



North Texas Catholic

BRINGING THE GOOD NEWS TO THE DIOCESE OF FORT WORTH



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Two men answer God's call
to serve as priests

HERE I AM, LORD

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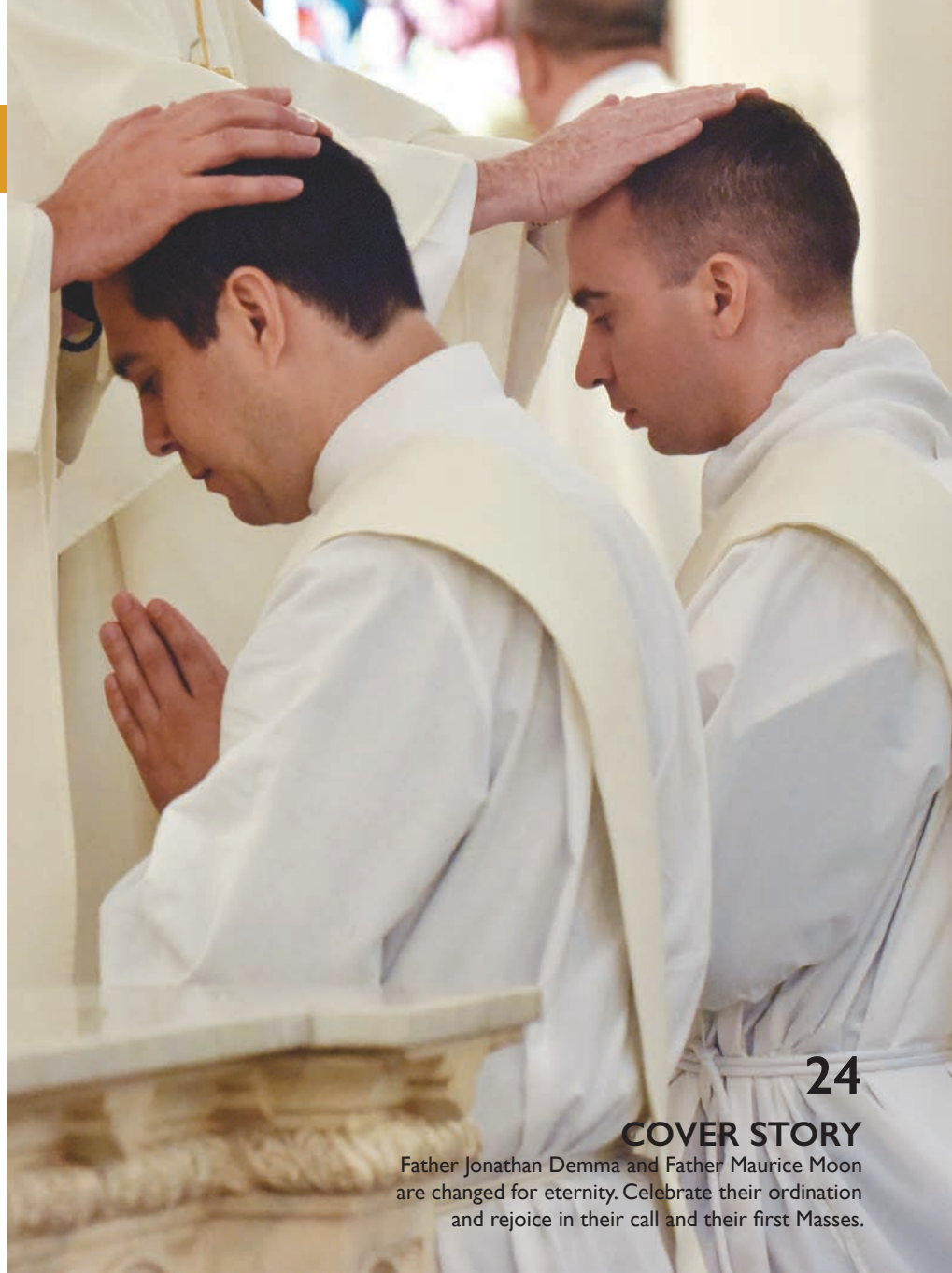
Jonathan Demma and Maurice Moon kneel before the altar as they answer the call to become priests for our diocese.

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A Lesson from St. Barnabas

Earlier this month, the Church celebrated the feast of a “holy man...worthy to be numbered among the Apostles” and “filled with the Holy Spirit and with faith” (*Acts 11:24*).

That man is St. Barnabas, one of the earliest Apostles and a person critical to the growth of the early Church.

Barnabas certainly has a lesson to teach us. A lesson that applies to all of us, I’m sure. Have difficulty trusting God? Barnabas can help. Have a problem with fear? Barnabas can help show the way. It’s natural for us to fear, but it’s not natural to let fear of the unknown control us. And isn’t the unknown always there? We can’t tell the future, we don’t know the answers, we live with the constant presence of ‘should we’ or ‘shouldn’t we.’

Barnabas turned fear on its head multiple times during his lifetime. On an old replay of his podcast, the late Father Al Lauer of the *Our Daily Bread* show hosted by our friends at Presentation Ministries, said, “If you’re not in the custom of asking Barnabas to pray for you, I would encourage you to get into that custom.”

Why? Because “Barnabas did not give into the fear of the unknown,” Fr. Lauer said.

For example, Fr. Lauer said, the early Church was an “unknown commodity” at the time — it was new and there were many questions. Yet Barnabas takes his property, sells it, and lays the profit at the feet of the Apostles. He wasn’t “paralyzed” by the questions surrounding the early Church. “He’d just act in faith.”

“And he kept doing that,” Fr. Lauer continued. Saul’s conversion, for instance, had a seemingly loud ring of “too-good-to-be true.” Saul was such a vicious persecutor of the Christians, that the early Church suspected he was setting up the Christians in order to find their hangouts and kill more of them. But Barnabas acted differently. He refused to let fear stop him. At the prompting of the Spirit, he stepped in and befriended the unknown and previously dangerous Saul, mediating between him and the suspicious Apostles. The rest, as they say, is history.

There are more examples and proofs of Barnabas’ courage. But we’ll leave those for another day. For now, the question for us is: What is holding us back from completely following/trusting Christ? Once we know that, let’s ask St. Barnabas to help us. I’m sure he’d be thrilled; that’s his forte. St. Barnabas, pray for us!

Juan Guajardo, Editor



Bishop Michael Olson makes the Sign of the Cross with chrism on Grace Wempe's forehead May 13 at St. Andrew Parish. (NTC photo/Jayne Shedenhelm)

Confirmation: Sealed by the Holy Spirit

FORT WORTH — Nervous yet excited, 53 high school Catholics came forward in the sanctuary of St. Andrew Parish in Fort Worth, their sponsors' hands firmly planted on their shoulders. Bishop Michael Olson waited at the foot of the altar to complete the process of initiation into the Catholic community.

"For the candidates, the Mass is the time for them to confirm the baptismal promises their parents and godparents made for them at Baptism," said Kathy Lawson, coordinator of Faith Formation for Children and Youth at St. Andrew.

Confirmation is an important step in their faith journey, Lawson said.

"When they receive the chrism from the bishop at the Confirmation Mass, this completes their sacraments of initiation and brings them more fully into their Catholic faith," Lawson explained.

Confirmation preparation varies by parish but can include classes, service to the Church or community, and a retreat.

"The retreat is where I always see the youth opening themselves up even more to the Holy Spirit in many ways," Lawson said.

At St. Andrew, the Confirmation team also had a sponsor and candidate lunch where Lawson said she spoke with the sponsors about being more than the person "who shows up at Confirmation Mass."

Being confirmed is a true milestone for the youths.

"It meant growing in my faith and confirming for the rest of my life my faith," said 17-year-old Paschal High School student Stephen Pinckney.

Joshua Kinch, 16, also a student at Paschal, said Confirmation was the "pinnacle of my faith journey so far."

— Lance Murray

Trilingual Grand Ultreya shows God's universal love

ARLINGTON — As a "boat person" fleeing South Vietnam at 10 years old in 1980, Nga Nguyen said her family of seven had little but their faith to cling to as they faced perils such as pirates from Thailand en route to their new home in Port Arthur.

Now 49 and the mother of four living in Grapevine, Nguyen is always seeking ways to celebrate and deepen her faith.

So on May 20, Nguyen was one of the faithful who participated in a diocesan-sponsored Grand Ultreya celebration. The four-hour program was held at Vietnamese Martyrs Parish in Arlington. The trilingual celebration included talks in English, Spanish, and Vietnamese.

The Ultreya is a gathering of people in a climate of friendship where members share their life experiences based on the tenets of Cursillo life: prayer, study, and action.

Cursillo is short for *Cursillo de Cristiandad*, a short course in Christian living, and is designed to open participants up to a deeper relationship with Christ and present a method of Christian living "so we can make a difference for Christ in the world around us," said Chris Flemister, the English Cursillo lay director for the movement in the diocese.

The day included cross-cultural fellowship and witness talks, as well as singing and praying.

— Marty Sabota

Fr. James Flynn of St. Francis of Assisi Parish in Grapevine speaks with young men about his vocations experience at St. Patrick Cathedral. (NTC photo/Ben Torres)



Eighth graders explore options at Vocation Day

FORT WORTH — The Diocese of Fort Worth offered nearly 400 eighth-grade students a respite from the end-of-year activities to consider their future vocation. On April 25 at St. Patrick Cathedral, Eighth Grade Vocation Day integrated the annual eighth grade end-of-year Mass with vocation guidance.

Students from across the diocese spent a six-hour day together that included lunch and culminated in a closing reflection and Mass led by Bishop Michael Olson.

The Wednesday assembly continued the tradition of the eighth-grade Mass, with eighth-graders from Catholic schools across the diocese.

It was melded with break-out sessions for students to consider religious vocations.

The diocese is putting a greater emphasis than ever on vocations, with priests, religious women, and seminarians speaking during

the school year to students from their early years to high school.

Speakers included Father James Flynn, pastor of St. Francis of Assisi Parish in Grapevine; Father Raymond McDaniel, pastor of St. Philip the Apostle Parish in Lewisville; and Sister Anna Imelda Nguyen, OP, of the Dominican Sisters of Mary Immaculate Province.

After the break-out sessions, the students attended Mass celebrated by Bishop Olson. In his homily he spoke about the day being important, a day “we ask God’s blessing as you make a transition as we meander into our high school years.”

The bishop hoped that for some there could be a calling to the priesthood or religious life.

“Those are callings in which the Lord Jesus asks one to give one’s life as He gave it for the sake of all,” Bishop Olson said.

— Marty Sabota

Prayer blossoms at Our Lady of Lourdes Prayer Garden

MINERAL WELLS — Father Balaji Boyalla, SAC, pastor of Our Lady of Lourdes Parish in Mineral Wells, has always wanted a statue of the patroness of his parish at their church. But with the help of his parishioners, he got much more than that.

A committee of parishioners funded and built a prayer garden that was dedicated and blessed by Bishop Michael Olson on February 9.

The garden includes a statue of Our Lady of Lourdes, a waterfall, the Stations of the Cross, and a large crucifix with special intention

and prayer rocks at the bottom.

Fr. Boyalla hopes the garden will be well used by the parish, “It will be a place of prayer, a place of meditation and a place of healing,” said the pastor. “Families can come together, have a meal and pray together. Maybe a Rosary, maybe the Stations of the Cross during the Lenten season.”

After only being open for a few months, Fr. Boyalla has already heard from parishioners that they feel the garden is the “biggest blessing to our parish.”

— Katherine Hoffman



For full versions of these stories plus a video of the prayer garden, visit NorthTexasCatholic.org

Official Assignments for the Diocese of Fort Worth

BY MOST REV. MICHAEL F. OLSON, STD, MA

REV. JAMES ANGERT, TOR

New to the Diocese of Fort Worth, has been appointed **Pastor** of St. Maria Goretti Parish in Arlington, effective June 15, 2018.

REV. REEHAN SOOSAI ANTONY, SAC

Parochial Administrator of St. Rita Parish in Ranger, Holy Rosary Parish in Cisco, St. Francis Xavier Parish in Eastland, and St. John Parish in Strawn, has been appointed **Pastor** of St. John the Baptizer Parish in Bridgeport, Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary Parish in Decatur, and St. Mary Parish in Jacksboro, effective July 1, 2018.

REV. BALAJI BOYALLA, SAC

Pastor of Our Lady of Lourdes Parish in Mineral Wells and St. Francis of Assisi Parish in Graford, has been appointed **Pastor** of St. Michael Parish in Bedford, effective July 1, 2018.

REV. PHILIP BREMBAH

Pastor of Holy Family of Nazareth Parish in Vernon, St. Joseph Parish in Crowell, and St. Mary Parish in Quanah, has been appointed **Pastor** of St. Vincent de Paul Parish in Arlington, effective August 1, 2018.

REV. RICHARD COLLINS

Without prejudice to his assignment as **Chaplain for Prison Ministry** has changed residency from St. Joseph Parish rectory, Arlington to St. Francis of Assisi Parish rectory, Grapevine, effective July 1, 2018.

REV. SIMON HOANG MINH DAO, CRM

New to the Diocese of Fort Worth, has been appointed **Pastor** of Christ the King Parish in Fort Worth, effective June 10, 2018.

REV. JONATHAN DEMMA

Newly ordained, has been appointed **Parochial Vicar** of St. John the Apostle Parish in Fort Worth, effective July 1, 2018.

REV. PRAKASH DIAS, SAC

Parochial Vicar of Our Lady of Lourdes Parish in Mineral Wells has been appointed **Parochial Vicar** of St. John the Baptizer Parish in Bridgeport, Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary Parish in Decatur, and St. Mary Parish in Jacksboro, effective July 1, 2018.

REV. ALPHONSUS BA VAN DO, CRM

New to the Diocese of Fort Worth, has been appointed **Parochial Vicar** of Christ the King Parish in Fort Worth, effective June 17, 2018.

REV. THOMAS D'SOUZA, SAC

Pastor of St. John the Baptizer Parish in Bridgeport, Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary Parish in Decatur, and St. Mary Parish in Jacksboro, has been appointed **Pastor** of Our Lady of Lourdes Parish in Mineral Wells and St. Francis of Assisi Parish in Graford, effective July 1, 2018.

REV. MICHAEL GRECO

Parochial Vicar of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish in Keller, has been appointed to canon law studies for two years, effective July 1, 2018.

REV. KEITH HATHAWAY

Chaplain of Notre Dame School in Wichita Falls and Vocations Liaison, has been appointed to canon law studies for two years, effective July 1, 2018.

REV. J. MICHAEL HOLMBERG

Pastor of St. Vincent de Paul Parish in Arlington, will retire, effective August 1, 2018.

REV. ALBERT FRANCIS KANJIRATHUMKAL

Sacramental Minister of Sacred Heart Parish in Seymour and St. Mary Parish in Megargel, has been appointed **Pastor** of St. Mary Parish in Henrietta, St. Jerome Parish in Bowie, St. Joseph Parish in Nocona, and St. William Parish in Montague, effective July 1, 2018.

REV. TOM KENNEDY

Pastor of St. Thomas Aquinas Parish in Pilot Point, has been appointed **Parochial Vicar** of St. Joseph Parish in Arlington, effective July 1, 2018.

REV. RICHARD KIRKHAM

Resigned as Pastor of St. Martin de Porres Parish in Prosper, effective June 4, 2018.

REV. RAUL MARTINEZ LOPEZ

Parochial Vicar of Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish in Wichita Falls, has been appointed **Pastor** of the parish, effective July 1, 2018.

REV. MARIYA JAMES SUSAI MANICKAM, SAC

Parochial Vicar of Our Lady of Lourdes Parish in Mineral Wells and St. Francis of Assisi Parish in Graford, has been appointed **Parochial Vicar** of St. Michael Parish in Bedford, effective July 1, 2018.

REV. VIJAYA RAJU MAREEDU, SAC

Parochial Vicar of St. John the Baptizer Parish in Bridgeport, Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary Parish in Decatur, and St. Mary Parish in Jacksboro, has been appointed **Parochial Administrator** of St. Rita Parish in Ranger, Holy Rosary Parish in Cisco, St. Francis Xavier Parish in Eastland, and St. John Parish in Strawn, effective July 1, 2018.

RETIRING TEACHERS LEAVE A LEGACY



The North Texas Catholic was invited to spend a little time with **Galine Baker**, of St. Andrew Catholic School, and Mary Lou Ruiz and Susan Overcash, of St. John the Apostle Catholic School, who have packed up their classroom for the final time, something that brings a new set of emotions as they say goodbye to the work they love.

Combined, these three teachers have more than 100 years of experience between them and have been a blessing to so many children.



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

NTC photo/Jayne Shedenhelm

PASTORAL SPANISH CLASSES BEGIN

Bishop Michael Olson has a vision of a bilingual clergy in the Diocese of Fort Worth.

To bring this vision to life, Juan Rendon, Director of Diaconal Formation for the Diocese of Fort Worth, has introduced pastoral Spanish classes for the Diaconate candidates this year.

He has high hopes for the classes and feels they will positively affect how the candidates will be able to interact with Spanish speakers.

The first two sessions are being offered at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish June 9 and June 23 for both diaconate candidates and current deacons.



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OFFICIAL ASSIGNMENTS, *continued*

REV. JOHN MARTIN

Parochial Vicar of St. Francis of Assisi Parish in Grapevine, has been appointed **Pastor** of St. Thomas Aquinas Parish in Pilot Point, effective July 1, 2018.

REV. MAURICE MOON

Newly ordained, has been appointed **Chaplain** of Nolan Catholic High School and Vocations Liaison, with residency at St. Patrick Cathedral rectory, effective July 1, 2018.

REV. NGHIA NGUYEN

Parochial Vicar of St. John the Apostle Parish in North Richland Hills, has been appointed **Parochial Vicar** of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish in Keller, effective July 1, 2018.

REV. PHILIP PETTA

Pastor of St. Peter Parish in Lindsay, has been appointed **Pastor** of Holy Family of Nazareth Parish in Vernon, St. Joseph Parish in Crowell, and St. Mary Parish in Quanah, effective July 1, 2018.

REV. LUKE ROBERTSON, TOR

Pastor of St. Maria Goretti Parish in Arlington, has been **recalled** by his TOR religious order community, effective June 15, 2018.

