



NEWSMAGAZINE North Texas Catholic

Bringing the Good News to the Diocese of Fort Worth Vol. 31 No. 1 January / February 2015

*Indian priests
serve faithfully
throughout
our diocese*



2015 is the Year of Consecrated Life, Clergy, and Vocations in the Diocese of Fort Worth, and its observance has already begun. Together we can learn more about those who serve the Church, her people, and the poor through consecrated or ordained life.

In This Issue...

STORIES TOO GOOD TO MISS: OTHERWISE KNOWN AS BRIEFS

THRIVE, World Youth Day Six Flags, six-month old Santiago Quezada from Denton receiving a kiss from Pope Francis, and more you can read in full at northtexascatholic.org.

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MATT MAHER SHARES WHAT IT'S LIKE TO BE CATHOLIC IN CHRISTIAN CONTEMPORARY MUSIC

Matt Maher's Mass settings are sung at parishes around the diocese, but he may be best known for his plaintive singing of his song "Lord, I Need You" at World Youth Day in Rio de Janeiro in 2013.

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CATHOLICS CELEBRATE EVENTS SURROUNDING JESUS' BIRTH ALL THE WAY TO THE 'PRESENTATION'

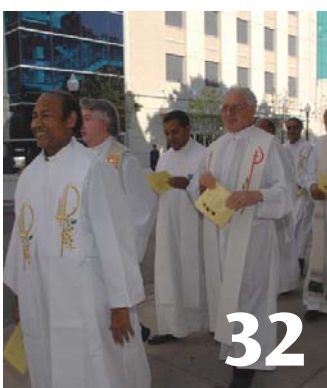
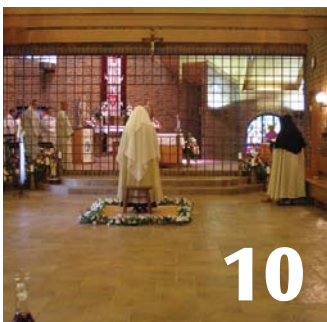
While the secular world and many Christians kick the tree to the curb after the presents are opened, Catholics continue to celebrate the world-changing event through Jesus' Presentation in the Temple Feb. 2

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NOTICIAS EN ESPAÑOL EN ESTA EDICIÓN

En esta edición del NORTH TEXAS CATHOLIC el Padre Carmen Mele habla acerca del contraste entre el punto de vista, de la Iglesia y el de la sociedad, sobre el matrimonio; Joan Kurkowski-Gillen nos bosqueja el apoyo de Caridades Católicas para los que buscan cómo responder a la orden ejecutiva del Presidente Obama, que ofrece una limitada extensión de residencia a algunos inmigrantes; el Arzobispo J. Michael Miller dice en la UDMC, que LA ALEGRÍA DEL EVANGELIO nos reta a vivir la opción misionera.

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4 OLG CHURCH'S OLG PROCESSION

Hundreds of Our Lady of Guadalupe parishioners gathered to celebrate the feast of the parish's namesake and Patroness, Our Lady of Guadalupe. Matachines led the procession down the streets of the North Side of Fort Worth, gloriously re-creating the story of Mary's appearance to St. Juan Diego.

10 YEAR OF CONSECRATED LIFE, CLERGY, AND VOCATIONS

Pope Francis has invited the whole Church to celebrate the lives of selfless service of priests, nuns, and brothers living consecrated lives, and the USCCB and the diocese have added Clergy and Vocations to the celebration.

12 DEDICATION OF ST. MARK CHURCH

Around 1,200 parishioners gathered for Bishop Michael Olson to celebrate the Rite of Blessing and Dedication of the new St. Mark Parish church and altar Dec. 7, inside the Spanish mission-style building sitting on nearly 27 acres of land, in southwest Denton.

30 UDMC OFFERS THOUSANDS OF LOCAL CATHOLICS INSPIRATION

More than 5,000 took part in the Eighth Annual University of Dallas Ministry Conference at the Irving Convention Center Oct. 23-25, learning new information to improve their service of the Body of Christ and to help them grow as followers of Jesus.

32 INDIAN PRIESTS OFFER THE LOCAL CHURCH CONSECRATED SERVICE

With 13 priests from India, representing three religious orders: the Franciscans, Third Order Regular; the Pallottines; and the Heralds of the Good News, the Church brought to India by the Apostle Thomas in the first century, is making a huge contribution to the spiritual health of the Diocese of Fort Worth.

North Texas Catholic



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To access current news and information, find us at www.northtexasatholic.org

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Tony Gutiérrez to depart for Phoenix, leaves a legacy here

It's hard to express how much of a difference one person makes in the running of an enterprise like the *North Texas Catholic*, how much they contribute to the excellence of the publication, to its service to the Church.

Tony Gutiérrez is an excellent Catholic journalist, one whose contributions to the field have been recognized at the national level of the Catholic Press Association with numerous first place awards in the annual CPA Journalism Awards. Only six years into his experience as a diocesan staff member, his contributions to the Education Committee of the CPA have helped create a course in conjunction with the folks at Loyola University to teach the most basic of the basics of Church structure and theology to new publication staff members online.

With Tony as my Associate Editor for the past six plus years, I can say with a certainty no one else can, that he has made great contributions to the accuracy and fidelity of the *North Texas Catholic*, both when we were a newspaper and through the changes that led us to becoming a magazine printed on coated stock.

Tony's love for the Church, its servants, its traditions, its theology, and its people have fueled efforts to prepare the publication for the printers that have stretched through the night, into mid-morning and beyond on too many days to count.

He has stepped into the editor's role on the occasions of my surgeries (far too many of them) and completed the process of layout and copyediting the publication, ending up doing a disproportionate share of the publication's pages. On at least one occasion, he took the magazine from conception of the content, all the way through to production, with the help of our freelance community.

I told his new supervisor-to-be, Diocese of Phoenix Communications Director Rob DeFrancesco, he's not getting someone as editor who has never acted as editor.

But probably the most important thing about Tony as a Catholic journalist is that he has given his heart to God and his Church in deeds, not just in words. He has dedicated himself to his marriage and to fatherhood, he has given tremendously in service to the Knights of Columbus, particularly in developing their college campus councils across the State of Texas, and now he has been active in development of the new St. John Paul II University Church, serving the University of North Texas and Texas Woman's University communities in Denton.

Tony's moving on is a great gift to Phoenix and a loss to us. We'll miss you, Tony. And the publication will miss your contributions.

Jeff Hensley

Fort Worth's Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish honors their patroness on her feast day



More than 800 parishioners process down a street on Dec. 12, near Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish in Fort Worth. The parish celebrated the feast day of Our Lady with a procession down the neighboring streets, hymns, Rosaries, bringing flowers to Our Lady, and with Mass.



Jaylen Ramirez (left) and Angela Nieto (right) lead the procession on Dec. 12.



A charro waits to accompany the procession down the streets of North Fort Worth near the parish.

Omar Alonso plays the drums for the matachines during the procession on the Feast Day of Our Lady of Guadalupe, Dec. 12.



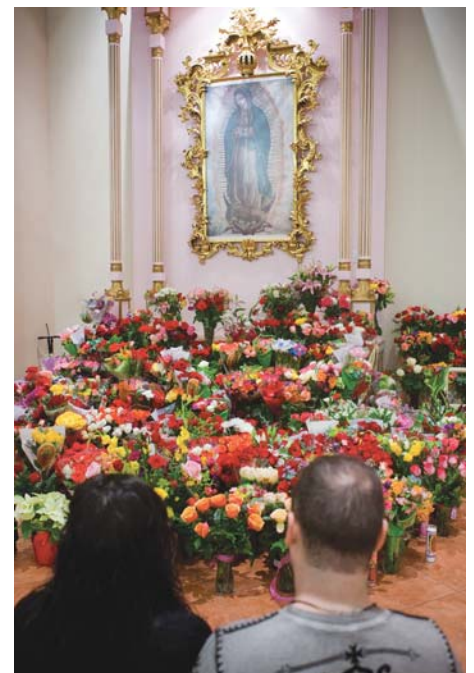
A young matachin dances down the street during the procession Dec. 12, at Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish.

**NTC Photos by
Juan Guajardo**

Parishioners pray to Our Lady on Dec. 12 at OLG Parish in Fort Worth.



A young boy is dressed as St. Juan Diego during Mass Dec.12 at Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish.



Sacramental marriage brings grace to share God's love, pope says

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — With the strength of the grace that comes from the sacrament of marriage, Catholic families are called to proclaim God's love to the world, Pope Francis said.

God's love gives birth to the family, and that love must be "the center of all its human and spiritual dynamism," the pope wrote in a letter Dec. 9 to Archbishop Vincenzo Paglia, president of the Pontifical Council for the Family, which will sponsor the Sept. 22-27 World Meeting of Families in Philadelphia next year.

Repeating his promise to attend the gathering in Philadelphia, Pope Francis thanked the Archdiocese of Philadelphia for generously committing itself to organize and host the event as a "service to the universal church and to families on every continent."

The October extraordinary Synod of Bishops on the family, and the general assembly of bishops scheduled to meet in 2015, are attempting to identify the most urgent needs of families today and to devise pastoral responses to them, he said.

However, the pope wrote, "the values and virtues of the family, its essential truths, are points of strength on which to build the nuclear family and are not up for discussion."

The Vatican released the text of the pope's letter Dec. 10, shortly after he spoke about the synod at his weekly gen-



Archbishop Charles J. Chaput of Philadelphia speaks during a press conference with a delegation from Pennsylvania at the Vatican March 25. Pennsylvania leaders were meeting with Vatican officials to plan the Sept. 22-27, 2015, World Meeting of Families in Philadelphia. (CNS photo/Paul Haring)

eral audience. He told people gathered in St. Peter's Square that no one at the extraordinary synod "called into question the fundamental truths about the sacrament of marriage: its indissolubility, unity, fidelity, and openness to life."

Preparing for the World Meeting of Families in September and for the general Synod of Bishops on the family a few weeks later, he said, the Church is seeking ways "to proclaim the Gospel of marriage and the family" in a way that responds to "the social and cultural contexts in which we live."

Catholic couples, priests and parish communities must "let themselves be guided by the word of God, which is the foundation for the holy construction of the family as a domestic church and of the family of God."

CRS, nonprofits beat back clause in bill that could have cut food aid

WASHINGTON (CNS) — Catholic Relief Services and a host of other nonprofit agencies that distribute food aid overseas were successful in getting lawmakers to purge a provision in a bill that could have cut the amount of food aid they would be able to distribute in the future.

The provision would have increased from 50 percent to 75 percent the amount of food aid that must be transported on privately owned, U.S.-flagged ships. In 2012, Congress had lowered the requirement from 75 percent to 50 percent.

When the NTC went to press Dec. 19, the House, which passed a version of the legislation in April increasing the percentage to 75 percent, was expected to reconsider the bill before the lame-duck congressional session ended prior to the Christmas break.

The issue is important to CRS, the U.S. church's international relief and development agency, and others, because shipping goods on U.S. ships cost about 2.7 times as much as shipping them on foreign-flagged vessels, according to the U.S. Department of Transportation.

CRS and other aid groups have contracts with the federal government for fixed dollar figures on sending food aid to countries in need, said Eric Garduno, CRS' senior legislative specialist in Washington.

From that contract, all expenses



A displaced Somali woman holds her malnourished child in a makeshift camp outside Somalia's capital, Mogadishu, July 20. (CNS photo/Feisel Omar, Reuters)

must be paid, including the cost of shipping the food, Garduno said.

In a joint statement, more than 30 nonprofits banded together to argue against raising the U.S.-flag requirement.

"In April, the Department of Homeland Security warned that increasing cargo preference from 50 percent to 75 percent, as proposed under Sec. 318 (of the House bill), would increase transportation costs for U.S. international food aid programs by \$75 million annually, and result in at least 2 million vulnerable people losing access to life-saving food aid from the United States," the statement said.

Time to tackle global warming is running out, pope tells climate summit

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Tackling the problem of climate change is a serious ethical and moral responsibility, Pope Francis told negotiators from around the world meeting for a climate summit in Lima, Peru.

"The time to find global solutions is running out. We can find adequate solutions only if we act together and unanimously," he said in a written message to Manuel Pulgar-Vidal, Peru's minister of

the environment and host president of the 20th U.N. Climate Change Conference.

Thousands of negotiators from 195 countries gathered for the meeting in Lima Dec. 1-12 to hammer out details of a new international agreement to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases that cause global warming.

The Vatican released a copy of the pope's message Dec. 11.

The pope encouraged the leaders in

their discussions because their decisions will "affect all of humanity, especially the poorest and future generations. What's more, it represents a serious ethical and moral responsibility."

The impact climate change already has been having on coastal regions and other areas "reminds us of the seriousness of negligence and inaction," he said. It is morally imperative that people act.

"An effective fight against global

warming will be possible only with a collective and responsible answer" that overcomes one-sided or special interests and is "free from political and economic influence," he said.

The pope said the leaders' response will have to "overcome distrust; promote a culture of solidarity, encounter, and dialogue; and be capable of showing responsibility for protecting the planet and the human family."



Photo courtesy of Gloria Mendoza
Pope Francis kisses six-month-old Immaculate Conception parishioner Santiago Quezada in St. Peter's Square.

Pope blesses ICC six-month-old

By Jacqueline Burkepile
Correspondent

ROME — On the morning of June 11 in Rome, Gloria Mendoza and her husband Agustín Quezada, parishioners at Immaculate Conception Church in Denton, were surprised when Pope Francis picked their six-month-old baby, Santiago, out of a crowd and blessed him during the Wednesday papal audience in St. Peter's Square.

The couple was in Florence this summer for a family wedding and decided to travel to Rome with several members of Gloria's family. While Agustín held Santiago, Gloria had her video camera ready to record Pope Francis when he made his appearance. As the Holy Father passed by their family, he pointed at Santiago, tapped his driver on the shoulder, and told him to stop.

"As I turned the camera, I saw that they took Santiago from Agustín's arms to take him to Pope Francis," Gloria told the *North Texas Catholic*. "He kissed Santiago and gave him back, and the Holy Father rode away with blessings."

The couple then embraced Santiago saying, "You have no idea what just happened to you." Agustín and Gloria said the reality "sunk in" when those around them at the papal audience began kissing and touching Santiago.

Family friend Isabella Pina-Hinojosa said she was in a state of awe when she first heard of Santiago's papal blessing.

"This child will forever know that the Holy Father gave him a special kiss and a blessing," she said.

THRIVE draws 400 young adults

By Juan Guajardo
Correspondent

COPPELL — More than 400 young adults from the Dioceses of Fort Worth and Dallas converged upon St. Ann Church in Coppell Nov. 14-15 to participate in the second annual THRIVE Conference.

Keynote speakers included Matt Fradd of Chastity Project for men, and St. Ann high school youth minister Naomi Lehw for women.

Now married for three years, Lehw recalled how she "was single a longer time than a lot of other people," but grew closer to God, even through the challenges of single life.

"In the end, I just had to be like, 'Look, if I am single right now it's because God is allowing it,'" Lehw said. "I still needed to do what I could to prepare for a husband. I needed to grow in holiness. I needed to take care of my health. But if I was doing all that I could, then the rest was in the Lord's hands."

Fradd, a well-known Catholic blogger and speaker, referred to stories of saints and other great Christian men in his talk, "The Man Talk."

"I think one of the things that prevent men from becoming who we want to be and who God invites us to be are the lies that we believe ... so much that they no longer appear to us to be lies," Fradd said. "Instead it's our reality, and it can be lies about ourselves, like 'I don't have what it takes to be a good husband, to be a good father, to be a good lover, and I could never overcome this particular thing in my life.'"

Started last year by the Diocese of Dallas, coordinators joined forces with Fort Worth diocesan Young Adult Ministry Director Jeff Hedglen and other young adult ministers. The conference was designed to allow participants to congregate with other young people, attend workshops specific to challenges in their lives, and discuss matters of faith with their peers during the small group discussions.

DIOCESAN, LOCAL & STATE NEWSBRIEFS

Schoenstatt members in North Texas celebrate global group's centennial



As part of the ceremony commemorating Schoenstatt's centennial, members place a rose before a shrine of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

By Crystal Brown
Correspondent

KELLER — Local members of Schoenstatt, a Marian Movement founded in Germany a century ago, gathered Oct. 18 at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish to celebrate the movement's 100th anniversary. Following a Saturday evening Mass they processed with a portable shrine, known as a Mother Thrice Admirable shrine, from the church to where the ceremony was held.

The ceremony began with the presentation of roses that each participant placed in vases on a table before the shrine, and included several prayers and songs reminding the members of their covenant.

According to the Schoenstatt website, "The Covenant of Love with Mary is Schoenstatt's original form for living the baptismal covenant. It expresses

and safeguards our covenant with the Blessed Trinity. Understood in this way, it is 'the source of vitality and the center of Schoenstatt's spirituality,' the heart of Schoenstatt."

Those who pledge their devotion to Mary through the Schoenstatt movement become part of one family where each person is a child of Mary and a brother and sister to one another. According to members, these relationships should result in a stronger devotion to Mary and to Christ.

Patti Bowlin, the district leader for the Schoenstatt mothers' branch in Dallas, said the focus of the mother's group is to provide spiritual direction on how to be a better mother and how to be more like the Blessed Mother.

"I think it makes you a better mother to your family, to your children," Bowlin said, "and it makes your heart just love them so much more."

Silver & Golden Anniversary Mass

On Sunday, March 1, 2015 at 2 p.m. the Office of Marriage and Family Life will host the **Silver and Golden Anniversary Mass Celebration** for all couples who are celebrating their 25th and 50th wedding anniversary. Also, all couples who have been married longer than 50 years are welcome.

The celebration will take place at St. Patrick Cathedral, 1206 Throckmorton St., Fort Worth. Bishop Michael Olson will preside at this special Mass which will include an opportunity for you to renew your marriage vows and receive an anniversary blessing. A light reception with cake and punch will follow immediately afterward in the parish's Family Life Center.

Please RSVP by January 22 to **Irma Jimenez** at 817-560-3300 ext. 360 or jjimenez@fwdioc.org. Please provide us with the couple's first and last names, years of marriage, total number of guests and contact information.

St. John the Apostle Parish celebrates 50th anniversary

By Jerry Circelli
Correspondent

NORTH RICHLAND HILLS—On Oct. 18, it was standing-room-only at St. John the Apostle, when more than 800 faithful gathered to celebrate the parish's 50th anniversary.

During his remarks at the end of the anniversary Mass, diocesan Vicar General Very Rev. Karl Schilken recalled serving as pastor of St. John from 2007 to 2012.

He recalled seeing a "significant dip" in the floor of the main aisle of the church from his seat in the sanctuary.

It was a good problem to have for a church, he continued.

"This is a parish where thousands upon thousands of people have come to hear the Word of God, and they have been nourished by the Body and

the Blood of Christ," Fr. Schilken said. "Thousands and thousands of people have walked down the aisle to encounter Christ, and their lives have been forever changed.

"When you think about what has gone on in the past 50 years of this parish and really the past 48 years in the church, it is significant to think that enough people have walked down a stone floor to actually begin to wear it out."

In his homily, current pastor Father Hoa Nguyen said parishioners were gathered that day not to feel joyous about themselves, but to be nourished and to continue to proclaim the Gospel.

"We must reaffirm our commitment to this parish," he said, "so that the faith we have received will pass forward and that St. John the Apostle Catholic Church will continue to be the Mystical Body of Christ right here in North Richland Hills."

Bishop recognizes four Scouters for contributions to Catholic Scouting



Photo courtesy of Ernest Doclar

Bishop Michael Olson presented four awards to Scouters involved in Catholic Scouting at a dinner hosted by the Diocesan Catholic Committee on Scouting at Good Shepherd Parish Hall in Colleyville Dec. 5. Jim DeNova and Hector Gutierrez, both of St. Joseph Parish in Arlington, received the Bronze Pelican Medal, the highest adult award that may be bestowed by the diocese on Scouters. The bishop also placed the St. George Emblem ribbon, bearing a bronze image of St. George, patron saint of Scouting, around the necks of Margaret Canizares from St. Mark Parish in Denton, and Susan Schabel from St. Philip the Apostle Parish in Lewisville. The St. George Emblem is the highest honor that may be given by the National Catholic Committee on Scouting.

WYD attendees challenged to place Christ at the center

By Joan Kurkowski-Gillen
Correspondent

ARLINGTON—Mike Patin was the keynote speaker the local World Youth Day Oct. 19 at Six Flags Over Texas. More than 6,000 attended the annual event co-sponsored by the Dioceses of Fort Worth, Dallas, and Tyler.

"Acceptance, love, peace, and success — all those things we want — come down to how we handle the roller coaster of life," he said. "To get what you really need, include God. And put God in the center."

Patin cautioned his audience not to settle for quick substitutes when looking for affection or relationships. Filling your life with "stuff" doesn't lead to happiness. Keeping God in your life does.

"He wants you to be poor in spirit and make room for Him," he said, referencing the event's theme: Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of heaven (*Matthew 5:3*). "He



Photo by Joan Kurkowski-Gillen / NTC
Mike Patin facilitates group interaction at the WYD Celebration Oct. 19.

doesn't just want to be the God of your religious life. He wants to be the God of your messed up, freaky life."

After spending the day in the theme park, youth groups reconnected inside the Music Mill Amphitheatre for a late afternoon Mass celebrated by Fort Worth Bishop Michael Olson.

"Oftentimes, the world says we should use people like objects," Bishop Olson said. "The choices we make in answering God's call and following his will shape us and form our image. How we polish and hone that image by our faith and love is what we give back to God."

DIOCESAN JOB OPENINGS

SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

The Diocese of Fort Worth, Texas (www.fwdioc.org), a growing Catholic diocese, is seeking a visionary, faith-filled leader to serve as Superintendent of Schools. This position reports to Bishop Michael F. Olson and requires a strategic thinker to share and fulfill his vision for growing and opening schools.

The successful candidate will display intellect, curiosity, creativity and a passion for the evangelization and education of young people. He/she will be proactive, relationship oriented, supportive of the Church's teaching and able to work collaboratively with pastors, school presidents and principals, the Advisory Council and the Diocesan staff, overseeing 18 urban and suburban schools with 6,000 students. Applicants should possess an understanding of contemporary communication tools and strategies to facilitate collaboration and marketing.

The Superintendent will develop and implement a strategic plan ensuring the faith formation and academic accomplishment of students while addressing challenges in enrollment,

accessibility, affordability and funding. The ideal candidate will have experience in a growth-oriented Diocese with various models of educational leadership in multi-cultural schools.

An applicant must be a practicing Catholic who embraces the teachings of the Catholic Church, and possess a master's degree in educational leadership or related field and 7-10 years in Catholic school leadership. A doctoral degree is strongly preferred, as is teaching background and experience at the Diocesan level. Salary is competitive and commensurate with experience. Position is available on or before July 1, 2015.

Qualified applicants should submit electronically a letter of introduction; resume; statement addressing *Reimagining Catholic Schools to Strengthen Mission and Evangelization*; and names, addresses, telephone numbers, and email addresses of five professional references to: Superintendent, Diocese of Fort Worth, Catholic School Management, Attn: Jennifer C. Kensel, at office@catholicsschoolmgmt.com. Review of applications will begin immediately.

Fr. Jim Miller (1931-2014) established St. Joseph in Arlington, St. Michael in Bedford

By Nicki Prevou
Correspondent

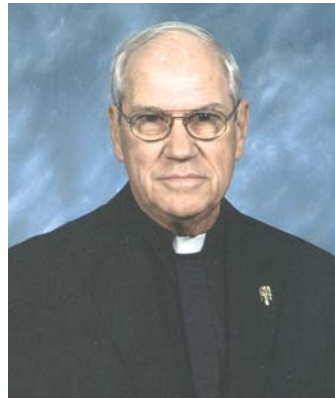
Father James “Jim” Remi Miller, a retired priest of the Diocese of Fort Worth and founding pastor of St. Michael Church in Bedford and of St. Joseph Parish in Arlington, passed away during the week of Dec. 7 at his home in St. Francis Village in Crowley. Visitation and a vigil service were held Dec. 14 at St. Joseph Church in Arlington, with Vicar General Very Rev. Karl Schilken presiding. Bishop Michael Olson presided at the Mass of Christian Burial, celebrated at St. Joseph Dec. 15. Interment was at the National Cemetery in Dallas.

