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# NORTH TEXAS CATHOLIC



# FEAR NOT

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CHARITY AND FAITH DURING THE  
ONGOING PANDEMIC

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# RETURNING TO NORMAL, OR BETTER

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



 @BpOlsonFW

Christ is truly risen from the dead. He has conquered sin and its bitter effects of sickness, error and ignorance, and its most bitter effect — death itself. Christ reigns and is sovereign of His Kingdom that the Church — established by Him — inaugurates into being through the proclamation of His Gospel. We know this through faith and are reminded of it daily through our prayers and through the offering and acceptance of works of mercy at home and in our greater community. The Gospel readings of the Easter season present to us the unmistakable mission given us by Christ to march quickly and confidently into the future to proclaim the Gospel of Christ’s Resurrection with courage in the face of fear and doubt.

The current circumstances of the world in which we live suggest to us that there is much for us to fear about the future. The world of the flesh tells us that Christ doesn’t reign but that COVID-19 reigns with power and intimidation to take our health, to take our lives and those of our loved ones, to wreck our economy, and to take our livelihood — even to take away our faith by preventing gatherings (including Mass and Confessions) of more than 10

people. The world of the flesh tells us to be afraid of the future because things will not be the same — that they will be worse for us.

Yet, we know better. We know that Christ has risen from the dead. We know, like the world of the flesh, that things will not be the same as before. Yet, unlike the world of the flesh, we know that things will not be the same as before — they will be better. We shape the future in living the Gospel with confidence in the present moment. Christ has entrusted us with the mission to be converted and to convert those enslaved in fear by the world of the flesh.

We will go forward with confidence, not returning to what was normal, if by “normal” we meant taking the sacraments for granted, as entitlements of convenience. We will go forward with confidence, not returning to normal, if by “normal” we meant living our lives as if God doesn’t exist in any way that affects how we live our lives and how we care for our neighbors. We will go forward with confidence, not returning to normal, if by “normal” we meant treating the Church as only a place to go and not a vocation of our being in relationship with Christ and with each other in love and service. We will go

forward with confidence, not returning to normal, if by “normal” we meant living life looking out only for ourselves as individuals and being indifferent to the suffering of others. It means that when we return to church and the frequent reception of the sacraments — including Penance and Eucharist — we do so with a renewed spirit of gratitude for God’s grace as He changes our lives — soul and body — and not simply a return to a “normal” mindset that treats Penance as a relief valve for guilty feelings, and the Eucharist as a commodity with only private value.

I know how much you miss going to church on Sunday. I want you to know that I miss you too. Your priests miss you. Your neighbors miss you. As we go through this together, our vision at the end of this is a return to the full celebration of the Sunday Eucharist and the other sacraments as Christ intended, but not a return to “normal.” There is light at the end of the tunnel, the light of Christ, “who, coming back from death’s domain, has shed His peaceful light on humanity, and lives and reigns for ever and ever.” ✝

*+ Michael F. Olson*



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## A STOLEN EASTER?

Shortly after Easter Sunday, my father-in-law came across a poem, “How the Virus Stole Easter,” that put to paper what our collective society and fellow Christians might have felt during this pandemic.

Written with the tongue-twistingly delectable prose of a Dr. Seuss poem, its author, Kristi Bothur, recalls how “’Twas late in ‘19 when the virus began...Bringing chaos and fear to all people, each land.”

She continues, “As winter gave way to the promise of spring, the virus raged on, touching peasant and king. People hid in their homes from the enemy unseen. They YouTubed and Zoomed, social-distanced, and cleaned.”

Soon, April arrives and “the churches were closed. ‘There won’t be an Easter,’ the world supposed.”

But — taking a page from the popular Seuss book, “How the Grinch Stole Christmas,” Bothur details how Easter came nonetheless. “The world stared around, popping its eyes. Then it shook! What it saw was a shocking surprise! Every saint in the nation, the tall and the small, was celebrating Jesus in spite of it all!”

As we all found out this Easter, and even this Lent, the Good News doesn’t vanish when a pew remains empty or a church building is still. Nothing prevents God in His abundant love and mercy from being with us and saving us from sin. In Bothur’s sublime words, “The churches are empty — but so is the tomb, and Jesus is victor over death, doom, and gloom.”

For us faithful, the ending is hardly surprising, but I’m glad Bothur highlighted it because I suspect that for a good number of us, that joyful truth may have been overshadowed by the growing numbers of COVID-19 victims, the dread of financial instability, the drastic change in routine, and the fear of a future unknown.

With all those concerns weighing on us, perhaps we *did* feel our Easter was stolen. If we did, or still do, just recall the ending and the context of that poem. It’s remarkably similar to the first Easter. Like us, the early disciples were fearful and without hope. But in the early morning light of Easter Sunday, the angel proclaims, “Do not be afraid.... He is not here, for He has been raised just as He said” (*Mt 28:1-10*).

In spite of a crucifixion, sentinels, a great stone, and an imperial seal, Easter still came. Divinity, in the form of humanity, rose from the grave to bless us with mercy, grace, and the gift of everlasting life. If we remember that truth and recall it in dark times, we will remain joyful even when it seems we’ll never rise again.

*Juan Guajardo, Editor*

Kristina Davis counts her resources as she holds her “baby” during the poverty simulation at Good Shepherd Parish. (NTC/Rodger Mallison)



## Poverty simulation gives parishioners understanding

**COLLEYVILLE** — A young man just released from prison is sleeping in a homeless shelter because he can’t find a place to live. A single mom of three is just barely getting by when her car is stolen. Another parent can’t go to work because he can’t afford childcare, on top of all the other family expenses.

These are just a few of the stories that parishioners from Good Shepherd Church in Colleyville experienced for themselves when they participated in a poverty simulation to help them understand the challenges of those in dire financial need.

Parishioners who attended said the experience was eye opening.

A team from TXU Energy’s customer advocacy department conducted the simulation. Those who attended were divided into family groups and given an identity with all the details

of background, income, and expenses.

Participants had to role play four weeks of going to work or school, seeking work if they were unemployed, paying bills, and trying to get food stamps and other assistance. Adults waited in line for many services. There was a pawn shop and a dishonest payday loan lender, along with a bank and grocery store. Family members could end up in jail or a homeless shelter.

Kim Campbell, senior manager of customer advocacy for TXU Energy, said that the idea is “there’s more month than money,” and participants had to decide which tradeoffs to make.

“It’s eye opening, and it changes your opinion about the choices families in need have to make each month,” Campbell said.

— Sandra Engelland

## Organist leads music in Vernon for 60 years

**VERNON** — On Wednesday afternoons, Mary Boatman can be found practicing the organ at Holy Family of Nazareth Parish in Vernon. With more than 60 years of playing the organ at the church, why does she still practice on Wednesday afternoons? Because on Tuesdays and Thursdays, she volunteers at the hospital gift shop.

Music is the release for the joy and love Boatman feels inside of her. “It comes automatic. You’re not singing for people. You’re singing for the Lord. I love to sing to the Lord,” she gushed.

She began making music in the diocese in

the late 1950s at St. Mary Parish in Quanah, in the northwest corner of the diocese. There, she met and married her late husband. When they moved to Vernon in the 1960s, she began playing there while she raised her four children.



Mary Boatman

Boatman, 90, plays at both the Saturday Vigil Mass and the Sunday Mass. She admitted she is at the parish every time it’s open.

“Myself, I live here,” she joked. “I feel really good after I get out of the church on Saturdays or Sundays that I played here. I forget my troubles. I just thank the good Lord and He makes me feel really good.”



For full versions of these stories plus more photos, visit [NorthTexasCatholic.org/local-news](http://NorthTexasCatholic.org/local-news)



Jason Spoolstra prays at the doors of St. Mary of the Assumption Parish before dawn. (NTC/Juan Guajardo)



## Marathon pilgrimage: youth director prays at 91 parishes

**FORT WORTH** — “There’s a reason no one has done this before,” said Jason Spoolstra with a laugh, after visiting every parish in the Diocese of Fort Worth in just over two days. “It’s crazy, but I’m willing to be crazy for Jesus Christ and the Church.”

From Feb. 28 – March 1, Spoolstra successfully completed a pilgrimage that took him to all 91 parishes of the diocese in 50 hours, in honor of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Diocese of Fort Worth.

The idea to pray at each parish during the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary began percolating in the mind of the diocesan director of youth, young adults, campus, and singles ministry back in November.

Explaining why the idea appealed to him, he said, “I am a product of the diocese. I was born and raised here, and it’s where I was brought into the faith. I received all my sacraments here. I worked virtually my whole life here; by and large

I have served the Church through the diocese.... I owe so much to this diocese. It’s sort of a love letter and a thank-you to the diocese.”

At each parish, Spoolstra recited a prayer for Eucharistic Adoration he selected from the missal because it dovetailed with the theme of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary — The Eucharist Makes Us the Church. He also received prayer intentions before and during his trip.

Even though the St. Elizabeth Ann Seton parishioner was traveling to many of these parishes for the first time, he said, “I was not a stranger. I was coming home every time. I felt peace and I felt at home because of Jesus Christ, present in the Eucharist.”

Reflecting on his 1,500-mile journey through the diocese, Spoolstra was impressed by the “rich diversity of the diocese, on every conceivable level” — ethnicity, culture, architecture, geography — “but all united in the Eucharist.”

## For I was hungry and you gave me food

**WICHITA FALLS** — Christians feeding the hungry dates back to the loaves and fishes. But two parishes in our diocese have noteworthy outreach to the hungry: one for its longevity, and another for its scale.

At Sacred Heart Parish in Wichita Falls, more than 100 people stop by the pastoral office to pick up a sack lunch on three days each week. The program, called the St. Andrew’s Lunch Sack Ministry, started in 2010.

“Since we’ve begun, we’ve given out over 45,000 lunch sacks,” said Sacred Heart Pastoral Assistant David Bindel.

Sacred Heart parishioners donate the food. Anyone may receive a meal; some are homeless.

“It is so important for a parish to have some

direct outreach to the local community,” said Parochial Administrator Father Jonathan Demma. “It allows us to work together in witness to our faith in God’s providence by providing for the needs of our neighbor.”

At St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish, it’s almost impossible to have too many cooks in the kitchen.

More than 200 volunteers from the Keller parish and the surrounding community make hundreds of sandwiches for the homeless.

Every month, the parish hosts the sandwich-making night which benefits the homeless clients of four different nonprofits. As one volunteer put it, “it’s community helping community.”

— *Jenara Kocks Burgess*





# TAKING THE

Catholic Charities Fort Worth celebrates 110 years of helping our community

# cake

By Susan Moses

**C**hristopher Plumlee has hosted several Know Poverty tours of Catholic Charities Fort Worth. The reaction is always the same.

“Every time, they shake their heads and say, ‘Holy cow!’ They are blown away by all the things we are doing,” said the chairperson of the nonprofit’s Board of Directors, who is pleased to show firsthand the scope of CCFW’s mission and the many ways volunteers can support it.

This spring, the organization celebrated 110 years of sustaining its mission: to serve those in need, to advocate for compassion and justice in the structures of society, and to call others of good will to do the same.

The charity began on St. Patrick’s Day of 1910, when a group of ladies approached Bishop Edward Dunne on the steps of St. Patrick Cathedral and requested permission to begin an “act of mercy.” In those early years, the women sold their handmade crafts at the State Fair of Texas, and then used those proceeds to give \$1 or \$2 to those who came to the church office requesting assistance.

That business model worked a century ago, but it has changed with the times. Michael Grace, the president of CCFW, noted that the organization has gone through many life cycles during its existence, responding to the needs of the community during each particular era.

For example, during the Great Depression, volunteers stepped forward and opened St. Teresa’s Home to provide shelter and education to an increasing number of homeless children.

Following the Vietnam War, CCFW began refugee services programs to help the great numbers of families fleeing Southeast Asia to seek safety in the U.S.

Today, according to Grace, the nonprofit has pivoted to be more proactive in its focus, seeking what can be done to solve the problem of poverty, and not just reacting to the symptoms of poverty.

Grace said, “The key differentiator is that a lot of nonprofits are crisis-centered. They are dealing with people in crisis mode — they are homeless and they are hungry. We are more holistic in our approach. We look at the long-term strategy

that can be deployed to break the cycle of these needs. We are more long-term case management driven.”

## REPLICABLE RESULTS

CCFW, which has earned nine consecutive four-star ratings from Charity Navigator, has several unique programs that set it apart from other Catholic Charities organizations across the country.

First and foremost, the efforts to end poverty are research driven.

The organization has partnered with the Wilson Sheehan Lab for Economic Opportunities research team at the University of Notre Dame to evaluate and research its poverty programs. Plus, CCFW uses an internal research team to plan and monitor its work to determine what is effective and how to most responsibly use the nonprofit’s resources.

The results? The value of research, both internal and external, is that the successes at CCFW are known and can be replicated for future local clients and at other Catholic Charities.

Studies have shown that

**Continued on Page 10**

## From Page 9

one of the most successful pilots has been Stay the Course, which partners economically disadvantaged community college students with a navigator who helps each student overcome his individual obstacles. Stay the Course students are four times more likely to graduate than those who don't receive the service.

"We've learned a lot [from research]. There are ways to solve poverty. However, it's very expensive, and it's very financial-capital and human-capital intensive," said Grace, who noted that a CCFW case manager might work with 30 clients, whereas a government case worker might manage ten times as many.

## A WIN-WIN-WIN SITUATION

Determining a community need and responding to it is a win for those in privation.

But CCFW has created four social enterprises that multiply the win.

For example, the Translation & Interpretation Network. Created about 20 years ago, it provides much needed language services to schools, employers, hospitals, and the judicial system, among other clients. First win: for the community who needs professional translation services, by phone, video, or in person.

Second win: the network employs immigrants and refugees to translate. Last year, about 400 individuals provided translation and interpretation services, in almost 200 languages, and they earned wages totaling about \$2 million. For many, Translation & Interpretation Network is their first job in the U.S. and a bridge to future full-time, permanent employment elsewhere.

And the third win puts it over the top. The network has clients around the nation, who find the services through its website, TINtranslation.com. The social enterprise has been profitable since its earliest days, and those profits go back into CCFW. In 2019, TIN netted \$370,000 that CCFW put back into its poverty solutions.

CCFW's other social enterprises are a dental clinic, immigration services, and a transportation program that provides



more than 80,000 rides each year.

Grace said that 20 to 25 percent of the nonprofit's revenue stream comes from its social enterprises, and he hopes to expand into other sectors in the future, which would provide more of the financial capital necessary to increase its reach in the community.

Like the research-based programs, social enterprises have proven to be replicable elsewhere. Meti Dibra, senior

director of Translation & Interpretation Network, said CCFW has assisted other Catholic Charities in establishing similar services. Alternately, some locations have chosen to provide translators in their respective regions, but they use CCFW for ongoing business support behind the scenes.

Dibra helped launch the service 20 years ago, and he has been delighted to see the enterprise flourish. "We were that





## People Power

- 1 Bridget Hennessy, Sarah Dunham, Trenton Ormsbee-Hale, and Dr. Jennifer Strand compose CCFW's Research and Evaluation team. Research and evidence-driven methods are a crucial component of the CCFW model of helping clients. (NTC/Rodger Mallison)
- 2 Darlene Irely, sales executive; Meti Dibra, director; and Deqo Hassan, interpreter and translator, are part of CCFW's Translation & Interpretation Network. (NTC/Ben Torres)
- 3 Ron Russel, left, and Jesse Carrizales are part of the CCFW Provide-A-Ride program, which provides more than 80,000 rides a year. (NTC/Ben Torres)

### URGENT NEEDS

Support CCFW as they continue to serve the community through the COVID-19 crisis. Donate at: [CatholicCharitiesFortWorth.org/donate](https://CatholicCharitiesFortWorth.org/donate)



little program that was looking outside of the box, and I'm so proud to be part of the process and the evolution of CCFW. So proud," he emphasized.

### FISHING LESSONS

Christopher Plumlee, who has served on CCFW's board for five years, compares the nonprofit's current strategy to a fishing lesson.

"We're really not trying to give someone a fish. For us, we're really trying to teach people how to fish" so that they can eat for a lifetime. "It's not, 'Here's a fish, good luck, and God bless,'" said Plumlee, the president of Elevate Strategy Group, a business management consulting company.

Treating the symptoms of poverty, which most nonprofits do, is good and necessary, Plumlee quickly pointed out. But he has observed that CCFW meets clients where they are and addresses their underlying issues, for the ultimate goal of lifting clients out of poverty.

