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



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



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



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



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



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



**Stephen Kouba, FIC**  
Cell: 817-727-5872  
stephen.kouba@kofc.org



**Jonathan Fincher**  
Cell: 469-984-5493  
jon.fischer@kofc.org



**Tom Centarri**  
Cell: 682-261-5806  
tom.centarri@kofc.org



**Tim Bradford**  
Cell: 817-821-2323  
tim.bradford@kofc.org



**Brian Sprague**  
Cell: 817-382-7301  
brian.sprague@kofc.org

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**Chris Stark, FICF**  
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**Andrew Tice, FIC**  
*Assistant General Agent*  
Cell: 972-333-7462  
andrew.tice@kofc.org  
KofCInsuranceFW.com





# PEACE, JUSTICE, RESPONSIBILITY

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



 @BpOlsonFW

A few weeks ago, we assembled to worship God and to pray for the repose of the soul of George Floyd, our brother by virtue of his being created in the image and likeness of God. As people of prayer, we prayed for the consolation of his family and friends.

We also prayed for peace and the end of injustice and racial enmity and discord in our community. We asked God for His mercy to bring about our conversion as individual persons and as a community from sins of injustice that result in chaos and evil. We pray for those entrusted with the responsibility of protecting us from injustice through upholding the law.

The commandments to love God and love your neighbor cannot be separated. This means I cannot truly love God without loving my neighbor, nor can I truly love my neighbor without loving God. Truly loving my neighbors means respecting them and treating them justly, which begins with the humble recognition that none of us are God. God has designed us to need Him and to need each other, with our authentic diversity and our common human nature.

As the bishops of the United States state in *Open Wide Our Hearts: The Enduring Call to Love – A Pastoral Letter Against Racism*: “Racism arises when — either consciously or unconsciously — a person holds that his or her own race or ethnicity is superior, and therefore judges persons of other races or ethnicities as inferior and unworthy of equal regard. When this conviction or attitude leads individuals or groups to exclude, ridicule, mistreat, or unjustly discriminate against persons on the basis of their race or ethnicity, it is sinful. Racist acts are sinful because they violate justice. They reveal a failure to acknowledge the human dignity of the persons offended, to recognize them as the neighbors Christ calls us to love (Mt. 22:39).”

As children of the one true God, the God of all people, it is required of us to live by rightful authority for the sake of justice and love; we also have the obligation to hold those entrusted with this rightful authority to be accountable in accord with justice and love. When those who possess the responsibility of authority betray that trust, they harm society as well as an individual created in the image and likeness of God. It is incumbent upon us to not be

indifferent but to be accountable ourselves for justice, and to hold those who have violated the trust to be accountable in law with such just remedies that include due process befitting human dignity.

When we see betrayals of this trust, fear and anger are inevitable. We can be tempted to react by tearing down legitimate authority and acting in lawlessness and violence. We as a people of faith must make use of more than fear and anger and make use of the path of a system of justice, not simply a system of laws and procedures that are the edicts of the powerful, but rather a system of justice that is established in a recognition and respect for human nature that provides for a morality that is both compassionate and binding, and, more importantly, turn to God for enlightenment and encouragement. If we rely only on fear and anger, we attack the authority of law that protects the vulnerable and each of our neighbors. If we choose the path of indifference, we undermine the authority of law that is intended to serve justice and not simply the status quo that too frequently assaults the vulnerable, who should be safeguarded.

Radical calls to defund the police are not reasonable and are frequently part of a strategy by activists to destabilize our society through playing upon the fears of many of us. We especially need the police to protect the order of the common good and to safeguard those who are most prone to be the victims of crime and injustice. The men and women of our police departments require our prayers and support because of the responsibility entrusted to them to act reasonably and to keep the peace in emotionally charged situations at great risk to themselves. Training in protocols and practices are not enough. A formation anchored in right reason and reinforced by transparency and community involvement and support are needed to prevent us from suffering greater injustices of racial enmity and mob rule. Pope Saint Paul VI said it well on January 1, 1972, the Solemnity of Mary, the Mother of God, “If you want peace, work for justice.” This does not mean that justice is something that other people possess to give me in exchange for my letting them live in peace. Justice and peace are interdependent, and each require law and accountable authority and the contribution of everyone — of every person and of every community. ✚



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PUBLISHER BISHOP MICHAEL OLSON

COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR PAT SVACINA

EDITOR JUAN GUAJARDO

ASSOCIATE EDITOR SUSAN MOSES

EDITORIAL ASSISTANT ROSA ROSALES

WEB DESIGNER CHRIS KASTNER

CIRCULATION DEBBIE DOWIS

CONTRIBUTORS JENARA KOCKS BURGESS  
 JERRY CIRCELLI | JAYME DONAHUE  
 SANDRA ENGELLAND | JOAN GILLEN  
 KIKI HAYDEN | JOY KAISER  
 RODGER MALLISON | MICHELLE MCDANIEL  
 SUSAN MCFARLAND | KENNETH MUNYER  
 VIOLETA ROCHA | MARTY SABOTA  
 MICHAEL SHERMAN | MARY LOU SEEWOSTER  
 MATTHEW SMITH | BEN TORRES

TRANSLATOR YOLANDA NEWCOMB

REGULAR COLUMNISTS MARLON DE LA TORRE | JEFF HEDGLEN  
 ALI HOFFMAN | DAVID MILLS  
 CALLIE NOWLIN | FR. NGHIA NGUYEN

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

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## EMBRACING THE CHRISTIANITY OF CHRIST

To say we're living in "interesting times" is an understatement, if not a blatantly dismissive assessment of our current situation.

On top of a global pandemic, we're seeing racial strife rear its ugly head, an economy brought to its knees, sky-high unemployment, violence and riots, misinformation at the highest levels, minds darkened with suspicion by conspiracy theories, and acrimonious political battlelines being drawn everywhere by vastly flawed politicians. We're stressed. We're divided. We're fearful. We're angry.

Truly, the "falcon cannot hear the falconer," as poet William B. Yeats laments in *The Second Coming*. And lamentation or knee-jerking isn't going to fix this.

To change the world, we need to first look inward. After all, our outward realities are, to some extent, a reflection of our inner ones. Big outcomes on a big stage aren't just about "a few dozen people...who happen to be 'at the helm of the ship of state' and whose deeds and decisions form what is history," as Sebastian Haffner wrote in his unfinished memoir, *Defying Hitler*. The big outcomes belong to "we anonymous others" whose millions of coinciding choices make those of the big dogs pale in comparison.

So, we must look inward.

If we do that, we see that many of our current troubles are symptoms — not the problems in and of themselves. Through that same lens, we also see our neighbors aren't the problem either, but instead share the burden of this struggle we find ourselves in as a nation. I submit to you that the problem is we aren't living up to what Christ's Gospel asks of us.

Think about it: If we are falling short of our call to be salt and light, we're failing not only ourselves but others. If we're not taking our faith seriously and putting God first in all areas of our lives (politics, family, work, community), we're failing to build up God's kingdom on earth. Frederick Douglass, a man ahead of his time, once said, "between the Christianity of this land and the Christianity of Christ, I recognize the greatest possible difference." That's what we're up against. The effects of sin are communal, and it will take communal good to undo them.

Fortunately for us Catholics, we have the sacraments to help us. Relying on God's grace, ask yourself in what areas you're falling short and then ask how you can better love and serve your neighbor and God. It's simple, but uncomfortable. But that is our call as children of God, and that is the only way we will make lasting positive change in our world.

*Juan Guajardo, Editor*



Roxanna Young, Flourishing Tree director, speaks with a client. The family and pregnancy resource center in Aledo is providing baby products in a drive-through service. (NTC/Juan Guajardo)

## Can St. Anthony help namesake bookstore?

**FORT WORTH** — Catholics around the world call on St. Anthony when they've misplaced something, hoping he'll render aid in retrieving the lost object. The Franciscan friar is also the patron saint of lost people, some of whom amble into the Fort Worth bookstore that bears his name.

Mary Myers, the owner of St. Anthony's Church Supplies and Stella Maris Books, said people often wander into the store "who are searching for faith. They come in to look at the books and statues. They want to learn how the Catholic Church works or how to pray the Rosary."

As with all nonessential retailers, St. Anthony's had to close on March 24 when Tarrant County Judge Glen Whitley and

Fort Worth Mayor Betsy Price issued a stay-at-home order to reduce the spread of the coronavirus.

Myers said the timing, just three weeks before Easter, was particularly challenging for the store, located in south Fort Worth. Usually candidates and catechumens enter the Church at Easter, and many children receive their first Holy Communion in the following weeks. "It's normally our busy time of year, and business is really down," said the St. Patrick parishioner.

Myers' trust in God helps her cope with the uncertainty of running the 46-year-old business, but she's certain the store will endure. If St. Anthony helps the lost, surely he can intercede for help with lost business, too.

## Aledo pregnancy center offers help and hope

**ALEDO** — A family recently came to Flourishing Tree Family & Pregnancy Resource Center. The dad had lost his job and mom just found out she was pregnant with their sixth child.

The parents arrived feeling anxious and depressed, but they left with necessary supplies, support, and hope, said Roxanna Young, Flourishing Tree director.

Other recent clients of the center include pregnant teens and young dads who want to help their babies get a good start in life.

The center, housed in a home on acreage in fast-growing Aledo, has experienced a big increase in people seeking services in the last two months, Young said. In a recent three-day period, more than 150 clients received help.

"Many people tell us, 'I didn't know a place like this existed,'" Young said.

The center provides all types of baby-related products free of charge: diapers, formula, clothing, toys,

books, car seats, furniture, décor, and more.

Under normal circumstances, parents can visit the Baby Boutique, a room in the house where they can select new and gently used clothing, toys, and other items for their children.

For the last three months, clients have received items in a drive-through service. They pull up in the front drive and get diapers and whatever else they need. Clothing is sorted into bags by sex and age.

"We've stayed open, but we had to make changes in how we connect with clients," Young said.

The ministry, an apostolate of the Diocese of Fort Worth, started about four years ago. In addition to items and education, the center offers free self-administered pregnancy tests, adoption referrals if requested, and free visits with a licensed counselor, a lactation consultant, or a nutritionist.

— Sandra Engelland



Bishop Olson blesses oils to be used in sacraments throughout the diocese. (NTC/Rodger Mallison)

## Two acts, one purpose: the Chrism Mass

**FORT WORTH** — Two acts set the Chrism Mass apart from every other Mass celebrated during the liturgical year. First, and the source of the Mass' name, the bishop blesses the oils to be used in sacraments throughout the diocese in the coming year. Secondly, the priests renew their ordination vows, recommitting themselves to the faithful service of God and His people.

Both acts speak to one truth: the unity of the Catholic Church.

Always rich in symbolism and significance, the Chrism Mass was rescheduled from its typical time and place this year. Usually celebrated during Holy Week, the liturgy was celebrated May 28.

The Chrism Mass was relocated from St. Patrick Cathedral to the large nave at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish in Keller, so that about 75 priests, along with deacons, seminarians, and deacon candidates,

could attend while abiding by social distancing recommendations.

Despite the change in time and place, the Chrism Mass remained “awe-inspiring,” according to Terry Timmons of Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish in Abbott. The deacon candidate was most impressed by the blessing of the Holy Oils. “To think that the oils will be used to save a lot of souls and bring people into the Church – it’s a reminder that we are people of faith sealed by these oils.”

Timmons said watching Bishop Olson ask God to bless the Holy Chrism took on “special meaning, since, God willing, when I am ordained a deacon in August, I will be using the Chrism at Baptisms.”

After the Chrism Mass, the three oils were dispersed to the 91 parishes in the Diocese of Fort Worth, so that the bishop has a symbolic presence at every Baptism, Confirmation, and Anointing of the Sick.



## Identical twins, same GPA, are co-valedictorians

**WICHITA FALLS** — As identical twins, Andrew and Thomas Koch share even more than most siblings do. Now, with the same GPA — 4.0508 — they are co-valedictorians of Notre Dame Catholic High School in Wichita Falls.

“We weren’t totally surprised as they’ve always had virtually the same grades from kindergarten on, and they’re highly competitive with each other,” said their mother, Susan Koch. “It’s actually a relief that they tied, rather than have one be valedictorian and the other salutatorian.”

Since birth, Andrew and Thomas have attended Sacred Heart Parish in Wichita Falls with their family. They both said the incorporation of their

Catholic faith at Notre Dame was significant to them.

“I enjoy the Catholic aspect of Notre Dame, as my faith is important to me,” Andrew said.

“I enjoyed the closeness you felt with everyone surrounded in a faith-based atmosphere,” Thomas said. “We were all family through Christ and in the classroom,” he said.

Andrew and Thomas each had 18 concurrent credit hours and were both accepted to the Honors College at Texas Tech University, where their sister, Elizabeth, is a senior. Andrew plans to study biology and Thomas plans to study psychology. Both think medical school might be in their future.

— Jenara Kocks Burgess



Ellise Moreno rides in the back of a pickup through the Nolan Catholic High School campus. (NTC/Rodger Mallison)

## Wendy Collins named stewardship director

**FORT WORTH** — For those who know her, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Church parishioner Wendy Collins' June 1 appointment as director of stewardship and parish relations in the Advancement Foundation supporting the Catholic Diocese of Fort Worth likely comes as no surprise, given her longstanding penchant for diving in to help.

In addition to having served as coordinator for stewardship as well as welcoming and hospitality at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton in Keller, Collins has served on the Keller School Board and Council of PTAs.



Wendy Collins

“Wendy will be collaborating with parishes throughout the Diocese of Fort Worth on coordinating and planning stewardship campaigns and events,” Clint Weber, president of the Advancement

Foundation, said. “She will also train and provide support and guidance to the pastors and their staffs in developing stewardship committees.

Her goal is to promote an environment of stewardship through discipleship.”

Stewardship, Collins said, is “a person’s grateful response to all the gifts that God has given them.”

— Matthew Smith

## Students of resilience: graduating in a pandemic

**FORT WORTH** — On May 22, most of the 207 seniors at Nolan Catholic High School decorated their cars and drove through campus to the cheers of faculty and staff. Posters lined the drive, music blasted through speakers, and cowbells clanged praise.

The graduation car parade was the first time the seniors had been on campus since March 6, and it may be the last time for the senior class of 2020.

William Perales, principal of Nolan, watched the parade from behind an Americana cloth mask. Between congratulating students as they drove past, usually with their families, he explained, “It’s important that the seniors feel celebrated, feel recognized. The music, the cheering — it’s joyous. They deserve it.”

When Governor Greg Abbott declared a state of disaster in Texas due to COVID-19, the four Catholic high schools of the diocese made a quick flip to distance learning. Soon,

some of the community and social aspects of education were cancelled or had to move online also.

Brian Lott, principal of Cassata Catholic High School in Fort Worth, thinks the greatest loss for seniors was the simplest — the everyday interactions of friends in the school hallway. Zoom meetings became a tool for social interaction as much as instruction.

The administrator believes that lessons learned from making the transition from high school to adult life during a pandemic can serve the seniors well in the future.

Students no longer have the structure of a school schedule, and communication has changed from conversations at the teacher’s desk to text messages and emails. “Students have improved in time management and become self-motivators,” observed Lott. He thinks those habits will translate into future success for the seniors, whether they enter college, the workforce, or the military.



# GREAT OPPORTUNITIES

Father Jonathan Wallis returns to Fort Worth after appointment as vicar general, director of TCU Newman Center

By Juan Guajardo

After five years in Louisiana, Father Jonathan Wallis looks forward to returning not only to his home diocese and “being able to serve in a brand-new way” but also to his alma mater, Texas Christian University.

On May 18, Fr. Wallis, dean of students at St. Joseph Abbey and Seminary College in Covington, La., was appointed Vicar General of the Diocese of Fort Worth. The Missouri native and priest of 13 years will begin that assignment July 1 and will concurrently serve as the chaplain and director of the TCU Catholic campus ministry.

“Fr. Wallis is a fundamentally a good priest of prayerful and trustworthy character,” Bishop Michael Olson told the *NTC*. “He will serve well as vicar general because he is known and very much respected by his peers, the priests.”

While never having served in either of those roles before, Fr. Wallis’ vast and varied ministerial background has given him experience that will be valuable in both campus ministry and as vicar general.

Since his ordination in 2007, Fr. Wallis served as parochial vicar at St. Matthew Parish in Arlington; earned his licentiate in sacred theology at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome; rode the circuit for the western parishes in Strawn, Cisco, Eastland, and Ranger; served as diocesan Director of Catechesis for about a year; worked as the diocesan vocation director — also for a year; and served at Holy Trinity Seminary in Irving, before becoming assistant dean, and later, dean, at St. Joseph Seminary.

“Fr. Wallis has acquired much wisdom



In this 2013 photo, Father Jonathan Wallis stands in the chapel of the Catholic Center. (*NTC/Jerry Circelli*)

through these experiences in his life as a man and as a priest,” Bishop Olson said.

In the vicar general role, Fr. Wallis will succeed Monsignor Juan Rivero, who served in the role for the past four years. As vicar general, he will act as “second-in-command” to Bishop Michael Olson in diocesan executive matters.

Typically, each diocese has only one vicar general, said Sara Pagialunga, JCD, rotal lawyer for the diocesan tribunal.

A vicar general assists the bishop in the governance of the whole diocese, she said, both in administrative and pastoral matters.

At Bishop Olson’s discretion, the vicar general can act in place of the bishop in carrying out many duties across the diocese,

such as dispensations and permissions, explained Father Timothy Thompson, JCL, judicial vicar for the diocesan tribunal and pastor of Immaculate Conception Parish in Denton.

When notified of the appointment, Fr. Wallis felt both grateful and “that the Lord is calling me to something new and I’ll really do the best I can through His grace.”

Fr. Wallis said his appointment as chaplain and director of the Newman Center at TCU was slightly surprising — but pleasantly so. An Episcopalian at the time, Fr. Wallis graduated from TCU with his bachelor’s degree in music education in 1996.

