

Inside this issue:

- *Bishop Sis on America's birthday (Page 2)*
- *New clergy assignments (Page 4)*
- *Awards given to inspirational Catholics (Page 6)*
- *Pursuing holiness in marriage (Page 7)*
- *A look at some unique liturgies (Pages 10, 11)*

WEST TEXAS ANGELUS

Serving Catholics in the Diocese of San Angelo, Texas

Volume 46, No. 6

June 2026



Welcome, Deacon Joshua Basse!



ALAN TORRE | APTORRE PHOTOGRAPHY

Joshua Basse was ordained a transitional deacon for the Diocese of San Angelo May 23, 2026, at Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish in Midland. Deacon Basse will continue his studies for the priesthood as a seminarian for the diocese at Notre Dame Seminary in New Orleans.



ALAN TORRE | APTORRE PHOTOGRAPHY

From the Bishop’s Desk

A Catholic perspective on America at 250

On July 4, 2026, the United States of America will celebrate the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. Across the country, people are planning events to commemorate this historic milestone. In this article, I offer some thoughts from a Catholic perspective to promote thoughtful personal reflection on our nation’s semiquincentennial.

Gratitude

We should never take our country for granted. This occasion calls each one of us to count our blessings for so many positive aspects of life in the United States. We have so much to be grateful for, including our beautiful geography, natural resources, productive agriculture, democratic system of government, religious liberty, educational system, robust infrastructure, public health, rule of law, and a social structure based on human equality with opportunities to improve one’s condition through hard work and dedication. Our nation has become a thriving culture by drawing upon the combined talents of a variety of people from around the world, with each one contributing their ingenuity and energy to serve the common good.

Our 250th anniversary should also include gratitude for those who have generously served our nation over the years — our founders, political leaders, legislators, members of the judiciary, public safety officials, and members of the military. Furthermore, we must never forget those who have paid the ultimate sacrifice by giving their lives to defend our freedom and human rights. Jesus said, “No one has greater love than this, to lay down one’s life for one’s friends” (Jn 15:13).

Wounds and sins

While appreciating the many blessings and gifts of our country, it is also important to recognize that we are not perfect, and our society needs ongoing renewal. This is acknowledged by the lyrics of the beloved patriotic song, “America the Beautiful,” which says, “God mend thine every flaw.” A genuine love of country includes a desire to heal our nation’s historic wounds and sins, including slavery, racism, segregation, the forced displacement of Native Americans, the systematic killing of the unborn, euthanasia, human trafficking, and the seemingly insatiable appetite for drugs that fuels a violent criminal underworld. As we cross the threshold of 250 years, it is important that we pray about these social sins and commit ourselves to building a healthier society.

Christ our King

The United States of America has thrived for 250 years, yet no one knows how long any given nation will continue to exist. Over the course of my lifetime, several countries have been dissolved, and others have been formed in their place. Governments come and go, but Christ lives forever. His kingdom is everlasting. The only reign that will last forever is the kingdom of God, under Christ, the king of the universe. St. Paul says that God the Father “delivered us from the power of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son” (Col 1:13).

What does it mean to have Jesus Christ as our king? Before we are citizens of any country, we are children of God. The nation is not God. The nation is under God. No government takes the place of God. To God we owe everything. To God we entrust our souls for all eternity.

We live in the world, but we are not of the world. We obey a higher power, but we still live with our feet on the ground. We participate in the affairs of this world, but we also follow God’s commandments.



Bishop Michael J. Sis

Diocese of San Angelo

Jesus says, "Repay to Caesar what belongs to Caesar and to God what belongs to God" (Mt 22:21). He thus speaks of two obligations — God and country. You could say that we each have multiple citizenships: in the kingdom of God, and in our nation(s). As Christians, we have responsibilities both to God and to country.

What we owe to God

God is our supreme authority. God created the whole universe, and everything that exists belongs to God. Therefore, there are certain things that we owe to God:

- to know, love, and serve him
- to revere him and obey his commandments
- to believe what he has revealed
- to worship him in the way he has revealed is most pleasing to him
- to follow our conscience, the voice of God in the human heart
- to continue educating our conscience, so we can better discern right and wrong
- to be good stewards of the resources that have been entrusted to us

What we owe to our country

God created the natural law. Our duties toward civil society are based upon that natural law. Our country is not equal to God, but we still have various duties toward it. We have a Christian responsibility to serve our country. St. Peter says, “As each one has received a gift, use it to serve one another as good stewards of God’s varied grace” (1 Pt 4:10). If we want to live in a world of justice, peace, and respect for basic human rights, then we all must do our part. All people of good will must step up and take an active role in building a better world.

Politics and government

Let’s look at what is the Catholic attitude toward politics and government. First, it is not blind patriotism. We must never glorify our own country so much that the kingdom of God is identified with the nation state. Second, it is not a complete separation of faith and politics. Politics and religion are not two completely isolated realms. Our Catholic faith teaches that all political decisions must have a moral component. Third, it is not isolation, where all the pure and holy believers separate themselves off in a commune somewhere in the wilderness, circling the wagons in a separatist fringe group, untouched by this imperfect world. Instead, the recommended Catholic attitude toward politics and government is active engagement. We seek to infuse the world with the aroma of Christ. We seek to make our world and our laws more just and equitable. We try to leave the world better than we found it. As Christians, we can serve as the “conscience of society.” We participate, critically evaluate, challenge, and call to account. We seek to permeate and transform the world for Christ. We bring the seed of Christian truth to the social order. An anonymous Christian patristic writer in the second century A.D. wrote in his Letter to Diogne-

tus, "What the soul is to the body, let Christians be to the world."

Responsible Citizenship

As we celebrate the 250th birthday of our country, all of us would do well to do an examination of conscience regarding our own fulfillment of the duties of responsible citizenship:

1. Do I obey civil authorities and the rule of law? The First Letter of St. Peter says, “Be subject to every human institution for the Lord’s sake. ... Be free, yet without using freedom as a pretext for evil” (1 Pt 2:13, 16).
2. Do I pay my taxes? This is a fundamental responsibility.
3. Do I stay informed about local and national issues?
4. Do I let my public officials know where I stand on the issues? We should continually challenge politicians and the parties to be willing to refine and reform their positions, to get beyond their ethical blind spots.
5. Do I take the time to vote?
6. Am I willing to be inconvenienced enough to serve on jury duty? It may be sometimes inconvenient, but it is part of the privilege of living in a free country.
7. Do I give of my time in civic volunteer efforts?
8. Do I encourage people that I know who have good moral virtues and competence to serve in public office?
9. Do I pray for those in public office? St. Paul urges us to pray for “everyone, for kings and for all in authority, that we may lead a quiet and tranquil life in all devotion and dignity” (1 Tim 2:1-2).
10. Have I ever considered running for public office? In the *Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, Gaudium et Spes*, from the Second Vatican Council, it says that “those with a talent for the difficult yet noble art of politics ... should involve themselves in political activity” (GS, no. 75). Thus, the position of our Catholic faith is that it is not a sin to be a politician.

Work in the field of politics and government should be carried out, not for personal self-interest or self-promotion, but rather in self-giving service for the common good. Our first Catholic president, John F. Kennedy, said in his inaugural address on Jan. 20, 1961, “My fellow Americans: ask not what your country can do for you — ask what you can do for your country.”

Rather than spending our whole lives as mere spectators of politics and government, there comes a time when some good men and women need to step up and do the actual work of governing. If any government is going to function in a way that is just and fair, it needs leaders who are virtuous and competent.

Conclusion

The 250th anniversary of the founding of our nation is a worthy occasion to reflect upon the great privilege and responsibility of living in this country. It is also a good opportunity to read the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution, particularly its first ten amendments, known as the Bill of Rights. This is a good year to visit any of our beautiful national parks, which are national treasures. It is fascinating to read about the thirteen Catholics whose statues are included in the National Statuary Hall Collection at the U.S. Capitol in Washington, D.C. Finally, following the lead of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, we are all encouraged to consecrate ourselves and our nation to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. God bless America, land that I love.

'Magnifica Humanitas' a reminder of 'moral responsibility' in AI oversight, expert says

By Junno Arocho Esteves
OSV News

At the heart of Pope Leo XIV's first encyclical, *Magnifica Humanitas* (*Magnificent Humanity*), is the conviction that in the age of ever-advancing artificial intelligence, technological innovation must be subordinate to human dignity.

For David Kirchhoffer, director of the Queensland Bioethics Center at the Australian Catholic University, the encyclical's call for humanity to remain at the heart of the digital revolution must translate to concrete regulations that facilitate moral accountability.

"There is a real danger of people giving up their moral responsibility to AI or having it taken from them," Kirchhoffer told OSV News on May 25. "For this reason, practically speaking, all AI development and application should have human oversight built into it, especially at key decision points, and moral responsibility should rest with these agents."

In *Magnifica Humanitas*, Pope Leo called for measures to ensure an economy that "favors human dignity," first and foremost through transparency and accountabil-

ity.

"When data and algorithms influence credit distribution, personnel selection, or access to services and opportunities, it is necessary that decisions be understandable, contestable, and subject to oversight, so that individuals are not reduced to mere profiles," the pope wrote.

Echoing the pope's concerns, Kirchhoffer, a theologian specializing in morality, ethics, and the concept of human dignity, told OSV News that the "danger is that AI can present me with plausible answers to seemingly complex questions of law, ethics, medicine, and so on."

"Unless I have the expertise to pick up the inaccuracies and check these answers, there is a real risk of following bad advice or simply wasting my time on useless endeavors," he said.

Furthermore, "the development of AI cannot and should not mean that we stop seeking new knowledge and finding new answers in that uniquely human way," Kirchhoffer said, adding that knowledge should be "discovered by human inquiry" and not simply be produced by a large language model, or LLM, a type of AI trained on data to generate text.

"The AI, especially LLMs, will only ever be as good

as the information it is trained on," Kirchhoffer said.

"There are so many gaps in our knowledge and ethical biases in our existing knowledge for all sorts of reasons, that we need to constantly pursue better knowledge using the criteria appropriate to the field of inquiry to generate high-quality knowledge that is ethically better, as well as intellectually better."

'Babel syndrome'

Pope Leo also warned against the "Babel syndrome," which he noted was characterized by idolatry of profit, uniformity that neutralizes differences, and the reduction of human mystery to data.

"The risk of dehumanization — of building a future that excludes God and reduces the other to a means — is an ancient and ever-new temptation that today takes on a technical guise," the pope wrote.

Asked what policies regulators should create to prevent the "Babel syndrome" from dictating AI development, Kirchhoffer said the "solution is less about

Una perspectiva católica sobre los Estados Unidos a los 250 años

El 4 de julio de 2026, los Estados Unidos celebrará el 250° aniversario de la firma de la Declaración de Independencia. Por todo el país, se están organizando eventos para conmemorar este hito histórico. En este artículo, comparto algunas reflexiones desde una perspectiva católica para fomentar la meditación personal sobre el semiquincentenario de nuestra nación.

Gratitud

Nunca debemos dar por sentado nuestro país. Esta ocasión nos invita a reflexionar sobre las muchas bendiciones que nos brinda la vida en los Estados Unidos. Tenemos mucho que agradecer, incluyendo nuestra hermosa geografía, recursos naturales, agricultura productiva, sistema de gobierno democrático, libertad religiosa, sistema educativo, infraestructura sólida, salud pública, estado de derecho, y una estructura social basada en la igualdad humana, con oportunidades para mejorar la propia condición mediante el trabajo arduo y la dedicación. Nuestra nación se ha convertido en una cultura vibrante gracias al talento combinado de personas de todo el mundo, cada una de las cuales aporta su ingenio y energía al servicio del bien común.

Nuestro 250° aniversario también debe incluir un agradecimiento a quienes han servido generosamente a nuestra nación a lo largo de los años: nuestros fundadores, líderes políticos, legisladores, miembros del poder judicial, funcionarios de seguridad pública, y miembros de las fuerzas armadas. Además, jamás debemos olvidar a quienes hicieron el máximo sacrificio al dar su vida para defender nuestra libertad y los derechos humanos. Jesús dijo: “Nadie tiene mayor amor que este: dar la vida por sus amigos” (Jn 15:13).

Heridas y pecados

Si bien apreciamos las muchas bendiciones y dones de nuestro país, también es importante reconocer que no somos perfectos y que nuestra sociedad necesita una renovación constante. Esto se reconoce en la letra de la querida canción patriótica “America the Beautiful”, que dice: “Que Dios repare cada uno de tus defectos”. Un amor genuino por la patria incluye el deseo de sanar las heridas y pecados históricos de nuestra nación, como la esclavitud, el racismo, la segregación, el desplazamiento forzado de los nativos americanos, el asesinato sistemático de los no nacidos, la eutanasia, la trata de personas, y el apetito aparentemente insaciable por las drogas que alimenta un violento submundo criminal. Al cruzar el umbral de los 250 años, es importante que oremos por estos pecados sociales y nos comprometamos a construir una sociedad más sana.

Cristo nuestro Rey

Los Estados Unidos ha prosperado durante 250 años, pero nadie sabe cuánto tiempo más existirá ninguna nación. A lo largo de mi vida, varios países se han disuelto, y otros se han formado en su lugar. Los gobiernos van y vienen, pero Cristo vive para siempre. Su reino es eterno. El único reino que perdurará para siempre es el reino de Dios, bajo Cristo, el rey del universo. San Pablo dice que Dios Padre “nos libró del poder de las tinieblas y nos trasladó al reino de su Hijo amado” (Col 1:13).

¿Qué significa tener a Jesucristo como nuestro rey? Antes de ser ciudadanos de cualquier país, somos hijos de Dios. La nación no es Dios. La nación está bajo Dios. Ningún gobierno puede ocupar el lugar de Dios. A Dios le debemos todo. A Dios le encomendamos nuestras almas por toda la eternidad.

Vivimos en el mundo, pero no somos del mundo. Obedecemos a un poder superior, pero seguimos con los pies en la tierra. Participamos en los asuntos de este mundo, pero también seguimos los mandamientos de Dios.

Jesús dice: “Pagar a César lo que es de César y a Dios lo que es de Dios” (Mt 22:21). Así, habla de dos obligaciones: con Dios y con el país. Podríamos decir que todos tenemos



Obispo Michael J. Sis

Diócesis de San Ángelo

múltiples ciudadanía: en el reino de Dios, y en nuestra(s) nación(es). Como cristianos, tenemos responsabilidades tanto para con Dios como para con nuestro país.

Lo que le debemos a Dios

Dios es nuestra autoridad suprema. Dios creó todo el universo, y todo lo que existe le pertenece. Por lo tanto, hay ciertas cosas que le debemos a Dios:

- conocerlo, amarlo, y servirle
- venerarle y obedecer sus mandamientos
- creer lo que él ha revelado
- adorarlo de la manera que él ha revelado es lo que más le agrada
- seguir nuestra conciencia, la voz de Dios en el corazón humano
- seguir educando nuestra conciencia, para que podamos discernir mejor entre el bien y el mal
- ser buenos administradores de los recursos que se nos han confiado

Lo que le debemos a nuestro país

Dios creó la ley natural. Nuestros deberes para con la sociedad civil se basan en esa ley natural. Nuestro país no es igual a Dios, pero aun así tenemos diversos deberes para con él. Tenemos la responsabilidad cristiana de servir a nuestro país. San Pedro dice: “Cada uno, según el don que ha recibido, úselo para servir a los demás, administrando con generosidad la multiforme gracia de Dios” (1 Pe 4:10). Si queremos vivir en un mundo de justicia, paz, y respeto por los derechos humanos fundamentales, todos debemos hacer de nuestra parte. Todas las personas de buena voluntad deben asumir un papel activo en la construcción de un mundo mejor.

Política y gobierno

Analicemos la postura católica respecto a la política y el gobierno. En primer lugar, no se trata de un patriotismo ciego. Jamás debemos glorificar tanto a nuestro país como para que el reino de Dios se identifique con el estado nación.

En segundo lugar, no se trata de una separación total entre fe y política. La política y la religión no son dos ámbitos completamente aislados. Nuestra fe católica enseña que todas las decisiones políticas deben tener un componente moral.

En tercer lugar, no se trata de un aislamiento, donde todos los creyentes puros y santos se separan en una comuna en algún lugar del desierto, formando un grupo marginal separatista, ajenos a este mundo imperfecto.

En cambio, la actitud católica recomendada hacia la política y el gobierno es la participación activa. Queremos infundir el mundo con el aroma de Cristo. Buscamos hacer que nuestro mundo y nuestras leyes sean más justos y equitativos. Intentamos dejar el mundo mejor de como lo encontramos.

Como cristianos, podemos ser la “conciencia de la sociedad”. Participamos, evaluamos críticamente, cuestionamos, y exigimos responsabilidades. Buscamos permear y transformar el mundo para Cristo. Llevamos la semilla de la verdad cristiana al orden social. Un escritor cristiano patristico anónimo del siglo II d.C. escribió en su Carta a Diogneto: “Lo que el alma es para el cuerpo, que los cristianos lo sean para el mundo.”

