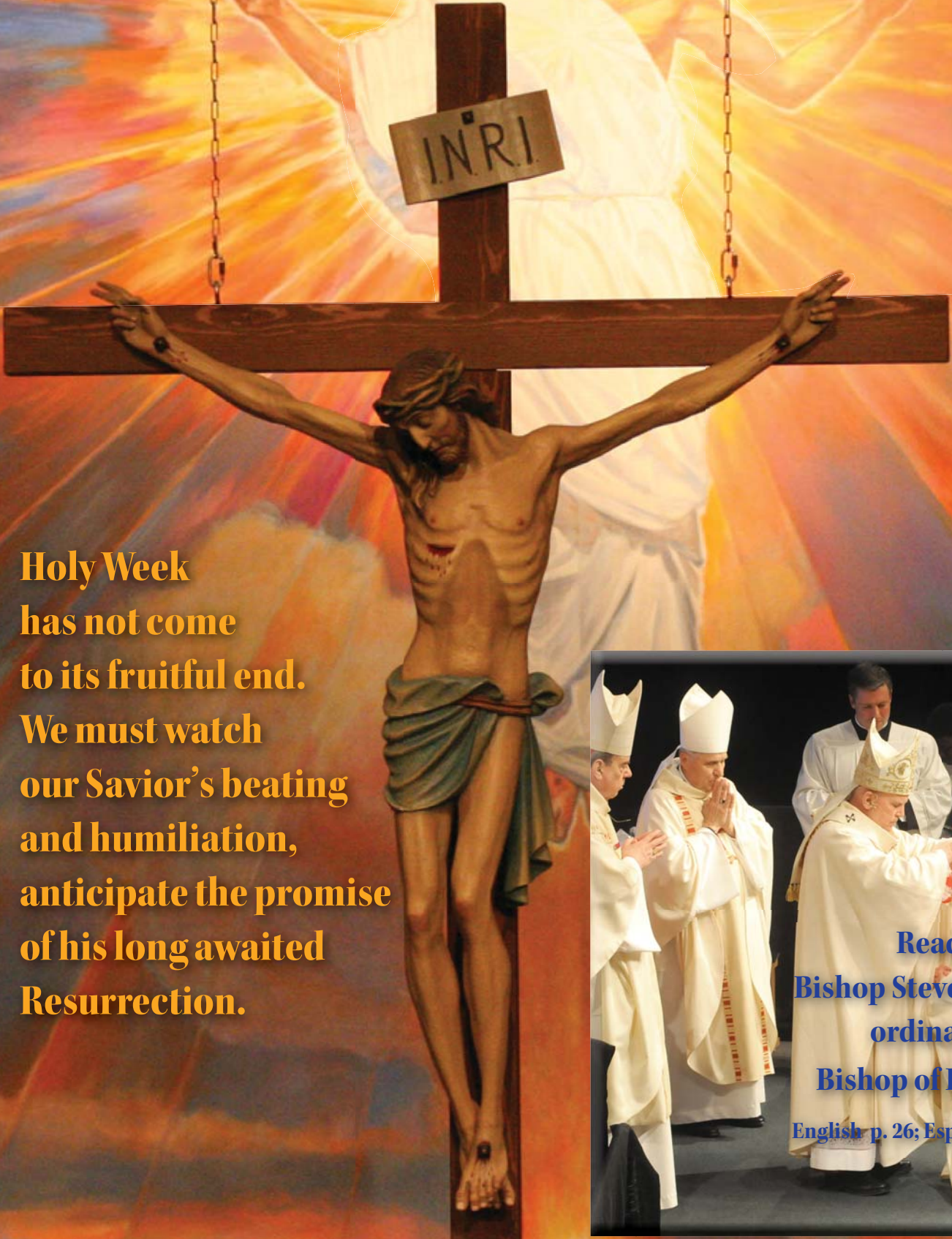




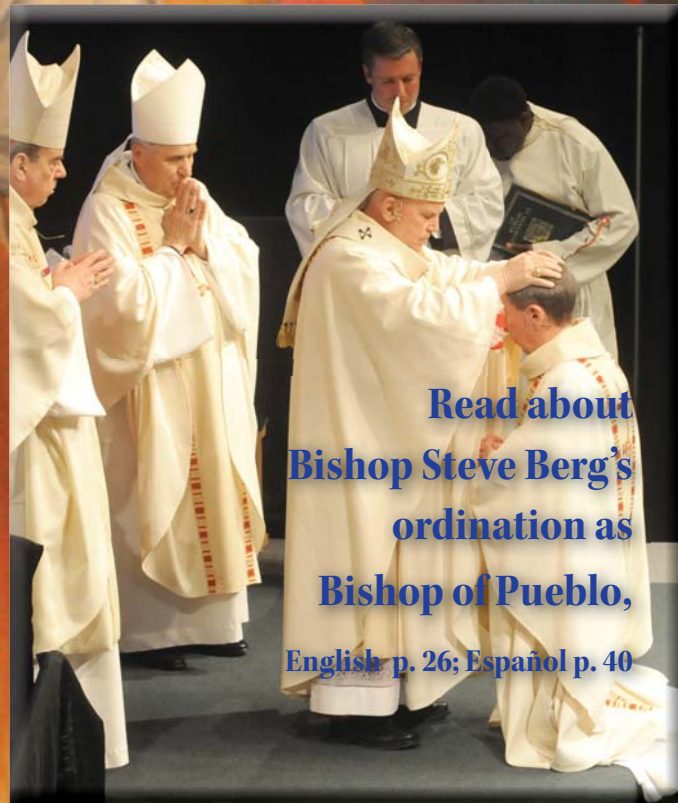
# North Texas Catholic

Bringing the Good News to the

Vol. 30 No. 4 May / June 2014



**Holy Week  
has not come  
to its fruitful end.  
We must watch  
our Savior's beating  
and humiliation,  
anticipate the promise  
of his long awaited  
Resurrection.**



**Read about  
Bishop Steve Berg's  
ordination as  
Bishop of Pueblo,  
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# In This Issue...

## JOSEPH PEARCE, RACIST AGITATOR 18 TO CHRISTIAN BIOGRAPHER

Many people know the name of Joseph Pearce as a noted Christian biographer of great Christian authors ranging from G.K. Chesterton and J.R.R. Tolkien to Aleksandr Solzhenitsen, but few know his background as a racist propagandist, the lurid past he details in his book *Race with the Devil*.

## FROM CHRIST BEFORE PILATE, 30 THROUGH THE PASSION, EASTER, AND DIVINE MERCY SUNDAY, TO LIFE BEYOND THIS ONE

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**20 SUPPORT FOR SEMINARIANS**  
Our diocese is blessed with 31 men who are in formation to become priests. It takes a great commitment to serving God and his people to enter this path, and it takes a great deal of financial support to pay for their studies. We need each other.



**22 OUR MSGR. BERG BECOMES PUEBLO'S BISHOP BERG**  
How often does one's uncle bless the symbols of office for a new bishop, as a bishop himself? How often do *that* many family members get to be present for their brother, uncle, or son's ordination as a bishop? Bishop Berg's ordination in Pueblo was a family affair, one that involved us all.



**26 'DEAR POPE FRANCIS'**  
Little did the inmates who take part in Catholic prison ministry at the James Allred Unit outside Wichita Falls think they would hear back from Pope Francis when their chaplain, Deacon Russell Detweiler sent a portrait of the pope by Terry Watkins. But they did.

**COVER PHOTO:**  
A crucifix hangs before a mural depicting the Resurrection in the sanctuary at St. Timothy Parish in Mesa, Arizona. (CNS photo/J.D. Long-García, CATHOLIC SUN)

# North Texas Catholic



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## *A humble priest rises to the rank of bishop, a humble pope inspires*

**W**hen you look at the contents of this issue, it's hard to not come to the conclusion that it's all about the priesthood and the hierarchical personages of the Church in general.

From outlining the motivations of our seminarians and the cost of preparing them for their priestly ministries, to the driving urge of our oldest living priest, Father George Curtsinger, to continue to respond to the needs of others with compassion.

From coverage of the elevation of our former diocesan administrator, now Bishop Steve Berg, to the ranks of the hierarchy, as he was recently installed as the Bishop of Pueblo, Colorado (a diocese only slightly smaller than the the state of Arkansas), to the honoring of our (still) new and saintly Pope Francis by the TCU Catholic Community.

And, of course, we have the tremendous event that will take place at the Vatican, the canonization of two popes who have shaped the Church, as it knows itself and makes itself known in the modern world — the soon to be St. John XXIII and St. John Paul II.

All these examples point us to the great high priest, Jesus. Were it not for his glorious example of total giving of self for God, his Father and ours, and others, we would have no reason for a priesthood at all.

Were it not for the wonder of a God willing to come down, forsaking all his heavenly power to live among us, to take on human flesh, to endure human suffering, to give his very life, there would be no Church to serve.

Holy Week is upon us. We are about to face the harsh realities of the betrayal of Jesus, Jesus before Pilate, Jesus tortured by the soldiers, Jesus on the Way of the Cross, Jesus lifted up, mocked by all who saw him, having been abandoned by all who followed Him. Only by entering fully into the mystery of these days of suffering, can we be fully prepared to share in the glory and the joy of his Resurrection.

But by his stripes we are made whole and risen from the dead, He draws us all to Himself. All of us, ordained and lay, are called to live in his Kingdom as prophets, priests, and kings, formed in the pattern of his life.

Jeff Hensley  
Editor

# Annual Vocation Day teaches fifth-graders to be open to God's will

## DIOCESAN, LOCAL & STATE NEWSBRIEFS

# Speaker exhorts women to give thanks to God at second annual DCCW Day of Reflection

By Joan Kurkowski-Gillen  
Correspondent

FORT WORTH — Giving Catholic school fifth-graders the chance to meet priests, seminarians, and women religious in a casual setting is the idea behind the annual diocesan Fifth Grade Vocation Day, observed this year March 26 at Holy Family Church.

The Offices of Vocations and Catholic Schools sponsor the day-long program to encourage young people to start thinking about the future — particularly service to God and his Church.

During his homily, and later while answering questions, diocesan Vocations Director Father Jonathan Wallis asked the 450 fifth-graders seated inside the church to consider what God wants them to do with their lives.

“Jesus Christ is calling each and every one of you to a vocation. Maybe He wants you to get married, or become a priest, sister, or single person,” he explained.

Every person has goals and desires, he told the youngsters.

“But sometimes Jesus asks us to follow Him and that’s at the heart of every



Photo by Joan Kurkowski-Gillen / NTC  
Sister Rosalyn Nguyen, CSFN, a teacher at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton School in Keller, shares her vocation story.

single vocation,” the speaker added.

In closing, Fr. Wallis advised his listeners to turn to Jesus for guidance. In a world that tells people they can have everything, the true road to happiness is through sacrifice and service.

“Jesus will take us down that road,” he assured. “Begin asking God what He wants you to do. Ask Him how you can serve Him and your neighbor each and every day of your life.”

The word “vocation” is new to the vocabulary of Jacob Schacter, a student at Notre Dame School in Wichita Falls.

“I know now it’s something God and Jesus is calling you to do,” he said. “It got me thinking.”

By Michele Baker  
Correspondent

Dr. William Thierfelder related the story of driving through an unfamiliar city with an open bottle of water in the cup holder of the car. When he made a sudden stop and the water bottle sprayed water all over him and his car, his response was not what most people would have expected.

“Thank you, Jesus!” he exclaimed.

After years of training himself to receive all things — good and bad — as coming from God, Thierfelder was able to make a soggy profession of faith even in the midst of an everyday inconvenience. That attitude of gratitude was one of the ideas he imparted to the women gathered for the Diocesan Council of Catholic Women’s second annual Women’s Day of Reflection.

The event, which began with Mass and Morning Prayer, took place at St. Patrick Cathedral and its Pastoral Center in Fort Worth on Feb. 27. Nearly

100 women from throughout the diocese attended.

Thierfelder, who is currently president of Belmont Abbey College in North Carolina, is a father of 10 who makes time to pray the Rosary with his family each night despite an extraordinarily busy schedule.

“Mary’s ‘fiat!’ was extraordinary,” he said, paraphrasing the words of Ven. Archbishop Fulton Sheen. “It reversed Eden and made Mary into the new Ark of the Covenant.”

In an address that was at times funny, personal, even startlingly academic but always accessible, Thierfelder engaged the women with stories of faith rooted in a spirit of thanksgiving.

“He brought so much to the women at our gathering,” said DCCW President Margaret Adams. “He gave us lots of books to read and lots to think about because of the kind of person he is. He brings Christ into everything in his career and his home life.”

## Former Episcopalian priest Fr. Jonathan Duncan completes path to Catholic priesthood

**Editor’s note:** This is adapted from an online feature. Read the full story on the web at [www.northtexas-catholic.org](http://www.northtexas-catholic.org).

After years of prayerful discernment, Jonathan Duncan, 31, a former Episcopalian priest, was received into the Catholic Church on All Saints Day 2013. It’s a decision that’s brought him peace and a renewed sense of mission. Within five months, he would be ordained

a Catholic priest on March 29 by Bishop Michael Olson at St. Mary the Virgin Parish in Arlington.

Following the lead of other former Anglicans, Fr. Duncan and some members of his flock decided to join the Catholic Church in 2013 and become part of the Personal Ordinariate of the Chair of St. Peter.

He currently serves as the parochial administrator of St. John Vianney Ordinariate Community in Cleburne.

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## Local author earns top honor from Catholic historical society for book

By Jerry Circelli  
Correspondent

SAN ANTONIO — Dr. Patrick Foley, a renowned Catholic historian and writer, is the latest winner of the Paul J. Foik Award, which is presented annually by the Texas Catholic Historical Society to the author or editor of a recent publication with the most significant contribution to Catholic history in the Southwest.

“I was really glad ‘he’ won it,” said Foley referring to Bishop Jean-Marie Odin, the focus of his award-winning book: *Missionary Bishop: Jean-Marie Odin in Galveston and New Orleans*. The presentation was made in San Antonio. “It’s not who wrote it that’s important, but who it’s written about.”

The society also honored Foley by naming an annual award after him for the best article published in *Catholic Southwest: A Journal of History and Culture*.

Foley also received an official proclamation from the Texas State Senate recognizing him for his contributions to his field. It also contains the Senate’s official seal and is signed by state Senator Jane Nelson.

“The most important institution in the world is the Catholic Church,” said Foley. “The Texas Catholic Historical Society has really advocated the study of the truth in history. And we need that. We need to discover more deeply the truth and history of our Church.”



Photo by Jerry Circelli / NTC  
Dr. Patrick Foley of Azle displays two recent awards: the Paul J. Foik Award (LEFT), and an official proclamation from the Texas State Senate (RIGHT).

## DIOCESAN, LOCAL & STATE NEWSBRIEFS

### Knights’ Fr. Donlon Vocations Dinner passes \$2 million cumulative total



Photo by Bertha Salazar / North Texas Catholic  
Knights of Columbus Council 1473 raised \$138,000 for seminarians at this year’s Father Aidan Donlon Vocations Dinner Feb. 15. Grand Knight Tony Smith presents Bishop Michael Olson the check during the dinner.

By Jenara Kocks Burgess  
Correspondent

WICHITA FALLS — By raising more than \$2 million dollars in 23 years with the Father Aidan Donlon Vocations Dinner, Knights of Columbus Council 1473, based out of Our Lady Queen of Peace Parish in Wichita Falls, has played an important role in the lives of many priests in the Diocese of Fort Worth, including Bishop Michael Olson.

In his homily at Sacred Heart Church Feb. 15, the day of the 23rd annual dinner, Bishop Olson talked about attending the first Fr. Donlon dinner as a seminarian in Wichita Falls.

“This evening, we’ll celebrate, again, the Father Donlon Vocations Dinner and with gratitude in my own heart — and even more, a deeper gratitude in my own heart because now I have to sign the checks for seminarian education,” Bishop Olson said, to the congregation’s laughter. “But also with the most sincere gratitude in my heart because I never could have imagined, as a seminarian, some 23 years ago, here in Wichita Falls, here at the first vocations dinner, that God would ask,” him to take on the role of bishop. “Never,” he said.

Bishop Olson thanked the Knights at the dinner, named for the late Pallottine priest who had urged the Knights

to “do more for vocations.”

The bishop, who joined the Knights while interning at Our Lady Queen of Peace, said that particular council holds a, “special place in my own heart, personally, and I thank you.” He continued, saying it’s “always a personal pleasure for me to come back here and celebrate anything with all of you, but especially, the Father Donlon Vocations Dinner.”

The dinner’s chairman Mike Brown also announced at the dinner that the council had raised a total of \$138,000 this year, surpassing the \$136,000 raised last year, and brought the total raised over the 23 years to \$2,088,000.

Bishop Olson also thought it was appropriate that the dinner was named after Fr. Donlon who was known as a “people’s priest.”

“So many people have great memories of Fr. Donlon,” Bishop Olson said. “His warmth, his kindness, his sense of humor, and his willingness to always be available — be it for dinner; or be it for something more serious like a confession; or a kind [ear] to listen to the people. And so I ask you to continue now to encourage vocations to your sons and daughters that they can give themselves willingly with confidence to the Lord in discerning where it is the Lord wants them to serve,” he said.

## Thomas More Law Center chief counsel discusses religious freedom

By Jerry Circelli  
Correspondent

FORT WORTH — Richard Thompson, president and chief counsel of the Thomas More Law Center, based in Ann Arbor, Michigan, addressed members of the local Legatus chapter March 6.

Thompson heads up a team of lawyers and 700 allied attorneys in every state offering pro-bono help on cases involving religious liberty issues.

To understand the erosion of moral values and religious liberties in America, Thompson took a historical look at the crisis by outlining the following:

“In 1962 the Supreme Court outlawed school prayer. In 1963, the court declared pornography was a free-speech right. In 1963, the same year, they outlawed Bible readings in public schools. In 1973, as you know, they made abortion a Constitutional right.”

The erosions continue today, he said, including the HHS Mandate that requires employers to provide health insurance plans that include contraception, sterilization, and abortifacients.

“The federal government is intentionally forcing its citizens to violate their God-given constitutionally guaranteed right to free exercise of religion and conscience,” Thompson said.

It is important for American citizens to remember their basic freedoms come not from the government, but from God, as stated in the Declaration of Independence, he said.

Then, referencing the Constitution, he said, “With all those elegant words and guarantees of religious freedom and free speech, they are meaningless unless we take action to implement them and to enforce them in the public square.”

Taking action and ensuring that those freedoms remain in place, said Thompson, is the reason the Thomas More Law Center was founded.

“There is no better time to be a Catholic than right now, and so there is no better time to act,” he concluded.

## Bishop Olson appoints Very Rev. Karl Schilken as diocese's new Vicar General, Moderator of the Curia

Bishop Michael Olson appointed the Very Rev. Karl Schilken as the new Vicar General and Moderator of the Curia for the Diocese of Fort Worth on March 26 for a period of six years. Fr. Schilken will also remain pastoral administrator of St. Paul the Apostle Parish in River Oaks.

Fr. Schilken was born Aug. 28, 1954 in Dallas to Joseph and Margaret (Minor) Schilken. He entered the Church on May 5, 1973 at St. Thomas Aquinas Chapel at the University of Dallas, where he was working on a bachelor's degree in history. He entered Holy Trinity Seminary in 1975, and graduated with a BA in history in 1976. He then attended St. Meinrad Seminary, in St. Meinrad, Indiana, from 1976 to 1980, where he earned a Master of Divinity.

Fr. Schilken was ordained to the diaconate on March 31, 1979 in St. Meinrad by the late Bishop Francis Shea of Evansville, Indiana. He was ordained to the priesthood March 29, 1980, at St. William Parish in Montague by the late Bishop John Cassata, the first bishop of Fort Worth.

As a deacon, he assisted at St. Mary Parish in Henrietta in the summer of 1979 and spring of 1980. After ordination, he served at Espiritu Santo Parish in Monterrey, Nuevo Leon, Mexico in May and June

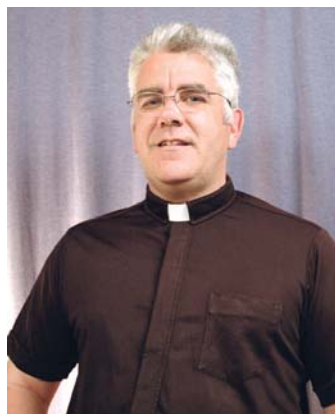
of 1980. When he returned to the diocese, he served as associate pastor at St. Rita Parish in Fort Worth (1980-81), St. Bartholomew Parish in southwest Fort Worth (1981-82), and Immaculate Conception Parish in Denton (1982-84).

In 1984, Fr. Schilken was appointed pastor of Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish in Wichita Falls. He then served as pastor of Immaculate Conception (1988-92), St. Joseph Parish in Cleburne (1992-1997), and St. Jude Parish in Mansfield (1997-2003). He then took a sabbatical for two years.

Returning from sabbatical in 2005, he worked in the diocesan Tribunal while serving as a sacramental minister for parishes in Ranger, Eastland, Strawn, and Cisco. He served as pastor of St. John the Apostle Parish in North Richland Hills from 2007 to 2012, when he went to Washington, D.C., to obtain a Licentiate in Canon Law from the Catholic University of America. After graduating, he returned to the diocese in 2013 to serve at St. Paul.

"I am looking forward to serving the diocese in this capacity and assisting Bishop Olson in his ministry," Fr. Schilken said in a statement to the *North Texas Catholic*.

According to the Code of



NTC file photo / Chris Kastner  
**Very Rev. Karl Schilken**

Canon Law, the Vicar General of a diocese must be at least 30 years old and hold a licentiate or doctorate in canon law or sacred theology, and has "the executive power over the whole diocese ... to place all administrative acts except those, however, which

the bishop has reserved to himself or which require a special mandate of the bishop by law" (canon 479). As Moderator of the Curia, Fr. Schilken will also "coordinate those things which pertain to the treatment of administrative affairs and to take care that the other members of the curia properly fulfill the office entrusted to them" (canon 473).

Fr. Schilken replaces Bishop Stephen Berg, who had served as Vicar General and Moderator of the Curia under Bishop Vann, and as Diocesan Administrator before Bishop Olson's ordination and his own appointment as Bishop of Pueblo, Colorado. Bishop Olson also appointed The Very Rev. Daniel Kelley and Monsignor Juan Rivero to continue in their roles as diocesan Chancellor and Vicar for Priests, respectively.

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# School of Lay Ministry summer session to feature Franciscan priest discussing 'Franciscan Spirituality'

The diocese's Pope John Paul II Institute School of Lay Ministry will feature Father John Stowe, OFM Conv., as its summer cycle's featured speaker June 23-26.

The school's summer cycle, which is being held at various locations June 14-26, is an opportunity for students to continue their formation, prospective students to check out the program, or others who may simply be interested in the topics.

Fr. Stowe will give four lectures on "Franciscan Spirituality" from 7 to 9 p.m. at St. Andrew Parish, located at 3312 Dryden Rd. in Fort Worth. Fr. Stowe is the vicar provincial of the Conventual Franciscan of Our Lady of Consolation. Prior to that assignment, he served as Chancellor, Moderator of the Curia, and Vicar General for the Diocese of El Paso from 2002-2010. Fr. Stowe holds a licentiate in sacred theology in Church history from the Jesuit School of Theology in Berkeley, California.

While in El Paso, Fr. Stowe taught numerous courses at that diocese's Tepeyac Institute and in the deacon formation programs for El Paso and Las Cruces, New Mexico. His talks for the Summer Cycle will show the development of Franciscan spirituality from the time



of St. Francis of Assisi in the 1200s to its adoption by Pope Francis as the contemporary face of the Church.

The summer session also includes courses being offered at Nolan Catholic High School (4501 Bridge St., Fort Worth), on Saturday, June 14, and at the Diocesan Catholic Center (800 W. Loop 820 South, Fort Worth), on Saturday, June 21.

