



NEWSMAGAZINE North Texas Catholic

Bringing the Good News to the Diocese of Fort Worth

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Pope Francis announces Holy Year of Mercy

December 8, 2015 to November 20, 2016

Urges all
Catholics
to practice
corporal
and
spiritual
works
of mercy

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FIRST UNIVERSITY PARISH ST. JOHN PAUL II BREAKS GROUND

St. John Paul II Catholic Church broke ground for a new parish church and campus center across from the UNT campus in Denton April 11, making history as the diocese's first church built to serve university communities.

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JOHN MICHAEL TALBOT CONCERT AT ST. BARTHOLOMEW, JUNE 2

John Michael Talbot, legendary pioneer of Christian Contemporary Music and founder of the Little Portion Hermitage in Arkansas, will bring an evening of inspiration and music to St. Bartholomew in Fort Worth June 2.

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THESE MEN HAVE BEEN CALLED 30-31

Two orders, one from Mexico and the other from India serve in parishes across the diocese, bringing the Gospel and the sacraments to the people of God in the Diocese of Fort Worth: the Confraternidad Sacerdotal de Operarios del Reino de Cristo from Mexico and the Heralds of the Good News from India.



NOTICIAS EN ESPAÑOL EN ESTA EDICIÓN

En esta edición del North Texas Catholic, el Padre Carmen Mele habla de la alegría y fidelidad de dos empleadas de la diócesis, recientemente jubiladas; Joan Kurkowski-Gillen esboza el jubiloso servicio de las Hermanas de Santa María de Namur, muchas de las cuales sirven en nuestra diócesis; ofrecemos además breves historias de dos órdenes de sacerdotes que sirven aquí, los Operarios (CORC) y los Heraldos (HGN).



6 OLQP NEW FAMILY LIFE CENTER

Our Lady Queen of Peace celebrated Divine Mercy Sunday with the dedication of a new 22,500 square-foot Family Life Center April 12. The parish's ability to serve meals to large and small groups and provide meeting space has been dramatically increased.

8 THE TRIDUUM OFFERS DRAMA

Some of the most meaningful events in the life of the Church occur during the Triduum of Holy Week. We sent photographer Ben Torres to capture some of those moments at St. Catherine of Siena Church in Carrollton and Holy Family Church in Fort Worth.

26 SISTERS OF ST. MARY OF NAMUR

Sister Mary Jean Warmuth (left) and Sister Miriam Nesmith carry forward the Catholic heritage of their order. The SSMNs have founded more than two dozen schools in North Texas since coming to Texas in 1873, and they continue to serve people in need and proclaim the Gospel to all.

32 FR. HOA KNOWS GOD CAN SAVE YOU IN MORE WAYS THAN ONE

Fr. Hoa Nguyen has his hand on the actual helm of the crowded boat he and his brother escaped from Vietnam on. It hangs in his office at St. John the Apostle Church, where he is pastor.

34 JEAN DENTON'S LONG TERM LOVE FOR HAITI BEGAN 25 YEARS AGO

When Jean Denton went to Haiti to report for the NTC on Food for the Poor's service there more than two decades ago, she never suspected how deep her connection with the people of God in that beleaguered part of the world would become or how long it would last.

North Texas Catholic



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Sisters of St. Mary of Namur will always have value, like us

When we were preparing the complete list of the Sisters of St. Mary of Namur that appears on pages 29 and 43 of this issue, I found it a bit disturbing that many were listed as retired or semi-retired, and some were simply listed by their place of residence. We all know nuns never really retire, even when they cease working outside their shared home.

So when we presented the list for additional information to Sister Gabriela Martinez, provincial of the Western Province, whose Mother House is located on the South Side of Fort Worth, she graciously and in a very timely manner, enlightened us to many of the functions and jobs nuns were continuing to perform. As she put it, "The fact of the matter is that everyone pitches in to do so many things, in house, but also in the area of hospitality, being present, listening, praying for folks," and so on.

We also know that many who do these kindnesses now have in their past, decades and decades of active ministry in any number of fields. Many who perform hospitality now were teachers and administrators, nurses, missionaries to Africa and other continents, directors of religious education and RCIA and RCIC, Catholic Charities workers, administrators of programs at the diocesan level, workers with people with AIDS, community organizers. My imagination will fail me, but I know that the list includes hundreds more specific descriptions in a myriad of fields.

Nuns have served God and their fellow human beings with love and joy — and they continue to do so.

But their value — and yours and mine — doesn't come from these very necessary and useful functions, as wonderful and driven by compassion as they may be.

Our value comes from the love of God. It comes from our humanness, quite simply as a gift from God.

My wife's grandmother Pearl spent the last decade or more of her life being covetously taken care of by one or the other of her daughters. They would vie for the privilege of having "Mama" live with them. And Pearl could do virtually nothing around the house.

What Pearl could do was love. And the love I received from her was of the same quality as that received by her daughters, by my wife, by everyone who came into her presence. I learned more from Pearl than I learned from just about anyone I have ever known.

Pearl's one function in life wasn't a job, it wasn't a set of duties or services she performed. It was to do the one thing we were all created to do: to love God and our neighbor, lessons she learned from her church and her Bible. God loves each of us just the same, and that alone is where our value comes from.

Jeff Hensley

Defending justice, promoting humanity

Texas bishops, laity join together to advocate for all stages of life

By Jerry Circelli
Correspondent

THE DIOCESE OF FORT WORTH HAD A STRONG PRESENCE AT THE TEXAS CAPITOL IN AUSTIN MAR. 24 WHEN BISHOP MICHAEL F. OLSON WAS JOINED BY MORE THAN 50 AREA FAITHFUL, including several youth, for the 2015 Texas Catholic Conference (TCC) Faith in Action Advocacy Day.

Through the TCC the bishops of Texas act together to advocate for state policies and programs that support the life and dignity of every person from conception to natural death.

Members of the local Church joined with more than 3,000 other Catholics from throughout the state for the event, focusing on six main areas: Protecting Human Life, Children and Families, Health and Human Services, Justice for Immigrants, Protecting the Poor and Vulnerable, and Criminal Justice.

Like other Texas dioceses, the Diocese of Fort Worth was represented by several team captains, each leading groups of fellow Catholics tasked with paying personal visits to elected officials from the Texas House of Representatives and Senate.

Catholics from the diocese visited with 24 elected officials to discuss topics that had been outlined by Texas bishops and staff of the TCC.

Pending and upcoming bills were discussed that included end-of-life reform.



L-R. Austin Tarver, Claire Cox, Sean Gillen, Youth For Life coordinator Sue Laux, Bishop Michael F. Olson, Gabriel Project trainer Angela Walters, Ray Yokell, and Adrienne Conley during a break at the TCC Catholic Faith in Action Advocacy Day. Eight members of the diocesan Youth For Life group attended the event and spoke with elected officials. (Photo by Jerry Circelli / NTC)

The Texas bishops advocate advance directives reform legislation that recognizes the dignity of natural death.

The bishops also support pro-life legislation, ranging from providing Down's Syndrome assistance information for parents to requiring awareness sessions, including adoption options, to women seeking abortions.

Other legislation Catholics discussed with their legislators included the Education Tax Credit Scholarship, which the TCC said expands educational opportunities for low-income families by allowing them to attend private schools or for public school students to receive after-school tutoring. The bill also introduces a scholarship program funded by contributions from Texas businesses.

Catholic advocates at the Capitol also discussed immigration reform that the TCC said should be "merciful, charitable, and compassionate to those here simply working for a better

life, while also recognizing the legitimate responsibility of the federal government to maintain control of our nation's borders."

Related to the poor and the vulnerable, Catholics discussed concerns about "speedy cash" and "easy money" loans that they said could trap low-income borrowers in a dangerous cycle of debt. The bishops support consumer protection bills in these areas.

The TCC also expressed concerns to legislators about open carry laws, especially those that "would permit the open carry of handguns in public areas, particularly proposals that would allow weapons to be carried into churches, schools, college campuses, and hospitals."

On the issue of criminal justice reform, Catholics expressed support for legislation that would end the death penalty, provide compassionate treatment of prisoners, and encourage rehabilitation and forgiveness of those re-entering society.

One of the highlights of the Advocacy Day was a mid-day rally on the steps of the Texas State Capitol. Cardinal Daniel DiNardo, Archbishop of Galveston-Houston, and 11 bishops of Texas dioceses addressed the crowd at the rally.

During his opening talk, Cardinal DiNardo said that he and the bishops shared productive talks with Governor Greg Abbott, Lieutenant Governor Dan Patrick, and members of the Texas House and Senate. He asked the thousands gathered in front of the Capitol to carry the Catholic advocacy messages forward to their representatives.

"May we realize that as we abet the public square by our own witness that we are adding and aiding the witness of the word of God," the cardinal said.

Along with those gathered, Cardinal DiNardo prayed that lawmakers would deliberate wisely, with prudence and with good judgment about the

legislative issues the group was discussing with them on the Advocacy Day.

From the Capitol steps Bishop Olson also addressed the gathering, talking specifically about end-of-life care reform.

"What's so important," said Bishop Olson, "is that we accompany each other throughout life. Not as individuals, but as members of a community. This is especially true when it comes to those who are nearing the end of life—the chronically ill and the terminally ill."

The bishop said that these people should not be abandoned by our health care system. "Nor should they be abandoned more specifically by any one of us," he added.

"Our Texas Catholic Conference advocates advance directives reform legislation that recognizes the dignity of a natural death," the bishop said. "Human intervention that would deliberately cause, hasten, or unnecessarily prolong a patient's dying violates the dignity of the human person. Reform efforts should prioritize the patient, while also recognizing the legitimate emotional and ethical concerns of their families and health care providers, and also of our communities who want to provide the most compassionate care possible, to love our neighbor."

In his talk, the bishop stressed, "All of us have a responsibility to care for each other. Even while we are dying, we belong to our community and our society."

Have faith, practice charity Bishop Olson tells DCCW gathering

By Joan Kurkowski-Gillen

FORT WORTH — More than 140 women, from 16 different parishes traveled from across the diocese to attend the third annual Day of Reflection at St. Patrick Cathedral. The March 19 gathering was hosted by the Diocesan Council of Catholic Women (DCCW).

Held on the feast day of St. Joseph, a morning liturgy was followed by a keynote talk given by Bishop Michael Olson.

The Fort Worth DCCW works under the direction of the National Council of Catholic Women to promote the dignity and vocation of the Catholic woman while encouraging works of charity. Both organizations collaborate on national and world issues of social justice affirming Catholic values and Church teaching.

Former Fort Worth Bishop Kevin Vann initiated the Day of Reflection three years ago to give women in the diocese a forum to address their concerns and ideas.

In his address, Bishop Olson discussed how faith and hope lead to charity and to understanding how Christians are called to help people in need.

“This is especially true when



Bishop Michael Olson talks to a group of women during the third annual Diocesan Council of Catholic Women. (Photo by Joan Kurkowski-Gillen / NTC)

responding to the unborn and their mothers, the refugee, the confined, and those who fall through the margins of society,” he explained. “[Hope] is a particular virtue women are inclined to have and can use to help the Church.”

Catholics are called and corporately sent in and for communion with each other, he said, making reference to the many church communities that came together to help the waves of unaccompanied migrant children crossing into the U.S. from Latin America last summer.

“Our ultimate end is to love God and to love our neighbor here and now in the present moment with a faith that enlightens us to the next right step while ruling out all steps that are contrary to the Gospel,” he said.

Annual Vocations Day invites youth to ask: 'What is my vocation in life?'

By Joan Kurkowski-Gillen

FORT WORTH — “What is God calling me to do with my life?”

It’s a question everybody answers — eventually.

But organizers of the Fifth Grade Vocation Day, held March 25 at Holy Family Church, hope to spark some early soul searching. Sponsored by the Diocese of Fort Worth since 1999, the annual event is designed to encourage young minds to think about the future.

“We introduce the idea of religious vocations, but, at the same time, it’s also about asking that overall question, ‘what is my vocation in life?’ Father James Wilcox explained. “It’s taking a moment to stop and think, how is God working in my life? How can I serve Him?”

Appointed Vocation Director for the diocese last July, the young priest shared his own vocation story in front of 423 fifth-graders. An informal question-and-answer session followed a Mass concelebrated by Fort Worth Bishop Michael Olson, Father Hoa Nguyen, and Fr. Wilcox.

The rural pastor of four parishes told the youngsters he thought about the priesthood while attending Pius X Elementary and Bishop Lynch High



Students pray at morning Mass during the diocesan Vocation Day held at Holy Family Church in Fort Worth. (Photo by Joan Kurkowski-Gillen / NTC)

School in Dallas but didn’t listen to God’s call until his early 30s. Skies didn’t open and there was no voice echoing from the clouds when he decided to begin seminary studies.

“God often talks to us in silence and whispers,” the speaker continued.

Held on the Solemnity of the Annunciation, the Vocation Day Mass provided an opportunity for Bishop Olson to compare Mary’s “yes” to God with the “yes” required to serve Him in today’s world.

“When we have a grateful heart and appreciate our gifts, we’re able to hear the voice of God just like Mary, who heard the voice of the messenger Gabriel announcing the Good News,” he said.

**With Praise and Thanksgiving to Almighty God
The Catholic Diocese of Fort Worth
joyfully announces and invites you to attend the Ordination of**

**Michael Carl Greco
Keith William George Hathaway
Ronaldo Josef Jan Theodore Mercado**

to the Sacred Order of Presbyter through the imposition of hands and the invocation of the Holy Spirit by The Most Reverend Michael F. Olson, STD, Bishop of Fort Worth on Saturday, May 23rd, 2015 at 10 a.m.

St. Patrick Cathedral
1206 Throckmorton Street
Fort Worth, Texas 76102

You are cordially invited to a reception afterward in the St. Patrick Pastoral Center.

**En alabanza y acción de gracias a Dios Todopoderoso
la Diócesis Católica de Fort Worth
anuncia con gozo y los invita a participar en la ordenación de**

**Michael Carl Greco
Keith William George Hathaway
Ronaldo Josef Jan Theodore Mercado**

a la Sagrada Orden del Presbítero mediante la imposición de manos y la invocación del Espíritu Santo por Su Excelencia, Monseñor Michael F. Olson, STD, Obispo de Fort Worth el sábado, 23 mayo 2015, 10 a.m.

St. Patrick Cathedral
1206 Throckmorton Street
Fort Worth, Texas 76102

Usted está cordialmente invitado a una recepción después en el Centro Parroquial de St. Patrick.

On Divine Mercy Sunday

Our Lady Queen of Peace Parish dedicates new family life center

By Jenara Kocks Burgess
Correspondent

“TODAY, OF COURSE,
IS MERCY SUNDAY,”
SAID BISHOP

**MICHAEL OLSON DURING THE
PROGRAM CELEBRATING THE
DEDICATION OF OUR LADY QUEEN
OF PEACE PARISH’S NEW FAMILY
LIFE CENTER ON APRIL 12.**

“And it’s appropriate that we dedicate this Family Life Center because the family really is the first place we experience God’s mercy,” he continued. “We learn his truth, through our parents, through our siblings, but in a very special way, we also learn how to forgive and how to receive forgiveness, how to reconcile and how to be participants in a larger society, a larger community, a parish, our city, our state, our nation, and our world.”

The bishop went on to say that fifty years ago, the Second Vatican Council called the family the domestic church.

“We pray as we start this new family life center, this building will be a means by which you can continue to grow as families, to strengthen each other and also to strengthen each other as members of the parish family,” Bishop Olson said.

Father Sojan George, pastor of OLQP since 2011, said he announced the decision to build the Family Life Center on Divine Mercy Sunday in 2013. Almost two years ago, parishioners pledged \$2.9 million toward the project, and on the date of the building’s dedication, 22 months later, more than 90 percent of what the parishioners pledged had been contributed, he said.

Fr. Sojan thanked everyone who helped with the project from the building committee led by Dan Shine, to the campaign committee led by Steve Morath, parish office staff, including Deacon Jim



Knights of Columbus stand at the entrance of OLQP’s new parish hall on April 12, 2015.
(Photo by Bertha Salazar / NTC)

Bindel, and many other people who contributed their time, talent, and money to the project.

The 22,500 square-foot Family Life Center is connected to the 20,000 square-foot church, which seats 1,000. The Family Life Center Grand Hall, where the dedication ceremony and dinner was held, can accommodate 640 and echoes the modern renaissance style of the church with stone and stained oak wood accents and a beautiful wood-grain styled composite floor.

The kitchen features stainless steel appliances, a separate dish cleaning station with multiple sinks and sprayers, a buffet style serving station with warmers, a huge countertop, ice machine, two large rolling warmers, and three pantries.

Two other important rooms were expanded in the new family life center’s construction: The chapel and the St. Joseph Room. Shine said the number of pews in the chapel was nearly doubled, from 70 to 130, which created a center aisle, allowing access from the rear of the chapel.

The St. Joseph Room which can seat 120 and is suitable for bereavement dinners and after-Mass breakfasts was dedicated to honor the Sisters of St. Mary of Namur by Pat and Lulu Canan.

“We’re just glad to honor the

nuns who make our parish and our school so vibrant,” Pat Canan said.

The new building also has a large covered patio where the Knights of Columbus, Men’s Club, and others can cook with a grill and broiler.

Mark Augustine, a member of the building committee, talked about how excited they were to have more meeting rooms.

“This is a very vibrant parish community,” Augustine said. “You drive by and there are people in the parking lot all the time. Those people have to be some place. Having all these different size rooms available is really handy.”

After the event, Fr. Sojan said that the parish was happy and excited about their new Family Life Center. “Our hope is that generations to come will use the facility with the same fondness and ownership as we do now.”

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Seeking room for growth

Groundbreaking held for new St. JP II Church — construction may begin this year

by Jacqueline Burkepile
Correspondent

ON SATURDAY, APRIL 11, A NEW CHAPTER BEGAN FOR ST. JOHN PAUL II CATHOLIC CHURCH IN DENTON.

The parish celebrated the groundbreaking for its new chapel and campus center, which primarily serves students, faculty, staff, alumni, and friends of the University of North Texas and Texas Woman’s University.

The parish hosted the event in the current campus center’s backyard. Students from UNT kicked off the event with live music, followed by a welcome from Father Kyle Walterscheid, pastor of St. John Paul II Parish. The Very Rev. Karl Schilken, Vicar General for the Diocese of Fort Worth, then offered an opening address and prayer for the new project.

“Campus Ministry has to be a major priority of the diocese,” Fr. Schilken said. “It has to be a major force in what we’re trying to do to evangelize to the young, and proclaim the Gospel to them. The work we begin today should enliven our faith and make us grateful.”

The 12,000-square-foot Italian Renaissance-style church will cost \$2.7 million and will sit on 1.5 acres of land across the street from UNT. The church will have two floors: the first floor containing six offices, four meeting areas, and a large kitchen, and the second floor containing the chapel, which will comfortably seat 160 people.

However, St. John Paul II needs to have pledges totaling 50 percent of the total cost in order to begin construction. They currently have \$1.2 million pledged, meaning the parish needs an additional \$164,500



A view of JP II parish's future church building.

Photo by Donna Ryckaert / NTC

before construction can begin. Their hope is to begin the project by August with the design-build company SREIC Companies Real Estate Development & Brokerage.

Fr. Walterscheid said the parish desperately needs a new facility because the current building is only 1,600 square feet, which is too small for its students and parishioners. The chapel overflows during daily Mass, and there is no room for parishioners to park. The result is many people are often unable to attend daily Mass.

“We’ve reached our maximum capacity to grow,” he said. “In fact, we’re stunted in our growth this year. We can’t get a bigger parish base because we have no room for them.”

Following the clergy’s introductory remarks, several parish representatives made statements about the new church.

Audry Salvador, a communications junior at UNT, said she is “stoked” about St. John Paul II’s plans to build a new church and campus center. She said the Catholic Center has made a vast impact on her life, and she is grateful to all those who have supported it.

“Through this Catholic Center, I’ve really learned that it’s not just

through the people, it’s through the sacraments and my own personal faith in Christ that He allowed me to push my own borders and actually act as the Gospel says,” Salvador said.

UNT journalism professor Samra Bufkins emphasized the importance of a parish community and daily faith life.

“This parish will bring everybody associated with the universities together,” Bufkins said. “Every time we see each other... we are reminded that we are one body in Christ. We become more comfortable living out the Gospel of Jesus knowing that we are not alone in handling

the stresses, bureaucracies, and challenges of college life.”

Immediately following these parishioners’ testimonies, Fr. Schilken blessed and led the ceremonial groundbreaking. Those in attendance then proceeded to the Catholic Center for a reception.

Patrice Briggs, a junior studying psychology at TWU, said the groundbreaking ceremony was beautiful, and is excited for the building of the new church because there will be more room for growth.

“Father Kyle’s efforts are definitely appreciated,” Briggs said. “The students who shared their testimonies really were the voices of the college student population. It helped the audience see how much the parish affects our lives. St. John Paul II has done so much with limited resources. Imagining the future of the new church is almost mind-blowing. It will be a beautiful sight to see.”

If you would like to donate to St. John Paul II Catholic Church, please visit jp2denton.org, or make checks payable to the parish and mail them to 1303 Eagle Dr., Denton, Texas 76201.



L-R. Fr. Karl Schilken, Vicar General for the diocese, Fr. Kyle Walterscheid, pastor of St. JP II parish, and Fr. Tom Kennedy, dean of the North Deanery, perform the ceremonial groundbreaking at the current site of St. JP II Parish. (Photo by Donna Ryckaert / NTC)

FROM DEATH TO RESURRECTION, **VICTORY**

A visual celebration of Holy Week

Easter Vigil

At the Easter Vigil, we read about Christ rising from the dead and leaving the tomb. As Mary Magdalene approaches Jesus' empty tomb the angel reminds her that He has gone before her to Galilee. The priest wears white as a symbol of our joy in Jesus' victory over death. We gather in darkness as the Paschal candle — the "Light of Christ" is lit — and the congregation lights their candles from it. We read additional readings to recall salvation history, we pray the Exsultet prayer, sing the Litany of the Saints, and sing Alleluia for the first time since before Lent began. Finally, people coming into the Church are Baptized and Confirmed.



Lee Boley, left, and Hilary Boley, hold their lighted candles during the Easter Vigil, Saturday, April 4, 2015 at Holy Family Church in Fort Worth. (Photo by Ben Torres / NTC)



Erika Sims stands with other catechumens and candidates as they prepare for Communion during their initiation into the Church. (Photo by Ben Torres / NTC)

RIGHT: Fr. Jeff Poirot baptizes Erika Sims during the Easter Vigil.

(Photo by Ben Torres / NTC)



This is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad.

— PS 118:1-2, 16-17, 22-23

Good Friday

On Good Friday, Jesus endured his Passion for the salvation of the whole world. The priest wears red to remind us of the blood Jesus shed for us. No Mass is celebrated on this day (the Host is consecrated on Holy Thursday), and the tabernacle is still empty. We read St. John's account of the Passion, and as the congregation, we often read the parts demanding Jesus' crucifixion. This is to bring to mind how our sins made the Cross of Christ necessary. Finally, we venerate the Cross as a sign of thanksgiving to Jesus.



