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JANUARY — FEBRUARY 2020
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LOOK TO FUTURE WITH HOPE

BISHOP MICHAEL OLSON is the fourth bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Fort Worth.

 @BpOlsonFW



Editor's note: Bishop Michael Olson was interviewed recently by Fr. Robert McTeigue, SJ, on the radio program "The Catholic Current." Below, we have excerpted some highlights about the coming year (and beyond) from their wide-ranging conversation.



What's on your to-do list between now and the next meeting of bishops in June 2020?

Bishop Olson: Prior to the June meeting, we have our *ad limina* visits to prepare for. Mine is in January along with the other Region X bishops from Texas and Arkansas and Oklahoma. This involves preparation for the audience with the Holy Father as far as what we will discuss and what we need to address. Please pray for us during those meetings.



What do you think are the needs of the Catholic Church in the United States in the coming five years?

Bishop Olson: To discern that, we have to look outside — both to listen to what's being said in other areas of the Church — but most especially to learn what are the needs we can assist people with — to foster generosity from within us, and to overcome the fear that is currently plaguing us. As the Church, that's our chief responsibility for the greater aspect of society, which shows the common good of our own society beyond the good of the individual.

We have to confront the reality that there's very little room anymore to barter, but our institutions have to be evaluated as to how they serve the mission of the Church, and not the other way around.

We're going to have to get to the point where we call evil, "evil," and good, "good." That's what we're trying to do all the time, and we're getting to a point where things are just so formally evil and destructive that it's very challenging to affirm what is good, in order to bring about more good. We're coming to that point as a Church in this society.

As far as the interior questions though, so much of our success is

going to be contingent upon our responsibilities to take seriously the issues of safe environment, ministerial integrity, and accountability, chiefly on the part of bishops and in the clergy, but also on the part of our lay ministers.



Why would we not be well-served by fear in this time of the Church's life in the United States?

Bishop Olson: It's a spiritual truth that discouragement never comes from God. Discouragement is a weapon of the evil one. Fear is a human condition that serves to modify our behavior, to turn to God, and to practice fortitude, all with His grace.

We don't need foolhardiness any more than we need cowardice, but we have to be vulnerable. There is no courage without vulnerability. In other words, we need the capacity to be wounded for the sake of the truth. That's something that I've seen as a reality in my life and ministry as a bishop during these last six years. That's been a reality introduced to me again and again.

Without courage, there's no hope. So, do we believe this or not? Is He the Son of God or not? I say He is because of the blood of the martyrs, and the truth of the Gospel is lifted and passed on and handed down through tradition.



How do you begin to form consciences in a context where every moral issue is opened and decided with the words, "I feel that?"

Bishop Olson: Bishop Robert Barron made a point about the transcendental nature of beauty. That is a starting place because beauty can elicit emotions. Beauty captures the imagination, and it lifts us up. The proportionality of form and the classical understanding of beauty is one of the transcendentals of God.

I find young adults and millennials have a sense of what's beautiful. There's something that captivates the millennials about the liturgy or Catholic art. They may be at a loss as to why that is beautiful, but then we can take that to the deeper realities manifested by beauty. ✝

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'FOR LOVE OF ME'

I recently began exploring how many saints and mystics the Child Jesus has appeared to. The list is great, starting from, of course, the Holy Family down to more recent saints like St. Gemma Galgani and St. Faustina Kowalska.

Notably on that list is St. Thérèse of Lisieux. She had quite the encounter with the baby Jesus on Christmas Eve 1886, just before she turned 14. Described as “precocious and sensitive” by the Society of the Little Flower, and having a “spirit that wanted everything,” her life was changed forever by this vision. As she described it in her own words, “On that blessed night the sweet infant Jesus, scarcely an hour old, filled the darkness of my soul with floods of light. By becoming weak and little, for love of me, He made me strong and brave.”

The rest of the story is more well known. After midnight Mass she hurried to find her shoes at the fireplace, filled with presents, “as I had always done since I was little.” Her father had always taken delight in her cries of joy as she opened gifts from her “magic shoes.” But this year, Jesus had come to cure her of her oversensitivity. This year, her father was in a bad mood, and as she was going upstairs, she overheard him say, “Thérèse ought to have outgrown all this sort of thing, and I hope this will be the last time.” She was cut to the heart, and Thérèse confessed she would typically have cried like a baby in her usual way.

“But I was not Thérèse anymore; Jesus had changed me completely,” she said in her autobiography, *The Story of a Soul*. Holding back her tears, she went back downstairs, picked up her shoes and unwrapped her presents joyfully, “looking all the while as happy as a queen....Father...entered into the fun of it, while [her older sister] Céline thought she must have been dreaming.”

But, this was no dream! Thérèse had been cured of her hypersensitivity and filled with the inner conviction and fortitude that the holy Christ Child gave her.

The rest, as they say, is history.

I encourage us all to think of Christmas as a great gift to us. The sweet infant Jesus comes to pour His fullness into our emptiness. This Christmas season, take courage and look inside your soul. What would you like Jesus to heal in you? Don't be ashamed to ask! In all His appearances as the Child Jesus, our Lord was more than happy to touch the depths of those visionaries' souls. If we ask, He will do the same for us, filling our hearts with charity and self-denial so that we may find true happiness with Him in heaven.

Juan Guajardo, Editor

Teresa Williams laughs with her husband, Michael, during a one-on-one breakout session at Marriage on Tap Nov. 2. (NTC/Ben Torres)



A generous pour of faith, marriage, and community

COLLEYVILLE — A selection of wine and beers, a little food and music, and conversations with old and new friends entice dozens of couples to gather in the Upper Room of the Shepherd Center at Good Shepherd Parish on the first Saturday of each month.

Don't be misled by the relaxed vibe and convivial atmosphere. Important Church teaching is about to begin.

Marriage on Tap began in 2018 at Good Shepherd in Colleyville to support married couples in their vocation by combining social time, solid teaching on theology or practical tools for marriage and family life, and a one-on-one breakout session between spouses. All of that in two hours on a Saturday night — with child care available to boot.

Good Shepherd parishioner Sonja Lange said one benefit of Marriage on Tap is “couples realize that they are not alone in the journey.” The mother of eight,

who has helped plan the events since they began, said Marriage on Tap is designed to fill the gap between ministries that prepare couples for marriage and ministries that help marriages in crisis.

The topics discussed each month are based on suggestions by those who attend. Tammy Sandoval, the director of faith formation at Good Shepherd Parish, explained that the organizers like to “mix it up,” rotating theology and catechesis with practical applications for creating a marriage that thrives.

Topics covered this year have included Theology of the Body, forgiveness, prayer, and conflict resolution.

Sandoval said in current society, “Marriages are falling apart, and the world thinks that’s not important.” Marriage on Tap helps provide resources on “creating a holy marriage, an attractive marriage.”

Also, Sandoval added, the evenings build bridges with couples from nearby parishes who attend.

New staffs for the shepherds of the diocese

FORT WORTH — In thanksgiving for their service to the Diocese of Fort Worth, and as an expression of gratitude for their participation in the 50th anniversary Mass, custom crozier were designed for Bishop Kevin Vann and Bishop Stephen Berg.

Currently the Bishop of Orange, California, Bishop Vann served as the third bishop of the Diocese of Fort Worth.

Bishop Stephen Berg was a Fort Worth priest who served as diocesan administrator before being named Bishop of Pueblo, Colorado.

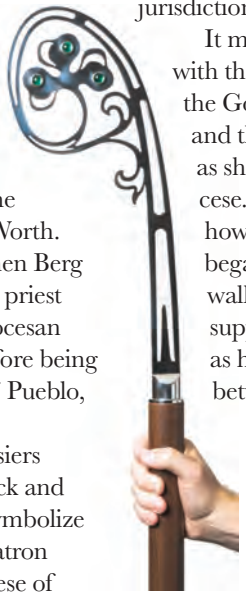
The new croziers feature a shamrock and green stones to symbolize St. Patrick, the patron saint of the Diocese of

Fort Worth. An additional custom crozier was ordered as a surprise for Bishop Michael Olson, who used it for the first time at St. Patrick Cathedral for adult Confirmation on Oct. 30.

The crozier symbolizes the bishop’s authority and jurisdiction over a diocese.

It may originate with the parable of the Good Shepherd and the bishop’s role as shepherd of a diocese. Others believe, however, the crozier began as a modified walking stick to support a bishop as he journeyed between churches.

Whatever the origin, its liturgical use dates back to the fifth century.



Bishop Michael Olson celebrated Mass at Our Lady Queen of Peace Parish, followed by 40 hours of Eucharistic Adoration. (NTC/Kenneth Munyer)



40 hours of Adoration reminds faithful to slow down

WICHITA FALLS — Our Lady Queen of Peace parishioners in Wichita Falls, joined by many faithful of the Northwest Deanery, felt the Advent invitation to slow down and spend time with the Lord during the Mass on Dec. 8 that initiated 40 hours of Eucharistic Adoration in honor of the diocese’s 50th anniversary.

During the Mass, Bishop Michael Olson encouraged Eucharistic adorers “to pray for renewal of our Church, a renewal of vocations anchored in our baptismal call, renewal of family life and marriage, and for God’s blessing and peace that we will be [in] communion with each other through challenging times — the times the Lord has entrusted us with to bring the Gospel of truth and light.”

At the end of Mass, Father Alexander Ambrose, HGN, explained the significance of kneeling and worshipping the Blessed Sacrament during an indoor Eucharistic procession down

the aisles of the church.

“You all will be kneeling down,” the pastor said. “It’s the most beautiful, special moment in our lives, you know, Jesus passing by you. Pray. Pray for the most important thing in your life as He passes through, and most importantly, pray for vocations to the priesthood.”

The Mass and 40 hours of Adoration was scheduled on the same night that Our Lady Queen of Peace hosted the Northwest Deanery Youth Mass, so many youth from local parishes also attended the Mass, the procession, and Adoration.

“Adoration is a beautiful thing,” said Joey Villeda, a volunteer with the Holy Family Parish youth group, adding that leaders impressed upon the youth the beauty of spending time “with Jesus in [His] bodily form.”

Another 40-hour Adoration begins June 11 at St. Peter Parish in Lindsay.

— *Jenara Kocks Burgess*

Dom Reid celebrates sacred liturgy’s participatory call

KELLER — One attendee of Dom Alcuin Reid’s Nov. 20 appearance at Keller’s St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Church summed up Reid’s presentation as “an important reminder of what we need to be doing”

Dom Reid, a liturgical scholar and Benedictine monk, is the founding prior of the Monastere Saint-Benoit in the Diocese of Frejus-Toulon, France. Reid, during several Texas stops, discussed praying the sacred liturgy. The title “dom” is traditionally applied to monks of the Benedictine and Cistercian orders.

Delivering the homily

during Mass before his presentation, Reid stressed the “crucial necessity” of acting post haste upon the opportunities God gives.

“Not tomorrow, and not never,” Reid said. “For that is what’s expected of us. Nothing less. Let us take these opportunities to advance the Kingdom of God.”

Sacred liturgy, Reid explained, is the “official public ritual worship of the Church, the summit toward which the activity of the Church is directed and the font from which all her power flows.”

— *Matthew Smith*



Dom Alcuin Reid



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

Msgr. Publius Xuereb performs an Anointing of the Sick after the first healing Mass celebrated at Holy Redeemer Parish in Aledo. (NTC/Juan Guajardo)



Holy Redeemer Parish begins monthly Anointing of the Sick

ALEDO — Healing goes beyond just the physical to the mental, emotional, and spiritual, Msgr. Publius Xuereb stated in his homily during Holy Redeemer Parish’s first healing Mass Dec. 1 at 5:30 p.m.

and Anointing of the Sick. Msgr. Xuereb, pastor of Holy Redeemer, said, “Visit any hospital, and you notice many types of sickness.”

More than 100 faithful took the opportunity to receive the special graces offered by Anointing of the Sick, which, according to the U.S. bishops, include the “Holy Spirit’s gift of peace and courage” to deal with illness, crisis, or suffering. Father Wilson Lucka, TOR, pastor of Holy Trinity Parish in Azle, also administered the sacrament.

He encouraged those experiencing illness, their loved ones, and their caregivers to attend a Mass of healing.

Illness affects a person and the family for life, he explained, often bringing feelings of fear, sorrow, denial, and anger, among others. “The Mass brings healing and soothes all aspects [of illness],” he said.

The Aledo parish will continue to celebrate a Mass of healing the first Sunday of each month at 5:30 p.m. All are welcome at the Mass, which fulfills the Sunday obligation and is followed by Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, a benediction,

The pastor continued, “You are not alone, forgotten, or ignored. Come feel the tender invitation of Jesus telling you, ‘Come to me all of you who are weary and find life burdensome. I will refresh you and give you rest.’” (*Matthew 11:28*).

The next healing Mass is scheduled for Sunday, Jan. 5 at 5:30 p.m. at Holy Redeemer Parish in Aledo.

Book, documentary depict St. Patrick Cathedral

FORT WORTH — When Chuck Johnson toured St. Patrick Cathedral, he was “flabbergasted by how cool it is,” and he wanted to preserve and share the story of the Gothic revival church.

1892. Johnson wrote, produced, and directed the 30-minute documentary, “The Making of St. Patrick’s Cathedral,” which premiered on NBC KXAS-TV Channel 5 and

Kay Fialho remembers her first visit to the cathedral in 1962 and the effect the historic landmark had on her. Little did she know she would become the archivist and historian of the parish for 38 years, giving tours to students and visitors, including Johnson.



can be found on the Catholic Diocese of Fort Worth YouTube page. Fialho wrote “a book that encompasses most of what I say during a tour,” sharing beautiful photos and details about the cathedral’s design, as well as its altars, statues, chalices, and reliquaries. Her book, *Cathedral Treasures*, can be pre-ordered for \$25 on the cathedral’s website, **StPatrickCathedral.org**, and will arrive after Christmas.

Inspired by the beauty and spirituality of the downtown church, both Johnson and Fialho used their professional talents to chronicle the cathedral, which was dedicated in



For a video of the healing Mass at Holy Redeemer, visit **NorthTexasCatholic.org/video-gallery**



Joe Daniels, left, and Marc Wolf of the new National Medal of Honor Museum speak with students at St. Joseph Catholic School in Arlington. (NTC/Ben Torres)

St. Joseph students help bring heroes' museum to Texas

ARLINGTON — Students at St. Joseph Catholic School in Arlington played a major role in the city's bid to land the National Medal of Honor Museum, according to museum officials.

Earlier this fall, fourth-graders wrote letters and first-graders drew pictures to ask site selection committee members to choose North Texas as the museum's future home.

On Nov. 7, Joe Daniels, the CEO and president of the National Medal of Honor Museum, and Marc Wolf, the museum's vice president of development, visited St. Joseph to thank the students for their contribution to the bid.

"Your letters had a direct impact on why we chose Arlington for this museum," Daniels told the school's fourth-graders.

Daniels, the former CEO of the National 9/11 Memorial & Museum in New York City, said the museum is slated to open in four years in the Arlington

Entertainment District and invited St. Joseph students to be the first school field trip to the site.

Daniels said he enjoyed visiting with students.

"In a world where we're so hyper-divided, this gives us hope for the next generation," he said.

Principal Diane Price said that students have been writing notes to military service members since Sept. 11, 2001.

On the day Daniels and Wolf visited, several packets of cards written by second-graders were in the outgoing mail for soldiers serving at Bagram Air Base in Afghanistan.

Price was touched the students had such a big impact on the selection. "Something as simple as writing a sweet letter or drawing a picture — something they do all the time — people making the decision recognized their heartfelt love," she said.

— Sandra Engelland

Encouraging parents of those in formation

SOUTHLAKE — Jennifer and Daniel Proctor recently joined the Serra Club because they believe in the group's mission of supporting those who are in the priesthood and religious life and those who are in the formation process.

As parents of a young seminarian, the Proctors are learning firsthand about the needs of those pursuing religious vocations. Coming out of St. Francis of Assisi Parish in Grapevine, their son

Reed Proctor is in his third year of formation for the Diocese of Fort Worth. He is currently studying at St. Joseph Seminary College in St. Benedict, La.

The Proctors were among about 30 people who attended a fellowship dinner and Rosary in Southlake hosted by the Northeast Fort Worth Serra Club for parents of men and women in formation.

— Sandra Engelland

OFFICIAL ASSIGNMENTS

REV. JOHN MARK KLAUS, TOR

Parochial Vicar at St. Andrew Parish in Fort Worth, has been appointed Parochial Vicar at Good Shepherd Parish in Colleyville, effective Nov. 15.



Father Brijil Lawrence, SAC (NTC/Juan Guajardo)

continuing the MISSION

Father Brijil Lawrence, SAC, leads diocesan Mission Office

By Matthew Smith

Bishop Michael Olson recently named Father Brijil Lawrence, SAC, as the new director of Propagation of the Faith for the Diocese of Fort Worth as well as chairman of the Diocesan Mission Council. Fr. Lawrence also serves as pastor of Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish in Abbott and Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary Parish in Penelope.

Previously, Fr. Lawrence pastored churches in the Diocese of Albany, New York and the Archdiocese of Denver.

Originally from India, Fr. Lawrence said he's only been in Texas a short time.

"Texas is new every day," Fr. Lawrence joked. "Starting with the weather. But I love this place."

Hot weather being common in India, Texas summers don't bother him, though he admits the transition involved a bit of culture shock.

“It’s a huge change, of course,” Fr. Lawrence said. “But as one preparing for missionary priest life I was already exposed to different cultures. India is a multicultural country. As part of our formation we moved from one place to another, at least six different states. So, I had already been exposed to different cultures and, as missionary priests, we are open to experiencing new cultures.”

In addition, the priest has enjoyed eating steaks and living in Willie Nelson’s hometown of Abbott. “Also, the history of the two parishes,” Fr. Lawrence said. “The Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary is 110 years old, and Immaculate Heart will soon be 75.”

Fr. Lawrence was ordained eight years ago, but knew long before then that he wanted to become a priest.

“What inspired that was living in a Catholic tradition in association with the Church,” Fr. Lawrence said. “Seeing and living the faith and growing up with many people all around and many priests always inspired me.”

A priest in his hometown encouraged Fr. Lawrence to take his time before making such a decision.

“At the end of 10th grade I wanted to join the seminary, but a priest from my parish advised me, ‘No, you finish 12th grade, then you’ll be able to make a good decision.’

“So that was my discernment period and, at the end of it, I knew this was my call. I belong to a missionary congregation, the Society of the Catholic Apostolate, which is also known as the Pallottines.”

Fr. Lawrence said that most Catholics, assuming they’ve heard of either entity, likely have little idea what the Mission Council or the Office of the Propagation of the Faith do.

The late Father Thomas Craig wrote in 2017 that all baptized Catholics are called to mission.

The Mission Council, Fr. Craig wrote, began in 1997 to “educate, initiate, and coordinate activities with the goal that every parish will participate in this outreach.”

The Office of the Propagation of the Faith, Fr. Lawrence explained, is a canonical requirement for the diocese. The scope of both offices covers both the diocese and beyond, he said.

