



NORTH TEXAS CATHOLIC



let earth
be glad!

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NORTH TEXAS CATHOLIC



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Pivotal players

I recently watched *The Pivotal Players*, a video series by Bishop Robert Barron profiling 12 saints, artists, authors, and scholars who have influenced the Catholic Church in remarkable ways. Each episode takes viewers to the location where the extraordinary person lived and worked, and amid that backdrop, explores how they impacted the Church and the culture of their time as they lived out their faith.

When the documentary's creators were developing their list of 12 subjects, some must have been easy choices to include, such as St. Francis of Assisi. Others, such as the American novelist Flannery O'Connor, are not obvious selections as key figures in Catholic history.

However, it was fascinating to see how God used the unique personalities, circumstances, and talents of these individuals to bring the message of the Gospel to the world. Separated by epochs and continents, these influencers were vastly different from each other, but each was willing to say yes to God and use their God-given gifts for His service.

It wasn't much of a leap to think about the pivotal players in the Diocese of Fort Worth. Again, some selections come to mind immediately — missionaries, prominent clergy, and religious sisters who established schools and hospitals.

However, behind-the-scenes actors can have a significant role in someone's faith journey. For example, on a personal level, my parents ensured the family was at Mass each Sunday, a parish director of religious education invited me to try teaching little ones, and a Catholic neighbor wove her faith into every conversation, to name a few among many individuals who have influenced my path.

In this issue, you'll find the effects of local pivotal players, from the ordination story of our diocese's two new transitional deacons, Deacon Eric Flores and Deacon Benjamin Grothouse, to photos of our Easter Vigil Mass, during which 598 new brothers and sisters entered the Catholic Church.

Don't underestimate your daily yes to follow God and share His love with friends and family. Although we may not be the subject of a documentary, we can help build the Kingdom of God.

Susan Moses

EDITOR



Bishop Michael Olson welcomed Governor Greg Abbott to Nolan before the governor addressed parents and educators. (NTC/Rodger Mallison)

Governor Abbott speaks at Nolan Catholic High School

FORT WORTH — “Our purpose is to ensure every child in the state of Texas gets the best education that can be provided by the state of Texas.”

Governor Greg Abbott emphasized that point during a visit to Fort Worth’s Nolan Catholic High School April 19 where he discussed his mission to bring parental empowerment and school choice to the state’s public education system.

The governor told a supportive audience of 1,000 students, parents, and educators that an irrefutable, timeless truth exists at the center of the issue: mom and dad are in charge.

“If mom and dad are in charge that automatically puts a child on a better pathway to education excellence, a better chance at life, and a better chance for success,” he said.

No parent wants to send their child to a failing school but finances often limit change.

“The state has to help those families who are stuck in schools that are not addressing the needs of their children,” the governor insisted. “The bill I’m working on will give parents the unprecedented opportunity to choose the school (for their child) that is best for them, regardless of the fact they may be disadvantaged.”

A proposed Education Savings Account allows parents to opt out of their local school district and receive state money to educate children at a private school. It’s a program working in other states and a similar initiative for students with special needs already exists in Texas.

Advocating for a Parental Bill of Rights, Abbott believes

mothers and fathers deserve access to their child’s curriculum, school libraries and should know what is being taught. He also would like to see a return to teaching the basics like math, science, and American history as opposed to “woke” sociological issues.

Welcoming the governor to Nolan Catholic, Bishop Michael Olson thanked him for promoting the idea of parental rights and recognizing that fathers and mothers are the primary educators of their children.

“Our challenge today is that too many falsely and unwittingly presume the primary unit of society is the individual and that the responsibility to educate children belongs to the state and not parents,” he commented.

The state has a vested interest in protecting and

educating children, the bishop admitted, but that does not supersede the rights and responsibilities of mothers and fathers to form and educate children.

Nolan Catholic Principal Oscar Ortiz said recently amended legislation is an answer to prayer for many parents unable to exercise school choice because of finances or location.

“Nolan Catholic is not just a school, but a ministry of the Diocese of Fort Worth committed to pursuing the truth of Christ,” he said.

“We’re honored to have the opportunity to remind the world of the importance of the family, community, and freedom of parents to choose the best education for their children,” concluded Ortiz.

— Joan Kurkowski-Gillen



Students seek source, strive for summit

BEDFORD — Several takeaways stuck with high school sophomore and St. Stephen Church parishioner Gideon Artho following the recent Source and Summit retreat.

“Trying to help us find our place, to show us that we’re worth it,” Artho said. “Then, that God never gets tired of forgiving us. We just get tired of asking for forgiveness. That really hit me.”

Artho was one of 99 high school students from six parishes and Fort Worth’s Cristo Rey High School attending the April 14-15 retreat at Bedford’s St. Michael Church.

The retreat, referencing the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*’s description of the Eucharist as the “source and summit of the Christian life,” offered Mass, Adoration, reconciliation, and music as well as presentations and fellowship with various religious.

“It’s so important in this age to turn to God,” Sister Maria Jose Socias of the Servants of the Pierced Hearts of Jesus and Mary told students. “Because everything else in this world tells you not to.”

“With so much influence of selfishness and self-indulgence, arguments will not convince,” Sr. Maria Jose said. “The best way to bring young



Retreatants pray before the Blessed Sacrament. (NTC/Juan Guajardo)

people to the Lord and Eucharist is to have true witnesses of who Jesus is to bring them to know there’s something else besides the secular world.”

Servants of the Pierced Hearts’ Sister Alyssa Renee and others spoke of the effort required to develop a relationship with Jesus and finding

meaning in an age of unfulfilling self-gratification and distraction.

“Don’t be afraid to be saints and stand up amidst selfishness and emptiness,” Sr. Alyssa said. “Don’t be afraid to be different. You have a gift.”

– Matthew Smith

PRIESTLY ORDINATION

SATURDAY, MAY 20
10:00 AM
ST. PATRICK CATHEDRAL

Through the invocation of the Holy Spirit
and the imposition of hands
Most Reverend Michael F. Olson, STD, MA
will ordain deacons
Brandon Edward LeClair,
Austin Travis Hoodenpyle,
and Randolph Edward Hopkins, Jr.
to the sacred order of presbyter.

For more information visit fwdioc.org



BRANDON
LECLAIR



AUSTIN
HOODENPYLE



RANDOLPH ED
HOPKINS JR.

Views from the Pews

Parishioners across the Diocese of Fort Worth took advantage of numerous opportunities during Lent to grow closer to Jesus. Fortunately, no matter the Church season, He's always waiting for us to turn toward Him.

Jesus, in three stories. Father Reehan Antony, SAC, and other speakers helped more than 75 young adults in the diocese encounter Jesus in three familiar stories from the *Gospel of John* at the diocesan Young Adult Ministry Lenten retreat at St. Ann Parish in Burleson.

A spiritual bounce. At Holy Cross Parish in The Colony, middle schoolers from around the diocese gathered to have fun in bounce houses, play games, pray, listen to talks, and adore Jesus Christ present in the Eucharist.

Grateful stewards. The Holy Eucharist is God's gift to us, and our grateful response is one of stewardship. Bishop Michael Olson and Father Joseph Moreno connected the Eucharist with stewardship at the Diocesan Day of Stewardship at St. Andrew Parish in Fort Worth.

THERE'S
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NTC/Juan Guajardo



NTC/Kevin Bartram



NTC/Juan Guajardo

McGivney relic tour debuts in diocese



Alec and Mila Tran reach to touch a relic of Knights of Columbus founder Blessed Michael McGivney. (NTC/Ben Torres)

KELLER — Knights of Columbus Diocese of Fort Worth general agent Chris Stark joked that March 5 marked Blessed Michael

McGivney’s first Texas visit. The pilgrimage event offered opportunity for veneration of a relic of McGivney’s, a bone fragment, that day at St.

Elizabeth Ann Seton Church in Keller with appearances scheduled on subsequent days in San Angelo, Odessa, Lubbock, and Wichita Falls.

Bishop Michael Olson celebrated the Mass and attended the veneration at Our Lady Queen of Peace Parish in Wichita Falls on March 9.

McGivney, a former New Haven, Conn., priest, founded the Knights of Columbus in 1882.


“Father McGivney started the Knights when he was 29,” Stark said. “But he died at 38 and did not live long enough to see the organization reach Texas.”

Knights, and others, from throughout Texas filled cards with prayer intentions to deposit into a basket and lined up to venerate Blessed McGivney’s relic.

Veneration of a relic entails a “spiritual exchange” between those on earth and those already in heaven, with focus on intercession rather than the actual object, said Father Jonathan Kalisch, OP, director of chaplains for the Knights.

– *Matthew Smith*

A bundle of joy

 Gabriel Project grows at Sacred Heart Parish in Wichita Falls, helping expectant moms in need

WICHITA FALLS — Since the inception of the Gabriel Project at Sacred Heart Parish in Wichita Falls in spring 2022, seven babies have been born, and more moms-to-be are receiving help.

“I think one of the most important things of our faith is the sanctity of life,” said Elaine Schlabs, the project’s storage and supply coordinator at the parish. “Young moms, dads, and families need to know that we are here to support them

in choosing life for their child. One caring person can make such a difference,” she said.

Catholic Charities Fort Worth works with parishes throughout the diocese to increase services available to expectant parents in need through the Gabriel Project.

“These women are ministered to in a two-fold manner: each Gabriel mom is paired with a [CCFW] case manager to support her big material needs, while the fantastic



Sacred Heart Gabriel Closet stocks baby supplies. (NTC/Juan Guajardo)

volunteers at Sacred Heart pair Angel volunteers to walk one-on-one with a Gabriel mom and provide basic baby items through baby’s first year

of life,” said Tova Anderson, CCFW Gabriel Project volunteer coordinator.

– *Jenara Kocks Burgess*

The Passion of Christ



NTC/Carolina Boelter

EASTLAND — Since 2017, parishioners from St. Francis Xavier Parish in Eastland, with help from St. Rita Parish in Ranger, Our Lady of the Holy Rosary Parish in Cisco, and St. John Parish in Strawn, reenact the Passion of Christ. About 25 actors participate, and an audience of approximately 200 watches the Good Friday tradition, which serves to evangelize and help people understand how Jesus suffered out of love for us, according to co-director Eric Cruz.

Austrian archduke visits



All called to live a life of heroic virtue, says grandson of beatified emperor

FORT WORTH — Presenting to a rapt audience of young people in the parish hall of St. Patrick Cathedral might be one of the last places some would expect to find a senior member of one of Europe’s oldest and most renowned royal families — yet there was a nearly palpable feeling this was exactly where Archduke

Carl Christian of Austria needed to be March 29. Archduke Carl Christian is a member of the Habsburg family, who ruled numerous kingdoms and territories in Europe and beyond for nearly a thousand years. Archduke Carl Christian’s grandfather is Blessed Karl of Austria, also known as Emperor



NTC/Rodger Mallison

Karl I: the only lay head of state to have been beatified by the Church. His grandmother, Empress

Zita of Bourbon-Parma has been named a Servant of God. — Walker Price

CLERGY ASSIGNMENTS

BY

MOST REV. MICHAEL OLSON

REV. JASON ALLAN

Previously Parochial Vicar of Immaculate Conception Parish in Denton, has been appointed **Pastor** of St. Thomas Aquinas Parish in Pilot Point, effective May 1.

REV. IGNATIUS HEMBROM, TOR

New to the Diocese of Fort Worth, has been appointed **Parochial Vicar** of St. Thomas the Apostle Parish in Fort Worth, effective April 5.

REV. THOMAS JONES

Previously Parochial Vicar of St. Jude Parish in Mansfield, has been appointed **Pastoral Administrator** of Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish in Abbott and Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary Parish in Penelope, effective June 1.

REV. MAURICE MOON

Previously Chaplain at Nolan Catholic High School, has been appointed to **Formation Faculty** at St. Joseph Seminary College, effective July 1.

REV. BRETT METZLER

Has been appointed **Chaplain** of Nolan Catholic High School in Fort Worth, without prejudice to his current assignment as Vocation Director, effective July 1.

REV. NGHIA NGUYEN

Previously Pastor of St. George Parish in Fort Worth, has been appointed **Pastor** of Our Lady of Mercy Parish in Hillsboro, effective June 1.

Badge of honor



Vincent Micheli earns every Boy Scout badge

COLLEYVILLE — Since he became a Boy Scout in 2016, 18-year-old Vincent Micheli has accomplished something that fewer than 1 percent of scouts achieve — earning all the 138 merit badges scouting offers.

It's an impressive feat. There are 2.6 million scouts who have achieved the rank of Eagle Scout since 1910, and 21 merit badges are required for Eagle rank. Fewer than half of 1 percent (roughly 500 scouts) have earned all available merit badges since 1910.

Actually, Micheli has 139 badges because one of them was later renamed.

A parishioner at Good Shepherd Church in Colleyville, Micheli is a senior at Cistercian Preparatory School in Irving.

Micheli attained Eagle Scout rank on March 22, 2018. He was in seventh grade and had recently turned 13.

Micheli, a member of Troop 1905 in Colleyville, said his Catholic faith helps him chart a life course.



Vincent Micheli (courtesy photo/Jim Reisch)

“Catholicism provides a good baseline for my life. My education is obviously Catholic, but my troop is also mostly composed of Catholics. Scouting teaches a certain attitude towards God and others which I think is corroborated by Catholicism,” he said. “Scouting has religious emblems, and I have earned the four that Catholic youth can earn and have the Chi-Rho award for that.”

— Lance Murray



Sister Adelaide Valtierra, SSMN, faithful educator, dies at 94

FORT WORTH —

Growing up in a small town near Weatherford, Sister Adelaide Valtierra had a loving grandmother who taught her to love the Blessed Sacrament.

The 94-year-old Sister of St. Mary of Namur passed away on Holy Thursday, April 6, shortly after Father Richard

Flores carried the Blessed Sacrament in a procession to Sr. Adelaide's room in the infirmary after the Holy Thursday liturgy.

Sister Louise Smith, archivist for the religious order's Western Province, said, “Sr. Adelaide's love for the Blessed Sacrament was rewarded in her last



Sr. Adelaide Valtierra, SSMN

moments.”

The daughter of Tirzo and Maria Valtierra joined the Sisters of St. Mary of Namur in 1952 and studied education at the University of Dallas and Our Lady of the Lake University in San Antonio. She taught primary grades in various schools staffed by her order.

Years later, the devoted educator worked in the federal Head Start and Project Follow Through programs designed to help disadvantaged children. In retirement, she served as a translator on a medical mission to Honduras.

— Joan Kurkowski-Gillen



Eric Flores and Benjamin Grothouse kneel as Bishop Michael Olson prays the Prayer of Ordination at St. Philip the Apostle Church in Flower Mound on March 25. (NTC/Juan Guajardo)

CALLED FOR service

Eric Flores and Benjamin Grothouse ordained as transitional deacons

By Joan Kurkowski-Gillen

On a day when Catholics around the world celebrated Mary's "Yes" to becoming the Mother of God, two seminarians proclaimed their resolve to be consecrated ministers of the Church with an emphatic "I do."

Eric Homero Flores and Benjamin Hunt Grothouse were ordained to the transitional diaconate during a Mass concelebrated by Bishop Michael Olson with diocesan priests and visiting clergy on March 25, the Solemnity of the Annunciation of the Lord, in St. Philip the Apostle Church. The morning liturgy marked a significant step in formation for the men who will spend the next year completing seminary studies and assisting in parishes as they prepare for ordination to the priesthood, God willing.

"This is a very important step for Eric and Ben and an answer to continued prayer for vocations to the priesthood," said Father Jonathan Wallis, vicar general and director of seminarian formation. "Returning to the seminary and their academic courses allows them to really focus their minds and hearts on service to Our Lord Jesus Christ and His Church."

TO SERVE, NOT TO BE SERVED

Derived from the Greek word "diakonia" meaning "service," a deacon is called, like Christ, to serve others and not to be served. Essential duties include proclaiming the Gospel, performing works of charity, and assisting at liturgies. Deacons may baptize, witness and bless marriages, bring viaticum to the dying, and officiate at funerals.

Although they share similar functions and responsibilities as permanent deacons, transitional deacons have the added intention of working toward priestly ordination.

Welcoming families and guests at the start of the Mass, Bishop Olson expressed gratitude to the parents of the ordinands for their support and generosity during the vocation journey.

"I also want to thank the brothers and sisters of Ben and Eric for the love and encouragement offered them in the acceptance of their vocation and perseverance in studies over these years," the bishop said.

Directing his remarks to the grandparents, some traveling from Colorado and Ohio for the occasion, he added, "Your presence here today is especially

important and a cause of great happiness."

Bishop Olson also acknowledged the organizations and seminaries who prayed and supported the candidates throughout their time in formation.

A MINISTRY TO THE LOWLY AND POOR

In his homily, the leader of North Texas Catholics drew parallels between God's choice of Mary to be the mother of His Son and a deacon's ministry to the poor and alienated.

"The lowliness of Mary, called and chosen to be the Ark of the New Covenant, is highlighted and underscored in the call of deacons to be ministers of the charity of God," Bishop Olson explained. "It is the ministry to the lowly and poor of the world whom God raises up as He casts down the mighty."

