

Inside this issue:

- Signs of welcome with Bishop Sis (Page 2)
- Sister Chavez reflects on her ministry (Page 5)
- Holy Cross high school earns Newman Society recommendation (Page 7)
- Learn about the nation’s first bishop (Page 12)

DIOCESE OF SAN ANGELO
PO BOX 1829
SAN ANGELO TX 76902-1829

NONPROFIT ORG.
US POSTAGE PAID
SAN ANGELO, TX
PERMIT NO. 44

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

WEST TEXAS ANGELUS

Serving Catholics in the Diocese of San Angelo, Texas

Volume 46, No. 7

July 2026



Three ordained to priesthood for diocese



Newly-ordained priests Father Francisco Camacho, Father Mauricio Romero, and Father Humberto Diaz joined diocesan vocation director Father Ryan Rojo on the front row of principal concelebrants at their Mass of Ordination to the Priesthood June 20, 2026, at the Cathedral Church of the Sacred Heart in San Angelo.

WEST TEXAS ANGELUS

Welcome your new priests:

Father Francisco J. Camacho
Father Humberto Diaz Jr.
Father Mauricio Romero

Ordained June 20, 2026

See more: Pages 10-11

Early in the Mass, before the Rite of Ordination, the three candidates were presented to the gathered faithful. Left to right are Diaz, Romero, and Camacho.



WEST TEXAS ANGELUS

From the Bishop’s Desk

Signs of welcome: How parish signage supports hospitality and evangelization

A thriving church is a genuinely welcoming place. Good signs are not just about advertising. They are a tangible way of caring for people who want to grow closer to God. Effective signage serves both practical and pastoral purposes by helping parishioners, visitors, newcomers, and those seeking spiritual support feel comfortable and connected. Intentional signage is an important ministry tool for a Catholic parish because signs communicate hospitality, accessibility, and a sense of welcome before a person ever enters the church.

One of the four priorities of the Pastoral Plan of the Diocese of San Angelo for 2025-2028 is Effective Communication. One of the parish initiatives of that priority for year two (July 2026 – June 2027) is about signage. It states that each parish should “assess all parish signage, both on the property and on streets or highways; improve or add signs as needed for clarity, visibility, and attractiveness.” Parish councils should put this on their agenda in the upcoming months. The entire text of our current Pastoral Plan can be found on our diocesan website at <https://sanangelodiocese.org/pastoral-plan>.

Public street signs: Helping people find the church

Signs located on highways, public streets, and near the parish grounds are often the first point of contact between the parish and the wider community. A person who is unfamiliar with the area, visiting for a wedding or funeral, searching for a place to worship, or exploring faith for the first time should be able to identify easily where the church is located.

Some of our churches are hidden away in neighborhoods, and visitors need some signs to help them find them. Even some of our churches that are located on main thoroughfares can be hard to spot. For example, I will never forget my experience of trying to find one of our mission churches when I first came to our diocese in 2014. I used my GPS to drive to the church, but when I arrived at the address, I passed it up, because I could not see the church sign and I couldn’t tell the building was a church. In that case, the placement and size of the sign made it ineffective. I recall another one of our churches whose sign is well located at a strategic street corner on the main street of town, but the sign is so faded that it is illegible.

When a person approaches one of our towns that has a Catholic church, they should see a sign on the main road letting them know there is a Catholic church there, with the name of the church and the street address. The sign should be large enough and clear enough so the church name can be easily seen by those in passing vehicles. Keep in mind that a sign parallel to the road can be seen only when one is directly in front of it and looking directly at it, and driving slowly enough to notice it.

Here are some things that are accomplished by clear public street signage:

- It welcomes visitors and newcomers who may not already know where the church is.
- It makes the parish visible as a place of prayer, community, and service within the neighborhood.
- It assists those attending special events such as Masses, baptisms, weddings, funerals, religious education programs, or community gatherings.
- It lets everyone know that Catholics are here.

A parish that is difficult to find can unintentionally create a barrier for people seeking to participate. Accessible and attractive exterior signs demonstrate that the parish is open and ready to receive people.

Property signs: Helping people navigate the parish

Some of the parishes in our diocese are such a confusing mixture of buildings that they make it harder for people to get involved. Once people arrive on parish property, effective signs continue the ministry of hospitality by helping them find the way to their destination. Many church campuses include multiple buildings, offices, meeting spaces, restrooms, and worship areas. Clear directional signs reduce confusion and allow people to move through the property with confidence. They experience the parish as organized, caring, and attentive to their needs.

Good wayfinding signs are especially important for visitors, families with children, people with disabilities, elderly parishioners, and anyone attending the parish for the first time. Illuminated signs help people to find the way even when it is dark outside.

Signs of welcome: Communicating Christian hospitality

Signs are more than directions — they are also expressions of the parish’s mission. A welcoming sign can help create an atmosphere of warmth and belonging be-



Bishop Michael J. Sis

Diocese of San Angelo

fore someone enters the church building. Some examples of welcoming messages include:

- “Welcome to [Parish Name]”
- Scripture verses or messages reflecting faith, hope, and community

A welcoming sign can be especially meaningful for people who may feel uncertain about entering a church, including visitors, those returning to the faith, or individuals searching for spiritual connection. A simple message of welcome can open the door to a deeper encounter with the parish community.

I will never forget an excellent sign in a small rural parish in central Texas. As people are exiting the church after Mass, there is a sign above the inside of the main door that reads, “Welcome to the vineyard of the Lord.” It reminds people of their call to bring Christ with them as they go forth from the Mass into the world.

Signs about church activities: Inviting participation

Signs that communicate parish activities help people understand that the church is not only a place for Sunday Mass but a living community throughout the week. They provide opportunities for people to become involved and discover ways to grow in faith and service.

Activity signage may serve to promote a number of things that build a more vibrant parish, such as faith formation programs, service opportunities, and parish events.

These signs help parishioners stay informed and encourage visitors to take the next step toward involvement. They remind people that the parish is a place where they can worship, learn, serve, and build relationships.

A method for assessing signage

An excellent method to assess the effectiveness of church signs is to ask a person who is completely unfamiliar with the parish to drive to the church, park, find the main entrance, the restrooms, the church office, and the locations of programs listed in the bulletin. If the parish bulletin lists activities in a certain room (for example, the “youth room,” “parlor,” or “gym,” this person tries to find those rooms. Then, after this exercise, their report is discussed by the parish council and parish staff. This can be an eye-opening process.

Successful use of billboards

I am very grateful for the billboards that have been placed throughout our diocese by the Rome Boys, an apostolate of three committed Catholic laymen that was

established in Rowena in 2020. Their well-designed billboards provide an attractive message of Catholic faith and remind travelers to pray as they are driving down the highway. Their billboards are now in many places around the country, and currently over 100 million people see them every year.

Chris Martin, one of the Rome Boys, offered the following reflection on this project: “The first sign we put up was near the Chadbourne overpass in San Angelo. It was expensive, but we said if it could reach one person, it was worth it. The message was that of St. Faustina, ‘Jesus I trust in you.’ A few weeks later we received validation. While I was paying a utility bill and chatting with the clerk who is Catholic, the sign came up in conversation. A young lady nearby overheard. She stopped me on the way out and began to cry saying, ‘Did you put up that sign?’ I replied, ‘Many people contributed to make it happen.’ She poured out her story saying she was in the darkest time of her life, in the darkest moment, crying while driving and she came over the overpass and said she read those words, ‘Jesus I Trust in You’, and had never felt so much peace in her life. She said she'd never once prayed before that moment. Then she immediately prayed for those who put up the sign, and that everyone who sees it receives the same peace as her. I was supposed to be out of town. I wasn't supposed to be in that utility office after hours; it was already closed, and they locked the door behind me when I entered. I don't know how that young lady entered after me, and the office was empty. Just another sign from God, I thought.”

Another very effective use of billboards was carried out by our diocesan team who coordinated our efforts during the three-year National Eucharistic Revival from 2022 to 2025. Those billboards proclaimed the truth of the Eucharist and led many people to discover our local parishes. They even led some to pursue the OCIA and become new Catholics. Father Ryan Rojo, the leader of the project, said, “A generous benefactor first made it possible for us to put signs in our major population centers, listing the local Catholic parishes in each of those cities. I remember hearing priests and others comment that they were encouraged by the Church’s creative approach to get people back into our pews. We ran a second billboard campaign with the generosity of a second donor. The messaging invited people to consider coming back to the Catholic Church. I remember at least a couple of people mention to me that the positive message on these billboards made an impact on their decision to come back to the Church.”

Both of these approaches to the use of billboards show how well-designed and strategically placed signs contribute to the mission of the Church.

Conclusion

Effective signage is an extension of a Catholic parish’s mission of hospitality and evangelization. From the street to the sanctuary, signs guide people physically while also communicating care, openness, and belonging. A parish that invests in clear, attractive, and welcoming signage removes obstacles and creates an environment where people can more easily encounter the presence of Christ through the life of the church community.



During the National Eucharistic Revival, billboards welcomed people to the local Catholic churches in the major population centers in the diocese. This sign advertised the Catholic parishes in San Angelo.

COURTESY

Señales de bienvenida: cómo la señalización parroquial fomenta la hospitalidad y la evangelización

Una iglesia floreciente es un lugar verdaderamente acogedor. La buena señalización no se limita a la publicidad. Es una forma tangible de cuidar a quienes desean acercarse a Dios. La señalización eficaz cumple propósitos tanto prácticos como pastorales, ayudando a feligreses, visitantes, recién llegados, y a quienes buscan apoyo espiritual a sentirse cómodos y conectados. La señalización intencionada es una herramienta pastoral importante para una parroquia católica, ya que transmite hospitalidad, accesibilidad, y una sensación de bienvenida incluso antes de que una persona entre en la iglesia.

Una de las cuatro prioridades del Plan Pastoral de la Diócesis de San Angelo para el período 2025-2028 es la Comunicación Efectiva. Una de las iniciativas parroquiales de esta prioridad para el segundo año (julio de 2026 - junio de 2027) se refiere a la señalización. Esta establece que cada parroquia debe “evaluar toda la señalización parroquial, tanto en la propiedad como en las calles o carreteras; mejorar o agregar letreros según sea necesario para mayor claridad, visibilidad, y atraktividad.” Los consejos parroquiales deben incluir esto en su agenda en los próximos meses. El texto completo de nuestro Plan Pastoral actual se puede encontrar en nuestro sitio web diocesano en <https://sanangelodiocese.org/pastoral-plan>.

Señales en calles públicas: Ayudando a la gente a encontrar la iglesia

Los letreros ubicados en carreteras, calles públicas, y cerca de la parroquia suelen ser el primer punto de contacto entre la parroquia y la comunidad en general. Una persona que no conoce el área, que la visita para una boda o un funeral, que busca un lugar de culto, o que se acerca a la fe por primera vez, debería poder identificar fácilmente dónde se encuentra la iglesia.

Algunas de nuestras iglesias están escondidas en barrios residenciales, y los visitantes necesitan señales para encontrarlas. Incluso algunas de nuestras iglesias ubicadas en avenidas principales pueden ser difíciles de localizar. Por ejemplo, nunca olvidaré mi experiencia al intentar encontrar una de nuestras iglesias misioneras cuando llegué a nuestra diócesis en 2014. Usé mi GPS para llegar a la iglesia, pero al llegar a la dirección, me pasé, porque no veía el letrero y no reconocí que el edificio era una iglesia. En ese caso, la ubicación y el tamaño del letrero lo hicieron ineficaz. Recuerdo otra de nuestras iglesias cuyo letrero está bien ubicado en una esquina estratégica de la calle principal del pueblo, pero está tan descolorido que es ilegible.

Cuando una persona se acerca a uno de nuestros pueblos que tiene una iglesia católica, debería ver un letrero en la carretera principal que indique su presencia, con el nombre de la iglesia y la dirección. El letrero debe ser lo suficientemente grande y visible para que el nombre de la iglesia se vea fácilmente desde los vehículos que pasen por allí. Tenga en cuenta que un letrero paralelo a la carretera solo se ve cuando uno está justo enfrente, mirándolo directamente, y conduciendo lo suficientemente despacio como para percibirlo.

Aquí hay algunas cosas que se logran con una señalización pública clara en las calles:

- Da la bienvenida a visitantes y recién llegados que tal vez no sepan dónde está la iglesia.
- Hace que la parroquia sea visible como un lugar de oración, comunidad, y servicio dentro del vecindario.
- Ayuda a quienes asisten a eventos especiales como Misas, bautizos, bodas, funerales, programas de educación religiosa, o reuniones comunitarias.
- Esto permite que todos sepan que aquí hay católicos.

Una parroquia difícil de encontrar puede, sin querer, crear una barrera para quienes desean participar. Unos letreros exteriores accesibles y atractivos demuestran que la parroquia está abierta y dispuesta a recibir a la gente.

Señalización de propiedades: Ayudando a las personas a orientarse en la parroquia

Algunas de las parroquias de nuestra diócesis son una mezcla tan confusa de edificios que se hace aún más difícil para que la gente se involucre. Una vez que las personas llegan a la propiedad parroquial, la señalización efectiva continúa la labor de hospitalidad, ayudándolas a encontrar su destino. Muchos complejos parroquiales incluyen varios edificios, oficinas, salas de reuniones, baños, y áreas de culto. Las señales claras reducen la confusión y permiten que las personas se muevan con confianza por la propiedad. Ellos experimentan la parroquia como organizada, atenta, y al tanto de sus necesidades.

Una buena señalización es especialmente importante para los visitantes, las familias con niños, las personas con discapacidad, los feligreses ancianos, y quienes asisten a la parroquia por primera vez. Los letreros iluminados ayudan a encontrar el camino incluso en la oscuridad.

Señales de bienvenida: Comunicando la hospitalidad cristiana

Los letreros son más que simples direcciones – también son expresiones de la misión de la parroquia. Un le-



Obispo
Michael J. Sis

Diócesis de
San Ángelo

trero de bienvenida puede ayudar a crear un ambiente cálido y acogedor antes de que alguien entre a la iglesia.

Algunos ejemplos de mensajes de bienvenida incluyen:

- “Bienvenidos a [Nombre de la parroquia]”
- Versículos bíblicos o mensajes que reflejen fe, esperanza, y comunidad.

Un letrero de bienvenida puede ser especialmente significativo para quienes se sienten inseguros al entrar en una iglesia, incluyendo visitantes, personas que regresan a la fe, o quienes buscan una conexión espiritual. Un simple mensaje de bienvenida puede abrir la puerta a un encuentro más profundo con la comunidad parroquial.

Jamás olvidaré un letrero conmovedor en una pequeña parroquia rural del centro de Texas. Al salir de la iglesia después de la Misa, un letrero en la pared interior arriba de la puerta principal dice: “Bienvenidos a la viña del Señor.” Les recuerda a las personas su llamado a llevar a Cristo consigo al salir de la Misa y compartir su presencia con el mundo.

Letreros sobre las actividades de la iglesia: Invitando a participar

Los letreros que informan sobre las actividades parroquiales ayudan a comprender que la iglesia no es solo un lugar para la Misa dominical, sino una comunidad viva durante toda la semana. Ofrecen oportunidades para que las personas se involucren y descubran maneras de crecer en la fe y el servicio.

La señalización de actividades puede servir para promover varias cosas que contribuyen a crear una parroquia más dinámica, tal como programas de formación en la fe, oportunidades de servicio, y eventos parroquiales.

Estos letreros ayudan a los feligreses a mantenerse informados y animan a los visitantes a participar activamente. Les recuerdan que la parroquia es un lugar donde pueden adorar, aprender, servir, y entablar relaciones.