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Father Jonathan Demma used his engineering and programming background to broadcast Mass to Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, and even via FM radio. (NTC/Juan Guajardo)



# *into the* **BREACH**

Local priests have been leading their flocks with charity and courage during the pandemic

By Joan Kurkowski-Gillen

“**R**ight from the beginning we had the support of our priest.” That’s what Ginger Benes remembers about the early days of the coronavirus pandemic when public gatherings were banned, companies shuttered their doors, and many Azle residents suddenly found themselves without a job or paycheck.

“His immediate concern was that people would need things,” said the Holy Trinity parishioner, recalling how Father Wilson Lucka, TOR, sent out a plea asking the faith community to bring whatever food items they could spare to the church. “That’s when our front kitchen became a food pantry on Monday and Thursday. Families would come and take what they needed.”

As they have in the wake of other tragedies, clergy responded to the latest health crisis with resolve, compassion, and empathy. During the Spanish Flu of 1918, churches closed their doors hoping to ease the spread of the deadly virus that killed 675,000 Americans. In 2020, similar precautions to mitigate COVID-19 barred church attendance, but this time clergy had a new resource at their disposal — technology. Cooperating with the directives of state and local officials, the Diocese of Fort Worth suspended public worship but encouraged priests to celebrate the Mass via livestream so parishioners could participate via their computers, smartphones, radios, and televisions.

Pastors also used social media platforms to keep in touch with parishioners and share news about needs in the community.

When personal protective equipment for health care workers began to dwindle in North Texas, Fr. Lucka approached the Holy Trinity Men’s Club and parish seamstresses about making masks and face shields. Talented sewers created hundreds of masks in different patterns and came up with creative ideas when the supply of elastic was gone. Materials purchased by the Men’s Club produced more than 400 face shields distributed to a children’s hospital and the Weatherford Police Department.

“I was so proud of how parishioners pulled together,” Fr. Wilson said. “It’s been beautiful seeing people reach out to support one another.”

## **TECHNOLOGY CONNECTS SCATTERED FLOCK**

Father Jonathan Demma used his engineering and programming background to connect with as many parishioners at Sacred Heart in Wichita Falls as possible. Ordained two years ago, the young priest is the parish’s parochial administrator and also works with Notre Dame elementary and high schools, as well as Catholic Charities Northwest Campus. Serving the different communities is always a stretch.

“This has been a new challenge — trying to reach a scattered flock, keep them together, and

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Father John Perikomalayil, pastor of St. Joseph Parish in Rhineland, offered virtual Adoration and recitation of the Rosary and Divine Mercy Chaplet on Fridays during the pandemic. (NTC/Juan Guajardo)

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ministering to them pastorally when I don't have immediate access," Fr. Demma said.

Prior to the pandemic, Sacred Heart Church had three cameras set up to televise Mass in the back chapel for an overflow crowd. A content delivery network he purchased tied the cameras together so Mass could be livestreamed and broadcast on Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram.

"People are notified when the Mass is starting on social media," explained the former technology director for a long-distance company. "Because we're

using computer-based streaming, there's no trouble with buffering, and during Communion, the picture-in-picture feature displays the sanctuary with the words to the prayer for spiritual communion."

"We're getting great livestream numbers," enthused Fr. Demma, who relies on volunteers to help with the broadcasts. "Families from all over the country — Florida, New Mexico, and Colorado — are watching. Some are former parishioners. Others are family members of parishioners."

With social distancing guidelines enabling the resumption of public celebrations of the Mass, the tech-savvy



Father Timothy Thompson gives Communion to parishioners outside of Immaculate Conception Church in early May. (NTC/Kenneth Munyer)

priest found a way high-risk parishioners uncomfortable with entering the church can participate. A mobile black box audio transmitter allows people to sit in Sacred Heart's parking lot and listen to the Mass on 90.1 FM — a low power radio station. Once they leave parish grounds, the station is no longer available.

"They can listen to the Mass and receive Communion from an extraordinary minister in the parking lot," he added. "It's a great alternative for people with limited data plans and those without a smart phone."

The parish priest continues to look for innovative ways to bring the parish together.

"Some people are technologically inclined. Others are not," Fr. Demma observed. "We've tried to make some way for everyone to participate according to their needs."

### LETTERS LIFT SPIRITS

Lord Byron once said, "Letter writing is the only device for combining solitude with good company." In the same spirit, Father Tim Thompson shared his stay-at-home pandemic experiences with weekly letters sent via email to Immaculate





Conception parishioners. Most of the missives focused on lighthearted topics like cutting his hair or “flattening the curve around his waistline.” But there were also practical matters to discuss, like employing social distancing guidelines to reopen the church.

“There is a law of unintended consequences, which means stuff happens that you did not plan,” the pastor philosophized in one letter after the chimes of a newly acquired grandfather clock kept him up all night. “People live by highways and never hear the noise. It’s hard to get out of your routine, isn’t it?”

The priest’s humorous stories about life during lockdown helped him lift the spirits of readers dealing with the stress of isolation. His story about trimming his own hair generated the most feedback.

“I assumed parishioners are having the same problems as everybody else — being

stuck at home, not able to come to church, an interruption to normal life,” Fr. Thompson explained. “I wanted to convey the message, ‘this too shall pass.’”

Pastor of the Denton parish for nine years, the hard-working priest encourages families to trust in God’s providence and care.

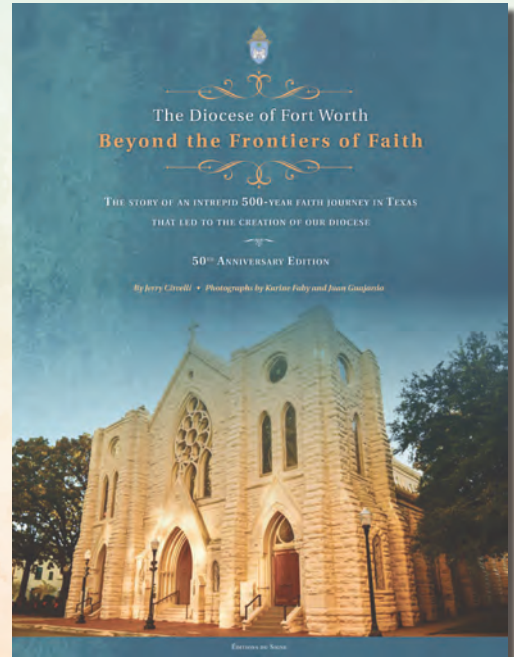
“If we didn’t have any hope or faith, you’d be very wary of how fragile the world is,” he suggested. “This highlights for me how important having faith is in an uncertain world.”

### SAFETY, PRAYER WILL DEFEAT VIRUS

Knox County reported one lone case of COVID-19 during the first weeks of the epidemic, but that didn’t keep Father John Perikomalayil Antony, HGN, from offering some sage advice to members of St.

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Father Oscar Sanchez Olvera hasn't let the coronavirus keep him from ministering to parishioners. (NTC/Juan Guajardo)



### From Page 13

Joseph Parish in Rhineland.

“Take care of each other,” the pastor urged. “Be hygienic and keep a safe distance to protect one another. And pray every day for people who have lost their lives, those affected, and workers helping us get through this situation.”

A rural farming community, Rhineland hasn't felt the same social and economic pressures as large cities dealing with the pandemic.

“People continue to farm but residents who work in the oil fields have lost their jobs,” he explained. “I always say if you feel like you need assistance, give me a call.”

The parish's food pantry, stocked by donations from church families, opens every Monday for those struggling financially. St. Joseph also participates in Ministerial Alliance, a network of churches that provides assistance to the needy.

While livestreaming Mass, as well as the daily recitation of the Rosary

at 6 p.m., the Heralds of Good News missionary reminds his congregation to remain united in prayer.

“Our prayers will help us defeat the enemy virus that is trying to destroy us,” Fr. Perikomalayil said. “Our faith in Christ and remaining together as a family and a unit is how we'll be successful.”

### MINISTRY TO THE SICK, WITH CARE

Fear of the coronavirus didn't keep Father Oscar Sanchez Olvera, CORC, and Father Alejandro Lopez Chavez, CORC, from ministering to the ill and elderly of Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish in Fort Worth.

Using safety protocols, the priests from the *Confraternidad Sacerdotal de Operarios del Reino de Cristo* (Fellowship of Laborers of the Kingdom of Christ) visited the sick in their homes to hear confessions and anoint them.

Taking all necessary precautions, the visitors wore gloves, put on a mask, and carried the holy oil on a cotton ball.

“We did everything essential to

prevent us from getting sick in order to take care of them,” assured Fr. Olvera, the pastor.

Since the start of the pandemic, the priests at Immaculate Heart of Mary presided at several funerals held in mortuary chapels or the cemetery and limited to 10 mourners. None of the deaths were attributed to the virus.

“The first thing [the pandemic] has taught us is that we need to adapt and adjust to the circumstances,” the pastor explained. “The priesthood, Eucharist, and the sacraments remain the same, but we can change the way of accompanying people especially during these times.”

Fr. Chavez, the parish's parochial vicar, said the sight of an empty church made him appreciate, even more, the presence of community.

“It has been very meaningful to see the response of the people who follow the broadcast of the Mass on the internet,” he added. “That speaks of the faith they have in the Church, and in God. They are doing everything they can to receive His grace.” 🇺🇸



From Page 9

More significantly, the aspiring choir director received his first taste of Catholicism during his time at the university — through friendships, research on St. John Paul II and the Eucharist, and attending Mass for the first time. Fr. Wallis explained, “I really do feel that I was drawn into the Catholic Church. It’s not something I went looking for — just looking at my personal history, I was called into the Catholic Church and I’m very appreciative of that call and grateful for it.

“The people I met by going to TCU were the ones who were instrumental [in my conversion] .... So those four-and-a-half years at TCU were very integral in setting my path. I had made my life in Fort Worth, and this is where I felt called to stay. I became a Catholic in Fort Worth. I lived in Fort Worth three years after graduation, and this is where I wanted to stay and serve and become a diocesan priest and serve the people of Fort Worth.”

Now, Fr. Wallis looks forward to helping college students grow in their Catholic faith. “To be able to go back to TCU almost 30



Father Jonathan Wallis

years later, as the chaplain of the Newman Center, shows that God has amazing things in store and that you really have no idea where your life is going to go.”

He will miss the seminary and Benedictine abbey where he took pride in helping many 18- to 22-year-old seminarians discern what God wants for their lives and encouraging them to “become friends with Jesus Christ — to know Jesus, and to serve and love Him.” But the five years he spent working with those young men will be helpful as he embarks on a

new adventure.

“It’ll be the same age group, although some of the challenges and opportunities will be a little bit different at a university,” he explained. “But I also think some of the questions will be the same — like people stepping out on their own for their first time in life and finding a way to really take on the Catholic faith and identity in a more intentional way. To be involved in their life at the university, I think it’s a great, great opportunity.”

“My desire is to do what I can to serve the diocese to the best of my ability,” he said. 🇺🇸

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## DURING QUARANTINE

Sacramental grace, love, and hope prevail over shelter-in-place restrictions and subsequent limits on Mass attendance



By Susan Moses

**O**liver and Emelia Davila had overcome a few obstacles as they planned for their April 17 wedding. As the coronavirus snowballed and businesses closed, they had to find new vendors to provide flowers and other wedding day services. Oliver rebounded quickly from each setback. “I’m a Plan A, Plan B, and Plan C person,” he said.

But 10 days before the wedding, an unforeseen obstacle arose. Their Arlington parish canceled the wedding, recommending the couple postpone it indefinitely.

The pair went to Adoration, as was their habit, and prayed about the situation. “My wife wanted a Mass with her wedding. Everything else was second,” Oliver explained.

They left Adoration with the resolve to move forward with their plans for marriage.

Oliver called Father Jim Gigliotti, TOR, pastor of St. Andrew Parish in Fort Worth, whom he had known from the priest’s years at St. Maria Goretti Parish. Fr. Gigliotti agreed to be the officiant and offered to hold a 10-person nuptial Mass at St. Andrew on April 17.

Despite resorting to Plan D, the couple is delighted. “In moments of trouble, we have to hold on to joy and happiness,” said Oliver.

During the shelter-in-place restrictions and subsequent limits on Mass attendance, several weddings and Baptisms took place in the Diocese of Fort Worth, and about 1,000 catechumens and candidates entered the Church, proving the joy and hope of sacramental grace prevails over a virus.

### GOD CARRIED US THROUGH

At Our Lady Queen of Peace in Wichita Falls, Father Alexander Ambrose, HGN, officiated a wedding on March 21, just two days after Governor Greg Abbott declared a public health disaster in Texas.

The bride and groom, Abigail and Victor Wattigny, had made their first Holy Communion together at the parish as children. Their relationship developed after they became friends in the parish’s youth group in 2010.

In the days leading up to the wedding, the couple began growing concerned as they heard reports of various community events being cancelled and schools closing.

Abigail, Victor, and Fr. Ambrose met the Friday before the wedding and the pastor explained the implications of the new civic and health directives on the ceremony. She remembers they all got emotional.



Oliver and Emelia Davila kneel in front of empty pews at St. Andrew Parish. Oliver calls Father Jim Gigliotti, TOR, "Superman" for volunteering to officiate their wedding when their previous parish canceled 10 days earlier. (photo by Innova Dream)



Fr. Ambrose's explanation of the diocesan restriction to 10 people was "hard for him to tell us, and hard for us to hear," she admitted.

But the couple quickly adapted. "God has a reason for all of this, and He carried us through," said Abigail. "It wasn't specific to us — everyone was experiencing it and we had to roll through this change."

At their wedding the next day, Fr. Ambrose experienced a full measure of happiness, even with the limited attendance. He said, "It's a joy to celebrate weddings at all seasons of the liturgical calendar, especially in the time of the pandemic. God is good, even in moments of difficulty and uncertainty. God is great. It's a moment of hope."

A few months into their marriage, the couple is glad they didn't postpone the nuptials to a later date when they could

have hosted the large ceremony and reception as planned. "Everything else is part of a day," Abigail explained. "This [the sacrament of Matrimony] is a lifetime."

### WELCOME TO THE FAMILY

Father Khoi Tran prefers to baptize individuals during Mass, so that they can be welcomed into the family of God by the entire congregation.

However, due to the pandemic, the youngest members of one family had a private Baptism.

The family and godparents watched a livestreamed Mass in the parking lot of Christ the King Parish in Iowa Park from their respective cars, then entered the church after Mass for the Baptism.

"It was a joyful experience, wonderful," the priest recalled. Because the parents and older siblings are in RCIA,

Fr. Tran explained each step of the rite to them as he baptized the two youngest siblings.

"I was very happy to be able to experience it one-on-one with them. It was a more intimate experience and an opportunity to affirm the faith and the reasons why they want to become Catholic," he said.

Thomas Joseph and Maria Thomas, parishioners at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton in Keller, had a grand Baptism planned for their daughter, Isabella. When this long-awaited first child joined the family of God, relatives and friends from both coasts were planning to rejoice together the last weekend of April.

The sacrament was important to the parents. Maria said she was thinking, "I want to get my baby baptized and enter

Continued on Page 18



Isabel Longoria, with her sponsor Mike Waldon, receives the sacrament of Confirmation from Father John Robert Skeldon. (NTC/Kenneth Munyer)

### From Page 17

into this religion, enter into faith, enter into this journey with Christ.”

In the weeks preceding April 25, the parents communicated frequently with Miguel Chaidez, the liturgy assistant at the parish, to stay abreast of the dynamic situation and changing directives. Maria was informed there was a strong chance the Baptism would be postponed.

However, Deacon Larry Sandoval baptized Isabella on April 25, with only her parents, grandparents, and proxy godparents present, all wearing gloves and masks.

“It was a little heartbreaking to see the empty pews and the silence,” said Maria, who usually attends daily Mass. “But on the other hand, I prayed to God, ‘Thank you for giving me this chance to come back into the church and the sanctuary.’ I felt

my child was very blessed to be able to do this.”

The restrictions on the Baptism’s attendance were not enough strong enough to constrain the parents’ joy. Afterwards, the parents celebrated by dropping off food and goody bags at the doors of local friends and family.

### WAITING ON THE HOLY SPIRIT

Samuel Stroud said, “I’ve been waiting to get into the Catholic Church for four years. What’s another 50 days?”

Stroud and more than 1,000 others entered the Catholic Church in the Diocese of Fort Worth on the weekend of May 30-31, the Feast of Pentecost — 50 days after they were originally scheduled to join the Church at the April 11 Easter Vigil Mass. Parishes around the world were closed at Easter to reduce the spread of

COVID-19.

The former Protestant took the delay in stride. “I have my health. I have my faith. We have a civic duty to be as safe as possible, and I knew I’d get in eventually,” he said. Baptized 26 years ago in the Baptist faith, he received the sacraments of Holy Communion and Confirmation at a Pentecost Vigil Mass at St. Patrick Cathedral in Fort Worth.

In his 31 years, he never stepped away from God, but he grew more and more attracted to the beauty, reverence, and tradition of the Catholic faith. Stroud observed, “When you watch the priests and deacons, you can see how seriously they take it. It’s real, it’s tangible.”

Father John Robert Skeldon, rector of St. Patrick, presided over the two-hour Pentecost Vigil Mass, which was limited to the 26 catechumens and candidates who



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View the photo gallery of the Pentecost Mass and read more stories of receiving sacraments during quarantine. Visit [NorthTexasCatholic.org/local-news](http://NorthTexasCatholic.org/local-news).



would receive the sacraments, plus their sponsors, friends, and family.

The priest said, “Pentecost is the birthday of the Church. And this is a birthday [that] you who are to be baptized and confirmed will know so deeply in your hearts, year after year, as the Feast of Pentecost comes around.”

Mike Waldon, who coordinates RCIA as St. Patrick Cathedral’s director of catechesis and evangelization, said the Pentecost Vigil is a wonderful time to enter the Church.

Sunday readings during the preceding weeks include the *Acts of the Apostles*, so the candidates and catechumens have reflected on the early Church.

Waldon said Pentecost “shows the beginning of the Church. The Holy Spirit is sending us out from this point. [Joining the Church] is not an ending point, this isn’t what you’ve worked up to, then stop. This is . . . the beginning of your life in the Church as fully initiated Catholics in the faith.”

