

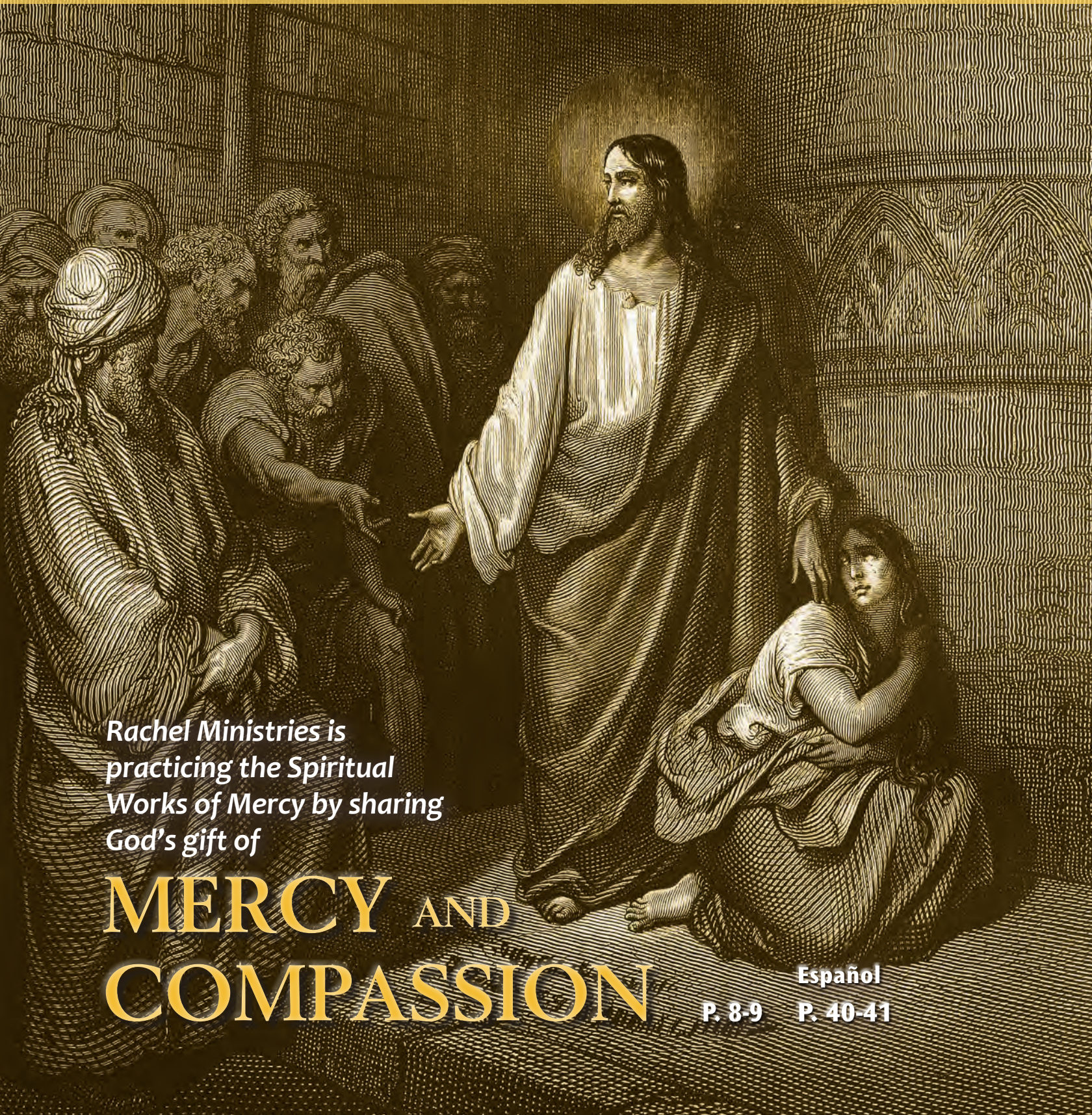


NEWSMAGAZINE North Texas Catholic

Bringing the Good News to the Diocese of Fort Worth

Vol. 32 No. 3

May / June 2016



Rachel Ministries is practicing the Spiritual Works of Mercy by sharing God's gift of

**MERCY AND
COMPASSION**

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Deacon Joe Keating was in St. Peter's Square when Pope Francis was elected to the papacy, and his one Easter as a deacon, he was able to chant the Gospel during the pope's Easter Mass in St. Peter's Square.



8 RACHEL MINISTRIES BRINGS WOMEN GOD'S AMAZING MERCY

Through weekend retreats and compassionate peer ministry, Rachel Ministries helps connect those who have been involved in abortions with the mercy of their loving God, lifting a burden of guilt some have lived with for decades.



12 32ND GOOD FRIDAY ROSARY FOR LIFE DRAWS NEARLY 500

Bishop Michael Olson led the crowd in praying the Rosary in front of the Planned Parenthood abortion facility in Southwest Fort Worth on Good Friday. He also asked the gathering to remember and pray for Chuck Pelletier, who, along with his wife Pat, organized and promoted the Rosary Vigil each year. Chuck Pelletier, ardent advocate for the unborn and Vietnam War hero, passed away Jan. 14.



20 SAINT JOSEPH SEMINARY DAMAGED BY RECORD FLOODING

Saint Joseph Abbey and Seminary in Southern Louisiana suffered \$3 million in damage March 11, when waters rose higher than a historic 1927 flood. Fourteen seminarians from the diocese attend the seminary. The Benedictines have no flood insurance and are appealing for assistance to help pay for repairs to the campus.



5 HAUCK AND MARTIN ORDAINED TRANSITIONAL DEACONS

Stephen Hauck and John W. Martin share one thing in common — other than their vocation to the priesthood. Both come from careers that seemed to predict they'd not end up serving the Church in ministry. They were ordained transitional deacons April 9 at St. Maria Goretti Church.

10 PELLETIER HAS HEADED OUR CATHOLIC SCHOOLS FOR A YEAR

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From fixing sagging porches to painting mission building interiors, two groups from Sacred Heart Church, Seymour and Sacred Heart Church, Wichita Falls helped the poor and the Catholic mission that serves them.

North Texas Catholic



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Year of Mercy shines light on works of mercy

The Year of Mercy has captured our attention and our imaginations. Everywhere we look there seems to be another entreaty to us to keep the Year of Mercy in mind, to incorporate it into our lives, to keep it always before us. It has become a new way for us to identify as Catholic people. Not that we didn't always seek to be a people of compassion and tenderness toward those who need our love, attention, and help, but now, it seems the tenderhearted nature of Jesus calls to us to respond with even more intensity.

In this issue of the *North Texas Catholic*, there are numerous compassionate outreaches that offer us an idea of how seriously many among us are incorporating the ideas and actions of mercy into their ministries here in the diocese.

Two Sacred Heart churches in our Northwest deanery made mission trips to Appalachia in March. Their work brought them into contact with poor isolated folks living so far into the heart of rural America's poverty, some of them said they hadn't even had a conversation with another person for a long time. Their loneliness and isolation was intense.

These everyday Christians from Seymour and Wichita Falls become everyday missionaries, as they helped repair homes and brought love and prayer to folks living in conditions seminarian Jonathan Demma described as dangerous and unhealthy.

Pete Agosto, a parishioner from Sacred Heart, Wichita Falls, there with his children, also volunteering, said "We saw Christ in them.... They want the same things you and I want, to raise our families in a safe home with the best things we can provide them. And they're just not able to. They just need a hand. They're overwhelmed."

Rachel Ministries Coordinator Betsy Kopor continues in this special year, to do what she has done for many years, extend a hand of mercy to those caught in the grip of fear and shame that often is the hidden outcome of having been involved in an abortion. But, Betsy said, on the Rachel Vineyard Retreat, "They come to know that God forgives them; their child forgives them; and once they know those two things, they can start to forgive themselves."

Asked what she was doing for the Jubilee Year of mercy, Betsy responded, "Exactly what I am doing. We have always been a ministry of mercy, and this Year of Mercy is a celebration of our ministry, just as it is."

Jeff Hensley

Seminarian Joseph Keating chants Gospel during papal Easter Mass

by Joan Kurkowski-Gillen
Correspondent

VATICANCITY— When the Eternal Word Television Network (EWTN) broadcasted the Papal Mass from St. Peter's Square on Easter Sunday morning, North Texas Catholics had the opportunity to see one of their own seminarians on the altar.

After receiving a blessing from Pope Francis, Deacon Joe Keating chanted the Gospel in Latin during the Solemn Mass of Easter on March 27.

"Serving for the Holy Father on Easter Sunday was a joyful and humbling experience. This was my one Easter as a deacon, and I will never forget it," says the transitional deacon who moved to Rome in 2011 to continue his studies for the priesthood at Pontifical North American College.

"My interaction with the Holy Father was short, but incredibly meaningful; I was also in St. Peter's Square on the night he was elected to the papacy, and so this was a fitting bookend for my time studying here in Rome," he added.

A musician and member of the marching band/orchestra in high school and at Texas Tech University, he joined



Photo by Pontifical North American College

Dcn. Joe Keating with Father James Wilcox, diocesan director of vocations.

the seminary choir and was eventually selected as one of the cantors.

"During that time I learned a lot about singing technique and how to read chant notation," he explains.

When two of Dcn. Keating's classmates were chosen to serve at the Easter Vigil but became unable to participate in the Sunday liturgy, they asked their friend from Texas to step in.

"I am always humbled to be entrusted with the proclamation of the Gospel, and even more so to have proclaimed it to so many faithful from all around the world," he said.

Dcn. Keating will be ordained to the priesthood on May 21 in St. Patrick Cathedral.

DIOCESAN, LOCAL & STATE NEWSBRIEFS

Long-time columnist and friend of the NTC, Pat Poundstone, died Mar. 25

FORT WORTH — Long-time friend of the *North Texas Catholic*, Pat Poundstone died peacefully Mar. 25, and her life was remembered and celebrated with the Mass of Christian Burial April 4 at her home parish of St. Andrew, to which she gave loyal service for decades. Among her many accomplishments, Pat served as president of the Diocesan Council of Catholic Women in the Dioceses of Amarillo and Fort Worth. She was also a founding member of the constituting committee of the Texas Conference of Churches and she and her husband Dave were active in various ministries in St. Andrew's.

In addition to serving as president of the diocesan DCCW, Pat served as its PR chair, writing a column for the *NTC* and serving as our special correspondent. And, unlike our other fine writers, Pat was not allowed to take pay for her contributions, because Dave said it would just mess up their income taxes. And he was probably right about that. Dave would accompany Pat on many of her assignments, serving as her photographer, duties he carried out very well.

Pat and Dave were both for many years a beloved part of the *North*



Photo courtesy Poundstone family

Pat Poundstone is seen in a photo with her husband, Dave.

Texas Catholic, and we always tried to compensate for that lack of pay with bylines and heartfelt appreciation. We continue to hold the two of them in high esteem, confident that they both have received the reward due any of God's faithful servants: joy-filled life with Him for eternity.

Memorials: In lieu of flowers, donations may be given to Catholic Charities.

Pat is survived by her children, David Poundstone (Rita); Catherine Poundstone; Mary Miller (Ken); Patricia Beans (Michael); Thomas Poundstone; and Elise Alexander (Darren). She is also survived by six grandchildren and five great-grandchildren.

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

**Joseph Paul Keating
Nghia Trung Nguyen
Matthew Robert Tatyrek**

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 21st, 2016 at 10 am.

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

You are cordially invited to a reception immediately following.



**CLERGY ASSIGNMENTS FOR THE
DIOCESE OF FORT WORTH**



by Most Rev. Michael F. Olson, STD,

PASTORS

Rev. Alejandro Hernandez Garcia, CORC, new to the Diocese of Fort Worth, has been assigned as **Pastor** of St. Matthew Parish in Arlington, effective Mar. 4, 2016.

PAROCHIAL VICARS

Rev. Msgr. Francis Boakye Tawiah, returning to the Diocese of Fort Worth, has been assigned as **Parochial Vicar** of St. Patrick Cathedral, effective April 1, 2016.

Two paths lead toward one destination

Stephen Hauck and John W. Martin ordained transitional deacons

Photos by Juan Guajardo
Associate Editor

By Susan Moses
Correspondent

The saying that “the Lord works in mysterious ways” proved true for Stephen Hauck and John W. Martin regarding their calls to the priesthood. Their diaconate ordination April 9, where they took the next important step closer to becoming priests, demonstrated that the Lord also works in beautiful and joyful ways.

Stephen credits Metroplex traffic as a small factor in his decision to say “yes” to God. His daily commute from his job as a computer programmer for a wood manufacturing company in South Dallas was a grind. He developed a habit of dropping by a church and having a holy hour of Eucharistic adoration late every afternoon. He explained, “I could sit in traffic, or I could have a holy hour.”

His hours of prayer helped him make the decision to quit his job and focus on discerning God’s call.

“I’d been working for several years, but I wasn’t fulfilled in work,” Stephen said. “The things I thought should make me happy, like a new truck or a new TV, didn’t. It was not enough for me.”

Stephen entered Holy Trinity Seminary in 2006 and transferred to St. Joseph Seminary College in Louisiana to finish his collegiate seminary degree in 2012. He will be ordained to the priesthood next year after completing his graduate theological studies at St. Mary’s Seminary in Houston.

John’s journey to Holy Orders



Approximately 500 local Catholics came out for the diaconate ordination of Stephen Hauck and John Martin at St. Maria Goretti Parish in Arlington April 9.

began earlier and has taken longer than Stephen’s. Raised in a non-Catholic family, John remembers watching a Mass on TV around the age of seven and thinking he’d like to be a priest. As a teen, he attended Mass with his Catholic friends, and the idea still resonated with him, but he dismissed it. “Too much education,” he thought.

After high school, he said “yes” to a different authority: the U.S. Marines. His service took him to Okinawa, Japan, where he converted to Catholicism. With nine years of service and a sergeant’s rank, he left the Marines and used his aviation expertise at Bell Helicopter, where he worked in quality assurance for 22 years.

“I felt like I wasn’t giving enough of myself to God or to his people,” said John. He began talking with priests and attending vocation discernment programs while he



The two newly ordained deacons flank Bishop Olson on the altar, as they assist him during the Mass following their ordination. (Left — Deacon Stephen Hauck and Right — Deacon John W. Martin).

continued to work. After another year, he enrolled at Sacred Heart Seminary and School of Theology in Hales Corners, Wisconsin.

Joy was palpable even before the trumpet fanfare began the Ordination Mass at St. Maria Goretti on April 9. This was the first celebration of Holy Orders at the church in Arlington, which is commemorating its 75th anniversary this year.

John and Stephen selected the Ordination Mass readings, which Bishop Michael Olson entwined to explain their roles as deacons and their lives in Christ. The second reading, from Acts 6:1-7, told the origin of the diaconate ministry, when seven reputable men were appointed to serve those in need within the early Church community.

“Your vocation as deacon is an essential part of your priestly ministry. It prevents exclusion based on differences and shows that God’s

grace is deeper than the walls built by sin,” explained Bishop Olson, who added that John and Stephen will always remain deacons, like all priests and bishops.

The Lord’s call can be difficult, as seen in the first reading from Jeremiah, when the Lord says to Jeremiah that He dedicated him as a prophet before he was born. “You must answer, and say ‘yes’ in faith. You can trust in the one who chose you,” said the bishop. Like the prophet, the deacons can point to renewal and hope even in times of exile and destruction.

When the disciples of Jesus saw Him walking toward them on the stormy waters at night in the Gospel of John, they began to be afraid. Bishop Olson compared that to Jesus coming to us in the chaos and storms of life, adding that we can trust Jesus today and every day.

The bishop also recommended to John and Stephen that they don’t leave the shore without Jesus in the boat.

After the prayer of ordination and the laying on of the bishop’s hands, the investiture with the stole and dalmatic, and the handing on of the book of Gospels, John and Stephen were welcomed into the Order of Deacons by the many deacons in attendance.

The newly ordained responded promptly to their call to service. The next morning, Stephen and John served as deacons at Sunday Mass at their respective home parishes of St. Maria Goretti and St. John the Apostle in North Richland Hills.



A painting depicting Jesus of Divine Mercy is held among the faithful as Pope Benedict XVI leads the *Regina Coeli* prayer from the balcony of his residence in Castel Gandolfo, Italy, April 19, 2009. (CNS photo/Max Rossi, Reuters)

Celebrating
the great
Feast of

MERCY

Story and Photos
by Lance Murray

OUR MOTHER OF MERCY CATHOLIC CHURCH IN SOUTHEAST FORT WORTH WAS FILLED TO CAPACITY APRIL 3 FOR THE CELEBRATION OF DIVINE MERCY SUNDAY.

Monsignor Francis Boakye Tiawah started the day with Mass, with parishioners from Our Mother of Mercy, All Saints Catholic Church, and Our Lady of Guadalupe Catholic Church joining together to hear a special message in honor of the Jubilee Year of Mercy as proclaimed by Pope Francis.

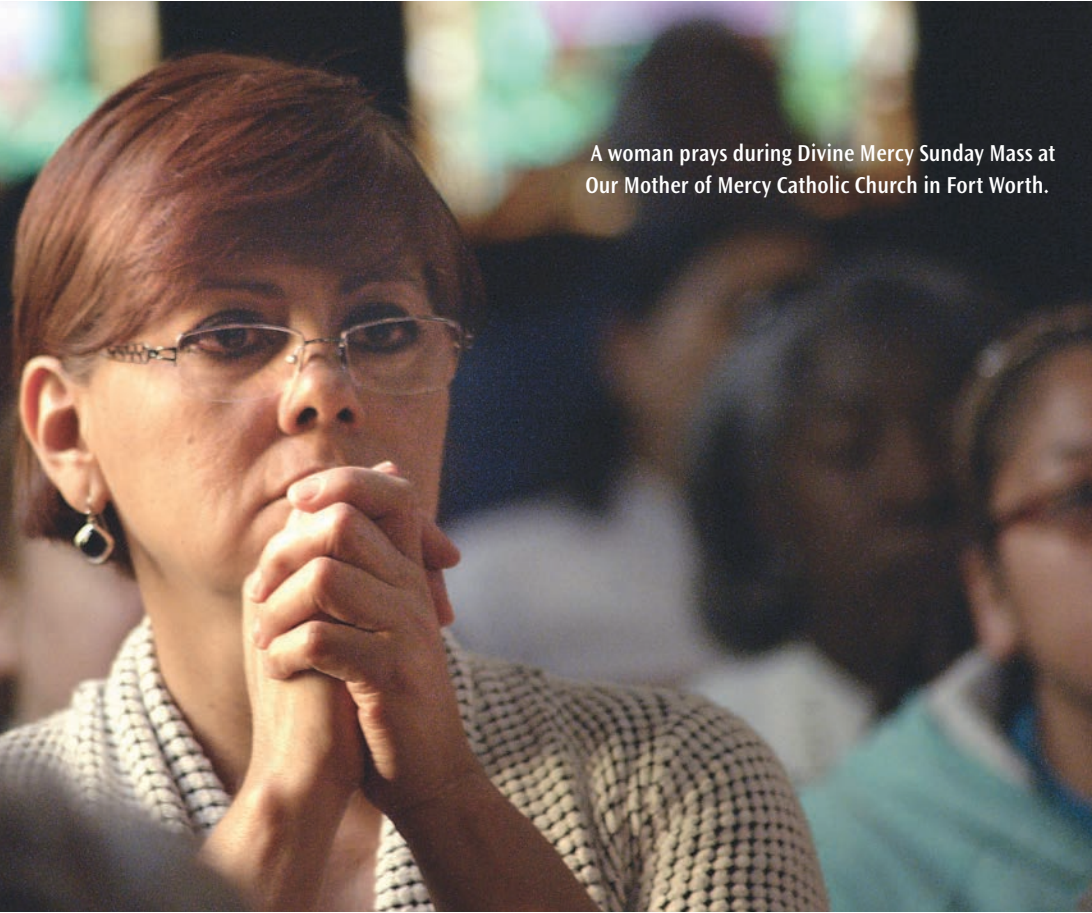
The diverse group of Catholic faithful celebrated the day with prayer, readings from the Sacred Scripture and papal writings on Divine Mercy, Adoration before the Blessed Sacrament, and Benediction.

The Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy runs from the Feast of the Immaculate Conception on Dec. 8, 2015 to the Feast of Christ the King on Nov. 20, 2016.