Un método para evaluar la señalización

Un método excelente para evaluar la efecacia de los letreros de la iglesia consiste en pedirle a una persona que no conozca la parroquia que vaya en coche hasta allí, se estacione, encuentre la entrada principal, los baños, la oficina parroquial, y la ubicación de los programas que aparecen en el boletín. Si el boletín parroquial indica que las actividades se realizan en una sala específica (por ejemplo, la sala de jóvenes, el salón o el gimnasio), esta persona intenta encontrar dichas salas. Después de este ejercicio, el consejo parroquial y el personal de la parroquia analizan su informe. Este proceso puede resultar muy revelador.

Uso exitoso de vallas publicitarias

Estoy muy agradecido por las vallas publicitarias que los Rome Boys, un apostolado de tres laicos católicos comprometidos fundado en Rowena en 2020, han colocado en

toda nuestra diócesis. Sus vallas, con un diseño atractivo, transmiten un mensaje inspirador de la fe católica y recuerdan a los viajeros la importancia de orar mientras conducen por la carretera. Actualmente, sus vallas publicitarias se encuentran en muchos lugares del país y más de 100 millones de personas las ven cada año.

Chris Martin, uno de los Rome Boys, compartió la siguiente reflexión sobre este proyecto: “El primer letrero que colocamos estaba cerca del paso elevado de Chadbourne en San Ángelo. Fue caro, pero dijimos que si podía llegar a una sola persona, valdría la pena. El mensaje era el de Santa Faustina: ‘Jesús, en ti confío’. Unas semanas después recibimos la confirmación. Mientras pagaba una factura de servicios públicos y charlaba con la empleada, que es católica, surgió el tema del letrero en la conversación. Una joven que estaba cerca lo oyó. Me detuvo al salir y rompió a llorar diciendo: ‘¿Ustedes pusieron ese letrero?’ Le respondí: ‘Muchas personas contribuyeron para que fuera posible’. Ella contó su historia diciendo que estaba en el momento más oscuro de su vida, en el momento más sombrío, llorando mientras conducía, cuando llegó al paso elevado y dijo que leyó esas palabras: “Jesús, en ti confío”, y que nunca había sentido tanta paz en su vida. Dijo que nunca había orado antes de ese momento. Inmediatamente después, oró por quienes colocaron el letrero y para que todos los que lo vieran recibieran la misma paz que ella. Se suponía que yo estuviera fuera de la ciudad. No se suponía que estuviera en esa oficina de servicios públicos fuera del horario de servicio; ya estaba cerrada, y cerraron la puerta con llave cuando entré. No sé cómo esa joven entró después de mí, y la oficina estaba vacía. Otra señal de Dios, pensé.”

Otro uso muy eficaz de las vallas publicitarias fue llevado a cabo por nuestro equipo diocesano, que coordinó nuestros esfuerzos durante el Avivamiento Eucarístico Nacional de tres años, de 2022 a 2025. Estas vallas proclamaron la verdad de la Eucaristía y llevaron a muchas personas a descubrir nuestras parroquias locales. Incluso motivaron a algunos a buscar la OICA y convertirse en nuevos católicos. El Padre Ryan Rojo, líder del proyecto, dijo: “Un generoso benefactor hizo posible que colocáramos letreros en nuestros principales centros de población, con la lista de las parroquias católicas locales en cada una de esas ciudades. Recuerdo haber escuchado a sacerdotes y otras personas comentar que se sentían alentados por el enfoque creativo de la Iglesia para atraer a la gente de vuelta a nuestros bancos. Realizamos una segunda campaña de vallas publicitarias gracias a la generosidad de un segundo donante. El mensaje invitaba a la gente a considerar regresar a la Iglesia Católica. Recuerdo que al menos un par de personas me mencionaron que el mensaje positivo de estas vallas publicitarias influyó en su decisión de regresar a la Iglesia.”

Ambos enfoques sobre el uso de vallas publicitarias demuestran cómo los letreros bien diseñados y colocados estratégicamente contribuyen a la misión de la Iglesia.

Conclusión

Una señalización eficaz es una extensión de la misión de hospitalidad y evangelización de una parroquia católica. Desde la calle hasta el santuario, los letreros guían físicamente a las personas, a la vez que transmiten cuidado, apertura, y un sentido de pertenencia. Una parroquia que invierte en una señalización clara, atractiva, y acogedora elimina obstáculos y crea un ambiente donde las personas pueden experimentar más fácilmente la presencia de Cristo a través de la vida de la comunidad parroquial.



Este letrero que da la bienvenida a los viajeros a Midland es estupendo, salvo que la parroquia La Virgen de San Juan ahora se llama San Miguel Arcángel.

CALENDARS

Please pray for our clergy



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)

August

- 2

Rev. Francis Njoku (O — 1997)
- 4

Rev. Michael Rodriguez (O — 1990)
- 4

Deacon José Villagrana (B)
- 7

Rev. Andrew DeMuth (D — 1969)
- 10

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

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

Rev. David Herrera (O — 1989)
- 12

Rev. Ted McNulty (D — 2006)
- 13

Deacon Sergio Cedillo (B)
- 14

Rev. Bernard Binversie (D — 1992)
- 15

Rev. Sam Homsey, CPPS (D — 2004)
- 15

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

Rev. Johnrita Adegboyega (O — 2000)
- 17

Deacon Orlando Mendoza (B)
- 17

Deacon Daniel Vaughan (B)
- 18

Rev. Serafin Avenido (B)
- 19

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

Deacon William Callan (D — 1988)
- 21

Deacon Encinencio Samaniego (2008)
- 22

Rev. Charles Larue (D — 2005)
- 22

Deacon Enrique Martinez (O — 1976)
- 22

Deacon Jesse Martinez (B)
- 22

Deacon Robert Selvera (D — 2023)
- 23

Rev. Raymond Gallagher (D — 2010)
- 23

Deacon Eufrazio Hernandez (D — 1998)
- 23

Rev. Charles A. Knapp (D — 1978)
- 24

Deacon Edward Gonzalez (B)
- 24

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

Rev. Arokiadoss Arokiasamy (B)
- 27

Deacon Mike Medina (B)
- 28

Deacon Mario Calderón (D — 1998)
- 29

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

Deacon Mike Hernandez (B)

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



Bishop’s Calendar

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

July 2026

- 2

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

FORT STOCKTON, N-5 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.
- 10

SAN ANGELO, Diocesan Pastoral Center, Diocesan Liturgical Commission meeting at 10:00 a.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

August 2026

- 2

ABILENE, St. Francis, Mass at 9:00 a.m. and diocesan discernment retreat
- 2

ABILENE, Wylie High School, clergy and youth kick-ball game at 4:00 p.m.
- 3–5

SAN ANGELO, Christ the King Retreat Center, seminarian gathering
- 10

SAN ANGELO, Diocesan Pastoral Center, Charitable Foundation Board meeting at 10:00 a.m.
- 13

SAN ANGELO, Diocesan Pastoral Center, Priest Pension Committee meeting at 10:30 a.m.
- 14

ODESSA, St. Mary Central Catholic School, Mass at 10:00 a.m.
- 15

MIDLAND, Our Lady of Guadalupe, 130th Anniversary Mass at 5:00 p.m.
- 22

AMARILLO, St. Mary’s Cathedral, Centenary Mass at 10:00 a.m.
- 23

SAN ANGELO, Christ the King Retreat Center, Mass for deacons’ retreat at 11:00 a.m.
- 29

SAN ANGELO, St. Joseph, Mass of Installation of Pastor, Rev. Freddy Perez, at 6:00 p.m.



Christ the King Retreat Center

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

August 2026

- 1–2

Teen ACTS
- 2–5

Seminarian Summer Gathering
- 6–9

Mens’ Walk to Emmaus
- 9–15

Bethl Sisters Week Retreat
- 10

Heart of Mercy Prayer Group
- 21–23

DOSA Deacons’ Retreat #1
- 24

Heart of Mercy Prayer Group
- 27

DOSA Staff Meeting, Mass & Lunch
- 28–30

Engaged Encounter & Natural Family Planning

Special Collections

July 19, 2026
Honduran Partnership Dioceses

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

August 2, 2026
Diocesan Priests’ Retirement

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

Prayer intentions of the Holy Father

JULY

For respect for human life. Let us pray for the respect and protection of human life in all its stages, recognizing it as a gift from God.



Intenciones de oración del Santo Padre

JULIO

Por el respeto de la vida humana. Oremos por el respeto y la protección de la vida humana en todas sus etapas, reconociéndola como un don de Dios.

A new chapter at the table: West Texas campus ministry

By Sister Christina Chavez, CDP

When I started in this ministry back in January 2023, I never would have thought I’d remain for only seven semesters or three academic years. With profound gratitude to the Diocese of San Angelo, I look back at my time serving among the college students of Midland and Odessa as a tremendous gift.

Although I had already served in campus ministry for several years, I still felt pretty new as a campus minister, especially as I prepared to take on the office solo. The existing campus ministry had been cultivated with care by previous ministers and volunteers through a challenging season of rebuilding after COVID. My arrival came at a providential moment when campus events were once again reflecting the life and community of college campuses. The timing was just right for me to grow awareness of the ministry and to expand outreach among communities.

Much as it is with any field associated with education, no two days are the same. Every semester has its own unique rhythm shaped by different students, schedules, current events, and life circumstances. The active pace and constant turnover in population create a unique challenge for campus ministry where the desire is to build lasting community and grow together in faith.

As young adults grow in knowledge and freedom, there remains a current that moves them toward finding purpose and belonging. West Texas Campus Ministry responds to that desire by cultivating safe spaces where students know they are welcomed and loved and can be openly curious about the faith in a trusting, judgment-free environment.

At the Catholic Crew meetings of the University of Texas Permian Basin, our club’s membership extends beyond Catholic students to other Christian denominations, and even to some students who are unsure of their faith. Their continued participation has been a meaningful witness to the openness and welcome at the heart of this ministry.

“Consistency is key.” I had heard that before, yet through my time as the campus minister in the Permian Basin, I came to truly appreciate it. Personally, I enjoy and thrive in spaces where there’s variety from day to day and week to week, so I had to grow in consistency in order to do this work effectively.

In my three years, the approach shifted only slightly, but the foundation remained the same: a weekly gathering centered around a shared meal and time to share life with one another.

To best serve in this area, West Texas Campus Ministry has to be mobile and flexible. Rather than students leaving campus to gather at a center, I would go to them on their campus. Many students work and some have to commute, so meeting where they are and when they are on campus is essential. The aim is to remove as many barriers as possible: a convenient gathering space, a shared meal, and a timeframe that allows students to participate within their busy schedules.

Early on, I tried to meet students first to determine which day would best fit the most schedules and I quickly learned that approach didn’t work well. Instead, my student leaders and I chose a day and stuck

with it for the next few semesters. We also expanded the time window so students could come for a bit before class or drop in afterward, creating a two-hour time frame for gathering that accommodated both rhythms.

We set the table to gather — whether for twelve students or two. The rhythm of campus ministry adjusts to the fluctuations on a weekly basis, yet the invitation always remains the same.

One of the most beautiful experiences for me involved a student I met during my first semester of working here. They didn’t join the club right away though we came to know one another through simple greetings and their attendance at the Ash Wednesday Mass. A few semesters later, they became a committed member of the Catholic Crew, eventually serving in leadership and representing the club until their graduation.

I also loved witnessing the continuity of community through several students who joined the Crew at Midland College and continued to participate after transferring to UTPB. Watching their growth and transition over time felt like a gift and privilege. I also met students who had attended elementary school at St. Ann’s in Midland, which was especially meaningful to witness their desire to remain connected to their faith as young adults.

Lunch time was more than socializing; it’s also a space of formation. We listened to Catholic speakers, reflected on the current liturgical season, and sometimes worked on simple crafts such as creating a prayer tracker for Lent. We also hosted rosary-making workshops which, this year, even grew into a fundraiser. Many of the rosaries we made are now being sold at Glory Be! Gifts at St. Ann’s in Midland.

Beyond the weekly gatherings, I was blessed to accompany students on a few trips out of town, and even one out of state. These moments were opportunities to extend the rhythm of campus ministry beyond campus life while retaining the spirit of gathering, conversation, and growing in faith together.

During the Jubilee Year of Mercy, to mark the occasion, a pilgrimage to San Antonio was born. As a member of a congregation with a motherhouse in San Antonio, it was only natural to visit the San Antonio Missions and to reflect on God’s mercy not only in our own lives, but also across generations. Four young women courageously signed up for the pilgrimage, where we stayed at my convent. It was a joy to share several of my deepest loves in one experience — Catholicism, sacred spaces, my sisters, and the city of San Antonio.

Attending SEEK25 in Salt Lake City, Utah, was another meaningful opportunity to travel with students. SEEK is a Catholic conference offered to college students and other young adults, where participants hear speakers like Father Mike Schmitz, Jackie Francois, and Dr. Edward Sri among many others. Because it is designed for college-age young adults, the talks speak directly to their lived experiences and questions. Thousands of young people gather over winter break for this conference each year, and it has grown to the point that it is now held simultaneously at multiple sites.

While participating in Church life among my fellow parishioners, I often found myself answering questions about what this campus ministry does and how it operates. At one point I was encouraged to

prepare a proposal for attending SEEK that could be shared with potential donors who might wish to contribute. Providentially, we received a grant from one foundation that underwrote the expenses for my group of students in the Midland/Odessa area, which made participation possible for more students than I had initially imagined.

Other ways the Church at large has supported this ministry include sponsoring one of our weekly meals, providing food for retreats, and even supplying and cooking burgers for a tailgate party for a UTPB football game. Catholic professionals, alumni, and business owners participated in this ministry to young adults with their generosity for which I am eternally grateful.

I must highlight the intentional presence of our diocesan leadership among our college students. Bishop Michael Sis and Father Ryan Rojo have made a practice of alternating the celebration of Ash Wednesday liturgies, rotating each year between Abilene and the Permian Basin. My first experience hosting Ash Wednesday Mass at both Midland College and UTPB was with our vocation director, Father Rojo, as the presider. The following year, Bishop Sis himself came to celebrate with us. Our campus communities have greatly appreciated their presence at these celebrations.

I’m deeply grateful for the bishop’s trust and support for this ministry. His humility and grounded presence among the

students have been a meaningful affirmation of the importance of campus ministry in the life of our diocese.

Though I am moving on to do vocation work for my congregation, all who have participated in the Catholic Crew and have supported this ministry will remain in my prayers. Sister Kate Fitzgerald and I will both be moving back to San Antonio, and yet the presence of the Congregation of Divine Providence in this diocese continues through Sister Estela Guadalupe Tovar, who continues to minister at Holy Redeemer Catholic Church in Odessa.

As my presence in this ministry comes to an end, I carry with me the cherished memories formed over these years, and I pray that these experiences will enrich my new ministry doing vocation work.

My hope is that young adults will continue to encounter a Church that is not simply somewhere to attend but a community to which they truly belong. Their gifts matter. Their questions matter. Their presence matters. As a Church, we need them.

With confidence in the Providence of God, I trust that our diocese is committed to continuing the mission of West Texas Campus Ministry. May the next campus minister build on what is present and enlarge the gathering table. Let’s look forward with joy and hope in all that God has yet to do among us.



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:



Reporting Sexual Abuse

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

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

Reportar Abuso Sexual

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

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

Charismatic Corner: Report on apostolic succession and new charismatic churches

By Matteo Calisi

In the panorama of contemporary Christianity, few ecclesial phenomena have had such a profound impact on the world's religious geography as the growth of the new evangelical, Pentecostal, and charismatic churches. This development represents one of the most significant transformations of Christianity in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries and today involves hundreds of millions of believers on different continents.

This expansion inevitably calls into question the theological, ecclesiological, and ecumenical reflection of the Catholic Church, which is called to confront new forms of Christian experience characterized by a strong emphasis on the pneumatology, missionary, and charismatic dimension of the faith.

The expression "new charismatic churches" generally indicates those Christian communities that arose mainly in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, often outside the traditional historical ecclesial structures, characterized by a strong emphasis on: the action of the Holy Spirit, on charisms, on personal conversion, on spontaneous praise, on healing, on missionary evangelization, on the direct experience of God's presence.

