

# NEWSMAGAZINE North Texas Catholic

Bringing the Good News to the Diocese of Fort Worth Vol. 31 No. 6 November / December 2015

## Pope Francis transforms hearts

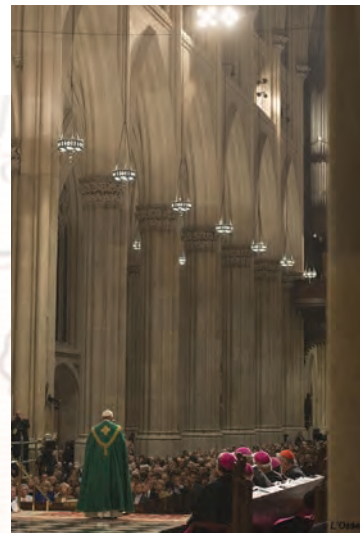




# Pope Francis' U.S. visit was truly apostolic



Pope Francis raises the chalice of the Eucharist as he celebrates Mass at Madison Square Garden in New York Sept. 25. Concelebrant Cardinal Timothy M. Dolan of New York is also pictured. (CNS photo/Paul Haring)



Pope Francis gives the homily as he celebrates vespers with priests, and men and women religious in St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York Sept. 24. (CNS photo/L'OSSERVATORE ROMANO, handout)



Pope Francis places a rose at the South Pool of the National 9/11 Memorial and Museum Sept. 25. (CNS photo/Tony Gentile)



Pope Francis waves goodbye at Philadelphia International Airport Sept. 27. (CNS photo/L'OSSERVATORE ROMANO, handout)



Pope Francis addresses the General Assembly of the United Nations in New York Sept. 25. (CNS photo/Mike Segar, Reuters)



Pope Francis greets religious leaders during an inter-faith prayer service at ground zero 9/11 Memorial Museum in New York Sept. 25. (CNS photo/Paul Haring)



Pope Francis shakes hands with an inmate at the Curran-Fromhold Correctional Facility in Philadelphia Sept. 27. (CNS photo/L'OSSERVATORE ROMANO, handout)



Young people cheer as Pope Francis arrives to celebrate Mass and the canonization of Junipero Serra outside the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington Sept. 23. (CNS photo/Matthew Barrick)



Archbishop Charles Chaput of Philadelphia speaks beside Pope Francis, meeting with World Meeting of Families organizing committee, volunteers and donors Sept. 27. (CNS photo/L'OSSERVATORE ROMANO, handout)



Pope Francis enters the House of Representatives to address a joint meeting of Congress at the U.S. Capitol in Washington Sept. 24. In the first such speech by a pope, he called on Congress to stop bickering as the world needs help. (CNS photo/Paul Haring)



Relics of Junipero Serra are placed beside the altar as Pope Francis celebrates Mass and the canonization of the Spanish missionary Sept. 23 at the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception. (CNS photo/Matthew Barrick)



Pope Francis embraces Rabbi Abraham Skorka at St. Joseph's University in Philadelphia Sept. 27. The longtime friends co-authored a best-selling book about their interfaith dialogue. (CNS photo/Paul Haring)



# North Texas Catholic



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## The time has come to speak of Jesus

So I'm at the dentist Tuesday, having told my new guy that I'm not only Catholic, but a Catholic journalist. He has his hands in my mouth with his assistant at his side, and all they can talk about is the pope. Though both are believers, they say that they're not Catholic, but that they love this guy. He's different, they say.

And during one of the rare times their hands leave my mouth, I try to explain that anyone who admits they like the paintings of Marc Chagall is going to be different, that unlike previous popes who had lived pretty much exclusively in clerical surroundings all of their lives, this pope had lived in the same neighborhoods as drug dealers and poor people, so naturally, he was going to be "different" from previous popes.

The Francis effect. In a time when we have had one extraordinary pope after another — great teachers — great scholars — great men of faith who loved God with their whole hearts — God has given us a pope the whole world has fallen in love with.

And in this very moment, with the pumps primed for us to move into a springtime of New Evangelization, this pope, beloved by the world, declares an Extraordinary Jubilee Year of Mercy, a year in which we are to focus on receiving afresh the love of the Father poured out for us in Jesus — and turn around to the rest of the world and make flesh for them, especially those who do not believe, the mercy God the Father has poured out upon us all.

In this moment, in which we realize anew that God is Our Father and Jesus is Our Brother — and that all the human family is included in that divine family, the Father sends us this ambassador of the faith from the Vatican, with a smile on his face and the honesty to tell us how we need to shape up, so that we can be worthy of that great mercy.

If this isn't a moment of grace, we'll never see one.



Crowds line the sidewalk as Pope Francis rides down Fifth Avenue in New York Sept. 24. (CNS photo/Richard Drew, pool)

Jeff Hensley

# OUR SHEPHERD SPEAKS

## Mother Church *Nurturing God's Family*

**T**he main reason for Pope Francis' journey to the United States was to participate and to speak at the World Meeting of Families in Philadelphia. "The Family" was not only the topic of his address to that gathering of people; rather, it is a metaphor that imbued his entire approach to his time spent among us.

It occurred to me as I listened with other bishops and among other men and women to the Pope's words of encouragement and call to conversion that he very much presents our life as the Church as being involved in a family, in God's family to be more precise.

Pope Francis frequently speaks of the Church in her role as a Mother, holy Mother Church, who loves her children and does not exclude them from her life. The Church as our mother includes all of her children without abandoning her responsibility to teach them lovingly the full truth as revealed by Christ. As a mother, the Church never excludes her children even when she cannot condone their wayward behavior that denies both the Gospel

and harms human nature. The Pope especially demonstrated this point when he spoke to prisoners — his brothers — reminding them that confinement does not mean exclusion. In other words, these men — our brothers — are accountable to justice by being confined, yet they are responsible for acting toward rehabilitation and to use well their time of confinement for the good of their neighbors in society. They do not lose their human dignity nor are they excluded from membership in the family.