REV. JOHN ROBERT SKELDON

without prejudice to his assignment as Parochial Vicar of St. Patrick Cathedral in Fort Worth, has been appointed **Chaplain** of Cristo Rey at Our Mother of Mercy High School in Fort Worth, effective July 1, 2018.

REV. JOHN SWISTOVICH

Pastor of St. Michael Parish in Bedford, will retire, effective July 1, 2018.

REV. MATTHEW TATYREK

Chaplain of Nolan Catholic High School, has been appointed **Pastor** of St. Peter Parish in Lindsay, without prejudice to his assignment as Vocations Liaison, effective July 1, 2018.

REV. PHILIP BINH TRAN, CRM

Pastor of Christ the King Parish in Fort Worth, has been **recalled** by his CRM religious order community, effective June 21, 2018.

REV. ALPHONSUS TRI VU, CRM

Parochial Vicar of Christ the King Parish in Fort Worth, has been **recalled** by his CRM religious order community, effective June 20, 2018.



The Ruppel family holds signs bearing their graduation years after Zoe's graduation ceremony. Pictured from left to right: Chris, Elizabeth, Katie, Nick, and Zoe Ruppel. (Courtesy photo/Amy Felton)

The Ruppel Effect

Husband and wife show what it truly means to be servant leaders

By Katherine Hoffman

When Joanie Ruppel enrolled her firstborn at St. John the Apostle School in 1987, she had no suspicion she would have children attending the North Richland Hills school for the next 31 years.

Joanie and her husband, John, began attending Mass at St. John the Apostle Parish in 1981, and their oldest son, Chris, began preschool in 1987. Their four younger children followed suit.

Described as a legacy family, the Ruppels have deeply impacted the faculty, staff, and families that have been part of St. John over the past three decades.

"John was president of the schoolboard, he was on the parish advisory council, new building

committee, finance committee, really any committee you could be on, John was on it. When he retired he even became a substitute teacher here," said Mary Moody, a fifth grade teacher at St. John and a family friend of the Ruppels.

Moody continued, "Joanie teaches music in our childcare program, pre-K, and kindergarten classes, helps direct our choir, and does the music for our school Masses." And together they taught marriage preparation classes, served in the food pantry, and more.

"They've just always been here, and when you needed somebody that's who you went to. You go to the Ruppels, they just make it happen," said Moody.

Their giving spirit has been passed on to their children, as all five of the Ruppel children have volunteered in various areas throughout the church and school.

Joanie credits the school's close

community as the reason she and her husband kept sending their children to St. John. "It has given us a place where we can live our faith seven days a week, and we feel like it's our second home," said Joanie Ruppel. "The community is so deeply embedded in our life."

When John passed away in 2010, the school was closed on the day of his funeral, showing how important he was to the school. Joanie said, "The community is really what picked us up and kept us going at that difficult time in our life."

"This family is truly a legacy to this school. St. John wouldn't be St. John without their influence," Moody said.

The youngest Ruppel, Zoe, graduated from the eighth grade at St. John the Apostle this year, ending the family's 31 years at the school. Their presence will still be felt. 🇺🇸

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Teach. Explain. Defend.

Old teachings bring about new understanding of the faith



Chris Vaughan teaches a class at the St. Junipero Serra Institute. (NTC photo/Juan Guajardo)

By Susan Moses

As the St. Junipero Serra Institute approaches its first anniversary, its mission is crystallizing: Teach. Explain. Defend.

“We want everyone to be able to give a reason for their hope,” said Paola Quintero-Araújo, director of the St. Junipero Serra Institute. “We don’t want the instructors to be the only experts in the faith and what the Church teaches.”

Faith education at the institute goes “back to the basics” — studying original sources including the Bible, the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, papal encyclicals, and Vatican documents.

“We want to give our students a firsthand experience, so we go back to Church teaching. As a class we read and

help unpack the documents,” explained Quintero-Araújo.

The foundational classes offered include Apologetics, Vatican II, Biblical Foundations, Theology of the Body, and Evangelization and Catechesis. St. Junipero Serra Institute, an educational outreach of the Diocese of Fort Worth, teaches the courses in both English and Spanish.

Future plans include adding intermediate and advanced courses and more specialized classes for those interested in youth ministry, marriage and family life, RCIA, or adult faith formation. Students who complete all the levels will receive a certification. In 2019, the foundational classes will be available online.

Stephen Lund, a parishioner at Holy Redeemer in Aledo, took all five foundational classes and encourages

others to take the instruction. Firstly, he said, the classes exposed him to “basic catechetical stuff that I didn’t retain or didn’t learn growing up.”

Lund, who is a deacon inquirer, appreciated reading original Church documents. “It’s good to know that we didn’t just make it up 50 or 60 years ago. Our faith has been around a long time. It’s helpful to go back and read about the people who knew Jesus and the people who knew people who knew Jesus. What did they say? How did they practice the faith?”

When pressed to name his favorite class, Lund chose Evangelization and Catechesis. “This class spoke to issues that my friends and I had been discussing: ‘Where is the Church struggling?’ This class answered that question.”

After completing the course, Lund

said he learned how to engage in conversations about God and the Church with others in his parish and with his family and children. He feels prepared to discuss the faith with fallen-away Catholics with whom he works.

Quintero-Araújo said that student feedback from the first year has been positive. Evaluations praised the experience and knowledge of the instructors, the quality of the curriculum, and the value of the course. Students also noted that the instructors really care about the students and make certain they master the material.

For example, while teaching the Evangelization and Catechesis course, Chris Vaughan, diocesan director of marriage and family life, realized that several were not familiar with how to use the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. He quickly incorporated that lesson into the evening's study.

The instructors' goal is to enable students to speak knowingly of Church teaching with a well-formed faith. Most instructors have earned master's degrees in theology and work for parishes or the diocese in religious education. The



Jorge Chapa-Hurtado (center) attended five classes at the St. Junipero Serra Institute. (NTC photo/Juan Guajardo)

curriculum has been developed by the department of evangelization and catechesis of the Diocese of Fort Worth.

One recommendation from past students is to make the classes longer. Beginning in the fall, courses will last six weeks instead of four. Quintero-Araújo said the extra time will allow the students to explore the topics more deeply and have “more time to digest” the material.

“People should know the richness of the teachings of the Church,” continued Quintero-Araújo, who wants all Catholics to experience the “beauty and wisdom of the documents” discussed in the courses.

Jorge Chapa-Hurtado attends St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish in Keller, where he and wife teach a course to help parents prepare their children to receive

their first Holy Communion. Like Lund, he is inquiring about becoming a permanent deacon.

He said the classes whetted his appetite to learn more. “It expanded my knowledge and love for the Church and God. As I gained more awareness of more of the teachings, I became more amazed at the richness of the Church.”

By reading Vatican II documents,

he said, he increased his understanding of “why the Church is how it is today.” Reading the theological language was an adjustment for the engineer, but he found it became easier and easier as “his brain got into the rhythm” of the language.

Chapa-Hurtado finished his fifth course in June. “These are very good classes for people who want to teach the faith, or for anyone who wants to gain knowledge. After taking them, I am more in love with our faith and our God.”

Like Lund and Chapa-Hurtado have done, Quintero-Araújo encourages “everyone to invest in yourself and your faith.”

For more information or to register, visit fwdioc.org/st-junipero-serra-institute. 🇺🇸



A few of the books used during the classes at the St. Junipero Serra Institute.

NTC photo/Katherine Hoffman



Reaching the Forgotten

Volunteers across the diocese share Christ's love and grace behind bars

By Matthew Smith

Volunteers received and returned hugs, handshakes, and high fives as they worked through the double line of about 60 inmates early morning May 19 at Bridgeport Correctional Facility — not a scene most associate with prison life and also a first for the Diocese of Fort Worth.

Kolbe Prison Ministries, already active in the Diocese of Dallas and elsewhere, held a May 18-20 retreat at Bridgeport. Most attending, volunteers readily admitted, likely showed for the free food of higher grade than normal

prison fare. Volunteers' hope and belief, however, is that they left with much more.

Kolbe Prison Ministries was founded in 2009 by a group of Catholic men in the Texas Hill Country with an eye toward ministering God's word in Texas prisons.

Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary Church in Decatur parishioner and lay minister Howard Biel had already logged seven years of prison ministry involvement at Bridgeport when an inmate, Christopher Humble, suggested a Kolbe retreat.

"Kolbe is like an ACTS retreat, except it's here," said



From left: Phong Tran, Rael Eckenroed, Roger Sickler, Fr. George Thennattil, Richard Malahowski, Van Nguyen, Frank Artiles, and John Kasper prepare to visit inmates at the Tarrant County Corrections Center in Fort Worth. (NTC photo/Ben Torres)

Biel, who participated in an ACTS retreat several years earlier that changed his life.

Biel worked with Minh Tran, who was already involved in Kolbe in another diocese.

Biel's introduction to prison ministry came suddenly, he joked.

"I asked a deacon one day after Sunday Mass what I could do to help," Biel said. "So he says, 'Come with me,' and brought me to prison."

A pharmacist, Biel had experience with abusers fraudulently attempting to procure prescription drugs and generally held a sour view of those in prisons.

"My idea then was they need to be here," Biel said. "They've obviously done bad and we need to punish them and have a bad attitude toward these guys.

"But I got involved here and realized,

frankly, we're all sinners and all have histories. So now I come bringing the word of the Lord and bringing my love, but what I get is more. I never ask what they did but I know these guys are having to pay serious consequences, and so I ask, 'What can I do, God?'"

"I've found all I can do is hug them and tell them God loves them because once a person realizes that, that's all that matters. And maybe we're the only ones who have ever said that to them in their lives."

St. Elizabeth Ann Seton parishioner Tran said he's been involved with prison ministry for 12 years and Kolbe for 6 simply because he wants to share God's graces with people in prisons.

"I see no difference between them and anyone else," Tran said. "We're all children of God and whoever God puts in front of me, those are the people God wants me to talk to."

Biel, noting the need for more prison ministry volunteers for his and all prison ministry groups, agreed.

"Most probably think inmates should be punished and that collecting coats for people in winter or fighting against abortion are more important," Biel said. "Those things are important. But what does it say in *Matthew 25* about you came to visit me in prison?"

"It hurts me as a Catholic to see a lot of people hold that view. I'm not casting stones because I was at that same place once. But people need to think of what Jesus said and focus on that."

Humble echoed Biel's call for more help.

"More volunteers [for prison ministry] are definitely needed," Humble said. "We're just people who made mistakes but are now trying to better ourselves."

Like the famous Las Vegas ad, what happens in prison ministry sessions stays in those sessions. But Humble expresses no reticence discussing his past and incarceration though he's more passionate in detailing his search for God and conversion to Catholicism.

"What I heard people saying about the Church growing up is, I found, not what the Church teaches," Humble said.

It's a challenge at times, Humble said,

residing in a prison where the majority of those professing Christianity are Protestant.

And yet, Biel said, about 40 percent of those attending his prison ministry sessions are non-Catholics. Which Biel sees as a plus.

"There are so many myths about the Catholic Church," Biel said. "We come with two missions: to show the love of Jesus Christ and share the fullness of truth of the Catholic Church.

"This prison, like others in the South, is mainly Protestant so people put out misinformation. But then some [inmates] come here and they're like, 'Wait a minute.'"

Weekly ministry sessions and events like Kolbe, Humble said, go a long way toward dispelling myths about prison ministry in general and Catholicism in particular.

"It's amazing to see the love from the volunteers and interaction between Catholics and non-Catholics," Humble said. "The food is a draw, sure. But they're here and learning something about the Catholic faith, which is an amazing thing"

Inmate Cordero White, a non-Catholic, provided music during the retreat, playing drums in an ad hoc band consisting of inmates and volunteers.

White said Biel asked several months ago if he would play during the weekly ministry sessions.

"I told Howard I have a gift and I'm not going to reject playing for the Lord," White said. "And I've enjoyed it, learning about Catholics and how they pray and other things."

Prison ministry volunteer Cruz Jimenez, who also played music during the retreat, said he became involved at Biel's behest, both men members of the same parish.

"I was looking for something more meaningful to do than just go to church every week because that's what we're supposed to do," Jimenez said. "When we first started here maybe 12 guys would show up each week. Now it's 60 or more so it's showing results I think."

Inmate Shane Pace said he became interested in Catholicism thanks to a mention of St. Francis in the introduction of the *Book of James* in his Protestant Bible and went on to delve into Catholic history and

Continued on Page 14



Inmates shake the hand of Cruz Jimenez after a singing performance at the Kolbe Prison Ministries retreat at the Bridgeport Unit in Bridgeport. (NTC photo/Ben Torres)

From Page 13

teaching. Pace now attends Mass and is in the process of converting, adding that while he attended church earlier in life, things never felt right until he discovered the Catholic Church.

“Jesus gave us His time and these [volunteers] give us theirs,” Pace said. “The fact they choose to come to prison and spend time with us, I mean, they had to force me to come but these people willingly come to visit us.”

The next step, Biel hopes, is to start RCIA classes within Bridgeport, which will be taught both by inmates and volunteers.

Biel’s is one of several prison ministry groups active in the diocese.

Roger Sickler is one of several volunteers and priests who regularly visit 14 correctional facilities throughout the diocese.

“It’s not a [ministry] for everyone,” Sickler admitted. “It takes a special person, but volunteers are always needed.”

The need for volunteer ministers is huge as well.

“Our hope is to help make a change in their lives and keep them from coming back to prison once they get out,” Sickler said. “Something like 75 percent of those released return back within three years. That’s a huge cost moneywise but also spiritually.”

Sickler, a member of St. Michael Parish in Bedford, became involved in prison ministry 14 years ago as a way to give back and help.

“As I said, it takes a special kind of person, but it’s also not rocket science,” Sickler said. “I’m not a biblical genius by any means. Some of the inmates know the Bible better than us. Basically I learned the ropes on the job, following the leads of the chaplains and other volunteers.”

Success is difficult to gauge given that inmates come and go and/or transfer to other facilities. It’s also hard to ascertain why inmates choose to participate in many cases, but that’s not the point.

“It’s not our discernment to make,” said Deacon Bruce Corbett, a prison chaplain coordinator. “We’re simply here to provide

ministry. These are guys and gals who made mistakes in life but who still need that spiritual and community connection. If the Church doesn’t provide that, they may not get it. You hope you make a difference, but again, we’re not there to judge.”

It’s the effort that counts, Sickler said.

“We do some good definitely,” Sickler said. “One fellow who was convicted of murder and sentenced to life without parole said, ‘I probably would have committed suicide if not for you guys.’”

Father George Thennattil, TOR, said he sees a desire for God on the part of most inmates.

“They want to participate in the Mass, confession, and [have] someone to talk to,” Fr. Thennattil said.

Dcn. Corbett agreed.

“Participation is voluntary; they sign up if they want,” Dcn. Corbett said. “We’re safe and well protected, never had any trouble. We’re providing a service for them, something they want to participate in. Talking to us for them is probably something different than interacting with the



Offenders explain a poster they made of St. John Paul II during the Kolbe Prison Ministries retreat at the Bridgeport Unit. (NTC photo/Ben Torres)

jailers.”

Alan Fowler, an inmate at the Tarrant County Corrections Center in downtown Fort Worth, said the visits definitely bring hope.

“I look forward to Mass, receiving the Eucharist, things I miss from being in the outside world,” Fowler said. “Talking to fellow Catholics helps as well. The [volunteers] commitment means a lot too. They’re here every week, put in a lot of time. Knowing they’ll be here and go out of their way with that level of support means a lot.”

As it is at Bridgeport so it is at Tarrant County Corrections. Some inmates of other faiths, or no faith, often participate in prison ministry sessions as well, Fowler said.

“For some it’s mainly curiosity maybe,” Fowler said. “Honestly, some give it a try and figure it’s not for them but most are mainly appreciative and hungry, and it’s good to see God’s word extended. It gives us a chance to let God correct us and reflect on our lives and mistakes.”

Johnson County Sheriff Adam

King said prison ministry, Catholic and non-Catholic alike, plays a vital role in the rehabilitation process.

“There’s no way to quantify results,” King said. “But it makes a huge difference. I know that in my heart.

“As police officers we only deal with the symptoms. Prison ministers go in and deal with the real problems, people who are broken, forgotten, hurting, addicted in many cases. We deal only in crime, which is a side effect of those things.”

Johnson County Sheriff’s Office Capt. David Blankenship, who oversees jail operations, agreed.

“You see that it makes a difference in many cases,” Blankenship said. “A lot is up to the inmate. It has to hit in a point in their life where they’re ready to make a change. If that continues once they get out, who knows? But that’s certainly the hope, and I know [prison ministry] does make a difference a lot of times and is worthwhile.”

St. Michael parishioner Rael Eckenroed is one of the newest members of the prison ministry group and one of its few female

volunteers.

“I’ve been in other ministries but they were overcrowded, and I knew they needed women ministers for this,” Eckenroed said. “Men can’t go into the women’s pod without a female.”

Eckenroed said she was nervous at first. “Can’t take your cellphone in,”

Eckenroed said. “The metal door banging behind me that first time and thinking, ‘Oh my God. Will I ever get out of here?’”

“But after that first meeting with the women and sharing with them, that was it, no turning back for me.”

Volunteering, Eckenroed said, has increased her patience and understanding and exposed her to life from many perspectives.