A member of the Ladies Auxiliary of the Knights of Peter Claver prays during the Mass on April 3.

“On that day the very deep
ocean of graces upon the



A woman prays during Divine Mercy Sunday Mass at Our Mother of Mercy Catholic Church in Fort Worth.

What is Divine Mercy Sunday?

- Jesus appeared various times to St. Maria Faustina Kowalksa, a young Polish nun, during the 1930's.
- Though God's message of Divine Mercy was nothing new to the Church, St. Faustina's revelations and messages from the Lord sparked a stronger focus on the mercy of Christ.
- Out of those revelations, which are documented in the *Diary of Saint Maria Faustina Kowalska*, were born various devotions focused on Jesus' boundless mercy: the Chaplet of Divine Mercy, the Divine Mercy Novena, the image of Christ's Divine Mercy (opposite page), prayer at 3 p.m. (the Hour of Great Mercy) and, of course, Divine Mercy Sunday.
- Divine Mercy Sunday was not based solely on St. Faustina's revelations and was not altogether a new feast. The second Sunday after Easter — the Octave Day of Easter — was already a solemnity meant to give thanks to God for the goodness and mercy He showed the world through the Easter Mystery.
- Divine Mercy Sunday then, as Jesus told St. Faustina, was to make the reality of God's endless mercy even more apparent to us.
- On April 30, 2000 (the same day St. Faustina was canonized), St. Pope John Paul II declared that henceforth the Octave Day of Easter would be known as Divine Mercy Sunday and every diocese in the world was to celebrate it as such.
- On this Feast of Mercy, Jesus promised that all faithful who seek his mercy would receive it in abundance — "a whole ocean of graces" and complete cleansing of their sins — if on that day they go to Confession, receive Holy Communion, and trust in his Divine Mercy.



ights
April 3.



Women adore the Most Blessed Sacrament during Adoration on Divine Mercy Sunday.



A woman prays the Rosary before the Divine Mercy Sunday Mass.

... depths of my tender mercy are open. I pour out a whole
... those souls who approach the fount of my mercy."

— Jesus to St. Faustina, *Diary of Saint Maria Faustina Kowalksa*, entry 699

You are forgiven

During this Year of Mercy, Rachel Ministries is continuing its 15 year mission to bring God's boundless mercy to women and men suffering from abortion

Looking at the Works of Mercy:

In this issue of the NTC we highlight the spiritual works of mercy performed by many caring Rachel Ministries counselors and volunteers. The ministry for years has been letting women know that there is hope and healing available for them after abortion and that they deserve it.

If you feel called to attend a Rachel's Vineyard Retreat please visit racheltx.org for upcoming dates.



by Mary Lou Seewoester
Correspondent

LISA, A 40-YEAR-OLD MOTHER OF THREE, CARRIED THE SHAME AND GUILT OF A PAINFUL SECRET FOR MORE THAN 20 YEARS.

She had an abortion at the age of 18 and feared that she could never be forgiven. Then, in 2010, she called Rachel Ministries, and on the other end of that phone call heard the voice of mercy.

"I was so nervous," Lisa remembered, "but her voice was so compassionate. I felt safe telling her my story. It was easy because I wasn't being judged. I was being held in compassion. It was the merciful voice that I needed to hear."

That merciful voice belonged to Betsy Kopor, Rachel Ministries coordinator for the Fort Worth Diocese. Kopor has her own story to tell and experienced her Rachel's Vineyard Retreat in 1999 through the Dallas Diocese.

"That retreat turned around this horrible thing that I had struggled with for 18 years," Kopor recalled. "My life was so dramatically changed by the Lord and through his mercy that I wanted to help other women receive this healing and hope from the Lord."

Kopor and her husband, Steve, trained for two years before starting Rachel Ministries, a 501c3 non-profit in the diocese with then-Bishop Joseph Delaney's blessing. In 2009, Bishop Kevin Vann created a diocesan office for Rachel Ministries.

The ministry is named for the biblical Rachel who, in Jeremiah 31:15, "mourns for her children ... because they are no more."

Though Rachel Ministries sponsors several post-abortion programs, Rachel's Vineyard Retreat has been the most helpful and effective, Kopor said.

There are six weekend retreats a year in

"I experienced the Father running toward me and I truly felt mercy for the first time in my life. It gave me the courage to be merciful to others."

— Lisa,
Rachel's Vineyard Retreat participant

Catholic and interdenominational formats, and two of those are offered in Spanish. Each retreat team includes a licensed counselor, a priest, and a facilitator who has completed her own Rachel's Vineyard Retreat.

All of the retreats are rooted in Scripture and the Catholic form of the retreat includes Mass, Adoration, and Confession. Kopor also stressed the importance of confidentiality and asks everyone to sign an agreement not to identify anyone from the retreat.

"Most women and men think abortion is the unforgivable sin. There is so much shame and the secret is just so big," Kopor said, "so they keep it to themselves."

But on retreat, "they come to know that God forgives them; their child forgives them; and once they know those two things they can start to forgive themselves," she added.

Lisa and others testify to the profound healing, mercy, forgiveness, and freedom

they receive on the Rachel's Vineyard Retreat.

"That weekend began a healing journey that I could never have done on my own," Lisa remembered. "I had confessed but I couldn't forgive myself I experienced the Father running toward me and I truly felt mercy for the first time in my life. It gave me the courage to be merciful to others."

Lisa explained that her healing touched many areas of her life. She had a previous marriage that had been annulled, and was drinking and struggling in her second marriage before her retreat.

"From that forgiveness, I was able to come to my marriage and to forgive. It brought healing for both of us in our marriage ... and after Rachel, I didn't drink. Something else had filled me up. A hole in my heart had finally been filled."

"These retreats are a unique blend of spiritual and emotional help," Kopor noted. "It provides a lot of different types of healing, and one of those is relational healing."

Kopor estimated that one in three women have had an abortion, indicating that for every abortion there is a man who also needs forgiveness and healing.

She recounted the story of an elderly woman who struggled to tell her husband of 50 years that she wanted to attend a Rachel's Vineyard Retreat because she had an abortion before she met him. When she finally found the courage to tell him, he asked if he could go with her because he, too, had participated in an abortion, but had never told anyone.

"They came on retreat together, mourned the loss of their children with

each other and had a dramatic healing," Kopor concluded.

Raymond, who experienced his retreat over a year ago, explained that men suffer post-abortion pain differently than women.

"It's more suppressed," he said. "It might be more difficult for us to put our finger on it, but the pain is there and doesn't go away. I tried to cover it up with noise and work ... but I was a corpse, walking dead, functioning but not really living."

He said, "the main reason for a man to go on this retreat is to come out of that darkness and into true life ... and to know that he can be forgiven, restored, and loved."

When recently asked what she was doing for the Jubilee Year of Mercy, Kopor responded, "exactly what I am doing! We have always been a ministry of mercy, and this Year of Mercy is a celebration of our ministry just as it is."

Kopor encourages anyone suffering from an abortion to call Rachel Ministries' helpline: **817-923-4757 for English, 817-886-4760 for Spanish, or visit their website, racheltx.org.**

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Students sing during the annual Diocesan Eighth Grade Mass celebrated last year at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Church in Keller. Starting this year, the Mass will move to St. Patrick Cathedral.
(Photo by Joan Kurkowski-Gillen / NTC)

As you learn more, your faith, too, will

GROW!

Catholic Schools: A look back at Superintendent Jennifer Pelletier's first year and her efforts to encourage greater Catholic identity in the classroom

**By Joan Kurkowski-Gillen
Correspondent**

PERHAPS THE OPENING WORDS OF THE CHARLES DICKENS CLASSIC *A TALE OF TWO CITIES* BEST DESCRIBES JENNIFER PELLETIER'S FIRST YEAR AS SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENT IN THE DIOCESE OF FORT WORTH: IT WAS THE BEST OF TIMES AND THE WORST OF TIMES.

A renewed emphasis on Catholic identity in the schools and efforts to transition the historic Our Mother of Mercy campus to a Cristo Rey College Preparatory High School are two triumphs

achieved by the seasoned administrator since assuming the leadership post last April 15.

But the year also was fraught with tragedy. Longtime Catholic school educator and principal of Keller's St. Elizabeth Ann Seton School, Kay Burrell, passed away on the first day of classes. Rafael Rondón, principal of Muenster's Sacred Heart Catholic School, was ministering to students when he died Nov. 16 from an apparent heart attack. And the superintendent experienced personal loss when her father, Chuck Pelletier, a well-known advocate for the unborn, succumbed to a respiratory illness in January after a lengthy hospital stay.

"It's been a year packed with ups and downs,"

admits Pelletier, who found inspiration in trying moments.

After the sudden death of Sacred Heart's principal, the Catholic school superintendent spent 10 days on the school's campus offering guidance and support. In return, she witnessed how people in the rural, farming town banded together in prayer and compassion.

"That community is unbelievable," she recalls. "I'll never forget how they responded to me and to the Rondón family."

Pelletier says each one of the four high schools and 18 elementary schools in the diocese is uniquely gifted in different ways. All Saints began dual lan-

guage instruction in Pre-K last fall. Cassata High School continues to serve disadvantaged high schoolers.

"It's definitely a priority to protect the uniqueness of each one of those schools," she told the *North Texas Catholic*. "That's where community is built."

A Fort Worth native, the University of Dallas graduate served as president of St. Joseph School in Bryan (near College Station) before moving to Fort Worth. She also taught at St. Luke School in Irving and later at St. John's College High School in Washington D.C.

where she received the Gasser Award for her dedication to at-risk students. Voted on by faculty, the honor recognizes a peer who best exemplifies the ideals of the teaching profession.

The opportunity to live closer to family and work with Bishop Michael Olson enticed Pelletier to apply for the position of Catholic school superintendent left vacant after the retirement of Don Miller.

"There are so many exciting things going on. I wake up and think — what's today going to bring," Pelletier says enthusiastically.

Encouraging a greater sense of Catholic identity in the schools — a priority for the educator — resulted in many "firsts" for teachers and students. At the beginning of the academic year, a diocese-wide in-service day for staff began with a Mass celebrated by Bishop Olson. School principals later gathered for an inaugural "community building" retreat, and students of the newly re-named Cassata Catholic High School worshipped together, for the first time, at nearby St. Mary of the Assumption Church.

One of the biggest changes to the school calendar will occur May 4 when the traditional 8th grade Mass moves from its customary morning time slot at a different parish each year to a 5 p.m. liturgy at St. Patrick Cathedral. The new plan gives more parents the opportunity to attend and allows soon-to-be graduates the chance to see and understand the significance of the cathedral and bishop's chair. Called the *cathedra*, the large, wooden seat is a symbol of the bishop's teaching authority in the Church.

"When they move out of their parish to find a job or go to college, I want them to understand that St. Patrick is their home. That's the bishop's home, and they are always a part of it," Pelletier

Superintendent Jennifer Pelletier spent her first year making sure students are not just learning, but gaining a better sense of their Catholic identity.
(Photo courtesy St. Joseph Catholic School)



"I want our kids to know there's never a moment when they are not Catholic, and there's never a moment when the Catholic Church does not welcome them."

— Jennifer Pelletier
Superintendent of Catholic Schools

points out. "I don't want them to have a notion anywhere in their head that they've graduated from their faith."

Those are words she heard time and again from her mentor, Monsignor John McCaffery, a veteran educator and pastor of St. Joseph in Bryan.

"I want our kids to know there's never a moment when they are not Catholic, and there's never a moment when the Catholic Church does not welcome them," she says with conviction. "We have to make sure they understand that in everything we do."

Toward that objective, Pelletier spent the past

year visiting campuses, meeting faculty members, and identifying the strengths of each community. Melissa Burton, current principal of St. Andrew School, will soon share those duties as assistant school superintendent.

A curriculum committee, comprised of principals and curriculum directors, was formed to make reading lists consistent throughout the diocese and review other core materials. The decision

to adopt another curriculum or write something new for the diocese has not been made.

"I'm tired of the conversation being, 'let's make sure academics are seen through Catholicism.' There's no difference," the superintendent asserts. "Truth exists in the Church, period. So, when you're studying math or science, the better you understand it, the better you understand your faith."

A Catholic education isn't based on discussing the Trinity in geometry class or making sure God is inserted into an English lesson.

"That's not it," she continues. "The better you understand math — the more you delve into the truth of anything — the closer you come to God because God is the fullness of truth."

Parents — the primary educators of their children — are responsible for instilling a faith foundation. Catholic schools must assist families in helping children make that faith their own.

"At some point our students will be asked to choose between a very countercultural society and their faith in all kinds of big and little ways," Pelletier explains. "We have to ensure they make the right choices in a culture that can be very insidious."

She credits her parents, Pat and the late Chuck Pelletier, with giving her the greatest gift she ever received — Catholicism — coupled with a strong belief in academics.

"My parents understood that the better our minds work, the better we understand God," Pelletier says. "We can't understand God fully here (on earth) but it creates and engenders in us a total need and longing to know more."

Therein lies the value of a Catholic education.

"It captures the curiosity of a child and makes him or her understand there's more to know ... and more to know ... and more to know."

NEARLY 500 GATHER FOR 32ND ANNUAL GOOD FRIDAY ROSARY FOR LIFE

praying for mothers, babies, and abortion workers

Chuck Pelletier, who, along with his wife Pat, was the original organizer of the event, is remembered

Photos by Adrean Indolos



More than 480 people were in attendance at the Rosary outside the Planned Parenthood Center in Southwest Fort Worth.



Dominican sisters, mothers and their babies, and men and women of all ages joined in the Rosary Vigil.

By Joan Kurkowski-Gillen
Correspondent

FORT WORTH — Meagan Flynn knew she wanted to make the Good Friday Rosary Vigil part of her son's first Easter celebration.

"I had appendicitis when I was six months pregnant, and we thought I was going to lose him," the young mother says, choking back tears as she stroked the face of 7-month-old Gareth Michael.

Named for St. Michael the Archangel, his Welsh given name and middle name combine to mean "gentle protector."

"The pro-life cause is close and personal to us," continued Flynn, who peacefully protested outside a now-closed Washington D.C. abortion clinic when she worked for a defense contractor in the nation's capital. "We hope Gareth grows up to be a gentle protector of other people."

Protecting innocent life from conception to natural death was the focus of the 32nd Annual Bishop's Rosary Vigil for Life held March 25 outside Planned Parenthood in Southwest Fort Worth. More than 480 men, women, and children lined the sidewalk outside the building where abortions

are performed to pray for unborn babies and their mothers, and a "conversion of hearts" for those involved in the abortion industry. They were joined by several members of the clergy.

This year, the Good Friday Vigil coincided with the Feast of the Annunciation — the date on the liturgical calendar when the Church commemorates the Archangel Gabriel's visit to Mary and her submission to God's will to become the mother of Jesus.

"On this day, when we remember the conception of Jesus and Mary's 'yes,' we also remember the end of his life and how He redeemed all life from natural conception to natural death," Bishop Michael Olson said before leading the crowd in the Joyful Mysteries of the Rosary. "We pray for the dignity of those babies who will be killed today and for those engaged in this evil endeavor."

Bishop Olson also asked the gathering to remember and pray for Chuck Pelletier, who organized and promoted the Rosary Vigil each year along with this wife, Pat. The ardent advocate of the unborn and decorated Vietnam War hero passed away January 14.



Alicia Shepherd-Jones, a volunteer from St. Patrick's Cathedral, leads the attendees in song.



Bishop Michael Olson begins leading the peaceful gathering in praying the Rosary.

With help from longtime volunteers Jeff Williams and Bobby Warren, his widow, Pat Pelletier, worked to ensure the Good Friday prayer service continued.

"Chuck and I would start preparation on Ash Wednesday, and all of Lent was spent working on the Rosary Vigil," she explained. "Jeff and Bobby always helped us in the past. They did the physical part of it — setting up the tent and the sound system — things Chuck couldn't do."

Planning the Rosary Vigil was a big hurdle for her emotionally.

"Bishop Olson's strength and kindness is what carried us through this difficult time," Pat continued. "And I'm grateful for all those who came to the vigil to pray with us."

Assuming the role of emcee, Warren greeted participants and asked them to observe several rules of assembly.

"Chuck is on my mind today, but he would say we need to have the babies, mothers, workers, and doctors on our minds while we're here," the St. Patrick parishioner told the *North Texas Catholic*. "We need to focus on an end to abortion. This is a beautiful day, and we expect a big crowd to pray

for life."

Ricardo Martinez brought a friend to the vigil after seeing the event publicized at his parish.

"I'm here because this is what God calls us to do every day — to pray," explained the St. Michael parishioner. "In my opinion, it (abortion) is the biggest injustice in the world. If we don't have life, we don't have anything."

Life is a gift from God, he said, adding, "it's a right — a fundamental right."

Attending the Rosary Vigil has become a tradition for the Squibbs family. After participating in the Stations of the Cross at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Church, Brian and Lisa Squibbs bring their three boys, Alex, Sean, and Luke to pray outside Planned Parenthood.

"I think it's important on Good Friday to pause and be penitential and make sure we recognize what He (Jesus) did for us," the dad said. "It's important to pray for the unborn and protect those who do not have a voice."

Lisa Squibb noted that Pope Francis is asking Catholics to observe a Year of Mercy.

"I think being here shows we're witnesses to that love and mercy," she added.



The ranks of Rosary participants lined the streets and curbs across from the abortion facility, as well as in front of it.



Men and women of all ages and many families with their children took part in the Rosary Vigil in Southwest Fort Worth.

Walking with Jesus during Holy Week

DURING THE WEEK OF MARCH 21-27, NTC PHOTOGRAPHERS DONNA RYCKAERT AND ADREAN INDOLOS PHOTOGRAPHED CATHOLICS WITHIN THE DIOCESE AS THEY ACCOMPANIED JESUS DURING THE TRIDUUM: HOLY THURSDAY, GOOD FRIDAY, AND THE EASTER VIGIL; AND THE CHRISM MASS BEFORE THAT.

1. Father José Gildardo Álvarez Abonce, CORC (far right), leads the outdoor Stations of the Cross with the Spanish-speaking community at Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish. (*Adrean Indolos / NTC*)
2. RCIA candidate Kathleen Bundy is baptized by Father Richard Eldredge, TOR, in the baptismal font of Good Shepherd Parish in Colleyville. (*Adrean Indolos / NTC*)
3. Good Shepherd RCIA candidates during the Service of Light. (*Adrean Indolos / NTC*)
4. Immaculate Heart of Mary parishioners kiss the crucifix during the Adoration of the Cross. (*Adrean Indolos / NTC*)
5. Father Tim Thompson, pastor of Immaculate Conception Church in Denton, washes the feet of RCIA candidates during Holy Thursday Mass. (*Adrean Indolos / NTC*)
6. Immaculate Conception parishioners spend time praying before the Eucharist during Adoration after Holy Thursday Mass. (*Adrean Indolos / NTC*)
7. Priests from the Diocese of Fort Worth join Bishop Michael Olson during the Liturgy of the Eucharist at St. Patrick Cathedral during the Chrism Mass. (*Donna Ryckaert / NTC*)





Sacred Heart in Wichita Falls to celebrate 125 years of faith, hope, charity on Feast of the Sacred Heart, June 3

by Jenara Kocks-Burgess
Correspondent

SACRED HEART CHURCH IN WICHITA FALLS IS CELEBRATING 125 YEARS OF FAITH, DECADES OF HOPE, AND FAMILIES OF LOVE WITH MANY EVENTS THROUGHOUT 2016, BUT THEIR BIGGEST EVENT WILL BE ON THE FEAST OF THE SACRED HEART, CELEBRATED ON JUNE 3 THIS YEAR.

“This celebration speaks to us of the hope that we have as a Catholic community,” said Father Jack McKone, pastor of Sacred Heart Church. “From the parish’s beginnings as an outreach of St. Mary Parish in Henrietta up to today, Sacred Heart Parish has seen much...and today is a vibrant and active center for helping people live their Catholic faith.”

Everyone is invited to celebrate with Mass at 5:30 p.m. June 3 at Sacred Heart Catholic Church, 1501 Ninth Street in Wichita Falls, followed by a dinner in the Ray Clymer Exhibit Hall at the Multipurpose Events Center (MPEC,) 1000 5th Street in Wichita Falls.

Tickets are \$20 per person, or \$250 for a table of eight. Contact the church office at 940-723-5288 by May 8 for tickets.

