in the Second Vatican Council's declaration *Gravissimum Educationis*, which affirms that "since parents have given life to their children, they are bound by the most serious obligation to educate their offspring and therefore must be recognized as the primary and principal educators."

And as the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* states: "The right and duty of parents to educate their children are primordial and inalienable."

Schools, whether public or private, serve an important role in supporting that mission, but they do not replace it. The *Mahmoud* decision brings this principle more fully

into the legal consciousness of our nation, reminding us that state-run schools must operate in partnership with families — not in opposition to them.

In recent years, many Catholic parents have grown increasingly concerned about ideological content creeping into public school curricula — content that often runs counter to church teaching on human dignity, sexuality, the family, and the nature of the human person. While some families can choose Catholic education or home-schooling as an alternative, many others rely on the public school system and expect, at minimum, a baseline respect for their religious and moral convictions.

Mahmoud v. Taylor represents a significant blow against the progressive overreach that has too often characterized public education in recent years. In reaffirming that the state has no right to impose a singular worldview upon all children, the court has created space for genuine pluralism, where families of diverse beliefs can coexist and collaborate in the public square without being coerced into ideological conformity.

This ruling should serve as both encouragement and a

El impacto de los recortes del DOGE en los migrantes y refugiados

Los recortes presupuestarios iniciados por la actual administración, impulsados por el nuevo y poderoso Departamento de Eficiencia Gubernamental (DOGE por sus siglas en inglés), han afectado indiscriminadamente a muchos programas vitales, especialmente a aquellos que repercuten en los migrantes y refugiados.

No hay nadie que no desee que el gobierno sea eficiente, especialmente cuando se trata de tolerar el fraude y el despilfarro. Sin embargo, como ex director del programa de reasentamiento de los obispos estadounidenses entre 1985 y 1992, puedo afirmar que los recortes están poniendo en peligro la vida y el bienestar de algunos migrantes y refugiados.

Por ejemplo, la interrupción brusca del programa de reasentamiento de refugiados de Estados Unidos se produjo en medio de una situación en la que muchos refugiados auténticos y acreditados esperaban entrar en el país.

Los refugiados que reúnen los requisitos para este programa deben ser investigados primero por el personal de las Naciones Unidas y luego por los funcionarios del Departamento de Seguridad Nacional (DHS por sus siglas en inglés). Estados Unidos aplica normas rigurosas y exhaustivas comprobaciones de antecedentes para garantizar que reasienta a personas que necesitan protección, en lugar de personas que suponen una amenaza para la seguridad nacional.

Muchos refugiados huyen de amenazas a su seguridad, y los que han sido aprobados para entrar en Estados Unidos se encuentran ahora languideciendo en el extranjero en circunstancias difíciles.

La reciente aprobación de 59 afrikáners sudafricanos como refugiados es muy cuestionable, ya que no cumplen la definición de refugiados, que deben demostrar una amenaza de persecución, daño físico o incluso muerte, lo que se ajusta a los requisitos para calificar como refugiado.

Trágicamente, millones de refugiados auténticos que merecen serlo no están siendo considerados para el reasentamiento en Estados Unidos, ya que la administración ha cerrado prácticamente el programa, salvo por una reciente orden judicial que permite la entrada de 10.000 re-



Obispo
Nicholas DiMarzio
OSV News

Caminando con Migrantes

fugiados aprobados si el Gobierno cumple la sentencia. Las repercusiones internas de la suspensión de la financiación también han sido graves. Las agencias de reasentamiento sin ánimo de lucro han perdido la financiación de los servicios ya prestados, lo que ha obligado a la Oficina de Servicios de Migración y Refugiados de la Conferencia de los Obispos Católicos de Estados Unidos (USCCB por sus siglas en inglés) a despedir a cientos de empleados tanto en la sede central como en las diócesis.

La USCCB tuvo que demandar al Gobierno federal por millones de dólares por los servicios ya prestados en virtud del contrato.

El vicepresidente JD Vance criticó a los obispos estadounidenses cuando dijo: “Y creo que la conferencia episcopal católica de Estados Unidos debería mirarse un poco en el espejo y reconocer que, cuando reciben más de 100 millones de dólares para ayudar a reasentar a inmigrantes ilegales, ¿les preocupan las cuestiones humanitarias? ¿O les preocupa en realidad su balance final?”.

De hecho, los obispos de Estados Unidos no utilizan fondos federales para ayudar a los indocumentados y contribuyen al programa de reasentamiento de refugiados. Esta declaración incorrecta nunca fue reconocida públicamente ni tal falsedad retirada. Como resultado, la USCCB se vio obligada a detener la labor de reasentamiento de refugiados de la Iglesia, sin planes de reanudarla.

Es de esperar que este programa vital se restablezca durante la actual o la próxima administración.

Los refugiados afectados proceden de diversos países,

entre ellos Afganistán, Somalia, Irak, Sudán, Siria y Myanmar. Muchos llevan hasta cinco años esperando para venir a Estados Unidos y muchos estaban vinculados a este país de diversas maneras. Por ejemplo, en Afganistán e Irak, estas personas estaban empleadas por las fuerzas estadounidenses.

La USCCB se compromete a identificar nuevos métodos para apoyar a los refugiados y a los menores no acompañados, cuyos programas también se han visto afectados por recortes.

Además, los recortes adicionales en los programas del sistema de inmigración de Estados Unidos afectarán a la reunificación familiar, la naturalización y la mayoría de los visados para trabajadores de baja calificación. Al parecer, los visados para algunos trabajadores de alta tecnología y “la tarjeta dorada” propuesta para personas que hayan invertido 5 millones de dólares o más están exentos de estos recortes.

Sin embargo, hay algunas buenas noticias.

Se ha presentado una legislación para ayudar a los trabajadores religiosos a obtener la residencia permanente, subsanando los retrasos y ampliando la utilidad del programa. Esta interrupción se produjo porque el Departamento de Estado de los Estados Unidos asignó erróneamente las tarjetas de residencia de esta categoría de visados a otros inmigrantes.