LEFT: A man kneels to kiss the cross during the Adoration of the Cross at the Good Friday service on April 3, 2015 at St. Catherine of Siena Church in Carrollton. (Photo by Ben Torres / NTC)

BELOW: Father Raymond McDaniel takes the consecrated Host to the Altar of Repose on Holy Thursday Mass in this file photo from 2011, at St. Peter's Church in Lindsay. (Photo by Juan Guajardo / NTC)

“For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the death of the Lord until He comes.”

— 1 COR 11:23-26



Holy Thursday

On Holy Thursday, Jesus celebrates the Last Supper with the Apostles, instituting the Eucharist and priesthood. As a symbol of our love for Jesus in the Eucharist, the priest wears white and performs the washing of the feet as a sign of servant dedication. Finally, as this is the day Jesus is betrayed and handed over, the priest strips the altar of all decorations and transfers the consecrated Hosts to an Altar of Repose, and then away from public view. This is to help us experience the loss the Apostles felt on Good Friday.

Chrism Mass

On Tuesday, the bishop and the priests of the diocese gather at St. Patrick Cathedral to celebrate the Chrism Mass. During this sacred celebration, the bishop blesses three oils: the Oil of Catechumens, the Holy Chrism, and the Oil of the Sick. These oils will be used throughout the whole year in the administration of sacraments (like Confirmation, Baptism, Holy Orders, Anointing of the Sick), and the dedication of new churches.



Priests from all over the Diocese of Fort Worth join Bishop Michael Olson in the Consecration of the Host during the Chrism Mass.

Photo by Donna Ryckaert / NTC

Nghia Nguyen ordained to transitional diaconate

By Susan Moses
Correspondent

“YOU WERE CHOSEN TO SERVE, NOT TO BE SERVED,” BISHOP MICHAEL OLSON EMPHASIZED to Nghia Nguyen in prayer, Scripture, and his homily during his ordination to the transitional diaconate on March 7 at Vietnamese Martyrs Church in Arlington. “Christ is our deacon, teaching his disciples and washing their feet. Carry on this ministry of paramount importance.”

Being charged with continuing Christ’s servanthood left the diocese’s newest transitional deacon, “nervous and joyful at the same time.

“I felt a surge of adrenaline helping Bishop Olson prepare the altar for

the Eucharistic feast, and I was humbled by everyone who came to support me,” said Deacon Nguyen. Representatives from four seminaries, dozens of priests and deacons, and friends and family from across the country attended the service, which blended English, Vietnamese, and Latin.

Two of his fellow deacons and friends from seminary, Ronald Mercado and Branson Hipp, clothed him in the deacon vestments of the stole and dalmatic.

Dcn. Nguyen’s faith was nurtured at Christ the King in Fort Worth as a child. Upon graduating high school in Missouri, he returned to Fort Worth and began formation to become a diocesan priest. He finished his collegiate

program at St. Joseph Seminary College in Covington, Louisiana.

Now a transitional deacon, Nguyen will head to Houston for a final year of theological studies at St. Mary’s Seminary and will assist at a parish. The deacon will serve as a minister of the Word, proclaiming the gospel and teaching; a minister of charity, identifying and meeting the needs of the marginalized; and a minister of the sacraments, able to baptize, witness marriages, and conduct funeral services.

Dcn. Nguyen is looking forward to becoming a priest for the Fort Worth Diocese. “Seminary can be a challenge, because you’ve got all this joy, but you have to keep it bottled up since you spend so much time in a classroom. I enjoyed my pastoral year in Graham, and I’m eager to serve wherever Bishop Olson assigns me and let my joy loose.”

Bishop Olson emphasized that



Newly-ordained transitional deacon, Nghia Nguyen was all smiles as he thanked his friends, mentors and family. (Photo by Donna Ryckaert / NTC)

Dcn. Nguyen’s diaconate ministry of service will never change, even after his ordination as a priest. “Once you are a deacon, you are always a deacon. When you transition to the priesthood, your responsibility to care for the poor, the voiceless, and the isolated never goes away. Your diaconal ministry prevents the priesthood from becoming a ceremonial role.”

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St. Bartholomew's to host evening with John Michael Talbot June 2

John Michael Talbot, Christian music legend, best-selling author, and host of The Church Channel's *All Things Are Possible*, is coming to St. Bartholomew Church at 7 p.m. Tuesday, June 2 for an evening of music and ministry. St. Bartholomew is in Southwest Fort Worth at 3601 Altamesa Blvd.

The evening includes an in-

spirational message and sacred music. Please contact the parish office at 817-292-7703 for more information.

Tickets are not required, but a love offering will be received to support the ministries of John Michael Talbot and the Brothers and Sisters of Charity.

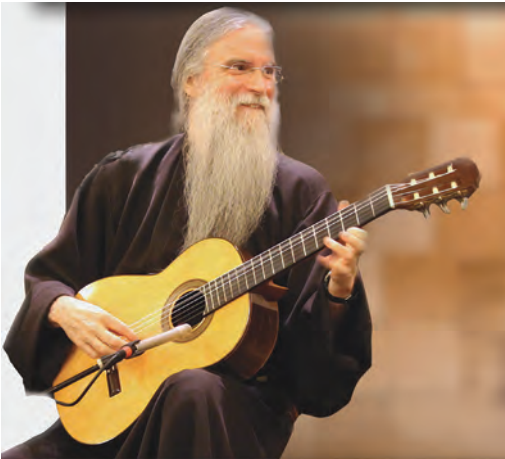
Talbot's ministry began over 35 years ago with a vision.

"God gave me a vision of itinerant ministry," he said, "I believe that our current ministry is fulfilling that vision."

Talbot leads his active ministry from the Little Portion Hermitage in Arkansas and St. Clare Monastery in Houston. He is the founder and Minister General of the Brothers and Sisters of Charity. His artistic

and humanitarian efforts have been recognized with awards from the National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences, the Gospel Music Association, Mercy Corps, and the Mother Teresa award.

For more information visit: johnmichaeltalbot.com
[facebook.com](https://www.facebook.com/johnmichaeltalbot)
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John Michael Talbot has been composing and performing Christian sacred, inspirational, and soft rock music as a pioneer of what became Christian Contemporary Music for more than 35 years. (Photo provided)

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Jennifer Pelletier named superintendent of schools

By Joan Kurkowski-Gillen
Correspondent

IF YOU WANT TO KNOW THE TRUE MISSION OF CATHOLIC EDUCATION, JUST CHAT WITH AN ELEMENTARY OR SECONDARY SCHOOL CHILD ATTENDING ST. JOSEPH SCHOOL IN BRYAN, TEXAS.

“Ask any student walking down the hall what Ms. Pelletier is trying to do, and he or she will stop, roll their eyes, and say, ‘make me a saint,’” says Jennifer Pelletier, sharing what’s become an accepted truism at the school where she has served as president since 2013. “Our job as Catholic educators is to make saints. That’s it.”

The Fort Worth native, who attended Holy Family Parish and Our Lady of Victory School, brings that philosophy to her new role as superintendent of schools for the Diocese of Fort Worth. She will assume responsibility for the four high schools and 18 elementary schools in the 28-county diocese on July 1.

“I went to Holy Family up through fifth grade and then OLV, so it’s exciting to go back and walk through those halls again,” says Pelletier, who left the area 20 years ago.

After graduating from Arlington Heights High School, the new superintendent earned a Bachelor of Arts in English Literature in 1995 and a Master’s in Education in 2002, both from the University of Dallas in Irving. As an undergraduate, a teaching career wasn’t on her radar.

The enthusiasm and vision she witnessed in Nancy Russell, then-principal of St. Luke Catholic School in Irving, coaxed her into a teaching position at the school.

“I was drawn to her ideas,” Pelletier recalls.



Teacher became pupil when Jennifer Pelletier took the place of a student who won the chance to be “President for the day.” (Courtesy St. Joseph Catholic School)

While at St. Luke’s, the principal encouraged her to enroll in a new master’s program at the University of Dallas. Upper level theology courses, offered in the program, examined Church doctrines and encyclicals. Studying the documents, “shaped my administration and really enriched my theological understanding of education,” she says.

A few years later, Pelletier brought her newfound awareness to St. John’s College High School in Washington D.C., the second-oldest De La Salle Christian Brothers school in the U.S.

Pelletier taught upper level English, but she was also drawn to the resource program dedicated to children with learning disabilities.

The words of St. John Baptist de la Salle, Christian Brothers’ founder, guided her work with challenging students.

“You have to meet the child where they are and then move them forward from that space,” she says, paraphrasing the 17th century priest and patron saint of teachers, before adding her own philosophy. “And, I think the only way to meet them ‘where they are’ is to know who they are and

where they’re coming from.”

It’s all about the entirety of the child, Pelletier continues.

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

During her 10 years at St. John’s, the educator also tutored the nationally-recognized boys basketball team and helped players with scheduling and college recruiting. One of the struggling athletes she took from failing grades to the honor roll was Chris Wright. The basketball standout received a scholarship to Georgetown University and later played for a short time with the Dallas Mavericks. He was the first player in NBA history known to have multiple sclerosis.

“His basketball career was shortened, but he has a fine education which he might not have without the direct intervention from Jennifer,” says her proud father, Chuck Pelletier. “She had a massive impact on a lot of students.”

Her dedication to educating children — especially at-risk

students — earned Pelletier the Gasser Award at St. John’s. Voted on by faculty, the award recognizes a teacher who best represents the ideals of the teaching profession. She was also named Teacher of the Year by the football team for her skill working with athletes and their parents.

Pelletier says the opportunity to work with Bishop Michael Olson and Vicar General Father Karl Schilken is one of the incentives drawing her away from Bryan’s St. Joseph community.

“My first priority is to get to know the schools and principals,” Pelletier adds. “It’s important for the principals to get to know me and understand that I’m a resource for them.”

The new superintendent is the daughter of Chuck and Pat Pelletier, founders of Mother and Unborn Baby Care, Inc. and leaders in the diocese’s pro-life community.

Lessons learned at home are elements she brings to Catholic school education here. Both her parents have servants’ hearts and cope with her father’s Vietnam War injuries that keep him to a wheelchair.

“Not once in my life have I heard him complain about the wheelchair, and my mom never complained about helping him,” their daughter says with admiration. “There’s a true partnership there. You don’t realize how important that is to your formation until you’re old enough to realize it.”

A strong faith is something else her parents instilled by example.

“My faith is the most important thing in my life and always has been,” Pelletier said. “That’s what I’m bringing to this job — a strong faith, very diverse background in education, and ability to work with all sorts of people.”

Quintero-Araújo appointed director of faith formation

By Mary Lou Seewoester
Correspondent

WHEN PAOLA QUINTERO-ARAÚJO MOVED TO DALLAS IN 1998, HER PLAN WAS TO PRACTICE DENTISTRY.

But the Holy Spirit had another plan that nudged her in a different direction and eventually led to her selection as the new Director of Faith Formation for the Diocese of Fort Worth, a position she started April 1.

Quintero-Araújo, a native of Colombia, was just looking for a Spanish Mass to attend while living and working in Dallas. But that search led to several years of ministry with Hispanic youth and young adults in the Diocese of Dallas.

"I was working all day and then working for the Church in the evenings ... and I found much more joy in working with the Church," she explained.

That realization and some discernment led to a Master's in Theology from the University of Notre Dame and a two-year apprenticeship with the Director of Religious Education (DRE) at St. Michael Parish in Bedford. In 2010, she became Coordinator of Hispanic Ministries there.

Quintero-Araújo, who is bilingual, will work primarily with DREs, Children's Religious Education (CRE) programs, and catechists working in both the English and Spanish programs.

"There is a great need for formation of Hispanic catechists as well as more opportunities for formation of English-speaking catechists," she said. "I hope to develop a system throughout the whole diocese for sharing resources, best practices, and having more opportunities to network with each other and see what has worked in some places and what hasn't worked. It doesn't mean that one thing will

work everywhere, but at least," she said, "we'll have more options and resources for DREs and CREs."

Marlon De La Torre, Department Director for Catechesis for the diocese, explained that Quintero-Araújo's position was previously named Director of Children's Catechesis. However, since 2011, the position evolved to include much more than children's catechesis, so a change in the job title was in order.

"There is a little bit greater outreach because everything will be done in English and Spanish," De La Torre said. "We wanted to expand the position to go beyond just the foundational pieces related to catechist formation, DREs, and curriculum."

He said that during his tenure in that position, he expanded the job to include some aspects of pastoral work with an emphasis on supporting Hispanic communities.

"Paola also will be able to do leadership training, retreats, and workshops to form catechetical leaders in that way as well. That's how the position evolved, and Paola is the perfect fit for that to continue. She's going to naturally be able to take that over and run with it," he added.

Quintero-Araújo also hopes to help parishes find ways to bring more parent involvement to Children's Religious Education so that instruction will have continuity from the home to the classroom, while strengthening the bonds between parents and children as they share their faith.

"I know our religion has been passed to us from what our grandmothers, and our parents taught us, and that is a great part of who we are as Christian Catholics," she said. "In all those traditions and devotions that get passed down through generations in our families, there are rays of the Gospel and there are truths of the Gospel. And we also need to dig



Paula Quintero-Araújo began April 1 as Director of Faith Formation for the Diocese of Fort Worth. Previously, she was coordinator of hispanic ministries at St. Micheal Catholic Parish in Bedford. (Photo courtesy Laura Bute)

a little bit and to focus on what the Church teaches about them."

As Coordinator of Hispanic Ministries at St. Michael Parish, Quintero-Araújo continually assessed the community's needs and responded with a variety of programs in Spanish including marriage preparation, quinceañera preparation, and parent sessions for sacramental preparation. She also facilitated *Why Catholic?*; Fr. Robert Barron's *Catholicism*; *Women in the Old Testament*, *Women in the New Testament*, by Maria P. Septien; and *Sediente de Dios* for Lenten preparation.

And when parishioners started asking questions about things they'd heard in secular media about Pope Francis, she began a

weekly discussion group using the actual text of Pope Francis' catechesis during his general audiences.

For the past two years, she also taught courses in both English and Spanish for the John Paul III Institute.

When asked about the challenge of moving from parish ministry to diocesan ministry, Quintero-Araújo said, "I think you can receive your greatest joy out of your greatest challenge. The biggest challenge for me," she said, "will be to get to know the whole diocese. And every parish will have a different reality and different need. The greatest joy will come from that because I will get to learn from them and from what they are doing, and hopefully support them in becoming even better at what they're doing."

To Report Misconduct

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

- Call Judy Locke, victim assistance coordinator, (817) 945-9340 or e-mail her at jlocke@fwdioc.org
- Or call the Sexual Abuse Hot-line (817) 945-9345 and leave a message.

To Report Abuse

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

Peter Flynn, long-time finance director, retires

By Nicki Prevou
correspondent

WHEN ASKED TO DESCRIBE THE IMPACT PETER FLYNN HAS MADE UPON THE CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF FORT WORTH, HIS COLLEAGUES IN MINISTRY STRUGGLE TO FIND THE RIGHT WORDS; enough words; adequate words to fully express the ways in which Flynn, the longtime diocesan director of Finance and Administrative Services, has helped shape, guide, and support the vibrant, evangelizing, and ever-expanding identity of the Catholic Church in North Texas.

On March 2, Bishop Michael Olson announced Flynn's retirement, and expressed his appreciation for Peter's many contributions to the diocese during his 30-year career.

"We want to thank Peter for his service during the years that the diocese was experiencing challenging growth," Bishop Olson wrote. "His leadership as the financial manager assisted the diocese in establishing new parishes and building new schools, while enabling a broad range of ministries, programs, and apostolates that serve Christ's mission within our diverse diocese."

Hired in 1985 by Bishop Joseph Delaney to serve as Director of Diocesan Development and Planned Giving, Flynn was named diocesan Director of Finance in 1995. In 2011, then-Bishop Kevin Vann appointed him to serve as Vice Chancellor for Administrative Services

and Director of Finance.

As executive director of the Catholic Foundation of North Texas, a position he held since 1991, Flynn guided the foundation's evolution into the diocesan Advancement Foundation, which was established in 2010. The foundation, of which Flynn served as president until his retirement, manages \$95 million in assets and exists as the fundraising arm of the diocese.

While tasked with the fiscal and administrative management of an organization that supports 90 parishes and 21 schools within 28 counties in North Central Texas, Flynn has been what Nancy Eder, RN, calls "extraordinary" in his commitment to carrying out his many responsibilities.

"Yes, Peter has always worked incredibly hard, handling so many needs across the diocese," Eder, diocesan school nurse consultant, said. "And yet, Peter is effective as a leader because of the way he relates to people with such compassion, with prayerfulness, and with so much respect."

Part of Eder's work involves helping retired clergy of the diocese navigate issues such as living arrangements and medical care.

"Because of this, I've seen how tirelessly Peter has worked on behalf of our priests," Eder explained. "Day or night, he comes to hospitals and nursing facilities when there is an emergency. He makes sure that the financial and practical issues are dealt with, but more than that, he visits



Newly-retired Vice Chancellor for Administrative Services, Peter Flynn, smiles as he is surrounded by friends, family, co-workers, and his wife, Shirley (far left), at his farewell gathering at the Catholic Center. (Photo by Donna Ryckaert / NTC)

with our priests and their families when they have a need of any kind. He is never too busy to just sit down and visit, to offer comfort, to make sure that they know they will be assisted."

Flynn's leadership has touched lives across the globe, says Bishop Mauro Muldoon, OFM, who served as bishop of the Diocese of Juticalpa, Honduras, from 1987 until 2012.

Bishop Muldoon credits Flynn as being the "driving force" behind the success of the covenant partnership that was formed between the dioceses of Fort Worth and Juticalpa in 1998. The focus was on rebuilding that part of Honduras after the devastation inflicted by Hurricane Mitch, he says. Together, Flynn and Bishop Muldoon helped set up a Catholic university, a Catholic hospital, and a water system for 15 mountain villages.

"Peter has had a very, very strong positive impact on the mission Church of Honduras, and upon its recovery and now its con-

tinuing growth," Bishop Muldoon said. "I could talk all day about the growth of education and vocations to priesthood that can be attributed to Peter's leadership, but what is most important is to stress the Catholic and Christian testimony that he shares, along with his incredible work ethic."

Hundreds of colleagues and friends attended a farewell gathering, held in Flynn's honor at The Catholic Center in Fort Worth on Sunday, March 22. They offered similar words of praise on Peter's behalf, while gratefully recognizing his wife, Shirley, and his daughters, Shannon and Brianna, for their roles in supporting him in his ministry through the years.

After a prayer led by Bishop Olson, Flynn was presented with gifts of original artwork and with a scrapbook filled with words of appreciation from people in a variety of ministries, organizations, and parishes, who have worked with him through the years.

With evident emotion, Flynn thanked those who attended his farewell gathering, telling them that he felt "honored and privileged" to serve them for the past three decades.

Flynn said he looks forward to a much more relaxed schedule, one that allows for travel and for spending time with friends.

"I'm excited by the time I will have with my family, and the time that I will have with all of you," he told the crowd in his concluding remarks.

"Most of all, I'm excited by the growth, the evangelization opportunities, the future of this diocese — all are just amazing. The next 30 years will be tremendous for this diocese. I look forward to being a part of it, from off to the side," he said.

Flynn continued, "Margaret Runbeck wrote, 'Happiness is not a station that you arrive at, but the manner in which you travel.' Truly, happiness is knowing you, all of those with whom I have traveled, for the last 30 years."

Father James Pemberton, a life remembered

By Joan Kurkowski-Gillen
Correspondent

ONE COUPLE, WHO EXPERIENCED THE LATE FATHER JIM PEMBERTON'S JOYFUL SPIRIT AND THOUGHTFUL SERMONS, SAID IT BEST. In a condolence message left for his family they wrote: "The fact he went to be with our Lord on Holy Saturday tells us he was ready to be with Him to celebrate the Resurrection."

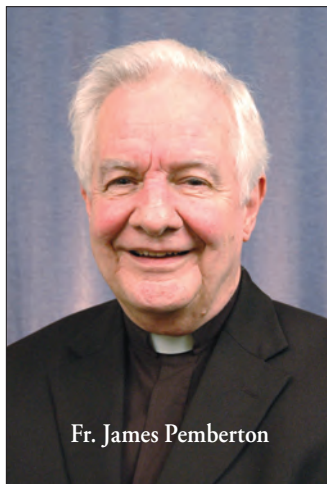
Fr. James Weldon Pemberton, 81, a priest of the Catholic Diocese of Fort Worth, died April 4 after a lengthy illness. The Fort Worth native's call to the priesthood was realized later in life. He entered the high school program at St. John's Seminary in San Antonio at the age of 15 but left in 1954 after meeting the sister of fellow seminarian Joseph Scantlin. Monsignor Scantlin is now pastor of Most Blessed Sacrament Parish.

"There was just something about her expression," the late Fr. Pemberton said, describing his wife, Joy, in a 2005 *Star-Telegram* article. "I was knocked off my feet. And it got better from there."

The couple was married 45 years and raised four children: Michael, Anne Marie, Andrew, and Bridget. After postponing his formal education to be able to spend time with his family, he earned a degree in business from Texas Christian University in 1988 and enjoyed success in the workplace.

Fr. Pemberton's management career included an eight-year stint at Six Flags Over Texas in Arlington as general sales manager and 10 years as vice president of marketing for the State Fair of Texas. He took early retirement in 1999 to care for his ailing wife.

After Joy Pemberton's cancer death in 2001, James Pemberton toyed with the idea of starting a marketing firm. But, after some soul searching during a private retreat,



Fr. James Pemberton

the widower requested permission from the Diocese of Fort Worth to achieve his long-deferred dream of becoming a priest. He entered a Spanish language immersion program in Mexico and, in January 2002, returned to his seminary studies after a 47-year absence. Sacred Heart School of Theology in Hales Corners, Wisconsin, which specializes in training older seminarians prepared him for the priesthood.

Although Jim and Joy Pemberton were longtime parishioners at St. Rita Church, he chose Most Blessed Sacrament Church — his brother-in-law's parish — as the site for his May 21, 2005 ordination. He was 71 at the time.

The ceremony was rich in symbolism. Fr. Pemberton's children, who jokingly began to refer to their dad as "Father father," carried white roses to the front pew and placed them in their mother's empty seat. The newly-ordained priest had his wife's wedding diamond removed from her ring and placed on a gold cross at the base of his chalice. Fr. Pemberton's deceased mentor and spiritual director, Father John O'Malley Sharpe, had bequeathed the chalice to him.

Every time he celebrated Mass, the widower was reminded of his wife.

"She's with me in everything I do," he told the *Star-Telegram*.