As a mother, the Church always includes her children who are her children because of baptism. The image used by the Pope is that of a dialogue, that is, a respectful conversation between a mother and her children; it is a conversation that includes people even if their ideas cannot be included because of their opposition to human dignity or the fullness of the Gospel. It is not the dialogue of activists who dishonestly employ it to serve their own agenda.

Pope Francis, the Holy Father, encouraged us bishops to be fathers to our priests and to our people — to avoid the temptation to be bureaucrats instead of being fathers. Fathers are first members of a family, they protect their children; they accompany their children and lead them to authentic freedom by living as active contributors to the common



good; fathers love their children and never speak harshly to them even when they rightly are admonishing and encouraging them to live good lives for the sake of the entire family.

The Pope especially demonstrated this point when he spoke to us bishops — his brothers — reminding us that we are to pray to Christ for our people so that when He asks each of us, "Who is my sister, and brother, and mother," each of us can respond, "Here they are. I return them to You Who first entrusted them to me."

It is at the heart of our call from Christ to conversion to become more truly his family as the Church. It is a conversion that requires that we do our best to live faithfully our baptismal call, despite the postmodern messiness of fragmentation that afflicts each of us in the lives of our families. To understand the Church as being a family, as Pope Francis does, requires that we accept our baptismal and sacramental membership in that family with its corresponding responsibilities of service especially to the poor and voiceless. It requires that we not see the Church as yet another fragment with which we construct our own inward looking ideology that leads us to a selfish polarization.

*+ Michael F. Olson*

+ BISHOP MICHAEL F. OLSON, STD, MA  
DIOCESE OF FORT WORTH



**Pope Francis gives a blessing at the conclusion of the Festival of Families during the World Meeting of Families in Philadelphia Sept. 26.**  
*(CNS photo/Bob Roller)*



# First Lady Cecilia Abbott to encourage Respect Life supporters at Bishop's Gala, Nov. 7

by Joan Kurkowski-Gillen  
Correspondent

**C**ECILIA ABBOTT IS THE FIRST MEXICAN-AMERICAN TO BECOME FIRST LADY OF TEXAS, BUT THERE'S ANOTHER DESIGNATION SHE CELEBRATES MORE.

"Of all the titles we have held, the ones that matter the most are 'mom' and 'dad,'" says the San Antonio native. "Our lives were blessed, and forever changed, the moment Greg and I held our daughter the day she was born."

Governor Greg Abbott and his wife, Cecilia, married 34 years ago. Their 18-year-old daughter, Audrey, is adopted.

"Every day we thank God for

the precious gift of Audrey's life and for the woman who was strong enough to give Audrey a new life with our family," Abbott continues.

The ardent pro-life advocate will share her story during a keynote address delivered at the Bishop's 11th Annual Catholics Respect Life Gala set for Saturday, Nov. 7 in the Fort Worth Convention Center. A silent auction begins at 5:30 p.m. followed by dinner at 7 p.m. Tickets are \$90 before the Oct. 29 reservation deadline and \$125 after that date, if available. Log onto [www.respectlifefw.org](http://www.respectlifefw.org) to make reservations or call Yolanda Newcomb, event coordinator, at 817-925-9443 for more information.

Organized by the diocese's

Advancement Foundation, the gala raises money for Respect Life Ministries that promote a culture of life in the diocese. Rachel Ministries offers post-abortion healing to women, Gabriel Project helps mothers dealing with a crisis pregnancy, and Youth for Life programs educate teens on life issues and chastity. The Advancement Foundation manages the financial resources needed to support the activities, ministries, and programs of the Diocese of Fort Worth.

"It is our mission to serve the parishes and families within the Diocese of Fort Worth through education, pastoral care, prayer, and worship," explains Michael Demma, director of the Respect Life Office. "We work in union with parishes and families to change public policy and legislation in an effort to restore the dignity due to every human life from conception to natural death."

Issues involving the sanctity and dignity of life are close to the Abbotts' hearts, and they remain committed to protecting and defending life in Texas. In September,



Cecilia Abbott

Cecilia Abbott helped dedicate a new ultrasound machine for a pregnancy resource center in San Marcos. The Knights of Columbus donated the equipment.

"I believe in protecting life from the moment of conception to natural death because we are each wonderfully made in God's image," she asserts. "And we will continue to promote a culture of life in Texas."

**Catholic Diocese of Fort Worth**

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## CLERGY ASSIGNMENTS FOR THE DIOCESE OF FORT WORTH

by Most Rev. Michael F. Olson, JCD, MA

**Rev. Brendan Murphy, SVD**, new to the Diocese of Fort Worth, is appointed Pastor of St. Paul the Apostle Parish in Fort Worth, effective Sept. 19, 2015.

**Rev. Thomas Kennedy**, was Ordained to the Presbyterate on behalf of the Personal Ordinariate of the Chair of St. Peter on Saturday, August 29, 2015. He will serve as Parochial Vicar at St. Mary the Virgin Parish in Arlington, effective immediately.

**Rev. Carmen Mele, OP**, in addition to his position as Director of St. John Paul II Institute, School of Lay Ministry, is appointed Director of Spiritual Formation for Diaconate Formation, effective Aug. 20, 2015.

**Rev. Brendan Walsh, SAC**, new to the Diocese of Fort Worth is appointed Parochial Vicar at St. Brendan Parish in Stephenville, effective Oct. 9, 2015.