“Just as every Catholic is called to [be a] missionary, the way of the diocese is also missionary — both within and without its territory,” Fr. Lawrence said. “The Mission Council is here to help counsel the bishop, suggest ways to carry out that mission and call based on needs of the various groups and places.

“Then the Propagation of Faith office coordinates those efforts. It’s sort of an office within an office that listens to the Mission Council and helps implement the things Bishop [Michael] Olson would like to see implemented in the parishes and missions. It’s looking at the [Diocese of Fort Worth] and the universal Catholic Church big picture at the same time, because we also coordinate with missions operating outside the diocese.”

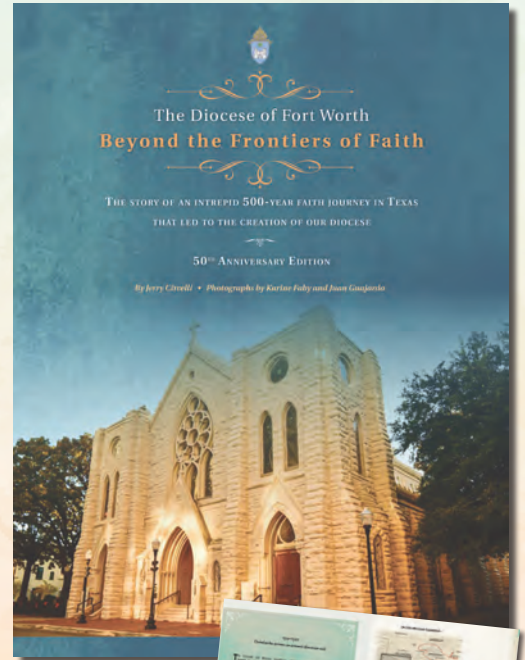
The vision is for every parish in the diocese to have a mission council of its own and participate in diocesan missionary activities.

Although many hear mission and think of travel to foreign countries, mission is more than that, and, more importantly, should be accessible to all.

“First of all, you have to become a missionary to yourself before you can be a missionary to others,” Fr. Lawrence said.

“Obviously everyone can’t go off to other countries to do missionary work. But mission can be carried out in different ways. For those who cannot go to these mission fields, they can pray and support missions and missionaries in different ways possible for them. And, of course, mission can be both local and elsewhere.” 🇺🇸

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COMMON prayer

Catholics with Anglican heritage celebrate the 10th anniversary of the apostolic constitution *Anglicanorum Coetibus*

By Joan Kurkowski-Gillen

“Doubly blessed.” That’s how Father Christopher Stainbrook feels 10 years after the apostolic constitution *Anglicanorum Coetibus* changed his life.

The decree, issued by Pope Benedict XVI on November 4, 2009, authorized the establishment of Personal Ordinariates for Anglicans entering into full communion with the Catholic Church. At the same time, it allowed them to retain the treasures of Anglican patrimony — liturgical texts, sacred music, and customs of pastoral care.

In 2011, Fr. Stainbrook was vicar of St. Timothy Episcopal Church in Fort Worth when he decided to resign from that post to request admission to Holy Orders within the Personal Ordinariate of the Chair of St. Peter. Structured like a diocese, the ordinariate encompasses the United States and Canada.

“I’m blessed to be part of the Ordinariate of the Chair of St. Peter and to be stationed here,” said the pastor of St. John Vianney, an ordinariate parish in Cleburne. “We have an exceptionally close relationship with the Diocese of Fort Worth and Bishop Michael Olson, who is extraordinarily helpful and supportive.”

Members of St. John Vianney joined

more than 350 parishioners from North Texas’ three other ordinariate congregations, St. Thomas Becket in Fort Worth, St. Mary the Virgin in Arlington, and Denison’s St. Michael and All Angels, for a Dec. 7 Mass held in St. Patrick Cathedral to mark the 10th anniversary of *Anglicanorum Coetibus*.

Bishop Steven J. Lopes, leader of the U.S. Ordinariate, celebrated the Mass using *Divine Worship: The Missal* — a distinct liturgy derived from the classic books of Anglican religious tradition that is fully Catholic in content and expression. Seven other priests from the ordinariate concelebrated with him.

Bishop Olson served as homilist. Calling the anniversary a “joyful occasion,” the bishop reminded the congregation of the Diocese of Fort Worth’s foundational role in promoting the Ordinariate of the Chair of St. Peter.

Former Fort Worth Bishop Kevin Vann offered early support, counsel, and steady assistance to North Texas Anglicans interested in joining the Catholic faith. On June 30, 2012, he ordained six former Anglican clergy to the Roman Catholic priesthood in St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Church. Fr. Stainbrook, Father Charles Hough III, and Father Timothy Perkins returned to Fort

Worth to participate in the anniversary Mass.

“It is not an understatement that the experience of the Anglican faithful and Catholic Church in Fort Worth served as an instrumental catalyst for the movement of the Holy Spirit to prompt the Holy See to establish the Ordinariate of the Chair of St. Peter,” Bishop Olson suggested.

Houston, home of the chancery and Our Lady of Walsingham Cathedral, is the head and body of the ordinariate.

“But Fort Worth has its soul,” the bishop added lightheartedly.

Held on the feast day of St. Ambrose, the Mass provided an opportunity to tell the story of the fourth century convert and Bishop of Milan who grappled with discord between the Nicene Catholic Church and the Arians in his community. An eloquent writer and theologian, St. Ambrose had witnessed failed attempts by the local Church to bring about peace through political compromise and church leadership.

“What was required of him was not being right and not being nice, but a true conversion in the truth and the authentic charity that only comes about with God’s grace through Baptism and full communion in the Church,” Bishop Olson



Bishop Steven Lopes of the Ordinariate of the Chair of St. Peter says the Eucharistic Prayer during a Mass celebrating the anniversary of *Anglicanorum Coetibus* Dec. 7. (NTC/Juan Guajardo)

explained. “Ambrose converted from thinking about the Church to thinking in communion with the Church.”

A similar journey was traveled by Catholics who have come into full communion corporately through the establishment, formation, and development of the ordinariate.

The anniversary of *Anglicanorum Coetibus* allows us to better understand the words of St. Ambrose, the homilist said, quoting, “Let your door stand open to receive Christ. Unlock your soul to Him. Offer Him a welcome in your mind and then you will see the riches of simplicity, the treasures of peace, and the joy of grace.”

Any milestone provides a time to look back on what’s been accomplished with gratitude and, at the same time, offers motivation for future progress, Bishop Lopes told the *North Texas Catholic*. The California native was named bishop of the Personal Ordinariate of the Chair of St. Peter in late 2015.

“When you think about a project as big and difficult as setting up a new diocese in a territory involving North

Continued on Page 14



Bishop Michael Olson kneels in prayer in front of the cathedra. (NTC/Juan Guajardo)



◀ Father Tim Perkins distributes Communion during a Mass of thanksgiving for the 10th anniversary of the apostolic constitution *Anglicanorum Coetibus*. (NTC/Juan Guajardo)

SEE MORE OF MASS

See the video and more photos of the Mass. Go to NorthTexasCatholic.org and click on "Galleries."



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America, it's amazing what's been accomplished in the first 10 years," he enthused.

Eighty priests currently serve 45 ordinariate parishes in the U.S. and Canada. Approximately 20,000 worshippers attend Sunday Mass.

When Lopes was ordained bishop, the ordinariate had no seminarians. Today there are six in formation.

Other Personal Ordinariates are Our Lady of Walsingham in England and Our Lady of the Southern Cross in Australia.

The ordinariate is still an abstract concept for most people.

"But the more our parishes grow and begin to look and act like Catholic parishes, the more the Catholic community will respond to us as something familiar, as something known, and as brothers and sisters in Christ," Bishop Lopes said.

"Our priests collaborate with the diocesan priests and there is a real sense of common mission," he continued. "It's a mission of reaching out and inviting people into the Church."

Brian Coddington was baptized Catholic but left the Church as a teenager

before he was confirmed.

Reading news stories about the U.S. Ordinariate piqued his curiosity. When he learned an ordinariate faith community, St. Timothy, was meeting at St. Mary the Assumption Church in Fort Worth, the lapsed Catholic attended Mass.

"I showed up during Lent, enjoyed it, and started taking my wife and son," said Coddington, who is drawn to the added reverence and tradition of ordinariate liturgies. "The people were inviting and welcomed."

Renamed in honor of St. Thomas Becket, the parish now meets each Sunday at the Catholic Center for Mass celebrated by its parochial administrator, Father Kenneth Bolin.

"It's been a nice transition," added his wife, Sarah, who explored the Methodist and Church of Christ religions before becoming Catholic. "I've enjoyed our church family experience, the traditions, and beauty of the services."

In 1994, St. Mary the Virgin in Arlington was the first Episcopal parish in the world to come into full

communion with the Catholic Church, bringing with it congregants, clergy, and property. A pastoral provision, issued by the late Pope John Paul II in 1980, permitted the ordination of married Episcopal clergy to the Catholic priesthood and the retention of certain Anglican traditions.

The parish joined the ordinariate in 2015 and is now led by Father Prentice Dean.

Father Timothy Perkins, the pastor at St. Mary the Virgin from 2013 until 2016, reunited with his former parishioners following the anniversary Mass. Now the ordinariate's vicar general, he considers the recent canonization of John Henry Newman another cause for celebration. The new saint was an Anglican priest who converted to Catholicism, becoming a cardinal and one of the faith's most noted theologians and philosophers.

"The challenge for us, as the ordinariate matures, is to hold fast to the mission of reaching others who have not yet found full communion in the Catholic faith," Fr. Perkins observed. "We must draw them into our witness with charity and love so as many persons as possible hear the Good News of unity and peace." 🇺🇸

hallmarks of a good, Catholic EDUCATION

Classical education helps students develop virtue and character

By **Sandra Engelland**

One after another, the students marched to the podium and recited their poems. Some spoke in strong, clear voices, enjoying the challenge. A few started with smiles, anticipating laughter from a funny phrase. Others were hesitant at first, but their voices grew with the heartfelt emotion in their verses. Classmates, parents, grandparents, and other visitors applauded each one.

Welcome to a special reading of original poetry by the sixth-, seventh- and eighth-graders at St. Martin de Porres Catholic School in Prosper.

This is one example of what classical education looks like in Catholic schools of the Diocese of Fort Worth and its emphasis on helping students open the doors of truth, beauty, and goodness.

After the performance, students reflected on what they learned.

“At first I thought poetry might just be some boring words, but I learned that in poetry we can express ourselves in ways we usually might not,” said seventh-grader Miriam Bayas. “It’s a wondrous way to share our concerns about our world and share about ourselves.”

Eighth-grader Aubrey Mier said, “I think it’s awesome to learn how to express your feelings.”

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A student at St. Martin de Porres Catholic School in Prosper presents original poetry during a recital at the school Nov. 15. (NTC/Kevin Bartram)

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Their English Language Arts teacher Elaine Nolting said the poetry reading was the official end of their poetry unit.

“If they have an audience, they put more of an effort into their poems and practicing,” Nolting said. “It’s much more memorable for them than just writing the poem for a grade.”

Nolting began the poetry unit introducing students to famous poets: William Shakespeare, Edgar Allen Poe, Robert Frost, Emily Dickinson.

They looked at themes, methods, and concepts. Then Nolting encouraged students to write their own poems, using inspiration they gained from the masters of the craft.

“It’s placing learning back into their hands in order to create,” Nolting said. “They are deciding what topics are most important to them, and they can figure out how to express them.”

Then students chose their favorite poem to recite at the event.

“It becomes more impactful when they have a purpose for their learning,” Nolting said, allowing them a chance to share their passions and beliefs. “It prepares them for the future as they develop and hone their communication skills.”

PREPARING STUDENTS FOR LIFE

Classical education is a focus on grammar (basic rules of a subject), logic (the ordered relationship of concepts), and rhetoric (how to clearly express and defend one’s position).

Jennifer Pelletier, superintendent of schools, said classical education is

“really just good, intentional teaching.”

Classical education is teachers helping students understand the language of a subject, understand the concepts, and communicate what they know, she said.

Throughout the phases, there is a focus on exploring and appreciating the beauty and truth inherent in the subject.

Developing a love of beauty and truth helps students develop their ideas and character, Pelletier said.

“We want them to be able to defend what it is they know,” she said. “There’s nothing more important than that in the culture in which we exist.”

William Perales, principal at Nolan Catholic High School, focuses on classical education as he leads training for new and continuing teachers in the diocese.

The classical approach to education will help students “develop virtue, develop intellectual habits, and really cultivate wisdom,” he said at a recent diocesan teacher training workshop at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Catholic School in Keller.

Children learn intellectual, physical, and spiritual virtues when they are introduced to beauty in literature, art, music, and nature; to truth in math and science; and to goodness in characters and historic figures who overcame obstacles and evil, Perales said.

“It becomes a foundation, a reference point, to evaluate things in the world. It prepares them for life,” he said. “Overall, it will better prepare them to respond to what God calls them to do.”



Katie Tweedel and other teachers from across the diocese participated in an outdoor learning exercise during a November teacher formation day at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Catholic School. (NTC/Juan Guajardo)

**CATHOLIC
SCHOOLS
WEEK**

Learn more about the students and teachers at our 19 Catholic Schools. Visit NorthTexasCatholic.org to see our Catholic Schools Week coverage Jan. 26-Feb. 1, 2020.



LEARNING FROM GOD’S CREATION

At the recent workshop, teachers were focusing on ways to incorporate nature into the school day, both by spending time outside and by bringing natural items into the classroom.

Jessica Dalton, outdoor learning teacher at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, showed teachers her nature-focused classroom.

Dalton’s students keep nature journals where they record their observations during regular visits to the school’s garden and playing field.

One day they might draw clouds and another day they might toss a hula hoop on the ground and look at the plants,

insects, and minerals within the small space, sketching a few of their favorites.

In the classroom, children study snake skins, grow seedlings, observe the class fish or gerbils, and make bird feeders.

Dalton told the teachers, “Yesterday, a child brought his snake. He’s a shy little guy, but this gave him an opportunity to talk to the class.”

Stephanie Schroering, a fifth- and sixth-grade math teacher at SEAS, said she was finding ways to talk about nature in math.

She recently introduced students to the Fibonacci Sequence — a series of numbers found by adding the two numbers before it — and how it is found in seashells.

Teachers at the workshop got the chance to do some of the same activities students do, exploring the garden and sketching natural items.

Perales said, “Why nature? Because kids, all of us really, respond to being outdoors. The more senses a child uses in a lesson, the more they will remember.”

A PATH TO KNOW GOD BETTER

Pelletier said educators in the diocese are making a point to include families in the educational process. The diocese has a speaker series for parents, suggestions for family activities at home, and an optional reading list for parents.

The amount of homework is limited so families have time to enjoy one another, she said.

Classical education is a path to “a well-formed mind and a well-formed soul,” a way to get to know God better.

“As they’re growing in their studies, they’re growing in a better knowledge of God,” she said. ✦

love

ENDURES

How love of Christ and a charism of 'total gift' kept a congregation going for 200 years and counting

By Joan Kurkowski-Gillen

It started quietly with a sewing circle. Two hundred years ago, in a European country ravaged by revolution, religious persecution, and turmoil, an ordained Cistercian monk came up with an idea to help the poor of Namur, Belgium. Two members of his St. Loup parish, skilled seamstresses who owned a tailoring shop, were known for leading prayer while fashioning garments with other like-minded women.

Josephine Sana and Elizabeth Berger, employees of the business, approached Father Nicholas Joseph Minsart about a religious vocation, despite the Belgian government's prohibition of religious congregations. The innovative priest came up with a way the pair could discreetly pursue a vocation while helping desperate women learn a marketable trade. The priest found a small house in an impoverished neighborhood where the two faith-filled parishioners could live in community and teach sewing to girls while catechizing them. Lessons in reading and writing eventually became part of the workday.

The underground ministry's good deeds soon attracted other kind-hearted volunteers and the group became known as

the "Pious Ladies of St. Loup."

As their numbers and influence grew across Belgium in 1819, the young congregation, now called Sisters of St. Mary of Namur, began the tradition of Catholic education and service to others that still defines the religious order today.

Celebrating the 200th anniversary of its founding, the international congregation has provinces in Belgium, England, Canada, Brazil, Congo, Rwanda, and the U.S. Enthusiastic members of all ages serve the Church and society as educators, missionaries, parish ministers, health care workers, spiritual directors, and immigration advocates.

"We began very humbly and simply in a little town in Belgium when a priest and a couple of laypersons saw a need," said Sister Patricia Ridgley, a longtime pastoral staff worker at Dallas' Holy Cross parish. Now retired, she joined the Sisters of St. Mary in 1960 after graduating from Our Lady of Good Counsel.

The little sewing school gave young, destitute girls a way to earn money other than begging or prostitution.

"To me, it's a meaningful story even now," asserted the former Bishop Dunne teacher and school board member. "Women have always been at the forefront

of seeing a need and jumping in to do some small, little thing to help. God has blessed our congregation and we're still doing some good in different countries around the world."

NEW WORLD, NEW BEGINNINGS

Missionary zeal to teach the poor and disadvantaged inspired five members of the religious order to journey to the New World in 1863. When America's Civil War thwarted plans to travel west, they settled in Lockport, New York and established schools in the area to serve the German and Irish immigrant population. Ten years later, encouraged by Bishop John Timon of Buffalo and other supporters who recognized a need for Catholic schools in Texas, a group of sisters headed south to frontier settlements in the Lone Star State.

But the move to Waco in 1873 proved to be a different experience from their welcome in New York. The pioneer missionaries dealt with open anti-Catholic hostility from the Protestant majority, streets dirtied by cattle drives, oppressive heat, and tornadoes.

Despite those challenges, the Sisters of St. Mary of Namur founded their first school in Texas — Sacred Heart Academy — one week after arriving in Waco.

Sisters of St. Mary of Namur are seen in North Texas in this undated NTC file photo. (Colorized by Michael Sherman)



Always struggling and perpetually in debt, the religious order built a system of nine schools across North Texas over a span of 40 years — primarily with their own funds. Over the next five decades, the order established more schools at a record pace.

CHANGING LIVES

Saint Joseph “San Jose” School opened in 1926 to serve children whose parents fled the religious persecution (the “Cristero” War) that followed the Mexican Revolution of 1910. Located in the heart of Fort Worth’s “El Norte” neighborhood, the predominantly Hispanic school lacked new textbooks and other teaching aids but consistently outshone its public counterpart, M.G. Ellis Elementary, in

both academics and sports. San Jose later merged with All Saints Catholic School.

James Reza, who graduated from San Jose in 1952, credits the foresight and wisdom of the SSMNs for his successful career at General Dynamics.

“The majority of the kids who went to that poor, humble Catholic school became engineers, businessmen, nurses, or other well-paid professionals,” he said. “I attribute that to learning the basic foundation and comprehension of the English language.”

Many new students arrived at San Jose knowing only Spanish.