After his ordination, there were two Fr. Pembertons serving the Diocese of Fort Worth. Jim Pemberton was the eldest son of James and Winifred (Donohue) Pemberton. His younger sibling, Joseph Pemberton, was ordained to the priesthood in 1977 and is now a monsignor and rector of St. Patrick Cathedral.

Winifred Pemberton hoped one of her sons would wear a Roman collar. With both sons now priests, "she must be doing an Irish jig," the brothers quipped in the local newspaper article.

Fr. Jim Pemberton's first assignment was at St. Matthew Parish where he served as associate pastor for two years. He was also parochial vicar at St. Peter the Apostle Parish in Fort Worth and became pastor of St. Mary Parish in Gainesville in 2008.

His life experience as a father and husband was something parishioners seemed to appreciate, according to Sherri Haverkamp.

"Everyone loved him. He always had a joke and remembered everyone's name," the parish secretary said. "The fact that he had been married before helped so many parishioners. They felt he could understand their struggles — whether it involved marriage or kids."

During his time in Gainesville, one of his favorite ministries was reaching out to shut-ins, especially those living in the town's nursing homes.

"He brought Mass to those people who could not come any longer," Haverkamp recalls. "That was a big concern for him — maybe because of some past experience. Visiting nursing homes is a ministry usually neglected."

Fr. Pemberton was assigned as pastor of St. Bartholomew Parish in 2011 and served the parish until his health began to decline in 2014. Although battling illness, he continued to assist in local parishes. He took part in celebrating his last public liturgy at noon Mass on

Ash Wednesday at St. Rita Parish.

At St. Bartholomew's, Fr. Pemberton formed a close bond with others in the parish who shared his strong Irish heritage.

"Whenever someone in their family died, it was Fr. Jim they would count on to say a funeral Mass," according to Diane Etzel, the church's sacristan. "He was like family to them. One of the corporal works of mercy is to bury the dead. Fr. Jim knew it was his calling to help them at one of the worst times in their lives."

During those funeral Masses Fr. Pemberton didn't just speak as a priest.

"He understood what it meant to be married and a parent," Etzel continues. "Knowing that was his background spoke volumes to people — especially if a spouse was sitting there. It's a perspective you don't often hear."

Along with a talent for masterful storytelling, the late Fr. Pemberton possessed a lyric Irish tenor voice described by Joan Grabowski as "beautiful and expressive."

"When he sang, it was always as a prayer, and I was always moved," says the experienced vocalist who met Jim and Joy Pemberton when she joined the staff at St. Rita Parish where he led the Saturday Mass music group. "Even as a layman, Jim had many creative ideas about liturgy and music."

"He was a joy to work with ... so alive, so connected with the Spirit of God," she says.

But what the music minister will remember most is Fr. Pemberton's ability to find humor in everyday life and sharing that humor in every imaginable situation — even the difficult ones. She considers those lighthearted moments a gift.

"Jim always held up a mirror to show me what he saw — a person God loved unconditionally," Grabowski adds. "I am so blessed to call him friend and to have had him in my life."

Pope John Paul II Institute announces Summer Cycle workshops and lectures; June 13-25

The John Paul II Institute, the diocesan lay ministry formation program, will hold its annual Summer Cycle June 13 – 25.

All lay ministers are welcome to attend the Saturday workshops and everyone is invited to the weekday lectures. Admission to all events is free, although if pre-registration for the workshops is not made, there will be a service fee.

This year's Summer Cycle lecturers are Msgr. Don Fischer of the Diocese of Dallas and Fr. Brian Pierce, O.P., of the Dominican Priory at the University of Dallas. Msgr. Fischer's lectures, entitled "The Power of Spirituality in Family," will take place at St. Michael's Church in Bedford, Monday — Wednesday, June 15-17, 7-9 p.m. Msgr. Fischer is a retired pastor but very active spiritual guide. He gives the reflections on the readings of Sunday's Eucharist for WRR radio.

Fr. Pierce is a much sought after speaker. His lectures in Spanish, entitled "The Praxis of Evangelization: Listen, Live and Share the Gospel," will be given at St. Francis of Assisi Church in Grapevine, Monday — Thursday, June 22-25, 7-9 p.m.

Besides the lectures, the Summer Cycle features workshops in different areas of ministry in both English and Spanish. All will take place in the education building at Immaculate Heart of Mary Church in South Fort Worth. Admission is free if pre-registered (contact Lucia Romo at lromo@fwdioc.org or 817-945-9358); otherwise, \$5 will be charged at the door. A list of the workshops follows.

ENGLISH

1. June 13, 9-11:30 a.m., social ministry workshop, "The Obama Immigration Initiative: Where It Stands, How It Can Help," — Xergio Chacín, Director of Immigration Services, Catholic Charities of Fort Worth.

2. June 13, 12:30-3 p.m., liturgical ministry workshop, "Planning and Doing Eucharistic Adoration," with Deacon Don Warner, Diocesan Director of Liturgy.

3. June 20, 9-11:30 a.m., catechetical ministry workshop, "Health and Catechesis," Jared Zimmerer, Director of Adult Faith Formation, St. Francis Church, Grapevine.

4. June 20, 9-11:30 a.m., pastoral ministry workshop, "Prison Ministry: How to Be Christ to the Incarcerated," Deacon José Treviño, Director of Prison Ministry, Diocese of Dallas.

SPANISH

1. June 13 and 20, 9 a.m. –3 p.m., liturgical ministry workshop, "Diploma in Music Ministry," Fr. Hector Magallon, CORC, associate pastor at St. Matthew Church, Arlington, and Ricardo Martinez, music minister at St. Michael Church, Bedford.

2. June 13, 12:30-3 p.m., social ministry workshop, "The Obama Immigration Initiative: Where It Stands, How It Can Help," — Xergio Chacín, Director of Immigration Services, Catholic Charities of Fort Worth.

3. June 20, 9 a.m.-3 p.m., catechetical ministry workshop, "The Catechetical Vision of Pope Francis," Pedro Moreno, Director of Hispanic Ministry, Archdiocese of Oklahoma City.

4. June 20, 12:30-3 p.m., pas-

toral ministry workshop, "Prison Ministry: How to Be Christ to the Incarcerated," Deacon José Treviño, Director of Prison Ministry, Diocese of Dallas.

El Instituto Juan Pablo II presentará su programa anual Ciclo de Verano para todos los ministros laicos de la Diócesis de Fort Worth y toda la gente de la diócesis. Este año la entrada al programa será gratis excepto por una cuota si el participante de un taller no se registra de antemano.

El programa destaca una serie de charlas teológicas en ambos español e inglés. En español el Padre Brian Pierce, O.P., hablará en la parroquia de San Francisco de Asís, Grapevine, el lunes hasta el jueves, 22-25 de junio, 7-9 p.m. Sus charlas se titulan, "Praxis de la Evangelización: Escuchar, Vivir y Compartir el Evangelio" (traer: Biblia y La Alegría del Evangelio). En inglés el monseñor Don Fischer de la Diócesis de Dallas dará las charlas tituladas, "El poder de la espiritualidad en la familia." Tendrán lugar en la parroquia de San Miguel, Bedford, el 15-17 de junio, 7-9 p.m.

Además de las charlas, el Ciclo de Verano destaca talleres en las diferentes áreas de ministerio por los sábados, 13 y 20 de junio. Todos los talleres tendrán lugar en el edificio de educación de la parroquia del Inmaculado Corazón de María en el sur de Fort Worth. Para la registración de antemano, se tiene que comunicarse con Lucía Romo (lromo@fwdioc.org o 817-945-9358). Si no está pre-registrado, se le pedirá \$5 en la puerta. La lista de talleres está a la continuación.

EN ESPAÑOL

1. Catequético — Pedro Moreno, "La Visión Catequética del Papa Francisco", 20 de junio, 9 a.m. – 3 p.m.

2. Litúrgico — Padre Hector Magallón, CORC, y Ricardo Martínez, "Diplomado en Música Sacra": un curso orientado a todos los directores de coros que participan en la sagrada liturgia y revisando los aspectos técnicos musicales y litúrgicos para mejor vivir la Santa Misa", 13 de junio y 20 de junio, 9 a.m.-3p.m.

3. Pastoral — Deacon José Treviño, "Ministerio carcelario: cómo ser Cristo a los encarcelados", 20 de junio, 12:30-3 p.m.

4. Social — Xergio Chacín, "La iniciativa Obama de inmigración: ¿dónde está ahora, cómo puede ayudar?" June 13, 12:30-3 p.m.

EN INGLÉS

1. Litúrgico — Diácono Don Warner, Director de la Liturgia, Diócesis de Fort Worth, "La planificación y la práctica de la adoración eucarística," 13 de junio, 12:30-3 p.m.

2. Social — Xergio Chacín, Director de los Servicios de Inmigración, Caridades Católicas, Fort Worth, "La iniciativa de inmigración de Obama: donde queda y cómo puede ayudarnos", 13 de junio, 9-11:30 a.m.

3. Pastoral — Diácono José Treviño, Director del Ministerio Carcelario, Diócesis de Dallas, "El Ministerio carcelario: cómo ser Cristo a los encarcelados, 20 de junio, 9-11:30 a.m.

4. Catequético — Jared Zimmerer, Director de Catequesis de Adultos, San Francisco de Asís, Grapevine, "La salud y la catequesis," 20 de junio, 9-11:30 a.m.

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CATHOLIC CHARITIES

Northeast CCFW office at Good Shepherd Parish serves large numbers in need



Fr. Richard Eldredge, TOR, pictured at the CCFW Northeast office posing with workers and volunteers (L. to R.) Kathy Hi, central intake; Lucina Casas, driver; Holly Lane, central intake coordinator. For more information or to volunteer, call 817-421-1387 x205.

Holly Lane has important advice to share with Catholic Charities Fort Worth (CCFW) volunteers. “During our training process, I tell our volunteers to *hear* what clients are saying, but also to really *listen* with total compassion,” she explains. “People who come to us for help often need so much more than they can express. We work with them in meeting their immediate needs, but we also ask about the other issues that they are dealing with and try to connect them to services that will help to lift them out of poverty.”

Holly, who serves as central intake coordinator at CCFW’s Northeast office, which opened in July 2014 at Good Shepherd Church in Colleyville, explains that two critical programs — transportation, and client intake by telephone — are offered at the new location.

“We have 20 volunteers who commit to four hours a week, answering the phones and assessing the needs of those who are calling and in need of help,” says Holly. “Many of our volunteers love this work so much, they commit to multiple shifts, and some of them also help out

as drivers in our transportation program.”

CCFW’s Director of Parish Relations Deb McNamara works closely with the Northeast office. She notes that the transportation program fills a great need for those who need help in getting to work, medical appointments, and church services.

“We have two CCFW staff members working as dispatchers onsite at our Colleyville location, and about 20 volunteer drivers commit four or more hours each week in getting our clients where they need to go,” says Deb. “Some of our drivers use their own vehicles, and others use one of the 10 vehicles that we keep onsite. Every day, we hear stories about how life-changing this service is for so many people in Northeast Tarrant County.”

Father Richard Eldredge, TOR, pastor of Good Shepherd, says that he is “delighted” to have been able to invite CCFW to establish the Northeast office on parish property. “We are so glad to be in partnership with Catholic Charities,” says Fr. Eldredge. “Together, we are doing some amazing work to meet needs in our community.”

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LIGHTER & BRIGHTER



Fr. Nicholas Smith helps vest sixth-grader Brett Haubrich, of Affton, Mo., Brett was diagnosed with a brain tumor last summer. St. Louis Archbishop Robert Carlson invited him to take his place beside the altar at the cathedral as "Priest for a Day." (CNS photo/Lisa Johnston, St. LOUIS REVIEW)



Children play soccer near a statue of St. John Bosco near the Sanctuary of Our Lady of Help of Christians in Turin, Italy, the site of St. Bosco's home for poor and abandoned boys. Pope Francis will commemorate the 200th anniversary of the saint's birth during his June 21-22 visit to Turin. (CNS photo/Paul Haring)



People tug at Pope Francis' cassock as he meets inmates at Rome's Rebibbia prison on Holy Thursday, April 2. Pope Francis washed the feet of 12 prison inmates. (CNS photo/L'OSSERVATORE ROMANO via Reuters)



Tulip magnolias are seen in front of the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington in April. (CNS photo/Bob Roller)

Comic Retreat By: Brian Montfort

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GROWING AS A CHRISTIAN

'Focusing on the reality' of Life after life

BY JEFF HEDGLEN



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

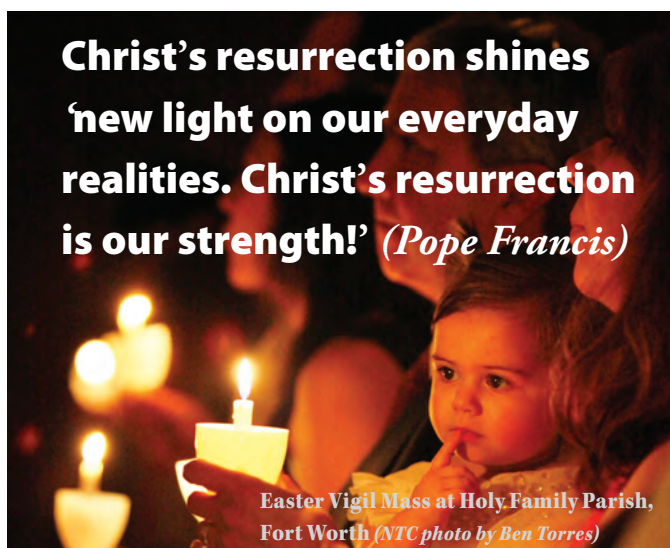
IT CONSTANTLY AMAZES ME HOW MUCH THERE IS TO LEARN ABOUT THE CATHOLIC FAITH. AFTER 30 YEARS IN FULL-TIME MINISTRY, A MASTER'S DEGREE, AND YEARS OF BIBLE STUDY I FEEL LIKE I AM JUST SCRATCHING THE SURFACE.

This hit home for me at the funeral for the 19-year-old son of a friend of mine. The Gospel reading for the Mass was the story of Mary and Martha mourning the loss of their brother Lazarus. I have heard the story more times than I can count and have studied it quite in-depth numerous times, but one of the main points of the homily revealed a truth about this story that I had never known.

Father Hector Medina was celebrating Mass, and he spent a good amount of his homily talking about one word from this line of the Gospel: "I am the resurrection and the life." Interestingly enough, the word he spent the most time on at this funeral was the word "life."

He explained that when we hear this word we think of the life we live on earth, our physical or biological life, but that is not the meaning of the Greek word that is used in this passage. The Greek word for life that we see here is *Zoe*, which means the eternal life of God, the divine life uniquely possessed by God, literally life that goes beyond the biological.

As I reflected on this idea I



was reminded that we are not created solely for this world, in fact, our destiny is to die and to be born into eternal life. And while, in my mind I know this, in my heart and daily practice of life and faith, this idea rarely comes to mind.

When Jesus says that He "came so that we might have life and have it more abundantly," He was not talking about a great house, a big family, a nice job, and fancy vacations (*John 10:10*). Rather, He was talking about this other idea of what life is — a life beyond the bounds of the biological. I really wish this truth could be more at the forefront of my personal spiritual life.

We are an Easter people. The Resurrection of Jesus is the core

of all our beliefs as Catholics. If Jesus does not rise from the dead, our faith means nothing, the sacraments are empty symbols, the Mass is a fruitless ritual, and life ends with biological death. But the power of the Resurrection, which we continue to celebrate in this Easter season and, in fact, never lose sight of in the liturgical year, is the focal point of our entire life. Yet, we often spend little or no time contemplating what the Resurrection means for our lives.

Yes, the Resurrection of Jesus impacts our ultimate destination, but it also hugely affects every twist and turn of our life as we journey to the beatific vision. Pope Francis in his daily audience April 3 last year, said that the

Resurrection of Jesus "leads us to living our everyday lives more confidently, to facing each day courageously and with commitment. Christ's Resurrection shines new light on our everyday realities. Christ's Resurrection is our strength!"

Who amongst us does not need more strength to love the people in our lives, to forgive those who have hurt us, to meet the demands of our daily duties at work and at home, to deal with illness, sadness, pain, and suffering, to let go of resentments, grudges, and hatred, to find our way to our knees in prayer or to the church for Mass or Adoration, to focus on others' needs instead of our own, and ultimately, to love God and neighbor more deeply, fully, and completely.

If we could do even one of these things just a bit better, our lives could take one more step beyond the earth-bound biological, and into the heavenly realm where life goes beyond life as we know it.

What If We Took Our Baptismal Promises Seriously?

BY MARLON DE LA TORRE



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

HAVE YOU EVER ASKED YOURSELF; “WHAT IS THE FINAL CAUSE OF EVERYTHING THAT I DO?” The answer can be summed up in the virtue of love. Truthfully, this is what drives our Lenten observance and the anticipation of the Resurrection (Easter) of our Lord. Christ offered Himself out of love to bring us into full communion with Him.

St. Paul tells us:

Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.

— Romans 6:3-11

When we truly reflect on the unique catechetical character of our baptismal promises, several things come into play. First we are asked if we will reject Satan, and all his empty works, and all his empty promises. After this, we are asked if we freely submit ourselves to a “Credo of belief” i.e. the Creed or Profession of Faith. The premise behind these requests is four-fold:

FIRST: Will you and I forego the temptations the Devil has subtly placed in front of us over the past year?



Fr. Jeff Poirot baptizes David McDonald during the Easter Vigil, Saturday, April 4 at Holy Family Catholic Church in Fort Worth. (Photo by Ben Torres / NTC)

SECOND: Will you and I seek the promise of redemption instead of the promise of desolation?

THIRD: Will you and I believe in the Holy Trinity (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) and the salvific acts of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ who was born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried?

FOURTH: Will you and I recognize the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church founded by Christ on earth to prepare us for our final eternal rest in Heaven?

One of the most important aspects of renewing our baptismal promises is the free desire to enter into a more intimate communion with Jesus Christ. The basic premise is to reject Satan and his fallacies and embrace Christ.

WHY RENEW OUR BAPTISMAL PROMISES AT EASTER?

As St. Paul alluded to earlier, we are not only baptized into Christ’s life but also into his death. Easter alludes to the fact that Christ’s Resurrection brings us into a new life with Him. It marks our journey of faith where Christ has conquered sin and death. In Baptism, we are new creatures brought forth for the kingdom of God. Our mission upon our Baptism is to proclaim the Gospel faithfully (2 *Corinthians* 5:17; CCC 1265). Renewing our baptismal promises affirms our desire to remove ourselves from the near occasion of sin and understand that Baptism signifies the first redemptive act of Christ for all humanity.

These promises call us to

publicly affirm that we do indeed believe in Jesus Christ and that we also agree to live according to the teachings of the Church. In other words whether we realize it or not, we freely attest not to subvert Christ or his Church privately or publicly.

WHY TAKE OUR RENEWAL SERIOUSLY?

Why not? Man was created with dignity. God would not have it any other way. However, when this dignity was bruised as a result of the sin of our first parents, there was an immediate need for a series of redemptive acts to occur culminating in the life, death, Resurrection, and ascension of the Son of God Jesus Christ. Our Christian identity bears this mark since we are created in the image of God. God’s creation was not just going to be left to wallow and deteriorate. Because God so loved the world He created, He offered his only-begotten Son so that we may not perish to sin but have eternal life (*John* 3:16). This is part of what our Christian identity signifies i.e. love. If God chose to offer his Son to grant us the opportunity for salvation out of love, then all of our actions should be directed to a final cause rooted in love which gives us ample reason to take our baptismal promises seriously.

The merciful God judges

Love as He loves

By David Mills

WE HAD GOTTEN STUCK IN A CORNER TOGETHER AT A PARTY. THE FELLOW TOLD ME ABOUT HIS LIFE, WHICH INCLUDED A GOOD BIT OF MORAL CORNER-CUTTING IN HIS BUSINESS. He was also a regular churchgoer and seeing the contradiction said, “God knows what I’m like.” He smiled a little and half-shrugged, as if he were saying “Coach knows I have trouble hitting the slider.”

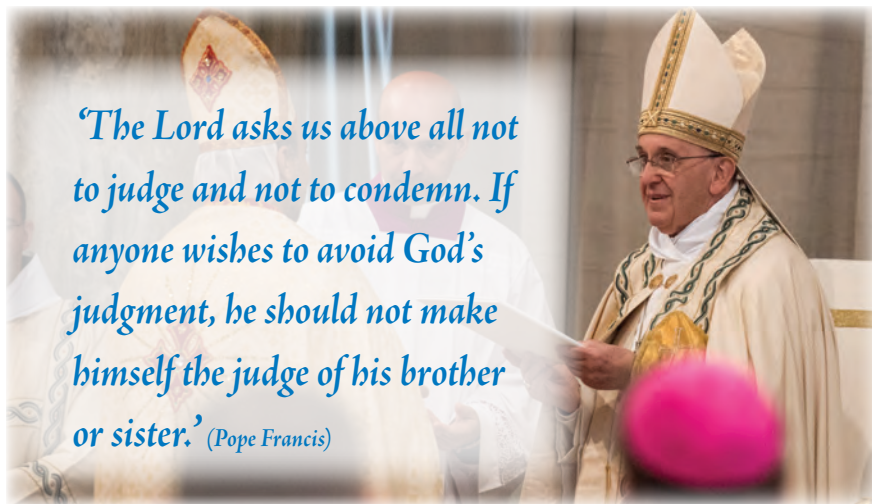
He’s like most of us, just a little more honest. We often think of God’s mercy as meaning that God will go easy on us. He knows we sin and has arranged a way out that’s like going down the playground slide. One little push at first and down you go, no problem. All we have to do is feel kind of sorry for what we’ve done and God will tell us we’re okay.

Pope Francis is all about mercy, but in his new statement *Misericordiae Vultus* (*The Face of Mercy*), he also warns us about God’s judgment. I didn’t expect that. He issued it last Sunday, Divine Mercy Sunday. It’s a “bull of indiction” for the Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy he has declared for next year. It explains why he did that and what he wants us to know about mercy. Excerpts can be found at tinyurl.com/MisVultus.

The first time he talks about judgment, he quotes Jesus’ words, “Judge not, and you will not be judged; condemn not, and you will not be condemned; forgive, and you will be forgiven.... For the measure you give will be the measure you get back.” It’s a scary passage. Jesus sets a high standard.

Francis then explains: “The Lord asks us above all not to judge and not to condemn. If anyone wishes to avoid God’s judgment, he should not make himself the judge of his brother or sister.” We only see the surface and can’t judge fairly. Our criticism often hurts others.

We can’t just speak mercifully, he says. That’s not enough. “Jesus asks us also to forgive and to give. To be instruments of mercy because it was we who first received



‘The Lord asks us above all not to judge and not to condemn. If anyone wishes to avoid God’s judgment, he should not make himself the judge of his brother or sister.’ (Pope Francis)

Pope Francis presents a document officially proclaiming the 2015-2016 extraordinary Holy Year of Mercy to a bishop in St. Peter’s Basilica at the Vatican April 11. (CNS photo/Cristian Gennari)

mercy from God. To be generous with others, knowing that God showers his goodness upon us with immense generosity.”