Los Estados Unidos siempre han sido líderes mundiales en el reasentamiento de refugiados gracias a un generoso programa de reasentamiento. Solo el año pasado, Estados Unidos reasentó a más de 100.000 refugiados; este año, solo se ha reasentado a unos 160 refugiados, aparte de la controversial decisión de reasentar a 59 afrikáners de Sudáfrica.

La pérdida del programa de refugiados es otro ejemplo de cómo Estados Unidos ha renunciado a su liderazgo entre las naciones en materia de ayuda humanitaria.

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En tiempos difíciles, recurre a las personas que ayudan

Una de mis citas favoritas pertenece a Fred Rogers, el recordado presentador de programas infantiles. Él solía contar que, cuando era niño y se asustaba con las noticias, su mamá lo consolaba diciéndole: "Busca a las personas que ayudan. Siempre encontrarás a alguien que esté dispuesto a hacerlo".

Creo que hoy en día, todos llevamos dentro un poco de ese niño asustado.

Por eso me alegra tanto escuchar hablar del chef José Andrés, fundador de World Central Kitchen. Esta organización, creada en 2010 tras el devastador terremoto en Haití, ha distribuido más de 450 millones de raciones de comida fresca y nutritiva en todo el mundo a personas en situación de crisis. En pocas palabras, preparan comida de calidad para quienes más la necesitan.

Posiblemente te hayas enterado de que, en abril de 2024, un ataque israelí en Gaza acabó con la vida de siete trabajadores de World Central Kitchen, un hecho que Israel calificó más tarde como un “error”.

Aun así, Andrés y su equipo siguen ayudando, a pesar de contar con muy pocos suministros en Gaza, donde Israel impuso un bloqueo humanitario que restringe el ingreso de alimentos, medicinas y cualquier tipo de ayuda hasta que se liberen todos los rehenes tomados durante el ataque terrorista de Hamás en 2023.

Recientemente, Andrés — quien nació en España y emigró a Estados Unidos a los 21 años — publicó un nuevo libro: *Change the Recipe: Because You Can't Build a Better World Without Breaking Some Eggs* (*Cambia la receta: porque no puedes construir un mundo mejor sin romper algunos huevos*).

Esto no es una reseña del libro, ya que todavía no he tenido la oportunidad de leerlo. Pero la publicación ha generado varias entrevistas, y una mañana, en la radio pública nacional, escuché a alguien preguntarle a Andrés cómo logra seguir adelante en los tiempos oscuros actuales. Su respuesta fue casi un eco de las palabras de Fred Rogers. Cuando los tiempos son especialmente difíciles, dijo: “Lo mejor de la humanidad se hace presente”.

Son palabras que invitan a la reflexión en este tiempo de Pascua. A veces olvidamos que la Cuaresma dura 40 días, pero el tiempo pascual, nuestro tiempo de celebrar, dura 50. Este es el



Effie
Caldarola
OSV News

momento de alegrarnos y de seguir al Señor hacia Galilea.

Ese mismo Señor nos dejó un modelo claro de cómo ayudar en Mateo 25, versículos 34 al 40: dar de comer al hambriento, acoger al forastero, vestir al desnudo, cuidar al enfermo y visitar al preso. Y cuando hacemos estas cosas, dijo Jesús, en realidad se las estamos haciendo a Él.

El Papa Francisco fue un verdadero servidor, y animó a los que prestan ayuda en todo el mundo. ¿Acaso nos sorprende que hiciera el esfuerzo de saludar a la multitud en la Plaza de San Pedro en Pascua, justo el día antes de su fallecimiento?

Catholic Relief Services ayuda al mundo en nuestro nombre. Fue fundada por los obispos católicos estadounidenses al final de la Segunda Guerra Mundial para asistir a los sobrevivientes en Europa. CRS ha prestado servicio a más de 200 millones de personas en más de 100 países de los cinco continentes.

Recortes drásticos recientes en la agencia USAID han afectado su presupuesto. Ahora más que nunca, necesitan nuestro apoyo financiero.

Pero además de colaborar económicamente, hay muchas formas de contribuir. ¿Hay un banco de alimentos en tu ciudad? ¿Alguna vez donaste sangre a la Cruz Roja? ¿Hay algún vecino que esté solo y necesite conversar?

Una mujer de mi parroquia organiza una colecta mensual de comida casera para un refugio. La gente deja, de forma anónima, cazuelas caseras en un congelador ubicado en el garaje de la parroquia, y alguien las reparte el lunes por la mañana.

¿Y si en estos días pensamos en una manera de ayudar cada día? Puedes comenzar por hacer una lista.

Buscar a las personas que ayudan es un buen consejo para ese niño asustado. Ser una de esas personas es una forma de superar el miedo.

Arzobispo Wenski: Hay que mantener la decencia común en la aplicación de las leyes de inmigración

Arzobispo Thomas G. Wenski
OSV News

Los obispos de Estados Unidos han abogado durante mucho tiempo por reformas a nuestro deficiente sistema migratorio.

Quienes observan atentamente los desafíos que enfrenta nuestro país, no pueden evitar reconocer que se necesitan reformas serias para preservar la seguridad y la integridad de nuestras fronteras, así como para satisfacer las necesidades laborales, la estabilidad familiar y la posibilidad de migrar de quienes corren graves riesgos.

Seguimos proponiendo reformas que mejorarán nuestro sistema migratorio, respetarán la dignidad humana y promoverán el bien común.

El gobierno ha logrado controlar la frontera y está actuando con determinación para expulsar y deportar a quienes han ingresado al país y cometido delitos graves. Sin embargo, como podrían confirmar los empleadores de los sectores agrícola y de servicios de nuestra economía, la mayoría de los inmigrantes son trabajadores y honestos, y solo buscan construir un futuro de esperanza para ellos y sus familias.