Bishop Michael Olson will be one of the guest speakers, and former pastors will be in attendance, including Father Ivor Koch, now retired, and Father Hoa Nguyen, current pastor of St. John the Apostle Church in North Richland Hills.

Sacred Heart Church began in Wichita Falls as St. Patrick Church, housed in a small frame building on Austin Street between Seventh and Eighth Streets in 1891, where 12 families would gather, according to Sacred Heart’s directory.

The parish was a mission parish of St. Mary’s Church in Henrietta. The priest at St. Mary’s had to travel 20 miles by horse and buggy to celebrate Mass at what was then called St. Patrick’s.

In 1906, St. Patrick’s was moved to its present site on land opposite the Academy of Mary Immaculate, a boarding school founded by the Sisters of St. Mary of Namur. Sometime between 1907 and 1910, the church’s name changed to Sacred Heart. Over the years, Sacred Heart itself began other mission churches in Wichita Falls that are still in existence today. Our Lady of Guadalupe, Our Lady Queen of Peace, and Immaculate Conception of Mary, as well as St. Jude Thaddeus in Burkburnett, all started as missions of Sacred Heart.

Sacred Heart Church had several renovations over the years with the most recent in 1994 of the parish hall, and 1997 of the church, which doubled its capacity with an addition to the back that also serves as a chapel.

More than 1,400 families are registered as members of Sacred Heart Parish.



The interior of Sacred Heart Church in Wichita Falls.
(Photo courtesy Sacred Heart)

“This 125th anniversary of the founding of the parish commemorates all the faithful — some known, most unrecorded, whose legacy we share today,” Fr. McKone said. “Our prayer is that those coming after us enjoy that same legacy, by the grace of our merciful God.”

Judy Shaw, Sacred Heart’s worship coordinator for the past 29 years, is a lifetime member of the parish, along with her parents, children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren. She said the 125th anniversary shows that the parish has staying power within the community of Wichita Falls.

“It’s not going to go away. It’s here for all generations to come,” said Shaw, who also attended Sacred Heart Academy.

Sacred Heart’s Pastoral Assistant David Bindel, who has been a member of the parish for more than 30 years and whose parents became members in the 1940s, said he has seen generations grow up at Sacred Heart Parish.

“You see kids as altar servers grow up, and the next thing you know, they are extraordinary ministers [of Holy Communion],” he said. “The next thing you know, you’re reserving at their weddings. It’s a great testimony to our faith and their faith to see them grow like that.”

Bindel and Shaw both said that Sacred Heart has a strong presence in the Wichita Falls community. They remembered the contributions of the late Monsignor Charles King, a native of Wichita Falls and Sacred Heart’s pastor in the late 1970s and early 1980s.

Msgr. King played a major role in starting up Interfaith Ministries, a cooperative effort of the city’s religious bodies that helped rebuild the city after the 1979 tornado, they said.

Current pastor Fr. McKone was instrumental in working with the Diocese of Fort Worth to open a Catholic Charities office across the street from Sacred Heart in October 2015.

Bindel said the parish is also a big supporter of the Wichita Falls Pregnancy Help Center and Faith Mission.

Overall, Bindel agrees with Fr. McKone that the 125th anniversary means a lot because of the congregation’s support of the parish.

“It’s their heart,” Bindel said. “It shows their faith and their community involvement and how important it is to them to show the longevity and the commitment. We all cooperate with God’s will. He brought us this far, and it’s up to us to keep it going for the next 125 years.”



Fr. Eric Groner, SVD, pastor of St. Rita Church in Fort Worth, gives his homily during a special Mass blessing the new convent for the Missionary Catechists of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary, April 8.



Sister Edith Torres receives Communion from Fr. Groner during the Mass blessing the new convent.

**Photos by Ben Torres
Special Contributor**



Sisters Eva Sanchez, right, and Rosa Maria Rodriguez, left, greet each other during the blessing Mass.

The Missionary Catechists
of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary
have a new home to unite their community

Under One Roof

**By Mary Lou Seewoester
Correspondent**

THE MISSIONARY CATECHISTS OF THE SACRED HEARTS OF JESUS AND MARY (MCSH) HAVE SERVED THE DIOCESE OF FORT WORTH FOR MORE THAN 50 YEARS, BUT NEVER HAD A CONVENT OR CENTRAL HOUSE IN WHICH TO LIVE A COMMUNAL LIFE AS CONSECRATED RELIGIOUS.

On April 8, Father Eric Groner, SVD, pastor of St. Rita Parish in Fort Worth, blessed the recently renovated St. Rita Convent, 732 Weiler Blvd., for six MCSH sisters who now live there in community as a visible presence of the religious life. The sisters previously had lived at parishes or in apartments.

In his homily at a Mass preceding the blessing ceremony, Fr. Groner thanked each sister by name, saying they “are invaluable for us as a presence and for the catechesis they provide We’re happy and pleased for the work you are doing here and in the parishes.”

The MCSH sisters all are bilingual and minister to the Hispanic communities in seven different parishes as directors of religious education or as coordinators of Hispanic ministries.

Sister Superior Midory Wu, MCSH, said “each one goes to a different parish . . . , but now we live together in faith. We can pray together every morning.”

“It’s the way we live religious life,” Sister Eva Sanchez, MCSH, said. “It’s important to interact among ourselves after we have been so involved with people during the day. It’s good for us to come together . . . and especially to pray together.”

Before the renovation, smaller groups of sisters from different religious orders had lived at the convent but “it was underutilized,” Fr. Groner said. He added that often only two or three sisters shared the convent, and at one point it was vacant.

The renovation, which cost \$175,000, increased the number of bedrooms to nine, included central air and heat, hardwood floors, and remodeling of the chapel, dining room, and community room.

Sister Yolanda Cruz, SSMN, Delegate for Women Religious, said Bishop Michael Olson “wanted to have visibility of religious life and to also have their service in ministry. To do that, we needed convents.”

Gary Fragosso, diocesan property manager, said the diocese also invested \$225,000 to remodel the former Marianist residence on the campus of Nolan High School in Fort Worth for eight Dominican Sisters of Mary Immaculate Province.

The sisters moved into their new convent last August, and in September, Father Karl Schilken, Vicar General, blessed the building, which they re-named Blessed Imelda Convent. All of the Dominican Sisters teach in diocesan schools.



Fr. Groner blesses the new convent walking with sisters in a living room set for a special meal for the occasion.



A musician accompanied singing for the Mass blessing the new convent for the Missionary Catechists of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary.

Texas Catholic Conference seeks Executive Director

The Texas Catholic Conference, a statewide association of the Roman Catholic dioceses in Texas which serves and acts as the public policy voice of the Bishops of Texas, is seeking applicants for its **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR** position. The Executive Director reports to the bishops of Texas and is responsible for the day-to-day operations, functions, and supervision of the TCC. This is a full-time, exempt position with a moderate degree of independent judgment for taking public positions and use of discretionary decision making.

To find out more about this position, including qualifications, essential job duties, and how to apply, please visit: www.fwdioc.org/non-diocesan-employment

‘Fr. Wallis is like a second father to all of us’

Fr. Jonathan Wallis named dean of students at Saint Joseph Seminary

By Susan Moses
Correspondent

IN SERVING THE DIOCESE OF FORT WORTH, FATHER JONATHAN WALLIS, STL, CONTINUES TO STRETCH ITS BOUNDARIES. Since his ordination in 2007, he has served the diocese’s western reaches of Strawn, Cisco, Eastland and Ranger, earned a degree in Rome, and now mentors seminarians at Saint Joseph Abbey and Seminary College in Covington, Louisiana. Beginning with the 2016-17 school year, he will transition from his current post as assistant dean of students to become the dean of students.

“The dean of students has very practical responsibilities, from assigning rooms to coordinating meals and schedules, as well as handling any disciplinary matters that may arise,” said Fr. Wallis. Fr. Wallis also serves as a personal formation director for 18 students and teaches courses at the seminary.

“Father Wallis is like a second father to all of us. He’s very intentional in letting you know that he cares for you and is watching out for you,” said Brett Metzler, a fourth year student from St. Mark’s in Denton.

David LaPointe, a third-year student from St. Andrew’s in Fort Worth concurred. “Fr. Wallis’ defining quality is that he genuinely cares about his men — the Fort Worth guys and all the guys at seminary.”

Metzler continued, “He’s also an incredibly smart priest. Sometimes, studying philosophy and theology can leave your head foggy. After spending five minutes with Fr. Wallis, you can see the sky again. He gives you clarity and points you in the right direction.”



Here, Fr. Jonathan Wallis chats with Brett Metzler (left) and another seminarian. (Photo courtesy of Saint Joseph Abbey and Seminary)



Seminarians process into Saint Joseph Abbey Church on Palm Sunday. (Photo courtesy of Saint Joseph Abbey and Seminary)

Currently, 14 men from the Fort Worth Diocese are enrolled in the four-year college seminary program at Saint Joseph. A total of 138 seminarians from 20 dioceses across the South study philosophy and theology there in preparation for entering graduate seminary.

Set on 1,200 acres in the piney woods of Louisiana, Saint Joseph Abbey and Seminary College was started in 1889 by Benedictine monks. The surrounding woods, lakes, and river provide a rich source of inspiration and recreation to the students who share the campus with 32 monks.

According to Fr. Wallis, “It’s not hard to find the world, but

it can be hard to find tranquility. Being out and away from the city, you can find silence here to develop a deep sense of prayer and quiet in your life.”

LaPointe agreed, “Saint Joseph’s gives you the space and opportunity to spend time with the Lord and with others. You can focus on becoming a man of and for Jesus Christ.”

On most days, many of the young men take advantage of the natural setting to spend recreation time hiking, biking, or fishing.

Learning to achieve a balance between the academic coursework, personal prayer, community worship, and recreation time is one of the skills that the seminarians will

carry with them back to the diocese as parish priests. “It’s important that the men have the freedom in their schedule to find their own balance of study and relaxation. As formators, we help them find that balance. Seminary habits will carry over to the priesthood, and the men need to take personal responsibility for the structure of their days,” explained Fr. Wallis.

“These seminarians are usually between 18 and 22, which are formative years. Our goal at the collegiate level is to focus on the human qualities, to help form good men and to help them become responsible. When they graduate, they are good men formed after Jesus Christ. God’s grace building upon human nature.”

Fr. Wallis continued, “The challenges of society are the same challenges of the seminary. Social media is growing more and more important in our culture, and many young people live in a virtual world that they control. In the seminary, students live in community and form real, face-to-face relationships. The men learn to accept people when they are good and to offer forgiveness when they are not.”

One of the most important means of instruction is exposure to the lives of priests and Benedictine monks who teach, live, and work with the seminarians. Although the seminarians’ days are different than the Benedictine monks, the ethos of the monks pervades the campus, according to Fr. Wallis.

As the school year winds down, the seminarians are looking forward to having Fr. Wallis as the dean of students when they return in August. “All of us look up to Fr. Wallis,” said LaPointe. “He’s a man who follows Jesus Christ and finds joy in doing that.”

New Associate Director of Vocations Kim Brown wants sisters to be more visible and plentiful in the diocese

By Joan Kurkowski-Gillen
Correspondent

WHILE GROWING UP IN ST. JOHN THE APOSTLE AND LATER AT ST. MICHAEL AND GOOD SHEPHERD PARISHES, KIM BROWN NEVER MET A RELIGIOUS SISTER.

And when she became involved in parish life as an adult, the University of North Texas graduate didn't know the energetic women teaching catechism classes and directing social ministry programs were sisters because they didn't wear traditional habits.

"What I knew about religious life, I learned from movies like *Sister Act*, *The Sound of Music*, and *The Bells of St. Mary*," Brown explains.

As the new associate director of Vocations in the Diocese of Fort Worth, the former college administrator hopes to ensure future generations of girls and young adults know more about women religious than just the images created by Hollywood.

"I'm going to bring in and engage religious sisters in the diocese so people — especially the young — will have contact with them," she continues. "Most youth see married people, but you don't always see the life of women religious lived out."

In addition to planning vocation-oriented events and assisting Father James Wilcox, director of vocations, Brown also will give talks drawing on her personal discernment journey. While enjoying a successful career as director of student life for North Central Texas College, the young professional began to feel restless. Her sights were geared toward becoming a college president, but a month spent honing her emergency management skills at a Hurricane Katrina shelter in Gainesville made her rethink the future. Helping victims of the 2005 hurricane rekindled a desire to help people directly rather than shuffling policy papers behind a desk. At the same time, she began exploring a deeper relationship with God.

"Education is important and gives people the opportunity to improve the quality of their lives, but I would rather work for the salvation of souls than help someone get a good job after they graduate," she says, explaining why she dropped out of a doctoral program.

St. Augustine's prayer, "Our hearts are restless until they rest in thee," resonated with the cradle Catholic.

"Those words 100 percent match what was



Kim Brown

happening in my life," Brown says. "I knew I wanted more ... not material things or status; I had this hunger for God."

The Denton resident considered becoming a Catholic school teacher or parish youth minister. But something her 98-year-old grandmother said gave her another option to mull over.

"She asked me whether I ever thought of becoming a nun," remembers Brown, calling her grandmother one of the most influential people in her life. "It scared me because I had a very comfortable, established life and a religious vocation was not on my radar."

Thoughts of joining a religious community surfaced frequently during a trip to Rome, and she prayed about it again while making a Camino de Santiago pilgrimage in Spain in 2012. It wasn't until Ascension Thursday 2013 that Brown knew — without a doubt — God was calling her not only to become a sister, but to start a religious community.

"It was one of the greatest, most joyful moments of my life, just knowing I was created

for this specific purpose," she says, reflecting on the certainty of her decision.

Brown presented her cause to form the Kingdom of God Sisters to Fort Worth Bishop Michael Olson in May 2014. He gave permission for the order to develop a website and start sharing information with women after a follow up meeting.

The mission of the Kingdom of God Sisters is apostolic evangelization for both children and adults. More than 60 women have contacted Brown to express interest in discerning a vocation.

"That's a huge blessing," says the new associate director, who plans to bring the same energy, vision, and focus to her new duties with the diocese. Increasing awareness of women religious and promoting a culture where vocations thrive are primary objectives.

"People who aren't married and don't have a vocation should be discerning where God is calling them, she says, speaking from experience. "Careers are secondary. Your vocation is your path to holiness."

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St. Joseph Seminary — training ground for Fort Worth diocese seminarians — devastated by floodwaters

By Joan Kurkowski-Gillen
Correspondent

SAINT JOSEPH ABBEY AND SEMINARY — A PLACE THAT HELPS PREPARE YOUNG MEN FROM THE DIOCESE OF FORT WORTH FOR THE PRIESTHOOD — IS NOW IN DESPERATE NEED OF HELP FROM NORTH TEXAS CATHOLICS.

A devastating March 11 flood damaged every building on the 1,200-acre campus in Southern Louisiana, including the library, dormitory halls, cafeteria, and gym. The cost of recovery, cleanup, and reconstruction to date is estimated to be in the millions. Roughly \$3 million is estimated solely for cleanup. The Benedictine monks who operate the Abbey and seminary have no flood insurance.

Donations to the Abbey's flood relief efforts can be made at the website

www.helptheabbey.com.

"We had about 20 to 24 inches of water on the entire grounds of the Abbey," said James Shields, Saint Joseph's manager of communications. "It's been 90 years since the last great flood (of 1927), and this one surpassed that."

Several rows of books in the library were ruined, and a dormitory, Hannan Hall, was damaged to the point that it is uninhabitable. The administrative and business offices were also affected. Located on higher ground, the church was not flooded, but water did seep into the basement where it damaged the heating, air conditioning, and electrical systems.

Fourteen young men from the Diocese of Fort Worth are among the 138 seminarians currently enrolled at Saint Joseph. Following a scheduled spring break, students remained at home during Holy Week as crews evaluated the damage and worked to make repairs.

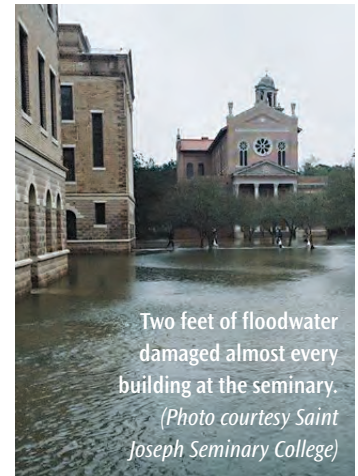
The seminarians returned to campus March 28.

The Benedictines hope to apply for grant money and will seek reimbursement from the Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA) to help the Abbey and seminary rebuild. FEMA funding is projected to provide up to 75 percent of expenses with the rest of the burden falling on Saint Joseph's.

"It's essential to get our campus back to a place where we can focus on education," Shields explained. "The Abbey is very dear to many in the community and the outpouring of support has been overwhelming."

Saint Joseph Seminary has trained diocesan priests for many years. Helping them continue that mission is important, said diocesan Vocations Director Father James Wilcox and Bishop Michael Olson.

They also asked the Catholics of the



Two feet of floodwater damaged almost every building at the seminary. (Photo courtesy Saint Joseph Seminary College)

diocese to prayerfully consider helping the Abbey and seminary return to full strength.

"I am asking the faithful of our Diocese to find it in their hearts to assist Saint Joseph Seminary in this time of need," Bishop Olson said.

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CATHOLIC CHARITIES

The truth about poverty

An evening of conversation



CCFW invites all to join Robert Doar, Morgridge Fellow in Poverty Studies at the American Enterprise Institute and Co-Chair of the National Commission on Hunger, with notes offered by CCFW CEO and President Heather Reynolds and CCFW clients.

Heather Reynolds, who serves as president and CEO of Catholic Charities Fort Worth (CCFW), has become increasingly visible at the national level, as she shares her agency's bold — and effective — initiatives in its work to eradicate poverty.

Reynolds was invited to testify on welfare reform before the Committee on the Budget for the U.S. House of Representatives in July, 2014, and was again invited to testify before the Ways and Means Committee for the U.S. House of Representatives in April, 2015.

More recently, Reynolds was asked to submit testimony to the National Commission on Hunger. Information from her testimony was incorporated into a report, entitled "Freedom from Hunger: An Achievable Goal for the United States of America." The report, an in-depth review of root causes of hunger that includes specific recommendations for action, was created by the bi-partisan commission and was submitted to Congress and the Department of Agriculture in January of this year.

Because of CCFW's focus on assisting low-income Americans to achieve self-sufficiency, Reynolds has invited the commission's co-chair, Robert Doar, to come to Fort Worth to share his insights and experiences. Doar studies and evaluates the ways in which Free Enterprise and improved federal policies

and programs can reduce poverty and provide employment and educational opportunities.

April 27, Doar and Reynolds will speak at the event, "The Truth About Poverty: An Evening of Conversation," at the Kimbell Art Museum, 3333 Camp Bowie Boulevard in Fort Worth. The event will begin with check-in at 5:15 p.m., and the program, refreshments, and discussion will begin at 5:30 p.m. The public is invited to attend.

The evening will offer a special educational and interactive opportunity to participants, says CCFW Public Affairs and Relations Manager Shannon Rosedale, noting that Doar is known for his work as a former Commissioner of the New York City Human Resources Administration (HRA). In that role, Doar annually placed over 75,000 recipients of welfare benefits into jobs, while expanding access to work support programs.

"Robert Doar is an expert in the area of evaluating how effectively federal programs are being used in combating poverty," explained Rosedale. "At Catholic Charities, we are working to educate our policy makers about the realities and the needs that are faced by our clients. We are excited to offer the opportunity for this conversation."

For more information or to RSVP to the April 27 event, e-mail krugman@ccdofw.org.

