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# WEST TEXAS ANGELUS



Serving Catholics in the Diocese of San Angelo, Texas

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## Celebrating Catholic schools



COURTESY

The kindergarten and 1st grade classes of St. Mary's Central Catholic School in Odessa celebrated 100 days of school on Monday, Feb. 2. The celebration came after the conclusion of Catholic Schools Week, held each year during the last week of January. This year's Catholic Schools Week was celebrated from Jan. 25-30, though some of the schools' planned activities had to be cancelled or postponed until the following week due to closures related to wintry weather.

**See more from  
Catholic Schools Week  
Pages 10-11**

The first 100 days are the hardest.

COURTESY

From the Bishop's Desk

# The pastor in relationship with his councils



**Bishop  
Michael J. Sis**

Diocese of  
San Angelo

egation by committees nor from popularity among parishioners, but from ordination and appointment by the diocesan bishop. He is responsible for guiding parish programs and training parish leaders. He is accountable for the finances, he must make sure the facilities are well taken care of, and he fosters the lay ministry of all the members of the parish.

The pastor exercises real authority to lead, decide, and direct pastoral life, to oversee the parish ministries and staff, and to oversee the administration of parish goods. The pastor represents the parish in all juridic affairs and is to ensure that the goods of the parish are administered according to the norm of law (see can. 532).

## The role of the pastoral council

The 1983 *Code of Canon Law* provides for a parish pastoral council in canon 536. It says, "If the diocesan bishop judges it opportune ... a pastoral council is to be established in each parish, over which the pastor presides and in which the Christian faithful, together with those who share in pastoral care by virtue of their office in the parish, assist in fostering pastoral activity."

Official Church documents clarify that the pastoral council represents the People of God, but not in a legal or political sense. Rather, council members are representative in that they serve as a witness or a sign of the whole community (Sacred Congregation for the Clergy, *Omnes Christianifideles*, 1973, no. 7[SM1.1]).

The Diocese of San Angelo mandates pastoral councils because the very nature of the Church "requires the active collaboration of the baptized in the mission Christ entrusted to it" (Pastoral Manual of the Diocese of San Angelo, "PM," sec. F, p. 10). Consequently, every parish and mission church in the diocese must establish a council and maintain bylaws approved by the bishop. When a mission church cannot provide sufficient personnel resources to the pastoral council, it may send representatives to the parish church's pastoral council (see PM, sec. F, p. 10).

The Pastoral Council is a consultative body that strives to discern the movement of the Holy Spirit within the parish. In collaboration with the pastor, the council:

- Monitors "the pulse" of the parish, identifying immediate needs and opportunities for growth.
- Investigates potential solutions and recommends practical conclusions.
- Fosters open and free dialogue between the pastor and community representatives.
- Strives for consensus in thought and action regarding all matters of parish life (PM, sec F, p. 11).

"The pastor assigned to a parish/mission must retain the ultimate decision-making responsibility within the parish. The council's action must become final and binding only when ratified by the pastor (see can. 536)" (PM, sec. F, p. 11).

"The pastoral council must not meet in the absence of the pastor. The council must have regular meetings at least quarterly, at which the pastor presides (see can. 536). The chair conducts the meeting" (PM, Sec. F, p. 13). The pastor may appoint up to one-third of the voting membership, but the majority of the members must be elected (PM, sec. F, p. 11). I encourage parishioners to consider serving on this council, and to keep an eye out for announcements of the next selection process.

While the council exercises a vital role in the decision-making process, its nature is explicitly advisory. Canon 536 § 2 says, "The pastoral council has only a consultative vote." It assists the pastor by offering insight, discernment, and recommendations, but it does not run the parish, direct the pastor, act independently of him, or claim authority over parish property or finances.

## The role of the finance council

The *Code of Canon Law* requires the establishment of a finance council in every Catholic parish, governed by universal law and by norms issued by the diocesan bishop. In canon 537, it states that in the finance council "the Christian faithful, selected according to these same norms, are to assist the pastor in the administration of the goods of the parish," keeping in mind that in all juridic affairs the pastor represents the parish according to the norm of law (can. 532).

The Pastoral Manual of the Diocese of San Angelo states: "Each parish/mission of the diocese must establish a finance council to assist the pastor in administering the temporal goods of the parish or mission (can. 1280). The council must have a consultative voice only. However,

pastors are not to take their advice lightly" (PM, Sec. F, p. 14).

"The finance council must meet as often as required to conduct the parish/mission's temporal affairs at the pastor's discretion but at least quarterly. They must review the parish/mission's financial status at these meetings, emphasizing revenue and expenditures. They must ensure that diocesan policies regarding income and expenditures and accurate reporting to the diocese are carried out" (PM, Sec. F, p. 15).

"At least quarterly, the community's finance council must review each month's parish or mission financial statements, including the ledgers and bank accounts" (Sec. F, p. 22).

The finance council serves as a "watchdog" and an advisory board for the parish's financial affairs. It does not control parish finances independently of the pastor, nor does it possess authority over pastoral priorities, staffing decisions, or liturgical life.

Our diocese provides resources for council members, including sample versions of bylaws for pastoral councils and finance councils, training videos, and best practices. These resources are available from the Office of the Chancellor. The diocesan norms for pastoral councils and finance councils can be found at the website of the Diocese of San Angelo (<https://sanangelodiocese.org/pastoral-manual>).

## Conclusion

Authentic collaboration in the Church flourishes only when roles are rightly ordered. The pastor listens attentively, consults sincerely, and values the wisdom of the laity. Councils speak honestly, advise generously, and respect the pastor's authority. When each serves according to his or her proper role, the parish reflects the Body of Christ — ordered, living, and directed toward holiness.

Pope Francis called the Church to a spirituality of "synodality," where we all walk along the road together, listening to one another, with healthy dialogue, transparency, accountability, reciprocity, and co-responsibility. In this context, he said, "everyone has a part to play;" bishops and priests are to be "shepherds in the midst of the flock, yet remaining shepherds, not the flock. ... In front to show the way, in the middle to sense how people feel, and behind to help the stragglers" (Address, Sept. 18, 2021). The healthy relationship of a pastor with his pastoral and finance councils is a good example of the practice of synodality.

The parish priest, as pastor, stands not above the Church but within her, yet unmistakably as shepherd. A renewed understanding of the roles of the pastor and the councils is essential for the flourishing of parish life. Only when each office respects its proper limits does the parish truly reflect the mystery of the Church: one body, many members, united under Christ the Head.

## The Prayer Square Lenten prayer for civility

God of all compassion,  
You call us to love one another  
as you have loved us.

In this time of Lent, help us to see our sisters and  
brothers as truly beloved children of God.

Help us to fast from incivility and feast on your  
love for each one of us.

Help us to fast from discord and feast on the  
knowledge that you have created each person  
in your own image.

Help us to fast from fear of those  
with whom we disagree and  
feast on the joy community brings us.

Help us to fast from timidity when we hear hurtful  
language and feast on sharing the good news of  
our God-given dignity.

Help us to fast from the desire to win arguments  
and feast on compassion  
shared in understanding.

Help us to fast from assumptions and feast on lis-  
tening deeply to the stories of our community.

Lord, our God, be with us  
in this time of fasting and repentance,  
in this time of quiet and simplicity.

Let us turn to you as the source of our joyfulness  
and our first giver of love.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

Amen

From usccb.org.

One of my favorite ceremonies as a diocesan bishop is the public installation of a pastor in his parish. When I celebrate this ritual in our local churches, many people tell me it is the first time they have ever seen it take place. Part of the liturgy includes the presentation of the members of the pastoral council and finance council of the parish. As I present the council members to the new pastor, I say, "Father N., this is the pastoral council and the finance council of N. Parish. They are the voice of your people, and they will assist and counsel you as you minister to this parish. Always be attentive to the needs they express."

Then the pastor says to the pastoral and finance councils, "My friends, I pledge to seek your counsel, guidance, and advice in the spiritual and temporal care of my pastorate." That brief exchange captures the heart of the relationship between a pastor and the councils of his parish.

This relationship is essential to the vitality of a church community. A pastor bears a tremendous amount of responsibility, but he does not exercise his authority in a vacuum. His ministry becomes more effective by regularly consulting with lay members of the parish. The documents of the Second Vatican Council called for the creation of parish pastoral councils as a recommended approach to parish leadership.

The decree on the Apostolate of the Laity states, "Insofar as possible, there should be councils which assist the apostolic work of the Church either in the field of evangelization and sanctification or in the charitable, social, or other spheres, and here it is fitting that the clergy and religious should cooperate with the laity" (*Apostolicam Actuositatem*, no. 26).

## The Voice of the Laity

The *Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, Lumen Gentium*, states, "The laity have the right, as do all Christians, to receive in abundance from their spiritual shepherds the spiritual goods of the Church, especially the assistance of the word of God and of the sacraments. They should openly reveal to them their needs and desires with that freedom and confidence which is fitting for children of God and brothers in Christ. They are, by reason of the knowledge, competence or outstanding ability which they may enjoy, permitted and sometimes even obliged to express their opinion on those things which concern the good of the Church. When occasions arise, let this be done through the organs erected by the Church for this purpose. Let it always be done in truth, in courage and in prudence, with reverence and charity toward those who by reason of their sacred office represent the person of Christ (*Lumen Gentium*, no. 37).

"The laity should, as all Christians, promptly accept in Christian obedience decisions of their spiritual shepherds, since they are representatives of Christ as well as teachers and rulers in the Church. ... Let the spiritual shepherds recognize and promote the dignity as well as the responsibility of the laity in the Church. Let them willingly employ their prudent advice. ... A great many wonderful things are to be hoped for from this familiar dialogue between the laity and their spiritual leaders: in the laity a strengthened sense of personal responsibility; a renewed enthusiasm; a more ready application of their talents to the projects of their spiritual leaders. The latter, on the other hand, aided by the experience of the laity, can more clearly and more incisively come to decisions regarding both spiritual and temporal matters. In this way, the whole Church, strengthened by each one of its members, may more effectively fulfill its mission for the life of the world" (*Lumen Gentium*, no. 37).

## The role of the pastor

Canon Law defines a parish as "a certain community of the Christian faithful stably constituted in a particular Church, whose pastoral care is entrusted to a parish priest (*parochus*) as its proper pastor under the authority of the diocesan bishop" (see can. 515 §1; can. 519). The parish priest, therefore, is not a "hired hand" of the parish but its shepherd, entrusted with the care of souls.

By virtue of the sacrament of holy orders and canonical appointment by the local bishop, the parish priest is configured sacramentally to Christ the Head and Shepherd of the Church. Thus, he shares in the threefold office of Christ: teaching (*munus docendi*), sanctifying (*munus sanctificandi*), and governing (*munus regendi*).

Teaching: A pastor teaches the faith given to us by Jesus Christ himself and passed down to us through the authoritative teachings of the Catholic Church. The pastor is the primary preacher and catechist of the parish. He bears responsibility for proclaiming the Word of God in its fullness — whether convenient or not — ensuring doctrinal integrity in preaching, catechesis, and parish programming (see can. 528 §1).

Sanctifying: As chief steward of the sacraments in the parish, the pastor leads the community in the worship of God through the Mass, the other sacraments, and all the prayers of the Church.

Governing: The pastor is the shepherd of the local faith community. He serves under the authority of the bishop. His identity and authority do not arise from del-

# El párroco en relación con sus consejos



**Obispo  
Michael J. Sis**

Diócesis de  
San Ángelo

el buen estado de las instalaciones, y fomenta el ministerio laico de todos los miembros de la parroquia.

El párroco ejerce autoridad real para guiar, decidir y dirigir la vida pastoral, supervisar los ministerios y el personal parroquial, y supervisar la administración de los bienes parroquiales. El párroco representa a la parroquia en todos los asuntos jurídicos y debe garantizar que los bienes de la parroquia se administren conforme a la ley (véase canon 532).

## El papel del consejo pastoral

El *Código de Derecho Canónico* de 1983 prevé un consejo pastoral parroquial en el canon 536. Dice: “Si el obispo diocesano lo juzga oportuno ... se constituirá en cada parroquia un consejo pastoral, que preside el párroco y en el cual los fieles, junto con aquellos que participan por su oficio en la cura pastoral de la parroquia, presten su colaboración para el fomento de la actividad pastoral.”

Los documentos oficiales de la Iglesia aclaran que el consejo pastoral representa al Pueblo de Dios, pero no en un sentido legal o político. Más bien, los miembros del consejo son representativos en el sentido de que sirven como testigos o señales de toda la comunidad (Sagrada Congregación para el Clero, *Omnnes Christifideles*, 1973, núm. 7[SM1.1]).

La Diócesis de San Ángelo exige consejos pastorales porque la propia naturaleza de la Iglesia “requiere la colaboración activa de los bautizados en la misión que Cristo le encomendó” (Manual Pastoral de la Diócesis de San Ángelo, “PM,” sec. F, pág. 10). En consecuencia, cada parroquia e iglesia misionera de la diócesis debe establecer un consejo y mantener los estatutos aprobados por el obispo. Cuando una iglesia misionera no puede proporcionar suficientes recursos de personal al consejo pastoral, puede enviar representantes al consejo pastoral de la iglesia parroquial (véase PM, sec. F, pág. 10).

El Consejo Pastoral es un cuerpo consultivo que se esfuerza por discernir el movimiento del Espíritu Santo dentro de la parroquia. En colaboración con el párroco, el consejo:

- Monitorea “el pulso” de la parroquia, identificando necesidades inmediatas y oportunidades de crecimiento.
- Investiga posibles soluciones y recomienda conclusiones prácticas.
- Fomenta un diálogo abierto y libre entre el párroco y los representantes de la comunidad.
- Busca consenso en el pensamiento y la acción respecto a todos los asuntos de la vida parroquial (PM, sec. F, pág. 11).

“El párroco asignado a una parroquia/misión debe conservar la máxima responsabilidad en la toma de decisiones dentro de la parroquia. La decisión del consejo será definitiva y vinculante solo cuando sea ratificada por el párroco (véase el canon 536) (PM, sec. F, pág. 11).

“El consejo pastoral no debe reunirse en ausencia del párroco. Debe celebrarse reuniones regulares al menos trimestralmente, presididas por el párroco (véase canon 536). El presidente dirige la reunión (PM, sec. F, pág. 13). El párroco puede nombrar hasta un tercio de los miembros con derecho a voto, pero la mayoría de los miembros debe ser elegido (PM, sec. F, pág. 11). Animo a los feligreses a considerar servir en este consejo y a estar atentos a los anuncios del próximo proceso de selección.

Aunque el consejo desempeña un papel vital en el proceso de toma de decisiones, su naturaleza es explícitamente consultiva. El canon 536 § 2 dice: “El consejo pastoral solo tiene un voto consultivo.” Asiste al párroco ofreciéndole perspectiva, discernimiento, y recomendaciones, pero no dirige la parroquia, ni lo dirige, ni actúa independientemente de él, ni se atribuye autoridad sobre los bienes o las finanzas de la parroquia.

## El papel del consejo de finanzas

El *Código de Derecho Canónico* exige el establecimiento de un consejo de finanzas en cada parroquia católica, regido por el derecho universal y por las normas emitidas por el obispo diocesano. En el canon 537, se establece que en el consejo de finanzas “los fieles, elegidos según estas mismas normas, deben asistir al párroco en la administración de los bienes de la parroquia,” teniendo presente que en todos los asuntos jurídicos el párroco representa a la parroquia conforme a la norma del derecho (canon 532).

El Manual Pastoral de la Diócesis de San Ángelo establece: “Cada parroquia/misión de la diócesis debe establecer un consejo de finanzas para asistir al párroco en la administración de los bienes temporales de la parroquia o misión (canon 1280). El consejo debe tener voz exclusivamente consultiva. Sin embargo, los párrocos no deben tomar a la ligera sus consejos” (PM, sec. F, pág. 14).

El consejo de finanzas debe reunirse con la frecuencia necesaria para gestionar los asuntos temporales de la parroquia/misión, a discreción del párroco, pero al menos trimes-

tralmente. En estas reuniones, debe revisar la situación financiera de la parroquia/misión, con especial atención a los ingresos y gastos. Debe garantizar que se cumplan las políticas diocesanas en materia de ingresos y gastos, así como la presentación de informes precisos a la diócesis (PM, sec. F, pág. 15).

“Al menos trimestralmente, el consejo de finanzas de la comunidad debe revisar los estados financieros de la parroquia o misión de cada mes, incluidos los libros de contabilidad y las cuentas bancarias” (PM, sec. F, pág. 22).

