

BRINGING THE GOOD NEWS TO THE DIOCESE OF FORT WORTH



# NORTH TEXAS CATHOLIC



The **Vocations**  
issue

JULY – AUGUST 2021  
VOL. 37 | NO. 4



# IN THIS ISSUE

July - August 2021

**10 GOLDEN MILESTONE**  
Father Ron Mohnickey, TOR,  
celebrates 50 years of priesthood.

**12 A NATURAL WAY**  
Understanding her body improves  
health and empowers women.

**20 UP, UP, AND AWAY**  
Father Khoi Tran will serve as a  
chaplain in the U.S. Air Force.

**22 THE ENCOURAGERS**  
Three local Serra Clubs foster  
vocations and support priests.

**26 ALL IN THE FAMILY**  
Four children pursue religious voca-  
tions in a St. Joseph Parish family.

## ON THE COVER

Six priests ordained, the diocese's  
largest class. (NTC/Juan Guajardo)

## FOLLOW US ONLINE

Visit [NorthTexasCatholic.org](http://NorthTexasCatholic.org) for  
photo galleries, videos, the digital  
version of the magazine, and web-  
only articles.

## HAVE A STORY IDEA?

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



**36**  
**A GREAT HARVEST**  
Six men lay down their lives to  
become priests for the Diocese of  
Fort Worth.



**30 RELIGIOUS LIBERTY**



**52 SOUL PURPOSE**



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

SOCIAL MEDIA MANAGER ANNETTE MENDOZA-SMITH

CONTRIBUTORS KEVIN BARTRAM | JERRY CIRCELLI  
JAYME DONAHUE | SANDRA ENGELLAND  
JOAN GILLEN | JILLIAN HOLMBOE  
JOY KAISER | RODGER MALLISON  
SUSAN MCFARLAND | LANCE MURRAY  
WALKER PRICE | MATTHEW REDDEN  
VIOLETA ROCHA | ALEX ROSALES  
MICHAEL SHERMAN | MARY LOU SEEWOSTER  
MATTHEW SMITH | BEN TORRES

TRANSLATOR YOLANDA NEWCOMB

REGULAR COLUMNISTS JEFF HEDGLEN | ALI HOFFMAN  
FR. MAURICE MOON | CALLIE NOWLIN  
FR. TAD PACHOLCZYK | SEAN WRIGHT

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

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

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

For address changes, please contact Debbie Dowis, 817-533-3172.

## On a life worth living

My high school geography and history teacher would often remark about how she believes in God because she would lose her mind otherwise.

The thought of there being nothing else in this life but absolute death at the end, no afterlife, no heaven, would be unbearable. “Why live life at all...why try to achieve...why assume risks?” she reasoned. The permanence and ever-looming presence of a cold, eternal silence six feet under the earth would snuff out the thrill and wonder of life.

In a certain way, there’s a wisdom to my teacher’s musings. One could even argue it’s healthy to consider death. In fact, the author of the *Book of Ecclesiastes*, Qoheleth, meditates on this very point himself. Death levels all; fame, glory, and fortune are subject to loss; and humanity marches toward the grave, he writes. That pessimism, however, is countered by the author’s conclusion that God is the ultimate judge of a life lived well or badly, so best live it well.

Archbishop Charles Chaput, OFM Cap., goes to the heart of this in his new book, *Things Worth Dying For: Thoughts on a Life Worth Living*. He states, “God and His mercy are real,” therefore, “Time has a purpose. The meaning of a sentence becomes clear when we put a period at the end of it. The same applies to life...thinking a little about our mortality puts the world in perspective.”

Both Chaput and Qoheleth understand that life only has meaning and purpose if lived *correctly*, if lived for the right *reason*. And that’s the crux: what is the right reason?

As Catholics, we are infinitely blessed to know we have a Creator who created for this overriding reason expressed so succinctly in the *Baltimore Catechism*: “God made me to know Him, to love Him, and to serve Him in this world, and to be happy with Him forever in heaven.” *That’s* the cause worth living for and dying (literally and figuratively) for.

If we consider life apart from what Jesus calls us to, we risk a purposeless and empty life which is subject to death. If we consider life with Jesus, in love and communion with Him, death is not an end but the beginning of the light of eternity we’ll spend with God.

The recent ordination of six men to the priesthood is a vivid testimony to finding truth and purpose in life. Their joyful self-sacrifice points us to the reality that when life is lived well — that is, with love — death loses its sting, its victory (*1 Corinthians 15:55-57*).

So, in order to feel alive, now and forever, remember that love is the key (*John 15:13*).

*Juan Guajardo*  
EDITOR



David Cassanova assists Fr. Ken Robinson during Mass for the deaf community at St. Rita Church, May 2. (NTC/Rodger Mallison)



## Together again: Deaf Community Mass resumes

**FORT WORTH** — It's not unusual to linger after Mass for a few minutes to talk with friends, but for three hours? When the deaf community gathered for their monthly Mass on June 6, they visited until the lights were off, three hours later.

Community Mass for the deaf resumed May 2, after being halted in April 2020 because of coronavirus precautions.

David Cassanova, the deaf Mass coordinator, said, "It's wonderful and inspiring to see people — people were happy to be together and that made me happy and motivated."

Father Ken Robinson celebrated the Mass at St. Rita Church in Fort Worth.

Connie Martin, coordinator of deaf ministry and special needs services, explained the pandemic was especially difficult for the deaf community, which already experiences isolation.

Furthermore, masks make lip reading impossible and obscure facial

expressions. However, from the beginning of the pandemic Bishop Michael Olson has scheduled sign language interpretation for the livestream Mass from St. Patrick Cathedral each Sunday. The livestreams of the Easter Triduum and priestly ordination Mass were also interpreted for the deaf.

"The bishop has been so supportive," said Martin, who made home visits to members of the deaf community early in the pandemic to reassure them.

"If we didn't reach out, the deaf would be forgotten, pushed aside. We have to pull them in, and it changes their lives. The spiritual benefit makes a difference," she continued.

Deaf Ministry also provides sign language interpretation for religious education, sacramental preparation, and other services as requested.

The Knights of Columbus provide financial support for deaf ministry.

## A domestic mission with a global mindset

**COLLEYVILLE** — Since 2008, the Mission Outreach Council at Good Shepherd Parish in Colleyville has sent many groups to its mission partner in Honduras, but its latest mission work has been close to home. Within the diocese, in fact.

Good Shepherd parishioners met with Nikki Leafgreen, the principal of St. George Catholic School, and determined a plan to improve the outdoor learning spaces at the Fort Worth school.

School students and families partnered with the mission team from Good Shepherd Parish to improve the existing

bleachers, clean the grounds, and create a rosary garden.

The rosary, made of a gold painted cross and large painted stones, represents the World Mission Rosary, inspired by Archbishop Fulton Sheen to encourage prayers for children living in poverty and adversity at home and throughout the world. Each color symbolizes a continent.

When their work was accomplished, the mission day concluded with a hot dog lunch and kickball.

"It was an amazing time of fellowship," said Tere Martin, mission ministry coordinator at Good Shepherd Parish.







## Graduates walk the stage confident and ready

Graduate Diana Aguirre processes with teacher Dillon Bagwell during the commencement for Nolan Catholic High School. (NTC/Ben Torres)

**FORT WORTH** — The mortarboard hats and the endless refrains of “Pomp and Circumstance” are unmistakable indications of graduation.

Nolan Catholic High School celebrated graduation at Globe Life Field on May 24.

During the students’ senior year, Nolan President Leah Rios observes a tremendous transformation. Many seniors begin the year unsure of themselves, she said, but by the time they walk across the stage, “They leave self-confident in their faith and in their lives, ready to move forward with God.”

A senior retreat and service projects help Nolan students prepare for their ultimate purpose “to know God, to love God, and to serve God,” according to Rios.

At Nolan’s graduation, students choose a faculty or staff member to assist them as they don their graduation robe and any stoles or awards they have earned,

a particularly meaningful tradition.

Mandy Lester, dean of academics at Nolan, admitted that graduation is a celebration of everything the students have accomplished, but it also symbolizes a necessary letting go.

“We connect as educators for four years, and then they take the next step on their own,” she said. “If they come back to visit, it’s a different relationship.”

Graduation is a rite of passage that’s a bitter-sweet moment for faculty and staff, according to Dr. Maggie Harrison, president of Cassata Catholic High School.

She said the small school enables teachers to build close relationships with the students. “We’re proud of everyone, but we miss them when they go,” she said.

Cassata Catholic High School graduates, along with their friends and family, celebrated commencement on May 22 at St. Andrew Church.

## Buy the book: St. Rita library wins \$5,000 grant

**FORT WORTH** — Here’s a story with a happy ending.

St. Rita Catholic School received a \$5,000 grant from the Laura Bush Foundation for America’s Libraries to buy books for its library.

The grant’s timing is especially opportune. In a normal year, St. Rita’s small library budget derives from proceeds of book fairs. In a pandemic year, no book fairs were scheduled.

Equipping a library for children from pre-K-3 through eighth grade is a challenge at any school. A collection ranging from picture books to teen novels is required to match interests and reading abilities as students develop.

According to Principal Mary Burns, St. Rita has a

couple of extra challenges.

The diversity at the school in east Fort Worth makes for a beautiful community that Burns and librarian Robin Bolliger want to reflect in its assortment of books. A second challenge, Burns explained, is that some students who enroll at St. Rita in the higher grades arrive with reading deficits. “We want books that draw in the struggling reader,” said Burns.

This story won’t conclude with the school year’s end. In conversations with her pupils throughout her career, Burns has determined that many students have few books at home. This year, like every year, St. Rita’s school library keeps summer hours so students can read happily ever after.



Sister Mary Jean, SSMN, tours the halls of Our Lady of Victory Catholic school where she taught for seven years. (NTC/Ben Torres)

## An educational legacy of centuries and generations

**FORT WORTH** — Our Lady of Victory School hosted a legacy celebration and closing ceremony for the south Fort Worth school on June 12.

Bishop Michael Olson celebrated Mass in the school gymnasium with many Sisters of Saint Mary of Namur, other former and current teachers, and invited guests.

The Sisters of Saint Mary of Namur established the school in 1910, and their legacy of Catholic education in Texas was honored.

An open house followed, and former students walked halls lined with photos depicting the 111-year history of the school.

Sister Patricia Ridgley, regional superior for the SSMNs, previously cited rising costs, declining enrollment, and the COVID-19 pandemic as the reasons behind the decision to close the school at the conclusion of this school year.

Linda Kuntz, a former student who returned to

OLV for a 28-year career as a teacher and principal said, “We hope that students keep Our Lady of Victory within their hearts, within their academics, within their minds, and within their families.”

Another school named for our Blessed Mother, Notre Dame Catholic School in Wichita Falls, has also ceased operations due to declining enrollment, years of annual expenses exceeding income, and many years of costly deferred maintenance on the aging buildings.

Twenty years ago, more than 500 students enrolled, but about 200 students attended in recent years.

Many of the rituals that mark the end of the school year, such as the spring concert and field day, took on extra significance, knowing that the school established in 1905 would soon be closed.

On May 15, Bishop Olson delivered the commencement address for the last class to graduate from Notre Dame.

## In Eastland, Bishop Olson blesses foundation stone

**EASTLAND** — Four parishes share a single vision of having a place for community and religious education. The property is purchased, architectural plans are rendered, and on June 5, the vision took another step towards reality.

Bishop Michael Olson prayed the Rosary and blessed the foundation stone for the All Saints Family Activity and Youth Center, accompanied by parishioners from St. John Parish in Strawn; St. Rita Parish in Ranger; Holy Rosary Parish in Cisco; and St. Francis Xavier Parish in Eastland.

The first phase of the construction includes three classrooms, a foyer, and a commercial kitchen.

Father Vijaya Mareedu, SAC, pastor of the four parishes, describes the project as “like a seed

that is planted. It grows slowly, but it will grow.”

The property, on I-20 in Eastland, exceeds 50 acres and is central to the four parishes, which were established more than 100 years ago. Fr. Mareedu envisions the center will become a hub for youth, including college students from nearby Ranger College and Cisco College. In addition to regular religious education classes, it will be able to host retreats and fellowship events.

Janie Ortiz, a religious education teacher and mother of five from St. Francis Xavier, explained the religious education program has outgrown its current building.

She said, “We have a great future with all these children, all these youth. We see a brighter future — better things are coming”





Father Ray McDaniel leads the Eucharistic Procession at St. Philip the Apostle Parish. (NTC/Kevin Bartram)

## Parishes take Christ into the community. Literally.

**LEWISVILLE**— Just one third of Catholics believe that during Mass, the bread and wine actually become the Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus Christ, according to a widely publicized 2019 study by the Pew Research Center.

To demonstrate reverence for the real presence of Jesus in the Holy Eucharist, parishes have held public processions with the Blessed Sacrament for centuries.

In 1551, in response to the denial of the real presence of Jesus in the Eucharist during the Protestant Reformation, the Council of Trent declared, “The Sacrament is to be honored with extraordinary festive celebrations (and) solemnly carried from place to place in processions according to the praiseworthy universal rite and custom of the holy Church.”

Several parishes in the Diocese of Fort Worth observe the tradition of the Eucharistic Procession on the Solemnity of the Most

Holy Body and Blood of Christ, which fell on June 6 this year.

St. Philip the Apostle Parish in Lewisville holds a Eucharistic Procession each year. Father Ray McDaniel, pastor of St. Philip, led the congregation after the 12:30 Mass on a public procession through the church grounds and returned to the sanctuary for a benediction.

This year at St. Andrew Church in Fort Worth, Father Jim Gigliotti, TOR, established the parish’s first Eucharistic procession in recent memory.

“In these days of disbelief in the real presence, such devotions speak loudly of Adoration of His Majesty in the Eucharist,” said Fr. Gigliotti.

Hundreds of St. Andrew parishioners sang as they followed the Eucharist through the parish and school grounds. The Knights of Columbus held a canopy over the monstrance, and Boy Scout Troop 97 knelt along the path.

## The Reynas serve 53 years, even before parish opened

**DE LEON** — Lila Reyna began teaching Catholic children before the town’s Catholic church, Our Lady of Guadalupe, even existed.

“I went to Sacred Heart Church in Comanche,” Reyna said. “Our priest said we needed to get Catholics in De Leon involved in coming to church since De Leon didn’t have a church yet, and that’s what got me involved.”

Reyna, since 1968, has served as a longtime catechist and recently retired as director of catechesis at Our Lady of Guadalupe.

Parishioners honored Reyna and her husband, Joe Reyna, for 53 years of dedicated service to the parish.

Reyna initially taught in people’s homes and later at a local Methodist church until the parish was established.

“I remember Joe and I used to cut the grass at the church with a push mower,” Reyna said. “That wasn’t always fun, especially on hot days. Fortunately, someone else does that now.”

Joe Reyna helped with that and other church maintenance needs and projects through the years.

“I always wanted to do all I could for my church since I was young,” Joe Reyna said.

“Lila and Joe were charter members of our church,” Our Lady of Guadalupe Pastoral Council member Don Halbrook said. “They were one of the cornerstones.”

— Matthew Smith



## Arlington native receives Holy Orders

**ARLINGTON** — On June 12, Christopher Kellerman, SJ, a native of Arlington, was ordained to the priesthood, along with three other Jesuits from the USA Central and Southern Province. Archbishop of New Orleans Gregory Aymond, presided at the sacred liturgy.

A longtime member of Most Blessed Sacrament Parish in Arlington, Fr. Kellerman graduated from Lamar High School in 2004. Fr. Kellerman attended Texas



Father Christopher Kellerman, SJ

Tech University in Lubbock, where he studied music and political science and was an active member of the Catholic Student Association. He went on to earn his master's degree in theology from the University of Dallas in Irving, where he began seriously discerning a religious vocation.

He entered the Jesuit Novitiate in Grand Coteau, La., in 2011. After two years, he went to St. Louis, where he studied philosophy at Saint Louis University and served for a year at St. Louis University High School.

Fr. Kellerman's ministerial experience was at Regis Jesuit High School in Denver. He then earned his Master of Divinity degree at Regis College at the University of Toronto. For the past year, he has been a visiting research fellow at the Jesuit Social Research Institute (JSRI) at Loyola University New Orleans, as well as serving as a deacon in Baton Rouge, La.

Fr. Kellerman is now serving as a priest at Immaculate Conception Parish in Baton Rouge, while serving as interim director of JSRI in New Orleans.

## OFFICIAL ASSIGNMENTS BY MOST REV. MICHAEL

### REV. JASON ALLAN

Newly ordained, has been appointed **Parochial Vicar** at Immaculate Conception Catholic Parish in Denton, effective July 1.

### REV. JAMES ANGERT, TOR

Pastor of St. Maria Goretti Parish in Arlington, at the proposal of his order's superior, has been **transferred** outside of the Diocese of Fort Worth, effective June 1.

### REV. FRANCIS CHINTHAMALLA, HGN

Parochial Vicar of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish in Keller, has been appointed **Pastor** of St. Joseph Parish in Rhineland and Santa Rosa Parish in Knox City, effective July 1.

### REV. MICHAEL CISKI, TOR

Parochial Vicar at St. Maria Goretti Parish in Arlington, has been appointed **Pastor** of the same parish, effective June 1.

### REV. JONATHAN DEMMA

Pastoral administrator at Sacred Heart Parish in Wichita Falls, has been appointed **Pastor** of the same parish, effective July 1.

### REV. MIGUEL ANGEL GONZALEZ-LOPEZ, TOR

Pastor of St. Jude the Apostle Parish

in Mansfield, has been **transferred** outside of the Diocese of Fort Worth, effective July 1.

### REV. THOMAS JONES

Newly ordained, has been appointed **Parochial Vicar** of St. Jude the Apostle Parish in Mansfield, effective July 1.

### REV. DANIEL KELLEY

Pastor of St. Joseph Parish in Arlington, has been appointed **Pastor** of St. Jude the Apostle Parish in Mansfield, effective July 1.

