



NEWSMAGAZINE North Texas Catholic

Bringing the Good News to the Diocese of Fort Worth Vol. 32 No. 1 January / February 2016

Mercy abounds

Extraordinary Year of Mercy 2016

**"With how
much love
Jesus looks at
us! With how
much love He
heals our sinful
heart! Our sins
never scare
Him."**

— Pope Francis



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Sunday, Dec. 13 Bishop Olson ushered in the Extraordinary Year of Mercy in the diocese when he rapped his staff on the doors of Our Mother of Mercy Parish near downtown Fort Worth. Hundreds of the faithful streamed into the church to hear him speak of God's mercy in this Holy Year.

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Before he was a priest, Fr. Jack McKone, pastor of Sacred Heart Parish in Wichita Falls, was an auto parts and service worker, a navigator of a B-17, and a model railroad enthusiast.

Front cover: Pope Francis opens the Holy Door in St. Peter's Basilica to inaugurate the Jubilee Year of Mercy Dec. 8. (CNS photo/Max Rossi, Reuters)



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The kingdom of Jordan has sheltered perhaps 1.5 million refugees, Christians and Muslims alike. Maria Ruiz Scaperlanda, a frequent contributor to the NTC, spoke with the refugees, and reports on the state of the refugee crisis.

North Texas Catholic



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Jubilee Year of Mercy makes Lent even more a time to appropriate grace

Whenever the liturgical calendar brings us around to Lent, it always brings us a great opportunity to examine our lives and see if we are living up to the great promise of the abundant love God has offered us.

But this year, as we prepare to enter Lent, we have the added grace of papal indulgences, admonitions to practice mercy, constant reminders that we have received great love from the Father in the person of Jesus Christ.

We've been given the ultimate gift, the Holy Spirit flowing into our lives because the Son of God placed our good ahead of his own, so that we might have the grace of his love.

We look around us, and we see examples of others offering their lives in service to the poor and to the people of God — in fact to all people, whether they have recognized the great love of God or not.

We live in times of crisis in seemingly every area of life. Racial and ethnic tensions and conflicts between the rich and the poor cloud relationships between people. Many politicians stir the pot of resentments, seeking to gain advantage over the "other guys" whoever they may be. And around the world, there are whole peoples seeking to exterminate those who are different from themselves.

But the good news for us is quite literally, the Good News. It's not that none of these threats to our peace will fail to touch us, but that because we know Who to turn to in tough times, we know we can not only persevere through bad times, but triumph over the hatred and negativity that surrounds us.

We are in a special time of grace. We are about to enter a season of introspection and turning our hearts and our lives to doing good, even as we turn away from wrongdoing.

Let's resolve to make the most of this time of grace by enfleshing the One who gave his life for us. Let's see if we can't, by the grace of God, make this a year of Mercy for those we may not agree with, those who may not look like us or sound like us or value all the same things we do.

May the grace of God empower us to act in mercy, not just profess its value.

Jeff Hensley

At Diocesan Formation Center, renovations make more room for Christ

by Susan Moses
Correspondent

Therefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.

— 2 Corinthians 5:17

TO BECOME FILLED WITH CHRIST MEANS FIRST EMPTYING OURSELVES OF THE BUSYNESS AND DISTRACTIONS THAT FILL OUR LIVES.

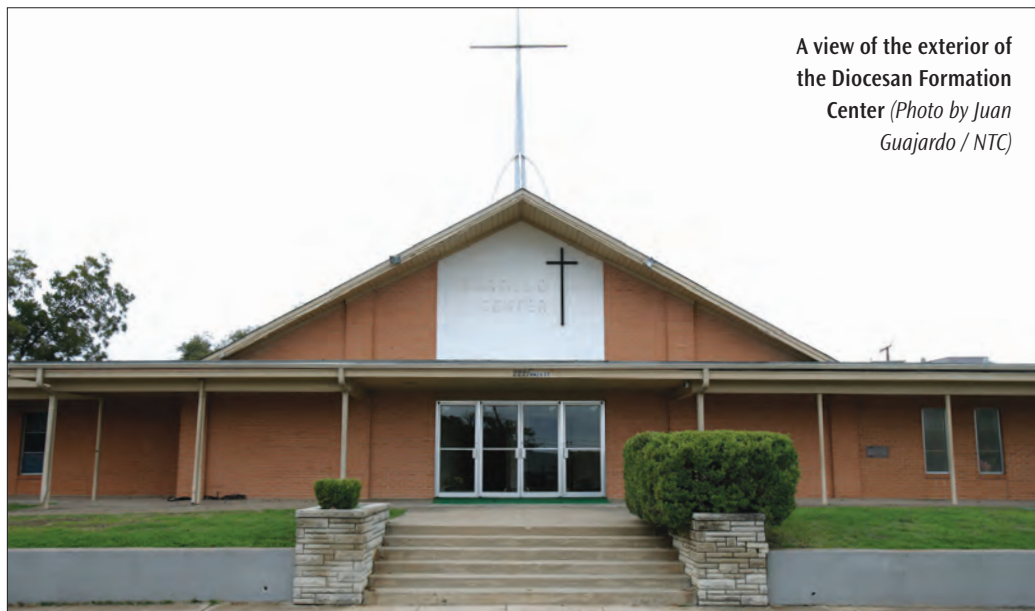
Much of the same is happening at the former Cursillo Center, which is in the midst of a transformation into the Diocesan Formation Center.

The diocese purchased the property at 2221 NW 26th Street, a few miles west of the Fort Worth Stockyards more than 30 years ago. Formerly a Baptist church, the facility was primarily used to host retreats offered by the Cursillo Movement. Two years ago Bishop Olson envisioned a renewal of the building and its purpose: to serve as a center of formation for the entire diocese.

Renovation of the building began in June.

“We had a big, weeklong garage sale and cleared out 99 percent of the building. What we didn’t sell we gave away or sold at the metal recycling yard,” said Jo Ann Foley, office assistant at the center.

Interior renovations are nearly complete. Fresh carpet and paint, new bunk beds, and repaired bathrooms create a peaceful environment for those attending retreats. The



A view of the exterior of the Diocesan Formation Center (Photo by Juan Guajardo / NTC)

center sleeps 64 and has a chapel, a meeting room equipped with audiovisual technology, a dining room and kitchen — complete with a new commercial oven and range — and a large hall with a stage for large-scale presentations or Masses.

Exterior renovations, including converting a neglected yard into a rosary garden with Stations of the Cross and a Marian grotto, are expected to be completed in December. A repaving of the parking lot is also planned, Foley said.

“Our vision is that we welcome the whole diocese, and that those who step through the doors will be received in a hospitable environment and be evangelized, catechized, and loved,” said Marlon De La Torre, diocesan director for

CONTINUED ON PAGE 10

Catholic Diocese of Fort Worth



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

Diocesan Closing Ceremony for The Year of Consecrated Life

Friday, February 5, 2016

St. Francis of Assisi Parish, Grapevine

Mass at 6:30 p.m.

Reception immediately following the Mass
in the parish hall



For more information on vocations, contact the Vocations Office at 817-560-3300 or visit the diocesan web site at www.fwdioc.org



Catholic Charities cements its presence in Wichita Falls with new building

by Jenara Kocks-Burgess
Correspondent

WICHITA FALLS — Employees of Catholic Charities, members of several local parishes, community members, and Bishop Michael Olson gathered Oct. 29 for the dedication of the new location of the Catholic Charities Northwest Campus in Wichita Falls at 907 Holi-day Street.

A Mass was celebrated at Sacred Heart Parish, across the street from the new facility, preceding the dedication.

"It was a culmination of a lot of people's very hard work and commitment to the success of Catholic Charities in this part of the diocese," said Laura Sotelo, senior director of the Northwest Campus.

She said Catholic Charities' partners in the community, including local parishes and donors from both Wichita Falls and Fort Worth, contributed to the project.

"The biggest thing for me was this big sigh of relief that this had really happened," Sotelo said. "A free standing Catholic Charities location was something we had been talking about and planning for, so we could show com-

DIOCESAN, LOCAL & STATE NEWSBRIEFS

Pilgrimage of Mercy unites students from St. Maria Goretti and St. Andrew Schools

by Susan Moses
Correspondent

DALLAS — Many from the Fort Worth Diocese, including eighth grade students from St. Maria Goretti School in Arlington and St. Andrew School in Fort Worth, seized the opportunity to visit the relics of St. Maria Goretti, the youngest saint canonized by the Church.

On Nov. 3 the students from both schools met to celebrate Mass, reflect on mercy, visit the relics, and share prayers and paper lilies with the thousands of Catholics lined up to venerate the saint.

St. Maria Goretti Principal Leah Rios explained how the day impacted her school. "We wear the name of St. Maria Goretti every day, and we teach lessons of mercy and forgiveness all year long. But our students had an epiphany when they saw the people lined up around the church and down the block, waiting two hours to see the saint. The kids saw it isn't just a name, but the meaning behind it. They realized what an impact this little saint has on people around the world."

"Our entire student body prayed with her and for her, that the relics



Photo courtesy Lisa Harrington

St. Andrew School eighth graders hold up St. Maria Goretti prayer cards during their visit to the saint's relics at St. Monica Church in Dallas.

would help bring mercy and forgiveness into the lives of those who visited," Rios continued.

The U.S. tour of the saint, called the Pilgrimage of Mercy, included video and photo displays on her life and virtues, along with the sacred remains. Pope Francis sent the "Little Saint of Great Mercy" as a special envoy to prepare U.S. Catholics for the Holy Year of Mercy.

"Our Holy Year of Mercy started beyond the classroom environment. We lived it, we shared it — it was a living, breathing experience," Rios said.



Photo by Ben Torres / NTC

Bishop Michael Olson blesses an office inside the new Northwest Campus for Catholic Charities Fort Worth, on Oct. 29.

mitment to serving this community."

Longtime Sacred Heart members Carol Schroeder and Gayle Morrison, who attended the Mass and dedication, were excited about having a Catholic Charities location in Wichita Falls.

"I think it's amazing," Schroeder said. "It gives us a place to refer people who are in need...."

"It's God's plan," Fr. McKone, pastor of Sacred Heart, said. "It's God's will for us that we continue to be his agents here. So let us continue to dream. Let us dare to imagine how things can be as we look around at how things are. And let us be thankful for the gifts that Catholic Charities brings to this community."



CLERGY ASSIGNMENTS FOR THE DIOCESE OF FORT WORTH

by Most Rev. Michael F. Olson, STD, MA



PASTORS

Rev. Lucas Alejandro Olivera, OFM Cap, is appointed **Pastor of Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish** in Fort Worth, effective Nov. 16, 2015

PAROCHIAL VICARS

Rev. Eugene Nyong, is appointed **Parochial Vicar of St. Francis of Assisi Parish** in

Grapevine, effective Nov. 30, 2015

DEPARTURES/ RETIREMENTS

Rev. Brendan Walsh, SAC, recently assigned **Parochial Vicar of St. Brendan Parish** in Stephenville has been recalled by his Religious Order community for health reasons, effective Oct.

12, 2015

Rev. Hilary M. Nhuan Tran, CMC, recently assigned to **The Holy Family Religious and Retreat Center,** has been recalled by his Religious Order community effective Oct. 23, 2015

Rev. Darrell Kelly, SVD, **Pastor of Our Mother of**

Mercy Parish in Fort Worth has been recalled by his Religious Order community, effective Oct. 23, 2015

OTHER

Rev. Raphael Eagle, TOR, is in **residence at Holy Cross Parish** in The Colony from being in **residence at St. Patrick Cathedral** in Fort Worth, effective Nov. 15, 2015

Open wide the Door of MERCY

Joined by hundreds of local Catholics, Bishop Michael Olson ushered the Year of Mercy into the diocese Dec. 13

by Susan Moses
Correspondent

With three sharp raps of his crosier, or bishop's staff, Bishop Michael Olson opened the Door of Mercy at Our Mother of Mercy Church in Fort Worth, ushering in the Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy to our community.

This holy year which emphasizes God's grace and reconciliation began with a blessing of the doors followed by a Mass overflowing with pilgrims from throughout the diocese.

Themes of mercy and joy prevailed throughout the Mass, which was celebrated Dec. 13, the third Sunday of Advent, known as Gaudete Sunday for its focus on joy.

The bishop explained that joy is neither the experience of pleasure nor the self-satisfaction of a steady job and good health. Instead, joy is the knowledge that Jesus is coming to us and for us. Joy arrives with mercy in swaddling clothes, in the person of Jesus.

"As the baptized, we have experienced mercy offered and mercy received. Now we have the responsibility to open the door and share the gift of mercy to the alienated and the wounded," Bishop Olson said in his homily.

Showing mercy is a courageous act, the bishop said, which

Jesus demonstrated perfectly by taking on the wounds of the cross because of his love for us and out of obedience to the Father.

"Where there are wounds, there is also the healing and grace of God," continued Bishop Olson. He encouraged the congregation to exhibit mercy in their personal wounds, the wounds in their parish, and the wounds in the diocese and larger community.

Pope Francis proclaimed an Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy that began Dec. 8, the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

"From the heart of the Trinity, from the depths of the mystery of God, the great river of mercy wells up and overflows unceasingly. It is a spring that will never run dry, no matter how many people draw from it. Every time someone is in need, he or she can approach it because the mercy of God never ends," wrote Pope Francis in *Misericordiae Vultus*.

Earlier this year, Pope Francis announced that each diocese should designate a Door of Mercy at a church of special significance during the Holy Year. Worldwide, these Holy Doors were opened Dec. 13.

Bishop Olson selected Our Mother of Mercy, stating "Since its establishment in 1929, the parishioners, religious sisters, and priests of Our Mother of Mercy have faithfully serviced and witnessed

Bishop Olson gives a special jubilee blessing at the end of Mass Dec. 13. (Photo by Juan Guajardo / NTC)



to God's abundant mercy most fully expressed through the gift of his Son, Jesus Christ. They have done this through service in education and outreach to the Catholic and broader African-American communities with a spirit of inclusion of all people."

Floyd Ware, a parishioner and musician at Our Mother of Mercy, said, "The announcement that we were chosen as the principal church for the Year of Mercy was unexpected, but we are honored and we welcome visitors with open arms. Opening the Door of Mercy today was a good



A view of the Door of Mercy at Our Mother of Mercy Parish. (Photo by Juan Guajardo / NTC)

start, and we look forward to bigger things."

During the jubilee year, pilgrims visiting Our Mother of Mercy or other pilgrimage churches

Key Events during the Jubilee Year

OPENING OF THE YEAR
Dec. 13, 2015, Bishop Olson and pastors of the Jubilee churches opened the Doors of Mercy in their designated parishes.

24 HOURS FOR THE LORD
March 4-5, reconciliation along with Adoration will be available at one church in each deanery from 7 p.m. Friday to 9 a.m. Saturday.

DIVINE MERCY SUNDAY
A solemn vesper service will take place April 2 at St. Patrick Cathedral. On Divine Mercy Sunday, a Mass will be held at the cathedral followed by exposition and Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, a Chaplet of Divine Mercy, reflections on Divine Mercy, and Benediction.

CLOSING CELEBRATION OF THE JUBILEE OF MERCY
A special Mass will be held on Nov. 12, 2016, and Masses of Thanksgiving will be held in each Jubilee church at each deanery.

Hundreds of faithful process into the Door of Mercy opened Dec. 13 at Our Mother of Mercy Parish in Fort Worth.

(Photo by Juan Guajardo / NTC)



designated by the bishop may receive an indulgence. To receive the plenary indulgence, the visitor must pass through the Door of Mercy, receive the sacraments of the Eucharist and Reconciliation, and pray for the intentions of the pope. (For more on this, see page 8)

In *Misericordiae Vultus*, the announcement of the Year of Mercy, Pope Francis explained the tradition of indulgences during a Jubilee. “To live the indulgence of the Holy Year means to approach the Father’s mercy with the certainty that his forgiveness extends to the entire life of the believer. To gain an indulgence is to experience the holiness of the Church, who bestows upon all the fruits of Christ’s redemption, so that God’s love and forgiveness may extend everywhere.”

Our Mother of Mercy parishioner Marie Guidry said, “Bishop Olson opening the Door of Mercy was a blessed experience. It was symbolic, but I hope we internalize it and turn it toward more goodness in the world. We need to understand that our own point of view is not the most important. We need to seek to understand those who are different from us. This can bring hope to the whole world.”

Guidry’s thoughts seemed to echo Pope Francis’ as he expressed the desire for people to become more merciful in their own lives and to bring the mercy of God to others.

He wrote in *Misericordiae Vultus*, “We must admit that the practice of mercy is waning in the wider culture. In some cases the word seems to have dropped out of use. However, without a witness to mercy, life becomes fruitless and sterile, as if sequestered in a barren desert.

“The time has come for the Church to take up the joyful call to

JUBILEE CHURCHES in the Diocese of Fort Worth

NORTHWEST DEANERY - St. Mary, Windthorst

SOUTHWEST DEANERY - Our Lady of Lourdes, Mineral Wells

SOUTH DEANERY - St. Frances Cabrini, Granbury

WEST CENTRAL DEANERY - Holy Redeemer Aledo

EAST CENTRAL DEANERY - Christ the King, Fort Worth

ARLINGTON DEANERY - St. Matthew, Arlington

NORTHEAST DEANERY - St. Catherine of Siena, Carrollton

NORTH DEANERY - St. Thomas Aquinas, Pilot Point

DIOCESAN JUBILEE CHURCH - Our Mother of Mercy, Fort Worth



Lay faithful pray as Bishop Olson conducts the Rite of Blessing the Holy Door. (Photo by Juan Guajardo / NTC)

mercy once more. It is time to return to the basics and to bear the weaknesses and struggles of our brothers and sisters. Mercy is the force that reawakens us to new life and instills in us the courage to look to the future with hope.”

What you need to know about the YEAR OF MERCY

by Juan Guajardo
Associate Editor

WITH THE HOLY YEAR OF MERCY HAVING STARTED DEC. 8, QUESTIONS ABOUT THE CELEBRATION ARE PLENTIFUL. WE ANSWER YOUR BURNING QUESTIONS RELATING TO THE JUBILEE YEAR.

What's the difference between a holy year, a jubilee year, and an extraordinary jubilee? A holy year (also known as a jubilee) is a year of forgiveness of sins and the punishment merited by those sins. Typically celebrated every 25 years, it calls for reconciliation between adversaries, conversion, and greater emphasis on the Sacrament of Reconciliation. The last jubilee was celebrated in 2000.

Extraordinary jubilees can be

called for special occasions, times, or events. This is the case with Pope Francis' 2016 Holy Year, which comes earlier than the 25-year norm. Extraordinary holy years occur much less frequently but hold the same emphasis that a holy year does. This will only be the third extraordinary jubilee held since the tradition began in the 16th century.

So, why did Pope Francis call for this holy year? He unexpectedly called for it on March 12 during a Lenten penance service at St. Peter's Basilica.

He explained that for a long time he had reflected on how the Church (and that includes us, as well) can more effectively witness and proclaim that God's mercy is central to her mission. Hence the extraordinary jubilee, which will help direct us on a journey to spiritual conversion and remind us clearly that "God forgives all, and God forgives always." The pope's wish is "that the Jubilee be a living experience of the closeness of the Father."

What is a Holy Door? Pope Francis inaugurated the Year of Mercy when he opened the Holy Door at St. Peter's Basilica on Dec. 8.

Each of the four papal basilicas in Rome has a holy door. They are usually sealed shut from the inside and are only opened during Jubilee years so that the faithful can pass through them and gain a plenary indulgence. The Pontifical Council for the Promotion of the New Evangelization says the rite of opening the holy door goes back to *John 10:9* and *John 14:6* where Christ is recognized as "the sole door through which we enter salvation" and "the

one way that leads to the Father." Walking through the Holy Door also symbolizes the journey of a person leaving worldly influences and entering into God's presence, from sin to grace, as St. Pope John Paul II puts it in *Incarnationis Mysterium*.

Are there Holy Doors outside of Rome? Yes! During the jubilee, the pope has given diocesan bishops authority to designate a Holy Door at their cathedral or at other churches.

What should I know about the plenary indulgence?

According to the Apostolic Penitentiary, plenary indulgences can be applied to oneself or to the souls of the deceased. It can be received once a day.

What can I do to live out the call to mercy during this Holy Year? The Holy Father wrote in *Misericordie Vultus* that God's mercy "is not an abstract idea, but a concrete reality with which He reveals his love as of that of a father or mother, moved to the very depths out of love for their child." The words of Jesus in *Matthew 25:40*, "You did it to me" also touch on this tangible dimension of mercy. Pope Francis said the spiritual and corporal works of mercy are great ways of living that out.

Where can I learn more about the jubilee? Visit the diocesan Year of Mercy webpage, www.fwdioc.org/jubilee-year-mercy for resources, scheduled events, and more! Also, keep an eye out for "Mercy Friday" posts on the diocesan and NTC Facebook and Twitter accounts, and check out www.northtexascatholic.org for

How do I obtain the plenary indulgence?

1

Take a pilgrimage and enter the Door of Mercy at the designated church in your deanery, or come to Our Mother of Mercy Parish — the diocese's principal church for the Holy Year.

2

Receive the sacrament of Reconciliation and receive the Eucharist within a week before or after your pilgrimage.

3

While at the church, make a profession of faith and pray for the intentions of Pope Francis for the Church and the world. The latter should be at least an Our Father, but could also be the pope's prayer for the Jubilee Year of Mercy, or other prayers.

articles and columns on different aspects of the Year of Mercy and Wednesday catechesis audiences by the pope.

What is the Year of Mercy indulgence?

DynamicCatholic.com says: "A plenary indulgence removes all of what is called 'temporal punishment' due to sins that have already been forgiven.