Deacons are entrusted to bring the hope of the Gospel and the grace of the sacraments to those who rely only on God because they have no other advocate. Recalling the words of the late Pope Benedict XVI, he asked the deacon candidates to use the presence of God in them to bring light to the world with all its sadness and problems.

By following Mary's example and saying, "Let your will be done. I am the servant of the Lord," your life loses nothing, the bishop promised, but becomes enriched.

"Dear Sons, on this great Solemnity of the Annunciation and this joyful day of your ordination to the diaconate ... all of us, the entire Church, pray and ask the Blessed Virgin Mary that you open yourselves even more to God as ministers of His Word, ministers of the sacraments, and ministers of charity," Bishop Olson said, addressing the soon-to-be ordained candidates.

A SACRED, ESSENTIAL MOMENT

During the solemn Rite of Ordination, Flores and Grothouse made promises of celibacy, prayer, and obedience before prostrating themselves in front of the altar as a sign of humility and supplication, while the congregation chanted one of the oldest continually used prayers in the Catholic Church — the Litany of the Saints.

The most sacred, essential moment of the ordination ceremony followed, with Bishop Olson placing his hands on each candidate's head to impart the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Transformative and powerful, the laying on of hands dates back to the Apostles who used the gesture to

Continued on Page 12

Newly ordained Deacon Benjamin Grothouse hugs a loved one after he was ordained as transitional deacon on March 25. (NTC/Rodger Mallison)

From Page 11

confer the Holy Spirit after Pentecost.

Now ordained, the new deacons received the outward symbols of their ministry — the stole and dalmatic. Deacons Rigoberto Leyva and Bruce Corbett vested Eric Flores, and Benjamin Grothouse received his vestments from Deacons Pat Quinn and Joe Standridge.

Wearing the diaconal garments, the men then knelt before the bishop who handed them the Book of the Gospel with the declaration, “Receive the Gospel of Christ whose herald you have become. Believe what you read. Teach what you believe, and practice what you teach.”

BENJAMIN GROTHOUSE

Greeting well-wishers after the Mass, Ben Grothouse was “overjoyed” to have reached this stage in his formation.

“I’m blessed to be ordained with my best friend and guided by Bishop Olson who’s been like a father to me for years,” he enthused. “Men like Fr. Wallis have been an inspiration to me. I’m just on cloud nine right now.”

Influenced by the priests he saw working at St. Maria Goretti Parish, the Arlington native began to seriously discern a vocation and entered St. Joseph Seminary in 2015.

“Growing up they made it very clear what joy there is in the life of a priest by being a servant of the people and sharing God’s love,” Grothouse said, citing Father Mike Ciski, TOR, and Father Jim Gigliotti, TOR, as significant role models. “It’s remarkable how much of an effect they had on me.”

Spending a pastoral year at St. Philip the Apostle Parish under the guidance of Father Ray McDaniel allowed the 27-year-old to witness the responsibilities of a busy pastor and meet parishioners like Ken and Kathy Gelzleichter. Along with other church members, the couple



Newly ordained Deacon Eric Flores greets well-wishers after he was ordained as transitional deacon March 25. (NTC/Rodger Mallison)

visited with the seminarian once a month to offer comments, suggestions, and encouragement.

“We have seen such growth in this young man and want to support him any way we can,” said Kathy Gelzleichter, who attended the ordination with her husband. “He’s very personable, especially with young people, and that’s a

group the Church needs desperately.”

Now in his eighth year of formation, the son of Tom Grothouse and La Dawn Everette will return to the Theological College at Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C., where he is earning a bachelor’s degree in sacred theology and a master’s degree in divinity.



Deacons Eric Flores and Benjamin Grothouse join Bishop Michael Olson after he celebrated Mass to ordain them as transitional deacons March 25. (NTC/Juan Guajardo)

ERIC FLORES

Eric Flores was an impressionable eight-year-old, making his first Communion, when becoming a priest seemed like a good idea. Sacraments were always celebrated at the parish of his mother’s uncle, Father Florencio Rodriguez, TOR, so those family memories played a pivotal role in the 26-year-old’s vocation story.

“I remember thinking my uncle’s got the coolest job in the world,” Flores said. “That kind of sparked an interest in the priesthood for me.”

As he grew up, inquisitive relatives often asked, “Are you still thinking of being a priest?” But the Good Shepherd, Colleyville parishioner, involved in activities at Nolan Catholic High School, was considering other career paths. A heart-to-heart moment with God as a college freshman rekindled childhood thoughts of a vocation.

“From then on I fully developed the drive to be a priest for God,” Flores said. “And that drive is still going strong.”

Attending Our Lady of Victory School operated by the Sisters of St. Mary of Namur also fostered a desire for church service.

“My education there is a big part of the faith culture I grew up with,” he added. “It really helped and encouraged me to pursue this call. I just want to give the sisters all my

blessings and say thank you.”

Linda Kuntz, a former OLV principal who taught Flores in kindergarten, attended the Ordination Mass.

“It’s exciting to see how he has evolved and grown in his faith,” she observed. “He looks so happy and I’m happy for him.”

The OLV graduate would often return to his alma mater to talk with students about vocations.

“This is the first time I’ve had a student prepare for the priesthood, so he’s special to me,” Kuntz said.

Flores, the son of Homero Flores and Mary Regina Moore, will continue to work toward a master’s degree in divinity at Assumption Seminary Oblate School of Theology in San Antonio during his diaconal year.

A STRONG BROTHERHOOD

Second-year theology student Blake Thompson felt honored to participate in the Ordination Mass. A longtime friend of both seminarians and classmate of Grothouse at the Theological College, he served on the altar.

“Seeing these men make those promises fills me with a lot of hope and confidence,” Thompson said. “We have a really strong brotherhood in our vocation and discernment, so seeing each other succeed is a victory for us all.” ✝

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PHOTOS



Scan the QR code to view our photo gallery of the Ordination Mass.



In Calcutta, Sister Mary Joseph, Superior General of the Missionaries of Charity, welcomes Bishop Michael Olson.

Snapshots from India

Bishop Michael Olson and Father Thomas Jones traveled through India visiting the places and people that form our missionary priests

Bishop Michael Olson and Father Thomas Jones, parochial vicar of St. Jude Parish in Mansfield, traveled to India for four weeks in February. The bishop sat down with the *North Texas Catholic* and discussed some observations from the visit.

NORTH TEXAS CATHOLIC: What was the purpose of this trip?

BISHOP MICHAEL OLSON: I wanted to go to India to visit the superiors and the religious

houses of formation that provide 22 of our priests here in the diocese: the religious orders of two provinces of the Third Order Regular Franciscans; the Heralds of the Good News; and finally, the two provinces and a region of the Pallottine Fathers.

NTC: Did it help you better understand our missionary priests from India?

BISHOP: What's been nice is visiting the seminaries that they attended, and seeing their graduation pictures on the wall and

then taking a photo of it and sending it to them. Now I come back and visit with them, hear them tell stories about that experience, and also the experience of their assignments that they've had — very challenging assignments of founding a school in a predominantly non-Catholic area, a non-baptized, non-Christian area, for example. But they persevere in the faith by loving God and loving their neighbor. That same Spirit has brought them here.

I asked the superiors, "What are some of the criteria that you find important



Bishop Michael Olson cuts the ribbon and blesses the new wing of St. Vincent Pallotti High School in Konkepudi, Andhra Pradesh, India, on Feb. 16.

before you offer a priest to serve here?” And one replied, “Of course he has to be a good priest, well grounded in spirituality, seasoned, and experienced.” But then he said, “They also have to be willing to minister so far from home.”

Sometimes in a sense of hubris — the shadow side of our American pride — we think, “Who wouldn’t want to minister here?” But they’re 11 and a half hours ahead of us in the time zone; it took me 20 hours of travel time to get there. It’s a far, far place. And their willingness to come here, and to be of service, and to suffer sometimes uncharitable and impatient criticism — their willingness to do that for Christ should really embolden our souls to be more dedicated to Him as well.

NTC: After an extensive visit with those superiors and religious houses, how would you describe the state of the Catholic Church in India?

BISHOP: Well, it’s very strong. It’s very small, but very effective. At its heart is evangelization primarily through education — educating the young — and then also

outreach. Where those overlap in a particular way is the education of women.

NTC: What can the faithful in our diocese learn from our brothers and sisters in India?

BISHOP: First of all, what is it like to really practice your faith — and that includes outreach, education, faith sharing, all of the things that we can take for granted here — amidst a hostile government. The current government in India is pushing a Hindu nationalism, that India is a Hindu country, and anything, particularly from the west, particularly Christianity, should be rejected or at the very least discouraged. For example, it’s illegal to make a convert to Catholicism in India.

Now it does happen, but the Church very wisely focuses on living their faith as a witness, and then also they take the long game of preparation and evangelization where so many of those whom they educate leave eventually for jobs, good jobs here in the United States, as well as in South Africa, and in Australia, and the United Kingdom. Many of them have had such a positive

experience of the ministry of the Church that they’re drawn to conversion.

We can take from that a sense of being patient with faith. The Church in India dates to apostolic times — the Apostle Thomas brought the faith there, and I was privileged to celebrate Mass at the site of his martyrdom. The Indian experience of the Church and Christianity is not a product of colonialism, although it’s tried to be painted that way by the current nationalists.

Do not underestimate the power of outreach to the poor done with an evangelical heart, very simply because this is what Christ has asked us to do. Mother Teresa was always saying, “You don’t have to feed everybody or solve world hunger. Feed one person.”

The Lord asked her to be faithful, not successful. So focus on the fidelity of that, and I think that’s really at the heart of how we should live our faith in times of change, in times where ideologies that are very hostile to the Church and to human dignity are having a good deal of influence in our own nation.

Continued on Page 16



Bishop Olson's itinerary included visits with students at many Catholic schools, including St. Francis School in Saraiyahat, Jharkhand, India.

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NTC: What were some high points from your visit?

BISHOP: First of all, it was wonderful to see some of the priests who've served here, who've returned to India. It was very nice to have that reunion, to renew old friendships and fraternities.

Secondly, to speak and visit and listen to seminarians who are preparing for priestly life and particularly missionary life.

Thirdly, it was also good to meet some of the family members of some of the priests who are serving here, and to thank them personally for supporting their sons and brothers in their ministry and their missionary ministry. It's important for us, especially those of us who are native to North Texas, or even born in other parts of the U.S., to really have a sense of gratitude and appreciation of how far these good priests have come to minister and serve as missionaries and as priests.

It's a good time to say thank you to them. Not just the Indian priests, but priests from other parts of the world who've come here.

One of the reasons I went was to foster a better sense of ecclesial unity and communion. The Church is a lot more closely united than we may think sometimes.

We have to begin with the unity that we find in Christ, the unity of our baptism, the unity of our human nature, the unity of the basic things

that make us flourish.

The sense of challenges that the Church in India faces were very educational for me — the challenges that bishops face, but also people in family life face.

If we're focused on Christ and what He's given us and the gift of the Eucharist and all of the sacraments that really enliven our family life, then we have an understanding based in gratitude that can transcend and help us persevere through very difficult, challenging times.

NTC: In pictures you shared, you received a tremendous welcome everywhere.

BISHOP: Yes, we were welcomed a lot. "Hearty welcome" seems to be the Indian expression.

That's a very strong custom shared in all of the states of India and all of the languages of India. You welcome a guest with veiling, kind of showing God surrounding them, the warmth of the sense of welcome. While it's ritualized, it's not simply perfunctory. It's very important for them to offer that welcome and for one to receive that welcome.

NTC: Which might be difficult?

BISHOP: Everything was new for me in a sense, and so I wanted to remain open. But I thought, you enter into sort of a deeper sense of the mystery of the human person in a new place like that. And

SEE MORE OF INDIA

Go to NorthTexasCatholic.org or scan the QR codes below to see:

Bishop Olson's photo gallery.



Video of Bishop Olson's travels in India.





Bishop Olson visited the seminaries of religious orders who serve in the Diocese of Fort Worth. Here, he celebrated Mass with the seminarians of the Heralds of the Good News at Saint Joseph Minor Seminary in Chatrapur, Odisha, India.

I was very grateful for that type of welcome because it is far away and everything is different. But that sense of a warm welcome really helps an outsider, before asking, “Why are you here?” or, “Are you here in the right way?” It is an important lesson for us in Christian hospitality, which has been part of the Church since the apostolic times.

Today with the challenges we face at our border, which are very complicated, because we do have a national security issue, and at the same time we have a responsibility to welcome the stranger, provide for their basic needs, for no matter how long they’re here. To welcome them as another human being.

That’s the stance that we’re trying to take as a Church through our outreach in a sense: to work with our government to see what are the principle issues of security that we can assist with, but also just simply basic kindness to people. Jesus is very clear on that when He tells us to welcome the stranger.

NTC: Has this trip given you new ideas or new insights?

BISHOP: It’s helping us to form a presbyterate first, to work together and to share that common call and that common identity and mission as priests. It’s very important.

Secondly, the importance of education

with evangelization. It’s a central component because it helps us understand the Gospel very clearly. Whenever Jesus came to town, first He healed, He cared for the poor, and He taught.

That really is the heart of a healthy church, a Church that’s not closed in on itself. And not preoccupied with small things that don’t have to divide us.

NTC: Any memories you want to share?

BISHOP: A girl at St. Vincent Pallotti National English School asked me, “You come from the United States, which is a very developed nation, and we’re in India, which in many ways is not a developed nation. What can the United States learn from India? And what can India learn from the United States?”

I said, “One of the things we can learn in the United States is there’s a natural religiosity to the people in India.” There’s a natural openness to God, which I think is human. The people have a natural respect for God, and they know God exists, in somewhat of a meaningful way. And I think that’s here too, though we don’t acknowledge it.

What the United States has is our discussions, even if there are different approaches and even if they can get someone angry or spirited, on how do you take

care of the human person and who belongs?

In India there are challenges because in some areas the caste system is still very strong. Some people don’t matter; the Church is facing that. Also the particular role of women there is something the Church is facing very much. I marveled and I was gratefully impressed by a number of the religious orders of women and also by the whole church in a very important ministry: taking care of elderly women, who have no children, who have no surviving husband, or they’ve been left behind.

Another religious order, the Religious Sisters of the Good Shepherd, will take care of young girls who are abandoned, left in bus stations, trafficked. And so the sisters and their lay collaborators house them, educate them, teach them, and then prepare them for both the business world and then also for marriage. And then maintain that relationship afterwards. And particularly one of the sisters said, she said, “We teach them about their basic rights as human beings.”

The majority of people who are poor are overwhelmingly women because they fall through societies, and I think the Church has a place for them. ✨

All photos are courtesy of Bishop Michael Olson. This interview was edited for brevity and clarity.

CAPITOL Campaign

On Catholic Advocacy Day, faithful from across the state share opinions with Texas legislators

By Susan Moses

Texas Catholics made their voices heard in Austin on Catholic Advocacy Day — both quietly in one-on-one visits with state legislators and loudly with more than 1,000 Catholics cheering, chanting, and praying at a rally on the steps of the Capitol on March 28.

From the Diocese of Fort Worth, about 60 clergy, students, and lay leadership from Catholic Charities Fort Worth, the Advancement Foundation, and the diocesan central office attended the day-long event, held every two years while the legislature is in session.

This year, as per the norm, the Texas Catholic Conference of Bishops identified bills with moral and social effects for participants to advocate for or advise against, on topics such as education, health care, restorative justice, immigration, religious liberty, and support for the poor and vulnerable.

But Jennifer Allmon, executive director of the TCCB, noted this particular Catholic Advocacy Day was historic. After the rally's opening prayer and introduction of bishops, she said, "I want to pause a moment to let it sink in that this is the very first Catholic Advocacy Day at the Texas State Capitol where we do not have to march into that building and ask that the lives of the unborn be spared, because our generation ended legal abortion in Texas."

Father Anthony Chandler, interim CEO of CCFW, and diocesan Safe

Environment Director Sandra Schrader-Farry visited State Rep. Chris Turner, who was elected by voters in parts of Arlington and Grand Prairie.

The discussion began with thanks to the legislator for his past support of legislation benefitting veterans and children. Rep. Turner in turn thanked Texas bishops, and Bishop Michael Olson in particular, for their efforts to eliminate predatory lending. Fr. Chandler pointed out that CCFW, in partnership with Frost Bank and the St. Vincent de Paul Society, now offers low-interest emergency loans, which was welcome news to Rep. Turner, who thanked CCFW for its sustained assistance to the poor and vulnerable in the community.

Then the conversation, totaling almost 30 minutes, moved to proposed legislation supported by the Catholic bishops. The lawmaker and his Catholic visitors found common ground on the accessibility of

background checks and juvenile sentencing and shared mutual concern on protecting the most vulnerable in society.

Schrader-Farry asked if she could broach the topic of parental choice in education.

"Sure, I'll listen," replied Rep. Turner.

A respectful dialogue about the pros and cons of state funding of private school education ensued, although neither viewpoint changed.

After the visit, Fr. Chandler described the conversation as "a dance."

The interim CCFW president said that rational debate is scarce in today's society. "If you can get people to listen, and if you can have a dialogue — we may disagree, but we can always discuss [viewpoints]. Maybe we can begin to chip away each other's position and have an understanding of why we hold a position.