### 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. PEDRO MARTINEZ

Pastoral Administrator of St. Peter the Apostle Parish in Fort Worth, has been appointed **Pastor** of the same parish, effective July 1.

### REV. SAMUEL MAUL

Newly ordained, has been appointed **Parochial Vicar** of St. John the Apostle Parish in North Richland Hills, effective July 1.

### REV. RONALD MERCADO

Pastor of St. George Parish in

## IN MEMORIAM

### FATHER DAVID BRISTOW

May 22, 2021

During his 23 years as a Catholic priest in the Diocese of Fort Worth, Fr. Bristow served several area parishes, including St. Mary of the Assumption in Fort Worth for 15 years.



Full obituary is available at [bit.ly/FatherBristow](http://bit.ly/FatherBristow)



Fort Worth, has been appointed **Pastor** of St. Joseph Parish in Arlington, effective July 1.

**REV. BRETT METZLER**

Newly ordained, will continue his graduate studies at the Catholic University of America, in residence at Theological College, effective July 1.

**REV. JOSEPH MORENO**

Newly ordained, has been appointed **Pastoral Administrator** of St. Jude Thaddeus Parish in Burkburnett, Christ the King Parish in Iowa Park, and St. Paul Parish in Electra, effective July 1.

**REV. JAMES MORMON, TOR**

Returning to the Diocese of Fort Worth, has been appointed **Parochial Vicar** of St. Maria Goretti Parish in Arlington, at the proposal of his superior, effective July 1.

**REV. LINH NGUYEN**

Newly ordained, has been appointed **Parochial Vicar** of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish in Keller, effective July 1.

**REV. NGHIA NGUYEN**

Parochial vicar of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish in Keller, has been appointed **Pastoral Administrator** of St. George Parish in Fort Worth, effective July 1.

**REV. JOHN PERIKOMALAYIL, HGN**

Pastor of St. Joseph Parish in Rhineland and Santa Rosa Parish in Knox City, has been appointed **Pastor** of Our Lady of Mercy Parish in Hillsboro, effective July 1.

**REV. OUSEPH THEKKAUMTHALA**

Parochial administrator of Our Lady of Mercy Parish in Hillsboro, will be **in residence** in Fort Worth, effective July 1.

**REV. KHOI TRAN**

Pastoral administrator of St. Jude Thaddeus Parish in Burkburnett, Christ the King Parish in Iowa Park, and St. Paul Parish in Electra, has been released to the Archdiocese of Military Services for ministry as a **Chaplain** of the U.S. Air Force, effective July 1.

**REV. RICHARD KIRKHAM**

Resigned as pastor of St. Martin de Porres Parish in Prosper on June 5, 2018, but later changed his mind and sought to reverse the resignation by hierarchical recourse to the Holy See. The third and final step in that recourse is now complete, and the Supreme Tribunal of the Apostolic Signatura upheld the validity of his resignation as did the Congregation for the Clergy in the first instance. Rev. Kirkham remains without assignment in the Diocese of Fort Worth.

**MR. JOHN GREMMELS**

Formerly a priest of the Diocese of Fort Worth, requested dispensation from all rights and duties of priestly ministry, and the rescript of laicization has been granted by the Holy See.

**MR. ISAAC OROZCO**


Formerly a priest of the Diocese of Fort Worth, requested dispensation from all rights and duties of priestly ministry, and the rescript of laicization has been granted by the Holy See.




**SAINT FRANCIS VILLAGE**

A GATED RETIREMENT (62+) COMMUNITY ON THE SHORES OF LAKE BENBROOK

**COME SHARE OUR LITTLE PIECE OF HEAVEN**

 A community of strong Catholics, plus independent living and security

 Daily Mass and weekly Confession

 250-acre country living, turkey and deer abound



[SaintFrancisVillage.com](http://SaintFrancisVillage.com)  
[StFrancisVillageCatholicChapel.com](http://StFrancisVillageCatholicChapel.com)  
817-292-5786

# noble service

## 50 YEARS OF

Father Ron Mohnickey, TOR, celebrates  
50 years of priestly life

By Matthew Smith

**T**hat Good Shepherd Church parishioners treasure Father Ronald Mohnickey, TOR, is obvious as attested by a standing ovation of sustained applause and long lines of well-wishers following a May 16 Mass of Thanksgiving honoring the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Father Mohnickey's ordination.

In person, the parochial vicar, 78, comes across as gentle, engaged, and caring. Not to mention humorous in relaying his unconditional love of donuts or friendship with Father Jim Angert, TOR, of St. Maria Goretti Parish in Arlington, who also celebrated his 50<sup>th</sup> ordination anniversary on May 16. Fr. Jim Angert, TOR, at the proposal of his superior was transferred outside of the dioceses on June 1.

"We were ordained together," Fr. Mohnickey said. "He was featured recently in the *North Texas Catholic* and I have chided him ever since. I asked him to autograph my copy. We've been friends for 55, 60 years."

The years since his 1971 ordination seem both long ago and not so much, Fr. Mohnickey mused.

"Sometimes unbelievably so, sometimes not," Fr. Mohnickey said. "My body tells me it's been a long time, but not necessarily my spirit."

Although Fr. Mohnickey claims his is hardly "a very noble story," others would beg to differ.

His humility and devoutness are easily discernable, Good Shepherd parishioner Martha Eberlein said. "When he talks, when he sings, he's got this heavenly voice. I'm always excited when I know he's celebrating the Mass."

In characterizing Fr. Mohnickey as a saint, parishioner Jose Jimenez agreed.

"He's very humble," Jimenez said. "He'll never tell you he doesn't have time. There's never, 'Oh, I'm busy.' He's very passionate."

Cleveland, Ohio, born and raised, Fr. Mohnickey's ministries before coming to Good Shepherd included serving as an instructor and administrator at St. Francis University, in Pennsylvania and as director of novices and instructor at Franciscan University's Gaming, Austria campus, among other assignments. Texas, however, was love at first sight.

"Texas really feels like home," Fr. Mohnickey said. "I'm with a cane now and a dry Texas summer is safer than a slippery Ohio winter."

So too does Good Shepherd feel like home.

"I have a sign over my desk that says 'Extravagant Appreciation,'" Fr. Mohnickey said. "That's what I've experienced here."

The feeling is mutual.

"He's just got this peaceful presence and wicked sense of humor," Good Shepherd Director of Faith Formation Tammy Sandoval said. "He's quite a storyteller with a gift for gab and always available. He's very pastoral and stops whatever he's doing to help others."

Sandoval said that during a recent stop at a donut shop, a man noted the church name on Sandoval's shirt and asked if she worked for the parish.

"He said Fr. Ronald saved his marriage, and I asked what he meant," Sandoval said. "He said, 'We called three parishes before we found a priest that would meet with us to get us through the night.'"

"Mass and Reconciliation", Fr. Mohnickey answered when asked the best part of being a priest.





Father Ronald Mohnickey blesses the congregation at the end of his 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary Mass May 16 at Good Shepherd Parish. (NTC/Jayme Donahue)

“I never thought confessions would be particularly a delight,” Fr. Mohnickey said. “But we have them four times a week here, and I spend 10 percent or more of my time on that sacrament. It recently dawned on me that if you’re ever looking for a quitter, you would never find one in line for confession. No matter the struggles or pain people are going through there are just no quitters in that line. They’re not going to let darkness, or addiction, or whatever have the final say.”

On the other hand, homilies pose much challenge and soul searching, Fr. Mohnickey said.

“Well, some of the parishioners have told me they think his homilies are so on [point], so impactful,” said Rita Rawlings, Fr. Mohnickey’s sister, who flew in from Ohio for the May 16 Mass.

Fr. Mohnickey’s brother, John Mohnickey, agreed.

“They paint a picture,” John Mohnickey said. “In Cleveland, before Mass he would go to the lake and spend a good bit of time formulating. Peaceful time where he could connect with his inner spirit and get a feel for what he was directed to talk about.”

John Mohnickey, a McKinney resident 19 years his brother’s junior, joked that Fr. Mohnickey called several years ago from Austria asking John if he’d ever heard of a



People form a line to congratulate Father Ron on his 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary as a priest. (NTC/Jayme Donahue)

place called Colleyville.

“He could’ve been assigned anyplace in the world,” John Mohnickey said. “It’s like a mini miracle he ended up in a place so close to me. Being 19 years younger, I didn’t get to spend much time with him growing up. This has given us the opportunity to see each other and, in a sense, learn more about each other.”

John Mohnickey received his first Communion during his big brother’s first Mass, an apparent first in the Diocese of

Cleveland.

Good Shepherd Pastor Michael Higgins, TOR, noted during the May 16 Mass that Fr. Mohnickey has celebrated about 50,000 Masses.

“Even after 50 years, sometimes I’ll [process] in formally and I’ll get chills [at Sunday Mass],” Fr. Mohnickey said. “How is it possible that I’m doing this? I’m going to this altar to celebrate these sacred mysteries. Some days that’s absolutely almost a new shock.” ✚

# LOVE

Natural Family Planning fosters authentic love, health, empowerment, and Christian discipleship

By NTC Staff

After her first pregnancy, St. Matthew parishioner Brenda Reyes de Lara’s body felt disoriented. “I had no idea what was going on, and my hormones were all over the place,” she said.

In the process of seeking a marriage validation, she and her husband took a class on the Billings Ovulation Method, a method of Natural Family Planning (NFP) that uses cervical fluid to determine a woman’s fertility status. Seeing the hormone patterns on the chart helped her to understand the postpartum changes of her body. “It was truthfully an answer to our prayers to learn NFP,” she added.

Reyes de Lara and her husband have now been teaching the Billings Ovulation Method for four years. As the Natural Family Planning coordinator for the diocese, Reyes de Lara encourages everyone to learn NFP — engaged and married couples, single women, even teenagers. “A lot of couples think [NFP] is just for married couples or because they’re wanting to have

kids,” she said. “But it’s... to learn your health and know your body.”

“Even in our secular world... I’ve noticed people going away from birth control not for religious but for health reasons,” added Chris Vaughan, Director of Marriage and Family Life. “For us, we do it because of Jesus Christ. On the cross, He shows us what true love is.”

Informed by solid research and inspired by Christ’s bold selfless love, instructors and experts say that Natural Family Planning empowers women (and men) to care for their bodies in sickness and in health, and to love selflessly like Christ on the cross.

## THE SCIENCE

NFP, or as it is referred to in secular circles, Fertility Awareness Based Methods (FABMs), interprets signs and symptoms of hormonal changes in a woman’s body to determine the fertile and infertile phases of her monthly cycle. NFP helps couples determine the best opportunities for conception. To avoid pregnancy, a couple can abstain from sexual activity

during the woman’s fertile days.

The Diocese of Fort Worth offers instruction in four methods of NFP, all based on rigorous research: Billings Ovulation Method and Creighton Model FertilityCare System use a woman’s cervical fluid to determine fertility. The Sympto-Thermal Method taught by the Couple to Couple League relies on cervical fluid, basal body temperature, and cervical position. The Marquette Model uses a combination of cervical fluid, temperature, and chemical urine analysis.

Vaughan explained why the Church teaches women to work with their bodies’ fertility, rather than eliminating it via chemical contraceptives or surgery. “To maintain the human body — and usually the female body — it’s not healthy.”

“Having periods is not a disease,” wrote Clara Moskowitz and Jen Schwartz in *Scientific American’s* spotlight on women’s reproductive health in May 2019. In the same issue, Maya Dusenbery wrote: “A couple can only fertilize an egg up to about five days before and two days after ovulation because of the combined viability of sperm and



# E



egg in the female body. So the goal of fertility awareness-based methods, or FABMs, is to predict — and then confirm — when ovulation occurs.”

Toni Weschler wrote in *Taking Charge of Your Fertility*: “Fertility Awareness is [...] based on the observation and charting of scientifically proven fertility signs that determine whether or not a woman is fertile on any given day.” Weschler contrasts FABM with “...the obsolete rhythm method,” which is “nothing more than a flawed statistical prediction.”

According to a 2013 scientific literature review by Michael Manhart, Ph.D and colleagues, users of well researched fertility awareness methods “have unintended pregnancy rates comparable to those of many other methods” of family planning. Dusenbery wrote, “When done right, some [fertility awareness based methods] are 95 to 99 percent effective.”

In addition to being a violation of Church teachings, using barrier methods is risky, St. Patrick parishioner Nicole Havrilla cautioned. Using them during the fertile window may result in unintended pregnancy; at that point the couple is relying on the effectiveness of the barrier method

Continued on Page 14

From Page 13

rather than on the effectiveness of NFP. “The condom failed you; NFP didn’t fail you,” she said. For optimal accuracy, users of NFP should abstain from sexual intercourse during the woman’s fertile window.

“God gave us outward signs of our fertility,” said Havrilla. By charting a few signs and symptoms each day, women can learn their fertility patterns and be more proactive in their healthcare and their reproductive habits. With well over a decade of NFP experience, Havrilla is the founder and president of WholeLife Authentic Care clinic in Fort Worth, whose doctors and practitioners use the Creighton FertilityCare model to help women track their ovulation — whether they are trying to achieve pregnancy, avoid pregnancy, or improve their health.

### EMPOWERING WOMEN

Women who practice NFP daily chart their health. According to Stephanie Gavin, a certified FertilityCare practitioner who attends Holy Family and St. Andrew, a woman’s charts “identify red flags that may need a physician’s attention,” she said. Gavin and fellow practitioners at WholeLife Authentic Care use their patients’ Creighton charts to develop personalized treatment plans.

Due to misunderstanding of the normal variance of a woman’s cycles, Weschler lamented that many couples “are led to believe they are infertile when they actually may not be.” Many women undergo expensive, invasive — and unnecessary — diagnostic and treatment plans when a fertility chart would have provided sufficient information.

For women whose charts indicate a need for medical intervention, actively charting can help prevent serious health complications, infertility, and even some miscarriages. “Charting your cycle is able to put you into the best frame of mind and the best information possible,” said Havrilla. Even

Continued on Page 16

Natural Family Planning (NFP) is the umbrella term for the scientific, natural, and morally permissible methods of family planning that can help married couples either achieve or postpone pregnancy.

NFP methods are based on the observation of the naturally occurring signs and symptoms of the fertile and infertile phases of a woman’s menstrual cycle. No drugs, devices, or surgical procedures are used to avoid pregnancy.

Since the methods of NFP respect the love-giving (unitive) and life-giving (procreative) nature of the conjugal act, they support God’s design for married love and enrich the bond between husband and wife!



N  
F  
P

M  
E  
T  
H  
O  
D  
S





## BILLINGS OVULATION METHOD

The Billings Ovulation Method® is a simple yet scientific method of Natural Family Planning. Ongoing research has been conducted in Australia, Sweden, and Spain since it was developed over 50 years ago by physicians John and Lyn Billings of Melbourne, Australia.

Couples using the Billings Ovulation Method® track the woman's natural and unique signs of fertility and infertility each day. Based on the primary observation of sensation, four simple rules are applied within the woman's cycle based on a couple's desire to achieve or postpone pregnancy. As published in numerous journals, the Billings Ovulation Method® is 99.5 percent effective at avoiding unintended pregnancies.



## CREIGHTON MODEL SYSTEM

The Creighton Model FertilityCare™ System (CrMS) is a standardized modification of the Billings Ovulation Method, and utilizes the new women's health science of NaProTECHNOLOGY. CrMS relies upon the standardized observation and charting of biological markers that are essential to a woman's health and fertility. These biomarkers tell the couple when they are naturally fertile and infertile, allowing the couple to use the system either to achieve or to avoid pregnancy.

These biomarkers also telegraph abnormalities in a woman's health, providing her the added benefit of being able to monitor and maintain her procreative and gynecologic health over her lifetime.



## SYMPTO-THERMAL METHOD BY CCL

The Sympto-Thermal Method taught by the Couple to Couple League (CCL) is based on three key signs of fertility: cervical mucus, basal body temperature, and changes in the cervix. By observing and recording these signs, you and your spouse will be able to know if you're in a time of fertility or infertility. These signs are easily noticed by any woman who has learned to watch for them. It takes only a minute or two each day to record them in CCL's mobile app, CycleProGo, or on a paper chart. The chart provides a daily record that can be used to identify the days of fertility and infertility.



## MARQUETTE MODEL SYSTEM

The Marquette Model (MM) system of NFP brings 21<sup>st</sup> century technology to NFP by using the ClearBlue Easy Fertility Monitor, a device used at home which measures two different hormone levels in urine to estimate the beginning and end of the time of fertility in a woman's menstrual cycle.

The information from the monitor can be used in conjunction with other biological indicators of fertility. The MM was developed by professional nurses and physicians at Marquette University in the late 1990s. Research has shown that the Marquette Method of NFP can be up to 99 percent effective at avoiding unintended pregnancies when practiced correctly, and with the guidance of a Marquette Method instructor.

## FIND OUT MORE

Women and couples seeking to learn NFP can contact Brenda Reyes de Lara to get connected with an instructor at [fwdioc.org/natural-family-planning](http://fwdioc.org/natural-family-planning).

### From Page 14

when a woman is not able to achieve her fertility goals, she added, charting can give women and couples “a sense of peace — we did everything we could and... we’re called to be something else.” She added that practicing NFP and seeking personalized medical care based on her charts can help a woman “move on the continuum of better health.”

For Joselyn Ramey, who attends Our Mother of Mercy, charting “helped me to better understand the different phases of my cycle. That knowledge gave me confidence to ask questions at my yearly physical. It also gave me a visual — this is how I’m feeling during this time; this is how I’m feeling during another time. So I could see where I needed to make adjustments like sleeping, eating, so I could feel better.”

### LOVING LIKE CHRIST

Saint Pope John Paul II’s sermons on the Theology of the Body warn men (and women) not to “reduce all the riches of her femininity to a single value — sex. [...] Lust obscures the significance of the body and the worth of the person.”