"We have an audacious goal of lifting 10,000 families out of poverty permanently," he said. Specifically, CCFW wants its clients to have skills to secure a job that pays a living wage; to obtain permanent housing; to be able to care for the family for a lifetime; and to eliminate pernicious debt.

According to Plumlee, "If you come

through Catholic Charities' doors with a will, a focus, and a commitment to lifting your family out of poverty, we will give you the tools and resources to get there."

Tonita Burbage exemplifies that strategy. When she contacted CCFW, Burbage had a part-time job that didn't provide the cost of living for the single mother and her two daughters. She admitted she "felt worthless" and was nervous.

The team at CCFW started by helping her with her interview and resume skills and provided some gently used interview clothing.

Even after she acquired a full-time job, she met with her case worker twice a month. One by one, she checked off her goals. She paid off her car, then she accumulated enough savings to make a down payment on a new home.

"They built my confidence back up," she said. "They helped me stay focused, set goals, and meet them. Now I know I can do anything if I put my mind to it."

The Catholic Ladies Aid Society, as Catholic Charities Fort Worth was known in its beginning, could not have conceived the social enterprises or research-based programs that Catholic Charities employs to help lift families out of poverty. However, the heart, effort, and mission remain as the nonprofit looks forward to its next milestone. 🇺🇸



With a background in family and juvenile courts, Sandra Schrader-Farry works to protect children and vulnerable adults as safe environment director. (NTC/Juan Guajardo)

# an **ADVOCATE** for all

Sandra Schrader-Farry appointed  
Director of Safe Environment for Diocese of Fort Worth

**By Susan Moses**

**S**andra Schrader-Farry didn't want to modify her resume to accommodate a potential employer.

In addition to the law degree and work experience in family and circuit courts, her resume lists six positions or activities in her

parish, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton in Keller.

Schrader-Farry has found a role that unites her education, legal experience, and service to the Church. Effective February 20, she was named Director of Safe Environment for the Diocese of Fort Worth.

She explained, "To apply for a job in

the public sector, you would remove being a catechist. You would remove teaching Safe Environment if you wanted to be more marketable. I don't want to do that, because that's who I am. It's important to me.

"The ability to share my faith and practice my faith openly, and not to have to



compartmentalize it and pigeonhole it, is a blessing,” she continued.

An attorney with 18 years’ experience in children’s advocacy, Schrader-Farry oversees the diocesan Safe Environment Program, which includes the curriculum, training, and screening of all clergy, employees, and volunteers who minister and work in the diocese.

With training for preschoolers through adults, the Safe Environment program provides instruction in self-protection and in the protection of children and vulnerable adults. It includes educating all volunteers about the dynamics of abuse and abuse prevention strategies; evaluating the backgrounds of all employees and volunteers; and reviewing and signing the Code of Conduct and Standards of Behavior.

In 2018 Schrader-Farry began serving as a Safe Environment facilitator and educator at her parish. She estimates she has facilitated more than 30 Safe Environment sessions for the parish and its adjoining school.

She recalled, “It’s an important but difficult topic. I was lit on fire by doing those facilitations because I saw the impact the material and the training we were providing was having on our parishioners and our teachers and volunteers at school.”

Schrader-Farry was encouraged that even people who participated in previous iterations of Safe Environment training gained a deeper understanding from the new program implemented in September 2018. She described Protecting God’s Children® as “a great platform; it’s very well put together and very thoughtful.”

Schrader-Farry holds a law degree from Washburn University School of Law in Topeka, Kansas, and she earned a bachelor’s degree from Missouri State University in Springfield, Missouri.

She was an attorney for the Jackson County Family Court in Kansas City, Missouri, working with abuse and neglect cases. She also served as chief legal counsel for the juvenile department of the 37<sup>th</sup> Judicial

Circuit of Missouri, responsible for legal proceedings involving abuse, neglect, and delinquency.

She holds a certification in mediation and is a trained guardian ad litem. As a guardian ad litem, she acted as a representative for the best interest of minor children in adoption and child custody legal proceedings.

Schrader-Farry’s time adjudicating cases in family and juvenile courts provided experience ranging from delinquency to abuse and termination of parental rights. She said, “Hopefully, having a wide array of experiences gives me an opportunity to understand what comes through our doors, and how best to serve the faithful of our diocese, and how best to avoid those really horrific situations.”

Working in the courts gives Schrader-Farry a firsthand perspective on the value of being proactive in the prevention of abuse. She said, “That’s the epitome of what we do, to protect kids, and adults — all of the faithful of our diocese. To make sure we’re doing what we can to ensure safety. That everything is done to create a safe environment.”

Like the previous Director of Safe Environment, the late Richard Mathews, Schrader-Farry hopes the Safe Environment program will reach beyond the pews of the Diocese of Fort Worth.

“Our program offers insight into how to keep [children and vulnerable adults] safe, and what to look for, and what to do if you suspect that something is wrong.

“[Mathews’] vision was to share our program and the procedures we have in place with not just the faithful of our diocese but also with other people within our community. I would like to see that. The training we offer our people is helpful for anyone, in any walk of life.

“That’s the goal. To be able to share it with different agencies within our community, schools, other groups that could benefit from the training. Being educated about it is the key,” she said. 🇺🇸

## SAFE ENVIRONMENT

### To Report Misconduct:

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

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

### To Report Abuse or Suspected Abuse:

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

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

**For More Information:** To learn more about our abuse prevention policies and programs, please visit [fwdioc.org/safe-environment](http://fwdioc.org/safe-environment)





Bishop Michael Olson prays over Brett Metzler during the Laying on of Hands during the transitional diaconate ordination Mass on March 19.  
(NTC/Ben Torres)







# A GREAT EVENT OF hope

Six men are ordained transitional deacons

By Joan Kurkowski-Gillen

**T**homas Allan expected his son, Jason, to follow in his footsteps as an engineer. The duo worked together on projects around the house with the teenager becoming a skilled handyman.

“Then he came to me one day and said, ‘Dad, I’ve made a decision,’” the elder Allan said, remembering his son’s determination to study for the priesthood right after high school. “At first we were quite surprised but, after our own discernment, his mother and I were very supportive.”

Thomas and Nancy Allan were among the small group of parents and other close relatives who witnessed the ordination of their son and five other men to the Order of Deacon during a March 19 Mass celebrated by Bishop Michael Olson in St. Patrick Cathedral. Jason Allan, Thomas Jones, Samuel Maul, Brett Metzler, Joseph Moreno, and Linh Nguyen are members of the

largest class of transitional deacons in the 50-year history of the diocese.

Parishioners across the diocese participated in the Mass via livestream through the diocesan website, [fwdioc.org](http://fwdioc.org).

Ordination as a transitional deacon marks the final year of seminary formation for a man as he assumes the clerical state and publicly commits to promises of obedience, celibacy, and prayer. The first of three ranks of ordained ministry in the Church, deacons proclaim the Gospel, preach, assist at liturgies, and perform acts of charity. They may also baptize, witness the exchange of marriage vows, bring Viaticum to the dying, and officiate at funerals.

Prior to the coronavirus pandemic, the diocese planned to host the Ordination Mass at Vietnamese Martyrs Church, which can accommodate 2,000

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people. The venue was changed, and the congregation limited to 50 people, to comply with public health regulations.

“I thought the ordination ceremony was just beautiful,” Thomas Allan enthused. “In some ways, it was even more special with just a small group there.”

Although not the grand celebration originally envisioned, the significance of the solemn rite wasn’t lost, agreed Janna Maul, mother of seminarian Sam Maul.

“It was still very touching and moving,” she recalled, describing the liturgy. “Those young men are so ready to be of service. It gives me hope for the future of our Church.”

Welcoming worshippers assembled in the cathedral and those watching from home, Bishop Olson called the ordination of six new deacons in the diocese “a great event of hope in the midst of a pandemic.” Noting the liturgy coincided with the Solemnity of St. Joseph, he urged the seminarians to view the saint and intercessor as an example of integrity, selfless service, and pure love.

“As you leave the cathedral tonight as heralds of the Gospel and as ministers of charity, be sure what you have to offer is good and needed,” the bishop advised. “Be sure our Heavenly Father will sustain you as He sustained St. Joseph in his vocation.”

After Bishop Olson imposed his hands on each man to invoke the power of the Holy Spirit, the new deacons were vested in a stole and dalmatic — the outward sign of their new ministry. Presented with the Book of the Gospels, the bishop instructed them to “Believe what you read. Teach what you believe, and practice what you teach.”

### BRETT METZLER

As a Catholic teenager attending a non-denominational Christian high school, Brett Metzler admits there were times when he tackled difficult questions about his faith.

“I even did research on what the Church taught in different circumstances so I could talk with my friends about our different beliefs,” said the 27-year-old who grew up in Denton. “Overall, it was a good experience. The ethics of the school



Bishop Michael Olson places the Book of the Gospels in the hands of newly ordained Deacon Joseph Moreno, saying, “Receive the Gospel of Christ whose herald you have become. Believe what you read, teach what you believe, and practice what you teach.” (NTC/Ben Torres)

were good and that, combined with the struggle of defending the faith, produced good fruit.”

After graduating and spending his freshman year at Texas A&M University, Metzler began to think about entering the seminary.

“A retreat introduced me to silent prayer and that became a practice every day,” he recalled. “After a couple of months of keeping a Holy Hour, I experienced, what I felt, was a call from Jesus to become a priest.”

The son of Michael and Tammy Metzler spent four years at St. Joseph Seminary in Louisiana and is now in his third year at the Theological College at Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C. During a pastoral year at St. Francis of Assisi Parish in Grapevine, he made hospital and nursing home visits, attended staff meetings, and helped at different youth events.

“The transformation that happens in your spiritual life and your outlook on life is pretty incredible,” Metzler said. “Daily prayers, studying theology and philosophy, and the service seminarians do for the poor at different parishes has trained me to enjoy living my life for other people.”

As a new deacon, the former St. Mark parishioner is looking forward to preaching, preparing homilies, and baptizing.

“Bringing young babies into the family of God is awesome,” Metzler said.

### JOSEPH MORENO

You never know when a small act of kindness will make a difference in someone’s life.

Joseph Moreno was beginning his studies at Texas Tech University when a roommate invited him to attend Mass at a nearby Catholic church. Baptized but not raised in the faith, the college freshman found the suggestion intriguing.

“I was told I was Catholic, but I didn’t know what that meant,” Moreno remembered. “It was something I wanted to explore.”

His faith grew even more after marrying. Sarah Moreno wasn’t Catholic, “but she had a great faith and it ignited mine,” he admitted. “It spurred me to get more active in my church.”

The St. Matthew parishioner became a catechist, lector, and Eucharistic minister and started serving at Mass as an acolyte in 2010. He discerned a call to become a permanent deacon but that changed after





The six deacon candidates lie prostrate down the center aisle of St. Patrick Cathedral during the Litany of the Saints. (NTC/Ben Torres)

———— The largest class of transitional deacons in the Diocese of Fort Worth ————



Jason Allan



Thomas Jones



Samuel Maul



Brett Metzler



Joseph Moreno



Linh Nguyen

his wife of 20 years died from cancer.

“After she passed away, God came calling a second time,” explained Moreno, who sought guidance from the diocesan vocation director Father Jonathan Wallis.

Entering the seminary meant leaving a lucrative job as an IT security specialist and having a heart-to-heart conversation with his daughter, Kathryn, who was a college student.

“It was important for me that she was

okay with my decision,” he said. “She thought about it and had three conditions: I’m daddy not father; I’m not going to officiate her wedding because I promised to walk her down the aisle; and I’m never going to hear her confession.”

Moreno believes his years as a husband and father will benefit his ministry. People often turn to their parish priest for marriage and family advice.

“I’ll help from experience because I’ve lived it,” he added.

**LINH NGUYEN**

Linh Nguyen’s call to the priesthood began with a childhood observation.

“I was only five or six years old when I noticed how my pastor interacted with the people in the parish,” he remembered. “I knew, in my heart, I wanted to be like him.”

Growing up in the predominantly Vietnamese Christ the King Parish, Nguyen

**Continued on Page 18**





The six candidates stand before Bishop Michael Olson during their transitional diaconate ordination Mass at St. Patrick Cathedral March 19. (NTC/Ben Torres)

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saw how Father Khanh Hillary, CRM, not only served the people sacramentally but was part of their everyday lives.

“He would show up at family events like birthday parties and would journey with the families,” the 25-year-old recalled. “I liked the idea of having a spiritual father who would walk with me through life.”

Although he admired members of the Congregation of the Mother of the Redeemer who worked at his parish, Nguyen decided to become a diocesan priest rather than join a religious order. The decision stemmed from a desire to forge long-term spiritual relationships with people.

“I wanted to continue to have a fatherly relationship with people and not have to move to different places around the country and the world every four years,” he said, referring to the missionary charism of some religious communities. “Even if I move between different deaneries in the diocese, I can still spiritually accompany the people I’ve ministered to in the past and journey with them for the rest of their lives.”

The son of Tuyet and Viet Nguyen, the new deacon attends Assumption Seminary in San Antonio where he is completing a master’s degree in divinity.

“It’s such a privilege and a tremendous blessing that God has bestowed on our

family,” his parents said. “We are blessed to be able to offer our son in a particular way to His mission and to do His work for the Church.”

### JASON ALLAN

Active in the youth group at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish and a frequent altar server at Mass, Jason Allan said his desire to become a priest grew stronger as a teenager.

“During a retreat, I met Father Kyle [Walterscheid] who was vocation director at the time and he really encouraged me,” remembered the 26-year-old. “All of that influenced my decision.”

Parish priests were another source of inspiration.

“I saw the witness of Monsignor [James] Hart, Father Dennis Smith, and Father Jim McGee, who were at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton when I was in high school,” Allan continued. “Seeing them celebrate the sacraments and serve people was a great example to me.”

After earning a Bachelor of Arts degree in Philosophy and Theological Studies from St. Joseph Seminary College in Covington, Louisiana, Allan continued his formation at the Theological College of the Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C. His pastoral year was spent at St. Mark Parish in Denton where he served at weekend Masses, assisted with religious

education programs, and brought Communion to sick hospital patients.

A week after his ordination, the new deacon was commissioned an ensign in the U.S. Navy chaplain corps under the auspices of the Archdiocese for the Military Services, USA. After ordination to the priesthood and three years of pastoral service in the Diocese of Fort Worth, Allan will go on active military duty.

Continuing Christ’s ministry on earth is particularly crucial now, Allan said, adding, “It’s especially important for the Church to be present to people at this time of crisis.”

### SAM MAUL

Sam Maul was just 15 years old when a conversation at a summer youth camp sparked thoughts of a religious vocation. A Holy Cross priest he met at the University of Notre Dame asked the L.D. Bell High School student whether he ever thought of becoming a priest. When Maul answered “no,” Father Dan Parrish responded, “Well, you should.”

“Those three words changed my life because it oriented me toward a life of service,” said the 26-year-old from St. Michael Parish. “It made me think about what God is calling me to do. How can I be of service in this world?”

Maul contacted the diocesan vocation office while still in high school and began attending monthly discernment meetings hosted by Father Kyle Walterscheid, former vocation director. The son of Janna and Rick Maul entered the seminary following graduation in 2012.

As part of his formation, the seminarian earned a bachelor’s degree in philosophy from the Theological College at the Catholic University of America and is continuing his studies at Assumption Seminary where he is working toward a master’s degree in divinity, Master of Arts in theology, and bachelor’s degree in





Jason Allan prays while prostrate during the Litany of the Saints. (NTC/Ben Torres)

VIEW THE PHOTOS

View the photo gallery of the March 19 ordination Mass. Visit [NorthTexasCatholic.org](http://NorthTexasCatholic.org) and click on the 'Photo Gallery' tab.



sacred theology.

For this pastoral year, Maul was assigned to St. Philip the Apostle Parish in Lewisville where he had the opportunity to work in youth ministry, serve at Mass, and become part of the RCIA team.

As a deacon, Maul looks forward to new responsibilities assigned by the bishop.

“The nature of ordained ministry is to be of service in all times. That is especially true in diaconate ministry,” he stressed. “We’re prepared to do anything necessary for the sake of the Gospel.”

**THOMAS JONES**

When Thomas Jones talks about his vocation story, the 37-year-old’s thoughts return to his service in the Air Force and

deployment to Iraq in the wake of the 9/11 attacks. The former military computer specialist remembers being thrust into an alien environment filled with chaos, barbed wire, and hearing the Muslim call to prayer.

