



North Texas Catholic

BRINGING THE GOOD NEWS TO THE DIOCESE OF FORT WORTH

LIGHT OF CHRIST

VOL. 34 NO. 3 MAY / JUNE 2018

Converts to the faith share their
journeys to Catholicism

IN THIS ISSUE

May-June 2018

13 YOUNG VOICES

Three millennials with Texas ties travel to Rome to share their view of the Church.

20 ENCUESTRO

Preparing for the national V Encuentro, regional delegates pinpoint priorities.

38 HUMANAЕ VITAE

Blessed Paul VI's landmark encyclical has been called "prophetic." Here's why.

42 FUN IN THE SON

Make summer a growing season in faith for you and your family.

46 TAKE 5 WITH FATHER

Why Father Nghia Nguyen was labeled "The Baby Whisperer," and much more.

COVER STORY

Converts to Catholicism share their individual journeys to the same destination – the Church founded by Jesus Christ.

30



Linda Wigginton receives a candle representing the light of Christ as she was received into the Catholic Church at St. Ann Parish in Burleson. (NTC photo/Juan Guajardo)

ON THE FRONT

Valeria Carrasco holds a candle lit with the Easter fire prior to joining the Catholic Church at St. Ann's Easter Vigil.

FOLLOW US ONLINE

Visit NorthTexasCatholic.org for photo galleries, videos, the digital version of the magazine, and web-only articles.

HAVE A STORY IDEA?

Share it with us! Help us make sure your parish community is seen in the NTC online, in print, or on our quickly-growing social media accounts. Submit your ideas and briefs to: NTC@fwdioc.org.



10 POVERTY'S FRONT LINE 24 GOOD SHEPHERDS



PUBLISHER BISHOP MICHAEL OLSON

COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR PAT SVACINA

EDITOR JUAN GUAJARDO

ASSOCIATE EDITOR SUSAN MOSES

EDITORIAL ASSISTANTS ROSA ROSALES

WEB DESIGNER CHRIS KASTNER

CIRCULATION CRISSY GROSSLEY

CONTRIBUTORS JENARA KOCKS-BURGESS | KEVIN BARTRAM
 JERRY CIRCELLI | JOAN GILLEN
 SUSAN MCFARLAND | LANCE MURRAY
 THAO NGUYEN | ALEX ROSALES
 MARTY SABOTA | JAYME SHEDENHELM
 MARY LOU SEEWOESTER
 MATTHEW SMITH | BEN TORRES

TRANSLATORS REYNA CASTELAN | YOLANDA NEWCOMB

REGULAR COLUMNISTS MARLON DE LA TORRE | JEFF HEDGLEN
 ALI HOFFMAN | DAVID MILLS
 MARY MORRELL | CALLIE NOWLIN
 JOEL RODRIGUEZ | FR. MANUEL HOLGUIN

SPECIAL THANKS BIANCA GUAJARDO | MONICA ROLLING

Editorial Office: 800 West Loop 820 S., Fort Worth, Texas 76108, 817-945-9424.

NORTH TEXAS CATHOLIC Magazine (USPS 751-370) (ISSN 0899-7020) is published bi-monthly by the Most Rev. Michael F. Olson, Bishop of the Diocese of Fort Worth. For those who are not registered parishioners in the Diocese of Fort Worth, subscription rates are \$18 for one year, \$35 for two years, \$50 for three years. Periodicals postage paid at Fort Worth, TX. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to North Texas Catholic, 800 W. Loop 820 S., Fort Worth, Texas 76108.

The appearance of advertising in these pages does not imply endorsement of businesses, services, or products. Readers must exercise prudence in responding to advertising in all media.

For address changes, please contact Crissy Grossley, 817-945-9465.

Into the Breach

It's a picture taken in 1945, all but lost from society's consciousness for more than half a century, before being recirculated by Pope Francis in the form of a card at the end of 2017.

In it, a young Japanese boy, about 10 years old, stands at attention before officers working a funeral pyre in Nagasaki. On his back is a lifeless infant — his baby brother. Photographer Joseph O' Donnell, who captured the mournful moment, said this to a Japanese interviewer:

“He was carrying a baby on his back. In those days in Japan, we often saw children playing with their little brothers or sisters on their backs, but this boy was clearly different. I could see that he had come to this place for a serious reason. He was wearing no shoes. His face was hard. The little head was tipped back as if the baby were fast asleep. The boy stood there for five or ten minutes.

“The men in white masks walked over to him and quietly began to take off the rope that was holding the baby. That is when I saw that the baby was already dead. The men held the body by the hands and feet and placed it on the fire. The boy stood there straight without moving, watching the flames. He was biting his lower lip so hard that it shone with blood. The flame burned low like the sun going down. The boy turned around and walked silently away.”

Over several more months, O'Donnell, a photographer with the U.S. Marines, documented the devastation caused by the bombs across the rest of western Japan. On the back of the card bearing the image, Pope Francis wrote in Italian, “The fruit of war.”

It's not only in the 1940s that we find such heartbreaking photos. Each decade, sadly, holds up its own. The 1990s hold up Kevin Carter's photo of “The Vulture and the Little Girl.” The 2000s hold up images of 9/11 and its aftermath. The year 2015 holds up the photo of the drowned Syrian toddler, Alan Kurdi, whose family was fleeing the war plaguing the country. How many tongues have uttered “never again” only to see the evil reoccur just a decade later!

War. Extreme poverty. Genocide. Persecution. Loss of innocent lives. Corruption. That's the social and communal impact of sin run rampant; of evil not kept in check and tipping the scales. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* reminds us of that: “Sin makes men accomplices

Continued on Page 4



A Japanese boy standing at attention after bringing his dead baby brother to a funeral pyre in Nagasaki, 1945.

“THE FRUIT OF WAR”

From Page 3

of one another and causes concupiscence, violence, and injustice to reign among them. Sins give rise to social situations and institutions that are contrary to divine goodness” (1869) — think abortion, sexual slavery, and euthanasia, etc.

But even when the evil seems much bigger than us, even when the sin isn't ours, we can do something. That, I believe, is Pope Francis' message to us. While the impact of sin is communal, the antidote is personal.

There is something to be said for standing against a crashing tide; there is something to be said for choosing virtue in the midst of antagonism; there is something to be said for choosing to be honorable rather than agreeable. After all, Christian love always calls us to step into the breach, where God takes hold of our sacrifice and weaves a tapestry of blessings out of it. If we give up or don't speak up during times of trial, there is that much less heroism, justice, and love to buoy our world.

Could one more good man or woman have changed the course of events that led to the sorrow of the Japanese child in that photo? Maybe. Maybe not. There's no way of knowing.

However, I will point out the example of St. Maximilian Kolbe who gave his life to save a young father in a concentration camp during that same war. That one holy man's decision, seemingly just another drop in

the ocean, made an impact not only on that family, but also on generations! What's more, our Church received a valiant saint and intercessor. What would hundreds, thousands, or hundreds of thousands of choices and sacrifices made with love and right reason have done? Again, there's no way of knowing, but I like the odds.

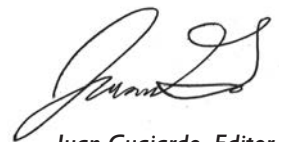
We Catholics know that suffering endured with love of God can benefit our souls, our families and loved ones, and our society.

We understand how much grace sacrificial love can purchase — not just for ourselves but for others!

St. Therese of Lisieux reminds us that even tiny acts of love matter. “Miss no single opportunity of making some small sacrifice...always doing the smallest right and doing it all for love.”

Don't let evil have the final say. Rather, let's bend our knee and pray to our Blessed Lord to enlighten our dim reason; to strengthen our feeble will; and to grace us with the goodness and courage to step into the breach. After humbly praying for wisdom, act! Action doesn't make the problems vanish magically, but it does begin to solve them.

“The boy stood there straight without moving, watching the flames. He was biting his lower lip so hard that it shone with blood. The flame burned low like the sun going down.”


Juan Guajardo, Editor in

YOU'RE INVITED!

¡Está invitado!

PRIESTLY ORDINATION MASS

The Diocese of Fort Worth invites you to attend the Ordination Mass of Jonathan Michael Demma and Maurice Lawrence Moon.

La diócesis le invita a asistir a la misa de ordenación de Jonathan Michael Demma y Maurice Lawrence Moon.

Reception follows immediately at St. Patrick Cathedral Parish Center.

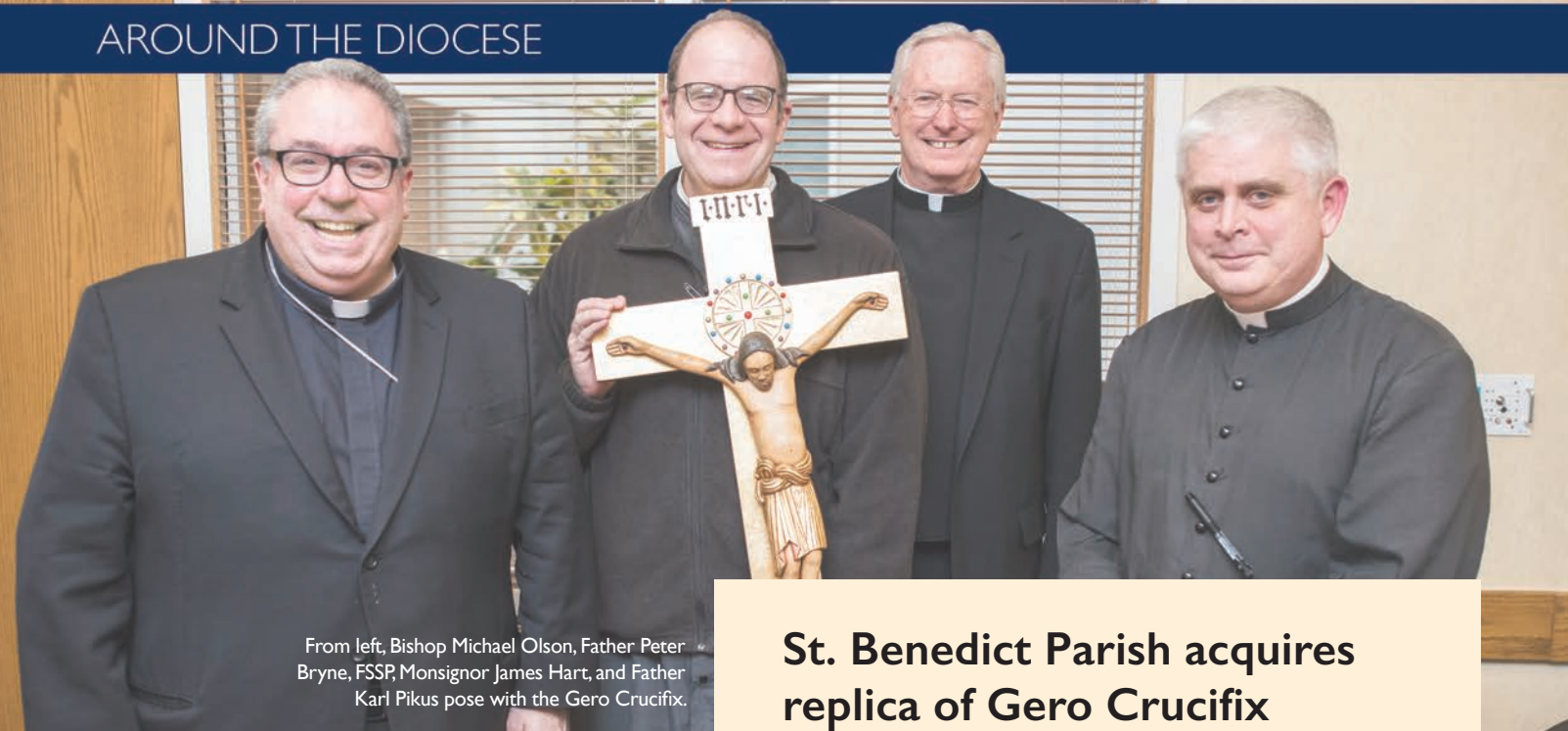
Una recepción sigue inmediatamente después en el Centro Parroquial de la Catedral de St. Patrick.

10 A.M. | ST. PATRICK CATHEDRAL

MAY 19



WATCH THE LIVE
STREAM: 10 A.M. AT
FWDIOC.ORG



From left, Bishop Michael Olson, Father Peter Bryne, FSSP, Monsignor James Hart, and Father Karl Pikus pose with the Gero Crucifix.

St. Benedict Parish acquires replica of Gero Crucifix

FORT WORTH — Three years ago, Bishop Michael Olson established St. Benedict to serve Catholics who wished to participate in the Extraordinary Form of the Roman Rite.

They began celebrating the Latin Mass at St. Mary of the Assumption Parish and moved into their permanent home in the old St. Thomas the Apostle campus when St. Thomas' new church building was dedicated in December 2016.

Already proud of their northwest Fort Worth church, St. Benedict parishioners have a beautiful new addition — a replica of the Gero Crucifix.

The altar crucifix featuring a linden wood Jesus corpus was installed on Easter.

Bishop Olson blessed the crucifix on March 21 on the patronal Feast of St. Benedict, founder of the Order of St. Benedict.

The cross is based on the design of the Gero Crucifix. Located in Cologne

Cathedral in Germany, the 6-foot-2-inch crucifix is the earliest monumental sculpture of the crucified Christ still in existence and was one of the largest crosses of its time. Made of wood and painted, it was commissioned in 970 by Gero, archbishop of Cologne, for his cathedral.

"It's very timeless," Father Karl Pikus, FSSP, pastor of St. Benedict, said. "It's not old and it's not new. Over the years it has stood the test of time."

The crucifix was a welcome addition to the approximately 250 parishioners at St. Benedict, which is a personal parish, meaning it has no territorial boundaries within a diocese but serves Catholics with particular cultural needs.

"This cross uniquely blends both East and West, Good Friday and Easter, suffering and glory," Fr. Pikus said.

— Marty Sabota

At Chrism Mass, oils are blessed, priests renew vows

FORT WORTH — In the beautiful journey of Holy Week, the Chrism Mass can be a hidden gem.

On Tuesday, March 27 at St. Patrick Cathedral, Bishop Olson celebrated the Chrism Mass. In his homily, he said, "There is a particular quality of repetition to the liturgical structure of the Chrism Mass that is even more pronounced than in other liturgical celebrations of the Mass. As priests and as your bishop, the Chrism Mass is structured with such an order as to invite us

to repeat our promises that we pronounced and proclaimed on the occasions of our respective ordinations.

"The oils that are blessed and consecrated respectively as the Oil of the Sick, the Oil of Catechumens, and the Sacred Chrism, we will use throughout the year repetitively in the sacramental rites of Anointing of the Sick, Baptism, Confirmation, and in Holy Orders in the ordination of priests."

At the end of the Mass, priests bring the oil back to their parishes to use in the sacraments during the coming year, a symbol of unity with the universal Church.

The Chrism Mass is celebrated throughout the world during Holy Week.

See the beauty and learn the rich symbolism



NorthTexasCatholic.org/video-gallery



Marriage on Tap's monthly events in Wichita Falls allow couples to strengthen their faith together. (NTC photo/Ben Torres)

Couples events tap into thirst for faith, community

WICHITA FALLS — Catholic spouses from Wichita Falls and surrounding towns now have another way to learn about their Catholic faith while building community through a recently launched Marriage on Tap program.

During their third event on March 22 at the Half Pint Taproom & Restoration Hall in Wichita Falls, Father Khoi Tran, pastor of St. Jude Thaddeus Parish in Burkburnett, Christ the King Parish in Iowa Park, and St. Paul Parish in Electra, taught couples how God demonstrates His love for His people through Holy Thursday, Good Friday, and the Easter Vigil and how spouses can imitate that love in their marriages.

“Intimacy begins with your ability to communicate and communicate well. I know this is corny, but intimacy means IN-TO-ME-YOU-SEE,” Fr. Tran said. “So, intimacy begins with you and I opening our hearts

up to God. This leads us to the wonderful example of God’s love for us through the Triduum.”

Kitty Eisenbeil, a member of Our Lady of the Skies Parish at Sheppard Air Force Base in Wichita Falls, said Marriage on Tap is more than just a once-a-month date night.

“I want couples to meet each other, exchange phone numbers, and start living their faith together outside of Mass on Sundays,” Eisenbeil said. “The whole point is to bring Christ to the world in your daily lives through the vocation of marriage. Have dinners together. Meet up for Adoration. Even have people see you praying over your meals together at a restaurant. Become comfortable letting your marriage be a witness to Christ.”

Attendance has surpassed Eisenbeil’s expectations, with more than 100 present on March 22.

—Jenara Kocks Burgess

Missionary priest shares news on school that faith built

BEDFORD — Father Robert Thames was more than 4,100 miles from his home in Bolivia, but for the priest from the Diocese of Fort Worth, his recent trip to North Texas was a reunion and a chance to update on the success of Educate the Children Bolivia.

Fr. Thames came to North Texas for a reunion of The Happening, a retreat for Catholic youth designed in the late 1960s by Fr. Thames and a group of other young priests.

Fr. Thames held a Period of Reflection at St. Michael Parish in Bedford.

During the reflection, Fr. Thames reminded, “God does not live in temples, God lives in

people,” and that prayer is important.

“Get in touch with God,” he told attendees. “We can pray any place, any time.”

Originally from Decatur, Fr. Thames will celebrate his 54th year in the priesthood this year, spending most of that time abroad.

Since 1996, Fr. Thames has served the rural villages in Cabezas, Bolivia, a remote agricultural section of the South American country where Educate the Children Bolivia has four schools, including the regular high school with 352 students and the adult school with 430 students.

—Lance Murray



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

Bishop Michael Olson and Heather Reynolds hold up the check representing the diocese's donation to Catholic Charities Fort Worth.



Official Assignments for the Diocese of Fort Worth

BY MOST REV. MICHAEL OLSON, STD, MA

REV. PRAKASH DIAZ

Has been appointed **Parochial Vicar** of Our Lady of Lourdes Parish in Mineral Wells and St. Francis of Assisi Parish in Graford, from Parochial Vicar at St. John the Baptizer in Bridgeport, Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Decatur, and St. Mary Parish in Jacksboro, effective March 7, 2018.

IN MEMORIAM



SISTER DOROTHY ANN FLORI, SSMN
Feb. 26, 2018

Sister Dorothy Ann Flori served Catholic education in a variety of roles for 66 years. She was 92 and a member of the Sisters of St. Mary of Namur for 74 years.

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

Bishop Olson awards \$450,000 to Catholic Charities Fort Worth

FORT WORTH — The fundraising efforts behind the Annual Diocesan Appeal are “a labor of love” for Renée Underwood, associate director of the Advancement Foundation.

“It’s exciting when the fruits of labor become dollars for vital ministries in our diocese,” she said.

On Mar. 19, Bishop Michael Olson presented \$450,000, raised through the Annual Diocesan Appeal, to Heather Reynolds, President and CEO of Catholic Charities Fort Worth.

Underwood said those funds, generously given by people across the diocese, will help Catholic Charities fulfill its mission “to provide service to those in need, to advocate compassion and justice in the structures of society, and to call all people of goodwill to do the same.” Supporters of the Annual Diocesan Appeal enable Catholic Charities to provide programs for men, women, children, and families to end the cycle of poverty.

