

BRINGING THE GOOD NEWS TO THE DIOCESE OF FORT WORTH



NORTH TEXAS CATHOLIC



helping
them **both**

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A CALL TO *Gratitude*



“As each one has received a gift, use it to serve one another as good stewards of God’s varied grace.”

-1 Peter 4:10



Catholic Diocese of Fort Worth Advancement Foundation 201 Main St., Ste. 1198, Fort Worth TX 76102-3105, bit.ly/ADADonate (case sensitive), 817-533-3174



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ALL FOR LIFE

With the demise of *Roe v. Wade*, pro-life apostolates prepare to assist even more families in need.

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A NOTICE TO OUR FAITHFUL READERS

This year we have experienced disruptions in the supply of our customary magazine paper.

To get the Good News of the Diocese of Fort Worth to you in a timely fashion, we have substituted paper.

We plan to return to our usual paper when available.



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Jesus is hungry

Mother Teresa recalls in *The Joy in Living* how she once met a very hungry, very dirty young boy in the slums of Calcutta. She brought him to the mother house, where he was fed, cleaned, and looked after. It so happened that this boy disappeared the next day. Shortly after, a fellow sister found him in the streets and brought him in. Yet again, he vanished.

After this happened a third time, Mother Teresa asked one of her Missionaries of Charity to follow the child to see where he went. The sisters found him under a tree, sitting beside a woman (his mother), who looked just as malnourished and neglected as he. “She was cooking something she had picked up out of the dustbin,” Mother Teresa recalls. The sisters asked the boy why he kept running away. He looked at his mother and then at the sisters and said, “This is my home because this is where my mother is.”

Come what may, the child understood that even though his mom could scarcely provide for him, she was his *family*, and where she was, there home was too. More than a tender story, however, this encounter is a call to action as similar experiences unfold here in the U.S. — albeit not to the extremes seen in developing countries.

My wife has seen it firsthand as a former staff member of a local Catholic-led crisis pregnancy center. With regularity, young women would come seeking help after finding out they were pregnant. At times, the fathers and family members provided little or no support, leaving these young moms to fend for themselves. Like the mother in the story above, they struggled to provide for themselves, much less for their children. But they recognized that they were carrying a human life within them and they were going to do everything they could to provide a good home for that child.

As Catholics, we’re called to act when Jesus is hungry, thirsty, naked, sick, and in prison. That’s an obligatory part of the Gospels. Currently, we have a major opportunity to tend to Jesus in our neighbors, specifically families in crisis pregnancies. Circumstances are rife for us to “find our own Calcutta,” as Mother Teresa once said. Rising inflation and the long-awaited overturning of *Roe v. Wade* mean an increase in clients at many of our local pro-life pregnancy centers, which in turn means those apostolates are struggling to keep up with needs.


This issue’s centerpiece (40-49) is proof of that. Those same pages also speak of the many “ordinary” people who dare to make an effort to tend to Jesus. May they inspire us to do the same.

Juan Guajardo
 EDITOR



Seminarian Joseph Hoffschwelle at a Shepherd's Guild event. (NTC/Jayme Donahue)

Future shepherd support

 St. John Paul II Shepherd's Guild backs seminarians with finances, prayers

FORT WORTH — Priestly ordinations remain robust in the Diocese of Fort Worth, Advancement Foundation Executive Director Clint Weber said, and the St. John Paul II Shepherd's Guild has been integral to providing financial and prayerful support for seminarians.

“Since [Bishop Michael Olson’s] ordination as bishop of Fort Worth, more than 19 men have been ordained as priests of the diocese, including six last year,” Weber said. “That’s the largest group of men ordained at one time in the 53-year history of the diocese.”

A July 30 Mass at St. Patrick Cathedral followed by breakfast provided Guild members the opportunity to visit with and celebrate

26 seminarians before their return to fall studies at seminary.

“These are good men born and nurtured of families here in the Diocese of Fort Worth,” Bishop Olson said. “That in itself is significant. That every one of them is from a different part of the diocese seems to indicate to me a healthiness of the local Church.”

Originally called the Bishop’s Guild, the first intention was to provide financial support for seminarians who face years of expensive education on their journeys to priesthood.

The Guild also stresses the importance of prayer for seminarians and serves as ambassadors for vocations in the diocese.

— Matthew Smith

CLERGY ASSIGNMENTS

BY MOST REV. MICHAEL OLSON

REV. ALPHONSUS BA VAN DO, CRM
From Parochial Vicar of Vietnamese Martyrs Parish in Arlington, **recalled** by his religious order, effective June 20.

REV. STANLEY HOLLAND, TOR
New to the Diocese of Fort Worth, has been appointed **Parochial Vicar** at St. Maria Goretti Parish in Arlington, effective August 1.

REV. VICTOR MANUEL CONTRERAS JUAREZ, CORC
From Parochial Vicar at Holy Name of Jesus Parish in Fort Worth to **Parochial Vicar** at St. Matthew Parish in Arlington, effective August 8.

REV. MAURICE MOON
To **Director of Collegian Seminarian Formation** without prejudice to his current assignment as Chaplain of Nolan Catholic High School, effective March 1.

REV. JAMES MORMAN, TOR
From Parochial Vicar of St. Maria Goretti Parish in Arlington, **recalled** by his religious order, effective August 1.

REV. AUGUSTINE AN HONG PHAM, CRM
New to the Diocese of Fort Worth, has been appointed **Parochial Vicar** at Vietnamese Martyrs Parish in Arlington, effective July 1.

VERY REV. JONATHAN WALLIS, STL
From Director of Seminarian Formation, to **Director of Theologian Seminarian Formation** without prejudice to his current assignment as Vicar General and Director of Campus Ministry at the TCU Newman Center, effective March 1.

DEACON STEVE DIXON
From St. Stephen Parish in Weatherford, to Holy Redeemer Parish in Aledo, effective August 10.

DEACON MARTIN GARCIA
From All Saints Parish in Fort Worth, to Holy Trinity Parish in Azle, effective August 10.

DEACON BILL JOHNSON
From St. Joseph Parish in Arlington, to St. Francis of Assisi Parish in Grapevine, effective August 10.

MR. RODRIGO SERRANO
From leave of absence, to dismissed from the clerical state, effective August 17.

Views from the Pews

All around the Diocese of Fort Worth, *North Texas Catholic* photographers caught local faithful basking in the summer Sun. These and more photo galleries can be found at North-Texas-Catholic.smugmug.com.

Corpus Christi. Hosted by Immaculate Conception Parish, St. John Paul II Parish, and Loreto House, a Corpus Christi procession in Denton on June 16 gave faithful the opportunity to worship and witness to the real presence of Christ in the Holy Eucharist.

Quo Vadis. On August 1, high school boys spent a day with seminarians and priests to begin considering their vocation. The annual retreat, held at Montserrat Jesuit Retreat House, includes time for Mass, prayer, games, and casual conversations.

Forever Love. A marriage conference attended by more than 100 Spanish-speaking couples on June 25 was so well received that they won't call it quits! As a result, the Hispanic Ministry department is hosting monthly marriage workshops from August to October.

VIEW THE PHOTOS



Find photo galleries of people and events in the Diocese of Fort Worth.



NTC/Kevin Bartram



NTC/Juan Guajardo



NTC/Ben Torres



See the photos online at: North-Texas-Catholic.smugmug.com

A gift that saves lives

 Diocese shows generosity through blood donations

FORT WORTH — Through blood drives with Carter BloodCare, Catholics in the Diocese of Fort Worth have contributed significantly toward the nonstop need for available blood supply in local communities.

Over the course of 2021, North Texas Catholics donated about 1,745 pints of blood, according to Carter BloodCare. The number does not include the number of Catholics who donated blood independently.

That number is especially impressive when factoring in that each pint can save up to three lives.

Father Luis Gerardo Arraiza, OFM Cap., pastor at Our Lady of Guadalupe Church in Fort Worth, has personally donated more than 130 gallons of platelets — or 1,040 pints — through Carter BloodCare.

“When I was growing up in the Basque Country of Spain, [giving blood] was part of the culture,” he said. When he immigrated to America, he continued to regularly give blood.

Fr. Arraiza shared this practice with his church community in Fort Worth. Not only does he host four blood drives a year at his parish, but he undergoes a one-to-two-hour process of donating platelets every other week.

“Catholic churches are really good about hosting blood drives,” said Colleen Horan, a sales consultant at Carter BloodCare and St. Elizabeth Ann Seton parishioner. “They get it.”

— Michelle McDaniel

Courtesy photo/Carter Blood Care



Yvette Garza and Deacon David Garza at Lost Paws Rescue. (NTC/Juan Guajardo)

Life in the dog house

 Parishioner's love for animals comes to the rescue

CELINA — As a young girl, Yvette Garza never found a stray she didn't bring home. But a love for all God's creatures, great and small, created an obstacle for her family.

“My parents were always afraid to open the door to my bedroom because they never knew what they would find,” admitted the founder of Lost Paws Rescue of Texas. “I remember hearing, ‘Yvette, we can't keep a possum in the house!’”

Decades later, the St. Thomas Aquinas parishioner is still rescuing animals, albeit on a larger, more organized scale. After working with other rescue groups, Garza opened a 501(c)(3) charity in 2005 to give abandoned dogs and cats a second chance at finding a forever family. Preventing animal suffering and cruelty, as well as promoting responsible pet ownership, is also part of the nonprofit's

mission.

“God puts us on this earth for a purpose. My purpose is rescuing animals,” explained the organization's CEO, who estimates Lost Paws Rescue of Texas — based in Celina — has saved more than 10,000 dogs and cats over the years. “I view what I do as a ministry.”

Housing 60 dogs — separated by size in different buildings — and a new puppy barn for mothers and their newborns, requires time, money, and a team of dedicated volunteers.

The founder's parents, Annette and David Garza, are two of the rescue's most ardent supporters. David Garza, a retired Catholic deacon, still helps out at St. Thomas Aquinas

Parish in Pilot Point when he's not transporting animals from Amarillo or Abilene.

— Joan Kurkowski-Gillen



Sacred Heart breaks ground

COMANCHE — Imagine if half the congregation at Sunday Mass watched the sacred liturgy through a window.

On any given Sunday at Sacred Heart Parish in Comanche, about 120 parishioners squeeze into the nave, the main seating area of the church, and an overflow crowd gathers in the parish hall, which has a window into the sanctuary and a set of speakers.

The parish, in the southwest reaches of the Diocese of Fort Worth, held a ceremonial groundbreaking on June 18 for a solution to the overflow attendance: a new church that will seat 400 people.

“We will build the building, but Christ will make it His Church,” said Bishop Michael Olson in a short homily before he blessed the site and broke ground along with Father James Amasi, SAC, parochial vicar of the parish; Deacon Tommy Diaz; members of the parish; and diocesan representatives.

Father Matthew Sanka, SAC, pastor, was out of town.

Bishop Olson began the “day of gratitude” by praying for God’s blessing and His protection of the construction workers. He expressed thanks for the lay



Bishop Michael Olson blesses and breaks ground for a new church for Sacred Heart Parish in Comanche June 28. (NTC/Annette Mendoza-Smith)

leadership and priests who have served Sacred Heart, especially Father Philip McNamara, SAC, who served the south deanery of the diocese for 37 years.

“The Lord blesses and consecrates some places as holy spots for His people to gather, and for them to gather as belonging to Him. We belong to the Lord, and by His will we also belong to His Church,” said the prelate.

About 250 people attended the bilingual groundbreaking in temperatures that hovered around the century mark.

“We are continuing to grow. We’ve outgrown the church, and the parish

hall is full,” said Dcn. Diaz, a member of the parish since his childhood and its deacon for 12 years.

The parish, which began as a mission of St. Brendan in Stephenville in 1963, has been fundraising for the new construction for more than 10 years, according to Dcn. Diaz.

Three years ago, the parish purchased the land across the street, which measures more than eight acres and has direct access to Highway 16, which will increase the church’s visibility.

– Susan Moses

Meet new Denton principal

DENTON — As the new principal at Immaculate Conception Catholic School in Denton, Frank Perez is looking forward to building on the school’s foundation of excellence. “The vision for me is to continue the great things that have happened at ICC,” Perez said.

Although his background is in public education, Perez is very familiar with the school at Immaculate Conception Church. He and his wife have been parishioners there since moving to Denton more than a decade ago.

As an educator in Denton ISD — most recently as an assistant principal at Denton High School — Perez made friends with faculty members at ICC, helped with church youth retreats, and taught children’s catechesis.

His parish involvement plus a strong background in classical education and school administration makes Perez a great leader, said Diocesan Superintendent Brinton Smith.

– Sandra Engelland



Frank Perez

Preaching on the presence



Priests to inspire greater appreciation of Eucharist

FORT WORTH — Eucharistic preachers, including two from the Diocese of Fort Worth, are fanning out to dioceses across the country to inspire deeper reflection on the gift of the Eucharist to the Church.

Father Pedro Martinez, pastor of St. Peter the Apostle Parish in Fort Worth, and Father Linh Nguyen, parochial vicar of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish in Keller, were selected from the Diocese of Fort Worth.



Father Pedro Martinez

The Eucharistic preachers respond to invitations from dioceses to speak at clergy convocations, gatherings of diocesan and Catholic school leaders, diocesan holy hours, and youth and young adult events to help build stronger connections with the Eucharist.



Father Linh Nguyen

Fr. Nguyen said being one of 58 Eucharistic preachers is “a good opportunity for me and the faithful to rekindle our fire and love for the Eucharist.”

The last weekend of August, he visited the Diocese of San Angelo and spoke on the Eucharist. With an intentional focus on the Blessed Sacrament, Fr. Nguyen explained, “We can check-in with our thoughts and understanding [of the real presence of Christ], and deepen our relationship with Christ in the Eucharist and our appreciation of Mass.”

The National Eucharistic Preachers are one piece of a three-year initiative under the National Eucharistic Revival being organized by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. Bishops hope the revival will help Catholics encounter the reality of Christ truly present in the Eucharist at every Mass.

It culminates in the National Eucharistic Congress, which will be held July 17-21, 2024, in Indianapolis.

Synod reaches national stage

FORT WORTH — Some activities take a summer break, but preparations for the Synod on Synodality are moving at full speed.

At the end of June, the diocese submitted its Synod synthesis document, which presented the major topics from 121 listening sessions held across the 28-county diocese. It’s available on the diocesan website, fwdioc.org, in English, Spanish, and Vietnamese.

The document includes a summary of the diocesan Synod process, an action plan, and a summary of the major themes that emerged in the listening sessions, which include: the Eucharist as the central point of unity; gratitude for the local clergy and a desire to work toward an increase in priestly vocations; hunger for spiritual activities such as Mass, catechesis, Eucharistic Adoration, and spiritual retreats; and hope for unity, engagement, understanding and help for each other, including those not journeying with us.

After the completion of the diocesan reports, representatives from 19 dioceses and archdioceses in Texas, Oklahoma, and Arkansas met to assess and compile the synod documents under the leadership of the region X bishop’s representative, Bishop Mario Aviles, auxiliary bishop of Brownsville.

Paola Quintero-Araujo, assistant director for diaconate pastoral formation, worked on the regional committee and noted parishioners across the region

expressed similar ideas. She and other representatives wrote a regional report and submitted it to the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops in July.

The USCCB has reviewed synod documents from each of the 15 regions in the U.S., and the national report will soon be complete. The Diocese of Fort Worth will post the national report on its website once approved by the end of September.

Preparations are underway for the continental phase of the synod to take place between December 2022 and February 2023, and a continental synthesis will be written and sent to the Vatican. After receiving reports from the continents, the Vatican will create a working document for the October 2023 meeting of bishops in Rome. The Synod on Synodality is the culmination of Pope Francis’ three-year process of “listening to the questions, concerns, and hopes of every church, people, and nation.”



Check it out at FWDioc.org/synod-synthesis





Catholic schools kick off with Christ

KELLER — Kicking off back-to-school week with a Mass at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Church on Aug. 8, Bishop Michael Olson urged teachers and administrators to “share the truth in love” with students, families, and communities living in a society increasingly hostile to Christ.

About 700 educators attended convocation in preparation for the beginning of the school year.

The bishop urged educators to keep the right focus throughout the school year.

“If we do not begin and end with prayer and gratitude to Christ, we run the risk of ignoring Christ, and we can’t help families confused by the world’s ideology,” he said. “Without Christ Himself, Christianity becomes reduced to just another ideology. If we neglect Christ, we expose students to indifference, ignorance, and hostility to Christ.”

Educators should foster an



Bishop Olson addresses all teachers and staff at the school convocation. (NTC/Kevin Bartram)

environment that shares the truth in love, welcomes all, and gives to those in need, he continued.

Brinton Smith, superintendent of Catholic Schools for the Diocese of Fort Worth, said the bishop’s message was a fitting culmination of the

training principals and new teachers received last month.

Diocesan principals attended a five-day retreat, and new teachers attended a one-day workshop.

— Sandra Engelland



New Nolan principal follows God’s lead



Oscar Ortiz

FORT WORTH — Oscar Ortiz is thrilled to be the new principal at Nolan Catholic High School because he sensed God leading him to move from a secular setting to a faith-based campus.

After working for more than a decade as an educator and administrator in public classical education charter schools, Ortiz is ready to lead the instruction of the “fullness of faith” in Catholic education.

“We’re not focused on preparing students for one part of life. We’re preparing students for union with God. Because of that, we’re able to order and prioritize in line with that end,” Ortiz said.

Born and raised in Honduras, Ortiz came to the U.S. at age 19 and attended the University of Dallas where he earned

a bachelor’s degree in philosophy.

He taught at a classical education charter school in Arizona, and during those years he completed a master’s degree in liberal arts, philosophy, and religious studies from St. John’s College in Maryland.

Then he came to Texas to become an assistant principal at a Great Hearts charter school in San Antonio, later working as a leader in a few other public charter schools.

Diocesan School Superintendent Brinton Smith praised Ortiz for his strong Catholic educational background at UD and St. John’s, his devout faith, and his years of leadership experience.

— Sandra Engelland

BACK TO SCHOOL

From drop-off to the first Mass, NTC photographers caught special moments at diocesan Catholic schools in Fort Worth. Go to North-Texas-Catholic.smugmug.com for more photos.



NTC/Kevin Bartram

First grader Eleanor Rojas Perez
ST. GEORGE CATHOLIC SCHOOL



NTC/Joyne Donahue

Pre-K students make new friends
ST. RITA CATHOLIC SCHOOL



NTC/Juan Guajardo

Students sing at the first school Mass
ST. PETER THE APOSTLE CATHOLIC CLASSICAL SCHOOL



New Athletic Director is on the ball

FORT WORTH — Shannon Irwin is uniquely equipped for her role as athletic director for schools in the Diocese of Fort Worth.

Combining her passion for sports and her love of administration with her faith made the job feel like a perfect fit, Irwin said.

“It’s of lifelong importance for us to realize we’re created by God,” Irwin said.

“Our bodies are our temples, and by being healthy and staying healthy we show reverence for God.”

After serving in a part-time interim role as diocesan athletic director since last fall — along with her duties as A.D. and physical education teacher at St. Andrew Catholic School — Irwin was happy to step into the full-time role this summer. She said, “Sports are a great avenue for kids to learn about themselves.”