These realities have their historical roots in classical Pentecostalism born at the beginning of the twentieth century, especially with the Azusa Street Awakening in the United States, but they have also developed later through the charismatic movement and the new international neo-Pentecostal networks.

Among the main expressions of this phenomenon can be identified:

- the historic Pentecostal churches;
- the neo-Pentecostal communities;
- the independent apostolic networks;
- ecumenically oriented charismatic communities.

Many of these realities have experienced an extraordinary expansion, especially in Latin America, Africa, and Asia, profoundly changing the face of global Christianity.

Among the most sensitive questions emerges the relationship between the Catholic doctrine of apostolic succession and the ecclesial conception of the new charismatic communities. For a long time, this confrontation was marked by mutual misunderstandings, historical mistrust, and apologetic oppositions. However, in recent decades, especially since the Second Vatican Council, a new season of dialogue has progressively opened, based not only on theological confrontation, but also on mutual listening, common prayer, and recognition of the action of the Holy Spirit beyond the visible boundaries of individual ecclesial communities.

In this context there are numerous experiences of spiritual and ecumenical dialogue that in recent decades have fostered new forms of encounter among Catholics, Evangelicals, Pentecostals, and new international charismatic realities.

1. Apostolic succession in the vision of the Second Vatican Council

The Second Vatican Council clearly reaffirmed the apostolic dimension of the Church, while at the same time recovering its biblical, sacramental, and pneumatological significance. The Dogmatic Constitution, *Lumen Gentium*, teaches: "Bishops, by divine institution, have succeeded the Apostles as pastors of the Church" (20).

Apostolic succession is not understood by the Council as mere juridical or institutional continuity, but as a living transmission of the apostolic mission entrusted by Christ to the apostles through:

- the laying on of hands;
- the consecratory prayer;
- communion in the apostolic faith;
- the sacramental continuity of the Church;
- universal ecclesial communion.

The conciliar perspective therefore goes beyond a purely administrative conception of the apostolic ministry, highlighting instead its spiritual and pastoral nature.

At the same time, Vatican II forcefully recovers the pneumatological dimension of ecclesiology. The Holy Spirit does not work exclusively through the hierarchical structure of the Church, but distributes gifts and charisms to the entire People of God: "The Holy Spirit also distributes special

graces among the faithful of every order" (*Lumen Gentium*, 12).

This vision has allowed the Catholic Church to develop greater attention to the spiritual experiences that have arisen even outside its visible borders, opening new perspectives for ecumenical dialogue with the Pentecostal and charismatic world.

2. The new charismatic churches and the understanding of apostolicity

The new evangelical, Pentecostal, and charismatic churches generally do not share the Catholic conception of historical and sacramental apostolic succession.

For many of them, apostolicity consists above all in fidelity to the Gospel proclaimed by the apostles, in personal conversion, in evangelization, and in the manifestation of the charisms of the Holy Spirit. In this perspective: apostolic continuity is first and foremost spiritual and biblical, ecclesial authority derives mainly from the anointing of the Spirit, the evangelizing mission is the fundamental criterion of ecclesial authenticity, and the experience of the "new birth" represents the heart of Christian identity.

Many new charismatic churches conceive of ecclesial ministry in a predominantly pneumatological and missionary form. Authority is often recognized to figures considered "apostolic" or "prophetic," not on the basis of a historical sacramental succession, but for their spiritual charisma, evangelizing capacity, and community recognition.

This ecclesial model has fostered remarkable missionary flexibility and rapid global growth, but it has also raised questions about ecclesial discernment, doctrinal stability, community fragmentation, and the relationship between authority and charism.

Some evangelical and Pentecostal circles have historically interpreted Catholic apostolic succession as an expression of institutionalization or centralization of ecclesiastical power.

However, a more careful historical reading shows how apostolic succession played a decisive role in the early Church in safeguarding the apostolic faith and preserving ecclesial unity. Already St. Irenaeus of Lyons, in the second century, saw in the succession of bishops the guarantee of the continuity of the faith received from the apostles against Gnostic drifts and arbitrary interpretations of Christian revelation.

The sub-apostolic tradition thus testifies that apostolic authority was not understood simply as a structure of control, but as a service to ecclesial communion, to the custody of truth, and to spiritual discernment.

3. Vatican II and the ecumenical turning point

One of the major contributions of Vatican II consists in having overcome an exclusively polemical vision of other Christian communities. The *Unitatis Redintegratio* decree states: "The Spirit of Christ does not refuse to use them as means of salvation" (3).

This statement represents a major ecclesiological turning point. While reaffirming the fullness of the means of salvation preserved in the Catholic Church, the Council recognizes the real presence of elements of sanctification and truth in other Christian communities as well.

Thus, a new season of dialogue with the evangelical, Pentecostal, and charismatic world begins, especially around some shared themes: the centrality of Sacred Scripture, the experience of the Holy Spirit, evangelization, personal conversion, prayer, mission, and Christian witness.

In this context, dialogue is no longer conceived as a simple doctrinal confrontation, but also as a mutual recognition of the action of the Holy Spirit in the lives of believers.

4. Spiritual ecumenism as a space for ecclesial encounter

Within this perspective, numerous ecclesial experiences have developed that are committed to the promotion of spiritual ecumenism and dialogue with the international evangelical and Pentecostal world.

Many of these experiences have not developed primarily through official theological negotiations, but through what

Vatican II calls "spiritual ecumenism": common prayer, mutual listening, Christian fraternity, conversion of heart, and reconciliation of memories.

Particularly significant were the numerous international ecumenical and charismatic initiatives that fostered spaces for encounter, common prayer, and reconciliation between Christians belonging to different ecclesial traditions.

These experiences have helped to overcome ancient historical mistrust and to develop new forms of Christian fraternity based on mutual listening, conversion of heart, and common recognition of the action of the Holy Spirit.

5. Apostolic succession and the charismatic dimension: Toward ecclesial reconciliation

One of the most significant aspects of contemporary charismatic dialogue consists in having concretely shown that fidelity to Catholic apostolic succession and openness to the charisms of the Spirit are not necessarily opposing realities.

These experiences have sought to bear witness to an ecclesiology that is both sacramental and charismatic, hierarchical and missionary, catholic and ecumenically open, institutional and pneumatological.

On the one hand, it has helped many Evangelicals and Pentecostals to understand apostolic succession not as domination or control, but as a service to ecclesial unity, apostolic memory, and community discernment.

On the other hand, it has fostered in the Catholic world a greater ability to recognize the spiritual fruits present in the new charismatic communities: evangelizing passion, love for sacred Scripture, intense life of prayer, experience of charisms, missionary zeal, and community dynamism.

6. An ecclesial challenge for the future

Important theological differences certainly remain regarding the ordained ministry, the Eucharist, ecclesial authority, the sacraments, ecclesiology, and the understanding of the universal Church. However, the ecumenical journey of recent decades has shown that mutual demonization no longer belongs to the horizon desired by the Second Vatican Council.

The true ecclesial challenge of our time does not consist in choosing between institution or charism, apostolic succession or freedom of the Spirit, ecclesial structure or spiritual experience. Rather, the challenge is to understand how these dimensions can be reconciled in the one mission of the Church.

An apostolic succession devoid of spiritual renewal risks being reduced to mere institutional conservation; but a charismatic experience devoid of ecclesial communion and apostolic discernment risks fragmentation, subjectivism, and doctrinal instability.

In this sense, many experiences of spiritual and charismatic dialogue appear today as authentic ecclesial laboratories in which an attempt is made to build a Christian culture of encounter, fraternity, and reconciliation.

Perhaps it is precisely here that one of the most significant prophetic intuitions of our time is manifested: the understanding that Christian unity will not only be born of theological agreements or institutional structures, but also of the healing of memories, mutual conversion, and the common recognition of the action of the Holy Spirit in the lives of believers.

As Pope Francis recalled, the Charismatic Renewal constitutes a true "current of grace" for the whole Church. It is precisely within this spiritual current that many contemporary ecclesial experiences today seek to make their own contribution to the cause of Christian unity.

- - -
Reprinted with permission of the author.
- - -
Go to CatholicCharismatic.com to find our San Angelo diocesan prayer groups and events.
- - -
Mission of Catholic Charismatic Renewal:
• *BRING baptism in the Holy Spirit to the whole Church*
• *BUILD unity in the Body of Christ*
• *SERVE the Poor*

Pope Leo calls all Christians to celebrate 2033 anniversary of Christ's redemption together

By Courtney Mares
OSV News

ROME — Pope Leo XIV has called on all Christians to work together toward the celebration of 2033, when the Catholic Church will mark an extraordinary Jubilee Year commemorating 2,000 years since the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

The pope expressed this hope during a June 30 audience with an Orthodox delegation from the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople, who traveled to Rome for the June 29 feast of Sts. Peter and Paul

and joined Pope Leo for prayer at the tomb of St. Peter in the crypt beneath St. Peter's Basilica at the end of the papal Mass for the feast day.

"Your presence amongst us expresses the fraternal closeness of our sister Church in Constantinople and of its shepherd and guide, His All Holiness Bartholomew, Ecumenical Patriarch," the pope told the delegation June 30.

"I once again express my heartfelt gratitude for this visit, as well as for your personal commitment and that of the Ecumenical Patriarchate to promoting the holy

cause of Christian unity," he said.

Pope Leo used the meeting to look ahead to 2033, when the Church will observe an Jubilee year marking two millennia since the passion, death, and resurrection of Christ. He expressed hope that the milestone could become a shared moment for all Christians.

"May the journey towards the celebration of the second millennium of the Redemption in 2033 be undertaken together by all the Christian denominations of the world, rediscovering the gift and the call to be witnesses to the Risen One," he said.

The pope's remarks build on a vision he first laid out publicly during his first international trip to Turkey and Lebanon in November when he told Christian leaders in Turkey that he hoped they might gather in Jerusalem in 2033 to mark the anniversary together — specifically in the Cenacle, the traditional site of the Last Supper, where Jesus washed his disciples' feet, and which is also venerated as the site of Pentecost, according to the Holy See Press Office.

Holy Cross Catholic High School earns Cardinal Newman Society recommendation

By Stephanie Hill
Holy Cross Catholic High School

Holy Cross Catholic High School has announced that it has been recommended by The Cardinal Newman Society, an organization that recommends schools committed to upholding the standards of faithful Catholic education.

This recognition is a significant milestone for Holy Cross Catholic High School, which opened in 2019 as the only Catholic high school between Fort Worth and El Paso. In just seven years, Holy Cross has grown into a school community rooted in academic excellence, authentic Catholic formation, and a desire to serve families throughout the Permian Basin.

“Since its inception, Holy Cross Catholic High School has espoused the idea of an educational institution where our young people are formed in mind, body, and soul by encountering the living God,” said Roy Ramirez, President of the Holy Cross Catholic High School Board of Directors. “Our mission has never been simply to prepare students academically for college or careers, but to help form young men and women who come to know and love Christ and who go into the community and the world equipped with truth, goodness, and beauty.”

For the last 30 years, The Cardinal Newman Society has worked to identify and support Catholic schools across the United States that remain faithful to the mission of Christ and the Church. For Holy Cross, this recommendation affirms the work and sacrifice of many families, faculty, staff, students, benefactors, and community members who have helped

build the school from its earliest days.

“This recommendation is a joyful affirmation of what Holy Cross strives to live every day,” said Gabriel Salgado, Head of School. “We are deeply grateful for the families who entrust their children to us, for our faculty and staff who pour themselves into this mission, and for the many people who have sacrificed so that Catholic high school education could take root and flourish here in the Permian Basin.”

Holy Cross celebrated the announcement with a special Mass of Thanksgiving, followed by time for students, faculty, and staff to gather in celebration as a school community. The day reflected the heart of the school’s mission: placing Christ at the center while also giving students the opportunity to experience the joy of belonging to a faithful Catholic community.

“This honor is not something that happens overnight,” Ramirez said. “It is the fruit of years of dedication, commitment, prayer, and sacrifice. We are grateful to every person who has been part of this important milestone in the life of our school.”

As Holy Cross continues to grow, school leaders remain committed to providing students with a faithful Catholic education that forms the whole person and prepares graduates to lead lives of faith, virtue, and excellence.

“This is not a finish line for us,” Salgado said. “It is a reminder of the responsibility we have to remain faithful to who we are and to continue forming students who will bring Christ into their homes, their workplaces, their communities, and the world.”



COURTESY

Supporters of Holy Cross Catholic High School celebrated the school’s achievement of being named a Cardinal Newman Society recommended school.

Catholic Daughters of the Americas elect new officers, host Religious Appreciation Dinner

By Gloria Johns

In conjunction with the annual Religious Appreciation Dinner on June 11, Council #1736 of the Catholic Daughters of the Americas (CDA) appointed their new officers for the 2026–2028 period. Bishop Michael J. Sis blessed and welcomed the incoming officers.

CDA Council #1736 is now 85 members strong, including dynamic women of all ages, walks of life, and races. Said Carol Halfmann, newly elected Regent, “As a woman who holds my Catholic faith very close and proudly, I love serving God as he calls me to the various ministries in my parish and in my community, but most especially in sharing my faith with my family. Being a part of the Catholic Daughters of the Americas has surrounded me with strong women of faith who share the same values and love of God and neighbor. We put our hearts and hands to work to accomplish great things in our world following our Catholic values. It humbles me greatly to hold their trust in leading such a faithful and committed group of ladies.”

Along with Bishop Sis, also attending were Msgr. Larry Droll and several priests and seminarians from the diocese. The annual Religious Appreciation Dinner is just one way the CDA express themselves as servants in the Catholic faith. The council also sponsors the journey of seminarians, the Pregnancy Help Center, the ACS Fiesta, monthly meetings at St. John Catholic Campus Outreach, the Chrism Mass, Marriage Jubilee reception, a Memorial Scholarship Fund, the Heart of JMJ Foundation, and a pantry shower for the hermitage and Catholic Outreach. And, as they say, this is just to name a few of their interests. Money is raised through spring bake sales at churches, an August garage sale, and the generosity of its members.

The Catholic Daughters of the Americas is a non-profit organization historically referred to as an order. They are more commonly known as CDA, which was begun in 1903 by the Knights of Columbus. Membership is for Catholic women ages 18 and older who love and support the Church and the Holy See and desire to participate in social and charitable activities. There are over 16,000 local court members in the 245 courts throughout Texas. Service is centered around the Circle of Love Program under the facets of quality of life, youth, legislation, education, spirituality, leadership, and family. For more information about CDA Council #1736 please contact financial secretary Noreen Rodriguez at noreenr11@gmail.com.



COURTESY

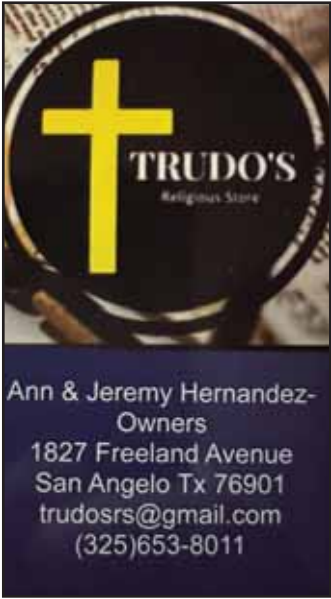
Top: Bishop Michael J. Sis and the newly-elected officers of Catholic Daughters of the Americas Council #1736 (left to right), District 3 Deputy Linda Binns, Treasurer Paige Morrone, Financial Secretary Noreen Rodriguez, Vice-Regent Elizabet Cabello-Ponce, Recording Secretary Angelica Ortiz, and Regent Carol Halfmann.

Bottom: CDA Council #1736 in San Angelo.



COURTESY

Trudo’s Religious Store



The Month of July is dedicated to “The Precious Blood of Jesus.”

Trudo's is grateful to serve you with these “Precious Blood” items as you live and share your faith with others.