La mayoría, aunque no tiene estatus legal permanente, sí cuenta con algún tipo de estatus, como el Estatus de Protección Temporal (TPS), la libertad condicional o una solicitud de asilo. Algunos (como los haitianos, cubanos, venezolanos y nicaragüenses) llegaron con visas humanitarias especiales, válidas por dos años, pero las condiciones en sus países de origen aún no han mejorado.

Otros llegaron legalmente como estudiantes o visitantes y perdieron su estatus. Los DREAMERS fueron traídos aquí por sus padres y, aunque el gobierno les ha otorgado una "salida diferida", no tienen ninguna vía para obtener la residencia permanente legal.

Estados Unidos enfrenta escasez de mano de obra en muchos sectores, como la salud, los servicios y la agricultura. Expulsar a los trabajadores inmigrantes solo agravará esta escasez.

En lugar de gastar miles de millones para deportar a estas personas que ya contribuyen positivamente al bienestar de nuestra nación, sería más razonable — y financieramente y moralmente aceptable —, que el Congreso, en colaboración con el gobierno, ampliara las vías legales para que los migrantes no delincuentes se ajusten a un estatus legal permanente. El gobierno tiene la responsabilidad de hacer cumplir las leyes, pero el Congreso las crea y puede modificarlas.

Con la entrada en funcionamiento del nuevo centro de detención en el Aeropuerto Dade-Collier, o "Alligator Alcatraz", parece necesario evaluar estos recientes avances en la aplicación de la ley migratoria, y reiterar la necesidad de medidas que vayan más allá de las medidas coercitivas.

Resulta alarmante observar estrategias de aplicación de la ley que tratan a todos los inmigrantes irregulares como delincuentes peligrosos.

Peace with creation: Season of Creation 2025

The theme for this year’s Season of Creation is “Peace with Creation.” The Season of Creation is an ecumenical initiative that takes place annually from Sept. 1, the World Day of Prayer for Creation, to Oct. 4, the feast of St.



**Bishop Emeritus
Michael D. Pfeifer,
OMI**

Diocese of
San Angelo

Francis of Assisi, the patron saint of creation. The Biblical base for the theme, “Peace with Creation,” comes from Isaiah 32:14–18. During the Season of Creation, we join together as sisters and brothers of a universal family celebrating in prayer and action how to renew our appreciation, our commitment, our conversion, and our care and activities to protect and bring new life to Mother Earth, our Common Home. The season is in the spirit of truth a time to do a heart-filled assessment of the situation of Mother Earth which is suffering many abuses and misuses by us humans. The Season of Creation is a source of strength and communion encouraging us to truly hope and act justly with all of creation. To begin in a deep spirit of heartfelt gratitude, we thank our loving God for the beautiful gift of all creation.

Pope Francis designated the first day of the Season of Creation, Sept. 1st, as the World Day of Prayer for Creation, calling every person living on this planet to pray and to care for our shared Earth. To aide us in our prayer, Pope Leo XIV recently approved and offered the new Holy Mass for the Care of Creation. In his Homily, Pope Leo shared, “On this beautiful day, I would begin by asking everyone, including myself, to take stock of what we are celebrating here amid the beauty of what might be called the ‘cathedral’ of nature, with so many plants and elements of creation that have brought us together to celebrate the Eucharist, which means to give thanks to the Lord.” Pope Leo continued, “Our mission to care for creation, to foster peace and reconciliation, is Jesus’ own mission, the mission that the Lord entrusted to us.” In April 2025, Pope Francis announced that “Seeds of Peace and Hope” is the theme of this year’s World Day of Prayer. The metaphor of seeds indicates there is a long-time commitment, while expressing hope that the seeds of peace may have a date when they may emerge in new life across all continents, as we pray and work for peace. This day reminds us of the strong connection between war and the degradation of our planet, which is seen in the waste of resources due to destruction and violence. The World Day of Prayer is another opportunity for us to connect with our Creator, God, and allow the Lord to redefine our relationship with the environment: from one of consumption and control and abuse, to one of care and protection.

This year is the 10th anniversary of Pope’s Francis encyclical, *Laudato Si’*, in which he calls Mother Earth our Common Home that we will pass on to the next generation. The *Laudato Si’* movement tells us that the Season of Creation is an annual remembrance of Christians and many other denominations to pray, listen, and respond in action together to the cry of creation. In this season the ecumenical family around the world unites to listen and to show more care of our common home. Mother Earth, with millions of her children and with all kinds of creatures, cries out because of our destructive actions causing the climate crisis, loss of biodiversity, and human suffering in so many ways. Of the many human sufferings, I mention here one of the worst and urgent, which is global hunger. The 2025 Global Network Against Food Crisis Report reveals a sharp rise in global hunger. Over 295 million people now face severe food insecurity, an increase of 14 million from the previous year. This huge global number of hungry people is almost equivalent to the total US population, which is about 342 million. This alarming increase in global hunger reflects a deepening crisis largely driven by conflict, climate-related disasters, and economic shocks. But the Season of Creation calls us, guided by the Holy Spirit, to change our negative manner of acting and teaches us that hope is present in the waiting and working together to promote peace for a better future in our Common Home. To hope in a Biblical sense does not mean standing still and quiet, but rather together in payer, groaning, crying, and actively striving and working for new life amid the failures and struggles. Creation and all of us are called to worship our Creator, working together for a future of active hope expressed in our care and action. When we as a world-wide family work together with creation, the first fruits of the seeds of peace will be born. The Biblical text for this year’s theme from the Prophet Isaiah pictures the desolated creation without peace because of the lack of justice and the broken relationship between God and humankind. This is the description of devastated cities and wastelands which eloquently stresses the fact that human destructive behavior has a negative impact on Earth. Our hope: Creation will find peace when justice is restored, and when we examine the true meaning of freedom. May we think of freedom not as the right to do as we please, but the opportunity to do what is right (from Peter Marshall). This means that we act, pray, change, and reconcile with creation and Creator, and follow his laws, in unity, metanoia, conversion, and solidarity.