“Pope Paul VI in *Humanae Vitae* tells us love is free, full, faithful, and fruitful,” said Vaughan. “It’s a free gift, like Jesus’ love is free.” According to Vaughan, using NFP unconditionally accepts all aspects of their partner’s body, including fertility. Vaughan referenced a quote from the wedding night of Tobias and Sarah in the *Book of Tobit*: “I now am taking this kinswoman of mine, not because of lust, but with sincerity.” That’s the kind of love that NFP aspires to.

Abstaining during the woman’s

fertile window to avoid pregnancy is a mutual act of self-sacrifice. “It’s certainly good... but there are times you don’t love it,” said Vaughan.

For some couples, the fertile window is brief. For others, times of abstinence can be much longer. “This practice helps couples when they must go through more extended periods of abstinence due to chronic health problems or if at some point they experience a form of cycle irregularity, dysfunction, or sexual pain,” said St. Elizabeth Ann Seton parishioner Amy Rustand. Rustand and her husband have been teaching the Sympto-Thermal Method for 15 years. “NFP normalizes abstinence, removes the stigma of the idea, and helps couples recognize the graces they can receive when giving up a good like sexual intimacy and reproduction together.”

“When you say your vows, you are accepting them in health and [when they’re] unhealthy,” said Reyes de Lara. “Sometimes it can be hard, but it’s just like putting it together with His suffering on the cross.”

“Marriage should not be reduced to the conjugal act,” Vaughan said. “We have to foster ways to give to each other. That’s what NFP is all about.”

Havrilla, who has experienced many extended periods of abstinence for medical reasons, encourages couples to “go back to the dating days.” When a couple practices NFP, “there’s a level of empathy that enters the discussion,” Havrilla said.

Learning NFP also fosters radical self-love and appreciation of the way God created woman. NFP taught Havrilla to “appreciate what my body does.”

After learning NFP, Reyes de Lara felt “mesmerized by the gift of being a woman.” 🇺🇸

## 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 about our abuse prevention policies and programs, visit [fwdioc.org/safe-environment](http://fwdioc.org/safe-environment)





DIOCESE OF FORT WORTH  
CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

# OPENING the DOORS of TRUTH, BEAUTY, and GOODNESS.



Now accepting  
applications for  
the 2021-2022  
school year

Catholic school educators in the Diocese of Fort Worth empower students and their families by proclaiming the faith, celebrating values and ministering to the spiritual, academic, social, cultural and physical needs of diverse communities.



## CATHOLIC SCHOOL GRADUATES ARE:

**PEOPLE OF FAITH...** able to articulate the teachings of the Catholic faith, exemplify the core values, and put these learnings into practice.

**MORAL DECISION MAKERS...** consider the moral and ethical implications of decisions, respects others, and chooses to do what is right.

**GRATEFUL PEOPLE...** appreciate the beauty in the world, the value of each and every life, and the blessings that have been bestowed upon them.

**CULTURALLY EVOLVED MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY...** exhibit global awareness and cultural sensitivity, and support the Church's teachings regarding social justice.

**ACADEMICALLY PROFICIENT...** well-prepared for higher education.

**EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATORS...** active listeners who seek diverse perspectives, and expresses their own views with confidence, clarity and purpose.

**CREATIVE PROBLEM SOLVERS...** apply ingenuity, critical thinking and situational awareness to solve problems and serve others.

**STRONG LEADERS...** perform at the highest level, are accountable, compassionate towards others, and inspire these attributes in those around them.

**LIFE-LONG LEARNERS...** have a continuous learning mindset, and seek to improve and evolve throughout their lifetime.

## TUITION ASSISTANCE

The Tuition Assistance Fund was established in 2006 to increase available financial aid for families who demonstrate financial need. The goal is to offer affordable Catholic school education to as many families as wish to send their children to a Catholic school.

## WE NEED YOU!

Support the Tuition Assistance Fund and you can help young people succeed.

[advancementfoundation.org](http://advancementfoundation.org)

Learn more about the  
Diocese of Fort Worth Catholic Schools:  
[catholicschoolsfwdioc.org](http://catholicschoolsfwdioc.org)



*This advertisement  
was made possible  
by the generosity of*



**Advancement Foundation**  
CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF FORT WORTH

# Prayers for INDIA

By Joan Kurkowski-Gillen

Restrictions on travel from India leave local pastors stranded abroad

When Father Benjamin Hembrom, TOR, left for India after celebrating Easter Mass with his St. Thomas the Apostle parishioners April 4, he had no idea the month-long vacation would end with a travel ban preventing him from returning to North Texas.

A sudden spike in COVID-19 cases in his homeland prompted the White House to restrict most travel from India to the U.S. beginning May 4. The new restrictions affect thousands of visa holders like Fr. Hembrom and Father Wilson Lucka, TOR, who is also trying to return to his parish — Holy Trinity in Azle.

As of June 15, coronavirus cases in India numbered 29.5 million with 374,305 reported deaths. A high infection rate, coupled with a shortage of hospital beds and oxygen, is contributing to the mortality rate.

“My friend lost his beloved wife recently because of the virus,” Fr. Hembrom said. “It is very painful when someone you know well

loses a loved one and children are left [without a mother]. It’s a tragedy for the family.”

The pastor, who is staying in the northern part of India in the state of Jharkhand, cannot visit relatives because of regional lockdowns that imposed curfews and limit travel.

“The COVID crisis in India is a serious matter. The lives of the people have been affected badly,” St. Thomas’ pastor explained. “The Church is trying to help people — especially those who have lost loved ones. At the same time, the Church is not able to do much because of the lockdown.”

Priests from his religious order are caring for COVID patients in a nearby hospital.

“Last rites [are administered] and the Viaticum is taken there by our priests whenever it is needed,” he continued. “By the grace of God, they are able to help people in time. I strongly believe God is in control of everything and He will help us. Let us trust in Him and patiently wait.”

In Fr. Hembrom’s absence, other TORs serving in the Diocese of Fort Worth have stepped in to celebrate Mass at St. Thomas.

“Our parishioners are very thankful to the TORs that have come to help from Good Shepherd, St. Andrew, and St. Michael,” said Beverly Oberdorf, the business manager at St. Thomas. “They are very understanding and are praying for Fr. Benjamin to come back.”

Father Sushil Tudu, TOR, credits luck and



Father Benjamin Hembrom, TOR



Father Wilson Lucka, TOR



Father Sushil Tudu, TOR



CASES  
29.6 million

RECOVERED  
28.3 million

DEATHS  
374K

From JHU CSSE Covid-19 data and Reuters data on June 15.

a kindhearted airport worker for allowing him back into the country. The pastor of St. Catherine of Siena in Carrollton traveled with Fr. Hembrom to northern India in April.

“When I booked my ticket, everything was fine but then things happened,” he explained. “People became too relaxed about social gatherings.”

Health officials believe a religious festival that drew thousands of Hindu pilgrims to the Ganges River was one of the superspreader events contributing to an increase in COVID cases. Political rallies also continued despite surging infection numbers.

“They have vaccines in India. They are just not getting enough [doses],” Fr. Tudu observed. “Many priests and religious have died in India — more than 150.”

When the pastor’s flight arrived in the U.S. May 14, he waited and prayed in immigration for two hours before being allowed to re-enter the country.

“At the airport, an official checked my bags and found out I was a Catholic priest. He was Catholic and forwarded my [visa] to his boss,” Fr. Tudu recalled. “I got lucky.”

The infection rate is slowing in India and the Franciscan friar is hoping the outbreak is controlled within a month.

“Parishioners were praying for me and sending messages,” he said. “I’m grateful and just happy to be back. Pray for India.” 🇮🇳

# PRAY

## A Rosary for Healing and Protection

[bit.ly/FWrosaryforhealing](https://bit.ly/FWrosaryforhealing)



SHOP WHERE YOU CAN SEE AND  
TOUCH WHAT YOU BUY.

WE HAVE MANY BEAUTIFUL GIFTS  
FOR PERSONAL AND SACRAMENTAL  
OCCASIONS.



WE ALSO ACCEPT ORDERS ONLINE AT  
[WWW.STELLAMARISBOOKS.COM](http://WWW.STELLAMARISBOOKS.COM)

**St. Anthony's Church Supplies - 5312 Trail Lake Dr.  
Fort Worth 76133 - 817 924 7221**

Located in the Wedgewood Village Shopping Center

# UP, UP AND Away

Father Khoi Tran continues his calling to serve  
at Vandenberg U.S. Space Force Base

By Susan Moses

**F**ather Khoi Tran never forgot where he came from. In fact, that's the reason behind his upcoming step.

Next month, Fr. Tran will join the U.S. Air Force as a Catholic chaplain, and his assignment promises to be out of this world.

Fr. Tran came from Vietnam. His family immigrated to the U.S. and settled in Kansas with his extended paternal family when he was nine years old.

Fr. Tran feels a debt of gratitude to his adopted country, and he intends to repay it.

He said, "I truly am very grateful for this country, what she has done for me and my family. I've always tried my best, ever since [we've been] here, to be a responsible and dutiful citizen, giving back what she has given us. To come from a communist country to a land of opportunity — I'm grateful for that."

## GETTING HIS WINGS

Looking back, Fr. Tran can see God "slowly closing and opening doors" to enable this vocation within a vocation. As a teen, he considered a military career and belonged to his high school's U.S. Army JROTC program.

During his priestly formation, he felt a desire to minister to teens and young adults and "be a good example and walk with them" as they discover who they are and learn how to deal with injustice, hurts, and anger.

In his current assignment with the Diocese of Fort Worth, Fr. Tran is a short drive to Sheppard Air Force Base. He worked with many base chaplains as they assisted each other in ministry, and one even suggested he would be a "great asset" for the Air Force.

Since 2015, Fr. Tran has served as the parochial administrator of St. Jude Thaddeus Parish in Burkburnett, St. Paul Parish in Electra, and Christ the King Parish in Iowa Park. He estimates about 60 percent of his current parishioners have a connection to military service: active duty, reserve, retired, or dependent. In serving as their priest, he came to better understand the spiritual needs of those in the armed forces, including post-traumatic stress disorder, marriage difficulties, and personal problems.

For more than two years, Fr. Tran discerned whether God was calling him to become a military chaplain. Bishop Michael Olson was "very generous" with the discernment process and gave his





Father Khoi Tran wearing his blue U.S. Air Force uniform. (NTC/Juan Guajardo)

approval, he said.

While he was praying and seeking God's will, he was also losing weight to meet the physical requirements of military service. The priest changed his diet and took up running, and he has lost 95 pounds.

After he completed and passed the long application process assessing his physical, mental, pastoral, and professional aptitude, Fr. Tran fill out a form stating his first assignment's geographic preference. He noted, "I am a Catholic priest with no dependents. I am willing to go to where I am needed the most, even outside of the U.S."

His assignment astonished him

— Vandenberg U.S. Space Force Base in California.

"It was way out of the picture, way out of what I expected. It must be providential, because that didn't even cross my mind," he said, reflecting on being assigned to the newest and smallest of the military branches.

### SERVING THOSE WHO SERVE

At the end of June, Fr. Tran will take the Oath of Office and put on his uniform (blue for the Blessed Virgin Mary, he pointed out), and spend eight weeks in Officer Training School at Maxwell Air Force Base in Montgomery, Alabama, before

beginning his first assignment.

As he prepares to join the U.S. Air Force, he prays, "If this is God's will for me, that I do my best to be present to those who are in need. That I might be His instrument of love and peace to those who are often-times forgotten."

Fr. Tran hopes to support the troops by helping with their spiritual needs. Service members may have visible physical injuries, but they may also bear spiritual wounds that are invisible, he explained.

Often, the remedy for spiritual injuries, according to Fr. Tran, is "to be able to talk and journey with them. At the end of the day, we can't solve anyone's problem. There's only one Savior, and we are all His instruments. We're just trying to be present, to listen, to care, and to say, 'Hey, you are not alone.'"

The Diocese of Fort Worth has several priests who served in the military before answering God's call to the priesthood. Might Fr. Tran inspire service members to consider a religious vocation?

He demurred, "My only desire is that I live as God calls me to be. I hope that perhaps with my example, people can see that the priesthood is a life worth living.

"It's not just a career; it's not just a job, but it's truly a vocation of love. The only way that I am a priest right now is because I am in love with Christ, and I know that He loves me. I say 'yes' to Him even though it gets hard at times," he concluded.

The Archdiocese for the Military Services has expressed a great need for Catholic chaplains. Slightly more than 200 Catholic priests are on active duty, and the armed services number 1.4 million active duty men and women.

Another priest from the Diocese of Fort Worth will also serve his country as a military chaplain. Newly ordained priest Jason Allan was commissioned an ensign in the U.S. Navy last May, and he will see active duty after gaining pastoral experience in the diocese for several years. 🇺🇸

# PRAYING FOR THE harvest

Three local Serran Clubs provide prayer and support to encourage vocations

By Mary Lou Seewoester

In 1934, four laymen, Dan Rooney, Leo Sharkey, Richard Ward, and Harold Haberle met for lunch in Seattle, Washington, to talk about how they could fully live out their Catholic values. The focus of their discussion soon expanded to fostering vocations to the priesthood and consecrated life. That became the primary mission of the group, which they named “Serra” as a memorial to St. Junipero Serra, the Spanish missionary who established missions in California.

Serra International now claims 1,100 Serra Clubs and more than 20,000 members in 46 countries. Three of those clubs support priests, seminarians, and consecrated religious in the Diocese of Fort Worth.

The Fort Worth, Arlington, and Northeast Fort Worth Serra Clubs collaborate on diocesan-wide programs that actively foster vocations and support priests. But Serrans maintain that prayer is the primary

and most valuable activity of each club.

Jo-Ann Bresowar, Serra regional director for Texas, said prayer is fundamental to Serra clubs. The 31 Club, for example, ensures that a Serran is praying for vocations every day of every month. With the Seven Serrans program, they pray for priests in the diocese each day of the week, Bresowar added.

Serra clubs also share a commitment to pray specifically for the diocese’s five vocations liaisons, Bill Jackson, Northeast Serra president, said.

“Prayer does not require you to go out and act, but it is an act,” Bresowar explained. “Prayer is the basis for everything we do. The action comes out of the prayer, not the other way around.”

## A WEEKEND TO DISCERN

A significant action carried out by Serrans is the annual Vocations Awareness Program (VAP), held this

year June 11-13 at the University of Dallas. The Fort Worth and Dallas Serra clubs work together to fund, facilitate, and promote the weekend, which helps single women and men learn about the lives of priests, brothers, and sisters. Since the first VAP in 1990, about 1,250 men and women have been guided in discernment during two-and-a-half days of prayer, discussion, Q&A forums, and one-on-one conversations with priests and sisters.

“A lot of the current priests in our diocese have attended the VAP weekend,” Mary Elwood, former Northeast Fort Worth Serra president, said. “About 30 to 40 attend each year. You just never know who the Holy Spirit is calling to the weekend.”

In 2008, the Holy Spirit called 21-year-old Maurice Moon to the VAP weekend. Ordained in 2018, Father Moon now serves as chaplain at Nolan Catholic High School and as vocations liaison.





Father Maurice Moon prays before the St. John Paul II Monstrance at St. Matthew Parish in Arlington. (NTC/Juan Guajardo)

In this 2017 photo, Father Stephen Hauck ► enjoys a casual conversation with a young man attending the Vocation Awareness Program. (NTC/Jayme Donahue)

He said VAP helped him move forward in discernment because he was able to talk one-on-one with priests, ask questions, and be with other men considering the priesthood. He said Serrans helped him as a seminarian with prayer and financial support, and they continue to support his priesthood with both prayer and works.

“I am so grateful to them for helping me find my vocation, supporting me as a priest, and supporting what I do — helping more men and women consider their calling.”



Continued on Page 24

Attendees participate in evening prayer at Vocation Discernment Weekend at the University of Dallas June 11-13. (NTC/Ben Torres)



---

From Page 23

“The harvest is abundant  
but the laborers are few;  
so ask the master of  
the harvest to send out  
laborers for His harvest.”

Matthew 9:37-38

---

#### PRAYER AND PROVISIONS

As a way to fortify the VAP with prayer, Serrans also host the St. John Paul II monstrance for several weeks before and during the VAP weekend.

In 2004, the late Pope John Paul II blessed six monstrances for the Year of the Eucharist, one for each continent. He presented the North American Continent monstrance to the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, which then gave it to Serra USA with instructions to fulfill the pope’s request to use it to pray for vocations.

This is the eighth consecutive year that Dallas and Fort Worth Serrans have handled the logistics of safely moving the monstrance between parishes, schools, and religious communities, Bresowar said. During that time, Serrans scheduled





## Learn more about the Serra Club

Contact a Serran to learn how to join them in their mission of fostering and affirming vocations.



### Fort Worth Serra Club

CONTACT: Bill Moore  
cwmoorej@sbcbglobal.net



### Arlington Serra Club

CONTACT: Bill McNeill  
wm.mcneill@sbcbglobal.net



### Northeast Fort Worth Serra Club

CONTACT: Sue Laux  
suelaux@catholicrealtordfw.com



Or check out their website: [SerraUS.org](https://www.serraUS.org)

nearly 400 dates of prayer for vocations with this monstrance during Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament.

“It’s in great demand because it’s a second-class relic. It was held by the saint, blessed by the saint, and given instructions [by the saint] on what to do,” she added.

Serrans also encourage vocations with food and fellowship. The three local clubs take turns providing food for monthly St. Andrew Breakfasts and Dinners, where men in high school or college can learn about the priesthood. On Thursday evenings during Lent, Serrans provide food for the Lenten Discernment for Men, which includes Holy Hour, dinner, and discussion on prayer, seminary life, and the priesthood.