“Your generosity makes this possible,” Underwood added. “Thank you for giving and contributing for the common good!”

To make a donation to the Annual Diocesan Appeal text ADA to 91999 or visit:

bit.ly/AnnualDiocesanAppeal.

MISSION ART CONTEST AWARDS FORT WORTH

Nearly 150 young artists submitted drawings to the Diocese of Fort Worth for the annual Missionary Childhood Association Christmas Art Contest. Judges faced the difficult task of selecting three winners.

Christen Hocevar (pictured) and Kaylee Martinez, seventh-grade students at St. George Catholic School in Fort Worth, received their respective first and second place awards for Christen's illustration of a nativity scene and Kaylee's Magi seeing the star of Bethlehem from afar.

Fifth-grader Paola Ramirez from St. Vincent de Paul Parish in Arlington placed third with a colorful painting of the Three Wise Men.



[NorthTexasCatholic.org/
local-news](http://NorthTexasCatholic.org/local-news)



GOOD FRIDAY ROSARY VIGIL FORT WORTH



A crowd of nearly 700 lined the sidewalks outside of Planned Parenthood in Fort Worth to join Bishop Michael Olson for the 34th annual Good Friday Rosary Vigil for Life.

The faithful requested the Blessed Mother's intercession for unborn babies, mothers, abortion industry workers, and those who have been hurt by abortion, saying Good Friday is a fitting day to unite the suffering of abortion with Jesus' suffering on the cross.



[NorthTexasCatholic.org/
video-gallery](http://NorthTexasCatholic.org/video-gallery)

HELPING HANDS

Six months after Hurricane Harvey devastated the Texas coast, 14 University of Texas at Arlington students and their campus minister, Jeff Hedglen, traveled to the Diocese of Victoria to help with clean-up and assessments of property damage.



[NorthTexasCatholic.org/
video-gallery](http://NorthTexasCatholic.org/video-gallery)

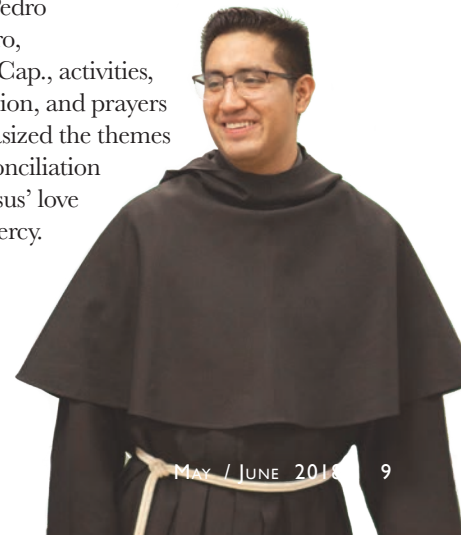


HISPANIC YOUNG ADULT RETREAT FORT WORTH

Father Genaro Mayorga Reyes, TOR, pastor of All Saints Parish in Fort Worth was the spiritual director for the Hispanic young adult retreat hosted by Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish in Fort Worth during Holy Week.

Music [NorthTexasCatholic.org/
photo-gallery](http://NorthTexasCatholic.org/photo-gallery)

led by
Friar Pedro
Romero,
OFM Cap., activities,
discussion, and prayers
emphasized the themes
of reconciliation
and Jesus' love
and mercy.





THE GOOD

fight

House Speaker Paul Ryan talks with Heather Reynolds, president and CEO of Catholic Charities Fort Worth, during a town hall at the nonprofit facility on April 3. (NTC photo/Juan Guajardo)



TRANSFORM

House Speaker Paul Ryan visits Catholic Charities Fort Worth to witness firsthand what works in the battle against poverty

By Susan Moses

Individualized. Focused. Customized. That's how Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives Paul Ryan described Catholic Charities Fort Worth's approach to ending poverty.

Intensive, personalized case management is a method that works, and Catholic Charities Fort Worth (CCFW) has the research to back it up, according to Heather Reynolds, the nonprofit's chief executive officer.

Speaker Ryan has been studying poverty at the federal level from Washington, D.C., but he took a few hours to learn what poverty looks like on the front lines with a visit to CCFW on April 3.

After touring the facility and meeting with three clients and case managers, Speaker Ryan and Reynolds had a town hall with about 200 supporters and staff of Catholic Charities to discuss what has worked, and what hasn't, in the war on poverty.

One difficulty, Ryan articulated, is that the federal government has been measuring its success in eliminating poverty by its input, not its outcome. In 50 years, the U.S. government has developed more than 80 programs to assist the poor, spending more than \$15 trillion. However, very

few of those poverty reduction programs evaluate the actual results.

Ryan, who will retire from Congress in January 2019, said, "We spend all this money, but we don't measure whether it's working or not. In this 21st century, [this] data century we're in, clearly we ought to be able to measure the outcomes of these programs. But how you do that matters, and you want to make sure you do it in a very academically rigorous way and you've got to respect people's privacy."

WHAT WORKS IN FORT WORTH

The poor and vulnerable — and the organizations that assist them — can be found in every city in the United States, but Ryan chose to visit Fort Worth. Why Fort Worth?

Reynolds explained, "One of the things he's respected about us at Catholic Charities Fort Worth is that we're willing to test what we're doing and understand what works, so we as an organization continue to learn and evolve and quit doing what doesn't matter and invest in what does."

To determine the effectiveness of their efforts to break the cycle of

Continued on Page 12

Speaker Paul Ryan talks with Bishop Michael Olson and Catholic Charities representatives, clients, and social workers during a private round table discussion on poverty issues. (NTC photo/Juan Guajardo)



From Page 11

poverty, CCFW partnered with the Wilson Sheehan Lab for Economic Opportunities at the University of Notre Dame two years ago to conduct research and randomized trials.

Year one results indicate that intensive case management is crucial to accomplishing CCFW's goal of eliminating poverty, one family at a time, in the 28-county diocese it serves.

Success has been measured in two programs in particular: Stay the Course, which provides low-income college students with comprehensive social support to help them complete their degrees. Post-secondary education is the most reliable means to earning a living wage, said Reynolds, but only 20 percent of community college students complete their associate's degree or transfer to a four-year college. The first generation college students in the Stay the Course program

benefit from CCFW counselors who help them overcome obstacles to completing their education.

Looking at six years of data, the Notre Dame researchers determined that Stay the Course students are four times as likely to complete their degrees compared to the randomly selected control group.

The second program, the Padua Pilot, gives clients broad-based intensive case management to evaluate their strengths and needs. A case manager provides close and frequent counseling to assist clients with their health, finances, education, child care, housing, and other needs that keep a person in poverty.

The long-term goal is that clients will obtain permanent employment that pays a living wage, save a three-month emergency fund, hold no inappropriate debt, and receive no assistance from the government.

In the first year of the Padua Pilot,



WATCH THE VIDEO

See the Paul Ryan visit and townhall at Catholic Charities Fort Worth at NorthTexasCatholic.org/video-gallery

clients saw their incomes increase 19 percent while their spending decreased 20 percent due to budget coaching and their credit card debt was reduced by 40 percent.

Tonita Burbage, a Catholic Charities client who attended the town hall, was laid off in 2014 and struggled with unemployment and underemployment for two years. She credited Catholic Charities' assistance in helping her find a full-time job with benefits so she could support her two daughters without government assistance.

Continued on Page 17



Pope Francis greets Nick Lopez during a pre-synod gathering of youth delegates in Rome March 19. Lopez, a parishioner at St. Michael in Bedford, addressed the pontiff in preparation for the Synod of Bishops on young people, the faith, and vocational discernment this October at the Vatican.

The Ear of the Pope

Three young Americans, including one from our diocese, travel to the Vatican to share ideas on youth and the Church

By **Joan Kurkowski-Gillen**

As the director of campus ministry at the University of Dallas, Nick Lopez talks with young people every day. Why was March 19 different? Along with 300 young adults from around the world, Pope Francis was listening.

The St. Michael in Bedford parishioner was one of three young adult Catholics chosen to represent the U.S. at a pre-synod gathering in Rome to share ideas about young people and their relationship to the Church. The pre-synod event, called by

Pope Francis, is a forerunner to October's Synod of Bishops where prelates will meet to discuss "Young People, Faith, and Vocational Discernment."

One of five delegates asked to address the Holy Father directly, Lopez talked about the struggles and opportunities facing young people in the Americas during his 10-minute presentation. The campus minister told the pontiff a common thread runs through the life of every young person — constant transition.

"The life of the young person is riddled with potential changes and the mere existence of these changes is cause

for great stress and anxiety," he said to the Holy Father, adding later, "It appears the Church's guidance of our youth and young adults is needed now more than ever."

"It was wonderful to see the universal Church," he continued. "When it comes to youth and young adults, there are a lot of commonalities but there are also differences depending what part of the world you come from. It was eye opening to see and hear those stories."

The 28-year-old calls the ability of representatives from across the

Continued on Page 14



CNS photo/Paul Haring

Pope Francis listens at a pre-synod gathering of youth delegates in Rome March 19. The meeting was in preparation for the Synod of Bishops on young people, the faith, and vocational discernment this October at the Vatican.

From Page 13

Young people must be taken seriously! It seems we are surrounded by a culture that, on the one hand idolizes youth, trying to prevent its passing, yet on the other it excludes many young people from being protagonists.

— Pope Francis
March 19, 2018
at the Pre-Synod with young people

globe to create an effective document for bishops to use during their October synod “a remarkable feat.”

While the document is intended as a guide for the bishops and the pope, Lopez expects lay ministers to view it as a foundational work for their parish and young adult programs. The campus ministry director hopes to organize an open forum at the University of Dallas so students can voice their opinions about the document. He knows some of the content reflects their experiences.

“One of the things echoed in the document, that my students told me, is the need for accompaniment,” Lopez said. “When it comes to the Catholic Church and why young people leave, there’s a strong sense of the need for a personal relationship with members of the faith community.”

Young people want a mentor — a person who will journey with them — whether it’s a parent, aunt, uncle, or priest.

“They want someone who will walk with and set an example not just when it comes to Church teachings, but the lived experience,” he added.

Lopez, Katie Prejean-McGrady, a youth minister and popular speaker from the Diocese of Lake Charles, Louisiana, and LaSallian Christian Brother Javier Hansen, a religion teacher at Cathedral High School in El Paso, were the three young adult Catholics chosen to represent the U.S. in Rome. The trio joined a 300-member delegation that included Catholics, people of other faiths, agnostics, and lapsed Catholics from around the world.



Katie Prejean-McGrady, De La Salle Christian Brother Javier Hansen, Chris Russo, and Nick Lopez, young adults from the United States participating in the Vatican's pre-synod meeting, posed March 21 in front of St. Peter's Square. Chris Russo, a 23-year-old working in Boston, represented the Ruthenian Catholic Church.

Inviting both Christians and non-Christians to attend the pre-synod assembly, the Holy Father stated, "The Church wants to listen to the voices, the sensibilities, the faith, as well as the doubts and criticisms of young people. We must listen to young people."

After attending the March 19-25 pre-synod event, Prejean-McGrady said one word continues to resonate with her — hope.

"I went in with the expectation of coming together with a lot of different people from different countries to 'fix the problem,'" admitted the 28-year-old, a University of Dallas alumna.

But, instead of just mulling over dire statistics that show a growing number of 15- to 25-year-old Catholics leaving the faith, Prejean-McGrady said the small group conversations revealed an underlying confidence and joy in the Church.

"There are wonderful things happening globally that we need to articulate and be excited about," she enthused. "It felt like a Catholic revival because we were willing to be present to one another and not be afraid to say what was on our minds and in our hearts."

A lively dialogue focused on the challenges facing young people in different countries but, "there was no Church bashing," Prejean-McGrady pointed out. Factors causing teens and young adults to walk away from regular Mass attendance were identified during small group conversations.

"Then we discussed what can bring them back. We were there

to come up with solutions to problems and then articulate them in a way that gives the bishops a compass to show the direction young people are headed," she added.

Delegates also spent a lot of time talking about the Mass and ways to make liturgy more meaningful, accessible, and inviting.

The pre-synod gathering proves the Church's leadership values the ideas and contributions of the younger generation, according to Prejean-McGrady. Pope Francis spent four hours listening attentively to the questions and concerns posed by participants who ranged in age from 16 to 29.

"I think millennials — my generation — get a bad rap for being lazy, unaffected by what's going on in the culture, and always having our heads stuck in phones and computers," the wife and mother opined. "What I experienced this week about the millennial Church is one that is desperate to be involved, has ideas, and is unafraid to articulate those."

She believes the document produced by pre-synod delegates is a worthy representation of the state of young people around the world.

"It's not a theological treatise, an attempt to change Church doctrine, or a manifesto of demands," Prejean-McGrady said adamantly. "It's exactly what Pope Francis asked us to do. It captures what young people think globally so the Church knows how to address them, work with them, and preach the Gospel effectively." ✝

Diocese Assessing Safety Protocols for Churches, Schools

Security checks are being conducted at all parishes, schools

By Matthew Smith

Churches and schools within the Diocese of Fort Worth, at the direction of Bishop Michael Olson, are being assessed for safety by a specialized security firm, in addition to steps undertaken to improve security already.

Although the Feb. 14 mass shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida that left 17 dead served to highlight the increase of such tragedies, heightened security plans have been in the works for the diocese for some time.

“The recent pattern of acts of terror and violence perpetrated against churches and schools prompted some people to express their justly warranted concerns for safety,” Bishop Olson wrote in a Feb. 22 memorandum. “Sharing their concerns, I directed that each school and parish be assessed for safety.”

The findings of those security plan assessments revealed “considerable variation in their thoroughness and in the types of security to be employed” between the parishes and schools, Bishop Olson said.

For those reasons, Bishop Olson decided to engage a security firm to “assist the diocese in upgrading our particular security plans.”

After the Nov. 5 shooting at



The Diocese of Fort Worth’s 90 parishes, 1 mission, and 19 Catholic schools are being assessed for safety by a specialized security firm.

First Baptist Church in Sutherland, Texas, which resulted in 26 deaths, all parishes in the diocese revisited and improved security and emergency plans and contacted their local law enforcement agencies for additional recommendations, diocesan officials said.

“We knew this was something we had to move quickly on, the parishes and schools putting together a plan on how to address security issues,” said Steve Becht, diocesan director of real estate and construction.

“Some plans were very sophisticated, some not so much,” he added. “We

knew we needed to work with experts to tell us how best to form and implement a uniform safety plan throughout the diocese.”

Churches and schools have been directed to monitor and modify their security plans as needed until assessments by the security firm can be completed and uniform guidelines adopted.

“It is each pastor’s and principal’s responsibility to make certain that the security plan is implemented and

Continued on Page 18



◀ Tonita Burbage, a Catholic Charities client who received help in finding a full-time job, chats with Heather Reynolds. (NTC photo/Juan Guajardo)

From Page 12

The organization helped her with job training, developing a resume, and providing interview outfits. However, Burbage said what helped the most was “to have someone support everything that I wanted to do and having that open door where I can call anytime or email — to have someone listening.”

Speaker Ryan said the gains accomplished by intensive case management prove the federal government needs to “manage the supply lines, but not the front lines of fighting poverty.” He envisioned federal resources working in partnership with the private sector at the local level to lift families out of poverty.

Fort Worth Mayor Betsy Price, Congresswoman Kay Granger, and Bishop Michael Olson accompanied Speaker Ryan on his tour. The bishop said the speaker’s visit “shows that Church and state can work together, and I think it also shined a light on why our Catholic Charities is doing so well. . . . Case management is an anchor to our Catholic Charities. It exists in other programs throughout the U.S., but we’ve had the far-sighted investment to make this an anchor of how we approach the eradication of poverty.”

“One of the things [Paul Ryan] respected about us at Catholic Charities Fort Worth is that we’re willing to test what we’re doing and understand what works, so we continue to learn and evolve.”

— Heather Reynolds
CCFW President and CEO

The bishop expressed that relief for the poor is both an urgent and important work, but that local charities are better equipped to assist.

“The [federal] government has the

taxable mechanisms to provide for the extreme cases of a safety net, but also should enable and empower those places most local to the problem at hand. The problems are so human and so particular to time, place, and situation. Things like what a living wage is, what are the particular employment opportunities, and what’s required in education to survive and participate in society are best understood in light of the local situation.”

Now that the scientific method has shown that intensive case management can break the cycle of poverty, CCFW is planning to expand the depth and breadth of the approach.

“Locally, we are working on expanding the efforts of what we know is successful, so our community college program is expanding and our case management is expanding,” said Reynolds.

On a national level, Ryan and Reynolds expressed hope to see the CCFW model of eliminating poverty through intensive case management replicated in other dioceses. Reynolds is confident that “we can test and prove our intervention is replicable and scalable.”

Reynolds, who gave congressional testimony on poverty reform on Capitol Hill in 2014, said “Having Speaker Ryan see firsthand the work that we do is such an honor.” She thanked him for his willingness to “disrupt the status quo and put front and center the American dream, because that’s what we’re about at Catholic Charities.”

At the town hall, Speaker Ryan said he is a “big fan of the Catholic Charities model” and would like to see the “beautiful casework management system replicate. I really believe this is among the keys to fixing poverty and addressing it at its root core to break the cycle of poverty.” 🇺🇸

From Page 16

maintained,” Bishop Olson said.

Both are encouraged to initiate dialogue with their local law enforcement and first responders to ensure familiarity between them and the churches and schools.

“The security firm will work with the churches and schools to upgrade safety measures and make sure they’re kept up on a continual basis,” Becht said.

Parish and school officials have been extremely receptive and cooperative, Becht said.

“It’s been, ‘Wow! We’re glad you’re here and we want to talk about these issues.’” Becht said.

For example, Charles McGrath, president of Nolan High School, said a safety audit of Nolan’s campus has begun, and that school officials are working to implement and upgrade initial security plan recommendations.

As of press time, Becht said no timetable exists for full implementation throughout the diocese.

“Bishop Olson takes the safety of all parishioners and students very seriously,” Becht said.

“We very seriously want to get this in place and done as soon as is practical. This is high priority, but it’s also not a knee-jerk reaction. This is permanent, so we want to make sure we’re as thorough as possible.” 🇺🇸

Saint Francis Village

**A Gated Community on the shores
of Lake Benbrook**

*Come share our little bit
of heaven*

***A Strong Catholic Community
With Independent Living**

*** Daily Mass**

***Activities, crafts
and hobbies**



**4070 St. Francis Village Rd.
Crowley, Tx 76036
Phone 817-292-5786**

Visit our village or
visit our websites @

www.saintfrancisvillage.com

www.stfrancisvillagecatholicchapel.com

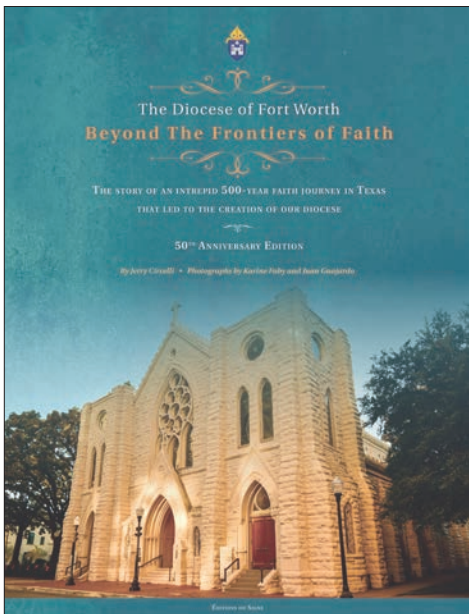
Ad Sponsored by
St. Francis Village Catholic Chapel Parish

**DO MORE.
BE MORE.**

KOFC.ORG/JOINUS
join online today

**Lead with Faith
Serve Others**

**Protect Your Family
Defend Your Values**



Good News in Fort Worth

Anniversary book chronicles the story of the diocese from the missionaries to today

Although the Diocese of Fort Worth will commemorate its 50th anniversary in 2019, our forefathers in the faith have been building the Catholic Church in North Texas for 500 years.