— Sandra Engelland



Ave Maria, gratia plena, Dominus tecum

The ordinands lay prostrate as the assembly prays the Litany of the Saints during the ordination Mass Aug. 10, 2022 at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Church in Keller. (NTC/Juan Guajardo)



PREPARED TO serve

Ten men are ordained permanent
deacons for the Diocese of Fort Worth

By Joan Kurkowski-Gillen

Rosalie Tolentino clutched two framed photographs as she waited inside St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Church on Aug. 10 to witness Bishop Michael Olson ordain 10 men to the Sacred Order of the Diaconate. Her husband, Davy Tolentino, was one of them.

During seven years of formation and two prior attempts to complete diaconal training, the Tolentinos lost two young adult children — Franklin and Brittany — to congenital heart disease. Bringing their images to the celebration was important.

“It’s God’s timing and still a joyful occasion because we’re here today,” said Rosalie Tolentino, who came to the evening liturgy with the couple’s surviving child, Michel.

She remembered how her husband would complete theology assignments from their daughter’s hospital room. Brittany, a heart transplant patient, was adamant her father continue his studies.

“As a deacon I think he’ll bring a good listening ear to those who are hurting and experiencing the same

struggles in life,” explained Rosalie Tolentino, a parishioner at Our Lady Queen of Peace in Wichita Falls. “He might serve as an example to future deacons who consider juggling family life, a job, and the diaconate program impossible.”

Ordained along with Davy Paul Tolentino were Dennis Brent Catlin, David Michael Kinch, Francisco Javier Leal de la Fuente, Alfred Matthew Mosco, Mark David Pierson, David Robinett, Francisco Joel Rodriguez, Jesus Valadez Morales, and Sergio Vera Orozco. The sixth class of men ordained to the permanent diaconate in the diocese, they join 95 active deacons currently working in parishes.

Held on the Feast of St. Lawrence, a martyred deacon, the Ordination Mass was concelebrated by Bishop Michael Olson with Father Jonathan Wallis, vicar general; Monsignor E. James Hart, chancellor and moderator of the Curia; Father James Flynn, pastor of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton; and priests from the local Church and other dioceses.

Continued on Page 14



The deacon candidates kneel as Bishop Michael Olson concludes the prayer of ordination during the Aug. 10 liturgy. (NTC/Juan Guajardo)



Jesus Valadez kneels before Bishop Olson during the Laying on of Hands. (NTC/Juan Guajardo)

From Page 13

More than 1,100 guests and clergy attended the celebration which was livestreamed on the diocesan website.

An order that dates back to the early Church, deacons share in the sacramental grace and character of Holy Orders but are ordained to ministry, not to the priesthood. The word deacon is derived from the Greek “diakonia” meaning “service” and underscores the diaconal call to serve others like Christ. Permanent deacons, who are married or unmarried, differ from transitional deacons who are preparing for the priesthood. In a homily that described

the selfless actions and martyrdom of St. Lawrence, the bishop explained the threefold ministry of a deacon: to proclaim the Gospel, assist at the altar, and perform acts of charity.

“Depending on the circumstance, one or another of these may receive particular emphasis in an individual deacon’s work, but these three ministries are inseparably joined together as one in the service of God’s redemptive plan,” he said, quoting Pope St.

John Paul II who spoke to U.S. permanent deacons in 1987.

Proclaiming the Word of God inevitably leads to Eucharistic worship at the altar, which, in

SEE THE PHOTOS



Scan the QR code to view the photos from the Aug. 10 ordination Mass in Keller.



Bishop Olson entrusts Francisco Leal with believing, teaching, and practicing the message of the Gospel. (NTC/Jayme Donahue)

turn, develops a new way of living that expresses love of God and neighbor through charitable acts.

Through diaconal ministry the poor and previously underserved “receive the rich gift of belonging to the family of God,” the bishop added.

The permanent diaconate was restored by Pope St. Paul VI after the Second Vatican Council. Bishop Olson said the late pontiff called the ministry “a driving force” that serves the Church in a fallen world where the poor have no place to belong, and human beings are valued only for their productivity.

“Since the call of the first deacons recorded in the *Acts of the Apostles*, this has been the vocation of deacons, to remind the Church, through intentional service, that the poor have first place of belonging even when they do not fit in.”

Watching how the late Deacon Emilio “Popo” Gonzalez served his fellow people in Denton inspired Francisco Leal to apply for the ministry.

“He was an example to

me of how to be a deacon in the life of a community,” he said, noting that a local preschool, Gonzalez School for Young Children, was named to honor his advocacy for others.

“Popo visited the jails, hospitals, nursing homes and sometimes became involved in political issues,” Leal added.

The new deacon is looking forward to serving at the altar, spreading the message of Jesus, and becoming a link between the priest and the people.

“I want to visit the sick, the imprisoned, and show Jesus’ love to the community,” he explained. “I’m excited to start this new journey — the next step in my life. Popo told me not to worry about what people say but to trust in Jesus and listen to your heart.”

During the ancient Rite of Ordination, each candidate promised to fulfill the responsibilities that come with ministry and pledged obedience to the bishop

Continued on Page 16

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World Mission Day Diocesan Celebration

Oct. 16
10:45 a.m.

Celebrant:
Bishop
Michael
Olson

Scan for more!



St. Stephen Church, 1802 Bethel Road, Weatherford, 76086

From Page 15

and his successors. They then prostrated themselves before the altar — symbolizing their submission to the will of God — as the congregation prayed the intercessory Litany of the Saints.

The moment of ordination took place with the Laying on of Hands — a gesture used by the Apostles when they elected the first deacons. After placing his hands on the head of each candidate to invoke the gifts of the Holy Spirit, Bishop Olson concluded the rite with the Prayer of Consecration.

The new deacons were then dressed in a stole and dalmatic by other clergy. Recently purchased to match the bishop's blue and white chasuble and mitre, the dalmatics will be used for future liturgical celebrations.

Wearing diaconal vestments for the first time, the new deacons knelt before the bishop to receive the Book of the Gospel with the words, "Believe what you read; teach what you believe; and practice what you teach."

Along with assisting at Mass and preaching the homily, a deacon may baptize, witness and bless marriages, and preside at funeral liturgies.

Juan Rendon, director of diaconal formation, said the newest group of permanent deacons began their theological, pastoral, and spiritual training in 2017 and are "faithful to the mission of the Church and faithful to the proclamation of the Good News."

Hailing from diverse parishes, the new deacons are expected to assume a larger role in ministry, especially in the areas of hospital chaplaincy, hospice work, and sacramental preparation. Fifty percent of them are bilingual.

"Some priests have asked for bilingual deacons to help with Baptisms, marriage preparation, and hospital visits," Rendon continued. "They are talented, gifted men. It's been a blessing and an honor to



ABOVE: Deacon David Robinett is embraced by Bishop Michael Olson during the fraternal Kiss of Peace. (NTC/Jayme Donahue)



LEFT: Newly ordained Deacon Davy Tolentino distributes Holy Communion. (NTC/Juan Guajardo)

walk with them from day one."

Formation for the next class of men aspiring to become permanent deacons began Aug. 13.

For David Robinett, the journey to become a permanent deacon began nine-and-a-half years ago in Austin. The Catholic convert was 18 months shy of ordination with the class of 2019 in the Austin Diocese when his employer transferred him to the DFW Metroplex. A year later, the Diocese of Fort Worth accepted him into its diaconate program and four years of candidacy began anew.

The Air Force veteran didn't consider starting the formation process again a setback.

"My desire is to surrender to the Holy Spirit, so there was definitely something I could continue to learn and grow from," he said. "I'm exactly where I need to be. God has put me with some amazing men that have taught me greater lessons in humility and service, and I'm proud to call them my brothers."

Now, Dcn. Robinett is looking forward to ministry as a deacon with "joyful excitement." 🇺🇸

To serve, not be served

Meet the 2022 Class of Deacons for the Catholic
Diocese of Fort Worth



ASSIGNED TO: Our Lady
Queen of Peace, Wichita Falls



ASSIGNED TO: Holy Family,
Fort Worth



ASSIGNED TO: St. Thomas
Aquinas, Pilot Point



ASSIGNED TO: Good
Shepherd, Colleyville



ASSIGNED TO: St. Mary of
the Assumption, Fort Worth



ASSIGNED TO: St. Catherine
of Siena, Carrollton



ASSIGNED TO: St. Jude,
Mansfield



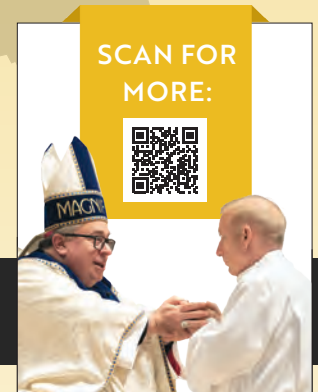
ASSIGNED TO: Our Lady of
Guadalupe, Wichita Falls



ASSIGNED TO: All Saints,
Fort Worth



ASSIGNED TO: St. Matthew,
Arlington



VIEW THE VIDEO

Listen to the vocation stories of two of the newly ordained deacons by visiting NorthTexasCatholic.org and clicking on the "Galleries" tab at the top.

nine sisters ONE TRUE LOVE

Lovers of the Holy Cross of Vinh profess perpetual vows at Vietnamese Martyrs Parish

By Kiki Hayden

In front of Vietnamese Martyrs Parish in Arlington, a larger-than-life stone statue of Our Lady of La Vang welcomes parishioners and visitors. On July 31, there were many people to welcome.

Parishioners and visitors from as far as Vietnam traveled to celebrate the profession of perpetual vows of nine religious sisters from the order of the Lovers of the Holy Cross of Vinh.

Among the newly professed were Sister Anne Vinh Thi Nguyen and Sister Mary Kim Thuan Thi Phan, who both live in the Arlington convent of the Lovers of the Holy Cross. The other seven sisters are studying and working throughout the United States and gathered at the Arlington church for their solemn profession.

The bilingual Mass drew more than 600 parishioners and lay guests as well as several dozen priests and deacons who joined in celebrating the sisters' unity and their individual vocations to the religious life. The reception following Mass featured food, music, and dancing.

As the Mass began, the nine candidates lined up and processed into the

church — with clock-like precision — holding candles as the choir sang the entrance hymn in Vietnamese.

The Mass settings were sung in English, and the hymns and prayers in Vietnamese. The first reading and the Gospel were read in English, and the psalm and second reading in Vietnamese.

In his homily, Bishop Olson compared the call of religious sisters today to the call of Samuel in the first reading. "Jesus has given you the gift of an intimate belonging to Him as His spouse," he said.

After the homily and an examination of readiness, the sisters lay prostrate, faces to the stone tile floor in front of the altar while the congregation prayed the Litany of the Saints for the soon-to-be-professed sisters.

When the moment of profession arrived, the sisters — three by three — approached Sister Maria Nguyen Thi Nga, Superior General, who had traveled from the Vinh Diocese in Vietnam to hear and accept the sisters' vows. They placed their hands in hers, and in unison they read their vows, pausing to allow each of the sisters to say her name in turn. Then each sister placed her formula of vows on

the altar.

After the prayer of consecration, nine rings on a tray in the shape of a pink heart were brought up to Bishop Olson. He presented each sister with a ring and a wooden crucifix. The gifts marked them as members for life of the Lovers of the Holy Cross. In unison, the sisters held up their crucifixes to the altar, then turned to each side of the church. Then the Lovers of the Holy Cross shared hugs and bright smiles with each of the newly consecrated.

Each sister had her own reaction to professing vows. Some smiled serenely, others dabbed tears of joy from their faces.

After Mass, visitors and parishioners were ushered into the parish hall for a reception complete with balloons, decorated tables, a buffet of noodles, shrimp, vegetables, and more. After opening prayers, Father Anthony Minh Vu from St. Athanasius Parish in Louisville, Kentucky hyped up the crowd. "Come close to the stage!" the master of ceremonies cried. "You've never seen anything like this before in your life! Maybe you've seen sisters dancing, but you've never seen these

Continued on Page 20



Nine sisters stand for the Presentation of the Candidates during the Mass of Perpetual Profession of the Lovers of the Holy Cross of Vinh. (NTC/Juan Guajardo)

Bishop Michael Olson places a ring on each sister's finger to remind her of God's everlasting love for her. (NTC/Juan Guajardo)



After verbally professing vows to the Superior General, sisters sign and place their Formula of Vows on the altar. (NTC/Juan Guajardo)

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sisters dancing. They are going to dance from the heart because they love Jesus so much!”

Then the nine newly professed Lovers of the Holy Cross took off their shoes and danced. The skirts of their black habits swirled around them as they spun and swayed. In time with the music, the sisters performed gentle dance steps and choreographed hand motions.

According to Sister Anne Vinh Thi Nguyen, the song, “*Ngai Goi Ten Con*,” was about God’s calling. “God calls our name personally and we respond.” Sister Vinh is currently teaching religion at St. Peter the Apostle Catholic Classical School in Fort Worth.

She pointed out the many parishioners, priests, and religious gathered to celebrate with the sisters that day. “I feel so loved by God,” she said. “God is loving me through the people. There are so many people here today!”

Sister Mary Kim Thuan Thi Phan

MORE PHOTOS!



See photo galleries from the Profession of Vows and other major diocesan events at: North-Texas-Catholic.smugmug.com.



explained that the Lovers of the Holy Cross have two main missions — “to take care of the sick,” which she did while studying as a pharmacist during her postulancy in Vietnam, and educating, which she does now, teaching religion at St. Maria Goretti Catholic School in Arlington.

“I love to teach,” she said, “to help people, especially youth, to empower them to joyfully be disciples of Christ.”

Sr. Thuan Phan greeted a table of Franciscan sisters she used to live with and a table of Dominican sisters, including Sister Theresa Paul Tran, OP, who lives in the Blessed Imelda Convent on the campus of Nolan Catholic High School.

According to Sister Theresa Paul, religious communities often support each other, and the local Dominican order is no stranger to the Lovers of the Holy Cross. “We are friends because we are all religious sisters,” she said.

The reception continued into the evening and included several songs onstage, a violin duet, roses for the nine newly professed sisters, and another dance.

The Lovers of the Holy Cross and Vietnamese Martyrs Parish punctuated the celebration with an invitation to grow closer to Jesus and His blessed mother. As guests left the festivities, they were presented with a gift: a small statue of Mary with her arms open. 🇺🇸

A new church!

The Diocese of Fort Worth establishes St. Teresa of Calcutta Parish in far north Fort Worth

By Susan Moses

“It’s a great problem, to add a parish,” said Deacon Daniel Zavala, appointed coordinator of parish life for the newly announced St. Teresa of Calcutta Parish in far north Fort Worth.

Although he was busy with the logistics of the inaugural Mass on September 4, he praised Bishop Michael Olson for his decision to open the 92nd parish of the Diocese of Fort Worth in the rapidly growing area.

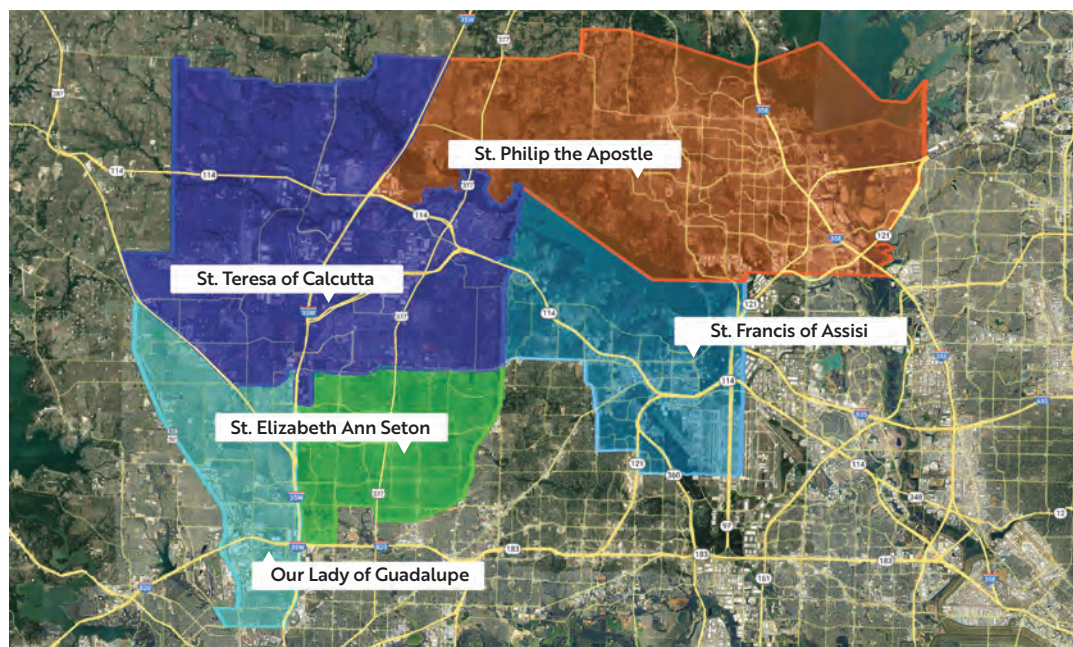
“I’m proud of Bishop for doing what we need to do and putting the need for Mass and the Eucharist at the forefront,” said the deacon.

The church will be located at 13517 Alta Vista Road, north of U.S. Highway 170, in Fort Worth on a site of approximately 31 acres.

The new parish was established at a Mass celebrated by Bishop Olson on September 4 at its location, which currently houses several temporary buildings that were home to the former Our Lady of Grace High School.

The new parish is “in the perfect place,” said Dcn. Zavala. “People in that area drive quite far to go to Mass.”

Tom Ross, senior



This map shows the parish boundaries of St. Teresa of Calcutta Parish in purple. The area draws from land previously within the boundaries of Our Lady of Guadalupe, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, St. Francis of Assisi, and St. Philip the Apostle parishes.

construction program manager, described the population growth of Tarrant and Denton Counties as a boom — some of the fastest growing in the U.S.

“We can accommodate the need for a Catholic Church there. The current parishes in that area are over capacity,” he said.

Dcn. Zavala stated the current facility, as it stands now, seats around 100 persons, and he hopes the new parish will offer a Saturday vigil Mass and a Sunday Mass beginning

the weekend of September 10-11.

The first permanent structure to be built will be a multi-use facility with an office, classrooms, and a parish hall where Mass will be celebrated. A church will follow in a few years.

The new parish is formed from areas currently within the boundaries of Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish in Fort Worth, St. Philip the Apostle Parish in Flower Mound, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish in Keller, and St. Francis of Assisi

Parish in Grapevine.

Cities within the parish include Fort Worth, Justin, Roanoke, Trophy Club, Haslet, and Keller.

Updates on St. Teresa of Calcutta Parish, including a Mass schedule, are available at fwdioc.org/parish-finder.

Other parishes added in the diocese in recent years include Holy Trinity Parish in Azle in 2019; St. Benedict Parish in Fort Worth, which offers the traditional Latin Mass, in 2015; and St. Martin de Porres Parish in Prosper in early 2015. 🇺🇸

STEWARDSHIP in action

The Annual Diocesan Appeal provides essential support for parishes, schools, vocations, and more

By Susan Moses

If you need an example of the Advancement Foundation's Annual Diocesan Appeal accomplishing its mission, Father Joseph Moreno can give you at least three.