Jesus’ disciples received the Holy Spirit at Pentecost then went out to proclaim the Gospel. Waldon explained, “This is the same Holy Spirit. When Confirmation happens, it’s the same Holy Spirit that’s being sealed, it’s conferring Baptism. . . . This is the Church going forward.

“The Church is alive. . . . People are still choosing to come into the Church. People are saying ‘yes.’ That’s what the Church is about — saying ‘yes,’” Waldon said.

### SACRAMENTAL PEOPLE

Waldon compared the longing of catechumens and candidates to receive the Eucharist with the feeling many Catholics had during the weeks that

Mass was celebrated *sine populo*, without the people. The faithful could join in the Spiritual Communion of Mass but not receive the Body of Christ.

“Being sacramental people, those tangible aspects are very much a part of what we’re about — those human elements, those physical elements, the personal aspect,” he said.

Receiving the Body of Christ — Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity — was the apex of Isabel Longoria’s journey into the Catholic Church.

For most of Longoria’s childhood, her mother did not practice her Catholic faith. But when her mother was confirmed in 2016, they began attending Sunday Mass together.

A year later, Longoria left home to attend college and stopped attending Mass. “I missed that peace that I had. I was yearning for peace constantly and I wasn’t getting it anywhere,” she recalled.

Longoria began RCIA last year “to grow closer to God, to get the peace that I was missing,” and she began going to daily Mass and weekly Eucharistic Adoration.

Adoration felt a little awkward for Longoria at first, “until I realized that Jesus is really present in the Eucharist. He’s there. I know He hears me, and sometimes I don’t have to say anything for Him to understand me. It’s a peace that I get.”

Isabel received the three sacraments of initiation at the Pentecost Vigil Mass at St. Patrick. Afterwards, she said elatedly, “I’m so happy. I cannot believe that Jesus is inside of me right now! This is really happening.”

She plans to continue attending daily Mass, “But now I can receive the Eucharist! I’m really excited about it.” 🇺🇸

## SAFE ENVIRONMENT

### To Report Misconduct:

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

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

### To Report Abuse or Suspected Abuse:

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

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

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



# Consecrated in the *WOMB*

Father Joy Joseph, TOR, of Holy Cross Parish celebrates his 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of priesthood

By Kiki Hayden

**T**he calling of Father Joy Joseph, TOR, pastor of Holy Cross Parish in The Colony, began in his youth. “I couldn’t think of another life,” he told the *North Texas Catholic* as he reflected on the 25<sup>th</sup> year of his priesthood.

Born to faithful Catholics, his parents helped found his home parish, St. George in Poolappadam, Kerala, India. “Five [or] six families were Catholic, so... my parents and a few other parents built a shed and we began with one Mass a month.” Mass was celebrated in the Syro-Malabar rite (an Eastern Catholic rite commonly practiced in India). Eventually, a Carmelite monastery was built a few miles away, providing priests to celebrate weekly Mass at St. George. Fr. Joseph became a regular at the parish. “When I was studying in catechism, I got a prize for not missing a single class the whole year.” Fr. Joseph laughed at the memory.

The young man noticed that the Carmelites and seminarians “were so happy, and free, mingling with people, singing, helping... they gave me a lot of inspiration.” A friend from St. George encouraged young Joseph to consider the Franciscan friars. A Franciscan priest

traveled by bus from northern India and walked the rest of the way to Fr. Joseph’s home to help him discern his vocation.

Fr. Joseph’s first year of Franciscan formation was in his home state of tropical Kerala, where he was taught more English and Hindi and learned about the Franciscan way of life in preparation for his journey to Bihar, a state in northern India with very different language, food, and weather.

The first time Fr. Joseph attended a Roman rite Mass was with the Franciscans. Used to the lengthy, musical, incense-filled Syro-Malabar rite, he wasn’t sure when to sit, stand, or kneel. “I had no idea what was going on,” he recalled with a laugh.

The years of his formation were full of studies and service in northern and southern India, including mission work with the Santal people, who have very little access to infrastructure such as running water, electricity, or education. The novitiate year he spent studying, meditating, and praying in a remote village was the “most important” part of his formation process. “It’s a time to make a mature decision,” Fr. Joseph reflected. “It’s a very grace-full time.”

On April 22, 1995, Fr. Joseph was ordained a priest at St. George Parish in Kerala. By then, St. George was a brick





Father Joy Joseph, TOR, pastor of Holy Cross Parish in The Colony. (NTC/Ben Torres)

building — but still too small to hold the several hundred guests at the ordination: family, parishioners, and many fellow Franciscans, including “one jeep full of friars.” In front of the church, a colorful canopy was set up with a view of the forests and “green mountains” in the distance. Incense wafted in the light summer breeze. “It was very hot. Oh, I will not forget. And humid,” Fr. Joseph added. Under the canopy, the bishop ordained Fr. Joseph in the Syro-Malabar rite, and immediately afterward, Fr. Joseph celebrated his very first Mass. Then there was a feast of biryani, chicken, and vegetables.

Like his formation and studies, Fr. Joseph’s priesthood has taken him all over India — and beyond. After completing a master’s degree in canon law and serving several years at the TOR formation house, he was sent to upstate New York to complete a master’s in Franciscan studies. “I was scared,” he laughed. “But I felt very happy, very honored.”

He returned to India for a few years,

then was assigned to the Diocese of Fort Worth in 2008. He served in several parishes before being appointed pastor of Holy Cross Parish in 2015.

“I really enjoy my ministry at Holy Cross,” Fr. Joseph said. “People are so welcoming, accepting... loving, caring. Maybe I’m biased,” he said with a chuckle.

He enjoys serving a parish that is “friendly, and... small, like my home parish.” In 2010, he was appointed a judge on the diocesan tribunal, a unique aspect of his ministry. His knowledge in canon law has made him “more sensitive... I look into any way I can help.” According to Fr. Joseph, canon law “is more pastoral than civil law.”

April 22, 2019 began Fr. Joseph’s jubilee year. That fall, Holy Cross Parish honored Fr. Joseph’s jubilee with a reception and cake. During his annual visit to Kerala, he celebrated Mass (followed by another reception) at St. George, now a “beautiful building” with plenty of windows, ceiling fans, and statues. Then

he traveled to Bihar to celebrate Mass at the Franciscan motherhouse with about a hundred fellow Franciscans.

The last few months of Fr. Joseph’s jubilee year were eventful, including the spread of the coronavirus and national unrest due to racial violence.

Fr. Joseph encourages Catholics to pray for an end to the coronavirus pandemic, for an end to abortion, for peace, and for people to be united. He said the role of Catholics begins with “promoting brotherhood and understanding and caring in your own parish.” In India, his home parish is just down the street from a mosque and an Orthodox church. “We existed in peace and love,” Fr. Joseph recalled.

April 22, 2020 marked the end of Fr. Joseph’s jubilee year. After 25 years of priesthood, Fr. Joseph reflected on his Catholic upbringing and vocational journey. “I do believe that God consecrated me in the womb of my mother,” he said, referencing *Jeremiah 1:5*. 🇺🇸

Deacon Kevin Bagley delivers the homily during a recent livestreamed Mass at St. Andrew Church in Fort Worth. (NTC/Juan Guajardo)



# harmonizing:

THE CHALLENGE OF A MAN  
WITH TWO VOCATIONS

By Kiki Hayden



One evening several years ago, while the kids were asleep, Kevin and Donna Bagley sat in the living room, listening to the whir of the dishwasher in the kitchen. “He looked like he was contemplating... deep in thought,” recalled Mrs. Bagley.

Kevin Bagley wasn’t entirely satisfied with his retail job. So, he turned to his wife and asked, “What should I be when I grow up?”

Right away, she responded, “You’re happiest in the Church.”

“That was the catalyst that set everything in motion,” Deacon Bagley told the *North Texas Catholic*.

After years of discernment, catechesis, and formation, he was ordained a permanent deacon. He served in Baltimore, then briefly in Seattle. Eventually he and his wife settled in the Diocese of Fort Worth.

“Deacons are [usually] married clergy,” Dcn. Bagley said. “This is the challenge of the man who has two vocations: one to marriage, and one to Holy Orders.... I’m not a fan of work/life balance... Our lives are more like an orchestra. How do we try to keep it all in harmony?”

For Dcn. Bagley, this means, “God comes first. With the diaconate, the family comes second. And then your diaconal assignment would come third.”

## GOD FIRST: LISTENING TO THE CALL

The diaconate has drawn Dcn. Bagley closer to God. “I pray more; I go to Adoration; I’m attentive and active in the celebration of the Eucharist.”

“[The diaconate] is a calling, just like any man who is called to be a priest,” Mrs. Bagley said.

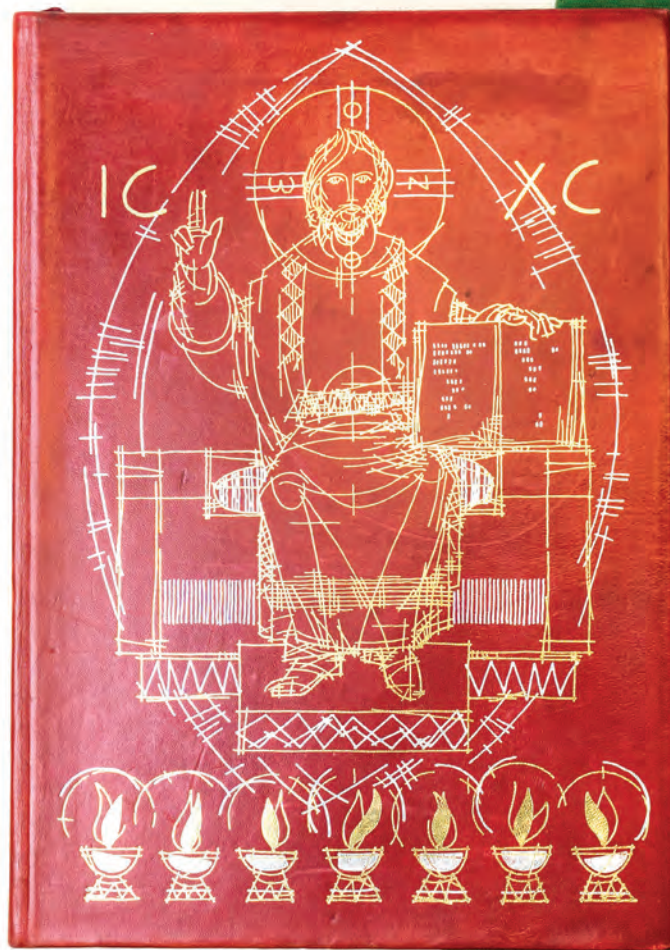
So how should a man discern whether he is called to the diaconate? “Prayer and Adoration,” Dcn. Bagley advised. “Sit in front of our Lord and say, ‘What will You have me do?’” The deacon encourages men discerning a call to the permanent diaconate to talk to priests and other deacons, and to explore volunteer opportunities in the

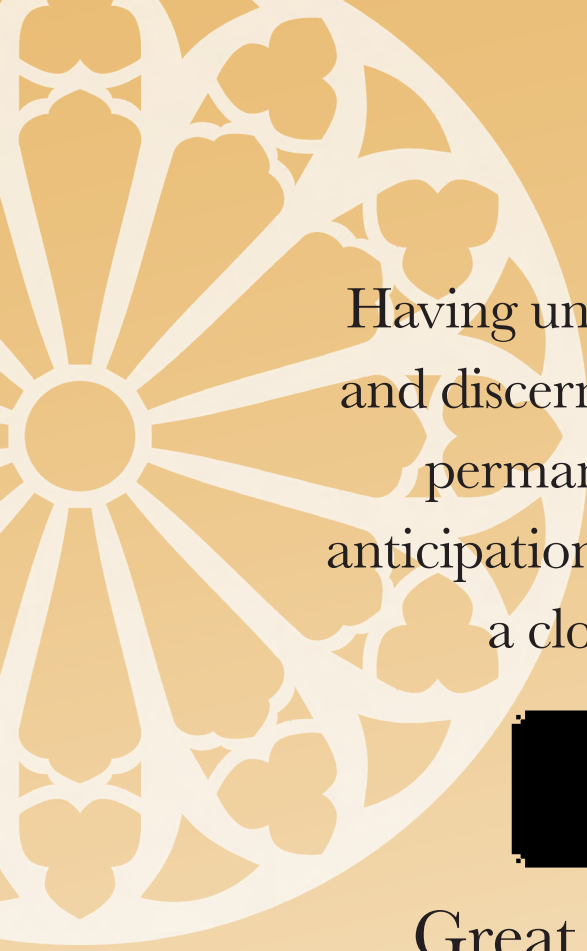
Church.

Established by the Apostles during the infancy of the Church to serve the needs of Greek-speaking widows and orphans abandoned by society, the diaconate is a distinct ministry of Christian service. Permanent deacons proclaim the Gospel, preach and instruct, assist at liturgies, baptize, witness the exchange of wedding vows, bring Viaticum to the dying, officiate at funerals, and perform acts of charity.

If a man feels called to the diaconate, he should submit an application to the Office of the Permanent Diaconate. The man must be at least 35 years old and be in a strong, stable marriage with the “full, genuine, and

Continued on Page 25





Having undergone five years of formation and discernment, 24 men will be ordained permanent deacons this August. In anticipation of that celebration, we give you a closer look at the diaconate:

## DEACONS

# Great and visible signs of the HOLY SPIRIT

By Callie Nowlin

To begin to understand the diaconate, one must first understand the nature and purpose of Sacred Orders within the Body of Christ. The diaconate is one of three levels of Holy Orders in the Roman Catholic Church. In a nutshell, a man called and ordained to the diaconate is called to be a servant of God and His people.

Yes, it's true that in Christ we are all called to serve God and our neighbor as an outpouring of Christ's love within us. But, in a particular way, by the reception of the sacrament of Holy Orders, these individuals are dedicated to total service to the Body of Christ.

Misunderstandings about the diaconate may arise from misuse of conventional terms and concepts

within our sacred tradition. "*Diakonia*" is Greek for ministry. In our culture, the term "ministry" is oftentimes misused because we call people who greet at Mass and those charged with catechizing youth "ministers." However, "ministry" in its formal sense is performed strictly by the Church's sacred ministers, namely priests and deacons. Beyond that, we as lay people can and should assist with these duties of ministry, but it is not our ministry that we are performing. As an example, we understand that an altar server assists the priests during Mass or in the administration of sacraments, but we would never call them sacred ministers for this title is reserved for ordained priests and deacons alone.

A "*cleros*" is someone who has a

share in this sacred ministry and does so because of the reception of Holy Orders. Whether serving at the altar during the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, preaching, or serving the orphan and the widow, deacons are truly an icon of Christ, the servant of all, to whom they have been configured by the reception of the Order of Diaconate.

### SPIRITUALITY

The spirituality of the deacon is best understood in light of Christ the Servant, who on Holy Thursday wrapped a towel around His waist and washed the feet of His twelve Apostles. The deacon is conformed to Christ, who came to serve, not to be served. The deacon is to live out the Church's ministry of charity and justice.



With this in mind, perhaps it is unfortunate, though understandable, that deacons are sometimes placed into leadership roles out of necessity. Where there is a need in the body, they are to be at service. Thus, even with tasks that require leadership, they fulfill these tasks humbly and in keeping with a spirit of quiet service.

The spirituality of the deacon can also be seen at Mass, in their ministry of word and liturgy. Just as the best altar servers almost melt into the background, thereby embodying what they are called to resemble — saints and angels assisting in the heavenly liturgy — a deacon is similarly called to quiet service, often unseen.

### PERMANENT DIACONATE

The Church in her wisdom considers it illicit to call men to orders who are preparing for baptism or have been newly baptized. Rather, she allows for formation and discernment specific to the sacrament of Holy Orders — separate from the general formation and growth due to every newly baptized Christian. In addition to being the body of Christ, the Church is diaconal in nature. The Church is fundamentally like a deacon in how she ministers to the world, continuing Christ's mission of the salvation of the world through modest and even laborious or monotonous work.

Having some among us who are called to stably and faithfully serve the Church in this way is an essential witness to Christ. As mentioned earlier, it is true that lay and consecrated members in the Body of Christ are called by their Baptism to assist with delegated tasks when there is a need. But let us never forget there is something unique and solemnly different in the nature of the deacon, who through the sacrament of Holy Orders is conformed to Christ the Servant. May the deacons' witness of faith and prayer be one that inspires us to greater service, working for the greater glory of God, rather than ourselves.

### "TRANSITIONAL" DIACONATE

We use the term "transitional" to refer to those who we hope will one day be ordained a priest. Typically, transitional deacons are seminarians in the last year of their formation. But there is truly nothing "transitional" about the sacrament. Like Baptism and Confirmation, Holy Orders leaves an indelible mark on a soul. One beautiful result of this truth is that once men are ordained deacons, they will always retain on their souls the mark of a deacon — even if later they are also ordained priests or bishops. ✚



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.

### From Page 23

active support of his wife," according to the diocesan website. (For more details about application requirements and formation process for the diaconate, visit [fwdioc.org/deacon-formation](http://fwdioc.org/deacon-formation)).

"In a loving and supportive relationship, we want the best for our spouse... I believe [wives] need to be supportive and they need to be honest," Dcn. Bagley said. "Does she feel this is right for her? Does she feel this is right for the family?"

### FAMILY SECOND: HARMONIZING

Not only should a prospective deacon's wife be on board, so should the whole nuclear family, Dcn. Bagley explained.

"The family dynamic is going to change, and the whole family's involved... My kids can stack chairs like nobody's business," he said.

Growing up, his son was an altar server, and his wife became involved in ministries such as fundraising for a mission in Haiti and participating in CRHP (Christ Renews His Parish) retreats.

"If [Kevin] wasn't where he is, I don't know that I would be as faith-filled," Mrs. Bagley gushed.

Often church responsibilities (such as being present to a class of first communicants) conflict with family responsibilities (such as attending a grandchild's birthday party). In the event of a schedule conflict, Dcn. Bagley considers where it is most important for him to be on that day. "Sometimes I'm late for things on the family side," he confessed.

Mrs. Bagley described changes that the diaconate made on the division of labor at home: "I had to shoulder a little more responsibility... helping at home,

doing the yard, because he was going to school in the evenings... My calling is to be supportive."