- Pamphlets to use while attending Eucharistic adoration.
- Rosaries/pamphlets to meditate on the role the Precious Blood plays in the mysteries.
- Lectio Divino meditation.
- Litany of the Most Precious Blood.

Thank you and have a blessed summer.

Msgr. Droll Scholarship taking applications

The Rev. Msgr. Larry J. Droll Scholarship, worth between \$1,000 and \$3,000, will be awarded to Catholic lay men or women pursuing graduate degrees in theology or religious studies and in need of tuition assistance. This scholarship is geared toward those who have already obtained their bachelor’s degree and are either enrolled or want to enroll in a Catholic graduate school.

Students must be enrolled, in-person or remotely, in an accredited graduate program at a Catholic university in the United States. Scholarships are paid only to the university for tuition and other needs. The applicant must also be a practicing Roman Catholic who resides in a state in which Catholic Life Insurance is licensed to operate. These states include Texas, Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, Nebraska, New Mexico, Ohio, and Oklahoma.

The deadline to apply is July 15, 2026.

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

NEW

Diocese of San Angelo

FOUNDATIONS OF FAITH

AN OPPORTUNITY TO LEARN ABOUT OUR FAITH!

Topics include:

- Ministry
- Liturgy
- Scripture
- Meaning of Vatican II and MORE!

Classes over zoom!

Gain knowledge of our faith!

Meet people from different parishes!

www.sanangelodiocese.org/foundations-formation-program

SCAN ME

Following Christ at the cathedral

The Adult Faith Formation team of the Cathedral Church of the Sacred Heart would like to welcome those of you who have attended Discovering Christ to register for Following Christ. Registration will run until 23 August and is open to anyone who has previously participated in Discovering Christ. Our first session will be on Aug. 25 at 6 p.m. in the cafeteria. Please join us for praise music, a video lesson, small group discussions, and dessert! We look forward to seeing you all again and to aid one another in following Jesus Christ. Please visit: <https://sanangelocathedral.org/adult-faith-formation> or scan the QR Code below to register. FMI: adultfaith@sanangelocathedral.org.

CATHOLIC engaged encounter

EN ESPAÑOL La Boda es un día...el Matrimonio es para toda la Vida

Si te quieres casar por la Iglesia Católica...

Te invitamos a vivir un fin de semana de profundo encuentro con tu pareja para prepararse para el matrimonio.

Porque la boda es un día ... el matrimonio es para toda la vida.

NOVIEMBRE 6, 7 y 8

San Elizabeth Ann Seton Catholic Church Odessa, Texas.

INFORMACIÓN: Gricelda Bueno (432) 202-8056

FOLLOWING CHRIST

Registration is now open! Please scan the QR Code or visit sanangelocathedral.org/adult-faith-formation to register

FMI: adultfaith@sanangelocathedral.org

Join Fr. Joseph Choutapalli on a Pilgrimage to

Rome, Assisi, & Fatima

Rome - Orvieto - Assisi - Fatima - Santarem - Lisbon

Sign up in 2025 and get \$500 Off

September 7-15, 2026 Book Now at HolyLandTC.com

Starting from \$4699 Per Person

THE 3RD ANNUAL VOCATIONS Rally



The Diocese of San Angelo invites 6th-8th grade students to joyfully explore God's call in their lives through inspiring speakers, music, and prayer during National Vocation Awareness Week.

**MARRIAGE
PRIESTHOOD
CONSECRATED LIFE
SINGLE LIFE**

YOU HAVE A VOCATION



Scan for more information

Holy Cross Catholic High School

TWO SESSIONS | NOV 4TH EVENING | 5TH DAYTIME | 2026

No cost to attend | Meals provided

<https://sanangelodiocese.org/vocation-rally>

Are you or someone you know interested in helping plan this event?
Contact Lori Hines (325) 374-7609

St. James Parish in Sanderson to hold annual festival

St. James Parish in Sanderson, Texas, will hold their annual parish festival July 25, 2026. The parish is located at 209 East Hackberry Street in Sanderson.

For more information, contact St. James Parish at 432-336-5027 or sanderson@sanangelodiocese.org.

**Are you struggling after an abortion?
Are you seeking healing and hope?**

The Project Rachel Ministry of the Diocese of San Angelo is here for you. Our team has been praying for you, and you are not alone. Jesus offers healing and mercy to all who desire peace and self-forgiveness. Please reach out to our confidential helpline or email to learn more about healing retreats, counseling, and compassionate support.

Project Rachel Ministry – Diocese of San Angelo
 ☎ Call or text: (432) 236-9883
 ✉ projectrachel@sanangelodiocese.org

**¿Está sufriendo después de un aborto?
¿Necesita sanación y esperanza?**

El Ministerio Proyecto Raquel de la Diócesis de San Angelo está aquí para usted. Nuestro equipo ha estado orando por usted, y no está sola. Jesús ofrece sanación y misericordia a todos los que desean paz y perdón interior. Por favor comuníquese con nuestra línea confidencial o por correo electrónico para obtener información sobre retiros de sanación, consejería y apoyo compasivo.

Ministerio Proyecto Raquel – Diócesis de San Angelo
 ☎ Llame o envíe un texto: (432) 236-9883
 ✉ projectrachel@sanangelodiocese.org

Read the Angelus online

Sign up for DOSA Mail (see below) to get the WTA and other news from the diocese in your inbox.
 Past issues available at:
sanangelodiocese.org/west-texas-angelus



Stay Connected with the Diocese of San Angelo

DOSA Mail

The official Flocknote of the Diocese of San Angelo. Receive texts or emails with important news, updates, and messages from the diocese.

Two ways to join:
 1) Text DOSA to 84576
 OR
 2) Visit
<https://app.flocknote.com/dosamail>

Social Media

Diocese of San Angelo on Facebook:
<https://www.facebook.com/DioceseofSanAngelo>

Bishop Michael Sis on X (formerly Twitter):
 @SABishopMike

On the Web

www.sanangelodiocese.org

THE FAMILY WARRIOR PRESENTS

TAILGATE ROSARY

FOR THE FAMILIES OF SACRED HEART CATHEDRAL



SATURDAY, AUGUST 1ST • 10:00AM - 12:30PM
SACRED HEART CATHEDRAL • 20 E BEAUREGARD AVE • SAN ANGELO, TX

Join us for an inspiring time of prayer, encouragement, and fellowship as we grow stronger together in faith. Stay for a shared meal and meaningful connection with a community united in prayer and purpose.
 Bring a friend and be part of a powerful morning that will inspire, encourage, and strengthen your walk with God.

We look forward to praying with you!

FMI Contact Derek Love 325.656.5154 dereklove725@gmail.com



Meet the newest priests of the Diocese of San Angelo

By Brian Bodiford
Editor, West Texas Angelus

Father Francisco Camacho: Excitement and awe



"All is well," Father Francisco Camacho said, six days into his priesthood. "It's been a joy just to get into this life and to finally ... live my vocation."

"I'm in! Praise God!"
Almost immediately after his ordination at the Cathedral Church of the Sacred Heart in San Angelo June 20, Camacho started to notice changes in the way the world sees him. "One of my main surprises is my family," he said. After the ordination Mass, he went to a get-together at his cousin's house. He thought it would be just like old times. "I thought, they'll just treat me like normal, but they didn't," Camacho said. "It was very surprising, them giving the reverence of a priest to me. I was like, 'Oh wow! I am a priest!'" He laughed, recalling how they then "put me to work, blessing things."

Born and raised in Midland, Texas, Camacho received all his sacraments at Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish. He went to seminary at age 18, just after high school. He attended public school, playing saxophone in the marching band at Midland Lee High School. "I was really involved with my high school band," he said. "I really enjoyed that aspect of my high school life, by the Lord has other plans for me."

"That's when my gifts of organization started to form," Camacho said of his time in band, also crediting the experience with honing his leadership skills.

Though he doesn't play saxophone anymore, he is looking for a hobby to fill the time that is left empty now that he isn't involved in heavy seminary studies. "Being back in the diocese ... after finishing my studies, I realized, 'Oh, I need to get a hobby!' ... I don't want to just be doomscrolling or just sitting there watching tons of movies." He's been trying to get into running and might look into something with music. Some parishioners have suggested golf, but it remains to be seen if they will convince him to hit the links.

In addition to his gift of organization and leadership, Father Camacho has other charisms to bring to his role of spiritual fatherhood. "A lot of people say I'm very approachable, so that approachability is a very good gift I have to give to the people of God."

Noting that a "charism test" was part of his seminary formation, Camacho said that his top result was discernment. "I'm able to discern spirits very well, apparently," indicating aptitudes for guidance and spiritual direction. "I would also say I like to bring order into chaos. When I see parishes or anything disorganized and there's no systems in place, I just like to, 'Okay, let's get some systems, let's take out the old and bring in what needs to be brought in.'"

The first parish to benefit from Father Camacho's ministry is Abilene's Holy Family, where he began as parochial vicar July 1. "I'm very excited for being part of the schedule," he said. "I'm the one giving the Mass, I'm the one hearing confessions, and that's very exciting for me. But also I'm very excited to help the priest there," pastor Father Nilo Nalugon, "and also to be able to give myself the opportunity to plug myself into different ministries."

Father Nalugon has tasked him with filling a gap in the parish ministries by developing something for young families.

Immediately after his ordination, Father Camacho



Father Humberto Diaz: SEARCH leads to answers

"From the earliest beginnings, since I was a young boy, the priesthood was already there," Father Humberto Diaz said days after his ordination to the priesthood June 20, 2026, at the Cathedral Church of the Sacred Heart in San Angelo, Texas. "I would play priest as a young boy," he continued. "I would use my mom's robe and go to the kitchen and get tortillas to use as hosts."

"In that sense, priesthood has been there since, you know, the earliest age I can remember."

It was at a SEARCH retreat during his freshman year in high school, however, that the call from God was clear. Diaz was born and raised in Abilene, attending St. Vincent Pallotti Parish. The high school retreat brought him to the cathedral in San Angelo, the same place where he would later be ordained a priest, and the site of his first assignment: Father Diaz began as the parochial vicar at the cathedral July 1.

"It's a beautiful thing that I'm actually at the cathedral now as my first assignment," he said. "It was there at the cathedral that Jesus asked me to come follow him, to feed his sheep, in Eucharistic adoration." It was there, during adoration, that Diaz asked God what his will was. "I don't take for granted that the Lord was very clear and direct with that."

Despite his early clerical reenactments in his mother's robe, the path to the priesthood was not always clear to Diaz. "I wanted to do a lot of things," he said. "Especially in middle school, I wanted to make a lot of money, and I wanted to be the governor of Texas, I wanted to be a lawyer, a doctor. ... This [retreat] helped me just refocus."

Diaz received all his sacraments at St. Vincent in Abilene, largely thanks to his uncle and aunt, Simon and Estella De La Cruz. His parents were Catholic, but not very active.

The love of the Church shown by aunt and uncle eventually brought Diaz and many members of the family to the faith. Diaz even served as his mother's confirmation sponsor. Before they passed, both Diaz's parents gave him their blessing to pursue his vocation to the priesthood.

"If it weren't for them, I wouldn't even be here today," he said of his aunt and uncle. Simon and Estella De La Cruz stood with Diaz at his ordination.

"It's such a buildup," Diaz said of his ordination after years of study and training. "You take it day by day. There's a lot of beautiful mystery about it all."

"I just look forward to everything about the priesthood," Diaz continued. "As a young man, I wanted to be a lot of things. ... I realized, in the priesthood, I'm going to be all that in a spiritual capacity. You know, fight for justice, be a healer, govern ... and most importantly, be a father. In the priesthood, in the spiritual realm, that's amplified and that's all lived out. It's such a sacred mystery."

While discerning his call, Diaz searched for his place in the Church, exploring religious communities before finding his home in the diocesan priesthood. "I had the privilege to look at many religious communities," he said. "I found that I loved a little bit of everything from religious life, of different communities: the Franciscans, the Carmelites, the Salesians, the Dominicans, missionary priests."

None of the communities felt quite right. "I realized, just like the same way in living out this vocation of all the things I wanted to be as a young boy, in like manner, the charisms of all these religious communities, in priesthood, I can bring that out. ... Those things that I love [about religious communities] are things that I love about myself."

"In my priesthood I have an ability to be all things to all people," he said, hoping that he will be able to incorporate all the aspects he loved about each religious community he visited during his discernment.

"My first love was always diocesan priesthood," he said. "It's just more clear now. It's clearly God's will."

One moment helped solidify the call to diocesan priesthood after visiting with a group of Franciscan missionaries. "I just had a sense of, from God: 'No.' ... At the time, Diaz thought that meant he should apply to the Salesians instead. When he spoke to the Salesian community's vocation di-



rector, he was asked: "Humberto, how do you see yourself serving in God's Church?" Diaz's answer? "I want to help people in their ordinary lives come to holiness in ordinary ways." The vocation director was frank: "I don't think you're called to religious life."

"Jesus and I had some conversation that evening in adoration. He and I, we had a talk," Diaz said. He realized his first love was the community offered by parish life. Diaz enrolled in community college in Abilene with no real plans, studying for two years.

The plan came together in 2018. "It was on May 1, the feast of St. Joseph the Worker, that I received the phone call from the diocese here to begin my application process for the seminary," Father Diaz said.

"When you do God's will, you never know what God has in store."



Father Mauricio Romero: 'Something greater than myself'



"This weekend was great," Father Mauricio Romero said, referring to his ordination to the priesthood June 20 at the Cathedral Church of the Sacred Heart in San Angelo. "It's super exciting. It's still hard to believe. It's kind of slowly setting in." His first Mass at Holy Redeemer Parish in Odessa was also "very special ... just a lot of joyful moments in the past week," he said, a reminder of the joy and responsibilities of the priesthood.

Born in Chicago, Illinois, Romero and his family moved to Odessa when he was 4. They initially attended the parishes on the south side of Odessa before settling at Holy Redeemer. "I basically grew up there," he said. "I became an altar server, I was in the choir, I was in the youth group. All these things really helped solidify ... my calling to the priesthood."

These opportunities to serve in the parish allowed Romero to see what a priest is and what he does. "Going to different retreats like the Steubenville conferences in the summer" also got Romero thinking about God's plan for him, he said.

"I think at that point, when I was in high school, there were several options open," he said. "I eventually decided to ... try out seminary, at least. I wasn't completely sure."

Accepted to Conception Seminary College in 2017, he graduated in 2021. Before his undergraduate degree was finished, though, Bishop Michael Sis and seminarian director Father Ryan Rojo decided where they wanted Romero to attend theology classes. "That's when bishop asked me to go study in Rome," he said, calling it "super unexpected."

Romero completed his seminary training at the Pontifical North American College in Rome. Unlike the two men ordained with Romero, though, he is headed back to school. Father Romero will complete one more year of studies to earn an advanced degree — a Licentiate in Dogmatic Theology — before returning to the Diocese of San Angelo for good.

Before his final year of studies, Father Romero will be assigned as parochial vicar of St. Stephen Parish in Midland from July 22, 2026, to Sept. 23, 2026.

"It's been a true blessing to be able to study over there," Romero said. "The culture and the language, the food, it's all different." His years of study there required a little bit of adjustment. "One of my favorite parts has been meeting people from all over the world at the universities," he said. "The most astounding thing is how palpable the Church is, just being there. It's real." His seminary in Rome looked out on St. Peter's Square; he's met both Pope Francis and Pope Leo XIV.

When he returns to his studies in Rome, his final degree "looks at the basic tenants of the faith ... Christology, looking at the person of Christ; studying the Trinity, three persons in one God; studying Ecclesiology, the nature of the Church; Mariology, looking at the person of Mary ... kind of looking at how these things build up the faith, where they come from, how we see them now, looking at the from different perspectives," he said. "These areas have always been interesting to me, challenging to kind of wrap one's head around, but I think kind of necessary."