For the first time, the parish cluster of St. Jude Thaddeus Parish in Burkburnett, St. Paul Parish in Electra, and Christ the King Parish in Iowa Park has received an operating grant from the Annual Diocesan Appeal: \$34,000 to hire a director of youth and family ministry.

Fr. Moreno, the pastoral administrator of the parishes, explained that the grant will help enrich the faith in his Wichita County parishes. Since the coronavirus pandemic began in 2020, youth ministry has been limited to religious education classes. Adding a youth minister, he said, will enable teens to “take what they’ve learned in religious ed, use it to apply to their lives, and experience conversion and relationship with Christ. We need that. Desperately.”

Youth and family ministry

will grow “where the Holy Spirit leads us,” he added, hoping the parishes will add programs for service, prayer meetings, discipleship, spirituality, fellowship, and vocations, plus maybe even a mission trip.

Ordained to the priesthood in 2021, Fr. Moreno also cites support for seminarians as an instance of the Annual Diocesan Appeal's impact on the diocese. Last year, the Appeal contributed \$240,000 toward the tuition and housing expenses of 23 seminarians. This year it will support 26.

Seminarians for the Diocese of Fort Worth are blessed to be able to focus on their academic and spiritual formation because their education and living expenses are fully paid by the diocese. While Fr. Moreno was in seminary, he met men from other dioceses who had to take summer jobs or find benefactors to pay for their schooling.

In contrast, seminarians in the Diocese of Fort Worth are able to continue formation in the summer with ministry assignments or

Spanish lessons.

Other students outside the diocese had no health insurance and incurred medical debt while in seminary, according to Fr. Moreno.

Fort Worth seminarians “are very fortunate, and the Appeal is a big part of that,” he said.

Fr. Moreno's three parishes were the first in the diocese to meet their annual goals for donations and participation last year — a third example of how the Annual Diocesan Appeal works.

“I'm very proud of them. It's stewardship in action, sharing the gifts that God has given us,” he said of his parishioners, whom he described as good, hardworking people — ranchers, farmers, oil industry workers, and airmen from nearby Sheppard Air Force Base.

The priest acknowledged that the Appeal evokes the Biblical call to return our first fruits to God. He also referenced the example of the early disciples in the *Book of Acts*, who distributed what they had to those in need.

He said, “This isn't a bunch of



Confirmation teacher Emma Brown, 32, Britni Nguyen, 14, Samantha Danks, 20, Knights of Columbus Youth Coordinator William Trice, and Father Joseph Moreno pose after a Mass at St. Jude Thaddeus Parish in Burkburnett Aug. 6, 2022. (NTC/Ben Torres)

little parishes and big parishes that are all independent of each other. God founded one Church, and we're all part of that Church.”

BROTHERHOOD

Deacon Jim Novak will head to the Metroplex to explain the challenges rural parishes face to the parishioners of St. John the Apostle Parish in North Richland Hills.

For 15 years, the deacon has served as parochial administrator to Sacred Heart Parish in Seymour and St. Mary of the Assumption

Parish in Megargel. He recalls that the parishes have received financial assistance from the Advancement Foundation for each of those 15 years.

Rural parishes “keep their belt tight,” said the administrator, especially during years when drought and prices of cattle and oil bring additional financial struggles.

Without the support of the Annual Diocesan Appeal, Sacred Heart and St. Mary of the

Continued on Page 24

Support for Parishes

Thanks to a grant from the Annual Diocesan Appeal, Fr. Moreno’s three parishes will be able to afford a director of youth and family ministry. At least 36 other parishes are receiving grants from the Appeal this year.



CATHOLIC SCHOOLS



Scan the QR code to see how the Annual Diocesan Appeal supports students with tuition support.



PRISON MINISTRY



Scan the QR code to see how funds from the Appeal are helping prison outreach programs spread the message of the Gospel.



Third-grader Soa Ahovelo gets dropped off for the first day of school at St. Rita Catholic School in Fort Worth Aug. 10, 2022. (NTC/Jayme Donahue)

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Assumption would not be able to pay their part-time youth minister, secretary, and maintenance worker, he said.

In the diocese, 37 parishes will receive operating grants totaling \$815,000 this year, and salary support is the primary use of parish operating grants. Parishes request help for a priest’s salary (13 parishes), for a full-time or part-time youth minister (12 parishes), for bookkeepers (9 parishes), and more.

When Dcn. Novak speaks to the North Richland Hills parishioners in

September, he plans to tell them how beneficial the Appeal has been, citing that his parishes offer religious education and youth ministry at no charge. “I call it ‘big brother, little brother,’” he said, describing the relationship between parishes with robust resources and those with less.

But the little brothers give too. Parishioners in Seymour and Megargel consistently meet their annual fundraising and participation goals. Dcn. Novak remarked, “People understand it’s important to give, to share with your brother. Our stewardship has come up across the parish.”

Support for Catholic Schools

The Annual Diocesan Appeal provides tuition assistance and diocesan learning specialists as part of its support to the 17 Catholic schools in the Diocese of Fort Worth.

While Dcn. Novak is speaking at St. John the Apostle, Toni Kelly, director of admissions and advancement of St. John the Apostle Catholic School, will travel to Sacred Heart in Seymour to explain how stewardship benefits Catholic education.

The Annual Diocesan Appeal provides tuition support that helps students at all 17 diocesan Catholic schools.

Kelly said only 10 percent of students at St. John the Apostle pay full tuition. The student body comprises middle and “not-so-middle” class students from various ethnic and economic backgrounds.

“The majority needs financial aid. [School administration] can’t say ‘Sorry, you can’t afford Catholic education’ and close the doors. We are here to form disciples of Christ,” she explained.

Kelly said tuition assistance from the Annual Diocesan Appeal, the Stephen Breen Memorial Foundation, and other endowments and benefactors are a vital means for families to send their children to the 57-year-old school.

ADAPTING TO NEEDS

Although operating grants to parishes, seminarian education, and tuition assistance are important components of the Appeal, the funds raised also help other needs in the diocese, such as Catholic Charities Fort Worth, diaconate formation, marriage and family life programs, care for retired priests, and ministries to college

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A Lasting Gift

Parishioner to bequeath estate to Annual Diocesan Appeal



Dan Riehm (left) poses with Chris Chapman, senior director of development for the Advancement Foundation. (NTC/Juan Guajardo)

By Susan Moses

Dan Riehm would be the last person on earth to boast. He carries a flip phone, drives a 19-year-old car, and mows his own yard. He eschews any form of spotlight, praise, or adulation, and his volunteer work at a Weatherford nonprofit that serves those in need is vital but behind-the-scenes.

However, the retired Coast Guard captain is willing to talk about his gift to the Advancement Foundation because he hopes that others may learn from his experience and follow suit.

With almost 50 years of saving, investing, and living modestly, Riehm has accumulated a comfortable nest egg. About seven years ago, he began thinking in earnest about what would happen with his estate after his death, especially since he has no children.

A graduate of the Coast Guard Academy, he considered leaving

his estate to the alumni association of the academy that launched his 25-year career that took him from Kodiak, Alaska, to Miami, Florida, and several ports in between.

But Riehm, who holds an M.B.A. in finance from the University of Washington, examined the alumni association’s financial statement and realized they didn’t need it.

The St. Stephen parishioner has a long history of donating to the Annual Diocesan Appeal, which supports needy parishes, schools, and ministries in the Diocese of Fort Worth.

He reflected on the legacy he would leave behind, thinking, “Where can I make a contribution somewhere more meaningful to me, to a group of people that can benefit from this gift, that need it? I looked at the annual report from the Appeal, and I saw where the

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Allison Moore, director of the Gabriel Project, is shown with Emma Bouillion, coordinator of young adult outreach, at a Gabriel Project Supply Closet located at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Church in Keller. (NTC/Juan Guajardo)

RIEHM, continued

money was going to support churches that did not have enough money to make ends meet, and all the other projects that they were working on, and I said, ‘This is stuff I believe in, and I can make a difference.’”

One day, while visiting his parents’ grave, he thought, “I could make a perpetual gift to the diocese” to benefit the Annual Diocesan Appeal every year.

As his decision began to coalesce, “I thought I would have to do this with a financial firm, and they would take a big cut off the top of it,” he said, but then he asked the Advancement Foundation if they were able to invest the principal of a significant gift and distribute the gains to the Annual Diocesan Appeal each year.

The answer, he learned, was “yes.”

He was pleased to learn his gift will grow tax-free, will be invested in ethical companies, and is shielded from litigation. Also, the Advancement Foundation administers the endowment, so no hefty management fees are paid to an outside financial planner.

However, the biggest benefit according to Riehm is that the balance will remain invested to provide an ongoing contribution to the Annual Diocesan Appeal. His generosity will benefit the diocese long after his lifetime.

The Advancement Foundation offers donors the option of restricting their gift for a specific purpose — such as seminarian education, an individual parish, or retired priests — but Riehm chose the Appeal because as the diocese grows and changes with the passing of the decades, the Annual Diocesan Appeal will reflect its current needs, and income from his bequest will be distributed accordingly.

Riehm calls the Advancement Foundation a “hidden gem,” because many faithful in the Diocese of Fort Worth don’t realize the services it can provide.

He feels confident that he can make a significant difference with his donation. He said, “It’s protected; it’s invested; it should last forever.” 🇹🇽

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campuses and prisons.

As needs change in the diocese, so does the financial allocation by the Annual Diocesan Appeal.

This year, for example, assistance to Respect Life ministries will more than double, impacting all pro-life apostolates, which help mothers in crisis pregnancies and their children.

In particular, CCFW anticipated a surge in demand for Gabriel Project services and requested additional funding. Gabriel Project will receive at least \$216,000 to add an additional caseworker and volunteer coordinator, plus other assistance to expand the parish-based ministry that trains volunteers to accompany pregnant women in need and provide spiritual,

Support for Pro-Life

This year, the Appeal will provide at least \$216,000 to Gabriel Project, which provides support for mothers in crisis pregnancies.

emotional, and practical help until their child is 18 months old.

Last year, the Annual Diocesan Appeal distributed \$3.4 million to parishes, ministries, organizations,

services, and purposes in the diocese. This year it sets \$3.5 million as its goal.

Bishop Michael Olson, in his letter introducing the Appeal, said this is an opportunity to respond to Christ’s call to gratitude.

He wrote, “We have this moment to consider the gift of our lives and the many blessings already placed in our lives by God. Appreciating this goodness draws us closer to God and impels us toward acts of selfless love in imitation of His ultimate gift of His Son, who came to save us from sin.” 🇹🇽

Amy Barnes, CCFW navigator, began assisting clients in Eastland County on Aug. 1.



(NTC/Carolina Boelter)

Catholic Charities expands westward

By Mary Lou Seewoester

As he serves at the four Eastland County parishes to which he's been appointed, Father Vijaya Mareedu, SAC, likes to always stay "conscious of one thing — wherever we are at a point in time, God puts us there to reach as many as we can ... you leave your footprints where the work is pointing you."

Today, the pastor's footprints are pointed toward the many rural families who will benefit from the expansion of Catholic Charities Fort Worth into Eastland County. He is providing office space at St. Francis Xavier Parish in Eastland for a full-time CCFW client navigator and is allowing three bilingual staff at his parishes to help with translation, when needed. Since he and his staff know area families well, they also will be able to refer clients to CCFW Navigator Amy Barnes, who began assisting in Eastland County August 1.

Fr. VJ, as he is known by parishioners, oversees St. Francis Xavier, Our Lady of

the Holy Rosary Parish in Cisco, St. John Parish in Strawn, and St. Rita Parish in Ranger.

He said for rural parishes, "it's hard because sometimes to get help it is a three-hour journey. But now [CCFW] has placed someone here for ongoing help."

Cindy Casey, CCFW director of client services/client strategies, said the agency will address short- and long-term critical issues to lift families out of poverty and help them put together a plan to deal with those needs. CCFW provides financial coaching along with resource connections that include housing, employment, education, utility assistance, and transportation.

"We want to make sure people know that we're here to help not just with one-time assistance, but to identify their real needs," Casey explained. "Is it one-time assistance? Or do they need it for two or three months? Or do they need a longer-term plan in place?"

Casey said CCFW wants to hear from community members about their needs.

"We're not going to tell people what they need," Casey noted. "They're going to tell us ... there may be needs out there that we don't even know about."

She said there are funds to begin serving clients, but the program needs additional funding to continue.

"We'll be looking for partners to help us serve the community," she added.

Casey said Eastland County families that struggled with poverty even before the pandemic now face rising inflation, a drought, and devastating effects of the Eastland complex fire that burned more than 54,000 acres. Seven of the 83 families in Carbon who lost their homes to the cluster of fires are St. Francis Xavier parishioners.

However, both Fr. VJ and Casey stressed that assistance is available to everyone in the community — not just to Catholics.

"Now with the presence of Catholic Charities here, we are making an impact in the heart of every person who seeks help," Fr. VJ said. 🇹🇽





Msgr. Ray Mullan leads the recession after a Mass at St. Jude Parish in Mansfield to mark the 60th anniversary of his ordination June 29. (NTC/Kevin Bartram)

Inspiring Courage

Monsignor Ray Mullan's priesthood spans
six decades and two continents

By Kiki Hayden

As a young boy, Raymund Mullan stole a penny from his mother. "That penny started to burn a hole in my pocket," he told the *North Texas Catholic*.

During confession, he feared anger and judgment from the priest and from God. Even years later, Mullan thought that

priests became angry during confession.

"[Hearing] my first confession cured me of that," he said.

On June 29, 1962, Mullan was ordained a priest in the Archdiocese of Pretoria, South Africa. A few hours after his ordination, someone asked Fr. Mullan to hear her confession. "I don't remember a single word she said, but I do recall what I felt. I felt a deep, deep compassion

for this woman, an intense family love. ... I was feeling God's love for her flowing through me."

This summer Monsignor Ray Mullan celebrated his 60th anniversary to the priesthood. As a testament to the contagious joy and perseverance with which he inspires courage and builds up community wherever he goes, many faithful from across the Diocese of Fort Worth attended



Bishop Michael Olson celebrates a Mass in honor of Msgr. Mullan's anniversary on June 28 at St. Patrick Cathedral. (NTC/ Juan Guajardo)

two Masses and receptions in his honor on June 28 at St. Patrick Cathedral and June 29 at St. Jude Parish in Mansfield.

When he served in South Africa, Fr. Mullan was involved in many ministries, as a broadcaster on radio, as a vocations director, and as a chaplain to inmates on death row. One notable achievement was the building of a badminton court next to St. John Fisher Parish just outside of Pretoria.

"He called it a parish hall," said Father Glen Mullan, a priest of the Diocese of Corpus Christi who knows Raymund Mullan as "Uncle Ray." According to Fr. Glen, this badminton court/parish hall exemplified his uncle's way of evangelization: "...you have to gather the people first, and through that you bring the Gospel."

Fr. Mullan also ministered to soldiers during a war. Despite pushback from the South African government, "Fr. Mullan remained focused upon Christ and fulfilled his ministry with integrity," said Bishop Michael Olson in his June 28 homily.

In 1989, with the approval of his archbishop, Fr. Mullan moved to the Diocese of Fort Worth where he continued serving as a "faithful priest" — first as associate pastor at St. John the Apostle Parish in North Richland Hills, then at Immaculate

Conception Parish in Denton, and finally as pastor at St. Mary Parish in Graham and St. Theresa Parish in Olney.

On his priestly anniversary in 1994, Fr. Mullan was incardinated in the Fort Worth Diocese. On March 27, 2012, Pope Benedict XVI conferred on him the title of Monsignor.

Jeannine and Duane Wendel, who attended St. Mary during Msgr. Mullan's 23-year tenure there, gushed about his contagious joy. "He baptized our children and gave them all their sacraments," said Jeannine. "He glows!"

In 2014, Msgr. Mullan retired to Mansfield due to health difficulties. There he assisted as a supply priest at several parishes, especially St. Jude.

"I remember him coming every day in his wheelchair," said 13-year-old Sarah Idemudiah, a parishioner at St. Jude. "He came to Mass even when it was hard for him to walk."

In 2021, Msgr. Mullan nearly died of a heart attack and a pulmonary embolism. But he emerged victorious. "This was a miracle," he told the *NTC*. "I came out of rehab better and stronger than I had been a year before."

Msgr. Mullan remains active. Julie Cosby, business manager of St. Jude, said, "He regularly celebrates Mass for the

residents of Legend of Mansfield, a senior living community where he resides, and attends St. Jude on some Sundays and during certain holy days."

On June 29, at his 60th anniversary Mass at St. Jude, Msgr. Mullan used a walker, a wheelchair, and occasional assistance from his fellow priests (including his nephew, Fr. Glen Mullan) during Mass.

The celebratory Mass featured music composed by Msgr. Mullan himself — the Mass of Maria Regina, as well as the songs "Lord, Forgive Me" and "Ave Maria."

Music leaders Pam Rodrigues and Leonardo Zuno directed the choir. "I've heard him improvise before, and [the Mass] has the beautiful quality of his improvisations," said Zuno.

In his retirement, Msgr. Mullan began sharing in his homilies the story of that first confession, the one where he felt like a conduit of God's love.

"Each time, people would come up to me and say, 'For the first time, I've received the courage to go to confession.'"

He recently recounted the tale at a 60th anniversary dinner with Bishop Olson and many diocesan priests. "I'm sharing it with you, brothers, because the people want to hear your stories," he explained. "They need to hear them, and you need to tell them." 🇹🇽

SPIRIT OF service

Father Eugene Nyong celebrates 25 years of
priestly ministry in Nigeria, Chad, and Texas

By Susan Moses

Jim Burkett knew he would like Father Eugene Nyong from their first encounter.

A longtime sacristan at St. Mary Parish in Graham, Burkett was accustomed to preparing the altar for the celebration of Mass according to the preferences of each priest. So when Fr. Nyong arrived, Burkett introduced himself and asked, “How would you like the altar set up for Mass?”

Fr. Nyong reached behind him and pulled out the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*. “This is how we do Mass. We will do it right,” said the priest.

“And that makes my life easier,” laughed Burkett.

On September 14, the pastor of St. Mary Parish and St. Theresa Parish in Olney will observe the silver anniversary of his priesthood, nearly 7,000 miles from where he was ordained in the Diocese of Uyo, Nigeria.

In those 25 years, he has celebrated Mass in English, Spanish, French, Ngambaye, and his mother tongue of Ibibio, but he has always celebrated it attentively, reverently, and correctly.

He explained, “The liturgy is

not my liturgy. It’s the Church that’s given me the faculty to celebrate it, and it’s a public celebration — not something where I can introduce whatever I feel like. The people have the right to a proper celebration of the liturgy, so I have to respect their right.”

In addition to adhering to liturgical norms, his parishioners can rely on receiving a well-considered homily. Fr. Nyong puts a lot of time and study into each homily, because “people have the need; people have the right to be fed with the Word of God. [I] should be prepared to give them the nourishment.

“I put a lot of work into it,” he described. “What is the key to open [the Scripture] and get the message?” And once he finds the key, the rest of his homily comes easily.

Vickie Keller, the volunteer director of religious education at St. Mary Parish, appreciates Fr. Nyong’s “awesome homilies. He hits the point. You can tell he has a strong faith — we are blessed to have him.”