### THREE CLUBS, ONE PURPOSE

Each local Serra Club has found unique ways to follow the organization’s three-fold mission to foster vocations to the priesthood and support priests in ministry, encourage vocations to consecrated life, and help each other respond to God’s call to holiness in their own lives.

The Fort Worth Serra Club began in 1950 and currently has about 30

members. Jackson said the club pays for a seminarian appreciation dinner each spring and clergy appreciation dinners in May and December. The Fort Worth club also sends Christmas gifts to seminarians.

“It takes a lot of financial and prayer support to have enough priests to meet the needs of all the parishes in our diocese,” Jackson explained. “It’s heartwarming for me to know that I am working toward that. It has brought me spiritually closer to God because I know I’m helping to do His work.”

In 1985, the Arlington Serra Club received its charter with 25 members. Today, about 40 Serrans from five Arlington parishes pray for and sponsor programs supporting seminarians, priests, and religious.

Bruno Watts, Arlington Serra president, said that in addition to monthly meetings, the group also attends Mass together one Saturday a month to pray for vocations.

One Wednesday each month, Arlington Serrans also provide a home-cooked meal for students at the UTA University Catholic Center (UCC). Two of the UCC’s former members are now seminarians, Watts said.

“It is important to have lay participation to support seminarians and priests,” Watts said. “It’s a labor of love.”

The Northeast Fort Worth Serra Club also has assisted Catholic college students. For instance, the club purchased vestments for Benediction and Eucharistic Adoration at the TCU Newman Center, Elwood said.

The club, which formed about four years ago, currently has 17 members from parishes in the Northeast deanery. Members send care packages to diocesan seminarians at St. Joseph Seminary College in Louisiana, Assumption Seminary in San Antonio, and Catholic University in Washington, D.C. Seminarians receive school supplies in the fall and snacks and sweets in April when they are studying for final exams.

In February, for World Day for Consecrated Life, club members deliver pantry baskets with canned and boxed goods to convents in the diocese. During the pandemic, they sent baskets of cleaning supplies.

“All Catholics know we need more priests, and we also know the power of prayer,” Elwood said. “The things we do for them remind them that we also are praying for them.” 🇺🇸

RELIGIOUS LIFE  
WAS ALL IN THE

# family

One charter family of St. Joseph Parish in Rhineland had four children who pursued a religious vocation

By Joan Kurkowski-Gillen

**B**erta Pilkington still remembers the happy commotion that always surrounded her aunts' visits to the family farm in Rhineland.

Members of the Order of St. Benedict (the Benedictines), Sister Martha Loran and Sister Andrea Loran were permitted to leave St. Scholastica Monastery in Fort Smith, Arkansas once a year for a two-week vacation. The break from routine was spent at the cotton farm in rural North Texas where their parents, Bertha and Liberatus Loran, raised 11 children.

"It was so much fun," enthused Pilkington, remembering how her father, along with aunts, uncles, and cousins would gather at her grandparents' home to greet them. "It was like a big family reunion."

Dressed in the white coif and black veil of the Benedictines, her aunts would roll up the sleeves of their habit, don an apron, and help can vegetables in the kitchen.

The Lorans were part of the first wave of settlers to establish homesteads in the heavily German-Catholic town of Rhineland located in the rolling plains of North Texas. Founded in 1895 by Father Joseph Reisdorff, a native of the Rhine province of Germany, the township flourished around its hub — St. Joseph Catholic Church. Known as "the cathedral in the cotton field," the country parish marked its





125<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2020.

Part of St. Joseph's legacy is the wealth of vocations that came from one of the parish's charter families. Of the Loran's 11 children, three girls entered the convent (daughter Ruth left after several years) and their youngest son, Vincent, professed vows as a Benedictine monk later in life after marrying and having two children. Given the name Brother Eric by his community, the former air traffic controller became the first monk named prior of Subiaco Abbey in 1991 and served in several other leadership roles before his death in 2016. The Rhineland native once said he was "Benedictine at heart" from childhood having grown up in a parish staffed by Benedictine priests and sisters.

"They were kind, loving, soft-spoken people," said Mary Denise Groves describing the aunts and uncle who answered the call to religious life. Groves is the last remaining Loran cousin living in Rhineland and the secretary/bookkeeper at St. Joseph Parish. She credits her grandparents' devout faith for inspiring vocations in their children.

Many of the Loran first cousins found their Benedictine relatives had an effect on their lives beyond religion. Sr. Martha spent most of her ministry caring for the sick in local hospitals.

"Sr. Martha was a nurse and that influenced me to become a registered nurse," explained Beth Arnold, who is now assistant director of the nursing program at Vernon College and a Eucharistic minister at Our Lady Queen of Peace in Wichita Falls.

Brother Eric also kept in touch with his many nieces and nephews and, as the father of a daughter and son, he returned to Texas



Bertha and Liberatus Loran, seated at center with their 11 children. Sister Martha is front left with the future Brother Eric standing behind her. Sister Andrea is front right. (courtesy photo)

often to see them.

"It was an unusual thing for a Brother to have children," admitted Renee Tielkemeier, explaining how her father retreated to the abbey shortly after her parents' divorce when he was 35. "He once told me his mother always wanted him to have a religious life, and 'God gets what God wants.' It was a great life for him. He loved it."

Tielkemeier grew up in Grapevine where she still attends Mass at St. Francis of Assisi Parish. As a teenager, her first visit to Subiaco was in 1976 to watch her father profess final vows.

"I fell in love with Subiaco and continue to visit the abbey three or four times a year," she said. "It's definitely deepened my faith and appreciation for Catholic traditions."

Each journey to Arkansas includes a stop to visit her father's last surviving sibling, Sr. Andrea. After a lifetime of working as a dietician at Catholic hospitals and helping manage the Hesychia House of Prayer operated by her religious community, the 94-year-old sister is retired and lives at a health and rehabilitation facility in Fort Smith, Arkansas. A voracious reader, she is valued by other residents of the home for her easy-going, gentle presence and quiet sense of humor.

"My aunt is so charming and still has a good memory," Tielkemeier commented. "When we visit, she likes to talk about family history."

Sr. Andrea shared some of those memories with the *North Texas Catholic* via email.

The third youngest Loran daughter entered St. Scholastica Monastery in 1946 when she was 18 years old. Her much older sibling, Martha, who joined the order 10

years earlier, died in 1994.

"I just felt the call in my heart. I just knew I wanted to be a Sister," Sr. Andrea said, explaining why she entered the convent.

A skilled cook, she worked in the monastery kitchen and later at St. Joseph Orphanage in North Little Rock, Arkansas, before taking summer courses offered by the Catholic Hospital Association to become a certified dietician.

"There was a shortage of dieticians in the 1960s," Sr. Andrea continued. "It was a wonderful program, and I enjoyed the work."

Helping people stay healthy by providing nutritional food was a valuable ministry, but she cites "beautiful prayers" as the most rewarding aspect of her years as a religious sister.

"Prayer has always been important to me," Sr. Andrea added. "I like to sing the [Divine] Office and the Mass and used to sing Gregorian chant. I just live life and enjoy it."

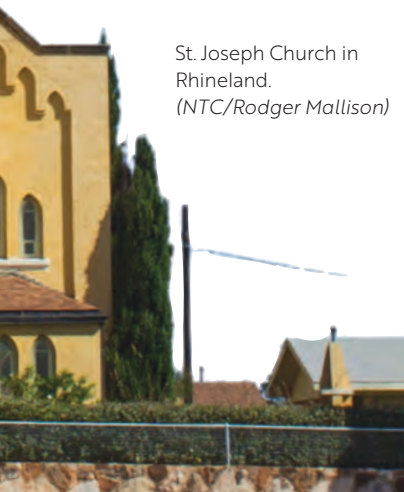
Rita Mooney, the Loran family historian and Queen of Peace parishioner, said her religious aunts and uncle had a positive effect on everyone.

"There was a goodness and kindness about them that radiated throughout their brothers and sisters and the rest of the family," she asserted. "It was always a joy to see and talk with them."

Today it's rare to find multiple vocations coming from one family, and the Wichita Falls resident thinks she knows why.

"The Lorans grew up in a different era and in a community that lived the Catholic way of life," Mooney observed. "Our family had that devotion and religiosity ingrained in them." 🇺🇸

St. Joseph Church in Rhineland. (NTC/Rodger Mallison)







# Insure Your *Life* for *Life*

Some things in life are worth protecting no matter what.  
 The Knights of Columbus permanent life insurance programs offer  
 guaranteed death benefits, increasing cash value and flexible payment options.

Contact me today to learn how we can provide the safety and security your family deserves.

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



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



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



**Michael Bryant, FIC**  
 Cell: 940-282-8074  
 michael.bryant@kofc.org



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



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



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



**Carlos Canseco**  
 Cell: 682-465-9691  
 carlos.canseco@kofc.org



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



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



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

## Your Knights of Columbus Fort Worth Agency



**Chris Stark, FICF**  
 General Agent  
 Cell: 979-218-3664  
 Office: 817-616-5359  
 chris.stark@kofc.org

Join us  
 online today:  
[www.KofC.org/Join](http://www.KofC.org/Join)

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



© Knights of Columbus, 1 Columbus Plaza New Haven CT 06510



# staying on budget



Areli Gardea, *MyMoney@Work* navigator. (NTC/Juan Cuajardo)

## Catholic Charities Fort Worth helps employees through *MyMoney@Work* employer-based financial coaching program

By Mary Lou Seewoester

**W**illiam, who works in house-keeping for a hospital, struggled to pay rent on time.

Maria, whose salary is more than sufficient for her needs, has never been able to stick to a budget. And Sarah, who works in an entry-level position, has never been able to save regularly.

Fortunately, they all work for companies that partner with *MyMoney@Work*, the Catholic Charities Fort Worth employer-based financial coaching program. They each meet regularly with Areli Gardea, a *MyMoney@Work* navigator, who helps them gain the knowledge and skills for financial wellness and resiliency.

In working with Gardea, William realized his salary wasn't sufficient for his needs, so he found a second, part-time job. He also learned that working two jobs is a temporary solution, and he is on track with savings so he can train for higher paying employment as a pharmacy technician.

Maria, who had tried everything from Dave Ramsey strategies to budgeting

apps, finally stayed within her budget for three months, saving substantial amounts each month. And Sarah has made savings deposits every month since beginning *MyMoney@Work*.

Gardea said clients see results because navigators work one-on-one with them to determine their needs and wants, set goals, put it on paper, and then make an action plan.

Judith Priest, director of CCFW client navigation, said *MyMoney@Work* re-launched in January 2021 as a re-designed, expanded, and more robust version of its former employer-based coaching services, which focused on lower wage earners.

*MyMoney@Work* now serves not just the working poor, but all employees at partner companies, including those struggling to recover financially from a crisis or those who earn a living wage but lack the resources and knowledge to build financial resiliency and plan for the future.

"Some people may earn a living wage but have really high debt, or they don't have adequate savings and they can get upside down in a hurry," Priest explained. "Those people also need help and this

program is designed to address that."

Priest also noted that the pandemic "showed us how fragile and vulnerable we all are. A major crisis can ... shake someone's stability very quickly and most people are unprepared for that kind of shock."

*MyMoney@Work* currently partners with eight businesses including hotels, non-profit organizations, and a major hospital. CCFW collaborates with company leaders to promote it as an employee benefit.

"Our main goal is to help those employees gain the knowledge and confidence to achieve their financial goals, to empower them with the skills they need to overcome obstacles, increase savings, eliminate debt, and strengthen their ability to navigate any financial concern," Priest said.

She said *MyMoney@Work* also helps CCFW's mission to end poverty.

"When we work with one family at a time in a program like *MyMoney@Work* and they learn skills they can teach other family members, that's when we really can have a ripple effect in the community that lasts more than just a transactional encounter." 🌟



# THE FIRST Freedom

God-given rights to religious liberty face serious new threats at home and abroad

By Jerry Circelli

*The world is very different now. For man holds in his mortal hands the power to abolish all forms of human poverty and all forms of human life. And yet the same revolutionary beliefs for which our forebears fought are still at issue around the globe – the belief that the rights of man come not from the generosity of the state but from the hand of God.*

President John F. Kennedy  
Inaugural Address, Jan. 20, 1961

In a timeless speech that now belongs to the ages, President John F. Kennedy reminded the world of the fundamental American principle that life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness — as outlined by our founders in the Declaration of Independence — are bestowed upon human beings by God Himself.

The president made several other references to God in his address, ending his speech, “... let us go forth to lead the land we love, asking His blessing and His help, but knowing that here on earth God’s work must truly be our own.”

Times have changed. Countless religious freedoms and God-given rights have been under attack. Two notables include Supreme Court of the United States (SCOTUS) landmark decisions in 1962 and 1973. In the 1962 case, *Engel v. Vitale*, SCOTUS ruled that school-sponsored prayer, even if non-denominational, was unconstitutional. In 1973, SCOTUS made abortion a constitutional “right” with its *Roe v. Wade* decision.

Other Supreme Court decisions have buoyed religious freedom, including the June 17 unanimous decision against the City of Philadelphia, which violated First Amendment rights by refusing to contract with Catholic Social Services once it learned the nonprofit would not place children for adoption with same-sex or unmarried couples.

One of the biggest threats to religious liberty today is the proposed “Equality Act,” which could have a catastrophic effect on churches, religious schools, adoption centers, hospitals, charities, families, and even freedom of speech for individuals

voicing Biblical teachings.

According to Catholic News Service, Dan Balsarak, religious liberty director and assistant general counsel for the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), described the Equality Act as a historic faceoff between LGBTQ rights and religious freedom and the protection of unborn life.

## INEQUALITIES OF SO-CALLED “EQUALITY ACT”

The USCCB emphasizes that every human is made in the likeness of God and







should be treated accordingly. On the subject of people with same-sex attractions, the USCCB said the Church teaches that they be “accepted with respect, compassion and sensitivity,” and that society must avoid “unjust discrimination in their regard.”

In the same way, the Church cannot disregard the moral teachings of Jesus or condone any restrictions that limit those beliefs.

The misleadingly named “Equality Act” would add “sexual orientation” and “gender identity” to a wide range of non-discrimination laws. The act has already

passed the U.S. House of Representatives. If approved by the U.S. Senate and signed into law by the president, the measure would likely require taxpayers to fund elective abortions because of its definition of sex discrimination, according to the USCCB.

Furthermore, according to the U.S. bishops, the Equality Act could force doctors and hospitals to perform abortions, even if it violates their beliefs. It could also require businesses and organizations with more than 14 employees, including religious groups, to cover abortions in their

health insurance plans.

The list goes on: The Equality Act could mandate that doctors perform life-altering “gender transitions.” It could force girls and women to share locker rooms, gym showers, restrooms, and dorms with males who self-identify as females, and even compete in school sports against them.

Catholic Charities and other charitable groups who abide by their religious doctrines would also be harmed. If signed

**Continued on Page 33**

# PRAYERS FOR RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops



## ADOPTION & FOSTER CARE

Pray that children waiting to be placed in a loving home and the caregivers who will serve those children will find strength and support from the Church.



## CATHOLICS IN NICARAGUA

Pray for our Catholic sisters and brothers who are suffering in Nicaragua.



## CATHOLIC SERVICES IN THE PANDEMIC

Pray that God will continue to grant Catholic institutions the wisdom and courage to serve a world suffering the effects of the COVID pandemic.



## CONSCIENCE RIGHTS FOR HEALTH CARE WORKERS

Pray that governments will respect the consciences of all people who care for the sick and vulnerable.



## THE EQUALITY ACT

Pray that the dignity of all people will be respected in our country.



## CHRISTIANS IN IRAQ

Pray for Christians in Iraq and that people of all faiths in the land of Abraham may live in peace.



## CHURCH VANDALISM

Pray that Christian witness in the face of attacks on our churches will convert hearts to faith in Jesus Christ.



## FREE SPEECH

Pray that Christians will have the courage to speak the truth with kindness and clarity, even in the face of adversity.



From Page 31

into law, legal experts say the act would be devastating to these groups, including Catholic foster care and adoption services that place children in a home with a married mother and father. Similarly, such groups maintaining emergency shelters for abused and traumatized women would be forced to house them with biological men or face shutdown.

Furthermore, the Equality Act could force church-owned halls and properties to host same-sex ceremonies and other events, and it could strip churches, parochial schools, hospitals, and charities of federal tax exemptions for their teachings and sincerely held beliefs on marriage, sex, and gender. The act could also prohibit freedom of speech, requiring all people to use preferred pronouns.

**TIME FOR CATHOLICS TO ACT**

Balsarak, at the USCCB, encouraged all North Texas Catholics to “walk the walk” right now in living out their faith.

“Here in the United States, we often call religious liberty the ‘first freedom,’” Balsarak told the *NTC*. “It is the first to be named in the First Amendment. It preceded the creation of the state. And it protects our ability to fulfill our highest obligation — our duty to God.

“If we cannot freely seek divine truth, all other freedoms are meaningless,” he explained. “So, Catholics should take special care to value religious freedom in their public life.”

Balsarak urged Catholics to make their voices heard to their elected representatives and to be resolute in the fight to preserve religious liberties.

“The best thing you can do for religious liberty is to do what you’re already supposed to be doing — live a boldly and authentically Catholic life,” Balsarak



A statue depicting Mary holding her son, Jesus, on the grounds of the administrative offices of the Diocese of Brooklyn, N.Y., was vandalized sometime during the weekend of May 15 and 16, 2021. (CNS/courtesy Brooklyn Diocese)

continued. “Yes, of course, stay informed and let your legislators know you value religious liberty; vote for candidates who do, too. But the case for religious liberty will ultimately not be won or lost in the courts, but in the hearts and minds of our neighbors. So, get out there and show everyone what our faith is good for.”

David Upham, Ph.D., J.D., and

Professor of Politics at the University of Dallas expressed similar sentiments.

Those who believe in Judeo-Christian principles in the United States have become a “shrinking minority,” he said. “But we’re large enough to do something about it and not just sit here. It is important for us, even if we are a minority, to urge our political representative to protect our rights for equal citizenship in our own country.