Psychologically, “you couldn’t be further from home,” he observed.

Respite and peace came from the presence of chaplains.

“We would go into a plain conference room, they set up their Mass kit, and it was home,” Jones explained. “It really struck me, and I wanted to bring that to other people. I wanted to give people that refuge.”

After eight years in the Air Force, the St. Catherine of Siena parishioner

began studying for the priesthood in 2010. He earned a Bachelor of Arts in Philosophy from the University of Dallas and continued his formation at Assumption Seminary and Oblate School of Theology.

His pastoral year was spent at St. Philip the Apostle in Lewisville under the guidance of Father Ray McDaniel.

“He is a man of steadfast devotion and clear insight,” said Jones, crediting the pastor for helping him cope with the death of his father, Orion Jones. His mother, Kathy, lives in Florida. “Fr. McDaniel has been crucial in my vocation since my first summer as a seminarian right after my dad went home to heaven.”

Grace comes from God, and as a deacon, he hopes to provide people with the grace that comes from the sacraments.

“Christ doesn’t just call us to Himself. He calls us to the altar but then He sends us forth from there,” Jones reasoned. “He sends us into the world to serve. That’s what we’re here for — to give our lives to the common good.” 🇺🇸

# ADVANCE notice

Former Marine Clint Weber  
named executive director of the  
Advancement Foundation



By Matthew Smith

On March 16, just as fears of COVID-19 kicked into high gear, Clint Weber started his new role as executive director of the Advancement Foundation for the Diocese of Fort Worth. Unfortunate timing, some might say, but not Weber.

"There's no perfect time to ever start anything," Weber said. "But, to the extent that we are in extraordinary times, I'm just honored and privileged to be here. If I could've picked a different time to come into the job, I can honestly say I wouldn't."

Challenging times, Weber said, both make life more interesting and amplify the Advancement Foundation's necessity.

Founded in 2009 as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, the Advancement Foundation operates as a separate entity yet integral partner with the diocese. The Foundation oversees the fundraising, stewardship, and asset protection needs of the diocese and serves to educate and motivate parishioners on the importance of supporting their diocese. Through those guidelines, the Foundation helps support diocesan parishes, schools, ministries, and other needs.

Weber, 48, earned a history degree from Texas A&M University and an MBA from Texas Christian University, after which he worked as an analyst at Corbett Capital and later as president and CEO of Gruene Anolyte, a Fort Worth biotech firm.

"I don't think there's much difference," Weber said of the corporate compared to the nonprofit world. "The only thing different about a nonprofit are several of the tax and business rules. For me, both are about mission. If you make widgets, the mission is making widgets. Here the mission is Jesus Christ, His Church, and supporting that, which we do by putting a plan together to raise money, then being very transparent about where that money goes."

"That happens through teamwork and networking, working with others who are passionate about the mission," he continued. "Then those resources are funneled back into the diocese as needed in accordance with Bishop [Michael] Olson's direction, plan, and vision."

Weber lived all over the world growing up (his father was a Marine), but always considered Texas home. Weber describes himself as a product of Catholic schooling.

"That's where I believe I really, in addition to my parents, learned my values that helped me become who I am," Weber said.

The military played a role as well.

"I love airplanes and wanted to fly the best, the fastest ones," Weber said of his decision to follow his father's footsteps into the Marines.

Weber added that although his grandfather died in the early 1970s, stories of his career as a Naval aviator during World War II loomed large throughout his childhood, as did the fact that his grandparents were initial parishioners of an Abilene Catholic church in the mid-1950s.

"So why leave private equity, private enterprise, to come work for the Church?" Weber said. "Well, you do that because you're inspired, you want to make a difference."

The separation between the Foundation and the diocese allows, among other things, both to focus on what they're best at doing, Weber said.

"The operation of the diocese, all those things that have to be done on a daily basis to support the Kingdom of God here on earth, in and of itself is extremely difficult,"





NTC/Juan Guajardo

Weber said. “You’re talking 90 some parishes, 26,000 something square miles. So, it’s not unusual. You see this in private enterprise all the time, to create two organizations. One that oversees daily operation of the main organization and the other that functions around the idea of stewardship and management of the resources. Because those are two whole different skill sets. And if you have those independent of each other, they can focus on their core activities — the idea being you should see overall performance improvement in both.”

“This could potentially get me fired,” Weber said with a laugh when asked who he roots for if TCU plays A&M. “I think Fort Worth is the finest big city in Texas. That’s why I’m here and why I brought my family here. But I will never root against the Texas Aggies.”

With COVID-19 precautions precluding congregations from attending Mass throughout the diocese, Foundation members have stressed the importance of continued diocesan support via online, mail, or phone donations. With more individuals out of work and no collection baskets circulating, needs have increased urgently.

“One blessing I will say is that this has given us the opportunity to really brainstorm and think strategically about a lot of things,” Weber said.

Weber said that, as members of the Body of Christ, we’re all called to do our part.

“I’m a cradle Catholic and grew up thinking it wasn’t good enough just to go to Mass Sunday,” Weber said. “I think we as Catholics, when we’re called, need to answer because we make the Church better that way.” 🇺🇸

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Father Vijaya Mareedu, SAC,  
celebrates Mass at St. Rita  
Parish in Ranger. (NTC/Juan  
Guajardo)







# ALL TOGETHER

Active in the diocese for more than 60 years, Pallottine priests invite laity into worship and service

By Jerry Circelli

Symbolically, you might say that Society of Catholic Apostolate priests, better known as Pallottines, are part of the very DNA of Christ's Church in the Diocese of Fort Worth. Sixteen years before the Diocese of Fort Worth was established, the Pallottines were hard at work ministering at parishes, establishing missions, and bringing the faithful back into the fold of the Catholic Church in North Texas.

St. Stephen Parish in Weatherford was among the first in the present Diocese of Fort Worth to benefit from the presence of the Pallottines, when in 1953 two Irish Pallottine priests, Father James Maher and Father Alphonsus Hayes, were assigned by Diocese of Dallas-Fort Worth Bishop Joseph Lynch to take over pastoral duties. The arrangement speaks volumes of the esteem in which Bishop Lynch held the religious group. The parish maintained a special place in the bishop's heart, as he had actually built St. Stephen's red brick church in 1902 when he was assigned there as a young priest. He knew the

Pallottines would serve parishioners well.

Historical accounts in a St. Stephen booklet entitled "The First Hundred Years" bear out the fact that the Pallottines' mission for engaging the laity was effective. Author Billie Greenlee wrote nearly 40 years ago, "No sooner had Father Maher and Father Hayes reached Weatherford than things began to happen. Church attendance increased immediately."

The success of the Pallottines in building the Church in the Weatherford area prompted Diocese of Dallas-Fort Worth Bishop Thomas Gorman to seek the help of the religious society to staff churches and develop faith communities during the years he shepherded the North Texas flock of Catholics from 1954 to 1969. That tradition continued as the Diocese of Fort Worth was created in 1969, with Pallottines continuing to serve at several area parishes and in special diocesan ministries today.

At St. Stephen, the long line of

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Pallottine priests serving the parish has remained unbroken for 67 years. Current SAC priests include Father Michael O’Sullivan and Father Emmet O’Hara. Like their predecessors at the parish, Pastor O’Sullivan and Parochial Vicar O’Hara are with the Mother of Divine Love Province in Dublin, Ireland.

“The older Pallottines left a good legacy for us,” Fr. O’Sullivan said. “We’re standing on the shoulders of giants.”

The priest continued, “Our mission has always been to build up the lay apostolate and give people confidence to know that they all have a vocation.”

Fr. O’Hara shares that Pallottine charism to engage the laity. “We give people the confidence to live out their own vocation,” the parochial vicar said. “They have the gifts and those gifts really just need to be brought out.”

No matter where Pallottines call home, they all share the mission to make the faithful an integral part of the Church. SAC missionary priests from the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary Province in India began arriving in the Diocese of Fort Worth 15 years ago. Among the first to serve the diocese was Father Balaji Boyalla, who has been taking on pastoral care of

area parishes since 2008.

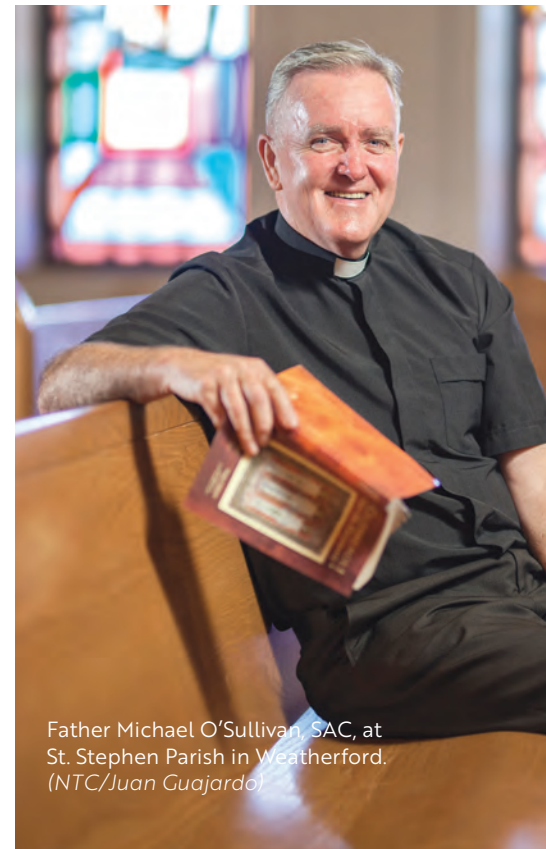
“Whether we are Irish, African, Indian, European, or American, we all have one charism,” Fr. Boyalla said of the society founded by St. Vincent Pallotti. “We have one saint, one charism, and one goal.”

Now pastor of St. Michael Parish in Bedford, Fr. Boyalla said he joined the Pallottine family of apostolates because he wanted to be a missionary and an apostle for Christ. “Even the Apostles were missionaries,” Fr. Boyalla said, explaining that St. Thomas, one of the 12 Apostles of Christ, traveled to India and brought Christianity there.

As a Pallottine, Fr. Boyalla and his community follow St. Vincent Pallotti’s mission “to promote the Gospel of Jesus Christ, to call the clergy, religious, and laity to work as partners, to renew the faith, and rekindle love.”

Fr. Boyalla explained that the number of Pallottines in India is growing, requiring a restructuring of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary Province. From this province, Our Lady of Good Health Province and Gloria Dei Region, both in India, were formed. Seven Indian priests from the two provinces and the region are serving in the Diocese of Fort Worth. Fr. Boyalla is now associated with the Gloria Dei Region.

Father Balaji Boyalla, SAC, speaks to first communicants at St. Michael Parish in Bedford. (NTC/Juan Guajardo)



Father Michael O’Sullivan, SAC, at St. Stephen Parish in Weatherford. (NTC/Juan Guajardo)





Father Prakash Dias, SAC, elevates the Body of Christ at Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish in Breckenridge. (NTC/Juan Guajardo)



Also among the Pallottines from India is Father Mariya James Susai Manickam, from Our Lady of Good Health Province in India. He now serves as parochial vicar at St. Michael. Fr. Manickam said that St. Vincent Pallotti's teachings have greatly enriched the Church.

"Without the involvement of all the people," Fr. Manickam said, "the Church is only clergy.

"St. Vincent Pallotti taught us that this is a ministry of Christ," Fr. Manickam continued, "and each person has an equal responsibility. He did not make a distinction. He meant everybody — priests, religious, lay people — all joined together."

Father Prakash Dias, pastor of Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish in Breckenridge and Jesus of Nazareth Parish in Albany, is a Pallottine who takes a practical approach to involving laity in building the

Church. He is from the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary Province in India.

"I try to recognize people's talents and put them to good use," Fr. Dias said. "Recently, at Sunday Mass, I asked people with different skills to please sign up and be of service to the Church — whether it be as a carpenter, a welder, a plumber, a computer technician, a teacher, or with whatever special talents they have.

"I know we have parishioners who can contribute in many ways to help the Church and our community.

"This was precisely the desire of our founder, St. Vincent Pallotti, to have a participatory Church," said Fr. Dias.

Father Vijaya Raju Mareedu, a Pallottine priest from the Gloria Dei Region in India, covers a lot of territory

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# PALLOTTINE PRIESTS

## SERVING THE DIOCESE OF

# FORT WORTH



## Priests & Parishes

### REV. BRIJIL LAWRENCE, SAC, Pastor

Also: Director of the Propagation of the Faith and Chairman of the Diocesan Mission Council (Our Lady of Good Health Province, India)

- **Abbott**  
Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish
- **Penelope**  
Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary Parish

### REV. PRAKASH DIAS, SAC, Pastor

(Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary Province, India)

- **Albany**  
Jesus of Nazareth Parish
- **Breckenridge**  
Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish

### REV. MATTHEW SANKA, SAC, Pastor

(Mother of Divine Love Province, Ireland)

### REV. JAMES AMASI, SAC, Parochial Vicar

(Mother of Divine Love Province, Ireland)

- **Stephenville**  
St. Brendan Parish
- **Dublin**  
St. Mary Parish
- **Comanche**  
Sacred Heart Parish
- **De Leon**  
Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish

### REV. REEHAN SOOSAI ANTONY, SAC, Pastor

(Our Lady of Good Health Province, India)

- **Bridgeport**  
St. John the Baptizer Parish
- **Decatur**  
Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary Parish
- **Jacksboro**  
St. Mary Parish

### REV. BALAJI BOYALLA, SAC, Pastor

(Gloria Dei Region, India)

### REV. MARIYA JAMES SUSAI MANICKAM, SAC, Parochial Vicar

(Our Lady of Good Health Province, India)

- **Bedford**  
St. Michael Parish

### REV. VIJAYA RAJU MAREEDU, SAC, Parochial Administrator

(Gloria Dei Region, India)

- **Ranger**  
St. Rita Parish
- **Cisco**  
Our Lady of the Holy Rosary Parish
- **Eastland**  
St. Francis Xavier Parish
- **Strawn**  
St. John Parish

### VERY REV. MICHAEL O'SULLIVAN, SAC, Pastor

Also: Dean of Southwest Deanery, Diocese of Fort Worth (Mother of Divine Love Province, Ireland)

### REV. EMMET O' HARA, SAC, Parochial Vicar

(Mother of Divine Love Province, Ireland)

- **Weatherford**  
St. Stephen Parish

### REV. THOMAS D'SOUZA, SAC, Pastor

(Mother of Divine Love Province, Ireland)

- **Mineral Wells**  
Our Lady of Lourdes Parish
- **Graford**  
St. Francis of Assisi Parish



From Page 25

for the Diocese of Fort Worth. He serves as parochial administrator of St. Rita Parish in Ranger, Our Lady of the Holy Rosary Parish in Cisco, St. Francis Xavier Parish in Eastland, and St. John Parish in Strawn.

Ordained in 2015 and arriving in the United States in 2018, the young priest reflects the optimism and charisma of St. Vincent Pallotti and those who follow the society he established 185 years ago.

“I am happy to be here,” Fr. Mareedu said, adding that in harmony with his parishioners, “I look forward to many years of growing closer to Christ, together.”

The young Pallottine also made a point, like many of the other priests of his order who spoke with the *North Texas Catholic*, to bring a painting named “Mary Queen of Apostles” into focus.

St. Vincent Pallotti commissioned the painting, which shows Mary together with two other women and the Apostles as the Holy Spirit descends upon them.

*Acts 1:13-14* describes it this way:

“When they entered the city they went to the upper room where they were staying, Peter and John and James and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James son of Alphaeus, Simon the Zealot, and Judas son of James. All these devoted themselves with one accord to prayer, together with some women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brothers.”

For Fr. Mareedu and his fellow Pallottines, the image and the Scripture reinforce their founder’s mission to emphasize that the Church comprises all people — clergy and laity alike.

“These timid men and women who came together in the upper room went out with Spirit-filled hearts to spread the message of Christ,” Fr. Mareedu said. “That is the same Holy Spirit that should touch each one of us to be led by Him and Him alone.” 🇺🇸

## Who is St. Vincent Pallotti?

Visionary priest called laity, clergy, and religious groups to unify and become Apostles for Christ

Small in stature but big in heart, St. Vincent Pallotti — born in 1795 in Rome, Italy — was a Catholic well ahead of his time.