An avid hunter and fisherman, Fr. Miller was also an intrepid traveler, and enjoyed visiting fam-

ily members and friends across the country. Known for his engaging homilies, he used a plain paper bag as a prop, pulling articles such as holy cards, bars of soap, stethoscopes, a baptismal certificate, books, or even a live tarantula from its depths.

“He used these ordinary things each week to capture our attention, and then he made a connection between these items and the readings for the week,” recalled Bianca LeVesque, who served as Fr. Miller’s pastoral assistant at St. Joseph from 1990 until his 2002 retirement. “He absolutely loved being a priest. He had this wonderful zest for life, and he used it to draw people into involvement in the life of the Church.”

Fr. Miller was born Sept. 8, 1931, in Lincoln Park, Michigan, the



Father Jim Miller

fifth of six children born to John and Lucy (Lemerise) Miller. He attended St. Henry Catholic School and was taught by the Sisters of St. Joseph. He graduated from high school in 1949, and enlisted in the Navy in 1951, where he served for four years as an aviation electronics technician. He was discharged in 1955.

The young veteran then studied electrical engineering at the University of Detroit and graduated in 1960. His work took him to several states, including Massachusetts and California, before bringing him to Fort Worth as the vice-president of a small electronics firm in 1962.

Fr. Miller began seminary studies in 1963, briefly studying Latin at John Carroll University in Cleveland before entering the Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C. He was ordained to the priesthood at Sacred Heart Cathedral in Detroit on Jun 1, 1968 by Detroit Archbishop (future Cardinal) John Dearden, for the Diocese of Dallas-Fort Worth.

The young priest’s first assignment was to serve as associate pastor of St. Patrick Parish in Dallas from 1968 to 1969. From 1969 to 1975, he served as associate pastor of Immaculate Conception Parish in Denton and as chaplain of what was then North Texas State University’s Catholic Community.

From 1975 to 1977, Fr. Miller

served as pastor of St. John the Baptist Parish in Bridgeport, before he was appointed to serve as founding pastor of St. Michael Parish in Bedford. In 1979, he requested permission to do missionary work in the Diocese of Fairbanks, Alaska, where he served at Immaculate Conception Parish in Bethel, Sacred Heart Cathedral in Fairbanks, and St. Francis Xavier Parish in Kotzebue, about 33 miles north of the Arctic Circle. He returned to Texas in 1982, where he served as pastor of St. Rita Parish in Ranger, St. John Parish in Strawn, St. Francis Xavier Parish in Eastland, and Holy Rosary Parish in Cisco. In 1988, Bishop Joseph Delaney appointed him as the founding pastor of St. Joseph Parish in Arlington.

After his retirement, Fr. Miller continued to serve in various parishes, often piloting his small plane to assist in rural areas. He helped to found the Retrouvaille International program, a ministry to help repair troubled marriages, within the Diocese of Fort Worth in 1984. He marked the ministry’s 30th anniversary in the diocese by serving as chaplain on his final Retrouvaille weekend in April of this year.

“He was a wonderful priest, and a very gifted leader,” said Marie Pate, who, with her late husband Bob, worked with Fr. Miller to bring Retrouvaille to the diocese. “He had a special love and concern for couples and for families, and he deeply believed in the importance of the sacrament of marriage.”

Fr. Miller is survived by several nieces and nephews and many close friends. Donations in his honor may be made to The Catholic Diocese of Fort Worth Advancement Foundation, Priest Care Fund, 800 W. Loop 820 S., Fort Worth, Texas 76108.

For additional information and photos, visit tinyurl.com/FrJimMiller.

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Deacon Bill Beaton from St. Mark Parish in Denton dies at 82

By Jenara Kocks Burgess
Correspondent

Deacon William Patrick Beaton, 82, known as “Deacon Bill,” of St. Mark Parish in Denton, died Tuesday, Nov. 25.

“He really believed in life and believed in the Lord. He would call it the way he saw it, too,” said Deacon Jim Galbraith, who served with Dcn. Beaton at St. Mark. “Semper Fi! He would always use that slogan from the Marine Corps. He would always close any conversation with Semper Fi — always faithful.”

Dcn. Beaton was born Sept. 16, 1932, in Boston to Albert and Annie MacEachen Beaton, the fifth of six children. Bill, as he was called, attended Boston Latin High School, and served in the Merchant Marines and the U.S. Marine Corps as a first lieutenant during the Korean War. He was a graduate of Boston College and an avid reader. He married Kathleen Anne Cashman on July 4, 1964, and for most of their married life they lived in Connecticut where they raised their four children. Before his call to the diaconate, he worked as a labor relations specialist for several U.S. corporations.

After moving to New Mexico, he was ordained to the diaconate for the Diocese of Gallup on June 12, 1998, by Bishop Donald Pelotte. While in that diocese, he served at St. Vivian Parish in Nilan from 1998 to 1999, and at Our Lady of Sorrows Parish in Cebolleta, Our Lady of Light in Cubero, and St. Joseph in San Fidel from 1999 to 2006. Dcn. Beaton and his wife relocated to Denton in 2006, and he was granted faculties to practice ministry in 2007 by Bishop Kevin Vann. He had served at St. Mark since that time.

Dcn. Galbraith said he met



Photo courtesy of St. Mark Parish
Deacon Bill Beaton

Dcn. Beaton when he (Galbraith) moved to Denton in 2007. Dcn. Galbraith said Dcn. Beaton had a very distinctive Boston accent and recalled how the two would trade military stories.

“I was in the Navy, [so] he was always jabbing me,” recalled Dcn. Galbraith, referencing the rivalry between the Marines and the Navy. “We had a good rapport with one another.”

Dcn. Galbraith said Dcn. Beaton also talked about how he, as a deacon, and his wife Kathleen, as a nurse, used to work on the Indian Reservations in New Mexico.

Serving together in Denton, the two deacons also worked in prison ministry, conducting Communion services for the inmates on Fridays.

“He was very devout in his faith,” Dcn. Galbraith said. “He was willing to share his time and his talent for the men.”

Sean Stenovitch, a district deputy for the Knights of Columbus overseeing councils in Denton, Decatur, and Pilot Point, was grand knight of St. Mark’s Council 12553 while Dcn. Beaton served as the council’s associate chaplain.

“He was well-liked,” Stenovitch said. “He was active. He showed up at the meetings and participated. I remember when he came

to the first meeting and introduced himself as Dcn. Beaton, and he jumped right in,” Stenovitch said.

Before Dcn. Beaton had to retire from active ministry for medical reasons, he served at Mass at St. Mark, occasionally proclaiming the Gospel and preaching homilies.

“I’m certain he’s with the Lord,” Dcn. Galbraith said. “Obviously, God Almighty is the ultimate judge, but in my mind he’s ... up there, helping St. Peter at the pearly gates.”

A memorial service will be held for Dcn. Beaton on Jan. 16 at The

Immaculata in San Diego. Arrangements for another memorial service to be held at St. Mark sometime in the new year are pending.

His ashes will be interred at Miramar National Cemetery in San Diego that afternoon. He is survived by his wife, Kathy Beaton, and his four children: Sarah Beaton Williams of Arlington, Virginia; Rachele Beaton Loconte of Double Oak, Texas; Deirdre Beaton La Placa of LaVerne, California; and Alexander Beaton of San Diego, along with seven grandchildren and four siblings.

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WAKE UP THE WORLD!

— 2015 Year of Consecrated Life —

Diocese joins Pope Francis celebrating Year of Consecrated Life, Clergy, and Vocations

By Jerry Circelli
Correspondent

CATHOLICS IN THE DIOCESE OF FORT WORTH SEARCHING FOR A MEANINGFUL 2015 NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION MIGHT LOOK IN THE DIRECTION POPE FRANCIS IS POINTING. The pope proclaimed 2015 as "The Year of Consecrated Life" and has asked Catholics throughout the world to observe it. The designated year provides the opportunity for the faithful to show support for the men and women who serve the Church as religious, to be attentive to God's call in their own lives, and to help others who may have a calling.

In response to the Holy Father, the local Church will host "The Diocese of Fort Worth Celebration for The Year of Consecrated Life, Clergy, and Vocations" on Feb. 6, 2015, beginning at 6:30 p.m. at St. Patrick Cathedral in Fort Worth, and continuing at the adjacent Pastoral Center. The day will mark this year's World Day of Consecrated Life and kick off the local observance for the Year of Consecrated Life.

SAVE THE DATE:

**Friday, Feb. 6, 2015
6:30 p.m.**

**The Diocese of Fort Worth
Celebration for the Year of
Consecrated Life**

**St. Patrick Cathedral
1206 Throckmorton St.
Downtown Fort Worth**

"Show everyone that to follow Christ and to put his Gospel into practice fills your hearts with happiness!" the pope said in a message to leaders of religious orders, congregations, and communities on Nov. 29, 2014, when he announced the observance.

"Religious life ought to promote growth in the Church by way of attraction. The Church must be attractive. Wake up the world!

Be witnesses of a different way of doing things, of acting, of living! It is possible to live differently in this world."

The year marks the 50th anniversary of *Perfectae Caritatis*, a decree on religious life, and *Lumen Gentium*, the Second Vatican Council's Constitution on the Church. Globally, the Year of Consecrated Life started on the First Sunday of Advent, Nov. 30, 2014, and will conclude Feb. 2, 2016, on the World Day for Consecrated Life.

The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops has added to the celebration by naming it the "Year of Consecrated Life, Clergy, and Vocations."

USCCB President Archbishop Joseph E. Kurtz of Louisville, Kentucky, explained in a statement, "Our brothers and sisters in Christ living consecrated lives make great contributions to our society through a vast number of ministries. They teach in our schools, take care of the poor and the sick, and bring compassion and the love of Christ to those shunned by society; others lead lives of prayer in contemplation for the world."



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT:

Dcn. Jim Novak presents the Gospels; Fr. Eldredge TOR, answers students' questions at a school Mass; Carmelite Prioress Mother Mary OCD, breaks ground; SSMN Sister Lola 'Ulupano greets fellow SSMN; Frs. Thompson and Walterscheid pray over newly ordained Frs. Wilcox and Tran; SSMN sisters pose at fundraiser.

Heading up the Feb. 6 diocesan celebration committee are Vocations Director Father James Wilcox and Sister Yolanda Cruz, SSMN, associate director of Women's Vocations. The celebration at St. Patrick will include Solemn Vespers presided over by Bishop Michael Olson, with the Holy Trinity Seminary Schola Cantorum singing inspirational hymns and chants.

"That will be so beautiful to have our seminarians there participating in this way," said Sr. Yolanda. "We're hoping to really pack the cathedral."

Following the Vespers service, the faithful will be able to visit personally with religious priests, sisters, and brothers at the pastoral center. Sr. Yolanda envisions the event as a "religious fair" where the faithful can get to know one another.

"This will give people a chance to see all of the religious orders of men and women working in our diocese," Fr. Wilcox said. "I think many people will be surprised when they see how many we have. But, that's not to say we couldn't use a lot more of them."

The Diocese of Fort Worth, which includes more than 700,000 Catholics in 28 counties, is served by approximately 100 priests — about half of whom are religious. Also serving God and the faithful in the diocese are 87 religious sisters, several religious brothers, and more than 100 permanent deacons. In addition, the diocese has more than 30 seminarians preparing to serve the local Church.

The diocesan celebration and the yearlong observance will include all those who have devoted their vocations full-time to serving God, Fr. Wilcox and Sr. Yolanda said. That way, the events can be inclusive for all those who serve the Church, both those who have consecrated their lives to Christ as religious and others who have chosen to follow Christ along other paths: the diocesan priesthood, the diaconate, or by preparing for the priesthood as a seminarian.

"These are all people who have dedicated their lives to the work of Jesus Christ," Fr. Wilcox said. He added that the designated day and year honoring them will not only help people grow closer to those who serve the Church in these ways, but inspire others to be more attentive in listening to God's call. At the same time, those who have already answered his call can take joy in the fact that the Holy Father is recognizing their important work and asking others to do the same.

As vocations director for one of the fastest-growing dioceses in the nation, he is hopeful that more people may hear God's call as a result. In the months ahead, he said, retreats, youth events, and other activities will turn some focus on the Year of Consecrated Life and prayers for vocations.

Sr. Yolanda, like other consecrated women serving the local Church, took vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience. She provided a deeper look into how priests, sisters, brothers, and deacons will benefit from the diocesan event and the entire Year of Consecrated Life:

"One of the objectives of all this is to pray for these men, these women, all of us," Sr. Yolanda said. "Because we are weak. We need the prayers of our brothers and sisters in Christ to keep us going, to keep us faithful, and to keep us focused on our lives."

"And it encourages people to pray for us as we're discerning, because sometimes we might get lukewarm," she added. "The pope is looking for a joy-filled people — people with stamina — to serve Christ. So this year really is not only to promote vocations or to help people become aware and pray for us, but it's also for us to renew ourselves and come away with more zest in life and be more the face of Christ."

For more resources, including downloadable prayer cards, visit the following sites using the search engine Google:

USCCB Year of Consecrated Life, Clergy and Vocations:
<http://www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/vocations/consecrated-life/year-of-consecrated-life/index.cfm>

**Pope Francis Feb. 2, 2014
Feast of the Presentation of the Lord
A Letter to Consecrated Men and Women**
http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccsclife/documents/rc_con_ccsclife_doc_20140202_rallegratevi-lettera-consacrati_en.html



A view of the interior of the new St. Mark Church on Crawford Road in Denton is seen on Dec. 7.

Room to grow in faith and size

St. Mark parishioners assemble in building at new location in Denton Dec. 7 as bishop blesses and dedicates its new altar

By JACQUELINE BURKEPILE / CORRESPONDENT
PHOTOS BY JUAN GUAJARDO

“REJOICE IN THE LORD! THAT DOESN’T SEEM VERY HARD FOR US TO DO TODAY,” SAID BISHOP MICHAEL OLSON AT ST. MARK CHURCH’S NEW DENTON LOCATION DURING THE RITE OF BLESSING AND DEDICATION OF THE NEW CHURCH BUILDING’S ALTAR SUNDAY, DEC. 7.

The Dedication and Rite of Blessing was held in St. Mark’s new multi-purpose parish activity center, which totals 20,800 square feet and sits on 26.7 acres of land. The Spanish mission-style building includes a church for Mass, a chapel, a full-service kitchen, several office and meeting spaces, and a cry room.



An exterior view of the new church building on Dec. 7 at St. Mark Church.

Other features of the main sanctuary include an altar made and donated by parishioners Ken and Jewell Lively, and a large hand-carved and painted crucifix from Italy.

With approximately 1,200 parishioners in attendance, members of the Fourth Degree Knights of Columbus Honor Guard led the opening procession while St. Mark’s choir and instrumentalists led “In This House” as the opening hymn. After the opening prayer, Bishop Olson then walked throughout the building blessing and sprinkling the congregation with holy water.

Bishop Olson presided with St. Mark Pastor Father Baby George concelebrating, along with Very Rev. Timothy Thompson, pastor of Immaculate Conception Church in Denton and former pastor of St. Mark, diocesan Vicar General Very Rev. Karl Schilken, diocesan Chancellor Very Rev. Daniel Kelley, and Father Jonathan McElhone, TOR, from Good Shepherd Parish in Colleyville. Several deacons also assisted, including Deacons Jim Galbraith and Leroy Berens of St. Mark, Deacon Joe Standridge of St. Philip the Apostle Church in Lewisville, and diocesan Director of Liturgy

and Worship Deacon Don Warner.

During his homily, Bishop Olson commended St. Mark parishioners and previous pastors for their hard work, dedication, and patience throughout the tedious 12-year process. (St. Mark Parish began as a mission of Immaculate Conception in 1990, but officially became a separate parish in 1995. Planning for a new facility began in 2002.)

“Today, the life of your parish — our parish — experienced its life in a new and fresh manner — the blessing and dedication of this altar, this building, and this new parish site,” said Bishop Olson. “This should exemplify the sense of mission that the Lord has entrusted to you and of being a people on the move toward the new and eternal Jerusalem.”

The bishop added that the parish site’s dedication during the Advent season is noteworthy because Advent signifies the two comings of Christ. He said we first prepare for Christ’s second coming, and we later celebrate his first coming at Christmas. Bishop Olson said he is very grateful for the parish’s dedication to building the life of the local Church.

“Christ is coming again and is proclaimed



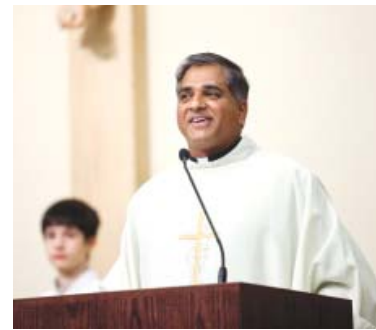
Members of the local Fourth Degree Knights of Columbus process into the new church.



Deacon Jim Galbraith lights the candle at the altar of the new church.



Bishop Olson anoints the new St. Mark altar with chrism oil.



Pastor Father Baby George thanks his parishioners after the liturgy.

in the humbly prophetic manner of John the Baptist by this community through its active prayer life, retreat ministry, outreach, and concern for the poor, concern for the formation of its youth, and for its overall sense of discipleship manifested through vocations to married life and to priestly, diaconal, and religious life," said Bishop Olson.

Following his homily, Bishop Olson anointed the Church's new altar with chrism oil while the choir joyfully sang "Veni Sancte Spiritus," or "Come Now, Holy Spirit." He then prayed over the altar saying, "Bless this altar," and "make this altar a sign of Christ." After the anointing, Bishop Olson placed incense on the altar, allowing it to burn for a few minutes. An assisting deacon then incensed the congregation while the choir led them in singing "From the Hand of the Angel."

Mass concluded with closing remarks by St. Mark Pastor Father Baby George. Fr. George expressed his gratitude to all those involved with the dedication Mass, as well those who were a part of the development process of the new parish location.

Bishop Olson then added final remarks and thanked Fr. George for his leadership and kindness within the St. Mark community. He encouraged the congregation to continue in their discipleship as a parish.

"The Lord gathers us together and He

makes us one through the gift of his Eucharist," said Bishop Olson. "Please continue to grow in discipleship as you encourage it in the married life, in the diaconal ministry, and also in a very special way, in the vocation to religious life and the priesthood."

Following Mass, attendees were invited for refreshments in the 11,700-square-foot religious education building next door to the parish activity center. Also reflecting a Spanish mission-style construction, this building consists of 15 offices and a nursery. The parish will use it for pastoral and liturgical needs, administration, religious education, and outreach.

Many parishioners at the reception expressed their excitement and anticipation for the parish's journey ahead. St. Mark building committee members and parishioners Leo Wehkamp and Michael Nieswiadomy said they do not know exactly when groundbreaking will begin for the new, more traditional Spanish-Romanesque style church, but they hope it will be within the next five to seven years after the parish activity center and religious education buildings are completely paid for.

Bret Curran, grand knight of St. Mark's Knights of Columbus Council 12553, said he and his wife have been parishioners since 1998. His son Kevin will be the first parishioner to marry at the new location.

"I love the new facility," said Curran. "It's fantastic to go from 10 acres and being crowded to expanding to almost 30 acres and having a lot of room for growth."

Parishioner Leslie Hendryx has attended St. Mark with her family since 1996. She organizes funeral meals and helped facilitate the dedication's reception. She is also very pleased with the parish's new facilities.

"We've been waiting for this day for a long time and I'm very, very excited," said Hendryx. "I'm sad about leaving the other place because a lot happened there, but very excited about what's to come for us here."

Shirley Royster, the vice regent for St. Mark's Catholic Daughters of the Americas Court Salve Regina, said she also appreciates the new facility and considers it a blessing.

"It's wonderful. We needed the space. We have lots of land here," said Royster. "We're looking forward to the time when we can build the church itself, but the new Parish Activity Center/Multi-purpose center is beautiful, and we're looking forward to being here for many, many years."

St. Mark Catholic Church is located at 6500 Crawford Road in Denton. It is visible from I-35W and intersects with John Paine Road. For more information about St. Mark, visit www.stmarkdenton.org.



Kathy Yoder covers the altar at St. Mark.



Parishioner Robin Frye sings during the Mass.



A view of some of the stained glass windows in the new church.



Bishop Olson sprinkles the church and parishioners with Holy Water.

Catholic Medical-Dental Guild of Wichita Falls helps healthcare workers integrate faith and work

By Jenara Kocks Burgess
Correspondent

DR. ROBERT PARKEY, PRESIDENT OF THE NEWLY-FORMED CATHOLIC MEDICAL-DENTAL GUILD OF WICHITA FALLS, SAID THE IDEA FOR THE ORGANIZATION, THE FIRST OF ITS KIND IN THE DIOCESE OF FORT WORTH, started with a simple conversation 10 years ago at the Catholic Medical Association's national meeting in Boston with a fellow doctor who is now a priest and pastor of St. Mary Parish in Windthorst, Father Michael Moloney.

"Wouldn't it be nice if we could bring something like a Catholic Medical Association back home," Parkey said.

In September, Parkey, Fr. Moloney, and a group of fellow Wichita Falls health care providers and friends were approved as a chartered guild of the Catholic Medical Association (CMA), the only one in the diocese.

According to the organization's web site www.cathmed.org, the CMA is a community of health care professionals that "informs, organizes, and inspires its members, in steadfast fidelity to the teachings of the Catholic Church, to uphold the principles of the Catholic faith in the science and practice of medicine."

The first big event for the Catholic Medical-Dental Guild began with a Mass with a special intention for health care workers, followed by a dinner and keynote address on health care ethics by Bishop Michael Olson at Sacred Heart Parish in Wichita Falls Oct. 25. Almost 130 people attended, more than Parkey and other guild members expected.

"I'm very proud of the medical and dental community in Wichita Falls and in the northwestern part of our diocese," said Bishop Olson at the dinner after Mass. "We've come together to ask God's blessing on their practices and also to recon-



LEFT: The Catholic Medical-Dental Guild's officers pose with Bishop Olson.

BELOW: Guild President Dr. Robert Parkey holds a certificate signifying the group's status as a chapter of the national Catholic Medical Association.



nect with the vocational character of their professions — those who are in direct service to health are also in direct service to life and therefore in service to God and their neighbor."

During Parkey's speech before he introduced Bishop Olson as the keynote speaker, he talked about how society often questions doctors who see their patients "as their neighbor" and are concerned about human dignity, because in this society, doctors are seen as scientists who should focus on technology.

"Faith teaches us that there is no separation between the scientific fact of our humanity and our personhood and our dignity as human beings," Parkey said. "With all the reverence and honor we can muster, we owe each other the simple recognition that we are all made in the image and likeness of God. It's our culture that wants to separate humanness from personhood — not the Church."

"What our Church teaches can be carried with us. It is not an academic curiosity... Our ethics and our moral vision in the Roman Catholic Church are eminently practical, greatly needed in this world, and unquestionably our responsibility to uphold, especially in health care," Parkey said.

Bishop Olson said this topic is very close to his heart because he has spent a lot of his priestly ministry in this area. Shortly after his 1994

ordination, he began doctorate work at Saint Louis University Center for Health Care Ethics, and has served as a consultant for the Texas Catholic Conference — a role in which he has testified before the state legislature on end-of-life issues.

Community expectations for health care providers have shifted away from paternalism in medicine, which is good in some ways, but it has also shifted away from the covenantal relationship to a customer-based approach, the bishop added. The bishop said covenant goes back to the Judeo-Christian roots of Catholic tradition and the moral tradition of medicine itself — God made a covenant with his people Israel, and He places the imbalance in the favor of the weaker, the people.

"Likewise in medicine from Hippocrates on down, there's a covenant relationship between physicians ... and those who are sick and most in need, with the obligation being imbalanced in favor of the weak and in favor of the sick with the obligation being on the physician, nurse, health care professional, or whoever else has their vocation in this practice of medicine and health care," he said.

Bishop Olson said physicians do have a covenantal relationship with their patients that they can't escape, and their patients really do not want to lose.

"Community, covenant, and

finally conscience," he said. "Conscience is right judgment — right judgment in the midst of difficult circumstances, the best possible judgment to be made with the best possible knowledge that you have at the time."

In conclusion, Bishop Olson encouraged guild members to start discussions about ethics and medical and health care practice.