Each course is priced separately. To register for the summer sessions, or for a complete listing of courses or more information, visit the school's website at [www.fwdioc.org/pages/john-paul-2-institute-about](http://www.fwdioc.org/pages/john-paul-2-institute-about), or call Fr. Mele or Lucia Romo at 817-560-3300, ext. 317. Fr. Mele can also be reached by e-mail at [cmele@fwdioc.org](mailto:cmele@fwdioc.org), and Romo can be reached at [lromo@fwdioc.org](mailto:lromo@fwdioc.org).

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- Or call the Sexual Abuse Hotline (817) 560-2452 ext. 900 and leave a message.

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## YOUNG ADULT

# TCU Catholic Campus Ministry bringing journalist John Allen to discuss pope's call to service April 22

**By Nicki Prevou  
Correspondent**

Drew Curd, a 22-year-old mathematics major at Texas Christian University in Fort Worth, came into the Catholic Church at Easter of his sophomore year. Curd attended Methodist, and later, Church of Christ services before coming from his hometown of Lawrenceville, Georgia, to attend college in Texas. He now serves as co-president of the TCU Catholic Community Student Board.

"I found such a loving, genuine, and faith-filled Catholic community at TCU, and Father Charlie (Calabrese, director of the university's Catholic campus ministry) helped me every step of the way, as I looked into what the Church is all about," Curd



Renowned journalist John L. Allen, Jr., meets Pope Francis on the papal airplane during World Youth Day in Rio de Janeiro last year. Allen is the author of *Against the Tide: The Radical Leadership of Pope Francis*. (Photo courtesy of John Allen)

recalled. "And now, I really love my Catholic faith, and it's an important part of my life."

Like many young adults all over the world, Curd follows news

coverage of Pope Francis with interest. "Students here at TCU, whether they are Catholic or not, are drawn to his message, his openness, and to his call to service," Curd reflected.

"When we started talking about hosting a special event that would give the community a chance to learn more about the pope and his message, everyone got pretty excited."

Curd was already aware of the reputation that journalist John L. Allen, Jr., has as an expert on Pope Francis and his leadership, and he and many of his friends were pleased, he said, to learn that Allen will speak at TCU from 7 to 9 p.m. Tuesday, April 22, in TCU's Brown-Lupton University Union building. Allen will deliver the inaugural Faith Acts Footsteps Lecture, a new series co-sponsored by the TCU Catholic Community and the TCU Office of Religious and Spiritual Life. The event will be free and open to the public.

The lecture, dubbed the "Pope Rally 2014: A Call to Serve," will

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CCFW seeks volunteer drivers



Photo by Donna Ryckaert / North Texas Catholic  
CCFW volunteer driver Victoria Cook stands outside the bus she drives.

Just a few months ago, Yolanda (not her real name), having moved from Oklahoma to Arlington in search of employment, was living in a homeless shelter. Now, she says, her life has changed dramatically, thanks to a new job, an apartment of her own, and the services provided by the Catholic Charities Fort Worth (CCFW) Transportation Program.

"I was walking for miles every day to get to and from work during the really cold weather that we had here this winter, and it was pretty tough," says Yolanda. "But I was so happy to get a good job with benefits, working in housekeeping at a hospital, I just did what I had to do. Then I heard about this program with Catholic Charities, and I was able to get signed up for rides [to and from the hospital]. I can't believe how good my life is now."

Because she is paying just \$2 for each ride to and from her home each day, Yolanda will soon have saved enough money to purchase a vehicle. According to Kaycie Tugman, a transportation volunteer specialist for CCFW, Yolanda's is just one of the many success stories that illustrates the importance of the Transportation Program.

"Access to safe, affordable,

and reliable transportation is one of the most critical needs our clients face, here in the DFW area," explains Tugman. "Especially in Arlington and in Northeast Tarrant County, we have a tremendous need, because public transportation options are so limited in those areas."

In 2012, CCFW began providing a variety of services to meet mobility needs within Tarrant County, after taking over the transportation program formerly offered through the American Red Cross, says Tugman. During 2013, a total of 3,094 clients were served, with an average of 250 to 350 rides offered each day.

"We are in great need of volunteer drivers to assist in getting clients to and from work, medical appointments, and school," says Tugman. "Right now, we have a long waiting list, and we're hoping that people will come forward to help. It's inspiring to think that many times, by providing a trip to people in need, you're providing them with a trip out of poverty."

*Volunteers must be 21 years of age or older and must have a valid driver's license. For more information, visit the CCFW Website at [www.ccdofw.org](http://www.ccdofw.org) or call (817) 413-3936.*

offer an opportunity to learn more about Pope Francis and his emphasis on service to the poor and marginalized members of society, according to members of the TCU Catholic Community advisory board.

"John Allen is a Vatican insider, highly respected for his balanced, unbiased reporting," said Father Charles Calabrese, director of Catholic Campus Ministry at TCU. "He will share stories of his personal experiences with Pope Francis. I think that his insights and his personal anecdotes will serve as a catalyst to help our students deepen their own commitment to service."

Prior to joining the *Boston Globe*, Allen covered three popes in his 16 years as a correspondent for the *National Catholic Reporter (NCR)*. His "All Things Catholic" column appeared in the *NCR* weekly, and now continues to appear in the *Globe*. He has authored nine books on the Vatican and Catholic Affairs and serves as the Senior Vatican Analyst for CNN.

The lecture corresponds with a semester-long effort to engage TCU students in service at several community-serving agencies, including Catholic Charities, the Tarrant Area Food Bank, the Presbyterian Night Shelter, the Boys and Girls

Club, and Habitat for Humanity. Representatives of these agencies will be present before and after the lecture to provide information and to offer opportunities for students to sign up for volunteer service.

During each of the Sunday Masses during the month of February, Fr. Calabrese connected the Sunday readings to Christ's call to serve. A corresponding food drive yielded over 3,000 pounds of donated items for the Tarrant Area Food Bank.

"We were so pleased to see the passion that our students have for service, with an enthusiastic response to the idea of learning more about Pope Francis," he said, noting that approximately 150 people participated in an interest survey and then in a "town hall meeting" after the Feb. 9 Mass. Representatives from several area service organizations met with interested potential volunteers during the meeting.

"Many of our students were already volunteering in various ways, but now, even more have begun to get involved ... as a result of this semester's focus."

*For more information about the event, contact Father Charlie Calabrese at (817) 257-7380, or visit the "TCU Catholic Community" Facebook page.*

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LIGHTER & BRIGHTER



A girl reacts after greeting Pope Francis during his general audience in St. Peter's Square at the Vatican March 26. (CNS photo/Paul Haring)

Musicians and St. Peter's Basilica are reflected in a sousaphone as Pope Francis leads his general audience April 2. (CNS photo/Paul Haring)

Bishop David L. Ricken of Green Bay, Wisconsin, pets a goat brought to St. Mary Church in Crivitz for a blessing of animals following the annual Rural Life Day Mass March 27. (CNS photo/Sam Lucero, The Compass)



A young volunteer displays food prepared for dinners served at a Friday evening Lenten fish fry at Sweetest Heart of Mary Church in Detroit March 28. (CNS photo/Jim West)

Restorers work on the ceiling of the San Lorenzo Chapel adjacent to the Holy Stairs in Rome March 11.

Layers of grime on the chapel's Renaissance frescoes are being removed, bringing the original splendor of the artwork back to life. (CNS photo/Paul Haring)



# Cross-Words

By Mark Simeroth

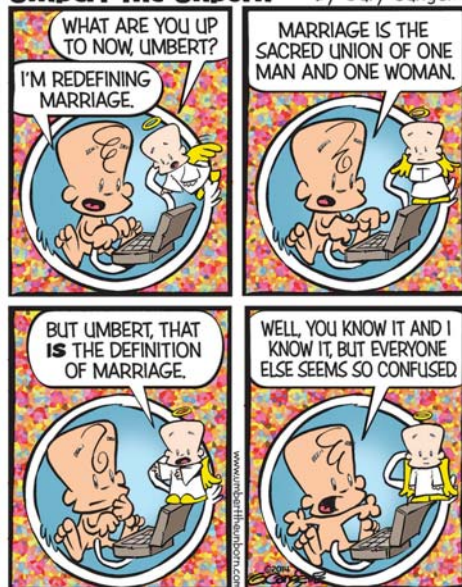
Across & Down:

1. Jesus' ancestor
2. Banishment
3. Goes by bus
4. Chosen
5. Invigorating solution

1	2	3	4	5
2				
3				
4				
5				

## Umbert the Unborn

by Gary Cangemi



## The FLOCK

by Jean Denton

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# GROWING AS A CHRISTIAN

## Mary's embrace of her son continues, enables our own

**YEARS AGO I WAS BLESSED TO SEE NOTRE DAME CATHEDRAL IN PARIS.** There were so many beautiful things to see there, but the image that has stayed with me more than 20 years was the Pietà by Nicholas Coustou that is behind the altar. I wanted to stay and stare at it for hours, but my tour group was moving on to other sites, and I had to leave this glorious statue of Mary holding her now dead son, both being attended to by two angels.

Mary is looking up to heaven with her arms outstretched with a look that is at the same time anguish-filled and questioning. It is such a profoundly human moment, yet at the same time, it is sublimely divine. Mary is holding her son, the Son of God, while looking up to her son's Father. So much is happening in this moment captured in stone.

I can only imagine what is going through the mind and heart of Mary. My guess is that the answer is, not much. The violence of the last few hours culminating with watching her son take his last breath has to have left her numb and in a state of shock. Yes, this moment had been predicted by Simeon when she and Joseph presented Jesus at the Temple all those years ago, but now that prophecy was fulfilled. There was no comfort in it, just the raw reality that her son is dead and in her arms.

As I meditate on this image, my mind wanders back to another moment when Mary held her son, but this one was in Nazareth and



*Descent from the Cross by Nicolas Coustou; photo courtesy of Wikipedia Commons (Photo by Prajinadhanya)*

his life on earth has just begun.

I wonder about all the other times she held her son throughout his life, certainly many times as a child, maybe during stormy nights, or during times of prayer, for sure after she and Joseph found him in the temple after three days of looking for him. Mary holding Jesus must have been a common occurrence, probably less as he grew older, but not one of those embraces prepared her for this embrace.

Holding her son at the foot of a cross could not have been in her plan, yet here she was fulfilling another plan, a plan set in motion by her "Yes" to the angel.

In a certain way this was not the last time she held Jesus. Mary's presence among the disciples in the frightful hours after Jesus died, and then discovering that Jesus was alive and all that

that meant for them and the world, and then in the ensuing years as the Church was formed, in all these moments, Mary was holding the Body of Christ, and thus, in a certain way she was holding her Son. But these also were not the last time she held her Son. Her final embrace with Jesus is still happening in eternity.

Meditating on the Pietà also leads me to wonder about the ways I too can hold Jesus. *Colossians 1:27* says that Jesus lives inside me, so I certainly hold Him in a spiritual way, and each time I serve the poor I serve Jesus, and thus I embrace Him then too.

When I read the Word of God I hold Him in my mind and heart, and when I encounter the Body of Christ here on earth, I am caught up in his arms once again. But the most intimate and overwhelming way that Jesus and



*Jeff Hedglen is the Campus Minister at UTA and associate director of Young Adult Ministry for the diocese. He is also the primary convener of Camp Fort Worth's many editions.*

I embrace comes every time I receive the Eucharist, for in that grace-filled Sacrament I hold Him physically for a few moments in time.

The Pietà is, certainly, a poignant scene, but it is not the culminating moment in the Paschal Mystery. The whole of Good Friday finds its meaning in the dawn of Easter Sunday. So when we meditate on the image of mother and son at the foot of the cross, we must not have our gaze end there, for the pain of the cross always calls us to the glory of resurrection.

Because of the Resurrection, Mary's last embrace of Jesus is not at the foot of the cross, and, down through the centuries, we too continue to be invited to embrace our Savior in a multitude of ways. All leading up to the time when we too embrace death, only to be born again into eternity with Jesus awaiting us at the gates of heaven, with arms open wide, ready to continue the embrace, forever.

# The bravest action ever?

following Jesus (especially the first followers)

By Kathy Cribari Hamer

**“WHAT DO YOU THINK WAS THE BRAVEST ACTION EVER?” MY HUSBAND ASKED AT BREAKFAST LAST SUNDAY.**

“I don’t know,” I said. “Maybe the first rodeo clown who ever voluntarily jumped in a barrel and let a Brahma bull head-butt him across the arena?” I thought my guess was brilliant, but it wasn’t as simple as Larry’s conjecture.

“Sorry,” Larry said, grinning like the guy ringing the gong-of-failure on a 1960s TV game show. “The actual bravest action was taken by the first person who ever ate an egg.” What??

Larry described an imaginary scene: two people looking intensely at a chicken, wondering what elliptical object it had just left on the ground.

“I don’t know what it is, do you?”

*“No, but I think I’ll eat it.”*

My daughter Abby and her husband Chad have just started farming, and on her most recent visit, she proudly brought us two dozen farm-fresh eggs. Even though I like eggs, I admit to having been skeptical about those recently laid ones; still, I didn’t want to hurt her feelings.

“Sure I’ll try one,” I said, internally grinning. “They look delicious.”

Actually, they were all different sizes, from marbles to golf balls. I went into my imaginary newsroom and playfully transposed those facts into a twisted weather report: “Today, in what appeared to be a normal Saturday morning homestyle breakfast,” I broadcast to my pretend audience, “a Texas mother found hailstone-sized eggs on her kitchen counter.”

Abby’s first farm eggs boasted extraordinarily bright orange-colored yolks, and I was reluctant to taste them. But Abby was praising the delicacy, so I took a tentative bite of the egg she had fried for me. It was tasty, as brilliant as its color, rich and delicious.

Sure enough, it turned out that fictitious guy who ate the first egg was indeed

**I took a tentative bite of the egg she had fried for me. It was tasty, as brilliant as its color, rich and delicious.**

brave — but also correct. I went ahead and asked Abby for a second helping.

As the 2014 Easter season begins, we enjoy the egg as a perfect food, one that has only 70 calories, but still raises our good cholesterol count. Additionally, though, it provides an ever-expanding source of traditions for celebration. We especially enjoy traditions that involve chocolate eggs — which unfortunately have more than 70 calories.

But there are also jeweled Fabergé eggs whose value is beyond delicious, traditional or sentimental; and Ukrainian eggs, painted so intricately one admires the technique just slightly more than the generosity they represent.

Multiple legends, from Roman to Chinese, tell of the Phoenix, a mythological bird that lives a legendary 500 years, then builds itself a twig nest that burns and reduces itself and the Phoenix to ashes. A new Phoenix egg arises, though, and is destined to live as long as its old self. This is a real story of resurrection.

On the Christian side, a traditional Easter church legend tells of Mary Magdalene bringing boiled eggs to the other women at the tomb of Jesus. When she sees the risen Christ, the eggs in Mary’s basket miraculously turn brilliant red.

Another story tells of Mary Magdalene as an evangelist, who visits the Emperor Tiberius in Rome. “Christ has risen,” Mary

says, in greeting. When Tiberius hears those words, he points to an egg on his table and announces, “Christ has no more risen than that egg is red.” The egg, legend says, immediately turns blood red.

The first person to eat an egg was a risk-taker indeed. But the apostles were even braver, listening to Jesus when He asked that they drop everything and follow Him, even though they would thus have absolutely nothing left in this world. Bet on me, Jesus said.

The apostles took the gamble, followed Jesus to his cross, mourned for Him after He died, and then rejoiced three days later, when Mary Magdalene ran to them and announced, “I have seen the Lord” *John 20:18*.

The Easter egg is a perfect food, as well as a perfect image of the everlasting life Jesus’ resurrection promised. The egg nourishes us, but also has the potential of producing a chicken, in essence nourishing us forever.

But Jesus promised more. He said He would feed us eternally with his own words, and even better, He would do this while we live with Him in Heaven. A no-risk warranty, for sure.

Who’s braver: a rodeo clown? The guy who first decided to taste an egg? Or those who followed Jesus?

I choose to be brave enough to follow Jesus.

I am going to count on the power of faith, the endurance of hope, and mostly, the labor of love.



*Kathy Cribari Hamer and her husband are members of St. Andrew Parish. Her family life column has been recognized repeatedly by the Catholic Press Association of the United States and Canada. Contact: [Kathy@somethingelseagain.com](mailto:Kathy@somethingelseagain.com) or visit her website [www.somethingelseagain.com](http://www.somethingelseagain.com).*

# The soupiness of Atheism

And they're supposed to be the intellectuals?

By David Mills

**THE NEW YORKER ENJOYS OVER A MILLION SUBSCRIBERS AND CLAIMS WELL OVER FOUR MILLION READERS.**

Nearly every famous writer you can think of has written for it, and its history is one of the grandest among American magazines. You can find it in nearly every public library in America. And its editors apparently can't find an atheist who has any idea what he's talking about.

In a long article in the Feb. 17 issue, Adam Gopnik reviewed two new histories of atheism and then set out his own ideas. Gopnik has written charming and witty books about France, cooking, children, and other subjects, as well as several children's stories, and won several major awards for his writing. And he is an atheist who has no idea what he's talking about when he talks about religion.

The review begins promisingly. Gopnik notes that although the writers of the books he's reviewing talk about the famous atheists' ideas, "much of the argument against God works less well as argument and thesis than as atmosphere and tone."

The eighteenth century English historian Edward Gibbon accepted the truth of Christianity in his *Rise and Fall of the Roman Empire* (or seemed to), but then described its early success as the product of human politics: The Christians were better organized and more energetic than their opponents. That's why Christianity's still around today. Treated this way, Gopnik explains, God "is diminished without ever being officially doubted."

It's a useful insight into the way the faith's most effective critics work. They pretend to take it seriously but then explain away its appeal and success. Whether or not Christianity's true, it works, and many people assume, completely illogically, that this means it's not true.

The atheist argues that these people just can't break free of religion. The Catholic will ask: Why can't they? Maybe they see or feel the reality of God without knowing it and hold on to something.

Of course the Catholic could agree with most of the argument. Christianity did have practical advantages over the alternatives. But the question to be asked is: Why did it have those practical advantages? Gibbon didn't go nearly deep enough. Maybe, the Catholic will want to say, it worked out so well in practice because it told the truth about God and man.

We have some examples from history. In a book called *The Rise of Christianity*, a sociologist named Rodney Stark — who was not any sort of believer himself — gave a lot of examples of how Christian teaching brought the Church worldly success. One of them was the Christian understanding of the infinite value of human life.

Girls weren't as useful as boys and many pagan families let their newborn girls die. The Christians said they're just as important to God and wound up having a lot more young women than the pagans. Young pa-

gan men found themselves becoming Christians in order to marry Christian women. So the Church grew in part because it had more women, but it had more women because it believed that God loved everyone.

Gopnik doesn't spare his own side from the same critical treatment. People who say they don't believe in God find all sorts of substitutes for God and for the feelings religion brings. He calls this "the soupiness of doubt." They "search for transcendence and epiphany, practice some ritual, live some rite. . . . They have some syncretic mixture of rituals: they polish menorahs or decorate Christmas trees, meditate upon the great beyond, say a silent prayer, light candles to the darkness."

John Lennon, whose silly song "Imagine" I keep hearing in the grocery store, tried atheism for just nine months, Gopnik says. (One of the song's famous lines runs "Imagine there's no heaven. It's not hard if you try.") "In truth Lennon was entirely captive to whatever superstition had most recently tickled his fancy, or his wife's. Imagine there's no Heaven — but pay attention to the stars and throw the *I Ching* as necessary. The maker of the great atheist anthem was anything but an atheist."

The atheist argues that these people just can't break free of religion. The Catholic will ask: Why can't they? Maybe they see or feel the reality of God without knowing it and hold on to something. As with Gibbon, the problem's deeper than it appears to the atheist.

The article gets worse, when Gopnik shows he has no idea what he's talking about when he talks about religion.

*David Mills is a writer. He and his family attend St. Joseph's Church in Coraopolis, just north of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.*

# Let God's light shine through you

Let God's image brightly show his presence

By Denise Bossert

**I REMEMBER THE DAY I DISCOVERED THE JOY OF PLAYING WITH A PRISM AND THE POWER GENERATED BY A MAGNIFYING GLASS.**

I was sitting on the windowsill of our fifth grade classroom and chatting with friends. We were looking at Mrs. Grace's plants and goofing around with the magnifying glasses and prisms. I was fascinated by the rainbows appearing on our notebook paper when we held a prism just so, between our fingers and thumb. What an amazing thing, this ray of sunlight! I studied the spectrum, trying to figure out just where one color ended and another began.

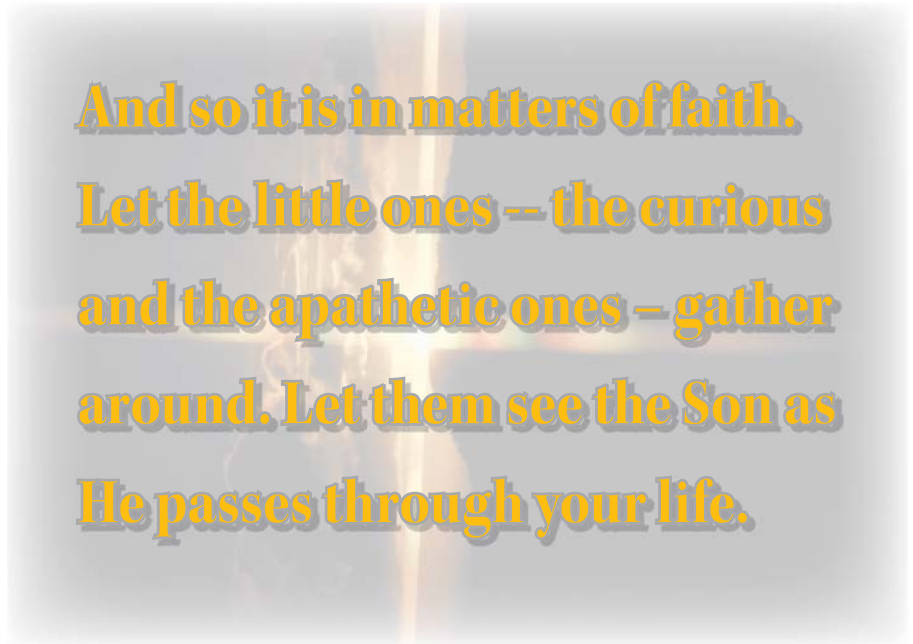
A friend was playing with the magnifying glass. She was fascinated by the pinpoint of bright light that she could generate by steadily holding the magnifying glass in one position and letting the sunlight pass through the glass.

As we watched and laughed at the wonders of science, her paper began to smoke, and the little spot of bright light turned brown. The paper was on fire. There was one collective intake of breath, and then everyone was silent. We had heard about that sort of thing happening, and now we had witnessed it for ourselves.

If you've ever played with rays of sunlight, you understand how our lives can be a prism in the hand of God. Our works become a rainbow of colors for all to see. Beautiful. Drawing the eyes of others toward God, causing their souls to marvel and wonder.

Our souls can be a magnifying glass in the hand of God. We lift our hearts up, and Jesus Christ is magnified. Everyone in proximity holds his breath in wonder, in awe. Miracles happen. Lives are set ablaze.

The divine light reveals our unique gifts, like the colors in the rainbow. The divine light reveals God Himself. Power. Majesty. The consuming fire of God.



That day, on a windowsill in a fifth-grade classroom, a group of children were stunned into silence for just a moment. We had been fascinated by the rainbows. But when we realized the power of the sun, and what we could do with a little magnifying glass, we made no sound at all. This was a power too great — something too important — to misuse.

We looked at each other with big eyes and open mouths. And we quietly put the magnifying glasses away in a box. We had uncovered a secret about the sun that demanded maturity, awe, respect. When we opened our science books, we now understood as children who had experienced it personally. Hands-on education. The kind of learning that sticks around long after the test and the last day of class. The kind of learning that even the most apathetic student will abide. Yes, he will keep coming back to discover more.

And so it is in matters of faith. Let the

little ones — the curious and the apathetic ones — gather around. Let them see the Son as he passes through your life, yielding the colors of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, self-control. Watch, as He displays his power in the middle of human suffering. Or sorrow. Or death. Miracles happen right here. And everyone is stunned. They cannot help but ponder it all. And they will not forget.

It's Mrs. Grace's classroom all over again.