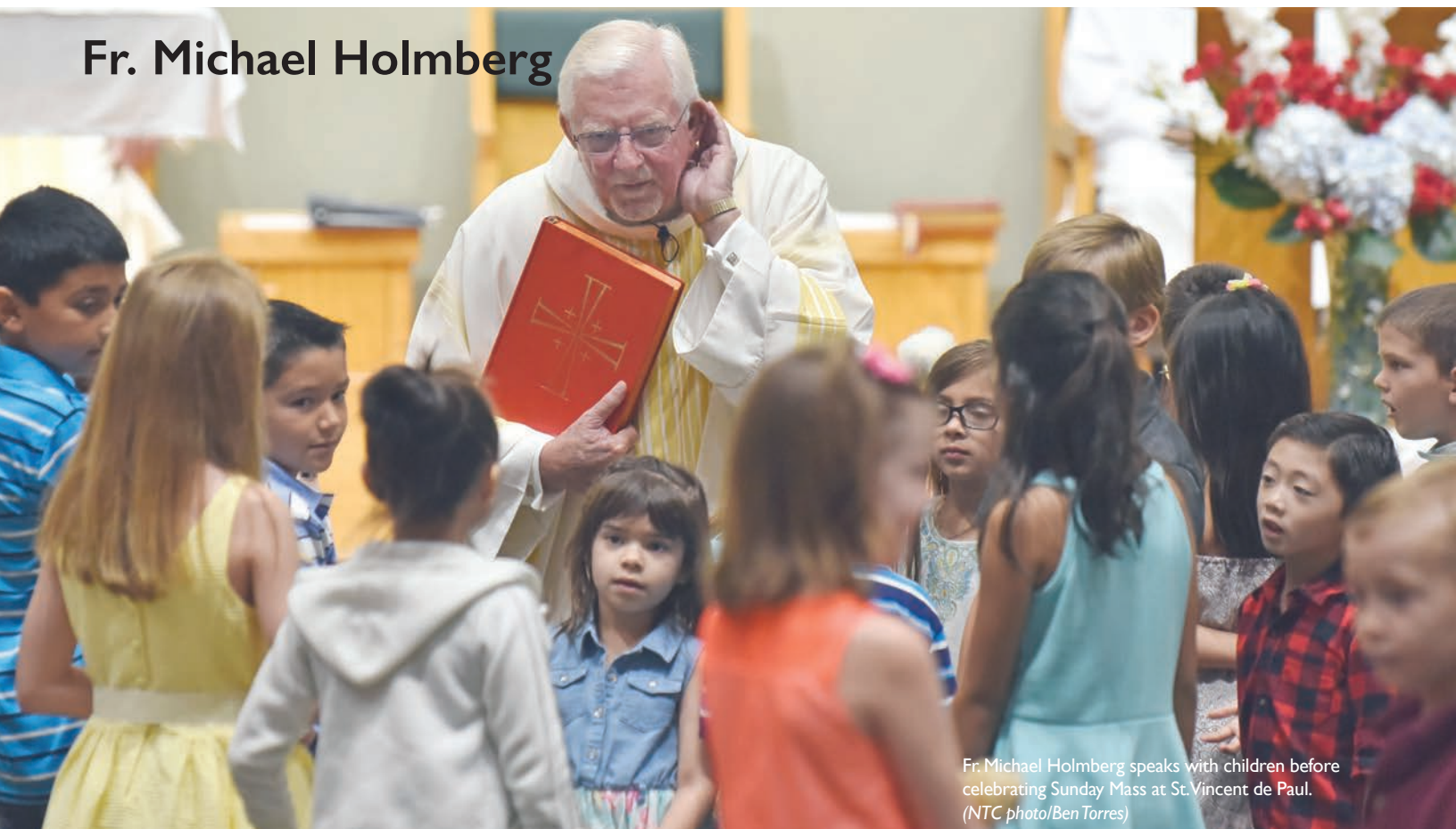
“I never Google to find out why they’re here,” Eckenroed said. “I don’t care. They’re women with husbands, children, and friends like everyone else, who have made mistakes, but deserve God’s grace. I look forward to this. I’m tired sometimes, but always go. I want to be here. I want to do this.” 🇺🇸

Fr. John Swistovich



Fr. John Swistovich prepares the Eucharist for Communion during Saturday Mass at St. Michael Parish in Bedford. (NTC photo/Ben Torres)

Fr. Michael Holmberg



Fr. Michael Holmberg speaks with children before celebrating Sunday Mass at St. Vincent de Paul. (NTC photo/Ben Torres)

Faithful Shepherds

Father Swistovich leaves legacy
of hard work as he retires after
20 years in the priesthood

By Alice Varela Murray

As Father John Swistovich enters his retirement as pastor from St. Michael Parish in Bedford, he can reflect back on two successful careers — as a leader in business and his second as leader to his Catholic parishioners.

Even as an accomplished businessman for 20 years, Fr. Swistovich recalls his priestly ordination on May 23, 1998 at age 52 as a significant milestone.

“The day I was ordained was a great day,” Fr. Swistovich said. “That was a great accomplishment for me.”

Fr. Swistovich, 73, retired May 31, entering a third chapter in his life.

A native of upstate New York, Fr. Swistovich said after he graduated from college he worked in banking, finance, and sales for Lanier Business Products, where he trained salesmen.

“Those jobs moved me around from place to place,” he said. “That is how I got to Texas from New York.”

An only child, he and his parents attended St. Thomas Aquinas Parish in Binghamton, New York, where he started serving as an altar server in sixth grade.

Fr. Swistovich’s upbringing kept him firmly planted in his faith, and even with all his business travels he would always seek out a local Catholic parish to join.

When he moved to Abilene, Fr. Swistovich met a priest who was a fellow New Yorker and former businessman, just like him.

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Father Holmberg strengthened
community across North Texas
during his years as a priest

By Lance Murray

On April 28, 1973, Father J. Michael Holmberg was ordained at Holy Family Parish in Fort Worth.

On Aug. 1 Fr. Holmberg will retire as pastor at St. Vincent de Paul Parish in Arlington. He plans to move closer to family and to have more time to read, one of his favorite pastimes.

Fr. Holmberg, born Oct. 14, 1947 in Austin, said he knew as a teenager that he was interested in entering the priesthood.

“I probably didn’t think about it until the latter years of high school,” Fr. Holmberg remembered. He entered seminary immediately after high school.

As a priest, he focused on community building.

“I think a big thing for me in my ministry has been working with individuals and communities and developing them into a Christian community, gratefully realizing what God has given us — we need to build up the Christian community,” the pastor said.

As a parish priest, Fr. Holmberg said the pastoral role has been integral to his life.

“In my opinion the only role for a priest is their pastoral role — working to build up the community of God, and that’s all pastoral,” he said.

“Whether it’s at Mass on Sunday or helping someone go through a great trial in life, it’s something that people recognize the presence of God in their midst.”

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Fr. Swistovich

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 17



Fr. John Swistovich greets parishioners after Saturday Mass. (NTC photo/Ben Torres)

He became a Eucharistic Minister and joined the Knights of Columbus at the priest's encouragement.

Fr. Swistovich later moved to Fort Worth and joined St. Michael, where he heard about priestly vocations and met with a vocations director.

"I entered the seminary on Aug. 4, 1992 at the age of 46," Fr. Swistovich said. Entering the priesthood was "something I was always called to," he said.

"I just had to be ready to take the step, and I needed those years out of school that were going to prepare me to come into the priesthood," he said. "It was God's planning that gave me the path that led me here to be a pastor."

His life as a priest began in 1998 when he was assigned to St. Matthew Parish in Arlington and later moved to North

Richland Hills' St. John the Apostle Parish.

He faced his biggest challenge three years later when he was named pastor of Our Lady Queen of Peace Parish in Wichita Falls, Swistovich said.

"Basically, for 50 years they were in the gymnasium in the school. I knew they wanted to build a church, but they were never able to get out of the planning stage," he said. Fr. Swistovich knew they didn't need another plan, he just needed to put a team in place to get the project completed.

"Basically, the Lord put me there to say 'yes, we are going to do that,'" he said. "I was part of a team that wanted to accomplish something."

When the 1,000-seat church was built, "the parish never borrowed a penny—all of the money was on pledges from

Fr. Holmberg

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 17



Fr. Michael Holmberg greets young parishioners after celebrating Sunday Mass at St. Vincent de Paul Parish. (NTC photo/Ben Torres)

Fr. Holmberg said that while he plans to move closer to family and enjoy his retirement, "on weekends, I hope to help out with some parishes."

And, he'll find time to kick back and enjoy a good book.

"I'm sort of a voracious reader of all kinds of things. I'm big on history and how something historical relates to today," Fr. Holmberg said. "I pretty much read anything."

Fr. Holmberg said it was important for him to stay current, even as the world changed around him.

"Communication has changed and the Church exists in the real world, that's the reality," Fr. Holmberg said. "We have to communicate in the language of the day, whatever that language may be.

"And, technology, there are

different ways to communicate with people than there were 20 years ago," he continued. "We have to embrace all of that just to communicate and get people together."

He hasn't decided what the message will be in his final homily before Aug. 1.

"I haven't gotten that far yet," Fr. Holmberg said.

And despite his impending retirement, he's busy tending to the business of St. Vincent de Paul.

"I'm still in the throes of planning for next year, that I won't be here for. The new year begins July 1," Fr. Holmberg explained.

"The day starts pretty early, often before 4 or 5, and ends at about 10," he said.

Staying busy is just fine with him, though. "I don't do well

people — so we were debt-free the moment we opened the door to the church.”

His next and final assignment brought him full circle, back to the church where he had started his priesthood — St. Michael.

At St. Michael, not only did Fr. Swistovich have a statue of St. Michael and a Marian statue erected on the parish grounds, but he also “made it a priority to improve” the worship space.

“Our place of worship has to be the center of what we do,” he said in a release. “So, I worked with the Parish Council and Finance Council to redo that area with new sound systems and light systems. We also moved the tabernacle from the chapel back into the main sanctuary of the church.

“I think it’s about getting back to the roots of our faith, and the Eucharist is the center of our faith. When you have a place of worship that is practical and inviting — where people can actually hear the Word of God and the lighting is good — it allows them to be in a prayerful place and to focus.”

Serving as a priest over the years has been “always a privilege,” he said.

“I am retiring just from the pastorship and will be in residence in one of the parishes down the road,” Fr. Swistovich said.

“I will still be celebrating Mass on a limited basis. I am still looking forward to serving God’s people and the Diocese of Fort Worth with the blessings the Lord has given me,” he said. “At my age, it’s time for the young guys to take over.” 🇺🇸

just sitting around,” he said.

Fr. Holmberg said he would encourage young men interested in the priesthood to pursue that vocation if their gifts lead them in that direction.

“I think people really have to recognize what their gifts are, and then develop those gifts that God gave them to help in the Christian community, even if they have to do some things they’re not really gifted at,” Fr. Holmberg said.

“They really need to recognize what their special giftedness is and develop that.”

Fr. Holmberg’s gift of communication has been clear.

In 2013, for example, he gave the invocation before the State Legislature, invited to do so by a parishioner who was a member of the House of Representatives at the time. It

was a simple message of service, faith, and devotion to duty.

“Empower each member of this assembly with your Spirit so that as free people of your creation, they may always display truth and personal integrity in their actions,” he told the legislators.

The priest has left his mark at several parishes in North Texas.

At the beginning of his career, Fr. Holmberg served as associate pastor at St. Maria Goretti Parish in Arlington in 1973 and held the same post the following year at Holy Family. He also served at St. Michael Parish in Bedford, St. Paul the Apostle Parish in Fort Worth, and was pastor at Holy Cross Parish in The Colony before being assigned to St. Vincent de Paul in 2016. 🇺🇸

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Seminarians Samuel Maul and Brandon LeClair answer questions during recess at Holy Trinity Catholic School in Grapevine. (NTC photo/Jayme Shedenhelm)

Back to the Beginning

Seminarians visit grade schools to start conversation about vocations

By Susan Moses

In elementary and middle school, the last few days of the school year lean more toward celebration than education. But this year, the fourth through eighth grade classes in the diocese took time out from field days and class parties to ask some key questions and learn some important lessons about religious vocations.

Seminarians from the Diocese of Fort Worth visited each elementary and middle school during the last week of school. After introductions, they opened the floor to questions. The students' questions ranged from the sartorial ("Why do you wear black?") to the spiritual ("Is lying for a good reason a sin?"). Samuel Maul, who will begin a pastoral year at St. Philip the Apostle in Lewisville in August, turned the tables on the students and asked them questions.

"I like to tell them that I just finished my final exams and one of the questions was 'Who is Jesus?' Then I ask them to tell me how I should have answered it," he said with a grin.

Elementary students at Holy Trinity Catholic School in Grapevine said they had never met a seminarian before. They were astounded that the path to the priesthood can take nine years, and they were relieved to discover that seminarians enjoy sports, own phones, and play video games.

"It was pretty cool to learn what they felt like when they

were called to a vocation," said fifth-grader Daniel Neis. "I asked them if they ever regret it. They told me they have had days but a lot more good days, and everyone always has some bad days."

According to Maul, conversations at the elementary schools are "a chance to get to know someone wearing a collar" and learn what it means to be a seminarian.

The future priests expect to establish a tradition of visiting the schools each year. In January, the seminarians were guests at the diocesan high schools.

The high school conversations differ from chats with the younger students, Maul explained. In high school "students are thinking about what they are doing next year. We ask, 'Do you know what you want to do when you grow up? Do you pray about it?'"

Brandon LeClair just graduated from St. Joseph Seminary College in Covington, La. and will begin theology studies in August. He said, "Our presence is to be an example to the children. We are here to show them that they could do this one day."

Superintendent of Catholic Schools Jennifer Pelletier sees value in having the seminarians "hang out" with the young students. "Boys and girls are drawn to holiness, they are drawn to the truth. When they see the life of a seminarian, they see a religious vocation is an option for them." 🇺🇸



Suzu Schiml asks seminarians Samuel Maul and Brandon LeClair a question during recess. (NTC photo/Jayme Shedenhelm)



Seminarian Austin Hoodenpyle speaks with a student during recess. (NTC photo/Jayme Shedenhelm)



Seminarian Samuel Maul gets acquainted with a group of students during lunch. (NTC photo/Jayme Shedenhelm)



Seminarian Thomas Jones relaxes over lunch with a group of students. (NTC photo/Katherine Hoffman)



Deacon Scott France (left) speaks about Msgr. Publius Xuereb before a special lunch as they celebrated his 50th anniversary as a priest at Holy Redeemer Parish in Aledo. (NTC photo/Ben Torres)

50 Years of Joy

Holy Redeemer Parish honors Msgr. Publius Xuereb's fifty years as a cheerful, loving priest

By Joan Kurkowski-Gillen

The reasons why Holy Redeemer parishioners love and respect their pastor, Monsignor Publius Xuereb, are as plentiful as the wildflowers that spring up near the rural Aledo church each May.

"He brings a smile to everyone's face," observed Natalie Touchet, a middle school student and altar server who admires how hard the priest works to keep the busy parish running smoothly.

Longtime religious education volunteer Amber White said everything Msgr. Publius does is from the heart. "He

never has a cross word to say and is so welcoming," she added. "He makes me happy to come to church."

White and Touchet were among the more than 500 parishioners and friends who turned out for a May 5 celebration honoring Msgr. Publius on the 50th anniversary of his ordination to the priesthood.

During the homily, the monsignor thanked the congregation for their support and spoke emotionally about his late parents, Nicholina and Francis Xuereb. The couple raised 11 children on the rural island of Gozo after their home on the main island of Malta was

destroyed during World War II.

"Thank you God for these 50 years and I thank my family and parents," Msgr. Publius said to the gathering. "It is because of them that I am a priest."

Neither parent could read or write but that didn't prevent them from teaching by example the importance of hard work, faith, and serving God.

Named for his maternal grandfather, the priest also shares a name with the first bishop of Malta — a Roman governor who converted to Christianity after meeting St. Paul. "My mother named me after her father so I was her favorite son and I took advantage of that every

day,” he said to the congregation, who responded with laughter. Although rarely heard in the U.S., the name “Publius” is common in his native country, the monsignor told his listeners.

But Nicholina Xuereb gave her son another lasting gift. As a child in Malta, the jubilarian remembers accompanying his mother to St. Joseph Church to hear daily Mass celebrated in Latin. Too young to receive the host himself, the youngster would listen to his mom whisper the Anima Christi after Communion. The 14th century prayer is still widely recited today as a post-Communion meditation.

“Seventy years later, I say this same prayer, in the same language whispered by my mother,” the monsignor said, using the memory as a teaching moment. “Parents, this is the power of prayer when you pray with your children!”

Hearing God’s call at an early age, the future priest enrolled in a local seminary and was ordained on May 11, 1968.

His first post-ordination assignment was at an orphanage in Gozo where he ministered to children ranging in age

from a few weeks old to 25.

“You had to be both father and mother to these children. It was the best time in my life,” explained the priest who would often take the orphans home to visit his mother. “My mother loved the children and I still keep in touch with some of them.”

A chance meeting with Fort Worth’s first bishop, John J. Cassata, in 1969 brought the young priest to North Texas. The pair met at an event that established the Diocese of Fort Worth after being part of the Diocese of Dallas for almost 80 years. Fr. Publius was visiting his brother in Dallas at the time.

Bishop Cassata, whose parents were from Sicily, felt a cultural connection with the visitor from Malta and suggested he transfer to Fort Worth. Since then, the industrious priest has served as assistant pastor or pastor at 11 different parishes in the diocese including Our Lady Queen of Peace in Wichita Falls, St. Thomas Aquinas in Pilot Point, and Holy Cross in The Colony.

In 2012, the Holy Redeemer pastor received the papal honor of monsignor from Pope Benedict XVI for his service to

the Church. The announcement came on the anniversary of his mother’s death.

“I know my mother had something to do with it. The timing could not have been better,” he told the *North Texas Catholic* at the time.

As he prepared to celebrate 50 years in the priesthood, Monsignor Publius was frequently asked the same question: What do you like most about being a priest?

“It’s the sacraments,” he answered simply. “My joy is to give people the sacraments.”

The pastor cited a recent Baptism as one example. While the family gathered for the ceremony, the grandmother reminded Msgr. Publius that he baptized the baby’s father and also gave him first Communion while assigned to St. Peter the Apostle Parish. Eight years ago, he married the baby’s parents at Holy Redeemer and now would baptize their child.

“That’s the beauty of a priest,” Msgr. Publius said, reflecting on his ability to touch the spiritual lives of the people he served. “That’s the beauty of the Church.” 🇺🇸

Msgr. Publius Xuereb observes a special thanks painting by artist Benny Paredes honoring the monsignor for his 50th anniversary as a priest. (NTC photo/Ben Torres) ▶



▶ Msgr. Publius Xuereb is congratulated by Elena Kett, 4, after celebrating his golden jubilee. (NTC photo/Ben Torres)



Fr. Demma and Fr. Moon kneel during the laying on of hands, the ancient sign of ordination.

Called by His Grace

Father Jonathan Demma and Father Maurice Moon ordained to the priesthood

Stories by Joan Kurkowski-Gillen

Photography by Ben Torres

Jonathan Demma and Maurice Moon can pinpoint the moment when a vocation to the priesthood became more than just a fleeting thought.

