

BRINGING THE GOOD NEWS TO THE DIOCESE OF FORT WORTH



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JULY – AUGUST 2022
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40 SEE MORE CLEARLY

In an “us versus them” world, we lose sight that we are all made in the image of God.



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A Syrian girl at a refugee camp in Zaatari, Jordan. (Richard Juilliart/Shutterstock)

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WORTH ALEGRAMENTE ANUNCIA

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ORDENADOS AL ORDEN

DEL DIACONADO EN LA

PARROQUIA STA.

ELIZABETH ANN

SETON EN KELLER

AGOSTO 10.

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Oh, but human beings

There's a somewhat obscure song by the band *Relient K* that strikes a chord that's especially timely for us in this day and age. It's on an extended play album of their "b-sides" and features the lyrics, "I'm a human being, being happy and sane. Oh, but human beings, we all need to quit being inhumane."

Unfortunately, being inhumane has been a characteristic of the human race ever since we were created: from Cain and Nero to Hitler and Putin. And it's not just leaders. Inhumane actions happen among individuals, families, communities, and societies, in big ways and small. We treat our fellow humans so callously that a zookeeper on the hit Discovery Channel show "Dirty Jobs" once told host Mike Rowe he preferred dealing with animal excrement all day over being treated like that by other people. What an indictment!

It goes without saying, we fall short of being a "civilization of love," as coined by St. Pope Paul VI. But there's hope, even when we don't feel hopeful. Just a couple of weeks ago we celebrated Pentecost and the arrival of the Holy Spirit. That's one of our unfair advantages in this fight against inhumanity. The Spirit gives us heroic virtues to overcome the limitations of our human nature and consistently see our neighbors charitably and mercifully. And on top of that, we have the sanctifying graces given to us in the sacraments, the Eucharist most especially.

Furthermore, if we put in a bit of discipline and practice, even the most unprincipled of us can reprogram ourselves to more readily live out the Great Commandment to love God above all things and love our neighbor as ourself. By integrating kind actions in our day-to-day, we can overcome our lack of compassionate instinct and instead become a member of the "Church of the Good Samaritan," as Paul VI once said. If Blaise Pascal of the famous wager believed that even just "acting" Christian could help atheists come to faith, living charitably can surely help us become more humane.

At the end of the day, we must try. Because as the Apostle John wrote in his first letter, "If anyone says, 'I love God,' and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen."

Juan Guajardo
EDITOR

Memorable Moments

During a very busy spring, *North Texas Catholic* photographers traveled across the diocese capturing moments of piety, camaraderie, joy, and hope.

Maroon Mass. Father James Flynn celebrated the Maroon Mass at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish in Keller on May 27 with about 100 former, current, and prospective Aggies. Meg Ruhter, class of 2012, and four Aggie friends were the organizers for the first Maroon Mass in the Diocese of Fort Worth.

Sacred Heart Graduation. Parents, family, and friends of the 17 class of 2022 graduates from Sacred Heart Catholic School in Muenster watched proudly during the baccalaureate Mass and commencement ceremony on May 19 at Sacred Heart Parish. Father Jonathan Wallis, vicar general, was the homilist for the Mass.

Rogation Days. Faithful from the Catholic parishes in Strawn, Ranger, Eastland, and Cisco came to St. Boniface Church in Dodson Prairie for the annual blessing of their tools, seeds, and animals. Rogation Days are a longstanding faith tradition in which Catholics pray, do penance, and *rogare* (petition) God for His protection and a good, bountiful harvest during the year.



NTC/Ben Torres



NTC/Ben Torres



NTC/Rodger Mattison

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Fr. Chandler named interim CEO of CCFW



Priest on loan from the Archdiocese of Louisville

FORT WORTH — Beginning June 27, Father Anthony Chandler will serve as interim CEO of Catholic Charities Fort Worth.

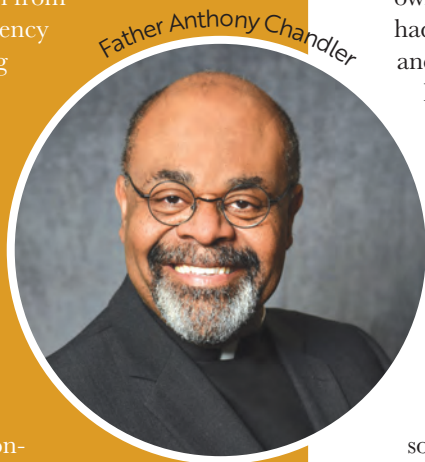
Fr. Chandler, on loan from the Archdiocese of Louisville, Kentucky, has two master's degrees, one in theology from Catholic University of America, and an MBA in human resource management from the University of Maryland.

He used his business degree to help parishes achieve strategic business and personnel goals, and he has also served as the vice chancellor of the Archdiocese for Military Services for three years in Washington, D.C., where he oversaw Roman Catholics in every branch of military service, Veterans Affairs, diplomats, and military academies.

Bishop Michael Olson welcomes Fr. Chandler to the diocese, saying, "I extend my gratitude to the Most Reverend Shelton Fabre, Archbishop of Louisville, for agreeing to permit Fr. Anthony Chandler to serve as the interim president and CEO of Catholic Charities Fort Worth. I welcome Fr. Chandler as a fine priest, excellent administrator, and compassionate pastor."

Fr. Chandler has a special interest in rural communities, veterans, and education. He plans to be out in the parishes, meet with clients directly to learn from them, and help the agency grow in understanding of Catholic Social Teaching.

Deb McNamara will continue to serve as the board chair of Catholic Charities Fort Worth and work collaboratively with Fr. Chandler on local relationships as the non-profit strives to end poverty, one family at a time, while the agency finds a permanent CEO.



Father Anthony Chandler



Father Thu Nguyen leads the first liturgical workshop at St. Joseph Parish in Arlington. (NTC/Juan Guajardo)

Unity and beauty



Liturgical workshops emphasize sacredness of Mass

ARLINGTON — In more than 10 years serving three different parishes in the Diocese of Fort Worth, Father Thu Nguyen "had a sense" that some parishes did not always conform to the liturgical rubrics in the Roman Missal.

"When I was a pastor, people asked me why our parish does things that other churches don't do," Fr. Nguyen recalled.

Then, during the pandemic, he saw those differences with his own eyes. Bishop Michael Olson had named him director of Liturgy and Worship in 2020, which gave him the opportunity to fill in for Masses at different parishes during the COVID-19 outbreak.

Fr. Nguyen, who holds a Master of Liturgy degree, said he "saw a variety of errors in many parishes regarding liturgy."

"We need to go back to our roots," he added, "and sometimes we don't know our roots because we weren't informed or evangelized to the real essence of it."

So, Fr. Nguyen is informing and evangelizing those who support parish liturgy with workshops on the dignity and deeper meaning of the rubrics in the Roman Missal. Between May and December, he will present workshops in seven parishes, each consisting of five sessions addressing different liturgical elements. One workshop will be in Vietnamese and another will be in Spanish.

The five sessions cover an introduction to liturgy; the sacristy and sacred space ornamentation; altar servers and extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion; sacred music; and sacred Scripture readers and hospitality ministers.

Leo Wolf, liturgy coordinator for St. Frances Cabrini Parish in Granbury, said, "For five years, I have been praying for this. It's a godsend. We need to participate in discussions to really internalize it and then be able to implement it. It's another step to have your parish grow ... and it's for your own growth."

— Mary Lou Seewoester

Building God's house



St. Mark Church in Argyle breaks ground on sanctuary for growing parish

ARGYLE — With “Christ as the Cornerstone,” parishioners of St. Mark Church in Argyle celebrated with Bishop Michael Olson, clergy, and guests the fulfillment of a long-awaited dream with the groundbreaking for a new church building April 23.

Close to 1,000 people attended the event on a breezy morning at the site of the future sanctuary.

Joining Bishop Olson in the procession were Father George Pullambrayil and Deacon Jim Galbraith, both of St. Mark, and Monsignor James Hart, chancellor of the diocese, and Vicar General Father Jonathan Wallis.

During his greeting, Bishop Olson said, “We have awaited this day with great joy.”

The growing parish, which covers South Denton, Argyle, and surrounding areas, has been waiting for a church building for many years.

St. Mark Parish was established in 1995 with Father Eugene Sweeney as its first pastor at a site on Teasley Lane, but the number of registered families more than tripled over the next decade, prompting then-pastor Father Tim Thompson to lead efforts to build at a new location in Argyle, near the Denton

border: 27 acres on Crawford Road and John Paine Road.

Father George became pastor in 2011, and in December of 2014 Bishop Olson led the Rite of Blessing and Dedication at St. Mark’s multipurpose parish activities center, which includes a space that serves both for Mass and special events. On the first Sunday in Advent, December 2023, parishioners hope to celebrate the dedication of the new church: a 34,000-square-foot facility with seating for 1,800, more than doubling the current capacity.

The church, with an estimated cost of \$25 million, is designed by Dallas-based architects CP&Y to match the existing buildings in a Spanish mission style. Linbeck Construction is the general contractor on the project. The costs will be funded by \$7 million in St. Mark’s savings, a \$10 million parish capital campaign, and an \$8 million

diocesan loan.

In his homily, Bishop Olson recognized Father George’s “pastoral and servant leadership,” noting the groundbreaking was taking place on the

Feast of Saint George.

He also recalled with gratitude the major milestones and parish pastors over the 27 years since its founding. His message focused on the difference between dreams and fantasies, and how God-given dreams like St. Mark’s

building projects require perseverance, prayer, and action.

Following the homily, Bishop Olson blessed the site and sprinkled it with holy water.

Then Bishop Olson and clergy, along with Denton Mayor Gerard Hudspeth and Argyle Town Councilmembers Rick Bradford and Joan Delashaw, shoveled dirt for the ceremonial groundbreaking.

— Sandra Engelland



Architectural rendering of the future St. Mark Church.



CLERGY ASSIGNMENTS

BY MOST REV. MICHAEL OLSON

REV. JOHN PERIKOMALAYIL ANTONY, HGN

From Pastor of Our Lady of Mercy Parish in Hillsboro, to **Pastor** at St. Mary of the Assumption Parish in Fort Worth, effective July 1.

REV. REEHAN SOOSAI ANTONY, SAC

From Pastor of Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary Parish in Decatur, St. John the Baptizer Parish in Bridgeport, and St. Mary Parish in Jacksboro, to **Pastor** at St. Ann Parish in Burleson, effective August 1.

REV. MEL BESSELLIEU

From Pastor of St. Ann Parish in Burleson, to **Parochial Vicar** at St. Francis of Assisi Parish in Grapevine, effective August 1.

REV. ANTO VIJAYAN CARLOOSE, SAC

From Parochial Vicar of Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary Parish in Decatur, St. John the Baptizer Parish in Bridgeport, and St. Mary Parish in Jacksboro, to **Pastor** at the same parishes, effective August 1.

REV. RICHARD COLLINS

From in residence at St. Francis of Assisi Parish in Grapevine, to in residence at All Saints Parish in Fort Worth, effective July 1.

REV. JOSE FRANCIS, TOR

From outside the diocese, to **Parochial Vicar** at Sacred Heart Parish in Wichita Falls, effective June 1.

REV. KEITH HATHAWAY

From graduate studies at Catholic University of America, to **Pastoral Administrator** at St. Rita Parish in Fort Worth, effective July 1.

REV. MARIYA JAMES SUSAI MANICKAM, SAC

From Parochial Vicar of St. Michael

Parish in Bedford to **Pastoral Administrator** at Holy Angels Parish in Clifton and Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish in Morgan, effective July 1.

REV. BRETT METZLER

From graduate studies at Catholic University of America, to **Vocation Director** and priest in residence at St. Philip the Apostle Parish in Flower Mound, effective June 1.

REV. NGHIA NGUYEN

From pastoral administrator of St. George Parish in Fort Worth, to **Pastor** at the same parish, effective June 1.

REV. THU NGUYEN

From Director of Liturgy and Worship, to **Pastor** at St. Paul the Apostle Parish in Fort Worth, without prejudice to his current assignment, effective July 1.

REV. XAVIER SILVADASAN, HGN

From Pastor of Holy Angels Parish in Clifton and Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish in Morgan, to **Pastor** at Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish in Wichita Falls, effective July 1.

VERY REV. JOHN ROBERT SKELDON

To **Canonical Pastor** at Our Mother of Mercy Parish in south Fort Worth, without prejudice to his current assignment as the Rector of St. Patrick Cathedral, effective July 1.

REV. MATTHEW TATYREK

From Pastor of St. Peter Parish in Lindsay, to **Pastor** at Immaculate Conception Parish in Denton, effective July 1.

DEACON TOM GIOVANNITTI

To **Parish Life Coordinator** of Our Mother of Mercy Parish in Fort Worth, effective July 1.

Parishioners comfort Uvalde victims



Volunteers donate 30 shawls to grieving families

ARLINGTON — For longtime St. Vincent de Paul parishioner Dan Mathys, taking a 12-hour round trip drive to Uvalde was just the right thing to do.

On June 2, he and his wife Pam took the day off to take 30 prayer shawls to the victims of the school shooting massacre that left 19 children and two teachers dead, along with 17 wounded.

They delivered the shawls to Sacred Heart Church in Uvalde, where many of the victims' families are parishioners. The shawls were distributed to the families who lost children in the shooting, to the children who were hospitalized, to the grandmother of the shooter, and to the families of the two teachers who died.

"It was something we could do to help," Dan Mathys said. "It was a privilege to do it. My wife was given one of these [shawls] some years ago when her father passed. It was comforting to her. So we've seen it work."

The shawls, which were carefully and prayerfully made (volunteers pray as they knit or crochet them) by St. Vincent de Paul's Prayer Shawl Ministry, let the grieving families know they are being prayed for 352 miles away in Arlington. The group, led by Jan Nelson and Jo-Lee Buncic, comprises 40 members.



Nothing but gratitude



Wildfire survivors thank Bishop, diocese

FORT WORTH — They lost everything in the fire except the gratitude for the help they have received.

Families whose homes burned in the Eastland Complex wildfire came to the administrative office of the Diocese of Fort Worth to thank Bishop Michael Olson and the faithful of the diocese for the spiritual, emotional, and financial support shown after the fire devastated their community.

Seven families who are members of St. Francis Xavier Parish in Eastland lost their homes, and another family lost outlying structures for their livestock.

The survivors took time



off work to present the bishop and others with flowers and cards to express their appreciation.

A special collection for wildfire relief has raised just over \$120,000 to date, which was disbursed for emergency

relief and to help them rebuild.

The donation from parishioners in North Texas “made us one” with the faithful of the Diocese of Fort Worth, “so all of them have come to give thanks,” said Father Vijaya Mareedu, SAC, pastor.



Survivors of the Eastland wildfires expressed gratitude for support from the bishop and the diocese. (NTC/Juan Guajardo)



SVdP at Holy Family turns 75 years old

FORT WORTH — Face-to-face visits, suspended during the COVID-19 pandemic, have resumed, but requests for help have hardly subsided, said Laura Michaelides, president of the St. Vincent de Paul Conference at Holy Family Church in Fort Worth. “There’s still a lot of people suffering,” Michaelides said.

The Society’s Holy Family

Conference was established in 1947, when the parish was still named St. Alice Church.

“Seventy-five years ago, a long time,” Father Hoa Nguyen, pastor of Holy Family, joked during a Mass to celebrate the anniversary. “I wasn’t born yet.”

Holy Family’s is the oldest

conference in the diocese. “It started in someone’s garage,” Michaelides said. “We were still the Diocese of Dallas then. But 75 years is amazing for a ministry.”

Fr. Nguyen described his parish as active, generous, and welcoming, including the Vincentians.

– Matthew Smith





NTC/Juan Guajardo

Sister Immaculata Therese, OP, uses a trick bag to explain God's generous gifts.

Students reflect on God's call

 Annual Eighth Grade Vocation Day reinstated after COVID cancellation in 2020 and 2021

FORT WORTH — A crossroads is a natural place to pause and look at each direction, to consider which path to take.

On Eighth Grade Vocation Day, 315 eighth grade students from 15 diocesan Catholic schools met at St. Patrick Cathedral — an opportunity to step away from the routine of classes and reflect on which path God is calling them to follow.

Melissa Kasmeier, the associate superintendent of Catholic schools, said scheduling Vocation Day for the end of eighth grade year is intentional, because eighth grade students “close out this phase [of their education] and embark on a new phase.”

Her hope was that the day would “plant some seeds in their minds, to continue to be open to God's call in their lives and what that call might mean in the world.”

The morning began with a welcome by Father Jonathan Wallis, vicar general and director of seminarian formation for the diocese, who assured the students, “When you say ‘yes’ to God, He has amazing things

in store for you. When you say ‘yes’ to the Lord in small ways, all your problems don't go away, but you will have someone to help carry the burden.”

Seminarian Eric Flores, along with transitional Deacon Randolph Edward Hopkins Jr. and Father Maurice Moon, the chaplain of Nolan Catholic High School, shared their vocation stories with the boys and held a lively question-and-answer session where the youth asked about how to develop a prayer life, along with questions about favorite sports, videogames, and music. (The seminarians listen to classic country or rock, and Fr. Moon prefers “anything before 1885.”)

The girls heard the vocation stories of Sister Anna Imelda Nguyen, OP, who teaches theology at Nolan, and Sister Immaculata Therese Nguyen, OP, a Holy Family Catholic School teacher.

Fr. Moon closed with a reminder: “We need priests to lay down their lives for the Church. We need religious sisters to lay down their lives for the Church. Be open to that.”

Mass of Reparation



Bishop Olson calls for vigilance and fortitude



NTC/Juan Guajardo

Bishop Olson delivers the homily.

FORT WORTH — Bishop Michael Olson opened his homily on St. Mark's feast day by asking for the saint's intercession to help heal those who have been harmed by the terrible evil of abuse.

The prelate celebrated the second annual in-person and livestreamed Mass of Reparation for Sins of Sexual Abuse. The Mass, held at St. Patrick Cathedral, helped close the Diocese of Fort Worth's observance of Child Abuse Prevention Month.

The bishop celebrated the Mass for the intention of reparation for sins of sexual abuse perpetrated against minors and the vulnerable, especially by those serving in public ministry in the name of the Church.

“Instead of driving out demons, speaking new languages, and picking up serpents to remove them with bravery and fortitude, [many shepherds within the Church] decided to be driven out and to hide from the responsibilities for which they were anointed by God,” Bishop Olson said.

But he made clear that reparation goes beyond remorse and requires “contrition and firm purpose of amendment.” He noted two necessities from the readings on which we should meditate as we beg God for reparation: vigilance and fortitude.

With vigilance, the faithful are able to avoid subjective and relativistic approaches to moral life that make it easy to justify evil actions. With fortitude, Catholics are able to take up their legitimate responsibility to defend the vulnerable and innocent.

— Michelle McDaniel



Answering the Call

Three men are ordained transitional deacons

By Joan Kurkowski-Gillen

Kelly Hoodenpyle is proud of her son for following his heart.

Tonya LeClair appreciates the prayers and support her son is receiving.