Likewise, Dcn. Bagley recognizes the sacrifices made by his wife.

"So when I realize I've put in a lot of time at the office, then... let's make sure I do something special for my other vocation of marriage."

### CHURCH THIRD: SERVING GOD'S PEOPLE

Unlike most permanent deacons, Dcn. Bagley works full time for his home parish, St. Andrew in Fort Worth. More typically, he also serves in several volunteer capacities, including serving on the Deacon Formation Team of the diocese, mentoring a cohort of deacon candidates, teaching classes — and, of course, serving at Mass.

When asked about his favorite moment in the Mass, Dcn. Bagley groaned. "Oh, I love the whole Liturgy; that's not fair!" He paused. "Receiving the Eucharist, participating in the distribution of the Eucharist... But also, being the herald of the Gospel... actively participating in the high point of the Liturgy of the Word."

For Dcn. Bagley, the "charism of orders" is a call to evangelization. "I am the one that should be bringing God into the equation. Whether it's a relationship in the grocery store, in the doctor's office, on the roadway... At home, at work, everywhere."

At 2:30 p.m. on a recent Wednesday, Dcn. Bagley found himself walking back to his office from the parking lot, brandishing a plastic Holy Water dispenser. His day had been filled with meetings and appointments. "And then there's a car blessing," he added, grinning.

Dcn. Bagley shares God's grace everywhere. Even in parking lots. ✚

# ANGELS

## AT THE BEDSIDE

COVID-19 teams and their medical colleagues follow  
in the footsteps of pioneering Catholic sisters

By Jerry Circelli

**T**he reputation of 11 Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word preceded them long before they stepped off a steam train in Fort Worth on April 5, 1885. Traveling from France, to Galveston, to San Antonio, and then on to Cowtown, the religious order of sisters was building along the way some of the finest hospitals in the world.

Fearless in the face of danger during outbreaks of cholera, yellow fever, and other infectious diseases, the sisters served at the bedside of Texans to help them battle serious illnesses — sometimes at their own peril.

Upon their arrival at the southeast corner of what are now South Main and West Morphy streets, in Fort Worth, the sisters saw an aging, wooden railroad infirmary standing alone atop a small rise two miles south of the city. It would be a challenge, but this is where their work would begin on the development of St. Joseph Hospital, the first in Fort Worth.

### ANGELS ON HIGH

Fast forward 135 years. The day is May 6, 2020, and by 11:30 a.m., hundreds of health care workers are gathered on the six-acre greenspace and atop adjacent parking garages in the heart of the Fort Worth medical district. It is the area where the sisters lived and worked, and precisely where St. Joseph Hospital — once one of the largest and most modern in Texas — formerly stood. People are here this day to witness the U.S. Navy Blue Angels flyover saluting frontline medical responders.

“There they are!” a woman in hospital scrubs shouts, pointing north toward downtown Fort Worth. Approaching in perfect formation are six blue and gold F/A-18 Hornets, prized Navy jets capable of nearly Mach-2 speed. Within seconds, the jets make

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**ANGEL OF HEALTH:** George Grace Clover, a graduate of Saint Joseph's School of Nursing, applies a Kenny hot pack treatment to a 4-year-old polio patient. Clover volunteered for polio duty through the Red Cross in 1945. (Fort Worth Star-Telegram Collection, UTA Libraries)

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a wide pass to the south and west of the area before circling back toward downtown. Then, to the surprise of spectators, the jets bank hard toward where they are standing and make a thunderous sweep directly overhead. White smoke billows in their wake. The moment the Blue Angels pass over the St. Joseph Hospital site, the sun lights up their underbellies, only for a few seconds, with a reflective burst that silences the crowd. The flyover and dramatic reflection occurred at the right place, at the right time, for all the right reasons.

This was a fitting tribute not only to today's health care workers, but also to all those who came before them. The pilots' flight path that took them directly over the site where 11 Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word arrived in 1885 could rightly be described as divinely inspired. It is also quite logical. The sisters built Fort Worth's first hospital here and the sprawling medical district that exists today developed all around it over the decades. So, it was the logical, strategic epicenter for a flyover saluting area health care workers fighting a pandemic.

We can only imagine how the Blue Angels must have looked flying over Fort Worth's hospital district from the perspective of real angels in heaven — and saints such as the 11 sisters who started it all in 1885.

### CARRYING ON CHRIST'S COMPASSION FOR THE SICK

The legacy of the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word exists in quality patient care and best practices in medicine that they established through two centuries. Although hospital ownership and administration in North Texas has now been mostly secularized, the influence of the Catholic Church and impact of the sisters is far reaching. The religious order women were on fire for Christ's teachings to care for people in need and have passed the torch to many in the medical community today.

A figurative example of that torch can be found in the office of John Burk, M.D., of Fort Worth. It is in the form of a crucifix that has a special place on the desk and in the life of the doctor.

A pulmonary and critical care specialist, Dr. Burk is busy these days serving COVID-19 patients in intensive care units at area hospitals, including Baylor Scott & White All Saints Medical Center, Texas Health Harris Methodist, and others.

A physician for 50 years, Dr. Burk served nearly two decades at St. Joseph Hospital in Fort Worth. When the hospital closed its doors in the early 1990s,

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**A SHOW OF GRATITUDE:** Hospital staff, including nurses, doctors, and administrators, look on as the United States Navy Blue Angels fly over North Texas hospitals on May 6. (Getty/Tom Pennington)









Dr. John Burk, a pulmonary specialist, is photographed in his office after returning from treating COVID-19 patients at a Fort Worth hospital. (NTC/Juan Guajardo)

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the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word, in a gesture of thanks, presented a crucifix to the doctor they so admired.

“It had been in the surgical waiting room where people awaited reports on their family members who were having surgery,” Dr. Burk said. “It had been there since about the 1930s, and ever since the sisters gave it to me, it has remained on my desk. The sisters were generous to share it with me.

“I wish it could tell stories, like, ‘Here’s what I’ve observed over the years’ and ‘Here’s what I’ve seen,’” Dr. Burk said. The physician, however, has a good idea about what went on at St. Joseph Hospital and said it was nothing short of excellence in health care, thanks to the high standards of the religious order of women who built it, served as nurses, and ran it.

“And it was a very, very, very caring environment,” Dr. Burk stressed. “The

nuns just shared their commitment to caring for folks with staff, and that was the environment you lived in and worked in.”

The sisters hired the best people for the job at St. Joseph Hospital. Some, like Dr. Burk, were Christians but not Catholics. An Episcopalian, Dr. Burk said the hospital kept him connected with the Catholic Church and the sisters he respected.

“You didn’t see people on staff there, however, who were not of faith,” Dr. Burk said. “That was just part of what it was like to work there. It was a very safe, secure environment for caring for people and addressing their spiritual needs.”

Keeping the faith is important in persevering through the current COVID-19 pandemic, Dr. Burk said, explaining that he and others in the medical field are working 12-hour shifts for several days in a row. The pulmonary and critical care doctor explained that in addition to people experiencing the

aches, pains, and fevers that can accompany COVID-19, some develop serious complications in their lungs, causing oxygen levels to fall and requiring oxygen support.

In overseeing COVID-19 patient treatment, the doctor emphasized the need for a dedicated team. He credits those teams for the progress being made. “That includes nurses, respiratory therapists, housekeeping, and I mean everybody is involved and is incredibly supportive of each other in taking care of patients. It’s quite an organized effort.”

No stranger to infectious disease control, Dr. Burk served in Bihar, India, in 1974, to care for patients during one of the worst smallpox epidemics of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. He has also worked in the field of epidemiology with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and participated in smallpox eradication programs with the World Health

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# Deeply Rooted

## CATHOLIC HEALTH CARE IN TEXAS

Did you know that the state-of-the-art hospital district now in the heart of Fort Worth could trace its origins to Catholics? It's true! Dating back to the 16<sup>th</sup> century, Catholics, guided by the healing ministry of Christ, made enormous contributions to the health care system throughout the ages. Jerry Circelli tells us how:



The first recorded surgical operation in North America was by Cabeza de Vaca in 1535. (Courtesy/Tom Lea Institute)

1535



Álvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca, the first person to heal the sick in the name of Christ in present-day Texas, had no intention of doing so when he set sail for the New World in 1527. But heal he did — especially in his dealings with Native Americans. In 1535, Cabeza de Vaca performed the first surgery recorded in the Southwest.

1600-1700s



Franciscan friars and lay brothers not only worked hard to build the Church, but also considered themselves protectors of Native Americans. They took on the role of caregivers, tending to the needs of sick indigenous people.

1857



The Ursuline Sisters unintentionally advanced the hospital system in Texas as a response to health emergencies. When they first arrived in Houston, their mission was education, not health care. But after students contracted yellow fever in 1857, the educators took on the role of nurses. And in 1861, they converted their school into a hospital to care for wounded Civil War soldiers.

1867



The Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word (CCVI) further advanced the hospital system in Texas. At the request of Bishop Claude Dubuis, the order built the first Catholic hospital in Texas: Charity Hospital in Galveston in 1867.

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Organization.

“Right now, we are living through medical and social history,” Dr. Burk said. “We’ve been confronted with epidemics before, and COVID has its own story.”

Through it all, Dr. Burk said, “I feel blessed to be given the opportunity to serve in a very special way. I hope I can bring to the bedside what peace that can come from being present when others can’t, when families can’t.

“That has been a very painful part of the current hospital experience,” Dr. Burk said, explaining that because of the highly infectious nature of COVID-19, families are often separated from their loved ones in the hospital.

“We have to remember that we are all part of the whole and we are here to serve each other,” Dr. Burk said.

## TAKING THE FIGHT TO THE CORONAVIRUS

Robert McBroom, M.D., of Wichita Falls, is an infectious disease specialist and member of the Texas State Guard who is literally mobilizing military units to combat COVID-19.

In his role with the Texas State Guard, Dr. McBroom has been involved in setting up testing centers as well as overflow hospital camps and shelters, if needed. In addition to establishing protocols for health care at the units, the physician has had to establish procedures to ensure brigades are fit for service with no pre-existing respiratory illnesses or other issues that would put them at a higher health risk.

In the civilian sector, Dr. McBroom is involved in the care of COVID-19 patients and others at United Regional Health Care System and a private surgical hospital, both in Wichita Falls.

Like others in the medical community serving during the pandemic, Dr. McBroom has been working 12- to 16-hour days. Most of that work, he said, came in the mid-March to mid-April timeframe when the medical community was assessing patient needs and care procedures, and trying to make



Dr. Robert McBroom, an infectious disease specialist, has been involved in mobilizing military units and testing centers to combat COVID-19. (NTC/Juan Guajardo)

them conform with medical community recommendations and ever-changing government regulations.

A physician for 35 years, Dr. McBroom has worked through other epidemics and pandemics, including HIV/AIDS, Ebola, and now COVID-19.

While physicians may see COVID-19 patients once per day, Dr. McBroom said nurses, respiratory therapists, and other hospital staffers are providing constant care. “They are the real boots on the ground in this fight.”

A member of Sacred Heart Parish in Wichita Falls, Dr. McBroom said his faith has kept him strong at his job dealing with infectious diseases.

“I was never afraid of any of that and I was never frightened of influenza or the novel strains that could become pandemic,” Dr. McBroom said.

“We can’t protect ourselves from everything, except by faith. Faith gives us strength to persevere,” he said.

Dr. McBroom recommended, “Put your faith in God to work and trust Him to protect you. Or if the axe falls, trust Him to see you through it.

“Having faith is the best medicine — more than anything man can do,” he said. “Put a little more trust in God.”

## WARRIORS IN THE FIGHT AGAINST COVID-19

In North Fort Worth, Alex Guevara, D.O., enlists the help of an army of 25 staffers at his family practice to wage war on COVID-19 while also taking care of other patients requiring medical attention.

The physician said that members of his team, like many others, are truly on the front line of the COVID-19 fight.

“We’re seeing patients and trying to keep them out of the hospital,” Dr. Guevara said, emphasizing the importance of testing for those showing

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## CATHOLIC HEALTH CARE IN TEXAS



Workers install a cross outside of St. Joseph Hospital in 1958. (Fort Worth Star-Telegram Collection, UTA Libraries)

1885

The Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word took over nursing duties at the local railroad infirmary in Fort Worth in 1885. After a fire destroyed the infirmary, the sisters rebuilt the structure and named it St. Joseph Infirmary.

1906

The CCVI sisters continued to usher in enormous developments in health care in Fort Worth. By 1906, they opened a training school for nurses and expanded St. Joseph by more than double. The nursing school produced a long line of nurses — a prophetic achievement as they would later assist the sisters in caring for the multitude of sick during the Spanish Flu pandemic of 1918.

1930

By 1930, St. Joseph Hospital was one of the most modern of its kind. It earned accreditation by several organizations. It had grown to five stories and had more than 200 patient beds.

1993

St. Joseph Hospital grew into a complex of 10 buildings covering 570,00 square feet. In 1993, St. Joseph had 625 doctors and 1,000 staff members. In 1994, it was purchased by another corporation and closed just one year later. 🇺🇸

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symptoms of the infectious disease. He said his practice is conducting between two and 10 tests per day, in addition to antibody testing.

He estimated that about 99 percent of his patients can recover at home successfully, while some require hospitalization.

Along with caring for COVID-19 patients and others, Dr. Guevara said his priority is also to protect his staff. “They are in harm’s way,” the physician said, emphasizing the importance of procedures, protocols, and personal protective equipment for his staff.

The doctor is also looking for the help that only God can provide.

“I’m asking for guidance from above,” Dr. Guevara said. “I make no bones about it. I’m asking my Lord, Jesus Christ, to help us through these endeavors, and to guide our hands.

“And I have no problem praying with my patients, expounding on the fact that we may be calling on the Lord to help us.”

A parishioner of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Church in Keller, Dr. Guevara also attends and is a strong supporter of All Saints Parish in north Fort Worth, where many of his patients reside.

A physician for 35 years, Dr. Guevara said his faith is his guiding light. “I see it as a beacon, almost as a lighthouse in the darkness. The darker it gets, the stormier it gets, the more difficult it gets, the more important it becomes to keep track of that lighthouse and how it’s leading me through the storm.”

## FINDING OUR WAY THROUGH FAITH IN GOD

Tram Nguyen, M.D., knows about faith being a guiding light in a storm. In 1991, at age six, she went through the ordeal of leaving communist Vietnam via refugee camps and then on to the U.S. Dr. Nguyen credits her mother’s strength and unquestioning trust in God for making that journey a reality. She told young Tram never to lose her faith and to give back to society for the blessings she had been given. Dr. Nguyen has never forgotten.



Dr. Tram Nguyen says her faith guides her healing work as a family physician. (NTC/Juan Guajardo)

In addition to her work in private practice with offices in Fort Worth and Grand Prairie, she started Hand-in-Hand: Share Missions, a nonprofit organization that provides people in both Vietnam and the United States with food, medical care, and other basic needs.

For medical services, Dr. Tram enlists the help of physicians, optometrists, dentists, pharmacists, and others in the medical field. Regarding food and basic needs, the doctor finds help through volunteers of all ages and backgrounds.

For one special program named “1975 Meals to Heal,” her organization works with area restaurants for food donations. She also recruits helpers from youth groups at Vietnamese Martyrs Parish in Arlington and St. Joseph Vietnamese Parish in Grand Prairie. Collectively, the volunteers raise money and provide at least 1,975 meals for front line responders, including those at hospitals, health clinics, and fire departments. The significance of the “1975” in the program name is that it commemorates the many Vietnamese people who escaped communist repression and





Dr. Beatrice Kutzler, an obstetrician and gynecologist, has also treated COVID-19 patients during the pandemic. (NTC/Juan Guajardo)

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endured great hardships after the fall of Saigon on April 30, 1975. The food deliveries are made each year on April 30.

In another program, "Operation Kindness," the nonprofit organization has provided groceries and food delivery to elderly people during the COVID-19 situation. The program also has provided food for orphans, the elderly, and others in Vietnam.

At her family practice offices in Fort Worth and Grand Prairie, Dr. Nguyen treats patients with COVID-19 and other illnesses. She also oversees COVID-19 testing and treatments at some area nursing homes.

So, how can she keep up the

rigorous schedule, especially with the extra workload brought on by caring for patients during the COVID-19 crisis?

"It can be really stressful," Dr. Nguyen said. "But I feel I was very blessed, and my family has been blessed. My mom always taught us to give back whenever we can.

"We've been so blessed and the Lord has given us so much. We do things during non-pandemic times, but this is the time people need help the most. That's why we have to work extra hard right now."

It's teamwork with volunteers, Dr. Nguyen said, that makes the help possible. "I can't do it alone."

## FACING CHALLENGES WITH A PRAYERFUL HEART

Beatrice Kutzler, M.D., is another doctor who has found herself with a heavy workload during the COVID-19 pandemic.

As an obstetrician and gynecologist, Dr. Kutzler serves on the leadership team at Andrews Women's Hospital at Baylor Scott & White in Fort Worth. In that role, she has been involved in constant meetings with hospital staff to implement best practices in dealing with COVID-19, as recommended by medical and government entities. Like other doctors, she found the recommendations and regulations to be constantly changing, often several times in one day.

"I've been 'meeting-out,'" the doctor said.

More efficient and faster testing for the virus, she said, has improved the situation at hospitals.

Dr. Kutzler has treated pregnant patients suffering from COVID-19 as well as others without the virus. It

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Amanda Noboa, a registered nurse, works in the intensive care unit. (NTC/Juan Guajardo)

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requires extra diligence with personal protection equipment to ensure the safety of health care workers, patients, and babies.

It has also required special N95 respirator masks for doctors and medical staff in the delivery room and masks for mothers in labor. When a woman is pushing during labor, there is a high risk of aerosolization of the virus, the doctor explained, and donning the masks helps to prevent possible transmission from person to person.

The doctor discussed another major change during the COVID-19 pandemic, especially in her life.

“I’ve been saying a lot more Our Fathers and Hail Marys,” she said. “They tell you to wash your hands for a full 20 seconds, so I’ll alternate between an Our Father and Hail Mary every time I’m washing my hands.