Demma was in his early 20s when he witnessed the ordination of a Franciscan priest in New York.

“As soon as the cardinal placed his hands on the friar’s head, I knew I was called to be a priest,” recalled the former Texas A&M undergraduate who grew up in St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish in Keller.

For Moon, the peace and joy experienced in the confessional — after a 15-year absence from the sacrament of Reconciliation — led to a greater awareness of faith and a deeper relationship with Jesus Christ.

“Through prayer, Mass, and Adoration, I realized he was calling me to be a priest,” said the Arlington native who considers St. Philip the Apostle in Lewisville his home parish.

Years of discernment, study, training, and prayer culminated joyfully for both men with their ordination to the Sacred Order of the Priesthood on May 19. Parishioners from across the diocese gathered in St. Patrick Cathedral, or viewed the ceremony live streamed on the diocesan website, to see Fort Worth Bishop Michael Olson confer the sacrament of Holy Orders during a Mass imbued with symbolism and ritual.

In welcoming remarks at the start of the morning liturgy, Bishop Olson acknowledged the presence of family members who filled the front pews of the cathedral.

“I especially want to thank the parents of our ordinands who fostered the gift of faith in their lives,” Bishop Olson, said praising Mike and Alana Demma, Maureen Moon and Randy Moon. “You helped them persevere to this moment that the Lord has called them to.”

The Demmas have six boys and the family always expected “something big” from Jonathan, according to his older brother, Mark.

“He’s intelligent and excelled at everything he’s ever done,” the proud sibling told the *North Texas Catholic*. “It was a surprise when he told us he was discerning the priesthood but we’ve been behind him the whole way. We’ve prayed and tried to give him whatever he needed to get to this day.”

When Maurice Moon’s 88-year-old grandmother, Edna, had young children, she prayed one of her sons would grow up to become a priest.

“Then my grandson entered the seminary and I thanked God for answering my prayers,” said the devout Catholic who traveled from a retirement village in San Antonio. “I’m glad I was around to see God grant my wish.”

Presented to the bishop as the rite of ordination began, the transitional deacons were accepted by him as worthy candidates on behalf of the entire Church with the words: *Relying on the help of the Lord God and our Savior Jesus Christ, we choose these men, our brothers, for the Order of the Priesthood.*

The standing-room-only crowd of worshippers responded to the proclamation with spontaneous applause.

Addressing the ordinands during his homily, Bishop Olson reminded the men they are called by name as friends of Jesus Christ and will prophesy to people by preaching, teaching, and exemplifying the entire truth of His gospel.

“In the celebration of the sacraments, you will prophetically reveal God’s desires for his people,” he explained. “These desires include entrance into eternal life, freedom from original sin, and membership in His Church through Baptism.”

Along with the merciful absolution of sins, witnessing the life-giving love of the sacrament of Matrimony, and healing sin’s effects in illness and death through the Anointing of the Sick, a priest carries out the mission of Christ by celebrating the Eucharist. People see Christ’s face, “in your attentively reverent and priestly presence as celebrant and presider,” the bishop added. “And most especially in the bread and wine consecrated through your praying of Christ’s words becoming His Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity.”

Bishop Olson encouraged the soon-to-be priests to spend time with Jesus in prayer “as with a friend.” Prayerful conversation, he said, nourishes the prophetic character of a priestly vocation.

“Christ desires that you treat Him as a friend and not as a passing acquaintance or useful benefactor,” the homilist pointed out.

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Fr. Jonathan Demma smiles after receiving his stole and chasuble during the Rite of Ordination into the priesthood from Msgr. James Hart and Father Michael Kmiołek, CFR.

Fr. Maurice Moon kneels before Bishop Michael Olson to receive a chalice during the Rite of Ordination into the priesthood.



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“The people of God depend on this.”

Offering some final words for reflection, Bishop Olson asked the ordinands to remember another gift Christ gave his people — Mary, his mother. A source of help for all Christians, Mary provides special motherly care for her Son’s priests.

“She assists us in cultivating the virtue of purity of heart and fosters in us a sense of approachable compassion for all God’s people. Our Blessed Mother assists us in saying yes to God with trust in the midst of frightening circumstances that would be overwhelming and insurmountable without God’s grace,” he said, concluding with one last piece of advice. “Pray to her.”

After promising obedience to the bishop and his successors, the seminarians prostrated 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 Christian community as the congregants sang *The Litany of the Saints*.

Rising from prayer, each man knelt before the bishop as the essential rite of the sacrament took place. Laying his hands on the head, Bishop Olson invoked the gifts of the Holy Spirit. This Biblically-based sign of apostolic succession imparts a sacred character that makes the recipient “a priest forever.”

The newly ordained then received symbolic vestments of ministry — a stole and chasuble — from fellow priests instrumental in their vocation journey. Monsignor E. James Hart and Father Michael Kmiołek, CFR served as vesting priests for Father Demma with Father Raymond McDaniel and Father Nghia Nguyen doing the honors for Father Moon.

Presented with a paten and chalice after their palms were anointed with holy chrism, the new priests were welcomed into the Order of Presbyters by Bishop Olson and approximately 100 diocesan and visiting priests.

Cheyenne Marrinan brought her two godchildren to the Ordination Mass. As the youth minister at Holy Family of Nazareth in Vernon, she observed the pastoral skills of both seminarians when they came to work at the rural faith community.

“I served with Maurice at the parish and I think he embodies what it takes to be a priest,” she said. “He is somebody who is quiet and takes the time to listen to people and understand their idiosyncrasies.”

Jonathan Demma helped the youth leader host a youth retreat for 21 Catholic parishes in the northwest deanery.

“He really came to our rescue,” Marrinan remembered, explaining how the seminarian brought his own sound system and took photos at the event.

“I think he will dedicate himself to the priesthood in a way that will be an example to others,” she continued.

Gloria Ayala did not know either of the new priests personally. The St. Elizabeth Ann Seton parishioner heard about the ordination at daily Mass and wanted to attend the liturgy to show her support and appreciation.

“We’re just so happy to be here,” she said. “It’s a wonderful day for the Church.” 🇺🇸

Check out the video and photo gallery:

NorthTexasCatholic.org



Fr. Jonathan Demma consecrates the Eucharist during his first Mass as a priest at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish in Keller.



Joy Builds on Joy

Father Jonathan Demma blesses parents' golden anniversary at his first Mass

It's not every day a family celebrates two landmark events in the same weekend.

On May 19, Mike and Alana Demma watched as one of their six sons received the sacrament of Holy Orders from Fort Worth Bishop Michael Olson in St. Patrick Cathedral. Later that day, the newly ordained Father Jonathan Demma recognized his parents' 50th wedding anniversary with a special blessing during his first Mass as a priest. The liturgy was held inside St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Church in Keller, the family's home parish, on the eve of Pentecost Sunday.

"They've been dating since they were 14-years-old," Fr. Demma explained before offering a prayer over the bowed heads of the couple. "And now we have this beautiful family of six boys and many, many nieces and nephews."

Invited up to the altar with his parents were friends of the Demma family who traveled to Texas for the ordination.

Mark and MaryAnn Stanos, Frank and Sue Evan, and the Demmas grew up in Cleveland, Ohio and have known each other since all three men attended St. Joseph High School. The couples

and their children remained close through the years.

"They double dated and were present at each other's weddings," the new priest told the congregation. "They've also been married 50 years, so it's my honor and privilege to offer the blessing for their anniversaries today."

The celebrant also honored his parents with mindful gifts marking his initiation into the Sacred Order of the Priesthood.

He presented his mother, Alana, with the *manutergium* — the white linen cloth that blanketed his hands after they were anointed by the bishop with holy chris. Traditionally, the material, perfumed with the sacred oil, is treasured during the mother's life then placed in her hands as she lies in the casket.

"My mother taught me, by example, what it means to serve others and to use my hands to care for their needs unceasingly and tirelessly," the proud son said. "This will go in her coffin as a sign of the sacrifices she made to teach me everything I need to be of service to the people of God."

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A purple stole Fr. Demma will use to hear confessions is reserved for his father, a man who “taught me justice and mercy and then...more justice,” he said as parishioners erupted with laughter.

In an interview prior to his ordination, the former seminarian told the *North Texas Catholic* that a religious vocation was the furthest thing from his mind when he began college. That changed during the 2002 World Youth Day in Toronto when a friar convinced the young Texan to accompany him to Eucharistic Adoration. Demma never experienced the devotion before.

“I had this moment where I evaluated all of the things God had given me in my life — all the gifts and talents — and realized I wasn’t giving anything back to Him,” he remembered. “So, I made a promise that day to find a way to serve the Church.”

His commitment deepened the following year when he witnessed the ordination of a friend, Father Juniper Mary Sistare, a member of the Franciscan Friars of the Renewal.

“I remember watching this friar walk

across to the cardinal and thinking he was going to kneel down as one man then stand up changed for all eternity,” Fr. Demma explained. “As soon as the cardinal placed his hands on the friar’s head, I knew I was called to be a priest.”

The former Texas A&M engineering student left school to join the Bronx-based Franciscan order but eventually began to notice the difference between the life of an itinerant preacher traveling to parish mission retreats and the more stable ministry of the diocesan priesthood. With the friars, he moved 11 times in nine years.

“I really got interested in sacramental theology and felt I had a gift for teaching and preaching,” continued Demma, who was drawn to the idea of guiding families through the sacraments as a parish priest. “The priesthood was never in question. I just didn’t know whether I would do it as a Franciscan or go to a diocese.”

Dispensed from the solemn vows made as a Franciscan, Demma began seminary formation for the Diocese of Fort Worth five years ago. He enrolled at Theological College of Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C., in a dual degree

program to earn a master’s degree in divinity and a baccalaureate in sacred theology.

A pastoral year spent at Sacred Heart Parish in Wichita Falls, under the guidance of Father Jack McKone, affirmed his decision to become a diocesan priest. Described as a “wonderful mentor” by Fr. Demma, he asked the pastor of St. John the Apostle Parish to give the homily at his first Mass. The new priest will serve alongside Fr. McKone as parochial vicar at the North Richland Hills parish during the next year.

When he celebrates Mass for the faith community, Fr. Demma will use a chalice given to him by his parents on Easter Sunday. The chalice is etched with scenes depicting the life of Christ from the Annunciation to the Resurrection. Receiving the gift was an emotional experience, the 37-year-old admitted.

“One of the greatest blessings was my ordination coming the day after they celebrate 50 years of marriage,” Fr. Demma said. “It’s been a long journey but worth every minute. My parents and the people of the diocese lifted me up when I needed it. I’m humble and grateful and can’t wait to serve them as a priest.” 🇺🇸



Fr. Jonathan Demma presents gifts to his parents during the celebration of his first Mass.

Newly ordained Father Maurice Moon blesses the incense before his first Mass at St. Peter Parish in Lindsay on May 20.



Responding to His Grace

Father Maurice Moon celebrates his first Mass at St. Peter Parish in Lindsay

Choosing a church for his first Mass as a priest was an easy decision for Father Maurice Moon. The Arlington native never forgot the kindness and support shown him by St. Peter in Lindsay parishioners when he was a new student at St. Joseph Seminary in Covington, La.

“This was my first summer assignment,” he recalled moments after giving the final blessing to worshippers who filled the pews of the historic church on Pentecost Sunday, May 20. “I’ve never been so encouraged and supported by a community. That’s why I wanted to come back and celebrate Mass for them.”

As a seminarian, Fr. Moon returned to the parish as often as possible to visit with friends and work with the youth group.

“They took me in as one of their own and I really felt at home,” he explained. “I just loved being there.”

The 32-year-old was ordained to the Sacred Order of the

Priesthood the previous day by Fort Worth Bishop Michael Olson. Fr. Moon’s parents, Maureen Moon and Randy Moon, his sister, Randi Rose Friesenhahn, 88-year-old grandmother, Edna Moon, and a contingent of aunts, uncles, and cousins witnessed the ceremony, then traveled the following day to the rural farming town of Lindsay for his first Mass.

“When Maurice spoke to the priest at St. Philip’s in Lewisville about having a vocation to the priesthood, I cried tears of joy,” said Maureen, who raised him as a single parent. “I had never seen Maurice so happy, filled with joy, and content. He’s very dedicated to the Catholic Church and has made me a better Catholic because of his wisdom.”

Randy Moon was surprised when his son entered the seminary.

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As a teenager, the younger Moon was a disinterested Catholic who didn't like attending church. His father believes a car accident and near death experience led him to search for God and faith.

"He's very confident the priesthood is his path and loves what he does," Randy Moon said. "He's found his calling and finds it challenging every day."

In an interview prior to ordination, Moon said the appeal of religious life came after years of restlessness, discontent, and being unhappy. "Nothing in this world was fulfilling me. I needed something more powerful — God," he told the *North Texas Catholic*.

In 2009, at the age of 23, the former Chili's waiter began his studies at St. Joseph Seminary in Covington, La. where he earned a liberal arts degree with a focus on philosophy. In May, he received a graduate-level academic degree in sacred theology from Washington, D.C.'s Theological College at Catholic University of America.

During his formation, the seminarian spent a pastoral year at St. Bartholomew Parish, where he was introduced to the busy schedule of a pastor and the day-to-day needs of his flock.

"It was a great experience getting to know people who showed me the difficulties, challenges, and joys of being Catholic," said the former seminarian who witnessed close-up the value of ministry. "I visited the sick and the incarcerated. I also enjoyed teaching youth and young adults."

Once a confused teen himself, the new priest wants to help young people discover God's will in their lives.

"They're getting a lot of mixed messages from the world and that's something I can relate to," he continued. "I think knowing clarity, truth, beauty, and goodness is so important for every person — especially youth."

Fr. Moon saw those qualities in two men who mentored him as a seminarian, Father Ray McDaniel and Father Jonathan Wallis.

"They conveyed to me the beauty and truth of the Church and were always available," the cleric explained. "Both were inspiring and a big influence on me."

Fr. Moon asked Fr. McDaniel to give the homily at his first Mass. Fr. Jonathan Wallis and Father Phil Petta also concelebrated



Fr. Maurice Moon celebrates his first Mass at St. Peter Parish in Lindsay, where he spent his first summer as a seminarian.

the liturgy inside the beautiful century-old church.

"On his (Fr. Moon's) behalf, I want to thank this wonderful parish family for the love, generosity, prayers, and support you have shown him since that first summer about eight years ago," Fr. McDaniel told the congregation. "You have played a truly significant role in his formation. Those long years of training and study led to another priest for the church."

Sister Cecilia Marie Bayer, a member of the Sister Servants of the Eternal Word based in Birmingham, Ala., read from the *Acts of the Apostles* during the morning liturgy. The former St. Peter parishioner met Fr. Moon when he was a seminarian and she was considering religious life.

"He's a good friend," the nun said.

"He's very concerned for souls and prayerful. I think he'll be a good shepherd. We pray for each other."


During the next year, Fr. Moon will serve as chaplain at Nolan Catholic High School and a vocations liaison for the diocese. The newly ordained priest is grateful for the support received from Catholic organizations and parishioners over the years and is looking forward to the challenges of ministry.

"We experience the love of God through other people and the generosity of others helped me experience the love of God in my life," he said thoughtfully. "People want good, holy priests. I've seen that. I've been inspired by that. I want to give my life to the people of Fort Worth so I can be a good and holy priest for them." ✝



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Seminarian Linh Nguyen from the Diocese of Fort Worth sings during vespers at St. Patrick Cathedral. (NTC photo/Juan Guajardo)



A Culture of Vocations

Young men in the diocese are responding to the renewed emphasis on vocations

By Mary Lou Seewoester

First a van, then a mini-bus, and this year a full-sized bus. Forty-two young men considering priesthood packed a bus bound for St. Joseph Seminary College in Covington, La., this spring for a Come and See visit. A record number of young men attended this discernment weekend, compared to 27 attending the same event in 2017.

Since the Diocese of Fort Worth embarked on a team approach to fostering vocations last September, the results have been both encouraging and measurable. Father Nghia Nguyen, parochial vicar at St. John the Apostle Parish in North Richland Hills, is one of four vocations liaisons. He attributes the increased attendance to being able to “actively encourage young men who have an interest in the priesthood.”

He said the team is able to reach out to more young men because instead of one vocations director, the diocese now has a team of five priests headed by Father Jonathan Wallis, director of seminarian formation at St. Joseph Seminary College. The three other vocations liaisons are Father Manuel Holguin, pastor of St. Peter the Apostle Parish in Fort Worth; Father Keith Hathaway, chaplain at Notre Dame Catholic School in Wichita Falls; and Father Matthew Tatyrek, chaplain at

Nolan Catholic High School in Fort Worth. Fr. Tatyrek recently was assigned to St. Peter Parish in Lindsay and newly-ordained Father Maurice Moon will be added to the team as chaplain at Nolan.

Fr. Wallis said this approach “is yielding good results. It’s obvious that it was the fruit of a lot of hard work by the team and the bishop.”

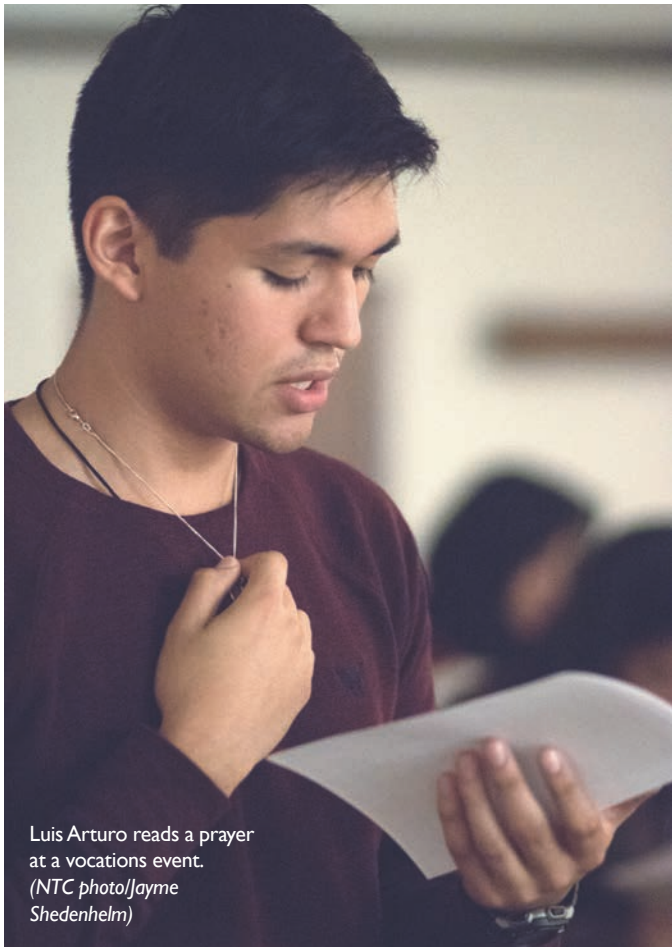
Isaac McCracken, a parishioner at St. Vincent de Paul in Arlington, attended both the fall and the spring Come and See weekends.