The second time the Holy Father talks about judgment he brings up another scary passage, where Jesus sets us another high standard. “We cannot escape the Lord’s words to us, and they will serve as the criteria upon which we will be judged,” writes Francis. The standard we have to meet: “whether we have fed the hungry and given drink to the thirsty, welcomed the stranger and clothed the naked, or spent time with the sick and those in prison.”

Francis continues: “Moreover, we will be asked if we have helped others to escape the doubt that causes them to fall into despair and which is often a source of loneliness; if we have helped to overcome the ignorance in which millions of people live, especially children deprived of the necessary means to free them from the bonds of poverty; if we have been close to the lonely and afflicted; if we have forgiven those who have offended us and have rejected all forms of anger and hate that lead to violence; if we have had the kind of patience God shows,

who is so patient with us; and if we have commended our brothers and sisters to the Lord in prayer.”

He then reminds us that Jesus is present in all these people. “His flesh becomes visible in the flesh of the tortured, the crushed, the scourged, the malnourished, and the exiled, to be acknowledged, touched, and cared for by us. Let us not forget the words of St. John of the Cross: ‘as we prepare to leave this life, we will be judged on the basis of love.’”

“Well, I’m sunk” is the natural way to respond to Jesus’ high standards. But as Francis keeps saying throughout *Misericordiae Vultus*, God loves us. The Jesus who sets the high standards is also the Jesus who shows us that God is “a Father who never gives up until he has forgiven the wrong and overcome rejection with compassion and mercy.” We’re not sunk after all.

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

Self-knowledge first requires knowledge of God

By Mary Morrell

THEY SAY IF YOU KNOW THE BOOKS IN A PERSON'S LIBRARY, YOU WILL KNOW AN IMPORTANT PIECE OF WHO THEY ARE.

Looking up from my computer screen to the shelves overhead, I scan just a few of the more than 1,000 books that surround me — not counting the ones I have given away or sold: *Emotional Intelligence*, by Daniel Coleman; *St. Francis of Assisi*, by G.K. Chesterton; *A Grief Observed*, by C.S. Lewis; *The Wisdom of the Irish* and *Celtic Inspirations*; three books by Father Richard Rohr, one by Father Ronald Rolheiser, and *Cold Sassy Tree*, by Olive Ann Burns — one of two books of fiction that I have managed to read from beginning to end during the past 15 years.

Surveying the room, I wonder what it is I am looking for in all the pages of these books that span myriad topics of art and music, literature and religion, ancient civilizations, effective leadership, philosophy, prayer, and even mystical meditations on the Hebrew alphabet. What do these books say about me, and why does it matter?

“Know thyself” is an ancient maxim, an inscription of which is found on the portal of the Temple of Apollo at Delphi, but which may well date back to the Egyptian dynasties of 3,000 B.C. It is a universal maxim appearing throughout the centuries in countries and cultures around the world, and continues in contemporary culture to be preached as the pinnacle of knowledge — the knowledge of self.

Socrates, the classical Greek philosopher and founder of Western philosophy, stressed the need for self-knowledge above all other knowledge, emphasizing humbly in his dialogues with students that it was something for which he continued to search. He said, “I am not yet able, as the Delphic inscription has it, to know myself; so it seems to me ridiculous, when I do not yet know that, to investigate irrelevant things.”

I would hesitate to argue with Socrates, or 5,000 years of ancient wisdom, about the



value of self-knowledge for human growth and fulfillment, but in my own search for self, which often proves elusive, I have welcomed the wisdom of another teacher, Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel, who wrote: “‘Know Thy God’ ... rather than ‘Know Thyself’ is the categorical imperative of the biblical man. There is no self-understanding without God-understanding.”

For those who believe in the God of Scripture, and whose faith leads them to a life oriented to God, the search for self-knowledge becomes more than a search for the truth of one person’s existence. It becomes a search for the truth of God, for a means of responding in love to a God who loves first and forever.

For the Greeks, wrote Msgr. John Oesterreicher, in his work, *The Tears of God*, the truth “was something that could be thought of, something that could be meditated upon, and spoken about. For the Hebrews, it was something that had to be done and lived. ‘To do the truth in love’ — an expression that is to be found in *Ephesians 4:15* ... would have seemed absurd and even laughable to the Greeks. To the sons and daugh-

**For it is LOVE
that I desire, not
sacrifice,
and knowledge of
GOD rather
than burnt
offerings.’**

— Hosea 6:6

ters of Israel, however, it was their greatest joy ... ‘to walk in the truth and in fidelity.’”

This brilliant priest, who also founded the Institute of Judeo-Christian studies in Seton Hall University, South Orange, New Jersey, closes his brief theological investigation with these words from Scripture: “God is love.”

Outside of all the books that may fill our libraries, it is in this truth we discover who we are.

“God is love, and whoever remains in love remains in God and God in him. In this is love brought to perfection among us, that we have confidence on the day of judgment because as he is, so are we in this world” (1 John 4:16-17).



Mary Morrell, mother of six, she has served the Church for more than 22 years in the fields of catechesis, communications,

and ducation. She is the founder of Wellspring Communications, (<http://wellspringcommunications.typepad.com/wellspring/>) a blog sharing life and faith.

What Would Jesus Do?

Act with love

By Denise Bossert

IT IS DISHEARTENING WHEN PEOPLE WALK AWAY FROM THE CHURCH.

Sometimes, when we try to talk, they run at us like some kid on the opposite team in a game of Red Rover. They want to break through our line and pull somebody else from the Church. They may even attempt to pull us away.

We have a choice. When they run toward us, even if it is with a kind of adversarial spirit, we must be ready to receive them, ready to hold them tightly in our arms, ready to defend the faith, and maybe even ready to reclaim them for our Lord and his Church. “Red Rover, Red Rover, send them on over,” we pray.

It has happened to me many times. I write an article or post something on social media. Someone sends an e-mail explaining why he is glad I am happy being Catholic, but he wants me to know that his choice was clear. It was time to walk away. Somebody disappointed him. Something someone did scandalized her. She lost the joy of being Catholic. He decided to walk away from God or just find God in some other faith community.

Many do build a relationship with Jesus somewhere else. Usually, it is in a church with a name that does not fit categories. No denomination. No labels. No hierarchy. They find a place where they can begin again. It feels wonderful and they are happy, they say.

It makes me think. I believe we all have reasons to be bitter and walk away. There are plenty of offenses to send us through the exit doors. Most of the ones who left didn't hate the faith. There were just things that rubbed them the wrong way. Their love for the sacraments and the Church was not enough to keep them here. It sometimes makes me wonder. Will my love endure?

Am I strong enough to persevere when others scandalize the faith?

If I encounter a priest who is far from



pastoral or an administrator in a Catholic workplace who has more vices than virtues, will I stay?

What about the young Catholic whose spouse cheats — after sponsoring her husband into the faith? Will he have the strength to stay when she leaves their family and the Church?

What about the young person who hears about a charitable organization squandering funds, and it becomes common knowledge that those who could have stopped the whole thing just looked the other way — will the spiritually fragile young person stay after that?

What happens when a bishop or cardinal causes scandal? What will we do when a high profile Catholic falls off the pedestal in a very public way — or in a quiet way and nobody else has any idea?

These are not made-up scenarios. For some people, these things were enough to send them in the opposite direction. For others, nothing would take them away from

the Eucharist. The ones who stick around seem to have some things in common. For them, truth is true, and God is God. If the Church is the Church in time, and devotions lead to holiness; if the saints light the way, and the Eucharist is Christ; if the Word is alive, and the poor are fed, the lost are found, the sick are healed; if miracles still happen, and Christ still calls disciples; if angels still aid, and the confessional still cleanses; if martyrs still die, and others rise to take their places; if a still small voice can be heard above the betrayal, wounds, and doubts — then the Church is still the Church.

In that moment we realize that God never fails, even when people sometimes do. And the person running toward us with division in her heart is really a lost lamb running toward us. A soul in need of strong arms that wrap around her and

gather her back to the safety of the Church. Red Rover, Red Rover, send her on over.

She looks up, a bit disoriented, because she didn't break through the line. She was, in fact, caught in loving arms. Hopefully, she sees a smile. A welcoming nod. Not gloating. Not condescension.

Make room for her at your side. Squeeze her hand a couple of times to let her know you are glad she's back. And brace yourselves. Someone else is barreling at the line. But he is not the enemy either. Hold the line, and let it wrap around him — with love.



Denise Bossert has four children and is a member of Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish in New Melle, Missouri. Her column,

CATHOLIC BY GRACE, has run in 46 diocesan newspapers. She blogs at www.catholicbygrace.com.



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BY FATHER JAMES WILCOX

IN THESE JOYOUS DAYS OF EASTER, WE FIND OURSELVES PLUNGING DEEP INTO THE LIVES OF THE APOSTLES AFTER THE RESURRECTION AND ASCENSION OF JESUS CHRIST, AS THEY EMBARK UPON THEIR MINISTERIAL DUTIES.

It seems now, in the time of the resurrected Christ, Peter has come into his own, with a courageous and bold manner of preaching the Gospel message. Peter's fervent trust in the Lord is infectious for the other Apostles and efficacious for those to whom he ministers.

A few short weeks ago we somberly heard of Peter's denial of Jesus Christ in the Passion narratives. As Archbishop Fulton Sheen reminds us, prior to the crucifixion Peter was able to confess the divine Christ, but upon the arrest, Peter was not able to confess the suffering Christ. However, after an experience of the empty tomb at Easter and his experience of the resurrected Christ, this first pope vigorously defends Christians and dynamically proclaims Jesus Christ as Lord.

In the midst of seeing Peter's transformation, we should reflect back to the beginning of his call to follow Jesus Christ in such an intimate way. It was Peter's brother who brought him to the Christ. In actuality, Andrew brought so many to Christ, hence the reason our discernment events for men considering the priesthood bear his name. All of us need an Andrew in our life to bring us to knowledge of relationship with Jesus Christ. Encouraging others to deepen their relationship with Jesus Christ is a magnanimous endeavor, in which each of us must strive.

Young people in their teens and early 20s are working diligently to determine what we want to do in life. I remember for one great week of determination, I was certain I was go-

ing to be a meteorologist. (Any job where you have to be right only 50 percent of the time is surely an attractive profession!) With the help of my supportive parents, I went out and bought some supplies — a laminated map of the US, markers, etc. — so that I could chart weather movements. You can imagine that as quick as the weather changes in Texas, so did my interest in this profession. It is quite likely that as a precocious teenager, this was not my first — nor would it be my last — professional endeavor met with wholehearted enthusiasm at the beginning and complete apathy a mere week later.

A profession, like meteorology, is different than a call to priesthood and religious life. We simply have to look at the motto for the Year of Consecrated Life — Wake Up the World — to recognize the difference. Of course, the rightly-aligned heart of a person who offers their work to God in their professional life does signal to others the love of God moving throughout our lives. Clearly on a different level altogether, those who consecrate their lives through priesthood, the diaconate, and religious life (sisters, brothers, monks, nuns), are called to live a life that shakes the world to recognizing the presence of Jesus Christ among us.

In bringing people to Christ, consecrated men and women use the example of their lives to wake people from the stupor of secularism. Following the example of the Apostle Andrew, all of us together must strive to see that each person is brought to Jesus Christ — through knowing Him and through an experience of Him. See in these days of our liturgical readings how the Apostles' faith is fully ignited in the experience of the Risen Lord. We must be instruments for such encounters.

This is not a job exclusive to those in con-



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

secrated life. All Christians are called to awaken the world. See how beautifully the Fathers of the Second Vatican Council describe it:

They live in the ordinary circumstances of family and social life, from which the very web of their existence is woven. They are called there by God that by exercising their proper function and led by the spirit of the Gospel they may work for the sanctification of the world from within as a leaven. In this way they may make Christ known to others, especially by the testimony of a life resplendent in faith, hope and charity. Therefore, since they are tightly bound up in all types of temporal affairs it is their special task to order and to throw light upon these affairs in such a way that they may come into being and then continually increase according to Christ to the praise of the Creator and the Redeemer.

— *Lumen Gentium*, 31

Today, who do you need to bring to Jesus Christ? Who do you need to encourage to follow their call to the consecrated life? Upon whom do you need to "throw light" and show Jesus Christ?

Follow the Apostles and the great example of our Peter. His faithful and confident proclamation of Jesus Christ serves to inspire us to an active life of waking the world. Live your life as someone who has experienced the Risen Lord. Inspire young people in their endeavors to seek their calling in life. Encourage a young man or woman to attend the Vocation Awareness Program (June 27-29, 2015) to learn more about a life dedicated to serving God's people. Lead someone to Jesus Christ and together let's Wake Up the World!



Servants FROM THE START

By Joan Kurkowski-Gillen
Correspondent

THE MORE SISTER PATRICIA RIDGLEY STUDIES THE HISTORY OF HER ORDER, THE GREATER HER RESPECT GROWS FOR THE FIVE SISTERS OF ST. MARY OF NAMUR WHO LEFT THE SECURITY OF THEIR BELGIUM MOTHERHOUSE FOR THE PERILS OF THE NEW WORLD.

A Civil War was still ravaging America in 1863 as Mother Emilie, and four subordinates said goodbye to their families and fellow sisters — many for the last time — and embarked on a long journey that began with a train ride to Brussels and ended with a harrowing ocean voyage.

“It must have been a daunting thing,” imagines Sr. Patricia, a Dallas native, who entered the religious community’s Western Province in 1960. “I’m inspired to realize these women — who were trying to hear God’s call to go where there was a need for education — just struck out.”

The genesis of the congregation began years earlier following the French Revolution. A concerned pastor, Father Nicholas Joseph Minuart, was troubled by the poverty and illiteracy forcing young girls from his Namur, Belgium parish into menial jobs and prostitution. In 1819, he asked Josephine Sana and Elizabeth Berger to begin a sewing workshop that provided participants with vocational options.



As seen in the collage above, the Sisters of St. Mary of Namur do much more than teach — one of the gifts they are best known for. They also participate in many other ministries, such as cuddling preemies at Cook Children’s NICU, missionary work in the Congo, leading ESL classes for Spanish-speaking residents, serving parishes in many capacities, and comforting and being present for others. (Photos by Joan Kurkowski-Gillen, Donna Ryckaert, and the SSMNs)

Other young women soon joined the project and this small group of 16 was later recognized as a religious congregation approved by Bishop Jean Arnold Barrett of Namur. Sister Claire of Jesus served as the order’s superior for 36 years and helped develop its religious and spiritual formation. The sisters’ efforts to teach the poor and disadvantaged began an educational ministry that defined the small group of missionaries who arrived in the United States in 1863.

Ten years after settling in Lockport, New York, the habited pioneers

set out on another adventure. Encouraged by the Bishop of Buffalo John Timon, an early supporter of the order who thought Texas was ripe for evangelization, three sisters clambered aboard a train and headed south.

In the book, *A Little Good*, written by the late Sister St. John Begnaud, SSMN, she describes how her religious order was attracted to the idea of starting schools in frontier settlements of North Texas. Other European missionaries, who entered the U.S. through the port of Galveston, had estab-

lished a foothold in San Antonio and didn’t venture beyond Austin.

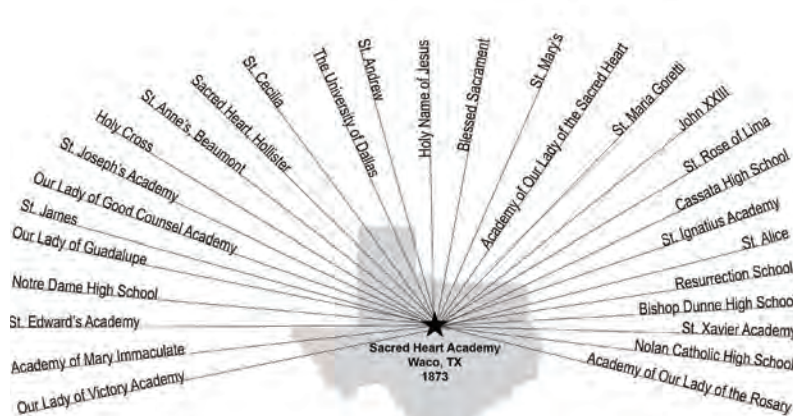
“...There was a recognizable presence of the Church in the southern area of the state,” Sr. St. John observes in a chapter detailing the order’s decision-making process. “Word had spread quickly that the railway system now served the area farther north. The sisters would go where people were more in need of support. The enterprise did not seem impossible to the sisters in New York. Texas was, after all, a state of the Union; the same language was spo-

ken, the same flag was flown.”

But their move to Waco in 1873 proved to be a far different experience from New York culturally. The majority of families were Protestant, and they dealt with open prejudice expressed publicly by the anti-Catholic Ku Klux Klan. Cattle drives stirred up the streets, and they had to contend with oppressive heat and fear of tornadoes.

Despite their discouragement, the sisters announced the opening of a school one week after arriving in East Waco. By November 1873, 26 students were enrolled in the first Texas school founded by the Sisters of St. Mary of Namur—Sacred Heart Academy.

Always struggling and perpetu-



Schools established by the Sisters of St. Mary of Namur

ally in debt, the religious order built a system of schools across North Texas over a span of 40 years — primarily with their own funds.

In 2013, when the order celebrated the 150th anniversary of

coming to America with a Mass at St. Patrick Cathedral, Sister Gabriela Martinez, now SSMN provincial superior, praised the achievements of the pioneering sisters who survived poverty, the threat of yel-

low fever, and discrimination to accomplish the goal of doing, “a little good.”

“We are conscious that we stand on the shoulders of holy, good, and courageous women who for 150 years have gratefully heard and responded to God’s call to be of service to those in need,” she said, in an address to those attending the Mass of Thanksgiving.

Sr. Patricia Ridgley says her religious order and the thousands of young people educated under their tutelage owe a debt of gratitude to those departed heroes.

“Many years have gone by, but we’re still beholden to those women of great courage and trust in God,” she said.

More than educators: Sisters continue to give

The Sisters of St. Mary of Namur are best known for educating thousands of North Texans in schools from Waco to Wichita Falls, but the religious order’s unseen and unnamed deeds of love and mercy extend far beyond the classroom.

Today, members of the congregation are engaged in health care, parish ministry, outreach to immigrants, counseling, youth formation, and evangelization. Although the average age at the SSMN convent in Fort Worth is 76 and many have retired, the sisters continue to share their gifts and talents with the larger community.

Sister Francesca Walterscheid rocks babies in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit at Cook Children’s Medical Center three hours a week with Sister Mary Elaine Breen, a former nurse and midwife.

“Sister Mary Elaine started doing it and invited me to join her,” remembers the 87-year-old who also served as a teacher and infirmaria aide during her 68 years in the convent.

Her third career as a baby cuddler provides the human contact the premature or ill infants need for

social bonding and growth. Many have mothers who work during the day or live far from the hospital.

Helping immigrants achieve a more promising life is the goal of Sister Rita Claire and Sister Cecile Faget. Since 1987, the seasoned educators have taught English as a Second Language (ESL) classes to primarily Spanish-speaking people.

For many years, their ministry was centered in Knox City and Crowell but now classes are held at Immaculate Heart of Mary Church in Fort Worth.

“The people are very enthusiastic and grateful,” Sr. Rita Claire observes. “They want to learn English because many of them have children in school and want to help with homework.”

Knowing English makes employment easier and some want to communicate with doctors and health care providers.

“I just love seeing people grow and do better for their families,” Sr. Rita Claire said. “I want people to be confident and not nervous because they don’t know the language.”

For the past 45 years, Sister Patricia Ste. Marie has worked at Our Lady



Photo courtesy SSMN

Queen of Peace Church in Wichita Falls where she pioneered the parish’s adult formation program, organized the Shalom Music Ministry, and led Scripture studies for adults. She also served as the order’s provincial for six years and taught nine years at Notre Dame High School as the director of religious education.

The Our Lady of Victory graduate remembers feeling a call to religious life as early as the fourth grade. By eighth grade, the desire for a family larger than what marriage could provide grew stronger.

Sr. Patricia took final vows in

1970, and today both she and Sister Ginny Vissey, SSMN, director of religious education at OLQP, are part of a growing, Spirit-filled parish.

“We’re teaching the children of the children we taught years ago,” she explains. “It’s fulfilling to be part of a community that is so alive.”

But there was time when the faith of parishioners was tested.

On April 10, 1979, one of the worst weather disasters in Texas history took direct aim on Wichita Falls. An EF-4 tornado, packing 200

CONTINUED ON PAGE 28

mph winds, destroyed 3,000 homes and damaged 1,000 others as it cut a one-mile path through the city. Forty-two people were killed, and another 5,000 were left homeless.

"We supported people and helped those in the parish and city by providing food and spiritual support," she says. "One woman whose home was destroyed, lived with us for a time."

The tragedy gave birth to an interfaith ministry that continues in Wichita Falls 35 years later.

"All the Christian churches got together and started pooling their efforts," Sr. Patricia continues. "We worked with people who

sponsored a healing service for the whole town because every time a cloud came over, everyone panicked."

The Sisters of St. Mary of Namur experienced a similar spirit of interfaith cooperation in the late 1960s and early 1970s as the Civil Rights Movement gained momentum in Dallas. Sister Patricia Ridgley taught theology at Bishop Dunne High School at the time and enjoyed getting her students involved in the concerns of the local community.

"It was a time when a lot of discussion was going on in the country, and we encouraged students at Bishop Dunne to understand the

issue more deeply. We engaged them to be people who accepted everyone," the educator asserts.

To accomplish that goal, pupils were introduced to the concept of community service — an idea that is now standard curriculum in most Catholic high schools.

"Students went to the local county hospital to welcome people. That made them more aware of how the poor were treated compared" with those who could afford "more sophisticated hospitals," the sister recalls. "We'd also go down to the Department of Human Welfare office and discuss

why more jobs weren't available."

The Sisters of St. Mary worked with members of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference and became acquainted with the preachers and people in Dallas who were demanding civil rights and racial justice. An associate of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Reverend Peter Johnson, became a close friend to them.

"I learned a lot about the Gospel and justice from Rev. Johnson," Sr. Patricia adds. "Our eyes were opened as we asked questions and tried to learn. I think it helped our student start taking account of other issues they never thought of before."

'This is where we want to be'

Standing in the hallway of Our Lady of Victory School as students scurry to their classrooms, Principal Linda Petrey watches 105 years of history come alive.

"The Sisters of St. Mary of Namur put their hearts and souls into this place, and you can feel it," the educator explains. "OLV is one of the oldest schools in the diocese, and it's unique as the only one operated by a religious order. A lot of leaders and professionals in Fort Worth have walked through those doors."