**Rev. Eliseo Hernandez, CORC**, has been recalled by his Religious Order community from St. Matthew Parish in Arlington, effective Sept. 30, 2015, with our sincere gratitude for his service to the Diocese of Fort Worth.



## 40 Days for Life kicks off in Fort Worth Sept. 23



Father Karl Schilken, Vicar General and Moderator of the Curia, speaks at the 40 Days for Life rally. (Photo by Lance Murray / NTC)

FORT WORTH — On Sept. 23, just as Pope Francis began his historic 2015 visit to the United States, 325 local Catholics and pro-life supporters from around North Texas came together for the kickoff of the annual 40 Days for Life Campaign.

40 Days is a 24/7 pro-life prayer demonstration taking place outside abortion clinics through November 1. The local prayer vigil is currently taking place outside the Planned Parenthood clinic on 6464 John Ryan Drive in Southwest Fort Worth. For our full article on the kickoff visit [northtexascatholic.org](http://northtexascatholic.org)

## DIOCESAN, LOCAL & STATE NEWSBRIEFS

by Joan Kurkowski-Gillen  
Correspondent

FORT WORTH — When he wrote his encyclical, *Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis hoped to promote a dialogue among all people.

The Nolan Catholic High School community responded to that appeal by presenting, “Care for Creation,” a public forum that explained key passages and elements of the 200-page document released in June 2015. Held on Oct. 3, the eve of the feast day of St. Francis, the 13th century forerunner of ecological awareness, the gathering included Mass in the school chapel and a musical performance.

Nolan Principal Benedict V. Reyes said the event was hosted by the school and organized by

William Perales, Dean of Students at Nolan, as a vehicle for evangelization and education.

Perales highlighted key points in the encyclical’s six chapters which explore: environmental issues like the depletion of fresh water and impact of fossil fuels on human life, the Gospel of Creation, how materialism leads to a disregard for the environment and human life, and the collective actions required for an “ecological conversion” that recognizes the true worth of all created entities. A series of speakers, some of them Nolan faculty and students — discussed how major factors, including economics, and personal behaviors, like nutrition and athletics — are aspects of stewardship.

At the close of the two-hour forum, theology teacher Toni

## Nolan hosts forum on Pope Francis' *Laudato Si'*



Corbett reminded the gathering that every creature reflects something of God and has a message to convey. She advised her listeners to seek God in all things and to feel God’s grace working in their hearts.

“God created us out of love and has entrusted us with the responsibility to have and care for each other — especially the excluded and vulnerable,” Corbett pointed out. “He tasked us with caring for his creation and we must respond to these responsibilities.”

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# Local SSMNs among orders benefitting from national collection

by Juan Guajardo  
Associate Editor

SINCE THEY CAME TO TEXAS IN 1873, THE SISTERS OF ST. MARY OF NAMUR HAVE BUILT AND OPERATED SCHOOL AFTER SCHOOL THROUGHOUT NORTH TEXAS, PREPARING STUDENTS FOR CAREERS AND FRUITFUL FAITH JOURNEYS.

But that selfless serving came at a price — in the spirit of charity and modeling Jesus, the sisters performed most of their work for free, or for much lower wages than lay ministers. Now, as Sister Joan Markey, SSMN, put it in a 2010 *Fort Worth Star-Telegram* article, the local sisters are in a “financial pickle.”

In order to pay for healthcare and other basic necessities, the 29 retired members of the religious community now depend on the income of the six sisters who are currently in compensated ministry; on the auxiliary fund developed by the sisters’ friends and benefactors; and on one very important national collection: the National Collection for Retired Religious, taking place Dec. 12-13 in parishes throughout the Diocese of Fort Worth.

According to the U.S. bishops’ National Religious Retirement Office (NRRO), which is charged with overseeing and distributing the collection, the SSMNs are far from being the only ones in this “pickle.”

The stipends and wages earned by most senior religious during their years of active ministry were so modest that little, if any, income was left for retirement savings. As a result, Social Security checks also are quite small, with most SSMNs receiving less than \$400 per month, according to Sr. Joan.

“We’re very much behind being fully-funded for retirement,”



Sister Francesca and Sister Mary Elaine Breen (L) care for newborns at Cook Children’s Hospital in Fort Worth. (Photo by Joan Kurkowski-Gillen / NTC)

Sr. Joan said.

Launched by the U.S. bishops in 1988, the National Collection for Retired Religious helps address the “profound deficit in retirement funding among U.S. religious communities,” according to a USCCB press release.

Last year, the Diocese of Fort Worth raised more than \$184,000 for retired sisters and brothers throughout the country. The local sisters received \$38,000, Sr. Joan said. While the grant was a blessing, it was still only enough to help provide for one sister, she said.

Sr. Joan said local supporters can help by praying for religious, encouraging vocations, volunteering time, donating to the SSMNs, and giving generously to the national collection.

“Anything that people can give is a great help — not just to us but every religious community in the U.S. We are extremely appreciative of the generosity of our friends.”

To find out more, or to give to the National Collection for Retired Religious, please visit:

[www.retiredreligious.org](http://www.retiredreligious.org)

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# Katherine Listi chosen to lead diocese's Safe Environment Program

By Joan Kurkowski-Gillen  
Correspondent

**K**NOWLEDGE AND VIGILANCE ARE KEY TO CREATING A SAFE ENVIRONMENT FOR THE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE WHO PRAY, STUDY, AND WORSHIP IN OUR SCHOOLS AND CHURCHES.

That's why it's necessary to reevaluate and hone current procedures to meet the challenges presented by an ever-changing society.

"In this environment, we can't afford to be complacent," says Katherine Listi, who became the new director of the Diocese of Fort Worth's Safe Environment Program on Sept. 1. "God created man in his image. Because of the dignity of the human person, we are tasked with the stewardship of protecting our children and teaching them how to protect themselves."