"...Every sin, large or small, is in some way a rejection of the best-version-of-ourselves and a rejection of God. 'Temporal punishment' is the natural consequence of that sin, the necessary purification following forgiveness of sin."

(Background image by CNS/ Malcolm Grear)

Bishop's 11th Annual Respect Life Gala draws record-breaking crowd

by Joan Kurkowski-Gillen
Correspondent

ORGANIZERS WERE THRILLED WITH THE RECORD-BREAKING TURNOUT. Cecilia Abbott, the First Lady of Texas, brought the crowd to its feet with a stirring speech, and auction bidders were enthusiastic in raising money for diocesan pro-life ministries at the Bishop's 11th Annual Catholics Respect Life Gala, held Nov. 7 in the Fort Worth Convention Center ballroom. Here's a recap of the event:

- **MORE THAN 800 PEOPLE ATTENDED.** Their donations went to support the ministries, education programs, and civic efforts that advance a culture of life in the Fort Worth Diocese.
- **CHUCK AND PAT PELLETIER** were honored with the Service to Life Award by Bishop Micheal Olson for their more than three decades of work counseling pregnant women outside abortion clinics.
- **MICHAEL DEMMA**, director of the diocesan Respect Life Office thanked the crowd for their support of programs like Pro-life Boot Camp, Youth for Life, Rachel Ministries, and Gabriel Project.
- **CECILIA ABBOTT**, wife of Texas governor Greg Abbott gave the keynote address. She became friends with Bishop Olson back when they were both students at the University of St. Thomas in Houston.
- **THE FIRST LADY** recounted for her audience the story of how she and



Bishop Michael Olson with Texas First Lady Cecilia Abbott at the 11th Annual Respect Life Gala. (Photo by Donna Ryckaert / NTC)

her husband adopted their daughter, Audrey. She also acknowledged how difficult it can be to be pro-life in today's society. "That's why we need the strength of our family in Christ even more — not just in the pews at church, but in our everyday lives. We can change hearts," she asserted.



Chuck and Pat Pelletier were the recipients of the Service to Life Award at the Bishop's 11th Annual Catholics Respect Life Gala held Nov. 7. (Photo by Donna Ryckaert / NTC)

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Catechesis.

Sister Diana Rodriguez, HCG, serves as the first director of the Diocesan Formation Center. Coming from a teaching order, she has served many years as the director of religious education in parishes, most recently Our Lady of Guadalupe in Fort Worth. She'll now have the opportunity to provide education in the faith to groups from across the diocese.

Sr. Diana also brings other strengths to her new role. "She's just the right person to overhaul the center. She's savvy with resources, and she gets 'yes' before she even asks the question. She's gotten some furniture donated and purchased a new oven and beds at a great discount," De La Torre said.

Another benefit is that Sr. Diana is well known and

respected in the neighborhood. She grew up in North Fort Worth and attended All Saints Church, which is just a few minutes away.

In sixth grade at All Saints School, Sr. Diana first felt the call to religious life.

She remembered, "I was encouraged by the sisters and attracted by the joy I saw in them. I spent my teenage years accompanying them on parish visits, [praying] the Rosary with them, helping them with parish ministry, and joining them when they relaxed and had fun."

After graduating from Trimble Tech High School, she entered formation with the Hermanas Catequistas



Sr. Diana Rodriguez, HCG, and Jo Ann Foley staff the renovated Diocesan Formation Center. Here they show off the newly painted walls and new bunk beds in the ladies' dormitory. (Photo by Susan Moses / NTC)

Guadalupe in 1979. Her older sister also belongs to the order.

Sr. Diana cherishes every moment of saying "yes" to God. "All of it is the good part," she explained. Compared to the days of parish life filled with meetings and classes, overseeing the formation center is quiet and peaceful.

Although getting on her knees to pray is nothing new, her latest assignment also brought her to her knees: scrubbing decades of grease and mildew in the kitchen.

"I didn't know what I was getting into, but I do like to be busy," Sr. Diana said.

The interior was completed Sept. 16, just hours before the first retreat of Cursillistas occupied the renovated building. Foley remarked, "They appreciated how nice and clean everything looked."

Many other groups have followed. Leaders of parish retreats, youth and



One of the renovated rooms includes a large hall that can be used for Masses, or presentations. (Photo by Juan Guajardo / NTC)

college student retreats, and confirmation retreats have scheduled weekends at the repurposed facility.

Rachel's Vineyard, college groups, and the John Paul II Institute have also reserved times.

"My vision is to see it busy during the week too. It could be used for days of reflection or conferences. I may start a weekday Bible study for people in the neighborhood," Sr. Diana said.

For more information on the Diocesan Formation Center, please visit: www.fwdioc.org/retreat-locations

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CATHOLIC CHARITIES

IFC brings hope to kids needing foster care



These children are among those served by CCFW's International Foster Care (IFC) program. (Photo courtesy of CCFW)

Mohammed, Jean, and Grace — children who have survived years of violence, poverty, and homelessness — are looking forward to Christmas this year, thanks to those involved in Catholic Charities Fort Worth's International Foster Care (IFC) program. IFC partners with generous North Texas families to provide safe, nurturing, foster homes to refugees and unaccompanied migrant youth, asylees, and victims of trafficking.

“We always have a great need for foster homes for these children, who have endured so much,” says Monique O’Neill, Foster Family Recruiter for CCFW. “War and instability have forced many children to flee their homes and countries without their parents and other family members. Our foster families have found their own lives tremendously enriched when they welcome these children into their homes.”

Many of the children have experienced horrors most Americans can only imagine. Mohammed, a Pakistani orphan, had to work 14-hour days before violence against the Hazara community in which he lived, forced him to flee for his life.

Jean, who was born in the Congo, lost his parents to ethnic violence at age 10. He and his two

sisters lived in extreme poverty in a refugee camp, deprived of clean water, education, and adequate housing or nutrition.

Grace, a native of Burma, fled her country at the age of eight, traveling alone through jungles to avoid being conscripted as a child soldier. She survived years of deprivation in a Malaysian refugee camp, with no access to medical care or education.

These children, and many others from Somalia, Ethiopia, and Central America, have now found safety within loving, supportive families in North Texas. IFC provides services designed to meet the needs of each minor, including education, mentoring, training in independent living skills, cultural activities, legal assistance, mental health services, and English as a Second Language classes.

Even if a family cannot complete the process, which includes a 36-hour training course, in order to become a licensed foster care home, there are many other ways in which individuals, families, and groups can provide much-needed assistance to the IFC program. To learn more about IFC, or to volunteer or make a donation, call (817) 289-0461 or visit www.catholic-charitiesfortworth.org/IFC

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Bishop Olson shares Catholic perspective as part of end-of-life issues panel

By Mary Lou Sewoester
Correspondent

Death can be a problem for some—a solution for others. But for Catholics it should be neither.

“Death either becomes the ultimate enemy — the ultimate problem that needs to be ‘medicalized’ and staved off at all costs — or it becomes the solution in order to live our lives autonomously — that if death is inevitable, ‘well then I’m going to take it on my own terms.’ Both are really ways by which we exclude the dying,” Bishop Michael Olson said at a roundtable discussion on end-of-life issues Oct. 29 at the Fort Worth Botanic Gardens Lecture Hall.

“Death and dying, in a spiritual sense, really draws us more deeply *into* the community,” Bishop Olson clarified, “and care for those who are suffering and dying involves solidarity with them through care, through presence, through listening, sometimes in silence, but it never involves abandonment or the propping up of a false sense of individualism or autonomy or an undue reliance on technology.”

Bishop Olson joined Dr. Jennifer Arnouville, DO, geriatrician with USMD Health System, and Jen Eisenbarth, director of care coordination and social work for Baylor Scott & White Regional Medical Center Grapevine, for “The Conversation: A Spiritual Discussion in Medical World,” sponsored by hospice provider VITAS Healthcare.

They discussed the importance of having “the hard talk” with loved ones about end-of-life medical decisions that respect a person’s faith, culture, and values.

Eisenbarth opened the roundtable by explaining three crucial elements in end-of-life care: an advance directive and why it is needed, who to choose as a decision maker, and



Bishop Olson makes a point during the panel discussion on end of life issues Oct. 29. (Photos by Lance Murray)

what is the right amount of care “for me”?

She said not having an advance directive can add to the stress of a difficult situation with a loved one.

“The opportunity to have discussions with family members before finding yourself in a difficult situation can make all the difference for you and your family,” she said.

Dr. Arnouville, recommended having many “ongoing conversations” about end-of-life care with both family members and physicians.

Using an example of a patient with dementia, she underlined the importance of those conversations and the value of hospice care. The dementia patient’s family, upon seeing her condition worsen, would take her to the hospital, Dr. Arnouville explained. But those hospital visits “didn’t make her better anymore ... every time she came out of the hospital, it was another step down in her health.”

Had the family planned ahead with meaningful discussions about end-of-life care, Dr. Arnouville said, hospice care could have allowed the patient to spend valuable time at home with loved ones instead of in the hospital.

Bishop Olson agreed with the



Kathy Campbell, program organizer, speaks to the audience about a TV news clip on the topic. Campbell is director of bereavement and volunteers for VITAS.

value of hospice saying “the greatest strength of hospice care is that it transforms an aggressive treatment to eradicate disease into an aggressive treatment to alleviate suffering and the symptoms of pain, so that when people suffer and are dying, they are not doing so in pain and in isolation.”

The three panelists agreed that an advance directive is not a “once and done” action, but a preparation and guide for the time when decisions are necessary.

“You don’t have *the* conversation that solves *the* problem,” Bishop Olson explained. “Hopefully it’s the first of many conversations that you have, so you can have a clearer conversation in the midst of the crisis of dying and death.”

Kathy Campbell, program organizer and director of bereavement and volunteers for VITAS, suggested visiting www.theconversationproject.org for help with starting a family conversation about end-of-life care.

Bishop Olson, who has experience with end-of-life concerns both with his own family and as a former hospital chaplain, cautioned several times against two extremes in approaching death.

“Mercy involves accompanying the sufferer through solidarity, *not* the ultimate patient abandonment either by trying to do everything possible to maintain physiological existence or to do nothing at all and [thereby] foster an approach to suicide or euthanasia that *seems* to be a quick and easy answer.”

Panelists tackled a wide range of issues during the question-and-answer portion of the program, including what to do if a patient changes their mind.

Bishop Olson said an advance directive is a plan that “helps form your decision that’s meant to be made at a particular time. It’s preparation for it. Having a plan doesn’t supplant or take the place of decision-making.”

“Sometimes when people change their minds, they’re saying ‘wait,’” Bishop Olson added. “They’re not ready” because they haven’t had the opportunity to talk with a loved one, to hear a family member’s voice, or see someone close to them one last time, the bishop explained. “Dying and death is more than a biological process. It’s human — a human experience — and so it’s a mystery, and everybody does it a little differently.”

Bishop Olson to medical workers: God invites all to share in his mission of mercy

by Jenara Kocks-Burgess
Correspondent

REFERENCING POPE FRANCIS' TEACHING ON THE CHURCH AS A 'FIELD HOSPITAL,' BISHOP MICHAEL OLSON ENCOURAGED DOCTORS AND HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS TO CONTINUE REACHING OUT TO ALL WHO ARE WOUNDED — BOTH SPIRITUALLY AND PHYSICALLY.

Speaking to the Catholic Medical-Dental Guild of Wichita Falls at a Nov. 21 gathering featuring a Mass, dinner, and presentation, Bishop Olson touched on the topic of mercy and its role in ministry.

Proceeds from the event, which was held at Our Lady Queen of Peace in Wichita Falls, went toward Catholic Charities Fort Worth's Northwest Campus and to the educational programs of the guild, which is now a year old.

Guild president Dr. J. Robert Parkey said the organization, which is the only local chartered guild of the National Catholic Medical Association, offers camaraderie and knowledge both about healthcare and the Catholic faith.

Dr. Parkey kicked off the evening presentation by introducing the bishop, explaining that health care professionals have a friend in Bishop Olson who wrote his doctoral dissertation on end-of-life issues, and is well-respected in the field.

During his presentation, Bishop Olson defined what mercy is and used some medical metaphors, especially the "field hospital," which Pope Francis uses when referring to the Church. Bishop Olson talked about mercy using three metaphors: the defendant and the trial, the pilgrim and the pilgrimage, and that of the refugee and the field hospital.

Over the course of the talk, the bishop identified the metaphor of the pilgrim — a person who is learning and growing on a journey — as the one most closely aligned with the Catholic faith. He defined the metaphor of the defendant as the most deficient in its explanation of God's mercy and love. The metaphor



LEFT TO RIGHT: Medical-Dental Guild Officers Robert Parkey, M.D., Laurie Harper, Duanne Peters, M.D., and Steven Finley, DDS, pose with Bishop Michael Olson at the presentation and dinner Nov. 21. (Photo by Bertha Salazar / NTC)

of the refugee and field hospital, Bishop Olson said, is the most closely aligned with the pilgrimage metaphor.

"Mercy flows from love of God and neighbor, and it's an important part of charity and justice," he said. "In other words, God mercifully offers his people his justice. His justice is most biased toward those who are wounded by sin and those who are most vulnerable.

"But his bias does not in any way leave out the happiness of those who are less vulnerable and who are more capable because He involves them in this mission to those who are weaker among them," Bishop Olson said.

He also said that many times people see the moral teaching of the Church as an imposition to their freedom

"A challenge for us is to ask permission to be called into a mature and loving adult relationship with a God who loves us unconditionally instead of seeing God's moral teaching of the Magisterium and the Gospel as a hindrance to our freedom and therefore a hindrance to our human happiness," said Bishop Olson.

He also said if the Church was to treat the

refugees in the world today in the way of the "trial and defendant" metaphor, it would end up shooting the wounded. That metaphor is most opposed by the Hippocratic Oath and tradition of medical practice, he explained.

"If we understand our role in the Church as the pilgrim people, we allow refugees to be seen as individuals," he said.

Bishop Olson pointed out that the people of Israel, who made a covenant with God, began as refugees.

They bonded as a people in the desert and gradually moved into trust. In that journey, they changed from refugees to pilgrims. In that way, they moved from being in the field hospital to embarking on the pilgrimage, Bishop Olson said.

The bishop described the mission of the Church today as seeking to welcome the refugees of post-modernity, as they are. This mission involves asking them to enter into our pilgrimage, showing them God's love by our actions and then leading them through the experience of the Gospel, sharing it with them and thus drawing them into a deeper understanding of conversion, he said.

Gabriel Project Angels help mothers in need, giving hope, supporting them through their pregnancies

By Joan Kurkowski-Gillen
Correspondent

MEGAN PEREZ UNDERSTANDS THE STRESS AND PRESSURE that comes with new motherhood. The St. Patrick parishioner gave birth to a baby girl, Leyla, four months ago. She's also a former Child Protective Services social worker who witnessed firsthand how poverty and abuse affects families.

A newly-commissioned Gabriel Angel, Perez hopes to use her professional skills and personal experience to help struggling moms-to-be find the material and spiritual resources needed to improve their lives.

"Everyone wants a stress-free pregnancy," she observes, "but how can you do that if you have to worry about where your next meal is coming from or where you are going to sleep?"

Connecting expectant moms with community services is only part of the goal.

"I want to give them hope," says the enthusiastic volunteer. "As a social worker in the field, I wasn't able to share my religious beliefs. So to lead women to Jesus Christ, invite them to church and into my life is such a blessing. Knowing what it's like to go through pregnancy, and how stressful motherhood can be, will help me relate to them."

Perez recently completed a two-day training session required to become an angel for the Gabriel Project. A pro-life ministry of the Diocese of Fort Worth, the outreach program provides practical assistance to women in crisis pregnancies. Parishes and individuals involved in the Gabriel Project support a mother's choice for life with prayer and friendship as well as needed maternity and nursery items.

Angela Walters, a longtime pro-life advocate who was named



Director of Marriage and Family Life Chris Vaughan helps with a Gabriel Project training session for TCU students recently as longtime pro-life advocate Angela Walters, appointed diocesan coordinator of the Gabriel Project Oct. 1, looks on at Vaughan's left. (Joan Kurkowski-Gillen / NTC)

diocesan coordinator of the Gabriel Project on Oct. 1., says, "The situation can be as simple as talking to them on the phone a few times or as difficult as seeing them on a constant basis through a crisis."

Walters plans to expand the ministry by having a trained Gabriel Angel — including more Spanish speakers — in every parish in the diocese. There are currently 60 active angels and 250 volunteers. Thirty new angels have joined the program since March.

"Our mission is to provide spiritual and emotional support during pregnancy and beyond," Walters continues. "Sometimes they need a few baby items, and that opens the door to a conversation that hopefully brings Jesus into their lives."

The local Gabriel Project 24-hour hotline currently receives approximately 75 calls a year. About 30 of those women are eventually paired with a Gabriel Angel.

Walters intends to energize the ministry.

"My goal is to expand it into the whole diocese and get into the rural areas," says the coordinator

who was asked to join a Child Fatality Review Team in Johnson County. The task force is studying the area's high infant mortality rate. "One of the things Gabriel Project can do is help women get pre-natal care — especially immigrants who fear deportation."

Today Gabriel Project workers are found in more than 20 states. Women distressed over an unplanned pregnancy find the ministry through referrals or churchyard signs that ask: *Pregnant? Worried or Confused? We're here to help.* An 800 number directs them to a hotline.

"Sometimes all it takes is a few words of support and comfort to change somebody's mind," says Debra Heron, former diocesan coordinator of the Gabriel Project who now heads the parish ministry at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish.

Heron is also part of a team that helps train Gabriel Angels. A seasoned mentor accustomed to guiding pregnant women through difficult life circumstances, she provides information on how to access community and church resources, prenatal care, and insur-

ance programs. Her presentations also explore topics like "How do you begin a conversation?" Gabriel Angels are expected to contact their moms-to-be twice a week and meet with them at least once a month. Circumstances dictate the frequency of interaction.

"What makes a good Angel? She has to have the qualities of our Mother Mary," Heron asserts. Gentleness and kindness are necessary virtues.

"A Gabriel Angel must be able to befriend someone, keep in contact, listen to them, spend time with them, and have a lot of love for the person they are mentoring," she explains. "That's the primary purpose of our ministry — to give emotional and spiritual support."

Some Gabriel Angels remain in the lives of the women they help for a long time.

"I know women who have been walking with their moms five to 10 years," Heron says, describing the close bond that is sometimes formed. "Some moms call us when they become pregnant again because we become like a mother to them."

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Maryknoll Lay Missioner Dee Dungy, embraces one of the women she works with providing compassionate care and basic services for the elderly in a forced eviction resettlement area outside of Phnom Penh, Cambodia. (CNS photo/Sam Stanton, courtesy Maryknoll)



Aria Woodman from Wadsworth, Ill., waves goodbye to the baby Jesus after visiting during the opening day for the outdoor creche in Chicago's Daley Plaza Nov. 28. The God Squad, a team of volunteers from Chicago-area parishes, sets up the Nativity scene each year at the start of Advent. (CNS photo/Karen Callaway, CATHOLIC NEW WORLD)



The Vatican's 2015 Christmas stamps feature a manuscript illumination of the Holy Family from the 15th century. The image is from the *Codices Urbinae Latini 239* at the Vatican Library (1477-1478). (CNS photo/courtesy Vatican Philatelic and Numismatic Office)



A peace banner is seen as Pope Francis arrives for a meeting with young people at the Kololo airstrip in Kampala, Uganda Nov. 28. (CNS photo/Paul Haring)



Tatiyana Rogers of St. Agnes Academic High School in College Point, N.Y., gestures to proclaim the psalm during Mass Nov. 22 at the Dominican Sisters' motherhouse in Amityville, N.Y. (CNS photo/Gregory A. Shemitz)



Pope Francis opens the Holy Door in St. Peter's Basilica to inaugurate the Jubilee Year of Mercy at the Vatican Dec. 8. (CNS photo/Max Rossi, Reuters)

Comic Retreat by: Brian Montfort



Umbert the Unborn by Gary Cangemi



The FLOCK by Jean Denson



GROWING AS A CHRISTIAN

Love is mercy put into action

By JEFF HEDGLEN

ONE OF THE CLASSES I HAD TO TAKE FOR MY MASTERS DEGREE IN THEOLOGY WAS AN OLD TESTAMENT CLASS. FOR ONE OF THE PAPERS WE WERE TASKED WITH PICKING SOME ASPECT OF GOD AND MINING THE TEXT FOR INFORMATION ABOUT THIS PARTICULAR CHARACTERISTIC. By “mine the text” the professor meant that we were to use only the Scriptures to write the paper, no commentaries or books by other people who investigated a similar focus. We were charged to dig around in the books, chapters, and verses for nuggets that exemplified our topic. The subject I went digging for was the mercy of God.

The word mercy occurs 172 times in the Old Testament of the *New American Bible* in 30 books from Genesis to Malachi. When I was writing my paper I looked up all 172 verses in the *New American Bible*. I then compared those to the same verses in the *New Jerusalem Bible*. Since the *New American Bible* is a word for word translation and the *New Jerusalem Bible* is a meaning for meaning translation, some interesting insights were gained, and this proved to be instrumental in discovering the richness of the mercy of God. For often when the *New American Bible* uses the word mercy, the *New Jerusalem Bible* uses another word or phrase to express the same thing. The main expressions found in the *New Jerusalem* in place of mercy are: faithful love, pity, compassion, covenant, and a few times saving acts and grace

are used.

In my paper I used many of the 172 verses as examples of each of these alternatives for the word mercy and gained some insight in to this major aspect of God. I discovered that the key elements of

of his Son. God sends Jesus to the earth to free us from the slavery of sin and to offer us salvation, redemption, hope, healing, friendship, compassion, and above all a perfect display of his faithful love.