The remarkable stories and history of our diocese have been recorded in a commemorative book, *Beyond the Frontiers of Faith*, the story of an intrepid 500-year faith journey in Texas that led to the creation of our diocese.

The fascinating account begins with Spanish missionaries, including Friar Juan de Padilla, the first martyr in the United States, who feasted with friendly Native Americans 80 years before the Pilgrims had their first Thanksgiving in Massachusetts.

Early settlers in North Texas kept the faith alive with occasional visits from courageous priests who crossed the prairie on horseback to celebrate Mass in their homes. Other dedicated priests traveled by train or covered wagon. Father Paul Mosler would walk 23 miles through the night from Seymour to Megargel to arrive in time to celebrate Sunday Mass.

As towns got established, faithful Catholics gathered in a variety of available locations to attend Mass. From converted barns to outdoor tents, from hardware stores to automobile showrooms, and from public school cafeterias to community centers, many areas served as places of worship for early Catholics before they built a sanctuary.

Townspool pooled their resources and skills to build those early churches, often to see them destroyed by fire or tornado.

The book chronicles the deep roots of the diocese plus provides individual accounts and color photos of each parish.

Jerry Circelli, an award-winning journalist for the *North Texas Catholic*, spent nearly two years researching and writing the book. He spoke with scores of archivists, pastors, sisters, librarians, and church staff. His investigation took him south to the Catholic Archives of Texas in Austin and east to Mission San Francisco de los Tejas, the first Catholic mission

established in East Texas in 1690. He descended into the basement of St. Patrick Cathedral, where its founding priest, Father Jean Marie Guyot, is entombed under the high altar.

As he delved into the history of the diocese, Circelli was amazed at the “dedication and perseverance of the early priests, who held their own in the Wild West while they evangelized.”

Beyond the Frontiers of Faith reveals the sacrifices and work of the early evangelizers to grow the faith in North Texas. “After leaving their native countries, those priests had to survive in the elements and camp to establish the faith. It’s easy and convenient for us to attend Mass, but they had to put real work into it,” the author continued.

Today, Catholics in the Diocese of Fort Worth are 940,000 strong, worshipping Christ in 28 counties covering nearly 24,000 square miles, and we owe a debt of gratitude to the faithful who came before us.

Parishes will sell *Beyond the Frontiers of Faith* with an anticipated delivery date of mid-September. 🇺🇸



The book highlights each parish and recounts the history of the entire diocese.



NTC photo/Thao Nguyen

Deacon Martin Garcia from All Saints Parish in Fort Worth participated in a breakout session at the regional V Encuentro in San Antonio on April 14.

What Works?

At regional meeting, Fort Worth delegates compare notes on Hispanic ministry with 18 dioceses to prepare for September's V National Encuentro

By Joan Kurkowski-Gillen

Excited. Nervous. Energized. Honored. Joyful.

That's how 40 delegates from the Diocese of Fort Worth described their participation in the V Encuentro Region X Conference held April 13-15 in San Antonio.

Culminating years of preparation in parishes and dioceses, the regional event brought together 800 lay ministers, parishioners, religious women, and clergy from Arkansas, Oklahoma, and Texas for one purpose: to improve the quality of ministry to Hispanic/Latino Catholics so they become more engaged in the life of

the Church.

"I'm hoping to do my best to represent all the Hispanic people and the needs they have," said Ricardo Romero, a parishioner at St. Francis of Assisi in Grapevine. "We have the opportunity to share and identify with others the things that will bring more people to the faith, as well as help those who 'just go to church' but are not really a part of it."

During a process that involved reviewing ideas and suggestions culled from working documents submitted by 18 dioceses in Region X, delegates were assigned to small groups where the conversation was limited to one ministerial area. Focusing their discussions on

areas such as evangelization and mission, stewardship, faith formation, family life, immigration, and more, participants prioritized recommendations and strategies to best serve Hispanic and Latino Catholics.

"Hopefully, we can do something that will help them feel part of the body of Christ," Romero added. "We are sharing our thoughts with the bishops so they can take action and inspire people."

V Encuentro is an initiative of the U.S. Catholic bishops who want to respond and reach out to the growing number of Hispanics in the country — especially the young and those living on the periphery of society. Efforts made at

the diocesan and regional level will lead up to the V National Encuentro gathering, hosted by the Diocese of Fort Worth from Sept. 20-23 in Grapevine.

Previous Encuentros took place in 1972, 1977, 1985, and 2000. The goal of V Encuentro is to discern ways the U.S. Catholic Church can better respond to the presence of Hispanics and Latinos and strengthen ways they can respond to the New Evangelization call for missionary disciples serving the entire Church.

Bishop Michael Olson took time during his busy weekend to meet with Fort Worth's Encuentro delegates for a frank and intimate dialogue about vocations, young adult ministry, and other concerns affecting Hispanic parishioners.

"I think this Encuentro process, and our year-long preparation for our [50th] anniversary, is going to change us and the way we articulate, identify, and address things," he said, thanking delegates for their discourse. "It won't end here."

Olivia Olvera appreciated the personalized attention the group received from the bishop.

"It was great to pose questions to the bishop about the different things we're talking about this weekend and hear his answers," said the Safe Environment coordinator at St. Mary Parish in Graham. "It's rare to have that opportunity."

Members of the Hispanic community support the bishop and know he's working on their issues.

"The power we have as laity is to share what we know with our brothers and sisters and say, 'the bishop is listening,'" Olvera explained. "He answered our questions and took the time to sit and listen so he can be a better shepherd to us."

A procession of representatives from every diocese in Texas, Oklahoma, and Arkansas, led by the Cross of the Encuentros, welcomed delegates to the opening of the Region X gathering. Blessed by Pope Francis, the oak cross bears the inscription "Hispanic People: Joyful Disciples in Mission" and is engraved with thorns and resurrection lilies. It symbolizes the faith journey of Hispanic and Latino Catholics in the



NTC photo/Thao Nguyen

Bishop Michael Olson of Fort Worth processed with bishops from the 17 other dioceses represented at the regional V Encuentro to begin Mass on April 15.



NTC photo/Thao Nguyen

Laura Espinosa of St. Frances Cabrini Parish in Granbury listened to other delegates during a breakout session. Dioceses from Arkansas, Oklahoma, and Texas were represented at the regional V Encuentro.

U.S. over the past 50 years.

"This cross reminds us that long before the Founding Fathers gathered in Philadelphia, immigrant missionaries from Spain and Latin America were already at work," said one of the event's emcees, Father Hector Madrigal from the Diocese of Amarillo. "La Cruz de los Encuentros reminds us that the Catholic faith of the Latino people shaped the American story from the very

beginning."

Current U.S. census estimates show Hispanics are the fastest growing ethnic population in the country with about 29.7 million Hispanic Latinos identifying as Catholics. Sixty percent of American Catholics under the age of 18 are also of Hispanic descent.

"These statistics are a clear indication

Continued on Page 22

From Page 21

why the V Encuentro is so important,” observed Diocese of Austin Bishop Joe S. Vasquez, addressing delegates during the opening ceremony. “Hispanics are now found in every state in our country. They are contributing to the vitality of this country and our Church.”

Designated Episcopal Moderator for Region X, Bishop Vasquez asked the audience to remember Encuentro is a three-step process of evangelization, communion, and consultation.

“The process of consultation requires us to be open and listen to many people — those actively involved in the Church and those distanced from the Church,” he said, noting the importance of two particular groups.

Bishop Vasquez advised delegates to recognize the hopes and dreams of young people and reach out to immigrants and “Dreamers” — those young adults brought to the U.S. as children without documentation.

“They are our brothers and sisters, classmates, and coworkers. We pray together. We worship together,” he pointed out. “The Church will continue to defend their rights and dignity as children of God. We’re called to reach out to the peripheries where many people feel abandoned and often times disconnected.”

The bishop’s words resonated with Gemma Ramirez. While preparing children for Reconciliation and first Communion, the St. Elizabeth Ann Seton parishioner often encounters parents who don’t speak English.

“It’s a big church with a smaller (Hispanic) community who needs attention,” the catechist said, referring to the Keller parish.

Families seeking faith formation for their youngsters may face a language barrier or have other obstacles like economic

hardship or an absent father. Even a little gesture can make a big difference.

“Sometimes those people don’t feel welcomed so even hearing ‘buenos dias’ from the pastor makes them feel better,” Ramirez added.

A member of Pastoral Juvenil Hispana in the Diocese of Fort Worth, Daisy Gaytan was part of a roundtable discussion on the best way the Church can serve young people from different ethnic groups.

“Our conversations included a diocese with a community of Nigerians,” said the 26-year-old. “It was very insightful and I learned things. At the same time, I was able to share the reality of our diocese and how we celebrate Our Lady of Guadalupe on December 12 in a big way.”

Joel Rodriguez, director of Hispanic Ministry, called the regional V Encuentro a success for the Fort Worth team. Delegates were well-prepared and productive representatives of the diocese.

“The impact of having the bishop here was incredible,” he said. “Everyone could see Bishop Olson was genuinely and personally involved. The attitude was just a manifestation of joy.”

The 3,000 delegates expected at the V National Encuentro in Grapevine will review the recommendations submitted by the regional delegations then publish a working document outlining the pastoral

priorities and strategies appropriate to the present time.

Paola Quintero-Araujo, one of the V Encuentro organizers and director of the diocesan St. Junipero Serra Institute, said the Fort Worth delegates left the regional gathering enthused and “very on fire.”

“They are ready to go out, take this experience, and tell other people about it,” she continued. “They want to go into their parishes and start doing the work.” 🇺🇸



Standing near the Cross of the Encuentros, Perla Cabrera of All Saints Parish in Fort Worth read the issues that were priorities for her group during the plenary session at the regional Encuentro. (NTC photo/Thao Nguyen)



A Safer Environment

Advances in the Safe Environment Program improve curriculum and database

By Susan McFarland

Protecting the most vulnerable is a top priority for the Church, and with an updated, streamlined educational program being implemented for the Diocese of Fort Worth, achieving that objective will be a little easier.

The Safe Environment Program includes training sessions for preschoolers through adults, offering instruction in the protection of children, youth, and vulnerable adults. With April being National Child Abuse Prevention Month, timing for educational outreach about the improved program couldn't be better.

Child abuse and neglect know no boundaries, affecting children of every

age, race, and income level. According to recent statistics, one out of every four girls and one out of every six boys are sexually assaulted before they turn 18. In 2016, concerns about the safety and well-being of more than 7 million children were reported to Child Protective Services.

"When you're a community, you look out for each other. That is why we have this training," said Richard Mathews, director of Safe Environment. "We teach people to not be bystanders and to say something."

Mathews said protecting others is what Christ instructed His Church to do.

"It goes to our Catholic faith. We are our brother's keeper. We have to love our neighbor as our self," he said. "This gives us the opportunity to demonstrate our faith, walk with Christ, imitate Christ, and

focus on protecting the most vulnerable."

Since the program began in 2002, it has seen exponential growth. Last year, 4.5 million children in Catholic schools and parishes in the United States received the training, and the Diocese of Fort Worth educated 26,595 children in the program, which teaches children how to stay safe from abuse.

Last year, the Diocese of Fort Worth also trained and processed criminal background checks on 27,498 volunteers, 946 educators, 942 employees, 127 priests, 75 deacons, and 41 candidates for ordination.

A new program will streamline the process, allowing for even more effective outreach. Improvements include live training, as opposed to a web-based curriculum,

Continued on Page 27

GOOD SHEPHERDS OF FUTURE FLOCKS

A look at the stories of two seminarians in their pastoral year, and how the Seminarian Education Fund — along with grace and lots of prayer — made their journey possible

By Joan Kurkowski-Gillen

Thomas Jones first began thinking about a vocation to the priesthood in high school. But the Carrollton native didn't understand the need for more "men of the cloth" until he was deployed in the Middle East with the U.S.

Air Force.

"We were in theater, but not a forward operating base, so chaplains would provide Mass for us," explained Jones, who served as a military computer specialist.

Soldiers on the front lines, confronting the enemy, would go months without receiving the sacraments.

"That really bothered me because I was able to go to Mass every day but the people being shot at couldn't," recalled the 35-year-old who witnessed firsthand the ripple effect one

priest can have on the lives of others. "That's one of the main factors that compelled me to enter the seminary."

After eight years in the Air Force, the St. Catherine of Siena parishioner began studying for the priesthood in 2010 and is now one of 26 seminarians in the Diocese of Fort Worth. He is currently spending his pastoral year at St. Philip the Apostle Parish in Lewisville where he is becoming acquainted with the inner workings of a faith community.

"The Church needs more seminarians — a lot more seminarians," Jones asserted, and parishioners can help the cause in two ways. They can pray for vocations and support the diocese's Seminarian Education Fund.

Contributions allow young men to study for the priesthood without worrying about financing the required education. Faithful can make a gift to the Seminarian Education Fund at any time by texting SEF to 91999.

"When a man commits to being one of our seminarians, our bishop pledges to pay for all college expenses — tuition, room, board, and books, explained Renée Underwood, associate director of the Advancement Foundation, a non-profit corporation that oversees donations made to assist the mission of the Church in North Texas. "Education costs for seminarians are the single biggest line item in the diocesan budget every year.

"Our priests are pastors of their flock," Underwood added. "Their lives are a total self-giving for others. These young men being helped will be our future priests."

The average annual cost to the diocese per seminarian is \$52,090 with the length of formation taking seven to nine years. Diocesan seminarians currently attend St. Joseph Seminary in Covington, La., Theological College in Washington, D.C., and

BY THE NUMBERS

26 THE TOTAL NUMBER OF SEMINARIANS IN OUR DIOCESE DURING 2017-2018.

7-9 THE NUMBER OF YEARS IT TAKES TO COMPLETE SEMINARIAN EDUCATION.

\$52,092 THE AVERAGE ANNUAL COST PER SEMINARIAN (TUITION, BOARD, BOOKS, HEALTH INSURANCE).



Assumption Seminary in San Antonio.

Financial obligations stalled Pedro Martinez from entering the seminary.

Already active in various church ministries, Martinez first considered a call to the priesthood after his pastor, Father Hector Medina, asked him to think about the possibility.

“My pastor was such a great example of care and compassion and that added to my desire to be a good servant for the

Church,” explained the St. Matthew parishioner.

But Martinez, who moved to the U.S. from Mexico at the age of 14, was reluctant to enter the seminary. After earning bachelor’s and master’s degrees from the University of Texas at Arlington, the new graduate was saddled with student loan debt and began

Continued on Page 26



HELP PROMOTE VOCATIONS

You can help offset the education costs of seminarians by giving to the Seminarian Education Fund. Text ‘SEF’ to 91999.

From Page 25

working full time. His job as a human services specialist with the City of Arlington also helped support his disabled father.

“It was a tough decision,” he admitted. “I wanted to serve the Church but didn’t know how I could leave my family.”

The enthusiasm he witnessed at World Youth Day in Madrid, Spain rekindled a desire for the priesthood.

“When I came back, I decided to discern my vocation,” he continued. “I contacted the Vocations Office and they were very helpful in guiding me through the process.”

Martinez’ student loans were deferred and the diocese paid for his tuition and other expenses at Assumption Seminary in San Antonio. Just as his formation studies began in 2013, the Social Security Administration approved his father’s disability payments.

“It was a way for me to see how God always provides and takes care of His people,” he explained. “I’m very blessed to have people who are very generous and support our vocation both spiritually and financially.”

Currently serving his pastoral year at St. Jude Parish in Mansfield where he’s in charge of the altar servers, the 32-year-old tells people to encourage young men they know to consider a religious vocation.

“The money you contribute can help change the life of a seminarian,” he said. “I’m very grateful for the support I get from the diocese in general. It’s made a big difference in my discernment and journey to the priesthood.”

Fellow seminarian Jones expressed similar feelings. “I eat every day, I have a bed at night, and a roof over my head because of the generosity of others,” he said. “That’s something that’s never far from my mind.” 🇺🇸

Seminarian Pedro Martinez shows new hospital ministry volunteers how to properly handle a pyx March 8 at St. Jude Parish in Mansfield. (NTC photo/Jayme Shedenhelm)



Seminarian Thomas Jones processes during the Chrism Mass celebrated at St. Patrick Cathedral March 27. (NTC photo/Jayme Shedenhelm)



From Page 23

to provide a more interactive session. A more accurate database will help program coordinators interact with those who have taken the training, offering reminders about renewals before training certificates expire and making sure all the background checks are current.

The program will have a strong social media push for awareness. Posters in English, Spanish and Vietnamese have been delivered to parishes and schools with information about child abuse and resources to call for help.

“Just like terrorism and domestic violence, we can’t take a bystander role. We need to know what to look for, whether it’s physical, social, or emotional abuse,” Mathews said. “We need to make sure the community knows the warning signs so we can protect children and vulnerable adults.”

“We share a great responsibility to understand the nature of abuse and the steps we must take to establish and maintain safe, holy, and faith-affirming environments.”

— Bishop Michael Olson

Children who suffer abuse or neglect have an increased risk of depression and suicide attempts, substance abuse, developmental disabilities and learning problems, social problems, teen pregnancy, lack of success in school, domestic violence, and chronic illnesses including heart disease, cancer, and lung disease.

“I don’t think people understand the effects of child abuse. We tend to think, ‘They’ll get over it, they’ll get past it,’ but the trauma suffered by children impacts generations,” Mathews said.


Nancy Mitchell, safe environment analyst, said everyone involved with streamlining the improved program has been working relentlessly for the past year and a half.

“It’s amazing how many people in the diocese are anxious to get this right, everyone is trying so hard, and that’s really impressive,” she said.

Bishop Michael Olson said the requirement for in-depth renewal is “designed to safeguard children and young people and to protect all members of the diocesan community in parishes, schools, and ministries.”

Rollout for the upcoming program will be later this year, with facilitator training in June and July, and the program starting in parishes and schools by August and September. 🇺🇸

SHOP WHERE YOU CAN SEE AND TOUCH WHAT YOU BUY.



WE HAVE MANY BEAUTIFUL GIFTS FOR PERSONAL AND SACRAMENTAL OCCASIONS.

WE ALSO ACCEPT ORDERS ONLINE AT WWW.STELLAMARISBOOKS.COM
St. Anthony's Church Supplies - 5312 Trail Lake Dr.
Fort Worth 76133 - 817 924 7221
 Located in the Wedgewood Village Shopping Center

GOLDEN WORLD TOURS/PILGRIMAGES-2018

FRANCE – SPAIN - PORTUGAL – 10/1 -10/10 ..\$2,299
 Paris, Lisieux, Lourdes, Zaragosa, Avila, Segovia and Fatima

-HOLYLAND/JORDAN (PETRA)–10/16 -10/27... \$2,699
 Mt. Nebo, Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Cana, Nazareth, Galilee, etc.