Developing boundaries and giving youngsters an understanding of what's appropriate and what's not appropriate is crucial to protecting them from predators.

"So many times, in our highly sexualized society, they don't know what's appropriate unless mom and dad are there correcting that," explains the Catholic convert. "What they learn may or may not be enforced in the (public) school system. It has to be reinforced in church at the parish level and religious activities."

A native of Wichita Falls who received a

degree in communications and theater from the University of North Texas (formerly North Texas State University), Listi taught at Nimitz and Skyline high schools in Dallas before going to work for the Boys Scouts of America. Over a 23-year period, she produced 60 projects for the Irving-based organization — many involving youth protection training and information.

Along with John Patterson, a former scouting professional and consultant for the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, Listi co-authored the Youth Protection Program uniformly used by Boy Scout troops across the country.

"We had a direct line to people who had many years of experience," she says, citing sex researcher David Finkelhor and Cordelia Anderson, developer of the Touch Continuum concept, among her contacts. "John Patterson's background in social work also helped us develop profiles of pedophiles."

Listi has read and culled data from more than 200 books on preventing the sexual abuse and exploitation of children. Paired with what she continues to learn from experts in the field, the new director of the diocese's Safe Environment program plans to update and enhance its guidelines.

"We plan to make changes in training and reporting procedures to make them more accurate as well as improving the annual audit," explains the seasoned researcher who has also



Katherine Listi

earned a master's degree in theology from Ave Maria University.

The audit process is used to determine if dioceses throughout the U.S. are implementing practices established by the U.S. Catholic Conference of Bishops in their 2002 Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People.

Listi says a revamped program will include a discussion of how young people are victimized by predators using social media platforms. Access to the Internet and chat rooms has become easy for children as young as 10 or 11.

"By the time they get to the 5th grade, well over 50 percent of kids have a cell phone and, very often, it's a smart phone," she says, describing a phone with features of a personal computer.

"I've done research on social media and renew my statistics each year," she continues. "It's astounding that kids think a relationship formed through an electronic device is a valid relationship. It's important to tell them the guy or gal they meet online is not their friend, because you don't really know who they are."

Keeping children safe begins by setting boundaries in the home, Listi said. She advises putting phones away in a basket — especially at bedtime — and starting a conversation.

Communicating with children is as important a tool as any other resource when it comes to thwarting sexual victimization.

"Safe environment programs go way beyond the Church. It's about teaching people life skills," she insists. "It's about teaching boundaries."

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# Joseph Keating ordained to transitional diaconate; moves closer to priesthood

by Juan Guajardo  
Associate Editor

**ALTHOUGH HE'S THOUSANDS OF MILES AWAY, SEMINARIAN JOSEPH P. KEATING IS NONETHELESS ONE BIG STEP CLOSER TO BECOMING A PRIEST FOR THE DIOCESE OF FORT WORTH.**

Keating was ordained to the transitional diaconate Oct. 1 at the Pontifical North American College in Rome, joining Deacon Matthew Tatyrek, and Deacon Nghia Nguyen as the three men from the diocese who are to enter the priesthood next year.

He was among 38 other seminarians to be ordained by Cardinal Timothy Dolan of New York during a Mass at the Papal Basilica of St. Peter in the Vatican.

In his homily, Cardinal Dolan spoke to the candidates for ordination about the paradoxes of the Christian

faith which are manifested in the Ordination Rite.

"You were called forth and were said to be found worthy, and yet we began our prayer with an acknowledgment to God of our sinfulness," Cardinal Dolan said. "You come here freely, and yet will make a promise of obedience to your Ordinary. You are raised up to serve at the altar, yet in a moment you will lie down prostrate in a symbol of submission to the supplication to the saints on your behalf."

The cardinal, who is an alumnus of the North American College and a past rector, said these paradoxes are indeed fitting in the basilica dedicated to St. Peter — the Apostle who by his martyrdom, upside down on a cross, came to see right side up Jesus whose divine love he had come to imitate.

During the ordination, now-Deacon Keating and the other new deacons promised to live a life of prayer, celibacy, and obedience to their respective diocesan bishops.

Having spent six years in formation, Dcn. Keating in an interview with the *North Texas Catholic*, said he is now eagerly laying out plans for his final year of seminary, during which he will spend weekends serving as a deacon at the U.S. Naval base in Naples, Italy, "preaching, [providing] catechesis, and leading a Confirmation retreat for the teens." During the week, he is charged with watching over new seminarians and coordinating prayer and social activities as the "hall deacon" of his seminary corridor.



Dcn. Joseph Keating with Fr. James Wilcox, vocations director for the diocese, on the day of the ordination in Rome. (Photo courtesy Pontifical North American College)

Asked what he hopes to bring to the people of God during his time as a transitional deacon, Dcn. Keating replied with who, not what: "Jesus Christ. Not myself, but Jesus."

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# The bishops of Texas are joining the fight to regulate payday, title loan lending

by Mary Rezac  
CNA/ EWTN News

**L**ENDERS CHARGING EXORBITANT RATES ON PAYDAY LOANS IN ARLINGTON HAVE A NEW FORCE TO CONTEND WITH IN THEIR FIGHT AGAINST REGULATION: THE BISHOPS OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH.

In late September, the Texas Catholic Conference (TCC) — which serves as the public policy voice for the Catholic bishops of the state — announced it would join several local payday lending opponents in an effort to regulate payday and title loan lending.

“It seems that every week another member of my parish tells me a horror story about one of these loans. They debilitate our families. People take out loans without fully understanding the terms, and this begins the vicious cycle of debt that ruins the lives of too many families. This must end,” Father Daniel Kelly, pastor of St. Joseph Catholic Parish in Arlington and chancellor of the Fort Worth Diocese, said in a press release.