Ciudadanía responsable

Al celebrar el 250° aniversario de nuestro país, todos haríamos bien en realizar un examen de conciencia respecto al cumplimiento de nuestros deberes como ciudadanos responsables:

1. ¿Obedezco a las autoridades civiles y al estado de derecho?
2. ¿Pago mis impuestos?

Esta es una responsabilidad fundamental.

3. ¿Me mantengo informado sobre los asuntos locales y nacionales?
4. ¿Les informo a mis funcionarios públicos cuál es mi postura sobre los temas en cuestión?

Debemos exigir continuamente a los políticos y a los partidos que estén dispuestos a refinar y reformar sus posturas, a superar sus puntos ciegos éticos.

5. ¿Me tomo el tiempo para votar?
6. ¿Estoy dispuesto a soportar las molestias necesarias para formar parte de un jurado?

Puede que a veces resulte inconveniente, pero forma parte del privilegio de vivir en un país libre.

7. ¿Dedico mi tiempo a actividades de voluntariado cívico?
8. ¿Animo a las personas que conozco, que tienen buenas virtudes morales y competencia, a servir en cargos públicos?
9. ¿Oro por quienes ocupan cargos públicos?

San Pablo nos exhorta a orar por “todos, por los reyes y por todos los que están en autoridad, para que podamos vivir una vida tranquila y apacible con toda devoción y dignidad” (1 Tim 2:1-2).

10. ¿He considerado alguna vez presentarme a un cargo público?

En la *Constitución Pastoral sobre la Iglesia en el Mundo Moderno, Gaudium et Spes*, del Concilio Vaticano II, se afirma que “quienes tengan talento para el difícil pero noble arte de la política... deben involucrarse en la actividad política” (GS, núm. 75). Así pues, la postura de nuestra fe católica es que no es pecado ser político.

El trabajo en el ámbito de la política y el gobierno debe realizarse no por interés personal ni para la autopromoción, sino como un servicio desinteresado al bien común. Nuestro primer presidente católico, John F. Kennedy, dijo en su discurso inaugural el 20 de enero de 1961: “Compatriotas: no pregunten qué puede hacer su país por ustedes, sino qué pueden hacer ustedes por su país.”

En lugar de pasar toda nuestra vida como meros espectadores de la política y el gobierno, llega un momento en que hombres y mujeres de bien deben dar un paso al frente y asumir la labor real de gobernar. Para que un gobierno funcione de manera justa y equitativa, necesita líderes virtuosos y competentes.

Conclusión

El 250° aniversario de la fundación de nuestra nación es una ocasión propicia para reflexionar sobre el gran privilegio y la responsabilidad de vivir en este país. También es una buena oportunidad para leer la Declaración de Independencia y la Constitución de los Estados Unidos, en particular sus diez primeras enmiendas, conocidas como la Carta de Derechos. Este es un buen año para visitar cualquiera de nuestros hermosos parques nacionales, que son tesoros nacionales. Es fascinante leer sobre los trece católicos cuyas estatuas forman parte de la Colección Nacional de Estatuas en el Capitolio de los Estados Unidos en Washington, D.C. Finalmente, siguiendo el ejemplo de la Conferencia de Obispos Católicos de los Estados Unidos, se nos anima a consagrarnos, junto con nuestra nación, al Sagrado Corazón de Jesús. Que Dios bendiga a América, la tierra que amo tanto.

‘Magnifica Humanitas’: un recordatorio de la ‘responsabilidad moral’ en la supervisión de la IA, afirma un experto

Por Junno Arocho Esteves
OSV News

En el corazón de la primera encíclica del Papa León XIV, "Magnifica Humanitas" (‘Magnífica Humanidad’), reside la convicción de que, en la era de una inteligencia artificial en constante avance, la innovación tecnológica debe estar subordinada a la dignidad humana.

Para David Kirchhoffer, director del Centro de Bio-ética de Queensland en la Universidad Católica Australiana, el llamado de la encíclica a mantener a la humanidad en el centro de la revolución digital debe traducirse en regulaciones concretas que faciliten la rendición de cuentas moral.

"Existe un peligro real de que las personas cedan su responsabilidad moral a la IA, o de que esta les sea arrebatada", declaró Kirchhoffer a OSV News el 25 de mayo.

"Por esta razón, desde un punto de vista práctico, todo desarrollo y aplicación de la IA debería incorporar una supervisión humana --especialmente en los puntos clave de toma de decisiones--, y la responsabilidad moral debería

recaer en estos agentes".

En "Magnifica Humanitas", el Papa León abogó por la adopción de medidas para garantizar una economía que reconozca y favorezca la dignidad humana, ante todo mediante la transparencia y la rendición de cuentas.

"Cuando los datos y los algoritmos influyen en la concesión de créditos, la selección de personal o el acceso a servicios u oportunidades, es necesario que las decisiones sean comprensibles, cuestionables y sometidas a control, para que la persona no quede reducida a un perfil", escribió el Papa.

Haciéndose eco de las inquietudes del Papa, Kirchhoffer, un teólogo especializado en moral, ética y el concepto de dignidad humana, declaró a OSV News que "el peligro radica en que la IA puede ofrecerm e respuestas plausibles a asuntos aparentemente complejos en los ámbitos del derecho, la ética, la medicina, etcétera".

"A menos que cuente con la pericia necesaria para detectar las inexactitudes y verificar dichas respuestas, existe un riesgo real de seguir malos consejos o, simplemente, de desperdiciar mi tiempo en empeños inútiles", afirmó.

Además, "el desarrollo de la IA no puede ni debe significar que dejemos de buscar nuevos conocimientos y de hallar nuevas respuestas de esa manera singularmente humana", afirmó Kirchhoffer, añadiendo que el conocimiento debería ser "descubierto mediante la indagación humana" y no simplemente producido por un modelo de lenguaje grande (LLM), un tipo de IA entrenada con datos para generar texto.

"La inteligencia artificial --y especialmente los LLM-- solo será tan buena como la información con la que haya sido entrenada", señaló Kirchhoffer. "Existen tantas lagunas en nuestro saber, así como sesgos éticos en los conocimientos de los que ya disponemos --por todo tipo de razones--, que necesitamos buscar constantemente un conocimiento mejor, empleando los criterios adecuados para cada campo de investigación, a fin de generar un saber de alta calidad que sea éticamente superior, además de intelectualmente superior".

El Papa León también advirtió contra el "síndrome de

CALENDARS

Please pray for our clergy



June

- 1

Deacon John Specht (O — 1995)
- 1

Rev. Santiago Udayar (B)
- 1

Rev. Joseph Uecker, CPPS (O — 1968)
- 2

Rev. Carlos Felipe Rodriguez (B)
- 3

Rev. Ruben Covos (O — 2006)
- 3

Deacon Rogelio Ibarra (O — 1995)
- 3

Rev. Ariel Lagunilla (O — 2006)
- 3

Rev. Tony Franco (O — 2016)
- 4

Rev. Patrick Akpanobong (O — 2011)
- 4

Deacon Eduardo Castillo (O — 2022)
- 4

Deacon Sergio Cedillo (O — 2022)
- 4

Deacon Alexander Chick (O — 2022)
- 4

Deacon Billy Garcia (O — 2022)
- 4

Deacon Mike Hernandez (O — 2022)
- 4

Deacon Alonzo Landin (O — 2022)
- 4

Deacon Pete Madrid (O — 2022)
- 4

Deacon Alfonso Moreno (O — 2022)
- 4

Deacon Erick Morgado (O — 2022)
- 4

Deacon Francisco Ocampo (O — 2022)
- 4

Deacon Bobby Porras (O — 2022)
- 4

Deacon Scott Randolph (O — 2022)
- 4

Deacon Johnny Rodriguez (O — 2022)
- 4

Deacon Stanley Sienkiewich (O — 2022)
- 4

Rev. Prem Thumma (O — 2011)
- 5

Deacon Frankie Aguirre (O — 2010)
- 5

Deacon Alfred Camarillo (O — 2010)
- 5

Rev. Frank Chavez (O — 1976)
- 5

Deacon Antero Gonzalez (O — 2010)
- 5

Deacon Walter Hammons (O — 2010)
- 5

Deacon Leonard Hendon (O — 2010)
- 5

Deacon Dwain Hennessey (O — 2010)
- 5

Rev. Steven Hicks (O — 1982)
- 5

Deacon Daniel Holguin (O — 2010)
- 5

Deacon Allan Lange (O — 2010)
- 5

Deacon Michael Lopez (O — 2010)
- 5

Deacon Luis Mata (O — 2010)
- 5

Deacon Marc Mata (O — 2010)
- 5

Deacon Freddy Medina (O — 2010)
- 5

Deacon Hector Mendez (O — 2010)
- 5

Deacon Robert Moreno (O — 2010)
- 5

Deacon Jesús Napoles (O — 2010)
- 5

Deacon Reynaldo Nuñez (O — 2010)
- 5

Deacon Victor Ramirez (O — 2010)
- 5

Deacon Gary Rhodes (O — 2010)
- 5

Deacon Claudio Sanchez (O — 2010)
- 5

Deacon Daniel Shannahan (O — 2010)
- 5

Deacon Ricardo Torres (O — 2010)
- 5

Deacon Daniel Vaughan (O — 2010)
- 5

Deacon Luis Villarreal (O — 2010)
- 5

Deacon David Workman (O — 2010)
- 5

Deacon Steve Zimmerman (O — 2010)
- 7

Deacon Gary Brooks (O — 2003)
- 7

Rev. Ray Corr, OP (D — 2005)
- 8

Rev. Felix Cubelo (D — 2007)
- 8

Rev. Innocent Eziefule (O — 2013)
- 8

Rev. Lorenzo Hatch (B)
- 8

Rev. Lorenzo Hatch (O — 2013)
- 8

Rev. Francis Onyekozuru (O — 2013)
- 8

Rev. Angel Castro Gonzales, MSP (O — 2013)
- 9

Rev. Reggie Odima (O — 2018)
- 9

Rev. Freddy Perez (O — 2018)
- 10

Rev. Joshua Gray (O — 2017)
- 10

Rev. Timothy Hayter (O — 2017)
- 10

Rev. Mike Elsner (O — 2023)
- 11

Rev. Eduardo Velazquez (O — 1999)
- 15

Rev. Msgr. Larry Droll (O — 1973)
- 15

Rev. John Kuehner (B)
- 15

Deacon Luis Mata (B)
- 15

Rev. Bhaskar Morugudi (B — 1972)
- 17

Rev. Barry McLean (D — 2012)
- 18

Deacon Frankie Aguirre (B)
- 18

Rev. Steven Hicks (B)
- 18

Rev. John Lucassen (D — 1993)
- 19

Deacon Francisco Ocampo (B)

See CLERGY, Page 5

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



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

June 2026

- 3

ABILENE, Holy Family, Parish Staff Development Day at 8:30 a.m.
- 4

SAN ANGELO, Holy Angels, Clergy Appreciation Dinner at 6:00 p.m.
- 6

BRADY, St. Patrick, Confirmation Mass at 12:30 p.m.
- 6

ABILENE, Sacred Heart, Confirmation Mass at 5:30 p.m.
- 7

SAN ANGELO, St. Margaret of Scotland, Confirmation Mass at 10:00 a.m.
- 7

ODESSA, Marriott Hotel and Conference Center, 50th Anniversary Mass of Father Frank Chavez at 4:00 p.m.
- 8–13

ORLANDO, FLORIDA, USCCB General Assembly meeting
- 14

MENARD, Sacred Heart, Confirmation Mass at 9:00 a.m.
- 16

ODESSA, Catholic Charities of Odessa at 10:30 a.m.
- 18

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

SAN ANGELO, Sacred Heart Cathedral, Priestly Ordination of Francisco Camacho, Humberto Diaz, and Mauricio Romero at 10:30 a.m.
- 20

ELDORADO, Our Lady of Guadalupe, Confirmation Mass at 6:00 p.m.
- 21

COLORADO CITY, St. Ann, Confirmation Mass at 10:30 a.m.
- 22

SAN ANGELO, Christ the King Retreat Center, Diocesan Mission Council at 4:00 p.m.
- 23

SAN ANGELO, Priestly Life and Ministry Committee meeting at 10:00 a.m.
- 24

MIDLAND, St. Stephen, Parish Staff Development Day at 8:30 a.m.
- 26

SAN ANGELO, Diocesan Pastoral Center, Finance Council and College of Consultants joint meeting at 11:00 a.m.
- 27

SAN ANGELO, St. Joseph, Confirmation Mass at 6:00

- p.m.

28

CARLSBAD, St. Therese, Confirmation Mass at 9:00 a.m.
- 29

MIDLAND, St. Ann, 25th Anniversary Mass of Father Ignatius Edet at 6:00 p.m.
- 30

LAREDO, Ordination of Bishop John Gomez at 2:00 p.m.

July 2026

- 2

SAN ANGELO, Priest Personnel Board meeting at 2:00 p.m.
- 8

FORT STOCKTON, N-S Prison Unit, Sacraments of Christian Initiation at 12:00 p.m.
- 9

SAN ANGELO, Diocesan Pastoral Center, Vocation Team meeting at 1:00 p.m.
- 11

MIDLAND, St. Stephen, To the Heights Young Adult Conference Mass at 12:00 p.m.
- 11

COYANOSA, St. Isidore, Mass at 5:00 p.m.
- 11

IMPERIAL, Our Lady of Lourdes, Mass at 6:30 p.m.
- 12

SANDERSON, St. James, Confirmation Mass at 1:00 p.m.
- 15

SAN ANGELO, Christ the King Retreat Center, Parish Staff Development Day at 8:30 a.m.
- 19

SAN ANGELO, Sacred Heart Cathedral, 40th Anniversary Mass at 6:00 p.m.
- 23

SAN ANGELO, Diocesan Pastoral Center, Presbyteral Council meeting at 11:00 a.m.
- 25

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

SAN ANGELO, Sacred Heart Cathedral, Family Warrior Men's Conference with Mass at 4:00 p.m.
- 26

SAN ANGELO, Goodfellow AFB, Mass at 9:00 a.m.
- 26

MIDLAND, Our Lady of Guadalupe, SEARCH Closing Mass at 2:15 p.m.
- 27–31

TYLER, Hermanamiento 25th Anniversary Assembly



Christ the King Retreat Center

June 2026

- 4

DOSA Staff Meeting, Mass & Lunch
- 8

Heart of Mercy Prayer Group
- 12–18

Deacon Formation
- 18–21

Girls' Chrysalis
- 22

Diocesan Mission Council
- 22

Heart of Mercy Prayer Group

July 2026

- 3

CKRC Offices closed for Independence Day
- 9–12

Women's Walk to Emmaus
- 13

Heart of Mercy Prayer Group
- 13–20

OND Sisters Week Retreat
- 15

Parish Staff Development
- 16–19

Cursillo Team Retreat
- 23–26

Boys' Chrysalis
- 27

Heart of Mercy Prayer Group
- 29–Aug 2

Teen ACTS

Special Collections

June 14, 2026
Parishes in Need

This local collection is reserved for unexpected needs in the parishes of the Diocese of San Angelo. Giving to this collection allows the diocese to have funds to disburse to local parishes and missions when major unexpected expenses arise.

June 28, 2026
Peter's Pence (Collection for the Holy Father)

The Peter's Pence collection is a gesture of solidarity through which every member of the faithful can participate in the activity of the pope as pastor of the universal Church. Funds collected will be used for church needs, for humanitarian initiatives and social promotion projects, as well as for the support of the Holy See.

Bishop announces new clergy assignments for July

For the benefit of the people of God in West Texas, Bishop Michael J. Sis announces the following clergy assignments, effective July 1, 2026, except where otherwise noted:

- Rev. Arokiadoss Arokiasamy as parochial administrator of St. Theresa of the Child Jesus Parish in Junction and Sacred Heart Parish in Menard;
- Rev. Terry Brenon to a leave of absence;
- Deacon Francisco Camacho as parochial vicar of Holy Family Parish in Abilene;
- Deacon Humberto Diaz as parochial vicar of the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart in San Angelo;
- Rev. Mike Elsner as parochial administrator of Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish in Eldorado, Immaculate Conception Mission in Knickerbocker, and St. Peter Mission in Mertzon;
- Rev. Timothy Hayter as parochial vicar of Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish and Shrine in Midland;

- Rev. Jeevan Kamalapuram as parochial administrator of St. Patrick Parish in Brady and St. Francis Xavier Mission in Melvin;
- Rev. Kevin Lenius as parochial administrator of St. Margaret of Scotland Parish in San Angelo and director of St. John Catholic Campus Outreach at Angelo State University;
- Rev. Freddy Perez as pastor of St. Joseph Parish in San Angelo;
- Rev. Benito Rojas, MSP, reassigned outside the diocese by his religious superior, effective June 1, 2026;
- Deacon Mauricio Romero as parochial vicar of St. Stephen Parish in Midland from July 22, 2026, to September 23, 2026, before departing to complete studies in Rome;
- Rev. Mark Woodruff to retirement;
- Rev. Eduardo Velazquez, MSP, reassigned outside the diocese by his religious superior.



