

Diocese ordains three to priesthood



Father Ronaldo Mercado, Father Michael Greco, and Father Keith Hathaway (*Left to Right*) process from the altar of St. Patrick Cathedral where they have just been ordained to the priesthood, May 23. Read about the ordination and their paths to the priesthood.

(*NTC Photo / Donna Ryckaert*)

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Bishop Michael Olson imposes hands on Pedro Romero, invoking the Holy Spirit and ordaining him a priest for the Church and the Franciscan Capuchin Order of Friars Minor. Father Romero was ordained at Fort Worth's Our Lady of Guadalupe Church May 31.

(*NTC Photo / Donna Ryckaert*)

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We see faces; we hear voices

We see a face in the shining visage of the full moon. It's not so much a matter of there being a fully developed set of facial features on its surface to perceive, as it is that we, looking for facial features, find them.

It's what we've been doing all our lives.

When our parents first held us, we looked into their eyes; we recognized features there, though we had no names for them: eyes, a nose, a mouth, set in a roundish, oval. And from that point on, when we heard a voice or recognized the form of a human, we looked for that indicator of their intent, that source of love and approval and nurturing — the face.

Many times, I've noticed, especially when my mind is tired, that staring into seemingly random patterns on walls, on floors, even ceilings, that my brain will form those patterns into faces. Bearded and bewigged ones, angelic ones; too many Lincolns, Washingtons, and cherubs to count.

But it all links back, ultimately to those first experiences, when being lifted from crib or cradle, we came quickly to realize that the best indicator that we were loved was a smiling, cooing face, searching our own for signs of a response.

I think that's why the craters and shadows we perceive on our friendly sallow-faced satellite most often seem to be smiling back at us.

Western outdoors adventure writer Craig Childs tells of an experience deep in a slot canyon leading into the main basin of the Grand Canyon. He had been wandering interconnected canyons for days, isolated from human companionship, when he heard voices ahead, hidden in the folds of the rock.

He definitely was drawing closer and the voices became clearer as he approached. He could almost make out the words of their boisterous conversation. He was about to shout a greeting when he turned a bend and found water flowing over rocks.

Like faces from the visual, we seek to make human conversation from the auditory.

It's almost enough evidence to make you think we are deeply, to the core of our souls, engineered for connection to each other, to the giving and receiving of love and attention and mutual validation through our interactions.

Perhaps we are all bits of the Trinity, longing for the give and take of connectedness. Bits of the Trinity longing to share the give and take of life and love with humanity, even if we have to create them ourselves.

Jeff Hensley

OUR SHEPHERD SPEAKS

Pope Francis' Encyclical *Laudato Si'* reminds us of our responsibility to care for God's Creation, practice just stewardship



Bishop Michael Olson

In the first chapter of the Book of Genesis we read how God created the heavens and the earth; God created man and woman in His image and likeness — to whom He entrusted the fruits of the earth to sustain life.

In his Encyclical, *Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis appeals to all men and women of good will to exercise our God-given responsibility for stewardship of all Creation. The Holy Father reminds us that selfishness regarding the resources of creation will jeopardize our common human prosperity and threaten us with moral and social calamity in the Twenty-first Century.

Pope Francis explains in his encyclical that human ecology and natural ecology form an integral ecology. As the Pope told the European Parliament last year, “Respect for nature calls for recognizing that man himself is a fundamental part of it.” In so doing, the Holy Father eschews the relativism of so much of contemporary theory by appealing to one of the last vestiges of moral absolutes held by popular opinion, that is, respect for the environment.

Today, people of the world relate more easily to one another no matter where we live. We also relate to the environment around us, integrally woven by God into the fabric of our lives, affecting each and every living creature including other human beings. If we damage or destroy the environment, the Creation that God gave to us, we damage or destroy human beings. God intended for us to use His cre-

ation for the common good of each and every human person in order for each of us to flourish in the global society.

Pope Francis has explained that Creation is not a “property, which we can rule over at will; or, even less, is the property of only a few: Creation is a wonderful gift that God has given us, so that we care for it and we use it for the benefit of all,” in short, for the common good of all. Personal property rights are essential for the common good and toward a just stewardship of Creation; these property rights are measured by correlative responsibilities for a just order within society. In other words, to separate Creation from its relationship to God and to human beings is to reduce Creation to the raw matter of consumerism and to exploit families and human communities as objects of an unbridled free market. Such actions have always been considered to be sinful because they show ingratitude toward God and sin violently through acts of commission or omission against our neighbors in the human community.

Through the Encyclical, *Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis, continuing in line with the teaching tradition of his most recent predecessors Benedict XVI and St. John Paul II, warns that our self-centered culture promotes greed and wastefulness, whether it's an inordinate desire to drive a new car or to eat or to dress extravagantly.

Pope Francis particularly warns us of the evil of our “Throw Away Culture.” The ad-

vancements of modern civilization, unhinged from such moral absolutes as human dignity, have created a culture where all is to be treated as disposable. This approach especially assaults the dignity of the weakest and most vulnerable of human beings within our worldwide community: including the poor, the sick, and the unborn. The Pope has said that in this culture, “Human beings are themselves considered to be consumer goods to be used and then discarded.”

Laudato Si' calls on us to be responsible for God's Creation, the planet on which we live, because what we do affects other people within what the Pope calls our “common home.” It means that the natural ecology and the human ecology are so united that one affects the other. It means that we must nurture and protect our environment as grateful stewards of what God has entrusted to us. It means that to do so is to act in a way in which we care for the least and weakest of our brothers and sisters among us.

+ Michael F. Olson

+ BISHOP MICHAEL F. OLSON, STD, MA
DIOCESE OF FORT WORTH





CLERGY ASSIGNMENTS FOR THE DIOCESE OF FORT WORTH

by Most Rev. Michael F. Olson, STD, MA



PASTORS

Rev. Fernando Preciado, is appointed as **Pastor** of St. Frances Cabrini Parish, Granbury, and St. Rose of Lima, Glen Rose, from Pastor Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish, Breckenridge, effective July 1, 2015.

Rev. Joy Joseph, is appointed as **Pastor** of Holy Cross Parish, from Pastor of Holy Family of Nazareth Parish, Vernon, effective July 1, 2015.

Rev. Darrell Kelly, SVD, new to the Diocese of Fort Worth, is appointed as **Pastor** of Our Mother of Mercy Parish, Fort Worth, effective August 17, 2015.

PAROCHIAL VICARS

Rev. Salvador Hernandez, CORC, is appointed as **Parochial Vicar** of Holy Name of Jesus Parish, Fort Worth, effective May 1, 2015.

Rev. Luke Robertson, TOR, returning to the Diocese of Fort Worth, is appointed as **Parochial Vicar** of St. Maria Goretti Parish, Arlington, effective June 1, 2015.

Rev. Khiem Nguyen, is appointed as **Parochial Vicar** of Immaculate Conception Parish, Denton, from Parochial Vicar, St. Michael Parish, Bedford, effective July 1, 2015.

Rev. Michael Greco, is appointed as **Parochial Vicar** of St. Patrick Cathedral, Fort Worth, from transitional deacon, effective July 1, 2015.

Rev. Keith Hathaway, is appointed as **Parochial Vicar** of St. Joseph Parish, Arlington, from transitional deacon, effective July 1, 2015.

Rev. Ronaldo Mercado, is appointed as **Parochial Vicar** of St. Michael Parish, Bedford, from transitional deacon, effective July 1, 2015.

Rev. Pedro Romero Gutierrez, OFM, is appointed as **Parochial Vicar** of Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish, Fort Worth, from transitional deacon serving Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish, Fort Worth, effective July 1, 2015.

PAROCHIAL ADMINISTRATORS

Rev. Reehan Soosai Antony, SAC, is appointed **Parochial Administrator** of St. Rita Parish, Ranger; Holy Rosary Parish, Cisco; St. Francis Xavier, Parish, Eastland; and St. John Parish, Strawn, from Parochial Vicar of St. John the Baptizer Parish, Bridgeport, effective July 1, 2015.

Rev. Philip Brembah, is appointed **Parochial Administrator** of Holy Family of Nazareth Parish, Vernon; St. Joseph Parish, Crowell; and St. Mary Parish, Quanah, from Parochial Vicar of St. Joseph Parish, Arlington, effective July 1, 2015.

Deacon Rubén Castañeda, is appointed **Administrator** of Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish, Breckenridge, and Jesus of Nazareth Parish, Albany, from Administrator of St. Joseph Parish in Rhineland, effective July 1, 2015.

Rev. Khoi Tran, is appointed **Parochial Administrator** of St. Jude Thaddeus Parish, Burkburnett; St. Paul Parish, Electra; and Christ the King Parish, Iowa Park, from Parochial Vicar of Immaculate Conception Parish, Denton, effective July 1, 2015.

DEPARTURES/RETIREMENTS

Rev. Augustine Lieb, TOR, of the Third Order Regular of St. Francis from the Province of the Most Sacred Heart in Loretto, PA, has chosen to leave ministry here and hopes to serve in another diocese as announced by the Rev. Tom Stabile, TOR, effective May 2, 2015.

Rev. Francis Fernandez, OFM Cap, is leaving the Diocese of Fort Worth and his post as the Director of the Cursillo Center, effective May 31, 2015.

The Community of Franciscan Friars of the Renewal (CFRs), will end ministry in the Diocese of Fort Worth effective May 31, 2015. The community at Sacred Heart Friary in Fort Worth include: the Rev. Pio Maria Hoffmann, CFR; Brother Isaiah Hofmann, CFR; Brother Thomas McGrinder, CFR; and Brother Seraphim Pio Baalbaki, CFR.

Rev. Charles Calabrese, will retire as Campus Chaplain for Texas Christian University, effective May 31, 2015.

Rev. Antony Mathew, TOR, has been recalled to his religious order community, from Parochial Administrator of Holy Cross Par-

ish, The Colony, effective June 30, 2015.

Rev. Msgr. Juan Rivero, will retire as Pastor of St. Frances Cabrini Parish, Granbury, and St. Rose of Lima Parish, Glen Rose, effective July 1, 2015.

Rev. Jerome LeDoux, SVD, has been recalled to his religious order community, from Parochial Administrator of Our Mother of Mercy Parish, Fort Worth, effective August 9, 2015.

OTHER

Rev. Thomas Craig, is appointed as Chairman of the Mission Council for the Diocese of Fort Worth, and will remain Pastor of St. Vincent de Paul Parish, Arlington, effective May 13, 2015.

Rev. James Wilcox, is appointed as the new Campus Chaplain for Texas Christian University, and will continue his assignment as Vocations Director for the Diocese of Fort Worth, effective June 1, 2015.

RELIGIOUS SISTERS

Sr. Yolanda Cruz, SSMN, is appointed Delegate for Women Religious, a part-time position for the diocese, from Vice Chancellor for the Diocese of Fort Worth, effective June 1, 2015.

Sr. Diana Rodriguez, HCG, is appointed Director of Cursillo Center, with an emphasis on Cursillo programs and training Spanish-language catechists, from Director of Religious Education, Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish, Fort Worth, effective June 1, 2015.

St. Joseph's faculty, students put their faith into action on Faith Extension Day

By Donna Ryckaert
Correspondent

ARLINGTON — Focusing on Pope Francis' exhortation, "Go, do not be afraid, and serve," the entire student body, faculty, staff, parents, and alumni of St. Joseph Catholic School in Arlington participated in actively living out their faith by serving the less fortunate on their second annual Faith Extension Day.

St. Joseph pastor, Father Dan Kelley, kicked off the day with morning Mass.

"Let your hands be the hands of the Lord," he said to his young audience. "Let your voice be the voice of the Lord. Let your feet be the feet of the Lord, today and every day so that Christ may be seen in you."

Though the weather dampened some of the outdoor volunteer activities, the students' spirits were not. The sixth-graders managed to plant flowers at the Carmelite Monastery before it started raining. Others helped feed the poor both locally and internationally. Kindergarteners packed sack lunches for Union Gospel Mission in Fort Worth, while fourth- and fifth-graders prepared dry food packets to be shipped to Haiti as part of the Kids Against Hunger program.



Toto Ikem, Avery Grimmert, and Emma Oviedo sweep out a storage garage at Arlington Life Shelter. (Photo by Donna Ryckaert / NTC)

Other service activities included organizing and cleaning the Arlington Night Shelter, assembling furniture needed for refugees at Catholic Charities, performing for patients at Scottish Rite Hospital in Dallas, and cleaning out pet habitats at Fort Worth Animal Care/Control.

Sponsors and donations funded the entire event with 125 flats of flowers, 48 trees, food for sack lunches, dried food for Haiti, and all the furniture that was assembled.

DIOCESAN, LOCAL & STATE NEWSBRIEFS

By Joan Kurkowski-Gillen
Correspondent

KELLER — Jesus' example of love and service was the focus of Fort Worth Bishop Michael Olson's address to the 391 eighth-graders graduating from diocesan schools this May.

During his homily at the annual Diocesan Eighth Grade Mass celebrated May 8 at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Church in Keller, Bishop Olson asked his young listeners to remain guided by Christ's command to "Love one another as I have loved you."

"(Do this) not just by getting along," he explained. "But by doing what Jesus does: He puts your good in front of his own. Be of service to your neighbor, your friend, and even your enemy."

Being given a strong faith foundation during their years in elementary school and high school provides an even greater opportunity to "lead with the Spirit," the bishop pointed out.

"Be kind, truthful, humble, and ever more hungry to know the truth and share that with your neighbor — even when they are not interested."

Concelebrating the Mass with St. Elizabeth Ann Seton pastor Monsignor

Bishop Olson to eighth-graders: Pray, take time to listen to Christ



Eighth-grade students line up with flags from their respective schools prior to processing in to the Mass. (Photo by Joan Kurkowski-Gillen)

James Hart and other diocesan priests, Bishop Olson challenged the students to take time during their high school years to pray and discern how God wants them to serve others.

"How is He calling you to lay down your life in love for your neighbor?" he asked, listing married life, the priesthood, or religious life as possible options. "Take the time to listen. It's too important to miss hearing his invitation."

"Love one another — not at a distance or as strangers, but as true friends and disciples first of Jesus — then of each other," he said in closing.

The annual liturgy marks a milestone in the lives of the eighth-graders and gives them an opportunity to worship with peers who are also preparing for high school and new responsibilities. Participation is a key component of the celebration. Students carried their school banners into the church during the processional and served as lectors, ushers, musicians, and choir members.

After the Mass, classes enjoyed lunch and fellowship at local restaurants.

Isabella Thies is looking forward to high school but will miss the small school community she's enjoyed at Denton's Immaculate Conception School.

"Everyone is like family," she explains. "We're kind to each other and try to get each other closer to Christ. It's just a great school."

Marian

Mass & Dinner

for the Vigil for the Feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary

with THE MOST REVEREND MICHAEL F. OLSON, STD
BISHOP OF FORT WORTH

FRIDAY, AUGUST 14, 2015
6:00 PM Mass followed by Dinner

St. Mary of the Assumption Parish
509 W. Magnolia Ave. Fort Worth, TX 76104

for Single Women in Vocation Discernment

Sister Yolanda Cruz leaves Chancery to help her order establish discernment house, foster more vocations

By Joan Kurkowski-Gillen
Correspondent

CO-WORKERS OF SISTER YOLANDA CRUZ HAVE ALWAYS ADMIRED HER EFFICIENCY AS VICE CHANCELLOR OF THE DIOCESE OF FORT WORTH, BUT WHAT THEY WILL MISS MOST AFTER SHE LEFT THE POST MAY 31 IS HER JOYFUL PRESENCE.

“She has a very unique pastoral touch,” said longtime friend Pedro Moreno, former director of the diocese’s Light of Christ Institute, who now oversees Hispanic Ministry for the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City. “It’s a combination of true love and joy. She’s a very happy sister who loves being in consecrated life. It permeates her ministry.”

Sr. Yolanda is resigning from her Chancery Office position to head a project for the western province of her religious order, the Sisters of St. Mary of Namur. Along with Sister Gloria Cabrera, SSMN, and Sister Donna Marie Crochet, SSMN, she will establish a house of discernment in a seven-bedroom dwelling located on Our Lady of Victory Center property.

“It’s a leap of faith for my community and for me, personally,” explained the director of vocations for the Sisters of St. Mary. “But I think it will open doors, make us more visible, and help young women join a life of prayer and community.”

The concept and details of the project are still under development. Having resigned from her job as vice chancellor, Sr. Yolanda hopes to visit parishes and meet young women who are considering a religious vocation. A house of discernment provides an opportunity for them to spend weekends with the Sisters of St. Mary.

“I know God is calling us, in this Year of Consecrated Life, to invite young women to a religious life,” she continued. “It’s bittersweet because I’m passionate about what I do for the

diocese, but I’m also passionate about vocation ministry. It’s new territory, but I have a sense of peace about my decision.”

Sr. Yolanda will continue to assist Fort Worth Bishop Michael Olson on an interim basis as the Delegate for Women Religious. The veteran diocesan employee will maintain her email and phone number at The Catholic Center to facilitate contact with all the religious women’s orders in the diocese.

A farewell reception for the departing vice chancellor was held May 15 at The Catholic Center. Diocesan staff, members of her community, and friends turned out to show their appreciation for her 16 years of service to the local Church in North Texas.

Before presenting Sr. Yolanda with a memory book, framed photo of coworkers, and gift from the Chancery Office, Father Karl Schilken, vicar general and moderator of the curia, praised the hardworking sister for her achievements. Bishop Olson was out of town and unable to attend the gathering.

“We have many international priests and religious in our diocese, and Sr. Yolanda has overseen their safe arrivals and departures,” he said. “She coordinated with the INS (Immigration and Naturalization Service) to handle all of their paperwork.”

Sr. Yolanda was also praised for her role as liaison between communities of women religious and the diocese.

“It’s been a tremendous blessing to have her here as part of the diocesan



Father Jose Alvarez Abonce, CORC, talks with Sister Yolanda Cruz, SSMN, at the farewell reception held for her May 15.
(Photo by Joan Kurkowski-Gillen / NTC)

staff,” Fr. Schilken continued. “Work can become impersonal because of the size and growth we’re experiencing. It’s nice to have someone here with a smiling face and someone who is a woman of tremendous faith.”

Prior to becoming vice chancellor, Sr. Yolanda was diocesan director of children’s catechesis. Josie Castillo was hired 13 years ago to work in her office.

“I will miss her,” said the administrative assistant. “She makes everyone feel welcome and is very caring. If anything needed to be done, she was there to serve.”

Missionary Catechist Sister Eva Sanchez called Sr. Yolanda a talented woman well suited to new challenges.

“We need people like her to go out and present religious life to women who want to follow Jesus,” added the longtime friend who works at Holy Name Parish. “It’s important to let them know religious life is not mysterious. It’s an open door to follow Jesus as a light in our life.”

Addressing reception guests, Sr. Yolanda expressed appreciation for the many people who enriched her life.

“I can’t thank you enough for your presence, support, love, friend-

“I’m passionate about what I do for the diocese, but I’m also passionate about vocation ministry. It’s new territory, but I have a sense of peace about my decision.”

— Sister Yolanda Cruz, SSMN

ship, and collaboration in ministry,” she continued.

Pioneering a discernment program for her community is both exhilarating and daunting.

“The Sisters of St. Mary have always been pioneers,” she told the *North Texas Catholic*. “It’s humbling and life-giving at the same time. It’s such a privilege to work with other sisters and young women walking on this journey. This is how God leads.”

Mary Goosens named CFO, COO for diocese

by Joan Kurkowski-Gillen
Correspondent

FOR THE AVERAGE PERSON, UNDERSTANDING COMPLICATED SPREADSHEETS, PROFIT AND LOSS STATEMENTS, AND THE FINANCIAL JARGON THAT GOES ALONG WITH THEM IS NEVER EASY.

Mary Goosens is gifted with the ability to help people with limited business acumen learn about finances in language that's clear and succinct.

"I don't talk like a certified public accountant," explains the new chief financial officer (CFO) and chief operating officer (COO) for the Diocese of Fort Worth. "One of my strong points is that I can discuss a company's financial health at a level the owner can understand."

Goosens started her new position with the diocese May 1.

Before accepting the job, the Fort Worth native's skill sets and knowledge helped Catholic Charities of Fort Worth develop into one of the premiere agencies in the U.S. She joined the organization as finance director in 2005 and became vice president for administration and CFO in 2010. During her tenure, the annual budget of Catholic Charities Fort Worth grew from \$10.2 million to \$27 million.

"What I was able to do was pull together the financial picture of Catholic Charities as a whole," Goosens says. "I'm not a social worker, but I could make sure the program managers and front line staff had everything they needed to do their jobs."

Heather Reynolds, chief executive officer



Photo by Joan Kurkowski-Gillen / NTC

Mary Goosens

of Catholic Charities Fort Worth, credited the former employee with managing the organization's growth with "incredible finesse."

"She led Catholic Charities Fort Worth to a place of great financial health while, at the same time, placing our agency's value of compassion first and foremost in every interaction," the CEO points out. "All of us at Catholic Charities saw Mary's wisdom, experience, knowledge, and sound judgement come to life during her decade of service."

The seasoned analyst earned her Bachelor of Business Administration in accounting from the University of Texas at Arlington and began her career at Electronic Data Systems (EDS) of Plano where she was later promoted to senior financial analyst in the New York Regional office.

In 1995, Goosens joined AT&T Solutions

in New Jersey as a finance manager and worked in New York City as the company's major account chief financial officer.

Her career continued at Scientific Applications International Corporation of Falls Church, Virginia as a group controller for the customer solutions and services division and later business manager.

Goosens also served as business manager for Corporate Sportswear, LLC of Alexandria, Virginia.

After living on the East Coast for almost 10 years, the successful business/finance manager returned to Fort Worth to be closer to family.

"I missed my family, and I knew I could be a CPA anywhere," she says matter-of-factly.

A friend, who was on the board of Catholic Charities Fort Worth, told her the agency was looking for a finance director. She interviewed for the position and was hired. The change from profit to non-profit work was a leap, she admits.

"Now I can't imagine going back to the technology sector," Goosens adds, referring to past employment. "Heather Reynolds is very hands on and forward thinking. To do that you have to know where your money is coming from, how you're spending it, and what you're going to do with it in the future."

Now part of the diocesan leadership team, the CFO/COO plans to help Fort Worth Bishop Michael Olson meet the challenges of the growing local Church.

"My goal is to give the bishop and other leaders of the diocese the information they need to advance the mission of the Church," Goosens insists. "As CFO, I make sure the financial health of the diocese is moving in the right direction and that the money we're gifted is used in the way it's intended."

As the diocesan chief operating officer, she is responsible for the administrative and financial ministries of the diocese including the Catholic Diocese of Fort Worth Advancement Foundation.

The Holy Family parishioner is looking forward to serving North Texas Catholics.

"I'm a very behind the scenes person, but I do hope that when people hear my name, they feel confident with what's happening with our day-to-day stewardship," she says. "I want to hold myself up to that standard."

MY goal is to give the bishop and other leaders of the diocese the information they need to advance the mission of the Church."

— Mary Goosens

After 30 years, Fr. Charles Calabrese retires as TCU chaplain

by Nicki Prevou
Correspondent

Father Charles Calabrese, who served as Catholic chaplain at Texas Christian University (TCU) since 1984, retired from the position May 31 of this year.

Bishop Michael Olson, in announcing the transition within the TCU Catholic Community, thanked the beloved priest for his years of service to “generations” of TCU Catholic students.

“The Catholic Diocese of Fort Worth is grateful to Father Charles for his 30 years of dedicated ministerial service at TCU,” Bishop Olson said. In a statement released on May 4, the bishop announced that Father James Wilcox, who serves as director of the Office of Vocations for the Diocese of Fort Worth, will begin a new assignment as TCU Catholic chaplain on June 1. Fr. Wilcox

will continue his assignment as vocations director.

“Father Charlie,” as he is known within the TCU community, was honored at two campus events. He received gifts and a steady stream of accolades at a reception hosted by the TCU Office of Religious and Spiritual Life on April 22. Approximately 200 current and former students, faculty and staff members, and TCU administration officials attended the afternoon gathering.

A second farewell gathering, planned by students and alumni, was held on the evening of April 26. The reception was held after the 5 p.m. Sunday Mass, which is celebrated weekly in the Brown-Lupton University Union Ballroom on the TCU campus. Junior Brad Horn, a religion major who served as co-president of the TCU Catholic Community organization during the current school

year, was one of several community members who offered their reflections at the event.

Horn spoke of how easy it is to talk to, and connect with Fr. Calabrese, also praising his skills as a listener. “He has done so much for TCU students,” Horn said, “and has such a heart for the poor and the suffering, which has made him a great example for all of us. He will be missed.”



Fr. Charles Calabrese preaches during one of the many Masses he has celebrated as Catholic chaplain at Texas Christian University.

To Report Misconduct

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

- Call Judy Locke, victim assistance coordinator, (817) 560-2452 ext. 201 or e-mail her at jllocke@fwdioc.org
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To Report Abuse

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Fr. Gonzalo Morales, a faith fully realized

by Nicki Prevou
Correspondent

ACCORDING TO THE MANY PARISHIONERS WHO KNEW AND LOVED HIM DURING HIS 30 YEARS OF PRIESTHOOD, FATHER GONZALO MORALES LOVED TO SEE A CROWDED CHURCH.

He loved to preach, to raise his voice in enthusiastic song, to share the Gospel message, and, most of all, to celebrate the Eucharist.

The beloved priest died April 30 in Arlington after a lengthy illness, at the age of 56.

Several among the hundreds of friends who filled the pews of Most Blessed Sacrament Church in Arlington at his vigil service and funeral commented on how much “Father Gonzo” would have enjoyed the sight of so many of the faithful gathered together. Dozens of his brother priests also traveled from across the diocese to participate in the Mass of Christian Burial, celebrated Tuesday afternoon, May 5, with Bishop Michael Olson serving as the main celebrant.

At the vigil service, conducted Sunday afternoon, May 3, Father John Robert Skeldon, pastor of St. Bartholomew Church in Fort Worth, recalled how he, as a college freshman, first met the dynamic pastoral leader in the fall of 1991.

“Here was this priest, crazily on fire, preaching the Word” at a weekday Mass, said Fr. Skeldon. Fr. Morales, who served as director of the Office of Vocations for the Diocese of Fort Worth from 1989 until 1994, encouraged and supported the young college student on his path to the seminary and eventual priesthood.

“With him [Fr. Morales] it was all about connection, and about bringing the love of Christ to the world in a powerful way,” mused Fr. Skeldon. “Right now, I can count about nine to 11 priests who are

currently active in this diocese as a result of his efforts.

“The day before he died, I told him, ‘Thank you, Gonzo, for launching me into what would become this great journey of priesthood.’ As we celebrate his life and commend his soul to our almighty God, we remember that his life was a powerful witness. For him, it was all about bringing people, in a deeper way, into connection with the Lord Jesus.”