“You can talk to seminarians, ask them about their daily routine and just see if you would fit in with the community,” he said. The diocese currently sponsors 24 seminarians, including 12 men at St. Joseph.

Fr. Wallis said he has noticed that men from the diocese who visit the seminary “know why they’re here. They’re answering the question: ‘Is Jesus Christ calling me to the priesthood?’ It’s turning the focus away from, ‘Is this going to be fulfilling for me?’ toward ‘What is my call?’

“The discernment of vocation really centers on the call of Jesus Christ and an outward focus of that call,” Fr. Wallis continued.

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Luis Arturo reads a prayer at a vocations event. (NTC photo/ayme Shedenhelm)



Seminarian David LaPointe prays during vespers. (NTC photo/Juan Guajardo)

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“And that’s where I see the four vocations liaisons have worked really hard to talk about discernment of a vocation in that way.”

Fr. Nguyen said that since the diocese is so large geographically, the team has made efforts to offer St. Andrew Breakfasts and Dinners across the area. St. Andrew events include Mass, a meal, and a discussion about discernment.

The vocations liaisons have seen other benefits of a team approach to fostering vocations.

“Having a team of four allows us to build more relationships of trust with young men so they get to know a priest, and priests get to know them... we can reach out more than in the past,” Fr. Hathaway said.

McCracken, a University of Texas at Arlington (UTA) sophomore, said he had been active in his parish youth group, but he didn’t seriously consider priesthood until he joined the University Catholic Community at UTA and developed relationships with a few of the priests who celebrate Mass there.

“They are generally pretty open people and you can ask them questions about being a priest,” he said. “When you have a relationship with a priest, you get to see more in depth what their life is like.

“At my parish, we usually only had one priest. It’s a fairly large parish, so we didn’t talk to him personally or see what his life is like,” he added.

Fr. Hathaway explained that in years past, “it was common for people to know their priest, but now that’s not [always] the case. So having four on the team allows us to

spend time with them at vocations events, and also to follow up afterwards.”

Fr. Nguyen agreed. “We’re able to foster meaningful relationships by keeping in touch with them, asking how discernment is going and praying for them daily, by name.”

“We don’t bombard them,” he added. “We let them pray. It’s an invitation to prayerfully consider their vocation.”

This year, diocesan Catholic schools have developed a new approach to fostering vocations also. A key component is pizza.

At the four high schools, seminarians attended Mass with the young men and then sat down for lunch and casual conversations. Over a relaxed meal, students learn about the daily lives of seminarians.

High school students are accustomed to thinking of what comes next, according to Superintendent of Catholic Schools Jennifer Pelletier. Knowing seminarians helps students understand the first step on the path to the priesthood and allows them to envision themselves on that journey.

“It’s a conversation now that’s part of the culture of our schools,” said Pelletier, who took principals and coaches to St. Joseph so they are better equipped to discuss the seminary with interested students.

Talking about vocations should be “part of who you are, part of your imagination,” said Pelletier. An ongoing conversation, not a one-time event.

Another step to normalize the discussion of vocations in high school was to change vocation day from fifth grade to the end of eighth grade. When those students enter high school, they will be primed to



Father Jonathan Wallis, Father Nghia Nguyen, and Father Keith Hathaway pose with seminarians and some attendees of the “Come and See” program. (Photo courtesy/Hai Nguyen)

consider a religious vocation, the superintendent said.

Fr. Wallis said the diocese is responding to a recent trend, that of younger men entering the seminary.

“Throughout the diocese and the South, a number of men are entering [seminary] right out of high school,” Fr. Wallis said. “And especially in our diocese, there has been greater openness to accepting men right out of high school.”

In past years, the trend was to encourage men to get several years of life experience before considering the seminary. “But the idea now is ‘let’s not thwart the work of the Holy Spirit,’” he said. “If a young man believes he’s being called to the priesthood then that’s something that needs to be fostered.”

Fr. Hathaway said it can be “discouraging for a young man to hear ‘go to college

first and get some life experience.’ It sounds like a ‘no.’”

“If the Holy Spirit is working in these young men’s lives, calling them to follow Christ ... we don’t want to put that off,” he added. “Christ calls us in the present moment to be faithful to Him now. So if a young man wants to go to seminary out of high school — if the Holy Spirit is leading him that way, we want to encourage that.”

In addition to being a voice of encouragement, the liaisons share both the joys and the challenges of priesthood.

“We have very clear expectations of priesthood and speak frankly from our experience about the joys of priesthood and also the challenges we face as priests in today’s culture. And that kind of honesty and transparency, along with a sense of mission and purpose, is a very strong message,” Fr. Hathaway said.

As the vocations team moves forward from this initial success, families, parish ministers, and teachers can help foster an atmosphere of vocations in the diocese.

“Everyone’s first duty is prayer,” Fr. Hathaway stressed. “Pray for priests. Pray for vocations to the priesthood. Pray for them by name. But also encourage them and refer them to us.”

Families can help by being open to discussing vocations with their children and encouraging them if they show an interest. When teachers and parish ministers become aware of someone’s interest in the priesthood or religious life, they can refer them to the vocations team or suggest they attend one of the diocese’s vocations events.

In describing his thoughts about the men he teaches, prays for, and encourages, Fr. Nguyen said, “maybe this is the same guy I will one day call my brother priest.” 🇺🇸

My Son, The Father

The call to a religious vocation
through a mother's eyes



Father Joseph Keating on his
ordination day at St. Patrick
Cathedral. (NTC photo/Juan Guajardo)

By Susan Moses

Growing up, Joseph, Steven, and David Keating were altar servers at the small parish on Goodfellow Air Force Base in San Angelo. Their mother, Priscilla, and their grandmother would occasionally reflect, “Wouldn’t it be wonderful if one of the boys became a priest someday?”

Her oldest son, Father Joseph Keating, was ordained to the priesthood for the Diocese of Fort Worth on May 21, 2016.

Now, two years later, Mrs. Keating admits to occasionally being a little distracted during the Eucharistic Prayer. Watching the miracle that occurs in every Mass, when the host and wine become the Body and Blood of Christ through the priest, the thought will sometimes cross her mind — “that’s what my son does.”

Mrs. Keating is a proud mother of each of her sons. The retired physical therapist said, “They sought out what they have known to be their calling.” She and her husband, Bob, intentionally gave them the freedom and space to seek out their individual vocation.

“We wanted to give them the independence to seek their dreams, what makes them happy. And they have each been successful in different directions.”

Reminiscing about the years that Fr. Joe spent discerning his path, Mrs. Keating shed a few happy tears.

As Joe earned his bachelor and master degrees at Texas Tech, “Bob and I and Joe would have talks about what his plans were, about his experiences, his ideas. He would share those with us.”

“He could say what was on his mind, what was on his heart. He knew he would have his parents’ support and confidence.”

Joe became involved in the Catholic student organization, and they saw his fervor for his faith grow. After



Fr. Joseph Keating pictured with his mother, Priscilla, and father, Bob, after celebrating his second Mass, at St. Mark Parish in Denton. (Photo courtesy of Keating Family)

graduation, he worked a year for a major corporation, but left to become a youth minister at St. Mark Parish in Denton.

When he announced his decision to enter seminary two years later, his parents were not surprised. “We embraced his decision, and we knew he had put a lot of thought into it. We felt included, although we had not nudged him either way,” she said.

Mrs. Keating saw Joe’s resolve to become a priest strengthen and his knowledge and love of his faith grow throughout his years of seminary.

When the day of his priestly ordination arrived, Mrs. Keating expected to feel “nervous, worried, and discombobulated. But I felt calm, collected, and content.”

It helped that Mrs. Keating had come to know Joe’s friends in seminary, and that he was being ordained by Bishop Michael Olson, who had been the rector of the first seminary Joe attended. She felt like he was joining a larger family.

“It was encouraging to a mother that he was in the care of God, our Savior,” she remembered. “I felt at ease, comfortable, and confident.”

After the ordination Mass and reception, Fr. Joe, his parents, and his brothers loaded up the car to drive from St. Patrick Cathedral in Fort Worth to his first Mass at St. Mark Parish. That’s where Mrs. Keating admitted to being anxious. With construction and red lights

en route, they arrived with only 15 minutes to spare.

Looking back on his ordination and first Mass, Mrs. Keating remembered, “I had a special love in my heart through the whole day. Everything was beautiful and loving. It was the culmination of Joe’s dreams and efforts, shared with us, his family.”

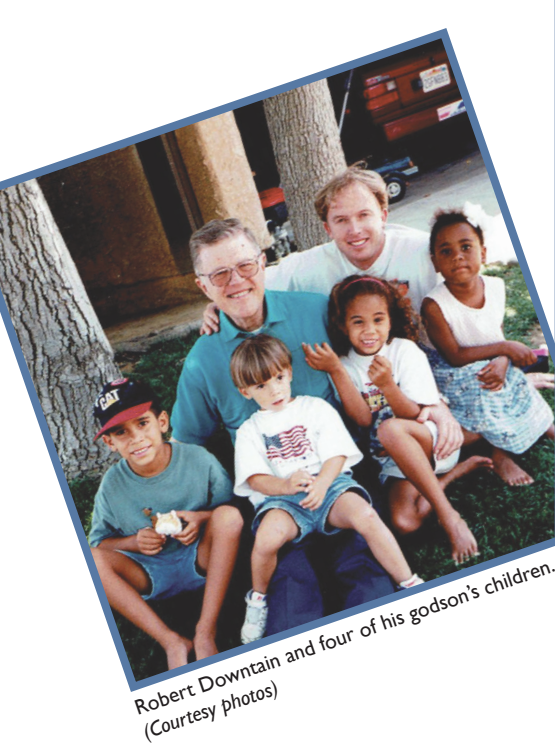
The Keatings travel from San Angelo to visit their son, who is the pastor of Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish in Abbott and Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary Parish in Penelope.

They have learned to arrange visits during the week, since he is quite busy on the weekends.

Mrs. Keating said she feels joy knowing that he is “touching the lives of so many in two rural communities. He can give individual attention to them as their pastor.”

Many little towns, she said, don’t have the support system of a resident priest, “but these parishioners have their own priest to talk to and confide in. They are not alone with their problems, and he can share their joys, too.”

Fr. Joe has told his mother that his parishioners support and help him in many ways, including bringing him food. She said, “I am not as worried as I thought I would be. He’s part of a larger family now. He has his brother priests and the parishioners.” 🇹🇽



Robert Downtain and four of his godson's children.
(Courtesy photos)



Robert Downtain and his godson.



Robert Downtain and his godson.

Lasting Gift of Love

By Alice Varela Murray

A parishioner at St. John the Apostle in North Richland Hills who spent his lifetime as an educator has bequeathed the parish a \$750,000 gift that will help educate young Catholics for years to come.

Robert “Bob” Downtain, a longtime teacher at Tarrant County Community College Northeast campus in Hurst, died on Jan. 18 at the age of 79, and left the money as part of his estate.

Father Jack McKone, pastor of St. John the Apostle Parish, recounted the story of Downtain and his remarkable gift.

“Bob, while he was in college, had a same sex attraction and was a faithful Catholic,” Fr. McKone said. “So, he had to figure out, ‘how to live my life — marriage is not an option.’”

He found a welcoming Catholic family from among his classmates, and Bob became attached to this family, Fr. McKone said.

“When their son was born, they asked Bob to be the godfather. So, Bob figured that somehow God has something

for him in mind,” Fr. McKone said.

“He and my dad were buddies when they were both going to university,” said Downtain’s godson, who asked not to be identified. “They met at church and they used to go see ballgames together.”

Downtain realized a call to “really be the godfather to this boy,” once the godson’s father died, Fr. McKone said.

“I was thrilled to have him in my life. I have six kids and he knew them all,” the godson said. “He was a special man — I miss him a lot, for sure.”

The godson said St. John the Apostle had a special place in Downtain’s heart. He joined the parish in 1969.

“He just loved St. John,” and gave his time to many ministries, the godson said. “The church was a beneficiary to his investments that he had. I know he gave generously to St. John, and he gave generously to Catholic Charities Fort Worth.”

Downtain lived very modestly, said the godson, who is helping administer Downtain’s estate.

This spring, Fr. McKone got a call

from Wells Fargo Financial Advisers who said, “we need to talk to you about the Downtain legacy.”

The Downtain bequest was left to the discretion of the pastor on how to use it.

“Our school, like many Catholic schools, is struggling. Our principal and I are trying to get it on firm financial ground,” Fr. McKone said. “And suddenly we have this legacy gift.”

“The beautiful part of Bob Downtain’s story is that he was the only one who knew what he was going to do about it [the bequest],” Fr. McKone said. “It was just a love for his brothers and sisters in the body of Christ that allowed him to do something which has already meant so much for us.”

And what is also remarkable is that he loved his godson, who is married with a family of his own, Fr. McKone said.

“He left a tremendous amount to that young man and that young man is taking up the mantle of his godfather and has already made plans about how that fortune will be used to help other people,” Fr. McKone said. “Generosity is contagious.” 🇺🇸

Sharing and Serving

COMMUNICATION AND COMPROMISE:

“After you get married, communication is one of the biggest tools you will have. So much comes up in life, you have to be able to talk and compromise with each other to make it work. When you get married, you not only marry that person, but you marry into their family traditions and you have to be able to discuss those things and compromise with each other,” Anthony said.

BEING A DAD: “Every decision I make as a Dad and a husband affects my child. I want my son to see that I treat people with respect. I want my son to see that it’s ok to be a man in the world today and have a love for God. To not be afraid of our faith and sharing that faith.”

SERVING TOGETHER: The couple has been youth ministry leaders for eight years together. Rosa said, “We have shared some life experiences regarding our faith journey to the youth and in the process we have opened up more about our relationships with God as well. I have learned that some of the youth look up to us as role models and we try to show them that marriage is a partnership with God always present.

“Sharing an interest together, such as youth ministry, gives us a sense of joy and happiness, because we’re serving others in the name of God. Having Anthony by my side while serving in youth ministry has brought me peace and courage knowing he will always be there to help me grow in my faith.” 🇺🇸

THEY ARE: Anthony and Rosa Flores, with their son, Noe. They are parishioners at St. Bartholomew Parish in Fort Worth and will celebrate 11 years of marriage on August 18. (NTC photo/Ben Torres)



Victoria Nelson, center, of Good Shepherd Parish in Colleyville, deposits checks at a PLS Check Cashing store. (NTC photo/Ben Torres)

New Struggles Bring New Perspective

Approximately 40 community members, representing financial organizations, parishes, and non-profit organizations, gamely left the Catholic Charities Fort Worth (CCFW) campus in groups of four to explore financial options in various Fort Worth neighborhoods.

Afterwards, these participants in FinX, an innovative “boots-to-the-ground” workshop, gathered to compare notes from the hectic field experience, discussing firsthand insights into the many challenges faced by those in poverty.

Because many underbanked individuals do not possess the photo identification, minimum amount of funds, or transportation options needed to easily access traditional banks, participants were instructed to attempt to complete several financial tasks in less familiar venues. Tasks included cashing checks, buying general purpose reloadable (GPR) cards, completing domestic and international money transfers, acquiring small personal loans, and visiting pawn shops.

Workshop participants were surprised by the high fees required to cash a check, load and use funds on a GPR, and execute money transfers. “The main take-away from everyone I talked to is that it is expensive and time-consuming to live outside the traditional banking system,” reflected Christopher Plumlee, a CCFW board member.

“People have to make tough decisions — like if they are going to forgo an hour’s worth of wages so they can wait in a long line to cash a check at a place with lower fees before they have to pick up their child from school,” he continued.

The Consumer Financial Experience (FinX) was created by the Chicago-based Center for Financial Services Innovation (CFSI), and hosted by CCFW.

The event is designed to help community members gain a deeper understanding of the complexity of financial consumers’ lives, especially when they are members of what is known as the “underbanked” community — working-class Americans who cannot access mainstream financial services and

products, such as credit cards or loans.

President and CEO of CCFW Heather Reynolds explained the significance of the agency’s partnership with CFSI. “For us to truly serve our clients with empathy, we need to know what it is like to deal, as a low-income person, with the financial industry,” she said. “We are always asking ourselves, ‘Is the financial assistance we currently provide to our clients helping to eradicate poverty, or are we just treating the symptoms? Are we sharing best practices and influencing key policy makers?’”

Because many CCFW clients are underbanked, the agency is committed to helping to create services that will help them to achieve financial health, said Reynolds. “Because we at Catholic Charities have the bold goal of ending poverty, we know that it is important to assist our clients in obtaining and using financial tools effectively.”

For more information about CCFW, visit CatholicCharitiesFortWorth.org or call 817-534-0814. 📍



A LIGHT ON CAMPUS

NTC photo/jayne Shedenhelm

H E IS: Father Kyle Walterscheid, pastor of St. John Paul II University Parish in Denton serving University of North Texas and Texas Women’s University.

He has also served at St. Matthew Parish in Bedford, as a campus minister at University of Texas at Arlington, and as vocations director for the diocese.

ORDAINED: May 25, 2002 at Sacred Heart Parish in Muenster.

GROWING UP: The youngest of seven, Fr. Walterscheid was raised on a farm “with every type of animal you could think of.” Out of all the chores, Fr. Walterscheid’s favorite was raising calves.

STEEPED IN FAITH: He went to Sacred Heart School where he attended daily Mass. In third grade, he became an altar server, aspiring to become the head altar server, who had the privilege of ringing the bell. “Except for those times I forgot to ring the bell.”

His family instilled good habits, like resting on the Sabbath and saying the Rosary during Lent. But “my best

memories growing up with the faith was the Mass itself and serving.”