This isn’t the first time the bishops have been involved in grassroots efforts to reform payday lending, both locally and at the state level.

Jennifer Allmon, associate director of the Texas Catholic Conference, said the Church became involved about six years ago when Catholic Charities agencies realized many of their clients asking for financial assistance had the same problem — outstanding payday loan debt.

The Catholic Church has frequently condemned the practice of usury, or the loaning of money while charging unreasonable rates of interest.



(Photo courtesy CNA / Andy via Flickr)

According to the TCC’s website, payday and title lenders in Arlington and other Texas cities often charge “usurious interest rates of 800 percent APR and excessive fees.”

After some research, Catholic Charities found that 18 percent of their clients who were receiving direct financial assistance for payments such as utilities and rent were paying hundreds of dollars in fees every month to payday lenders.

“We began to engage in payday reforms around that time, the impetus being, ‘The Lord hears the cry of the poor,’” Allmon said. “Our bishops engaged and said we can’t witness this happening and not speak out.”

On the state level, the fight has been difficult — Texas does not put limits on payday lending the way many other states do, and any effort to push through legislation is up against a wealthy and powerful lobby on the other side.

“Basically the advocates for consumers and for reform are outspent at the capitol by a very well-funded lobby on the payday lending side of things,” Allmon said.

The Church and other proponents of loan reform have had more success at the city level, where they can get ordinances passed that limit the number of times lenders

are allowed to charge fees.

So far, 26 cities in Texas have passed local ordinances that limit the fees lenders can charge, and in most of those cases, she said, the local bishop was directly involved in pushing for those reforms.

In their payday loan reform research, the Texas Catholic Conference conducted roadshows, during which they travelled to meet with borrowers and lenders alike in different cities to see what the situation was like across the state. The TCC and other nonprofits held listening sessions in Arlington Sept. 28 at St. Joseph Parish.

Oftentimes they found that payday lenders put up storefronts right across the street from dentists, because “you can ignore a headache, but can’t really ignore the need for a root canal,” Allmon said.

Similar co-locations were

common — lenders would set up shop near places where they knew people would be paying utilities or other necessary bills, and they were very prominent in poor areas of town.

For instance, in the South Arlington area, there are more than 55 payday and auto title loan lending businesses in a five-mile stretch between I-20 and I-30, according to Catholic Charities of Fort Worth.

Allmon said they also found that lenders often tried to take advantage of people with disabilities, or people who don’t speak English.

It was not uncommon to find borrowers who had no idea exactly how much interest they were being charged, and for lenders to illegally withhold information from borrowers, she said.

“We’d ask borrowers what they thought their interest rate is, and they’d say about 40 percent, but we’d show them the math and say actually, it’s 800 percent. And they had absolutely no concept that that’s how the loan worked.”

The goal of the current campaign, Allmon said, is to pass reforms at either the state or local levels that protect the lender from failure while being fair to the borrower, according to the seven principles for fair lending listed on their website.

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**CATHOLIC CHARITIES**

**CCFW to dedicate new Northwest Campus offices in Wichita Falls, Oct. 29**



Photo by Jenara Kochs-Burgess

Laura Sotelo, senior director of Northwest Services for CCFW, on the entrance ramp of the Northwest Campus of Catholic Charities in Wichita Falls.

Thursday, Oct. 29, Bishop Michael Olson will preside at a celebratory Mass at Sacred Heart Church in Wichita Falls. Then Bishop Olson, joined by Catholic Charities Fort Worth (CCFW) President and CEO Heather Reynolds and Sacred Heart pastor Father Jack McKone, will lead the congregation in a procession across 10<sup>th</sup> Street, to the threshold of a freshly renovated office building.

“And that’s when Catholic Charities’ Northwest Campus will be officially dedicated,” said Laura Sotelo, CCFW’s senior director of Northwest Services. “We’ve been working toward this exciting goal for several years.”

Sotelo, as CCFW’s former director of Parish Relations, has traveled across the diocese’s 28 counties, working with pastors, staff members, and volunteers to educate faith communities about the work of Catholic Charities.

“After the 2007 flood in Wichita Falls, I met with the staff at Sacred Heart to ask what we could do to help,” said Sotelo. “We began to brainstorm and lay the groundwork for establishing a Catholic response to needs within this part of the diocese.”

Sotelo formed a planning committee comprised of community and parish leaders within the eight counties of the Northwest

Deanery and of Young County, in the Southwest Deanery.

Members of the group identified area needs and existing gaps in services, said Sotelo, noting that CCFW staff members began serving clients from office space at Sacred Heart Church in June of 2014.

The staff of eight has already served hundreds of individuals and families, offering individualized case management, with special outreach to veterans and immigrants. Clinical counseling and career and education support are offered, along with help for clients in obtaining food, housing, utilities, and medical care.

“I always say, ‘Ending poverty is not a Catholic Charities problem, it is a community problem,’” said Sotelo. “We have to work together to move people forward to the point where they are thriving. And that’s what we’re doing at the Northwest Campus.”