An OLV graduate who taught kindergarten and sent three sons to her alma mater, Petrey feels the weight of carrying on that legacy.

"I follow in the footsteps of many former sisters who have come before me," the administrator says humbly. "They are the foundation of this school, leading us by their dedication and devotion to the Catholic Church and living the word of the Gospel."

After the Sisters of St. Mary arrived in Texas in 1873, they established schools in various dioceses. In Fort Worth, the education trailblazers were instrumental in opening St. Ignatius Academy in 1885 and Our Lady of Victory Academy and College in 1910. The boarding school for girls became the first integrated school in Fort Worth.

"Our sisters' educational ministry was widespread across Texas in parish schools," explains Sister Gabriela Martinez, provincial superior of the order's Western Province. "Many children received free schooling or scholarships. Money was not the object. Some families 'paid' with eggs, chickens, or whatever they had."

James Reza grew up on Fort Worth's North Side where he attended San José Mission School from the mid-1940s until eighth-grade graduation in 1952. The Sisters of St. Mary started the ministry in 1926 to serve the area's growing influx of Mexican-American children.

"They instilled in us that our brains were just as good as anybody else," remembers Reza.

Guided by the sisters, young-

sters who didn't understand any English were reading the *See Jane Run* primer just weeks after starting classes at San José, according to Reza. The language curriculum was so exceptional, Reza and his sister won Fort Worth's Spelling Bee championship.

"Can you imagine these two little Hispanic kids from a poor North Side neighborhood doing that?" he gushes. "I still recall Sr. Lawrence's jubilant face as we spelled the words correctly."

He credits the sisters' discipline and devotion to students for his success and that of other classmates. Years later, the San José alumnus spearheaded a breakfast for the Sisters of St. Mary and had former Mayor Bob Bolen proclaim "Sr. Lawrence Day" in Fort Worth.

Today, members of the order continue to use their special gift for education either pastorally, in the formation of parish ministers, or in RCIA and other sacramental preparation programs. They also tutor youngsters, and offer piano lessons.

Sister Dorothy Powers says the charism of her order is rooted in evangelization.

"We started out meeting the needs of Catholic education with our schools, then we moved into pastoral ministry," explains the OLV graduate who organized a broad range of parish programs from children's catechesis to Hispanic ministry. "We love people. I think our spirit of joy and simplicity and sense of hospitality help people feel at home with us."

The provincial of the Western

"The call of Pope Francis to Evangelization is not a new call for us." The order's constitution asks its members to proclaim "the Good News of the Kingdom" to the poor. "This is where we are; this is where we want to be."

Sister Gabriela Martinez



Sisters of St. Mary of Namur living and serving in the Diocese of Fort Worth

Sr. Mary Elaine Breen
Our Lady of Victory,
Ministry with preemies
At Cook Children's Hospital

Sr. Gloria Cabrera
Helps with Vocation Ministry
Summer Mission Coordinator

Sr. Jane Conway
Our Lady of Victory
Music and Liturgy

Sr. Donna Marie Crocket
Our Lady of Victory
Provincial Council Member

Sr. Yolanda Cruz
The Catholic Center
Vice Chancellor, Parish Services
and Women Religious

Sr. Rita Claire Davis
ESL Coordinator

Sr. Ines Diaz
The Catholic Center
Delegate for Hispanic Ministry

Sr. Mary Michael Dittoe
Our Lady of Victory
Intercessor

Sr. Cecile Faget
Our Lady of Victory
ESL volunteer, Tutor

Sr. Dorothy Ann Flori
Our Lady of Victory
Tutor

Sr. Mary Helen Fuhrmann
Our Lady of Victory
Coordinator of OLV Center

Sr. Mary Fulbright
Meals on Wheels

Sr. Roberta Hesse
Our Lady of Victory
Fundraiser for Missions

Sr. Teresa Honkomp
Our Lady of Victory
Chapel Sacristan
Chaplain for OLV School

Sr. Anselma Knabe
Our Lady of Victory
Intercessor

Sr. Bernice Knapek
Provincial Councilor
Liaison with OLV School

Sr. Ann Vincent Kucirek
Our Lady of Victory
Intercessor

Sr. Joan Markey
Provincial Treasurer
Provincial Secretary

Sr. Gabriela Martinez
Our Lady of Victory
Provincial

Sr. Camella Menotti
Our Lady of Victory
Oversees maintenance

Sr. Mary Merdian
Recuperating from surgery

Sr. Miriam Nesmith
St. Rita Church
Outreach and social ministry
Provincial Council Member

Sr. Patricia Ridgley
Dallas, International SSMN
Peace and Justice Coordinator
Dealing with Trafficking, En-
vironment, and Advocacy

Sr. Dorothy Powers
Our Lady of Victory
Spiritual Director, Workshops
Volunteer RCIA

Sr. Mary Frances Serafino
Our Lady of Victory
Spiritual Director, Retreats,
Coordinator of Associates

Sr. Charles Marie Serafino
Fundraiser for SSMN Missions
Speaker on Rwandan issues
Piano Tutor

Sr. Louise Smith
Our Lady of Victory
Archivist

Sr. Rosemary Stanton
Nolan Catholic High School
pastoral minister
SSMN General Council

Sr. Patricia Ste. Marie
Our Lady Queen of Peace
Part-time parish ministry
Provincial Council Member

Sr. Devota Sweeney
Our Lady of Victory

Intercessor
Sr. Lola Ulupano
Student TWU
Student Teacher

Sr. Adelaide Valtierra
Our Lady of Victory
Ceramic Arts and Crafts

Sr. Ginny Vissing
Our Lady Queen of Peace
Religion Teacher, Music

Sr. Clara Vo
Our Lady Queen of Peace
Flower Arranging for OLQP
Environment, gardening

Sr. Frances Vuillemin
Our Lady of Victory
Tutor

Sr. Francesca Walterschied
Our Lady of Victory,
Coordinator,
Cook Children's volunteer

Sr. Mary Jean Warmuth
Wichita Falls Community
Parish volunteer

Province says her order has never stopped giving of themselves so others may know Christ. Advocates for life, justice, and peace, the sisters

reach out to the most vulnerable in society: immigrants, the homeless, and victims of human trafficking. "That is why the call of

Pope Francis to Evangelization is not a new call for us," Sr. Gabriela explains. The order's constitution asks its members to

proclaim "The Good News of the Kingdom" to the poor. "This is where we are," she says adamantly. "This is where we want to be."

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Sent to Harvest

CORC priests labor for the Kingdom of Christ

Story and photos by Susan Moses
Correspondent

FATHER JUAN GUERRERO MORALES, CORC, BAPTIZED 62 INDIVIDUALS THE FIRST WEEK HE ARRIVED AT HOLY NAME OF JESUS IN FORT WORTH, DEMONSTRATING THE VAST NEED FOR PRIESTS TO SERVE THE SPANISH-SPEAKING COMMUNITY.

He and five other Confraternidad Sacerdotal de Operarios del Reino de Cristo (CORC) priests from Mexico, busily minister at three parishes in the Diocese of Fort Worth.

Founded in 1962 in Mexico by Father Enrique Amezcua Medina, the religious order's name means Fellowship of Laborers of the Kingdom of Christ. The order values manual labor, following Jesus' example of working with his hands as a carpenter.

"Holy Name had been without a regular priest when Fr. Juan arrived last year," church receptionist Josie Herrera said. "He immediately noticed the church was overdue for some maintenance and refreshing. He invited anyone interested to help clean, landscape, sew banners, and do many other things to improve the appearance of the church and its grounds.

"Many parishioners turned out, and Fr. Juan was out in the middle of us, working side by side with everyone else. It built unity in the church," continued Herrera, who has been a parishioner of Holy Name since childhood.

As one of the first generation of priests at the CORC seminary, Fr. Guerrero and his fellow seminarians built their own classrooms and dormitory. They poured concrete, installed plumbing and electricity, and did bricklaying and gardening.

With the seminary built,



Fr. José Gildardo Álvarez Abonce



Fr. Alejandro López Chávez



Fr. Juan Guerrero Morales



Fr. Salvador Hernández



Fr. Eliseo Hernández

subsequent students, including Father Alejandro López Chávez, CORC, of Immaculate Heart of Mary in Fort Worth, had other tasks. "We were responsible for cleaning, cooking and gardening," said Fr. López

"Life in the seminary was a balance of study, prayer, and labor," added Father Eliseo Hernández, CORC, pastor of St. Matthew Parish in Arlington.

Many attributes of the CORC priesthood originated from the first year of Fr. Amezcua's priesthood, when he travelled with the Bishop of Tacámbaro to the southern parts of the diocese in 1944. He was moved by the challenges faced by rural clergy: isolation, scarcity of priests, and lack of training. These observations planted the seeds of the order he founded almost 20 years later. Fr. Amezcua also valued a rigorous study of theology, and the order aims to provide its priests with a similarly strong formation at its high school and college seminaries in Mexico and graduate studies programs in Spain and Rome.

Fr. López enjoys sharing the fruits of his studies with his parish. In his 10 months at Immaculate Heart of Mary, the parish has added education classes, retreats, music performances, and conferences to increase involvement and strengthen the parishioners' understanding of the Catholic faith.

"The Spanish-speaking community needs priests who know and share their customs," Fr. López said. "Growing up here, they can lose their language, their cultural identity, and their faith. Having priests from Mexico helps Latinos keep their traditions and keep the door open to both societies."

Living in community is also important to the CORC priests.

"We preach about loving one another, and by living in community we learn to love better," Fr. Hernández said.

"We always eat at least one meal together, and it's not unusual for us to eat all three together," continued Fr. Hernández. "We work like diocesan priests, but we live like religious priests."

The Operarios, as they call themselves, are a tightly woven

group. "We cover for each other and help each other take care of the parish. We work in community very well," Fr. Guerrero said.

Currently, approximately 150 CORC priests serve more than 40 parishes in Mexico, Colombia, Puerto Rico, Spain, and Italy, as well as in California, Oklahoma, and Texas. The order came to the diocese almost four years ago, after a CORC priest visiting family here noted the shortage of Spanish-speaking priests. He met with then-Bishop Kevin Vann, who arranged a visit with the order's directors.

After the CORC priests arrived, Holy Name of Jesus, Immaculate Heart of Mary, and St. Matthew have each added at least one weekend Mass. Approximately 17,000 families are served by the three churches.

"We have many groups with many activities here, but we need to unite and become one Eucharistic people," explained Fr. Hernández. "Jesus is morally present in the Gospels, but he is substantially present in the Holy Eucharist. That's the Sacrament of Sacraments, and that remains the most important thing."

Confraternidad de Operarios del Reino de Cristo (CORC) priests serving in the Diocese of Fort Worth

Fr. José Gildardo Álvarez Abonce
Pastor; Immaculate Heart of Mary in Fort Worth

Fr. Salvador Hernández
Parochial Vicar; Holy Name of Jesus in Fort Worth

Fr. Alejandro López Chávez
Parochial Vicar; Immaculate Heart of Mary in Fort Worth

Fr. Hector Magallón
Parochial Vicar; St. Matthew Parish in Arlington

Fr. Eliseo Hernández
Pastor; St. Matthew Parish in Arlington

Fr. Juan Guerrero Morales
Pastor; Holy Name of Jesus in Fort Worth

More information on the Confraternidad de Operarios del Reino de Cristo

<http://confraternidadorc.org/>

Priests without borders

Heralds of Good News follow in the footsteps of early missionaries

By Jerry Circelli
Correspondent

THE FACT THAT ADVENTUROUS, SPIRITUAL MEN FROM INDIA ARE GOING FORTH AS PRIESTS THROUGHOUT THE WORLD TO SPREAD THE GOOD NEWS SHOULD COME AS NO SURPRISE.

Many Catholics may not know it, but India's first missionary arrived in 52 A.D., more than 1,400 years before Christians set foot in the New World. Christians do, however, know this missionary's name — Thomas the Apostle.

Personally inspired by Jesus' command to "make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit," this once-doubting Thomas persevered with conviction. He introduced the Word of God to India, which now includes more than 24 million followers of Christ.

Other missionaries, including St. Francis Xavier in the 16th century, continued to spread the Word of God to the Indian people.

In the spirit of those early

missionaries, the Heralds of Good News have boldly taken up the flag to spread the Gospel in more than a dozen nations. Formed in India in 1984 and named a Pontifical Rite in 1999, this missionary society has grown from four priests at its founding to more than 400 today. They hail from four HGN provinces, all based in India, and serve throughout the world to carry out the society's mission to promote vocations to the priesthood, train seminarians, and supply priests where they are needed.

One of those areas has been the Diocese of Fort Worth, and four priests from this missionary society have traveled 9,000 miles to serve the local faithful.

Among them is Father Alexander Ambrose, HGN, Parochial Vicar at St. Patrick Cathedral in Fort Worth. In answering God's call to become a priest, Fr. Ambrose said he was particularly led to HGN by its mission "to train and supply zealous, dedicated, hardworking, and saintly missionaries to proclaim the Good News of the Lord" to dioceses facing a shortage of priests.

The Diocese of Fort Worth was his first assignment outside of India, and Fr. Ambrose feels divinely



Fr. John Antony Perikomalayil traveled 9,000 miles to serve the local faithful by providing sacraments, including Baptism. (Photo by Jerry Circelli / NTC)

inspired. "I believe God brought me here to serve the people. They are appreciative, welcoming, prayerful, and supportive."

Another HGN priest and one with a long tenure in the Diocese of Fort Worth is Father Sojan George, HGN, pastor of Our Lady Queen of Peace in Wichita Falls. He first arrived here in 2002 and has served at six other parishes in the diocese, under three bishops — Joseph P. Delaney, Kevin W. Vann, and Michael F. Olson.

"I have been welcomed with open arms wherever I was assigned," Father George said.

Fr. John Antony Perikomalayil, HGN, sacramental priest at St. Joseph in Rhineland and Santa Rosa in Knox City, arrived in the diocese in 2013. He said he feels the same way.

"The most exciting thing about the faithful here," Fr. Perikomalayil said, "is that they never let you feel that you are away from home or away from your country."

His welcoming experiences with the local faithful, far from his country, reaffirm the promise Fr. Perikomalayil made to follow Christ

through HGN. The charism of the missionary society, in particular, helped him refine the way he would serve God.

"I always wanted to become a diocesan priest," Fr. Perikomalayil said. That changed, he said, when he attended a vocations camp at his diocese in India and met an HGN priest. "There was a force in me," Fr. Perikomalayil recalled, "telling me that this is the order I have to join."

Like the others, he said he was inspired to become a missionary priest where spreading the Word of God has no boundaries.

"The most special thing about the charism of our society is that it is not bound by any particular region or country," Fr. Perikomalayil said.

Members have diverse backgrounds and speak different languages, the priest explained, but share something in common: The opportunity to work in different parts of the world.

Fr. Perikomalayil added, "This is an 'infant society' that always relies on the support of the people for growth. The encouragement, acceptance, support, and prayers for all of us are highly appreciated."

Heralds of Good News (HGN) priests serving in the Diocese of Fort Worth

Fr. Alexander Ambrose, Parochial Vicar; St. Patrick Cathedral in Fort Worth
HGN Mother Teresa Province; Odisha, India

Fr. John Antony Perikomalayil, Sacramental Priest; St. Joseph in Rhineland; Santa Rosa in Knox City
HGN Mother Teresa Province; Odisha, India

Fr. Albert Francis Kanjirathumkal, Sacramental Priest; Sacred Heart in Seymour; St. Mary of the Assumption in Megargel
HGN Mother Teresa Province; Odisha, India

Fr. Sojan George, Pastor Our Lady Queen of Peace in Wichita Falls
HGN St. Paul Province; Kerala, India

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Once lost, later found

Fr. Hoa Nguyen lets God chart course on spiritual journey

Story by Jerry Circelli
Correspondent

THERE IS A CERTAIN MARITIME FEEL INSIDE THE OFFICE OF FATHER HOA NGUYEN, PASTOR OF ST. JOHN THE APOSTLE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN NORTH RICHLAND HILLS.

A ship's wheel is centered on the front wall of his long, narrow workspace. On the "port" side, an oil painting depicts Jesus reaching down to pull up his faltering apostle, Peter, from the white-capped swells in the Sea of Galilee.

A black and white photo of the USS Juneau holds a special place on an adjacent wall. The formidable 570-foot warship was once assigned to the Pacific Fleet, earning five battle stars during the Vietnam War. The ship is also depicted in a watercolor — the naval vessel towering high above an overcrowded fishing boat with weary passengers frantically trying to flag it down.

To understand the significance of the ship's wheel, the oil painting, the Navy photograph, and the watercolor, is to know the true meaning of gratitude, humility, and faith in God. In short, it is to understand the extraordinary experiences, religious formation, and character of Fr. Hoa.

The visuals all serve as reminders of a horrific ordeal starting in early October 1979, when Fr. Hoa began a journey in which he experienced starvation, dehydration, and hopelessness while being lost at sea for 31 days.

A native of South Vietnam, Fr. Hoa was the second oldest of eight children — ranging in age from newborn to 14 — when the communists from North Vietnam took over his nation's capital of Saigon on April 30, 1975. During that time, at the age of 12, Hoa witnessed communist troops dragging his father away from home at gunpoint. A



banker, devout Catholic, homeowner, and former employee of the South Vietnamese government, Fr. Hoa's father represented everything the communist regime despised.

With the head of the household in prison, and with no food, no money, and relegated to a small section of their home now seized by the new government, the family was forced into survival mode.

"I remember we went three days straight with nothing to eat," Fr. Hoa recalled. "The baby was so bloated. We never expected he would survive."

Through persistence and faith, the family pressed on. Yet Fr. Hoa's parents told their children that they must always be looking for an opportunity to escape the oppression, and likely death, that would befall them if they remained in their homeland.

The opportunity for brothers Hoa and Thuan came like a flash in 1979. Thuan, age 17, awoke 16-year-old Hoa in the middle of the night, shouting to his younger brother to follow him. Hoa asked, "Where?" and Thuan shouted "Di My!" "Di My!" ("To America!" "To America!").

Wearing only a pair of shorts, Hoa sprinted behind his brother

to a nearby dock, where he and 42 other South Vietnamese boarded a fishing boat and chugged off into the darkness, loaded with people, fuel, and hope for a new life.

Excitement and optimism ruled the day for the passengers on the overcrowded boat that was carrying them far away from their troubled homeland. Then the boat's engine quit.

With no land in sight and ominous skies overhead, the passengers' high hopes turned to deep despair.

"We just floated out there," Fr. Hoa said. "October and November is typhoon season, and we got hit by storm, after storm, after storm."

No strangers to survival techniques, passengers did what they could to stay alive. They ate mice, cockroaches, and seaweed, and learned to catch fish by hand after baiting them off the side of the boat with dead jellyfish. To prevent dehydration, they immersed themselves for long periods of time in the sea, holding onto the side of the boat.

Despite their best efforts, the passengers were still starving on the disabled craft, and one man died on the 15th day at sea.

Then, after a month at sea, there

A painting showing Jesus helping Peter out the waters at Galilee was given to Fr. Hoa Nguyen and it reminds him of the trust and faith he must always put in the Lord. (Photo by Jerry Circelli / NTC)

were shouts of joy on board as some passengers spotted a big ship coming their way. Most dismissed the discovery. Too many ships had come and gone and no one had rescued them.

"But when we heard people shout, 'American flag! American flag!' and we saw that this was an American ship, we knew we would be saved," Fr. Hoa said.

Many hardships ensued after their Nov. 6, 1979 rescue, but untold miracles unfolded for Hoa and his brother, Thuan. They managed to make it to Covington, Kentucky, worked hard, earned degrees, and eventually reunited with their entire family — mother, father, five brothers, and one sister. All are successful, productive members in their adopted nation, where they found opportunities and the freedom to worship God.

On that wall in Fr. Hoa's office is the exact wheel that he and others used to direct their humble sea craft. It was given to Fr. Hoa in 2012 on his 15th anniversary as a priest by the USS Juneau captain who rescued him and the others.

The photo of the USS Juneau proudly hangs next to the steering wheel. The watercolor depicts the rescue at sea.

And that painting of Jesus lifting Peter from troubled waters reminds Fr. Hoa of his own life and mission.

"I know that we must have strong faith in God and the miracle of life," Fr. Hoa said. "The mystery of life is beyond our understanding. My experience transformed me and gave me courage to step out in life."

"It taught me that life is not all about me. It's about people helping other people. God gave me a second chance."

"I believe that if I do my part, God will do his part. I will do my best and God will take care of the rest. We just have to trust in God and let Him guide us."

A time to heal, to help, to forgive

Pope Francis announces Year of Divine Mercy

By Cindy Wooden
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY — MERCY IS WHAT MAKES GOD PERFECT AND ALL-POWERFUL, POPE FRANCIS SAID IN HIS DOCUMENT OFFICIALLY PROCLAIMING THE 2015-2016 EXTRAORDINARY HOLY YEAR OF MERCY.

“If God limited Himself to only justice, he would cease to be God, and would instead be like human beings who ask merely that the law be respected,” the pope wrote in *Misericordiae Vultus*, (“The Face of Mercy”), which is the “bull of indiction” calling a Holy Year to begin Dec. 8.

Standing in front of the Holy Door of St. Peter’s Basilica April 11, Pope Francis handed copies of the document to the archpriests of the major basilicas of Rome and to Vatican officials representing Catholics around the world.

Portions of the 9,300-word proclamation were read aloud before Pope Francis and his aides processed into St. Peter’s Basilica to celebrate the first vespers of Divine Mercy Sunday.

In his homily at vespers, the pope said he proclaimed the Year of Mercy because “it is the favorable time to heal wounds, a time not to be weary of meeting all those who are waiting to see and touch with their hands the signs of the closeness of God, a time to offer everyone the way of forgiveness and reconciliation.”

The boundless nature of God’s mercy — his willingness always to forgive anything — has been a constant subject of Pope Francis’ preaching and is explained in detail in the document, which outlines some of the specific projects the pope has in mind for the year.

The Old Testament stories of how God repeatedly offered mercy to his unfaithful people and the New Testament stories of Jesus’ compassion, healing, and mercy

demonstrate, the pope said, that “the mercy of God is not an abstract idea, but a concrete reality through which He reveals his love,” just like mothers and fathers love their children.

“How much I desire that the year to come will be steeped in mercy, so that we can go out to every man and woman, bringing the goodness and tenderness of God,” he wrote. “May the balm of mercy reach everyone, both believers and those far away, as a sign that the kingdom of God is already present in our midst.”

Pope Francis asked that all dioceses around the world designate a “Door of Mercy” at their cathedral or another special church or shrine, and that every diocese implement the “24 Hours for the Lord” initiative on the Friday and Saturday before the fourth week of Lent. In Rome the last two years, the pope has opened the celebration with a penance service in St. Peter’s Basilica and churches around the city were open for the next 24 hours for confessions and eucharistic adoration.