“It is our right, and in fact our duty, to provide things like adoption services and all other types of corporal works of mercy that the Church has always done, without at the same time, by word and by deed, renouncing what our Lord teaches and what the Church has always taught about

Continued on Page 34



Discover “Six Ways to Advocate for Religious Freedom” by *NTC*’s Katie Hoffman: [northtexascatholic.org/features-news](http://northtexascatholic.org/features-news)



Read the *NTC* review of former Supreme Knight of Columbus Carl Anderson’s book, “These Liberties We Hold Sacred:” [northtexascatholic.org/books-news](http://northtexascatholic.org/books-news)



The House of Representatives passed the Equality Act, but the Senate is still debating the bill. (CNS/Tyler Orsburn)



The Equality Act jeopardizes existing prohibitions on using taxpayer funds for abortion.

**From Page 33**

matrimony.”

The professor urged anyone interested in preserving their religious freedoms to contact their U.S. Senators and tell them to not only oppose the act, but to ensure that it does not reach the Senate floor for a vote. Even in states such as Texas, where both U.S. Senators have gone on record opposing the act, issues about preserving

religious freedoms need to be reiterated, he added.

To illustrate his point, Dr. Upham quoted the late Everett McKinley Dirksen, a Republican congressman and senator from Illinois who helped write and pass the landmark Civil Rights Acts in the 1960s. The politician once said, “When I feel the heat, I see the light.”

“They always need to be reminded,” the professor said.

The assault to religious freedom brought on by the Equality Act “is not accidental. It is intentional,” Dr. Upham continued.

The professor explained that the proposed legislation, which exempts itself from the Religious Freedom Restoration Act, was written “for the purpose of getting at the people that the authors of the act want to get at: the shrinking minority of Americans who still believe, ‘Male and female, He created them’ (*Genesis 1:27*).

“And it would represent the first act in American history where any major civil rights legislation would be repealed,” the political science professor said.

Richard Thompson, president and chief legal counsel for the Thomas More Law Center, based in Michigan, is also alarmed that the Equality Act exempts itself from the Religious Freedom Restoration Act. Thompson heads up a team of lawyers and 780 allied attorneys across the nation offering *pro bono* help on legal cases involving religious freedom.

The Religious Freedom Restoration Act of 1993 was intended to safeguard free exercise of religion, Thompson explained.

“So, not only are they attacking Christians, but they are trying to remove



the legal defense that Christians have,” Thompson said.

“Christians who believe in Biblical principles, who believe in the Bible, and who want to practice their faith will be under constant threat of discrimination lawsuits if the Equality Act passes,” Thompson predicted.

While many people oppose the Equality Act and other legislation or judicial decisions that erode their religious liberties, they are reluctant to speak up because they fear being labeled as intolerant or bigoted, Thompson said.

“It’s going to take a lot of courageous Christians to stand up and fight for what their faith tells them is the truth,” he continued.

“If we sit back and do nothing, we are merely encouraging more attacks on the Christian faith and on Christians individually. Power is still in the hands of the people if they choose to get involved and use that power,” Thompson said.

Thompson encouraged people to get involved at the local level, especially with public school boards of education “where they are determining the curriculum that your children are going to have. The classroom is where the struggle is occurring, where they are fighting for the hearts and minds of young people.”

A believer in the benefits of Catholic schools, Thompson said such institutions and other private schools are wise options for parents concerned about what their children are being taught.

Bishop Michael Olson, certainly a strong proponent of Catholic education, takes the issue back a step further.

“Mothers and fathers are the primary educators and formators of their sons and daughters. That is prior to the responsibilities of schools, whether they be public or private or religious. Mothers and fathers need to be involved in the education of their children, including in this very delicate issue of sexuality and gender identity.”

The Equality Act, if passed, would take that responsibility away from parents who hold religiously formed values, and put it directly in the hands of the state, the bishop said.

Bishop Olson said that if passed into law, the act could also result in Christians being charged with hate speech for

defending what the Bible tells them about issues of morality.

“This false charge of hate speech makes it ever more urgent that we courageously speak the truth of Christ in love and never out of fear, anger, resentment, arrogance, or contempt for other people. Yet, speak the truth at all costs.”

The bishop continued, “The Church will always speak the truth . . . but it could cost us a great deal of suffering to maintain the truth that we believe, that we know, that we can grasp through faith and right reason.”

If the Equality Act is passed and enforced, Bishop Olson said, it could inflict great harm on Catholic schools, which will not deviate from teaching strongly held Christian beliefs. “We cannot operate our schools under those mandates,” the bishop said. “In other words, we are not going to teach that. And the enemies of the Church will attempt to shut us down.”

Bishop Olson encouraged Catholics to “know their faith, to know what the Church truly teaches” and to accept the fullness of the Gospel that is revealed to them in Christ.

It is important for Catholics to share that faith with others. Only then, the bishop said, can Catholics effectively stand firm for what they believe.

## CHURCH ATTACKS GROWING AROUND THE WORLD

In addition to facing religious freedom threats in political arenas, the Church is also literally under physical attack from vandals.

Since May 2020, at least 75 incidents of vandalism have occurred at Catholic Churches and cemeteries in 25 states. This has included arson, desecration of statues, defaced gravestones, vile graffiti, burning of American flags, and general destruction.

One of the incidents, which occurred July 11, 2020, at Queen of Peace Catholic Church in Ocala, Fla., could have proven deadly. According to news reports based on statements from the Marion County Sheriff’s Office, a man crashed his minivan into the front door of the church, poured gasoline in the foyer and ignited it — setting the Catholic church on fire with parishioners still inside.

In Nicaragua, Catholic clergy have been harassed, arrested, and assaulted during the current political unrest there, according to the USCCB. In addition, churches have been desecrated and the faithful fear attending Mass due to threats and violence.

In Iraq, the Christian population that was once estimated at 1.4 million faithful has dwindled to less than 300,000. The decrease is a result of brutal attacks, harassment, intimidation, and extortion of Christians.

Nigeria recently made the World Watch List Top 10 list of countries for the persecution of Christians. The murders and kidnappings of priests and Christians, by terrorist group Boko Haram and others, led the U.S. State Department to identify the African nation as a “country of particular concern” for religious freedom.

The issues outlined by Bishop Olson, Professor Upham, religious freedom attorneys Richard Thompson and Dan Balsarak, and the USCCB are just some of the many in the United States and around the world involving the persecution of Christians and the trampling of their religious liberties.

Bishop Olson emphasized that Christians should never despair in defending their faith, especially considering the support they have behind them.

“We have the guarantee of Christ,” the bishop said, “that He will always be with us until the end of the world.”✚



Check out resources to learn more about religious freedom at the diocesan website: [fwdioc.org/religious-freedom-week](https://fwdioc.org/religious-freedom-week)



Join the USCCB observance of Religious Freedom Week, June 22 - 29: [usccb.org/committees/religious-liberty/religious-freedom-week](https://usccb.org/committees/religious-liberty/religious-freedom-week)



# AN ABUNDANT

—————  —————

# harvest

L-R: Father Brett Metzler, Father Thomas Jones, Father Linh Nguyen, Father Samuel Maul, Father Joseph Moreno, and Father Jason Allan.  
*(NTC/Juan Guajardo)*






# West

Stories by Joan Kurkowski-Gillen





## El Obispo Olson ordena seis candidatos al sacerdocio, el grupo más grande en la historia de la Diócesis


**L**a ordenación al Orden Sagrado de seis seminaristas el 22 de mayo en la Iglesia de los Mártires de Vietnam marcó un momento histórico para la Diócesis de Fort Worth. Éste es el grupo más grande de candidatos al sacerdocio desde que se estableció la Diócesis hace casi 52 años. Jason Allan, Thomas Jones, Joseph Moreno, Hai Linh Nguyen, Samuel Maul y Brett Metzler recibieron el Sacramento del Orden para el Presbiterado del Obispo Michael Olson durante un rito de ordenación enriquecido con tradiciones que datan de la Iglesia primitiva.

La Misa de Ordenación fue concelebrada por el Reverendísimo Michael F. Olson, Obispo de la Diócesis de Fort Worth, junto al Obispo Auxiliar Neal J. Buckon de la Arquidiócesis de las Fuerzas Armadas de los Estados Unidos; el Padre Jonathan Wallis, Vicario General de la Diócesis; Monseñor E. James Hart, Canciller y Moderador de la Curia de la Diócesis; y el Padre Hy Nguyen, PSS, Rector del Seminario de la Asunción de San Antonio. En esta significativa celebración eucarística participaron además 99 sacerdotes, 45 diáconos, Fort Worth Brass Ensemble y varios miembros representantes de los coros de la Parroquia de los Mártires Vietnamitas, la Catedral de San Patricio y las Hermanas Dominicas de María Inmaculada.

Una pieza musical especial basada en el Salmo 96 fue compuesta y escrita por Bach Phan específicamente para la Misa de Ordenación para celebrar “la primera

CONTINÚA EN LA PÁGINA 40

Jason Allan and the other five ordinands are presented to Bishop Olson for petitioning for ordination to the priesthood. (NTC/Juan Guajardo)



## Bishop Olson ordains six men to the priesthood, the largest class in diocesan history





**A**s Janna and Rick Maul waited to see their son, Sam, ordained to the priesthood May 22 in Vietnamese Martyrs Church, they remembered a time, 28 years ago, when worry supplanted joy. Janna, already the mother of three young boys, had just finished chemotherapy treatments for cancer when she became pregnant with a fourth child.

“Someone told me the baby was God’s gift to me,” she recalled. “It was His way of telling me I was going to be okay.”

And she was.

“The baby was born healthy and happy, and we named him Samuel Joseph,” the grateful mom continued. “He really was a miracle baby.”

Surrounded by friends and family at the Ordination Mass, the Mauls now believe there was another reason for the unexpected crisis pregnancy.

“Sam wasn’t just a gift for us,” Janna said tearfully. “I know he was meant for God.”

Their families watched with gratitude and pride as Samuel Maul, Jason Allan,

Thomas Jones, Joseph Moreno, Hai Linh Nguyen, and Brett Metzler received the sacrament of Holy Orders from Bishop Michael Olson during an ordination rite steeped in the traditions of the early Church. It is the largest class of candidates to complete seminary formation since the Diocese of Fort Worth was established almost 52 years ago.

Calling the six new priests a “tremendous blessing from God,” Father Jonathan Wallis, the diocesan vicar general and

**Continued on Page 40**



director of seminarian formation, praised the men for being dedicated and faithful to the call of Jesus Christ in their life.

“Each of them, in his own way, had to sacrifice to get to this day,” he observed. “None of them had an easy road but they continued to say ‘yes’ to God.”

The vicar general credits the history-making number of vocations to God’s grace and a real answer to prayer:

“Many people have worked very hard for a number of years to increase the number of priests we have in the diocese,” Fr. Wallis explained. “God is hearing and answering our prayers.”

Concelebrating the Ordination Mass with the bishop were the Auxiliary Bishop Neal J. Buckon of the Archdiocese for the Military Services, USA; Father Wallis; Monsignor E. James Hart, diocesan chancellor and moderator of the curia; and Father Hy Nguyen, PSS, rector of Assumption Seminary. Also participating in the liturgy were 99 priests, 45 deacons, the Fort Worth Brass Ensemble, and choir members from Vietnamese Martyrs, St. Patrick Cathedral, and the Dominican Sisters of Mary Immaculate Province.

A special piece of music based on Psalm 96, was composed and written by Bach Phan specifically for the Ordination Mass to celebrate the Diocese of Fort Worth and its “abundant harvest” in 2021.



The six ordinands lie prostrate during the Litany of the Saints at the Ordination Mass May 22 at Vietnamese Martyrs Parish. (NTC/Juan Guajardo)



cosecha abundante del 2021 de la Diócesis de Fort Worth”.

La asistencia a la liturgia matutina se limitó a los familiares y amigos cercanos de los candidatos debido a las existentes precauciones contra el COVID. Más de 2,600 hogares vieron el evento transmitido en vivo en el sitio web diocesano, [fwdioc.org](http://fwdioc.org).

Al comienzo de la Misa el Obispo

Olson dio la bienvenida a la congregación y agradeció a los padres de los ordenandos que “oraron para que este día se hiciera realidad y caminaron con sus hijos”.

Los candidatos fueron ordenados diáconos de transición el 19 de marzo del 2020, justo cuando la pandemia del COVID-19 fuera declarada como una emergencia nacional. En esa ocasión se permitió que sólo 50 personas presenciaran la Misa de ordenación en

la Catedral de San Patricio. “Quiero expresar el más profundo agradecimiento a nuestros ordenandos por su generosidad y la voluntad de recibir la ordenación al diaconado en las circunstancias extraordinarias de la pandemia”, dijo el Obispo en aquel entonces. “Estoy muy agradecido a esta clase y a sus familias por poner a Cristo y el bien común de la Diócesis en primer lugar”.

Kathryn Rossman se sintió “más que bendecida” al ver a su hijo, Thomas Jones,





## PHOTO GALLERY

Check out dozens more photos from the ordination and the newly ordained priests' first Masses at:

[NORTH-TEXAS-CATHOLIC.SMUGMUG.COM](http://NORTH-TEXAS-CATHOLIC.SMUGMUG.COM)

Attendance at the morning liturgy was limited to family members and close friends of the candidates because of continuing COVID precautions. More than 2,600 households watched the event livestreamed on the diocesan website, [fwdioc.org](http://fwdioc.org).

Welcoming the congregation at the start of the Mass, Bishop Olson thanked the parents of the ordinands, who “prayed for this day and walked with their sons.”

The men were ordained transitional deacons on March 19, 2020, just as the COVID pandemic was declared a national emergency. Only 50 people were allowed inside St. Patrick Cathedral to witness that ceremony.

“I want to express a word of thanks to our ordinandi for their generosity and willingness to receive ordination to the

diaconate in the extraordinary circumstances of the pandemic,” he said. “I’m very grateful to this class and to their families for putting Christ and the common good of the diocese first.”

A year later, Kathryn Rossman felt “beyond blessed” to watch her son, Thomas Jones, become a priest. As a young child, the Air Force veteran turned seminarian displayed an innate kindness to people and animals. His compassion continued into adulthood.

“When he was in the military, receiving the injured arriving on airplanes in Germany, he would go to the hospital and talk to them and write letters for them. It was a way of encouraging them,” she told the *North Texas Catholic*.

**Continued on Page 42**

ser ordenado al sacerdocio un año más tarde. El veterano de la Fuerza Aérea, que se convirtiera luego en seminarista, mostró de niño una gran bondad innata hacia las personas y los animales. Su compasión continuó hasta la edad adulta.

“Cuando Thomas estaba en el ejército era parte del equipo que recibía a los soldados heridos que llegaban a Alemania en avión. Él iba al hospital y hablaba con ellos y les escribía cartas. Era una forma de animarlos y apoyarlos”, comentó Kathryn

al *North Texas Catholic*.

La madre de tres hijos varones cree que su hijo menor hará una valiosa aportación al sacerdocio.

“Sé que Tom quisiera servir en el ejército como capellán y estar en esos lugares donde puede ayudar a los desfavorecidos y animarlos”, agregó Rossman. “Como madre no puedo estar más orgullosa de él y sé que su padre Orión, ya fallecido, que era un católico muy devoto, está hoy presente en espíritu con nosotros”.



Durante la liturgia multicultural, se le pidió a Mery Nguyen, la hermana de Hai Linh Nguyen, que hiciera la segunda lectura en vietnamita.

Mientras esperaba que comenzara la celebración litúrgica, Mery recordó cómo su hermano mayor se sintió atraído hacia la Misa incluso cuando era niño. Sus padres, Tuyet y Anthony (Viet) Nguyen, solían invitar a los sacerdotes de la Parroquia de

**CONTINÚA EN LA PÁGINA 42**



Bishop Olson imposes hands on Thomas Jones during the Rite of Ordination at Vietnamese Martyrs Parish. (NTC/Juan Guajardo)

Cristo Rey a su casa para cenar y celebrar ocasiones especiales.

“Los hermanos y las hermanas de otras familias jugaban a estar en la casa, pero nosotros pretendíamos celebrar una Misa. Él fingía ser sacerdote y nos daba la comunión”, dijo entusiasmada.

La joven de 23 años supo siempre que su hermano estaba interesado en el sacerdocio, pero la decisión de ingresar al seminario no llegó hasta después de graduarse de la escuela secundaria.

“Nos dijo que aquí es hacia dónde quería dirigir su vida y ver hoy cómo eso se hace realidad es maravilloso”, dijo Nguyen. “Ha estado trabajando por lograr esto durante mucho tiempo”.

Al dirigirse a los futuros

sacerdotes en su homilía, el Obispo Olson dijo que su vocación es siempre una gracia y no simplemente una cuestión de acciones o palabras.

“Sino que más bien se trata de una cuestión de cómo nuestras palabras y acciones son auténticas a nuestro carácter”, señaló. “Se trata de cómo nuestro carácter corresponde a Cristo, el Buen Pastor, que da su vida por las ovejas”.

El prelado líder de los católicos del norte de Texas pidió a los hombres que recordaran el ejemplo de San Maximiliano Kolbe, quien ofreció su vida como mártir y sacerdote. Con las palabras, “Deseo tomar el lugar de este hombre. Soy un sacerdote católico”, el fraile

CONTINÚA EN LA PÁGINA 44

The mother of three sons believes her youngest child will be an asset to the priesthood.

“I know Tom wants to serve in the military [as a chaplain] and be in those places where he can help the underprivileged and raise them up,” Rossman added. “I couldn’t be prouder, and I know his [late] father, Orion, who was a very devout Catholic, is with us in spirit today.”

During the multicultural liturgy, Mery Nguyen, sister of Hai Linh Nguyen, gave the Second Reading in Vietnamese.