Lupe Gutierrez, a parishioner at St. Frances Cabrini Church in Granbury, where Fr. Morales served as parochial vicar from 2008 to 2013, said that she believes he was “extremely successful” in his mission to positively impact the lives of his parishioners, especially families.

“I really loved the way he preached,” recalled Gutierrez. “His style of speaking was so passionate, so heartfelt. He opened our eyes to see things differently, to appreciate family time and appreciate each other.”

“Many times, after he preached, he would sit down and start to cry because he had preached the Gospel from his heart,” said Gutierrez. “He made us cry, too. We will truly miss a beautiful priest.”

Juanita Cortez, a longtime parishioner at St. John the Baptizer Church in Bridgeport, brought several family members to the Sunday vigil service. They joined a large delegation of mourners from the parishes of Bridgeport, Decatur, and Jacksboro, in the North Deanery of the diocese, where Fr. Morales served as pastor of St. John the Baptizer; Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary; and St. Mary parishes, respectively, from 1994 until 2002.

“Fr. Gonzo was very much loved because of his big heart, and because of the wonderful way that he taught and preached. He was just so full of life,” said Cortez, recalling how the priest presided at the 50th



Fr. Gonzalo Morales

“Many times, after he preached, he would sit down and start to cry because he had preached the Gospel from his heart.”

— Lupe Gutierrez

wedding celebration for her and her late husband, John, in 2004. “He loved to laugh, to dance, and to sing; he loved to hunt, to fish, and he loved my cooking. I’m really going to miss him, but I know that he is now in heaven.”

Msgr. Joseph Scantlin, pastor of Most Blessed Sacrament and a close friend and mentor to Fr. Morales for over 40 years, spoke at both the vigil service and funeral Mass. Offering closing remarks at the vigil service, he pointed out friends from Fr.

Morales’ home parish of St. Philip the Apostle Church in Lewisville, and from parishes in Fort Worth, Denton, Arlington, Mineral Wells, Clifton, Morgan, Granbury, Glen Rose, and Grafrod.

“I want to thank all of you for being here,” said Msgr. Scantlin. “I know that Gonzo loved being a priest; he loved the work of being a priest. He loved his family; he loved his friends. He loved all of you.”

Msgr. Scantlin served as his friend’s caregiver during his final illness.

“It’s probably the hardest thing I’ve ever had to do, to witness his illness and his suffering, but it has also been a wonderful experience, one that I will never forget,” Msgr. Scantlin told the members of the congregation. “He always had a smile. He never complained.”

Fr. Morales specifically requested that Bishop Olson preside at his funeral, said Msgr. Scantlin. His second request was that his seminary classmate, Father Hector Medina, associate pastor of St. Bartholomew Church in Fort Worth, preach at the funeral Mass.

Speaking in both English and in Spanish as he addressed the congregation, Fr. Medina praised Fr. Morales’ “free spirit” and the “loving heart” that so generously served God’s people through his 30 years of priesthood.

“Christ is thanking him now, in his graciousness, for all of the Eucharists, the Holy Thursdays, the service that he offered to all of us,” said Fr. Medina. “Christ is thanking his priest for all of the crosses that he bore, for allowing Christ to lead him.

“We thank Gonzo for all of the fires that he lit in people, the lives that he touched through his preaching and his teaching. We bring him to the altar, now, as a priest. It is his priesthood that defines him. Today, Gonzo’s faith is fully realized.”

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CATHOLIC CHARITIES

Donation of accessible van will help CCFW serve handicapped clients at lower cost



Photo supplied by Catholic Charities Fort Worth

Heather Griffith, left, Chair of the Fort Worth Mayor's Committee on Persons With Disabilities, watches Howard Glaser, Mobility Ventures president, present the donated MV-1 to CCFW President and CEO Heather Reynolds.

Willie Rankin, Fleet Manager for Catholic Charities Fort Worth (CCFW), is aware of the data. Research clearly shows the critical link between access to reliable transportation and the opportunity for low-income workers to achieve financial stability.

Beyond the data, however, are the very personal stories of individuals and families whose lives are dramatically changed for the better through such access, says Rankin. He notes that CCFW's innovative Transportation Program serves approximately 10,000 residents of Tarrant County each year.

"Many of those clients have disabilities, and they want to be self-sufficient and to make better lives for themselves," Rankin explains. "We provide the services that allow them to get to work and to their medical appointments."

In recognition of the "outstanding" work that CCFW has been doing since expanding the agency's transportation services in 2012, Mobility Ventures LLC, the designer and manufacturer of the acclaimed MV-1 vehicle, has donated one of the wheelchair-accessible vehicles to Catholic Charities. A ceremony marking the donation was held May 4 at the Water Gardens in downtown

Fort Worth.

"Mobility Ventures was happy to donate a wheelchair-accessible MV-1 to Catholic Charities of Fort Worth. We are honored to help this wonderful organization accomplish its mission of serving those in need," said Howard Glaser, president of Mobility Ventures.

According to Mobility Ventures officials, the MV-1 is the only vehicle on the market that has a side-entry electronic ramp and allows passengers to sit in the front of the vehicle, next to the driver, with additional room in back for another wheelchair and extra passengers.

Willie Rankin explained that the MV-1, which retails for about \$52,000, is less costly to maintain and repair than larger vans, and is safer and easier for volunteer drivers to maneuver.

"These smaller vehicles allow for more efficient and, most importantly, more personal service," said Rankin. "Our clients can sit in a smaller space and be closer to the driver. This allows for more conversation."

For more information about the CCFW Transportation Program or to volunteer, contact Merissa Kuylen at (817) 534-0814.

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A coach congratulates a player during a Catholic baseball camp in 2014 at Russell Sports Complex in Kent, Wash. (CNS photo/Stephen Brashear)



Pope Francis helps a girl say a few words during a meeting with children of Italian prisoners in Paul VI hall at the Vatican May 30. (CNS photo/Paul Haring)



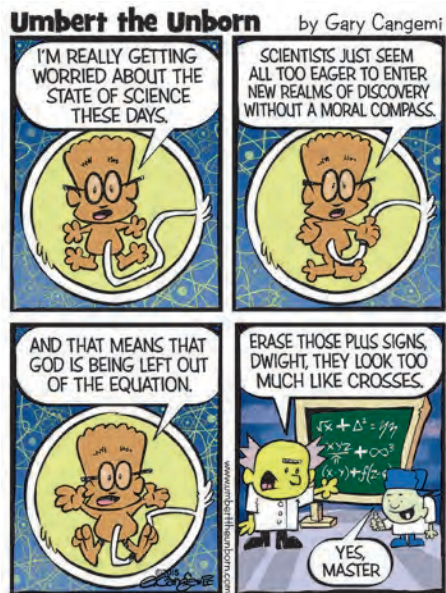
A banner shows new Saint Marie-Alphonsine as a family waits for the start of the canonization Mass for four new saints in St. Peter's Square May 17. (CNS photo/Paul Haring)



Pope Francis watches as children of Italian prisoners fly kites before their audience with him in Paul VI hall at the Vatican May 30. (CNS photo/Paul Haring)



Bosnian woodcarver Edin Hajderovac works on a chair for Pope Francis at his workshop in Zavidovici, Bosnia- Herzegovina, May 25. He and his father, Salem Hajderovac, are putting finishing touches to the chair made from walnut, which Pope Francis will use during his visit to Sarajevo. The father and son, both devoted Muslims, initiated the project in the belief that it will reflect the message of peace the Catholic Church's top leader will bring to Bosnia. (CNS photo/Dado Ruvic, Reuters)



GROWING AS A CHRISTIAN

Young adult ministry: no simple answers

By Jeff Hedglen

I CLEARLY REMEMBER THE YEAR I BEGAN TO FEEL LIKE AN ADULT. TWO EVENTS MARKED THIS TRANSITION. FIRST, I WAS 27 YEARS OLD AND I WAS DRIVING IN THE CAR WITH SOME HIGH SCHOOL YOUTH, AND A GREAT SONG CAME ON THE RADIO THAT THEY HAD NEVER HEARD; IT HAD COME OUT WHEN THEY WERE CHILDREN.

The second event happened a few weeks later while having dinner with one of the parish families. During dinner I discovered the parents and I were talking about a topic in which the teens at the table had no interest. I was having a grown-up conversation. These two events signaled that maybe, just maybe, I was becoming an adult.

The struggle to move from being a carefree young person to a responsible, full-fledged, confident adult is hard for almost everyone, and this is why I love journeying beside folks in their 20s and 30s today. I remember the difficult time so well and want to help this current generation navigate the ups and downs; all while helping them deepen their faith.

The task of Young Adult Ministry is a daunting one. We are charged with people from age 18-39. This is a huge age range encompassing many different stages of life: college students, folks who went right into the work force, post-college professionals, young singles, young marrieds, older singles, divorced, single parents, young families, and a few others, all with unique and specific spiritual, emotional,

You know how they say it takes a village to raise a child?
Well, it takes a Church
to raise a Church.
We are all called to reach out to
the young adults
in our lives.

Fr. James Wilcox leads a prayer outside St. Francis Xavier Church in Eastland with members of the diocesan Young Adult Ministry after they cleaned and restored areas of the church during the "Faith In Action Together" (FIAT) Mission Trip, May 20. (Ben Torres/Special Contributor)

and physical needs.

Another nuance to ministering to this age group is that in addition to the different stages of life, there are differing stages of connection to Jesus and the Church. Some are "all in" and attend Mass every Sunday and Young Adult events, as well as being involved at the parish in liturgical ministries, as catechists, and in other capacities. But this is a small sample of the group of kids who were brought to the baptismal font as an infant.

Most young adults are not attending Mass regularly, if at all. Many have not entered a church since their teenage years. Many would call themselves "spiritual but not religious," but many others would say they have abandoned faith in God altogether.

This is the reality that we face as a Church. As a matter of fact, I'll bet a good percentage of the people reading this are parents of a young adult, and you

know exactly what I am talking about.

Countless times I have been asked by the parent of a young adult "How can I get my child to return to the sacraments?" Every time I'm asked this question, I wish with all my heart I had a fantastic one-size-fits-all answer. But the reality is that each person has his or her own path back into the arms of the Savior. The best I could offer is that they pray for a person to enter their offspring's life that can bring them back. Also, continue to invite them to Mass whenever they visit home.

I was very lucky. Three months after I graduated from high school my parish started a Young Adult Bible Study. It was this group that kept me grounded, while the rest of my young adult life seemed to be tossed by one storm after another. It was not an expensive program. It was one man with a passion for the young adult church who gave us an op-

portunity to gather, learn a bit about our faith, find community, and stay connected to the Church while we found our way.

You know how they say it takes a village to raise a child? Well, it takes a Church to raise a Church. We are all called to reach out to the young adults in our lives. Whether they are people you sponsored for Baptism or Confirmation, or colleagues at work and school, or even your own children. Invite them for coffee and ask them about the last time they went to Mass or prayed, or thought about God. Send them a spiritual book that has meant something to you. Or just drop them a note or text letting them know you prayed for them that day.

Don't be pushy, just be inviting, welcoming, open minded, interested in them, and, most of all, be like Jesus when he looked at the rich young man: look at them and love them.



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

Making a new friend

Is a smile-worthy event

By Kathy Cribari Hamer

THE LITTLE 9-YEAR-OLD GIRL WAS MY FIRST “DAKOTA,” AND I WAS GLAD TO BE PRESENT WHEN SHE VISITED FORT WORTH.

Dakota displayed an innocent smile and large curious eyes. She had a combination of sweetness and spunk that engaged the people around her. I was one of them.

That night it was raining buckets, and my husband, Larry, and I had mistakenly chosen this uninviting opportunity to go out for dinner. It was the first time I'd left the house since breaking my leg several weeks earlier, and we chose to dine at Outback Steakhouse.

A large number of people also had ignored the weather that night, so, as it poured, the restaurant lobby was packed. Increasing the crowd, there was also a long bus parked outside, depositing its damp passengers.

When Larry and I had squeezed in, and shaken off the raindrops, he spotted a single space on a bench, and gestured toward it, suggesting I sit there until we were assigned a booth. As I maneuvered my walker, which had become a cumbersome best friend, I finally settled in, somewhat comfortably on the wooden plank.

Lucky me. I had sat right next to Dakota. My first Dakota.

She was dressed in jeans, a vest, and worn cowboy boots. I smiled at her, and began our conversation. “I bet you have a horse at home,” I said. “Do you?”

Dakota answered affirmatively, then told me the history of all the horses on the family's ranch in Stephenville. I said, “I love barrel-racing; have you ever done that?”

Before I expected an answer, her mother produced photos of her, racing around the barrels at several different events. I was delighted, and squeezed the little girl's shoulder. Her father joined the conversation, describing Dakota's favorite horse and when they had acquired it.

After dinner,
Dakota's face lit up
when they brought
her the newest and
largest dessert on
the menu.

He also spoke to me: “I am a curious man,” he said. “What happened to your leg?”

“I fell in the bathtub and broke my femur,” I explained. “The worst part was that I was in the bathtub upstairs in my house, and no one else was at home.”

Dakota perked up her ears and thought for a minute. Then the little sleuth asked, “How did you get out of there?” Not all kids would have thought that far.

I answered her, as concisely as I could, concluding, “God was with me, and He helped me.”

“That was a very smart question, Dakota,” I said. “We shared questions! I asked about your horse and you asked about my leg. We both found out things, didn't we? I think that will help us remember each other.”

The sad part of our conversation came when I asked her mom what had brought their little family to Fort Worth. She told me her mother, Dakota's grandma, had a leg amputated. In a few months, she would lose the second one. It was dreadful! My heart broke for them.

By then our beepers went off and we were escorted to tables. Dakota's family was within our vision, and we talked about her

until our server came. Then, Larry produced a \$25 gift card from his pocket, gave it to the waiter, instructing him: “Give this card to the little girl at that table. Don't tell her who sent it. Just say, ‘Remember to have dessert. Get whatever you want.’”

Words can't explain the joy that stirred in me. I hadn't smiled recently, but that night, sitting near my walker, and listening to my husband arrange a surprise, I was exploding with unaccustomed joy.

After dinner, Dakota's face lit up when they brought her the newest and largest dessert on the menu. She shared it with her parents.

In the car later, Larry said, “She will always remember this event. Years from now, maybe she will pass it on.”

Still, that wasn't the most significant part of our rainy evening. Larry mused, “Tonight we picked the Outback for our dinner, and it turned out that was where you ‘came back!’”

More importantly, we agreed, God had given me two gifts. One was the knowledge of my tremendous good fortune. I had broken a leg; I hadn't lost one like Dakota's grandmother had. I was blessed and grateful.

The second divine gift was meeting someone about whom I would always smile, and who hopefully would smile when she thought of me.

She is my new 9-year-old precious friend.

My first friend named Dakota.



Kathy Cribari Hamer and her husband are members of St. Andrew Parish. Her column was recognized as best family life column by the Catholic Press Association of the United States and Canada in 2014. She is the author of ME AND THE CHICKENS: BIG KATE'S SIMPLE WISDOM, and can be found on her website www.somethingelseagain.com.

'Play it again, Sam'

We need to think it through

By David Mills

MY WIFE AND I CAN'T WATCH THE GREAT OLD MOVIE *CASABLANCA* TOGETHER, BECAUSE I TEND TO SAY THE LINES ALONG WITH THE ACTORS. FOR SOME REASON SHE FINDS THIS ANNOYING.

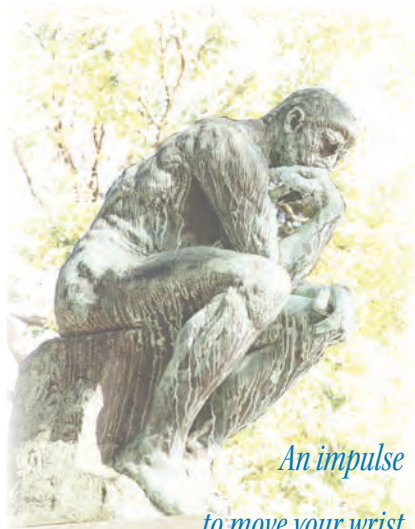
As you ought to know, because it's a great movie you really should have seen, the end of the movie hinges on two decisions. (Spoiler alert if you've never seen the movie.) The first is world-weary café owner Rick Blaine's decision to give up the woman he loves (and later to shoot the evil Nazi Major Strasser to save her) and the second, the cynical and corrupt Inspector Renault's decision not to turn Blaine in for the killing.

Both decisions depend upon the character's moral choice. The drama in *Casablanca* isn't just about whether the good guys will defeat the bad guys. It's driven by the question: What will all these people do? Will they do the right thing even though it will hurt? The action alone doesn't put you on the edge of your seat. The characters' morals do.

You may not know that a good portion of professional philosophers and other atheist academics want to deny free will. The atheists of the past usually wanted to say we were free because God isn't around to tell us what to do. Many atheists today want to say we aren't free, therefore God doesn't exist.

They take their main evidence from neuroscience. They say that studies of our brains show that we don't make decisions freely. We're pretty much programmed to make them.

The most famous experiments were made by a scientist named Benjamin Libet, who taught at the University of California in San Francisco. By scanning his subject's brains, he showed that the brain decided to do something — in the experiment the subjects had to flex their wrists — before the person knew it. Aha, some people, said, what we think are freely made decisions



An impulse to move your wrist is very different from thinking through an important decision.

are really only the firing of neurons in our brain. Champagne bottles popped in the homes of atheists around the world.

This isn't true, the Catholic philosopher Edward Feser recently pointed out, in a review of a book called *Free*, written by another philosopher named Alfred Mele. (The review appeared on the website of the magazine *City Journal*.) Mele's published 10 books on the subject of the will, nine of them published by Oxford University Press and the other by Princeton Press. He's not a lightweight.

Mele found a couple of big problems with the experiment. First, it only included the times when the brain activity was followed by the subject moving his wrist. It didn't show the brain activity when the subject didn't move his wrist.

Even if the experiment did show that the brain fired the order to move our wrists before we consciously thought about moving our wrists, that wouldn't prove anything, Fe-

ser points out. "It still wouldn't follow that the flexing wasn't the product of free choice. Why should we assume that a choice is not free if it registers in consciousness a few hundred milliseconds after it is made?"

We shouldn't, he says. We do lots of things without thinking about them, like make coffee in the morning, but we still do them freely.

Second, the experiment didn't examine the kind of decisions that matter when we're talking about free will. An impulse to move your wrist is very different from thinking through an important decision.

"Other arguments against free will fare no better," Feser concludes. This kind of argument takes scientific data, which may not be complete enough, and draws a philosophical conclusion that doesn't follow from it. Unfortunately, too many people hear "Science" and think "Must be true."

Back to *Casablanca*. We lose a lot when we give up the idea that we human beings have free will. Among the things we lose is the kind of moral drama we enjoy in a movie like *Casablanca*. Any Hollywood thriller can show the good guys beating the bad guys and give us 90 minutes of excitement. We won't remember it, though.

We need free will to create the more exciting drama of a man beating the bad guy within himself and becoming one of the good guys. There's a reason people still watch *Casablanca* 70 years after it was made, but no one but a teenage boy will watch *Mission Impossible* again. It's free will that makes the classic movie classic.

David Mills, former executive editor of FIRST THINGS, is a senior editor of THE STREAM, editorial director for ETHIKA POLITIKA, and columnist for several Catholic publications. His latest book is DISCOVERING MARY. Follow him @DavidMillsWrting.1

Making a vacation more...

[More like a pilgrimage]

By Denise Bossert

I SPEND A LOT OF TIME TRYING TO FIGURE OUT HOW TO GET THE MOST OUT OF THIS FAITH JOURNEY. HOW TO GO ABOUT IT. HOW TO OPEN MYSELF UP TO JESUS CHRIST.

How to engage the faith like a saint. I mull it over.

I'm not certain that is the right approach anymore. It seems more efficient to just be docile, like falling into the swimming pool on that old Nestea commercial. Don't try to figure it all out. Just give yourself to it, with abandon.

It's a pilgrimage, not a vacation.

Vacations are planned, mapped out, budgeted, mulled over. You hit the road and argue about when to stop and where to eat.

"You decide."

"No, you decide."

"But I'm not hungry yet."

"Well, I am."

"I have to go to the bathroom."

"But, we just stopped."

"That was to get something to drink, and that's why I have to go to the bathroom."

"If we keep having pit stops, we'll never get there."

No wonder we come home exhausted.

We spend our time bickering about the details and worrying about the unforeseen events and very little goes as planned. The magical moments, those moments that we will remember and cherish 20 years from now, those are almost always the moments we didn't see coming. The ice cream cone on our last night. The insomnia that sent us to the window where we had a midnight view of Lake Michigan. The afternoon nap in Florida that wasn't planned but came so full and so deep that we woke up and wondered where we were. Like when we were children. And then we smiled.

In the moment our vacation takes us

And maybe that's the point.

Summer vacations – like life – need to make room for pilgrimage moments. And a pilgrimage is about giving up control. It is about opening up the soul.

where we didn't plan, it looks more like a pilgrimage. And that's when we realize we really needed a pilgrimage and not a vacation in the first place.

A spiritual Nestea plunge.

Into the arms of Christ.

And maybe that's the point. Summer vacations – like life – need to make room for pilgrimage moments. And a pilgrimage is about giving up control. It is about opening up the soul.

It is about expecting nothing and receiving everything.

It is about letting God dot the "I" and cross the "T."

Faith likes a bit of willy nilly, a bit of waiting. A little wonder and awe.

A little wonder and awe at ice cream. At long drives. At Mass in rural America at a church we've never seen and will probably never see again.

Like being a disciple and walking from Capernaum to Cana with no expectations. It's the moment when you taste the best wine you ever had. And you realize that grace showed up.

Vacations can be the best of times. Or

the worst of times. And I think it is one of the sadder things that we as Americans spend so much money on something that magnifies the worst we have to offer one another, the very ones we are supposed to love the most.

Like children in the backseat.

"There. That's your half. Stay on your side."

"Hey, Dad, are we almost there?"

And you say, no, son. We are already there. This is *there*.

There's joy in discovering Jesus Christ in the *now of it*.



Denise Bossert has four children and is a member of Immaculate Heart of Mary in New Melle, Missouri. Her column has run in 46 diocesan newspapers. A Catholic author, speaker, and travel writer, her blog can be found at catholicbygrace.blogspot.com and at [Patheos \(patheos.com/blogs/denisebossert/\)](http://Patheos.com/blogs/denisebossert/). She is the author of *Gifts of the Visitation*, recently published by Ave Maria Press (www.avemariapress.com)

By seminarians, for everyone: Catholic Bytes podcast launches June 29

CATHOLIC BYTES, A NEW CATHOLIC PODCAST THAT OFFERS SHORT (5-10 MINUTE), DYNAMIC TALKS ABOUT THE FAITH IS SET TO LAUNCH FROM ROME, ITALY ON JUNE 29.

Deacon George Elliott, co-founder and director, said “The goal of Catholic Bytes is to offer dynamic catechesis for people on the move. Most people do not have time to sit down and study the faith, but these episodes offer an opportunity to learn more about Catholicism or to grow in relationship with the Lord, in short

5-10 minute sessions. It is a way to bring the Gospel message to the ‘peripheries,’ as exhorted by Pope Francis.”

Episodes offer listeners a variety of themes ranging from faith fundamentals, Scripture, dogma, morals, liturgy, spirituality, saints, Church history, and personal testimonies.

Catholic Bytes is an initiative of seminarians from the Pontifical North American College, Rome, including classmates of Diocese of Fort Worth seminarians Joe Keating, Justin Conover, and Matthew Tatyrek. It offers to a

global audience the expertise and experience of faith-filled priests, seminarians, and laity from across the world who are currently studying at various pontifical universities throughout Rome.

All podcasts will be offered for free and can be accessed at www.catholicbytespodcast.com. The website will launch with a ‘pre-release’ that can be accessed from June 15, 2015 until June 26, 2015. More information can also be accessed on Facebook (facebook.com/Catholic-Bytes) and Twitter (twitter.com/catholicbytes).

JOB OPENINGS

Preschool Director at St. Francis of Assisi in Grapevine

St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church in Grapevine is looking for a full-time Preschool Director. The preschool is for children from 18 months - 4 years old and is on the campus of St. Francis of Assisi. Classes are held on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9:00am – 2:00pm. The director will be responsible for the day to day operations, curriculum and teacher development. The preferred candidate will be a practicing Catholic in good standing, possess a Bachelor’s Degree with 9 credit hours in Early Childhood Education, have 3 years preschool work experience, and have supervisory experience. If you are interested in this position please send your resume to Fr. James Flynn at jflynn@sfatx.org or call 817-481-2685.

High School English Teacher at Cassata High School in Fort Worth

Essential Duties and Responsibilities: Provide incentive and motivation to enhance student achievement. Provide individual direction and instruction of course requirements. Conduct whole class instruction when appropriate to ensure mastery of course concepts. Develop curriculum in line with accepted standards as defined by State. Adapt curriculum to insure maximum accessibility to individual learners. Provide and maintain classroom environment that is educationally stimulating (visual aids, learning resources, etc.) Provide a classroom atmosphere that allows students to study and work free of distractions. Assist students in goal setting and tracking of progress. Assist student in the implementation of organizational practices and reinforce the use of such techniques. Evaluate student progress in completing coursework and provide feedback on assignments in a timely manner. Counsel students and redirect non-productive learning practices and behavior. Provide opportunities for students to acquire and demonstrate positive social skills. Explain, model and enforce school policy. Maintain accurate records of student progress and attendance. Maintain open communication with parents, counselors, administration and faculty to maximize student resources and success. Provide written documentation of student progress as directed by administration. Maintain familiarity with current trends in education and developments in content field. Model appropriate social and educational skills. Other duties and responsibilities as deemed necessary by the principal. Work Environment: Normal Classroom conditions; Moderate to high work pace for extended periods of time. Qualifications: Committed to the mission and vision of Cassata High School; Meets Texas Catholic Conference Education Department (TCCED) qualification requirements: Teachers in Grades 9-12; Bachelor’s Degree in content area taught; 12 hours in education courses or a valid, appropriate state certificate; 12 credit hours in each additional content area taught or successful completion of appropriate state certification program; Completed a criminal background check, Keeping Children Safe Program and TB test; Provided all requested supporting documentation. If interested, please contact Trinette Robichaux at trobichaux@cassatahs.org or at 817-926-1745.

Director of Campus Ministry at Cassata High School in Fort Worth

Cassata High School, a Catholic 9-12 High School in the Diocese of Fort Worth is seeking qualified applicants for the position of Director of Campus Ministry for the start of the 2015-16 school year. The successful candidate for the position must: Be a strong practicing Catholic, who is knowledgeable and passionate about their Catholic faith; have a minimum of a Bachelor’s degree in theology from a Catholic University (Masters preferred); have successful experience working with high school youth; have experience in organizing, planning and executing student retreats, liturgical experiences, and Christian service experiences; have experience in the continuing development of Catholic identity within the school setting; Be energetic, dynamic, and have strong communication, leadership, collaborative, and organizational skills; meets teaching requirements of the Diocese of Fort Worth and TCCED. Interested candidates seeking additional information about the position and school, as well as application materials may contact Mrs. Trinette Robichaux, President, at trobichaux@cassatahs.org or call 817-926-1745. Position Open Until Filled.