St. Catherine of Siena once said we will set the world ablaze, if we become what we were meant to become. And what is that? A magnifying glass in the hand of God. Come, let us magnify the Lord, together.

*Denise Bossert has four children and is a member of Immaculate Heart of Mary in New Melle, Missouri. Her column "Catholic by Grace" has run in 46 diocesan newspapers. Check out her blog at [catholicbygrace.blogspot.com](http://catholicbygrace.blogspot.com).*

# Procrastination turns potential...

into a field of thistles

By Mary Morrell

**IT'S ABOUT THAT TIME OF YEAR FOR ONE OF OUR UNIQUE FAMILY TRADITIONS – THE EASTER MANGER.**

It's an awesome visual reminder of the connection between the humble birth of the Savior, God incarnate, and his eventual Resurrection and Ascension into Heaven, and is easily transformed from an empty manger, with only some remnants of straw remaining, to the empty tomb.

It's brilliant, it's unique and it's a figment of my imagination as I try to explain why we still have a large homemade, plywood manger on our front lawn at the advent of Lent and a quickly approaching Easter. And while we usually don't have a fully outfitted Easter manger by the time Holy Week rolls around, the presence of the manger in the spring has been a long-standing tradition, one to which my neighbors have, hopefully, become accustomed.

The obvious question would be, "Why?"

For many of us, such situations seem to be a matter of adhering to that age-old maxim, "Why do today what you can put off until tomorrow?" The choice applies particularly to chores that are seemingly unimportant, uninteresting, or distasteful.

Sadly, I am among those who sometimes fail at good decisionmaking. While my forays into procrastination do not always take center stage on my front lawn, they have their own deleterious effect on the fruits of my life and, in that way, are a detriment to my faith life, as well.

It is one thing to be challenged by such things as a loss of income which means bills can't be paid, a crisis of health or loss, serving as caretaker for a loved one, or working multiple jobs to make ends meet. In these cases, our responsibilities may be more than we can reasonably handle, and we need to be forgiving of ourselves when we don't accomplish everything we set out to do.

It is another thing when we abdicate

**It [links] the humble birth of the Savior, God incarnate, and his eventual Resurrection and Ascension .... It's brilliant, it's unique and it's a figment of my imagination...**

control of our finances, our relationships, our homes, and our futures because we've adopted an "I'll get to it later," approach. It's all too easy to fall into the same trap with our spiritual lives as well, leaving prayer, worship, and service for another day.

Psychologists explain that, for most, procrastination is not a matter of laziness, which demonstrates a lack of desire. Instead, for a variety of reasons, we delay putting our intentions into action. We want to do something, but we don't. We make a decision to do something else instead — usually something that makes us feel better at the moment — and inevitably suffer the consequences of this poor choice, including damage to our health.

The guilt and anxiety of procrastinating affects more than our finances when we postpone doing our taxes, or our relationships when unmet responsibilities fall on a

loved-one's shoulders. It affects us physically and emotionally and, ultimately, is an obstacle to God's plan for us.

Obviously, God is well-aware of the potential harm to our good wrought by a lack of self-discipline, no matter the reasons, which is why Scripture is full of teachings about the dangers of this behavior.

At times when I have looked at the state of our yard in the spring I have been reminded of a story in the book of Proverbs: "I passed by the field of a sluggard, by the vineyard of one with no sense; It was all overgrown with thistles; its surface was covered with nettles, and its stone wall broken down. As I gazed at it, I reflected; I saw and learned a lesson: A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the arms to rest — then poverty will come upon you like a robber, and want like a brigand."

God forbid I should be a sluggard! But I will admit that I am often overwhelmed by my to-do list, and lose sight of appropriate priorities. At those times, when I return to prayer, I am reminded that God has charged us with the responsibility to be stewards of our blessings, which includes the blessing of time. Not only is good stewardship an expression of gratitude but it is a path to freedom; an opportunity to build our physical and spiritual houses to serve the Lord, using our time and responsibilities to become who we were meant to be.

After years of experience, I realized that procrastination is more than just a bad habit. It is, as Charles Dickens observed, "a thief of time."

St. Augustine knew this, too, and his words have a prominent place on my refrigerator: "God has promised forgiveness to your repentance, but he has not promised tomorrow to your procrastination."

*Mary Morrell serves as managing editor of THE MONITOR, Catholic newspaper of the Diocese of Trenton in New Jersey.*

## Book: *RACE WITH THE DEVIL*

### New book gives momentum to readers running their own race to outdistance sin

By Jerry Circelli / Correspondent

IT MIGHT COME AS A SURPRISE THAT ONE OF TODAY'S MOST PROLIFIC CATHOLIC AUTHORS, JOSEPH PEARCE, SPENT THE EARLY YEARS OF HIS LIFE WRITING ARTICLES AND EDITING A MAGAZINE FOR THE SOLE PURPOSE OF INCITING A RACE WAR.

It probably doesn't come as a surprise, however, that Pearce — author of 19 Catholic titles — is not the first sinner to find redemption through Jesus Christ and his Church.

St. Peter cracked three times in his denial of Christ during the Passion before becoming the solid rock on which the Catholic Church was built; St. Paul the Apostle went out of his way to persecute Christians before traveling thousands of miles on foot to spread the Good News; and St. Mary Magdalene, once possessed by demons and sin, faithfully stood by Jesus at the cross and was the first to see Him after his resurrection.

With these Scriptural examples of redemption in mind, a reader can navigate with some degree of optimism through the troublesome early chapters of Pearce's new book, *Race with the Devil: My Journey from Racial Hatred to Rational Love*. In these passages of the book, Pearce recounts a childhood devoid of true faith. An empty spiritual life eventually led him to become an anti-Catholic, agnostic intent on inciting racial hatred as a white supremacist. The talent for creating inspirational prose that God bestowed upon him was certainly not used for good at the beginning of Pearce's life.

In September 1977, at the age of 16, Pearce launched a youth magazine titled *Bulldog*, a publication that he says now, had the ultimate purpose of inciting racial hatred. The magazine was published by the

National Front, a white supremacist organization that demanded the removal of non-whites from the United Kingdom. As the controversial magazine's writer and editor, Pearce found himself in the national spotlight and became one of the most widely known members of the National Front.

Within a year, Pearce's aggressive *Bulldog* grew from several hundred copies per issue to several thousand, and he began working full time for the National Front.

Pearce's quick ascension through the ranks of the organization gave him reason to believe his life was moving in the right direction.

"I was now living every young radical's dream of being a fully paid, full-time revolutionary, giving his life to the 'Cause,'" Pearce writes in his book.

By January 1982, at the age of 20, Pearce was sentenced to six months in prison for publishing material deemed likely to incite racial hatred under the United Kingdom's Race Relations Act. Four years later, Pearce again would be charged with that hate crime, and this time would spend 12 months in prison, including six months in solitary confinement.

During his second imprisonment, Pearce describes what he perceived as his descent into a tunnel whose light was not yet visible. He now sees it as his personal experience with the "dark night of the soul," about which St. John of the Cross wrote in a poem and treatise by the same name 400 years earlier. In his works, St. John discusses confusion, fear, and doubts about his faith on a journey that ultimately leads him to a closer union with Christ.

During Pearce's jury trial, someone gave him a rosary, and he held onto it. During his first days of his imprisonment,

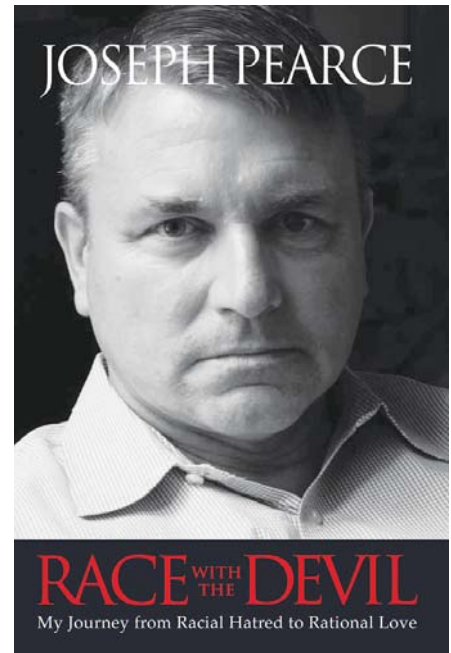


Image courtesy of Saint Benedict Press

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Pearce found himself fingering the rosary, though he had no idea of the prayers associated with the beads. As best he could, he began to mumble his own prayers. Pearce said this was the first time in his life that he had prayed. He also began attending Mass in prison.

Though still a long way from spiritual conversion and being received into the Catholic Church in 1989, these were the first steps Pearce took on his long road to redemption.

In the latter chapters of Pearce's book, we begin to witness the light of Christ through the author's eyes. The reader is in Pearce's shoes when he truly begins to open his eyes to witness God's grandeur. We can relate when he discovers the magnificence of uncountable stars in the sky or the brilliance of a full moon that lights up the night. Like Pearce, we often become too swept up in our hurried lifestyles to notice God's everyday miracles. As a reader, we are also there with Pearce as he encounters special people who give witness to Christ simply by the way they live their lives and offer help through love and compassion.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE



# SEEKING GOD'S PATH VOCATIONS

## *With canonization, Popes John XXIII, John Paul II intercede for vocations*

BY FATHER JONATHAN WALLIS

**DIVINE MERCY SUNDAY WILL WITNESS THE CANONIZATION OF BLESSED JOHN XXIII AND JOHN PAUL II. THIS IS AN AMAZING EVENT IN THE LIFE OF THE CHURCH. BOTH THESE MEN HAD A SIGNIFICANT IMPACT ON THE LIFE OF THE CHURCH AND ON VOCATIONS.**

The witness of joy in serving God and his Church is one of the best witnesses for the priesthood. Both Popes John XXIII and John Paul II served with joy and dedication.

My own call to the priesthood was strengthened by the witness of Pope John Paul II. I had the honor of seeing him in St. Louis in 1999. His health was not good, but he radiated hope and a deep love of Jesus Christ.

I went to St. Louis wrestling with the idea of becoming a priest. I was certain that I was interested in the idea, but was not certain

of Christ's call.

Mass with the pope was wonderful, and on the way home I read his speech to a group of youth, given on the previous day. I'll never forget his words: "To those of you who think that Christ may be inviting you to follow him in the priesthood or the consecrated life, I make this personal appeal: I ask you to open your hearts generously to Him; do not delay your response. The Lord will help you to know his will; He will help you to follow your vocation courageously."

I felt that the pope was speaking directly to me. I felt I needed to move forward, and through many twists and turns in the road, I entered the seminary and am now a priest.

I tell as many people as I can about the words of John Paul II. The invitation is as true today as it was when I first read it. Jesus



*Father Jonathan Wallis, STL, was ordained to the priesthood in 2007 and has served as the Vocations Director for the Diocese of Fort Worth since June 2013.*

Christ is faithful — He will help you to know his will and He will give you the strength to follow Him.

Pope John Paul II ended his talk, stating: "Christ is calling you; the Church needs you; the pope believes in you and he expects great things of you!"

It will not be long before we can ask Pope Saint John Paul II to intercede for us. I ask that he will intercede for us before God to inspire many young men to follow the call of Jesus Christ into the priesthood and many young men and women to follow Him into the consecrated life. May we all be witnesses of the hope and joy of Jesus Christ in the world.

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The greatest inspiration of all from the book is that no matter the severity of our sins, if we truly are sorry for our past transgressions and follow Christ, we can be forgiven. It is with both a sense of anger toward Pearce and sadness that we accompany him on his journey before Christ enters his life. Our feelings turn toward hope and admiration later when Pearce devotes himself to the Lord. The transformation shows us the enormous power of God and his redemptive love.

In opening up his life to Christ, Pearce began to read the works of Catholic writers and intellectuals, including G.K. Chesterton. He mentions Chesterton several times in his book and dedicates an entire chapter to the Catholic theologian and apologist. In Chesterton, Pearce said, he found "a new friend who

would become the most powerful influence (under grace) on my personal and intellectual development over the following years."

After his conversion to Catholicism, Pearce went on to write biographies of Chesterton, another English writer J.R.R. Tolkien, Irish writer Oscar Wilde, and Russian author Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, along with many other titles that reveal the spirituality and souls of their subjects. He has also written books exploring the affiliations of William Shakespeare and C.S. Lewis with the Catholic Church. He is currently writer-in-residence at The Thomas More College of Liberal Arts in Merrimack, New Hampshire, and co-editor of *Saint Austin Review*, an international magazine dedicated to Catholic topics.

In his book's postscript, Pearce writes, "My sinful life and the lessons it taught had led me to the foot of the Cross. My path was

that of Mary Magdalen. She and I were miserable sinners, forgiven by Christ, and invited by Him to become his disciples."

Pearce tells us that even though he has found God, his journey is not over. "I have my dragons to face and my sins to be forgiven," he writes. Again, what reader is without sin and cannot relate to the conscious decisions we must all make on a regular basis to avoid our demons and grow closer to God?

"Although my reception into the Church was the end of the journey from racial hatred to rational love, it was not the end of my life's journey. I am still a miserable sinner, and the race with the devil is anything but over," Pearce tells us.

The author leaves us not with a storybook about life that has a happy ending, but with a story about life that can have a renewed beginning through Jesus Christ.



Photo by Donna Ryckaert / North Texas Catholic

Seminarian Nghia Nguyen speaks to other seminarians of the Fort Worth Diocese right before Bishop Michael Olson's episcopal ordination Mass Jan. 29. The seminarians from the diocese served as the primary altar servers during the Mass. Nguyen was one of the assistant masters of ceremonies for the Mass.

# Support for Seminarians

*Parishioners, seminarians united in response to God's call*

BY JERRY CIRCELLI / CORRESPONDENT

Now in his second year at the University of St. Thomas School of Theology at St. Mary's Seminary in Houston, Stephen Hauck is on track to be ordained a Diocese of Fort Worth priest in 2017. A man dedicated to serving God and the Church, Hauck said he never really chose to be a priest. Instead, he explained, the "the priestly vocation chose me first."

"God is always reaching out to each of us," Hauck said. "The choice for us comes in how to respond."

For the 33-year-old seminary student, the response came in the midst of a successful career as a computer programmer. "After much prayer, I began to be able to quiet the inner noise from my daily life and hear the call God had been placing within my heart," Hauck said.

"I have no doubt that right now, pursuing the priestly vocation in seminary, I am doing what God created me to do. I am right where I am supposed to be. It is a great feeling to know that you are doing what God is calling you to do."

Hauck, whose home parish is St. Maria Goretti in Arlington, is one of 31 men called by God to become seminarians in the Diocese of Fort Worth. That number is nearly triple the 12 seminarians in formation to become diocesan priests in 2001.

Count 21-year-old Fernando Peralta among the increasing number of young men in the diocese to receive the call. A student at St. Joseph Seminary College in Saint Benedict, Louisiana, Peralta is progressing toward a 2021 ordination to the priesthood.

Like Hauck, Peralta views himself as a humble servant of God responding to a call.

"I see this priestly vocation as an invitation from God to love. This invitation calls us to love Him above all, but also his Church and his people."

Peralta, whose home parish is St. Michael in Bedford, continued, "In my second year of seminary now, I have had some time to experience a little of this priestly vocation. In this time, I have been filled with a lot of happiness and joy. I really feel that I am where God wants me to be."

The story of an inner calling, a joy for the priestly vocation, and a desire to serve in Christ's Church is a common theme in the lives of those currently called to priestly formation for the Diocese of Fort Worth, said Vocations Director Father Jonathan Wallis.

The record-high number of dedicated seminarians, Fr. Wallis said, is particularly encouraging for a diocese that is one of the fastest-growing in the country. The Diocese of Fort

*As he passed by the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting their nets into the sea; they were fishermen. Jesus said to them, "Come after me, and I will make you fishers of men." Then they abandoned their nets and followed him. He walked a little farther and saw James, the son of Zebedee, and his brother John. They too were in a boat mending their nets. Then he called them. So they left their father Zebedee in the boat along with the hired men and followed him.*

— MARK 1:16-20

Worth now includes 710,000 Catholics in 89 parishes and two missions throughout 28 North Texas counties.

"I attribute the number of seminarians to the work of the Holy Spirit," said Fr. Wallis, adding that God is listening to those who pray for vocations.

And now that those prayers are being answered, Fr. Wallis said, the faithful are challenged to ensure that every man called to serve as a priest in the Diocese of Fort Worth has the opportunity to follow God's divine direction.

Following through on God's call to seminarians will require prayer and financial support. The average annual cost of seminarian education — including tuition, books, room and board, and health insurance — is estimated by the diocese to be about \$47,300.

Considering that the average education for a seminarian is nine years, including four years of undergraduate work, four years of masters level theological studies, and one year of internship, costs associated with the formation of a priest can total nearly \$426,000.

The generosity of parishioners to meet those costs have come from several funding sources administered by the diocese including the Good Shepherd Sunday collection, The Bishop's Guild, the Sharing in Ministry annual appeal, the All Things Possible capital campaign, and special endowments as part of the Seminary Burse Fund.

"I always tell our seminarians that they are making a big sacrifice, but so are our parishioners," Fr. Wallis said. "This is a mutual sacrifice."

To a man, each seminarian knows his journey to serve God and his Church is a partnership with parishioners in the diocese, Fr. Wallis said.

# Support for Seminarians

*Faithful answer God's call to support those who follow priestly vocation*

BY JERRY CIRCELLI / CORRESPONDENT

**THE LIFE OF A MAN CAN CHANGE FOREVER ONCE HE DECIDES TO FOLLOW JESUS CHRIST AND DEVOTE HIS TIME ON EARTH TO SERVING THE CHURCH. IN THE DIOCESE OF FORT WORTH, ON AVERAGE IT REQUIRES A NINE-YEAR COMMITMENT, INCLUDING FOUR YEARS OF UNDERGRADUATE WORK, FOUR YEARS OF MASTERS-LEVEL THEOLOGICAL STUDIES, AND A ONE-YEAR INTERNSHIP AT A PARISH.** In addition, seminarians are expected to be fluent in at least two languages — English and Spanish.

The extensive education is necessary for the responsibilities associated with the job, said Father Jonathan Wallis, director of Vocations for the Diocese of Fort Worth. As Vocations director, Fr. Wallis also oversees seminarians and currently helps guide 31 young men along their journey to become priests. A 1996 TCU graduate who was ordained to the priesthood for the Diocese of Fort Worth in 2007, Fr. Wallis can closely relate to the sacrifices each of the men must make to take up his call.

"Personally," said, Fr. Wallis, "I feel blessed and honored that Jesus Christ would trust me with the obligation of priesthood."

Fr. Wallis said he also considers it a blessing that an increasing number of men are studying at seminaries with the goal of becoming priests in the Diocese of Fort Worth.

The increasing number of seminarians, which has nearly doubled since 2001, is welcome news for the rapidly growing Diocese of the Fort Worth, but presents its own set of challenges. The cost to educate each seminarian averages

approximately \$47,000 per year.

To meet those costs, the Diocese of Fort Worth has implemented several programs that are striving to support those who are called by God to serve the Church.

Following is an overview of those funding sources:

## **GOOD SHEPHERD SUNDAY (MAY 10-11, 2014)**

The Diocese of Fort Worth has designated the fourth Sunday of Easter as "Good Shepherd Sunday." Launched in 2010, the name was inspired by *John 10:11*. In that Scripture passage, the apostle tells us that Jesus said, "I am the good shepherd. A good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep."

A special collection on Good Shepherd Sunday supports seminarians, who are dedicating their lives to serve the faithful and follow in the footsteps of Jesus Christ. The Good Shepherd Sunday collection is designated for the Seminary Formation Fund, which supports seminarians throughout their discernment, education, and training.

Pat Miller, associate director of advancement for the Diocese of Fort Worth, said that more than \$1 million has been raised since the inception of the collection in 2010. According to financial figures she supplied, the 2010 collection raised \$215,944, in 2011 a total of \$285,415 was collected, in 2012 the diocese saw \$274,515 in contributions, and in 2013 the generosity of parishioners in the diocese totaled \$275,204.

## **THE BISHOP'S GUILD**

Another recent source of



Photo by Donna Ryckaert / North Texas Catholic

Transitional Deacon Gary Picou (left), and seminarian Joe Keating (right) go over a few details prior to Bishop Olson's ordination Mass. The two served as assistant masters of ceremonies for the liturgy.

funding to keep pace with the growing number of seminarians in the Diocese of Fort Worth is the "The Bishop's Guild." Started in 2012 by former Bishop Kevin Vann, the Guild progressed under the leadership of then Diocesan Administrator Monsignor Stephen J. Berg (now the bishop of Pueblo, Colorado), and carries on with Bishop Michael F. Olson.

The Guild focuses its efforts on supporting issues related to the education and lives of priests in the diocese. Specifically, two funds have been formed by the Guild. They include the "Support for Seminarians" for men following God's call to the priesthood and the "Priests Care Fund," for priests who are retired, disabled, or need healthcare assistance.

Michael Messano, diocesan director of advancement (until he returned to the St. Augustine,

Florida area at the end of January), explained that the faithful are stepping up in a big way to support seminarians through the Guild. "It's one of the central passions we have as a diocese and something we're very proud of," Messano said. "It's such a blessing."

As part of their membership in the Bishop's Guild, members meet quarterly and often hear first-hand from seminarians on their progress. In the past, Bishop Vann was an active participant at the Guild's dinner meetings. The Guild looks forward to continued involvement from Bishop Olson and from the seminarians who are studying hard to serve the diocese as priests in the near future.

Still a relatively new organization, the group is looking at innovative ways to support seminarians,

CONTINUED ON PAGE 20



Photo by Donna Ryckaert / North Texas Catholic  
Seminarians (from left to right) Eugene Flynn, Rijo Philip, Maurice Moon, Michael Greco, and Stephen Hauck process out of the arena at the end of Bishop Olson's ordination Mass.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 19

in addition to their financial contributions.

To date, Messano said 34 married couples and two single participants have made commitments of \$2,500 for three years as part of their Bishop's Guild membership. The total of 36 current memberships, at \$2,500 each, accounts for \$90,000 for men entering the priesthood and others who have served.

#### SHARING IN MINISTRY

An annual appeal tied to the operating budget of the Diocese of Fort Worth, Sharing in Ministry supports a wide-range of Church programs and building and repair projects. Depending on the needs of the diocese, each year the appeal designates areas of support for funding.

Parishioners in the diocese are asked to make pledges to the appeal, which lists a "Case for Support" — specific areas of funding needed and how those funds will be used. People who donate can make a one-time gift to fulfill their pledge or make monthly contributions.

For the 2013-2014 fiscal year, ending June 30, the diocese set a \$3 million Sharing in Ministry goal, which included grants for parishes and schools; educational programs serving children and adults; Catholic Charities; Parish Share; the Marriage Tribunal; and support for seminarians.

Of the \$3 million goal, \$475,000, or 16 percent of the total, has been designated for supporting seminarians.

#### ALL THINGS POSSIBLE CAPITAL CAMPAIGN

In addition to the Sharing in Ministry annual appeal, the Diocese of Fort Worth has been conducting a multi-year capital campaign

## Average costs per seminarian during 9-year formation \*

Total Room and Board	\$15,200	x 8 years	= \$121,600
Total Tuition and Books	\$23,500	x 8 years	= \$188,000
Total Annual Collegiate Stipend	\$1,800	x 4 years	= \$7,200
Total Annual Theologian Stipend	\$2,400	x 4 years	= \$9,600
One-year Pastoral Internship Costs	\$4,800	x 1 year	= \$4,800
Total Annual Insurance	\$10,500	x 9 years	= \$94,500

\$425,700 = Total cost per seminarian during 9-year formation

\$47,300 = Average Annual Cost Per Seminarian

( $\$425,700 \text{ Total Cost Per Seminarian} \div 9 \text{ years} = \$47,300 \text{ per year}$ )

\* Estimated annual costs and total cost for seminarian training. Tuition rates, room and board and other costs vary, depending on the seminary attended, scholarships, and total years in education. Costs listed are intended to give readers an estimate of financial resources necessary to fund those called to follow priestly vocations in the Diocese of Fort Worth.

named "All Things Possible." Launched in 2009, on the 40th anniversary of the Diocese of Fort Worth, the campaign seeks to meet the most critical needs of the local Church. The \$40 million campaign will conclude this year, with a goal of raising \$1.5 million for seminarians.