"And you don't have to argue from a strictly faith basis. You can argue from the principles of medicine that obviously correspond well with faith, just as reason and faith both serve the God of Truth, that which liberates and gives us authentic freedom," he said.

To Report Misconduct

If you or someone you know is a victim of sexual misconduct by anyone who serves the church, you may

- ♦ Call Judy Locke, victim assistance coordinator, (817) 560-2452 ext. 201 or e-mail her at jlocke@fwdioc.org
- ♦ Or call the Sexual Abuse Hotline (817) 560-2452 ext. 900 and leave a message.

To Report Abuse

Call the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (Child Protective Services at (800) 252-5400

'LORD, I NEED YOU'

Musician Matt Maher reflects on being Catholic in the largely-Protestant contemporary Christian music world

By JENARA KOCKS BURGESS / CORRESPONDENT

CATHOLIC SINGER AND SONGWRITER MATT MAHER RECENTLY SHARED HIS THOUGHTS ABOUT BEING A CATHOLIC IN THE PRIMARILY NON-CATHOLIC CHRISTIAN CONTEMPORARY MUSIC SCENE WITH THE *NORTH TEXAS CATHOLIC*.

Maher was in the area with Christian contemporary musician Toby Mac's "Worship, Stories, and Songs" tour. Two of the three Texas stops on the tour were within the diocese's boundaries — Memorial Auditorium in Wichita Falls and First Baptist Church in Lewisville.

Because of his worship music, Maher is known as a worship leader, and his music is often used in Catholic parishes and Protestant churches in the United States and throughout the world. He performed at the University of Dallas Ministry Conference in 2010 and at World Youth Day in Rio de Janeiro in 2013.

"My personal mission is really rooted in *John 17* in the Gospel, when Jesus prays for unity," he said, "I've really tried to be a Catholic, ministering alongside my fellow brothers and sisters from different denominations But with that being said, it's a different kind of ecumenism. It's not one where I'm trying to convince anyone of anything as much as I'm first of all, trying to stand alongside and proclaim Jesus to the world with them," Maher said.

Originally from Newfoundland, Canada, Maher moved to Arizona when he was 20. Although he was raised Catholic, it was after he moved to Arizona that Maher grew deeper in his faith through the Charismatic Renewal. He said he thinks the way for Christians to understand each other is to publicly proclaim together the centrality of Jesus.

"Jesus is at the center of the Church, even for Catholics with the Eucharist. The Eucharist is Jesus, so Jesus is the center of our Catholic faith," he said. "Being able to stand shoulder-to-shoulder with other Christians and just proclaim the importance and beauty of who Jesus is is a great thing. And I think this is what the Holy Father (Pope Francis) has been trying to say. 'Look, if we can stand together and proclaim Christ on the way, we can understand our differences and talk about them and learn to have a greater respect for each other.'"

Maher said he thinks worship music, which



Photo courtesy of CMA Media Productions
Matt Maher

has become his specialty, could be used as a way of bringing all Christians together and bringing the younger culture in as well, because of its honesty.

"I think in our culture, that's what people really want when they look at Christians — they just want people to be honest," he said. "Be honest about life; be honest about the struggles that we face; be transparent; be who you are. I think Christianity has had a real credibility problem in America, and it's not just Catholicism now. The world needs witnesses, not people who are perfect, but people who are honest, because I think, the Gospel really starts with honesty.

"Jesus has all these conversations with sinners who are honest about who they are. So I think God can work with honesty," he added. "I think God can work when we sort of get everything out into the light. Worship music is very real because it comes from a place of need or a place of deep devotion."

Referring to one of his most popular songs, "Lord, I need you," Maher said it's popular because it's honest.

"It's writing about God from the point of need," he said.

Maher has also written worship songs about Catholic beliefs such as "Adoration." He

said he thinks music is a way to allow other Christians and non-Christians to become familiar with such beliefs.

"...You can just expose them to something and give them space to think about it on their own. I think that's what I've definitely tried to do," Maher said. "Music is music, and they appreciate it, but at the same time, there are things we sing about from a Catholic context. A lot of it is how you articulate it. I think the Eucharist is just inherently a part of Christianity. You can't remove it, but you can lose sight of its importance."

Maher originally wanted to be a film composer writing music for movies until he started working at a parish in youth ministry. He said he had been in a couple of rock bands but had never considered himself a singer until he became involved in ministry.

"I realized I had kind of a passion for it Ever since then it was kind of like, 'Well, I guess that's what I was called to do,'" he said.

Maher also sits on the board for Life Teen, a national Catholic youth ministry catechetical program that began in Arizona and is used in several parishes in the Diocese of Fort Worth. "I love what they do. I think youth ministry is an important thing in terms of kind of helping the Church change its notion that the youth are a really important part of the Church," he said.

Now a husband and father, Maher tries to balance his vocation as a Christian musician with his family life. "You leave for a few days and come back," Maher said. "I think the goal is when I'm home, to be really present to being home. That's kind of the balance of it."

Maher said he never knows when he will receive inspiration for a song, so he has to be prepared. "You just try to capture the idea — iPhones have been great for that in the sense of just the spontaneity of it; you get an idea, and you can hum it into your phone."

He said his own life and relationship with God are inspirations for his music.

"You write about what you know, is sort of the first rule of song-writing. So it's not about me projecting what I think other people know. It's just saying this is what's going on in my heart and my life," Maher said.

St. Thomas the Apostle parishioners break ground at church's new location

By Joan Kurkowski-Gillen
Correspondent

The faith community of St. Thomas the Apostle Parish broke ground for a new church Nov. 8. The parish's growing demographics, precipitated by a surge in nearby housing developments, fueled the decision to build a larger church on 31 acres of property off Bowman Roberts Road in Northwest Tarrant County.

General Contractor M&F Litteken Co. of Wichita Falls will build a cruciform style structure designed to seat 1,200 people. St. Thomas' current location on Azle Avenue can accommodate 225. An overflow crowd views Mass via a screen in the parish hall.

"We need something larger to welcome Catholics who live in this area but drive to different places to go to church," said longtime parishioner Cathy Thomas whose late father, Raney Fief, started St. Thomas' Knights of Columbus council. "I hope we can work together to maintain that small, close-knit feeling that makes this parish so special."

Bishop Michael Olson, joined by St. Thomas pastor Father Mathew Kavipurayidam, TOR, and parishioner Bruce Mallory, turned over the first spade of dirt marking the start of construction. The Diocese of Fort Worth gave the go-ahead for the project after parishioners raised almost half of the estimated \$7.25 million needed to fund the new church. St. Thomas is home to 1,200 families.

More than 200 parishioners, clergy, and guests braved brisk temperatures and wind gusts to attend the groundbreaking ceremony held on former pastureland. Before sprinkling the building site with holy water, Bishop Olson commended the parish's fundraising efforts and reminded members that a new church presents new challenges. Along with retaining current pa-



Bishop Michael Olson, joined by St. Thomas the Apostle pastor Father Mathew Kavipurayidam, TOR, (*center right*), Deacon Hector Salvá (*right*), and acolyte John Grimes (*left*), blesses the ground where the parish's new church will be built. Surrounding them are members of the Fourth Degree Knights of Columbus. (*Photos courtesy of Fr. Mathew Kavipurayidam, TOR*)

rishioners, he asked the crowd to be a welcoming presence to Catholic families living in the surrounding neighborhoods.

Fr. Kavipurayidam, who became St. Thomas' pastor Sept. 15, met with diocesan leaders twice before the groundbreaking.

"We're very happy to be moving forward," he told the *NTC*. "Our parishioners are very excited. They worked and prayed for this."

Crews could begin excavating the site within the next few weeks.

"I think everyone was surprised we were able to collect the funds we needed in a relatively short period of time. We're a small parish," pointed out William Seger, chairman of the building committee.

In addition to a capital campaign organized to solicit pledges and donations, parishioners hosted casino nights, bake sales, steak dinners, and raffles. Proceeds from two fall festivals, held at the site of the new church, were also targeted for the building fund.

Seger credited former pastor Father Antony Mathew, TOR, for broaching the idea of a new church and laying the groundwork to make the venture possible.

"Fr. Antony initiated fundraising without using a professional firm and that saved us 25 percent," explained Seger, who also praised the parish's current pastor. "Fr. Mathew [Kavipurayidam] is help-

ing the project come to fruition."

St. Thomas the Apostle Church was built by Czech settlers in North Fort Worth, then a part of the Diocese of Dallas, and dedicated by Dallas Bishop Joseph P. Lynch in 1937.

CNK Associates Inc., the same architectural firm that designed Vietnamese Martyrs Church in Arlington, submitted blueprints for

the new church. Preliminary plans include a main church, small chapel, and parish hall.

Seger says relocating St. Thomas five miles from its present location is a visionary idea that fulfills a twofold purpose: a new church glorifies Jesus Christ and his mission and will draw new members to the parish.

"St. Thomas is a good strong faith community and we want to share that with as many people as possible," he adds.

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CATHOLIC CHARITIES

CCFW dedicates second group home for unaccompanied immigrant children



(L-R) David Springer, Walt Springer, Donna Springer, Dana Springer, Hanna Springer, Virginia Lawrence, and Tina Springer pose Oct. 29 at the Donna R. Springer Home for unaccompanied immigrant children. (Courtesy of CCFW)

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For children who have suffered unimaginable deprivation and loss as a result of war, famine, and disease, a safe, comfortable home and the routines of a happy family life are gifts that are never taken for granted.

With the goal of offering healing and a bright future to unaccompanied minor immigrant children from countries such as the Congo, Somalia, Eritrea, Burma, Guatemala, and Mexico, Catholic Charities Fort Worth (CCFW) recently opened the second of four planned homes as part of the agency's international foster care program. The recently purchased home, in a quiet neighborhood in Fort Worth and designed to accommodate up to six youth and a foster parent, was renovated and furnished through the efforts of donors and volunteers.

Bishop Michael Olson blessed the house during a joyous dedication ceremony, Oct. 29. "The work that we celebrate today is really at the heart of our lives as Catholics," he told the gathering of approximately 100 agency staff and board members, volunteers, and donors. "This is part of our baptismal responsibility. It's important to remember that we learn so much from the people whom we are called to serve, the people we strive to help."

CCFW executive director

Heather Reynolds, announced that the house is to be called the "Donna R. Springer Home," in honor of one of the agency's most dedicated volunteers.

"Donna Springer is practically a full-time volunteer at Catholic Charities," noted Reynolds, explaining Springer's role as a longtime board member and as project manager for the construction of the agency's \$16 million main campus that opened in 2010, and for the 2012 construction of a dental clinic. "Catholic Charities Fort Worth would not be the organization that it is today without Donna's knowledge, insight, dedication, and hard work." Springer and her husband, Walter, are parishioners at Good Shepherd Church in Colleyville.

Holly Merritt, director of the CCFW international foster care program, explained that the home's occupants will attend school, learn the English language, share meals, and receive health care and counseling. "Many of them have experienced a great deal of trauma, but they are very resilient," she said. "They see the amazing opportunity that they have been given by coming to this country. It doesn't take them long to become confident and to do very, very well in our program."

LIGHTER & BRIGHTER



Members of the Catholic Women's Association of Baltimore, originally from Cameroon, laugh with Baltimore Archbishop William E. Lori at the end of a Nov. 2 Mass celebrating the 225th anniversary of the Archdiocese of Baltimore. (CNS photo/Christopher Guntz, CATHOLIC REVIEW)



Kassandra Palzkill, 14, Caleb Mitchell, 17, and Dominic Mailloux, 13, provide organ music for Masses at the Congregation of St. Mary/St. Paul in Mineral Point and St. Philomena Parish in Belmont, Wis. (CNS photo/Kevin Wondrash, CATHOLIC HERALD)



In this file photo, a Vatican worker cleans the Baldacchino over the main altar in St. Peter's Basilica at the Vatican Dec. 18, 2012, in preparation for Christmas. (CNS photo/Paul Haring)



A firefighter places a wreath on the extended arm of a tall statue of Mary overlooking the Spanish Steps in Rome Dec. 8, the feast of the Immaculate Conception, a tradition observed since 1857. (CNS photo/Paul Haring)



Brianna Guerrero plays the violin during mariachi class at St. John the Evangelist Catholic School in Tucson, Ariz., Oct. 24. (CNS photo/Nancy Wiechec)



Pope Francis kisses a baby during his general audience in St. Peter's Square at the Vatican Dec. 10. (CNS photo/Paul Haring)

Comic Retreat

By: Brian Montfort



Umbert the Unborn

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We are all disciples and missionaries

BY JEFF HEDGLEN

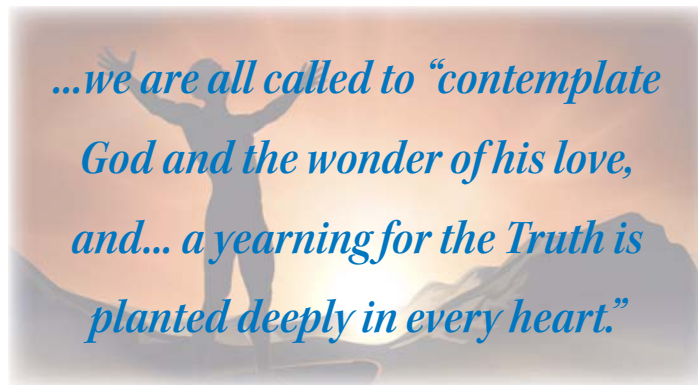
AS WE TURN THE CORNER ON A NEW YEAR, WE OFTEN TURN TO WAYS WE WOULD LIKE TO IMPROVE OURSELVES, OR PARTS OF OUR LIVES THAT WE WOULD LIKE TO CHANGE, OR HABITS WE WOULD LIKE TO LEAVE IN THE PAST. THIS YEAR I WOULD LIKE TO PROPOSE THIS IDEA. BECOME A MISSIONARY.

Let's all make 2015 the year we take the big leap, the year we finally set aside all our excuses, the year we actually live, full on, the call we received when water was poured on our heads in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

And the best part is, you don't have to move to another continent to fulfill this call, though it is still a great idea if you can.

This idea was driven home to me at the University of Dallas Ministry Conference in October. The keynote address given by Archbishop Michael Miller from the Archdiocese of Vancouver focused on the encyclical by Pope Francis *The Joy of the Gospel*.

He said we are all called to "contemplate God and the wonder of his love, and that a yearning for the Truth is planted deeply in every heart." I think we can all agree with this sentiment. But his next thought was a huge challenge. He said: "It should disturb us that so many are living without the consolation of Jesus." He wondered aloud "How many are



tired and exhausted and waiting for the Church," and by "Church" he did not mean the institutional Church. He meant the Body of Christ, you and me!

He said we are all disciples and missionaries. It is not enough to be comfortable following Jesus as a disciple, if we are not also sharing Jesus with others. He quoted a phrase coined by Pope Francis. We are all "missionary disciples." Now, don't get too nervous. The entire weight of sharing the Gospel with others is not on your shoulders; Archbishop Miller explained that we are not the principle evangelizers. The Holy Spirit is primary and we are stewards. The Holy Spirit guides and we follow.

Archbishop Miller followed these challenging words with these questions: To whom do we go? Where do we go? What is the scope? He answered them this way.

Go to those who have left the

practice of the Church, but don't condemn them. Instead try to understand why. Also, he said the specific group that has first claim to our work is the poor and sick, those usually despised and neglected. He said "The poor are the privileged recipients of the Gospel."

He also gave guidelines for how to be a missionary disciple. First, evangelize with our lives. With the first proclamation being Jesus Christ has saved ME. Know your testimony and how to share it.

Second, evangelize with words, not just actions. He emphasized that we are not to use complicated theological truths, rather with "simple words" and a "heart of faith." Simply share the beauty of the saving love of God made manifest in Jesus.

Third, evangelize with mercy. He said that the Church (again you and I) are to be a merciful



Jeff Hedglen is director of Young Adult Ministry and Campus Ministry for the diocese. He is also the founder and primary convener of Camp Fort Worth's many editions. His column received second place honors for best spiritual life columns by CPA of the United States and Canada in 2014.

mother who cares for and never turns her back on her children, that we are to be a maternal womb of mercy.

Lastly we are to enter into dialogue not debate. He said that we do not impose, but propose with gentleness and patience. We need to, as Pope Francis is fond of saying, "take on the smell of the sheep." We need to get out of our normal situation and get into the work of the Kingdom.

I realize this can seem like a huge and too daunting task. But the archbishop had a final word of encouragement, "Trust that Jesus the Lord is with us." This is not a trite, frivolous phrase; it is the heart of what it means to be a missionary disciple. Jesus is with us. Thus everywhere we go, Jesus is there and Jesus is always wanting to heal, love, serve, and save.

Jesus has chosen to empower us to be his hands and feet. Let's take up the challenge of Pope Francis and follow Jesus into the mission field of our lives!

Heaven on Earth

It really does exist

By Kathy Cribari Hamer

MY HUSBAND SAYS OUR LIVES ARE PEPPERED WITH GLIMPSES OF HEAVEN. HIS CURRENT FAVORITE GLIMPSE — PENELOPE — ARRIVED LAST NOVEMBER. SHE IS OUR 16TH GRANDCHILD.

“Heaven isn’t just waiting for everyone,” Larry says, creatively. “We receive pieces of it constantly, while we’re traveling the ‘yellow brick roads’ of our lives.”

Not long after dear Penelope’s birth, I got my own glimpse of heaven. It wasn’t during a stroll on a brick road or a ride in a hot-air balloon. It was on a simple flight to Colorado Springs.

I was looking forward to relaxation that day — in my handbag was a baby blanket to crochet for Penelope. Today’s airlines are crowded, but if you are lucky enough to have an aisle seat, which I did, they still provide time to complete little projects.

Boarding, I followed the plane’s yellow brick road to row 21 D, when I realized MY aisle seat was already occupied by a teenager, and next to her, in the middle of MY ROW, her mother.

The mother leaned forward and whispered, “Could you trade seats with my daughter? I thought she and I had been assigned seats next to each other. I really need to sit with her.

“Would you trade? My daughter’s seat is across the aisle, in the center.”

Was this woman talking to me? Is it I, Lord? (Eeek. Center seat??)

I had long been waiting for this mini vacation that began with an AISLE SEAT, on my way to Colorado Springs. But now, well, do the words “hot air balloon” and “deflated” belong in the same column?

Not having expected this situation, I mentally worked the logistics. Wasn’t there someone else who could make this trade? I understood the mother’s intensity and seriousness. But in my heart of hearts, I wanted

Every time I thought of my dad; every time I dreamed about him, or his name entered my mind, I said one Hail Mary. No more, no less.

to NOT acquiesce and NOT switch places with anyone.

My inner comedian found excuses: “How about, ‘my shoes aren’t made for walking ... backward?’” Illogical, insensitive trivia filled my brain, and then, a voice I didn’t recognize spoke:

“Certainly,” the voice said. “I will be happy to trade places with your daughter.”

The voice and I climbed into my new [center] seat across the way, all the while apologizing to the humorless woman seated on the aisle.

I knew an awful moment would come, later, when I had to ask, “Will you please excuse me?” and climb out into the aisle. The humorless woman would (and did) chastise me as though I were four years old. “Already?” she said. “Could you not plan ahead?”

When I returned, she had taken all my belongings from under the seat where they were stashed, and relocated them under the end seat. “Why don’t you just sit there?” she suggested, harshly.

Embarrassed, I looked across the aisle, at the mother and daughter, for whom I had traded seats. We exchanged silent understanding.

We were preparing to land when the girl’s mother reached out and passed me a folded paper, a torn-out page from a 2013 day-planner. On it she had penciled the following:

“I want to share with you that we are going to Colorado Springs for a funeral – for my daughter Samantha’s dad. Your kindness is greatly appreciated. I can’t thank you enough. Sincerely, Monica.”

Stunned, I momentarily covered my face with my hands. I had not earned her gratitude; my generosity was fake! I had made the right choice only because there was none other.

I loved God more in those moments after Monica’s note. I was grateful for his work in my life, and that I had done what He willed me to do. I thanked the sweet Lord for my accidental action.

Walking off the plane with Samantha and her mother, I held the child’s hand and said, “I am sorry for your loss, Sam. I was just 18 when my father died, and while I know that is older than 14, I experienced what you are going through today.

“I want to tell you what I did after my dad’s death. Every time I thought of him, or dreamed about him, I said one Hail Mary. No more, no less. So, as the months and years went by, that process became my healing, and part of my life. Well, I am finished with it now, so I am handing down that salvation to you.”

My trip to Colorado showed me a little speck of heaven. I had avoided it, fled from it, and tried not to accept it.

But God forced heaven on me.

He is pushier than a mother, more protective than a father, and more magical than a Wizard.



Kathy Cribari Hamer and her husband are members of St. Andrew Parish. Her column has been recognized repeatedly by the Catholic Press Association.

For information about her book, Me and the Chickens, go to somethingelseagain.com

Meet Jesus

Enter his Church

By David Mills

A HARD-WORKING BLOGGER HAS COLLECTED QUOTES FROM AMERICAN CONVERTS, TAKEN FROM A NEW BOOK CALLED *THE MISSISSIPPI FLOWS INTO THE TIBER*.

It's a dictionary of "notable" American converts. (You can find the page here: tinyurl.com/AmericanConverts.)

I was struck by how many of the converts the blogger quotes speak about coming to Christ more than about coming to the Church. This matches my own reading of books by and about converts. Once they meet Christ, they walk into his Church without considering any other option, as if they intuitively recognized his home. I'm guessing most do. When asked why he became a Catholic, the novelist Walker Percy said, "What else is there?"

Avery Cardinal Dulles seems to have done this. He grew up a Presbyterian and became a Catholic after graduating from college, disappointing one of America's most powerful families — his father became secretary of state and his uncle ran the CIA. "The New Testament writings [are] religious testimony — a testimony embracing both factual memories and spiritual insights... The novelty of the message, the conviction, unanimity, constancy, and spiritual power with which it is heralded, give us every reason to conclude that the apostles were bearers of revelation."

So there's meeting Jesus. From there he went straight to the Catholic Church. The New Testament, he said, "is not simply the expression of an ancient faith. We read it today with full consciousness that the religion born of the apostles still retains its vitality. The witness of the primitive Church is enhanced by the witness of the Church today."

People who aren't Catholic tend to think

"Unless you are prepared to call Him your Risen Lord, seek no religious meaning in his life and teachings. Nor in his death; for the Passion is what it is only in light of the Resurrection."

Background picture: Painting by Stephen B Whittle
"The Glory of Christ" (CNS photo)

that we enter the Church because we want what the Church offers, like the sacraments. And that's true, but it's still not accurate. We enter the Church because we want what the Church offers, and that's first and foremost Jesus.

Specifically, the Jesus the Church proclaims, the one who's God of God, Light of Light, and all that, not the world's Really Nice Guy Jesus. As the painter Caryl Coleman writes: "The more I studied the life and works of Christ, the greater grew my admiration for his character. Almost immediately I saw that if it were stripped of its supernatural qualities, it would be meaningless and contradictory."

Clare Boothe Luce, the successful New York playwright and first woman appointed to be ambassador to a major country, had thought of the Father as "an absolute tyrant" and Jesus as "an effeminate, saccharine, mournful, and naïve character, with a martyr-complex." She could get along without

that God. "The kind of God I could not get along without was the kind I found in the New Testament."

The philosopher Edward Feser warns that "Unless you are prepared to call Him your Risen Lord, seek no religious meaning in his life and teachings. Nor in his death; for the Passion is what it is only in light of the Resurrection."

It's the Church's Jesus who can change your life. "A decisive moment in my journey in faith," explained the feminist historian Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, "came when, one day, seemingly out of nowhere, the thought pierced me that Jesus had died for my sins. And, immediately on its heels, came the devastating recognition that I am not worth his sacrifice. Only gradually have I come truly to understand that the determination of worth belongs not to me but to him."

The conservative historian Russell Kirk offered a similar insight from his own experience. "It is only, I think, in the light of the suffering of the Son of God that we can look without dismay at the wounded man in his private world of pain... [T]his same world in which hopes are stillborn and good causes are brought to nothing, so full of wastelands and crosses, is, if the Christian revelation be true, a cross on which God has stretched his arms, making a tree of life."

That's the Jesus we enter the Church to meet. To put it another way: Nowhere else has a Tabernacle.

