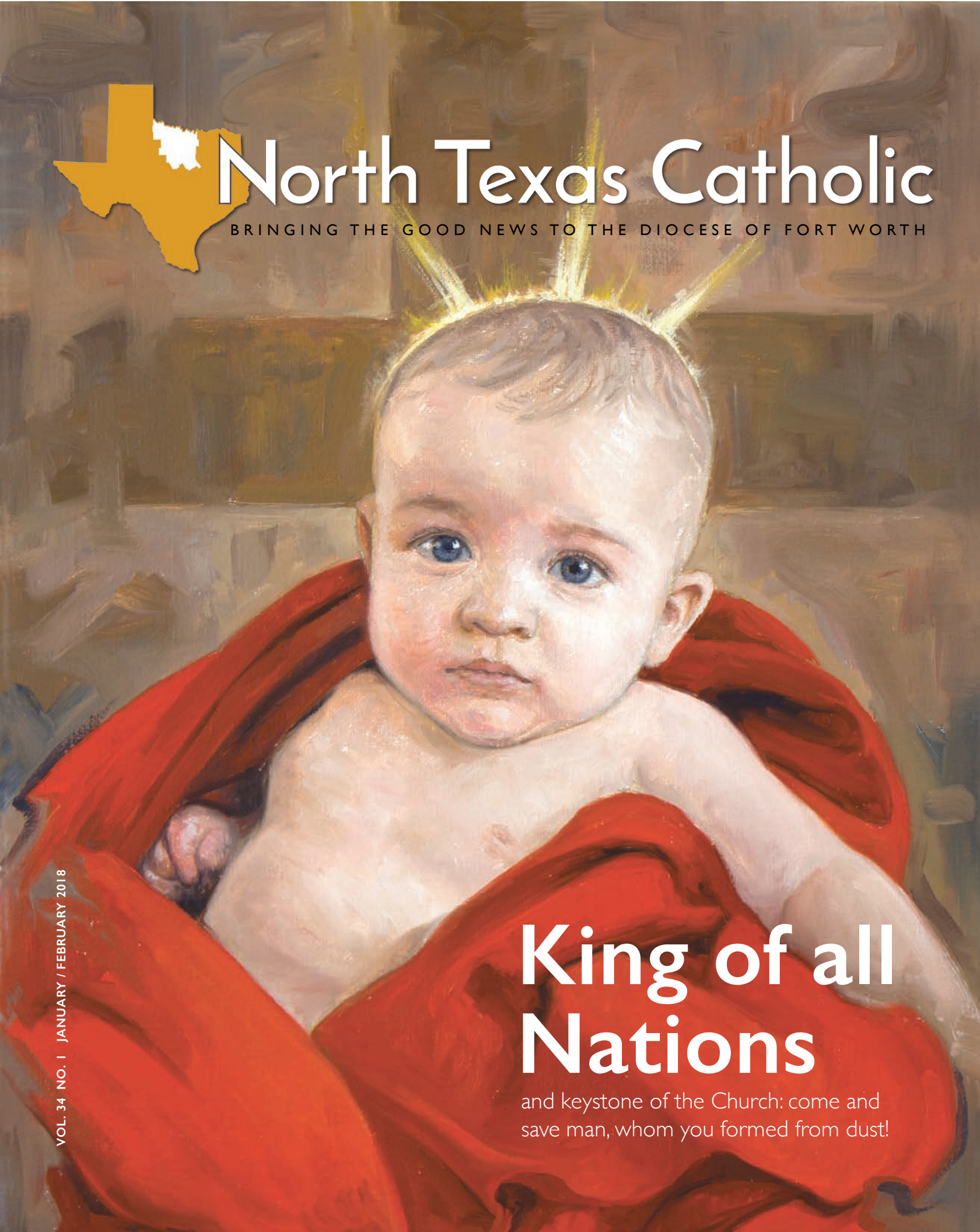




North Texas Catholic

BRINGING THE GOOD NEWS TO THE DIOCESE OF FORT WORTH



King of all Nations

and keystone of the Church: come and save man, whom you formed from dust!

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January-February 2018

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Niño Jesús, by Spanish artist Raúl Berzosa, 2016.

(Courtesy of the artist, raulberzosa.com)

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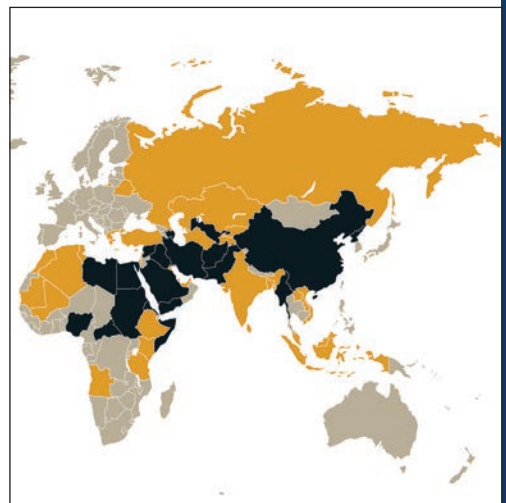
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NTC@fwdioc.org.

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How can sinners today become a holy family? Practical advice and insights on the Holy Family from Marcellino D'Ambrosio (Dr. Italy).

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North Texas Catholic

Two feasts, two gifts

We have much to be grateful for! In a few days, we celebrate the great feast of Christmas, rejoicing that “Emmanuel” — God with us — descended to “human nature” to visit us, as St. Gregory of Nyssa puts it, “since humanity was in so miserable and unhappy a state.”

With the Nativity, our longing for a King and Giver of Law, a “light” for all nations, is fulfilled.

But there’s another important date on the Church calendar we should be equally grateful for: Epiphany.

Our fellow brothers and sisters of the Eastern tradition have a beautiful understanding and appreciation of Epiphany that we Western Catholics should take note of, because indeed it takes both feast days to gain the fullest appreciation and understanding of our Lord Jesus Christ. And what’s initiated by one is concluded by the other.

At Christmas, we receive the great revelation of God coming to us as a helpless infant; God truly made man. Epiphany, by celebrating the many ways Christ makes Himself known to us — namely the Adoration of the Magi, the Baptism of Jesus, and the Miracle of Cana (but not just those) — reveals the other side; that this infant truly is the King and Ruler of the universe.

Celebrate Christmas with gratitude and praise for God for His gift of sending us a son, who “for us men and for our salvation, came down from heaven...and was made man.” And don’t stop there. Epiphany propels us to go beyond the “family feast of Christianity” and proclaim the Gospel to the whole world, to confess that God came to Earth for everyone.

As Catholic author Elsa Chaney states, “Epiphany demands that like the [three] kings, we should return to our own countries a different way, carrying to all those we meet the light of Christ...We have the responsibility to radiate that light in the darkness of our own world.”

So enjoy this Christmas season and give thanks for God’s love for us made manifest in the manger, and prepare yourself for the multi-layered and beautiful feast of Epiphany, which awakens us to recognize and respond to the Divine Master. Give thanks for the double blessing that our faith has given us.



Juan Guajardo
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Peace on Earth

Prayerful silence and the Prince of Peace in our world today

Just as silence enables prayer, noise provokes violence. It should not be surprising that so much of what passes currently for conversation in political discourse and in news reporting has become harsh and incendiary, a reflection of the violence that dominates us in our contemporary world.

The conversation that we have with God in silence prompts us to become alert to His loving and selfless priorities for us that soon become, through a change of heart in us, our own priorities for our loved ones, who may agree or disagree with us. If we have cultivated a prayerful habit of silence for meditation on the “Word made flesh,”

we cannot help but be free of violent thoughts and actions against our neighbor. As Robert Cardinal Sarah notes, “God’s first language is silence. Everything else is a poor translation. In order to understand this language, we must learn to be silent and to rest in God.”

The word “peace” is mentioned in abundance in the Scriptures. “Peace” or “shalom” in Hebrew is more than the absence of war. Peace is a sense of fulfillment or completion that can be found only

in harmonious and right relationship with God — external peace among people and nations, and an internal peace within each human person.

At this time of Christmas, when we celebrate the birth of the Prince of Peace, we can remind each other that we can be confident and not afraid of the violence and fear that surround us. This peaceful confidence should sustain us in our conversation about important political matters and remind us that we can refrain from mean and disrespectful discourse. We must be part of a solution and not contribute to the problem when we first encounter the Christ Child in the silence of

the manger of each of our souls.

When we see violence rampant in our society and communities, why is that? Again, because, intentionally or unintentionally, we have no room for Him; we ignore His word and become distracted by noise. We can lose trust in Him and wrongly prefer being enslaved to noise and discord.

In a few short days in our liturgical calendar, the Word will become flesh again, Emmanuel will again be born in

our hearts, “eternity in time; omnipotence in bonds; God in the form of man,” as the Venerable Archbishop Fulton Sheen once put it. There in the silence of the manger is no better reminder that the Lord wants nothing more than to be with us, to give us peace, to give us hope, to give us Himself in vulnerability for our love, to give us eternal life with Him and the Father in heaven. He comes to us in the quiet darkness of the manger as our light, not in the glare of the city as an argument to which we must capitulate.

As the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* teaches us, the Word became flesh for “us men and for our salvation,” to be “our model of holiness,” and to show God’s boundless love for us. If we believe, we cannot help but share this love with others, beginning with our prayer, flowing through our speech, and culminating in our actions. ✝

“If we have cultivated a prayerful habit of silence for meditation on the Word made flesh, we cannot help but be free of violent thoughts and actions against our neighbor.”



+ Michael F. Olson

Initially called St. Alice Parish, Holy Family adopted its current name and location in 1965. (NTC/Juan Guajardo)

HOLY FAMILY CATHOLIC CHURCH

Holy Family celebrates 75th anniversary

FORT WORTH — From 65 families in 1942 to almost 2,500 families today, parishioners at Holy Family Parish have plenty of reasons to celebrate the church's 75th anniversary.

A small, white frame building at the corner of Camp Bowie Boulevard and Locke Avenue held the very first Mass on June 7, 1942 at St. Alice Church, the parish's original name. Twenty-three years later, the church family moved to a new home on Pershing Avenue and became Holy Family Parish.

Cam Ryan, chair of the 75th anniversary steering committee, joined the parish 26 years ago after a friend she worked with at a charity organization invited her to visit.

She helped plan the many celebration activities held throughout the year, including a retreat, picnic, and a service project that built a Habitat for Humanity home in nearby Como.

A noteworthy accomplishment of 2017 was completion of a parking garage and connector from the front of the church to the garage.

Joe Rodriguez, director of liturgy and formation, who also served on the steering committee, said activities throughout the year provided "an opportunity to look back and treasure past memories; and also to look forward with renewed energy and hope for the future of this community."

Reflecting on the anniversary, Father Hoa Nguyen, pastor, said, "What we inherited today, we accept as a privilege, but that comes with a responsibility to move forward and become stronger.

"We pray we will continue to carry it out, to help the community at large, help the poor, and be a witness not just to our community but outside the parish."

— Susan McFarland

Whitehead assumes new role

FORT WORTH — Jason Whitehead, the former assistant director of evangelization and catechesis, has been promoted to director of faith formation. In this role, Whitehead is leading children's catechesis, working in the areas of evangelization, RCIA, and adult faith formation, and assuming the role of special religious education coordinator.

Though he will still be working with adults, Whitehead is excited to be helping them in a slightly different way—as parents.

"I'm hoping to reach

out to parents to reinforce their role in the home. The Church teaches that parents are the first teachers of their children," he said.

"We seem to have this great division between

formation and the adults' side. I am going to try and bring them together for it to be more family based," he said.

Whitehead is excited about being a special needs liaison, something he and his wife Nancy have personal experience with as parents of Jacob, a 15-year-old with autism.

— Susan McFarland



For full versions of these stories plus more photos, visit NorthTexasCatholic.org/local-news



The merciful mother of all: Our Lady of Guadalupe

FORT WORTH — “I am your merciful mother, the merciful mother of all of you who live united in this land, and of all mankind, of all those who love me . . .” said Our Lady of Guadalupe to St. Juan Diego on Tepeyac Hill, the site of a former pagan temple near Mexico City.

Within a few years of her apparition as a brown-skinned, Indian woman to the humble peasant in 1531, about 8 million Aztecs in Mexico converted to Catholicism, the largest conversion in the history of the Church.

Named the Patroness of the Americas by St. John Paul II, Our Lady of Guadalupe still unites people and brings them closer to her son.

Churches across Mexico

and the U.S. mark her feast day Dec. 12 with processions and special liturgies.

Flowers and drums, dancers and bands incor-

porate Mexican, Aztec, and American symbolism. The celebrations often begin before dawn.

“This is one of the biggest celebrations of the year,” explained Mar-

cos Ortiz, a parishioner at Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish in Fort Worth. “Our Lady of Guadalupe brought the Catholic faith to Mexico, so we honor and love her today and every day.”

Ortiz explained in a 2016 interview, “She chose Juan Diego, a simple man. That shows us no matter who you are, how old you are, or what your skin color is, she is our mother.”



See the dancing,
hear the music!

Video at:

**NorthTexas
Catholic.org/
video-gallery**

Campus ministry invites students to faith, vocations

FORT WORTH — Campus ministers agree that the biggest challenge for college ministry may be the tendency of many to fall away from their faith during college.

“There are so many distractions,” Midwestern State University Campus Minister Debbie Neely said. “Many are away from home for the first time, away from parents asking if they’ve gone to Mass. It can be easy to pull away from that relationship with God.”

Such freedom, however, often results in an opposite reaction, TCU Campus Minister Tom Centarri said.

“It’s easy to assume students on their own are going to rebel, and a lot do,” Centarri said. “But

a lot also make their faith their own at that point. It’s not their parents’ anymore.”

During Vocation Awareness Week, Father Nghia Nguyen asked students at a TCU Mass to contemplate how God is calling “each and every one” of them to holiness and to love in a specific way.

“Vocation means how do you respond to God’s calling to serve in love,” Fr. Nguyen said. “Our vocation is in each and every one of us. My role is to advocate, promote, and foster the vocation in a person whether that’s the seminary, religious life or maybe not — maybe it’s something else.”

— Matthew Smith

ST. ANDREW BREAKFAST, FORT WORTH



Young men discerning a vocation find brotherhood and food for thought at St. Andrew Breakfasts. Held at St. Patrick Cathedral, the monthly discernment event begins with an 8 a.m. Mass followed by a catered breakfast, socialization, catechesis, and a concluding prayer. Typically, 10 to 15 young men, ranging in age from 14 to 20, attend.

For more information or to register for the upcoming St. Andrew Breakfast, go to the calendar page at fwdioc.org.

CABALGATA PROCESSION, FORT WORTH



St. Peter the Apostle Parish held its first cabalgata procession to kick off its Our Lady of Guadalupe celebrations. The Knights of Columbus led the procession of the Blessed Mother, followed by a choir, matachines dancers, and drummers.

Father Manuel Holguin, pastor, joined about 20 others on horseback to conclude the joyful procession. The Mexican tradition leads people to church for major religious celebrations.

WATER WALK, ARLINGTON



About 550 students, teachers, and families of St. Joseph Catholic School in Arlington have taken steps to solve the clean water crisis in Africa — literally.

Participants donned heavy backpacks filled with water bottles and walked for 90 minutes in solidarity with those who have to walk miles to collect and carry water to their homes.

Walkers raised funds for clean water projects in a refugee camp in Ethiopia and a Ugandan primary school.

IMAGES OF LIFE, LEWISVILLE



Knights of Columbus Council 9884 partnered with two Lewisville churches, St. Philip the Apostle and Our Lady of Lebanon, to raise \$20,000 for an ultrasound for All Babies Born Alive pregnancy center. Seeing the unborn baby and hearing the heartbeat helps mothers make a life decision.

At the fundraiser, keynote speaker Carol Everett, a former abortion clinic manager turned pro-life lobbyist, described moneymaking in the abortion industry.

ONLY ON THE WEB



FINALLY, FULLY CATHOLIC AT 87

You're never too old to become a Catholic, according to Edward Geisel, who has realized his lifelong dream.

ANOTHER WIN FOR KATIE MEILI

The Olympic medal-winning swimmer is inducted into the Nolan Catholic High School Hall of Fame.



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Official Assignments for the Diocese of Fort Worth

BY MOST REV. MICHAEL F. OLSON, STD, MA

REV. RICHARD COLLINS

Pastor of St. Mary Parish in Henrietta, St. Jerome Parish in Bowie, St. William Parish in Montague, and St. Joseph Parish in Nocona, has been appointed **Sacramental Minister** for Prison Ministry and Priest in Residence at St. Joseph Parish in Arlington, effective Jan. 16, 2018.

REV. PRAKASH DIAZ

New to the Diocese of Fort Worth, has been appointed **Parochial Vicar** of St. John the Baptizer in Bridgeport, Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Decatur, and St. Mary in Jacksboro, effective Nov. 15, 2017.

REV. JAMES FLYNN

Without prejudice to his assignment as Pastor of St. Francis of Assisi Parish in Grapevine, has been appointed as a member of the College of Consultors, effective Dec. 1, 2017.

REV. OSCAR FONSECA

New to the Diocese of Fort Worth, has been appointed **active-duty Chaplain** at Sheppard Air Force Base, under the jurisdiction of the Archdiocese of Military Services, granted faculties effective Nov. 9, 2017.

REV. AUGUSTINE KOLAPURAM, TOR

Pastor at St. Catherine of Siena Parish in Carrollton, has been recalled by his religious order community, effective Nov. 25, 2017.

REV. RAYMOND MCDANIEL


Without prejudice to his assignment as Pastor of St. Philip Parish in Lewisville, has been appointed as a member of the College of Consultors, effective Dec. 1, 2017.