#### SEMINARY BURSE FUND

In addition to other revenue sources, the diocese has also established a Seminary Burse Fund to assist in the education of seminarians. A Seminary Burse Fund is a permanent fund set aside for educating and training future priests. The principal is not used for the funding, but instead dividends earned by investing the money from the burses, contribute to the funding stream.

Messano and Miller both said that through the Seminary Burse Fund, funding streams can be established "in perpetuity," or for a long time for seminarian education, since they flow from invested capital.

#### A PASSION FOR SUPPORTING VOCATIONS

Whether the source of funding for seminarians is from annual appeals, a capital campaign, special collections, the Bishop's Guild, endowments through the Seminary Burse Fund, or special donations from organizations and individuals, the diocesan advancement office continues to witness the generosity of parishioners in the Diocese of Fort Worth.

"People in this diocese really put a lot of

time, effort, and resources into supporting our seminarians and their vocation," said Messano.

"The expenses and the income are always changing," Messano explained, with the growing number of seminarians and associated financial needs. "But the people in this diocese, they have such a passion for vocations. It's a real blessing."

Miller agreed. "We're challenged in this office to meet expenses and raise revenue by sharing the goodness of what these seminarians are doing.

"It is such an important focus for the diocese," Miller continued. "We want to do all that we can do in the parishes and through our efforts in this office. We want to do all that we can do to support all of their effort as seminarians. And they respect the fact that people are sacrificing to help support them."

Miller called the shared sense of responsibility between seminarians and faithful Catholics who support them as the "tie that binds," as they continue the work of Christ's Church. Messano termed it "a partnership." And Fr. Wallis has referred to it as "a mutual sacrifice."

No matter how you term it, the combined effort of generous Catholics and dedicated seminarians in formation, is necessary for the future of the Church.

"The important thing is that every man who is called by Jesus Christ to serve as a priest in the Diocese of Fort Worth has the opportunity to do so," Fr. Wallis said. "Seminarian support is just like investing for the future."



## VOCATION AWARENESS PROGRAM

**JUNE 20 - 22, 2014 UNIVERSITY OF DALLAS, IRVING, A Catholic University**

A weekend of discernment helps single Catholic men and women, ages 18 – 40, find answers about life as a Priest, Sister, Brother or Consecrated Lay Woman. It includes presentations, panel discussions, Q&A periods and one-on-one conferences with diocesan and order Priests, Sisters and Brothers. There are no fees, private rooms and meals are furnished, and no one will pressure you or seek a commitment. To learn more and apply, visit [vapinfo.org](http://vapinfo.org) or contact Fr. Jonathan Wallis at the Ft. Worth Diocese, 817-560-2452, ext. 110, [jwallis@fwdioc.org](mailto:jwallis@fwdioc.org).

Visit [vapinfo.org](http://vapinfo.org). Application deadline June 9.

Sponsored by the Vocations Offices and Serra Clubs of Dallas and Fort Worth

*Faithful priest and former vicar general and diocesan administrator has left the Diocese of Fort Worth to become*

# Bishop Berg of Pueblo

Bishop Stephen Berg addresses the assembly at the end of the Ordination Mass, acknowledging the people who formed and guided his faith journey.

STORIES BY JOAN KURKOWSKI-GILLEN / CORRESPONDENT  
PHOTOS BY DONNA RYCKAERT

As his mother, nine siblings, and uncle, Bishop Emeritus Joseph L. Charon of Des Moines, looked on, Stephen J. Berg was ordained the fifth bishop of the Diocese of Pueblo, Colorado during a Feb. 27 Mass that celebrated faith and family.

The crowd filling the 1,600-seat Pueblo Memorial Hall included a large contingent from the Diocese of Fort Worth, where the new bishop was ordained a priest in 1999 and served as pastor and diocesan administrator until the ordination of Fort Worth's new bishop, Michael F. Olson Jan. 29. Pope Francis

named the Miles City, Montana, native the next bishop of the Diocese of Pueblo on Jan. 15.

Nine members of the Ingler family traveled from rural North Texas to see their former pastor become a bishop.

"It was important for us to come and support him in his new journey with Christ," said Chance Ingler, a member of St. Joseph Church in Nocona. "It was a beautiful ceremony, and he is a beautiful man. Our loss is Pueblo's gain."

Michelle Hoover of Aledo, Bishop Berg's first cousin, was one of 50 family members who came to Colorado for the

ordination.

"I wanted to be part of this. I'm just so proud of Steve," said the Holy Redeemer parishioner. "Getting to see other relatives is a wonderful part of this celebration. But I'm a little disappointed he's leaving Fort Worth."

Principal consecrator Archbishop Samuel J. Aquila, metropolitan of the Denver Province, performed the sacred rite of laying on of hands and recitation of the prayer of ordination, assisted by co-consecrators Bishop Charon and Bishop Michael Sheridan of Colorado Springs, who had also served as Pueblo's apostolic administrator. The anointing of the head with sacred chrism — symbolic of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit — and the presentation of the Book of the Gospels and episcopal ring, miter, and crozier were completed beneath a 15-foot crucifix constructed specifically for the occasion by local carpenter Michael Cora. A 5 ½-foot corpus attached to the cross Cora had formed was borrowed from St. Pius X Church in Pueblo.

Bishop Olson participated in the liturgy, along with 15 fellow bishops, 100 priests, and 60 deacons. More than a dozen members of the clergy were from the Diocese of Fort Worth.

One of the visiting priests was Father Kyle Walterscheid, pastor of Bl. John Paul II University Parish in Denton, who studied for the priesthood with the new bishop at Assumption Seminary in San Antonio.

"Our readings for Lent ask us to be mindful of becoming a humble servant who is compassionate and forgiving, and that's who Bishop Berg is. He identifies with what the pope is trying to bring into ministry," said Fr. Walterscheid of his longtime friend. "He will definitely be a person who is bishop for the people as well as his own priests."

In his homily, Archbishop Aquila reminded worshippers that bishops are entrusted with the same mission Jesus Christ gave his apostles.

"They are the successors of the apostles," he explained. "Throughout the generations, up to this day, there is that unbroken succession given to the Church so she might proclaim the truth of Jesus Christ."

The consecrating archbishop advised Bishop-elect Berg to form a close connection between himself and the priests in the diocese.

"They will be your closest collaborators," he assured. "Come to know them and love them as Christ loved the apostles."

A bishop must build the same familiarity with the people in his diocese. Paraphrasing

the words of Pope Francis, he said bishops and priests should be shepherds who take on the smell of their sheep and become involved in the lives of people under their care, especially the poor and those who do not know Christ.

"Follow in the steps of Jesus and embrace the crosses that will be given to you," the archbishop said in closing. "May you become the icon of the Good Shepherd."

Several friends and members of the Berg family were invited to participate in the Ordination Mass. Lucas Pollice, former director of Catechesis for the Diocese of Fort Worth who now lives in Denver, read the second reading from *1 Timothy*. Nieces and a nephew of the bishop presented the offertory gifts.

Sister Frances de la Cruz, a Capuchin Poor Clare of the Heavenly Father, read the first reading from *Isaiah* in Spanish. The Pueblo religious order is a cloistered community, but the sisters journeyed from their monastery for the special occasion.

"We prayed a lot for the Lord to send a new shepherd, and He answered the prayers of many people," the nun said. "We came out to meet the new bishop."

Addressing the congregation at the end of the Ordination Mass, Bishop Berg acknowledged the people who formed and guided his faith journey.

"What you see in this section is much of my past life and the reasons for which I am here," he said, gesturing toward the center rows of the auditorium crowded with people from Montana, Texas, and California.

He called participating in the lives of so many relatives and friends "a gift" and singled out for special recognition his 88-year-old mother, Jeanne, and his late father, Conrad Berg, for the sacrifices they made raising and

educating him.

As a new chapter in his life began to unfold in recent weeks, Bishop Berg said he processed the changes by remembering the past.

"But I'm here for the future, and I'm here for the people of Pueblo," he asserted.

Leaving no doubt he will approach his responsibilities with whole-hearted determination, the new bishop told parishioners in his new diocese, "I belong to you."

Covering the southern and western parts of Colorado (nearly half of the state), the Diocese of Pueblo is geographically huge, covering 48,100 square miles, but sparsely populated. Parishes are separated by distance, with some quite isolated. Catholics comprise about 10 percent the population.

The layout of his new diocese reminded Bishop Berg of his time as a rural pastor ministering to the needs of four, widespread parishes in North Texas.

"And I see some of you have six, seven, or eight parishes and missions," he said, addressing the throng of white-robed diocesan priests. "I just want to say I will get to know and listen to you. We are going to work together."

As he grows into his new role as bishop of Pueblo, the former college music instructor and corporate executive of a nursery business, asked for prayers.

"I was very surprised by your call last December," Bishop Berg said, speaking to Archbishop Carlo Maria Viganò, the apostolic nuncio to the United States, who delivered news of Monsignor Berg's appointment to bishop of Pueblo from Pope Francis.

"I promise you, as I did then to our Holy Father, I will give it everything that I've got," he stated, as the assembly applauded their appreciation.



Bishop-elect Berg lies prostrate before the altar moments before his ordination as bishop.



Bishop-elect Stephen Berg embraces his uncle, Bishop Emeritus Joseph Charron of Des Moines, at a Solemn Vespers service the eve of his episcopal ordination.



Bishop-elect Berg is joined by supporting bishops in the sanctuary of the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart at a Solemn Vespers service Feb. 26, the evening before his ordination.



**ABOVE:** Bishop Charron blesses the symbols of office for his nephew the evening before his ordination.

**BELOW:** Bishop Berg embraces Fort Worth Bishop Michael Olson immediately after his installation as bishop of Pueblo.



## On eve of ordination, Bishop-elect gifts to lead his new flock to Christ

**WHEN FACED WITH TOUGH DECISIONS DURING HIS YEARS AS A PASTOR AND LATER AS DIOCESAN ADMINISTRATOR FOR THE DIOCESE OF FORT WORTH, MONSIGNOR STEPHEN BERG KNEW THERE WAS A TRUSTING SOUL WHO UNDERSTOOD THE CHALLENGES OF MINISTRY.**

For advice and encouragement he turned to his uncle, Bishop Emeritus of Des Moines Joseph L. Charron, also known to his many nieces and nephews as “Bishop Uncle Joe.”

The depth of the relationship between nephew and uncle became obvious on the eve of Msgr. Berg’s ordination as the fifth bishop of Diocese of Pueblo. At the end of the Feb. 26 Solemn Vespers service, both men expressed their love with an emotional embrace. The moment was captured on the front page of the local newspaper, *The Pueblo Chieftan*.

Prior to the poignant hug, Bishop Charron blessed his nephew’s pastoral ring, crosier, and miter, then spoke from the heart about faith, family, and his own ordination to the episcopacy.

“It’s not often that a bishop uncle can give guidance to another bishop,” he said, as a low chuckle rose inside the Diocese of Pueblo’s Cathedral of the Sacred Heart. “As (Fort Worth) Bishop Olson said so beautifully, you’re on a journey rooted in faith, and it’s that living

faith that brought you here to Pueblo. The gifts of faith and love you received from your mom and dad can now be shared, through your ministry as a bishop, with the people of your diocese.”

Twenty years ago, the retired prelate was ordained Bishop of Des Moines, and he remembered being overwhelmed by the experience.

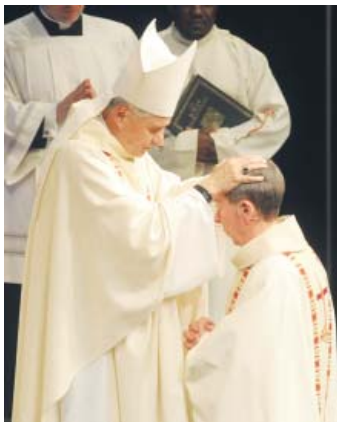
“Laying on the floor of the cathedral, I was probably as nervous as you are now, but a calmness and peace of mind came to me like I’m sure it will come to you tomorrow,” he said reassuringly to the then bishop-elect. “The Spirit of God will strengthen you.”

Bishop Charron reminded his nephew that people will pray for him, adding, “rely on those prayers and know the prayers of the faithful will truly support you.”

The assembly, which included priests and parishioners from North Texas, also heard from Fort Worth Bishop Michael Olson who was asked by his longtime friend to give the homily at the Vespers service.

“I was honored and touched (to participate) on behalf of the Diocese of Fort Worth and personally, because he’s a dear friend and brother priest,” the bishop told *the North Texas Catholic*. “I’m very happy for the Diocese of





**ABOVE LEFT:** Bishop Charron lays hands on his nephew as one of the principal co-consecrators. • **ABOVE 2ND FROM LEFT:** Archbishop Samuel J. Aquila, metropolitan of the Denver Province, pours the sacred chrism over Bishop Berg's head. • **ABOVE 2ND FROM RIGHT:** Archbishop Aquila places the mitre on Bishop Berg's head, reminding him to look to heaven. • **ABOVE RIGHT:** Bishop Berg receives his crozier from Archbishop Aquila. • **RIGHT:** Bishop Berg is seated in the cathedra (bishop's chair), officially installing him as bishop of Pueblo.



## Berg advised to share his

Pueblo. I have a sense that this is a very good fit for him and the diocese. We will miss him very much, but he can always come back and visit.”

During his homily, Bishop Olson recalled attending World Youth Day in Colorado 21 years ago with fellow seminarian Stephen Berg and 1,500 youth from the Diocese of Fort Worth.

“On that occasion, Blessed John Paul II spoke to each and to all of us that, ‘Christ first invites us, then He reveals Himself more fully, and then He sends,’” he explained.

Speaking to the massive Denver, Colorado audience in 1993, the late pontiff said, “Christ can call you at any stage of your pilgrimage through life and wants you to have the treasure of knowing him more fully.”

Christ, once again, brought Bishop-elect Berg to Colorado, Bishop Olson observed.

“Not to what would more aptly be called World Late Middle Age Day — but to lead and shepherd the People of God in the Diocese of Pueblo,” he continued.

“Yet, the marrow of the invitation remains the same — to experience in each other, most especially gathered at the Eucharist, the treasure of knowing Christ more fully.”

The homilist asked the people of Pueblo to accept, love, and receive their new bishop.

“May this time in your life as the Church be a time for clarifying Christ as your treasure and his will as your focus,” Bishop Olson added.

Jeanne and Jim Pagano, who attended the Vespers service, heard their new bishop speak at a Feb. 23 youth rally and were impressed with his ability to engage young people.

“He spoke to them on their level like a real country man,” Jeanne said.

While working at the Serra Club booth, Jim Pagano watched the bishop-elect walk from row to row and shake hands with many of the teens.

“He took his time with them and that was nice to see,” Pagano said. “Fort Worth should be proud of this man of God.”

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Local clergy react to Bishop Berg's appointment

‘He’s a keeper’: Bishop Berg’s family reacts to his episcopal appointment



# THE DIGNITY OF THE PRISONER

*Inspired by Pope Francis' visit to a prison last Holy Thursday, inmates at the Allred Unit outside of Wichita Falls painted a portrait of the Holy Father and sent it to him as a gift...*

*Here's the kicker — he responded*

BY JENARA KOCKS BURGESS / CORRESPONDENT  
IMAGES COURTESY OF DEACON RUSSELL DETWILER

**INMATES OF THE JAMES V. ALLRED PRISON UNIT IN IOWA PARK WHO TAKE PART IN THE DIOCESE OF FORT WORTH'S PRISON MINISTRY READ LAST SPRING THAT THE NEWLY-ELECTED POPE FRANCIS WASHED PRISONERS' FEET DURING HOLY THURSDAY MASS: THEY WERE MORE THAN IMPRESSED.**

Some of them were moved to express their appreciation to the Pope for directly ministering to people in prison, said Deacon Russell Detwiler, chaplain for the ministry.

"They couldn't imagine a pope going into a prison and washing inmates' feet," he said.

Last year the Holy Father washed the feet of 12 young people of different nationalities and faiths at Rome's Casa del Marmo prison for minors during the evening Mass there. According to the Catholic News Service story, almost 50 detainees, including about a dozen women, attended the Mass. Detainees also proclaimed the readings and led the prayers of the faithful.

Inmate Terry "Buster" Watkins, Jr., 39, has been at Allred for the past nine years, and has attended Catholic Mass for the past two. In a written interview, Watkins said that reflecting on Pope Francis and "his act of humbling and humiliation ... it is inspiring and truly insightful in helping us to understand how Christ would want us to serve others in our daily lives."

The James V. Allred Unit is an all-male Texas Department of Criminal Justice correctional facility with a capacity of 3,722. It sits on about 320 acres four miles northwest of Wichita Falls in the town of Iowa Park. Dcn. Detwiler has served as a volunteer chaplain at the Allred Unit for a total of 10 years and had previously served four-and-half years at a large county jail in Michigan.

After the Holy Thursday Mass last year, Dcn. Detwiler said one of the inmates asked Watkins to draw a portrait in pastels of the Pope on an 18" by 22" canvas, and they asked

Dcn. Detwiler to send it to the pope.

Deacon Detwiler says he learned it would cost \$284 to mail the artwork to the Vatican City State. "So I contacted the Apostolic Nunciature, which is the Vatican Embassy to the US in Washington D.C., and they told me if I could get that picture to them, they would see to it that the pope got it," he said. "So I sent it to them, and it cost me \$24."

Later, Dcn. Detwiler received a letter from the Apostolic Nuncio saying that they had received the painting, and would make sure the Pope would receive it. Sometime later, he received a letter from the pope's secretary saying the Holy Father had received the painting and appreciated it. As a sign of gratitude, the pontiff responded by sending a picture of himself with his signature and his papal coat of arms to the deacon and to Watkins.

"So I made copies of it," Dcn. Detwiler said. "About 125 copies, 4-by-6, I think, and passed it out at the (weekly Communion) service to all the guys who were involved in this."

The Allred inmates were very pleased by the letter and photo the pope sent, Dcn. Detwiler said.

"We got a standing ovation when they found out what happened," he said.

Sacred Heart parishioner Jim McSorley, who has been involved as prison ministry volunteer for six years, assisted Dcn. Detwiler that day, and reported that the inmates were "just overwhelmed."

"They were like, 'Little us, little old prisoners in the Allred Unit in Iowa Park, and we got a notice back,'" McSorley said.

Watkins said in his written interview that receiving the letter back from the Vatican as well as the photo meant a lot to him.

"I felt like I had finally been heard and seen and was blessed knowing our Pope took the time to recognize something that a 'nobody' like me had drawn," Watkins wrote.



This painting by inmate Terry "Buster" Watkins was inspired by Mass last year. The painting was sent to the Holy Father as a gift.

"I've always wanted my work to be seen, and for the first person to recognize it to be our blessed Pope Francis is amazing!"

Watkins wrote that the prison ministry is important to him.

"It helps me to stay grounded in a spiritual walk that helps me stay out of trouble and act in positive ways," Watkins said in his written interview.

"These volunteers are blessings, with the work and unconditional love they bring," he wrote. "The amount of work they put in benefits us, and it changes the lives of these inmates. They bring a passion and light into a



Pope Francis' washing of prisoners' feet during Holy Thursday lit.

dark place like this to bring us a better way of serving Christ," Watkins continued.

Dcn. Detwiler, who pulled back from his diaconal duties at Sacred Heart Church in Wichita Falls (except the prison ministry) this year, said he hopes this story will help people see what a blessing the prison ministry is to both the inmates and volunteers.

"It's really hard to get people to come into this ministry," Dcn. Detwiler said. "It's a really dark place because of the human tragedies in the lives of the [inmates], and people are afraid to venture out there.

"We've never been threatened," he said, "or had any fear of being hurt because we are

there for them, and they understand that. The last thing they want to happen is for one of us to get hurt and for us to go away. They take good care of us. And the staff is very supportive too. They are actually kind of glad we're out there trying to bring a little peace to the place."

Dcn. Detwiler said he, McSorley, and another prison ministry volunteer, Sacred Heart parishioner Bob Butterfield, who has helped with the ministry for 13 years, go to the Allred Unit every Thursday and Friday year round.

"I think I get a whole lot more out of it than I put in," Butterfield said. "There's so much to be done out there, and we're just skimming the surface. I'm truly inspired by some of these men.

"They know they've done wrong; they're truly remorseful for it, [but] they're trying to get their faith back, and the conditions," he said, "you know, are never good -- But they pursue it."

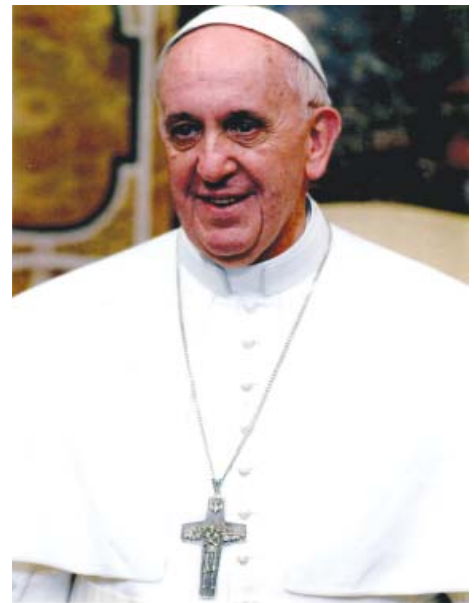
Dcn. Detwiler said on Thursdays, Butterfield teaches the RCIA class, and occasionally he distributes Holy Communion at one of the secure buildings. Also on Thursdays, Dcn. Detwiler and McSorley teach a Catechism class, and lead a Rosary. A Mass or a Liturgy of the Eucharist with distribution of Holy Communion (depending on the availability of a priest) is held every Friday.

Watkins said that he attends many of the Catholic prison ministry's activities and helps set up the gymnasium for the weekly liturgy as well as helping with the music and ushering.

Dcn. Detwiler said the Catholic ministry at Allred started with just 25 men in an RCIA class. Now there are 35 inmates in RCIA, 47 in a Catechism class, 20 in the Marian Movement Rosary, and 100 to 110 attending the Friday liturgy. Dcn. Detwiler also said they have baptized and confirmed 36 since he's been at Allred, including 14 this past October. As part of the prison ministry, Butterfield, McSorley, and Dcn. Detwiler all said they serve not only Catholics, but people of other faiths as well.

McSorley said he first began volunteering with the prison ministry because Butterfield, a fellow Knight of Columbus, piqued his curiosity. He said he also felt that beyond the Knights, he needed to give back to God for the blessings he had been given.

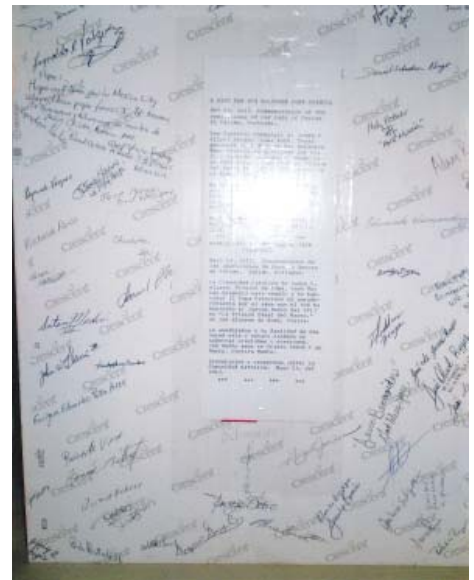
"One thing led to another. I kind of liked it and thought, 'Gee whiz, this is a way to give back,' and I promised myself I was going to do it because there is a tremendous need," McSorley said. "Let me put it to you this way,



Francesco

**ABOVE:** Pope Francis expressed his appreciation by sending the inmates this portrait of himself with his signature at the bottom.

**BELOW:** The prisoners at the Allred Unit signed the back of the painting they sent to the Holy Father.



'the harvest is plentiful, abundant. Laborers are few.' You know that Gospel. This is true. There's only three of us out there. We could use more volunteers."