*All are invited to attend the dedication of the CCFW Northwest Campus Oct. 29. Mass will begin at 10 a.m. at Sacred Heart Church, 1501 9<sup>th</sup> Street, Wichita Falls; a dedication ceremony will follow at 10:40 a.m. across the street at the Northwest Campus, 1418 10<sup>th</sup> Street. For more information, call (940)716-9669 or visit [www.catholiccharitiesfortworth.org/northwest](http://www.catholiccharitiesfortworth.org/northwest).*



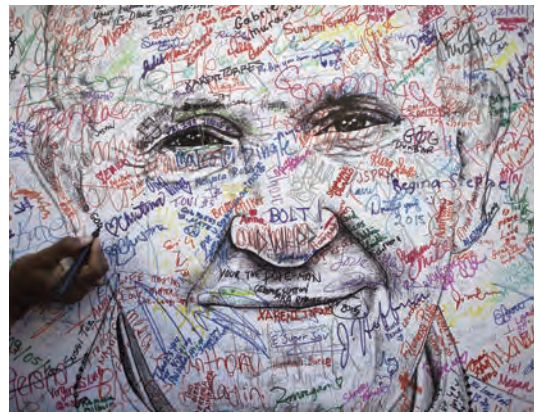
**LIGHTER & BRIGHTER**



Pope Francis arrives at Our Lady Queen of Angels School in the East Harlem area of New York Sept. 25. (CNS photo/Eric Thayer, pool)



Stefan Scherer-Emunds poses in Chicago Sept. 22. (CNS photo/Karen Callaway, CATHOLIC NEW WORLD)



A delegate to the 2015 World Meeting of Families signs a poster drawing of Pope Francis by artist Mark Gaines Sept. 23 in Philadelphia. (CNS photo/Mark Makela, Reuters)



Doug Bauman waits for the arrival of Pope Francis for the closing Mass of the World Meeting of Families in Philadelphia. The father of three traveled with his family from Indianapolis. (CNS photo/Lisa Johnston)



People wait for Pope Francis to drive past along a street in Washington Sept. 23. (CNS photo/Alex Brandon, pool)





# GROWING AS A CHRISTIAN

## Mercy is love put into action

BY JEFF HEDGLEN

**THERE IS A LOT OF TALK ABOUT POPE FRANCIS AND MERCY. EVERYWHERE HE GOES HE ATTRACTS SO MUCH ATTENTION FOR HIS ACTS OF MERCY.**

Whether it is his washing the feet of young people at a juvenile detention center or his touching and kissing those afflicted with various maladies or his lunching with the homeless or his decision to erect showers for the homeless at the Vatican. He is also quite outspoken about how faith in Jesus, God's love incarnate and bringer of mercy, necessarily involves acts of mercy on our part.

Sometimes we may have no idea on how we can put this call to give mercy into action. We might be tempted to think that it is easy for Pope Francis; After all he is the pope! Or we might think that we are not holy enough or not equipped enough to be a dispenser of mercy. But I would like to offer one way we can all put the call into action. For me this idea came from one of the greatest men I have ever known.

For many years during funerals at my parish a challenge was laid out. One of my personal mentors, teachers, and a genuinely inspiring man, was the person who was called when a parishioner died. He was the person who helped the family navigate the process of burying their loved one. He was the calm in the storm of countless families. He would help them choose a funeral home and



Logo for the Holy Year of Mercy (CNS/courtesy of Pontifical Council for Promoting New Evangelization)

pick the Scripture readings and music for the Mass — and help them with the countless details we seldom think about, but are very necessary when the time comes.

But the thing that stands out to me the most is when, at the funeral, Phil Record would challenge all in attendance to not forget the people in the reserved section at the church. These family members, he would say, will still be hurting in a week, a month, and a year from now. He would say that soon all the out of

town visitors would be leaving, and the busyness surrounding the funeral would pass away, and this is when the real grief would come, in waves.

What Phil Record was challenging us all to do is to live one of the Spiritual Works of Mercy — Comfort the Sorrowful. This is even more important in the coming weeks as many of the people we know and love are experiencing their first Thanksgiving and Christmas without their loved one.

We comfort those who are in sorrow in many ways:

Listen to them, really listen, no need to tell them “it will be all right” or that their loved one “is in a better place” or that “everything happens for a reason.” Even if all of these things are true, when you are hurting these things do not ease the pain. What helps is asking them to tell stories about the person and listening to these stories.

Do things for them. Often we say, “If you need anything, just let me know.” That is nice, but it is really hard to ask for help when

*Jeff Hedglen is director of Young Adult Ministry and Campus Ministry for the diocese. He is also the founder and primary convener of Camp Fort Worth's many editions. His column received second place honors for best spiritual life columns by Catholic Press Association of the United States and Canada in 2014.*

we are hurting. Instead, think of what you might like in a similar situation and just do that thing. Cook a meal and bring it over. If it looks like their yard needs mowing, mow it. If you are going to spend the day running errands, invite them along. They have errands to do too, and could probably use the company.

Send them flowers (or chocolate); who doesn't like to get gifts? This idea is especially helpful if you do not live near them.

Sit with them. Sometimes all we need to do is hang out with them, especially if they live alone. Join them for a Netflix binge or a walk in the park or a game of cards. In truth it is not all that important what you do to comfort those in sorrow; all that matters is that you be present in whatever way you can.

Mercy is love put into action. We celebrate the ultimate act of mercy at Christmas, and it is precisely at this time of year when many people need your love for them put into action.





# The key to happiness...

## forgetting oneself

By Kathy Hamer

**MY FRIEND VIRGINIA AND I WERE TALKING ABOUT HER HUSBAND, BOB. HER WORDS WERE WARM AS COCOA, AND ENDLESS AS A CHILD'S REPETITIONS OF A FAVORITE STORYBOOK. "BOB DID THIS, BOB BOUGHT ME THAT...."**

"Bob loved blue," she said, warmly. "It was his favorite color. He'd see other colors and say, 'That's pretty... but it's not blue!'"

I was fascinated with Virginia's love for Bob. I asked my friend how long they'd been married and she said, "51 years." Then, with characteristic humor, her eyes shone and she smiled, "But I wish it had been 61 years." (Cymbal crash. Applause.)