The blessing of his presence might seem a little unlikely. Fr. Nyong’s 25 years of priesthood have taken him farther than most diocesan priests.

Shortly after ordination, his bishop assigned him to missionary

work in Chad, where he had to learn French and the local language of Ngambaye in short order. The country was in the midst of civil unrest, and rebels kidnapped and tortured a priest at the cathedral where Fr. Nyong was based. Another priest was driving his truck when rebels commandeered it. Fr. Nyong’s personal safety was often at risk, and he admitted it was a difficult assignment.

He returned to his diocese after four years, where he encountered violence personally. During a robbery of the rectory, he was shot in the head and back. Although a bullet passed close to his spinal cord, he was not permanently injured.

After several years in his diocese, his bishop sent him to Texas, where he served at St. Mary Cathedral in downtown Austin. Then on to the Diocese of Fort Worth, where his first assignment was parochial vicar of St. Francis of Assisi Parish in Grapevine. While there, he traveled to many parishes in the diocese to celebrate Mass.

When he arrived in Graham in 2016, he added Spanish to his bank of languages. “It’s always been learning, learning, learning,” he said with a laugh.

Fr. Nyong is the third of seven children “in a praying family. My



Father Eugene Nyong at the altar of St. Mary Parish in Graham. (NTC/Ben Torres)

mom and my dad would not go out for anything, or sleep, without calling all of us to pray as a family.”

He attended local Catholic schools, and he and his four brothers were altar servers. At home, he would sometimes dress as a priest and mimic the Mass.

Growing up, he was open to the idea of a religious vocation, but he thought he might become a physician. When he entered minor seminary as a high school student to discern the priesthood, he asked God to make his vocation obvious — physician or priest. His biology grade wasn’t high enough to study medicine, which he took as an answer to prayer.

Being a priest, according to Fr. Nyong, “is service. It’s a call. No one has a right to it.

“That spirit of service is important to me. Getting people to know God, accept Him, being baptized — that brings me joy,” said the priest.

He especially likes to get young

people involved and rooted in the Church by encouraging them to become altar servers after they receive their first holy Communion and lectors after they are confirmed.

“I like to inspire them. It’s not the church of Mom, the church of Dad — but they have a place in the Church, and there are various ministries that they can carry out,” he said.

Olivia Olvera, director of youth and family ministry for the parishes, said Fr. Nyong frequently drops by religious education or youth group meetings “so they see him; they know he’s available and paying attention to them. He’s a very good pastor.”

He wants all the parishioners, regardless of age, to realize “God loves each and every one of us, with the knowledge we are sinners, and He still loves us. If only we agree, accept, cooperate with His grace, we remain God’s beloved people.

“Faith is not just something you

profess. You have to live it. You can’t disconnect your life from your faith,” he continued, adding that God is the only source of truth.

Reflecting on his years since he answered his vocational call, Fr. Nyong recalled the privilege of assisting in the weddings of his six siblings.

He cited many forefathers from the Bible, such as Jonah, Moses, and Isaiah, who were reluctant to answer God’s call. “God doesn’t take ‘no’ for an answer, but He transforms those He calls.

“That’s what I’ve learned in 25 years, that God transforms those He calls, if you are willing to cooperate with His grace, because He also respects our freedom to say ‘yes’ or ‘no.’”

The parishes of St. Mary and St. Theresa will celebrate Fr. Nyong’s “yes” with a Mass and dinner on September 24, marking Fr. Nyong’s silver anniversary as a priest and St. Mary’s centennial as a parish. 🇺🇸



“God never let go”

On the 25th anniversary of his priesthood, Father Ariel Sánchez, CORC, reflects on a call that endured

By Violeta Rocha

At only 10 years old, Ariel Sánchez felt God calling him to the priesthood. From then on, along with his mother, he began to save up by selling cow’s milk to be able to enter the seminary. Although many years passed before he was able to achieve it, Father Ariel Sánchez, CORC, is now only days away from celebrating 25 years of priesthood.

The pastor of St. Matthew Parish in Arlington assures that “God never left me,” and he is simply overwhelmed by “gratitude for God” for 25 years of a priestly life full of blessings.

Fr. Sánchez was born in Jalpan de Serra, Queretaro, “one of the missions of Saint Junipero Serra.” The deep faith and service of his mother, Doña María Dolores, inspired his vocation, he said, remembering when he accompanied her to teach catechism even

Fr. Ariel Sánchez, CORC, pastor of St. Matthew Parish in Arlington, will celebrate his 25th anniversary of priestly ordination on September 26. (NTC/Ben Torres)

though she did not know how to read or write. “She had a brilliant memory” and a great dedication to service, Fr. Sánchez, 65, said.

Few economic resources, an ill father, and concern about providing for four siblings prevented him from going to school, much less to seminary, a desire that continued to grow after seeing a photograph of his maternal uncle, a recently ordained priest.

He completed high school at the age of 16, and later entered the seminary of the Missionaries of Christ the Redeemer (the *Idente Missionaries*), but he decided to leave, thinking that priesthood was not his vocation.

“But God never let go of my hand,” he asserted. The call of God continued.

After leaving seminary, he moved to North Carolina and worked as a farm laborer. The pastor of his parish asked for help teaching Bible study classes and for support in growing Hispanic ministry “which was just beginning.”

During a vacation in Mexico, he visited his priest uncle, who at that time was the spiritual director of the seminary of the Fellowship of Laborers of the Kingdom of Christ (or the *Confraternidad Sacerdotal de Operarios de Cristo*, as they are known in Spanish), resulting in his residence as a seminarian. The young seminarian achieved his dream on September 26, 1997, when he entered holy orders in the Cathedral of Queretaro.

“It was a great feeling. I asked God to allow my parents to see me

get ordained, and He granted it,” Fr. Sánchez shared. His father died two years later and his mother five years later.

For Fr. Sánchez, being in the Diocese of Fort Worth as part of the CORC order “is fulfilling one of the dearest desires of our founder: to go to the diocese most in need and where we are called. We are called to serve. Here, with pleasure we are giving 100 percent, serving the Church as a fellowship,” he said, adding that “to be an instrument of God for our brothers” through constant surrendering is his biggest satisfaction.

The Fellowship of Laborers of the Kingdom of Christ, founded by Father Enrique Amezcua Medina in Mexico in 1963, has served in the Diocese of Fort Worth for 10 years. Currently, there are six CORC priests in the diocese, serving at Holy Name Parish and Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish in Fort Worth, and at St. Matthew in Arlington.

For Fr. Sánchez, 25 years of service to God signifies “the crowning of a mutual effort, my parents, my family, with the fellowship and myself because it was not easy to reach priesthood,” said Fr. Sánchez, a devotee of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and the Holy Souls of Purgatory.

Celebrating 25 years together with the parishioners of St. Matthew, which “is an active community, will be a great joy.”

“It gives me joy and pride to see whole families who seek God,” noted Fr. Sánchez, who since his

ordination has served in California and Puerto Rico and as an instructor at the CORC seminary in Queretaro for two years. For the last five years, he has served in the Diocese of Fort Worth, first as parochial vicar at St. Matthew and then as pastor of the same parish.

Diana Castruita, business manager at St. Matthew, highlights the closeness of Fr. Sánchez with the entire parish community. He always invites everyone to work together.

“In the pastoral meetings, Fr. Ariel tells us, ‘We have to motivate our members; this is our parish and we have to take care of it,’” Castruita recalled. Fr. Sánchez “has motivated all the groups to raise funds to fix our kitchen,” she added, explaining that catechism classrooms that required immediate attention were also repaired thanks to his call to action.

“Fr. Ariel does a lot for the parish; we work together and in harmony,” said Maru Franco, a parishioner of St. Matthew for 32 years. “He conveys a great peace. The presence of God is felt in him. When a parish priest opens his heart, we are all willing to help.

“We feel very loved by him, and he makes us feel that we are special,” he said, adding that through his availability, silent work, and great patience, “[Fr. Sánchez] lets us know that he is with us.”

“These 25 years are a celebration of the love that Fr. Ariel conveys to us, and we are fortunate to be members of St. Matthew as he celebrates his priestly anniversary,” said Franco. 🇺🇸

so many BLESSINGS

Thousands of pilgrims visit St. Bernadette's relics
in Mineral Wells, Graford parishes

By Joan Kurkowski-Gillen

Martha Peña came to venerate the relics of St. Bernadette Soubirous hoping for a miracle but not really expecting one.

The Iowa Park resident made the 90-minute trip to Our Lady of Lourdes Parish in Mineral Wells on July 21 with her 40-year-old son, Andrew, who was born with cerebral palsy.

"Miracles are always in the back of one's mind, and that would be wonderful, but spiritual healing is really what I'm looking for," said the Christ the King parishioner as she guided her eldest child's electric wheelchair up to the striking gold reliquary. "He's never been to a place where he could see a relic, so I thought this would be a good opportunity for him."

Hoping to renew or strengthen faith, find peace with a difficult life situation, or simply reflect on the holy life of a French peasant girl, more than 3,000 people visited the rural Palo Pinto parish July 20-22.

Our Lady of Lourdes was one of 42 locations in the U.S. chosen to host the relics of St. Bernadette — a 14-year-old asthmatic who saw 18 apparitions of the Virgin Mary and uncovered a spring of healing waters at Mary's command. The relics also spent a brief time at

St. Francis of Assisi Parish in Graford.

"It's been a blessing for us and so many people who have come here," said Father Thomas D'Souza, SAC, Our Lady of Lourdes pastor. "They tell me, 'Now we don't have to go to France!'"

A well-known saint whose humility and obedience was showcased in the Academy Award-winning film "The Song of Bernadette," the young visionary suffered poor health and initially was persecuted by the French government, Church authorities, and members of her own religious order.

Greeting pilgrims who journeyed to his parish from as far away as Oklahoma, Puerto Rico, Waco, and San Antonio, Fr. D'Souza hopes the people who venerated the relics learn lessons from the saint's life.

"She never gave up on what she believed. That should be our conviction," he said. "When we're standing for life or know something is right, we shouldn't back down. No matter what

pressure you're facing, stand for the truth." The traveling reliquary that arrived in the U.S. April 7 for its first-ever tour of the U.S. was commissioned in 2019 to meet the growing demand of people who wanted to honor St.

PHOTO
GALLERY



Scan the QR code
to view our photo
gallery of the relics
visit July 20-22.



Dora Moralez of Vernon venerates the relics of St. Bernadette at Our Lady of Lourdes Parish in Mineral Wells on July 21, 2022. Several faithful also touched religious items to the reliquary by which they become third-class relics. (NTC/Juan Guajardo)



Knights of Columbus carry the replica statue of Our Lady of Lourdes during a candlelight Rosary and procession at the Mineral Wells parish on July 21, 2022. (NTC/Ben Torres)

Bernadette outside of France. Crafted in a neo-Gothic style by Spanish artisans, the gold and enamel relic holder was designed to reflect the spirit of Lourdes and the great Marian devotion of the saint. It contains a first-class, *ex-carne* (from the flesh) relic removed from St. Bernadette's incorrupt body 46 years after her death in 1879 at age 35.

Relics remind people of a saint's holiness and inspire prayers for God's grace to lead a similar faith-filled life.

Many of the visitors who came to venerate the relics held rosaries, holy cards, and other sacramentals up to the glass-encased reliquary, making their items third-class relics.

"Relics are reminders of the sanctity of the saints," said Father Joseph Keating, pastor

of Sacred Heart Church in Muenster, who accompanied a busload of parishioners to Our Lady of Lourdes and celebrated a noon Mass for more than 400 pilgrims.

While studying for the priesthood in Rome, he visited Lourdes and brought with him the candle held during a Marian procession to the Grotto. The spring water that flows from the niche where the Virgin Mary stood "is the source of spiritual healing for so many, but it's really the grace of God that heals us," Fr. Keating told the congregation during his homily. "It's our faith manifested in a tangible sign."

During the reliquary's stop in Mineral Wells, pilgrims were invited to participate in daily

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A young man prays before the relics of St. Bernadette Soubirous on July 21, 2022 at Our Lady of Lourdes Parish. (NTC/Ben Torres)

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Masses, evening candlelit processions to the parish’s grotto, Reconciliation, and an Anointing of the Sick liturgy. Led by a guide from the North American Lourdes Volunteers, the tour included a virtual pilgrimage that allowed parishioners to touch rocks from the Grotto of Massabielle, and during *le geste de l’eau* — the “gesture of water” — they were allowed to touch water from Lourdes.

The holy water was used to bless 1,900 rosaries made by members of Our Lady of Lourdes Parish and distributed to visitors.

A youth group from Most Blessed Sacrament Parish in Arlington spent part of its summer mission week in Mineral Wells experiencing the relics and attending Mass. The arrival of the reliquary to the diocese in July was fortunate timing, according to Renee Alarcon, the parish’s youth director.

“When we saw it was coming here, we wanted to make a pilgrimage to show our young people what it’s like to travel to see something so holy,” she explained. “I told them, ‘Normally you have to go to Europe to see something like this. It doesn’t happen in our area very often.’”

Alarcon used the day trip to talk about Our Lady of Lourdes, St. Bernadette, and the process that leads to canonization. Fielding questions from the inquisitive group, she described what a relic is, what makes it holy, and the difference between venerating a relic and Catholic worship of God and the Eucharist.

“I hope this experience lets them know they can go to the saints to get closer to Christ,” she said.

Felix Ruiz, who came to view the reliquary with his daughter and granddaughters, said it’s important to understand the story of St. Bernadette and the lessons of faith it teaches. Thanks to her trust in the Virgin Mary, Bernadette, a chronically ill miller’s daughter helped create a place of pilgrimage that brings peace and comfort to millions each year. She is the patron saint of the sick, the poor, shepherds, and people ridiculed for their piety.

“We have to remember in times of struggle — in times of need — to pray the Rosary,” said Ruiz, a St. Stephen parishioner. “Instead of dwelling on all the bad things going on and feeling hopeless, we have the Rosary to fall back on. We have Mary to intercede for our needs.” 🇺🇸



SEE THE VIDEO



Scan the QR code to see what pilgrims had to say about their experience visiting the relics.

▶ The reliquary containing first-class relics of St. Bernadette. (NTC/Carolina Boelter)



Catholic
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Building a foundation for future generations

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- You must be age 70 ½ or older to make a QCD.
- Individuals can transfer up to \$100,000 per year. A married couple may each give up to \$100,000 a year, for a possible combined maximum of \$200,000 annually.
- Your gift must be transferred directly from your IRA funds to the charity.
- A direct transfer of funds from your IRA to CCFW Endowment or other charity does not create taxable income for you, and it is not considered a charitable tax deduction.
- If you are 72 or older, the transfer of funds counts towards your RMD from your IRA.

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A YOUNG VISIONARY

Pauline Jaricot, the young foundress of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith, calls us to bring others to God

A young French woman developed a heart for missions, and her work lives on two centuries later because of the power of the cross and her ability to enjoin and organize others. Beatified earlier this year, Pauline Jaricot founded the Society for the Propagation of the Faith, which still introduces Christ to communities around the world.

PAULINE'S STORY BEGINS

Baptized Marie Pauline Jaricot on the day of her birth, July 22, 1799, she was the last of seven children born to Antoine and Jeanne Jaricot in Lyons, France. Pauline's older brother Phileas, born two years earlier, would be very influential in her life — nurturing her love for missions.

Lyons was an industrial city famous for its silk factories. Her father was a silk merchant and supported the bourgeois family. While the early years of her childhood were marked by the exclusive societal life of Lyons, something would happen in her teen years that would open her heart to the whole world.

A VISION FOR THE MISSIONS

At the age of 15, Pauline suffered a bad fall. Not long after, her beloved mother died. It took Pauline many months to recover emotionally and physically. When she did, she resumed her social life, but with less delight than before. Her heart, she wrote at this time, was “made for the whole world.”

She began to long to help missions in China and the United States — a desire nurtured by her brother



Phileas, who was preparing for the priesthood and told Pauline all about the work and witness of missionaries. Pauline saw this as her vocation — to become a missionary of the love of God. She came to believe that “to truly help others is to bring them to God.”

So she came up with a plan to support missionaries and their work. She gathered workers in her family’s silk factory into circles of 10. Everyone in the group pledged to pray daily for the missions and to offer each week a *sou*, the equivalent of a penny. Each member of the group then found 10 friends to do the same. Even in the face of opposition from parish priests in Lyons, Pauline remained steadfast. Within a year, she had 500 workers enrolled; soon there would be 2,000.

Pauline’s successful efforts, which were not isolated or unique, were the main thrust behind the formation of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith. She was the match that lit the fire. But there was a struggle — like with all new initiatives — to control what was quickly becoming a source of strength and hope for the missionary Church. At one point, Pauline was sidelined, and she struggled to ensure that what the Lord had inspired her to set in motion would come fully to life.

In 1963, 100 years after her death, Pope John XXIII wrote: “It was she who thought of the society, who conceived it, and made it an organized reality.”

THE SOCIETY FOR THE PROPAGATION OF THE FAITH

On May 3, 1822, in Lyons, a group of men called “*Les Messieurs*” gathered to discuss a request for funds for the missions in Louisiana. A representative of Louisiana’s Bishop William DuBourg, Father Angelo Inglesi, hoped at this meeting to have an organization set up similar to Pauline’s “Propagation” which was doing so well. The organization he had in mind would be formed to help missions in Louisiana, which, at that time, extended from the Gulf of Mexico to Canada.

Benôit Coste, one of “*Les Messieurs*,” made the point that no single mission should be the sole beneficiary of funds that were gathered; any organization formed must help all missions everywhere. This was, indeed, Pauline’s own vision of universal help.

By 1922, the Society for the Propagation of the Faith — and three other societies established to help the missions — became pontifical: under the pope’s direction with headquarters relocated to Rome. Within the first hundred years of its existence, the Society for the Propagation of the Faith sent about \$7 million in help to the young church in the U.S.

The U.S. Church started contributing to the Propagation of the Faith in 1833, with a humble gift of \$6. Today, Catholics in the U.S. contribute about 25 percent of the support collected through the Propagation of the Faith for the 1,150 mission dioceses worldwide, mostly in Africa and Asia, mainly through the annual World Mission Sunday collection.

Shortly after the foundation of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith, Pauline established the Association of the Living Rosary; again, her method was to form “circles” which would reach out to form new groups which would recite the Rosary every day. These groups continue to thrive in Lyons even today.

SUFFERING FOR A LOVING, GENEROUS HEART

St. John Vianney, the Curé of Ars and Pauline’s spiritual director for many years, made this public tribute to her: “I know someone who knows how to accept the cross, and a heavy cross, and how to bear it with love! It is Mademoiselle Jaricot.”

Father Charles Dollen wrote this in a biography about her: “The theology of the cross came alive for her. ... More and more she identified with the Sacred Heart of Jesus, the incarnate Son of God, loving, suffering, atoning.”

Pauline died on January 9, 1862. The prayer found after her death, written in her own hand, ended with these words: “Mary, O my Mother, I am Thine!”

In 1963, Pope John XXIII signed the decree which proclaimed the virtues of Pauline Jaricot, declaring her Venerable. On May 22, 2022, Pauline was beatified, declared Blessed. The cause for her canonization continues. 🇺🇸

Editor’s Note: This article was graciously provided by the Pontifical Mission Societies.