The licentiate degree will also require Romero to write a thesis. While the specifics are yet to be finalized, he plans to study Venerable María de Jesús de Agreda and her work, The Mystical City of God. Perhaps best known in West Texas for the stories of her bilocation from Spain to cate-

chize the native Jumano population, her book, and it's focus on Mary, will likely be the crux of Romero's thesis.

The road to the priesthood has been long for Father Romero. "When I was a kid, probably around 8-ish, I used to play Mass, and I would have my mom and my sister kind of help me out," he said. "My mom taught me my prayers when I was super young. I think that was kind of the seed that was planted from the very beginning."

Beginning seminary, Romero was open to exploring the call to the priesthood. There was no moment where God specifically called him. Rather, Romero's experience was one of "just growing in prayer and relationship with God and just realizing that he was calling me to something deeper."

"What I really wanted to do with my life was to do something greater than myself." In high school, the parts of Mass that stuck with him were readings of Jesus calling his disciples. "You know, 'come and follow me' ... 'leave everything behind.' Those words always resounded to me. There's just something about them that made them very impactful to me."

"I just wanted to explore that," he said.

"I truly care about other people," Father Romero said. "I care about their wellbeing, and I care about them being involved, not being left out ... and feeling heard. Especially because I've seen the opposite. And I've seen how detrimental that can be."

"Slowly, Christ has kind of, in a way, molded me to become a better listener and a more compassionate man, to be able to hear and not be indifferent to people," Father Romero said. "People go to priests and they seek counsel, and they seek help."

That can put the pressure on, but Romero feels prepared: "One of the most important things that I've learned in seminary is that I'm not perfect, and I'm okay with that. ... People can place priests on a pedestal very often." The whole goal of priesthood, for Father Romero, is "recognizing that I'm not enough, and that I want to bring others to Christ."



West Texas Angelus photos
See more at sanangelodiocese.org

Great American Catholics — Archbishop John Carroll: A Catholic bridge-builder in a fledgling nation

By Russell Shaw
OSV News

As the Revolutionary War drew to a close and the 13 former British colonies were being transformed into the United States, American Catholics faced an obvious, urgent challenge: to win the acceptance of their fellow Americans.

Catholics in the new country totaled only about 25,000, with the largest concentrations in Maryland and Pennsylvania. Few were rich or influential. Instead, in many places Catholics were targets of contempt, suspicion, and persecution. Attitudes and practices transferred to the new world from the European religious wars of the 17th century.

In such circumstances the choice of a leader for the Church in America was of crucial importance. John Car-

roll — first bishop, later first archbishop in the United States — was the right man in the right place at the right time for this onerous, highly sensitive job.

A member of a wealthy and respected Catholic family, with excellent contacts among America's political and social elite, Archbishop Carroll proved notably adept at building bridges with the non-Catholic world in a career spanning more than three decades. "A gentleman of learning and abilities," John Adams, who was to be second president of the United States, said of the young priest in 1776, the year of American independence.

Along with persuading Protestants that Catholics also had a place in America, John Carroll was to tackle the mammoth task of building the infrastructure of the Church from scratch. And in this, too, he proved remarkably successful.

He was born Jan. 8, 1735, at his parents' plantation in southern Maryland, the fourth of seven children. His older brother, Daniel, was to be one of only five men who signed both the Articles of Confederation and the U.S. Constitution. His cousin and lifelong friend, Charles Carroll of Carrollton, was the only Catholic signer of the Declaration of Independence and the first U.S. senator from Maryland.

Following early studies in Maryland, young Carroll and his cousin Charles were sent to French Flanders to study at the Jesuits' College of St. Omer, an institution established to accommodate the sons of well-to-do English-speaking Catholics who had no Catholic schools in their own countries.

In 1753, the 18-year-old entered the nearby Jesuit novitiate in preparation for becoming a priest of the Society of Jesus. He was ordained in 1771.

In the summer of 1773, Pope Clement XIV, under pressure from several Catholic monarchs with whom the Jesuits had tangled, issued a brief suppressing the Society. Carroll was shocked but, having no other choice, accepted the papal decree. (In later life, he would display a marked preference — which he acknowledged — for ex-Jesuits like himself in filling clerical posts in his sprawling American diocese.) Returning home in 1774, he engaged in pastoral work near what is now Washington, and there established the colonies' first Catholic parish.

In 1776, the Continental Congress, now in open conflict with the mother country, dispatched a mission to Canada to try to persuade the Canadians to join the struggle against Great Britain.

The members were Benjamin Franklin, Samuel Chase, a signer of the Declaration of Independence and later justice of the Supreme Court, and Charles Carroll of Carroll-



OSV NEWS PHOTO/COURTESY OF GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY LIBRARY, SPECIAL COLLECTIONS RESEARCH CENTER

Baltimore Archbishop John Carroll seen in a painting by Gilbert Stuart.

ton. Although not formally a member of the group, Father Carroll was asked — and agreed — to accompany it. A priest's involvement, it was reasoned, would smooth the way with French Canadians.

The effort failed, but Father Carroll's role strengthened his image among the movers and shakers of his day as a trustworthy and capable figure.

Pope Pius VI in 1784 appointed him ecclesiastical superior of the mission in the United States. (This was the same Pope Pius who in August 1799 was to die in France as a prisoner of the French Revolution. For his part, John Carroll, though a strong supporter of the American Revolution, was disgusted with the extremism and violence of this French version of regime change.)

Four years later, after Rome authorized the priests of the United States — then numbering little more than two

See CARROLL, Page 19

Should a priest do a Mass intention 'for the people of the parish' when there are more specific intentions waiting?

Q: I try to have a Mass said for my deceased grandparents every year around the anniversary of their deaths. But this year, my parish said their Mass intention calendar is very full, and people are requesting dates as far as six months out! Then I went to Mass last Sunday, and the priest offered what sounded like a vague intention "for the people of the parish." I guess it's nice that he wants to pray for everyone, but should he really be doing that when there are so many parishioners waiting to request specific intentions?

A: The short answer is that your priest isn't offering Mass for the people of the parish because he personally wanted to or because he thought it was a good idea (although he probably is happy to do this and praying for the people of the parish is indeed a good idea)! Rather, he was offering this specific Mass intention because the Church's canon law specifically requires him to do so.

As we read in Canon 534 of the Code of Canon Law: "After a pastor has taken possession of his parish, he is obliged to apply a Mass for the people entrusted to him on each Sunday and holy day of obligation." In more technical canonical contexts, we would refer to this mandatory Mass intention as the "*Missa pro populo*," which translates literally into English as "Mass for the people."

A parish pastor's requirement to celebrate a weekly "*Missa pro populo*" closely parallels the similar obligation of a diocesan bishop, noted in the Canon 388 of the Code, to celebrate a Mass for the people of his diocese.

That same canon goes on to state that the "bishop himself must personally celebrate and apply a Mass for the people on the days mentioned," and it's clear from the context in the relevant canon that this is likewise a personal obligation for parish pastors.

That is, while parish pastor can potentially delegate the weekly "*pro populo*" Mass to another priest "If he is legitimately impeded from this celebration" (such as, for example, in the case of a sudden illness), the "*pro populo*" Mass is an obligation that is entrusted to the particular, individual priest who serves the parish in the specific role as pastor.

Or in other words, prayerfully providing for the spiritual needs of the people is not a service offered by the parish as an institution, but is rather a duty specifically



Jenna Marie Cooper
OSV News

Question Corner

committed to the person of the priest who serves as the primary shepherd and spiritual father of the parish.

This relatively small detail tells us something important about the nature of the priesthood and of the way authority works in the Church more generally. Although priests are often charged with the practical day-to-day administration of a parish, just as a bishop is charged with the prosaic details of running a diocese, diocesan bishops and parish pastors both have roles that are far more profound than that of a chief executive officer of a merely human organization.

Of course, it is to be hoped that parishes and dioceses are run well and that their relevant organizational and material needs are tended to in a sensible and prudent fashion. But at the end of the day, the Church — and the portions of the Church that we call parishes and dioceses — are far closer to a spiritual family than they are to a secular charity or ordinary non-profit.

St. John Paul II alludes to this reality in his 1992 document *Pastores Dabo Vobis* on priestly formation: "In his spiritual life, therefore, (the priest) is called to live out Christ's spousal love toward the Church, his bride. Therefore, the priest's life ought to radiate this spousal character, which demands that he be a witness to Christ's spousal love and thus be capable of loving people with a heart which is new, generous and pure ... with full, constant and faithful dedication."

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

GRN RADIO PROGRAM SCHEDULE

GUADALUPE RADIO NETWORK

Radio for your soul can be heard on:

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

POPULAR ENGLISH PROGRAMS

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

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

8:00 AM – Catholic Connections - Teresa Tomeo

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

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

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

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

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

2:00 PM – *EWTN Open Line*

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

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

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

8:00 PM – *EWTN Nightly News*

To promote your business or events, please call our local office at 432-682-5476.

For a complete schedule or to listen live, go to our website at: GRNonline.com. Download our free Apps for English or Spanish programming.

Guadalupe Radio Network
Operated by La Promesa Foundation

The Guadalupe Radio Network is a proud Affiliate of the EWTN Global Catholic Network

St. Anthony Mary Zaccaria and love of liturgy

Anthony Mary Zaccaria was two years old when his father, Lazzaro, died in 1504 in Cremona, Italy. His mother, Antonia Pescaroli, devoted the rest of her life to her son and his education. Rosemary Ellen Guiley wrote in *The Encyclopedia of Saints* that she also taught him compassion for the suffering and destitute.

He began studying medicine at the University of Padua and received his doctor of medicine degree at 22. He served as a doctor in his hometown of Cremona for a time before he began studying theology and ministering to the poor and sick, changing from physical to spiritual healing. He began teaching the catechism to both children and adults from the small church of St. Vitalis, next to his mother's home. During his service in prisons and hospitals during the plague of 1528, the citizens of Cremona began calling him an apostle.

It was under the influence of the Dominicans that he became a priest and was ordained in 1528. Just two years later, together with two Milanese noblemen, Anthony Mary founded an order of priests to regenerate the love of the liturgy. Richard McBrien writes in *Lives of the Saints* that he encouraged frequent preaching with an emphasis on the writings of St. Paul. The order received formal approval in 1533 from Pope Clement VII and adopted the name of Clerks Regular of St. Paul. The congregation started with five members and soon gained a reputation for preaching with stress on Our Lord's redeeming passion and pastoral



Mary Lou Gibson
Speaking of Saints

work.

According to Guiley, the group wanted to establish three religious families within the community: priests, sisters, and lay people. All three families shared the same zealous mission for reform and preaching encouraging daily Communion, penitence, and service to the sick and poor.

Louisa Torelli, the Countess of Guastella, worked with Anthony to found a women's Congregation dedicated to helping women in danger of falling into prostitution. Paul Burns writes in *Butler's Lives of the Saints* that Anthony introduced the custom of ringing the church bells at 3 p.m. every Friday to commemorate the death of Christ and spread the Milanese practice of exposing the Blessed Sacrament for three days of devotion.

According to McBrien, the order encountered opposi-

tion from local clergy because of the reforms it tried to introduce, but Rome stood behind it. The Clerks were twice delated to Rome for heresy. A vigorous preacher, Anthony Mary did not endear himself to everyone, but this is what he wrote in response: "We should love and feel compassion for those who oppose us, since they harm themselves and do us good" (Woodene Koenig-Bricker, *365 Saints*).

He organized conferences for the clergy, established associations for married people, preached in the open air and ministered to the sick. McBrien wrote that his spirituality was based on devotion to the Eucharist and the passion of Christ.

In the last year of his life, Anthony began negotiations to make the church of St. Barnabas in Milan the headquarters of his order. That is why its members became known as Barnabites. He died on July 5, 1539, at his mother's house in Cremona.

After his death, the order grew steadily but never became very large according to Burns. Its priests work among poorest of the poor in France, Germany, Belgium, and South America. The first house in North America was in Buffalo, New York, in 1952.

Anthony Mary was canonized in 1897 by Pope Leo XIII. His feast day is July 5.

- - -

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

10 things every Christian man should know about the pro-life calling

The pro-life calling is not a political talking point. It is a divine mandate. Too many Christian men believe that being pro-life simply means voting a certain way or opposing abortion. True pro-life conviction is far larger. It demands the radical protection, defense, and provision for all human life from the moment of conception to the final breath of natural death. We are called to stand in the breach for the unborn child, the struggling single mother, the broken family, the disabled, and the forgotten elderly. The culture of death wants men to remain passive observers. Christ demands that his sons become active protectors. Here are ten truths every Christian man must understand about the sacred call to defend life from the womb to the tomb.

- 1. God is the sole author of human life.** No human being is an accident of biology or a mistake of fate. Every life is intentionally spoken into existence by the Creator. A Christian man must recognize that because God alone gives life, God alone holds the authority to determine its span. To compromise on the value of any human life is to assault the sovereignty of God himself.
"In his hand is the soul of every living thing, and the life breath of all mortal flesh" (Jb 12:10).
- 2. Human dignity begins in the womb.** The battlefield for life starts in the darkness of the womb. The unborn child is not a clump of tissue. It is a unique human person with a soul known by God before the foundation of the world. A faithful man must speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves and defend the absolute sanctity of the unborn.
"You formed my inmost being; you knit me in my mother's womb. I praise you, because I am wonderfully made; wonderful are your works! My very self you know" (Ps 139:13-14).
- 3. Pro-life demands sacrificial provision.** True masculinity does not stop at protecting a child from abortion. It requires providing for that child and their family. Christian men must step up to support pregnant mothers, foster children, and fathers who are struggling to navigate the pressures of parenthood. We must be the safety net that the world refuses to provide.
"And whoever does not provide for relatives and especially family members has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever" (1 Tm 5:8).
- 4. Every person bears the image of God.** The value of a human being is not determined by their economic utility, intellectual capacity, or social status. Every individual possesses inherent dignity because they bear the



Robin Miller
The Family Warrior

- divine imprint of the Creator. From the homeless man on the street to the corporate executive, we must defend the life of every person as a reflection of God.
- "God created mankind in his image; in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them" (Gn 1:27).
- 5. We must protect the sick and vulnerable.** A culture of utility discards those who are weak, disabled, or suffering from chronic illness. A man of God does the exact opposite. True strength is measured by how we treat those who cannot offer anything in return. Protecting life means ensuring the sick and disabled are treated with absolute care and profound respect.
"And the king will say to them in reply, 'Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me'" (Mt 25:40).
- 6. Dignity must be defended until natural death.** The pro-life mission does not end when a person grows old. The elderly are increasingly targeted by a culture that pushes euthanasia and assisted suicide as easy solutions to suffering. A Christian man honors the aged. We must protect our parents and grandparents from abandonment and ensure their lives are guarded until God calls them home.
"My son, be steadfast in honoring your father; do not grieve him as long as he lives" (Sir 3:12).
- 7. Men must fight the spiritual battle for the family.** The attack on human life is a spiritual war aimed at destroying the family structure. The enemy wants fathers absent, mothers isolated, and children viewed as burdens. Christian men must stand at the front door of their homes and push back against these demonic lies with aggressive prayer and spiritual vigilance.
"I call heaven and earth today to witness against you: I have set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse. Choose life, then, that you and your descendants may live" (Dt 30:19).
- 8. True masculine leadership requires active de-**

fense. A passive man is a dangerous liability to his family and community. God has positioned men to be the primary protectors of the vulnerable. When life is threatened by abortion, neglect, or medical overreach, men cannot sit silently in the background. We must use our strength, our voices, and our resources to shield the weak.

"For I had said to the nobles, the magistrates, and the rest of the people: 'Our work is scattered and extensive, and we are widely separated from one another along the wall; wherever you hear the trumpet sound, join us there; our God will fight with us'" (Neh 4:13-14).