SEEKING GOD'S PATH VOCATIONS

Seminarians transition to summer activity and change of ministries

By Father James Wilcox

SUMMER IS A TIME WHEN DUAL EXPERIENCES IN OUR LIVES TEND TO CONVERGE. SPECIFICALLY, SUMMER OFFERS A RESPITE FROM THE ORDINARY BUSTLE OF WORK AND SCHOOL LIFE.

Simultaneously, these days offer the flurry of activities including camping, vacations, summer jobs, swimming, and an array of summer camps for band, cheerleading, scouts, football, etc. So while there is rest from the commonplace commotion, it is replaced by the hubbub of different happenings.

Our seminarians are experiencing this phenomenon as well. Most of our men are assigned to various parishes throughout the diocese to live with the priest, follow in his daily activities, and most importantly, minister to the people. Many of you have welcomed them by opening your hearts and your homes. Your fruitful influence on their formation during these summer months is a beautiful witness to your own call to live the Gospel message. Thank you!

As our men are sent — often in pairs as the disciples were in the Gospels — they too have left behind the daily routine of seminary life in exchange for the summer hum of parish activities. Often we think of summer as a “down time” in the parish, however, in my experience, it is anything but boring. With activities like Vacation Bible School, DCYC, camps, youth trips, and the like, parishes move from the ordinary to the extraordinary ways of allowing the light of Jesus Christ to shine in their lives. Reports from seminarians in parishes indicate that they have been enjoying these activities.

Other seminarians have taken an assignment further south, Guatemala to be exact, for a Spanish immersion experience. While they live with host families and take Spanish classes and tutoring from the local school, these men



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

In our spiritual life and in hearing the call of God for our life, all Christians are called to live in the midst of the convergence of dual experiences: the anticipatory feeling of desire and longing to do God's will in the midst of the peace and consolation of receiving a whisper of God's voice in prayer.

Fr. Wilcox digs a trench for flowers at St. Francis Xavier Church in Eastland during the "Faith In Action Together" (FIAT) Young Adult Ministry mission trip, May 20. (Ben Torres/Special Contributor)

are encountering the love of Jesus Christ as part of the Universal Church. This broad perspective and gaining skills in language will allow them to serve more people throughout our diocese upon ordination.

New seminarians have been through the application and acceptance process, and now they are underway, making preparations to begin officially with the diocese at the beginning of August. They are in the midst of leaving behind the comfort of what is known, to pour their lives fully into the hands of Jesus Christ through the seminary formation process.

They are living out the words of Jesus Christ: “Whoever wishes to come after me must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it” (Matthew 16:24-25). Most men in this situation have a dual experience as well. They are excited about the road ahead and anxious about the unknown.

This dual experience of emotions is true for much of our lives. For new parents, the excitement of a baby is tempered by the nervous-

ness of parenthood. For employees, the start of a new job brings enthusiasm for the adventure along with the humbling realization of not knowing the lay of the land.

In our spiritual life and in hearing the call of God for our life, all Christians are called to live in the midst of the convergence of dual experiences: the anticipatory feeling of desire and longing to do God's will in the midst of the peace and consolation of receiving a whisper of God's voice in prayer. Then, once one hears the voice of God leading them on their path, the courage and confidence to answer is only possible with the support and encouragement of others.

It is this intimate relationship with God through prayer that allows all of us to bask in the goodness of the convergence of experiences. Keep your prayer and sacramental life strong this summer, whether your adventures take you traveling across the U.S. or simply across the county to explore the lakes now full of water (Praise be to God!). Please keep the encouragement and prayers going for those who are working to answer the call of God.

FOLLOWING THE WAY OF CHRIST

Will we follow Jesus or a God of our own making?

IS JESUS CHRIST AT ODDS WITH THE TEACHINGS OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH?

Have you ever wondered if Jesus actually believed everything He taught to those around Him? This is a question that is gaining momentum among people who wish to defend a personal position contrary to the teachings of the Catholic Church. Their method is to use Christ and somehow convince people that what He taught was an openness to embrace a golden rule of loving everyone but leaving each person to their own devices with no attempt at a genuine conversion of heart to Christ Himself.

Our human condition is both a great gift from God and a great curse presented by our own free will. What was created with the fullness of grace, involves a drama of right and wrong choices, moral and immoral impulses, and everything in between. The problem appears when Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Word made flesh, becomes too much for us to handle. We then fashioned Him into our own version of the Golden Calf to fulfill our own devices.

The letter to the Hebrews tells us it is impossible to please God without faith, since anyone who comes to Him must believe that He exists, and that He rewards those who try to find Him (*Hebrews 11:6*). The funny thing about this Scripture is the last few words; “those who try to find him.” And “try” is the operative word. When Moses was delayed from coming down the mountain, Israel’s impatience and lingering pagan sensibilities gathered and encouraged Aaron to discard Moses as their leader and instead championed

a “new way” of satisfying their moral tastes by fashioning a golden calf. Sacred Scripture tells us Aaron did just that, and the end result was the slaughter of over three thousand men and the affliction of another plague upon the people of Israel by God (*Exodus 32*). As we can see with the example of the Golden Calf, Israel’s insistence to refashion God led to a series of events that did not end in their favor.

A catechetical refashioning of Jesus Christ

The reality of this story continues to this day. The latest example of refashioning Christ to fit a new moral norm occurred on the campus of Seton Hall University where popular campus minister Father Warren Hall was fired from his duties for supporting gay marriage on his Twitter and Facebook page. As one might expect, a group of individuals protested his firing, invoking the names of Jesus Christ and Pope Francis to legitimize their position.

The underpinning of this group’s argument is not so much invoking Jesus Christ and Pope Francis to defend their position, but the attempt to refashion Jesus Christ and Pope Francis, if that is possible, to promote a new form of doctrinal conformity, one that would deny any authentic remnant of Christ-centered thought. The *Catechism* reminds us that; the way of Christ “leads to life;” a contrary way “leads to destruction” (1696).

We should not assume that the attempt to refashion Christ is a new phenomenon. We first should look at what would make people think they could change Church teaching to fit their personal preferences. We need

look no further than the catechetical instruction of the last 40 years: the “Jesus loves you” lesson plan, with no reasonable explanation as to “why He loves us,” or, the emphasis to embrace the Resurrected Christ (happy) versus the Crucified Christ (gory). A sponsor in an RCIA class I was teaching commented to me that “Jesus was a pacifist.” I asked him to explain how Jesus’ crucifixion was a sign of pacifism. His response: “I hadn’t thought about that.”

Jesus Christ and the Golden Rule

Christ asks us to meditate on Him and imitate Him (*John 8:12*). These two requests lay the groundwork to freely and lovingly embrace the Gospel intimately and to lovingly unite ourselves with the Father and the Holy Spirit. These two seeds of meditation and imitation forge the Law of the Gospel which requires us to make the decisive choice between “the two ways” and to put into practice the words of the Lord which are summed up in the *Golden Rule*, Whatever you wish that men would do to you, do so to them; this is the law and the prophets (*CCC 1907*).

The Church of Jesus Christ

To imply that Jesus Christ Himself would somehow be at odds with his own message of the Kerygma is simply senseless. It reveals an ignorant and at the same time sinister approach to undermine the Deposit of Faith and refashion the Golden Rule. Man’s very essence is deistic, in that we are created in the image and likeness of God.

One of the gifts of Baptism is the opportunity to seek a more intimate union with Christ. Baptism gives us the opportunity to be one with God



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

and be of single heart and mind with Him. We become open to the light of reason, if we so choose, which disposes us to listen, based on right reason. Hence we become members of the Body of Christ, the Church, which he instituted at Pentecost.

Let us continue to pray for our brothers and sisters in Christ, especially those who may not fully understand the gift of their faith nor see the light of reason that the Church of Christ provides for them. One of the greatest acts we can participate in to foster unity of the faithful is to engage in the act of prayer affirming our faith and conformity to God. St. Francis De Sales describes this act in these terms;

Christian doctrine clearly proposes unto us the truths which God wills that we should believe, the goods he will have us hope, for the pains he will have us dread, what he will have us love, the commandments he will have us observe, and the counsels he desires us to follow. And this is called God’s signified will, because he has signified and made manifest unto us that it is his will and intention that all this should be believed, hoped for, feared, loved, and practiced.

Treatise on the Love of God, Book VIII, Ch. III, pp. 329-330

family ties

The global Church will focus the Catholic gathering of families con

POPE ST. JOHN PAUL II ONCE SPOKE OF TWO CIVILIZATIONS: A “CIVILIZATION OF LOVE” INTIMATELY RECEPTIVE TO GOD’S LOVE POURED INTO OUR HEARTS BY THE HOLY SPIRIT. AND A “DESTRUCTIVE ANTI-CIVILIZATION” CONFIRMED, HE SAID, BY THE MANY NEGATIVE SITUATIONS AND CRISES IN THE WORLD TODAY.

At the heart of both is family, he explained.

On the one hand, the family is called to be filled with joy and selfless love. But on the other hand, it remains vulnerable to dangers that can lead it to be a denial of the civilization of love, “destroying love in its various expressions with inevitable consequences for the whole of life in society.”

This focus on the family — both as a foundation for a civilization of love, and “domestic church” feeding into the larger universal Church — became the basis of the largest family gathering hosted by the Catholic Church: the World Meeting of Families (WMOF). Held every three years since 1994, it is set to be held in the U.S. for the first time September 22-27. The last meeting was held in Milan, Italy.

Now it’s Philly’s turn. The archdiocese is working jointly with the Pontifical Council for the Family to put on the international event which is expected to bring one to two million people on its final days. According to *Catholic News Agency*, it’s an estimate that may be met, considering the conference itself has 11,190 people registered as of June 1 (compared to the 7,000 registered for Milan’s WMOF in 2012).

The congress invites lay people (youth, families, single, and married), clergy, and religious to participate in four days of prayer, discussion groups, catechesis, Masses, and keynotes given by a line-up featuring: author, speaker, and host of the *Catholicism* series Father Robert Barron; *Caritas Internationalis* president and Archbishop of Manila Luis Antonio Cardinal Tagle; authors, radio hosts, and relationship-counselors Greg and Lisa Popcak; and Catholic convert, theologian, and renowned author Dr. Scott Hahn.

This year’s theme is “Love Is Our Mission: The Family Fully Alive,” and will tackle prominent family life subjects such as love, sex, marriage, unity, and other Catholic teachings regarding family, in a “fresh, insightful and accessible” way, according to Philadelphia Archbishop Charles J. Chaput.

The conference closes with the arrival of Pope Francis on the last day of the event, marking his first visit to the U.S. It is presumed the pope will celebrate the closing Mass.

In anticipation of the event, the *NTC* spoke with local Catholics about the importance of family, challenges facing today’s families, and what they hope to see out of this year’s WMOF.

Branden & Catherine Schneider



Catherine and Branden are high school sweethearts who married last summer. They are members of St. Patrick Cathedral in Fort Worth. They are highly involved in pro-life activities around the diocese and the Young Catholic Professionals group.

Andy & Kate Wheaton



Andy and Kate are parishioners of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Church in Keller. They have five children, from five months to nine years of age. He is active in the Knights of Columbus and she homeschools their children and hosts a monthly Rosary in her home.

Chuck & Pat Pelletier



Chuck and Pat are co-founders of Mother & Unborn Baby Care, a local pro-life pregnancy resource center that provides free baby supplies, counseling, and sonograms. They have been married over 40 years and have five children. They attend St. Patrick Cathedral.

the spotlight on the family when the largest international s convenes in Philadelphia Sept. 22-27

In what ways has your family helped catechize you and bring you closer to Christ?

A: Growing up, if I had a question or something I didn't understand or needed help with in school, it was common in my family to be able to go to them for help. Even if they didn't know the answer, they would find a book, tutor or something that would help me learn what I needed. The same was true when I had questions or needed explana-

tions of my faith. This approach has helped me realize that our beautiful faith has all of the truths. It has given me a hunger to continue to learn and understand more about my faith. By committing ourselves to learning, understanding, and living out the Church's vision of marriage and the family, we will change the world and make it a better place.



WORLD MEETING OF FAMILIES

How significant is it that our global Church is placing such a focus on the well-being and building-up of family?

A: First of all, it is significant because it recognizes that the family is under attack. Satan hates the family. He hates marriage. It is really no surprise then that, culturally, the family is taking a beating. Culturally, marriage is a dissolvable arrangement that's only worth maintaining if it's mutually enjoyable. The purpose of marriage according to the world is personal satisfaction. The result of that think-

ing is evident: no-fault divorce rates are staggering; young people prefer cohabitation to marriage; children are valued in small numbers at best, at worst they're considered a burden to be avoided; in some instances parents of many children are even considered irresponsible — supposedly unable to fully love each child as needed; procreation is being eliminated as an end of marriage altogether, muddying the collective understanding of

who can even be married, etc. In all of this, souls are suffering and souls are being misled. So the need for the Church to focus on the well-being of the family is critical. So much of what guides a family is experiential, it's generational. The sad fact that so many people never witness authentic, selfless, permanent fidelity [in] one's family means that those individuals will have a tremendous handicap in forming their own

families. And since the family is the very institution in which God has ordained that souls be created and formed, the destruction of the family is unspeakable. So I guess I would point out two things: first, there is an obvious and profound need to guide and encourage the faithful in their marriages and families; and secondly, I am grateful that the Church is going to do so in the Synod, or at least hopeful that she will.

In what ways has your family been a support for you in times of difficulty?

A: Obviously we've had difficulty in our family over the years, with Chuck being injured in Vietnam and being put in a wheelchair when we went through that hospitalization in the VA in Ann Arbor. We were the only couple who made it through as a couple that had similar types of injuries. Everybody else split before they got through the hospitalization. I think part of

the reason that we were able to stick together, other than our faith, was also our family and the way we were raised. Both of us.

Chuck had a brother who had muscular dystrophy and died from that; I had two brothers with hemophilia. I remember writing a note to my mom on their 50th and thanked them for the way they treated their sons, my brothers, be-

cause it really prepared us for what was going to happen to us. We saw the wheelchair and all the rest of that as being a sense of freedom instead of something that was going to limit what we could do as a family. So our family background was very supportive and then he (Chuck) had cancer later and it was

all family that stuck by us and took care of us, and made it all possible for us to keep going. The kids are there now which is really great for us to see. When we run into problems, the kids stand up and come and say 'What can we do?'

INTERVIEWS CONTINUED ON PAGE 22

World Meeting of Families continued...

How valuable is family to a good society?

Branden & Catherine

A: Each person is called to spread the Good News and love of God. We can do this in any profession or line of work. However the most important line of work is in our families. The foundation of our faith begins here and is lived out by example each day of our lives. We

must prepare our families for society and to prepare them with enough wisdom about their faith to continue to make faithful choices in society. This is where St. John Paul II's wisdom cannot be forgotten "As the family goes, so goes the nation and so goes the whole world in which we live."

How does the family impact the community of faith?

Andy & Kate

A: I think that the family is where individuals learn how to love. It is where they learn their faith. And it is where they learn to love their faith.

In my mind, and I think the Church would agree, the family is where spouses are supposed to give themselves fully to each other and to their children, thereby assisting each other in getting to heaven; it's where children should be soundly catechized, in order that they can truly know, love, and serve God; and it is where

joy and culture should be palpable! When this blueprint is executed, no matter the trials, individuals of the family connect a joy and a goodness to their faith.

My mother told me, "help your children to love their faith, then they will have the courage to defend it."

And families influence one another. Joy is visible. Fidelity is visible. Courage is visible. Our family has been so inspired by numerous other families to follow Christ. For us, it is

always the intentional, joyful generosity that calls for imitation. Marriage is the sign of Christ's love for his Church right? The family, the fruit of that love, is the sign of Christ's love in perpetuity. Our world desperately needs to see that love in the flesh. It is no accident that Christ instituted the sacrament of marriage as a very visible sign of his love.

Now we must have the courage and the intention to answer that call, to be a light and a hope to the world by our love!

How important is the family to living out the faith?

Chuck & Pat

A: The best thing I've ever heard was when a daughter of a friend of ours got married down in Victoria. And a priest from Irving was the witness and the homilist, and he looked at Jason and Ann at the time of the homily and said, "Jason, your path to salvation now has a name: Ann." And then he said the same thing to Ann. "Your path to sal-

vation now has a name." All of us who were married looked at each other. We need to start really looking at this and the children, the gift of the family. And that's the truth. Our vocation is our pathway to salvation and the family is definitely our vocation and that's our pathway to salvation. That's definitely important.

THE NUMBERS

A LOOK BACK AT THE 2012 WMOF — MILAN, ITALY

7,000 Conference attendees

350,000 Festival of Families attendees

1,000,000 Papal Mass attendees

FOR MORE INFO

If you would like to attend this year's WMOF in Philadelphia, please visit: worldmeeting2015.org.

To attend the conference, participants must register online. Advance registration is open until 9/15. Registration is not required for the Festival of Families nor the Papal Mass.

The Papal events will be free and open to the public.

NFP practitioners, doctors, and supporters hold fundraiser for prospective pro-life clinic with a

Unique Approach

by Erica Rohde
Correspondent

AFTER WITNESSING COUNTLESS NATURAL FAMILY PLANNING (NFP) PRACTITIONERS AND PHYSICIANS WORK DAILY WITH PATIENTS IN NEED OF PRO-LIFE REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH SOLUTIONS THAT WERE UNAVAILABLE AT TYPICAL OB/GYN PRACTICES, MANDY COX AND NICOLE HAVRILLA DECIDED TO TAKE A STEP TO FILL THAT NEED.

Last fall on St. Padre Pio's Feast Day, the two NFP practitioners from the Diocese of Fort Worth formed WholeLife Authentic Care, a nonprofit dedicated to opening a clinic with a unique approach to healthcare for women and families.

In a fundraising kick-off to bring the proposed clinic to the Fort Worth medical district, nearly 50 women and men gathered in the pastoral center of St. Patrick Cathedral, May 16 for a presentation on the development and vision of the WholeLife Authentic Care Clinic.

With more than a year's worth of planning completed, the full support of Bishop Michael Olson, and the help of pediatric practitioner Dr. Steven Krebel — one of the founding board members of the clinic — the clinic is targeted to open in the fall.

Members of the WholeLife Authentic Care board explained at the kickoff that the clinic will be divided into three departments: the Medical Clinic, the Fertility Care Center, and the Education program.

Founding board members Cox and Havrilla explained that rather than using "band-aid" solutions like IUDs, birth control pills, and artificial reproductive



Four-month-old June Robison is held by her grandmother during an announcement of fundraising goals for the WholeLife Authentic Care pro-life clinic at St. Patrick Cathedral's Pastoral Center. June's mother is a NaProTECHNOLOGY client and supporter of the proposed clinic. (Photo by Ben Torres / NTC)

technologies that run contrary to Church teaching, the envisioned clinic will operate under the Creighton Model FertilityCare System — a method of NFP that relies on charting biological markers in a woman's menstrual and fertility cycles. For medical and surgical solutions, providers will use NaProTECHNOLOGY (Natural Procreative Technology), a subspecialty of women's health science that monitors gynecological and reproductive health, and has successfully solved problems ranging from menstrual cramps and hormonal abnormalities to infertility and repetitive miscarriages.

"From the very beginning patients would experience that this is a healthy part of her body and see this as a beautiful thing that should be respected as part of being a woman," said Cox.

The clinic, with its pro-life culture and unique structure, will give women the local NaProTECHNOLOGY care and surgical fellows they seek, instead

of sending them to Houston, Austin, or Omaha, where those options are available, Cox and Havrilla said.

One initial step to build and equip the clinic, which already has more than 180 potential clients signed up online, is to recruit a Pope Paul VI Institute Fellowship NaProTECHNOLOGY surgeon out of the 20 in the nation.

"We have had three fellowship-trained physicians reach out to us in the past year," Havrilla said. "By building WholeLife Authentic Care, Dallas-Fort Worth would have an opportunity for them here.

WholeLife Authentic Care will need an initial \$700,000 in funding: \$100,000 for its first year's rental of space in the hospital district; capital expenses to outfit facilities, totaling an estimated \$165,000; and a year's worth of management, estimated at \$435,000.

At the fundraising presentation, Krystina Robison, a Holy

Family parishioner and client of Havrilla, spoke to the need for the clinic. Robison recounted her successful journey with NaProTECHNOLOGY.

"Five years spent trying to have a baby," Robison said, summarizing her frustration. "Five years of failure. Sixty times that the Lord said 'No.'"

Robison eventually spoke with Havrilla, and in 2014, traveled to Houston to seek a fellowship-trained physician, Dr. Brooke Jemelka. With surgical help from Dr. Jemelka, along with additional hormonal and cycle support, Robison's health improved. On Jan. 15, 2015, Krystina and Clinton Robison welcomed their daughter, June Violet.

"Only two cycles after my surgery, the Lord finally said 'Yes,'" Robison said. "This program is responsible for giving us our daughter. It protected the sanctity of her life as my progesterone levels were monitored throughout my pregnancy, to protect us against miscarriage..."

According to Dr. Krebel, to see the clinic to completion, it will take not just health care professionals and clients, but the community.

"I want you to understand your vocation," Dr. Krebel said. "That may include your time, that may include your talent, that may include your treasure. You now know this information. You're called to do something with it."

"Women deserve this," Havrilla added. "Our daughters deserve a better future. If we build this now, they will have somewhere to go from the start."

For more information please visit wholelifeac.com

Aiming High

Catholic Charities' new Padua

by Jerry Circelli

IN THE SPIRIT OF ST. ANTHONY OF PADUA, THE PATRON SAINT OF POVERTY, Catholic Charities Fort Worth is launching an innovative program designed to lead the poor along a path to economic independence and

an improved quality of life. Named "The Padua Pilot," the program aims at lifting the poor out of poverty long-term and breaking the cycle of dependency that has kept them there.

To formally introduce the pilot program, Catholic Charities held a kick-off event May 6 for about 200

friends and supporters at the Fort Worth Community Arts Center in Fort Worth.

Six speakers at the event — all sharing in the mission to end poverty — presented concise, fact-filled talks to provide background for Catholic Charities' latest venture. Topics cov-

ered included, "Welfare Reform," "The Economics of Poverty," "The Opportunity," "The Reality," and "The Pilot."

Introducing the program and the speakers, Heather Reynolds, CEO of Catholic Charities Fort Worth, began with a hard dose of reality.

The Economics of Poverty

JIM SULLIVAN, associate professor of economics at the University of Notre Dame, said the time is right for the Padua Pilot.

He reasoned that the cost of poverty far exceeds its toll only on the poor. "Everyone is paying the price, and it is steep," Sullivan said.

"The poor struggle to put food on the table, to pay bills, to make ends meet," Sullivan said, adding "40 million Americans are what the USDA calls 'food insecure' — people who skip meals, go hungry, eat less nutritious food because they can't afford to eat better. And almost a third of them are children."

Sullivan said that lack of money and inadequate resources keep the poor living in a state of stress and uncertainty. The poor, he said, face other issues besides lack of finances. These include living in dangerous neighborhoods, greater rates of crime victimization, poor health, and the increased likelihood of depression.

Poverty robs society as a whole of its overall productive potential, Sullivan added.

"If we could eliminate poverty, how much bigger would our economy be?" Sullivan asked. He said research has shown that lost earnings, as well as costs involved in dealing with crime

and poor health care add up to \$500 billion per year in the U.S.

The investment for society to help eliminate poverty, Sullivan said, "is worth it."

He continued, "This is not a call to throw more money at the problem. We already spend more than a trillion dollars a year fighting poverty in the U.S., but the return we get from this investment is very unclear because we know very little about what works and what doesn't work." More research is needed, he said, and the Padua Pilot is positioned to do that.

The Opportunity, the Reality

BRIAN R. CORBIN, senior vice president for Social Policy at Catholic Charities USA, cited more statistics about poverty. In Texas, he said, 3.6 million people live in poverty. "That's enough to fill AT&T Stadium 46 times over," Corbin said.

"So, what can one person do?" he asked. "To start with, we can't be content with the same old way of doing business."

He said that approaches used 50 years ago during President Lyndon B. Johnson's "War on Poverty" are still being used today.

"It's time to think anew," Corbin said.

"Pope Francis, who has spoken so eloquently about our responsibil-

ity to accompany those in need, has called us to leave aside the old structures and find new ways of being the hands of Christ, reaching out to those in need," Corbin said.

"The truth is that for the past 2,000 years, the Catholic community has been feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, and welcoming the stranger," Corbin said. "In each person and family in need we see the image of Christ. Ignoring their needs is ignoring Christ in our midst."

The Padua Pilot, he said, can be the first step for many in carrying on that time-honored service established by Christ Himself.

Building on Corbin's observations, Amanda Cowart, associate

director of Fund Development at Catholic Charities Fort Worth, said her organization strives daily "to see each and every individual as a whole person. This is how we give people hope," she said. "Our work is firmly rooted in our organization's core values of respect, integrity, compassion, hospitality, excellence, and stewardship."

Cowart continued, "Our organization's goal to end poverty is a radical one, but what I love most about Catholic Charities Fort Worth is that we are not afraid to take risks in our relentless pursuit to achieve it."

“We have
to stop

aiming so low.

Can we honestly

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done is help

them with a few

months of unpaid

bills?”

- Frank Santoni
Director, Padua Pilot

Padua Pilot focuses on lifting poor out of poverty — for the long haul

“What if I told you that despite a decade of growth and success at Catholic Charities Fort Worth, we are not satisfied?” Reynolds asked.

Despite Catholic Charities’ history of more than 100 years serving the community with scores of programs, 15 percent of Tarrant County

residents still live in poverty, Reynolds said. And half of all Tarrant County families don’t earn enough to cover their basic necessities.

“The question is — Why? Why can’t we do better?” she said.

Reynolds said that three years ago, her organization determined it

could improve on many existing plans that she said involve “federal funding parameters that lack clear goals and are often based on false assumptions about why people stay poor.”

Thus, the Padua Pilot was launched, with Catholic Charities Fort Worth partnering with Catholic

Charities USA and the Lab for Economic Opportunities at the University of Notre Dame to evaluate the plan.

“We want to learn more so we that we cannot only serve more, but we can assure that we are serving in the most impactful way possible,” Reynolds said.

Welfare Reform

MARCI YBARRA, assistant professor at the University of Chicago Social Service Administration, gave an overview of welfare reform. Ybarra said that welfare reform of the 1990s was implemented because past programs made government subsidies more attractive than low wage work. The purpose of the reform was to get people off welfare programs and into jobs that resulted in more income than the assistance program could provide.

The reform was successful in dropping the number of welfare caseloads, in most states by 50 percent, Ybarra said. Families, however, were not better off. Their wages were consistently low, work was sporadic with frequent unemployment, and poverty remained.