YOU’RE INVITED!



Scan the QR code to view more information about the upcoming World Mission Sunday Mass on October 16. All are invited to join.





▶ Marissa Jones plays with her 2-year-old daughter, Journey, as her twin daughters Nova and Lyric entertain each other.
(NTC/Juan Guajardo)



all for LIFE

With *Roe v. Wade* finally overturned, pro-life apostolates continue serving clients, from conception through the early years and beyond

By Joan Kurkowski-Gillen

Dr. Haywood Robinson was inside his College Station home June 24 when the U.S. Supreme Court — in a 5-4 decision — overturned the 1973 *Roe v. Wade* precedent that legalized abortion in the U.S.

With the words, “We hold the Constitution does not confer a right to abortion,” the Supreme Court stated *Roe* was wrongly decided and allowed state legislatures to regulate or ban the medical procedure.

A draft of the ruling was leaked weeks earlier, so the announcement didn’t surprise Robinson, a former abortion doctor turned pro-life advocate and 40 Days for Life speaker. He also didn’t celebrate.

“You’d think I’d be jumping up and down and bursting champagne bottles. Quite the contrary,” said the retired physician. “Our work is just beginning.”

Reversing *Roe v. Wade* turns an already deeply divided America into a country with two sets of states: places where abortion is either guaranteed or outlawed.

“Abortion-loving states will hyper-infuse it, and others will recognize the right of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness,” Dr. Robinson explained. “Our true goal is to do what’s necessary so all people have the right to life.”

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▲ Adriana Solis plays with her 2-year-old, Amaya. Flourishing Tree of Life, a pro-life pregnancy resource center, has helped the mom with practical assistance and emotional support. (NTC/Juan Guajardo)

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Accomplishing that won't be an overnight, tidy little thing. It's going to take a long time, state by state. I can't celebrate knowing they're still killing babies."

REDOUBLING OUR EFFORTS

In a pastoral letter issued after the Supreme Court's June 24 rulings, Bishop Michael Olson stressed the work to support the unborn and their parents has not ended despite legal decisions favoring the pro-life cause in Texas and the U.S.

"We must be mindful that at the heart

of our prayers and labor is not the changing of law but the conversion of hearts toward greater gratitude, respect, and love for each human person," said the leader of the Diocese of Fort Worth. "Human beings are only as safe as the most vulnerable member of our society."

He promised the diocese — through its Respect Life Office, apostolates, and parish outreach — would redouble its focus to serve expectant mothers and care for the prenatal and early development needs of their children. The diocese is committed to promoting behaviors and policies that foster a safe and flourishing family life.

"Through a variety of parish and independent pro-life ministries within the 28 North Texas counties that encompass the Diocese of Fort Worth, pregnant and parenting women can find the help and support they need," Bishop Olson assured.

WE'RE HERE FOR LIFE

In 2020, Adriana Solis was struggling to make ends meet and pregnant with her fifth child when she turned to one of the pro-life organizations in the diocese for help.

"I was crying when I opened the door to Flourishing Tree of Life," the 40-year-old told the *North Texas Catholic*. "I was worried."

With children ranging in age from 22 to 8, the Aledo resident cleaned houses and her husband ran a lawn care business to support their family.

"So the baby was going to change everything," she added.

Comforting words from the nonprofit's executive director, Roxanna Young, eased her through the crisis.

"She told me everything was going to be fine. God has a plan," Solis recalled. "We're here to help you."

Emotional support was coupled with practical assistance. The new mom received diapers, clothing, formula, and information about social service agencies.

"We have a lot of resources we can connect them with, and we do it as a team. All the pregnancy centers work



together,” explained Young, who started Flourishing Tree with help from fellow Holy Redeemer parishioners in Aledo in 2016. “We’re a small organization but we’re growing and we’re strong.”

The pro-life ministry now has outreach locations in Weatherford and Fort Worth in addition to Aledo and provides for families beyond a child’s birth.

One woman helped by Flourishing Tree gave birth to a child with a disability four years ago.

“The baby cannot walk or talk and we still help her,” the director said pointedly. “We have diapers from newborn to size seven. We’re here for the moms. We’re here for the families. We’re here for life.”

Hoping to attract more vulnerable women, the ministry is improving the way it uses Instagram, Twitter, and other

social media platforms popular with young people.

Ninety percent of women considering abortion are either verbally or physically abused, according to Young.

“We have to strengthen our moms and women so they have the courage to say ‘no’ to their boyfriend, parents, or husband when pressured to have an abortion,” she stressed. “Because of domestic violence, I sometimes feel they don’t have a choice, and a lot of them don’t know we exist.”

UNDETERRED

What’s the future of the pro-life movement in the wake of *Roe v. Wade’s* collapse?

“I hope it makes it even stronger,” asserted Theresa Schauf, director of the

▲ Starlene Seaton, a Weatherford resident, has fun with her 4-year-old daughter, Rachel, at Dream Park in Fort Worth. Rachel, who was born with cerebral palsy, has been receiving help from Flourishing Tree of Life in Aledo and Grace House, a pro-life apostolate in Weatherford. (NTC/Juan Guajardo)

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▲
Garia Dates holds her 1-month-old son, Royal McIntosh, at their home in Arlington. She is grateful for the help and mentorship she has received through Gabriel Project. (NTC/Juan Guajardo)

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diocesan Respect Life Office since 2017. “The work continues.”

Initial reaction to the rollback of *Roe v. Wade* incited violent attacks against Catholic Church buildings and pregnancy outreach centers across the country. On May 7, a vigilante spray painted Loreto House, a Denton facility for women and men facing an unexpected pregnancy. The threats didn’t deter the center from providing supplies, parent education, and overall support to clients.

“At Loreto House, we continue to serve about 40 women every day, and these [vandals] will not keep us from serving the needs of our guests,” said founder Randy Bollig in a letter to the pro-life community. “The women in Texas need Loreto House more than ever, and we are ready to assist the huge number of women who come through our doors.”

Schauf said local pregnancy resource centers, like Loreto House, noticed an uptick in activity following passage of the Texas Heartbeat Act in September 2021. The bill

prohibits abortion after a fetal heartbeat is detected, usually around the sixth week of gestation.

“Women who can’t afford to go out of state for an abortion are looking for places they can turn to for help,” she said. “Many times, clients are relieved because they were being pressured into an abortion they didn’t want.”

To keep up with increased demand, Loreto House is in the late stages of construction on a second facility in Flower Mound.

THE HEART OF MINISTRY

Gabriel Project, a parish-based ministry managed by Catholic Charities Fort Worth, has paired expectant moms in crisis with a caring mentor since the local chapter was founded in 2004 by St. Francis of Assisi Parishioner Angela Walters. Responding to an increased volume of calls for assistance following *Roe’s* reversal, the program will double its staff by adding another caseworker, another volunteer coordinator, and more trained Gabriel Project

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Catholic Diocese of Fort Worth Respect Life Ministry

Promotes the Dignity of Every Human Life

Through a variety of parish and independent pro-life ministries which serve within the 28 North Texas counties that encompass the Catholic Diocese of Fort Worth, pregnant and parenting women can find the help and support they need.

The Catholic Diocese of Fort Worth remains committed to serving pregnant and parenting women in need. The mission of the Diocese of Fort Worth Respect Life Office is to promote the dignity of every human life from conception to natural death through prayer, education, pastoral care, and civic action.

Listed below, in alphabetical order, are the approved ministries serving pregnant and parenting women within the Catholic Diocese of Fort Worth. Contact information and/or websites are also included. Services provided by these agencies include, but are not limited to, free pregnancy tests and ultrasounds, material assistance, mother and baby boutiques, parenting classes, and referral assistance.



Choices Clinic and Life Resource Center
Erath, Young, & Hamilton Counties
ChoicesInLife.org



Mid Cities Women's Clinic
Euless
MCWomensClinic.com



Flourishing Tree
Aledo
FlourishingTree.org



Mother & Unborn Baby Care
Fort Worth
817-870-2229



Gabriel Project, Catholic Charities
Fort Worth
1-800-545-5935



Next Step Women's Center
Burlison and Fort Worth
NextStepWC.com



Grace House
Weatherford
GraceHouseMinistries.net



The Open Door
Cisco and Breckenridge
SupportOpenDoor.org



Loreto House
Denton
LoretoHouse.org



WholeLife Authentic Care
Fort Worth
WholelifeAC.com



Parishes in the Diocese of Fort Worth, as well as throughout the country, have been encouraged to participate in Walking with Moms in Need, a USCCB campaign which encourages parishes to identify local pregnancy and family resources that are able to assist mothers and families lacking material or emotional support. To participate in, or learn more about this effort, visit fwdioc.org/walking-with-moms-in-need.



Gabriel Project is a Catholic Charities Fort Worth parish-based ministry that pairs trained volunteers, or Gabriel Angels, with women in crisis pregnancies. Angels accompany mothers throughout their pregnancy and beyond, with spiritual, emotional, and practical help. Once they are close to delivery, they help provide items for baby.

Courtney Price holds up a sonogram of Zyair, who is now one year old. They've received material support and practical assistance from Loreto House in Denton.
(NTC/Juan Guajardo)



Volunteer Berene Spivey helps expectant mother Kyleigh Hinson choose items in the supply closet of Gabriel Project at St. Bartholomew Parish in south Fort Worth July 20.
(NTC/Rodger Mallison)

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“angels.” Angels are compassionate, understanding women who maintain ongoing contact with a mother throughout her pregnancy.

“Angels are the heart of our ministry,” explained Kasey Whitley, CCFW director of parish social ministry. “They are the ones providing pastoral care, emotional support, and encouragement for the moms. They provide the relationship.”

Catholic Charities contributes social service expertise. The agency equips angels with the material goods a new parent needs. It also has the resources to address more complex issues like safe and affordable childcare, stable housing, and career and vocational training.

If a mom is referred to a CCFW long-term case management program after pregnancy, “we can make sustainable and meaningful impact and lead those moms on the path out of poverty for good,” Whitley added.

Twenty-five parishes in the diocese working with Gabriel Project have assisted 113 women so far this year. A surge of new volunteers is being trained to mentor more mothers who are on a waiting list.

For those who don’t have the time to become mentors, there is another meaningful way to help.

“The quickest and easiest way to support our mothers is by donating or purchasing items off our Amazon wish list,” Whitley said.

Pregnant women who contact the ministry are typically unmarried, lack a support system, and are

experiencing stress related to poverty.

One expectant mom became homeless after the death of her husband and was living in a car when she was referred to Gabriel Project by a local parish. Placed in a maternity home with her five-year-old child, the woman was encouraged to find a job and start saving for an apartment by her Gabriel angel. After achieving those goals, the program furnished the family’s new home with a mattress, bedding, housewares, a crib, and other essentials before the baby’s arrival.


“Her angel provided friendship and hope during a vulnerable and uncertain time for this pregnant mom and her young child,” Whitley said. “Regardless of what circumstances bring a woman to our doors, Gabriel Project responds with compassion, empathy, and support for choosing life.”

LEADERS FOR LIFE

A renewed commitment from the national Knights of Columbus to support pro-life programs will benefit ministries like Gabriel Project. The Catholic fraternal organization pledged at least \$5 million by June 2023 to support pro-life clinics and maternity houses.

For every \$500 a council gives to a qualified pregnancy resource center or maternity home, the Supreme Council will add \$100 — a 20 percent increase. Anticipating the fate of *Roe v. Wade*, “pregnancy resource centers will take center stage in the struggle for life,” Supreme Knight


Continued on Page 48



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Lizbeth Gonzalez holds her 5-month-old son, Leo, at their home in Aledo. Flourishing Tree of Life helped Lizbeth and her family shoulder the cost of diapers, formula, and more. (NTC/Juan Guajardo)

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Patrick E. Kelly told a gathering of state deputies June 10. “In a post-*Roe* world, we need to be there for mothers and children. They will need our help more than ever.”

Launched on July 1, Aid and Support After Pregnancy (ASAP) will help cover the rising cost of assisting families. The Knights’ initiative comes at a time when many centers are paying for increased security measures and repairs to buildings damaged by vandalism.

With fewer abortions being performed, “we have to shift our efforts to care for young families and mothers,” explained Chris Stark, Fort Worth general agent for the Knights. “One hundred percent of charitable dollars given to the Knights of Columbus ends up exactly where it is supposed to be.”

Over the years, the Knight’s long-running Ultrasound Initiative has placed more than 1,500 machines in pregnancy centers, including at Loreto House and Flourishing Tree. Members have also served more than 1.7 million volunteer hours and given more than \$18 million in funds and supplies to pregnancy centers from 2018 to 2022. Through their programs, the Knights of Columbus affirm the dignity and goodness of human life.

“We have always been leaders in this mission,” Stark enthused.

NEVER A RIGHT

It was another case argued before the Supreme Court, *Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Organization*, that triggered *Roe*’s demise. In a 6-3 decision, the court upheld a Mississippi law banning abortion after 15 weeks. The state asked the court not only to uphold its restriction but to rule on the constitutionality of abortion.

“It begs the question: Was there ever



a constitutional right? I don’t believe there ever was a right to abortion — constitutional or otherwise,” challenged David Upham, Ph.D., J.D., director of legal studies and an associate professor of politics at the University of Dallas. “The right existed exclusively in the federal judiciary.”

Some rights listed in the Constitution have a privacy component or secure certain types of privacy, such as the Fourth Amendment’s freedom from unwarranted search and seizure by the government. In 1973, the Supreme Court extended the right of privacy to include a woman’s right to an abortion.

“But there isn’t a general, indiscriminate right to privacy in the Constitution,” insisted the professor, who teaches a course on civil liberties that includes studying the history of the Supreme Court and its interpretation of the Constitution.

The importance of this November’s elections will add a degree of gravitas to the political discourse.

“The midterm elections will determine whether there is enough of a majority in the House and Senate to establish and expand [codify] the abortion license in the country,” Upham pointed out. “Conversely, if pro-life

candidates do well, they may pass laws expanding federal protections for the unborn.”

MORE SUPPORT PROMISED

Abortion in the U.S. has claimed the lives of more than 62 million babies since 1973. With states now allowed to protect mothers and their unborn children, Joe Pojman, Ph.D., executive director of Texas Alliance for Life, promises Texas will offer more support to struggling families.

Final judgment in the *Dobbs* case, issued July 26, means the Texas Human Life Protection Act, passed in 2021, went into effect August 25. The law protects the unborn beginning at conception and outlines harsh penalties for performing an abortion with exceptions for ectopic pregnancy or miscarriage.

“Now the pro-life movement can expend even greater resources toward providing compassionate alternatives to abortion for women with unplanned pregnancies,” Pojman said in a June 24 press release. “Our goal is to build a society where abortion is unthinkable and women with unplanned pregnancies take full advantage of the vast resources available to them.”

Assistance available in Texas includes a state appropriation of \$100 million for the Alternatives to Abortion program which provides services for women facing unplanned pregnancies whether they keep the baby or place it for adoption. Baby items, parenting classes, and job skills training are available for three years after the birth at nearly 200 approved pregnancy centers, maternity homes, and adoption agencies across the state. Hundreds of privately funded centers and church-based programs offer similar support.

Additionally, government-funded

Medicaid pays for more than half the births in Texas. The program — available to uninsured pregnant women with incomes up to 200 percent of the federal poverty level — provides prenatal, childbirth, and follow-up care for mothers and babies.

HELP WITHOUT JUDGMENT

Walking with Moms in Need, a campaign started in 2020 by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, is designed to make ordinary parishioners aware of the important information they can give a pregnant woman challenged by a difficult pregnancy.

The initiative addresses an appeal from Pope Francis to make parishes “islands of mercy in the midst of a sea of indifference.” While many pro-life programs are coordinated at the diocesan or regional level, women facing a crisis pregnancy are best reached at the local level.

“The campaign’s mission is to educate the people in the pews so they are aware of the resources available and help them identify the gaps that exist,” Schauf explained. “Everyone in the parish should know where to refer a pregnant woman in need.”

Statistics from abortion providers show that most women who choose abortion are poor, young, and unmarried. Like the Virgin Mary who “went in haste” to help her pregnant cousin and was greeted joyfully as Elizabeth’s baby leapt in her womb, “we need to do the same,” Schauf implored.

“We must receive women with joy when they share with us that they are in crisis because they are pregnant or parenting young children and need resources,” she explained. “And we must go in haste to help them not with judgment but support.” 🇺🇸

SAFE ENVIRONMENT

AMBIENTE SEGURO

To Report Misconduct:

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

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

To Report Abuse or Suspected Abuse:

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

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

For more information about our abuse prevention policies and programs, visit fwdioc.org/safe-environment

Para más información sobre nuestros programas de prevención de abuso, visite fwdioc.org/safe-environment



fun-sized lessons

For 42 years and counting, Sandy Townsend builds character, community, and joy at St. Andrew Catholic School

By Susan Moses

Sandy Townsend agreed to help for one year by teaching pre-K students at St. Andrew Catholic School. With any luck, the next year she hoped to teach third grade — her favorite grade from her past experience teaching second, third, and fourth grades in other schools.

That was 1980. Now, 42 years later, she's still singing, crafting, and playing games with the four-year-olds. She said, "I love it. I'll do it as long as they let me. I won't retire until they make me."

For someone with such deep roots at St. Andrew now, it's a bit of a miracle that Townsend was ever planted at the Fort Worth school.

Growing up the third of eight children in

Milwaukee, she planned to be a flight attendant, but her father persuaded her to try college for two years. Because she attended Catholic schools through grade 12, she chose to continue her education at a Catholic university.

Many Catholic universities, including Marquette, were nearby, but Townsend wanted to test her independence and enrolled 1,000 miles away from home at University of Dallas, where she studied elementary education.

It was there she met her future husband, Buddy, up from Texas A&M University for a blind date (she was initially matched with his friend). After she married the young soldier, she taught in Virginia, Korea, and Bryan, Texas. He was discharged from the U.S. Army and eventually took a job at General Dynamics, which brought the young family to Fort Worth.

For Townsend, employment at St. Andrew was a bit of a scouting expedition, as she wanted to have full knowledge and trust in the school where she would send her daughter and two sons.

Little did she know she would have such a lasting and significant impact — an impact that goes beyond the pre-K classroom into the entire school.

Kristen McAdoo, who taught pre-K with Townsend for 16 years, said Townsend builds community within the faculty with her generous, selfless nature.

For example, she opens her home and hosts a meal at the beginning and end of each school year for the faculty and staff, and she creates games to play and provides prizes at teachers' meetings. Not to mention the massive candy jar in the teachers' lounge, which Townsend fills every week.

"God is her center, and everything just flows from there," explained McAdoo. "It goes into her teaching; it comes through in everything she does, how she relates to others."

Before Melissa Kasmeier was associate superintendent of Catholic Schools, she

was principal of St. Andrew and quickly came to treasure Townsend.

Kasmeier said, "She has the gift of bringing joy to others in every encounter. All the students remember and love her, and she's incredibly supportive of all the teachers. Her loving, joyful presence makes a tremendous impact on the school, the students, and their families."

FUN AND GAMES

As a gift to the fellow faculty and to maintain relationships with her former students, she gives each teacher a break. On her days off, she will come to their class with a bag full of prizes and play games with the students for an hour in April or May.

"That's one of the greatest times for me, because I get to see them grow up," Townsend said.