Love is mercy put into action,



The student body, faculty, staff, parents and alumni of St. Joseph Catholic School in Arlington participated in actively living out their faith by serving the less fortunate on their second annual Faith Extension Day. (NTC/Photo by Donna Ryckaert)

God’s mercy are compassion, pity, grace, and tenderness. His mercy is great and boundless and it is faithful love that endures. I boiled all the verses down to this definition of the mercy of God as found in the Old Testament Scriptures: God’s loving involvement with his people in an immeasurable, gentle way that can be depended upon, always.

This definition, as wonderful as it is, does not even take into account the New Testament displays of God’s mercy, namely the immeasurable gift of the sending,

and this is exactly what the Father does. For God, love is not just a nice idea, or fodder for a pretty song, or an emotion shared between people. Rather it is a verb. Throughout biblical and Church history we see God’s love put into action. Whether it is in the rescue of his people from slavery in Egypt, through the prophets, through the gift of his Son, through the sending of the Holy Spirit, through the actions of the early Church, and down through the centuries through the teachings of the Church, the Saints,



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 Catholic Press Association of the United States and Canada in 2014.

and extending to the clergy and the faithful in the pews, God’s love has been radically on display in a myriad of ways.

Pope Francis in this Jubilee Year of Mercy is calling on all of us to continue this display of mercy. The theme for the Year of Mercy is “Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful” (*Luke 6:36*). And in choosing this verse about mercy, out of all the possible verses, Pope Francis is calling us to BE mercy, to BE like the Father.

To be sure this is going to take different forms for all of us, all depending on where we are in life. Sometimes all the mercy we can muster is to take care of our cats and our children and sometimes we can buy a stranger a cup of coffee — and sometimes we can do a whole lot more.

So, as we bask in the glow of THE act of mercy during the wonder of the Christmas season, let us find a way to do our own act(s) of mercy as the year unfolds.

SEEKING GOD'S PATH VOCATIONS

Prayer is essential in striving for holiness

BY FATHER JAMES WILCOX

WE HEAR AND READ MUCH ABOUT THE UNIVERSAL CALL TO HOLINESS. THE HUMAN EXCURSION TOWARD ETERNAL LIFE, WHICH WAS OFFERED A DEEPER UNDERSTANDING BY THE FATHERS OF THE SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL, IS AN EASY REMINDER FOR PREACHERS AND WRITERS. All the faithful of Christ are invited to strive for the holiness and perfection of their own proper state (*Lumen Gentium* 42).

Of course by “their own proper state,” the Fathers acknowledge a difference in the lives of religious, priests, and laity. While this is the Year of Consecrated Life (see the info about the Feb. 5 event!), I spend this column on the importance of holiness of priests and the need for all of us to pray and promote this holiness for those in discernment.

Outstanding work is being accomplished in many aspects of society these days. However, we can see that we are still under attack by sin and evil. No one is immune to the spiritual warfare underway in our society today. In the fight for conversion and holiness in the lives of all, Satan is often seeking to pull down those men — priests, consecrated to the work of Jesus Christ — who seek to bring all people into a life of unity with the Divine.

It takes great courage to accept the call to discern the priesthood. It is accepting a call to discern the ability to be formed into the man of Christ and the priest of Christ, so to enter the battlefield as part of God's army. “We like to imagine you (seminarians), after all the years of preparation in your native lands, as regiments of soldiers who have been chosen and set aside, in obedience to the call of the Lord, for the future conquests by the Kingdom of God” (*St. John XXIII*).

A priest must be a man of constant prayer to be always prepared for the next brawl against evil. It is in prayer that the priest's heart is fortified with the love of Jesus Christ so to win holiness for the sheep in his care.

Christ is the example of every form of holiness — for the priest, the religious, the layperson. Perhaps the most important reminder for priests can be found in the crucifix.

The cross is not a place of comfort. The priest cannot be controlled by comfort. Those who crave satisfaction of their thirst through society, material goods, or even human knowledge and experience are not men who can be soldiers for the Kingdom of God. Soldiers, i.e. priests, are men who are comfortable being in the battle against evil, comfortable in the angst to ensure truth, and comfortable with standing their ground for what is right in the eyes of God.

A man of self-denial is a man seeking the good and holiness of others. The priest accomplishes this self-sacrificial and compas-

sionate concern for the flock through preaching the word of God, hearing confessions, celebrating the Holy Mass, anointing the sick and the dying, instructing the ignorant on matters of faith, comforting those who suffer, and aligning those who are misguided. In these efforts, the priest can be like Christ who “went about doing good and healing all those oppressed by the devil” (*Acts 10:38*). That is, the priest “must be aflame with charity toward everyone. Not even his thoughts, his will, his feelings, belong to him, for they are rather those of Jesus Christ who is his life” (*Pope St. John XXIII, SACERDOTII NOSTRI PRIMORDIA* 6).

Do we expect this level



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

of holiness and dedication from our priests? Of course. To expect less belittles the priestly life instituted by our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. The mercy of the heart of Jesus Christ comforts when one falls short. However, the striving for holiness — in the lives of all of us — is what keeps us focused on winning the battle for the Kingdom of God

Together, as a community striving toward holiness, we must keep praying for priests, seminarians, religious men and women, and all in discernment. We must anticipate and expect holiness from them. And we must follow the example of holiness they proclaim with their lives.

DAILY PRAYER LIST

FORT WORTH SEMINARIANS 2015-2016

A Prayer for a Seminarian
God our Father, Thank you for calling [name] to prepare for priesthood. Grant him the grace to grow closer to You through daily prayer. Help him form his personality as a credible witness to others. Bless him while he studies Your word and the teachings of the Church, and give him a generous heart to serve Your people. We ask this through Your son, Jesus Christ, our great High Priest. Amen.

Thank you for your support and generosity. Please pray for the following seminarians:

Day of the Month	Name
1	Dcn. Joseph Keating; Dcn. Nghia Nguyen; Dcn. Matthew Tatyrek
2	Stephen Hauck
3	John Martin
4	Jason Allan
5	Jeffrey Ambreit-Quepons
6	Collin Becker
7	Jonathan Demma
8	Ricky Diaz
9	Eric Flores
10	Benjamin Grothouse
11	Kevin Hathaway
12	William Hayes
13	Cody Honkomp
14	Autin Hoodenpytle
15	Ed Hopkins
16	Thomas Jones
17	David LaPointe
18	Brandon LeClair
19	Harrison Lewis
20	Pedro Martinez
21	Samuel Maul
22	Brett Metzler
23	Maurice Moon
24	Joseph Moreno
25	Linh Nguyen
26	Rijo Philip
27	Derek Stanzel
28	Michael Sumcizk
29	Anthony Vecchio
30	Benjamin Vina
31	for those discerning vocations

Does God inconvenience you?

BY MARLON DE LA TORRE

A VERY INTRIGUING ASPECT OF CATHOLICISM IS THE FREE WILL ACT TO SACRIFICE AND EMBRACE SUFFERING. For many, the notion of sacrifice is already beyond comprehension because of the belief that; "I've sacrificed enough." The irony in this statement is its contradictory nature when placed in relation to Christ's Crucifixion. The whole premise of God's convenience toward man is eternal rest with Him in Heaven. Having the praeternatural gift of seeing God face to face and being with Him in heaven is not a bad proposition; the key is getting there, and this is where the notion of inconvenience comes in.

The prophet Jeremiah (12:1-3) offers us a glimpse of how we respond to the inconveniences of the world when he complains to God about the people he has to evangelize and his disdain for their wickedness and their prosperity in it. He goes on to say:

Why does the way of the wicked prosper? Why do all who are treacherous thrive? You plant them, and they take root; they grow and bring forth fruit; you are near their mouth and far from their heart. But you, O Lord, know me; you see me, and test my mind toward you. Pull them out like sheep for the slaughter, and set them apart for the day of slaughter.

Jeremiah's method of dealing with these inconveniences is to simply have God wipe them out. Again the irony here is when pressed to freely obey, listen, and follow God many exhibit the

same mindset toward God as the ultimate form of inconveniences because of what He asks from us e.g. The Ten Commandments. This tendency develops further when we expand our list of inconveniences to include Christ and the Church, thus eliminating every obstacle that stands in our way. We need look no further than the moral inconveniences people find in the sacrament of Holy Matrimony between one man and woman, the inconvenience of living a chaste life, or inconvenience of having a child and respecting the gift of life from conception to natural death.

Our missionary responsibility

One thing is for certain, if Christ is our aim, we must have a genuine relationship with Him. God's method for revealing his love was by setting us on a path toward his Son thus eliminating the inconveniences that would prevent us from having a relationship with his Son Jesus Christ if we so chose. The *Catechism* (2044) beautifully and clearly strengthens this point with respect to our missionary responsibility:

The fidelity of the baptized is a primordial condition for the proclamation of the Gospel and for the Church's mission in the world. In order that the message of salvation can show the power of its truth and radiance before men, it must be authenticated by the witness of the life of Christians. The witness of a Christian life and good works done in a supernatural spirit have great power to draw men to the faith and to God.

A sound guess as to why some knowingly or unknowingly view God as an inconvenience is a genuine lack of missionary urgency to live out their baptismal call, let alone share their faith with others. Part of this phenomenon is a lack of understanding that they (we) are part of the family of God. And if this is the case, then our tendency would be to drift away from God to the point of actually viewing Him as an inconvenience. Again the *Catechism* (2045-2046) wisely offers us some sound words with respect to this point:

Because they are members of the Body whose Head is Christ, Christians contribute to building up the Church by the constancy of their convictions and their moral lives. The Church increases, grows, and develops through the holiness of her faithful, until "we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ." By living with the mind of Christ, Christians hasten the coming of the Reign of God, "a kingdom of justice, love, and peace." They do not, for all that, abandon their earthly tasks; faithful to their master, they fulfill them with uprightness, patience, and love.

The convenience of God

God does not cause inconveniences, we do. This reality is most visible in his Son Jesus Christ and the gift He left us in his Church and the means to



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expound on God's mercy and love through the sacramental life, especially our Baptism. As I mentioned earlier, the Prophet Jeremiah had some choice words to tell God regarding the wretched people he had to deal with. God's response to Jeremiah (12:14-17) fittingly reveals just how simply and conveniently God makes Himself available to all:

Thus says the Lord concerning all my evil neighbors who touch the heritage which I have given my people Israel to inherit: Behold, I will pluck them up from their land, and I will pluck up the house of Judah from among them. And after I have plucked them up, I will again have compassion on them, and I will bring them again each to his heritage and each to his land. And it shall come to pass, if they will diligently learn the ways of my people, to swear by my name, "As the Lord lives," even as they taught my people to swear by Baal, then they shall be built up in the midst of my people. But if any nation will not listen, then I will utterly pluck it up and destroy it, says the Lord.

We can't let fear keep us from welcoming the stranger

By Liz Quirin
Catholic New Service

VIOLENCE: WE SEE IT EVERYWHERE — IN OUR NEIGHBORHOODS, OUR SCHOOLS, OUR COMMUNITIES, OUR WORLD — AND FEEL LESS ABLE TO AVOID IT. TURNING ON A TELEVISION, CONSULTING SOCIAL MEDIA: IT'S EVERYWHERE.

Along with the violence, we see images of people fleeing, sometimes walking for miles to escape intolerable situations. It happens over and over. We can trace violence through our refugees from the Vietnamese in the 1970s, the Latin Americans in the 1980s, the Bosnians in the 1990s, children surging across our borders just last year, and now the refugees from the Middle East.

In 2014, according to the Pew Charitable Trusts, 69,000 unaccompanied minors, mainly from El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras, streamed across U.S. borders, many standing still until immigration officials “collected” them. It will take years for them

to be processed through the courts as they live their lives with family members already here or foster families who have taken them in. While this reached a crisis late last summer, the numbers have dropped significantly this year, with Mexico stopping them at the border with Guatemala and returning them to their home countries. We have no idea what happens to them when they return or whether they will survive their return.

The world is now watching another crisis unfold, as Syrian refugees climbed onto rafts or went over land out of their country to escape violence. The United States was about to welcome 10,000 of them, not as many as other countries but still a respect-

able number to some. Then Paris happened. The bloggers, the purveyors of vitriol against a group of people fleeing for their lives took center stage. Since we are all on a 24-hour news feed, we're hearing and seeing information at one time that will be contradicted at a later time. We should all be calling out TMII — Too Much Incorrect Information. People are basing their opinions on unsubstantiated so-called facts.



(CNS photo/Georgi Licovski, EPA)

In simple terms, we are afraid of any group that we foresee as threatening to us in some way. We don't see how refugees, whether they are children or families, can enrich our lives, stretch us to become our best selves by opening our doors to them. Have we become so fearful and self-centered that we cannot reach out to others whose very lives are threatened if they remain in their home countries? Who would want to leave home forever, abandoning friends, other family members, possessions to embark on a journey without a destination, relying on the generosity of others?

It's easy to drop off clothes at a St. Vincent de Paul store, to send a check to a

worthy organization. This is, after all, the season when we typically do those things, but now we're being asked to do more: to be tolerant, to be willing to be merciful to people we don't understand, coming from a country where people hate us and to offer them hope and a new beginning.

It's easy to sit in a snug office contemplating a bright future for refugees, whether they arrived from Latin America or are still

arriving from the Middle East or other parts of the world. We've made so many mistakes over the years, reacting to terrible tragedies instead of openly trying to work with countries to make systemic changes so people don't need to flee for their lives. Instead of forming partnerships with countries to make positive changes for their people that can be the basis of lasting relationships, we have

watched people become desperate, making life-changing or life-threatening decisions because they can no longer remain where they are.

We are preparing for a Year of Mercy in our Catholic Church around the world. We must think about opening our doors whether they have been designated a Holy Door or they are just the doors to our hearts so that we can see clearly what we must do as followers of Jesus and pilgrims who walk alongside others so that we can all find peace.

Liz Quirin is the editor of the BELLEVILLE MESSENGER, newspaper of the Diocese of Belleville, Illinois.

Listen with a merciful heart

but beware of the deceiver

By David Mills

ONE OF THE DOVES THAT COMES TO OUR WINDOW FEEDER SEEMS TO BE MISSING THE SKIN ON THE BACK OF HIS HEAD. I'M PRETTY SURE THAT WHITE AREA WE SEE WHEN HE LOOKS AWAY FROM THE HOUSE IS ACTUALLY HIS SKULL. IT'S A DANGEROUS WORLD OUT THERE WHEN YOU'RE PREY.

They're pretty birds, our doves, but they don't look intelligent. They don't have that "Hello, lunch!" look the hawks and eagles at the National Aviary have. Doves always seem to be day-dreaming. They have a kind of "Hi! I'm your dinner!" look to them.

So, doves, not the kind of bird you want to be. Yet Jesus told us in Matthew's Gospel to be as innocent as doves, and also as wise as serpents. My first reaction to this instruction is "But doves look dumb and get eaten, and I don't want to look dumb and get eaten. Why couldn't Jesus have chosen one of the cool birds?"

But He didn't. Scholars and preachers understand the verse in different ways. One way that makes sense to me is to think of the doves' innocence as trust in others and the serpents' wisdom as looking carefully at what those others are actually doing. We want people to be open and kind, but we don't want them to get conned.

I bring up the poor dove in our window feeder because he and his fellow doves, and their peers the serpents, tell us something important about our witness when we enter into the public debates. We have to learn to be both trusting and alert. We have to listen to others sympathetically while having enough distance and skepticism to tell when someone is telling the truth and when he's lying.

That can be hard to do. We can all think



of people who'll believe almost anything and people who won't believe anything.

In the debates over abortion, for example, the pro-choice forces have some sneaky arguments that most of us won't spot. It's like watching a magician when you'd swear that he'd put the ball in his left coat pocket, and at the end of the trick it appears on a table 10 feet away. Or in your own left coat pocket. At some point in the trick, he tricked you into looking the wrong way.

One of these sneaky arguments, which I've written about elsewhere, is to switch the subject to the philosophical idea of "personhood" when the pro-lifer talks about "human life." Talk about the unborn child having human life undermines the pro-choice argument for abortion. It's a hard fact to get around. But "personhood"? What's "personhood" mean anyway?

The unavoidable fact is that from his conception from two human parents onward

that creature has a unique human genetic code. If left alone, he will grow into someone that everyone will recognize as a human being. He's human. That's just a fact. It's a fact as obvious as the fact that Michael Vick isn't as good a quarterback as Ben Roethlisberger. And since that child's human, most people will assume he has all the basic human rights, high among them the right not to be killed.

Some people will disagree and some people will just ignore the fact of the unborn child's humanity, but a lot of people will follow the obvious argument: He's human, therefore protect his life. This is a fact the pro-choice movement definitely doesn't want anyone thinking about.

So what do pro-choicers do? They used to talk about the unborn child as "a blob of tissue" or "the product of conception," as if he were just a thing we can throw away. They still do that, but when someone talks about human life, they like to switch the discussion from the fact of human life to the idea of "personhood." Most of us don't notice.

People can argue all day about what makes a human being a "person," and do. The pro-choicers then argue that since no one agrees about what makes up a person, abortion must be legal. I've seen this happen in TV debates and had people do it to me. It's a good trick. So be a dove when listening to people when they talk about abortion, but be a serpent too.

David Mills David Mills is senior editor of THE STREAM and editorial director of ETHIKA POLITIKA and he blogs at www.patheos.com/blogs/davidmills.

Planes, trains, and automobiles deliver native son to priesthood

By Jerry Circelli
Correspondent

You might say that Father Jack McKone, a native of Fort Worth, took a circuitous route toward his priestly vocation. Thirty years of working in parts and service for major automobile dealers in the area, several years of serving as a navigator aboard a vintage WWII B-17 “Flying Fortress,” and a lifelong passion for model trains all eventually led Fr. McKone in the right direction.

How could these activities lead a man to Christ? Well, take first the automobile business.

In 1970, Fr. McKone entered the automotive industry with Luke Pontiac in Arlington. He retired 30 years later, in 2000, with the David McDavid Automotive Group in Irving.

Through it all, Fr. McKone specialized in parts and service — a skill that would later serve the people of Honduras well when Fr. McKone turned his attention to missionary work.

Fr. McKone’s journey toward Christ began to gain momentum when his brother, Chuck, served in Guatemala as a Franciscan lay missionary in the mid-1990s. Mostly out of curiosity, Fr. McKone and his sister went to visit their brother.

“Both of us were really struck by what a wonderful and holy ground we encountered there. And so both of us became interested,” Fr. McKone said.

Once back in Fort Worth, Fr. McKone became increasingly involved with the Diocesan Mission Council and his parish mission board. His involvement took him to Guatemala and Honduras to serve the people there.

Then, in early 2000, Fr. McKone learned that the Diocese of Fort Worth had purchased five used



A man with a strong connection to planes, trains, and automobiles, Fr. Jack McKone eventually found his way to the priesthood after listening to God’s call. Jerry Circelli / NTC

school buses from the Fort Worth Independent School District for use by the Catholic University at Olancho, Honduras. The Diocese of Fort Worth turned to the man with 30 years of experience in the parts and service business to get the buses in working order, and the Diocese of Juticalpa in Honduras sent five mechanics to Fort Worth to work on the vehicles under Fr. McKone’s direction.

The mechanics ultimately drove the now road-ready vehicles to Honduras, a journey of more than 2,000 miles loaded with donated food, clothing, medical equipment, and much more as the buses were packed full of supplies for those in need.

Fr. McKone even found a way to include himself as part of that precious cargo, hitching a ride to Patzun, Guatemala, to help the Carmelite sisters in their mission work there. He served there for the next year and a half, coordinating efforts by diocesan parishes to aid the sisters.

Upon his return to Fort Worth in 2002, Fr. McKone said that after much discernment, he heard God’s call clearly. “And when I finally said

‘Yes!’ to God, there was a peace and a happiness. It was like, wow, this really is where I’m supposed to be, doing what God wants me to do,” Fr. McKone said.

In 2002, Fr. McKone entered the seminary and was ordained in January 2008. His calling as a diocesan priest was realized when he became associate pastor of St. Matthew Church in Arlington, where he served for 18 months.

In 2009, he was named pastor of Holy Family of Nazareth Parish in Vernon, St. Mary Parish in Quanah, and St. Joseph Parish in Crowell.

Since 2012, he has served the Church as pastor of Sacred Heart Parish in Wichita Falls.

Reflecting on his many life experiences, Fr. McKone said they have served him well as a diocesan priest. As a navigator on the B-17, in addition to entertaining people at air shows, he helped bring veterans tangible memories from the days they served their nation.

Especially after WWII re-enactments, Fr. McKone said, “There would hardly be an airshow where some older man wouldn’t come up, and without saying anything, would just touch the side of the airplane.

And you could see the tears coming down. They wouldn’t say a word. Not a word. They would just touch the plane and walk away.”

The trains, started out as a childhood hobby, and grew to become a much anticipated Christmas display at the parishes where Fr. McKone has served. Now, five trains travel through miniature villages constructed permanently atop a 22-by-11-foot platform of various heights. Complete with caroling nuns in front of a church with the Blessed Mother atop it, and a nativity scene on the grounds, the train display is a centerpiece during Christmas receptions for parishioners and friends at Sacred Heart.

Looking over the elaborate setup at his Sacred Heart rectory Fr. McKone said, “This really belongs to God. I just use it to keep his people happy.”

Exploring God’s presence in our lives, Fr. McKone said all Catholics are called in some way to serve the Church. Their missions might be in other nations, or they might be right here at home, but Christ calls us all to go out and proclaim the Gospel, he said.

“You know, we end every Mass with something to the effect of, ‘Go forth, the Mass has ended.’ We are sent out with a mandate to be a missionary,” Fr. McKone said.

“And as Pope Francis told us, we should celebrate the joy of the Gospel. It’s good news!”

All aboard!