For more information about volunteering with the Diocese of Fort Worth's prison ministry, visit [www.fwdioc.org/pages/prison-ministry](http://www.fwdioc.org/pages/prison-ministry). To volunteer with the prison ministry in the Northwest Deanery, contact Dcn. Detwiler at 940-692-1194.



or two at the ready and hand them out when the need arises.

Nancy Eder, who serves as diocesan school nurse consultant and health advocate to priests, was impressed when she visited Fr. Curtsinger recently and saw Wallace working on the supply bag project under the watchful eye of the retired priest.

“My reaction was, ‘What a great thing you and Father are doing,’” Eder said. “They are both very humble and they live very humbly. I think they are living out the Gospel and living out Pope Francis’ mission to serve the poor.”

“I truly think it is good for all of us to serve the poor,” she added. “It’s good for us to take a step back and find ways to help those who have less than we do. When we see what Chris and Father are doing, their mission inspires us — Fr. Curtsinger is a retired priest, he’s 99 years old, and he is still serving the people.”

Although he has limited mobility and speech these days, Fr. Curtsinger remains dedicated to service and is aware of what is going on around him. That is evident as he frequently affirms his support for Wallace, not only for getting him through each day, but also for helping him stay in close contact with the world.

“You’re doing a good job” and “you’ve done well,” are words Fr. Curtsinger conveys to Wallace many times throughout the day.

Wallace often drives Fr. Curtsinger to nearby parks in Fort Worth — the Botanical Gardens and Forest Park are among his favorites — to be among people and witness the natural wonders created by God.

A sketch of Fr. Curtsinger by longtime friend and artist Jerrell Sustaita.

Image courtesy of Fr. George Curtsinger



Photo by Jerry Circelli / North Texas Catholic

At age 99, Fr. George Curtsinger continues to honor Christ. His caretaker, Chris Wallace, is dedicated to helping the priest carry out his continuing mission to serve the Church.

Nature has long held a fascination for Fr. Curtsinger. His detailed photography of flora and fauna have been on display at art galleries, compiled in photography collections, and included in a poetry book. Sixteen years ago, Fr. Curtsinger and his love for photography were the subjects of a 1998 *Fort Worth Star-Telegram* feature written by Jim Jones and distributed worldwide by the Associated Press.

The writer said of Fr. Curtsinger, age 83 at the time, “He’s been shooting pictures for more than 50 years. And his photographs — bare trees seen through mist, birds on a moonlit night, Spanish horses leaping in midair, brilliant splashes of color from yellow flowers — are displayed in homes in Texas and around the world.”

Fr. Curtsinger’s “photographic excellence,” Jones wrote, comes from “an innate artistic sense,” and what another person called “a spiritual center” at the heart of his work.

Renee Johnson is well aware of Fr. Curtsinger’s artistic talent, not only in photography but in music as well. “He’s a classically trained pianist,” Johnson said. She described the powerful music the priest once made with his Steinway grand piano as “majestic, strong, and uplifting.” She added, “He could play Bach, Brahms, Beethoven; you name it, he played it.”

Johnson met Fr. Curtsinger in the 1980s, during the priest’s 30-plus years of chaplaincy at St. Joseph’s Hospital in Fort Worth. Her husband had served on the board of the direc-

tors at the hospital, and Johnson, not a Catholic at the time, quickly grew to admire the priest and his ministry. In 1992, she was accepted into the Catholic Church, inspired by the example of Christ she saw in Fr. Curtsinger.

“He’s been a remarkable friend and has been a source of spiritual guidance for me,” Johnson said.

“Listening to his homilies, I was just astounded,” recalled Johnson. “He could say in just three sentences a whole year’s worth of thoughts. You would just be awed by how succinct, but enormous, his homilies were. He has always been a remarkable man and I’ve never met anybody like him.”

In addition to three decades of service at St. Joseph’s hospital, which has now been demolished, Fr. Curtsinger’s 62 years of priesthood have included pastoral posts at numerous parishes throughout the dioceses of Fort Worth and Dallas. He also served as priest in residence at The College of Saint Thomas More in Fort Worth. In addition, Fr. Curtsinger has authored several works, ranging from inspirational spiritual topics to mental health issues to the finer points of playing the piano.

Blessed by a lifetime much longer than most people experience, Fr. Curtsinger continues to touch the lives of those around him.

“This is purely a gift,” said Wallace, about his work to help the priest continue his holy mission any way he can. “I’m simply blessed to be a part of his life.”



## Christ is Risen! Love has triumphed!

Last year, Easter brought with it a new pope, and the new pope brought with him a classic, timeless message: “Christ is risen!”

Pope Francis had been elected pontiff less than a month when he declared in his first Easter message *urbi et orbi* (“to the city and to the world”):

“I would like it [the message that Christ is risen] to go out to every house and every family, especially where the suffering is greatest, in hospitals, in prisons. ... Most of all, I would like it to enter every heart, for it is there that God wants to sow this good news: Jesus is risen, there is hope for you, you are no longer in the power of sin, of evil! Love has triumphed, mercy has been victorious! The mercy of God always triumphs!”

He reminded us that Easter is our exodus, a “passage of human beings from slavery to sin and evil to the freedom of love and goodness.”

Pope Francis said, “This passover from slavery to evil to the freedom of goodness must be accomplished in every age.” He invited us to embrace God’s gift of grace that comes freely every Easter, to “change hatred into love, vengeance into forgiveness, war into peace.”

A crucifix is silhouetted against a stained-glass window at the chapel inside Elmira Correctional Facility, a maximum security prison in Elmira, New York March 18. (CNS photo/Mike Crupi, CATHOLIC COURIER)

## Jesus’ Resurrection was physical, real, in the flesh

By **Marcellino D’Ambrosio**  
Catholic News Service

In the heyday of the Roman Empire, the corruption of the times caused a wave of dissatisfaction. Many were disgusted with the gross sensuality of society and yearned for a higher, spiritual existence. They sought a redeemer who would enlighten those who walked in darkness.

When they heard about Jesus of Nazareth, they suspected they’d found this light. But surely, they thought, He was a divinity who just appeared to be flesh and blood so that He could pass on enlightenment.

Since He wasn’t really human, He couldn’t have really died. Calvary must have been the final act of the play, the necessary device to get Him off stage so He could resume his divine existence, free of all material entanglement.

These people thought the greed and lust they saw around them was the inevitable result of having physical bodies. Salvation for them was the soul’s escape from the prison of the body so that it could soar back to its heavenly home.

These people, known as the Gnostics, wrote documents they claimed represented the secret, spiritual view of Jesus and his message. The so-called “gospels” of Judas, Thomas, and Mary Magdalene all came from this movement.

It’s as if Jesus knew this distorted idea would arise after his death, for in the four canonical Gospels, the risen Lord appears to the disciples and debunks the idea that He is a spirit.

The disciples, justifiably so, are spooked by the reappearance of someone they buried. Jesus insists He is no spook. Though He is changed in appearance, He is clearly flesh and blood and downs a snack of fish to prove it.

His death was no mirage. *Luke 24:35-48* tells us he proved that by showing the disciples the wounds in his hands and feet.

The Redeemer saved us by offering his body as a sacrifice that would remove our sin. The psalms, the law, and the prophets foretold it: The Savior would not just teach, but had to suffer and die. And yet, passage after passage hinted that He would live again.

Was this clearly laid out in the Old Testament? Not in the least. The Scriptures are divine, having been inspired by the Holy Spirit, laden with meaning exceeding the awareness of their human authors. Reading the Scriptures with human eyes, people are bound to miss a lot.

On Easter Sunday afternoon, Jesus explained the passages that referred to his death and Resurrection and opened his disciples’ minds to the understanding of the Scriptures. He did that by giving them a share in the same spirit who inspired the Scriptures in the first place. Through Baptism and Confirmation, He shares with us, too, this spirit of understanding.

Jesus died, and his body rose again; He didn’t need to escape it to remain divine. On Easter, we celebrate his resurrection and show faith of our heavenly future with Him.

*Marcellino D’Ambrosio writes from North Texas, where he lives with his large family. He is co-founder of Crossroads Productions, an apostolate of Catholic renewal and evangelization.*

# Jesus' sufferings point to the reality of his Kingship over all

By Jeff Hedglen  
NTC Columnist

Jesus just had a Passover supper like never before. Sure they did all the prescribed rituals, with a couple twists: he holds the unleavened bread that his ancestors held in Egypt and says, "This is my body." He takes the cup of wine and says, "This is my blood." Now we have a new covenant, one that will last forever.

I have long wondered what his disciples were thinking as this was happening. Did they really comprehend what was taking place before their very eyes? The air must have been thick in that room that night. Thick with the Holy Spirit who was yet to be sent, but already there, for where there is one person of the Trinity there are all three!!

Then the betrayer leaves the supper. Soon after then they all leave and go to the garden, a place they often stayed.

Scripture says the Son of Man had no place to lay his head, thus neither did his followers.

Gethsemane was a place where they often slept. While they are there Jesus prays, "Let this cup pass... but not my will but yours" while the disciples try to stay awake with Him.

The prayer and sleep are interrupted by the betrayer. He comes to Jesus and gives Him a kiss, a sign of love, friendship, affection, and now, betrayal. Jesus the one who brings freedom is bound and arrested and taken to the Praetorium, (the governor's house) where he is surrounded by the whole company of soldiers.

If this is not imposing and intimidating enough, they stripped off his clothes. Now, Jesus in all



A Knight of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem holds the crown of thorns during a ceremony at Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris March 21. The relic which was presented was woven from thorn branches and believed to have been placed on Christ during the events leading up to his Crucifixion. (CNS photo/Philippe Wojazer, Reuters)

his human, humanity is naked, bare, vulnerable, and exposed. I am sure they want to humiliate Him but Jesus is human AND Divine. The all important "AND." Though human and experiencing all of this as a human, Jesus is divine and rising above all the game playing, knowing He is not playing a game, He is playing his part.

The next portion of the drama that plays out is a series of ironies. First, they throw a scarlet military cloak about Him pretending that He has some power, but of course He has more power than they know. Then they weave a crown out of thorns and placed it on his head.

A crown is the hat of a king, but usually it is gold and jeweled. Jesus' is made from thorns, his is a crown of suffering revealing a new kind of glory.

Next, they place a reed in his right hand, like the staff of

a ruling king, not knowing they are giving this to the ruler of the world. Jesus is holding the very staff that will be wielded against him. Next they kneel before Him, as they should, but they are unaware of how right they are when they do this.

They do not worship Him they mock Him. And lastly, they mock Him with words of praise, "Hail, King of the Jews!" is what they say, and they are right, all Hail, King Jesus!

The reed they mockingly gave Him is now used to beat Him. They hit his head, where the crown of thorns is, and Jesus experiences pain, anguish, blood, and tears for you and for me.

When their mocking is finished, they strip Him again and dress Him in his own clothes and lead Him off to crucify Him. It is not a long walk on a typical day, but after the beatings and carrying a heavy cross, it is a journey that

lasts an eternity.

They came to a place called Golgotha, the Place of the Skull. The place where salvation will soon be won, where our sins will be paid for, where the Father's love reaches its climax. The night before He shared the sweetest wine of all, he is Himself now given bitter wine to "refresh" Him.

He wants none of it. Then they crucify Him; nails, hammer, and spear in his hands, feet, and side.

Each pierced for you and me, for our sins, for all of them, forever, for everyone.

Jesus is dying, and they gamble for his clothing. A blood soaked garment is their prize. Soaked with the Savior's blood, his saving blood. They know not how rich they are.

The crucifiers become spectators and watch. Jesus prays — "Father forgive them." Jesus says, "Mother, here is your son, son here is your mother." Jesus says that He thirsts. Jesus prays, "Father why have you forsaken me."

Then He breathes his last. Jesus dies and above his head hangs a sign stating the charges against Him, one last irony, "This is Jesus, the King of the Jews."

Yes it is, Jesus is King of the Jews and the Gentiles and all of creation.

Why, why did all of this take place; why did God send his Son to suffer and die? The short answer is love. The Father desires to be united with us. Sin separates us from God, and God loves the world so much that He gave his only begotten Son so that all who believe in Him will not perish but have eternal life. So, believe, believe the Good News. Let Jesus be the king of your life.

# Divine Mercy — a Journey to the Heart of Jesus

By Sharon K. Perkins  
NTC Columnist

“Lord, have mercy!” It’s an expression I’ve heard occasionally, used as a mild oath. And yes — mild though it may be, it’s a sin against the Second Commandment about taking the name of the Lord in vain. But as a kid, I heard it from adults all the time, and didn’t think anything of it.

It wasn’t until my teens, when I began reading the Bible more, that I began to realize how often in Scripture the words “God” and “mercy” appear in the same sentence. In college theology courses I learned about the Hebrew word *hesed* and how it appears in the Old Testament almost 250 times, with half of those occurring in the Psalms. It became clearer to me that “mercy” was the attribute the God of the Hebrew Bible seemed to have in abundance.

Although Israel’s repeated rebellion often resulted in harsh consequences, God’s judgments were always tempered with compassion. God’s mercy, I imagined, was like a cushion preventing the full severity of his wrath from utterly destroying his disobedient people — sort of like the folded bedsheets that my husband stuck in his pajamas as a boy when he anticipated a well-deserved spanking. The purpose of mercy was to soften the blow that Israel had coming to it.

But of course, that was Israel. In my view, “mercy” usually applied to someone else in another place and time, and it was always directed toward more serious infractions. My sins seemed fairly insignificant in the grand scheme of things. I believed God forgave them but God’s mercy — now that was reserved for the really big stuff. Like a software program that has the right data but which

is installed to run on the wrong operating system, I thought I had all the “facts” about God’s mercy, but I was operating in my daily life out of an entirely different way of thinking, hoping that God would show me mercy but acting as if he might not.

That’s why, in 2000, I was somewhat puzzled by Pope John Paul II’s designation of the Sunday after Easter as “Divine Mercy Sunday.” I had heard of the “Divine Mercy Chaplet” and the Holy Father’s canonization of Sr. Faustina Kowalska, but why such a fuss about them? Was it simply a Polish thing? And if so, why was the Church Universal encouraged to embrace them? And what was that image of Jesus with the red and white rays of light coming out of his chest?

When Pope John Paul II died in 2005 on the vigil of Divine Mercy Sunday and was later beatified in 2011 on the same feast day, I thought it was an interesting coincidence but I still didn’t quite understand it. I still regarded the whole Divine Mercy thing as a nice devotion for Catholics who were on the “fringes” but a purely optional and not very relevant one for me. The visions that St. Faustina recorded in her Diary were “private revelations,” and so I was not

bound to assent to them in faith, even if EWTN did broadcast the Chaplet every single afternoon.

About a year ago, however, I found my point of view gradually changing. It wasn’t any one catalyst that I can recall. I just started paying more attention. If I was in my car at 3:00 p.m. (the “hour of mercy”) and listening to Catholic radio, I would pray the Chaplet along with the show’s host and hear callers’ personal stories of the miracles and graces that had occurred. I learned more about the meaning of the Divine Mercy image — that in her encounters with Jesus, St. Faustina had been instructed to portray him with the rays of Divine Mercy pouring from his pierced heart, much as the blood and water had flowed from his side after his crucifixion. I was also struck by the numbers of holy and prayerful (and apparently sane) persons I met who found great spiritual comfort and strength in their practice of the devotion.

The pieces really started to fall into place for me when I joined a small group of friends at my parish in a 10-week retreat and book study of *Consoling the Heart of Jesus* by Fr. Michael Gaitley, a Marian priest of the Immaculate Conception. The

book was meant to be a follow-up to the act of Consecration to Jesus through Mary that we had done a few months before. I wasn’t sure what to expect, but as I read, reflected, watched, and listened, the lights began to come on.

God’s mercy really isn’t about God mitigating his punishment — although that is often how we perceive it in Scripture. Rather, God’s mercy is the definitive form that divine love takes — a love that is so extravagant that it continually reaches out for each and every person, aching with longing for us to return his love — and nowhere is this more visible than in Jesus on the Cross. The physical torture of Jesus’ body produced great suffering indeed, but in his Passion he experienced immeasurable pain from “a heart that has loved so much yet receives so little love in return,” as he revealed to St. Margaret Mary Alacoque. Despite his lavish outpouring of love, Jesus is still met with ingratitude, contempt, and apathy, and so his suffering continues with little consolation except from the gift of love which we freely offer in return.

The devotion of Divine Mercy, which quite simply acknowledges and expresses gratitude for that Divine Love which suffered so much for our sake, is based on a confidence and willingness to unite our hurts and disappointments, loneliness and woundedness, with his infinite sufferings, for the “sake of the whole world.” Our limited sufferings thus become a powerful source of healing and reconciliation for others as well as ourselves. This truth is at the heart of Easter and Jesus’ Paschal Mystery, of which we are not mere spectators but full participants.

It took me a while to get on board — but I can now say that I am privileged to join with St. Faustina, St. Margaret Mary, and now Pope St. John Paul II, in this marvelous redemptive work of mercy. “Jesus, I trust in You!”



Sharon and this group of friends from her parish studied about God’s great mercy together over a 10-week period. (Photo courtesy of Sharon K. Perkins)



# The lives of Christians extend beyond death

By H. Richard McCord  
Catholic News Service

The book *A New Catechism: Catholic Faith for Adults*, also known as the Dutch Catechism, tells the story of Christian missionaries who visited a pagan king. They preached a new religion that he was uncertain about accepting. He consulted his advisers and one of them told him the story of a bird that quickly flies into a hall during a cold winter night and just as quickly leaves.

“A person’s life is much the same. We are here for a short time. We don’t know what went before and we cannot see what will follow us. But if the new religion can speak with certainty of these questions, then it is well for us to follow it.”

At the story’s conclusion the authors tell us: “They found the answer they sought in the message of Jesus.”

What is this message? Jesus tells us: “I am the resurrection and the life; whoever believes in me, even if he dies, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die” (*John 11:25-26*). Unlike the king in the story, we know we come from the creative hand of God and we are destined to return to God’s embrace when our time on earth ends.

Pope Francis addressed the Christian meaning of death in his Nov. 27 weekly audience. He said if we look at life’s painful moments, when we have lost a loved one, for example, “we realize that



The resurrection of Christ is depicted in a mosaic at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington. (CNS photo/Paul Haring)

even amid the tragedy of loss, the conviction arises in the heart that everything cannot be over, that the good given and received has not been pointless. There is a powerful instinct within us that tells us that our lives do not end with death. This thirst for life found its true and reliable answer in the Resurrection of Jesus.”

If we are to die in Christ we must first live in Him and then be raised up to dwell with Him. To live one’s life in Christ means to allow the pattern of his life to become ours. This pattern comes into focus during Holy Week and Easter.

In *Mark 10:33*, Jesus told his disciples, “Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem.”

Do we hear this as an invitation? Are we ready to go with Him to the place of his death and resurrection? Can we see ourselves

in his story and make it our story in faith?

A verse in a hymn often sung during Holy Week asks “Were you there?” at the Passion, death and Resurrection. We can’t say we were there physically, but we can say, “Yes, I’m present there now in faith as I try to walk the same journey as Jesus did.”

We do not walk this road alone. Together with our sisters and brothers in the faith we unite our lives to Christ when we receive the sacraments, pray alone and with others, meditate on God’s word, and engage in the works of charity and justice, particularly for those with whom Jesus identifies.

“For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink ... whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me”

(*Matthew 25:35, 40*).

In his audience talk, Pope Francis said that we express our belief in the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come in a special way by “caring for the bodily and spiritual wounds of our neighbor ... sharing sorrow and infusing hope.”

The Holy Father repeated three times, “The one who practices mercy does not fear death.” Then he asked, “Why?”

“Because he looks death in the face in the wounds of his brothers and sisters, and he overcomes it with the love of Jesus Christ.”

*Richard McCord is the former executive director of the U.S. bishops’ Secretariat of Laity, Marriage, Family Life, and Youth. He is currently a freelance writer and ministry consultant.*

**May 4, Third Sunday of Easter.**

**Cycle A. Readings:**

- 1) Acts 2:14, 22-33  
Psalm 16:1-2, 5, 7-11
- 2) 1 Peter 1:17-21  
Gospel) Luke 24:13-35

**By Sharon K. Perkins**

There's nothing like a long walk to get the blood pumping and to help clear one's head, find a new perspective or to work through an issue with one's walking partner. I remember one spring day when my sister-in-law and I covered all sorts of ground — literally and figuratively. When the walk ended, we were so much closer in our relationship. Something about those shared miles helped us to shortcut through the banalities of “nice” conversation and get right to the heart of the matter.

Today's Gospel highlights a seven-mile walk shared between



two companions who are also “conversing and debating” the distressing events of the previous few days in Jerusalem and trying to make sense of it all. I can only imagine their “what ifs,” “whys” and “how could this have happened?”

It's what we do when confronted with the sudden death of dreams, hopes, expectations, or even persons. The travelers' despair and confusion were so profound that they could neither rejoice in the women's report of

*“What are you discussing as you walk along?”*

— Luke 24:17

the empty tomb, nor recognize Jesus when He joined them.

I often wonder what would have happened if Jesus hadn't shown up on the road. How many times would those two downcast companions have replayed the events of Jesus' passion and death with no closure or resolution? How long would they have remained stuck in their hopelessness and bewilderment?

Fortunately, the narrative doesn't end that way. Jesus does show up — listening to their painful stories, reminding them of

the promises of the Scriptures and patiently accompanying them for as long as it took to work through their grief.

So powerful was the shared experience of those last few miles that they were able to recognize Him, finally, in the blessing and breaking of the bread. It's the same kind of healing encounter that enables the psalmist to proclaim: *“You will show me the path to life, abounding joy in your presence.”*

We can all get stuck in the disappointments and losses of our lives. But Jesus walks that road by our side, sharing our burden of grief for as long as necessary, patiently helping us to reinterpret our situation until we are ready to recognize Him in the power of his resurrection.

**QUESTIONS:**

When have you been so consumed with grief or unfilled hopes that you couldn't get past the loss? How can you share your burden with the risen Lord and so find healing?

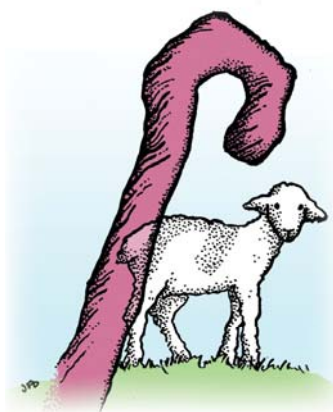
**May 11, Fourth Sunday of Easter. Cycle A. Readings:**

- 1) Acts 2:14a, 36-41  
Psalm: 23:1-2a, 3b-6
- 2) 1 Peter 2:20b-25  
Gospel) John 10:1-10

**By Jeff Hensley**

My wife and I have a friend who, along with her husband Al, kept a herd of 30 or 40 sheep on the small piece of land they owned in the Ozarks. We visited them a couple of summers ago and got to witness one modern-version shepherd, Al, and how his sheep knew his voice and followed him.

But, as I said, this was the modern version. At evening feeding time, Al would mount his four-wheeler and head out into a nearby pasture and begin “baa-ing” in a loud voice to gather up his sheep.



Then they, knowing this meant only good things for them — their evening meal, in this case — began running full tilt back to the barn where their fodder waited for them in feeding troughs.

Al provided a dramatic illustration of what Jesus tells us about himself as the Good Shepherd in the Scripture from John for this

*“I will dwell in the house of the Lord for years to come.”*

— Psalm 23:6b

week. Jesus' sheep know him, and they know that all others who had come to lead them did not have their best interests at heart and so they would not follow them.

“Whoever enters through me will be saved,” Jesus tells us, his sheep, “and will come in and go out and find pasture. ... I came so that they might have life and have it more abundantly.”

The psalm response for this weekend's liturgy quotes Psalm 23, and, no matter how many

times I read it, nor what version the translation is, it always seems to bring a sense of calm. *The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. In verdant pastures he gives me repose; beside restful waters he leads me; he refreshes my soul.*

And the congregational response repeats over and over, *The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want.*

When we are really following our Shepherd, we know that he will provide for all our needs, just like those bleating sheep following Al on the four-wheeler knew Al could be trusted to provide only good things for them. If simple sheep can trust a human shepherd, how more can we trust ours?