With Praise and Thanksgiving to Almighty God,
the Diocesan Church of San Angelo
joyfully announces the

40th Anniversary Mass

of Priestly Ordination of

Bishop Michael J. Sis

Sunday, July 19, 2026 at 6:00 p.m.

Sacred Heart Cathedral
20 E. Beauregard Ave., San Angelo, TX 76903

All are invited.

Reception to follow in the Cathedral gymnasium.
No gifts please.

Donations are welcome in support of the Seminary Burse
for the Diocese of San Angelo at the following link:



Reflecting on a year of evangelization, catechesis

By Alison Pope

When we are in the midst of the day-to-day that is our lives, we can sometimes lose sight of all that we have accomplished in the past. It is important to occasionally take a moment to reflect on all that has been happening over a given timeframe. This is true in our personal lives, our work, and our ministries.

In the Office of Evangelization and Catechesis, we are often looking ahead to plan and prepare for upcoming things, but we do not always do well at looking at what we have done over the last academic year. Join me as we look at all we have done in the last year.

During the summer of 2025, we found ourselves implementing a change in the curriculum used for part of our overall Safe Environment program. One portion of Safe Environment is a curriculum implemented with our children, youth, and parents. As a diocese, the 2025–2026 academic year found us switching to a new curriculum from Virtus called, Empowering God’s Children. We held three training sessions, one in each deanery, so that religious education/faith formation and youth ministry leaders could learn about the new program and its implementation.

In August, we hosted our annual meetings for all of our religious education/faith formation and youth ministry leaders. These are hosted by deanery and are a great time to come together and share important updates, as well as to learn from each other. This year, we focused on taking advantage of the wisdom of our parish leaders to brainstorm ideas for some of the initiatives in the current diocesan pastoral plan. All notes were then shared so that everybody present had a list of ideas to share with their parishes.

We are continuously evaluating our current offerings and asking for input from those we serve as to how we can better meet their needs. One of the changes that came out of these evaluations and feedback was the change to the long-standing Diocesan Conference Day. Rather than host a single all-day event, we moved to hosting three half-day workshops, one in each deanery. Each workshop was on a different topic so that those who were interested in attending more than one workshop would build their knowledge and skills in different areas. We named this new series the Equip Workshop Series.

The first workshop in this new series featured Dr. Alex Gotay speaking on the topic of How to Avoid Burnout in Ministry. The second offering was on Marriage Enrichment in the Parish and featured Dr. Roland Millare from the St. John Paul II Foundation. Our final offering for this year was on The Art of Accompaniment, featuring Noelle Garcia McHugh. We were pleased with the response to this new format and look forward to announcing the upcoming year’s speakers and topics soon.

Both our Basic and Advanced Formation processes continued with a surge in enrollment. The diocese has offered formation for adults in some variation for at least 45 years. It has changed over the years, and change is once again on

See REFLECT, Page 6

Prayer intentions of the Holy Father

JUNE

For the values of sports. Let us pray that sports be an instrument of peace, encounter, and dialogue among cultures and nations, and that they promote values such as respect, solidarity, and personal growth.



Intenciones de oración del Santo Padre

JUNIO

Por los valores del deporte. Oremos para que el deporte sea un instrumento de paz, encuentro y diálogo entre culturas y naciones y para que promueva valores como el respeto, la solidaridad y la superación personal.

CLERGY, continued

- 20 Rev. Serafin Avenido (O — 1977)
- 20 Deacon William Smith (D — 2003)
- 22 Rev. Ruben Covos (B)
- 22 Rev. Msgr. Alvin Wilde (D — 1996)
- 23 Deacon Thomas Martinez (O — 2018)
- 23 Deacon Andrew Davis (O — 2018)
- 23 Deacon Thomas Flores (O — 2018)
- 23 Deacon José Gallegos (O — 2018)
- 23 Deacon Edward Gonzalez (O — 2018)
- 23 Deacon Joel Gutierrez (O — 2018)
- 23 Deacon Jesse Martinez (O — 2018)
- 23 Deacon David Mendez (O — 2018)
- 23 Deacon Orlando Mendoza (O — 2018)
- 23 Deacon Alan Pelzel (O — 2018)
- 23 Deacon John Rangel (O — 2018)
- 23 Deacon Floyd Schwartz (O — 2018)
- 23 Deacon Ronald Stegenga (O — 2018)
- 23 Deacon José Villagrana (O — 2018)
- 23 Deacon Bobby Wright (O — 2018)

- 24 Rev. Msgr. Maurice Voity (O — 1979)
- 25 Rev. Bill DuBuisson, OMI (D — 2015)
- 26 Deacon Victor Belman (O — 2004)
- 26 Deacon William Brady (O — 2004)
- 26 Deacon Bill Butler (O — 2004)
- 26 Deacon Abel Fernandez (O — 2004)
- 26 Deacon Paul Hinojos (O — 2004)
- 26 Deacon Charles Lambert (O — 2004)
- 26 Deacon Victor Lopez (O — 2004)
- 26 Deacon Mike Medina (O — 2004)
- 26 Deacon Jesse Ortiz (O — 2004)
- 26 Deacon Harry Pelto (O — 2004)
- 26 Deacon Alexander Perez (O — 2004)
- 26 Deacon Salvador Primera (O — 2004)
- 26 Deacon Reuben Reyes (O — 2004)
- 26 Deacon Felix Segura (O — 2004)
- 26 Deacon Alex Sosa (O — 2004)
- 26 Deacon Sador Sotelo (O — 2004)
- 26 Deacon Clemente Villa (O — 2004)
- 26 Deacon Ignacio Villa (O — 2004)
- 27 Rev. Ignatius Edet (O — 2001)

- 28 Rev. Tom Barley (B)
- 28 Bishop Stephen Leven (D — 1983)
- 29 Deacon Joseph Lopez (D — 2021)
- 29 Rev. Joseph Ogbonna (O — 2002)
- 29 Rev. Richard Regan (O — 1985)

July

- 2 Rev. Bernard Degan, CM (D — 2001)
- 2 Deacon Floyd Frankson (D — 1992)
- 2 Rev. Jeevan Kamalapuram (B)
- 4 Rev. Msgr. Charles Dvorak (D — 1963)
- 4 Deacon Michael Kahlig (B)
- 5 Rev. Ray Wilhelm, OMI (D — 2006)
- 5 Rev. Joseph Ogbonna (B)
- 5 Rev. Peter Voelker, C.Ss.R. (D — 2025)
- 6 Deacon Gary Rhodes (B)
- 7 Deacon Alex Sosa (B)
- 10 Rev. Emil J. Gerlich (D — 1969)
- 12 Rev. Michael Udegbumam (O — 1981)

- 14 Deacon Joel Gutierrez (B)
- 14 Deacon Bobby Wright, Jr. (B)
- 17 Deacon Andrew Davis (B)
- 17 Rev. Tony Franco (B)
- 17 Deacon Enrique Martinez (B)
- 17 Rev. George Varakukala (D — 2020)
- 18 Deacon Gerald Schwalb (D — 2022)
- 19 Rev. Msgr. Andrew Marthaler (D — 1984)
- 19 Bishop Michael Sis (O — 1986)
- 21 Rev. Michael Rodriguez (B)
- 22 Bishop Thomas J. Drury (D — 1992)
- 25 Deacon Abel Campos (D — 2002)
- 26 Deacon José Rosales (D — 2000)
- 27 Rev. Joe Barbieri (B)
- 27 Rev. John Kuehner (O — 2003)
- 27 Deacon Victor Lopez (B)
- 27 Deacon Scott Randolph (B)
- 28 Rev. Frank Chavez (B)
- 29 Deacon Jesus Napoles (B)
- 31 Deacon Ignacio Villa (B)

Reporting Sexual Abuse

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

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

Reportar Abuso Sexual

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

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

Honoring those who inspire others

By Alison Pope

When we take time to recognize individuals, we do more than celebrate accomplishments — we strengthen the values of service, dedication, and perseverance that often inspires others to contribute to the needs of the community. While the Office of Evangelization and Catechesis does what we can to recognize some of these amazing individuals in our parishes each spring, we realize that there are many others in our parishes contributing in amazing ways. Our hope is that we can inspire parishes to continue recognizing the volunteers and staff that help their ministries succeed.

This year, certificates of appreciation were awarded to the following adults for their hard work as catechists:

- Oscar Masga (Holy Family Parish, Abilene)
- Jennifer Davis (Holy Family Parish, Abilene)
- Dcn. Alonzo Landin (Holy Family Parish, Abilene)
- Jennifer Hernandez (Holy Family Parish, Abilene)

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

- Jose Garcia (St. Joseph Parish, San Angelo)
- Ezekiel Hernandez (Holy Family Parish, Abilene)
- Natalia Tapia (St. Joseph Parish, San Angelo)
- Maria Lara (St. Joseph Parish, San Angelo)
- Brenda Gomez (St. Vincent Pallotti Parish, Abilene)
- John Henry Donnelly (Holy Family Parish, Abilene)
- Wes Neinast (Holy Family Parish, Abilene)

This year our staff visited three parishes to present the recipients their awards in front of the faith communities to which they contribute. The Timothy Award is presented to one youth in the diocese, grades 7–10, who exhibits leadership in their parish, school, and civic community settings, demonstrates Gospel values through service to others, and witnesses to their faith by living as a disciple of Christ, setting an example in Catholic morals and integrity. The 2026 Timothy Award has been awarded to Toby Garcia from Holy Family Parish, Abilene. As shared by the person who nominated him, “Toby exemplifies what it means to live as a disciple of Christ in every aspect of his life. His leadership, servant heart, and commitment to including and uplifting others set him apart as a role model. Toby consistently reflects humility, compassion, and joy. He is an example of faithful discipleship.”

The Companion on the Journey Award for Catechetical Ministry is presented to an adult who has shown excellence in catechetical ministry as reflected in the Directory for Catechesis, shows a commitment to ongoing education and formation, and shows outstanding leadership at the local, diocesan, and/or national level. The 2026 Companion on the Journey Award for Catechetical Ministry has been awarded to Vanessa Sanchez of Our Lady of Lourdes Parish, Andrews. As shared in her nomination, “Vanessa has shown her commitment to not only serving the people of her parish, but in growing in her own faith and knowledge. She shows resilience and professionalism, even in challenging circumstances. She has a heart for the students and families she serves and is always looking to do what is in their best interest.”

The Companion on the Journey Award for Youth Ministry is presented to an adult who has shown excellence in youth ministry leadership as reflected in Renewing the Vision, shows a commitment to ongoing education and formation, has a longevity in ministry, and shows leadership and participation at a local, diocesan, and/or national level. The 2026 Companion on the Journey Award for Youth Ministry is awarded to Cindy Bentfield of St. Therese, Carlsbad. As shared in her nomination, “The joy and enthusiasm Cindy has for the youth is evident. Cindy is always seeking to learn more — whether for her own faith development or so that she can better serve the teens. She is open to new ideas and not afraid to think outside the box while still helping the young people to encounter the person of Jesus Christ.”

Congratulations to the 2026 award recipients and thank you to those who took the time to recognize those who were nominated. For more information on nominations for future awards, contact the Office of Evangelization and Catechesis. Nominations are accepted in the spring and awards are usually given out near the end of the academic year. While the youth must be nominated by their parish DRE, CRE, CYM, or pastor, adults can be nominated by anybody from throughout the diocese.



Cindy Bentfield (center) of St. Therese Parish in Carlsbad was this year’s winner of the Companion on the Journey Award for Youth Ministry. Presenting the award was Angela Garcia of the Office of Evangelization and Catechesis, joined by parish pastor Father Joe Barbieri.

COURTESY



Above: Toby Garcia (right) of Holy Family Parish in Abilene was awarded the Timothy Award this year. The award was presented by Kelly Tyler of the Office of Evangelization and Catechesis.



Left: Vanessa Sanchez (center) of Our Lady of Lourdes Parish in Andrews received this year’s Companion on the Journey Award for Catechetical Ministry. Presenting was Alison Pope of the Office of Evangelization and Catechesis, joined by parish pastor Father Joseph Ogbonna.

COURTESY

Now hiring: Midland/Odessa campus minister

Under the Office of Evangelization and Catechesis and with established policies and procedures, the Campus Minister’s primary responsibilities are planning and implementing programs and activities related to campus ministry outreach. Such duties include but are not limited to: planning and coordinating social, spiritual, and educational opportunities geared toward college students; offer spiritual companionship; inviting students to events; accompany students in their faith journey; maintaining

member database; promoting the Campus Ministry to the university and colleges, parishes, and general community; supervising and mentoring student leaders; acting as a liaison to university administrations. Through a comprehensive pastoral approach, this role helps students encounter Christ and grow as disciples in the Catholic faith. Applications/Resumes should be sent to kpickens@sanangelodiocese.org. See the full job description at <https://sanangelodiocese.org/employment>.

REFLECT

Continued from Page 5

the horizon. After a few years of evaluating our current offering, seeking feedback, and exploring alternatives, we were pleased to recently share our new formation offerings that will begin this fall. The new program will be Foundations of Faith. We shared more details about this change in the April edition of the West Texas Angelus. We hope the changes will allow more flexibility in how the people of our diocese are able to engage these offerings. We continued our efforts to engage people in understanding the foundations of catechesis and youth ministry with our Essentials for Catechesis and Essentials for Youth Ministry. These were formerly known as Leadership Training for Catechesis and Leadership Training for Youth Ministry. These programs, while separate, both have the same goal — to help people become more aware of the foundational documents for catechesis and youth ministry, respectively, and what that means for our parish programs. In January, we were approached about an opportunity to host a workshop at no cost to us or the attendees. This workshop was entitled Engaging the Marginally Engaged Parent and was graciously sponsored by EQSaints. They had previously received a grant that allowed them to gather data on how parents engage their children’s faith. The second grant allowed them to offer workshops to share their findings and some practical tips. We were hon-

ored to be one of a handful of dioceses to whom this workshop was offered. We were able to host this workshop in both San Angelo and Midland. While this opportunity was not in our original plan for the year, we felt it was an important topic that would be beneficial to the people of our diocese. Another way our staff serves the diocese is with parish visits. These visits are done at the invitation of the parish staff or pastor and can cover a variety of topics. Some of our parish visits this year included a three-day catechist workshop, training for new staff, and evaluation of current programs. Every year, we are honored to give our five diocesan awards and numerous certificates of recognition. A change we made last year was to present the awards to the recipients at their parish at a Sunday Mass. We felt it was important for the people of the parish to see the great things being done by those in their community. Be on the lookout for a separate article that shares more about this year’s award recipients. Every May we offer a Day of Reflection to our religious education/faith formation leaders, youth ministry leaders, campus ministers, and Catholic school principals, as well as any of their volunteers or team members they want to invite. This day is a chance for them to step away from the busyness the spring brings and focus on themselves and their relationship with God. This year we welcomed Cooper Ray as our facilitator for the day, and our focus was Philippians 1:6, “The one who began a good

work in you will continue to complete it until the day of Christ Jesus.” While the actual event is still a year away, we are in the throes of planning for World Youth Day 2027. When competing with close to one million people for flights and lodging, the planning must start early. Registration for this trip is open and the deadline to secure your spot is this August. In addition to all of these “normal, day-to-day” things that take up our time, our staff are also members of regional and national organizations and participate in their meetings and conferences. We also meet three times a year with our Office of Evangelization and Catechesis Advisory Committee. This group of individuals help to give feedback and input, as well as carry out the initiatives of our department. While not a completely exhaustive list of what we have done this academic year, it helps us — and you — to see the many things offered to the people of our diocese. We have already been planning for a few months for the 2026–2027 academic year, and we invite you to look for more information on our social media or the diocesan website. Our staff is always happy to answer your questions and help you take advantage of our various offerings. See sanangelodiocese.org/evangelization-and-catechesis.

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Alison Pope is Director of the Office of Evangelization and Catechesis for the Diocese of San Angelo.

‘We want whatever you have’ – Teams of Our Lady seek holiness in marriage

By Felipe D’Avillez
The Pillar

In 1938, a young French couple approached their parish priest, Father Henri Caffarel, asking for advice on how they could grow together spiritually within their marriage. After praying about the request, Caffarel — who had only been a priest for eight years — went on to form a group of four couples who committed to regular meetings where they would talk and pray together. The “Caffarel groups” multiplied as the word spread, eventually developing into Teams of Our Lady (TOL), a Catholic movement to provide spiritual growth to couples within their marriages.

Caffarel believed firmly that those called to marriage should seek sanctity within that vocation. “There is no need to look elsewhere in order to progress towards the Lord: marriage is a sacred way and the Christian family is a living cell of the Church,” he once said.