Randy Hopkins noticed his son always had a strong spiritual side.

Answering the call to serve God and His people, all three men were ordained transitional deacons May 21 at St. Philip the Apostle Church in Flower Mound.

More than 300 family members,

friends, and supporters of the seminarians witnessed Fort Worth Bishop Michael Olson confer the sacrament of Holy Orders on Brandon Edward LeClair, Austin Travis Hoodenpyle, and Randolph Edward Hopkins Jr. during a Mass of Ordination rich in tradition and symbolism.

Advancing to the Sacred Order of the Diaconate marks the final year of formation to the priesthood. Deacons are ordained as a sacramental sign to the Church and world that Christ came not to

◀ The three diaconal candidates lie prostrate as the congregation prays the Litany of Saints during the ordination Mass at St. Philip Church. (NTC/Juan Guajardo)

be served, but to serve.

“They are dedicating their lives to our faith, so supporting them is crucial as they develop and guide us,” said Terra Coyle, who attended the Mass with other St. Philip parishioners. “A call to the priesthood can be a lonely journey. That’s why it’s important to make seminarians feel a part of the community wherever they serve.”

Welcoming worshippers to the morning liturgy, Bishop Olson thanked the parents, Serrans, members of the St. John Paul II Shepherd’s Guild, and others who prayed and supported the candidates throughout their time in formation.

“Strengthened by the gifts of the Holy Spirit, they will help the bishop and his priests in the ministry of the Word, the Altar, and of charity, showing themselves to be servants of all,” he said, explaining the responsibilities that come with ordination.

Deacons proclaim the Gospel, administer Baptism, witness and bless marriages, bring viaticum to the dying, and conduct funeral services. As ministers of charity, they identify the needs of others and marshal the Church’s resources to meet those needs.

“Do the will of God in charity, from the heart,” the bishop instructed the ordinands who stood before him. “Serve others with joy as you would serve the Lord. Be like those once chosen by the apostles for the ministry of charity — men of good reputation, full of wisdom and the Holy Spirit.”



The Rite of Ordination began with Father Jonathan Wallis, the vicar general and director of seminarian formation, presenting the trio of candidates to the bishop who accepted them with the words, “We choose these, our brothers, for the Order of the Diaconate.” Reminiscent of the first “election” of seven deacons by the early Christians, the appreciative congregation applauded their consent.

▲ Newly ordained Deacon Austin Hoodenpyle is handed the Book of the Gospels by Bishop Michael Olson. The new deacon is entrusted with proclaiming, believing, and teaching the message of the Gospel. (NTC/Juan Guajardo)

Continued on Page 14



The three deacon candidates kneel as Bishop Michael Olson prays for the gift of the Holy Spirit to guide their service as deacons. (NTC/Juan Guajardo)

From Page 13

In the homily that followed, Bishop Olson informed the soon-to-be deacons that the responsibility of each man called and ordained to Holy Orders is to live a life centrally devoted to Christ.

“Prayer for yourselves and others is essential to keep Christ central in your lives and to foster the faithful friendship that He offers you,” the bishop asserted. “May this Eucharistic celebration of your ordination to the diaconate help you to cherish that it is Jesus who has called you as friends and invites you to lay down your life with Him for His friends.”

In closing, he reminded his listeners, “God is the God of the truth, not of falsehood. God is the God of love, not of selfishness. God is the God of order, not of chaos.”

After lying prostrate on the floor as

the congregation prayed the Litany of the Saints, each candidate approached the bishop for the Laying on of Hands. This essential act of the ordination rite, handed down from the Apostles, signifies conferral of the Holy Spirit.

The newly ordained were then vested with the outward symbols of their ministry — the stole and dalmatic — by fellow deacons instrumental in their vocation.

Wearing their diaconal vestments, the men knelt to receive the Book of the Gospels from the bishop who commanded, “Receive the Gospel of Christ whose herald you have become. Believe what you read, teach what you believe, and practice what you teach.”

Calling the ordination of three transitional deacons a sign of hope, Fr. Wallis said many people have looked forward to this day for a very long time.

“It’s a great blessing for the Diocese of Fort Worth and the result of a lot of prayer, hard work, and dedication,” he said.

The vicar general urged North Texas Catholics to pray for seminarians, and other young men they think would make good priests, by name.

“People are afraid to do that because they don’t want to put pressure on someone,” he added. “What you’re really doing is assisting them through your prayers and the grace of the Holy Spirit.”

Each of the three newly ordained deacons described a vocation journey steeped in prayer and transformation.

BRANDON LECLAIR

A cradle Catholic, Brandon LeClair, 28, considered careers in teaching, criminal justice, and the culinary arts before a talk with his pastor at St. Jude



Newly ordained Deacon Ed Hopkins is vested by Deacon Norman Etienne (left) and Deacon Jim Novak (right) during the ordination. (NTC/Juan Guajardo)

Parish in Mansfield led to discerning the priesthood. Attending a Camp Fort Worth retreat reinforced his decision.

“I gave my vocation story, and one of the kids observed that all my prior choices seemed to point to the priesthood — teaching the faith, guarding the flock, and bringing everyone to the table of the Lord,” said the former fifth grade religious education teacher.

Entering St. Joseph Abbey and Seminary College in Covington, La., in 2015 with the blessing of his parents, Edward and Tonya LeClair, he grew in self-awareness thanks to philosophy courses.

“Now studying theology at Assumption Seminary in San Antonio takes me into the vocation process of becoming Christ’s priest,” LeClair said. “Being with other men discerning the same thing is very impactful.”

The new deacon, assigned to St. Mark Parish in Denton for the summer, advises young people to take seriously whatever God is calling them to do.

“Discernment isn’t just about the priesthood. It’s also about marriage or religious life, so it’s important to surround yourself with people who can help you with that.”

AUSTIN HOODENPYLE

Raised in the Methodist Church, Austin Hoodenpyle’s first exposure to Catholicism came during a trip to visit Catholic relatives in northern Illinois after the eighth grade.


“I remember going to Mass with them and being impressed by the beauty of the liturgy,” remembered the 27-year-old. “There was a mystery there I didn’t understand, but it was enthralling.”

Returning to North Texas, his fascination with the faith grew as he continued to research what the Catholic Church teaches. His parents, Brent and Kelly Hoodenpyle, were supportive but surprised.

“It was strange for them to see their high school freshman watching Mother Angelica every day,” Hoodenpyle quipped, referring to the legendary founder of the Eternal Word Television Network.

Entering the Church in 2011 during the Easter Vigil Mass, the convert became immersed in parish life at St. Frances Cabrini as a lector and frequent volunteer at the Lenten fish fry. He seriously began discerning the priesthood during

VIEW THE VIDEO!



View our video on the diaconal ordination by scanning the QR code above.

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BRING TO THE TABLE

Representatives gather at Diocesan Pre-synodal meeting to synthesize results from parish listening sessions

By Joan Kurkowski-Gillen

Ricardo Romero came to the Diocesan Pre-synodal meeting May 7 at St. Patrick Cathedral eager to represent his parish and learn the insights of 112 listening sessions held in the diocese this spring. These listening sessions were the precursor to the 2023 assembly of bishops in Rome referred to as the Synod on Synodality.

The findings from this first phase of the synodal process allow bishops to hear from a diverse section of Catholics — from parishioners to priests — in a spirit of collaboration and openness. Announced by Pope Francis in October 2021, the Synod invites participation from Catholics worldwide as the Church hopes to learn which processes can help it live communion, achieve participation, and open itself to mission.

“I’m excited to contribute in a small way,” enthused Romero, an extraordinary minister of holy Communion at St. Francis of Assisi Parish in Grapevine. “I hope what we do here helps the Holy Father understand the current needs we have and what the Church can do in the future.”

Romero was one of 130 delegates from faith communities across the diocese who listened intently to the feedback from parish discussions and then participated in a small group discernment about emerging faith realities and how the Holy Spirit is inviting the Church to move forward.

Seated at a table for Spanish speakers, the church volunteer provided a Latino perspective to the synodal conversation.

“We want to have more ministries and events that support the Hispanic community so they feel part of the Church,” he said.

After celebrating Mass, Bishop Michael Olson welcomed delegates to the Diocesan Pre-synodal meeting by saying he was grateful the process emphasized listening.

“We have to speak the truth and we have to speak it kindly, patiently, and clearly,” he pointed out. “Loudly is not the way that is going to get us forward, and it’s certainly not what the Lord is asking of us.”

As he travels across the diocese administering the sacrament of Confirmation, the bishop witnesses how the local Church is growing and being evangelized.

“I get to see the Church unified under the Holy Spirit imparting gifts, and in that unity, I’m able to see the diversity,” he added. “Because of the diversity among us we can truly listen to people and more clearly share the Gospel.”

Information gleaned from the diocesan gathering is very much essential to the mission of the universal Church as well as the Diocese of Fort Worth, Bishop Olson emphasized.

“With a greater awareness of Christ’s presence, we will be able, as earthen vessels, to discharge the ministry He’s entrusted to all of us as His Church,” he assured the delegates.

A synthesized 10-page document,

Continued on Page 18



ABOVE: Parishioner Howard Ratliff shares with other parish representatives during small group discussions at the Diocesan Pre-synodal meeting. (NTC/Juan Guajardo)



LEFT: Bishop Michael Olson blesses the congregation at the end of the Mass which opened the Diocesan Pre-synodal meeting. (NTC/Juan Guajardo)

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Father Jonathan Wallis elevates the Body of Christ during Benediction of parish representatives prior to the Diocesan Pre-synodal meeting. (NTC/Juan Guajardo)

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produced from the meeting and reflecting the diversity of views and opinions in the diocese, will be submitted to the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. It ends the diocesan phase of the synodal process which was coordinated by Father Jonathan Wallis, vicar general, and Paola Quintero-Araujo, director of the St. Junipero Serra Institute.

“Our task today is to ensure those major themes the Holy Spirit elicited from us during the listening sessions make their way into the final document,” Fr. Wallis said, explaining the meeting’s objective. “We’re looking for commonalities to make sure the primary issues are heard and the diocese is well represented.”

The 3,311 people who attended listening sessions across the 28-county diocese came from both rural and urban parishes, four campus ministry groups, the deaf community, and retired residents of St. Francis Village. Forty-one responses also were received via survey from parishioners unable to attend a listening session. A wide range of age groups was represented.

“This is our opportunity to get a

birds-eye view of the whole diocese and the great gifts and riches the Holy Spirit has given us,” Fr. Wallis added.

One of the overwhelming themes emerging from the diocesan consultative process was the need for people to feel connected to the Church and each other.

“I think there is a real longing for people who drifted away [from the parish] during COVID to come back,” the vicar general observed. “Their presence is missed.”

After reminding the audience the theme for the Synod on Synodality is communion, participation, and mission, Quintero-Araujo explained why each listening session in the diocese began with Mass or Adoration before the Blessed Sacrament.


“At the direction of the bishop, we wanted it to be a spiritual process,” she said. “We have to listen first and foremost to God to see what He is telling us. We can then be open to listening to the same voice in our brothers and sisters.”

The majority of people participating in the listening sessions were Caucasian or Hispanic with a large representation coming from the Asian and Black communities.

A few Pacific Islanders and Alaskan or Native Americans also attended. Most participants were involved in parish ministries, groups, or leadership.

“The numbers reflected the demographic reality of the diocese,” explained Quintero-Araujo, noting organizers grouped responses from the parish listening sessions into three categories: spiritual, service, and fellowship.

SYNOD DOCUMENT



For the document that synthesizes input from the parish listening sessions, go to FWdioc.org/synod.

DIACONATE ORDINATION, From Page 15

his senior year at Glen Rose High School and joined the seminary after graduation in 2013.

“I grew in love and gratitude for the sacraments and began to realize the way I wanted to serve Christ was to bring that grace to His people in the unique way only a priest can do,” Hoodenpyle explained.

A student at Catholic University of America’s Theological College in Washington, D.C., he will spend his diaconate year completing a bachelor’s degree in theology and a master’s degree in divinity.

RANDOLPH EDWARD HOPKINS

“A call to service has been with me throughout my life, but I had to discern Who was calling,” disclosed Randolph Edward Hopkins, explaining the genesis of his vocation. “I grew up Baptist so there was no reason, as a young person, that I would have thought of becoming a priest.”

At 43, the Texas Christian University

MBA graduate is one of the older men in formation. He converted to Catholicism 10 years ago after working as a special education teacher in Katy, Texas, and as a development professional for a Washington, D.C., trade association.

“Something outside of me just drew me to the faith. I’ve never been able to explain it,” Hopkins continued. “That’s what God had in store for me, and little by little I figured it out.”

When he began considering the priesthood, his parents, Randy and Susan Hopkins, were “unbelievably supportive,” he recalled. “They weren’t surprised I wanted a life of service.”

Reading books by Catholic authors and about the Church fathers helped him

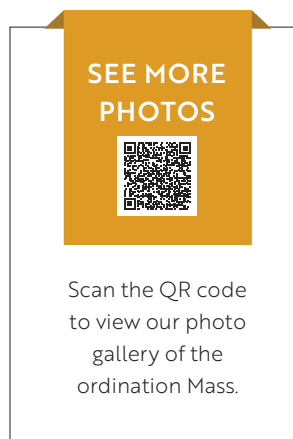
discover the Benedictines. The Fort Worth native spent his early months of discernment living with the monks at the St. Vincent Archabbey in Latrobe, Pennsylvania.

“It was a great experience. I just wasn’t a good fit,” Hopkins said.

Preparing for his ordination, he revisited the Archabbey for some contemplative prayer. “I spent a lot of time in the Marian grotto at the basilica there,” the seminarian shared. “Quiet time alone with God gives me strength.”

After a summer assignment at St.

Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish, where he just completed his pastoral year, the new deacon will return to Assumption Seminary in San Antonio to finish his Master of Divinity degree. 🇺🇸



Paola Quintero-Araujo, diocesan synod contact, talks with parish representatives during small group discussions. (NTC/Juan Guajardo)

“First and foremost, the way people feel we are journeying together [in our diocese] is through the Eucharist,” she told the audience. “It’s the sacrament of unity around which all the races, cultures, languages, and age groups gather.”

Before starting the small group discussions, Quintero-Araujo asked delegates to focus on the steps and paths the Holy Spirit is asking the Church to take.

Nanya Young made the two-hour drive from De Leon to share her rural parish’s

experiences with the synodal process.

“I’m curious to see how other people interpreted what we talked about in the listening sessions,” said the Our Lady of Guadalupe parishioner. “At my parish we discussed ways our parish could grow, serve more people, and become better disciples.”

Keeping the younger generation interested in the faith is a concern she hopes is addressed at the Synod.

“Parents are not instilling religion into their children’s lives like they used to,” she stated. “We have to make an effort to keep our youth in the Church.”

After taking part in his parish’s listening session, Pedro Moreno hopes the synodal process inspires a reawakening of faith.

“People are hungry for formation and the opportunity to be together. The Holy Spirit is telling us to satiate that hunger with Jesus Christ,” said the Our Lady of Guadalupe in Fort Worth parishioner. “When you study the faith, you find Jesus. When you go out on mission, you share Jesus. The Church is the presence of Jesus in the world.” 🇺🇸



Sister Marie Thérèse after her solemn profession of vows. (NTC/Juan Guajardo)

hymn of love

Sister Marie Thérèse of the Holy Face of Jesus, OCD,
makes her solemn profession of vows

By Kiki Hayden

On May 31, the chapel of the Monastery of the Most Holy Trinity in Arlington resonated with a choir of voices singing *Tinh Khúc*, or “hymn of love,” a Vietnamese hymn inspired by St. Teresa of Avila.

The occasion for the chorus? The solemn profession and veiling of Sister Marie Thérèse of the Holy Face of Jesus, OCD, (née Theresa Marie Uyen Nguyen). After spending 11 years with the Dominican order, and then several years with the Carmelites, Sr. Marie Thérèse professed her solemn vows to live the rest of her life

as a Carmelite nun praying for all souls. The Carmelite monastery in Arlington was filled with family and friends eager to celebrate the important milestone for Sr. Marie Thérèse.

Dominican sisters filled many pews. Friends made sure visitors had a place to sit, putting out folding chairs and, with big smiles, ushering folks to their seats.

The Mass began with Sister Mary Francisca playing the organ to accompany the soprano Gregorian chant of the Carmelite sisters singing the Entrance Antiphon for the Feast of the Visitation. After the readings and the homily, Bishop Michael Olson questioned Sr. Marie Thérèse about her desire to profess solemn

vows; she responded with an enthusiastic “Yes, I am so resolved.” She then lay prostrate on the chapel floor, surrounded by roses, as the Carmelites sang a litany.

Following the litany, Sr. Marie Thérèse professed her solemn vows as a Carmelite, her voice trembling with emotion.

Then came the veiling. Mother Teresa Agnes and Sister Joseph Marie carefully removed Sr. Marie Thérèse’s white veil. With great care, they pinned her new black veil in place, then crowned Sr. Marie Thérèse with roses.

The Liturgy of the Eucharist followed, and the communion hymn was the *Tinh Khúc* sung by Sr. Marie Thérèse’s family. The family choir was accompanied by

Thien-Kim Pham, Sr. Marie Thérèse's goddaughter, on the keyboard. Thien-Kim's father, Vu Pham, stood by proudly, recording the scene on a phone camera. Sr. Marie Thérèse's family sang passionately this *Tinh Khúc*, this hymn of love to Jesus, reading from sheet music and singing toward the Carmelite sisters behind the grille. Many members of the congregation sang along. The melody swelled in a dramatic crescendo as the family harmonized with each other.

On the other side of the grille, Sr. Marie Thérèse knelt, surrounded by flowers, weeping quiet tears of joy as she listened to her family singing and her goddaughter on the keyboard for the communion hymn. Sr. Marie Thérèse lifted her glasses to wipe her eyes.

After the *Tinh Khúc* closed with a gentle flourish of high piano notes, Bishop Olson prayed for the newly professed Sr. Marie Thérèse, "who is bound to You by solemn vows consecrated this day by her holy offering."

Holy offering. That's how Sr. Marie Thérèse views her life as a Carmelite. "Religious profession is a consecration in which one makes the offering of oneself," she told the *NTC*. She quoted her patron Saint Thérèse of Lisieux, who wrote in a letter, "Zero by itself has no value, but when placed next to a unit it becomes powerful ... That is where Jesus has placed me ..."

Sr. Marie Thérèse added, "This is our Carmelite vocation: to remain a little zero behind our bishop, priests, religious, missionaries, catechists, and all who are working for God's kingdom. I hope by God's mercy that this simple act of love to remain a little zero will multiply the missionary's works and evangelization by 10." How does she offer herself and overcome obstacles to holiness? "By devotion to Our Lady and the saints," she said.

After Mass, Sr. Marie Thérèse's sister Trang Nguyen ushered visitors toward the food — egg rolls, rice, noodles, shrimp, vegetables, fruit, and other delicacies. Sr. Marie Thérèse, Mother Teresa Agnes, and Sr. Joseph Marie greeted visitors in the parlor. Friends, family members, and admirers lined up to give Sr. Marie



Sister Marie Thérèse received a black veil symbolizing solemn vows. (*NTC/Juan Guajardo*)



Sister Marie Thérèse was congratulated by a Dominican friend after the Mass. (*NTC/Juan Guajardo*)

Thérèse gifts through the grille.