“It started when I was praying for one of the patients. I was praying that I

really hoped this turned out well for her and I started praying the Our Father while I was washing my hands and I thought, ‘Oh, that’s 20 seconds.’ So, now I’m doing it all day long.”

A devout Catholic who attends Mass and is involved at Holy Family Parish and St. Patrick Cathedral in Fort Worth, Dr. Kutzler has made prayer an important part of both her life and her work.

“Before surgery, some patients ask me to pray with them,” the doctor said. “And they pray for me, asking God to guide my hands. I always ask God to guide my hands before I operate.”

### SCRIPTURE IS THE BEST MEDICINE

Many other Catholics in the medical field seek and find guidance in their work by listening closely to the word of God. One of them — a critical care nurse — offered special insight on how Scripture and reasoning has inspired her in her medical career.

Amanda Noboa, a graduate of the

University of Texas at Arlington College of Nursing and Health Innovation, sees her work as a blessing as well.

She has spent the past 17 years in nursing, mostly in the field of critical care at intensive care units with hospitals in Dallas and Arlington. One of the most memorable interactions with a patient was also one of the most spiritually enriching for her.

“Early on in my nursing career, while I was washing the feet of a patient, he made a reference to Jesus washing the feet of the disciples. Now every time I am bathing patients and washing their feet, I think of Jesus’ commandment to ‘Love one another, as I have loved you.’”

The nurse added, “I pray before each shift that God will help me to do His work and grant me the wisdom and strength to care for my patients. My faith also definitely helps me deal with suffering and death. Knowing the Easter story makes a big difference in being able to handle those circumstances.” 🇺🇸





David Arnold of Catholic Charities Fort Worth delivers boxes of groceries from the Tarrant Area Food Bank to people who need them during the COVID-19 outbreak. (NTC/Rodger Mallison)

# Partnership Creates Food Fleet

By Matthew Smith

As they have before, Catholic Charities Fort Worth and Tarrant Area Food Bank are once again playing off each other's strengths to address an immediate need — food insecurity in this instance, aggravated by the twin challenges of decreased donations and the closure of many church and community organization food pantries during the COVID-19 crisis. Many are in need of healthy food options and unsure where to turn.

In order to direct those in need to available food sources quickly, a phone bank whereby CCFW has taken on TAFB's call center functionality has been established. The partnership combines CCFW's Community Care Center with TAFB's software system designed to track all local food pantries and mobile events via an interactive map. The system enables CCFW staff and volunteers to direct callers in need to food sources closest to them.

Adding to the efficiency is the use of CCFW's transportation fleet to deliver food should a caller lack transportation.

Those in need are urged to call CCFW at 817-534-0814 option 1 from 8 a.m. to noon Monday through Friday.

Staffers will assist callers with a proxy service allowing them to pick up food from pantries on their behalf. Those unable to travel or who lack a proxy and qualify by way of categorical eligibility in other government programs will have food delivered to their home by the transportation fleet.

Counties served include Tarrant, Johnson, Denton, Wise, Parker, Hood, Erath, Palo Pinto, Cooke, Hill, Bosque, Hamilton, and Somervell.

"In times of great need, the best thing we can do is put our heads together and amplify each other's strengths," CCFW CEO and President Michael P. Grace said. "Our teams have been training volunteers, learning the system, and are expecting at least 200 additional calls per week as a result of people seeking essential nutrition.

We're in a perfect place to take this on and support both our community and the food bank."

TAFB CEO and President Julie Butner identified TAFB's top priorities as increasing food access and simplifying the process of doing so.

"In addition to [tafb.org/find-food](https://tafb.org/find-food) page, this new call center and delivery service managed in collaboration with CCFW is a solution our community will cherish," Butner said.

The Find Food Map includes mobile food events as well as pantries at a variety of churches and area agencies, said Marc Dabal, CCFW director of parish relations and social ministries. Dabal said response to the program, which began on May 5, has been steady but is expected to increase substantially as word gets out.

"All of us at CCFW and TAFB are delighted to offer this service to members of our communities that are most in need," Dabal said. "It is what we are called to do." 🇹🇽



# Great Hardship Yields GREAT VIRTUE

Dorothy Day's path to sainthood began by nursing Spanish Flu patients

By Joan Kurkowski-Gillen

Whether she's leading the Rosary before the noon Mass inside St. Patrick Cathedral or from her living room during the coronavirus stay-at-home order, Wanda Styrsky ends the devotion with the same five words — "Dorothy Day, pray for us."

"People always ask who she is and why we're praying for her," explained the steadfast advocate for Day's canonization. "I tell them we're praying for her because she's on the path to sainthood. We use her as an intercessor for prayer."

And never has Dorothy Day's story of conversion and outreach to the marginalized been more relevant. Best known as co-founder of the Catholic Worker Movement, the native New Yorker was a free-spirited young adult in 1918 — a time of self-discovery that was both complicated yet transformative. One experience in her biography stands out. While working as a newspaper reporter, she socialized with writers, artists, and revolutionaries who gathered in the backroom of the Golden Swan saloon known as the Hell Hole.

During a night of drinking in Greenwich Village, a member of her inner



Dorothy Day, circa 1916

circle, jilted by his girlfriend, intentionally overdosed on heroin.

"Everybody ran but Dorothy and the guy's sister," said Jeffrey Korgen, the New

York-based coordinator of Day's cause for canonization. "Here were all these people who talked about making the world a better place and when a friend was in trouble, they ran."

Watching the young man die in her arms transformed Day from an idealist to a realist.

"I hate being Utopian and trying to escape from reality," she wrote to a friend after the incident. "It's the poor that are suffering. I've got to do something."

With the Spanish Flu raging across the country, the 21-year-old journalist decided to join the nursing staff at Kings County Hospital in Brooklyn. Few people know Day worked as a nurse because it's not part of her Catholic biography, Korgen pointed out. She didn't convert to Catholicism until 1927.

But her memories of that short-lived career — recollected in a 1952 autobiography, "The Long Loneliness" — are strikingly similar to what today's health care workers say about treating coronavirus patients.

"This was the time of the flu epidemic and the wards were full and the halls too," Day wrote, remembering the long hours and emotionally numbing work in the





Wanda Styrsky poses with books about Dorothy Day at her home in Fort Worth. (NTC/Juan Guajardo)

hospital. “Many of the nurses became ill and we were short-handed.”

At the end of her shift, nurses wrapped bodies in sheets and wheeled them to the morgue. The unceasing flow of patients left no time to dwell on the situation.

“It was impossible to suffer long over the tragedies which took place every day,” she wrote. “One was too close to them to have perspective.”

Day worked as a nurse for a year until the pandemic was over, but the experience left an indelible mark on her soul.

“We see the seeds of who Dorothy Day became in that period,” observed Korgen, who marveled at the way the potential saint could refer to specific memories of specific patients. “The whole idea of personalism — focusing on the person right there in front of you — characterized the Catholic Worker Movement. That’s the heart of Dorothy Day.”

Sara Drury, associate professor of rhetoric at Wabash College, wrote her graduate thesis on Dorothy Day and the Catholic Worker Movement. Growing up in Buffalo, N.Y., she first learned about the social

justice reformer at her all-girls Catholic high school.

“One of the things I find remarkable about Dorothy Day was her ability to be incredibly reflective about the world around her,” she asserted. “Her reflection about the current moment always has a link into her past and history. She had empathy for people who were struggling, people who were on the outside of society, and those in great pain or suffering. It would not surprise me if there were strong threads connecting her to being a nurse during the 1918 pandemic.”

Drury, who teaches political discourse and how to have difficult conversations across divides, occasionally offers a course on religious rhetoric. Dorothy Day, who tried to keep a pacifist movement alive in the Catholic Church during the Vietnam War, becomes part of that discussion.

A member of St. Bernard Parish in Crawfordsville, Indiana, the professor is intrigued by the radical acts of love Day and the Catholic Worker community took on.

“They offer a challenge to us,” Drury

suggested. “We need to ask ourselves, as a Church, are we really trying to radically love our neighbors? That’s a hard task. Day’s example prompts Catholics today to ask those difficult question about whether we’re living out our faith.”

Styrsky, a former labor and delivery nurse, isn’t surprised Day worked in health care during the 1918 pandemic.

“Nurses are compassionate. They seek to love people and help them in their brokenness,” said the St. Patrick parishioner. “You see in her autobiography her intense desire to help people, and that feeds into where she was led in starting the Catholic Worker Movement.”

Although the world is a different place politically, economically, and medically than it was 100 years ago, there are lessons to glean from Day’s experience during the Spanish flu. Great virtue is formed during great hardship, Styrsky said.

“How many of us, coming out of this hardship, will be formed in great virtue?” she asked. “I think we learn from her what never changes — how to treat other people.” 🇺🇸

L O V E

# OVERCOMES

H A T E

And the fullness of Christ in His Church  
will help get us there

By Mary Lou Seewoester

**A**mid worldwide protests about the killing of George Floyd and racial inequality, Bishop Michael Olson brought the diocese together for a Mass for the repose of the soul of George Floyd, for the consolation of his family, and for peace and an end to civil discord.

In his homily at the June 4 Mass, Bishop Olson stated, “Justice is the need and responsibility of everyone. Peace is the need and responsibility of everyone. We can only achieve them if we work towards them together and we cannot achieve them without recognizing that justice and peace come from God and we need Him.”

The struggle to achieve justice and peace on this earth is ongoing.

In reflecting on George Floyd’s death and the ensuing protests against racism, Donald

Walker, Jr., parishioner of Our Mother of Mercy Parish in Fort Worth, recalled the history of racism in our country.

“We keep being reminded about where we were at earlier times in history by events like this,” he said. “We need to not just address George Floyd’s death but also the circumstances that led to his death.”

“Our country was founded as a country that condoned slavery. It goes back to that, and includes other peoples who suffered as well,” he added.

“We need to have courage,” he said. “Not the absence of fear, but how we respond in the face of fear. How you choose to push forward even though something is fear-inducing. How you press on.”

One who suffered at the hands of racism, yet pressed on, was Venerable Augustus Tolton, the first African American priest in the U.S.

Born into slavery in 1854, he overcame years of ridicule, exclusion, slander and racist acts, even by other Catholics, in order to answer his call to priesthood. He attended seminary in Rome because no American seminary would accept a black man, and he returned to build and pastor the first African American parish in Chicago.

Last June, Pope Francis advanced Father Tolton’s path to sainthood by declaring him “venerable,” meaning he lived a life of heroic virtue. Today, Fr. Tolton’s heroic virtue, tenacity, and perseverance serve as a model for all Catholics who strive to avoid the sin of racial prejudice.

“The Catholic Church deplores double slavery — that of the mind and that of the body. She endeavors to free

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# PRAYER TO OVERCOME RACISM

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**M**ary, friend and mother to all, through your Son, God has found a way to unite Himself to every human being, called to be one people, sisters and brothers to each other.

We ask for your help in calling on your Son, seeking forgiveness for the times when we have failed to love and respect one another.

We ask for your help in obtaining from your Son the grace we need to overcome the evil of racism and to build a just society. We ask for your help in following your Son, so that prejudice and animosity will no longer infect our minds or hearts but will be replaced with a love that respects the dignity of each person.

Mother of the Church, the Spirit of your Son Jesus warms our hearts: pray for us.

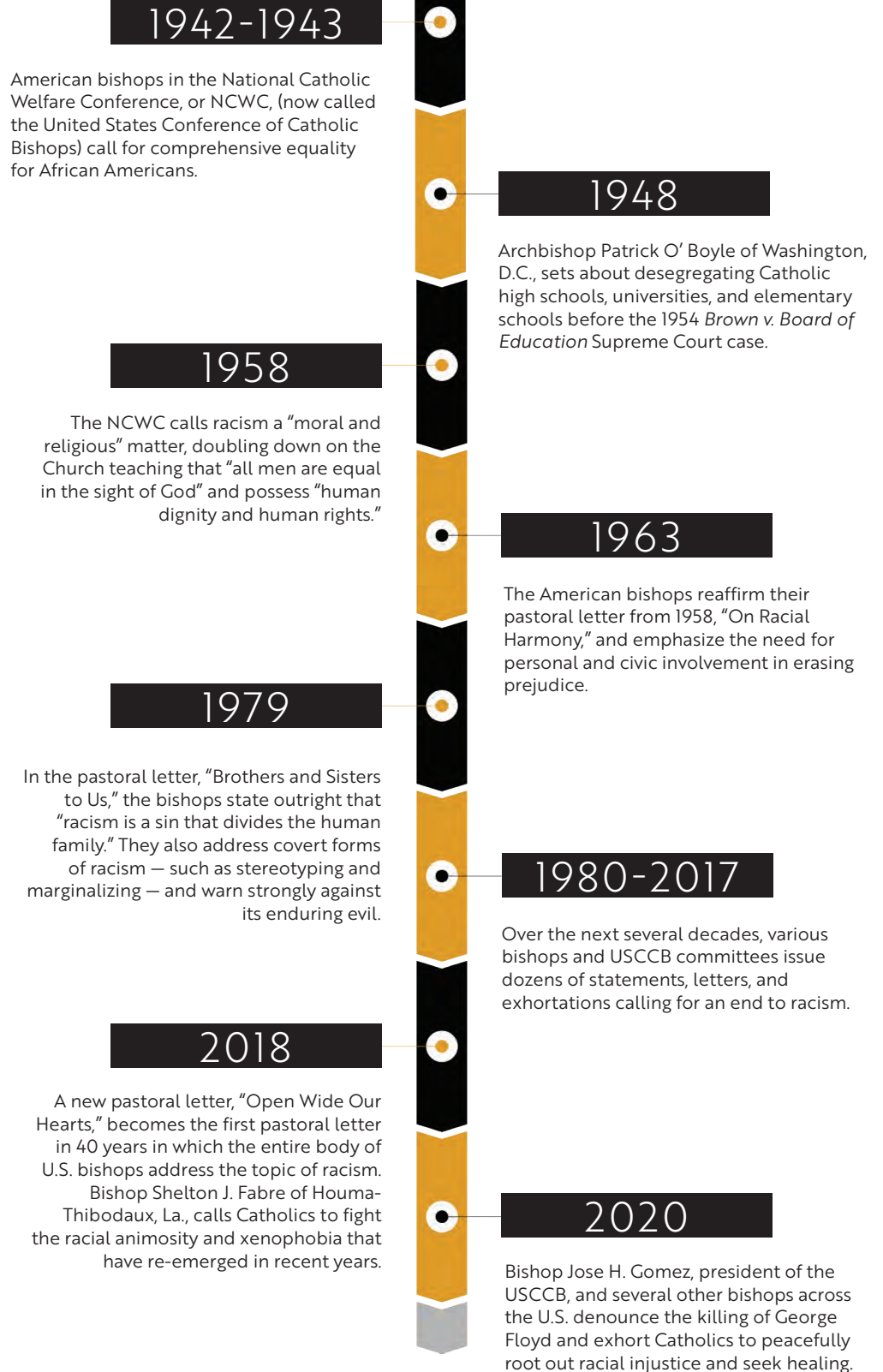
AMEN.



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# RACISM IS A SIN

A timeline of the U.S. Church's long fight against racism





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us of both,” Fr. Tolton told the first Black Catholic Congress in 1889.

Fr. Tolton died on July 9, 1897, the 29<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment, which granted citizenship and equal civil rights to emancipated slaves.

Though some Catholic laity and even clergy have been complicit with segregation and discrimination since the Civil War, the Church always has viewed racism as contrary to God’s love and will for humanity. In the several decades following Fr. Tolton’s death, the U.S. bishops issued strong statements and pastoral letters against both overt and subtle systemic forms of racism. Priests, laity, and religious did their part to fight discrimination, too.

Like Fr. Tolton, Josephite Father Narcisse Denis became the founding pastor of the first African American parish in Tarrant County — Our Mother of Mercy Parish in 1929.

According to parish records, the Ku Klux Klan was active in Fort Worth, and often targeted the parish and Fr. Denis by burning fiery crosses on church property. Fr. Denis pressed on, repeatedly replacing a sign he had installed on the church steeple because someone kept shooting it out.

That hostility didn’t prevent three Sisters of the Holy Spirit from opening a school for 50 neighborhood children the following year. In 2008, the Diocese of Fort Worth built a new Our Mother of Mercy school building for \$2.5 million and assisted with \$2.3 million in operating expenses so the school could continue serving the community until 2016.

In 2018, the school transitioned to become Cristo Rey Fort Worth High School at Our Mother of Mercy in order to provide a quality, college preparatory education to disadvantaged youth in the Diocese of Fort Worth. The new high school thrived and needed room for expansion. However, challenges posed by surrounding structures viewed as historic prompted the school’s move to its current larger site in southwest Fort Worth. There it continues to honor the educational legacy of its predecessor.

Despite the abolition of slavery in 1865, discrimination against blacks continued, especially in the South. The



◀ Father Augustus Tolton, the first recognized American diocesan priest of African descent, is pictured in an undated photo. (CNS photo/courtesy of Archdiocese of Chicago Archives and Records Center)

journey toward racial equality inched forward for nearly a century, from Reconstruction and Jim Crow laws to “separate but equal” amendments and eventually the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

Catholics pressed on against racism during the 1960s, when current Our Mother of Mercy parishioner Erma Bonner-Platte took protesters into her Goldsboro, N.C. home, fed them, washed their clothes, and gave them a place to rest before they returned to sit at a Woolworth “whites only” lunch counter.

Bonner-Platte remembers when African Americans were turned away from all-white parishes. She had been teaching at a small segregated public school in northeast Texas, her first job out of college, and had walked to the local parish for Mass. The next day, the superintendent of schools told her she was not allowed to attend the all-white parish.

“I had never been told I couldn’t go to Mass,” Bonner-Platte said.

Zenobia Collins, director of Liturgy and Music at Our Mother of Mercy, recalls a similar experience. When she visits her Mississippi hometown today, she attends Mass at the same parish that 50 years ago would have turned her away.

“You just knew not to go there,” Collins said. “There might not have been a sign saying, ‘You can’t come in,’ but you knew you weren’t welcome and if you did, you certainly wouldn’t be able to take Communion.”