El consejo de finanzas actúa como “vigilante” y consejo asesor para los asuntos financieros de la parroquia. No controla las finanzas parroquiales independientemente del párroco, ni tiene autoridad sobre las prioridades pastorales, las decisiones de personal, ni la vida litúrgica.

Nuestra diócesis ofrece recursos para los miembros de los consejos, los cuales incluyen ejemplos de estatutos para consejos parroquiales y consejos financieros, videos de entrenamiento, y las mejores prácticas. Estos recursos están disponibles en la Oficina del Canciller. Las normas diocesanas para los consejos pastorales y los consejos de finanzas pueden consultarse en la página web de la Diócesis de San Ángelo (<https://sanangelodiocese.org/pastoral-manual>).

## Conclusión

La colaboración auténtica en la Iglesia solo florece cuando los roles están correctamente ordenados. El párroco escucha atentamente, consulta con sinceridad, y valora la sabiduría de los laicos. Los consejos hablan con honestidad, aconsejan con generosidad, y respetan la autoridad del párroco. Cuando cada uno sirve según su función, la parroquia no refleja una corporación ni una legislatura, sino refleja el Cuerpo de Cristo — ordenado, vivo, y orientado hacia la santidad.

El Papa Francisco llamó a la Iglesia a una espiritualidad de “sinodalidad”, donde todos recorremos juntos el camino, escuchándonos mutuamente, con un diálogo sano, transparencia, rendición de cuentas, reciprocidad, y corresponsabilidad. En este contexto, dijo, “cada uno tiene un papel que desempeñar”; obispos y sacerdotes deben ser “pastores en medio del rebaño, pero permaneciendo pastores, no el rebaño. ... Delante para mostrar el camino, en medio para percibir cómo se sienten las personas, y detrás para ayudar a los rezagados” (Discurso, 18 de septiembre de 2021). La sana relación de un párroco con sus consejos pastorales y financieros es un buen ejemplo de la práctica de la sinodalidad.

El párroco, como pastor, no se sitúa por encima de la Iglesia, sino dentro de ella, pero inequívocamente como pastor. Una comprensión renovada de las funciones del párroco y de los consejos es esencial para el florecimiento de la vida parroquial. Solo cuando cada oficio respeta sus propios límites, la parroquia refleja verdaderamente el misterio de la Iglesia: un solo cuerpo, muchos miembros, unidos bajo Cristo, la Cabeza.

## La voz de los laicos

La *Constitución Dogmática sobre la Iglesia, Lumen Gentium*, establece: “Los laicos, al igual que todos los fieles cristianos, tienen el derecho de recibir con abundancia de los sagrados Pastores los auxilios de los bienes espirituales de la Iglesia, en particular la palabra de Dios y los sacramentos. Y manifiéstense sus necesidades y sus deseos con aquella libertad y confianza que conviene a los hijos de Dios y a los hermanos en Cristo. Conforme a la ciencia, la competencia y el prestigio que poseen, tienen la facultad, más aún, a veces el deber, de exponer su parecer acerca de los asuntos concernientes al bien de la Iglesia. Esto hágase, si las circunstancias lo requieren, a través de instituciones establecidas para ello por la Iglesia, y siempre en veracidad, fortaleza y prudencia, con reverencia y caridad hacia aquellos que, por razón de su sagrado ministerio, personifican a Cristo” (*Lumen Gentium*, núm. 37).

“Los laicos, como los demás fieles, acepten con prontitud de obediencia cristiana aquello que los Pastores sagrados, en cuanto representantes de Cristo, establecen en la Iglesia en su calidad de maestros y gobernantes. ... Que los Pastores espirituales reconozcan y promuevan la dignidad y la responsabilidad de los laicos en la Iglesia. Que utilicen con gusto su prudente consejo. ... Son de esperar muchísimos bienes para la Iglesia de este trato familiar entre los laicos y sus líderes espirituales: en los laicos el sentido de la propia responsabilidad; un entusiasmo renovado; se asocian más fácilmente las fuerzas de los laicos al trabajo de los Pastores. Estos, a su vez, ayudados por la experiencia de los seglares, están en condiciones de juzgar con más precisión y objetividad tanto los asuntos espirituales como los temporales, de forma que la Iglesia entera, robustecida por todos sus miembros, cumpla con mayor eficacia su misión en favor de la vida del mundo” (*Lumen Gentium*, núm. 37).

## El papel del párroco

El Derecho Canónico define la parroquia como “una comunidad de fieles cristianos constituida de forma estable en una Iglesia particular, cuyo cuidado pastoral se confía a un párroco (*parochus*) como pastor propio, bajo la autoridad del obispo diocesano” (véanse canon 515 §1; canon 519). El párroco, por lo tanto, no es un “trabajador asalariado” de la parroquia, sino su pastor, encargado del cuidado de las almas.

En virtud del sacramento del orden sagrado y el nombramiento canónico por parte del obispo local, el párroco está configurado sacramentalmente con Cristo, Cabeza y Pastor de la Iglesia. Así, participa del triple oficio de Cristo: enseñar (*munus docendi*), santificar (*munus sanctificandi*), y gobernar (*munus regendi*).

Enseñar: El párroco enseña la fe que nos dio Jesucristo mismo y que nos fue transmitida mediante las enseñanzas autorizadas de la Iglesia Católica. El párroco es el principal predicador y catequista de la parroquia. Tiene la responsabilidad de proclamar la Palabra de Dios en su plenitud — sea conveniente o no — garantizando la integridad doctrinal en la predicación, la catequesis, y la programación parroquial (véase el canon 528 §1).

Santificar: Como principal administrador de los sacramentos en la parroquia, el párroco dirige a la comunidad en la adoración a Dios a través de la Misa, los demás sacramentos, y todas las oraciones de la Iglesia.

Gobernar: El párroco es el pastor de la comunidad de fe local. Sirve bajo la autoridad del obispo. Su identidad y autoridad no surgen de la delegación de comités ni de la popularidad entre los feligreses, sino de la ordenación y el nombramiento del obispo diocesano. Es responsable de guiar los programas parroquiales y de capacitar a los líderes parroquiales. Es responsable de las finanzas, debe asegurar

## Espacio de Oración

### Oración cuaresmal por la civilidad

Dios de toda compasión,  
Nos llamas a amarnos unos a otros como tú nos  
has amado.

En este tiempo de Cuaresma, ayúdanos a ver a  
nuestras hermanas y hermanos como hijos  
amados de Dios.

Ayúdanos a ayunar de la incivilidad y saciarnos  
con tu amor por cada uno de nosotros.

Ayúdanos a ayunar de la discordia y saciarnos  
con el conocimiento de que has creado a cada  
persona a tu propia imagen.

Ayúdanos a ayunar del miedo de aquellos con  
quienes no estamos de acuerdo y saciarnos con  
la alegría que nos brinda la comunidad.

Ayúdanos a ayunar de la timidez cuando  
escuchamos palabras que hieren y saciarnos con  
el compartir de la buena nueva sobre nuestra  
dignidad otorgada por Dios.

Ayúdanos a ayunar del deseo de ganar los  
debates y saciarnos con la compasión compartida  
en la comprensión.

Ayúdanos a ayunar de los prejuicios y saciarnos  
con la cuidadosa escucha de las historias de  
nuestra comunidad.

Señor, Dios nuestro, quédate con nosotros en  
este tiempo de ayuno y arrepentimiento, en este  
tiempo de tranquilidad y simplicidad.

Permítenos recurrir a Ti como la fuente de nuestra  
alegría y nuestro primer Proveedor de amor.

Te lo pedimos por Cristo nuestro Señor.

Amén.

De [uscbb.org](http://uscbb.org).

# CALENDARS

Please pray for our clergy



## February

- 1 Deacon Dan Shannahan (B)
- 2 Rev. Francis Onyekozuru (B)
- 2 Deacon Pedro Sanchez (D — 2013)
- 4 Deacon Fidel Saldivar (D — 2025)
- 5 Deacon David King (D — 2006)
- 5 Deacon John Rangel (B)
- 6 Deacon Ignacio Cisneros (D — 2016)
- 7 Deacon Pete Madrid (B)
- 8 Rev. Msgr. James Bridges (D — 2024)
- 8 Deacon Thomas Flores (B)
- 9 Rev. Albert Fuytinck, CSSR (D — 1997)
- 10 Rev. Terry Brenon (B)
- 10 Rev. Charles Vogel (D — 2009)
- 11 Rev. Bernardito Getigan (B)
- 11 Deacon Ray Smith (D — 2014)
- 14 Rev. Martin Hubbs, OCarm (B)
- 15 Deacon Victor Belman (B)
- 15 Rev. Frank Colacicco (D — 2006)
- 16 Rev. Msgr. Larry Droll (B)
- 19 Deacon Bobby Porras (B)
- 20 Deacon Mark Reeh (D — 2005)
- 20 Deacon Sador Sotelo (B)
- 21 Rev. Tom Kelley (D — 2005)
- 22 Rev. Francisco Lopez (D — 1994)
- 22 Rev. Ed DeLeon, OMI (D — 2017)
- 24 Rev. Msgr. Timothy Schwertner (D — 2025)
- 26 Rev. Mamachan Joseph, CMI (B)
- 26 Rev. Leo E. Lavoie (D — 1978)
- 27 Deacon Apolonio Gutierrez (D — 2025)
- 28 Rev. Lawrence Underdonk (D — 2004)
- 29 Rev. Msgr. Bernard Gully (B)

## March

- 1 Deacon Johnny Rodriguez (B)
- 1 Rev. Joseph Scharrer, CPPS. (D — 1994)
- 3 Rev. Joshua Gray (B)
- 7 Deacon Victor Ramirez (B)
- 10 Rev. Arockiaraj Gali (D — 2021)
- 10 Rev. Stephen Kennelly (D — 2017)
- 10 Deacon Charles Lambert (B)
- 10 Deacon Bonifacio Rodriguez (D — 2017)
- 11 Deacon William Brady (B)
- 11 Deacon Albert Libertore (D — 1977)
- 12 Deacon Fred Greene (B)
- 14 Rev. George Fey CPPS (D — 2013)
- 15 Deacon Cosme Ureta (D — 2011)
- 15 Rev. Msgr. Benedict Zientek (D — 2023)
- 17 Deacon Allan Lange (B)
- 20 Deacon Flabio Franco (D — 2024)
- 21 Deacon Frank Trudo (D — 1992)
- 22 Rev. George Green, OMI (D — 1987)
- 23 Rev. Paul Kodakarakaran (B)
- 25 Rev. Anthony Sloan (O — 2000)
- 26 Rev. Serran Braun (D — 1999)
- 26 Rev. Kevin Lenius (B)
- 26 Deacon Audon Saldivar (D — 2000)
- 26 Deacon Steven Zimmerman (B)
- 27 Rev. Prem Thumma (B)
- 28 Deacon Alexander Perez (B)
- 30 Rev. Freddy Perez (B)
- 31 Deacon Alexander Chick (B)
- 31 Deacon Harry Pelto (B)
- 31 Rev. Santiago Udayar (O — 1989)

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

(Dates of birth and ordination given for living clergy; date of death for deceased.)



## Bishop's Calendar

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

### February 2026

- 1 CRANE, Good Shepherd, Mass at 9:00 a.m.
- 1 McCAMEY, Sacred Heart, Mass at 11:00 a.m.
- 1 SAN ANGELO, St. Mary, Marriage Jubilee Mass at 4:00 p.m.
- 2-4 DALLAS, National Catholic Bioethics Center workshop
- 5 SAN ANGELO, Diocesan Pastoral Center, Priestly Life and Formation Committee meeting at 10:00 a.m., Priest Pension Committee meeting at 2:00 p.m.
- 6 MIDLAND, St. Ann, Knights of Columbus Clergy Appreciation Night at 5:30 p.m.
- 7 MIDLAND, St. Ann, Mass at 5:00 p.m. and meeting of Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre
- 8 SAN ANGELO, Christ the King Retreat Center, Diaconal Formation Mass at 11:00 a.m.
- 9 SAN ANGELO, Sacred Heart Cathedral, Cathedral School Endowment Board meeting at 12:00 noon
- 9 SAN ANGELO, Christ the King Retreat Center, Diocesan Mission Council meeting at 4:00 p.m.
- 10 FORT MCKAVITT, San Angelo Deanery meeting at 11:00 a.m.
- 11 SAN ANGELO, Holy Angels, Angelo Catholic School Mass at 10:00 a.m.
- 15 ABILENE, St. Vincent Pallotti, Project Andrew at 6:00 p.m.
- 18 MIDLAND, Midland College, Ash Wednesday Mass
- 18 ODESSA, UTPB, Ash Wednesday Mass at 3:30 p.m.
- 20 SAN ANGELO, Christ the King Retreat Center, Men's Small Town ACTS Retreat
- 22 CARLSBAD, St. Therese, Mass at 9:00 a.m.
- 22 SAN ANGELO, Sacred Heart Cathedral, Rite of Election at 2:30 p.m.
- 24 SAN ANGELO, Christ the King Retreat Center, Staff Morning of Reflection at 9:00 a.m.
- 25 ABILENE, Holy Family, Association of Congregations meeting at 12:00 noon
- 25-27 EL PASO, Tex-Mex Border Bishops meeting
- 28 SAN ANGELO, Bentwood Country Club, Fishers of Men Dinner at 6:30 p.m.

### March 2026

- 1 ODESSA, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, Rite of Election at 3:30 p.m.
- 1 MIDLAND, The Way Retreat Center, Project Andrew at 6:00 p.m.
- 2-6 SAN ANGELO, Christ the King Retreat Center, Annual Priests' Retreat
- 8 ROWENA, St. Joseph, Confirmation Mass at 11:00 a.m.
- 8 ABILENE, St. Vincent Pallotti, Young Adult leaders meeting
- 11 WALL, St. Ambrose, High School religious education at 6:30 p.m.
- 12 SAN ANGELO, Diocesan Pastoral Center, Priest Personnel Board meeting at 10:30 a.m.
- 13 SAN ANGELO, Diocesan Pastoral Center, Finance Council meeting at 11:00 a.m.
- 14 SAN ANGELO, Christ the King Retreat Center, Diaconal Formation Mass at 11:30 a.m.
- 14 MILES, St. Thomas, Confirmation Mass at 5:30 p.m.
- 15 SAN ANGELO, Christ the King Retreat Center, Diaconal Formation Mass at 11:00 a.m.
- 16-20 MISSOURI, Seminary visits
- 21 SAN ANGELO, St. Margaret, Mass at 5:00 p.m.
- 22 SAN ANGELO, St. Margaret, Masses at 8:00 a.m., 10:00 a.m., and 12:00 noon
- 22-23 SAN ANTONIO, TCCB Spring meeting
- 24 MIDLAND, San Miguel Arcángel, Adult Confirmation Mass at 7:00 p.m.
- 26 SAN ANGELO, Diocesan Pastoral Center, Presbyteral Council meeting at 11:00 a.m.
- 29 SAN ANGELO, Sacred Heart Cathedral, Palm Sunday Mass at 10:00 a.m.
- 31 SAN ANGELO, Sacred Heart Cathedral, Chrism Mass at 11:00 a.m.



## Christ the King Retreat Center

### February 2026

- 6-8 Deacon Formation
- 9 Diocesan Mission Council meeting
- 9 Heart of Mercy Prayer Group
- 12 DOSA Staff Meeting, Mass & Lunch
- 19-22 Small Town Men's ACTS
- 23 Heart of Mercy Prayer Group
- 24 Staff Lenten Day of Reflection
- 27-Mar 1. Engaged Encounter & Natural Family Planning

### March 2026

- 2-6 DOSA Priests' Annual Retreat
- 9 Heart of Mercy Prayer Group
- 13-15 Deacon Formation
- 19-22 Men's Walk to Emmaus
- 23 Heart of Mercy Prayer Group
- 27-29 Engaged Encounter/Natural Family Planning

## Special Collections

### February 18, 2026 Aid to the Church in Central & Eastern Europe, Latin America, and Africa

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

Catholics in the United States will have an opportunity to show solidarity and share their faith by giving to the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' (USCCB) annual Collection for the Church in Latin America next month to help people who reside in regions where poverty, political and religious persecution, and other hardships make it difficult for the Church to support itself.