REV. GEORGE PULLAMBAYIL

Without prejudice to his assignment as Pastor of St. Mark Parish in Denton, has been appointed as a member of the College of Consultors, effective Dec. 1, 2017.

REV. SUSHIL WILLIAM TUDU, TOR

Parochial Vicar at St. Thomas the Apostle Parish in Fort Worth, has been appointed **Pastor** of St. Catherine of Siena Parish in Carrollton, effective Nov. 24, 2017.



DIOCESE OF FORT WORTH

Notice of Loss of the Clerical State

Please be advised that the petitions of Bishop Michael Olson to the Holy See for the loss of the Clerical State, including being dispensed from all the obligations connected with Sacred Ordination to the Priesthood, including sacred celibacy, were granted, August 1, 2017, with regard to Jonathan Michael SCALONE and Kevin Patrick KEITH, by Supreme Decision, against which there is no appeal or recourse.

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IN MEMORY



FATHER M. GERALD GORDON, TOR
Nov. 10, 2017
 Fr. Gordon, ordained May 17, 1969, served at the parishes of St. Thomas the Apostle and St. Andrew in Fort Worth.



FATHER PHILIP MCNAMARA, SAC
Oct. 24, 2017
 Fr. McNamara, ordained June 12, 1958, served in the diocese for 37 years at numerous rural parishes.



SISTER MARY HELEN FUHRMANN, SSMN
Dec. 4, 2017
 In her more than 60 years of religious life, Sister Mary Helen spent 19 years in pastoral ministry and many as a schoolteacher.

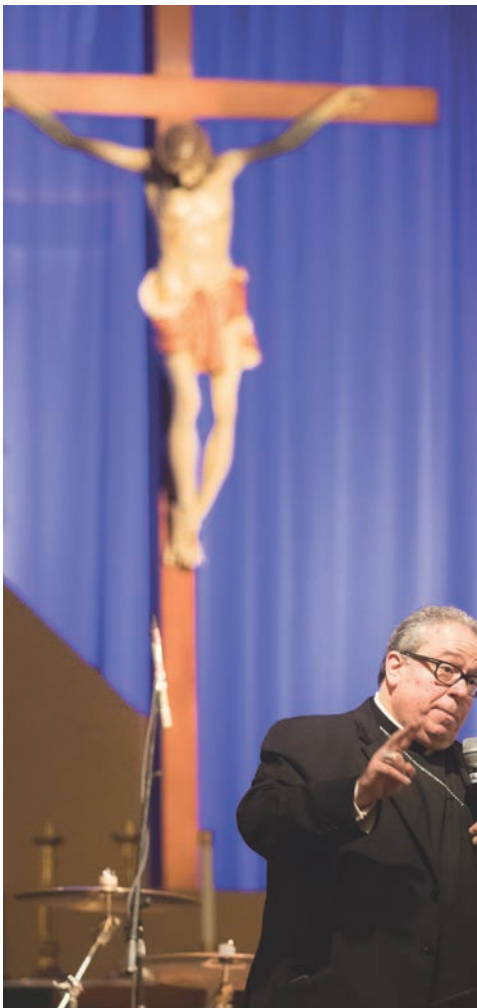
Please keep our recently deceased priests, deacons, and religious in your prayers. Full obituaries are available at NorthTexasCatholic.org.

First Fruits of a Harvest

Diocesan Encuentro Celebration yields ideas, hopes, and action

By Susan Moses

After a listening session with delegates, Bishop Michael Olson addressed the crowd, calling Encuentro a “moment of grace to respond to the call of Christ.” (NTC photo/Jayme Shedenhelm)



Even though the national meeting is nearly 10 months away, V Encuentro is already bearing fruit.

About 300 delegates from 39 parishes in the diocese gathered at the Arlington Convention Center for the V Encuentro Diocesan Celebration last month to discuss the results of their parish Encuentro sessions.

Lucia Cruz was one of four delegates presenting the concerns and hopes of the

Hispanic community to Bishop Michael Olson. The member of St. Ann Parish in Burleson admitted she was nervous.

“When we go to church, we want to feel welcome, accepted, like we belong,” she explained afterwards. “When I saw [Bishop Olson] looking at me with love, he made me feel welcome and accepted, like I belong. Then I felt nervous but happy.”

Bishop Olson said the diocesan Encuentro “offered me as bishop a structured chance to listen more intentionally to the desires and ongoing contributions of the diverse and local Hispanic community.”

“It’s very important for us especially in the Diocese of Fort Worth, who are a bridge between North and South America and for so many cultures, that we can experience the unity of one faith in Christ.”

Bishop Michael Olson

INCREASING INVOLVEMENT

Some of those hopes expressed to Bishop Olson are already being realized as a result of the parish Encuentros.

Carla and Ismael Gonzales, parishioners at St. Patrick Cathedral for 41 years, joined about 20 others at their parish sessions. Carla said, “Everyone seemed to be involved in it and going out to spread the word and evangelize and see how they could help more Hispanics be a part of the Church and use their talents.”

Ismael added that many committed to “be a part of the Eucharistic ministry and as ushers and helping out at church and attending different groups. So that [Encuentro] helped them go all the way through and join a ministry.”

Continued on Page 10

From Page 9

Often programs exist, but the Hispanic community is not aware of them. When parish Encuentro groups reached out into their neighborhoods, they learned some were not aware that the nearby parish offered Mass in Spanish. Also, most of the classes offered by the diocese, from marriage preparation to catechist formation, are available in both Spanish and English.

As Encuentro has identified needs, some parishes have already added Spanish-language young adult ministries or Bible studies.

Many delegates mentioned that increasing participation begins with being welcoming. Maria Chavez, a 21-year-old active in several ministries at Our Lady of

“Encuentro seeks to acknowledge and value the specific gifts that Hispanic Catholics have offered, and continue to offer, to the Church in your country. But it is more than that: it is part of a great process of renewal and missionary outreach — one to which all of your local churches are called.”

Pope Francis



At the diocesan Encuentro, 39 parishes sent delegates, who broke into small groups to share ideas, concerns, successes, and laughter. (NTC photo/Jayme Shedenhelm)

Guadalupe Parish in Morgan, said that letting visitors know “they are welcome in the Church, giving a smile to them, little small things can make big differences in their lives.”

MORE THAN THE SACRAMENTS

Bishop Olson criticized the mindset of using the Church as a means to check off each sacrament. We are here to serve the Church, not to be served, he noted.



Daisy De Jesus’ experience at Immaculate Conception Church taught her that catechists must have dedication and time to engage those who “drop in” to receive a sacrament.

She thought she would “drop in” at the Denton parish several years ago to be confirmed. Afterwards, her faith instructor invited her to assist in ministry. De Jesus was surprised but glad to help teach the youngest students.

“She asked me, ‘Where do you fit in? Do you need help getting involved?’” the University of North Texas student said.

As De Jesus got more involved, she and fellow parishioner Alfonso Mendoza saw a need for a Spanish-language young adult ministry, so they formed one. Mendoza said, “If those who are Catholic by tradition will get connected to the Church, the Holy Spirit will help, little by little, as they come.”

ENCUENTRO MEANS ENCOUNTER

According to Joel Rodriguez, director of Hispanic Ministry for the Diocese of

◀ Joel Rodriguez, director of Hispanic Ministry for the Diocese of Fort Worth, said that he expects Encuentro to open doors to bring people back to the Church. Already he sees a new group of Hispanic leaders stepping forward and saying, “I want to help, where do you need me?” (NTC photo/Juan Guajardo)

What Bishop Olson heard

Although the Hispanic community represents several generations, diverse countries of origin with unique cultures, and language differences, similar concerns arose from parishes and were discussed at the diocesan Encuentro. Bishop Olson summarized them in an address at the fall general assembly of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops:

- Continual catechetical formation at all levels
- A desire for new and younger leadership
- Best practices on how to develop an active sacramental life among our young adults directed toward ministry and outreach
- Cultural integration, and not strict assimilation, in all areas of parish life
- The discernment of lay leadership
- And the start of a plan for fostering priestly and religious vocations.



Lucia Cruz of St. Ann Parish in Burleson summarized her Encuentro team's discussion for Bishop Michael Olson and the other delegates Nov. 5 at the Arlington Convention Center. (NTC photo/Jayme Shedenhelm)

Fort Worth, Encuentro begins with an encounter with Jesus, like the disciples on the road to Emmaus in Luke 24. "For a long time, the community has been thirsting for this encounter with Christ," Rodriguez said.

About 3,000 participated in the parish Encuentros, which met for five sessions. Rodriguez has been encouraged by the fervor he has seen grow out of those meetings. "People are on fire as they re-encounter their faith," he said. In fact, eight additional parishes in the diocese have contacted Rodriguez recently to request the materials to initiate Encuentros at their churches.

"Now is the most critical part of Encuentro, where besides the regional celebration and the national Encuentro celebration, we are moving toward the true conversion of hearts among those who participated. Being a missionary, they will share these stories with others, saying 'we'll take you to Him,' like the Apostles did," he continued.

WHAT'S NEXT?

In April, 92 delegates from the diocese will attend the regional Encuentro in San Antonio. Then, the Diocese of Fort Worth will host the national V Encuentro from Sept. 20-23, 2018 in Grapevine. More than 3,500 attendees are expected, including 80 bishops.

However, a successful V Encuentro will conclude where it began, at the grassroots level.

Besides increased participation at parishes, Rodriguez is seeing additional unity across ministries, across cultures, and across parishes.

He said, "We are all called to be missionaries from the day we were baptized. We all serve one God, one Spirit, one Church. And Encuentro is just that. We come to that encounter all together.

"Encuentro is the mustard seed, and then the Holy Spirit takes over." ✚

Blessed and Growing

St. Martin de Porres School celebrates new building dedication

By Joan Kurkowski-Gillen

Visitors to the new St. Martin de Porres Catholic School in Prosper have no doubt as to the building's ultimate purpose. Within view of the reception area is the school's light-filled chapel and a stone alcove sheltering a large statue of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

The 40,000-square-foot neo-Spanish structure boasts collaborative classroom furniture, an inviting, kid-friendly library and two separate academic wings, but it's the school's mission and ministry that set it apart from other places of learning, according to Gail Knobbe.

"Our Catholic identity inside the school and within our academics is very strong," said the development director. "It was very important to us that people recognize and see that as soon as they walk through our doors."

The newest elementary campus in the Diocese of Fort Worth was dedicated and blessed by Bishop Michael Olson Nov. 3. The bishop concelebrated a Mass in the school chapel with St. Martin de Porres Pastor Father Richard Kirkham and Father Walter Dworak.

The first full day of classes at the new site was Nov. 6. Previously, the 156 youngsters attending St. Martin de Porres studied in a much smaller space in Frisco.

Currently, instruction is offered for pre-K3 through seventh grade with plans to add an eighth grade in 2018. The new school can accommodate 354 students.

On a 52-acre plot of land in rapidly growing eastern Denton County, the school is part of a \$17-million master plan that includes a church, parish hall with chapel, and gymnasium. A field, north of the school, allows for future school expansion.

Completion of the parish hall, which will house the school's cafeteria, is expected later this month.

"This is the biggest project we have completed in the diocese to date and it will get bigger from here," said Jay deLeon, assistant property and construction manager for the diocese. "Opening the school is a huge milestone."

Originally opened as Holy Cross Catholic School in September 2012 as part of Holy Cross Parish in The Colony, the school was deeded to St. Martin de Porres parish when it was formed in 2015. The change was made because the new parish's location on the booming Highway 380 corridor provided the possibility of expansion and better accessibility to Catholics living in Prosper, Little Elm, and Frisco.

"How far we've come so fast by God's grace. And we have more to go," Bishop Olson said to parents, parishioners, and benefactors seated in the school's chapel.

During his homily, the bishop referenced the struggles of the parish's patron saint who was denied an education because of race. The illegitimate son of a freed slave of African descent and a Spanish nobleman, St. Martin de Porres' young life in Peru was marked by prejudice and poverty.

The bishop reminded his listeners the dignity of each person is written in the truth of God.

"One of the ways to treat people without dignity is to refuse to educate them, to educate them insufficiently, or to educate them in an impoverished way," the bishop continued.

◀ Students watch as each classroom is blessed. (NTC photo/Ben Torres)

NTC photo/Ben Torres





Courtesy photo/St. Martin de Porres School

Deprived of an education and place in society, St. Martin found a home with the Dominicans and a vocation serving the Church. He was recognized for wisdom despite limited literacy.

“St. Martin de Porres is an example for us and is a patron of social justice — social justice which is anchored in the truth of the Gospel,” Bishop Olson said.



Catholic education contributes to society by witnessing to the truth, the authenticity of the Gospel, and the dignity of each and every human person.

“So we might form a society that respects the common good and not see education simply as a commodity — a product for self-service,” he added. “That is the prophetic mission of this school Christ has entrusted us with.”

Steve Knobbe, chairman of the building committee, thanked the prelate for his leadership.

“You bought 52 acres of prime land before the home builders and developers,” Knobbe added. “You captured this beautiful spot — this key location.”

He also credited the bishop with providing the Church community with its most valuable resource, Fr. Kirkham, the pastor.

“We have taken this vision and, working with the diocese, developed a master plan for the parish and the school,” Knobbe said. “Now we stand in this building ready for its dedication. This building represents our ministry of Catholic education.”

Principal Nancy Kirkpatrick became emotional voicing her gratitude to the roomful of people who turned out for the dedication.

“I want to thank all of you who have supported us on this journey,” she said tearfully. “It’s had its high and lows but it’s worth it.”

Calling the new school a gift, she told the *North Texas Catholic*, “We’re looking forward to providing an education that will help children develop their mind and soul.”

Jennifer and Corey Dugas chose St. Martin de Porres School because they wanted a faith-based education for their children. The couple graduated from different Catholic schools in Louisiana. Their son, Jamison, is in kindergarten.

“He is beyond excited to be at this new school and have all this space,” Jennifer Dugas said. “We believe a Catholic education will teach him values and the right way to live. I know the Catholic high school I went to changed my life.” ✚

Clothed in Christ

New name, new clothing equip two women for new and timeless mission

By Susan Moses

Assuming a new name was “thrilling,” agreed Sister Lucia of the Holy Eucharist and Sister Marie Therese of the Holy Face of Jesus. They likened it to Jesus changing Simon’s name to Peter — a new name symbolizing a new mission.

Sr. Lucia and Sr. Marie Therese recently adopted new names and donned the Carmel habit upon the completion of their postulant year with the Discalced Carmelite Nuns at the Monastery of the Most Holy Trinity Carmel in Arlington.

Their new mission: a contemplative life of prayer.

According to Sister Teresa Agnes, novice mistress, donning the habit symbolizes “in our hearts we are putting on our new self” and strengthens community among the women.

Sr. Lucia, whose investiture was Sept. 23, said wearing the habit heightened her awareness of her calling. “There’s something significant to every action that I do now. I think of Our Lady and Our Lord whenever I am working on something.”

Sr. Marie Therese, who was clothed on Dec. 8, the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception, said she was “in awe of the whole event. Being clothed on Our Lady’s feast day was my dream.” Having family attend from Minnesota, Japan, and Vietnam added to the joy.

The garments have symbolic meaning: the cincture (belt) represents fortitude and obedience; the scapular (cloak) symbolizes joy and peace in the service of God; and the white mantle (veil) signifies virginity and innocence of life. The novices will continue to wear the white mantle when they profess simple vows in two years. They will adopt the black mantle when they profess their solemn vows three years later.

Sr. Marie Therese continued, “To receive the habit is a privilege, an honor to belong to her and belong to her army. To have a hidden life with her to love her Son and love the Holy Trinity is a tremendous beauty.”

Both women contemplated their vocation many years before entering the monastery.

After her father died when she was 13, Sr. Marie Therese struggled with the meaning of life until she read the writings of



Chinh Dinh, the brother-in-law of Sister Marie Therese of the Holy Face of Jesus, said her ten siblings feel “proud and privileged” to have a religious vocation in the family. (NTC photo/Juan Guajardo)

St. Therese of Lisieux. “Through the writings of my patron saint, I found Jesus Christ as the answer,” and she began to consider a religious vocation.

Initially, she entered an active community of religious women, but during her formation there she felt drawn to live the contemplative life of a cloistered nun. An internet search ultimately led her to Carmel.

Ten years ago, Sr. Lucia heard God ask her to consider religious life, although she had never met a nun or sister. A college

senior, she completed her electrical engineering degree then worked in oil fields across the country. No matter where she was, she always found time for Eucharistic Adoration, “my home away from home.”

“The quiet, simple prayer, the intimacy, that’s what got me here. It may only have been 10 minutes, but that’s what saved me. It saved my life, my vocation,” she explained.

Once her student loans were paid, she visited a few monasteries. When she stepped onto the grounds of Carmel, she immediately felt a “peace that was overwhelming” and knew it was where she belonged.

Bishop Michael Olson celebrated Mass following the investiture of Sr. Marie Therese, and he praised the Carmelite’s ministry of “prayer and sacrifice at the heart of the Church.”

Although the nuns are cloistered, they are well aware of the intentions and needs of the diocese and “hold all that in our hearts,” said Sr. Teresa Agnes. “That is our whole vocation. That’s why we are here, to pray for everyone, especially our priests.”

Sr. Marie Therese concurred. “The gift of contemplative life is not being isolated from the world, but hidden for the salvation of the world. I feel privileged and honored to be a part of this life.” ✦

From left, Sr. Teresa Agnes, Sr. Lucia of the Holy Eucharist, and Mother Anne Teresa on Sr. Lucia’s clothing day. (Photo courtesy of Carmelite Monastery of the Most Holy Trinity)



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What Do We Leave Behind?