“Welfare reform dramatically reduced caseloads, but did not dramatically reshape poverty in the United

States,” Ybarra said. She maintained that today’s large, inflexible welfare programs supported by state and federal dollars are not designed to tackle poverty problems effectively.

She said, however, that organizations such as Catholic Charities, already reaching millions of low-income families every year, are less encumbered and more agile than large bureaucratic agencies. It is time, she said, to put the Padua Pilot to the test and evaluate the results.

The Pilot

FRANK SANTONI, director of the Padua Pilot at Catholic Charities Fort Worth, wasted no time in outlining “a new direction and new trajectory” for serving the poor by helping them lift themselves out of poverty.

He focused on three points. First, he said, “We have to stop aiming so low. Can we honestly say we helped someone leave poverty behind when all we’ve done is help them with a few months of unpaid bills?”

Second, Santoni said, “We need to be honest about the challenges the poor face. We have to quit looking at people as problems to be fixed.” They should be viewed for their resourcefulness, resiliency, and ability to forge pathways toward their own success, Santoni said. “We have to invest in the strengths of our clients and not focus on deficits.”

For someone to be truly self-sufficient, Santoni said, that person should be earning a consistent wage that can sustain his or her family, have adequate savings, and know how to manage debt.

Ultimately, Santoni said, people should be living independent of government subsidies. Catholic Charities is committed in the early stages of the project to send out “supercharged case managers” to provide close and frequent counseling for clients. “They will be equal parts concierge, coach, and cheerleader,” Santoni said.

There will be no overloaded caseworkers, only those who

can spend quality time with clients, setting long-term goals and building meaningful relationships.

Third, Santoni said, there needs to be a “new kind of collaboration,” between agencies working to eliminate poverty. He said even today’s best efforts are fragmented and added that Catholic Charities has already made plans to coordinate efforts with 12 key community partners to implement the project.

Over the next three years, with a base of 200 clients, the Padua Pilot will carry out its work. Results will be tracked throughout the period and compared to a control group using traditional approaches to assisting the poor.

“Then we will be able to point with confidence to what really works to move people beyond poverty,” Santoni said. “I believe the end of poverty is achievable, one family at a time.”

For more information on the Padua Pilot visit: catholiccharitiesfortworth.org/paduapilot



During a weeklong mission trip, a group of local young adults answered Pope Francis' call to take their faith outside and learn what can come from one simple...

fiat

Journal excerpts by Christina Benavides
Photos by Ben Torres



Jacob Daniell, of UTA, digs a trench for planting flowers at St. Francis Xavier Parish in Eastland.

UNLIKE MOST MISSION TRIPS, THE FIAT (FAITH IN ACTION TOGETHER) EXPERIENCE IS ONE THAT FOCUSES ON SERVING LOCALLY—ALBEIT IN PLACES THAT ARE STILL HOURS AWAY FROM HOME.

Designed by Jeff Hedglen, diocesan director of Young Adult and Campus Ministry, the trip is open to all young adults in the diocese. It features lots of manual labor, prayer, Mass, camaraderie, and of course, a big boost to spiritual life.

On this year's trip, young adults hosted a two-day mini-retreat for Father James Wilcox's confirmation students, and they helped the pastor of the four rural parishes (in Eastland, Ranger, Cisco, and Strawn) with beautification and clean-up of the churches.

We asked University of Texas at Arlington student, Christina Benavides, a member of the school's University Catholic Community, to share her experiences from the trip May 16-21.

MONDAY, MAY 18. Right at the beginning of Adoration at Holy Rosary in Cisco, we prepared a silent skit for the retreatants, and it elicited quite a powerful effect. However, what really made this holy evening a success was when we prayed with our kids in one-on-one prayer sessions. As they sang Jeff [Hedglen's] "Come, Holy Spirit," each one of us college students would swoop over to one of the kiddos, and offer to pray with them. They all accepted. I had never done anything like this, so I decided (rather cowardly, before the magnificence of Jesus in the Monstrance) that I wouldn't join in because I'd never done it before and didn't want

to mess it up for them. But then I kept seeing my groupmates successfully swooping and affecting the retreatants all around, and I realized that although the swoop was strong in them, they kept missing one of the girls in my group. She also noticed that she was one of the few who had not been visited by a college student, and appeared not a little left out at this realization. I waited a while longer, expecting someone else to finally notice and pop over to whisper prayers into her ear, but again and again, no one would appear. So finally, I pushed aside my worries that I would be so bad at helping her that she would quit being a Catholic, and I went to her. I asked

her if she would like to pray together.

She accepted.

I asked God for his ability to help us pray for those we trust, and after I prayed for those close to me, I then asked her if she would like to pray for someone in particular. As she began to tear up, she paused for a while until she replied in a voice I could barely hear that she wished to pray for her father. We began an Our Father.

This little prayer session impacted us both a lot, or if it didn't do much for her, it sure meant a lot for me. I felt like my eyes had truly been opened, and my heart felt dedicated to committing more time toward prayer and helping others.

TUESDAY, MAY 19. It's shed day! After we woke up, we dressed up in our best working clothes, and scurried to the common room to get together and leave [for Holy Rosary Parish in Cisco].

After breakfast, we went outside, and took a good look at the shed we had been asked to demolish. Now in our minds, when we thought "shed," we thought of a flimsyish plastic or light wood creation....This was not the case here. It had been constructed amazingly well.

When we first entered the shed, the first thing we noticed was the reek. I thought it was perhaps the blessing of a neighborhood skunk, or a cat's pee spot, but when one of our number entered, she leapt right out, and declared, "It smells of death." And so it was. As the guys started clearing some of the heavier objects out, they found the source: an electrocuted cat. Its tail had been shocked off and everything.

After a lot of squirming and washing, (with a couple of yelps and wild exclamations), the guys had finally taken everything out of the shed, including the air conditioner, window,

and door. And then it was time for lunch. I, however, had had lunch earlier, so when I found the sledgehammer, I couldn't help but give it a whirl. Following my example, my friends took up whatever crowbar or hammer was lying about, and together we decimated the wooden walls. Smash, push, pull, smash!

Meanwhile, some of the parishioners took Jeff [Hedglen] aside, and asked him if he had brought a bunch of angry people with him to help. Our ferocity, Jeff told them, was merely a side effect of a stress-ridden semester.

We had started *Operation: Shed our Anger* at around 9 a.m., and we finally finished the shed's demolition at two or 3 p.m. The shed was a glorious destruction. We took off for the showers. Gallons and gallons of water later, we headed for Mass at Holy Rosary. It was at this Mass that I even volunteered myself to read the first reading and reflection psalm. I hadn't read in Mass since my First Communion, so I was super nervous, but then again, my only audience were my friends and Jesus, both of whom would forgive me for any mistakes.



Richard Le Grand and young adult minister Jeff Hedglen (L) plant a rose bush at St. Francis Xavier Parish.



(L-R) Christina Benavides, Jeff Hedglen, Fr. James Wilcox, and the group of young adults pray May 19.



Monse Olmos, of Texas Woman's University cleans up the front of St. Francis Xavier Parish.

THURSDAY, MAY 21. It's around 4 p.m. as I write this. The retreat is officially over! I feel as if I've grown a lot from this experience, and I'm super grateful to have participated in it.

This morning we packed our bags and left for Mass and breakfast. We ate with some of the parishioners who had helped us with the shed, and who were feeling mighty generous with their cooking! They thanked us for all of our help and for our

dogged ferocity in our demolition of their shed. We in turn thanked them for all of their help and expertise, and for being so welcoming and gracious to us as we traveled. The people of Cisco are awesome.

After breakfast, we said our goodbyes.... We agreed to stop at a BBQ restaurant in a small town with a population of five. The BBQ was delicious, and we had the most amazing rolls! This was our last meal together, and we enjoyed it until the very end. I

WEDNESDAY, MAY 20. Yesterday's greatest challenge rested with the dead cat. Today's centered on tree roots [at St. Francis Xavier Parish]. You never know how infuriating tree roots can be until they get in your way mid-dig. Tree roots seem to be impervious to hoes, shovels, and stern lecturing. But we like to believe that they willingly gave up the fight once they saw Father Wilcox lead us in dancing "Cotton-eyed Joe." Digging these trenches was hard work,

but it was fun! The only regret I had was forgetting to bring extra mosquito repellent, but it's okay — my legs took one for the team.

I remember that right before we began the heavy-duty dig, a man came up to us and offered Father Wilcox \$10 to buy flowers for Mary. Father Wilcox was inspired by this, and headed to the nearest store to buy two rose bushes. We planted them on either side of the entrance to the church, and they looked like a beautiful addition.

feel very lucky and blessed to have met all of these awesome people, and I wish them luck in their future endeavors.

On our way back to Arlington we played some games in the car, and before we knew it, we were back. Once again, we said our goodbyes, and one by one, we all returned home, better than before.

Through the Tuition Assistance Fund, we are striving to put Catholic education within everyone's reach.

'We want Catholic School education to be available to anyone who wants to be there'

THE FAITHFUL IN THE DIOCESE OF FORT WORTH HAVE A TREMENDOUS OPPORTUNITY TO HELP FORM FUTURE LEADERS IN THE LOCAL CHURCH.

And it begins with support of Catholic school education, said Paula Parrish, executive director of the diocese's Advancement Foundation.

A graduate of Nolan Catholic High School, Parrish returned to that school for 23 years, including 15 years teaching and playing key roles in development, alumni relations, and communications. In her current position as executive director of the \$95 million Advancement Foundation, Parrish leads a staff responsible for securing the financial resources required to support the activities, ministries, and programs of the Catholic Diocese of Fort Worth, including its parishes and schools.

The potential for Catholic education in the diocese is enormous, Parrish said.

"We have about 6,000 students in our Catholic schools," she said, "and ironically we have about 45,000 students who are in public schools and going to religious instruction on Sundays in their parishes.

"I know there are a lot of those 45,000 students who would really love to attend Catholic school but



Nicholas and Jessica Gehrig, and Aubree Longoria, of St. George School, donate items.
(Photo by Juan Guajardo / NTC)



A Holy Cross student shows her artwork during Catholic Schools Week.
(Photo by Donna Ryckaert / NTC)

cannot afford the tuition. They need financial assistance."

That's where the Tuition Assistance Fund, formerly known as the Bishop's Scholars Fund, comes in.

For the 2014-2015 school year, the fund awarded \$624,400 to 786 students.

Scholarships generally range from \$500 to \$1,500 per deserving student each year, Parrish said. Specific criteria, based on need, are used in determining scholarships, which are awarded after each application for aid is submitted for a third-party needs assessment, Parrish said.

"We want Catholic School education to be available to anyone who wants to be there," Parrish said.

"It's really our responsibility to make sure that our Catholic school students receive the best education they can possibly have, and it's our duty to help families in our diocese in any capacity that we have to ensure

that these students get good Catholic formation early on."

Parrish stressed that all Catholics in the diocese should feel a vested interest in Catholic education for youth.

"It's everybody's responsibility," she said. "These are the future leaders of our Church, and they should have a good, solid foundation in religious doctrine and formation of their faith.

"In order to produce those leaders, everybody who really wants to be in a Catholic school should have an opportunity to be there. And that's what the Tuition Assistance Fund does."

Parrish continued, "Catholic schools offer the academic excellence that people are looking for. They are a gift to the nation."

Jennifer Pelletier, the new superintendent of schools for the Diocese of Fort Worth, agreed. Another prod-

uct of Catholic education during her youth, Pelletier is now in her 22nd year of serving the Church through school teaching and administrative posts in Washington D.C. and Texas.

Like Parrish, Pelletier said a Catholic school education should be attainable for anyone in the diocese who seeks it.

The diocesan school system includes four high schools and 18 elementary schools in its 28 North Texas counties.

High schools include: Nolan and Cassata in Fort Worth, Notre Dame in Wichita Falls, and Sacred Heart in Muenster.

Elementary schools include: All Saints, Holy Family, Our Lady of Victory, Our Mother of Mercy, St. Andrew, St. George, and St. Rita in Fort Worth; Holy Cross in Frisco; Holy Trinity in Grapevine; Immaculate Conception in Denton; Notre Dame in Wichita Falls; Sacred

Assistance Fund, the diocese is
Catholic school education

for everyone's reach

Stories by Jerry Circelli / Correspondent

Foundation honoring student becomes major benefactor in sponsoring Catholic education



A St. Maria Goretti student listens to the Mass on Ash Wednesday. (Photo by Juan Guajardo / NTC)



Bishop Michael Olson greets students at Our Mother of Mercy School. (Photo by Donna Ryckaert / NTC)

A MAJOR CONTRIBUTOR TO CATHOLIC SCHOOL EDUCATION IN THE DIOCESE OF FORT WORTH IS THE STEPHEN BREEN MEMORIAL FOUNDATION.

It was established in honor of Stephen Breen, who lost a courageous fight to cancer in 2004 at the age of 15, while a sophomore at Nolan Catholic High School.

Stephen's wish that less fortunate children be helped in order to have the same opportunities he had is being carried out

by the foundation that bears his name.

Since its inception, the Stephen Breen Memorial Foundation has provided more than \$900,000 in tuition assistance to children in Catholic schools in the diocese, impacting the lives of more than 1,800 students.

In addition to issuing its own scholarships, the foundation also contributes to the Diocese of Fort Worth Bishop's Scholars Fund, now the Tuition Assistance Fund. Since 2006, the foundation contributed more than \$250,000 of its total disbursements to the Bishop's Scholars Fund.

"Every moment in time is an opportunity to encounter Christ," said Jim Breen, Stephen's father. "Catholic schools educate children not just in mind and body, but most importantly in spirit, bringing Christ's presence to every classroom, lunchroom, recess, athletic field, and social events at the school."

To learn more about the Stephen Breen Memorial Foundation, visit stephenbreenmemorialfoundation.org. To view a video about the foundation, including commentary by Bishop Michael Olson, local Catholic school administrators, a seminarian, and Stephen's family and friends, visit stephenbreenmemorialfoundation.org/?p=598

Heart in Muenster; St. Elizabeth Ann Seton in Keller; St. John the Apostle in North Richland Hills; St. Maria Goretti and St. Joseph in Arlington; St. Mary in Gainesville; and St. Peter the Apostle in White Settlement.

More than 500 teachers are employed in those schools. Pelletier said programs like the Tuition Assistance Fund helps parents afford tuition to pay those teachers on a pay scale comparable to that of teachers in the public sector.

"My career has been all in Catholic Schools, and I can tell you that no Catholic teacher is in it for money," Pelletier said.

"You can't put a dollar sign on the tradeoff in being able to talk about God," Pelletier said. "We're trying to lead students on the path to sainthood, which is the point of all our schools — to make saints out of our children."

"But there is a cost and a reality involved," Pelletier said. Average high school yearly tuition is about \$12,000, while average elementary school tuition is about \$5,500 per year, she said.

Assistance from faithful Catholics in the diocese who donate to the Tuition Assistance Fund, said Pelletier, is critical in helping students

obtain a Catholic school education.

The result of their generosity is priceless, Pelletier said.

"God is in our school building. He is everywhere, but we literally have Christ in the Eucharist," Pelletier said. "We have Mass, Adoration, Rosary — all of these things that unite us as a faith community. It all helps lead our students down a path where they can find a stronger relationship with God."

While the Tuition Assistance Fund is headed in the right direction, \$6 million remains in unfunded need, according to the diocese, so more donors and gifts are actively being sought.

In the months ahead, look for more information about the Tuition Assistance Fund and fundraising activities planned, including possible golf tournaments, appeals to local Catholic school alumni, and activities at parishes.

For more information on Catholic Schools in the Diocese of Fort Worth visit fwdioc.org/catholic-schools-about.

For more information on how you can help the Tuition Assistance Fund, visit advancement-foundation.org/bishops-scholars

PEOPLE GIVING TO PEOPLE:

ANNUAL
Diocesan Appeal
2016



How *SHARING IN*
MINISTRY, NOW THE
ANNUAL DIOCESAN APPEAL,
IS GOING BEYOND THE
STATS, LEDGERS, AND
NUMBERS TO SHOW
THE PEOPLE — AND
MINISTRIES — DIRECTLY
IMPACTED BY DONORS’
GENEROSITY

by Elizabeth Sehon Harris
Correspondent



Caitlin Rye, of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton in Keller, dances during a presentation at the 2013 Diocesan Catholic Youth Conference. More than a thousand middle school and high school youth from around the diocese attend DCYC every summer, many of whom receive scholarships funded by the Annual Diocesan Appeal.

CHANGES ARE AHEAD FOR THE DIOCESE’S ANNUAL APPEAL, STARTING WITH A NEW BRAND AND A RENEWED EFFORT TO PUT A FACE TO THE LIVES IMPACTED BY THE DIOCESAN PROGRAMS, SERVICES, AND MINISTRIES, WHICH ARE DEPENDENT ON THE CRITICAL FUNDING AND RESOURCES RAISED EACH YEAR.

Sharing in Ministry, the theme of the Bishop’s annual appeal campaign for more than 30 years, is now titled the *Annual Diocesan Appeal* and

already has realized an increase in the growth in contributions this past year.

“We are just calling it what it is — there’s no fancy name, really,” said Pat Miller, associate director of the Advancement Foundation, the office that oversees the Annual Diocesan Appeal. “*Sharing in Ministry* will be gone — it’s history, literally.”

Coinciding with the new name is an increase in the goal by \$150,000 to \$3.15 million.

The Annual Diocesan Appeal raises the

resources necessary to administer and carry out the programs, services, and ministries that are beyond the scope of individual parishes. Its outreach is made possible by the collective giving of the faithful of the diocese.

The areas the annual appeal directly impacts, or case areas, are Seminarians, Permanent Diaconate, Youth Ministry, Campus Ministry, Outreach to Parishes and Schools, and Catholic Charities.

Every year, the budget needs of each of the

Campus Ministry

Campus Ministry often provides a place at the secular university for students seeking to continue building their faith with other young adult Catholics.

The University Catholic Community at UT Arlington is a refuge for continuing faith formation for young Catholics.

“The ministry has given me a home away from home,” said **CLAYTON KOOP**, 20, a geology student from Wylie who found campus ministry during his first semester.

“I’m not from here, so it’s like a safe haven. I’ve met a bunch of friends and people I can share my

faith with. It gives me a community, and that’s something that everyone seeks in college.”

Koop has become a leader at “Awakening” retreats conducted each year near campus. He’s now also assisting other universities with their retreats.



Photo by Elizabeth Sehon Harris

diocese's ministries is identified. But, beginning this year Miller and others will work to show the people impacted by each of the ministries funded.

That will make the fiscal year 2016 appeal, which launches July 1, a personal mission for Miller, who will show the diocese the faces and voices of participants affected in all six case areas.

"We need to tell the stories of the people who are impacted," Miller said.

Ministry directors are eager to tell their stories.

Jeff Hedglen, director of the diocese's Campus and Young Adult Ministry, has ministered to students at the University of Texas at Arlington for three years and has seen firsthand the impact on students.

Hedglen said every semester campus ministries see students walk through their doors seeking the sacrament of Confirmation, as well as those interested in learning about becoming Catholic and the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA).

"Having a space for students to gather, build community, participate in the sacraments, have opportunities for catechesis and service is vital not only for the students who are actively seeking God, but they are also a safe place for those who are questioning," he said.

Hedglen also said campus and young adult ministries are where young Catholics meet their spouses, join the Knights of Columbus, forge

lifelong friendships, and connect with their parishes to become active in the life of the Church.

Funds from the Diocesan Annual Appeal provide the staffing and facilities for these campus ministries, he said.

But the buck doesn't stop there. Jason Spoolstra, the director of youth ministry, is teaching teens all across North Texas to brush up on their "three-minute testimony."

During the Young Disciples camp in Granbury this June, young Catholics were taught to explain how God impacted their lives in less than three minutes, so they can be prepared to testify about the Catholic faith in any situation or circumstance.

"If they're at school, or at the grocery store, or at home, or at their parish serving as leaders, then they can tell how God has changed their lives and give their story," he said.

However, without the help of the annual appeal, it would be impossible for some youth to join in these events, Spoolstra said.

"Some of these kids come from very rural parishes and may not have the income to come all the way out here," Spoolstra said, referring to the appeal-funded scholarships offered to youth attending Young Disciples and the 2015 Diocesan Catholic Youth Conference later this summer.

The appeal also helps fund the new diaconal formation classes that were on hold for six years because of budget constraints.

Juan Rendon, new director of

Permanent Deacon Formation, was chosen by Fort Worth Bishop Michael F. Olson to recruit and oversee candidates for the formation program.

In the Fort Worth Diocese, several deacons will retire soon, which requires a critical process of recruitment and replacement.

"It's been overwhelmingly supportive and positive," Rendon said, referring to the response to reviving the recruitment, screening, and formation program. "We have the resources now to start it again."

The goal increase and push are inspired by Bishop Olson.

According to Miller, Bishop Olson's aspiration has fed a new vibrancy within the diocese to reach out to people in need.

To do that, the bishop is using digital media, like video. He'll speak about making a contribution to the appeal through a videotaped address presented at Masses throughout the diocese on the weekend of Sept. 20.

"He can't physically be at all locations for every Mass on any given weekend, but the fact that he is going to be giving the same message to the people on the same weekend to all of our parishes is significant," Miller said. "He will be front and center, speaking about the needs for this coming year."

The bishop's video is just one of many ways the appeal is being launched, Miller said, but she is convinced that showing those faces

Youth Ministry



Photo by Elizabeth Sehon Harris

Each summer, the Office of Youth Ministry and Adolescent Catechesis uses diocese-wide retreats, like Young Disciples and DCYC, to help students build personal relationships with Christ.

After attending a five-day Young Disciples retreat in Granbury, **CATHERINE RICHARDSON, 16**, a junior at Mansfield Legacy High said, "It's giving me confidence spiritually. I feel like [my spiritual journey] is a work in progress because I'm still going through the process of learning about Christ, and I'm not fully there yet.... Tonight at our service I felt God's presence and have met great people here."

the campaign impacts will have the most significance.

"That's a switch for us, in our phraseology," she said. "We always talked about the ministry, but not always about who is impacted. It's people giving to people."

Permanent Diaconate



It's difficult to imagine the life of the Church without the leadership of the deacon and his role in its various ministries.

DEACON SCOTT FRANCE of Holy Redeemer Parish in Aledo was ordained in 2009.

A member of the RCIA team at the parish, France was merely curious about the diocese's Permanent Deacon Formation. So he asked Father Robert Wilson, founding pastor of Holy Redeemer Parish, and

now deceased, Fr. Wilson encouraged France to join the formation program. Soon the husband, and father of two, who makes his living in finance, was on his way to joining the diaconate.

Adult men, married or single, are eligible for the Permanent Deacon Formation, which has been a crucial ministry since the Church's earliest days and was re-emphasized and restored through the Second Vatican Council.

A number of deacons are set to retire soon, creating a need to recruit and replace.

"This is one of the greatest things I've ever done in my life, and it's an answer I was awaiting," France said.

"I turned myself over [to God] and said 'I'm here, do what you want with me', and this is what ended up happening."

Stay the Course

Catholic Charities helping low-income college students earn their degrees

by Joan Kurkowski-Gillen
Correspondent

DANIELA SERRANO HOPES TO BECOME A REGISTERED NURSE ONE DAY. BUT HER STUDIES TO EARN A COLLEGE DEGREE ALMOST ENDED BECAUSE OF FAMILY AND ECONOMIC STRUGGLES.

The Tarrant County College student works full time in the medical records department of a hospital. She's also the mother of seven- and 12-year-old children and the family's breadwinner. Any unexpected expense pushes her over a financial cliff.

"There are house payments, car payments, and costs associated with school for myself and my children," explains the 29-year-old.

When her car was towed and the computer she needs for online courses broke down, Serrano thought about quitting school to find a higher paying job.

Thanks to the Stay the Course program, that didn't happen. Designed to reduce community college dropout rates by providing comprehensive support services to pre-selected, low-income Tarrant County College students, Stay the Course is the result of a partnership between the Lab for Economic Opportunities (LEO) at the University of Notre Dame and Catholic Charities Fort Worth.

The pilot program replaced Serrano's broken computer and provided Christmas gifts for her children.

"I can always go to my counselor for help," she says appreciatively. "The program helps me get stuff for the kids I can't afford at the moment. It's keeping me in school."

Community college completion rates are low for struggling, first-generation college students like Serrano. With help from Catholic Charities, Notre Dame researchers are evaluating how offering specific support services increases the likeli-



Tracy Saheib (left) chats with her Stay the Course counselor, Kara Rodriguez, at Tarrant County College Trinity River Campus.

Photo by Joan Kurkowski-Gillen / NTC

hood of earning a college degree.

"LEO is a research center. Our main goal is to identify effective anti-poverty programs through rigorous research," says Jim Sullivan, LEO director at Notre Dame. "We asked Catholic Charities USA to put us in touch with local agencies that were really cutting edge and doing new work."

A community college vocation program, started by Catholic Charities Fort Worth, fit LEO's criteria. Organizers redesigned the program so researchers could measure the program's effectiveness with scientific methodology.

Catholic Charities counselors help students overcome obstacles outside the classroom that can force them out of school like medical emergencies, transportation issues, or loss of income.

LEO researchers track the academic success and retention rates for students receiving assistance compared to a control group. Their work will identify which innovative, effective, social service programs are moving people out of poverty. Findings will then be shared with other service providers and policy makers, and could be used to promote the

idea nationally.

Although researchers will continue to evaluate the three-year program through 2016, one academic year after starting the program in August 2013, early evidence demonstrates that students in Stay the Course are less likely to drop out and average more credit hours than the control group.

"And that's promising," Sullivan points out. "Since the commercial aired, we've gotten a positive response from a lot of different groups who want to talk about the details of the program and learn from our experience."

Three Stay the Course counselors/navigators handle 128 students involved with the program at TCC's Trinity River campus. They meet consistently with individual clients to ensure they are achieving their goals and provide them with academic and social service resources, such as bus passes, food, childcare, and housing assistance.

During her first year of college, Tracy Saheib, a 21-year-old studying to be a sign-language interpreter, spent more time concentrating on her part-time job than school and her grades suffered.

But her Stay the Course counselor encouraged her to stay in school, said Saheib, who is now a Phi Beta Kappa member and maintains a high grade point average. "I'm glad Stay the Course reached out to me. I got a perfect mentor who fit my need. It's been a great experience."

The Stay the Course program carries out the mission of Catholic Charities by offering people a path out of poverty.

"Our ultimate goal is to draw a link between higher education and better jobs," said Jennifer Zubyk, Catholic Charities Stay the Course program manager. "If we help clients persist in school and finish a degree, they can obtain living wage employment and pull themselves out of poverty."

A better life and more job opportunities is Daniela Serrano's goal. She began TCC's nursing program in January, and she intends to stay in school until she earns a bachelor's degree.

"My counselor is always there for me," she said. "She tries to find out what's going on in my life and how that's affecting my schoolwork. Sometimes, just having someone listen, helps."