“From day one, the sisters versed us in English, and in a couple of weeks we were reading ‘See Spot Run’ in the old primer

books,” added the All Saints parishioner. “They knew English was the language that would propel us into high school and get us into college so we could have a career.”

LIVING THE GOSPEL MESSAGE

Our Lady of Victory Academy (now school) is the only educational institution still owned and operated by the SSMNs. Originally housed in a five-story, red brick building on Fort Worth’s south side, the academy enrolled day and boarding students from kindergarten through junior college. Some pupils came from as far away as west Texas. OLV was also the first school to desegregate in Fort Worth.

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The year was 1956, and, like other members of her order, Sister Louise Smith, SSMN, was teaching school in Texas.

“When Mother Theresa [Weber] announced it to us, it was a *fait accompli*,” recalled Sr. Louise, the archivist for the order’s western province. “Some of the parents objected and took their children out of the elementary school. Other parents admired what she wanted to do. It was a courageous decision for the time.”

Watching her teachers live the Gospel influenced Susie Reyes’ view of the world. Her parents, Loreto and Pedro Reyes, sent their five daughters to OLV in the 1960s and 70s.

“The way the sisters led their lives had an impact on my life as a Catholic and my service to the community,” said the grant writer for several nonprofits. “As I look back, their commitment to educating us went above and beyond.”

A 1974 Nolan Catholic High School graduate, another school the SSMNs founded, Reyes remembers the gentle prodding of her educators.

“They wanted us to succeed. We were always told to think ahead to college and the future,” she added, noting several classmates became doctors, lawyers, or other professionals. “It had an incredible impact on our lives.”



Sister Clara Vo, Sister Rosemary Stanton, and Sister Louise Smith at Our Lady of Victory Convent. (NTC/Juan Guajardo)

OUTREACH TO BRAZIL

When Rosemary Stanton graduated from Nolan in 1967, her ambition was to join the Peace Corps. Thoughts of helping the underprivileged, in faraway places, appealed to the teenager. But, after attending the University of Texas at Arlington for a year, the college freshman made a different decision.

In 1968, she joined the Sisters of St. Mary of Namur and began a journey that would take her to the order’s missions in Africa and Brazil.

“We did a lot of social work to help out the people, as well as evangelization,” explained Sister Rosemary Stanton, SSMN, who spent 34

years as a missionary.

The congregation’s first outreach in Brazil was in the northeastern part of the South American country.

“We lived in one of the many towns that belonged to one big parish with no resident priest,” she said, remembering the villagers who worked hard to survive.

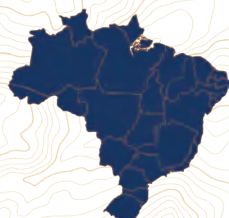
The Brazilian bishop asked the sisters to administrate parish life so the Eucharist could stay in the church.

“A priest would come once a month and between those times, our sisters took care of the parish,” Sr. Rosemary continued. The Fort

Where SSMNs Served Abroad



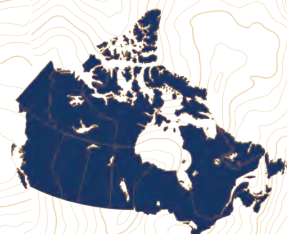
Belgium



Brazil



Cameroon



Canada



Democratic Republic of Congo

Worth native returned home in 2002 and is now part of the campus ministry team at her alma mater. She prepares liturgies, trains Eucharistic ministers, and provides resources for theology classes along with other pastoral duties.

Many Nolan students never had contact with a religious sister in elementary school. Sr. Rosemary's presence on campus fills that void.

"My gift of being a Sister of St. Mary for 51 years has been the people I've been blessed to live among and the people I have ministered to," she explained. "For me, it's all about the people."

STRONG TIES

After living with another congregation in Mexico, Sister Yolanda Cruz began the process of becoming a SSMN in 2001 and professed final vows in 2005. What attracted the New Jersey native to the Fort Worth congregation?

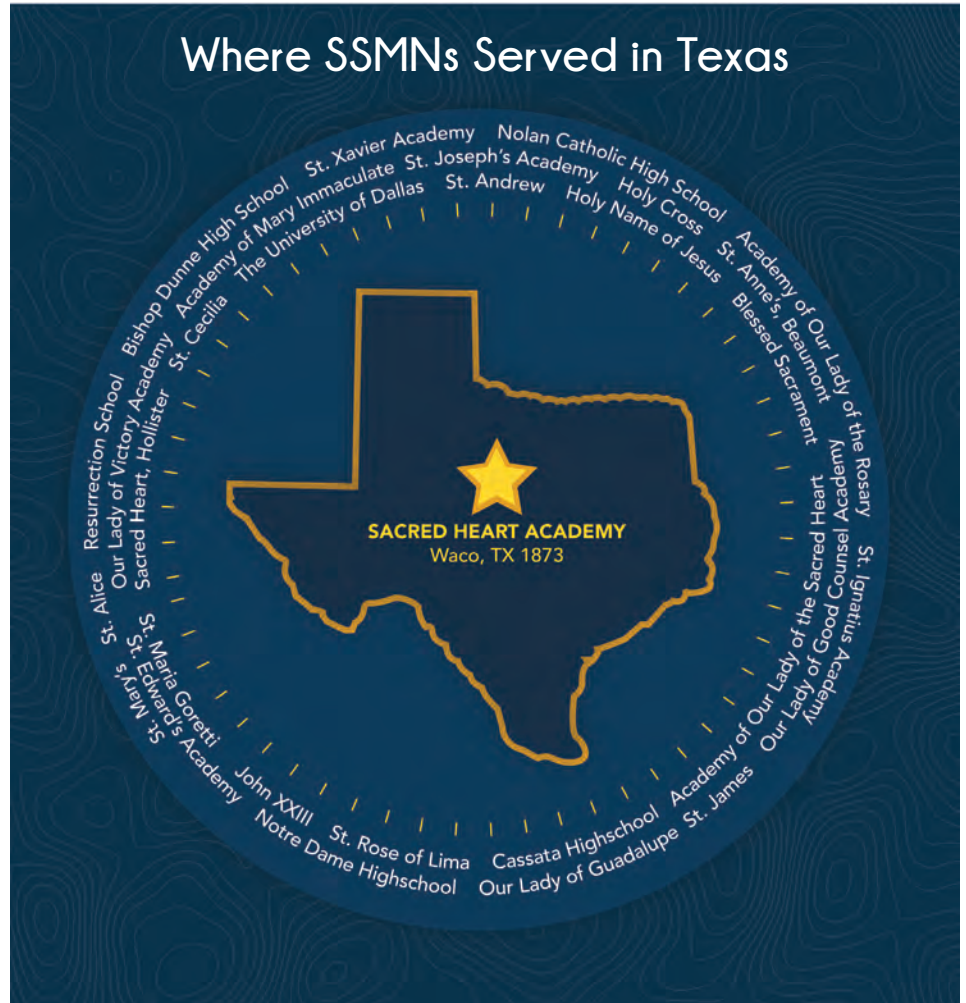
"I saw their joy and simple ways," Sr. Yolanda enthused. "They were so pastoral in their ministries and I saw their deep presence in the diocesan Church. People gravitated to them and I gravitated to them as well."

The former vice chancellor and delegate for women religious for the diocese is now a faculty member at the University of Dallas' Neuhoff School of Ministry.

Passionate about mission and catechesis, Sr. Yolanda initially balked at the idea of becoming a college professor.

"Never saw myself in an academic setting," she admitted. "I thought it would limit my interaction with the community at large and the Church."

But her order's strong ties to the Irving university changed her expectations. The



western province of the SSMNs teamed up with two Dallas businessmen to open UD in 1956 with the blessing of Bishop Thomas Gorman. Several sisters were part of the original faculty.

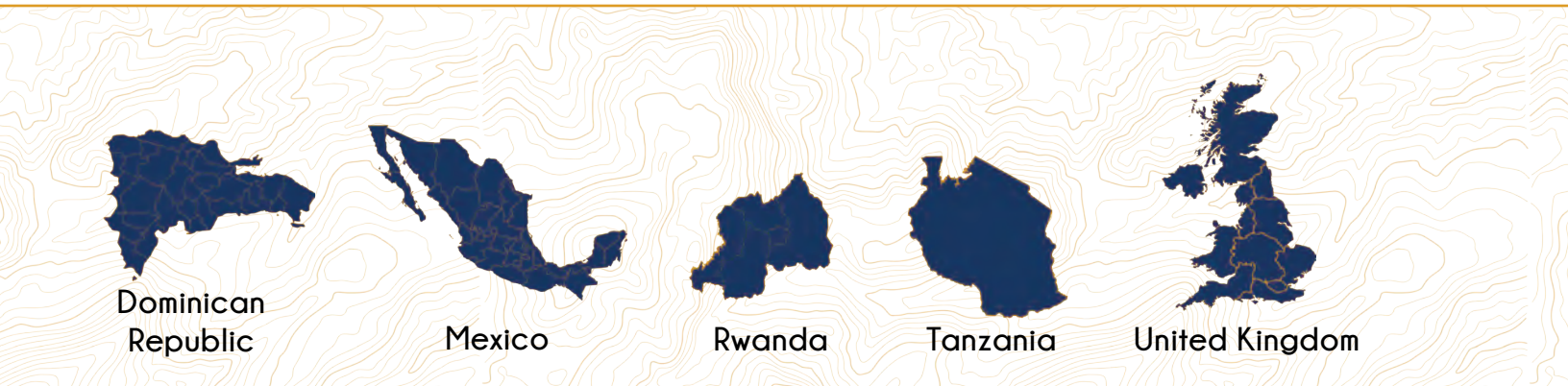
"It's humbling to follow in the footsteps of the other sisters who taught here," said Sr. Yolanda, who teaches theological courses in Scripture online and in the classroom. "We're embedded

in this university."

WELCOMING HISPANICS

When Sister Ines Diaz came from Mexico to the U.S. to join the Sisters of St. Mary of Namur in 2010, she helped provide outreach to Hispanic families at St. John the Apostle and Holy Name parishes.

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“It was common to see people who were baptized but didn’t have other sacraments,” she pointed out.

Offering RCIA and sacramental preparation classes and materials in Spanish persuaded more Hispanic Catholics to re-engage with the Church. She later continued that mission as director of Hispanic Ministry for the diocese. Today Sr. Ines works as co-coordinator of the SSMN convent and is pursuing a master’s degree in Bible studies. The seasoned catechist hopes to lead Bible classes in Spanish.

“Helping Hispanics come back to the Church is my passion. I feel very blessed and very energized to do it,” she said. “By coming here, I filled a need and hope to continue this part of my vocation.”

FINDING PEACE

An unexpected death changed Sister Francesca Walterscheid’s life as a SSMN.

She was teaching first grade at St. Cecilia’s School in Dallas when Sister St. Mark, SSMN, who supervised the convent’s infirmary, died in a tragic car accident.

“We worked together on weekends, so I kind of knew what was going on,” said the 91-year-old, remembering how her responsibilities shifted from the classroom to health care in 1978. “I missed teaching but kept busy working with the sick.”

She learned how to move patients and bandage wounds from watching Sister Elaine Breen, SSMN, a registered nurse. They also attended workshops on geriatrics together.

Taught by the Benedictine sisters in Muenster, the Sacred Heart graduate looked into different religious orders after high school before choosing the SSMNs. She was drawn to the congregation’s hospitality and simple ways.

“I felt at home and at peace,” Sr. Francesca recounted. “If you find peace, it’s a good sign that it’s a vocation because you never know when you enter. It’s a leap of faith.”

The former nurse’s aide sat at the bedside of many sisters who were dying and said it was a privilege to care for them in their final days. The “letting go” is always

peaceful.

“They know what’s important in life,” she explained. “That’s how we’re all supposed to live.”

WITNESSING GENOCIDE

When you ask Sister Charles Marie Serafino what inspired her to become a missionary, she remembers watching old Maryknoll movie reels with her seventh-grade geography students at St. Maria Goretti Catholic School. The films, produced to highlight Catholic missions overseas, provided surprising details about life in South American and African countries.

“Growing up in Duncanville, I had this narrow vision of the world. Those Maryknoll films enlightened me,” the former teacher explained. “I started questioning the injustice in the world and the gap between rich and poor.”

The SSMNs have ministered in Africa since 1923, so the idea of serving the poor in another country seemed possible. Her request to begin mission work was finally approved, and in 1964 she left Texas for her first assignment at a girl’s boarding school in Rwanda.

“It didn’t have any running water or electricity and we had to chop wood to cook,” Sr. Charles Marie said, describing the primitive conditions. “All of those material needs were very preoccupying.”

Her 38 years in Africa included time in the Congo where she was director of novices — a task that continued after returning to Rwanda where a new novice was started on the other side of the country.

Although she calls washing clothes in a stream with tribal women or helping villagers prepare for marriage or first Communion “real mission moments,” an enduring memory is living through 100 days of the 1994 genocide in Rwanda. Ethnic Hutu extremists killed more than 800,000 members of the minority Tutsi tribe during the mass slaughter.

Avoiding danger, Sr. Charles Marie and 24 other sisters — some from another congregation fleeing harm — hid in the woods or the SSMN’s mission house in Kiruhura. They lived on oatmeal, cooking oil, and whatever vegetables were growing in the garden.

“Several times the militia, dressed in



huge banana leaves, came running through our property with clubs and machetes,” she said, recalling the experience. “There was the anguish of not knowing what would happen next. People were being massacred all around us.”

Eventually, some members of the group were flown via helicopter to Congo. Sr. Charles Marie escaped by driving a Suzuki — packed with sisters — into neighboring Burundi. No members of her order were lost but other congregations suffered casualties.

Talking about the Rwandan genocide is still difficult for the longtime missionary.

“Being with the villagers outside, under the night sky, and watching them dance and sing — those are the moments I try to remember,” Sr. Charles Marie emphasized.

BEING PRESENT

“Working in Africa, I received so much more than I could ever give. It wasn’t as



LEFT: Sister Roberta Hesse, Sister Mary Dorothy Powers, Sister Francesca Walterscheid, and Sister Charles Marie Serafino. (NTC/Juan Guajardo)

BELOW: Sister Yolanda Cruz, Provincial Gabriela Martinez, and Sister Ines Diaz stand in the chapel of Our Lady of Victory Convent. (NTC/Juan Guajardo)



much about nursing as it was learning the value of just being present.”

That’s how Sister Roberta Hesse, SSMN, described the years spent working with families in Rwanda, the Congo, Cameroon, and Tanzania.

“Everywhere I went I got to know the people on a very personal level by just being with them,” she explained. “Even if I didn’t know how to do their work, I would just sit with them.”

A licensed vocational nurse, the Muenster native spent much of her time treating children who suffered from malnutrition or tuberculosis. Sitting in the mission’s nutrition center, the sister’s heart would ache to see malnourished children walk in with a mother who often carried another baby on her back.

“They were wonderful people, but their lives were hard because of the lack of food and not much space,” Sr. Roberta said, explaining how a large tract of land became smaller as it was divided between family members.

Women did all the farming, so she taught them about crop rotation, distributed vitamin pills, and fed the children powdered milk mixed with ground sorghum and a little sugar.

“The children loved it and they gained weight,” Sr. Roberta remembered. “As they grew healthier, their mothers wanted to know more about nutrition. That was always a positive thing”

During her 34 years on the continent, the families she met weren’t very different from those in the U.S.

“The hearts of African mothers are exactly like mothers here and in other parts of the world,” the missionary said. “They want the best for the children. They want them to be healthy, educated, and to make something of their lives.” 🇺🇸

PILLARS *of the* PARISH

Directors of religious education support everyone from the pastor to the smallest child

By Susan Moses

Directors of religious education are pillars of the parish, according to Jason Whitehead, diocesan director of faith formation. They help support everyone in the parish, from the pastor to the smallest child.

Although they constitute the congregation's "front lines of evangelization and catechesis," Whitehead said, "they certainly don't get as much thanks as they deserve."

He continued, "Having spiritually sound catechists is absolutely fundamental to the health of the diocese. Because through each and every one of our 91 parishes, the most fundamental role that the laity can play is to live out their baptismal call in the role of catechist — radiating Christ by way of evangelization and catechesis."

Bishop Michael Olson and Whitehead, along with other diocesan faith formation staff, took an evening to thank parish directors of religious education. About 100 parish DREs, with varied responsibilities of children's catechesis, adult formation, and RCIA instruction, met at St. Patrick Cathedral Parish in Fort Worth on Nov. 7 for Solemn Vespers followed by an appreciation dinner.

Bishop Olson began the dinner with words of gratitude for the catechists. "I want to thank you, first and foremost, for your generosity, for giving of yourselves in handing on faith

through catechesis and education — two very important, necessary, and essential works of the Church."

The bishop pointed out the distinction between teaching the faith and passing on the faith. Whereas teaching conveys concepts and ideas, passing on the faith transmits "by our example and by sharing not only what the Church believes, but how we, as the Church, believe it, and how and why we cherish it."

A good DRE must first be a catechist, handing down Catholic faith, teaching, and morals. "Their role is to be a witness to Christ, to echo Christ, to radiate Christ," said Whitehead.

Their second role is administrative: recruiting catechists and coordinating the faith formation for the parish. In this role, Whitehead joked, they carry not the keys to the Kingdom, but the keys to every classroom and supply closet.

These directors of faith formation, said Whitehead, are "inherently oriented toward self-giving. We're particularly appreciative of those that have given year after year after year. They are certainly giving of themselves and not for what they get in return."

On this and the next pages, *NTC* spoke with a few of these special catechists who pour their heart and soul into their work.



ANDREA WOOLUMS

Coordinator of
Elementary Faith
Formation

St. Mark Parish,
Denton

NTC/Juan Guajardo



Bishop Michael Olson leads catechists in the Liturgy of the Hours before an appreciation dinner. (NTC/Ben Torres)



SHARE THE GIFT: “I have been given a great gift. I experienced conversion in my early adulthood years, and it was so transformational for me. I feel like God gives us these things, these gifts, to give to others. It enkindled a fire in me that I haven’t been able to contain. I’ve always looked for ways to help people experience Jesus and meet Him in catechesis, in evangelization moments. I feel like it’s just in my heart to bring people into that relationship and help them know Him.”

NOT JUST FOR KIDS: “I want to be a part of the education of families. We cannot do it without the parents. If we’re getting the children here, of course we can plant a seed, but it’s going to be totally covered up by everything that’s happening in the family if the family is not supporting that. “We have to reach the parents. They have to meet Jesus. It can’t just be knowledge. It must be experiences that draw them into relationship. My goal is to be trying always to create those experiences.”

Woolums plans multi-generational events periodically, such as a time tunnel demonstrating our covenant with God or

a welcome meal to explain Advent.

PASSING ON THE FAITH: “We, as witnesses, are passing on the faith whether we are intentionally going into a classroom and teaching or not. Even a lack of faith passes on a lack of faith. It’s making all adults, and children, aware that your actions, the way you approach things, the way you talk about things, is teaching the faith. Whether you are or are not teaching the faith, you are giving them what they will have in their adulthood.”