Travel along the tracks as Fr. Jack McKone shares his Christmas-themed model railroad at Sacred Heart Catholic Church in Wichita Falls. Visit: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xGiXkN8eW7U>

A gift to the Church

The Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word bring a healing touch through their ministry

by Mary Lou Seewoester
Correspondent

IF YOU LIVED IN TEXAS IN 1866, YOU WOULD SEE PEOPLE RECOVERING FROM THE RAVAGES OF THE CIVIL WAR WHILE ENDURING A RAPIDLY SPREADING CHOLERA EPIDEMIC.

But the Bishop of Galveston, Claude Marie Dubuis, saw “Our Lord Jesus Christ, suffering in the persons of a multitude of the sick and infirm of every kind.”

So, he founded the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word (CCVI) in his diocese, which at that time included the entire state of Texas.

Today, more than 300 CCVIs minister in the areas of health care, education, and pastoral and spiritual ministry in the United States, Mexico, Peru, and Zambia, in southern Africa. And two of them, Sister Frances Evans and Sister Joretta Eveler, continue the charism of their order in the Diocese of Fort Worth.

Sr. Frances has two passions: her vocation and baseball. Over the years, Sr. Frances became well known as one of the two “baseball nuns” who have cheered on

“We try to be the healing presence of Christ in the world today and promote human dignity.”

— Sister Joretta Eveler, CCVI

the Texas Rangers at every home game since the team’s first opening day in 1972. The pair also attended three playoff games and baseball fantasy camp as guests of the team. Her longtime friend and baseball buddy, Sister Maggie Hession, CCVI, died in 2013 of Alzheimer’s.

Sr. Frances’ passion for her vocation has resonated through her work in the medical field, as a medical technician in San Antonio and Amarillo hospitals. She also spent decades at St. Joseph’s hospital (now closed) in Fort Worth as a lab technician, and later as its first director of social services.

She was a lab technician at Santa Rosa Hospital in San Antonio when she first met the



Sister Frances Evans shows support for her Rangers during their playoff run in October 2015. (Photo via Ranger Nuns Facebook page)

CCVI sisters there. She also was an Episcopalian.

“Then a friend invited me to Mass,” she said. “My curiosity was aroused, and I did a lot of reading” before becoming Catholic and joining the order in 1950.

Though she no longer does hospital work, and currently lives in an assisted living community, Sr. Frances still lives by a motto that applies to baseball as well as ministry: “never ever quit.”

“You don’t ever quit a ministry,” she said. “We’re always doing ministry I’m 89, but I can still get around. And I try to use everything I have.”

Sr. Joretta Eveler, who taught elementary school for 61 years in Texas, Illinois, and Missouri, now lives the charism of “being the real presence of Jesus in the world,” by caring for her biological sister who suffers from Parkinson’s disease.

“We try to be the healing presence of Christ in the world today and promote human dignity,” she added.

She moved to the diocese

this past July from Immaculate Conception School in Jefferson City, Missouri.

“It’s a blessing that the congregation has given me permission to do this,” remarked Sr. Joretta. “I had planned to teach kindergarten there this year, but God had other plans for me.”

Sr. Joretta felt called to consecrated life “by the example of the Incarnate Word sisters who taught me as a child” and by her own sister who entered the order six years ahead of her.

This year, instead of celebrating her birthday, Sr. Joretta marked the Year of Consecrated Life by celebrating the date that she joined the order as a candidate — Sept. 7, 1951.

SISTERS OF CHARITY OF THE INCARNATE WORD (CCVI) SERVING IN THE FORT WORTH DIOCESE

Sister Frances Evans (CCVI), retired

Sister Joretta Eveler (CCVI), not in active ministry

What comes after *'Yes'*

Preparing men for the priesthood in the Diocese of Fort Worth

By Susan Moses
Correspondent

ASTHE YEAR OF CONSECRATED LIFE COMES TO AN END, WE LOOK AT THE BEGINNING OF CONSECRATED LIFE IN THE DIOCESE OF FORT WORTH: THE YEARS BETWEEN SAYING "YES" TO GOD'S CALL AND RECEIVING HOLY ORDERS AS A PRIEST.

Discernment to the priesthood begins with conversations, first listening and talking to God, and then usually the parish priest. The diocese also sponsors several regular events for men considering the priesthood, from monthly breakfasts to retreat weekends.

"If you feel God is calling you to the priesthood, you also have to

think about whether you will become a parish priest or serve in a religious order," explained Father James Wilcox, vocation director for the diocese.

Two orders, the Cistercians and the Dominicans, have houses of formation in our area.

CISTERCIAN ABBEY

A vow of stability sets apart the monks at Cistercian Abbey. They commit to living in this particular monastic community in Irving for life.

"We face the challenges of the family by living together. We live, work, and pray in community," explained Father Peter Verhalen, OCist, abbot.

Young men who join the Cistercians respond to a threefold call: to be monks, priests, and teachers. The first year at Cistercian Abbey focuses on the monastic life. Novices minimize their contact with the outside world, studying theology and Cistercian tradition at the abbey.

"Christ calls us to leave everything behind and follow him," Fr. Verhalen said. "During the first year, novices are uprooted from their former lives so they can focus on finding God in the monastic life. The monastic life is our foundation, the priesthood is our manner of service, and teaching is our profession. It's a complex vocation but a beautiful life."

After taking temporary vows at the end of the first year, the junior monks attend classes at University of Dallas and begin their priestly studies and preparations to teach. Most of the 27 monks work at the neighboring Cistercian Preparatory School for boys, and several teach at University of Dallas, just across the freeway.

Cistercian Abbey was founded by monks who fled Communist Hungary in the 1950s. Several were invited

by Thomas Gorman, bishop of the Dallas-Fort Worth Diocese, to help found a new Catholic university, the University of Dallas. In 1961 the community formally established the independent monastery, the only Cistercian monastery for men in the U.S. In 1962, the community opened Cistercian Preparatory School, which currently enrolls 350 boys from grades 5 to 12.

"We assist in parishes with Mass and Confessions, but teaching is our main source of income. We prefer to work in a way that allows us to keep our community intact instead of having our energies dissipated," Fr. Verhalen said. "However, we do want to serve as a resource for the diocese, as a place priests or laypersons can come for a quiet day of reflection or a retreat on how to live the Gospel today."

ST. ALBERT THE GREAT DOMINICAN PRIORY

"I tell our novices, if you want to know if Dominican life will suit you, look at the men



Father Ambrose Strong, OCist, shares a laugh with Cistercian Preparatory School students. (Photo courtesy Jim Reisch)



The class of seminarians for the Fort Worth Diocese
(Photo by Juan Guajardo / NTC)



Brothers Joseph Paul Albin and Hugo Rojas, with Father Scott O'Brien, OP, during the profession of the brothers' temporary vows after a year at St. Albert the Great Dominican Priory.
(Photo courtesy St. Albert the Great Dominican Priory)

around you,” said Father Scott O’Brien, OP, novice master. “We have friars who took their vows 50 years ago, and they are still going strong, preaching, teaching, and serving God. Witnessing the life that our friars live is a huge part of discernment.”

The Dominican Order celebrates its 800-year jubilee in 2016. From its origination in France in 1216, the friars have always strived for a balance of contemplative life and apostolic ministry.

“We are called to share the fruit of our contemplation with others,” Fr. O’Brien said.

Perhaps best known for being itinerant preachers, the Dominican friars also teach and serve in campus ministries. A number of the friars also serve the poor in

various ministries, including overseas missions. “We accompany the poor on their walk, then return to community life.”

Many in the diocese are familiar with Father Carmen Mele, OP, who has conducted retreats and preached across the diocese for 16 years. His ministry mainly includes work in diocesan, parish, and priestly formation settings. Since 2009 he has directed the St. John Paul II Institute of Lay Ministry Formation for the diocese, and he also serves as director of Spiritual Formation for Diaconate Formation.

St. Albert the Great Dominican Priory opened in the 1960s in Irving adjacent to the campuses of University of Dallas and Holy Trinity Seminary, and friars have

taught and served at both institutions. The priory hosts men in their first year of formation as Dominican friars. There the novices experience community life, including daily liturgies and common prayer. Study of Scripture, theology, and the history and spirituality of the Order fills their days, along with informal conversations with the professed friars as well as “bellman duties,” or the practical chores of living.

After professing temporary vows on or around August 8, the Feast Day of St. Dominic, the brothers continue their studies at the Aquinas Institute of Theology in St. Louis, Missouri.

Whether at Cistercian Abbey or the Dominican Priory, both Fr. Verhalen and Fr. O’Brien agree that the first year is critical to formation.

Fr. O’Brien said, “It’s a time to nurture the interior life, to learn common and personal prayer, and to adjust to the discipline and structure of communal life. You have to learn to settle down and be still, so that you can find Christ and share Him with others.”

DIOCESAN PRIESTHOOD

For most people, when they think of the priesthood, the diocesan, or parish priest, comes to mind. The diocese currently has 32 men in the seven-to-nine-year

formation process.

Philosophy studies begin at St. Joseph Seminary College near Covington, Louisiana, where seminarians start their growth in the four pillars of the priesthood: intellectual, spiritual, human, and pastoral.

“Having the men together helps them bond into a priestly fraternity,” Fr. Wilcox said.

In addition to college classes, they have ministry assignments, which include helping with religious education in parishes, serving in hospital ministry, or working with the poor, homeless, or imprisoned. Seminarians spend their summers back in the diocese, helping in parishes or with diocesan events.

After receiving their undergraduate degree, they do their graduate theology formation at one of four seminaries. The four years of study are divided by a year of parish ministry, and most will spend a summer in Guatemala to study Spanish by being immersed in the language.

Fr. Wilcox observed, “Becoming a priest reminds me of *John 15:13*, ‘No one has greater love than this, to lay down one’s life for one’s friends.’ Jesus Christ made the ultimate sacrifice, and we are called to follow in his footsteps. As a priest, you have the opportunity to lay down your life and stand up for the truth — Jesus Christ.”



Dominican Order celebrates St. Dominic calls Catholics fallen away Catholics

By Carmen Mele, O.P.
Director,
St. John Paul II Institute:
School of Lay Ministry

Once a famous churchman had an idea. He would begin a new kind of evangelization. He would call on others to join him in reaching out to fallen away Catholics. They would go to the marketplaces to speak to the people who had become alienated from the faith. Not just their words but the quality of their lives would convince the disheartened of God's love for them. Who was this churchman? Blessed Paul VI? St. John Paul II? No, the person in mind here lived in the Middle Ages. He founded what is still officially the "Order of Friars Preachers." He is St. Dominic Guzman.

Part of the catalog description of "St. Dominic in Prayer" by El Greco says of the painting, "And so we have here nothing but Saint Dominic, simply dressed in his black and white habit, in a moment of quiet piety in the wilderness, kneeling in prayer before a simple, model crucifix propped up against a rock."

c called on others to join him in reaching out to Catholics. It was a new kind of evangelization

In 2016 the Order of Preachers (the Dominicans) celebrates its eight hundredth anniversary. The Order's history includes stories of intellectual giants, social prophets, and self-effacing humanitarians. Its composition embraces peoples of all races and most nations. There are women and men, lay and religious, non-ordained and ordained. Remarkably the Order has remained without fracturing despite schisms, reform movements, and general turmoil within the greater Church.

The success story of the Dominicans has much to do with its founder. Although Dominic's written legacy is embarrassingly modest, anecdotes of his life abound. These have inspired his followers to both contemplation and action.

As a young, diligent student Dominic became aware of people enduring famine. To buy them food, he sold the precious parchments from which he studied. As an itinerant preacher, Dominic demonstrated a rare devotion to love at the service of truth. Once he stopped at an inn where the keeper had joined the Albigensian sect. Albigensians, scandalized by opulent Church officials, considered everything material — even food — as sinful. Dominic discussed the issue with the innkeeper all night long. In the morning he left the man back in the graces of the Church.

Dominic first founded a community of nuns to pray for his preaching enterprise. After receiving papal approval for his band of preachers, he dedicated himself to

their flourishing. His biographer writes that there was none so affable to the friars (that is, brothers) as he was during the day and none so assiduous in prayer to God for them at night.

An apocryphal story indicates the noteworthy effect that Dominic has had on his brother and sister preachers. Images of him receiving the rosary from the Virgin Mary can be seen in churches throughout the world. However, there is no historical record of that event ever taking place. Yet church archives are replete with accounts of Dominicans preaching the Rosary as a way of meditating on the mysteries of salvation. The ubiquitous image and the historical fact can be explained by the dictum: What is said of followers is attributed to their founder. Dominicans are uniformly grateful to witness in their ministry the memory of their charismatic patriarch.

Many Dominicans have distinguished themselves in the Church and in the world. These include Fra Angelico, one of the Renaissance's most renowned painters, and Dominique Pire, who was awarded the Nobel Peace prize in 1958, for his work with refugees after World War II. Three others demonstrating both the breadth and depth of the Order deserve special attention.

St. Thomas Aquinas is easily Christianity's greatest systematic theologian. His *Summa Theologiae*, although unfinished, brilliantly synthesizes Scripture and philosophy to give Catholic doctrine a firm foundation. Said

to have known everything there was to be known at the time (the mid-thirteenth century), he became an authority in philosophy and economics as well as theology. He was also a saint not because of his intellectual achievements but because of his devotion to prayer. It is said that one of his scribes once heard Thomas conversing with Jesus as he prayed before the crucifix. Jesus said to him: "Thomas, you have written well of me. What reward will you have?" Thomas answered, "Lord, nothing but yourself."

Three quarters of a century after Thomas Aquinas died, Catherine di Giacomo di Benincasa was born in Siena, Italy. Although she was a virgin and wore the white habit, she was actually a member of the Dominican laity. More importantly, St. Catherine of Siena was a mystic, a writer, a caregiver to the poor, and a charismatic leader. She became influential in both secular and ecclesial politics. She has been named along with St. Francis of Assisi as the co-patron of Italy and one of the five co-patrons of Europe. A prominent historian has called her the most important woman of the fourteenth century.

Perhaps no Dominican has achieved a greater popularity than the son of a Spanish knight and a freed Panamanian slave. Martin de Porres was born in Lima, Peru, in the late sixteenth century. As an adolescent and young man, Martin worked as a servant in one of the city's Dominican priories. In time he took vows in the Order but was never ordained a priest,

perhaps because ecclesiastical law then discriminated against people of African and Indian descent. In any event Martin became known for his charity, sanctity, and medicinal cures. Today he is revered as the patron saint of social justice with a huge number of devotees among the world's poor.

What makes the eighth centennial of the Order of Preachers worthy of note? Is it Dominic's vision of charismatic preaching or Thomas Aquinas' legacy of philosophical theology? In part, yes, and also in part the ministries of many other Dominicans who have influenced the history of Church and world. But there is another characteristic of the Order that is worth special attention, even emulation. The Order is in effect a family composed of people from both sexes, all classes, and most nations. It has remained united through the ages while consistently advancing the mission of evangelization. In short, the Order presents a very fitting model for the whole Church.

There is a convent of Dominican sisters on the campus of Nolan Catholic High School in Fort Worth and a priory of Dominican friars on the campus of the University of Dallas in Irving. The Irving priory has established a chapter of Dominican laity. It is also planning 800th anniversary celebrations for the public on Jan. 28, the Feast of St. Thomas Aquinas; April 29, the Feast of St. Catherine of Siena; Aug. 8, the Feast of St. Dominic; and Nov. 3, the Feast of St. Martin de Porres.

Wherever GOD CALLS

Locally, SVD priests continue the long-standing influence they've had throughout the world

By **Joan Kurkowski-Gillen**
Correspondent

IF YOU ASK FATHER BRENDAN MURPHY WHY HE DECIDED TO BECOME A DIVINE WORD MISSIONARY, HIS THOUGHTS TURN TO DUBLIN, IRELAND AND HIS YEARS AS A YOUNG AUTO MECHANIC.

The “aha” moment that eventually drew him to the seminary came when he was standing in front of a car’s engine wondering why it wouldn’t start.

“I ran my fingers through my hair in frustration and immediately remembered a picture I saw in a magazine,” recalls the new pastor at St. Paul the Apostle Church in Northwest Fort Worth.

The photograph was of a priest, holding his head in despair after his car broke down on his way to a mission.

“My first thought was to go to the missions and help them fix cars,” Fr. Murphy says, recounting part of his vocation story. “That developed into going into the priesthood itself.”

Over the years what influences you — or what you thought influenced you — changes, he admits. But the well-traveled missionary, who evangelized in Louisiana, Arkansas, Houston, Mississippi, and Ireland before coming to Fort Worth, acknowledges one certainty.

“How I landed and where I landed is because of God — not because of what I chose,” Fr. Murphy explains. “I thought I was choosing a life of loneliness, but it hasn’t been that way. I have a lot of friends and have always been happy wherever I’ve served.”

It’s that spirit of joy and selfless giving to others that defines the Divine Word Missionaries, the largest Catholic missionary order in the world. Responding to the need for missionaries to preach the Gospel across the globe, Father Arnold Janssen, a priest in the Diocese of Muenster, Germany, founded the Society of the Divine Word (SVD) in

1875. At the time, the German government tried to repress the Church so Fr. Janssen went across the border to Steyl, Holland to start a missionary training center. Within four years, the first two SVD missionaries were sent to China.

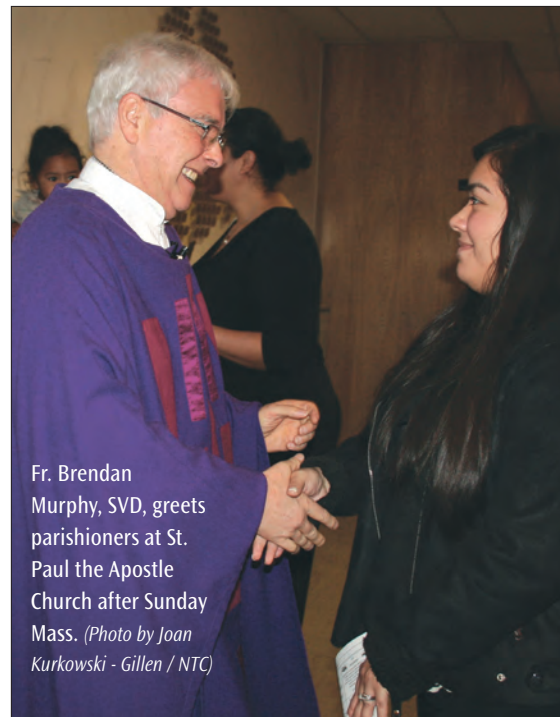
Brother Wendelin Meyer was the first SVD to arrive in the United States in 1895, eventually settling on a farm north of Chicago known as Techny. By 1909, the order established its first seminary in the United States to train priests and brothers for service in the foreign missions.

Several missions were also founded in the South where there were few Catholics. The SVD’s willingness to engage people of other races, ethnicities, and faiths is illustrated by the order’s success in opening the first seminary for African-Americans in 1923. For decades, St. Augustine Seminary in Bay St. Louis, Mississippi was the only place an African-American man could study for the priesthood.

Today, Divine Word Missionaries serve the spiritual and social needs of people on six continents. More than 6,000 men currently work in 70 countries. Each missionary brings his unique gifts to ministries that range from pastoral and sacramental duties in a parish to healthcare, chaplaincy, and family outreach programs.

“We often think of God’s grace as our unmerited gift of salvation,” says the SVD website describing the order’s charism. “As Christians, we share this grace by using our own particular gifts for the good of others to help spread the Word of God.”

Over the years, several SVD missionaries have served the Diocese of Fort Worth by enriching the lives of Catholics living in North Texas. When Father Jerome LeDoux, SVD, came to the predominately African-American parish, Our Mother of Mercy, in 2008, he refurbished the church with new pews and a new sound system, and then extended the weekend Mass schedule.



Fr. Brendan Murphy, SVD, greets parishioners at St. Paul the Apostle Church after Sunday Mass. (Photo by Joan Kurkowski-Gillen / NTC)

The Louisiana native also encouraged parish support for the adjacent school.

At St. Rita Church, Father Paul Kahan, SVD, was known for his inspiring homilies during a six-year stay as pastor. His departing words at the end of each sermon, “Don’t forget church. God cares deeply about you, so let’s take care of each other,” taught parishioners how to be Christ to one another.

When he assumed the role of provincial for his order’s U.S. Southern Province in June 2014, another SVD priest, Father Eric Michael Groner, was named pastor of the ethnically diverse parish in East Fort Worth.

“I think that missionary spirit really helps our parish,” explains Pat Cavanaugh, a longtime member of St. Rita. “Being in the center of the homeless population, we have a lot of issues and needs — not only with our parishioners but the rest of the community.”

Missionaries who have seen different things and been to different places can revitalize a community. “They have stories to tell,” Cavanaugh continues. “You can see the faith alive in them.”

SOCIETY OF THE DIVINE WORD PRIESTS (SVD) SERVING IN THE DIOCESE

- **Fr. Eric Michael Groner**, pastor, St. Rita Church, Fort Worth
- **Fr. Brendan Murphy**, pastor, St. Paul the Apostle Church, Fort Worth

Contemplating God's Majesty

Jesuits bring Ignatian spirituality to faithful at Montserrat Retreat House

THE WORLD IS CHARGED WITH THE GRANDEUR OF GOD.

IT WILL FLAME OUT, LIKE SHINING FROM SHOOK FOIL;

....AND THOUGH THE LAST LIGHTS OFF THE BLACK WEST WENT

OH, MORNING, AT THE BROWN BRINK EASTWARD, SPRINGS— BECAUSE THE HOLY GHOST OVER THE BENT

WORLD BROODS WITH WARM BREAST AND WITH AH! BRIGHT WINGS.