It has been written that St. Vincent wandered from his mother’s side at the age of four to kneel before a statue of the Blessed Virgin Mary and prayed, “Dear Mother, make me a good boy.” Not surprisingly, he was known during his youth as “*Il Santerello*” — the Little Saint.

What distinguishes St. Vincent as a prophetic Catholic visionary, however, is the fact that in 1835 he sought to revitalize the Church through greater involvement of the laity.

If that sounds similar to the Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity that resulted from the Second Vatican Council, which convened from 1962 to 1965, there is good reason. The Catholic Church was, in fact, bringing the vision of St. Vincent Pallotti into focus after 130 years.

During a homily in 1986 in Rome’s San Salvatore in Onda Church, St. John Paul II said, “Continue to increase your commitment so that which Vincent Pallotti prophetically announced, and which the Second Vatican Council authoritatively confirmed, may become a happy reality, and that all Christians become authentic apostles of Christ in the Church

and in the world!”

St. Vincent’s lasting legacy, in addition to his engagement of the laity and tireless service to the poor, has been the formation of the Union of Catholic Apostolate. That union of the faithful contin-

ues to this day, comprising Pallottine fathers and brothers, Pallottine sisters, Pallottine missionary sisters, and laity groups.

The community of priests and brothers is known in

Latin as *Societas Apostolatus Catholici* (SAC), the Society of the Catholic Apostolate.

The society, with its general administration based in Rome, has 2,300 members serving in 53 countries. Collectively, the religious society of men carry out the mission of their founder by ministering in 40 different languages.

All are faithful to the mission of their founder, St. Vincent Pallotti, “to revive faith and re-ignite charity of the entire People of God and to spread the faith and charity in the world, so that soon there may be but one flock and one shepherd.”

SAC members are also bound by promises of chastity, poverty, obedience, perseverance, sharing of resources, and a spirit of service.

The motto of the society is adopted from the words of St. Paul in *2 Corinthians 5:14*.

“The love of Christ urges us on.” 🇺🇸



# SOLITUDE AND

How the local Church united to respond generously in the time of coronavirus

# solitude

By Mary Lou Seewoester

**P**ews have been empty at every Mass in every parish in the Diocese of Fort Worth since March 19 — evidence that the local Church in North Texas has not been immune from effects of the COVID-19 virus.

While the Church felt the impact of social distancing and stay-at-home orders, it flexed and adapted a multitude of times in a myriad of ways.

## GOOD AND PRUDENT SHEPHERDS

Parish priests celebrated Sunday and daily Masses, assisted usually by one deacon and/or acolyte, but without a congregation (*sine populo*) for the past several weeks. Though celebrated without a population, priests celebrated Sunday Masses *pro populo*, offering Mass on behalf of their parish communities aching to return to the sacraments.

In the early phases of the pandemic, for a week, parishes adapted so the faithful

could still receive holy Communion from Eucharistic ministers outside the church after Masses. Parishioners waited in their cars until an usher directed them to approach the church, one at a time, to receive the Eucharist in the hand only.

And for a week, Confessions behind the screen and Eucharistic Adoration also continued.

But on March 24, a stay-at-home order from city and county officials required Bishop Michael Olson to suspend Confession, Eucharistic Adoration, and public reception of holy Communion. Parishes adapted again by moving Masses to online venues.

On March 22, the diocese began live-streaming the 11 a.m. Sunday Mass celebrated by Bishop Olson at St. Patrick Cathedral on the diocesan website, [fwdioc.org](http://fwdioc.org). And the bishop also began using Facebook Live to

Continued on Page 30



# idarity



Bianca Guajardo reads a Bible story to her daughters on Easter Sunday. With more time at home due to the COVID-19 pandemic, parents across the Diocese of Fort Worth took the opportunity to more intentionally catechize their children.  
*(NTC photo illustration/Juan Guajardo)*

## ON THE WEB



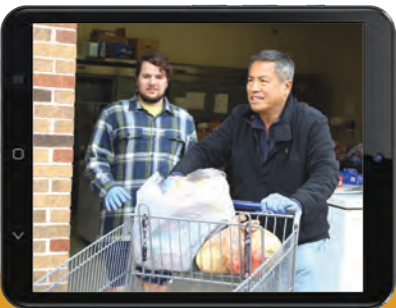
◀ Check out how students at University of Texas at Arlington pray, worship together during the pandemic

Visit [bit.ly/virtualUCC](https://bit.ly/virtualUCC) for the full version of this story by reporter Mary Lou Seewoester.



◀ Local Catholic medical personnel continue helping the sick during coronavirus crisis

Visit [bit.ly/COVIDhealthcare](https://bit.ly/COVIDhealthcare) for the full version of this story by reporter Joan Kurkowski-Gillen.



◀ Parishes and ministries remain busy serving their neighbors — from a safe social distance

Visit [bit.ly/pandemicoutreach](https://bit.ly/pandemicoutreach) for the full version of this story by reporter Susan McFarland.

livestream daily Masses in the cathedral.

The prelate also encouraged parishes to livestream Masses wherever possible and to pray the Act of Spiritual Communion aloud during Mass.

“I ask you in all charity: if Mass can be livestreamed for the faithful, please arrange to schedule this even for the celebration of daily Mass,” Bishop Olson stated in a March 28 letter to his priests. “Frequent celebration of the Eucharist is at the very core of the nature of the Church and of the acute sacramental longing presently experienced by a great many of the Christian faithful.”

By the following weekend, nearly all parishes with the technological capability were livestreaming Sunday Mass.

Holy Week saw pastors utilizing platforms such as YouTube, Facebook, and their church websites to celebrate the Triduum, with laity watching the liturgies virtually.

With churches restricted to allowing gatherings of only 10 people or fewer, the Chrism Mass was tentatively transferred to May 28, so priests and faithful could attend. The celebration of sacraments of initiation typically associated with the Easter Vigil was delayed to an extended Vigil of Pentecost on May 30.

### CATHOLICISM IN THE AGE OF CORONAVIRUS

As early as Jan. 10, the diocese had begun adapting to flu season by offering dispensation from the Sunday obligation for anyone who was sick or susceptible to illness (those over the age of 60 or with a chronic or underlying health issue), or for those who care for vulnerable persons. Bishop Olson suspended offering the Precious Blood during Communion and shaking or holding hands during Mass.

As the COVID-19 threat developed, with recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and local public health agencies changing almost daily based on the spread and severity of the virus, the local Church responded in kind to protect the faithful, while finding new ways to meet their spiritual, physical, and educational needs.

“Our spiritual needs, like our other essential needs, do not abate during a time of crisis. In fact, our spiritual needs become even more prominent,” Bishop Olson said in an earlier pastoral letter.

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**ADAPTING TO THE TIMES:** Following CDC and local health agency recommendations in early March, parishes began limiting Masses to 250 people.

St. Maria Goretti parishioner Alex Benavides (left) attended one of those crowd-restricted Masses at the SMG cafetorium March 14. (NTC/Ben Torres)

By the following weekend, a rapid spike in COVID-19 cases led the diocese to celebrate Masses without congregations.

Bishop Michael Olson (above) celebrated the 11 a.m. Sunday Mass on March 22 in an empty St. Patrick Cathedral. (NTC/Juan Guajardo)



# From physical to virtual

Through creativity and determination, local Catholics continue to evangelize, teach, and serve



## Evangelization, Catechesis, Safe Environment go virtual

Reflecting on the spread of coronavirus in North Texas and the impact it has had on catechesis, Marlon De La Torre said, “We went from a physical body to a virtual body.”

De La Torre, department director of Evangelization and Catechesis for the Diocese of Fort Worth, said the ministries of the diocese responded quickly and proactively to the ever-changing coronavirus situation.

Training and formation classes are being held remotely and religious education directors are sending parents online resources for their children.

Departments such as the diaconate formation program, marriage preparation, the St. Francis de Sales catechist formation program, and the St. Junipero Serra Institute are using interactive conferencing platforms such as Zoom, Skype, and Microsoft Teams to reach the faithful. Youth, Young Adult, and Campus ministries host virtual Bible studies, Rosaries, and even faith movie nights.

On March 20, the Safe Environment Office also began remote training sessions, said Director of Safe Environment Sandra Schrader-Farry. 🇺🇸

Visit [bit.ly/virtualcatechesis](https://bit.ly/virtualcatechesis) for the full version of this story by reporter Kiki Hayden.

## Catholic schools shift online during pandemic

Despite the empty classrooms and vacant playing fields in schools across the Diocese of Fort Worth, students are busy learning, developing skills, and finding new ways to connect with each other and with God during the global COVID-19 pandemic.

Most schools were on spring break the week of March 9 when the spread of the coronavirus prompted leaders to shut down schools.

While the building closures took many by surprise and the exact duration remains unknown, educators in the diocese got lessons up and running online as students were set to return to class the week of March 16.

“We’re working to provide excellence in education through distance learning,” said Melissa Kasmeier, assistant superintendent of Catholic schools and interim principal at St. Andrew Catholic School.

She added that teachers were using a variety of platforms — including Google Classroom, Zoom, Microsoft Teams, and Seesaw, along with emails and messaging apps — to deliver curriculum, engage students, and communicate with parents. 🇺🇸

Visit [bit.ly/virtualschooling](https://bit.ly/virtualschooling) for the full version of this story by reporter Sandra Englland.





## CAPTIONS

The Diocese of Fort Worth and parishes are conducting formation, Rosaries, and sacramental preparation classes by video conference. (NTC/Juan Guajardo)

Teacher Anna Engelland signs off a lesson with her Nolan Catholic High School students with a Nolan Viking "V" and an "Esto Dux." (NTC/Anna Engelland)

Merryl Carson takes items from a car as Catholic Charities Fort Worth collects donations of packaged foods, diapers, and disinfecting wipes for distribution to people affected by the COVID-19 pandemic April 4. (NTC/Rodger Mallison)

## Catholic Charities Fort Worth increases community outreach

Even as Catholic Charities Fort Worth faces an unprecedented level of need, the increased opportunities to be of service provide a sense of sustained motivation and determination, said the nonprofit's CEO, Michael Grace.

"Bishop [Michael] Olson, our executive committee members, our board members, and our staff members are all extremely supportive and collaborative," Grace said. "Our community partners, the parishes, and churches who work with us, everyone is on board 100 percent and ready to tackle the challenges that we are facing."

The coronavirus pandemic saw the agency step up to help college students in its Rural Vocations College Completion Program. In the 28 counties of the diocese, CCFW client navigators helped 300 students address housing and food insecurity, lack of internet access, and loss of childcare.

The CCFW Transportation Program also serves in a "unique" but "much-needed

way" according to program director Matt Jacobs. Its fleet of 40 vehicles began providing door-to-door meals, boxed goods, and baby supply deliveries to clients in need, as well as area food pantries and churches. An April 4 food drive resulted in more than 120 full bags of groceries that, after being safely handled and cleaned, have been given to several food pantries within Tarrant County.

Finally, although CCFW staffers at the Fort Worth, Colleyville, and Arlington offices are unable to sit with clients as usual to help them with filling out documentation, team members continue taking calls and helping people in need.

"Our staff members are working safely from home, helping callers to access emergency rental and utilities assistance," CCFW Director of Parish Relations Marc Dubal said. 🇹🇽

Visit [bit.ly/CCFWcovid](https://bit.ly/CCFWcovid) for the full version of this story by the NTC.



### From Page 30

Catholic schools switched to online learning, while school buildings were sanitized and deep cleaned. Parishes temporarily suspended formation classes and all group ministry events or moved them to online platforms.

By March 13, local health agencies had limited the size of any crowd to 250. Rather than suspend public celebration of Masses altogether — as other dioceses had done — on March 14 and 15, priests, deacons, parish staff, and laity worked tirelessly to implement Bishop Olson’s directive to

continue weekend Masses, but allowing no more than 250 persons in the church.

They also helped sanitize the church after each Mass and removed the hymnals and worship aids. Once the number of persons reached 250, the overflow was directed to another location on parish campuses for an additional Mass or a Sunday Celebration in the Absence of a Priest.

At St. Patrick, volunteers roped off every other pew to keep them vacant, then placed signs on the open pews indicating how many people could occupy that pew.

Deacon Walter Stone, chief of staff at St. Patrick, explained that all but two of the church doors were locked, and ushers counted the faithful as they entered. Because several priests serve at St. Patrick, additional Masses began in the parish hall soon after the regularly scheduled Mass.

Throughout the diocese, a similar process allowed parishioners to attend Mass while maintaining a safe social distance.

“We did this because we wanted to give the faithful as much of an opportunity as we can to worship while still complying with the civil directives,” Dcn. Stone said.





**MODERN CHURCH:** Father Jack McKone (*left*) raises the crucifix during the Veneration of the Cross on Good Friday at an empty St. John the Apostle Church in North Richland Hills. The Good Friday liturgy was livestreamed to the parish website. (NTC/Juan Guajardo)

Bishop Michael Olson (*below*) celebrates daily Mass during Lent. He has all daily Masses livestreamed via Facebook Live, where hundreds of faithful are able to watch. (NTC/Juan Guajardo)



By the March 24 stay-at-home order, pastors and parish staff already had begun searching for ways to continue religious formation and to communicate with the faithful via Zoom, YouTube, Flocknote, or other online platforms.

Tim Brennan, director of religious education at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish in Keller, used Zoom for meetings, classes, and group prayer with both students and adults.

Brennan said St. Elizabeth Ann Seton has 37 adults and children preparing for Baptism this year, so he continued the Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults classes online. He sent out class materials and links to videos, then gathered the class virtually for discussion.

“Our hope is to find a way to prepare everyone using whatever resources we can find online,” he

said. So, when the stay-at-home order is lifted, “we can get everyone to the baptismal font and to Confirmation and First Communion.”

Ricky Shoop, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton youth minister, used Zoom and YouTube to continue meeting with middle and high school groups on Sunday evenings. He also meets virtually with many of his students at 3 p.m. daily to pray the Divine Mercy Chaplet.

Such gatherings are held to strict Safe Environment standards: two Safe Environment certified chaperones must be present, and parents are invited to participate.

All families of K-sixth grade students received materials to continue their children’s faith formation at home. Some volunteer catechists

### JOIN BISHOP OLSON FOR DAILY MASS

Join Bishop Olson as he celebrates daily Mass on Facebook Live. Visit [Facebook.com/fortworthdiocese](https://www.facebook.com/fortworthdiocese) to watch the 12 p.m. Mass, Monday through Friday.



Continued on Page 37





# Homegrown Faith

**AT HOME:** Angela said during the stay-at-home order, “I have had my eyes opened to how Mary put our Savior truly above all things and what an example this is for all Christians. To prioritize prayer as an individual, couple, and family is such a small but vital way we can deny our wants and give the gift of time back to our Creator. I feel like God can form me into what He is wanting because my eyes are more on Him versus my passions and my busyness.”

Lucas agreed, “During this quarantine period we have been given the opportunity to experience suffering, to go without, to truly take up a disposition of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving. I believe God is calling on us to orient the desires of our hearts on Him alone.”

**FAMILY FOCUS:** “The graces we received from the sacrament of Matrimony propel us to be a beacon in this world. Our families are little churches where the brilliance of past generations is passed on to future generations,” said Angela.

**BALANCING ACT:** Lucas said, “To know your vocation is to know your responsibilities. Priorities are made when we ask the question, ‘Does this support my vocation?’ and ‘Are the fruits of this endeavor good or rotten?’ Balance comes when I pursue Christ with all my heart and all my strength.” 🇹🇽



**THEY ARE:** Lucas and Angela Wynn and their children Annelise, Josephine, Eloise, and Leo, parishioners at Holy Redeemer Church in Aledo. (NTC/Ben Torres)



## From Page 35

contacted families by email, Flocknote, or telephone, while others sent videos or used Zoom to connect. The parish staff at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton also began calling every family involved in religious education from kindergarten through high school.

“We want to make sure they’re OK,” Brennan said. “We want them to realize the parish is still there and will be there when it’s over.”

“We’re not just delivering information,” he added. “It’s about touching other people.”

The University Catholic Community at the University of Texas at Arlington has seven students receiving RCIA instruction from Jeff Hedglen, UTA Campus minister.

He said the online syllabus has links to articles about each topic. Students read the articles before meeting with him in an online conference to discuss them.

“They’re always willing to ask questions and then we have good conversation around those things,” Hedglen said.

At St. Patrick, Deacon James Crites uses Zoom, not only for Baptism preparation, but also to help prepare couples for the sacrament of Matrimony.