By Susan Moses

A love of travel. A pie recipe. A favorite joke. The value of hard work. When we pass away, what do we leave for those we love? What do we treasure and want to give others?

The Advancement Foundation, supporting the Diocese of Fort Worth, has introduced a presentation, “Building Your Legacy.” The gathering begins with a game with cards designed to help identify what you value and to prompt conversations with a spouse and family about what you would like to leave behind.

The short presentation is a chance to pause and reflect on what we treasure.

Joe Arredondo of Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish in Fort Worth said the game helped him clarify and articulate

what is most important to him. “I’ve never talked like this before,” he said.

Nancy and George Carefoot of St. Bartholomew Parish in Fort Worth called the exercise “eye-opening” and said it opened different possibilities for the couple as they enter the early stages of estate planning.

When it comes to financial assets, planning to meet the needs of you and your family is paramount, according to Renée Underwood, associate director of the Advancement Foundation. After those needs are satisfied, many worthy charities compete for donations, but “you are more



NTC photo/Juan Guajardo



likely to be fulfilled if you are intentional about your giving, if the organizations reflect your values.”

A telling indicator is to look at where you have volunteered your time, she added.

The Advancement Foundation can assist in estate planning by connecting individuals with qualified financial advisors and lawyers who share similar values.

Underwood said if a person makes a provision for a parish, a ministry, or the diocese in their will, the Advancement Foundation would like to be notified in advance. “We don’t need to know the amount, but we can help identify what is most important to you and make a purposeful decision about how to direct the funds.”

She said seminarian education, priest retirement, Catholic Charities, or a specific Catholic school are among many

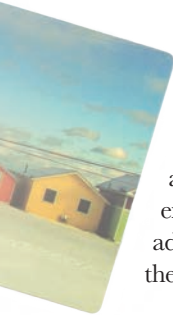
After selecting which cards were most meaningful to him, Father Stephen Jasso explains his choices in an exercise to help prioritize values. (NTC photo/ Juan Guajardo)



beneficiaries often considered.

Another benefit to informing the Advancement Foundation about your intent is membership in the Legacy Society. The diocese expresses its appreciation to Legacy Society members with an annual luncheon.

Planned giving requires “discernment, prayer, and wise counsel that you trust,” said Underwood. “It’s a different kind of giving than when you are caught up by a natural disaster or a bucket challenge.” Instead, she explained, you are planting a seed to advance your faith and the work of the Church for future generations. ✚



“Building Your Legacy” presentations are scheduled on **Feb. 22** and **May 17**. More information on planned giving can be found at AdvancementFoundation.org.




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Life Support

How two ministries show love, provide hope, and encourage the protection of unborn lives

By Susan Moses

Who's the first to know about a positive pregnancy test at Mother and Unborn Baby Care in Fort Worth? The Carmelite nuns in Arlington.

In the center's lab, the cloistered women rank first on the speed dial list. The next call initiates the prayer chain among friends of the crisis pregnancy center. Then, it's time for the mother to see the results, once prayers that she will choose life for her unborn baby are reaching heaven.

According to Randy Bollig, the executive director of Loreto House in Denton, a woman in an unplanned pregnancy can seek assistance in approximately 50 pregnancy aid centers within the 28 counties of the diocese. Only two centers are Catholic.

Almost 40 miles apart, the two Catholic pregnancy resource centers — Loreto House and Mother and Unborn Baby Care — use different approaches to achieve the same goal of protecting the life of the unborn. However, they both claim their greatest strength in the struggle to save lives is having the Blessed Sacrament in a chapel on the premises.

"This is the most important room in the whole center," said Laura Herrera, director of Mother and Unborn Baby Care. "If a woman is abortion-minded, there's a spiritual battle going on. By keeping the Blessed Sacrament here, we have a huge defender on our side."



Both centers celebrate Mass weekly in their chapels and offer their clients the opportunity to pray in the chapel. Most clients do, even though the majority are not Catholic. And for the 30 percent of the clientele who are fallen-away Catholics, prayer in front of the tabernacle encourages them to return to



the faith and a sacramental life, said Bollig.

MOTHER AND UNBORN BABY CARE

The signage at Mother and Unborn Baby Care is minimal, just big lettering that offers a free pregnancy test. Located in the medical district of Fort Worth, some women mistake the pregnancy help center for an abortion clinic. Herrera doesn't mind as long as it gets them in the door.

Others come in the door when sidewalk counselors at Planned Parenthood refer them. Some women find the center on their own. Herrera claimed all the clinic's clients and volunteers are there for one reason — "God

brings them here and He wants us here."

She quipped that their pro-life strategy is to "suit up and show up" and prayerfully allow the Holy Spirit to guide the discussions that follow the pregnancy test. For women considering abortion, an ultrasound often provides convincing evidence that

a baby's life is at stake.

Herrera finds that women in an unplanned pregnancy are often receptive to the Gospel and the teachings of the Church.

The mother of six said, "We are blessed to have the ability to share truth with people in a very loving way, not critical.

"God brings every person so we can help those in real need. We always love them and try to help them see how significant and important they are to God. Often that's a message they have never heard," continued the St. Patrick parishioner.

As a Catholic pregnancy aid center, the volunteers advise women with a negative pregnancy test on Natural Family Planning and sexual purity.

The majority of women decide to continue the pregnancy, and Mother and Unborn Baby Care helps them tap into the resources of Catholic Charities Fort Worth and the Gabriel Project. The clinic, established in 1984 by Chuck and Pat Pelletier, can also provide some clothing and financial assistance.

LORETO HOUSE

Named after the Holy House of Mary in Nazareth, the Blessed Mother guides the Catholic life center.

"We want to make our guests feel welcome as Mary would," said Denise Burke, a faith companion in her fourth year of volunteering. Indeed, a life-size portrait of Mary and the infant Jesus

Continued on Page 20

From Page 19

welcomes guests to the parlor, and Marian artwork adorns almost every room.

Loreto House creates a “peaceful, non-clinical setting, because our goal is that our guests be as comfortable as possible,” explained Bollig. Snacks, homemade crafts, and cozy sofas help too.

About a dozen women seek help from Loreto House each weekday. The Catholic life center journeys with women from their initial suspicion of pregnancy through the child’s first 24 months, offering “non-judgmental, sisterly advice” along with practical help, said Debra Heron, certified program advocate at Loreto House.

After the woman “pours out her bucket of problems” to a counselor, then she can be receptive to new ideas, Heron explained, including developing a plan and finding resources to enable the mother to raise the baby.

Staff at Loreto House guide expectant mothers to community and government resources, and they provide education resources on-site. Mothers, fathers, and family members can attend more than 60 prenatal and parenting classes, earning credit to spend on diapers, maternity and baby clothes, formula, and other baby supplies at the center’s gift shop.

Loreto House, which moved into its current location in 2016, employs “soft evangelism,” said Bollig. In addition to meeting her material needs, the mothers are asked if they would like a faith companion to pray with them and for them.

THE HIGHS AND LOWS

Helping women in a crisis pregnancy is difficult. “There’s so much suffering. You have poverty, drugs, abandonment by the father, abuse, fear of loss of job, mental illness,” listed Bollig.

Yet at the end of the day, “it’s a hard job to put down and leave,” confirmed Herrera.

Despite the struggle, the Catholic life centers and their primarily volunteer staff are committed to their mission of showing compassion to the women and helping them choose to love their new baby. And, not infrequently, grateful mothers return to show off those bundles of joy. 🇺🇸



Harley, Alex, and Anahi, eighth-graders from St. Peter the Apostle Catholic School, show the 3D models the Spiritual Adoption Program uses to teach fetal development.

Being their Ke

Started nine years ago from humble roots, the Spiritual Adoption

By Mary Lou Seewoester

In 1973, shortly after the United States Supreme Court legalized abortion, Venerable Archbishop Fulton Sheen wrote this short prayer and exhorted Catholics to spiritually “adopt” an unborn baby in danger of abortion:

Jesus, Mary, Joseph, I love you very much. I beg you to spare the life of the unborn child that I have spiritually adopted who is in danger of abortion. Amen.

For the first time, more than 1,000 seventh and eighth grade

students in all diocesan schools will spiritually adopt and pray for an unknown unborn baby in danger of abortion. Martha Jacobi, program liaison and member of Holy Family Parish in Fort Worth, said three parish youth groups also use the program.

In 2008, Jacobi and her sister, Tricia Hunter, also a Holy Family parishioner at the time, started the diocese’s first Spiritual Adoption Program for their parish school.

“We got involved in respect life activities and wanted to further expose our children to the beauty and dignity of human life,” Jacobi said.



NTC photo / Juan Guajardo

Keepers

Adoption Program is making a big impact

In researching respect life programs for youth, Jacobi and Hunter borrowed a few ideas from the Baltimore Archdiocese, modified them for middle school, and organized everything into an easy-to-follow program.

The program targets seventh and eighth graders because students who attend public high school “won’t get this message ever again,” Jacobi said.

After its first year at Holy Family, the Spiritual Adoption Program quickly spread to include most diocesan elementary schools.

“We’re just volunteers and moms,” Jacobi said. “We paid for it ourselves. We thought it was so important for teens to get the beauty of life

Continued on Page 22

How can you help build a Culture of Life?



BE A WITNESS: Wear pro-life t-shirts; wear a “precious feet” pin; attend a Life Chain; order a “Choose Life” license plate; and attend a local or national March for Life. Participate in Fort Worth’s yearly 40 Days for Life campaign.



SUPPORT MOMS IN CRISIS PREGNANCIES: Volunteer at local pregnancy centers; have a diaper or formula drive at your parish; donate new or gently-used infant clothes; donate to the Office of Respect Life.



BE A GABRIEL ANGEL: Volunteer to provide practical help to women who otherwise may not choose life for their babies. Contact Angela Walters at awalters@ccdofw.org or at 817-789-0514 to get involved or to find out more.



EDUCATE YOURSELF: Read *Humanae Vitae*; read the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*; read pro-life books.



PARTICIPATE IN CIVIC ACTION: Write your state or federal congressmen and show your support for pro-life bills. Post pro-life articles on social media.



START, LEAD, OR PARTICIPATE IN: A Respect Life group at your parish or school. Contact respectlife@fwdioc.org for information on starting or joining a group.



— *Respect Life Office of the Diocese of Fort Worth*

and respect life message that you can't put a price on it."

In 2012, the diocese approved funding for the Spiritual Adoption Program, but Jacobi still volunteers as program liaison to make sure each campus receives necessary materials.

The Spiritual Adoption Program usually occurs during religion classes and has four components.

1. For nine months, students pray for an unknown baby in danger of abortion. They receive a laminated prayer card and may name the baby.
2. Each month, teachers display a poster showing the development of an unborn baby. For example, the third month poster explains: "The baby can now squint, swallow and move his tongue." Students also receive sticky notes, pencils, or magnets with respect life messages.
3. Students receive monthly thank you notes from their baby with messages such as "I'm one month old now. I have a heart pumping and a backbone. Thank you for praying."
4. At the end of the school year, they have a baby shower and donate items to a local crisis pregnancy center.

Jacobi said some schools supplement the program's format with additional activities such as videos, field trips and letter writing campaigns to lawmakers.

Diana Yandell, who teaches religion, math, and history at St. Peter School, extends the program to a full class period each Tuesday and includes lessons on chastity and a visit to Eucharistic Adoration to pray for unborn babies.

Eighth-grader Harley Tyree said students also carry a baby doll to classes every Tuesday.

"It reminds us all day to pray for the baby," she said. "It's important to pray because they don't really have anyone to pray for them if their family is considering abortion...I feel our prayers will be answered, especially when we're in Adoration."

In addition to posters, Yandell also uses three-dimensional fetal models spanning six to 30 weeks gestation to illustrate a baby's development.

"They see the dramatic difference in the growth of the baby...and I tell them you were once this size too," she said.

Kaitlyn Jones, a St. Peter eighth grader, said the models helped her realize "how fast the baby develops is a miracle."

"To intercede for a baby who could be aborted is the most important thing," she added.

Terri Schauf, Respect Life coordinator for the diocese, said spiritual adoption fosters formation of children's natural pro-life instincts.

"Children are naturally pro-life. If you asked any child if they knew about abortion, they would be horrified. So, having a program like this helps continue the development and formation of their natural pro-life beliefs," she said. 🇺🇸

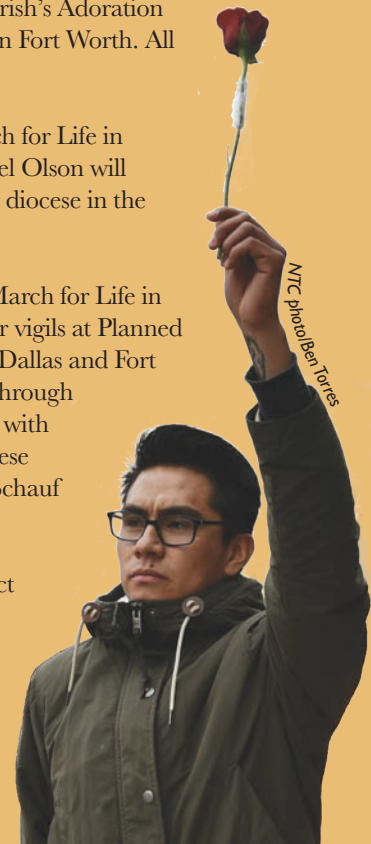
Respect Life Events for Jan. 2018

JANUARY 8: Adoration for Life in Fort Worth. An hour of prayer for the dignity of life will be held from 7 to 8 p.m. at St. Peter the Apostle Parish's Adoration Chapel at 1201 S. Cherry Lane in Fort Worth. All are welcome.

JANUARY 19: National March for Life in Washington, D.C. Bishop Michael Olson will lead hundreds of youth from our diocese in the national event.

JANUARY 20: North Texas March for Life in Dallas. The day starts with prayer vigils at Planned Parenthood abortion facilities in Dallas and Fort Worth. It's followed by a march through downtown Dallas, and continues with a Rally for Life. Fort Worth Diocese Respect Life Coordinator Terri Schauf will emcee the event.

JANUARY 22: Annual Respect Life Mass for the Diocese of Fort Worth. The Mass begins at 6:30 p.m. at St. Patrick Cathedral



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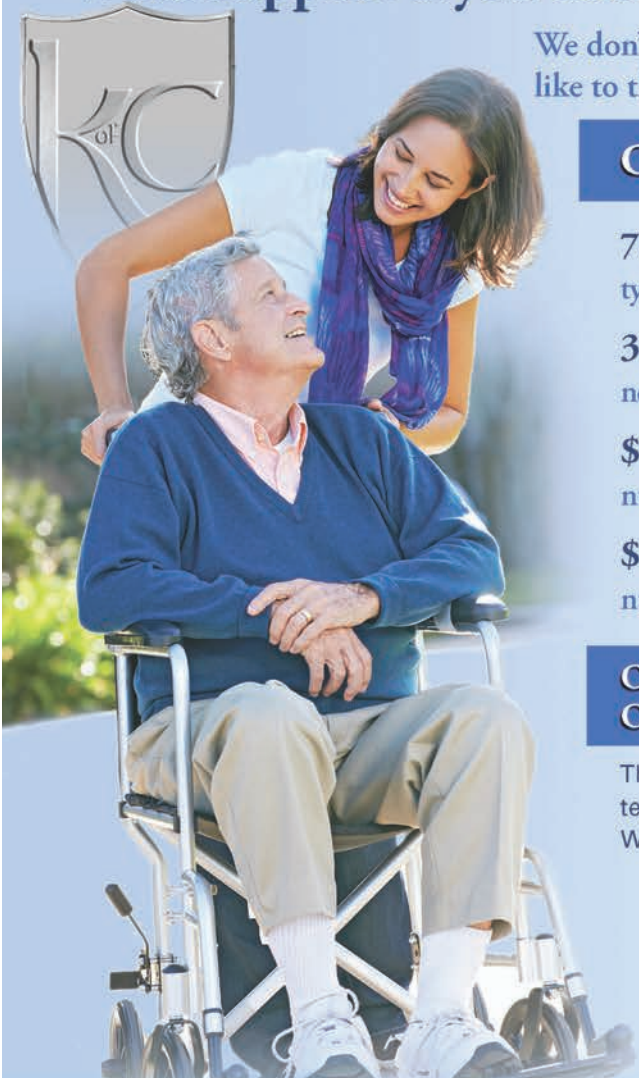
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**THE HOLY FAMILY
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Bartolome Esteban Murillo,
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scene shows the Virgin Mary
winding thread and St. Joseph
watching over the Christ
Child as He plays with a
small bird and a dog. In the
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the painting “exalts home life,
the family, and work.”

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Lessons from the Holy Family for 21st century families

By Dr. Marcellino D'Ambrosio

Every year, right after Christmas, we celebrate the Feast of the Holy Family. There is an important reason for this. It's easy to think the "incarnation" means God took on a human body, that He appeared in human flesh.

But there is much more to it than that. In Jesus, God unites Himself to an entire human nature. This means that He enters into the full breadth of human experience in all its earthliness.

Think about it. The creator of the universe spent most of His human life as a craftsman, working with Dad in the family business and ultimately taking it over. His mother, Mary, was the holiest and greatest of all creatures. Yet she spent most of her time changing diapers, cooking, and cleaning.

The *Passion of the Christ* was the most intense movie I've ever seen. But there was a moment of comic relief, a flashback to a young Jesus in the backyard, working on a new invention. It was the kind of table that is now commonplace. But in a society where people reclined to dine, this table would have put the food out of reach. Mary asked Him to explain His puzzling design. He responded that, someday, people would eat sitting upright, on chairs. Mary replied authoritatively, "It will never catch on!" He laughed, washed up for dinner, and playfully splashed Mom with the wash water.