- 9. True pro-life work offers mercy and healing.** The culture of death leaves behind a trail of immense pain, regret, and brokenness. Many men and women carry the silent agony of past abortions or failures to protect life. A truly pro-life brotherhood does not condemn. It extends the restorative mercy of Jesus Christ to heal wounds and rebuild broken souls.
"Come now, let us set things right, says the Lord: Though your sins be like scarlet, they may become white as snow; Though they be red like crimson, they may become white as wool" (Is 1:18).
- 10. The legacy of life shapes generations.** Defending life is an exhausting battle that requires continuous sacrifice. However, the reward is eternal. When a man dedicates his life to building a culture of life within his home and community, he leaves an enduring legacy of faith and righteousness that will impact his children's children.
"Let us not grow tired of doing good, for in due time we shall reap our harvest, if we do not give up" (Gal 6:9).

Christian men were never called to a life of comfortable neutrality. We were called to be protectors of the sacred gift of life at every single stage. This world will tell you to mind your own business and stay quiet. Christ calls you to stand alert, armed with truth, and ready to sacrifice for the least of his brethren.

In a culture that devalues the weak and discards the inconvenient, faithful men must hold the line. Your protection matters. Your financial support for families matters. Your leadership matters. The battle for life from the womb to the tomb is fierce, but the victory belongs to the Lord.

Be the family warrior God has called you to be. God bless.

- - -

Robin Miller is the founder and executive director of The Family Warrior, a men's ministry based in San Angelo. See www.thefamilywarrior.org.



St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish in Odessa held Vacation Bible School from June 1-6, 2026.

ALAN TORRE | APTORRE PHOTOGRAPHY

Reporte del Retiro Engaged Encounter

Por Diacono Erick Morgado

Durante los días 19, 20 y 21 de Junio, se llevó a cabo con gran éxito el más reciente retiro del programa Engaged Encounter en la St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Catholic Church, ubicada en Odessa, Texas. Este retiro fue organizado con el propósito de acompañar y preparar a las parejas comprometidas para vivir plenamente el sacramento del matrimonio.

En esta ocasión participaron quince parejas, quienes tuvieron la oportunidad de vivir una experiencia profunda de reflexión, diálogo y crecimiento tanto personal como espiritual. A lo largo de los tres días, los participantes trabajaron en temas fundamentales para la vida matrimonial, fortaleciendo aspectos esenciales como la comunicación, la confianza, el compromiso, la resolución de conflictos y la importancia de la fe dentro de la relación.

El ambiente que se vivió durante el retiro estuvo lleno de alegría, respeto y apertura. Cada pareja dedicó tiempo para dialogar de manera sincera sobre su relación, compartir sus experiencias y reflexionar sobre los desafíos y bendiciones que encontrarán en su futura vida matrimonial. Fue evidente el entusiasmo y la disposición de todos los participantes para aprovechar al máximo esta oportunidad de preparación.

Como equipo de Engaged Encounter, nos sentimos profundamente agradecidos por la participación y el compromiso demostrado por cada una de las parejas. Fue una bendición acompañarlos en este importante momento de sus vidas y ser testigos de su crecimiento como futuros esposos.

Nuestra oración es que este retiro haya dejado una



huella duradera en cada una de las parejas y que las herramientas, enseñanzas y experiencias compartidas les sirvan de guía para construir matrimonios sólidos, saludables y centrados en el amor de Dios. Esperamos que continúen poniendo en práctica todo lo aprendido y que encuentren en el diálogo, el respeto mutuo y la fe los pilares fundamentales de su vida juntos.

Pedimos a Dios que bendiga abundantemente a estas quince parejas, que las acompañe en su camino hacia el matrimonio y que sus futuros hogares sean reflejo de su amor, llenos de paz, unidad y esperanza. Que los frutos de este retiro en Odessa, Texas, perduren por muchos años y contribuyan al fortalecimiento de matrimonios santos y felices.

Catholic Extension Society announces Lumen Christi nominations; San Angelo’s Stokes-Santana among nominees for immigration work

CHICAGO — Catholic Extension Society announced the 46 nominees for the 2026-2027 Lumen Christi Award. The Lumen Christi Award is Catholic Extension Society’s highest honor. Since 1978, it has been presented annually to people who radiate and reveal the light of Christ present in the communities where they serve.

Each year, bishops are asked to nominate one individual, group, or institution from their diocese for this award. Collectively, their stories of spiritual care, compassionate service, and compelling self-sacrifice for others showcase the mission of the Church in this country.

“The Lumen Christi Award is a real-time window into the incredible impact of people of faith in America,” said Father Jack Wall, president of Catholic Extension Society. “Born out of their love for God, the dedication of these nominees to the good of the Church and the good of their neighbors should make us all proud to be Catholic.”

From these outstanding nominees, a group of finalists will be announced later this summer, followed by the selection of a national honoree in the fall. Award finalists will receive \$15,000 each, and the national honoree will be awarded \$100,000 to support their ministry.

The 2026-2027 Lumen Christi Awards nominees are as follows:

Catholic Charities of Central Louisiana | Diocese of Alexandria, Louisiana

Liz Loeffler | Archdiocese of Anchorage-Juneau, Alaska

Movidos por el Espíritu | Diocese of Arecibo, Puerto Rico

Marcel Karian | Armenian Catholic Eparchy of Our Lady of Nareg

Barbara Comer | Diocese of Baker, Oregon

Carolyn Fernandez | Diocese of Beaumont, Texas

Jennifer Williams | Diocese of Biloxi, Mississippi

Mother Mary Joseph Campbell | Diocese of Bismarck, North Dakota

Deacon Ken Pitlick | Diocese of Cheyenne, Wyoming

Father Guillermo Treviño | Diocese of Davenport, Iowa (posthumous nomination)

Coleen Stein | Diocese of Dodge City, Kansas

Deacon Bryan Bassa | Diocese of Duluth, Minnesota

Monsignor Arturo Bañuelas | Diocese of El Paso, Texas

Father Christopher Nahra | Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon

Greg Sauvageau | Diocese of Fargo, North Dakota

Andres Zamudio | Diocese of Fresno, California

Vicki Trujillo | Diocese of Gallup, New Mexico/Arizona

Manuel Obando and Maria Victoria Perez | Diocese of Gaylord, Michigan

Jean Ann Molczyk | Diocese of Grand Island, Nebraska

Lori Purpura | Diocese of Great Falls-Billings, Montana

Patricia “Pat” Caillouet | Diocese of Houma-Thibodaux, Louisiana

Father Guy Wilson, S.T. | Diocese of Jackson, Mississippi

Home Heating Assistance | Diocese of Kalamazoo, Michigan

Bridgette Mouton | Diocese of Lafayette, Louisiana

Deacon Enrique Peñuñuri | Diocese of Laredo, Texas

Father David Powers | Diocese of Lexington, Kentucky

Connie Cobb | Diocese of Little Rock, Arkansas

Plainview Pastoral Planning Committee | Diocese of Lubbock, Texas

Bishop Baraga Association | Diocese of Marquette, Michigan

St. Patrick Champion Community Outreach Center | Diocese of Memphis, Tennessee

Kim Derrick | Diocese of Nashville, Tennessee

Susan Montalvo-Gesser | Diocese of Owensboro, Kentucky

Deacon Santiago Molina | Diocese of Pensacola-Tallahassee, Florida

Sister Patricia Pora, RSM | Diocese of Portland, Maine

Sapa Un Jesuit Academy | Diocese of Rapid City, South Dakota

Father Joe Walsh | Diocese of Reno, Nevada

Michael Edwards | Diocese of Salt Lake City, Utah

Patricia Stokes-Santana | Diocese of San Angelo, Texas

Deacon Andy Orozco | Diocese of San Bernardino, California

Martin Noriega | Diocese of Savannah, Georgia

Marianne Jones | Diocese of Springfield-Cape Girardeau, Missouri

Mother Marla Marie Lucas | Eparchy of St. Maron of Brooklyn

Yvonne Huck | Diocese of Steubenville, Ohio

Deacon Fidel Carrillo | Diocese of Stockton, California

Michael Mosykowski | Ukrainian Catholic Eparchy of St. Josaphat in Parma, Ohio

Cristina Hernandez | Diocese of Youngstown, Ohio

Read more about each nominees’ inspiring stories at <https://www.catholicextension.org/what-we-do/lumen-christi-award/2026-2027-lumen-christi-award-nominees/>.

Stokes-Santana’s profile from Catholic Extension’s website reads, in part:

“Patricia Stokes-Santana serves as a vital force within the Diocese of San Angelo’s Immigration Services ministry, where her work ensures that both individuals and the Church itself can flourish without being hindered by legal barriers. A 2026 graduate of the University of Cincinnati, and a dean’s lister, Stokes-Santana earned her degree in law and paralegal studies. She brings discipline and intellect and stands as a vital protector of the Church’s mission in West Texas.

“Federally authorized to provide legal counsel and represent clients before U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, Stokes-Santana also holds Department of Justice Partial Accreditation, a recognition of both her legal expertise and ethical integrity. In her role, she is the legal and administrative heartbeat of the diocesan Immigration Services Office, a recognized agency by the U.S. Department of Justice. Her work is twofold: She manages a complex caseload that safeguards the dignity and unity of families — handling petitions for family reunification, adjustments of status, and naturalization — and she secures legal protection for vulnerable individuals through the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program, the Violence Against Women Act, and critical waivers.”

Bishop Sis: Message regarding the schism of SSPX

By Bishop Michael J. Sis
Bishop of San Angelo

On July 1, 2026, four new bishops were ordained in Switzerland by the Society of St. Pius X (SSPX) without a papal mandate and against the will of Pope Leo XIV, in defiance of the Holy Father’s plea for them to avoid schism. This has caused a serious rupture to the unity of the Church, and it is an occasion of mourning and sadness even in our diocese in West Texas. There is one chapel of the SSPX in Midland, Texas, called St. Michael the Archangel Chapel, where for many years priests of the SSPX have visited monthly to celebrate traditional Latin Masses.

In response to the ordination of the four

new bishops, the Holy See has issued a Decree and Explanatory Note regarding the resulting schism and automatic excommunication caused by these ordinations. The decree issued by the Vatican Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith (DDF) on July 2, 2026, states that “clerics and lay faithful are warned not to adhere to the schism of the Priestly Society of Saint Pius X, as they would incur ipso facto the penalty of latae sententiae excommunication.” It says that the lay faithful "who formally adhere to the Priestly Fraternity of Saint Pius X ... are to be considered schismatic and excommunicated."

The DDF has warned the lay faithful that the sacred ministers of the SSPX unlawfully administer the sacraments, and that the

sacrament of penance administered by them and marriages witnessed by them are now invalid. The celebration of the Mass and the confection of the Eucharist, because they are done by an ordained priest, are still valid, but they are illicit.

I encourage all Catholics to remain steadfast in communion with Pope Leo XIV, with the bishops in communion with him, and with the whole Church. Communion with the successor of Peter is essential to the nature of the Catholic Church and is the foundation of its ecclesial life and mission.

Rather than attending Masses celebrated by the excommunicated SSPX clergy, I encourage those Catholics wanting to celebrate the traditional Latin Mass to attend St. Margaret of Scotland Catholic Church at 2619

Era Avenue in San Angelo, where the Mass in the Extraordinary Form is celebrated with permission from the Holy See each Sunday.

To assist those Catholics who might have worshipped locally with the SSPX at the St. Michael the Archangel Chapel in Midland, and who would like to make it clear that they adhere to the universal Roman Catholic Church in union with Pope Leo XIV, the Holy See has provided protocols which I would be happy to make available to them. The DDF Explanatory Note says, “The Church, as a caring mother, will welcome with sincere affection and lively concern all those who wish to return to full communion.” I wish to reassure them of my pastoral concern as a shepherd with a desire to assist in this difficult time.

La crisis de la amistad que se esconde tras la epidemia de la soledad

By Vicente Del Real
OSV News

Hace unos meses, me senté frente a un joven que parecía tenerlo todo a su favor. Tenía un buen trabajo, buen círculo social y una agenda muy ocupada. Sin embargo, tras unos minutos de conversación, me miró y me dijo algo que se me ha quedado grabado desde entonces: "Nadie me conoce de verdad". Haciendo énfasis a la realidad de que se siente solo.

Sus palabras me sorprendieron, no porque fueran inusuales, sino porque las oigo con mucha frecuencia. En todo el país se habla de la epidemia de la soledad. Los investigadores la estudian. Los profesionales de la salud mental advierten sobre ella. Las familias la sufren. Sin embargo, me pregunto si la soledad no es el problema, sino el síntoma.

Quizá el problema más profundo sea que hemos olvidado cómo ser amigos. No conocidos. No seguidores. No contactos de redes sociales, sino amigos. El tipo de amigo que contesta al teléfono cuando la vida se desmorona. El que se sienta a tu lado en los momentos de dolor y derrota. El que conoce tus defectos y te quiere a pesar de todo.

Muchos de nosotros estamos rodeados de gente, pero nos sentimos profundamente desconocidos. Tenemos cientos de contactos guardados en nuestros teléfonos, pero muy pocas personas a las que confiamos nuestros miedos. Sabemos cómo mantenernos conectados, pero nos cuesta mucho seguir estando cerca. Hemos aprendido a practicar una especie de amistad "teatral" o performativa. Nos reunimos cuando la vida va bien, celebramos los logros y compartimos nuestros momentos más destacados. Pero la amistad no se pone a prueba en la cima de la montaña. Se pone a prueba en el valle. Muchos de nosotros tenemos gente con quien celebrar, pero muy pocas personas con quienes sufrir. La verdadera amistad no se trata de quién aparece cuando todo va bien. Se trata de quién permanece cuando la vida se vuelve difícil. Quizá la crisis de la soledad no se deba simplemente a que nos falten relaciones. Se debe a que nos faltan amistades lo suficientemente profundas como para soportar el peso de una vida real. Nos falta esa relación que no se queda en lo superficial y que te hace sentir cui-

dado y acompañado.

En el libro del Génesis, Dios dice: "No es bueno que el hombre esté solo". Esta verdad va más allá del matrimonio. Se refiere a la propia naturaleza del ser humano. Fuimos creados para las relaciones porque fuimos creados a imagen de Dios mismo. ¿Y quién es Dios? Padre, Hijo y Espíritu Santo: una comunidad en comunión de amor. Si Dios existe eternamente en la relación, entonces no debería sorprendernos que nuestros corazones anhelan la comunión. La amistad no es simplemente un bonito complemento de la vida. Es una parte esencial del diseño de Dios para la humanidad. Sin embargo, la amistad auténtica requiere algo que a muchos nos resulta difícil: la vulnerabilidad.

Y es que la verdadera amistad nos pide que dejemos de actuar, que dejemos de fingir que todo va bien todo el tiempo. Necesitamos recordar que el propio Jesús nos mostró su vulnerabilidad en muchos momentos, pero especialmente en el abandono de la cruz. En una cultura que premia la imagen, los logros y la autopromoción, nos convertimos en expertos en presentar la mejor versión de nosotros mismos. Seleccionamos cuidadosamente lo que los demás ven, mientras ocultamos nuestras luchas, dudas y miedos.

Las redes sociales no crearon esta tendencia, pero sin duda la han amplificado. Como resultado, muchas personas pasan la vida siendo vistas sin que nadie las conozca realmente. Puedes estar rodeado de compañeros, pero sentirte profundamente solo.

Esto es especialmente cierto entre los jóvenes adultos. Con frecuencia me encuentro con jóvenes que tienen éxito según todos los criterios externos, pero que se sienten profundamente aislados. Temen que, si los demás los conocieran de verdad, no serían aceptados. Así que siguen actuando con confianza mientras cargan con la soledad en silencio.

El Evangelio ofrece un camino diferente. Jesús no construyó relaciones a través de la actuación. Las construyó a través de la presencia. Caminaba con la gente. Compartía comidas con ellos. Les escuchaba. Les permitía encontrarse con él no como un ideal, sino como un amigo. Antes de su Pasión, dijo a sus discípulos: "Ya no los llamo siervos... Los he llamado amigos". Qué afirmación tan sencilla y hermosa. El Hijo de Dios nos invita

a la amistad.