"Will you change some minds? You'll change some. Will you change some votes? You'll change some," he continued.

YOUNG VOICES

At 5:15 that morning, nine students from Cassata Catholic High School and 26 from Nolan Catholic High School boarded a bus to travel to Austin.

Several students made visits to legislators, and others observed bills being debated on the floor of the Texas House Chamber from the upstairs gallery. The students also attended the rally on the steps of the Capitol, where several bishops gave brief explanations of the Catholic viewpoint of legislative priorities.

SEE THE
VIDEO



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Catholic
Advocacy Day



▲ Fort Worth faithful cheer as Bishop Michael Olson is introduced during a rally at Catholic Advocacy Day in Austin on March 28. (NTC/Thao Nguyen)

◀ Sen. Kelly Hancock (right) visits with students and employees of the diocese and CCFW during Catholic Advocacy Day, sponsored by the Texas Catholic Conference of Bishops. (NTC/Thao Nguyen)

Bishop Olson spoke to the Nolan students, emphasizing their rights and responsibilities as citizens and Catholics.

The students' afternoon concluded with a mock hearing on predatory lending.

Lynne Burns, who teaches history and government at Cassata, said the visit to the Capitol was beneficial to the students as both citizens and Catholics.

The students will soon be voters, she said, and firsthand observation of legislators in action brings a reality to state government beyond what a textbook can provide.

The rally, she explained, exposed the students to other Catholic schools across the state, plus they heard the bishops' stances on various issues, along with an overview of legislation that supports those

issues. The experience demonstrated the universality of the Church and its teachings on social justice.

FAITHFUL CITIZENS

Catholic Advocacy Day is a unique opportunity to educate, inform, and be a witness to the Catholic faith in state government.

Fr. Chandler said, "It's good for us to be seen in the political realm. We're part of it, whether we like it or not. We pay taxes, and our tax money is used for everything, so let's help decide where that money goes.

"As Catholics, we always talk about our faithful citizenship. As Roman Catholics, we are people who have a

moral compass. We are people who have a moral stance on many, many things, most especially our respect for all people. It's important, as voting members of this country, that we look out for the needs of all of our brothers and sisters, and not just ourselves," the priest continued.

Schrader-Farry said participation in Catholic Advocacy Day is "imperative. This is our house, and we need to visit it. Our voices, the voices of the Catholic parishioners and faithful in our diocese and across the state, need to be heard, in a very friendly and respectful way, but they need to be heard."

While the 88th Texas Legislature is in session, may those Catholic voices echo in the rotunda. ✚

heavenly hideaway

St. Francis Village offers community and faith
within relaxing retirement setting

By Matthew Smith

Perched near the banks of Benbrook Lake, St. Francis Village calls to mind a tranquil oasis proximate to but sufficiently removed from nearby Metroplex clamor. Or, as many associated with the Village call it, “a little bit of heaven.”

“We hear that a lot,” Village Director David Tolson said. “Many have told me that, as they drive through the gates, they just feel a great sense of peace because here it’s like it was 50 years ago when we were all growing up and everyone knew everybody. Outside of here many people just live in their own little cocoons now. But the Village is like a big family. It’s just a different world.”

Longtime resident Judy Chesser agreed.

“I came here as soon as I could and have been in the Village 23 years now,” Chesser said.

The former Tarrant County court clerk retired in 1998 and quickly fell in love with St. Francis Village.

“Peaceful, quiet, private,” Chesser responded when asked what she most likes about the Village. “It’s an unusual place, kind of off the beaten track and you

probably won’t find anything else like it anywhere.”

All homes and buildings in the independent senior living community are single level with no stairs involved, Chesser added while offering a tour of her two-bedroom cottage. Chesser mentioned garages or carports and ample yard space as additional pluses.

“I love it,” Chesser said, pointing out her back porch view of the lake.

FATHER PHIL

Father Philip Marquard, OFM, founded the Village in 1965. The

Village’s fall festival is named after Fr. Phil, who passed away in 1986.

“The concept was to establish an affordable retirement community with a Christian environment,” according to a remembrance of Fr. Marquard compiled by former Village residents who knew him. “The Fort Worth area was chosen because land in this area was cheaper.”

Fr. Marquard’s original mission — to provide affordable, safe, and active (both spiritually and socially) retirement options — remains in place today, Tolson said.

Although Fr. Marquard remained largely Chicago-based, where he founded homeless shelters, food banks, a transitional home for ex-offenders, and other projects, he paid frequent visits to the Village.

“You could tell by the way he talked the Village was special to him,” former resident Melba Buchanan said. “He loved this place.”

Fr. Marquard’s love of Christ proved infectious, former resident Dorothy Abbott said.

“Fr. Phil’s charisma and kindness made you want to get involved in helping others,” Abbott said.

LIFE AND
WILDLIFE



Scan the QR code
to see photos of the
village, including
turkeys and the lake.



A statue of St. Francis is seen at St. Francis Village on March 22. (NTC/Juan Guajardo)

LAID-BACK AND LOCKED IN

St. Francis Village's bucolic, peaceful setting provides residents both a ticket away from it all and social opportunities galore to get involved.

"We're basically our own little city here. We have our own water system, our own wastewater treatment plant, our own cable and internet system. The only thing we don't do is generate electricity," said Tolson, who plans to retire this summer.

About 540 seniors reside in the Village, which consists of just over 400 residences. Empty frontal acreage provides room for future growth as well as a buffer from encroaching development due to the opening of the nearby Chisholm Trail Parkway about a decade ago.

Affordable, safe living remains the goal. Rents — all utilities save phone included — range from \$1,121 to \$2,175 per month with square footage options ranging from 612 to 1,099 square feet. Security guards are on hand 24 hours a day in this gated community.

Wildlife abounds, especially deer and turkeys.

"They run the place," Tolson joked.

And prove a big hit with residents.

"Yesterday I counted 20 turkeys in my backyard," Chesser said. "Some by the fence, some were just pecking around."

Walking trails, including lake access, wind through the Village.

"We have about a mile of lake frontage where people can walk or fish," Chapel Administrator Mike Pierson said. "A number of residents have become photographers, taking pictures of sunsets, birds, the turkeys."

SPIRITUAL NEEDS

Resident services manager Cat Karnezis, who also lives at St. Francis Village, pointed out Stations of the Cross arranged outside the chapel and the nearby rosary garden.

Now retired Father Ken Robinson, who lives in the Village and celebrates Mass daily (the Village also has a

Protestant chapel) praised the residents who volunteer to help with everything from Mass needs to activity coordination to donating to the Village pantry. Fr. Robinson joked that, unlike his previous assignment as pastor of Sacred Heart Parish in Muenster, he provides sacramental ministry but performs no administrative duties.

"[Pierson] handles the administrative duties," Fr. Robinson said with a laugh. "I did that before, don't want to do it again."

Resident Hortencia Laguna paints a baseball, a gift for her grandson, in the Village's ceramics shop while touting life in the Village. Friend and fellow resident Mary Gillespie said she first heard of the Village while volunteering there as a senior at Nolan Catholic High School in 1973.

"Later, when we were getting ready to retire, I looked at my husband and said, 'What about St. Francis Village?'" Gillespie said. "In my heart, that's where I wanted to go." 📍

BABY BOOM!

Pro-life pregnancy resource centers
expand locations and services

By Joan Kurkowski-Gillen

Pregnant? Scared? Need help? It's a message blanketing highway billboards across the country. And never has responding to those pointed questions been more important.

Since the first pregnancy resource center opened in 1967, the number of life-affirming organizations in the U.S. offering holistic care to women in crisis pregnancies has grown to almost 3,000. Texas has approximately 200 pregnancy centers — more than any other state.

According to the Charlotte Lozier Institute, in 2019 pregnancy health centers served roughly two million women and men with services valued at \$266 million.

In the Diocese of Fort Worth, two nonprofits, Mother and Unborn Baby Care and Loreto House, have seen calls increase for emotional, material, and practical support during pregnancy since the Supreme Court, in a 5–4 decision, overturned the *Roe v. Wade* decision legalizing

abortion in the United States.

Following the Court's ruling, Bishop Michael Olson promised the diocese would redouble efforts to serve expectant mothers and families by caring for the prenatal and early development needs of their children through its Respect Life Office and apostolates.

“We must be mindful that at the heart of our prayers and labor is not the changing of law but the conversion of hearts toward greater gratitude, respect, and love for each human person,” he said.

Meeting that expectation, both Mother and Unborn Baby Care and Loreto House have expanded their outreach and services to help families overcome the obstacles that prompt them to seek abortion.

BECOMING MORE VISIBLE, ACCESSIBLE

Photos of babies saved from abortion decorate the walls of a recently constructed Mother and Unborn Baby Care building at 3264



Mother and Unborn Baby Care volunteer Cindy Zampardi holds 3-month-old Messiah Fearson during a client session on April 13 at the new MUBC location. (NTC/Juan Guajardo)

The new Loreto House location in Flower Mound. (NTC/Kevin Bartram)

Lackland Road. The two-story brick structure is the new home for a ministry started in 1984 by the late Chuck Pelletier and his wife, Pat.

Every image tells a story and Pat Pelletier, the organization's president, remembers in detail the circumstances surrounding each life rescued. One college student feared missing too much school if her pregnancy continued. Another worried about an unpaid truck loan. The mother of several young children was pressured by her husband to terminate a pregnancy because she was the family's breadwinner.

"Some of these babies are now 35 years old," explained Pelletier, drawing attention to a collage of smiling faces. "They are all so special to us."

After working for 20 years from



a 1,400-square-foot storefront in the hospital district, the ministry has moved into a larger, almost 6,000-square-foot space in west Fort Worth. The appealing layout features a family-friendly waiting area, counseling rooms, two sonogram stations, offices, and more storage for

diapers, clothing, and formula. An oratory housing the Blessed Sacrament is planned. Designed with an upstairs conference room for large gatherings, the building benefits both the ministry and

Continued on Page 24



Randy and Laurie Bollig at the new Loreto House location in Flower Mound. (NTC/Kevin Bartram)

From Page 23

the diocese.

“It gives us more space and the location makes us more available to women,” the pro-life advocate pointed out. “And it’s good for the diocese. Forty Days for Life will use the conference room for training, and the Respect Life committee has already had a quarterly meeting here.”

Neighboring a now-closed clinic that once performed 500 abortions a month, Mother and Unborn Baby Care hopes its neutral “Pregnancy Option Center” sign will draw women to its door.

“Sixty to 65 percent of the women coming to see us want an abortion,” Pelletier said. Many visitors ask for the abortion pill which accounts for 54 percent of terminated pregnancies.

Others call the center looking for transportation to a state where abortion is legal.

“Sidewalk counselors in Wichita, Kansas, tell us the parking lot is full of cars with Texas tags,” she revealed. “They told one man about resources in Fort Worth to help him, and he got his wife out of the clinic. They’re back home and we’re going to help.”

Undertaking a construction project was a daunting but necessary challenge. Relocating to a well-traveled street and

multipurpose building makes the ministry more visible and accessible.

“The whole thing is God’s mission,” Pelletier added. “The only thing that makes me feel comfortable when we’re struggling for funding is seeing God’s hand in it.”

Following in his parents’ footsteps, Jim Pelletier joined the organization as administrator and helped oversee the building process. Guided by R.J.M. Contractors — a charity-focused business — the project was completed on time and under budget.

“Everything about this is being authentically Catholic. It’s about having a mission in the most literal sense and that mission is bringing Jesus to those who are either unwelcomed or unvalued,” he said. “That’s what we’ve done for 38 years with the Blessed Sacrament.”

Everything Mother and Unborn Baby Care can provide — emotional support, sonograms, and resources — is important.

“But the real power behind all this is the real presence [of Christ],” the administrator continued.

Eighty-five to 90 percent of clients who come to the center change their minds about having an abortion.

“It’s not because we’re great counselors,” Pat Pelletier admitted. “The Holy Spirit is the one who leads the conversation.”

HELPING WOMEN, TRANSFORMING LIVES

People who wonder whether a pregnancy help center can make a real difference in the life of a woman only have to read the dozens of five-star reviews for Loreto House from grateful clients. Providing compassionate assistance and support to expectant mothers since 2007, the Denton-based apostolate now operates a medical clinic at 1100 N. Bonnie Brae Street and has opened a second location with the same services in Flower Mound.

“When the doors are closing in and you have no one to talk with, Loreto House is there to listen and do whatever they can to help.”

“I gained so much information about being pregnant and raising a baby. They supported me with baby and mother essentials.”

“This place made me feel extremely safe and comfortable while waiting for results.”

The need for a crisis pregnancy center in the north area of the diocese prompted Randy Bollig and his wife, Laurie, to open Loreto House — a ministry named for the home where, according to Catholic tradition, the Blessed Mother was conceived, was born, and experienced the Annunciation.

“Our charism comes from the Holy Family — the perfect model for today’s families,” said Bollig, executive director. “Women can come to us knowing they will be treated with full dignity and in accord with our faith.”

There’s no judgment or proselytizing. “We serve without trying to convert, and we emulate the Blessed Mother,” he explained. “That’s why we’re so successful. We’re living our faith by action.”

Requests for assistance increased dramatically last year when Texas banned abortions following the demise of *Roe v. Wade*. Loreto House now serves 50 to 60 women a day and organizers believe the

new Flower Mound location will equal that.

The craftsman-style building at 2213 Acropolis Drive houses two exam rooms, a nurse's station, a lab, seven ADA-compliant bathrooms, spaces for quiet conversations, a private oratory, and a large parking lot.

"All those things we've been doing for the past 15 years will continue there," Bollig assured. "We serve women during their pregnancy and up to 36 months after the baby is born with support, classes, and material goods. We walk with women for quite a long time and the addition of a medical clinic extends that."

Affiliated with the Obria medical group, Loreto House began offering well-woman exams, first trimester prenatal care, STD testing and treatment, and cancer screenings along with other services in February.

"There's a great need for women to get quality health care," said Tracy DuBois, director of medical services for both locations. "With many OB/GYNs in Denton retiring, moving, or not accepting Medicaid, we recognized a gap we could fill."

The clinic accepts insurance and payment plans.

"We serve everyone. No one is turned away. If someone can't afford our services, we work with them," DuBois stated decisively. "It's about carrying out the same compassionate services we offer on our advocate side."

An advocate is the person a Loreto House client meets first.

"Whether it's resources,

material goods, pregnancy tests, or clinic referrals, we're the ones who hold their hand throughout the whole pregnancy or parenting process," said Nicole Ellis, a volunteer who visits with four or five clients a day. "We also do classes with them."

Mothers who turn to Loreto House for help come from varied backgrounds. Most are single but some are married and struggling financially. Domestic violence and other issues are often part of the narrative.

Ellis, a St. Mark parishioner in Argyle, works at the new Flower Mound location where the list for appointments is already growing.

"We're here to serve everyone, moms and dads, no matter what the situation," she emphasized. "We care about the whole family unit."

Randy Bollig invites North Texas Catholics to visit Loreto House, where they can imagine the joy of welcoming new life into the world. The former home builder and real estate agent promised, "It will open your eyes."

"A lot of people think we're just a pregnancy care center giving out diapers. We do much more," asserted the founder who describes what happens at Loreto House as transformative.

Facing an unexpected pregnancy, a woman will often walk through the door tearful and fearful.

"When she leaves an hour later, she's hugging the advocate and crying tears of joy," Bollig said. "That's a privilege I get to see a lot." 🍀



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houses of worship Centered on Christ

Parish renovations and tabernacle relocations underscore the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist

By Matthew Smith

Renovations and other changes in several parishes within the Diocese of Fort Worth over the past few years have enhanced aesthetics and in some cases accessibility. Although both results are worthwhile, the primary goal behind the changes, parish priests said, has been to augment the worship experience and particularly focus on the tabernacle and the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist.

With these changes, leaders hope to reinforce the central tenet of Catholicism that, during consecration, the bread and wine become the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ as opposed to merely symbols of His sacrifice, and that the Eucharist is the “source and summit” of Christian life. Only 31 percent of self-described U.S. Catholics profess these truths, according to a 2019 Pew Research Center survey.

The most recent renovations occurred at St. Paul the Apostle Church in River Oaks, culminating with a March 19 blessing by Bishop Michael Olson.

At that parish, the tabernacle remains where it’s always been located, in the middle of the sanctuary behind the altar, St. Paul Pastor Thu Nguyen said. Additional renovations,

however, enhanced both the church’s physical and spiritual attributes.

“When I first came in July, the pews did not have kneelers,” Father Nguyen said. “So we recently installed 32 pews with kneelers.”

Older pews (the parish dates to 1952) had been replaced about six years ago.

“A protestant church donated the pews, which didn’t have kneelers, before we got the new ones,” Fr. Nguyen said. “So our parishioners had been kneeling on the hard floor for over five years.”

The changes didn’t stop with the pews.

“At the same time, the altar was flimsy so we got a new altar, a new ambo, and a new candlestand for seven candles,” Fr. Nguyen said. “A piece of marble from the former altar was consecrated with a relic from the original church. That marble piece was inserted into the new altar and was there when we blessed it.”