“It’s like you have a piece of glass in front of you and they’re on the other side of the glass, so you’re virtually with each other,” he said.

Parents in the Baptism class “have responded with gratitude because people were afraid they would have to put off Baptism of their children,” he added.

Dcn. Crites also meets virtually with couples for marriage preparation.

Marlon De La Torre, Director of Evangelization and

Catechesis for the diocese, said all Marriage Preparation and Family Enrichment formation courses are now online.

“We’ll be able to do the entire marriage preparation in this virtual environment,” Dcn. Crites remarked. “We prefer in person, but we’re finding a way to use new technology to remain virtually present to one another and accomplish what needs to be accomplished.”

In addition to online sacramental preparation, Father John Robert Skeldon, rector at St. Patrick, has moved his weekly study of Sunday Mass readings to the parish website.

At Our Lady Queen of Peace Parish in Wichita Falls, Deacon Jim Bindel now uses FaceTime to meet with engaged couples and Zoom for RCIA. The parish has seven adults and eight children preparing for the Rite of Christian Initiation.

With the Triduum, Easter Sunday, Divine Mercy Sunday, and other holy feast days being celebrated virtually in churches with empty pews, attention shifted to practicing the faith as a family.

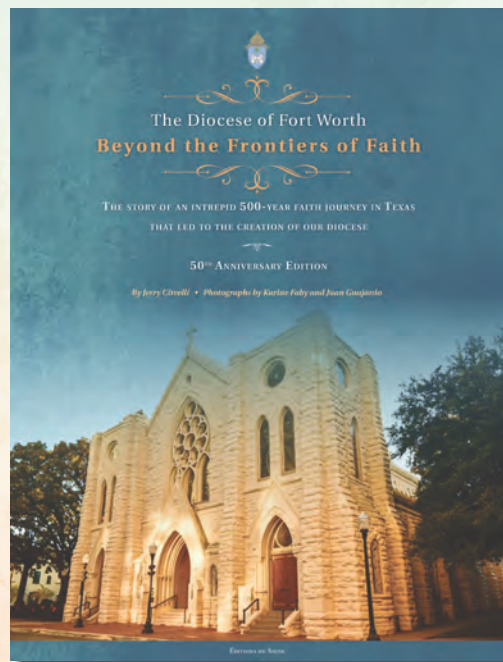
Dcn. Bindel suggested the faithful use their time at home to pray the Rosary, pray the Divine Mercy Chaplet, read Scripture, and talk about it with their children.

But above all, he reminded, “There’s no need to fear.”

“God is in charge of all of this,” he added. “Even though our heads are spinning, His plan is so much greater than we can understand. We just have to put our hope in God.”

“We also need to be grateful in all things, even in this [pandemic],” he added. “God can turn anything into good for His purpose.” 🍀

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# ANCHORED BY FAITH

In his downtime, Father Eric Groner journeys for Jesus on the open seas

By Joan Kurkowski-Gillen

Once or twice a year, Father Eric Groner leaves the routine of parish life to set sail on the open seas.

While a fellow priest from his religious order, the Society of the Divine Word (SVD), fills in for him at St. Rita Church in east Fort Worth, the energetic missionary boards a cruise ship that takes him to exotic and historic ports around the globe.

But the maritime excursions aren't for pleasure. Fr. Groner is a member of the Apostleship of the Sea (AOS) USA — a professional association dedicated to providing sacramental and pastoral care to seafarers, fishermen, dock workers, “and all who work or travel on the waterways of the world.”

“It's not a vacation. It's work,” insisted the pastor, recalling how his SVD provincial described the maritime chaplaincy. “It's a ministry for the people of the sea.”

A veteran of 21 cruises, Fr. Groner celebrates daily Mass for passengers, a late-night Sunday Mass for the crew, and a Sunday non-denominational service for anyone who wants to attend. His faculties on the boat are non-territorial — meaning he doesn't need permission from a local bishop to meet the pastoral needs of voyagers.

In addition to celebrating liturgies, he helps cruise line employees continue sacramental preparation started by other chaplains and offers comfort or counseling

when the unexpected happens. And the unexpected happens more than you think, the seafaring padre points out.

Leisure cruises typically attract an older demographic of people who may have age-related heart problems or other health issues.

“On a boat, you're the chaplain and not just the Catholic chaplain,” Fr. Groner said, explaining a call to a stateroom can mean someone has died or is seriously ill and they're sending for a helicopter. “You're out at sea but your job is just like it would be for a parishioner. You take care of their pastoral needs. That can mean anointing the person and comforting the family.”

Sometimes tragedy affects more than just a few passengers.

“We were in Grand Cayman where some people went scuba diving,” the priest continued. “One of the men — who was relatively young — had a heart attack and drowned in the water.”

An incident like that casts a shadow of gloom over everyone's trip. “So, you provide pastoral ministry,” he added.

## SERVING THE CREW

AOS-USA screens and assigns its 450 to 500 Catholic clergy membership to major cruise companies, like Royal Caribbean and Celebrity, during Christmas and Easter holidays, or if a cruise itinerary is longer than a week and involves many days at sea. Holland America has 14 ships with a priest

onboard every cruise.

With many of its priests aging and no longer able to travel, the AOS-USA is seeking more volunteers. Maritime chaplains receive a free trip but are responsible for paying their own gratuities and other expenses.

“You're not considered a passenger. You're part of the crew,” disclosed Fr. Groner, who lodges in an interior room on the navigation deck of the ship.

Being available to the crew is a large part of the ministry. Most of the people hired by cruise lines sign six to nine-month contracts.

“They come from the Philippines, India, Indonesia, and Eastern Europe and work 12 to 14 hours a day,” he asserted. “Many are Catholic and the only opportunity for church is when we provide it.”

Cruise line employees are considered migrant itinerant workers — not unlike farm laborers who move from one agricultural job to another.

“Migrant workers can be in a field or on a boat, but we provide pastoral ministry to them,” Fr. Groner said, noting that Pope John Paul II formed the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People in 1988. It now falls under the auspices of the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development.

“These people sacrifice not being with their families because, economically, they can earn two to three times more money than at home.”

Hearing confessions and counseling



Father Eric Groner, SVD, is pictured at St. Rita Parish in Fort Worth. (NTC/Ben Torres)



— especially for crewmembers — keeps the chaplain busy. Long shifts, living in close quarters, and stress can lead to relationship problems between coworkers.

“People have issues and if there’s a blow up on the boat, I may be asked to talk to someone,” Fr. Groner explained. “Sometimes counseling is the last resort before a contract is terminated.”

### PROMOTING ECUMENICAL DIALOGUE

The best part of traveling the high seas for the adventurous priest isn’t the view from the deck or interesting ports of call. Ordained in 1996, the Missouri native says his work on a cruise ship allows him to practice his vocation as a missionary in a different way.

“You’d be surprised how many people want to talk about religion when you sit down at a table,” observed Fr. Groner, whose clerical collar seems to prompt dinner invitations.

A form of evangelization, the presence of a priest on a cruise ship exposes guests to the Catholic faith. After attending the non-denominational Sunday service he conducts, participants will tell Fr. Groner they didn’t know Catholics read the Bible.

“There’s an ecumenical dialogue — an outreach to these people,” the chaplain suggested. “I get all kinds of questions. People ask me what I think about Pope Francis or want to know the Church’s view on moral issues like [same-sex unions]. Based on their personal experience, people have a good or bad opinion about the Church.”

Catholic passengers also welcome the availability of a priest onboard and use the opportunity to go to confession. Others take advantage of Fr. Groner’s approachable nature to discuss family problems or reasons why they no longer attend Mass.

“In many ways, this outreach ministry

is providential,” he added thoughtfully. “You meet people who may be at a crossroads in their life or haven’t practiced their faith. They can sit down and tell me anything because they’re never going to see me again. It’s ministry in a different setting.”

### SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES

Sunday Mass, celebrated in one of the cruise ship’s entertainment theaters, usually draws about 200 people according to Fr. Groner. But circumstances can bump up that figure.

During one cruise, the ship stayed out at sea because of sustained winds from Hurricane Ophelia. With churning waves rocking and rolling the boat, the Sunday crowd of 100 people grew to 500 for the daily service.

“They say there’s no atheist in a fox-hole. Well, I guess there aren’t any atheists on a cruise ship in a hurricane either,” he added with a light-hearted chuckle. 🇺🇸





A photo illustration depicts what Friar Juan de Padilla looked like. He and his companions likely passed through the future Diocese of Fort Worth with both the Coronado and Moscoso Expeditions as early as 1541-42.  
*(Adapted from Diocese of Dallas photos /1936 Texas Centennial Exposition)*



# *the first* MARTYR

Franciscan Friar Juan de Padilla and his mourners  
passed this way nearly 500 years ago

By Jerry Circelli

**B**y now, you already know that we are celebrating the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Diocese of Fort Worth. Did you realize, however, that the Catholic history of our diocese can be traced back nearly 500 years?

The first martyr in the present-day United States — Franciscan Friar Juan de Padilla — likely trekked through the current northwestern boundaries of the Diocese of Fort Worth in 1541 as he traveled with the tenacious Coronado Expedition. About three years later, holy men with whom he served traveled through our current diocesan boundaries as well, as they mourned the death of Friar de Padilla on their way back home.

## THE JOURNEY BEGINS

In 1540, Spanish-born explorer Francisco Vázquez de Coronado assembled 1,000 men, including 240 mounted horsemen, 60 foot soldiers, and hundreds of head of horses, mules, cattle, and sheep. His expedition traveled up Mexico's west coast, destined for the present-day American Southwest.

Well supplied and armed, Coronado's objective was to find gold and riches in what is now the American Southwest and to claim this land for Spain. The accompanying friars were intent on bringing Christ to the indigenous people.

Among the Franciscans, in addition to Friar de Padilla, were Friars Marcos de Niza, Juan de la Cruz, and Luis de Escalona.

Failing to find anything of value at the fabled Cibola, part of the Seven Cities of Gold near today's New Mexico-Arizona border, Coronado turned his

attention to the north and east. This time he was in search of another settlement, Quivera, a place he was told was laden with gold. The general location of the mythical city is believed to be around the Texas Panhandle, Oklahoma, or south-central Kansas.

Before he reached his destination in 1541, Coronado split his forces in central New Mexico, northeast of Albuquerque, and pressed onward with 30 select men toward Quivera. The remaining army was sent back to a place they named Tiguex, just to the west. The special mission with Coronado to Quivera included Friar de Padilla.

Some noted historians trace the 30-man journey in search of Quivera as passing through a general area that on close inspection includes Hardeman, Foard, and Knox counties — all within the present Diocese of Fort Worth. Today, Catholics at St. Mary in Quanah, St. Joseph in Crowell, St. Joseph in Rhineland, and Santa Rosa in Knox City all walk in the footsteps of the first martyr in the United States.

Interestingly, another expedition, this one led by Luis de Moscoso, entered the eastern boundaries of the Diocese of Fort Worth about a year later. Franciscan friars traveling with this contingent of 600 men were also among the first to bring the Word of God inside the current diocesan boundaries.

As for Coronado, he never found his riches in Quivera. Like Cibola, tales of the golden city turned out to be another myth. His mission a failure, Coronado began a return march to rejoin his expedition forces in central New Mexico and settle in for the winter of 1541-42. Dejected and injured

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### From Page 41

from a horse fall, Coronado made plans for a final retreat back to Mexico.

Friars de Padilla, de la Cruz, and de Escalona did not share Coronado's view that the mission had been a failure, as their objectives had been different. They did not want to return, reasoning that their work had only just begun. Unlike Coronado, the friars were not driven to find gold, but to save souls. They had already brought many Native Americans to Christ at settlements along the way and were thankful that so many of these people had accepted Him.

Insight into the hearts of the friars is provided by Carlos Castañeda, noted historian, author, and professor. In 1936 as part of his exhaustive seven-volume work, *Our Catholic Heritage in Texas*, Castañeda writes:

*“Coronado and his men were disappointed, worn out, and ready to leave for New Spain; not so the undaunted sons of St. Francis to whom toils, privations, and hardships were nothing where the salvation of souls was concerned. The courageous and determined [Friar] Juan de Padilla, together with Brothers Luis de Escalona and Juan de la Cruz, told the commander they wanted to stay in the land.”*

The author continues:

*“The good Padre explained that it was his intention to return to Quivera, where he was sure that his efforts would bear copious fruit in the conversion of the natives. Brother Luis de Escalona, an old and saintly man, wished to remain in Cicuye. He declared that with a chisel and an adze he would erect crosses and baptize the children on their deathbeds in order to send them to heaven. The three Franciscans pointed out that they had the consent of their provincial to stay and labor among the natives.”*

The three Franciscans, true to their vocation, followed their hearts and dispersed into the Southwest to continue



#### Editor's Note:

This is Part V of our series of historical features during the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Diocese of Fort Worth.



their ministry.

Friar Juan de Padilla returned to Quivera in 1542, with two Native American lay Franciscans, known as Lucas and Sebastián, and a Portuguese soldier named Andrés do Campo.

The Franciscans, led by Friar de

Padilla, were successful in establishing a mission among the Native Americans they had befriended in the High Plains. After two years of ministering to the local inhabitants who were accepting Christ, Friar de Padilla ventured with do Campo and his Franciscan brothers a day's journey to the east, where they hoped to expand their ministry.

Tragically, the small band of Christians was attacked by a hostile group of Native Americans. It is reported that to gain time for the others to flee, Friar de Padilla knelt down in prayer, intentionally becoming the target of a lethal barrage of arrows. The date of his martyrdom is believed to be Nov. 30, 1544.

Historians have noted that after Friar de Padilla was killed, his companions did not get far before they were captured. The Franciscans and do Campo later managed



By studying historical records as well as flora and fauna described by explorers, researchers have traced the earliest penetrations into Texas by the Spanish. *Texas, A Historical Atlas*, by A. Ray Stephens, illustrated some of those journeys. Other researchers have provided their own details. This map, adapted from those sources, shows the routes that the Coronado expedition explorers and friars — including Father Juan de Padilla — may have taken through the present Diocese of Fort Worth around 1541. The illustration focuses closely on routes described by researchers Frederick W. Hodge and George P. Winship. (NTC/Michael Sherman)

to escape, and once again the present boundaries of the Diocese of Fort Worth enter the historic picture.

### THE TRAIL OF THE CROSS

To mourn Friar de Padilla, the two Franciscan lay members made a large, heavy wooden cross — hewn from native trees — and shouldered it during their on-foot escape back to Mexico. A constant reminder of their fallen brother, the cross also would help them find safe passage back to Mexico, the Franciscans believed.

The journey, according to several historians, would have taken the survivors in a direct path along the Interstate 35W corridor from central Oklahoma or Kansas all the way to Panuco, on the east coast of Mexico. This would place the mourners as traveling inside or near a 200-mile stretch along the eastern boundary of the present Diocese of Fort Worth.

After the group reached Mexico safely, explorers learned of the route the mourners had taken and began following it in their future forays into the interior of the New World. It eventually became I-35, a busy stretch of roadway known today for getting us quickly

to our destinations, but unknown for the pathway of holy men mourning the death of the first martyr in the present-day United States.

Historians believe that Friars Escalona and Cruz were also killed in service to the Lord at the indigenous villages where they preached.

While their deaths predate those of the Jesuit martyrs of North America by about 100 years, many people know nothing about Friar Juan de Padilla or his companions.

According to the late Father Don Miller, OFM, of St. John the Baptist Province in Cincinnati, Ohio, Friar de Padilla was the first of at least 79 Franciscans martyred in what is now the United States.

Fr. Miller's summary of the martyr, who once passed this way nearly 500 years ago, tells us much about the life and death of early Catholics in America and what we can learn from their faithful example.

"Juan de Padilla was motivated more by a desire to spread the Gospel than by fear for his own life," Fr. Miller wrote. "He reminds us that we do not have much choice about how we will die; however, we have a lot of choice about how we shall live." 🇺🇸



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ANDREW CATHOLIC SCHOOL



Erin Vader stands at the entrance to St. Andrew Catholic School, where she began teaching. (NTC/Juan Guajardo)

# JOB WELL DONE

A product and proponent of Catholic education, Erin Vader ventures outside diocese for superintendent position

By Susan Moses

**F**rom her earliest days, Erin Vader’s parents instilled in her a purpose: her job was to give back. As a young adult with a fresh degree in English from the University of Texas at Arlington, she set out into the world certain of two things. One, she would do something that would serve her community. And two, she was not going to teach. She was only half right — much to the benefit of Catholic schools in the Diocese of Fort Worth. A product of St. Maria Goretti Catholic School in Arlington and Nolan Catholic High School, returning to the educational system that formed her was a natural fit.