Meanwhile, Sr. Marie Thérèse's mother, the inspiration of Sr. Marie Thérèse's Catholic faith, sat at a table in the parlor, eating lunch with her daughter.

"I was raised up in a Catholic environment with daily Mass and family Rosary in the evening," Sr. Marie Thérèse said.

"When I was a baby, [my sisters] sang hymns as lullabies to put me to sleep."

During the reception, the keyboard remained in the corner of the chapel, a silent sign of the *Tinh Khúc*, the hymns of love Sr. Marie Thérèse, the Nguyen family, and the Carmelite community sing to the Lord. 🇺🇸

A GRATEFUL Celebrant

Father Mel Bessellieu credits his silver anniversary of priesthood to the Eucharist and Mother Mary

By Susan Moses

Mel Bessellieu had “no idea why” he felt called to become Catholic, but he knew one thing: “I knew the Catholics had something, and I wanted that, but I couldn’t put my finger on it,” he thought.

It wasn’t for lack of searching.

Raised in Baptist and Church of Christ denominations, he was baptized — by immersion, in unheated water — as a 12-year-old at a Baptist church in Oregon. “I went into the baptismal waters a warm, dry sinner, and I came up a cold, wet saint,” he recalled.

Six years later, he experienced a “great awakening” at a Billy Graham crusade at Texas Stadium. On fire for God, he entered a Church of Christ seminary for two years but withdrew because he found the teaching limited and narrow.

He joined the Methodist Church for 13 years, but he gradually came to think, “there has to be deeper waters.”

He began to read about the Catholic Church — but this time from a Catholic perspective rather than the Protestant authors he had read previously. His main objections, to papal infallibility and the

role of Mary, were laid to rest and he decided to enter RCIA in 1988.

When the RCIA director took the new inquirers on a tour of the church, the last stop was the Eucharistic chapel. “I’ll never forget this, as long as I live,” said Fr. Bessellieu. “She went to the tabernacle, turned the key, and matter-of-factly said, ‘Jesus is in here.’

“I left that chapel in tears,” he remembered. “Thinking, ‘Jesus, why would you do that for us? Why would you humble yourself, day after day, on altars around the world, to be the bread for us to eat?’ And the only answer I came up with was, ‘Because I love you. And I can’t bear to be apart from you.’”

At that moment, Fr. Bessellieu found his why. “I’m becoming Catholic because of the Eucharist. The real presence of Christ in the Eucharist. That’s why I became Catholic, that’s why I will always be Catholic, and that’s why I decided to accept God’s invitation to be a priest. It all begins and ends with the Eucharist,” he explained.

On May 31, the pastor of St. Ann Parish reached the 25th anniversary of his priesthood, a milestone which he attributes to his strong devotion to the Blessed Sacrament as well as the Blessed Mother.

The Burleson congregation

celebrated their pastor’s silver anniversary with a Mass and reception on May 29.

CRITICAL MASS

St. Ann parishioner Sue Spear describes Fr. Bessellieu as “very shy, introverted — but he comes alive when he walks through the doors for Mass.” She said his reverence “makes you feel like you are at the Last Supper.”

Homilies are his “strong suit,” making it “just a pleasure to go to Mass and feel the Word,” said the longtime parish volunteer.

Celebrating Mass is never routine for the priest. “The minute I start walking down the aisle, it’s like, for a moment, for about an hour, I’m with Jesus. I’m with God. I’m really with Him,” he said.

He wants children to understand and participate in Mass as well.

Once a month the parish features Backpack Sunday, where the children gather on the altar steps for a homily directed toward them. Fr. Bessellieu asks them questions, and afterward they each receive a small gift related to the Gospel from the backpack.

Because of his reverence for Mass and his self-described “traditional, conservative bent as far as architecture,” the first major project



Fr. Mel Bessellieu elevates the Body of Christ at the Easter Vigil Mass at St. Ann Parish in Burlleson on March 31, 2018. (NTC/Juan Guajardo)

he undertook when assigned to St. Ann Parish in 2007 was a renovation of the sanctuary, which previously resembled a “’70s meeting hall,” he said.

The congregation didn’t have a parish hall, but Fr. Bessellieu insisted, “We’re not going to build a place to party before we have a place of beauty to worship in.”

The tabernacle and crucifix were moved front and center, and the parish commissioned low and high altar pieces from artisans in Italy.

The sacred environment helps reinforce one of Fr. Bessellieu’s maxims, according to Mark von Rosenberg, a St. Ann parishioner and Grand Knight of Council 7175, based at St. Ann. “He often tells us, ‘There are no C+ saints,’ meaning we can’t try to do the bare minimum to get to heaven. Don’t shoot for purgatory, but aim for heaven and strive to be an A+ saint. Keep yourself in a state of grace,” he said, recalling his pastor’s message.

Von Rosenberg is grateful to Fr. Bessellieu’s leadership during the COVID

pandemic, when attendance at the parish, and at Knights of Columbus functions, was quite low. “He never lamented to the parish about the difficulties. He was thankful for what God gave us to work with,” remembered von Rosenberg, who tried to follow the priest’s positive example.

On April 30, Fr. Bessellieu, a fourth degree Knight himself, was named “Chaplain of the Year” by the Knights of Columbus at their state assembly, where he also was appointed associate chaplain for the State of Texas.

In addition to being a Knight of Columbus, Fr. Bessellieu is a Knight of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem, an organization dating to 1096 which supports the Holy Land through prayer, presence, and financial support. He will lead some newly ordained priests, seminarians, and deacons on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land in July.

Another title he wears is Carmelite of the Third Order. St. Thérèse of Lisieux, a Carmelite nun, has been a special saint

to him since he prayed a novena to her during his second semester of Catholic seminary, when he considered dropping out. Buckets of roses arrived near the end of his novena to assure him that his prayers had been heard.

As a Carmelite tertiary, he embraces Carmelite spirituality and dedicates himself to contemplative prayer. He feels a special bond with the Discalced Carmelite nuns at the Monastery of the Most Holy Trinity in Arlington, where he celebrates Mass weekly.

In his quarter century as a priest, Fr. Bessellieu has also served at St. Michael Parish in Bedford, Immaculate Conception Parish in Denton, and St. Thomas Aquinas Parish in Pilot Point. As he reflects on his vocation, Fr. Bessellieu said, “I have no regrets. Every day I wake up and I say, ‘Thank you, Lord, for this gift of priesthood.’ I love being a priest. I can’t envision myself doing anything else. I’m also humbled by that. Because why did God choose me?” 🇺🇸



Proud mother Priscilla Chol kisses her daughter Akolde Chol, a member of Cristo Rey Fort Worth's first graduating class. (NTC/Ben Torres)

proven SUCCESS

Cristo Rey Fort Worth celebrates its first graduating class

By Joan Kurkowski-Gillen

With Cristo Rey Fort Worth celebrating its first class of graduates June 4, Dani Ray Barton credits one simple yet powerful word for the college preparatory school's overwhelming success.

"We had a group of volunteers who said 'yes' to bringing Cristo Rey to Fort Worth and a board that is still committed and in the grind," said the director of the school's corporate work/study program. "And we had families who said 'yes' to a different path for their children's education."

The trust was even greater for the 18 founding companies who agreed to hire a group of 14-year-old freshmen they had never met.

"They took a chance and that's what makes Cristo Rey so special," Barton said, addressing students, parents, and supporters at a May 12 senior appreciation dinner in the Fort Worth Club. "Now we get to see what 'yes' has led to."

The school's first graduates boast a 100 percent college acceptance rate. Ninety-two percent of the 48-member senior class are first generation, college-bound students with offers of over \$12 million in

scholarships and grants.

The amount of scholarship money earned by the group is impressive, Barton pointed out, but, more importantly, Cristo Rey prepared them to become men and women of faith, purpose, and service.

"I cannot wait to see them set this world on fire," she enthused.

Opened in 2018, Cristo Rey Fort Worth is part of a 38-school network in the U.S. that gives young men and women of limited economic means the opportunity for a Catholic college preparatory education. The innovative work/study program combines four days of on-campus academic

instruction with a day spent at a corporate job site. Students earn a portion of their tuition while learning about careers in architecture, banking, engineering, health care, accounting, and energy.

Fort Worth was the first diocese to become the religious sponsor of a Cristo Rey school after Bishop Michael Olson contacted the network's Chicago-based administrative offices about opening a campus in the diocese. Calling the inventive, affordable approach to education "an opportunity to grow in our understanding of human dignity," the bishop felt the school would have a positive effect on impoverished youth in the area and include more people in the common good.

"It offers us hope and an opportunity to come together at a time when our city and country are challenged by voices of discord and discontent," he told the *North Texas Catholic* after plans for Cristo Rey Fort Worth were shared publicly in 2016. "This effort allows us to encounter God and other human beings as brothers and sisters."

When Cristo Rey Fort Worth welcomed its first group of 75 freshmen in 2018, the diocese donated use of the now closed Our Mother of Mercy School in the Terrell Heights

neighborhood for classes.

Hoping to accelerate growth, the school purchased a 4.47-acre property in April 2019 and moved the campus to 2633 Altamesa Blvd. in Fort Worth. Today enrollment numbers 225 ninth through 12th graders.

One of Cristo Rey's graduating seniors, Kaitlyn Garcia, received a full scholarship from the QuestBridge organization to attend University of Notre Dame in the fall. The nonprofit helps high-achieving, low-income students access some of the country's leading institutions of higher learning.

"I've changed and grown so much, especially through the corporate work/study program," said Garcia, who performed data entry/analysis tasks at General Motors and plans to study chemical engineering. "I learned skills you wouldn't know unless you're in the field."

The St. George parishioner said Cristo Rey provides an inviting, supportive learning environment where kids aren't afraid to ask a question in class.

"It's a growing school, but the administrators and teachers have done a great job maintaining that



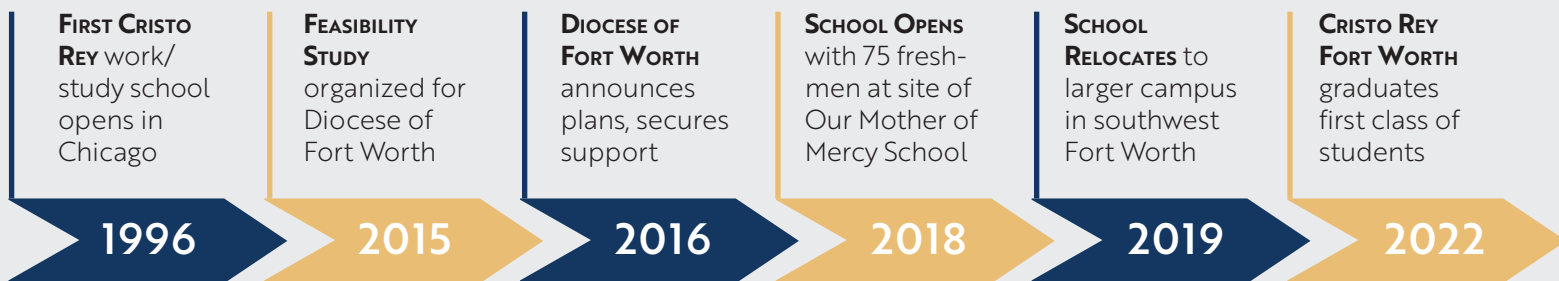
Cristo Rey graduate Esther Mawi walks on stage to receive her diploma. (NTC/Ben Torres)

Continued on Page 26

Cristo Rey Fort Worth: A Timeline

Before the first graduating class of Cristo Rey Fort Worth could toss their mortarboards, hundreds of people over many years worked to turn this dream into reality, from Jesuit Father John P. Foley who

introduced the work/study concept in Chicago, to Bishop Olson who initiated contact with the national network, to the corporate sponsors, academic staff, and students and their families in Fort Worth.





Bishop Michael Olson poses with the Cristo Rey Fort Worth Class of 2022 after celebrating the Baccalaureate Mass June 3. (NTC/Ben Torres)

From Page 25

small, close-knit feeling,” the straight-A student continued. “If you’re willing to take on the academics and work/study program, you’ll learn things you wouldn’t at another high school and meet people who are really interested in your future.”

All Saints Catholic School alumna Amber Castaneda was recognized with the GRIT (Grace, Responsibility, Integrity, and Tenacity) Student Award at the dinner. She will study marketing at the University of Richmond on a full scholarship.

“I’m grateful for this award and can’t wait to come back to this community and give back as much as it gave to me,” she said.

Other students received full or partial scholarships from Texas Christian University, Augustana College, University of Dallas, Kansas State University, and University of North Texas. Scholarship money also is coming in from organizations like the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce.

The impressive number of award letters received by Cristo Rey’s first class of graduates demonstrates the dedication they have for their education, according to Nathan Knuth, the school’s president since March 2020.

“I think it shows our Cristo Rey students have a special kind of grit, drive, and motivation to do the extra, hard work,” he

said proudly. “They want to see themselves and their families have a brighter future.”

The national Cristo Rey office is kept informed about the positive feedback local administrators receive about student performance.

“We have good things to report, and they have been excited to see the results that are coming in,” the president added.

Elizabeth Goettl, president and CEO of the national Cristo Rey network; Brian Melton, general counsel; and Mary Kearney, the network’s chief academic officer, attended Cristo Rey Fort Worth’s graduation ceremony at Will Rogers auditorium June 4. Bishop Olson delivered the invocation and Chairman Emeritus of Cristo Rey Fort Worth’s Board of Directors Charlie Morrison delivered commencement remarks.

“He’s been instrumental and a huge supporter since day one, so we felt it was only appropriate he should speak at the first graduation,” Knuth said.

Sending his son Jonathan to Cristo Rey was the right decision for Pedro and Rosalva Cardenas. The work/study program helped the 17-year-old develop

confidence.

“When he started going to Cristo Rey, he was a little shy. But having him work at different companies gave him new skills,” Jonathan’s father explained. “I’ve brought him into my air conditioning business, and he can talk to customers. It’s a real plus for my business.”

The graduate’s mother appreciates the faith-based education Cristo Rey provides.

“We wanted him to keep his faith,” she conveyed. “Regardless of jobs or education God comes first because He’s the one who helps you go forward in life.”


Jailyn Ochoa applied to Cristo Rey after hearing about the school at Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish. She plans to study social work at the University of Texas at Arlington.

“Cristo Rey not only helped me grow in my relationship with God, but I also got four years of work experience,” she said.

A year spent doing office work at a senior living facility influenced Ochoa’s career choice.

“I saw how they helped people and that’s what I want to do with my life — help people.” 🇺🇸

CELEBRATE MORE



Scan the QR code for more photos of graduation and the Baccalaureate Mass.



Davy Tolentino, a class of 2022 deacon candidate, rehearses how to conduct the Rite of Marriage during a practicum on Nov. 13, 2021 at St. Peter the Apostle Church in Fort Worth. (NTC/Juan Guajardo)

Deacon candidates prepare for ordination

By Michelle McDaniel

Ten deacon candidates will be ordained to the permanent diaconate on Wednesday, Aug. 10 at 7 p.m. at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Church in Keller. The Mass will be livestreamed on [FWDiocese.org](https://www.fwdiocese.org).

Before their ordination, they participated in a five-day silent retreat June 8-12. After the retreat, they will meet with Bishop Michael Olson for the final steps on their journey to Holy Orders: the Profession of Faith and the Oath of Fidelity.

For the Diocese of Fort Worth, the process of formation takes six years in total for candidates.

In the first two of these years, a stage called aspirancy, the men attend workshops, seminars, and classes with their wives to discern if they “have the seeds of the vocation to the diaconate,” Director of Diaconal Formation Juan Rendon explained.

After these two years of heavy discernment, they must then petition the bishop for admission to candidacy by writing a letter about their calling.

They are guided by a formation advisor, participate in prayer groups, and are assigned to an annual pastoral outreach such as a hospice, homeless shelter, hospital, prison, or charity, as well as to a parish.

According to Rendon, it is unlike a graduate school program where one might enroll in two or three courses at a time, but instead must focus on a multitude of different dimensions of ordained ministry formation — not only academic, but also pastoral, spiritual, human, intellectual, and vocational.

Rendon defines the diaconate as “a vocation to be at the service of the bishop, to reach out to the peripheries of human experience” and “a vocation to be the charity of Christ in the Church.”

David Kinch first considered the

diaconate while praying for vocations with fellow parishioners at St. Andrew Church in Fort Worth after a Mass.

“I remember, at that moment, experiencing a little nudge, a little prompting, saying that I could do this,” Kinch said.

Kinch said he hopes to serve wherever there is the greatest need.

Alfred Mosco first considered the diaconate because of the witness of Deacon Klaus Gutbier at Good Shepherd Parish in Colleyville, but he calls the process the “work of the Holy Spirit.”

“Part of the beauty of our Church is just the mystery of the Holy Spirit and how it works all throughout the mystical body of Christ,” Mosco said. “I think that it’s very, very hard to put into words, but I really think it was at the prompting of the Holy Spirit. I think it was a calling for me to at least get into inquiry and then to continue to invite the Holy Spirit into the journey and let it guide me.” 🇺🇸



Loreto House co-founders Laurie Bollig and Randy Bollig show off the architectural rendering for the new Loreto House location coming to Flower Mound this year. (NTC/Juan Guajardo)

Due Date

Pro-life pregnancy centers expand locations and services to assist more mothers, babies

By Susan Moses

After the leak of the Supreme Court decision indicating that *Roe v. Wade* might be overturned, people have told Pat Pelletier that the need for Mother and Unborn Baby Care, the pro-life pregnancy center she co-founded with her late husband, Chuck, will be diminished because abortion may soon become illegal in Texas.

They've suggested to her, "The babies will be born; why not fold up your tent?"

On the contrary. Pelletier countered, "A lot more women will need more help,

and we'll stay as long as they need us."

Similarly, since Texas enacted the Heartbeat Bill last September, Loreto House President Randy Bollig has noted a rise in the number of women seeking assistance from the Denton pregnancy and parenting resource center, as well as a change in some guests' demeanor.

"Some are coming in a state of shock, and crying," he said, observing that walk-in visits have increased. "We are able to calm them down and say, 'OK, we have resources to help you. We have real options, alternatives to abortion.'"

Both Catholic pro-life pregnancy centers are building new facilities that will

increase their capacity to serve mothers and children in need.

GOOD NEIGHBORS

On May 14, Father John Robert Skeldon, rector of St. Patrick Cathedral, joined a group of the nonprofit's friends and supporters to bless the new site of Mother and Unborn Baby Care in west Fort Worth, right next door to an abortion facility.

The setting is intentional because about 60 percent of the nonprofit's clients contemplate abortion, estimated Pelletier. Ultimately, about 85 percent of their clients decide to have the baby.

The new building will be four times as large as their current facility in the downtown hospital district, allowing almost double the number of counseling rooms plus adding a second sonogram room — large enough for the mother to have family with her during the ultrasound.