— Gerard Manley Hopkins, SJ
(1844-1889)

by **Jerry Circelli**
Correspondent

TO UNDERSTAND THE CHARISM OF THE SOCIETY OF JESUS AND ITS MEMBER JESUITS IS TO CONTEMPLATE “GOD’S GRANDEUR,” BY GERARD MANLEY HOPKINS, A 19TH CENTURY POET AND JESUIT PRIEST.

In fact, the Jesuits state that the first line of the poem captures the central spirituality theme that God is everywhere, as taught by St. Ignatius of Loyola, who established the society in 1540.

In Hopkins’ opening, he vividly illustrates that God is the spark that energizes our lives and our universe.

Today’s Jesuits continue to follow Ignatian spirituality, which professes that God is present in our world and active in our lives. The Jesuits believe that this understanding provides a pathway toward deeper prayer, good decisions guided by keen discernment, and an active life of service to others.

In North Texas, getting in



Jesuits Fr. Anthony Borrow, Fr. John Payne and Fr. Ron Boudreaux serve at the Montserrat Retreat House on Lake Lewisville. (Photo by Jerry Circelli / NTC)

touch with God through Ignatian spirituality has been part of the Catholic environment since 1959. That was the year that the Montserrat Jesuit Retreat House was established on the eastern shore of Lewisville Lake in Lake Dallas. Continuously administered by the Jesuits for the past 57 years, more than 100,000 people have walked its serene and peaceful grounds — now spanning 30 acres — mostly in silent prayer to hear God’s voice more clearly.

Today, the three Jesuits serving the area faithful at the retreat house include Father Ron Boudreaux, SJ; Father John Payne, SJ; and Father Anthony Borrow, SJ.

All say they were drawn to the society for the diverse ways its members serve Christ. Jesuits throughout history have been scientists, explorers, poets, missionaries, doctors, teachers, astronomers, martyrs, and saints. Considering the field of astronomy, alone, a Jesuit heads the Vatican Observatory, and 35 craters on the moon are named after Jesuits. And, of course, the leader of

the worldwide Catholic Church — Pope Francis — is a Jesuit.

In the Diocese of Fort Worth, the Jesuits are dedicated to helping people grow closer to God through quiet reflection.

“We have always had silent retreats here,” said Fr. Boudreaux, the director of the retreat house. “Silence means not only not talking, but really enjoying the interior peace and quiet,” the priest explained.

Silence has a long history in the spirituality of the Catholic Church, Fr. Boudreaux continued. “It allows the Holy Spirit to give us insight and move our hearts. God works in very quiet and subtle ways. And you really have to pay attention to that.”

In addition to quiet contemplation and silent prayer, people attending retreats at Montserrat attend conferences facilitated by the Jesuits. They also participate in the sacraments of Anointing, Reconciliation, and daily Eucharist.

The Jesuits facilitate 26 weekend retreats each year, which run Thursday evenings through

Sunday afternoons. The retreat house is used by other Church groups at other times of the year. More than 4,300 people were served there this past year.

Fr. Boudreaux stressed that the Jesuits do not supply a compass for people to deepen their faith. Instead, the priests help foster an atmosphere in which people can listen to God about the way He wants them to travel in life.

“God is ultimately the One who wants personal contact with you,” Fr. Boudreaux said. “God is going to lead you where He wants you to go. I don’t know where God wants you to go. I don’t have any idea. But I can offer up an environment where you can discover that for yourself.”

Fr. Borrow said it is gratifying when a retreat wraps up and people provide feedback. He said he often hears from the faithful about the ways they were touched by God at the Montserrat retreats.

“They tell me, ‘I leave the weekend with a greater sense of peace, tranquility, and clarity. And I’ve had an experience of God’s love,’” Fr. Borrow related.

“What more could you ask for?” Fr. Boudreaux asked rhetorically. “That’s what this is all about.”

SOCIETY OF JESUS PRIESTS (SJ) SERVING IN THE DIOCESE

- **Fr. Ron Boudreaux**, director, Montserrat Retreat Center
- **Fr. Anthony Borrow**, Montserrat Retreat Center
- **Fr. John Payne**, Montserrat Retreat Center

Celebrating the Mass in Latin

fostering spiritual growth

By Mary Lou Seewoester
Correspondent

FOR MANY OF THE YOUNG FAMILIES AT ST. BENEDICT PARISH IN FORT WORTH, attending Latin Mass there is not a nostalgic return to an old form, it's the discovery of a unique expression of the Mass that brings them closer to Christ.

"The beauty of it helps to bring me more into the mystery of the Mass," said Katie Guy, a St. Benedict parishioner. "And it's not just the Latin Mass. It's also the fraternity priests. They put such a high priority on the spiritual welfare of the souls of people through confession. That has been huge for our family's spiritual growth."

Currently two Priestly Fraternity of St. Peter (FSSP) priests serve the Diocese of Fort Worth at St. Benedict Parish, which was erected this year by Bishop Michael Olson to serve Catholics who wish to participate in the celebration of the Extraordinary Form of the Roman Rite (Latin Mass).

Bishop Olson appointed Father Karl Pikus, FSSP, as pastor and Father Peter Byrne, FSSP, as parochial vicar of the parish.

For centuries the Roman Rite Mass was celebrated in Latin worldwide. Then, in 1965, liturgical reforms of the Second Vatican Council changed not only the language used during Mass to the vernacular or local language, but also the position of the priest to face the people. Since then, some Catholics have continued to find, or discovered anew, spiritual nourishment in the Latin Mass.

"Pope John Paul II saw there was still an interest in the Church in the pre-conciliar liturgical traditions and he responded to that," Fr. Byrne said.

The FSSP was founded in 1988 in Switzerland when a group of clerics approached Pope St. John Paul II about forming a society of priests to minister to the faithful in the older form of the liturgy, the Latin Mass. They were founded as a Clerical Society of Apostolic



Fr. Karl Pikus, pastor of St. Benedict Church

Life of Pontifical Right — a group of priests and seminarians in the Catholic Church who come together to pursue a common purpose.

"We're not members of a religious order," Fr. Pikus said. "But we are priests who live in community ... We don't take the solemn vows like orders that are Institutes of Consecrated Life, but we do take solemn promises of chastity and obedience like diocesan priests."

He added that because they work as parish priests in the diocese, they are answerable to both the FSSP superior general and to Bishop Olson.

The charism of FSSPs is to work together for the formation and sanctification of priests and to minister in diocesan parishes by offering Mass and other sacraments according to the Roman rite as it existed before the liturgical reforms of the Second Vatican Council.

"Our apostolate is diocesan," said Fr. Byrne. "Most of us work in parishes. The only real difference is liturgical ... we are parish priests who offer a different liturgy form and do everything else diocesan priests do."

St. Benedict parishioner Gerald Kramer explained that the diocese has had a Latin Mass community for 26 years, but did not have its own parish until recently. FSSP priests

from Mater Dei Parish in the Dallas Diocese had been celebrating Mass in Fort Worth on Sunday evenings at St. Mary of the Assumption Parish, 509 W. Magnolia Ave.

"But now that we have our own priests, we can have a parish. It creates stability in the community," he said. "Now they're here in Fort Worth and they're more accessible."

Fellow parishioner Katie Guy agrees.

"They are such awesome shepherds of their flock. I can go to any Mass and know that I can get into confession before or after Mass," she said. "They will stay in the confessional until the line is gone, no matter what time it is."

Guy, who grew up attending Mass in English, said she discovered Latin Mass several years ago, "and just fell in love with the tradition."

"The Low Mass is very quiet, and for me having that silence really helps to develop a deeper spiritual awareness during the Mass," she added.

Fr. Byrne noted that attending Latin Mass "has to be something that people figure out on their own. If it's something that helps them spiritually, and it brings them closer to Christ, then that's the answer."

St. Benedict Parish will continue to celebrate Mass at 5:30 p.m. Sundays at St. Mary of the Assumption and daily Mass at 12:15 p.m. at St. Thomas the Apostle Parish, 2920 Azle Ave. in Northwest Fort Worth. When St. Thomas the Apostle completes its new church building, just north of Loop 820, the Azle Ave. campus will become St. Benedict Parish.

PRIESTLY FRATERNITY OF ST. PETER PRIESTS (FSSP) SERVING IN THE DIOCESE

- **Fr. Karl Pikus**, pastor, St. Benedict Church, Fort Worth
- **Fr. Peter Byrne**, parochial Vicar, St. Benedict Church, Fort Worth

A divinely-inspired *Mission*

Missionary Catechists of Divine Providence serve and advocate for the refugee and Hispanic community

by Mary Lou Seewoester
Correspondent

FOR SISTER JANETTE HERNANDEZ, MISSIONARY CATECHIST OF DIVINE PROVIDENCE (MCDP), HER CHARISM IS CULTURAL.

"All of our sisters are bilingual, and our focus is on serving the Hispanic population. It's one of our strengths and gifts to the Church," she explained. "We can understand and be advocates for Hispanics in the Church."

Sr. Janette lives the MCDP charism as a licensed professional counselor at Cook Children's Neighborhood Clinic on McCart Avenue in Fort Worth. There she works with pediatricians to help children needing mental health services.

The MCDPs were the first religious order in the United States devoted specifically to the material and spiritual needs of the poor and marginalized in the Hispanic community. They were formed in 1930 in Houston when Sister Benitia Vermeersch, a Congregation of Divine Providence (CDP) sister, "saw that children were hungry and were not being catechized," said Sr. Janette.

Sr. Benitia enlisted the help of various eighth grade girls from the parochial school where she was principal who were eager to share their faith with public school students who were children of refugees from the Mexican Revolution. As the girls grew to an age where they could make a commitment to consecrated life, Sr. Benitia sought and received approval for them to become recognized as a branch of the CDPs dedicated to serving the impoverished Hispanic population. In 1989 the Holy See approved the MCDPs as a fully autonomous religious congregation.

"That's the difference between CDPs and MCDPs," Sr. Janette said. "The CDPs are

Sister Janette Hernandez at Cook Children's Neighborhood Clinic in Fort Worth. (Photo courtesy of Sr. Janette)



"We can understand and be advocates for Hispanics in the Church."

—Sister Janette Hernandez, MCDP

sity in San Antonio and adult catechesis for the Archdiocese of San Antonio.

Sr. Janette "always knew" she had a religious vocation, but after nine years with the Teresian sisters (Society of St. Teresa of Jesus), and before taking final vows, she began to think about joining the Missionary Catechists.

"I had known MCDPs for years ... I was always intrigued with how close they were to the Hispanic community," she said. "And I was very much taken up with that spirit."

When she joined the order in 1987 she said, "I felt like I had come home to myself — to my culture. That God had really led me here."

This year, she said MCDPs "have really looked at the consecrated life ... we've taken upon us this challenge to really try to be women who are transparent ... who say we don't have the luxury or the right to not be joyful and committed to one another and to the people we serve and to bring that hope to the Church."

teaching sisters who work during the school day. We have always been the ones working nights and weekends and going house to house to catechize."

About 38 MCDP sisters currently serve Hispanic communities in Texas, Kansas, and California in Hispanic Ministry, catechesis, youth ministry, soup kitchens, seminaries, hospital chaplaincy, and social services.

Sr. Janette began working with the Cook Children's Neighborhood Clinics five years ago, as part of a three-year grant to provide [counseling] services for the poor and disadvantaged in neighborhood clinics. The goal of the SUPPORT Grant (Services Uniting Pediatrics and Psychiatry Outreaching to Texas) "was to reduce the number of visits to the ER and keep the children in school," she said. "And we had positive results."

She has worked in individual and family therapy for more than 10 years, including four years at a San Antonio juvenile treatment center. Sr. Janette also has taught psychology and religious studies at Our Lady of the Lake Univer-

MISSIONARY CATECHISTS OF DIVINE PROVIDENCE (MCDP) SERVING IN THE FORT WORTH DIOCESE

Sister Janette Hernandez (MCDP)
Licensed Professional Counselor at Cook Children's Neighborhood Clinic in Fort Worth

Holy Jordan: sheltering the living stones of our Christian faith

By Maria Ruiz Scaperlanda
Correspondent

Editor's note: On a recent pilgrimage to the Christian and Jewish holy sites in Jordan with a group of other American Catholic journalists Maria Ruiz Scaperlanda, a frequent contributor to the *NORTH TEXAS CATHOLIC* and a pre-eminent Catholic writer, had the opportunity to interview many refugees who escaped the genocidal attacks of ISIS and had been welcomed by the Jordanians.

WHEN 52-YEAR-OLD NAWAL GAGGO BUTRUS ADDRESSED OUR GROUP OF AMERICAN CATHOLIC JOURNALISTS, her demeanor immediately changed from quiet and private to public and forthright.

When asked what she wants the world to know about their situation as refugees living in Jordan, Nawal declared, "If you're not going to fight ISIS ... then please ... help us get to safety to live in peace."

Like the hundreds gathered at the St. George Greek Catholic parish hall that evening, Nawal's description of her family's escape from Mosul, Iraq, is a tale spun around an axis of threat, tragedy, and death led by the so-called Islamic State — also known as ISIS, Daesh, or ISIL.

It's also a familiar story taken out of a page of the Gospel of Matthew.

Like Mary and Joseph's escape from Herod's threats and into Egypt, these refugee families were forced to leave their homes and their safety. And much like the Holy Family, they left behind all possessions, bringing with them only what they could carry.

They also know they are the lucky ones.

Nawal, a university professor who happens to be the first woman skydiver in Iraq, escaped the country with one of her children, "with nothing but the clothes on our backs." They eventually reached neighboring Jordan, a predominantly Muslim country that has become a model of religious cooperation in the volatile Middle East.

Nawal is one of 125,000 Iraqi Christians



Fr. Boulos Haddad, pastor of St. George Greek Melkite Catholic Church in the predominantly Christian town of Fuheis, celebrates Mass for his parishioners and refugees they are assisting. (Photo courtesy of Jeffrey Bruno / JTB / Aleteia)

brutally pushed out of their ancestral homeland since last year by ISIS. Her hometown of Mosul, a city of 2.5 million people that once included a thriving Christian community, is located on the edge of the Nineveh Plain, a vast area in northern Iraq that has been home to Christians since the 1st century after Christ.

As is true of most of the 8,000 other Iraqi Christian refugees who have fled to neighboring Jordan since the rise of ISIS, Nawal's and other families live in uncertainty and survive on hopeful expectation.

Although Christians make up only six percent of Jordan's total population — with 92 percent of Jordanians being Sunni Muslim, the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan prides itself on being a tolerant, Islamic state that welcomes all religions.

"Please tell [the world] about our struggle to survive," Nawal said through an interpreter,

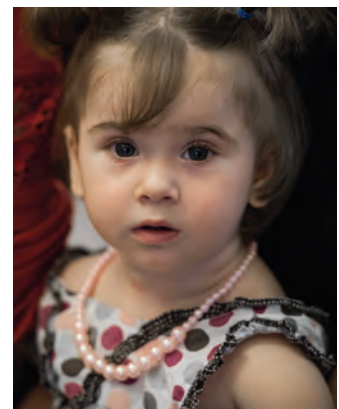


Ra'ed A. Bahou, Regional Director for Iraq and Jordan, of the Pontifical Mission, the papal agency for Middle East relief and development, spoke with Catholic journalists about the agency's work with refugees at the Pontifical Mission Library (community center) in Amman, capital of Jordan. (Photo by Maria Ruiz Scaperlanda)

yet pausing to look into the eyes of our group of journalists. "All we want is somewhere to live in peace, where we can work and make a living raising our families — as we did before," she declared with emotion.

"Everyone around us was killed by ISIS. The people you see here," said 50-year-old Hazem through an interpreter, his eyes filled with grief, "we are the ones who survived and left. I don't have a home. I don't have a country Without the Church and the help it provides, we would be out on the street."

Most refugees have no illusion of returning



One of the children present when the Catholic journalists visited with refugees being helped by St. George Melkite Greek Catholic Church in Fuheis, Jordan. (Photo courtesy of Jeffrey Bruno / JTB / Aleteia)



These refugees arrived two months before Maria Scaperlanda's group visited. They are being helped by St. George Melkite Greek Catholic Church in Fuheis, Jordan, a predominantly Christian village of about 20,000 people. (Photo courtesy of Jeffrey Bruno / JTB / Aleteia)

to their home countries. Their hope is to build a safe home for their families somewhere in Europe, North America, Australia, or any country willing to host them.

In the meantime, Jordan's Christian community does all it can to help.

"What's happening is unbelievable. We can't speak of it simply in words," explained Ra'ed A. Bahou, regional director for the Pontifical Mission, the papal agency for Middle East relief and development.

"These refugees didn't come because they are poor," said Bahou, a native Jordanian and the son of Palestinian refugees. "They came here because they were cleaned out of their country for their faith, entire villages, because they are Christian. Many are educated, middle class people who now come to me for a \$50 certificate to feed their families."

While other Middle East countries are losing Christians, Jordan continues to absorb more Christians, Bahou noted. "We need to do what we can to support Jordan, and hope that [the country] continues to stay safe and stable," noting how the country's population has doubled in 10 years.

While the United Nations reports 686,594 refugees officially registered in Jordan, the Jordanian government estimates that since the beginning of the Syrian war in 2012, the number of Syrian and Iraqi refugees is closer to 1.5 million. That's 22 percent of the population in a country of 6.8 million people.

It is a desperate situation for the refugees, and a critical situation for Jordan, an oil-poor country with limited water and energy sources. At 34,445 square miles, the entire country of Jordan is less than half the size of the state of Oklahoma.

Yet both publicly and politically, the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan remains committed to welcoming refugees. "We reiterate our position

supporting a comprehensive political solution for this protracted suffering," declared King Abdullah II on Nov. 15 at the opening of Jordan's Ordinary Session of Parliament.

"Jordan has provided all possible assistance, medical aid, and shelter to ease their suffering, while other countries with far more resources have turned their backs on them," King Abdullah noted. "Jordan will remain a stronghold, a safe haven, and a stable homeland, providing an example of strength, unity, and harmony that binds its sons and daughters — Muslims and Christians — together, united in their belonging for Jordan."

Admitting in a November interview with *Euronews* that Jordan's resources are "pretty much maxed-out," King Abdullah clarified that every year it costs Jordan roughly a quarter of its budget to cover the cost of refugees and infrastructural support, adding that only 10 percent of the refugees are actually in camps. The rest are living in the capital city of Amman and in Jordan's villages, spread throughout the country — such as, the predominantly Christian town of Fuheis, population 20,000.

Father Boulos Haddad, pastor of St. George Greek Catholic Church in Fuheis, has spearheaded the effort to shelter 500 Iraqis, including Nawal Gaggo Butrus. An estimated 2,000 more are living in similar church-sponsored shelters.

"We depend a lot on the help and support from Father Boulos and the other priests in the area. We are so very grateful for their help this past year," described Bassam Ashaq A-Qannd, 48, an Assyrian Orthodox from Mosul who previously worked in the Iraqi government's Ministry of the Environment. "The Christians in Jordan give a lot, they are very generous," Bassam added, speaking through an interpreter.

When asked how this life-altering experience

has affected his faith, Bassam looked surprised, taken back by the question. "No," he shook his finger for emphasis, "My faith is unshaken. It became stronger." He paused and smiled. "If it's been a test, it's the best test, a good test."

In the United States, Bishop Eusebio Elizondo, chairman of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' Committee on Migration, in a Nov. 17 statement, called on all public officials to, "work together to end the Syrian conflict peacefully so the close to 4 million Syrian refugees can return to their country and rebuild their homes."

Emphasizing that the United States must show leadership during this global crisis, Bishop Elizondo, said that, "until that goal is achieved, we must work with the world community to provide safe haven to vulnerable and deserving refugees who are simply attempting to survive."

The Texas Catholic bishops noted in a Nov. 25 statement that, "We firmly believe that it is possible to maintain security at home while also welcoming refugees," adding that it's imperative that we, "avoid impulsive judgments in setting public policies regarding the placement of refugees. The horrors of modern terrorism are frightening, but they demand from us a strong renewal of our faith and our commitment to Christian teachings and the common good."

"We don't help people because they are Christian; we help people because we are Christian," concluded Ra'ed A. Bahou of the Pontifical Mission. "The Christian families in this part of the world are the oldest Christian communities. They have been here for thousands of years. We need to preserve, not the stones — but the living stones!"

St. George Greek Melkite Catholic Church in the Christian town of Fuheis, Jordan, has extended hospitality to 500 Iraqis who have fled the persecution of ISIS, escaping with only what belongings they could carry. (Photo courtesy of Jeffrey Bruno / JTB / Aleteia)



January 3, The Epiphany of the Lord.

Cycle C 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 Jean Denton

The first of this week's Scriptures for Epiphany calls the people of God to see the light of hope that the Lord shines on them amid the world's darkness. Raise your eyes, the prophet Isaiah tells us, and see your sons and daughters coming from everywhere to live in that light.

On a tour to Eastern Europe last fall, I visited several sites that recalled some of humanity's darkest moments in recent history, and I was struck by the enormous number of people drawn to those places from all over the world.

I wondered why people come

by the thousands every day to look into such darkness. Why do they walk through the Nazi death camp at Auschwitz or stand next to the remains of the Berlin Wall — memorials to victims of unthinkable human atrocities and oppression?

After a sobering visit to Auschwitz, our tour took us to nearby Czestochowa, a place of much more hope and light where for 600 years faithful, trusting Catholics have trekked to pray for God's care and protection before an ancient icon of the Black Madonna.

Observing crowds stream to both Auschwitz and Czestochowa,

I realized that both are places of pilgrimage and that people are drawn not to the darkness but to search for light out of the darkness.

Visitors had listened intently to the guide at Auschwitz who spoke of individuals and families degraded and exterminated in the camp, whose dignity and strength survived through the recollection of their lives.

The guide told me her own grandmother suffered great

QUESTIONS:

Where have you witnessed God's light in dark experiences of today's world? How can you bring that light into situations where you recognize evil?