THE CALL: Fr. Walterscheid pushed off thoughts of priesthood while he earned an undergraduate degree in civil engineering and master’s degree in structural engineering. “I was very adamant not to become one before I became adamant to become one.”

He designed bridges for the highway department for five years while he reflected and prayed about the priesthood.

“The process is difficult because it is saying ‘yes’ to God. Anybody and everybody can relate to that. Saying ‘yes’ to God for your life means you have to give up something in order to enter into the new doors that God has in store for you.”

BEST PART OF BEING A PRIEST: “In Reconciliation, you see the Holy Spirit active and powerfully wiping away sin and giving them a fresh start, giving them the grace to be alive and free again.

And the Eucharist. To celebrate the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass — to make present the sacrifice of Christ in our time, in this place, with this community.”

ON CAMPUS: “It’s where I feel I can do the greatest good. College-age men and women are open to exploring and asking deeper questions.” Bible studies, community, and prayer life help pass on the faith and transform lives.

Fr. Walterscheid sees the millennial generation struggling with isolation and loneliness.

“I personally support them, encourage them, challenge them, and place them deeper into a community that will do likewise. To bring them Christ who is our ultimate solution, and our ultimate reward is to be in union with Him for eternity.”

WORTH FIGHTING FOR: “Every human life is made in God’s image and likeness and we have to fight to sustain that dignity in the public forum that is constantly stripping that dignity away.”

OUR BLESSED MOTHER: Three years ago, Fr. Walterscheid celebrated his 25th anniversary of a daily Rosary by adding a second Rosary to his day. “The Lord on the cross gave us His own mother . . . How can you still be giving gifts in the hour of your death?” ✚



The Miraculous Draught of Fishes by Raphael

“FOLLOW ME”

The Feast of Sts. Peter and Paul
June 29, 2018

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

LECTIO



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

MEDITATIO



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

ORATIO



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

CONTEMPLATIO



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

THE SCRIPTURE

GOSPEL FOR JUNE 29, 2018 | SOLEMNITY OF STS. PETER AND PAUL — VIGIL

Jesus had revealed himself to his disciples and, when they had finished breakfast, said to Simon Peter, “Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?”

Simon Peter answered him, “Yes, Lord, you know that I love you.”

Jesus said to him, “Feed my lambs.”

He then said to Simon Peter a second time, “Simon, son of John, do you love me?”

Simon Peter answered him, “Yes, Lord, you know that I love you.”

He said to him, “Tend my sheep.”

He said to him the third time, “Simon, son of John, do you love me?”

Peter was distressed that

he had said to him a third time, “Do you love me?” and he said to him, “Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you.”

Jesus said to him, “Feed my sheep.

Amen, amen, I say to you, when you were younger, you used to dress yourself and go where you wanted; but when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will dress you and lead you where you do not want to go.”

He said this signifying by what kind of death he would glorify God. And when he had said this, he said to him, “Follow me.”

— John 21:15-19

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THE REFLECTION

Today's feast is an important one in the life of the universal Church and for each of us as Christians. We have other feasts set aside to contemplate the Seat of St. Peter or the conversion of St. Paul, but this day we are asked to consider their manner of life, which ultimately led to their death. They were willing to give all of their lives "poured out as a libation" (2 Timothy 4:6).

Peter, prior to the cross, had been ready to die a glorious death for Christ, but a death on his own terms. Jesus responded by telling Peter that he would "follow Him later" (John 13:36-37).

Now, after the Resurrection, Jesus asks Peter, "Do you love me more than these?" The question clearly recalls both Peter's reckless claim of love, but also his defeat alongside the others. Peter is no more faithful "than these." "Do you love me," Jesus asks two more times as He assigns

Peter responsibility as shepherd.

With the resurrected Jesus standing before him, Peter stands fully seen — and fully known — by the one whom he loved and then abandoned. Peter now knows that he will have to lay down not only his life, but also his will for the sake of Jesus and His sheep. "These" are Christ's sheep, and Peter is to tend and guide them according to the instructions of their owner. Answering God's call is about trust, not necessarily ease, and certainly not on our own terms. So, like Peter, we hear a challenge every day to respond to God in faith and transparency. Every day we are called to seek His will and glory, rather than our own.

I love how this reading ends with the charge "Follow me." It resonates in one's mind, especially as it is immediately followed by the homily and the Liturgy of the Eucharist, where Christ is made fully

present in our midst. Christ's words are clear: We are to follow Him and not our desires, our comfort, or our timing. Follow Him and you will do greater things than these. Follow Him, but know that to do so means to lay down your own will for the sake of the Kingdom of God.

At Mass every week we remember His sacrifice on the cross. So, should we be surprised that following Him means doing so at the peril of our lives — and to do so with love? ✚

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



NOLAN CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL

Congratulations Class of 2018

Valedictorian



DANIEL AARON BRYANT

Salutatorian



RACHEL ANNE EMRICH

239 scholarship offers exceeding **\$9.4 million** have been awarded to 101 seniors from the Class of 2018.

This represents 51% of the senior class. We congratulate them for their tremendous effort and success!

Strengthening Your Child's Conscience

How does a parent strengthen the moral conscience of his own child? Blessed Cardinal Newman describes the testimony of conscience as an echo of the voice of God enlightening each person to moral truth in specific situations. All of us have a duty to obey a right conscience over and above all considerations.

A distinction in Blessed Newman's description is that conscience is based on the echo of God, meaning that our conscience cannot be separated from God. It is not an echo of ourselves. It must be in unison, in harmony with the will of God. Our human nature is guided by this very fact.

Developing a conscience requires moral reason, not personal reason. It is a judgment of reason in which the human person recognizes the moral quality of a concrete act (*CCC 1778*).

OUR ROLE AS PARENTS

One of the primary responsibilities of parents is educating their children in the development of a proper moral conscience. As primary educators, this should be the first thing parents initiate as children begin to develop their sense of faith and reason. It is a lifelong task, because from the very beginning a child should be exposed to proper practice and knowledge of conscience.

Prudent education teaches virtue. It prevents or cures fear, selfishness, and pride, resentment arising from guilt, and feelings of complacency born of human

weakness and faults (*CCC 1785*).

Children rely on their parents through their Christian witness to learn and embrace the Catholic worldview exercised within the home and outside of it. The development of this Catholic worldview is intimately rooted in Christ and expressed through active participation in the sacramental life of the Church. If parents go to Confession, children will tend to follow. If the family faithfully attends Mass, children will tend to follow. These examples open the door toward developing a child's moral conscience.

Blessed Newman once again reminds us that conscience is a messenger of Him, who both in nature and in grace, speaks to us behind a veil, and teaches and rules us by his representatives.

Recognizing the dignity and value of fellow human beings through the lens of Christ is the first step in the development of a properly formed moral conscience. There is an understanding that all of God's creatures have an inherent beauty and must be respected and cared for. This understanding comes with the willingness to accept responsibility for one's actions.

PRACTICAL STEPS

As I alluded in the previous paragraph, there is a right way of forming a child's moral conscience. The **first step** is to rely on the Word of God and incorporate the practice of reading and meditating on

Sacred Scripture. The reason we begin with the Word of God is to direct our attention to Christ and not ourselves. A properly formed moral conscience leads to an examination of one's own conscience in light of the cross.

The **second step** is to establish an atmosphere of prayer within the home. The simple act of praying with your child before meals, for the souls in purgatory, for those in need, and especially to end the day initiates an attitude to seek Christ in all things. This is particularly important in the development of sound moral judgment.

The **third step** is to be incarnational with your child. What this means is that our actions must be rooted in Christ. Our demeanor, character, and behavior should reflect the holiness of Christ and nothing else. The active practice of the beatitudes (*Matthew 5*) coupled with the cardinal virtues (prudence, temperance, fortitude, and justice) provide a sound foundation toward the development of a moral conscience.

The premise of any moral act requires the development of a sound moral conscience. Our duty is to help our children turn inward to Christ and not themselves. Children need to witness in their parents this inward turn so they can see God in everything. Thus, their actions will gravitate toward helping others first over themselves. ➔



Marlon De La Torre

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

Holy Bible

Staying Faithful After Graduation



Change can be exciting and tumultuous, often at the same time. In some respects, the transitions that come with graduating from high school and college can be some of the toughest to navigate.

We have spent years building up to the momentous occasion and once we walk across the stage it might seem like our future is supposed to be set in stone. We might even have the impression that at this point in life we should “have it all together.” While this might be true for some, it’s not the reality for most graduates.



Jeff Hedglen

An often overlooked post-grad step is staying connected to God and the Church. I’d like to illustrate this reality with three stories.

Claire was a senior at Nolan. She was headed to a great school with a great campus ministry. As graduation approached, I encouraged her to plug in right away because it’s easy for faith to slip away if we do not stay connected. She assured me her faith was so strong it would never fade. Well, midway through her second semester she let me know everything I warned her about had happened. She slowly stopped going to Church and sure enough her faith life had dwindled.

After high school, Anthony was not interested in college — he was interested in getting out of his parents’ house! And that’s exactly what he did, at least until he lost his roommates, his money ran

out, and he needed to move back home. During his days of “freedom” he seldom went to church. But back home he reconnected with his faith, started volunteering with the youth ministry program, and even joined a Bible study.

The last story is about Jennifer, who finished college and when she came back home decided to join the young adult group at the parish, but she did not find one. But since she had a degree in business and marketing she decided to start one! A few years later it had grown bigger than she could have ever imagined.

Each of these stories teaches a lesson. Claire’s teaches us that we are never strong enough on our own. Anthony’s story shows that even if we stray for a while, God is always waiting for us to return. Lastly, Jennifer’s story reveals that when you see a need, you can fill it.

All of these stories together touch upon three necessary elements to keeping your faith strong as an adult.

The first is community. We are made in the image and likeness of a God who is three in one. Thus, we are made for community. We cannot exist on our own and we cannot grow in faith alone. But we must remember that whomever we spend time with will influence us. The trick is to spend time with peers who have the same faith and values.

The second key to staying close to Jesus is to stay close to the sacraments.

Especially the sacraments of the Eucharist and Reconciliation. Too often we stay away from Confession out of fear, embarrassment, or a sense of unworthiness, but Jesus died and rose again to conquer the power of sin. All we have to do is summon the courage to stop by the parish on a Saturday afternoon and get our soul washed clean. Additionally, receiving the Eucharist connects us to Jesus in the most perfect and intimate way possible.

The third element is responsibility. As an adult, it’s up to you to stay connected. You are the one choosing your friends. You can set your alarm for Mass and you can choose to join a young adult event at the parish or diocese.

Lastly, I would encourage you to get involved wherever you go to Mass. Join a Mass ministry, volunteer in religious education, or join a Bible study or the Knights of Columbus.

If you find yourself not feeling connected to the Church, don’t wait for someone to show up at your front door with an invitation. Read the bulletin — most likely a call for volunteers is already there. Our diocese and local parishes also host many young adult events. For more on those, visit fwdioc.org/yam. You are always welcome. ✚

Jeff Hedglen is the Director of Young Adult and Campus Ministry and the primary convener of Camp Fort Worth. For more on Young Adult Ministry, visit fwyam.org.



Created to be Holy

I'm terrified of becoming holy. I'm terrified of actually allowing God to mold me into the saint He's created me to be. I'm terrified of what all that entails, mainly because I *can't* control it.

Most days, I like to put God in a neat, little box, dictating to Him what my terms of holiness are. Not knowing what's to come in the future, or what sort of trials, sufferings, and pain that could come on this road to holiness often paralyzes me in my pursuit of sanctity.

I stop seeking the Lord because I am afraid. However, we were never meant to live a life of fear. We were not created to live a safe, complacent life. Jesus did not die on a cross for you to live in a comfortable bubble.

Jesus came so that *through* His death and resurrection, you might have eternal life. He came to *save* you. What the world needs *right now* are people who are not afraid of what's to come, but living day-to-day inside the will of the Father.

HOW DO YOU DO THAT?

This was a consistent theme that stuck out to me in conversations with some people over the past couple of months.

The same questions came up over and over again:



Ali Hoffman

- Am I sure I'm doing what God wants me to do?
- How do I know I'm doing God's will for my life?
- How do I know if He's calling me to do something?
- How do I hear His voice?

HAVE YOU EVER ASKED THOSE QUESTIONS?

I think it's so common to question if you're actually living out God's will and plan for you. We can overanalyze, over question, over think every decision, living in fear that we're somehow missing out on what God has planned for us.

We don't have to overcomplicate God's will. He lays it out very simply: Love God above everything, and love your neighbors. If you are praying, actively seeking a personal relationship with Jesus, frequenting the Sacraments, then *trust* that God has placed you exactly where He needs you to be; and if you're not where He wants you to be, *trust* that He will lead and guide you to that next step.

You were created to change the world

and bring the Kingdom of God through your holiness. Whether that's the entire world or the world in which you surround yourself, trust that God is using you in powerful ways. You may never see the fruit of your holiness, but have faith that you *are* making an impact far greater than you could imagine.

Do not be afraid of what Jesus is calling you to do. As Pope Francis noted in his most recent apostolic exhortation, *Gaudete et Exsultate* (Rejoice and Be Glad), "Do not be afraid of holiness. It will take away none of your energy, vitality, or joy. On the contrary, you will become what the Father had in mind when he created you, and you will be faithful to your deepest self" (32).

The world needs your sanctity and the fruit that comes from your relationship with Jesus — do not be afraid of what is to come. ✝

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

Pray Specifically, Encourage Attentively



On a recent visit to Saint Joseph Seminary College in Covington, La., Bishop Michael Olson reminded our seminarians that they have a crucial role to play in fostering vocations to the priesthood. He asked that they pray not just for an increase in vocations, but to pray for specific men by name.

During the Prayers of the Faithful at Mass, I'm certain you have heard some variation of the intercession: "We pray for an increase in vocations to the priesthood and religious life in our diocese." Praying for an increase in vocations to the priesthood is important and worthwhile. However, it can become something routine without a personal connection or commitment.



Fr. Jonathan Wallis

Praying for a specific man, by name, means that we think of fostering vocations not just in a general way, but in our particular life and situation. Let's ask ourselves: What are my attitudes toward the priesthood? Have I ever encouraged a young man to consider the priesthood?

In praying for a specific man by name, we not only realize but act on the truth that we all have a crucial role to play in fostering priestly vocations. If we want good priests, we have to encourage young men to live lives directed toward Jesus Christ. We must then lead by example.

It is a gift and privilege to be called to follow Jesus Christ. Faith in Him is beyond price. Let's pray that we all become more

attentive to the young men in our lives that Jesus Christ might be calling to the priesthood. Let us encourage them by our prayers and good example in following Jesus Christ and his Church. ✝

Ordained to the priesthood in 2007, Father Jonathan Wallis, STL, serves as Dean of Men and Director of Seminarian Formation at St. Joseph Seminary College in Covington, Louisiana, where 12 men from the diocese are enrolled in the four-year college seminary program.

PREMIERES JUNE 21 • Visit NorthTexasCatholic.org/video-gallery

FATHER HATHAWAY CIRCUIT RIDER

1 PRIEST • 2 DAYS • 5 MASSES • 120 MILES



El Obispo Olson está sentado junto a los recién ordenados sacerdotes, el Padre Maurice Lawrence Moon, a la izquierda, y el Padre Jonathan Michael Demma, a la derecha, durante la Misa del Rito de Ordenación al Sacerdocios en la Catedral de San Patricio en Fort Worth.

Ritos Antiguos, Nuevos Sacerdotes

El Padre Jonathan Demma y el Padre Maurice Moon ordenados sacerdotes

Por Joan Kurkowski-Gillen
Fotos por Ben Torres

Edna Moon dio a luz a siete niños y cada vez que su bebé era varón, le pedía a Dios que le enviara un sacerdote.

Alana y Mike Demma, padres de seis hijos varones, tuvieron esperanzas similares.

Las oraciones de ambas familias se hicieron realidad el 19 de mayo con la ordenación de Maurice Moon y Jonathan Demma a la sagrada orden del Presbiterado.

Una multitud de parientes, amigos y feligreses de toda la Diócesis llenaron la Catedral de San Patricio en una soleada mañana sabatina para presenciar cómo el Obispo de Fort Worth, Mons. Michael Olson, confería el sacramento de las Órdenes Sagradas en una Misa distinguida por rituales antiguos.

Para Edna, la abuela de 88 años del Padre Moon, haber podido estar presente en la ceremonia de ordenación fue la culminación de un sueño que había añorado toda su vida.

Sus tres hijos nunca consideraron el sacerdocio. “Y entonces mi nieto entró al seminario y le di gracias a Dios por escuchar mis oraciones”, dijo esta católica devota que viajó desde su lugar de retiro en San Antonio para la ocasión.

“Estoy feliz de haber estado presente para ver cómo Dios me concedía mi deseo”.

Michael Demma recordó el día en que su hijo Jonathan decidió dejar la Universidad de Texas A&M para seguir la vocación al sacerdocio.

Estudiaba ingeniería, tenía un promedio GPA de 3.7 y una prometedora carrera por delante.

“Soy un pensador práctico, así que mi único temor era que Jonathan no terminara sus estudios”, admitió. “Tenemos seis hijos. Cuando uno de ellos quiso servirle a Dios con su vida, nos emocionamos”.

En el saludo de bienvenida al inicio de la Misa de Ordenación, el Obispo Olson felicitó a Maureen y Randy Moon, los padres de Maurice Moon, así como a la familia Demma, que se encontraban en los bancos delanteras de la Catedral.

“En especial quiero agradecer a los padres de nuestros ordenandos que fomentaron el don de la fe en sus vidas”, dijo.

“Ustedes les ayudaron a perseverar hasta este momento al que el Señor los ha llamado”.

El Obispo también expresó su agradecimiento a los seminarios donde Moon y Demma estudiaron, así como al Padre Jonathan Wallis, Director Diocesano de los seminaristas. También agradeció a los Padres Matthew Tatyrek, Keith Hathaway, Manuel Holguín y Nghia Nguyen, miembros del equipo de vocaciones.

Una vez comenzó el rito de ordenación, los diáconos transitorios fueron aceptados como dignos candidatos al presbiterado en nombre de toda la Iglesia.

En su homilía, el Obispo Olson recordó a los ordenandos que fueron llamados por su nombre como amigos de Jesucristo y que serán profetas al predicar, enseñar y dar testimonio de la verdad completa del Evangelio.