Father Kyle Walterscheid left his work in structural engineering in order to draw up **Roadmaps to Heaven**

by Jerry Circelli / Correspondent



Fr. Kyle Walterscheid, pastor of St. John Paul II University Parish in Denton, is using new designs to build bridges toward Christ's kingdom. (Photo by Jerry Circelli)

IF YOU DRIVE THE HIGHWAYS AND BYWAYS OF FORT WORTH, CHANCES ARE YOU REGULARLY TRAVEL OVER SEVERAL OF THE 50 BRIDGES IN THE AREA DESIGNED BY FATHER KYLE WALTERScheid, PASTOR OF ST. JOHN PAUL II UNIVERSITY PARISH IN DENTON.

From 1990 to 1995, before he became a priest, designing bridges was the nature of Fr. Kyle's work. With a bachelor's degree in civil engineering and a master's in structural engineering from the University of Texas at Arlington, Fr. Kyle spent a decade studying and working in a field he truly enjoyed.

"I loved it," Fr. Kyle said. "I just loved it, but there were other bridges to build."

Those bridges would involve leading the faithful along the path to Christ, and Fr. Kyle said he heard the call from God growing louder while he was focusing on structural engineering in college.

"I really felt a very strong nudge to be doing something beyond that," he said.

"I felt called to do something directly, rather than indirectly," Fr.

Kyle explained. The priest said that he enjoyed his job as a bridge designer because it involved helping people reach their destinations safely and efficiently. The job, however, entailed working behind closed doors, away from the people he was helping.

"I felt God calling me into something much more direct," Fr. Kyle said. While he knew the calling was to the priesthood, Fr. Kyle said he asked himself the same question that many seminarians ask: "Why me?"

The young engineer sought the answer through quiet dialogue with God. "I think my prayer life really developed over those five years and finally got me to the seminary doors. And I never looked back."

After attending Assumption Seminary in San Antonio, Fr. Kyle was ordained in 2002 for the Diocese of Fort Worth. He has served at St. Matthew Catholic Church in Arlington and with the diocese as both associate director and director of vocations. In 2012, he was named pastor of St. John Paul II University Parish.

In his current role as pastor, Fr. Kyle has spent three years helping

"You don't need to know the whole roadmap, all you need to know is the next 100 feet in front of you with the light that the Lord has given you, and you're eventually going to get there."

— Father Kyle Walterscheid

build a local Church community that is unlike any other in the diocese.

"We are a non-territorial parish," Fr. Kyle explained. "We're not defined by boundaries."

Saint John Paul II University Parish is constituted primarily of students at the University of North Texas (UNT) and Texas Woman's University (TWU), both in Denton, along with current and retired staff and faculty of the universities, alumni, and parents of students. The

diversity of the faithful is even more evident, considering that students hail from throughout Texas, as well as other states and several foreign countries. Add to that the fact that the student population is constantly in transition.

While Masses are currently being held at non-denominational chapels at UNT and TWU, the new parish will have a home next year with the construction of a new pastoral center and chapel.

Following a long history of Catholic ministry on the campuses, the Church serving this area has seen significant growth under Fr. Kyle's leadership the past three years. From a campus ministry served by visiting priests, it has evolved into a parish that supports itself financially, and benefits from two full-time workers, and several part-time workers.

While his work has been diverse as a parish priest, director of vocations, and now pastor of a unique university parish, Fr. Kyle said he is enjoying the ever-evolving journey. "No one ever knows exactly where their vocation will take them," Fr. Kyle said.

"Someone once asked, 'Don't you need to know everything your vocation entails in order to say "yes" to it?'" Fr. Kyle related. In response to that question, the priest shared an analogy that has guided him.

"Let's say your vocation is like a roadmap, and you have to go from Dallas to Chicago all through the night. ... You don't need to know the whole roadmap, all you need to know is the next 100 feet in front of you with the light that the Lord has given you, and you're eventually going to get there."

"We don't need to have the whole roadmap all figured out. Let God guide us. He will give us the light that's going to guide us along the road. I've always liked that analogy. It's worked for me."

Empowered by Three men set out

by Joan Kurkowski-Gillen
Correspondent

PENTECOST CELEBRATES THE BIRTH OF THE CHURCH WHEN THE DISCIPLES WERE EMBOLDENED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT TO TRAVEL THE WORLD AND PROCLAIM THE GOOD NEWS.

On the vigil of that feast day, three men from the Diocese of Fort Worth were empowered by receiving the Sacrament of Holy Orders to embark on the same mission of forgiveness and reconciliation.

Michael Greco, Keith Hathaway, and Ronaldo Mercado were ordained to the Sacred Order of the Presbyterate by Fort Worth Bishop Michael Olson during a Mass celebrated May 23 at St. Patrick Cathedral with other diocesan clergy. Family, friends, and people from the seminarian's home parishes — St. Michael in Bedford, St. Jude in Mansfield, and Holy Family of

Nazareth in Vernon — filled the historic sanctuary to witness the ordination rite.

"This is a great day for Holy Family (of Nazareth) and a great day for the diocese," said David Miller, a parishioner and member of Knights of Columbus Council #7435. His organization supported Mercado during his years in the seminary and continues to support two other seminarians from Vernon. More than 40 people from the small town in the western part of the diocese traveled by bus to watch the former medical technologist be ordained to the priesthood.

"It's a big day for us. We weren't about to miss it," said Elba Jaloma, a parishioner of St. Mary Church in Quanah. "We've known Ronaldo since he worked at our little hospital and would come to our house for meals. He's from Manila, so we were like his family here. My younger kids would go to him with their problems



Fr. Ronaldo Mercado



Fr. Keith Hathaway

because he's such an understanding, down-to-earth person."

Before beginning the liturgy, Bishop Olson thanked all the vocation directors and seminary staff who played a role in the formation of the soon-to-be-ordained candidates.

Among those attending the ordination from Assumption Seminary in San Antonio where Ronaldo Mercado studied were the rector, Father Jeff Pehl. Father Gerald McBrearity represented the Theological College in Washington D.C., alma mater of Seminarians Hathaway and Greco, and Father Jonathan Wallis represented Holy Trinity Seminary in Irving.

"And in a special way, I want to thank the parents of the ordinands who supported them throughout their years of formation," he said, acknowledging John and Deborah Greco, Eufrocina Mercado, and Rob and Debbie Hathaway. Ronaldo Mercado's father, Jose, is deceased.

Debbie Hathaway said her son, Keith, spent nine years preparing for the priesthood.

"I'm so excited for him," the ordinand's mother said, enthusiastically, as worshipers filed into the cathedral pews. "He's going to be a remarkable priest."

The 27-year-old is compassionate and knows the faith "inside and out," she continued.



Fr. James Flynn (center) and Fr. Hector Medina (right) place their hands on the ordinands' heads, praying for the Holy Spirit to dwell in them. (Photos by Juan Guajardo / NTC)

led by the Spirit at as Christ's priests



Fr. Michael Hathaway



Fr. Michael Greco

"I think it's important for children to see the priesthood is not only for older men. They can look at him and say, 'Yes, this is something I could do as well.'"

During his homily, Bishop Olson reminded the seminarians the ministry they were about to embrace is not rooted in the bloody shame of Good Friday but in the glorification and redemption of Easter.

"Today you are to be ordained priests," the bishop said, addressing the seminarians. "Your hands are to become his (Christ's) wounded hands, glorified to celebrate the Eucharist, to absolve sinners, anoint the sick, baptize the sinner, and bless the vows of those who marry."

Through ordination, the Holy Spirit gives priests the capacity to speak the truth.

"Speak it well," Bishop Olson advised the trio. "Listen to Him (Christ) most especially in the confessional when penitents approach you with their anguished wounds of sin. Christ enables you, as his priest, to manifest the whole truth of his redemption and forgiveness

of their sins."

But the mission of reconciliation extends beyond the confessional, and he instructed the men to also attempt healing those wounded by sin in society, parish communities, families, and throughout the world.

"This mission is Christ's gift to you," the bishop emphasized. "It is not your gift to Him. Never cease to thank Him."

Voicing their willingness to serve the Church with a resounding, "I do," the seminarians promised obedience to the bishop and his successors before prostrating themselves in front of the marble altar. Dressed in white albs with their faces buried in their arms, the candidates for the priesthood submitted themselves to God and the Church as the congregation sang the Litany of the Saints. A combined choir from St. Patrick, St. Michael, and St. Elizabeth Ann Seton churches led the ancient prayer for divine assistance.

In the most solemn moment of the ordination rite, the candidates for priesthood approached the bishop's chair, or cathedra, one

at a time and knelt for the Laying on of Hands and silent invocation of the Holy Spirit by Bishop Olson. The act signifies a sacred transformation and sets the men apart for their presbyteral ministry. Brother priests then laid their hands upon the newly ordained, calling down the Holy Spirit to dwell within each soul.

Following investiture with the stole and chasuble — a visible sign the new priests have "put on Christ," Bishop Olson anointed each man's hands with the holy oil of chrism, sanctifying him for sacramental work. After members of the Greco, Hathaway, and Mercado families carried the Eucharistic gifts of bread and wine to the altar, the bishop placed a paten and chalice into the hands of the newly ordained with the words: "Receive the oblation of the holy people to be offered to God. Understand what you do. Imitate what you celebrate, and conform your life to the mystery of the Lord's cross."

The Rite of Ordination concluded with Fathers Greco, Hathaway, and Mercado welcomed into the Order of the Presbyterate by Bishop Olson and the other priests during the Kiss of Peace.

At the end of the Mass, people lining the doorway of the cathedral burst into applause as the new priests exited the church. Fr. Hathaway and Fr. Greco celebrated their first Masses the following day, Pentecost Sunday, at their home parishes, St. Michael in Bedford for Fr. Greco and St. Jude in Mansfield for Fr. Hathaway. Fr. Mercado chose to offer his Mass of Thanksgiving that afternoon at St. George Church in near Northeast Fort Worth, where he spent his pastoral internship.

Janet Spellings, sacristan at St. Michael, helped Fr. Greco prepare

"Your hands are to become his (Christ's) wounded hands, glorified to celebrate the Eucharist, to absolve sinners, anoint the sick, baptize the sinner, and bless the vows of those who marry."

- Bishop Michael Olson

for his first Mass at the parish where he grew up.

"We've been praying for Michael, so we're glad this day is finally here," she said. "He has a prayerful spirit, a grateful heart, and a special devotion to the Blessed Mother. We are blessed to have him in our diocese."

Newly-ordained priests Michael Greco, Keith Hathaway, and I

Three gathered in

Stories by Joan Kurkowski-Gillen
Correspondent

CONVERSION STORIES — AS TOLD IN THE BIBLE — OFTEN INVOLVE AN EARTHQUAKE, FLASH OF LIGHTNING, OR SOME OTHER ELEMENT OF NATURE.

Father Keith Hathaway's life changed the day he fell into a chilly, mountain stream while backpacking. He was 17, slightly foolish, and thought he could tough out dipping temperatures in wet clothing by sitting next to a fire. By the time a group of fellow Boy Scouts found him shivering next to the flames, hypothermia had set in from exposure.

"I went into shock and it was scary," remembers Fr. Hathaway, explaining the genesis of his vocation to the priesthood. "I thought I was going to die. When I came to, I was very grateful."

Friends cared for him in a warm cabin by providing clean, dry clothes and a blanket. They considered transporting him to a hospital, but he refused, not wanting to leave the adventure trail.

"In my backpack, I found a Bible and rosary that a chaplain had given me before base camp and started reading and praying," the Eagle Scout continues. "And I came to the conclusion that I had lived my life apart from the Catholic Church and wanted to go back."

Growing up, Keith and older brother, Kevin, were baptized and received their first Communion, but the seminarian describes his family as lily-and-poinsettia people.

"We were part of the Easter/Christmas crowd, and, after a while, we stopped going to church altogether," he confesses.

His newfound religious devotion changed that. "My parents were surprised when I started going back to church and welcomed them to join me."

Fr. Hathaway's brother and mother, Debbie, followed his lead.

"My dad was not Catholic at the time, but he was very supportive and respected my decision," the appreciative son recalls. "After a while,



he started going to Mass with us."

Rob Hathaway later converted to Catholicism and his brother is now a seminarian.

During the next few years, Keith, a St. Jude parishioner, enrolled in RCIA, read *The Catechism of the Catholic Church* voraciously, participated in various parish activities, and received the sacrament of Confirmation. He also volunteered with the Knights of Columbus and St. Vincent de Paul Society.

"People saw me at the parish so often, they began asking if I had ever considered the priesthood," Fr. Hathaway recounts. "So many people asked the question that, eventually, I began to think, 'maybe there's something to this' and talked to Father Kyle Walterscheid who was vocation director at the time."

The Tarrant County College freshman attended Monday discernment gatherings during Lent and spoke with more priests. By the fall of 2006, he decided to give his life to Christ in the priesthood and entered Holy Trinity Seminary in Irving.

Nine years of seminary studies included time at the Theological College at the Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C., and a pastoral year spent at Immaculate Conception Parish in Denton. Fort Worth Bishop Michael Olson ordained him to the transitional diaconate last July.

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WHEN A COLLEGE PHILOSOPHY CLASS PROMPTED FATHER MICHAEL GRECO TO START QUESTIONING THE TENETS OF HIS FAITH, HE FOUND ENCOURAGEMENT AND ANSWERS IN THE WRITINGS OF A POPULAR AUTHOR.

C.S. Lewis, who penned *The Chronicles of Narnia* and other award-winning books, is considered one of the great intellects of the 20th century. Once an avowed atheist, he converted to Christianity and earned the label, "apostle to the skeptics" thanks to his effectiveness in communicating theological truths.

"I was taking an intro to philosophy class at Tarrant County College with a friend, and we began to discuss what I believed and why I thought it was true," says Fr. Greco, one of three men who received the sacrament of Holy Orders May 23 at St. Patrick Cathedral. "I realized then I didn't know much about my faith and wanted to learn more."

During that quest for knowledge, he stumbled upon the works of C.S. Lewis. It became a turning point in the young college student's life.

"Reading his books, I was impressed with the beauty, depth, and coherence of the Christian faith," says the recent graduate of the

"I went from a position of embracing and being co-truth of it."

- Father

and Ronaldo Mercado each took different journeys to become in Christ's name



(Left) Fr. Hathaway blesses Fr. Raymond McDaniel, pastor of St. Philip the Apostle in Lewisville. (Center) Fr. Greco gives a blessing to a child during Communion. (Right) Fr. Mercado blesses Deacon Jim Novak from St. Mary of the Assumption Parish in Megargel. (Photos by Juan Guajardo / NTC)

Theological College at The Catholic University of America. “It was an intellectual thing. I went from a position of doubt to really embracing and being convinced of the truth of it. C.S. Lewis’ writings were very clear, wise, and balanced.”

A native of Pittsburgh, Fr. Greco moved to Texas 20 years ago with his parents, John and Deborah, older brother, Matthew, and twin sister Rachel. The family regularly attended St. Michael Church in Bedford.

“But I was a typical kid and not really interested in church,” he admits, recalling his adolescence. “I went to Mass and religious ed because I had to.”

Inspired by Lewis, Fr. Greco did more reading and began going to Mass and confession more often. His newfound insight into Christianity led to a deeper understanding of Catholicism in particular.

“From that, I fell in love with the faith, the Church, the Gospel, and Jesus Christ,” says the 33-year-old who was attending the University of North Texas at the time. “Out of that experience, I started thinking about the possibility of the priesthood.”

The St. Michael parishioner was aware of

HOLDING THE HAND OF AN ELDERLY PATIENT AT WILBARGER GENERAL HOSPITAL IN VERNON IN THE FAR WESTERN REACHES OF THE DIOCESE GAVE FATHER RONALDO MERCADO HIS FIRST NUDGE TOWARD THE PRIESTHOOD.

The medical technologist’s warm, friendly smile and easygoing manner made him a favorite with the nursing staff and the people they treated.

“I think some of the older patients saw me as something like a grandson,” the priest says humbly. “When I took blood samples, they would ask to hold my hand, and sometimes I would initiate prayers. I was doing chaplaincy work without knowing it.”

On his way back to the laboratory after one of those visits, he wondered if there was a better way to serve people.

“I felt called to a greater ministry,” remembers Fr. Mercado, who attended a Vocation Awareness Program weekend in 2006. “And I finally knocked on the door of the Vocation Office.”

After two years of discernment, the native of Manila, in the Philippines, entered Assumption Seminary in August 2008. Seven years later, Fort Worth Bishop Michael Olson ordained the 42-year-old to the priesthood on May 23 in St. Patrick Cathedral.

Family members flew in from the Philippines to attend the ceremony, including his mother, Eufrocina Mercado, and two sisters. A younger sister remained in the Philippines. Fr. Mercado’s

“I felt called to a **greater ministry**, and I finally knocked on the door of the Vocation Office.”

- Father Ronaldo Mercado

father, Jose, is deceased.

“I don’t have a biological brother, but I gained a lot of brothers in the seminary — spiritual brothers,” Fr. Mercado muses. “I enjoyed my time in the seminary, and it was a blessing for me to go to different places like Mexico and Puerto Rico.”

The former medical worker, who worked with tissue typing and DNA analysis at the National Kidney and Transplant Institute in Manila, had the opportunity to revisit hospital routine as a seminarian. In 2012, he spent 10 weeks at Baylor Medical Center in Dallas working as a chaplain.

“Having medical knowledge increased my understanding, my sense of compassion, and pastoral skills with people,” asserts Fr. Mercado, who was sponsored by Wilbarger General Hospital to work in the U.S. because of his laboratory skills.

The hospital internship also gave the technologist a better understanding of self.

“I think the Clinical Pastoral Education we get helps seminarians know who they are as people and not just learn about ministries like the chaplaincy,” he adds.

As part of his formation for the priesthood, Mercado experienced parish life at St. George

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Fr. Hathaway...

"It was really during my year in the parish that I embraced my vocation and became very confident that I'm called by God to be a priest," Fr. Hathaway explains. "I loved serving at the altar on Sunday Masses, helping with RCIA, and the youth programs."

Once a lukewarm Catholic, the 27-year-old can relate to young people who shy away from Sunday Mass and church involvement. Many of them view Christianity as a list of moral codes and a series of doctrines, he explains, adding, "They're looking for an authentic spiritual experience, and if they don't find that in church, they don't come."

"When I was younger, I didn't understand how the life of a man who died for us years ago could affect my own," he admits. "By encountering God in prayer and talking to people about my faith, I came to know God."

A personal encounter with Jesus Christ can change hearts and lives, he said.

"As Catholics, we have to be very bold in proclaiming that Jesus Christ rose from the dead, and we must manifest his love for us with each other and the rest of the world," Fr. Hathaway explains. "When we proclaim that — loudly and courageously — the faith becomes very attractive to people."

After graduating from the Theological College last month, the priest followed up his May 23 ordination by celebrating his first Mass on Pentecost Sunday at his home parish of St. Jude's.

Where would he be if he hadn't fallen into that stream? The risk taker can't imagine a life different from the one he's chosen.

"I love the priesthood," Hathaway adds enthusiastically. "My vocation is a beautiful gift I've been given. I'm very excited to serve the Lord and the Church."

Fr. Greco...

the need for more vocations in the diocese. Members of his parish participated in the Chalice Program — designed by U.S. bishops to promote vocations to the priesthood and religious life. A prayer for vocations was also recited every Sunday at Mass.

"I researched, prayed, and thought about it," remembers Fr. Greco who attended a weekend vocation program and took time discerning. "It was a process of many years before I finally decided to enter the seminary."

His parents were initially reserved about the life-altering announcement.

"It's a big decision, and they wanted to make sure I knew what I was doing," he explains.

Greco attended Holy Trinity Seminary in Irving where he completed a bachelor's degree in philosophy before transferring to the Theological College at the Catholic University of America for graduate work.

The priest's eight years of preparation included a pastoral year at St. Peter Church in Lindsay. Founded by German-Catholic settlers in 1892, the small, rural parish is one of the historic Painted Churches of Texas.

"It was good to spend time in that part of the diocese," says Fr. Greco, who enjoyed the slower pace and close-knit spirit of the community. "I shadowed Father Ray McDaniel who was then St. Peter's pastor and learned a lot from him."

Now, following his ordination, Fr. Greco is looking forward to serving the faithful.

"A lot of people, like the Knights of Columbus, supported me on this journey," he says. "People in my home parish were praying for me and offering encouragement, and I really appreciate that. It helped get me here."

“By encountering God in prayer and talking to people about my faith, I came to know God.”

- Father Keith Hathaway

Fr. Mercado...

Church. His duties included training altar servers and acolytes and teaching religion classes at the adjacent Catholic school.

"Whenever I'm in Fort Worth, I continue to serve there. The people are like family to me," he says emotionally. "They invite me into their homes whenever I'm in Fort Worth."

Many of Fr. Mercado's own relatives still live in the Philippines where the faith traditions of his childhood are a fresh memory.

"My mother's family was very religious," the priest recalls. "When I was five years old, I remember going house-to-house on November 1st with an elderly uncle and cousins praying the Rosary for the poor souls."

Those pious practices had an impact.

"They made me who I am now," Fr. Mercado says. "I still have those devotions, and I hope, when I begin my ministry, to introduce some of them to foster vocations."

While preparing for his recent ordination, Fr. Mercado went on a restorative, silent retreat. While reflecting on his years of formation, he says, "I realized that, as a child, God marked me for the priesthood."

His aunt Josephina recently disclosed that her brother, Fr. Mercado's late father, Jose, dreamed of having a son who was a priest. The story reminded Fr. Mercado of a Christmas Day encounter with Father Oren W. Key, a Jesuit who was the pastor of Holy Family of Nazareth Parish when he was living in Vernon.

"I had just finished serving at Mass and had nowhere to go, so I stayed for an hour of adoration," the new priest remembers. "Fr. Key was checking the doors of the church when he turned and asked me, 'Ronaldo, do you think you have a vocation?' I told him I wanted to have a family, but if I ever had a son, I would pray for him to become a priest."

His answer didn't seem to convince his pastor, who encouraged him to think about the priesthood anyway.

Fr. Mercado now realizes his wish was really his father's.

"My father would be so happy about my ordination because this was his secret desire," he explains.

The new priest is thankful to people in the diocese for helping him understand and accept his vocation.

"I'm just a humble servant of the Lord who wants to serve for the good of the people," he says.

Where will they serve?



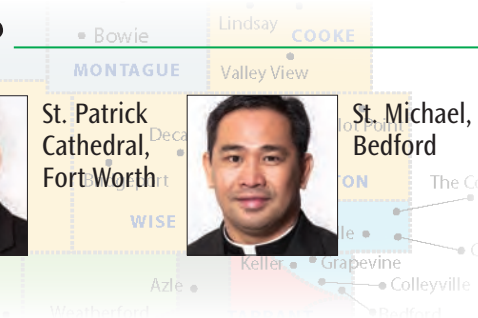
St. Joseph, Arlington



St. Patrick Cathedral, Fort Worth



St. Michael, Bedford



Spanish-speaking faithful welcome newly-ordained OFM Cap priest: Father Pedro Romero Gutierrez

by Jacqueline Burkepile
Correspondent

ON SUNDAY MAY 31, BISHOP MICHAEL OLSON ORDAINED FRAY PEDRO ROMERO GUTIERREZ, OFM CAP, AS THE NEWEST PRIEST IN THE DIOCESE AT OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE CHURCH IN FORT WORTH.

Father Romero is a member of the Order of Friars Minor Capuchin within the Mexico-Texas Vice-Province, also known as the Capuchin Franciscans.

Fr. Romero is an immigrant from Aguascalientes, Mexico. On the first weekend in January 2000, the Solemnity of the Epiphany of the Lord, he heard his vocational calling at a Catholic Charismatic Renewal Congress in Mesquite. This call led him to the Capuchin Franciscans, where he began his formation three years later.

“The life of St. Francis of Assisi captivated me,” he explained. “The values of brotherhood, simplicity, and humility really called my attention.”

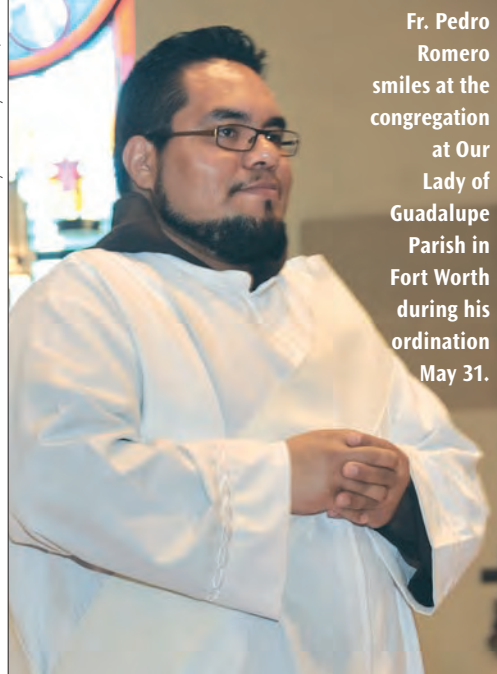
Twelve years later, after years of prayer and discernment, years of study, ministry training, and progressing through the stages of Capuchin formation, the friar, or ‘*fray*’ as they are often referred to in Spanish, stood before the altar as hundreds of people — including family, friends, and parishioners who came to know him from his service over the years — packed the pews of Our Lady of Guadalupe Church as Bishop Olson conferred the sacrament of Holy Orders.

Bishop Olson was joined by 10 other priests in celebrating the Ordination Mass, among them many Capuchin Franciscan priests. Father Stephen Jasso, TOR, of All Saints Parish in the North Side of Fort Worth, and Deacon Don Warner also assisted at the Mass.

The bishop centered his homily on priestly obedience to the Church and living the faith in all aspects of priestly life.

“Too frequently our administrative and pastoral politics become more important to us than the mandates regarding loving our neighbor, the Beatitudes, or even the dignity of marriage as Jesus and his Church taught,” Bishop Olson said. “The obedience that Christ requires of his priests and religious is an obedience that gives life and sheds light on the obedience that Christ has toward the Father.”

Photo by Donna Ryckaert / NTC



Fr. Pedro Romero smiles at the congregation at Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish in Fort Worth during his ordination May 31.

The life of St. Francis of Assisi captivated me. The values of brotherhood, simplicity, and humility really called my attention.”

- Father Pedro Romero

Once Bishop Olson ordained Fr. Romero, he and all the clergy congratulated him while the Church community provided a standing ovation and roaring applause. Parishioners, priests, and other supporters expressed joy as their brother in Christ entered into the priesthood.

Fr. Romero’s father, Pedro Romero Chavez, said he is very happy about his son’s ordination. “This is the result of all the teaching and principles that were instilled in my son from his early communities,” said Chavez. “This is the result of... everything we taught him.”

Father Constantino Alonso Zaldívar, OFM Cap, the superior of the Mexico-Texas Vice-Province of the Franciscan Capuchins, attended the event in support of Fr. Romero.