“My Catholic faith was a completely integrated part of my life. Growing up, we were always at church or at school,” she recalled. As a child, she watched her parents, also Nolan graduates, put their faith into action and serve in various ministries in her home parish of St. Vincent de Paul in Arlington.

Vader’s career began at St. Andrew Catholic School, teaching middle school. She discovered she loved the intellectual

side of instruction, but what she cherished most of all could only be found in a Catholic setting.

She explained that Catholic education “allows you to really support the parents in the formation of the whole child. We aren’t just teaching a subject; we are forming young disciples. We help them identify the gifts God has given them. That’s the most exciting part for me, helping them discover gifts they didn’t even know they had, and how to use those gifts as servant leaders in the world.”

She delighted in watching her Catholic faith, so fundamental to her character since her childhood, take root in her young students. She reminisced, “You take an unruly group of seventh graders on the way to Mass. You’re telling them to ‘hush’ and ‘be quiet’ and ‘remember where you are going.’ The minute they hit the holy water font, you see the change that comes over them. You see that they get it. They understand that they’re in the real presence of Christ. That’s an amazing thing.”

### A BIGGER COMMUNITY

Equipped with almost 10 years in the classroom, plus years of additional education (Vader would eventually earn a doctorate in educational leadership from Texas Wesleyan University), she became principal of St. Peter the Apostle Catholic School, then Our Mother of Mercy.

She laughed as she remembered her years as principal in the small grade schools in Fort Worth. “The principal of a small Catholic school does everything — sometimes you’re a teacher, custodian, health professional, development director, and occasionally the cafeteria lady.”

But the satisfaction that came with being a classroom teacher was multiplied as she moved into leadership positions. “Your family gets bigger. It’s not just your classroom. You’re responsible for a lot of people’s formation. Not just the kids, but also the faculty and staff, and to a degree the parents of your students,” she said.

Not only did her focus change from one classroom to the greater school community, but her vision changed from planning the week’s lessons to concentrating on the long term.

The St. Andrew parishioner said, “It becomes about not just the kids you have,

but the kids the school is going to have 10, 20 years down the line when you’re not there anymore. You always have one foot in the now, and one foot in the future. When you make decisions that are good, that will last, that’s very rewarding.”

After her principal years, her next stop was her alma mater, Nolan, where she was president of the high school for three years. Currently, she is helping all 19 schools in the diocese as coordinator of schools advancement and alumni relations.

### EXPANDING HORIZONS

After giving back to Catholic schools in the Diocese of Fort Worth for more than 20 years, Vader will move to the Diocese of Jefferson City, Missouri to become superintendent of Catholic schools, effective May 1. The Catholic school system in central and northeastern Missouri includes three high schools and 37 elementary schools, educating about 7,000 students annually.

The diocese is one of two in the U.S. that allows children of parents who tithe regularly to attend grade school tuition-free.

Vader said that, beginning in her years as principal, she’s always had a role in development, and she finds the titling model employed by the Diocese of Jefferson City intriguing.

“Knowing the challenges that our Catholic schools face in the U.S., we have to be looking at innovative, out-of-the-box funding models,” she said.

Leaving the diocese where she’s lived her entire life will be challenging, she admitted. However, Vader plans to employ the same strategy in Missouri that has worked well for her in Fort Worth. “I pray for a lot of grace,” she said.

And despite the fact she’ll miss “everything” about Fort Worth, she’s taking with her the faith instilled by her parents, by her teachers and religious sisters, the schools, and the parishes to which she’s belonged.

Although the territory will be new, Vader will still be doing the work she was raised to do, giving back to the next generation by providing a strong faith foundation for young Catholics.

“What a gift it is, that my faith is so integrated into who I am. The idea that I am able to be part of giving that gift to other people is amazing,” she said. 🍀



# THE HIDDEN SACRAMENT

In this special edition of 'Let us Lectio,' we pull back the veil on the Anointing of the Sick

By Callie Nowlin

**T**he Anointing of the Sick is one of the most hidden sacraments in the life of the Church. However, a few years ago I was privileged to take groups of students to a local hospice center, and since we had a priest with us, we were invited to gather as he administered the sacrament to a sick woman.

I was so grateful that we were able to witness and participate in this sometimes hidden liturgical work of Christ. Seeing her lying there as the priest prayed over her was to see Christ in action in a way I had not previously seen. I often think of this: how Christ is present in every sacramental action, and how important it is to prepare to encounter Him there.

## **WHO IS THIS SACRAMENT FOR?**

In this sacrament, the people of God are invited, and even urged, to unite their lives and suffering with the passion and death of Christ. In this sacrament, Jesus continues His work among the poor and the sick; He never ceases to give His mercy and grace to those in need.

In the past, it was commonly thought that one needed to be at the doorstep of death to receive this sacrament. One need not wait for such an extreme situation to call a priest. The spiritual dangers of grave illness and the frailty of old age are significant. Knowing

this, Christ desires not only to strengthen the faithful but also to unite their sufferings in a special way to His passion and death.

If one is seriously impaired by illness which can lead to death, or if one is about to undergo surgery due to a serious illness, one may seek this sacrament.

It's widely recognized that friends and families should take care of their sick. That responsibility also includes caring for the spiritual health of their sick loved one. Care should be given so that God's graces are available to the infirm, if at all possible, before the illness becomes worse.

The qualifier of "serious" is important in this context. This sacrament is not for those who merely catch a cold or are having minor surgery. Seriously debilitating illness comes with fatigue, struggle, and a unique set of temptations that make the sacrament of Anointing of the Sick a very welcome influx of grace. Of course, if a sick person recovers and later falls ill again, the sacrament can be repeated as a new occasion and new need of God's grace.

## **WHAT HAPPENS DURING THE SACRAMENT?**

The sacraments are first and foremost public, not private, matters. It's important to know what the liturgy consists of and what to



expect.

The sacrament of Anointing of the Sick is rather simple in its execution. The priest will begin with an introductory prayer and Scripture reading, wherein we recall that Christ, through His Church, is present in the sacraments. The official prayer of the Church follows. The priest then extends his hands and places them on the head of the believer while reciting a brief prayer. Afterward, the priest will use blessed oil and make a sign of the cross, if possible, on the forehead and hands of the believer. While doing so he will pray the following:

*“Through this holy anointing may the Lord in His love and mercy help you with the grace of the Holy Spirit. May the Lord who frees you from sin save you and raise you up.”*

Typically, this sacrament occurs in a personal setting. Notice, I did not say a “private setting” because all sacraments are an expression of the public life and ministry of Christ continued by His Church. With this in mind, the Sacrament of Anointing should be celebrated in the presence of family, friends, or other faithful Catholics. Other sacraments and prayers can accompany this sacrament. If one is able, it’s helpful to conduct an Examination of Conscience. In conjunction with this sacrament, the believer (if conscious) may be offered the Sacrament of Reconciliation. If able to swallow, he will be offered Communion or even Viaticum. Even a very small particle or piece of the host is enough. These sacraments

prepare the sick to cross over to their “heavenly homeland” (CCC 1525).

The Church is always waiting with open arms to distribute the grace and mercy of God. However, I cannot emphasize enough that the Sacrament of Anointing is best understood as part of a healthy sacramental life. In other words, this sacrament should not be misunderstood as a last-minute, sure-fire, ace-up-the-sleeve to “clean the slate.” Although God willingly offers His mercy even when one is on his or her deathbed, it would be more than imprudent to plan on such a thing, especially when the availability of a priest is not guaranteed.

As Archbishop Fulton Sheen said, “Let no one think he can be totally indifferent to God in this life and suddenly develop a capacity for Him at the moment of death.”

### **THE VICTORY IS WON**

All sacraments find their origin and purpose in Jesus Christ. They serve to provide that which is necessary for salvation for the individual and the Church.

Christ’s title can give us great insight into the meaning, power, and dignity of this sacrament. “Christ” means Anointed One. And while several in salvation history, such as King David, were known as God’s anointed, none share in this anointing in a full and everlasting way except Jesus, true God and true man.

**Continued on Page 48**



NTC/Juan Guajardo

## From Page 47

When we receive the sacrament of Anointing of the Sick, we do so through the person of a priest by the hand of the very Body of Christ, who healed the sick and the lame and raised the dead. It's in that moment which we participate in His continued work of healing and saving the world.

At the heart of the Paschal Mystery is Christ's supremacy over sin and death, which is beautifully expressed in His resurrection. God created man with a body and soul and with the intent of an everlasting relationship with Him. In response to the evil that sin brought into the world, whose ultimate fruit was death, God eventually sent His Son. Death, the ultimate fruit of sin in the world, is often preceded by the suffering of illness and the infirmity of old age. In Scripture, Jesus does not heal everyone that He encounters, but the ones He does are radical witnesses of Christ's victory over sin and death.

These prophetic signs come to fulfillment by the triumphant passion, death, and resurrection of Christ Himself. In addition, Christ identifies Himself with the sick and the suffering (*Matthew 25:36*). This, combined with the suffering of Christ on the cross, offers a new dignity to the faithful who suffer — if they are willing to unite their suffering to that of Christ's (*Colossians 1:24*).

### MISUSE OF THE SACRAMENT

The sacrament is properly understood as one of healing and comes from God, who wishes for our wholeness in both body and soul. If, however, one were to openly deny the fullness of God's mercy, which necessarily includes repentance of sin, the sacrament should certainly be delayed. Without this willingness for



The Anointing of the Sick isn't just for those in danger of death. The faithful can also receive it during grave illness to receive the strength to fight spiritual dangers in times of suffering. (NTC/Juan Guajardo)

conversion and openness to mercy, the seeking of the sacrament of Anointing of the Sick would be approaching the Church as more of a machine rather than the person of Christ.

And again I stress: seeking the sacrament extremely close to death can be risky in itself, for there is a chance that a priest may not be available for the call.

### VIATICUM AND "LAST RITES"

Viaticum is the term used for one's last Communion, when the believer is close to death. Just as our first Communion should be marked with solemnity and considered a special event, so too should one's last Communion. In fact, as a baptized Catholic, we have a duty to seek this last sacrament. Canon law states, "The Christian faithful who are in danger of death from any cause

are to be nourished by holy Communion in the form of Viaticum." It is something that the dying faithful are due. And their families should know that they are to receive it and request it from their pastors on behalf of their dying loved ones, at an appropriate time.

It is primarily a pastor's duty and privilege to administer Viaticum, but any priest may do so. If circumstances require, a deacon or lay person may also offer holy Communion at this important time, but without the other prayers associated with "last rites."

"Last rites" is an old and common term used to describe the various sacraments, rites, and prayers that may be offered for the dying. Essentially, the principle is that the Church desires to give every good possible to the dying in hope they will stay faithful to the very end. While this is not particularly emphasized today, the Church has a long tradition of encouraging her children to prepare for the "hour of our death."

In continuing that tradition of offering every sacrament available according to the circumstances, along with prayer and even a Litany of the Saints, the Church expresses concern for her children who are ending their earthly pilgrimages.

Saints in heaven, pray for us. Merciful Lord, pray for us. ✠



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





# BRAIN SCIENCE at WORK

Kimberly Lawrence poses in front of her white board containing key words to help her staff and clients. (NTC/Ben Torres)

To be a Catholic Charities Fort Worth client, colleague, or volunteer working side by side with Kimberly Lawrence, LCSW, is to feel safe within the supportive embrace of her twinkling-eyed humor, her air of humility, and her empathetic gaze.

It is to be uplifted by what she calls her “absolute belief in the necessity of lots of laughter, because it resets your nervous system.” It is to observe both her gentleness and grit as she sits with clients — those who suffer trauma, abuse, violence, dislocation, and grinding poverty — and also leads her team in practicing the evidence-based ways in which such social sins can be effectively healed.

Healed one person, one family at a time, through the transforming power of CCFW’s holistic approach to eradicating poverty. Such an approach is grounded in a profound understanding of the ways in which adversity rewires developing brains, creating long-term obstacles in learning and behavioral patterns.

Writing for both CCFW’s own blog and for the national Catholic Charities USA website, Lawrence, who has worked

at CCFW for the past 10 years, explained, “Many of our clients have lived in fight-or-flight survival mode for their whole lives. In typical brain development, emotion

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“Brain science tells us a more complete story (about our clients).... All ‘misbehavior’ points to an unmet need. Our case managers work to identify these unmet needs and start from a place of respectful curiosity.”

Kimberly Lawrence, LCSW, Manager of Padua Pilot and Working Family Services, CCFW

regulation supports growth in planning and cognition. But, if the brain switches into survival gear, the lights go out in the cortex, and there’s very little capacity to focus on more than today.”

In helping clients build new neural pathways and healthy habits that lead to stability and success, Lawrence added, “Case managers must understand that poverty is not a character defect. Clients don’t need to try harder; they need to develop functions they’ve never been given room to develop before.”

Lawrence relishes what she calls the privilege of watching clients find their voices, see their own potential, and seek healing.

“Our approach here at Catholic Charities is always about growing and evolving,” she said. “We’ve created a culture of learning. And that benefits both our staff members and those we serve.”

CCFW’s Padua Pilot program is in its third year of successful and “supercharged” case management, working to lift individuals and families out of poverty. To learn more, call **817-534-0814** or visit **CatholicCharitiesFortWorth.org**. 📍







# Unexpected Graces

**HE IS:** Father Philip Petta, pastor of Holy Family of Nazareth Parish in Vernon, St. Joseph Parish in Crowell, and St. Mary Parish in Quanah. Previously he was pastor of St. Peter Parish in Lindsay for five years. Immediately after his ordination, he was assigned to St. Matthew Parish in Arlington.

**THE CALL:** A student of history (he holds a history degree from Texas A&M University), Fr. Petta was an Episcopalian who delved into the Nicene Creed and early Church history. He converted to Catholicism in 2004 and wanted to enter seminary right away, but was required to wait two years. He was ordained on June 4, 2011.


**RAVENOUS READERS:** Fr. Petta holds a Sunday night book club that reads an eclectic mix of Church teaching, Scripture, religious history, and the occasional Catholic novel. “When I started this in Lindsay, I thought, ‘We’re not going to have anybody show up.’ The place was packed. There’s a big, big thirst of people to be taught what the Church teaches and why.”

**PLANNING AHEAD:** A career in insurance, plus a lifetime love of chess, have taught him the value of planning ahead. He’s added handrails to the steps at his parish.

**UNEXPECTED GRACES:** Anointing of the Sick or helping a parishioner through a difficult situation, while “drawing on the strength of the Holy Spirit and the Blessed Mother,” can be a source of consolation and blessing. “The unexpected graces of being a priest are amazing. A priest should always keep himself open for the possibility of grace, even when you aren’t looking for it and the situation seems bad.”

**ON THE ROAD:** Fr. Petta makes an 82-mile journey on Sunday to celebrate Masses at three parishes, “which makes for a busy Sunday, but it’s wonderful because the people are so grateful to have a priest bringing them the sacraments. The people here in West Texas are nice and wonderful and loving.”

**SOURCE AND SUMMIT:** “The Church has taught from the very beginning, the earliest writings, that the bread and wine becomes the Body and the Blood of Christ. Christianity stands on the Eucharist.” The Eucharist drew him into the Church.

**THE TAKEAWAY:** “Be an adult in your faith, don’t remain a child. Have an adult appreciation of the Mass and the Church. Be curious.” 



NTC/Juan Cuajardo





# The Eucharist Leads Us

On the Solemnity of the Body and Blood of the Lord, commonly known to us as *Corpus Christi* Sunday, we are, in a certain sense, taken back to Holy Thursday. The Church, once again, celebrates the commemoration of the institution of the Most Holy Eucharist.

A person sitting in the pew might well ask, “Father, why do we have a second feast observing the Lord giving us the Eucharist?” Rev. Pius Parsch, in his commentary on the liturgical year, *The Church’s Year of Grace*, says “Holy Thursday, assuredly, marks the anniversary of the institution, but the commemoration of the Lord’s Passion that very night suppresses the rejoicing proper to the occasion. Today’s observance, therefore, accents the joyous aspect of Holy Thursday.” In a sense, what we celebrate on that Thursday during Holy Week is just too much to celebrate. Holy Thursday overflows with the divine life of God’s grace, which is too abundant for a single day.