Esta invitación también nos enseña cómo relacionarnos unos con otros. La amistad cristiana no se basa en la utilidad ni en la conveniencia. Se fundamenta en una preocupación genuina por el otro. Se mantiene presente tanto en los momentos de alegría como en los de sufrimiento. Es una sencilla llamada a amarnos unos a otros.

Nuestra vocación es ser un lugar de comunión y comunidad. La gente no necesita simplemente más programas o más eventos. Necesita lugares a los que pueda pertenecer. Necesita comunidades en las que pueda contar la verdad sobre su vida sin temor a ser juzgada. Necesita amistades arraigadas en la fe, la confianza y el amor.

Los primeros cristianos transformaron el mundo no porque tuvieran edificios impresionantes o estrategias sofisticadas. Cambiaron el mundo porque la gente los miraba y decía: "Miren cómo se aman unos a otros". Ese testimonio sigue siendo igual de poderoso hoy en día.

El antídoto contra la soledad no es simplemente la conexión. Es la comunión. La comunión comienza cuando tenemos el valor de conocer profundamente a otra persona y nos permitimos ser conocidos a cambio. Crece cuando elegimos la presencia por encima de la actuación, la honestidad por encima de la imagen y la amistad por encima de la conveniencia.

La epidemia de la soledad es real. Pero también lo es la respuesta cristiana. Quizá lo que nuestro mundo más necesita ahora mismo no es otra plataforma, otra aplicación u otra estrategia. Quizá lo que necesita es profundizar en cómo podemos establecer relaciones auténticas entre nosotros y recuperar la profunda alegría de no caminar solos.

Esto da miedo, incluso para mí mientras escribo esto, pero siento una profunda llamada a responder a ese llamado e invitar a otros a recordarnos que, como dijo la Madre Teresa, nos pertenecemos los unos a los otros.

- - -

Vicente Del Real es el fundador y director ejecutivo de Iskali, una organización católica sin fines de lucro dedicada a formar y empoderar a jóvenes líderes latinos. Escribe desde Chicago, donde lidera la misión de fe, servicio y comunidad de Iskali. Esta columna fue escrita en colaboración con Maria De Leon-Sanchez.

El Papa León XIV pide solidaridad y oraciones tras los mortíferos terremotos en Venezuela

By Junno Arocho Esteves
OSV News

El Papa León XIV ofreció oraciones por las víctimas de los devastadores terremotos gemelos que sacudieron Venezuela, mientras el número de muertos sigue aumentando y los equipos de rescate se apresuran a salvar a las personas atrapadas bajo los edificios derrumbados.

Al dirigirse a los peregrinos reunidos en la Plaza de San Pedro el 28 de junio, tras rezar el Ángelus, el Papa expresó su solidaridad con el pueblo de Venezuela y rezó por los fallecidos y los heridos.

"Mientras ruego al Señor por el eterno descanso de los fallecidos, renuevo mi cercanía espiritual a sus familiares, a los lesionados y a quienes han sido golpeados por esta tragedia", dijo.

"Así mismo, manifiesto mi gratitud y aliento a cuantos trabajan con generosidad en las labores de búsqueda y de asistencia".

Los dos terremotos, que sacudieron el estado de La Guaira, en el norte de Venezuela, en la noche del 24 de junio, tuvieron una magnitud de 7,2 y 7,5 y fueron los sismos más fuertes que han azotado a Venezuela en más de un siglo.

Según The Associated Press, funcionarios del gobierno venezolano informaron el 28 de junio que el número de muertos ascendió a 1.450 y que había miles más de heridos. Equipos de rescate de todo el mundo han llegado al país para colaborar en las labores de rescate.

Las Naciones Unidas indicaron que más de 2.200 rescatistas y 140 perros de búsqueda de 27 países trabajaban para localizar a los sobrevivientes atrapados. En un comunicado publicado el 25 de junio, Tom Fletcher, subsecretario general de las Naciones Unidas para Asuntos Humanitarios y coordinador de ayuda de emergencia, señaló que los próximos días "requerirán un esfuerzo colectivo masivo para respaldar la respuesta lider-

ada por el Gobierno y ayudar a las comunidades".

"Incluso antes de estos sismos, casi 8 millones de personas en Venezuela necesitaban ayuda humanitaria. Este desastre corre el riesgo de agravar las vulnerabilidades ya existentes", dijo Fletcher.

A pocas horas de que los sismos consecutivos azotaran el país, el Papa León envió una donación inicial de emergencia de 100.000 euros (115.000 dólares estadounidenses) a través del Dicasterio para el Servicio de la Caridad, según informó Vatican News.

El Papa y el Colegio Cardenalicio también recordaron al pueblo de Venezuela durante el consistorio de dos días celebrado en el Vaticano. En su discurso de clausura del 27 de junio, el Papa expresó su cercanía y la de los cardenales, y aseguró "nuestras oraciones por las víctimas, por sus familias y por todos aquellos que sufren las consecuencias de esta tragedia".

"También encomendamos al Señor a todos quienes participan en las labores de socorro y pedimos que no falte la solidaridad de la comunidad internacional hacia esa querida nación", dijo.

Las conferencias episcopales de toda América Latina también movilizaron esfuerzos para ayudar al pueblo de Venezuela, organizando recaudaciones de fondos y campañas de solidaridad para.

La Conferencia Episcopal Peruana y Cáritas Perú anunciaron el 27 de junio el lanzamiento de la campaña "Solidaridad con Venezuela", instando a los fieles a realizar donaciones y explicando que esta ayuda "permitirá la adquisición de alimentos de primera necesidad, artículos de higiene, medicinas, así como otros insumos indispensables para las familias damnificadas".

"Cada aporte, sin importar el monto, representa un gesto concreto de fraternidad y esperanza para nuestros hermanos venezolanos", señaló Cáritas. "En



OSV NEWS/MAXWELL BRICENO, REUTERS

Juan Carlos Gómez, un bombero de Caracas, busca a su hermana, Katiuska Hernández, y a su sobrino Brett Roude entre los escombros de un edificio en La Guaira, Venezuela, el 25 de junio de 2026, tras los terremotos de magnitud 7,2 y 7,5 que sacudieron el país el 24 de junio. La cifra de muertos alcanzó al menos 1.450 y hay miles de heridos, según informaron funcionarios del gobierno venezolano el 28 de junio. Equipos de rescate de todo el mundo han llegado al país para colaborar en las labores de salvamento.

momentos de dolor, la solidaridad une a los pueblos y demuestra que nadie está solo cuando la caridad se hace acción".

En Colombia, los obispos afirmaron que también estaban coordinando donaciones con la Cáritas local e hicieron un llamado a los "fieles católicos, a las comunidades eclesiales y a todas las personas de buena voluntad a manifestar su solidaridad mediante una respuesta generosa, organizada y oportuna, que contribuya a atender las necesidades de quienes han sido golpeados por esta emergencia".

Expresando su "cercanía y solidaridad" con el pueblo de Venezuela, la Conferencia Episcopal Ecuatoriana anunció una colecta para el 5 de julio en las par-

roquias de todo el país.

"Pedimos que esta colecta sea motivada en las celebraciones litúrgicas, en los espacios formativos, en las comunidades parroquiales y en las distintas obras pastorales, animando a los fieles y a las personas de buena voluntad a colaborar generosamente, según sus posibilidades", dijeron los obispos en un comunicado publicado el 25 de junio.

"Cada aporte será un signo concreto de cercanía con quienes hoy necesitan sentirse acompañados y sostenidos", se lee en el comunicado.

- - -

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

Catholic Voices

The heart of the matter

On June 11, the United States bishops undertook the long-anticipated consecration of the nation to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Ahead of the Mass at which the consecration took place, three American archbishops offered to their brothers reflections on the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

The presentation by Louisville's Archbishop Shelton J. Fabre, on how the Sacred Heart of Jesus builds communities, was a tour de force of what living with the love of the Sacred Heart should look like in the Church, for the good of society.

Archbishop Fabre offered a stirring examen for his brother bishops, building upon Christ's heartfelt plea to the Apostles on the night before he offered his life in love: "I give you a new commandment: love one another. As I have loved you, you also should love one another. This is how all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another" (Jn 13:34–35).

Challenging his brothers to take these words to heart, Archbishop Fabre stressed the need for unity within their ranks, observing how "before the Apostles would preach, govern, sanctify, and hand on the life of the Church, they first had to learn to love one another as brothers."

Urging further reflection on Christ's commandment of love, Archbishop Fabre asked his brother bishops to confront the sometimes obvious, sometimes subtle divisions that can creep into their ranks. Why? Because, as he said, if bishops are to ask their priests and flock "to build communities rooted in charity, encounter, patience, and mutual love" then it is incumbent upon them to be exemplary models "regardless from which directions the political, partisan, or civic winds may blow." He warned that the danger of not doing so risks making their communion "reduced to a temporal ideological model" rather



Michael R. Heinlein
OSV News

than "the spirituality of communion and mission we visibly live and foster as genuine fraternity."

"If we desire our parochial communities to become authentic parishes animated by communion, missionary discipleship, trust, and mutual charity, we must first model that Communion," Archbishop Fabre urged. As he rightly pointed out, those entrusted to the bishops' care "should always be able to look to us and discernibly see living icons of what it means to follow Jesus Christ."

These words struck me as most timely and necessary. We live in a society plagued with deep divisions and polarizing ideologies, and the Church is not immune from mirroring these tendencies. Any divisions that exist among the bishops, which Archbishop Fabre articulated so well, "deeply harms the Church's witness and calls us to feel the gravity of our unity's fragility."

Bishops, he argued to his brothers, are called to "ensure that our words and choices make visible our life-giving incorporation into Jesus Christ, a lived participation in Christ that binds us to each other with an unfeigned love."

In warning against the temptations to categorize

people, which our polarized and fractured world so often encourages, Archbishop Fabre stressed encountering others in the manner of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. "If we are to always be continually striving to love one another authentically as brothers, we must resist the temptation to reduce one another to labels or conventions."

To a conference that has had its share of embroilments, Archbishop Fabre observes: "The people entrusted to our care do not simply need efficient leadership or compelling strategies. They long to encounter the Sacred Heart of Jesus in us, their shepherds."

And to a conference at times divided over prudential matters, Archbishop Fabre encourages: "The Christian faithful seek to see bishops who continually and genuinely love one another, speak of one another with reverence, bear one another's burdens patiently, and remain united even amid difficulty. Such a witness is an exemplar of the evangelical beatitudes and possesses a formidable evangelical power."

Simply put, in order for the recent consecration of the U.S. to the Sacred Heart of Jesus to bear fruit, our hearts must be transformed — and Archbishop Fabre's impassioned appeal got to the heart of the matter. The archbishop laid out a vision for the U.S. episcopacy that can equip them to be shepherds with the heart of Christ.

The challenge he posed to his brother bishops was simple: To love as Christ loves, and to model this love for the world.

- - -

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

'Magnifica Humanitas' and AI: How Catholic social teaching affirms human dignity in digital world

If you use artificial intelligence for certain tasks, a good Catholic question to ask is simple: Am I aware of how my use of AI — and my support of AI systems — affects human dignity and the common good? Catholic social teaching offers principles of discernment to help answer that question.

As members of society, Catholics are called to turn to the Church's social doctrine to better understand the world and how we ought to live and interact with one another. When technological revolutions develop at such an intense pace, there is always the risk that innovation can move beyond ethical boundaries in areas such as work, warfare, subsidiarity, relationships, and basic human dignity.

The much-anticipated encyclical by Pope Leo XIV, *Magnifica Humanitas*, reflects on how the Church understands technological developments in an age of AI and their impact on human dignity, the common good, and responsible use of our God-given gifts.

Catholic social teaching helps everyday Catholics evaluate AI systems and related policies through moral and social criteria rooted in the dignity of the human person and ordered toward the good of all. Pope Leo identifies several principles that guide discernment regarding AI: inalienable human dignity, the common good, universal destination of goods, subsidiarity, solidarity, and social justice.

What might this discernment look like in everyday life? Catholic social teaching can serve as a practical framework for discerning how we engage AI.

1. Human dignity

Human dignity should shape how we think about AI in healthcare, education, employment, and the justice system — especially in situations where people risk being reduced to data profiles. Are we using these tools in ways



Sister Nancy Usselmann
OSV News

Media Mindfulness

that free people for deeper human interaction rather than replacing it?

2. Common good

Does AI widen access to opportunities and resources, or does it deepen inequality? Who truly benefits from AI systems? Are they used solely for profit or efficiency, or also for the flourishing of individuals and communities? What happens to small towns when data centers consume their land, water, and energy resources?

3. Subsidiarity

The moral aim of AI development should include meaningful participation and shared responsibility. Decisions should be made at the most appropriate level possible, preserving genuine human agency and local involvement.

4. Solidarity

Pope Leo emphasizes that social justice must guide our discernment of AI. We should ask: Does AI protect the vulnerable? Are certain communities excluded from conversations about AI development and implementation?

5. Preferential option for the poor

The earth and its resources belong to the whole human family. Pope Leo calls us to resist viewing AI merely as a consumer product. He challenges us to ask

whether the benefits of knowledge and automation are distributed in ways that genuinely promote human flourishing for all people, especially the poor and marginalized.

It may seem that these issues are too large for ordinary people to address. Pope Leo acknowledges that innovation today is driven largely by private — often transnational — actors whose resources and influence can exceed those of many governments, making discernment and direction toward the common good more difficult.

So, what can we do?

Catholic social teaching exists to form consciences so Catholics can evaluate public life and moral choices in a way consistent with the Gospel, rather than merely reacting with fear or fascination.

In practice, this means being responsible citizens who support public servants and policies that uphold the Church's social doctrine. It means becoming a voice for the voiceless and working together to confront injustices in AI development that threaten human dignity and authentic human flourishing.

The everyday Catholic is not called to be a policy specialist, but to be a faithful disciple of Christ the Master, Way, Truth, and Life — using Catholic social teaching as a practical moral lens for how daily choices shape justice, solidarity, and human development. Catholic social teaching transforms AI from merely a "technology question" into a question of human dignity and the common good, giving conscience a disciplined framework for moral judgment and faithful action.

For more on this subject, go to *CatholicFaithAI.com*

- - -

Sister Nancy Usselmann, a Daughter of St. Paul, is director of the Pauline Center for Media Studies in Los Angeles and a media literacy education specialist.

The sacred heart of parenting

"Making the decision to have a child — it is momentous. It is to decide forever to have your heart go walking around outside your body."

Over the years I've heard so many parents share this quote from Elizabeth Stone, because it speaks to the (literal) heart of raising a child: a calling that involves vulnerability, anxiety, lack of control, and above all, overwhelming love.

But what about the original One who let his (literal) heart be broken open and given to us?

In June, the month dedicated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, I'm always struck by the vivid imagery of this title and devotion. Christ is shown holding his own heart, pointing to a human heart pierced with thorns, held in his wounded hands, giving his whole self to us in the most visceral way.

What is the holy beat of the Sacred Heart if not the same joyful, painful throb that parents feel the moment a



Laura Kelly Fanucci
OSV News

Faith at Home

child is placed in their arms, knowing they will forever have their whole heart walking around outside their body?

Every time I speak at a church or conference, parents and grandparents come up afterward and want to tell me their most painful stories. Grief, loss, illness, estrangement, addiction, abuse — I am brought to my knees by what the human heart can hold.

Yet I'm equally amazed by how the heart can heal, mend, stretch, yearn, and hope. I have witnessed the resilience and radical love of parents who come to understand that while they cannot control or change their children, they can always come to God with every hope that Love will carry their children through whatever life brings.

My own body bears physical scars and emotional wounds. The deepest pains I have carried are from parenting: The babies I have buried, the wounds my children suffered that I was powerless to stop, and the dreams I had to let die to embrace the real life before me. But the Sacred Heart reminds me that nothing — not even the bruised or broken parts of our lives — needs to be hidden from God, especially not from Jesus who never shielded his own flesh from wounds but laid down his whole life out of love.