David Mills is the author of DISCOVERING MARY and his column, "Catholic Sense" runs in multiple diocesan publications. He and his family attend St. Joseph Church in Coraopolis, Pennsylvania. He blogs at www.patheos.com/blogs/davidmills.

Faith in God

transforms ordinary people into unlikely heroes

By Mary Morrell

SOME TIME AGO I PICKED UP A 100-YEAR-OLD COPY OF RUDYARD KIPLING'S POEMS ENTITLED *BAR-RACK ROOM BALLADS*.

The book was water-damaged, but sturdy enough, so I decided to save it from oblivion on the old dusty, heavily laden shelves of a used book store. That's the problem with bibliophiles, there's always an excuse.

I truly did intend to read it, as I've always appreciated poetry, but it took me some time to warm up to poems and prose with military themes. Still, I loved the movie, "Gunga Din," (with Gary Grant and Sam Jaffe) set in colonial British India and based on the Kipling poem of the same name. So, putting my literary prejudices aside, I read through the small book and came upon a poem that has stayed with me.

"Giffen's Debt", written in 1886, tells the story of a British officer in India who somehow plummets into debt and is decommissioned from the service in disgrace. Giffen, writes Kipling, takes to drink, loses all his friends, and seeks refuge in a village where the natives accept him, support him, and even find him a wife.

Kipling describes him as fellow officers viewed him, "always drunk, unclean, abominable, out-at-heels; forgetting that he was an Englishman."

A tragedy falls upon the village and the surrounding area when a dam, built with defective materials, bursts and sends "several hundred thousand cubic tons of water" into the valley, but drowning only 25 villagers in

Giffen is an example of the kind of person we often judge, people who, for reasons unbeknown to us, are plagued with their own demons, but in whose hearts and spirits the divine spark has not been extinguished.

the heavily populated area. Among the dead, found six miles away under a dead horse, is Giffen. His fellow officers decide Giffen "fell victim to the demon drink," was of no real loss and promptly forgot him.

The villagers told another story — "a foolish legend of the flood," wrote Kipling — about a larger-than-life hero who rode through the valley upon a monstrous steed, driving almost all the villagers out of harm's way and saving a countryside at the expense of his own life.

Giffen is an example of the kind of person we often judge, people who, for reasons unbeknown to us, are plagued with their own demons, but in whose hearts and spirits the divine spark has not been extinguished.

An unlikely hero in the eyes of his peers, Giffen is in the company of untold others whom God has used in spite of their weaknesses. Scripture is full of the stories of people like the Apostle Paul, who once hated Christians; David, the king who was also an adulterer and murderer; Samson, who gloried in his own strength; Gideon, who was afraid to follow God's command for him; and Rahab, a Canaanite prostitute who ends up as a mother in the line of David, the line of Jesus Christ, giving testimony to the unlimited power of God to transform lives.

Without a doubt, there are unlikely heroes in our lives, perhaps in our families or our various communities. We may not recognize them because we look at them with our own prejudiced vision. But God calls us to look with the eyes of faith ... even when we look in the mirror.



Mary Morrell serves as the managing editor of THE MONITOR, newspaper for the Diocese of Trenton, New Jersey. A mother of six, she has served the Church for more than 22 years in the fields of catechesis, communications, and education.

Priorities

Family Comes First

By Denise Bossert

IT WAS TWO YEARS AGO THIS MONTH.

Our unmarried daughter met us for dinner and announced that she was pregnant with her third child. I tossed and turned that night as I thought about this third grandson who would be born into my daughter's single-parent family.

Less than twenty-four hours later, my son called to say that his baby girl had arrived, but was being taken by life flight to Cardinal Glennon Hospital in St. Louis. They didn't know if the baby would survive. The neurological team said she would have brain damage, if she managed to make it through her first day of life.

In the moment my daughter told me she was pregnant again, I immediately began doing damage control. Instantly, I knew that I would not sign a teaching contract for the following year. Maybe my daughter could move back in with us. Maybe we could babysit, and she could work. Maybe these grandchildren would have some concept of family through grandparents and extended family.

When my son called with the news about his baby girl less than a day later, I couldn't think at all. I wasn't planning. There was no strategy in my head. It was too big; the news too unexpected, too awful to analyze and process and mitigate. We took each day as it came. The first family crisis sent me into damage-control mode. The second family crisis left me adrift. No mother could wrap her arms around this.

I took the overnight shift at the hospital. My daughter-in-law could barely walk in the days that followed that traumatic birth. She and my son seemed to be in post-traumatic stress. That's how it is when a baby is born without life signs; when you are told she may not survive; when you watch her



have two seizures in her first 24 hours of life, and the experts say that she will have brain damage.

Instinctively, I activated a social teaching of the Church that isn't talked about very much. *The Compendium on Social Doctrine of the Church* says that there is to be a "social priority of the family" (252). It goes on to say there must be "the recognition on the part of civil society and the State of the priority of the family over every other community" (254).

In short, family comes first.

That night, my husband and I talked it over; I talked to my parish priest; I prayed a lot, and then I submitted a letter of resignation. We both knew what I had to do. It was time to be a mother and grandmother before anything else.

I believe God honored our desire to put family first. Within months, my daughter and her three sons converted and entered the Catholic Church. The very next day, an MRI showed that my granddaughter had been miraculously spared brain damage. She has had two surgeries since then to address other complications stemming from the traumatic birth, and my son and his family stay with us often to be close to physical

therapy sessions in St. Louis. But the two-year old that was supposed to have brain damage has met or exceeded all mental developmental milestones. And the physical therapy is helping in the areas affected by the nerve damage.

The eyes of the Church are on the World Meeting on Families in September 2015. It is an important time in the life of our Church. Now, more than ever, we are being called to put family

above all earthly things, and that includes our employment.

Family comes first.

We must help to meet their temporal needs, but we must also meet their spiritual needs. Corporal works of mercy and spiritual works of mercy begin at home. Our number one job is to get our family members to heaven. Just as the Church helps us along our personal pilgrimage to heaven, the domestic church is a vehicle for the salvation of the family.

Rarely is one called upon to set aside work for family. Typically, work is necessary for the financial viability of the family. But we must never get our priorities out of whack. The family has priority over every other community on earth. Solidarity begins in the home.



Denise Bossert has four children and is a member of Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish in New Melle, Missouri. Her column, CATHOLIC BY GRACE, has run in 46 diocesan newspapers. She blogs at www.catholicbygrace.com.

SEEKING GOD'S PATH VOCATIONS

Building a culture of vocations

BY FATHER JAMES WILCOX


ALL CATHOLICS HAVE A SEMBLANCE OF UNDERSTANDING FOR THE IMPORTANCE OF PRIESTS AND RELIGIOUS IN THE LIFE OF THE CHURCH.

They do good; they lead the Church; they help people live lives of holiness. Perhaps you would give additional answers if asked about priests and religious brothers and sisters in your parish. So when we pray for vocations, our prayer might be because we know we need more access to the sacraments, especially the celebration of the Holy Mass and the hearing of confessions, so we ask God to send more priests. We might know that our parishes and schools grow in faith through religious education, so we ask God to send more sisters and brothers to serve as teachers, etc.

These are good and wholesome prayers; however, in the Diocese of Fort Worth, we are in the midst of a cultural shift in our view, consideration, prayer, and excitement about vocations to the priesthood and religious life. With Pope Francis' proclamation of 2015 as the Year of Consecrated Life, we as a diocese are working to live the call of Jesus Christ to make disciples of all nations — together we are building a Culture of Vocations.

Through his Incarnation, Jesus Christ unites and sanctifies us. "Therefore in the Church, everyone whether belonging to the hierarchy, or being cared for by it, is called to holiness...." (*Lumen Gentium*, 39). This universal call to holiness for all people is the basis for building the Culture of Vocations.

A Culture of Vocations exists when, in recognizing the universal call to holiness for us all, we assist one another in hearing the voice of Jesus Christ as He guides each on his or her path. This means that recognizing vocations



WAKE UP THE WORLD!
— 2015 Year of Consecrated Life —

Prayer for the Year of Consecrated Life

O God, throughout the ages you have called women and men to pursue lives of perfect charity through the evangelical counsels of poverty, chastity, and obedience. During this Year of Consecrated Life, we give you thanks for these courageous witnesses of Faith and models of inspiration. Their pursuit of holy lives teaches us to make a more perfect offering of ourselves to you. Continue to enrich your Church by calling forth sons and daughters who, having found the pearl of great price, treasure the Kingdom of Heaven above all things. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

to the priesthood and religious life permeates throughout our lives as part of a normative and prominent process of seeking to do God's will.

Vocations are spoken about freely first and foremost in the home, the domestic church, where the seeds of priesthood and religious life are nourished with loving, supportive family members who are excited to have one of their own consider serving the Lord in this notable role. Schools, parishes, ministry groups, youth nights, and diocesan events are so ingrained



Father James Wilcox was ordained to the priesthood in 2013 and serves as the Vocations Director for the Diocese of Fort Worth.

with anticipating and even expecting vocations to come from their groups that those who step forward are supported in prayer and encouraged in actions.

The Year of Consecrated Life is a great opportunity for us all to reflect on the men and women in our lives who are dedicated to serving the Lord in priesthood and religious life. Pope Francis calls the consecrated life, "an encounter with Christ." How beautiful the hands and feet of these men and women who toil and labor to serve as a bridge for us from the temporal elements of this world to the supernatural experience of Jesus Christ. While the work of the entire Church serves to sanctify the world, those living in consecrated life are examples par excellence of hearing the will of God, trusting in his path, and courageously taking the leap of faith to put his love into action.

Are you being called to consecrated life? Take this same leap of faith, and have the discussion with a parent, family member, friend, pastor ... with someone important in your life. Seek the experience of loving Jesus Christ in a distinctive relationship that could lead to serving the Church as a priest, sister, or brother.

There are men in the seminary who were so greatly influenced by the Church's Year for Priests in 2009-2010. United in prayer, may this Year of Consecrated Life throughout 2015 have the same impact on a new group of men and women in our diocese who will joyfully seek the Lord's will and live it with vigor and strength from Jesus Christ. Our encouragement of young women and men to consecrate themselves to a life of service will deepen our own relationship with Jesus Christ and will move our world toward greater sanctification.

What would you say to someone who wants to leave the Catholic Church?

BY MARLON DE LA TORRE

I WOULD IMAGINE THAT NO ONE EVER WANTS TO SEE A LOVED ONE WALK AWAY FROM THE CHURCH.

This scenario plays out more often than not with the people I speak to on a daily basis. A day doesn't go by without encountering someone who is Catholic but not practicing.

When I recently taught on this topic to a large capacity crowd who were anxiously waiting for the magic formula, I asked them a basic question: How many of you know someone who has either left the Church or is considering leaving the Church? To the surprise of everyone, all hands were raised. It's a situation that has become all too prevalent for a myriad of reasons. One of the main reasons Catholics leave the Church is a continual disassociation from the Church, or in other words, a loss of belonging in the Church.

St. John Paul II once said that conversion requires convincing of sin (*CCC 1848*) which in turn involves an active conscience and the ability to authentically distinguish right from wrong, grace versus sin. It was very apparent to me that the audience was deeply concerned about their loved ones who have left the Church and had an ardent desire to do something about it. A point I stressed throughout the presentation was to not lose hope and fall into despair. There is no sense in joining the "misery loves company" approach. Regardless of the reasons someone either leaves or is contemplating leaving the Church it's

usually for the wrong reasons.

WHAT SHOULD YOU SAY?

Many of us worry that we'll say the wrong thing and drive our loved one further away from the Church. Thus the temptation might be to say nothing at all or just pray. From one perspective it shouldn't matter, because some have already left the Church in mind and spirit. Cynicism set aside, honestly there is no way you can truly assess whether what you say will have a lasting impact or not. Your actions however can paint a different story. The key is that if you say or do something, may it be reverent (*1 Peter 3:15-17*).

When talking with someone about the Church it's important that your Christian actions speak louder than your words. Genuine discipleship goes a long way in communicating the faith to someone. As I mentioned earlier, one of the main reasons people either leave or drift away is that they have no intimate relationship with the Church, especially the Church community. They don't necessarily see themselves as part of God's plan. At times it boils down to being religious without affirming God.

LEAVING FOR THE WRONG REASONS

A recent article at the *Our Sunday Visitor Weekly* highlighted a study conducted in the Diocese of Springfield, Illinois on why Catholics leave the Church. When the sample size data was collected,

five main reasons stood out within the Diocese of Springfield as to why people left the Church: birth control, ordination of women, civil marriage after divorce, fertility treatments, same-sex marriage. These five reasons should come as no surprise in that they are related to core doctrinal teachings of the Church. This statistic shows us how easily ignorance becomes doctrine. If the Diocese of Springfield is any indication of why Catholics leave the Church in general, then our efforts must be directed at clarifying any misconceptions of the faith through our visible and authentic witness of the Gospel. One of the most striking reasons Catholics tend to leave the Church was a loss of the sense of community which led to people no longer believing in the Church, which in turn caused dissatisfaction with the Church as a whole.

Are these legitimate reasons for leaving the Church? Those that left think so, but regardless of the reasons, this diocesan study does reveal an underlying theme: "Why can't the Church give me what I want when I want it?" This "me-centric versus Christocentric" attitude is at the heart of the great diaspora of Catholics from the Church.

St. Paul in his letter to the Ephesians presents the counterpoint of being part of the Body of Christ, when he reminds the people of Ephesus that they are no longer strangers and sojourners, but are fellow citizens with the holy ones and members of



Marlon De La Torre is the director of Catechesis for the Diocese of Fort Worth, and author of *SCREWTAPE TEACHES THE FAITH: A GUIDE FOR CATECHISTS*.

the household of God, built upon the foundation of the Apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus Himself as the capstone. Through Him the whole structure is held together and grows into a temple sacred in the Lord; in Him you also are being built together into a dwelling place of God in the Spirit (*Ephesians 2:9-22*).

WHAT'S THE NEXT STEP?

Pray! In particular pray that the person in question is open to God and begins to cooperate with Him. Jesus for example would call upon his disciples to prayer, almsgiving, and fasting as the means to cooperate with God (*Matthew 6*). This makes logical sense because these actions aim to draw us away from ourselves and toward God.

Intercessory prayer is by far one of the greatest spiritual weapons you can use for someone who has fallen away from the Church. The desire for God is naturally written in our human heart because it comes from God Himself. We must not forget that we are created for Him and are called to be in communion with Him. It's an invitation to converse with God (*CCC 27*). And this is what anyone who is considering leaving the Church needs, a genuine invitation to stay home.

December 25th may be past, but The Church is a Pilgrim Church

BY DENISE BOSSERT

DEPARTMENT STORES HAVE THEIR LINEN SALES GOING ON. IF YOU HAVE BEEN WAITING FOR A GREAT DEAL ON A NEW COMFORTER, NOW IS THE TIME. Home supply stores are pushing materials for indoor fix-it projects. If your kitchen floor looks like mine, maybe it's time to price floor tile or new cork options.

December 25th has come and gone. Everyone is moving on — especially marketing departments. Not a speck of the faith remains on store shelves. Maybe our souls mimic that reality. We are done. Ready to move on. We want to sit at home, nest a while, go nowhere and pay off Christmas. Whatever energy we can muster is directed toward getting back to work, back to school, back to life.

We're worn out. Even the idea of travel is set aside now that Thanksgiving and December 25th have come and gone.

But when was the faith journey ever in step with the culture? Perhaps it is a good time to be even more faith-minded than before. Perhaps it is the right time to make a pilgrimage to Christ, with Christ, or for Christ.

Maybe it's because I traveled to the Holy Land twice in 2014, but I have pilgrimage on the brain. Last



Men dressed as the Three Wise Men ride their horses as they take part in the Three Kings Cavalcade in celebration of the Epiphany in Warsaw, Poland.
(CNS file photo/Adam Kozak, Agencja Gazeta via Reuters)

May, while writing a book on the Visitation, I journeyed with Mary to Ein Kerem where she remained with her relative Elizabeth for three months. During Advent, I journeyed with the Blessed Mother to Bethlehem where Our Lord was born. And now, while the rest of the American culture is packing up Christmas and moving on, I am still making pilgrimages — at least spiritually.

Key liturgical dates rise up before us now and remind

us that it is not the time to be sitting with our feet up. It is time to make a journey to Christ, with Christ and for Christ. These major liturgical events pivot around the idea of pilgrimage. So put your hiking boots on. The spiritual journey is just beginning.

January 4: The Epiphany

It's almost like poetry. It's a clarion call. "Rise up in splendor! Your light has come, and the glory of the Lord shines upon you."

These words from *Isaiah* (60:1) come to us on the Solemnity of the Epiphany, and they are the mandate.

Isaiah describes a people on the move. Sons and daughters come from afar. The wealth of nations is brought to the Lord. Caravans of camels from Sheba, treasures from Kedar and Nebaioth. Everyone is coming with offerings for the Lord.

And then the Gospel reading showcases one of the greatest pilgrimages in all



Pope Francis uses incense to venerate an icon of the Presentation of Jesus as he celebrates a Mass to open the extraordinary Synod of Bishops on the family in St. Peter's Basilica Oct. 5. (CNS photo/Paul Haring)

salvation history. Magi see a natal star rising in the sky; do they decide to sit around and watch television, buy some new linens, and fix up their palaces? No. They decide to go and see this King.

Upon entering the house, they saw the Child with his mother. And they opened up their treasures and laid them before the Lord.

The desire remains in us to find this Christ and to lay our own gifts before Him. What gifts do you have?

Is this the year to unwrap them and lay them before the Blessed Mother and her Son? We have stars of our own which we must follow:

The Liturgy of the Hours. Sacred Scripture. Books by countless saints. A word spoken by someone that becomes a bit of grace at just the right moment. These are the stars that point to Christ. We must seek Him, but let's go one step further. We must help others to seek Him.

Liturgy of the Hours. Sacred Scripture. Books by countless saints. A word spoken by someone that becomes a bit of grace at just the right moment. These are the stars that point to Christ. We must seek Him, but let's go one step further. We must help others to seek Him.

They aren't expecting it right now; so now is the powerful time to evangelize. To send a note. To share a book. To light a candle. To invite a friend to visit a shrine with you.

We must seek Him. In the poor. In a child. The rest of the world has something else to think about now that donating to a food pantry or helping in a soup kitchen is so yesterday. But the need remains. The need is so today.

Seek Him in the children — who are down in the dumps about returning to school or a spouse who isn't

ready to return to work, or a neighbor you haven't seen lately. Help another to see the face of Christ in you. Help someone encounter Jesus Christ when you are buying groceries, by being joy-filled at the check-out, while others give the cashier a post-holiday attitude.

February 2: The Presentation in the Temple

While the Magi made a pilgrimage to Jesus Christ, Mary and Joseph made their pilgrimage with Jesus Christ. It was a deliberate journey to

present the Son of God — to God. This is hard to imagine. They made the journey with Christ to present God to God!

Ah, does this sound like anything you do? Does it ring any bells? Any communion bells?

Yes, each time we make a mini-pilgrimage to Mass or Adoration, we are following in the footsteps of Mary and Joseph. We are traveling with Christ to offer the Eucharist (Christ) to God. We are going up to the New Jerusalem for a Divine Presentation.

Perhaps this is the perfect time for you to add an hour of Adoration to your week. Maybe it is the right time to rise a little earlier and make a pilgrimage to daily Mass — to offer Jesus Christ to God the Father.

A Pilgrimage to Christ, with Christ, for Christ

At a time when everyone is ready to move on, sit home, nest, perhaps it is a good time to be counter-cultural and deliberately make a pilgrimage.

We are a pilgrimage people. We were never meant to settle comfortably into our surroundings, contemplating new linens and new floors.

We have seen the star. So put on your hiking boots. Let's make a pilgrimage to Our God!

The Church continues to celebrate!

BY JEFF HEDGLEN

THE CHRISTMAS DINNER DISHES ARE PILED UP IN THE SINK; THE WRAPPING PAPER IS AN AMOEBA-SHAPED BLOB IN THE CORNER, and the family members are, either playing with their new gifts, trying on their new clothes, or taking a nap. I suppose this means Christmas is over and it is just 3 p.m. Christmas day!

This might be the way the holiday plays out in the secular world, but in the Catholic Church, the celebrating is just getting started. In fact, starting with Christmas and going through Feb. 2, there are a total of 14 Solemnities and Feasts celebrated. This is the highest concentration of special days on the liturgical calendar all year.

But before I go any farther let me clarify some terms. Until recently I was pretty ignorant about the difference between a Solemnity, a Feast, and a Memorial. I knew they were special days, but had no idea what differentiated them.

Solemnities hold the highest rank among Church celebrations, and there are 24 of these days on the annual liturgical calendar. A Solemnity is a day that recalls and glorifies an important event in the life of Jesus, and the most significant mysteries of the Catholic faith, days like: Christmas, Epiphany, Easter, Pentecost, etc. Other solemnities honor the Blessed



A calendar reliquary showing relics of saints with feasts in the first three months of the year displayed at St. Anthony's Chapel on Troy Hill in Pittsburgh. (CNS photo/Nancy Wiechec)

Mother: the Immaculate Conception, the Assumption, the Annunciation, and Mary, Mother of God. Some saints are acknowledged with a solemnity: St. Joseph, the Nativity of St. John the Baptist, Sts. Peter and Paul, and All Saints Day.

Celebrations identified on the Church calendar as a Feast typically honor a special saint or one of the apostles as well as other important events in Christian history like: the Baptism of the Lord, the Conversion of St. Paul, the Transfiguration, etc. Most feasts are fixed dates on the calendar.

A Memorial is a feast day of relatively low importance. However, all priests must recall the saint commemorated, in the Masses they celebrate on the Memorial and in the Liturgy of the Hours.

Some Memorials are

optional, these are the lowest class of feast day. The priest is permitted to celebrate the feast day or not as he chooses. The saints or events celebrated in these feast days are considered to be of less universal importance to the Church.

Here are some of the special celebrations coming up, their dates and what kind of day each is:

JANUARY 1: *Mary Mother of God – Solemnity*

JANUARY 4: *Epiphany – Solemnity*

JANUARY 5: *St. John Neumann – Memorial*

JANUARY 11: *Baptism of the Lord – Feast*

JANUARY 26: *Saints Timothy and Titus, Bishops – Memorial*

JANUARY 31: *Saint John Bosco, Priest – Memorial*

FEBRUARY 2: *The Presentation of the Lord – Feast*

The Church has these various levels of special days, not only to honor these amazing events in the life of the Church and these holy people, but also to invite all of the faithful to enter into the life of the Church in a deeper way. It is not unlike when we celebrate the birthday or anniversary of people we love. Sure, we can just send a card or send a Facebook message, but we all know that it is a deeper celebration and a more profound acknowledgment of this person when we go in person and celebrate with them.

It is the same when the Church gathers for a Solemnity or a Feast or a Memorial. It is not an accident that the Church is often called the Family of God, for we are a family, and as a family we like to gather for special occasions.

Father James Wilcox, the Vocations director for the Diocese of Fort Worth recently told me that on special Feast days he often grabs a couple of friends and heads to Dairy Queen for a Blizzard to celebrate. So this Christmas season, gather with your parish community and celebrate the great saints and special moments that are being remembered at this time of year, and then head out for a treat of some kind to continue the celebration!

Ordinary Lives Extraordinary Mission

John Wood says call to universal holiness is for us

by Susan Moses / Correspondent

DR. JOHN WOOD HAS TRANSITIONED FROM A COLLEGIATE TRACK STAR TO A SPEAKER, AUTHOR, OPTOMETRIST, HUSBAND, AND FATHER, BUT HIS DETERMINATION TO EXCEL ENDURES. With his track and field championships behind him, his outlook has changed from “Win, Win, Win” to *Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus*. Jan. 4-8, he will speak at several events in the diocese to assure Catholics that holiness is possible and that we are all called to be saints in our ordinary lives.

Wood’s book, *Ordinary Lives, Extraordinary Mission*, describes five steps to winning the spiritual battles within ourselves. Written in the language of the layperson, he uses personal examples and common, everyday experiences to help his readers make choices to become saints. He shares spiritual lessons he has learned in fixing up a dilapidated house, raising his four children, pushing his limits at track events, and working as an optometrist.