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

### February 18-April 2, 2026 Operation Rice Bowl

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

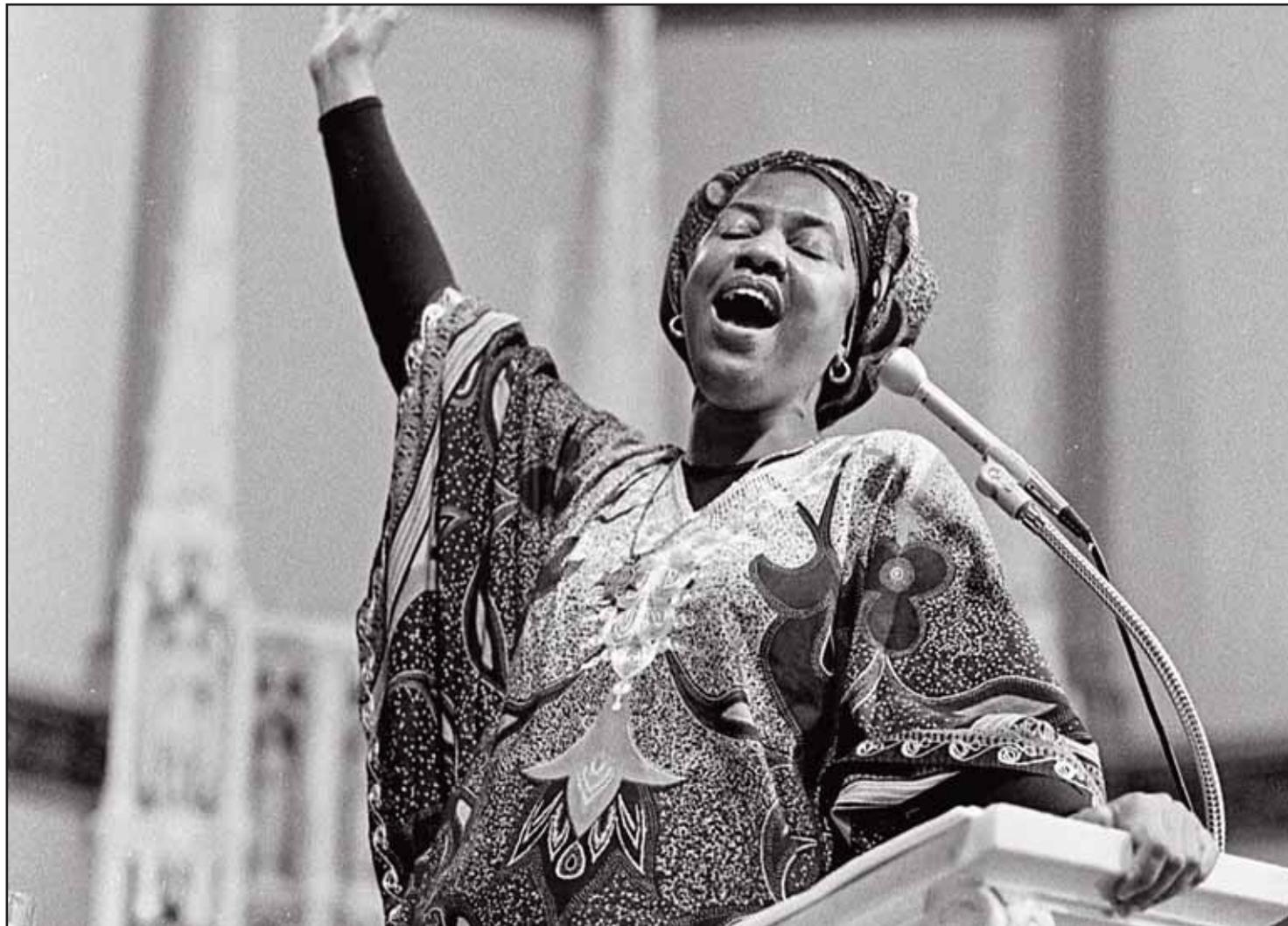
You can also give online at <https://www.crsrice-bowl.org>.

### February 22, 2026 Black & Indian Missions/ Catholic Extension Society

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

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

# Sister Thea Bowman's sainthood moving forward to Vatican review



Sister Thea Bowman, a Franciscan Sister of Perpetual Adoration, is shown during a talk she gave at St. Augustine Church in Washington in 1986. Sister Bowman, who died in 1990, is one of six African American Catholics whose causes for canonization are being considered by the Catholic Church. Her sainthood cause was opened in 2018 and she has the title "Servant of God."

OSV NEWS PHOTO | CNS FILE, MICHAEL HOYT, CATHOLIC STANDARD

(OSV News) — Servant of God Thea Bowman's canonization cause is moving ahead, with a Mass and ceremony marking the closure of the cause's diocesan phase held Feb. 9 at the Cathedral of St. Peter the Apostle in Jackson, Mississippi.

Bishop Joseph R. Kopacz of Jackson celebrated a Mass of thanksgiving at noon followed by an official closing session of the diocesan phase of the canonization process, where the cause's leaders sealed the boxes containing the diocesan phase's documents and findings. Those boxes will be shipped to the apostolic nunciature in Washington for transfer to the Dicastery for the Causes of Saints at the Vatican, which will further investigate the cause.

In 2018, Bishop Kopacz opened the cause for Sister Bowman, a Mississippi native and the only African American member of her religious community, the Wisconsin-based Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration. Before she died of cancer in 1990 at age 52, she was a widely known speaker, evangelizer, and singer.

Sister Bowman was a trailblazer in almost every role: first African-American religious sister from Canton, Mississippi, first to head an office of intercultural awareness, and the first African American woman to address the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops.

Born in 1937 as Bertha Bowman in Yazoo City, Mississippi, she was the daughter of a doctor and a teacher. Nicknamed "Birdie," she attended Canton Holy Child Jesus School, and at age 8 decided she wanted to become a Catholic, inspired by the Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration teaching at her school. She knew by her early teenage years that she was called to consecrated life.

She took first vows in 1958 and perpetual vows in 1963. She studied at Viterbo College in La Crosse, Wisconsin — which was founded by her religious community — and later earned advanced degrees at The Catholic University of America in Washington. She returned to Canton to teach, care for her aging parents, and inspire the people in her community.

Sister Bowman led the Jackson Diocese's Office of

Intercultural Awareness, taught at several Catholic high schools and colleges, and was a faculty member of the Institute of Black Catholic Studies at Xavier University in New Orleans.

Renowned for her preaching, she took her message across the nation, speaking at Church gatherings and conventions, making 100 speaking engagements a year until her spreading cancer slowed her. Music was especially important to her. She would gather or bring a choir with her and often burst into song during her presentations.

In addition to her writings, her music also resulted in two recordings, "Sister Thea: Songs of My People" and "Round the Glory Manger: Christmas Songs and Spirituals."

When Sister Bowman spoke at the U.S. bishops' meeting in June 1989, less than a year before her death from bone cancer and confined to a wheelchair, she was blunt. She told the bishops that people had told her black expressions of music and worship were "un-Catholic."

Sister Bowman challenged that notion, pointing out that the Church universal included people of all races and cultures, and she challenged the bishops to find ways to consult those of other cultures when making decisions. She told them they were obligated to better understand and integrate not just black Catholics, but people of all cultural backgrounds.

Catholic News Service reported that her remarks "brought tears to the eyes of many bishops and observers." She also sang to them and, at the end, had them all link hands and join her in singing "We Shall Overcome."

That fall, the Thea Bowman Foundation was founded to support black Catholic education at all levels. In its first year, the foundation gave scholarships to 46 black students at U.S. Catholic colleges and universities. It also established an annual award for outstanding contributions to black Catholic education.

Less than a week before her death at age 52 in March 1990, she was announced as the winner of the Laetare Medal, awarded by the University of Notre Dame. Other honors included the American Cancer Society's Courage

Award, given at the White House in 1988, and U.S. Catholic magazine's U.S. Catholic Award in 1989 for contributions to the advancement of women in Church and society.

At her funeral Mass in Jackson, Father John Ford, a member of the Missionary Servants of the Most Holy Trinity and a longtime friend of the nun who served as homilist, told the 1,000 mourners who packed the church: "We must find ways to imitate this woman. No other one is coming. We need to find ways to imitate Thea."

In what was likely her last writing — a posthumously published column in *Mississippi Today*, the Jackson diocesan newspaper — she asked readers observing Holy Week to "see the Son of Man riding on an ass' colt, to feel the press of the crowd, to be caught up in the 'Hosannas,'" and then as Holy Week goes on, to "watch as Jesus is sentenced by Pilate to Calvary, to see him rejected, mocked, spat upon, beaten, and forced to carry a heavy cross, to hear the echo of the hammer, to feel the agony of torn flesh and strained muscles, to know Mary's anguish."

By the mid-1990s, Catholic schools in Gary, Indiana, East St. Louis, Illinois, and Port Arthur, Texas opened bearing her name. Other schools and centers have also since adopted her name. In 2023, the Catholic student center at Howard University in Washington was also named in her honor.

Sister Bowman also was the focus of several books, including 1993's *Thea Bowman: Shooting Star — Selected Writings and Speeches*, 2008's *This Little Light: Lessons in Living From Sister Thea Bowman*, and 2010's *Thea's Song: The Life of Thea Bowman*.

Sister Bowman was the focus of the 2022 documentary *Going Home Like a Shooting Star: Thea Bowman's Journey to Sainthood*. She was among people featured in the 2025 documentary *Trailblazers of Faith*, which tells the story of how African Americans have embraced the Catholic faith without abandoning their culture.

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*This reporting draws from Catholic News Service archives.*

## Reporting Sexual Abuse

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

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

## Reportar Abuso Sexual

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

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

# Knights of Columbus show clergy, sisters their appreciation at annual celebration



ALAN TORRE | APTORRE PHOTOGRAPHY

The Knights of Columbus sponsored a Clergy Appreciation Dinner at St. Ann Parish in Midland Feb. 6, 2026. The annual celebration honors the priests, deacons, and women religious who have dedicated their lives to the Church.

## US bishops praise DHS policy change on wait times for religious worker visas

By Kate Scanlon  
OSV News

WASHINGTON — The Department of Homeland Security said Jan. 14 it issued an interim final rule reducing wait times for religious worker visas. Catholic advocates were among those who pushed the Trump administration to address the backlog in their visa category.

In its announcement, the department said its regulation change would reduce the wait time applicants are required to remain outside the U.S.

A spokesperson for DHS said in a statement the department "is committed to protecting and preserving freedom and expression of religion."

"We are taking the necessary steps to ensure religious organizations can continue delivering the services that Americans depend on," the spokesperson said. "Pastors, priests, nuns, and rabbis are essential to the social and moral fabric of this country. We remain committed to finding ways to support and empower these organizations in their critical work."

The new rule removes the requirement for R-1 religious workers to reside outside the U.S. for a year upon reaching the visa's statutory five-year maximum period.

DHS said in its announcement that while R-1 religious workers will still have to leave the U.S., there is no longer a minimum time requirement for them to reside and be physically present outside the U.S. before reapplying for the R-1 visa.

Archbishop Paul S. Coakley of Oklahoma City, president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, and Bishop Brendan J. Cahill of Victoria, Texas, chair of the USCCB's Committee on Migration, said in a joint statement, "We are tremendously grateful for the Administration's work to address certain challenges facing foreign-born religious workers, their employers, and the American communities they serve."

The DHS announcement came shortly after Archbishop Coakley met with President Donald Trump at the White House, although the topics of their Jan. 12 meeting have not been made public.

The USCCB is among the organizations that have worked to address the religious worker visa backlog. Bishop Mark J. Seitz of El Paso, Texas, the migration committee's previous chair, told the bishops' fall plenary assembly in Baltimore in November that he was "very optimistic" there would be "see positive developments in the very near future" on the issue of religious worker visas.

R-1 non-immigrant religious worker visas allow some religious workers outside the U.S. — such as Catholic priests and nuns — to legally enter the U.S. to serve their faith communities. These are initially granted for a 30-month period, with one possible renewal allowing for a total of 5 years, so they can be in the U.S. to carry out ministry work.

While within that window, they can apply for employment-based EB-4 status so they can legally remain in the U.S. without interruption. However, there is a significant backlog for such visas, as there is greater demand than the number of visas issued. That backlog could have a grave impact on the Church in the U.S., as the National Study of Catholic Priests — released in 2022 by The Catholic University of America's Catholic Project — indicated 24 percent of priests serving in the U.S. are foreign-born, with many of them also subject to visa renewals.

The R-1 visa rule change, by eliminating the requirement to have residency outside the U.S. for one year before reapplying, is expected to help prevent these religious workers serving U.S. faith communities from having to be reassigned outside the U.S. to serve faith communities in other countries.

In their statement, Archbishop Coakley and Bishop Cahill added, "The value of the Religious Worker Visa Program and our appreciation for the efforts undertaken to support it cannot be overstated."

"This targeted change is a truly significant step that will help facilitate essential religious services for Catholics and other people of faith throughout the United States by minimizing disruptions to cherished ministries," they said. "In order to provide the full extent of the relief needed and truly promote the free exercise of religion in our country, we continue to urge Congress to enact the bipartisan Religious Workforce Protection Act."

That legislation, if enacted, would permit religious workers already in the U.S. on temporary R-1 status with pending EB-4 applications to stay in the U.S. while waiting for permanent residency. The bipartisan legislation was introduced in the Senate by Sens. Tim Kaine, D-Va., Susan Collins, R-Maine, and Jim Risch, R-Idaho, and in the House by Reps. Mike Carey, R-Ohio, and Richard Neal, D-Mass. In statements at the time, Kaine and Collins both cited priest shortages in their states. All five lawmakers behind the legislation are Catholic.

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



OSV NEWS PHOTO | GREGORY A. SHEMITZ

Members of the Knights of Columbus participate in a "Keep Our Priests" rosary rally at St. Mary Church in East Islip, N.Y., April 29, 2024. More than 300 people gathered to pray for changes in U.S. immigration procedures to prioritize visa and green card applications for foreign-born religious workers. On Jan. 14, 2026, the Department of Homeland Security announced it issued an interim final rule reducing wait times for religious worker visas.

## Pope sets Jubilee to mark 800th year since St. Francis' death; saint's body to be displayed

ASSISI, Italy (OSV News) — Pope Leo XIV has proclaimed a special Jubilee Year marking the 800th anniversary of the death of St. Francis of Assisi, highlighting the saint's enduring message of peace, holiness, and care for creation.

In a Jan. 10 decree issued by the Apostolic Penitentiary and announced by the Franciscan Friars, the Vatican declared a Year of St. Francis that runs from Jan. 10 of this year through Jan. 10, 2027. During the jubilee, Catholics may receive plenary indulgences under the usual conditions, including through pilgrimages to Franciscan churches worldwide or spiritual participation by the sick and homebound.

In a letter marking the opening of the jubilee in Assisi, Pope Leo said St. Francis' witness is urgently needed in a world marked by war, division, and environmental harm. The jubilee will feature major events in Assisi, including the first public display of St. Francis' body this spring, drawing hundreds of thousands of pilgrims. The overwhelming number of people coming for the public display, the basilica said, is a testament to "the universality of the message of the Saint of Assisi and the timeless appeal of his figure."

## Olympics 2026: Pope calls for 'healthy competition' to unite people at Winter Games

By Junno Arocho Esteves  
OSV News

In a message to the Archdiocese of Milan, Pope Leo XIV expressed his hope that the 2026 Winter Olympic and Paralympic Games will be an occasion of solidarity and bridge-building between peoples and cultures.

The papal message was read during a Jan. 29 Mass marking the arrival of the "Cross of Athletes" and the official launch of the archdiocese's Olympic pastoral initiative, "For Each Other."

In his message, which was signed on his behalf by Cardinal Pietro Parolin, Vatican secretary of state, the pope said he hoped the Olympic Games would bring about "sentiments of friendship and fraternity, strengthening awareness of the value of sport at the service of the integral development of the human person."

"The Holy Father assures his prayers so that these days of healthy competition may contribute to building bridges between cultures and peoples, promoting hospitality, solidarity, and peace," the message stated.

The "For Each Other" initiative, which will coincide with the Feb. 6-

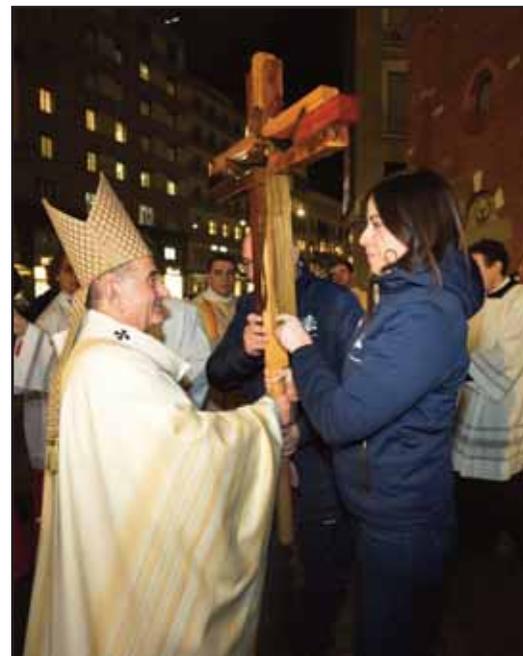
22 Winter Olympics and the March 6-15 Paralympics, will feature activities, performances, and events hosted in parishes across Milan.