Decades later, the movement has become truly global. “Currently, there are teams in 92 countries, for a total of 74,635 couples. In the United States, we have close to 800 teams, and it’s growing,” said TJ Holt, who is part of the International Leading Team along with his wife Ellen. The Holts, who live in Texas, are tasked with accompanying the movement in English-speaking countries. In a conversation with *The Pillar*, they explained the origin of the movement’s name: “A good team supports each other. People bring their strengths for the benefit of others. And that is embodied in the name of Teams of Our Lady, because it is really intended that we help each other.”

The building block of the TOL movement is the base team, which is composed of about six or seven couples and a spiritual counselor, who is usually a priest or religious. The team gathers once a month at one of the couple’s homes for a meal, prayer, and discussion.

“You come together for a very simple meal — the host couple has a main dish, another couple brings a salad, another couple brings dessert; you share things that have been going well and things that have not been going so well, we call that the ‘highs and lows’; there is a time for prayer, and finally discussion of a study topic,” Ellen said. Between meetings, couples are expected to pray together and read Scripture together. They are also expected to go on a yearly retreat and have a “sit-down,” where the husband and wife set aside some time to talk about the issues affecting them, their family, and their spiritual life.

“The purpose of those is really for the couple to grow in holiness. That is the foundation of the movement,” said Ellen.

Over time, the Holts explained, what may have begun as a group of disparate couples with little in common coalesces into a strong community. “Our team has been together for 26 years. We’ve supported each other in good times and in bad,” TJ said. “The team has become a place where we can talk about challenges that we’ve been having, whether it be about raising our children, helping with aging parents or financial problems — things we all face.”

“And one of the things that’s comforting is understanding that it’s not always easy. Our sacrament of marriage is not always easy. There’s always challenges,” he said.

“Couples that don’t have that understanding think they’re the only ones in that situation, and that if they’re fighting, they can’t reconcile. But when they hear about other people who have gone through the same struggles, they don’t feel like they’re isolated and that it’s unusual. It’s important that they know that it is a challenge, but it’s worth working on. Father Caffarel used to say that mar-

riage has a soul and it is love. And to neglect love is to condemn marriage.” TJ and Ellen believe that the persistent focus on sanctity in their marriage has borne fruit. “We have couples come to us and say: ‘We don’t know what you’re doing, but we want whatever you have.’ That’s weird for us, because we don’t feel like we’re anything special. But we share about how we’re part of TOL.” The vast majority of teams around the world are accompanied by a priest. Though his main role is to provide advice and spiritual guidance, he is a full member of the team, expected to share his highs and lows during meetings as well. Father Nuno Coelho, a parish priest in Cascais, Lisbon, currently accompanies four teams, as well as being on the TOL board that serves Portuguese-speaking countries. While in seminary, he told *The Pillar*, his superiors — starting with the former Patriarch of Lisbon, Cardinal Manuel Clemente — would encourage new priests to join a team.

“He said it was important for us to build family-based relationships. As priests, of course we have our own family, but our personal and pastoral lives can lead away from regular family life. We can find that in TOL,” Coelho said. “In my case, I have teams with older couples, some my age, and some younger, so it is a fun mix. With the ones my age, we’ve been in the same team for over 20 years, since I was ordained, so we are like brothers, we’ve been through a lot, they know me very well and we are good friends. With the younger ones it’s more of a pastoral relationship, but still very close.”

“Over the years I’ve done baptisms, funerals, 20th wedding anniversaries, birthday celebrations, and I’ve become just one more member of their families.” Being close to families has been a blessing in his own priestly ministry, Coelho said.

“When we reflect on the Word of God, we do so from life experience, and the more familiar we are with the lives of those around us, the better we can connect with them,” he said. “Having this experience of family life, learning about the difficulties of educating children, family illness, the dramas and the joys, the stress, the struggle to take three restless kids to Mass... These are perspectives of Church life that we [priests] are not used to, and with TOL we learn to experience them through the couples.”

The children within the group often form deep bonds of friendship as well. “One Fourth of July, our team met, and we were going to watch the fireworks,” Ellen recalled, “the adults were talking, and we looked over and the kids had formed a circle on a blanket and they were basically doing the highs and lows, sharing things that had been going well, or not so well. We were all just so surprised.”

Coelho said the children in his group see him as a friend. “I’ve been asked to be a confirmation sponsor, some just come around to the parish to chat, it’s been such a fruitful experience.”

One of the particularities of the movement, he said, is that couples will often find themselves in the same team as others who have a very different spiritual background.

“My teams have people who are involved in Opus Dei, and others who are closer to the Jesuits; some are active in the Scouts, others in the Neocatechumenal Way, and there are others who are new to the faith or had no connection to a particular charism,” he said.

“And this is a richness for the team, because nobody is there to defend their particular vision, they are there to prayerfully help and support each other. That helps to build personal bridges which then become spiritual bridges.”

Teams of Our Lady is active in the Diocese of San Angelo!

To learn more, visit www.teamsofourlady.org

The priest added that in his experience, couples who are active in TOL tend to be more service-oriented than other families.

“We find them teaching Sunday School, guiding youth groups, on the boards of charities, doing baptism or marriage preparation courses,” he said.

The Holts agreed, saying many members of their team are active at the parish. “Some are on vocations committees, some are supporting OCIA and prison ministries, and some do the perpetual adoration ministry, and things of that nature. That’s why we pray the Magnificat [the official prayer of the movement] every day, so that we can be like our Holy Mother and say yes.”

The inclination to serve is not a coincidence, but is a natural fruit of the movement, according to Caffarel, who said that “if the Teams of Our Lady are not a seedbed of men and women ready to take on courageously all their responsibilities in the Church and in society, they lose their *raison d’etre*.”

During the Second Vatican Council, Caffarel was appointed a consultant to the Apostolate of the Laity. In this role, he addressed the Council Fathers, asking them to give attention to the importance of family and married life.

“Married Christians are, for the most part, convinced that Christian perfection is not for them. This, once again, is the view of too many priests. That error is fatal: the person who is not aiming at perfection soon slides into mediocrity, into sin. One has here one of the explanations for the current decline of Christian marriage,” he said in one address.

“Against this, what an impetus would one not create if one brought to the notice of couples Christ’s call to perfection, if one taught them that the essence of this perfection is to be found in Love, and not [only] in the vows of the religious life, and that in itself marriage not only is not an obstacle but is a means of arriving at the perfecting of that Love.”

Caffarel died in 1996. On March 23 this year, the Vatican officially recognized his heroic virtues, granting him the title Venerable.

The news came as no surprise for many who have had close contact with his charism. In recent years, in an effort to highlight his legacy, the movement has been asking TOL members to revisit some of his writings, which often contain practical recommendations and advice on prayer and marriage.

Though some of these writings are over 80 years old, couples are often surprised by how they still resonate today, TJ said.

“What we’ve come to find out is that it doesn’t really matter where you are in the world; as married couples, we all face many of the same challenges, and we all want the same thing: we want what’s best for our spouse and what’s best for us as a couple.”

- - -

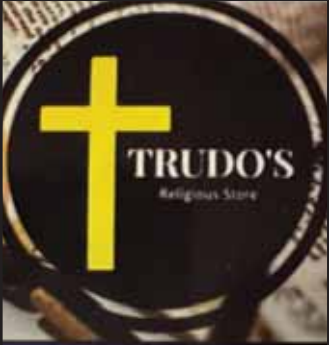
This article originally appeared on The Pillar. See www.pillaratholic.com.



Holy Angels Parish in San Angelo is very proud of the 23 children and youth who received their first holy Communion on Sunday, April 19, at the 11:00 a.m. Mass. May the Holy Spirit inspire them to love and serve one another in God’s Church. Please pray for these children of God.

COURTESY

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The deadline to apply is July 15, 2026.

Applications are available at www.cliu.com. Founded in 1901, Catholic Life Insurance offers life insurance, IRAs, and annuities to individuals and businesses.

Marian conference returns to San Antonio next month with nationally-known speakers

SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS – Pilgrim Center of Hope announces the historic return of its Marian Conference on Friday and Saturday, July 24–25, 2026, at the Boeing Center at Tech Port in San Antonio, marking the USA’s 250th anniversary under the patronage of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Mother of Hope Marian Conference, an event centered around Jesus Christ through interest in the Blessed Virgin Mary, will feature nationally-known speakers at the Boeing Center in San Antonio’s Tech Port, built on land formerly occupied by Kelly Air Force Base.

Speakers will include the Chaplain of the only Church-approved Marian apparition site in the United States, Our Lady of Champion; as well as Franciscan Friar of the Renewal Fr. Jeremiah Myriam Shryock, whose books include Mary and the Interior Life. He is slated to present on “Becoming Another Mary for Jesus” and "The Rosary: A Spiritual Masterpiece.”

Featured speakers also include former SiriusXM radio host and founder of Rosary Army apostolate Greg Willits, Ethics and Public Policy Center fellow Noelle Mering, theologian Dr. Leonora Butau, and others.

San Antonio archbishop Most Rev. Gustavo García-Siller, M.Sp.S. (Missionary of the Holy Spirit), will preside at Saturday morning Mass. Opportunities to receive the healing sacrament of reconciliation and participate in a Eucharistic adoration service will also be available.

San Antonio was formerly the home of Marian Conferences that attracted thousands from various faiths, organized in the 1990s by the Marian Center of San Antonio and Pilgrim Center of Hope, a Catholic nonprofit. Speakers varied from Trinity Baptist Church pastor Buckner Fanning, to former NFL manager and Ronald McDonald House founder Jim Murray, to award-winning singer and actress Lola Falana. The conferences ended after the Jubilee Year 2000 introduced new ministry opportunities for the organizing committee.

However, according to co-director Mary Jane Fox, upon noticing increased interest in Pilgrim Center of Hope’s media content about the Blessed Virgin Mary over the last several years, the organization decided during the 2025 Jubilee (themed by Pope Francis, "Pilgrims of Hope") to revive the Marian Conference under the title "Mother of Hope" beginning in 2026.

“The Blessed Virgin Mary helps us draw closer to Jesus in a way no other person can," Fox remarked. “All are welcome. This conference will forever be a part of history!”

Music, vendors, and two exhibitions—about the Virgin Mary and the Shroud of Turin respectively—are set to provide attendees with further “opportunities to receive spiritual tools and live with hope,” Fox added.

Details and registration are available at MotherOfHopeConference.com or by calling Pilgrim Center of Hope at 210-521-3377.

Liturgical rites and symbols reveal God's presence, Pope Leo says

By Josephine Peterson
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY — The rites and symbols of the liturgy are not arbitrary ceremonies but the means through which Catholics encounter God and are formed in faith, Pope Leo XIV said June 3.

Continuing his series on the Second Vatican Council's *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, Sacrosanctum Concilium*, the pope reflected on the role of rites, signs, and symbols in Catholic worship during his weekly general audience in St. Peter's Square.

"The rites of the Christian liturgy are not a mere external covering of the sacramental mystery, a collection of arbitrary ceremonies, but are the ecclesial mediation through which the divine gift reaches us," he said.

The pope said liturgical rites shape the spiritual lives of believers, teaching them to recognize God's presence and participate more fully in the life of the Church.

"Rite gives shape to liturgical action and, through it, to our lives, generating in us a spiritual sensibility that makes us capable of savoring the presence of God through Jesus Christ," he said.

Catholics are called to participate in the liturgy with their "body, mind, and heart," the pope said, allowing themselves to be formed through listening to Scripture, giving thanks, adoration, fraternal sharing, and communion.

He added that while the structure of the liturgy may seem at odds with modern preferences for spontaneity, its rhythms help believers step away from a culture focused on productivity and rediscover what is essential.

"In the rite we experience a logic of gratuitousness, we find a pause that regenerates the heart, we recognize that we are preceded by divine grace, we learn to live in a rhythm in-

habited by the Holy Spirit," he said.

Turning to signs and symbols, Pope Leo cited the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, which teaches that their meaning is rooted in creation, human culture, and salvation history, and fully revealed in Christ.

He pointed to water as one of Christianity's most significant symbols, recalling its role in the story of creation, the flood, the crossing of the Red Sea and the Jordan River, and the water flowing from Christ's side at his death.

"When we are sprinkled with holy water, our awareness of the gift received at baptism and our commitment to new life in Christ is re-kindled," he said.

The pope also highlighted symbolic actions such as kneeling and exchanging the sign of peace, saying they foster a sense of belonging and help create "authentic ecclesial relationships."

Quoting Pope Francis' apostolic letter *Desiderio Desideravi*, Pope Leo said Christians must once again become capable of understanding symbols and allowing themselves to be educated by the Church's liturgical rites.

The experience of a living and devout liturgy, accompanied by sound catechesis, remains "the best resource for reawakening in everyone that openness to the encounter with God," he said.

In his greeting to English-speaking pilgrims, the pope encouraged Catholics to rediscover the signs and symbols of the liturgy as the church prepares to celebrate the feast of Corpus Christi. Greeting Polish pilgrims, he said Eucharistic processions should be "a courageous witness of faith" that reminds people God remains present among his people and accompanies them in daily life. He also encouraged Italian-speaking pilgrims to keep alive "this beautiful expression of public witness to the faith."



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Rural Life Mass 2026

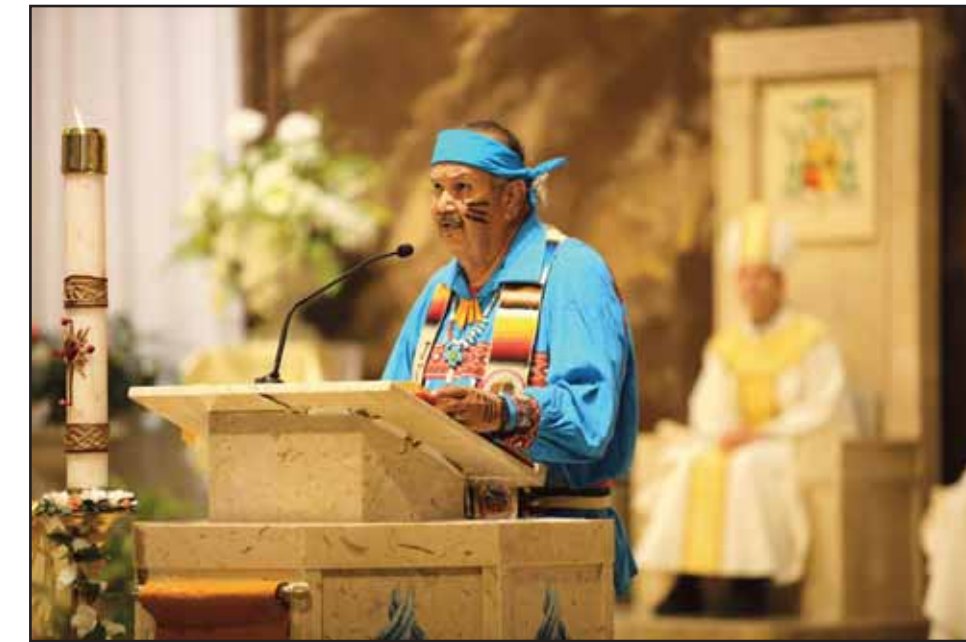
This year's Rural Life Mass was held at the Hoelscher Rock Pit near Garden City and St. Lawrence May 15. The Rural Life Mass is held each year on May 15, the feast of St. Isidore the Farmer, in a different location in the diocese that showcases an aspect of rural life that is important to the local economy.

This year's Mass was the 25th Rural Life Mass in the Diocese of San Angelo.



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Celebrating the Lady in Blue



WEST TEXAS ANGELUS PHOTOS

People gathered from around Texas and beyond May 16 to honor Sor María de Jesús de Ágreda, also known as The Lady in Blue, a 17th-century nun in Spain who somehow mystically traveled to the American Southwest to instruct indigenous people in the Catholic faith. An all-day conference that included speakers and descendants of the Jumano people who reported encountering the Lady in Blue. The day's events concluded with Mass and a rosary procession from the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart to a statue of Sor María de Jesús de Ágreda located nearby on the Concho River in downtown San Angelo.



The school year is over, and the 8th-grade class of St. Mary's Central Catholic School in Odessa has advanced. The students in the photo are officially off to high school next year.

COURTESY

Great American Catholics — Dorothy Day: Catholic Worker founder pioneered a faith-based alternative to secularist progressivism

By Russell Shaw
OSV News

In one of his more snarky stories about clerical life — it's called "The Forks" — the American Catholic writer J.F. Powers capsulizes the fraught relationship between a stuffy, self-important pastor and his young curate in a single, prickly sentence: "He found Father Eudex reading *The Catholic Worker* one day and had not trusted him since."

There was a time when many Catholics, not just stuffy pastors, held the same view of Dorothy Day and her group: dangerous. Some still may. But the Church is thinking of declaring her a saint.

Day was co-founder of the Catholic Worker movement and longtime editor of the penny-a-copy newspaper of the same name. From the mid-1930s to the early 1980s,

she preached radical Christianity and no less radical social activism to a sometimes appreciative, sometimes puzzled, sometimes angry audience of American Catholics. The gospel according to Day was a heady mix of the inspiring and the infuriating.