-EASTERN EUROPE – 11/1-11/10 – Czech Rep. (Prague), Poland (Krakow), Hungary (Budapest), Vienna, etc. .. \$2,399

++++AFFORDABLE CRUISES++++

-Alaska – 9/16 - 9/23 - Hubbard Glacier, Juneau, Sitka ...fm \$1,599

-Caribbean Year End-12/30-1/6/19 – West Caribbeanfm \$1,799

+++ PROGRAMS PLANNED FOR 2019+++

-SPRINGBREAK – MAR. 8-13 – FRANCE CHATEAUX
 Amsterdam(Holland)-Bruges(Belgium)- Loire Valley..\$2,299

-PERU – Machu Picchu, Valley, Cuzco, Lima–07/19 ..\$2,499

-INDIA – (Taj Mahal+Tigers) Ext Mt Everest 10/19. \$2,899

-AFFORDABLE ITALY - Turin, Padua, Venice, Florence, Pisa, Assisi, Rome, Ext. St.Pio/San. Giovanni 11/19.. \$1,999

-CRUISES– Baltic (St Petersburg) & Europe River Cruise
-Prices per pax dbl. occ. incl. DFW air/taxes, 1st class hotels, breakfast/dinner daily. Call for terms,conditions/registration.
TEL: 972-934-9635 - Email: michael.menof@cnhintl.com

SAFE ENVIRONMENT

To Report Misconduct
 If you or someone you know is a victim of sexual misconduct by anyone who serves the Church, you may:

- Call the victim assistance coordinator at (817) 602-5119.
- Or call the Victim Assistance Hotline (817) 945-9345 and leave a message.

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

To Advertise in the NTC:



Please contact us at ntc@fwdioc.org or call us at 817-945-9424. All advertising sizes and rates are at NorthTexasCatholic.org/advertising-page

LECTIO DIVINA



'The Ascension' by Benjamin West

The King Ascends His Throne

The Ascension of the Lord
May 13, 2018

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

LECTIO



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

MEDITATIO



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

ORATIO



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

CONTEMPLATIO



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

REFLECTION

How fitting it is to end this series on the liturgical year with the Feast of the Ascension of Jesus Christ. Frequently this year we have meditated together on the reality of Christ as King of heaven and earth, as King of our souls, and as King of the Jews.

Today we consider Christ as a king who ascends to heaven to be seated at the right hand of the Father, a king who will return (recall Christ the King Sunday) and to whom we are accountable even in His apparent absence. Today the King of Kings ascends to heaven with shouts of joy. All things are brought under His authority.

Before His Passion, Jesus prophesied that when He is lifted up He will draw all men to Himself. While on the cross, He obediently allowed Himself to be lifted up, but not by His own strength. Today, He ascends to the heavenly throne by means of His own power. He inaugurates His reign over all the earth, a reign that is an "everlasting dominion that shall not pass

away" (*Daniel 7:13-14*).

We read in the Gospel that His disciples begged Him not to depart. They feared the pain they would incur at His departure, after all that had happened. Thanks be to God that we know that in His leaving, we are not abandoned. Rather, as we teach young children about the Eucharist, we tell them that Christ is hidden in the Sacraments and in our priests, and that they have to look in a special way to find Him.

Similarly, in the Mass, the priest ascends to the altar, and sits in the president's chair. Both of these actions are intended to point to heavenly realities. Here it is Christ, truly present in the priest, who ascends to the altar and sits in the president's chair.

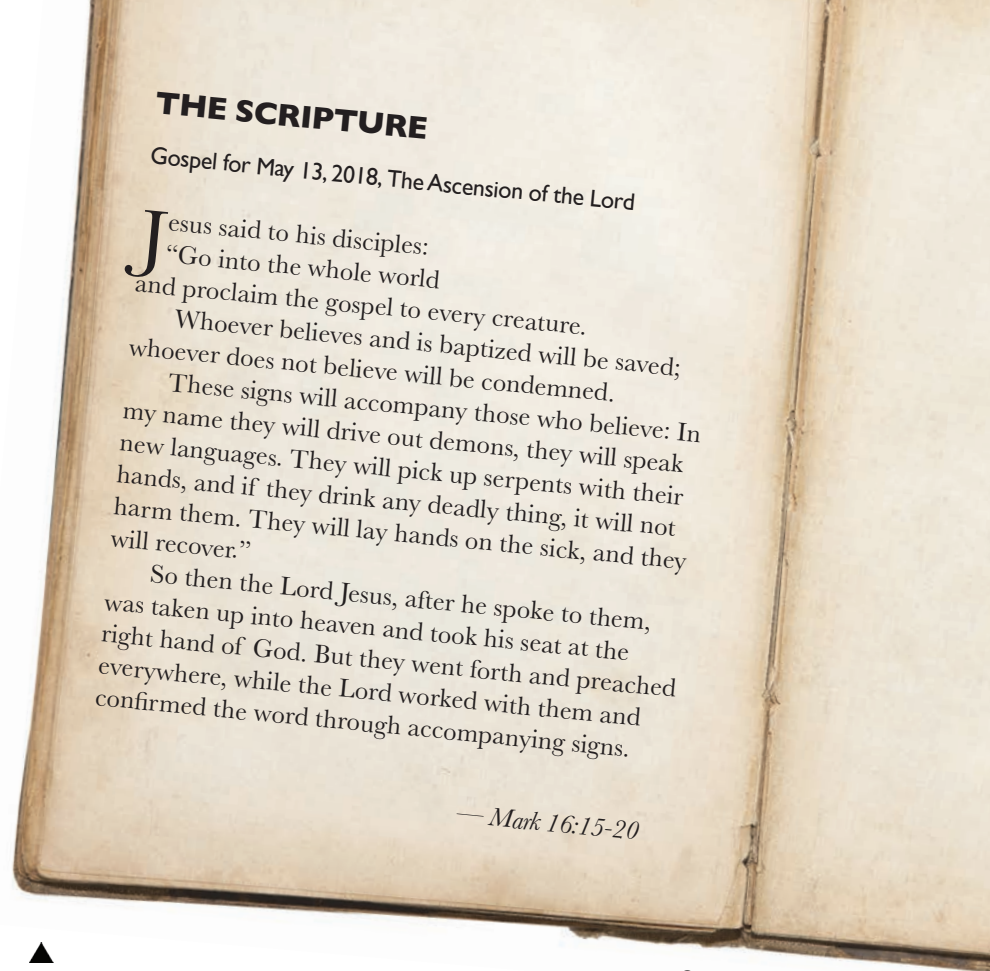
Even when an earthly king ascends his throne, the appropriate response for those gathered is to kneel, and to swear allegiance and obedience to the reigning king. How much more should we respond with humility and obedience as we witness the King of

Kings ascend to His throne in heaven?

But how could we find Him, so truly manifested, in all these ways if He first had not returned to the Father? Because He is God — and a God who loves us — He is able to be present to all of us in these special ways.

May we drink deeply from these truths and ask Him to illumine our heart and mind. May we meditate often on our identity as His: His child, His disciple, His follower, His student, and His emissary in the world. And from this and with the frequent graces of the sacraments may we learn to live more freely the dignity of being a child of the King. 🇺🇸

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



▲ Scripture texts in this work are taken from the New American Bible, revised edition © 2010, 1991, 1986, 1970 Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, Washington, D.C. and are used by permission of the copyright owner. All Rights Reserved. No part of the New American Bible may be reproduced in any form without permission in writing from the copyright owner.

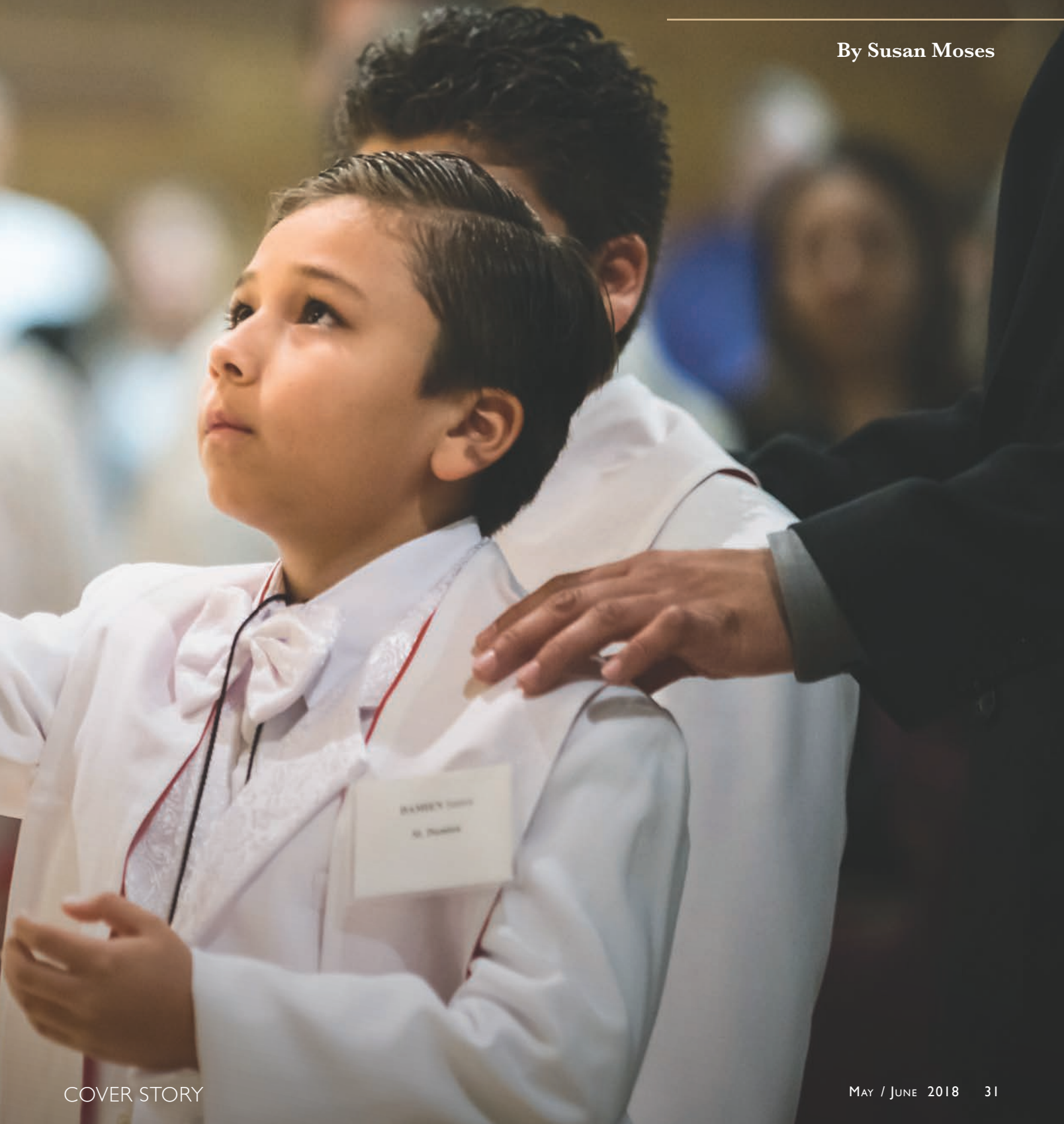
Father Mel Bessellieu lights the baptismal candle of Damien Santos during the Liturgy of Baptism. Santos entered the Catholic Church at St. Ann Parish's Easter Vigil Mass March 31. (NTC photo/Juan Guajardo)



THE EASTER *People*

Thousands of people join
the Catholic Church at Easter.
Each has a different journey.
Here are their stories.

By Susan Moses



Robert Powell, a fundamentalist Bible-based Protestant, was intrigued when Pope Benedict XVI resigned and the College of Cardinals assembled to select a new pope.

He asked a Catholic coworker, he queried Google, he even read the section in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* about apostolic succession. “I read it to find out how ridiculous it was, but my thoughts transitioned to ‘I can’t find fault in that,’” he explained.

He then became “wild with curiosity” and started filling up a legal pad with everything he thought was unbiblical about Catholicism: the “extra” books in the Bible, Jesus’ command to call no man your father, Mary, and confession, to name a few.

As he dug into the answers, he had a paradigm shift and realized, “I can’t add to the division in Christianity. I have a duty to go back to the original Church that Jesus intended.”

It almost tore apart his marriage.

On the other hand, after Brian Seaman became Catholic, his marriage went “from good to great. We’re put together with God’s glue now.” He married Julie, a cradle Catholic, more than 30 years ago in a civil ceremony.

Throughout their marriage, he admired Julie for her dedication in taking their children to Mass alone each week. He would join them at Easter and Christmas. In 2012, his father-in-law invited him to a Christ Renews His Parish retreat, where Seaman “fell in love with the Lord.”

“It’s changed my life. I had tried to fill the emptiness inside with work, fishing, and sports. But I don’t have the desire to do those things now. I want to serve. I want to spend time with her. I have found the meaning of life.”

After his previous marriage was annulled, the Seamans were married in the Church on February 13, 2016. “I realized the importance of having Christ leading us together, even though He was with us all along,” said the St. Frances Cabrini parishioner, who was also baptized, confirmed, and received Holy Communion that momentous day.

Powell, Seaman, and others who join the Catholic Church as adults each have a conversion story with unique experiences and difficulties in their journey to Catholicism. However, they share

a common element.

“We’re all wired for God. As such, all people of good will have this yearning . . . for what they know is lacking in their lives. Inevitably, that will draw people, if they have the proper exposure and openness, to the Church” said Jason Whitehead, diocesan director of faith formation, who left Southern Baptist ministry to become Catholic in 2012.

“In the end, you have to do what you have to do to follow Christ in the fullness that He can be followed. And that is in the Catholic Church,” continued Whitehead.

When Powell told his wife, Kristi, that he felt God was calling him into the Catholic Church, she thought he was joking. She had met Robert through the Church of Christ, and he had done some preaching at church and helped with youth ministry during their marriage.

But at a weekday Mass in December 2013, the students at Immaculate Conception Catholic School in Denton witnessed Powell joining the Catholic Church. His wife didn’t.

Kristi said, “Our grandparents and our parents were all Church of Christ. Marrying outside the Church of Christ would have been a deal-breaker.” Kristi thought Robert’s conversion could end their marriage and Robert’s salvation.

Hoping this was just a mid-life crisis, she asked him not to tell their three children and to continue attending Church of Christ services.

As the months passed and tensions rose, the Powells began attending both Catholic and Protestant services. He thought, “If I can get her near the Eucharist, near Jesus, something would miraculously happen.”

More than four tumultuous years and three Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) programs later, Kristi and their three children entered into full communion with the Catholic Church at St. Martin de Porres Parish in Frisco this January.

MASS APPEAL

Working in South Korea, Liz Sanchez agreed to go to Mass with some coworkers although she was Baptist. After all, Mass was in English.

She liked feeling the connection to her Catholic friends in the U.S. who were hearing the same readings. “There is a deliberateness, a universality. Church is more than just who is in

ONLY ON THE WEB

Our photographers visited four parishes to capture the sights of the Easter Vigil. See the photos at NorthTexasCatholic.org/photo-gallery





Father Richard Kirkham confirms Brandon Story with sacred chrism during the Easter Vigil Mass at St. Martin de Porres Parish in Prosper March 31. (NTC photo/Ben Torres)

the same building that you are in,” she said.

So, when she returned to Texas and met her future husband, who was a member of St. Maria Goretti Parish in Arlington, she was open to exploring the faith.

She said, “My mother-in-law was a big influence on me. I thought Catholics had their rituals and just went through the motions. But she loved Jesus and prayed and held onto her faith outside of Mass.”

She joined the Church at the Easter Vigil Mass in 2012, got married, and soon was expecting a baby. While six-months pregnant, she was diagnosed with a brain tumor.

“I knew I was in His hands. I didn’t question ‘why did this happen?’ or have a faith struggle,” she said. She leaned on her Catholic faith to cope with brain surgery while pregnant and then the four-week wait to deliver her daughter and begin chemotherapy and radiation.

Sanchez and her daughter, who will start kindergarten in August, help with the food cart ministry at their home parish of St. Vincent de Paul in Arlington. She has also taught Rite of Christian Initiation for Children, which she said helped build up her knowledge, too.

“The tradition and history of the Catholic Church is rich, rich, rich, but I’ve

realized what we have in common with Protestants is more than what we don’t,” she said.

A BRICK WALL

Christina Almaden shares something in common with Sanchez — both have survived brain tumors. For Almaden, the diagnosis was “God’s sign, a brick wall.”

During her difficult childhood, Almaden sought refuge in prayer but rarely attended church. She envied the families who went to church together each Sunday, and she envisioned attending

Continued on Page 34

Catechumen Carlos De La Rosa receives the sacrament of Confirmation during the Easter Vigil Mass at St. Michael Parish in Bedford March 31. (NTC photo/Kevin Bartram)

From Page 33

church with her future husband and children.

In 2010, she began experiencing difficulty seeing and emotional instability. One day in November, she couldn't see her computer at work. That's when a CT scan showed a large benign tumor wrapped around her optic nerve.

After she recovered, she began going to Mass with her Catholic husband, whom she married in 2008. She found "it's what I've always wanted. It's what I've always needed."

Almaden entered the Catholic Church at St. Michael Parish's Easter Vigil Mass March 31.

ASKING QUESTIONS

When Linda Wigginton's home in New Orleans was devastated by flooding in Hurricane Katrina, or when her husband was diagnosed with lymphoma, she didn't ask God why He allowed those tragedies to happen. And in caring for her patients at Cook Children's Hospital in Fort Worth, she didn't ask why a loving God permits suffering in the world.

"I didn't blame God because I didn't believe in God. I didn't believe any of it," she admitted.

Through the crises, she had an internal certainty that she would be all right. However, the question that nagged at the back of her mind was "Why am I allowed to be happy?"

Last year, she decided to attend Mass at St. Ann Parish in Burleson with her husband of 19 years. She had stopped working weekends and it was a small sacrifice of time to her, but the gesture meant a lot to her Catholic spouse.

"I was encased in ice, and watching and listening at Mass chipped a little away every week. The more I attended, the more I loved it," she said.

"I came to the realization that I do believe in God. I can't see or touch God, but I believe in Him," she asserted.



ONLY ON THE WEB

Read our feature about famous converts to Catholicism at NorthTexasCatholic.org/features-news

FROM DARKNESS TO LIGHT

Wigginton was welcomed into the Catholic Church at the Easter Vigil service at St. Ann on March 31. The whole night was "beautiful" and "amazing," especially Baptism, where "I literally felt my sins washed away" and the "joyful moment" of receiving the Body and Blood of Christ in

the Holy Eucharist.

Also joining the Church at St. Ann that evening — Melissa Rhodes. Her first visits to St. Ann were during Eucharistic Adoration, where she experienced "the most peace I've ever felt" as she accompanied her mother through a fight with cancer. When her brother became Catholic and she saw the excitement and serenity in him, she began to think "maybe I need to do it, too."