At the heart of the activities will be the 11th-century Basilica di San Babila, dedicated to St. Babylas of Antioch, where the opening Mass was celebrated and which will be known as the "Church of Athletes" throughout the Olympic and Paralympic Games.

During the Mass, the "Cross of Athletes" was entrusted to the archdiocese by Atletica Vaticana, the Holy See's sports association. Blessed by Pope Francis at the 2013 World Youth Day in Rio de Janeiro, the cross has been placed in chapels in the Olympic host cities of London in 2012 and Paris in 2024.

According to the Archdiocese of Milan, the cross, which will remain at the altar in the Basilica di San Babila until the end of the Paralympics, "symbolizes the close bond between sporting activities and the values of solidarity, inclusion, and personal growth."

In his homily, Archbishop Mario Delpini of Milan said the Olympic and Paralympic Games could serve as a form of rigorous spiritual



OSV NEWS PHOTO | ARCHDIOCESE OF MILAN  
Members of Atletica Vaticana, the Holy See's sports association, entrust the "Cross of Athletes" to Archbishop Mario Delpini of Milan outside the Basilica di San Babila in Milan Jan. 29, 2026. The cross was entrusted to the archdiocese ahead of the 2026 Winter Olympic and Paralympic Games in Milan and Cortina d'Ampezzo.

See OLYMPICS, Page 20

## The National Eucharistic Pilgrimage is back in 2026 — with a patriotic twist

By Maria Wiering  
OSV News

The National Eucharistic Pilgrimage is back for 2026 with a special route that will travel the East Coast from St. Augustine, Florida, to Portland, Maine, ending in Philadelphia, organizers announced Jan. 8.

The pilgrimage — the third of its kind — will begin in May on Memorial Day weekend and end July 5. This year's pilgrimage celebrates America's 250th anniversary with the theme "One Nation Under God," and its route incorporates key sites in the history of the country and

its Catholics.

Organizers described the pilgrimage as "a nationwide call to renewal, unity, and mission rooted in the Eucharist."

In a Jan. 8 media release announcing the route, organizers noted that 2026 marked the 75th anniversary of the lobbying campaign, led by the Knights of Columbus, to add the phrase "One nation under God" to the nation's Pledge of Allegiance.

"One Nation Under God is not a borrowed slogan; rather, it is an invitation to realign our lives, our communities, and our country under the sovereignty of Jesus Christ," said Jason Shanks, president of

the National Eucharistic Congress, in the media release.

The National Eucharistic Congress nonprofit organizes the pilgrimage, which first took place as four routes in 2024 ahead of the 10th National Eucharistic Congress in Indianapolis as part of the National Eucharistic Revival, and which returned last summer with a route from Indianapolis to Los Angeles.

"Our hope is that Catholics will come together on this significant anniversary to give thanks for our country and to pray for our future," said Bishop Andrew H. Cozzens of Crookston, Minnesota, who serves as chairman of the National Eucha-

ristic Congress, in the statement. "We want all Catholics to be inspired with missionary zeal to bring revival through the light and love of Jesus Christ."

The pilgrimage has been placed under the patronage of St. Frances Xavier Cabrini, an Italian-American immigrant and the first U.S. citizen to be canonized a saint. It will also take place in solidarity with the U.S. bishops' call to consecrate the United States to the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

Like previous National Eucharistic Pilgrimages, the route will be traveled by

See PILGRIMAGE, Page 18

OFFICE OF EVANGELIZATION & CATECHESIS  
EQUIP WORKSHOP SERIES

# WALKING WITH: THE ART OF ACCOMPANIMENT IN MINISTRY



OUR SPECIAL SPEAKER  
**NOELLE GARCIA**

MARCH 21, 2026



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# Guadalupe Radio Network

## 2026 "Fishers of Men" Benefit Dinner

*Casting Nets & Engaging Hearts*

*Together in Mission*



**Keynote Speaker**  
Cy Kellet

**Saturday, February 28, 2026**

**Doors open - 6:30pm**

**Program 7pm - 9pm**

Bentwood Country Club

2111 Country Club Lane, San Angelo TX 76904

**FOM Honorees**  
Mario & Connie DeHoyos

Join us for a night to celebrate GRN Catholic media that catches hearts for Christ at our THIRD Annual "Fishers of Men" Benefit Dinner for KPDE in San Angelo. We will recognize Mario & Connie DeHoyos, beloved San Angelo business owners and loyal supporters of GRN, as the "Fishers of Men" Award Honorees. Together, we'll cast the net wide—proclaiming Christ, connecting hearts, and transforming lives through Catholic radio.

Our Keynote Speaker will be Cy Kellet, host of Catholic Answers, Live, heard at 5 PM daily across GRN. Cy can be heard every Wednesday on GRN's Morning Joy with "I Spy With Cy" segment.

### TABLE LEVELS!

**St. Peter Table - \$10,000**

Seating for Ten, 3-months of on-air announcements, on-screen recognition at dinner, and GRN website.

**St. Paul Table - \$5,000**

Seating for Ten, 2-months of on-air announcements, on-screen recognition at dinner, and GRN website.

**St. John the Apostle Table - \$2,500**

Seating for Ten, 1-month of on-air announcements, on-screen recognition at dinner, and GRN website.

**St. Maximilian Kolbe Table - \$1,500**

Seating for Ten, on-screen recognition at dinner and GRN website.

**Individual Seats: \$ 150**

For more info:

[Kimberleigh@GRNOnline.com](mailto:Kimberleigh@GRNOnline.com) | (210) 579-9844



## SHC Altar Society to hold pancake supper

The Sacred Heart Cathedral Altar Society will host a Fat Tuesday pancake supper and family fun night Tuesday, Feb. 17, from 5:30 to 8:00 p.m.

The evening will feature activities for all ages, including face-painting, masks, silent auction, and a bottle raffle.

The cost is \$10 per person, with a \$40 cap per family. FMI visit [sanangelocathedral.org](http://sanangelocathedral.org).

## Project Rachel: Hope and Healing after Abortion

Safe and confidential helpline:  
**432-236-9883**

Email:  
[projectrachel@sanangelodiocese.org](mailto:projectrachel@sanangelodiocese.org)

Website:  
[HopeAfterAbortion.com](http://HopeAfterAbortion.com)

## Proyecto Raquel: Esperanza y Sanación después del Aborto

Línea de ayuda segura y confidencial:  
**432-236-9883**

Correo electrónico:  
[projectrachel@sanangelodiocese.org](mailto:projectrachel@sanangelodiocese.org)

Sitio web:  
[HopeAfterAbortion.com](http://HopeAfterAbortion.com)



## 2026 MEDICAL MISSION To La Ceiba, Honduras

### MEDICAL PROFESSIONALS



The diocese of San Angelo is seeking compassionate medical professionals, (physicians, nurses, PA's and NP's), to join us on our second mission to provide essential healthcare services to underserved communities of Honduras. This year's mission aims to offer medical assistance, health education, and spiritual support to those in need.

**Special Request for:**  
**OB/GYN, Pediatricians, and Family Practice Physicians**

For more information, and to sign up, visit [www.SanRafaelExpeditions.org](http://www.SanRafaelExpeditions.org) or email: [info@SanRafaelExpeditions.org](mailto:info@SanRafaelExpeditions.org) or call Janelle O'Connett at (325-668-3397)



# US bishops commemorate Black History Month: 'Let us be faithful stewards of memory'

(OSV News) — Two U.S. bishops Feb. 3 urged Catholics to be "faithful stewards of memory" and "courageous witnesses to truth" during Black History Month, observed in February.

Bishop Daniel E. Garcia of Austin, Texas, chairman of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Subcommittee for the Promotion of Racial Justice and Reconciliation, and Auxiliary Bishop Roy E. Campbell Jr. of Washington, chairman of the USCCB's Subcommittee on African American Affairs, issued a joint statement to commemorate the month.

They noted that the 2026 observance marks 100 years of commemorating Black history in the United States. "This milestone is an opportunity for us to prayerfully reflect on the ways history has been preserved, honored, and passed on across generations," Bishop Garcia and Bishop Campbell said.

In 1926, Carter G. Woodson, an American historian, author, and journalist, initiated the first Negro History Week in February of that year. He selected the week that included the birthdays of two key figures in the history of Black Americans: President Abraham Lincoln (Feb. 12) and abolitionist Frederick Douglass (Feb. 20).

It expanded and became Black History Month, officially recognized by President Gerald R. Ford in February 1976, and later codified by Congress in 1986. The combined efforts marked what the Smithsonian's National Museum of African American History & Culture called a century of commemorating the history, achievements, and contributions of Black Americans.

The bishops pointed to "Open Wide Our Hearts," the U.S. bishops' pastoral letter against racism, in which they said the bishops "recognized that the lived experience of the

vast majority of African Americans bears the marks of our country's original sin of racism."

"During this year's observance of Black History Month, we encourage the faithful to consider the lessons of history, honoring our heroes of the past and learning from the mistakes of the past," they said.

"Although we may at times encounter people or situations in our country that seek to erase 'memory' from our minds and books, it can never be erased from our hearts," they continued.

"May our reflections strengthen our faith and communities. Let us be faithful stewards of memory. Let us be courageous witnesses to truth. Let us pray and work to honor the inherent dignity of every person and the sacred stories of every people."

In a joint reflection they issued with the statement, Bishop Garcia and Bishop Campbell emphasized that racism is a sin against human dignity.

"As shepherds of the Church, entrusted with the care of souls and the proclamation of the Gospel, we care deeply for our people, their joys and sorrows, and the stories they carry. This is especially important in our efforts to witness to the dignity of every person, which requires acknowledging the times in our nation's history when racism has prevented that dignity from being realized," they said.

"This reflection is about the sacred task of remembering," they added. "We must recommit ourselves to the sacred task of remembering — especially the stories of those whose voices have long been unheard. Sacred Scripture and Tradition offer a way forward for helping us understand why telling our stories is central to the Gospel mandate."

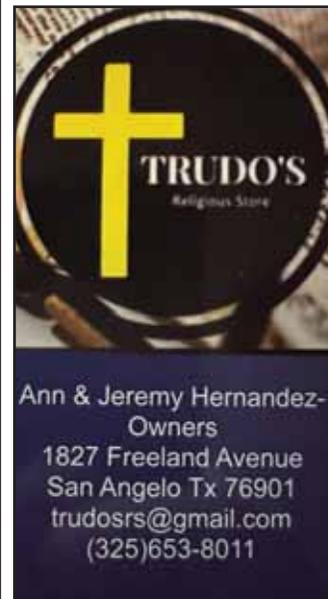
## Men's Lent workshop set for 3/14

The Family Warrior, a men's ministry in San Angelo, will present a men's Lent workshop on March 14, 2026, from 10:00 a.m. to noon. "Surrender: A Call for Men Who Refuse to Stay the Same" will feature Catholic speaker Alex Gotay, and poses the question, "What do you need to surrender in order to grow in your faith?"

The morning's activities will be held in the gym of St. Mary Parish in San Angelo at 7 West Avenue N. The workshop will include a free lunch.

To reserve a seat at this men's workshop, contact Robin Miller with The Family Warrior by phone at 325-651-3823 or by email at [robinmiller@thefamilywarrior.org](mailto:robinmiller@thefamilywarrior.org).

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# Catholic Schools Week



PHOTOS COURTESY ST. ANN CATHOLIC SCHOOL

Catholic Schools Week was a truly joyful celebration at St. Ann's Catholic School! It highlighted the beauty of Catholic education and reminded us of the incredible individuals and groups who make our school such a special place.

Despite missing a few days due to winter weather, the week was filled with joy, gratitude, and wonderful moments. Students enjoyed a sweet treat on Student Appreciation Day, and parents received a prayer card that had been prayed over by each of our Saints in recognition of their commitment to Catholic education. Teachers and staff were spoiled with a lunch for Teacher Appreciation Day, and our clergy enjoyed a catered meal shared with our middle school students, allowing for meaningful conversation and an opportunity to express appreciation for all they do for our parish and schools.

We were very honored to welcome Bishop Sis to celebrate Mass with us on Friday. Our students served and read at Masses throughout Catholic Schools Week, and our student ambassadors did a phenomenal job giving countless tours to visiting grandparents during Grandparents Day, proudly sharing all that makes St. Ann's so special.

A BIG thank you to our amazing Parent Teacher Organization and to Devin Benavides, our Catholic Schools Week Chair, for the care and effort that made this week so meaningful for our students, staff, and families. Catholic Schools Week concluded with our inaugural Robotics program competing in its first competition and culminated in the most festive way with our annual Mardi Gras Gala, a beautiful and fun evening that raised significant funds in support of both our Endowment Fund and our Growth and Development Fund.

We are truly thankful for our incredible school and for the gift of Catholic education.



PHOTOS COURTESY HOLY CROSS CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL  
Students and staff of Holy Cross Catholic High School in Midland visited various local parishes and assisted during Mass during Catholic Schools Week.



For Catholic Schools Week, Angelo Catholic School celebrated:

- Our community – by publicly thanking them in all their support;
- Our students – by treating them to one ice cream after their lunch;
- Our nation – by holding a school-wide rosary (which included the 3- and 4-year-olds, who were amazing!) where each "Hail Mary" was dedicated to a state, and each "Our Father" was dedicated to a branch of our country (first responders, military, ect.);
- Our vocations – by inviting priests to join our school lunch, where Msgr. Larry Droll and Deacon Humberto Diaz had the kids so excited to see them;
- Our staff – by holding a staff luncheon;
- Our families – by hosting a "Cake Picnic" where our families stopped by the school to share desserts and time to chat.

PHOTO COLLAGES COURTESY ANGELO CATHOLIC SCHOOL

# Visuals, rituals, traditions: How Catholic schools stand out

By Joseph D. White  
OSV News

Most of the growth we have seen across Christian denominations in recent years has been in Christian communities that teach sure norms that are relatively stable as society changes. The coming generation of Catholic parents are likely to look for a strong sense of Catholic identity in Catholic schools. As resources become scarcer, why would parents choose Catholic school for their children if they do not perceive that Catholic school offers something that public school, or another private school, cannot?

Promoting a uniquely Catholic culture in our schools is both a necessary task and a challenging one. In rising to this challenge, it is helpful to examine what variables make cultural identity survive and thrive.

One important characteristic is a common language. How do we understand, and talk about, Catholic education? What do we mean by "Catholic"? And more

broadly, what language do we share when we talk about our faith? Sharing a common language will mean a well-articulated mission, one that is communicated effectively to parents such that it attracts families to our schools.

A second characteristic of cultural identity is the use of symbols. What symbols do we see of Catholicism in our schools? When parents stop by to visit, does the Catholic school look different to them than the local public school or a Baptist school would?

Children, especially those of elementary age, are very concrete thinkers and learners. The visible symbols around them, such as icons, statues, crucifixes, and pictures of faith in action, help tell them about where they are and what they are learning. What unique ideas, values, and beliefs do we promote in our Catholic schools, and how are they made visible in concrete ways?

The identity-building power of rituals and traditions make them important characteristics of most academic institutions that have longevity. Current students want to remain because of the shared rituals that have built community and become an important part of their lives, and former students continue to support the school — and encourage their children to attend it — because of their fond memories of these traditions.

In our Catholic tradition, we need not look far for ideas that can build the sense of collective identity in our Catholic schools. The liturgical calendar provides occasions for many types of celebrations and traditions, not to mention the day-to-day experiences of Catholic prayer and the sacraments.

Shared cultural norms, even ones that pose challenges to the individual, also build the sense of cultural identity. Catholic schools should not be afraid to promote an authentically Catholic, often countercultural,



COURTESY

Students from Angelo Catholic School participate as Mass greeters at Holy Angels Parish in San Angelo.

morality that includes respect for life at all ages and stages, promotion of chastity as a response to our understanding of the dignity of the body and sacredness of marriage, the necessity of social action, including solidarity with the poor, and countless other ways in which we as Catholics are called to be witnesses in society today.

Similarly, we live in a culture in which academic standards have been challenged by the notions of one's "personal best," leading to a situation in which we have many public school graduates with high self-esteem, but very little knowledge or academic skill.

While needs and talents can vary greatly, we must also remember that children cannot rise to standards we do not set, and we must not be afraid to call them to rise to high standards of behavior and academic achievement, all the while assisting them in meeting the challenge.