Waiting for the worship service to begin, she recalled how her older brother was drawn to the Mass even as a child. Their parents, Tuyet and Anthony (Viet) Nguyen, often invited priests from Christ the King Parish to the family home for





Bishop Michael Olson embraces Fr. Linh Nguyen during the fraternal kiss of peace. (NTC/Rodger Mallison)

dinner and special celebrations.

“Brothers and sisters in other families played house, but we would have pretend Mass. He would be the priest and give us communion,” she said.

The 23-year-old always knew her brother was interested in the priesthood but the decision to enter the seminary didn’t come until after graduating high school.

“He told us this is where he was taking his life and to see it come to fruition is wonderful,” Nguyen said. “He’s been working on this for a long time.”

Addressing the soon-to-be priests in his homily, Bishop Olson said their vocation is always a grace and not simply a matter of

actions or words. “But rather a matter of how our words and actions are authentic to our personal character,” he pointed out. “It is a matter of how our character corresponds to Christ the Good Shepherd who lays down His life for the sheep.”

The leader of North Texas Catholics asked the men to remember the example of Saint Maximilian Kolbe who offered his life as a martyr and priest. With the words, “I wish to take this man’s place. I am a Catholic priest,” the Franciscan friar volunteered to take the place of a prisoner who was condemned to die in a starvation bunker at Auschwitz.

“Father Kolbe does not give the guard his own name. He does not identify

himself by his prison number. He offers no other reason and wastes no words,” the bishop explained. “He gives his life freely, prophetically, and sacrificially in this moment as a priest with pastoral charity as he takes the place of Franciszek Gajowniczek.”

Fr. Kolbe’s mission as a priest continued in the death chamber where he comforted nine other prisoners with the Gospel and sacraments, “so that, in the end, they do not abandon faith, hope, or charity nor reject the salvation of their souls won for them by Christ’s sacrifice of the cross,” the bishop concluded.

After voicing their willingness to be ordained, and promising obedience to the bishop and his successors, the ordinands prostrated themselves in front of the altar in submission to the will of God as the congregation sang the Litany of the Saints. The ancient prayer of the Church calls upon the saints to intercede on behalf of the men as they approach the sacrament of Holy Orders.

Rising from prayer, each man knelt before the bishop for ordination.

With a gesture first used by the Apostles in choosing the first deacons for the Church, the bishop prayed in silence to the Holy Spirit as he placed his hands on the head of each candidate. A Prayer of Ordination followed the Laying on of Hands and completed the essential act of ordination.

**Continued on Page 44**



Father Joseph Moreno gives a blessing to his daughter, Kathryn, after the ordination Mass. (NTC/Jayme Donahue)

The newly ordained priests received the stole and chasuble — outward signs of the office of the priesthood — before approaching the bishop again to have their hands anointed with Sacred Chrism. Bishop Olson presented the paten and chalice to each new priest with the words, “Receive the oblation of the holy people to be offered to God. Understand what you do. Imitate what you celebrate and conform your life to the mystery of the Lord’s cross.”

Bill Moore, a St. Andrew parishioner and a guest of Jason Allan, said, “Anytime the Church is able to produce six new priests is a happy day. Without priests, we have no Church.” The pair

met at a St. John Paul II Shepherd’s Guild dinner and connected over a mutual interest in the Navy. Moore is a retired three-star admiral, and Allan, who was commissioned an ensign in the Navy last May, will see active duty as a chaplain after serving in the diocese for several years.

Families of the newly ordained agree the journey to priesthood is difficult and requires the support of parents, loved ones, and parishioners. Many of the diocese’s 20 seminarians participated in the Ordination Mass.

“I’m happy for my son, Brett, because he so loves the Lord and wants to serve God’s people,” said Tammy Metzler, who received a blessing from her son following his ordination. “It’s such a gift and I will give glory to God for the rest of my days.” 🇺🇸

franciscano se ofreció para tomar el lugar de un prisionero que fue condenado a morir de hambre en un búnker en Auschwitz.

“El Padre Kolbe no le da al guardia su propio nombre. No se identifica por su número de prisión. No ofrece ninguna otra razón ni desperdicia palabras”, explicó el Obispo. “Él da su vida libre y proféticamente, y se ofrece en sacrificio en ese momento como sacerdote con caridad pastoral mientras toma el lugar de Franciszek Gajowniczek”.

La misión del Padre Kolbe como sacerdote continuó en la cámara de gas donde consoló a otros nueve presos con el Evangelio y los sacramentos, “para que, al final, no abandonen la fe, la esperanza o la caridad ni rechacen la salvación de sus almas ganada para ellos por el sacrificio de Cristo en la cruz”, concluyó el Obispo Olson.

Luego de que cada candidato expresara su voluntad de ser ordenado y de prometer obediencia al Obispo y sus

Meet the new priests. Stories start on Pg. 46!





sucesores, los ordenandos se postraron ante al altar en sumisión a la voluntad de Dios mientras la congregación cantaba la Letanía de los Santos. La antigua oración de la Iglesia pide a los santos que intercedan en nombre de los candidatos cuando se acercan al Sacramento del Orden Sagrado.

Una vez concluida la oración, los candidatos se arrodillaron uno a uno ante el Obispo para ser ordenados.

Con un gesto utilizado por primera vez por los Apóstoles al elegir a los primeros diáconos de la Iglesia primitiva, el Obispo invocó al Espíritu Santo en silencio mientras impuso sus manos sobre la cabeza de cada candidato. La imposición de manos fue seguida por la oración consagratoria, culminando así el acto esencial de la ordenación.

Los sacerdotes recién ordenados recibieron la estola y la casulla, signos externos del oficio del sacerdocio, antes de acercarse nuevamente al Obispo Olson para que les ungiera las manos con el Santo Crisma. El Obispo procedió a presentar la patena y el cáliz a cada nuevo sacerdote mientras decía: “Recibe la oblación del pueblo santo para ser ofrecida a Dios. Entiende lo que haces. Imita lo que celebras y conforma tu vida al misterio de la cruz del

Señor”.

Bill Moore, un feligrés de la Parroquia de San Andrés que fue invitado por Jason Allen, dijo, “cada vez que la Iglesia puede producir seis nuevos sacerdotes es un día feliz”. Ambos se conocieron en una cena de St. John Paul II Shepherd’s Guild y se hicieron amigos por su mutuo interés en la Marina. Moore es un almirante retirado de tres estrellas y Allan recibió la insignia de alférez en la Marina en mayo del año pasado. Comenzará su servicio activo como capellán después de servir varios años en la Diócesis.

“A cada persona en el ejército se le permite practicar su culto y nuestros capellanes están allí para ayudar a las personas de todas las religiones”, agregó Moore. “Jason está comprometido con Jesucristo. Va a ser un gran sacerdote”.

Al cabo de su primer año de formación en el Seminario St. Joseph, Quang Nguyen estuvo ansioso por ayudar a los organizadores a preparar la ordenación.

“Éste es un sacramento al que no estamos expuestos con frecuencia, por lo que hoy estoy muy emocionado”, dijo el seminarista de la Parroquia de Nuestra Señora de Fátima. “Discernir la vocación sacerdotal es un camino completamente nuevo para mí”. ✝



**TOP:** Father Linh Nguyen receives the chalice and paten from Bishop Michael Olson. (NTC/Juan Guajardo)

**MIDDLE:** Father Sam Maul receives a congratulatory greeting during the priestly ordination Mass. (NTC/Juan Guajardo)

**BOTTOM:** Father Brett Metzler kisses his stole as he dons his priestly vestments for the first time. (NTC/Jayme Donahue)

¡Conozca a los nuevos sacerdotes!

Historias comienzan en la página 46.



# Meet FATHER Joseph Moreno

**K**athryn Moreno Escutia was teased about being a “preacher’s kid” long before her father entered the seminary.

“When I was younger, people would joke about it because my dad was so involved in the Church,” said the 25-year-old, remembering how Joseph Moreno taught religious education, belonged to the Knights of Columbus, and served as a lector, Eucharistic minister, and acolyte at different times for St. Matthew Parish in Arlington. “We were always there.”

An IT security specialist, Fr. Moreno initially discerned a call to the permanent diaconate. But, after the death of his wife, Sarah, he reconsidered that decision and contacted the diocesan vocations office about studying for the priesthood.

Kathryn approved the change after a heart-to-heart conversation with her father.

The oldest in the group of six who were ordained, the former St. Matthew parishioner said his years in the seminary allowed him to grow closer to God and deepen his relationship with Him.

“The more I’m filled with His grace, the more I will be able to pour that out,” he added thoughtfully. “Being here has been wonderful and rewarding.”

Just after his ordination, Fr. Moreno celebrated his first Masses May 22 and 23 at St. Matthew, with his daughter and son-in-law watching from the first pew.

Fr. Moreno will begin his priestly ministry as the pastoral administrator of St. Jude Thaddeus Parish in

Burkburnett, Christ the King in Iowa Park, and St. Paul in Electra on July 1.

But, like his new fellow brother priests, the cradle Catholic is eager to begin the next chapter in ministry.

“We are all incredibly excited and can’t wait to start serving the people of Fort Worth,” Fr. Moreno enthused.

His newly married daughter is also confident the parent-turned-priest will shepherd his flock with the same caregiving skills he used raising her.

“He’ll be able to use some of the parenting techniques — consoling, advising, and other things he was good at — to connect with people on a deeper level,” Kathryn said. “He’ll be great at it. I tell him all the time my mom and I are proud and support him in everything he does.”



# Meet FATHER Jason Allan

As Jason Allan prepared to receive the Rite of Ordination from Bishop Michael Olson on May 22, he constantly relied on prayer — particularly the Psalms in the Liturgy of the Hours.

During his first years of formation, the former St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish altar server learned to find guidance in the scripture passages.

“The Psalms contain the full gamut of human emotion. There’s a real richness in those very poetic prayers,” Fr. Allan explained. “Emotions expressed in the Psalms are a means of relating to the rest of the Church and humanity at large.”

Fr. Allan entered the seminary nine years ago after graduating from Keller High School. An active member of

the Squires — an official youth group of the Knights of Columbus — and a former religious education teacher at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, the 27-year-old was considered “very religious” by those who knew him. But the choice to pursue a priestly vocation still surprised his parents, Nancy and Tom.

“I had plans for him and that wasn’t it,” explained Fr. Allan’s dad, a retired Naval officer. “He always said he wanted to be an engineer and go into the Navy. At the same time, he was discerning a vocation.”

“We’re very proud the priesthood is his chosen vocation,” said the elder Allan, who urges the parents of future seminarians to “let your son follow his heart if that’s his calling. They need the support of family.”

Now that he is ordained, Fr. Allan is looking forward to “being in the parish fulltime and involved in people’s lives as they come to church to worship, grow in their faith, and pass on that faith to their children.”

He celebrated his first Mass at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish in Keller on May 22 and a Spanish Mass on May 23. Come July 1, Fr. Allan will serve as a parochial vicar at Immaculate Conception Parish in Denton.

Fr. Allan credits the examples of faith he saw growing up for his vocation.

“My time in seminary, and various assignments in every corner of the diocese, helped me grow in my capacity to be a priest,” he said. “I hope to repay the graces I’ve received in my ministry.”



Fr. Jason Allan celebrates his first Spanish Mass at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton in Keller. (NTC/Ben Torres)

# Meet FATHER Brett Metzler

“Be still and know that I am God.”

Those words from *Psalms 46:10* continue to resonate with Father Brett Metzler after being ordained a priest for the Diocese of Fort Worth May 22.

Ordained a transitional deacon last March along with five other men, the former St. Mark parishioner said the psalm’s comforting message helped him cope with the stress and uncertainty of the past year and the strain of the pandemic.

“What I’ve learned the most from this year is the priesthood isn’t fundamentally about me but about Christ,” the 28-year-old explained. “The priesthood is about serving. It’s about Christ and His Church and its people. COVID, in a very particular way, showed me that.”

A graduate of Immaculate Conception Catholic School in Denton and Liberty Christian Academy, Metzler entered the seminary after completing his freshman year at Texas A&M University. The decision to study for the priesthood surprised his parents, Tammy and Mike Metzler, who initially urged him to finish college first.

“In a letter he told us he prayed and was going to daily Mass at St. Mary’s at A&M and just really felt a calling to the priesthood,” his mother recalled. Months later, the Metzlers drove their 19-year-old son to St. Joseph Seminary College in Covington, Louisiana, to begin his formation.

Fr. Metzler most recently attended the Theological College Seminary at Catholic University of

America in Washington, D.C., where he completed a bachelor’s degree in sacred theology (STB) and will return to the campus July 1 to earn a Licentiate of Sacred Theology (STL).

Fr. Metzler is excited “to just be available to people as a priest. I’ve done ministry as a seminarian and deacon, but as a priest, there’s a special spiritual father role you take on. That includes the sacraments, confession, and the Mass.” Fr. Metzler received his first opportunity to do just that the day after his

ordination, when he celebrated his first Mass at St. Mark.

He is also looking forward to reaching out to the sick and elderly.

“I really loved hospital ministry,” disclosed the priest, who visited young patients and their families at Children’s Medical Center in Dallas one summer as part of his seminarian training. “Bringing Christ to the suffering and confusion in people’s lives was extremely rewarding. It’s difficult work but important to bring the mercy of Jesus to people.”



Fr. Brett Metzler hugs his mother after presenting her with the maneturgium after his first Mass at St. Mark in Denton. (NTC/Matthew Redden)





Fr. Linh Nguyen delivers his homily in Vietnamese during his first Mass at Christ the King in Fort Worth. (NTC/Jayme Donahue)



# Meet FATHER Linh Nguyen

When Bishop Michael Olson ordained Linh Nguyen to the priesthood on May 22, the people who watched him grow up in Christ the King Parish witnessed the ceremony with pride and gratitude. The Vietnamese faith community in Fort Worth supported the parishioner with prayers and encouragement since he entered the seminary after high school.

The 26-year-old who was active in the Vietnamese Eucharistic Youth Movement and other church activities said, “In a sense, it’s like a family watching their son grow up and head off to something big in their life.” He returned to Christ the King Parish on May 23 to celebrate

his first Mass.

Seeing how pastors engaged people in the parish inspired the son of Tuyet and Viet Nguyen to consider a call to the priesthood. Members of the Vietnam-based Congregation of the Mother of the Redeemer not only served the parish sacramentally, they became part of family life, attending birthday parties and other special occasions.

Although the young parishioner admired the missionary zeal of the priests assigned to Christ the King, Nguyen decided to become a diocesan priest rather than join a religious order in order to forge long-term, spiritual relationships with people.

Fr. Nguyen will begin forging relationships at St. Elizabeth Ann

Seton Parish in Keller as parochial vicar on July 1.

Fr. Nguyen began preparing for the priesthood nine years ago and finding joy in life’s little moments made the difficult times easier.

“I like bringing joy to people, whether that’s my brothers in the seminary, my family, or the people I minister to,” he continued. “It’s not super extraordinary things either — just simple gestures...allow me to bring happiness.”

The Fort Worth native is looking forward to “helping people encounter God’s mercy and love” in the confessional. Catholics who receive the sacrament of Reconciliation open themselves up for personal renewal and divine grace, he said.

# Meet FATHER Samuel Maul



Fr. Sam Maul celebrates his first Mass at St. Michael Parish in Bedford. (NTC/Kevin Bartram)



St. Joseph always had a special place in Father Sam Maul's heart. His parents, Rick and Janna Maul, named him Samuel Joseph at birth and, as a teenager, he chose the name Joseph again for Confirmation.

Last year, the seminarian was ordained a transitional deacon on March 19, on the Solemnity of St. Joseph, and his May 22 ordination to the priesthood occurred during the Year of St. Joseph.

"St. Joseph has definitely been praying for me during this time," said Fr. Maul, who entered the seminary after graduating from L.D. Bell High School in 2012. "It's been both a challenging and rewarding time."

Having completed his final year of theology courses at Assumption

Seminary in San Antonio, the former St. Michael parishioner is now preparing to serve the community of St. John the Apostle in North Richland Hills as parochial vicar on July 1.

As a transitional deacon, he assisted at Our Lady of Grace Parish in San Antonio, focused on academics, and completed his master's degree in divinity.

"In the fourth year, a lot of our courses are practicum courses," Fr. Maul pointed out. "We learn how to preside at liturgies as a priest. There are courses in Confession and Anointing of the Sick."

After ordination, the 27-year-old eagerly put into action what he'd learned. He returned to St. Michael Parish on May 23 to celebrate his first Mass.

"In general, a priest's responsibilities

are the promises made at ordination to pray — praying for the people and maintaining a good prayer life," said Fr. Maul, who recites the *Anima Christi* after every Mass. "Saying Mass and bringing the sacraments to people are the biggest responsibilities."

His nine years in the seminary — spent at both the Theological College at Catholic University of America and Assumption Seminary — were transformative.

The Bedford native explained, "Part of seminary formation is our human formation. We learn to adhere our lives — not just our spiritual lives, academics, or how we interact with people — but we conform our lives to the life of Christ and the life of the Church."



Fr. Thomas Jones gives blessings after his first Mass at St. Philip the Apostle in Lewisville. (NTC/Ben Torres)



## Meet **FATHER** Thomas Jones

**H**is eight years in the military trained Thomas Jones to expect the unexpected.

Three tours of duty in the Middle East taught the Air Force veteran that people respond to the reaction of others in a crisis.

“You have to maintain an ‘everything’s fine, everything’s okay’ appearance,” said the former staff sergeant, who grew up attending Mass at Holy Cross Parish in The Colony and St. Catherine of Siena Parish in Carrollton. “Maintaining stability for other people helped me maintain my own stability.”

The newly ordained priest hopes to bring a similar steadiness, leadership experience, and “be ready for anything” attitude to the people he serves as

parochial vicar of St. Jude the Apostle Parish in Mansfield. Jones is one of six men Bishop Michael Olson ordained to the priesthood on May 22.