Having more space available will allow room for a conference room, storage for baby clothing and gear, and offices for 40 Days for Life and Sidewalk Counseling Advocates.

Most important will be the oratory, which will hold a tabernacle with the Blessed Sacrament. Pelletier said the small prayer chapel is situated as close to the abortion clinic as possible.

Initial progress, especially the permitting process, was slow, but construction has begun, and Pelletier hopes to be able to offer a walk-through tour on Oct. 1.

By then, the Supreme Court's decision on *Roe v. Wade* will be official. If it's overturned and abortion becomes illegal in Texas, Pelletier said, "It won't change our mission. It might change our outreach."

For example, the center could be more faith forward in its décor and its initial interactions with the women.

The mission of educating mothers about their baby's growth and development, sharing the mercy of God,



Father John Robert Skeldon blesses the foundation of the new Mother and Unborn Baby Care crisis pregnancy and pro-life resource center on May 14. (NTC/Jayme Donahue)

and providing material and emotional assistance remains, she said. "They will need support, and we'll be walking with them. We will still be there for them, as long as they need us."

Since its founding in 1984, Pelletier estimates that Mother and Unborn Baby Care has assisted more than 9,000 mothers who have brought their babies into the world.

It's not just the babies in jeopardy, but the mothers as well, she explained. "We care about the baby and the mother's soul. We want to save them both. No one wants an abortion," she said. "We offer help."

MULTIDIMENSIONAL GROWTH

In the two years since coronavirus forced Loreto House Pregnancy Center in Denton to restructure how it operates, the facility has expanded in size by nearly 50 percent, transformed its method of serving guests to a case management

Continued on Page 30

VIEW THE
VIDEO!



To learn more, visit
UnbornBabyCare.org
or to view our video,
scan the QR code
above.



Volunteers hand out diapers to clients during a diaper day event hosted at Loreto House in Denton. (NTC/Ben Torres)

From Page 29

model, and recently partnered with Lewisville ISD to help teen mothers.

And that’s just in Denton. Construction has begun on a second location in Flower Mound to assist pregnant women and families with children under 36 months.

Plans for the additional site began two years ago, when an anonymous benefactor donated a 1.3-acre parcel of land at a busy intersection in Flower Mound. The area has experienced a rapid rise in population but has no pregnancy resource center.

Bollig expects the new location will serve guests within a 10-mile radius, including Carrollton, Lewisville, Coppell, and Grapevine, and nearby Catholic parishes might be a source of employees, volunteers, and material support.

A retired building contractor, Bollig admitted that construction at present is “a scary thing. I thought we were sufficiently funded when we started the project a year

ago, but construction costs are 40 percent more expensive than what I budgeted a year ago.”

Despite soaring costs and supply chain delays, Bollig hasn’t grown discouraged. He said that an increase in financial contributions from donors proves that the Lord is at work.

The land and architectural plans were donated, and the retired contractor is “using my skills to try to get this built as inexpensively as possible and as beautiful as possible.”

The new facility will be similar in size and amenities to the Denton location, with about a dozen advocate parlors, a sonogram room, and a chapel with the Blessed Sacrament that replicates the Holy House of Loreto, a pilgrimage

destination in Loreto, Italy. Tradition holds that the Holy House of Loreto is the site of the Annunciation and where Mary was born and raised. (It was moved from Nazareth in the 13th century.)

The nonprofit hopes to celebrate its grand opening on December 10, the Feast of Our Lady of Loreto.

Back at the Denton location, the Knights of Columbus donated their 100th ultrasound machine in Texas, thanks to funds raised by Council 12553 of St. Mark Parish in Argyle. Coincidentally, the first ultrasound machine donated by the Knights in Texas was also to Loreto House, when it

opened in 2009.

Loreto House has also appointed a medical director, which allows the staff

LEARN
MORE

To learn more about Loreto House or to support their outreach, scan the QR code below.





◀ The tabernacle in the chapel at Mother and Unborn Baby Care Center. (NTC/Juan Guajardo)



◀ Pat Pelletier, one of the founders of Mother and Unborn Baby Care Center. (NTC/Rodger Mallison)

nurse to offer more prenatal medical services to pregnant mothers, including transvaginal ultrasounds to detect an early heartbeat, screening for sexually transmitted infections, and in the future, abortion pill reversal.

SOLID ROOTS

Thirteen years ago, Loreto House served about 250 women in its first year in Denton. In 2021, they conducted about 7,500 individual visits.

Despite the rapid growth, Loreto House remains rooted in hospitality. The staff gives

each guest “the same welcome they would receive at our Blessed Mother’s home,” said Marjorie Looney, the director of case management.

Laurie Bollig, the foundress and director of hospitality, added that advocates look to Mary as inspiration for interacting with each guest. She said Mary “would offer [guests] something to eat and drink; she would get to know them, build a relationship with them; and she would introduce them to Jesus. That’s

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St. Bernadette, PRAY FOR US

The St. Bernadette relics tour comes to two parishes in the Diocese of Fort Worth this July

By Jerry Circelli

Our Lady of Lourdes Parish in Mineral Wells and St. Francis of Assisi in Graford are among only 42 locations in the United States where the faithful can venerate the relics of St. Bernadette Soubirous during a special tour that originated recently in Lourdes, France.

The relics will be on display July 20-22 at Our Lady of Lourdes Church, 108 NW 4th Ave., in Mineral Wells. On July 22, the relics will also visit St. Francis of Assisi Church, 14965 N. State Highway 16, in Graford.

This year marks the first time the

relics have traveled from the Sanctuary of Our Lady of Lourdes, in the south of France, to the United States. Relics of St. Bernadette are normally housed in a reliquary at the shrine site, which attracts more than 6 million people annually.

Father Thomas D'Souza, SAC, pastor of Our Lady of Lourdes in Mineral Wells and St. Francis of Assisi in Graford, said he was surprised when he received a call from one of the tour organizers asking if he was interested in hosting St. Bernadette's relics at his parishes.

"I said, 'Certainly, I'm interested,'" Fr. D'Souza recalled, further explaining that he contacted Diocese of Fort Worth Bishop Michael Olson, who was also strongly in favor of bringing the

TOUR OF THE RELICS OF ST. BERNADETTE

No Passport Required



Our Lady of Lourdes Parish in Mineral Wells and St. Francis of Assisi Parish in Graford will host Masses, veneration of the relics of St. Bernadette, talks, and candlelight processions from July 18-22, 2022. For the full schedule, scan the QR code.



▲ A view of the reliquary holding the relics of St. Bernadette Soubirous. (Courtesy/Sanctuary of Our Lady of Lourdes)

relics to this area.

“It is a great privilege for us to host these relics,” Fr. D’Souza said. “The relics of St. Bernadette will bring us such great spiritual love for Jesus and Mary. People will be very moved in the presence of the relics.”

The priest said the faithful will come away with some good memories of their participation during the veneration of the relics and might even experience their own miracles of faith in the process.

Fr. D’Souza said he also plans to lead a novena in advance of the relics’ visit to the parishes he serves.

“I think this whole experience will strengthen the faith of people who learn the story of St. Bernadette,” Fr. D’Souza said, “and how as a poor girl she experienced these apparitions of the Blessed Mother again and again.”

Over the course of several months starting in 1858, the Blessed Virgin Mary appeared 18 times to 14-year-old Bernadette at the Grotto of Massabielle, on the present sanctuary site, with messages calling for penance and prayers for the conversion of sinners.

On one visit, Our Lady asked the peasant girl to dig in the ground, and to drink and wash in the water that would appear.

Onlookers saw Bernadette digging

frantically, eating dirt, and eventually drinking muddy water.

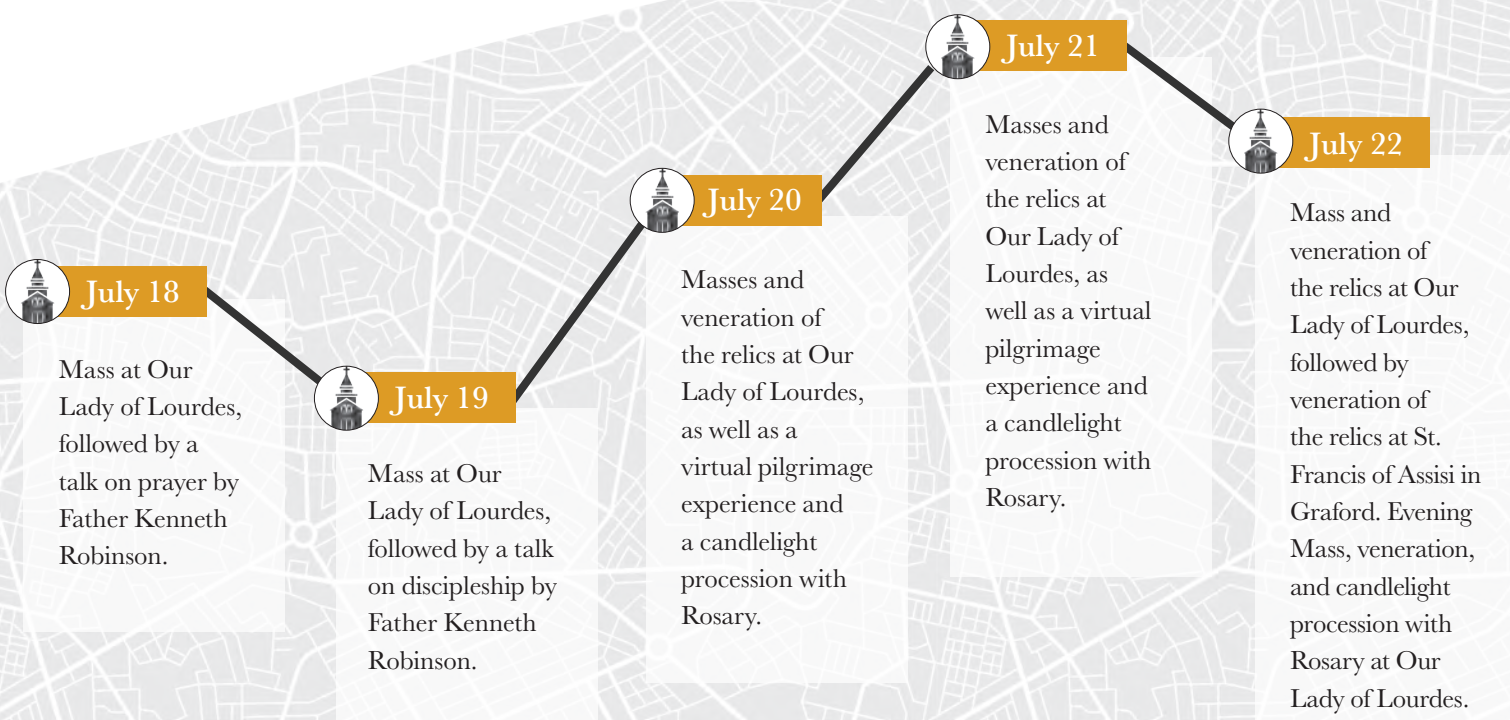
Soon, however, clear spring water began to flow. Since that time, millions of people have bathed in the healing water of Lourdes, with several thousand miraculous recoveries attributed to the intercession of Our Lady of Lourdes at the site. Of those, 70 cases have been officially recognized by the Catholic Church, with the most recent in 2013.

Now, people in North Texas have the opportunity to experience the same healing water from Lourdes — all without making a 5,000-mile pilgrimage to France.

For the first time ever in the United States, local Catholics will be able to drink and wash in the water from Massabielle Grotto, participate in a Marian candlelight procession accompanied by the relics of St. Bernadette, and venerate the relics of one of the world’s most beloved saints.

“For miracle-minded Catholics and those with a Marian devotion, St. Bernadette Soubirous is one of the most noteworthy saints

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RELICS, from Page 33

in the modern history of the Church,” EWTN’s “Miracle Hunter” Michael O’Neill told the *North Texas Catholic*.

“Not only was she the recipient of 18 visions of the Virgin Mary and the one who unearthed the healing spring that has resulted in many healing miracles still happening at Lourdes today, the body of St. Bernadette inexplicably lies in a state of near perfect preservation, making it one of the most remarkable such cases in the history of the Catholic Church.”

The Miracle Hunter continued, “For faithful who venerate the relics of St. Bernadette, they will be connecting in a very rare and real way with one of the great Marian saints of history.”

Monsignor Olivier Ribadeau Dumas, rector of the Sanctuary of Our Lady of Lourdes in France, was a central figure in making that connection possible. He was involved for several years in the process of bringing the relics to the United States.

Msgr. Dumas told the *North Texas Catholic* that he and his colleagues in France have been driven to “spread the spirituality of Our Lady of Lourdes in the world. It is what we live for at the Sanctuary.”

The rector thanked Bishop Olson for the opportunity to accommodate the relics for the faithful of North Texas and said the 9,000-mile journey the relics will make as they wind their way throughout the U.S. has been “a beautiful challenge.”

Just as Mary helped St. Bernadette uncover a spring that led people to the miraculous healing spring water



A view of the Lourdes grotto in France, where St. Bernadette saw the Blessed Virgin Mary 18 times. (Courtesy/Sanctuary of Our Lady of Lourdes, Pierre Vincent)

in Lourdes, she is doing the same now through this special tour, he said.

“When we welcome the relics of St. Bernadette,” Msgr. Dumas said, “we also welcome the Virgin Mary, and hear her invitation to go to the spring. Mary always leads us to Christ, the risen one.”

“Today, being close to the relics of Bernadette is a way to draw from the spring. It is a way of refocusing our life on Christ, the unique mediator between God and humanity,” the monsignor said.

“By our closeness to the saints in the communion of saints, it is the grace of Christ, the grace of salvation, that we receive.”

To the faithful of the Diocese of Fort Worth, the Lourdes Sanctuary rector said: “I strongly believe that the visit of the relics will be full of graces for those who participate. Pope Francis has given a plenary

indulgence for those who visit the relics, confess, attend Mass, and pray for the pope’s intentions.

“When Bernadette saw the Virgin Mary, she communicated the happiness of heaven to her. That promise of the happiness of the other world is here for us today. The veneration of the relics of Bernadette gives us a foretaste of this happiness.”

In reference to *Matthew 5:6*, Msgr. Dumas said, “It also strengthens our faith in God who comforts the afflicted and satisfies those who hunger and thirst for righteousness.”

The rector concluded, “The veneration of relics is all about faith. We thank God for the faith of His saint, and as we reflect on and learn more about this saint’s faith, we pray that God will renew and increase it in ourselves.”

The St. Bernadette relics tour was organized by the Sanctuary of Our Lady of Lourdes in France, in partnership with the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, North American Lourdes Volunteers, Hospitalité de Miami, and the Order of Malta.

The U.S. tour of the relics began in April, and by August will have made parish and cathedral stops in 21 states. The only locations for the relics tour in Texas include the two parishes in the Diocese of Fort Worth and the Cathedral of Our Lady of Walsingham in Houston.

For more information on the 2022 Relics of St. Bernadette Tour, including a tour map, Prayers of Consecration to Mary, Novena to Our Lady of Lourdes, Novena to St. Bernadette Soubirous, and more, visit: StBernadetteUSA.org. 🇺🇸

PRO-LIFE, From Page 31

what our hope is here.

“You can see from when you come in — it’s very welcoming, very openly Catholic,” Bollig said.

By switching to a case management model, an advocate can potentially work with a guest for almost four years and build a close relationship with the mother. Each advocate has a cozy, custom “parlor,” where they offer guests refreshments and listen to determine how best to help.

Looney stressed the advocates provide “loving support for people that are very scared. We want them to know ‘We’ve got you.’”

Women can receive free pregnancy tests, ultrasounds, parenting classes on 140 topics, lactation consulting, and resources for employment, food banks, and adult education. Many of their services are also available in Spanish and Vietnamese.

At the first visit, guests receive a gift bag that includes a homemade baby hat and the first of many sets of diapers. Laurie Bollig coordinates volunteers who create small craft gifts for the women.

By attending classes, guests earn points to select items including baby clothing and gear. Plus diapers — Loreto House distributes about 16,000 each month, and mothers and fathers receive them at every visit.

“We are trying to meet the need where there’s a gap where women and men are struggling to provide everything for the baby,”

said Randy Bollig, adding that a \$30 box of diapers can be a critical help.

Being a Catholic pregnancy resource center means no graphic images, no shaming, and no pressure to convert, according to Bollig. “We try to elevate the women’s experience.”

His wife Laurie added, “It’s all about love. It’s just pure loving them. And God gives you the grace to really love them,” she said.

INVITATION TO HELP

With major construction underway and more mothers and children in need, both Loreto House and Mother and Unborn Baby Care need additional personnel, baby supplies, and financial donations.

In addition to support for the capital campaign, Bollig also emphasized the need for prayer, especially since the Denton location was targeted by graffiti in May. He explained, “We are saddened by the hate crime perpetrated on our facility, and we pray for conversion of heart of the people who hate us for who we are and what we do to serve women in our community.”

For Pelletier, raising \$1 million to complete the building isn’t easy, but she realized “God wants this to be a missionary project, to bring God into a place where He’s not known or not welcome.”

She continued, “This is an outreach project, where all can be a channel of God’s grace to the world. How often do you have the opportunity to make an investment where the reward is eternal souls?”. 🇺🇸



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A death chamber is seen from the viewing room at the state penitentiary in Huntsville, Texas, in this 2010 file photo. (CNS photo/Jenevieve Robbins, Texas Department of Criminal Justice, Handout via Reuters)

an inadmissible PUNISHMENT

The fight to do away with the death penalty continues in Texas

By Matthew Smith

The United States, according to Amnesty International’s 2020 report, remains among a small handful of industrialized nations still employing the death penalty and trails only China, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, and Egypt in number of citizens executed.

It’s a situation Church leaders hope will soon become a relic of

the past. Church teaching calls for respect for life from conception to natural end and, as such, opposes the death penalty.

Paragraph 2267 of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* previously allowed for the death penalty in certain extremely limited conditions — conditions which for all practical purposes are virtually nonexistent

in almost every instance. A 2018 revision approved by Pope Francis, however, eliminated any previous exception, pointing out that “the dignity of the person is not lost even after the commission of very serious crimes.” The revision cites “new understanding” as to the significance of penal sanctions, the effectiveness of detention to ensure the protection

of others, and the importance of not depriving a guilty person of the “possibility of redemption.”

“Consequently, the Church teaches, in the light of the Gospel, that the death penalty is inadmissible because it is an attack on the inviolability and dignity of the person, and she works with determination for its abolition worldwide.”

Compared to opposition to abortion or euthanasia, support for opposition of the death penalty can be a hard sell, admitted Jennifer Allmon, executive director for the Texas Catholic Conference of Bishops.

“What I try to remind people is that our opposition to the death penalty is not about what the criminal has done,” Allmon said. “It’s about what it does to us. It’s about who we become when we do that, and that’s a different sort of thing when we’re the instrument of death.”

“I think people understand that conversation in terms of changing hearts and minds. We’re not trying to justify that this person has committed an atrocious crime and should be spared, so much as we’re saying, ‘Should we repeat that?’”