**QUESTIONS:**

How can you keep this image of Jesus the Good Shepherd ever before you, to give you peace?

## May 18, Fifth Sunday of Easter. Cycle A. Readings:

- 1) Acts 6:1-7  
 Psalm 33:1-2, 4-5, 18-19  
 2) 1 Peter 2:4-9  
 Gospel) John 14:1-12

By Jean Denton

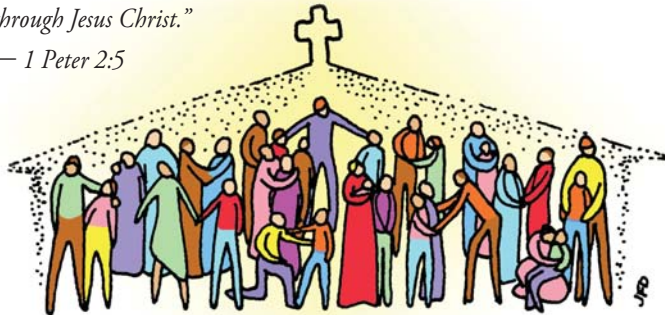
When I was assigned by my diocesan newspaper to cover the annual deacon's convocation two years ago, I made sure that my pencil was sharpened and I had a spare ready for when it got worn down to the nub writing notes on the keynote presentation, because the speaker was a (zzzzz) theologian.

I anticipated a droning address. I did not expect a noted theologian — a person expert in doctrine and religious scholarship — to come out with inspiring, down-to-earth statements about the lived faith of ordinary people. But that's what Michael Tkacik had for the deacons.

In the Church's primary work of spreading the Gospel, he said,

*"Like living stones, let yourselves be built into a spiritual house ... to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ."*

— 1 Peter 2:5



its "point of contact" with the world is the laity and, "the only way the Church will succeed in its mission is if laypeople live out their faith."

He added, "For you as deacons, this whole vision we're talking about can't succeed if you're not there."

That must have been gratifying to these men who were chosen and ordained for the specific role of service to God's people. The Church today depends on their ministry and the committed faith and work of the laity as much as

the early Church depended on Stephen and those first singled out to concentrate on doing the works of Christ.

This weekend's Scripture in Acts tells how the early Christian community chose "reputable men, filled with the Spirit and wisdom" to serve the people "at table" and make sure the widows and or-

### QUESTIONS:

When have you witnessed a spiritual conversion resulting from someone's compassion or act of charity? How have you been touched by another's Christ-like actions?

phans weren't neglected.

The result, the reading says, was that "the word of God continued to spread, and the number of disciples in Jerusalem increased greatly."

Dr. Tkacik believed what happened then happens now. After all, Christians caring for people is where the rubber meets the road — the point of contact. Their faith in action is a tangible experience of Christ for others. No wonder it brings conversion.

Jesus seconds the motion in the Gospel when He states, "I am the way and the truth and the life." When Philip asks to be shown the Father, Jesus tells him the Father is in Jesus' way of life: "The Father who dwells in me is doing his works."

When we live the way of Christ, others discover God.

## May 25, Sixth Sunday of Easter. Cycle A. Readings:

- 1) Acts 8:5-8, 14-17  
 Psalm 66:1-7, 16, 20  
 2) 1 Peter 3:15-18  
 Gospel) John 14:15-21

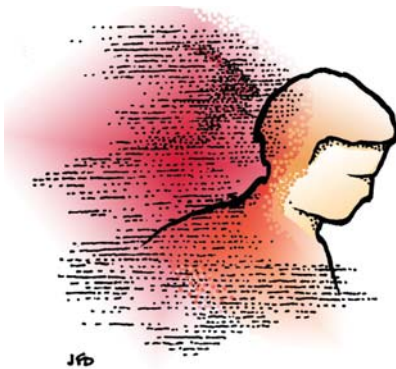
By Jeff Hedglen

Every time I hear this Sunday's Gospel I am reminded of the second bishop of the Diocese of Fort Worth. The memory stems from the first Confirmation ceremony I was charged with coordinating as a new youth minister at the age of 23.

I was nervous, wanting to be sure the candidates would be able to answer any question Bishop Joseph P. Delaney might ask them. I was anxious about all the details: that all the sponsors and candidates were present, the procession was orderly, the candidates doing readings were

*"I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate to be with you always."*

— John 14:16



prepared, and on and on. I was an emotional wreck, hoping that everything would come off without a hitch. I was really feeling the need for some encouragement and assistance.

I received just what I needed from Bishop Delaney's homily. He was teaching the candidates

(and everyone else for that matter) about the Holy Spirit, specifically about the title of Paraclete (or Advocate). Bishop Delaney said that the word "paraclete" comes from a Greek legal term for someone who could assist a witness.

He explained that in court the paraclete would accompany a witness to the witness stand and help him give his testimony, basically whispering in his ear what to say. In essence, he said, this person was allowed to coach the witness. Thus, the Holy Spirit is our coach as we witness for Jesus.

I was floored on many levels.

### QUESTIONS:

How would you describe the Holy Spirit to someone? How have you experienced the Holy Spirit being your coach?

First, Wow! What an amazing description of the Holy Spirit. Second, what a great way to help teens grasp the significance of the Spirit in their lives and the purpose of the Sacrament of Confirmation. Third, I was comforted because I felt that I needed a coach to get me through my first Confirmation ceremony.

Years later, I am still amazed by this characterization of the Holy Spirit, and I have used Bishop Delaney's analogy countless times. Jesus knew that being his disciple and the charge to continue his mission here on earth would not be easy, so He sent us a coach to whisper in our ear, encourage us to push ourselves, and give us the tools we need to build the kingdom of God.

## June 1, The Ascension of the Lord. Cycle A. Readings:

- 1) Acts 1:1-11  
 Psalm 47:2-3, 6-9  
 2) Ephesians 1:17-23  
 Gospel) Matthew 28:16-20

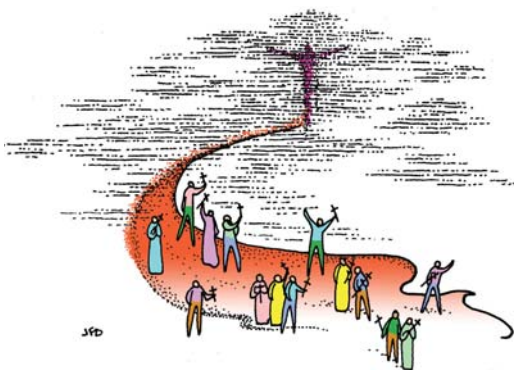
By Sharon K. Perkins

I've had the privilege of being present when two of my nephews were commissioned as Marine officers. They had been through months of rigorous academic, physical, and leadership training, and it was a proud moment for their parents when the new officers, resplendent in their "dress blues," received their second lieutenant pins.

The most moving part of the commissioning ceremony was the officers' oath, ending with the solemn words, "I take this obligation freely, without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion; and I will well and faithfully discharge the duties of the office on which I am about to enter. So help me God."

*"All power in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations."*

— *Matthew 28:18-19a*



My nephews' commissioning marked but the beginning of a commitment of service to both their country and their fellow Marines. Although the details of their future deployments were as yet unknown, they had been well prepared, authorized, and empowered for the work that would be asked of them.

Today's readings are about a different kind of commissioning — often referred to as "the great

commission." The 11 disciples, prepared and taught by Jesus during his ministry, Passion, death, and Resurrection, assembled in Galilee as they had been instructed. The writings of Matthew and Luke affirm both the given assignment

— to be witnesses to Jesus' Lordship to the entire world (evangelization) — and the power to accomplish it, through the awaited gift of the Holy Spirit. And while each disciple probably had his own "mental reservations" and the occasional temptation to evade his

### QUESTIONS:

When is the last time you shared your experience of "God's saving love" with someone? How can you rely more on the Holy Spirit's power to equip you as Jesus' witness?

commission, Jesus' promise to be always with his body, the Church, gave them the authority and the courage to fulfill their calling.

Pope Francis' apostolic exhortation, *Evangelii Gaudium*, states: "All the baptized, whatever their position in the Church or their level of instruction in the faith, are agents of evangelization, and it would be insufficient to envisage a plan of evangelization to be carried out by professionals while the rest of the faithful would simply be passive recipients.... Indeed, anyone who has truly experienced God's saving love does not need much time or lengthy training to go out and proclaim that love."

We, the baptized, are authorized by the Father, clothed in Christ, and empowered by the Spirit — and our solemn oath is the promise made in baptism. It's time for deployment.

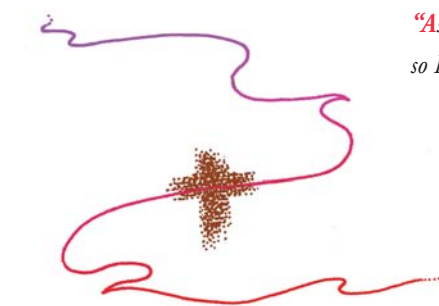
## June 8, Pentecost Sunday. Cycle A. Readings:

- 1) Acts 2:1-11  
 Psalm: 104:1, 24, 29-31, 34  
 2) 1 Corinthians 12:3b-7, 12-13  
 Gospel) John 20:19-23

By Jeff Hensley

It's hard to think of Pentecost without joy being mingled in somewhere. In this week's readings, the coming of the Spirit at Pentecost results in the proclamation of the Gospel and sheds light on how that event comes to be characterized as both a time of joy and the "birthday of the Church."

The description of the actual time of Pentecost taken from the Books of Acts has all the followers of Jesus gathered together in one place when "a noise like a strong driving wind ... filled the entire house" and there appeared to them "tongues of fire which



parted and came to rest on each of them, And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in different tongues, as the Spirit" helped them to proclaim the Good News that had come from God.

As the members of the amazed crowd put it, "We are Parthians, Medes, and Elamites, inhabitants of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the districts of Libya near Cyrene, as well as travel-

*"As the Father has sent me, so I send you."*

— *John 20:21*

ers from Rome, both Jews and converts to Judaism, Cretans, and Arabs, yet we hear them speaking in our

own tongues of the mighty acts of God."

We know from the associated Scriptures from Acts that the Apostle Peter proclaimed to the crowd that Jesus, who had been crucified, had been chosen by God to be both Savior and Lord. Hearing that, they asked, "What are we to do, my brothers?"

### QUESTIONS:

Have you considered how repentance and joy are linked? How can we make this link clear as we invite others to belief that Jesus has come to save and redeem them into his fellowship — the Church?

"Peter said to them, 'repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit'.... "Those who accepted this message were baptized, and about three thousand persons were added [to the numbers of the Church] that day."

OK, so what happens when even one sinner repents and is baptized?: There is great rejoicing in heaven. What happened when Peter proclaimed the Gospel?: Great numbers of new believers were added to the church. So what does that make the day of Pentecost?: The birthday of the church. And what is more appropriate to a birthday than great joy?

## June 15, Solemnity of the Most Holy Trinity.

### Cycle A. Readings:

- 1) Exodus 34:4b-6, 8-9  
Psalm) Daniel 3:52-56
- 2) 2 Corinthians 13:11-13  
Gospel) John 3:16-18

By Jean Denton

**W**e three women stood in a parking lot the other night, finishing up the conversation we'd started over supper together. Sherry, Barbara, and I are close friends — so close that we all know and love each others' grown children. As we were about to part, Barbara related what had happened earlier that week when she drove her youngest, Will, back to college after spring break.

The drive-up loading zone in front of his dorm was gridlocked. With an impending storm, everyone was arriving at the same time to drop off their students and hurrying to leave. "There was no place to park, and I needed to keep moving," she told us, reliving

*"If I find favor with you, O Lord, do come along in our company ... and receive us as your own."*

— Exodus 34:9



the frenetic moment. "Will had to just grab his bag and jump out of the car. All I could say was, 'I love you. I'm sorry, honey, but I can't stop.' His face looked stunned, and I'm sure mine did, too. As I drove away I felt terrible. A few minutes later, my cellphone rang and it was Will. He said, 'Well, that was awful.'"

They didn't get their hug. Sherry and I listened intently

as Barbara's story unfolded. We sighed at the end as though it had happened to us. We felt it — the missing embrace.

For Barbara and Will, of course, it was just a momentary loss. After Barbara finished telling the story, we three moms in the

### QUESTIONS:

Who are the people you hold in the embrace of your life? How do you describe your relationship with the three persons of the one true God?

parking lot shared a group hug and all felt better. We understand about embracing.

The truth is, the parent-child relationship — from beginning to end — is sealed by the embrace: the welcoming, the comforting, the shared joy, the parting. In embracing, we cling to each other as one. When we miss the embrace, we miss something vital.

This oneness is what we celebrate on Trinity Sunday: God the Father and God the Son are one, held together by the embrace of the Holy Spirit.

It is their embrace that draws us into the all-loving relationship of Father and Son. This welcoming Holy Trinity of love calls us, too, into its life.

*John 3:16* explains it: God loves us so much that he invites us to share in the embrace of his Son, and that redeems us.

## June 22, Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ (Corpus Christi).

### Cycle A. Readings:

- 1) Deuteronomy 8:2-3,  
14b-16a  
Psalm 147:12-15, 19-20
- 2) 1 Corinthians 10:16-17  
Gospel) John 6:51-58

By Jeff Hedglen

**M**y grandfather had been away from the Church for more than 50 years. I only saw him a handful of times in my life because we always lived on opposite sides of the country.

I have a few memories of him though. When I was 16, he came for a visit, and I shook his hand with a rather limp effort on my part. He looked me in the eye and proceeded to teach me how to shake another man's hand ... with a firm but not too powerful grip. I have put that into practice ever since.

When he was nearing the end of his life, my father went to visit him. In an attempt to help his father come back to the Lord, my father wrote a prayer on a piece of paper and gave it to my grandfather; then my dad came back home.

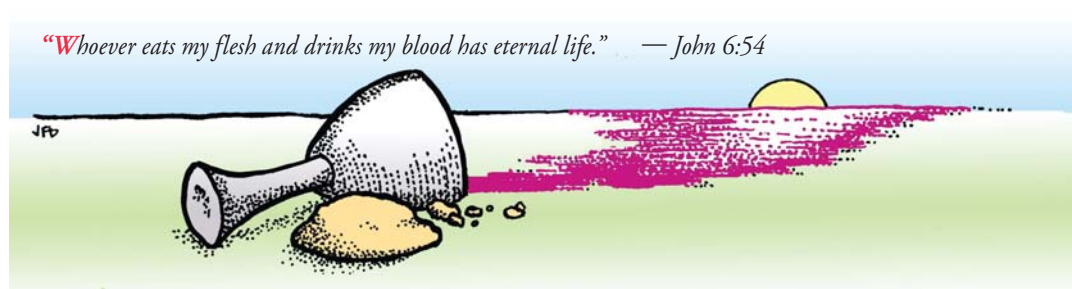
A few weeks later my grandfather passed away. When my dad went to the funeral, he stopped by the nursing home where my grandfather spent his final days and the nurse gave my dad back the piece of paper that he had given to his dad. The nurse explained that every day my grandfather would read this paper

and say, "Dave (my dad) really loved me."

The nurse went on to explain that after a few weeks of reading this prayer my grandfather asked to see a priest. He gave his first confession in more than 50 years and received Communion. The next day he died. I have always imagined the Lord keeping my grandfather alive long enough for him to come back to Him.

### QUESTIONS:

How has the body and blood of Jesus impacted your life? If you know someone who has been away from the Church for a long time, what can you do to help him or her come back?



*"Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life."* — John 6:54

## Obispos hacen llamado a compasión, reforma migratoria durante Misa fronteriza

## NOTICIAS



Foto por Nancy Wiechec / CNS

El Obispo Gerald F. Kicanas de Tucson, Arizona bendice a la gente en el lado mexicano mientras distribuye la Comunión por el muro fronterizo en Nogales, Arizona, el 1 de abril. Un grupo de obispos estadounidenses, dirigidos por el Cardenal Sean P. O'Malley de Boston, celebraron la Misa en la frontera para llamar la atención de la situación de los inmigrantes y apelar para que ocurran cambios en la política migratoria de EE. UU.

**Por Patricia Zapor**  
NOGALES, Arizona (CNS) — Con el fondo de los listones de hierro oxidado del muro de 30 pies a lo largo de la frontera Estados Unidos-México a unos cuantos pies de distancia, el Cardenal Sean P. O'Malley de Boston y otra docena de obispos procedentes de tres países oraron el 1 de abril por compasión y por un regreso a los ideales de acoger inmigrantes.

Más de 300 personas formaron la congregación al aire libre en el lado estadounidense de la frontera y otros cientos participaron en el lado de México, recibiendo la Comunión puesta en manos extendidas entre los listones.

“Venimos al desierto hoy porque es el camino a Jericó”, dijo el Cardenal O'Malley en su homilía. “Este es un viaje por muchos intentando llegar a la metrópolis de Jerusalén. Hemos venido aquí hoy para ser vecinos y encontrar un vecino en cada una de las personas sufrientes que arriesgan sus vidas y a veces pierden sus vidas en el desierto.”

Él añadió que el grupo también vino a expresar duelo por la pérdida de “incontables inmigrantes que arriesgan sus vidas en manos de los ‘coyotes’ (contrabandistas) y a las fuerzas de la naturaleza para venir a los Estados Unidos”.

La Misa fue organizada por la

*Iniciativa kino para la frontera*, de los jesuitas, y *Servicios de migración y refugiados* de la *Conferencia Estadounidense de obispos católicos*.

La homilía del Cardenal O'Malley, pronunciada en gran medida en español, fue recibida con aplausos en varios momentos, tales como cuando habló de cómo los migrantes de hoy día, que vengan con o sin permiso gubernamental, mantienen el mismo tipo de valores que trajeron las generaciones anteriores de inmigrantes.

“Nuestro país ha sido el beneficiario de tantos grupos de inmigrantes que tuvieron la valentía y la fortaleza de venir a los Estados Unidos. Ellos vinieron huyendo de condiciones horribles y albergando el sueño de una vida mejor para los niños”, dijo.

Después de la Comunión una procesión de obispos se subió a la carretera de acceso de la Patrulla Fronteriza a lo largo del muro. En una parte del camino subiendo la empinada colina, el Cardenal O'Malley colocó dos coronas de flores junto a una cruz para conmemorar a aquellos que han muerto a lo largo de la frontera, incluyendo “rancheros, agricultores, pacifistas, y viajeros que buscan terreno común de paz y prosperidad”, según el programa de la Misa describía el monumento.

## Sesiones de verano de la ESCUELA DE MINISTERIO LAICAL presentarán charlas sobre la espiritualidad cristiana

El Instituto Juan Pablo II escuela de ministerio laical de la Diócesis de Fort Worth presentará al Padre José Gildardo Álvarez-Abonce, CORC, como orador principal del ciclo de verano del 16 al 19 de junio.

El ciclo de verano de la escuela, que se llevará a cabo en diversos lugares del 14 al 26 de junio, es una oportunidad para que los estudiantes continúen con su formación, para que futuros alumnos estudien el programa o para quienes simplemente les interesen los temas.

El Padre Gildardo presentará una serie de cuatro charlas sobre “La espiritualidad cristiana: fuentes y métodos” desde las 7 p.m. a las 9 p.m. en la *Parroquia San Juan Apóstol*, ubicada en el 7341 Glenview Dr. en North Richland Hills. El Padre Gildardo es un miembro de la Confraternidad Sacerdotal de Operarios del Reino de Cristo y párroco de la *Parroquia Inmaculado corazón de María* de Fort Worth. Sus estudios de teología espiritual los cursó en la *Pontificia Universidad Gregoriana* de Roma, Italia.

Sus charlas se enfocarán en cuatro temas trascendentes de la vida espiritual: 1) la historia y la naturaleza de la espiritualidad cristiana; 2) sus fuentes en la Santísima Trinidad; 3) las mediaciones perennes de la santificación, particularmente de la Iglesia y la Virgen María y 4) cómo ser



y actuar como cristianos en el mundo actual.

La sesión de verano también ofrecerá cursos en la escuela Nolan Catholic High School (4501 Bridge St., Fort Worth), el sábado, 14 de junio, y en el Diocesan Catholic Center (800 W. Loop 820 South, Fort Worth), el sábado, 21 de junio.

El precio de cada uno de los cursos varía de \$10 a \$20. Si desea inscribirse en las sesiones de verano o ver una lista completa de los cursos que se ofrecen junto con otra información, visite la página de Internet de la escuela en [www.fwdioc.org/pages/instituto-juan-pablo-2-mas](http://www.fwdioc.org/pages/instituto-juan-pablo-2-mas) o llame al Padre Mele o a Lucia Romo al 817-560-3300, ext. 317. También puede comunicarse con el Padre Mele por correo electrónico a la dirección [cmele@fwdioc.org](mailto:cmele@fwdioc.org) y con Romo a la dirección [lromo@fwdioc.org](mailto:lromo@fwdioc.org).

### Mecanismos para reportar conducta sexual inapropiada

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

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

Mecanismo para reportar abuso

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

# El propósito de canonizar juntos a los Papas Juan XXIII y Juan Pablo II

POR EL PADRE CARMELO MELE, OP



EL PAPEL MÁS IMPORTANTE QUE LLEVA EL PAPA TIENE QUE VER CON LA UNIDAD. SOBRE TODO EL PAPA TIENE QUE MANTENER LA IGLESIA UNIDA EN LA VERDAD Y EN EL AMOR. DESDE SUS PRIMERAS PALABRAS DESDE EL BALCÓN DONDE FUE ELEGIDO, EL PAPA FRANCISCO HA TENIDO QUE LUCHAR POR LA UNIDAD COMO EL ENTRENADOR DE UN EQUIPO DE FÚTBOL CON ONCE SUPERESTRELLAS.

Viajó a Río de Janeiro el verano pasado para que los jóvenes sintieran la solicitud de la jerarquía. Hace poco cuando pidió oraciones de los evangelistas, buscaba la reunificación de los hermanos separados de la *Iglesia Católica*. En abril el Papa Francisco va a presidir otro evento con significado unificador.

Por los últimos 50 años ha surgido una fractura palpable entre las personas más involucradas en la Iglesia. Algunos, que se consideran como liberales, quieren ver cambios en muchos asuntos eclesiásticos. Los mayores de este campo recuerdan los tiempos ante-*Vaticano II* cuando los católicos eran enseñados a rechazar a los protestantes en prácticamente todos los aspectos.

Por ejemplos, se prohibía rezar en un templo no católico y si una católica quería casarse con un protestante, el matrimonio tenía que tener lugar en la rectoría para evitar un escándalo. Los liberales fueron entusiasmados con los resultados del *Concilio Vaticano*



Fotos por Catholic News Service

El Papa Francisco canonizará sus predecesores, los Papas Juan XXIII (izquierda) y Juan Pablo II (derecha), el 27 de abril, la *Fiesta de la Divina Misericordia*.

*II* como lo llamó el Papa Juan XXIII. Según este Papa, la Iglesia necesitaba abrir las ventanas de la Iglesia para admitir aire fresco. Al 27 de abril, el Papa Francisco va a canonizar a su predecesor Juan XXIII como santo.

Por supuesto, el Papa Juan XXIII no será el único santo canonizado ese día. Junto con él, el Papa Francisco canonizará al Papa Juan Pablo II. Porque los cambios de los años siguientes al *Concilio Vaticano* se hicieron desmesurados, el Papa Juan Pablo II tuvo que ponerles un alto. Por eso, recibieron los aplausos de los conservadores en la Iglesia. Sin embargo, no se probó como santo simplemente por eso.

El Papa Juan Pablo mostró al mundo entero que la búsqueda para Dios se lleva en cada aspecto de la vida humana. Se recuerda

particularmente por su energía incansable, sus gestos ilustrativos y su oración profunda. Me ganó a mí para siempre cuando vino a California en el medio de la controversia sobre la propagación de SIDA. A pesar de la incertidumbre sobre la dispersión del virus VIH por los líquidos de la boca, el Papa abrazó cariñosamente a una víctima de la enfermedad temida.

Ciertamente el Papa Francisco tenía más en cuenta que vivían en la misma época cuando decidió canonizar a los dos predecesores suyos al mismo tiempo. No, está canonizando a los dos a la vez para reparar la división entre los liberales y los conservadores que siguen sospechosos de uno y otro.