Historian Charles Morris says she "transformed the social conscience of a whole generation of young clergy." To which one might add: lay intellectuals, writers, and journalists, too. The effort to have her canonized is moving, slowly but apparently steadily, ahead.

This ex-communist who had an abortion and several love affairs might not have entirely welcomed that. "Don't call me a saint," she once said. "I don't want to be dismissed so easily."

Dorothy Day was born Nov. 8, 1897, in Brooklyn. Her parents had been married in an Episcopal ceremony but seldom went to church. Her father, a sportswriter, moved the family to San Francisco to take a job with a newspaper, but the San Francisco earthquake of 1906 wiped out the paper and the elder Day's job, and the family shifted to Chicago.

There the young girl showed her first interest in religion and was baptized and confirmed in the Episcopal Church. Around this time, too, she got what she later called her "first impulse toward Catholicism" — the sight of a Catholic friend's mother kneeling in her bedroom at prayer.

"For many a night after that," Day writes in her 1952 autobiography *The Long Loneliness*, "I used to plague my sister with my long prayers ... So we began to practice being saints; it was a game with us."

At age 15, she started having doubts about religion. On the one hand, she saw churchgoers who were well off. On the other, she saw the poor. "I did not see anyone taking off his coat and giving it to the poor. I didn't see anyone having a banquet and calling in the lame, the halt, and the blind."

At the University of Illinois, Day joined the Socialist party. Leaving the university after two years, she headed back to New York, where she wrote for Socialist publications, was active in radical causes that included feminism and free love, and pursued a Bohemian lifestyle among artists and activists. In 1917 she was arrested for picketing for women's suffrage at the White House and spent 15 days in jail.

Her friends at this time included playwright Eugene O'Neill and prominent communists, with one of whom she had an affair. After still another affair, around 1920 or



OSV NEWS PHOTO | COURTESY MILWAUKEE JOURNAL
Dorothy Day, co-founder of the Catholic Worker Movement, is pictured in an undated photo.

1921, she had an abortion. Thereafter, she married briefly, published a semi-autobiographical novel whose screen rights she sold to Hollywood for \$2,500, and bought herself a Staten Island beach cottage where she lived from 1925 to 1929 with a man named Forster Batterham.

In 1926, Day gave birth to a daughter whom she named Tamar. Now her old interest in Catholicism not only revived but intensified. She met a nun named Sister Aloysia, had her baby baptized, and studied the faith. Forster didn't like it, and the two split. On Dec. 28, 1927, Day was received into the Catholic Church with Sister Aloysia as her sponsor.

See DAY, Page 19

Is 6 months of donations to a parish a normal requirement for baptizing a baby in the parish?

Q: I'm a lifelong Catholic who recently gave birth after moving to a new city. When I went to our local parish to ask about having our baby baptized, the parish secretary said they would need a record of six months of parish offertory envelopes with our name on it. But we haven't been at this parish for that long. Is six months of envelopes a normal requirement in most places? I was always taught that you should baptize a baby right away.

A: You are correct that the Church teaches that newborn infants should be baptized as soon as reasonably possible. While the Church doesn't give us a strict time limit, Canon 867 of the *Code of Canon Law* indicates that: "Parents are obliged to see that their infants are baptized within the first few weeks (of life)."

At the same time, under normal circumstances it is to be expected that a parish would be reluctant to baptize an infant without having some pastoral contact with the parents beforehand.

This is also envisioned in the Church's law, which tells us: "The celebration of baptism should be properly prepared. Accordingly ... the parents of a child who is to be baptized, and those who are to undertake the office of sponsors (godparents), are to be suitably instructed on the meaning of this sacrament and the obligations attaching to it" (Canon 851).

In light of this, Canon 867 goes on to state: "As soon as possible after the birth, indeed even before it, (the parents) are to approach the parish priest to ask for the sacrament for their child, and to be themselves duly prepared for it."

However, it's good to keep in mind that if an infant is in danger of death, all bets are off and the child should be baptized immediately, regardless of whether or not the parents have been "suitably instructed" (See Canon 867, 2). And in this kind of scenario anyone with the proper intention, even layperson or a non-Catholic, can validly and licitly confer baptism (Canon 861, 2).

But even in normal situations where there is no immediate danger of death, canon law does not mandate any particular formation program for the parents of an infant to be baptized, nor does it specify any particular length of time for pre-baptismal instruction.

Also, while the Church desires that parents be duly in-



Jenna Marie Cooper
OSV News

Question Corner

structed on the obligations that arise from the baptism of their infant, the Church does not require any special degree of parental holiness. And technically, the parents do not even have to be practicing Catholics in order to have their infant child baptized in the Catholic Church! The minimum requirement for an infant to be baptized is that at least one parent consent to the baptism, and that there is a "founded hope" — meaning that such a hope is not "altogether lacking" — the child will be raised Catholic (Canon 868).

Regarding your personal situation, obviously I only know the minimal details of what you have shared here. But my guess is that your parish was confusing the eligibility for infant baptism with the higher bar of eligibility for something like serving as a godparent.

My thought is that your parish was probably using the envelope system as a way to verify that you are a practicing Catholic. Because if they were requiring monetary contribution as a condition for your child to be baptized, then this would veer into the sin and canonical crime of simony (the crime of buying or selling a sacrament or other spiritual good; see Canon 1380).

My advice is to try to speak to the pastor of your parish directly and explain your situation. But at the end of the day, the priority is to have your baby baptized as soon as possible. So if your pastor is unwilling to budge on the six-month timeline, you might consider approaching other parishes or even reaching out to your diocese.

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

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POPULAR ENGLISH PROGRAMS

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

8:00 AM – Catholic Connections - Teresa Tomeo

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

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

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

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

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

2:00 PM – *EWTN Open Line*

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

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

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

8:00 PM – *EWTN Nightly News*

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Matt Talbot, from drunk teen to venerable

Matt Talbot would be the first one to tell you that he was no saint. What he was, was a drunk. Like so many people, drink for Matt was an escape from the grinding poverty that put him into the workforce at age 12. He was born in Dublin, Ireland, on May 2, 1856, and had just one year of schooling and could not read or write. There was no compulsory education in Ireland in the mid-19th century. He found a job at a firm which bottled beer. One biographer wrote that he began drinking the dregs from the bottom of the returned bottles. He started drinking whiskey at age 16 and began coming home drunk regularly, like his father who was also a heavy drinker. For the next several years, drink was Matt’s only interest. He spent all his money at the pub and even found extra work to support his addiction, but it was never enough. He had a rude awakening one day when he was 28. He was standing outside the pub hoping his friends would stand him to a drink because he had no money at all. But one by one they passed him by and rejected him. He was stunned and realized then how he was totally enslaved by drink (“The Story of Matt Talbot” from the Dublin Diocese). He decided to make a radical change in his life: he would try to stop drinking. Kenneth Woodward in his book, *Making Saints*, calls this a “moral miracle” in Matt’s life — an event of extraordinary grace which produces a moral or spiritual transformation.



Mary Lou Gibson
Speaking of Saints

It was the custom in 19th century Ireland for a person who wanted to stop drinking to take a solemn pledge before a priest to abstain for a period of time. Matt’s priest recommended that he take the pledge for 90 days. To fight the temptation to drink, he never carried any money with him and began to take long walks in the evening, stopping in churches to rest. Gradually, he began to pray and to attend daily Mass. More time passed. He took the pledge again for six months. Then he took the pledge for life and kept that vow for the next 41 years. Few knew of Matt Talbot’s growing spiritual life during these years. His friends knew him as a likeable, generous man who often helped people with money. He joined the Secular Franciscan Order and kept many strict penances. He prayed the rosary, attended many reli-

gious meetings, and contributed generously to the missions. He worked for many years as a builder’s helper in a lumberyard and belonged to the Transport and General Workers Union. When he died of a heart attack on his way to church on Trinity Sunday on June 7, 1925, it wasn’t a sensational event. He was buried in a pauper’s grave in Glasnevin Cemetery a few days later. Pope Paul VI gave Matt Talbot the title of Venerable in 1975 and set his feast day on June 19. He is currently awaiting the approval of a miracle for beatification. There are a number of Matt Talbot houses, inns, and centers around the world to treat alcoholics and other addicts. In the U.S., the Matt Talbot Retreat Movement began in 1944 and has held programs for thousands of men and women. It is based in Eatontown, NJ. The retreats are open to recovering alcoholics regardless of religion, sex, race, color, or creed. (http://www.matttalbotretreats.org/history_of_mt.htm) Note: The Matt Talbot community kitchen and outreach center has served in Lincoln, Nebraska, for over 30 years. It provides meals, housing support, and addresses addiction and provides outreach and advocacy. - - - Mary Lou Gibson writes about the saints for the West Texas Angelus from her home in Austin.

Something we all can do

Many times we are tempted to compare ourselves to others or what they may have. When we do, it is most likely that we either feel “less than,” often with no possibility of gaining equality, OR, we fall into the feeling of the superiority trap that Jesus so clearly warned against when he said, “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and the great ones make their authority over them felt. But it shall not be so among you. Rather, whoever wishes to be great among you shall be your servant; whoever wishes to be first among you shall be your slave” (Mt 20:25–27). In Luke’s Gospel, Jesus similarly teaches this lesson in another way: “He then addressed this parable to those who were convinced of their own righteousness and despised everyone else. ‘Two people went up to the temple area to pray; one was a Pharisee and the other was a tax collector. The Pharisee took up his position and spoke this prayer to himself, “O God, I thank you that I am not like the rest of humanity—greedy, dishonest, adulterous—or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week, and I pay tithes on my whole income.” But the tax collector stood off at a distance and would not even raise his eyes to heaven but beat his breast and prayed, “O God, be merciful to me a sinner.” I tell you, the latter went home justified, not the former; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and the one who humbles himself will be exalted” (Lk 18:9–14). While the world places value on materialism and status, there is a truth to keep in mind ... “If there is something someone has that you don’t have or something they can do that you can’t do, or on the other hand, something you have that they don’t have or something you can do that someone else can’t do, then it is not something that is required to get to heaven.” This truth eliminates money, materialism, special abilities, education, sight, possessions, body type, family of origin, sex, race, and just about everything else, including gifts of the Holy Spirit. God wants all of us to be united with him for all eternity; therefore, getting to heaven must require things we all can do. We clearly have a responsibility to use any



James R. Sulliman, PhD

and all of the gifts we have been given to bring ourselves and others closer to God, but gifts are meant to unite us, not divide us because of jealousy or even a hint of superiority. Think about it. What are things we all can do, unless significant brain impairment puts us completely in God’s hands? 1. We can all pray. We can especially pray all four mysteries of the rosary each day. We grow closer to one another by spending time together and sharing our thoughts and feelings. It is no different with God. Adoration chapels provide us that opportunity in a very special way. Or NOT, because we can all choose to turn away from God. 2. We can all forgive. Jesus emphasized how important this is in his prayer when he tells us “If you forgive others their transgressions, your heavenly Father will forgive you. But if you do not forgive others, neither will your Father forgive your transgressions” (Mt 6:14–15). Or NOT, because we can all choose to not forgive. 3. We can all serve. Jesus makes the importance of that action very clear in Matthew 20:28: “Just so, the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many.” Or, NOT, because we can all choose to be self-serving, instead. 4. We can all sacrifice. Paul gave this advice to the Romans (Rom 12:1–2): “I urge you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to offer your bodies as a living sac-

rifice, holy and pleasing to God, your spiritual worship. Do not conform yourselves to this age but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and pleasing and perfect.” Or NOT, because we can all choose to avoid sacrifices. 5. We can all suffer. The pain of suffering is a great equalizer where all of us can unite our sufferings with the sufferings of Jesus so that others might be spared from pain. Or NOT, because we can waste the gift of suffering by letting it go to waste without appreciating its value. 6. We can all persevere. Perhaps my favorite lines from poetry are these from Kipling’s “If”: “If you can force your heart, and nerve, and sinew to serve their turn long after they are gone, And so hold on when there is nothing in you except the will that says to them ‘Hold on!’” Or NOT because we can all choose to quit the first time we meet an obstacle. 7. Most importantly, we can all choose to love. In Deuteronomy 6:5–6, we find these words, “Therefore, you shall love the Lord your God, with your whole heart, and with your whole being, and with your whole strength. Take to heart these words which I command you today.” Moses received the Ten Commandments from God the Father, but at his last supper, Jesus gave us an “11th” when he said, “I give you a new commandment: love one another. As I have loved you, so you also should love one another” (Jn 13:34). We can all choose to love God and others each and every day of our lives; we can all choose to be transformed into reflections of God because “God is love” (1 Jn 4:8); and we can all choose to walk in the footsteps of Jesus who embodied these seven “universals” and follow him to heaven to be forever emersed in love we can not possibly imagine. Or NOT... - - - Dr. James Sulliman has 50 years’ experience in individual, marriage, and family therapy.

10 truths every father must know about his son

As fathers, we are called to be the first prophets, priests, and kings of our homes. We often spend our lives focused on providing protection and security, but the truest measure of our strength lies in how deeply we *know* the young men we are raising. Raising a son is a sacred mission, yet it is often fraught with miscommunication, unspoken fears, and the heavy weight of legacy. It’s easy to judge our sons by the man we are, or worse, the man we wish we were. Instead, we must dedicate ourselves to seeing them as God sees them: as unique, complex souls entrusted to our guidance. Here are 10 profound truths every father must know about his son, anchored in the enduring wisdom of Scripture: **1. He craves your unconditional approval, not just your compliments.** Your son needs to know that your love is not tied to his touchdowns, his grades, or his obedience. He needs to know he is loved simply because he exists. Compliments are fleeting; approval is foundational. “And a voice came from the heavens, saying, ‘This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased’” (Mt 3:17). **2. He is fighting a private battle for identity.** Every young man is waging a war against the world’s definitions of masculinity. Is he supposed to be tough and silent, or



Robin Miller
The Family Warrior

emotionally open? Successful or humble? He is constantly asking, "Who am I?" Your stability and definition of worth must be his anchor. “God created mankind in his image; in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them” (Gn 1:27). **3. He doesn’t always need you to fix it; he needs you to listen.** When your son comes to you with a problem, your first instinct is to find a solution. But sometimes, especially as he matures, that reaction shuts him down. He needs a safe space to process his failures and frustrations without judgment or an immediate plan of attack. “Know this, my dear brothers: everyone should be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath” (Jas 1:19). **4. His quietness is not rebellion; it is contemplation.** When your son retreats into silence, do not immediately label it as withdrawal or defiance. Often, he is wrestling with big ideas, deep fears, or complicated feelings he hasn't yet learned to articulate. Give him space but remain accessible. “Be still and know that I am God! I am exalted among the nations, exalted on the earth” (Ps 46:11). **5. He learns faith best through your actions, not your sermons.** You can give a thousand lectures on prayer, honesty, and forgiveness, but if he sees you cut corners, hold grudges, or skip Mass, those actions become his real curriculum. Your integrity is his lesson plan. “For it is not those who hear the law who are just in the sight of God; rather, those who observe the law will be justified” (Rom 2:13). **6. He needs you to model humility, not perfection.** The greatest freedom you can give your son is permission to fail and admit it. When you apologize to him, to his mother, or to others, you are modeling the pathway to repentance, healing, and true strength. Perfection breeds anxiety; humility breeds resilience. “Likewise, you younger members, be subject to the presbyters. And all of you, clothe yourselves with

Catholic Voices

Human life is sacred from conception

The Bible clearly teaches that human life is sacred and precious from conception, and that murder is wrong (Gn 9:6). This sacredness flows from the sacrament of marriage in which a married couple cooperates with God in bringing new human life into our world. Uniquely among all creatures created by God, only man, the human person, the human being, which includes each and every member of *homo sapiens* at all stages of life, has the capacity for a loving relationship with God. Only man has a soul and is the only one made in God’s image and likeness (Gn 1:26). It follows then the human soul must be present from conception. Body and soul cannot be separate until death as determined by God.

The Christian Institute, from which I have taken much information, reminds us that the incarnation of Christ also has important implications for medical ethics. Jesus Christ reveals not only the nature of divinity but also the nature of what is human. Jesus was born in a manger in Bethlehem, but he was conceived much before this by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary.

Since Jesus shared our humanity and was like us in every way (Heb 2:14, 17), our own human life must also have begun at conception. ProLife American reminds us that abortion drugs account for the majority of abortions in the United States, amounting to 65% of the total in 2025. These drugs carry with them potentially serious risks, not only to the unborn but to the health of their mothers. The Christian Institute also affirms that human personhood begins at conception and that the human embryo is precisely that — a human embryo. There are enormous practical moral implications which flow from this belief. Not only is abortion seriously wrong, but so is any practice which deliberately destroys human embryos.

For good pastoral, moral clarity, it is necessary to point out why artificial contraception is also morally wrong. The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), based on Catholic moral doctrine, specifically *Humanae Vitae* in 1968, maintains that direct sterilization and artificial contraception are “intrinsically evil” and forbidden, as they represent a deliberate, unnatural obstruction of the generative process. The USCCB supports Natural Family Planning (NFP) as the morally acceptable method for spacing children. NFP allows the couple to use the natural infertile periods of the woman’s cycle to avoid pregnancy without interfering with the natural, life-giving design of the act.