The friendship crisis beneath the loneliness epidemic

By Vicente Del Real
OSV News

A few months ago, I sat across from a young man who seemed to have everything going for him. He had a good job, plenty of social connections, and a busy calendar. Yet after a few minutes of conversation, he looked at me and said something that has stayed with me ever since: "Nobody really knows me."

His words surprised me, not because they were unusual, but because I hear them so often. Across the country, we are talking about the loneliness epidemic. Researchers study it. Mental health professionals warn about it. Families experience it. Yet I wonder if loneliness is not the problem but the symptom.

Perhaps the deeper issue is that we have forgotten how to be friends. Not acquaintances. Not followers. Not networking contacts, but friends. The kind of friend who answers the phone when life is falling apart. The kind who sits with you in grief and defeat. The kind who knows your shortcomings and loves you anyway.

Many of us are surrounded by people, yet deeply unknown. We have hundreds of contacts stored in our phones but very few people we trust with our fears. We know how to stay connected, but we struggle to remain close. We have learned to practice a kind of performative friendship. We gather when life is good, celebrate achievements, and share our highlights. But friendship is not tested on the mountaintop. It is tested in the valley. Many of us have people to celebrate with, but very few people to suffer with. Real friendship is not about who shows up when everything is going well. It is about who remains when life becomes difficult.

Perhaps the loneliness crisis is not simply that we lack relationships. It is that we lack friendships deep enough to carry the weight of a real life. We lack the relationship that does not stay on the surface, and makes you feel cared for and walked with.

In the book of Genesis, God says, "It is not good for the man to be alone." This truth extends beyond marriage. It speaks to the

very nature of the human person. We were created for relationships because we were created in the image of God himself. And who is God? Father, Son, and Holy Spirit: A community in communion of love. If God exists eternally in relationship, then it should not surprise us that our hearts long for communion. Friendship is not simply a nice addition to life. It is an essential part of God's design for humanity. Yet authentic friendship requires something many of us find difficult: vulnerability.

Real friendship asks us to stop performing, stop pretending like everything is OK all the time. We need to be reminded that Jesus himself showed us vulnerability, in many moments, but especially in the abandonment of the cross. In a culture that rewards image, achievement, and self-promotion, we become experts at presenting the best version of ourselves. We carefully curate what others see while hiding our struggles, doubts, and fears.

Social media did not create this tendency, but it has certainly amplified it. As a result, many people spend their lives being seen without ever being known. You may be surrounded by peers but feeling deeply alone.

This is especially true among young adults. I regularly meet young people who are successful by every external measure, yet feel profoundly isolated. They fear that if others truly knew them, they would not be accepted. So they continue performing with confidence while carrying loneliness in silence.

The Gospel offers a different path. Jesus did not build relationships through performance. He built them through presence. He walked with people. He shared meals with them. He listened to them. He allowed them to encounter him not as an idea but as a friend. Before his Passion, he told his disciples, "I no longer call you servants ... I have called you friends." What a simple and beautiful statement. The Son of God invites us into friendship.

This invitation also teaches us how to relate to one another. Christian friendship is not based on usefulness or convenience. It is



OSV NEWS PHOTO | COURTESY OF ISKALI

A group of Iskali youth gathers as community in this undated photo. Iskali — a Chicago-based Catholic organization whose name in Náhuatl symbolizes growth, resurgence, and new beginnings — supports young Latinos in their faith formation to help them become transformational leaders.

rooted in genuine concern for another person. It remains present during moments of joy and moments of suffering. It is a simple call to love one another.

Our call is to be a place for communion and community. People do not simply need more programs or more events. They need places where they can belong. They need communities where they can tell the truth about their lives without fear of judgment. They need friendships rooted in faith, trust, and love.

The first Christians transformed the world not because they had impressive buildings or sophisticated strategies. They changed the world because people looked at them and said, "See how they love one another." That witness is just as powerful today.

The antidote to loneliness is not merely connection. It is communion. Communion begins when we have the courage to know another person deeply and allow ourselves to

be known in return. It grows when we choose presence over performance, honesty over image, and friendship over convenience.

The loneliness epidemic is real. But so is the Christian answer. Perhaps what our world needs most right now is not another platform, another app, or another strategy. Perhaps what it needs is to dig deeper on how we can be in true relationship with each other, and regain the deep joy of not walking alone.

This is scary, even for me I as write this, but I feel the deep call to respond to the call and invite others to remind ourselves that, as Mother Teresa said, we belong to each other.

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.

The blessings that are our limitations

Any of us who has ever suffered a grievous loss, a terrible illness, a physical or mental handicap that consumes us, knows the pain of such loss. Why did my brother have to die? Why do I have this disease or this limitation?

Yet at the same time, many of us know that losing someone we loved has helped us become more compassionate when others experience loss. Losing our mom enables us to draw closer to someone else experiencing that same loss. Suffering from an illness can actually make us more generous to others. Struggling with these tremors of mortality can draw us closer to God, even as we ask why.

Why must there be suffering and loss is a very human question. But we live in an age when our pride and our technological accomplishments can lead us to think the avoidance of such suffering and loss is within our grasp.

It is thoroughly modern to wish that science would simply find a cure, a solution to that which burdens us. Some of the richest people on the planet, reportedly, are even seeking a technological or medicinal means to immortality, as if their money and their hubris will allow them to cheat death's finality.

For all of us moderns, Pope Leo XIV's new encyclical has some surprising advice: "Humanity flourishes not despite limitations, but often through them."

This is because it is our own finitude, our frailty, that helps us discover compassion and generosity, and ultimately draws us closer to God.

The subtitle of *Magnifica Humanitas* — "On safeguarding the Human Person in the Time of Artificial Intelligence" — tells the reader the primary focus of Pope Leo's first encyclical letter. It is a look at the potential and the threats of AI. Yet half way through the document is a moving reflection on the blessings that are our limitations.

"Everything that appears as a 'limit' — incapacity, illness, old age, suffering, vulnerability — tends to be seen primarily as a defect to be corrected, rather than as a reality through which our humanity matures and opens itself to relationship," he writes.

Our limitations lead us to others, including God.

"When we face rejection, when we suffer the ill-



Greg Erlandson
OSV News

Amid the Fray

ness or loss of a loved one, when we encounter our own weakness or failure," it is at those moments when "we discover a new wisdom, tangibly experience the closeness of others and encounter the presence of the Lord."

The pope assures us that although seeking to alleviate suffering through medicine or technology is not in itself wrong, we can be misled into seeing our finitude not as a blessing but as a curse. And he warns us that "to eliminate suffering entirely would mean, in the end, extinguishing love and desire as well." The lessons we learn from suffering, from loss, and from disappointments are essential to what it means to be human.

"Finitude, when truly accepted, does not diminish us but opens us to recognizing the face of God and others," Leo writes. And this is the means by which we "recognize the inviolable dignity of every person."

How we respond, of course, is the moral challenge we face. Do we see this God-given dignity in others or do we run from that awareness?

All of which brings us back to artificial intelligence and how we choose to use it. Does it help us to flourish, to be fully human, capable of relationship and love? Or, while enriching the few, does it isolate us, impairing our ability to see Christ in each other?

In short, will it help us to recognize the grandeur of every human person, or make us strangers to ourselves?

Greg Erlandson is an award-winning Catholic publisher, editor and journalist whose column appears monthly at OSV News. Follow him on X @GregErlandson.

Cartoon Corner



Feeding the hungry in Colorado City



Parishioners from St. Ann Parish in Colorado City prepare to deliver meals to the home-bound. The parish delivers around 45-55 meals per month. Pictured, left to right, are Yoly Rivera, Ester Espinoza, Mary Reyes, Velia Vasquez, Janie Luera, and Alice Huff.

COURTESY

Singing his praises in Midland



Kairós, a Spanish-language children's choir that sings at the children's Masses at St. Stephen Parish in Midland, recently celebrated thier first anniversary.

COURTESY

ANNIVERSARY

Continued from Page 6

Pope Leo pointed to last year's commemoration of the 1,700th anniversary of the First Council of Nicaea as an example of an anniversary that was marked jointly by Catholics, Orthodox, and other Christian communities. The pope took part in an ecumenical prayer service hosted by Patriarch Bartholomew on Nov. 28 at Iznik, Turkey, the site of ancient Nicaea, during his apostolic visit to the country.

"This celebration offered an eloquent

testimony to the communion that already exists amongst those who share faith in God, the Father of all, and who believe in Jesus Christ, as Lord and Son of God, and in the Holy Spirit, who inspires us and leads us to the fullness of truth and unity," the pope told the delegation.

"That commemorative event made clear that the Nicene Creed must be the foundation and guiding principle of this ecumenical journey, offering the model of true unity within legitimate diversity: Unity in the Trinity, Trinity in Unity," he added.

Preparations for 2033 are already underway in some parts of the Catholic

world. The Archdiocese of Denver last year launched a nine-year novena leading up to the Jubilee.

During the audience, the pope also underlined the need for greater cooperation among Christians in the face of today's challenges, including global conflicts, new technological challenges and care for creation.

Pope Leo said Christians' shared "responsibility for the life and dignity of every human being, beginning with the youngest and most needy, is the criterion that will determine our present and eternal destiny."

"In an age marked by wars and grow-

ing polarization, as well as cultural and social divisions, Christians — reconciled amongst themselves and united in their profession of the one faith — are called to be a credible sign of peace, making a decisive contribution to the efforts of all men and women of good will to build peace," he said.

"Moreover, in the current situation, it is not only the credibility of the Christian message that is at stake, but the very future of humanity."

- - -

Courtney Mares is Vatican editor for OSV News. Follow her on X @catholic-courtney.

CARROLL

Continued from Page 12

dozen — to choose a bishop, the result was predictable: an overwhelming vote for Father Carroll. Pius VI approved the choice and named him first bishop in the United States on Nov. 6, 1789. His new Diocese of Baltimore encompassed the entire territory of all 13 states.

This way of choosing a bishop may seem unusual now, with selection by the pope the norm, but it was common enough in the late 18th century, when direct papal appointment of bishops was rare and local clergy commonly made the choice. Often, too, secular authorities controlled the process — a role the American government declined to play from the start.

In later years Bishop Carroll favored adopting a method like the one used in his selection as the standard for the United States, but in this he had no success. His approach to the question of choosing bishops reflected the balancing act he found necessary to play on this and all other matters — on one hand unshakable loyalty to the pope as the indispensable principle of unity in the Church; on the other the ever-present fear that too much involvement by Rome in local affairs "would draw on our religion a heavy imputation from the government under which we live."

Similar sensitivity to the pastoral needs of the Catholic community he led can be seen in his support for a vernacular liturgy. Insistence on Latin, he remarked in 1787, may have made sense in response to "insulting

and reproachful demands" for the vernacular by early Protestant reformers.

But now, he said, citing the twin problems of illiteracy and a shortage of liturgical books, "to continue the practice of the Latin liturgy ... must be owing either to chimerical fears of innovation or to indolence and inattention." It was another 200 years before Bishop Carroll's argument prevailed.

Consistent with this attitude, he desired a native-born clergy for the Church in the United States. In 1789 he founded the school that was to become Georgetown University with the aim of training "subjects capable of becoming useful members of the ministry," and two years later brought French Sulpicians to Baltimore to establish a seminary there.

Inevitably, though, in the Carroll years the small body of priests working in the United States was largely foreign born. Many were committed and effective, but some were eccentrics and troublemakers and a continuing thorn in their bishop's side.

The same was true of the lay trustees who in a number of places owned the property of parishes and claimed the authority to hire and fire pastors. Archbishop Carroll dealt firmly with the situation, but trusteeism plagued his successors throughout much of the 19th century.

In 1808, recognizing the growth of the Church in the United States, Pope Pius VII created four new American dioceses: Boston, New York, Philadelphia and Bardstown, Kentucky. Baltimore became the metropolitan archdiocese, and Bishop John Carroll was el-

evated to archbishop. Two years earlier, in Baltimore, he had laid the cornerstone of the first cathedral in the United States — the Cathedral of the Assumption, today a basilica — with Benjamin Henry Latrobe, architect of the U.S. Capitol in Washington, as its designer.

Archbishop Carroll did not live to see its completion. He died in Baltimore Dec. 3, 1815, and is buried in his cathedral's crypt. A quarter-century earlier, taking possession of the see, the new bishop lamented that it would no longer be enough for him to be merely "inoffensive in my conduct and regular in my manners." Instead, he said, his job included not only caring for the faithful of his vast diocese, with "nothing in view but God and your salvation," but also fostering "charity and forbearance" toward other churches while simultaneously avoiding the "fatal and prevailing indifference which views all religions as equally acceptable to God and salutary to men."

He got the job done. At the time of his death, the Catholic Church in the United States was growing in numbers (close to 120,000), putting down institutional roots, and at peace with Protestant America.

What neither John Carroll nor anyone else knew or could have known was that the nation then stood on the brink of a vast immigrant influx that would soon bring explosive growth, plus new tensions, to American Catholicism.

- - -

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

FANUCCI

Continued from Page 16

The 17th-century mystic St. Margaret Mary Alcoque wrote of her intense visions of the Sacred Heart of Jesus: "The divine heart ... is an abyss of joy into which all of us can immerse our sorrows ... an abyss of love to meet our every need." She spoke of God's love and mercy in words that resonate with the unconditional, sacrificial love of anyone who has ever given their life to a child: "The Sacred Heart is an inexhaustible fountain, and its sole desire is to pour itself out into the hearts of the humble so as to free them and prepare them to lead lives according to his good pleasure."

Can we step back to let this sacred iconography startle us anew? A shining, flaming heart encircled by thorns and topped by a cross. An organ outside the body, outstretched and offered to us. What is Christ saying to us through this image if not the truth that love is costly and painful — yet also the ultimate offering of hope? You cannot see a bleeding heart and turn away unchanged.

We let our hearts walk around outside our bodies, and so does God, the ultimate loving parent.

What a gift to have not just a single solemnity but a whole month — at the sweet start of summer — to celebrate the greatest gift of the Sacred Heart. A heart that cannot contain all the compassion and mercy it offers, spilling over in abundance. A heart that beats for all of us, God's beloved children walking out into the world, always part of the body of Christ.

- - -

Laura Kelly Fanucci is an author, speaker and founder of Mothering Spirit. Her latest book is Living Easter: 50 Days to Practice Resurrection.



Guadalupe Radio Network

Thirteenth Annual

Fishers of Men' Dinner

Saturday, October 10, 2026
7:00 PM

Odessa Marriott Hotel & Conference Center
305 E 5th St, Odessa, TX 79761

Keynote Speaker
Tim Staples
Catholic Answers



Honoree:
Gina Aaron

Early bird

Buy your table by July 1st
and you will be eligible
to join us at a

Special Meet & Greet
with TIM STAPLES



For more information:
Toll Free: 888-784-3476
Email: GRNtickets@GRNOnline.com

Member
OSV News
Catholic Media Association

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

Subscription rate for all others:
\$10 per year

THIRD CLASS POSTAGE PAID AT
SAN ANGELO, TEXAS

Printed by
Livestock Weekly
San Angelo, Texas

Submissions:

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

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

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

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

Bishop Michael J. Sis
Publisher

Brian Bodiford
Editor
Director of Communication

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

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

Steubenville Lone Star 2026



COURTESY

Youth groups from many parishes in the Diocese of San Angelo attended the Steubenville Lone Star 2026 Conference in Irving, Texas, June 19-21. The huge group posed for this photo on June 20.

Congrats on 50 years of priestly ministry, Father Chavez!



ALAN TORRE | APTORRE PHOTOGRAPHY

Father Frank Chavez (standing), pastor of St. Joseph and St. Anthony Parishes in Odessa, celebrated the 50th anniversary of his priestly ordination with a Mass June 7 at the Odessa Marriott Hotel and Conference Center.