LIGHTER & BRIGHTER



Pope Francis greets Lizzy Myers of Mansfield, Ohio, during his general audience at the Vatican April 6. A disease is gradually rendering her blind and deaf. She met the pope as part of her "visual bucket list." (CNS photo/Paul Haring)



Martha Louis Ntumbala, 20, and Zeobia Ndonde, 18, students at the Bigwa Secondary School in Morogoro, Tanzania, are pictured in an undated photo. The Tanzanian Catholic Association of Sisters runs the Bigwa secondary school for 360 female students. (CNS photo/Melanie Lidman, GSR)



Susan Pawlukiewicz, a parishioner of Blessed Sacrament Church in Alexandria, Va., accents the wounds of Jesus in one of 35 Divine Mercy images she brought back from Poland three years ago. She distributes the images to area parishes, convents, and schools, hoping to help spread "the idea that mercy and salvation is for all of us," she said. (CNS photo/Katie Scott, CATHOLIC HERALD)



Pilgrim Ann Sieben is greeted outside the Basilica-Cathedral Notre-Dame in Quebec City by its rector, Msgr. Denis Belanger, on Holy Thursday. As a pilgrim, Sieben walked from Denver, arriving just in time for the Easter Triduum. (CNS photo/Philippe Vaillancourt, Presence)



Pope Francis joined photo-sharing site Instagram March 19 using the account "Franciscus." By April 15 the pope had more than 2.2 million followers. This is a screen capture of his page. (CNS photo)



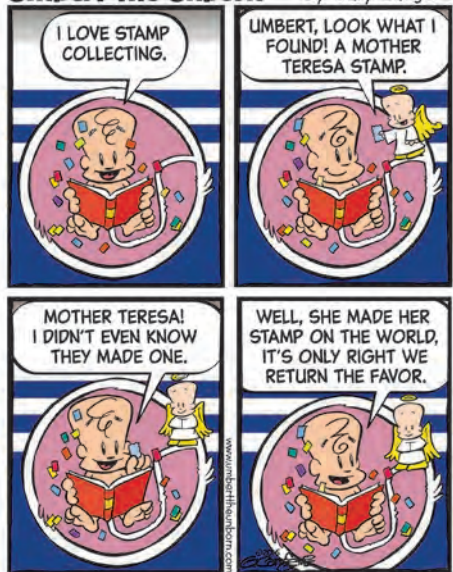
A family prays at Sunday Mass in 2011 at St. Joseph's Church in Alexandria. Pope Francis' apostolic exhortation on the family, *Amoris Laetitia* ("The Joy of Love"), was released April 8. The exhortation is the concluding document of the 2014 and 2015 synods of bishops on the family. (CNS photo/Nancy Phelan Wiechec)

Comic Retreat by: Brian Montfort



@delmontyb comicearth.com

Umbert the Unborn by Gary Cangemi



The **FLOCK** by Jean Denton

www.sheepdotcom.com



The power of *Lectio Divina* *Hearing the Word of God*

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

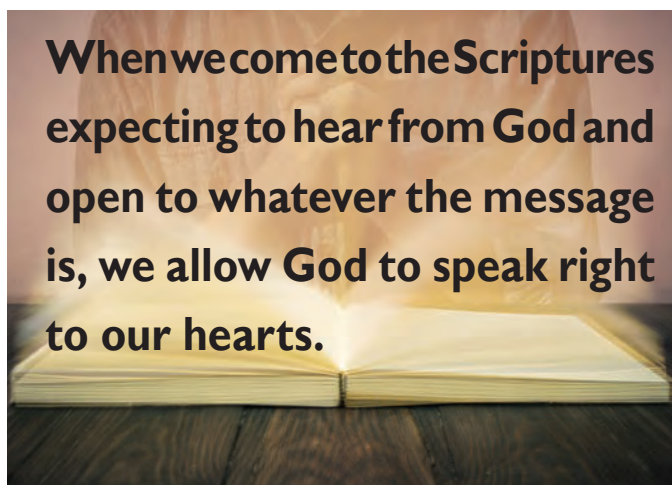
IT IS OFTEN SAID THAT CATHOLICS DON'T READ THE BIBLE OR KNOW MUCH ABOUT SACRED SCRIPTURE.

While in practice this might regrettably be the case, the Church not only does not discourage the reading of the Bible, we are highly encouraged to read and study this pivotal source of Divine Revelation.

In the document from Vatican II called *Dei Verbum* (*The Word of God*) all Catholics are encouraged to read the Bible. The council fathers say that the faithful "should gladly put themselves in touch with the sacred text itself, whether it be through the liturgy, rich in the divine word, or through devotional reading ... let them remember that prayer should accompany the reading of Sacred Scripture, so that God and man may talk together" (*DV*, 25)

For people who have never opened the Bible, it can seem like a daunting task. To be sure, there is a lot to be gained through Bible study with someone who has a degree in biblical theology, but people with these qualifications are not hanging out in very many parish pews.

But this is not the only way to approach the Scriptures. One way that has born a lot of fruit in my life is called *Lectio Divina* (Divine Reading). This is a process of reading the Scriptures that dates back to the sixth century. There are five steps.



Step 1. *Lectio* (Read)

Read the passage slowly and prayerfully. Ask yourself what is happening in this story, paying attention to any words or phrases that stand out to you.

Step 2. *Meditatio* (Meditation)

Prayerfully read the passage again quietly savoring the Word of God. Be fully present and open to the Lord. Now begin to think about the words or phrases that stood out to you. Come in faith with the expectation that the Lord will speak to you. To help you reflect more deeply ask God a question such as, "What does this mean?" or "Why this word/phrase, Lord?"

Step 3. *Oratio* (Prayer)

Cry out to God for the grace to be changed by what you have read. Respond to his Word from the depths of your heart either with a spoken or written prayer.

Step 4. *Contemplatio* (Contemplation)

Be quiet before the Lord enjoying his presence. In this stage set aside any words or thoughts and just rest in the Lord's presence.

Step 5. *Actio* (Action)

How is God calling you to live what you have learned? Try to think of one concrete thing you will do to respond to this time of prayer.

I like to do this form of prayer using the Gospel for the upcoming Sunday. Recently I was doing this with the parable of the Prodigal Son. Let me share a bit of my experience as a way of explaining how the process works.

The phrase that stood out to me as I read and meditated on this Gospel story was: "My son, you are here with me always; everything I have is yours." (*Luke 15:31*) As I reflected on this I thought about all the riches of

the Church that are always there, but I do not take advantage of as much as I could; things like the Sacrament of Reconciliation, Adoration, the tabernacle at the parish, and many other opportunities to connect with God. I realized that too often I am like the older son, wallowing in my own self-pity, instead of indulging in the plethora of options that are always with me.

As I left that time of prayer I made a commitment to go to confession that week and take my rosary into the eucharistic chapel for some prayer time with Jesus.

The power of *Lectio Divina* is in the reality that the Word of God is living. Jesus, the Word made flesh, is still speaking to us, even in the twenty-first century. When we come to the Scriptures expecting to hear from God and open to whatever the message is, we allow God to speak right to our hearts. Psalm 119 says that the Word of God is a lamp to our feet, but we have to open the page before the light can illuminate our path.

What's wrong with the 'Gospel of Me'?

BY MARLON DE LA TORRE

THERE IS A SIGNIFICANT ASPECT TO HOLY WEEK AND IN PARTICULAR THE HOLY TRIDUUM THAT DRAWS US AWAY FROM OURSELVES.

This is done in order to see the transparent reality of what Christ actually did to resuscitate our souls to Him. Instead of acting on a prideful desire to be heard by everyone because we believe we have something important to say, the Triduum asks us to relinquish this desire and instead listen to Him. Our self-distorted human nature to communicate our desires and wants collide with the Paschal Mystery.

The temptation with pronouncing our own Gospel message reflects a natural inclination to redefine basic truths in order to justify our position even though we may recognize it's wrong to do so. St. Paul echoed this similar position in Rome (*Romans 7:11-25*), telling the crowd that he knows the very thing he should not do but does it anyway. This example reflects the daily temptation we profess in the "Gospel of Me" versus the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

The Premise of the Gospel (Kerygma)

The *Catechism* defines the term Gospel as the good news of God's mercy and love revealed in the life, death, and Resurrection of Christ. If we take the time to analyze this basic premise of the Gospel it's a proclamation of the Paschal Mystery intimately connecting the saving reality of Christ directed toward humanity.

At the center of the Gospel is the Incarnational reality of God becoming man fully revealed in his only-begotten son Jesus Christ. This means that a significant premise of the Gospel is its sacrificial nature accomplished with Jesus' death on the Cross.

This redemptive reality is not a fabrication of an event to simply justify proclaiming a Gospel for one's own liking and prerogative. The redemptive reality spoken of is the Church instituted by Christ to continue the salvific realities of what He handed down to the Apostles (*Matthew 16:16-19; Acts 2:37-42*). When we speak of the Gospel we also mean the articulation and announcement of the *Kerygma*. The reality of the *Kerygma* is that it is a message of salvation aimed at fostering a deep penetrating conversion where our evangelistic efforts may bear fruit and thus provide an opportunity for effective catechetical instruction. The *Kerygma* offers us an opportunity to profess a universal message (Jesus Christ crucified) in order that we may awaken from our own spiritual slumber and emphatically embrace the message of Christ.

What is the Gospel of Me?

In a simple way the Gospel of Me reflects an attitude of "myself first, others second." It's a demonstrative way of affirming one's own righteousness at the expense of others, especially Christ Himself. Another way to look at the Gospel of Me is its disassociation with a "Poverty of Heart"

described in the *Catechism* (2544):

Jesus enjoins his disciples to prefer Him to everything and everyone, and bids them "renounce all that they have" for his sake and that of the Gospel. Shortly before his Passion He gave them the example of the poor widow of Jerusalem who, out of her poverty, gave all that she had to live on. The precept of detachment from riches is obligatory for entrance into the Kingdom of Heaven.

Alone in your own world

A poverty of heart opens the door to our ability to take part in the Christ's Passion by dying to sin and in his Resurrection being born to new life (*CCC 1988*). The proclamation of the Gospel is for everyone, and because of this very fact offers everyone the opportunity to embrace the Paschal sacrifice and restore us to communion with our Lord (*CCC 613*).

The purpose of our missionary mandate is to bring everyone into communion with Jesus Christ. Our evangelistic efforts are directed toward this first initiative of our faith because it is intimately connected to our baptismal call. Thus when faced with the temptation to preach the Gospel of Me, we really need to ask ourselves; who would want to hear it? The reality of the Gospel of Me is a very lonely road where all you hear is yourself and not the sounds of people walking aimlessly around you waiting for someone to introduce them to Jesus Christ. If the premise of *Catechism* is to re-echo Christ,



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*.

then the premise of the Gospel is to introduce Christ, and this is precisely what the *Kerygma* does.

Since, like all the faithful, lay Christians are entrusted by God with the apostolate or virtue of their Baptism and Confirmation, they have the right and duty, individually or grouped in associations, to work so that the divine message of salvation may be known and accepted by all men throughout the earth. This duty is the more pressing when it is only through them that men can hear the Gospel and know Christ. Their activity in ecclesial communities is so necessary that, for the most part, the apostolate of the pastors cannot be fully effective without it. (CCC 900)

Easter offers us a significant opportunity to turn away from the Gospel of Me and instead profess the Gospel of Jesus Christ. This is why you cannot get to the Resurrection without first going through the Crucifixion. At the heart of our missionary journey is Jesus Christ crucified, which means exercising our Incarnational character to faithfully live out the Gospel and be stewards of faith for the sake of the Kingdom which is the whole premise of the Resurrection.

SEEKING GOD'S PATH VOCATIONS

Make them true shepherds of souls

BY FATHER JAMES WILCOX

MEN WHO ARE SEEKING TO SERVE THE CHURCH IN THE PRIESTHOOD ARE FORMED IN THE FOUR PILLARS: HUMAN, INTELLECTUAL, SPIRITUAL, PASTORAL.

"The whole formation imparted to candidates for the priesthood aims at preparing them to enter into communion with the charity of Christ the good shepherd" (John Paul II, *Pastores Dabo Vobis*, 57).

When men recognize the actions of priests in their lives that they want to emulate, it is the priest's pastoral ministry that attracts prospects to the priesthood. The ministry of the priest takes a variety of forms, but all is focused on the love of Jesus Christ and the salvation of souls. This is the work of good shepherds.

In the Diocese of Fort Worth, we have many examples of priests living out the work of the Good Shepherd through their pastoral actions. You can think of your own pastor and his shepherding of the souls in your parish. This includes the visits to the hospitals to offer the sacraments to loved ones in grave illness or near their deaths. You might recall seeing him with the students preparing for the sacraments of first Communion or Confirmation. He is always ready to help parishioners reconcile their lives with God through the sacrament of Confession. Perhaps you remember when Father went with the youth to a retreat or diocesan event. Most of all, your priests celebrate the Eucharist, preach the homily, and minister to those in need.

In whatever way you see your shepherd, his manner for providing that care was shaped in the seminary through his pastoral formation. This formation is centered on Jesus Christ and on the priest representing Christ to all of humanity. In addition to offering context to the formation in the human, intellectual,

and spiritual pillars, pastoral formation unifies the formation of the man into the shepherd of souls.

There is a beautiful piece of writing by St. Vincent Ferrer in the Second Week of Easter Office of Readings, where he offers simple exhortations on three areas of the priest's pastoral work: preaching, hearing confessions, helping those in need. He reminds us priests to be simple in our preaching and offer vivid examples so that each "sinner in your congregation" should have the feeling that the homily is written for him or her specifically.

As he continues, we see that St. Vincent Ferrer has a good understanding of pastoral formation, and that the preaching of the homily is not a time for lambasting souls. Rather, a more influential and effective method must be utilized to move souls from the sinful habits. "Your tone of voice should be that of a father who suffers with his sinful children, as though they were seriously ill or were lying in a huge pit; and he struggles to free them, raise them up, and cherish them like a mother, as one who is happy over their progress and the hope they have of heaven's glory."

The image of a priest in ministry who has characteristics of a father and mother is not an occurrence by happenstance. To achieve the care of parent, and more importantly of the Good Shepherd, the man in formation for priesthood must be intentional about developing these ministerial skills.

St. Vincent continues further: "When hearing confession, you should always radiate the warmest charity." The shepherd welcomes the injured with open arms, seeking to heal the wounds and restore life to the downtrodden soul.

As penitents, we must all remember that



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

we are not going into the confessional to receive chastisement, but that we are going to hear the truth about our actions and the comfort of forgiveness in our repentance. St. Vincent reminds the priest to be warm in speech as he assists the penitent with strengthening his or her conscience.

The pillars of formation are intimately connected. This is evident by St. Vincent's final exhortation for priests: Before you begin any ministerial duty, "you should approach God first with all your heart." A strong and powerful prayer life is essential for pastoral ministry to the people of God. In all things, the priest seeks to serve God through serving his people. The intimate relationship with God through diligent, constant prayer unifies his service with the heart of Jesus Christ.

Throughout this year, three seminarians have been on their Pastoral Year, working in parishes alongside the pastor to grow and be formed in pastoral ministry. In years past, a number of parishes in our diocese have served the greater Church by hosting seminarians. We all continue to thank those men and women who aid in this part of pastoral formation. The priests and the parishioners are helping the man grow into the priest of Jesus Christ.

The Fort Worth seminarians will soon return to the diocese and begin their summer assignments, serving in parishes and in ministries such as Catholic Charities, Camp Fort Worth, and the Vocation Awareness Program (please see the ad on page 28). Through these assignments, "they will learn to open the horizon of their mind and heart to the missionary dimension of the Church's life."

Please continue to pray for vocations to the priesthood and religious life. Our Lady, mother of priests, pray for us. Amen.

The circle of life

and the tree of faith

By Kathy Hamer

MY DAUGHTER MEREDITH ONCE FOUND NEW ICE SKATES HANGING FROM A TREE IN OUR YARD. I EXPLAINED TO HER, "SANTA MUST HAVE DROPPED THEM FROM HIS SLEIGH!" BUT I SMILED INSIDE, THINKING FACETIOUSLY, "SURE. HE CAN HIT A CHIMNEY IN ITALY, BUT NOT MY FRONT PORCH."

When my son John was little, he liked to see the "Christmas trees" in Foster Park. He didn't realize the evergreens were growing there, and not being sold at a holiday tree stand.

These days, when I drive past Foster Park, on South Drive, I smile nostalgically, thinking of my little boy, a daddy himself now, living 1,300 miles away.

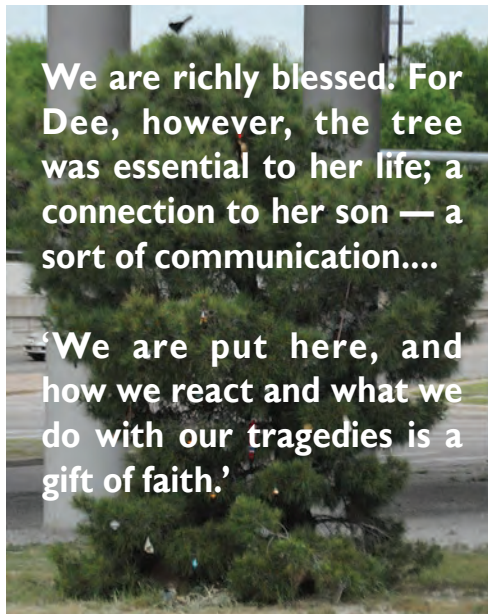
My friend Dee Klawiter's youngest son left her world Jan. 12, 1987, a month after his 19th birthday. He was killed in an auto accident on Hulen Street, while driving home from Dallas.

Born in December, 1967, Dee's son was named "Christopher Troy," because his older brother Russell, then 3, thought the new baby would be a good "Christmas Toy."

"When Chris died, I was angry with God," said Dee. "I reminded Him, 'Six children was a lot, and we were joyful with each one You sent! We took good care of them; how could You do this to us?' For months I couldn't walk into St. Andrew's — all I could see was my Chris's casket."

Immersed in her sadness, Dee forgot some things she might have done for Chris. "Often when parents lose a child," she realized, "it's due to health reasons, so they have time to think about a memorial. But everything happened so quickly, I didn't write a special obituary. Someone gave the newspaper basic information, but still, there was nothing beautiful written in the paper about my Chris."

Dee's life was justifiably tumbling. "I never slept. I wanted so bad to have some sort of contact with Chris! One night I was



walking around the house, and I remembered an evergreen tree we were going to plant, but never had. It was already at the curb for pick-up.

"I decided, 'Chris, I am going to plant this tree for you! This can be your way of letting me know everything is okay.'"

She took the tree and left, searching for a suitable planting spot. It needed to be a place she could get to, a place that would give the tree a chance to live: some sun, and some water.

"I don't remember how I got to Granbury Rd., at Loop 820, but I decided, 'Ah. I can park the car here, run across that access road, and get under the bridge. There'll be some sun, and it'll get some rain.'"

"So I grabbed my shovel, at 2 in the morning, and thank God the police didn't come by! I am sure they would have put me in a hospital.

"No one plants trees at 2 a.m.! How would you explain that to a policeman? He probably wouldn't say, 'Oh I understand. Let

me help you!'"

The place where Dee planted the tree was mostly soil and weeds. Later, probably because of erosion, she said, the city came in with trucks of rocks. "And I thought the tree was doomed."

But Chris's tree lived on! "It never got any water," Dee said. "Whatever Mother Nature and God wanted was all the nourishment that tree got. It was strong. It just kept growing, to this day!"

When Dee planted it, the tree was less than three feet tall. Today it measures more than 20.

"I think my tree is safe now. It's big! I didn't plant it close to the curb, so it isn't in the way of traffic," Dee said. "There's not a thing my tree is doing that could be wrong."

I have been thinking about Dee; how I respect her and Bob, her husband, and their five children. For our own family, "tree" stories have always been funny. We are richly blessed. For Dee, however, the tree was essential to her life; a connection to her son — a sort of communication.

Many people visited that tree to place their own little memorials. Thirty years later they still do.

"I just had to know my Chris was okay," Dee said.

"I was so angry; but God understands. He gave me that opportunity to be angry. And then He did all kinds of beautiful things to show me He can't prevent all of this. We are put here, and how we react and what we do with our tragedies is a gift of faith."



Kathy Cribari Hamer's column has been recognized repeatedly by the Catholic Press Association. For information about her book, ME AND THE CHICKENS, go to somethingelseagain.com.