“I am very happy [to be at the ordination today],” Fr. Alonso said. “It is a very important event for the order and for the parish. We are very glad for this grace that is for the community and for the order.”

Father Jesús Maria Bezunartea, OFM Cap, another priest who concelebrated at the ordination, knew Fr. Romero from his studies in Mexico. “Pedro was our companion in Mexico City. He studied theology there with us and I was the superior over the house,” said Fr. Bezunartea. “It was a joy having him as my student.”

Following the ordination, the parish hosted a reception in honor of Fr. Romero. Hundreds celebrated, and Our Lady of Guadalupe parishioners expressed their excitement that Bishop Olson named Fr. Romero as their parochial vicar.

Fred Soriano, a parishioner at Our Lady of Guadalupe, said he met Fr. Romero six months ago. Soriano believes the priest will be of great benefit to their community.

“I see a lot great things happening with this young priest,” Soriano said. “I think he’s a good guy. He’ll bring us all together, and make us united in our faith.”

Joel Lopez, also a parishioner at Our Lady of Guadalupe, was very happy that so many people came to enjoy the celebration, especially since their church is quickly growing.

“When Fr. Romero came to the parish, we needed help because we had one priest and it’s a big parish,” Lopez said. “This was mine and my wife’s first ordination [to attend]. It was beautiful.”

Fr. Romero said he is very excited to be the Parochial Vicar of the parish where he served as a transitional deacon because the community is “very welcoming and willing to work and serve together as a team for the Kingdom of God.” His hope is to help the people “meet and encounter the God of Jesus Christ — the God of love and mercy.”

With God's Guidance

Escaping persecution, CMC priests and brothers now serve Vietnamese Catholics in U.S.

by Jerry Circelli
Correspondent

WITH THE FALL OF SAIGON ON APRIL 30, 1975, THE COMMUNIST REGIME SENT HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE OFF TO PRISONS THEY LABELED "RE-EDUCATION CAMPS."

Father Dominic Tran Dinh Thu, founder of the Congregation of Mother Co-Redemptrix (CMC) religious order, saw the persecutions coming.

It was not the first time he had to stay a step ahead of the communists. Having established the CMC order in the north in 1942, Fr. Dominic had led CMC members south in 1954 when the nation was partitioned and communists took control of North Vietnam.

In 1975, about a month before the communist takeover of Saigon, he called a meeting of about 170 CMC members — nearly half the order. Fr. Dominic told the group he had devised a plan to get them out of the country.

Fr. Jim Khoi (CMC), pastor of Our Lady of Fatima Catholic Church in Fort Worth, listened to his founder's bleak announcement. "He told us about a plan to leave Vietnam. He said he did not know where we would end up, but he entrusted us with a mission — to maintain and expand our order and to evangelize," Fr. Khoi said.

The priests and brothers left their motherhouse in Thu Duc and embarked to the seaside city of Vung Tau. From there they were taken to board seven fishing boats, overcrowded with hundreds of their countrymen, on April 30, 1975 — the same day Saigon was evacuated.

"We sailed out into the ocean from Vung Tau," Fr. Khoi said "We all asked each other where we were headed, and no one had an answer.



Congregation of Mother Co-Redemptrix (CMC) priests serving in the Diocese of Fort Worth

Fr. Jim Ngo Hoang Khoi

Pastor; Our Lady of Fatima in Fort Worth

Fr. Joseph Than Van Liem

Pastor; Christ the King in Fort Worth

Fr. Bede Nguyen

Christ the King in Fort Worth

Fr. Mark Huynh Thanh Nguyen

Pastor; Immaculate Conception of Mary in Wichita Falls

Fr. Francis Tung

Holy Family Religious & Retreat House in Fort Worth

Fr. Polycarp Duc Thuan Nguyen

Holy Family Religious & Retreat House in Fort Worth

Fr. Francis Vinh Van Vu

Pastor, Vietnamese Martyrs in Arlington

Fr. Augustine Nguyen

Parochial vicar; Vietnamese Martyrs in Arlington

Fr. Lawrence M. Nguyen

Parochial vicar; Vietnamese Martyrs in Arlington

We just entrusted everything to God and set out into the ocean."

After several days at sea, the refugees eventually witnessed the miracle they prayed for — several U.S. Navy vessels that would welcome them aboard and deliver them to a world of freedom.

After several weeks in camps on Guam and the Wake Islands, Fr. Khoi recalled, many of the brothers and priests were transported by military aircraft to Fort Chaffee, Arkansas. Others went to refugee camps in California and Pennsylvania.

At Fort Chaffee, half a world away, they found comfort in the daily Masses celebrated by an Air Force chaplain.

"The chaplain began to wonder why he was seeing this large group of single men attending Mass every

day," Fr. Khoi said. "He began to ask us questions, and found out that we belonged to our order."

When news reached Springfield-Cape Girardeau Bishop Bernard Law — his Missouri diocese sponsored them, and CMC members found housing at a vacant Oblate seminary in Carthage, Missouri.

CMC priests and brothers from the other refugee camps eventually relocated there as well.

About 80 of the nearly 170 CMC brothers, Fr. Khoi estimated, went on to become priests. While the CMC members at the Provincial house in Carthage number around 150 members, the motherhouse in Vietnam includes about 600 priests and brothers, Fr. Khoi said.

The refugees from that fateful day of the fall of Saigon now minister

In October 2014 Bishop Michael F. Olson visited with priests at the CMC Holy Family Monastery and Retreat House in Fort Worth. **First row from left:** Fr. Jim Khoi, Fr. Bede Nguyen, Fr. Polycarp Duc Thuan Nguyen, Bishop Olson, Fr. Louis Nhien, Fr. Lawrence M. Nguyen. **Second row from left:** Fr. Joseph Liem, Fr. Raymond Thu, Fr. Felix Luan, Fr. Augustine Nguyen, Fr. Francis Tung, Fr. Ignatius Duong, and Peter Flynn, former finance director for the diocese. (Photo courtesy Fr. Jim Khoi)

to most of the Vietnamese Catholics and their families in the United States, about 495,000 Catholics in 232 parishes, according to a 2014 USCCB report.

In the Diocese of Fort Worth, Vietnamese Catholic parishes include Christ the King and Our Lady of Fatima in Fort Worth, Vietnamese Martyr's Church in Arlington, and Immaculate Conception of Mary in Wichita Falls. Nine CMC priests serve at these parishes and the CMC Holy Family and Religious Retreat House in Fort Worth.

While most CMC priests and brothers arrived in 1975, others left Vietnam later. Father Francis Vinh Van Vu, pastor of Vietnamese Martyrs in Arlington, escaped from Vietnam in 1987, a year in which communist persecution increased and saw Fr. Dominic imprisoned.

Fr. Vu and his associate pastors, Father Lawrence Nguyen and Father Hoang Minh Nguyen, agreed that Fr. Dominic was an inspirational leader for their order.

"We all have different stories and journeys, with many difficulties along the way, but our mission is the same," Fr. Lawrence Nguyen said.

"We just keep moving forward as Fr. Dominic told us," Fr. Khoi said. "We will continue our apostolate work to help parishes, schools, hospitals, and nursing homes, and to work as we are doing right now. We are here to help people follow the Good News."

Playing like a champion

New program promotes character-building environment for young athletes

by Joan Kurkowski-Gillen
Correspondent

COACHES YELLING FROM THE SIDELINES. PARENTS CHEERING AGAINST THE OTHER TEAM. PLAYERS ARGUING WITH OFFICIALS AFTER A BAD CALL.

You won't find those behaviors at local Catholic school athletic events thanks to a new program implemented in the Diocese of Fort Worth last fall. The Play Like a Champion Today (PLCT) initiative, introduced by the University of Notre Dame's Institute for Educational Initiatives in 2006, focuses on promoting a positive sports culture for young people.

Training sessions for coaches and adults are designed to show how character development and spiritual growth can coexist in a competitive sports environment. Based on the university's latest research on adolescent development, workshops advance the idea that youth sports should be fair, inclusive, character-building, fitness-focused, safe, and fun.

Since its inception, Play Like a Champion Today has educated more than 35,000 coaches and 15,000 parents nationwide who went on to influence more than a million young people.

The diocese decided to implement the program after witnessing its positive influence on the Fort Worth Christian Youth Football League. Frank Poeschel and Jim Breen started the league for Catholic middle school youngsters in 2007 as a way to share their faith through football. They later attended a PLCT Leadership Conference and brought what they learned about ethically-responsible leadership to the coaching staff.

"A kid's reason to play sports is fun. But the main reason for coaches and parents to become involved is to win. That's the exact opposite of what kids say," Breen points out. "Play Like a Champion Today helps parents and coaches re-focus their attention back on their kids and not just live vicariously through them."

Over the past seven years, Poeschel and Breen have brought Notre Dame trainers to Fort Worth for PLCT workshops. Participation was mandated for football league coaches, but others in the diocese were invited to participate.

"I think the diocese recognized the success we had," says Breen, explaining that many coaches and parents in the football league also



Campers pray the Rosary during a Catholic Baseball Camp in Kent, Wash. (CNS photo/Stephen Brashear)

volunteered for sports teams in the Catholic elementary schools. "People began asking why weren't we holding ourselves to these standards in all of our sports — not just football."

Diocesan Athletic Director Chelle Gunter attended a PLCT Leadership Conference at Notre Dame last June and implemented the program diocese-wide on August 17. Every coach and one parent of every Catholic school athlete is required to attend a workshop conducted by a local trainer.

"When I went to Play Like a Champion training it really opened my eyes to the idea that coaching sports was a ministry and a way to evangelize your faith to kids while teaching them good sports-related principles," explains Gunter, who also teaches physical education at Our Lady of Victory School.

The athletic director says coaches are encouraged to start each practice with a prayer or meaningful Scripture reading.

"Play Like a Champion also addresses giving power back to the kids and letting them make decisions while learning about the game," she continues. "We try to teach them how to treat their opponents, officials, and everyone else with respect."

Approximately 2,000 children and adolescents participate in diocesan sports, but Gunter says many PE teachers are also implementing the ideas in their classes.

"I've noticed a change this year in the attitude of some of the coaches and parents watching the game," the coach adds. "Play Like a Champion gave us a uniform program, so we have the same expectations for everybody."

Virtues stressed in the program — prudence, temperance, fortitude, and justice — have taught Terri Guhl's sons, Robbie, Nicholas, and Joshua, sportsmanship, she says. Parents also learn how to be supportive and not just emphasize mistakes made during the game. At a recent sports event, she witnessed the difference a Play Like a Champion Today workshop can make.

"We had a football game and most of the players were from diocesan schools who went through the program," she recalled. "Parents were 100 percent encouraging and praising what they did right and not commenting on what the other team was doing. Parents from other schools, who didn't have exposure to Play Like a Champion, were very negative throughout the game. They criticized their own kids and other people's kids."

Sports are a great way to impart important life lessons, but there's more to coaching than just teaching kids to be "tough," Breen said. Wanting to win is an important part of the competitive process, but it's not everything.

"There's nothing wrong with wanting to win — Christ was a winner," he adds. "You just have to learn how to do it the right way."

**July 5, Fourteenth Sunday
in Ordinary Time.**

Cycle B. Readings:

- 1) Ezekiel 2:2-5
Psalm 123:1-4
- 2) 2 Corinthians 12:7-10
Gospel) Mark 6:1-6

By Jeff Hensley

The message that comes through loudly in these readings is that the role of the prophet, the one announcing the will of God, is a pretty thankless lot.

God commands Ezekiel to speak a word of correction to the Israelites, who He describes as “rebels who have rebelled against me; they and their ancestors have revolted against me to this very day.”

Jesus is amazed when He comes to his native place and begins to teach in the synagogue. “Where did this man get all this?”



is one of the comments spoken against Him.

That led Jesus to say, “A prophet is not without honor except in his native place.”

But neither Ezekiel nor Jesus were deterred in carrying out the

“He was amazed at their lack of faith.”

— Mark 6:6

mission God had placed on their hearts.

I’ve known a few genuine prophets. One was Father Richard Thomas, who worked with the poor of El Paso and Juarez, Mexico. He followed God’s instructions obediently and saw God work. I’m sure he was met with opposition, but that is not what anyone will remember. They will remember God’s miracles that followed after his obedient actions.

Another was Phil Record, a member of the *Fort Worth Star-Telegram’s* management team, and a person to whom many Catholics

on the staff came when they were facing a personal or spiritual dilemma and needed wise counsel.

I’m sure that when a firm correction was needed, the man who had served as the paper’s ombudsman and managing editor, spoke whatever he felt was God’s counsel. But he would always have done it with a heart filled with love for the person before him.

What the scriptural stories of opposition don’t examine is the motive force that makes the prophet act in the first place. But that’s what I saw in Father Thomas and Phil, and that is what we see in Jesus. The prophet first of all loves God, fully and completely. In addition, he loves the people God has had him address.

QUESTIONS:

If God asked you to speak the truth in love to someone, how do you think you would handle it?

**July 12, Fifteenth Sunday
in Ordinary Time.**

Cycle B. Readings:

- 1) Amos 7:12-15
Psalm 85:9-14
- 2) Ephesians 1:3-14
Gospel) Mark 6:7-13

By Jean Denton

Going out as a disciple of Jesus to try to spread his Gospel carries the risk of many pitfalls. The consequences might involve being intellectually attacked, morally questioned, mocked, personally rejected, or psychologically manipulated. The challenge for the disciple is to not get mired in those consequences.

That’s probably why Jesus warned his disciples, in this weekend’s Gospel, to leave their own baggage behind, stay light on their feet and keep moving forward.

He said, “Whatever place does not welcome you or listen to you, leave there and shake the dust



off your feet in testimony against them.”

In other words, give it your best shot, but if your example of Christ’s way is rejected, don’t spend time beating your head against the wall.

I’m still sorry, years later, about a failed attempt to encourage and support a friend when she

“He instructed them to take nothing for the journey but a walking stick.”

— Mark 6:8

was struggling with serious family problems.

When Kay’s family troubles arose, it would’ve been good for me to call and offer support. However, I procrastinated, and by the time I reached out, it was too late.

I learned from a mutual friend that Kay had felt abandoned by her church community when she most needed it.

Determined that she not feel forsaken by the “faithful,” of all people, I telephoned and emailed numerous times over several weeks. I wrote a letter expressing my concern and asking forgiveness. She never responded.

Kay was hurting and bitter. She had pinned her suffering on the church community. Whether or not it truly let her down, she refused to believe otherwise. Nothing I could do or say would change that. My concern about her perceptions of the faith community and my opinion that she was being unreasonable were unnecessary “baggage” — more about us than about Kay’s need for God.

I had to let it go before it became a negative conflict that would suck the life right out of the Gospel message. Although my efforts were ineffective, I had to continue believing the Gospel itself is life-saving — and move on to people and situations where it would bear fruit.

I trust Jesus will find a way to open Kay’s heart.

QUESTIONS:

When have you felt your efforts to share the Gospel were hitting a brick wall? How does letting go of such a difficult situation help you be a better disciple?

July 19, Sixteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time.

Cycle B. Readings:

- 1) Jeremiah 23:1-6
Psalm 23:1-6
- 2) Ephesians 2:13-18
Gospel) Mark 6:30-34

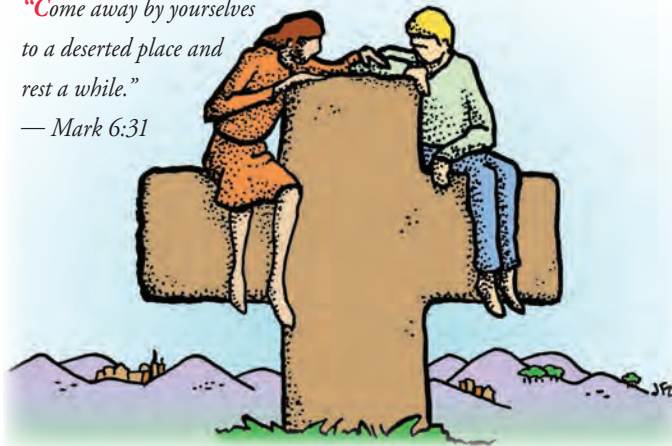
By Jeff Hedglen

I work with college students at a public university. Most of the students that I know take about five classes a semester, work one or two jobs, study many hours a week, and try to have a good social life when they can squeeze it in.

As much as they would like to, they seldom find the time to heed the invitation from Jesus we see in this week's Gospel: "Come away by yourselves to a deserted place and rest a while." I imagine that if I was to offer this same idea I would be met with exasperation. Come away? Rest? By myself? Who has time for that?

*"Come away by yourselves
to a deserted place and
rest a while."*

— Mark 6:31



I also can imagine many people reading this who are not in college might have similar reactions. Between work, kids, laundry, homework, bath time, meals, and a hundred other daily tasks, the idea of coming away to a lonely place to rest with Jesus — while *exactly* what we want, need, and long for — is an unreasonable notion.

The Gospel reveals that

achieving this solitude proved to be a difficult task even for Jesus and his disciples. I don't know about you, but I can't just jump in a boat and spend a few hours on the water. Even if I did, I would still have all my set-aside respon-

sibilities waiting for me on the other side of the lake.

Yet, as hard as it is to carve out some time for rest and reflection, it is exactly what we need. For left to our own devices, we become exactly what Jesus saw in the crowd: "sheep without a shepherd."

When the Lord Jesus is our shepherd, there really is nothing we want. Want comes when we are our own shepherds. I realize that Jesus is not going to come back to earth and do your eight loads of laundry, or pull your all-nighter cramming for a test, or finish that project at work, but what a little time alone beside the still waters of his presence will do is refresh your soul for the tasks ahead. It is not magic, but if done regularly, it could just possibly border on mystical.

QUESTIONS:

Where do you go for quiet solitude with Jesus? Do you do this enough? What could you do to find more time like this in your life?

July 26, Seventeenth Sunday in Ordinary Time.

Cycle B. Readings:

- 1) 2 Kings 4:42-44
Psalm 145:10-11, 15-18
- 2) Ephesians 4:1-6
Gospel) John 6:1-15

By Sharon K. Perkins

In many dioceses in the United States, parishes tend to be clustered in larger cities and towns. But in the more rural areas, Catholic churches are fewer and farther between, and often their congregations are small. This is certainly the case in our 25-county diocese, the Diocese of Austin.

With small congregations come small Sunday collections and fewer material resources, so it's understandable for parishioners in these places to compare themselves with larger urban parishes and consider themselves lacking. At a recent meeting where some of our rural parishes



*"The hand of the Lord feeds us;
he answers all our needs."*

— Psalm 145:16

ple; Philip's skepticism echoed his fellow disciple Andrew's ("What good are these for so many?").

There are at present many situations in our world in which the immensity of human need and suffering seem to have no way of being remedied, and despair is a most natural reaction.

But near the feast of Passover, the commemoration of God's mighty works of deliverance and provision on Israel's behalf, Jesus leads his disciples, the "new Israel," through a similar test of faith. Rather than allowing them to focus on scarcity, Jesus simply asks, "What *do* you have?" Then He

multiplies their meager offering to the point where their needs are met with plenty left over to share.

The "loaves and fishes" story is a favorite Gospel for children preparing to make their first Communion. But what Jesus is doing here is not child's play. It's a challenge for grownups to take seriously the works He is able to do when we entrust to Him the resources we have, without reservation. It happens at every celebration of the Eucharist. In the offering of bread and wine we offer all that we are and have to the Father of Jesus.

In the blessing, breaking, and sharing it's not only the bread that is changed. We are changed — made into more — enabled to bring God's abundance of love, peace, and provision to a hungry world.

were represented, I heard several remarks that bordered on helplessness: "How can we have a good religious education program with so few catechists?" or, "We're a dying parish because we don't have enough (altar servers/classrooms/supplies/money/fill in the blank)."

Without discounting such valid concerns, I am also reminded of today's readings. Elisha's servant wondered aloud whether 20 barley loaves could feed 100 peo-

QUESTIONS:

When were you tempted to despair because of an overwhelming need? How did God's provision bring you from an attitude of scarcity to one of abundance?

WORD TO LIFE

August 2, Eighteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time.

Cycle B. Readings:

- 1) Exodus 16:2-4, 12-15
Psalm 78:3-4, 23-25, 54
- 2) Ephesians 4:17, 20-24
Gospel) John 6:24-35

By Jeff Hensley

The Israelites grumbled as they fled Egypt. They wished they were back in captivity, sitting by their stewpots, eating the bread of that land. God had mercy on them and provided quail for meat and manna from the surface of the desert for bread.

When Jesus came, the crowds following Him after He multiplied loaves and fishes went with Him across the Sea of Galilee in search of more. Miraculously, He provided food. Jesus berates them for looking to Him for food instead of



something of lasting value.

Someone brings up the example of Moses having provided God's people with bread from heaven to eat. Jesus corrects them:

"It was not Moses who gave the bread from heaven; my Father gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is that which comes down from

"Whoever comes to me will never hunger."

— John 6:35c

heaven and gives life to the world."

When they ask for that heavenly bread always, He responds, "I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me will never hunger and whoever believes in me will never thirst."

Pattie Watson recently retired from her position as social ministry director at St. Andrew Church in Fort Worth. When she first had contact with that ministry's food pantry, she was estranged from the Church. She was so estranged she would not accept help for her family from Franciscan Brother Ed

Bennett. She relented only when he told her, "This isn't charity. This is family helping family, and someday, somehow, you'll be able to give back."

In time, her relationship with the Church healed, and she became, once again, one of those receiving the bread from heaven that is Jesus.

And in time, she came to accept what she believed was God's direction to take the job of director of the social services ministry.

She says she came to realize, "It didn't matter what anybody else did to me. It mattered what I did, and that's what faith is all about. My faith is strong. It got stronger with every package of food I handed over."

QUESTIONS:

How have you found your life as a Christian more clearly defined through giving to others?

August 9, Nineteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time.

Cycle B. Readings:

- 1) 1 Kings 19:4-8
Psalm 34:2-9
- 2) Ephesians 4:30-5:2
Gospel) John 6:41-51

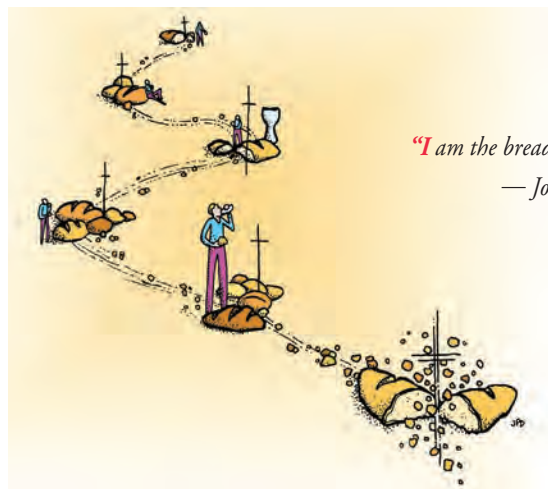
By Jean Denton

Several years ago, a young friend of mine was convicted of a crime.

Sam always was — and is — your basic "fine young man." A thoughtful son and brother, he was a very good student and responsible part-time employee while working his way through college. However, he got drawn into a moneymaking enterprise that was illegal.

He was sentenced to two years in a program set up specifically to rehabilitate first-time, nonviolent offenders at a facility far from home. It would involve group and individual counseling as well as physical labor.

The court allowed him to live with his parents for several



months between the time he was sentenced and the date he was to report to the detention center. It was a dark period for Sam as he felt a great deal of shame, remorse, and anxiety about what would happen to him over the next two years.

His father was a regular attendee at 6 a.m. daily Mass and, with his life upended, Sam began to go along.

He was much like Elijah in this week's first reading who lay under a tree feeling defeated until

an angel encouraged him to rise and take nourishment — and then take more.

Sam, too, rose each morning in the early hours when he could sit quietly in the one place where he felt accepted for what was good in him. There he received the nourishment of Jesus in the Eu-

charist every day until he had to leave to begin serving his time.

At the detention center, Sam realized how much he needed the daily bread of Christ's life, so he attended Mass whenever it was offered.

Like Elijah, Sam needed strength for the difficult journey he had to make. What he chose for sustenance was "the living bread that came down from heaven."

It enabled him to see the importance of his own life. He did everything that was asked of him in the rehabilitation program and returned home healthy and ready to move ahead.

Filled with the confidence of Jesus' presence within him, he was at peace about his future because he was fortified — not once but continually — by the bread that would give him strength and life forever.

QUESTIONS:

When have you felt truly strengthened by Jesus as the bread of life? How do you experience nourishment through continually receiving the Eucharist?

August 16, Twentieth Sunday in Ordinary Time.

Cycle B. Readings:

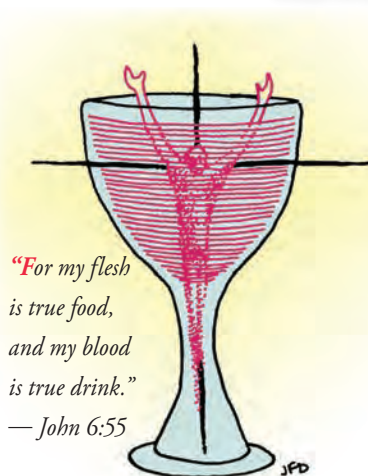
- 1) Proverbs 9:1-6
Psalm 34:2-7
- 2) Ephesians 5:15-20
Gospel) John 6:51-58

By Jeff Hedglen

A friend of mine once told me he didn't believe that the bread and wine of holy Communion are really the body and blood of Jesus. He said the difficulty for him ultimately was that he could not get past how the bread and wine still taste like bread and wine after the prayers of consecration.

I didn't know how to respond. Luckily, I was studying for my master's degree in theology at the time, so I took this question to my professors.

What I learned is this: Everything that exists can be thought of in two ways. First, there's "sub-



stance" or that of which something is made. Second, are the "accidents," a philosophical term meaning the look, feel, taste and texture of something.

For example, the "substance" of a Hershey bar is sugar, cocoa butter, chocolate, soy lecithin, vanilla and some artificial flavors. (I looked it up.) The "accidents" are

smooth, creamy, sweet, chocolaty, wonderful, and mouthwatering.

If the Eucharist were in the form of a Hershey bar, during the Eucharistic prayer, the substance of the bar would change from sugar, cocoa butter, etc., to the body, blood, soul and divinity of Jesus. But the accidents (smooth, creamy, sweet, chocolaty...) would remain the same. So even though it still tastes like chocolate, it is actually Jesus. The same is true for the bread and wine.

We're so used to a world in which "what you see is what you get" that it is often hard to come

to terms with the mystery of the Eucharist. It was no different in the time of Jesus, as we see in this week's Gospel.

But Jesus makes a bold statement when he says: "Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life." Then, in case anyone thought he was speaking metaphorically, he adds: "For my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink."

Jesus loves us so much that he gave us his body, blood, soul and divinity, so that we could connect with Him on an intimate level and receive strength from this connection.

Thus, every time you receive the Eucharist, what you see is not what you get. What you see is a little round wafer of bread and common wine. What you get is Jesus!