SIDE EFFECTS: “I’m hungry all the time, I want to know more. I just love being creative with how to explain the faith. And it helps me grow. I learn new things all the time. And I grow closer because I take it to prayer, and it helps me rely on our Lord to help know, “What am I supposed to do with this opportunity?”

REWARDS: “I get to be creative. I love meeting the people here, the different stories. I’m always impressed with the stories of people coming to relationship with God.”



**PAUL
CRNKOVICH**

Director of Religious
Education

St. Thomas the
Apostle,
Fort Worth

NTC/Juan Guajardo

WHY: “I do it because I love Jesus. Jesus has been my best friend as long as I can remember, and for me the purpose of evangelization, catechesis, religious education, whichever title you use, is to bring souls close to Him. Anything that I do in catechesis and religious education, whether it’s administrative data entry or whether it’s helping to be a Christian brother to someone who’s suffering, it’s to bring them closer to Christ. That’s the goal.”

REWARDS: “One of the joys of my job is that I get to be more in communion with fellow brothers and sisters. That’s one of the signature joys for me. Especially when you are teaching or catechizing or simply relating to someone, you’re able to enter into a deeper intimacy with that person on a level that I don’t think occurs at other places.”

AN ATTITUDE OF GRATITUDE: “Where that responsibility [to pass along the faith] comes from has to be a place of gratitude and a place of response to the gifts that you’ve been given. Someone passed to you the gift of faith. They echoed it, and that’s what the word catechesis

FINDING TRUTH: Raised in Baptist and Methodist churches, Dixon drifted into the “nones” in his 20s. His wife, Cheryl, is Catholic. “Like a lot of people, I was brought to faith by my children. Once I got a taste of the truth, I wanted to dive more into the truth, then it became a call to share it. You see so many people who are floating through their faith, who are just coasting through their faith with no real depth. It’s the right thing to do to help people understand not just that God loves us, but how much God loves us and how He wants a relationship with each one of us.

“One of the sad things in our society is that people are searching for truth, but they don’t know what it looks like. So, we must present the truth to them so they can see what it looks like, then they make the choice whether they want to accept it and live it or not. If they don’t ever have that choice of what truth is, and know what it looks like, then they can’t make that decision.”

RCIA MOMENTS: Dixon joined the Catholic Church in 1996 at the Easter Vigil service at St. Frances Cabrini Parish in Granbury. After Confirmation, the priest said to the dozen or so new Catholics, “Now turn around and look into the eyes of your family.’ I still remember the feeling of acceptance and love that

overwhelmed me at that time. I love to see people who have walked that RCIA path; they’ve journeyed into the faith. To see that moment where they are accepted and loved into the Church is just an overwhelming, beautiful thing.”

GROWTH: “My wife teases me that every time we start up a new session, my library grows. I study the faith; I want to be prepared for when someone asks a question about the faith. Show them what the Church teaches, and how she teaches, and how the beauty of the truth comes together into one coherent concept.”

EXERCISE: “Faith doesn’t grow unless it’s stretched and worked. It’s like a muscle. If you don’t exercise it, it just gets lazy. Faith has to be an energetic action; it just can’t sit around and read books.

“As Catholics, sometimes we rely too much on the ordained, or those who have taken vows, or those with lots of initials after their names to present the faith. We get lazy. Words are always necessary. Yes, actions do speak loudly. But our words, our speech, is vitally important. If we’re not speaking out about issues that we see, then it means that we accept them. We have to learn our faith, we have to exercise our faith, and then we have to speak out about what our faith is.” 🇺🇸

**STEVE
DIXON**

Catechist and
deacon candidate

St. Stephen Parish,
Weatherford

NTC/Juan Guajardo

means. Out of simple gratefulness if nothing else, to pass on that faith is an absolute need. And it should be a joy. It should not be a drudgery. And it doesn't have to be only in the form of classroom instruction. Your very life should pass on the faith, should echo everything that Jesus wants you to."

EARLY LESSONS: Crnkovich joined the U.S. Army at 18 and served for six years as a chaplain's assistant, which often had him working with the wounded and the dying. "It helps you to understand the suffering of Christ as well as to give you much more compassion for those who are in need. [The experience] really emphasized the need for salvation, the need to minister in a spiritual way."

Crnkovich requested the assignment because his grandfather had been a chaplain's assistant in World War II. "I thought, 'If I do this, I want to do it like him.' My grandfather, my father's father, was very influential in my faith and my life in general."

TEXAS BOUND: After his military discharge, Crnkovich studied at University of Dallas and worked at Catholic Charities Fort Worth. Last January, he completed a master's degree at Franciscan University of Steubenville before returning to the Diocese of Fort Worth. "This is a place where the Holy Spirit is moving and growing, and I wanted to be a part of that."



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too BEAUTIFUL

Rebeca Garcia adopts a new name and the habit of a Carmelite novice

By Kiki Hayden

Rebeca Garcia wept as she prayed in a Houston adoration chapel, surrounded by 50 other sweaty young adults. A retreat server brought her one tissue, then another, and then gave her the whole box. That, according to Garcia, is when she felt the Lord calling her into relationship with Him.

Growing up, Garcia hadn't paid attention to her faith. But after that retreat, she prayed more and joined a young adult group. The first time she met a religious sister, Garcia felt drawn to her. "I want what she has," Garcia thought.

"I guess you receive a grace to start noticing things," she told



Sister Teresa Agnes hands a candle to Sister Maria Sagrario prior to the Mass of Thanksgiving for her investiture at Arlington Carmel. (NTC/Juan Guajardo)

MORE PHOTOS

See more photos of Sister Maria Sagrario's investiture: NorthTexasCatholic.org and click on 'Photo Gallery.'



cloistered, very hidden. That's just too beautiful. Surely I'm not called to that...Then St. Teresa said otherwise."

During her discernment, Garcia read the autobiography of St. Teresa of Avila, who came to her conversion by an arduous struggle. Garcia realized, "You don't have to be born super good to have that kind of calling." Inspired by the Spanish mystic and the foundress of the Discalced Carmelite Nuns, she began writing to contemplative orders.

First, she visited a Carmelite community near Houston. "I didn't feel I was called there," she recalled. Then she visited another Carmelite community in Indiana "and it was not there either," she said. Finally, in 2017, she found the Discalced Carmelites of the Most Holy Trinity in Arlington. She wrote, they sent her information, and a visit was arranged.

Garcia visited the Arlington monastery in June and again in October 2017. Not yet allowed behind the grille, she stayed in a guest room and joined the sisters for prayer in the chapel. She also met each sister in the parlor, still separated by the grille. "After my second visit... I knew, this is it, I'm coming in," Garcia recalled. In January 2018, she was first allowed to enter behind the grille during her live-in visit — a taste of life in Carmel.

How does someone know they have found their vocation? "You just get that feeling... this is my home. It's scary to feel that way," said Garcia. But she emphasized finding peace. "The Lord will let you know... If you feel that peace there, then it's probably it. Where there's peace, there's the will of God."

There was one problem: Garcia had loans to pay. "Rebecca worked so hard to pay off her student loans," novice mistress Sister Teresa Agnes said, smiling proudly. Garcia worked for the family business. She also made and sold *posole* (hominy stew) as a fundraiser. Her mother offered to help, but Garcia insisted, "This is my work."

Finally, she entered Carmel as a

postulant on the Feast of All Saints 2018. "It's funny because I did my novena to All Saints because I didn't know who to choose to get help," Garcia said.

Almost a year later, Garcia was well-accustomed to the Carmelite daily routine of prayer and work. Several times a day, the sisters congregate in the chapel. They stand, bow, and pray in rhythmic spoken chant. Like dancers, the sisters circle each other, take turns standing in the center to read, rise, and kneel as one. After midday prayer, Garcia kneels to pray. A red candle flickers in the chapel. The silence is punctuated by occasional bells, the bark of a dog, and a bird squawking. Garcia remains kneeling, her gaze peaceful, smiling gently.

In preparation for her investiture, Garcia gave Mother Anne Teresa a list of three spiritual names. "I pray about it and I may choose one or I may not," explained Reverend Mother. "This time I did. It was a beautiful name." On November 9, 2019, Garcia received her white veil and the new name: Sister Maria Sagrario of the Pierced Heart of Jesus. Surrounded by the Carmelite sisters, her family, and her friends, Sister Maria Sagrario became a Carmelite novice. Two friends from her young adult group, now priests, concelebrated the celebratory Mass of thanksgiving.

After Mass, a friend said to Sister Maria Sagrario, "You used to always say Jesus was your boyfriend. Now there's no doubt." Laughing, Sister Maria responded, "Now he's my husband!"

Sister Maria Sagrario's daily routine has not changed, according to Reverend Mother. But as a novice, she has received her habit, her new name, and "the mission that comes with the name," explained Sister Maria Sagrario. What is her mission? "Contemplation in front of the Blessed Sacrament," said Reverend Mother. Her beautiful name will always direct her toward the Eucharist. Her first name, Maria, is Spanish for "Mary" — the *theotokos* or God-bearer; the second word in her name, *Sagrario*, is Spanish for tabernacle. 🇺🇸

UL

the *North Texas Catholic*. "I started noticing women wearing weird things [such as habits and veils]. I said... wait, they're the spouse of Christ!" Fascinated by religious life, she attended diocesan discernment events and searched online for religious orders.

Garcia hoped to join a "growing, vivacious" community with a full habit. "At first, I completely put aside [Carmel]; I was like... oh no, that's for good, holy women...



Sisters Nicole and Almariz Ortiz present gifts to the infant Jesus at St. Joseph Parish in Arlington. (NTC/Juan Guajardo)



gifts for a KING

Ideas for giving back to Him who first gave to us

By Juan Guajardo and Susan Moses

This time of year, it's common to see lawns and bumpers decorated with those cliché phrases "Jesus is the reason for the season" and "Keep Christ in Christmas." Although their creators surely meant well, these remarks simply fall short of how truly grateful we should be for having a God who loved us so, He became "the word made flesh" (*John 1:14*). By His Incarnation we have indisputable evidence that God loves each of us so much that He "emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men" (*Phil 2:7*).

How, then, can we express our gratitude? Those who were present at the Nativity give us a clue.

First and most importantly, what Jesus wants most is for us to give Him our whole life. That is, to know, serve, and love Him with all our heart, with all our strength, and with all our mind as He said in the *Gospel of Luke*.

The Virgin Mary bears witness to this. "Mary is more

blessed because she embraces faith in Christ than because she conceives the flesh of Christ," St. Augustine noted. Mary embraces Christ fully. She places Him first and foremost in her life. No half measures. She invites us to do the same, modeling holiness for us, just as her Son does.

Also there with the Divine Child is His earthly father, St. Joseph. We don't hear much about him. In fact, we don't hear anything at all from him in Scripture. But we know from his actions that he was a man of strong faith who *knew* he was in the presence of something greater. The *Gospel of Matthew* describes him as "a just man." He has four dreams in which God gives him specific instructions. And guess what? He obeyed all of them. That is evidence of a man who placed his trust in God and knew how to listen. We should take notes.

There too, were the shepherds, who though having little, gave the infant Christ what they did have: their time, their adoration.

Finally, the three Magi, as tradition tells us, led by a shining star and yearning for truth, arrive at the party. They bring gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. The gifts, as you'll learn in the following pages, pay homage to Christ's divine kingship, priestly mission, and death. In short, they knew His identity and honored it.

After meeting Him, their lives were forever changed. Although sacred Scripture says nothing of what happened to the three Magi, tradition tells us they were so touched by their encounter with the infant Christ that they kept this experience in their hearts, later becoming Christians upon hearing the Gospel.

Inspired by the spirit of those who adored Jesus in the manger, we propose that this Christmas you also strive to give a gift to our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Though this is by no means a comprehensive list, here are 21 ideas to get you started.

Continued on Page 32

1 **ADORATION:** A king is worthy of praise and worship. Make a commitment to spend time with Jesus in Adoration. Most parishes offer Adoration at least once a month. A

few, like St. Peter the Apostle in Fort Worth and Sacred Heart in Wichita Falls, offer almost perpetual Adoration that all faithful are invited to.

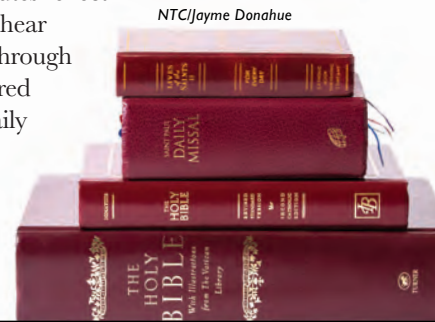
Sacred Heart parishioner Brenda Grayson said, “When you go once a week to sit in front of Jesus, read Scripture or a holy book, write in your journal, pray a Rosary, or just sit with Jesus, you grow in holiness.”

To find Adoration hours at our local parishes use the Parish Finder tool at fwdioc.org/parish-finder



3 **READ THE DAILY READINGS:** Don't feel like you hear the word of God? Give reading the Word of God a try. Make a habit of reading the daily Mass readings and then spending a few minutes reflecting on them. You'll hear

God speaking to you through the written word inspired by His Holy Spirit. Daily readings can be found by visiting the U.S. bishops' website at uscbb.org.



what gifts should we bring Jesus?

The three Magi give us a clue. With the first wise man's gift of gold, he recognizes God's kingship. Of course, Jesus came not as the king the Jews expected. Rather, He wants to be king of our hearts. So, let's recognize His divine kingship by giving Him the gift of our time and trust.

GIFTS OF TIME AND TRUST

2 **GET TO KNOW HIM:** St. Jerome once famously said, “Ignorance of Scripture is ignorance of Christ.” Being a Father and Doctor of the Church, we should take heed. After all, how much can you love a King whom you don't know?

Intimidated by the massive amount of knowledge in the Bible? You don't have to go it alone. Join a Bible study at your parish, or enroll in the St. Junipero Serra Institute.

Visit fwdioc.org/st-junipero-serra-institute for more information.

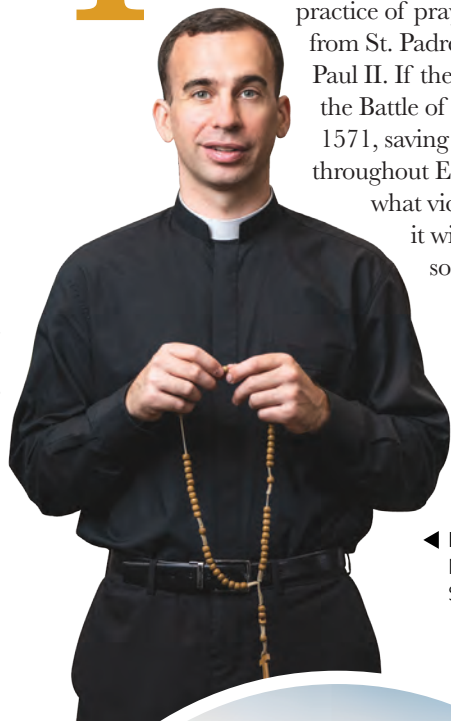


◀ **PAOLA QUINTERO-ARAUJO**
St. Junipero Serra Institute

4

PRAY THE ROSARY: The Holy Rosary is a great way of deepening one's relationship with Jesus and spending time with Him.

Many a saint has had a devout practice of praying the Rosary, from St. Padre Pio to St. John Paul II. If the Rosary won the Battle of Lepanto in 1571, saving Christianity throughout Europe, imagine what victories and graces it will obtain for your soul!



◀ **FATHER MAURICE MOON**
Nolan Catholic High School

NTC/Juan Guajardo



NTC/Juan Guajardo

6

GO TO DAILY MASS: Express your love for Jesus by attending a daily Mass when possible. Jesus, the King of Kings, will be there in the Word and in the Eucharist — Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity. What a wonderful chance to give Him your time and for Him to give you His presence.

▲ **FATHER VIJAYA MAREDOU**
St. Rita Parish in Eastland

◀ **MONTERRAT JESUIT RETREAT CENTER**



NTC/Juan Guajardo

7

PRAY A NOVENA: What better way to get to know Jesus than through His friends in heaven, the saints? A novena comprises nine days of prayer and meditation to ask God for a special request or intention. Oftentimes, novenas are used to ask for the intercession of specific saints.

The tradition of the novena goes back to the time of the Apostles, when the disciples and Mary prayed constantly for nine days in the upper room. At the end of the nine days, the Holy Spirit descended on the Apostles as “tongues as of fire, which parted and came to rest on each one of them” (*Acts 2:3*).



NTC/Jayne Donahue

5

GO ON RETREAT: Sometimes in our spiritual lives, we just need to reset or get spiritually charged, especially in this busy and noisy society. For the past 60 years, Montserrat Jesuit Retreat House, located in the northeast Diocese of Fort Worth, has encouraged men and women alike to pray, to listen, and to learn. Visit MontserratRetreat.org for more information.

8 JOIN THE ALTAR SOCIETY: Have a knack for cleaning or for decorating? Ever noticed how nice your church looks whenever Mass is celebrated?

All that requires the good will and generosity of volunteers, year round! Consider helping clean the altar linens, dressing up the church interior, or contributing and arranging the flowers at the altar.



NTC/Juan Guajardo

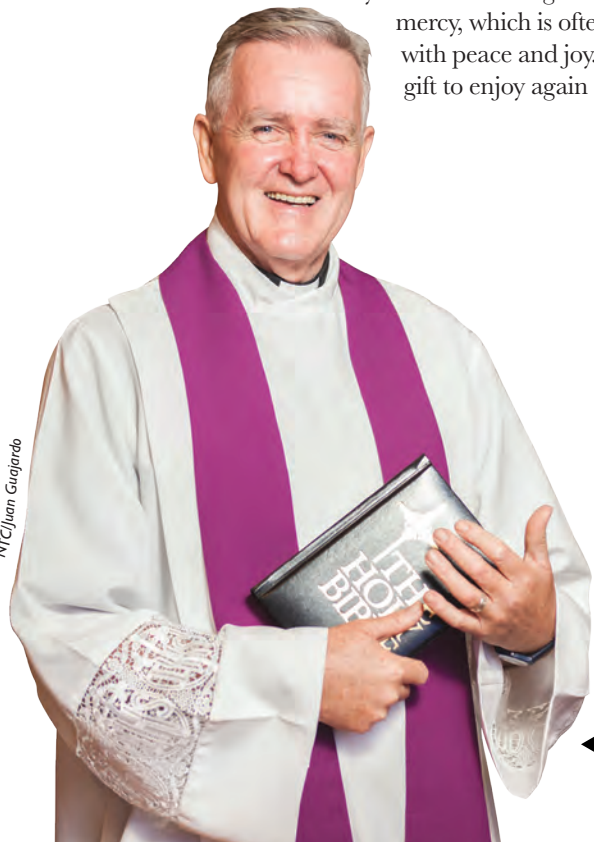
SUZAN TUGMAN ▶
St. Jude Thaddeus
Parish in
Burkburnett

what gifts should we bring Jesus?