Fr. Jones first began thinking about a vocation to the priesthood in high school. The military chaplains he met during his years in the Air Force reinforced the idea by their devotion to the men and women they served.

Two years after his August 2001 enlistment, the young Texan from Carrollton found himself in Qatar surrounded by desert sand, barbed wire, and an alien culture. Chaos and conflict weren’t far away.

“You couldn’t feel further from home, and there were always amazing chaplains there that were able to give

some semblance of peace,” he said, recalling what it was like to be deployed overseas in a post-9/11 world.

As a priest unpacked his Mass kit, Jones would gather in the base conference room with other service members for worship.

“And there was home,” he remembered thoughtfully. “That was something that really struck me, and I wanted to bring that refuge to other people. It helped me pursue my call.”

After 11 years in the seminary, the 38-year-old “good listener” is looking forward to hearing confessions and celebrating Mass as a priest. He celebrated his first Mass at St. Philip the Apostle Church in Lewisville May 23, the Solemnity of Pentecost.



# ETERNAL Education

For education to make the grade, Interim Superintendent of Catholic Schools Melissa Kasmeyer measures more than test scores

By Susan Moses

**M**elissa Kasmeyer waits a long time to measure success. As interim superintendent of schools for the Diocese of Fort Worth, she could track accomplishment by test scores, academic growth, or graduation rates. And while those metrics are assessed and valuable, her first priority is eternal. “Truly, it’s about the salvation of souls. That’s the importance [of Catholic education],” she said.

The Catholic schools in the diocese provide excellent academics, asserted Kasmeyer, but she’s watching to see that these young students develop in the future into leaders within the Church and incorporate Catholic values into their daily living.

“Our students are so much more than a test score. . . . Being disciples of Christ, that’s the big picture. That’s true success,” she said.

This criterion is so important to her that she’s chosen to focus on it for the doctoral dissertation that she’ll complete later this year at Texas Wesleyan University. Titled “More than a test score: Cognitive and non-cognitive outcomes in Catholic

education,” it represents three years of her studies into the long-term benefits of Catholic education.

## SCHOOL DAYS

Kasmeyer’s work in Catholic education began in 2012, when she joined St. Andrew Catholic School as assistant principal after working in the public school system for 17 years as a teacher and principal.

She was named principal of the Fort Worth school in 2014, then became assistant superintendent of diocesan schools in 2016.

During the first four years as assistant superintendent, she and then superintendent Jennifer Pelletier improved services to students with learning differences, transitioned to a more classical Catholic education approach, and increased professional development for teachers, among other achievements.

But 2020 demanded a new set of priorities: how to protect the health, safety, and wellbeing of students and staff while providing a robust education.

The situation was full of unknowns, but the administrative team had one certainty — that in-person education was best for the students.

Last summer, Kasmeyer remembered, was especially intense. “The number of decisions to be made in a day” was extensive, in an atmosphere where everyone — teachers, health experts, parents, principals — was struggling with fear and anxiety.

Navigating the school reopening was “a courageous overcoming,” she recalled. At that time, public schools were delaying the start of school and reducing in-person learning, so their decision to reopen was not self-evident. With the benefit of hindsight, she sees the health protocols implemented by the schools successfully balanced health concerns along with educational needs.

Despite the challenges, Kasmeyer remembers those months as a time when she felt especially close to God. “With this pandemic, it’s provided a lot of challenges; however, I would say there are so many beautiful gifts that have come from that.” As an educator, she saw parents, teachers, and principals “relying on and trusting in God for Him to guide us.”

Personally, she said, “Not going through this before, I really relied on Christ for clarity and guidance to do His will. It’s a daily prayer.”

Even after the schools had opened,





Interim Superintendent of Catholic Schools  
Melissa Kasmeier. (NTC/Juan Guajardo)

adjustments had to be made throughout the school year to balance safety with relaxing protocols. Sometimes academic needs, such as benefits of reading groups for early readers, were juxtaposed with health concerns of keeping students socially distanced.

With the doors closed on the 2020-2021 school year, Kasmeier can see that along with the trials of education during a pandemic, blessings were also present. She mentioned the schools gained more technological savvy as virtual options were implemented. With this experience, she expects to see more collaboration between the schools despite the geographic distance between them. For example, third grade teachers could meet virtually to compare successful techniques for engaging their students in a particular subject.

### **MANY HATS**

During much of her tenure as assistant superintendent, Kasmeier has filled multiple roles. For 18 months, she also has been

interim principal of St. Andrew Catholic School, and in April she added the responsibilities of interim superintendent.

Not to mention she's the mother of three daughters — one a graduate of Nolan Catholic High School and two currently enrolled in diocesan Catholic schools.

How does one wear multiple hats? By following the advice she gives her daughters and the St. Andrew students.

She said, "During a difficult moment, settle yourself, breathe, and call upon the Holy Spirit. Through Christ you have the strength to do what you are called to do at that moment in time.

"What is God calling me to do right now? I have to remind myself, 'What am I called to do today?' Not in the future, because I'm a planner and a goal setter and always thinking ahead, but let's live in the moment. What's God calling me to today?"

Kasmeier seeks quiet times and spaces in Adoration and outside in nature to hear God amid the busy days.

Ultimately, the need to juggle the obligations of several positions has proven to be a "great blessing," Kasmeier explained. She understands the policies and expectations set by the diocesan administrative team, plus she gets a firsthand look at the implementation of those decisions in the halls and classrooms of St. Andrew. And finally, as a parent, she witnesses the struggles and the triumphs that students experience.

Another blessing — in her role as interim principal, she catches glimpses that reveal the ultimate success of Catholic education.

Kasmeier has instituted the opportunity for Adoration after school at St. Andrew twice each week. One day, she heard a fifth-grade boy mention to another that after a hard day at school, he went into the Adoration chapel and the stress and worries went away.

"I thought, 'I wish I would have learned that at 10 or 11,'" Kasmeier said. "That's the beauty of Catholic school." 🇺🇸





## Love and Faith; Tested and True

Pope Francis released his apostolic exhortation *Amoris Laetitia* (The Joy of Love) five years ago. Based on the two synods on the family convoked by the pontiff in 2014 and 2015, it affirms the complexity and realities of family life and shares spiritual insights and practical wisdom.

As an example of the document's tone and content, take paragraph 57, in which Pope Francis writes, "I thank God that many families, which are far from considering themselves perfect, live in love, fulfill their calling, and keep moving forward, even if they fall many times along the way. The Synod's reflections show us that there is no stereotype of the ideal family, but rather a challenging mosaic made up of many different realities, with all their joys, hopes, and problems."

In honor of the fifth anniversary of *Amoris Laetitia*, the NTC expands its regular feature The Domestic Church. Joe and Mary Pham, parishioners of Christ the King, discussed how faith has helped them overcome hardships as they fled their homeland in Vietnam and raised six children in Fort Worth.



**THEY ARE:** Joe and Mary Pham. Their devotion to the Blessed Mother inspired them to donate the Marian statue behind them to Christ the King Parish in Fort Worth. (NTC/Ben Torres)



**THE RIGHT CHOICE** — Joe and Mary grew up in Catholic families in Vietnam. Their fathers knew each other, and they planned for their children to marry. Although an arranged marriage is unconventional in our time and place, it was typical for their community. Mary explained that because of the trust and respect they gave their parents, “We believe that our parents made the right decision. We work at the marriage. We share equal responsibility to make the relationship work and raise a family.”

The couple will celebrate their 50<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary on April 30, 2022.

**GO WITH GOD** — When the Vietnam War ended, economic hardships remained and political and religious repression intensified. In 1980, Joe and Mary had four children and another on the way, but they contemplated joining the estimated 800,000 Vietnamese who fled their homeland by boat.

It would be a dangerous and unpredictable journey, sailing in small, overcrowded fishing boats not designed for the open sea and at the mercy of weather and pirates. Leaving the country was illegal, and a fourth or more of the refugees died at sea. Should they attempt the journey?

For weeks, Mary asked the Blessed Mother for wisdom. “Mary should show me the way. Whatever the decision, guide us,” she remembered.

She asked for a sign, which she received, then she added a new prayer. “If we’re not going to be contributing members of society [in our new homeland], it’s better to let us die at sea. But if we’re going to be productive members of society, then let us go safely.”

They would leave behind land and property, but Mary thought, “As long as I’m healthy and still have two hands, we can rebuild what we have lost.”

**COMING TO AMERICA** — Joe left first with their three older children, who were 8, 6, and 4 years old. He recalled, “The children were seasick. It was a challenge to get them to eat, to stay strong and hydrated.”

The boat’s engine died before they reached their destination of Malaysia, and Joe resorted to using a small amount of gold that Mary had sewn into her daughter’s waistband to pay a Chinese fishing boat to tow them.

After reaching Malaysia, Joe, who had served in the South Vietnamese Army, was able to request refugee resettlement in the U.S.

**MEANWHILE** — Mary “felt 100 percent sure” she would see her husband and older children again, because she trusted they were following God’s plan.

She made the voyage a year later, with a three-year-old and a six-month-old. Fellow refugees on the boat worried the baby’s cries would alert the authorities and all would be imprisoned. She muffled the baby, but seasickness and minimal nutrition proved to be a bigger problem. Mary lost her strength and was no longer able to hold, much less breastfeed, the infant. Passengers supported her with herbal remedies until she revived.

**TOGETHER AGAIN** — The couple reunited in Oklahoma, where Joe had found work as a bricklayer by day and a cook at night. Mary worked at a printing company in the morning and at restaurants in the afternoon and evening.

A sympathetic priest allowed them to enroll their children in Catholic school for a nominal fee.

Joe eventually went to trade school and became a repair technician. He found a job in Fort Worth, and the family, now with six children, followed him later.

The couple bought a convenience store, where Mary worked long days and the children helped clean and stock shelves after school. Joe took over in the evenings after finishing his day job. “Every day,” recalled Joe.

In Fort Worth, all six children attended Catholic school and graduated from Nolan Catholic High School. Their daughter Chi remembers staying after school to clean to offset some of the tuition. Catholic school was important

to the family because the couple desired “strong academics and strong faith” for their children.

**TODAY** — Having sold the store and retired, Mary increased her service to Christ the King Parish, which she said was very welcoming when they moved to Fort Worth. Mary cooks for parish events, belongs to a prayer group, and brings the Eucharist to the homebound. Giving back to the parish is important to the couple, who has 10 grandchildren.

**POWER OF PRAYER** — Three of Mary’s relatives were martyred for their faith and are among the 117 Vietnamese Martyrs that were canonized in 1988. She believes their intercession has helped her family through difficult times.

Mary is also close to the Blessed Mother. “If you ask Mary to intercede for you, your prayer will be heard,” she said.

But, Mary advised, always pray that God’s will be done, because sometimes God has a better plan. God has blessed the family with more than she asked, “more than I ever thought in my imagination to be possible,” she said.

For example, Mary prayed that her children would go to college. The oldest graduated from college and is a computer programmer, and the five younger siblings are physicians. Despite their accomplishments, Mary wants her children to know, “At the base of it, it’s not through their work alone — it is God’s gift to us, and He’s still guiding us.”

**LIFE LESSONS** — Mary hopes that her children have learned that “No matter what the hardships are, God will provide.” And Joe, like the silent saint whose name he bears, summed up his example of faith in just one word: “Patience.” 🇺🇸

---

**Editor’s note:** Joe and Mary’s eldest daughter, Chi Pham, assisted with translation for this article.



# “A Life Worth Living”

**HE IS:** Father Stephen Hauck, pastor of St. Martin de Porres Parish in Prosper since 2018. Previously he was parochial vicar at St. Michael Parish in Bedford.

**FOUNDATION:** Growing up with his father in the U.S. Army, Fr. Hauck and his five siblings moved often, including overseas. He said the two constants in his youth were faith and family.

**CHILDHOOD LESSONS:** Experiencing the Catholic Church in other parts of the world taught him the universality of the Church. Wherever his father was stationed, he and his siblings served as altar servers or lectors and assisted the poor.

“Faith was being lived at home, wherever home happened to be,” he remembered.

**HEARING A CALL:** After graduating from Lamar High School in Arlington, he pursued a career in computer programming. Although the pay was good, the work was not fulfilling. He began spending time in Eucharistic Adoration each day on his way home from work.

**ANSWERING THE CALL:** Fr. Hauck entered the seminary in August 2006 and was ordained a priest on May 20, 2017.

**CALL ME JOYFUL:** “In this day and age there are challenges, but this is a

wonderful vocation. This is a life worth living, and it is filled with a lot of joy because you do get to encounter Christ.”

**BEST THINGS ABOUT BEING A PRIEST:** His daily activities are “very meaningful” to him. “It is challenging, but I like that.” His work is also “meaningful to others,” and he enjoys ministering to people at different phases of their lives. Also, no two days are the same — some days he administers four different sacraments.

**NEW ROUTINES:** Most of Fr. Hauck’s parishioners have recently moved to Texas, which is a good opportunity to “start over with your faith. Re-establish routines that are meaningful.”

**LOVES LITURGY:** “The reason we have a liturgy — there should be a familiarity. It’s an opportunity to go deeper. The liturgy speaks to us. At the heart of it, it’s a relationship with the Lord.”

For Fr. Hauck, celebrating daily Mass is “the appropriate space for increased intimacy and depth of relationship. You can’t get to a deep relationship without familiarity.”

**AT EVERY PARISH:** “Our people’s expectations should be to find Christ, to be able to encounter Christ, most especially in the Eucharist but also in His people.”



NTC/Juan Guajardo



# God wants to work on your heart

Seminarians for the  
Diocese of Fort Worth.  
(NTC/Jayme Donahue)

**P**rayer, receiving the sacraments frequently, serving others — these are important when discerning a vocation to the priesthood and religious life.

But what is also important is attending a vocation event. Just as college visits can help people know if they want to go to that college, likewise, visiting the seminary, a convent, or attending a vocation event can help people know what God wants for them.

Every year we take young men to the Come and See retreat at St. Joseph Seminary in Louisiana where they get to meet many of our seminarians, see the beautiful campus, and learn what life is like there. Often the men will want an application to the seminary by the end of the retreat. Similarly, when a young woman visits a convent of religious sisters, she may experience a deep peace and can visualize herself being a part of that community. These are ways God can work on the hearts of men and women, to help them to know His will for them.

Moreover, going to vocation events with seminarians, priests, and religious sisters can be most helpful for those discerning their vocation. Hearing what life is like as a priest, a seminarian, or a religious sister; asking questions; meeting others of the same age who are also

discerning; praying together — this is what makes vocation events very helpful.

In my own experience, I remember attending the Lenten Holy Hours and dinners at St. Patrick Cathedral, with Father Kyle Walterscheid and other young men. I remember being moved by the beauty of the church, the peacefulness of being before the Blessed Sacrament, and being edified by the discussion on priesthood. Getting to talk with a priest, meeting other young men who were also discerning the priesthood — this was incredibly helpful. God inspired me during these discernment events to be a priest.

God wants to work on the heart of people attending a vocation event, but if they never make a leap of faith to attend one of these events, how will they know what God wants? Sure, Jesus Christ can still appear to the person and audibly speak to them, but Jesus tends to reward faith — not timidity. When the person is willing to take a leap of faith by attending a vocation event, God will bless this action and give the person a better sense of what He wants for them.

So, the Diocese of Fort Worth has various vocation events each year to help with discerning one's vocation. We have a Quo Vadis retreat for high school boys on August 6 at Montserrat Retreat Center

(email [SPenuela@fwdioc.org](mailto:SPenuela@fwdioc.org) for more details). We have monthly St. Andrew Breakfasts on Saturdays at the Cathedral at 8 a.m. (our next meeting is on August 21). We have our Fall Come and See at St. Joseph Seminary on November 5-7. And we are also in contact with various religious orders, such as the Dominican Sisters of Mary Immaculate Province, to help young women have opportunities to visit a convent and meet religious sisters.

I encourage all of us to continue to pray specifically for more religious vocations in our diocese and to offer our Holy Communion and Rosaries for men and women to consider the call to be a priest, religious sister, or brother. Perhaps we can even have a monthly Holy Hour at all our parishes for religious vocations. Lastly, I encourage us to continue to invite young men and women to these discernment events so that they can see what the seminary or convent is like, to be able to visit with priests, religious sisters, and seminarians, as well as other people of the same age. These vocation events will greatly help them in knowing what God wants for them in their life. 🇺🇸



Fr. Maurice Moon

---

Ordained to the priesthood in 2018, Father Maurice Moon serves as Chaplain at Nolan Catholic High School in Fort Worth and as Vocations Liaison with the Vocations Office.

# On our common priesthood

While attending the ordination of our six new priests I was reflecting on something I learned in a theology class years ago. We were told that we are all baptized into Jesus' offices of priest, prophet, and king. Sometimes this is called the baptismal priesthood. But what exactly is this? After all, we do not wear vestments and offer Mass or other sacraments.

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* puts it this way: "The whole Church is a priestly people. Through Baptism, all the faithful share in the priesthood of Christ. This participation is called the 'common priesthood of the faithful'" (CCC 1591).

How do we act out this priesthood? The *Catechism* also explains this, saying that "all their works, prayers, and apostolic undertakings, family and married life, daily work, relaxation of mind and body, if they are accomplished in the Spirit — indeed even the hardships of life if patiently born — all these become spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ" (CCC 901).

Basically, what this is saying is that when we live our daily life "in the Spirit," we are helping to bring Jesus to the world. This implies intentionality. We do not stumble into living our daily tasks filled with the Spirit. We need to offer our day to the Lord

in the morning and pray for all the people we will meet with through work and school and family life. We need to take time to pray and spend time with God each day.

The last part of the quote above says, "Indeed even the hardships of life if patiently born — all these become spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ." This means that even our difficult times, our sufferings, our crying babies at 3 a.m., our 12-page term papers, our overtime work, our illnesses, and on and on, when we connect them to the Holy Spirit, they are a way to live out our Baptism.