After completing optometry school, Dr. Wood launched a mobile eye care business in 2007, and he travels to more than 40 nursing homes and developmental disability facilities to provide eye care. This self-described introvert from Ohio never intended to find a second calling as a speaker or author. However, God had other plans.

His parish’s pastoral council invited him to lead a monthly program for the entire family, and Wood agreed, hoping someone else would take over after two or three lessons. He began teaching from one of the biggest influences in his spiritual life: St. John Paul II’s writings on the Theology of the Body. As his lessons developed, he was asked to speak in other locations. This book arose out of his presentations.

“John Paul II has been a huge influence in my spiritual growth. As a youth in the Catholic Church, I admired him because he had a contagious holiness that made the Gospel attractive to young people, and he called us to do something more with our faith,”

Wood explained.

“I don’t have a theology degree, and I didn’t receive a Catholic education. But in college, when many students question their faith and lose it, I dug deeper and gained a better understanding of my faith. I saw the genius of Catholicism, that it is the best way to live, and not just a set of rules or a Sunday obligation,” he continued.

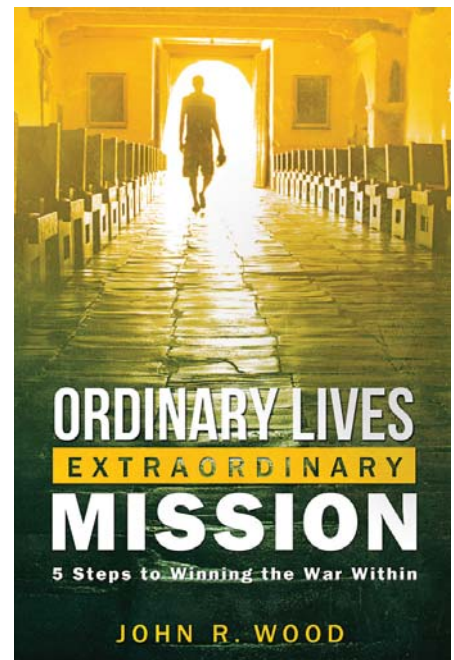
As his passion for his faith deepened, a personal mission surfaced — to re-engage Catholics who have become disengaged. “I want to help awaken the sleeping giant that is the Catholic Church,” he said.

In his book, Wood explains that Christ has given us the Church, which provides us with the weapons we need to stand in the middle of our culture and live in truth and love. Scripture, sacraments, and prayer will free us from a society based on individualism and pleasure.

Ordinary Lives, Extraordinary Mission can be condensed to one stark message: Become a saint; nothing else matters. The author details five steps to personal growth according to God’s design, beginning with defining an individual mission amidst our society’s “What’s in it for me?” mentality. The steps conclude with a call to live authentic Catholic lives spiritually, emotionally, intellectually, and physically.

“The truth is, the Catholic Church accepts everybody, just as God accepts everybody. Come as you are. However, you’d better not expect to stay as you are. The call of the Gospels is a radical call to change.”

An extended analogy explains that everything we need to accomplish our mission of becoming saints on the Holy Highway to Heaven is in God’s Church. Baptism is the entrance ramp of the road to salvation. The Eucharist fuels our journey, and Reconciliation washes us clean and provides maintenance and repairs. Angels are our seatbelts, protecting us from unexpected harm. And



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PAGE COUNT: 192

PRICE: \$15

the GPS that provides guidance and direction? Mary and the saints.

Wood said, “As an eye doctor, it’s my vocation in life to help people see the world more clearly. However, as a disciple of Christ, part of my mission in life is helping people see the truth more clearly. This world may be in darkness, but the Church is the light. We are the light of the world.”

Dr. Wood will be speaking at several events in Fort Worth in January, three of which are open to the community:

Sunday, Jan. 4 at St. Patrick Parish Hall, potluck supper after 5 p.m. Mass
Monday, Jan. 5, Young Catholic Professionals, St. Patrick Pastoral Center, 7 p.m.
Tuesday, Jan. 6 at St. Andrew Church, 7 p.m.

His presentations are accompanied by Simply RC, two musicians whose soaring talents match their zeal for the Lord.

As he balances his optometry practice, speaking engagements, and family responsibilities, Dr. Wood is completing a second book, *Saints in the Making*, scheduled to be published in 2015.



Juan Guajardo / NTC

Participants lay down glass to make a cross at David Novinski's art exhibit at the University of Dallas Ministry Conference. The conference, held at the Irving Convention Center, featured dozens of ministry and faith talks, keynote presenters, music, and exhibits for the thousands in attendance.



Juan Guajardo / NTC

Archbishop J. Michael Miller, CSB, of Vancouver delivers the keynote address on Oct. 24 at the UDMC.

2014 University of Dallas Ministry Conference attendees learn practical ways to LIVE THE 'MISSIONARY OPTION'

By North Texas Catholic Staff

VELMA SMITH ATTENDS THE UNIVERSITY OF DALLAS MINISTRY CONFERENCE (UDMC) FOR ONE VERY IMPORTANT REASON. "Our religion is an ever-learning religion," says the St. Bartholomew parishioner. "You can never grasp all that the Catholic Church has to offer."

The largest Catholic ministry conference in the Southwest gives Smith the opportunity to hear nationally-recognized speakers, network with other teachers, and pick up books and ideas she can use in her classroom.

"I'm always finding out about something new," says Smith. "It builds my faith journey."

More than 5,000 North Texas Catholics participated in the Eighth Annual UDMC held Oct. 23-25 at the Irving Convention Center. Sponsored by the Diocese of Fort Worth, the Diocese of Dallas, and the University of Dallas, the event included 200 informative sessions, worship, exhibits from Catholic publishers, live music performances, and liturgical art. For the first time, the 2014 conference schedule was extended to include some Thursday afternoon and evening programs.

Archbishop J. Michael Miller, CSB, of Vancouver opened the conference with an energizing keynote address that explored Pope

Francis' apostolic exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* (*The Joy of the Gospel*).

"This morning I am inviting you to take up the challenge of Pope Francis to become 'missionary-disciples' of Jesus Christ in the dioceses of Dallas and Fort Worth," Archbishop Miller said. "Yes, we are disciples: followers of Jesus Christ. And we are also missionaries: transmitters of the faith."

The call to both follow and lead that flows from the baptismal call of every Christian begins with an encounter with Jesus Christ, said Archbishop Miller. The transformation wrought by that encounter in turn leads the faithful to live lives filled with the joy of the Gospel, attracting those who do not know Christ.

"In *The Joy of the Gospel*, the Pope invites us to share his dream of a 'missionary option,'" Archbishop Miller said. "That is, a missionary impulse capable of transforming everything so that the Church's customs, ways of doing things, times and schedules, languages, and structures can be suitably channeled for the evangelization of today's world, rather than for her self-preservation" (*Evangelii Gaudium*, 27).

Also new to the ministry conference was a collaborative cross art project, crafted by David Novinski, that tied into the gathering's "Walk-

ing Together in Faith" theme. A focal point of the art display, the experiment became a favorite activity as the work-in-progress took shape.

"Everyone was given a small bag of stones and a prayer card," explained the Dallas sculptor. "We asked them to come by, say a prayer, and add their stones to the cross."

After the conference, Novinski will bond the beads inside the cross together with glue, transforming it into a stained-glass window. The project will remain on display at the University of Dallas before returning to the 2015 ministry conference.

More than 100 national and area speakers offered insight and education on a variety of topics ranging from general faith formation to using technology and the media to promote ministry. Many sessions were available in three languages — English, Spanish, and Vietnamese.

Robert McCarty, a prolific author and youth minister since 1973, discussed ways to effectively engage young people in the faith community. The best way to keep young people interested in the Catholic faith is to make them feel accepted and connected, he said.

For those who leave the Catholic Church, the majority do so between ages 15 and 23.

"People don't leave over teachings. They leave because their spiritual needs are not being met," McCarty suggested. "It's about the experience of belonging."

The antidote is building an environment where young people feel a strong emotional attachment to their faith community.

"Engagement is more than involvement — it's belonging. It's about connecting and building relationships," he continued. "This leads to spiritually-committed people."

McCarty also advised his listeners to carve out real opportunities for young people to participate in church activities and ministries.

"And I mean responsible participation — not just tokenism," he pointed out.

In closing, he reminded the audience



Joan Kurkowski-Gillen / NTC

Irma Jimenez runs the table for the Diocese of Fort Worth Respect Life Office.



Joan Kurkowski-Gillen / NTC

Christina Mendez, principal of St. Peter the Apostle School in White Settlement, looks over educational materials in the exhibition hall.



Juan Guajardo / NTC

Timothy Matovina from the University of Notre Dame, gives a talk on Latino Catholicism on Oct. 25.



Joan Kurkowski-Gillen / NTC

Deb McNamara, parish relations director for Catholic Charities Fort Worth promotes WORN.

of church workers, “our kids are a gift to be shared, not a problem to be solved. Think about how that changes what we do.”

Timothy Matovina, professor of theology and executive director of the Institute for Latino Studies at the University of Notre Dame, presented on “Latino Catholicism: Current Realities and Opportunities,” his analysis of the fastest-growing demographic in the U.S.

Discussing ways the U.S. Church has addressed the growing Latino population, Matovina said that for a demographic with 40 percent of the Catholic population, only six percent of priests are Latino. Of that six percent, only 20 percent are born in the U.S.

“They’re the only ones that can truly balance two cultures,” Matovina said, referring to that 20 percent, “the culture of their parents and grandparents, and the culture of the U.S.”

He also addressed the changes in parish life, saying many parishes function like two parishes in the same building. He added that many Latinos get involved in lay ecclesial movements, which help them maintain their faith.

“The biggest pastoral issue is passing on the faith to the children of these immigrants,” he said. “They grow up in this country; they live in two worlds — the world of their parents, and the world of their peers.”

Lisa Hendy, founder and editor of CatholicMom.com and author of *The Grace of Yes: Eight Virtues for Generous Living*, provided listeners with “tips, tools, and techniques for the new evangelization” using the power of the Internet in her Oct. 24 session, “Solving the Social Media Mystery.”

“Christ’s followers are to shape and influence culture,” said Hendy. “It makes sense to me that we would use these tools to share the best news in the world, which is that Jesus Christ is our Savior.”

Hendy added that using social media for the new evangelization comes with responsibilities.

“When we mishandle or misrepresent what

Mother Church has to say, that has repercussions,” she said. “What we say matters when we tweet and post about our Church.”

Hendy later added that the Internet is in an ever-changing mode, and will always have new additions to its platform.

“We need to find new and exciting ways to reach our Church right now,” she said. If the Church isn’t present in these places, Hendy said, then the only content people will find online “is a vacuum filled with the stuff we don’t want them looking at.”

In his discussion of “The Bible, The Domestic Church and the New Evangelization,” Alejandro Aguilera-Titus said families should honor, respect, and work with the teens living in the home.

“How we relate to young people within the family is extremely important because today’s generation will transmit the faith to the next generation,” explained the former lay missionary who serves as assistant director of Hispanic Affairs for the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. “We should treat young people in a way that empowers them. They are not trouble. Being young has its own gifts.”

Aguilera-Titus used illustrations and quotes from the Bible to demonstrate why sharing the Word of God is essential to building a family where people are nurtured, forgiven, and protected from harmful habits and addictions. Calling the family the “basic cell of society where the Church is born every day,” the husband and father of three admitted it’s sometimes a challenge for Catholics to feel comfortable with the Bible.

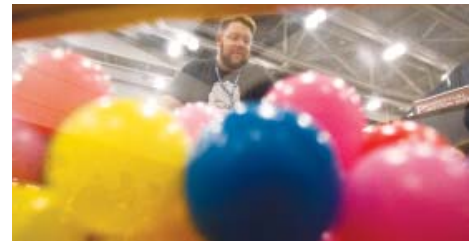
“And if you don’t feel comfortable, you won’t make the connection in terms of Catholic doctrine and teaching,” he stressed. “If we don’t know the stories and the values, we can’t make the Bible a companion for us.”

NTC Correspondents Joan Kurkowski-Gillen, Michele Baker, and Jacqueline Burkepile, and Associate Editor Tony Gutiérrez contributed to this article.



Juan Guajardo / NTC

Participants walk into a morning keynote.



Juan Guajardo / NTC

Scott Dougherty of Perpetual Motion Ministries invited UDMC attendees to sit in a ballpit—one of the many tools his ministry uses to help youth open up.



Juan Guajardo / NTC

A piece of stone from Tepeyac Hill in Mexico—where Our Lady of Guadalupe appeared to St. Juan Diego—is seen at the UDMC. The stone will go inside the OLG Shrine planned to be erected at UD.

9,000 miles from home, 13 Indian order priests answer God's call to serve the local faithful



Among the religious order priests from India serving the faithful in the Diocese of Fort Worth are Pallottine Fathers from the Society of the Catholic Apostolate (SAC). They include, from left: Fr. Balaji Boyalla, Fr. Reehan Soosai Antony, and Fr. Thomas D'Souza. (NTC / Jerry Circelli)

**By Jerry Circelli
Correspondent**

AT THE AGE OF 7, A BOY FROM AN IMPOVERISHED FAMILY IN INDIA IS SENT TO LIVE IN AN ORPHANAGE AFTER HIS FATHER DIES. He resides there until age 13, when priests from the Society of the Catholic Apostolate (SAC), better known as the Pallottines, reach out and bring him into their school. The Pallottine fathers see something holy and reverent in the teenager who grew up among the poorest of the poor in India. And they are quite right in this case.

The youngster greatly admires the German priests running the Pallottine school at the time. They are loving, kind, and full of great wisdom. He sees these priests as mentors and aspires to be just like them.

"I became motivated to learn more about

God. I read holy books. So much was done for me at that school. And it was there that I felt called to be a priest," recalled Father Thomas D'Souza, SAC, who pursued his calling and was ordained a priest in the apostolic society in 1988.

"All my formation and who I am today, I owe to them completely," Fr. D'Souza said of the Pallottine fathers.

Like others in the society — founded by St. Vincent Pallotti in 1835 in Rome — Fr. D'Souza embarked on a lifelong journey to promote the Gospel, renew Christian faith, and rekindle love.

As a missionary priest, Fr. D'Souza's travels have taken him throughout India, serving as a parish priest and working in mission schools and formation houses.

Twenty-four years after his ordination, Fr. D'Souza's ministry expanded to the United

States. In 2012, he was assigned to Our Lady of Lourdes Church in Mineral Wells as associate pastor. He now serves as pastor of the Catholic Community of Jack and Wise Counties, which includes St. John the Baptizer Parish in Bridgeport, St. Mary Parish in Jacksboro, and Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary Parish in Decatur.

Consider this: When you donate to a charity, perhaps so that missionaries can help a poor child growing up in an orphanage, someday the person you helped might become your parish priest. Fr. D'Souza is proof of that.

The story of Fr. D'Souza is just one among many whose personal story offers some perspective on the 13 religious priests from India now serving in parishes and ministries in the Diocese of Fort Worth. Many, like Fr. D'Souza, serve multiple parishes.

These priests, and others in India, were

influenced by Christians before them who possessed missionary zeal and unshakable faith.

Among the most notable was the 16th century, Spanish-born priest, St. Francis Xavier. One of the founders of the Society of Jesus, St. Francis Xavier evangelized extensively in Southern India, lived and worked among the poor, and built nearly 40 churches along its coast. Although he died on a Chinese island, the body of the saint now lies at the Basilica of Bom Jesus in Goa. This is the same state in India where Fr. D'Souza was born and received schooling from the Pallottines.

The evangelization work of St. Francis Xavier continues to this day. "It was a seed that was sown by our great missionaries," Fr. D'Souza said.

The Very Rev. Balaji Boyalla, SAC, pastor of Our Lady of Lourdes and dean of the Southwest Deanery, also continues the missionary work that has a strong foundation in India.

Ordained in 1999, Father Boyalla served several years as a parish priest in India. In 2008, he was asked by his SAC superiors to continue his ministry in the United States, and that year he arrived and was appointed associate pastor at Holy Family Parish in Fort Worth. After serving at that parish for two years, Fr. Boyalla was named pastor of Our Lady of Lourdes Parish in Mineral Wells and St. Francis of Assisi Parish in Graford, where he continues today.

Like Fr. D'Souza, Fr. Boyalla and Father Reehan Soosai Antony, associate pastor for the Catholic Community of Jack and Wise Counties, are Pallottines from their society's Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary Province based out of the Southern Indian city of Bangalore. In fact, Fr. D'Souza was a formator and taught philosophy to Fr. Boyalla when he



attended seminary in Southern India.

Like the other priests from India now serving here, Fr. Boyalla said that being assigned to a Catholic church in the United States was a challenge at first.

"It was a world of difference when I came from India to America. It was a big change for me, personally," Fr. Boyalla said. Cultural differences in food, lifestyles, and even within the structure of the Church in the U.S. presented challenges, he said.

"In India, the priest takes care of everything," Fr. Boyalla said. It took some adjustment to grasp the concept of lay ministry, he said, but he quickly learned to appreciate the involvement of laity. "Here it is something very special that people share in ministry.

"There are some cultural differences," Fr. Boyalla continued, "but as a priest, your responsibilities are the same. Whether you are in India, whether you are in America, or whether you are in Europe — your ministry is to be a priest. And I have found that people are loving everywhere. I truly enjoy my ministry as a pastor."

Father Mathew Kavipurayidam, TOR, pastor at St. Thomas the Apostle Parish in Fort Worth, expressed the same sentiments. Ordained in India in 1975, he is a Franciscan Third Order Regular priest from the Province of St. Thomas the Apostle in India. The order traces its foundation to St. Francis of Assisi nearly 800 years ago.

"What makes me happy," said Fr. Kavipurayidam, "is to do the work wherever the Lord sends me. This is the Universal Church. The people of God are everywhere, no matter the language or the culture. I give what I have, but I learn from them, also," the priest said. "It has been a great experience for me to work in a different country and a different culture."

Like Fr. Boyalla, Fr. Kavipurayidam said it took him a little time to adjust to the role of laity in the Catholic Church in America.

"It was a challenge for me," Fr. Kavipurayidam said. "It took me awhile to get to know the place and the people and the way things are done here."

Fr. Kavipurayidam, who served at St. Catherine of Siena in Carrollton from 2004 to 2014 before being assigned to St. Thomas, said

Father Antony Mathew, TOR, celebrating the first Mass on the site of the new St. Thomas the Apostle Parish, as their pastor, is now Parochial Administrator of Holy Cross Parish in the Colony. (NTC / Joan Kurkowski-Gillen)



Fr. Gerald Gordon, TOR, former parochial vicar at St. Andrew Parish chats with Fr. Joy Joseph, TOR, pastor of Holy Family Parish, Vernon at a clergy day on the RCIA. (NTC / Juan Guajardo)

he has also come to respect and admire the differences.

"I have been especially impressed that in the Church here, the role of laity is very important. In India it is mostly a clerical Church. The priest decides things mostly on his own. Here, I have learned to work with people to get things done. It was a great learning experience for me," Fr. Kavipurayidam said.

Not only can a Church leader get more done when ideas are shared, the priest said, but "you develop a great relationship with the community. And I have been so impressed by their faith and commitment, and that so many people are devoted to serving the Church."

Fr. Kavipurayidam was raised in a strong Christian family in the state of Kerala in South India. His sister is a nun in India; several of his nieces are nuns, and two of his nephews are in the seminary.

Also from a devout Catholic family from Kerala is Father Joy Joseph, TOR. The two priests have much in common. Not only are both TOR priests from the same region of India, but Fr. Kavipurayidam was also the rector of the seminary where Fr. Joseph studied theology.

Ordained in 1995, Fr. Joseph arrived in Texas in 2008 and was assigned as associate pastor at St. Catherine. He also served as associate pastor at St. Patrick Cathedral in Fort Worth before becoming pastor of Holy Family of Nazareth Parish in Vernon, St. Joseph Parish in Crowell, and St. Mary Parish in Quanah.

Fr. Joseph's aunt and sister are both nuns. His mother, he added, was a strong influence

CONTINUED ON PAGE 34

on his formation as a priest.

“My mom always read us stories from the Bible and told us about the lives of missionaries. She explained to me how noble a vocation it was to be a missionary,” Fr. Joseph said. “That was the initial sowing of the seed for me.”

The call to be a priest grew, Fr. Joseph said, and at the end of high school, “my desire got stronger and stronger. It became a deep desire and no one could block it.”

It is not uncommon, said Fr. Joseph, to find devout Catholics from Kerala who are eager to spread the Good News. Christianity there dates back to St. Thomas the Apostle — the namesake of Fr. Joseph’s Franciscan province.

St. Thomas arrived in Kerala in 52 A.D. At the command of Jesus to spread the Gospel throughout the world, St. Thomas ventured forth to India. Fr. Joseph explained that St. Thomas made his way to India with Jews who traveled to the country to trade for coveted spices. St. Thomas, however, came not to gather spices, but to spread the word of God.

“Sometimes,” Fr. Joseph remarked, “people ask me, ‘Are your parents Catholic?’” Many do not realize, he said, that Christianity in India dates back to the first century, brought by a disciple of Jesus. According to Fr. Joseph and Fr. Kavipurayidam, about 25 percent of the population of Kerala is Catholic.

This strong Catholic region of India, where Christianity was introduced by St. Thomas the Apostle, was also the home to Father Sojan George, HGN.

Ordained in 2000, Fr. George is now pastor of Our Lady Queen of Peace Parish in Wichita Falls. He has served as associate pastor at St. John the Apostle Parish in North Richland Hills, as well as St. Patrick Cathedral and St. George Parish in Fort Worth. He has also been pastor at the three churches in the Catholic Community of Jack and Wise Counties.

“Kerala is referred to as the Ireland of India,” Fr. George said, explaining that missionaries from there have spread the Gospel in Northern India and throughout the world.

In Fr. George’s case, it was his superior

Father Mathew Kavipurayidam, TOR, pastor of St. Catherine of Siena Parish in Carrollton, poses with pilgrims from his parish and Bishop Kevin Vann during the diocese’s 2009 pilgrimage to Rome. *(Photo supplied)*



Father Sojan George, HGN, comes from the state of Kerala, which is 25 percent Catholic. He is the pastor of Our Lady Queen of Peace Parish in Wichita Falls. *(NTC /Donna Ryckaert)*

from the Heralds of Good News (HGN) missionary society — founded in India in 1984 — who asked him to serve in the Diocese of Fort Worth. As in all cases, the superiors of religious orders and societies in India responded to requests from bishops in the Diocese of Fort Worth for priests to serve at churches here.

Fr. George explained that he has served under three bishops since he first arrived in 2002. “And they have all been great,” he said.

“I love the diocese and the people here,”

Fr. George said. “I have been welcomed with open arms wherever I was assigned. People are warm and friendly, and they have a Texas-sized heart.”

Fr. Albert Francis Kanjirathumkal, HGN, is also from Kerala and the Heralds of Good News missionary society. He was ordained in India in 2008 and arrived here in 2010. Fr. George was his philosophy professor at seminary in India.

Fr. Kanjirathumkal has served as associate pastor at St. Patrick Cathedral in Fort Worth and as a sacramental priest at Sacred Heart Parish in Wichita Falls. He is now the sacramental priest at Sacred Heart Parish in Seymour and St. Mary of the Assumption Parish in Megargel.

“I am honored to work in the Diocese of Fort Worth,” Fr. Kanjirathumkal said. “This is really a vibrant diocese. The faithful here are very receptive to the word of God and to new priests, like me.”

“People here are very appreciative and encouraging to us,” Fr. Kanjirathumkal added. “We are away from our home in India, but when you get to know people here and they accept you and express their encouragement, it makes you feel good. We feel at home.”

All of the priests from India who shared their life stories with the *North Texas Catholic*, expressed similar sentiments about acceptance and appreciation from the local faithful.

“You can’t imagine how many times people tell us that they appreciate us,” Fr. Boyalla said, providing insight about himself and fellow missionary priests from India. “When we hear that, it’s great encouragement. Every day, it shows and reminds us that people love us and what we are doing.”

“I think that’s what keeps us going,” Fr. Boyalla said. “This is a very loving and inviting community. The people are always right there to support you. It’s nice to be here.”