Measured over the course of an entire school year, an hour of games is a blink of an eye, but the students cherish the experience.

Townsend recalled, "One year, walking across the courtyard at the beginning of the school year, a little girl stopped me and said, 'Do you still come and play games in third grade?'"

"I said, 'Absolutely,'" and she told the student she visits every grade, every class.

"'Oh good,' the student said with a big sigh of relief. 'You know, Mrs. Townsend, you can never die,'" recounted the teacher, laughing.

In fact, games aren't limited to St. Andrew students. Nolan Catholic High School students have returned for a bingo hour with her as they prepare to graduate from high school — 13 years after she taught them.

"I do believe you can learn everything through games and having fun," she said, such as being kind, following rules, and respecting others.

"There's so much they learn when you're not teaching," she continued. "Who you are, what you say, how you say it. So

much of it comes back to who we are, what God did for us."

Teaching boils down to two essentials in Mrs. Townsend's class: a love of God and a love of school.

On the last day of school before Christmas break, she told her class the benefits of having two weeks off — sleeping late and having plenty of free time.

A student responded, "We can't come to school? That's not fair."

FAITH AND FORTITUDE

What keeps Townsend teaching for 42 years and counting? The students. She has five grandchildren, but her husband jokes that each year she gets a new set of grandkids.

"There's a lot of joy at four," she said, explaining the students' outlook has helped her during difficult times, such as the death of her parents. "Their joy gets you through. It's really hard to be sad around four-year-olds."

She loves listening to their conversations, pulling out pearls of wisdom such as, "You can't be the line leader if you don't know where you're going."

It tugs on her heart to hear them initiate prayer for a classmate whose dog has died, or to see a student draw a letter to God to express her sorrow over a grandfather's death.

The longtime teacher said she "puts God into everything we do" in the classroom. "In all honesty, I'm a firm believer in Catholic schools."

As for herself, the lifelong Catholic appreciates the faith passed down from her parents, especially the Eucharist and quiet prayer during a hectic day.

Prayer, she said, "is a time to settle down. I stay so busy that it's really good to have [prayer] every night, and you start the day with 'This is for you. Help me get through it.'"

A generous God answers her morning supplication, and her cup runneth over with joy, love, and the laughter of children. 🇺🇸



The three steps

“**T**homas said to Him, ‘Master, we do not know where you are going; how can we know the way?’ Jesus said to him, ‘I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me’” (*John 14:5-6*).

Many of us relate to Thomas. “Lord, where are you? We do not see you. How do we know the way to follow you? Where do we go?”

Jesus’ response to us is the same that it was for Thomas. “I am the way, the truth, and the life.”

Jesus’ message to His followers does not include a map, nor a simple list of truths, nor a one-size-fits-all guide to life. His message is simple not because it lacks depth, significance, and challenge. His message is simple because ultimately it is a Person. His message is Himself, the Savior of the world, the Lover of our souls, our one and only Hope, our only Way, our one Truth, our Life.

To follow Jesus means to follow Him as a disciple: *the way*. It means to seek to know Him, to learn about Him, to find Him, and eternally relate to Him more deeply: *the truth*. It means to live our lives in the way He showed us by giving ourselves away completely to others. To give is to die, and to die is to live: *the life*.



Fr. Brett Metzler

If Jesus’ place in our lives does not include all three of these, something is missing. If we do our best to avoid sin, attend Mass, and avail ourselves of the

sacraments, our life speaks of being a good Catholic and a good disciple. But do we know Him? Do we give ourselves away as He did? If we spend much time in prayer, in learning about Church teaching and the spiritual life, and studying the Church’s theology, we are doing well to seek Christ as the Truth. But does this truth take root and transform us into

people who actively seek ways to serve? Especially those whom we most do not want to serve? Do we allow ourselves to carry the cross of other people? Or do we run away and distract ourselves?

As vocation director, my task is to follow Christ as the way, truth, and life. In the Gospels of *Luke* and *Matthew*, we hear the Lord say, “The harvest is abundant, but the laborers are few. Therefore ask the master of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.” This means praying to God for more vocations, but it also means praying that we become better laborers. It means facing the difficult question: Do I actually labor in the Lords’ harvest? Do I encourage young men to become priests, the shepherds of our

harvest? Do I really believe that the Lord is willing to work with and through me if I make Him — in *my life* — the way, the truth, and the life?

Our diocese has 26 seminarians studying for the priesthood. This is an incredible blessing. These men have pursued the Lord as disciples. They have learned about Him and His harvest, and what it means to be His laborers. They have said yes to pick up the cross and serve in a way that is public, profound, difficult, and truly will save souls.

Our response to these men should be gratitude and prayer, of course. But even more so, it should be inspiration. If a healthy young man who has grown up in today’s culture, which tells him everything the opposite of the priesthood will make him happy and still chooses to make Christ his way, his truth, and his life, this means that the Gospel is real, it is true, and that Jesus Christ has not given up on His Church. Let this give us hope, and let us forever seek to become greater laborers for His harvest. 🇺🇸

Ordained to the priesthood in 2021, Father Brett Metzler serves as Director of Vocations for the Catholic Diocese of Fort Worth and priest in residence at St. Philip the Apostle in Flower Mound.



Still more to teach

HE IS: Father Jim Gigliotti, TOR, pastor of St. Andrew Parish in Fort Worth since 2017 and pastor of St. Maria Goretti Parish in Arlington from 1996 to 2015. He has also been a pastor in the Florida cities of St. Petersburg, Venice, and Sarasota.

GROWING UP: He and his three siblings grew up in Punxsutawney, Penn., and they were very involved in their parish and Catholic schools.

BROTHER FIRST: The Franciscan friars who visited his parish impressed him because “they talked to us ... they were teachers and accustomed to dealing with high school boys.” He took vows as a Franciscan brother on July 1, 1968, and earned a teaching degree. (He also holds master’s degrees in library science and pastoral counseling.)

PRIEST NEXT: After a few years of teaching high school, he felt a call to the priesthood and received permission from his superior to enter seminary. He was ordained May 10, 1980.

He taught a total of 17 years — business, English, journalism, and theology — and served in parishes in Pennsylvania and New Jersey on the weekends.

TRADITION: Fr. Gigliotti embraces Catholic traditions, including Divine Mercy Sunday, Corpus Christi processions, and Eucharistic Adoration. “We’ve just started the Five First Saturdays [at St. Andrew Parish]. Why? Because people asked for it. Young people love the traditions. Then you preach about it — it’s teaching, it’s modeling, it’s explaining our tradition.”

LET US ADORE: Under his watch, St. Andrew added a Eucharistic Adoration chapel, and a new school wing will house the Blessed Sacrament. “Eucharistic Adoration is such a sustenance to the people of God. A lot of grace comes through it.”

SCHOOL OF THOUGHT: “I’m a big proponent of Catholic education on all levels.”

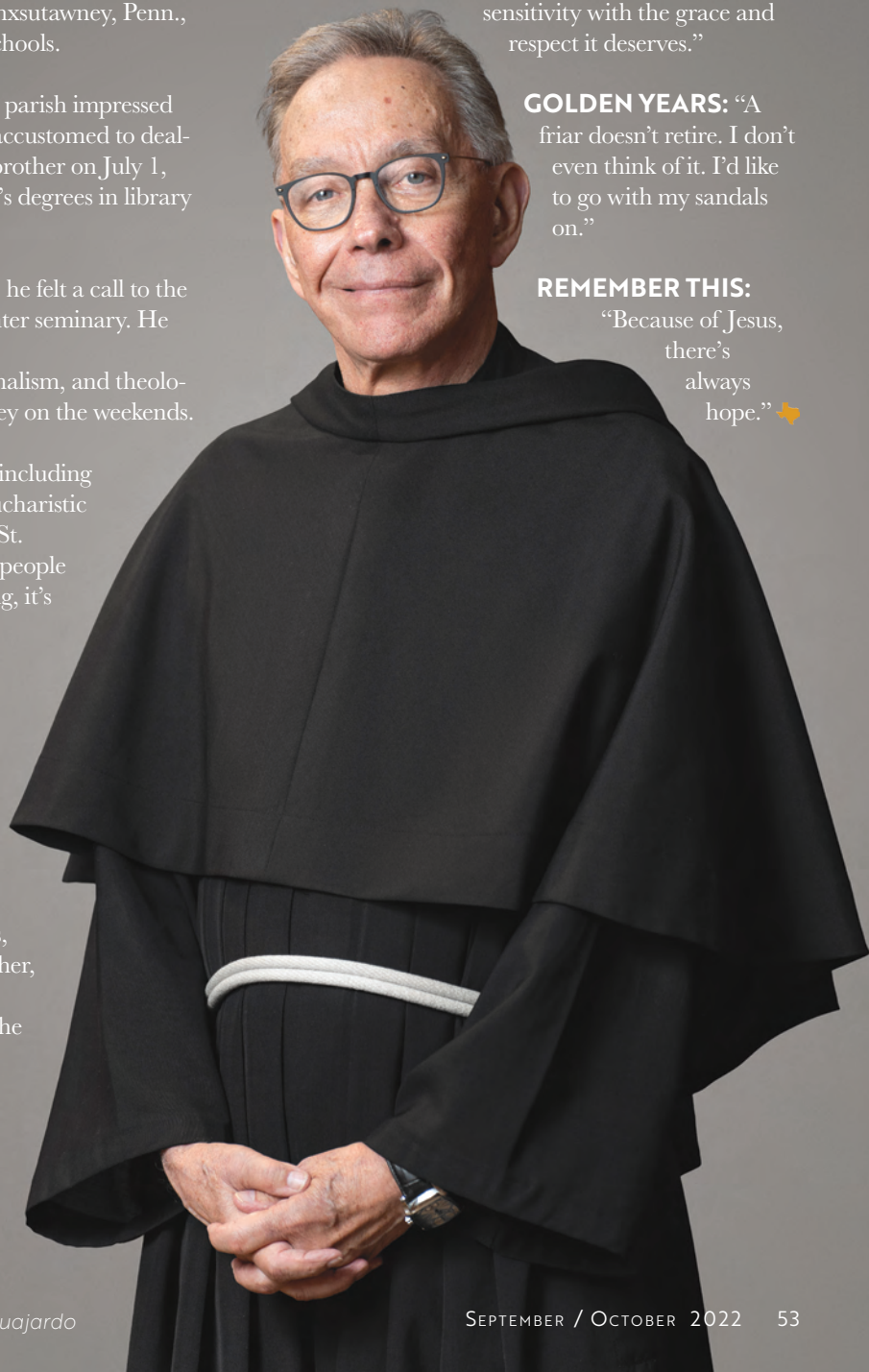
In learning Scripture, tradition, and academic subjects, students “get a nice sense of the always-present God — Father, Son, and Holy Spirit — and the difference that it makes when we develop a relationship with Him, particularly in the Eucharist.”

MAMA MARY: “A relationship with the Blessed Mother as our mother is so rich for us. To have the Mother of God be our mother, too, is such comfort.”

CONFESSION: Fr. Gigliotti offers Reconciliation after each Mass. “That sacrament is a moment of such vulnerability for a soul. What I listen to is the struggle with sin and grace, the struggle of God’s mercy and fear. It’s a real, honest moment, and a priest had better treat that sensitivity with the grace and respect it deserves.”

GOLDEN YEARS: “A friar doesn’t retire. I don’t even think of it. I’d like to go with my sandals on.”

REMEMBER THIS: “Because of Jesus, there’s always hope.” ✨



ESTAMOS AQUÍ PARA servir

La Diócesis de Fort Worth celebra la ordenación
de diez nuevos diáconos permanentes

Por Joan Kurkowski-Gillen

Rosalie Tolentino miraba dos fotografías enmarcadas mientras esperaba dentro de la Parroquia de Sta. Elizabeth Ann Seton el 10 de agosto para presenciar cómo el obispo Michael Olson ordenaba a diez candidatos al Orden Sagrado del Diaconado. Su esposo, Davy Tolentino, era uno de ellos.

Durante los siete años de formación y dos intentos previos de completar la formación diaconal, los Tolentinos perdieron dos hijos adultos jóvenes, Franklin y Brittny, a causa de una enfermedad cardíaca congénita. Llevar sus fotos a la celebración de la ordenación fue muy significativo para ellos.

“Es el momento de Dios y sigue siendo una ocasión alegre porque estamos aquí hoy”, dijo Rosalie Tolentino, que asistió a la liturgia vespertina con su hijo Michel.

Ella recuerda cómo su esposo completaba las tareas de teología desde la habitación del hospital de su hija Brittny. Ella era paciente de trasplante de corazón y le insistió todo el tiempo a su padre que debía continuar sus estudios para el diaconado.

“Como diácono, creo que escuchará bien a los que están sufriendo y

experimentando luchas semejantes en la vida”, explicó Rosalie Tolentino, feligresa de Nuestra Señora Reina de la Paz de Wichita Falls. “Él podría servir de ejemplo para los futuros diáconos que consideran imposible hacer malabarismos con la vida familiar, el trabajo y el programa del diaconado”.

Junto a Davy Paul Tolentino fueron ordenados Dennis Brent Catlin, David Michael Kinch, Francisco Javier Leal de la Fuente, Alfred Matthew Mosco, Mark David Pierson, David Robinett, Francisco Joel Rodríguez, Jesús Valdez Morales y Sergio Vera Orozco. Ésta es la sexta clase de hombres ordenados al diaconado permanente de la Diócesis de Fort Worth. Los recién ordenados diáconos se unen a los 95 diáconos activos que actualmente trabajan en las parroquias.

La Misa de ordenación tuvo lugar en el día de la Festividad de San Lorenzo, diácono mártir y patrono de los diáconos, y fue concelebrada por el Obispo Michael Olson junto con el Padre Jonathan Wallis, Vicario General; Monseñor E. James Hart, Canciller y Moderador de la Curia; el Padre James Flynn, párroco de Sta. Elizabeth Ann Seton; y numerosos sacerdotes de la Iglesia local y de otras diócesis. Más de 1,100 invitados y

clérigos asistieron a la celebración que se transmitió en vivo a través del sitio web de la Diócesis.

El diaconado se remonta a la Iglesia primitiva. Los diáconos permanentes comparten la gracia sacramental y el carácter del Sacramento del Orden, pero están ordenados al ministerio del servicio, no al sacerdocio. La palabra diácono se deriva del griego “diakonia” que significa “servicio” y subraya el llamado diaconal a servir a los demás como Cristo. Los diáconos permanentes, casados o solteros, difieren de los diáconos de transición que se preparan para el sacerdocio.

El Obispo habló en su homilía sobre las acciones desinteresadas y el martirio de San Lorenzo. Explicó además el triple ministerio de un diácono que comprende proclamar el Evangelio, asistir en el altar y realizar actos de caridad.

“Dependiendo de las circunstancias, una u otra de estas funciones puede recibir más énfasis en el trabajo de un diácono en particular, pero estos tres ministerios están inseparablemente unidos como uno solo al servicio del plan redentor de Dios”, aseveró el Obispo Olson y citó al Papa San Juan Pablo II, quien se dirigió a los diáconos permanentes de los Estados Unidos en el



El Obispo Michael Olson reza por los diáconos recién ordenados durante la Misa de Ordenación al Diaconado el 10 de agosto en Sta. Elizabeth Ann Seton. (NTC/Jayme Donahue)

1987.

El anuncio de la Palabra de Dios conduce inevitablemente al culto eucarístico en el altar, que, a su vez, desarrolla una nueva forma de vivir que expresa el amor a Dios y al prójimo a través de los actos de caridad.

Mediante el ministerio diaconal los pobres y los que estaban anteriormente desatendidos “reciben el rico don de pertenecer a la familia de Dios”, agregó Monseñor Olson.

El diaconado permanente fue restaurado en la Iglesia por el Papa San Pablo VI después del Concilio Vaticano II. El Obispo Olson dijo que el difunto

pontífice llamó al ministerio “una fuerza motriz” que sirve a la Iglesia en un mundo caído donde los pobres no tienen un lugar al que pertenecer y los seres humanos son valorados sólo por su productividad.

“Desde el llamado de los primeros diáconos registrado en el Libro de los Hechos de los Apóstoles, ésta ha sido la vocación de los diáconos: recordar a la Iglesia, a través del servicio consciente, de que los pobres tienen el primer lugar de pertenencia, incluso cuando no parezcan encajar”.

El ver la manera que el difunto diácono Emilio “Popo” González sirvió a

su prójimo en Denton inspiró a Francisco Leal de la Fuente a solicitar y consagrarse para este ministerio.

“Él fue un ejemplo para mí de cómo servir como diácono en la vida de una comunidad”, dijo y señaló que una escuela preescolar local, Gonzalez School for Young Children (Escuela González para Niños Pequeños), fue nombrada en honor a Popo por su entrega y servicio a los demás.

“Popo visitó cárceles, hospitales, hogares de ancianos y, a veces, se involucró en asuntos políticos”, agregó de la Fuente.

El nuevo diácono espera servir en el altar, difundir el mensaje de Jesús y convertirse en un vínculo entre el sacerdote y los fieles.

“Quiero visitar a los enfermos, los encarcelados y mostrar el amor de Jesús a la comunidad”, explicó. “Estoy emocionado de comenzar esta nueva jornada y dar el próximo paso en mi vida. Popo me dijo que no me preocupara por

VEA LAS FOTOS!



Vea más fotos de la ordenación diaconal visitando NorthTexasCatholic.org y haciendo clic en la pestaña “Galerías” en la parte superior.



CONTINÚA EN LA PÁGINA 56

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lo que diga la gente, sino que confiara en Jesús y escuchara mi corazón”.

Durante el antiguo Rito de Ordenación, cada candidato prometió cumplir con las responsabilidades que conlleva el ministerio y prometió obediencia al Obispo y sus sucesores. Luego, se postraron ante el altar, simbolizando su sumisión a la voluntad de Dios, mientras la congregación rezaba las Letanías de los Santos.

El momento de la ordenación tuvo lugar con la imposición de manos; gesto que usaron los apóstoles cuando eligieron a los primeros diáconos. Después de colocar sus manos sobre la cabeza de cada candidato para invocar los dones del Espíritu Santo, Monseñor Olson concluyó el rito con la Plegaria

de Consagración. Los nuevos diáconos fueron entonces vestidos con la estola diaconal y la dalmática por otros clérigos.

Los nuevos diáconos, ya usando las vestimentas diaconales por primera vez, se arrodillaron ante el Obispo para recibir el Libro del Evangelio mientras el prelado pronunciaba las siguientes palabras: “Cree lo que lees; enseña lo que crees; y practica lo que enseñas.”

Además de asistir durante la Misa y predicar la homilía, un diácono puede bautizar, atestiguar y bendecir los matrimonios, y presidir las liturgias fúnebres.

Juan Rendón, director de la formación diaconal, dijo que este grupo de diáconos permanentes comenzó su formación teológica, pastoral y espiritual en el 2017 para ser “fieles a la misión de la Iglesia y fieles a la proclamación de la

Buena Nueva”.

Se espera que los nuevos diáconos, que provienen de diversas parroquias, asuman un papel más amplio en el ejercicio de su ministerio, especialmente en las áreas de la capellanía hospitalaria, el trabajo de hospicio y la preparación sacramental. El cincuenta por ciento de ellos son bilingües.