Bishop Olson on March 19 blessed the altar, ambo, and pews.

“Several parishioners have said they like the new kneelers, that everything is much more comfortable now,” Fr. Nguyen said. “Bishop Olson commented on how beautiful the new altar is and the other changes.”

The projects cost about \$85,000.



Bishop Michael Olson speaks to parishioners at St. Paul the Apostle Church in River Oaks on March 19. Bishop Olson blessed the new altar, ambo, and pews at the church during Mass. (NTC/Juan Guajardo)

“We did fundraising events through the Advancement Foundation, the parish annual festival, and donors,” Fr. Nguyen said.

In the last few years, through funds on hand and/or capital campaigns, St. Michael in Bedford, Good Shepherd in Colleyville, St. Stephen in Weatherford, St. Francis of Assisi in Grapevine, St. Vincent de Paul in Arlington, St. Bartholomew in Fort Worth, and Holy Trinity in Azle — among other parishes — have also undergone renovations, most of which included tabernacle relocations.

In February 2022, workers relocated Good Shepherd’s tabernacle from a small chapel near the back of the church to the sanctuary.

“We didn’t get a new tabernacle,” said Father Michael Higgins, TOR, pastor of Good Shepherd. “We used the tabernacle that was in the chapel and put it on a stand constructed in the sanctuary that was designed by the architect who designed the church. That way it fits the design of the

ambo, altar, and so forth, and looks like it was there from the beginning.

“That was my goal. I didn’t want it to look like an add-on.”

Placement of the tabernacle should be either in the sanctuary, though apart from the altar of celebration, or in a chapel “suitable for the private adoration and prayer of the faithful,” according to the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* (315).

Fr. Nguyen, who also serves as diocesan director of Liturgy and Worship, discussed the history of the tabernacle and its importance in worship.

“We want the focus on God, not on us,” Fr. Nguyen explained. “The faithful come to church and they have to recognize the presence of Christ.”

The Most Blessed Sacrament, according to the guidelines, “should be reserved in a tabernacle in a part of the church that is truly noble, prominent, conspicuous, worthily decorated, and suitable for prayer” (314).

The tabernacle “should usually be the

only one, be irremovable, be made of solid and inviolable material that is not transparent, and be locked in such a way that the danger of profanation is prevented to the greatest extent possible” (314).

For a church to have a tabernacle in both the sanctuary and an adoration chapel would require the bishop’s permission, Frs. Nguyen and Higgins added.

Good Shepherd’s tabernacle has always, as far as he knows, been in the chapel, Fr. Higgins said.

Fr. Higgins, through a letter to parishioners, outlined theological reasons for relocating the tabernacle and stressed that the relocation was in no way a negative comment on those who designed the church.

“The intent for them was having a separate chapel to highlight the importance of the Eucharist,” Fr. Higgins said. “But I don’t think it was doing what they hoped it would do.

Continued on Page 28



When St. Michael Parish in Bedford renovated its sanctuary, the altar, crucifix, and tabernacle were moved front and center. In this 2021 photo, Bishop Olson celebrates a Mass blessing the altar, tabernacle, and statuary. (NTC/Juan Guajardo)

From Page 27

“Part of the [reason for the] move was the decline in the belief or understanding in the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist over the years,” the pastor explained. “With the tabernacle being in a separate chapel, you could, in a sense, say people perceived it as, ‘Well, that’s not important. They just put it in a corner.’”

The tabernacle’s previous location required Eucharistic ministers to transport the Blessed Sacrament in a large ciborium from the chapel to the main altar for daily and Sunday Mass.

“I didn’t see that as giving due dignity to the Eucharist,” Fr. Higgins said. “The constant movement back and forth to the tabernacle and the altar.”

Relocation of the tabernacle to Good Shepherd’s sanctuary has already brought positive effects.

“Before, because the tabernacle was

not in the sanctuary, people were not genuflecting,” Fr. Higgins said. “Occasionally they would bow to the altar or cross, but that’s not genuflection. Now people are coming in and genuflecting to the tabernacle before they take their seats.”

Fr. Higgins added that each parish is different, of course, and that costs and architectural layouts may limit their renovation possibilities.

In 2018, St. Francis of Assisi in Grapevine, with a goal toward fulfilling their mission of “building a church of missionary disciples,” began a \$5.7-million capital campaign for renovations and additions including renovation of the sanctuary and existing buildings, plus a new formation center and an adoration chapel.

“We pulled down the entire sanctuary,” Father Sojan George, pastor of St. Francis of Assisi, said. “Tore the whole thing down and rebuilt it, so a major renovation.”

The project included a new altar, ambo, and tabernacle, in addition to new artwork of St. Francis, mosaics, private confessionals, and the reintroduction of the church’s original stations of the cross.

“We relocated the tabernacle to the center,” Fr. George said. “It had been off to the side, so we wanted to bring it to the center, to make it the center of our worship and stress its importance as the source of our faith.”

A three-year project at St. Michael in Bedford reached fruition on Sept. 25, 2021, as Bishop Olson blessed the parish’s newly completed altar, tabernacle, and statuary on the Feast of St. Michael.

Parishioners representing 42 nationalities helped raise funds for the renovations through selling traditional foods, in addition to donations and other fundraising efforts. Because of them the chancel (space around the altar) received many “reverent and liturgically beneficial changes,” former



▲ In 2019, St. Francis of Assisi Parish in Grapevine rebuilt its sanctuary and moved the tabernacle to the center. (NTC/Kevin Bartram)

◀ Since the tabernacle was relocated from a chapel to the sanctuary, Good Shepherd parishioners genuflect before taking a seat. (NTC/Juan Guajardo)

St. Michael Pastor Balaji Boyalla, SAC, said.

“Previously, the altar was to one side, the crucifix to one side, and the tabernacle just on a plank,” Fr. Boyalla said.

“We wanted to give more focus to the Eucharist because we’re also celebrating, as the bishop says, that the Eucharist unites us. So, we wanted to put the altar, tabernacle, and crucifix on the same [center] line. Now, as people come in, they automatically go on their knees to genuflect and it gives us a more traditional look

and more importance is given to the Holy Eucharist, the presence of Jesus,” said the former pastor.

The renovation addressed logistical issues as well.

“The ambo moved from the right side of the altar, as you enter, to the left,” Fr. Boyalla said. “We added a ramp on that side because many of our lectors are senior people who had difficulties with the steps but still wanted to do the readings.”

The tabernacle is new — the former one is now in the adoration chapel — as

is the crucifix, the new cross made by a parishioner and the corpus coming from Italy, like the new statues of the Blessed Virgin Mary and St. Joseph. The former statues and crucifix now call the narthex home.

“To be frank, not even a single person said anything negative about the changes,” Fr. Boyalla said. “Rather, feedback has been that they are so happy.

“That is so perfect because, since the pandemic, a lot of people show more interest in watching Mass online. But we want them to get up and come and receive Communion and I think these renovations have definitely helped in getting people back to the church and helped increase worship focused on the Holy Eucharist.” 🇺🇸



Father Raymond McDaniel practices the new organ on March 22, during the last phase of installation. (NTC/Juan Guajardo)

New pipe organ at St. Philip the Apostle Parish lifts hearts and minds

By Sandra Engelland

Easter services at St. Philip the Apostle Church in Flower Mound were extra special this year as parishioners enjoyed beautiful, uplifting music from their new pipe organ.

“I think it supports congregational singing like nothing else,” said Father Raymond McDaniel, St. Philip’s pastor. “The best instrument for singing God’s praise is the human voice, and second is the organ.”

“It powerfully lifts up our hearts to God and our minds to higher things,” Fr. McDaniel said.

Katie Schmitz, director of music and organist, said the organ has been a part of the Church since the 10th or 11th century, adding beauty to worship.

Schmitz said, “We can’t ignore that aspect. Beauty is important in liturgy.”

Fr. McDaniel said that the church building, which was dedicated Feb. 22, 2022, was designed and built with the large pipe organ — and its 2,313 pipes — in mind, especially the choir loft.

During the design process for the sanctuary, Fr. McDaniel and the previous

organist Andrew Kenney conducted a multiyear search, visiting with a number of organ builders from the U.S., Canada, and France. The winning company was Casavant Frères from Quebec.

Schmitz joined St. Philip’s staff in 2020 and had the opportunity to review Casavant’s proposal, share some ideas, and learn the reasons behind their design decisions. “It was an organist’s dream,” Schmitz said.

Schmitz got to visit the Casavant studio near Montreal and see a portion of the organ assembled there.

The organ was then disassembled and packed onto a truck to make the long trip south at the end of January during the big winter ice storm. The truck was slightly delayed, and the flights of the installation team were delayed even more, Schmitz said.


When everything was unloaded from the truck, pipes and various organ components covered the pews, the aisles, and the narthex. Builders erected scaffolding and rigged up a pulley system to lift materials from the church floor to the choir loft.

First came the framework and the winding components, then the pipes. Some of the pipes are wooden while others are metal. The construction team installed most of the pipes for the organ but left out strategic pipes so the voicing team members could do their work.

The voicing team plays each note of the organ multiple times, adjusting pipes individually to achieve the best tone. They install the last of the pipes as they finish the voicing phase.

St. Philip signed off on the organ March 24, and Schmitz practiced with it and played it for portions of weekend Masses, but the real unveiling was Easter Sunday. 🇺🇸

SEE IT BUILT!



See installation photos by scanning the QR code or visiting NorthTexasCatholic.org/local-news.



Seventh graders Mia Coffey, Madeleine Schroder, and Ella Taylor pose with the 16,500 diapers they and their classmates at St. Andrew Catholic School collected for CCFW's Gabriel Project. (NTC/Juan Guajardo)

Making a change, a diaper at a time

“**M**ake a change by giving a change” is the slogan that helped three seventh graders at St. Andrew Catholic School in Fort Worth collect and deliver 16,500 diapers to Catholic Charities Fort Worth. They exceeded their goal of 13,500 diapers and helped hundreds of infants and babies in needy families.

Ella Taylor, Mia Coffey, and Madeleine Schroder promoted the student-led diaper drive during daily announcements, at school assemblies, in the Wildcat Weekly school newsletter, and with posters placed throughout the campus. Taylor said many of the posters contained statistics such as the number of diapers a newborn uses daily or that 1 in 3 families struggle with diaper needs.

They also involved St. Andrew Parish with flyers in the bulletin and boxes in the narthex for diaper donations from parishioners.

“A lot of grandparents, aunts, and uncles also wanted to contribute even though they weren’t necessarily part of our

church or school,” Taylor said.

Those unable to purchase diapers donated money. Taylor said donations totaled \$1,050, which paid for three diaper bags, 400 extra diapers, 100 packages of baby wipes, and ten \$50 Target gift cards.

The diaper drive was conceived four years ago by three other St. Andrew students, now freshmen at Nolan Catholic High School. As sixth graders, Josie Folzenlogen, Gigi Brownlow, and Avery Schmidt wanted to do something — on their own — to make a difference for people in poverty. Their desire became a diaper drive for Gabriel Project, a parish-based program that supports mothers experiencing crisis pregnancies.

“We felt God calling us to help people in our local community,” Folzenlogen said.

“So, we went to Catholic Charities looking for ways to help,” Schmidt explained, “and they introduced us to Gabriel Project.”

Though the school has many teacher-sponsored service opportunities, the three student leaders thought a

student-driven service project could create greater involvement and passion for the project. Their instincts were correct.

The first diaper drive exceeded its goal of 3,000 diapers with a total of 5,500. Each year, the girls increased the goal, and then exceeded it.

“Year after year, [the drive] collected more and more diapers and it keeps growing,” Taylor recounted. Today, the project collects enough diapers to also reach families beyond Gabriel Project.

Kasey Whitley, director of CCFW parish social ministry, said, “Though Gabriel Project is the primary beneficiary, any new or expectant parent in any program at Catholic Charities will benefit.”

Whitley, a St. Andrew parent, said she also witnessed the impact of the diaper drive on the students who became engaged and excited about a corporal work of mercy.

“We all grew in our faith and grew closer together ... because of how many people became involved and worked to help us,” Taylor said. 🇺🇸



Darkness on the moon: The origins of Corpus Christi

St. Juliana of Liège contributes to the institution of Corpus Christi

By Sean Wright

Born in 1192, St. Juliana of Liège entered religious life as a Norbertine canoness regular. Of her, Pope Benedict XVI wrote: “She is little known but the Church is deeply indebted to her, not only because of the holiness of her life but also because, with her great fervor, she contributed to the institution of one of the most important solemn liturgies of the year: *Corpus Christi*.”

In 1208, at the age of 16, Juliana

experienced a vision of the full moon shining splendidly save for an area of darkness, described variously as a spot or as a diagonal stripe. Says Pope Benedict: “The Lord made her understand the ... moon symbolized the life of the Church on earth; the opaque line, on the other hand, represented the absence of a liturgical feast ... in which believers would be able to adore the Eucharist so as to increase in faith, to advance in the practice of



the virtues and to make reparation for offences to the Most Holy Sacrament.”

Not the impulsive type, Sister Juliana experienced this vision for 20 years and became prioress of her convent before describing it to a devout priest, John of Lausanne, her confessor. A number of local theologians were consulted and all thought it feasible to set aside a feast day of liturgical thanksgiving for the Most Glorious Sacrament of the Altar.

Together, Juliana and John composed an office — the Mass prayers — for the feast. Their enthusiasm induced Bishop Robert Torote of Liège to accept the concept. In 1846, he introduced the Feast of Corpus Christi to his diocese.

The beauty of this feast was not lost on the son of a cobbler, Jacques Pantaléon, who had become Archdeacon at the Liège cathedral and, later, Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem. Although he was not a cardinal, Pantaléon was elected Pope in 1261, taking the name Urban IV.

With the bull, *Transiturus de Hoc*

Mundo (11 August 1264), Urban instituted Corpus Christi as a “feast of precept”, taking precedence over any other liturgical celebration, even one of highest rank, assigning its celebration to the Thursday following the Octave of Pentecost, the Thursday following Trinity Sunday. This was the first time a pope imposed a feast to be observed by the Universal Church. (In 1969 Pope St. Paul VI permitted episcopal conferences the option to celebrate Corpus Christi on the first Sunday after Pentecost.)

With Pope Urban’s wholehearted advocacy, magnificent processions soon were held throughout Europe. Homes and businesses were colorfully decorated with bunting, banners, pennants and flowers. As flower girls strewed petals on the cobblestones and acolytes swung their thuribles raising clouds of incense, the townsfolk, dressed in their best clothing, lined both sides of roadways. They sang exuberant hymns of thanksgiving, adoration, and praise.

All across the continent, as

local pastors or bishops approached beneath a canopy, walking or sometimes riding in a special carriage and wrapped in beautiful copes and humeral veils, they held aloft monstrances containing the Eucharistic Jesus for all to see. When Jesus approached, the people cheered and crossed themselves. And, in the midst of wondrous, lengthy waves of genuflection, the inhabitants of every hamlet, every town, and every city in Europe came to pay homage to their Savior and Lord.

Gratified to learn of all the love and adoration directed toward the Sacred Host, Pope Urban declared, “Indeed we grasp the other things we commemorate with our spirit and our mind, but this does not mean that we obtain their real presence. On the contrary, in this sacramental commemoration of Christ, even though in a different form, Jesus Christ is present with us in His own substance. While He was about to ascend into heaven, He said, ‘And lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age.’” (*Matthew 28:20*)

Come, let us adore Him. ✚



allelui



a!

The story of Easter in the Diocese of Fort Worth

By Susan Moses

Easter. A day that changed everything. A season that lasts 50 days. A story that has been proclaimed for 2,000 years.

To share the celebration of Easter in the Diocese of Fort Worth, we'll rely on photographs. Sometimes a picture is worth a thousand words, but sometimes it's worth more.

In addition to these photos, Father Jonathan Wallis, vicar general for the Diocese of Fort Worth, offers a brief explanation of the significance of each Mass, and someone present at each celebration shares their firsthand experience.

For a fuller account, scan the QR codes with a link to more photos, or go to North-Texas-Catholic.smugmug.com.

THE CHRISM MASS

Two things make the Chrism Mass unique: first, the renewal of priestly promises, “individually and collectively, as a reminder that we serve together as priests of Jesus Christ for the Diocese of Fort Worth,” explained Fr. Wallis.


Secondly, the oil of the sick and the oil of catechumens is blessed, and the Holy Chrism is consecrated.

“Each year, the new oils are used. There’s a genuine sense, as priests go out to celebrate the sacrament of anointing, that those oils come from the Chrism Mass. They are blessed by Bishop [Michael] Olson. It’s a real extension of charity and solidarity in the diocese,” said Fr. Wallis.

Father Brett Metzler, director of vocations, led the procession carrying the Holy Chrism, which will be used to anoint those receiving baptism, confirmation, and holy orders.

Knowing the ordination of three priests is scheduled in May, Fr. Metzler said, “It’s an honor to present the oil that’s used to consecrate us as priests and bishops. It’s a profound honor to be able to carry that forward to Christ, the oil that’s used to bring more ministers into His fold.”