Este acto tiene todo el significado que tuvo el matrimonio de la Reina Isabel de Castilla y el Rey Fernando de Aragón para unificar

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

a España en el siglo XV. Ambos, el Papa Juan XXIII y el Papa Juan Pablo II servían al Pueblo de Dios fiel e inteligentemente.

Los dos se dedicaron a preservar las tradiciones de la Iglesia pero no como tumbas del pasado sino como escalones que nos llevan a Dios. Y los dos pusieron sus caras al futuro atrevidamente buscando nuevos métodos para contar al mundo de la historia de Jesucristo.

Dicen algunos que particularmente el Papa Juan Pablo II mereció un día aparte para celebrar su canonización. Ciertamente Juan Pablo II fue un personaje único en nuestros tiempos y con mucha razón algunos le llaman "Juan Pablo Magno". Pero el Papa Francisco reconoce un propósito más grande que la gloria personal con el nombramiento de santos.

Tanto su tarea como ocupante de la *Sede de San Pedro* como su inclinación como discípulo de Cristo lo conducen a envolver a todos en el abrazo de la fraternidad. Traer ambos a los liberales y a los conservadores a Roma para celebrar la ceremonia de santificación de su propio héroe le parece como modo digno de cumplir este objetivo.



El Arzobispo metropolitano Samuel J. Aquila de la *Provincia de Denver* ordena al Monseñor Stephen Berg al episcopado. Lo asisten el Obispo Michael Sheridan de Colorado Springs (*esquina izquierda*), co-consagrante principal, y su tío el Obispo Emérito Joseph Charron de Des Moines (*segundo desde la izquierda*). Otros obispos también lo asistieron, incluido el obispo de Fort Worth, Michael Olson (*esquina derecha*).

*Sacerdote fiel y anterior vicario general y administrador diocesano ha dejado a la DIÓCESIS DE FORT WORTH para convertirse*

# El Obispo Berg de Pueblo

POR JOAN KURKOWSKI-GILLEN / CORRESPONSAL  
FOTOS POR DONNA RYCKAERT

EN PRESENCIA DE SU MADRE, NUEVE HERMANOS, UN TÍO Y EL OBISPO EMÉRITO JOSEPH L. CARRON DE DES MOINES, STEPHEN J. BERG FUE ORDENADO EL QUINTO OBISPO DE LA *DIÓCESIS DE PUEBLO*, COLORADO, DURANTE UNA MISA EL 27 DE FEBRERO EN LA QUE SE CELEBRÓ LA FE Y LA FAMILIA.

La multitud que llenó los 1,600 asientos del *Memorial de Pueblo* incluyó un gran contingente de la *Diócesis de Fort Worth*, donde el nuevo obispo recibió las órdenes sacerdotales en 1999, y sirvió como párroco y administrador diocesano hasta la ordenación del nuevo obispo de Fort Worth, Michael F. Olson, el 29 de enero. El 15 de enero, el Papa Francisco designó al nativo de Miles City, Montana, como obispo de la *Diócesis de Pueblo*.

Nueve miembros de la familia Ingler

viajaron desde una zona rural del norte de Texas para presenciar la ceremonia en la que su párroco fue consagrado Obispo.

“Fue importante para nosotros asistir y apoyarlo en su nuevo ministerio de servicio a Cristo”, dijo Chance Ingler, miembro de la *Iglesia de San José* de Nocona. “Fue una hermosa ceremonia y él es un gran hombre. Nuestra pérdida, es una ganancia para Pueblo”.

Michelle Hoover de Aledo, prima hermana del Obispo Berg, fue una de los 50 familiares que viajaron a Colorado para la ordenación.

“Quería estar presente. Estoy tan orgullosa de Steve”, dijo la parroquiana del *Santísimo Redentor*. “El encontrarse con otros familiares fue una parte maravillosa de esta celebración. Pero me apena un poco que se aleje de Fort Worth”.

El celebrante principal, el Arzobispo me-

ropolitano Samuel J. Aquila, de la *Provincia de Denver*, celebró el rito sagrado de imposición de las manos y recitó la plegaria de la ordenación, asistido por los co-consagrantes, los Obispos Carron y Michael Sheridan de Colorado Springs, quienes también habían servido como administradores apostólicos de Pueblo. La imposición de las manos con el crisma sagrado — que simboliza la efusión del Espíritu Santo — y la presentación del *Libro de los Evangelios* y del anillo episcopal, la mitra y el báculo se completó bajo el crucifijo de 15 pies construido especialmente para la ocasión por el carpintero local, Michael Cora. El cuerpo de cinco pies y medio que Cora colgó de la cruz fue un préstamo de la *Iglesia de San Pío X* de Pueblo.

El Obispo Olson participó en la liturgia, junto con otros 15 colegas obispos, 100 sacer-



dots y 60 diáconos. Más de una docena de los miembros del clero eran de la *Diócesis de Fort Worth*.

Uno de los sacerdotes visitantes fue el Padre Kyle Walterscheid, párroco de la *Parroquia de Beato Juan Pablo II* de Denton, que estudió para el sacerdocio con el nuevo obispo en el *Seminario de la Asunción* de San Antonio.

“Nuestras lecturas de Cuaresma nos piden que seamos conscientes de ser siervos humildes, compasivos y misericordiosos, y el Obispo Berg es así. Se identifica con lo que el Papa está tratando de traer al ministerio”, comentó el Padre Walterscheid, su amigo de muchos años. “No hay ninguna duda de que será una persona que es obispo para el pueblo, y también para sus sacerdotes”.

En su homilía, el Arzobispo Aquila les recordó a los feligreses que a los obispos se les confía la misma misión que Jesucristo les encomendó a los apóstoles.

“Ellos son los sucesores de los apóstoles”, les explicó. “A través de las generaciones y hasta el presente, hay esa ininterrumpida sucesión en la Iglesia para que continúe proclamando la verdad de Jesucristo”.

El arzobispo consagrante le aconsejó al Obispo electo Berg que formara una conexión estrecha entre él y los sacerdotes en la diócesis.

“Ellos serán sus más esenciales colaboradores”, le aseguró. “Trate de conocerlos y amarlos como Cristo amó a los apóstoles”.

Un obispo debe crear la misma familiaridad con el pueblo de Dios en su diócesis. Parafraseó entonces las palabras del Papa Francisco cuando les dijo a los obispos que ellos y los sacerdotes debían ser los pastores que huelen como sus ovejas, y se involucren en las vidas del pueblo bajo su cuidado, especialmente los pobres y aquellos que no conocen a Cristo.

“Siga los pasos de Jesús y abrace las cruces que encontrará en su camino”, señaló el arzobispo al terminar. “Quiera Dios que se convierta en la imagen del Buen Pastor”.

Varios amigos y familiares de Berg fueron invitados a participar en la Misa de la ordenación. Lucas Pollice, previo director del *Departamento de catequesis* de la *Diócesis de Forth Worth*, que ahora vive en Denver, fue el lector de la segunda lectura, la 1.<sup>a</sup> Carta a *Timoteo*. Las sobrinas y sobrinos del Obispo presentaron las ofrendas en el Ofertorio.

La Hermana Frances de la Cruz, una *Clarisa Capuchina del Padre Celestial*, leyó en español la primera lectura de Isaías. Esta comunidad religiosa de Pueblo es una orden de clausura, pero las hermanas viajaron desde su

monasterio para esta ocasión especial.

“Oramos fervorosamente al Señor para que nos envíe un nuevo pastor, y Él respondió a las plegarias de mucha gente”, dijo la religiosa. “Vinimos para conocer al nuevo obispo”.

Al final de la Misa de Ordenación, el Obispo Berg se dirigió a la congregación y reconoció a las personas que lo formaron y guiaron durante su camino de fe.

“Los que ustedes ven en esta sección representan mucho de mi pasado y las razones por las cuales estoy aquí”, indicó mientras señalaba con un gesto las filas de asientos centrales del auditorio, llenos de gente de Montana, Texas y California.

Dijo que su participación en las vidas de tantos familiares y amigos es un “regalo” y distinguió con un reconocimiento especial a su madre, Jeanne, de 88 años, y a su padre fallecido, Conrad Berg, que hicieron muchos sacrificios para criarlo y educarlo.

A medida que un capítulo nuevo de su vida comenzó a revelarse en las semanas recientes, el Obispo Berg dijo que había procesado los cambios recordando el pasado.

“Pero estoy aquí para el futuro, y estoy aquí para la gente de Pueblo”, afirmó.

No dejó ninguna duda de que asumirá sus responsabilidades con la total determinación de su corazón. El nuevo obispo les dijo a los parroquianos de su nueva diócesis: “soy suyo”.

La *Diócesis de Pueblo* cubre partes del sur y del oeste de Colorado (cerca de la mitad del estado), es geográficamente inmensa, con una extensión de 48,100 millas cuadradas, pero es escasamente poblada. Las parroquias están separadas por distancias grandes, algunas completamente aisladas. Los católicos representan un 10 por ciento de la población.

El diseño de su nueva diócesis le recordó al Obispo Berg de su experiencia como párroco rural en el que servía las necesidades de cuatro parroquias, dispersas en el norte de Texas.

“Veo que algunos de ustedes tienen seis, siete u ocho parroquias y misiones, dijo, dirigiéndose a un gran grupo de sacerdotes diocesanos vestidos de blanco. “Quiero decirles que los conoceré y escucharé. Vamos a trabajar juntos”.

Mientras se familiarice con su nuevo papel de obispo de Pueblo, el que fue previamente instructor universitario de música y ejecutivo corporativo en la industria de viveros, pidió que rezaran por él.

“Usted me sorprendió mucho con su llamada el pasado diciembre”, dijo el Obispo Berg, dirigiéndose al Arzobispo Carlo Maria



**ARRIBA:** El Monseñor Stephen Berg abraza a su tío, el Obispo Emérito Joseph L. Charron de la *Diócesis de Des Moines*, Iowa, durante las Vísperas el 26 de febrero.

**ABAJO:** Al final de la Misa de Ordenación, el Obispo Berg dirige a la congregación y reconoce a las personas que lo formaron y guiaron durante su camino de fe.



Viganò, nuncio apostólico en los Estados Unidos, quien fue el que le informó al Monseñor Berg que el Papa Francisco lo había designado obispo de Pueblo.

“Les prometo a ustedes, como lo hice antes al Santo Padre, que les ofreceré todo mi ser”, afirmó, mientras la asamblea aplaudió demostrando su aprecio.



El Papa Juan XXIII aparece en esta foto sin fecha. (Foto de CNS/cortesía del Arzobispo Loris Capovilla)

# Los Santos

## Pontificado breve de gran impacto: el Beato Juan XXIII impulsó reformas

**EL MONSEÑOR  
RAY MULLAN  
ERA UN JOVEN**

**ESTUDIANTE DE TEOLOGÍA EN SUDÁFRICA CUANDO FALLECIÓ EL PAPA PÍO XII EL 9 DE OCT. DE 1958.**

Para este seminarista y el mundo, las semanas posteriores a ese funeral estaban llenas de anticipación en espera del nombre del sucesor.

“Nos la pasábamos arrimados cerca de la radio esperando el anuncio”, recuerda el sacerdote y párroco de la Diócesis de Fort Worth en Graham and Olney. “Entonces escuchamos (el 28 de oct.) que los cardenales habían elegido a un hombre de 76 años. Muchos pensaron que era muy mayor, pero cuando se enteraron de quién era, se dieron cuenta que era obra del Espíritu Santo”.

El nuevo papa fue el Cardenal Angelo Giuseppe Roncalli, hijo de un agricultor, que por su naturaleza gentil lo apodaban cariñosamente “Juan, el Papa Bueno”.

Considerado como uno de los papas más populares del siglo XX, el Papa Juan XXIII será canonizado el 27 de abril en la Plaza de San Pedro, junto con el Papa Juan Pablo II, quien lo beatificó en el 2000. Se espera una multitud en la ceremonia.

Debido a su avanzada edad cuando fue electo, los analistas esperaban que Juan XXIII sería un papa cuidador que mantendría el “statu quo”.

Para la sorpresa de todos, y citando la inspiración del Espíritu Santo, el nuevo papa convocó un Concilio Ecuménico, el primero en casi 100 años. A la reunión del Concilio Vaticano Segundo el 11 de oct. de 1962, asistieron 2,540 cardenales, patriarcas y obispos de todo el mundo. También se invitaron a representantes de otras denominaciones cristianas.

El Cardenal Loris Capovilla, secretario privado del Beato Juan durante su pontificado, escuchó algunos de los primeros comentarios del papa sobre lo que sería el Vaticano II.

Los cardenales y obispos le presentaron al

nuevo pontífice una letanía de desafíos, comentó el Cardenal Capovilla, en las áreas de liturgia, diplomacia y educación y disciplina de los sacerdotes. “Mi escritorio está lleno de problemas, preguntas, solicitudes, esperanzas”, le dijo el Beato Juan. “Lo que se necesita es un concilio”.

Cuando el secretario se negó a comentar, el papa interpretó su silencio como desaprobación.

“Crees que soy viejo”, le dijo el Beato. “Crees que haré un lío de esta enorme tarea; que no tengo tiempo. [...] Pero así no es como se piensa con fe. [...] Si es posible comenzar con una comisión preparatoria, eso sería un gran mérito. Si fallecemos, otros llegarán. El solo comenzar es un gran honor”. Aunque moriría antes de que finalizara el concilio en diciembre de 1965, su labor la continuó su sucesor, el Papa Pablo VI.

Después de la clausura de la sesión inicial en 1962, estableció un comité para dirigir las actividades del concilio durante el receso de nueve meses. Las sesiones posteriores produjeron documentos para las funciones de los obispos y sobre formación sacerdotal, vida religiosa, educación cristiana, el laicado y el diálogo interreligioso.

En la liturgia ocurrió un profundo cambio, como cuando la Misa se comenzó a celebrar en lengua vernácula. Se llamó a los feligreses a participar activamente en la Misa que ahora incorporaba costumbres y tradiciones de culturas nativas, y se restableció el diaconado permanente.

Produjo varias encíclicas históricas, como *Mater et Magistra* sobre la doctrina social cristiana y *Pacem in Terris*, emitida en 1963 en plena Guerra Fría, sobre la necesidad de paz y justicia mundial.

Estableció una Comisión Pontificia para la Revisión del Código de Derecho Canónico, que culminó en la publicación del nuevo código en 1983. Internacionalizó el Colegio de Cardenales y beatificó a Elizabeth Ann Seton, la primera santa estadounidense.

El Beato Juan llevó su estilo humilde, aunque carismático y personal, al papado. Le dio mucha importancia a su crianza modesta en un pueblo a 25 millas al noreste de Milán, cuando dijo: “Vengo del campo, de la pobreza”, que des-

cribió como una “pobreza feliz y bendecida, no maldecida ni sufrida”.

Nacido en Sotto il Monte, Italia, en 1881, Angelo Giuseppe Roncalli, uno de 13 hijos de una familia de aparceros, ingresó al seminario menor a los 11 años y fue enviado a Roma a estudiar a los 19 años.

En 1904 fue ordenado sacerdote y, después de varios años como secretario del obispo de Bergamo, fue llamado al Vaticano. En 1925 comenzó como diplomático del Vaticano, primero en Bulgaria y luego en Grecia, Turquía y Francia. Se le nombró cardenal y patriarca de Venecia en 1953. Murió de cáncer el 3 de junio de 1963.

El Mons. Mullan describe a los papas de su vida como “hombres buenos y santos”. Espera levantarse temprano el 27 de abril para ver la canonización de dos de ellos por televisión.

“Somos sumamente bendecidos en la Iglesia ya que nuestros papas han sido hombres de gran carácter, personalidad y santidad”, agregó.

*Recopilado de informes de Joan Kurkowski-Gillen, corresponsal de NTC, y de CATHOLIC NEWS SERVICE.*



El Beato Juan XXIII aparece en los jardines del Vaticano con la cúpula de la *Basílica de San Pedro* en el trasfondo en esta foto sin fecha. (Foto de CNS / Catholic Press Photo)

# os Papas

## Beato Juan Pablo trajo fuerza moral, intelecto y carisma al escenario mundial

**EL BEATO JUAN PABLO II, QUIEN SERÁ CANONIZADO EL 27 DE ABRIL, FUE UNO DE LOS LÍDERES MORALES MÁS ENÉRGICOS DE LA EDAD MODERNA.** Durante más de 26 años trajo el intelecto de filósofo, la intensidad espiritual de un peregrino y el carácter dramático de un actor a su función como cabeza de la Iglesia Universal.

El primer papa sin antecedentes italianos en 455 años, se convirtió en un protagonista espiritual durante dos transiciones mundiales: la caída del comunismo europeo, que comenzó en su país de Polonia en 1989, y el comienzo del tercer milenio del cristianismo.

Como párroco de la Iglesia Universal, viajó alrededor del mundo llevando su mensaje a 129 países en 104 viajes fuera de Italia, incluso siete a Estados Unidos. En sus últimos años, el mal de Parkinson hizo que se desplazara con dificultad, se cansara fácilmente y se expresara menos. Aún así, se esforzó arduamente convencido de que su sufrimiento era en sí una forma de liderazgo espiritual.

Para Margie Gómez, parroquiana de San Andrés que estuvo muy cerca del papa cuando



El Papa Juan Pablo II camina por un camino de gravilla en esta foto sin fecha tomada por el fotógrafo del Vaticano Arturo Mari. (Foto de CNS / L'OSSERVATORE ROMANO)

visitó a San Antonio en 1987, el pontífice polaco fue un santo mucho antes de que se anunciaran planes de su canonización. Gómez viajó desde Fort Worth a ver al pontífice con su difunto esposo, Ted, quien recibía tratamiento por un tumor cerebral que lo dejó ciego.

Cuando llegaron, fueron informados que Ted había sido seleccionado para recibir la bendición del Santo Padre. Mientras Juan Pablo II se desplazaba en el papamóvil, la pareja esperaba cerca del altar con otras 25 personas discapacitadas. “Antes de que llegara al altar, el papa vino al área de discapacitados. Sentí tanta emoción que no podía decir nada, así que solo tomé fotos mientras bendecía a mi esposo”, recuerda Gómez.

Ted Gómez experimentó un milagro ese día. “No uno físico, ya que hay muchos tipos de milagros”, comentó. “Mi esposo se sintió bendecido cuando él lo tocó”.

Como remedio a la ambigüedad doctrinal, el papa aprobó un catequismo universal. También impulsó diversos puestos eclesiásticos dentro del foro público. En 1990 instó a los obispos del mundo a luchar más contra el aborto y la eutanasia diciendo que esas prácticas representaban la “matanza de los inocentes” de la edad moderna. Sus agudas críticas a estas y otras políticas “antifamiliares” promovieron su selección como el “Hombre del año” por la revista Time en 1994.

A su rebaño le recordó continuamente que la oración y los sacramentos son vitales para ser un buen cristiano. Sostuvo a María como modelo de santidad de toda la Iglesia, actualizó el rosario con cinco nuevos “Misterios luminosos” y nombró a más de 450 santos, más que todos sus predecesores combinados.

El papa vivió una profunda vida espiritual, algo que no comunicaron bien los medios. No obstante, en sus primeros años, pareció hecho para los medios modernos y su pontificado fue capturado en imágenes duraderas, como conversando en una pequeña celda con Mehmet Ali Agca, quien atentó contra él en la Plaza de San Pedro el 13 de mayo de 1981.

El Papa Juan Pablo II se recuesta de su báculo durante la Misa en el Parque Central de Nueva York en 1995. (Foto de CNS/Michael Okoniewski)



Karol Józef Wojtyła nació el 18 de mayo de 1920 en Wadowice, en el sur de Polonia. Su madre falleció cuando tenía 9 años, su único hermano a los 12 años y su padre a los 20 años.

Aunque fue un actor consumado en el teatro clandestino de Cracovia durante la guerra, cambió de rumbo e ingresó al seminario clandestino después de que le dijeran en un monasterio carmelita: “Vete porque en tu futuro hay cosas muy grandes”.

Después de estudiar teología y filosofía en Roma, regresó a Polonia para trabajar en parroquias en 1948, mientras acampaba los fines de semana con otros jóvenes. Cuando fue nombrado obispo auxiliar en Cracovia en 1958, fue el obispo más joven de Polonia. Pasó a ser arzobispo de Cracovia en 1964. Luego, captó la atención de la Iglesia Universal por su trabajo en documentos importantes en el Concilio Vaticano Segundo.

Aunque cada vez era más respetado en Roma, el Cardenal Wojtyła era casi desconocido cuando fue electo papa el 16 de oct. de 1978. Después de más de 26 años como papa, falleció a los 84 años en el Vaticano el 2 de abril de 2005, en la vigilia del domingo de la Divina Misericordia.

Esta fecha tenía un significado especial para el Beato Juan Pablo ya que la nombró como día festivo en la Iglesia la semana después de Pascua. Fue beatificado por el Papa Benedicto XVI el 5 de mayo de 2011, un domingo de Divina Misericordia, y será canonizado por el Papa Francisco en ese día festivo el 27 de abril de 2014, junto con el Beato Juan XXIII, beatificado en el 2000.

*Recopilado de informes de Joan Kurkowski-Gillen, corresponsal de NTC, y de CATHOLIC NEWS SERVICE.*

## Key events in the life of Pope John XXIII

Pope John XXIII was the 260th successor of St. Peter, serving as pope from October 1958 to June 1963. He is best known for convening the Second Vatican Council.

1881

**Nov. 25,** Born Angelo Giuseppe Roncalli to Giovanni Battista and Marianna Giulia Roncalli

1904

**Aug. 10,** Ordained a priest; serves as secretary to bishop of Bergamo.

1915–18

Serves as medic and chaplain during World War I.

1921

Goes to Rome to head Italian national office of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith.

1925

Named archbishop; appointed apostolic visitor to Bulgaria.

1934

Transfers to Istanbul to serve as apostolic delegate to Turkey and Greece.

1939–44

During World War II, helps many Jews escape Nazi persecution, coordinating rescue plans with other ambassadors

1944

Named nuncio to Paris.

1953

Named a cardinal and patriarch of Venice.

1958

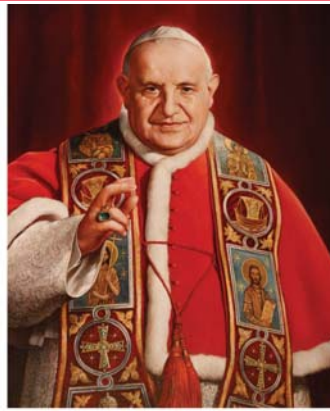
**Oct. 28,** elected pope, takes name John XXIII.

1962

**Oct. 11,** opens first session of Second Vatican Council.



Pope John XXIII leads the opening session of the Second Vatican Council in St. Peter's Basilica Oct. 11, 1962. (CNS photo/L'Osservatore Romano)



1963



Releases "Pacem in Terris" ("Peace on Earth"), social encyclical teaching that true peace must be built on pillars of truth, justice, love and freedom.

Pope John XXIII signs his encyclical "Pacem in Terris" ("Peace on Earth") at the Vatican in this 1963 file photo. Considered a highlight in Catholic social teaching, the encyclical addresses universal rights and relations between states. (CNS photo)

1963

June 3, dies of cancer.



The body of Pope John XXIII lies in state at the Vatican June 4, 1963, the day after he died of cancer. (CNS)

2000

**Sept. 3,** beatified by Pope John Paul II.

SOURCES: Wikipedia, vatican.va, "Pope John XXIII: Shepherd of the Modern World," papagiovanni.com

TIM MEKO for CATHOLIC NEWS SERVICE

# Msgr. Ray Mullan recalls election of John XXIII; implementing Vatican II

By Joan Kurkowski-Gillen  
Correspondent

Msgr. Ray Mullan was a young theology student in South Africa when Pope Pius XII died Oct. 9, 1958. The weeks that followed the funeral were full of anticipation as the seminarian — and the rest of world — wondered who would succeed him.