The pope said he will designate and send out “Missionaries of Mercy” to preach about mercy; they will be given special authority, he said, “to pardon even those sins reserved to the Holy See.” Under Church law, those sins involve: a man who directly participated in an abortion and later wants to enter the priesthood; priests who have broken the seal of confession; priests who have offered sacramental absolution to their own sexual partners; desecrating the Eucharist; and making an attempt on the life of the pope. Usually, the Apostolic Penitentiary, a Vatican court, handles those cases.

And he urged all Catholics to spend more time practicing what traditionally have been called the corporal and spiritual works of mercy. The corporal works are: feeding the hungry, sheltering the homeless,



Pope Francis stands in front of the Holy Door prior to first vespers of Divine Mercy Sunday in St. Peter’s Basilica at the Vatican April 11.

(CNS photo/Andrea Solaro, Reuters)

clothing the naked, visiting the sick, visiting the imprisoned, giving drink to the thirsty, and burying the dead. The spiritual works are: converting sinners, instructing the ignorant, advising the doubtful, comforting the sorrowful, bearing wrongs patiently, forgiving injuries, and praying for the living and dead.

The date the pope chose to open the year — Dec. 8 — is the feast of the Immaculate Conception and the 50th anniversary of the closing of the Second Vatican Council. Both dates, he wrote, are related to the Year of Mercy.

Mercy, he said, is “the bridge that connects God and man, opening our hearts to a hope of being loved forever despite our sins.” That bridge was made concrete when God chose Mary to be the mother of his son.

The Year of Mercy, Pope Francis wrote, is also a way to keep the Second Vatican Council alive. The council recognized “a responsibility to be a living sign of the Father’s love in the world.”

The life and action of the Church, he said, “is authentic and credible only when she becomes a

convincing herald of mercy,” a mercy that “knows no bounds and extends to everyone without exception.”

While some people try to argue that mercy, even God’s mercy, is limited by the demands of justice, Pope Francis said mercy and justice are “two dimensions of a single reality that unfolds progressively until it culminates in the fullness of love.”

Preaching mercy, he said, is not the same as ignoring sin or withholding correction. Instead, mercy invites repentance and conversion and ensures the sinner that once God forgives a sin, he forgets it.

“God’s justice is his mercy,” the pope said. “Mercy is not opposed to justice, but rather expresses God’s way of reaching out to the sinner, offering him a new chance to look at himself, convert, and believe.”

Recognizing that they have been treated with mercy by God, he said, Christians are obliged to treat others with mercy. “At times how hard it seems to forgive,” he said. “And yet pardon is the instrument placed into our fragile hands to attain serenity of heart. To let go of anger, wrath, violence, and revenge are necessary conditions to living joyfully.”

Finding Christ in the villages of Haiti

Photos and story by
Jean Denton / Correspondent



Above: A child at the Cité Soleil slums during Denton's first trip to Haiti in 1990. **Right:** The author and her friend, Nini, during a recent trip.



IDESCENDED THE MOUNTAIN VERY CAREFULLY. THE PATH WAS STEEP AND RUTTED BY EROSION. Every 500 yards or so, I stopped. For one thing, I didn't want to fall and break my neck, and for another, I wanted to etch this place in my mind, because I was almost certain it was the last time I'd be there.

Now I'm not so sure.

I was in Haiti. Again. For a while now I've been going to Haiti about every two years. Before the most recent visit in January, I declared it would be my last trip to the impoverished Caribbean country. One of my children reminded me that I'd said that more than once before.

But something keeps drawing me back: Every time I go to Haiti, I encounter Jesus. I don't mean that I see the love of Jesus in an innocent child or that I come face to face with "the least" of human lives with whom Jesus identifies — although I do.

I mean every time I go to Haiti I have a tangible, personal experience of Christ's presence.

These encounters, beginning with the first one 25 years ago, are at the heart of my love for Haiti.

My first sojourn to Haiti was as a regular correspondent for the *North Texas Catholic* in October, 1990. That visit occasioned a pivotal moment

in my faith life when I would feel

Jesus' touch and understand Him with a clarity I never experienced before — or since.

Food for the Poor, a non-profit charity, hosted the weeklong trip with a group of about 15 clergy and Catholic journalists to promote the organization's ministry in Haiti.

In Port-au-Prince, the Food for the Poor staff escorted us to a number of sites ministering to people in dire circumstances, including a facility for mentally and physically handicapped individuals and a hospital for people with AIDS. We also spent a memorable morning in Cité Soleil, one of the worst slums in the world. It was nearly overwhelming. Seeing pictures of poverty is one thing — there, we could smell it and feel it burn our eyes.

We went to an orphanage run by Mother Teresa's Sisters of Charity. It was filled with malnourished infants and toddlers struggling to survive. I took a turn diapering, feeding, and holding a tiny baby girl. She clung to me so tightly, it was hard to put her down when it was time to leave.

At home a few days later, I had much to write. But I was dazed by the experience and in trying to process it I went to daily Mass. Kneeling to pray, all I could see in my mind was the face of that baby girl, her hair tinged red by malnutrition and so little flesh on her tiny bones.

I knew she was unlikely to live even another year. I pressed God for answers: "Why is this? Why must this child have such a hard, brief life, and I have a life of such privilege? I just don't get it."

God's response came swiftly,

during the Sacrament of Eucharist, at the very moment of the breaking of the bread. I recognized the dying child — and Jesus — at once as I heard: “This is my body given up for you...” It was almost too much to fathom. But it is what Jesus wanted me know. I had encountered Him in the flesh. I’d held Him and He clung to me.

It would be nine years before I’d return to Haiti. But that experience seated itself deeply in my spiritual life and continued to call me to somehow serve those poor through whom I first met Christ.

After moving from Fort Worth to Roanoke, Virginia, in 1998, I learned that our new parish was beginning a “twinning” program with a rural parish in Cabestor, Haiti. I immediately signed on and accompanied Dr. Tom Fame, project coordinator, on his next trip.

When we arrived in Port-au-Prince, I observed that the city hadn’t changed much since the last time I saw it. It was still dirty, crowded, and miserable with endemic poverty.

Here was a country that in the previous two decades had undergone dramatic political change with a popular uprising toppling the longtime dictatorship. We would witness more periods of violence and continuing struggle, but I was moved to hear people speak fervently about their desire for self-determination and hope for Haiti’s future. However, persistent political instability made for dysfunctional governance.

I was happy to leave the mean streets of Port-au-Prince and head to our twin parish 60 miles away over mountain roads so bad that the drive took more than six hours.

There we met the people of Cabestor. As we began planning our first joint project together — a school — we also visited in their homes in the scattered villages Sacre Coeur Parish serves. We prayed and worshiped with them, learned some Creole words and had long conversations with the pastor and

A young woman and child stand outside their home in Mon Michel — a far-flung village accessible only by foot. According to the CIA, Haiti’s maternal mortality rate is more than 16 times higher than that of the U.S. Midwives for Haiti and Denton’s parish plan to change that.



parish leaders about community life and the people’s needs. Our friendship grew.

In one of those remote villages, accessible only by foot, I again found Jesus. This time it was in an encounter with a humble older woman who likely never before had beheld a white person, but who welcomed me, a stranger, by sharing a sparse meal from her own plate.

I returned regularly with Fame and other fellow parishioners. Fifteen years of twinning resulted in three schools, a feeding program, a clean water system, solar power, developing local leadership, and organizing public health initiatives. We saw the life of the local community gradually improve as we worked alongside our Haitian friends.

Our visits also always involved holding their babies, visiting their classrooms, sharing Eucharist, discussing our families, eating together, singing and dancing in their yards, and walking all over their countryside.

Again and again on subsequent visits, I would experience the presence of Christ in some personal relationship of mutual love. Whether momentary or sustained, the reality of Jesus was unmistakable.

Last January, I encountered Jesus present and powerful in a wonderful, life-giving work in

Cabestor — the culmination of the enduring, dynamic friendship between two faith communities and their love for God and each other.

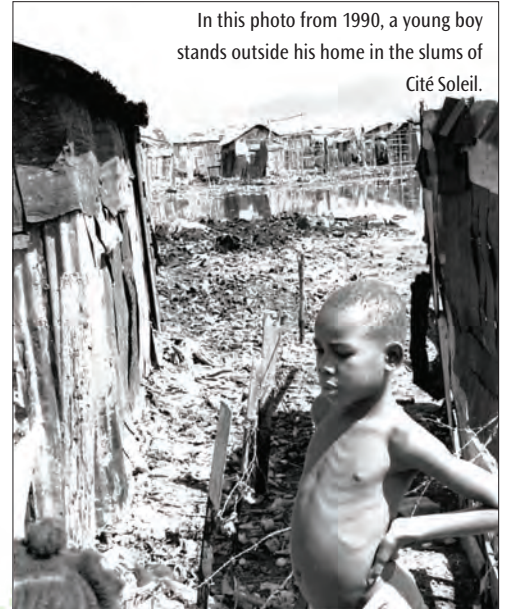
During the week of our visit, a birthing center was established there — significant because the region has a population of about 16,000 spread throughout mountainous terrain inaccessible to motorized vehicles, and because in the last few years more than 300 babies and almost 100 mothers died in childbirth for lack of prenatal and critical care.

The new birthing center is a collaboration of the twin parishes with a Virginia-based non-profit, Midwives for Haiti. It will provide ongoing prenatal care and trained, resident midwives and also will train local traditional birth attendants, known as “matrons,” in additional skills to assist at births in even more remote areas. The project didn’t happen randomly.

Our Haitian pastor, having witnessed the loss of too many mothers and infants in his communities, convinced local authorities a year ago to build a road to Cabestor, allowing Midwives for Haiti to bring a monthly mobile clinic to the parish to provide prenatal care.

When the Midwives were recently offered a grant to establish a birthing center in Haiti in a

In this photo from 1990, a young boy stands outside his home in the slums of Cité Soleil.



remote, high-need area, they chose Cabestor because, while other sites lacked the basic infrastructure necessary to support a birthing center, it turned out that over all those years, with various projects, the twinning parishes had, in fact, built an infrastructure.

Cabestor had everything needed: clean water, electricity, a road, and a community willing to support the birthing center.

The project came together quickly, but it actually had been years in the making — the making of a caring relationship between two communities based on mutual concern, one in which periodic misunderstandings and conflicts were overcome by a shared commitment to one another, to Christ, and to the needs of his people.

Although life in Haiti has improved some, instability, distrust, and corruption persist. It appears the country has been poor and oppressed for so long that it will take generations to bring fundamental change.

Nevertheless, there’s been much change in the region around Cabestor, where the perseverance of two faith communities, and the presence of Christ, has brought much hope.

I think I may go back.

**May 3, Fifth Sunday of
Easter.**

Cycle B Readings:

- 1) Acts 9:26-31
Psalm 22:26-28, 30-32
- 2) 1 John 3:18-24
Gospel) John 15:1-8

By Jeff Hensley

The last time I saw my friend, he and his wife were hosting a going away party for a colleague and his family — a colleague he hadn't worked with for about seven years. That's the kind of guy he is.

He's also the kind of guy who strikes up a friendship with a middle-aged developmentally delayed gentleman from his parish, a friendship in which they played basketball together and shared good times. In fact, throughout the years I've known him, a pretty fair number of



*"I am the vine, you are the branches."
— John 15:5a*

broken and poor individuals have broken bread with him and his family.

In this week's readings the quote from the First Letter of John begins, "Children, let us love not in word or speech but in deed and truth." That's the way my friend lives his faith.

But he is also a teacher at the university level, so he must speak of God's love as well as live it out. I admire the wisdom and fidelity to the Gospel I have heard when I have listened to him speak at Church gatherings.

Jesus, in this week's Gospel, "said to his disciples: 'I am the true vine, and my Father is the vine grower. He takes away every branch in me that does not bear fruit, and every one that does

he prunes so that it bears more fruit.'" So it has been with my friend.

The career path his life has taken in the last decade or so has not been straightforward. There have been some hiccups, but Jesus' words have seen him through.

Despite ups and downs in his professional life, his experience bears out the final words of Jesus in this week's readings: "If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask for whatever you want and it will be done for you. By this is my Father glorified, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples."

QUESTIONS:

When have you found yourself in difficult circumstances that forced you to turn to God for strength — and for answers to the questions you faced?

**May 10, Sixth Sunday of
Easter.**

Cycle B Readings:

- 1) Acts 10:25-26, 34-35,
44-48
Psalm: 98:1-4
- 2) 1 John 4:7-10
Gospel) John 15:9-17

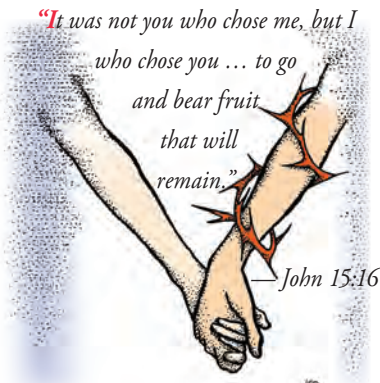
By Jean Denton

This weekend's Gospel proclaims: "Love one another as I love you," and "As the Father loves me, so I also love you."

The words of the First Letter of John echo, "Let us love one another because love is of God; everyone who loves is begotten by God and knows God."

Wow. Reading that makes me feel really good. I feel as if I could love forever and be totally "of God."

But — I promise I am not



making this up — as I was contemplating that Scripture in preparation to write this reflection, this bon mot popped up on my computer:

"Behind every great kid is a mom who's pretty sure she's screwing it all up."

It was sent — lovingly — by a person with whom I'd been discussing the ups and downs of my parenthood. Of course, the witicism was meant to emphasize the

redeeming outcome of a "great kid" through unconditional, selfless love as personified in the term "Mom."

However, going back to the Scripture I was reminded that my ability to love is sometimes tenuous. Now I noticed the line exhorting us to "remain in my love," and I remembered how hard that can be. For those of us who aren't divine, loving with constancy isn't a given. Even with one's own beloved child, one can easily screw up under strain and fall off the love train.

God knows that. As this Gospel explains, that's why He sent us his Son — to show us how to "remain" in divine love.

We remain there by keeping God's commandment to love one

another as He loves us, Jesus said, explaining, "No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends."

Indeed, Jesus lived that truth, giving his life for humanity. In that act, He at once redeemed our weakness and exemplified how to remain in God's love.

Love without condition, but by sacrifice — which could include comfort, security, material things, self-fulfillment, control, personal preferences, short-term happiness — for the sake of others in need.

Like the "great kid" loved unconditionally by a mom, we learn love by being loved and accepting the exemplified effort it requires to love in the same way. So love remains.

QUESTIONS:

When, recently, have you failed to love selflessly? What obstacles do you have — and how can you overcome them — to more readily love others as Jesus loves you?

May 17, Solemnity Of The Ascension Of The Lord.

Cycle B Readings:

- 1) Acts 1:1-11
Psalm 47:2-3,6-9
- 2) Ephesians 1:17-23
Gospel) Mark 16:15-20

By Jeff Hedglen

For years I have been telling high school and college students that one of the hardest things they will ever do in their entire lives is, in dating, to follow their conscience as a Christian and remain pure. I do not think this is new information for them, but I also remind them that just because it is one of the hardest things they will ever do, doesn't mean it is impossible.

There are many very difficult things we have to go through in life. Just recently, a student I know asked for prayers



“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you.” — Acts 1:8

so much poverty, disease, and sadness in the world and feeling overwhelmed by wondering how you can help, or any number of challenging aspects in life, this week's readings are here to bring us some hope.

In the passage from the Acts of the Apostles, Jesus tells us that we will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon us. Then we hear in Ephesians that those who believe are connected to the surpassing greatness of his power. Finally, in the Gospel Jesus tells us that in his name we can even drive out demons.

because she is suffering through the fifth classmate of hers who has died in the last three years. She was at her wits' end and could not understand why God was allowing this to happen.

Whether it is dating as a believer, trying to understand why bad things happen to good people, struggling with sobriety, trying to lose weight, seeing

We are not alone in this world full of troubles. Yes, there are problems we will face, but God does not leave us powerless. In fact, the opposite is the case. Not only are we not powerless, we have been given the power of the Holy Spirit to aid us in this life.

It is not magical power that takes away the entire struggle; rather it is strength for the journey, resolve in the midst of temptation, and hope for the future.

Suffering is a part of the Christian journey, but there is no Easter Sunday without a Good Friday. Just as it was with Jesus, in the midst of the struggle we may feel abandoned, but God has a bigger plan in the works.

QUESTIONS:

How have you seen the power of God in your life? How has your faith sustained you through tough times?

May 31, Solemnity of the Most Holy Trinity.

Cycle B Readings:

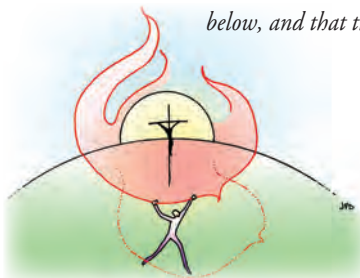
- 1) Deuteronomy 4:32-34, 39-40
Psalm 33:4-6, 9, 18-20, 22
- 2) Romans 8:14-17
Gospel) Matthew 28:16-20

By Jean Denton

Moses describes our God, “before your time” when he created humankind. Then He mentions people hearing God's voice and witnessing Him take a nation with strong hand and outstretched arm. Finally, the prophet says to fix one's heart in God because He provides a place for us forever.

That's the essence of the passage in Deuteronomy given us for this Sunday, the Solemnity of the Most Holy Trinity. God is beyond us, among us, and within us all at

“Fix in your heart, that the Lord is God in the heavens above and on earth below, and that there is no other.” — Deuteronomy 4:39



once.

It's challenging to imagine an experience in which one could parse out each person of our triune God existing in a single moment. But I was in a situation recently that serves as such an example.

I was hiking in the backcountry with friends and a guide on a steep mountain ridge. If it had been photographed, my feet would be on the ground and my head in the clear blue sky. I definitely sensed (God beyond) the almighty

Father and Creator of the entire scene. The trail was precarious and I felt our guide's hand take my arm (God among) and hold me steady. Usually, I like to think I can maintain my balance on my own, but at that instant I was totally grateful for the certainty (God within) that I wouldn't fall.

It wasn't a momentous occasion, but it demonstrated how God, in all God's persons, is present to us.

Moses' description was of a God all powerful and transcending all time. Yet his message emphasized that this almighty God is also

very close to us — within us, in fact. If we accept and keep God's commandments, Moses said long before Jesus arrived, our God offers us and our children a life with Him forever.

When Jesus came among us He modeled the life God desires, the life lived according to the Father's commandments, and promised if we follow his way, He will accompany us in the person of the Holy Spirit. Again: forever.

Forever begins now, He suggested, as He enjoined us to participate in the mission of bringing along our descendants: “Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them” in the name of our God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

QUESTIONS:

How does following God's commandments fill you with his life? When has the Holy Spirit empowered you to go and make disciples?

June 7, The Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ (Corpus Christi).

Cycle B Readings:

- 1) Exodus 24:3-8
Psalm 116:12-13, 15-18
- 2) Hebrews 9:11-15
Gospel) Mark 14:12-16, 22-26

By Jeff Hensley

As we commemorate the institution of the Eucharist on this special Sunday, I am reminded of how proud I am to be a part of an incarnational Church. It delights and inspires me to be a part of the body of Christ that believes so deeply that we must en flesh the Word of God.

But it was the wording toward the end of the longer form of the sequence for today's Mass that brought to mind images of a com-



munity of Catholics who were convened around Jesuit Father Rick Thomas, now deceased. The words:

*Nought the precious gift divides,
Breaking but the sign betides
Jesus still the same abides,
still unbroken does remain.*

Stories of the first Christmas this small Catholic charismatic group spent at the Juarez, Mexico, garbage dump flowed into my mind. They had come to the dump that day because Fr. Rick

"Take it; this is my body."

— Mark 14:22e

said to the group: "When have we carried out that simple little verse of Scripture where our Lord tells us that when we give a party, we should invite those who cannot repay us?"

So they ended up at the dump, gathering — miraculously — two competing groups of desperately poor scavengers, sharing ham and other Christmas fixings from the tailgate of a pickup truck. Postman Frank Alarcon would later tell of watching as a ham was sliced and sliced and sliced, never diminishing in size until all of those gathered had been fed.

QUESTIONS:

Have you ever gone beyond your own capacities to serve others and discovered God providing extra resources to fill the gap?

The group would later go to minister in jails, where they would witness the same miracle of multiplication with tortillas and lemonade. One stainless steel container of lemonade, tipped on its side to make a pool at the corner, yielded pint after pint of the tart drink as inmates dipped milk containers into it, one after another after another, until all had had their fill.

That is the fullness of what Jesus offers us in his Body and Blood. That is the abundance we have to share with those who are hungry for his goodness, when we partake of his Flesh and Blood with the intent of sharing his love with others. That is what it means to be an incarnational Church.

June 14 Eleventh Sunday in Ordinary Time.

Cycle B. Readings:

- 1) Ezekiel 17:22-24
Psalm 93:2-3, 13-16
- 2) 2 Corinthians 5:6-10
Gospel) Mark 4:26-34

By Jean Denton

This Gospel parable, comparing the kingdom of God to a tiny seed growing into a large flourishing plant, would be a good fight song for everyone who tries to start a new ministry.

Watching a ministry "sprout" can be frustratingly slow. When the initial response is tepid, it's tempting to just walk away unless you believe in the vision of the kingdom come.

I sensed that temptation when my friend (and, incidentally, fellow Word to Life writer) Jeff Hedglen planned a youth service project at our parish one summer. Jeff and I were on the staff of

"This is how it is with the kingdom of God; ... through it all the seed would sprout and grow, he knows not how

— Mark 4:26-27



St. Bartholomew Church in Fort Worth at the time.

I remember standing in the doorway of his youth ministry office listening as he described the program he envisioned for the teens.

Each morning for a week, they would meet at church and head out into the community to participate in a variety of ministries from soup kitchen and nursing facilities to working with at-risk children and making repairs in low-income neighborhoods. Afterward, they would return to church, play some games, and

people showed up."

Then he smiled, "But for those three it was great!"

The experience of those few teens was exactly what he'd envisioned for the ministry. So he did it again the next summer — with eight participants.

Now, more than 20 years later, Jeff continues to coordinate the summer youth service program. It's called "Camp Fort Worth" and has grown into an enormous diocesan event with hundreds of youth participating each year.

Many a Catholic youth has grown to adulthood with his or her faith, first fed by that experience, flourishing and welcoming others to God's kingdom.

Why? Because three showed up — and it was great.

divide into small groups to pray and discuss how Christ was present in the day's experience.

Jeff did a lot of preparation to promote the event, coordinate with local organizations, collect supplies and equipment, plan prayer activities and arrange transportation.

On the first morning of the service week, I waved to Jeff as he passed my office with a couple of youth carrying supplies for the day.

When he returned at the end of the afternoon I asked how it went. "It was OK," he replied, clearly disappointed, "only three

QUESTIONS:

When have you felt frustrated by the meager beginnings of something you considered a valuable pursuit? How does the vision of God's kingdom encourage you to persevere?