In spite of the challenges and inspired by their faith, the parish community of Our Mother of Mercy blossomed over the decades. Originally made up of only about a dozen members meeting in a chapel that was formerly an abandoned drug store, it grew into a church community that has produced many leaders in diocesan and national Catholic organizations, in government, business, and education.

In 2015, Bishop Olson selected Our Mother of Mercy Church as the chief pilgrimage church for the Year of Mercy called by Pope Francis, in order to highlight the importance of God’s mercy amongst those most marginalized and overlooked.

“Our Mother of Mercy was established in the midst of racial segregation to evangelize the African American community — Catholic and non-Catholic through education and

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Our Mother of Mercy parishioner Donald Walker Jr. plays in the choir at a recent Mass. Walker has experienced overt acts of prejudice in the past, but believes the Church has made significant progress in combating racism and has a large role to play in addressing it in our society. (NTC/Ben Torres)

## ON THE SIN OF RACISM

Read Bishop Michael Olson's latest pastoral letter condemning racism and discrimination: [bit.ly/bishoppastoral](http://bit.ly/bishoppastoral)



### From Page 43

faithful witness,” Bishop Olson said. “In so doing, it also evangelized the broader and dominant white Protestant community, and the broader Catholic community, itself a minority subject to exclusion and prejudice, about the evils of racial prejudice.

He continued, “Many African Americans of many different religious traditions overcame unjust exclusion from mainstream society because of the education offered them through the mission of the Catholic Church and its schools. Our Mother of Mercy is now located in a neighborhood that is no longer predominantly African American, yet our challenge remains for us to not turn inward in fear but to be present also in predominantly African American neighborhoods for the evangelization of today.”

Collins collaborates on worship music with several other choir directors for the Annual Memorial Mass for Dr. Martin

Luther King, Jr., which has been celebrated at a different parish in the Diocese of Fort Worth every year since 1986, the year that Dr. King’s birthday was first celebrated as a national holiday.

Reflecting on her six years directing the integrated and multicultural choir for the Memorial Mass, she said the decision to celebrate the Mass at a different parish each year is one way the diocese has responded to racism.

“For me, the most important thing is that it brings about unity in the community,” she added. “It allows us to get to know each other better, to enjoy each other and experience the differences in our cultures and our music.”

Bishop Olson told the *NTC* that it’s important to celebrate the annual Mass honoring the memory and mission of Dr. King because “even though slavery ended well over 150 years ago and segregation ended in law 50 years ago, we still have a

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**EDITOR'S NOTE:**

Originally, this letter was addressed to our Catholic school communities but taking the advice of that old adage, "it takes a village to raise a child," and with the permission of Jennifer Pelletier, we share it with all of our local Catholics for the benefit of our greater society.

# AN OPEN LETTER ON WHAT GEORGE FLOYD'S DEATH CAN TEACH US

**A**s the superintendent of 19 wonderfully diverse schools, and more importantly, as a teacher who is called to form students into their very best relationship with God, I would be remiss if I did not address the tragedy of George Floyd's death which has enveloped us all in anger, confusion, and even fear.

As we are created in the image and likeness of God, our humanity deserves to be protected and celebrated. Our goal on earth is to glorify God in all we do so we can be happy with Him in heaven. Our actions as students, teachers, family members, citizens of the United States, and in every vocation and job must glorify God and all His creation. To hurt, to enslave, to murder, to abuse, to undervalue, to unjustly imprison is to attack the inviolability of human life.

We have a responsibility to recognize these injustices and act on them in a peaceful way that teaches our students the innate value and dignity of their own selves for them to understand the value and dignity of every citizen — whether they know them or not. To be a human being is to deserve to be protected. To be a human being is to protect those who cannot protect themselves.

As Pope St. John Paul II said in his encyclical, *Evangelium*

*Vitae* (The Gospel of Life): "It is therefore a service of love which we are all committed to ensure to our neighbor, that his or her life may be always defended and promoted, especially when it is weak or threatened."

The transcendentals of truth, goodness, and beauty are best understood within the context of the glory of all of God's creation. We know what is right, we are drawn to what is beautiful, and we innately desire to do what is good. As fallen creatures, we do not always embrace what is right and just, but it is our responsibility to keep trying; to find in ourselves what God has already taught us: human life is sacred from conception until natural death.

The Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith addresses that in *Donum Vitae* (On Respect for Human Life in its Origin and on the Dignity of Procreation): "Human life is sacred because from its beginning it involves 'the creative action of God,' and it remains forever in a special relationship with the Creator, who is its sole end. God alone is the Lord of life from its beginning until its end: no one can, in any circumstance, claim for himself the right to destroy directly an innocent human being."

It is our responsibility to protect, defend, and celebrate

all of God's creation — most especially human beings. George Floyd had innate dignity and value as a human being and the loss of his life is therefore a tragedy for his family, for his community, and for society as a whole. It is now our responsibility to teach our students that George Floyd had value simply because he was a human being. It is our duty to teach our students that all of humanity deserves the life that God has endowed on us. He is the Author of all, and we must allow ourselves to be instruments of His will.

As Catholic school educators, we understand that we are working in partnership with you to best form your children. What a blessing to be in a Catholic school where our faith is celebrated and taught in every class. Please help us continue that conversation about our faith and talk to your children about the sanctity of all life. Do not hesitate to reach out to your local school if you need guidance in that conversation. And please pray for peace in our nation. 🇺🇸

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Jennifer Pelletier is Superintendent of Catholic Schools for the Diocese of Fort Worth.



Bishop Michael Olson greets Cristo Rey Fort Worth students after a Friday morning Mass at Our Mother of Mercy in 2018. The Catholic preparatory school has continued the legacy of Our Mother of Mercy Catholic School. (NTC/Ben Torres)

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residue of distrust and fear. This celebration reminds us to make conscious our common humanity.”

In addition to more culturally inclusive liturgies and “preaching about racism as unjust,” Bishop Olson said the diocese also has vigorously addressed racism in its schools, its athletic programs, and with its commitment to educate African American children.

“But we can do better,” he added. “We also need to look more clearly at those structures of racism that we take for granted and overlook ... perhaps unspoken biases, or fears of people of different colors, cultures, or ethnic backgrounds.”

Bishop Shelton Fabre of the Diocese of Houma-Thibodaux, Louisiana, was this year’s guest homilist for the Jan. 11 Memorial Mass. He told the diverse congregation gathered at St. Joseph Parish in Arlington that although civil legislation “allowed us to make the progress we have made to this point in combatting racism ... there is much work to do.”

Bishop Fabre said, “While governments

can and must create laws that respect the civil rights of people regardless of race, the aspect of the struggle against racism that you and I as people of faith alone can accomplish is this conversion of hearts.”

Bishop Olson said that call to convert hearts includes our own conversion by “looking with intentionality in our own lives and where we see it, confess it and repent from it.”

For Walker, conversion of hearts begins with relationships among people working together across demographic lines.

“Sometimes it just takes people working together and being together in the trenches to understand that we’re not really all that different,” he said.

Walker said that though overt acts of prejudice are easy to spot, “there might be implicit bias ... that we’re not even aware of and it does impact our overall behavior.”

“One of the final battlegrounds for true equality and acceptance for all,” he continued, “is the one where we have to tackle some of the feelings that we’re not even aware that we have.”

Walker said moving forward against racism means putting the problem “under a spotlight.”

“It dwells and hides where people can’t see it, especially when there’s this ongoing narrative that it doesn’t exist,” he said.

Recent demonstrations have turned a spotlight on racial inequality around the world.

“A lot of times people try to deny that there’s a racial divide in this country and that there’s systemic racism in the application of justice,” Walker recently told the *NTC*. “But with the death of George Floyd, there is no denying that racism is still out there for all to see.”

Bishop Olson acknowledged the sin of racism in his June 13 pastoral letter, urging the faithful of the diocese to remember, “We are each and all children of the one true and living God.”

According to the bishop, the first step to following the command to love God and love our neighbor begins “with the humble recognition that none of us are God. God has designed us to need Him and to need each other, with all of our diversity and our common human nature.” 🇺🇸





# Finding God in the Chaos

During this time of the pandemic, we could ask, “How can God allow such evil on his people?” I remember reading the *Book of Genesis* and wondering the same thing.

From Cain and Abel, Noah and the flood, Joseph’s betrayal by his brothers and being sold into slavery, to the 10 plagues in Egypt, we can easily see the evil within the stories but we can also see the mercy.

Sometimes it is hard to see how God’s work is present in the darkest moments of history, but if we look with the eyes of faith, we can see God’s work daily.

Take an example from the story of Joseph. We can see all sorts of evil from this story: jealousy, attempted murder, slavery, and revenge. We can see the good in this story as well: brotherly love, compassion, forgiveness, and mercy.

During this period of COVID-19, we have witnessed how the world can change in one moment. In the beginning of the pandemic, we saw how people reacted in a manner of selfishness — the belief to look out only for number one. But we also saw incredible acts of charity and mercy. From the selfless acts of kindness in donations of food and other essential items to our parish outreach center, to the donation of masks

for the clergy so that we were protected in our daily visits with people, God is always at work within the chaos.

The use of our talents varies from vocation to vocation, but every one of us is ultimately called to the vocation of holiness. [ *Lumen Gentium, V (39)* ]

Again, take Joseph’s talent of interpreting dreams. His brothers were jealous of him because of the dreams

he had interpreted. But that same talent is what saved him and his family in the end. Joseph chose to use God’s gift in the manner it was intended to be used.

During the pandemic, the Church had to find new ways to reach parishioners when the stay-at-home order was enacted. One of the talents I believe God gave me was the love of technology and electronics. I was able to set up our parish for livestreams so that our parishioners could join us virtually.

I also saw God’s work in our first responders, nurses, and doctors all pulling together to help each other during this difficult time. Some even went to areas most affected by COVID-19 and risked their lives in service to others. By using our talents for others, we can see God’s work and mercy in times of uncertainty.



Fr. Nghia Nguyen

I remember in elementary school my teachers would often ask this question, “What do you want to be when you grow up?” Many of us would answer something along the lines of the profession our parents are in or something noble like a doctor, lawyer, or astronaut. At this time, I would like to challenge you — instead of thinking about what you want to be, ask God what He wants you to be. The only way you can do this is to earnestly ask God in prayer “What do You want me to be or do?”

God knows every one of us intimately; He did create us after all. I firmly believe we all have a purpose in life, whatever that may be, and that if we use the talents that God gives us, we can help each other build up the Kingdom of God even through the darkest of times. God continues to remain with His people through the works of the Church. God’s mercy continues to shine even in the darkest of times. So pray for your vocation, and ask God how you can use the talents He has given you to serve your brothers and sisters in Christ. ✝

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Ordained on May 21, 2016, Father Nghia Nguyen serves as the parochial vicar of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton in Keller and as Vocations Liaison with the Vocations Office.



# HIGHER education

Immaculate Conception teacher wins national award  
as she instructs students in art, drama, and environmental science

By Susan Moses

**T**ina Jezek had a problem. The speech and drama teacher at Immaculate Conception Catholic School had six angel costumes for the Christmas pageant, but after praying about the cast, she wanted to include 15 angels in the annual program.

Making nine new angel costumes would be a daunting task. However, Jezek wanted all the angels to match. So, in the course of two days, she sewed 15 angel costumes, hemming each one to fit the height of the angel.

The multiplication of the angels exemplifies why Principal Elaine Schad called Jezek “one lean, mean, Christmas machine.”

According to Schad, Jezek brings that mindset of “We’re going to get it done. How will we do it?” to all her roles at the Denton school: art teacher, one-act play director, environmental science teacher, liturgy assistant, and special projects coordinator.

## EXCEPTIONAL EDUCATION

Parents at Immaculate Conception didn’t need the National Catholic Educational Association to tell them that

Jezek is an extraordinary teacher.

Parents recognize the enthusiasm and knowledge she instills in the students when their youngsters clamor to plant a garden at home after working with Jezek in the school’s garden. They recognize Jezek’s excellence when their budding artists and thespians return from state competitions with awards. Her talents are obvious in the beauty and spirituality of the school’s Christmas pageant, living Stations of the Cross, and other special events.

By honoring Jezek with the 2020 Lead, Learn, Proclaim Award — one of only seven Catholic school teachers in the country to win — the NCEA designated what the parents have long known: that Jezek is an exemplar in a school full of dedicated, outstanding teachers.

Jezek is a little befuddled about the national recognition. “Art is my love. I’ve been gardening all my life. Basically, I just talk about what I know,” she said.

Jezek didn’t seek a career in education, but teaching found her. She grew up on a Denton County farm then worked as an X-ray tech for 10 years. After earning a degree in art with a focus in interior design from the University of North Texas, she did freelance art and design projects while raising four sons and volunteering

in scouting and at their schools, including Immaculate Conception.

When Immaculate Conception School needed a part-time art teacher in 2010, Schad invited the 12-year volunteer to consider it. Two years later, after observing Jezek’s work ethic was “second to none,” Schad asked Jezek to consider teaching drama also.

Although Jezek’s experience tended toward set design instead of directing, she’s the type to “get the necessary tools in her toolbox to be successful,” explained Schad.

Through networking and theater camps, she learned about coaching drama. Her interior design background and sewing skills proved useful for the set and costumes. “And she does it on a shoestring budget,” the principal marveled, explaining that Jezek shops thrift stores and flea markets.

When Immaculate Conception parents Kevin and Vianey Reinhardt saw the school’s one-act play for the first time, they were moved to tears at their son’s performance. Justin was always more interested in athletics than theater, and the whole family, including Justin, was surprised to discover his hidden talent. Vianey Reinhardt recalled that Justin explained how he blossomed as an actor. “Mrs. Jezek



Tina Jezek sits outside the greenhouse of the service learning garden at Immaculate Conception Catholic School. (NTC/Kenneth Munyer)



believed in me even when I didn't. I did not want to let her down," he told his parents.

### SOWING GOOD SEED

Three years after Jezek added drama to her repertoire, the Texas Master Gardener began teaching environmental science. The school's service learning garden has grown year by year as she's led the school's older students in projects such as building a patio, creating an outdoor classroom with benches and a table, and constructing a greenhouse.

Jezek emphasizes the service aspect of the garden. Each year, the school donates as much as 400 pounds of produce from the garden to a Denton soup kitchen. The school's innovative outdoor center has won accolades from Keep Texas Beautiful and

### *Today's Catholic Teacher.*

The garden is a labor of love for Jezek, who can be found tending to it even when school is not in session. Working with plants allows her to reflect on the words of Jesus in her favorite Bible verse, *John 15:1-2*.

"I am the true vine, and my Father is the vine grower. He takes away every branch in me that does not bear fruit, and every one that does He prunes so that it bears more fruit."

Jezek said, "I think about that verse every time I'm working outside. I'm always pulling weeds, tossing them aside, and leaving the good things intact. It's always a prayer of mine, 'Lord, don't ever let me sever my relationship with you. Let me always be part of the vine. Don't ever let

me be cut off in any way.'"

Jezek finds the garden a good place to pray, but so is the classroom, the stage, and the hallways.

St. Paul's message to the *Thessalonians* to "pray without ceasing" comes naturally to the longtime parishioner of Immaculate Conception Church. Jezek explained, "I'm doing that all the time. Not rote prayers, but I have to stop constantly and feel the presence of God in everything I do. I just want to say, 'Thank you' constantly for all the blessings."

She continued, "He's given me the talents and I have the opportunity to do this. It's so awesome. It's a dream job. What I'm doing is a prayer; it's thanksgiving to God for giving me these talents. You gave this to me; this is how I'm giving it back." 🇺🇸





# A Pipeline of God's Grace

**HE IS:** Father Sergio Rizo, pastor of Saint Joseph Parish in Cleburne, where he has served for 28 years.

**GROWING UP:** Fr. Rizo was the youngest of five children. His parents grew corn, beans, wheat, and lentils on a farm in Jalisco, Mexico. The family lacked transportation to attend Mass weekly, but he grew up praying the Rosary and hearing stories of family members and friends who fought in the Cristero War.

**A LONGER PATH:** Fr. Rizo entered the seminary at 15. His 21-year journey to the priesthood includes studies in Mexico, Connecticut, Spain, Rome, Dallas, and San Antonio and teaching with a religious order. He also took five years off to work for a large corporation in Mexico City.

**HOLY ORDERS:** More than 5,000 attended the priestly ordination of Fr. Rizo in the plaza of his hometown in Mexico on May 27, 1989, the Feast of Corpus Christi. "There were no invitations, but everyone was invited," he said.

**A HEART FOR IMMIGRANTS:** When Fr. Rizo was in the corporate world, he felt a tug to help immigrants, who "leave their language, customs, church, and family." In his years at the Cleburne parish, the Hispanic

faithful has grown to about 85 percent of the congregation.

**ONE CHURCH?:** "It is one of the sad things that occur in this whole country, even in the pews, there is discrimination and bigotry."

**FROM THE HEART:** If you want a copy of his homily, you'll have to write it down yourself. To prepare, he sits at a table with coffee and Scripture, then listens to "what He tells me" and gets a few ideas and a structure. He speaks from the heart, adapting the message to the people and place.

**ONE AT A TIME:** "If you want to serve people, you have to take people for who they are, where they are, or we will never touch their lives. Every one of us has a journey. Every one is different. You have to listen to their story."

**ROLE OF A PRIEST:** "The minister is like the pipe that brings the water, but it is God's grace that showers you."

**THE TAKEAWAY:** "Know God, and try to devote your life to the Gospels. The Holy Spirit is an instrument to guide us and guide others to God." 🇹🇽



NTC/Juan Guajardo





## Holy Orders

With praise and thanksgiving to almighty God, the Catholic Diocese of Fort Worth joyfully announces the priestly ordination of

**Pedro Javier  
Martinez Rodriguez**

Monday, June 29, 2020, 7 p.m.

Livestream available at  
[fwdioc.org](http://fwdioc.org)

## Ordenes Sagradas

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

**Pedro Javier  
Martinez Rodriguez**

Lunes, junio 29, 2020, 7 p.m.