In the *Gospel of Matthew*, the second wise man clues us in. He brought frankincense, an aromatic resin used to make incense. Of course, incense is often used in the Mass to symbolize the prayers of the faithful rising up to heaven. It follows, therefore, that frankincense honors Christ's priestly mission. And what mission was that? To bring about a new covenant, reconciling us to His Father.

GIFTS OF WORSHIPPING AND SERVING HIM

9 MAKE FREQUENT CONFESSION: A clean house helps make a friend feel welcome, so let's give Jesus a clean place to abide in us. Sweep out sin through the sacrament of Reconciliation, and you'll receive the gift of God's mercy, which is often wrapped with peace and joy. Truly a gift to enjoy again and again.



NTC/Juan Guajardo

◀ **FR. MICHAEL O'SULLIVAN, SAC**
St. Stephen Parish in
Weatherford

10 HELP WITH THE LITURGY: Have a good voice? Be a lector or choir member. You

could also consider being an extraordinary minister of Holy Communion. If you're a youngster, be an altar server. Check your parish bulletin for information on training sessions.



NTC/Juan Guajardo

◀ **WILLIAM SCHAUF**
Holy Redeemer
Parish in Aledo

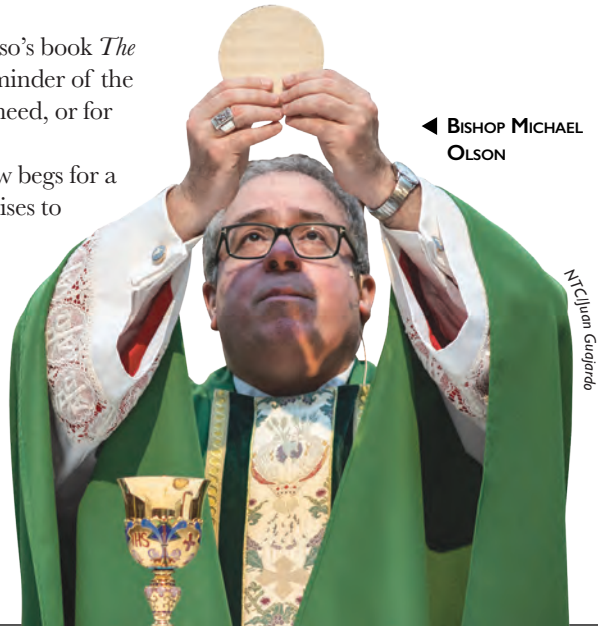
11

OFFER A MASS FOR SOMEONE: Josephine Nobisso's book *The Weight of a Mass: A Tale of Faith* is a poignant reminder of the importance of offering a Mass for someone in need, or for the faithful departed.

In the illustrated story, a poor faithful widow begs for a piece of bread from a faithless baker. She promises to offer a Mass in return for the baker's gift.

Mockingly, the baker writes "One Mass" on a piece of paper, placing it on his scale to determine how much bread it was worth. To his and the whole town's surprise, nothing in the bakery outweighed the worth of one Mass! That worth remains true today and for all eternity. Consider the priceless charity of offering a Mass for someone this Christmas season and beyond.

Visit fwdioc.org/parish-finder to find local Mass times and locations.



◀ BISHOP MICHAEL OLSON

NTC/Juan Guajardo



12

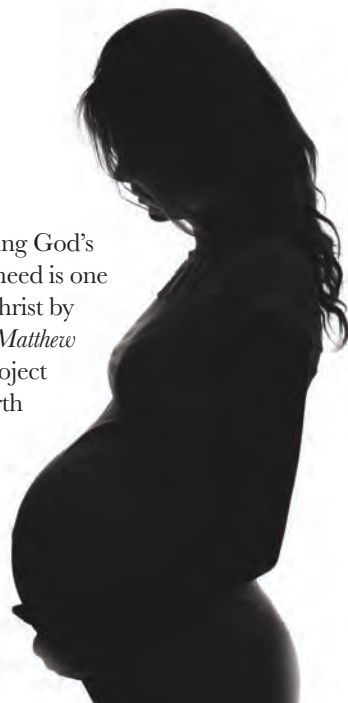
TAKE COMMUNION TO THE HOMEBOUND: Bring the Light of the World to those unable to attend Mass due to infirmity or illness. Your parish office is the first step in delivering the Eucharist to the homebound.

◀ BILLY HUTCHISON, BOB SPENCER, AND VICTOR GONZALES
St. John the Baptizer Parish in Bridgeport

NTC/Kenny Munyer

13

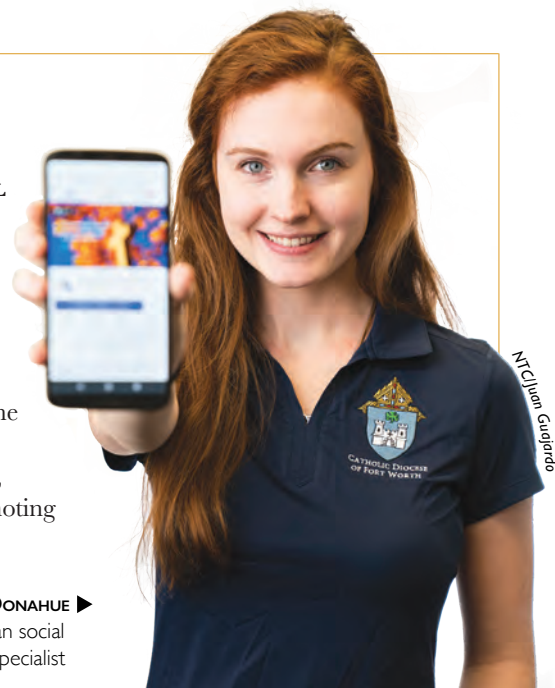
SUPPORT MOTHERS AND CHILDREN IN NEED: Helping God's little ones and mothers in need is one practical way of serving Christ by serving the least of them (*Matthew 25:31-46*). The Gabriel Project in the Diocese of Fort Worth does just that by helping women who are pregnant or have a child under the age of 18 months. Visit fwdioc.org/pro-life-apostolates for more information.



14

EVANGELIZE ON SOCIAL MEDIA: Social media can be a cesspool sometimes. Bring the Good News of Christ to your friends and "followers" by being charitable in your online discussions or debates and by sharing articles, photos, or videos promoting the Catholic faith.

JAYME DONAHUE ▶
Diocesan social media specialist



NTC/Juan Guajardo

15

FEED THE HUNGRY: Jesus was moved by compassion to feed the hungry, and we can follow His example today. Bring nonperishables to stock the shelves of a food pantry, buy a meal for

someone experiencing homelessness, or donate money to a local nonprofit — all these acts of kindness help feed the hungry, the first of the corporal works of mercy.

VERONICA TAVERA AND FINNEGAN STRITTMATTER ▶ St. Rita Catholic School



NTC/Joyne Donohue

18

SPONSOR AN ENGAGED COUPLE: A crucial step for any couple preparing for marriage is having the guidance of a sponsor couple. Volunteer couples in Fully Engaged, a premarital prep program used by the Diocese of Fort Worth, help brides- and grooms-to-be solidify the foundation upon which they'll build their marriage. Visit fwdioc.org/fully-engaged for more.



NTC/Joyne Donohue

16

LOVE THE ONES YOU'RE CLOSEST TO: Sometimes your children or your spouse survive on leftovers: the remnants of energy

and attention that remain as the day draws to its end. Give them the best of you, in the ways they love best — a favorite meal, the game of their choice (again!), a loving note — whatever shows your love in a special way.



17

GOT FAITH? Even more than fruitcake, faith is a gift meant for sharing. Check

with your parish office, and you may find your niche with the preschoolers, on the Confirmation team, or with those entering the Church founded by Jesus.



MARIA SOTO ▶ Business Manager, St. Matthew Parish



19

BE A CHEERFUL GIVER: Do you want to thank God for His generosity? For many, the end of the year is a good time for an extra financial donation to the parish. Or consider a gift to the Annual Diocesan Appeal (AdvancementFoundation.org/annual-diocesan-appeal), which impacts rural and needy parishes and schools in our diocese.

what gifts should we bring Jesus?

The third magi bore the final gift: myrrh. What is that, you ask? It's a burial spice used in ancient embalming customs. It's not the first thing one would give an infant — but as Christian blogger Suzanne Tucker points out, "this was no typical child." The burial ointment foreshadows Christ's death on the cross. Jesus Christ pours Himself out completely for us, out of love. Recognizing that, what else can we give Him but our lives in return? Recognize Him as Lord in all areas of your life by being a good steward of the talents, time, and graces God gives you.

GIFTS OF LORDSHIP IN ALL AREAS OF OUR LIVES

21

THE LEAST OF THESE:

God can use your talents to serve others, sometimes in ordinary ways like driving a senior citizen to a medical appointment. This opportunity and dozens of others abound through Catholic Charities Fort Worth, the Christ Child Society, the Knights of Columbus, and the Society of St. Vincent de Paul.

Little acts of service call to mind *Matthew 25:40*, in which Jesus said, "Whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me." 🇺🇸

20

DEFEND LIFE FROM CONCEPTION TO NATURAL DEATH: God gave us the gift of life. Be a witness for the sanctity of life by praying outside of an abortion clinic or volunteering with pro-life crisis pregnancy apostolates, like Loreto House, Flourishing Tree of Life, or Mother and Unborn Baby Care. Visit fwdioc.org/apostolates to learn more about these nonprofits.

CNS/Dave Hrbcek, The Catholic Spirit



▲ **NICKY PETERS**
Sidewalk counselor in St. Paul, Minn.



◀ **RON RUSSEL AND JESSE CARRIZALES**
Provide-a-Ride volunteers at Catholic Charities Fort Worth

HELPING THOSE IN harm's way



“Free Burma Rangers” is a true adventure movie, featuring real-life heroes. Chief among them is David Eubank, a former U.S. Special Forces soldier who puts his life on the line constantly to free the oppressed and rescue victims of civil wars. (Courtesy Deidox Films and Lifeway Films)

In the midst of conflict, 'Free Burma Rangers' founder talks with us about his latest mission

By Jerry Circelli

Following my review of the eye-opening documentary “Free Burma Rangers,” about missionaries who help free and treat oppressed people around the world, I felt compelled to get in touch with the group’s founder, David Eubank.

I wanted to know what motivated this seasoned U.S. Special Forces soldier to become a missionary and risk his life daily to help people in some of the most dangerous regions on earth.

Heidi McDow, a communications specialist associated with the Free Burma Rangers, told me that Eubank was in Syria. He was in the midst of freeing Kurds pinned down in the fighting there and moving them to safety. I asked her if, somehow, he could answer some questions for the readers of the *North Texas Catholic*. Ms. McDow relayed my questions to Eubank via email and told me it could take a while to get a response.

A few days later, on the evening of October 30, I was watching “Special Report with Bret Baier” and there he was — David Eubank — in the middle of frontline rescues of the Kurdish people in Syria. With the blood of rescue victims on his clothing, Eubank was explaining to reporter Benjamin Hall the dire circumstances in which the Kurds find themselves in Syria. Along with treating rescued Kurds, Eubank and his Free Burma Rangers were also treating a Syrian government soldier.

I watched as the news reporter said of Eubank: “His team operates under fire — day in, day out — putting their own lives at risk to treat others... It’s not clear how the Syrian story will end. There are so many competing powers in such a small space. But there are people like Dave Eubank, who will do whatever they can, simply to help those caught in the middle.”

I received a phone call in the middle of the report. It was the communications specialist telling me that Eubank had forwarded a

message to her for the *NTC* from the front lines of the fighting in Syria.

I touched “play” on the attached file she had sent to me. And there he was again — David Eubank.

Following is what the Free Burma Rangers leader and founder relayed to Catholics in North Texas:

“It was hard to condense 26 years of working in Burma — and now Iraq, Syria, and Sudan — to one documentary,” Eubank said. “But we prayed, and we asked God to help us to put together what was needed for this film.... So we chose what we thought were some of the most significant moments for the Free Burma Rangers in Burma and in Iraq, and we left out Sudan completely, and we left out Syria, and we left out a lot of Kurdistan. But we hoped the essence of what we’re about and what we’re trying to do, which is love and serve God and His people, is there. And I believe it is.”

When asked what he hoped would be some of the greatest takeaways for viewers of the movie, Eubank related a recent encounter.

“A lady watched the movie, who I didn’t know and she didn’t know me, and she said ‘Do you know who the hero of the movie is? It’s God.’

“And I thought, wow, we did it. God helped us do this. He’s the hero. ... This movie is about salvation and finding that salvation through Jesus.”

To deliver that message and accomplish his goals to free and treat the oppressed around the world, Eubank takes an ecumenical and all-inclusive approach.

“Our organization has Muslims, Christians, atheists, agnostics, spirit worshipers, Buddhists, Yazidis ... everybody is welcome as long as you are here for love, stand with the people, don’t run if they can’t, and are able to read and write, so you can provide good medicine and write reports. This [is] what it takes to be with the Free Burma Rangers. And I hope that comes through, and that we’re a family. Not just

READ THE REVIEW

See what movie reviewer Jerry Circelli had to say about “Free Burma Rangers” at NorthTexasCatholic.org/movies-news



Continued on Page 40

From Page 39

my family, my wife, and kids who grew up doing this, but all of us.... It's about family and it's about love."

Eubank continued, "We've trained almost 4,500 Rangers and hundreds of videographers. We have thousands of hours of film ... and what I hope comes out of this is that people look at their own lives and ask themselves who they are serving, what they are serving. I hope they find that answer in love and in Jesus. ... And I hope people are inspired to stand up for people who are hurt and oppressed and that they draw their strength from God."

As for himself, Eubank explained his priorities and what keeps him motivated.

"I try to put things in this order: First is the Spirit, led by God.

"Second, intellect and heart — intellect says oppression is wrong and the heart says love.

"And finally, the body. It's fun to walk around in the jungle, it's fun to run around — for me anyways — and help people and live an outdoor life.

"War and fighting don't bother me that much, so it fits. But I want to keep it in that order. God first. Heart and brain second. And then then the body."

Eubank said his crews will continue filming in order to keep people apprised of what is going on in the lives of oppressed people around the globe. Expect more films, especially now with his involvement in Syria.

"This is just an offering of love," Eubank said, "to say thank you to God and thank you to everybody for what we've seen and what we've been able to be a part of. In spite of our weaknesses and failures, God has used us."

Regarding his faith, Eubank describes himself as a Christian.

Eubank's parents were missionaries in Thailand, and he spent his childhood there, getting to know many Jesuit priests and Maryknoll sisters.

He relayed a story from those days in the missionary fields.

"I went to boarding school and I was away from my mother and father. I was a small boy, seven years old, and I felt homesick. I got dengue fever, so I was physically sick, too. And I remember laying in my bed.

"Mom and Dad were not there. I was missing them. They were a thousand miles away. I was in northern Thailand and they were in southern Thailand.

"And I said 'Jesus, I don't know if you're real or not. My parents believe in you, but I need to know.' And so I said, 'If you're real, help me.'

"Right away I felt like the room got lighter and I felt love in my heart. And you know God is love. That's what you should feel, right? I thought about that later. I felt love in my heart, and I closed my eyes and it got even brighter. Then I saw an image — a picture, a face.

"It was the face of Mary. I thought, 'Whoa!'

"I'm not Catholic. I didn't grow up Catholic. But that's what I saw.

"I became a follower of Jesus after that."

Eubank continued to explain, "One day at church, years later, someone asked me my conversion story. And I told it."

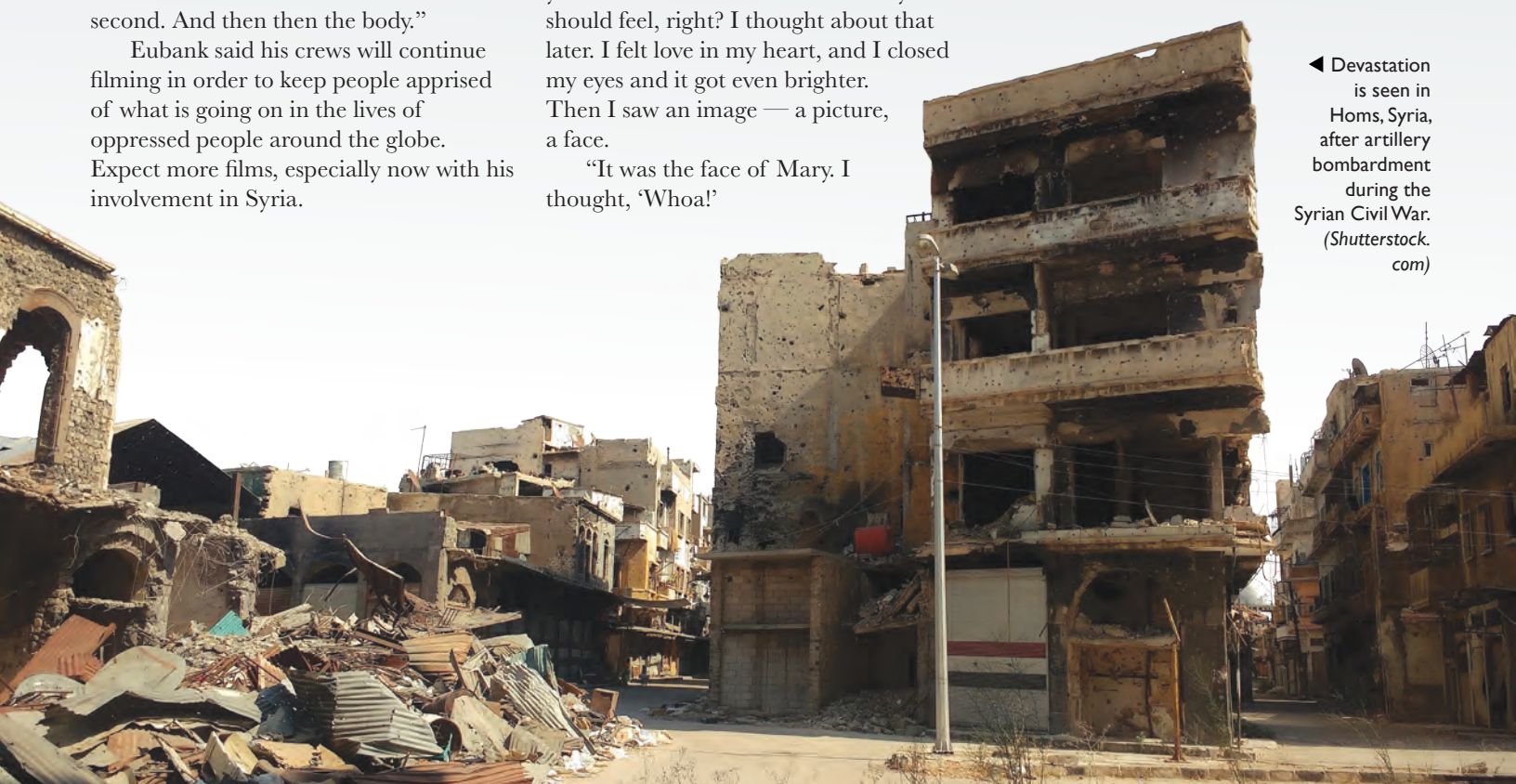
Eubank said a woman took interest and explained his vision in a way that has forever made sense to him.