Her mother and brother witnessed Rhodes' initiation into the Church. Afterwards, she followed her brother's

Continued on Page 36

Protect each other for better and for worse.



A marriage is a new beginning: a new beginning of love, a new beginning of family, and a new beginning of financial responsibility and obligation. Protect yourself and your spouse with life insurance from one of the World's Most Ethical Companies.*



Chris Stark, FICF
General Agent
Cell: 979-218-3664
Office: 817-439-9292
chris.stark@kofc.org
KofCInsuranceFW.com

New office number: 817-616-5359
New office address:
8701 Bedford Euless Rd
Ste 304 Hurst, Tx 76053



Andrew Tice, FIC
Cell: 972-333-7462
andrew.tice@kofc.org



Terry Peffers, FIC
Cell: 817-690-7924
robert.peffers@kofc.org



Bob Hoholick, LUTCF
Cell: 214-455-5256
robert.hoholick@kofc.org



Luis Hernandez
Cell: 817-975-4220
luis.hernandez@kofc.org



Michael Bryant
Cell: 940-282-8074
michaelbryant@kofc.org



Arthur Kelly
Cell: 469-951-7398
arthur.kelly@kofc.org



Stephen Higdon
Cell: 817-528-1170
stephen.higdon@kofc.org



Brian DesCamps
Cell: 682-225-2276
brian.descamps@kofc.org



Randy Brock, FSCP
Cell: 940-886-8417
randall.brock@kofc.org



Eddy Patterson
Cell: 817-776-0555
eddy.patterson@kofc.org



Steve Kouba
Cell: 817-727-5872
steve.kouba@kofc.org

LIFE INSURANCE • DISABILITY INCOME INSURANCE • LONG-TERM CARE INSURANCE • RETIREMENT ANNUITIES

*Ethisphere Institute 2018

From Page 34

advice. She dabbed some confirmation chrism from her forehead onto one of her favorite Bible passages, the first chapter of John.

According to Whitehead, about 1,200 individuals in the diocese convert

to Catholicism each year. Many join during the Easter Vigil — the “liturgy of liturgies.” The Mass, which can last as long as three hours, begins in darkness and recounts salvation history from the creation story through the Litany of the Saints.

Whitehead said the service is the

“most profound example of unity,” bringing the Church together in time and place. New members receive all three sacraments of initiation, and the congregation renews their baptismal promises.

Carlos De La Rosa, who was received into the Church at St. Michael Parish in Bedford, “realized the enormity of it and took it all in.” Expecting his first child this month, De La Rosa wanted to join the Church so that he and his wife could share the responsibility of bringing up his daughter in the faith.

He said the service was “humbling. Me with the mistakes I’ve made, I’m now part of a bigger family. It feels so incredible.”

Another new member, Brandon Story, was prompted by his children to join the Church. When he attended Mass with his wife and three children at St. Martin de Porres Parish, his kids asked why he didn’t receive Holy Communion.

When he began RCIA last year, he “thought it was just something you have to do. Now I see the purpose.” Receiving the sacraments at the Easter Vigil left him “pumped. I feel like I’m set on a different path.”

NOW WHAT?

Whitehead, who taught RCIA for five years after joining the Church, recommends that new members of the Church fully participate in mystagogy, a series of classes to help them continue the journey as fully initiated members of the Body of Christ.

He expressed the importance of those already in the Church to include the new members so they don’t feel isolated or get lost in the shuffle of the transition.

Having responded to the call of Christ to the Church, new members now have a responsibility to build up the Body of Christ and put their gifts into the service of others.

Now that the Powells are singing from the same hymnal again, Kristi said their marital problems are resolved and they “go all the time” to St. Martin de Porres for Mass and Family Faith Formation classes. Ready and willing to serve, they plan to help with the next round of RCIA. 🇺🇸



Father Daniel Kelley baptizes Angel Amandi March 31 at St. Joseph Parish in Arlington. (NTC photo/Jayme Shedenhelm)

Loreto House

Catholic Pregnancy Resource Center
serving women of the Diocese of Fort Worth for 10 years



Where women are loved. Where hearts are touched. Where babies are saved.



MAKE A DONATION THAT SAVES A LIFE

Support us, donate, and learn more at Loretohousedonors.org
Loreto House is an approved apostolate of the Diocese of Fort Worth.
We serve women of any, or no faith.

Our advocates and volunteers provide loving and compassionate care to women dealing with an unplanned pregnancy. All services are **free of charge** and include:

- Free pregnancy testing • Free non-diagnostic sonogram • Material goods such as, diapers, clothing, toiletries, food and more. • Up to date parenting classes

Loreto House 1100 N. Bonnie Brae St., Denton, TX 76201, 940-380-8191 Loretohouse.org

50 YEARS *later*

By Juan Guajardo



Why there's no
better time than
now to read
Humanae Vitae

truth remains

It's been called many things by many people. Everything from "that damn encyclical" to "watershed" and a "prophetic statement," Dr. Janet Smith points out in her essay on *Humanae Vitae*, "A Generation Later."

Indeed, a half-century later *Humanae Vitae* (Of Human Life), Blessed Paul VI's 1968 encyclical reaffirming the Church's rejection of artificial contraception, remains ignored, controversial, or misunderstood by society at large. Quite possibly it's because its truths are not an easy pill to swallow (pun intended) and the Church's teaching against contraception "seems to be the Church teaching most difficult for laypeople to accept," as Dr. Smith, an expert on the topic, noted.

However, to look at *Humanae Vitae* and its prescriptions through the lens of it being too "difficult" jeopardizes our clarity, making us miss the forest for worrying about the trees. The encyclical goes beyond teaching on contraception, touching on truths and guidance that touch the individual, the couple, and the family.

Here's why there's no better time than now to read this document and reflect on how we can live that fullness out with genuine charity — if we aren't already.

RELEVANT THEN, RELEVANT NOW

Humanae Vitae was released into a world of generational mores and morals turned upside down by the Sexual Revolution. The Pill, pornography,

contraception, and sex outside of marriage were exploding onto the scene.

Meanwhile, some influential Catholic theologians were publicly spreading views that contradicted Church teaching at a time when the ears of Catholics in the pews could be plied. Not a small number of Catholics were mistakenly thinking, especially in light of Vatican II changes, that Paul VI would actually change Church teaching on contraception.

Catholics were faced with the rise of divorce and the societal approval of abortion; traditional marriage as a whole was coming under attack. Population control advocates also threw their voices into the fray. The infamously alarmist book by Paul Ehrlich, *The Population Bomb*, hit bestseller lists the year prior to *Humanae Vitae*'s release. Some Catholics, meanwhile, continued to believe they had the right to have sex whenever they wanted and considered Natural Family Planning a serious burden on marriages.

Similarly, U.S. society today seems just as misguided, or even comfortable, living in opposition to the Church's teaching on contraception. A 2016 Pew Research Center study said just 4 percent of all U.S. adults think contraception is immoral. Only 8 percent of Catholics, according to that study, think using artificial birth control is morally wrong. The marriage rate has fallen in favor of cohabiting relationships, while the divorce rate still hovers at around 40-50 percent according to the American Psychological Association. Abortion remains a billion-dollar industry.

The Church sent *Humanae Vitae* into a society and time that needed guidance,

truth, and answers — much like ours.

As Pope Benedict XVI said on the 40th anniversary of the encyclical: "What was true yesterday remains true even today. The truth expressed in *Humanae Vitae* doesn't change."

NOT JUST ABOUT BIRTH CONTROL

Often overlooked is the fact that Pope Paul VI defines the characteristics of a holy marriage — a road map, if you will.

Paul VI declares that, contrary to popular belief, marriage is not a social construct open to interpretation, or "the effect of chance or the product of evolution of unconscious natural forces." Rather, it is a "wise institution" created by God Himself in order to help humankind grasp "His design of love" and walk a path toward perfection and nobility.

Furthermore, for those who are baptized, marriage is a sacramental "sign of grace" representing the union of Christ and His Church.

Paul VI assigned four characteristics to marriage:

- That it is fully human (involving body and soul)
- That it is faithful and exclusive (one man, one woman)
- That it is total (a very special friendship in which the husband and wife are to share everything)
- That it is fertile (destined to continue by raising up new lives and provide lasting happiness)

Continued on Page 40

Sound familiar? It should — those traits are still shared in Catholic marriage prep courses today. Diocesan Director of Marriage and Family Life Chris Vaughan pointed out that Paul VI was quite possibly one of the first to characterize marriage in that way.

Why those four traits? Because they reflect how God works, Vaughan said. “This is good, but why? God wants us to reflect Jesus in being free, full, faithful, and fruitful. Did Jesus sanitize His experience on the cross? No, He totally gave of Himself.

“Our love for spouse needs to imitate that love Jesus Christ has for us.”

A STRAIGHT ANSWER ON CONTRACEPTION

Pope Paul VI extols that the marital act is “noble and worthy” because these symbolically reveal something of God’s unconditional love.

Nonetheless, he makes it absolutely clear that each and every conjugal act “must remain open to the transmission of life.” In other words, the marital act as God intended is defined by two inseparable aspects: the unitive (which brings the husband and wife closer together) and the procreative (the capacity to raise a new life).

Artificial contraception necessarily violates both components, he said. Why? Because contraception is not a true and full giving of self since the couple is not ready to commit their fertility to each other. If sex, an act of life and love as defined in *Humanae Vitae*, is to mirror Christ’s love to the Church, it must be fully given.

So does that mean couples should leave family size to mere chance? Or that births shouldn’t be spaced out for righteous reasons? Not at all! Rather, *Humanae Vitae* reminds us that we have the great honor of being co-creators with God and are called to respect His design by using methods of Natural Family Planning — the only approach which supports God’s design for married love.



IT’S PROPHETIC

Paul VI proved prophetic when it came to the extraordinary consequences that openly accepted artificial contraception would wage upon society. In *Why Humanae Vitae was Right*, Dr. Janet Smith wrote that the pope was among the few who saw the connection “between the use of contraception and the multitude of other evils decimating our society.”

The contraceptive mentality would lead to men losing respect for women, he warned, even to the point where he would see her as a “mere instrument of selfish enjoyment and no longer as his respected and beloved companion.”

What’s more, contraception could become “a dangerous weapon” in the hands of immoral public authorities who could impose it upon their people, he warned. Artificial birth control would place at the mercy of government the “most personal and most reserved sector of conjugal intimacy.”

WATCH THE VIDEOS



Couldn’t make it to the diocese’s conference on *Humanae Vitae* on April 28? Don’t worry. Watch videos of the full presentations by Bishop Michael Olson and Dr. Janet Smith at NorthTexasCatholic.org/video-gallery. The videos will be available beginning May 4.

He warned that contraception would mislead people into thinking they are masters of their own bodies, rather than God as St. Paul teaches us. “You are not your own. You have been bought, and at a price” (*1 Corinthians 6:19-20*).

He predicted a “general” lowering of morality: an increase in the divorce rate, abortion, pornography, and infidelity.

All of these have become realities “beyond [Paul VI’s] wildest nightmares,” Dr. Smith noted.

She’s right. Our society has seen same-sex “marriage” legalized, gender “reassignment” cheered, and in-vitro fertilization recommended — not to mention the lack of respect for women the #MeToo movement has revealed.

But there’s hope. By understanding those consequences and their root causes, we can better counter them today.

FEAR THE ‘HURDLE’ IS TOO HIGH?

Truth is everywhere. It’s interesting where you can find its traces and shades sometimes.

Take for instance, the Netflix series, “Comedians in Cars Getting Coffee.” In one episode, over cups of coffee, Jerry Seinfeld and Stephen Colbert (a practicing Catholic) have the following conversation.

Stephen asks Jerry: *How do you feel about happiness? Where do you rank happiness?*

Jerry: *I think it’s a foolish thing to pursue.*

Stephen: *Suffering is actually a pretty good way to get happiness.*

Jerry: *Exactly! Like I’m suffering right now trying to make you happy.*

Stephen: *You have. You’ve made me happy.*

Stephen (after describing one of his first jobs): *The woman who ran the program was going through a divorce. She said, ‘What should I do?’ She laid out all the different options she had for how to handle her relationship. I said, ‘You should think of the thing that you least want to do because it’s probably the right thing to do and you know it, which is why you don’t want to do it...’”*

That scene illustrates vividly what we know deep inside: that truth is sometimes inconvenient or contradictory to what we want.

Pope Paul VI, who will be

canonized a saint this October, knew the truth would be taken bitterly by some when he wrote *Humanae Vitae*. He knew the confusion that abounded regarding birth control and the poorly imparted Church teaching on contraception. He recognized it would feel like an insurmountable hurdle to many marriages.

Still, he pulled no punches in calling spouses to carry out their blessed vocation properly.

Immediately, the document became a sign of contradiction, as Paul VI had also predicted. But, contrary to what critics said, the encyclical’s teaching was in no way meant to be a “burden.”

“The Church, in fact, cannot have a different conduct towards men than that of the Redeemer,” Paul VI explained. “She knows their weaknesses, has compassion on the crowd, receives sinners; but she cannot renounce the teaching of the law which is, in reality, that law proper to a human life restored to its original truth and conducted by the spirit of God.”

The Apostle John reminds us, “For the love of God is this, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome, for whoever is begotten by God conquers the world” (1 John 5:1-6).

So, through the pages of *Humanae Vitae*, Paul VI shows equal doses of truth and compassion. He does what any good father would: give advice.

He advised families to practice mastery of self and to seek God’s help through the sacraments. He reminded spouses that the sacrament of matrimony reinforces them; they have each other as guides to heaven.

Husbands and wives, he encouraged to “face up to the efforts needed” and “implore divine assistance by persevering prayer.” If they fell, he urged them to never tire of getting up and seeking Reconciliation.

Pope Paul VI effectively tells us: If you fear the hurdle is too high, rather than lower it, trust God and His grace to lift you over it. 🇺🇸

PAPAL SUCCESSION

Paul VI’s *Humanae Vitae* made a splash when it came on the scene in the late 1960s. But its spirit is not limited to that time period. Check out how the wisdom prescribed by *Humanae Vitae* has crossed decades.



Pope John XXIII

Wrote *CASTI CONNUBII* (On Christian Marriage) in 1930. The encyclical is, in a sense, the predecessor to *HUMANAE VITAE*.



Pope John Paul II

His *Theology of the Body* audiences from 1979 to 1984 expanded on the dimensions of marital love expressed in *HUMANAE VITAE*.



Pope Benedict XVI

Reaffirmed value of *HUMANAE VITAE* in a 2008 address.



Pope Francis

Refers to and relies on *HUMANAE VITAE* for the entire 68th paragraph of his marriage encyclical *AMORIS LAETITIA*.



Basking in the Son

Make summer a growing season in faith
for you and your family

By **Susan Moses**

Long days and less responsibility make summer a perfect time for your family's faith to flourish. With no school and no homework, schedules tend to be more relaxed and kids have more time to explore and expand their spiritual horizons.

Jason Spoolstra, director of youth ministry for the Diocese of Fort Worth, said "everyone thinks of making resolutions at the New Year, but summer is also great time" for implementing ideas and



FUN FACT FOR TEXAS TRAVEL

Texas has four basilicas:

- St. Anthony Cathedral Basilica in Beaumont
- St. Mary's Cathedral Basilica in Galveston
- Basilica of the National Shrine of the Little Flower in San Antonio
- Basilica of the National Shrine of Our Lady of San Juan del Valle in San Juan

The basilica designation signifies a special relationship with the Vatican due to its importance in the community, its history as a parish, and its significance in the history of the United States.

activities for faith formation.

Here are some ideas to help you and your family to grow closer to the Lord and each other this summer.

BEGIN WITH THE FOUNDATION

Julie Kiehlbauch, mother of three and youth ministry assistant at St. Ann Parish in Burleson, said her family finds summer is a good time to “up the opportunity for sacraments.” Add a daily Mass during the week and go to Reconciliation as a family.

Start a family tradition. Pick an evening to pray the Rosary or Divine Mercy Chaplet as a family, study Scripture together, or discuss the readings from Sunday Mass. Have each family member choose a saint and learn about him or her.

NEXT, CHECK OUT YOUR PARISH

Many parishes offer Vacation Bible School, which offers fun and faith lessons for the younger ones. Don't miss the experience when your children age out — youth and adults will be welcome helpers

and assistants.

Discover what your parish youth ministry has scheduled for the summer, which can range from Bible study and game nights to overnight trips.

High school students have a selection of faith-filled conferences and retreats nearby. Registration usually begins at the parish level, but you can contact the diocese if your parish is not participating.

Steubenville Lone Star brings in

Continued on Page 44

From Page 43

nationally renowned speakers for a weekend of inspiration and evangelization through music, talks, prayer, Eucharistic Adoration, and Mass.

Camp Fort Worth focuses on local service projects in the diocese by day, with worship and fellowship in the evenings.

The Young Disciple Retreat delves deeper into discipleship and using your gifts to glorify God.

The Vocations Office sponsors the Quo Vadis retreat for young men beginning to consider their vocation.

DAY TRIPPING WITH THE FAMILY

With 28 counties and 90 parishes, you'll find lots to explore within the diocese.

Make a mini-pilgrimage and attend Mass at Saint Patrick Cathedral or one of the many historic churches.

St. Peter Parish in Lindsay has earned architecture awards for its ornate interior painting and stained glass.

The Marian grotto at St. Mary Parish in Windthorst attracts visitors from around the world.

Attend Mass at Our Mother of Mercy Parish in Fort Worth, which was designated the primary Door of Mercy for the diocese during the Year of Mercy in 2016.

GETTING AWAY

If you are traveling this summer, a little time on the internet can yield big results. Shrines, basilicas, or missions may be located near your destination. Was the city founded by Catholics? Or does an American saint hail from there? With a bit of research, your family can discover a hidden gem of the Church and make great memories.

If you plan to send your child to camp, consider The Pines, a Catholic camp in East Texas. Kiehlbauch, whose children attended the camp, appreciated that all activities were directed back to God, from



swimming to a walk in the woods.

Consider a mission trip as a family. Chris Vaughan, diocesan director of marriage and family life, spent a week with Family Missions Company in General Cepeda, Mexico last summer with his wife and six children. He said, "We helped serve Christ in very real ways. My wife and the younger ones visited the elderly and sick, and the older kids and I helped build houses."

TO LOVE IS TO SERVE

It's never too early to instill the value of serving. Local aid organizations need hands to sort clothes or canned goods. Pray outside an abortion clinic. Leave the world better than you found it by picking up trash at a park, then pray St. Francis of Assisi's *Canticle of the Creatures*.

Give your nearest nursing home a call. Residents love visitors to play music, play checkers, paint nails, or just socialize.

Summer boredom can be a blessing. With a bit of thought, your family can come up with more ideas to cultivate faith than Abraham has descendants. And may these seeds of faith bloom over a lifetime. 🇺🇸

GEMS OF THE DIOCESE

Among many treasures, you'll find (from top):

Our Mother of Mercy Church in Fort Worth, a historically African-American parish, was designated as the primary Door of Mercy for the diocese during the Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy.

St. Peter Church in Lindsay is listed in the National Registry of Historic Places and is considered one of the most beautiful churches in Texas.

The Marian grotto at St. Mary Church in Windthorst was built in 1949 and dedicated to Our Lady of Perpetual Help in thanksgiving for returning all 64 servicemen from World War II.