The Catholic Climate Covenant points out how through the month-long celebration, we can come together in an annual ecumenical prayer to celebrate our Common Home.

How can I or my parish participate in the Season of Creation? Individuals and communities are invited to participate through prayer, sustainability projects, and advocacy:

- Prayer: Host an ecumenical prayer gathering that unites all Christians and other denominations for the care of our common home. One option is to host an interactive Feast of St. Francis program, found annually at catholicclimatecovenant.org
- Sustainability: Lead cleanup or carbon-reduction projects that help

Catholic Voices

A sower of light in the shadows

Clergy sexual abuse has mutilated the Church. It has scourged Christ's body. Like a rock dropped in the water, the ripples stretch out far, and they continue to reach far beyond the sins perpetrated in darkness.

And, naturally, this devastating reality casts a shadow over any new pontificate in our day. Perhaps the first-U.S. born pope can begin modeling the wisdom from former U.S. Supreme Court justice Louis Brandeis, who penned in 1913 the memorable maxim, "sunlight is said to be the best of disinfectants."

Recent papal elections have been shaped by the sexual sins committed against minors by clergy, too. Chicago's late Cardinal Francis George went so far as to raise the issue, ahead of the 2013 conclave, stating it was a legitimate question to wonder if papal candidates "have a past" and could be compromised even by ties to others guilty of sexual misconduct.

All of this makes hopeful some recent words from Pope Leo XIV on this and related matters.

In a homily on May 31, during a Mass at which he ordained priests for the first time since his election, Pope Leo stressed the importance of integrity, authenticity, and transparency in the life of priests — antidotes to the double life that some priests have lived.

Leo quoted St. Paul's farewell discourse, in which he says, "You know how I lived among you the whole time" (Acts 20:18). Leo explained: "Let us keep this expression clearly in our hearts and minds! 'You know how I lived:' the transparency of life. Lives that are known, legible lives, credible lives! We live among the People of God, so that we may stand before them as credible witnesses."

Important words to hear from the pope today. Only with this important instruction can the Church begin to emerge more fully from the revelations of clergy abuse.

Leo's admonition to priestly credibility come also as many are still questioning how seriously the matter is being handled in Rome, particularly as some high-profile abusive clerics seem to have been protected by Pope Francis, such as the former Jesuit and renowned artist Father Marko Rupnik, who allegedly committed a variety of sexual abuses in the context of creating artwork adorning chapels and shrines throughout the world.

Priestly credibility is not an end in itself, of



Michael R. Heinlein
OSV News

Papal Words

course. It is a model set forth for God's people and the world. Leo concluded his thoughts on the topic in the same homily: "Together, then, we will rebuild the credibility of a wounded Church, sent to a wounded humanity, within a wounded creation. We are not yet perfect, but it is necessary that we be credible."

In a message on June 20, sent to attendees at a play dramatizing the heavily criticized work of a journalist who exposed deep-seated corruption and abuses within the Peruvian ecclesial movement Sodalitium Christianae Vitae, Pope Leo again spoke on the Church's recovery from the revelations of abuse among those in the hierarchy.

Leo, who spent nearly a decade as a bishop in Peru, was well-acquainted with the abuses in the Sodalitium and, in his position within the Roman Curia, backed up the claims of survivors that led to the group's dissolution in January.

To the victims, Pope Leo said, "Your fight for justice is also the Church's fight. A faith that does not touch the wounds of the human body and soul has not yet understood the Gospel."

"It is urgent to ingrain throughout the Church a culture of prevention that does not tolerate any form of abuse — neither of power or authority, nor of conscience or spirituality, nor sexual," he said. "This culture will only be authentic if it is born of active vigilance, transparent processes, and sincere listening to those who have been hurt."

And, speaking to communicators in the same message, Pope Leo encouraged the necessary work of exposing abuses in ecclesial life: "Do not be afraid. Through your work, you can be builders of peace, unity, and social dialogue. Be sowers of light in the shadows."

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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.

The virtue of patriotism

Today, the idea of counting patriotism as a virtue makes a lot of people antsy and uncomfortable. But that wasn't always the case. Aspiring to the love of God and country was the norm for most of human history. And until rather recently, every culture celebrated its great patriots in art, literature, music and film. The classic movies produced during World War II — and then about it — are enduring examples of how we expressed our patriotism before patriotism itself got a bad rap.

But something changed in the United States when the children of the "Greatest Generation" reached adolescence. With body-bag counts from Vietnam reported daily on the 6 o'clock news and the Watergate hearings overriding regular daytime programming on television, almost everyone under 30 struggled to find any reason to be proud. For kids in elementary school like me, the ambivalence permeated everything.

Our fathers and grandfathers fought evil in Europe and the Far East and defeated it at great personal cost. But the society at large was intent on proving that we didn't owe them anything. The fourth commandment — "honor your father and your mother" — no longer applied. Consequently, I didn't witness much patriotism until Ronald Reagan was elected president. And when I finally did, it frightened me.

In those years, we were told (in both direct and oh-so-subtle ways) that America's best days could only be found in history books, but that what was written in those books was misleading.

Our nation was troubled from the start, rife with broken promises at home and prone to arrogant bullying abroad. Strong countercultural forces peddled the narrative that America had little to be proud of and a lot to be ashamed of.

People who didn't see things that way were marginalized. At best, they were considered old and less sophisticated than the critics who were always armed with yet another reason to hold their own country in contempt. At worst, they were thought of as delusional and potentially dangerous



Jaymie Stuart Wolfe
OSV News

Called to
Holiness

nationalists. In retrospect, very few people were anything of the sort.

Nationalism had been identified as the underlying cause of World War II. The Nazis were motivated by a kind of patriotism, after all. So, it was important to view all patriotism with skepticism, even suspicion. National identity accompanied by patriotic pride would inevitably erupt in war. Consequently, my generation was encouraged to see ourselves as "citizens of the world." Globalizing ourselves, it was thought, was the way to cultivate peace.