Medical science in recent years has confirmed our long-held faith belief that human life begins at some point in fertilization and conception. This is why more recently there is an ever-growing support for Congress to use its power under section 5 of the 14th amendment to the Constitution of the United States, declaring that the right to life granted by the Constitution is vested in every human being born and unborn person. This ever-growing effort is called the Life at Conception Act and incorporates the Church’s proper understanding of NFP. However, nothing in this Act shall be construed to authorize the persecution of any woman for the death of her unborn child.

Life is indeed, in God’s mind, sacred from concep-



Bishop Emeritus
Michael D. Pfeifer, OMI

Diocese of
San Angelo

tion, and as it is a unique act of creation of a new person, God alone is the final author of how conception is to take place for those who read, believe, and care deeply for the word of God. The Bible teaches us about God, the Master of Creation, who brings into our world a whole new human being with the cooperation of his children, a married woman and man. This loving act of cooperation with God in the formation and birth of a new person is an essential part of the sacrament of matrimony. Here we remember the beautiful and inspiring passage from Psalm 139:13–16: “For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother’s womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well. My frame was not hidden from you, when I was being made in secret, intricately woven in the depths of the earth. Your eyes saw my unformed substance; in your book were written, every one of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there was none of them.”

And then we hear in the Bible that when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the baby leaped in her womb. Elizabeth was pregnant with John the Baptist and was filled with the Holy Spirit, and she exclaimed with a loud cry about Mary, “Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! And why is this granted to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For behold, when the sound of your greeting came to my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy” (Lk 1:42–44). The fruit in Mary’s womb was the very son of God, Jesus Christ, true God and true man. These words of the Holy Spirit bring out how sacred was the fruit in the womb of those two marvelous women.

And then we read in Jeremiah 1:5 how only God knows and plans how each of his little children is formed in a woman’s womb with the help of a husband, “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations.” Only the Bible gives testimony that in the beautiful creation of a new human being, God is the Father and Master of this beautiful process and knows exactly when fertilization begins and the life of a new beautiful human person. The Bible passage supports the reason for the Life at Conception Act.

From usccb.org/prolife/life-matters, here I bring to your attention when married parents encounter the heartache and worry that arise when they find themselves with serious difficulties in conceiving a child of their own. Often, they jump immediately to IVF — *in vitro* fertiliza-

tion — where they attempt to control all factors of timing, embryo creation, and selection — leaving little to nature and God’s design. IVF is now a \$3 billion industry, which is largely unregulated and seemingly unconcerned about the long-term health risks for women or children. The first and most obvious is the serious moral problem raised by *in vitro* fertilization that it invariably requires fertilizing several eggs in the laboratory at the same time. Typically, some embryos are implanted in the uterus in the hope that one will survive. The embryos not implanted are either discarded or frozen for later use. Many do not survive the freezing or defrosting process. It is the sad reality that the great majority of embryonic children created by IVF will end up dead sooner or later. What is lost here is that these many failed technological attempts in each procedure involve living human individuals created by God who deserve to be treated with dignity of a human person. They share — as all human beings do — in the likeness of God the Father of all. The deeper meaning of sexual intercourse in marriage — uniting a couple in love so generous and powerful that it allows God to bring forth a new child destined to live forever — is lost in the process.

Every child conceived in IVF is truly deserving of respect and love: each is a human person, regardless of the manner of conception. As Christians we must come to understand that IVF puts the lives of women and children at risk. As Christians we must all stand for the dignity of every human as a gift from God and not as a product to be manipulated, even with the best of intentions.

In closing, I bring to your attention the words of St. Pope John Paul II in his powerful pastoral statement, the *Gospel of Life* — *Evangelium Vitae* — “What is urgently called for is a general mobilization of consciences and a united ethical effort to activate a great campaign in support of life, including the unborn. All together, we must build a new culture of life.” As fellow disciples of Jesus, especially for us who are pastors and teachers, we proclaim that human life is a precious gift from God and that each person who receives this gift is responsible to God and each other; that society, through its laws and social institutions, must protect and nurture human life at every stage of its existence. To follow these principles and live these values will contribute much for the need for our lawmakers to approve a Life at Conception Act.

Hopefully many of our Congresspeople and all of us will support the efforts of Congressman Eric Burlison, and the many who have cooperated with him, who introduced the Life at Conception Act to affirm and protect all life efforts for every human being — born and unborn. Burlison states “Every life is a sacred gift from God, deserving of dignity and protection from the moment of conception. The Life at Conception Act urges Congress’ constitutional authority to define personhood, fulfilling our moral and legal obligation to safeguard the lives of the unborn.”

Hopefully all of us as children of God, sisters and brothers of Jesus, will pray for and actively support all efforts for this Act to become a reality in our country. These tiny unborn children of God depend on you and me.

The creation, fall, and redemption of the family

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* affirms the centrality of the family as an institution of both creation and redemption. As an institution of creation, the family is the original cell of social life (no. 2207). As an institution of redemption, the Christian family constitutes a domestic church and is a community of faith, hope, and love (no. 2204). Why does the Catholic Church teach that the family is both an institution of creation and of redemption? To answer this question, we can look at both the first command God gave to the first family he created and the last command the risen Christ gave to his disciples before his ascension. When we do this, we see how this leads us to the wisdom revealed to us in Scripture and tradition. Knowledge gives us understandings of particulars, while wisdom gives us a picture of the whole.

The first command given to man is found at the end



Father Knick
and Sandie
Knickerbocker

of the first chapter of the Book of Genesis. We learn about the creation of man and the creation of the family. In Genesis 1:26–28 we read: “Then God said, ‘Let us make man in our image, after our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air,

and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.’ So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. And God blessed them, and God said to them, ‘Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth’” (RSV2CE).

The word “image” means that every human being has the capacity for a personal relationship with God, a heart to receive and give love, a conscience to determine right from wrong, and reason to determine truth from falsehood. However, it is the word “likeness” that relates this passage to the family. The last command that Jesus gives

See KNICKERBOCKERS, PAGE 17

MILLER

Continued from Page 13

humility in your dealings with one another, for: ‘God opposes the proud but bestows favor on the humble’ (1 Pt 5:5).

7. He sees how you treat his mother as the blueprint for his future. The way you honor, respect, and sacrifice for your wife is the most direct and powerful instruction he will ever receive on how to be a husband, and how women deserve to be treated. Your marriage is his foundational teaching on sacrificial love.

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

8. He fears mediocrity and failure. While he may act nonchalant, deep down he is aware of the pressures of the world. He worries about measuring up to his peers, his

own goals, and the expectations he perceives from you. He needs you to affirm his efforts, not just his victories.

“I have the strength for everything through him who empowers me” (Phil 4:13).

9. He needs defined boundaries to feel safe. It may seem counterintuitive, but a child who pushes boundaries is often testing the safety net. Clear, consistent, and lovingly enforced limits show him that you are present, engaged, and ultimately, in control of the ship. This structure provides freedom from the anxiety of self-governance.

“At the time, all discipline seems a cause not for joy but for pain, yet later it brings the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who are trained by it” (Heb 12:11).

10. He is a spiritual warrior waiting to be commissioned. Every son possesses an innate drive for purpose, conquest, and heroism. We must commission this natural yearning away from frivolous pursuits and toward his true

mission: fighting for holiness, protecting the weak, and serving the Lord.

“Be on your guard, stand firm in the faith, be courageous, be strong” (1 Cor 16:13).

The knowledge of your son is not a task to check off a list; it is a lifetime covenant of love. Resolve today to put aside your assumptions and truly observe the man God is forming beneath the surface. This requires patience in the moments when he is hardest to understand, and humility when your expectations fall short of who he is becoming. It demands that you listen more than you lecture and remain present even when he pulls away. In that quiet, consistent attention, you begin to witness not who you want him to be but who he was created to become.

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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.

'Les Misérables' y las cuestiones morales detrás de la migración

Hace poco, durante unas vacaciones, leí "Les Misérables" de Víctor Hugo.

Víctor Hugo fue sin duda un poeta y un gran pensador. "Les Misérables" ("Los Miserables") se convirtió en una de sus obras más conocidas, primero gracias a su versión musical en Broadway y luego a su adaptación cinematográfica. La obra entrelaza distintas historias de vida, marcadas por dilemas morales complejos que exigen una respuesta.

Las palabras "les misérables" aparecen una sola vez en todo el libro. Se usan para describir a los pobres que buscaban justicia, no necesariamente una revolución, sino simplemente lo esencial para subsistir. Es un término difícil de traducir en inglés, pero hace referencia a quienes atraviesan situaciones de gran necesidad; el propio diccionario francés amplía su significado.

Cuando era niño, le pregunté a mi abuelo paterno por qué había emigrado a Estados Unidos desde Italia, y me respondió con dos palabras: "la miseria".

Comprendí el sentido de esa expresión gracias a lo que mis abuelos me contaban sobre la vida en Italia a comienzos del siglo pasado. No había trabajo ni oportunidades de educación, y la comida escaseaba. Por eso la gran ola migratoria de principios del siglo XX llevó a tantos "les misérables" de distintos países de Europa a emigrar a Estados Unidos. Ese flujo de personas, muchas veces consideradas indeseables, se vio frenado por la Ley de Inmigración de 1924, de carácter racista.

Los inmigrantes de hoy llegan por las mismas razones que aquellos de la gran ola migratoria: la falta de trabajo en sus países, las escasas posibilidades de educación para sus hijos y muchas otras carencias. Las escenas de redadas de inmigrantes en Minneapolis y en otras ciudades de Estados Unidos recuerdan, sin duda, los disturbios por el hambre que aparecen en "Los miserables".

Los nuevos migrantes se integran rápidamente a través del trabajo. Por eso vinieron a Estados Unidos: para trabajar, aportar y buscar una nueva vida para ellos y



Obispo
Nicholas DiMarzio
OSV News

Caminando con Migrantes

sus hijos. El acceso a beneficios sociales, que son pocos para quienes no tienen documentos, no es más que lo justo para quienes perciben salarios bajos.

Si se hubiera controlado el ámbito laboral, como se prometió en el programa de regularización de 1986, no habría sido necesario reforzar el control en las fronteras. Es en el lugar de trabajo donde empieza el problema y donde también puede resolverse. Mientras nuestra economía dependa de empleos mal remunerados, los trabajadores sin papeles seguirán cubriendo la falta de mano de obra.

Los operativos de gran dureza llevados a cabo por ICE en Minneapolis y en otros lugares, que terminaron con la muerte de dos manifestantes inocentes, fueron totalmente innecesarios. (Se encontraban en el lugar y en el momento equivocados, con un arma y dentro de un vehículo, convencidos de que actuaban por una causa justa. No merecían la pena de muerte.)

En un artículo anterior mencioné las redadas migratorias y los operativos en lugares de trabajo de la década de 1970, que perjudicaron tanto a los agentes como a los migrantes. Existen otras formas de gestionar a esta población, “invisible” en términos legales, aunque en muchos casos contribuye pagando impuestos y aportes a la seguridad social.

En el ámbito laboral, algunos se han convertido en "Les Misérables", y en ocasiones son tratados de manera

injusta.

Lo que aprendimos del proceso de regularización de 1986 es que es posible legalizar la situación de los trabajadores que ya forman parte de nuestra sociedad y reconocer lo que justamente han ganado con su trabajo. La enorme cantidad de recursos que hoy se destina a medidas de control podría redirigirse fácilmente a un amplio programa de regularización.

Podríamos registrar a todos los trabajadores activos y, de ese modo, identificar más fácilmente a quienes cometen delitos. En "Los miserables", los grupos revolucionarios que participaban en las protestas ni siquiera comprendían del todo las causas por las que arriesgaban la vida, pero sí percibían una injusticia que exigía una respuesta.

La forma estadounidense de protestar nace de nuestros derechos constitucionales. Creemos en la justicia tal como la definen nuestras leyes, y si no estamos de acuerdo con ellas en una democracia constitucional, podemos cambiarlas por medios pacíficos. No se puede acallar la oposición recurriendo a la violencia contra los indocumentados ni contra quienes los defienden.

Si nos tomamos el tiempo necesario para comprender las causas profundas que afectan a la población inmigrante trabajadora, podremos encontrar mejores soluciones. En 1924, leyes marcadas por prejuicios raciales impidieron la llegada de ciertos grupos de migrantes, concretamente a los precedentes de Europa del sur y del este.

Hoy, a quienes no son bienvenidos se les retira su estatus legal y se los deporta. Todo problema social tiene una dimensión moral, pero parece que solo los poetas y los pensadores logran vislumbrar posibles soluciones a nuestros problemas humanos, mientras que los legisladores se muestran reacios a colaborar para encontrarlas.

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El obispo Nicholas DiMarzio es el obispo emérito de la Diócesis de Brooklyn, Nueva York. Escribe la columna "Walking with Migrants" para OSV News.

Vayan y hagan discípulos de todas las naciones

By Silvio Cuéllar
OSV News

Era un domingo del mes de mayo y Sergio Jiménez se encontraba frente a una iglesia repleta en la parroquia Blessed Sacrament Church en Providence, listo para hacer una breve invitación al concluir la Misa.

Sergio, miembro del equipo del retiro diocesano de hombres "Cámbiame a mí, Señor", estaba allí para invitar a los fieles a participar en el próximo retiro, que se llevaría a cabo este mes de mayo en el Centro de Renovación Espiritual Inmaculada Concepción, en Putnam, Connecticut.

Con sencillez y convicción, Sergio invitaba a otros hombres a conocer más de cerca a Jesús. Compartía una buena noticia: la oportunidad de crecer como mejores cristianos, padres, hijos y esposos.

Su invitación me hizo recordar las palabras de Jesús antes de su ascensión al cielo: "La paz esté con ustedes... vayan y hagan discípulos de todas las naciones" (Mateo 28,19). Ese llamado sigue vivo hoy, y personas como Sergio lo hacen realidad.

Los retiros "Cámbiame a mí, Señor" comenzaron hace casi 25 años como un esfuerzo de la Oficina del Ministerio Hispano de la Diócesis de Providence para invitar a los fieles a dar ese primer paso de acercamiento a la fe. Es un retiro que ofrece la oportunidad de salir de la rutina diaria, escuchar testimonios reales de hombres que han transformado sus vidas y tener un encuentro personal con Jesús.

En ese encuentro, muchos descubren una paz profunda y reciben abundantes bendiciones que Dios tiene reservadas para quienes escuchan su llamado.

Miles de personas han participado en los retiros, tanto de hombres como de mujeres. Como fruto de esta experiencia, muchos se han integrado activamente en sus parroquias y hoy sirven como líderes en distintos ministerios, poniendo sus talentos al servicio del Señor.

Durante su breve testimonio, Sergio compartió cómo, en un momento de su vida, se encontraba alejado de los caminos del Señor, sin paz ni alegría en su corazón. Fue a través de este retiro que

pudo experimentar de manera personal el amor y la misericordia de Dios, encontrando la paz que tanto había buscado.

Después de vivir esa experiencia, tomó la decisión de involucrarse en el equipo organizador, compuesto por hombres de diferentes parroquias que sirven ofreciendo generosamente su tiempo, talento y tesoro.

"Yo quería compartir con otros lo que había recibido, para que ellos también pudieran experimentar el amor y la paz que Dios nos ofrece cuando abrimos nuestro corazón a Él", expresó Sergio.

Yo tuve la bendición de formar parte del equipo original, sirviendo por algunos años, y experimenté en carne propia las bendiciones de este ministerio cuando invité a mi papá a asistir al retiro hace más de 20 años. Aquella experiencia lo llevó a darle un rumbo diferente a su vida, acercándose más a Dios y sirviendo luego en el coro de la iglesia durante muchos años.

Años después, antes de que su salud se quebrantara y el Señor lo llamara a su presencia, tuvo la oportunidad de acompañarme nuevamente en el retiro de hombres. Fue una experiencia que todavía llevo en mi corazón y que agradezco haber podido vivir junto a él.

Desde hace varios meses, un grupo comprometido de 15 hombres que forman parte del equipo ha estado preparando cada detalle para que los participantes vivan una experiencia bendecida, capaz de marcar un antes y un después en sus vidas.

Todos los hombres mayores de 18 años pueden participar y vivir esta hermosa experiencia kerigmática: un fin de semana diferente para compartir con otros, reflexionar sobre el rumbo de sus vidas y crecer, con la ayuda de Dios, para ser mejores padres, hijos y esposos.

Los retiros "Cámbiame a mí, Señor" celebrarán este año su 25.º aniversario. Los miembros de los equipos de hombres y mujeres están trabajando en una Misa junto al obispo, seguida de una cena en la que reconocerán a muchas de las personas que han servido a lo largo de los años, algunas de las cuales ya han sido llamadas a la casa del Señor.