In a Mass especially rich in symbols of unity and holiness, Fr. Metzler also cherishes the renewal of priestly promises. “We’re all doing it at the same time even though we were ordained some 30 years, 50 years apart. We’re all renewing our commitment to Christ, our promises to Christ, and our desire to try again and again to lay down our life for Him, as a brotherhood.”



Bishop Michael Olson mixes the oils comprising the Sacred Chrism during the Chrism Mass on April 4, at St. Patrick Cathedral. (NTC/Juan Guajardo)

Triduum Begins

THE LAST SUPPER AND THE WASHING OF THE FEET

▼ During the Holy Thursday Mass, the Blessed Sacrament is moved from the sanctuary to an altar of repose, as seen at St. Jude Parish in Mansfield on April 6. (NTC/Juan Guajardo)





Father Daniel Kelley dries the feet of James Shipp during the Holy Thursday Mass at St. Jude Parish in Mansfield on April 6. (NTC/Juan Guajardo)

HOLY THURSDAY

Holy Thursday is a day of firsts: the institution of the priesthood, the institution of the Holy Eucharist, the beginning of the Triduum.

According to Fr. Wallis, the Gospel reading on the Last Supper provides “an opportunity to meditate particularly upon the events of Holy Thursday — and then the move, after Mass, of the Blessed Sacrament to the altar of repose, and that time to spend with Jesus. To hear Him say to us, ‘Can you not spend one hour with me?’”

Maria “Connie” and James Shipp were among the 12 whose feet were washed on Holy Thursday at St. Jude Parish in Mansfield.

The experience made the Gospel of the Last Supper come alive for the couple. Connie imagined the Apostles at the Last Supper, feeling excited, worried, and unsure of what was to come. She thought, “Why are you washing my feet?”

James added, “You feel very humble to have a priest washing your feet. You think, ‘You shouldn’t be doing this.’”

SEE MORE PHOTOS

Chrism Mass



Holy Thursday



Death on a Cross

THE LORD IS CRUCIFIED
AND LAID IN THE TOMB



Parishioners carry a corpus of Jesus during a Good Friday procession after Stations of the Cross on April 7 at St. Peter the Apostle Church in Fort Worth. (NTC/Juan Guajardo)



Parishioners adore the holy cross during the celebration of Good Friday of the Lord's Passion April 7 at St. Matthew Church in Arlington. (NTC/Juan Guajardo)

GOOD FRIDAY

SEE MORE
PHOTOS

Good Friday



Attentive Catholics will realize there is no Mass on Good Friday. “Interestingly, there’s no blessing at the end of Thursday night, and there’s no Sign of the Cross to begin the Good Friday service,” said Fr. Wallis, noting that the Triduum is a cohesive whole. The Eucharist received on Good Friday was consecrated on Holy Thursday.

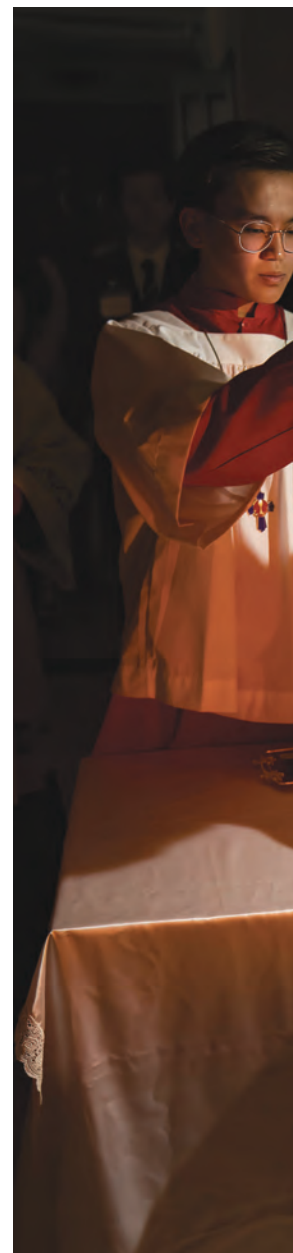
The reading of the Passion of Christ and the silent reverence of the cross give us the “experience of the absent presence of Christ, that He has gone to the tomb,” said Fr. Wallis. “It can serve as a stark reminder to us that Jesus has died, but also an experience of waiting in joyful hope for the resurrection.”

For Deacon Gustavo Garcia at St. Matthew Parish in Arlington, one phrase grabbed his attention from Good Friday’s long reading of the Passion — Jesus, on the cross, stating, “I thirst.”

The deacon said, “We hear, but we don’t reflect how much Jesus thirsts for us to follow Him. How much he thirsts for everyone to see who He was, and give up their lives to Him. I heard the words ‘I thirst,’ and it was like a bucket of water on me, cold water. It woke me up and I thought, ‘He really thirsts for my love.’”

Rejoice!

LIGHT HAS CONQUERED
THE DARKNESS



▶ Hư'ng Kim Le is baptized during the Easter Vigil on April 8 at Christ the King Parish in Fort Worth. (NTC/Juan Guajardo)



Father Lawrence Nguyen, CRM, lights the Paschal candle during the Easter Vigil on April 8 at Christ the King Parish in Fort Worth. (NTC/Juan Guajardo)

SEE MORE
PHOTOS

Easter Vigil



HOLY SATURDAY

“The most beautiful of liturgies, the Easter Vigil,” said Bishop Olson, begins with an Easter fire and blessing of the Easter candle in a darkened church, as a reminder that Christ is our light — yesterday, today, and forever.

Readings recount our salvation history, from the fall of Adam and Eve to the resurrection. “It’s a real triumph of light over darkness, virtue over sin, life over death,” said Fr. Wallis. “We’re able to put away those days of Lent and rejoice in the Lord’s resurrection.”

At the Easter Vigil at Christ the King in Fort Worth, Hoa Le joined the Catholic Church. After six months of study, he received baptism, confirmation, and Holy Communion, along with four other catechumens.

After the Mass, he felt a deep sense of gratitude for God’s forgiveness, and Le plans to ask forgiveness of those he may have hurt. “God is my example, and I will follow Him,” he said.



The Paschal candle stands prominently as Father Jason Allan celebrates Easter Mass at St. Thomas Aquinas Parish in Pilot Point. (NTC/Ben Torres)



During the Easter season, sprinkling with holy water is often part of the penitential rite of Mass. (NTC/Ben Torres)

Alleluia!

HE IS RISEN

EASTER SUNDAY

Easter Sunday, explained Fr. Wallis, is the celebration of the Lord's resurrection. "We're able to join the holy women and announce to the world that the Lord is risen. We testify, in our own lives, to the triumph of Jesus Christ."

The priest continued, "We experience it ourselves and carry it to our families, we share it with the world. That's the central event that changes everything. The world is completely transformed by His resurrection."

Preparing for the Triduum and Easter Mass at St. Thomas Aquinas Parish in Pilot Point came together fairly quickly, in about six weeks, according to Brian Boerner, chair of the liturgy committee. "Because we're a church that's been around 135 years, everybody stepped up, knew what their job was," he said.

Easter Sunday brings full pews of faithful who appreciate "the joyous music, the way the church looks," he said. "When we get to a day like today, it's feasting." 🇺🇸

SEE MORE PHOTOS

Easter Joy!



Sebastian Rodriguez, 6, collects plastic eggs during an Easter egg hunt after celebrating Easter Mass at St. Thomas Aquinas Parish. (NTC/Ben Torres)





Tic Block, a longtime parishioner and volunteer at St. Peter Church in Lindsay, stands in his outdoor kitchen. (NTC/Juan Guajardo)

Cooking with Purpose

St. Peter parishioner shares joy of Christ in cooking, giving back to community

By Jacqueline Burkepile

“Lord, if you want me to keep cooking, send me the wood, because I don’t know what to do. I cannot afford to buy it. We’re broke.”

St. Peter parishioner Glenn “Tic” Block said this prayer almost 20 years ago when he felt God’s call to cook food for community events in Lindsay.

Since he said this prayer, the Catholic husband and father of four says God

always provides the wood he needs for cooking. Block now provides food service for countless fundraisers and benefits across Cooke County and nearby parishes in the diocese.

“It makes me feel like I should keep doing it,” he said. “This is what I’m called to do.”

Block began volunteering as a cook for fundraisers after a friend was severely

injured in a car accident in the early 1990s. The community held a benefit for him, which sparked Block's interest in giving back.

"They were so generous. So, I thought, 'Whoa, we need to do something like that!'" he said.

Following this inspiration, he began his cooking journey. He first prepared meat for events, then eventually cooked full meals. Ladies in the community provided him with recipes and tips for beans, sauerkraut, and German potato salad.

Block's largest endeavor came during his career at Peterbilt Motors Company in Denton. He volunteered to cook the company picnic, seeking the challenge and learning experience of making a meal for 2,700. He began cooking at 1 a.m. and opened the serving line ten hours later. The meal was a success, but "no guy in his right mind would do it," said Block.

On the other hand, cooking for 400 has become as simple as a couple of phone calls, he quipped.

He retired in 2020 at age 54 to volunteer full time. He's converted a 1,000-square-foot work shed into his "cook hut," which he lined with the original wood flooring installed in St. Peter Church in 1903. He's also built a 1,200-square-foot "cook shack" to prepare spaghetti or casseroles, and his 16-foot smoker can cook up to 1,200 pounds of beef or pork.

One of his most meaningful fundraisers was helping a parish family

pay for cochlear implants for their deaf son. Block expected 600 people to attend and hoped to raise \$20,000 toward the surgery, which costs about \$70,000 per ear.

About 850 people from Lindsay and nearby Muenster came, creating a modern "loaves and fishes" experience. The event raised \$140,000 — seven times the expected amount — said Block, who "still gets goosebumps" thinking about it.

When the *North Texas Catholic* caught up with Block, he was prepping 330 pounds of brisket for a fire department fundraiser. Brisket is the crowd favorite, he explained, but pulled pork is the easiest.

In addition to cooking for fundraisers, he donates time to woodworking and carpentry, making wheelchair ramps for the disabled and elderly. He also welds, gardens, and helps maintain the Lindsay German Founders Park and church cemetery. He has served as the Grand Knight in the Knights of Columbus.

As a lifelong member of St. Peter Parish, he said, "If you want to know Christ, there's no better way than the Catholic Church." The sacraments, saints, and devotions all offer opportunities to draw closer to God, Block said.

Father Matthew Tatyrek, former pastor of St. Peter Parish, nominated Block for the diocesan Light of Christ Award last year for his years of Christian stewardship.

"Tic is an outstanding example of what it means to serve Christ by serving his neighbor," Fr. Tatyrek, now pastor of Immaculate Conception Parish in Denton,

said. "During my four years as pastor of St. Peter, Tic always availed himself of whatever I asked of him."

Block's wife, Sonya, who works as secretary for St. Peter Parish, said her husband's service is a "labor of love," and requires sacrifice.

"Even though he is retired, he works all the time," she said. "It is a sacrifice, but he enjoys a lot of it so much.

"He has a big heart and wants to help people," Sonya continued. "He knows he can do things. He does not let things stop him, and he is not afraid to work."

Sonya also said her four grown children are the same way due to her husband's example.

"After Knights of Columbus events, we stayed and cleaned. Our kids were like, 'Why do we always have to be the last one to leave?'" she said. "They all help and volunteer now."

St. Peter Parish business manager Beth Kelley said Block exemplifies Christ's love in the community and is known "for his hard work and dedication."

"He is one who gives of himself above and beyond," Kelley said. "He is an example of love and a very humble man."

Also known for his contagious joy while serving, Block said seeing people happy provides encouragement.

"When people are eating, people are happy. It's a benefit. Everybody wants to help," he explained. "When you do these charities, everyone is there to help. It's a collective effort for a common goal. It's easy because no one is working against you."

Block added that cooking is a way he glorifies God. He encourages others to serve their communities in any way they feel called.

He said, "Jesus came down here to serve, and we're all called to serve.

"Find what you can do. Find what can glorify the Lord. Whatever your hobby is, share it. I'm very fortunate that mine is cooking, because you can share that with everybody. Hopefully a lot of good can come from it.

"I like to think that we are stewards of the gifts that God has given us," Block continued. "We utilize them and want to share our time, talent, and treasure — whatever we can do. If everybody did that, look how easy things would be." 🇺🇸

Tic Block shows off some brisket made on his custom smoker. Now retired, Block spends much of his time cooking for the parish, community, and charities. (NTC/Juan Guajardo)





Love and faith endure

Tom McCall, a semi-retired CPA, is accustomed to working with numbers, and he and his wife, Karen, have accumulated some large numbers between them.

They have been married for 47 years, spending almost 30 of those years as parishioners at Holy Cross Church in The Colony.

Karen said, “You find in church good role models of people who have been married 50 years. I want to do that; I want to be there.”

Both educated in Catholic schools, their common faith has helped the couple’s relationship last through the years.

Pope Francis, in his apostolic exhortation *Amoris Laetitia* (*On Love in the Family*), addresses marital love that endures, writing, “If I expect too much, the other person will let me know, for he or she can neither play

God nor serve all my needs. Love coexists with imperfection. It ‘bears all things’ and can hold its peace before the limitations of the loved one” (*Amoris Laetitia*, 113).

The McCalls shared with the *North Texas Catholic* some thoughts on a lifetime of faith and marriage.

LASTING LOVE: Tom said that the keys to a lasting marriage are patience and communication. “If you have patience with each other and you communicate well, you can just about kick anything.”

Karen joked, “I disagree. I think it was blind luck.”

While they enjoy attending professional hockey games together, many of their interests diverge. Tom explained, “We’re always on the same page, but in different books. And then sometimes it’s a different library.”

NURTURE AND GROW: Like a plant, their relationship has grown and changed with time. Karen said, “Every once in a while, you hit a brick wall and then you have to recount. You get to a certain age or you get to a certain illness and all of a sudden you are looking at each other saying, ‘That’s not gonna work anymore. We have to change.’”

She added, “You have to open up your eyes to what your partner needs, more than what you need. And to know how to say things, instead of arguing or snipping.”

OPEN COMMUNICATION: Tom said, “You have to have the strength to talk about the issues. To put the issues on the table and unvarnish them. Talk in an unvarnished way, and maybe it’s going to get a little dicey, but then once you’ve had the hard talk, you can smooth it out on the edges.”

PARISH PEOPLE: Serving the parish became more important after the birth of their two children. Karen said, “I realized I have to put my money where my mouth is, to show my kids that this is what I believe.”

Tom is known at the parish as the “Building Guy,” because he helps with maintenance and led the finance campaign for a \$6.1 million expansion and renovation completed in 2019. A semi-retired CPA, he chairs the parish finance council, serves as a sacristan, and is a Knight of Columbus.

Karen sings in the choir, and in the past the couple has taught religious education and RCIA and served as sponsors for engaged couples.

She admitted that when they moved to Texas, “I was looking for a big parish where I would get lost. You can keep your head down and your mouth shut.”

Now, Tom laughed, “If there’s a need, we’re going to fill that need. That’s kind of been our gig.”

Karen explained, “You can’t be blessed and not give something back. You can’t have all those graces and not share them. It just doesn’t stop.”

GOSPEL TRUTH: Tom’s advice for new Catholics is to read the *Gospel of Matthew*, spending plenty of time with the Sermon on the Mount. Then read the *Acts of the Apostles* to see how the Apostles lived.

He said, “Take a look at how they reached up with the Holy Spirit and went out and did things that they had no idea they could do. We can all do that.”

He added, “I really feel wonderful to be part of the Church founded by Jesus Christ. Not by some preacher.”

GROWING IN FAITH: One year for Lent, a friend challenged Karen to listen only to Catholic radio. She reluctantly agreed. “Then I got hooked. For a lot of it, I knew those things in my heart, but I didn’t know how to explain it.”

Karen and Tom take advantage of an adult faith formation class at the parish along with Catholic resources in the media and online.

CATHOLIC CORE: Karen doesn’t hesitate when asked why she’s a Catholic. “The Eucharist. The community. The eternity of it. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be.”

She continued, “No matter what you see on the news, and no matter how horrible it is, I came to the realization that it’s a war won by Christ. So, I can have worry, but I don’t have to be depressed, and I don’t have to give up, because it’s already done.” 🇺🇸

SAFE ENVIRONMENT

To Report Misconduct:

If you or someone you know is a victim of sexual misconduct by anyone who serves the Church, including clergy:

- ▶ Call the Victim Assistance Hotline at 817-602-5119.
- ▶ Call the Director of Safe Environment at 817-945-9334 and leave a message.
- ▶ Call the Chancellor of the diocese at 817-945-9315.

To Report Abuse or Suspected Abuse:

If you suspect abuse of a child, elder, or vulnerable adult, or abuse has been disclosed to you:

- ▶ If someone is in immediate danger call 911.
- ▶ Call the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (CPS) at 800-252-5400.
- ▶ Immediately report the alleged abuse to your supervisor, priest, or principal and submit the Confidential Notice of Concern with CPS report information, contact information on all concerned, description of abuse, dates if known, and how you learned of the abuse.

For more information about our abuse prevention policies and programs, visit fwdioc.org/safe-environment



Let Him lead the way

NTC/Juan Guajardo

HE IS: Father Keith Hathaway, pastoral administrator of St. Rita Parish in Fort Worth. He also served as parochial vicar of St. Joseph Parish in Arlington and Sacred Heart Parish in Wichita Falls. He then left to study canon law at Catholic University of America, and he returned to the diocese last summer.