There is more to this scene than just a break in the action. It was a subtle way of showing that Jesus was fully human. For being human does not just mean having flesh and blood, but also having kith and kin. To be human means to belong to a family.

The pagan philosophers of Greece and Rome reflected quite insightfully upon the role of family in human life. They observed that

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children owed more to their parents than to anyone except God. Obviously, kids' physical existence and basic education depend upon mom and dad. But if you think about it, children owe much more to their parents. We learn our native tongue not from our schoolteachers, but instead, from our parents. We pick up from them, as by osmosis, attitudes, mannerisms, gestures, and habits. Like it or not, we are profoundly influenced not only by our genes, but by our family experience.

For this reason, the ancients described a special family virtue that falls under the cardinal virtue of justice. Justice involves the determination to give others their due. The virtue of piety, recognizing the extraordinary debt that children owe their parents, gives parents a unique degree of honor, respect, and affection.

Of course, we have the obligation to honor and respect all human beings, since they are made in the image and likeness of God. But the degree of honor we are bound to give to others is directly proportional to the burden of responsibility that they bear for our sakes. No one has been given more responsibility for us than our parents, and so we must give them more honor and respect than anyone.

This is laid out clearly in the very order of the Ten Commandments. The first three commands outline our duty to God. The very first commandment having to do with obligations to human beings is the fourth: "Honor your father and your mother." When we are minors, this means obeying our parents. When we are adults, this means caring and providing for them in the winter season of their lives (*Sir 3:12*). In His final act on the cross, Jesus did just this, entrusting His widowed mother to the care of the beloved disciple (*Jn 19:26-27*).

OK, so it was easier for Jesus to treat His parents with honor, affection, and respect given that Mary was immaculate and Joseph was a saint. And it was certainly easier for Mary and Joseph not to nag or provoke Jesus (*Col 3:21*) since He happened to be the sinless Son of God.

Most households, like mine, are populated with both parents and kids who happen to be sinners. That's why the Church gives us *Colossians 3:12-21* as the second reading for the Feast of the Holy Family with its command to "forgive as the Lord has forgiven you." A Christian family is holy not because it is sinless, but because it responds to sin with forgiveness rather than resentment. In my household, when we hurt each other, we don't just let it slide or worse, let the wound fester. The offender must find it within himself to say, "I'm sorry, please forgive me." And the

The infant Christ shows His mother a scroll referring to Himself as "The Lamb of God" — thus the presence of the lamb in this painting. The lamb, a sacrificial animal, also foretells Christ's Passion and the martyrdom of St. John the Baptist.



THE HOLY FAMILY WITH THE INFANT BAPTIST by Bartolome Esteban Murillo, circa 1670. This artwork, painted in the Baroque style, is influenced by Franciscan meditations on the life of Jesus.

one offended, after cooling down a bit, must pronounce those liberating words: "I forgive you." And then the matter must be forgotten.

But in addition to forgiveness, patience and forbearance are always required. Sometimes it is not the sin of another family member that gets to us, but faults, annoying habits, or just ideas that happen to be different from our own — like Jesus' newfangled table. The family is the first place where we learn to become broader people, to celebrate, laugh, and splash water at such differences rather than let them divide us. ➡

Marcellino D'Ambrosio (aka "Dr. Italy") is a local speaker, author and pilgrimage leader who appears regularly on Catholic radio and television. Connect with him at DrlItaly.com or @dritaly.



How to pray a family Rosary

PERSONALIZE IT: Each family member should have their own rosary. Children may play with it. Girls may wear it as a necklace. Boys will try to use it as a lasso. That's fine. It helps them become familiar with a rosary. Eventually they will learn and grow in reverence for their rosary.

CREATE A HABIT: Set a time that is comfortable for your family and that works without adding stress. When it doesn't happen, don't give up entirely, just pick it up again the next day.

CREATE A SPACE: Set the tone for prayer so young children understand this is different than other family activities. If possible, light a candle and play some soft, background instrumental music.

START SMALL: Be patient. Don't try to complete an entire Rosary the first time you gather together in prayer, particularly if you have young children. Start with a decade and build over time.

KEEP IT SIMPLE: The Rosary is a great way for young children to learn the Hail Mary, Our Father, and Apostle's Creed and to learn about the lives of Jesus and His Mother Mary.

INVOLVE ALL FAMILY MEMBERS: If children have a role, they will participate more fully and be more attentive. Let them lead a reflection or the prayers depending on their age.

OPPORTUNITY TO TEACH: Use the Rosary as a starting point to teach children about other aspects of their faith. Children are curious and will ask questions. Pause in prayer as necessary to answer their questions. As they get older, you can hold their questions until prayer is complete.

JUST START: There's no time like the present and no place like home.

Originally published by Catholic News Agency.

When family life doesn't seem so holy

The family has a divine identity card. Do you see what I mean? God gave the family an identity card, so that families could be places in our world where His truth, love, and beauty could continue to take root and grow.

Some of you may say to me: "Father, you can say that because you're not married!" Certainly, in the family there are difficulties. In families we argue. In families sometimes we throw dishes. In families children cause headaches. I'm not going to say anything about mothers-in-law! Families always, always, have crosses. Always. Because the love of God, the Son of God, asked us to follow Him along this way.

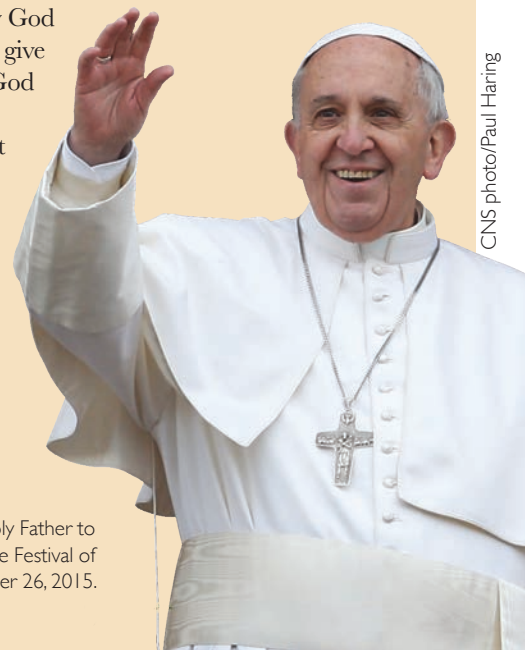
But in families also, the cross is followed by resurrection, because there too the Son of God leads us. So the family is — if you excuse the word — a workshop of hope, of the hope of life and resurrection, since God was the one who opened this path.

Then too, there are children. Children are hard work. When we were children, we were hard work. In families, there are difficulties, but those difficulties are resolved by love. Hatred doesn't resolve any difficulty. Divided hearts do not resolve difficulties. Only love is capable of resolving difficulty. Love is a celebration, love is joy, love is perseverance....

The family is beautiful, but it takes hard work; it brings problems. In the family, sometimes there is fighting. The husband argues with the wife; they get upset with each other, or children get upset with their parents. May I offer a bit of advice: never end the day without making peace in the family. In the family the day cannot end in fighting. May God bless you. May God give you strength. May God inspire you to keep moving forward. Let us care for the family. Let us defend the family, because there our future is at stake.

— *Pope Francis*

Address of the Holy Father to participants at the Festival of Families on September 26, 2015.



CNS photo/Paul Haring

Sharing Their Light

Five religious education directors retire; long service to diocese honored

By Marty Sabota

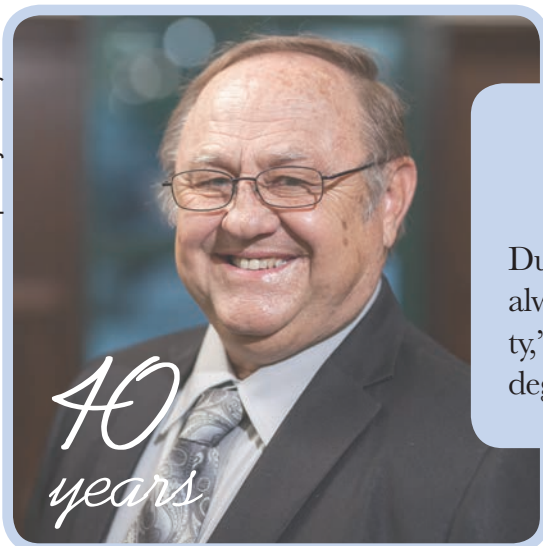
Almost 200 combined years of service. Thousands upon thousands of hours of religious education. That's how much time four women and one man combined have given in holy service to parishes of the Diocese of Fort Worth as directors of religious education.

At a ceremony at St. Patrick Cathedral that honored the 104 directors and coordinators of religious formation and education programs throughout the diocese, Bishop Michael Olson, joined by diocesan officials, congratulated these five directors of religious education on their retirement. ✝



For the full version of this article, visit [NorthTexasCatholic.org/local-news](https://www.northtexasatholic.org/local-news)

NTC photo/Juan Guajardo



Charles Gappa
St. Bartholomew Parish, Fort Worth

During his career in social work and real estate, “I was always interested in Catholicism and the road to spirituality,” said the Army veteran. His “loving heart” and master’s degree in religious education equipped him to share his faith.

Adela Hernandez
St. George Parish, Fort Worth

Volunteering at the parish, which felt “just like family,” led to her DRE position. “I love working with the families,” said the grandmother of two. “People think you are just working with children but you are also helping the parents.”



NTC photo/Ben Torres

Margarita Luna

Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish, Wichita Falls

Religious education was a ministry Luna and her husband did together, but when he died she continued, saying, “the best way to honor his memory is doing what we did together,” especially in the rural parishes that needed help.



NTC photo/Juan Guajardo

NTC photo/Ben Torres



Barbara Rohmer

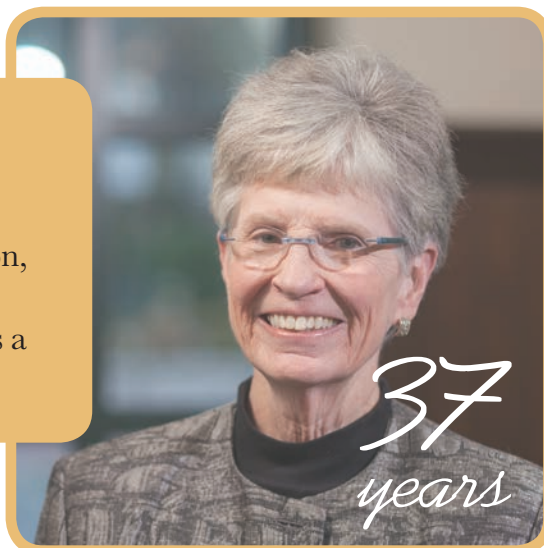
Sacred Heart Parish, Muenster

Growing up Catholic, Rohmer said she loved everything about her faith: “I liked going to Mass and I liked reading about saints.” She has shared that love by serving the Church in many roles and will continue in music ministry.

Sister Ginny Vissing, SSMN

Our Lady Queen of Peace Parish, Wichita Falls

First as a teacher, then as a director of religious education, Sr. Ginny said she has been “forming others as caring disciples of Jesus” for a total of 51 years, but added, “It’s a very wonderful gift given to me. I have been so blessed.”



NTC photo/Juan Guajardo

Under the SWORD



By Marty Sabota

Persecution of
Christians around
the world continues,
leaving its effect even
in the Diocese of Fort
Worth

When looking at international news reports that show Christianity is the most persecuted religion in the world, statistics often bring to mind the plight of religious oppression in the Middle East, Africa, and other faraway, perilous lands.

But one only has to look around the Fort Worth Diocese to see the effects of persecution in our own back yard.

Father Hoa Nguyen, pastor of Holy Family Parish in Fort Worth, said he often hears stories from his South Vietnam homeland of priests and others being beaten and locked up and their churches burned.

The oppressed still speak out, Fr. Nguyen said, and many, especially young women, take to the Internet to post videos and use other social media to put a spotlight on atrocious acts.

“The Catholic Church wants people to speak out, but in a nonviolent way,” Fr. Nguyen said, adding that those who do “are very courageous people.”

Fr. Nguyen knows firsthand the horrors of Christian persecution.

Nearly four decades ago — in October 1979 — the 54-year-old pastor began a horrific ordeal when he fled

his South Vietnam home after communists from North Vietnam took over Saigon, his nation’s capital.

Fr. Nguyen’s father, a banker, devout Catholic, homeowner and former employee of the South Vietnamese government, was a despised target for the communist regime.

Aware that the family — including his seven siblings — faced oppression and even death, Fr. Nguyen said his parents encouraged them to find an opportunity to flee.

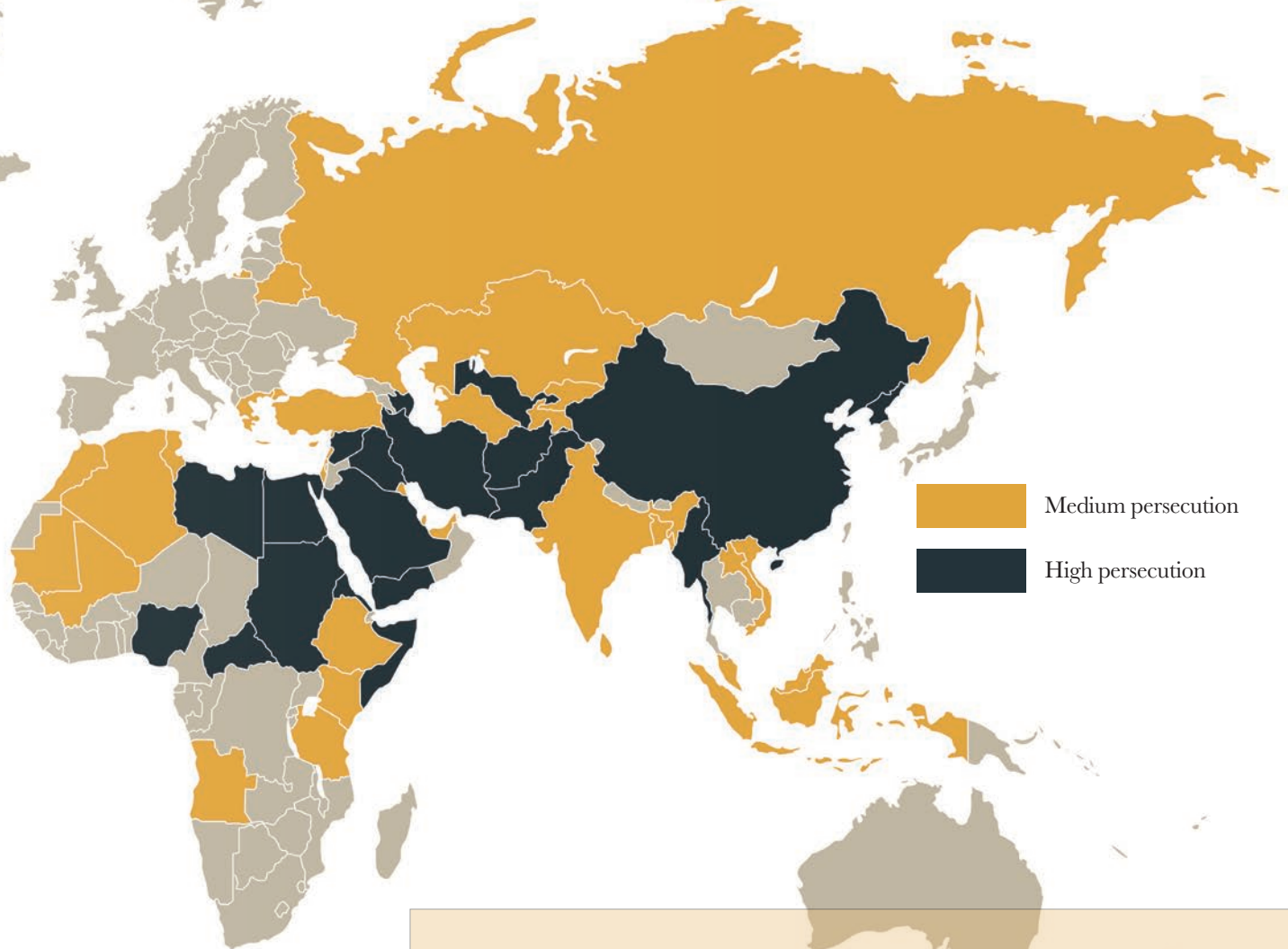
One night, Hoa, then 16, and his brother, Thuan, 17, fled in the middle of the night with Thuan shouting, “Di My!” “Di My!” (“To America!” “To America!”).

That cry began a 31-day journey in

* Map information courtesy of Aid to the Church in Need. See more at religious-freedom-report.org.

COUNTRIES WITH RELIGIOUS PERSECUTION

2015-2017



which he experienced extreme hunger, dehydration, and hopelessness while being lost at sea on an overcrowded fishing boat.

Many hardships ensued after their Nov. 6, 1979 rescue, but the brothers worked hard, earned degrees, and eventually reunited with their entire family — mother, father, five brothers, and one sister.

Fr. Nguyen was ordained on May 23, 1998 at St. Patrick Cathedral.

“I was healed and now I can heal somebody else,” Fr. Nguyen said of the opportunities he found in America and

Continued on Page 32

Uprooted by persecution, refugees get settled with CCFW support

Several years ago, Shalaina Abioye, director of Refugee Services for Catholic Charities Fort Worth, provided a client with an intangible gift that affected her deeply as well.

“I gave him hope,” she recalled.

His home country was in far North Africa and not only was his family persecuted when he was a child because of their Christian beliefs, he was further persecuted as an adult because his name was the equivalent of “Jesus” in his

native language.

“This client was experiencing extreme post-traumatic stress but was slowly able to regain his dignity and hope and move toward self-sufficiency and successful cultural adjustment through programs such as the ones offered here at Catholic Charities Fort Worth,” Abioye said.