---

Joseph D. White is a licensed psychologist.

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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

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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

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## Why is Mary's perpetual virginity so important to Catholics?

**Q: Why is Mary's perpetual virginity so important to us Catholics? I've had discussions with my Protestant friends about this, and while they believe Mary was a virgin when Jesus was born, they don't understand why we're so "hung up on" the idea that Mary remained a virgin for the rest of her life. (Florida)**

**A:** I think the first and most foundational reason why our belief in Mary's perpetual virginity is so important to us is because we believe this is simply the truth.

We see hints of Mary's commitment to a life of virginity within the text of the Gospel itself. For instance, in the first chapter of St. Luke's Gospel, when the angel Gabriel announces to Mary that she will be the mother of the Savior, Mary responds by asking: "How can this be, since I have no relations with a man" (Lk 1:34)?

Since Mary was already betrothed to Joseph, she would have had no reason to ask this question if she had intended on having normal marital relations at some point. That is, the thought that she would one day bear a son would not have surprised her if she was expecting her married life to unfold in the usual way — but this news would be quite shocking if she had committed herself to a special lifelong dedication to God in virginity.

Similarly, toward the end of St. John's Gospel, as Jesus is dying on the cross, he entrusts his now presumably widowed mother to the care of the beloved disciple, St. John (Jn 19:26-27).

Had Mary borne other children besides Jesus, as would have been expected in a normal marriage, there would have been no practical need for Jesus to do this. And although in some places the Gospels references the "brothers" of Jesus, early commenters such as St. Jerome have pointed out that a better translation of this word might be something like "kinsmen," since it could refer either to siblings born of the same parents or to cousins.

But beyond the Gospel accounts, Mary's perpetual virginity is something that has been continuously affirmed through our sacred tradition. And knowledge of the faith via tradition is something that sacred Scripture itself endorses (2 Thes 2:15).

One reflection of this tradition is a writing from the second century A.D. known as the "The Protoevangelium of James," which recounts stories of Mary's early life and



Jenna Marie Cooper  
OSV News

Question Corner

her special consecration to God as a young child. This work can be a bit fanciful in some places, which is part of why it didn't "make the cut" in terms of becoming part of the New Testament and included in the canon of Scripture. Still, given its ancient source material and lasting effects on popular Christian piety in the Church's early centuries, we can nevertheless appreciate this writing as a reflection of venerable oral traditions.

In terms of why Catholics are so, as your friends put it, "hung up" on the truth of Mary's virginity, I don't think there is any one quick and clearly defined answer to that question. But my own thought is that we treasure the doctrine of Mary's perpetual virginity because of the wider theology this relates to and points toward.

As the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* tells us: "Mary is a virgin because her virginity is the sign of her faith 'unadulterated by any doubt,' and of her undivided gift of herself to God's will" (CCC 506). And: "At once virgin and mother, Mary is the symbol and the most perfect realization of the Church: 'the Church indeed ... herself is a virgin, who keeps in its entirety and purity the faith she pledged to her spouse'" (CCC 507).

That is, the fruitful virginity of Our Lady — and Christian consecrated virginity in general — points to the radical primacy of God. Virginity is also a living anticipation of the life of the world to come, where God will be our total and perfect fulfillment.

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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.

# When your brother refuses a favor, try asking God

Among the thousands of canonized saints there are a special few who share a close family connection. The most famous of these are the brother-sister saints St. Benedict and St. Scholastica. They were immortalized by St. Gregory the Great in his "Dialogues," which he wrote some 40 years after Benedict's death in 547.

Some biographers state that they were fraternal twins born in 480 into a wealthy family in Norcia, Italy. They were brought up together until they were 14 when Benedict left for Rome to pursue his studies.

Scholastica dedicated herself to God at a very early age. Not much is known of her early life. A young Roman woman of Scholastica's class would likely have remained in her father's house until marriage or entering consecrated life.

Benedict spent years on a spiritual journey that ended at Monte Cassino where he established his monastery. It was Scholastica's lifelong conviction that sanctity is a matter of willpower and with her brother's help she founded a convent some five miles from Monte Casino in Plombariola. According to Rosemary Guiley, writing in the *Encyclopedia of Saints*, Benedict directed his sister and her nuns. This was the first convent of Benedictine nuns.



Mary Lou Gibson

Speaking of Saints

Scholastica visited her brother only once a year because that was Benedict's rule. Sarah Gallick writes in *The Big Book of Women Saints* they would meet at a small cabin outside Monte Cassino. Benedict and several of his brothers would meet her there and spend the day in prayer and spiritual conversation. After many years of such meetings, Scholastica had a premonition that the current one was going to be her last.

Paul Burns writes in *Butler's Lives of the Saints* that Scholastica begged her brother to stay the night so that they might continue their conversation. He replied that his Rule made this absolutely impossible and that he had to return to the monastery.

Scholastica bowed her head in prayers, whereupon

such a violent thunderstorm broke out that Benedict could not leave the house. He accused her of provoking this and she replied, "I asked a favor of you, and you refused it. I asked it of God, and he has granted it."

They spent the night talking about the joys of heaven. It was the last time they met. Three days later when Benedict was sitting in his cell, he saw her soul rising to heaven in the form of a dove. He sent some monks to collect her body, which was placed in a tomb he had had prepared. When Benedict died four years later, he was buried with her.

The tomb still survives at Monte Cassino despite the destruction of the monastery by Allied bombardment in 1944.

Scholastica is the patron saint of Benedictine nuns. She is invoked against storms and lightning. Her feast day is Feb. 10. Benedict is the father of Western monasticism and the patron saint of Europe.

There is a private Benedictine college in Duluth, Minnesota, called the College of St. Scholastica. It was founded in 1912 by a group of Benedictine sisters.

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

## We feel loved the most ...

Growing up in New Brunswick, New Jersey, almost everyone I knew worked a blue-collar job in some manufacturing business. Whether it was Westinghouse, Revlon, Wilson, or any other company, there were products that failed to meet the quality control standards for a variety of reasons and earned the unenviable classification as "seconds." These slightly damaged, mismarked, or incorrectly stamped articles would be made available to the workers of the companies for free or at a greatly reduced price. Church bingo halls were filled with ladies carrying large bags of goods that would be traded for other goods and bingo halls turned into bartering malls, while the church parking lots had many car trunks lifted up in temporary "open air markets." When most women sat down to play bingo, the first question they would ask someone they had just met was, "Where does your husband work?"

When I was five, Dad worked at a plastics company, and Mom worked for Carter's products where Arid Deodorant, Rise Shaving Cream, and, of course, Carter's Little Liver Pills were made. She also got her sister Violet a job there as well. Aunt Vi had three children: Mary, Paula (who lived with us for a while and was the closest thing I had to a sibling), and "Buddy."

One Saturday, Aunt Violet came over with Buddy, two years my senior, and she and Mom went shopping. Dad was the "babysitter." Our apartment was very small. You entered into a small narrow kitchen and passed through it into an even smaller living room. Some people had wall-to-wall carpeting ... in our living room, we had "wall-to-wall sofa," and it was a small sofa at that. Similarly, if you turned to the right when you came in, you would take five steps and be in our one bedroom, which was pretty much wall-to-wall bed, except for a crib. Through the bedroom was the "spare room" that held our clothing and few extra belongings. There was a broken "chandelier" hanging in that room that was nothing more than an ugly rusted piece of metal hanging from the ceiling. It was so old that George Washington might have seen it when he camped in New Brunswick on his way to crossing the Delaware.

When Mom and Aunt Violet left, Dad went to watch one of the three TV stations our tiny Fada television received with the help of a "rabbit ears" antenna, and Buddy and I went to play with little cars and trucks in the bedroom. After a while, my cousin asked what was in the spare room. I told him I was not supposed to go in there, but he could not resist opening the door to a new world of possibilities. Soon, he found boxes of Rise in the corner, took one of the cans and brought it to me. He asked if I knew how much shaving cream was in the can and I lined up my two index fingers, one at the top of the can, the other at its bottom and said, "This much." He replied, "No, there is a whole lot more!" I told him there couldn't be! He said, "Watch," and proceeded to empty the can's entire contents on the floor. It was mesmerizing, I tell 'ya, like some kind of magic trick. He went over to the corner and removed another can from the three boxes of 12, handed it to me and said, "You try it!" I must have felt like Adam a little bit at that moment because while a greater authority had forbidden me to do something like that, a person with absolutely no authority was giving me permission to do something I wanted to do. The shaving cream can might have just as well been the proverbial apple. I carefully held it and found that I, too, could make magic. An hour or two later, when Buddy and I were emptying cans #35 and #36 respectively, we heard Mom and Aunt Violet coming through the front door. Up until that very moment, it had not occurred to me that we might be doing something wrong. The room looked like it was covered in three feet of snow. Buddy had found a little stool and managed to empty a couple of cans on the chandelier which had been transformed into a priceless thing of beauty. You could no longer see out the window which was covered with "snow," and the stalactites and stalagmites that covered the room were as impressive as those in Carlsbad Caverns! My cousin and I were each wearing a can, or three, ourselves.



James R. Sulliman, PhD

At the sound of my Mom's voice — "It's awful quiet in here, I wonder what the kids are doing" — I immediately tried to reverse my "sin" by grabbing a hand full of the white stuff and forcing it back through the little nozzle. Being a bright little boy, I quickly abandoned the futility of plan #1. The only other option was to do what Adam did and hide but I did not have the luxury of trees and bushes, so there was only one other option. I stood there and tried to disappear. I shook as hard as I could. While I had never heard of "dematerialization," I apparently understood the basic concept, nonetheless. It didn't work.

I heard Mom walk to the living room and gave her report to my aunt. "Al is sound asleep on the couch ... where are the kids?!! Her footsteps quickened and soon she was standing in the doorway of the newly created "Snowville." I watched as her face morphed from the mother I loved into a contorted image from a horror movie, her temples bulging four inches from her head, her teeth almost biting through her bottom lip. In a voice that seemed straight out of the netherworld, she said, "DOOOONNNN'T MOOOOVVVVVE!" We didn't! She raced back to the living room and yelled at my father to "WAKE UP!!! YOU'RE THE BABYSITTER????!!!" Dad said, "What's wrong?" "I'LL SHOW YOU WHAT'S WRONG!!! COME HERE!!!" she said as she headed back our way and instantly appeared at our door where neither of us had moved an inch or taken a breath. In that same horrific voice, she told my Dad, "LOOOK WHAAATTTT THEYYY HAVVVE DONE!!!" At that point, she moved away from the doorway and my dad stood in her place. As he glanced around the room and looked at the two miniature snowmen, he doubled over in laughter, holding his stomach. If Mom was angry before, this sent her straight to the hilltop of fury. "AREN'T YOU GOING TO SAY SOMETHING?????!!!" Dad, still bent over and shaking with laughter raised one finger on his left hand in an effort to tell Mom, "Just a minute." When he finally stood up straight, tears streaming from his eyes, he asked, "Did you boys have fun?" Both of us were too scared to respond to that query in fear that it was some kind of a trick question. Dad prompted us toward the truth and said, "It looks like you had LOTS of fun! Did you?" while nodding his head in the affirmative. We finally had the courage to say, "Yes," and he said, "That's all that counts." Mom's immediate response was "THAT'S ALL THAT COUNTS????!! WHO'S GOING TO CLEAN UP THIS MESS????!!!" Dad said, "They will. They made it and they will clean it up, and I will help them because I was the babysitter!"

It was far more difficult to clean up the mess than could have been imagined. The three of us carried handfuls of shaving cream and completely filled the wash tubs, only to find that when you turned the water on, it only made one little hole in the mass of foam and required constant moving of the suds. Aunt Violet and Buddy left shortly thereafter. I was with Dad for a little while longer before it was bedtime, and my father may not have gone to sleep that night. It would not surprise me if I learned that when the window in that room is opened and a breeze blows in from the right direction, its current inhabitants get an unexpected and unexplainable whiff of shaving cream every now and then.

In retrospect, that event taught me a few things. First, two people are able to look at the same exact thing and "see" it from entirely different perspectives depending on their inter-

pretation of the event. Second, although I do not have research to support this theory, I suspect that when children are brought to emergency rooms, it is much more likely that their father was the babysitter and not their mom. But third, and this is the important one, you feel loved the most ... when you deserve love the least.

We see that clearly in the passage from Luke 15:11-24: "Then he said, 'A man had two sons, and the younger son said to his father, 'Father, give me the share of your estate that should come to me.'" So the father divided the property between them.

After a few days, the younger son collected all his belongings and set off to a distant country where he squandered his inheritance on a life of dissipation. When he had freely spent everything, a severe famine struck that country, and he found himself in dire need. So he hired himself out to one of the local citizens who sent him to his farm to tend the swine. And he longed to eat his fill of the pods on which the swine fed, but nobody gave him any. Coming to his senses he thought, "How many of my father's hired workers have more than enough food to eat, but here am I, dying from hunger. I shall get up and go to my father and I shall say to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I no longer deserve to be called your son; treat me as you would treat one of your hired workers.'" So he got up and went back to his father. While he was still a long way off, his father caught sight of him, and was filled with compassion. He ran to his son, embraced him and kissed him. His son said to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you; I no longer deserve to be called your son." But his father ordered his servants, "Quickly bring the finest robe and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. Take the fattened calf and slaughter it. Then let us celebrate with a feast, because this son of mine was dead, and has come to life again; he was lost, and has been found." Then the celebration began."

Similarly, Jesus made this point with one of his apostles. "Simon, I have something to say to you." "Tell me, teacher," he said. "Two people were in debt to a certain creditor; one owed five hundred days' wages and the other owed fifty. Since they were unable to repay the debt, he forgave it for both. Which of them will love him more?" Simon said in reply, "The one, I suppose, whose larger debt was forgiven." He said to him, "You have judged rightly" (Lk 7:40-43).

The greatest example of "undeserved love" is Jesus himself. "For Christ, while we were still helpless, yet died at the appointed time for the ungodly. Indeed, only with difficulty does one die for a just person, though perhaps for a good person one might even find courage to die. But God proves his love for us in that while we were still sinners Christ died for us" (Rom 5:6-8). If we truly understand that, our love for God knows no bounds!

But just as we feel loved most when it is "undeserved," we have an extremely important responsibility as Christians to give that same gift to others, when we are most hurt, disappointed, or saddened by someone who has "sinned" against us. It may not always be an easy thing to do, and we can be tempted to reflect "justifiable anger" rather than love to the penitent sinner. Even a priest who represents Jesus' love for us so beautifully in the confessional, might not find it as easy to forgive the guy who cuts him off in traffic, or a repairman who charges an exorbitant amount to fix a church's air conditioning system that stops running two days later. After all, even the pope makes confessions.

But whether it is in or out of the confessional, whether by the ordained or the laity, or whether for something recently done or in the distant past, the feeling of being forgiven and loved when we least deserve it is a gift we are likely to never forget. I never will. The many gifts from BOTH of my fathers.

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Dr. James Sulliman has 50 years' experience in individual, marriage, and family therapy.

## Catholic Voices

## Does parenthood mean giving your kids the world?

I just celebrated my 59th birthday, and growing older makes me ponder my life. As I start to reflect on my years on Earth one thing that often stands out is the fact that I'm a mom. I mean, sometimes I still feel like I'm a teenager. My body tries to tell me differently every morning, but my brain refuses to accept reality. Have I really lived long enough to have five children and two grandchildren? It doesn't seem real.

And yet, I can also remember all those precious moments when the doctor said, "It's a boy" or, "It's a girl." That was then followed by the joy, and the laughter, and sleepless nights, and the non-stop crying (whether it was the kid or me, I'm not telling). What an incredible gift the years have been since I became a mom. There are so many dreams that you carry around for your children when they are young. You work so hard to raise them right, teach them values, pray they find faith, and hope that they become good people. You want, more than anything, to give them the world.

You watch as they move from helpless to self-sufficient. It seems like that phase can take forever, until you realize it was truly just a blink. They are swaddled in a blanket for one minute and in a white gown and veil the next. They are wearing mismatched socks and a tiny Spurs jersey trying to read Dr. Seuss and suddenly they stand before you in a cap and gown. The time in between is a blur, yet distinct moments can come into focus with a word, a smell, or a song. In a flash, you can feel their small arms around your neck cuddled in for a nap on your shoulder. You can actually feel their little hand grasping yours as you walk around the park toward the swing. And that little voice lifted in prayer comes floating into your ear and down deep into your heart, echoing with innocence and a reminder of the times when faith in someone bigger came easy.