The 70-Day-After Abortion Pill

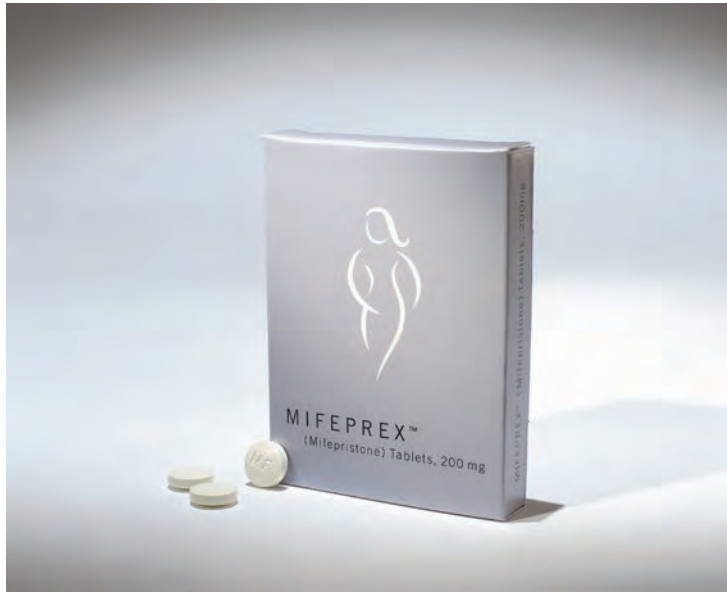
New FDA guidelines opposed by Pro-life advocates

By Deirdre A. McQuade

MUCH TO THE DELIGHT OF ABORTION ADVOCATES, THE U.S. FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION HAS LOOSENED ITS GUIDELINES FOR THE POWERFUL ABORTION DRUG, RU-486/MIFEPRISTONE, MARKETING AS “MIFEPREX.” It may now officially be used up to 70 days gestational age, rather than 49, and administered by non-physicians where allowed by state law—including nurse practitioners and physicians’ assistants.

Think about that for a moment: 70 days. That means that, since conception occurs around two weeks after a woman’s last period, the child in her womb could be eight weeks along in development. That’s two thirds of the way through the first trimester! At that stage, the baby’s heart has been beating for five weeks, and the baby has grown up to an inch and a half long. Her arms bend at the elbow, toes have formed, and she possesses all the organs she will have in adulthood. This is obviously not the so-called “morning-after pill,” though often confused with it. It is the “seventy-day-after” pill for destroying an innocent, developing human being.

How does this drug cause a chemical abortion? Mifeprex first starves the developing child by cutting off her nourishment in the womb. But using that drug alone can lead to “incomplete” abortions, putting women at risk of life-threatening infections. So Misoprostol is typically given to induce contractions, expelling the developing child, and thus “completing” the abortion. If that combination of drugs still does not “work,” then she must undergo



A box of the RU-486 drug, known generically as mifepristone and by its brand name Mifeprex, is seen in an undated handout photo. Pro-life advocates expressed dismay with new Food and Drug Administration guidelines that effectively expand how pregnant women can use RU-486, a drug that induces abortion. (CNS photo from Danco Laboratories)

a second abortion, this time surgical. Past experience suggests this is often done when the drugs are taken beyond 49 days, as the guidelines now allow.

The chemical abortion can take days to finish its lethal work. Depending on how far along she is in her pregnancy, the woman may bleed profusely, most likely passing her tiny unborn child at home or another setting without medical care. Some will even see or catch their tiny, but recognizably human, children when they pass. Who is there for women physically, emotionally, spiritually, when they’re confronted with the reality that a “chemical abortion” is more complicated than it first seemed?

What if she regrets her decision? Can it be reversed? While there are no guarantees,

reversals may be possible after taking the drugs in some cases. But time is of the essence, and not every doctor is yet equipped to help save the baby’s life.

The vast majority of doctors don’t perform surgical abortions. Sadly, more may be willing to administer Mifeprex because it’s less burdensome for them. Abortion advocates welcome this “side effect” of the new protocol. “Far from wanting abortion to be ‘rare’, abortion advocates are celebrating this expanded use as opening an ever-widening door to abortion,” says Cardinal Timothy Dolan, chairman of the U.S. bishops’ Committee on Pro-Life Activities.

Because of the FDA’s action, more innocent children will perish; and more women and girls will suffer from trauma and grief. We need to tell women and men the truth about Mifeprex abortions. For those considering one, we need to show them the infinitely better way of caring for both mother and child. For those struggling with past chemical or surgical abortions, we should listen compassionately and let them know about the Church’s post-abortion healing ministry, Project Rachel. In these ways, we can help save lives and show God’s mercy in action.

Deirdre A. McQuade is Assistant Director of Pro-Life Communications at the Secretariat of Pro-Life Activities, U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. For more on the bishops’ commitment to pro-life work, see www.usccb.org/prolife.



VOCATION AWARENESS PROGRAM

JUNE 24 - 26, 2016 UNIVERSITY OF DALLAS, IRVING, A Catholic University

A weekend of discernment helps single Catholic men and women, ages 18 – 40, find answers about life as a Priest, Sister, Brother or Consecrated Lay Woman. It includes presentations, panel discussions, Q&A periods and one-on-one conferences with diocesan and order Priests, Sisters and Brothers. There are no fees, private rooms and meals are furnished, and no one will pressure you or seek a commitment. To learn more and apply, visit vapinfo.org or contact Fr. James Wilcox at the Ft. Worth Diocese, 817-945-9320, frwilcox@fwdioc.org

Visit vapinfo.org Application deadline June 13

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

Diocese hosting workshop April 30 on how to better minister to Catholics with disabilities, special needs

SOME SIT IN WHEELCHAIRS, OR WALK WITH THE HELP OF A WALKER OR CANE, THEIR PHYSICAL DISABILITIES HINDERING THEIR MOVEMENTS. OTHERS BATTLE MENTAL OR COGNITIVE DISORDERS, WHILE OTHERS HAVE VISUAL OR HEARING PROBLEMS, THE SO-CALLED "INVISIBLE DISABILITIES."

They are members of a large segment of our population who often feel set apart from the rest of society because of their disabilities. Many of them are members of Catholic families.

To help improve how the Diocese of Fort Worth reaches out to its disabled community, the Office of Faith Formation and Children's Catechesis will hold a workshop titled "Open Wide the Door of Mercy" April 30 to instruct directors of religious education, catechists, parents, and other lay people on ways in which the Church can better minister to this ever-growing population.

The workshop will be offered from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. in the Pastoral Center at St. Patrick Cathedral in downtown Fort Worth.

Keynote speaker will be Sister M. Johanna Paruch, Ph.D., a member of the Sisters of St. Francis of the Martyr St. George. She is on the theology faculty at Franciscan University in Steubenville, Ohio, and travels the country presenting workshops on catechist training, catechist retreats, and catechesis for persons with disabilities.

The event is inspired by the Jubilee Year of Mercy designated by Pope Francis, running from the Feast of the Immaculate Conception on Dec. 8, 2015 to the Feast of Christ the King, Nov. 20, 2016.

Ministering to the disabled was a big part of the ministry of Jesus Christ, and it's a point of emphasis today as Catholics nationwide try to make the Church more inclusive and inviting to this segment of the population.

The number of families affected in the



According to the U.S. Census Bureau, 7.3 percent of Tarrant County's two million residents report having a disability.

Fort Worth Diocese could be large, but officials aren't sure what that number is.

"As of right now, it's hard to say because we don't keep a statistic in this area," said Marlon De La Torre, director of Evangelization and Catechesis for the diocese.

In Tarrant County, 7.3 percent of the county's two million residents report having a disability, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. In the United States, 12.6 percent of the nation's 320 million residents say they are disabled. In Texas, about 3 million people report having a disability, or 9.1 percent of the population. The Centers for Disease Control reports an even higher percentage of exceptionality, a somewhat broader category, among minors.

De La Torre has been evaluating the needs of the disabled community in the diocese for a long time.

"When I held the first mini-workshop back in 2011, it was met with overwhelming response, and it helped initiate the process of training catechists through the St. Francis De Sales Catechist Formation Program, and assisted in organizing resources and links that many in the community had no idea existed," De La Torre said. "This next conference is the next step that will hopefully lead to a full-time staff member in my department."

He said creating an office for disabilities would be a beneficial step for

the diocese to take.

"Establishing an Office for Special Needs will let the Catholic community know that all of God's children deserve our very best, and will bring to light the need to evangelize and catechize these children and their families," De La Torre said. "It will open the door for more people to volunteer their time and talent in the area of special religious education and hopefully garner donations for resources in this area."

Paola Araujo-Quintero, director of faith formation for the diocese, said the effort to bring more disabled people into the Church's mainstream is important.

In August 2015, she offered a workshop on catechesis for people with special

needs to see how much interest there was in the subject. About 60 people attended that event, and she said she expects roughly 100 people to attend this month's event.

It's all in an effort to bring the faith closer to families whose Church lives sometimes have been met with obstacles, frustration, or a feeling of exclusion.

"A lot of times they don't come to the religious education programs because they don't know they are available to them," Araujo-Quintero said.

Sometimes, they call looking for the programs, and some people in the parish don't know how to help them. The families' problems only become apparent later in the process.

That doesn't "give that child an opportunity to really thrive" in the Church, Araujo-Quintero said.

She said that people with special needs "are dear to my heart."

In some cases, people with disabilities might shy away from attending Church because, "they don't feel welcome," she said.

But that's avoidable, Araujo-Quintero said. "There are ways that we can work with people with special needs."

For more information on the workshop, contact Lucia Romo at 817-945-9358 or e-mail lromo@fwioc.org. The last day to register is April 22.

RACHEL'S CORNER

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Two Sacred Heart parishes share their love and labor aiding Appalachian neighbors

By Jenara Kocks Burgess
Correspondent

For 12 adults and seven youth of two of the diocese's Sacred Heart churches, one in Seymour and one in Wichita Falls, their mission trips to the Appalachian Mountains in Kentucky in March were a lesson in serving their neighbors.

"It was about building relationships but also seeing the face of Christ in people," said Deacon Jim Novak, parochial administrator of Sacred Heart Parish in Seymour and coordinator of the two mission trips, which involved helping needy families repair their homes.

During the first trip, Mar. 5-12, Dcn. Novak traveled with Father Albert Francis Kanjirathumkal, HGN, sacramental priest at Sacred Heart in Seymour, three other adults, and three youth to the Father Beiting Appalachian Mission Center in Kentucky.

Cathy and Jimmy Simek of Sacred Heart in Seymour and their two high school daughters, Jessica and Jordan, were part of the first group.

"I loved to see how each member of my family summed up their experience at the end of each day," Cathy Simek said. "It was interesting how we could all go to the same place, yet have different perspectives about the work we did that day."

Jessica Simek said, "When I was on the mission trip working for others and fixing their homes, it showed me that even though they had so little, they treasured every bit of it, and we were making their lives better. The mission trip was an amazing experience, and I would go back in a heartbeat."

During the second trip, March

(L. to R.) Seminarian Jonathan Demma, Walela Mystic, Pete Agosto, Gabriela Garcia, David, his wife and daughters, Will McCartney, Steele Jackson, and David Riggs, pose in front of David's family home where the mission volunteers have shored up flooring and performed other repairs.



Sacred Heart Seymour volunteers before the Beiting Appalachian Mission Center (L. to R.) Deacon Jim Novak, Jimmy Simek, Cathy Simek, Jessica Simek, Jordan Simek, David Zeissel, Marilyn McGough, and Fr. Albert Kanjirathumkal, HGN.

12-19, Dcn. Novak traveled with three other adults and one youth from Sacred Heart in Seymour as well as four youth and four adults from Sacred Heart Church in Wichita Falls including the church's pastoral intern, seminarian Jonathan Demma.

"Sometimes you need to go 1,200 miles away, out of your own backyard, in order to have your eyes opened to recognize situations that might be right in front of you," Demma said.

What many of them took back was that they learned to serve their neighbor in Wichita Falls in a way

they couldn't recognize before, he said.

Dcn. Novak said they started each day with Mass at 7 a.m., had meals on the road, and traveled as far as 30 miles to a location. Demma, who has a background in construction, said once at the location, the volunteers helped homeowners with repairs and other jobs around their homes.

He said the living conditions were dangerous and unhealthy, particularly for a snowy place in the mountains. They helped one family whose windows were broken out and used plastic to keep snow out.

"We had an orientation at the beginning of the week (at the Fr. Beiting Mission) to prepare our hearts for mission, to remind us that the construction job is important, but it's not the priority," he said. "The most important thing is the relationship and interaction with the people who live there."

Each day would begin and end with prayer with the family, and crew members would visit with the family and interact with their kids through the day.

"There were times, after we left, as we were saying goodbye, the people would cry. And they said it was the first time in a long time that they'd even had a conversation with another person — or they would tell you how lonely they are because they just don't get any visitors," Demma said.

Gabriela Garcia, 15, a parishioner of Sacred Heart in Wichita Falls, said she was impressed by the love in the little town of Louisa, where they worked on homes, and the joy she saw in the people there, even though they had so few material possessions.

"We spent time each day discussing and discerning what we saw and going through what we were doing as missionaries and where we saw the face of Christ and so forth. It wasn't just work," Dcn. Novak said.

"We hope to do this again," Dcn. Novak said, acknowledging that the trip was funded in part by a \$1,500 grant from the diocese's Mission Council.

Pete Agosto, a parishioner of Sacred Heart in Wichita Falls who went on the mission trip with his children, Joshua and Abigail, said it was a powerful week for him because it felt like he and his fellow volunteers were doing what Jesus wanted them to do.

"We saw Christ in them," Agosto said, "They really impacted me and my kids. They want the same things you and I want, to raise our families in a safe home with the best things we can provide them. And they're just not able to. They just need a hand. They're overwhelmed ... It was a powerful week."

Stewardship as a way of life: It's about a lot more than just attending Mass

By John Henry
Correspondent

STEWARDSHIP OFTEN HAS TAKEN ON A BAD CONNOTATION, AND THAT PERCEPTION HAMPERS RELATIONSHIPS WITH GOD. IT'S NOT ABOUT MONEY, THOUGH THAT'S CERTAINLY A PART OF IT. It's about discipleship and living as a disciple every day and saying "yes" to God in everything we do. That is the message being conveyed through a new pilot program.

"When someone commits to living as a disciple — giving their life over to God — Stewardship becomes a way of life, out of gratitude for what we've been given," said Diana Vetter, the diocese's director of Stewardship.

Vetter's position is new, designed to play a lead role in helping parishes develop Stewardship programs, while increasing parishioner involvement in the life of the parish community.

The program's goal is to help people encounter Christ through lives of gratitude and thanksgiving for all He has given us and sharing our gifts of time, talent, and treasure in love of God and neighbor.

To that end, Vetter and diocesan officials are asking the question: Why can't we follow the lead of the Diocese of Wichita, Kansas, where one priest changing the culture at his parish — St. Francis — revolutionized the faith community of the entire diocese.

Nine parishes throughout the diocese — St. Mark and Immaculate Conception, Denton; Good Shepherd, Colleyville; St. Vincent de Paul, Arlington; Sacred Heart, Wichita Falls; and St. Andrew, St. Peter, St. Bartholomew, and Holy Family, in Fort Worth — are taking part in the rollout of the Stewardship program. More than 140 from those parishes and some visitors from



Fr. Gary Kastl, pastor of St. Anne Church in Broken Arrow, Oklahoma, addresses participants on maintaining a healthy prayer life.

Photos by Adrean Indolos

others gathered for an all-day Stewardship retreat at Good Shepherd Church in Colleyville on April 2.

At St. Francis, Msgr. Thomas McGread nurtured a message to his parish in the late '60s. He and parish leaders developed a mission statement: "To nourish our love of God through Jesus Christ under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Centered in the Eucharist, we are developing a faith community through prayer, education, worship, and Christian fellowship. As stewards of God's love, we strive to share our gifts and talents for the service of God and all his people."

His message stayed consistent, preaching the message of Stewardship, emphasizing the gift of time, which we've all been given.

Over time, the parish's culture was re-developed to view Stewardship as a way of life and manner of action. Parishioners were challenged to recognize, accept — and share — their gifts from God.

"We must challenge people to become saints," Vetter said. "That's what we're called to do."

The first thing St. Francis did was get organized, through a process helping parishioners identify those gifts of time and talent they could commit to the service of the broader mission of the parish and

wider Church.

Soon, the influence of the newly re-vitalized St. Francis, where once the same 20 or 30 people did everything, spread across Wichita.

"Father McGread started asking new people to get involved," Vetter said. "As he got more people involved, he saw this involvement was creating encounters with Christ, and people were growing closer to God."

As more and more people were engaged and involved and invested in their parish, tithing increased significantly. The money followed a deeper sense of connectedness.

So much so that even as dioceses throughout most of the country struggle with lagging enrollment and parochial school closings, Wichita's outreach today includes tuition-free parochial schools. Also, Wichita's 250-acre diocesan campus includes assisted living centers for people with dementia, a nursing home, soup kitchen, and a health clinic for the underprivileged, staffed by doctors working pro bono.

These are what Vetter rightly termed "massive things," not generated through the perceived greed of a diocese but living the Gospel in a life of thankfulness and discipleship.

Vetter's job is to help organize, at the parish level, discipleship exemplified by St. Francis Parish.



Director of Stewardship Diana Vetter speaks about the meaning of stewardship and the mission of the new pilot program.

A Stewardship committee — six of the nine pilot parishes did not have an established committee — has been formed in each parish and cultivated with the focus first on engaging parishioners in parish activities, that is, donating their time and talents.

Each parish committee will have a timeline to follow through the year, with the first step being prayer. Each will also be nurtured through a curriculum of best practices and formation, namely the U.S. Bishops' Pastoral Letter, *Stewardship: A Disciple's Response*, and the four pillars of Stewardship — hospitality, prayer, formation, and service.

"It's really a culture" of the parish, Vetter said. "To help people see that 'I am part of the Church. It is my duty to share what I have to make it a better place.'"

It's realizing that living a life of discipleship is not checking a box, "attended Mass on Sunday." Mass ultimately should be inspiration for living the Gospel in our daily lives and answering the question: "What can I do for my Church and my brothers and sisters?"

It is, Vetter said, "saying 'yes' to God" with the knowledge "that God made us for greatness." In other words: for discipleship — for Stewardship.

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May 1, Sixth Sunday of Easter.

Cycle C Readings:

- 1) Acts 15:1-2, 22-29
Psalm 67:2-3, 5-6, 8
- 2) Revelation 21:10-14, 22-23
Gospel) John 14:23-29

By Jeff Hensley

The college student I was interviewing for an article in the *North Texas Daily* at the University of North Texas had retained his Jewish identity when he converted to an evangelical mode of Christianity.

Ron was very late to our appointment, and I found out why once he arrived.

People kept stopping him along the way and engaging him in conversations about his newfound faith.

I've always thought it had something to do with a giftedness he had for sharing the Good

"Whoever loves me will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our dwelling with him."
— John 14:23



The Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything and remind you of all that I told you."

I've always thought Ron had a special measure of the Holy Spirit that caused him to draw people

to himself so he could share the wisdom of God's love, the wisdom Jesus was talking about here.

On that first meeting with him, we began walking around the journalism offices on campus where I got to witness firsthand how God used Ron to communicate his love.

Person after person whom we greeted got into long, deep conversations about God and Jesus. People with slender faith backgrounds were eager to discuss faith with this exceptional guy.

While I had started out to get a factual story about Ron, it turned into a faith-filled feature story that ran in the secular campus newspaper.

Hmm, Holy Spirit at work?

News of Jesus' life, death, and Resurrection.

In this week's Gospel, Jesus says to his disciples, "I have told you this while I am with you.

QUESTIONS:

Have you ever known anyone who had a special wisdom that seemed to come from the Holy Spirit? Have you ever experienced God seeming to bring to mind answers you needed to help you in a time of special need?

May 8, Solemnity of the Ascension of the Lord.

Cycle C Readings:

- 1) Acts 1:1-11
Psalm 47:2-3, 6-9
- 2) Ephesians 1:17-23
Gospel) Luke 24:46-53

By Jean Denton

This week's Gospel shows the impressive patience and trust of Jesus' disciples as they watch their beloved master depart from them, ascending into heaven.

From the time they first became his disciples, He had been preparing them to spread his message to the whole world. In his final words, He again declares this to be their mission. However in the next breath He tells them not to go yet.

Nevertheless, their excitement and joy are undeterred by the command to wait. While confident in



"Wait for 'the promise of the Father ... in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.'"
— Acts 1:4-5

his promise that they will carry out his mission, they respect the fact that their desire and abilities alone will be insufficient for the task.

Jesus' transformative work is possible only with the power of his Spirit.

It's the difference between knowing about Jesus and knowing Jesus. For the latter to take place, we must sometimes wait and trust in God's timing.