The Texas bishops, via a 2016 Pastoral Statement, stressed that the death penalty does not fulfill justice.

“Capital punishment vitiates our hearts’ capacity for mercy and love,” the statement reads. “The death penalty not only does not correspond to the common good, it actually does great harm to it.”

They and others argue disparities in application of the death penalty, versus life in prison without parole, among minorities and lower income residents and cite instances where innocent people were likely executed.

Fort Worth attorney Greg

Westfall, who has served as a defense attorney on numerous capital murder cases, including several seeking the death penalty, opposes its use.

“There’s the moral question of is it good for our society?” Westfall said. “I don’t think our government should be in the business of killing our citizens because there’s no practical necessity for it. Deterrence and rehabilitation are not an issue at that point. So, punishment is the only thing left, which seems an awful lot like vengeance. It’s purely killing them to do it, which is utterly unnecessary.”

Less important than a person’s life, but notable nonetheless, is the fact that it costs substantially more to impose the death penalty than to house a prisoner for life.

Death penalty cases require additional attorneys, expert witnesses, a longer jury selection process, and numerous appeals in addition to other costs.

Westfall said that taxpayer money spent on one death penalty case he was involved in — that of Fort Worth resident Mark Anthony Soliz, convicted for the 2010 murders of a Tarrant County man and a Johnson County woman — totaled enough to fund the annual salaries of about 50 public school teachers.

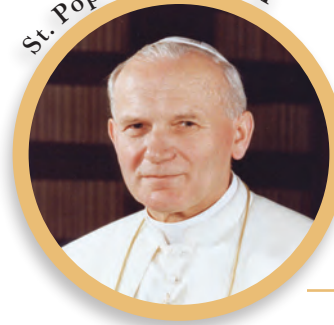
Add in also the cost of separately housing death row inmates, many of whom remain there for years before execution.

Texas Department of Criminal Justice Communications Officer Robert Hurst explained that death row inmates receive six hours of outside recreation time per week should they choose to do so, but always alone. Otherwise, they remain in their individual cells even during meals. TV is

Continued on Page 38

Lessons from our Holy Fathers

St. Pope John Paul II



“Not even a murderer loses his personal dignity, and God Himself pledges to guarantee this.”

— *Evangelium Vitae* —

Pope Benedict XVI



“I draw the attention of society’s leaders to the need to make every effort to eliminate the death penalty.”

— *Africae Munus* —

Pope Francis



“No matter how serious the crime that has been committed, the death penalty is inadmissible because it is an attack on the inviolability and dignity of the person.”

— *Address to Pontifical Council for Promoting the New Evangelization* —

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:

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- ▶ 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



(CNS photo/courtesy Melissa Lucio's defense team)



◀ An Ongoing Ordeal

Melissa Lucio, a Catholic mother of 14, was sentenced to death in Texas in 2007 for the death of her 2-year-old daughter, Mariah, that Lucio, now 53, has maintained was due to an accidental fall down a stairway. The Texas Catholic bishops joined a broad coalition urging state leaders to commute Lucio's death sentence, originally scheduled to be carried out April 27, 2022. Lucio remains on death row while her case goes back to trial court to examine new evidence her attorneys say show the toddler's death was an accident.

From Page 37

prohibited though some are allowed radios, and all are allowed newspapers and magazines provided they're approved.

Once an execution date is set, the death row supervisor informs the inmate, according to Texas Department of Criminal Justice execution procedures.

An execution watch log, which begins seven days before the execution, requires checking on the offender every half hour, then every 15 minutes, during the 36 hours leading to execution.

The morning of the execution, the offender's property is packed and inventoried, and visits with family, friends, religious leaders, and attorneys are permitted. The offender receives a last meal at 4 p.m. followed by an opportunity to shower. At 6 p.m. they are led to the execution chamber, barring a last-minute stay, where they may make a last statement before receiving a lethal injection of pentobarbital. Should they still exhibit signs of life, an additional five grams of pentobarbital is administered.

Denmark-based Lundbeck Inc., the manufacturer of pentobarbital, has since stopped selling the drug to states

for use in lethal injections, of which 27 states still retain the death penalty.

Texas' current stock is several years old and expired, Allmon said.

A setback in the Church's call to abolish the death penalty came with April's execution of Carl Buntion, 78, who was suffering multiple chronic health issues. Hope came in April's stay of Melissa Lucio's scheduled April 27 execution date by the Court of Criminal Appeals of Texas, a case where numerous questions of doubt surround Lucio's original conviction. (Bishop Michael Olson was among the bishops who petitioned Cameron County District Attorney Luis Saenz for a withdrawal of Lucio's execution date.)

Hope also endures, Allmon said, because despite the fact Texas is seen as a "hang 'em high" state, instances of the death penalty have significantly decreased over the past decade.

"I think most Catholics are aware of the Church's stance on the death penalty even though some disagree with it," Allmon said. "But even many of them who may not support its abolition still oppose many of the current uses of the death penalty.

"[The Church] supports abolition. But, just like with abortion, we're grateful for any incremental reduction in its use." 🇺🇸



Elia Moreno at the Catholic Charities Northwest Campus Poverty Summit recently in Wichita Falls. (NTC/Juan Guajardo)

Summit speaker tackles misconceptions on poverty

By Jenara Kocks Burgess

Poverty goes much deeper and is much more complex than people think at first glance, according to Elia Moreno, an author and expert on poverty.

During her keynote speech at the Catholic Charities Northwest Campus Poverty Summit May 10, she elaborated on lessons she learned about poverty throughout her career in social work and community outreach.

Ronna Huckaby, chief service officer of CCFW, said the Poverty Summit, held in Wichita Falls for the first time since 2018, is about creating awareness and shedding light on misconceptions about poverty.

“Poverty is extremely complex so the more people can talk about it, different points of view, maybe we can get to the finish line,” Huckaby said.

The Wichita Falls Chamber of Commerce cosponsored the event, and

Chamber President and CEO Henry Florsheim delivered the welcome as well as information about what poverty looks like in Wichita Falls.

“At the chamber, it’s our mission to build a stronger Wichita Falls — to build a strong community for economic development through business support. I can tell you the biggest type of poverty we see is among the working poor,” he said.

Data from the United Way’s latest ALICE Report indicates that 49 percent of households in Wichita County are below a basic economic survival threshold. ALICE stands for Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed — households that earn above the Federal Poverty Level but do not make enough to make ends meet.

“We are seeing an increased number of employed families who are unable to afford the basics — housing, childcare, food, transportation, health care, technology,” he said.

Huckaby wants people in Wichita

Falls to know that Catholic Charities Fort Worth Northwest Campus has a variety of programs to meet their clients where they are. “We have that information referral as well as that individualized, customized approach to assist people in their journey out of poverty,” Huckaby said.

Since writing her first book on poverty, Moreno’s goal, as she works in communities across the country, is to extend dignity and love to those she serves.

“We judge what we don’t understand so my goal is to teach today on the different types of poverty to open people’s eyes, so they are able to see through a different lens,” Moreno said.

Moreno’s presentations on the 12 types of poverty are usually three to six hours long, and she explains them through case studies. That night, she had less than 50 minutes before a short question-and-answer session so she went over two types of poverty: generational and situational. 🇹🇽





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clearly

At times it takes a little rehumanizing to see our neighbors with empathy and love

By Susan Moses

Sometimes problems are so big, we are paralyzed into inaction.

The battle over the protection of the unborn. Mass shootings. Racism. The demonization of immigrants. The vitriol in our political system.

What can I do that would make a difference in the vast swell of man's inhumanity to man?

As an individual, our personal behavior appears immaterial on a national or global level. But step back into our personal circle of influence. Can we have an impact in our homes, on our street, or in our neighborhood? Could followers of Christ collectively rehumanize society?

Just as the societal problems exacerbated by a divisive culture

are too immense for an individual to solve, neither can they be thoroughly analyzed in one article. But as a people called to love and respect each other as fellow image-bearers of God, we've got to make a start. We've got to rehumanize in order to see people clearly, not as the "faceless" other.

THE BATTLEGROUND

When it comes to culture wars and polarization, we should look back. Way back to the Acts of the Apostles, according to Father Zachary Burns, TOR, parochial vicar of Good Shepherd Parish in Colleyville.

The early Christians didn't

Continued on Page 42

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waver from preaching the truth, but neither did they go out looking for a fight. “This was never the goal of the original followers of Christ — to go out and stir up trouble. All they wanted to do was share the truth because they believed in the freedom that truth offers,” Fr. Burns said.

Sometimes the message of the Risen Christ was welcomed and accepted, and at other times its messengers were beaten and imprisoned.

We can also expect a mixed response when we live truth and share the truth, but “by virtue of being a representative of Jesus, there’s going to be pushback against what we do, what we teach, and who we are,” according to Fr. Burns.

Like the followers of The Way, our goal is “not to instigate or win, just something we have to engage in by virtue of people who share the truth.”

Fr. Burns has observed that some voices in the public arena seek to bring Christians down to a certain level, but he said if we’re fighting in the mud, we’ve already lost. Resorting to sarcasm, name calling, scathing remarks, and other cheap tactics might be a temptation, but we want to bring dignity to the debate.

“Engage with others in charity. Always assume the best in people. We’ve set any interaction up for failure if you assume the worst of our opponent, or the person who thinks differently than us,” he recommended.

We shouldn’t be surprised if our message is not well received. Jesus predicted it, the Franciscan friar reminded. He told His Apostles at the Last Supper, “If the world hates you, realize that it hated me first” (*John 15:18*).

Divides are especially apparent in three public arenas: politics, traditional media, and social media.

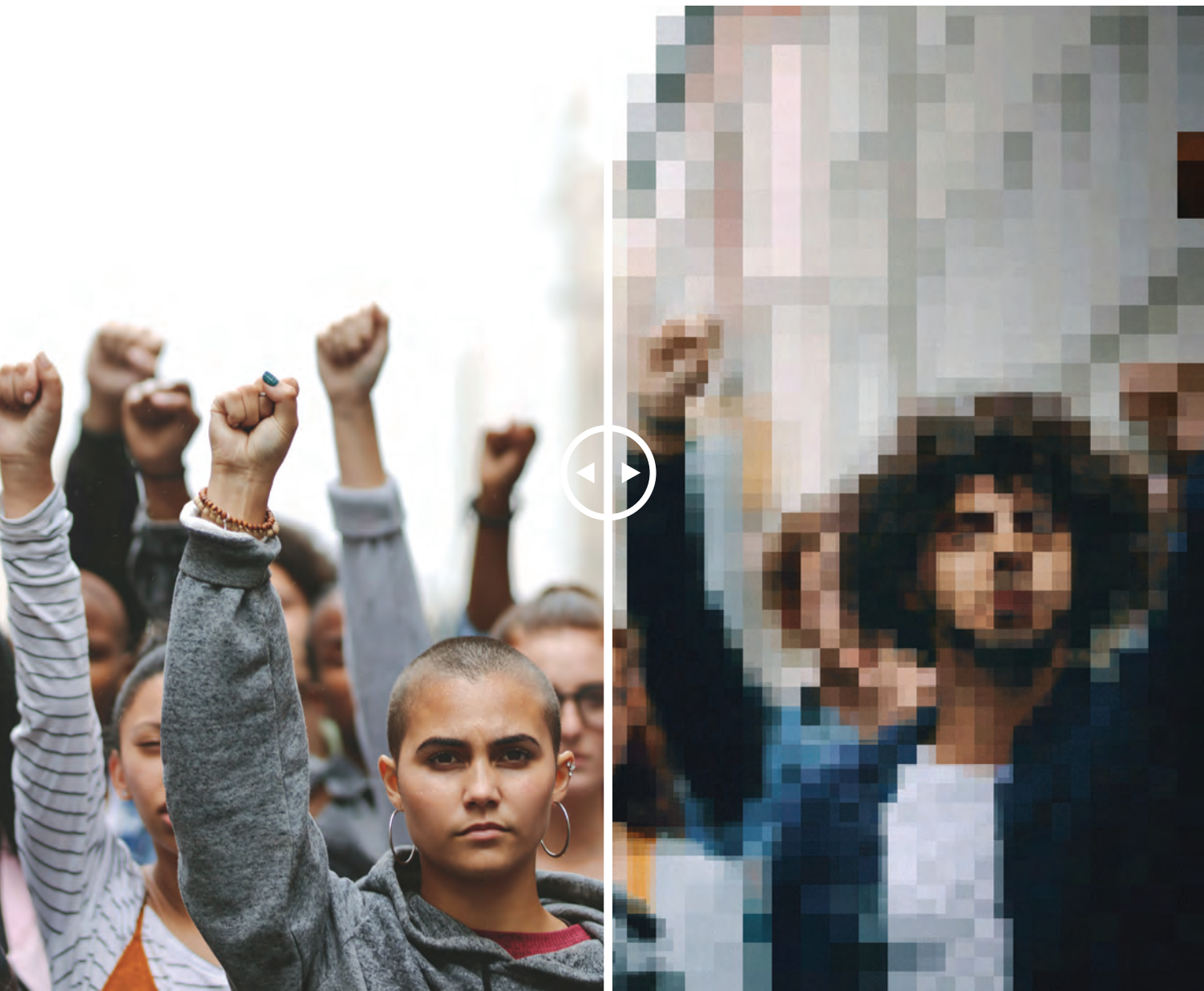
POLARIZING POLITICS

The polarization in politics was first apparent in Washington, D.C., but it has filtered into state and local government — fighting has erupted even at local school board meetings.



Tan Parker, who represents District 63 in southwest Denton, has a front row seat in state politics, serving in the Texas House of Representatives since 2007.

“Certainly, there are lots of times when I have disagreements with fellow lawmakers as well as a disagreement with constituents. I think it is incumbent on me, as a lawmaker, to always be open to discourse. I think it’s very, very important that we always maintain civility in discourse and that we need to be able to agree to disagree without having lines that are drawn that don’t allow for future



(Shutterstock/Jacob Lund)

dialogue or conversation,” he said.

The lawmaker looks to Ronald Reagan as a model of finding common ground with those harboring a different viewpoint, and to Martin Luther King Jr. as an exemplar of nonviolent social change.

Rep. Parker said he employs patience and empathy as he listens to competing stances and reminds himself to seek the common good. “It’s important that we love our fellow man, that we do our best

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HOW’S YOUR VISION?

In our day and age, different opinions can be a fulcrum for divisiveness. Our faith calls us to love those we count as our “enemies” (*Matthew 5:43-48*). Take Jesus’ mandate to heart: “Love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children of your heavenly Father.”

As Catholics, we are called to teach the truth. If confronted by someone who shares a different viewpoint on a controversial topic, seek the grace of the Holy Spirit and consider charitable dialogue that’s based on solid facts and research and informed by the truth of the Church — not by preferences or political orientation.



(Shutterstock/David Peinado Romero)

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to have empathy for others, that we do our best to put ourselves in their shoes and understand topics from their vantage point,” he said.

NEGATIVE NEWS

Media, whether television, radio, or newspaper, can be part of the solution or can exacerbate problems, according to Dave Palmer, executive director of KATH 910AM, the local affiliate of the Guadalupe Radio Network.

Unfortunately, the secular media, whether it’s conservative or liberal, likes to ignite controversy to attract eyeballs and ears, he said. If the audience is in a state of fear or agitation, viewers stay tuned, making disputes a purposeful strategy on many news and opinion programs to keep ratings high.

Palmer appreciates the alternative of Catholic media, which offers programming that upholds the teachings of the Catholic

Church in an attractive manner that draws listeners in. “Not to say that everything is rosy and perfect, but at the same time, we want to leave people with a sense of hope,” he said.

Palmer cites call-in programs in Catholic media as models for respectful discourse, even during dissent. Callers may disagree with the teachings of the Church, but radio hosts respond in a knowledgeable, charitable, and disarming manner. “Brilliant,” Palmer summarized.

To avoid becoming entrapped by the 24-hour news cycle of secular media that heightens fear or rage, make wise choices about the source, any potential biases, and the amount of media consumed.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media can be positive. Family and friends who live across the country or across an ocean can share happy updates of births, first days of schools, and graduations. People with a common hobby can connect. Worthwhile causes often gain awareness and funds.



HOW'S YOUR VISION?

Immigrants are some of the most misunderstood and misrepresented people in society. Here, a man and his son cross the Rio Grande, the natural border between Mexico and the United States. Migration is often caused by push factors such as poverty, violence, persecution, and natural catastrophes.

In his encyclical *Fratelli Tutti*, Pope Francis asks us to move beyond our “primal reactions” of fear, the temptation to close in on ourselves, and perhaps even of racism. He exhorts us to instead “develop a creative openness to others” that honors the inalienable dignity of every human person, regardless of origin.



(Shutterstock/Srdjan Randje(ovic)

◀ HOW'S YOUR VISION?

Ever heard the term “preferential option for the poor”? It’s a term that arose in the ‘60s and was then expanded upon and embraced by St. Pope John Paul II and Pope Benedict XVI. Originally used to refer to the trend in Scripture of preference being given to the powerless and poor of society, those two popes extended the meaning of “poor” to include social and spiritual poverty, as well as all those marginalized in society: widows, orphans, the sick and disabled, addicts, and victims of trafficking and oppression. Most importantly, Pope Benedict XVI posited the principle as a Christian *obligation* to care for the poor both materially and spiritually.

But one of the ills of social media is its capacity to teach us to amplify our moral outrage, because those responses get rewarded with more likes and shares.

A study from Yale University, published in the August 13 issue of *Science Advances*, provided evidence “that some people learn to express more outrage over time because they are rewarded by the basic design of social media.”

The relative anonymity of commenting and the amplification of moral outrage leads people to become “emotionally dysregulated online. Moral outrage, anger is a factor. We’re not as willing to keep our emotions in check, particularly online,” said Amy Fisher-Smith, Ph.D., the chair of the Department of Psychology at University of

Dallas and a clinical psychologist.

Dr. Fisher-Smith recommended a more nuanced use of social media.

“Limit your time. Prolonged use is not helpful,” said the professor, who also stressed maintaining one’s critical thinking skills when engaging on social media.

Another suggestion to de-escalate conflict on social media comes from Bishop Robert Barron, a well-known online presence, who has stated he begins his responses with “Friend” to remind himself the anonymous person is not an adversary even if they have left a negative post.

Another common suggestion is to tuck a prayer card at the edge of the screen to note that Jesus is sitting next to you as you type your response.

UNSEEN OR UNIMPORTANT

We’ve lost our humanity in how we interact with each other in politics, the media, and online. Unfortunately, that’s not all. We’ve lost our humanity by not seeing or caring about the other – whether because of a different skin color, economic status, age, religion, or culture.

Fr. Burns addressed this in his May 8 homily at Good Shepherd, which focused on the humanity of the unborn but addressed the dignity of all marginalized people.

“As Christians and as people of good will, we need to continue to rehumanize. Rehumanize. Remind people of the humanity of those they might be inclined to throw

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HOW'S YOUR
VISION? ►

Perhaps one of the easiest populations to dehumanize are the unborn. The Catholic Church warns us against this by proclaiming not only that human life is sacred, but that its protection is the foundation for a moral and just society.