Recuerdo también las palabras de un sacerdote amigo, el padre Father Bob Beirne, quien ya está retirado y, aun con



FOTO DE OSV NEWS | CORTESÍA DE SILVIO CUÉLLAR

El equipo del retiro "Cámbiame a Mí, Señor" de la Diócesis de Providence, R.I., prepara carpetas para los participantes en una fotografía sin fecha. El retiro se realiza dos veces al año.

sus 92 años, continúa sirviendo celebrando Misas. En varias oportunidades me dijo: "Cada vez que voy a una parroquia con comunidad hispana, veo mucha vida, muchas familias y muchas oportunidades para crecer en la fe".

Recientemente, participé en la reunión del consejo asesor de la Oficina del Ministerio Hispano de la Diócesis de Providence, del cual soy miembro ex officio y donde actualmente represento a nuestra Comunidad de Solidaridad diocesana de Catholic Relief Services, un ministerio de solidaridad global que ayuda a los más pobres del mundo.

El comité asesor está compuesto por representantes de todas las parroquias con comunidades hispanas, así como de diferentes movimientos apostólicos y grupos marianos. Después de orar, cada uno de los representantes compartió las actividades de su comunidad y recibió un calendario de eventos y retiros diocesanos, lo que ayuda a mantener la coordinación, el apoyo mutuo y a evitar la duplicación de esfuerzos.

Pude escuchar testimonios de parro-

quias con misas completamente llenas, ministerios sirviendo a Dios con alegría y comunidades anunciando la Buena Nueva a través de retiros, grupos de oración y distintos movimientos apostólicos.

Como ha recordado recientemente Pope León XIV, la Iglesia crece cuando sale al encuentro de los demás con esperanza y amor. Esa misión evangelizadora sigue viva hoy en nuestras comunidades hispanas.

Fue muy hermoso en esa reunión, poder ver los frutos de lo que fue el V Encuentro Nacional de Ministerio Hispano en un trabajo colaborativo de pastoral de conjunto. Pude ver una Iglesia viva, sirviendo con mucha dedicación para hacer realidad el llamado de Jesús antes de su ascensión al cielo: "Vayan y hagan discípulos de todas las naciones".

- - -

Silvio Cuéllar es un escritor, compositor de música litúrgica y periodista. Fue coordinador de la oficina del Ministerio Hispano y editor del periódico El Católico de Rhode Island en la Diócesis de Providence.

The ethics of suicide and organ donation

Physician-assisted suicide involves asking a medical professional to write a prescription for a toxic drug so that a patient can ingest it and bring his or her own life to an end. The practice sadly appears to be growing around the world, especially in Canada, Australia, Europe, and the U.S.

In early 2023, a 66-year-old former nurse in Australia, Marlene Bevern, was suffering from an aggressive form of motor neuron disease and opted for physician-assisted suicide. She was also very determined to donate her organs for transplant afterward — something that had never been done before in Australia. To make the donation, Ms. Bevern had to spend her last day in an ICU bed. Her assisted suicide had to be carried out close to the operating room where her organs would be harvested, because, if it were done at home, the organs would not be as useful for transplantation due to the extended time between cardiac arrest and organ procurement.

Prior to taking her own life, Ms. Bevern was given information about how many other people her organs would help. "I'll never forget her face," the organ transplant specialist said later, describing how she received that information, "she lit up with a big, beautiful smile." Following her suicide, her lungs, liver, and kidneys were transplanted and reportedly helped to save four other lives.

Many ethical concerns arise in a case like this. The prospect of donating one's organs can clearly incentivize and motivate a patient's intention to carry out physician-assisted suicide. Hospitals and medical facilities face the danger of corrupting their healing mission if they begin supporting the practice of organ harvesting from patients who are making plans to end their own lives through physician-assisted suicide. These institutions should not provide an environment facilitating physician-assisted suicides, should forbid the use of a hospital bed or suite for premeditated suicide, and should ban the use of operating rooms for organ extraction afterward. By establishing categorical policies excluding organ donation from such suicides, they avoid giving tacit support to the wrongdoing of the self-killing act.

We can consider related cases to help clarify the ethical lines. Suppose a middle-aged man let people around him know that he intended to commit suicide by using a large caliber handgun to shoot himself in the head. Suppose further that he lived near a hospital where transplants were carried out, and he was very insistent that he wanted to donate his organs after pulling the trigger. Suppose he contacted a local ambulance company requesting an ambulance to be standing by the house, so that as soon as the paramedics heard the gunshot, his lifeless body could be rushed to the hospital where organs would be extracted.

In making these arrangements with the ambulance service, suppose that he further requested that the trained EMTs enter his home a few minutes ahead of the scheduled suicide, and set up an IV drip to provide him with blood thinner that would help preserve and protect his organs from blood clots after the suicide.

It would of course raise grave concerns for the ambulance company to agree to set up such an IV or to transport his lifeless body to the operating room, when they knew ahead of time that he was making explicit preparations to commit suicide. By agreeing to take either of these steps, they would be signaling their implied or tacit approval of his immoral suicidal choice.

On the other hand, suppose a young man commits suicide by jumping off the 35th story of his hotel onto the sidewalk below. Suppose further that he has a note in large letters attached to his jacket stating: "Please arrange for immediate donation of as many of my tissues and organs as possible after you discover my body." Would it be wrong if an ambulance arrived and quickly transported his deceased body to a hospital, and at the same time contacted the hospital transplant team to notify them of his imminent arrival so they could prepare an operating theater to receive his body? Given that the hospital staff and the ambulance company employees had nothing to do with the death itself, neither contributing to it nor acting in a way that offered approbation or support for the act, they could indeed step in, and, in a blameless way, strive to procure organs from the young man's corpse following his tragic suicide.

These examples involving suicide and organ donation remind us of the ease with which we can be drawn into cooperating with evil in the name of doing good. Organ donation serves as a generous decision that can indeed save lives — and is allowable as long as unpaired organs are removed only after death has independently occurred. Great attention and care are required to avoid contributing to, and therefore becoming partially responsible for, the self-inflicted deaths of others.

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



Father Tad Pacholczyk
Making Sense of Bioethics

Catholic Voices

Pope Leo's first encyclical

It can be easy for Catholics to lose sight of the forest for the trees. Sometimes we can lose sight of the bigger global picture, get distracted from what matters most for humanity, even give into the temptation to zero in too much on internal ecclesial life. In more recent years, the Church has also been burdened by internal debates and feuds which distract us from the mission Christ entrusted to us.

The reality is that too often we do not look much different from the world. The world we live in is changing rapidly. But what is shaping and influencing this change? Are our increasingly fractured politics and overly selfish economics to determine humanity's future? Are the most sensitive geopolitical decisions soon to be determined by our technological advancements?

Pope Leo XIV's first encyclical *Magnifica Humanitas*, released May 25, is a wake-up call for the Church and the world. Adding his voice to the Church's social teaching, and reiterating the tradition he now stewards, Pope Leo has raised his voice to refocus priorities, shift perspectives, and offer the means to chart a course to peace.

Magnifica Humanitas is a summons to see humanity for its "grandeur," implicit in being made in God's image. As human rights and dignity are continually weakened and violated in an increasingly secularized and godless world, Pope Leo urges us to collaborate in advancing God's vision to counter the threats to human flourishing and the common good.

As with any social questions, ultimately the Church must "lovingly safeguard the grandeur of humanity bestowed upon us and revealed in its fullness in Christ." Pope Leo is particularly concerned in the encyclical with "how AI (artificial intelligence) is transforming certain aspects of life and society, in particular the serious implications for human dignity." The "civilization of love" — which St. Paul VI longed for amid the Cold War, with its threats to global peace and economic stability — is one that Pope Leo calls us to build anew today in the thick of contemporary challenges and divisions threatening humanity.

This summons is at the heart of *Magnifica Humanitas*. "We must resolutely recover this vision, for the civilization of love is no naïve utopia, but a demanding project, which consists in translating charity into structures of justice, giving institutional form to fraternity, and regarding others — whether individuals or peoples



Michael R. Heinlein
OSV News
Papal Words

— as allies necessary for building the common good," he writes.

As a keen pastor, Pope Leo offers practical steps for doing so. Still, it can seem daunting, idealistic, or futile. To weave hope, Pope Leo points to Mary as a model for "sharing who we are and what we have, so that the presence of Jesus may grow among us and his Kingdom take shape."

"Her soul magnifies the Lord and her spirit rejoices in God her Savior, because he chose a young, poor, and humble girl for his plan of salvation. Mary suddenly sees all of history through the lens of this revelation," he writes. Her life illustrates how God's will "is often hidden beneath the opaque context of human events that see 'the proud, the mighty, and the rich' triumph," Pope Leo writes, "yet his secret strength is destined in the end to be revealed."

Pope Leo invites us to consider Mary as we undertake our mission in today's world, allowing her to "guide our steps through this time of change and preserve in each of us true faith in the Gospel, so that we may bear witness to the grandeur of humanity, in which God has made his dwelling."

Ultimately there is no greater calling for Christians at this moment of history. And nothing should distract us from it. Mary's commitment can inspire ours.

Let us pray that Mary's intercession will help open our eyes to the wisdom of *Magnifica Humanitas* and allow it to guide our steps to building a civilization of love at this moment in history when that mission must be reinvigorated.

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 Co-operators.

Young men are struggling to find purpose and vocation

By Vicente Del Real
OSV News

A world of virtual victories

Across the United States, a quiet yet present crisis is unfolding among young men. Researchers increasingly describe a phenomenon known as the "delayed launch" of adulthood. Many young men are taking longer to enter stable work, form families, and establish a clear sense of direction in life.

The issue is not limited to economics. It is deeply connected to questions of self-search, vocation, and what may be understood as a crisis of purpose. In previous generations, the transition into adulthood was often marked by clear expectations. Young men were expected to work, provide, make sacrifices, contribute to their communities, and eventually form families of their own. These were responsibilities not always accomplished with ease, but they provided a framework for growth and maturity.

Today, that framework has changed. According to labor data, male participation in the workforce has steadily declined over the past several decades. In 1970, roughly 80% of American men participated in the labor force. By recent estimates, that number has dropped closer to 69%. Among younger men, especially those without college degrees, the decline has been even more pronounced.

However, this crisis is not simply about employment; it is a deeper crisis of social participation. A crisis was also brought to our attention in 2023 by the U.S. Surgeon General Vivek Murthy, who issued a warning describing the rise of "an epidemic of loneliness and isolation." More recently, attention has increasingly turned toward men, with some researchers and commentators identifying what has been termed a "male loneliness epidemic."

Importantly, this form of loneliness extends beyond romantic relationships and reflects broader social disconnection. To this point, traditional milestones of adulthood like marriage, stable employment, and civic participation are happening later or not at all for many.

This article will highlight, from personal experience working with young men, one noticeable factor in this reality.

One of the most visible cultural shifts affecting young men is the rise of immersive digital entertainment. Video games now occupy a significant portion of leisure time for many young men. Research from the National Bureau of Economic Research found that young men dramatically increased the amount of time spent playing video games over the past two decades, often replacing hours that previous generations might have spent working or developing other ideas, responsibilities, and abilities.

Yet the appeal of video games is not difficult to understand. They offer something the real world increasingly struggles to provide: clear goals, meaningful challenges, and visible progress — all within a framework of very few consequences for failure and highly competitive, entertaining environments.

Within these digital worlds, athletes or those who lead athletic teams can become heroes, warriors, and other significant figures who are noticeably admirable. They can defeat enemies, lead teams, build empires, and master difficult challenges. Their efforts are rewarded, their identity affirmed, and their progress recognized.

These all can be good things. The problem? This is only within a virtual world. But when the person disconnects from the video game, the contrast with real life can be stark.

Many young men feel that in the real world, they are none of those things. They may not feel needed, not feel capable, not feel invited into any meaningful mission. This presents a real opportunity for the Church to present young men with a real opportunity for community, mission, and vocation.

The deeper hunger

The deeper issue facing young men today is not simply technology or entertainment. It is the absence of spaces where they can feel invited to flourish, serve, and mature. Without clear pathways into meaningful responsibility, young men often drift.

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Martinez named retreat center GM



Jo Ann Martinez has accepted the position of General Manager for Christ the King Retreat Center. Martinez is a familiar face at CKRC, having served as the Guest Services Coordinator since 2012. During her tenure, she has been instrumental in the comprehensive management of daily operations, fa-

cility scheduling, and fostering a deep sense of community through exceptional hospitality.

Her extensive experience includes operational leadership, managing daily facility operations, including the coordination of all retreats, activities, and administrative duties; financial stewardship, preparing billing statements, managing payroll, and assisting with yearly budget management and revenue reporting; personnel management, supervising staff, coordinating housekeeping and maintenance, and leading staff training initiatives; and a diverse background, in addition to her work at the retreat center, including a rich professional history in marketing, communications, and campaign management.

Martinez is bilingual in English and Spanish. Her deep-rooted knowledge of the CKRC's mission and her proactive approach to meeting guest needs make her uniquely qualified to step into this leadership role.

KNICKERBOCKERS

Continued from Page 14

his disciples is recorded in the Gospel of Matthew 28:18–20, where we read: “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and behold, I am with you always, to the close of the age” (RSV2CE). The affirmation of God as a Trinity of Persons is a way of saying that God is perfect love. When two persons love a third person together their love is joined in a trinity of love. In the Holy Trinity two persons are always loving a third person together, and this perfect love always gives itself away. All of creation is a result of this overflowing Trinitarian love. The “likeness” of God is a Trinitarian likeness in which we see a human trinity of father, mother, and child. Here we see the relationship of the inner nature of God who is a Trinity of Persons to the culmination and center of God’s creation: the human trinity of father, mother, and child. The first command given by God to man is “to be fruitful and multiply.” In other words, the first man and woman are given the great privilege of participating in the creation of a “likeness” of God, and every husband and wife who have ever lived are given this same privilege. Since Adam and Eve there is no person who has ever lived who is not part of a human trinity that is the likeness of the Holy Trinity.

However, not only is the human family an institution

of creation but also an institution of redemption. This is so because before the first man and woman obeyed the first command of God to be fruitful and multiply, they fell into sin (Gn 3). Satan is a fallen angel (See Rv 12, 20), and he and all those evil angels who follow him are in rebellion against God the Holy Trinity. As created beings they know they can never defeat God, so they work to thwart his purpose in creation by attempting to destroy the human trinity, the human likeness of God himself. They are successful in tempting Adam and Eve to sin before they obey the first command of God to be fruitful and multiply and participate in the creation of that human trinity that is center and culmination of creation. After their fall into sin, Adam and Eve obey that first command and the result is seen in the fact that their first son (Cain) kills their second son (Abel) (Gn 4). So, the family is contaminated with sin from the beginning.

Nevertheless, God the Holy Trinity has a plan to redeem the image of God in which every human being is created and to redeem the likeness of himself in the human family. This redemption is found in the Holy Family of Bethlehem and Nazareth. The Son of God, the second person of the Holy Trinity, as St. Paul says, “did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men” (Phil 2:6–7,RSV2CE). He does not burst on the scene as the warrior leader of St. Michael and his angels who war against Satan and his fallen angels (See Rv 12). Rather, he comes as a baby in a human family, and as the center of the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph. He redeems the human family and

every human being, for every human being has a father and mother, and with father and mother, are intended to be a human trinity, a likeness of the Holy Trinity.

In this way, we can see the human family as both an institution of creation and an institution of redemption. The Holy Family of Bethlehem and Nazareth stands as mediator between God the Holy Trinity and the human family. Jesus is the center of the Holy Family, and through him the Holy Trinity redeems the family and each one of us.

When we receive this wisdom given in God’s revelation, we understand that all human history is the story of God the Holy Trinity at war with Satan and his evil angels, and the principal battleground is the human family, the center of all creation. Anyone who is living a faithful family life amid the joys and struggles we all have is participating in the Lord’s army and contributing to the redemption of individual people, the family, the whole human race, and, indeed, all of creation. Anyone who is not doing this, however unwittingly, is fighting against the Holy Trinity and is on the side of Satan and his fallen angels. As St. Paul teaches us, using military imagery, we must put on the whole armor of God that we may stand against he wiles of the devil (Eph 6).

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

The shepherd dies with his sheep

In the midst of the bloody Syrian civil war, a Dutch Jesuit named Father Frans van der Lugt was killed in the ravaged city of Homs. It was April 7, 2014. He was beaten and then shot in the head.

The 75-year-old priest had ministered in Syria since 1966, and although given the opportunity to leave, he remained among the starving and embattled poor, trying to publicize their plight and aid them in their sorrows.

Jesuit Father Federico Lombardi, Vatican spokesman at the time, said Father van der Lugt "died as a man of peace ... with great courage in an extremely dangerous and difficult situation. ... Where people die, their faithful shepherds also die with them."

I remember being very touched by Father van der Lugt's death. I knew Jesuits who had known him, and read their remembrances. I thought about 75-year-olds that I knew, perhaps relaxing on the golf course or enjoying a late afternoon cocktail as a reward for careers well spent. Father van der Lugt chose a different route.