My friend Julie, a devout Catholic, very much wanted her husband Scott to share her faith, but over 20

years of marriage he showed no interest. She prayed for him earnestly, but didn't believe in pushing him to participate in church.

Then, grieving over her father's death, Julie herself wandered away from the Church for a time. She returned after attending a women's retreat where she received the emotional and spiritual healing she needed.

Subsequently, she joined a Bible study group who asked her to invite Scott to come along. Although uncertain about the wisdom of such an invitation, Julie assured Scott the group had

no intention of converting him to Catholicism but simply wanted to know him and learn from his early experiences of faith in another tradition.

To her surprise, Scott accepted and quickly became an enthusiastic participant. He also began attending church with Julie and was welcomed by more of her friends. Then he signed up for a retreat where other men in the community shared their experiences of God with him. "It changed my life," he told everyone who would listen.

Julie had waited and the Spirit did not disappoint — it first renewed her and then embraced Scott with the unconditional love and encouragement that can only come through Christ.

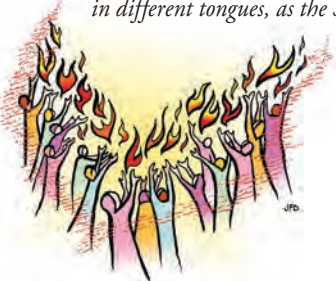
QUESTIONS:

How have you witnessed the Holy Spirit providing the necessary power to bring the Gospel message to life in someone?

WORD TO LIFE

"They were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in different tongues, as the Spirit enabled them to proclaim."

— Acts 2:4



May 15, Pentecost Sunday.

Cycle C Readings:

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

By Jean Denton

My husband and I have enjoyed hosting a small faith-sharing group in our home for the last few years.

Two in this parish-based group are Haitian immigrants. Yves is fluent in English, but his wife Suzanne came to the U.S. more recently and still struggles with the language.

So I was a little surprised that they wanted to participate in the group as it focuses on reading Scripture and involves a lot of discussion. On the other hand, I recognized that taking part in a faith-sharing group simply

follows from their commitment to their parish community.

Personally, I love hearing Yves read Scripture because his heavy accent evokes an unusual tone in the text. I also have to listen extra closely. His shared experiences of faith, having grown out of a different culture, greatly enrich the conversation for the rest of us.

At first, I was concerned that Suzanne would feel left out of the discussion that she could barely understand. But as I watched her, I realized that she was fully engaged with us — not in words,

but in Christ's Spirit among our group.

Everyone sensed this, and it came to an almost thundering manifestation — imagine the “noise like a strong driving wind” described in today's reading from Acts — one evening when we invited Suzanne to offer the closing prayer. The emotion, the confidence of God's presence and power came pouring out over all of us as she spoke stirringly in her native Creole language.

I heard a few people murmur in reverence as we all, somehow, understood every word.

QUESTIONS:

How have you experienced the diverse gifts of the Holy Spirit in your church community? When has the Spirit “spoken” to you in a manner beyond words?

The passage in Acts describes a moment when Jesus' disciples experienced a sudden noise as they became filled with his Spirit. They sensed what was happening — it was palpable — as they heard and understood the mighty acts of God spoken in foreign tongues.

In our home, there were no accompanying tongues of fire visible. But it became clear to us, just as it did to those gathered in Jerusalem on that Pentecost when Christ's Church was born, that his Spirit is not limited by language, culture, or any human convention.

The diversity of Christ's Spirit enriches us while the unity of Christ's Spirit strengthens us as we become one with Him and each other.

May 22, Solemnity of the Most Holy Trinity.

Cycle C Readings:

- 1) Proverbs 8:22-31
Psalm 8:4-9
- 2) Romans 5:1-5
Gospel) John 16:12-15

By Jeff Hedglen

One of my favorite memories from my years as a youth minister was teaching the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults adapted for youth. There was always such an interesting group of teens who either needed to catch up on their sacraments of initiation or, once in a while, there was a teen who wanted to become Catholic totally on his or her own initiative.

A story that sticks in my memory comes from three sisters from a blended family. They were each around 13 years old. They had never been to church before,

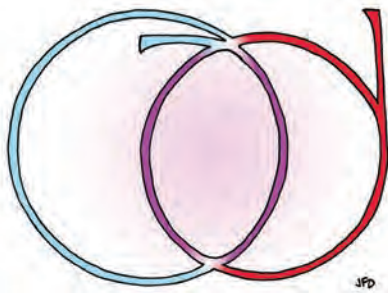
and they knew nothing about God, the Bible, the Catholic Church or what we believed.

They had heard of God, but they understood God as being only what we would call God the Father. When I was teaching them the sign of the cross they wanted to know who the Son and the Holy Spirit were. I said the Son is Jesus and together with the Father and the Holy Spirit this is God.

The looks on their faces were

"Spirit of truth, he will guide you to all truth."

— John 16:13



priceless. They argued that God was God, so Jesus cannot be God, too. They had no idea what to do with the Holy Spirit. We went round and round, with me using every analogy I could think of to try to get these teens to understand how three separate persons could share one divinity and together be the Triune God.

It took the better part of our next four classes for them to just begin to grasp the concept that

most Christians learn from an early age. I had the same feelings that Jesus expressed in this Sunday's Gospel, “I have much more to tell you, but you cannot bear it now.”

Whether one is a teenager who knows nothing about God or holds a doctorate in theology, there is always more to know about God, and especially the mystery of the Holy Trinity. But as I tried to explain to those three sisters, it is not important that we totally understand every mystery. Faith is the bridge that begins where our knowledge ends and connects us to the heights of the truth.

QUESTIONS:

How would you explain the Trinity to someone who had never heard of it? What is a mystery of the Catholic faith that you would love to know more about?

June 5, Tenth Sunday of Ordinary Time.

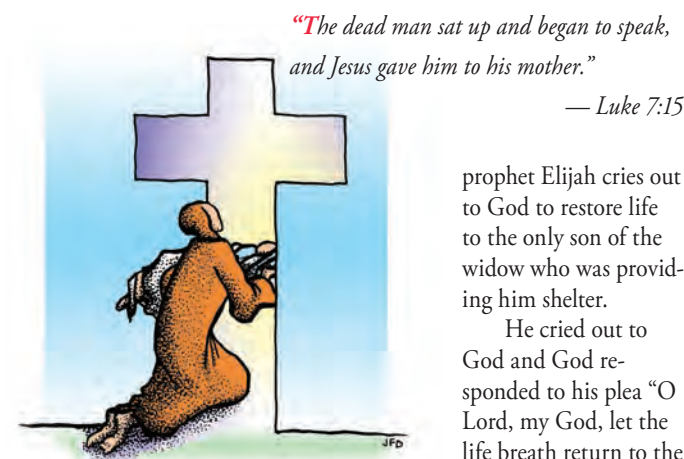
Cycle C Readings:

- 1) 1 Kings 17:17-24
Psalm 30:5-6, 11-13
- 2) Galatians 1:11-14a, 15ac, 16a, 17, 19
Gospel) Luke 7:11-17

By Jeff Hensley

Across the decades since I came into the Church in 1974, I have seen many instances where God was at work in the world. I've seen healings and many more instances of God bringing about good results in situations for which there was not reasonable hope.

But there are abuses of the belief in miracles. The worst I ever heard about came through a friend who was teaching in East Texas. While there she heard of the death of an infant for whom a Pentecostal church had prayed fervently. At the funeral, it was



reported, the pastor lifted the lifeless infant in the air and declared, and I can't help but feel in an arrogant and self-righteous manner, "This is lack of faith!"

That horrible moment must have caused many present to question their authentic faith in and love of God.

Today's readings hold the antidote to such flawed thinking. In the reading from Kings, the

prophet Elijah cries out to God to restore life to the only son of the widow who was providing him shelter.

He cried out to God and God responded to his plea "O Lord, my God, let the life breath return to the body of this child,"

When Elijah restored the child whom God had brought back to life to his mother, she responded. "Now indeed I know that you are a man of God. The word of the Lord comes truly from your mouth."

In the Gospel reading from Luke, Jesus is "moved with pity" when he witnesses a mother, also a widow, who has lost her son. He steps forward and touches the coffin and says, "Young man, I tell you, arise!" And he is restored to life and to his mother.

The crowd, witnessing these events cries out, "A great prophet has arisen in our midst,"... "God has visited his people."

In both these cases God was glorified by miraculous healing. Some might quibble about the role of those offering the prayers for healing, but Jesus, elsewhere in Scripture, states that in some places He was not able to do his miracles because of a lack of faith. Obviously Elijah and Jesus Himself acted with faith in a loving, active God.

QUESTIONS:

Have you ever witnessed what you believe was a miracle?

June 12, Eleventh Sunday in Ordinary Time.

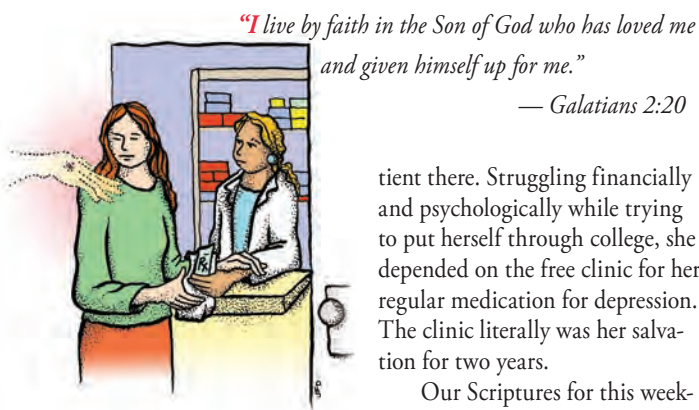
Cycle C Readings:

- 1) 2 Samuel 12:7-10, 13
Psalm 32:1-2, 5, 7, 11
- 2) Galatians 2:16, 19-21
Gospel) Luke 7:36-8:3

By Jean Denton

This Wednesday, Bettina will spend two hours volunteering at her community's free clinic, which offers a range of medical services for the working poor. She's not a medical volunteer, but goes to the clinic every Wednesday to greet and take information from clients and potential clients to determine or confirm their eligibility for services.

She has continued her weekly stint for years simply because she loves the free clinic for how it makes a significant difference in individuals' lives — including hers.



She loves seeing the staff and volunteer nurses, doctors, dentists, and pharmacists treat the patients with respect and genuine concern. She loves observing the easy, familiar relationship that various clinic personnel have with patients who have depended on them for years.

Bettina's love of the clinic is personal.

Many years ago she was a pa-

tient there. Struggling financially and psychologically while trying to put herself through college, she depended on the free clinic for her regular medication for depression. The clinic literally was her salvation for two years.

Our Scriptures for this weekend speak about God's saving mercy. The Gospel tells how a person's gratitude for being saved by Jesus' mercy produces a deep and lasting love. A woman anointing Jesus' feet after bathing them with her tears was lifted out of a life bound by sin. Now her love for Him was sealed.

Jesus pointed out to the Pharisees that a personal experience of love and mercy begets a greater response of love and mercy than a lesser relationship.

Bettina's love and commitment to the free clinic grew out of her experience of mercy. Once lost in the darkness of depression, she was lifted free to have a productive future. Her gratitude to God and the people at the free clinic who do God's work of compassion and healing is boundless and is shown in her actions.

While many people appreciate the valuable contributions the clinic and its volunteers make in the community, Bettina and others who've experienced its saving graces firsthand respond with true abiding love.

QUESTIONS:

When have you directly experienced Jesus' mercy? How has that experience affected your relationship with Him?

June 19, Twelfth Sunday in Ordinary Time.

Cycle C Readings:

- 1) Zechariah 12:10-11; 13-1
Psalm 63:2-6, 8-9
- 2) Galatians 3:26-29
Gospel) Luke 9:18-24

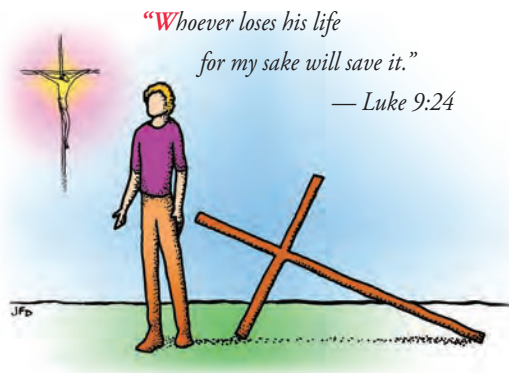
By Jean Denton

In today's Gospel, Jesus' disciples acknowledge Him as "the Christ of God," the promised Messiah who will save the world.

He proceeds to tell them how this will happen: through his suffering, death, and resurrection. Then He adds that "whoever wishes to come after Me" would have to give up his former way of life and take on Jesus' way, including the suffering that goes along with it.

No doubt if there had been a Galilean word for, "Yikes!" the disciples would've uttered it at that point.

It's one thing to know and ac-



"Whoever loses his life for my sake will save it."
— Luke 9:24

cept who Jesus is. The harder part comes in facing what that means in one's relationship with Him and in choosing to spend one's life following Him.

As a catechist, I often sensed this struggle in teenagers preparing for Confirmation. The young people came with a wide range of faith formation prior to entering the program. Some had attended parish formation classes since they were in kindergarten; others had received rigorous religious education in Catholic school; and

still others had only minimal catechesis since receiving their first Communion as second graders.

Each year, as the class progressed I saw nearly all of the young people grow to an understanding and acceptance of who Jesus is. But not all seemed certain about their desire to be confirmed in the Church.

Interestingly, the individuals most conflicted were those who had a personal, spiritual relationship with Jesus. Invariably, as the day for the sacrament approached,

those young people would tell me, "I don't think I'm ready."

They didn't take this step lightly. For them, coming into full participation in the Church was a serious moment of truth. It meant making the decision to actively follow Jesus as a disciple with all the complications that entailed.

Most of these conscientious ones chose to be confirmed. But a few decided to wait until they felt sure they could hold up their end of the bargain.

I've never worried for their souls. It was obvious they had a deep faith in Jesus as their guide and Savior. Besides, the fact that they were stressing over whether they could serve Him well enough revealed they already had taken up their crosses.

QUESTIONS:

What makes the difference for you between knowing who Jesus is and taking up your cross to follow Him?

June 26, Thirteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time.

Cycle C Readings:

- 1) 1 Kings 19:16b, 19-21
Psalm 16:1-2, 5, 7-11
- 2) Galatians 5:1, 13-18
Gospel) Luke 9:51-62

By Jeff Hedglen

When I was in high school I signed up for a special district-wide class on criminal justice. The idea was to gather from every school students considering a career in law enforcement.

I had to travel across town to another school for the course, and it turned out all the other students in the class went to that school. I was the only outsider. For an entire year the whole class treated me rudely, made fun of me, and called me offensive names.

Looking back, it was one of the best years of my life.



"Lord, do you want us to call down fire from heaven to consume them?" Jesus turned and rebuked them.
— Luke 9:54-55

at these other students; I just took their insults and did my best to be the better person. This experience has had a lasting impact on me.

It came to mind when reading this week's Gospel. Jesus wants to visit a Samaritan town, but the local people refuse to welcome Him. Jesus' disciples ask Him, "Lord, do you want us to call down fire from heaven to consume them?" But Jesus rejects this idea.

To be sure, when I was in that class daily with students

who refused to welcome me, I wanted to "call down fire from heaven," but by the grace of God, I was able to lean more heavily on the message from St. Paul this week: "Live by the Spirit and you will certainly not gratify the desire of the flesh."

So often we are in danger of letting our worldly passions rule our lives. But Jesus and St. Paul in unison reject this idea and call us to live by the Spirit.

As with most things in the spiritual life, it's simple but not easy. We must be steeped in the things of the Spirit and avoid the thoughts and activities mired in the flesh, if we are to have a fighting chance. But fight we must, lest we call down that fire from heaven and end up singed by our own wrath.

QUESTIONS:

What are some things you do to strive to live in the Spirit?

LA **INDULGENCIA** DEL AÑO DE LA MISERICORDIA

POR EL PADRE CARMELO MELE, OP



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.

¿QUÉ ES LA INDULGENCIA?

El monaguillo se sentía mal. Rompió en mil pedazos el platillo del lavado de manos que se cayó. Después de la misa se acercó al sacerdote para pedir disculpas. Pensaba que iba a recibir un regaño, pero el varón de Dios estaba clemente. Notando la timidez del niño, le dijo: “No vale preocuparte sobre quince centavos de vidrio”. Las palabras tranquilizaron al chiquillo no sólo por un momento sino por toda su vida. Aprendió ese día que no vale angustiarse por cosas pequeñas, y también que el poder de la misericordia es grande.

Se puede decir que el padre era indulgente con el monaguillo. Esta palabra proviene del latín en lo cual su raíz significa ser complaciente. El hombre complació al niño por aliviarlo de la vergüenza. De la raíz de esta palabra conseguimos la palabra indulgencia con su uso particularmente religioso.

Se define una indulgencia otorgada por la Iglesia como la remisión de la pena temporal por los pecados ya perdonados. Es posible que hayamos oído esta definición; no obstante, no quedamos seguros de su significado. Queremos preguntar: ¿Qué quiere decir la pena temporal por los pecados? En realidad, aunque el término sea oscuro, no cuesta mucho entender la idea.

LA DISTORSIÓN QUE EXPERIMENTAMOS POR EL PECADO

Cuando pecamos, siempre ofendemos a Dios cuyo perdón buscamos en el Sacramento de la Reconciliación. Sin embargo, no podemos estar tan rectos como antes después de pecar. Estamos distorsionados por nuestros pecados. Nuestras mentiras nos dejan más acostumbrados a engañar. Nuestras miradas a la pornografía nos hacen más deseosos del sexo ilegítimo. Nuestros robitos de cosas ajenas nos dejan más codiciosos de lo que no nos corresponde. Nos hemos hecho menos que los bienaventurados destinados para la vida eterna: limpios de corazón, deseosos de justicia, pobres del espíritu. Deberíamos preguntarnos: “¿Cómo podremos entrar en la casa de Dios tan inclinados a pecar como somos?”

Se puede llamar a la distorsión del alma por el pecado las penas temporales del pecado. Es denominada así porque tradicionalmente se ha pensado de ella como corregida con la experiencia del Purgatorio. Aunque hemos sido perdonados de los pecados, necesitaremos someternos a la disciplina del Purgatorio para arreglar nuestras faltas. Sin embargo, hay otro medio para superar las tendencias al mal debidas al pecado. Tirando de los méritos de Cristo y los santos, la Iglesia nos ha concedido indulgencias para quitar la ordalía del Purgatorio. Podemos ver la base de este poder en la enseñanza de Cristo a los apóstoles: “Todo lo que desaten en la tierra,

se mantendrá desatado en el Cielo” (Mateo 18,18b).

LA NECESIDAD DEL ARREPENTIMIENTO

Desde, al menos, el tiempo de Martín Lutero muchos han criticado la práctica de las indulgencias. Preguntan: ¿Cómo puede ser que una persona sea aliviada de todo el daño debido al pecado por un acto tan sencillo como visitar un santuario durante el año jubilar? Vale la pena considerar esta crítica porque en la vida cristiana no hay “gracia barata”. Eso es, la gracia no nos viene simplemente por hacer algunas cosas mecánicas.

La gracia precisamente porque es gracia nos viene gratis. No se puede comprarla ni siquiera merecerla. Pero no es barata. Costó a Jesús su muerte horribil y a los santos grandes sacrificios llevando sus cruces detrás de él. Para disponernos a recibir la gracia tenemos que arrepentirnos del pecado. El arrepentimiento implica nuestro rechazo de los vicios: el egoísmo, la concupiscencia, y la avaricia. Tenemos que decir no al prestigio, al placer, y a la plata. Sin el arrepentimiento la indulgencia será más grande que nuestra capacidad a llevarla. Sería como tener una ballena en el gancho de nuestra caña de pescar.

LA INDULGENCIA PLENARIA DEL AÑO DE LA MISERICORDIA

En este Año de la Misericordia

deberíamos aprovecharnos de la indulgencia plenaria ofrecida por el Papa Francisco. La indulgencia plenaria, que quita toda la pena temporal. Significará una pequeña vuelta de nuestra rutina y un gran cambio en nuestro estilo de vida. Tendremos que buscar el santuario designado por nuestro obispo: poco sacrificio. Y tendremos que fijarnos en Cristo: un enorme compromiso.