In our “throwaway” culture, as Pope Francis puts it, consider the Gospel call that every person is precious and is worth more than any thing(s). Pray and work peacefully for the protection of human life — from its embryonic to its elderly stage.



(Shutterstock/Alex Mit)



(Shutterstock/De Visu)

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away. Not just babies, but the poor, the elderly, immigrants, the mentally ill,” he said.

Fr. Burns explained in an interview with the *North Texas Catholic* that Pope Francis terms this age as a “throwaway culture,” in which human life is not intrinsically worthy of protection, but instead human worth is measured in economic potential or a capacity for pleasure, achievements, or comfort.

The priest explained we, as a society, no longer comprehend the innate goodness, the worth of human life — our life and the lives of others.

We divide the world between “us” and “them,” with “them” being less equal, less worthy, less important.

“We’ve lost the sense of the dignity of life in relation to God and in relation to each other. What a sad place to be, when we’ve lost an understanding that we belong to God and

Tools for Rehumanizing

we belong to each other,” said Fr. Burns.

POSITIVE CONNECTION

Despite our advances in technology, many people feel alone, isolated, unheard, unrecognized, or marginalized, according to Dr. Fisher-Smith, who added that philosophers and psychologists have been concerned for some time about the weakening of family and community structures.

“We have greater fragmentation, greater isolation. It’s a time where we see less ability to communicate effectively, less ability to listen, less ability to dialogue,” she said.

“Fostering real connectivity in our families and in our communities” needs to be a priority, said the professor.

The first place to build authentic connection, she suggested, is the kitchen table. Reinstating the family dinner with no cell phones.

“If it’s not dinner, create another family ritual without electronics that fosters some kind of communication between parents and children, dialogue between spouses,” she continued, adding that each family is unique.

Real connectivity begins in your family, and then expands to your community — starting with being involved in your church.

The U.D. professor said “churches are incredibly important” in creating connectivity in the community. Not only do you form relationships with fellow parishioners, but many parishes have outreach into their neighborhood.

In Pope Francis’ 2020 encyclical *Fratelli Tutti* (*On Fraternity and Social Friendship*), the pontiff speaks of a “culture of encounter, capable of transcending our differences and division. ... To speak of a ‘culture of encounter’ means that we, as a people, should be passionate about meeting others, seeking points of contact, building bridges, planning a project that includes everyone. This becomes an aspiration and a style of life” (215, 216).

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“**V**ery practically, the Church gives us some tools for [rehumanizing], and it’s through the Spiritual and Corporal Works of Mercy,” recommended Fr. Burns, who added he appreciates that the Church offers a “time-tested path” to increase our compassion for others and grow in awareness of the dignity of every human life.

The works themselves are brief, and we’ve added a suggestion or two that can serve as a starting point on how to apply and expand the works of mercy in our lives.

CORPORAL ACTS OF MERCY



FEED THE HUNGRY: Donate to food pantries by all means, and also consider who is hungry for conversation or assistance. Do you have a neighbor who lives alone? Or an elderly person who needs a lightbulb changed?



GIVE DRINK TO THE THIRSTY: Shelters and disaster relief agencies often need bottled water, or contributions to help build a well in a location without clean drinking water.



SHELTER THE HOMELESS: You can give time, money, or material items to Catholic Charities Fort Worth to use as they assist those experiencing homelessness as well as find apartments for refugees.



VISIT THE SICK: Bring a meal or mow the lawn for a neighbor who is ill. Volunteer to drive an acquaintance to a medical appointment. Give blood.



BURY THE DEAD: Go to funeral Masses to pray for the repose of the deceased’s soul and comfort the loved ones left behind.



VISIT THE PRISONER: In addition to prison ministry, consider organizations that support the children of inmates. Or visit a shut-in neighbor or nursing home resident.

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YOUR LIFE MATTERS

We can choose not to add to the polarization of our culture, and in some small, simple ways, we can be a light to a society in darkness, one person at a time.

Encountering others, especially those from different backgrounds, “expands and deepens our understanding of our common humanity, that we’ve all been created by God. It’s an ongoing process,” said Sister Patricia Ridgley, SSMN.

The Sisters of St. Mary of Namur is an international religious order with provinces in nine countries, which helps the sisters grow in understanding of “the dignity of each person, no matter their financial, racial, or ethnic background,” Sr. Patricia explained.

“None of us can say we created ourselves. None of us can say, ‘I chose to be born in a more affluent community’ or ‘I chose to be born from a mother who was alone in the world.’ We receive in total giftedness who we are and where we come from. Do we just not ponder that enough?” she asked.

She looks to Jesus as an example of embracing a culture of encounter, from talking with the woman at the well to eating dinner with tax collectors and sinners. Regardless of differences in culture, religion, and gender, He sought out others and treated them with deep respect.

At the Last Supper, Jesus said, “I give you a new commandment: love one another. As I have loved you, so you also should love one another” (*John 13:34*).

Love one another. Simple to comprehend, but difficult to execute. Nevertheless, as Catholic Christians, we must follow His command.

We can rehumanize ourselves and our culture, decrease division, and reach out to the marginalized when we encounter, listen, empathize, dialogue, and love. 🇺🇸

Tools for Rehumanizing



GIVE ALMS TO THE POOR: Donate your time or money to a charity that is meaningful to you.

SPIRITUAL ACTS OF MERCY



COUNSEL THE DOUBTFUL: Share your faith story, including how you overcame periods of doubts or questioning, with a companion. Recommend a website or a podcast.



INSTRUCT THE IGNORANT: Invite a friend or co-worker to Mass, pass along a book that helped you, or help with religious education at your parish.



ADMONISH THE SINNER: With humility and a loving spirit. “Remove the wooden beam from your eye first; then you will see clearly to remove the splinter from your brother’s eye” (*Matthew 7:5*).



COMFORT THE SORROWFUL: Providing a listening ear and a caring presence will give comfort to someone who is struggling and remind them of God’s love for them.



FORGIVE INJURIES: Remember the mercy that God has given you, and ask Him to help you forgive others.



BEAR WRONGS PATIENTLY: When you’re frustrated with a person or a situation, step away and pray for compassion.



PRAY FOR THE LIVING AND THE DEAD: Keep a prayer journal with a list of prayer intentions and give thanks for answered prayers. Ask people if they have a specific prayer request.



A disciple loves

HE IS: Father Jack McKone, pastor of St. John the Apostle Parish in North Richland Hills since 2017.

GROWING UP: The oldest of ten, he and his siblings attended St. Rita Catholic School and Nolan Catholic High School. His social life revolved around church activities. “I thought the world was Catholic.”

WORKING FOR A LIVING: From 1970 until retirement in 2000, McKone worked in the parts and services department of local auto dealerships.

HOBBIES: A self-described “hangar rat,” Fr. McKone is a licensed pilot and has served as a navigator on a vintage WWII B-17 “Flying Fortress” bomber. He’s also a photographer and model train enthusiast.

MISSION: A visit to his brother, a lay missionary in Guatemala, led McKone to spend a year and a half in Guatemala after his retirement. He helped the Carmelite Sisters, who were the bishop’s representatives in 28 Mayan villages and a Catholic school.

“It was a very simple life; it was a very joyful experience; physically it was very hard,” he said, recalling walks up and down the mountains at 8,000 feet of altitude and unheated buildings.

SCHOOLED: In 2002, he entered Assumption Seminary in San Antonio. He had a bit of trepidation because he’d been out of school for more than 30 years, but his habit of “don’t put off anything — start an assignment right away” served him well.

He was ordained Jan. 5, 2008, at St. Patrick Cathedral.

PARISH LIFE: Fr. McKone has served at St. Matthew Parish in Arlington; the parish cluster of Holy Family of Nazareth in Vernon, St. Mary in Quanah, and St. Joseph in Crowell; and Sacred Heart Parish in Wichita Falls.

“I’ve always found a community that I could love and become a part of. Every assignment I’ve had has been a good one.”

FAVORITE PART OF PRIESTHOOD:

“Watching and being a part of the struggles of the faithful to be the best people possible they can, and knowing how hard they are working at it. You see God’s grace working in them, in the day-to-day things. We have a privileged place to see God’s work.”


NOT THE FAVORITE PART: “That desk. You can have it.”

DISCIPLESHIP: “A good citizen follows the rules, but a disciple loves.

It’s a very different motivation. Doing the right thing for the love of God brings a joy that is unexpected,” even when called at night to make a hospital visit.

FINAL THOUGHTS: Fr.

McKone emphasized, “God’s delight is forgiving His children. You cannot get too far away from Him to be forgiven.

“Don’t ever doubt His power to forgive and forget our sins. It is His joy, His delight.” 





steadfast stewards

John and Patty Hinojosa are among more than 60 recipients of new diocesan Light of Christ awards

By Susan Moses

Decades ago, John Hinojosa routinely sat in a back pew of St. Mary of the Assumption Parish, a passive but regular participant in the celebration of Sunday Mass. Now, his level of service warrants possessing a key to the Fort Worth church.

He arrives an hour before the 8 a.m. Sunday Mass to open the church doors, set up the altar, and give the church a careful look to ensure its readiness for Holy Mass. When his tasks are complete, he usually has time for quiet prayer in a pew before he begins preparation for his role as an acolyte.

After the first Mass, he spends time planting or weeding in the Marian garden on the church grounds before again serving as an acolyte at the 10 a.m. Mass.

His wife, Patty, is a lector at the early Mass and takes Holy Communion to the homebound while John serves at the second Mass.

The couple, according to Father Jaison Mangalath, SVD, “are leaders, volunteers, and generous donors with humble hearts and joyful spirits.”

Their example of stewardship prompted their pastor to nominate them for the diocese’s first Light of Christ award. The Hinojosas are one of more than 60 couples or individuals across the diocese who will be honored for their commitment

to stewardship in their parish.

The Diocese of Fort Worth introduced the Light of Christ award this year to recognize lay individuals who live out the four pillars of stewardship: prayer, hospitality, formation, and service. Pastors were invited to nominate an individual or a couple from each parish.

Wendy Collins, director of stewardship and parish relations for the Advancement Foundation, said the purpose of the award is to “bring awareness to disciples leading a stewardship way of life.”

The honorees and their pastors are invited to attend an award ceremony on June 25, where Bishop Michael Olson will present them with a memento in appreciation of their stewardship.

Patty and John are “thankful and humbled” to learn of their selection, and Patty added, “We know there’s a lot of people deserving of it, so we’re honored to represent our church.”

AWARD WINNERS



For coverage of the June 25 Light of Christ awards and a list of all honorees, visit NorthTexasCatholic.org/local-news.

START SMALL

John’s service to his parish of 40 years began with an invitation. “We’re short on ushers. Can you help with the collection today?”

After saying “yes” that first morning, he continued to agree to subsequent requests to be an usher, greeter, Eucharistic minister, Knight of Columbus, and finally, nine

John and Patty Hinojosa at St. Mary of the Assumption Parish in Fort Worth. (NTC/Rodger Mallison)

years ago, an acolyte, whose duties include assisting the presiding priest by serving at the altar and training altar servers.

Fr. Mangalath helped John comprehend the spiritual aspect of being an acolyte. “He explained to us everything he does, and why he does it, and what it meant,” especially the consecration of the host, John said. “That makes it more spiritual when you’re up there. You feel things that most people take for granted. I’m really thankful to him for that — now I know what everything means.”

Patty, a longtime lector, was hungering to increase her service when a fellow parishioner asked her to help bring the Eucharist to the homebound in 2002. She’s been doing it for 20 years.

The nurse finds this ministry very rewarding. “I wanted to bring Jesus to those who were shut in, or forgotten, or lonely. I can see their eyes light up when they receive Communion,” said Patty, who also brings them a bulletin to help them feel connected to the parish.

Concerned that this ministry might grow to feel like an obligation on her day off instead of a blessing, Patty “prayed about it and asked God to give me the grace to be patient, to do His work,” she said. “He did.”

She currently coordinates homebound Communion ministry plus the lectors at Mass.

Another aspect of stewardship for the couple, who recently returned from walking 138 miles of El Camino de Santiago — the famous pilgrimage in Spain, is growing in their knowledge and love of Christ. They have participated in several Bible studies led by Fr. Mangalath, which have heightened their understanding of the Scripture readings in Mass. They regularly seek content from Formed, an online source for Catholic programming, films, and educational materials, and Patty attended RCIA classes to renew her knowledge of the Church.



THANK THE GIVER

An intentional focus on stewardship increases gratitude for God’s gifts and brings disciples closer to Christ, explained Collins, director of stewardship.

Gratitude is a powerful motivation for the Hinojosas, who have three children and eight grandchildren.

Patty said, “God is generous in His blessings, in sharing Himself with us, in giving us His Son who died on the cross for us. When I get Communion, I am thanking Him for that every Sunday.

“Knowing that we are sinners but loving us anyway and forgiving us, God is the most loving, generous being that there is. We strive to make God the center of our lives ... We try to live our lives the way we think Jesus would want us to,” she continued.

In addition to the Light of Christ award, other diocesan events to foster stewardship include the Diocesan Day of Stewardship, which is held in the spring, and Stewardship Sunday, planned in parishes on October 16. 🇺🇸



Better together

Pope Francis wrote the apostolic exhortation *Amoris Laetitia* (*The Joy of Love*) in 2016, focusing on “the reality of the family today in all its complexity, with both its lights and shadows.”

The Holy Father called for a year of the “*Amoris Laetitia* Family,” which concludes on June 26, during the 10th World Meeting of Families in Rome.

In the document, he addresses families of persons with special needs, like Darius and Rose Unkefer, who have raised Nick with the support of family and community and in turn increased opportunities for special needs children to grow in the Catholic faith.

The pontiff wrote, “People with disabilities are a gift for the family and an opportunity to grow in love, mutual aid, and unity... If the family, in the light of the faith, accepts the presence of persons with special needs, they will be able to recognize and ensure the quality and value of every human life, with its proper needs, rights, and opportunities.”



DIFFERENT ROOTS, SAME GOD:

Rose grew up attending St. Peter the Apostle Parish in Fort Worth, and she attended Catholic schools for her entire education: St. Peter the Apostle Catholic School, Nolan Catholic High School, and St. Mary's University in San Antonio.

Darius, born in New York, was raised by his Jewish mother and Christian father. He quipped, "We both grew up with guilt."

They met through mutual friends, and Rose was attracted to Darius' "sense of humor, lightness, and positiveness."

BOTH TRADITIONS:

The couple attended marriage preparation with Father Tim Thompson and talked through many issues, including having different faith backgrounds.

Both families were great supporters of the marriage, and Darius backed raising future children in the Catholic faith because he wanted them to have a strong foundation in God.

Their two children have been raised Catholic, but through their paternal grandmother, they have participated in Jewish traditions. "Mostly food," clarified Darius.

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY:

Darius and Rose celebrated 25 years of marriage on June 14.

FUEL THE FIRE:

The couple enjoys cooking good meals together at home and taking family walks.

MEETING CHALLENGES:

Rose said, "Starting a family, the different things that came our way in our early married life, we knew we had some big challenges ahead of us. We knew that we were better together than we would be apart."

Darius added, "We had to be a team."

RELY ON GOD:

"I definitely recall days when we had to just give it to God because we didn't have the answer," said Rose.

PARISH LIFE:

About 17 years ago, the Unkefers joined Holy Family Parish and soon became involved in special needs religious formation for Nick. With other parents, they helped develop a more formal religious education program for children with special needs. Darius usually helped in Nick's class and Rose in another.

"People at Holy Family supported and gravitated to having an open and inclusive environment," said Rose.

SPECIAL MASS:

Rose remembered attending Mass with Nick when he was young. "It can be really hard in Mass to sit quietly, and you don't want to disrupt other people."

The Unkefers and other parents approached the pastor of Holy Family to begin a monthly special needs Mass. Established more than 10 years ago, that Mass is celebrated every second Saturday of the month at 6:30 p.m.

Rose emphasized that the Mass is open to the entire diocese.

She said, "For the families that come, especially with littles, it allows them to relax, to actually be in the moment of Mass and not just thinking about 'Is this disturbing others?'"

"Now the biggest challenge is how to get the word out," she said.

SACRAMENTAL LIFE:

Much of Nick's youth centered around medical and therapy appointments, but Rose was also concerned: "How can we help Nick

on his faith journey?"

He has received the sacraments of Holy Communion and Confirmation through special needs religious formation at Holy Family.

Rose observed, "He embraces simple prayer. He knows God is good. He can see that. He thinks about it."

IT TAKES A VILLAGE:

Looking back, Rose is grateful for the support of family, friends, teachers, and therapists. "Did we tell them enough how thankful we are? And what a difference they made?"

FINDING HIS PLACE:

A kind, observant, and loving young man, Nick combines his skills in gardening and cooking by working part time at Stone's Throw Farm Co. He makes pickles and jams for the mobile farm stand and grocery store.

STUDENT TEACHING:

Nick lives with communication challenges, which has taught Darius "a lot of patience, love, and tolerance. You've got to react a little slower to interpret what he wants to get across to us. But he's been the teacher."

Rose added they "find joy in the little things" and have gained a sense of perspective. "Is this really a big deal?"

LIFE LESSONS:

After 25 years of marriage, Darius shows the same qualities that initially attracted Rose. He said he's learned to "have a sense of humor. Laugh more. Laugh at life."

Rose said she's grasped that, "It's a combination of faith and support, but knowing that everything will get sorted. It always does. Sometimes you don't know how it's going to look or what will happen, but take a deep breath. Know that life is good — keep on going." ✨

THEY ARE: Holy Family parishioners Darius and Rose Unkefer, with Nick, 20. Their daughter Caroline is 22 and a graduate student at University of Arkansas. (NTC/Ben Torres)

Called. And Recalled.

If Jesus asked, “Who do you say that I am?” — what would our answer be? Let’s say that we, like Peter, answer correctly, “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God,” but do not quite fully understand what it means. After Peter confessed Christ, he opposed Jesus’ first prediction of the passion, then the Apostle was rebuked (*Matthew 16:13-23*).

Let’s examine that word, “rebuke,” which some theologians instead describe as a “recall” of Peter to be a better disciple of Christ and to follow Him to be an instrument of Christ’s love and mercy to others.

It is like when we buy an item at the store, and later we find out the manufacturer has recalled the item due to certain defects because the item did not meet expectations of working a certain way. The defective item is discarded or taken out of circulation. Are we not constantly on recall? But unlike a store item, we are not discarded or taken out of circulation. Instead, Jesus recalls us through His sacraments and Word to a new life of discipleship in Him.

This recall to discipleship means fully embodying the whole salvific message of Jesus Christ and following Him in a vocation within the Church. A true Christian disciple takes on the life, passion, suffering, death, and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is a personal invitation to look deeper within our hearts and minds and answer His call.

The good news is that Jesus Christ is constantly inviting us to discover Him, not to be thrown away or discarded but to start again and again; to constantly grow in embodying Christ-like behavior and actions. We have the sacramental life of the Church and, in a particular way, the

sacrament of Reconciliation and the partaking of His Body and Blood at the altar of the Lord. We also have His living Word and a community of faithful Christians, among other instances where Jesus is

inviting us to grow in relationship with Him and be faithful disciples.