St. Patrick Cathedral in downtown Fort Worth features beautiful statues and artwork, including these five-foot-high Stations of the Cross carved in Italy.

Putting Yourself Last

ON DISCERNING

MARRIAGE: “I think it’s good to pray about it, but at the same time you have to ask yourself if you’re willing to put someone else before yourself. It’s so hard, but that’s what marriage should be. It’s usually not, because human beings aren’t perfect, but if you’re not even willing to entertain that idea, then maybe marriage isn’t for you,” Hilary said.

ON HOW MARRIAGE HAS INCREASED THEIR FAITH:

“A lot of our faith is external (going to Mass, helping the poor, going to Bible studies, etc.) but I think being married has a bigger impact on the internal aspect of faith. I’m a very prideful person, and the hardest and most humbling thing for me to do is apologize; I’ve had to apologize more to Matt in the last two years than I want to admit! I’m terrible at it, but I’ve forced myself to apologize at times when I absolutely didn’t want to, but knew I needed to.

“Marriage is about putting someone else before yourself, and consciously trying to do that makes you a better person. It’s also helped my prayer life; I definitely don’t pray enough, but I find I’m more likely to pray if I have a concern, or need guidance within our marriage. I want to be a good wife, and since I fall short most days, I pray more now than before I was married.

“You really look at yourself more closely when you have this other person that you’re trying to build a life with!” ✚

THEY ARE: Matt and Hilary Ross. They are parishioners at St. Francis of Assisi Parish in Grapevine and are going on three years of marriage.



RETURNING

THE GIFT



NTC photo/Joyne Shredenhelm

H E IS: Father Nghia Nguyen, parochial vicar of St. John the Apostle Parish in North Richland Hills and a vocations liaison for the Diocese of Fort Worth.

THE GIFT OF LIFE: Born four months premature, Fr. Nguyen had several brushes with death in his first days. He has always felt God saved his life for a reason.

FAITHFUL FAMILY: The second of five children of Vietnamese immigrants, his mother took them to daily Mass, and the family prayed and sang each evening. He and his two brothers became altar servers beginning at age seven at Christ the King Parish in Fort Worth.

THE CALL: At a Confirmation retreat, “I remember telling God, you gave me the gift of life; my gift to you is

my life. I’ll do whatever you want me to do.” After his freshman year of high school, he left home and entered the high school discernment program with the Congregation of the Mother of the Redeemer in Carthage, Missouri, where his uncle was a priest.

TO THE DIOCESE: After completing high school, prayer and priestly counsel led him to return to Fort Worth and begin formation to become a diocesan priest.

THE SPECIAL DAY: Fr. Nguyen was ordained May 21, 2016, and his parents were “excited, elated.” In Vietnamese culture, the father and mother of a priest receive an honorary title, *Ông Cố* and *Bà Cố*, equivalent to great grandparents, to indicate that a priest is the father of many.

BEST THING ABOUT BEING A PRIEST: Celebrating the sacraments. “The sacrament of Reconciliation is probably the most joyful. . . . When you see the people yearning for Christ’s mercy and love . . . it’s a joy to speak on behalf of Christ, to absolve them of their sins on behalf of the Church.”

Baptism is “always fun and joyful,”

and his knack for keeping babies quiet and calm during the sacrament has earned him the nickname of “the baby whisperer.”

SCHOOL DAYS: Fr. Nguyen frequently visits classrooms at St. John the Apostle Catholic School, where he’s not afraid to tackle tough questions ranging from theology to algebra.

HOBBIES: Target shooting, reading science fiction, and cooking. Fr. Nguyen began cooking for his family in his youth, and his Vietnamese fried rice, *crème brûlée*, and bread pudding earn rave reviews.

QUIET TIME: Fr. Nguyen heads to his office at 7 each morning to pray and read Scripture before the day begins. His devotion to Mary began during his years with the Congregation of the Mother of the Redeemer, who along with St. John Paul II, taught him “to see Mary as my mother. She leads me always towards Christ.”

THE TAKEAWAY: “We can teach others to love because God loves us first. We as Christians and Catholics can practice that, to love as God loves us.” 🇺🇸

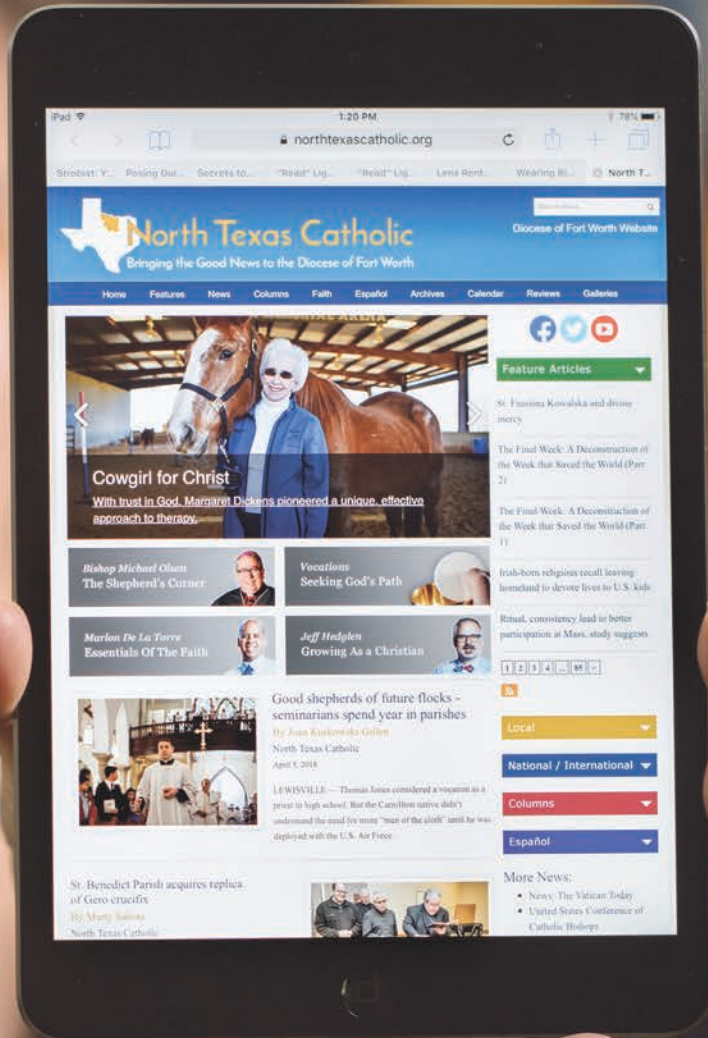
Check out Fr. Nguyen’s thoughts on vocations:



[NorthTexasCatholic.org/
video-gallery](http://NorthTexasCatholic.org/video-gallery)

NORTHTEXASCATHOLIC.ORG

Photos, videos, and news from around
the diocese and the world.



DON'T WAIT
ANOTHER
MINUTE.

FOLLOW US!





Three Most Powerful Words for Healing

In *Proverbs 3:5-6*, Solomon urges us to trust in the Lord with all of our heart and not rely on our insight. The serenity of this simple counsel is meant to guide man to acknowledge God before ourselves, as only God can make our paths straight and clear.

Topping this short examination of conscience is the call, fear the Lord, and turn away from evil. It will be healing to your flesh and refreshment to your bones (*3:7-8*).

Solomon's wisdom and counsel perfectly illustrates the perpetual opportunity God provides to seek His guidance and direction in all things. By following this simple spiritual exercise, we see Christ more clearly within our daily life.

THE FEAR OF CHANGE

The human condition is easily conditioned to seek something other than Christ. Look no further than Israel's actions after the parting of the Red Sea, their impatience with Moses speaking with God, and the construction of the golden calf (*Exodus 32*). These examples state the obvious of our ancestor's human condition; they could not let go of the past and their carnal urges were so strong within them that it drove them to live apart from God. One unique repercussion of Israel's behavior was the extent of God's mercy toward His children.

JESUS THE DIVINE PHYSICIAN

A characteristic of Christ we often gloss

over is that of a Divine Physician — not only a healer of the body, but primarily a healer of the soul. He redirected man to initiate an intimate relationship with Him as witnessed in His discourse on true greatness (*Mk 9:33-37*) or when forgiving the sinful woman (*Lk 7:36-50*). These examples reveal Christ's genuine desire to unite His children to Him and heal any impediment, physical or spiritual, that would hinder a genuine friendship with the Good Doctor.



Marlon De La Torre

ADDRESSING THE FEAR OF CONFESSION

Confession is probably the sacrament seen with the most disdain because the mere mention of the word or its equivalent (e.g., penance, conversion, forgiveness, reconciliation) calls the person to break away from their current state of being, to cease those habitual acts that are distancing oneself from Christ.

Jesus calls us to conversion; penance calls us to acknowledge our need to repent; forgiveness allows us to seek absolution; and reconciliation imparts on us God's love (*CCC 1424*). By our Baptism we are called continually to seek a conversion of heart as a way to embrace the love of Christ and His Church and dispel those fears that draw us away from Him. Keep in mind St. Peter's denial thrice over was met with an infinite gaze of mercy from Christ. He absolved him right on the spot without hesitation.

I ABSOLVE YOU

The journey toward absolution requires a contrite heart and confessing our sins. It is a free and genuine desire to seek healing for transgressions against God, His children, and the Church universal. Confession to a priest is part of the essential rite of the Church where one can validly seek reconciliation from his or her sins (*Jn 20:20-23, 2 Cor 5:18*).

St. Augustine reminds us "whoever confesses his sins... is already working with God... When you begin to abhor what you have made, it is then that your good works are beginning, since you are accusing yourself of your evil works. The beginning of good works is the confession of evil works. You do the truth and come to the light" (*CCC 1458*).

The effect of absolution within the rite of penance is reconciliation with God and the Church. It places us in the position to reject the path of death and embrace the path of life. The three most beautiful words that can bring immediate healing and release the bondage of anyone struggling with the weight of sin are the words of absolution: "I absolve you."

Absolution conferred by the priest *in persona Christi* reflects Christ's mercy as exhibited to St. Peter and directs us to sin no more, knowing that we still possess the inclination to sin due to the fall. ✚

Marlon De La Torre is the Director of Catechesis for the Diocese of Fort Worth and writes on catechesis, evangelization, and Christian spirituality at KnowingIsDoing.org.

Step Out of the Boat

Right before the start of last Advent, my beloved pastor at my parish received the call that he was going to be made a provincial for his religious order. He would be leaving St. Catherine of Siena Parish in Carrollton and moving back to India to serve the people there. The call came quite suddenly and he was to be moving in less than a month.

I remember talking to him about it before he left, and he said, *“I don’t want to leave my beloved family here, but I want to follow Jesus. I trust Jesus. I love Jesus.”* Those words made such an impression on me that I felt moved throughout Advent to pray for the grace to move when God calls me to move.

I’ve always been afraid of not doing what God wants me to do. Or living in the fear that I’m somehow missing out on what He’s actually planned for my life. My constant prayer is that I would be docile enough to be moved where the Holy Spirit best needs me to be. I often feel as if I’m not worthy to receive the call the Lord has placed on my heart — as if my sins, mistakes, or my past and present fears preclude me from accepting the mission He has given me.

Sometimes I over discern and I over pray about things, stopping me from actually moving and acting. I find myself in a circle of prayer and discernment, when God is simply asking me to step out

of the boat in action.

I was reading a meditation on the daily readings and this line stuck out to me, “we can’t let our wretchedness rule our response to His presence.” I cannot let my fears and doubts rule how I respond to Jesus. That is not discerning in truth or in love.

God is for us. (*Romans 8:31*) He does not play games with our hearts, nor does He lead us into our mission on the pretext that we will be miserable failures and He’ll laugh at us.

One of my favorite Bible stories is Peter walking on the water.



Ali Hoffman

“When the disciples saw [Jesus] walking on the sea they were terrified. ‘It is a ghost,’ they said, and they cried out in fear. At once Jesus spoke to them, ‘take courage, it is I; do not be afraid.’ Peter said to Him in reply, ‘Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water.’ He said, ‘Come.’ Peter got out of the boat and began to walk on the water toward Jesus. But when he saw how strong the wind was he became frightened; and beginning to sink, he cried out, ‘Lord, save me!’ Immediately, Jesus stretched out His hand and caught him, and said to him, ‘O you of little faith, why did you doubt?’ After they got into the boat, the wind died down. Those who were

in the boat did him homage, saying, ‘Truly, you are the Son of God’” (*Matthew 14:26-33*).

The immediate reaction of Peter’s response to Jesus calling him pierces my heart. Peter didn’t wait until the other disciples got out of the boat; he didn’t wait until the storm stopped around him; Peter didn’t even wait until science told him it was totally possible to walk on the water. No. Peter asked Jesus to call him, he locked eyes on Jesus, and he got out of the boat.

Jesus is calling you to get out of your boat. Whether that’s a boat of comfort, a boat of doubt, a boat of fear or misgivings, Jesus is looking at you, asking you to “Come.” The world is in need of the saints God has created to rise up and be a force of good in this world. That includes you.

So if you’re in a period of praying and discerning where God is leading you, take a deep breath. Stay close to Jesus through daily prayer and the sacraments, and finally, be brave and take courage to move when God says move. ✚

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

Living in Him and for Him

The joy of the Resurrection of Our Lord Jesus is the foundation of Christian life; men and women, as disciples of the Risen Lord, freely choose in joy to live daily in Him and for Him.

In this Paschal joy, I bring to memory that beautiful and sublime moment we recently celebrated: The Lord's Supper, the celebration of Holy Thursday. That holy and magnificent night in which the Lord announces

the most intimate aspect of His mission: His Death and Resurrection, and it is in this context that He precisely institutes the precious gift of the Priesthood.

It is a holy gift that God has given to His Church, through which Jesus Christ continues His redemptive mission in the world. The joy of living in Him and for Him is the reason for every young man who feels called to the priesthood. The first and ultimate motive that the candidate seeks in his discernment is the free will to live for his Master, united to Him, ready to consecrate his life for Jesus Christ, serving His Church.

For this reason, the grace of the resurrection, offered in the Holy Night where the ministerial priesthood finds meaning, constitutes the most perfect incentive for the candidate in his path of discernment towards the priesthood. It is through prayer that the young man opens his heart to this living encounter with the One who has conquered death and sin. Likewise, he must let himself be captivated by His love and go out to embark on the mission to which he is being invited.

The candidate to the priesthood, abandoned to His mandate, "*Come and follow me,*" and captivated by His words, "*Do this in memory of me,*" guides his heart and life to radically follow and join Jesus Christ, who calls him to serve his brothers in such a unique vocation, that is, the priesthood.

Thus, I invite all young people discerning their vocation, attracted by His words that resonate in their hearts, to be generous and not to fear giving their lives, consecrating them in Him and for Him. ✚



Fr. Manuel Holguin

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



Nicholas Alvarez (center) tutors international foster children with his parents James Alvarez and Minerva Cordero. (NTC photo/Ben Torres)

Tutoring Boosts Student Grades plus Family Togetherness

Nicholas Alvarez, a high school senior, has a suggestion for youth, young adults, and parents who would like to strengthen bonds within their families. “Volunteer together, as a family, to help kids through Catholic Charities,” advised the 18-year-old son of James Alvarez and Minerva Cordero of Arlington. “My parents and I have been tutoring [through Catholic Charities Fort Worth] since last fall, and we love it. It’s an activity that brings us all together in a very meaningful way.”

James and Minerva, both math professors at the University of Texas at Arlington, agree that the family’s weekly tutoring sessions with a small group of teenage boys has been a worthwhile use of their limited

free time. As members of St. Vincent de Paul Parish in Arlington, the family became interested in becoming involved with Catholic Charities Fort Worth when Nicholas was preparing for the sacrament of Confirmation and asked to complete his required service hours at the agency.


“We wanted to serve together as a family, and the International Foster Care program at Catholic Charities was in need of volunteers who would help some of the children with their homework,” Minerva explained. “We received extensive training and went through background checks. All three of us now meet with a small group of teenage boys for two hours each Sunday evening at a home in the Mansfield area. They are wonderful young men.”

Minerva, who also tutors an

18-year-old Catholic Charities client in Fort Worth each Sunday afternoon, insists that volunteers do not need to be professors or scholars in order to be of help to children who are newcomers to this country.

“High school students and college students could definitely serve in this way. There is such a need within the foster care program for this kind of help. Every time we meet with these boys, we tell each other on the way home that we are so glad we came. We know we are making a difference in their lives, but we also know that the greater benefit is to our own family.”

“Our family has been blessed by this opportunity,” Nicholas noted. “The student I work with is very eager to learn, and he works hard so he can make a better life for himself. I have been so inspired by this experience.”

The International Foster Care program helps to provide safe and nurturing homes for children who have fled their country of origin. To learn more, call 817-289-3871 or e-mail volunteer@ccdofw.org. 

Como Va la Familia, Así Va la Iglesia

Por Joel de Loera

La Iglesia se regocija con los que se regocijan y llora con los que lloran. Esto es particularmente cierto para las familias, ya que “la familia es la célula vital de la vida social”. (CCC 2207)

Si la familia se debilita, así también se debilitarán la sociedad y la Iglesia. Las familias disfuncionales contribuyen a sociedades disfuncionales y parroquias disfuncionales. Por otro lado, cuando una familia camina unida en la fe, la esperanza y la caridad, y ora junta en unión a María y los santos, esto brinda bendiciones sobre la comunidad parroquial y la sociedad en general.

Las familias deben reconocer el papel enorme y fundamental que tienen. La misión y el deber de la familia de manifestar el amor de Dios no sólo atañe a sus miembros, sino al mundo más amplio de los creyentes y no creyentes: “Como va la familia, así va la nación y, asimismo, va el mundo en que vivimos” (Papa San Juan Pablo II).

Desafortunadamente, muchas familias no están experimentando la verdadera alegría. Muchas de ellas se sienten abandonadas y traicionadas. La familia en el mundo de hoy está en peligro, especialmente la familia cristiana. Está siendo atacada por todos lados y en formas que no eran imaginables hace sólo unas décadas.

Muchas familias están cerrando sus corazones a cualquiera o cualquier cosa fuera de su propio “pequeño” mundo, en donde los placeres temporales son la norma, lo que resulta en una actitud egoísta y materialista hacia la humanidad. Estas actitudes impiden la madurez y el crecimiento en el amor en la familia. Las familias deben reconocer que están destinadas a ayudar y recibir ayuda de otras familias.

El finado pontífice tenía una visión clara de la familia. En *Familiaris Consortio*, San Juan Pablo II menciona algunos elementos positivos y negativos que se encuentran en las familias modernas. Entre los signos negativos que observó se incluyen los siguientes:

- Los esposos funcionan independientemente uno del otro
- Conceptos erróneos serios con respecto a la relación de autoridad entre los padres y los hijos
- Las dificultades concretas en la transmisión de los valores
- El número cada vez mayor de divorcios
- El aborto, la esterilización y la mentalidad anticoncepcional

San Juan Pablo II añadió, “En la base de estos fenómenos negativos está muchas veces una corrupción de la idea y de la experiencia de la libertad, concebida no como la capacidad de realizar la verdad del proyecto de Dios sobre el matrimonio y la familia, sino como una fuerza autónoma de autoafirmación, no raramente contra los demás, en orden al propio bienestar egoísta” (FC 6).