GROWING UP: In his youth, he was a lukewarm Catholic attending St. Jude Parish in Mansfield. On a scouting trip, a chilly fall into a cold mountain stream and subsequent hypothermia sparked a desire in him to plunge into his faith.

ORDAINED: May 23, 2015, at St. Patrick Cathedral.

POWERFUL PATRON: An Eagle Scout, Fr. Hathaway made a quick choice of St. George as his confirmation name because he is the patron saint of scouting, and every man is impressed by a dragon slayer. But through the years, the relationship has deepened. St. George “has always been a comfort and a help to me, especially praying for the courage to do the next right thing.”

UNIVERSAL CONGREGATION: Parishioners at St. Rita come from

diverse backgrounds, with immigrants from many nations. “These are fantastic people with a wonderful sense of community. People are very welcoming, very loving. They have a very strong sense of parish identity and traditions here.”

PARISH PRIEST: Fr. Hathaway enjoys his parish assignment, because of “the connections I make with people through the sacraments, either in the confessional, or anointing of the sick, or even burying the dead. Those are very important moments in the lives of people and their families, and it’s a grace to be a part of it.”

“It’s okay that I don’t have all the answers. When people are dying or when there’s a death, I just try and offer them the hope that our faith gives us.”

LIFE LESSONS: In his eight years as a priest, “I’ve grown a lot in compassion and patience for people, because life is very messy, and every family is different.”

CALLING YOUNG PEOPLE: A former chaplain at Notre Dame Catholic School in Wichita Falls, Fr. Hathaway encourages the altar servers and students at St. Rita to “be open to what God has in store for you. Sometimes we think we have our lives completely planned out, but a

lot of times plans don’t always come out the way we want them to. We want to let ourselves be surprised by God. Priesthood was not something I expected for myself when I was a young child.”

AND ADVICE FOR PARENTS: “You have to talk to your children about God, about prayer, about your own faith. You have to be authentic — you have to talk about your own doubts, even.”

RECHARGING: In his free time, Fr. Hathaway enjoys fishing, reading, and hanging out with his fellow priests or his two cats, George and Esther. He is improving his cooking skills and recently bought a barbecue smoker.

BEST READS: Fr. Hathaway likes to dive into the “small, overlooked books of the Bible” like Judith, Esther, Tobit, and Jonah. His favorite spiritual book is “*He Leadeth Me*” by Father Walter Ciszek, SJ, in which the priest gives an account of his 23 years in a Siberian labor camp, falsely accused of being a Vatican spy.

THE TAKEAWAY: “God is not far off or distant, but rather is intimately involved even in the little things in life. If we look for Him, we can find Him.” ✚

What is the significance of the Sign of the Cross?

In the previous installment of “Understanding the Mystery,” Father Thu Nguyen explained why and when we kneel, sit, and stand during Mass. Knowing the reasons behind our postures and gestures helps us enter into the faithful celebration of the Mass with more reverence and intentionality.

In this column, Fr. Nguyen, the diocesan director of Liturgy and Worship for the Diocese of Fort Worth, explains the meaning of some of the gestures we see in Mass, particularly the Sign of the Cross.



Fr. Thu Nguyen

WHEN CATHOLICS ENTER THE CHURCH, WE DIP OUR FINGERS IN HOLY WATER AND MAKE THE SIGN OF THE CROSS, THEN WE GENUFLECT BEFORE ENTERING A PEW. WHAT IS THE REASON FOR THIS TRADITION?

Fr. Nguyen: Why do we do that? Because we are entering the home of our Lord.

In parochial school, the religious sisters teach us that using the holy water reminds us of our own baptism, while we trace the cross over our whole body.

Before we enter the pew, we genuflect and make the Sign of the Cross again because of the sacredness of the tabernacle, where Christ is present.

Genuflecting is similar to adoring — reverencing — Who is here, and Who is my Lord.

MASS BEGINS WITH THE SIGN OF THE CROSS AND IT IS INCLUDED SEVERAL TIMES DURING MASS. WHAT IS THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THAT GESTURE?

Fr. Nguyen: The Sign of the Cross signifies the redeeming salvific act by Jesus: death on the cross for humankind. The cross reminds us in a physical way of the paschal mystery: Jesus’ passion, suffering, death, resurrection, and ascension.

WHEN ELSE DOES THE ASSEMBLY MAKE THE SIGN OF THE CROSS?

Fr. Nguyen: In addition to the beginning of Mass, the second time the assembly makes the Sign of the Cross is before the Gospel is read. We make three crosses: over the head, praying to open my mind to understand the Word of God I’m about to hear; over the lips, to open my lips so I may speak

these words of Jesus; and over the heart, to open my heart to love the Word of God. We are preparing ourselves to receive the word of Jesus.

You’ll see the presider trace the cross over the book of the Gospels.

When the gifts are presented, the presider will make the Sign of the Cross to bless them, praying that the Holy Spirit will transform the gifts into the Body and Blood of Christ. He also makes a Sign of the Cross during Eucharistic Prayer, and finally he blesses the people with a Sign of the Cross at the end of Mass.

WHAT ELSE CAN YOU TELL US ABOUT MAKING THE SIGN OF THE CROSS?

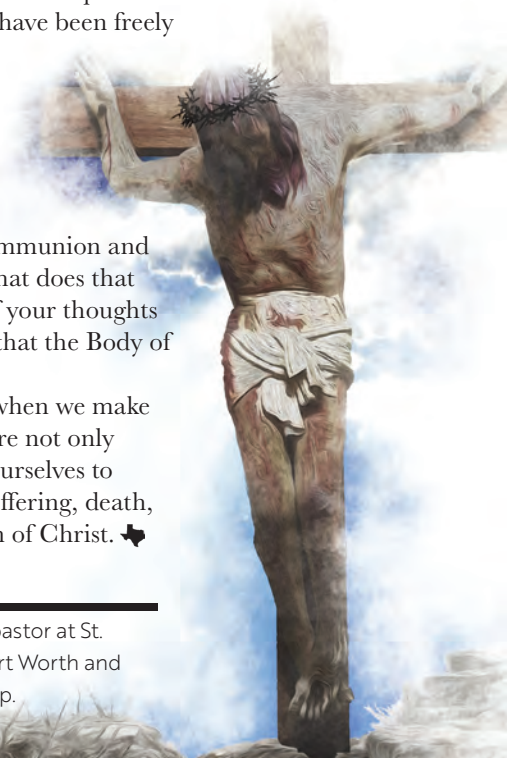
Fr. Nguyen: Many have the tradition to make the Sign of the Cross when passing a cemetery or a Catholic church. That’s a sign of reverence to those sacred places.

The assembly in Mass have been freely making the Sign of the Cross in many places. It is not magical, and the people have made it into a habit to do without understanding.

Let’s say I give you Communion and you make a silent cross. What does that mean? What is the focus of your thoughts at that point? It should be that the Body of Christ is inside of me.

We need to recognize when we make the Sign of the Cross, we are not only remembering but joining ourselves to the paschal mystery: the suffering, death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ. ✚

Father Thu Nguyen serves as pastor at St. Paul the Apostle Church in Fort Worth and Director of Liturgy and Worship.



Tend His Sheep

As we have experienced this Risen Christ, we rejoice and live with that joy day in and day out. The same Risen Christ asks us if we love Him, and as a response to that love, He invites us to feed and tend His sheep.

Growing up as a child in a small town in Mexico, besides going to school, one of my tasks was to look after my father's sheep. I named and cared for them, but sometimes I was frustrated because some of the sheep were rebellious and liked to go astray. The flock of sheep was mixed. I was a shepherd of sheep that were not mine but belonged to my father, but I loved and cared for them as mine.

The Risen Jesus asks us if we love Him and invites us to be shepherds of His flock by having the qualities of the loving Good Shepherd. A good shepherd cares for the sheep, knows them, and gives his life for them, like Jesus Christ, the Good Shepherd.

The love of Jesus is inseparable from the care of His flock. It is a love that

commissions us to be shepherds that feed, guide, listen, teach, heal, connect with, and shepherd the Lord's sheep. It is that love for Jesus Christ that calls us to be witnesses to God's flock. But above all, a

good shepherd is not selective of which sheep he chooses to tend. When Jesus told Peter to "feed my sheep," He was referring to all His sheep.

In a vocation to the priesthood, a young man responds to the Lord's question if he loves Him and is asked to be a shepherd over the sheep entrusted to him.

The young man must use the person of Jesus Christ as his model of a shepherd in his particular vocation to the ministerial priesthood.

A young man called to this vocation discerns that sheep in our community and society need to be pastored because they feel like they have lost all hope and their Christian and human dignity is taken away. There is much need for healing and hope that comes from the Good Shepherd, and even though priests are also sheep of the Good Shepherd, God calls them to heal and tend all His

sheep.

The Lord invites a young man in the ministerial priesthood to take care of all His sheep, which are not his, but the Lord's. As St. Augustine wrote, "Feed [all] my sheep as mine, not as yours; look for my glory in them, not yours; my good, not yours; my benefit, not yours." It is not a flock of his own, but the Lord trusts them to the priest who answers His call and asks him to make it his in the model of Jesus the Good Shepherd.

It is an answer that flows from the young man's love for the Lord and the individually professed love for Christ that calls the young man to be shepherd and tend God's sheep. It is time for the Christian community to embody the qualities of the Good Shepherd, the Risen Lord, and foster vocations particularly to the ministerial priesthood, a vocation to be shepherds in Christ.

Christ is Risen! He is Truly Risen! Alleluia! 🇺🇸



Fr. Pedro Martínez

Ordained to the priesthood in 2020, Father Pedro Martínez serves as Pastor at St. Peter the Apostle Parish in Fort Worth and as Vocations Liaison with the Vocations Office.



Apacienta Sus Ovejas

Al experimentar a Cristo resucitado nos regocijamos y vivimos con ese profundo gozo día tras día. El mismo Cristo resucitado nos pregunta a cada uno si lo amamos y, como respuesta a ese amor, nos invita a apacientar y amar a sus ovejas.

Crecí en un pequeño rancho de México y de niño uno de mis trabajos, además de ir a la escuela, era cuidar el rebaño de ovejas de mi padre. Las conocía y cuidaba, pero a veces me sentía frustrado porque algunas de las ovejas eran rebeldes y les gustaba extraviarse. Sin duda, en el rebaño había diferentes tipos de ovejas. Además, yo servía de pastor de unas ovejas que no eran mías, sino que pertenecían a mi padre, pero las amaba y cuidaba como si fueran mías.

Jesús resucitado nos pregunta si lo amamos y nos invita a ser pastores de su rebaño y cuidar de ellas de la manera que un Buen Pastor amoroso lo haría. Un pastor cuida de las ovejas, las conoce y da su vida por ellas como Jesucristo, el Buen Pastor. El amor de Jesús es inseparable del cuidado de su rebaño. Es un amor que nos llama a ser

pastores que alimenten, guíen, escuchen, enseñen, sanen, conecten y pastoreen las ovejas del Señor. Es ese amor por Jesucristo lo que nos llama a ser testigos del rebaño de Dios. Aún más importante es que un buen

pastor no puede elegir cuáles ovejas quiere cuidar. Cuando Jesús le dijo a Pedro “apacienta mis ovejas”, se estaba refiriendo a todas Sus ovejas.

Cuando un joven siente la vocación al sacerdocio y responde a la pregunta del Señor de si lo ama, Jesús le pide que sea pastor de las ovejas que se le han confiado. El joven

que le sigue está llamado a ver a Jesucristo como el ejemplo de pastor. Está llamado específicamente a una vocación particular en la persona de Cristo, que es el llamado al sacerdocio ministerial. Un joven llamado a esta vocación especial ve que las ovejas de nuestra comunidad y sociedad necesitan ser pastoreadas porque sienten que han perdido toda esperanza y que se les ha quitado su dignidad cristiana y humana. En este mundo hay mucha necesidad de la sanación y esperanza que viene del Buen Pastor, y aunque los sacerdotes son también ovejas del Buen Pastor, Dios los llama a

sanar y cuidar de todas Sus ovejas.

El Señor invita a un joven al sacerdocio ministerial para cuidar de todas Sus ovejas. Es decir, son las ovejas del Señor. San Agustín en sus escritos reflexiona sobre este llamado y resalta, “apacienta todas mis ovejas como mías, no como tuyas; busca mi gloria en ellos, no la tuya; mi bien, no el tuyo; mi beneficio, no el tuyo”. No es un rebaño propio, pero el Señor se lo confía al sacerdote que responde generosamente a Su llamado y le pide que las cuide siguiendo el ejemplo de Jesús el Buen Pastor. Es una respuesta que fluye del amor del joven por el Señor y es el amor que profesa a Cristo que lleva al joven a ser pastor y apacientar las ovejas de Dios. Es hora de que la comunidad cristiana cultive las virtudes del Buen Pastor, el Señor resucitado, y fomente las vocaciones consagradas, particularmente al sacerdocio ministerial, una vocación para ser verdaderos pastores en Cristo.

¡Cristo ha resucitado! ¡Él verdaderamente ha resucitado! ¡Aleluya! 🇺🇸



Fr. Pedro Martínez

El Padre Pedro Martínez sirve como párroco de San Pedro Apóstol de Fort Worth y como Enlace Vocacional de la Oficina de Vocaciones.



LLEVANDO LUZ Y ESPERANZA

Llamados a servir: Ordenación de Eric Flores y Benjamin Grothouse al diaconado de transición

Por Joan Kurkowski-Gillen

El mismo día en que los católicos de todo el mundo celebraban el “Sí” de María para convertirse en la Madre de Dios, dos seminaristas proclamaron su determinación de ser ministros consagrados de la Iglesia al profesar con firmeza, “Sí, quiero”.

Eric Homero Flores y Benjamin Hunt Grothouse fueron ordenados al diaconado de transición durante una Misa concelebrada por el Reverendísimo Obispo Michael Olson y varios sacerdotes diocesanos y clérigos visitantes el 25 de marzo, día de la Solemnidad de la Anunciación del Señor, en la Parroquia de St. Philip the Apostle. Esta celebración litúrgica marcó un paso significativo en la formación de estos jóvenes que, con la gracia de Dios, seguirán y completarán durante el próximo año sus estudios del seminario y ayudarán en las parroquias asignadas mientras se siguen preparando para su ordenación al sacerdocio.

“Éste es un paso muy importante en las jornadas de Eric y Ben; y es una respuesta a la oración continua por las vocaciones al sacerdocio”, dijo el Padre Jonathan Wallis, Vicario General y Director de Formación del Seminario. “Regresar al seminario y proseguir con sus cursos académicos les permite enfocar

sus mentes y corazones al servicio de Nuestro Señor Jesucristo y Su Iglesia”.

LLAMADOS A SERVIR Y NO A SER SERVIDOS

La palabra “diácono” se deriva de la palabra griega “diakonia” que significa “servicio”. El diácono es llamado, como Cristo, a servir a los demás y no a ser servido. Las responsabilidades esenciales del diácono en la Iglesia son proclamar el Evangelio, realizar obras de caridad y asistir en las liturgias. Los diáconos pueden bautizar, asistir a los matrimonios y bendecirlos, llevar el Viático a los moribundos y presidir los ritos exequiales.

Aún cuando se comparten funciones y responsabilidades similares a las de los diáconos permanentes, los diáconos de transición tienen la intención de seguir trabajando hacia la ordenación sacerdotal.

El Obispo Olson, pastor de los católicos del norte de Texas, trazó en su homilía paralelos entre María, la elegida de Dios para ser la madre de Su Hijo y el llamado al ministerio diaconal para servir a los pobres y marginados.

“La humildad de María, que fue llamada y escogida para ser el Arca de la Nueva Alianza, se destaca y subraya en el llamado de los diáconos a ser ministros

de la caridad de Dios”, explicó el Obispo Olson. “Es el ministerio dedicado a servir los humildes y pobres del mundo, a quienes Dios levanta, mientras derriba a los poderosos”.

Se les encomienda a los diáconos llevar la esperanza del Evangelio y la gracia de los sacramentos a los que confían sólo en Dios porque no tienen a nadie más que abogue por ellos. El Obispo citó las palabras del difunto Papa Benedicto XVI y pidió a los candidatos al diaconado de transición que, mediante la presencia de Dios en ellos, lleven la luz al mundo, que está tan lleno de tristezas y problemas.

El prelado añadió que al seguir el ejemplo de María y pronunciar “Hágase tu voluntad. Yo soy el siervo del Señor”, sus vidas no pierden nada, sino que, por el contrario, se enriquecen”.

UN MOMENTO SAGRADO Y ESENCIAL

Durante el rito sagrado y solemne del sacramento del Orden, Flores y Grothouse hicieron sus promesas de celibato, oración y obediencia antes de postrarse frente al altar en señal de humildad y súplica, mientras la congregación entonaba una de las oraciones más antiguas de uso continuo en la Iglesia Católica — la Letanía de los Santos.