Transmisión en vivo disponible en  
[fwdioc.org](http://fwdioc.org)

## OFFICIAL ASSIGNMENTS BY MOST REV. MICHAEL F. OLSON

### REV. BROTHER ZACHARY BURNS, TOR

New to the Diocese of Fort Worth, Deacon Burns will be ordained a priest July 11 and be appointed **Parochial Vicar** at Good Shepherd Parish in Colleyville.

### REV. SIMON HOANG MINH DAO, CRM

Pastor of Christ the King Parish in Fort Worth, has been recalled by his religious order, effective June 27.

### REV. ANDERSON DE SOUZA, SVD

New to the Diocese of Fort Worth, appointed **Pastor** of St. Paul the Apostle Parish in Fort Worth, effective July 1.

### REV. MICHAEL HIGGINS, TOR

Parochial Vicar at Good Shepherd Parish in Colleyville, has been appointed **Pastor** of the same parish, effective August 1.

### REV. JOHN MARK KLAUS, TOR

Pastoral administrator at Good Shepherd Parish in Colleyville, has been appointed **Parochial Vicar** of the same parish, effective August 1.

### REV. PEDRO MARTINEZ

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

### REV. BRENDAN MURPHY, SVD

To retire but remain in residence at St. Paul the Apostle Parish in Fort Worth, effective July 1.

### REV. LAWRENCE M. NGUYEN, CRM

New to the Diocese of Fort Worth, appointed **Pastor** of Christ the King Parish in Fort Worth, effective June 27.

### REV. ANTHONY G. RAUSCHUBER, SJ

New to the Diocese of Fort Worth, appointed **Director** of Montserrat Jesuit Retreat House, effective May 13.

### REV. CYRIAQUE SOUNOU, SVD

Parochial Vicar of St. Paul the Apostle Parish in Fort Worth, has been recalled by his religious order effective July 1.

### REV. JOHN TINH TRAN, CRM

Pastor at Our Lady of Fatima Parish in Fort Worth, has been appointed **Pastor** of Vietnamese Martyrs Parish in Arlington, effective July 18.

### REV. VINH VAN VU, CRM

Pastor at Vietnamese Martyrs Parish in Arlington, has been appointed **Pastor** of Our Lady of Fatima Parish in Fort Worth, effective July 18.

## IN MEMORIAM

### FATHER MATHEW KAVIPURAYIDAM

June 18, 2020



Ordained in India as a Franciscan Third Order Regular priest in 1975, Father Kavipurayidam served at St. Catherine of Siena Parish from 2004-2014 then was assigned to St. Thomas the Apostle Parish.

### FATHER JIM O'TOOLE

June 4, 2020



During his 56 years as a priest, Father Jim O'Toole spent 21 years as an Air Force chaplain and another three decades serving North Texas parishes, including St. Michael and Holy Cross.

Full obituaries are available at [NorthTexasCatholic.org](http://NorthTexasCatholic.org).



El Padre Miguel Ángel González López celebra la Misa transmitida en vivo en la Parroquia de Todos los Santos de Fort Worth. (NTC/Juan Guajardo)

# *En medio de la* **CRISIS**

Los sacerdotes pastorean sus rebaños con caridad y valentía durante la pandemia

Por Joan Kurkowski-Gillen



El Padre Óscar Sánchez Olvera en la Parroquia del Inmaculado Corazón de María de Fort Worth. (NTC/Juan Guajardo)



“Desde el principio tuvimos el apoyo de nuestro sacerdote”.

Eso es lo que Ginger Benes dice al recordar los primeros días de la pandemia del coronavirus cuando se prohibieron las reuniones públicas, las empresas cerraron sus puertas y muchos residentes de Azle se encontraron de repente sin trabajo ni sueldo.

“Su preocupación inmediata era que la gente necesitaría cosas y había que ayudarlas”, dijo la feligres de la Parroquia de la Santísima Trinidad y recuerda cómo el Padre Wilson Lucka, TOR, le pidió a la comunidad de fe que trajeran a la iglesia cualquier alimento que pudieran. “Fue entonces cuando nuestra cocina se convirtió en una despensa de alimentos los lunes y jueves. Las familias podrían venir y recoger lo que necesitaban”.

Como lo han hecho a raíz de otras tragedias, el clero respondió a esta última crisis de salud con gran determinación,

compasión y empatía. Durante la gripe española del 1918, las iglesias cerraron sus puertas con la esperanza de aliviar la propagación del virus mortal que causó la muerte de 675,000 estadounidenses. En el 2020, precauciones similares para mitigar la propagación del COVID-19 prohibieron que los fieles pudieran asistir en persona a las iglesias, pero esta vez el clero tenía un nuevo recurso a su disposición: la tecnología. En coordinación con las directivas de los funcionarios estatales y locales, la Diócesis de Fort Worth suspendió las celebraciones litúrgicas abiertas al público, pero alentó a los sacerdotes a celebrar la Misa a través de la transmisión digital en vivo para que los feligreses pudieran participar de la Misa a través de sus computadoras, teléfonos inteligentes, radios y televisores.

Los párrocos utilizaron también las plataformas de los medios sociales para mantenerse en contacto con sus feligreses

y compartir noticias sobre las necesidades de la comunidad parroquial.

Cuando el equipo de protección personal para los trabajadores de la salud comenzó a escasear en el Norte de Texas, el Padre Lucka se acercó al Club de Hombres de la Santísima Trinidad y a las costureras de la parroquia para pedirles que hicieran mascarillas y protectores faciales. Las talentosas costureras crearon cientos de mascarillas con diferentes patrones y adoptaron ideas muy creativas cuando se les acabó el suministro de elástico. Gracias a los materiales comprados por el Club de Hombres se produjeron más de 400 protectores faciales que fueron distribuidos en un hospital infantil y el Departamento de la Policía de Weatherford.

“Me sentí tan orgulloso de cómo los feligreses se unieron”, dijo el Padre Wilson. “Ha sido hermoso ver la manera

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## DE LA PÁGINA 53

en que los feligreses se acercaron entre sí y se apoyaron mutuamente”.

### LA TECNOLOGÍA CONECTA AL REBAÑO DISPERSO

El Padre Jonathan Demma usó su experiencia en ingeniería y programación para conectarse con la mayor cantidad posible de sus feligreses en la Parroquia del Sagrado Corazón de Wichita Falls. El joven sacerdote, que fue ordenado hace dos años, es el administrador parroquial y trabaja también con la escuela primaria y secundaria de Notre Dame. Además, el Padre Demma colabora con el campus del noroeste de Caridades Católicas. Servir a las diferentes comunidades exige siempre mucho esfuerzo.

“Éste ha sido un nuevo desafío: tratar de llegar a un rebaño disperso, mantenerlo junto y realizar mi ministerio pastoral cuando no tengo acceso inmediato con ellos”, señaló el Padre Demma.

Antes de la pandemia, la Parroquia del Sagrado Corazón ya tenía tres cámaras instaladas para televisar la Misa en la capilla cuando no cabía más gente en la iglesia. El Padre Demma compró una suscripción de una red de entrega de contenido que le permitió unir las tres cámaras para que la Misa pudiera transmitirse en vivo en Facebook, YouTube e Instagram.

“Se les notifica a los feligreses cuando la Misa está a punto de comenzar en las redes sociales”, explicó el que fuera director de tecnología de una empresa de larga distancia. “Debido a que estamos utilizando la transmisión basada en la computadora, no hay problemas con el almacenamiento en búfer, y durante

la Comunión, se logra que la imagen mostrada sea la del santuario con las palabras de la oración para la Comunión espiritual”.

Los espectadores ven también la información sobre cómo pueden utilizar su teléfono para enviar un mensaje de texto con su donativo para la parroquia durante el ofertorio.

“Mucha gente está viendo nuestra transmisión en vivo”, comentó entusiasmado el Padre Demma, que depende de varios voluntarios para ayudar con la transmisión en vivo de las Misas. “Familias de todo el país están viendo las Misas; tenemos espectadores de Florida, Nuevo México y Colorado. Algunas personas que fueron en algún momento feligreses de nuestra parroquia se conectan para ver la Misa. Otras son familiares de nuestros feligreses”.

Con las nuevas pautas de distanciamiento social que permiten la reanudación de las celebraciones públicas de la Misa, el sacerdote experto

en tecnología encontró una manera para que los feligreses de alto riesgo, que se sienten incómodos de entrar a la iglesia, puedan participar. Un transmisor de audio de caja negra móvil permite a las personas sentarse en su automóvil en el estacionamiento de la parroquia y escuchar la Misa por radio en 90.1 FM, una emisora de radiodifusión de baja potencia. Una vez que salen de los terrenos de la parroquia, la emisora ya no está disponible.

“Pueden escuchar la Misa y recibir la Comunión de un ministro extraordinario en el estacionamiento”, agregó. “Es una gran alternativa para las personas con un plan de datos limitados para teléfonos móviles y aquellas que no tengan un teléfono inteligente”.

El sacerdote sigue buscando formas innovadoras de unir a la comunidad de la parroquia.

“Algunas personas prefieren el uso de la tecnología. Sin embargo, hay otras que no lo quieren”. Demma observó. “Por eso,



El Padre Wilson Lucka, TOR, rápidamente movilizó grupos voluntarios de la Parroquia Santísima Trinidad para ayudar gente necesitada durante la pandemia. (NTC/Juan Guajardo)



El Padre Jonathan Demma en su oficina de transmisión en vivo en la Parroquia del Sagrado Corazón de Wichita Falls. (NTC/Juan Guajardo)



tratamos de hacer lo que esté a nuestro alcance para que todos participen de acuerdo con sus necesidades”.

### **LAS CARTAS LEVANTAN EL ÁNIMO**

Lord Byron dijo una vez: “Escribir cartas es el único recurso que combina la soledad con la buena compañía”. Movido por ese mismo espíritu, el Padre Tim Thompson compartió sus experiencias de quedarse en casa durante la pandemia mediante una carta semanal enviada por correo electrónico a los feligreses de la Parroquia de la Inmaculada Concepción. La mayoría de las misivas se enfocaron en temas alegres como cortarse el pelo o “aplanar la curva alrededor de su propia cintura”. Habló además en sus cartas de asuntos prácticos, como el uso de las pautas de distanciamiento social para poder reabrir la iglesia.

“Hay una ley de consecuencias no deseadas, lo que significa que suceden cosas que uno no planifica”, filosofó el párroco en una carta después de que

las campanadas de un reloj de péndulo recién adquirido lo mantuvieran despierto toda la noche. “La gente vive cerca de las carreteras y nunca escucha el ruido. Es difícil salir de tu rutina, ¿no es así?”

Las historias jocosas del sacerdote de la vida cotidiana durante el encierro en la casa lo ayudaron a levantar el ánimo de los feligreses que lidian con el estrés del aislamiento. Su historia en la que narra cómo se recortó su propio cabello generó la mayor cantidad de comentarios.

“Asumí que los feligreses están teniendo los mismos problemas que todas las demás personas enfrentan en estos momentos: el sentirse atrapados en casa, el no poder ir a la iglesia, y la interrupción de su vida normal”, explicó el Padre Thompson. “Quería transmitir el mensaje, ‘esto también pasará’”.

El sacerdote ha sido el párroco de la Inmaculada Concepción de Denton por nueve años. El Padre Thompson es muy dedicado a su trabajo y anima constantemente a las familias a confiar en

la divina providencia y el cuidado de Dios.

“Si no tuviéramos ninguna fe o esperanza, uno estaría muy intranquilo con lo frágil que es el mundo”, sugirió. “Esto resalta para mí lo importante que es tener fe en el mundo incierto en que vivimos”.

### **PROTEGERSE Y ACUDIR A LA ORACIÓN VENCERÁN AL VIRUS**

El Condado de Knox informó un solo caso de COVID-19 durante las primeras semanas de la epidemia, pero eso no impidió que el Padre John Perikomalayil Antony, HGN, ofreciera algunos sabios consejos a los miembros de la Parroquia de San José de Rhineland.

“Cuidense unos a otros”, instó el párroco. “Sean higiénicos y mantengan una distancia segura para protegerse unos a otros. Y oren todos los días por las personas que han perdido la vida, los afectados por el virus y los trabajadores

CONTINÚA EN LA PÁGINA 56



El Padre Tim Thompson da la Comunión a una feligrés en el estacionamiento de la Parroquia de la Inmaculada Concepción de Denton. (NTC/Kenneth Munyer)

#### DE LA PÁGINA 55

que nos ayudan a superar esta situación”.

Como es una comunidad agrícola rural, Rhineland no ha sentido las mismas presiones sociales y económicas de las grandes ciudades que se enfrentan a la pandemia.

“La gente sigue cultivando las granjas, pero los residentes que trabajan en los campos petroleros han perdido sus empleos”, explicó. “Les digo en todo momento que si sienten que necesitan ayuda, que me llamen”.

La dispensa de alimentos de la parroquia, abastecida por las donaciones de las familias de la iglesia, abre todos los lunes para atender a las personas que tienen dificultades económicas. La Parroquia de San José también participa en Ministerial Alliance, una red de iglesias que brinda asistencia a los necesitados.

Mientras transmite en vivo la Misa, así como en el rezo diario del Rosario a las 6 p.m., el misionero de los Heraldos de las Buenas Nuevas le recuerda a su congregación que permanezca unida en la oración.

“Nuestras oraciones nos ayudarán a vencer al virus enemigo que está tratando de destruirnos”, dijo el Padre

Perikomalayil. “Mediante nuestra fe en Cristo y permaneciendo juntos y unidos como familia es cómo seremos exitosos”.

#### EL MINISTERIO DE LA PASTORAL DE LOS ENFERMOS CON CUIDADO

El miedo al coronavirus no impidió que el Padre Oscar Sánchez Olvera, CORC, y el Padre Alejandro López Chávez, CORC, realizaran su ministerio de la pastoral para los enfermos y ancianos de la Parroquia del Inmaculado Corazón de María de Fort Worth.

Los dos sacerdotes que pertenecen a la Confraternidad Sacerdotal de Operarios del Reino de Cristo siguieron todos los debidos protocolos de seguridad y visitaron a los enfermos en sus hogares para escuchar confesiones y ungirlos con el santo óleo.

“Ninguna de las personas que visitamos tenían síntomas del virus ni lo habían contraído”, aseguró el Padre Olvera, el párroco, y agregó que los feligreses que visitó tenían cáncer o eran ancianos.

Tomaron todas las precauciones necesarias para hacer las visitas a domicilio y por eso usaron guantes, la mascarilla y llevaron el santo óleo en una bolita de algodón.

“Hicimos todo lo que era necesario para evitar que nos enfermáramos y así poder seguir atendéndolos en sus casas”, prosiguió.

Desde el comienzo de la pandemia, los sacerdotes del Inmaculado Corazón de María han presidido varios entierros celebrados en capillas mortuorias de las funerarias o en el cementerio; y los entierros se limitaron a 10 personas solamente. Ninguna de las muertes se atribuyó al coronavirus.

“Lo primero que la pandemia nos ha enseñado es que necesitamos adaptarnos a las circunstancias”, explicó el párroco. “El sacerdocio, la Eucaristía y los sacramentos siguen siendo los mismos, pero podemos modificar la forma de acompañar a las personas, especialmente durante estos tiempos difíciles de la pandemia”.

El Padre Chávez, el vicario parroquial, dijo que ver la iglesia vacía lo hizo apreciar, aún más, la presencia de la comunidad.

“Ha sido muy significativo para mí ver la respuesta de las personas que siguen la transmisión en vivo de las Misas en la Internet”, agregó. “Eso habla de la fe que tienen en la Iglesia y en Dios. Los feligreses están haciendo todo lo posible para recibir Su divina gracia”. 🇺🇸





El Diácono Rigoberto Leyva en la Parroquia de San Pedro el Apóstol de White Settlement el 23 de mayo de 2020. (NTC/Juan Guajardo)

# MI DESEO DE SERVICIO

El Diácono Rigoberto Leyva lleva “un pie en lo sagrado y un pie en el mundo”

Por Violeta Rocha

CONTINÚA EN LA PÁGINA 58

**E**l servicio es su motor. El constante crecimiento en la fe, su anhelo. A más de una década de su ordenación, para el diácono Rigoberto Leyva, 48, asignado a la Parroquia de San Pedro Apóstol en White Settlement, cada oportunidad de servicio “es una bendición”.

Sus planes eran crecer en la fe católica, ser un buen esposo y padre, pero Dios tenía trazado un sendero más amplio: el diaconado permanente.

Vivir el programa de formación de fe “Luz de Cristo”, en la Parroquia de Nuestra Señora de Lourdes, en Mineral Wells, la que considera su “cuna en la fe” se convirtió, sin pensarlo, en tres años de discernimiento, pues fue ahí donde comenzó a contemplar su vocación diaconal.

“Mi intención era sólo educarme en la fe”, recuerda, pero fue “realmente ese deseo de aprender, de educarme, de conocer más de Dios”, lo que tras horas de oración y meditación frente al Santísimo, resultó en su ingreso al programa de formación diaconal, puerta a la vida de servicio que hoy tanto ama, y que suma ya más de una década.

Originario de Monterrey, México, llegó al Norte de Texas en su juventud, y señala que aunque bautizado en la Iglesia Católica, durante años no practicó su fe. Eso cambió cuando conoció a quien se convertiría en su esposa, María Edith Leyva. Ya tienen casi 27 años de casados y disfrutan de sus 3 hijos y 3 nietos.

La orden del diaconado se establece en la Iglesia Católica como transitoria y permanente. El diaconado transitorio es parte de la preparación a la orden sacerdotal, generalmente de un año, mientras que el diaconado permanente es perpetuo y no busca la orden sacerdotal. Los candidatos al diaconado permanente pueden ser casados, y deben permanecer casados, y si son solteros se ordenan con el voto de celibato.

El diácono permanente casado, no va solo, sino junto con su esposa y su familia, asevera el Diácono Leyva, explicando que el discernimiento involucra acuerdos comunes en familia.

“Gracias a Dios, mi esposa y mis

hijos, siempre vieron ese deseo de servicio en mí, ese deseo de seguir educándome en la formación. Ellos mismos me ayudaron a encontrar ese balance tanto en mi vida secular como padre, como trabajador doméstico, como trabajador secular, y como servidor en la Iglesia”, dijo.