La familia de hoy necesita una gran cantidad de apoyo de diferentes fuentes. No obstante, un tipo de apoyo que no puede ser sustituido es el apoyo que recibe de la Iglesia. “Por ello hay que subrayar una vez más la urgencia de la intervención pastoral de la Iglesia en apoyo de la familia. Hay que llevar a cabo toda clase de esfuerzos para que la

pastoral de la familia adquiera consistencia y se desarrolle, dedicándose a un sector verdaderamente prioritario, con la certeza de que la evangelización, en el futuro, depende en gran parte de la Iglesia doméstica” (FC 65).

Por esta razón, como Iglesia, debemos asegurarnos de brindar suficiente apoyo a las familias y a los matrimonios en las parroquias. Muchas familias viven fielmente el Evangelio, mientras que

otras luchan por hacerlo. Las parroquias deben tener apostolados que aborden las necesidades y desafíos de la familia actual.

Al igual que su predecesor San Juan Pablo II, el Papa Francisco afirma la importancia de la familia y el papel de la Iglesia como apoyo y guía. “La alegría del amor que se vive en las familias es también el júbilo de la Iglesia... ‘el deseo de casarse y formar una familia sigue siendo vivo, especialmente entre los jóvenes, y esto es una inspiración para la Iglesia’ (Amoris Laetitia 1). ✝



Joel de Loera

Joel de Loera tiene una maestría en Teología Pastoral y es el Director de Formación de la Parroquia San Bartolomé de Fort Worth.



De la Indiferencia al Encuentro

Caminando con las Familias del Sistema de Crianza Temporal de Texas

Por **Jennifer Allmon** Directora Ejecutiva, Conferencia Católica de Obispos de Texas

El Papa Francisco ha dicho que nuestra mayor pobreza es el aislamiento y nuestro mayor pecado es la indiferencia. Esta pobreza y este pecado se encuentran en la crisis de crianza temporal en Texas, donde 30,000 preciosos hijos de Dios, hermanos nuestros, están atrapados en un doloroso aislamiento, así como en un trágico abuso y descuido, mientras millones de texanos permanecen indiferentes ante su dolor y su grave necesidad de apoyo.

La difícil situación de estos menores se ha visto en los titulares, se ha discutido en los tribunales y se ha enfrentado en nuestra legislatura durante años, pero la crisis continúa. A pesar de que permanece estancado el número de familias de crianza temporal que buscan ayudar a estos niños, hacemos caso omiso de una miríada de maneras más modestas en que individualmente podemos hacer una diferencia para estas familias.

En el Evangelio de Lucas, Jesús se encuentra con una viuda que acaba de perder a su único hijo. El Evangelio nos dice que “el Señor, al verla, se compadeció de ella”, y resucitó a su hijo de entre los muertos (*Lucas 7, 12-15*). Él vio su pérdida y su dolor, y no se limitó a hacer un comentario casual a los discípulos como, “pobre mujer”, para luego seguir su camino con ellos. En cambio, Jesús se movilizó para actuar. De esta manera Él remedia el aislamiento de la viuda solitaria, comprometiéndose. Gracias a que ella se encontró con

Jesús ese día, su familia fue restaurada. Cuando leemos los trágicos titulares de familias desgarradas y niños que mueren en el asediado sistema de crianza temporal de nuestro estado, ¿nos compadecemos, o simplemente comentamos a nuestros amigos cómodamente desde nuestra casa o parroquia, “pobres niños” y seguimos nuestro camino?

¿Cerramos la puerta a la misericordia de Dios al no salir al encuentro de las madres que han perdido a sus hijos, para acogerlos? ¿Cómo pueden nuestras parroquias comprometerse con estas madres para apoyarlas en la restauración de sus familias?

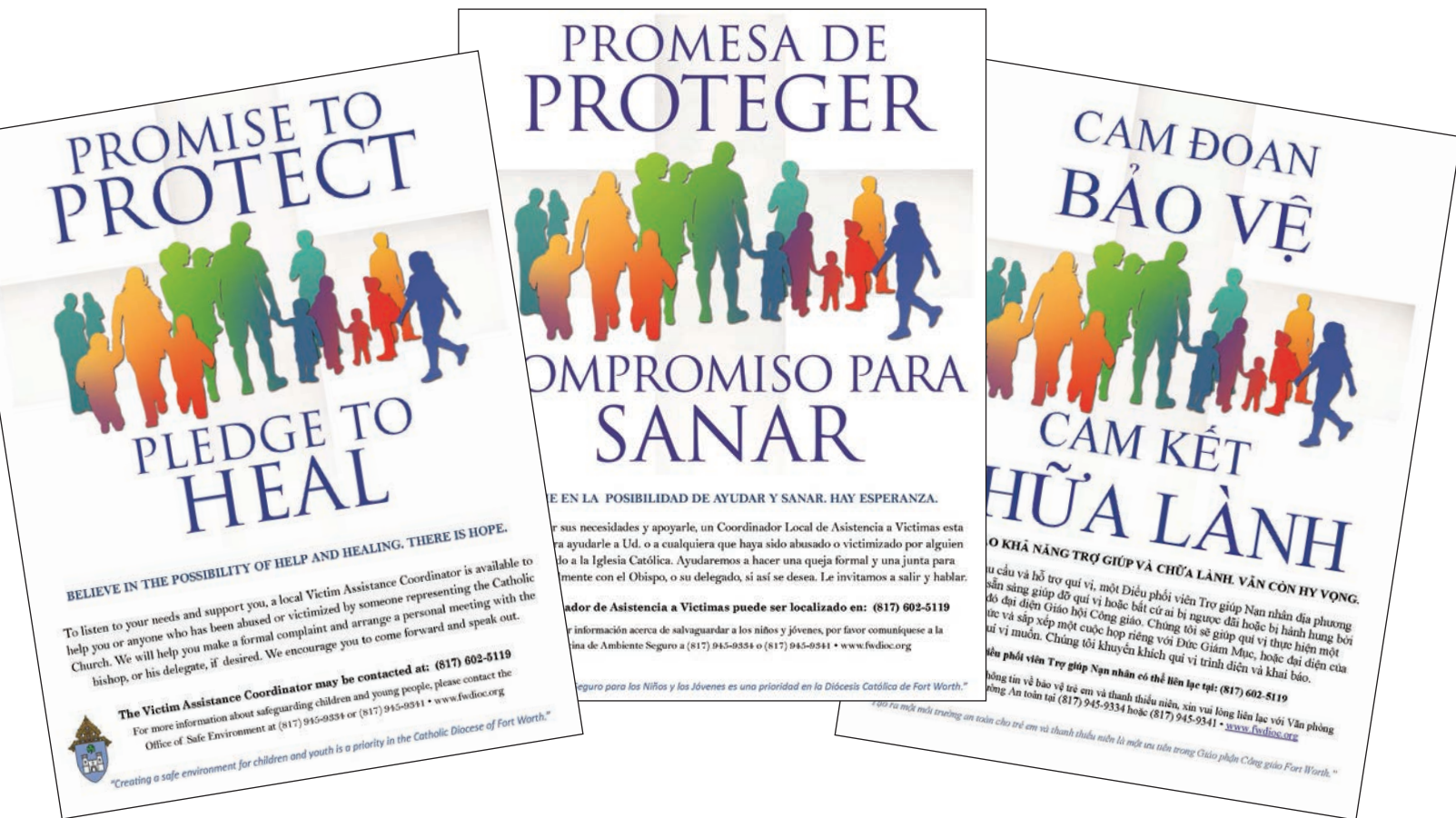
La Conferencia Católica de Obispos de Texas ha iniciado un ministerio de San José para ayudar a las parroquias y familias a discernir cómo pueden cuidar a las familias biológicas, de crianza y adoptivas que se encuentran en el sistema de protección infantil de nuestro estado.

Visite txcatholic.org/StJosephMinistry para aprender más sobre las formas en que usted puede convertirse en discípulo misionero al



Icono de San José escrito por el Padre Franciscano Nathanael Theuma. © Renáta Sedmáková – Adobe Stock.

encontrarse con estas familias. Al hacerlo respondemos al llamado del Santo Padre para llegar “a ser islas de misericordia en medio del mar de la indiferencia”. ✚



Un Ambiente Más Seguro

Los avances crean un ambiente más seguro

Por Susan McFarland

Proteger a los más vulnerables es una prioridad para la Iglesia, y con un programa educativo actualizado y simplificado que se está implementando en la Diócesis de Fort Worth, lograr ese objetivo será un poco más fácil.

El programa de Ambiente Seguro incluye sesiones de entrenamiento designado para niños preescolares hasta adultos y brinda instrucción sobre la

protección de niños, jóvenes y adultos vulnerables. Como abril es el Mes Nacional de Prevención del Abuso Infantil, el momento para informar y educar sobre la actualización del programa no podría ser mejor.

El abuso y la negligencia infantil no conocen fronteras y afectan a niños de todas las edades, razas y niveles de ingresos. Según estadísticas recientes, una de cada cuatro niñas y uno de cada seis niños son agredidos sexualmente antes de cumplir los 18 años. En el 2016,

la Oficina de Servicios de Protección Infantil recibió informes de problemas relacionados con la seguridad y el bienestar de más de 7 millones de niños.

“Cuando somos una comunidad, nos cuidamos unos a los otros. Por eso, es que tenemos este entrenamiento”, dijo Richard Mathews, Director de Ambiente Seguro. “Enseñamos a las personas a no ser espectadores y a decir algo”.

Mathews dijo que proteger a los demás es lo que Cristo enseñó a hacer a su Iglesia.

“Va con nuestra fe católica. Somos el guardián de nuestro hermano. Tenemos que amar a nuestro prójimo como a nosotros mismos”, dijo. “Esto nos da la oportunidad de demostrar nuestra fe, caminar con Cristo, imitar a Cristo y centrarnos en proteger a los más vulnerables”.

Desde que el programa comenzó en el 2002, ha experimentado un crecimiento rápido. El año pasado, 4.5 millones de niños en las escuelas y parroquias católicas de los Estados Unidos recibieron el entrenamiento y la Diócesis de Fort Worth educó a 26,595 niños en el programa, que enseña a los niños cómo mantenerse seguros contra el abuso.

El año pasado, la Diócesis de Fort Worth también entrenó y procesó verificaciones de los antecedentes penales de 27,498 voluntarios, 946 educadores, 942 empleados, 127 sacerdotes, 75 diáconos y 41 candidatos para la ordenación.

Un nuevo programa simplificará el proceso, permitiendo un alcance aún más eficaz. Las mejoras incluyen entrenamientos en vivo, contrario a un

plan de estudios basado en la web, para proporcionar una sesión más interactiva. Se contará con una base de datos más precisa que ayudará a los coordinadores de programas a comunicarse con quienes han realizado el entrenamiento, que ofrece recordatorios sobre las renovaciones antes de que expiren los certificados del entrenamiento y que se asegura de que todas las verificaciones de antecedentes penales estén actualizadas.

El programa será impulsado en las redes sociales para crear conciencia. Se enviarán carteles en inglés, español y vietnamita a las parroquias y las escuelas con información sobre el abuso infantil y los recursos existentes para pedir ayuda.

“Al igual que con el terrorismo y la violencia doméstica, no podemos asumir el papel de espectadores. Necesitamos saber cómo reconocer el abuso, ya sea abuso físico, social o emocional”, dijo Mathews. “Debemos asegurarnos de que la comunidad conozca las señales de advertencia para que podamos proteger a los niños y a los adultos vulnerables”.

Los niños que sufren abuso o negligencia tienen un mayor riesgo de depresión e intentos de suicidio, abuso de sustancias, discapacidades del desarrollo y problemas de aprendizaje, problemas sociales, embarazo en la adolescencia, falta de éxito en la escuela, violencia doméstica y enfermedades crónicas, incluso enfermedades del corazón, cáncer y enfermedad pulmonar.

“No creo que la gente realmente entienda los efectos del abuso infantil. Tendemos a pensar que ellos lo superarán, que lo olvidarán con el tiempo, pero el trauma sufrido por los niños afecta a generaciones”, dijo Mathews.

Nancy Mitchell, Analista de Ambiente Seguro, dijo que todos los involucrados en la simplificación y agilización del programa mejorado de Ambiente Seguro han estado trabajando sin descanso por año y medio.

“Es sorprendente la cantidad de gente de nuestra Diócesis que está ansiosa por hacer esto bien, todos están

“Compartimos la gran responsabilidad de comprender la naturaleza del abuso y los pasos que debemos seguir para establecer y mantener entornos seguros, santos y que afirmen la fe.”

— Obispo Michael Olson

esforzándose mucho, y eso es realmente impresionante”, añadió.

El Obispo Michael Olson dijo que el requisito de una renovación profunda del programa es que esté “diseñado para salvaguardar a los niños y los jóvenes y para proteger a todos los miembros de la comunidad diocesana en las parroquias, las escuelas y los ministerios”.

“Compartimos la gran responsabilidad de comprender la naturaleza del abuso y los pasos que debemos seguir para establecer y mantener entornos seguros, santos y que afirmen la fe”, dijo el Obispo Olson.

El lanzamiento del nuevo programa será más adelante este año; el entrenamiento de los facilitadores se hará en junio y julio, y el programa comenzará en las parroquias y las escuelas en agosto y septiembre. ➔

Ambiente Seguro

Para Reportar Conducta Inapropiada

Si usted o alguien que usted conoce es víctima de mala conducta sexual por cualquiera que sirva a la Iglesia, usted puede:

- llamar al Coordinador de asistencia a las víctimas al (817) 602-5119.
- O llamar a la línea de asistencia para víctimas (817) 945-9345 y deje un mensaje.

Para Reportar Abuso

Llame al Departamento de la Familia y Servicios de Protección de Texas (Servicios de Protección Para Niños) al (800) 252-5400.

Buenas Noticias en Fort Worth

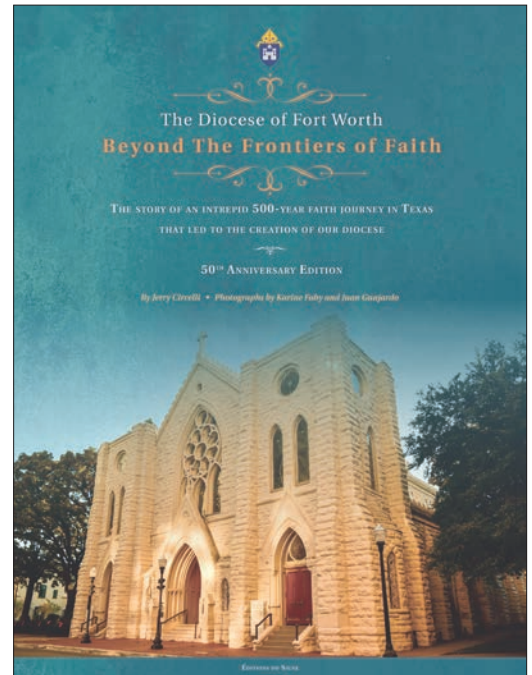
Libro conmemorativo narra la historia de nuestra Diócesis desde el tiempo de los misioneros hasta hoy día

Por Susan Moses

Aunque la Diócesis de Fort Worth conmemorará su 50º aniversario en el 2019, nuestros antepasados en la fe han estado edificando la Iglesia Católica en el Norte de Texas durante los pasados 500 años.

Los notables relatos y la historia de nuestra Diócesis se han registrado en un libro conmemorativo, *Beyond the Frontiers of Faith* (Más allá de las fronteras de la fe), la historia de una intrépida jornada de fe durante 500 años en Texas, que dio origen a la creación de la Diócesis de Fort Worth.

El fascinante relato comienza con los misioneros españoles, entre ellos, Fray Juan Padilla, el primer mártir de los Estados Unidos, que festejó con amigables nativos americanos 80 años antes de que los peregrinos tuvieran su primer Día de Acción de Gracias en Massachusetts.



El libro destaca cada parroquia, y relata la historia de toda la diócesis.

Los primeros colonos en el Norte de Texas mantuvieron viva su fe gracias en gran parte a las ocasionales visitas de valientes sacerdotes que cruzaban la pradera a caballo para celebrar la Misa en sus hogares. Otros sacerdotes con una gran dedicación y entrega a sus fieles viajaban en tren o en vagones cubiertos. El Padre Paul Mosler caminaba 23 millas durante la noche desde Seymour a Megargel para llegar a tiempo a celebrar la Misa dominical.

A medida que las ciudades se establecieron, los fieles católicos se reunieron en una variedad de lugares disponibles para celebrar la Misa. Desde establos convertidos para ese fin hasta carpas al aire libre, ferreterías, showrooms de automóviles, cafeterías de escuelas públicas hasta centros comunitarios, muchos sitios sirvieron como lugares de culto para los católicos antes de que se construyera un santuario.

Los pobladores unían sus recursos y habilidades para construir esas tempranas iglesias, pero a menudo presenciaron cómo eran destruidas por incendios o tornados.

El libro narra las raíces profundas de la Diócesis, ofrece un sinnúmero de relatos individuales y contiene fotografías a color de cada parroquia.

Jerry Circelli, un galardonado periodista del *North Texas Catholic*, pasó casi dos años haciendo su investigación y escribiendo el libro. Habló con decenas de archivistas, párrocos, hermanas religiosas, bibliotecarios y personal de la Iglesia. Su investigación lo llevó al sur a los Archivos Católicos de Texas en Austin y al este a la Misión de San Francisco de los Tejas, la primera misión católica establecida en el 1690 en el este de Texas. Visitó el sótano de la Catedral de San Patricio

CONTINÚA EN LA PÁGINA 62



El Diácono Martín García de la Parroquia de Todos los Santos de Fort Worth participó en las discusiones de grupo del V Encuentro Regional en San Antonio el 14 de abril. (Foto NTC/Thao Nguyen)

¿Qué Funciona?

En el Encuentro Regional, los delegados de Fort Worth comparten sus reflexiones sobre el ministerio hispano según se preparan para el V Encuentro Nacional en septiembre

Por Joan Kurkowski-Gillen

¡Emocionados! ¡Nerviosos!
¡Energizados! ¡Honrados!
¡Alegres!

Así es como 40 delegados de la Diócesis de Fort Worth describieron sus sentimientos al participar en el V Encuentro Regional celebrado del 13 al 15 de abril en San Antonio.

Culminando varios años de preparación en las parroquias y las diócesis que comprende la Región X, se reunieron

800 personas, entre ellas, ministros laicos, feligreses, religiosas y clérigos de Arkansas, Oklahoma y Texas con un propósito: reflexionar y fortalecer el ministerio a los católicos hispanos/latinos para lograr un mayor compromiso de ellos en la vida de la Iglesia.

“Espero poner todo mi esfuerzo para representar a todos los hispanos y las necesidades que tienen”, dijo Ricardo Romero, un feligrés de la Parroquia de San Francisco de Asís de Grapevine. “Tenemos la oportunidad de compartir

e identificar junto con otras personas las cosas que llevarán a más gente a la fe, así como también a aquéllos que ‘simplemente van a la iglesia,’ pero que en realidad no son parte de ella”.