The unanticipated result, however, was widespread apathy and indifference. Instead of learning to see everyone as our neighbor, we ended up becoming even more detached from those who actually were.

To be sure, loving one's neighbor is challenging. But as it turns out, loving people we don't know and with whom we will never share a common life is impossible. We can love and care for only the people close to us, those we encounter. Jesus commanded us to love our neighbors, that is, those God has placed near us, those with whom we share life as co-heirs of history.

But we are also commanded to honor our fathers and mothers, those who came before us not just biologically, but chronologically. In justice, we owe a debt of gratitude to our forebears and countrymen — even to the flawed and feckless

Pope Leo XIV champions media literacy

In this age of digital communication, it seems like nothing we say or do ever goes away. Once an interview, a podcast, a social media post, or an article has been recorded, reported on, or printed, it's out there for anyone at any time.

This is definitely true in regard to our new Holy Father, Pope Leo XIV. Snippets of things he said in interviews years ago are surfacing all over the internet. His family and friends are being mined for the special memories they have of their more intimate interactions with the new leader of the world's Catholics. Of course, this happens to many in Church leadership, but only one of them just got elected pope.

Of great interest to those of us who are dedicated to helping people live out their faith in the nitty-gritty's of life, especially in regards to communications media, is an interview then-Father Robert Prevost gave to Catholic News Service on Oct. 29, 2012. It was held at the Augustinian Institute for Patristic Studies in Rome and focused on the topic of evangelization.

During this interview, the future Pope Leo was asked if Catholics should try to eliminate or drastically limit the use of digital media in their lives. His answer is music to the ears of myself and any Catholic who tries to instill in people, especially young people, the importance of applying the values of their faith when making choices about what media they choose to interact with.

Here's what the Holy Father had to say back then: "And I think, personally, that the answer, rather than turning away, is in the area of formation. How do we teach people to become critical thinkers? How do we teach people to understand that not everything you hear or everything you read should be taken at face value? And how do we come to give people the formation that they need to read something or to hear something and to be able to discern, if you will, to understand that underlying the message that's being communicated is a very different message or a very subtle message that has severe consequences for the future of society, let's say, that can or cannot be understood as a part of a much bigger picture, if you will."

In other words, teaching media literacy is a formational imperative for Catholics today, especially those charged with the religious education of the young. But media literacy isn't only for kids. If we teach children to make responsible media choices and we adults get sucked into the scroll-and-swipe rabbit hole, we're not practicing what we're preaching. The best thing we adults can do is learn media literacy,



Sister Hosea
Rupprecht
OSV News

Media Mindfulness

apply it to ourselves, be discerning users, critical thinkers, and then, model good digital behavior for the children in our sphere of influence.

The pope mentioned these things back in 2012, around the time smartphones were becoming commonplace. With internet-accessible devices that fit into our pockets, the world of communications media changed drastically. Social media gained popularity and continues to grow today. Increased access makes necessary the need for critical thinking and discernment.

Now, it's been almost 13 years since this interview with then-Father Prevost. If critical thinking and discernment were important back then, they're even more essential now in our age when communications media has exploded and so many interactions between people happen through some sort of digital mediation.

Even in his short time as the Holy Father, Pope Leo has already reiterated his stance on critical thinking in regard to digital media. In a speech to the Centesimus Annus Foundation on May 17, 2025, he had this to say: "In the context of the ongoing digital revolution, we must rediscover, emphasize, and cultivate our duty to train others in critical thinking, countering temptations to the contrary, which can also be found in ecclesial circles. There is so little dialogue around us; shouting often replaces it, not infrequently in the form of fake news and irrational arguments proposed by a few loud voices."

If you are a part of the "digital revolution" (as I am through my use and sometimes dependence on digital technology), and you want to heed Pope Leo's call and be a better critical thinker, consider learning more about media literacy in a faith context.

Some sources can be found online through Pauline Media Studies at bemediamindful.org.

Sister Hosea Rupprecht, a Daughter of St. Paul, is the associate director of the Pauline Center for Media Studies.

ADKINS

Continued from Page 14

challenge to Catholic parents. It is a reminder that we are not powerless in the face of cultural forces. Legal precedent is now on the side of families who speak up when public education drifts into indoctrination rather than instruction.

But the decision also calls for renewed vigilance. The decision does not allow parents to shield their child completely from all sensitive topics or alternative viewpoints than their own; rather, it ensures that schools cannot impose ideological conformity around certain viewpoints. Therefore, it will require parents to exercise their responsibilities if they wish to have their legitimate rights protected.

If you send your child to a public school, do you know what he or she is being taught? Have you spoken with teachers or administrators about your concerns? Are you involved in school board elections or curriculum reviews?

Increasingly, Catholic parents must be active participants in their children's education, advocating for transparency, balance, and respect for faith and reality-based perspectives. *Mahmoud* offers a path forward for dialogue between parents and schools, which should be a dialogue grounded not in confrontation, but in the shared goal of forming well-rounded, morally grounded citizens.

The decision also invites Catholic school leaders to reflect on their mission. In a time when public schools often stray from the basics, our Catholic schools must continue to model an education rooted in truth, beauty, and goodness — faithful to the Church's teaching and supportive of parental authority. Catholic education should never mirror the confusion of the culture; it must be a refuge of clarity and charity, forming students in both intellectual excellence and moral virtue.

As Catholics, let us give thanks for this victory. But let us also rise to the occasion it presents. The U.S. Supreme Court has drawn a line in the sand; it is now up to us to walk forward — faithfully, courageously, and always in defense of the dignity of every child and the prerogatives of the family.

Jason Adkins is host of a new *Our Sunday Visitor* podcast called "Catholic in America," which explores topics related to the missionary imperative of faithful citizenship in our time. You can find "Catholic in America" on the major podcast platforms or visit catholicinamerica.osvpodcasts.com.

How and why to laugh like a saint

Is laughter good medicine? Maybe, but it's rare that we hear about the laughter of a saint. In our current historical moment, I think we need a saint's laughter.