“En la celebración de los sacramentos, revelarán proféticamente los deseos de Dios para su pueblo”, explicó. “Estos deseos incluyen la entrada a la vida eterna, la liberación del pecado original y la membresía en Su Iglesia a través del Bautismo”.

Junto con la absolución misericordiosa de los pecados, el testamento del amor que da la vida a través del Sacramento del Matrimonio y la curación de los efectos del pecado en la enfermedad y la muerte a través de la unción de los enfermos, un sacerdote lleva a cabo la misión de Cristo con la celebración de la Eucaristía. La gente ve la cara de Cristo, “en la presencia reverente y sacerdotal de ustedes como celebrantes y párrocos”, agregó el obispo. “Y más especialmente en el cuerpo y la sangre consagrados por su oración de la Palabra de Cristo convertida en Su cuerpo, sangre, alma y divinidad”.

El Obispo Olson animó a los futuros sacerdotes a pasar tiempo con Jesús en la oración, “como con un amigo”. Cristo desea que lo traten como a un amigo y no como un conocido pasajero o benefactor útil”, señaló. “El pueblo de Dios depende de esto”.

CONTINÚA EN LA PÁGINA 50



El Padre Maurice Moon y el Padre Jonathan Michael Demma salen de Misa luego de haber sido ordenados sacerdotes y de dar su bendición al Obispo Michael Olson en la Catedral de San Patricio.



Los sacerdotes diocesanos de Fort Worth hacen la imposición de manos durante el Rito de Ordenación al sacerdocio de Jonathan Michael Demma y Maurice Moon.

En sus palabras finales, el Obispo pidió a los ordenandos que recuerden otro regalo que Cristo le dio a su pueblo: María, su madre, que brinda cuidados especiales a los sacerdotes de su Hijo.

“Ella nos ayuda a cultivar la virtud de la pureza de corazón y la fomenta en nosotros. Nuestra Santísima Madre nos ayuda a decir ‘sí’ a Dios con gracia”, dijo, y finalizó con un último consejo: “Récenle a Ella”.

Después de prometer obediencia al Obispo y a sus sucesores, los seminaristas se postraron frente al altar de mármol.

Vestidos con albas blancas y con sus rostros ocultos en los brazos, los candidatos al sacerdocio se sometieron a Dios y a la comunidad cristiana mientras los fieles cantaban la Letanía de los Santos.

Luego de orar, cada uno se arrodilló ante el Obispo mientras se celebraba el rito esencial del sacramento. El Obispo Olson invocó los dones del Espíritu Santo sobre cada ordenado. Este signo bíblico de la sucesión apostólica imparte un carácter sagrado que hace que el destinatario sea “un sacerdote para siempre”.

Los recién ordenados recibieron entonces las vestimentas simbólicas del ministerio — una estola y una casulla — con la ayuda de otros sacerdotes que fueron instrumentales en su viaje vocacional.

Monseñor James E. Hart y el Padre Michael Kmiotek, CFR, sirvieron como ‘sacerdotes de vestimenta’ para el Padre Demma. Los Padres Raymond McDaniel y Nghia Nguyen hicieron los honores para el Padre Moon.

Luego de ser ungidos en las palmas de sus manos con el óleo crismal, ellos recibieron la patena y el cáliz. Entonces, fueron recibidos en la Orden de los Presbíteros por el Obispo Olson y alrededor de cien sacerdotes diocesanos y visitantes.

Un grupo de feligreses de la Iglesia de San Felipe Apóstol llegó temprano para asistir a la Misa de ordenación.

Rose Adams recordó cómo conoció Padre Moon hace cinco años en su parroquia.

“Maurice Moon estaba sentado a mi lado en la iglesia y dijo que esperaba ser sacerdote algún día. Pensé que era maravilloso y ahora lo ha conseguido”, dijo la veterana feligresa de San Felipe. “Es por eso que quería estar aquí hoy. No me lo perdería”, agregó.

Gabe Gutiérrez conoció a Jonathan Demma cuando ambos tenían poco más de 20 años y eran miembros de la parroquia Santa Elizabeth Ann Seton en Keller. Gutiérrez recordó haber sido testigo de la decisión de su amigo de ingresar a los Frailes Franciscanos de la Renovación y de su posterior retorno a Fort Worth para ordenarse como sacerdote diocesano.

“Han habido momentos maravillosos y de lucha”, dijo Gutiérrez. “Ver cómo todo ha ido tomando forma para él es una bendición. Sin sacerdotes, no tendríamos la dimensión sacramental de la Iglesia que nos da vida. Es maravilloso reconocer eso”. ✝



Gozo Edifica Gozo

Padre Demma bendice el aniversario de Boda de Oro de sus padres en su primera Misa

Por Joan Kurkowski-Gillen
Fotos por Ben Torres

No todos los días logra una familia celebrar dos importantes ritos en un mismo fin de semana. Mike y Alana Demma presenciaron el 19 de mayo a uno de sus seis hijos recibir el Sacramento de la Ordenación Sacerdotal por parte del Obispo de Fort Worth Michael Olson. Más tarde ese mismo día, el recién ordenado Padre Jonathan Demma bendijo el 50mo. aniversario de bodas de sus padres durante su primera Misa como sacerdote. La liturgia se celebró en la Parroquia de St. Elizabeth Ann en Keller, la parroquia de la familia Demma.

“Comenzaron a salir juntos desde que tenían 14 años”, explicó el Padre Demma. “Y ahora tenemos una hermosa familia de seis chicos y muchos, muchos sobrinos y nietos”

También fueron invitados al altar las amistades de la familia Demma, que viajaron a Texas para asistir a la ordenación.

Mark y Mary Ann Stanos, Frank y Sue Evan y Mike y Alana Demma son oriundos de Cleveland, Ohio y se conocen desde que

los tres varones asistieron a la Preparatoria de St. Joseph. Las parejas y sus hijos han mantenido su amistad a lo largo de los años.

“Hicieron citas dobles y estuvieron presentes en las bodas de cada uno”, dijo el nuevo sacerdote a la congregación. “También han estado casados por 50 años, por lo que me siento honrado y privilegiado de bendecir sus aniversarios hoy”.

El Padre Demma también honró a sus padres con regalos para conmemorar su inicio en el sacerdocio.

Le regaló a su madre Alana el manutergio — el paño de lino blanco que usó para secar sus manos luego de que éstas fueran ungidas por el Obispo con el santo crisma. Tradicionalmente, el manutergio, que queda perfumado con el aroma del santo óleo, es atesorado por la madre del sacerdote y se le coloca en sus manos cuando ella fallece y yace en el ataúd.

“Mi madre me enseñó, por ejemplo, el significado de servir

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P.Jonathan Demma realiza una bendición especial por el aniversario de bodas de sus padres durante la celebración de su primera Misa como sacerdote en la Parroquia Católica St. Elizabeth Ann Seton en Keller.



P.Jonathan Demma bendice un rosario para Gema y Kelly Ramirez después de celebrar su primera Misa como sacerdote en la Parroquia Católica, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton en Keller.

a los demás y utilizar mis manos para ayudar incesantemente e incansablemente”, dijo con orgullo el hijo. “Esto irá en su ataúd como símbolo de los sacrificios que hizo para enseñarme todo lo que necesitaba saber para entregarme al servicio del pueblo de Dios”.

La estola morada que el Padre Demma vestirá para escuchar confesiones está reservada para su padre, un hombre que “me enseñó la justicia, la misericordia y luego... más justicia”, dijo mientras que los parroquianos se reían.

Demma no había pensado en una vocación religiosa cuando comenzó sus estudios universitarios. Eso cambió durante la Jornada Mundial de la Juventud de 2002 en Toronto, cuando un fraile convenció al joven texano a que lo acompañara a la Adoración Eucarística. Demma nunca antes había experimentado la devoción.

“En ese momento evalué todas las cosas que Dios me había dado en la vida — todos los dones y talentos — y me di cuenta que no estaba devolviéndole nada a Él”, recordó. “Por eso, ese día prometí que hallaría la manera de servir a la Iglesia”.

Su compromiso se profundizó al año siguiente cuando presenció la ordenación de su amigo.

“Recuerdo ver al fraile caminando hacia el Cardenal y pensar que él se arrodillaría y luego se levantaría como un hombre cambiado para toda la eternidad”, explicó Demma. “Tan pronto el Cardenal colocó sus manos sobre la cabeza del fraile, supe que yo estaba llamado a ser un sacerdote”.

El ex-estudiante de ingeniería de Texas A&M dejó sus estudios para unirse a la orden Franciscana en el Bronx, pero pronto comenzó a notar la diferencia entre la vida de un predicador itinerante y el ministerio más estable del sacerdocio diocesano. Se mudó once veces con los frailes en sólo nueve años.

“Me interesó mucho la teología sacramental y sentí que tenía un don para enseñar y predicar”, dijo Demma. “Nunca dudé del sacerdocio. Pero no estaba seguro si lo haría como franciscano o en una diócesis”.

Una vez dispensado de los votos solemnes que hizo como franciscano, Demma comenzó su formación como seminarista para la Diócesis de Fort Worth hace cinco años.

Un año pastoral en la Parroquia del Sagrado Corazón de Wichita Falls, bajo la tutela del Padre Jack McKone, reafirmó su decisión de convertirse en un sacerdote diocesano. El Padre Demma le pidió al párroco de San Juan el Apóstol, a quien describe como un “mentor maravilloso”, que ofreciera la homilía en su primera Misa. El nuevo sacerdote servirá junto al Padre McKone como vicario parroquial en la parroquia de North Richland Hills durante el próximo año.

Cuando celebre Misa para los feligreses, el Padre Demma utilizará un cáliz que le obsequiaron sus padres. El cáliz está decorado con escenas desde la Anunciación a la Resurrección. El sacerdote de 37 años reconoció que recibir el obsequio fue un momento muy emotivo.

“Una de las grandes bendiciones ha sido que mi ordenación ocurriera un día después de que ellos celebraran 50 años de matrimonio”, dijo el Padre Demma. “Ha sido un camino largo, pero cada minuto ha valido la pena. Mis padres y la gente de la Diócesis me levantaron cuando lo necesité. Humildemente y lleno de agradecimiento estoy listo para servirles como sacerdote”. 🇺🇸



Padre Maurice Moon celebra su primera Misa como sacerdote en la Parroquia Católica de San Pedro en Lindsay, el 20 de mayo de 2018.

Respondiendo a Su Gracia

Padre Maurice Moon celebra su primera Misa en la Parroquia de San Pedro en Lindsay

Elegir una iglesia para celebrar su primera Misa fue una decisión fácil para el Padre Maurice Moon. El sacerdote oriundo de Arlington nunca olvidaría la bondad y el apoyo que le demostraron los parroquianos de San Pedro en Lindsay, cuando era apenas un estudiante en el Seminario St. Joseph de Covington, Louisiana.

“Fue mi primera asignación de verano”, recordó momentos después de dar su bendición final a los fieles que llenaron la histórica iglesia el domingo 20 de mayo, Fiesta de Pentecostés.

“Nunca había recibido tanto apoyo y motivación por parte de una comunidad. Por eso, quise regresar y celebrar Misa para ellos”.

El Padre Moon, de 32 años, fue ordenado sacerdote por el Obispo de Fort Worth Michael Olson el día anterior.

Sus padres, Maureen y Randy Moon, su hermana Randi Rose Friesenhahn, su abuela de 88 años, Edna Moon, sus tíos, tías y primos, presenciaron la ceremonia y viajaron al día siguiente a la comunidad rural de Lindsay para participar de la primera Misa

del joven sacerdote.

“Cuando Maurice habló con el sacerdote de San Felipe en Lewisville acerca de su vocación al sacerdocio, lloré de alegría”, dijo Maureen, que crió a su hijo como madre soltera.

“Nunca he visto a Maurice tan feliz, lleno de júbilo y contento. Es muy dedicado a la Iglesia Católica y me ha convertido en una mejor católica gracias a su sabiduría”.

Randy Moon se sorprendió cuando su hijo ingresó al seminario. De adolescente, el joven Moon fue un católico desinteresado al que no le gustaba asistir a Misa. Su padre cree que un accidente de auto que provocó una experiencia cercana a la muerte lo llevó a acercarse a Dios y a su fe.

“Está muy confiado de que el sacerdocio es su camino y ama lo que hace”, dijo Randy Moon. “Encontró su llamado y lo percibe como un reto diario”.

El Padre Moon dijo que su atracción por la vida religiosa llegó tras años de inquietud, desencanto e infelicidad.

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“Nada en el mundo me llenaba, necesitaba algo más poderoso—Dios”, dijo.

En 2009, a la edad de 23 años, el ex mesero de Chili’s comenzó sus estudios en el Seminario St. Joseph en Covington. Allí se tituló en Artes Liberales con énfasis en filosofía.

En mayo obtuvo un título de posgrado en Teología Sagrada del Colegio Teológico de la Universidad Católica en Washington D.C.

Durante su formación, el seminarista pasó su año pastoral en la Parroquia de San Bartolomé, donde estuvo expuesto a la atareada agenda de un párroco y a las necesidades diarias de su rebaño.

“Fue una gran experiencia conocer personas que me mostraron las dificultades, retos y gozos de ser católico”, dijo el Padre Moon.

“Visité a los presos y a los enfermos. También me gustó mucho enseñarle a los adolescentes y a los jóvenes adultos”.

Como él mismo fue un adolescente confundido, este nuevo sacerdote quiere ayudar a la gente joven a descubrir a Dios en sus vidas.

“Están recibiendo muchos mensajes

contradictorios del mundo y eso es algo con lo que yo me puedo identificar. Creo que conocer la claridad, la verdad, la belleza y la bondad es muy importante para todas las personas, especialmente, para los jóvenes”.

El Padre Moon vio esas cualidades en dos hombres que fueron sus mentores durante su vida en el seminario: el Padre Ray McDaniel y el Padre Jonathan Wallis.

“Ellos me transmitieron la belleza y la verdad de la Iglesia, y siempre estuvieron disponibles”, explicó. “me inspiraron y fueron una gran influencia para mí”.

El Padre Moon le pidió al Padre McDaniel que ofreciera la homilía en su primera Misa.

Los sacerdotes Jonathan Wallis y Phil Petta concelebraron la liturgia realizada en esta hermosa y centenaria iglesia.

“A nombre del Padre Moon, quiero agradecerle a esta maravillosa familia parroquial el amor, la generosidad, oraciones y el apoyo que le han mostrado desde ese primer verano hace ocho años”, dijo el Padre McDaniel a la congregación.

“Ustedes han jugado un papel significativo en su formación. Todos esos años de entrenamiento y estudio rindieron como fruto un nuevo sacerdote para la

Iglesia”.

La hermana Cecilia Marie Bayer, integrante de las Hermanas Siervas de la Palabra Eterna basadas en Birmingham, Alabama, hizo la lectura de los Hechos de los Apóstoles durante la liturgia de la mañana.

La también ex-feligresa de la Parroquia de San Pedro conoció al Padre Moon cuando él estaba en el seminario y ella estaba considerando la vida religiosa.

“Es un buen amigo”, dijo la religiosa sobre el Padre Moon.

“Está muy preocupado por las almas y la oración. Creo que será un buen pastor. Oramos el uno por el otro”.

Durante el próximo año, el Padre Moon servirá como capellán en la preparatoria Nolan Catholic High School y enlace para las vocaciones dentro de la Diócesis.

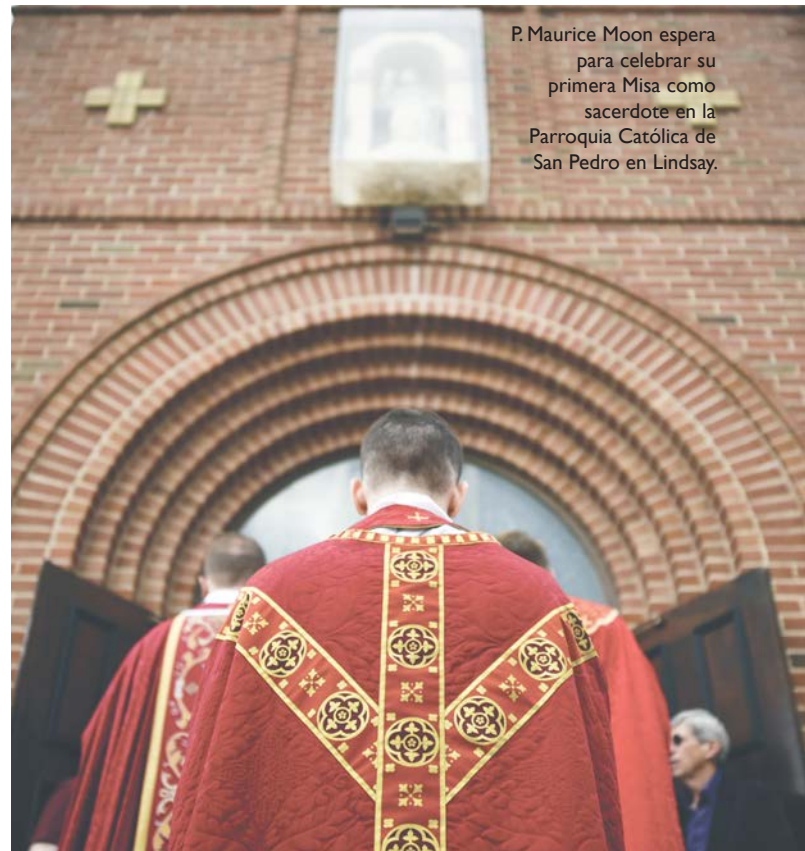
“Experimentamos el amor de Dios a través de otras personas y la generosidad de otros nos ayuda a experimentar el amor de Dios en nuestras vidas”, dijo el Padre Moon.

“La gente quiere buenos y santos sacerdotes. Lo he visto y eso me ha inspirado. Quiero darle mi vida a la gente de Fort Worth para ser un sacerdote bueno y santo para ellos”. 🇺🇸

P. Maurice Moon distribuye la Comunión durante la celebración de su primera Misa como sacerdote.



P. Maurice Moon espera para celebrar su primera Misa como sacerdote en la Parroquia Católica de San Pedro en Lindsay.



Refuerzo y Confianza

Por Violeta Rocha

Para el Padre Fernando Preciado, 42, párroco de la Iglesia St. Frances Cabrini en Granbury no existen las casualidades, sino la voluntad de Dios, con “estira y afloja” como él llama a los 18 años que transcurrieron desde su primer ingreso al seminario hasta el día de su ordenación, aquí en la Diócesis de Fort Worth.