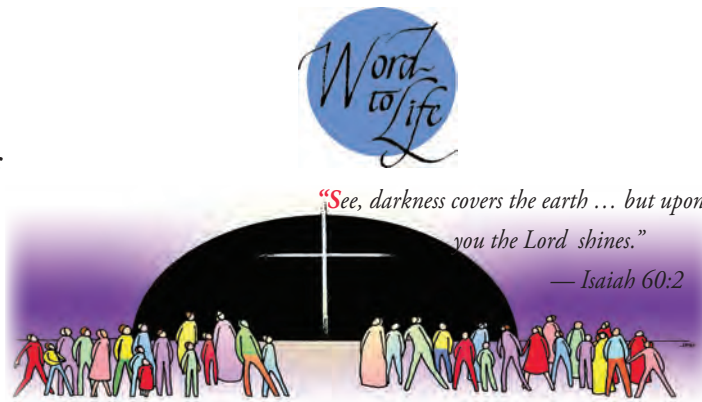
personal tragedy during World War II. "She cried and said, 'There must be no more war,' and that is why it is so important to me to show what happened here."

In Berlin, after the wall came down the city determined to leave some remnants standing as a reminder of the tragic effects of division and political oppression.

Pilgrims come to Auschwitz and Berlin to recognize the consequences of evil for humankind and to consider how to shine the light of goodness and hope in the presence of darkness.

Isaiah proclaims, "Thick clouds cover the peoples; but upon you the Lord shines."

We are called to face the darkness and find — and bear — God's light for the world.



January 10, The Baptism of the Lord.

Cycle C Readings:

- 1) Isaiah 42:1-4, 6-7
Psalm: 29:1-4, 3, 9-10
- 2) Acts 10:34-38
Gospel) Luke 3:15-16, 21-22

By Jeff Hedglen

Years ago, I quit reading the comic strip "Ziggy" because it is so pessimistic, and I didn't want to allow so much negativity in my life. But before I quit reading it, there was one particular bit of his signature cynical wisdom that had a ring of truth: "If you are continually disappointed, lower your expectations." See what I mean? It's kind of pessimistic, but there is some truth to the statement.

This was brought to my mind at a recent young adult ministry series called Theology on Tap. The presenter, Andrew Gill, was

"The people were filled with expectation."
— Luke 3:15



talking about how our faith calls us to live a healthy lifestyle, and he asked a series of questions: Do you often have expectations? Do they tend to lead to disappointment? Does this sometimes lead to resentment?

He went on to say that there is a better option: hope. He said, "Hope is different than expectation. Hope leads to acceptance,

and that leads to care."

The lessons from both Ziggy and this Theology On Tap discussion came rushing back to me when reading this week's Gospel, which starts out, "The

people were filled with expectation, and all were asking in their hearts whether John might be the Christ."

As it turns out, their expecta-

tion of John being the Anointed One was not realized. I am not sure if they were disappointed or not to find out that it was actually John's cousin who is the Messiah.

Their expectations were born of a centuries-long hope that was valiantly held by God's chosen people: the hope for the promised Messiah.

Hope is one of the three theological virtues: faith, hope, and love. Hope is not something we can conjure up; it is a gift from God. So when we find ourselves disappointed by unmet expectations, maybe instead of turning this into resentment, we can turn instead to Jesus and ask for a dose of hope, for hope does not disappoint.

QUESTIONS:

How do you react when your expectations are not met? What are some things you hope for in your life?

WORD TO LIFE

January 17, Second Sunday in Ordinary Time.

Cycle C Readings:

- 1) Isaiah 62:1-5
Psalm 96:1-3, 7-10
- 2) 1 Corinthians 12:1-11
Gospel) John 2:1-11

By Sharon K. Perkins

In January, 2014, I was able to fulfill the dream of a lifetime by traveling to the Holy Land on pilgrimage. A highlight of the trip for many of my traveling companions was celebrating Mass in the Wedding Church at Kafr Cana, a century-old chapel built over the site associated with the miracle in today's Gospel.

At the end of the homily, married couples were given the opportunity to renew their wedding vows, and I recorded some poignant videos of several friends doing so. But the reason I was able to capture the images is



"As a bridegroom rejoices in his bride so shall your God rejoice in you." — Isaiah 62:5b, 13:28

because my own spouse was not with me that day.

My husband had a previously-scheduled business commitment that he was unable to set aside, so I traveled to Israel without him. I bought him a souvenir bottle of Cana wine and consoled myself with the knowledge that he would make the same pilgrimage a few months later, but I felt our separation acutely.

We're at a point in our 37-year marriage when our children are

grown, our respective careers make great demands on our time, various losses have taken their toll, and some of our closest contemporaries have separated or divorced. Amid such profound challenges, a renewal of our own vows among friends in such a sacred place would have been reassuring.

In the first reading, Isaiah prophesies the end of Israel's exile, using the celebratory image of a reunited bride and bridegroom to describe the joyful encounter of a people with their God. Against this backdrop, the beginning of Jesus' ministry at a wedding in Cana has hopeful implications for believers who struggle with God's

QUESTIONS:

Have you ever felt acutely separated or exiled from God? What do today's readings say to you about how highly God upholds marriage as a sign of his faithfulness to his people? To you personally?

call to Christian marriage.

Even the strongest marriages of faith-filled couples are relentlessly tested from without and within. The wine of young romance lasts for a limited time, and as at Cana, those emptying jars, left to themselves, can eventually signal a crisis.

On our wedding day, my husband and I consecrated ourselves to each other — but we also consecrated our marriage to Jesus and to his mother. Sustaining our commitment requires daily (sometimes hourly!) re-consecration and hard work. But Jesus promises to replenish our empty vessels with an abundance of new wine, even better than the old, if we but entrust our marriage to his care.

January 24, Third Sunday of Ordinary Time.

Cycle C Readings:

- 1) Nehemiah 8:24a, 5-6, 8-10
Psalm 19:8-10, 15
- 2) 1 Corinthians 12:12-30
Gospel) Luke 1:1-4, 4:14-21

By Jeff Hensley

In Luke's Gospel for this weekend, Jesus rises in the temple to read from the Book of Isaiah, where He proclaims that the poor will have glad tidings brought to them, a year of liberty would be proclaimed to the captives, recovery of sight given to the blind, and the oppressed would be set free.

Jesus sits again, and with all eyes in the synagogue intently on him, says, "Today this Scripture passage is fulfilled in your hearing."

We have the specifics outlined

"Now you are Christ's body, and individually parts of it."

— 1 Corinthians 12:27



in the rest of the Gospels, as we see Jesus walking about performing wonders, healing the ill and proclaiming the coming of the kingdom of God, which he embodies, to rich and poor alike.

But building the kingdom doesn't stop there. Paul, speaking to the Corinthians, addresses many of the dimensions of Jesus enfolded in his people, his body. Paul emphasizes that all of us do

not engage in the same manifestations of the Spirit: "The body is not a single part, but many," he says.

That truth remains to this day. When I see

Jesus in those I encounter, I see various manifestations of the body.

The young woman behind the deli counter at the grocery store has a smile and a presence that clearly identifies her as a believer. She confirms it when I ask her if she is a Christian and what church

she attends.

My two colleagues from the Catholic press with whom I recently toured the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, are proclaimers of the Gospel. I know them both by their functions within the body and by their behavior across the years. They are servant leaders within the Body of Christ.

My wife, whose compassion extends beyond her family and colleagues to generously embrace the immigrants and refugees she teaches, shows the healing power of love that endures.

Would any of these alone show forth all the complexity of Christ's Body? It's not necessary. It takes all of us as Church to bring Christ's presence into the world.

QUESTIONS:

All parts of the Body of Christ are essential. How do you make his presence manifest to those around you?

February 7, Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time.

Cycle C Readings:

- 1) Isaiah 6:1-2a, 3-8
Psalm 138:1-5, 7-8
- 2) 1 Corinthians 15:1-11
Gospel) Luke 5:1-11

By Jean Denton

In today's Gospel, Jesus calls his first disciples to follow him and join his mission to bring all people to God's way of life.

His offer is convincing: Having the audacity to teach experienced fishermen how to fish, he demonstrates that if they follow his direction, they'll achieve a greater haul than they could attain themselves.

Jesus' message is to all of us: Trust that by following his way you will draw people into his fold.

By contrast, a refrain we often hear in our social enterprises today, "Build it, and they will come," is based on a belief in the

"Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching men."

— Luke 5:10



pre-eminent power of our own will — through marketing.

However, any city planner will tell you: Build it in the wrong place and "they" won't come, no matter how slick your marketing.

I learned how wise planning creates healthy, vibrant communities from my friend Joel, a long-time city planner in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Indeed, communities hire planners to direct development and growth to best serve the people's needs. Build to enhance their lives, and they will not only come but they'll participate.

No wonder Joel, also a devoted Christian, understands how to respond to the call to build and develop Jesus' community. He knows that Jesus' instruction to "put out into deep water" means to go where God is most needed.

Joel and his wife chose for their faith community not a well-established congregation but a small church in a struggling low-income neighborhood where the people were open to God's grace and just waiting to be "caught."

Indeed, Jesus' way brought in a large haul there.

Joel showed me a small neigh-

borhood park that he and fellow church members developed, with the city's blessing, on city property across the street from the church.

A local landscape architect volunteered to design the park. Then at-risk teens from the neighborhood joined with the church youth group to do the landscaping, with plants and materials donated by local suppliers. Children from the nearby grade school created and installed small outdoor sculptures, and other businesses contributed a sprinkler system and benches.

As the park became a center of neighborhood pride and activity, more people came to the church, drawn by the congregation's embrace and care for its community.

QUESTIONS:

Following the ways of Jesus, by what means might you bring others to a life with him? What have been your most effective methods of evangelizing?

February 14, First Sunday of Lent.

Cycle C Readings:

- 1) Deuteronomy 26:4-10
Psalm 91:1-2, 10-15
- 2) Romans 10:8-13
Gospel) Luke 4:1-13

By Jeff Hedglen

The most frequently asked question of Catholics at this time of year is, "What are you giving up for Lent?" Giving things up and doing extra things is definitely a big part of the Lenten season. I suppose another big question is how long will we keep firm in these intentions before totally failing at Lent.

I think one of the best reasons to give something up or do something extra in Lent is that it helps us grow in discipline. We are a culture that lets our emotions and feelings dictate our action or inaction.



"Jesus ... was led by the Spirit into the desert for forty days, to be tempted by the devil."

— Luke 4:1-2

that giving in to temptation and enjoying the creature comforts would bring more satisfaction than denying ourselves or employing restraint, but this is not the case.

This week's Gospel makes this abundantly clear when Jesus, in the middle of a 40-day fast, is tempted by the devil to give in to the moment and indulge his emotions. Yet, in the face of such temptation, Jesus reveals the truth that standing firm brings us closer to the will of God.

QUESTIONS:

How do you avoid giving in to temptation? What are ways you can be a better disciple of Jesus this Lent?

The word "disciple," not coincidentally, has the same root as "discipline." A disciple is one who follows the teachings of another person. When we discipline ourselves, we allow another's teaching to guide and direct our paths. To be sure, disciplining ourselves is not easy. It takes, well, discipline.

So, when week two of Lent comes, and we are tempted to abandon our resolve — eat the piece of cake or skip that daily Mass — let us be disciples of Jesus who disciplined Himself in the desert and did not give in to temptation.

May this be our constant prayer: *Jesus, lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil!*

February 21, Second Sunday of Lent.

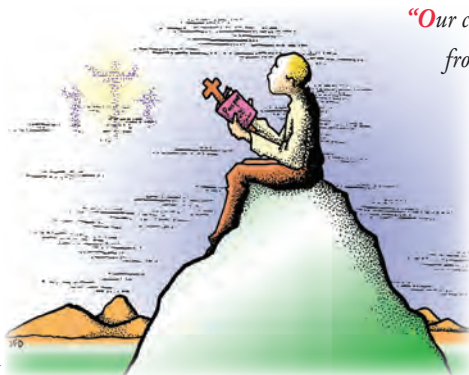
Cycle C Readings:

- 1) Genesis 15:5-12, 17-18
Psalm) 27:1, 7-9, 13-14
- 2) Philippians 3:17-4:1
Gospel) Luke 9:28b-36

By Sharon K. Perkins

I have a two-year-old nephew who currently lives in Shanghai with his parents. He was born in China, but because my brother and his wife are U.S. citizens, their son received the full privileges and benefits of American citizenship even before his first glimpse of the United States; he only needed to obtain the necessary documentation. When his parents' residence in China ends, little Mateo, already the proud owner of a U.S. passport, will be welcomed into his "new" homeland and bound by its laws and obligations.

There's a different kind of cit-



izenship described in today's readings, and we're given a preview of it, beginning in Genesis. Abram, a sojourner and a foreigner, is promised more descendants than he can count and the possession of a land that is not his birthright.

Although no documents are signed, there is the solemn enactment of a covenant by which God binds himself to fulfill his promises. Before he even sees the land that God has given to him, Abram becomes its citizen.

*"Our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we also await a savior, the Lord Jesus Christ."
— Philippians 3:20*

In the Gospel, Peter, James, and John saw the two great figures of their past, Moses and Elijah, on the Mount of Transfiguration. But Jesus also showed them a

glimpse of their future citizenship. It was as if a curtain were pulled back, and they were able to see a realm so glorious that they were overwhelmed, captivated, enthralled, and frightened all at the same time.

St. Paul reminds us that

"our citizenship is in heaven" and that "He will change our lowly body to conform with his glorified body." Although we haven't earned its rights and privileges, our citizenship has already been accomplished by Jesus' "exodus" in Jerusalem — his suffering and death on a cross. We are invited to inhabit a promised realm we have yet to see, living under its obligations while we "wait for the Lord with courage." Like the psalmist we can assert, "I believe that I shall see the bounty of the Lord in the land of the living."

It's a land we don't need documentation to enter — only trust that the God who fulfilled his promise to Abram, Moses, Elijah, Peter, James, and John will fulfill his promises to you and me.

QUESTIONS:

When have you lived more like an "enemy of the cross of Christ" than a citizen of Christ's kingdom? What is the greatest obstacle to seeing God's promises fulfilled in you?

February 28, Third Sunday of Lent.

Cycle C Readings:

- 1) Exodus 3:1-8a, 13-15
Psalm 103:1-4, 6-8, 11
- 2) 1 Corinthians 10:1-6, 10-12
Gospel) Luke 13:1-9

By Jeff Hensley

In the reading from Exodus, God speaks of his intention to come down and rescue his people from the tyranny of the Egyptians, revealing that his mercy is not merely felt, but results in action.

The psalm response, too, speaks repeatedly of the mercy of God toward us, his people. We are to remember that He pardons our sins and redeems our lives from destruction. God is slow to anger and abounding in kindness toward those who fear Him, the psalmist tells us.



In the Gospel, Jesus gets to the core of our response to God's mercy in his reference to the barren fig tree. The owner comes and finds it without fruit for the third year in a row and instructs the gardener to cut it down. No, the gardener contends, "leave it for this year also, and I shall cultivate the ground around it and fertilize it; it may bear fruit in

*"Merciful and gracious is the Lord, slow to anger and abounding in kindness."
— Psalm 103:8*

the future. If not, you can cut it down."

Lent is a special time for us to consider how we can respond to God's generosity by showing mercy and performing acts of charity and justice toward others.

Thinking about my friends who were already showing the mercy of God in their actions, I came up with too many to list. They varied in age, race, gender, and social status. Many were,

through their separate ministries, engaged in mission work extending from Latin America to Russia, from Africa to Indonesia. Others were kind and good to their neighbors and families — to those close to them.

All shared joy and a sense of purpose and mission in what they did. They knew that their connection to God, their obligation to live out the love of God poured into their hearts, was what kept them going.

My lesson for Lent will be to see how I can imitate their acts of goodness in my own life and in my own contacts with others, so that when the gardener checks on me, he might find me fruitful right where I've been planted.

QUESTIONS:

How is God calling you to become more fruitful in mercy and good works?

Abran de par en par la Puerta de la MISERICORDIA

Por Susan Moses
Corresponsal

CON TRES GOLPES SECOS DE SU BÁCULO PASTORAL, EL OBISPO MICHAEL OLSON ABRIÓ LA PUERTA DE LA MISERICORDIA EN LA IGLESIA DE NUESTRA MADRE DE LA MISERICORDIA EN FORT WORTH, INICIANDO ASÍ EL JUBILEO EXTRAORDINARIO DE LA MISERICORDIA EN NUESTRA COMUNIDAD.

Este año santo, que enfatiza la gracia y reconciliación de Dios, empezó con la bendición de las puertas seguida de una Misa rebotante de peregrinos de toda la diócesis.

Temas de misericordia y gozo prevalecieron durante la Misa celebrada en Dic. 13, el tercer domingo de Adviento, conocido como Domingo Gaudete por su enfoque en el júbilo.

El obispo explicó que el júbilo no es la experiencia de placer ni la autosatisfacción por trabajo estable y buena salud. En vez de eso, júbilo es el saber que Jesús viene a nosotros y por nosotros. El gozo llega con misericordia en pañales, en la persona de Jesús recién nacido.

“Como bautizados, hemos experimentado la misericordia ofrecida y la misericordia recibida. Ahora tenemos la responsabilidad de abrir la puerta y compartir el don de la misericordia con las personas alejadas y heridas”, dijo en su homilía el Obispo Olson.

Mostrar misericordia es un acto valeroso, dijo el obispo, que Jesús demostró perfectamente aceptando las heridas de la cruz por amor

Cientos de fieles laicos entran en procesión por la Puerta de la Misericordia, abierta en Dic. 13 en la Parroquia de Nuestra Madre de la Misericordia en Fort Worth. (Foto por Juan Guajardo / NTC)



a nosotros y obediencia al Padre.

“Donde hay heridas, también está la sanación y la gracia de Dios”, continuó el Obispo Olson. Él animó a la congregación a mostrar misericordia en sus propias heridas, en las de su parroquia, y también en las heridas de la diócesis y de la comunidad entera.

El Papa Francisco proclamó el Extraordinario Jubileo de la Misericordia que empezó el 8 de diciembre, solemnidad de la Inmaculada Concepción de la Bienaventurada Virgen María. “Del corazón de la Trinidad, desde el profundo misterio de Dios, el gran río de la misericordia brota y se derrama incesantemente. Es una fuente que nunca se agotará, no importa cuánta gente tome de ella. Cada vez que alguien la necesite, se pueden acercar a ella, porque la misericordia de Dios no tiene

El Obispo Olson bendice la Puerta de la Misericordia. (Foto por Juan Guajardo / NTC)



límites”, escribió el Papa Francisco en *Misericordiae Vultus*, el anuncio del Año de la Misericordia.

Temprano este año, el Papa Francisco anunció que cada diócesis

designaría una Puerta de la Misericordia en una iglesia de especial importancia durante el Año de la

Continuado en página 46

En el Centro Diocesano de Formación, renovaciones hacen más espacio para Cristo

Por Susan Moses
Corresponsal

De modo que si alguien vive en Cristo, es una nueva criatura; lo viejo ha pasado y ha comenzado algo nuevo – 2 Corintios 5:17

LENARNOS DE CRISTO SIGNIFICA PRIMERO, DEJAR DE LADO LAS OCUPACIONES Y DISTRACCIONES QUE LLENAN NUESTRAS VIDAS. MUCHO DE ESTO ESTÁ PASANDO EN EL ANTERIOR CENTRO DE CURSILLOS, QUE SE HA TRANSFORMADO EN EL CENTRO DIOCESANO DE FORMACIÓN.

Hace más de 30 años, la diócesis compró la propiedad sita en el 2221 de la calle NW 26, pocas millas al oeste del Stockyards en Fort Worth. Esta propiedad, que antes era una iglesia bautista, servía principalmente para los retiros que ofrecía el Movimiento de Cursillos. Hace dos años, el Obispo Olson pensó en renovar tanto el edificio como su uso: servir como centro de formación para toda la diócesis.

La renovación del edificio empezó en junio.

“Tuvinos una gran venta de garage, y en una semana limpiamos 99 por ciento del edificio. Lo que no vendimos, lo regalamos, y lo que quedó lo vendimos al negocio que recicla metal,” dijo Jo Ann Foley, la asistente de oficina del centro.

La renovación interior está casi terminada. Alfombra nueva y pintura reciente, literas nuevas y baños reparados crean un ambiente tranquilo para los asistentes a retiros. El centro tiene capacidad para 64 personas y tiene una capilla, un centro de reuniones equipado con tecnología audiovisual, un comedor y cocina—completa-

mente nueva con horno, estufa y todos sus elementos—y un gran salón con un estrado para Misas o grandes presentaciones.

Se espera que las renovaciones exteriores, que incluyen convertir un patio abandonado en un jardín con el Via Crucis y una gruta Mariana, terminen para fines de diciembre. También se planea repavimentar el estacionamiento, dijo Foley.

“Nuestra idea es dar la bienvenida a toda la diócesis, y que los que crucen las puertas sean recibidos en un ambiente acogedor, evangelizados, catequizados y amados”, dijo Marlon de la Torre, director diocesano de la Catequesis.

La Hna. Diana Rodríguez, HCG, sirve como la primera directora del Centro Diocesano de Formación. Viniendo de una orden de educadoras, ella ha servido muchos años como directora de educación religiosa en parroquias, más recientemente en Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe en Fort Worth. Ella tendrá ahora la oportunidad de educar en la fe a grupos de toda la diócesis.

“Ella es la persona idónea para supervisar el centro. Ella sabe manejar los recursos, y obtiene un ‘sí’ aun antes de preguntar. Ella ha obtenido unos muebles regalados y ha comprado con grandes descuentos un horno nuevo y camas”, dijo De La Torre.