June 21, Twelfth Sunday in Ordinary Time.

Cycle B Readings:

- 1) Job 38:1, 8-11
Psalm 107:23-26, 28-31
- 2) 2 Corinthians 5:14-17
Gospel) Mark 4:35-41

By Jeff Hedglen

A few years ago my brother and I hiked up Mount Cardigan in New Hampshire. When we started at the bottom, the mid-May temperature was a cool 75 degrees. As we climbed, it got colder and we kept adding layer after layer of clothing. Right when we made it to the summit, it started to snow with the wind so brisk that the snow was horizontal. It was at once exhilarating and frightening, as I feared being blown right off the mountain.



This was a literal storm, but in life there are other kinds of storms. I have many friends with young children — lots of young children. Their lives seem to be lived in a storm. Even their Facebook posts about laundry and family dinners make my trek up Mount Cardigan seem like a stroll along rolling hills.

I regularly encounter another storm of life in my work with college students. Many of them are juggling one or two jobs, 15-18

“Quiet! Be still!”
— Mark 4:39

hours of classwork, and the ups and downs of dating relationships, along with typical young adult social life.

Their lives seem to be speeding past them like that snow on top of the mountain in New Hampshire.

From time-to-time, we all have days, weeks, and even years that seem like a raging storm, and it was times like these that were on my mind as I read this week’s readings. In them we hear of how God is Lord of creation, and we

see the power of Jesus calming the storm.

The Gospel story is about a literal, weather-related storm that Jesus calms on the Sea of Galilee. In the passage from Job, God reminds Job that God is the Lord over all of creation, basically saying if I can control all of creation, I can certainly handle the storms in your life.

Knowing that Jesus can calm the storms of life does not necessarily remove the circumstances swarming around us. But armed with this understanding of Jesus’ power, we can face what comes at us. We are not alone; there is One greater than the storm who is in the boat with us.

QUESTIONS:

Have you ever seen the hand of God in a stormy time in your life? Does knowing God is the Lord of creation help you navigate the storms of life?

June 28, Thirteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time.

Cycle B Readings:

- 1) Wisdom 1:13-15, 2:23-24
Psalm 30:2, 4-6, 11-13
- 2) 2 Corinthians 8:7, 9, 13-15
Gospel) Mark 5:21-43

By Sharon K. Perkins

During a family gathering one summer, I sustained an injury that bruised my hip and caused a great deal of lower back pain, hampering my typically active lifestyle. Pain medication and ice reduced the swelling but did little to speed recovery from the trauma. I became grumpy and discouraged, wishing I could undo the injury and get back to normal.

Finally, I began visiting a chiropractor several times a week to straighten out my spine, restore blood flow, and hasten the healing process. When he suggested therapeutic massage for some lingering



“Go in peace and be cured of your affliction.”
— Mark 5:34

soreness, I decided to give it a try. The combination of chiropractic adjustments and the therapist’s skillful touch were sufficient to bring me back to my old self with a minimum of medication.

I thought of that experience when meditating on this Sunday’s Gospel account in which Mark intentionally sandwiches one story of healing (the woman with a hemorrhage) in the middle of another (the daughter of Jairus). The literary device causes us to pay

attention to the way that the two stories illuminate each other. Taken together, they illustrate the far-reaching effects of illness: helplessness, financial hardship, isolation, discouragement, despair, debilitating affliction, the anguish of loved ones, and even death.

But Jesus makes Himself present in the midst of their suffering. He responds to their pleas for help with compassion, silences the crowds of naysayers, touches the afflicted ones, speaks words of healing, reassures their faith, and restores them to health. By his actions He makes clear that God does not “rejoice in the destruc-

tion of the living.”

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* reminds us that in the sacramental anointing of the sick, the Church brings to those who ask for it that very same healing touch of Jesus, and a special gift of the Holy Spirit. It provides the graces of “strengthening, peace and courage to overcome the difficulties that go with the condition of serious illness or the frailty of old age,” renewing “trust and faith in God” and strengthening against the evil one’s temptations to give in to “discouragement and anguish in the face of death.”

Whether the resulting healing is spiritual or physical, a sacramental visit to the Great Physician speeds recovery — but without the bill.

QUESTIONS:

This Easter season, how are you celebrating the Father’s extraordinary gift of love and mercy given in Jesus? How can you more deeply invest your own life in the welfare and destiny of Jesus’ flock?

Las Hermanas de Santa María de Namur se ofrecen ellas mismas a Dios y al mundo

Por Joan Kurkowski-Gillen
Corresponsal

Mientras más estudia la historia de su orden, más crece el respeto de la Hermana Patricia Ridgley por las cinco Hermanas de Santa María de Namur quienes dejaron la seguridad de su convento original en Bélgica por los peligros del Nuevo Mundo.

En 1863, cuando la Guerra Civil todavía estaba asolando América, la Madre Emile y cuatro subordinadas se despidieron de sus familiares y de las hermanas y se embarcaron en la arriesgada jornada.

“Debe haber sido una situación desalentadora”, se imagina la Hna. Patricia, originaria de Dallas quien entró a la comunidad en la Provincia Occidental en 1960. “Me inspira saber que estas mujeres—que trataban de seguir el llamado de Dios de ir a donde la educación era necesaria—sin dudar emprendieron el viaje con rumbo desconocido.

El génesis de la congregación empezó años antes, al terminar la revolución francesa. El Padre Nicholas Joseph Minsart, se preocupaba por la pobreza y analfabetismo que forzaba a las jóvenes de su parroquia en Namur, Bélgica a trabajar como sirvientas o a prostituirse. En 1819, él pidió a Josephine Sana y a Elizabeth Berger que iniciaran un taller de costura para dar a las mujeres opciones vocacionales.

Otras mujeres jóvenes pronto se unieron al proyecto, y este pequeño grupo de 16, más tarde fue reconocido como congregación religiosa aprobada por el Obispo



de Namur, Jean Arnold Barrett. La Hermana Claire of Jesus sirvió como superiora de la orden por 36 años y ayudó a desarrollar su formación religiosa y espiritual. Los esfuerzos de las hermanas por enseñar a los pobres y marginados fue el inicio de un ministerio educativo que definió al pequeño grupo de misioneras que llegaron a los Estados Unidos en 1863.

Diez años después de establecerse en Lockport, Nueva York, las pioneras en hábito emprendieron otro proyecto. Alentadas por el Obispo de Buffalo, John Timon,

quien apoyaba a la orden y pensaba que Texas estaba lista para ser evangelizada, tres hermanas abordaron un tren y se dirigieron al sur.

En su libro, *A Little Good*, la finada Hermana St. John Begnaud, SSMN, describe cómo a su orden religiosa le atrajo la idea de establecer escuelas en los asentamientos del norte de Texas.

“...La Iglesia ya era una presencia reconocida en el área sureña del estado”, escribió la Hna. St. John. Se había esparcido rápidamente la noticia de que el sistema

ferroviario llegaba ahora más al norte. Las hermanas iban a donde la gente tuviera más necesidad de ayuda.... Texas, después de todo, era un estado de la Unión; se hablaba el mismo idioma, ondeaba la misma bandera”.

Pero viajar a Waco en 1873 demostró ser una experiencia muy diferente a la de Nueva York. La mayoría de las familias eran protestantes, y el *Ku Klux Klan* expresaba públicamente su prejuicio anti-católico. La transportación de ganado removía el polvo de las calles, y tenían que resistir el

e Namur al prójimo con amor y alegría

opresivo calor y el miedo a los tornados.

A pesar de su desaliento, las hermanas anunciaron la apertura de una escuela una semana después de llegar al lado oeste de Waco. Para noviembre de 1873, ya se habían inscrito 26 estudiantes en la primera escuela fundada en Texas por las Hermanas de Santa María de Namur—la Academia del Sagrado Corazón.

Siempre con gran esfuerzo, la orden religiosa, en el transcurso de más de 40 años, estableció un sistema de escuelas por todo el norte de Texas—principalmente con sus propios recursos financieros. El poder de su dedicación se manifiesta claramente por el establecimiento de:

La Academia de Nuestra Señora del Sagrado Corazón, Corsicana, 1874

La Academia de San Francisco Javier, Denison, 1876

La Academia de San José, Sherman, 1877

La Academia de San Ignacio, Fort Worth, 1885

La Academia de Nuestra Señora del Buen Consejo, Dallas, 1902

La Academia de María Inmaculada, Wichita Falls, 1905

La Escuela del Santo Nombre, Fort Worth, 1909

El Colegio y Academia de Nuestra Señora de la Victoria, Fort Worth, 1910

La Escuela de San Eduardo, Dallas, 1912

En 2013, la orden celebró con una Misa en la Catedral de San Patricio, los 150 años de su presencia en América. La Hermana Gabriela Martínez, la actual superiora provincial, alabó los logros de las hermanas pioneras que sobrevivieron la pobreza, la



La Hna. Dorothy Ann Flori instruye a niños en la Escuela de Nuestra Señora de la Victoria en 2012. Desde su arribo en Waco en 1873, las hermanas han establecido escuela tras escuela, abriendo sus puertas a todos, sin rechazar a nadie. (Foto cortesía de SSMNs)

amenaza de la fiebre amarilla, y la discriminación, para alcanzar la meta de hacer “un poquito de bien”.

“Estamos conscientes de que nos sostenemos sobre los hombros de santas, buenas y valerosas

mujeres quienes por 150 años han oído y respondido con gratitud el llamado de Dios de servir a los necesitados”, dijo ella a alumnos y personas que las apoyan, después de la Misa de Dar Gracias.

Más que educadoras

Por Joan Kurkowski-Gillen
Corresponsal

Las Hermanas de Santa María de Namur son mejor conocidas por educar a miles de estudiantes del norte de Texas en escuelas desde Waco a Wichita Falls, pero las desconocidas, y por tanto no mencionadas, obras de amor y misericordia de la orden religiosa, van más allá del salón de clases.

Hoy en día, las hermanas en

la congregación toman parte en el cuidado de la salud, en ministerio parroquial, servicio a inmigrantes, consejería, formación de la juventud y evangelización. Aunque la edad promedio en el convento de las SSMN en Fort Worth es de 76 años y muchas se han jubilado, las hermanas continúan compartiendo sus dones y talentos con la comunidad en general.

La Hermana Francesca Walterscheid mece a los bebés en la unidad de cuidado intensivo

para recién nacidos en el *Cook Children's Medical Center* tres horas por semana, en compañía de la Hermana Mary Elaine Breen quien fue enfermera y partera.

“La Hermana Mary Elaine empezó a hacer esto y me invitó a participar”, recuerda la hermana de 87 años, quien fue maestra y auxiliar de enfermería durante sus 68 años en el convento.

Su tercera carrera, acunar bebés, proporciona a los infantes el contacto humano necesario para

su crecimiento y adaptación social.

Cada lunes en la tarde, los voluntarios acunan a bebés que pesan apenas kilo y medio. “Algunas veces hablo con las madres que están ahí. Son situaciones agobiantes para ellas, pero *Cook Children's* tiene un ambiente agradable y las enfermeras son atentas y cuidadosas”, explica la Hna. Francesca, quien se considera abuela sustituta.

Ayudar a los inmigrantes a lograr una vida más prometedora

es la meta de las Hermanas Rita Claire y Cecile Faget. Desde 1987, estas experimentadas educadoras han enseñado clases de Inglés como segundo idioma (ESL) a personas que hablan primeramente Español.

Por muchos años, el ministerio de la Hermana Rita Claire se centraba en Knox City y Crowell, pero ahora da clases en el Inmaculado Corazón de María en Fort Worth.

“La gente es muy entusiasta y agradecida”, observa ella. “Quieren aprender Inglés porque muchos de ellos tienen niños en la escuela y quieren ayudarles con la tarea”.

“Me encanta ver a la gente crecer y hacer lo mejor por sus familias”, agrega la que era antes instructora de ciencias y matemáticas y ahora enseña Inglés a los principiantes. “Quiero que la gente tenga confianza en sí misma, no que esté nerviosa porque no sabe el idioma”.

Durante los últimos 45 años, la Hermana Patricia Ste. Marie ha trabajado en la Iglesia de Nuestra Señora Reina de la Paz en Wichita Falls, donde inició el progra-

ma parroquial de formación de adultos, organizó el ministerio de música (*Shalom Music Ministry*), y condujo estudios bíblicos para adultos. También sirvió como provincial de su orden por seis años y, por nueve años, fue directora de educación religiosa en *Notre Dame Highschool* (escuela preparatoria).

Graduada de Nuestra Señora de la Victoria, recuerda haber sentido el llamado a la vida religiosa desde que estaba en cuarto año. Para cuando llegó al octavo, se hizo más fuerte su deseo de tener una familia mucho más numerosa que cualquier matrimonio pudiera proporcionar.

Ella dice, que ella y la Hermana Ginny Vissing, SSMN, directora de educación religiosa en OLQP, encuentran que, “estamos enseñando a los hijos de los niños que enseñamos hace años. Nos complace ser parte de una comunidad tan llena de vida.

Pero en abril 10, 1979, la fe de los feligreses fue puesta a prueba cuando uno de los peores desastres climatológicos en la historia de

Texas golpeó Wichita Falls. Un tornado EF-4 con vientos de 200 millas por hora destruyó 3,000 casas y dañó otras 1,000 en su trayectoria de una milla a través de la ciudad. Murieron 42 personas y 5,000 quedaron sin hogar.

“Nosotras apoyamos a la gente y ayudamos en la parroquia y en la ciudad proveyendo alimentos y apoyo espiritual”, dijo ella. “Una mujer cuyo hogar fue destruido, vivió con nosotras por un tiempo”.

De la tragedia surgió un ministerio inter-religioso que 35 años todavía continúa en Wichita Falls. “Nosotras colaboramos con gente que patrocinó un servicio de sanación para todo el pueblo”, dijo la Hna. Patricia, “porque cada vez que había una nube, todos se aterrorizaban”.

Las Hermanas de Santa María de Namur experimentaron un similar espíritu de cooperación con comunidades de otra fe a finales de 1960 y principios de 1970 cuando el Movimiento de Derechos Civiles tomó impulso en Dallas. La Hermana Patricia Ridgley en ese tiempo enseñaba teología en *Bishop*

Dunne High School, y le agradaba hacer que sus estudiantes se interesaran por las preocupaciones de la comunidad local.

“Era un época en que había gran discusión en el país, y nosotras animábamos a los estudiantes en *Bishop Dunne* a que entendieran el problema más a fondo. Los llamamos a ser gente que acepta a todo tipo de personas”, dijo ella.

Para lograr eso, presentamos a los estudiantes el concepto de servicio comunitario. “Los estudiantes iban al hospital del condado a dar la bienvenida a la gente. Eso los hizo darse cuenta cómo se trataba a los pobres”, recuerda la hermana.

Las Hermanas de Santa María trabajaron con miembros de la Conferencia Sureña de Líderes Cristianos y se familiarizaron con los predicadores y la gente en Dallas que demandaban derechos civiles y justicia racial. “Nuestros ojos se abrieron al hacer preguntas y tratar de aprender. Creo que fue una ayuda para nuestros estudiantes empezar a darse cuenta de otros asuntos en los que nunca habían pensado antes”.

‘Donde queremos estar’

Por Joan Kurkowski-Gillen
Corresponsal

Estando en el vestíbulo de la Escuela de Nuestra Señora de la Victoria mientras los estudiantes corren a sus salones de clase, la Directora Linda Petrey observa cómo 105 años de historia cobran vida.

“Las Hermanas de Santa María de Namur pusieron sus corazones y sus almas en este lugar, y uno puede sentirlo”, explica la educadora. “OLV es una de las escuelas más antiguas en la diócesis, y es la única en ser dirigida por una orden religiosa. Muchos líderes y profesionistas en Fort Worth han pasado por estas puertas”.

Graduada de OLV, profesora de kínder, y madre de tres hijos en-

viados a estudiar en su *alma máter*, Petrey siente el peso de continuar con el legado.

“Sigo los pasos de muchas hermanas que vinieron antes que yo”, la administradora dice humildemente. “Ellas son los cimientos de esta escuela, guiándonos con su dedicación y devoción a la Iglesia católica, y viviendo la palabra del Evangelio”.

Después de llegar a Texas en 1873, las Hermanas de Santa María establecieron escuelas en varias diócesis. En Fort Worth, estas pioneras de la educación fueron instrumentos indispensables para abrir las Academia de San Ignacio en 1885 y la Academia y Colegio de Nuestra Señora de la Victoria en 1910. El internado para niñas fue la primera escuela integral en Fort Worth.

A través de los años, las hermanas establecieron, y sirvieron en, muchas instituciones de aprendizaje en la Diócesis de Fort Worth, incluyendo las escuelas: Misión de San José, *Cassata Learning Center*, *Nolan High School*, Santa Alicia (ahora la Sagrada Familia), Santa María, San Mateo-Inmaculado Corazón de María; Reina de la Paz, Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe y *Notre Dame* en Wichita Falls, Santa María Goretti en Arlington, San Andrés, El Apóstol San Juan, y la Universidad de Dallas.

“El ministerio educativo de nuestras hermanas se extendía por Texas en las escuelas parroquiales” explica la Hermana Gabriela Martínez, superiora de la Provincia Occidental de la orden. “Muchos niños recibieron becas o educación gratuita. El

objeto no era hacer dinero. Algunas familias ‘pagaban’ con huevos, gallinas o con lo que tuvieran”.

James Reza creció en el lado norte de Fort Worth y asistió a la escuela de la Misión de San José desde la mitad de los años cuarenta hasta su graduación del octavo grado, en 1952. Las Hermanas de Santa María empezaron este ministerio en 1926 para servir a la gran cantidad de niños México-americanos del área.

“Ellas nos inculcaron que nuestros cerebros eran tan buenos como los de cualquier otro”, recuerda Reza. Guiados por las hermanas los jovencitos, que ni siquiera entendían el Inglés, ya estaban leyendo el librito *See Jane Run* solo unas semanas después de empezar clases en San José. El curriculum del idioma era tan

excepcional, que Reza y su hermana ganaron el concurso de deletreo (*spelling bee*) de Fort Worth.

“¿Pueden imaginarse a estos dos niños Hispanos de un barrio pobre del *North Side* haciendo esto? “Todavía recuerdo la cara llena de júbilo de la Hna. Lawrencia cuando deletreábamos las palabras correctamente”.

Hoy, miembros de la orden continúan usando su talento especial por la educación ya sea pastoralmente, en la formación de ministerios parroquiales, en RICA, o en otros programas de preparación sacramental. Ellas también son tutoras de jóvenes y ofrecen clases de piano.

La Hermana Dorothy Powers dice que el carisma de su orden tiene sus raíces en la evangelización.

“Con nuestras escuelas empezamos a remediar la necesidad de educación católica, después nos dirigimos al ministerio pastoral”, explica la graduada de OLV quien organizó una amplia gama de pro-

“El llamado del Papa Francisco a la Evangelización no es nuevo para nosotras”. La constitución de la orden pide a sus miembros que proclamen “La Buena Nueva del Reino” a los pobres. “Aquí es donde estamos; aquí es donde queremos estar”.

Hermana Gabriela Martinez



Foto de archivo de la Hna. Gabriela, con cayado de peregrino, en la recepción en la Parroquia de San Andrés en 2012, después de su Misa de bodas de Oro como religiosa.

gramas parroquiales desde catequesis para niños hasta ministerio Hispano. “Nosotros amamos a la gente. Creo que nuestro espíritu de gozo, sencillez y hospitalidad hace que la gente se sienta con nosotras como en su casa”.

La superiora de la Provincia Occidental dice que la orden nunca

ha cesado de dar de sí mismas para que otros puedan conocer a Cristo. Defensoras de la vida, la justicia y la paz, las hermanas tratan de alcanzar a los más vulnerables: los inmigrantes, los que no tienen hogar, y las víctimas de los traficantes de personas.

“Por eso el llamado del Papa

Francisco a la Evangelización no es nuevo para nosotras”, explica la Hna. Gabriela. La constitución de la orden pide a sus miembros que proclamen “La Buena Nueva del Reino” a los pobres. “Aquí es donde estamos”, dice con firmeza. “Aquí es donde queremos estar”.

Hermanas de Santa María de Namur que viven y sirven en la Diócesis de Fort Worth

Hna. Mary Elaine Breen
Nuestra Señora de la Victoria,
Ministerio con bebés prematuros
en Cook Children’s

Hna. Gloria Cabrera
Asistente del Ministerio de vocaciones;
Coordinadora de la Misión de Verano

Hna. Jane Conway
Nuestra Señora de la Victoria
Música y liturgia

Hna. Donna Marie Crochet
Nuestra Señora de la Victoria,
Consejera provincial

Hna. Yolanda Cruz
El Centro Católico, Vicedirector de
Servicios Parroquiales y de Religiosas

Hna. Rita Claire Davis
Coordinadora, clases de Inglés (ESL)

Hna. Inés Diaz
El Centro Católico, Delegada para el
Ministerio Hispano

Hna. Mary Michael Dittoe
Nuestra Señora de la Victoria; Intercesora

Hna. Cecile Faget
Nuestra Señora de la Victoria
Voluntaria, clases de Inglés (ESL) Tutora

Hna. Dorothy Ann Flori
Nuestra Señora de la Victoria; Tutora

Hna. Mary Helen Fuhrmann
Coordinadora del Centro Nuestra Señora
de la Victoria

Hna. Mary Fulbright
Meals on Wheels

Hna. Roberta Hesse
Nuestra Señora de la Victoria
Organizadora de colectas para las misiones

Hna. Teresa Honkomp
Nuestra Señora de la Victoria
Sacristana de la capilla;
Capellán de la escuela de OLV

Hna. Anselma Knabe
Nuestra Señora de la Victoria; Intercesora

Hna. Bernice Knape
Consejera provincial
Enlace con la escuela de OLV

Hna. Ann Vincent Kucirek
Nuestra Señora de la Victoria; Intercesora

Hna. Joan Markey
Tesorera provincial
Secretaría provincial

Hna. Gabriela Martinez
Nuestra Señora de la Victoria
Provincial

Hna. Camella Menotti
Nuestra Señora de la Victoria
Supervisora de mantenimiento

Hna. Mary Merdian
Recuperándose de una cirugía

Hna. Miriam Nesmith
Iglesia de Santa Rita
Outreach y ministerio social
Consejera provincial

Hna. Dorothy Powers
Nuestra Señora de la Victoria
Directora espiritual; talleres;
Voluntaria en RICA

Hna. Patricia Ridgley
Dallas, SSMN internacional
Coordinadora de Paz y Justicia
para Trata de personas, ambiente
e intervención

Hna. Charles Marie Serafino
Organizadora de colectas para las
misiones; Oradora sobre cuestiones de
Ruanda; Tutora de piano

Hna. Mary Frances Serafino
Nuestra Señora de la Victoria
Directora espiritual, retiros
Coordinadora de asociadas

Hna. Louise Smith
Nuestra Señora de la Victoria
Archivista

Hna. Rosemary Stanton
Nolan Catholic High School
Ministerio pastoral;
Consejera general SSMN

Hna. Patricia Ste. Marie
Our Lady Queen of Peace
Ministerio parroquial de tiempo parcial;
Consejera provincial

Hna. Devota Sweeney
Nuestra Señora de la Victoria; Intercesora

Hna. Lola Ulupano
Estudiante en TWU
Instructora de estudiantes

Hna. Adelaide Valtierra
Nuestra Señora de la Victoria
Arte y artesanías en cerámica

Hna. Ginny Vissing
Nuestra Señora Reina de la Paz
Maestra de educación religiosa y música

Hna. Clara Vo
Nuestra Señora Reina de la Paz
Arreglos florales, medio ambiente
y jardinería

Hna. Frances Vuillemin
Nuestra Señora de la Victoria; Tutora

Hna. Francesca Walterschied
Nuestra Señora de la Victoria
Coordinadora;
Voluntaria en Cook Children’s

Hna. Mary Jean Warmuth
Convento de la Misericordia, Wichita
Falls; Voluntaria parroquial

Sacerdotes sin fronteras

Heraldos de la Buena Nueva (HGN) siguen los pasos de los primeros misioneros

Por Jerry Circelli
Corresponsal

No debería sorprendernos el hecho de que hombres de la India, sacerdotes llenos del Espíritu, se aventuren a llevar la Buena Nueva por todo el mundo.