Today, I'm leaning into that faith in Someone who knows what I'm feeling. Someone who gave me the gift of these children and trusted me to do right by them. Because this has been a time of transition in my life. So many changes, but one thing remains the same. I love my kids and I'm so incredibly proud of them. Two are already married.



Barbara Moore

One will be walking down the aisle in her beautiful white gown in June. One is in seminary discerning his vocation, and one just started college in Ohio. The diapers and car-seats are long gone, the homeschooling is done, and the Saturdays spent at games and play auditions are over. I'm also learning that I have forgotten how to cook for fewer than seven people and my husband can only eat so many leftovers, but that's another story for some other time.

I can feel my role shifting. The new path I'm on looks familiar, yet strangely, I'm not always comfortable with my footing. Those skills I learned and spent the last 29 years mastering; they sometimes don't work as well in this new environment where my children are adults. And yet, here's the thing: My prayers and hopes for them haven't changed. I hope I've raised them right. I hope their values are true. I pray they know how much they are loved by their God and that they love him in return. And I honestly believe they have become good people. I'm proud of that.

I'm guessing that my desire to give them the world is no different than most parents. I think we all want our children to find their passion and make a difference. We want them to be happy and safe. We want them to live fulfilled lives that bring them joy and allow them to share their blessings with others. But I hear people saying how tough our world is right now, how divisive and angry. I hear how hard it must be to bring children into this world at this time.

I understand the thoughts, even if I think that it is precisely because this world is so confused that we need to bring forth new life and raise them to make a difference.

Not long ago, as I listened to two moms on a podcast discuss motherhood and how hard things have become, I heard some wisdom that made me pause. It truly was a shift in my perspective and seems to be another way of addressing some of the common opinions prevalent today.

One mom said that as she looked at all that was happening in the world right now with so much anxiety, depression, isolation, and division all around us, she turned to her husband and said, "What kind of world are we giving our children and grandchildren?"

And his response? "We aren't called to give them the world. We are called to give them heaven."

Parents, hear this. There are only so many things we can control and that number is small. We can do our best to make a difference in this world, but we won't solve it all. I'll bet every parent has probably looked outside their window and thought, "I want it to be easier for my kids than it has been for me, but sometimes it feels like they will have to face things we never imagined. This world is so messed up." And they would be right. This side of heaven is messy. This world will never be a utopia, because we, as humans, are far from perfect.

But God didn't give us our babies so that we would all live here forever. We are blessed with these tiny humans and called to raise them to know God and get to heaven, because this world is passing and we are just passing through. Our time here is limited, but our time with him is without end.

So, rest easy and focus on what's important. Don't let the struggles and craziness that are outside your door stop you from remembering that your job as a parent is to raise your kids to know, love, and serve the Lord. And if they learn that, they will have good values, strong faith, and be good people. It's okay that you can't give them the world, but if you point them toward heaven, maybe, just maybe, they will help make this world a better place as they pass through.

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Barbara Moore is Parish Communication and Engagement Manager at Holy Family Catholic Church in Abilene.

## 10 things every Christian woman should know about her husband

By Robin Miller  
The Family Warrior

Being a Christian wife is not simply about sharing a life, it is about stewarding a vocation. In the sacrament of marriage, God entrusts a woman with the heart of a man who is being shaped for holiness through responsibility, sacrifice, and grace. To love a husband well, a woman must understand not only what he does, but who he is becoming. Here are ten truths every Christian woman should know about her husband, rooted in sacred Scripture.

**1. He bears a God-given responsibility.** Your husband carries a spiritual weight that is often invisible. He is called to provide, protect, and lead. Not as a ruler, but as a servant. Even when he does not speak of it, he feels accountable before God for his family.

"As the church is subordinate to Christ, so wives should be subordinate to their husbands in everything" (Eph 5:24).

**2. He needs respect as much as love.** Love nurtures his heart, but respect fortifies his identity. When you honor his efforts and affirm his leadership, you strengthen his resolve to live faithfully. Respect does not mean silence, it means speaking with dignity and trust.

"In any case, each one of you should love his wife as himself, and the wife should respect her husband" (Eph 5:33).

**3. His faith is often tested in silence.** A man's spiritual battles are frequently fought alone. Doubt, fear, and temptation shape his interior life more than he admits. Your prayers become a shield when words fall short.

"Be sober and vigilant. Your opponent the devil is prowling around like a roaring lion looking for [someone] to devour" (1 Pt 5:8).

**4. He longs to know he is enough.** Many husbands



Robin Miller

The Family Warrior

struggle with inadequacy, wondering if they measure up as providers, leaders, or fathers. Your affirmation reminds him that his worth is not earned but received from God.

"But the Lord said to Samuel: Do not judge from his appearance or from his lofty stature, because I have rejected him. God does not see as a mortal, who sees the appearance. The Lord looks into the heart" (1 Sm 16:7).

**5. He is learning while leading.** Christian leadership is formed through obedience, not perfection. Your husband will make mistakes, but grace allows growth. When correction is wrapped in love, it strengthens rather than wounds.

"Though the just fall seven times, they rise again, but the wicked stumble from only one mishap" (Prv 24:16).

**6. He expresses love through sacrifice.** Your husband may show love less through words and more through action, work, responsibility, and vigilance. These sacrifices are often his language of devotion.

"No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends" (Jn 15:13).

**7. He needs peace at home.** The world demands strength from him; home should offer rest. A peaceful spirit renews his courage and steadies his heart. Peace is not avoidance of truth, but the presence of charity.

"Better a dry crust with quiet than a house full of feast-

ing with strife" (Prv 17:1).

**8. He is called to protect, even at cost.** Protection is woven into his vocation. He may give up comfort, recognition, or personal ambition to guard his family's well-being. These sacrifices echo Christ's own self-gift.

"Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ loved the church and handed himself over for her" (Eph 5:25).

**9. He thrives when you believe in him.** Belief from his wife strengthens him more than applause from the world. When you trust his intentions and stand beside him in uncertainty, you become a source of holy courage.

"Therefore, encourage one another and build one another up, as indeed you do" (1 Thes 5:11).

**10. Loving him is an act of faith.** Marriage is not separate from your faith; it is one of its deepest expressions. Every act of patience, forgiveness, and fidelity becomes a prayer lived out in daily life.

"These things happened to them as an example, and they have been written down as a warning to us, upon whom the end of the ages has come" (1 Cor 10:31).

A Christian husband does not need a flawless wife; he needs a faithful one. A woman who prays for his soul, honors his calling, and walks with him in humility becomes a powerful partner in God's design. Marriage, lived sacramentally, is not about perfection ... it is about perseverance.

When a woman sees her husband not only as a man, but as a mission entrusted to her by God, love deepens into reverence. And when that love is rooted in Christ, the marriage itself becomes a living testimony ... quiet, strong, and sanctifying.

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Robin Miller is the founder and executive director of The Family Warrior, a men's ministry based in San Angelo. See [www.thefamilywarrior.org](http://www.thefamilywarrior.org).

## Una luz constante: los cinco momentos más destacados del Papa León XIV en 2025

Por Elizabeth Scalia  
OSV News

"El Líbano necesitaba este abrazo".

Las palabras se difundieron a través de una plataforma de redes sociales, y resultaron aún más conmovedoras por la imagen que las acompañaba, en la que se veía al Papa León XIV consolando a una mujer libanesa que lloraba.

No pude evitar pensar: "Quizás todo el mundo lo necesitaba, y necesita a este Papa, en este momento".

El papado de León, de nueve meses de gestación, se ha revelado lentamente, lleno de esperanza, pero también oculto, como si el primer Papa de Estados Unidos quisiera mostrarse con medidas pequeñas y sin apuro.

El cargo al que había sido empujado podría hacer rápidamente notar sus exigencias, pero este nuevo pontífice parecía estar considerando con cuidado todo lo que se le

presentaba. Los expertos, que apenas habían contado al cardenal Robert Prevost entre los "papables" al entrar en el cónclave, se han apresurado a definir al hombre, comparándolo rápidamente con su predecesor o tratando de etiquetar al nuevo pontífice según sus preferencias.

Apenas lo habíamos conocido cuando apareció un titular vertiginoso: "Con León, no hay vuelta atrás desde Francisco", mientras que otro editorial declaraba que Prevost no sería "Francisco 2.0 ni siquiera 1.5". Las publicaciones más reflexivas observaron y esperaron a ver qué mostrarían los primeros pasos de este pontificado recién nacido: ¿sería cauteloso o saldría a toda velocidad?

Nuestro nuevo Pedro llegó con un nombre papal de grandeza histórica y compromiso lúcido con los tiempos y las tendencias cambiantes, lo que pareció complacer a todos.

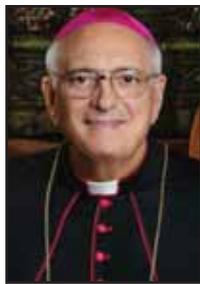
Mientras las sociedades se ven sacudidas por los efectos aún en evolución y apenas estudiados de la adicción a

la tecnología en nuestras mentes y almas, el aumento de la vigilancia gubernamental sobre nuestra confianza, el misterioso uso del bitcoin en las economías y la adopción irreflexiva de la inteligencia artificial en todo, parecía haber un consenso de esperanza en que este nuevo León pudiera estar asintiendo hacia León XIII, cuya encíclica *Rerum Novarum* ayudó a definir las preocupaciones morales y los derechos de los trabajadores durante la Revolución Industrial.

Cuando el nuevo pontífice lo admitió, crecieron las expectativas de que abordaría rápidamente todo ello, especialmente aportando la sensibilidad católica a los poderes y problemas inherentes a la inteligencia artificial, o IA. Mientras tanto, el agustino que apareció en el balcón de San Pedro el pasado 8 de mayo se guardó para sí sus pensamientos iniciales. En sus primeras incursiones en el

## Voces Católicas

# Momentos cruciales en la historia de la inmigración: De la restricción a la reforma y viceversa



**Obispo  
Nicholas DiMarzio**  
*OSV News*

Caminando con Migrantes

Estados Unidos.

Si avanzamos un poco en nuestra historia, llegamos a 1965. Fue una época en la que nuestro país estaba listo para corregir las injusticias del pasado y brindar a todos los países del mundo la oportunidad de que sus migrantes vinieran a Estados Unidos. La ley favorecía a los familiares de ciudadanos estadounidenses y a aquellos con habilidades necesarias. La ley permitió la llegada de inmigrantes de muchos países nuevos a Estados Unidos, especialmente de Sudamérica, Asia y África.

Esta fue la época de la lucha por los derechos civiles, y el presidente Lyndon Johnson, quien firmó la ley, consideró su acción como una contribución a los derechos civiles internacionales. Sin embargo, aunque la ley teóricamente igualaba las condiciones, aún presentaba problemas y creó nuevas dificultades que no se habían previsto. Debido a un estricto límite para los trabajadores agrícolas, vimos el comienzo de una nueva ola de personas indocumentadas que llegaron, especialmente para trabajar en la agricultura y otros puestos de trabajo de baja cualificación.

Fue recién en 1986 cuando el Congreso, bajo la presidencia de Ronald Reagan, aprobó la Ley de Reforma y Control de la Inmigración (IRCA, por sus siglas en inglés) de 1986, que regularizó la situación de más de 3 millones de personas, pero excluyó a una cantidad similar que per-

maneció indocumentada. Esta situación ha persistido hasta la actualidad y, sin duda, es el origen de nuestra actual visión negativa de la migración.

Desde entonces, no se han producido cambios positivos significativos en la legislación migratoria, solo más restricciones. Nuestro país no ha abordado sus necesidades laborales ni los problemas de reunificación familiar que se han generado.

Al inicio de esta nueva administración en 2025, se han producido enormes cambios en nuestro sistema de inmigración. En particular, se ha intensificado la deportación de quienes se encuentran en el país sin documentación o han permanecido más tiempo del permitido por sus visas. No se presenta ninguna evidencia científica sobre la demanda laboral ni sobre las dificultades en la integración de los nuevos migrantes. Lamentablemente, hemos regresado a las mismas actitudes nativistas o racistas que motivaron la primera ley de restricción migratoria importante en 1924.

Es importante nombrar un problema si se desea resolverlo. Y el problema al que nos enfrentamos es una teoría de la conspiración sobre el reemplazo poblacional: la idea de que la nueva inmigración es un plan para reemplazar a la raza blanca en Estados Unidos.

Anteriormente, esta perspectiva carecía de lógica, pero por diversas razones, se ha convertido en la principal justificación de las nuevas políticas restrictivas.

Quizás sea hora de reevaluar los fundamentos de las nuevas restricciones de este movimiento, que tendrán efectos perjudiciales a largo plazo no solo en nuestro crecimiento demográfico y bienestar económico, sino también en la posición moral que Estados Unidos tiene como faro de esperanza para el mundo.

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pado incipiente, pero la lenta revelación de León terminó en el Líbano, donde vimos una vela de luz constante, ardiendo con un corazón lleno y compasivo por los que sufren, una fe vigorosa y profundamente edificante y un sentido humilde pero firme de la ocasión.

2) La visita a Turquía y, especialmente, al Líbano

Al considerar los cinco momentos más destacados de este papado hasta ahora, la visita del Papa León a Turquía y Líbano es una de las más notables. Las fotos de la peregrinación de León a Iznik fueron impresionantes: de pie sobre las ruinas sumergidas de la antigua basílica de San Neófito, el obispo de Roma se unió en oración con el patriarca ecuménico de Constantinopla y representantes de las iglesias orientales, tanto católicas como ortodoxas, y ayudó a la única iglesia apostólica a respirar con ambos pulmones.

En Estambul realizó una respetuosa visita a la famosa Mezquita Azul, dejando sus zapatos fuera, pero, a diferencia de sus tres predecesores, declinó educadamente rezar con una reticencia innatamente estadounidense: "(No), está bien".

Después de eso, León se centró en el Líbano, donde los aproximadamente 1,3 millones de católicos de esa nación asediada se mostraron visiblemente encantados de conocer a su nuevo Papa. El Santo Padre parecía igualmente entusiasmado, convirtiéndose en el primer pontífice en visitar y rezar ante el santuario de San Charbel Makhlouf, el gran monje maronita profundamente venerado por los católicos e incluso por algunos musulmanes libaneses. De hecho, el Papa León reconoció más tarde "la verdad imperecedera de que cristianos, musulmanes, drusos y muchos otros pueden vivir juntos y construir un país unido por el respeto y el diálogo".

Desde allí, el Papa León se reunió con un entusiasta grupo de jóvenes, a los que dirigió un emotivo discurso en el que expuso los retos de equilibrar la tecnología y las relaciones interpersonales; también consoló a las familias de las víctimas de la devastadora explosión de 2020 que causó cientos de muertos — el "abrazo que el Líbano necesitaba" — y concluyó el viaje con una Misa a la que asistieron unos 150.000 católicos. Allí predicó con contundente belleza: "Líbano, levántate", dijo. "¡Sé morada de justicia y fraternidad! Sé profecía de paz para todo el Levante".

3) Encuentro y oración con un rey terrenal

Aunque sentó un precedente, el viaje apostólico del Papa León no fue el primer momento histórico de su pontificado. Un mes antes había recibido en San Pedro al rey Carlos III de Gran Bretaña, gobernador supremo de la Iglesia de Inglaterra, y, por primera vez desde la Reforma, un Papa y un monarca británico rezaron juntos, ¡y nada menos que en la Capilla Sixtina!

Todavía hay muchas cuestiones que nos separan, pero León está demostrando que los cristianos que rezan juntos, en todas partes del mundo, deben ser siempre el comienzo del diálogo por la paz.

4) *Dilexi te*: continuidad y unidad

Fue una hermosa señal de continuidad Papal

cuando el Papa Francisco retomó la encíclica inacabada de Benedicto XVI y la completó, publicando *Lumen Fidei* y escribiendo: "Asumo su precioso trabajo, añadiendo al texto algunas aportaciones". Del mismo modo, *Dilexi te*, la exhortación apostólica que el Papa Francisco estaba preparando antes de su muerte, fue terminada por León XIV, quien escribió: "Habiendo recibido como herencia este proyecto, me alegra hacerlo mío — añadiendo algunas reflexiones — y proponerlo al comienzo de mi pontificado, compartiendo el deseo de mi amado predecesor de que todos los cristianos puedan percibir la fuerte conexión que existe entre el amor de Cristo y su llamada a acercarnos a los pobres".

Aunque las nociones de continuidad Papal se basan con demasiada frecuencia en aspectos externos superficiales ("¿Renunciará a la mozzetta? ¿Llevará el camauro (gorro papal tradicional?)"), en esta cooperación de papas que trabajan como hermanos hacia un mismo fin, vemos la presencia continua del Espíritu Santo, que sostiene a la Iglesia institucional, tanto en sus mejores momentos como en los peores. Qué cosa tan alentadora.