This year the Church celebrates this beautiful and joy-filled solemnity on June 14. In the Sacred Liturgy for this day, the Church invites each of us to pause

and prayerfully consider the sacrifice and self-gift that are contained in the gift that Our Lord has left us as a memorial of His Passion.

The celebration of the Body and Blood of Christ is accompanied by a Eucharistic procession, “a public witness of faith and worship of the Most Blessed Sacrament.” If we simply thumb through the pages of the Old Testament, we can easily recognize the presence of processions in the life of the Jewish people. The Jews marched in procession through the desert on the way to the promised land. They processed around the walls of Jericho before it fell. Specifically, as Christians, we see how the Holy Spirit processes from the Father and the Son and into the hearts of the faithful, and how Christ takes on our flesh and proceeds to enter into our fragile humanity.

On the Feast of Corpus Christi and in the procession with our Eucharistic Lord, we celebrate the sacrament of God’s presence in our world, and we are reminded in a manifest way of our shared, common pilgrimage to heaven, the promised land for all who have faith in Christ. The Eucharistic procession is

a prayerful and edifying act of the entire Church. The opportunity to worship, adore, and follow our Lord should serve as a powerful moment of reflection for all of us as we ponder the centrality of the Eucharist in our lives. Moreover, it should also lead us to prayerfully consider the ministry of priests and the central role they serve in bringing the Eucharist to the people entrusted to their care, as well as the need for more young men who are devoted to the service of Christ’s flock.

As we follow Christ in procession, take a moment to remember all of those priests who have accompanied you on your spiritual journey toward eternal life with God — thank Him! Use those moments to pray for your parish priest who, by his ministry, has brought you the Eucharist. Finally, pray for young men, specifically from your parish, who might be called to serve Christ as his priest. Accompany these young men by your prayers, tell them that you are praying for their vocation, and encourage them along their journey of discernment. ✚



Fr. Matthew Tatyrek

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Ordained to the priesthood in 2016, Father Matthew Tatyrek serves as pastor of St. Peter Parish, Lindsay and as Vocations Liaison with the Vocations Office.



# caridad DETERMINADA

El clero y los fieles responden a los desafíos del COVID-19 con fe, amor e innovación

Por Mary Lou Seewoester

Los bancos han estado vacíos en cada Misa de cada parroquia de la Diócesis de Fort Worth desde el 19 de marzo, lo que nos demuestra que la Iglesia local en el Norte de Texas no es inmune a los efectos del virus COVID-19.

Los sacerdotes de las parroquias han estado celebrando sus Misas dominicales y diarias, con la asistencia de un diácono y/o acólito, pero sin la presencia de los fieles (*sine populo*).

Por una semana las parroquias hicieron los arreglos necesarios para que los fieles pudieran recibir la Sagrada Comunión de los Ministros de la Eucaristía, fuera de la iglesia al terminar de celebrarse la Misa. Los feligreses esperaban en sus carros hasta que un ujier les ordenaba acercarse a la iglesia, uno a la vez, para recibir la Eucaristía en la mano solamente.

Durante una semana se siguió ofreciendo el sacramento de la Reconciliación en el confesionario y también la Adoración Eucarística.

Sin embargo, la orden de ‘quedarse en casa’ emitida por los funcionarios de la ciudad y el condado de Tarrant el 24 de marzo requirió que el Obispo Olson suspendiera las Confesiones, la Adoración

Eucarística y la recepción pública de la Sagrada Comunión. Las parroquias se adaptaron nuevamente y decidieron seguir celebrando las Misas sin la presencia de los fieles y a celebrarlas en línea.

“La Eucaristía es la fuente y la cumbre de la vida cristiana”, declaró el Obispo Michael Olson en su Carta Pastoral del 18 de marzo. “La Eucaristía es lo que nos une con la Iglesia triunfante en el cielo, la Iglesia militante y la Iglesia sufriente”.

La Diócesis comenzó el 22 de marzo a transmitir en vivo la Misa dominical de las 11 a.m. celebrada por el Obispo Olson en la Catedral de San Patricio en el sitio web diocesano, [fwdioc.org](http://fwdioc.org)

El Obispo Olson alentó también a las parroquias a transmitir las Misas en vivo siempre que sea posible y a rezar el Acto de Comunión Espiritual en voz alta durante la Misa. Para el siguiente fin de semana, casi todas las parroquias con la capacidad tecnológica adecuada comenzaron a transmitir en vivo la Misa dominical.

## LA IGLESIA EN EL TIEMPO DE CRISIS DEL CORONAVIRUS

La Diócesis ya había comenzado a adaptarse a la temporada de gripe para

el 10 de enero al ofrecer la exención de la obligación dominical a cualquier persona que estuviera enferma o fuera susceptible a la enfermedad (mayores de 60 años o con un problema de salud crónico o subyacente), y a los que atienden y cuidan a las personas vulnerables. El Obispo Olson suspendió el ofrecimiento de la Preciosa Sangre durante la Comunión y el tomarse de las manos durante la Misa.

A medida que se desarrolló la amenaza del COVID-19, y siguiendo las recomendaciones de los Centros para el Control y la Prevención de Enfermedades (CDC, por siglas en inglés) y las agencias locales de salud pública, que cambiaban casi a diario debido a la propagación y la gravedad del virus, la Iglesia local respondió de nuevo para proteger a los fieles, mientras descubría nuevas formas de satisfacer sus necesidades espirituales, físicas y educativas.

“Nuestras necesidades espirituales, así como nuestras otras necesidades esenciales, no disminuyen durante un momento de crisis. De hecho, nuestras necesidades espirituales se vuelven aún más prominentes”, dijo el Obispo Olson en una de sus cartas pastorales.

Las escuelas católicas comenzaron



las clases en línea para sus alumnos, y al mismo tiempo, los planteles escolares fueron desinfectados y limpiados minuciosamente. Las parroquias suspendieron temporalmente sus clases de formación en persona y todos los eventos de ministerio grupal se cancelaron o se trasladaron a plataformas en línea.

Para el 13 de marzo, las agencias de salud locales habían limitado el tamaño de cualquier reunión de grupo a 250 personas. En lugar de suspender por completo la celebración pública de las Misas, como lo habían hecho otras diócesis, los sacerdotes, diáconos, el personal de la parroquia y los laicos trabajaron incansablemente el 14 y 15 de marzo para implementar la directiva del Obispo Olson de continuar las Misas de fin de semana, pero limitadas a no más de 250 personas en la iglesia.

Todos colaboraron para desinfectar la iglesia después de cada Misa y se eliminó el uso de los himnarios y los programas de la

liturgia en las Misas. Una vez que el número de personas llegaba a 250, el resto de los fieles se dirigía a otro lugar de los campus parroquiales para una Misa adicional o la Celebración Dominical en Ausencia de un Sacerdote.

Para el día de San Patricio, los voluntarios acordonaron filas alternas de los bancos para mantenerlos vacíos y colocaron también carteles en los bancos abiertos que indicaban cuántas personas podían ocupar ese banco.

El Diácono Walter Stone, jefe de personal de la Catedral de San Patricio, explicó que todas menos dos de las puertas de la iglesia estaban cerradas, y los ujieres contaban a los fieles según entraban. Debido a que varios sacerdotes sirven en San Patricio, se comenzaron a celebrar Misas adicionales en el salón parroquial después de la Misa programada regularmente.

A lo largo de la Diócesis, un proceso similar permitió que los feligreses asistieran

a Misa mientras mantenían una distancia social segura.

“Hicimos esto porque queríamos darles a los fieles la mayor oportunidad posible de congregarnos para la celebración Eucarística mientras cumplíamos con las directivas civiles”, dijo el Diácono Stone.

Para el momento en que se puso en vigor la orden de “quedarse en casa” el 24 de marzo, los párrocos y el personal de la parroquia ya habían comenzado a buscar formas de continuar la formación religiosa y de comunicarse en línea con los fieles a través de Zoom, YouTube, Flocknote u otras plataformas virtuales.

Tim Brennan, Director de Educación Religiosa de la Parroquia de St. Elizabeth Ann Seton de Keller, utiliza Zoom para las reuniones, las clases y las oraciones grupales con los niños, jóvenes y adultos.

Brennan señaló que la Parroquia de St.

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El Obispo Michael Olson y los sacerdotes de la Diócesis comenzaron a celebrar la Misa sin la presencia de los fieles para reducir el contagio del coronavirus. (NTC/Juan Guajardo)



La donante Loretta Endres habla con los voluntarios guardando una distancia segura mientras Caridades Católicas de Fort Worth recoge donaciones de alimentos y pañales en su empaque, y toallitas desinfectantes para ser distribuidos a las personas afectadas por la pandemia del COVID-19. (NTC/Rodger Mallison)



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Elizabeth Ann Seton tiene 37 adultos y niños que se están preparando a ser bautizados este año, por eso él continuó en línea con las clases de formación del Rito de Iniciación Cristiana de Adultos. Él envía los materiales de las clases y los enlaces de los videos y se reúne virtualmente con los catecúmenos para la discusión en grupo.

“Nuestra esperanza es encontrar una manera de prepararlos a todos utilizando cualquier recurso que podamos encontrar en línea”, dijo. Entonces, cuando se termine la orden de quedarse en casa, “podremos llevar a todos a la pila bautismal, y a la Confirmación y la Primera Comunión”.

Ricky Shoop, Director del Ministerio de Jóvenes de la Parroquia de St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, ha estado

utilizando Zoom y YouTube para continuar reuniéndose con los grupos de escuela intermedia y secundaria los domingos por la noche. También se reúne virtualmente con muchos de sus estudiantes a las 3 p.m. diariamente para rezar la Coronilla de la Divina Misericordia.

Todas las familias de los estudiantes que cursan los grados K-6 recibieron los materiales necesarios para continuar la formación de fe de sus hijos en el hogar. Algunos catequistas voluntarios se contactaron con las familias por correo electrónico, Flocknote o por teléfono, mientras que otros enviaron videos o utilizaron Zoom para conectarse. El personal de la Parroquia de St. Elizabeth Ann Seton también comenzó a llamar a todas las familias que participan de la educación religiosa desde el nivel preescolar hasta la escuela secundaria.



**PARTIPIE  
DE LA MISA**



Para buscar dónde puede unirse en Comunión espiritual en una Misa transmitida en vivo vaya a [fwdioc.org](http://fwdioc.org).





La Diócesis de Fort Worth y las parroquias llevan cabo cursos de formación, Rosarios y clases de preparación sacramental por video conferencias. (NTC/Juan Guajardo)

“Queremos asegurarnos de que las familias están bien”, dijo Brennan. “Queremos que se den cuenta de que la parroquia todavía está allí para ayudarles y que estará allí cuando esta situación termine”.

“No sólo estamos llevando información”, agregó. “Se trata de hacer un acercamiento a las personas”.

En la Comunidad Católica de la Universidad de Texas en Arlington hay siete estudiantes que reciben formación para el Rito de Iniciación Cristiana de Adultos impartida por Jeff Hedglen, Director del Ministerio Universitario del campus de UTA.

Comentó que el programa de estudios en línea comprende enlaces directos que contienen artículos sobre cada tema. Los estudiantes leen los artículos antes de reunirse con él en una conferencia en línea para discutirlos.

“Siempre están dispuestos a hacer preguntas y luego tenemos una buena conversación sobre esos temas”, dijo Hedglen.

En la Catedral de San Patricio, el Diácono James Crites usa Zoom, no sólo para la preparación del Bautismo, sino también para ayudar a preparar las parejas

para el sacramento del matrimonio.

“Es como si tuvieras una lámina de vidrio frente a ti y ellos están al otro lado del vidrio; por lo que estamos prácticamente el uno con el otro”, dijo.

Los padres en la clase de preparación para el Bautismo “han respondido con agradecimiento, pues temían que tuvieran que posponer el bautismo de sus hijos”, agregó.

El Diácono Crites también se reúne virtualmente con parejas para la preparación del sacramento del matrimonio.

Marlon De La Torre, Director de Evangelización y Catequesis de la Diócesis, dijo que todos los cursos de preparación matrimonial y de formación para el enriquecimiento de la familia están disponibles en línea.

“Podremos hacer toda la preparación para el matrimonio en este entorno virtual”, el Diácono Crites comentó. “Preferimos en persona, pero estamos encontrando una manera de utilizar la nueva tecnología para permanecer virtualmente presentes y unidos, y realizar lo que se necesita lograr”.

Además de la preparación sacramental en línea, el Padre John Robert Skeldon, rector de la Catedral de San Patricio, ha

trasladado su estudio semanal de las lecturas de la Misa dominical al sitio web de la parroquia y ha agregado un “Fireside Chat” (conversación) en vivo en línea los lunes por la noche.

En la Parroquia de Nuestra Señora Reina de la Paz de Wichita Falls, el Diácono Jim Bindel utiliza ahora FaceTime para reunirse con las parejas comprometidas y Zoom para la formación del Rito de Iniciación de Cristianos. La parroquia tiene siete adultos y ocho niños que se están preparando para RICA.

El Diácono Bindel sugiere que los fieles aprovechen su tiempo en la casa para recitar el Rosario, rezar la Coronilla de la Divina Misericordia, leer las Sagradas Escrituras y hablar sobre ello con sus hijos.

Pero, sobre todo, recordó que: “No hay que temer”.

“Dios está a cargo de todo esto”, agregó. “A pesar de que le damos vueltas al asunto en nuestras cabezas, su plan es mucho mayor de lo que podemos comprender. Sólo tenemos que poner nuestra esperanza en Dios”.

“Además, debemos estar agradecidos en medio de todo, incluso en esta pandemia”, añadió. “Dios puede convertir cualquier cosa adversa en algo bueno para Sus fines”.✝️

# DIOS ATRAPA Las Flechas EN SU TRAYECTORIA



## Un explicación de las tres Indulgencias Plenarias

Por Kiki Hayden

Imagínate una flecha que se lanza al blanco. Tú eres la flecha y Dios es el blanco.

El verbo griego para “pecado” es *hamartánein*; la misma palabra que se utiliza cuando el arquero lanza una flecha y “no da en el blanco”. Cuando cometes un pecado grave, estás “perdiéndote el blanco” o alejándote de Dios. Si sigues yendo en la trayectoria equivocada, te estás perdiendo la vida eterna con Dios al alejarte de tu relación con Él. La Iglesia Católica Romana llama a esto el “castigo eterno”.

Si quieres dar en el blanco, debes dejar de dirigirte hacia tus pecados y, con la gracia de Dios, apuntar tu flecha hacia el corazón del Señor. Alejarse de sus pecados es a menudo un proceso doloroso que requiere un viaje de purificación. Los pecados son eliminados a través del sacramento de la Reconciliación, pero el desorden y los efectos creados por el pecado aún pueden permanecer. La Iglesia Católica Romana llama a esto el “castigo temporal”. La purificación del castigo

temporal puede suceder en esta vida o en el purgatorio. Afortunadamente, Dios nos ama tanto que nos permite corregir nuestro récord, sin el sufrimiento que generalmente acompaña a la purificación, a través de las obras de piedad, penitencia, caridad o mediante una indulgencia.

No obstante, tienes que aceptar la nueva trayectoria de tu flecha. Dios nunca te obligará a amarlo. Si eliges no volver a apuntar tu vida hacia Dios, la Iglesia Católica Romana llama a esta elección el “pecado mortal sin arrepentimiento”.

Imagínate a Jesús alcanzando por el aire para tratar de ajustar la trayectoria de la flecha que va fuera de curso (que eres tú) hasta que se vuelva a dirigir directamente a Su Sagrado Corazón, que está lleno de misericordia. Ésta es la indulgencia plenaria o “plena”. Es plena porque Él nos libera de todo el castigo temporal que nuestros pecados merecen. Es como una “infusión” de misericordia para que vuelvas a la dirección correcta, hacia la mejor relación que puedas tener con Dios.

La pandemia del coronavirus ha traído mucho sufrimiento, por lo que es

un momento importante para recibir una nueva infusión de misericordia. Por eso es, que como lo afirma la carta pastoral del Obispo Michael Olson del 24 de marzo, el Papa Francisco ha impartido tres Indulgencias Plenarias Especiales durante estos “tiempos difíciles”.