What we are trying to accomplish through all of these endeavors is to be a bridge between God and humanity. We are made in the image and likeness of God, and when we intentionally live our life with this in mind, we bring God everywhere we go.

This all starts with our own devotion in prayer, Mass, and the sacraments. Through these we develop our relationship with God that we then can share with others. Through these spiritual practices we also discover our purpose and how we are to carry it out. Connection to Jesus is key for the common priesthood to be alive within us.

The common priesthood of the

baptized is vital. The world needs good and joyous witnesses of what it is like to live for Jesus. There's a lot of division, disunity, despair, and debauchery everywhere we go, and Jesus is the elixir for all of these plagues. When we worship by our holy actions, we consecrate the world itself to God, offering worship by the holiness of our lives (CCC 901).

We achieve the power for these actions through Mass and the sacraments, thus our common priesthood needs the ordained priesthood. The *Catechism* puts it this way: "The ministerial priesthood is at the service of the common priesthood. It is directed at the unfolding of the baptismal grace of all Christians. The ministerial priesthood is a means by which Christ unceasingly builds up and leads His Church" (CCC 1547).

Jesus is the high priest, and through Holy Orders He brings about the ministerial priesthood that brings the grace of Jesus, through the sacraments, to the lay faithful as we strive to live out our baptismal priesthood.

So, let us strive to live out the call that continues to resound from the waters of Baptism to sanctify the world through word and deed. 🇺🇸



Jeff Hedglen

---

Jeff Hedglen is the Campus Minister at University of Texas at Arlington.





Isabel Vera, su esposo Roberto Vera y su hija, Miah. (foto de cortesía de Brenda Vizuet)

## UNA AYUDA máxima

Los graduados dan crédito a las escuelas católicas y sus programas por ayudarles a tener éxito

Por Sandra Engelland

**L**e tomó a Isabel Vera nueve años luego de que abandonara la universidad comunitaria para volver a continuar sus estudios. La ayuda que recibió del programa Vocación Rural ('Rural Vocation'), que forma parte de los servicios que se ofrecen en el campus del noroeste de Caridades Católicas Fort Worth, lo hizo posible.

Tras el nacimiento de su hija y convertirse en mamá mientras cursaba la escuela secundaria y verse obligada a tener dos trabajos para mantener a su familia, Vera no estaba segura de poder realizar su sueño de convertirse algún día en maestra. Nadie en su familia inmediata o extendida había jamás ido

a la universidad. Con la ayuda de un navegador de clientes del programa de Caridades Católicas desarrolló un plan de estudios y aprendió sobre la programación, las destrezas adecuadas de estudio y "toda la experiencia universitaria".

Isabel se graduó *magna cum laude* el 1 de mayo de Midwestern State University y comenzará a enseñar segundo grado en Wichita Falls en agosto.

Vera comentó: "Espero algún día poder ayudar a alguien tanto como mi navegador de clientes me ayudó a mí".

Rita Gauthier, Directora de Servicios al Cliente del campus del noroeste de Caridades Católicas, dijo

CONTINÚA EN LA PÁGINA 60

Xavier González, un estudiante que se graduó de Cassata Catholic High School en mayo 22. (NTC/ Juan Guajardo)



#### DE LA PÁGINA 59

que la disposición de los estudiantes de trabajar con los navegadores de clientes es clave para el éxito del programa Vocación Rural. Para calificar para el programa, que incluye los servicios de un navegador de clientes y un asistente social, además de asistencia financiera, los participantes deben cumplir con las pautas de tener bajos ingresos, ser residentes de Texas en uno de los 28 condados que atiende Caridades Católicas Fort Worth, estar dispuestos y ser capaces de trabajar, tener entre 18 y 62 años y estar de acuerdo en comprometerse para lograr las metas del programa.

El Programa Vocación Rural trabaja en colaboración con ocho colegios comunitarios de la región, incluidos varios campus de North Central Texas College y dos universidades de cuatro años. El programa en Midwestern State University se implementó hace varios años. Se espera que para el otoño del 2021 se incorpore una nueva institución asociada: la Universidad del Norte de Texas de Denton.

Gauthier dijo que el programa de la Universidad del Norte de Texas ayudará a los inmigrantes indocumentados y a los estudiantes DACA (La Acción Diferida para los Llegados en la Infancia).

El programa Vocación Rural ayudó el año pasado a 375 estudiantes y se logró un número récord de 44 graduados en mayo. La mayoría de esos graduados están completando programas de grado asociado en enfermería y aspiran a ser enfermeros registrados en el futuro cercano, añadió Gauthier.

Además de la ayuda personalizada que proporcionan los navegadores de los clientes, el programa presenta talleres trimestrales sobre diversos temas tales como el establecimiento de metas, las destrezas de estudio, la elaboración de un presupuesto y el manejo del crédito.

Vera comentó que todavía utiliza la información que aprendió en los talleres de presupuesto y crédito.

Vera señaló que el reunirse con su navegador de clientes la ayudó a aprender a sobre llevar las presiones de sus estudios y los obstáculos de la vida. En el momento que regresó a la universidad ella estaba lidiando con problemas de salud mental, pero su navegador la ayudó a encontrar un consejero y la apoyó durante su jornada educativa.

Ella desea transmitir a la próxima generación el amor por aprender y el aprecio por la educación.

“Muchos estudiantes carecen de amor en sus vidas y su autoestima es baja”, dijo. “Quiero que sepan que pueden hacer lo

que quieran y creer en sí mismos”.

Poder celebrar la graduación con su hija, Miah, de 12 años y su esposo, Roberto Vera, fue “un día muy especial”, sobre todo, tras superar tantas luchas para lograrlo.

Ella nunca dará por sentada su educación.

“Cada vez que iba a Midwestern State University y veía mi reflejo en una puerta de cristal, pensaba: ‘Wow, estoy muy agradecida’”, agregó.

#### ‘UN GRAN RECURSO PARA LA EDUCACIÓN’

Xavier González no quería una experiencia tradicional de escuela secundaria. Le parecía demasiado abrumador un campus grande con cientos de estudiantes y estar todo el día en una sala de clases con 30 estudiantes para tomar sus asignaturas.

Después de tener muchas dificultades en la escuela pública durante sus primeros años escolares, Xavier progreso mucho en el entorno académico íntimo de la escuela católica de St. George. La entonces directora Mary Longoria (que actualmente es parte de la facultad de Nolan Catholic High School) sugirió que Xavier fuera a Cassata Catholic High School.

“Los maestros allí podían trabajar



individualmente con uno en lugar de tener una sala de clases llena de estudiantes”, dijo Xavier. “Podías obtener ayuda personalizada antes o después de la clase, y los profesores te hacían sentir como si tuvieras todo el tiempo del mundo”.

Xavier es uno de los primeros estudiantes en cursar los cuatro años de la escuela secundaria en Cassata, que al principio sólo aceptaba estudiantes de 16 años o más. Acaba de graduarse y planea ingresar a la Fuerza Aérea de los Estados Unidos.

Cassata, que fue establecida en el 1975 por la Hermana Mary Bonaventure y la Hermana Mary Fulbright de las Hermanas de Santa María de Namur, abrió sus puertas para ayudar a los jóvenes de 16 años o más que habían abandonado la escuela para ayudarlos a completar su educación secundaria.

La presidenta de Cassata, la Dra. Maggie Harrison, dijo que la escuela todavía atiende a esos estudiantes, pero que ahora también ayuda a cualquier estudiante de secundaria que esté buscando un programa educativo diseñado a su propio ritmo y cuyas circunstancias de vida hagan que una escuela tradicional de todo el día sea un desafío. La escuela tiene inscripción abierta, lo que significa que los estudiantes pueden comenzar allí en cualquier momento del año escolar.

Cassata ofrece sesiones matutinas o vespertinas para los estudiantes que toman tres clases a la vez. Los estudiantes pueden completar un plan de diploma mínimo, el plan de diploma recomendado o ir más allá de la escuela secundaria con cursos avanzados de doble crédito ofrecidos en asociación con Texas Wesleyan University. El personal de la escuela también puede ayudar a preparar los estudiantes a tomar el examen GED. La matrícula se basa en una escala flexible, según los ingresos familiares.

La madre de Xavier, Linda González, dijo: “Cassata es un gran recurso educativo que me gustaría que más personas conocieran”.

Pese a que algunas personas ven a Cassata como una escuela alternativa para estudiantes embarazadas o estudiantes que fueron expulsados de

una escuela tradicional, es mucho más que eso; es el mejor programa para muchos niños que encuentran abrumador el ambiente tradicional de la escuela secundaria, aclaró Linda González.

Harrison dijo: “Es una reputación que estamos tratando de cambiar a lo largo de los años. No somos una escuela para jóvenes con problemas. Estamos aquí para los estudiantes que enfrentan problemas de salud física o emocional, ansiedad, depresión o problemas médicos, y padres jóvenes que necesitan cuidar de su bebé y no pueden estar en la escuela todo el día. Tenemos una atmósfera muy tranquila y solidaria”.

El padre de Xavier, Abel González, dijo que su hijo se benefició realmente de las clases pequeñas y el aprendizaje individualizado.

Luego de que la familia adoptara a Xavier a los 12 años y trasladarlo poco después de la escuela pública a St. George, lo han visto crecer y desarrollarse durante sus años en las escuelas católicas.

“No era un estudiante perdido”, enfatizó Abel González. “Pudo participar e integrarse en la escuela. Se postuló para el consejo estudiantil y pudo crecer mucho desde el punto de vista educativo y social. Además, el aspecto espiritual de la escuela católica es un verdadero beneficio”.

Xavier se involucró activamente en su parroquia, Todos los Santos. Se unió al grupo de jóvenes en el 2017, luego se convirtió en líder juvenil y oficial de los Caballeros de Colón. Sirvió también como acomodador y miembro del coro.

Xavier y Harrison llegaron a Cassata en el otoño del 2017. Xavier fue estudiante de la Dra. Harrison cuando ella enseñó su primera clase en la escuela.

“Xavier es uno de los estudiantes que vimos cuánto se transformó, maduró y floreció aquí”, dijo. “Fuimos testigos de su crecimiento y estamos inmensamente orgullosos del joven en el que se ha convertido”. ✝

## 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 le han dicho de un posible abuso,

- ▶ 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)



# TRANSMITIENDO LA FE POR Ondas de radio

Carlos Canseco y Elsy Acatitla unidos en el amor y en la misión de Dios en su programa de radio católico

Por Violeta Rocha

**H**an diseñado su hogar para ser el estudio de grabación de su programa de radio católico desde donde diariamente transmiten mensajes informativos y de aliento enfocados en la fe. Han dedicado sus vidas a compartir basados en su propia experiencia “con los retos y las flaquezas” de la vida, que las luchas cotidianas se aligeran cuando uno se deja moldear por Dios.

“Hemos dedicado nuestro ministerio a la formación y evangelización de las familias”, señalan Carlos Canseco y Elsy Acatitla, quienes juntos como matrimonio producen y realizan el programa “Hoy es tu Gran Día” a través de la cadena radial EWTN, Radio Católica Mundial, que se transmite en 250 estaciones y localmente por Radio Guadalupe, 850 AM.

Cimentados en una profunda espiritualidad, con la refrescante espontaneidad de Elsy el notable conocimiento de Carlos, sumado a la participación de invitados especiales, tales como sacerdotes, psicólogos, terapeutas, y profesionales en temas de la familia, motivan cada día a sus radioescuchas a nutrirse de la misión del programa. Esa misión busca “desarrollar la fe, la esperanza y el amor enfocándose en la familia y la Iglesia, además de conectar

a las familias y las comunidades a través del mundo, en español”, apunta Canseco, sobre la difusión de “su programa de variedades” en EWTN que se escucha en vivo en los Estados Unidos, Latinoamérica y España.

El show estrenó un nuevo horario a partir del 31 de mayo, y se trasmite de 9 a 10 de la mañana en cualquier parte del mundo a través de Spotify y Apple Podcast.

“Mucho de lo que nosotros compartimos tiene que ver con los retos que como familia y matrimonio vivimos a diario, como la comunicación en pareja, la educación de los hijos y el enfrentar los retos de la vida en general, explica Elsy. Enfatiza además que “no somos maestros, sino también aprendices de la vida, junto con los radioescuchas”.

“Ha sido la Providencia Divina la que nos ha guiado para buscar y presentar información que llegue a las familias y nos formemos juntos,” apuntó Elsy.

Uno de sus grandes retos fue precisamente el haber inmigrado al área de Dallas/Fort Worth hace cuatro años por motivo de la salud de su hijo Daniel, que en ese entonces tenía 15 años.

Fuera de su zona de confort, que era en Yucatán, aprendieron a navegar y sobrepasar los desafíos de una nueva cultura, idioma e idiosincrasia.

Entre los dos conjuntamente tienen 25

años de servicio y preparación en la Iglesia de formación para el acompañamiento de las parejas y de la familia, “lo que nos llevó a descubrir cosas de nosotros mismos que necesitábamos mejorar y cambiar”, recordó Canseco. La adaptación los llevó a una “conversión” que los unió aún más como familia. Elsy, además, descubrió la belleza de ser maestra de su hija Mariana, bajo el sistema de educación desde el hogar.

Sus tres hijos desarrollaron talentos diversos, Mariana, 14, tiene un don en la cocina, Daniel 19, estudia psicología y Juan, de 21 años, comenzó su negocio de fotografía y video en Yucatán.

Carlos, originario de la Ciudad de México, y Elsy, originaria de Los Angeles, California, se conocieron en Mérida, Yucatán, donde Elsy se crió y se casó por primera vez. Tristemente ella perdió a su primer esposo en un accidente automovilístico a sólo un par de años de casados, y quedó viuda con su hijo Juan en brazos y embarazada de su hijo Daniel. Fue años más tarde, que, en el ministerio de música y medios de comunicación católica, coincidió con Carlos Canseco. Fue una respuesta a las oraciones que “por varios años” los dos, sin conocerse, hacían a Dios por la vocación del matrimonio. Unieron sus vidas con el Sacramento del matrimonio en el 2004 para vivir su vocación y servir a Dios en la Iglesia, celebrando años más



Carlos Canseco  
y Elsy Acatitla.  
(NTC/Juan  
Guajardo)



tarde la llegada de su hija Mariana.

A través de “amigos queridos” conocieron a los sacerdotes Operarios del Reino de Cristo de la Parroquia del Inmaculado Corazón de María de Fort Worth, en la que han sido feligreses desde que llegaron en el 2017, y quienes les brindaron apoyo y alojamiento a su llegada.

Han contado con el apoyo del Padre Óscar Sánchez, CORC, párroco de la Parroquia del Inmaculado Corazón de María de Fort Worth.

“Nos abrieron su corazón, su hogar, su espacio y nos hicieron ver a Cristo aquí en las familias” recordó Elsy sobre la calurosa hospitalidad de las familias cuando eran nuevos miembros de la parroquia.

Samuel Luna y su esposa Claudia, son una de esas familias que les ofrecieron su apoyo. “Identifiqué a mi familia con la de ellos, y tratamos de ayudarnos con lo que podíamos”, apuntó Luna, originario de Guanajuato, y catequista en la Parroquia del Inmaculado Corazón de María por más de 12 años.

“Carlos tiene la capacidad de explicar el Evangelio bajo la cotidianidad de la vida, se puede sentir al Espíritu Santo actuando

en él, y Elsy tiene mucho talento en su voz. Con su paciencia y prudencia da testimonio de Dios. Compartir con ellos nos deja siempre algo positivo”, aseguró Luna, quien también participó de los talleres de Biblia y de liderazgo que Canseco impartió en su parroquia hace varios años.

“Carlos y Elsy son personas entusiastas, dedicadas y muy trabajadoras, con preparación cristiana y humana, que día a día comparten los dones y carisma que Dios les ha dado,” señaló el Padre Sánchez. Está muy “orgulloso” de saber que feligreses de su parroquia “contribuyen a llevar el mensaje del Evangelio a través de los medios de comunicación”.

“Como sacerdote, el hecho de que los fieles pueden encontrar en el programa de radio de Carlos y Elsy una ayuda más, bajo el mensaje del Evangelio, me da paz y tranquilidad”, dijo.

La pandemia, explicó Carlos, creó Conciencia de “que estamos en la radio no sólo para hablar de un tema, sino para acompañar al pueblo y dar recursos”, dijo. Ve como “una bendición” su llamado a llevarles esperanza con “un mensaje

de aliento en momentos de soledad y acompañarlos en su caminar como familia”.

La esperanza también llegó a su hogar, gracias a los Caballeros de Colón, que le brindaron a Carlos la oportunidad de trabajar como agente de campo de la Agencia Stark, en el área de los seguros.

“Ha sido un lugar donde yo he podido combinar mi fe con el trabajo y la formación de la familia”, dijo, contento de poder trabajar bajo los valores cristianos de la caridad, la fraternidad, la unidad y el patriotismo, “que son los valores de los Caballeros de Colón”.

Como familia inmigrante, así como lo aprendieron en el V Encuentro, reconocen que “no son extranjeros, sino misioneros. Cada uno viene con sus valores, pero también con la oportunidad de acercarse a los valores que hay aquí y generar una nueva cultura”, bajo las enseñanzas de la fe católica. Por eso, concluyó diciendo “nuestra labor en la radio es ayudar a las familias a descubrir un estilo de vida católico desde su cultura, y desde su realidad, y recordándoles cada mañana que con la mano de Dios, “Hoy es tu Gran Día”. 🇺🇸



The Official Publication of the  
Diocese of Fort Worth

800 West Loop 820 South  
Fort Worth, TX 76108



NTC FILMS PRESENTS

# The Good Shepherds



A film about the largest priestly  
ordination class in the history  
of the Diocese of Fort Worth



PREMIERES JULY 6 | [NorthTexasCatholic.org/video-gallery](http://NorthTexasCatholic.org/video-gallery)