In July, we celebrated 31 days of St. Ignatius of Loyola, leading up to the anniversary of his death July 31, 1556. People who love Ignatius are always celebrating the important times in his life.

In 2021, we observed a "cannonball year," commemorating the 500th anniversary of this soldier, then known as Inigo, being severely wounded by a cannonball from the French forces at Pamplona. His long recuperation led to conversion. A man who had dreamed of battlefield glory and winning ladies' hearts became the man who founded the Society of Jesus (Jesuits) and became one of our greatest saints.

But in all the reading I've done on Ignatius I'd never heard about laughter. Maybe I'm caught in plaster statue sainthood mode — keeping saints on those pedestals is serious business.

So, reading a book of selected works by and about Ignatius, I came across this line, written by his companion and first-generation Jesuit, Jeronimo Nadal: "Those who were in his room," wrote Nadal, "were continually laughing."

I've been in Ignatius' original office rooms in Rome, and was privileged to attend a Mass with a small group in the room where Ignatius himself celebrated Mass and later died. There, Ignatius' own well-worn shoes are displayed.

Hearing that Ignatius' rooms were full of laughter is a good reminder at a time when so many Americans are feeling anxious. We are, after all, in a Jubilee year of hope. We are Pilgrims of Hope. But I, like many, struggle with hope.

Recently, I saw a post on social media about a man named Carlos who appeared at immigration court, accompanied by two Jesuits and a religious sister. He was following the legal process of seeking asylum but was whisked off by masked people purporting to be ICE employees.

The responses to the post were intense. "I live every day in a state of outrage and grief," wrote one poster. "I am very distraught," wrote another. Posts continued to pour out deep angst.



Effie
Caldarola
OSV News

Feeling It

This is the America where immigration enforcement has been awarded more money than the military budgets of many countries, where officials smile as they tour "Aligator Alcatraz," a new prison for refugees in Florida.

Archbishop Broglio, president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, lamented the "great harm" the recently passed "Big Beautiful Bill" will cause to many of the most vulnerable in our society, including migrants.

None of this, of course, is a laughing matter. Yet when we find ourselves distraught and grieving, we remember that, as Christians, we're called to hope and to joy. How?

Ignatius, too, lived in tumultuous times. The Protestant Reformation roiled Europe. Plague swept through cities intermittently. Henry VIII abandoned the Church for a second marriage. The Renaissance flourished and with it challenging new ideas.

Somehow, Ignatius, who called himself "the pilgrim," kept his eyes on God.

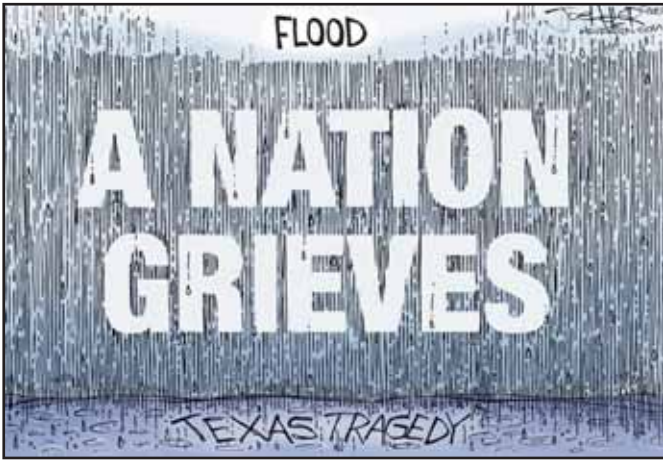
I remind myself that we pilgrims of hope cannot solve all the world's problems. We aid our neighbors when and where we can. We remain active politically. We avoid obsessing over the news. We focus on the positive, the helpers, the good around us.

Notice Nadal refers to "those who were in his room." We seldom laugh robustly by ourselves. Laughter is a communal event, something we do best together. Community has never been more important than it is right now.

Join friends to celebrate. Find laughter. Then, pilgrim, joyfully wear out your own shoes for the Lord.

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

Cartoon Corner



PFEIFER

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all of creation thrive (such as improving energy efficiency).

- **Advocacy:** Raise your voice for climate justice by participating in or leading an ongoing campaign that supports our common home.

To aide us in participating in this month-long celebration, the Season of Creation offers many other prayers and workshop resources (<https://seasonofcreation.org/resources/>).

Creation in many ways is crying out in suffering. As children of God our Father, and our Creator, living to-

gether in our Common Home, we acknowledge the urgent call of this cry to take action, responding on the basis of faith. The Season of Creation is a prayerful moment to recognize our strength and resources that we share in communion with one another, encouraging us to truly hope and act with creation. Creation will find peace when justice is restored. From our loving Creator with have inherited a garden, we must not leave a desert for our children.

The US Catholic Bishops reminds us that “As individuals, as institutions, as people, we need a change of heart to preserve and protect the planet for our children and for generations yet unborn.” The bishops continue to urge celebrants and liturgy committees to incorporate these elements for promoting justice and peace into our prayer and

worship that emphasize our responsibility to protect all of God’s creation and to organize prayerful celebrations of creations, like on feast days when honoring St. Francis and St. Isidore, and on many other days of prayer for creation. I add here that we especially need to come together in prayer and action when we celebrate the two great days of creation — World Water Day and World Earth Day. Guided by the great Spirit, all people can ecumenically cooperate as instruments of God for the care of creation according to their culture, religious background, political system, experience, involvement, and talents. Pope Francis called us to ask the assistance of the Holy Spirit to seek to live “a life that becomes a song of love for God, for humanity, with and for creation, and that finds its fullness in holiness.”

Christ is not absent from Gaza, but crucified in the wounded, patriarchs say after visit

By Judith Sudilovsky
OSV News

JERUSALEM — Amid the destruction witnessed during their July 18–20 pastoral visit to Gaza, following the Israeli shelling of the Holy Family Parish church compound that killed three people and injured 10, Cardinal Pierbattista Pizzaballa and Greek Orthodox Patriarch Theophilos III said they found something more enduring — "the dignity of the human spirit."