“Algunos sacerdotes han pedido diáconos bilingües para ayudar con los bautismos, la preparación para el matrimonio y las visitas al hospital”, continuó Rendón. “Los nuevos diáconos son hombres talentosos y dotados. Para mí ha sido una bendición y un gran honor caminar con ellos desde el primer día”.

La formación para la próxima clase de hombres que aspiran a convertirse en diáconos permanentes comenzó el 13 de agosto. ✝

El diácono recién ordenado Joel Rodríguez recibe el Libro de los Evangelios del obispo Michael Olson durante la liturgia de ordenación. (NTC/Juan Guajardo)



Alcanzando a todos

Se establece nueva parroquia en el norte de Fort Worth para servir a la creciente población

Por Susan Moses

“No es fácil abrir una parroquia nueva”, dijo el Diácono Daniel Zavala, coordinador designado de la comunidad parroquial de la recién anunciada Parroquia de Santa Teresa de Calcuta en el extremo norte de Fort Worth.

En medio de todas las tareas que estaba realizando para planificar la Misa inaugural, el Diácono Zavala elogió al Obispo Michael Olson por su decisión de abrir la nonagésima segunda parroquia de la Diócesis en esta área de rápido crecimiento.

“Estoy orgulloso de Monseñor Olson por hacer lo que debemos hacer y poner en primer lugar la necesidad de la Misa y la Eucaristía”, dijo el diácono.

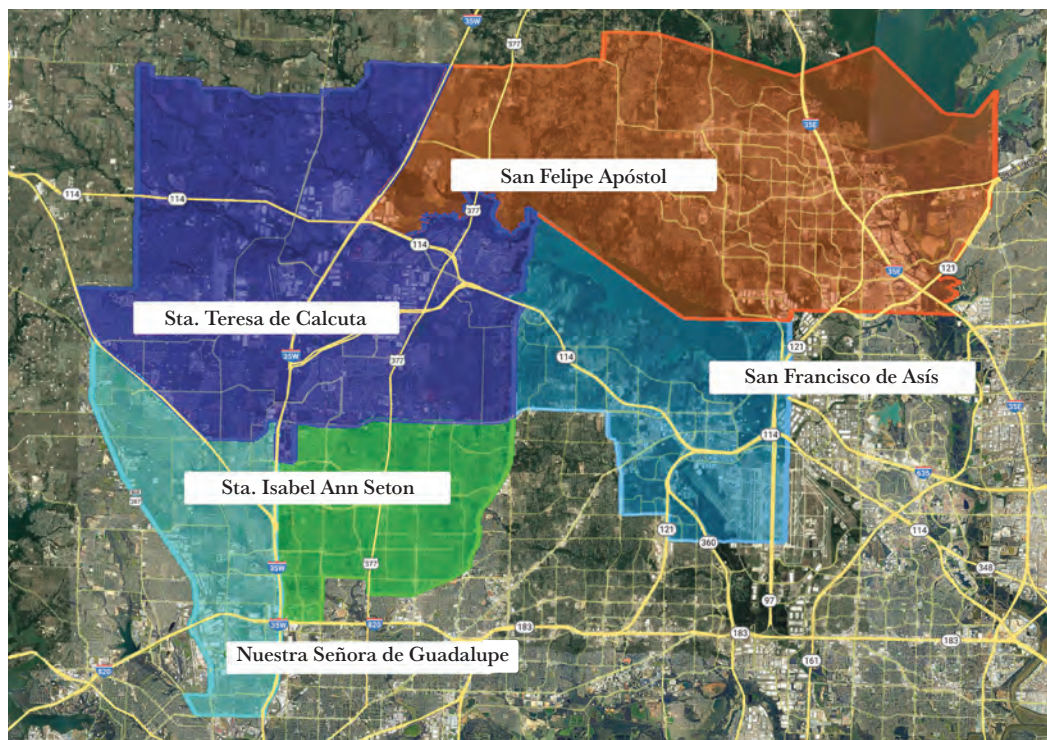
La iglesia estará ubicada en 13517 Alta Vista Road, al norte de U.S. Highway 170 en Fort Worth, en un terreno de aproximadamente 31 acres (12 hectáreas).

La nueva parroquia se estableció en una Misa celebrada por el Obispo Olson el 4 de septiembre en en el mismo lugar que se ubicará. En este terreno se encuentran actualmente varios edificios temporeros que fueron en un momento dado el hogar de la antigua escuela secundaria Nuestra Señora de la Gracia.

La nueva parroquia está “en el lugar perfecto”, dijo el Diácono Zavala. “La gente de esa zona tiene que conducir a veces muy lejos para ir a Misa”.

Tom Ross, gerente sénior del programa de construcción, reconoce que el crecimiento de la población de los condados de Tarrant y Denton ha tenido un gran auge. De hecho, esta área se considera como una de las de más rápido crecimiento de todos los Estados Unidos.

“Podemos dar cabida a la necesidad



El mapa muestra los límites de la parroquia de Santa Teresa de Calcuta en púrpura. El área se basa en sectores que anteriormente estaban dentro de los límites de las parroquias de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe, Santa Isabel Ann Seton, San Francisco de Asís y San Felipe Apóstol.

de una parroquia católica allí. Las parroquias actuales de esa área están llenas a capacidad”, añadió.

El Diácono Zavala apuntó que la instalación actual tiene capacidad para unas cien personas. Se espera que la nueva parroquia ofrezca una Misa de vigilia los sábados y una Misa dominical a partir del fin de semana del 10 al 11 de septiembre.

La primera estructura permanente que se construirá será una instalación de usos múltiples que cuenta con una oficina, aulas para las clases y un salón parroquial donde se celebrará la Misa. La iglesia se construirá en en los próximos años.

La nueva parroquia se formó a partir

de varios sectores que actualmente se encuentran dentro de los límites de la Parroquia de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe de Fort Worth, la Parroquia de San Felipe Apóstol de Flower Mound, la Parroquia de Sta. Isabel Ann Seton de Keller y la Parroquia de San Francisco de Asís de Grapevine.

La Parroquia de Santa Teresa de Calcuta comprende las ciudades de Fort Worth, Justin, Roanoke, Trophy Club, Haslet y Keller.

Información actualizada con respecto a la Parroquia de Santa Teresa de Calcuta, incluido el horario de las Misas, están disponibles en fwdioc.org/parish-finder. 📍

LLAMADO POR DIOS

La coronación de un anhelado servicio a Dios,
el Padre Ariel Sánchez, CORC, celebra 25 años de sacerdocio

Por Violeta Rocha

Cuando tenía apenas diez años sintió el llamado de Dios al sacerdocio. Desde entonces, el que es actualmente Padre Ariel Sánchez, CORC, comenzó a ahorrar junto a su madre “vendiendo leche de vaca” para poder entrar al seminario. Pese a que pasaron muchos años antes de lograrlo, hoy se encuentra a unos días de celebrar sus 25 años de sacerdocio y es el párroco de San Mateo de Arlington.

El Padre Sánchez asegura que “Dios nunca me dejó” y que sólo le embarga “un profundo agradecimiento a Dios” por los 25 años de una vida sacerdotal llena de bendiciones.

El Padre Ariel nació en Jalpan de Serra, Querétaro, que es “una de las misiones que fueron fundadas por el fraile franciscano San Junípero Serra”. El sacerdote remarca y resalta la profunda fe y servicio de su madre, Doña María Dolores, que, según él, inspiró su vocación. Cuenta cómo él la acompañaba a dar catecismo, a pesar de que ella no sabía leer ni escribir. “Ella tenía una memoria brillante y una gran vocación de servicio”, añadió.

La escasez de recursos económicos, su padre enfermo y que vivía preocupado por proveer para sus cuatro hermanos, le impidieron al Padre Sánchez asistir a la escuela. Aún más, le impedía realizar su anhelo de “irse al seminario”, que se había



El P. Ariel Sánchez prepara el incienso para bendecir la imagen de San Mateo durante una procesión eucarística en septiembre de 2021 en San Mateo en Arlington. (NTC/Ben Torres)

acrecentado tras ver la fotografía de su tío materno recién ordenado como sacerdote.

El Padre Sánchez concluyó la primaria abierta a los 16 años y más tarde, ingresó al seminario de los Misioneros de Cristo Redentor, pero decidió dejarlo, pues creía que tal vez el sacerdocio no era su vocación. “No obstante, Dios nunca me dejó de Su mano”, aseveró. El llamado de Dios lo siguió. Se puso a trabajar en el campo y un día el párroco de su parroquia en Carolina del Norte, a donde migró tras dejar el seminario, le pidió su ayuda para dar clases de Biblia y apoyar en el ministerio hispano “que apenas

comenzaba”.

Durante unas vacaciones a México visitó a su tío sacerdote, que para entonces era el director Espiritual del Seminario de la Confraternidad Sacerdotal de Operarios del Reino de Cristo, lo que resultó en su entrada al seminario, logrando así su gran anhelo el 26 de septiembre de 1997, día en que recibió el Orden Sagrado en la Catedral de Querétaro.

“Fue una gran emoción. Le pedía a Dios que permitiera que mis padres me vieran ordenado sacerdote y me lo concedió,” compartió. Su padre falleció dos años después de su ordenación y su



Padre Ariel Sánchez, CORC, en la Parroquia de San Mateo. (NTC/Ben Torres)

madre, cinco años más tarde.

Estar en la Diócesis de Fort Worth como miembro de la Confraternidad es para el Padre Sánchez “cumplir uno de los carismas de nuestro fundador: ir a las diócesis que más lo necesitan y en las que somos solicitados. Estamos llamados al servicio. Aquí estamos con gusto y al cien por ciento, sirviéndole a la Iglesia como Confraternidad,” aseveró. Dijo además que su mayor satisfacción es “ser instrumento de Dios para nuestros hermanos a través de la entrega constante”.

La Confraternidad Sacerdotal Operarios del Reino de Cristo fue fundada en el 1962 en México por el Padre Enrique Amezcua Medina. La Confraternidad ha servido en la Diócesis de Fort Worth desde hace ocho años. Hay actualmente un total de seis sacerdotes pertenecientes a la Confraternidad que sirven en la Diócesis.

“Estos 25 años de servicio a Dios significan para mí la coronación de un esfuerzo común: el de mis padres, mi

familia, la Confraternidad y yo, porque no fue un camino fácil llegar al sacerdocio”, dijo el Padre Ariel Sánchez, que es un fiel devoto de la Santísima Virgen María, del Sagrado Corazón de Jesús y de las Benditas Ánimas del Purgatorio.

Celebrar los 25 años de sacerdocio junto a la comunidad de San Mateo, “que es una comunidad activa, será una gran alegría”. “Me da mucha alegría y siento gran orgullo al ver llegar a familias completas que buscan a Dios” apuntó el Padre Ariel, quien desde su ordenación ha servido en California, Puerto Rico y fue además formador del Seminario de la Confraternidad Sacerdotal Operarios del Reino de Cristo en Querétaro por dos años. Desde hace cinco años, sirve en la Diócesis de Fort Worth, primero como Vicario, y desde hace un año, como párroco de San Mateo.

Diana Castruita, la administradora de la Parroquia de San Mateo, resalta la cercanía del Padre Ariel a toda la comunidad parroquial y menciona que

siempre los invita a todos a trabajar en conjunto. “El Padre Ariel nos dice en las juntas pastorales que ‘tenemos que motivar a nuestros miembros, que ésta es nuestra parroquia y que tenemos que cuidarla,’” apuntó Castruita. El Padre Ariel “motivó a todos los grupos a recaudar fondos para lograr arreglar nuestra cocina”, agregó. Señala además que también se arreglaron las salas de catecismo, que requerían inmediata atención.

“El Padre Ariel hace mucho por la parroquia, trabajamos juntos y en armonía. Transmite una gran paz y se siente la presencia de Dios en él. Cuando un párroco te abre el corazón, todos vamos a estar dispuestos a ayudar”, dijo Maru Franco, feligrés de San Mateo por 32 años. “Nos sentimos muy amados por él y nos hace sentir que somos únicos”, aseveró, y agregó que con su disponibilidad, trabajo silencioso y gran paciencia “nos deja saber que está siempre con nosotros”. 🇺🇸

ESPÍRITU DE SERVICIO

Padre Eugene Nyong celebra 25 años
de alimentando a los feligreses

Por Susan Moses

Jim Burkett supo que se llevaría bien con el Padre Eugene Nyong desde el día que lo conoció.

Burkett lleva muchos años como sacristán de la Parroquia de Santa María de Graham.

Está acostumbrado a preparar el altar para la celebración de la Misa según las preferencias de cada sacerdote. Cuando el Padre Nyong llegó a la parroquia, Burkett se presentó al recién llegado sacerdote y le preguntó: “¿Cómo le gustaría que se prepare el altar para la Misa?”

El Padre Nyong estiró la mano, tomó el libro de la *Instrucción General del Misal Romano* y dijo, “Así es como hacemos la Misa. La haremos bien como se debe hacer”.

“Y eso me hace la vida más fácil”, comentó Burkett y sonrió.

El párroco de Santa María y Santa Teresa en Olney celebrará el 14 de septiembre el vigésimo quinto aniversario de su sacerdocio a casi 7,000 millas de la ciudad en que fue ordenado en la Diócesis de Uyo en Nigeria.

A través de esos 25 años el Padre Nyong ha celebrado Misa en varios idiomas: en inglés, español, francés, ngambaye y en su lengua materna, el ibibio. No obstante, la celebra siempre correctamente de manera respetuosa, atenta y reverente.

Explicó: “La liturgia no me pertenece. Es la Iglesia la que me ha dado la facultad de celebrarla y es una celebración pública; no es algo en lo que pueda presentar lo que me apetezca. La



El P. Eugene Nyong en una Misa de ordenación sacerdotal celebrada por el Obispo Michael Olson en la Iglesia Católica de los Mártires Vietnamitas el 22 de mayo de 2021. (NTC/ Juan Guajardo)

gente tiene derecho a una celebración adecuada de la liturgia, por lo que tengo que respetar su derecho”.

Además de adherirse a las normas litúrgicas, sus feligreses pueden confiar en que van a recibir una homilía bien preparada. Padre Nyong dedica mucho tiempo y estudio antes de dar cada homilía, porque “la gente tiene la necesidad y el deseo; las personas tienen derecho a ser alimentadas con la Palabra de Dios. Yo debo prepararme bien para darles ese alimento”.

“Yo me esfuerzo y trabajo duro en ello”, describió. Se pregunta siempre, “¿Cuál es la clave para abrir las Escrituras y recibir el mensaje?” Y una vez que encuentra la clave, le resulta fácil escribir el resto de su homilía.

Vickie Keller, directora voluntaria de educación religiosa de la Parroquia

de Santa María, está muy agradecida de las “impresionantes homilías” del Padre Nyong. “Él da siempre en el clavo. Se nota que tiene una fe profunda; nos sentimos muy bendecidos de tenerlo como nuestro párroco”.

No es fácil ver a primera instancia las bendiciones en la vida del Padre Nyong. Los 25 años de sacerdocio del Padre Nyong lo han llevado por experiencias que la mayoría de los sacerdotes diocesanos no experimentan.

Recién ordenado como sacerdote, su obispo lo asignó al trabajo misionero en Chad, donde tuvo que aprender en poco tiempo francés y el idioma local de ngambaye. El país estaba en medio de disturbios civiles. Los rebeldes secuestraron y torturaron a uno de los sacerdotes que trabajaba en la misma catedral que servía de base al



Padre Eugene Nyong en la Parroquia de Santa María de Graham. (NTC/Ben Torres)

Padre Nyong. Otro sacerdote conducía su camioneta cuando los rebeldes se apoderaron de la misma. La seguridad personal del Padre Nyong a menudo estaba en riesgo y admitió que su labor allí fue muy difícil.

Regresó a su propia diócesis luego de cuatro años, donde se topó personalmente con la violencia. Durante un robo a la rectoría, recibió un disparo en la cabeza y la espalda. Aunque una bala pasó cerca de su médula espinal, afortunadamente no resultó lesionado de forma permanente.

Después de varios años en su diócesis, su obispo lo envió a Texas para servir en la ciudad de Austin. Pasó luego a la Diócesis de Fort Worth y su primera asignación fue la de Vicario Parroquial de San Francisco de Asís de Grapevine. Durante su estadía allí viajó a muchas parroquias de la Diócesis para celebrar la Misa.

Al llegar a Graham en el 2016 agregó el español a su banco de idiomas. “Hay que estar siempre dispuesto a aprender, aprender y aprender”, comentó riéndose.

El Padre Nyong es el tercero de siete hijos “en una familia de oración. Mi mamá y mi papá no saldrían para cualquier lugar, ni se acostarían, sin llamarnos a todos a orar en familia”.

Asistió a escuelas católicas locales y él y sus cuatro hermanos fueron monaguillos. Se vestía a veces como sacerdote en su casa e imitaba celebrar la Misa.

Cuando ingresó al seminario menor como estudiante de secundaria para discernir el sacerdocio, le pidió a Dios que hiciera evidente su vocación: si no estaba destinado a convertirse en médico, la señal sería que su calificación de biología no era lo suficientemente alta. Eso fue lo que le sirvió de respuesta a la oración del Padre Nyong.

“Ser sacerdote es servir”, según el Padre Nyong, “Es un llamado. Nadie tiene derecho a ello”.

“Ese espíritu de servicio es importante para mí. Lograr que la gente conozca a Dios, lo acepte, se bautice, eso me da alegría”, aseveró el sacerdote.

Le gusta especialmente que los jóvenes se involucren y se arraiguen en la Iglesia. Los anima a que sirvan como monaguillos después de recibir su Primera Comunión y sirvan como lectores después de la Confirmación.

“Me gusta inspirarlos. No es la Iglesia de mamá o la Iglesia de papá, sino que los jóvenes tienen un lugar dentro de la Iglesia y pueden realizar numerosos ministerios”,

agregó.

Olivia Olvera, la Directora de la Pastoral Juvenil y Familiar de ambas parroquias, señaló que el Padre Nyong pasa con frecuencia por las reuniones de educación religiosa o grupos de jóvenes “para que lo vean; para que sepan que él está disponible a escucharles y ayudarles, y que les presta atención. Es un párroco muy bueno”.

Él quiere que todos los feligreses, no importa la edad que tengan, se den cuenta de que “Dios nos ama a todos y cada uno de nosotros sabiendo que somos pecadores, pero aún así nos ama. Con tan sólo estar de acuerdo, aceptar y cooperar con Su gracia, seguimos siendo el pueblo amado de Dios”.

“La fe no es sólo algo que profesamos. Tenemos que vivirla. No podemos desconectar nuestra vida de nuestra fe”, continuó diciendo; y agregó que “Dios es la única fuente de la verdad”.

Las parroquias de Santa María y Santa Teresa celebrarán el 24 de septiembre el ‘s’ del Padre Nyong con una Misa y una cena en honor a sus bodas de plata como sacerdote y celebrar a su vez el centenario de Santa María como parroquia. ✝

CORRESPONSABILIDAD EN ACCIÓN

La Campaña Diocesana Anual proporciona apoyo esencial para parroquias y escuelas

Por Susan Moses

Si desea tener un ejemplo de cómo la Campaña Diocesana Anual de la Fundación de Avance de la Diócesis de Fort Worth cumple su misión, el Padre Joseph Moreno puede darle al menos tres.