Quizá muchos católicos no lo saben, pero el primer misionero llegó a la India en el año 52 de la e.c., más de 1,400 años antes que los cristianos llegaran al Nuevo Mundo. Sin embargo, los cristianos sí saben el nombre del misionero—el apóstol Tomás.

Personalmente inspirado por el mandato de Jesús de “ir a hacer discípulos en todas las naciones”, él llevó la Palabra de Dios a la India, que ahora cuenta con más de 24 millones de seguidores de Cristo. Otros misioneros, incluyendo a San Francisco Javier en el siglo XVI, continuaron difundiendo la Palabra de Dios al pueblo Hindú.

En el espíritu de esos primeros misioneros, los Heraldos de la Buena Nueva tomaron la bandera para di-

seminar el Evangelio en más de una docena de naciones. Formada en la India en 1984 y constituida Instituto de Derecho Pontificio en 1999, esta sociedad misionera ha crecido de cuatro sacerdotes fundadores a más de 400 ahora. Ellos vienen de cuatro provincias de HGN, todas con base en la India, a servir por todo el mundo cumpliendo con la misión de la sociedad de promover vocaciones al sacerdocio, entrenar seminaristas y suministrar sacerdotes donde se necesiten.

Una de esas áreas ha sido la Diócesis de Fort Worth, y cuatro sacerdotes de esta sociedad misionera han viajado 9,000 millas para servir a los fieles de este lugar.

Entre ellos está el Padre Alexander Ambrose, HGN, vicario parroquial de la Catedral de San Patricio en Fort Worth. El Padre Ambrose dijo que él se sintió particularmente atraído por la misión de los HGN de “entrenar y suministrar entusiastas, dedicados, trabajadores y piadosos misioneros para proclamar la Buena Nueva del Señor” en las diócesis



Fr. John Antony Perikomalayil viajó 9,000 millas para servir a los fieles locales proporcionándoles los sacramentos, incluso el Bautismo. (Foto de Jerry Circelli / NTC)

donde faltan sacerdotes.

La Diócesis de Fort Worth fue su primera asignación fuera de la India, y el Padre Ambrose siente la inspiración divina.

“Creo que Dios me trajo aquí a servir a la gente. Ellos son agradecidos, acogedores, devotos y dispuestos a apoyar”, dijo el Padre Ambrose.

El Padre Sojan George, HGN, párroco de Nuestra Señora Reina de la Paz en Wichita Falls por largo tiempo ha tenido un puesto en la diócesis. Llegó aquí en el 2002 y ha servido en otras seis parroquias en la diócesis, bajo tres obispos—Joseph P. Delaney, Kevin W. Vann, y Michael F. Olson.

“Me han recibido con los brazos abiertos dondequiera que he sido asignado”, dijo el Padre George.

El Padre John Antony Perikomalayil, HGN, quien celebra los sacramentos en San José en Rhineland y en Santa Rosa en Knox City, llegó a la diócesis en el 2013 y expresa los mismos sentimientos.

“Lo más emocionante de los fieles aquí es que nunca te dejan

sentir que estás lejos de tu casa o de tu país”, dijo el Padre Perikomalayil.

Las experiencias de la bienvenida de los fieles del lugar, lejos de su país, reafirman la promesa que hizo el Padre Perikomalayil de seguir a Cristo en compañía de los Heraldos. Particularmente, el carisma de la sociedad misionera lo ayudó a refinar el modo en que serviría a Dios.

“Siempre quise ser un sacerdote diocesano”, dijo el Padre Perikomalayil. Eso cambió cuando asistió a un campamento vocacional en su diócesis en India donde conoció a un sacerdote de los Heraldos. “Había una fuerza dentro de mí”, recordó el padre Perikomalayil, “diciéndome que a esta orden tenía que entrar”.

Como los demás, dijo que se sintió inspirado a ser sacerdote misionero donde no hay fronteras para difundir la Palabra de Dios.

El Padre Perikomalayil añadió, “Esta es una “sociedad naciente” que confía en el apoyo de la gente para crecer. Agradecemos inmensamente el estímulo, la aceptación, el apoyo y las oraciones por todos nosotros”.

Sacerdotes Heraldos de la Buena Nueva (HGN) sirviendo en la Diócesis de Fort Worth

P. Alexander Ambrose
vicario parroquial
Catedral de San Patricio
en Fort Worth
HGN Provincia de la Madre Teresa;
Odisha, India

P. Albert Francis Kanjirathumkal
sacerdote sacramental
Parroquias del Sagrado Corazón en
Seymour y Santa María de la Asun-
ción en Megargel
HGN Provincia de la Madre Teresa;
Odisha, India

P. John Antony Perikomalayil
sacerdote sacramental
Parroquias de San José en Rhineland
y Santa Rosa en Knox City
HGN Provincia de la Madre Teresa;
Odisha, India

P. Sojan George
párroco
Parroquia de Nuestra Señora Reina de
la Paz en Wichita Falls
HGN Provincia de San Pablo;
Kerala, India

Más información sobre los Heraldos de la Buena Nueva
<http://heraldsofgoodnews.org>

Enviados a cosechar

Sacerdotes de la CORC trabajan para el Reino de Cristo

Por Susan Moses
Corresponsal

El Padre Juan Guerrero Morales, CORC, bautizó a 62 personas la primera semana que llegó al Santo Nombre de Jesús en Fort Worth, demostrando así que hay una gran necesidad de sacerdotes para servir a la comunidad de habla Hispánica. Él y otros cinco sacerdotes de México, pertenecientes a la Confraternidad Sacerdotal de Operarios del Reino de Cristo, sirven afanosamente en tres parroquias de la Diócesis de Fort Worth.

Fundada en 1962 en México por el Padre Enrique Amezcua Medina, la orden religiosa, siguiendo el ejemplo de Jesús que era carpintero, valora el trabajo manual.

“Cuando el P. Juan llegó el año pasado”, dijo Josie Herrera, la recepcionista de la iglesia, “inmediatamente notó que la iglesia ya necesitaba renovación y mantenimiento”. Él invitó a los miembros de la parroquia a ayudarlo con la limpieza, jardinería, y muchas otras cosas para mejorar la apariencia de la iglesia.

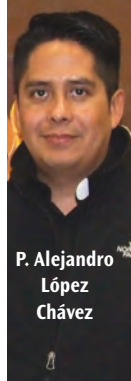
“Muchos de los feligreses llegaron y el P. Juan trabajó junto con ellos. Esto creó unidad en la iglesia”, continuó Herrera, feligrés del Santo Nombre desde su infancia.

Siendo de la primera generación de sacerdotes del seminario de CORC, el P. Guerrero y sus compañeros seminaristas construyeron sus propios dormitorios y salones de clase.

Ya construido el seminario, los estudiantes subsiguientes, incluyendo al Padre Alejandro López Chávez, CORC, del Inmaculado Corazón de María en Fort Worth, tenían otras tareas. “Nuestras responsabilidades eran la limpieza, la cocina y la jardinería”, dijo el P. López.



P. José Gildardo Álvarez Abonce



P. Alejandro López Chávez



P. Juan Guerrero Morales



P. Salvador Hernández



P. Eliseo Hernández

“La vida en el seminario incluía proporcionalmente estudio, oración y trabajo”, agregó el Padre Eliseo Hernández, CORC, párroco de la iglesia de *St. Matthew* en Arlington.

Muchas de las cualidades del sacerdocio de la CORC tuvieron su origen en los viajes que hicieron en 1944 el P. Amezcua y el obispo de Tacámbaro a la región sureña de la diócesis. Él se conmovió con los desafíos que enfrentaban los sacerdotes rurales, entre ellos aislamiento y falta de capacitación; esto influyó en la orden que él fundó 20 años después. El P. Amezcua también valoró el riguroso estudio de teología, por eso la orden proporciona a sus sacerdotes una sólida formación teológica en la preparatoria y en seminarios de enseñanza superior en México y en estudios de posgrado en España y en Roma.

El P. López disfruta compartir los frutos de sus estudios con su parroquia. En sus diez meses en el Inmaculado Corazón de María, la parroquia ha agregado clases de educación, retiros, ejecuciones musicales, y conferencias para aumentar la participación de los fieles y afirmar el entendimiento de su fe.

“La comunidad hispano parlante necesita sacerdotes que conozcan y compartan sus costumbres”, dijo el P. López. “Tener sacerdotes de México ayuda a los latinos a conser-

var sus tradiciones y a mantener la puerta abierta a ambas sociedades”.

Vivir en comunidad es importante también para los sacerdotes de CORC. Les ayuda a “crecer en espiritualidad y hermandad”, dijo el P. Hernández. “Predicamos acerca de amarnos los unos a los otros, y viviendo en comunidad aprendemos a amar mejor”.

Nosotros comemos juntos, por lo menos, una vez al día; y no es raro que nos juntemos para las tres comidas”, el P. Hernández dijo. “Trabajamos como sacerdotes diocesanos, pero vivimos con sacerdotes religiosos”.

Los Operarios, como ellos mismos se llaman, son un grupo muy unido. “Nos cubrimos y nos ayudamos para el cuidado de las parroquias. Trabajamos muy bien en comunidad”, dijo el P. Guerrero.

Actualmente, aproximadamente 150 sacerdotes de CORC sirven en más de 40 parroquias en México, Colombia, Puerto Rico, España e Italia así como en California, Oklahoma y Texas. La orden llegó a la Diócesis de Fort Worth hace casi cuatro años.

Desde que los Operarios llegaron, las parroquias del Santo Nombre de Jesús, del Inmaculado Corazón de María y de *St. Matthew* han agregado por lo menos una Misa el fin de semana. Estas iglesias sirven aproximadamente a 17,000 familias.

“Aquí tenemos muchos grupos con muchas actividades, pero necesitamos unirnos y llegar a ser un pueblo eucarístico”, explicó el P. Hernández. Y continuó diciendo, “Jesús es substancialmente presente en la Sagrada Eucaristía. Este es el Sacramento de Sacramentos, y sigue siendo lo más importante”.

Sacerdotes Confraternidad de Operarios del Reino de Cristo (CORC) sirviendo en la Diócesis de Fort Worth

P. José Gildardo Álvarez Abonce
párroco; Parroquia del Inmaculado Corazón de María en Fort Worth

P. Salvador Hernández
vicario parroquial; Parroquia del Santo Nombre de Jesús en Fort Worth

P. Alejandro López Chávez
vicario parroquial; Parroquia del Inmaculado Corazón de María en Fort Worth

P. Hector Magallón
vicario parroquial; Parroquia de St. Matthew en Arlington

P. Eliseo Hernández
párroco; Parroquia de St. Matthew en Arlington

P. Juan Guerrero Morales
párroco; Parroquia del Santo Nombre de Jesús en Fort Worth

Más información sobre el Confraternidad de Operarios del Reino de Cristo

<http://confraternidadorc.org/>

PENSAMIENTOS DE UN PREDICADOR

Se encuentra lo extraordinario en dos vidas ordinarias

por Carmelo Mele, O.P.

DOS JUBILADAS DEL TRABAJO CON LA DIÓCESIS DE FORT WORTH

Hace un mes dos mujeres maravillosas se jubilaron de sus ministerios en el Centro Católico. Son personas humildes con virtudes que han enriquecido la calidad de vida entre los servidores de la Iglesia de Fort Worth. Ha habido otros jubilados recientes cuyas contribuciones al funcionamiento de la diócesis son más conocidas, pero estas mujeres sobresalen por sus aportes al ambiente feliz. Vale presentar a las dos como modelos de la colaboración en el sitio de trabajo.

UNA RECEPCIONISTA SUMAMENTE ACOGEDORA

Aquellos que han venido al Centro Católico o han telefonado a alguien allá, a lo mejor conocen la voz amistosa de Bernice Martin. Ella estuvo a la puerta principal por quince años saludando a todos los que hicieron interrogantes. Típicamente les dijo ella: “¿Cómo puedo servirle?” No le importaba si la persona llevara hilachos, le habría tratado como si fuera el alcalde. Siempre Bernice hizo todo lo posible para conectar al visitante con el empleado con quien necesitara hablar.

Nacida en un hogar mexicano-americano, Bernice manejó las llamadas tanto en español como en inglés con igual fineza. Pero lo más notable de su modo de trabajar fue la compasión. Tuvo gran interés en el bien de todos, sean visitantes al Centro Católico por primera vez o sean empleados con veinticinco años de trabajo.

Bernice tiene otras cualidades que la hicieron una colaboradora excelente. Por ejemplo, siempre estuvo dispuesta a ayudar a los otros trabajadores con sus tareas. Varias veces le pedimos auxilio con la tarea de llenar carpetas con papeles. Nos dijo Bernice sin excepción: “Me alegra ayudarle si puedo”. Igualmente llamativo fue su modo de perdonar las faltas. Fue encargada de la reservación de los salones en el Centro. A veces hice la reservación del salón de clases principal en un día equivocado y tuve

que pedirle que hiciera el cambio. Me decía algo como: “No se preocupe; no me molesta hacer cambios”. Otra característica que destacó el trabajo de Bernice fue su habilidad para hacer collages de recuerdo para aquellos que iban a jubilarse. Siempre fueron piezas de arte que los jubilados apreciaron mucho y, sin duda, ya cuelgan en las paredes de sus casas como un premio por su servicio.

UNA PROFESIONAL CONOCIDA POR EL GOZO

El mismo día que abandonó el Centro Católico Bernice Martin, se jubiló también Judy Locke. Por los últimos 13 años, ella fue responsable de supervisor localmente los asuntos más sensibles en la Iglesia Católica; esos son, el ambiente seguro y las relaciones con víctimas del abuso de los niños por trabajadores de la Iglesia. Llevó a cabo sus menesteres con tanto profesionalismo que todos han aplaudido su trabajo como una audiencia del salón de concierto adularía a un pianista virtuoso. Se podía contar con Judy siempre por la sabiduría, la discreción, y la confidencialidad.

Varias veces cuando no me sentía seguro como tratar una situación delicada, fui a Judy para consulta. Invariablemente me dio consejo sensato y práctico. Ella había estudiado mucho ambas la psicología y la teología de modo que la hicieron persona sumamente prudente. En las corrientes inciertas que ocasionalmente dominan la vida, Judy está como un faro marcando el pasaje seguro.

Con todas estas grandes cualidades que tiene Judy, tal vez se le distinga más por el gozo. Siempre parece alegre. Una vez Winston



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.

Churchill dijo del Presidente Franklin Roosevelt: “Estar cerca de él fue como abrir una botella de champaña, y conocerlo fue como beberla”. Es así con Judy. Siempre es dispuesta a compartir con otra persona la risa del corazón contento. Como si fuera contagiosa, deja a la persona sintiéndose más agradecida por el don de la vida.

HICIERON LO NECESARIO PARA DESARROLLAR LA VIRTUD

Se ven en Bernice Martin y Judy Locke cualidades extraordinariamente humanas. Son derivadas de las virtudes de la fe, la esperanza, y el amor, pero tienen que desarrollarse con la diligencia. La compasión y el espíritu de colaboración que mostró Bernice fueron productos de una decisión de vivir con el corazón fijo en el otro. Asimismo Judy no nació con tanto gozo y prudencia. Más bien crecieron estas virtudes por su empeño en confiar en el Misterio Último que es Dios y que nos ama a pesar de nuestras faltas. La beata Teresa de Calcuta decía: “No todos nosotros podemos hacer cosas grandes, pero sí podemos hacer cosas pequeñas con gran amor”. Las vidas y trabajos de Bernice Martin y de Judy Locke brillan con esta verdad.

Mecanismos para reportar conducta sexual inapropiada

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

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

Mecanismo para reportar abuso

Llamar al Departamento de servicios para la familia y de protección del estado de Texas (Servicios de protección al

“I went to the Food Stamp Office to get help with child care and was told I made \$20 too much a month,” Watson says, recalling the bureaucratic nit-picking that prevented assistance.

Her mother suggested asking the Church for help. Citing bad experiences with clergy and a loss of faith, she refused.

In the early 1980s, former St. Andrew pastor Father Peter Lyons, TOR, started a food pantry in the church sacristy. As demand increased, Brother Edward (Ed) Bennett began managing the ministry from the pastoral office.

“One night he showed up on my doorstep with food, and said, ‘your mother told me you needed this,’” Watson recalls. “I told him I didn’t need charity and could take care of my children.”

The soft-spoken Franciscan asked to step inside for a chat. Sitting at her kitchen table, Br. Ed questioned why she could accept help from her parents but not her church family. Watson insisted she didn’t have a church family.

“Your mother tells me you still try to live your life as a Catholic, so maybe you believe more than you think you do,” he told Watson.

The retired church worker never forgot the next words he uttered.

“This isn’t charity. This is family helping family, and someday, somehow, you’ll be able to give back.”

Years later, that’s exactly what happened. Watson remarried and found a job as the administrative assistant for a vice president at Meridian Oil.

“Life was easier and I thought I could give back,” she says.

While recovering from a car accident, the organizational pro volunteered to tackle the food pantry’s paperwork. When Br. Ed left the parish, St. Andrew pastor, Father Warren Murphy, asked Watson to consider supervising the

food pantry ministry, a salaried position.

“I didn’t want to do it,” said Watson, who planned to return to her lucrative job at the oil company.

But as she walked from the food pantry’s location in the community center to the parish office one day, three different needy clients thanked her for the help they received.

“I felt like God was hitting me over the head with a baseball bat,” Watson continues. “Whether or not I wanted the job, I realized this is where He wanted me to be.”

During her years at the food pantry, the retired director watched the volunteer pool grow from 10 volunteers to almost 200. Shelves are kept stocked with canned vegetables, peanut butter, rice, toilet paper, and other staples thanks to the generosity of St. Andrew parishioners, school children, and religious education students.

“This parish is very generous, so we’re able to supplement what we get from the Tarrant Area Food Bank,” Watson says, explaining the ministry pays a Shared Maintenance Fee in exchange for products.

The St. Andrew food pantry — one of the four largest in Tarrant County — is also a “client choice” operation. Volunteers help clients select items on a shopping list with amounts determined by family size. The interaction fosters communication and goodwill.

“Volunteers in this ministry are wonderful because they are there to help people,” Watson points out. “We get to know the

people we serve, and if we find out they’re having trouble paying a utility bill, we can refer them to someone.”

Making food pantry clients feel welcomed is a priority.

“This is not a government organization. This is Church,” she insists. “To me it’s my Catholic faith in action and what I was taught to do as a child. We evangelize every time we open the door.”

Watson believes the emotional and financial difficulties experienced as a young woman prepared her to manage and grow St. Andrew’s outreach program. She sees herself in the worried faces of mothers who come to the

church for food, formula, and diapers.

“I bring common sense and real life experience to social ministry,” she explains. “I often wondered if some of the bad times I went through in my life were God’s preparation for me to take this job.”

Serving others helped her put a troubled past behind her. Walking to the food pantry one morning, Watson had an epiphany.

“It didn’t matter what anybody else did to me. It mattered what I did, and that’s what faith is all about,” she adds. “My faith is strong. It got stronger with every package of food I handed over.”

“This is not a government organization. This is Church. To me it’s my Catholic faith in action... We evangelize every time we open the door.”

— *Patty Watson, retired social justice director*



Watson (L) works the St. Andrew Food Pantry with some volunteers. While she was director of the food pantry, volunteer participation multiplied 20-fold.

GOOD NEWSMAKER

Table of Plenty

Retired social justice director Pattie Watson serves up more than food

STORY AND PHOTOS BY JOAN KURKOWSKI-GILLEN / CORRESPONDENT



Pattie Watson and her mother, Maxine Howell, have been longtime parishioners — and dedicated servants — at St. Andrew Church in Fort Worth.

THE LINE OUTSIDE ST. ANDREW'S FOOD PANTRY BEGINS TO FORM HOURS BEFORE THE DOORS OPEN AT 12:30 P.M.

"They like to visit with one another," explains Pattie Watson, observing the camaraderie of senior citizens, low-wage workers, and disabled clients who come to the parish each week for groceries. "When I first started working here 24 years ago, we served about 30 people a week. Now we average 30 to 60 every time we open the door."

The social ministry director, who retired in February, has a unique understanding of the struggles facing resource-challenged

families. There was a time when she needed help from St. Andrew Church to feed her own children.

"I was a battered wife," admits Watson, who left her parent's home in Southwest Fort Worth to elope.

Her husband's drinking and drug use eventually began to affect the marriage.

"He was a nice man when he was sober. But he wasn't sober that often," remembers the abused wife who never knew what would precipitate a beating. "I stayed for my kids and my Catholic upbringing which didn't allow divorce."

The night she left he almost killed her. After regaining consciousness, the young mother loaded her children into a car and

drove to a newly opened women's shelter.

"He ripped the hair out of the back of my head. I was bruised from shoulders to hips and had two black eyes," Watson says, describing her injuries.

While her father drove over to rescue the family, shelter workers tried to take the broken woman to an emergency room.

"But I didn't want to go to a hospital and leave my kids at the shelter," she remembers. "They had been through enough."

Moving back to her hometown, Watson worked to reclaim her life. She fought for custody of her older children and was granted a divorce. The family went for

"This isn't charity. This is family helping family, and someday, somehow, you'll be able to give back."

— *Brother Ed Bennett*

counseling, and the former abuse victim took classes to help other battered women.

Her parents, Milo and Maxine Howell — longtime members of St. Andrew Church — helped as much as they could, but paying bills and putting food on the table was a challenge for the mom turned breadwinner.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 47