"She said, 'Dave, you couldn't have your mother, so Jesus sent His mother to be with you.'"

Eubank continued, "There are mysteries that we don't understand in this world. We all have different experiences. But I believe in those things. And I believe that God did send Jesus, through Mary, on this earth in human form to show us what God is like, to forgive us our sins, to lead us in joyous life, and to give us salvation afterwards. And He's here with us every day."

With that, and a thank you to Catholics in North Texas, Eubank signed off, ready to fight another day and continue his mission to free and provide medical treatment for his brothers and sisters around the world. 🇺🇸

◀ Devastation is seen in Homs, Syria, after artillery bombardment during the Syrian Civil War. (Shutterstock.com)

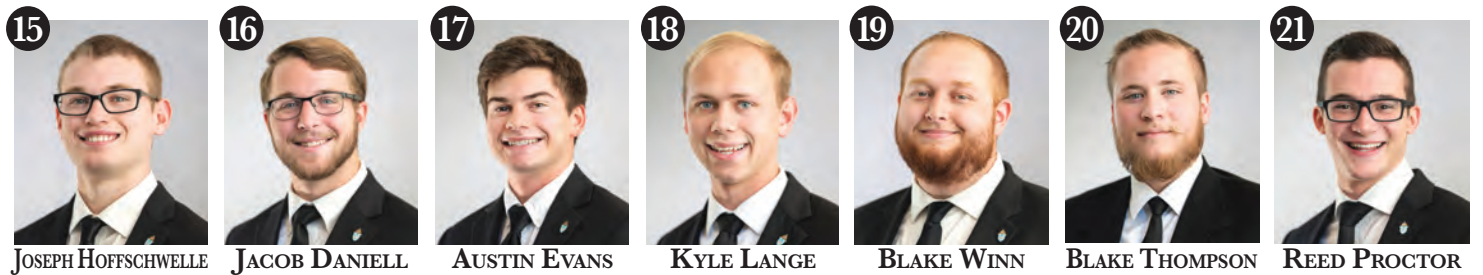


DAILY PRAYER LIST



Fort Worth Seminarians 2019-2020

Thank you for your support. Please pray for the following seminarians on the corresponding days of each month:



31 FOR SEMINARIANS TO GROW IN SELF-AWARENESS AS THEY DISCERN CHRIST'S CALL

Prayer for a Seminarian

God our Father, thank you for calling [name] to prepare for the priesthood. Grant him the grace to grow closer to You through daily prayer.

Help him form his personality as a credible witness to others. Bless him while he studies Your word and the teachings of the Church, and give him a generous heart to serve Your people. We ask this through Your Son, Jesus Christ, our great High Priest.

Amen.





Orant Charities medical clinic sees more than 50,000 patients per year. (Courtesy/Orant Charities)

“MALAWI chose us”

Denton parishioners’ quest to do the most good leads to sustained involvement in health, education, and agriculture of African nation

By Joan Kurkowski-Gillen

When Seth Morgan and Michael Tenny decided to start a charity that would make a difference in the world, they carefully weighed their options. For more than a year, the North Texas businessmen studied where money and manpower could do the most good.

Guatemala, Mexico, and impoverished areas in the U.S. were considered worthy candidates. But their thoughts soon turned to Malawi, an underdeveloped country in southeast Africa with high rates of malnutrition, infant mortality, and disease. It’s also home to more than 1 million children orphaned by HIV/AIDS.

“We didn’t choose Malawi. Malawi chose us and God made that happen,” explained Morgan, a lifelong member of Immaculate Conception Parish in Denton.

The landlocked nation survived severe famine in 2002 and tops the international list for illiteracy, lack of clean water, low life expectancy, and economic instability.

“We wanted to help people who are extremely poor and give them opportunity,” he added. “We’re blessed to live in America. Most people don’t appreciate what real poverty is.”

Orant Charities made its first trip to Malawi, “The Warm Heart of Africa,” in 2007 and became a permanent presence in the country a few years later. One of the first challenges was tackling inadequate

healthcare.

A medical clinic was purchased in 2014 and the charity invested thousands in renovations and program development. Today the rural health center boasts a fully stocked pharmacy and delivers as many as 30 babies a month in its new maternity ward. A mobile unit, staffed with doctors and nurses, travels to remote villages to treat the sick.

“We see more than 50,000 people a year in our clinic, and about 20,000 will have malaria,” said Tenny, explaining outbreaks of the disease are rampant in Africa. The mosquito-borne illness is particularly devastating to children. Left untreated, many die.

“If you have it, there are five days when

you are so violently ill, you can't eat or drink," the St. Mark parishioner continued. "Children [usually] can't live through that, but we haven't lost a child in five years."

Malaria is easily cured if caught early. After a blood test at the medical clinic confirms the diagnosis, 50 cents worth of medicine and a few hours of rest is all that's needed to get a youngster back playing soccer again.

"We're able to save lives but the clinic has to be there to do it," Tenny emphasized.

Providing clean water is another ongoing project. Since 2007, the charity's water program has repaired 200 wells and drilled 17 new bore holes to serve 30,000 people. Each water well costs \$5,000.

"We're constantly looking for places where a single water well will make a difference," said Orant's co-founder, who makes the 30-hour trip to Malawi several times a year.

In Africa, women haul all the water and firewood.

"If they have to walk two miles each way with children to get water, that's a burden," he pointed out. "So Orant tries to drill wells as close to the center of the community as possible."

Clean, safe, accessible water is more than a convenience.

"It helps prevent sickness," Tenny added. "Women and children don't get parasites."

Trying to break the cycle of poverty and improve the quality of life for Malawians, Orant Charities also supports the education of young people — particularly girls — and operates an agriculture extension program for farmers. Expenses are kept to a minimum, and business professionals operate the nonprofit efficiently. All donations are welcomed but the charity relies heavily on a small group of benefactors who have supported it from the beginning.

"Everyone doing the work is a volunteer, and every dollar put in goes directly to the charity," Tenny promised. "The only money we actually spend is running medical clinics, drilling water wells, helping farmers, or direct tuition aid for young women in school."

Orant Charities keeps a low profile and most Catholic parishes and organizations have never heard of it.

"We don't do pulpit announcements

and don't put as much effort forward in raising more money as we should," the organizer admitted. "That's because everyone running this organization has a full-time job. We're busy doing that and serving the people in Africa."

And there's another aspect of the charity that makes it different from others. Since its inception, Orant Charities has encouraged supporters to visit Malawi and become hands-on volunteers. Except for medical professionals volunteering their services, travelers pay their own airfare and carry extra luggage with supplies needed in Malawi. Orant covers housing and food.

"When you see how people in other parts of the world live, it's very

eye-opening," admitted Seth Morgan who never forgot the mud hut villages he saw during a mission trip to Guatemala in 2001. "Working side by side with the poor allows you to know them as people and what their life is like."

"We're a society that focuses on ourselves," the brewery owner observed. "When you focus on other people, it's incredibly fulfilling. It really helps us find our purpose."

Many ignore the voice calling them to mission work.

"God wants you to make a change in your life. I believe that strongly," he said. "If we listen to that voice, God will give us the experience we are supposed to have." ✚



Since 2007, Orant has repaired 200 wells and drilled 17 new ones because clean, accessible water helps prevent sickness. (Courtesy/Orant Charities)



Together in Adversity

RIGHT FROM THE START:

Before becoming engaged, couples should complete marriage preparation classes “so that you can truly discern marriage without the pressure of wedding planning,” Mary recommended. That’s the time to learn about spending habits, stress management, and other potential sources of conflict.

“Marriage is a commitment; you can only control your commitment to the other person, not much else,” she said.

COMMUNICATION IS KEY:

Juan suggests dinners without electronics, regular dates with your spouse, and monthly scheduled sit-downs “to talk about the hard things” with empathy and transparency.

FAITH AND ADVERSITY:

Juan and Mary’s younger daughter, Lizzie, was diagnosed with leukemia in 2018. She lost sight in one eye but is currently in remission.

Mary remembered, “When we found out Lizzie was sick, we had no choice but to put everything into our faith. Faith helps me put one foot in front of the other daily when sometimes I don’t want to face reality.”

Juan said, “The only way I continue working through that challenge is my faith and trust in God’s plan. Hardships are tough to deal with, but if your faith is strong, hard times become a way for you to grow as a human being.” 🇹🇽

THEY ARE:

Married nine years, Juan and Mary Reyes, with their children Benjamin, Bella, and Lizzie, attend St. Patrick Cathedral in Fort Worth. (NTC/Ben Torres)



Author Oren Cass praised Catholic Charities Fort Worth for assisting clients obtain meaningful work, thus releasing them from dependence on public assistance. (CCFW courtesy photo/Kumiko Murakami Campos/Suite935.com)

Catholic Charities: A Work in Progress

Renowned author and researcher Oren Cass surveyed a room filled with enthusiastic Catholic Charities Fort Worth staff members and supporters and marveled aloud, “What an impressive group we have here, all of you determined to do the hard work of ending poverty.”

“It’s such an honor to meet all of you in person, having written about you in my book,” Cass told those gathered on the evening of Oct. 22 at the Mopac Event Center in Fort Worth.

Cass, a senior fellow at the Manhattan Institute for Policy Research, a former domestic policy director for Mitt Romney’s presidential campaign, and author of the recently published book *The Once and Future Worker*, was invited to travel to Fort Worth to lead one of CCFW’s regular Thought Leader events. Cass highlighted the work of CCFW in his book, praising the agency for strategically assisting clients to obtain

meaningful work, thus releasing themselves from dependence upon public assistance.

During his presentation, Cass outlined his “Working Hypothesis,” a belief that public policy efforts should focus upon supporting a thriving labor market.

“Without work, self-esteem declines and a sense of helplessness increases,” said Cass. “I’m so impressed with what Catholic Charities Fort Worth is doing to help people to become self-sufficient. We need to have a lot more agencies just like it in this country, if we truly want to connect individuals to economic opportunities and to help them to achieve life satisfaction and happiness.”

Cass mentioned an example from his book, in which CCFW temporarily helped a client to pay for childcare so that the mother of a young family could enter the workforce. “More than a year later, she remained steadily employed and her family had achieved self-sufficiency and its

three-months-of-savings goal,” wrote Cass.

Michael Grace, CCFW president and CEO, agreed with Cass’s hypothesis that public policy should shift the safety net to help individuals obtain and keep good jobs.

“People who have pride in their work are better parents, spouses, and healthy members of our communities,” said Grace. “Our work here at CCFW incentivizes this reach for our clients. It is also a great pat on our back to remember that Oren wrote about us as an effective agent of change in his book, and we hope to keep inspiring others to see the benefits of our case management model.”

The Stand Together Foundation has named CCFW a Catalyst Partner in their national efforts to fight poverty. The foundation will match donations up to \$1,000 to CCFW through the end of 2019. To learn more or to donate, call **817-534-0814** or visit **[CatholicCharitiesFortWorth.org/donate](https://www.CatholicCharitiesFortWorth.org/donate)**. 📍





Faith, Community, Service

HE IS: Father Khoi Tran, parochial administrator of St. Jude Thaddeus Parish in Burkburnett, St. Paul Parish in Electra, and Christ the King Parish in Iowa Park.

GROWING UP: Because his father was a political prisoner, he and his brother lived in Vietnam with his grandparents, along with three cousins and an aunt. His grandparents taught him “to turn to God and to share what little we have.

I learned how to be an intentional disciple by their living.” His extended family, including Dad, settled in Kansas when he was nine.

THE CALL: After high school, Fr. Tran entered the Redemptorist community, but after five years his novice master suggested he had the gifts of a diocesan priest. “My dream shattered, but then God worked. I was accepted to the Diocese of Fort Worth in a short time.”

ORDAINED: June 29, 2013 at Vietnamese Martyrs Parish in Arlington.

THREE IN ONE: Fr. Tran said having three parishes is like having “three different children, with different personalities, different styles, different blessings, different challenges. And sometimes they don’t like each other,” such as when high school teams compete.

OUT OF THE OFFICE: In addition to three parishes, Fr. Tran visits prisons, Midwestern State University, Notre Dame Catholic School, and community events. “I try

not to be in my office a lot. I put a lot of miles on my car, to make myself available.”

THREE PILLARS: “Parishes are built on faith, community, and service. Our faith strengthens our community, which nourishes the community-at-large through service. Our faith needs to be lived in action.”

BEST PART OF BEING A PRIEST: “Celebrating the sacraments, especially offering the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, because to hear the words of Christ — ‘This is My body, this is My blood given up for you’ — that is heaven on earth.”

WISDOM OF AGES: His grandfather instilled in Fr. Tran a strong sense of duty and responsibility for his parishes, saying “your priesthood isn’t yours, it belongs to the people.”

GET SOCIAL: Fr. Tran’s active presence on social media and his blog is “like another parish. God works in a mysterious way. More and more people turn to the internet. If we don’t reach out to them outside of parish boundaries, we are missing a lot of the population that is searching for something higher, something more meaningful in life.”

TAKEAWAY: “You might not always agree with me, but I will always be there for you. In your time of need, the Church will never abandon you because Christ never abandoned us.” 🇺🇸



NTC/Juan Guajardo



Special Time of Grace

The priestly vocation is a great mystery between God who calls and the man who is called, and that is only understood from the point of view of faith.

God, in His infinite love and desire for salvation, has wanted each person to be a participant of His great plan. To save us, God has wanted to use our smallness and thus reveal His greatness through this great divine and human friendship.

In the Old Testament, it is revealed to us that, in his unceasing search for us, God promises a savior. When the fullness of time arrives, God sends the angel Gabriel to a small region of the world called Nazareth, and in His greeting to that virgin maiden, proposes the great work that the world had never imagined. God was to be born from the human race, so that we would unite with Him and thus redeem our misery.

This great divine feat reveals what we celebrate during Advent: God who always comes, God who always seeks, and God

who always wants to save us. And in this desire to save us, God continues to invite the human being to participate in His blessed plan of salvation.

The call to the priesthood of Jesus Christ is closely linked to God's intention to save us. Just as He did in the past, God calls specific men today so that in His name they may be fruitful and offer their brothers and sisters this gift of salvation. He calls these men so that

Emmanuel is born in their hearts and their lives can spark the growth of new life in Christ for others.

Despite his smallness, the priest gives the life of grace to those who approach him in search of God's greatness to be reconciled and forgiven at the sacrament of confession. Through the priest's humble and limited hands, God becomes the food of eternal life in the celebration of the sacrifice of the Mass. This is how in the smallness of the priestly life, God does His magnificent work of bringing His greatness to men and saving them.



Fr. Manuel Holguin

In Nazareth, that sublime invitation was given to the young woman who would be the Mother of the Creator, and in our time that invitation is heard in the heart of the young man who listens and discerns, "Come after me, and I will make you fishers of men" (*Matt. 4:19*).

May this Advent, a special time of grace, be for those who perceive within them the call of God, a time of listening, a time of preparation, and a time of response. In the same way that the blessed maiden responded to the sublime voice of God, young men today can respond with generosity, "Let it be done to me according to Your word" (*Luke 1:38*).

Lord, give us priests according to Your heart. ✝

Ordained to the priesthood in 2012, Father Manuel Holguin is the pastor at Saint Peter the Apostle Parish in Fort Worth and serves as a liaison with the Vocations Office.



His Perfect Time

I don't know about you, but sometimes when I pray, nothing seems to happen. I don't hear any big, booming voices. I either think I must pray harder or use different words. Does God even hear me? Is this whole Christian life a sham?!

Dramatic, I know. But my humanity peeks its head out every once in a while to remind me that I'm not a saint, I don't have perfect faith, and I should probably ask for more grace and faith.

My lack of trust sometimes glares right at me. In moments like these (which are very real, very human, and totally normal), I'm reminded of the Bible verse in *Romans*, where Paul talks about Abraham's faith:



Ali Hoffman

"[Abraham] did not weaken in faith when he considered his own body as already dead (for he was almost a hundred years old) and the dead womb of Sarah. He did not doubt God's promise in unbelief; rather, he was empowered by faith and gave glory to God and was fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to do" (4:19-21).

How often do I question God's timeline or move hastily on a dream or vision that He's given me? I want immediate results and I want them to be

perfect every time. Often, when I don't produce these unrealistic results, I shrink back into complacency and focus on the problems here and now. I don't fully have faith that God will do what He promised He would do. I often struggle with the reality of where I am in life, and I think my present state is where I'll be forever. However, God thinks differently. Thank Him for that!

"For the vision is a witness for the appointed time; a testimony to the end; it will not disappoint. If it delays, wait for it, it will surely come, it will not be late. See, the rash have no integrity; but the just one who is righteous because of faith shall live" (Habakkuk 2:3-4).

Whatever the Lord is calling you to do, He will make a way. You don't have to force it to happen. You don't have to coerce, manipulate, or demand for something to happen. You don't have to say the perfect prayer for God to hear you. You don't need to see immediate results, and often, you are only asked to plant seeds that someone else will harvest. The Lord has a timeline for everything under the sun.

- Sit.
- Wait.
- Pray.

And then move when He says move.

There's a reason why patience is a fruit of the Holy Spirit. It's not just being patient with other people. It's being patient with the dreams and desires the Lord has placed in our hearts to unfold in His perfect timing, not our sometimes-imprudent timing. So, trust Jesus. Fall in love with Jesus. And move when He says move. He's given you everything you need to love and follow Him in this present moment. There's a reason why the Psalmist says, "He is a light unto my path." Notice that there's no mention of the horizon.

Today, I'm praying for the faith of Abraham, that even though I have no idea how God is going to pull this off or make this happen, I have faith that He is God, and He will make a way. 🇺🇸

Ali Hoffman is a Co-Coordinator of Youth Ministry at St. Catherine of Siena Parish in Carrollton. She also does modern calligraphy and watercolor encouragement and prayer cards. You can find more of her work on Instagram at [TheOodlesOfDoodles](https://www.instagram.com/TheOodlesOfDoodles).



Developing a Missionary Mindset

The theme for this 50th anniversary of the Diocese of Fort Worth is: *The Eucharist Makes Us the Church.*

While reflecting on this, I remembered a homily I heard years ago where the congregation was exhorted to take what we receive at Mass, namely Jesus, out into the world.

We were asked to “be what we receive.” I remember thinking: “How can I be Jesus when it feels like I can barely be me day to day?”

The answer might be caught up in the core of our understanding of the world and our place in it. Put another way, our mindset sets the course for our daily living.

This time of year is full of so many things. We have parties to attend and presents to wrap, new years to ring in, houses to clean, decorations to put up and then take down, Holy Day Masses to attend, and all of this while juggling the normal day-to-day things like work, chores, errands, and obligations with family and friends.