5) Palabras claras en la rueda de prensa a bordo del avión

Los tres predecesores más recientes de León aceptaron dar ruedas de prensa en el avión, que son informales y a veces pueden dar lugar a respuestas que requieren un seguimiento o una aclaración posterior. A su regreso a Roma, el Santo Padre — sin duda aún procesando todo lo que había vivido en el Levante — abordó una serie de temas con claridad, discernimiento y discreción, sin necesidad de seguimiento, e incluso compartió algo de su vida de oración personal.

Quizás en consonancia con su creencia declarada de que no está destinado a ser 'el solucionador de los problemas del mundo', se negó a entrar en detalles sobre delicadas cuestiones sociopolíticas. Cuando se le preguntó por una carta de Hezbolá, León eludió delicadamente los detalles y se limitó a decir: "Evidentemente existe, por parte de la Iglesia, la propuesta de que dejen las armas y que busquemos el diálogo. Pero prefiero no comentar más sobre esto en este contexto".

Al responder a una pregunta sobre su estado de ánimo cuando se hizo evidente la posibilidad de su elección en el cónclave, el pontífice se mostró natural e instructivo. "Me resigné al ver cómo iban las cosas... Respiré hondo y dije: 'Aquí vamos, Señor, tú estás al mando y tú guías nuestro camino'".

Una oración de rendición ante un cambio inimaginable en la vida y la posición: "Aquí vamos, Señor, tú estás al mando y tú guías nuestro camino". Con palabras y con el ejemplo, quizás el mejor y más sucinto ejemplo de oración íntima y vivida que un Papa puede ofrecer, sin ceremonias, como instrucción para todos nosotros.

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*Elizabeth Scalia es editora general de OSV. Sigue en X @theanchoress.*

## LEÓN

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papamóvil entre la multitud que asistía a sus audiencias, saludó a los bebés y realizó varias capturas espectaculares cuando le lanzaron todo tipo de muñecos del "Papa Leo".

"Parece tranquilo, centrado y cómodo consigo mismo", le escribí a un amigo. "Pero me gustaría que hiciera algo espectacular ya. Quiero decir, ¿por qué tanta reticencia? ¡Es de Chicago!".

"Pero atravesé por las misiones en Chiclayo, Perú", me recordaron. "Ten paciencia. Sinceramente, me gusta que León se tome su tiempo y deje mucho a la imaginación...".

A medida que avanzaba el pontificado del Santo Padre, me di cuenta de que lo que yo consideraba "reticencia" era en realidad un hábito de reflexión cuidadosa arraigado en Agustín. Después del dramático órgano del Papa Juan Pablo II, el tranquilo piano de Benedicto XVI y la banda de música más grande que la vida que era el Papa Francisco (un hombre sin filtros cuando hablaba de improviso, pero capaz de una verdadera elegancia en el papel), Prevost se presentó más como una guitarra acústica afinada por el maestro: relajante, acogedora, compleja y capaz de grandes sorpresas.

Aquí están mis cinco "momentos del Papa León" favoritos para 2025.

1) Su primera entrevista y los mensajes que contiene.

En su primera entrevista (con el medio *Crux*), León habló claramente de sus preocupaciones por los problemas socioeconómicos, la desigualdad de riqueza, los marginados, los problemas medioambientales, la inmigración, la guerra y la extralimitación gubernamental, pero también sorprendió a muchos al insistir en que no consideraba que su función principal sea intentar resolver los problemas del mundo.

Más bien, el nuevo pontífice pretende arraigar firmemente la voz de la Iglesia en su origen, como lo dijo, según una parte de la entrevista cuya traducción fue publicada por *Crux*: "Los valores que la Iglesia promoverá al abordar algunas de estas crisis mundiales no surgen de la nada, sino del Evangelio". Se remontan, añadió, "a cosas muy básicas como el respeto mutuo, el respeto a la dignidad humana...".

Y así, mes a mes, el Papa León comenzó a mostrarnos lo que quería decir, emitiendo una hermosa y conmovedora exhortación sobre el amor a los pobres; rezando con el líder de un histórico perseguidor de la Iglesia; dirigiéndose a los marginados, tanto fuera como dentro de la Iglesia, a través del lente del Evangelio y con la mirada puesta en tender puentes entre lo que se ha polarizado. Ha utilizado los encuentros digitales para mantenerse en contacto con los jóvenes católicos, con excelentes resultados.

Todo ello supuso un gran comienzo para este pa-

## Is it ethical to clone animals?

The global market for cloning cats, dogs, and other pets reached \$300 million in 2024, and has been projected to reach \$1.5 billion by 2035.

When it comes to the ethics of cloning animals, whether cattle, race-horses, dogs, or cats, it is important to inquire if a

“proportionately serious reason” exists for doing the procedure, since the process can cause physical and genetic defects of varying severity in cloned animals.

Cloned mice, for example, have aberrant patterns of gene expression in multiple genes, and cloned animals have elevated rates of unexplained gestational or postnatal deaths, as well as anomalies like enlarged hearts or abnormal lungs.

Because cloning involves the bringing together of two remnants of heavily damaged cells — an extracted nucleus from a body cell, plus an egg that has been deprived of its nucleus — it should come as no surprise that these two conjoined elements may have difficulty cooperating and communicating with each other to produce a presentable member of the species.

It is also conceivable that a cloned animal could give rise to a dangerous genetic variation, by making the individual animal, for example, more violent. Even in the absence of such outcomes, regularly described in science fiction, it is still noteworthy that genetic variability and the long-term viability of animal populations, particularly small populations of endangered species, could be affected by extensive animal cloning.

Decreasing diversity through cloning could make populations more susceptible to disease and environmental changes, impacting sensitive ecosystems and conservation efforts.

Even with the risks of cloning, we can envision situations where a “proportionately serious reason” would exist for attempting to clone animals. A German shepherd, for example, that is exceptionally skilled at sniffing out illegal drugs or other contraband, might be cloned to expand the availability of “super-olfactory canines” for police departments around the country.

If a famous Hollywood celebrity loses his or her beloved Fido to cancer, however, we can validly debate whether a strong attachment to the departed canine constitutes a sufficiently serious reason for embarking on a cloning project with a price tag of fifty or sixty thousand dollars. A generated dog clone will always be an imperfect copy of Fido and will often have a very different personality from the original animal.

When actress Barbra Streisand lost her beloved 14-year-old Samantha, she cloned two replicas. She commented that they had “different personalities. ... I’m waiting for them to get older so I can see if they have her brown eyes and her seriousness.” Later, a somewhat disappointed Streisand remarked, “You can clone the look of a dog, but you can’t clone the soul.”

Given that canines hold a primary position in the animal world as “man’s best friend,” it should not be difficult to find another furry friend, perhaps one waiting to be rescued from a local shelter, who can serve as a new member of the family and once again pull at their owner’s heartstrings.

While animal cloning can sometimes be a reasonable choice, and ethically justifiable, the Catholic Church teaches definitively that the cloning of human beings is morally unacceptable. This conclusion arises from the recognition that human persons, unlike non-human animals, are created in God’s image and likeness, which implies an essential obligation that human procreation and the transmission of human life happen exclusively within marriage through the marital act of spouses.

As we consider animal cloning and other novel biomedical developments of recent years, we face important ethical questions about how best to exercise our limited dominion over the earth, including the animal kingdom. Our dominion is not an absolute right of domination over God’s creation. Instead, we are called to use reasonably, and avoid abusing, the powers we have received.

Exercising proper stewardship over animals ought to be a balanced part of a broader concern of avoiding exploitation of the vulnerable, as we try to be respectful of the given order of creation.

Cloning technology can have useful applications in animal husbandry, helping to generate stock animals that are more resistant to disease or that have a higher productivity rate. Researchers can engineer and clone dairy cows, for example, to produce an improved quantity of milk or better-quality meat.

But if animal cloning becomes widespread, as seems likely, it may have the subtle effect of shifting our attitudes and perceptions towards the animal kingdom.

By routinely cloning animals, they may come to be seen as little more than “manipulable quantities” or “raw material” for our domination — less as animals, and more as artifacts or objects. We need to be attentive to the prospect of reducing animals, including cloned animals, to market-driven technological commodities, cobbled together under the impetus of unrestrained profit-seeking.

So while the cloning of non-human animals is generally permissible when proportionately serious reasons exist, we must also remain attentive to the broader social and environmental implications. The responsible use of the technology requires us to weigh carefully its scientific potential against the duty to avoid causing unnecessary suffering to animals or risks to their populations.



**Father Tad Pacholczyk**

Making Sense of Bioethics

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Rev. Tadeusz Pacholczyk, Ph.D. earned his doctorate in neuroscience from Yale and did post-doctoral work at Harvard. He is a priest of the diocese of Fall River, MA, and serves as Senior Ethicist at The National Catholic Bioethics Center in Philadelphia. See [www.ncbcenter.org](http://www.ncbcenter.org) and [www.fathertad.com](http://www.fathertad.com).

## Catholic Voices

## Pope Leo's extraordinary extraordinary consistory

In the discussions leading up to the conclave last May, members of the College of Cardinals shared that they wished for more collegiality between themselves and the pope.

So, from the earliest days of his pontificate, Pope Leo XIV indicated that he wanted gatherings of the cardinals to not be as “extraordinary” (or, out of the norm) as its name suggests, but rather ordinary events in the life of the Church.

As a result, the first consistory in many years took place in early January. But after so few of such gatherings in the last decade-plus, it seems that many observers had hoped for the gathering to bring extraordinary results (usually regarding pet concerns).

Alas, they were disappointed.

But should they be? By all appearances, January’s consistory was a first step to returning to a more collegial sense of governance that has largely marked the exercise of papal ministry since the Second Vatican Council. A fraternal body such as the College of Cardinals inherently needs such occasions to be together — to pray, think and discern — for the pope to be effective in animating ecclesial life and to model for the Church what it means to be a leaven in the world.

In some ways, the extraordinary character of this particular extraordinary consistory was the fact that the cardinals met as a body, aside from seeing new members created or electing a new pope, for the first time in a long time. It illustrates the kind of leadership we might expect now with Pope Leo at the helm of Peter’s barque — a leadership intent upon uniting the ship’s crew amid the kinds of threats found in the storms that make up so much of ecclesial life today.

As I read Pope Leo’s homily from Jan. 8, I thought of how the return of this ordinary gathering was indeed extraordinary — particularly for the kind of leadership that it models to humanity. Pope Leo’s description of the event offers a powerful witness for all of us blessed with the task of leadership, and which resonated as especially true as a leader in a family.

I couldn’t help but think that what Pope Leo is effecting within the college of his closest collaborators is also a model for marriage and family life.

In his homily, Pope Leo observed that the word “consistory” comes from the Latin verb *consistere*, which means “to stand still.” He had me hooked al-



**Michael R. Heinlein**  
*OSV News*

Papal Words

ready. Of course it is important in marriage to find such opportunities, especially if blessed with children and all the busyness they often bring. Truly, such an opportunity to “pause” is, in Pope Leo’s words, “a highly significant and prophetic gesture, particularly in the context of the frenetic society in which we live.”

He continued, “(Pausing) reminds us of the importance, in every aspect of life, of stopping to pray, listen, and reflect.” This is important because this permits us to “refocus our attention ever more clearly on our goal, directing every effort and resource towards it, lest we risk running blindly or ‘beating the air’ in vain, as the Apostle Paul warns” in 1 Corinthians 9:26.

And Pope Leo remarked that the consistory’s “pausing” — and by the time I got to these lines I was fully committed to thinking the same about my wife and me — “is first and foremost a profound act of love for God, for the Church and for the men and women of the whole world.”

What might a consistory with my spouse look like, I began to wonder.

Pope Leo’s words — recalled from the fifth century and originating from the first pope to bear his name, St. Leo the Great — seem like a great place to start for any “consistory” for the cardinals or at home: “It is a great and very precious thing in the sight of the Lord when the whole people of Christ apply themselves together to the same duties, and all ranks and orders ... cooperate with one and the same Spirit.”

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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.*

## How to get more comfortable with being less comfortable

Picture your favorite place to sit. A cozy recliner near the TV, a reading spot on your couch or your usual chair at the kitchen table. Remember how your body sinks into that space without a second thought. After a long day, there’s nothing better than settling in where we feel most at home.

Now picture the place where you usually sit at Mass. You might have a regular pew, a certain side of the church you love, or the same exact seat every Sunday. Why do you pick this spot?

Maybe that’s where your family or friends have always sat. Maybe you like the view or the acoustics: You can see and hear well here. Or maybe you’re simply a creature of habit!

There’s nothing wrong with having a favorite place. In a chaotic, ever-changing world, our nervous systems sigh with relief at routines. We need the expected. Even Jesus liked to recline at table with his friends.

But in this in-between stretch of Ordinary Time, between the high feast of Christmas and the solemn preparation of Lent, we find ourselves in a new place as we settle into the New Year. What will 2026 hold, the good and the bad? Who might we become by year’s end?

At home, at church, in our communities and in the wider world, we can find ourselves seeking what is comfortable. We like this kind of food, that style of worship, this grocery store, or that politician. We feel at home in our particular camp.

Yet Christ came both to comfort (with God’s mercy) and challenge (with God’s justice). His call to discipleship is always prophetic, asking each of us to leave behind the nets of our comfort zones and venture into the deep.

As a parent of children ranging from kindergarten to high school, I find myself thinking often about the home as a place of comfort — but also challenge. I want our family home to be a space of safety, solace, and love for our kids, but I also know it must be a source of difficult lessons: how to forgive, how to change, and how to do the right thing even when it’s hard.

In 1902, humor columnist Finley Dunne coined a famous phrase about the duty of journalism, writing



**Laura Kelly Fanucci**  
*OSV News*

Faith at Home

that the role of the newspaper is to “comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable.” Catholics sometimes say the same about the mission of the Church, too. We need only look to the Gospels to see how Jesus comforted the suffering and spoke out strongly against the wealthy and powerful who did not care for the poor and vulnerable.

Where we stand (or sit) determines our view — of our home, church, and society. If we stand with the least among us as Christ did, we will see things very differently than if we side with the powerful, the popular, or the strong.

What if we took one step out of our comfort zone in 2026?

It might be a small change, like sitting in a different pew, to meet new parishioners in our community and see our physical church home from a new perspective. It might be a big change, like deciding to volunteer as a family with a local food shelf, to get to know our neighbors in need and serve them with our time and energy. Or we might devote this short season of Ordinary Time to deeper prayer, asking God to lead us further in faith even when it gets uncomfortable.

When we know we have safe spaces where we can return — like our family home, our favorite chair, or our regular parish pew — we can strike out in good faith and courage to do whatever challenging work that God calls us to do.

I pray this for my children when they leave the house each day, that God might go with them and lead them home safely. I pray the same for each of us: that we will always remember there is nowhere we can go, even the farthest leap from our comfort zone, where God has not already gone before us.

## Catholic Voices

## 'Astronomy is not about the study of stars and planets ...'



**Father Joseph Barbieri**

Diocese of San Angelo

"Take, Lord, and receive all my liberty, my memory, my understanding, and my entire will, all that I have and call my own. You have given all to me. To you, Lord, I return it. Everything is yours; do with it what you will. Give me only your love and your grace, that is enough for me." Whatever this Jesuit astronomer and high school teacher comes to "understand" about the cosmos, he returns to God.

The elder among the group, Jesuit Father Christopher Corbally, specializes in multiple star systems and stellar spectral classification. In his research he receives insights into the unique "personality" of each star he studies and feels that he is in some way participating in the knowledge of God who knows the stars and calls each one by name (Ps 147:4).

The different speakers presented us with many varied and complex topics in the field of astronomy, including the rate of the expansion of the universe, the tracking of asteroids, the protection of dark skies, and the construction of a pycnometer to measure the volume of samples harvested from the asteroid Bennu. Brother Guy offered an engaging presentation on the "Galileo Affair." We also benefited from guided tours on the campus of the University of Arizona showcasing the construction of large telescope mirrors, planetary science, and imaging.

In the present article, I do not wish to focus on science, but the persons who engage in astronomy. I will attempt to relate the experience of a few of the workshop's participants whom I perceived as representatives of humanity's endeavor to understand the stars and planets, and indeed

their own place in the universe.

Given the very personal nature of what was shared by this "sample group" of participants, I'm not going to mention them by name; rather I will assign each of them a pseudonym, specifically, the name of a constellation.