"We encountered something deeper than the destruction: the dignity of the human spirit that refuses to be extinguished. We met mothers preparing food for others, nurses treating wounds with gentleness, and people of all faiths still praying to the God who sees and never forgets," Cardinal Pizzaballa said, reading from a prepared statement.

"Christ is not absent from Gaza. He is there — crucified in the wounded, buried under rubble, and yet present in every act of mercy, every candle in the darkness, every hand extended to the suffering."

The patriarchs described the massive numbers of "starving and hungry-looking people," they saw stranded along the roads and the long lines of people waiting for food as they traveled to the church compound.

Prices on the black market — like \$100 for 2 pounds of tomatoes — have made basic nutrition unaffordable, worsening health conditions, especially for the elderly and children. "This is really very harsh to the heart," said Cardinal Pizzaballa.

From his statement he read: "We have seen it: Men holding out in the sun for hours in the hope of a simple meal. This is a humiliation that is hard to bear when you see it with your own eyes. It is morally unacceptable and unjustifiable." Patriarch Theophilos called the sight "very sad."

"We encountered a people crushed by the weight of war, yet carrying within them the image of God. Among the broken walls of the Church of the Holy Family and the wounded hearts of its faithful, we witnessed both profound grief and unyielding hope," Patriarch Theophilos said, reading from his statement.

He issued a moral appeal to global leaders and communities, warning that remaining silent amid human suffering amounted to a "betrayal of conscience." He offered words of solidarity to the "children of Gaza," assuring them that the church stands with them in their pain.

Addressing those in positions of authority, he invoked a call for peace, reminding them of the biblical teaching: "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God."

He said that after returning from Gaza, they held a "very interesting meeting" with U.S. Ambassador to Israel Mike Huckabee to discuss the situation there and rising settler attacks in the West Bank, including in the West Bank village of Taybeh, which the patriarchs visited in a solidarity gesture July 14.

During the press conference, Cardinal Pizzaballa called on U.S. President Donald Trump and other world leaders



OSV NEWS PHOTO | MOHAMMED TOROKMAN, REUTERS

The Latin patriarch in Jerusalem, Cardinal Pierbattista Pizzaballa, walks during a visit to the town of Taybeh, a Christian village in the Israeli-occupied West Bank that was attacked by settlers July 14, 2025.

to be "proactive and to take an important role in order to stop this devastation" to put an end to the 22-month long war.

The war in Gaza broke out after the Oct. 7, 2023, Hamas attack on Southern Israeli communities in which 1,200 people were killed and 250 people taken hostage. Fifty people remain in captivity, with 20 people believed to still be alive — some reportedly chained in underground tunnels, according to other hostages who have been released in previous ceasefire agreements.

Cardinal Pizzaballa described a Gaza of almost complete destruction, even more so than when he was last visiting Holy Family Parish just before Christmas. He said that when he visited the neighborhood of the Rosary sisters' school, he practically could not recognize the area because of the devastation.

He confirmed that although evacuation warnings were issued, Israel knew those in the Holy Family compound would not leave. About 400 people remain there, and around 160 are sheltering in the Greek Orthodox St. Porphyrios Church compound, he clarified.

Cardinal Pizzaballa also clarified that, contrary to reports from Italian Foreign Minister Antonio Tajani's X account, the patriarchs did not enter Gaza with 500 tons of aid. They have received Israeli clearance, but are still coordinating logistics with local partners due to complex conditions. He added that they need time to organize in order to avoid repeating the situation that is happening with distribution of humanitarian aid — without mentioning any specific name.

The Israeli-American Gaza Humanitarian

Foundation has faced strong criticism after over 1,000 Palestinians were reportedly killed at aid distribution points. While Israel is blamed for the deaths, it claims Hamas gunmen fired into crowds to regain control of aid distribution.

"Humanitarian aid is not only necessary — it is a matter of life and death. Refusing it is not a delay, but a sentence. Every hour without food, water, medicine, and shelter causes deep harm," Cardinal Pizzaballa said in his statement.

He stressed that their mission serves all Gazans, not just one group, noting that church sites such as St. Porphyrios, the Holy Family compound, Al-Ahli Arab Baptist Hospital and Caritas are open to everyone — "Christians, Muslims, believers, doubters, refugees, children."

The patriarch was audibly moved as he described a scene he witnessed of a father of six sitting beside the hospital bed of his one remaining child.

"Today we raise our voices in an appeal to the leaders of this region and the world: there can be no future based on captivity, displacement of Palestinians or revenge. There must be a way that restores life, dignity, and all lost humanity," he said.

"It is time to end this nonsense, end the war, and put the common good of people as the top priority. We pray — and call — for the release of all those deprived of freedom, for the return of the missing, the hostages, and for the healing of long-suffering families on all sides."

One sight which lifted his spirits was the sight of children still playing despite the devastation and bombing around them, he said.

"Children were able to enjoy the small things, ignoring the bombing around them," he said.

"The building was shaking but they were still playing. You could see how innocent they are. They are our humanity, something of our humanity which remains alive because of them."

Cardinal Pizzaballa thanked the world Christians for standing beside them and the people of Gaza, emphasizing that they were not against Israel or the Israeli people.

"I think it's important to say that we are denouncing what is going on in Gaza, but we have also to acknowledge the solidarity of many in ... Israeli society. Also thanks to them we could do what we are doing to deliver everything," he said. "So we are not against Israel, we are not against the Israeli people, but we need to say with frankness and clarity that this policy of the Israeli government in Gaza is unacceptable and morally we cannot justify it. ... And the future here is together. So we need to find a language ... and use words that do not deny the existence of the other."

Standing up to address the patriarchs at the end of the conference, octogenarian Abu-El-Walid Dajani, who belongs to one of the oldest Muslim families of Jerusalem and is the owner of the landmark Imperial Hotel, expressed his "deepest gratitude" on behalf of "many people of the world" for their "courage and thought."