Habiendo crecido en el norte de Fort Worth y asistido a la Igle-



Una vista del exterior del Centro Diocesano de Formación. (Foto por Juan Guajardo / NTC)

sia de Todos los Santos, a pocos minutos del Centro de Formación, la Hna. Diana es bien conocida y respetada en el vecindario.

Fue en la escuela de Todos los Santos donde la Hna. Diana sintió por primera vez el llamado a la vida religiosa.

“Las hermanas me animaron y me atrajo el gozo que vi en ellas”, ella recordó. “Pasé mi adolescencia acompañándolas a las visitas parroquiales, rezando el rosario con ellas, ayudándolas en su ministerio parroquial y unida a ellas cuando descansaban y se divertían”.

Después de graduarse de Trimble Tech High School, ella inició su formación con las Hermanas Catequistas Guadalupanas en 1979.

La Hna. Diana aprecia cada momento que dice “sí” a Dios. “Todo, cada parte, es la mejor parte”, ella explicó. Comparado con los días en la parroquia, llenos de reuniones y clases, supervisar el centro de formación es todo quietud y paz.

Aunque hincarse para rezar no es nada nuevo, su último trabajo también la puso de rodillas:

limpiar décadas de grasa y moho en la cocina.

“No supe en lo que me metía, pero me gusta estar ocupada”, dijo la Hna. Diana.

El interior se terminó el 16 de septiembre, justo horas antes de que el primer retiro de Cursillistas ocupara el renovado edificio. Foley comentó, “ellos apreciaron que todo se veía agradable y limpio”.

Muchos otros grupos han seguido. Retiros parroquiales, retiros de jóvenes y estudiantes universitarios, y retiros de confirmación han programado fines de semana en estas instalaciones. Vida Familiar, el Viñedo de Raquel, grupos universitarios y el Instituto Juan Pablo II también han reservado su lugar.

“Mi idea es verlo ocupado también durante la semana. Podría ser usado para días de reflexión o para conferencias. Quizá empiece estudio de Biblia un día a la semana para las gentes del vecindario”, dijo la Hna. Diana.

Para más información sobre el Centro Diocesano de Formación, por favor visite www.fwdioc.org/retreat-locations.

Las Hermanas CCVI se enfocan en el campo de salud

Por Mary Lou Seewoester
Corresponsal

SI USTED HUBIERA VIVIDO EN TEXAS EN 1866, USTED HUBIERA VISTO A LA GENTE RECUPERÁNDOSE DE LOS ESTRAGOS DE LA GUERRA CIVIL Y, AL MISMO TIEMPO, SOPORTANDO UNA EPIDEMIA DE CÓLERA QUE SE EXTENDÍA RÁPIDAMENTE.

Pero el Obispo de Galveston, Claude Marie Dubuis, vio a “Nuestro Señor Jesucristo sufriendo en la multitud de personas débiles y enfermas”.

Así que él fundó la congregación de las Hermanas de la Caridad del Verbo Encarnado (CCVI) en su diócesis, que en ese entonces incluía todo el estado de Texas.

Hoy, más de 300 CCVIs sirven en las áreas del cuidado de la salud, la educación, y el cuidado pastoral y espiritual en los Estados Unidos, México, Perú y Zambia, en el sureste de África. Y dos de ellas, las Hermanas Frances Evans y Josetta Eveler, continúan el carisma de su orden en la Diócesis de Fort Worth.

La Hna. Frances tiene dos pasiones: su vocación y el béisbol. A través de los años, la Hna. Frances es bien conocida como una de las dos “monjas del béisbol” que han animado a los Texas Rangers en todos los partidos jugados en casa desde el día de su primer juego en 1972. Su amiga de largos años y compañera de béisbol, la Hna. Maggie Hession, CCVI, falleció en 2013 de enfermedad Alzheimer.

La pasión de la Hna. Frances por su vocación se ha manifestado en su trabajo en el campo de la medicina, como técnica en medicina en hospitales en San Antonio y Amarillo. También pasó décadas como técnica de laboratorio en el Hospital de San José (ya cerrado) en Fort Worth, y después como su primera directora de servicios sociales.

Aunque ya no trabaja en hospitales, y actualmente vive en una comunidad de personas



La Hna. Frances Evans muestra su apoyo a sus Rangers durante los playoffs en octubre 2015. (Foto de Ranger Nuns en Facebook)

que requieren ayuda en su diario vivir, la Hna. Frances todavía vive bajo la norma que aplica tanto al béisbol como al ministerio: “nunca renunciés”.

La Hna. Josetta, quien fue maestra de primaria por 61 años en Texas, Illinois y Missouri, vive ahora el carisma de “ser la presencia real de Jesús en el mundo”, cuidando a su hermana de sangre quien sufre del mal de Parkinson.

“Tratamos de ser la sanación y la presencia de Cristo en el mundo de hoy y de promover la dignidad humana”, añadió ella.

Ella vino a esta diócesis, de la Escuela de la Inmaculada Concepción en Jefferson City, Missouri, en julio pasado.

La Hna. Josetta se sintió llamada a la vida consagrada “por el ejemplo de las hermanas del Verbo Encarnado que me enseñaron cuando era niña”, y por su propia hermana que ingresó a la orden seis años antes que ella. Este año, en vez de celebrar su cumpleaños, la Hna. Josetta conmemoró el Año de la Vida Consagrada celebrando el 7 de septiembre, fecha en que ingresó a la orden como candidata en 1951.

HERMANAS DE LA CARIDAD DEL VERBO ENCARNADO (CCVI) SIRVIENDO EN LA DIÓCESIS DE FORT WORTH

Hermana Frances Evans (CCVI), retirada

Hermana Josetta Eveler (CCVI), no en ministerio activo

Las Misioneras Catequistas continúan sirviendo a los refugiados, comunidad

Por Mary Lou Seewoester
Corresponsal

PARA LA HERMANA JANETTE HERNANDEZ, MISIONERA CATEQUISTA DE LA DIVINA PROVIDENCIA (MCDP), SU CARISMA ES CULTURAL.

“Todas nuestras hermanas son bilingües y nuestro enfoque es servir a la población Hispana. Es uno de nuestros fuertes y nuestros regalos a la Iglesia”, ella explicó. “Podemos entender y abogar por los Hispanos en la Iglesia”.

La Hna. Janette vive el carisma de las MCDP como consejera profesional en la clínica que Cook Children’s tiene en la avenida McCart en Fort Worth. Ahí trabaja con pediatras ayudando a niños que necesitan servicios de salud mental.

La MCDP fue la primera orden religiosa en los Estados Unidos dedicada específicamente

La Fraternidad Sacerdotal

Por Mary Lou Seewoester
Corresponsal

PARA MUCHAS DE LAS JÓVENES FAMILIAS DE LA IGLESIA DE SAN BENITO EN FORT WORTH, ASISTIR A LA MISA EN LATÍN NO SIGNIFICA UN NOSTÁLGICO REGRESO A UNA FORMA ANTERIOR, SINO DESCUBRIR UNA EXPRESIÓN DE LA MISA QUE LAS ACERCA MÁS A DIOS.

“Su belleza me ayuda a adentrarme más en el misterio de la Misa”, dijo Katie Guy, feligresa de San Benito. “Y no es solo la Misa en Latín. Es también la fraternidad de los sacerdotes. Ellos dan una gran prioridad al bienestar espiritual de las almas de la gente mediante la confesión”.

Actualmente dos sacerdotes de la Fraternidad Sacerdotal de San Pedro (FSSP) sirven en la Diócesis de Fort Worth en la Parroquia de San Benito, erigida este año por el Obispo Michael Olson para servir a los católicos que desean participar en esta Forma Extraordinaria del Rito Romano (Misa en Latín).



Catequistas y Misioneras a los Pobres y Marginalizados de la Comunidad Hispana

a las necesidades materiales y espirituales de los pobres y marginados en la comunidad Hispana. Fue formada en 1930 en Houston cuando la Hermana Benita Vermeersch, de la Congregación de la Divina Providencia (CDP), “Notó que los niños tenían hambre y no estaban siendo catequizados”, dijo la Hna. Janette.

La Hna. Benita consiguió la ayuda de varias niñas, del 8º. grado de la escuela parroquial de la que era directora, para seguir esta misión de servir la empobrecida población Hispana y a los



La Hna. Janette Hernandez en la clínica de Cook Children's en Fort Worth. (Foto cortesía de la Hna. Janette)

noches y fines de semana y vamos de casa en casa a catequizar”.

Cerca de 38 hermanas MCDP actualmente sirven a comunidades Hispánicas en Texas, Kansas y California en el ministerio Hispano, catequesis, ministerio juvenil, comedores de beneficencia,

MISIONERAS CATEQUISTAS DE LA DIVINA PROVIDENCIA (MCDP) SIRVIENDO EN LA DIÓCESIS DE FORT WORTH

Hermana Janette Hernandez (MCDP)

Consejera profesional en Cook Children's Neighborhood Clinic en Fort Worth

refugiados. Estas jóvenes eventualmente fueron conocidas como las MCDP.

“Esa es la diferencia entre las CDPs y las MCDPs”, dijo la Hna. Janette. “Las CDPs son hermanas educadoras que trabajan durante el día escolar. Nosotras hemos sido siempre las que trabajamos

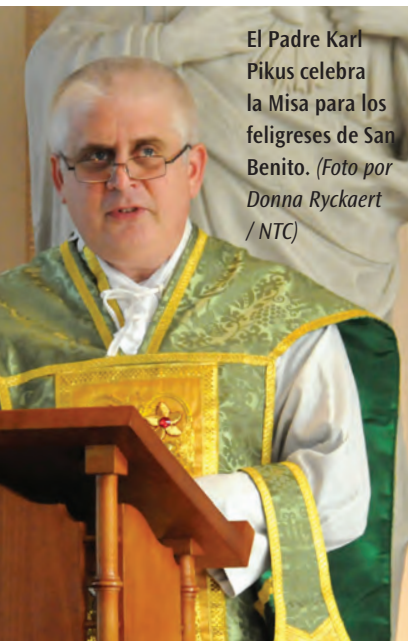
refugiados. Estas jóvenes eventualmente fueron conocidas como las MCDP.

refugiados. Estas jóvenes eventualmente fueron conocidas como las MCDP. Ella ha trabajado en terapia individual y familiar por más de 10 años, incluyendo cuatro años en un centro de tratamiento para jóvenes en San Antonio.

La Hna. Janette “siempre supo” que tenía vocación religiosa, y cuando ingresó a la orden en 1987 ella dijo, “sentí como si hubiera vuelto a mí misma—a mi cultura. Que Dios realmente me trajo aquí”.

Este año, dijo ella, las MCDPs “verdaderamente hemos examinado la vida consagrada... hemos aceptado el reto de tratar realmente de ser mujeres transparentes... que decimos que no tenemos el lujo o el derecho de no ser alegres y comprometidas unas con otras y con la gente que servimos, y traer esa esperanza a la Iglesia”.

El sacerdotado de San Pedro alumbra la Misa en Latín



El Padre Karl Pikus celebra la Misa para los feligreses de San Benito. (Foto por Donna Ryckaert / NTC)

El Obispo Olson asignó al Padre Karl Pikus, FSSP, como pastor y al Padre Peter Byrne, FSSP, como vicario parroquial de la parroquia.

Durante siglos la Misa del Rito Romano se celebró en Latín alrededor del mundo. Luego, en 1965, las reformas litúrgicas del Segundo Concilio Vaticano cambiaron

no solo el idioma usado durante la Misa al idioma del lugar, sino también la posición del sacerdote de

para a la gente. Desde entonces, algunos católicos continúan encontrando, o descubren de nuevo, alimento espiritual en la Misa en Latín.

La FSSP fue fundada en 1988 en Suiza, cuando un grupo de clérigos se acercó al Papa San Juan Pablo II solicitando formar una sociedad de sacerdotes para servir a los fieles de la anterior forma de la liturgia, la Misa en Latín. Fue formada como una Sociedad Clerical de Vida Apostólica de Derecho Pontificio—un grupo de sacerdotes y seminaristas en la Iglesia Católica que se reunieron para seguir un propósito común.

“No somos miembros de una orden religiosa”, dijo el P. Pikus. “Somos sacerdotes que vivimos en comunidad... Nosotros no hacemos votos solemnes como las órdenes que son Institutos de Vida Consagrada, pero hacemos promesas solemnes de castidad y obediencia como los sacerdotes diocesanos”.

Él añadió que como ellos trabajan como sacerdotes en una parroquia de la diócesis, ellos son responsables ante ambos, el superior general

FRATERNIDAD SACERDOTAL DE SAN PEDRO (FSSP) SIRVIENDO EN LA DIÓCESIS DE FORT WORTH

P. Peter Byrne (FSSP), vicario parroquial, Parroquia San Benito en Fort Worth

P. Karl Pikus (FSSP), párroco, Parroquia San Benito en Fort Worth

de la FSSP y el Obispo Olson,

El carisma de los FSSP es trabajar unidos para servir en parroquias diocesanas ofreciendo Misas y otros sacramentos de acuerdo al Rito Romano como existía antes de la reforma litúrgica del Segundo Concilio Vaticano.

“Nuestro apostolado es diocesano”, dijo el P. Byrne. “La mayoría de nosotros trabajamos en parroquias. La única diferencia real es litúrgica... somos sacerdotes de parroquia que ofrecemos una forma de liturgia diferente, y hacemos todo lo demás que los sacerdotes hacen”.

Los sacerdotes SVD van a donde Dios los llama

Por **Joan Kurkowski-Gillen**
Corresponsal

ES UN ESPÍRITU DE GOZO Y DESINTERESADA ENTREGA A LOS DEMÁS LO QUE DEFINE A LOS MISIONEROS DEL VERBO DIVINO, LA MÁS NUMEROSA Y EXTENSA ORDEN MISIONERA CATÓLICA EN EL MUNDO.

A través de los años, varios misioneros de la SVD han servido en la Diócesis de Fort Worth enriqueciendo las vidas de los católicos que viven en el Norte de Texas.

Cuando en 2008 el Padre Jerome LeDoux, SVD, llegó a la predominantemente Afroamericana Parroquia de Nuestra Madre de la Misericordia en Fort Worth, él renovó la iglesia y después amplió el

horario de las Misas de fin de semana. El nativo de Louisiana también animó a la parroquia a apoyar a la escuela adyacente.

En la Iglesia de Santa Rita, el Padre Paul Kahan, SVD era conocido por sus inspiradoras homilías durante sus seis años como párroco. Sus palabras al final de cada sermón, “No se olviden, iglesia, que Dios se preocupa profundamente por ustedes, así que cuidense unos a otros”, enseñaron a los feligreses cómo ser Cristo para los demás.

Cuando él asumió el cargo de provincial de la provincia sureña de su orden en los Estados Unidos en junio 2014, otro sacerdote SVD, el Padre Eric Michael Groner, fue nombrado párroco de esta parroquia diversamente étnica en el Este de

MISIONEROS DEL VERBO DIVINO (SVD) SIRVIENDO EN LA DIÓCESIS DE FORT WORTH

- **P. Eric Michael Groner**, Párroco, Iglesia Santa Rita, Fort Worth
- **P. Brendan Murphy**, Párroco, Iglesia San Pablo el Apóstol, Fort Worth

Fort Worth.

El Padre Brendan Murphy trae una energía similar a su nueva parroquia, la Iglesia del Apóstol San Pablo en el noroeste de Fort Worth, donde la asistencia a Misa ha aumentado desde que él llegó en septiembre. Los miembros de San



El P. Brendan Murphy, SVD, saluda a los fieles de la Iglesia del Apóstol San Pablo después de la Misa. (Foto por Joan Kurkowski-Gillen / NTC)

Pablo lo han recibido con los brazos y los corazones abiertos.

“Cuando entré al seminario, yo esperaba una vida de duro trabajo en un cometido austero y solitario. Lo que Dios me ha dado es una vida de satisfacción y alegría”, dice el P. Murphy.

Respondiendo a la necesidad

Los Jesuitas traen a los fieles la espiritualidad Ignaciana Montserrat Retreat House

Por **Jerry Circelli**
Corresponsal

ENTENDER EL CARISMA DE LA SOCIEDAD DE JESÚS Y DE SUS MIEMBROS JESUITAS ES CONTEMPLAR LA GRANDEZA DE DIOS Y QUE DIOS ESTÁ EN TODAS PARTES, COMO LO ENSEÑÓ SAN IGNACIO DE LOYOLA, QUIEN ESTABLECIÓ LA SOCIEDAD EN 1540.

La orden entiende que Dios es la chispa que da energía a nuestras vidas y a nuestro universo.

Los Jesuitas de hoy continúan siguiendo la espiritualidad Ignaciana, que profesa que Dios está presente en nuestro mundo y activo en nuestras vidas. Los Jesuitas creen que este entendimiento proporciona una senda hacia oración más profunda,



Los Padres Jesuitas Anthony Borrow, John Payne, y Ron Boudreaux sirven en el Centro de Retiros Montserrat en el Lago Lewisville. (Foto por Jerry Circelli / NTC)

buenas decisiones guiadas por agudo discernimiento, y una vida activa al servicio de los demás.

En el Norte de Texas, ponerse en contacto con Dios a través de la espiritualidad Ignaciana ha sido parte del ambiente católico desde 1959. Ese fue el año que el Centro Jesuita de

retiros Montserrat fue establecido en la orilla oriental del Lago Lewisville en Lake Dallas. Continuamente administrado por los Jesuitas durante los pasados 57 años, más de 100,000 personas han caminado por sus serenos y tranquilos jardines—que ahora abarcan 30 acres—generalmente

SACERDOTES JESUITAS (SJ) SIRVIENDO EN LA DIÓCESIS DE FORT WORTH

- **P. Ron Boudreaux**, director, Montserrat Retreat Center
- **P. Anthony Borrow**, Montserrat Retreat Center
- **P. John Payne**, Montserrat Retreat Center

orando en silencio para oír con más claridad la voz de Dios.

Actualmente, los tres Jesuitas que sirven a los fieles del área en el centro de retiros incluyen a los Padres Ron Boudreaux, SJ; John Payne, SJ; y Andrew Borrow, SJ.

En la Diócesis de Fort Worth, los Jesuitas están dedicados a ayudar a la

de misioneros para predicar el Evangelio en el mundo, el Padre Arnold Janssen, sacerdote de la Diócesis de Muenster, Alemania, fundó la Sociedad del Verbo Divino (SVD) en 1875.

El Hermano Wendelin Meyer fue el primer SVD en llegar a los Estados Unidos en 1895. Para 1909, la orden estableció su primer seminario en los Estados Unidos para entrenar sacerdotes y hermanos para servir en las misiones en el extranjero.

Varias misiones fueron fundadas en el Sur donde había pocos católicos. La disposición de los SVDs a relacionarse con gente de otras razas y etnias se ilustra con el éxito de la orden al abrir su primer seminario para Afroamericanos en 1923.

Hoy en día, los Misioneros del Verbo Divino sirven las necesidades espirituales y sociales en seis continentes. Más de 6,000 hombres trabajan en 70 países.

maciana en

gente a acercarse más a Dios por medio de la reflexión silenciosa.

“Siempre hemos tenido retiros silenciosos aquí”, dijo el P. Boudreaux, director de la casa de retiros. “Silencio no solo significa no hablar, sino disfrutar realmente la paz y quietud interior”, el sacerdote explicó.

El silencio tiene una larga historia en la espiritualidad de la Iglesia Católica, continuó el P. Boudrealux.

“Dios es Quien desea un contacto personal con uno”, dijo el P. Boudreaux. “Dios guía a uno a dónde Él quiere que uno vaya. Yo no sé adónde quiere Dios que alguien vaya; no tengo una idea. Pero puedo ofrecer un ambiente donde lo puede descubrir uno mismo”.

¿Qué sigue después del “Sí” — formación sacerdotal en la diócesis



Izquierda: Padre Ambrose Strong, O Cist, ríe con los estudiantes de la Escuela Preparatoria Cisterciense. (Foto de: Jim Reisch) Derecha: Hermanos Joseph Paul Albin y Hugo Rojas con el Padre Scott O'Brien, OP, profesan sus primeros votos después de un año en el Priorato Dominicano de San Alberto Magno. (Foto de: Priorato Dominicano de San Alberto Magno)

**Por Susan Moses
Corresponsal**

A L LLEGAR AL FINAL DEL AÑO DE LA VIDA CONSAGRADA, MIRAMOS HACIA EL PRINCIPIO DE LA VIDA CONSAGRADA EN LA DIÓCESIS DE FORT WORTH: LOS AÑOS ENTRE DAR EL “SÍ” AL LLAMADO DE DIOS Y RECIBIR LAS ÓRDENES SAGRADAS COMO SACERDOTE.

Discernir el llamado al sacerdocio empieza con conversaciones, primero dialogando con Dios y después, usualmente con el sacerdote de la parroquia. La diócesis también prepara varios eventos, desde desayunos mensuales hasta retiros de fin de semana, para los hombres que están considerando el sacerdocio,

“Si usted siente que Dios lo está llamando al sacerdocio, también está pensando en si será un sacerdote parroquial o si servirá en una orden religiosa”, explicó el Padre James Wilcox, director diocesano de vocaciones.

Dos órdenes, los cisterciense y los dominicos, tienen casas de formación en nuestra área.

ABADÍA CISTERCIENSE

Un voto de estabilidad distingue a los monjes de la Abadía Cisterciense. Ellos se comprometen a vivir toda su vida en esta singular comunidad monástica en Irving.

“Enfrentamos los retos de familia al vivir juntos. Vivimos, trabajamos y oramos en comunidad”, explicó el Abad, Padre Peter Verhalen, OCist.

Los hombres jóvenes que se unen a los cistercienses responden a un triple llamado: ser monjes, sacerdotes y

maestros. El primer año en la Abadía Cisterciense se enfoca en la vida monástica. Los novicios minimizan su contacto con el mundo exterior estudiando teología y la tradición cisterciense en la abadía.