"We had our ears glued to the radio waiting for the announcement," remembers the priest who now serves the diocese as a pastor in Graham and Olney. "Then we heard the cardinals elected a man who was 76. A lot of people thought that was too old, but when they began reading about who he was, they realized the Holy Spirit knew what it was doing."

The new pope, Angelo Giuseppe Roncalli, was the son of a peasant farmer. His gentle nature earned him the title "Good Pope John."

One of the most popular popes of the 20th century, Pope John XXIII will be canonized, along with

Pope John Paul II, April 27 in St. Peter's Square. Millions are expected to attend the ceremony.

Because of his advanced age when elected, analysts expected John XXIII to be a caretaker pope who would maintain the status quo.

In a move that surprised everyone, he called for Ecumenical Council — the first in almost 100 years. When Vatican II convened Oct. 11, 1962, it brought together 2,540 cardinals, patriarchs, and bishops from around the world. Representatives of other Christian denominations were also invited to attend.

Msgr. Mullan was a newly ordained priest in 1962, and he remembers the confusion the announcement generated with parishioners.

"In the beginning, people didn't have a clue what was going on because they'd never lived through a Council before," he explains.

A profound impact was the change in liturgy. Churchgoers were called to become active participants

CONTINUED FROM P. 48

the *North Texas Catholic*. "During that time, I met a lot of individuals who knew him personally and they shared all these incredible, extraordinary stories. I kept thinking someone should write them down."

The much-anticipated canonization of Blessed John Paul II seemed an appropriate time to separate the urban myths from the real miracles and anecdotes attributed to the late pontiff. Faced with a self-imposed deadline, Evert began contacting his primary sources -- priests, bishops and cardinals. One

interview led to another.

"Everyone was so generous," he recalls. "I spoke to friends he camped with and people who were on the high school retreats he led in Poland. I would ask for five minutes, and they talked for two hours. They told me remarkable stuff."

Evert says a quote from French novelist Arsene Houssaye, "tell me what you love and I'll tell you who you are," helped frame the information gathered for his 270-page manuscript.

"I looked at what he loved the most then studied him through those loves," explains the Franciscan

University graduate who explored John Paul II's devotion to the cross, the Blessed Sacrament, the Virgin Mary, young people, and human love through the prism of his struggle-filled years in Poland.

One of Evert's favorite stories in the book illustrates the pope's almost mystical connection to the Blessed Sacrament. Preparing for the Holy Father's 1995 papal pilgrimage to the U.S., the Vatican's advance man, Father Roberto Tucci, visited the bishop's residence in Baltimore — one of the stops on the tour. As he walked down a corridor lined with identical doors, Fr. Tucci noticed

one entry led to a chapel housing the Blessed Sacrament. He warned American organizers to keep the door shut during the pope's brief stay in the house.

"His travel team would actually reroute his Popemobile away from chapels or Catholic churches because, if he passed one, he'd stop, go in for 45 minutes and be late for whatever else was on the schedule," Evert says.

Following instructions, the bishop's staff made sure every door in the chancery was closed when John Paul II arrived. But as he walked down the hallway, the Holy Father

in the Mass which now incorporated customs and traditions of the native culture. The permanent diaconate was restored, and there were new roles for the laity.

Some of the changes weren't welcomed.

"In South Africa, the Catholic newspaper was full of letters of deep complaint about those changes," Msgr. Mullan recalls. "I think that was based on a lack of information."

When his own parishioners complained about standing instead of kneeling during portions of the Mass, he addressed their concerns by appealing to their common sense and compassion.

"I explained that when old people kneel down, it's a struggle for them to get up," the pastor recounts. "I found that when I instructed people about the changes, they were far more receptive to them."

Pope John XXIII called the Vatican II Council to reinvigorate the Church, reform its structures and institutions, and explore ways to unite Christians.

The rural pastor calls the popes of his lifetime "good and holy men." He plans to rise early on April 27 to see two of them canonized on TV.

"We're extraordinarily blessed in the Church that our popes have been men of wonderful character, personality, and holiness," he adds.

## Short pontificate, long impact:

# Blessed John XXIII launched reforms

CATHOLIC NEWS SERVICE  
VATICAN CITY

Although he served as pope for less than five years, Blessed John XXIII left one of the most lasting legacies in the Catholic Church's history by convening the Second Vatican Council.

A plump, elderly, smiling Italian of peasant origins, the future pope had an illustrious career as a papal diplomat in Bulgaria, Turkey, and in postwar France.

He became pope amid the rise of the Cold War, and the cusp of a technological transformation unlike anything since the Industrial Revolution.

Saying he was inspired by the Holy Spirit, he called the Second Vatican Council to help the Church confront the rapid changes in the world — even inviting non-Catholics to the council, to work toward Christian unity.

As pope from 1958 to 1963, Blessed John launched an extensive renewal of the Church when he convoked the council, setting in motion major reforms of the Church's structure, liturgy, communications, and relations with the Eastern churches.

After the initial session's close in 1962, he set up a committee to direct council activities during the nine-month recess. Subsequent sessions — the final one ended in December 1965 — produced documents on the role of bishops, priestly formation, religious life, Christian education, the laity, and interreligious dialogue.

He produced a number of historic encyclicals, including *Mater et Magistra* on Christian social doctrine and *Pacem in Terris*, issued in 1963 at the height of the Cold War, on the need for global peace and justice.

He established the Pontifical Commission for the Revision of the Code of Canon Law, culminating in publication of the new code in 1983.

Before becoming pope, he served as a Vatican diplomat working in Bulgaria and Turkey, with many Christians who were not in full communion with the Catholic Church. This inspired his effort as pope to try to recover the unity lost over the centuries.

With his humility, gentleness, and active courage, he reached out like the Good Shepherd to the marginalized and the world, visiting the imprisoned and the sick, and welcoming people from every

nation and faith.

His contact with the people and his open display of personal warmth, sensitivity, and fatherly kindness earned him the nickname "Good Pope John."

Blessed John placed great importance on his modest upbringing in a village about 25 miles northeast of Milan, saying: "I come from the country, from poverty" that he said was "happy and blessed poverty — not cursed, not endured."

Born in Sotto il Monte, Italy, in 1881, Angelo Giuseppe Roncalli one of 13 children in a family of sharecroppers, he entered the minor seminary at the age of 11 and was sent to Rome to study at the age of 19.

He was ordained to the priesthood in 1904 and, spent several years as secretary to the bishop of Bergamo. In 1925 he began serving as a Vatican diplomat, first posted to Bulgaria, then to Greece and Turkey and on to France. He was named a cardinal and patriarch of Venice in 1953. Cardinal Roncalli was elected pope Oct. 28, 1958. He died of cancer June 3, 1963.

Blessed John was beatified in 2000, by Blessed John Paul II, with whom he will be canonized April 27.

suddenly stopped and turned toward one doorway.

"Then he shook his head and wagged his finger at Fr. Tucci. He opened the door, went in and did significant damage to the schedule," the researcher recounts. "What astonished everyone was the pope had never been there before, and there was no way he could have known the Blessed Sacrament was behind that door."

Although Pope Francis is currently praised by the secular media for revolutionizing the papacy by his acts of humility and focus on the poor, Evert says Pope John Paul

II embraced a similar life of poverty and humility.

"He was so utterly detached from material things. Even as pope, he wouldn't accept new clothes," states the author, who asked papal biographer George Weigel to fact check his book for accuracy.

According to friends, John Paul II wore undershirts with holes and would hand new garments to his housekeeper to give to the poor in Rome. As a young priest, he was known for giving his jacket to any impoverished person he met on the street.

"He once had to borrow shoes

to say Mass because he had given his away," Evert reports.

A similar incident occurred after Cardinal Karol Wojtyla was elected pope. While visiting a slum in Brazil, he encountered a destitute mother.

"He doesn't carry a wallet in his cassock, so what does he give her? He took off the ring that Pope Paul gave him when he became a cardinal and gave it to her," Evert continues. "Then he had to borrow another bishop's ring for the rest of the visit so people would have something to kiss."

Evert, who is traveling to Rome

for the canonization, will appear on EWTN as part of the Catholic network's coverage. After reading more than 40 biographies of the late pontiff and seeing him 20 times, the founder of [chastityproject.com](http://chastityproject.com) thought he knew John Paul II.

"I couldn't believe how much I didn't know about him," admits Evert, who hopes to use *Saint John Paul the Great: His Five Loves* to evangelize and catechize Catholics. "This was an amazing book to research. I went mining for information and I found all these jewels. Anyone who thinks they know John Paul II will be surprised."

# Blessed John Paul touched lives of local Catholics

By Joan Kurkowski-Gillen  
Correspondent

Ask people what Pope John Paul II meant to them and you'll receive a wellspring of thoughtful responses.

"A man who gently and lovingly challenged the world."

"The most important saint of my lifetime."

"Divine Mercy"

"The reason I believe in superheroes."

"The pope of hope."

For Margie Gomez, the man born Karol Jozef Wojtyla in Wadowice, Poland was a saint long before plans for his canonization on April 27, 2014 were announced, insists the St. Andrew parishioner who stood inches from Pope John Paul II when he visited San Antonio in 1987.

Gomez traveled from Fort Worth to see the pontiff with her late husband, Ted, who was being treated for a brain tumor that took his sight. When they arrived, organizers told her Ted had been selected to receive a blessing from the Holy Father. As John Paul II circled the crowd in his popemobile, the couple

waited near the altar with 25 other people with disabilities.

"Before he went to the altar, the Holy Father came to the handicapped area. I was so excited, I couldn't say anything, so I just snapped pictures as he blessed my husband," Gomez remembers.

Ted Gomez experienced a miracle that day.

"Not a physical one. There can be all kinds of miracles," she says. "My husband was touched by him and he felt blessed. We talked about that day for the rest of his life."

Elected to the papacy on Oct. 16, 1978, John Paul II was the longest serving pope in the 20th century. He was also the most traveled. Before his death on April 2, 2005, the pontiff had visited more than 100 countries.

"He was very visible. By traveling all over the world, he was able to bring the message of Christ and the Church to so many people of different ethnic backgrounds," says Patrick Foley, who served as a Eucharistic minister at the open air Mass celebrated by Pope John Paul II in San Antonio on Sept. 13, 1987. "They all responded to him lovingly."

A noted author and historian, the Azle resident was asked by Texas organizers of the papal trip to write an official essay about the Catholic Church in Texas for the Holy Father. John Paul II later used some of the material in his homily.

Curators at the John Paul II Shrine in Washington, D.C., requested a copy of Foley's essay, and it's now part of the museum's collection of papers.

"Not only was John Paul II deeply spiritual, he was an intellectual," Foley points out. "His dedication to some of the great people in the Church like St. Thomas Aquinas and St. John of the Cross, shows that."

"When he decided to study for the priesthood, Poland was occupied by the Nazis, and he had to study in secret with a few other men," says the retired history professor.

"Then he had to deal with the Communists. Even as pope, he battled growing secularism in places like our country and France. In my opinion, he was a great hero of the Church."

Dr. Thomas Jodziewicz recalls his exuberance when 58-year-old Cardinal Wojtyla became the first non-Italian pope in more than

400 years.

"We share the same heritage," says the University of Dallas history professor. "My father was alive at the time, and the pride in having a Pole as the pope was extraordinary."

Jodziewicz calls John Paul II a wonderful example of truth and charity.

"We live in a world where any sense of eternal truth or truth itself is disappearing, so we were very fortunate to have him as pope when we did," he explains. "His witness helped give the rest of us courage to stand for Christ."

The educator visited Rome several times, but the closest he came to seeing Pope John Paul II in person was from a distance at a Corpus Christi benediction. His late father, Zygmunt Jodziewicz, had better luck. Visiting Rome with a tour group, the elder Jodziewicz and his wife met the pontiff during a general audience. A video camera captured the moment for the rest of the family.

"My father stopped and started talking with the pope in Polish. For those few moments, they looked like old buddies," his son explains. "It's a wonderful memory."

## Pope John Paul II A chronological record of the life and accomplishments of Karol Wojtyla

<p><b>1920</b> May 18: Born Karol Wojtyla in Wadowice, Poland</p> 	<p><b>Formation</b> Karol studies at the university, acts in a clandestine theater, writes poetry and reads philosophy, plays goalie on his soccer team, splits stone at a quarry and works in a chemical factory. It is at this time that his vocation to the priesthood comes into focus.</p>	<p><b>1940</b> Studies interrupted, works as manual laborer</p> <p><b>World War II</b></p> <p><b>1941</b> Father dies</p> 	<p><b>1954</b> Completes doctorate in philosophy • Teaches at Jagellonian and in Lublin</p> 	<p><b>Vatican II</b> He attends the 1962-65 Second Vatican Council, where he helps to draft documents on religious liberty and the church in the modern world.</p> 	<p><b>1978</b> Oct. 16: Becomes 264th pope</p> 	<p><b>1980</b></p> <p><b>1981</b> May 13: Mehmet Ali Agca wounds pope</p> 
<p><b>1929</b> Mother dies • Receives first Communion</p> 	<p><b>1938</b> Enters Jagellonian University</p> 	<p><b>1942</b> Enters secret seminary</p> <p><b>1945</b> Resumes studies</p> <p><b>1946</b> Nov. 1: Ordained priest</p> <p><b>1948</b> Earns doctorate in theology</p> 	<p><b>1958</b> Sept. 28: Becomes auxiliary bishop of Krakow</p> 	<p><b>1964</b> Jan. 13: Becomes Archbishop of Krakow</p>  <p><b>1967</b> June 28: Becomes cardinal</p>	<p><b>1979</b> Makes first of 104 papal trips abroad</p> 	<p><b>1983</b> Issues new Canon Law • Open Year of redemption Agca in prison</p> <p><b>1984</b> Establishes relations with Uni</p> <p><b>1985</b> Warns Eur abortion</p> 

# Blessed John Paul brought moral force, intellect, flair to world stage

CATHOLIC NEWS SERVICE  
VATICAN CITY

**B**lessed John Paul II, who will be canonized April 27, was one of the most forceful moral leaders of the modern age.

He brought a philosopher's intellect, a pilgrim's spiritual intensity, and an actor's flair for the dramatic to his role as head of the Universal Church for more than 26 years.

The Polish pope was a tireless evangelizer and forceful communicator, speaking to millions in their own languages.

The first non-Italian pope in 455 years, Blessed John Paul became a spiritual protagonist in two global transitions: the fall of European communism, which began in his native Poland in 1989, and the passage to Christianity's third millennium.

As pastor of the Universal Church, he took his message to 129 countries in 104 trips outside Italy—including seven to the United States.

Within the Church, the pope was just as vigorous and no less controversial. He disciplined dissenting theologians, excommunicated self-styled "traditionalists," and upheld often unpopular church positions

like its opposition to artificial birth control. At the same time, he pushed Catholic Social Teaching into relatively new areas such as bioethics, international economics, racism, and, ecology.

In his later years, the pope moved with difficulty, tired easily, and was less expressive, all symptoms of Parkinson's disease. Yet he pushed himself to his limits, convinced that such suffering was itself a form of spiritual leadership.

His long-awaited pilgrimage to the Holy Land in 2000 took him to the roots of the faith and dramatically illustrated the Church's improved relations with Jews.

His social justice encyclicals, including his landmark document, the apostolic letter *Novo Millennio Ineunte (At the Beginning of the New Millennium)*, made a huge impact, addressing the moral dimensions of human labor, the gap between rich and poor, and shortcomings of the free-market system.

His reaction to the mushrooming clerical sex abuse scandal in the United States underscored his governing style: He suffered deeply, prayed at length, and made brief but forceful statements emphasizing the

gravity of such sins by priests. He convened a Vatican-U.S. summit to address the problem, but let his Vatican advisers and U.S. church leaders work out the answers. In the end, he approved changes that made it easier to laicize abusive priests.

The pope approved a catechism as one remedy for doctrinal ambiguity. He also pushed Church positions further into the public forum. In the 1990s he urged the world's bishops to step up their fight against abortion and euthanasia, saying the practices amounted to a modern-day "slaughter of the innocents."

The pope was a cautious ecumenist, insisting that real differences between religions and churches not be covered up. Yet he made several dramatic gestures, including: launching a Catholic-Orthodox theological dialogue in 1979; visiting a Rome synagogue in 1986; and traveling to Damascus, Syria, in 2001, where he became the first pontiff to visit a mosque.

To his own flock, he brought continual reminders that prayer and the sacraments were crucial to being a good Christian. He held up Mary as a model of holiness for the whole Church, updated the Rosary with five

new "Mysteries of Light" and named more than 450 new saints — more than all his predecessors combined.

In earlier years of his papacy, this pope seemed made for modern media, and his pontificate has been captured in some lasting images, like huddling in a prison-cell conversation with his would-be assassin, Mehmet Ali Agca, who shot the pope in St. Peter's Square May 13, 1981.

Karol Jozef Wojtyla was born May 18, 1920, in Wadowice, in southern Poland. He lost his mother at age 9, his only brother at age 12, and his father at age 20.

An accomplished actor in Krakow's underground theater during the war, he changed paths and joined the clandestine seminary after being turned away from a Carmelite monastery with the advice: "You are destined for greater things."

Following theological and philosophical studies in Rome, he returned to Poland for parish work in 1948, spending weekends on camping trips with young people. When named auxiliary bishop of Krakow in 1958 he was Poland's youngest bishop, and he became archbishop of Krakow in 1964. He also came to the attention of the Universal Church through his work on important documents of the Second Vatican Council.

Though increasingly respected in Rome, Cardinal Wojtyla was a virtual unknown when elected pope Oct. 16, 1978.

After more than 26 years as pope, Blessed John Paul died at the age of 84 at the Vatican April 2, 2005, the vigil of Divine Mercy Sunday.

Divine Mercy Sunday had special significance for Blessed John Paul, who made it a church-wide feast day to be celebrated a week after Easter. He was beatified by Pope Benedict XVI on Divine Mercy Sunday, May 1, 2011, and will be canonized by Pope Francis on the same feast day, April 27, 2014, together with Blessed John XXIII, the pope Blessed John Paul beatified in 2000.

Issues Encyclical

<p>shoots and</p> <p>Code of Holy n • Visits</p> <p>diplomatic States pope against</p>	<p><b>1986</b> Makes historic visit to Rome synagogue • Calls world religious leaders to Assisi to pray for peace</p> <p><b>1987</b> Opens Marian year • Convenes first international World Youth Day • Calls Vatican meeting to resolve Catholic-Jewish controversies</p> <p><b>1989</b> Communism falls in Eastern Europe, pope seen as key figure</p> <p><b>1990</b> Establishes diplomatic relations with Soviet Union</p> <p><b>1991</b> Issues Catechism of the Catholic Church</p> <p><b>1992</b> Issues Catechism of the Catholic Church</p> <p><b>1993</b> Establishes diplomatic relations with Israel • Named Time magazine's Man of the Year</p> <p><b>1994</b> Establishes diplomatic relations with Israel • Named Time magazine's Man of the Year</p> <p><b>1995</b> Establishes diplomatic relations with Soviet Union</p> <p><b>1996</b> Urges total ban on nuclear testing, land mines</p> <p><b>1998</b> Makes historic trip 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## GOOD NEWSMAKER

Jason Evert's book reveals anecdotes that show the character of

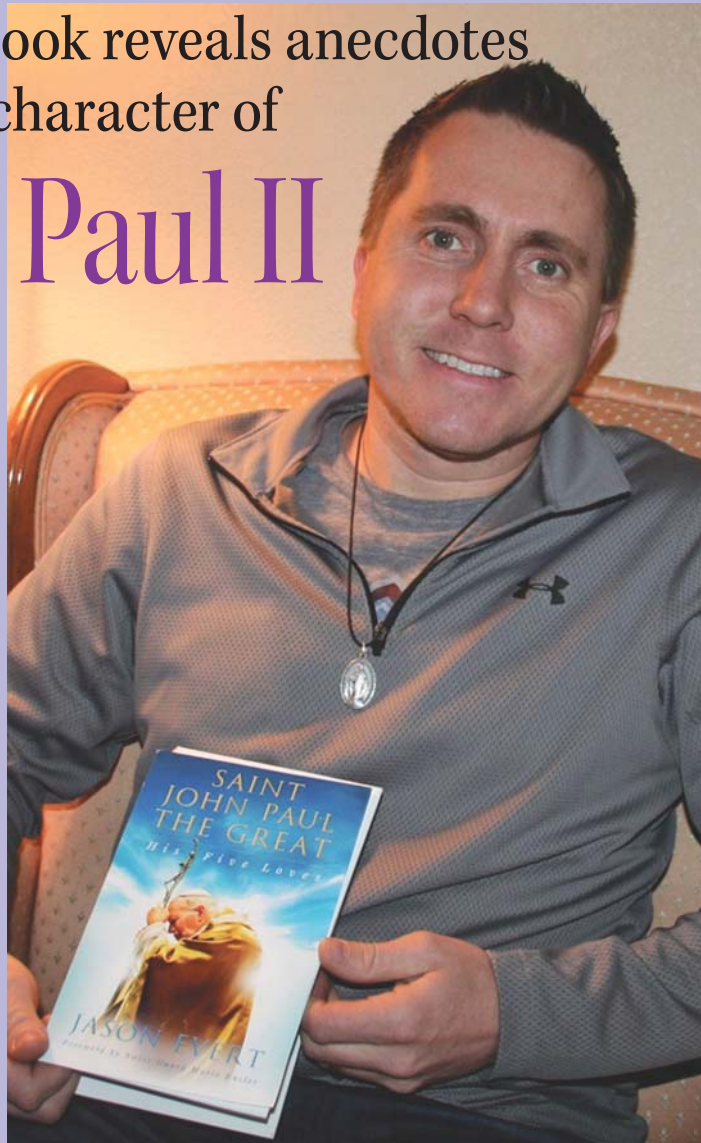
# St. John Paul II

By Joan Kurkowski-Gillen  
Correspondent

**O**n a warm, spring May afternoon in 1981, Pope John Paul II did something entirely characteristic for the personable, energetic pontiff. He carved out time in his busy schedule to chat with patients and employees at Rome's Gemelli Polyclinic-- a state-of-the-art medical center located a short distance from the Vatican. During the visit, a physician asked the Holy Father to bless a recently purchased ambulance.

The Holy Water was dutifully brought out, the pope sprinkled the emergency vehicle, and then hospital staff heard him utter an unusual prayer. Pope John Paul II offered a blessing for the first person needing the ambulance.

The next day, Mehmet Ali Agca shot the Holy Father as he circled St. Peter's Square in an open jeep. Suffering serious intestinal wounds caused by the bullet, Pope John Paul



Jason Evert, has written a revealing book about his hero Blessed John Paul II, titled *Saint John Paul the Great: His Five Loves*. (NTC / Joan Kurkowski-Gillen)

II was rushed to the nearby hospital. He became the first victim to use the new ambulance.

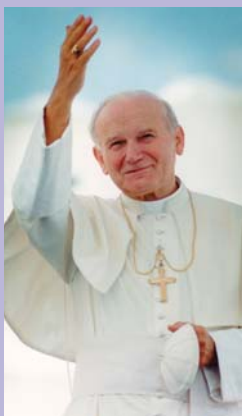
That little known coincidence is one of several stories about the late pontiff that best-selling Catholic

author Jason Evert reveals in his newly released book published by Totus Tuus Press and Lighthouse Catholic Media: *Saint John Paul the Great: His Five Loves*.

A nationally known chastity speaker who gave his first talk at Fort Worth's Nolan Catholic High School in 1999, Evert always wanted to write a book about the man he considers his hero. Vatican plans to canonize the Polish prelate, along with Pope John XXIII on April 27 — Divine Mercy Sunday — provided the motivation to get it done.

"For the last 15 years I've traveled around the world, visited six continents and spoken to more than a million people," Evert told

SEE P. 44



**April 27 in St. Peter's Square**, two new saints will join the ranks of those whose holiness, and heroic virtue earn the special designation of sainthood by the Church.

**Read how their lives and their papacies** have affected men and women from our diocese, and highlights of these holy men's lives — **pp. 44-47; español p. 42-43**

**For reactions directly from Vatican City** the day of the canonization, follow the commentary offered by the diocese's Director of Communications Pat Svacina on Twitter, @NTCatholic.