QUESTIONS:

How has your belief in the Eucharist grown over time? How would you explain the Eucharist to a non-Catholic?

August 23, Twenty-first Sunday in Ordinary Time.

Cycle B. Readings:

- 1) Joshua 24:1-2A, 15-17, 18B
Psalm 34:2-3, 16-21
- 2) Ephesians 5:21-32
Gospel) John 6:60-69

By Sharon K. Perkins

St. Augustine, fifth-century bishop and writer of *The Confessions*, is often quoted as saying to God, "Our heart is restless until it rests in you." St. Augustine knew himself — and the condition of the human heart — very well.

In spiritual life, as in most things, we often are attracted by novelty. Like the tribes of Israel who were drawn to the spiritual practices of their Canaanite neighbors, we get easily distracted and forget the great works that God has done for us.

Joshua understands this and brings the tribes at Shechem to



"Decide today whom you will serve. ... As for me and my household, we will serve the Lord."

— Joshua 24:15

a moment of clarity. Given the options of serving the gods of the Amorites, the former gods of their ancestors, or the God who delivered them from Egypt, Joshua makes them choose — today — whom they will serve.

Jesus has given his followers a difficult choice as well — a "hard saying." Having stated that He is the "living bread that came down from heaven," Jesus knew that his disciples would be forced to either accept or reject Him, and the results would be mixed. The moment of decision brought an end to the novelty that attracted them to Jesus in the first place. In fact,

the Gospel tells us that "many of his disciples returned to their former way of life and no longer accompanied him."

Similarly, St. Paul's teaching to the Ephesians on marriage offers a challenging choice for our age. "Be subordinate to one another out of reverence for Christ." This is hardly the counsel heard amid the cacophony of designer gown boutiques, honey-

moon resorts, glossy magazines, and reality TV shows through which the wedding industry provides a steady stream of novelties designed to make marriage look exciting and new. When the novelty of the wedding is gone, what happens to the marriage?

In our search for fulfillment, we are constantly met with an entire menu of options, and many of them satisfy — for a little while. St. Augustine knew this as well, having tasted all the novelties and attractions that life had to offer him.

But the psalmist invites us to "taste and see the goodness of the Lord." What many dismiss as old-fashioned, tedious, or unexciting brings us to abundant life. Like Augustine, we experience the Lord as "beauty ever ancient, ever new!"

QUESTIONS:

What novelties or distractions in your life have dulled your taste for the goodness of the Lord? How can you choose to allow the Lord to fulfill the restlessness of your heart?

Monseñor Michael Olson comenta acerca de la Encíclica del Papa Francisco *Laudato Si'*



Monseñor Michael Olson

En el primer capítulo del Libro del Génesis leemos cómo Dios creó el cielo y la tierra, Dios creó al hombre y a la mujer a Su imagen y semejanza — y les confió los frutos de la tierra para sustentar la vida.

En su Encíclica *Laudato Si'*, el Papa Francisco pide a todos los hombres y mujeres de buena voluntad ejercer la responsabilidad que Dios nos ha dado de administrar toda la Creación. El Santo Padre nos recuerda que el egoísmo con respecto a los bienes de la Creación pone en peligro nuestra común prosperidad humana y nos amenaza con una calamidad moral y social en el siglo veintiuno.

El Papa Francisco explica en su encíclica que la ecología humana y la ecología natural forman una ecología integral. Como el Papa dijo al Parlamento Europeo el año pasado, “El respeto por la naturaleza nos llama a reconocer que el hombre mismo es una parte fundamental de ella”. Al decir eso, el Santo Padre evita el relativismo de esta teoría contemporánea al recurrir a uno de los últimos vestigios de absoluta moral sostenida por la opinión popular, eso es, respeto por el medio ambiente.

Hoy, los pueblos del mundo se relacionan más fácilmente entre sí no importa donde vivan. Asimismo nos relacionamos con el ambiente que nos rodea, integralmente entretelado por Dios en la esencia de nuestras vidas, y que afecta a todas y cada una de las criaturas, incluyendo a los seres humanos. Si dañamos o destruimos el ambiente — la creación que Dios nos dio — dañamos o destruimos a los seres humanos. Dios nos destinó a usar Su Creación

para el bien común de todas y cada una de las personas humanas para que cada uno de nosotros prosperara en la sociedad global.

El Papa Francisco ha explicado que la Creación no es una “propiedad sobre la que podamos regir a nuestro gusto; y mucho menos es la propiedad de solo unos pocos: la Creación es un maravilloso regalo que Dios nos ha dado para que la cuidemos y la usemos para beneficio de todos”, en pocas palabras, para el bien común de todos. Derechos de propiedad personal son esenciales para el bien común y dirigidos hacia una justa administración de la Creación; estos derechos de propiedad se miden por la responsabilidad correlativa para un justo orden dentro de la sociedad. Dicho de otro modo, separar la Creación de su relación con Dios y con los seres humanos es reducir dicha Creación a la materia prima del consumismo y a explotar familias y comunidades humanas como objetos de un desenfrenado mercado libre. Tales acciones siempre han sido consideradas pecaminosas porque muestran ingratitud hacia Dios, y porque pecan violentamente por medio de actos de comisión u omisión contra nuestro prójimo en la comunidad humana.

Por medio de la encíclica *Laudato Si'*, el Papa Francisco, siguiendo la tradición de enseñanza de sus más recientes predecesores, Benedicto XVI y San Juan Pablo II, nos advierte que nuestra cultura egocéntrica promueve avaricia y desperdicio, ya sea esto un desmedido deseo de tener un coche nuevo o comer o vestir con despilfarro.

El Papa Francisco particularmente nos

advierte de la maldad de nuestra “cultura de usar y tirar”. Los avances de la civilización moderna, independientes de valores universales tales como la dignidad humana, han creado una cultura donde todo es desechable. Este enfoque asalta especialmente la dignidad de los seres humanos más débiles y vulnerables de nuestra comunidad mundial: incluyendo los pobres, los enfermos y los no nacidos. El Papa ha dicho que en esta cultura, “los mismos seres humanos son considerados bienes de consumo para usarse y desecharse”.

Laudato Si' nos llama a responsabilizarnos por la Creación de Dios, el planeta donde vivimos, porque lo que hacemos afecta nuestra “casa común”. Significa que la ecología natural y la ecología humana son tan unidas que una afecta a la otra. Significa que debemos nutrir y proteger nuestro medio ambiente como agradecidos administradores de lo que Dios nos ha confiado. Significa que hacer esto es actuar de modo que cuidemos de los más insignificantes y débiles de nuestros hermanos y hermanas en medio de nosotros.

+ Michael F. Olson

+ Monseñor Michael F. Olson, STD, MA
Obispo de la Diócesis de Fort Worth



La Hermana Yolanda Cruz deja la Cancillería para ayudar a su orden a establecer una casa de discernimiento

Por Joan Kurkowski-Gillen
Corresponsal

Los compañeros de trabajo de la Hna. Yolanda Cruz siempre han admirado su eficiencia como vicescanciller de la Diócesis de Fort Worth, pero lo que van a extrañar más cuando ella deje su puesto el 31 de mayo es su jubilosa presencia.

“Ella tiene un toque pastoral único”, dijo su amigo de mucho tiempo, Pedro Moreno, anterior director diocesano del Instituto Luz de Cristo y quien ahora supervisa el Ministerio Hispano en la Arquidiócesis de la ciudad de Oklahoma. “Es una combinación de gozo y amor verdadero. Ella es una hermana muy feliz que ama su existencia en la vida consagrada, lo cual impregna su ministerio”.

La Hna. Yolanda renunció a su puesto en la cancillería para dirigir un proyecto de la provincia occidental de las Hermanas de Santa María de Namur, su orden religiosa. Junto con la Hna. Gloria Cabrera y la Hna. Donna Marie Crochet, SSMN, establecerá una casa de discernimiento en una residencia con siete habitaciones situada en la propiedad del Centro de Nuestra Señora de la Victoria.

“Es un acto de fe de mi comunidad y mío personal”, explicó la directora de vocaciones de las Hermanas de Santa María, “pero creo que abrirá puertas, nos hará más visibles y ayudará a las jóvenes a entrar en una vida de oración y comunidad”.

El concepto y detalles del proyecto están todavía en desarrollo. Habiendo renunciado a su trabajo de vicescanciller, la Hna. Yolanda piensa visitar parroquias y reunirse con jóvenes mujeres que estén considerando una vocación religiosa. Una casa de discernimiento les dará la oportunidad de pasar fines de semana con las Hermanas de Santa María.

“Sé que Dios nos llama, en este Año de Vida Consagrada, a invitar a las mujeres jóvenes a la vida religio-



El Padre José Álvarez Abonce, CORC, platica con la Hermana Yolanda Cruz, SSMN, en su recepción de despedida el 15 de mayo. (Foto de Joan Kurkowski-Gillen)

sa”, continúa. “Es un sentimiento agrídulce porque me apasiona lo que hago por la diócesis, pero también tengo fervor por el ministerio de vocaciones. Es un nuevo territorio, pero estoy en paz con mi decisión”.

Aunque la Hna. Yolanda deja su trabajo en la cancillería, ella continuará ayudando a Monseñor Michael Olson, Obispo de Fort Worth como Delegada Interina para las Órdenes Religiosas de Mujeres. La experimentada empleada diocesana mantendrá en el Centro Católico su correo electrónico y su número de teléfono para facilitar el contacto con estas órdenes religiosas en la diócesis.

Una recepción de despedida para la vicescanciller tuvo lugar el 15 de mayo en el Centro Católico. El personal diocesano, miembros de su comunidad y amistades estuvieron presentes para manifestar su aprecio por los 16 años de servicio a la Iglesia local.

Antes de presentar a la Hna. Yolanda con un libro de recuerdos, una foto enmarcada de sus compañeros de trabajo y un regalo de la cancillería, el Padre Karl Schilken, vicario general y moderador de la curia, alabó a la trabajadora hermana por sus logros. El Obispo Olson estaba fuera de la ciudad y no pudo asistir a la reunión.

“Tenemos muchos sacerdotes y religiosos en nuestra diócesis, y la Hna. Yolanda ha supervisado que lleguen y se vayan sanos y salvos”, dijo él. “Ella coordinaba con el INS (Servicios de Inmigración y Naturalización) el manejo de sus documentos”.

La Hna. Yolanda también fue elogiada por su papel como enlace entre las comunidades de mujeres religiosas y la diócesis.

“Ha sido una inmensa bendición tenerla como parte del personal diocesano”, continuó el P. Schilken. “El trabajo puede volverse impersonal por el tamaño y crecimiento que estamos experimentando. Es grato tener aquí a alguien con una cara sonriente, alguien que es una mujer de formidable fe”.

Antes de ser vicescanciller, la Hna. Yolanda era directora diocesana de la catequesis infantil. Josie Castillo fue contratada hace 13 años para trabajar con ella.

“La voy a extrañar”, dijo la asistente administrativa. “Ella hace que todos se sientan bienvenidos y es muy cariñosa. Si se necesitaba hacer algo, ella estaba ahí para servir”.

La Hermana Catequista Misionera Eva Sánchez dijo que la Hna. Yolanda es una mujer talentosa y muy adecuada para nuevos retos.

“Necesitamos a alguien como

“Es un sentimiento agrídulce porque me apasiona lo que hago por la diócesis, pero también tengo fervor por el ministerio de vocaciones. Es un nuevo territorio, pero estoy en paz con mi decisión”.

Hna. Yolanda Cruz, SSMN

ella para salir a presentar la vida religiosa a las mujeres que quieren seguir a Jesús”, agregó la amiga de mucho tiempo, quien trabaja en la Parroquia del Santo Nombre. “Es importante hacerles saber que la vida religiosa no es misteriosa. Es una puerta abierta para seguir a Jesús, la luz de nuestra vida”.

Al dirigirse a los invitados a la recepción, la Hna. Yolanda expresó su aprecio por la cantidad de gente que ha enriquecido su vida.

“No puedo agradecerles bastante su presencia, apoyo, amor, amistad y colaboración en ministerio” continuó.

Iniciar un programa de discernimiento para su comunidad es al mismo tiempo, estimulante y desalentador.

“Las Hermanas de Santa María siempre han sido pioneras”, dijo ella al North Texas Catholic. “Eso te hace humilde y al mismo tiempo te da vida. Es un gran privilegio trabajar con otras hermanas y otras jóvenes al caminar esta jornada. Así es como Dios guía.”

Llenos del poder del E

Tres hombres emp

su ministerio como sacerdo

Por Joan Kurkowski-Gillen
Corresponsal

Pentecostés celebra el nacimiento de la Iglesia cuando los discípulos, infundidos del valor del Espíritu Santo, viajaron por el mundo proclamando la Buena Nueva. La vigilia de ese día de fiesta, tres hombres de la Diócesis de Fort Worth se llenaron de valor al recibir el Sacramento de las Órdenes Sagradas para embarcarse en la misma misión de perdón y reconciliación.

Michael Greco, Keith Hathaway y Ronaldo Mercado fueron ordenados a la Orden Sagrada del Sacerdocio por el Obispo de Fort Worth, Michael Olson, durante la Misa, concelebrada con otros clérigos diocesanos, el 23 de mayo en la Catedral de San Patricio. Familiares, amistades y gente de las parroquias de los seminaristas—San Miguel en Bedford, San Judas en Mansfield y la Sagrada Familia de

Nazaret en Vernon—llenaron el histórico santuario para presenciar el rito de ordenación.

“Éste es un gran día para la Sagrada Familia (de Nazaret) y también para la diócesis”, dijo David Miller, feligrés y miembro del Concilio 7435 de los Caballeros de Colón. Su organización apoyó a Mercado durante sus años en el seminario, y continúa apoyando a otros dos seminaristas de Vernon. Más de 40 personas del pequeño pueblo al oeste de la diócesis viajaron en autobús para observar cómo el anterior técnico en medicina fue ordenado sacerdote.

“Es un gran día para nosotros; no nos lo íbamos a perder”, dijo Elba Jaloma, feligrés de la Iglesia de Santa María en Quanah. “Conocemos a Ronaldo desde que trabajaba en nuestro pequeño hospital y venía a comer a nuestra casa. Él es de Manila, así que nosotros éramos como su familia aquí. Mis hijos pequeños



P. Ronaldo Mercado



P. Keith Hathaway

le confiaban sus problemas porque él es una persona muy comprensiva y sencilla”.

Antes de empezar la liturgia, el Obispo Olson agradeció a los directores de vocaciones y al personal de semi-

nario que colaboraron en la formación de los candidatos a la ordenación.

Entre los que asistieron a la ordenación desde el Seminario de la Asunción en San Antonio, donde Ronaldo Mercado estudió, estuvo el rector, Padre Jeff Pehl. El Padre Gerald McBrearity representó al Colegio Teológico en Washington, DC, *alma mater* de los seminaristas Hathaway y Greco, y el Padre Jonathan Wallis representó al Seminario de la Santísima Trinidad en Irving.

“Y de manera especial, quiero dar las gracias a los padres de estos ordenandos, quienes los han apoyado a través de todos sus años de formación”, dijo, reconociendo a John y Deborah Greco, a Eufrocina Mercado y a Rob y Debbie Hathaway. José, el padre de Ronaldo Mercado, es difunto.

Debbie Hathaway dijo que su hijo, Keith, pasó nueve años preparándose para el sacerdocio.

“Estoy muy emocionada”, dijo con entusiasmo la madre del ordenando, mientras los fieles llenaban las bancas de la catedral. “Él va a ser un extraordinario sacerdote”.



El P. James Flynn (centro) y el P. Héctor Medina (derecha) colocan sus manos sobre la cabeza de los ordenandos, rogando para que el Espíritu Santo more en ellos. (Foto de Juan Guajardo / NTC)

El Espíritu comprenden sacerdotes de Cristo



h Hathaway



P. Michael Greco

Tiene 27 años, es compasivo y conoce su fe “por dentro y por fuera” continuó.

“Creo que es importante para los niños ver que el sacerdocio no es solo para hombres mayores. Ellos pueden ver a Keith y pensar, ‘Sí, esto es algo que yo también podría hacer’”

Durante su homilía el Obispo Olson recordó a los seminaristas que el ministerio que estaban a punto de abrazar no tiene sus raíces en la ignominia del Viernes Santo, sino en la glorificación y redención de la Pascua.

“Hoy van a ser ordenados sacerdotes”, dijo el obispo, dirigiéndose a los seminaristas. “Sus manos se convertirán en Sus manos (las de Cristo) heridas, glorificadas para celebrar la Eucaristía, absolver a los pecadores, ungir a los enfermos, bautizar al pecador y bendecir las promesas de los que se casan”.

Por medio de la ordenación, el Espíritu Santo da a los sacerdotes la capacidad de hablar con la verdad.

“Díganla bien”, el Obispo Olson aconsejó al trío. “Escúchenlo (a Cristo) especialmente en el confesionario

cuando los penitentes se acercan a ustedes angustiados por sus heridas de pecado. Cristo les permite a ustedes, como sus sacerdotes, manifestar toda la verdad de Su redención y el perdón de sus pecados”.

Pero la misión reconciliadora se extiende más allá del confesionario e instruye a los hombres a tratar de sanar a los heridos por el pecado en la sociedad, las comunidades parroquiales, las familias y por todo el mundo.

“Esta misión es el don de Cristo para ustedes”, enfatizó el obispo. “No el regalo de ustedes para Él. Nunca dejen de agradecerse”.

Manifestando su deseo de servir a la Iglesia con un sonoro “Sí quiero”, los seminaristas prometieron obediencia al obispo y a sus sucesores antes de postrarse ante el altar de mármol. Vestidos con albas blancas, con sus caras tapadas con sus brazos, los candidatos al sacerdocio se sometieron a Dios y a la Iglesia mientras la congregación entonaba la Letanía de los Santos. El coro combinado de las Iglesias de San Patricio, San Miguel y Santa Elizabeth Ann Seton

dirigió la antigua oración invocando la ayuda divina.

En el momento más solemne del rito de ordenación, los candidatos al sacerdocio se acercaron uno por uno al asiento o cátedra del obispo, y se hincaron para la imposición de las manos y la invocación silente al Espíritu Santo por el Obispo Olson. Este acto significa la sagrada transformación y distingue a estos hombres para su ministerio presbiteral. Entonces, sus hermanos sacerdotes impusieron sus manos sobre los recién ordenados, pidiendo al Espíritu Santo que venga a habitar en cada alma.

Después de la investidura con estola y casulla—signo visible que los nuevos sacerdotes se “han revestido de Cristo”, el Obispo Olson ungió las manos de cada hombre con el Santo Crisma, santificándolo para el trabajo sacramental. Después que los miembros de las familias de Greco, Hathaway y Mercado llevaron los dones Eucarísticos de pan y vino al altar, el obispo puso la patena y el cáliz en las manos de los recién ordenados con estas palabras: “Reciban esta oblación del pueblo santo para ofrecerla a Dios. Entiendan lo que hacen. Imiten lo que celebran, y conformen su vida al misterio de la cruz del Señor”.

El rito de ordenación concluyó con la bienvenida de los padres Greco, Hathaway y Mercado a la Orden de Presbíteros por el Obispo Olson y los otros sacerdotes durante el beso de Paz.

Al terminar la Misa, la gente que cubría la entrada de la catedral estalló en aplausos cuando los nuevos sacerdotes salieron de la iglesia. Los padres Hathaway y Greco celebraron su primera Misa al día siguiente, domingo de Pentecostés, en sus parroquias de origen, San Miguel en

‘S us manos se
convertirán

en Sus manos (las

de Cristo) heridas,

glorificadas para

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absolver a los

pecadores, ungir a los

enfermos, bautizar al

pecador y bendecir

las promesas de los

que se casan”.

— Monseñor Michael Olson

Bedford del Padre Greco y San Judas en Mansfield del Padre Hathaway. El Padre Mercado escogió celebrar su Misa de Acción de Gracias, esa tarde, en la Iglesia de San Jorge, en el noreste de Fort Worth, donde hizo su internado pastoral.

Janet Spellings, sacristán en San Miguel, ayudó al Padre Greco a prepararse para su primera Misa en la parroquia donde creció.

“Hemos estado rezando por Michael y estamos muy contentos que este día finalmente ha llegado”, dijo ella. “Él tiene un espíritu piadoso, un corazón agradecido y una devoción especial a la Santísima Virgen. Es una bendición tenerlo en nuestra diócesis”.

Los recién ordenados sacerdotes Michael Greco y Keith Hathaway tomaron, cada uno, un camino diferente para

Por Joan Kurkowski-Gillen
Corresponsal

LAS HISTORIAS DE CONVERSIÓN—NARRADAS EN LA BIBLIA — SEGUIDO MENCIONAN TEMBLORES, RELÁMPAGOS O ALGUNOS OTROS ELEMENTOS DE LA NATURALEZA.

La vida del Padre Keith Hathaway cambió el día que cayó en un helado arroyo mientras excursionaba y acampaba por la montaña. Tenía 17 años y tontamente pensó que sentado junto al fuego, aún en su ropa mojada, podría resistir las bajas temperaturas. Para cuando un grupo de compañeros exploradores lo encontraron temblando junto a las llamas, sufría ya de hipotermia.

“Perdí el conocimiento y eso fue espantoso”, recuerda el P. Hathaway, explicando el inicio de su vocación al sacerdocio. “Pensé que iba a morir. Al recobrar el sentido me llené de gratitud”.

Sus amigos lo cuidaron en una cabaña calentita, dándole ropa limpia y seca y una cobija. Consideraron transportarlo a un hospital, pero él rehusó porque no quería perderse el resto de la aventura.

“En mi mochila encontré una Biblia y un rosario que un capellán me había dado antes del campamento básico y empecé a leer y a rezar”, continúa el Explorador Águila. “Y llegué a la conclusión de que había vivido mi vida lejos de la Iglesia Católica y quise regresar”.

Creciendo, Keith y su hermano mayor, Kevin, fueron bautizados y recibieron su primera Comunión, pero el seminarista describe a su familia como gente de lirio y nochebuena.

“Éramos parte de la muchedumbre que va en la Pascua y la Navidad y, poco después, dejamos de ir a la iglesia por completo”, él confiesa.

Su recién descubierta devoción religiosa cambió eso.

“Mis padres se sorprendieron cuando empecé a ir a la iglesia de nuevo y los invité a acompañarme”.



El hermano y la mamá del P. Hathaway siguieron su ejemplo.

“Mi papá no era católico entonces, pero me apoyó y respetó mi decisión”, recuerda el agradecido hijo. “Un poco después empezó a ir a Misa con nosotros”.

Rob Hathaway después se convirtió al catolicismo y su hermano es ahora un seminarista.

Durante los años siguientes, Keith, feligrés de San Judas, se inscribió en RICA, leyó vorazmente el Catecismo de la Iglesia Católica, participó en varias actividades parroquiales, y recibió el sacramento de la Confirmación. Asimismo fue voluntario de los Caballeros de Colón y de la Sociedad de San Vicente de Paul.

“La gente me veía en la parroquia tan seguido que empecé a preguntarme si alguna vez había yo pensado en el sacerdocio”, cuenta el P. Hathaway. Tanta gente me preguntó que, eventualmente, empecé a pensar que quizá había algo de eso, y hablé con el Padre Kyle Walterscheid, en ese tiempo director de vocaciones”.

Durante la Cuaresma, el estudiante de primer año en el Colegio del Condado de Tarrant asistió a las reuniones de discernimiento y platicó con más sacerdotes. Para el otoño de 2006, decidió entregar su vida a Cristo en el sacerdocio y entró al Seminario de la Santísima Trinidad en Irving.

Nueve años de estudios de seminario incluyeron tiempo en la Facultad de Teología de la

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CUANDO EN UNA CLASE DE FILOSOFÍA EL PADRE MICHAEL GRECO SE VIO INDUCIDO A CUESTIONAR LOS DOGMAS DE SU FE, ENCONTRÓ ÁNIMO Y RESPUESTAS EN LOS ESCRITOS DE UN POPULAR AUTOR.

C. S. Lewis, quien escribió Las crónicas de Narnia y otros libros premiados, es considerado como uno de los grandes intelectuales del siglo veinte. En otro tiempo ateo declarado, se convirtió al cristianismo y se ganó el mote de “apóstol de los incrédulos” gracias a su efectiva manera de comunicar verdades teológicas.

“Tomaba una clase de introducción a la filosofía en el Colegio del Condado de Tarrant, junto con un amigo, y empezamos a discutir mis creencias y porqué pensaba que eran verdaderas”, dice el P. Greco, uno de los tres hombres que recibieron el sacramento de las Órdenes Sagradas el 23 de mayo en la Catedral de San Patricio. “Me di cuenta entonces que yo no sabía mucho sobre mi fe y quise aprender más”.

En esa búsqueda de conocimiento, por casualidad encontró las obras de C.S. Lewis. Fue un momento crucial en la vida de este joven estudiante.

“Al leer sus libros, quedé impresionado con la belleza, profundidad y coherencia de la fe

“Pasé de una posición de rechazo a realmente abrazar y querer de esa verdad”

— Padre

Greco, Keith Hathaway y Ronaldo Mercado para llegar a servir en el nombre de Cristo



(Izquierda) el P. Hathaway bendice al P. Raymond McDaniel, párroco de San Felipe Apóstol en Lewisville. (Centro) El Padre Greco bendice a un niño durante la Comunión. (Derecha) el P. Mercado bendice al Diácono Jim Novak de la Parroquia de Santa María de la Asunción en Megargel. (Fotos de Juan Guajardo / NTC)

cristiana”, dice el recientemente graduado de la Facultad de Teología de la Universidad Católica de América. “Fue algo intelectual. Pasé de una posición de duda a realmente abrazar y quedar convencido de esta verdad. Los escritos de C.S. Lewis eran muy claros, sabios y sensatos”.

Originario de Pittsburgh, el P. Greco hace 20 años se trasladó a Texas, con sus padres, John and Deborah; su hermano mayor, Matthew; y su hermana gemela, Rachel. La familia regularmente iba a la Iglesia de San Miguel en Bedford.

“Pero yo era un muchacho típico y no estaba realmente interesado en la iglesia”, admite recordando su adolescencia. “Iba a Misa y a educación religiosa por obligación”.

Inspirado por Lewis, el P. Greco leyó más y empezó a ir a Misa y a confesarse más seguido. Su recién adquirida percepción del cristianismo lo llevó en particular a entender más profundamente el catolicismo.

“De ahí, me enamoré de la fe, de la Iglesia, del Evangelio y de Jesucristo”, dice el hombre de 33 años que, en ese entonces, asistía a la Universidad del Norte de Texas. “De esa experiencia empecé a pensar acerca de la posibilidad del sacerdocio”.

— Padre Michael Greco

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SOSTENER LA MANO DE UN ANCIANO PACIENTE EN EL *WILBARGER GENERAL HOSPITAL EN VERNON, LA REGIÓN OCCIDENTAL MÁS ALEJADA DE LA DIÓCESIS, DIO AL PADRE RONALDO MERCADO EL PRIMER EMPUJONCITO HACIA EL SACERDOCIO.*

La cálida, amistosa sonrisa y el sencillo trato del técnico en medicina lo hicieron favorito del personal de enfermería y de la gente que atendían.