Por primera vez, el grupo parroquial que comprende San Judas Tadeo de Burkburnett, la Parroquia de San Pablo de Electra y la Parroquia de Cristo Rey de Iowa Park recibió una subvención operativa de \$34,000 de la Campaña Diocesana Anual para contratar un Director de la Pastoral de Jóvenes y Vida Familiar.

El Padre Moreno, el administrador pastoral de las parroquias, explicó que la subvención ayudará a enriquecer la fe en sus parroquias del condado de Wichita. Desde que comenzó la pandemia del coronavirus en el 2020, la pastoral de jóvenes se había limitado a las clases de educación religiosa. “Agregar un ministro para la pastoral de jóvenes permitirá a los adolescentes tomar lo que han aprendido en la educación religiosa, usarlo para aplicarlo a sus vidas y experimentar la conversión y la relación con Cristo. Lo necesitamos desesperadamente”, aseveró.

El ministerio de jóvenes y vida familiar “ayudará a llevarnos donde el Espíritu Santo nos guíe”, agregó. Él espera que las parroquias agreguen

programas de servicio, reuniones de oración y discipulado, espiritualidad, compañerismo y vocaciones y, tal vez, un viaje misionero.

El Padre Moreno fue ordenado al sacerdocio en el 2021 y cita el apoyo a los seminaristas como un ejemplo del impacto de la Campaña Diocesana Anual de la Diócesis. La Campaña Anual aportó \$240,000 el año pasado para los gastos de matrícula y alojamiento de 23 seminaristas. La campaña de este año dará apoyo a 26 seminaristas.

Los seminaristas de la Diócesis de Fort Worth cuentan con la bendición de poder concentrarse en su formación académica y espiritual porque la Diócesis paga por completo su educación y sus gastos de manutención. Mientras que el Padre Moreno estaba en el seminario, conoció a hombres de otras diócesis que tenían que tomar trabajos de verano o encontrar benefactores para pagar sus estudios.

Por el contrario, los seminaristas de la Diócesis de Fort Worth pueden continuar su formación en el verano con tareas ministeriales o clases de español.

Seminaristas de otras diócesis con frecuencia no tienen seguro médico e incurren en deuda por razones médicas mientras están en el seminario, según el Padre Moreno.



Estudiantes de la Escuela Católica Santa María en Gainesville en septiembre de 2021. La Campaña Diocesana Anual provee asistencia para la matrícula de estudiantes en las 17 escuelas diocesanas. (NTC/Juan Guajardo)

Los seminaristas de Fort Worth “son muy afortunados y la aportación de la Campaña Anual constituye una gran bendición”, agregó.

Las tres parroquias de Padre Moreno fueron el año pasado las primeras en la Diócesis que alcanzaron sus objetivos con respecto a las donaciones y la participación de sus feligreses, lo que constituye un tercer ejemplo del impacto de la Campaña Diocesana Anual.

“Estoy muy orgulloso de ellos. Es mayordomía en acción, es practicar la corresponsabilidad y compartir los dones que Dios nos ha dado”, dijo sobre sus feligreses, a quienes describió como personas buenas y trabajadoras: rancheros, agricultores, trabajadores de la industria petrolera y aviadores de la cercana Base de la Fuerza Aérea Sheppard.

El sacerdote reconoció que la Campaña evoca el llamado bíblico a devolver nuestras primicias a Dios

y a seguir el ejemplo de los primeros discípulos en el Libro de los Hechos, quienes distribuyeron lo que tenían a los necesitados.

Él dijo: “No se trata de un grupo de parroquias pequeñas y parroquias grandes que son independientes entre sí. Dios fundó una sola Iglesia, y todos somos parte de esa Iglesia”.

FRATERNIDAD

El Diácono Jim Novak visitará el Metroplex para explicar los desafíos que enfrentan las parroquias rurales a los feligreses de la Parroquia de San Juan Apóstol de North Richland Hills.

El diácono se ha desempeñado por 15 años como Administrador Parroquial del Sagrado Corazón de Seymour y de la Parroquia de Santa María de la Asunción de Megargel. Según él recuerda, las parroquias han recibido asistencia económica de la Fundación de Avance en cada uno de esos quince años.

Las parroquias rurales “tienen un presupuesto apretado”, dijo el administrador, especialmente durante los años en que la sequía, y los precios del ganado y del petróleo traen dificultades económicas adicionales.

“Sin el apoyo de la Campaña Diocesana Anual, el Sagrado Corazón y Santa María de la Asunción no podrían pagar su ministro de jóvenes, la secretaria y el empleado de mantenimiento a tiempo parcial”, añadió.

Treinta y siete parroquias de la Diócesis recibirán subvenciones operativas por un total de \$815,000 este año, y el uso principal de las subvenciones operativas parroquiales es la asistencia salarial. Las parroquias solicitan ayuda para el salario de un sacerdote (13 parroquias), para un ministro de jóvenes de tiempo completo o parcial (12 parroquias), para contadores

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(9 parroquias) y el salario de otros empleados.

Cuando el Diácono Novak se reúne con los feligreses de North Richland Hills en septiembre, planea decirles cuán beneficiosa ha sido la Campaña, citando que sus parroquias ofrecen educación religiosa y ministerio juvenil sin cargo alguno. “Lo llamo ‘hermano mayor, hermano menor’”, dijo, describiendo la relación entre las parroquias con recursos sólidos y las que no los tienen.

No obstante, los hermanos pequeños también dan. Los feligreses de Seymour y Megargel cumplen consistentemente con sus metas anuales de participación y recaudación de fondos. El Diácono Novak comentó: “La gente entiende que es importante dar, compartir con su hermano. Nuestra corresponsabilidad ha crecido en toda la parroquia”.

Al mismo tiempo que el Diácono Novak vaya a hablar en la Parroquia de San Juan Apóstol, Toni Kelly, el Director de Admisiones y Promoción de la escuela católica de San Juan Apóstol, viajará a la Parroquia del Sagrado Corazón en Seymour para explicar cómo la corresponsabilidad beneficia a la educación católica.

La Campaña Diocesana Anual brinda también asistencia para la matrícula que ayuda a numerosos estudiantes en las 17 escuelas católicas de la Diócesis.

Kelly dijo que sólo un diez por ciento de los estudiantes de San Juan Apóstol paga la matrícula completa. El cuerpo estudiantil comprende estudiantes de clase media y “no tan media” de diversos orígenes étnicos y económicos.

“La mayoría de los estudiantes necesita ayuda económica. La administración de la escuela no puede decir ‘Lo siento, si no puede pagar la educación católica’ y cerrarle las puertas. Estamos aquí para formar discípulos de Cristo”, explicó.



(I-D) Maestra de confirmación Emma Brown, Britni Nguyen, Samantha Danks, William Trice, Coordinador Juvenil de Caballeros de Colón, y P. Joseph Moreno, después de una misa en la parroquia de San Judas Thaddeus en Burkburnett el 6 de agosto de 2022. (NTC/Ben Torres)

ADAPTACIÓN A LAS NECESIDADES

Pese a que las subvenciones operativas a las parroquias, la educación de los seminaristas y la asistencia para la matrícula de las escuelas son componentes importantes de la Campaña Diocesana

Anual, los fondos recaudados también ayudan a otras necesidades de la Diócesis, como Caridades Católicas de Fort Worth, la formación diaconal, los programas de matrimonio y vida familiar, el cuidado de sacerdotes jubilados y los ministerios en los campus universitarios y las cárceles.

A medida que cambian las necesidades alrededor de la Diócesis, así también lo hace la asignación financiera de la Campaña Diocesana Anual.

Por ejemplo, la asistencia a los ministerios Respeto a la Vida se duplicará con creces este año para hacer

un mayor impacto en todos los apostolados pro-vida que ayudan a las madres en crisis de embarazo y a sus hijos.

En particular, Caridades Católicas Fort

Worth anticipó un aumento en la demanda de los servicios del Proyecto Gabriel y solicitó fondos adicionales. El Proyecto Gabriel recibirá al menos \$216,000 para agregar un trabajador social adicional y un coordinador de voluntarios, además de más asistencia para expandir el ministerio parroquial que capacita a voluntarios para acompañar a mujeres embarazadas necesitadas y brindar ayuda espiritual, emocional y práctica hasta que su bebé tenga 18 meses.

LLAMADO A LA GRATITUD

La Campaña Diocesana Anual distribuyó el año pasado un total de \$3.4 millones a parroquias, ministerios, organizaciones, servicios y diferentes fines en la Diócesis. Su meta este año es de \$3.5 millones.

El Obispo Michael Olson, en su carta de presentación de la Campaña Diocesana Anual, dijo que ésta es una oportunidad para responder al llamado de Cristo a la gratitud.

Escribió: “Tenemos este momento para considerar el regalo de nuestras vidas y las muchas bendiciones que Dios nos ha concedido en nuestras vidas. Apreciar esta bondad nos acerca a Dios y nos impulsa a realizar actos de amor desinteresado a imitación del mayor don de Su Hijo, que vino a salvarnos del pecado”. 🇺🇸

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Una Santa Nos Visita



Visitantes a la Parroquia de Nuestra Señora de Lourdes en Mineral Wells ven las reliquias de Santa Bernardita mientras tocan artículos religiosos contra el relicario el 21 de julio de 2022. (NTC/Juan Guajardo)

Miles de peregrinos acuden a la Parroquia de Nuestra Señora de Lourdes para ver las reliquias de Santa Bernardita Soubirous

Por Joan Kurkowski-Gillen

Martha Peña fue a venerar las reliquias de Santa Bernardita Soubirous con la esperanza de que ocurriera un milagro, aunque no esperaba que realmente ocurriera uno.

La residente de Iowa Park viajó por carro hora y media el 21 de julio para llegar a la Parroquia de Nuestra Señora de Lourdes de Mineral Wells junto con su hijo Andrew, que tiene 40 años y que nació con parálisis cerebral.

“Los milagros siempre están en la mente de uno y eso sería maravilloso, pero lo que estoy buscando verdaderamente es la curación

espiritual”, dijo la feligresa de Cristo Rey que guió la silla de ruedas eléctrica de su hijo mayor hasta el llamativo relicario de oro. “Él nunca ha visto una reliquia de un santo, así que pensé que ésta sería una buena oportunidad para él”.

Más de tres mil personas visitaron la parroquia rural de Palo Pinto entre el 20 y el 22 de julio con la esperanza de renovar o fortalecer su fe, encontrar la paz en una situación difícil de sus vidas o simplemente para reflexionar sobre la vida de santidad que tuvo una campesina francesa. La Parroquia de Nuestra Señora de Lourdes fue uno de los cuarenta y

dos lugares de los Estados Unidos que fueron elegidos para albergar las reliquias de Santa Bernardita, una niña asmática de catorce años que vio 18 apariciones de la Virgen María y que descubrió un manantial de aguas curativas, según se lo indicara la Virgen. Las reliquias estuvieron también un tiempo breve en la Parroquia de San Francisco de Asís de Graford.

“Ha sido una gran bendición para nosotros y para tantas personas que han venido aquí”, dijo el Padre Thomas

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DE LA PÁGINA 65

D'Souza, SAC, párroco de Nuestra Señora de Lourdes. “Los fieles me dicen: ‘¡Ya no tenemos que ir a Francia!’”

Santa Bernardita es una santa muy conocida, cuya humildad y obediencia se mostraron en la película ganadora de varios Premios de la Academia, “La Canción de Bernardita”. La joven vidente padeció de problemas de salud e inicialmente fue perseguida por el gobierno francés, las autoridades eclesiásticas y miembros de su propia orden religiosa.

El Padre D'Souza saludó a los peregrinos que viajaron a su parroquia desde lugares tan lejanos como Oklahoma, Puerto Rico, Waco y San Antonio, y espera que las personas que veneraron las reliquias aprendan valiosas lecciones de la vida de la santa.

“Ella nunca se dio por vencida ni renunció a lo que creía. Ésa debe ser nuestra convicción”, dijo. “Cuando defendemos la vida o sabemos que algo está bien, no debemos dar marcha atrás. No importa la presión a la que te enfrentes, defiende la verdad”.

El relicario viajero, que llegó el 7 de abril a los Estados Unidos para su primera gira por el país, se encargó en el 2019 para satisfacer la creciente demanda de personas que querían honrar a Santa Bernardita fuera de Francia. El relicario fue elaborado con oro y esmalte en un estilo neogótico por artesanos españoles y fue diseñado para reflejar el espíritu de Lourdes y la gran devoción mariana de la santa. Contiene una reliquia ex-carne de primer grado extraída del cuerpo incorrupto de Santa Bernardita cuarenta y seis años después de su muerte en el 1879.

Las reliquias son un recordatorio para los fieles de la santidad de una persona (santo o santa); y sirven de inspiración para pedir por la gracia de Dios para que uno lleve una vida de fe semejante.

Muchos de los visitantes que fueron a venerar las reliquias de Santa Bernardita llevaron rosarios, estampas y otros sacramentales hasta el relicario de vidrio, por lo que dichos artículos se consideran reliquias de tercera clase.

Mientras el relicario estuvo en Mineral Wells se invitó a los peregrinos a participar



Visitantes ven las reliquias de Santa Bernardita. Al tocar sus sacramentales contra el relicario, los objetos religiosos se convierten en reliquias de tercera clase. (NTC/Juan Guajardo)

de las Misas diarias, las procesiones nocturnas a la gruta de la parroquia a la luz de las velas, el sacramento de la reconciliación y la liturgia de la unción de los enfermos. El recorrido de las reliquias, que fue dirigido por una guía de los Voluntarios de Lourdes de América del Norte, incluyó una peregrinación virtual que permitió a los feligreses tocar rocas de la Gruta de Massabielle y se les permitió tocar el agua procedente de la Gruta de Lourdes durante el “gesto del agua” (*le geste de l'eau*).

El agua bendita se usó para bendecir 1,900 rosarios hechos por los feligreses de la Parroquia de Nuestra Señora de Lourdes y que se distribuyeron a los visitantes.

Un grupo de jóvenes de la Parroquia del Santísimo Sacramento de Arlington pasó parte de su semana misionera de verano en Mineral Wells para vivir la experiencia de las reliquias y asistir a Misa. La llegada del relicario de Santa Bernardita en julio a la Diócesis de Fort Worth fue un momento afortunado, según Renee Alarcón, la directora del ministerio de jóvenes de la parroquia.

Alarcón aprovechó la excursión de un día para hablar sobre Nuestra Señora de Lourdes, la vida de Santa Bernardita

y el proceso de la Iglesia que conduce a la canonización. Respondió a las muchas preguntas del interesado grupo, describió qué es una reliquia, qué la hace sagrada y la diferencia entre venerar una reliquia y el culto católico a Dios y la Eucaristía.

“Espero que esta experiencia les haga saber que pueden acudir a los santos para acercarse a Cristo”, dijo.

Félix Ruiz, quien vino a ver el relicario con su hija y sus nietas, dijo que es importante entender la historia de Santa Bernardita y las importantes lecciones de fe que nos enseña.

Gracias a su confianza en la Virgen María, la hija de un molinero, que tenía una enfermedad crónica, ayudó a crear un lugar de peregrinación que trae paz

y consuelo a millones de personas cada año. Santa Bernardita es la patrona de los enfermos, los pobres, los pastores y de las personas ridiculizadas por su piedad.

“En tiempos de lucha y de necesidad, tenemos que rezar el Rosario”, dijo Ruiz, feligrés de la Parroquia de San Esteban. “En lugar de detenernos en todas las cosas malas que suceden y sentirnos desesperanzados, tenemos el Rosario para apoyarnos. Contamos con nuestra Madre María para que interceda por nuestras necesidades”. ✨

VEA MÁS
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El Sínodo avanza a nivel nacional

La Diócesis de Fort Worth presenta el informe de la Síntesis Diocesana para el Sínodo 2021-2023

Por Susan Moses

Algunas actividades toman un receso de verano, pero los preparativos para el Sínodo sobre la Sinodalidad avanzaron a toda velocidad durante este tiempo.

La Diócesis de Fort Worth presentó a fines de junio su síntesis diocesana del Sínodo. Este documento es una recopilación de los temas principales que resultaron de las 121 sesiones de escucha realizadas en los 28 condados de la Diócesis. La síntesis está disponible en la página web diocesana, fwdioc.org en inglés, español y vietnamita.

El documento incluye el resumen del proceso del Sínodo diocesano, el plan de acción y la síntesis de los temas más importantes discutidos en las sesiones, tales como: la celebración de la Eucaristía como punto central de unidad en la Diócesis de Fort Worth; gratitud por el clero local y el deseo de trabajar por el aumento de las vocaciones sacerdotales; la necesidad de actividades espirituales como la Misa, la catequesis, la Adoración Eucarística y los retiros espirituales para construir relaciones individuales y comunitarias con Dios; y el deseo de unidad, compromiso, comprensión y ayuda mutua entre todos.

Una vez que se completaron los informes diocesanos, representantes de 19 diócesis y arquidiócesis de Texas, Oklahoma y Arkansas se reunieron para evaluar y compilar los documentos del Sínodo bajo el liderazgo del representante del Obispo de la región X, Monseñor

Mario Avilés, Obispo Auxiliar de Brownsville.

Paola Quintero-Araújo, Director Asistente de Formación Pastoral, para la Diócesis de Fort Worth, trabajó en el comité regional y señaló que feligreses de toda la región compartieron ideas similares. Quintero-Araújo trabajó con representantes de otras diócesis para redactar un informe regional, que se presentó a fines de julio a la Conferencia de Obispos Católicos de los Estados Unidos (USCCB, por siglas en inglés).

La conferencia episcopal revisó los documentos del Sínodo presentados por cada una de las 15 regiones de los Estados Unidos y se espera que el informe nacional esté listo pronto. La Diócesis de Fort Worth publicará el informe nacional en su sitio web una vez que sea aprobado a fines de septiembre.

Los preparativos para la fase continental del Sínodo están en marcha y se anticipa que entre diciembre del 2022 y febrero del 2023 se escribirá y se enviará

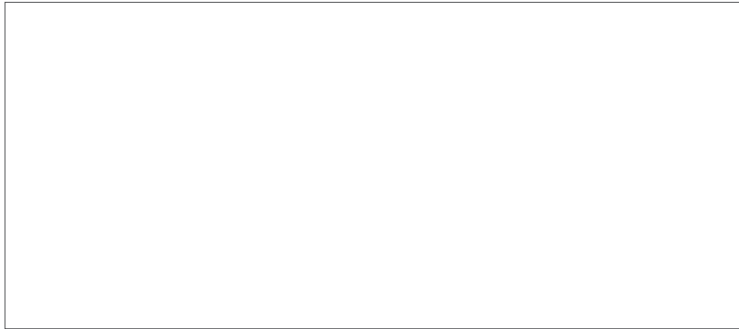
al Vaticano una síntesis continental.

El Vaticano recibirá la síntesis de las fases continentales de todo el mundo, a partir de la cual se creará un documento de trabajo para la reunión de los Obispos que se llevará a cabo en octubre del 2023 en Roma. El Sínodo sobre la Sinodalidad es la culminación del proceso de tres años que Papa Francisco estableció para “escuchar las preguntas, preocupaciones y esperanzas de cada iglesia, pueblo y nación”. 🇺🇸



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