En la Diócesis de Fort Worth el Monseñor Miguel Olson ha nombrado la iglesia de la Madre de la Misericordia (Mother of Mercy) en Fort Worth, y otras ocho iglesias como los santuarios del Año Jubilar de la Misericordia (vea www.fwdioc.org/jubilee-mercy-about para más información). Que visitemos una u otra de estas iglesias cumpliendo las condiciones de confesarnos, recibir la Santa Comunión, y rezar por las intenciones del Papa Francisco. Sin embargo, que no lo hagamos con la disposición de una empleada cumpliendo la orden de un cliente. Esta actitud no nos logrará mucho. Más bien, que nos esforcemos a arrepentirnos de nuestras faltas para vivir como verdaderos hijos e hijas de Dios.

Nueva Directora Asociada de Vocaciones Kim Brown desea que las hermanas religiosas sean mas abundantes y visibles en la diócesis

Por Joan Kurkowski-Gillen
Corresponsal

MIENTRAS CRECÍA, EN LA PARROQUIA DEL APOSTOL SAN JUAN, Y DESPUÉS EN LA DE SAN MIGUEL Y LA DEL BUEN PASTOR, KIM BROWN NUNCA CONOCIÓ A UNA HERMANA RELIGIOSA.

Y cuando, ya adulta, participó en la vida parroquial, la graduada de la Universidad del Norte de Texas no sabía que las activas mujeres que enseñaban clases de catecismo y dirigían los programas de ministerio social eran religiosas porque ellas no usaban los tradicionales hábitos.

“Lo que yo sabía acerca de la vida religiosa lo aprendí en las películas como *Sister Act*, *Sound of Music* y *The Bells of St. Mary*”, explica Brown.

Como nueva directora asociada de Vocaciones en la Diócesis de Fort Worth, la anterior administradora universitaria espera asegurar que futuras generaciones de niñas y jóvenes adultas sepan más acerca de las mujeres religiosas que solo las imágenes creadas por Hollywood.

“Voy a traer y atraer hermanas religiosas a la diócesis para que la gente—especialmente la juventud—tenga contacto con ellas,” continúa ella. “La mayoría de los jóvenes ven gente casada, pero no siempre ve cómo se vive la vida religiosa.”

Además de planear eventos para atraer vocaciones y de asistir al Padre James Wilcox, director de Vocaciones, Brown también dará pláticas usando su propia jornada de discernimiento. Mientras disfrutaba su exitosa carrera como directora de asuntos estudiantiles en el North Central Texas College, la joven profesional empezó a sentirse inquieta. Su intención era llegar a ser presidente de un colegio, pero el pasar un mes perfeccionando su habilidad para manejar emergencias en un albergue para damnificados por el huracán Katrina en Gainesville la hizo reflexionar sobre su futuro. Ayudar a las víctimas del huracán del 2005 reavivó su deseo de ayudar directamente a la gente en vez de barajar papeles detrás de un escritorio. Al mismo tiempo empezó a buscar una relación más profunda con Dios.

“La educación es importante y da a la gente la oportunidad de mejorar su calidad de vida, pero yo prefiero trabajar por la salvación de las almas que ayudar a alguien a encontrar un buen trabajo

después de graduarse”, dice ella, explicando por qué abandonó sus estudios de doctorado.

La oración de San Agustín, “Nuestro corazón está inquieto hasta que descansa en ti”, repercutía en esta católica de nacimiento.

“Esas palabras coincidían ciento por ciento con lo que estaba pasando en mi vida”, dice Brown. “Yo quería más ... no cosas materiales o posición; yo tenía hambre de Dios”.

La residente de Denton consideró ser maestra de escuela católica o ministro juvenil en una parroquia. Pero su abuela, de 98 años, dijo algo que le permitió meditar sobre otra opción.

“Ella me preguntó si había yo alguna vez pensado en ser monja”, recuerda Brown, llamando a su abuela una de las personas más influyentes en su vida. “Me asusté porque llevaba una vida muy estable y cómoda, y una vocación religiosa no estaba en mi mira.”

Pensamientos de entrar a una comunidad religiosa surgieron con frecuencia durante un viaje a Roma, y ella rezó al respecto de nuevo en su peregrinaje en el Camino de Santiago en España en 2012. No fue sino hasta el Jueves de la Ascensión en 2013 que Brown supo—sin lugar a dudas—que Dios la estaba llamando no solo a ser monja, sino a instituir una comunidad religiosa.

“El saber que fui creada para este específico propósito, fue uno de los momentos más grandes y jubilosos de mi vida”, dice ella, reflexionando en la certeza de su decisión.

En mayo 2014, Brown presentó su causa para formar las Hermanas del Reino de Dios al Obispo Michael Olson. Él dio su permiso para que la orden desarrollara su página en la red y empezara a compartir información con otras mujeres, después de una reunión de seguimiento.

La misión de las Hermanas del Reino de Dios es la evangelización apostólica para niños y adultos. Más de 60 mujeres se han puesto en contacto con Brown expresando interés en discernir una vocación.

“Eso es una gran bendición”, dice la nueva directora asociada, quien planea traer la misma energía, visión, y atención a sus nuevas obligaciones con la diócesis. Lograr que los feligreses se familiaricen con las religiosas a su alrededor y promover una cultura donde florezcan las vocaciones son los objetivos primordiales.

“La gente que no está casada y no tiene una



Kim Brown

vocación debería discernir hacia dónde las está llamando Dios”, dice ella, hablando por experiencia. “Las carreras son secundarias. Su vocación es su camino a la santidad”.

Con alabanzas y en acción de gracias a Dios Todopoderoso La Diócesis Católica de Fort Worth anuncia con júbilo y le invita a la Ordenación de

**Joseph Paul Keating
Nghia Trung Nguyen
Matthew Robert Tatyrek**

Al Orden Sagrado de Presbítero por medio de la imposición de manos y la invocación del Espíritu Santo del Reverendísimo Monseñor Michael F. Olson, STD Obispo de Fort Worth el sábado 21 de mayo 2016 a las diez de la mañana en St. Patrick Cathedral, 1206 Throckmorton Street Fort Worth, Texas 76102

Usted está cordialmente invitado a una recepción inmediatamente después de la Ordenación en el Centro de Convenciones de Fort Worth.

La gran misericordia de Dios es *ilimitada*

Las obras de misericordia: En esta edición del NTC destacamos las obras espirituales de misericordia realizadas por varios voluntarios y consejeros que son parte de los Ministerios de Raquel. Si busca más información sobre los Ministerios de Raquel, los próximos retiros Viñedo de Raquel, o busca ayuda, por favor visite racheltx.org.



Durante este Año de la Misericordia, los Ministerios de Raquel siguen su misión de traer la misericordia y paz de Dios a las mujeres y hombres que han pasado por un aborto

Por Mary Lou Seewoester
Corresponsal

LISA, DE 40 AÑOS, MADRE DE TRES HIJOS, LLEVÓ LA VERGÜENZA Y LA CULPA DE UN DOLOROSO SECRETO POR MÁS DE 20 AÑOS.

Ella tuvo un aborto a la edad de 18 años y temía que nunca podría ser perdonada. Luego, en 2010, llamó a los Ministerios de Raquel y al otro lado de la línea oyó la voz de la misericordia.

“Estaba tan nerviosa”, recuerda Lisa, “pero es voz era tan compasiva que sentí que podía contarle mi historia. Fue fácil porque no estaba siendo juzgada, sino sostenida por la compasión. Era la voz misericordiosa que yo necesitaba escuchar”.

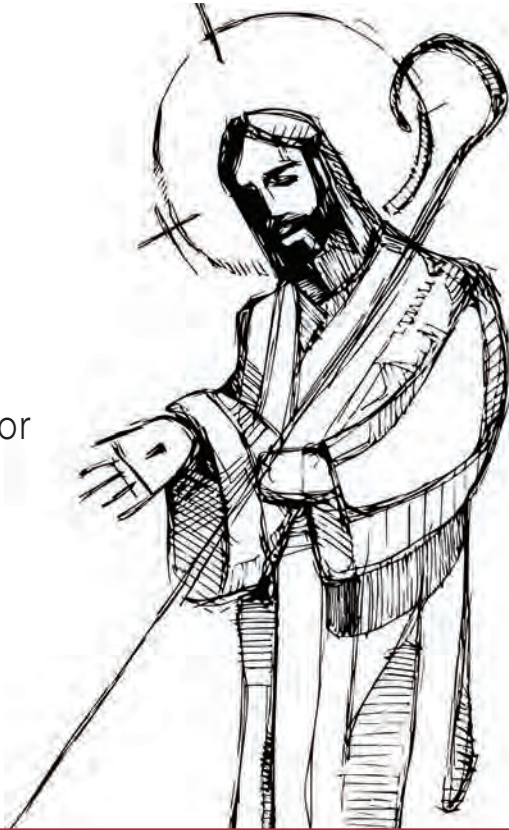
Esa voz compasiva era la de Betsy Kopor, la coordinadora de los Ministerios de Raquel en la Diócesis de Fort Worth. Kopor tiene su propia historia que contar y experimentó su propio retiro, El Viñedo de Raquel en 1999 gracias a la Diócesis de Dallas.

“Ese retiro transformó esta horrible cosa que con la que yo había luchado por 18 años”, recuerda Kopor. “Mi vida fue tan dramáticamente cambiada por el Señor a través de su misericordia que yo quería ayudar a que otras mujeres recibieran esta sanación y esperanza del Señor”.

Kopor y su esposo, Steve, se capacitaron por dos años antes de empezar los Ministerios de Raquel, organización 501c3 con fines no lucrativos, en la diócesis con la bendición del entonces Obispo Joseph Delaney. En 2009

“Experimenté al Padre corriendo hacia mí y **sentí verdadera misericordia** por primera vez en mi vida. Me dio el valor de ser compasiva con otros”.

— **LISA**, PARTICIPANTE EN EL RETIRO VIÑEDO DE RAQUEL



el Obispo Kevin Vann creó una oficina diocesana para los Ministerios de Raquel.

El ministerio lleva el nombre de la Raquel bíblica quien, en Jeremías 31:15, “llora la muerte de sus hijos ... porque ya no existen”.

Aunque los Ministerios de Raquel patrocina varios programas post-aborto, El Viñedo de Raquel ha sido el más útil y eficaz, dijo Kopor.

Hay seis retiros de fin de semana al año en formato católico e inter-denominaciones y dos de ellos se ofrecen en Español. Cada equipo de retiro incluye un consejero profesional, un sacerdote, y un facilitador que ha completado su propio retiro en El Viñedo de Raquel.

Todos los retiros tienen sus raíces en la Escritura y el retiro con formato católico incluye Misa, Adoración, y Confesión. Kopor también destaca la importancia de la confidencialidad y pide a cada uno que firme el acuerdo de no identificar a nadie que asista al retiro.

“Muchas mujeres y hombres piensan que el aborto es un pecado imperdonable.

Hay tanta vergüenza y el secreto es tan grande”, dijo Kopor, así que se lo guardan.

Pero en el retiro, “ellos llegan a saber que Dios los perdona, que su criatura los perdona; y una vez que ellos saben esas cosas, pueden empezar a perdonarse a sí mismos”, ella agrega.

Lisa y otros dan testimonio de la profunda sanación, misericordia, perdón y libertad que reciben en el retiro del Viñedo de Raquel.

“Ese retiro empezó un camino de sanación que yo nunca habría podido hacer por mí misma”, recuerda Lisa. “Me había confesado, pero no había podido perdonarme Experimenté al Padre corriendo hacia mí y sentí verdadera misericordia por primera vez en mi vida. Me dio el valor de ser compasiva con otros”.

Lisa explicó que su sanación llegó a muchas áreas de su vida. Ella había sido casada y el matrimonio había sido anulado y, antes del retiro, estaba tomando y luchando en su segundo matrimonio.

“Después de ese perdón, yo pude

venir a mi matrimonio y perdonar. Trajo sanación a ambos en nuestro matrimonio ... y después de Raquel, ya no tomé, algo más me llenaba. El vacío en mi corazón se había llenado finalmente.”

“Estos retiros son una mezcla única de ayuda espiritual y emocional,” observó Kopor. “Proporcionan diferentes formas de sanación y uno de ellas es la sanación relacional.”

Kopor estima que una de tres mujeres ha tenido un aborto, indicando que por cada aborto hay un hombre que también necesita perdón y sanación.

Ella relató la historia de una mujer mayor que se debatía para decirle a su esposo de 50 años que quería asistir al retiro del Viñedo de Raquel porque tuvo un aborto antes de conocerlo. Cuando finalmente tuvo el valor de decirle, él le preguntó si podía ir con ella porque él, también, había participado en un aborto, pero nunca se lo había dicho a nadie.

“Ellos asistieron juntos al retiro, lloraron juntos la pérdida de sus niños y experimentaron una dramática sanación”, concluyó Kopor.

Ramón, quien experimentó su retiro hace más de un año, explicó que los hombres sufren el dolor después del aborto de manera diferente que las mujeres.

“Es más callado”, él dijo. “Puede ser más difícil para nosotros identificarlo, pero el dolor está ahí y no se va. Traté de suprimirlo con ruido y trabajo ... pero yo era un cadáver, un muerto viviente, funcionando pero no vivo realmente.”

Él dijo que “la principal razón para que un hombre vaya a este retiro es salir de esa oscuridad a la verdadera vida ... y saber que él puede ser perdonado, restaurado y amado”.

Cuando se le preguntó recientemente qué iba a hacer para el Año Jubilar de la Misericordia, Kopor respondió, “¡exactamente lo que estoy haciendo! siempre hemos sido un ministerio de misericordia, y este Año de la Misericordia es una celebración de nuestro ministerio tal como es.”

Kopor exhorta a cualquiera que esté sufriendo por un aborto a llamar al teléfono de los Ministerios de Raquel: 817 923 4757 para Inglés, 817 886 4760 para Español, o a visitar racheltx.org.



Estudiantes cantan durante las Misa Diocesana Anual de Octavo Grado celebrada el año pasado en la parroquia Santa Elizabeth Ann Seton en Keller. Empezando este año, la Misa tendrá lugar en la Catedral de San Patricio. (Foto por Joan Kurkowski-Gillen / NTC)

¡Mientras aprendas más, tu fe también, **CRECERÁ!**

Escuelas Católicas: Jennifer Pelletier, Superintendente de Escuelas Católicas, pasó su primer año estimulando entusiasmo e identidad católica en el salón de clase.

Por **Joan Kurkowski-Gillen**
Corresponsal

QUIZÁ LAS PALABRAS CON LAS QUE EMPIEZA EL LIBRO CLÁSICO DE CHARLES DICKENS, *HISTORIA DE DOS CIUDADES*, SON LAS QUE MEJOR DESCRIBEN EL PRIMER AÑO DE JENNIFER PELLETIER COMO SUPERINTENDENTE DE ESCUELAS EN LA DIÓCESIS DE FORT WORTH: FUE EL MEJOR DE LOS TIEMPOS Y EL PEOR DE LOS TIEMPOS.

Renovado énfasis en la identidad católica

en las escuelas y la transición de la histórica Escuela Our Mother of Mercy a la Preparatoria Universitaria Cristo Rey son dos de los triunfos logrados por la experta administradora desde que asumió su puesto de liderazgo el 15 de abril del año pasado.

Pero el año también estuvo cargado de tragedia. Kay Burrell, por mucho tiempo educadora en escuelas católicas y directora de la Escuela St. Elizabeth Ann Seton en Keller, falleció el primer día de clases. Rafael Rondón, director

de la Escuela Católica del Sagrado Corazón en Muenster, estaba atendiendo a los estudiantes cuando murió el 16 de noviembre, aparentemente de un ataque al corazón. Y la superintendente experimentó una pérdida personal cuando su padre, Chuck Pelletier, un reconocido defensor de los que aún no han nacido, sucumbió en enero de una enfermedad respiratoria, después de una larga estancia en el hospital.

“Hasido un año repleto de altibajos”, admite Pelletier, quien halló inspiración en momentos difíciles.

Después de la inesperada muerte del director del Sagrado Corazón, la superintendente de escuelas católicas pasó 10 días en el campus de la escuela ofreciendo consejo y apoyo. A cambio, ella presencié cómo la gente del pueblo agrícola rural se unió en oración y compasión.

“Esa comunidad es extraordinaria”, ella recuerda. “Nunca olvidaré cómo ellos se portaron conmigo y con la familia Rondón”.

Pelletier dice que cada una de las cuatro escuelas preparatorias y 18 escuelas primarias en la diócesis está dotada singularmente de diferentes maneras. Escuela Todos los Santos empezó en Pre-K la instrucción en dos idiomas el otoño pasado. Cassata High School continúa sirviendo estudiantes de secundaria con desventajas económicas.

“Definitivamente es una prioridad proteger la unicidad de cada una de esas escuelas”, dijo ella al *North Texas Catholic*. Ahí es donde se forma la comunidad.

Nacida en Fort Worth, y graduada de la Universidad de Dallas, sirvió como presidenta de la Escuela de San José en Bryan (cerca de College Station) antes de cambiarse a Fort Worth. Ella también dio clases en la Escuela de San Lucas en Irving y, más tarde, en la preparatoria universitaria San Juan en Washington, D.C., donde recibió el Premio Gasser por su dedicación a los estudiantes en peligro de fracasar académicamente. La facultad votó por ella, este premio reconoce al colega que mejor ejemplifica los ideales de la profesión docente.

La oportunidad de vivir más cerca de la familia y trabajar con el Obispo Michael Olson atrajo a Pelletier a solicitar el puesto de superintendente de las escuelas católicas, vacante desde que Don Miller se jubiló.

“Suceden tantas cosas emocionantes. Me despierto y pienso, ¿qué nos traerá este día?” dice Pelletier con entusiasmo.

Estimular en las escuelas un mayor sentido de identidad católica—una prioridad para la educadora—resultó en muchas “primicias” para maestros y estudiantes. Al principio del año académico, un día in-service para el personal de toda la diócesis empezó con una Misa celebrada por el Obispo Olson. Los directores de escuela más tarde se reunieron en un retiro para “formar comunidad”, y los estudiantes de la recién re-nombrada Cassata Catholic High School, por primera vez, veneraron juntos en la cercana Iglesia de Santa María de la Asunción.

Uno de los más grandes cambios al calendario escolar ocurrió el 4 de mayo cuando la tradicional Misa del octavo grado se cambió, de



Superintendente Pelletier está trabajando para asegurar que sus estudiantes sigan creciendo académicamente y espiritualmente. (Foto cortesía de St. Joseph Catholic School)

su acostumbrado horario matutino en una parroquia diferente cada año, a una liturgia a las 5 p.m. en la Catedral de San Patricio. El nuevo plan da la oportunidad para que más padres puedan asistir y permite a los próximos graduados ver y entender la significancia de la catedral y de la silla del obispo. Llamada “cátedra”, el asiento grande, de madera, es un símbolo de la autoridad magisterial del obispo en la Iglesia.

“Cuando se vayan de su parroquia para buscar trabajo o para ir a la universidad, quiero que ellos entiendan que San Patricio es su hogar. Es la casa del obispo y ellos son siempre parte de ella”, indicó Pelletier. “No quiero que ellos tengan en su cabeza la noción de que se han graduado de su fe”.

Esas fueron las palabras que ella escuchó una y otra vez de su mentor, el Msgr. John McCaffery, un experimentado educador y párroco de la Iglesia de San José en Bryan.

“Quiero que nuestros niños sepan que en ningún momento dejan de ser católicos, y que en ningún momento la Iglesia dejará de darles la bienvenida”, dijo ella con convicción. “Tenemos que asegurarnos que ellos entiendan eso en todo lo que hacemos”.

Con ese objetivo, Pelletier pasó el año pasado visitando las escuelas, reuniéndose con el personal docente, e identificando los puntos fuertes de cada comunidad. Melissa Button, actual directora de la escuela de San Andrés, pronto compartirá esas obligaciones como asistente de la superintendente de escuelas.

Se formó un comité curricular, constituido por directores de escuela y de currículo, para hacer listas de lecturas consistentes para toda la diócesis, y para revisar otros materiales básicos. Aún no se ha tomado la decisión de adoptar otro currículo o de escribir algo nuevo para la diócesis.