Religious order priests from India serving the Diocese of Fort Worth

Heralds of the Good News (HGN)

Fr. Alexander Ambrose,
Associate Pastor; St. Patrick
Cathedral in Fort Worth

Fr. Sojan George, Pastor; Our
Lady Queen of Peace Parish in
Wichita Falls

Fr. Albert Francis
Kanjirathumkal; Sacramental
Priest; Sacred Heart Parish
in Seymour, St. Mary of the
Assumption Parish in Megargel

Fr. John Antony Perikomalayil,
Sacramental Priest; St. Joseph
Parish in Rhineland, Santa
Rosa Parish in Knox City

Society of the Catholic Apostolate, Pallottines (SAC)

Very Rev. Balaji Boyalla, Pastor;
Our Lady of Lourdes Parish in
Mineral Wells, St. Francis of
Assisi Parish in Graford
Dean of Southwest Deanery

Fr. Reehan Soosai Antony,
Associate Pastor; St. John the
Baptizer Parish in Bridgeport,
St. Mary Parish in Jacksboro,
Assumption of the Blessed
Virgin Mary Parish in Decatur

Fr. Thomas D'Souza, Pastor;
St. John the Baptizer Parish in
Bridgeport, St. Mary Parish in
Jacksboro, Assumption of the
Blessed Virgin Mary Parish in
Decatur

Third Order Regular Franciscans (TOR)

Fr. Joy Joseph, Pastor;
Holy Family of Nazareth Parish
in Vernon, St. Joseph Parish
in Crowell, St. Mary Parish in
Quanah

Fr. Mathew
Kavipurayidam, Pastor;
St. Thomas the Apostle Parish
in Fort Worth

Fr. Augustine Kolapuram,
Pastor; St. Catherine of Siena
Parish in Carrollton

Fr. Antony Mathew, Parochial
Administrator;
Holy Cross Parish in The
Colony

Fr. George Thennattil, Priest
in Residence; St. Mary of the
Assumption Parish in Fort
Worth

Fr. Sushil Tudu, Associate
Pastor; St. Thomas the Apostle
Parish in Fort Worth

Catholic Charities offers workshops to help immigrants respond to Obama executive order

By **Joan Kurkowski-Gillen**
Correspondent

Xergio Chacin has a warning for the 100,000 to 200,000 illegal immigrants living in the Diocese of Fort Worth directly impacted by President Barack Obama's anticipated plan to overhaul immigration policy.

During twice-weekly free information sessions at Catholic Charities campus, 249 W. Thornhill Dr., Chacin, the agency's director of immigration services, cautions clients to be wary of charlatans who want to save them a place in line for money.

"As we suspected, there are a lot of people trying to profit by offering to expedite the process for payment," said Chacin who meets with eager immigrants every Wednesday at 8 a.m. and Friday at 1 p.m. "Paying people money will not give you priority or put you first in line."

In a prime-time address to the country on Nov. 20, Obama said he would stop the deportation of parents who have lived in the country at least five years and have children who are either U.S. citizens or legal permanent residents. That protection also

extends to children who entered the country illegally with their parents before 2010. Both groups can work in the U.S. legally after passing a background check and paying a fee.

Law enforcement will focus future deportation efforts on criminals.

The executive order falls short of granting amnesty because it does not provide a path for legalization.

It will take 180 days for the president's plan to become "actionable" but Chacin's department is already assisting hundreds of immigrants who are turning to Catholic Charities for help.

At information meetings, attended by 10 to 50 participants, the experienced immigration advocate explains the details of the president's announcement, answers questions, and gives them written information on how they can gather their own documentation. He also stresses there are no short cuts in the process.

"Nothing else can be done at this point," Chacin reiterates. "The truth is there's a good level of opposition to this measure, so we never know what's going to happen. It's

not a solution that Congress passed."

People are desperate to normalize their situation. They want to lawfully work, report their taxes and drive with proper documentation.

But the president's executive action to reform immigration, "could disappear along with any money you pay someone. People need to be aware of that."

Over the next few months, Catholic Charities will bring the free information sessions to parishes. A Dec. 17 meeting was held in Wichita Falls and more are planned in other locations after the New Year.

"We'll be going to all 28 counties," the director promises. "Our commitment is to be available in every corner of the diocese."

Catholic Charities Fort Worth is also gearing up to provide legal services to a group of unaccompanied minors who remained in North Texas after an immigration surge this summer. Thousands of unaccompanied children crossed from Mexico into the United States from Central America's Northern Triangle — Honduras, El Salvador,

and Guatemala. Many received care at a Catholic Charities shelter in Fort Worth during the border crisis.

"We're going to court with them to obtain the benefits they might be eligible for," Chacin explained.

Recently, the U.S. State Department set up a process so children in these Central American countries can apply for refugee status.

"The idea is to avoid having children make the dangerous trek to the U.S.," Chacin continued. "It's a process that already existed in other parts of the country. It's called an affidavit of relationship."

Anchor parents living legally in the U.S. can apply to be reunited with children by claiming their youngsters face danger in their native country.

"They can say they are in danger or fear persecution and can come to the United States as refugees," the director added. "As a registered agency for refugee resettlement, Catholic Charities will start helping clients with these affidavits of relationship. We will help fill out the forms for parents who have this claim."

Central American communities are not large in the diocese, so Chacin does not expect a huge demand for assistance.

"But we do expect some inquiries," he said.

January 4, The Epiphany of the Lord.

Cycle B. Readings:

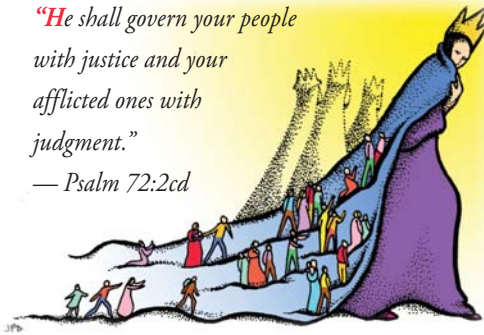
- 1) Isaiah 60:1-6
Psalm 72:1-2, 7-8, 10-13
- 2) Ephesians 3:2-3a, 5-6
Gospel) Matthew 2:1-12

By Jeff Hensley

I learned about the significance of Three Kings' Day, or Epiphany, from my Puerto Rican friend Pedro Moreno. The day is celebrated in grand fashion throughout Latin America, and though the gifts are more valuable at Christmas, the real celebration, the real hoopla of the Christmas season comes with Epiphany.

Pedro would joyously regale me with tales of the season as celebrated on the island. One of the most memorable of the customs in Puerto Rico was that of providing hospitality for visitors who would

"He shall govern your people with justice and your afflicted ones with judgment."
— Psalm 72:2cd



show up on the holiday. If friends come to your door, it is a matter of significant obligation that you offer them food and drink for as long as they want to stay — even if that stay extends into the next morning.

Those of us raised in other cultures may ask why this holiday is valued so highly in Latin American countries. But as I've been reading the Scriptures for this weekend, it has occurred to

me just how right they may be.

For the coming of the three Wise Men, or the three kings, is the coming of all of us who are not of Jewish birth to honor the king who has come into our midst — God among us — Jesus.

The Epiphany, showing forth publicly the Son of God to those from other cultures, foreshadows what is spoken of in *Isaiah 60*: "Nations shall walk by your light, and kings by your shining radiance." His effect on the affairs of men is spoken of in the readings from *Psalm 72*: "For he

shall rescue the poor when he cries out, and the afflicted when he has no one to help him. He shall have pity for the lowly and the poor."

So the Wise Men come to honor the new King, and the new King comes to bring forth a new kind of kingship, one that rescues the poor, one that hears the afflicted when they cry out.

The Wise Men represent us bringing our best, but what the King brings them — and us — is the gift of justice, the gift of compassion — the gift of lifting up the poor.

Yes, perhaps my friend Pedro and the rest of the Hispanic world have it right. Is that knocking I hear? Open the door to hospitality!

QUESTIONS:

What gift can you give to honor the King who gifts us with loving, compassionate charity?

January 11, The Baptism of the Lord.

Cycle B. Readings:

- 1) Isaiah 42:1-4, 6-7
Psalm: 29:1-4, 9-10
- 2) Acts 10:34-38
Gospel) Mark 1:7-11

By Jean Denton

At age 16, Carlos had a hard time articulating what he felt inside.

He was trying to explain what inspired him to become the lead teacher of the fifth grade class in his parish's Christian formation program.

Shortly after he was confirmed last spring, Carlos said, he volunteered to help teach vacation Bible school to the young children at his church. The experience made him desire more of the same.

"I feel like I was put in this

"My word shall not return to me void, but shall do my will."
— Isaiah 55:11



ministry because of something I have," he explained, earnestly pointing to his heart and looking for the right words. "It's something I have — wanting to teach, wanting people to know what I know. It's kind of being a leader."

He grinned sheepishly as he gave up the attempt to say what he meant. His friends teased him playfully. "Yes, the leader of the flock," one laughed. But it was obvious they admired and listened to

him. Clearly, they believed Carlos' "something I have" was a gift in their community.

Indeed, the Christian formation director of his parish affirmed that Carlos was a conscientious, diligent teacher and that the children in his class looked up to him.

In the words Carlos couldn't find, he "was called." He sensed a fire in his spirit insisting that he share with others something he cared deeply about: his faith and love of God.

It was amazing to hear a person his age say that he wanted to explain his Catholic faith to others, not to show that it was right, but so others could "know

what I know" and realize God's goodness.

This weekend's Gospel tells about Jesus' baptism. When Jesus emerged from the baptismal waters, the Spirit descended on him and his life took on new meaning. That life of love would have the power to save us all.

Our Catholic faith teaches that in our own baptism we are joined to Christ, dying to earthly life and emerging with Him, resurrected to new life, to be inspired by the Holy Spirit.

As it happened with Carlos after his confirmation, this new life excites us and calls us to share what we know: the incredible love of God.

QUESTIONS:

When have you felt "called" to a specific task or action by your life joined to the Spirit of Jesus? How have you witnessed someone's conversion through baptism?

January 18, Second Sunday in Ordinary Time.

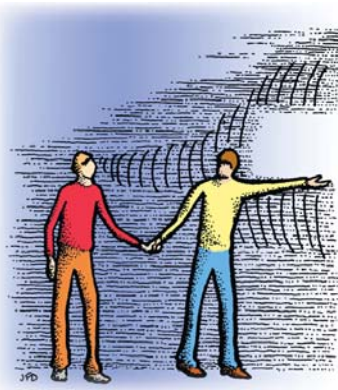
Cycle B. Readings:

- 1) Samuel 3:3b-10-11, 19
Psalm 40:2, 4, 7-10
- 2) 1 Corinthians 6:13c-15a, 17-20
Gospel) John 1:35-42

By Jeff Hedglen

Caller ID ruined a great analogy for hearing the voice of God. It used to be that you did not know who was calling until you answered the telephone. If it were someone you spoke with all the time you would recognize his or her voice. But if you had never spoken on the phone before with the person, you might not know who it was at first.

The same is true with our relationship with God: The more we talk and listen to Him, the more likely we are to recognize



the voice when we hear it.

This analogy came to mind when I was reading this week's Scriptures. God calls Samuel while he is sleeping in the temple. Samuel doesn't recognize God's voice because "at that time Samuel was not familiar with the Lord, because the Lord had not revealed anything to him as yet." So he thinks it is the priest Eli who is calling him. This happens a couple of times and Eli realizes

"Speak, for your servant is listening." — 1 Samuel 3:10

that it is God calling Samuel. So he tells Samuel next time to just say, "Speak, for your servant is listening."

The Gospel has another story of God calling, but this time it is the first disciples of Jesus. John the Baptist sees Jesus walk by and lets his disciples know that this is the Lamb of God, the Messiah for whom they have been waiting. They quickly begin to follow Jesus.

In both of these Scripture passages there is a trusted person

who points people to God. It is so much easier to follow when we are pointed in the right direction. Each of us, at one time or another, is called to be the trusted person pointing the way, and at other times, we are the person in need of direction from someone we trust.

The ability to hear the voice of God in our lives boils down to a few basic things. Read the Scriptures to get to know how God talks. Take time regularly to sit quietly and listen to God. Find faith-filled people you trust — your priest or others in your church community — and talk with them about Jesus. God is calling out to us. The question is, Are we listening?

QUESTIONS:

Who is a person that has pointed you toward God? How do you usually hear the voice of God in your life?

January 25, Third Sunday in Ordinary Time.

Cycle B. Readings:

- 1) Jonah 3:1-5, 10
Psalm 25:4-9
- 2) 1 Corinthians 7:29-31
Gospel) Mark 1:14-20

By Sharon K. Perkins

In my line of work, I send lots of e-mails, and I receive quite a few of them as well. There are times when it's simply impossible to read them all promptly, and I'm forced to leave most of them unopened until a more opportune time.

But when I'm the sender, I often wonder whether the recipients use the same stalling tactics I do. How do I ensure that my messages, urgent but still competing for attention, are opened quickly and responded to right away?

Whether it's a postal envelope or an urgent e-mail request, the little tag or subject heading "TIME SENSITIVE" usually does the trick. It tells the recipient that his or her response is critical because it's tied to a particular event. It also sets up the emotional tug that says that if the response is delayed, they might miss out on something important. I know that it works because it certainly motivates me when I'm the recipient!

"This is the time of fulfillment. The kingdom of God at hand." — Mark 1:15



Today's readings are the kinds of messages that would have

"TIME SENSITIVE" stamped all over them. Nineveh, a city so huge that it took a three-day walk to cross it, responded to Jonah's call for repentance after only the first day. Its destruction wasn't forecast for 40 more days, but the people obviously weren't taking any chances.

Likewise, the epistle carries the pressing message that "time is running out," the world is "passing away," and business as usual is no longer an option.

Jesus' proclamation in Galilee is also an urgent call to repentance — but it's not meant as a forecast of doom and gloom. The word "gospel" literally means "good

news," and the really good news is that God's loving promises are fulfilled and extended to each of us on this very day.

Jesus isn't manipulating our fears but inviting us to something so good that we would be foolish to miss out on even one more minute! The power of that proclamation certainly motivated Simon, Andrew, James, and John to leave their trade and follow Him immediately.

In our lives, we are inundated with messages clamoring for our attention. Some are more consequential than others and weighing their relative importance is tricky. But there's one "TIME SENSITIVE" message that outweighs them all, and Jesus is waiting for a response.

QUESTIONS:

What is Jesus' "time sensitive" message to you personally? How can you respond to Him, not out of fear but motivated by hope and joy?

February 1, Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time.

Cycle B. Readings:

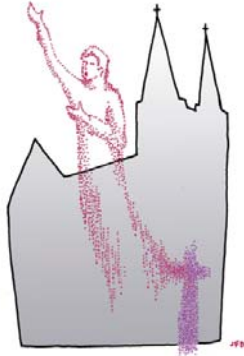
- 1) Deuteronomy 18:15-20
Psalm 95:1-2, 6-9
- 2) 1 Corinthians 7:32-35
Gospel) Mark 1:21-28

By Jeff Hensley

Coming back home to my Christian faith was a gradual process. I had walked away from the strong faith I'd had through my late teen years as my church attendance dropped to nothing. I'm not so sure I ever rejected faith so much as I simply let it die from lack of attention.

But it didn't stay dead for long. It started to come back as a result of late night conversations with a friend whose own faith was being rekindled. Reading Scripture nurtured the spark in my own life.

"I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their kin, and will put my words into his mouth." — Deuteronomy 18:18ab



Plus, I got a nudge from a neighbor down the road in rural Arkansas where we were working in the local schools as VISTA volunteers. She was a nun who had taken time away from the convent to care for her aging mother.

Sister Mary Herlinda loaned me a book, *The Cross and the Switchblade*, by David Wilkerson, and invited my wife and me to

take part in a little prayer meeting she had organized among three or so of our neighbors. It was a beginning.

When Susan and I returned to Fort Worth, we continued our sporadic church attendance at the closest Catholic church, and in time I began to take inquiry classes.

This was before the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults existed, and these classes outlining the basics of the Catholic faith took place over a period of six weeks in the parish library.

As I came to know more about Catholicism, I discovered that the Church spoke to all aspects of

humanity — holiness, personal relationships, family life, social justice, the economy, and issues of war and peace among them.

This new understanding likely played the largest role in my conversion to the Catholic faith. The Scriptures for this week-end remind me of that spiritual reawakening.

Speaking about Jesus, the Gospel reading from Mark explains: "The people were astonished at his teaching, for he taught them as one having authority and not as the scribes."

And so I found the Church. She, the successor of Jesus, the embodiment of his teaching authority on earth, taught with authority. She still does, and I'm still glad I became a Catholic.

QUESTIONS:

Have you struggled with the teaching authority of the Church? How have you resolved those struggles?

February 8, Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time.

Cycle B. Readings:

- 1) Job 7:1-4, 6-7
Psalm 147:1-6
- 2) 1 Corinthians 9:16-19, 22-23
Gospel) Mark 1:29-39

By Jean Denton

Misfortune arises too often in the world for anybody to avoid being touched by trouble. A fire in the oven, your car towed, being locked out of your house — maybe all in the same memorable week. It happens.

At such times one's thoughts often turn to the hero of today's first reading: Job.

In this passage, he laments his life is drudgery through months of misery and believes, "I shall not see happiness again."

We've all been there at the edge of giving up, especially for matters far worse than a car being towed.

"The whole town was gathered at the door. He cured many who were sick with various diseases."

— Mark 1:33-34



But the Gospel reminds us that even if the world continually comes at us with hardship and demands, Jesus never despairs or tires of coming to our aid.

No sooner had he healed Simon's mother-in-law than the whole town came to his door seeking his help. He cured and

blessed people all day. Then when He slipped away for a respite, his disciples came calling because everyone was still looking for Him.

Without a second thought, He went, saying, "For this purpose have I come."

This is what God wants us to know: He never wearies of tending to our need.

Yesterday, my friend Isa called to tell me she had just bought a house. It was incredible news that I would never have predicted for this single mother whose life has been punctuated by a series of adversities no less devastating than what had befallen Job.

Isa's childhood in Central America was lived amid a violent civil war that took the life of her brother as well as the nuns who were her teachers. As an adult, she suffered through unjustified

immigration woes, including deportation, jail, and financial exploitation. Later, her marriage was destroyed by mental illness and abuse. Her husband died tragically, leaving her destitute and unemployed with two young children.

But as each crisis arose, Isa admitted she had no answers except her unwavering belief that "God is going to provide and help me through."

Slowly, through Isa's resourcefulness and friendships nurtured by her own innate goodness, she overcame incessant financial difficulties to achieve a stable home and recently became a U.S. citizen.

The turnaround was unbelievable to her friends, but it didn't surprise Isa, who never stopped believing in Jesus' tireless care.

QUESTIONS:

How do you pray during troubled times when you want to give up? How has Jesus carried you through a seemingly hopeless situation?

February 15, Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time.

Cycle B. Readings:

- 1) Leviticus 13:1-2, 44-46
Psalm 32:1-2, 5, 11
- 2) 1 Corinthians 10:31-11:1
Gospel) Mark 1:40-45

By Jeff Hedglen

A while back I met a friend for lunch and when I went to shake his hand he pulled back and said he was sick and didn't want to spread his germs. I said, "Thanks," and just waved at him as we took our seats.

This is a pretty common practice; wash your hands and avoid contact during flu season. The Church even implements similar protocols to help slow the spread of disease.

Now imagine what it would be like if every time you had a

*"If you wish, you can make me clean."
— Mark 1:40*



rash or were visibly sick, you had to yell out, "Unclean, unclean!" when someone came close to you.

This was the reality of people with a variety of ailments in biblical times. This week's readings relate two stories of people with leprosy. Leviticus reveals the law that demanded an unclean person announce this to all those around them. In the Gospel, Jesus cures a man who had leprosy and afterward instructs him to go show himself to the priest to be proclaimed clean.

Thankfully, modern medicine

has led us to a point where illness is not seen as being unclean. But there is another ailment that we all are afflicted with that does make us unclean, and this is sin.

Try as we might to avoid it, sin impacts each of our lives and, as a result, makes us spiritually in need of a cleansing. Lucky for us, the Church offers the Sacrament of Reconciliation so we can "show ourselves to the priest" and by the

QUESTIONS:

How are you preparing for Lent this year? How does the Sacrament of Reconciliation affect your life?

power of God be made clean.

Lent starts this week. It is a season of repentance, a time to look within ourselves for the areas that need a little extra cleaning. The 40-day journey through the spiritual desert culminates with the Passion, death, and Resurrection of Jesus. In a very real way we take our sins and failures through the desert and offer them to Jesus on the cross so that his death can triumph over them in the resurrection.

Whenever I head into the confessional for the Sacrament of Reconciliation, I feel very much like the leper in the Scriptures, unclean. But I also leave just like the leper who was healed by Jesus, because that is exactly what happens.

February 22, First Sunday of Lent.

Cycle B. Readings:

- 1) Genesis 9:8-15
Psalm 25:4-9
- 2) 1 Peter 3:18-22
Gospel) Mark 1:12-15

By Sharon K. Perkins

I live near a lovely part of the country where rolling hills blanketed with vegetation and century-old live oak trees provide habitat for wildlife and even a couple of rare species of birds. One of those endangered species, the golden-cheeked warbler, depends upon the ash juniper for its nesting material and for its very survival. On a recent drive through the hills, I was shocked and dismayed to see huge tracts of ash juniper habitat replaced by bare, rocky soil, cleared for future housing construction.

I'm all for economic growth and the rights of families to relo-



cate and prosper, but I can't help feeling profound sadness at the irreplaceable loss of vegetation and wildlife that such progress brings. It goes beyond mere sentiment to a much deeper level of sorrow that something precious is gone forever.

The biblical story of Noah and the ark has captured the imagination of generations of children. But a less romantic reading and a review of what led to the flood in the first place also points us to a profound truth: The God who created not only human

*"I will recall the covenant I have made between me and you and all living beings."
— Genesis 9:15*

beings but every living thing, goes to tremendous lengths to keep us from destroying ourselves and everything else along with us. The sadness I feel at the loss of a bird habitat is only a fraction of the grief that

God must suffer when life, especially human life, is cheapened, abused, or annihilated.

The season of Lent begins with Jesus' proclamation of the Gospel of God — but what is this message?

In his 1995 encyclical letter *Evangelium Vitae*, St. John Paul II explains, "The Gospel of life is

at the heart of Jesus' message. ... Respect, protect, love, and serve life!" Conversely, it is the lack of regard for living things that he calls "the culture of death."

At its most extreme, this could involve the direct taking of human life — but it might also include rejection of the weak and vulnerable, reckless consumption of natural resources, or the irresponsible use of our sexuality.

Lent provides the perfect opportunity to reflect upon how the "culture of death" might have taken root in our own lives, to repent accordingly, and to once again embrace and cherish the fullness of life that overflows from the creative heart of God.

QUESTIONS:

In what way have I disrespected the dignity of another human person? How have I shown a lack of regard for the sacredness of other living things?

El Papa confirma que visitará Philadelphia en septiembre 2015

Por Francis X. Rocca

CIUDAD DEL VATICANO (CNS) — El Papa Francisco dijo que asistirá al *Encuentro mundial de las familias* en Philadelphia en septiembre 2015, haciendo la primera parada confirmada en lo que se espera que sea un viaje más extenso a América del Norte.

El Papa hizo el anuncio el 17 de noviembre durante un discurso de apertura de una conferencia interreligiosa sobre el matrimonio tradicional.

“Me complace confirmar que, si Dios quiere, en septiembre del 2015 iré a Philadelphia para el octavo *Encuentro mundial de las familias*”, dijo el Papa.

El anuncio había sido ampliamente esperado, ya que el Papa Benedicto XVI había dicho antes de su retiro que esperaba asistir al evento de Philadelphia.

Catholicphilly.com informó que el Arzobispo Charles J. Chaput de Philadelphia señaló que el Papa se ha enfocado en los muchos retos que las familias enfrentan hoy día globalmente. Su carisma, presencia y voz electrificarán la reunión.

“Como he dicho muchas veces antes, creo que la presencia del Santo Padre nos unirá a todos nosotros, católicos y no católicos por igual, de maneras tremendamente poderosas y unificadoras. Esperamos con entusiasmo la llegada a Philadelphia del Papa Francisco el próximo septiembre y lo recibiremos alegremente con brazos abiertos y razones en oración”.