The discipleship of Jesus and the call to any vocation in the Church (marriage, religious life, priesthood, or single life) encompasses a spectrum of demands and rewards, sacrifices, and joys of each follower of Jesus. Those

people preparing for any vocation require, first and foremost, to be faithful Catholics by regularly attending Mass, especially on Sundays, participating in Reconciliation, listening to His word, and acting Christ-like in everyday life.

The same Jesus from which we are being fed in the Word and Eucharist extends the invitation again to become faithful disciples. Just like He gives us forgiveness, we are called to go beyond and act entirely as disciples by forgiving one another. We should not be afraid to commit ourselves and be a disciple of Christ as we prepare for or live any vocation within the Church. Even when we fail, God will be there to help us get up and move along the way, trusting in Him as He continues to work with us and bring us to a deeper understanding of the Paschal Mystery. In the same way that Jesus did not give up on Peter or other people in Scripture, He is not going to give up on us. 🇺🇸



Fr. Pedro Martínez

Ordained to the priesthood in 2020, Father Pedro Martinez serves as Pastor at St. Peter the Apostle Parish in Fort Worth and as Vocations Liaison with the Vocations Office.



Llamado...Y Recordado

Aunque caemos constantemente, Dios todavía nos llama a seguirlo. “¿Quién dices que soy?” ¿Cuál sería nuestra respuesta? Digamos que respondemos correctamente, *tú eres el Mesías, el Hijo del Dios viviente*, pero no entendemos completamente lo que significa. Después de la confesión de San Pedro y la primera predicción de la pasión, el apóstol es reprendido. Examinemos esa palabra, “repreñión”, que algunos teólogos llaman en cambio un recordatorio a Pedro para ser un mejor discípulo de Cristo y seguirlo para ser un instrumento del amor y la misericordia de Cristo hacia los demás.

Es como cuando compramos un artículo en la tienda, y luego descubrimos que el fabricante ha retirado el artículo debido a ciertos defectos porque el artículo no cumplió con las expectativas de funcionar de cierta manera; el artículo defectuoso se desecha o se saca de circulación. ¿Quién de nosotros no cae también constantemente? Pero a diferencia de un artículo de la tienda, no somos desechados o sacados de circulación. En cambio, Jesús nos llama a través de Sus sacramentos y palabra a una nueva vida de discipulado en Él.

Este recuerdo al discipulado significa encarnar plenamente todo el mensaje salvífico de Jesucristo y seguirlo en una vocación dentro de la Iglesia. Un verdadero discípulo cristiano asume la vida, la pasión, el sufrimiento, la muerte y la resurrección de nuestro Señor Jesucristo. Es una invitación personal a mirar más profundamente dentro de nuestro corazón y mente y responder a Su llamado. Las buenas noticias es que Jesucristo nos invita constantemente a descubrirlo a Él y no a ser desechado o descartado, sino a comenzar una y otra vez para crecer constantemente en la incorporación de comportamientos y acciones similares a Cristo. Tenemos la vida sacramental de la Iglesia y, de manera

particular, el sacramento de la reconciliación, la participación de Su Cuerpo y Sangre en el altar del Señor. Tenemos también Su palabra viva y una comunidad de cristianos fieles entre otras instancias en las que Jesús nos invita a crecer en relación con Él y a ser discípulos fieles.

El discipulado de Jesús y el llamado a cualquier vocación en la Iglesia (Matrimonio, Vida Religiosa, Sacerdocio, Soltería) abarca un espectro de exigencias y recompensas, sacrificios y alegrías de cada seguidor de Jesús. Aquellas personas que se preparan para cualquier vocación requieren, ante

todo, ser fieles católicos que asisten regularmente a Misa, especialmente los domingos, acuden a la Reconciliación, escuchan la Palabra de Dios y actúan como Cristo en la vida cotidiana.

El mismo Jesús que nos alimenta en la Palabra y en la Eucaristía extiende la invitación a convertirnos en discípulos fieles. Así como Él nos da perdón, estamos llamados a ir más allá y actuar enteramente como discípulos perdonándonos unos a otros. No debemos tener miedo de comprometernos y ser discípulos de Cristo mientras nos preparamos para entrar en una vocación o si actualmente estamos ya comprometidos en una vocación dentro de la Iglesia. Incluso cuando caigamos en pecado, Dios estará allí para ayudarnos a levantarnos y avanzar en el camino, confiando en Él mientras continúa trabajando con nosotros y nos lleva a una comprensión más profunda del Misterio Pascual. De la misma manera que Jesús no se dio por vencido con Pedro o con muchas otras personas en las Escrituras, Él no se va a rendir con nosotros. ✝



P. Pedro Martínez

El Padre Pedro Martínez sirve como párroco de la Parroquia de San Pedro Apóstol de Fort Worth y como Enlace Vocacional con la Oficina de Vocaciones.

Responden al Llamado

Tres seminaristas se ordenan como
diáconos transitorios

Por Joan Kurkowski-Gillen

En respuesta al llamado de servir a Dios y a su pueblo, tres seminaristas fueron ordenados como diáconos transitorios el 21 de mayo en la Parroquia de San Felipe el Apóstol de Flower Mound.

Más de 300 personas, entre ellas familiares, amigos y simpatizantes de los seminaristas presenciaron cómo el Obispo de Fort Worth, Monseñor Michael Olson, confirió el sacramento del Orden Sagrado a Brandon Edward LeClair, Austin Travis Hoodenpyle y Randolph Edward Hopkins Jr. durante la Misa de Ordenación, que se distingue por su riqueza en la tradición y el simbolismo.

La ordenación al Orden Sagrado del Diaconado marca el último año de formación para el sacerdocio. Los diáconos son ordenados como un signo sacramental para la Iglesia y el mundo de que Cristo no vino a ser servido, sino a servir.

“Dedican sus vidas a nuestra fe, por lo que nuestro apoyo constante es crucial a medida que crecen en su formación y nos guían”, dijo Terra Coyle, que asistió

a la Misa con otros feligreses de la Parroquia de San Felipe. “El llamado al sacerdocio puede ser una jornada muy solitaria. Por eso, es importante hacer que los seminaristas se sientan parte de la comunidad dondequiera que sirvan”.

Al dar la bienvenida a los feligreses en la liturgia celebrada por la mañana, el Obispo Olson expresó estar muy agradecido a los padres, los miembros del Club Serra, los miembros del Gremio de Pastores de San Juan Pablo II y a todas las personas que oran y apoyan a los candidatos durante su tiempo de formación.

“Fortalecidos por los dones del Espíritu Santo, los seminaristas ayudarán al obispo y a sus sacerdotes en el ministerio de la Palabra, del Altar y de la caridad mostrándose como servidores de todo el pueblo de Dios”, dijo, y explicó los deberes que conlleva la ordenación al diaconado transitorio.

Los diáconos proclaman el Evangelio, administran el Sacramento del Bautismo, atestiguan y bendicen los matrimonios,



llevan el Viático a los moribundos y dirigen los ritos funerales o las Exequias. Los diáconos son ministros de la caridad, identifican las necesidades de los demás y organizan los recursos de la Iglesia para satisfacer esas necesidades.

“Hagan la voluntad de Dios con caridad desde su corazón”, instruyó el Obispo a los ordenandos que estaban ante él. “Sirvan a los demás con alegría como servirían al Señor. Sean como los que una vez fueron elegidos por los apóstoles para el ministerio de la caridad, hombres de buena reputación, llenos de sabiduría y del Espíritu Santo”.

El Padre Jonathan Wallis, Vicario General y Director de Formación de los

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(I-D) Los seminaristas, Austin Hoodenpyle, Ed Hopkins Jr. y Brandon LeClair fueron ordenados como diáconos transitorios el 21 de mayo en la Parroquia de San Felipe el Apóstol de Flower Mound. (NTC/Juan Guajardo)



(I-D) El diácono, Brandon LeClair, se pone de rodillas para recibir el Libro de los Evangelios del Obispo Michael Olson. (NTC/Juan Guajardo)



El diácono Austin Hoodenpyle abraza a su abuelo después de su ordenación. (NTC/Juan Guajardo)



El recién ordenado diácono Ed Hopkins Jr. recibe su vestimenta con los símbolos externos de su ministerio. (NTC/Juan Guajardo)

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seminaristas, presentó al comienzo del Rito de Ordenación los tres candidatos al Obispo, quien los aceptó con las siguientes palabras: “Elegimos a éstos, nuestros hermanos, para el Orden del Diaconado”. La ceremonia brinda reminiscencias de la primera “elección” de siete diáconos por parte de los primeros cristianos. La congregación agradecida y emocionada aplaudió su consentimiento.

En su homilía el Obispo Olson informó a los futuros diáconos que la responsabilidad de cada hombre llamado y ordenado al Orden Sagrado es vivir una vida consagrada y centrada en Cristo.

“Es esencial que oren por ustedes mismos y por los demás para mantener a Cristo en el centro de sus vidas y fomentar la amistad fiel que Él les ofrece”, afirmó el Obispo. “Que esta celebración eucarística de su ordenación al diaconado les ayude a apreciar que es

Jesús quien los ha llamado como amigos y los invita a dar su vida con Él por Sus amigos”.

El Obispo concluyó su homilía recordando a la audiencia: “Dios es el Dios de la verdad, no de la falsedad. Dios es el Dios del amor, no del egoísmo. Dios es el Dios del orden, no del caos”.

Luego de yacer postrados en el suelo mientras la congregación rezaba las Letanías de los Santos, cada candidato se acercó al Obispo para la imposición de manos. Este acto esencial del Rito de la Ordenación, cuya transmisión proviene de los Apóstoles, es el momento en que se ora para que cada candidato reciba el Espíritu Santo.

Los recién ordenados fueron investidos con los símbolos externos de su ministerio, la estola y la dalmática, por otros diáconos que ayudaron a cultivar la vocación de los ordenandos.

Ya con las vestiduras diaconales los hombres se arrodillaron para recibir el Libro de los Evangelios de manos

del Obispo mientras pronunciaba la siguiente exhortación: “Recibe el Evangelio de Cristo, de quien te has convertido en heraldo. Cree lo que lees, enseña lo que crees y practica lo que enseñas”.

El Padre Wallis describió la ordenación de los tres diáconos transitorios como un signo de esperanza y señaló que muchas personas habían esperado este día por mucho tiempo.

“Es una gran bendición para la Diócesis de Fort Worth y el resultado de mucha oración, arduo trabajo y dedicación”, afirmó.

El Vicario General instó a los católicos del norte de Texas a orar por los seminaristas y otros jóvenes que conozcan personalmente y que ellos crean serían buenos sacerdotes.

“La gente tiene miedo de hacer esto porque no quieren presionar a nadie”, agregó. “Sin embargo, lo que realmente estás haciendo es ayudarlos con tus oraciones y la gracia del Espíritu Santo”. 🇺🇸

Estrellas de la **santidad**

Como los ejemplos piadosos de cinco santos nos ayudan hoy en día



San Ignacio de Loyola



San Felipe Neri



Santa Teresa de Jesús

(Ilustraciones por Raul Bersozal)

Por Violeta Rocha

Este año celebramos los 400 años de la santidad de San Ignacio de Loyola, San Francisco Javier, Santa Teresa de Ávila, San Felipe Neri y San Isidro Labrador, cuya ceremonia de canonización en conjunto fue presidida por el Papa Gregorio XV el 12 de marzo

de 1622 en el Vaticano. Recordamos no sólo la entrega de ellos a Dios, sino que se abren oportunidades para reconocer y aplicar sus enseñanzas en nuestro diario vivir, aún en las pequeñas cosas.

“La santidad es posible”, señala Lupita Hernández, Coordinadora de Ministerio de la Preparatoria Católica Cristo Rey de Fort Worth. Tener como meta final ser santos, es “buscar agradar

a Dios desde el momento que nos despertamos”, señala sobre el crecimiento espiritual que la ha llevado a atender, al menos una vez al año, a los *retiros en silencio* en la Casa de Retiro Jesuita de Montserrat, legado de San Ignacio.

“San Ignacio se enfocaba en lo bueno para hacerlo mucho mejor. Eso es muy

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Mientras se recuperaba de una grave lesión a su pierna, San Ignacio experimentó una curación milagrosa que atribuyó a la intercesión de San Pedro Apóstol. (Ilustración por Raul Berszta)

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inspirador”, dijo Hernández, quien con alabanzas sirve en diferentes parroquias de la Diócesis durante Horas Santas, charlas y retiros. “La espiritualidad Ignaciana me permitió sentir a Dios con plenitud”, dijo y explicó que aprendió de San Ignacio a “buscar a Dios en todo”.

Hernández reconoce que para la comunidad hispana un retiro en silencio puede ser “retador”, pero se alegra de que “cada vez más se ve una mayor participación de los hispanos en estos

retiros”.

Los Centros de Retiro Jesuitas, como la Casa de Montserrat, existen gracias a las enseñanzas de San Ignacio de Loyola, destaca el Padre Tony Rauschuber, SJ, Director de la Casa de Retiro Jesuita de Montserrat. Los ejercicios espirituales que San Ignacio escribió en la cueva de Manresa, España, son los que se enseñan y se utilizan en los retiros para crear “un tiempo de oración, Eucaristía y silencio con Dios”. La duración de los retiros varía desde tres hasta 30 días. En los Estados Unidos hay más de 25 casas de

retiro jesuitas, y la de Lake Dallas, en los límites de la Diócesis de Fort Worth, es la única en Texas, lugar en que se imparten anualmente cuatro retiros en español al año.

“San Ignacio de Loyola fue persona de oración y es el fundador de los Jesuitas, que es la orden religiosa más grande del mundo en la actualidad”, explica el Padre Rauschuber.

Paola Quintero-Araújo, Directora del Instituto Junípero Serra, señaló que lo mejor que podemos desear no es el éxito profesional ni la gloria de este mundo, sino la gloria de la vida eterna, “porque una vez ganemos el cielo, todo lo demás es pasajero”, apuntó inspirada en su devoción a San Ignacio de Loyola.

Tras profundizar en sus enseñanzas, y vivir los ejercicios espirituales de San Ignacio por 30 días, Quintero-Araújo aplica y valora diariamente el examen Ignaciano, que es “hacer consciencia de la presencia de Dios durante el día para identificar las oportunidades que se perdieron de verle, ofrecerle las dificultades que lo impidieron y para ser mejor al siguiente día”, explicó Quintero-Araújo.

San Ignacio “nos enseña que todo lo debemos hacer es para la mayor gloria de Dios. Hay que reconocer “la presencia de Dios en tu vida y entregar tu vida a Él”, describió Quintero-Araújo, egresada de la Pontificia Universidad Javeriana de Bogotá, Colombia, que es una Universidad Jesuita.

Al ser contemporáneos, “importantes conexiones” existieron entre San Ignacio de Loyola, San Francisco Javier, San Felipe Neri y Santa Teresa de Ávila, apuntó el Padre Joe Tetlow, S.J., que está también en la Casa de Montserrat.

San Francisco Javier, que perteneció a “La Compañía de Jesús” (como también se conoce a la Orden de los Jesuitas) escribió un gran número de cartas que envió a San Ignacio durante sus largas



Como mística, Santa Teresa de Ávila tuvo numerosas visiones y experiencias sobrenaturales, varias de las cuales incluyeron a Jesús mismo. (Ilustración por Raul Berszoa)

misiones a Portugal, India, Marruecos y Japón. Estas cartas fueron copiadas por los Jesuitas y leídas a sus alumnos, y contribuyeron a ‘encender’ cientos de personas para mantenerse dentro de la Iglesia Católica y a cientos más que se sumaron a la Orden de los Jesuitas. Estas cartas tienen ‘una valiosa influencia’, declaró el Padre Tetlow.

San Francisco Javier enseñó en sus misiones que mostramos que Jesucristo es Nuestro Señor por la forma en que vivimos y que esperamos la vida eterna. Esto es algo que “cada uno de nosotros tenemos que reconocer en nuestros días”, aseveró el Padre Tetlow sobre el ejemplo del “Patrono de las Misiones”.

San Felipe Neri nació en Italia y fundó la Congregación del Oratorio. Sin embargo, según el Padre Tetlow, él intentó ser Jesuita, pero San Ignacio

observó que él podía crear su propia orden sacerdotal y así se lo recomendó. San Felipe Neri, “lo hizo y se convirtió en santo”, añadió.

Por su parte Santa Teresa de Ávila estuvo muy agradecida porque dos jóvenes sacerdotes Jesuitas le ayudaron a aprender de las Escrituras, explicó el Padre Tetlow.

Santa Teresa de Ávila, “fue una mujer emprendedora, con firme disposición, muy diplomática y devota de San José y de Nuestra Señora. Amó a la Iglesia hasta el extremo y quería siempre lo mejor para la Santa Madre Iglesia”, apuntó Juan Rendón, el Director de Formación Diaconal de la Diócesis de Fort Worth.

Rendón conoce bien “el carisma de oración” de Santa Teresa de Jesús, como también se le conoce, pues desde hace seis años es miembro de los Carmelitas

Descalzos Seglares y vive “la vida Carmelita Descalza”.

Santa Teresa reformó la Orden de Carmelitas Descalzas, no sólo para las monjas y los frailes, sino también para los seglares comprometidos con la misión evangelizadora de la Iglesia.

“La ‘santa andariega’ no paró de evangelizar mediante la fundación de conventos,” agregó Rendón, pues “añoraba el lugar de contemplación que reflejara esa vida del Monte Carmelo, de montaña, del desierto y de sencillez”, y reformó el Carmelo y le cambió el nombre a las “Carmelitas Descalzas”. Santa Teresa veía los conventos como “oasis de oración...para consagrar al mundo a través de la oración”. El Monasterio de las Carmelitas Descalzas fue establecido en la Diócesis de Fort Worth en el 1958. Está ubicado en Arlington desde el 1984.

Rendón la describe como “Maestra de oración” y apunta que Santa Teresa nos invita a encontrar “el balance entre la oración, la contemplación y la acción”.

“Hasta en los quehaceres anda el Señor, y ahí quiere que uno trabaje,” dijo al hacer eco de las enseñanzas de Santa Teresa. “Ella nos enseña a reconocer la sagradísima humanidad de Nuestro Señor para valorar su sacrificio y amor”, Rendón añadió.

El Papa San Pablo VI la proclamó Doctora de la Iglesia en el 1970. Santa Teresa de Jesús fue la primera mujer en recibir este título.

San Isidro Labrador, patrono de Madrid y de los agricultores, es el único de estos cuatro santos canonizados que era laico y fue nombrado santo casi 500 años después de su muerte. San Isidro labró la tierra durante toda su vida y puso primero a Dios en su vida siempre. Alcanzó la santidad por su gran entrega, confianza y profunda fe en Dios. 🙏

BAJO LA luz de Cristo

Antonio y Nora Fonseca iluminan con su servicio una vibrante cultura de mayordomía en la Parroquia Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe

Por Violeta Rocha

Cuando Nora Fonseca recibió hace un par de semanas una carta de la diócesis pensó de inmediato, “vamos a ver qué nos dice nuestro señor Obispo” y añade que no imaginó que la misma se trataría del reconocimiento de Luz de Cristo para resaltar el compromiso de ella y de su esposo en la vivencia de la corresponsabilidad católica.