In my experience, our mindset really sets the tone for our holiday celebrations as well as daily living. Are we celebrating the modern culture or the eternal God? Are we all about completing tasks or being in the moment? Are we most concerned with the bottom line in our bank account or the meaning behind our giving? Do we make decisions based on fear and avoiding

conflict or based on love and forgiveness? Any number of mindsets can rule the way we approach our day.

We get our cue from God the Father whose love for us is revealed through His missionary mindset. God’s mission and mindset is all about love and mercy, and we encounter this in the person of Jesus.

If we are going to be in the world what we receive at Mass, we might want to adopt this

same missionary mindset. What I mean by this is that we have two responsibilities as Catholics: To grow in our faith and to show our faith. Put another way — we need to have an interior life of faith and an exterior mission for the Kingdom.

We see this clearly in the Bible. The disciples spent three years with Jesus getting to know Him deeply before Jesus sent them into the world to spread the Good News. Jesus started the mission and then purposefully and powerfully passed it on to the Church to continue it.

Step one is our interior life. We cannot give what we do not have. Thus, to form a missionary mindset, we start by developing our relationship with Jesus. Think daily prayer, Mass more than once a week, praying with and studying the Scriptures, taking time for Adoration, and a good dose of silent prayer. In the silence, Jesus will speak to the deepest parts of our lives.



Jeff Hedglen

If these are new ideas to you, or if you tried these things in the past and it did not go well, let me suggest: Don’t focus on the times you failed, focus on the times you actually did pray or make it to Mass. God is only focused on your effort, not your perfection. God loves you and wants to be with you — period.

Fueled by our times of prayer, we can now more effectively live our faith. There is no compartmentalization in Catholicism. We must grow and show our faith. Yes, we have different spheres of life: family, work, church. But only one guiding force, Jesus.

Our exterior mission can take many forms, but it overflows from what is inside us. Our values, beliefs, and convictions come from within and manifest in our thoughts, words, and actions.

The missionary mindset of sending an infant into the world as a savior lets us know we do not have to start big. We can take baby steps in our interior life and in our missionary efforts. Just like the three kings, we bring our gifts to Jesus, adore Him, and are sent on mission with a different mindset. With this missionary mindset we can be the Church the Eucharist makes us. ✝

Jeff Hedglen is the Campus Minister at University of Texas at Arlington.



HOLY FAMILY

A perfect model of holiness and sanctity for all Catholic families

Holy Family Parish, in Fort Worth.
(NTC/Juan Guajardo)



Marlon De La Torre is the Department Director of Catechesis and Evangelization for the Diocese of Fort Worth.

A distinctive charism that the Holy Family intimately reveals to us is their openness to serve. St. Joseph is asked to care for Mary and Jesus and he humbly and lovingly obeys. Mary is asked to bear the Son of God and she humbly and lovingly obeys. Christ, the Son of God, offers Himself in the model of service through His sacrifice on the cross.

In many ways, the charism of service exhibited by the Holy Family provides us with a genuine and authentic example of what it means to serve others before ourselves. The very act of service embraces a communal identity or, in other words, introduces the importance of family and community. The *Catechism of the Catholic*

Church describes the Christian family as a communion of persons representative of the Blessed Trinity (CCC 2205).

St. Joseph is the model husband and father due to his fidelity toward God expressed in his fidelity to Mary and his adopted son, Jesus Christ. Mary, the Mother of God, is the perfect wife and mother — she is the model of perfect obedience and charity as the God bearer. The very acts of faith expressed by the Holy Family as revealed in Sacred Scripture demonstrate a desire to follow the will of God and in turn affirm their fidelity to God. This beautiful act of grace serves as the beacon of hope all families may follow because the destination is our family in heaven.



Tell us about the Feast of the Holy Family.

The Feast of the Holy Family, established in 1893 by Pope St. Leo XII, reflects on the role of St. Joseph as the adoptive father of Jesus Christ; Mary, the Mother of God, chosen to bear the Son of God Jesus Christ; and Jesus Christ Himself who is the second person of the Blessed Trinity and is the Incarnate Word.

The Holy Family is regarded as the perfect model of holiness and sanctity for all Catholic families to imitate. It provides us with an example of how to practice authentic fatherhood and motherhood toward our children.



Why was Jesus born into a family?

The Nativity, or birth, of Jesus Christ signifies and demonstrates the love God has for us, His people, through His only begotten son as the Word made flesh. In Christ we come to know and understand that God intended to bring all of us back into full communion with Him through the birth of a son as the second person of the Blessed Trinity.



WANT MORE INFORMATION?

Watch the full video and find out more about this and other faith topics through the following:

- ▶ NorthTexasCatholic.org/video-gallery
- ▶ fwdioc.org/adult-faith-formation
- ▶ fwdioc.org/st-junipero-serra-institute

Jesus' birth signifies through His life, death, and resurrection that His responsibility was to bring man back to God. Jesus' birth within the Holy Family represents our entrance into the Kingdom of God.



Are there specific devotions to the Holy Family?

Several prayers, devotions, and novenas are attributed to the Holy Family. See **PrayMoreNovenas.com** for an example of a Holy Family Novena.

A novena to the Holy Family is most appropriately begun nine days before the feast of the Holy Family. This year, the novena would begin Dec. 21 and conclude on Sunday, Dec. 29. It is also fitting to pray it during the month of February, which is consecrated to the Holy Family.



What lessons can modern families learn from the Holy Family?

The exercise and application of the virtues of humility and prudence serve as principle lessons all families can learn and apply in their daily lives.

In St. Joseph, we have the model of a husband and foster father who faithfully and prudently cared for the Blessed Mother at all phases of married life, listening to the will of God and ministering to his wife and adopted son Jesus Christ.

Our Blessed Mother serves as the model of perfect motherhood, humility, and charity in her acceptance of the will of God to bear the Christ Child and become the Mother of God. Her perfect obedience serves as a model of holiness and simplicity we are all called to imitate and embrace. 🇺🇸

SAFE ENVIRONMENT

To Report Misconduct:

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

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

To Report Abuse or Suspected Abuse:

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

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

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





El Reverendísimo Obispo Michael Olson se dirige a los invitados durante el rezo de las Vísperas de la Liturgia de las Horas en el Centro Pastoral de la Catedral de Fort Worth el 8 de noviembre del 2019. (NTC/Ben Torres)

EXPRESIÓN DE gratitud

Los catequistas son esenciales para evangelizar al pueblo de Dios

Por Violeta Rocha

“La razón existencial de la Iglesia es proclamar el Evangelio”, señaló Jason Whitehead, el Director de la Formación de la Fe de la Diócesis de Fort Worth, al citar las palabras del Papa San Pablo VI. A través de su enseñanza los catequistas ayudan a los fieles a conocer, amar y servir a Dios. Esta labor que realizan los catequistas, directores y coordinadores fue reconocida el 7 de noviembre en la Catedral de San Patricio de Fort Worth durante un evento de oración y apreciación, en la que el Obispo Michael F. Olson les agradeció su compromiso de evangelizar al pueblo de Dios.

“Sin ellos, simplemente no podríamos realizar la evangelización. Ellos son la línea frontal en la catequesis de la Iglesia”, dijo sobre el arduo trabajo de los catequistas en las 91 parroquias de la Diócesis.

“Todos trabajamos con el mismo fin”, añadió Whitehead.

“El Obispo no tiene la oportunidad, tanto como él quisiera, de expresar en persona su agradecimiento a todos los que realizan con excelencia ese rol fundamental de catequizar. Y ésta es una gran oportunidad para expresar esa profunda gratitud”, señaló Whitehead.

En cada historia se ve el plan de Dios. Hablamos con tres catequistas y directores de la formación de fe, que son reflejo del trabajo extraordinario que se realiza en nuestra Diócesis al proclamar el Evangelio.

VERDADERA VOCACIÓN

Joana Mireles comenzó a los 16 años como voluntaria en las clases de catecismo en su Parroquia de la Inmaculada Concepción de Denton. Aunque servir como catequista no fue su propia iniciativa, pues según ella, “mi papá vio que había necesidad de catequistas para el programa en español y me dijo, ‘te anoté para que seas catequista’. Mi papá no sabía que estaba colaborando con Dios para ayudarme a encontrar mi vocación”, comentó Mireles, Coordinadora de la



La Hermana Eva Sánchez, HCG, a la izquierda, y la Hermana Aracely Lobaton, HCG, disfrutaron de la cena ofrecida después del rezo de la Liturgia de las Horas en el Centro Pastoral de la Catedral de Fort Worth el 7 de noviembre. (NTC/Ben Torres)

Formación Primaria de su parroquia.

“Caminar junto a tantas familias en su jornada de fe”, es lo más valioso para Joana, quien tenía sólo dos años cuando sus padres migraron a los Estados Unidos de San Luis Potosí, México.

Mireles está casi por terminar sus estudios de docencia en la Universidad del Norte de Texas en Denton. Mireles rechazó trabajar para el distrito escolar de esa ciudad para ser Coordinadora de la Formación para los niños de Pre-kinder a 5º grado, cargo que ha desempeñado desde hace 11 años para un total de 17 años como catequista.

Mireles coordina la formación de más de 600 niños, de los que el 77 por ciento son de origen hispano. Tiene a su cargo 106 catequistas y 43 adolescentes asistentes.

Tener la oportunidad de reunirse todos como diócesis, junto al Obispo Olson, es para Mireles la ratificación de “que trabajamos juntos para ayudar a

llevar almas al cielo...es un honor y un aprendizaje para crecer en la humildad”.

JAMÁS DEJAR DE CONOCER DE DIOS

Hace 20 años Connie Campos, originaria de Austin, Texas, sintió la necesidad de conocer más su fe, “iba a Misa cada domingo, pero no estaba educada en la fe. Comencé como asistente de catequista, luego fui a varios retiros de Cursillos, ACTS, tomé estudios de Biblia y me preparé mejor para enseñar mejor”, compartió Campos, catequista de RICA para niños en la Parroquia de Santa María de Dublin.

Su deseo de formación no cesa y aprovecha cada clase ofrecida en su parroquia o en los diferentes institutos de la Diócesis.

“Soy catequista porque el Señor me llamó a compartir este regalo de fe. A lo que hemos sido llamados a hacer, lo

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debemos hacer bien... nosotros dependemos de Dios y Él depende de nosotros para ser Sus manos y Sus pies”, dijo Campos, quien vive su servicio junto a su familia, pues su esposo es también catequista, mientras que uno de sus tres hijos es asistente de catequista.

Para Campos formar a los padres de los niños en el programa de RICA es necesario, “porque ellos van a ser los cimientos de esa herencia de fe que va a ir de generación en generación, para la Gloria de Dios”, dijo.

AQUÍ ESTÁ EL REINO DE DIOS

Tras décadas de servicio en diferentes ministerios, Guillermo Muñoz respondió al llamado al Diaconado Permanente hace casi 5 años, y espera su ordenación en el 2020. Muñoz descubrió durante este proceso que de Dios también tenía el don de la enseñanza.

Desde hace dos años él es parte del departamento de formación de la Parroquia de San Miguel de Bedford.

“Al prepararme para la clase y enseñarla, yo aprendo también... en los grupos de RICA, las personas que están regresando a la religión católica tienen muchas preguntas. Responderles y enseñarles de Dios es una gran satisfacción”, dijo el que es originario de Chihuahua, México.

“Catequizar es como decirles ‘aquí está el Reino de Dios en sus manos, nada más tienen que agarrarlo. Aquí está para ustedes y aquí estamos nosotros para facilitarles’, y cuando vemos a las personas sirviendo en sus parroquias es una gran bendición”, afirmó.

Participar por primera vez en la cena de apreciación con el Obispo de la Diócesis de Fort Worth, es para Muñoz “un gran estímulo para seguir esforzándonos a ser mejores”. 🇺🇸



La catequista Joana Mireles
(NTC/Juan Guajardo)



La catequista Connie Campos
(NTC/Juan Guajardo)



El catequista Willy Munoz
(NTC/Juan Guajardo)

AMBIENTE SEGURO

Para Reportar Mala Conducta Sexual:

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

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

Para Reportar Abuso o si Sospecha de Abuso:

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

- ▶ Si alguien está en peligro inmediato llame 911
- ▶ Llame al Departamento de Servicios para la Familia y de Protección (DFPS) de Texas al (800) 252-5400.

Reporte inmediatamente el presunto abuso a su supervisor, sacerdote o director, y presente el Aviso Confidencial de Preocupación con la información requerida por DFPS.

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



DEMASIADO hermoso

Una carmelita encuentra su vocación

Por Kiki Hayden

Rebeca García lloró mientras rezaba en una capilla de adoración de Houston, rodeada por otros 50 jóvenes sudorosos. Un servidor del retiro le trajo un pañuelo de papel Kleenex, luego otro, y acabó dándole toda la caja. Según García, fue en ese momento que sintió que el Señor la llamaba a comenzar una relación especial con Él.

García no había prestado mucha atención a su fe mientras crecía. No obstante, luego de ese retiro, comenzó a rezar más y se unió a un grupo de jóvenes adultos. La primera vez que conoció a una hermana religiosa, García se sintió atraída por ella. “Quiero lo que tiene”, pensó García.

“Supongo que recibes la gracia de empezar a notar ciertas cosas”, dijo en su entrevista con *North Texas Catholic*. “Comencé a notar que algunas mujeres usaban cosas raras, como los hábitos y velos. Me dije a mí misma, ¡espera, son la esposa de Cristo!” Fascinada por la vida religiosa, asistió a varios eventos de discernimiento de la diócesis y buscó en la Internet para conocer a las comunidades de órdenes religiosas.

García esperaba unirse a una comunidad que fuera “creciente y vivaz”



La Hermana María Sagrario abraza a un ser querido después de la Misa de Acción de Gracias el día de su investidura como carmelita (NTC/Juan Guajardo)

y que usaran un hábito completo. “Al principio, ignoré por completo la orden de las Carmelitas. Pensaba como ... ‘Oh no, eso es para mujeres buenas y santas ... enclaustradas y muy escondidas. Eso es demasiado hermoso. Seguramente no estoy llamada a eso’... Entonces, Santa Teresa dijo lo contrario”.

Durante el período de su discernimiento García leyó la autobiografía de Santa Teresa de Ávila, quien experimentó su conversión tras mucho esfuerzo. García se dio cuenta de que “no tienes que nacer extraordinariamente

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ESPERANDO AL Niño Jesús

Observen las tradiciones latinas, recordando
que Jesús quiere nacer entre nosotros



Por Violeta Rocha

Observar y mantener vivas las tradiciones latinas dentro de la fe católica, ha sido esencial para “preservar y pasar la fe, sobre todo en la Navidad que es tan significativo para nuestra Iglesia”, asegura el Padre Alejandro Olivera, párroco de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe de Fort Worth.

Junto al adviento que comienza el 1 de diciembre, las parroquias y los hogares hispanos de nuestra diócesis observan con júbilo y prácticas de fe con gran arraigo como son las posadas, arreglo del Nacimiento Navideño y el acostar al Niño Jesús en las primeras horas del 25 de diciembre.

Colocar el nacimiento ó pesebre navideño simboliza que al igual que María

y José todos nos estamos preparando para la celebración del nacimiento de Jesús, señala Virginia Rodríguez, Directora de Educación Religiosa en la Parroquia de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe.

Desde el mes de noviembre el Nacimiento Navideño ya se observa en el pasillo principal de las clases de educación religiosa, como forma de adelantarse al tiempo de receso de las vacaciones navideñas. “Muchos de nuestros niños son de herencia hispana, y ven el nacimiento en sus casas, pero es importante que también lo vean en la Iglesia, en sus clases de catecismo, y vean que el nacimiento no es sólo la dulce espera de María y José por Jesús, sino también es ver que los Reyes Magos llegaron de diferentes lugares a adorarlo, porque Jesús no sólo vino para algunas personas en específico, sino para todo el mundo”, apuntó Rodríguez y aseguró que se siente “contenta de decir que desde los niños de kinder hasta los jovencitos de 8^{vo}. grado saben que el principal motivo de la Navidad es el nacimiento de Jesús, y no los regalos o las fiestas”.

La tradición del nacimiento nace con San Francisco de Asis, explica el Padre Olivera, “San Francisco se imaginaba el nacimiento de Jesús, pero quería contemplarlo con sus ojos y tuvo la inspiración de hacer una representación”, al explicar esta costumbre que comenzó con personas y animales vivos, y con el tiempo pasó a ser con figuras como lo conocemos ahora.

“Aunque simples, estas tradiciones son una forma de catequesis interactiva. Entra por los ojos y conmueve, entra en nuestra fe”, comparte el sacerdote originario de Oaxaca, México.

En la Parroquia del Inmaculado Corazón de María, la tradición de instalar el Nacimiento navideño estará a cargo del Padre Alejandro López Chávez, Vicario de la parroquia, que simulará este año, una ciudad pequeña con ríos, fuentes, milpas, animales, y María y José en la posada

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Los jóvenes de la Iglesia producen una pastorela en el escenario durante una fiesta parroquial de Navidad en la Parroquia de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe de Fort Worth. (NTC/Ben Torres)



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esperando al Niño Jesús.

Maricela Olvera, administradora general del Inmaculado Corazón de María, señala que como hispanos, estas tradiciones, dan identidad cultural a las nuevas generaciones de herencia hispana, al tiempo que le revive recuerdos de sus padres, pues “tenemos una espiritualidad religiosa muy profunda y somos mucho de símbolos, de cosas visuales. Sentimentalmente te transporta a la familia, a esas raíces de fe, a la fe que te enseñaron de niña”, asegura quien es originaria de Guanajuato, y llegó a Estados Unidos en su adolescencia.

Las nueve posadas son también representaciones. Se trata de una novena que, junto con el Adviento, nos invita a reflexionar.

“Caminamos en comunidad, cantando y siguiendo a María y José y tocando en diferentes puertas de la parroquia, y finalmente la última estación la hacemos en las puertas principales de la Iglesia, y ahí se le abre las puertas a Jesús”, dijo el Padre Olivera y explicó que en Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe, las posadas se realizan en la parroquia desde el 2015 y se comienza con el Rosario, seguido de la Santa Misa y después la posada.

Chocolate caliente, bolsas con dulces y fruta conocidos como “bolos” ó “aguinaldos” para los niños, además de romper la piñata que simboliza romper el mal, crea un ambiente festivo para la Posada, siempre recordando que “a quien celebramos es a Jesús”, apunta Mónica Carrera, del Ministerio de Matrimonios.

Aunque lleva más de tres décadas viviendo en los Estados Unidos, “no olvidamos nuestras tradiciones”, aseguró



Diana Borunda y Noel Underwood representan el viaje de María y José durante la posada celebrada en la fiesta navideña de la Parroquia de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe. (NTC/Ben Torres)

Carrera, originaria de Chihuahua y quien ha sido feligrés de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe por más de 25 años.

La Hermana Diana Rodríguez, Directora del Centro de Formación Diocesano, comenta que en diferentes parroquias de la Diócesis de Fort Worth se observan las Posadas y dice que motiva a que los niños “también conozcan y aprendan, pues las Posadas reflejan la alegría de que ya viene nuestro Salvador”.