Por lo general, recibir una indulgencia implica la confesión sacramental, recibir la Sagrada Eucaristía y orar por las intenciones del Papa, y hacer una oración especial para aceptar la “infusión de misericordia” que se otorga para redirigir la trayectoria de tu flecha. Sin embargo, durante este tiempo de cuarentena, se pueden hacer algunos ajustes:

- 1 Rezar un acto de contrición perfecta pidiéndole sinceramente perdón a Dios y resolver no pecar más.
- 2 Hacer un acto de comunión espiritual, hacer la resolución de recibir la Eucaristía cuando sea seguro hacerlo después de que haya pasado la epidemia; asistir a Misa de forma remota; rezar el Rosario;





rezar el Vía Crucis u otra devoción; o recitar el Credo, el Padrenuestro y pedir a la Santísima Virgen María que ore por nosotros.

**3** Orar por las intenciones del Santo Padre.

**4** Aceptar al Señor y esforzarse para ajustar la trayectoria de tu flecha y orar sinceramente para volver hacia Dios. Cada indulgencia tiene una oración especial.

Éstas son las tres formas de obtener estas Indulgencias Plenarias especiales. Trata de hacer una sola cada día, incluso si puedes recibir más de una durante la cuarentena. Estas indulgencias están también disponibles para las personas que han fallecido, por lo que, si has perdido a un ser querido, puedes orar para que esta indulgencia sea obtenida en su nombre para que puedan dirigir su flecha nuevamente hacia Dios.

**1** Cualquier persona que tenga el coronavirus y sus familias, cualquier persona en cuarentena (cuenta también, si está en su hogar) y los trabajadores de la salud: Ofrezcan esta prueba como

un acto de fe en Dios y por amor al prójimo. Aquéllos que pueden recibir esta indulgencia también deben completar uno de los siguientes: unirse espiritualmente a la celebración de la Santa Misa a través de los medios como la radio, la televisión o el Internet; recitar el Santo Rosario; hacer el Vía Crucis; o al menos, recitar el Credo, rezar el Padrenuestro y hacer una oración piadosa a la Santísima Virgen María.

**2** Cualquier persona que reza para que termine la epidemia y que ora por el alivio de los afligidos y la salvación de los que han muerto: visiten el Santísimo Sacramento y asistan a la Adoración cuando se pueda hacer de manera segura después que pase la pandemia; lean las Escrituras por 30 minutos; reciten el Santo Rosario; hagan el Vía Crucis o recen la Coronilla de la Divina Misericordia.

**3** Las personas al borde de la muerte y que hayan orado antes: todo lo que se necesita es un espíritu completamente desprendido del pecado. Eso cubre la confesión habitual, la recepción de la Sagrada Eucaristía y la oración por las intenciones del Papa. Se recomienda meditar ante el crucifijo o una cruz, pero no es obligatorio mientras rezas por esta indulgencia.

En un momento de tanto sufrimiento, podemos consolarnos con la infusión de misericordia extra especial que Dios nos concede a través de las indulgencias. Entonces, si tu flecha se dirige hacia algún pecado grave que te aleja del alcance de Dios, no te preocupes. Él se acerca a ti para ayudarte a ajustar tu rumbo y dirigirlo directamente hacia Su corazón, rebosante de misericordia. 🇺🇸

## AMBIENTE SEGURO

### Para Reportar Mala Conducta Sexual:

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

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

### Para Reportar Abuso o si Sospecha de Abuso:

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

- ▶ Si alguien está en peligro inmediato llame 911
- ▶ Llame al Departamento de Servicios para la Familia y de Protección (DFPS) de Texas al (800) 252-5400.
- ▶ Reporte inmediatamente el presunto abuso a su supervisor, sacerdote o director, y presente el Aviso Confidencial de Preocupación con la información requerida por DFPS.

Para más información sobre nuestros programas de prevención de abuso, visite [fwdioc.org/safe-environment](http://fwdioc.org/safe-environment)







Los hombres se encuentran postrados durante la Letanía de los Santos durante su ordenación diaconal. (NTC/Ben Torres)



# UN GRAN EVENTO DE ESPERANZA

Seis hombres son ordenados como  
diáconos de transición

Por Joan Kurkowski-Gillen

**E**l Reverendísimo Obispo Michael Olson denominó la ocasión como “un gran evento de esperanza en medio de una pandemia” al celebrar la ordenación de seis hombres al Orden del Diaconado durante una Misa el 19 de marzo en la Catedral de San Patricio en presencia de sólo los familiares más cercanos y unos pocos clérigos.

Los laicos de toda la Diócesis pudieron participar de la Misa mediante la transmisión en vivo a través del sitio web diocesano, [fwdioc.org](http://fwdioc.org).

Jason Allan, Thomas Jones, Samuel Maul, Brett Metzler, Joseph Moreno y Linh Nguyen, quienes son miembros de la clase más grande de candidatos a diáconos de transición en los 50 años de historia de la Diócesis, le pidieron al Obispo que no pospusiera su ordenación, a pesar de la restricción en el número limitado de invitados que podían asistir y los demás cambios que se han impuesto debido a las preocupaciones de salud relacionadas con el coronavirus.

El deseo de los hombres de servir a la Iglesia en tiempos de crisis superó cualquier idea que hubieran podido tener de una gran celebración, según Maul, un estudiante del Seminario

de la Asunción. La ordenación como diácono de transición marca el último año de formación de los seminaristas y es cuando asumen el estado clerical y se comprometen públicamente a las promesas de obediencia, celibato y oración.

“Como dijo uno de mis compañeros de clase, preocuparse por la celebración en lugar de la ordenación en sí sería ignorar lo que es realmente esencial”, dijo. “La naturaleza del ministerio ordenado es de servir en todo momento y eso es especialmente cierto en el ministerio del diaconado. Todos estamos muy emocionados de dar este próximo paso y ponernos a trabajar”.

El compañero seminarista Linh Nguyen se inspira en la súplica del Papa Francisco de no olvidar a los más vulnerables.

“La crisis que estamos atravesando ahora da un énfasis aún mayor a las palabras del Santo Padre”, dijo el joven de 25 años que creció en la Parroquia de Christ the King de Fort Worth. “Hay una gran necesidad en la Diócesis de servir y cuidar espiritualmente a las personas de una manera segura para nosotros y

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para ellos. Ahí es donde están nuestros corazones”.

Aunque la asistencia a la Misa de ordenación se limitó a 50 personas, los feligreses de toda la Diócesis pudieron ver la transmisión en vivo de la liturgia. La ordenación había sido programada inicialmente para llevarse a cabo en la Iglesia de Vietnamese Martyrs de Arlington, con una capacidad para 2,000 personas.

El lugar fue cambiado para cumplir con las restricciones de salud pública que prohíben que se reúnan grupos grandes.

Al comienzo de la Misa, el Obispo Olson expresó su agradecimiento a los familiares de los seminaristas.

“Les agradezco mucho el que hayan

alentado a sus hijos y haberlos confiado a Dios y a Su Iglesia”, dijo. “Y le pedimos a Dios que continúe bendiciéndoles por su gran generosidad y amor”.

El Obispo expresó también su gratitud a los sacerdotes, diáconos y otras personas que apoyaron a los seminaristas durante su formación y sus asignaciones pastorales.

El diaconado fue establecido por los Apóstoles en la Iglesia Primitiva para atender las necesidades de las viudas y los huérfanos de habla griega que eran rechazados por la sociedad. El diaconado es el primero de tres rangos de ministerio ordenado en la Iglesia. Los diáconos proclaman el Evangelio, predicán, ayudan en las liturgias y realizan actos de caridad. Pueden también bautizar, presenciar el intercambio de los votos

matrimoniales, llevar el Viático a los moribundos y officiar en los entierros.

“Han rezado y trabajado duro para estar aquí esta noche”, dijo el Obispo Olson, dirigiéndose a los seminaristas. “Y esta noche es un comienzo, según la Providencia de Dios, y nos genera profunda gratitud y asombro por Su poder y amor”.

Durante su homilía, el Obispo le recordó a los seminaristas que su ordenación coincidió con la Solemnidad de San José, un santo al que pueden admirar como ejemplo e intercesor para llevar una vida de integridad, ejercer el servicio desinteresado y profesar el amor puro. San José, el esposo de la Santísima Virgen y guardián del Mesías, fue un hombre justo. La fidelidad y el conocimiento de la Palabra de Dios le





Los recién ordenados diáconos se arrodillan ante el Obispo Michael Olson durante la Misa de Ordenación al Diaconado Transicional en la Catedral de San Patricio de Fort Worth celebrada el 19 de marzo. (NTC/Ben Torres)



Brett Metzler reza durante su ordenación diaconal. (NTC/Ben Torres)

permitieron entender el mensaje del ángel en un sueño para aceptar su vocación y llevar a María a su hogar.

“San José responde al llamado de Dios no con palabras, sino con acciones”, agregó el Obispo Olson. “Sus acciones son valientes y esperanzadoras”.

El santo patrón, que tuvo una muerte feliz, sólo buscaba la voluntad de Dios, no la suya. Esa fidelidad le condujo a la paz y la alegría.

“Cuando salgan de la catedral esta noche como heraldos del Evangelio y como ministros de la caridad, asegúrese cada uno de que lo que va a ofrecer a los demás sea bueno y necesario”, aconsejó el Obispo. “Confíen en que

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El Diácono Joseph Moreno y el Diácono Samuel Maul, a su derecha, distribuyen la Comunión durante la Misa de Ordenación al Diaconado de Transición. (NTC/Ben Torres)

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nuestro Padre Celestial los sostendrá de la misma manera que sostuvo a San José en su vocación”.

Para prepararse para su ordenación al diaconado de transición, Jason Allan hizo un retiro de cinco días con su director espiritual en Theological College en Washington, D.C.

“Dedicamos tiempo para orar y reflexionar sobre el Rito de la Ordenación”, dijo el feligrés de la Parroquia de Santa Elizabeth Ann Seton, que ingresó al seminario después de graduarse de la escuela preparatoria. “Pensé en las promesas que haré como diácono y en cómo las cumpliré no sólo como diácono, sino durante todo mi ministerio sacerdotal”.

Cuando comenzó el antiguo ritual de la ordenación, Allan y los otros ordenandos se acercaron al Obispo uno

a la vez, se arrodillaron y prometieron respetarlo, y obedecerlo a él y a sus sucesores. Como señal de su sumisión humilde ante Dios, los hombres se postraron en el suelo de la nave principal de la catedral mientras el cantor dirigía la asamblea en la Letanía de los Santos.

Durante la parte más sagrada de la ordenación, el Obispo Olson impuso sus manos sobre cada hombre y recitó en silencio la oración de la ordenación. Después de ser investidos con la estola y la dalmática, una señal externa del nuevo ministerio, los diáconos recibieron el Libro de los Evangelios del Obispo con las palabras: “Cree lo que lees. Enseña lo que crees y practica lo que enseñas”.

El distanciamiento social y el uso frecuente del desinfectante de manos fueron protocolos utilizados esta vez para prevenir la propagación del contagio durante la liturgia.

Joseph Moreno que fue bautizado

como católico, pero no fue criado en la fe, espera servir como diácono en una de las parroquias cerca de su seminario en San Antonio. Después de servir en la Parroquia de San Mateo de Arlington como catequista, lector y acólito, el ex vicepresidente de Citigroup dejó su lucrativo trabajo para estudiar para el sacerdocio.

“Fue un gran paso de fe, pero permití que Dios me guiara y formara”, dijo Moreno. “Me di cuenta de que, durante toda mi vida, Dios ha estado ahí guiando mis pasos para prepararme para este momento”.

Parte de la formación de cada seminarista incluye un año pastoral dedicado a trabajar en una parroquia diocesana. Thomas Jones hizo un poco de todo en la Parroquia de San Felipe Apóstol de Lewisville.

“Una de las mejores cosas de mi año pastoral fue visitar a las familias y conocer a la gente de la parroquia”, dijo el veterano de la Fuerza Aérea. “La gente de San Felipe me dio un gran ejemplo de amarse unos a otros”.

Brett Metzler considera que la camaradería forjada entre los seminaristas durante estos momentos de estrés y ansiedad les da tranquilidad.

“Todos decidimos por unanimidad llevar a cabo la ordenación de inmediato y eso me pareció realmente alentador”, dijo el ex residente de Denton. “Ver el liderazgo y el testimonio del Obispo quita gran parte del pánico y el miedo que nos rodea. En el Obispo ves a alguien que tiene esperanza cristiana, no sólo de que esta crisis terminará, sino que Jesús está presente entre nosotros durante todo esta crisis”.

Los seis hombres servirán por un año completo como diáconos de transición antes de que, con la gracia de Dios, se ordenen como sacerdotes. 🇺🇸





# VOLVER A LA NORMALIDAD, O ALGO MEJOR

**OBISPO MICHAEL OLSON**  
es el cuarto Obispo de la  
Diócesis de Fort Worth.



 @BpOlsonFW

**C**risto ha resucitado de entre los muertos. Él ha conquistado el pecado y sus efectos nocivos de la enfermedad, el error, y la ignorancia; y su peor efecto, la muerte misma. Cristo reina y es soberano de Su Reino que la Iglesia, establecida por Él, inaugura por medio de la proclamación de Su Evangelio. Sabemos esto a través de la fe y se nos recuerda diariamente mediante nuestras oraciones, y por medio de la ofrenda y aceptación de las obras de misericordia en nuestro hogar y en nuestra comunidad en general. Las lecturas evangélicas de la temporada de Pascua nos presentan la misión inconfundible que nos dio Cristo de marchar rápida y confiadamente hacia el futuro para proclamar el Evangelio de la Resurrección de Cristo con valentía ante el miedo y la duda.

Las circunstancias actuales del mundo que vivimos cada día nos llevan a sentir mucho temor sobre el futuro. El mundo de la carne nos dice que Cristo no reina, sino que el COVID-19 reina con poder e intimidación para arrebatararnos la salud, quitarnos la vida y la de nuestros seres queridos, destruir nuestra economía y afectar nuestro sustento, incluso para quitarnos nuestra fe al evitar que podamos reunirnos (incluidas las Misas y las Confesiones) en grupos de más de 10

personas. El mundo de la carne nos dice que le tengamos miedo al futuro porque las cosas ya no serán lo mismo, que serán peores para nosotros.

No obstante, sabemos que no es así. Sabemos que Cristo ha resucitado de entre los muertos. El mundo de la carne nos dice que las cosas no serán lo mismo que antes. Sin embargo, a diferencia del mundo de la carne, sabemos que las cosas no serán las mismas de antes, sino que serán mejores. Forjamos el futuro al vivir el Evangelio con confianza en el momento presente. Cristo nos ha confiado la misión de convertirnos y convertir a los esclavizados por el miedo según el mundo de la carne.

Seguiremos adelante con confianza, sin volver a lo que era normal, si por “normal” nos referimos a dar por sentado los sacramentos, como derechos de conveniencia. Avanzaremos con confianza, sin volver a la normalidad, si por “normal” nos referimos a vivir nuestras vidas como si Dios no existiera de ninguna manera que afecte la forma en que vivimos y cómo cuidamos y servimos a nuestro prójimo. Seguiremos adelante con la confianza de no volver a la normalidad si por “normal” nos referimos a tratar la Iglesia sólo como un lugar para ir, y no como la vocación de nuestra relación con Cristo y del uno con el otro para amarnos y servirnos. Seguiremos

adelante con la confianza de no volver a la normalidad si por “normal” nos referimos a vivir la vida velando sólo por sí mismos como individuos y siendo indiferentes al sufrimiento de los demás. Esto significa que cuando volvamos a reunirnos en la iglesia y a recibir frecuentemente los sacramentos, incluidos la Penitencia y la Eucaristía, lo hacemos con un renovado espíritu de gratitud por la gracia de Dios a medida que Él cambia toda nuestra vida, cuerpo y alma, y que no es simplemente volver a una mentalidad “normal” que considera a la Penitencia como una válvula de alivio para los sentimientos propios de culpa, y a la Eucaristía como un artículo que sólo tiene un valor privado.

Sé bien cuánto extrañan ir a la iglesia el domingo. Quiero que sepan que yo también les extraño. Sus sacerdotes les extrañan. Sus vecinos les extrañan. Al pasar por todo esto juntos, nuestra visión al final de esta jornada ha de ser la de un regreso a la celebración plena de la Eucaristía dominical y de los otros sacramentos como Cristo lo quiso, pero no la de un mero retorno a la “normalidad”. Vemos la luz al final del túnel, la luz de Cristo, “quien, volviendo del dominio de la muerte, ha arrojado Su luz pacífica sobre la humanidad, y que vive y reina por los siglos de los siglos. ✚



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