“Creo que algunos de los pacientes más ancianos me veían como a un nieto”, dice humildemente el sacerdote. “Cuando les tomaba muestras de sangre, me pedían tomar mi mano, y algunas veces yo empezaba una oración. Sin saberlo, estaba siendo capellán”.

Después de una de estas visitas, de camino de regreso al laboratorio, él se preguntaba si habría una mejor manera de servir a la gente.

“Me sentía llamado a un ministerio más amplio”, recuerda el P. Mercado, quien asistió al fin de semana del programa vocacional en 2006. “Y finalmente, toqué a la puerta de la Oficina de Vocaciones”.

Después de dos años de discernimiento, el nativo de Manila, Filipinas, entró al Seminario de la Asunción en agosto de 2008. Siete años más tarde, el Obispo de Fort Worth, Michael Olson, ordenó al sacerdocio a este hombre de 42 años, el 23 de mayo en la Catedral de San Patricio.

Miembros de su familia vinieron desde Filipinas para la ceremonia. Su mamá, Eufrocina Mercado y sus hermanas, Rhodora Melendez y Pilar Mangubat, se reunieron con el P. Mercado

“Me sentía llamado a un ministerio más amplio y finalmente toque a la puerta de la Oficina de Vocaciones”.

— Padre Ronaldo Mercado

al presenciar su ordenación. Una hermana menor, Karen Mercado, permaneció en las Filipinas. José, papá del P. Mercado, es difunto.

No tengo un hermano biológico, pero gané muchos hermanos espirituales en el seminario”, reflexiona el P. Mercado. “Disfruté mi tiempo en el seminario, y fue una bendición para mí viajar a diferentes lugares, como México y Puerto Rico”.

El anterior trabajador médico, que tipificaba tejidos y analizaba ADN en el *National Kidney and Transplant Institute* en Manila, como seminarista tuvo la oportunidad de visitar la rutina hospitalaria. En 2012 pasó 10 semanas trabajando como capellán en *Baylor Medical Center* en Dallas.

“Tener conocimiento médico aumentó mi entendimiento, mi sentido de compasión y mi habilidad pastoral con la gente”, asegura el P. Mercado, quien por sus habilidades en el laboratorio fue patrocinado por el *Wilbarger General Hospital* para trabajar en los E. U.

El internado en el hospital también ayudó al técnico a entenderse mejor a sí mismo.

“Creo que la Educación Pastoral Clínica que nos dan ayuda a los seminaristas a conocerse como personas, no sólo a aprender el ministerio de capellán”, agrega.

Como parte de su formación sacerdotal, Mercado experimentó la vida parroquial en la Iglesia de San Jorge, donde celebró su primera Misa la tarde de su ordenación. Sus obligaciones consistían en capacitar servidores del altar y

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Padre Hathaway

Universidad Católica de América en Washington, DC, y un año de estudios pastorales en la Parroquia de la Inmaculada Concepción en Denton. El Obispo de Fort Worth, Michael Olson, lo ordenó diácono transitorio el pasado julio.

“Realmente fue durante mi año en la parroquia que yo abracé mi vocación y tuve la seguridad de que Dios me ha llamado a ser sacerdote”, explica el P. Hathaway. “Me gustó mucho ser servidor del altar en las Misas dominicales, ayudar en RICA y en los programas de los jóvenes”.

En otro tiempo católico indiferente, este joven de 27 años puede relacionarse con los jóvenes que rehúyen ir a Misa los domingos y a participar en la iglesia. Muchos de ellos ven el cristianismo como una lista de códigos morales y una serie de doctrinas, explica, añadiendo, “Ellos

buscan una auténtica experiencia espiritual, y si no la hayan en la iglesia, no vienen.

“Cuando era más joven, no entendía cómo la vida de un hombre que murió por nosotros hace años podría afectar mi propia vida”, él admite. “Al encontrar a Dios en la oración y hablando con la gente acerca de mi fe, es como llegué a conocer a Dios”.

Un encuentro personal con Jesucristo puede cambiar corazones y vidas, dijo.

“Como católicos, tenemos que proclamar con valentía que Jesucristo resucitó de entre los muertos, y debemos manifestar su amor por nosotros a cada uno y al resto del mundo”, explica el P. Hathaway. “Cuando proclamamos esto—en voz alta y con valentía—nuestra fe se vuelve muy atractiva para la gente.

Después de graduarse de la Facultad de Teología el mes pasado, el sacerdote completó su ordenación del 23 de mayo celebrando su primera Misa el domingo de Pentecostés en San Judas, su parroquia de origen. Empezando el 1º de julio él será el vicario parroquial de la Parroquia de San José en Arlington.

“¿Dónde estaría ahora si él no hubiera caído en ese helado arroyo? El arriesgado muchacho no puede imaginar una vida diferente a la que ha elegido.

“Amo el sacerdocio”, Hathaway dice con entusiasmo. “Mi vocación es un hermoso regalo que se me ha dado. Es muy emocionante servir al Señor y a la Iglesia”

“Al encontrar a Dios en la oración y hablando con la gente acerca de mi fe, llegué a conocer a Dios”.

— Padre Keith Hathaway

Padre Greco

El feligrés de San Miguel estaba consciente de la necesidad de más vocaciones en la diócesis. Miembros de su parroquia participaban en el Programa del Cáliz—designado por los obispos de los Estados Unidos para promover vocaciones al sacerdocio y a la vida religiosa. También se rezaba una oración por vocaciones todos los domingos en la Misa.

“Investigué, oré y pensé acerca de ello”, recuerda el P. Greco quien asistió un fin de semana a un programa vocacional y tomó tiempo para discernir. “Fue un proceso de muchos años antes de que finalmente decidiera entrar al seminario”.

Sus padres inicialmente tenían sus reservas acerca del anuncio del cambio esencial de vida.

“Era una gran decisión, y ellos querían estar seguros que yo sabía lo que estaba

haciendo”, él explica.

Greco asistió al Seminario de la Santísima Trinidad en Irving donde obtuvo su licenciatura en filosofía, antes de ir a la Facultad de Teología de la Universidad Católica de América para estudios de postgrado.

Los ocho años de preparación del sacerdote incluyeron un año pastoral en la Iglesia de San Pedro en Lindsay. Fundada en 1892 por colonos Alemanes católicos, la pequeña parroquia rural es una de las históricas Iglesias Pintadas en Texas.

“Fue bueno pasar tiempo en esta parte de la diócesis”, dice el P. Greco, quien disfrutó de la calma y el espíritu de unidad de la comunidad. “Seguí de cerca al Padre Ray McDaniel quien era entonces el párroco de San Pedro y aprendí mucho de él”.

En julio pasado el celebró un acontecimiento fundamental en su vocación cuando el Obispo Michael Olson, de Fort Worth, lo ordenó diácono transitorio.

Ahora, después de su ordenación, el P. Greco espera servir a los fieles de la Catedral de San Patricio, donde será vicario parroquial desde el 1º de julio.

“Muchas personas, como los Caballeros de Colón, me apoyaron en esta jornada”, dijo él. “la gente de mi parroquia estuvo orando por mí e infundiéndome ánimo; y yo realmente aprecio eso. Me ayudó a llegar aquí”.

Padre Mercado

acólitos y enseñar clases de religión en la adjunta escuela católica.

“Cuando estoy en Fort Worth, continuó sirviendo allí. La gente es como mi familia”, dice con emoción. “Me invitan a sus casas cuando estoy en Fort Worth”.

Muchos de sus propios familiares todavía viven en las Filipinas donde las tradiciones de fe de su infancia todavía están frescas en su memoria.

“La familia de mi madre era muy religiosa” recuerda el sacerdote. “Recuerdo que cuando tenía cinco años, el 1º de noviembre iba de casa en casa, con mis primos y un tío anciano, rezando el rosario por las pobres ánimas”.

Esas piadosas prácticas religiosas tuvieron su impacto.

“Ellas me hicieron quien soy”, dice el P. Mercado. “Todavía tengo esas devociones y espero, cuando empiece mi ministerio, introducir algunas de ellas para promover vocaciones”.

Mientras se preparaba para su reciente ordenación, el P. Mercado fue a un restablecedor retiro silencioso. Mientras reflexionaba sobre mis años de formación, dice él, “me di cuenta que, desde niño, Dios me marcó para el sacerdocio”.

Su tía Josefina, quien vive en California, reveló recientemente que su hermano José, el difunto papá del P. Mercado, soñó que tenía un hijo que era sacerdote. La historia le recordó al P. Mercado su encuentro, un día de Navidad cuando él vivía en Vernon, con el Padre Oren W. Kay, un Jesuita que era párroco de la Parroquia de la Sagrada Familia de Nazaret.

“Había terminado de servir en la Misa y como no tenía a donde ir pasé una hora en adoración. El Padre Key estaba revisando las puertas de la iglesia cuando volteó y me preguntó, ‘Ronaldo, piensas que tienes una vocación?’ Le contesté que quería tener una familia, pero que si llegara a tener un hijo, rezaría para que él fuera sacerdote”.

Su respuesta no pareció convencer a su párroco quien lo animó a que, de todos modos, pensara acerca del sacerdocio.

El P. Mercado ahora se da cuenta que ese deseo verdaderamente era el de su padre.

“Mi padre estaría muy feliz por mi ordenación porque ése era su anhelo secreto”, él explica.

El nuevo sacerdote está agradecido con la gente de la diócesis por haberlo ayudado a entender y aceptar su vocación. El servirá como vicario parroquial en la Parroquia de San Miguel en Bedford empezando el 1º de julio.

“Soy solo un humilde servidor del Señor que desea servir para el bien de la gente”, dice él.

Monseñor Olson ordena al sacerdocio a Fray Pedro Romero de la Orden de los Hermanos Menores Capuchinos

Por Jacqueline Burkepile
Correponsal

EL DOMINGO 31 DE MAYO, EL OBISPO MICHAEL OLSON ORDENÓ AL FRAILE PEDRO ROMERO GUTIÉRREZ, OFM CAP., EL MÁS NUEVO SACERDOTE EN LA DIÓCESIS, EN LA IGLESIA DE NUESTRA SEÑORA DE GUADALUPE EN FORT WORTH.

El Padre Romero es miembro de la Orden de los Hermanos Menores Capuchinos de la Viceprovincia de México-Texas, conocidos también como los Franciscanos Capuchinos.

El P. Romero es un inmigrante de Aguascalientes, México. El primer fin de semana en enero 2000, Solemnidad de la Epifanía del Señor, él oyó su llamado vocacional durante el Congreso Católico de Renovación Carismática en Mesquite. Este llamado lo llevó a los Franciscanos Capuchinos, donde tres años más tarde empezó su formación.

“La vida de San Francisco de Asís me cautivó”, explicó. “Los valores de hermandad, sencillez y humildad verdaderamente llamaron mi atención”.

Doce años más tarde, después de años de oración y discernimiento, años de estudio, capacitación para el ministerio, y progresando a través de las etapas de formación Capuchina, el fraile o ‘fray’ como comúnmente se le llama en Español, estuvo ante el altar mientras cientos de personas—incluyendo familiares, amistades y feligreses que lo conocieron durante sus años de servicio—llenaron las bancas de la Parroquia de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe cuando el Obispo Olson le confirió el sacramento de las Sagradas Órdenes.

Diez sacerdotes más se unieron al Obispo Olson para celebrar la Misa de Ordenación, entre ellos muchos sacerdotes Franciscanos Capuchinos. El Padre Stephen Jasso, TOR, de la Parroquia de Todos los Santos en el Norte de Fort Worth, y el Diácono Don Warner también ayudaron en la Misa.

El obispo centró su homilía en la obediencia de los sacerdotes a la Iglesia y a vivir la fe en todos los aspectos de la vida sacerdotal.

“Frecuentemente nuestras políticas administrativas y pastorales se vuelven más importantes para nosotros que los mandatos acerca de amar al prójimo, las Bienaventuranzas, y hasta la dignidad del matrimonio como Jesús y su Iglesia nos



Foto de Donna Ryckaert / NTC

El Padre Romero sonríe a la congregación de la Parroquia de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe en Fort Worth durante su ordenación el 31 de mayo.

La vida de San Francisco de Asís me cautivó. Los valores de hermandad, sencillez y humildad verdaderamente llamaron mi atención”.

— Padre Pedro Romero

enseñan”, dijo el Obispo Olson. “La obediencia que Cristo requiere de sus sacerdotes y religiosos es una obediencia que da vida e ilumina la obediencia de Cristo hacia el Padre”.

Una vez que el Obispo Olson ordenó al P. Romero, él y todos los clérigos lo felicitaron mientras la comunidad eclesial, de pie, aclamaba con caluroso aplauso. Los feligreses, sacerdotes y otros patrocinadores expresaban su alegría porque su hermano en Cristo es parte del presbiterado.

Pedro Romero Chávez, papá del P. Romero, dijo que está muy feliz por la ordenación de su hijo. “Éste es el resultado de todas las enseñanzas y principios que fueron inculcados en mi hijo por sus primeras comunidades”, dijo Chávez. “Éste es el resultado de...todo lo que le enseñamos”.

El Padre Constantino Alonso Zaldívar, OFM Cap., superior de la Viceprovincia México-Texas de los Franciscanos Capuchinos, asistió al evento en apoyo del P. Romero.

“Estoy muy contento [de estar hoy en la ordenación]”, dijo el Padre Alonso. Es un evento muy importante para la orden y para la parroquia. Estamos muy dichosos por esta gracia, que es para la comunidad y para la orden”.

El Padre Jesús María Bezunarte, OFM Cap., otro sacerdote que concelebró en la ordenación, conoció al P. Romero cuando estudió en México. “Pedro fue nuestro compañero en la ciudad de México. Él estudio teología ahí con nosotros; yo era el superior de la casa”, dijo el P. Bezunarte.

“Fue una alegría tenerlo como mi estudiante”.

Al terminar la ordenación, la parroquia tuvo una recepción en honor del P. Romero. La celebración incluyó mariachis y auténtica comida mexicana.

Cientos celebraron, y los feligreses de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe expresaron su entusiasmo porque el Obispo Olson nombró al P. Romero como su Vicario Parroquial.

Fred Soriano, feligrés de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe, dijo que conoció al P. Romero hace seis meses. Soriano cree que el sacerdote será de gran beneficio para su comunidad.

“Veo que pasarán muchas cosas grandes con este joven sacerdote”, dijo Soriano. “Creo que es un buen individuo. Él nos reunirá y nos unirá en nuestra fe”.

Joel López, también feligrés de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe, estaba muy contento porque mucha gente vino a disfrutar de la celebración, especialmente porque su iglesia está creciendo rápidamente.

“Cuando el P. Romero llegó a la parroquia, necesitábamos ayuda porque teníamos un sacerdote y ésta es una parroquia grande”, dijo López. “Para mi esposa y para mí ésta es la primera ordenación [a la que asistimos]. “Fue Hermosa”.

El P. Romero dijo que está muy entusiasmado de ser el Vicario Parroquial de la parroquia donde ha servido con diácono transitorio desde octubre pasado porque la comunidad es “muy acogedora y deseosa de trabajar y servir junta, en equipo, por el Reino de Dios”. Su esperanza es ayudar a la gente a conocer y encontrar al Dios de Jesucristo—el Dios de amor y misericordia”.



Las parejas irregulares son acogidas

POR EL PADRE CARMELO MELE, OP

LA MANERA EN QUE UNA IGLESIA CRISTIANA HACE PROPAGANDA EN LA RADIO ME LLAMA LA ATENCIÓN. SU PUBLICIDAD TERMINA CON LA FRASE, “TODOS ESTÁN ACOGIDOS AQUÍ”. PUEDE SER UNA BIENVENIDA SINCERA PARA INVITAR A TODOS LOS ESCUCHADORES A SUS SERVICIOS. SIN EMBARGO, CREO QUE LOS QUE CONOCEN EL AMBIENTE RELIGIOSO ACTUAL DIRÍAN QUE LAS PALABRAS TIENEN UN MENSAJE OCULTO.

En su manera de ver, por la frase “todos están acogidos”, la iglesia intenta distinguirse de otras iglesias que, supuestamente, no aceptan a diferentes tipos de personas. Algunos critican nuestra Iglesia Católica así por no dejar a las parejas irregulares -- las parejas no casadas por la Iglesia y las parejas homosexuales -- comulgar. ¿Cómo deberíamos responder a tal crítica?

LA VISIÓN DEL PAPA FRANCISCO

Primero, tenemos que decir que la Iglesia Católica es sobre todo una comunión de amor. Ve a la Santísima Trinidad como modelo para imitarse. Por esta razón, se puede decir que todos son acogidos en sus templos. De hecho, en el domingo de Pentecostés el papa Francisco dijo precisamente esto. “La Iglesia no nace aislada -- dijo -- nace universal... con una identidad precisa pero abierta a todos, no cerrada, una identidad que abraza el mundo entero, sin excluir a nadie”. Es así particularmente en

En el caso del sexo, desde sus comienzos la Iglesia ha enseñado que la intimidad sexual es reservada para el matrimonio permanente entre un hombre y una mujer.

el caso de los homosexuales que han experimentado mucho prejuicio en la historia. La Iglesia ha hecho una opción preferencial por los marginados que incluyen a los gay.

La Iglesia entiende la dificultad hoy día de los que quieren vivir en relaciones monógamas aunque sea con una segunda pareja o una pareja del mismo sexo. No comparte la opinión que tales relaciones son necesariamente egoístas. Más bien reconoce que en muchos casos las parejas están siguiendo los deseos profundos del corazón. Por eso, por la mayor parte, la Iglesia no exige que las personas abandonen a sus parejas para volver a una vida solitaria.

LA ENSEÑANZA SOBRE LA INTIMIDAD SEXUAL

Pero la Iglesia Católica como todas organizaciones tiene normas y tradiciones con las cuales tiene que ser coherente o dejar a existir. En el caso del sexo, desde sus comienzos la Iglesia ha enseñado que la intimidad sexual es reservada para el matrimonio permanente entre un

hombre y una mujer. Esta enseñanza no es meramente una regla que puede dispensarse como la abstinencia de la carne el día viernes. Más bien, forma parte de la ley natural confirmada en este caso por el Señor Jesús. Por esta razón la Iglesia dice que las personas que tienen relaciones irregulares pueden rezar con los demás, pero no deben presentarse para la Santa Comunión. Este sacramento es reservado para aquellos cuyas vidas se conforman con la de Jesús.

EL ODIOS: OTRO PECADO SERIO

¿Cómo sabemos si nuestras vidas se conforman así? No es que todos los que reciben la hostia practiquen el amor al prójimo como Jesús siempre nos manda. De verdad, es posible que algunos que odian a otras personas sean los primeros para formar la fila de la Comunión. Estas personas olvidan la crítica que Jesús levantó contra los fariseos cuando citó al profeta: “Lo que quiero es que sean compasivos, y no que ofrezcan sacrificios”. Tal vez su pecado es aún más grave que aquel que sigue

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

en una relación sexual prohibida.

De todos modos no deberíamos juzgar a otras personas sin conocer su situación bien. A veces las parejas en situaciones irregulares aceptan el consejo de sacerdotes de que vivan sin tener relaciones sexuales. Sí, parece increíble este tipo de convivencia en una sociedad saturada con el sexo. Sin embargo, hay varias personas que aman al Señor tanto que están dispuestos a dejar el placer sexual.

LAS INTENCIONES DE NUESTRA ORACIÓN

Se ha mencionado que los que no pueden recibir la Comunión deben rezar junto con los demás. ¿Rezará para qué? Todos deberíamos rezar para que realmente seamos dignos de recibir el Cuerpo y Sangre del Señor Jesús. También deberíamos rezar para que aquellos que se encuentran en matrimonios irregulares puedan resolver sus problemas, tal vez con una anulación. Deberíamos rezar también por la fortaleza de vivir coherentes con Cristo. Como se ha dicho, tal vida implica más que recibir los sacramentos. Por eso deberíamos rezar finalmente para que amemos a todos como la Santísima Trinidad.

influenced by his family's dedication to Catholic schools. His aunt, a Sister of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, was an "excellent" teacher/principal, and members of her religious order taught him in grade school. Priests, managing his boarding school, were role models, but he cites the years at Alvernia University, his alma mater, as particularly formative.

"The Bernardine [Franciscan] nuns were outstanding," he says with enthusiasm "These were the experienced, first ladies of education whom I had for my teaching methods courses, and I learned so much from them. With this background, it was a natural choice for me to carry on the heritage of Catholic schools."

After teaching grade school and training catechists in the Diocese of Philadelphia-Allentown, Nemeth moved to Texas in 1980 at the invitation of Sister Mary Vernard Fulbright, SSMN, then superintendent of schools for the Diocese of Fort Worth. She asked him to consider a principal position and, during the interview process,

he stayed with the Marianists who operated Nolan Catholic.

"When the principalship did not work out due to financial reasons, Brother Tony Pistone, Nolan's principal, said he needed a vice-principal for academics, and I agreed to 'pinch-hit' for one year," recalls the transplanted Pennsylvanian.

Enticed by Marianist hospitality, he remained at Nolan except for a two-year stay in Maui to teach English, Christian lifestyle, and Hawaiian history at St. Anthony's for the Diocese of Honolulu. Nemeth used the work sabbatical to immerse himself in the culture of his ancestors. He learned the history and meaning of the hula, took language courses, and celebrated native customs.

"My father always spoke about the culture, and I wanted to meet our family still living there," says the teacher, explaining his relatives are like most modern Hawaiian families — a mixture of nationalities.

"The beaches are nice but what attracted me were the people," he

says thoughtfully. "Excellent teachers imbued me with the Hula spirit and gave me my Hawaiian name — *Kamea Aloha o Nahonu Kai* — during a big ceremony."

After returning to Nolan in 1986, he used those experiences to add interest and color to his classes. Students taking Pacific studies, a senior elective, receive their own Hawaiian name in a similar ritual. During the Marian prayer service, an all-male dance troupe performs a sacred hula to a Mary, Mother of All Nations chant written by Nemeth.

"It teaches them you can be a man, you can dance, and you can love Mary," the teacher points out. "I hope they remember this and it will affect their faith in a positive way."

Traditionally, Hawaiian men danced the *Hula Kahiko* to praise and honor the gods of fire, rain, and water.

"They do believe in these gods, but I can't do that as a Catholic," he explains. "To me, these are simply images of God's power in the volcano and the beauty of the ocean."

Exposing students to other beliefs and global religions like Buddhism and Hinduism is important,

he says.

"But I always relate them to our Catholic faith," the teacher explains. "I always tell them they don't have to agree with these beliefs, but they should understand and respect global cultures."

Nemeth's devotion to Catholicism and Mary comes across in his respect for other faculty members and students. Several years ago, he started a Mass of Remembrance at Nolan for deceased alumni and teachers.

"He really does his very best to lead a life that would make Mary proud," says Nolan president Erin Vader. "He takes that devotion very seriously and uses Mary as a model in his life. He's an incredibly engaging teacher who inspires his students."

Although he'll no longer walk the hallways of Nolan Catholic, the seasoned Catholic educator has promised to pray for the success of the school, its students, and staff. Retirement plans include gardening and animal rescue activities with his wife of 25 years, Linda.

"I hope my students remember that I was passionate about the subjects I taught, that I was very open to other cultures, and that I love Mary," says Nemeth, who's enjoyed a farewell luau and spate of other heartwarming gestures from the Nolan community.

"A part of my heart will always be with NCHS. *A hui hou*'—until we meet again."

Mr. Nemeth,

I just learned that you are retiring and I wanted to reach out to thank you for your time and devotion to all of your students.... Even beyond the materials of the class, your care for life and those around you was a great example for us as we matured into adulthood in the halls of Nolan.

Just the other day I thought of an anecdote you mentioned once; that you sometimes pick up earthworms that have been stranded on a sidewalk after the rain and put them back in the grass.

I'm finishing up law school at Notre Dame at the moment, and as it was raining on my walk to school that story came to mind when I saw an earthworm on the sidewalk. Know that you have had a great impact on all of us, and we wouldn't have been the same without it.

Thanks again and enjoy a well-earned retirement!

Matt Arth
Class of 2007

GOOD NEWSMAKER

Connecting students to Mary

Mr. Nemeth, as he's known to his students, bids farewell to Nolan Catholic, but his lessons about life, faith remain

By JOAN KURKOWSKI-GILLEN / CORRESPONDENT



Stephen Nemeth poses for a photo with senior Rodney Marshall at the farewell luau held for Nemeth in May.
(Photo by Joan Kurkowski-Gillen / NTC)

ASK ANY FORMER PUPIL OF STEPHEN “KAI” NEMETH WHAT THEY REMEMBER ABOUT HIM, AND THEY’RE LIKELY TO RECALL THREE THINGS: HE’S PASSIONATE ABOUT HAWAII, FEELS A STRONG, PERSONAL CONNECTION TO THE VIRGIN MARY, AND ENCOURAGES STUDENTS TO RESPECT AND UNDERSTAND GLOBAL CULTURES.

“I wish every teacher was like Mr. Nemeth,” sighs Karla Bruciaga who is sad the long-time Nolan Catholic faculty member is retiring after 45 years in Catholic education. The last 31 years were spent at Nolan’s East Fort Worth campus. “He tells stories in class based on what we’re learning. I still

remember those lectures because he personalized them.”

A product of Catholic education, the Pennsylvania native’s dedication to faith and teaching world geography merge each year during the Mary, Mother of All Nations freshman assembly. Inspired by an icon painted by William Hart McNichols, Nemeth started the event 18 years ago to show how Mary is honored differently across the globe, yet remains a unifying figure for all nations.

“Heworksreallyhardorganizing the Mary, Mother of Nations prayer service,” says Bruciaga, citing after-school practices so student musicians, vocalists, and dancers can hone their performances. “It brings together the whole freshman class and demonstrates what Nolan’s

all about — unity under Mary.”

But this year’s program also served as a farewell to the much-loved teacher who received flowers from the freshman class and a commemorative photo from the “Hula Brothers” dancers at the end of the assembly.

After a two-year discernment process, Nemeth is leaving Nolan, “but I can’t imagine not being involved in Catholic education in some way,” the veteran educator insists. “I’m blessed. This is an exceptional freshman class and my seniors are graduating, too, so I couldn’t be leaving at a better time.”

When Nemeth walked out of Nolan’s commencement ceremony May 24, he ended a storied career

Mr. Nemeth,

Congrats on retirement! Thank you for sharing your devotion to Mary with our class.

Now in my 20s, I still have a love for our Mother and I know that your class impacted and instilled in me an initial desire to do so.

I’m traveling to Hawaii for my honeymoon in June and will think of all the fun and interesting stories you shared. You will be in my prayers! Please enjoy this new chapter of life!

Clare Neece
Class of 2009

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