"We could have married earlier," she said, "But we were steadfast about finishing college."

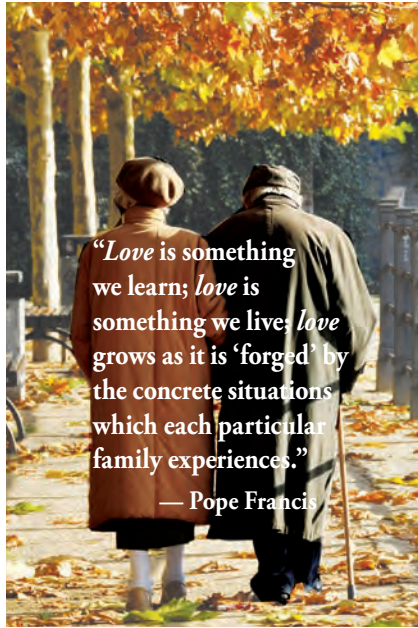
Bob completed a 1942-45 stint in the Air Corps; Virginia graduated first; they married in 1948 and she supported them while he finished dental school. It was a sweet, sentimental narrative, like a black-and-white wartime movie.

I am fascinated by the love my 91-year-old friend displays for her husband. I understand her feelings, but having been married just five years, my honeymoon mentality is still intact. Virginia, however, is in love with the man to whom she was married for a half-century! He died in 1999, the day before the couple was to move into a newly-constructed home. She lives there still.

I love the fall, these precious days between September and the winter solstice. The season creates memories like Virginia's: crisp and sweet as a new crop of red delicious apples. From warm October to cool November we seem able to garb ourselves in optimistic hearts and a clear vision of happy moments ahead.

And, this time of year, family life is alive and twinkling like the crystal ornaments on Virginia's Christmas tree, or the moving characters on her favorite music box.

This fall, the world witnessed the Pope Francis effect. During his USA visit, the pope emphasized family, and because he



*"Love is something we learn; love is something we live; love grows as it is 'forged' by the concrete situations which each particular family experiences."  
— Pope Francis*

shows rather than tells, we learned about giving and forgiving, in our collective lives. He demonstrated how we might practice familial love with one another.

At the Festival of Families in Philadelphia, Francis said, "Love is something we learn; love is something we live; love grows as it is 'forged' by the concrete situations which each particular family experiences."

My good friend, St. Therese of Lisieux, whose feast day we celebrated Oct. 1, wrote about her "conversion" — the end of childhood — which occurred at Christmas when she was 13. Charity entered her heart, she said, and she learned to forget herself always, and to think of others first. "Thenceforward I was always happy."

During the October Synod on the Family, the relics of St. Therese and her parents Louis and Zelig Martin, were displayed in Rome; Blessed Louis and Zelig were both canonized Oct. 18.

Autumn magic is real, filled with the aroma of leaves, the color orange, and hope. The season will end, appropriately, with forward-looking Advent, the celebration of Guadalupe, and the joy of Christ's birth. By

then, like our children, we will have been recipients of a myriad of gifts.

Virginia's husband Bob enjoyed giving to his family. He was a giver, according to his wife — albeit happiest when his presents were the color blue.

One morning at Mass, I sat behind a man who was carrying an oxygen cylinder on his back. I could hear it in our pew, and I remember thinking every breath he inhaled was a breath of life, a gift he wouldn't have had, if it hadn't come out of that can. My heart hurt, and yet glowed for the gentleman. He was on his feet, in stride with — and toward — the Lord.

He too, I imagined, was awash in fall optimism.

I hadn't noticed anything unusual about the man until we approached the altar for Eucharist. I heard him whisper, "She's been ill." There followed the sound of a breath from the oxygen tank I'd been listening to in church. Then a few more steps toward Communion until he repeated, "She's been ill."

He was praying for his wife, obviously important to him, moreso than his own health. Like Virginia, his mind and memory were preoccupied with the person he had loved and lived with; he prayed for that to continue.

This man and I had crossed paths during optimistic autumn. He made my day better. He made it glow.

Like Little Therese, he had learned to forget himself, and to think of others first. "Thenceforward I was always happy."

His memories were like Virginia's, but in real time; he still had his wife. And, like the crystal ornaments on Virginia's tree, his memories sparkled, I'm sure.



*Kathy Cribari Hamer's column has been recognized repeatedly by the Catholic Press Association. For information about her book, ME AND THE CHICKENS, go to [somethingelseagain.com](http://somethingelseagain.com).*

# His grandmother didn't see this coming

Conversion 101

By David Mills

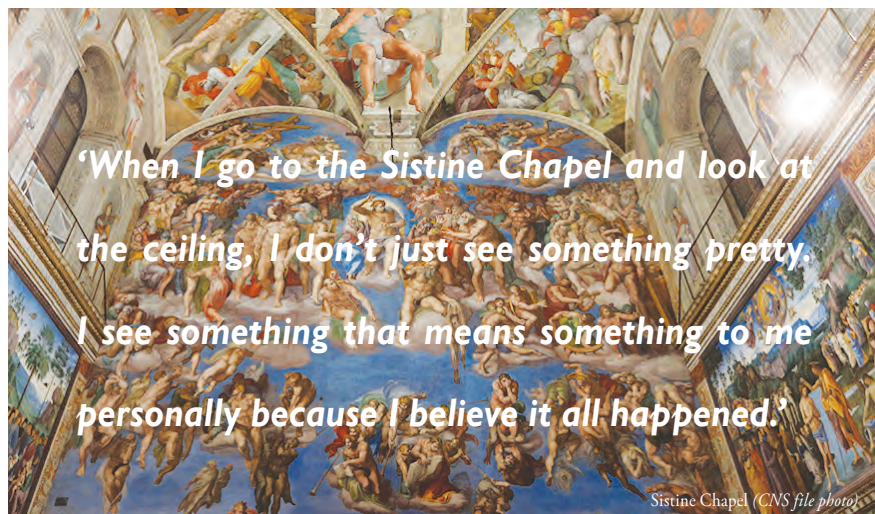
**HIS GRANDMOTHER CLAIMED TO BE A CLAIRVOYANT AND SEE THE FUTURE; HIS PARENTS WERE SPIRITUALISTS WHO BECAME BAPTISTS; IN COLLEGE HE BECAME A MARXIST WHO YEARNED FOR REVOLUTION AND THOUGHT CHRISTIANS WERE STUPID.** Later he became an Anglican but quickly saw that kind of religion wasn't nearly full and rich enough, and he entered the Catholic Church without telling anyone, especially not his family. That's the conversion story of Tim Stanley, an English historian and writer.