Durante un proceso que comprendió la revisión de ideas y sugerencias extraídas de los documentos de trabajo presentados por las 18 diócesis de la Región X, los delegados fueron asignados a pequeños grupos donde la conversación se limitó

CONTINÚA EN LA PÁGINA 58

DE LA PÁGINA 57

a un área ministerial. El foco de las discusiones cubrió varias áreas, tales como la evangelización y la misión, la formación de la fe y la catequesis, la vida familiar, la inmigración, y varias más. Los participantes priorizaron las recomendaciones y las estrategias para servir mejor a los católicos hispanos y latinos.

“Tengo la esperanza de que podamos hacer algo que los ayude a sentirse parte del Cuerpo de Cristo”, agregó Romero. “Compartimos nuestros pensamientos con los obispos para que puedan tomar medidas e inspirar a los fieles”.

El V Encuentro es una iniciativa de los obispos católicos de los EE.UU. que desean responder y acercarse al creciente número de hispanos en el país, especialmente los jóvenes y los que viven en la periferia de la sociedad. Los esfuerzos realizados a nivel diocesano y regional conducirán al V Encuentro Nacional del 20 al 23 de septiembre en Grapevine, en el que la Diócesis de Fort Worth servirá como anfitriona del evento.

Los Encuentros previos tuvieron lugar en el 1972, 1977, 1985 y 2000. El objetivo del V Encuentro es discernir cómo la Iglesia Católica de los EE.UU. puede responder mejor a la presencia de los hispanos y latinos, y fortalecer las formas en que pueden responder al llamado de la Nueva Evangelización para ser discípulos misioneros que sirvan a toda la Iglesia.

El Obispo Michael Olson tomó tiempo durante su agitado fin de semana para reunirse con los delegados de Fort Worth para un diálogo franco e íntimo sobre las vocaciones, el ministerio de jóvenes adultos y otras preocupaciones que afectan a los feligreses hispanos.

“Creo que este proceso del Encuentro, y nuestra preparación de un año para el 50^{mo} aniversario de nuestra diócesis, nos va a cambiar y cambiarán la forma en que articulamos, identificamos y abordamos las cosas”, dijo agradeciendo a los delegados por compartir sus ideas. “No terminará aquí”.

Olivia Olvera le agradeció al Obispo la atención personal dada al grupo de delegados.



El Obispo Michael Olson tomó parte de la procesión de entrada de la Misa de Clausura junto con los Obispos de las otras 17 diócesis representadas en el V Encuentro Regional. (Foto NTC/Thao Nguyen)



Miriam Figueroa de la Parroquia de Santo Tomás de Aquino de Pilot Point tomó parte de la discusión en grupo sobre el desarrollo de liderazgo y la formación pastoral. (Foto NTC/Thao Nguyen)

“Fue fantástico poder plantearle preguntas al Obispo sobre las diferentes cosas de las que estamos hablando este fin de semana y escuchar sus respuestas”, dijo el Coordinador de Ambiente Seguro de la Parroquia de Santa María de Graham. “Es raro tener esa oportunidad”.

Los miembros de la comunidad hispana apoyan al Obispo y saben que está trabajando para atender sus problemas y preocupaciones.

“El poder que tenemos como laicos es compartir lo que sabemos con nuestros

hermanos y hermanas y decir: ‘el Obispo está escuchando’”, explicó Olvera. “El Obispo respondió a nuestras preguntas y se tomó el tiempo para sentarse y escucharnos para poder ser un mejor pastor para nosotros”.

El Encuentro de la Región X se inició con una procesión de representantes de cada diócesis de Texas, Oklahoma y Arkansas, encabezada por la Cruz de los Encuentros. Esta cruz de roble, que fue bendecida por el Papa Francisco, lleva la inscripción “El pueblo hispano: discípulos



Laura Espinosa de la Parroquia de Santa Frances Cabrini de Granbury escucha a los otros delegados durante una sesión de grupo. Las diócesis de Arkansas, Oklahoma y Texas estuvieron representadas en el V Encuentro Regional. (Foto NTC/Thao Nguyen)

▲ La Diócesis de Fort Worth fue representada en el V Encuentro Regional en San Antonio por cuarenta delegados que colaboraron para identificar las prioridades del ministerio hispano. (Foto NTC/Thao Nguyen)

alegres en misión” y está grabada con espinas y lirios de la resurrección. Simboliza el camino de la fe de los católicos hispanos y latinos en los EE.UU. durante los últimos 50 años.

“Esta cruz nos recuerda que mucho antes de que los Padres Fundadores de este país se reunieran en Filadelfia, los misioneros inmigrantes de España y América Latina ya estaban trabajando”, dijo uno de los maestros de ceremonias del evento, el Padre Héctor Madrigal de la Diócesis de Amarillo. “La Cruz de los

Encuentros nos recuerda que la fe católica del pueblo hispano moldeó la historia estadounidense desde el principio”.

Las estimaciones actuales del Censo de los EE.UU. muestran que los hispanos son la población étnica de más rápido crecimiento en el país y que hay aproximadamente 29.7 millones de hispanos latinos que se identifican como católicos. Sesenta por ciento de los católicos estadounidenses menores de 18 años también son de ascendencia hispana.

“Estas estadísticas son una clara

indicación de la gran importancia del V Encuentro”, observó el Obispo de la Diócesis de Austin, Joe S. Vásquez, al dirigirse a los delegados durante la ceremonia de apertura. “Los hispanos ahora se encuentran en todos los estados de nuestro país. Están contribuyendo a la vitalidad de este país y de nuestra Iglesia”.

Designado como el Moderador Episcopal de la Región X, el Obispo Vásquez le recordó a la audiencia que

CONTINÚA EN LA PÁGINA 60

el Encuentro es un proceso de tres pasos de evangelización, comunión y consulta.

“El proceso de consulta requiere que seamos abiertos y escuchemos a muchas personas — a las personas que están activamente involucradas en la Iglesia y a las personas que están distanciadas de la Iglesia”, dijo, y destacó la importancia de dos grupos en particular.

El Obispo Vásquez aconsejó a los delegados que reconozcan las esperanzas y los sueños de los jóvenes y se acerquen a los inmigrantes y los “soñadores”, esos jóvenes adultos traídos de niños a los Estados Unidos sin documentación alguna.

“Son nuestros hermanos y hermanas, compañeros de clase y compañeros de trabajo. Oramos juntos. Adoramos juntos”, señaló. “La Iglesia continuará defendiendo sus derechos y su dignidad como hijos de Dios. Estamos llamados a llegar a las periferias donde muchas personas se sienten abandonadas y muchas veces desconectadas”.

Las palabras del Obispo Vásquez resonaron en Gemma Ramírez. Mientras prepara a los niños para la Reconciliación y la Primera Comunión, la feligrés de la Parroquia de Santa Isabel Ann Seton se encuentra a menudo con padres que no hablan inglés.

“Es una parroquia grande con una comunidad hispana pequeña que necesita atención”, dijo la catequista al referirse a la parroquia de Keller.

Las familias que buscan formación en la fe para sus hijos con frecuencia se enfrentan a la barrera del idioma y otros obstáculos como dificultades económicas o un padre ausente. No hay duda de que hasta un pequeño gesto puede hacer una gran diferencia.

“A veces esas personas no se sienten bienvenidas, por lo que incluso escuchar ‘buenos días’ del párroco los hace sentir mejor”,

agregó Ramírez.

Como miembro de la Pastoral Juvenil Hispana de la Diócesis de Fort Worth, Daisy Gaytan, fue parte de la discusión en grupo sobre la mejor manera en que la Iglesia puede servir a los jóvenes de diferentes grupos étnicos.

“Nuestro grupo incluyó una diócesis con una comunidad de nigerianos”, dijo la joven de 26 años. “Las discusiones fueron muy interesantes y aprendí muchas cosas. Al mismo tiempo, pude compartir la realidad de nuestra diócesis y cómo celebramos en grande la fiesta de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe el 12 de diciembre”.



Perla Cabrera de la Parroquia de Todos los Santos de Fort Worth, parada cerca de la Cruz de los Encuentros, lee las prioridades elegidas por su grupo en la sesión plenaria del Encuentro Regional. (NTC photo/Thao Nguyen)

Joel Rodríguez, Director del Ministerio Hispano, dijo que el V Encuentro Regional fue un éxito para el equipo de Fort Worth. Los delegados representantes de la Diócesis estaban bien preparados y su participación fue muy productiva.

“El impacto de tener al Obispo aquí fue increíble”, dijo. “Todos pudieron ver que el Obispo Olson estaba involucrado genuina y personalmente. La actitud fue una gran manifestación de alegría”.

Los 3,000 delegados que se esperan en el V Encuentro Nacional revisarán las recomendaciones presentadas por las delegaciones regionales y luego publicarán un documento de trabajo en el que se describirán las prioridades y las estrategias pastorales apropiadas para las necesidades de la época actual.

Paola Quintero-Araújo, una de los

organizadores del V Encuentro y Directora del Instituto Diocesano San Junípero Serra, dijo que los delegados de Fort Worth salieron de la reunión regional entusiasmados y “ardiendo en llamas”.

“Están listos para salir, tomar esta experiencia y contarles a otras personas sobre la misma”, continuó. “Ellos quieren ir a sus parroquias y comenzar a trabajar”. ➡

La Diócesis Revisa Medidas de Seguridad

La Diócesis evalúa los protocolos de seguridad de las parroquias y las escuelas

Por Matthew Smith

La seguridad de las parroquias y las escuelas de la Diócesis de Fort Worth, bajo la dirección del Obispo Michael Olson, está siendo evaluada de seguridad especializada, además de los pasos que se han ido dando para mejorar la seguridad de cada una.

Aunque el tiroteo masivo del 14 de febrero en Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School en Parkland, Florida, que dejó a 17 personas muertas, ha servido para resaltar el aumento de tales tragedias, la Diócesis ya ha estado trabajando desde hace un tiempo para fortalecer los planes de seguridad.

“El patrón reciente de actos de terror y violencia perpetrados contra las iglesias y las escuelas llevó a algunas personas a expresar sus justificadas preocupaciones por la seguridad”, escribió el Obispo Olson en un memorándum del 22 de febrero. “Compartiendo sus inquietudes, solicité que se evalúe la seguridad de cada escuela y cada parroquia”.

Los hallazgos de esas evaluaciones del plan de seguridad revelaron “una considerable variación en la minuciosidad y en los tipos de seguridad que serían utilizados en las parroquias y las escuelas”, dijo el Obispo Olson.

Por esa razón, el Obispo Olson decidió contratar a una empresa de seguridad para “ayudar a la Diócesis a

actualizar nuestros planes de seguridad particulares”.

A raíz del tiroteo del 5 de noviembre en First Baptist Church en Sutherland, Texas, que resultó en 26 muertes, todas las parroquias de la Diócesis revisaron y mejoraron los planes de seguridad y de emergencia y contactaron a las agencias policiales locales para obtener recomendaciones adicionales, según dijeron algunos funcionarios diocesanos.

“Sabíamos que era algo que

teníamos que hacer rápidamente, las parroquias y las escuelas comenzaron a elaborar un plan sobre cómo abordar los problemas de seguridad”, dijo Steve Becht, Director Diocesano de Bienes Raíces y Construcción. “Algunos planes eran muy sofisticados, otros, no tanto. Sabíamos que teníamos que trabajar con expertos para decirnos cómo se podía



Las 90 parroquias de la diócesis de Fort Worth, 1 misión y 19 escuelas católicas están siendo evaluadas para la seguridad por una empresa especializada en cuestiones de seguridad.

CONTINÚA EN LA PÁGINA 62



NOTICIAS, DE LA PÁGINA 56

de Fort Worth, donde su sacerdote fundador, el Padre Jean Marie Guyot, está sepultado bajo el altar mayor.

Mientras navegaba por las profundidades de la historia de la Diócesis, Circelli se sorprendió de la “dedicación y perseverancia de los primeros sacerdotes, que se mantuvieron firmes en el Salvaje Oeste mientras evangelizaban”.

El libro *Beyond the Frontiers of Faith* revela los sacrificios y el trabajo de los primeros evangelizadores para cultivar la fe en el Norte de Texas. “Después de dejar a sus países de origen, esos sacerdotes tuvieron que sobrevivir las inclemencias del tiempo y

acampar para establecer la fe. Para nosotros es fácil y conveniente asistir a la Misa, pero ellos tuvieron que trabajar arduamente para ello”, continuó diciendo el autor.

La Diócesis de Fort Worth tiene actualmente 940,000 católicos, que profesan su fe en Cristo en los 28 condados que cubren casi 24,000 millas cuadradas, y, sin duda, le debemos una inmensa gratitud a todos los fieles que vinieron antes que nosotros.

El libro *Beyond the Frontiers of Faith* estará a la venta en las parroquias. Se espera que la entrega del libro sea a mediados de septiembre del año en curso. 🙏

SEGURIDAD, DE LA PÁGINA 61

crear e implementar un plan de seguridad uniforme en toda la Diócesis”.

Se ha pedido a las iglesias y las escuelas que revisen y modifiquen sus planes de seguridad, según sea necesario, hasta que las evaluaciones de la empresa de seguridad puedan completarse y se adopten pautas uniformes.

“Es la responsabilidad de cada párroco y director de escuela asegurarse de que el plan de seguridad se implemente y se mantenga”, dijo el Obispo Olson.

Se alienta a los párrocos y directores a iniciar un diálogo con la policía local y oficiales del cuerpo de bomberos y emergencias para asegurarse de que se establezca una colaboración estrecha entre ellos y las parroquias y las escuelas.

“La empresa de seguridad trabajará con las parroquias y las escuelas para mejorar las medidas de seguridad y garantizar que se mantengan de forma continua”, comentó Becht.

“Los funcionarios de las parroquias y las escuelas han sido extremadamente receptivos y cooperadores”, dijo Becht.

Y continuó diciendo, “¡Ha sido fantástico!” Me han dicho, “Estamos muy contentos de que estés aquí y queremos hablar sobre este tema”.

Por ejemplo, Charles McGrath, Presidente de Nolan High School, dijo que una auditoría de seguridad del campus de Nolan ha comenzado y que los funcionarios escolares ya están trabajando para implementar y actualizar las recomendaciones iniciales del plan de seguridad.

Becht expresó que no existe actualmente un calendario definitivo para la plena implementación del plan en toda la Diócesis.

“El Obispo Olson toma muy en serio la seguridad de todos los feligreses y los estudiantes”, dijo Becht.

“Realmente queremos poner el renovado plan de seguridad en práctica y hacerlo tan pronto como sea posible. Esto es de alta prioridad, pero tampoco puede ser una reacción instintiva rápida. Esto es algo permanente, por lo que queremos asegurarnos de que se hace de la manera más completa y cabal posible”. 🙏

◀ The Quilting Angels, including Bea Schmitzinsky (left) and Taranía Snell (right), create lasting and loving comfort items that the recipients keep.



**From
Page 64**

to new mothers attending Cassata Catholic High School.

“When the ladies give me a larger-size quilt, I give it to the Sisters of St. Mary of Namur,” the diocesan nurse explained. “If I have a special needs child in one of our schools who’s been sick or hospitalized, I might give them one too.”

The small gesture not only keeps someone warm and lifts their spirits but, “I tell them it was made with love just for them,” Eder continued.

Distributed quietly without questions or judgment, the delivery messenger tells recipients the handmade gifts come from “lovely, beautiful quilting ladies.

“They’re so talented, work tirelessly, and always ask, ‘do you need more?’” Eder added.

Holy Redeemer’s quilting group formed almost eight years ago after members of the Aledo parish discovered Bea Schmitzinsky’s skill with a needle and thread.

“I started quilting when I was eight-years-old,” said the Hill Country native who grew up near Fredericksburg. “My mother handed me some fabric, a pattern, and scissors, and said, ‘cut this up.’ So I did.”

Decades later when Holy Redeemer was first established, Schmitzinsky made a turquoise-and-white quilt for the new parish to raffle with proceeds going to the building fund. More than \$3,000 was raised, and people began asking the artisan for quilting lessons. She was reluctant at first, doubting her teaching abilities.

“One day, I was sitting in the choir loft looking at a picture of the Lord’s Supper and I just felt Jesus telling me to do it,” recalled Schmitzinsky, who now quilts alongside seven or eight women on a regular basis.

When the Trinity Valley Quilting Guild she belongs to began making blankets for John Peter Smith Hospital, she suggested her Holy Redeemer friends do something similar for charity. Material for their projects comes from donated remnants and fabric.

Kathy Yosten could make clothes, embroider, and knit but quilting is a skill learned from Schmitzinsky. While her mentor “hand quilts,” Yosten prefers a machine to fashion squares of pink calico together.

“It helps me get the baby quilts done quickly,” said the design expert who is part of Holy Redeemer’s Art and Environment ministry.

The self-described decorating buff usually makes one quilt every two weeks but can easily produce eight a month if needed.

“The quilts are an excuse for me to use fun, bright, and sunny fabrics. That’s something I don’t usually do,” admitted Yosten, who fashions whatever combination of colors and patterns strikes her.

Getting together with other like-minded creative people is all about fellowship and helping others, she added. The quilters never add a name or identifying card to the blankets they give away.

“We don’t want credit. It’s not about us,” Yosten insisted. “The church knows we’re doing it and that’s enough.”

She hopes the babies and youngsters who fall asleep under the cozy quilts feel the love sewn into the fabric.

“God gave me these gifts. He made me creative so I could do things for other people,” Yosten explained. “The fact these quilts go to people who really need them is a plus.” ✨

NTC photos/Ben Torres



NTC photo/Ben Torres

Scraps of cloth are transformed into colorful, comforting quilts for children in shelters and social programs with the helping hands (and machines) of the Quilting Angels of Holy Redeemer Parish, including Tariana Snell (left) and Lynda McGee.

Blanketed in Love

Quilting Angels craft hundreds of homemade covers for disadvantaged kids

Twice each month, a circle of seamstresses gather inside Bea Schmitzinsky's home in Aledo to piece together carefully chosen blocks of fabric into quilts.

As sewing machines hum, and nimble fingers fashion material into intricate patterns, the Holy Redeemer parishioners share family news, memories, and creative suggestions.

Lighthearted conversation and laughter fills the room, but the day's mission is never forgotten. Each quilter's work is steady, purposeful, and exquisite. There's a reason so much care is put into every stitch.

"Somebody out there is waiting for these blankets," commented Mary Trinkle, referring to the homeless children, newborn babies, and special needs youngsters who will find warmth and comfort under the multi-layered coverlets. "A quilt for a kid who, for whatever reason, doesn't have much is special. It's something that will always be theirs."

The sewing circle is fastidious but prolific. With the arrival of winter and dipping temperatures, the group produced

49 crib-size quilts in December. Many were delivered to the Salvation Army's overflow shelter for women and children by Nancy Eder. The diocesan school nurse consultant serves as a liaison between the quilters and various social service agencies and charities gifted with the blankets.

Shelter caseworkers marvel when Eder arrives with an armful of beautifully-crafted donations that are brand new, clean, and something children can keep.

"I went to the Salvation Army one bitterly cold evening and they had the bedding out — white sheets and blankets," she recalled. "I gave them these colorful things for the children, and the staff was so happy."

The cheerful bed covers brightened the evening for the shelter's youngest guests and "allowed them to be kids," Eder observed.

Quilts are also given to Catholic Charities, Mother and Unborn Baby Care, Rachel Ministries, Samaritan House, and

Continued on Page 63