Nora y Antonio Fonseca son feligreses de la Parroquia de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe de Fort Worth desde el 2000 y servidores desde hace 16 años.

El matrimonio Fonseca sirve cada domingo en la Misa de la 1:30 p.m. como acomodadores y son parte del grupo de familias Ángeles de Esperanza, que ayuda a recaudar fondos para niños con cáncer que son atendidos en el Hospital St. Jude. Además, participan en el Ministerio de Adoración Nocturna desde que se formó en su parroquia hace cuatro años.

“Los dos nos quedamos muy sorprendidos. Sin palabras, simplemente agradecidos”, señala Nora. “Nunca hacemos nada en busca de reconocimiento, todo lo hacemos

por amor a Cristo que nos ha dado tantas bendiciones. Por eso, saber que pensaron en nosotros es algo muy bonito y especial”, agregó.

La Diócesis de Fort Worth introdujo este año los premios Luz de Cristo para reconocer a individuos laicos que viven los cuatro pilares de la corresponsabilidad: la oración, la hospitalidad, la formación y el servicio. Los sacerdotes de la Diócesis fueron invitados a nominar a un individuo o una pareja de cada parroquia.

Antonio Fonseca apunta que el saber que fueron nominados por su párroco, el Padre Luis Gerardo Arraiza, los llena de gratitud por “fijarse en nosotros”, y agregó que el Fray Capuchino inspira a toda la comunidad “a seguir sirviendo, a ser líderes no sólo en nuestra parroquia, sino también afuera, principalmente en nuestro

hogar”.

Nora y Antonio, que cumplirán en agosto sus 25 años de casados, llegan cada domingo a su parroquia con el claro propósito de “que la gente se sienta

bienvenida, se sienta en casa y, al mismo tiempo, para ayudar en las necesidades de nuestra parroquia”, aseveró Nora.

Ellos recuerdan sus primeros años en la parroquia cuando llegaban de la mano de sus dos pequeñas hijas para aprender “la fe que muchos otros nos transmitieron y que ahora nosotros seguimos cultivando día tras día para fortalecerla en nosotros mismos y en nuestra Iglesia, que es

nuestra comunidad parroquial”. El matrimonio Fonseca inició ‘su camino de servicio’ en el ministerio de Encuentro Matrimonial y durante un tiempo ella fue lectora de la Palabra.

APRENDA MÁS

Para la cobertura de los premios Luz de Cristo el 25 de junio y una lista de todos los homenajeados, visite NorthTexasCatholic.org/local-news.





Nora y Antonio Fonseca, feligreses de la parroquia Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe, en Fort Worth. (NTC/Kevin Bartram)

“Muchas bendiciones de Nuestro Señor nos han llegado juntas de un mes para acá”, resaltó Antonio. El nacimiento de su primera nieta, la notificación de su estatus migratorio y el anuncio del premio Luz de Cristo.

“Gracias a Dios, nos pudimos hacer residentes de este país. La residencia nos llegó el mismo día que nació nuestra nieta”, exclamó con regocijo y agregó que tras emigrar hace 29 años de su natal Guanajuato, “voy a poder ver a mis hermanas, que no las he visto en todos

estos años”.

“Nuestra fe es lo que nos mueve, es lo que nos lleva a seguir adelante”, asevera Nora Fonseca, quien junto a su esposo e hijas nunca encontró obstáculos para compartir su tiempo, trabajo y fe con los demás. “El Señor nos dejó el Jueves Santo la Eucaristía y el servicio”, dijo y apuntó con alegría que su hija Ariana, de 18 años, ha seguido sus pasos en el ministerio de hospitalidad, mientras que su hija mayor Valeria, de 24 años, de pequeña fue monaguillo y ha sido catequista hasta

hace poco que nació su bebé.

Nora, que es originaria de Tamaulipas, México, asegura que al ellos recibir el premio “Luz de Cristo”, será como si se lo entregaran a toda la comunidad parroquial. “A través de nosotros este premio va a toda nuestra comunidad porque nuestra comunidad tiene mucha gente que es ‘luz en el camino’, tanto los servidores como los parroquianos que llegan cada domingo”, enfatizó, “con este premio ellos son también reconocidos”.

Wendy Collins, la Directora de Corresponsabilidad y Relaciones Parroquiales para la Fundación de Avance, dijo que el fin del reconocimiento Luz de Cristo es “traer conciencia sobre los discípulos que se encaminan en una forma de vida de corresponsabilidad”.

Los homenajeados y sus párrocos están invitados a participar de la ceremonia de premiación el 25 de junio, donde el Obispo Michael Olson les entregará un recordatorio como señal de apreciación por su corresponsabilidad.

Otros eventos diocesanos que fomentan la corresponsabilidad incluyen el Día Diocesano de Corresponsabilidad, que se lleva a cabo en la primavera y el Domingo de Corresponsabilidad, que se celebra el 16 de octubre en todas las parroquias. “Se trata de un enfoque consciente de la corresponsabilidad que acrecienta el agradecimiento por los dones recibidos de Dios y lleva los discípulos más cerca a Cristo”, agregó Collins.

“Nuestra fe es lo que nos mueve y es lo que nos lleva a seguir adelante”, dijo Nora. Recalcó que la fe es un don de Dios y que es, a través del servicio, que se cultiva y crece.

“Seguiremos sirviendo con la esperanza de que el Señor nos siga indicando el camino como nos lo ha indicado hasta ahora”, aseguró el matrimonio Fonseca sobre su vivencia de la corresponsabilidad. 🇺🇸

UN EJERCICIO DE escucha

En la reunión presinodal diocesana se sintetizan los resultados de las sesiones de escucha parroquial

Por Joan Kurkowski-Gillen

Ricardo Romero llegó muy entusiasmado el 7 de mayo a la reunión Presinodal Diocesana en la Catedral de San Patricio para representar a su parroquia y deseoso de conocer el resultado de las 12 sesiones de escucha celebradas en la Diócesis durante la primavera como antesala de la asamblea de los obispos que se celebrará en el 2023 en la ciudad de Roma y que ha sido denominada el Sínodo sobre la Sinodalidad.

Los hallazgos de esta primera fase del proceso sinodal brindan a los obispos los comentarios y opiniones de un sector diverso de católicos que comprende a los feligreses y los sacerdotes en un espíritu de colaboración y apertura. El Sínodo, que fue anunciado por el Papa Francisco en octubre del 2021, invita a los católicos de todo el mundo a participar, ya que la Iglesia espera aprender qué procesos pueden ayudarla a la vivencia de la comunión, lograr una mayor participación de los fieles y abrirse a la misión.

“Estoy emocionado de contribuir de alguna forma”, dijo Romero, que es ministro de la Eucaristía de la Parroquia de San Francisco de Asís de Grapevine. “Espero que lo que hagamos aquí ayude al Santo Padre a comprender las necesidades actuales que tenemos y lo que la Iglesia ‘puede hacer en el futuro’”.

Romero fue uno de los 130 delegados de las comunidades de fe de la Diócesis que escucharon atentamente los comentarios de las discusiones parroquiales y que luego participaron en grupos pequeños para discernir juntos sobre las realidades emergentes de la fe

y cómo el Espíritu Santo está invitando a la Iglesia a avanzar.

Ricardo se sentó en una mesa de voluntarios hispanohablantes y colaboró para brindar una perspectiva latina a la conversación sinodal.

“Queremos tener más ministerios y eventos que apoyen a la comunidad hispana para que se sientan parte de la Iglesia”, agregó.

Luego de celebrar una Misa, el Reverendísimo Obispo Michael Olson dio la bienvenida a los delegados en la reunión Presinodal Diocesana y expresó que estaba muy agradecido de que el proceso enfatizará la escucha.

“Tenemos que decir la verdad y tenemos que hablarla con amabilidad, paciencia y claridad”, señaló. “Vociferar no es la forma que nos hará avanzar y ciertamente no es lo que el Señor nos pide”.

El Obispo Olson es testigo de cómo la Iglesia local sigue creciendo y se evangeliza mientras viaja por toda la Diócesis para administrar el Sacramento de la Confirmación.

“Veo que la Iglesia se unifica mediante los dones que imparte el Espíritu Santo, y en esa unidad puedo ver la diversidad del pueblo de Dios”, agregó. “Debido a la diversidad entre nosotros, podemos escuchar a las personas y compartir el Evangelio con mayor claridad”.

La información que se obtenga de la reunión diocesana es muy esencial para la misión de la Iglesia universal, así como para la Diócesis de Fort Worth, enfatizó el Obispo Olson.

“Al tener una mayor conciencia de la presencia de Cristo entre nosotros, como



Toni Gallegos, de la Comunidad Católica Universitaria de la la Universidad de Texas de Arlington, comparte su pensamiento con otros representantes parroquiales durante la fase diocesana del proceso sinodal. (NTC/Juan Guajardo)

vasijas de barro podremos cumplir el ministerio que Él nos ha encomendado a todos nosotros, Su Iglesia”, aseguró el Obispo a los delegados.

Se va a redactar un documento sintetizado de 10 páginas a partir de la reunión Presinodal, que reflejará la diversidad de puntos de vista y opiniones en la Diócesis. Tal documento se presentará a la Conferencia de Obispos Católicos de los Estados Unidos. Esto concluye la fase diocesana del proceso sinodal que fue coordinado por el Padre Jonathan Wallis, Vicario General, y Paola Quintero-Araújo, Directora del Instituto San Junípero Serra.

“Nuestra tarea hoy es asegurarnos de que los principales temas que el Espíritu Santo suscitara en nosotros durante las sesiones de escucha lleguen al documento final”, dijo el Padre Wallis, al explicar el objetivo de la reunión. “Estamos buscando los puntos que tenemos en común para asegurarnos de que se escuchen los asuntos importantes y que la Diócesis esté bien representada en nuestro documento”.

Las 3,311 personas que asistieron a las sesiones de escucha en los 28 condados

de la Diócesis procedían de las parroquias rurales y urbanas, cuatro grupos ministeriales universitarios, la comunidad sorda y algunos residentes jubilados de St. Francis Village. Se recibieron también 41 respuestas a través de una encuesta realizada entre los feligreses que no pudieron asistir a ninguna de las sesiones de escucha. Es importante resaltar que una amplia gama de personas de diferentes edades estuvo representada en este proceso.

“Ésta es nuestra oportunidad de obtener una vista panorámica de toda la Diócesis y de los grandes dones y riquezas que el Espíritu Santo nos ha dado”, añadió el Padre Wallis.

Uno de los temas predominantes que surgieron del proceso consultivo diocesano fue la necesidad que existe de que las personas se sientan conectadas con la Iglesia y entre sí.

“Creo que hay un anhelo real y común de que las personas que se alejaron de la parroquia debido al COVID regresen a la parroquia”, observó el Vicario General. “Se extraña su presencia”.

Después de recordar a la audiencia que el tema del Sínodo sobre la

Sinodalidad es la comunión, la participación y la misión, Quintero-Araújo explicó por qué cada sesión de escucha en la Diócesis comenzó con una Misa o Adoración al Santísimo Sacramento.

“Bajo la dirección del Obispo, queríamos que fuera un proceso espiritual”, afirmó Quintero-Araújo. “Tenemos que escuchar primero y ante todo a Dios para ver lo que nos está diciendo. Sólo así podemos estar abiertos a escuchar la misma voz en nuestros hermanos y hermanas”.

La mayoría de las personas que participaron en las sesiones de escucha eran de origen caucásico o hispanos, además de una gran representación proveniente de las comunidades asiática y afroamericana. Se contó con la participación de algunos habitantes de las islas del Pacífico, Alaska y nativos americanos. La mayoría de los participantes estaban involucrados en los ministerios, grupos o liderazgo de las parroquias.

“Las estadísticas reflejaron la realidad demográfica de la Diócesis”, explicó

CONTINÚA EN LA PÁGINA 66

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 ha escuchado de alguien sobre 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



Ricardo Romero, de la Parroquia San Francisco de Asís en Grapevine, comparte con otros representantes durante las discusiones en grupos pequeños como parte de la fase diocesana del proceso sinodal. (NTC/Juan Guajardo)



Mónica Segura comparte sus pensamientos con otros representantes de la parroquia durante la reunión presinodal. (NTC/Juan Guajardo)

DE LA PÁGINA 65

Quintero-Araújo, señalando que los organizadores agruparon las respuestas de las sesiones parroquiales de escucha en tres categorías: espiritual, servicio y compañerismo.

“En primer lugar, la gente siente que la forma en que caminamos y viajamos juntos en nuestra Diócesis es a través de la Eucaristía”, dijo Paola a la audiencia. “Es el sacramento de la unidad en torno al cual se reúnen todas las razas, culturas, lenguas y edades”.

Antes de comenzar las discusiones en grupos pequeños, Quintero-Araújo pidió a los delegados que se concentraran en los pasos y caminos que el Espíritu Santo le pide a la Iglesia que tome.

Nanya Young viajó dos horas desde De Leon, Texas, para compartir las experiencias de su parroquia rural con el proceso sinodal.

“Tengo curiosidad de ver cómo otras personas interpretan lo que hablamos en las sesiones de escucha”, dijo la feligrés de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe. “En

mi parroquia discutimos formas en que nuestra parroquia podría crecer, servir a más personas y convertirnos en mejores discípulos”.

Cómo mantener a las generaciones más jóvenes interesadas en la fe y en la Iglesia es una preocupación que espera se aborde en el Sínodo.

“Los padres no están inculcando la religión en la vida de sus hijos como solían hacerlo”, afirmó. “Tenemos que hacer un esfuerzo por mantener a nuestra juventud en la Iglesia”.

Después de participar en la sesión de escucha de su parroquia, Pedro Moreno espera que el proceso sinodal inspire en todos nosotros un nuevo despertar de la fe.

“La gente tiene hambre de formación y de la oportunidad de estar juntos. El Espíritu Santo nos está diciendo que saciemos esa hambre con Jesucristo”, dijo el feligrés de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe de Fort Worth. “Cuando estudias la fe, encuentras a Jesús. Cuando sales a hacer misión, compartes a Jesús. La Iglesia es la presencia de Jesús en el mundo”. 🇺🇸

UNA VISITA DESDE EL cielo

Los fieles locales podrán venerar las reliquias de Santa Bernardita en julio

Por Jerry Circelli

La Parroquia de Nuestra Señora de Lourdes de Mineral Wells y la Parroquia de San Francisco de Asís de Graford se encuentran entre los 42 lugares de los Estados Unidos en los que los fieles podrán venerar las reliquias de St. Bernadette Soubirous (Santa Bernardita) durante un recorrido especial que se originó recientemente en Lourdes, Francia.

Las reliquias se exhibirán del 20 al 22 de julio en la Parroquia de Nuestra Señora de Lourdes, ubicada en 108 NW 4th Ave., en Minerals Wells. Las reliquias llegarán el 22 de julio a la Parroquia de San Francisco, ubicada en 14965 N. State Highway 16, en Graford.

Ésta será la primera vez que las reliquias viajarán a los Estados Unidos desde el Santuario de Nuestra Señora de Lourdes en el sur de Francia. Las reliquias de Santa Bernadette normalmente se guardan en un relicario en el santuario, que atrae a más de seis millones de personas al año.

El Padre Thomas D'Souza, SAC, párroco de Nuestra Señora de Lourdes de Mineral Wells y de San Francisco de Asís de Graford, dijo que se sorprendió cuando recibió una llamada de uno de los organizadores de la gira preguntándole si estaba interesado en recibir las reliquias de Santa Bernardita en sus parroquias.

“Les dije: ‘Ciertamente, estoy interesado’”, el Padre D'Souza nos relató y recordó además que se puso en contacto

con el obispo de la Diócesis de Fort Worth, el Reverendísimo Michael Olson, quien también expresó con certeza estar a favor de traer las reliquias a esta área.

“Es un gran privilegio para nosotros albergar estas reliquias”, afirmó el Padre D'Souza. “Las reliquias de Santa Bernardita nos traerán un gran amor espiritual por Jesús y María. La gente se conmoverá mucho en presencia de las reliquias”.

El sacerdote expresó que durante este proceso los fieles se llevarán un buen recuerdo de su participación durante la veneración de las reliquias e incluso podrían experimentar en sus propias vidas milagros de fe.

“Creo que toda esta experiencia fortalecerá la fe de las personas que aprenden la historia de Santa Bernardita”, el Padre D'Souza dijo, “y cómo ella, que era una niña pobre, experimentó estas apariciones de la Santísima Madre una y otra vez”.

En el transcurso de varios meses a partir del 1858, la Santísima Virgen María se apareció 18 veces a Bernardita, que tenía sólo 14 años, en la Gruta de Massabielle en el mismo lugar en que se halla el santuario actual. En sus mensajes la Santísima Madre pedía a los fieles que hicieran penitencia

y oraciones por la conversión de los pecadores.

Nuestra Señora le pidió a la campesina en una de las visitas que cavara en la tierra, y que bebiera y se lavara en el agua que brotaría. Los espectadores vieron a Bernardita cavando frenéticamente, comiendo tierra y, finalmente, bebiendo agua con fango.

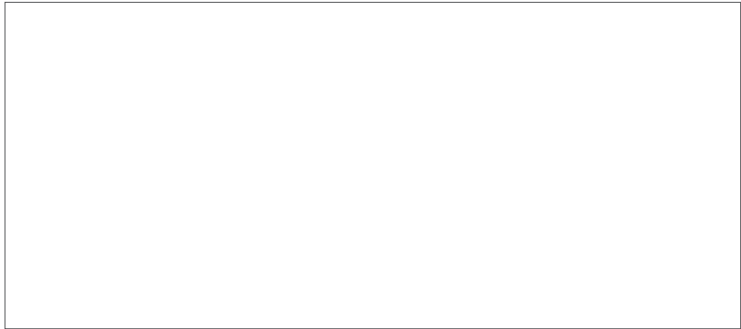
Sin embargo, de momento empezó a brotar agua clara de manantial. Desde entonces, millones de personas se han bañado en las aguas curativas de Lourdes y han ocurrido varios miles de recuperaciones y sanaciones milagrosas atribuidas a la intercesión de Nuestra Señora de Lourdes en ese lugar. De todas éstos, setenta casos han sido reconocidos oficialmente por la Iglesia Católica; el más reciente ocurrió en el 2013.

Las personas que viven en el norte de Texas tendrán pronto la oportunidad de experimentar la misma agua curativa de Lourdes y sin tener que hacer un peregrinaje de 5,000 millas a Francia.

Por primera vez en los Estados Unidos, los católicos locales podrán: Beber y lavarse en el agua de la gruta de Massabielle, participar en una procesión mariana a la luz de las velas, acompañada de las reliquias de Santa Bernardita, y venerar las reliquias de una de las santas más amadas del mundo.

Para el horario completo por favor visite [Bit.ly/Bernadette2022](https://bit.ly/Bernadette2022). 🇺🇸





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