NOTICIAS

Mexicanos celebran la fiesta de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe en medio de serios problemas a vencer



Un hombre va de rodillas en honor de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe en la Ciudad de México el 10 de diciembre. Miles de católicos Mexicanos viajan a Ciudad de México a celebrar la fiesta de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe el 12 de diciembre. (foto de CNS/David Agren)

Por David Agren

CIUDAD DE MÉXICO (CNS) — Vestidos de playeras verdes y portando estatuas de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe cubiertas con plástico, un grupo de peregrinos del estado de Guerrero rezaron, posaron para que les tomaran fotografías frente a la basílica dedicada a la Patrona de la nación y emprendieron la marcha de regreso a su población localizada en las montañas en dirección sur de la Ciudad de México.

Y dieron diferentes razones por las que habían ido a la *Basílica de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe*, la víspera del 12 de diciembre dedicado a ella, en el que se celebra la aparición de la Virgen María a San Juan Diego, en una colina situada al norte de la Ciudad de México, en 1531.

Venimos acá “por nuestra fe católica”, dijo una mujer; “por la Virgen”, dijo otra. “Para dar gracias por los favores recibidos durante el año”, dijo Galileo

Ruiz, maestro de escuela.

Y cuando se le preguntó acerca de los estudiantes desaparecidos y posiblemente asesinados en su estado natal, Ruiz dijo: “Es una oportunidad para pedir por la aparición de los 43”, refiriéndose al número de estudiantes normalistas desaparecidos en septiembre pasado.

La *Conferencia del episcopado mexicano* hizo un llamado a un día de oración para el 12 de diciembre y se celebraron Misas por todo el país. Miembros de la jerarquía y peregrinos expresaron opiniones encontradas sobre si los mexicanos deberían convertir un día dedicado exclusivamente a la devoción, celebraciones y gracias por favores recibidos, a una oportunidad para reflexionar.

“Nuestro país está en crisis”, dijeron los obispos en una declaración. “La inequidad, la injusticia, la corrupción, la impunidad, las complicidades y la indiferencia nos han sumido en la violencia, el temor y la desesperación. Ante esto, muchísimos mexicanos nos hemos manifestado de distintas maneras para demandar justicia y paz. ... Todos somos parte de la solución para construir una nación en la que se valore la vida, dignidad y derechos de cada persona.”

La devoción a Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe se ha mantenido fuerte en México, en donde se le acredita la conversión masiva de personas al cristianismo y ha llegado a ser parte íntegra de la identidad nacional.

Obispo maronita insta a tomar una postura de ‘fuerte desafío’ ante las persecuciones

Por Theresa Laurence

NASHVILLE (CNS) — El Obispo Gregory J. Mansour de la *Eparquía Maronita de San Maron de Brooklyn*, Nueva York, les dijo a los estudiantes de la *Universidad Belmont*, el 22 de octubre, que todos los cristianos necesitan responder a la persecución con una postura de “fuerte desafío” que es totalmente diferente a una venganza o a una sumisión inactiva.

“Jesús no fue víctima pasiva”, dijo el Obispo Mansour. “A los cristianos no se les pide solamente que sean buenas personas y que se dejen pisotear”.

El Obispo Mansour les dijo a los estudiantes que están llamados a permanecer en solidaridad con los cristianos que están siendo perseguidos en el Medio Oriente, y a unir fuerzas con otros cristianos, judíos y musulmanes de buena voluntad para elevar la voz en contra de “la peor injusticia que uno pueda imaginarse” que al presente sucede a manos de los militantes del *Estado islamita (ISIS)*.

El Obispo Mansour habló en la universidad como parte de la serie de pláticas coauspiciadas por el *Colegio de teología y ministerio cristiano*, y que lleva el distintivo de “Oradores de la Capilla”.

El obispo se distingue como dirigente de las Iglesias Unidas Cristianoárabes del Medio Oriente, cuyas oficinas centrales están en Líbano, lugar en donde fue consagrado obispo en 2004.

El Obispo Mansour había visitado campamentos de refugiados sirios en el Líbano, su tierra ancestral, durante el verano, y vio de primera mano el sufrimiento de los cristianos y de otros grupos minoritarios que se han visto forzados violentamente a abandonar su respectivo hogar.

Y a pesar de que “los cristianos del Medio Oriente están bajo persecución de todos lados”, dijo, “son la sal y la luz (del mundo)”.

Mecanismos para reportar conducta sexual inapropiada

Si usted o alguien que conozca es víctima de conducta sexual inapropiada por parte de cualquier persona que trabaje para la iglesia, sea voluntario, empleado, o miembro del clero, puede reportarlo de las siguientes maneras:

- llamar a Judy Locke, Coordinadora de asistencia para víctimas, al número (817) 560-2452, Ext. 201, o, mandarle un correo electrónico a jlocke@fwdioc.org
- llamar al número de emergencia para el abuso sexual: (817) 560-2452, Ext. 900

Mecanismo para reportar abuso

Llamar al *Departamento de servicios para la familia y de protección* del estado de Texas (*Servicios de protección al menor*) al número: (800) 252-5400.

El Matrimonio al día

POR EL PADRE CARMELO MELE, OP

NUESTRA PALABRA ENERO PARA EL PRIMER MES DEL AÑO PROVIENE DE LA MITOLOGÍA ROMANA. JANUS, LA PALABRA DE RAÍZ PARA ENERO, ERA EL DIOS DE LAS PUERTAS. Tenía dos caras, una mirando para adelante y la otra mirando para atrás. Por eso, *Janus* era también el dios de los comienzos y los finales. Como el dios *Janus*, ya es tiempo para tomar un vistazo sobre lo que anticipamos en este año nuevo y otro vistazo en lo que pasó en la historia que podría afectar el futuro.

UNA MIRADA AL PASADO

Hace cien años el estado de Nevada hizo encabezar en los periódicos de aquel tiempo un cambio en su ley de divorcio. Siempre Nevada había sido famoso como el lugar de divorcios. La facilidad de obtener el divorcio atraía a muchos visitantes al estado, particularmente a los ricos. Entonces, por un tiempo breve el estado reformó su ley de modo que se debiera tener un año entero de residencia antes de que se pudiera divorciar. Pero en 1915 por motivos comerciales los hombres de negocio tuvieron éxito al acortar el requisito de residencia a sólo seis meses. En los años posteriores Nevada relajó mucho más el requisito de residencia y también los motivos para el divorcio. En tiempo los otros estados siguieron Nevada hasta el día hoy cuando se puede conseguir un divorcio *en línea*.

Otro evento del pasado que vale la mención es la promulgación de *Gaudium et Spes*, la "Constitución pastoral sobre la Iglesia en el mundo actual", declarada por el Concilio Vaticano II hace 50 años. Contrarrestando la deriva de la cultura contemporánea a debilitar el matrimonio, el documento resaltó su indisolubilidad. Además enfatizó que las dos finalidades mutuas del matrimonio: la procreación de la prole y el crecimiento en el amor de los cónyuges. El amor conyugal les capacita a los matrimonios dar la atención necesaria para los niños. En el mundo actual hay bastante necesidad para el cuidado fortalecido porque muchas familias nucleares quedan lejos de sus familias extendidas.



LA CONDICIÓN PELIGROSA DE HOY

La triste verdad es que ahora los avances tecnológicos ponen a los muchachos en peligro de perderse moralmente. El internet que les ha puesto en comunicación con las grandes bibliotecas también les ha conectado con los depósitos de la pornografía. Los teléfonos que se deben usar para comunicarse con sus padres a cualquier hora también se ocupan para meterse en caprichos. Más que nunca los muchachos necesitan a los dos padres en casa para conseguir el equilibrio moral, emocional y espiritual. Sin embargo, se ha desvalorizado el matrimonio de modo que en muchos casos no se logra el apoyo necesario. Ciertamente la trivialización del divorcio ha contribuido a esta crisis. Recientemente el ultraje del "matrimonio homosexual" ha atacado la dignidad del matrimonio aún más.

LA VENIDA DEL PAPA FRANCISCO

Viendo hacia el futuro, anticipamos en septiembre del año nuevo el "Encuentro mundial de familias". Gentes de todas partes del mundo vendrán a Philadelphia, "la ciudad del amor fraterno", para participar en el evento. De hecho, el Papa Francisco ha indicado que vendrá de Roma para tomar parte en las festividad-



El Padre Carmelo Mele, de la ORDEN DE PREDICADORES (LOS DOMINICOS), ordenado como sacerdote en 1980, es el director del INSTITUTO JUAN PABLO II y de la CATEQUESIS PARA ADULTOS HISPANOS de la DIÓCESIS DE FORT WORTH.

des. El lema del encuentro, "El amor es nuestra misión: la familia plenamente viva", da huellas de su propósito. Va a brindar cómo el amor mutuo de los matrimonios da a todo miembro de la familia una ventaja significativa en la vida.

LA NECESIDAD DEL HERMANO MAYOR

El personaje del "Hermano Mayor" ha tenido mala fama desde que se estrenó en la gran novela de George Orwell 1984. En esa historia el "Hermano Mayor" fue el estado, siempre espionando a la gente hasta los asuntos más mínimos de sus vidas. Con razón se resiente el "Hermano Mayor" como el gobierno intrusivo. Pero hay sentido del "Hermano Mayor" que les relata a muchos el consuelo y la seguridad. Un hermano mayor puede ayudar a los hijos más chicos crecerse en personas de virtud. Por acompañarlos en sus actividades enseñándoles cómo enfrentar los retos de la vida y, donde sea necesario, reportándolos a sus papás, los hermanos mayores los protegen de los tropiezos en el camino.

Si los matrimonios no tuvieran miedo de tener familias con varios hermanos mayores, tal vez podrían evitar algunos problemas morales del día hoy. Con su atención dividida entre muchos a lo mejor ninguno de sus niños sería muy consentido. Al contrario, todos deberían desarrollar las virtudes profundamente cristianas del compartir y del cuidar a uno y otro. Ciertamente los cónyuges tendrían más razón a adherirse a uno y otra. Sí, les costaría ambas la energía y la cartera tener familia grande. Sin embargo, al final de cuentas toda la familia debería resultar más consciente de Dios por la experiencia.

Diócesis, Caridades católicas responden a orden ejecutiva sobre inmigrantes

Por Joan Kurkowski-Gillen
Corresponsal

XERGIO CHACIN TIENE UNA ADVERTENCIA PARA LOS 100,000 A 200,000 INMIGRANTES INDOCUMENTADOS QUE VIVEN EN LA DIÓCESIS DE FORT WORTH, y que se verán directamente favorecidos por el anticipado plan del presidente para reformar la política de inmigración.

Durante las sesiones informativas que *Caridades católicas de Fort Worth* ofrece gratuitamente dos veces por semana, en sus instalaciones en el 249 W. Thornhill Dr., Chacin, director de servicios de inmigración de la agencia, advierte a los clientes que sean precavidos, porque hay charlatanes que ofrecen hacer cola por ellos a cambio de dinero.

“Como sospechamos, hay mucha gente tratando de sacar provecho ofreciendo acelerar el proceso a cambio de dinero”, dijo Chacin quien se reúne con ansiosos inmigrantes cada miércoles a las 8 a.m., y cada viernes a la 1 p.m. “Pagar dinero a la gente no les dará ninguna ventaja ni los pondrá a la cabeza de la línea”.

En su discurso nacional, el 20 de noviembre, a la hora de mayor audiencia, Obama dijo que pararía la deportación de padres que hayan vivido en el país por lo menos cinco años y tengan hijos que son ciudadanos de los EE.UU. o residentes permanentes. La protección se extiende también a los hijos que entraron ilegalmente al país con sus padres antes de 2010. Ambos grupos pueden trabajar legalmente en los EE.UU. después de pasar una verificación de antecedentes penales y de pagar una cuota.

La ley enfocará sus esfuerzos futuros en la deportación de criminales.

“Vamos a seguir concentrando los recursos de aplicación del orden público en las amenazas reales a nuestra seguridad”, declaró el presidente. “En los delincuentes, no en

las familias. En los criminales, no en los niños. En los miembros de pandillas, no en una madre que está trabajando duro para mantener a sus hijos. Daremos prioridad, como lo hace cada día la aplicación de ley.”

El Obispo Michael Olson calificó el plan del presidente como un muy necesario primer paso para reformar el sistema de inmigración de la nación.

“Recibo con gusto el anuncio de que el gobierno federal no deportará inmigrantes indocumentados, ni a sus familias, que han contribuido al bien común viviendo fructífera y honradamente en los Estados Unidos de América”, dijo en su declaración del 21 de noviembre.

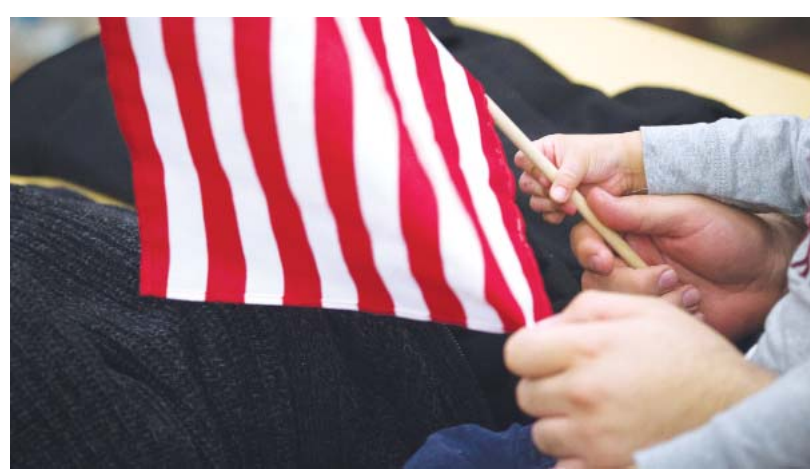
A través de los ministerios proporcionados por las parroquias y por *Caridades católicas de Fort Worth*, la Iglesia local ha sido testigo del daño que el obsoleto sistema de inmigración causa en la gente que, después de huir de la violencia y la persecución, busca las necesidades humanas básicas para ellos y sus familias, añadió el obispo.

“Creo que el anuncio del presidente lleva a nuestro país hacia un justo y digno sistema de inmigración”, aseguró el Obispo Olson. “Como católicos, debemos continuar escuchando las palabras de Jesús quien nos dice en *Mateo 25:40*, ‘que lo hicieron con el más pequeño de mis hermanos, lo hicieron conmigo’”.

La orden ejecutiva se queda corta porque no es una amnistía; no ofrece un camino a la legalización.

Tomará 180 días para que el plan del presidente esté “listo”, pero el departamento de Chacin ya está asistiendo a cientos de inmigrantes que recurren a *Caridades católicas* por ayuda.

En las sesiones de información, a las que asisten de 10 a 50 personas, Chacin explica los detalles del anuncio del presidente, responde a



Un padre y su hijo cargan una bandera estadounidense en el *Centro multicultural de CASA de Maryland* en Hyattsville, Maryland, durante el discurso nacional del Presidente Barack Obama sobre el tema de inmigración. (Foto CNS/Tyler Orsburn)

sus preguntas y les da información escrita acerca de cómo pueden reunir sus propios documentos. También afirma que no hay medios rápidos en este proceso.

“Nada más puede hacerse en este momento”, reitera Chacin. “La verdad es que hay un alto nivel de oposición a esta medida, así que no sabemos qué va a pasar. No es una solución decidida por el Congreso”.

“La gente está desesperada por regularizar su situación. Ellos quieren trabajar legalmente, pagar sus impuestos y tener la documentación apropiada para manejar”.

Pero la acción ejecutiva del presidente para reformar la inmigración, “podría desaparecer junto con el dinero que le paguen a alguien. La gente necesita estar consciente de eso.”

En los próximos meses, *Caridades católicas* llevará las sesiones de información gratuita a las parroquias. El 17 de diciembre hubo una reunión en Wichita Falls y más están planeadas en otros lugares para después del año nuevo.

“Vamos a ir a los 28 condados”, promete el director. “Nuestro compromiso es estar disponibles en todos los rincones de la diócesis.”

Caridades católicas de Fort Worth también se prepara para proporcionar servicios legales a un grupo de menores, que llegaron sin compañía y permanecen en el Norte de Texas después de la oleada de inmigración este verano. Miles de estos niños de Centroamérica cruzaron por México a los EE.UU. Durante la crisis fronteriza, muchos de ellos recibieron

cuidado en un albergue de *Caridades católicas en Fort Worth*.

“Vamos a ir a la corte con ellos para que obtengan los beneficios a que tengan derecho”, explicó Chacin.

Recientemente, el *Departamento de estado de los EE.UU.* estableció un proceso para que los niños de estos países Centroamericanos puedan solicitar el estatus de refugiado.

“La idea es evitar que estos niños hagan la peligrosa travesía a los E.U.”, continuó Chacin. “Es un proceso que ya existe en otras partes de la nación. “Se llama declaración jurada de relación de parentesco”.

Padres que viven legalmente en los EE.UU. pueden solicitar ser reunidos con niños alegando que sus jovencitos están en peligro en su país de origen.

“Ellos pueden decir que están en peligro o temen persecución y pueden venir a los Estados Unidos como refugiados”, añadió el director. “Como agencia registrada para el asentamiento de refugiados, *Caridades católicas* empezará a ayudar a sus clientes con estas declaraciones de parentesco. Nosotros ayudaremos a llenar las formas para padres que tengan este argumento”.

Las comunidades Centroamericanas no son grandes en la diócesis, así que Chacin no espera una gran demanda de ayuda. “Pero sí esperamos algunas consultas”, dijo.

Para más información, llama a CARIDADES CATÓLICAS a 817-534-0814, o visita www.catholiccharitiesfortworth.org/executive-action-information.

La Diócesis de Fort Worth se une al Papa para celebrar el Año de la Vida Consagrada

Por Jerry Circelli
Corresponsal

LOS CATÓLICOS DE LA DIÓCESIS DE FORT WORTH QUE BUSCAN UNA RELEVANTE RESOLUCIÓN PARA EL AÑO NUEVO, QUIZÁ QUIERAN VER HACIA DONDE EL PAPA FRANCISCO ESTÁ APUNTANDO. El Papa proclamó el 2015 como “El Año de la Vida Consagrada”, y le ha pedido a los católicos de todo el mundo que lo observen. Este año da la oportunidad a los fieles de mostrar su apoyo a los hombres y mujeres que sirven a la Iglesia como religiosos, de estar atentos al llamado de Dios en sus propias vidas, y de ayudar a otros que pueden estar oyendo su propio llamado.

En respuesta al Santo Padre, la Iglesia local será anfitriona de “La celebración de la *Diócesis de Fort Worth* por el *Año de la Vida Consagrada, del Clero y de las Vocaciones*”, el 6 de febrero, empezando a las 6:30 p.m. en la *Catedral de San Patricio* en Fort Worth, y continuando en el cercano centro pastoral. El día marcará este año el *Día mundial de la vida consagrada* e iniciará la observancia local del *Año de la Vida Consagrada*.

“¡Muestran a todos que seguir a Cristo y poner en práctica Su Evangelio llena sus corazones de felicidad!” dijo el Papa en un mensaje a los líderes religiosos el 29 de noviembre 2014, cuando anunció la observancia.

“La vida religiosa debería promover crecimiento en la Iglesia por vía de la atracción. La Iglesia deber ser atractiva ¡Despierten al mundo! ¡Sean testigos de una forma diferente de hacer las cosas, de actuar, de vivir! ¡Sí, es posible vivir de una manera diferente en este mundo!”

El año marca también el XL aniversario de *Perfectae Caritatis*, un decreto sobre la vida religiosa, y *Lumen Gentium* — la constitución dogmática sobre la Iglesia — del Concilio Vaticano II. Globalmente, el *Año de la Vida Consagrada* empezó el primer domingo de Adviento, el 30 de noviembre 2014, y terminará el 2 de febrero 2016, en el *Día mundial de la vida consagrada*.

La Conferencia estadounidense de obispos cató-



licos (USCCB) amplió la celebración al nombrarla “Año de la Vida Consagrada, del Clero y de las Vocaciones”.

El presidente de la USCCB, el Arzobispo Joseph E. Kurtz de Louisville, Kentucky, explicó en una declaración, “Nuestros hermanos y hermanas en Cristo que llevan vidas consagradas realizan grandes contribuciones a nuestra sociedad a través de un vasto número de ministerios. Ellos dan clases en nuestras escuelas, cuidan al pobre y al enfermo y llevan la compasión y el amor de Cristo a aquellos que son rechazados por la sociedad; otros llevan vidas de oración en contemplación por el mundo”.

Encabezan el comité de la celebración diocesana el Padre James Wilcox, director de vocaciones; y la Hermana Yolanda Cruz, SSMN, directora asociada de vocaciones femeninas. La celebración en San Patricio incluirá *Víspera Solemne* presidida por el Obispo Michael Olson y el Coro de Música Sacra del *Seminario de la Santísima Trinidad* cantando inspirados himnos y cánticos.

En seguida de la *Solemne Víspera*, los fieles podrán platicar con los hermanos, hermanas y sacerdotes religiosos en el centro pastoral. La Hna. Yolanda imagina el evento como una “feria religiosa” donde los fieles pueden llegar a conocerse.

“Esto dará a la gente la oportunidad de ver todas las órdenes religiosas de hombres y mujeres que trabajan en nuestra diócesis”, dijo el P. Wilcox. “Creo que mucha gente se sorprenderá cuando vea cuántas tenemos. Eso no quiere decir que no podríamos emplear otras más”.

La *Diócesis de Fort Worth* es servida por aproximadamente 100 sacerdotes — la mitad de ellos son religiosos. Sirviendo también en la diócesis hay 87 hermanas religiosas, varios hermanos religiosos, y más de 100 diáconos permanentes. Además, la diócesis tiene más de 30 seminaristas preparándose para servir a la Iglesia local.

La celebración diocesana y todo el año de observancia incluirán tanto a los que han consagrado sus vidas a Cristo como religiosos como a otros que han elegido seguir a Cristo desde otras sendas: el sacerdocio diocesano, el diaconado, o como seminarista preparándose para el sacerdocio.



Foto por NTC Archivos

La Hermana Isabel Maria del Corazón de Jesús, OCD, toma sus votos monásticos como monja Carmelita Descalza el 30 de agosto, 2008 en el *Monasterio de la Santísima Trinidad* en Arlington.

“Todos ellos son gente que han dedicado sus vidas al trabajo de Jesucristo”, dijo el P. Wilcox. Él añadió que el día y año designados para honrarlos no sólo ayudarán a la gente a acercarse a los que de este modo sirven en la Iglesia, sino que inspirarán a otros a estar más atentos a escuchar el llamado de Dios. Al mismo tiempo, los que ya han respondido a su llamado, pueden regocijarse en el hecho de que el Santo Padre está reconociendo su importante labor, y pidiendo que los demás también lo hagan.

Como director de vocaciones de una de las diócesis de más rápido crecimiento en la nación, él espera que, como resultado, más gente pueda oír el llamado. En los próximos meses, él dijo, retiros, eventos juveniles y otras actividades se enfocarán a su vez en el *Año de la Vida Consagrada* y en oraciones por vocaciones.

La Hna. Yolanda nos presentó una perspectiva más profunda de cómo los sacerdotes, hermanas, hermanos y diáconos se beneficiarán del evento diocesano y de todo el *Año de la Vida Consagrada*.

“Uno de los objetivos de todo esto es orar por estos hombres, por estas mujeres y por todos nosotros”, dijo ella. “Porque somos débiles. Necesitamos las oraciones de nuestros hermanos y hermanas en Cristo para seguir adelante, para seguir siendo fieles y para seguir enfocados en nuestras vidas.

“Y anima a la gente a orar por nosotros mientras discernimos, porque algunas veces nos volvemos tibios”, agregó ella. “El Papa está buscando gente llena de alegría — gente con mucha fortaleza — para servir a Cristo. Así, este año no es solamente para promover vocaciones o ayudar a la gente a tomar conciencia y rezar por nosotros, sino que también es para que nosotros nos renovemos, salgamos con más entusiasmo por la vida, y seamos más el rostro de Cristo”.

¡APARTEN LA FECHA!

“Una celebración diocesana para
El Año de la Vida Consagrada”
viernes, 6 de febrero del 2015

6:30 p.m.