“Cristo nos llama a dejar todo atrás y seguirlo”, el P. Verhalen dijo. “Durante el primer año, los novicios son desarraigados de su vida anterior para que puedan centrarse en encontrar a Dios en la vida monástica. La vida monástica es nuestra base, el sacerdocio es nuestro modo de servir, y enseñar es nuestra profesión. Es una vocación compleja, pero una hermosa vida”.

Después de tomar los votos transitorios al final del primer año, los monjes menores asisten a clases en la Universidad de Dallas y empiezan sus estudios sacerdotales y su preparación para enseñar. La mayoría de los 27 monjes trabajan en la cercana Preparatoria Cisterciense para jóvenes, y varios enseñan en la Universidad de Dallas, atravesando la autopista.

La Abadía Cisterciense fue fundada por monjes que huyeron de la Hungría comunista en los 1950s. Varios fueron invitados por Thomas Gorman, obispo de la Diócesis de Dallas-Fort Worth, para ayudar a formar una nueva universidad católica, la Universidad de Dallas. En 1961 la comunidad formalmente estableció el monasterio independiente, el único monasterio cisterciense para hombres en los Estados Unidos. En 1962, la comunidad abrió la Escuela Preparatoria Cisterciense, que actualmente cuenta con 350 jóvenes del 5º. al 12º. grados.

“Ayudamos en las parroquias con la Misa y Con-

Continúa en página 44

Formación sacerdotal...

fesiones, pero la enseñanza es nuestra principal fuente de ingresos”, dijo el P. Verhalen. “Sin embargo, queremos servir como recurso para la diócesis como un lugar donde sacerdotes y laicos puedan venir a pasar un tranquilo día de retiro o reflexión acerca de cómo vivir el Evangelio hoy”.

PRIORATO DOMINICO DE SAN ALBERTO MAGNO

“Yo le digo a los novicios, si ustedes quieren saber si la vida dominica es para ustedes, miren a los hombres a su alrededor”, dijo el Padre Scott O’Brien, director del noviciado. “Tenemos frailes que hicieron sus votos hace 50 años y todavía están firmes predicando, enseñando y sirviendo a Dios. Presenciar la vida que llevan nuestros frailes es gran parte del discernimiento”.

La Orden de los Dominicos celebra su octingentésimo aniversario (800 años) en 2016. Desde su origen en Francia en 1216, los frailes siempre se han esforzado por mantener un balance entre la vida contemplativa y el ministerio apostólico.

“Estamos llamados a compartir el fruto de nuestra contemplación con los demás”, dijo el P. O’Brien.

Tal vez mejor conocidos por ser predicadores itinerantes, los frailes dominicos también enseñan y sirven en el ministerio universitario. Un número de frailes también sirve a los pobres en varios ministerios, incluyendo misiones al otro lado del mar. “Acompañamos al pobre en su caminar y después regresamos a la vida en comunidad”.

Muchos en la diócesis están familiarizados con el Padre Carmen Mele, OP, quien ha con-

ducido retiros y predicado por toda la diócesis durante 16 años. Su ministerio principalmente incluye trabajar en el ambiente diocesano, parroquial y formación sacerdotal. Desde 2009 ha dirigido el Instituto San Juan Pablo II para la Formación de Ministros Laicos para la diócesis, asimismo sirve como director de Formación Espiritual para la Formación de Diáconos.

El Priorato Dominic de San Alberto Magno abrió en los 1960s en Irving, adyacente a los campus de la Universidad de Dallas y del Holy Trinity Seminary y los frailes han enseñado y servido en ambas instituciones.

El priorato aloja a los hombres en su primer año de formación como frailes dominicos. Ahí los novicios experimentan la vida comunitaria, incluyendo misas diarias y oración común. Estudiar Escritura Sagrada, teología y la historia y espiritualidad de la Orden llena sus días, junto con conversaciones informales con los frailes profesos, así como los que hacen del diario vivir.

Después de profesar sus primeros votos alrededor del 8 de agosto, la fiesta de Santo Domingo, los hermanos continúan sus estudios en el Aquinas Institute of Theology en St. Louis, Missouri.

Ya sea en la Abadía Cisterciense o en el Priorato Dominic, ambos el P. Verhalen y el P. O’Brien están de acuerdo en que el primer año de formación es crítico.

El P. O’Brien dijo, “Es un tiempo para nutrir la vida interior, para aprender oración personal y comunitaria, y para ajustarse a la disciplina y estructura de la vida comunal. Hay que aprender a calmarse y estarse quieto para que uno pueda encontrar a Cristo y compartirlo con los demás”.

SACERDOCIO DIOCESANO

La mayoría de la gente cuando piensa en el sacerdocio, viene a la mente el sacerdote parroquial o diocesano. La diócesis tiene actualmente 32 hombres en el proceso de siete a nueve años de formación.

Los estudios de filosofía empiezan en St. Joseph Seminary College cerca de Covington, Louisiana, donde los seminaristas empiezan su crecimiento en los cuatro pilares del sacerdocio: intelectual, espiritual, humano y pastoral.

“Manteniendo a los hombres juntos los ayuda a unirse en una fraternidad sacerdotal”, dijo el P. Wilcox.

Además de las clases universitarias, se les asignan ministerios, que incluyen ayudar con la educación religiosa en las parroquias, servir en hospitales, o trabajar con los pobres, los presos o los que no tienen hogar. Los seminaristas pasan sus veranos de nuevo en la diócesis ayudando en las parroquias o con los eventos diocesanos.

Después de recibir su licenciatura, hacen estudios de posgrado en teología en uno de cuatro seminarios. Los cuatro años de estudio se separan por un año de ministerio parroquial, y muchos pasan un verano en Guatemala estudiando Español inmersos en el idioma.

El P. Wilcox observó, “Ser sacerdote me recuerda a Juan 15:13, ‘Nadie tiene mayor amor que el que da su vida por sus amigos’. Jesucristo hizo el último sacrificio y estamos llamados a seguir sus pasos. Como sacerdote, uno tiene la oportunidad de dar la vida por defender la verdad—Jesucristo”.

ABAJO: En esta foto del 2015, el Obispo Michael Olson esta junto a la clase de seminaristas de la Diócesis de Fort Worth. (Foto por Juan Guajardo / NTC)



La Orden Dominica celebra OCHOCIENTOS AÑOS EN 2016

Por el Padre Carmelo Mele, O.P.

UNA VEZ UN FAMOSO HOMBRE DE LA IGLESIA TUVO UNA IDEA. EMPEZARÍA UN NUEVO TIPO DE LA EVANGELIZACIÓN.

Llamaría a otros a unirse consigo para alcanzar a los católicos extraviados. Irían a las plazas urbanas para hablar directamente a la gente que se había distanciado de la fe. No sólo sus palabras sino la calidad de sus vidas convencerían a los desilusionados del amor de Dios para ellos. Este hombre fue santo Domingo de Guzmán y fundó lo que todavía se llama la "Orden de los Frailes Predicadores".

En 2016 la Orden de Predicadores (los dominicos) celebra su octavo centenario. Su historia incluye gigantes intelectuales, profetas sociales, y humanitarios humildes. Su composición abarca gentes de todas razas y la mayoría de las naciones. Hay mujeres y hombres, laicos y consagrados, no ordenados y ordenados. Notablemente la Orden se ha mantenido sin fragmentarse a pesar de cismas, movimientos de reforma, y alboroto general dentro de la Iglesia.

El éxito de los dominicos tiene mucho que ver con el fundador. Aunque el escrito legado de Domingo es vergonzosamente modesto, anécdotas de su vida abundan. Estas han inspirado a sus seguidores a ambas, la contemplación y la acción.

Como un joven estudiante diligente, Domingo se dio cuenta de la gente aguantando el hambre. Para comprarle comida, él vendió sus pergaminos preciosos de los cuales estudiaba. Como un predicador iti-

nerante, Domingo demostraba una devoción singular al amor al servicio de la verdad.

Domingo fundó primero una comunidad de monjas para rezar por su empresa de predicación. Con la aprobación del papa para su banda de predicadores, se dedicó él mismo a su florecimiento. Su biógrafo escribe que no había nadie tan afable como Domingo hacia los frailes (eso es, sus hermanos comunitarios) durante el día y nadie tan asiduo en la oración a Dios por ellos durante la noche.

Una historia apócrifa indica el efecto apreciable que ha tenido Domingo en sus hermanos y hermanas predicadores. Por todo el mundo se encuentran las imágenes de él recibiendo el rosario de la Virgen María. Sin embargo, no hay ningún record histórico de que este evento haya tenido lugar. No obstante, los archivos eclesiales están repletos con anales de dominicos predicando el Rosario como un modo de meditar en los misterios de la salvación. La imagen ubicua y el hecho histórico pueden explicarse según el adagio: lo que se dice de los seguidores es atribuido a su fundador. Los dominicos están uniformemente agradecidos para atestiguar en su ministerio la memoria de su fundador carismático.

Muchos dominicos se han distinguido en ambas la Iglesia y el mundo. Estos incluyen a Fra Angélico, uno de los pintores más celebres del Renacimiento, y Dominique Pire, el cual fue laureado con el premio Nobel de Paz en 1958 por su trabajo con los refugiados después de la Segunda Guerra Mundial. Tres otros

dominicos demostrando lo ancho y lo profundo de la orden merecen atención especial.

Santo Tomás de Aquino es por mucho el mejor teólogo sistemático de cristianismo. Su Suma Teológica, aunque nunca cumplida, hace una síntesis sin igual de la Escritura y la filosofía para dar a la doctrina católica un cimiento firme. También fue muy santo. Se conoció no sólo por sus logros intelectuales sino también por su devoción a la oración. Un escriba de Tomás una vez lo escuchó conversando con el Señor mientras rezaba delante del crucifijo. Según la historia Jesús le dijo: "Tomás, has escrito bien de mí. ¿Qué premio quieres?" Tomás le respondió: "Señor, nada menos que Usted mismo".

Tres cuartos de siglo después de la muerte de Tomás de Aquino, Catalina de Giacomo de Benincasa nació en Siena, Italia. Aunque era virgen y llevaba el hábito blanco, en realidad fue un miembro de la tercera orden de los dominicos. Más importante, Santa Catalina era una mística, una escritora, una bienhechora de los pobres, y un líder carismático. Se hizo influyente en la política en ambos la Iglesia y el estado. Se ha nombrado junto con san Francisco de Asís como la copatrona de Italia y una de los cinco patronos del continente europeo. Una historiadora prominente le ha nombrado la mujer más importante del siglo catorce.

Quizás ningún dominico haya logrado más popularidad que el hijo de un caballero español y una esclava liberada panameña. Martín de Porres nació en Lima, Perú, al

final del siglo dieciséis. Como un adolescente y joven, Martín trabajaba como sirviente en uno de los prioratos dominicos de la ciudad. En tiempo tomó los votos en la orden pero nunca se ordenó sacerdote, a lo mejor porque la ley entonces discriminaba contra la gente de herencia africana e indígena. De todos modos se hizo conocido por todos por su caridad, su santidad, y sus curas medicinales. Hoy se reverencia como el patrono de la justicia social con un número inmenso de devotos entre los pobres por todo el mundo.

¿Qué hace al octavo centenario de los dominicos digno de anotarse? Los dominicos son en efecto una familia constituida de gentes de ambos sexos, todas clases sociales, y la mayoría de las naciones mundiales. Se ha perseverado unida a través de las edades incesantemente avanzando la misión de la evangelización. En breve, la Orden de Predicadores sirve como un modelo ideal para la Iglesia entera.

Hay un convento de hermanas dominicas en el campus de Nolan High School en Fort Worth y un priorato de frailes dominicos en el campus de la Universidad de Dallas en Irving. El priorato de Irving ha establecido un capítulo de laicos dominicos. También está planeando celebraciones del octavo centenario para el público el 28 de enero, la fiesta de Santo Tomás de Aquino; el 29 de abril, la fiesta de Santa Catalina de Siena; el 8 de agosto, la fiesta de Santo Domingo; y el 3 de noviembre, la fiesta de San Martín de Porres.

Misericordia...

Misericordia. Alrededor del mundo, estas Puertas Santas se abrieron el 13 de diciembre.

El Obispo Olson seleccionó Nuestra Madre de la Misericordia diciendo, “Desde su establecimiento en 1929, los feligreses, las hermanas religiosas, y los sacerdotes de Nuestra Madre de la Misericordia han servido y han sido testigos fieles de la abundante misericordia de Dios, expresada más plenamente por medio del regalo de su Hijo, Jesucristo.

“Ellos han hecho esto por medio de su servicio en educación y acercándose a los católicos y comunidades Afroamericanas en general, con un espíritu inclusivo”.

Floyd Ware, feligrés y músico en Nuestra Madre de la Misericordia dijo, “El anuncio de que fuimos escogidos como la iglesia principal para el Año de la Misericordia fue inesperado, pero nos sentimos honrados y recibimos a los visitantes con los brazos abiertos. La apertura de la Puerta de la Misericordia fue un buen comienzo y esperamos cosas mejores”.

Durante el año del jubileo, los peregrinos que visiten Nuestra Madre de la Misericordia y otras iglesias de peregrinaje designadas por el obispo pueden recibir una indulgencia. Para recibir la indulgencia plenaria, el visitante debe entrar por la Puerta de la Misericordia, recibir los sacramentos de la Eucaristía y la Reconciliación, y orar por las intenciones del Papa. (Lea más información sobre esto en inglés en la página 8)

Mary Guidry, feligrés de Nuestra Madre de la Misericordia dijo, “La apertura de la Puerta de la Misericordia por el Obispo Olson fue una experiencia bendita. Fue simbólica, pero espero que la interioricemos y la transformemos en más bondad para el mundo. Necesitamos entender que nuestro punto de vista no es el más importante. Necesitamos comprender a los que son diferentes a nosotros. Esto puede traer esperanza a todo el mundo”.

Los pensamientos de Guidry son eco de los del Papa Francisco cuando expresó el deseo de que toda la gente sea más

misericordiosa en sus propias vidas y lleve la misericordia de Dios a los demás.

Él escribió en *Misericordiae Vultus*, “Debemos admitir que la práctica de la misericordia está disminuyendo en la cultura popular. En algunos casos la palabra parece haber caído en desuso. Sin embargo, sin testimonio a la misericordia, la vida se vuelve infructuosa y estéril como secuestrada en un árido desierto.

“Ha llegado el tiempo de que la Iglesia tome de nuevo el alegre llamado a la misericordia. Es tiempo de regresar a lo esencial y soportar las debilidades y luchas de nuestros hermanos y hermanas. La misericordia es la fuerza que nos despierta a una nueva vida e infunde en nosotros el valor de mirar al futuro con esperanza”.

MÁS SOBRE EL AÑO DE MISERICORDIA

Para más información sobre el Año de Misericordia, por favor visite www.fwdioc.org/jubilee-year-mercy

¿CÓMO OBTENGO LA INDULGENCIA PLENARIA?

- 1) Vaya en peregrinaje y entre por la Puerta de la Misericordia de la iglesia designada para su deanato, o a la Iglesia de Nuestra Madre de la Misericordia—principal iglesia del Año Jubilar.
- 2) Confiese sacramentalmente sus pecados.
- 3) Comulgue dentro de la semana antes o después de su peregrinaje.
- 4) Rece la profesión de fe (credo) y rece por las intenciones del Papa Francisco. Las oraciones las decide cada individuo, pero de costumbre incluyen por lo menos el Padre Nuestro y el Ave María.



Fieles rezan mientras que el Obispo Olson bendice la Puerta de la Misericordia en Dic. 13. (Foto por Juan Guajardo / NTC)

Catholic Diocese of Fort Worth



¡DESPIERTEN AL MUNDO!
— 2015 Año de la Vida Consagrada —

Una Celebración Diocesana
para la Clausura
del Año de Vida Consagrada
viernes, 5 de febrero del 2016
St. Francis of Assisi Parish, Grapevine
Misa 6:30 p.m.
Recepción después de Misa
en el salón de la parroquia

Para más información sobre vocaciones,
comuniquense con la Oficina de Vocaciones al
817-560-3300 o visite la red diocesana al www.fwdioc.org



Meyer emphasizes St. Nicholas always gave to others

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he attended the St. Nicholas Institute — a four-day seminar conducted by Father Joseph Marquis, a Byzantine Catholic priest and professional Santa Claus. The program is designed to teach would-be Santas how to portray St. Nicholas, or his modern-day counterpart, convincingly.

Fr. Marquis, who was the official Santa Claus for Detroit's Thanksgiving Day parade from 1977 to 1989, promotes St. Nicholas as a committed Christian and person of integrity whose acts of unconditional love focused on the dignity of the human person. Santa Claus appropriated some of these same characteristics.

"The Institute was like a retreat and really inspired us," says Meyer, who uses what he learned to infuse faith into the secular symbols of Christmas.

When Meyer isn't talking to 4th, 5th, and 6th graders about the virtues of St. Nicholas, he dons a red suit and stocking cap to become Santa for scores of eager school children and lonely nursing home residents. Families also hire him for private parties. Wife, Debbie, joins the fun as Mrs. Claus.

"I like to bring joy into other people's hearts," adds the Keller resident who is blessed with God-given rosy-red cheeks and a full, white beard. "Santa can cheer up even sad people."

For the past three years, the Meyers have offered their talents as Mr. and Mrs. Claus to the list of live auction items proffered at the Bishop's Annual Catholics Respect Life Gala. Paired with a pasta dinner for 20 by the DeVivo Bros. Restaurant and homemade cannoli by Alana and Michael Demma, the visit by Santa Claus raised \$1,700 for diocesan pro-life ministries on Nov. 7.



Rob and Debbie Meyer, portraying Santa and Mrs. Claus, pose with five of the Dominican sisters who serve in the Diocese of Fort Worth at the Bishop's Annual Catholics Respect Life Gala recently where an evening with the couple, complete with an Italian dinner for 20 and cannoli were auctioned off — to the benefit of diocesan pro-life ministries. (Photo by Donna Ryckaert)

"We've been involved in Church ministry ever since we've been married," says Meyer, a retired naval aviator who once flew mission planes for a Catholic diocese in New Guinea. "Any compensation we received from our Santa work goes to pro-life causes."

The Meyers value children, parenthood, and life with good reason. As a teenager, Debbie Meyer was told she couldn't have children.

"But the Lord surprised me with four," says the grandmother of 14 who's been married 45 years. "It took 13 pregnancies to have our four children, so we feel blessed. We're very pro-life. We're giving back."

The couple donates proceeds from the Santa gigs to a crisis pregnancy center in Keller. In the past they've also spent time praying in front of abortion centers

and attending pro-life rallies in Austin.

After asking the people who hire Santa to write a check directly to the pregnancy center, "I'll talk about where the money is going," Meyer explains. "That brings the pro-life topic up in a non-confrontational way."

Impersonating St. Nicholas and Santa is a dream job, the retiree admits, and he never leaves an appearance without imparting some words of wisdom about the true meaning of Christmas. No

one ever gave St. Nicholas a gift, he points out. The saint always gave to others.

"The key to having a wonderful, happy Christmas is to think of others first," Santa tells his young listeners.

He encourages them to do good deeds, write letters, or make a gift.

"Make someone happy and you'll be happy, too," Meyer observes. "The happiness you get from being kind to others is the best gift."

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) 945-9340 ext. 201 or e-mail her at jlocke@fwdioc.org
- ♦ Or call the Sexual Abuse Hot-line (817) 945-9345 and leave a message.

To Report Abuse

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

Rob and Debbie Meyer mix and mingle Santa and St. Nicholas



Rob Meyer outfitted in vestments like those of the fourth century bishop of Myra, St. Nicholas, the original "Santa."

By Joan Kurkowski-Gillen
Correspondent

Many people spend the weeks before Christmas shopping for gifts, festooning their homes in garlands, and planning holiday get-togethers.

Rob Meyer uses the season of Advent to put the life of St. Nicholas back into Santa Claus. Dressed in a mitre and crimson vestments, the white-bearded grandfather visits religious education classes at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Church to talk about the 4th century Bishop of Myra and how his legendary works of compassion and gift giving eventually morphed into a rotund, jolly old elf who climbs down chimneys on Christmas Eve.

"Most of the kids don't know much about St. Nicholas or the fact that he was a bishop," Meyer explains. "I always remind them St. Nicholas was the first Santa.



Rob and Debbie Meyer, parishioners of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton in Keller, teach about the origins of St. Nicholas story with its stories of the saint's great generosity. Then they give away any of their earnings to a crisis pregnancy center in Keller. Hmmm, sounds like they're extraordinarily authentic in their portrayal of the saint. (Photo by Donna Ryckaert)

He's a tradition that was passed on through generations."

A biography of the Greek-born saint is colored with stories about his philanthropy. Orphaned

as a young man after his wealthy parents died in an epidemic, Nicholas went to live with his uncle, the Bishop of Patara, and used his inheritance to perform

anonymous works of charity. According to folklore, the gold coins he tossed through windows to poor families would often land in socks and shoes placed near the fireplace for drying.

Over the years, tales of his generosity became associated with gift giving especially in Holland and Western Europe. Dutch immigrants brought the tradition of St. Nicholas or Sinter Klaas to America in the 1700s.

Today, it is still customary for children to leave out shoes on the night before St. Nicholas' December 6 feast day in the hopes of finding a few treats tucked inside the next morning.

"St. Nicholas' mitre ended up looking like an elf hat and his pectoral cross became a belt buckle," Meyer says describing how Santa's commercially iconic look is rooted in Church history. "There were different versions of Santa until Hollywood and Coca-Cola standardized the image to what we see today."

To learn more about the spiritual dimensions of St. Nicholas, Meyer traveled to Michigan where

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