“Estoy cansada de conversaciones tales como ‘hay que asegurar que las materias sean vistas a través del catolicismo’. No hay diferencia”, asegura la superintendente. La verdad existe en la Iglesia, punto. Así que, cuando uno está estudiando matemáticas o ciencias, entre más las entienda, mejor entiende su fe.”

Una educación católica no se basa en discutir la Trinidad en la clase de geometría, ni asegurarse que se incluya a Dios en una lección de Inglés.

“No es eso”, continúa ella. “Entre más entienda matemáticas—entre más ahonde en la verdad en cualquier cosa—se acerca uno más a Dios porque Dios es la plenitud de la verdad”.

Los padres—primeros educadores de sus niños—son responsables de infundir los fundamentos de la fe. Las escuelas católicas deben ayudar a las familias a que los niños hagan suya esa fe.

“En algún momento, nuestros estudiantes tendrán que escoger entre el modo de vida social vigente y su fe, tanto en asuntos grandes como pequeños,” explica Pelletier. “Tenemos que asegurarnos que tomen las decisiones correctas en una cultura que puede ser muy insidiosa.”

Ella da crédito a sus padres, Pat y el difunto Chuck Pelletier, por haberle dado el mejor regalo que ella recibiera—catolicismo—unido a una fuerte creencia en la instrucción académica.

“Mis padres comprendieron que entre mejor trabajen nuestras mentes, mejor entendemos a Dios,” dice Pelletier. “No podemos comprender totalmente a Dios aquí en la tierra, pero crea y engendra en nosotros un anhelo y necesidad total de saber más”.

En eso reside el valor de la educación católica. “En que captura la curiosidad de los niños y los hace entender que hay más por conocer... más por conocer... y más por conocer.”

HOGAR DULCE HOGAR:

Misioneras Catequistas celebran la dedicación de su primer convento local

Por Mary Lou Seewoester
Corresponsal

LAS MISIONERAS CATEQUISTAS DE LOS SAGRADOS CORAZONES DE JESÚS Y MARÍA (MCSH) HAN SERVIDO A LA DIÓCESIS DE FORT WORTH POR MÁS DE 50 AÑOS, PERO NUNCA HABÍAN TENIDO UN CONVENTO O CASA CENTRAL EN LA CUAL VIVIR JUNTAS COMO COMUNIDAD DE RELIGIOSAS CONSAGRADAS.

El 8 de abril, el Padre Eric Groner, SVD, párroco de la Parroquia de Santa Rita en Fort Worth, bendijo el recientemente renovado Convento de Santa Rita, 732 Weiler Blvd., para seis hermanas MCSH que ahora viven allí en comunidad como visible presencia de la vida religiosa. Estas hermanas anteriormente habían vivido en las parroquias o en apartamentos.

En su homilía en la Misa que precedió la ceremonia de bendición, el P. Groner dio las gracias a cada hermana, diciendo que ellas son invaluable para nosotros por su presencia y por la catequesis que proporcionan... estamos felices y complacidos por la labor que ustedes están haciendo aquí y en las parroquias”.

Las Misioneras Catequistas son bilingües y sirven a las comunidades Hispánicas en siete diferentes parroquias como directoras de educación religiosa o como coordinadoras de los ministerios Hispánicos.

La hermana superiora, Midory Wu, MCSH, dijo, “cada una va a una parroquia diferente... pero ahora vivimos la fe juntas. Podemos rezar juntas cada mañana”.

“Es el modo como vivimos la vida religiosa”, dijo la hermana Eva Sanchez, MCSH. “Es importante interactuar entre nosotras después de estar tan involucradas con la gente todo el día. Es bueno para nosotras estar



Arriba: Hermana Eva Sánchez (derecha) y Hermana Rosa María Rodríguez se dan la señal de la paz durante una Misa especial para la dedicación del convento nuevo para su orden religiosa. El Convento de Santa Rita fue dedicado abril 8 en Fort Worth.



Izquierda: Padre Eric Groner de la Parroquia Santa Rita bendice el Convento de Santa Rita, que será usado por las Misioneras Catequistas de los Sagrados Corazones de Jesús y María (MCSH). (Fotos por Ben Torres / NTC)

juntas... y especialmente rezar juntas”.

Antes de la renovación, pequeños grupos de hermanas de diferentes órdenes religiosas habían vivido en el convento, pero “no estaba completamente aprovechado”, dijo el P. Groner. Él añadió que muchas veces solo dos o tres hermanas compartían el convento y que en algún tiempo estuvo vacante.

La renovación, que costó \$175,000, aumentó a nueve el número de recámaras e incluyó aire

acondicionado y calefacción central, pisos de madera, y remodelación de la capilla, comedor y sala.

La Hermana Yolanda Cruz, SSMN, delegada para las Religiosas, dijo que el Obispo Michael Olson “quiere que la vida religiosa sea visible y, también, que esté al servicio de los ministerios. Para eso, necesitamos conventos”.

Gary Fragosso, administrador de las propiedades diocesanas, dijo que la diócesis también invirtió

\$225,000 para remodelar la anterior residencia de los Marianistas en el campus de Nolan High School en Fort Worth, para que la habiten ocho Hermanas Dominicas de la Provincia de María Inmaculada.

Las hermanas se cambiaron a su nuevo convento el pasado agosto, y en septiembre, el Padre Karl Schilken, Vicario General de la diócesis, bendijo el edificio, que ellas llamaron Convento de la Beata Imelda. Todas las Hermanas Dominicas son maestras en las escuelas diocesanas.

Dos caminos conducen a un mismo destino

Stephen Hauck y John W. Martin son ordenados diáconos en transición

Por Susan Moses
Corresponsal

EL DICHO “EL SEÑOR TRABAJA DE FORMA MISTERIOSA” RESULTÓ CIERTO PARA STEPHEN HAUCK Y JOHN W. MARTIN RESPECTO A SU LLAMADO AL SACERDOCIO. SU ORDENACIÓN DIACONAL EL 9 DE ABRIL, DONDE DIERON EL SIGUIENTE IMPORTANTE PASO PARA SER SACERDOTES, DEMOSTRÓ QUE EL SEÑOR TAMBIÉN TRABAJA DE FORMA HERMOSA Y ALEGRE.

Stephen acredita al tráfico de la zona metropolitana el pequeño factor que influyó en su decisión de decir “Sí” a Dios. Su diario ir y venir de su trabajo como programador en una compañía manufacturera de madera en el sur de Dallas era agobiante. Él adquirió el hábito de llegar diario al atardecer a una iglesia para una hora de adoración Eucarística. Él explicó, “Podía esperar en el tráfico o hacer una hora santa”.

Sus horas de oración lo ayudaron a decidir renunciar a su trabajo y enfocarse en discernir el llamado de Dios.

“Yo había estado trabajando por varios años, pero no encontraba satisfacción en el trabajo”, dijo Stephen. “Yo pensaba que una camioneta nueva o una nueva televisión deberían hacerme feliz, pero no era así. No era bastante para mí”.

Stephen ingresó al Seminario de la Santísima Trinidad en 2006 y se trasladó al Seminario Universitario Saint Joseph en Louisiana para terminar su licenciatura en 2012. Él va a ser ordenado sacerdote el año próximo después de terminar sus estudios de postgrado en teología en el Seminario de Santa María en Houston.

La jornada de John a las Órdenes Sagradas empezó más pronto y ha tardado más que la de Stephen. Creciendo en una familia no católica, John recuerda que cuando tenía siete años vio una Misa en la TV y pensó que le gustaría ser un sacerdote. Siendo adolescente, asistió a una Misa con sus amigos católicos, y la idea todavía resonaba en él, pero la dejó de lado. “Demasiada educación”, pensó.

Al terminar preparatoria, dijo “sí” a una autoridad diferente: al Cuerpo de Marines de los E. U. Su servicio lo llevó a Okinawa, Japón, donde se convirtió al catolicismo. Con nueve años de servicio y el grado de sargento, dejó el Cuerpo de Marines y usó su experiencia en aviación en



Los dos nuevos diáconos flanquean al Obispo Michael Olson en el altar mientras le asisten durante la Misa. **Izquierda** — Diacono Stephen Hauck y **derecha** — Diacono John Martin. (Foto por Juan Guajardo / editor asociado)

Bell Helicopter, donde trabajó en seguridad de calidad por 22 años.

“Yo sentía que no estaba dando lo suficiente de mí mismo a Dios ni a su pueblo”, dijo John. Empezó a platicar con sacerdotes y a asistir a programas de discernimiento vocacional mientras continuaba trabajando. Después de un año, se inscribió en el Seminario del Sagrado Corazón y en la Facultad de Teología en Hales Corners, Wisconsin.

El júbilo era palpable aún antes que la fanfarria de trompeta empezara la Misa de Ordenación en Santa María Goretti el 9 de abril. Ésta fue la primera celebración de Órdenes Sagradas en la iglesia en Arlington, que este año está conmemorando su 75 aniversario.

John and Stephen seleccionaron las lecturas de la Misa de Ordenación, que el Obispo Michael Olson entrelazó para explicar sus roles como diáconos y sus vidas en Cristo. La segunda lectura, Hechos 6:1-7, narra el origen del ministerio diaconal, cuando siete hombres honorables fueron designados para servir a los necesitados dentro de la comunidad de la Iglesia primitiva.

“Su vocación como diácono es parte esencial de su ministerio sacerdotal. Previene la exclusión basada en diferencias y muestra que la gracia de Dios es más profunda que los muros que el pecado construye”, explicó el Obispo Olson, y añadió que John y Stephen siempre serán diáconos, igual que todos los sacerdotes y obispos.

El llamado del Señor puede ser difícil, como se ve en la primera lectura de Jeremías, cuando el Señor dice a Jeremías que Él lo consagró profeta desde antes de que naciera. “Ustedes deben responder, y decir “sí” en la fe. Ustedes pueden tener confianza en Quien los eligió”, dijo el obispo. Como el profeta, los diáconos pueden apuntar hacia la renovación y esperanza aun en tiempos de exilio y destrucción.

Cuando en el Evangelio de Juan, los discípulos ven a Jesús caminar hacia ellos sobre las aguas tormentosas en la noche, se llenaron de miedo. El Obispo Olson comparó eso con Jesús viniendo hacia nosotros en el caos y tormentas de la vida, agregando que nosotros podemos confiar en Jesús hoy y todos los días.

El Obispo también recomendó a John y a Stephen que no se alejen de la playa sin Jesús en la barca.

Después de la oración de ordenación y la imposición de manos del obispo, de la investidura con la estola y dalmática, y la entrega del Evangelio, John y Stephen fueron recibidos en la Orden de Diáconos por los muchos diáconos presentes.

Los recién ordenados respondieron pronto al llamado a servir. A la mañana siguiente Stephen y John sirvieron como diáconos en la Misa dominical en sus respectivas parroquias de Santa María Goretti en Arlington, y del Apóstol San Juan en North Richland Hills.

U.S. bishops: don't rush in reading, interpreting pope's 'love letter' to families

BACKGROUND: Copies of Pope Francis' apostolic exhortation on the family, *Amoris Laetitia* are seen at the Vatican April 8. (CNS photo/Paul Haring)

By Adelaide Mena
Catholic News Agency / EWTN News

WASHINGTON — THE UNITED STATES BISHOPS ARE WELCOMING POPE FRANCIS'S NEW APOSTOLIC EXHORTATION, *AMORIS LAETITIA*, PRAISING THE POPE'S CALL FOR CAREFUL ENCOURAGEMENT AND SUPPORT OF MARRIED LIFE AND ENGAGEMENT WITH FAMILIES FACING CHALLENGES.

The bishops also echo the Holy Father's call for a careful and considered reading of the text, urging understanding as Catholics seek to apply the pope's recommendations to their families and to society.

"The pope has given us a love letter — a love letter to families," said Archbishop Joseph E. Kurtz of Louisville and president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, in a Friday press conference. The document, the archbishop said, challenges the faithful to grow in love and trust in God's mercy in the face of difficulty. "Let us remember that no obstacle is too big for Christ to overcome."

Archbishop Kurtz also echoed the pope's own caution against "a rushed reading of the text" when turning to it for pastoral guidance and understanding. "I really encourage each one of us to read and reflect carefully on the words of Pope Francis — how they can be applied to our lives, our families, and our society."

Archbishop Kurtz was one of eight American participants in the two-year synod process that led up to the release. The process featured two meetings of bishops, or synods, hosted at the Vatican in 2014 and 2015, which culminated in the release of *Amoris Laetitia* April 8.

Bishop Richard J. Malone of Buffalo, chairman of the USCCB Committee on Laity, Marriage, Family Life, and Youth, said the letter is a "beautiful and stirring reflection on love and the family" that challenges pastoral ministry to be more "missionary" and to engage with the "concrete reality" of parishioners' lives.

He promised that the U.S. bishops "stand with families and seek to support those who are touched by poverty, trafficking, immigration challenges, domestic violence, and pornography."

"We also have room to grow and improve,

and we welcome the pope's encouragement of a renewed witness to the truth and beauty of marriage and a more tender closeness with couples and families who are experiencing real difficulties," he commented.

Bishop Malone also stressed to CNA that the first step for bishops and pastors in implementing the advice presented in *Amoris Laetitia* is to take time to read and truly understand it. "We cannot rush our interpretation of what we have here," he emphasized. "We don't want to be taking bits and pieces of them without taking them in context."

While it is too early to know what the full impact of the exhortation will be, Bishop Malone said that American bishops and pastors will likely seek ways to strengthen marriage preparation and support for married couples — both topics Pope Francis emphasizes in the letter.

Archbishop Kurtz agreed with his colleague, telling CNA that improvements to marriage preparation and support of couples after marriage "will probably be the largest impact" within the United States.

Archbishop José H. Gomez of Los Angeles, who also participated in the synod meetings in Rome, welcomed the document as a gift both to the Church and to "everyone who wants to understand what God really intends for our true happiness." The archbishop said in a statement

that while he is going to "read his reflections slowly and carefully," he was encouraged by the pope's emphasis on marriage preparation and support of couples in their first years of marriage.

"I was also touched by our Holy Father's call for all of us in the Church to reach out with compassion to wounded families and persons living in difficult situations," the archbishop commented.

Archbishop Charles Chaput of Philadelphia stressed that while the document "changes no Church teaching or discipline, it does stress the importance of pastoral sensitivity in dealing with the difficult situations many married couples today face."

Archbishop Chaput also participated in the Synod meetings in Rome, and hosted the World Meeting of Families in Sept. 2015 in Philadelphia.

Archbishop Chaput pointed to the letter's large size — more than 250 pages — and praised the Holy Father's advice to read *Amoris Laetitia* carefully and slowly, promising further thoughts of his own as he finished reading the exhortation.

Meanwhile, he thanked the pope for his thoughts and analysis of the "unique witness" of Christian marriage.

"Nothing is more essential to any society than the health of marriage and the family," he concluded.



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turning the other cheek.

“They really follow the Beatitudes,” Fr. Vasko observes. “Christians try to be the peacemakers. They’re not militant. They’re charitable, kind, and live the Gospel in many ways.”

“Blessed are the persecuted” is a harsh reality in the Holy Land where most of the Christians are of Palestinian descent. Caught between the politics and aggression that defines both sides of the Muslim-Israeli conflict, the majority of them have a difficult time finding jobs and live below the poverty line. A security wall, built by the Israelis, protects against suicide bombers, but it also limits mobility of residents living in the West Bank and Gaza.

“It takes away a people’s livelihood, education, and medical access and causes a lot of sorrow and agony,” Fr. Vasko says. “Some Christians can’t go to the [Church of the] Holy Sepulchre on Easter unless they have a travel permit.”

The key to helping Christians in the Holy Land is education — specifically more higher education, the friar adds. Since 1997, the FFHL has given more than \$6 million in scholarships and education grants to economically marginalized students. After completing their studies in Israel, Jordan, or Egypt, the young Christian graduates begin careers in the Holy Land as accountants, engineers, and medical personnel.

“They were going to leave but now they are staying,” Fr. Vasko says, lauding the program’s success. “We’re building a community of professional people.”

For young people who don’t have the academic grades, the FFHL partners with a trade school operated by the Lutheran World Federation.

“One hundred kids have gone through the two-year program to become carpenters, plumbers, and

Fr. Peter Vasko, OFM, delivers Christmas presents along with the current Custos of the Holy Land, Father Pierbattista Pizzaballa, OFM, to the boys in the Franciscan Boys Home.



Fr. Vasko stops to greet a religious sister while traveling through the Holy Land with a group of pilgrims.

electricians,” he adds.

To curb the flow of emigration, the foundation also provides housing for Christian families through subsidies and new construction projects. Humanitarian efforts like the Bethlehem Christmas program and Franciscan Family Center offer an emotional and psychological lift.

“We’re the only organization in the Holy Land proper taking care of Christians, and we’re doing as much as we can,” Fr. Vasko promises.

With support, the foundation can do more.

“How can people help? First, by praying for the conflict over there,” he explains. “Today, more than ever, peace is needed in the Holy Land.”

His second suggestion is a bucket list item for many. The friar, who works as a guide to the religious sites, invites Catholics to make a pilgrimage to the land of Christ’s birth, death, and Resurrection.

“It will give you a sense of your Christian heritage,” assures



the priest, who has escorted 4,000 visitors to the sacred shrines and landmarks in the past 28 years. “When you go to the Holy Land and come back, the words of Scripture pop out at you.”

Pilgrims, who have the opportunity to meet Christian students and graduates during the trip, are so impressed they often become sponsors in the FFHL education program.

“The pilgrim network for us is the most important means of letting people know what’s happening,” says Fr. Vasko, who’s quick to point out there’s no fighting in the streets of Jerusalem. “Pilgrimages are a time when you’re called to seek the divine, and when you do that, you’re pro-

TECTED. It’s safe. It’s peaceful.”

Twice a year, the former marketing executive leaves the Middle East to rally support for the Franciscan Foundation for the Holy Land from fellow Christians in other parts of the world. His passionate rhetoric, coupled with startling statistics, is effective in securing donations from individuals, religious organizations, and through benefit dinners.

The message Fr. Vasko sends to North Texas Catholics is equally powerful: Invest in Christianity.

“That’s the key,” he implores. “Our Church [in the Holy Land] is dying and needs to be rebuilt. It’s like St. Francis’ (call): ‘Rebuild My Church.’”

GOOD NEWSMAKER

Father Peter Vasko, OFM, has spent 30 years working with his order's efforts to maintain and protect the sacred sites and Christian presence in

Holy Jerusalem

“Our Church in the Holy Land is dying and needs to be rebuilt. It’s like St. Francis’ call: ‘Rebuild My Church.’”

By Joan Kurkowski-Gillen
Correspondent

It’s a crisis that rarely makes the headlines. Every year, 300 Christian families leave the Holy Land to escape the unemployment, poverty, and lost opportunities caused by systemic discrimination. If the trend continues unchecked, Church officials predict in 50 years, Christianity may disappear from the very place where it began.



The *North Texas Catholic* caught up with Franciscan Father Peter Vasko as he made a trip to Fort Worth and Dallas to raise awareness of the plight of the Christian community in the Holy Land. He invites those who have not been there to make a pilgrimage to deepen their understanding of the place where Jesus walked and of the crisis Christians face there. (NTC / Juan Guajardo)

Statistics support the dire prediction. There were 300,000 Christians living in Jerusalem in 1944. Now the number is 10,000. Of the eight million residents of Israel, 150,000 — less than 2 percent of the population — are Christian. That’s down from 18

percent in 1948.

“There will be museums and sanctuaries without a living, worshipping community,” warns Father Peter Vasko, OFM, president of the Franciscan Foundation for the Holy Land (FFHL). “That’s why the Franciscans started the

foundation — to tell the story of the Christian exodus from the Holy Land.”

Part of the Franciscan Custody of the Holy Land since 1987, the Brooklyn, New York native has spent the past 31 years in Jerusalem developing programs and resources that can help make it possible for Christians to remain in their homes. In early April, the friar visited North Texas to update benefactors on the progress being made to help struggling Christians survive in a political environment that persecutes them because of ethnic distrust.

“Countless generations of Jews and Arabs have passed onto their children and children’s children this concept of hate toward each other. In the middle of that you have the Christians,” Fr. Vasko explains.

Israeli Defense Forces regard Christians as Arabs, Palestinians, and suspicious enemies of the state. Militant Muslims view them as pro-West and enemies of the Islamic cause.

Followers of Jesus respond to the prejudice they encounter by

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