"We're looking for a better choice, for a better life in Gaza, and we hope that one day peace will prevail in the Holy Land," he said.

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Judith Sudilovsky writes for OSV News from Jerusalem.

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WOLFE

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ones who make us cringe. Whatever evils they did or good they failed to achieve, we have inherited from them not only a place to call home, but language, culture, civic institutions, and the infrastructure of community life. Acknowledging that with gratitude expresses itself in the loyalty and affection of patriotism.

Patriotism celebrates the personal bonds of human communities and makes them visible. As paragraph No. 2212 in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* reminds us: "The neighbor is not a 'unit' in the human collective; he is a 'someone' who by his known origins deserves particular attention and respect."

When we willingly serve those with whom we share a common life and a common good, all our relationships are re-ordered and directed toward charity. The love of neighbor expressed as authentic patriotism can bring this transformation to a societal scale.

Human beings flourish when we love those in proximity to us without hating those who are not. And that is possible because true patriotism is not rooted in the sins of pride, hatred or greed, but in the virtues of justice and love.

WENSKI

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Resulta sorprendente que agentes enmascarados y fuertemente armados no se identifiquen en las actividades de aplicación de la ley. También lo es la aparente falta del debido proceso en los procedimientos de deportación de los últimos meses.

En este sentido, gran parte del discurso actual es intencionalmente provocador. Es inapropiado para los funcionarios públicos, y corrosivo para el bien común, hablar del valor disuasorio de los "caimanes y pitones" en las instalaciones de Collier-Dade.

La decencia común exige que recordemos que las personas detenidas son padres y madres, hermanos y hermanas de familiares en dificultades. Deseamos garantizar que los capellanes y los ministros pastorales puedan atender a las personas detenidas, para su propio beneficio y el del personal.

También expresamos nuestra preocupación por el aislamiento del centro de detención, que se encuentra lejos de los centros de atención médica, y la precariedad de las estructuras temporales de "carpas" en el calor de La Florida y las tormentas eléctricas del verano, sin mencionar la posibilidad de proteger de forma segura a los detenidos en caso de un huracán.

Hacemos un llamado a todas las personas de buena voluntad para que oren por nuestros funcionarios gubernamentales, por las personas bajo custodia migratoria y sus familias, por quienes trabajan en la aplicación de la ley y por la justicia para todos en esta nación, a cuya prosperidad los inmigrantes siempre han contribuido.

El arzobispo Thomas G. Wenski dirige la Arquidiócesis de Miami.

EDICTAL SUMMONS
CASE: ZUNIGA -- MOJICA
NO.: SO/25/29

The Tribunal Office of the Catholic Diocese of San Angelo is seeking Rosa Mojica.

You are hereby summoned to appear before the Tribunal of the Catholic Diocese of San Angelo, at 804 Ford Street, San Angelo, Texas 76905, on or before the 11th day of August 2025, to answer to the Petition of Rosendo Zuniga, now introduced before the Diocesan Tribunal in an action styled, "Rosendo Zuniga and Rosa Mojica, Petition for Declaration of Invalidity of Marriage." Said Petition is identified as Case: ZUNIGA -- MOJICA; Protocol No.: SO/25/29, on the Tribunal Docket of the Diocese of San Angelo.

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

Given at the Tribunal of the Diocese of San Angelo on the July 24, 2025.

Very Rev. Joseph Barbieri, JCD
Judicial Vicar

**Death notice:
Redemptorist
Father Peter
Voelker**

Please pray for the repose of the soul of Father Peter Voelker, C.Ss.R., who died at the age of 89 on July 5, 2025, shortly after he was hospitalized in St. Louis, Missouri. A Redemptorist missionary priest for more than six decades, Father Peter will be remembered for his dedicated ministry to generations of Hispanic people, particularly in the South.

Father Peter Voelker served as pastor of Holy Redeemer Parish in Odessa from Aug. 1, 1981, to July 1, 1986.

Member
OSV News
Catholic Media Association

Published the 1st Monday following the 1st Saturday of each month and delivered to all registered parishioners in the San Angelo Diocese.

Subscription rate for all others:
\$10 per year

THIRD CLASS POSTAGE PAID AT
SAN ANGELO, TEXAS

Printed by
Livestock Weekly
San Angelo, Texas

Submissions:

Story suggestions, calendar items, parish briefs, and all other submissions should be emailed to
bbodiford@sanangelodiocese.org

COPY, PHOTO DEADLINE:
Third Friday of every month.
Photos should be in jpeg format.

Letters to the editor are welcome, and should be emailed to
bbodiford@sanangelodiocese.org

Letters to the editor are printed at the discretion of the editor and identities of the writer are subject to verification. Please include name, address and phone number when submitting letters.

Bishop Michael J. Sis
Publisher

Brian Bodiford
Editor
Director of Communication

The West Texas Angelus
Official Newspaper of the
Diocese of San Angelo, Texas

POSTMASTER: Send all address changes to:
WEST TEXAS ANGELUS
P.O. Box 1829
SAN ANGELO, TX
76902-1829

‘Let the children come to me’



COURTESY

COURTESY

“Great Journey with Jesus” was the theme of this year’s Vacation Bible School at St. Patrick Parish in Brady, where Father Terry Brenon (pictured at right) is pastor.



ALAN TORRE | APTORRE PHOTOGRAPHY

The youth group at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish in Odessa participated in a Teen ACTS Retreat that concluded with Mass celebrated by pastor Father Francis Onyekozuru July 20.

Three were confirmed at St. Therese Parish in Carlsbad July 13, 2025 (front row, left to right): Cutter Lange, Wyatt Pickett, and Dylan Pickett. Serving in the Mass were (back row, left to right) seminarian Lucean Helm, St. Therese pastor Father Joe Barbieri, Bishop Michael Sis, and seminarian Cameron Moore.