El Obispo Michael Olson celebra la Misa para ordenar a Eric Flores y Benjamin Grothouse como diáconos de transición durante la Solemnidad de la Anunciación del Señor en la Parroquia de St. Philip the Apostle de Flower Mound, el sábado 25 de marzo. (NTC/Rodger Mallison)

Se celebró a continuación el momento más sagrado y esencial de la ceremonia de ordenación. El Obispo Olson impuso sus manos sobre la cabeza de cada candidato para impartir los dones del Espíritu Santo. La imposición de manos, que es poderosa y transformadora, se remonta al tiempo de los Apóstoles, que usaron el gesto para conferir el Espíritu Santo después de Pentecostés.

Ya ordenados, los nuevos diáconos recibieron los símbolos externos de su ministerio: la estola y la dalmática. Los diáconos Rigoberto Leyva y Bruce Corbett invistieron a Eric Flores, y Benjamin Grothouse recibió sus vestiduras de manos de los diáconos Pat Quinn y Joe Standridge.

Una vez que tenían las vestiduras diaconales, los hombres se arrodillaron ante el Obispo, quien les entregó a cada uno el Libro del Evangelio mientras declaraba: “Recibe el Evangelio de Cristo, de quien te has convertido en heraldo. Cree lo que lees. Enseña lo que crees y practica lo que enseñas”.

BENJAMIN GROTHOUSE

Ben Grothouse estaba “rebotando de alegría” por haber llegado a esta etapa

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El recién ordenado diácono Benjamin Grothouse distribuye la Comunión el 25 de marzo. (NTC/Rodger Mallison)

de su formación mientras saludaba a los asistentes después de la Misa de ordenación diaconal.

“Tengo la suerte de ser ordenado con mi mejor amigo y de que contara con la guía del Obispo Olson, que ha sido como un padre para mí por muchos años”, dijo entusiasmado. “Hombres consagrados como el Padre Wallis han sido una inspiración para mí. Me siento como si estuviera soñando en este momento”.

Grothouse, nativo de Arlington, fue inspirado para hacerse sacerdote por los sacerdotes que vio trabajar en la Parroquia de St. Maria Goretti. Comenzó a discernir seriamente su vocación e ingresó al Seminario St. Joseph en el 2015.

“De niño, pude observar muy claro en estos sacerdotes el gozo que hay en la vida de un sacerdote al ser un servidor de la gente y compartir el amor de Dios”, dijo Grothouse. Citó al Padre Mike Ciski, TOR, y al Padre Jim Gigliotti, TOR, como importantes modelos a seguir. “Tuvieron en mí un efecto muy profundo”.

Su año pastoral en la Parroquia de St. Philip the Apostle bajo la guía del Padre Ray McDaniel le brindó al joven de 27 años la oportunidad de ser testigo de las responsabilidades de un pastor muy ocupado y dedicado a su rebaño.

Grothouse es hijo de Tom Grothouse y La Dawn Everette. Cursa su octavo año de formación y regresará al Theological College de Catholic University of América de Washington, D.C., para obtener una licenciatura en teología sagrada y una maestría en divinidad.

ERIC FLORES

Eric Flores era un impresionante y tierno niño de ocho años que al hacer su Primera Comunión ya le parecía una buena idea convertirse algún día en sacerdote. Los sacramentos se celebraban siempre en la parroquia del tío de su madre, el Padre Florencio Rodríguez, TOR, por lo que esos recuerdos familiares jugaron un papel fundamental en la historia vocacional de este joven de 26 años.

“Recuerdo que pensaba que mi tío



El recién ordenado diácono Eric Flores distribuye la Comunión el 25 de marzo. (NTC/Juan Guajardo)

tenía el mejor trabajo del mundo”, dijo Flores. “Eso despertó en mí un interés especial por el sacerdocio”.

A medida que crecía, los parientes curiosos le preguntaban a menudo:

“¿Sigues pensando en ser sacerdote?” No obstante, el feligrés de la Parroquia de Good Shepherd, y que estuvo muy involucrado en las actividades de la escuela secundaria Nolan Catholic High School, consideró también otras carreras. Todo cambió un día al tener un momento a solas con Dios cuando era estudiante de primer año de la universidad.

Sus pensamientos de la infancia sobre una posible vocación sacerdotal se reavivaron.

“Desde ese momento desarrollé plenamente el impulso y deseo de ser un sacerdote para Dios”, dijo Flores. “Y ese impulso, que sigue siendo muy fuerte, me ha traído hasta aquí hoy”.

Asistir a la escuela de Our Lady of Victory, administrada por las Hermanas de Santa María de Namur, fomentó en él también el deseo de servir en la Iglesia.

“Sin duda, mi educación en esta escuela es gran parte de la cultura de fe con la que crecí”, agregó. “Me ayudó mucho y me animó a seguir el llamado. Deseo de todo corazón darle a las

Hermanas mil bendiciones y darle las gracias”.

Linda Kuntz, ex directora de la escuela Our Lady of Victory que enseñó a Flores cuando estaba en kindergarten, asistió a la Misa de su ordenación al diaconado.

“Es emocionante ver cómo Eric ha evolucionado y crecido en su fe”, Kuntz observó. “Se ve tan feliz y yo estoy muy feliz por él. Ésta es la primera vez que uno de mis alumnos

se prepara para el sacerdocio; por lo que ésta es una ocasión muy especial para mí”.

Flores es hijo de Homero Flores y Mary Regina Moore. Él seguirá cursando sus estudios y trabajando durante su año diaconal para obtener una maestría en divinidad de la Escuela Oblata de Teología del Seminario de la Asunción de San Antonio. ✨

VER MÁS FOTOS



Escanee el código QR para ver nuestra galería de fotos de la Misa de ordenación.



Instantáneas de la India

El Obispo Michael Olson y el Padre Thomas Jones viajaron por la India visitando los lugares y personas que forman nuestros sacerdotes misioneros

El Reverendísimo Obispo Michael Olson y el Padre Thomas Jones, el Vicario Parroquial de St. Jude de Mansfield, viajaron en febrero a la India por cuatro semanas. North Texas Catholic entrevistó a Monseñor Olson para conversar sobre su viaje.

NORTH TEXAS CATHOLIC: ¿Cuál fue el propósito de su viaje a la India?

OBISPO OLSON: Quería ir a la India por tres razones: visitar a los superiores y las casas religiosas de formación que nos han enviado veintidós sacerdotes aquí a nuestra Diócesis, las órdenes religiosas de dos provincias de la Tercera Orden Franciscana Regular; visitar los Heraldos de la Buena Nueva; y finalmente, visitar las dos provincias y una región de los Padres Palotinos.

NTC: ¿Le ayudó su viaje a comprender mejor nuestros sacerdotes misioneros procedentes de la India?

OBISPO OLSON: Algo muy bueno y provechoso fue visitar los seminarios a los que los sacerdotes misioneros asistieron y tomar una foto de las fotos de graduación que vimos colgadas en la pared y enviárselas a ellos. Al regresar los voy a visitar y pedirles que cuenten sus propias historias sobre su experiencia. Conversaremos también acerca de la experiencia que han tenido en los diferentes lugares a los que fueron asignados. Muchas de estas asignaciones misioneras fueron sin duda muy desafiantes, como, por ejemplo, fundar una escuela en un área predominantemente no católica, o en una zona que no ha sido bautizada o que no es cristiana. Sin embargo, ellos perseveran en la fe por amor a Dios y amor al prójimo. Ese mismo Espíritu los ha traído aquí a nuestra Diócesis.

Su deseo de venir aquí y de servir, y de sufrir críticas que, a veces, son intolerantes y poco caritativas; y además, su voluntad de hacer todo eso por Cristo, debería animar nuestras almas a

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estar más dedicados también a nuestro Señor.

NTC: Después de una larga visita con los superiores y las casas religiosas, ¿cómo describiría el estado de la Iglesia Católica en la India?

OBISPO OLSON: Bueno, creo que es muy fuerte. La Iglesia es muy pequeña, pero muy eficaz. Su esencia y fundamento es la evangelización principalmente a través de la educación y, de especial manera, la educación de los jóvenes. Otro importante elemento es la divulgación y el acercamiento a todos. Estos dos aspectos se entrelazan de una manera particular en la educación de las mujeres.

NTC: ¿Qué pueden aprender los fieles de nuestra diócesis de los hermanos y hermanas de la India?

OBISPO OLSON: En primer lugar, nos enseñan cómo se practica realmente la fe. Esto incluye la divulgación, la educación, el compartir la fe, y todas las cosas que, a veces, damos por sentado aquí, en medio de un gobierno hostil. El gobierno actual de la India está impulsando el nacionalismo hindú; y cualquier cosa que

proviene del occidente, particularmente, el cristianismo, debe ser rechazada o, al menos, desalentada. Por ejemplo, convertirse al catolicismo es ilegal en la India.

No obstante, el hecho es que la conversión aún sucede, pero la Iglesia se enfoca muy sabiamente en vivir su fe como un testimonio. Además, emprenden una larga jornada para la preparación y la evangelización. Muchos de los que se forman en la fe eventualmente se van a buscar buenos trabajos aquí en los Estados Unidos, así como en Sudáfrica, Australia y el Reino Unido. Muchas personas tienen una experiencia tan positiva del ministerio de la Iglesia que se sienten atraídos hacia la conversión al catolicismo.

Todos podemos aprender de esto y adquirir en nuestras vidas un sentido de paciencia sostenidos por la fe. La Iglesia en la India se remonta a la época de los apóstoles. El apóstol Tomás llevó la fe allí y tuvo el privilegio de celebrar Misa en el lugar de su martirio.

No podemos subestimar el poder del acercamiento a los pobres que se realiza con un corazón evangélico, pues esto es simplemente lo que Cristo nos ha pedido que hagamos. La Madre Teresa siempre decía: “No tienes que alimentar a todos a la vez o terminar con el hambre en todo

el mundo. Necesitas alimentar a una persona”. El Señor le pidió a la Madre Teresa que fuera fiel, no exitosa. Así que hemos de concentrarnos en ser fieles a lo que Él nos pide; creo que eso es realmente la esencia de cómo debemos vivir nuestra fe en tiempos de cambio.

NTC: ¿Cuáles fueron los puntos más destacados de su visita?

OBISPO OLSON: En primer lugar, fue maravilloso ver otra vez algunos de los sacerdotes que sirvieron aquí y que regresaron a la India. Disfruté mucho tener ese reencuentro fraternal para renovar viejas amistades.

En segundo lugar, la oportunidad de hablar, visitar y escuchar a los seminaristas que se preparan para la vida sacerdotal y, particularmente, para la vida misionera.

En tercer lugar, también fue bueno conocer algunos de los familiares de los sacerdotes que sirven actualmente en nuestra diócesis; y poderles agradecer personalmente el apoyo a sus hijos y hermanos en su vocación y su ministerio misionero.

Es muy importante para nosotros que tengamos un verdadero sentido de gratitud y aprecio por lo lejos que han venido estos buenos sacerdotes



VER MÁS DE INDIA

Vaya a NorthTexasCatholic.org o escanee los códigos QR a continuación para ver:

Galería de fotos del Obispo Olson.



Video de los viajes del obispo Olson en la India.



para ejercer su ministerio y servir como misioneros y sacerdotes. No se trata sólo de los sacerdotes de la India, sino también de todos los sacerdotes de otras partes del mundo que han venido aquí a nuestro país.

Una de las razones por las que viajé a la India fue para fomentar un mejor sentido de unidad y comunión eclesial. La Iglesia universal está mucho más unida de lo que a veces pensamos.

Tenemos que empezar por la unidad que encontramos en Cristo, la unidad de nuestro bautismo, la unidad de nuestra naturaleza humana, la unidad de las cosas fundamentales que nos hacen crecer y resplandecer.

El ver los grandes desafíos que enfrenta la Iglesia en la India fue una experiencia muy educativa para mí. No sólo los desafíos que enfrentan los obispos, sino también los retos y dificultades que la gente tiene en su vida familiar.

Si estamos enfocados en Cristo y lo que Él nos ha dado, además del regalo de la Eucaristía y todos los sacramentos que nos animan y sostienen en nuestra vida familiar, entonces tendremos un entendimiento que se basa en la gratitud que trasciende y nos ayuda a perseverar a través de situaciones muy difíciles y desafiantes.

NTC: Podemos ver en las fotos que compartió que recibió una cordial bienvenida en todas partes.

OBISPO OLSON: Sí, nos sentimos muy acogidos. Como dicen en la India, “Una calurosa bienvenida”.

Ésta es una costumbre muy arraigada en la India, que se comparte en todos los estados del país y en todos sus idiomas. Le das la bienvenida a un huésped, o a un forastero, con un velo para mostrar que Dios le rodea. Las personas de la India desean ofrecer una bienvenida cálida. Si bien es un ritual, no es simplemente superficial. Para ellos es muy importante dar esa calurosa bienvenida y que uno se sienta acogido.

NTC: ¿Lo cuál podría ser difícil?

OBISPO OLSON: En cierto sentido, todo fue nuevo para mí y, por eso, quise permanecer con una actitud de apertura hacia un país nuevo y su cultura. Lo pensé y sentí que entras en un nivel más profundo del misterio de la persona humana en un lugar nuevo como ése. Agradecí profundamente ese tipo de acogida al estar tan lejos y en donde todo es tan diferente. Sin duda, el sentir una calurosa bienvenida ayuda realmente a un visitante forastero, antes de uno

preguntarse: “¿Por qué estás aquí?” O, “¿Estás haciendo lo correcto?” Es una lección importante para nosotros con respecto a la hospitalidad cristiana, que ha sido parte de la Iglesia desde los tiempos de los apóstoles.

Ante los desafíos que enfrentamos hoy día en nuestra frontera, que son muy complicados, ya que se trata de un tema de seguridad nacional, pero al mismo tiempo, como cristianos tenemos la responsabilidad de recibir al forastero y atender sus necesidades básicas, sin importar cuánto tiempo estén aquí. Hay que acogerlos y tratarlos como otro ser humano.

Ésa es la postura que estamos tratando de adoptar como Iglesia a través de nuestro acercamiento y alcance a todos en cierto sentido: trabajar con nuestro gobierno para ver cuáles son los principales problemas de seguridad con los que podemos ayudar, pero sin olvidar simplemente que hemos de mostrar amabilidad básica hacia las personas. Jesús lo tiene muy claro cuando nos dice que “demos la bienvenida al forastero”. ➡

NOTA DEL EDITOR:

Todas las fotos son cortesía del Obispo Michael Olson. Esta entrevista fue editada para mayor brevedad y claridad.

ESCAPADA DE FIN DE SEMANA con Cristo

El retiro Jornada Familiar volvió a ser ofrecido en persona luego de una pausa debido a la pandemia

Por Gabriel Hernández

Jornada Familiar llevó a cabo su primer retiro presencial de parejas el fin de semana del 24 al 26 de marzo de 2023, luego de la pausa debido a la pandemia del COVID-19.

El retiro se celebró en el Centro de Formación Diocesana de Fort Worth y asistieron veinticuatro parejas principalmente de este área, así como de lugares distantes. Algunas parejas viajaron desde Odessa en el oeste de Texas.

Los retiros de Jornada Familiar son una práctica común y ampliamente extendida en la Iglesia Católica. Los retiros de parejas consisten principalmente (como su nombre lo dice) en “retirarse” de las ocupaciones ordinarias para dedicarse por unos días para orar, reflexionar y recibir la gracia sacramental.

Jornada Familiar comenzó en el 1976 bajo el auspicio de la Diócesis de Dallas. Desde hace muchos años sus retiros se han realizado también en la Diócesis de Fort Worth.

Desde sus orígenes hasta el día de

hoy los retiros de Jornada Familiar se han mantenido fiel a una de sus premisas fundamentales. En un entorno en el que muchos movimientos ofrecían retiros exclusivamente para hombres o para mujeres, Jornada Familiar vislumbró lo necesario y oportuno para ofrecer una experiencia espiritual para las parejas.

Otro rasgo particularmente característico de Jornada Familiar consiste en la firme convicción de que el matrimonio es sacramentalmente a los esposos como servidores el uno del otro, a ejemplo de Jesucristo.

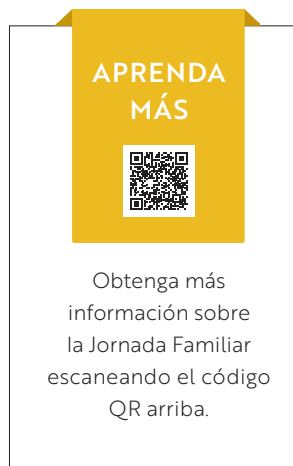
Karla y Víctor, una de las parejas asistentes al retiro, nos compartieron el testimonio de su experiencia del fin de semana de la Jornada. Mi conversación con ellos me evocó inmediatamente dos imágenes bíblicas, una de Génesis y otra de los Evangelios.

Comenzaré con la de Génesis 3,8. En este pasaje se hace alusión a lo que, según la tradición, era un encuentro que Dios solía tener habitualmente con Adán y Eva al final del día en el Jardín del Edén, “a la hora de la brisa”, como apuntan algunas versiones bíblicas.

Recordé dicha imagen porque pienso que, de la misma manera, y al igual que Adán y Eva, al final de ese viernes 24 de marzo, en medio de la brisa primaveral de abril, Dios vino al encuentro de las parejas asistentes al retiro, entre ellas la de Karla y Víctor.