Abioye explained that the Refugee

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From Page 31

the freedom to worship God.

Fr. Nguyen said his experience transformed him and gave him the “courage to step out in life.”

“In our suffering, there is hope and faith,” the pastor said. “God is always there to guide us.”

Hoping to spread the awareness of persecution to others, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) designated Nov. 26 as a Day of Prayer for Persecuted Christians, and also “Solidarity in Suffering,” a week of awareness and education from Nov. 26 to Dec. 2.

The USCCB collaborated with the Knights of Columbus, Catholic Relief Services, CNEWA, and Aid to the Church in Need during the observance.

Addressing the turbulence in the Middle East, the U.S. bishops are also expressing solidarity with Christians and all those who suffer from the conflict and persecution in the region. The Church stands at the service of all people in the Middle East — Christians, Muslims, and other minorities.

Recently, persecution in the Middle East has been addressed in the Fort Worth Diocese.

Representatives Steve Sada and George Tushia from the Melkite Mission of St. Barbara the Great Martyr in Houston visited parishes here, selling handcrafted religious items from the Holy Land to raise funds to build a church in Houston that will serve Melkite Catholics fleeing the violence in the Middle East.

“People were really receptive,” Sada said, adding that Christians in the Middle East are “having a very hard time” and “are even being persecuted for their faith.”

Father Fadi Al Mimass, pastor, said when he reached out to bishops across Texas, Bishop Michael Olson was one of four who, so far, have offered an invitation to allow his representatives to visit their dioceses.

“It would be the first Melkite church in the state of Texas,” said the priest, who is from Syria and was ordained in



ABOVE: Father Hoa Nguyen at Holy Family Parish in Fort Worth. **RIGHT:** Father Fadi Al Mimass is seen outside of St. Barbara Melkite Mission's leased space in Houston. Both men have seen firsthand the effects of persecution.

Damascus on Aug. 18, 2000.

He said they have bought approximately 4.5 acres of land in southwest Houston and are seeking at least \$1.5 million to build a church.

Many of their more than 400 families have come to the area from the Middle East and worship in a leased space at St. John Chrysostom Byzantine Parish in Houston.

Fr. Al Mimass, who came to Texas in 2014, said everyone in his community understands and sympathizes with those who remain in areas of conflict and persecution.

“If they catch you praying or celebrating Mass in the ISIS area, they will kill you for sure,” he said.

While in the Middle East, Fr. Al Mimass said he was fairly safe “because I was protected by the church.”

“The church provided food and everything else,” the priest said. “But outside the church it was dangerous.”

He said that in his travels he met people who were exposed to many dangers, including missiles and bombings.

“Christians in the Middle East are placing their hopes in the pope and the Western churches to defend them and protect them,” he said.

The Melkite Greek Catholic Church, formed in 1724 in Syria, has 1.5 million members, of which more than 700,000 reside in the Middle East, principally in Lebanon and Syria, but also in Jordan, Israel, Egypt, and the Sudan, with a small number in Iraq. About half of its members have emigrated. Instability and Christian persecution in the Middle East have led many Melkite Catholics to move, especially to Brazil and Argentina, but also to Australia, Canada, the U.S., Venezuela, and Mexico. 🇺🇸





Shalaina Abioye, director of refugee services for Catholic Charities of Fort Worth, has helped refugees fleeing religious persecution. She encourages Christians to be voices for the persecuted.



From Page 31

Services division at CCFW consists of several programs designed to assist refugees and other vulnerable groups who have been forced to leave their homeland because of persecution or a well-founded fear of persecution based on race, religion, nationality, social group, or political opinion.

“The goal of refugee resettlement is to empower refugees toward self-sufficiency and to promote their successful integration into the local community, known as cultural adjustment,” Abioye said.

Last year, 96 percent of the refugees settled by CCFW achieved self-sufficiency within six months, according to Heather Reynolds, chief executive officer of CCFW.

Abioye, who has served as refugee director for seven months, said the agency’s primary focus is to remove barriers by supporting clients with a safe and sanitary home, temporary cash assistance, English language classes, employment readiness and placement, cultural orientation classes, general case management, physical health services, and mental health case management with a counseling component.

Over the past few years, the majority of refugees resettled in the Fort Worth area were from Myanmar, Nepal, Iraq, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Afghanistan, Iran, Cuba, and Syria. Other

groups also arrive but in smaller numbers from Ethiopia, Eritrea, Sudan, Kenya, Pakistan, and Egypt — all but two of which are nations with medium or high levels of religious persecution, according to Aid to the Church in Need.

“As one can understand, individuals who have suffered persecution due to their Christian beliefs are very seldom open to coming forward to share their stories, even after making it to safety in the U.S. through refugee resettlement agencies such as our agency here at Catholic Charities Fort Worth.

“Their apprehension of coming forward is a solid example of the ongoing fears and trauma from the experiences they faced in countries where they were the minority.”

In all cases that “have been served by [CCFW] and other refugee resettlement agencies, our Catholic social teachings urge us to suffer with our clients by demonstrating sincere compassion and accompanying that with quality services, awareness, and advocacy,” she said.

Abioye said Catholics are being urged to share stories of the persecuted, to support agencies serving these populations, and “to be the voice for the unheard through advocacy, especially with our government, during the largest humanitarian crisis the world has seen to date.” 🇺🇸

Look and Learn

The diocese's 19 schools will open their doors to families, parishioners during Catholic Schools Week

Photos by Jayme Shedenhelm

In a 2016 interview with the *NTC*, Jennifer Pelletier, superintendent of schools for the Diocese of Fort Worth, summed up nicely the goal of Catholic education.

“Education only works if it’s about the formation of the entire person — not just math or English. Those subjects are just tools toward the larger picture, which is getting kids into heaven.”

From January 28 — February 3, the 19 schools in the Diocese of Fort Worth will celebrate that faith-driven focus, high academic standards, and priority on service that define Catholic education.

During Catholic Schools Week — a joint project of the U.S. bishops and the National Catholic Education Association — the schools will host several events like Masses, service projects, book fairs, intergenerational activities, and career days, but also open houses for families, parishioners, and other community members.

“The open houses at our diocesan schools are a great opportunity for parents to see all that our schools have to offer their families: an education experience that encompasses the whole child and the whole family,” said Erin Vader, coordinator of Schools Advancement and Alumni Relations.

To learn more about Catholic schools in our diocese, their open house dates, financial aid, and registration deadlines, please visit fwdioc.org/catholic-schools. Also, follow us online at NorthTexasCatholic.org/local-news as we publish mini-features on all of our schools leading up to Catholic Schools Week. 🇺🇸



TOP: A student at St. Andrew Catholic School in Fort Worth does classwork.



RIGHT: A student passes a soaked sponge to his teammate during an October 6 Field Day at St. George Catholic School in Fort Worth.

Place Christ at the Center

“The most important thing in marriage is a commitment, and love is a commitment.”

We have to commit to love each other forever, in the good and in the bad. That’s why it is so important to place Christ at the center of our lives and our marriage because we have to see Christ in those times that are difficult,” Liliana said.

ON THE IMPORTANCE OF CHURCH MARRIAGE PREP: “It was not imposed on us (when we were married in Columbia 37 years ago) to do a really meticulous disciplined marriage prep and now that we’ve been involved [in one], I think it’s one of the most important things and one of the biggest gifts that the Catholic Church gives every engaged couple. It should be required for every single person and no excuses. It brings the couple to open up to each other and to communicate things they would have never known would come up in the marriage,” Liliana said.

“With our couples, [they think], ‘We’re in love and that’s all that matters. I have that feeling and that’s all that matters.’ But there is more to marriage than just a feeling. There is more to love than what is just in our hearts. We need to learn how to talk with one another and how to communicate with one another on very difficult topics. If we can learn how to do that, we’re going to have a beautiful and long-lasting marriage,” Dr. Brad said. 🇺🇸

Interview by Jenara Kocks-Burgess



THEY ARE: Dr. Brad & Liliana Samuelson. They live in Wichita Falls and have been members of Our Lady Queen of Peace Parish since 1993. They are mentors for engaged couples. Dr. Brad is also a candidate in the 2020 permanent deacon class. The Samuelsons have been married 37 years and have three children.

Faithful Joseph, Faithful Father



The Flight into Egypt by Gustave Doré

The Nativity of the Lord
December 25, 2017

Start by using the steps below to reflect on the Scripture verse. Then read Callie's meditation, reflecting on it slowly.

LECTIO



First you deliberately read the passage, noting phrases that move your heart.

MEDITATIO



Secondly, ponder these words and ask God in prayer, "What do you desire that I hear in this?"

ORATIO



Third, speak back to the Lord as your heart is moved.

CONTEMPLATIO



Finally, be still and trusting in His presence. Simply rest in the Word of God.

REFLECTION

St. Joseph is famous for many things, especially for being a strong silent type.

The story of the birth of Christ is one of drama and moral dilemma, especially for Joseph.

Little is known about Joseph's life. But we do know that he was betrothed to a young woman, with whom he had been faithful and chaste, yet she was found pregnant. This child was clearly not his. There was no way around it; he was faced with a decision. Action was required. To stay or to leave. To advance or to retreat. To condemn to public scandal or to protect the vulnerable.

He is described in Scripture as a just and righteous man. This is a rare compliment in Scripture, and even more significant for someone of the line of David. King David was many things but he was not a just man. King Solomon was a wise man, but he was not a man after God's own heart.

Joseph, however, is a just and righteous man, chosen to be the guardian of the King of Kings.

Joseph is also a man of dreams. God speaks to him in dreams, which is significant because his namesake is the patriarch Joseph. Joseph, the patriarch, is known by his brothers as a dreamer who also received instructions through God in dreams (*Genesis 37*).

St. Joseph is a virtuous, righteous, and holy man who is also a man of prayer. God speaks to him in dreams and he rises to action. He is a man of righteous action but his action is born of deep prayer. He says nothing in Scripture but his actions speak volumes. We know who he is and his character is revealed through his actions.

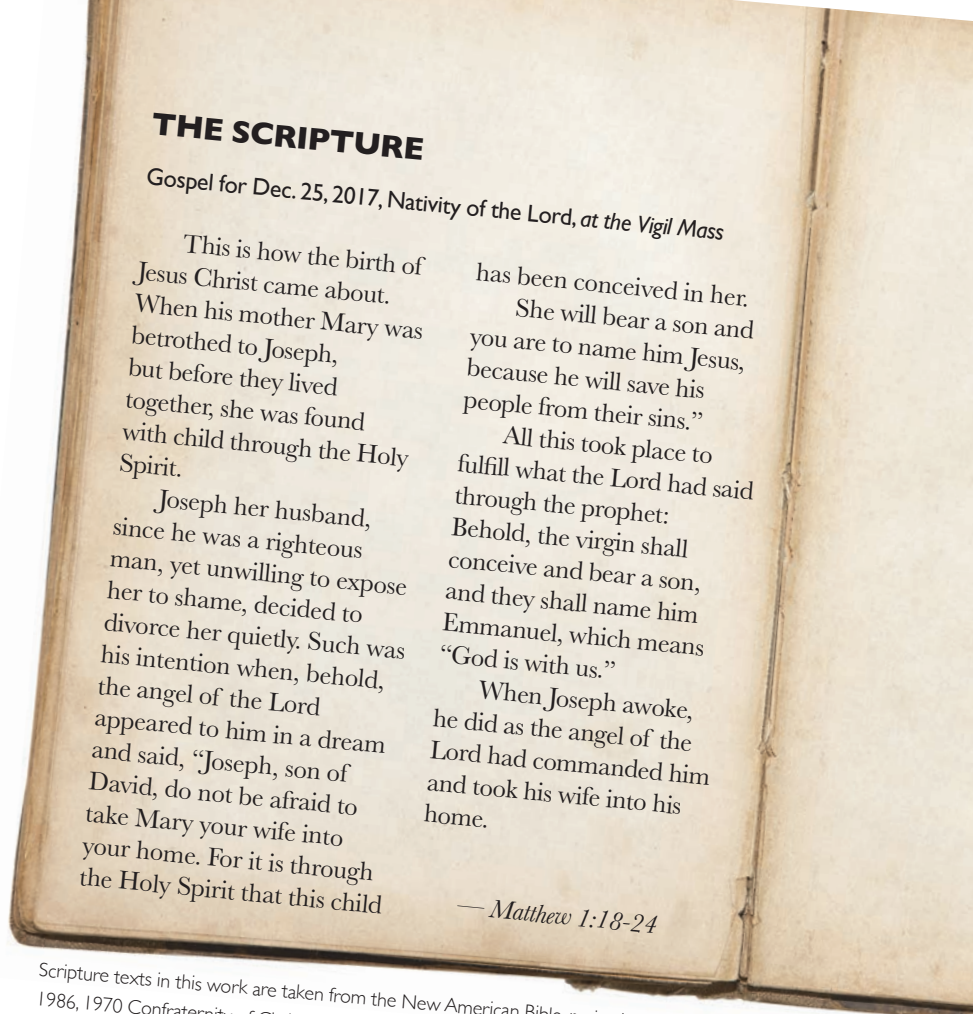
In the reading we find Joseph, having woken up from his dream and doing "as the angel of the Lord had commanded him." He received Mary pregnant

with child into his home, forming the Holy Family, had no relations with her, and named their son Jesus.

As Advent comes to a close, like Joseph, we are presented with the plan of God in our lives and the reality of Jesus who comes into our midst as Emmanuel, "God is with us."

This Christmas, may you listen to God in the depths of your conscience and may you have the courage to rise up and respond to the Lord's call in your life. ✝

Callie Nowlin, MTS, is a convert turned Director of Religious Education, catechist, and blogger with a passion for Scripture, teaching, and helping others on their journey toward Christ.



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The Time I Said ‘No’ to Jesus

By Ali Hoffman

This column does not have a happy ending nor does it have some victorious “look-at-what-I-did-and-how-God-used-me” ending.

In fact, I don’t want to write this story because frankly, it’s embarrassing and I feel ashamed at my resistance to be used by the Holy Spirit. However, I believe the Lord is kind and merciful and never wearies of forgiving us and showing us a better way. My hope is that you will come to understand that you are not your weakness; you are not your sin; and even when we fall and fail, we have the ability to stand back up and continue running after Jesus.

So! Here it goes...

I was recently going to get groceries at Walmart. As I was walking up, there was a man who looked disheveled and probably in need of a shower. It seemed everything he owned was in the backpack he wore. He was also looking through the trash. Several thoughts ran through my head:

“Oh geez, look at that poor man...”

“I think he needs help...”

“But man, I’m in such a rush!”

“I really don’t want to step out of my comfort zone.”

“I’m scared... I don’t even know what to say.”

“What if he gets offended if I ask him if he wants something to eat?”

“What if he gets angry at me and causes

a scene?”

“What if I embarrass myself...”

“Okay, that’s it, I’ll just go through the opposite door and pretend like I don’t see him...”

And that’s exactly what I did.

Immediately after walking through those doors, a flood of guilt washed over me. I wanted to hide from God and His obvious call, “Ali, where are you?” I immediately felt a Holy Spirit prompting in my gut that I was supposed to reach out to this man. I was supposed to get out of my comfort zone and speak to this human being obviously in need. And yet, I chose not to. Lightning didn’t strike me down. No loud, booming voice from the heavens shouted, “ALI! WHY DIDN’T YOU STOP?” And I wasn’t smited. However, there was regret in my soul.

I am a modern calligraphist, and I had just posted a quote from St. Teresa of Kolkata the day before that said, “How can you say you love God whom you cannot see if you do not love your neighbor whom you can see?” I’m a huge fan of St. Teresa and how she saw people as formed in the image and likeness of Jesus.

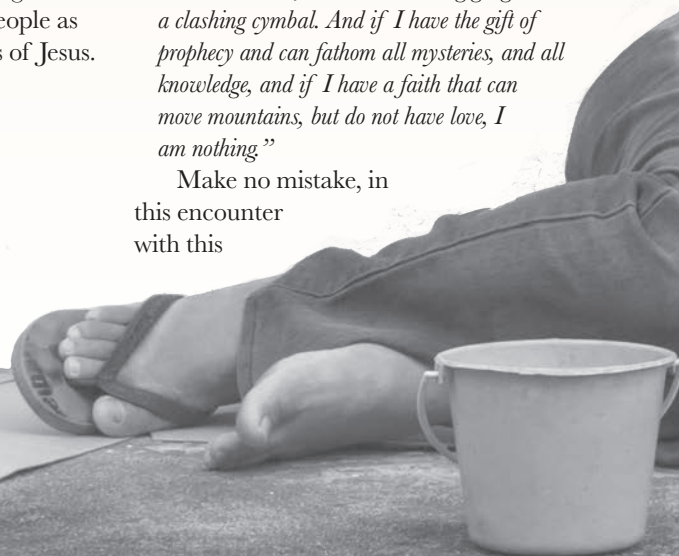
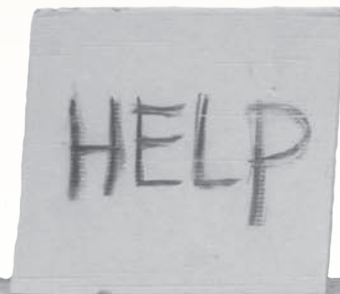
She loved people so intensely because she understood she was loving Jesus in them. She saw inherent dignity and worth in every human being because of the very fact that he or she was made in the image and likeness of the Creator of the Universe.

So, here I am, striving for sanctity, working at an amazing church as a youth director with fantastic students, trying to encourage them to love Jesus and neighbor. I earned my college degree in Catholic studies and family studies at a Catholic university; I have spoken at conferences and youth groups around the country showing how we were created to be in a relationship with Jesus. It’s not like I don’t have a solid foundation in the Catholic faith or don’t have a relationship with Jesus.