Catedral de San Patricio
1206 Throckmorton St.,
Fort Worth



DE IZQUIERDA A DERECHA: Los Padres Palotinos de India en el *Diócesis de Fort Worth*, El Muy Reverendo Balaji Boyalla, el Padre Reehan Soosai Antony, y el Padre Thomas D'Souza. (Foto por Jerry Circelli / NTC)

9,000 millas lejos de su casa, 13 sacerdotes religiosos de India, responden al llamado de Dios para servir a los fieles locales

POR JERRY CIRCELLI
CORRESPONSAL

AL MORIR SU PADRE, UN NIÑO DE SIETE AÑOS, DE UNA FAMILIA POBRE EN INDIA, ES ENVIADO A VIVIR EN UN ORFANATORIO. Vive ahí hasta que tiene 13 años, cuando unos sacerdotes de la *Sociedad del Apostolado Católico (SAC)*, mejor conocidos como “Palotinos”, lo traen a su escuela. Los *Padres Palotinos* ven santidad y reverencia en el jovencito que creció en medio de los más pobres de los pobres en India. En este caso ellos tuvieron razón.

El joven admira grandemente a los sacerdotes alemanes que en ese tiempo dirigen la escuela. Son amorosos, gentiles y tienen gran sabiduría. Él ve a estos padres como sus mentores y aspira a ser como ellos.

“Dispusieron mi ánimo para aprender más acerca de Dios; leí libros santos. Hicieron mucho por mí en esa escuela. Fue ahí donde me sentí llamado al sacerdocio”, recuerda el Padre Thomas D'Souza, SAC, quien siguió su llamado y en 1988 fue ordenado sacerdote en esa sociedad apostólica.

El padre D'Souza dijo que toda su formación y llegar a ser quien es actualmente, se lo debe totalmente a los *Padres Palotinos*.

Como otros en la sociedad — fundada por San Vicente Pallotti en 1835 en Roma — el Padre D'Souza se embarcó, hasta el fin de su vida, en una jornada para promover el Evangelio, renovar la Fe Cristiana y reavivar el amor.

Como sacerdote misionero, los viajes del Padre D'Souza lo han llevado por toda India

siRIENDO como párroco y trabajando en las escuelas de las misiones y en casas de formación.

Veinticuatro años después de su ordenación, el ministerio del Padre D'Souza se extendió a los Estados Unidos. En 2012, él fue asignado párroco asociado de la *Iglesia de Nuestra Señora de Lourdes* en Mineral Wells. Hoy en día, es párroco de la comunidad católica de los condados Jack y Wise, que incluyen las parroquias de *San Juan Bautista* en Bridgeport, *Santa María* en Jacksboro, y *Asunción de la Bienaventurada Virgen María* en Decatur.

Consideren que cuando ustedes dan un donativo a una organización caritativa, tal vez esos misioneros puedan ayudar a una criatura pobre creciendo en un orfanatorio, y un día esa persona que ustedes ayudaron puede ser su sacerdote. El Padre D'Souza es prueba de ello.

La historia del Padre D'Souza es solo una entre muchas historias personales que nos ofrecen cierta perspectiva de los trece sacerdotes religiosos de India que ahora sirven en parroquias y ministerios en la *Diócesis de Fort Worth*.

Estos sacerdotes y otros en India, fueron influenciados por Cristianos, anteriores a ellos, que poseían celo misionero y fe inquebrantable.

Entre ellos, el más notable fue San Francisco Javier, sacerdote Español del siglo XVI, uno de los fundadores de la *Sociedad de Jesús*. San Francisco Javier evangelizó extensivamente en el sur de India, vivió y trabajó entre los pobres, y construyó casi 40 iglesias a lo largo de la costa. Aunque él murió en una Isla de la China, el cuerpo del santo reposa ahora en la *Basilica de*

Bom Jesus en Goa. Este es el mismo estado de India donde el Padre D'Souza nació y recibió educación de los *Palotinos*.

El trabajo evangelizador de San Francisco Javier continúa hasta la fecha, “es una semilla que fue plantada por nuestros grandes misioneros”, dijo el Padre D'Souza.

El Muy Reverendo Balaji Boyalla, SAC, párroco de *Nuestra Señora de Lourdes* y deán del *Deanato del suroeste*, también continúa el trabajo misionero cuyos sólidos cimientos están en India.

El Padre Boyalla fue ordenado en 1999 y sirvió varios años como sacerdote en una parroquia en India. En 2008 sus superiores religiosos le pidieron que continuara su ministerio en los Estados Unidos, y ese mismo año llegó y fue nombrado párroco asociado de la *Parroquia de la Sagrada Familia* en Fort Worth. Después de dos años de servicio en esa parroquia, el Padre Boyalla fue nombrado párroco de la *Parroquias de Nuestra Señora de Lourdes* en Mineral Wells y de *San Francisco de Asís* en Graford, donde continúa hasta hoy.

Como el Padre D'Souza, el Padre Boyalla y el Padre Reehan Soosai Antony, párroco asociado de la comunidad católica de los condados de Jack y Wise, pertenecen a la *Provincia Palotina de la Bienaventurada Virgen María*, que tiene su base en Bangalore, ciudad sureña de India. De hecho, el Padre D'Souza era un formador en el seminario en el sureste de India y enseñó filosofía al Padre Boyalla cuando éste estudió allí.

Igual que los otros sacerdotes de India que ahora sirven aquí, el Padre Boyalla dijo que al principio, su asignación a una iglesia católica en los Estados Unidos fue un desafío.

“Era un mundo de diferencia cuando vine de India a América. Personalmente, fue un gran cambio para mí”, dijo el Padre Boyalla. Diferencias culturales en comida, estilo de vida, y hasta la estructura de la Iglesia en los EE.UU. presentó un desafío, dijo él.

“Hay algunas diferencias culturales”, continuó el Padre Boyalla, “pero como sacerdote, las responsabilidades son las mismas. Si estás en India, o en América, o en Europa — tu ministerio es ser un sacerdote. Y he encontrado que la gente es amorosa en todas partes. Verdaderamente disfruto mi ministerio como párroco”.

El Padre Mathew Kavipurayidam, TOR, párroco de la *Parroquia del Apóstol Santo Tomás* en Fort Worth, expresa los mismos sentimientos. Ordenado en India en 1975, él es un sacerdote *Franciscano* de la *Tercera orden regular* de la *Provincia del Apóstol Santo Tomás* en India. La fundación de la orden se remonta a San Francisco de Asís, casi 800 años atrás.

“Lo que me hace feliz”, dice el Padre Kavipurayidam, “es trabajar dondequiera que el Señor me envíe. Ésta es la Iglesia Universal. El pueblo de Dios está en todas partes, sin importar el idioma o la cultura. Doy lo que tengo, pero también aprendo de ellos”, dijo el sacerdote. “Para mí ha sido una gran experiencia trabajar en un país diferente y en una cultura diferente”.

El Padre Kavipurayidam, quien sirvió en *Santa Catalina de Siena* en Carrollton de 2004 a 2014 antes de ser asignado a *Santo Tomás*, dijo que también ha llegado a respetar y a admirar las diferencias.

“Especialmente me ha impresionado que en la Iglesia aquí, el rol de los laicos es muy importante. En India la Iglesia es mayormente clerical. El sacerdote decide todo por sí mismo. Aquí he aprendido a trabajar con la gente para hacer las cosas. Para mí, fue una gran experiencia de aprendizaje”, dijo el Padre Kavipurayidam.

No solo puede un líder de la Iglesia hacer más cosas cuando se comparten ideas, dijo el sacerdote, sino “que se desarrolla una gran relación con la comunidad. Me ha impresionado su fe y su compromiso, y la cantidad de gente dedicada a servir a la Iglesia.

El Padre Kavipurayidam se crió en una sólida familia cristiana en el estado de Kerala en el Sur de India. Su hermana es una monja en India; varias de sus sobrinas son monjas y dos de sus sobrinos están en el seminario.

También el Padre Joy Joseph, TOR, viene de una devota familia católica de Kerala. Los dos sacerdotes tienen mucho en común. No solo



Foto por Joan Kurkowski-Gillen / Archivos de NTC
El Padre Antony Mathew, TOR, administrador parroquial de la *Parroquia de la Santa Cruz* en The Colony, y entonces párroco de la *Parroquia de Santo Tomás Apostol*, celebra el 30 de septiembre, 2013 la primera Misa, en el sitio donde se construirá la nueva iglesia de *Santo Tomás*.

son, ambos, sacerdotes TOR de la misma región de India, sino que el Padre Kavipurayidam era también el rector del seminario donde estudió teología el Padre Joseph.

Ordenado en 1995, el Padre Joseph llegó a Texas en 2008 y fue asignado párroco asociado en *Santa Catalina*. También sirvió como párroco asociado en la *Catedral de San Patricio* en Fort Worth antes de ser el párroco de las *Parroquias de la Sagrada Familia de Nazaret* en Vernon, de *San José* en Crowell, y *Santa María* en Quanah.

La tía y la hermana del Padre Joseph son monjas. Él añadió que su mamá tuvo una marcada influencia en su formación como sacerdote.

“Mi mamá siempre nos leía historias de la Biblia y nos contaba acerca de las vidas de los misioneros. Ella me explicó qué vocación tan noble era ser un misionero”, dijo el Padre Joseph. “Ésa fue la primera semilla sembrada en mí”.

El llamado al sacerdocio creció, dijo el padre Joseph, y al final de la preparatoria, “mi deseo fue cada vez más fuerte. Se volvió un deseo profundo y nadie pudo detenerlo”.

El Padre Joseph dijo que no es extraño encontrar católicos devotos de Kerala ansiosos de difundir el Evangelio. La Cristiandad ahí data de la época del Apóstol Santo Tomás — homónimo de la provincia Franciscana del Padre Joseph.

Santo Tomás llegó a Kerala en el año 52 AD. Siguiendo el mandato de Jesús de propagar el Evangelio por todo el mundo, Santo Tomás se arriesgó a ir a India. El Padre Joseph explicó que Santo Tomás viajó a India con Judíos que viajaban al país para comerciar en las codiciadas especias. Sin embargo, Santo Tomás no vino a buscar especias, sino a difundir la palabra de Dios.

El Padre Joseph comentó, “algunas veces la gente me pregunta, ‘¿son católicos tus padres?’” Muchos no se dan cuenta, dijo él, que la Cristiandad en India data del primer siglo, traída por un discípulo de Jesús. Según los Padres Joseph y Kavipurayidam, como el 25 por ciento de la población de Kerala es católica.

Esta fuertemente católica región de India, donde la Cristiandad fue introducida por el Apóstol Santo Tomás, fue también el hogar del Padre Sojan George.

Ordenado en el año 2000, el Padre George es ahora párroco de *Nuestra Señora Reina de la Paz* en Wichita Falls. Él ha servido como párroco asociado en la *Parroquia del Apóstol San Juan* en North Richland Hills, así como en la *Catedral de San Patricio* y en la parroquia de *San Jorge* en Fort Worth. También ha sido párroco en las tres iglesias de las comunidades católicas de los condados de Jack y Wise.

“Kerala es conocida como la Irlanda de In-



Foto por Donna Ryckaert / NTC
El Padre Sojan George, HGN, párroco de la *Parroquia de Nuestra Señora Reina de la Paz* en Wichita Falls, lee las oraciones de la Misa el 21 de septiembre.

dia”, dijo el Padre George, explicando que los misioneros desde ahí han difundido el Evangelio hacia el Norte de India y por todo el mundo.

En el caso del Padre George, fue su superior de los *Heraldos de la Buena Nueva (HGN)* — sociedad misionera fundada en India en 1984 — quien le pidió servir en la *Diócesis de Fort Worth*. Como en todos los casos, los superiores de órdenes religiosas y sociedades en India respondieron cuando los obispos de la diócesis les solicitaron sacerdotes para servir en las iglesias aquí.

El Padre George explicó que él ha servido bajo tres obispos desde la primera vez que llegó en 2002. “Y todos ellos han sido admirables”, dijo él.

“Quiero a la diócesis y a la gente de aquí”, dijo el Padre George. “Me han recibido con los brazos abiertos en todas partes donde he sido asignado. La gente es cordial y amistosa, y tienen un corazón del tamaño de Texas”.

Todos estos sacerdotes de India, quienes compartieron sus historias con el *North Texas Catholic*, expresaron sentimientos similares acerca del aprecio y aceptación de parte de los feligreses locales.

“Ustedes no se pueden imaginar cuántas veces la gente nos dice que nos aprecian”, dice el Padre Boyalla, permitiéndonos ver un poco de él y de sus compañeros sacerdotes misioneros de India. “Cuando oímos eso, es un gran estímulo. Cada día, eso nos muestra y nos recuerda que la gente nos ama a nosotros y lo que estamos haciendo.

“Creo que eso es lo que nos sostiene”, dijo el Padre Boyalla. “Ésta comunidad es muy amorosa y acogedora. La gente está siempre ahí apoyándote. Es bueno estar aquí”.

VIVIR LA 'OPCIÓN MISIONERA'

POR MICHELE BAKER
CORRESPONSAL

UNA DE LAS IMÁGENES MÁS AMADAS DE JESÚS SE ENCUENTRA EN EL LIBRO DEL APOCALIPSIS. Presenta al Salvador parado afuera tocando a la puerta, esperando que lo dejemos entrar a nuestro corazón. Sin embargo, para ilustrar la necesidad de un cambio en la disposición de los fieles a proclamar el Evangelio, el Papa Francisco ha tomado esta imagen y nos propone esta pregunta, “¿Cuántas veces Jesús, dentro de nosotros, está tocando la puerta para que lo dejemos salir? Y no lo dejamos...”

Ésta es una de imágenes principales que el Arzobispo J. Michael Miller, CSB, de Vancouver en su discurso de apertura titulado “*La Alegría del Evangelio: El Papa Francisco y la opción misionera*”, presentó a los fieles reunidos el 24 de octubre en la *Conferencia de Ministerios de la Universidad de Dallas (UDMC)*. Los comentarios del Arzobispo Miller guiaron a la asamblea en una cuidadosa jornada a través de la exhortación apostólica del Papa Francisco, *Evangelii Gaudium (La Alegría del Evangelio)* enfatizando el llamado a participar



Juan Guajardo / NTC

El Arzobispo J. Michael Miller, CSB, de Vancouver pronuncia su discurso de apertura el 24 de octubre en la UDMC.



Juan Guajardo / NTC

Unos participantes esparcen vidrio para hacer una cruz en la exhibición de arte David Novinski durante la UDMC. La conferencia, que tuvo lugar en el *Centro de convenciones de Irving*, contó con docenas de pláticas sobre ministerio y la fe, discursos principales, música y exposiciones para los miles de asistentes.

en la Nueva Evangelización.

El Arzobispo Miller, nativo de Ottawa, ha servido como el pastor principal de los 475,000 Católicos de Vancouver desde enero del 2009. Además de varios puestos en la enseñanza y el servicio público, él ha servido en diferentes capacidades en Roma. Más notablemente, trabajó en la *Secretaría de estado* del Vaticano de 1992 a 1997, y en el 2003 fue nombrado secretario de la *Congregación para la educación católica* y vicepresidente de *Obra pontificia para las vocaciones sacerdotales*.

La pasión del Arzobispo Miller por la “opción misionera” como la propone el Papa Francisco seguramente creció durante el tiempo que él sirvió como miembro del *Consejo pontificio para la pastoral de los emigrantes e itinerantes*, del *Comité pontificio para los congresos Eucarísticos internacionales*, y como consultor de la *Congregación para los obispos*. Prolífico escritor y especialista en el papado y en la enseñanza papal moderna, el Arzobispo Miller habla inglés, español, italiano y francés con

fluidez y ha recibido seis doctorados honorarios de universidades alrededor del mundo.

Sin embargo, cuando se dirigió a los cientos de educadores de escuelas católicas, sacerdotes, religiosos, y fieles laicos reunidos en la *UDMC*, sus comentarios, más que como un discurso se sentían como una extensa homilía, infundida de la amorosa paciencia de un maestro.

“Esta mañana los estoy invitando a aceptar el reto del Papa Francisco a ser ‘discípulos-misioneros’ de Jesucristo en las diócesis de Dallas y Fort Worth”, dijo el Arzobispo Miller. Sí, somos discípulos: seguidores de Jesucristo. Y también somos misioneros: transmisores de la fe”.

El Arzobispo Miller recordó a los que estaban ahí reunidos para oír el discurso que el llamado, tanto a seguir como a guiar, que mana del llamado bautismal de cada Cristiano, empieza con un encuentro con Jesucristo. La transformación forjada por ese encuentro conduce a los fieles a llevar vidas llenas de la alegría del

Evangelio, atrayendo así a aquellos que no conocen a Cristo. Esta atracción, dice él, es el principio de “ir adelante”; es la semilla de la evangelización; es el aliento del espíritu misionero de la Iglesia.

“En *La Alegría del Evangelio*, el Papa nos invita a compartir su sueño de una ‘opción misionera’”, dijo el Arzobispo Miller. “Esto es, un impulso misionero capaz de transformar todo, para que las costumbres de la Iglesia, sus formas de hacer las cosas, sus tiempos y programas, sus idiomas y estructuras puedan ser convenientemente orientadas no hacia su propia preservación, sino hacia la evangelización del mundo actual”. (*Evangelii Gaudium*, 27).

“Para el Papa”, dijo el Arzobispo Miller, “todo debe ser puesto dentro de una clave misionera... Él suyo es un fuerte llamado por un Catolicismo misionero en el más amplio sentido, uno que abra los brazos al mundo”.



Juan Guajardo / NTC

Una preciosa piedra de la colina del Tepeyac — donde Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe se apareció a San Juan Diego — se ve en la UDMC. La piedra se guardará dentro del santuario de Nuestra Señora que se planea erigir en la *Universidad de Dallas*.



These decorative doors, whose purchase was funded by Nolan Catholic students open into the dormitory. (Photo courtesy Robert Gieb)

in our efforts, and by his grace we have kept moving forward.”

Uganda is a nation of 23 million people, 10 million of whom are Catholic. The Diocese of Masaka serves more than one million Catholics. The median age in Masaka is 16, and the average annual income is about \$250. The lack of open markets along with limited education has resulted in scarce economic opportunity.

“Ugandans may be better off than some Africans and not as well off as others, but all things considered, they are poor,” said Gieb. One goal of the school is to teach young Ugandans how to lift themselves out of poverty.

But, said Gieb, the primary goal of the school is to teach these youth the true faith of the Church. “This is not an abstract goal,” he

said. “We are not just transferring money; we are trying to build and reinforce the faith.” And for Gieb and those involved, it is a pressing and urgent concern.

To appreciate the urgency, one must understand the current climate in the region, he said. In Uganda and throughout Africa, there is a concerted effort by radical Muslims to convert Catholics and all Christians to Islam.

“The Islamists’ goal is to make Africa a Muslim continent,” contends Gieb. “They are committed and well-financed.”

To counteract this movement, Catholic education is absolutely essential. “This is what keeps me motivated,” says Gieb. “It is imperative that these youth are educated in a proper manner and taught the true faith of the Church.”

The school will serve youth between the ages of 13 and 19 by providing a high school education of general studies — math, science, history, English, and religion. The four-year program will also feature vocational classes to enable those not continuing their education to leave with a marketable skill in areas including tailoring, mechanics, agriculture, and more.

“This is especially beneficial to the girls,” said Gieb, explaining that the culture is geared to prepare girls to run the home. “St. Mary’s can provide them with in-

struction in home economics and homemaking.”

An additional two-year program will provide an advanced certificate which is required for the few students fortunate enough to be able to pursue a college education.

Currently, the school consists of four buildings on 20 acres of land in rural southern Uganda, west of the city of Masaka. The school is owned and will be operated by the Masaka Diocese.

The plan is to open the school in January 2015, with about 150-200 girls. That opening schedule is dependent on the project receiving enough funding to ensure the completion of a safe and sturdy environment for the students, hiring four to five qualified teachers, as well as other staff members for supervision, cooking, maintenance, security, and other non-teaching services. The school must operate as a boarding school due to lack of transportation and the distance students must travel to reach it. The residential setting also permits a more orderly environment for the students and better hygiene and nutrition.

The exteriors of all four buildings are complete, and the classroom building is ready. The interiors of the dormitory, latrine, sick bay, and office buildings still need funding to be finished out.

No new buildings will be built until the school is fully operational.

“Once the school is open and functioning, — and we pray that will be in January — we are confident it will attract more students and create additional interest,” said Gieb. It is also his hope that greater interest translates into more funding for the school. Long-term plans include a second dormitory for boys, a chapel, and a multi-purpose room.

Gieb shares Fr. Athanasius’s optimism that someday St. Mary of Joy will grow to serve more than 1,000 students. “I’m convinced that some divine blessings have come to us at key moments of this project,” he said. “I have faith that God will continue to provide.”

The St. Mary of Joy project has in many ways been a leap of faith for the community of Masaka and those involved in this ministry. More must be done before the school is able to welcome its first class of students.

For more information, contact Robert Gieb robert.j.gieb@gmail.com.

An earlier version of this article was published in the Summer 2014 issue of Nolan Catholic High School’s publication, THE SHIELD.

Contributing to this story was NTC writer Nicki Prevou.

Robert Gieb poses with a group of Nolan Catholic High students. Nolan students have raised more the \$2,000 toward the construction of St. Mary of Joy Catholic School in the Diocese of Masaka in Uganda. (Photo courtesy of Nolan Catholic High School)



GOOD NEWSMAKER

St. Patrick parishioner Robert Gieb

Helping make Ugandan school a reality

STORY BY ANNETTE KEARNS

ST. MARY OF JOY SCHOOL IS A DREAM THAT IS BECOMING A REALITY FOR THE DIOCESE OF MASAKA, UGANDA, in East Africa, and for diocesan priest Father Athanasius Kasekende, the visionary of the project. And it is coming into being, thanks primarily to the passionate efforts of Robert Gieb and his wife Mary, who have championed this mission project for the past nine years.

Gieb met Fr. Kasekende in 2005 when the visiting priest was in residence at St. Patrick Cathedral in Fort Worth while studying at the University of Dallas. "Mary and I were interested in becoming involved with a mission project, and I asked Fr. Athanasius what his diocese needed most," said Gieb. "He told me they desperately needed a boarding school in a rural section of the diocese."

Gieb's early tutelage under the Benedictine sisters at St. George School in Fort Worth and then at Nolan Catholic High School under the Marianists instilled in him a mission mentality. "I received a very good academic and religious education at St. George and Nolan," he said. "The sisters and brothers were enormous influences on me.

"We didn't have to think about being mission-conscious; it was a given at that time," Gieb reflected.

After graduating from Nolan, Gieb earned a bachelor's degree from St. Mary's University in San Antonio, and went on to receive his Doctor of Jurisprudence from the University of Texas at Austin.



The school's classroom building is complete. Work remains to be done on the dormitory and dispensary, restrooms, and office buildings

Photos Courtesy of Robert Gieb



The Gieb family: daughters Erin (left) and Cauley, flank Robert and Mary Gieb at a fundraiser for St. Mary of Joy School in Uganda.

Gieb served Tarrant County as an assistant district attorney, working in both the criminal and civil divisions. Since 1984 he has been in private practice. Gieb is also currently the chairman of the local Red Mass Committee and local counsel for Catholics United for Life of North Texas.

His first order of business to get St. Mary of Joy off the ground was to establish Uganda

Catholic Schools Inc., a 501(c) 3, non-profit charitable entity that would raise funds to build the school. Gieb, along with his sister, Susie Gieb Moses, and longtime educator and principal, Olga Ferris, have overseen the corporation since its inception.

From the outset, Robert and Mary found unwavering support close to home from their own family members: Dr. James Gieb, Steve Moses, Charles Gieb, Joe Gieb, and

children: Erin Gieb Davis and Cauley Gieb. "They have supported us and this important project in every way possible," said Gieb.

Another source of critical support came from the Altar Society and members of St. Patrick Cathedral Parish. "We received vital assistance that enabled us to secure land for the school and start initial construction," said Gieb.

Donations have also come from people throughout the diocese, he said, including many Nolan alumni who have been very generous through the corporation's annual fundraisers underwritten and hosted by Susie and Steve Moses. Money generated by these fundraisers has enabled the school to finish out the classrooms.

In addition, this past year, current Nolan students donated more than \$2,000 which, Gieb said, was instrumental in completing the purchase and installation of the doors for the dormitory building.

"We build as we have funding," he said. "God has blessed us

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