I begin with Mr. Orion. He came to ACME from a faraway country. From the very first day he exuded an absolute joyous incredulity that he could be participating in such an event. "Can you believe that someone like me is here!? This is like a dream come true!" What could be the source of his joy have been? I would soon find out. During a brief pause between presen-

tations, Mr. Orion pulled a box of medication out of a bag. "Do you know what these are?" he asked me. No, I answered. He explained "this is medication for my metastatic cancer. The doctors tell me that I am now in remission." Anyone else in those circumstances could have been in the depths of depression. He was not. He shared with me his deep conviction that his cancer was undeniably the "gentle touch of God." He was joyous, and every day was a new day for Mr. Orion. The mythological hunter Orion boasted that he could kill every animal on earth and was

See BARBIERI, Page 18



COURTESY

From left to right: Jesuit Brothers Bob Mackey and Brother Guy Consolmagno, and Father Joe Barbieri at the recent Astronomy for Catholic Ministers and Educators workshop in Tucson.

## All sin is personal but all sin is social

By Kenneth Craycraft  
OSV News

You are likely reading this column either just ahead of Ash Wednesday or a few days into Lent. In my adult lifetime, I don't think there's ever been a time when we the people have been more in need of repenting our collective sins.

This is not to suggest that it's the most morally corrupt era in U.S. history. Surely nothing can compete with the onerous institution of chattel slavery that prevailed for some 250 years. But, with this exception, we may be living in the most morally corrupt era in U.S. history. And if we do not repent of our sins, our lives together will continue to be degraded into warring sects and factions.

It's a dangerous game to cherry pick verses from the Hebrew Bible about blessings (or curses) of nations and apply them to the United States. In the first instance, such a practice tends to feed the pernicious myth that the United States is a chosen nation, or a Christian nation, or otherwise privileged by God over other nations. Catholic Christians should reject such ideas, as they tend toward idolatry, if they are not idolatrous notions in themselves.

But while it is a mistake to invoke God's specific admonitions to Israel as applying anytime or anywhere else -- especially to invoke God's alleged favor -- we can still learn what happens when a people turns its back on God.

First, however, we must dismiss the idea that we suffer from some mythical "national" or "institutional" sins. As with ancient Israel from time to time, it is not a "nation" in need of repentance, but rather the moral agents -- the people -- who constitute that nation. Institutions don't sin. The people who administer them do.

Of course, when corruption, duplicity and violence are as widely spread and deeply entrenched as they are in the current era, it's tempting to blame our current malaise on institutional structures. But only people have moral agency, and thus only people can be corrupt, duplicitous and violent. But those corrupt, duplicitous and violent moral agents can and do use institutional structures as their means to foment these

human sins.

This is why, even though sin is the personal failure of moral agents, we can identify "social sin," in the words of St. John Paul II, in his 1984 Apostolic Exhortation, "Reconciliation and Penance." While sins are the actions of individual persons, the cumulative effect of those actions have immediate social implications, he explains.

In the first instance, "by virtue of human solidarity ... each individual's sin in some way affects others," he says. Thus, one can speak of a "communion of sin, whereby a soul that lowers itself through sin drags down ... the whole world," he continues. "In other words, there is no sin, not even the most intimate and secret one, ... that exclusively concerns the person committing it." When we moral agents sin, it has "repercussions on ... the whole human family."

A second social implication of personal sins is more immediate and measurable. They are sins that "by their very matter constitute a direct attack on one's neighbor," he observes.

In the U.S., we can see this, for example, on both sides of the immigration issue. One side ignores the social harm done by unfettered illegal immigration, especially of organized career criminals. The other side condemns all immigrants in a blanket expression of nationalist xenophobia. I don't need to cite any data or news stories for the reader to recognize the cumulative effects of these sins on particular communities in the U.S.

This suggests the third meaning of social sin, according to St. John Paul II. While he calls it "class struggle," one can translate that phrase into our current crisis of prejudicial, intolerant, and violent "identity politics." As the pope observes, "whoever the person who leads it or on occasion seeks to give it a theoretical justification, [this] is a social evil."

After having described these "social sins," Pope John Paul II is quick to point out that they do not absolve individuals of their responsibility. "To speak even analogically of social sins must not cause us to underestimate the responsibility of the individuals

See CRAYCRAFT, Page 18

## Cartoon Corner



## PILGRIMAGE

Continued from Page 7

"perpetual pilgrims," eight young adults selected among a group of applicants (plus a "media missionary") who will attend Mass, Eucharistic adoration, other devotions, and community-building events along the way.

One of the perpetual pilgrims is Raymond Martinez of Midland, a seminarian for the Diocese of San Angelo.

The pilgrimage will launch Memorial Day weekend with Mass at Our Lady of La Leche Shrine in St. Augustine, the site of the first Mass celebrated on American soil in 1565. It will also include commemorations of the Georgia Martyrs, five Franciscan missionaries who were killed for their faith in 1597, whose path for beatification Pope Francis cleared in January 2025; the celebration of the feast of Corpus Christi in the Archdiocese of Washington and the Diocese of Arlington, Virginia; and stops in the Archdiocese of Baltimore, the nation's first Catholic diocese.

The pilgrimage will pass through most of the original 13 colonies, with stops in 18 dioceses and archdioceses: St. Augustine; Savannah, Georgia; Charleston, South Carolina; Charlotte, North Carolina; Richmond, Virginia; Arlington, Virginia; Washington; Baltimore; Wilmington, Delaware; Camden, New Jersey; Paterson, New Jersey; Springfield, Massachusetts; Manchester, New Hampshire; Portland, Maine; Boston; Fall River, Massachusetts; Providence, Rhode Island; and Philadelphia.

## CRAYCRAFT

Continued from Page 17

involved," he explains. Rather, recourse to "social sin" is "meant to be an appeal to the consciences of all, so that each may shoulder his or her responsibility seriously and courageously in order to change those disastrous conditions and intolerable situations."

All sin is social sin because all sin implicates all persons in a given community. This season of Lent is the time for Catholic Christians to demonstrate to the world that reconciliation can only come through repentance — not of the "nation's" sins, but of our own.

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*Kenneth Craycraft is a professor of moral theology at Mount St. Mary's Seminary and School of Theology in Cincinnati and author of Citizens Yet Strangers: Living Authentically Catholic in a Divided America (OSV Books).*

## BARBIERI

Continued from Page 17

purportedly killed by a scorpion sent to punish his arrogance. Our Mr. Orion exuded confidence, but he is far from arrogant. He reminds me of the promising words of St. Paul, "Where, O death is your victory? Where, O death is your sting?" (1Cor 15:55).

Allow me to introduce you to Cassiopeia. Cassiopeia is a queen in Greek mythology. She is best known for her fatal vanity, which brought disaster upon her family and kingdom. Quite the opposite, Ms. Cassiopeia at ACME portrayed a noble simplicity, an unassuming, gentle, strong, and devout persona. She was far from ostentatious, and yet I could not help but notice her at prayer during Mass. As I look back, I see another queen, Esther, who engaged God in intense prayer: "Save us by your hand, and help me, who am alone and have no helper but you, O Lord." Queen Esther was a model intercessor for her people, recognizing God as the only true King, rejecting pride and royal vanity. Our Ms. Cassiopeia has spent the last 10 years in prison ministry. She hopes to bring awe and faith-filled wonder of astronomy to prisoners who typically do not have the opportunity to stargaze. A truly noble spirit.

Let us now shift our gaze to the constellation Gemini and the twins Castor and Pollux. A delightful pair of young teachers were among the notable participants in the workshop. They are not fraternal twins, but they could very well have been. They



# The Class of 2026



		
<b>Edward Brandecker</b> Holy Family, Abilene	<b>Juan Gallegos</b> Holy Redeemer, Odessa	<b>Jimmy Hernandez</b> OLG, Fort Stockton
		
<b>Jerry Jimenez</b> St. Ann, Sonora	<b>Steve Klein</b> St. Joseph, Stanton	<b>Javier Lopez</b> St. Stephen, Midland
		
<b>Mike McEligot</b> St. Margaret, San Angelo	<b>Alvin Navarrete</b> OLG, Midland	<b>Barry Triche</b> Holy Family, Abilene
		
<b>Stephen Valdez</b> Sacred Heart, Abilene	<b>Phillip Ward</b> OLG, Midland	<b>Cody Wilson</b> St. Thomas, Midkiff

These men have been in formation discerning if they are called to become permanent deacons in the Catholic Church. They have reached a point in their formation where they are requesting to be ordained as permanent deacons. Before these men are called to Holy Orders by Bishop Sis, the People of God are to be asked about their worthiness. Therefore, if you are aware of any reason why any of these men should not be ordained permanent deacons, you are asked to contact Deacon Federico Medina Jr at your earliest convenience. You may reach him at: 325.651.3727.

are new to astronomy and their joyous echo of amazement carried through the parking lot of the Redemptorist Renewal Center — and beyond — where various telescopes were set up each night. They applied to participate in ACME convinced of the worth of presenting to their students the dialogue between faith and science. They exhibited a willingness to learn and to share. Yet their educational departments were less convinced, and the "twins" could participate only by using their personal time off and were not funded. Other Catholic educators in the group were in a similar situation. These stellar teachers showed the courage of conviction and were literally willing to pay the price. Interestingly, the constellation Gemini embodies the values of brotherhood, self-sacrifice, loyalty, and shared destiny. Values well-represented by these "twins."

I conclude with Mr. Lyra. Lyra, along with the constellations of Gemini and Orion, is visible in the winter night sky. Lyra represents the lyre, a harp. It has symbolized harmony and beauty as well as the transcendent power of music, divine inspiration, and order amid chaos.

Mr. Lyra literally struck a chord with all of us when after one of the Masses he sang a poem which he had written and sung for the congregation. He sung it to the tune of "When I Survey the Wondrous Cross," a hymn which moved him deeply as a child. The hymn begins in wonder:

"When I survey the starry sky  
And gaze upon the Moon so fair,  
My heart ascends to God on high  
And wordlessly lifts up a prayer."

And it ends with a poignant plea:

"When at the end of all my days,  
I stand before Thy throne above —  
Upon Thy Cosmos, may I gaze  
eternally, in wonder and love!"

I am sure it is no coincidence that the Office of Readings during the days of ACME offered this reflection of St. Athanasius: "Think of a musician tuning his lyre. By his skill he adjusts high notes to low ... and produces a series of harmonies. So too the wisdom of God holds the world like a lyre and joins things in the air to

those on earth, and things in heaven to those in the air, and brings each part into harmony with the whole." Using the analogy of the lyre, Athanasius illustrates that "by his decree and will he regulates them all to produce the beauty and harmony of a single, well-ordered universe."

How else can I conclude but with these words of Scripture: "From the rising of the sun to its setting, let the name of the Lord be praised" (Ps 113:3).

A final note: If you are interested in programs such as ACME, you might want to consider signing up for the Vatican Observatory newsletter. Registration for the next ACME will open in September 2027. You will find the Observatory's website at <https://www.vaticanobservatory.org> and you can sign up for the newsletter here: <https://www.vaticanobservatory.org/newsletters>.

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*Father Joseph Barbieri is Judicial Vicar and Vicar for Priests for the Diocese of San Angelo and pastor of St. Therese Parish in Carlsbad.*



## Permanent Deacon Class of 2029



Jason Ahrendt  
SEAS,  
Odessa



Chris Arredondo  
SEAS,  
Odessa



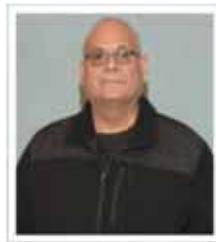
Felix Chavez  
SEAS,  
Odessa



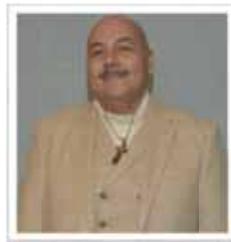
Mario Escajeda  
OLG,  
Midland



Carlos Garcia  
St Stephen,  
Midland



Elio Gaytan  
OLG,  
Midland



Jimmie Gonzalez  
Holy Redeemer,  
Odessa



Stephen Halfmann  
St. Thomas,  
Miles



Thomas Heiting  
St. Stephen,  
Midland



Neil Larremore  
St. Mary, Queen of Peace,  
Brownwood



Jesus Mata  
OLG,  
Midland



Rick Martin  
Cathedral Sacred Heart,  
San Angelo

These men are in formation, prayerfully discerning their call to become permanent deacons in the Catholic Church. They have reached a special stage in their journey, during which they are requesting admission to candidacy for Holy Orders. Before Bishop Sis calls these men to Holy Orders, the People of God are lovingly invited to reflect on their readiness. If you know of any concerns regarding the admission of these men, you are kindly encouraged to contact Deacon Federico Medina Jr at your earliest convenience.

You may reach him at:

Office of Diaconal Ministry  
P.O. Box 1829, San Angelo, TX 76902  
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325-651-7500



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Cathedral Sacred Heart,  
San Angelo



Paul Pérez-Jiménez  
St. Mary, Queen of  
Peace, Brownwood



Basilio Rendón  
OLG,  
Midland



Mark Rivera  
St. Joseph,  
San Angelo



Ignacio Rodriguez  
OLG,  
Midland



Manny Salazar  
Holy Redeemer,  
Odessa



Randy Schmaltz  
St. James,  
Bronte



Chris Shows  
Our Mother of Mercy,  
Merkel



Jaime Zepeda  
SEAS,  
Odessa

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## The penultimate rung



COURTESY

The new acolytes, alongside key members of their formation team, are (from left to right): Cody Wilson, Alvin Navarrete, Jimmy Hernandez, Stephen Valdez, Phillip Ward, Deacon Freddy Medina, Barry Triche, Bishop Michael Sis, Javier Lopez-Morales, Deacon David Workman, Juan Gallegos, Ed Brandecker, Mike McEligot, Jerry Jimenez, and Steve Klein.

### By Deacon Freddy Medina

If the process of formation for the diaconate is likened to ascending a ladder, the institution of acolyte would be considered the penultimate rung, with ordination as the summit.

On Jan. 10, 2026, at the Cathedral Church of the Sacred Heart in San Angelo, twelve men of our diocese reached this important stage of their formation.

They make up the deacon formation class of 2026, and God willing, these men will be ordained in December of this year.

**As a deacon, the man is set apart, or sacredly ordered, to go forth and serve in word, liturgy, and charity. The deacon serves fully when each aspect of his threefold ministry is integrated into what he believes and teaches.**

They have been in formation for five years in a formation program which includes over 1000 classroom hours, hundreds of hours of prayer, study, liturgical practicum, and service to others. As instituted acolytes, they are now considered ordinary ministers of Holy Communion. As such,

they're authorized to purify the sacred vessels of the holy Eucharist at Mass. However, as lofty as this may sound, purifying sacred vessels is not the deacon's primary function. Far from it, as a deacon, the man is set apart, or sacredly ordered, to go forth and serve in word, liturgy, and charity. The deacon serves fully when each aspect of his threefold ministry is integrated into what he believes and teaches.

Let us pray for these men and for their families as they complete their final year.

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*Deacon Freddy Medina is Director of the Office of Diocesan Ministry for the Diocese of San Angelo.*

## OLYMPICS

### Continued from Page 7

education, describing the athletic competitions as a "school of asceticism" and a "school of life" where one learns how to handle both victory and defeat.

For Olympians and Paralympians, the games will be a chance to learn "what strength is needed to accept defeat without becoming depressed, to live victory without becoming arrogant, to live through the disordered reactions of others, the unexpected anger, the irritating stubbornness, the paralyzing discouragement."

Reflecting on the presence of the "Cross of Athletes," which features a void silhouette of Christ's crucified body, Archbishop Delpini said the cross offered "more of a glimpse than a figure" of the body of Christ that "encourages our questions, our gaze, and our attention."

"If you want to know what love is, if you want to know if there is hope," the archbishop said, "look to Jesus, adore the crucified and risen body, listen to his words, and follow him, for he is the way, the truth, and the life."

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*Junno Arocho Esteves is an international correspondent for OSV News. Follow him on X @jae\_journalist.*

## A blessing for future blessings



COURTESY

Diocesan pro-life director Jerry Peters (left) and Bishop Michael J. Sis recently visited the Pregnancy Help Center of the Concho Valley in San Angelo, where Bishop Sis blessed a new sonogram machine. Contributions for the sonogram machine were collected and donated by several local Knights of Columbus councils and assemblies: #4316, Wall Council; #9641, St. Lawrence Council; #2772, St. Boniface Council; #6811, Miles Council; #8572, Ozona Council; #13514, St. Mary's Council (San Angelo); #12008, Holy Angels Council; #2136, San Angelo Council; #1098, Father Serran R. Braun 4th Degree Assembly; and #10985, St. Mary Star of the Sea Council.