I do have all of those things... yet after this incident at Walmart, I’m reminded of a passage in *1 Corinthians 13:1-2*:

“If I speak in human and angelic tongues, but do not have love, I am a resounding gong or a clashing cymbal. And if I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries, and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing.”

Make no mistake, in this encounter with this



man, I lacked love. Jesus says we can have enough faith to command mountains to move. I long to see amazing miracles like that.

However, the biggest miracle I want to see in my life is the mountain of my heart being moved to action. If I don't open my eyes to see the obvious need of my brothers and sisters, then I'm no better than the hypocrites "who love to stand and pray in the synagogues and on the street corners so that others may see them" (*Matthew 6:5*).

Or as the Apostle James said:

"If a brother or sister has nothing to wear and has no food for the day, and one of you says to them, 'go in peace, keep warm, and eat well,' but you do not give them the necessities of the body, what good is it? So also faith of itself, if it does not have works, it is dead" (2:15-17).

I can have all the faith in the world, but if my faith doesn't prompt me to move outside of myself, then what good is it?

So after I was done shopping, I couldn't

shake the feeling that I was supposed to talk to this man and see if I could help him. I got in my car and decided to drive around the parking lot and surrounding areas to see if I could find him, apologize, and ask him if he wanted something to eat. I couldn't find him. He was gone.

I told you this story doesn't have a happy ending.

This incident really impacted my heart and I was completely humbled. It opened my eyes to see how much farther I have to go on my road to sanctity.

Friends, this column isn't to shame myself into loving Jesus, or to overly berate myself for not acting. In fact, I know the Lord never wears of forgiving our shortcomings and

this incident doesn't change the fact that I'm still a beloved daughter of the King.

However, with the title as an adopted child of God, there comes a great responsibility. I am responsible for bearing the invisible God's image to the world. I have a responsibility to show this hungry world the everlasting Bread of Life. I have

a duty to go outside my comfort zone and touch the brokenness of humanity with the compassion of Jesus. Most importantly, when I meet Jesus face to face, He'll ask me:

"I was hungry, when did you feed me? I was thirsty, when did you give me a drink? I was a stranger, when did you welcome me? I was naked, when did you clothe me? I was ill or in prison, when did you visit me?"

And I'll have to answer Him, because He'll say to me, "Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did it for me" (*Matthew 25*).

If nothing else, I pray that my experience with this man challenges you to look for ways the Holy Spirit wants to use you, and open your eyes to see the ways we say "no" to Him.

The world needs the life-saving message of the Gospel — the Good News that Jesus Christ came to save us and we can spend eternity in Heaven with Him. He chooses to use you and me as His hands and feet, stubbornness and all, to proclaim that message to the people around us. So next time you go somewhere, pray that your eyes be open and you become prompted to be Jesus' love to whoever is in front of you.

I promise, you won't regret it. 🇺🇸

I can have all the faith in the world, but if my faith doesn't prompt me to move outside of myself, then what good is it?



Ali Hoffman is co-coordinator of youth ministry at St. Catherine of Siena Parish in Carrollton. You can read more of her columns online at NorthTexasCatholic.org/inspiration-news

Isolating Yourself from Your Children?

There comes a time when parents simply want some quiet time to themselves. Handling the rigors of parenthood can take a physical and spiritual toll. This is something almost every parent goes through. It's not sinful for a parent to seek a retreat or respite from their children. What can lead this desire toward the stages of sinful behavior is the intention of deliberately isolating ourselves from caring and teaching our children, which is a subtle but troubling trend I've witnessed over the last several years. What I mean here is a gradual separation of the spiritual, emotional, physical, and psychological relationship between parent and child.

Whether the reason is work, current family structure, or the distractions of daily living, the intimate relationship between parent and child appears to be gradually eroding. By nature, children desire to be near their parents. It's part of the protective nurturing process all children seek. When this parent-child structure is interrupted, the alternatives may not always be spiritually healthy.

The *Catechism* reminds us "the Christian family is a communion of persons, a sign and image of the communion of the Father and the Son in the Holy Spirit . . . The relationships within the family bring an affinity of feelings, affections, and interests, arising above all from the members' respect for one

another. The family is a privileged community called to achieve a sharing of thought and common deliberation by the spouses as well as their eager cooperation as parents in the children's upbringing" (2204-2205).

THE SIN OF ISOLATION

Our identity as parents rests in our understanding and willful intent to place Jesus Christ at the center of everything we do, especially our parenting. Every time a parent asks, "What should I do about my son?" I immediately tell them to first be genuinely present. It's very important that a child knows his father and mother are both spiritually and physically present. The ease by which one can fall into the sin of isolation from children is why the virtue of presence is so important. When isolation occurs, the child will often direct his attention toward something that draws his desire away from his family, replacing it with another outlet, typically one involving social media.

St. John Paul II reminded us the family finds its identity (what it is) and its mission (what it can and should do) in the plan of God the Creator and Redeemer (*Familiaris Consortio*, 17). Our actions as parents are therefore to re-echo Christ. One facet of this action is to bring Christ into the home in prayer. When we invite and initiate a relationship with Christ within the home,

it strengthens the family unit and provides a spiritual base by which the family can withstand the sin of isolation. Parents must regard their children as children of God and respect them as human persons. . . Parents have the first responsibility for the education of their children. They bear witness to this responsibility by creating a home where tenderness, forgiveness, respect, fidelity, and disinterested service are the rule (*CCC* 2222-2223).

ADDRESSING THE SIN OF ISOLATION

A sound and practical way of avoiding the sin of isolation is by being present to our children — especially in prayer. This act of love dispels any temptation to isolate ourselves from our children because we see them as authentic gifts from God.

One of the surest ways to dispel parental isolation is through the practice of intercessory prayer. Simply put, pray on behalf of your children and offer them to Christ. The gift of intercessory prayer is that it allows you to always be present with your child, which is exactly what our parental call is all about. 🇺🇸



Marlon De La Torre

Marlon De La Torre is the Director of Catechesis for the Diocese of Fort Worth and writes articles on catechesis, evangelization, and Christian spirituality at [KnowingsDoing.com](https://www.knowingsdoing.com).

A Lifetime of Treasure

Receiving a wrapped present, even after over 50 years of receiving them, is still cause for excitement, promise, and possibility.

Boxes filled with surprises, given by someone you love, are always special. This time of year is, of course, filled with many boxes waiting to be unwrapped and their contents embraced.

I recently received a different kind of box of promise and possibility. While going through my dad's office, helping him downsize so he could move to his new independent living apartment, I found a treasure chest in the form of a box filled with hundreds of pieces of paper. Unbeknownst to me, my father had written down pretty much everything he heard that inspired him. It's literally a lifetime of treasured sayings, quotes, and Scripture verses.

Most of the quotes are not attributed to anyone — that was not the point of writing them down. Rather, it was my dad's simple way of remembering the particular bits of wisdom he heard throughout his life. And now, I have all this insight sitting next to the printer in my office. This gives a whole new meaning to “desk reference.”

Here is a quick sampling of these nuggets of wisdom:

“It's your future... be there!”

“God's delays are not denials.”



Jeff Hedglen

“Turn your burdens into bridges.”

Some of the quotes are about how to approach life. Others are more about how to live your faith. Some are nice quips that bring a smile, and others are cause for deeper reflection. But whatever emotion or thought these bits of wisdom bring, what keeps hitting me between the eyes is the discipline my dad had to write these things down and save them — to the point they have become a collection.

Though it is fairly rudimentary, this box of inspiration bears some similarity to the collection of words and deeds we call the inspired Word of God. From the earliest of times, people have been remembering and sharing the powerful intersection of the Creator God and His creatures. What began as an oral tradition became written in time. After more time, these writings were collected into a single book.

To be sure, more interactions, thoughts, words, and deeds occurred from the time of Abraham to the close of the first century, but the ones the people really wanted to remember were preserved and gathered into the treasure chest known as the Bible.

This tradition of saving the most important thoughts, ideas, and events we experienced is still practiced today in many forms: from diaries and journaling, to story

time with grandparents, aunts, and uncles, to homilies and spiritual talks, and even in the modern world of Instagram, blogs, and other online portals.

What ties it all together is the desire to share and savor that which has inspired and challenged us. Everything from rather trivial pictures of great meals and quotes that bring meaning to our lives, to the poignant blog of a friend who is raising an autistic young adult with kidney failure, and, most powerfully, to the Word of God, written over the course of centuries, continues to change lives even today.

As I sit and look at this file filled with seemingly unconnected wisdom, my thoughts move to a stable and a manger, a mother and a father, a child and a savior. This scene is the culmination of centuries of slowly unfolding wisdom wrapped up for us in swaddling clothes.

Jesus truly is the ultimate treasure chest. He is the final Word spoken by God. Within His sacred heart we find the personification of the Father's love for us, the long-awaited Messiah, and the Word made flesh dwelling with us. ✚

Jeff Hedglen is the diocesan director of Young Adult and Campus Ministry and the primary convener of Camp Fort Worth. For more on Young Adult Ministry, visit fwyam.org.

Advent in the Life of the Diocesan Priest



Advent in the life of the diocesan priest usually means penance — lots of penance services that is.

This is a season of joyful expectation as we prepare for the coming of the Lord by maintaining vigilance in prayer and by confessing our sins so we receive our King with minds and hearts made pure. Thus, although we hear many confessions throughout the year, the many parish penance services of Advent take on a special significance for priests as we spend far more time in the “box” than usual. It is a short season as well, so we confessors have precious few moments to catch our breath let alone pause to marvel at the mystery of the Incarnate Word — the true reason for the season.

Although it can be a challenge for priests to truly delve into the mystery of the season as we have much to do, hearing confessions is truly a labor of love for us because our vocation to the priesthood is a precious gift. There is a sacred trust between priest and penitent within the sacrament that we are humbled to serve, unworthy that we



Fr. Keith Hathaway

are. People of all stripes come to parish penance services in particular, many of whom have not confessed in years. It is truly a joy to welcome those returning home to the Church with the words of absolution.

There is no sin too great to be forgiven for those of contrite heart and humble spirit who come before the Lord in the confessional asking for mercy. I will never forget how, as a newly — ordained priest, one of my elder brothers in the presbyterate gave me the advice, “never be surprised by sin in the confessional,” or, in other words, never be shocked or scandalized by what people will confess. I have also learned, time and again, that the mercy of the Lord in the sacrament never ceases to surprise.

We welcome and encourage all to approach the Lord in His mercy, knowing all too well how we ourselves are in desperate need of His forgiveness. We priests have drunk so deeply from the chalice of His mercy and love that our hearts yearn to absolve others.

One of my favorite moments as a priest came at the end of a penance

service when I was able to confess as well. After I finished, my confessor wordlessly removed his stole and offered it to me so that I would absolve him, in turn. I was humbled to forgive him just as I had been forgiven.

We confessors have neither myrrh, nor gold, nor frankincense with which to greet the newborn King. Instead, we lay before Him the cries of the poor, the doubts of believers, the grief and anxieties of families, and above all, the sins of His people.

We bring Him our own troubled and tired hearts, as well — troubled by the seeming indifference of the lukewarm and wearied by our toil of mercy among His flock. But, we priests are blessed and eternally grateful for having received a share of His Spirit for the forgiveness of sins. And we are blessed to be forgiven time and time again by His merciful love.

To Him may all glory and honor be given, now and forever. Amen. 🇺🇸

Ordained to the priesthood in 2015, Fr. Keith Hathaway serves as a full-time chaplain at Notre Dame Catholic School in Wichita Falls and as Vocations Liaison with the Office of Vocations.



◀ As part of their initiative to end poverty, CCFW staff and supporters gathered for an innovative education on the “underbanked.” (Photo courtesy of CCFW)

financial coaching. We believe in the importance of creating strong, trust-based relationships with our clients, and [Rachel Schneider] certainly emphasized the importance and the positive outcomes that result from that approach,” Springer said. “Her perspective is valuable, because she has studied these economic realities, and the strategies that create success, all over the country.”

Plumlee said, “It’s very difficult for people to extricate themselves from the financial quagmire. That’s where our team at Catholic Charities comes in. They’re working to educate clients, offer coaching, counseling, education, and training, helping them to achieve financial stability by obtaining better jobs and gaining access to services at trustworthy financial institutions.”

CCFW’s intensive case management with thousands of individuals and families within the Catholic Diocese of Fort Worth is not a “short-term fix” for people in need, added Plumlee. “They offer emergency assistance, and they also help people to change patterns that keep them in poverty,” he said. “This gathering offered an opportunity to learn more about how critically important [CCFW’s] work is at this time in the history of our country.”

CCFW staff member Shannon Rosedale explained that presentations like Schneider’s are part of the agency’s long-term strategic plan. “We want to transform the conversation around poverty,” Rosedale said. “The more we can continue to educate our community about what we are doing, the more we can accomplish.”

For more information about future educational opportunities at CCFW, call 817-289-0344 or email KnowPoverty@ccdofw.org. 🇺🇸

CCFW offers information on “underbanked” marketplace

“**B**eing poor is very expensive, because of high interest rates on payday loans, and high fees if you’re late with your rent or utilities payments when an emergency comes up,” noted Catholic Charities Fort Worth (CCFW) board member Christopher Plumlee.

Plumlee and CCFW staff, board members, and supporters enthusiastically welcomed featured speaker Rachel Schneider of New York for an “eye-opening” presentation on the implications of living paycheck to paycheck.

Schneider, co-author of the 2017

book *The Financial Diaries: How American Families Cope in a World of Uncertainty*, offered information about the obstacles to economic security faced by the “underbanked.” Working-class Americans often have insufficient access to mainstream financial services and products, such as credit cards or loans. Her interactive presentation, which included thoughtful analysis of the trends and economic realities currently impacting CCFW clients, was both challenging and validating, said Dana Springer, CCFW’s Senior Director of Case Management Services.

“At Catholic Charities, we provide many types of assistance, including

Spirit for adventure, heart for the Lord

HE IS: Father Michael O’Sullivan, SAC, pastor of St. Stephen Parish in Weatherford since March 2016. A Pallottine priest, he was ordained June 7, 1986 at Cathedral of the Assumption in Thurles, Ireland, and has spent most of his priesthood as a missionary in Tanzania and Kenya.

GROWING UP: His family ran a shop and guesthouse in a small village near Killarney, Ireland, so Fr. O’Sullivan and his four older siblings grew up in a “house always full of people” coming in for a cup of tea.

THE CALL: After his father’s unexpected death, former classmates insisted he join them for prayer and Scripture sharing each week. “For the first time, honestly, I heard the Word of God and thought, ‘Could it be possible that God actually speaks to us?’” A “cycle of coincidences, or graces” led him to the Pallottines. Unfamiliar with the Pallottines, Mrs. O’Sullivan initially despaired that her son was becoming Protestant.

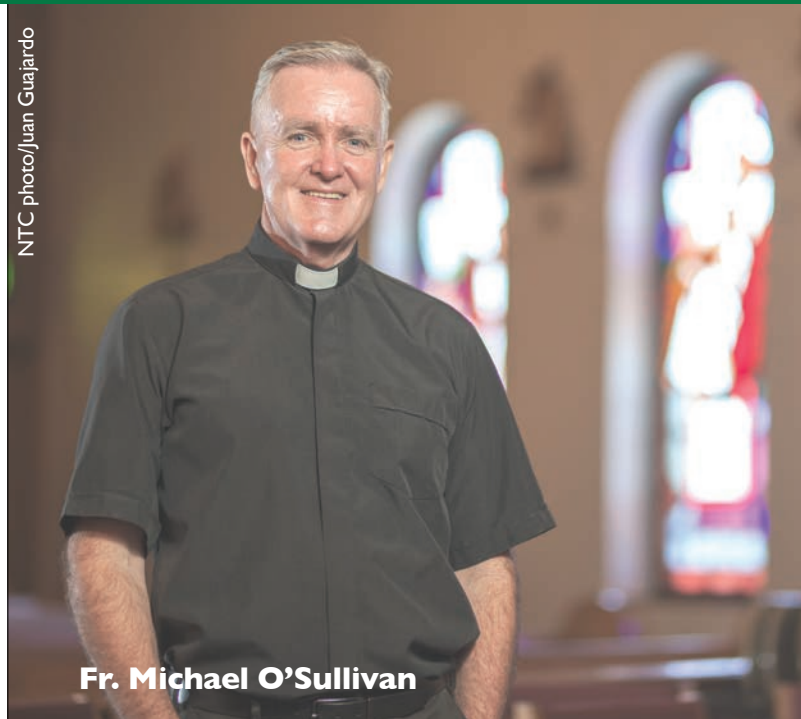
DREAM JOB: In 1992, the offer of his “dream job” as a missionary in Tanzania reignited the “sense of adventure” he had as a child. He arrived knowing two words in Swahili, but as he “slowly got to learn the language and know the people, that’s when the love affair began.”

ON THE AFRICAN CHURCH: “In Tanzania many people are living very close to the edge, never knowing what’s ahead or what’s tomorrow, and not knowing what to eat but really having that reliance on God. It’s the greatest witness of Christianity that I’ve seen in my life.”

FAVORITE MEMORIES: Fr. O’Sullivan likens one assignment located between two game parks to living in the Garden of Eden. Antelopes, zebras, and giraffes would freely wander the unspoiled open plains, a sight he “never took for granted.”

Another outstanding experience was opening a parish “under a mango tree” in Arusha, Tanzania. The parish “really exploded” when home visits with local Catholics led the entire neighborhood to request door-to-door visitations, growing from 120 members to almost 7,000 in ten years. He experienced a “hunger for the Church in people’s lives.”