Sus padres, José Preciado, “un hombre completamente de oración,” y María Jesús Villegas, “una mujer muy tranquila y de gran fe”, hicieron “florecer mi vocación”, dijo el Padre Preciado.

Tras viajar y aprender cuánto vale “la ayuda que uno puede dar”, informó a su padre que deseaba entrar al seminario. La noticia no sería bien recibida, pues a su padre le preocupaba no poder solventar los costos, pero, usando sus propios ahorros y con apoyo del sacerdote del pueblo, a los 15 años de edad dejó su natal Nochistlán, Zacatecas, a sus seis hermanos y padres e ingresó al seminario de Guadalajara.

FUE LLAMADO POR DIOS

Cuatro años después dejó el seminario pensando que se había equivocado en su vocación. Se hizo paramédico y trabajó en el hospital de Zacatecas. En el 1998 recibe invitación de Los Misioneros del Sagrado Corazón y Santa María de Guadalupe, y el llamado se deja escuchar nuevamente.

Fue de misión a la Selva Amazónica en Perú, tiempo que describe como “el primer amor de la vida. La aventura del encuentro con Dios y el ser humano”.

Mientras estaba en el seminario tristemente fallece su padre y unos años más tarde, pierde a su madre también; no obstante se mantuvo con gran fortaleza. “Mi madre confiaba en que yo iba a ser sacerdote, me decía “no dudes, confía”, y mi padre cuando regresé al seminario me dijo “Lo que vas a iniciar, siempre piensa si vas a terminarlo”,



El Padre Preciado con sus hermanos y hermanas en su ciudad natal, Nochistlán, Zacatecas. Sólo un hermano no estaba en la imagen. (De la izquierda) José, María del Rosario, Padre Fernando, María Muñoz, Luis Enrique, Nohemi. (Foto Cortesía)

eso me ha impactado mucho, mi padre reforzando mi vida y la confianza de mi madre”, aseveró.

Obtiene dispensa desde Roma y sale de la congregación de Los Misioneros y en diciembre de 2009 es ordenado diácono. Recibe la orden sacerdotal el 5 de junio del 2010, día en que cumplía 33 años, la edad de Jesús.

“Hubo salidas, entradas, salidas de vuelta, pero hoy más que nunca puedo decir, ahí estaba Dios, nunca me abandono...aquí estoy confiando en Dios”.

María Muñoz, 44, hermana del Padre Preciado, dice sentirse “como en las nubes, orgullosa, feliz de sentir la presencia de Dios Nuestro Señor y al mismo tiempo ver a mi hermano siendo sacerdote”, dijo recordando que “fueron muchos años, mis papás no tenían para sostener sus estudios en el seminario, y él trabajó mucho desde pequeño. Gracias a Dios logró ser el sacerdote que es...tiene mucha espiritualidad, le nace de corazón...tiene paciencia y dedicación para ayudar a los demás”, señala María, quien junto a su

esposo, son Ministros de Comunión en la Parroquia del Santo Nombre en Fort Worth. Sus tres hijos crecieron en esa parroquia.

La Eucaristía, “es lo que ha marcado mi vocación” y hablar de ella a sus feligreses es primordial, señala el Padre Preciado, por eso el poder celebrar Misa dentro del sepulcro de Jesús en Tierra Santa, el año pasado, fue “un milagro”. Cuando la gente le dice “Padre, quiero ayudar en esto”, se siente feliz y piensa “La palabra de Dios tocó a esta persona”, asegura de su feligresía, la cual no solamente es de Granbury, sino que llega a la gente de Waco, Maridan y Brownwood.

“Mi confianza está plenamente en Jesús y cada día que celebro Misa, cuando estoy en la oración de la Eucaristía, digo, si Tú quieres, aquí voy a estar”, explicó recordando las palabras de un sacerdote de su pueblo “Hay que aprender a ser el burro que lleva a Jesús en su lomo a la entrada triunfal de Jerusalén, y no creerse los borregos que Jesús lleva a los hombros”, dijo el Padre Fernando Preciado y enfatizó que “es lo que he tratado de ser todo el tiempo”, un servidor de Dios. 🇺🇸

Enseñar. Explicar. Defender.



Chris Vaughan, Director Diocesano de Matrimonio y Vida Familiar, enseña una clase del Instituto San Junípero Serra. (Foto NTC/Juan Guajardo)

Por Susan Moses

A medida que se aproxima el primer aniversario del Instituto San Junípero Serra, su misión se ha ido cristalizando: Enseñar. Explicar. Defender.

“Queremos que todos puedan explicar la razón de su esperanza”, dijo Paola Quintero-Araújo, Directora del Instituto San Junípero Serra. “No queremos que los instructores sean los únicos expertos de la fe y de las enseñanzas de la Iglesia”.

La formación en la fe del Instituto se fundamenta en “lo básico” y comprende el estudio de las fuentes originales, incluidos la Biblia, el Catecismo de la Iglesia Católica, las encíclicas papales y los documentos del Vaticano.

“Queremos brindarles a nuestros estudiantes una experiencia de primera

instancia, por lo que acudimos a la doctrina de la Iglesia. Como clase, leemos y ayudamos a analizar los documentos eclesiales”, explicó Quintero-Araújo.

Los cursos fundamentales que se ofrecen incluyen Apologética, Vaticano II, Fundamentos Bíblicos, Teología del Cuerpo y Evangelización y Catequesis. El Instituto San Junípero Serra, una extensión educativa de la Diócesis de Fort Worth, imparte los cursos en inglés y español.

Los planes futuros incluyen agregar cursos intermedios y avanzados y clases más especializadas para las personas que estén interesadas en el ministerio juvenil y el ministerio del matrimonio y la vida familiar, RICA o la formación de la fe de adultos. Los estudiantes que completen todos los niveles recibirán una certificación. En el 2019, los cursos fundamentales estarán disponibles en línea.

Stephen Lund, un feligrés de la Parroquia del Santo Redentor de Aledo, tomó los cinco cursos fundamentales y anima a otros a tomar las clases de formación. Lund comentó que las clases lo expusieron primordialmente a “materias básicas de catequesis que yo no me acordaba o que no había aprendido mientras crecía”.

Lund, que está discerniendo la posibilidad de hacerse diácono permanente, apreció leer documentos originales de la Iglesia. “Es bueno saber que no los inventamos hace 50 ó 60 años. Nuestra fe ha existido por mucho tiempo. Es útil leer los escritos de las personas que conocieron a Jesús y de las personas que conocían a personas que conocieron a Jesús. ¿Qué dijeron? ¿Cómo practicaron la fe?”

Quintero-Araújo dijo que los comentarios de los estudiantes del primer año acerca de los cursos han sido

positivos. Las evaluaciones elogiaron la experiencia y el conocimiento de los instructores, la calidad del plan de estudios y el valor de los cursos. Los estudiantes también señalaron que los instructores realmente se preocupan por los estudiantes y se aseguran de que conozcan a cabalidad el material.

Por ejemplo, mientras enseñaba el curso de Evangelización y Catequesis, Chris Vaughan, Director Diocesano de Matrimonio y Vida Familiar, se dio cuenta de que muchos no estaban familiarizados con el uso del Catecismo de la Iglesia Católica. Él no vaciló en incorporar rápidamente esa lección en el estudio de la noche.

La meta de los instructores es hacer que los estudiantes hablen con conocimiento de las enseñanzas de la Iglesia con una fe bien formada. La mayoría de los instructores han obtenido maestrías en teología y trabajan para las parroquias o la Diócesis con la educación religiosa. El plan de estudios ha sido desarrollado por el Departamento de Evangelización y Catequesis de la Diócesis de Fort Worth.

Una recomendación que algunos estudiantes del pasado han hecho es que los cursos sean más largos. A partir del otoño, los cursos durarán seis semanas en lugar de cuatro. Quintero-Araújo dijo que el tiempo adicional permitirá a los estudiantes explorar más profundamente los temas presentados y tener “más tiempo para digerir” el material.

“La gente debe conocer la riqueza de las enseñanzas de la Iglesia”, continuó Quintero-Araújo, que desea que todos los católicos experimenten la “belleza y la sabiduría de los documentos” estudiados en los cursos.

Jorge Chapa-Hurtado asiste a la Parroquia de St. Elizabeth Ann Seton de Keller, donde él y su esposa enseñan un curso para ayudar a los padres a preparar a sus hijos para recibir su Primera Comunión. Al igual que Lund, él está discerniendo sobre la posibilidad de hacerse diácono permanente.

Dijo que las clases despertaron su deseo de aprender más. “Expandió mi conocimiento y el amor por la Iglesia y Dios. A medida que fui adquiriendo más conciencia sobre un mayor número de



Jorge Chapa-Hurtado (izquierda), de la Parroquia de St. Elizabeth Ann Seton de Keller asiste a una clase de San Junípero Serra. (Foto NTC/Juan Guajardo)



Kim Nguyen asiste a una clase de San Junípero junto con otros. (Foto NTC/Juan Guajardo)

enseñanzas, creció mi asombro acerca de la riqueza de nuestra Iglesia”.

Agregó que la lectura de los documentos del Vaticano II aumentó su comprensión de “por qué la Iglesia es lo que es hoy día”. Leer el lenguaje teológico conllevó un ajuste para el ingeniero, pero descubrió que se fue haciendo más y más fácil a medida que “su cerebro entró en el ritmo” del lenguaje.

Chapa-Hurtado terminó su quinto

curso en junio. “Éstas son clases muy buenas para las personas que quieren enseñar la fe o para todo el que desea obtener más conocimiento”. Después de haberlas tomado, estoy más enamorado de nuestra fe y de nuestro Dios”.

Al igual que Lund y Chapa-Hurtado, Quintero-Araújo anima a “todos a invertir en ellos mismos y en su fe”. Para obtener más información o para inscribirse, visite fwdioc.org/st-junipero-serra-institute. 📍



Progreso y Oración

La familia, basada en lazos de sangre y amor, es la célula básica de la sociedad. Para muchos, la familia tradicional parece estar en peligro de extinción debido al divorcio, la separación, los niños nacidos fuera del matrimonio, el adulterio, vivir juntos, y otras razones. El hogar familiar debería ser un lugar que irradia calor, paz, gozo y amor. En muchos casos, es totalmente opuesto — un lugar donde la atmósfera está llena de tensión, resentimiento silencioso, lenguaje ofensivo, y en casos extremos, algún tipo de abuso.

El progreso es bueno cuando ayuda a que la vida sea más humana y digna. El progreso debería ayudar a la persona a ser moralmente más sana, más responsable, más generosa con los demás y más espiritual. Pero la idea de progreso que nuestra sociedad mundana está tratando de avanzar es perjudicial a los valores tradicionales de la familia cristiana.

En nombre del progreso, un hombre y una mujer pueden vivir juntos sin una base sólida de lo que significa amarse, y sin ninguna orientación de la Iglesia. Recibimos lecciones de amor y sexualidad de Hollywood y de la cultura popular. La gente no está segura de lo que es el amor.

Muchas parejas piensan que su matrimonio ha terminado porque no “sienten” el mismo amor que sentían cuando empezaron a ser novios. Amor es más que un sentimiento — es una decisión y un compromiso de toda la vida. Como lo expresó el Papa emérito Benedicto

XVI durante el Encuentro Mundial de las Familias en 2012: “Enamorarse es algo maravilloso...Seguido pienso en las Boda de Caná. El primer vino es muy bueno: es el enamoramiento. Pero no dura hasta el

final: Un segundo vino tiene que venir después, es decir, tiene que fermentar y crecer, madurar. El amor definitivo que llega a ser realmente «segundo vino» es más bueno, mejor que el primero. Y esto es lo que hemos de buscar”.

¿Son el divorcio, el aborto, y la anticoncepción parte del progreso? Éstos no fomentan

el amor en una familia. Equivocadamente, progreso se entiende como sinónimo de rechazo y abandono de Dios — creyendo que nada es pecaminoso y viviendo libremente sin reglas ni principios morales. Nuestra sociedad en general vive como si Dios no existiera.

Hoy en día, la mayor parte del entretenimiento sólo busca provocar instintos violentos o eróticos. Es difícil encontrar películas o programas de TV para toda la familia. Promover valores familiares, simplemente, no es negocio.

La principal misión de la familia es la transmisión de la vida y la educación de los niños. Una familia sana es la base de una sociedad libre y justa. Es hora de que los cristianos defiendan la familia. Que luchen por la institución de la familia con sus tradicionales valores morales. Que defiendan y declaren la guerra al estéril progreso que sólo deja detrás gran vacío e infelicidad.

¿Cómo declaramos la guerra? En

oración, por supuesto. La oración es el arma más poderosa usada contra la maldad del mundo actual. De hecho, ¡nuestra vida de oración es nuestro campo de batalla!

Las familias deben orar juntas e individualmente. Si la vida espiritual es débil, también es débil la armadura usada en la batalla. Por lo tanto, la oración debería ser el aspecto fundamental de la vida familiar.

He aquí algunas sugerencias que han ayudado la vida de oración de mi familia:

- Asistir a Misa con la familia todos los domingos; esto es esencial porque la “Eucaristía es origen y culmen de la vida cristiana” (*CIC 1342*).
- Asistir diariamente a Misa y Adoración, cuando sea posible. Esto fortalece los lazos familiares y aumenta nuestro amor y devoción al Santísimo Sacramento.
- Rezar el Rosario en familia todos los días.
- Estudiar la Biblia a la hora de cenar o en otro momento más conveniente.

Cuando las familias se reúnen para orar en Su Nombre, este mundo, tal cual lo conocemos, será transformado radicalmente por el poder y la gracia del Santo Espíritu de Dios. ¿Qué estamos esperando? ¡Pongámonos de rodillas y recemos! ✝



Joel de Loera



Weston Powell plays with one of his foster siblings at the Powell family home in Frisco. (NTC photo/Ben Torres)

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when she was four weeks old. Three weeks later, the placement agency called again.

Brooklyn was exposed to methamphetamines in the womb. An emergency delivery and six minutes of oxygen deprivation caused a stroke in the newborn. Would they take her?

A self-described “adrenaline junkie,” Kristi knew it would be difficult until the babies were sleeping through the night. She also knew that drug-exposed babies tend to be fussy and poor sleepers. She told her husband, “It will be rough for a while, but once they sleep through the night we’ll be okay.” Brooklyn left Parkland Hospital and entered their home.

The St. Martin de Porres family has been fostering 18 years but plans for a first — they hope to permanently adopt Savannah. Her biological parents have given up custody of their other five children and are expected to do the same.

For Kristi, adopting Savannah would open the door to adopting a second child. “I would want her to have a sibling close to her in age so she doesn’t feel like an only child when my older children leave.”

Calling themselves mama and daddy, the Frisco parents shower their little ones with love. Powell

admitted that it’s “hard when they go home. But God didn’t promise us our own kids forever. We just do it. No one is guaranteed a tomorrow,” she explained.

In many cases, communication between foster families and biological parents about routines and favorites helps make the transitions easier.

Those interactions keep Powell aware of how hard the birth parents work to get the kids back. Brooklyn’s mom has kept the Powells informed about her progress — getting sober, finding a job and housing. Plus, the birthmother asked the Powells to be godparents to Brooklyn, so the relationship will continue even after Brooklyn goes home this summer.

According to Powell, some people accuse the prolife community of only

caring about babies until they are born. The Powell family emphasizes respecting the worth of each person throughout his life, including the Biblical command to take care of the orphan.

Kristi said, “I don’t want to get to heaven and have God ask, ‘Why didn’t you do what I told you to do? I gave you the resources.’”

The Texas Catholic Conference of Bishops has launched St. Joseph Ministry, a foster care initiative to help parishes support foster parents, those with children in the custody of Child Protective Services, and foster children who have aged out of the system. About 30,000 children are in foster care in Texas.

In their parish resource guide, the Texas bishops explain that those who are not called to be foster parents can support the

frontlines by providing meals, tutoring, babysitting, and furnishing material items.

The Powells agree, having enjoyed an occasional movie with their older kids while someone watches the babies.

Despite the sacrifices, the Powells will open their hearts as long as they are able.

Powell said, “I just love them. They are so fun when you see their little faces light up. My kids absolutely love doing it. There are times when we think about taking a break and my kids say ‘no, we need to do this.’” 🇺🇸



Robert Powell plays with one of his foster babies at the family home. (NTC photo/Ben Torres)



The Powell family, mother Kristi, father Robert and children Whiteleigh, 16, Reid, 13, and Weston, 9, far-right, with their two foster babies, at their home. (NTC photo/Ben Torres)

Room to Spare, Love to Share

Family imitates Christ's love by loving foster children as their own

“I never know how many will walk through the door” quips Grandmother each time Kristi Powell and her family visit.

Her grandmother exaggerates, explained Powell. While it's true that she and her husband, Robert, have been foster parents to more than 40 children and are raising three biological kids, they never have more than three bonus kids at a time. And most stay about a year, so the number doesn't change frequently.

Powell said she first felt the call to foster “pretty sure the day I was born,” and she made certain her husband concurred before they married 25 years ago.

“When I love them, bathe them, clothe them, feed them, that's as close as I can get

to doing it to Jesus,” said the former elementary school teacher and principal.

Currently, all hands are on deck, with two babies in their care. “It takes a family to run a household,” Powell explained. Her daughter Whiteleigh, 16, and sons Reid, 13, and Weston, 9, love babies and prepare bottles, change diapers, and give baths, in addition to laundry, cleaning, and other household chores.

Powell believes having foster siblings will make her children better parents one day. All three express the desire to foster children themselves.

Her children have learned lessons more important than the basics of childcare and household chores. Their mother said, “It's taught them unconditional love. There's so

much prejudice in this world, from the color of your skin to your socioeconomic status, and my kids look past that.”

As for Powell, she has learned patience. They accept children with special medical needs, often due to prenatal drug exposure, like their two current babies. Therapists visit the house almost daily to promote the babies' development.

When Kristi gets a call that a home is needed for a child, it tugs on her heart. But she and Robert have two ground rules – they both must agree to do it, and the children must be younger than their biological children.

Last fall, the Powells took in Savannah

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