Ella misma recuerda que de niña, año tras año en su Parroquia de Todos los Santos en Fort Worth, los sacerdotes Clarecianos organizaban a la comunidad para celebrar Las Posadas, “recuerdo que participaba mucha gente...hacia mucho frío, hasta nieve, y era muy bonito cantar sobre la escarcha, se sentía la presencia de Jesús”, narró alegre.

La Hna. Rodríguez, nacida en Dallas, de descendencia hispana, señala que fue dentro de su apostolado con las familias hispanas, donde conoció la tradición de Acostar al Niño Dios. Una tradición mayormente se realiza en las casas, durante el festejo de Noche Buena. Dando las 12:00 a.m. del 25 de diciembre se arrulla al Niño Dios en medio de

cantos y rezos. Algunos lo colocan en una canasta con dulces o colaciones a su alrededor, que toman al pasar a darle un beso, para luego acostarlo en su pesebre.

“Es esa alegría de que tras la preparación del Adviento, ese día es que nace Jesús. En muchas de las parroquias hispanas el 25 de diciembre en la Misa, se va a adorar al Niño; así como pasamos a recibir la comunión, así pasamos a besar al Niño Dios...recordando que Dios se hizo hombre y vino para nosotros”, dijo la religiosa de la orden de las Hermanas Catequistas Guadalupanas.

Recordemos también que litúrgicamente la Navidad es del 25 de diciembre al 6 de enero que es el día de la Epifanía, dijo agregando que “otra tradición latina es dejar al Niño Jesús en su pesebre hasta el 2 febrero que se cumplen los 40 días, y que conocemos como el Día de la Candelaria, que es la presentación del Niño Jesús en el templo”.

Todas estas prácticas son “una riqueza de la cultura hispana porque es tradición popular, pero nos lleva a lo espiritual... como hispanos, nuestra fe no se termina, y recalco que la Natividad de Jesús vino a alegrar al mundo”, afirmó. 🇺🇸

La Hermana María Sagrario ora en silencio durante la Misa de su investidura del hábito carmelita. (NTC/Juan Guajardo)



Leticia Becerra, la tía de la Hermana María, reza durante la Misa de Acción de Gracias en el Convento de las Carmelitas de Arlington. (NTC/Juan Guajardo)



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buena para tener ese tipo de vocación”. Inspirada por la mística española y la fundadora de las Monjas Carmelitas Descalzas, García comenzó a escribir a las órdenes religiosas contemplativas.

Primero, visitó una comunidad carmelita cerca de Houston. “No sentí que me llamaban allí”, recordó. Luego visitó otra comunidad carmelita en Indiana y “tampoco sentí que era allí”, dijo. Finalmente, en el 2017, encontró a las Carmelitas Descalzas de la Santísima Trinidad en Arlington. Ella les escribió, le enviaron información y se concertó una visita.

García visitó el monasterio de Arlington en junio y, de nuevo, en octubre del 2017. Como todavía no se le permitía ir al otro lado de la rejilla, se quedaba en una habitación de huéspedes y se unía a las hermanas para sus rezos en la capilla. Conoció también a cada hermana en la sala de visitas, aún separadas por la rejilla.

“Después de mi segunda visita... lo sabía, éste era el lugar, voy a entrar a esta orden”, recordó García. En enero del 2018 se le permitió ir por primera vez detrás de la rejilla durante su visita y tuvo una muestra real de la vida de las Carmelitas.

¿Cómo sabe alguien que ha encontrado su vocación? “Sólo tienes esa sensación de que...ésta es mi casa. Da miedo sentirse de esa manera”, dijo García. Sin embargo, ella destacó el encontrar paz. “El Señor te hará saber ... Si sientes esa paz ahí, entonces probablemente sea eso. Donde hay paz, está la voluntad de Dios”.

Había un problema: García tenía préstamos de estudios que pagar. “Rebeca trabajó muy duro para pagar sus préstamos”, dijo la Directora de las novicias, la Hermana Teresa Agnes, a la vez que sonreía con orgullo. García trabajaba para el negocio de su familia. También hizo y vendió posole (estofado de maíz) para recaudar dinero. Su madre se ofreció a ayudar, pero García insistió: “Ésta

es mi tarea y deber”.

Finalmente, ingresó como postulante a las Carmelitas el día de la Fiesta de Todos los Santos del 2018. “Es gracioso porque hice una novena a Todos los Santos para obtener ayuda, pues no sabía a quién elegir”, comentó García.

Al cabo de casi un año García se ha acostumbrado a la rutina diaria carmelita de oración y trabajo. Las hermanas se congregan en la capilla varias veces al día. Se paran, se inclinan y rezan en cantos rítmicos. Al igual que los bailarines, las hermanas forman un círculo, cada una se turna pararse en el centro para leer, levantarse y arrodillarse juntas. Después del rezo del mediodía García se arrodilla para rezar. Una vela roja parpadea en la capilla. De vez en cuando, el silencio es interrumpido por el sonido de las campanas, el ladrido de un perro y el graznido de los pájaros. García permanece arrodillada con una mirada tranquila y una suave sonrisa.

En preparación para su investidura, García le dio a la Madre Anne Teresa una lista de tres nombres espirituales. “Rezo para decidir y puedo elegir uno de ellos o ninguno”, explicó la Reverenda Madre. “Esta vez lo hice. Era un nombre hermoso”. García recibió el 9 de

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MONTSERRAT a los 60 años



La tranquilidad de Montserrat ayuda a sus visitantes a profundizar su fe.
(NTC/Juan Guajardo)

Durante seis décadas, más de 150,000 personas han rezado, escuchado y encontrado a Jesús en la Casa de Retiro Jesuita de Montserrat

Por Matt Ackels

“**M**i esposa iba a tener un bebé”. Cuando Vic Muse relata los eventos que lo llevaron a su primer retiro en Montserrat, no puede evitar sonreír. Muse tenía un trabajo exigente, una esposa embarazada, una nueva casa y una crisis espiritual, por lo que se inscribió para un tranquilo fin de semana en el santuario de Lake Dallas llamado la Casa de Retiro Jesuita de Montserrat. Sin embargo, el día antes del retiro supo que tenía que ir de repente a Washington para un importante viaje de negocios. Extenuado y decepcionado, Muse ofreció una simple oración: “Señor, si quieres que haga el retiro, tienes que sacarme de este viaje”.

La Casa Montserrat celebró en octubre sus 60 años de servicio a los fieles del norte de Texas. Fue fundada en el 1959 por los jesuitas de la provincia de Nueva Orleans, que en la actualidad es la Provincia Jesuita del Centro y del Sur (UCS, por sus siglas en inglés). Montserrat ha sido un lugar de reflexión silenciosa, paz restauradora y renovación espiritual. Un pequeño edificio de piedra, la tradición de los ejercicios espirituales de San Ignacio de Loyola y un movimiento de retiro de los años 50 del pasado siglo sirvieron de base a sus humildes comienzos. El primer retiro acogió a 25 hombres para un fin de semana de oración y reflexión.

Durante las últimas seis décadas, la casa junto al lago, que se encuentra en la Diócesis de Fort Worth, se ha expandido para albergar a más de 150,000 personas que han asistido a uno de sus retiros. Miles de mujeres y hombres han acudido a rezar, escuchar y aprender. De esa manera han encontrado paz y un ardiente deseo



Visitantes a Montserrat pueden disfrutar vistas hermosas del Lago Lewisville, que bordea la casa de retiros. (NTC/Juan Guajardo)

innovador en su fe a través de los ejercicios espirituales de San Ignacio, según el Director de Montserrat, el Padre Anthony Borrow, SJ. “Cuando pienso en Montserrat, la palabra que me viene a la mente es ‘transformación’. Nuestro espacio permite que las personas se encuentren con Jesús y ese encuentro los transforma de muchas maneras”.

Las personas que visitan la casa de retiro cuentan con el apoyo de su misión oficial de “llevar la Buena Nueva transformadora de Jesucristo a las personas y a la sociedad”, lo que les ayuda a descubrir un enfoque dinámico de la espiritualidad, que fomenta el cambio y la libertad personal.

El Padre Borrow dijo que al echar una mirada a los 60 años de trabajo del centro de retiros se dio cuenta de que es imposible pasar por alto la última palabra en la declaración de su misión: sociedad. A lo largo de su historia, la Casa Montserrat ha creado cambios tanto en los individuos como en la cultura en general. En la década del 1970, Montserrat fue una de las primeras casas de retiro jesuitas en recibir a mujeres. Incluso durante sus primeros años, el alcance cultural para servir a la comunidad hispana fue una prioridad, lo que resultó en una lista constante de

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retiros en español en la Casa. A lo largo de los años, Montserrat ha desafiado constantemente las normas establecidas que tienden a excluir a las poblaciones desatendidas. Montserrat ofrece también retiros para las parejas casadas.

La Casa Montserrat, cuyo foco ha sido siempre expandir su misión, construyó *Campion Hall* a principios del siglo para tener un espacio en el que las organizaciones diocesanas, parroquiales y religiosas pudieran reunirse. En el 2013 se fundó el Instituto de Espiritualidad de Ignacio (ISI, por siglas en inglés) en la Casa Montserrat para capacitar a los futuros líderes de la Iglesia en las tradiciones reflexivas de San Ignacio. Estos esfuerzos, emprendidos con un espíritu de inclusión, definen a Montserrat como una casa de retiros saludable, vibrante e impactante en su 60^{mo} aniversario, comentó el Padre Borrow.

Tras celebrar más de medio siglo de servicio en octubre, la casa de retiros no tiene intención de retirarse pronto. El año pasado más de 6,000 personas visitaron el centro para participar de retiros, conferencias, clases y reuniones.

El futuro de la Casa Montserrat es muy prometedor y es dirigido por una comunidad de tres jesuitas: el Padre Borrow, el Padre Ron Gonzales y el Padre Roy Joseph. Montserrat depende en gran medida de la colaboración de varios laicos que trabajan incansablemente para llevar sus dones de transformación pacífica más allá de este centro junto al lago.



El ambiente de Montserrat inspira a visitantes a relajarse y reflexionar espiritualmente. (NTC/Juan Guajardo)

“San Ignacio nos dice que ‘Ve, prende fuego al mundo’”, añadió el Padre Borrow. “El objetivo de los jesuitas y de nuestros colaboradores laicos es encender los corazones para amar y seguir a Jesús. Nuestro campo misionero no llega necesariamente a todo el mundo, pero sí incluye el norte de Texas, Oklahoma, el norte de Louisiana y más allá.

“Sabemos por experiencia que las personas que experimentan Montserrat animarán a los feligreses de sus parroquias, se acercarán a quienes están al margen y serán líderes espirituales en su vida diaria. Bienaventurados los que escuchan Su llamado y responden con generosidad”, continuó diciendo el sacerdote.

El Instituto de Espiritualidad de Ignacio lanzó recientemente un programa que invita a las personas a realizar los Ejercicios Espirituales en su vida diaria. Esta experiencia permite a los participantes

integrar la oración regular en sus días tan ocupados, una posibilidad que Vic Muse podría haber disfrutado durante sus años como hombre de negocios.

Hoy día, ese nuevo bebé de Muse ya tiene 55 años, casi tan viejo como la Casa Montserrat. Después de que el viaje de Muse a Washington fuera cancelado milagrosamente a última hora, él hizo su primer retiro en ese pequeño edificio de piedra. Desde entonces, ha realizado 55 retiros en Montserrat, uno cada año, sin fallar nunca, y sus hijos y nietos a menudo lo acompañan en oración. Pese a que Montserrat no puede garantizar un milagro para sacar de sus viajes de negocios a los que desean hacer un retiro, ellos continúan siendo un conducto de la presencia de Dios en la vida de los católicos locales.

Para obtener información sobre cómo asistir a un retiro en Montserrat, visite MontserratRetreat.org. 📍

CARMELITA, DE LA PÁGINA 59

noviembre del 2019 su velo blanco y el nuevo nombre: Hermana María Sagrario del Corazón Perforado de Jesús. Rodeada de las hermanas carmelitas, su familia y sus amigos, la Hermana María Sagrario se convirtió en una novicia carmelita. Dos amigos de su grupo de jóvenes adultos, que ahora son sacerdotes, concelebraron la Misa de celebración de acción de gracias.

Después de la Misa, un amigo le dijo

a la Hermana María Sagrario: “Siempre solías decir que Jesús era tu novio. Ahora no hay duda”. La hermana María se rió y respondió: “¡Bueno, ahora es mi esposo!”

La Hermana María es actualmente la única monja hispana en el convento ubicado en Arlington. En el convento viven monjas de muchas nacionalidades. “Vivimos de la misma manera la vida y somos caritativas las unas con las otras”, dijo la Reverenda Madre. “es una vida comunitaria”.

La rutina diaria de la Hermana

María Sagrario no ha cambiado, según la Reverenda Madre. Sin embargo, como novicia, ha recibido su hábito, un nuevo nombre y “la misión que viene con el nombre”, explicó la Hermana María.

¿Cuál es su misión? “La contemplación frente al Santísimo Sacramento”, dijo la Reverenda Madre. Su hermoso nombre la dirigirá siempre hacia la Eucaristía. Su primer nombre, “María” significa *theotokos* o *portadora de Dios*; el segundo nombre, “Sagrario”, se refiere al tabernáculo. 📍



MIRANDO HACIA EL FUTURO

OBISPO MICHAEL OLSON

es el cuarto Obispo de la Diócesis de Fort Worth.



 @BpOlsonFW

NOTA DEL EDITOR: *El Obispo Michael Olson fue entrevistado recientemente por el Padre Robert McTeigue, SJ, en el programa de radio "La Corriente Católica". A continuación, hemos extraído algunos aspectos destacados discutidos en su amplia conversación con respecto al próximo año y más allá en el futuro.*

¿Qué hay en su lista de tareas pendientes para realizar antes de la próxima reunión de los obispos en junio del 2020?

Bishop Olson: Antes de la reunión de junio del próximo año tenemos que prepararnos para nuestras visitas ad limina. Mi visita es en enero junto con los otros obispos de la Región X de Texas, Arkansas y Oklahoma. Esto implica que debemos prepararnos para la audiencia que vamos a tener con el Santo Padre en cuanto a lo que discutiremos y lo que debemos abordar. Les pido que oren por nosotros durante esas reuniones.

¿Cuáles cree que son las necesidades de la Iglesia Católica de los Estados Unidos en los próximos cinco años?

Bishop Olson: Para discernir eso, tenemos que mirar hacia afuera, tanto para escuchar lo que se dice en otras áreas de la Iglesia, pero sobre todo para aprender cuáles son las necesidades de las personas que debemos atender para poder ayudarlas, para fomentar la generosidad desde nuestro interior y superar el miedo que nos aqueja hoy día. Como Iglesia, ésta es nuestra principal responsabilidad con una mirada

hacia la sociedad en general, que nos muestra el bien común de toda la sociedad más allá del bien del propio individuo.

Tenemos que enfrentar la realidad de que ya no hay mucha cabida para hacer trueques, sino que nuestras instituciones deben ser evaluadas en cuanto a la forma que sirven a la misión de la Iglesia, y no al revés.

Tenemos que llegar al punto en que llamamos a la maldad, "maldad" y al bien, "bien". Eso es lo que estamos tratando de hacer todo el tiempo, y estamos llegando a un punto donde las cosas están tan formalmente malvadas y destructivas, que resulta muy difícil afirmar lo que es bueno, para lograr un mayor bien. Estamos llegando a ese punto como Iglesia en esta sociedad.

Sin embargo, en lo que respecta a los cuestionamientos internos dentro de la Iglesia, gran parte de nuestro éxito dependerá de nuestra responsabilidad de tomar en serio los asuntos relacionados con un ambiente seguro, la integridad ministerial y la responsabilidad, principalmente de parte de los obispos y del clero, pero también de parte de nuestros ministros laicos.

¿Por qué no nos beneficiaría el miedo en este momento de la vida de la Iglesia de los Estados Unidos?

Bishop Olson: Es una verdad espiritual que el desánimo nunca viene de Dios. El desánimo es un arma del maligno. El miedo es una condición humana que nos sirve para modificar nuestro comportamiento, recurrir a Dios y practicar la fortaleza, todo con Su gracia divina.

No necesitamos ninguna temeridad más de lo que no necesitamos de la cobardía, pero tenemos que ser vulnerables. No hay valor sin vulnerabilidad. En otras palabras, necesitamos la capacidad de ser lastimados por el bien de la verdad. Eso es algo que he visto como una realidad en mi vida y ministerio como obispo durante estos últimos seis años. Ésa ha sido una realidad que he experimentado una y otra vez.

Sin valentía, no hay esperanza. Entonces, ¿creemos esto o no? ¿Es Él el Hijo de Dios o no? Digo que Él es por la sangre derramada por los mártires y la verdad del Evangelio que se eleva, se transmite y se entrega a través de la tradición.

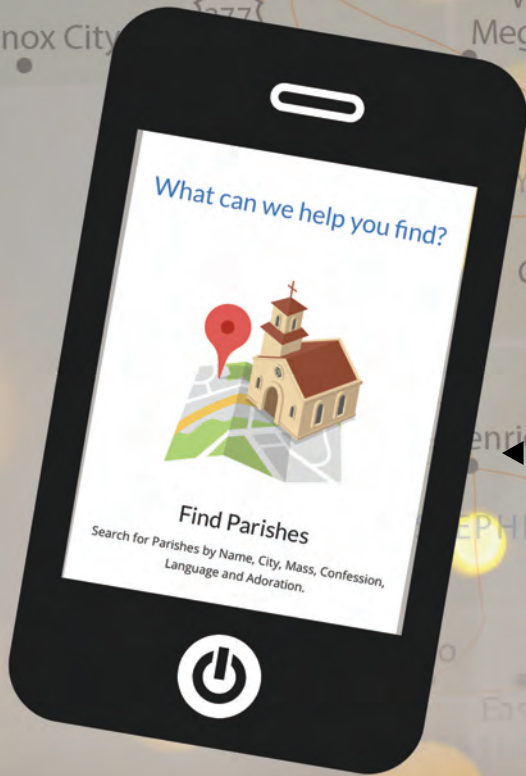
¿Cómo se comienza a formar conciencias en un contexto en el que cada tema moral se discute y se decide con las palabras "Siento que"?

Bishop Olson: El Obispo Robert Barron hizo un comentario sobre la naturaleza trascendental de la belleza. Ése es un punto de partida porque la belleza puede provocar emociones. La belleza captura la imaginación y nos eleva. La proporcionalidad de la forma y la comprensión clásica de la belleza son uno de los atributos trascendentales de Dios.

Encuentro que los adultos jóvenes y la generación del Milenio tienen una idea de lo que es hermoso, de lo que es bello. Hay algo que cautiva a los de la generación del Milenio sobre la liturgia o el arte católico. Es posible que no sepan las razones por las que eso es hermoso, pero podemos llevarlo a las realidades más profundas manifestadas por la belleza. 🇺🇸



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