NTC photo/Juan Guajardo



Fr. Michael O’Sullivan

BEST THING ABOUT BEING A PRIEST: Fr. O’Sullivan appreciates the sacred trust that people place with him. It “gives them great freedom to share some burden they have been carrying for years.”

Fr. O’Sullivan also delights in celebrating the sacraments. “Even though we celebrate the Mass every day, it’s something never to be taken for granted — to be really present to the presence of Christ.”

He’s especially moved by the rich symbolism of Baptism. “It’s a beautiful sacrament, so tactile. The child comes in belonging to the mother and father and leaves as our brother and sister. A transformation takes place.”

AN ATTITUDE OF GRATITUDE: “The more grateful I am, the less I take for granted. When we are thankful, we are less likely to forget what a blessing life is. As a priest and as a Catholic, the greatest act of thankfulness is the sacrifice of the Mass.”

A SPECIAL PRAYER: Before Sunday Mass begins, Fr. O’Sullivan says a short prayer with the ministers. “All who come to our church this day carrying a burden, whatever it is, hopefully that they will have some experience of His presence and His grace. That they will not feel alone . . . even in the darkness, there is the possibility of light.” 🇺🇸



To see a video of Father O’Sullivan’s interview, visit NorthTexasCatholic.org/video-gallery

Tu me Visitaste

Ministros de cárceles llevan esperanza a los olvidados



John Kasper, Richard Malahowski, Phong Tran, Roger Sickler, Padre George Thennattil, Frank Artiles, Van Nguyen y Rael Eckenroed son voluntariós en el Centro Correccional del Condado de Tarrant en Fort Worth. (Foto NTC/Ben Torres)

Por Matthew Smith

“**E**stuve en la cárcel y me fueron a ver”, dijo el voluntario del ministerio carcelario, Roger Sickler, citando al Evangelio de Mateo 25, 36 para explicar la razón por la que sirve.

Sickler es uno de los varios voluntarios y sacerdotes que visitan regularmente 14 centros penitenciarios

en toda la diócesis, pasando tiempo con hombres y mujeres que la mayoría de la sociedad rara vez piensa sobre ellos. La Campaña de Apelación Diocesana anual proporciona un pequeño presupuesto para los materiales que se utilizan.

“Nuestra esperanza es ayudar a lograr un cambio en sus vidas y evitar que vuelvan a la cárcel una vez que salgan”, dijo Sickler. “Alrededor de un

75 por ciento de los presos que salen de la cárcel son encarcelados nuevamente en un período de tres años. Eso implica un gran costo monetario, pero también espiritual”.

Sickler, miembro de la Parroquia de San Miguel en Bedford, se involucró en el

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ministerio carcelario hace 14 años como una forma de mostrar su agradecimiento y devolver lo que ha recibido, y para ayudar a otros.

Se hace difícil calibrar el éxito en este apostolado dado que los confinados van y vienen y/o se transfieren a otras cárceles. Es difícil también determinar por qué un confinado elige participar en muchos casos, pero ése no es el punto.

“No podemos juzgar”, dijo el diácono Bruce Corbett, coordinador de capellanes carcelarios. “Estamos aquí simplemente para proveer ministerio. Éstos son chicos y chicas que cometieron errores en la vida, pero que todavía necesitan esa conexión espiritual y comunitaria. Si la Iglesia no lo provee, es posible que ellos no reciban ninguna ayuda. Esperamos que uno haga una diferencia, pero de nuevo, no estamos allí para juzgar”.

“Definitivamente, se hace siempre algo de bien”, dijo Sickler. “Un confinado que fue condenado por asesinato y sentenciado a cadena perpetua sin libertad condicional dijo: Probablemente, me hubiera suicidado, si no hubiese sido por ustedes”.

El Padre George Thennattil, TOR, dijo que ve un deseo de Dios en la mayoría de los confinados.

“Ellos quieren participar de la Misa y la confesión, y sienten el deseo de hablar con alguien”, dijo Padre Thennattil.

Alan Fowler, un preso del Centro de Correcciones del Condado de Tarrant en la ciudad de Fort Worth, dijo que las visitas definitivamente le traen esperanza.

“Espero con ansiedad la Misa y recibir la Eucaristía, cosas que eché de menos cuando estaba afuera en el mundo”, dijo Fowler. “Hablar con otros católicos también ayuda. El compromiso de los voluntarios significa mucho también. Están aquí cada semana, dedican mucho tiempo. Saber que van a estar aquí y que hacen este esfuerzo para darnos gran apoyo significa mucho.”

Esto no es sólo para los confinados católicos. Algunos confinados de otras tradiciones de fe, o incluso sin ninguna fe, participan también a menudo.



Voluntario Roger Sickler habla con otros voluntarios de la prisión antes de entrar en el Centro Correccional del Condado de Tarrant en Fort Worth. (Foto NTC/Ben Torres)

“Para algunos, tal vez, lo hacen principalmente por curiosidad”, dijo Fowler. “Honestamente, algunos lo intentan y se dan cuenta de que no es para ellos, pero la mayoría lo aprecian y están hambrientos; es bueno ver que la palabra de Dios se extiende. Nos da una oportunidad para que Dios nos corrija y para que reflexionemos sobre nuestras vidas y errores”.

El Sheriff del Condado de Johnson, Adam King, dijo que el ministerio carcelario, tanto católico como no católico, desempeña un papel vital en la rehabilitación de los confinados.

“No hay manera de cuantificar los resultados”, dijo King. “Pero hace una gran diferencia. Lo sé en lo profundo de mi corazón”.

“Como policías sólo tratamos los síntomas. Los ministros de cárceles llegan y se ocupan de los problemas reales, de las personas que están rotas, olvidadas, heridas y que son adictos en muchos casos. Nosotros sólo nos ocupamos del crimen, que es un efecto secundario de esas cosas”.

Rael Eckenroed, feligrés de la Parroquia de San Miguel, es nueva en el ministerio carcelario y una de las pocas mujeres voluntarias.

“He estado en otros ministerios, pero tenían demasiada gente y sabía que necesitaban mujeres ministros para esto”, dijo Eckenroed. “Los hombres no pueden entrar en las cárceles de mujeres sin estar acompañados de una mujer”.

Eckenroed estaba nerviosa al principio. “No puedes llevar tu celular”, dijo Eckenroed. “Al entrar y cerrarse la puerta de metal detrás de mí pensé la primera vez, ‘Oh, Dios mío. ¿Podré salir de aquí?’”

“Pero después de ese primer encuentro con las mujeres y compartir con ellas, eso fue todo, no me he arrepentido y he seguido”.

El voluntariado, dijo Eckenroed, ha aumentado su paciencia y comprensión y la ha expuesto a ver la vida desde muchas perspectivas.

“Yo nunca he ido a Google para averiguar por qué están aquí”, dijo Eckenroed. “No me importa. Son mujeres con esposos, hijos y amigos como todos los demás, que han cometido errores, pero merecen la gracia de Dios. Lo espero con ansias. Estoy cansada a veces, pero siempre voy. Yo quiero estar aquí. Quiero hacer esto.” 🇺🇸



Paz en el Mundo

Oración silenciosa y el Príncipe de la Paz en nuestro mundo actual

Así como el silencio favorece la oración, el ruido provoca la violencia. Así, no es sorprendente que mucho de lo que actualmente pasa como conversación en el discurso político y el reportaje de noticias, se ha vuelto estridente e incendiario; un reflejo de la violencia que domina en nuestro mundo contemporáneo.

La conversación que sostenemos en silencio con Dios nos mueve a estar atentos a sus desinteresadas y amorosas prioridades para nosotros que, al cambiar nuestro corazón, pronto se convierten en nuestras propias prioridades para los que amamos, aún si estos están o no de acuerdo con nosotros. Se hemos cultivado un piadoso hábito de silencio para meditar sobre el “Verbo Encarnado” inevitablemente estaremos libres de pensamientos y actos violentos contra nuestro prójimo. Como observa el Cardenal Robert Sarah, “El primer idioma de Dios es el silencio”. Todo lo demás es una pobre traducción. Para entender este idioma, debemos aprender a estar en silencio y a descansar en Dios”.

La palabra “paz” se menciona con abundancia en las Escrituras. “Paz” o “shalom” en Hebreo significa más que ausencia de guerra. Paz es un sentido de totalidad o plenitud que solo puede encontrarse en la armoniosa y recta relación con Dios—paz externa entre los

pueblos y naciones y paz interna en cada persona humana.

En esta época de Navidad, cuando celebramos el nacimiento del Príncipe de la Paz, podemos recordarnos unos a otros que podemos tener confianza y no temer la violencia y el miedo que nos rodean. Esta pacífica confianza debería sostenernos en nuestra conversación acerca de asuntos políticos importantes, y recordarnos que podemos abstenernos del discurso bajo e irrespetuoso. Debemos ser parte de la solución y no contribuir al problema cuando encontramos por primera vez al Niño Dios en el silencio del pesebre en nuestras almas.

Cuando vemos la violencia desenfrenada en nuestra sociedad y comunidades, ¿por qué es eso? De nuevo, porque intencional o involuntariamente, no tenemos espacio para Él; ignoramos Su palabra, y el ruido nos distrae. Podemos perder la confianza en Él y erróneamente preferir ser esclavos del ruido y la discordia.

En unos pocos días, en nuestro calendario litúrgico, la Palabra se encarnará de nuevo, Emanuel nacerá de nuevo en nuestros corazones, “la eternidad dentro del tiempo; la omnipotencia cautiva; Dios en forma de hombre”, como el Venerable Arzobispo Fulton Sheen lo expresó una vez. Ahí, en el silencio del pesebre no hay mejor recordatorio de que el Señor lo único que quiere es estar con nosotros, darnos

paz, darnos esperanza, darse Él mismo en vulnerabilidad por nuestro amor, para darnos vida eterna con Él y el Padre en el Cielo. Él viene a ser nuestra luz en la oscura quietud del pesebre, no en el estruendo de la ciudad como un argumento al cual debemos rendirnos.

Como nos enseña el *Catecismo de la Iglesia Católica*, la Palabra se hizo Carne por “nosotros los hombres y por nuestra salvación”, para ser “nuestro modelo de santidad”, y para mostrar el ilimitado amor de Dios por nosotros.

Si creemos, no podemos dejar de compartir este amor con los demás, empezando con nuestra oración, fluyendo en nuestro lenguaje y culminando en nuestras acciones. ✝



+ Michael F. Olson

Diversas Voces

Diversas voces hispanas se funden en una durante la Celebración Diocesana del V Encuentro

Por Susan Moses

Fotos por Jayme Shedenhelm

Lucía Cruz estaba nerviosa cuando se acercó al micrófono para dirigirse al Obispo Michael Olson. La mera idea de poder ser la voz de los hispanos de la Diócesis era un desafío, por lo que oró para que el Espíritu Santo la ayudara a hablar con claridad.

“Cuando vamos a la iglesia, queremos sentirnos acogidos, aceptados y que se nos haga sentir que pertenecemos a esa comunidad”, explicó ella luego. “Su mirada [del Obispo Olson] de amor me hizo sentir acogida, aceptada y con un sentido de pertenencia. Yo estaba nerviosa, pero a la vez, feliz”.

Cruz, una feligresa de la Parroquia de St. Ann en Burleson, era una de los 300 delegados que se reunieron en el Centro de Convenciones de Arlington para la Celebración Diocesana del V Encuentro el domingo 5 de noviembre.

Durante la mañana delegados procedentes de 39 parroquias discutieron las preocupaciones y las esperanzas de la comunidad hispana de la Diócesis. Por la tarde se unieron 700 personas más para escuchar el mensaje del Obispo a la comunidad hispana de la Diócesis, el concierto de Adoración Sin Límites y para celebrar juntos la Misa de clausura del evento.

Varios objetivos comunes surgieron de las sesiones con los delegados para discutir los resultados de las reuniones del V Encuentro celebradas en las parroquias durante la primavera: cultivar y alentar un

crecimiento más profundo en la fe católica, especialmente en los jóvenes; mejorar la unidad; y brindar más oportunidades de ministerio para los fieles de habla hispana.

CULTIVAR UN CRECIMIENTO MÁS PROFUNDO

El Obispo Olson criticó la mentalidad de usar la Iglesia como un medio para recibir cada sacramento. Estamos aquí para servir a la Iglesia, no para ser servido, señaló.

Asimismo, otros expresaron el deseo de ver que los que son culturalmente católicos (o católicos sólo por tradición) a convertirse en participantes plenos de la Iglesia.

Muchos delegados mencionaron que para aumentar la participación hay que comenzar con la acogida por parte de la comunidad. María Chávez, de 21 años de edad, que participa activamente en varios ministerios de la Parroquia de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe en Morgan, dijo que es muy importante dejarles saber a los visitantes que “son bienvenidos a la Iglesia y acogerlos con una sonrisa. Estas pequeñas cosas pueden hacer una gran diferencia en sus vidas”.

Daisy De Jesús llegó a la Parroquia

de la Inmaculada Concepción en Denton para hacer su Confirmación hace varios años. Una vez que fue confirmada, su instructora de educación en la fe la invitó para ayudar con el ministerio. De Jesús se sorprendió, pero estaba muy contenta de ayudar a enseñar a los estudiantes más jovencitos.

“Ella me preguntó: ‘¿Dónde crees que puedes involucrarte? ¿Necesitas ayuda para involucrarte?’”, dijo la estudiante de la Universidad del Norte de Texas. La experiencia le enseñó que



Lucía Cruz de la Parroquia de St. Ann en Burleson resumió la discusión de su equipo de encuentro para el Obispo Michael Olson y los otros delegados en el Centro de Convenciones de Arlington.



ARRIBA: El equipo de las iglesias del Decanato del Centro Este tiene una discusión en el Centro de Convenciones de Arlington. Los participantes del V Encuentro se dividieron en equipos y tuvieron discusiones sobre las esperanzas de la comunidad Hispánica en la diócesis.



IZQUIERDA: El Obispo Olson habla con los miembros del V Encuentro en el Centro de Convenciones de Arlington.

los feligreses deben tener la dedicación y el tiempo para “dar seguimiento” a las personas que se acercan a la parroquia para recibir un sacramento.

Ella y su compañero feligrés de la parroquia, Alfonso Mendoza, vieron la necesidad de crear un ministerio de jóvenes adultos en español, por lo que formaron uno. Mendoza dijo: “Si aquéllos que son católicos por tradición se conectaran con la Iglesia, el Espíritu Santo ayudará, poco a poco, a medida que lleguen”.

“Cristo quiere un encuentro con nosotros, no sólo los domingos, sino también establecer una relación con nosotros todos los días”, dijo Chris Vaughan, Director de Matrimonio y

Vida Familiar de la Diócesis.

MEJORAR LA UNIDAD

La Iglesia es una, pero con distintas culturas y generaciones, dijo el Obispo Olson. “El Encuentro no pretende abordar las necesidades de la comunidad hispana como un problema, sino más bien ayudarnos a formar nuestra identidad como una sola Iglesia unida en solidaridad con el llamado de Cristo”.

El Diácono Matías Lagunas de la Parroquia de San Juan el Apóstol en North Richland Hills estuvo de acuerdo en que la unidad es una preocupación de cada parroquia. “Necesitamos romper las barreras, las paredes que nos dividen”, comentó.

La comunidad hispana comprende diversos países de origen con culturas

únicas y diferencias de idioma. A medida que las familias se establecen en el Norte de Texas, cada generación difiere de la que la precede. La división entre los feligreses anglosajones y los hispanos de una parroquia puede crear dos comunidades diferentes dentro de la comunidad parroquial.

El Obispo Olson dijo que el propósito del V Encuentro es encontrarse con Cristo y con el prójimo. “Estamos en comunión el uno con el otro. Esto es muy contrario al enfoque de la cultura predominante de hoy en día, que ve a todo el mundo solamente como individuos aislados y no como parte de una comunidad o sociedad”,

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explicó.

Cruz, de la Parroquia St. Ann, permanece optimista de que la brecha entre las culturas se llene con “amor, paciencia y compasión” para que la Iglesia pueda ser un solo Cuerpo de Cristo.

BRINDAR MÁS OPORTUNIDADES DE MINISTERIO PARA LOS FIELES DE HABLA HISPANA

Las parroquias representadas en el Encuentro diocesano quieren más. Desean más catequesis en español. Más sacerdotes que hablen español. Más participación en el ministerio.

Los programas existen a veces, pero la comunidad hispana no los conoce. Vaughan explicó que la mayoría de las clases ofrecidas por la Diócesis de Fort Worth están disponibles en español y en inglés.

Cuando los grupos del Encuentro de la parroquia visitaron sus vecindarios, se enteraron de que algunas personas no

sabían que la parroquia cercana ofrecía Misa en español.

Aunque los seminaristas de la Diócesis de Fort Worth pasan un verano en México para aprender español, se necesitan más sacerdotes bilingües. El Obispo Olson dijo que las vocaciones no eran sólo su responsabilidad, sino la de todos. Animó a las familias a fomentar las vocaciones religiosas en sus hijos.

“Hay una gran necesidad de orar por las vocaciones — especialmente, sacerdotales y religiosas — esto no es exclusivo para la comunidad hispana, pero no hay duda de que tiene una gran prioridad, ya que los hispanos son el grupo demográfico más joven entre nosotros en la Iglesia local de la Diócesis de Fort Worth”, dijo el Obispo.

¿QUÉ ES LO QUE SIGUE?

El Director de Evangelización y Catequesis, Marlon De La Torre, observó los “rostros alegres de los delegados” y sintió

entusiasmo, esperanza y fe en el Encuentro Diocesano, que fue la culminación de aproximadamente 18 meses de planificación y trabajo.