### EL REGALO DE SERVIR

Un diácono permanente casado, conoce bien el diario vivir del pueblo. Ser también parte de esa cotidianidad, permite al diácono ser aliento para los demás, “la meta es educar al pueblo, traerlo a los pies de Jesús”, afirma el diácono Leyva.

Además, la mayoría de los diáconos, tienen un trabajo secular, “y todo esto nos lleva a tener un pie en lo sagrado y un pie en el mundo”, dijo.

Durante sus primeros cinco años como diácono, mantuvo su trabajo de chofer de camiones de carga, laborando de 6 a.m. a 5 p.m., para luego atender a su parroquia asignada, Nuestra Señora de Lourdes, y desde hace cinco años, es el Coordinador de la Oficina de Formación Pastoral. En la Parroquia de San Pedro Apóstol, sirve desde hace dos años. “Lo que más disfruto como diácono es estar con la gente, me encanta compartir con ellos, poder servirles es lo más grande que me pudo haber sucedido como diácono,”

dijo, agregando que se regocija en predicar durante la Misa una vez al mes, y compartir charlas en las clases de RICA.

### HUMILDE MENTOR

“Es muy gratificante ver lo que eres, en otras personas”, señala sobre su servicio como coordinador de formación







a candidatos al diaconado, “mi participación con ellos es el observar, y poder explicarles un poco de la experiencia diaconal que he tenido. Dejarles saber la bendición que es ser diácono, y verla reflejada en muchos de ellos, es también una bendición”.

Hay 24 candidatos al diaconado permanente que llevan preparándose por más de seis años y que esperan ordenarse el 10 de agosto de este año. Será la siguiente generación de diáconos permanentes en la Diócesis de Fort Worth, desde el 2010.

El Papa Francisco pidió a principios del mes de mayo, rezar por los diáconos, llamándolos “fieles al servicio de la palabra y de los pobres”, para que “sean un signo viviente para toda la Iglesia”.

Los diáconos “están dedicados al servicio de los pobres que llevan en sí mismos el rostro de Cristo sufriente. Son los guardianes del servicio en la Iglesia”, agregó el Papa Francisco.

Es precisamente en su constante preparación para esa ‘guardia’ del servicio en la Iglesia que el Diácono Leyva ha buscado seguirse educando para servir mejor. Luego de completar su certificado de estudios de preparatoria (GED), al año de ordenado, este pasado 9 de mayo, se graduó, con un asociado en arte.

Y su siguiente paso es entrar a la universidad, para estudiar Teología.

El Diácono Rigoberto Leyva sabe que con oración, unidad familiar, pero sobre todo, “por obra de Dios”, “todo se puede hacer”. 🇹🇽

## AMBIENTE SEGURO

### Para Reportar Mala Conducta Sexual:

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

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

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

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

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

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







# UNA OFRENDA DIGNA DE DIOS

Memorial de San Junípero Serra  
1 de julio de 2020

Comienza usando los pasos a continuación para reflexionar sobre el versículo de las Escrituras. Luego lee la meditación de Callie, reflexionando sobre ella lentamente.

## LECTIO



Primero lees deliberadamente el pasaje, señalando frases que mueven tu corazón.

## MEDITATIO



Medita en estas palabras y pregúntale a Dios en oración: "¿Qué deseas que oiga en esto?"

## ORATIO



Tercero, habla al Señor mientras tu corazón se mueve.

## CONTEMPLATIO



Finalmente, quédate quieto, confiando en Su presencia. Simplemente descansa en la Palabra de Dios.

## LA ESCRITURA

LECTURA DEL EVANGELIO  
PARA EL 1 DE JULIO DE 2020  
MEMORIAL DE SAN JUNÍPERO SERRA

Esto dice el Señor: "Busquen el bien, no el mal, y vivirán, y así estará con ustedes, como ustedes mismos dicen, el Señor, Dios de los ejércitos.

Aborrezcan el mal y amen el bien, implanten la justicia en los tribunales; quizá entonces el Señor, Dios de los ejércitos, tenga piedad de los sobrevivientes de José.

Yo desprecio y detesto las fiestas de ustedes, no me agradan sus solemnidades.

Aunque me ofrezcan holocaustos, no aceptaré sus ofrendas ni miraré con agrado sus sacrificios de novillos gordos.

Alejen de mí el ruido de sus canciones; no quiero escuchar la música de sus arpas.

Que fluya la justicia como el agua y la bondad como un torrente inagotable".

— Am 5: 14-15, 21-24





## LA REFLEXIÓN

“**B**usquen el bien, y no el mal, y vivirán” (Amos 5:14).

Todos estamos llamados a abandonar nuestro egoísmo. Todos estamos llamados a aceptar la plenitud del Evangelio que comprende tanto la justicia como el amor, que están unidos inseparablemente. No obstante, este proceso de conversión no ocurre instantáneamente. La realidad es que la verdadera conversión toma tiempo; la verdadera evangelización lleva tiempo. Vemos que este principio básico se facilita durante el proceso del Rito de Iniciación Cristiana de Adultos en la parroquia. Ésta es la razón por la cual las personas son admitidas gradualmente fase por fase a los Sacramentos de Iniciación y en la comunidad de Cristo.

El hecho de que este proceso lleve tiempo es cierto tanto para las personas individualmente, así como para las comunidades y las culturas. Con esto en mente, los misioneros católicos españoles se embarcaron en un recorrido por las tierras estadounidenses que no estaban cultivadas con la semilla del Evangelio y que necesitaban trabajadores en el campo. Su tarea era presentar la plenitud del Evangelio con caridad y justicia, y ayudar a forjar una cultura y un pueblo que impartieran la misma verdad de Cristo a sus hijos. Al hacerlo, las misiones españolas dejaron una hermosa huella en el panorama de nuestra nación, y en su momento fueron bastiones de refugio en una tierra áspera.

San Junípero Serra es reconocido como el padre fundador de California y un modelo ejemplar de evangelización desinteresada de los pueblos indígenas nativos americanos. Dentro de los muros de sus comunidades misioneras San Junípero proporcionó a estas personas protección y un nivel de vida digno con el fin de promover y desarrollar el

sentido de su dignidad humana. Fuera de sus propias comunidades misioneras, se involucró en la política para defender los derechos humanos de esta población mediante lo que se convertiría en California en la “Carta de Derechos” para los nativos americanos, un pueblo que era considerado extraoficialmente como infrahumano.

El amor paternal y sacrificado de San Junípero por los indios nativos americanos le llevó a ganar sus corazones para Cristo, de tal manera que, incluso cuando los gobiernos de México y de los Estados Unidos transfirieron estas misiones a instituciones completamente seculares, la reverencia de la población local hacia Dios y Su Iglesia continuó floreciendo.

Éste fue siempre el propósito de las misiones. Plantar y cultivar el crecimiento del amor de Dios en un área para que eventualmente pudiera prosperar como una comunidad cristiana sostenible, o más bien, como una fe cristiana sostenible arraigada en la comunidad. Sin embargo, para lograr este objetivo se necesitaron los esfuerzos incansables de numerosos misioneros como San Junípero para producir una cosecha. Así, con el fruto de su trabajo, él pudo presentar una ofrenda digna de Dios. Que Dios nos ayude a todos a hacer lo mismo. ✝

**Callie Nowlin**, MTS, se convirtió al catolicismo y es Directora de Educación Religiosa, catequista y blogger con gran pasión por las Escrituras y por ayudar a los demás en su peregrinar hacia Cristo.



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# Magníficas OPORTUNIDADES

El Padre Jonathan Wallis regresa a Fort Worth luego de ser nombrado Vicario General de la Diócesis y Director del Newman Center de TCU

Por Juan Guajardo

Luego de haber estado trabajando por cinco años en Louisiana, el Padre Jonathan Wallis espera con entusiasmo no sólo volver a su diócesis de origen y “poder servir de una manera completamente distinta”, sino también regresar a su alma mater, la Universidad Cristiana de Texas (TCU, por siglas en inglés).

El Padre Wallis, que sirvió como Decano de Estudiantes de St. Joseph Abbey and Seminary College en Covington, Louisiana, fue nombrado el 18 de mayo Vicario General de la Diócesis de Fort Worth. El nativo de Missouri, que lleva como sacerdote 13 años, ocupará su nuevo cargo el 1 de julio y servirá además como Capellán y Director del Ministerio Católico Universitario de TCU.

“El Padre Wallis es fundamentalmente un buen sacerdote, un hombre de oración y digno de confianza”, señaló el Obispo Michael Olson. “Servirá bien como Vicario General porque es conocido y muy respetado por sus compañeros sacerdotes”.

Aunque nunca ha desempeñado ninguno de estos cargos, el Padre Wallis posee una experiencia ministerial vasta y variada que le será muy valiosa tanto en el ministerio universitario como en su nuevo cargo de Vicario General.

Luego de su ordenación sacerdotal en el 2007, el Padre Wallis sirvió como Vicario Parroquial en la Parroquia de San Mateo de Arlington; obtuvo su licenciatura en teología sagrada de la Pontificia Universidad Gregoriana de Roma; recorrió el circuito de las parroquias de la región

occidental de la Diócesis; sirvió como Director Diocesano de Catequesis durante aproximadamente un año; trabajó como Director Diocesano de Vocaciones; y sirvió por un tiempo en el Seminario Holy Trinity de Irving, antes de ser nombrado primero como Decano Asistente, y más tarde, como Decano del Seminario de St. Joseph.

“El Padre Wallis ha adquirido mucha sabiduría a través de estas experiencias en su vida como hombre y como sacerdote”, dijo el Obispo Olson.

En el cargo de Vicario General de la Diócesis, el Padre Wallis será el sucesor de Monseñor Juan Rivero, quien ocupó dicho cargo durante los últimos cuatro años. En su calidad de Vicario General, actuará como el “segundo al mando” del Obispo Michael Olson respecto a los asuntos ejecutivos diocesanos.

“Un Vicario general, que cuenta con potestad ordinaria, ha de ayudar al Obispo en el gobierno de toda la diócesis”, tanto en los asuntos administrativos como pastorales, dijo Sara Paglialunga, JCD, Abogada Rotal del tribunal eclesiástico diocesano.

A discreción del Obispo Olson, el Vicario general puede actuar en lugar del Obispo para realizar muchas gestiones en toda la diócesis, como las dispensaciones y permisos.

El Padre Wallis se sintió muy agradecido al notificársele su nombramiento y dijo “siento que el Señor me llama a realizar algo nuevo y haré todo lo mejor que pueda con la ayuda de Su gracia”.

El Padre Wallis agregó que su nombramiento como Capellán y Director del Newman Center de TCU fue un poco



Padre Jonathan Wallis

sorprendente, pero emocionante. Cuando cursaba sus estudios en dicha universidad, él era todavía episcopal. Se graduó de TCU en el 1996 con una licenciatura en educación musical.

Aún más significativo es que el entonces aspirante a director de coro tuvo su primer contacto con el catolicismo durante su tiempo en la universidad, a través de sus amistades, mediante sus investigaciones sobre San Juan Pablo II y la Eucaristía. Poco después, se convirtió al catolicismo y tres años después entró al seminario.

El Padre Wallis espera poder ayudar a los estudiantes universitarios a crecer en su fe católica. “Poder regresar a TCU casi 30 años más tarde, como capellán del Newman Center, muestra que Dios guarda cosas increíbles para uno y que realmente uno no tiene idea a dónde te llevará la vida”. 🇺🇸





# JUSTICIA, PAZ Y RESPONSABILIDAD

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



 @BpOlsonFW

**H**ace unas semanas nos reunimos para rendir gloria y adoración a Dios, y rezar por el descanso del alma de George Floyd, nuestro hermano, creado a imagen y semejanza de Dios. Como un pueblo de oración, oramos por el consuelo de su familia y sus amigos.

Oramos también por la paz y el fin de la injusticia, la discordia y la enemistad racial en nuestra sociedad. Le pedimos a Dios que nos conceda Su misericordia para lograr nuestra propia conversión individual y como comunidad de los pecados de injusticia que resultan en caos y maldad. Oramos también por las personas que están a cargo de la responsabilidad de protegernos de la injusticia mediante el cumplimiento de la ley.

Los mandamientos de amar a Dios y amar a tu prójimo no se pueden separar. Esto significa que no puedo amar verdaderamente a Dios sin amar a mi prójimo, ni puedo amar a mi prójimo sin amar a Dios. Amar verdaderamente a mi prójimo significa respetarlos y tratarlos justamente, lo que comienza con el humilde reconocimiento de que ninguno de nosotros somos Dios. Dios nos ha creado para que nos necesitemos unos a otros, con nuestra diversidad auténtica y nuestra naturaleza humana común.

Como declara la Conferencia de Obispos Católicos de los Estados Unidos en *Abramos nuestros corazones: el incansante llamado al amor*, carta pastoral contra el racismo: “*El racismo surge cuando – ya sea consciente o inconscientemente – una persona sostiene que su propia raza o etnia es superior y, por lo tanto, juzga a las personas de otras razas u orígenes étnicos como inferiores e indignas de igual consideración. Esta convicción o actitud es pecaminosa cuando lleva a individuos o grupos a excluir, ridiculizar, maltratar o discriminar*



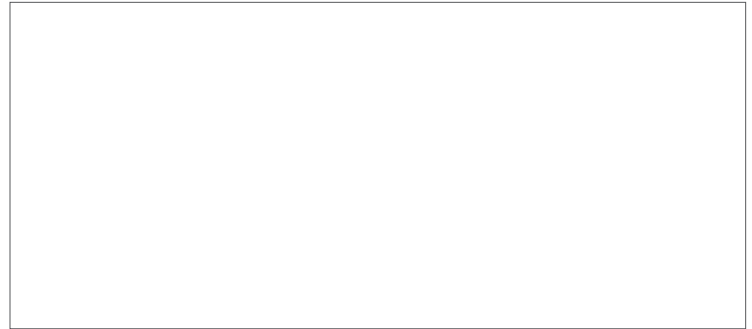
*injustamente a las personas por su raza u origen étnico. Los actos racistas son pecaminosos porque violan la justicia. Revelan que no se reconoce la dignidad humana de las personas ofendidas, que no se las reconoce como el prójimo al que Cristo nos llama a amar (Mt 22, 39)”.*

Como hijos del único Dios verdadero, el Dios de todas las personas, se nos exige vivir de acuerdo con la autoridad legítima por el bien de la justicia y el amor. Tenemos también la obligación de responsabilizar a los encargados de esta autoridad legítima de rendir cuentas de sus acciones acorde con la justicia y el amor. Cuando quienes poseen la responsabilidad de la autoridad traicionan esa confianza, perjudican a la sociedad y a la persona creada a imagen y semejanza de Dios. Nos incumbe no ser indiferentes, sino ser responsables de velar por la justicia y responsabilizar a quienes hayan violado la confianza ante la ley con remedios tan justos que incluyen el debido proceso conforme con la dignidad humana.

Cuando presenciamos que se traiciona esta confianza, el miedo y la ira son inevitables. Podemos sentir la tentación de reaccionar derribando la autoridad legítima y cometiendo actos ilegales, y recurriendo a la violencia. Nosotros, como personas de fe, tenemos que trascender el miedo y la ira, y hacer uso de la ruta de acceso del sistema de justicia; no se trata simplemente de un sistema de leyes y procedimientos que son los edictos de los poderosos, sino más bien un sistema de justicia que se establece en reconocimiento y respeto hacia la naturaleza humana que proporciona una moral que es a la vez compasiva y vinculante. Más importante aún es recurrir a Dios para obtener iluminación y aliento. Si sólo nos dejamos llevar por el miedo y la ira, atacamos la autoridad de la ley que protege a los

vulnerables y a cada uno de nuestros vecinos. Si elegimos el camino de la indiferencia, socavamos la autoridad de la ley que tiene la intención de servir a la justicia y no simplemente el *status quo*, que con demasiada frecuencia ataca a los vulnerables, que deben ser salvaguardados.

Las llamadas radicales para cortar los fondos de la policía no son razonables y, a menudo, son parte de una estrategia por parte de activistas para desestabilizar nuestra sociedad al aprovecharse de los temores que muchos de nosotros tenemos. Necesitamos especialmente que la policía proteja el orden del bien común y salvaguarde a aquéllos que son más propensos a ser víctimas de delitos e injusticias. Los hombres y mujeres de nuestros departamentos de la policía necesitan de nuestras oraciones y apoyo debido a la responsabilidad que se les ha confiado para actuar de manera razonable y mantener la paz en situaciones emocionalmente cargadas que presentan un gran riesgo para sí mismos. La capacitación en los protocolos y prácticas no es suficiente. Se necesita una formación anclada en la recta razón y reforzada por la transparencia, y la participación y el apoyo de la comunidad para evitar que suframos mayores injusticias de enemistad racial y de la ley de las turbas. El Papa San Pablo VI lo afirmó claramente el 1 de enero del 1972, día de la Solemnidad de María, la Madre de Dios: “Si quieres la paz, trabaja por la justicia”. Esto no significa que la justicia sea algo que otras personas poseen para darme a cambio de que yo les deje vivir en paz. La justicia y la paz son interdependientes. Cada una de ellas requiere de la ley y una autoridad responsable, y de la contribución de todos; de cada persona y de toda comunidad. 🇺🇸




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OF DEACON PEDRO MARTINEZ

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Mass!**

# ORACIÓN PARA SUPERAR EL RACISMO



**M**aría, amiga y madre de todos, a través de tu Hijo, Dios ha encontrado un camino para unirse a todos los seres humanos, llamados a ser un solo pueblo, hermanas y hermanos entre sí.

Pedimos tu ayuda al recurrir a tu Hijo, buscando el perdón por las veces en que hemos fallado en amarnos y respetarnos.

Pedimos tu ayuda para obtener de tu Hijo la gracia que necesitamos para vencer el mal del

racismo y construir una sociedad justa.

Pedimos tu ayuda para seguir a tu Hijo, para que el prejuicio y la animosidad no infecten ya nuestras mentes o corazones sino que sean reemplazados por el amor que respeta la dignidad de cada persona.

Madre de la Iglesia, el Espíritu de tu Hijo Jesús alienta nuestros corazones: Ruega por nosotros.

Amén.