“Doy gracias a Dios por llevarnos hasta ese lugar”, comentó Víctor con un tono profundo y reflexivo. Él no hablaba solamente del Centro de

Formación Diocesana, sino también de ese lugar espiritual y sagrado en el que, a través de la oración, y, sobre todo, de los sacramentos, ambos pudieron





Wilber Arzate y su esposa Yeritza Arzate se sonríen mientras trabajan en una encuesta de matrimonio juntos durante el retiro matrimonial de Jornada Familiar en el Centro de Formación Diocesana en Fort Worth, el sábado 25 de marzo. (NTC/Ben Torres)

recibir la gracia que los une y fortalece para santificarse mutuamente y evitar el pecado.

A manera de introducción de la imagen evangélica que me vino a la mente, quiero mencionar la respuesta que Karla me dio al preguntarle cuál había sido la actividad que más les había impactado. “Cuando nos lavamos los pies, comentó, y pedir perdón uno al otro”.

Quiero recalcar, por si no caímos en cuenta, que Karla afirma que ¡lo más

valioso de todo el retiro fue el momento en que esposo y esposa se lavaron mutuamente los pies! ¿Qué imagen nos viene a la mente de inmediato? Pensamos enseguida en el pasaje en que Jesús lavó los pies de sus apóstoles en el cenáculo.

El testimonio de Karla nos muestra no sólo el espíritu con el que se vive el retiro de Jornada Familiar, sino también un aspecto escandalosamente radical del concepto que, a menudo, tenemos del matrimonio. El matrimonio es un vínculo sagrado por el que servimos a

nuestro cónyuge con mucha humildad y compasión, como la que el mismo Cristo nos mostró al lavar los pies de sus apóstoles.

Escogí intencionalmente la expresión “escandalosamente radical” porque a los ojos del mundo de hoy resulta escandaloso profesar un amor así. Un amor que, lejos de buscar cómo servirse a sí mismo o beneficiarse del otro, considera como meta la mutua entrega —con la gracia de Dios— para amar y servirnos en pareja, tal y como Cristo nos amó y nos sirvió.

Reconocemos que no todas las parejas vivimos nuestros fines de semana de esta misma manera. El fin de semana del 24 al 26 de marzo, mientras unas parejas (la mayoría, diría yo) vivían su fin de semana de la manera usual, “como todos los demás”, “haciendo lo mismo de siempre”, hubo otras, veinticuatro para ser exacto, que se alejaron de todo para encontrarse con Dios. ¡Y Dios vino a encontrarse con ellos y a fortalecer con Su amorosa gracia su vínculo conyugal!

Estas veinticuatro parejas se contagiaron ese fin de semana del amor radicalmente servicial y humilde de Cristo y cada uno lo experimentó en comunión con el otro. Les pregunto, ¿cómo piensan vivir su próximo fin de semana? Después de leer este artículo, quizás sientan ganas de vivir la experiencia de Jornada Familiar.

Si están interesados, me complace decirles que habrá otros dos retiros en el 2023. Se llevarán a cabo del 8 al 10 de septiembre y del 1 al 3 de diciembre.

Para conseguir más información, no dudes en ponerte en contacto con:

Virgilio y Gaby Ulloa 817-714-0055, 817-296-7886, y Raúl y María Cerda 817-994-9064, 817-882-9304.

Es Dios quien viene a visitarlos a ustedes y su matrimonio. Y ustedes, ¿quieren salir a Su encuentro? 🇺🇸

UN AMOR NATURAL

La Planificación Familiar Natural fomenta el amor auténtico, la salud, el empoderamiento y el discipulado

Después de tener su primer bebé, Brenda Reyes de Lara, que es feligrés de la Parroquia de St. Matthew, se sentía rara; como que su cuerpo no se sentía completamente normal. “No tenía idea de lo que estaba pasando y mis hormonas estaban trastornadas”, comentó.

Como parte del proceso de obtener la validación de su matrimonio en la Iglesia, ella y su esposo tomaron una clase sobre el Método de la Ovulación Billings, un método de Planificación Familiar Natural (PFN) que utiliza el moco cervical para predecir el momento de la ovulación y, por lo tanto, indica el período más fértil del ciclo mensual de una mujer. Los patrones hormonales que ellos observaron en las gráficas presentadas le ayudaron a comprender los cambios postparto que estaban ocurriendo en su cuerpo. “Sentí que conocer este método de planificación familiar natural fue verdaderamente la respuesta de Dios a mis constantes oraciones”, añadió Brenda.

Reyes de Lara y su esposo llevan cinco años enseñando el Método de la Ovulación Billings. Reyes de Lara es la coordinadora de Planificación Familiar Natural de la Diócesis de Fort Worth. Ella alienta a todos a aprender la Planificación Familiar Natural: las parejas comprometidas y las casadas, mujeres solteras e incluso las chicas adolescentes. “Muchas parejas piensan que la Planificación Natural es sólo para las parejas casadas o cuando quieren tener

hijos”, dijo. “Sin embargo, este método va más allá... se trata de aprender más sobre tu salud y conocer mejor tu cuerpo”.

“Yo diría que es muy útil, incluso en nuestro mundo secular. He notado que las personas se alejan del control de la natalidad no necesariamente por razones religiosas, sino también por razones de salud”, agregó Chris Vaughan, Director diocesano de la oficina de Matrimonio y Vida Familiar. “Nosotros lo hacemos por Jesucristo. En la cruz, Él nos muestra lo que es el verdadero amor”.

Los instructores y expertos de la Planificación Familiar Natural se basan en investigaciones científicas y se inspiran en el amor audaz y desinteresado de Cristo al afirmar que los métodos de planificación natural empoderan a las mujeres (y a los hombres) para cuidar sus cuerpos “en la salud y la enfermedad”, y para mostrar su amor desinteresado como Cristo lo hizo en la cruz.

PUNTO DE VISTA CIENTÍFICO

La Planificación Familiar Natural o PFN, como se le conoce en los círculos seculares y los métodos basados en los estudios de la fertilidad, interpreta los signos y síntomas de los cambios hormonales en el cuerpo de una mujer para determinar los períodos fértiles e infértiles de su ciclo menstrual. Los métodos de planificación natural ayudan a la pareja a determinar en qué momento del mes ellos tienen la mejor posibilidad de que la concepción ocurra. Si se desea evitar el embarazo, una pareja puede

abstenerse de la actividad sexual durante los días fértiles de la mujer.

La Diócesis de Fort Worth ofrece instrucción acerca de cuatro métodos de Planificación Familiar Natural y todos se basan en investigaciones científicas serias.

Vaughan explicó las razones por las que la Iglesia enseña a las mujeres a trabajar con la fertilidad de sus cuerpos, en lugar de tratar de eliminarla mediante anticonceptivos químicos o cirugía. “Mutilar el cuerpo humano, y generalmente el cuerpo femenino, es perjudicial a la salud”, afirmó.

“Tener la regla no es una enfermedad”, escribieron Clara Moskowitz y Jen Schwartz en un importante artículo sobre la salud reproductiva de las mujeres publicado por *Scientific American Journal* en mayo de 2019. En la misma edición, Maya Dusenbery escribió: “Una pareja sólo puede fertilizar un óvulo hasta unos cinco días antes de la ovulación y dos días después debido a la viabilidad combinada del esperma y el óvulo en el cuerpo femenino. Por eso, el objetivo de los métodos basados en el estudio de la fertilidad, conocidos también en inglés como FABM, es predecir, y luego confirmar, cuándo ocurre la ovulación”.

De acuerdo con una revisión de los estudios científicos realizada en el 2013 por Michael Manhart, PhD, y varios colegas, “las tasas de los embarazos no deseados de las usuarias de métodos bien investigados de conocimiento de la fertilidad son comparables a las de



muchos otros métodos” de planificación familiar. Dusenbery escribió: “Cuando se siguen correctamente, algunos métodos basados en el conocimiento de la fertilidad tienen una efectividad de 95 al 99 por ciento”.

Además de actuar en contra de la doctrina de la Iglesia, usar métodos de barrera es arriesgado, advirtió Nicole Havrilla, que es feligrés de la Catedral de St. Patrick. Usarlos durante el período fértil puede resultar en un embarazo no deseado, ya que en ese momento la pareja confía en la eficacia del método de barrera en lugar de la eficacia de la planificación natural. “Te falló el condón; la Planificación Familiar Natural no te falló”, aseveró. Si se quiere lograr una precisión óptima, los usuarios de la Planificación Familiar Natural deben abstenerse de tener relaciones sexuales durante los días fértiles de la mujer.

“Dios nos dio señales externas de

nuestra fertilidad”, agregó Havrilla. Al registrar algunos signos y síntomas cada día, las mujeres pueden conocer sus patrones de fertilidad y ser más proactivas

en su atención médica y sus hábitos reproductivos. Nicole Havrilla es la fundadora y presidenta de la clínica WholeLife Authentic Care de Fort Worth, cuyos médicos y profesionales utilizan el modelo Creighton FertilityCare System para ayudar a las mujeres a dar seguimiento a su ciclo menstrual e identificar la ovulación y su período fértil, ya sea que estén tratando de lograr un embarazo, evitar quedar embarazada o para mejorar su salud.

EMPODERAMIENTO DE LAS MUJERES

Las mujeres que practican la Planificación Familiar Natural registran a diario signos relacionados con su salud.

Según Stephanie Gavin, una practicante certificada de FertilityCare que asiste a la Parroquia de Holy Family y la Parroquia de St. Andrew, las tablas y gráficas de una mujer “identifican señales de alerta que podrían indicar la necesidad de la atención de un médico”, apuntó. Gavin y sus compañeros practicantes de WholeLife Authentic Care utilizan los datos gráficos de Creighton de sus pacientes para desarrollar planes de tratamiento personalizados.

Debido a la falta de comprensión de la variación normal de los ciclos de una mujer, Weschler señaló que muchas parejas “podrían creer que son infértiles cuando en realidad no lo son”. Muchas mujeres se someten a planes de diagnóstico y tratamiento costosos, invasivos e innecesarios cuando un cuadro de fertilidad les hubiera podido proporcionar suficiente información.

Para las mujeres cuyos datos gráficos indican la necesidad de atención médica, el registro activo puede ayudar a prevenir complicaciones de salud graves, la

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APRENDA MÁS



Obtenga más información sobre Planificación Familiar Natural escaneando el código QR arriba.

DE LA PÁGINA 61

infertilidad e incluso algunos abortos espontáneos. "Trazar su ciclo mensual puede ayudar a que la mujer se sienta en un mejor estado de ánimo y proporcionar la mejor información posible", dijo Havrilla. Incluso cuando una mujer no puede lograr sus objetivos de fertilidad, agregó, la elaboración de las tablas y los datos gráficos puede brindarles a las mujeres y a las parejas "una sensación de paz, pues se sienten que hicieron todo lo que pudieron... y que están llamados a algo diferente". Comentó además que practicar la Planificación Familiar Natural y buscar atención médica personalizada basada en los datos gráficos puede ayudar a una mujer a "mantener una mejor salud".

AMAR COMO CRISTO NOS AMA

Los sermones del Papa San Juan Pablo II sobre la Teología del Cuerpo advierten a los hombres y las mujeres que no "reduzcan todas las riquezas de su femineidad a un solo valor: el sexo. La lujuria oscurece el significado del cuerpo y el valor de la persona".

"El Papa San Pablo VI en *Humanae Vitae* nos dice que el amor es libre, total, fiel y fructífero", dijo Vaughan. "Es un regalo gratuito, como el amor de Jesús es gratuito". Según Vaughan, el uso de la Planificación Familiar Natural lleva a aceptar incondicionalmente todos los aspectos del cuerpo de su pareja, incluida la fertilidad. Vaughan hizo referencia a una cita bíblica que describe la noche de bodas de Tobías y Sara en el Libro de Tobías: "Ahora estoy tomando a esta pariente mía, no para satisfacer una pasión desordenada, sino para constituir un verdadero matrimonio". Ése es el tipo de amor al que aspira la Planificación Familiar Natural.

Abstenerse de tener relaciones íntimas durante el período fértil de la mujer para evitar el embarazo es un acto mutuo que conlleva el autosacrificio de la pareja. "Ciertamente es bueno... pero hay veces que no te gusta", dijo Vaughan.

El período fértil de la mujer en algunas parejas es breve. Para otras, los tiempos de abstinencia pueden ser mucho más largos. "Esta práctica ayuda a las parejas cuando deben pasar por períodos más prolongados de abstinencia debido a problemas de salud crónicos o si en algún momento experimentan una forma de ciclo irregular, disfunción o dolor", señaló Amy Rustand, feligresa de la Parroquia de St. Elizabeth Ann Seton. Rustand y su esposo han estado enseñando la Planificación Familiar Natural durante quince años. "El método de Planificación Familiar Natural normaliza la abstinencia, elimina el estigma de la idea y ayuda a las parejas a reconocer las gracias que pueden recibir al renunciar juntos a un bien como la intimidad sexual y la reproducción".

"Cuando pronuncias tus votos, los estás aceptando en la salud y en la enfermedad", dijo Reyes de Lara. "A veces puede resultar difícil, pero se convierte en ofrenda al unirlo al sufrimiento de Cristo en la cruz".

"El matrimonio no debe reducirse solamente al acto sexual conyugal", dijo Vaughan. "Tenemos que fomentar otras formas de darnos el uno al otro. De eso se trata la Planificación Familiar Natural".

Havrilla, quien ha experimentado muchos períodos prolongados de abstinencia por razones de salud, alienta a las parejas a "volver a los días de cortejo y enamoramiento". Cuando una pareja practica la Planificación Familiar Natural, "se adquiere un nivel de empatía mutua muy profundo", dijo Havrilla.

El aprendizaje de la Planificación Familiar Natural fomenta también el amor a sí misma y la apreciación de la forma que Dios creó a la mujer. La Planificación Familiar Natural le enseñó a Havrilla a "apreciar lo que ocurre en mi cuerpo".

Después de conocer a fondo la Planificación Familiar Natural, Reyes de Lara comenta que "se sintió hipnotizada por el divino don de ser mujer". ✝

AMBIENTE SEGURO

Para Reportar Mala Conducta Sexual:

Si usted o alguien que usted conoce es víctima de abuso sexual por parte de cualquiera que sirve a la Iglesia, puede:

- ▶ Llamar a la Línea Directa de Asistencia a Víctimas: (817) 602-5119.
- ▶ Llamar el Director Diocesano de Ambiente Seguro: (817) 945-9334 y dejar un mensaje.
- ▶ Llamar al Canciller de la Diócesis: (817) 945-9315.

Para Reportar Abuso o si Sospecha de Abuso:

Si usted sospecha de abuso de un niño, anciano, o adulto vulnerable, o si abuso ha sido revelado a usted,

- ▶ Si alguien está en peligro inmediato, llame al 911
- ▶ Llame al Departamento de Servicios para la Familia y de Protección (DFPS) de Texas al (800) 252-5400.
- ▶ Reporte inmediatamente el presunto abuso a su supervisor, sacerdote o director, y presente el Aviso Confidencial de Preocupación con la información requerida por DFPS.

Para más información sobre nuestros programas de prevención de abuso, visite fwdioc.org/safe-environment



La Historia de la Pascua



Los feligreses se preparan para llevar los Santos Óleos durante la Misa del Jueves Santo en la Parroquia de St. Jude en Mansfield el 6 de abril de 2023. (NTC/Juan Guajardo)

A veces una imagen vale más que mil palabras, pero en ocasiones, vale mucho más.

Para contar la historia de la Pascua, el día que cambió todo para siempre, comenzaremos con las fotos ilustradas en estas páginas. El Padre Jonathan Wallis, el Vicario General de la Diócesis de Fort Worth, nos habla sobre el significado de cada Misa, y uno de los asistentes a la celebración pascual comparte su experiencia personal.

La historia de la Pascua es tan vasta e importante que el Tiempo litúrgico de la Pascua dura cincuenta días. La historia de la Pascua se ha proclamado durante más de dos mil años. Seguimos contando la historia de la Pascua con palabras, con imágenes y con nuestras vidas. 🇺🇸

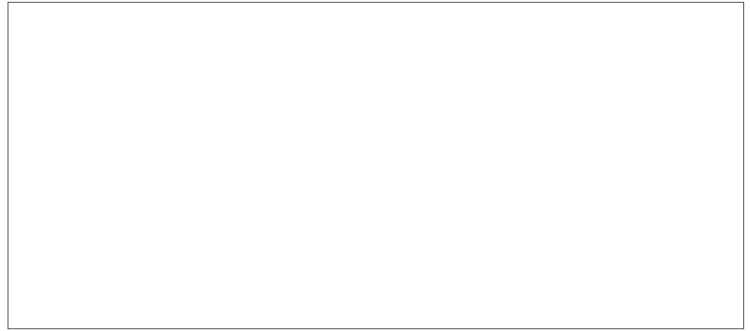
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FOTOS



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Los feligreses llevan la imagen de Cristo crucificado durante una procesión del Santo Entierro de Viernes Santo el 7 de abril en la Parroquia de St. Peter Apostle. (NTC/Juan Guajardo)



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