En abril del 2018 los delegados de la Diócesis asistirán al Encuentro Regional en San Antonio. La Diócesis de Fort Worth será sede del V Encuentro Nacional del 20 al 23 de septiembre de 2018 en Grapevine. Se esperan más de 3,500 asistentes, incluidos 80 obispos.

No obstante, un V Encuentro exitoso concluirá donde comenzó, en la parroquia.

De acuerdo con De La Torre, la Diócesis espera que después del V Encuentro, “tengamos más liderazgo laico involucrado en el ministerio hispano. Tenemos comunidades vibrantes de formación de fe para adultos. . . que quieren aprender más sobre la fe. Tenemos jóvenes y adultos jóvenes involucrados y totalmente integrados en la vida de la Iglesia, tanto en inglés como en español”. ✦



ARRIBA: Padre Jose Gildardo Abonce, CORC, del equipo de las parroquias del Decanato del Centro Este, tiene una discusión en el Centro de Convenciones de Arlington.



DERECHA: Diácono Matias Lagunas habla sobre el V Encuentro en el Centro de Convenciones de Arlington.

Fomentando Vocaciones

El ministerio universitario promueve las vocaciones, es una presencia durante años desafiantes

Por Matthew Smith

El papel de abogar, promover y fomentar una vocación en un joven se considera a menudo como el deber de las oficinas y directores diocesanos de vocaciones. Sin embargo, ellos no están solos en ese trabajo.

Los ministerios católicos en varias universidades del área desempeñan también un papel importante para apoyar y guiar a los estudiantes con respecto a cómo responder al llamado de Dios, ya sea en la vida religiosa o en otro lugar.

“Me dan satisfacción esos momentos de descubrimiento que los estudiantes tienen durante sus propias jornadas a través de las experiencias buenas y malas en sus vidas”, dijo Tom Centarri, el ministro a cargo de la Universidad Cristiana de Texas (TCU, por sus siglas en inglés). “Sus luchas y victorias, y verlos crecer como discípulos y grandes líderes parroquiales”.

Esto incluye a estudiantes de universidades del área que han respondido al llamado religioso — varios lo han hecho — así como a todos los demás, dijo Centarri.

“Independientemente de la dirección en la que quieran dirigirse, estoy aquí sólo como un recurso”, comentó Centarri. “Si tienen alguna pregunta



Albert Martínez enciende las velas del altar para la Hora Santa por las vocaciones en el Centro Newman de TCU en Fort Worth. (Foto NTC/Ben Torres)

sobre cualquier cosa en sus vidas, relacionada o no con las vocaciones, estamos aquí para ayudarlos”.

Ann Smith, una voluntaria que tiene 22 años de experiencia acumulada en ministerio universitario en Midwestern State University y TCU, asiste a Centarri. Hacer esto, bromea

Smith, la mantiene joven.

“Un gran motivador para mí es que cuando yo estaba en esta etapa de mi vida no contaba con un lugar seguro para hacer preguntas”, dijo Smith. “Lo que

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es una parte normal del desarrollo de la fe, ya está bien sentirse con incertidumbre y tener preguntas, explorar aspectos de la fe, cuestionar algunos asuntos y, como resultado, desarrollar una relación más profunda con Dios”.

Con respecto a la respuesta a la llamada a las vocaciones, la ministra de la Universidad del Norte de Texas (UNT, por siglas en inglés), Jenny Lynn Pelzel, dijo que una exalumna de la universidad es una hermana novicia, otra ha ingresado al seminario y nueve jóvenes se han convertido en misioneros. Más aún, se trata de proporcionar un espacio para que los estudiantes hablen, establezcan amistades y recen, dijo Pelzel.

“Siguiendo la iniciativa de San Juan Pablo II, todo lo que hacemos está enraizado en la oración”, añadió Pelzel.

Ella dijo que el ministerio universitario es un llamado, una vocación importante y llena de desafíos.

“El mayor desafío es nuestra sociedad y la cultura de relativismo, que ofrecen tantas distracciones y donde la Iglesia se ve como intolerante y diciéndole a la gente qué hacer”.

Debbie Neely, del ministerio universitario de Midwestern State University, dijo que ella trabaja para mantener una presencia en el campus universitario, incluyendo a un sacerdote que habla con los estudiantes durante los eventos en el centro de estudiantes.

Todos están de acuerdo de que el mayor desafío puede ser la tendencia de muchos estudiantes a apartarse de su fe durante sus años de estudio en la universidad.

“Tantas distracciones”, dijo Neely. “Muchos están fuera de la casa por primera vez, lejos de los padres que preguntan si asistieron a Misa. Puede ser fácil alejarse y enfriarse en su relación con Dios”.

“Tal libertad, sin embargo, resulta a menudo en una reacción opuesta”, dijo Centarri.

“Es fácil suponer que los estudiantes



El Padre Nghia Nguyen se arrodilla ante el Santísimo. (Foto NTC/Ben Torres)

por sí mismos se van a rebelar y muchos así lo hacen”, dijo Centarri. “Pero muchos también toman control de su propia fe en ese punto. Ya no es la fe de sus padres”.

La estudiante Helena Kons, que cursa su cuarto año y es miembro del comité de servicio de la Comunidad Católica de TCU, está de acuerdo.

“Sabía que iba a ser diferente cuando mi fe fuera completamente mi responsabilidad y no necesariamente una responsabilidad compartida entre mis padres y yo”, dijo Kons.

Al involucrarse activamente se ha ampliado su fe más allá de simplemente asistir a la iglesia y ahora ayuda en los bancos de alimentos del área y participa en servicios comunitarios para personas sin hogar, dijo Kons.

“Me inspiró a no tener una fe estática, a ser más activa en ella”, dijo.

Para el joven Jack Schroeter, estudiante que cursa su tercer año y que se desempeña como copresidente de los estudiantes católicos de TCU, el sentido de comunidad proporcionó lo que buscaba.

“Es un grupo al que me siento que pertenezco y con el que puedo desarrollar mi fe y que me ayudarán a seguir el



Estefania Barreto lee una oración durante una Hora Santa en la Universidad de Texas en Arlington. (Foto NTC/Ben Torres)

camino correcto”, dijo Schroeter.

Los ministros universitarios consideran también que la participación de los estudiantes es un regalo.

“Me siento tan bendecida cada día”, dijo Neely. “No es mi trabajo. Me encanta y es lo mejor que Dios ha puesto en mi vida, ser parte de la energía, las preguntas y la curiosidad de los estudiantes”.

Smith estuvo de acuerdo y dijo que encuentra inspiración en el hecho de que los estudiantes hoy día se enfrentan a un mundo más desafiante de lo que era cuando ella estudiaba.

“A pesar de las cosas difíciles del mundo de hoy, digo repetidamente que estos estudiantes me dan verdadera esperanza para nuestra comunidad, nuestra Iglesia y nuestro mundo”, dijo Smith. 🇺🇸



Lecciones para el Siglo XXI

Fiesta de la Sagrada Familia

Por Dr. Marcellino D'Ambrosio

Cada año, justo después de la Navidad, celebramos la fiesta de la Sagrada Familia. Hay una razón importante para esto. Es fácil pensar que la “encarnación” significa que Dios asumió un cuerpo humano, que apareció en carne humana.

Pero hay mucho más que eso. En Jesús, Dios se une a la naturaleza humana completa. Esto significa que entra en toda la amplitud de la experiencia humana participando plenamente de su dimensión terrenal.

Pensémoslo. El Creador del Universo

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pasó la mayor parte de su vida humana como artesano, trabajando con su padre en el negocio de la familia y, finalmente, asumiendo el control. Su madre, María, era la más santa y la más grande de todas las criaturas. Sin embargo, pasó la mayor parte del tiempo cambiando pañales, cocinando y limpiando.

La Pasión de Cristo es la película más intensa que jamás haya visto. Pero hubo un momento cómico, una escena del joven Jesús en el patio de su casa trabajando en un nuevo invento. Estaba haciendo una mesa al estilo que estamos acostumbrados. Sin embargo, en ese entonces en esa sociedad las personas se reclinaban para cenar y este tipo de mesa habría puesto la comida fuera del alcance de ellas. María le pidió que explicara su desconcertante diseño. Él respondió que, algún día, la gente comería sentada en posición vertical, en sillas. María respondió con autoridad: “¡Eso nunca se pondrá de moda!”. Él se echó a reír, se lavó antes de la cena y en broma salpicó a su mamá con el agua.

Esta escena va más allá de un momento jocoso en la acción de la película. Fue una forma sutil de mostrar que Jesús era completamente humano. Porque ser humano no significa simplemente tener carne y sangre, sino también tener parientes y amigos. Ser humano significa pertenecer a una familia.

Los filósofos paganos de Grecia y Roma reflexionaron muy cuidadosamente sobre el papel de la familia en la vida humana. Observaron que los niños debían más a sus padres que a nadie más, excepto a Dios. Obviamente, la existencia física y la educación básica de los niños dependen de la mamá y el papá. Pero si lo pensamos, nos damos cuenta de que los niños deben mucho más a sus padres. Aprendemos nuestra lengua materna no de nuestros maestros de la escuela, sino de nuestros padres. Tomamos de ellos, como por ósmosis, actitudes, gestos y hábitos. Nos guste o no, estamos profundamente influenciados no sólo por nuestros genes, sino por nuestra experiencia familiar.

Por esta razón, los antiguos describieron una virtud familiar especial que cae bajo

la virtud cardinal de la justicia. La justicia implica la determinación de dar a los demás lo que les corresponde. La virtud de la piedad, al reconocer la deuda extraordinaria que los hijos le deben a sus padres, le otorga a los padres un grado único de honor, respeto y afecto.

Por supuesto, tenemos la obligación de honrar y respetar a todos los seres humanos, ya que están hechos a imagen y semejanza de Dios. Pero el grado de honor que estamos obligados a dar a los demás es directamente proporcional a la carga de responsabilidad que llevan por nosotros. A nadie se le ha dado más responsabilidad que a nuestros padres, por lo que debemos rendirles más honor y respeto que a nadie.

Esto se presenta claramente en el mismo orden en que aparecen los Diez Mandamientos. Los primeros tres mandamientos describen nuestro deber con Dios. El primer mandamiento que tiene que ver con nuestras obligaciones con los seres humanos es el cuarto: “Honra a tu Padre y a tu Madre”. Cuando somos menores, esto significa obedecer a nuestros padres. Cuando somos adultos, esto significa cuidarlos y proveerles en la temporada de invierno de sus vidas (*Sir 3, 12*). En su acto final en la cruz, Jesús hizo justamente esto y confió su madre viuda al cuidado del discípulo amado (*Jn 19, 26-27*).

De acuerdo de que fue más fácil para Jesús tratar a sus padres con honor, afecto y respeto, dado que María era inmaculada y que José era un santo. Y, ciertamente, fue más fácil para María y José no regañar o provocar a Jesús (*Col 3, 21*), ya que resultó ser el Hijo de Dios sin pecado.

La mayoría de los hogares, como el mío, están formados por padres y niños que resultan ser pecadores. Por eso es que la Iglesia nos da a *Colosenses 3, 12-21* como la segunda lectura de la Fiesta de la Sagrada Familia con su mandato de “perdonaos unos a otros como el Señor os ha perdonado”. Una familia cristiana



La Familia Santa con el Bautista Infantil por Bartolome Esteban Murillo, circa 1670.

es santa no porque no tiene pecado, sino porque responde al pecado con perdón en lugar de resentimiento. En mi casa, cuando nos lastimamos, no lo dejamos pasar o peor, dejamos que la herida se pudra. El que ofende debe encontrar dentro de sí mismo la humildad para decir: “Lo siento, por favor, perdóname”. Y el ofendido, después de refrescarse un poco, debe pronunciar esas palabras liberadoras: “Te perdono”. Y, entonces, el asunto se debe olvidar.

Además del perdón, la paciencia y la tolerancia son siempre necesarias. A veces, no es el pecado de otro miembro de la familia lo que nos afecta, sino las fallas, ciertos hábitos que nos molestan o simplemente, las ideas que son diferentes a las nuestras, como la mesa recién creada por Jesús. La familia es el primer lugar donde aprendemos a convertirnos en personas más tolerantes, a celebrar, reír y “salpicar con agua” las diferencias, en lugar de dejar que nos dividan. 🍷

Marcellino D'Ambrosio (también conocido como “Dr. Italy”) es un orador, autor y líder de peregrinación que aparece con regularidad en la radio y la televisión católica. Se puede conectar con él en dritaly.com.



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ABOVE: Ron and Mary Marcello and Tonya McClellan serve dinner to the guests at the shelter. **BELOW:** a man leads grace before dinner; Veronica Gomez and her daughter share a smile; and volunteers Roy Metzler and Tonya McClellan help a young boy balance his meal. (NTC photos/Ben Torres)



“We’ve had children as young as two days old and senior citizens as old as 82,” Kay explained. “We also take their pets.” Outdoor kennels, salvaged from the building’s original purpose, offer that convenience.

The executive director tries to make a personal connection with many of the people who walk through the door. A Denton college student, who stayed at the shelter every time it was open, is a vivid memory.

“He’d come in, take a shower, and go to school. I don’t think the university knew he was homeless,” Kay assumed. “After graduation, he moved to New York City and got a job paying \$100,000. I heard from him for a while. People I met at the shelter are always calling from different states to tell me what’s going on in their lives.”

Debbie Millican oversees the 40 active volunteers who help in the kitchen and sleeping areas. A tasty evening meal, provided by Our Daily Bread soup kitchen, is served Tuesdays and Wednesdays.

Used to people and their problems, the former city administrator believes homelessness is a reality most people choose to ignore.

“No matter how much you don’t like them or don’t want to see them, they exist,” she pointed out. “And there aren’t many of us on this planet who aren’t one paycheck away from the same situation.”

The plight of older women, who walk the streets aimlessly during the day and are targets for crime, really tug at her heart.

“They bother me the most because I’m older,” said the 66-year-old. “I got up one morning and found a lady sitting in her chair sobbing. She had dementia and didn’t know where she was or what she was going to do. And there was nothing

we could do to help her.”

Some shelter occupants made one mistake in life and ended up losing their livelihood, families, and homes.

“So they end up on the streets,” Millican added. “When you get to know them, they’re good people.”

The shelter opens its doors at 6:30 p.m. and many of the exhausted homeless are in bed by 8 p.m. When the alarm goes off at 7:30 the next morning, volunteer Richard Wright prepares them a light breakfast. Healthier men and women are assigned chores to ensure the floors are swept, bathrooms cleaned, and the trash is taken out.

“There’s a certain magnetism to this work,” admitted Wright who began helping at the center last August as part of his training to become a permanent deacon for the diocese. “These people are kind and extremely grateful. They just had an unfortunate turn in life or have some health issues.”

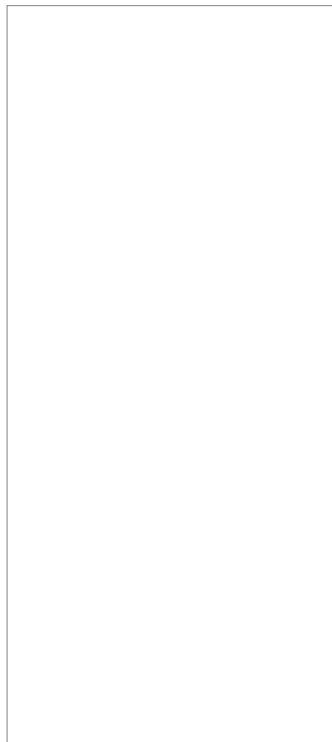
The dedication of fellow volunteers is also impressive. When meteorologists predicted freezing temperatures on a night when the center was not open, Wright was surprised how many individuals flocked to the shelter with food, “and then worked through the night on short notice. Msgr. King must have been an extremely charitable person and people want to continue that legacy in his honor.”

The late pastor’s concern for the poor and impoverished in Denton County still inspires. Millican never met Msgr. King.

“But I wish I had. Everyone talks about him with such warmth,” the volunteer coordinator observed. “When you say his name, their faces light up. I think he would be extremely happy about the good work this place does.” 🇺🇸



Eight years ago, Betty Kay envisioned a place for the homeless on freezing nights. Now, she spends nights at the center when it is open. (NTC photo/Ben Torres)



Room at the Inn

Dedicated volunteers at the Msgr. Charles King Outreach Center in Denton provide warmth, shelter, and food to the homeless on cold North Texas nights

It was mid-December 2009 and North Texas was experiencing a spate of cold nights. Warm and safe inside her Denton home, Betty Kay couldn't sleep.

The director at a local soup kitchen kept thinking about the men and women huddled under bridge overpasses and makeshift cardboard homes as they tried to brave the elements.

"I knew a lot of them by name and would say, 'I'm going to find a place where

you can go. I promise,'" Kay remembered. "But it took a long time. I didn't know where to start."

With snow and ice forecasted, Kay and fellow Immaculate Conception parishioner Sara Carey asked Monsignor Charles King if he would open the doors of their church to the homeless.

"He said it was the right thing to do," the advocate recalled. "We opened the next night and we've been opened ever since in various locations."

The dozen or so transients who arrived at Immaculate Conception Church to escape freezing temperatures that evening slept on pews as Kay and others supervised. Parishioners embraced the quickly-organized outreach program that was later named in memory of Msgr.

King, who passed away in 2011.

"We always say he's watching over us," suggested Kay, executive director of the Msgr. Charles King Outreach Center. "I think he'd love what the center has become."

Eventually, the Msgr. King Outreach Center — now an ecumenical, nonprofit charity — found a permanent home two years ago in Denton's former animal shelter leased from the city for \$1 a year. Remodeled and equipped with bunk beds, a family room, showers, and bathrooms, the building can sleep 91 people. It's open on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday nights or when the temperatures dip below 32 degrees or above 100 degrees.

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