Lately, I remembered him again as I watched a movie that I had missed the first time around but had always wanted to see.

The 2010 French film *Of Gods and Men* tells the story of a group of French Trappist monks who live peacefully in an Algerian village. Their neighbors are mostly Muslims; you can hear the Muslim call to prayer in the background of their daily life. It's a peaceful coexistence, with one of the monks helping out as the village doctor.

But, as Algeria's own civil war grows, a nearby group of foreign workers are assassinated by religious extremists, and the entire community is fearful. Like the Dutch priest, the Trappists have an exit strategy. The local Algerian government actually pleads with them to leave.

But as Father Lombardi said, "Where people die, their faithful shepherds also die with them."

Of Gods and Men is beautifully filmed, yet at times seems to move slowly to what the viewer knows is its inevitable conclusion. But the drama is in the interior struggle of the men themselves. Does it make sense to stay? Is this why they joined religious life? Is this really God's will? They cannot provide protection to the



Effie Caldarola
OSV News

Feeling It

frightened people around them. They can only provide witness.

If the concept of shepherds intrigues you, you might want to read *The Shepherd Who Didn't Run*, Maria Ruiz Scaperlanda's beautiful biography of Father Stanley Rother, a farm boy from Oklahoma who became a priest serving in Guatemala and was martyred there in 1981.

He was serving the impoverished Mayans of the region when civil war raged between the militarist government and rebel guerillas. Father Rother's name appeared on a death list. He returned to Oklahoma briefly; he was urged to stay home for his safety. But he returned to his parish. Shepherds don't run, he said. He is the first martyr from the U.S., and the first U.S.-born priest to be beatified.

We could mention so many others. The four church women brutally raped and killed in El Salvador in 1980. The six Jesuits, their housekeeper and her daughter killed in that country in 1989.

Why? Why are those bringing the Prince of Peace targeted for violence? What is it that those who espouse war fear in those who seek to build the beloved community, a phrase spoken by the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, a man who himself espoused non-violence and paid with his life?

Most of us will never face the choice to leave or stay and risk death. But each in our own way is called to be faithful.

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

Cartoon Corner



ENCYCLICAL

Continued from Page 2

regulating the AI itself and more about guiding what we value in society."

"The 'Babel syndrome' itself feeds off a reductionist view of the human person, of human society, and of human value," he explained. "As long as we continue to measure economies only on productivity or GDP, as long as we think of success merely in economic terms, as long as we think of life as good only if it is useful, we will generate societies that will 'train' AI in our own reductive image."

He also warned that the worst part "is not merely the loss of diversity, but the loss of excellence."

"We settle for 'good enough' in the name of efficiency. AI, as it is developing now, despite its evident promise, tends to fall victim to this mediocrity in the end," he told OSV News.

The concrete action needed to be taken by regulators, Kirchhoffer continued, needs to "focus on educational policies that value human intelligence and creativity" and "that promote human understanding through the humanities and critical thinking."

"The antidote to the 'Babel syndrome' is the same as the antidote to the alienation of industrialization: meaningful participation in the creation and enjoyment of real human goods," he said.

An environmental imperative

Magnifica Humanitas also raised significant concerns about the AI industry's environmental impact, noting the massive resources needed to sustain it.

"Current AI systems require enormous amounts of energy and water, significantly influencing carbon dioxide emissions, and place heavy demands on natural resources," the pope wrote, calling for the development of "more sustainable technological solutions that reduce environmental impact and help protect our common home."

The environmental impact of AI, Kirchhoffer noted, is a "significant problem" that is "largely invisible to most users of AI."

"It is so easy to use that, like turning on a light, we hardly think of the environmental impact of AI," he said.

Calling for a "carrots and sticks" approach that incentivizes good practices and punishes bad ones, Kirchhoffer told OSV News that developing more "sustainable AI solutions" is not only feasible, but necessary.

"Humanity cannot afford to destroy itself. It's as simple as that," he said. "And so, every AI developer and user should seek to use their human ingenuity to find solutions that will enable the benefits of AI without the costs."

Junno Arocho Esteves is an international correspondent for OSV News. Follow him on X @jae_journalist.

HUMANITAS

Continúa de Página 3

Babel", el cual, señaló, se caracteriza por la idolatría del lucro, una uniformidad que neutraliza las diferencias y la reducción del misterio humano a meros datos.

"Este es el riesgo de la deshumanización --construir el futuro excluyendo a Dios y reduciendo al otro a un medio--, una tentación antigua y siempre nueva, que hoy también toma un rostro técnico", escribió el pontífice.

Al preguntársele qué políticas deberían formular los reguladores para evitar que el "síndrome de Babel" dicte el desarrollo de la IA, Kirchhoffer afirmó que la "solución no reside tanto en regular la IA en sí misma, cuanto en orientar aquello que valoramos como sociedad".

"El 'síndrome de Babel' se nutre, precisamente, de una visión reduccionista de la persona humana, de la sociedad humana y del valor humano", explicó. "Mientras sigamos midiendo las economías únicamente en función de la productividad o del PIB; mientras concibamos el éxito meramente en términos económicos; mientras consideremos que la vida solo es valiosa si resulta útil, generaremos sociedades que 'entrenarán' a la IA a nuestra propia imagen reduccionista".

También advirtió que lo peor "no es meramente la pérdida de diversidad, sino la pérdida de excelencia".

"Nos conformamos con lo 'suficientemente bueno' en nombre de la eficiencia. La IA --tal como se está desarrollando actualmente--, a pesar de su evidente promesa, tiende a terminar cayendo víctima de esta mediocridad", declaró a OSV News.

Las medidas concretas que deben adoptar los reguladores, continuó Kirchhoffer, han de "centrarse en políticas educativas que valoren la inteligencia y la creatividad humanas" y "que promuevan la comprensión humana a través de las humanidades y el pensamiento crítico".

"El antídoto contra el 'síndrome de Babel' es el mismo que el antídoto contra la alienación de la industrialización: una participación significativa en la creación y el disfrute de bienes humanos genuinos", afirmó.

"Magnifica Humanitas" también planteó serias inquietudes respecto al impacto medioambiental de la industria de la IA, señalando los ingentes recursos necesarios para sostenerla.

"Los actuales sistemas de IA requieren grandes cantidades de energía y agua, inciden de manera significativa en las emisiones de anhídrido carbónico y consumen recursos de manera intensiva", escribió el Papa, haciendo un llamamiento al desarrollo de "soluciones tecnológicas más sostenibles para reducir el impacto sobre el medioambiente y cuidar nuestra Casa común".

El impacto medioambiental de la IA, señaló Kirchhoffer, constituye un "problema significativo" que resulta "en gran medida invisible para la mayoría de los usuarios de la IA".

"Es tan fácil de utilizar que, al igual que al encender una luz, apenas reparamos en el impacto medioambiental de la IA", afirmó.

Abogando por un enfoque del "palo y la zanahoria" --que castigue las malas prácticas e incentive las buenas--, Kirchhoffer declaró a OSV News que desarrollar soluciones de IA más "sostenibles" no solo es factible, sino necesario.

"La humanidad no puede permitirse destruirse a sí misma. Es tan sencillo como eso", afirmó. "Por consiguiente, todo desarrollador y usuario de IA debería esforzarse emplear su ingenio humano para hallar soluciones que permitan aprovechar los beneficios de la inteligencia artificial sin incurrir en sus costos".

Junno Arocho Esteves es corresponsal internacional de OSV News. Sígalo en X en @jae_journalist.



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DAY

Continued from Page 12

"God always gives us a chance to show our preference for him," she later wrote. "With me it was to give up my ... life with Forster. You do these things blindly, not because it is your natural inclination — you are going against nature when you do them — but because you wish to live in conformity with the will of God."

Conforming to God's will was now central to Day's life, but that didn't necessarily mean giving up old convictions and commitments. On the contrary — finding and living a practical synthesis between faith and radical social causes now was a growing concern for Day.

The turning point came early in the Great Depression. Working as a journalist, Day covered a jobs demonstration in Washington organized by communists, then later prayed in the crypt church of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception. There she offered "a special prayer, a prayer which came with tears and anguish, that some way would open for me to use what talents I possessed for my fellow workers, for the poor."

Returning to New York, she found waiting for her a slightly disheveled French peasant who was also a radical Catholic and a self-taught social thinker. His name was Peter Maurin, and he wanted to share his vision with Day. It wasn't long before the Catholic Worker movement was born.

With Day as editor, the first issue of *The Catholic Worker* newspaper appeared May 1, 1933. It sought to be an alternative to the communist *Daily Worker*. That first issue asked: "Is it not possible to be radical and not atheist?" For the next half-century, Day worked hard at showing how that could be done.

She supported the labor movement, racial justice, and the California farm workers led by Caesar Chavez. She opposed the Nationalist side supported by most Catholics in the Spanish Civil War. She was an uncompromising pacifist.

"We love our country, and we love our president," Day wrote after the United States entered World War II. But even so: "We are still pacifists. Our manifesto is the Sermon on the Mount." When the United States dropped the first atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945, Day's voice was one of the few Catholic ones raised in public protest.

During the Cold War, Day often joined other pacifists in peace demonstrations. On one occasion, she served a month in jail. She praised Fidel Castro's social revolution in Cuba while deploring its anti-religious policies. A few years later, she opposed the Vietnam War. While terming the Christmas season visits by New York's Cardinal Francis Spellman to American troops overseas "brave," she also wrote: "What are all those Americans doing all over the world so far from our own shores?"

Day was intensely loyal to Church doctrine but didn't hesitate to skewer Church leaders when she thought they were wrong. During a gravediggers' strike at New York Catholic cemeteries in 1949, she criticized Cardinal Spellman for bringing in seminarians to fill in for striking workers. In 1951, the archdiocese told *The Catholic Worker* either to stop publishing or remove the word "Catholic" from its name. Day did neither, and the archdiocese dropped the matter.

Though never large in numbers, over the years the Catholic Worker movement expanded to include houses of hospitality in several cities along with a Catholic Worker farm. Day lived in a Catholic Worker house in New York. It was there that she died, of a heart attack, on Nov. 29, 1980.

The first steps toward her possible beatification and canonization were taken in 2000 by the late Cardinal John J. O'Connor of New York. Efforts continued under Cardinal Timothy M. Dolan. At his urging, the U.S. bishops in November 2012 voted to endorse her cause. The cardinal called her "a saint for our time."

While remaining a lifelong admirer of the idealistic communists who'd once been her friends, she criticized the evil means communism used to achieve its ends. Whether she was unacceptably naïve about communism is, and probably will remain, in dispute. Many also think she should have shown more concern about the harm inflicted by the self-indulgent hippie culture of the 1960s and 1970s.

Day's principal lasting influence on American Catholicism may have been to show a faith-based alternative to secularist progressivism. In 2023, Pope Francis wrote the foreword to a new edition of Day's 1938 memoir about her conversion to Catholicism, *From Union Square to Rome*. Of Day, he wrote, "The Lord comforts restless hearts, not bourgeois souls who are content with things as they are." At present, she has the title "Servant of God."

Russell Shaw, a longtime journalist and writer, was the author of more than 20 books, including three novels. He died in January 2026.

DEL REAL

Continued from Page 16

Some turn to digital worlds where the experience of achievement is easier to obtain. Others struggle quietly with isolation, anxiety, and a lack of direction. But beneath these struggles lies something deeper: a desire for mission.

Young men do not simply want comfort or entertainment. They want a challenge. They want to build something meaningful. They want to know that their lives matter to others. However, this process requires maturity, and maturity requires sacrifice. This can be a scary process for many. Yet this deeper hunger in a young man's formation opens possibilities for growth that are both demanding and deeply rewarding, growth rooted in human formation, supported by places and spaces of accountability, and strengthened by the other pillars of formation.

In these environments, young men begin to develop discipline, responsibility, and a clearer sense of purpose. They learn to order their desires, to persevere through difficulty, and to commit themselves to something greater than comfort or self-interest.

A call to accompany young men

Emerging research highlights a decline in close social bonds among men, with increasing numbers reporting that they lack close friendships or feel deeply unknown by others. A 2023 report by Equimundo, for example, found that many men resonate with the statement "no one really knows me well," particularly among younger generations.

This growing sense of isolation stands in sharp contrast to the Church's longstanding understanding of the human person as inherently relational and purpose-

driven. Within this view, young men flourish not in isolation but when they are invited into lives of meaning — called to serve, to lead, to sacrifice, and to help build communities grounded in love and responsibility.

This means that families, parishes, and ministries cannot simply criticize young men for drifting. They must accompany them, challenge them, and invite them into meaningful participation in the life of the Church and society.

When young men come to recognize that they are genuinely needed and they are entrusted with responsibility and supported by a community that believes in them, their sense of identity begins to shift. The "hero" they may have once only encountered through screens starts to take shape in real life through meaningful action and purpose.

This transformation is especially significant given that loneliness has been consistently linked to adverse health outcomes, including increased risk for premature mortality, cardiovascular disease, anxiety, depression, dementia, and stroke. Findings from Equimundo further underscore this burden, with 40% of men meeting criteria for depressive symptoms and 44% reporting recent suicidal ideation.

Within this context, helping young men rediscover a sense of mission has implications that extend far beyond the individual. As they become more grounded in purpose and connection, families are strengthened, communities become more cohesive, and the Church is renewed by a generation of men prepared to serve.

Vicente Del Real is the founder and CEO of Iskali, a Catholic nonprofit dedicated to forming and empowering young Latino leaders. He writes from Chicago, where he leads Iskali's mission of faith, service, and community. This column was written in collaboration with Maria De Leon-Sanchez.



Guadalupe Radio Network

Thirteenth Annual

Fishers of Men' Dinner

Saturday, October 10, 2026
7:00 PM

Odessa Marriott Hotel & Conference Center
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Keynote Speaker
Tim Staples
Catholic Answers



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registered parishioners in the San Angelo Diocese.

Subscription rate for all others:
\$10 per year

THIRD CLASS POSTAGE PAID AT
SAN ANGELO, TEXAS

Printed by
Livestock Weekly
San Angelo, Texas

Submissions:

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

COPY, PHOTO DEADLINE:
Third Friday of every month.
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Letters to the editor are welcome,
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Bishop Michael J. Sis
Publisher

Brian Bodiford
Editor
Director of Communication

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

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

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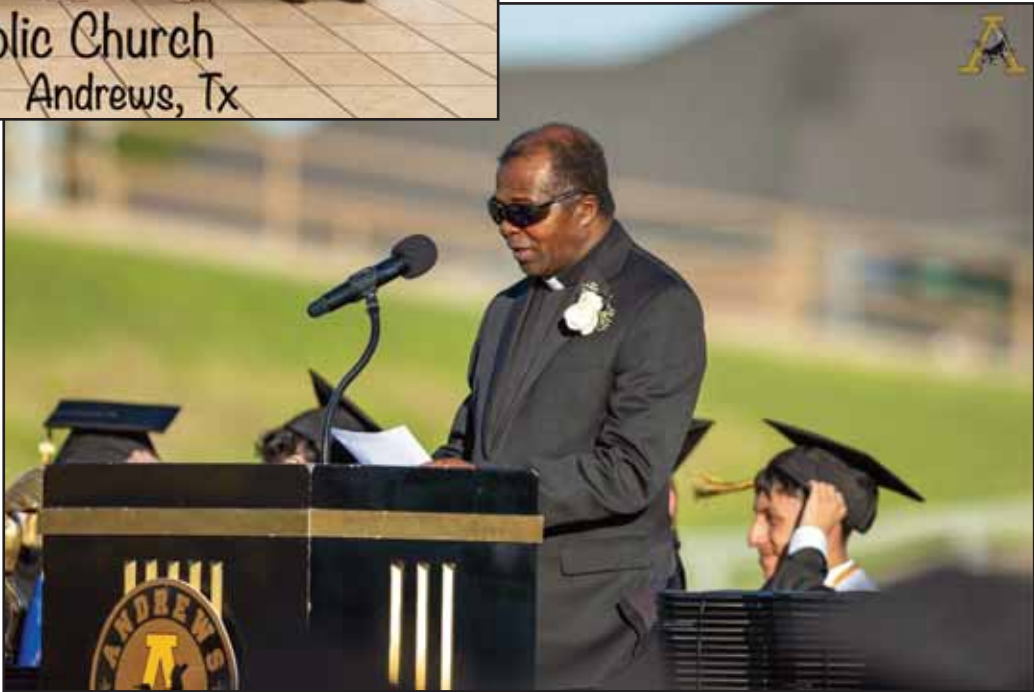
The Holy Cross Catholic High School Class of 2026 celebrated their commencement May 22, 2026.



Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Church
Graduation Mass May 17, 2026 Andrews, Tx

COURTESY

Father Joseph Ogonna celebrated Mass for the high school graduates in his flock at Our Lady of Lourdes Parish in Andrews May 17, 2026. Later, on May 22 (photo at right), Father Ogonna gave the commencement address for the Andrews High School graduates at the invitation of the Andrews Independent School District.



COURTESY