He's not the usual kind of person who writes conversion stories. He's made his name in the secular worlds of academic history and political writing. Though English, he came to notice with a book called *Kennedy vs Carter: The 1980 Battle for the Democratic Party's Soul* and then a biography of Patrick Buchanan. His latest book, *Citizen Hollywood*, explains how much the movie industry has influenced America's politics for the last century.

But he did tell his story in an article in the English newspaper *The Catholic Herald*. He was writing on the 10th anniversary of being received into the Church. Stanley says that he could make up a story about his coming to the Church, looking back at his journey, but it might not be exactly right. That's the historian being careful, because he knows our minds arrange our memories to fit the story we'd like to tell.

He admits that he's not really sure why he converted at all. Yet he is certain about one thing: "The simpler, yet more complex, answer is this: I fell in love." Which I liked, because I'd seen the same thing in my own life and tried to explain in an article I wrote a few years ago about how the process of coming into the Church is like the process of falling in love. (Here's the web address for the article if you're interested: [tinyurl.com/MillsConversion](http://tinyurl.com/MillsConversion).)

Back to Stanley. "I remain uncertain of



exactly why I converted at all. But I know I was absolutely right to," he says. He gives two reasons. First, he became part of something much bigger than himself.

"When I go to the Sistine Chapel and look at the ceiling," he writes, "I don't just see something pretty. I see something that means something to me personally because I believe it all happened. The story of the Martyrs of Compiègne is my story, too — the nuns who were killed in 1794 for their refusal to accept the authority of the French Revolution over their faith. And I understand why the Mexican martyrs of the Cristero War shouted 'Viva Cristo Rey!' before their executioners opened fire. As a historian, I no longer just study history. I am a part of it."

At the end of the article, explaining why he's so happy to be a Catholic, he adds "I've gained a friend in Jesus and a spiritual mother in Mary. When I'm lost for words, I pray to St. Francis de Sales. When the seas get choppy, I pray to St. Christopher."

Second, Stanley explains, in the Catholic Church he also found hope, especially through the sacraments. "I know that no matter how bad things get, I can always go

to Confession, take part in the Mass, and set things right again. Every day is a whole new day. And every day offers the chance for salvation." He's encouraged that at every second of the day, the Mass is being said somewhere in the world.

Not, he notes, "that I've become a saint over the past 10 years — on the contrary, I'm more conscious of my failings. When you become a Catholic you find lots of new ways of feeling guilty."

The reality of the Mass and the fact that Jesus' sacrifice for us is always being re-presented affects him a great deal. "For people who live with despair, and that's almost all of us, this promise is astonishing. One of the hardest things to believe is that someone else could love you unconditionally. We Catholics have proof. I suspect that this gift has saved my life. I might have died without it. It's that powerful."

*David Mills David Mills is senior editor of THE STREAM and editorial director of ETHIKA POLITIKA and he blogs at [www.patheos.com/blogs/davidmills](http://www.patheos.com/blogs/davidmills).*



# Cultivating empathy

## to live like a ‘Good Samaritan’

By Anamaria Scaperlanda Biddick



A migrant woman waits at the transit camp near Gevgelija, Macedonia, Sept. 29.  
(CNS photo/Georgi Licovski, EPA)

**AS A CHILD, I CONSUMED STORIES VORACIOUSLY: TALES OF CHILDREN ON THE PRAIRIE, RUNAWAYS HIDDEN IN A MUSEUM, AND SIBLINGS WHO FIND ANOTHER WORLD BEHIND THICK FUR COATS. LIKE MOST CHILDREN, I WAS ENCOURAGED IN THIS HABIT AND OTHER WAYS OF CULTIVATING MY IMAGINATION, BUT IT WASN'T UNTIL I WAS AN ADULT THAT ONE OF THE BENEFITS OF IMAGINATION BECAME CLEAR: THE IMPORTANCE OF IMAGINATION IN CULTIVATING EMPATHY, EVEN FOR THOSE WHO HAVE VERY DIFFERENT LIVES THAN OURS.**

Reading fiction allows us a unique chance to enter into another person's story. It trains us to “Walk a mile in someone else's shoes,” as that great literary hero Atticus Finch extols his daughter to do. When we read *To Kill a Mockingbird*, we glimpse the difficulty of working toward justice in a prejudiced society. *Little House on the Prairie*, *Little Women*, and other classic works show us, among other things, how widely families can vary and how these early experiences shape our lives. Anne Frank's diary and Lois Lowry's *Number the Stars*

offer a view into the humanity of a people oppressed.

Formed by these literary experiences, we face the world a different way. We are moved by those who live far from family when their first baby is born; we empathize with tornado victims, the homeless, the jobless, and the immigrant. Though we can never fully know their hardships, we are able to imagine what it must be like for the Christians of the Middle East to leave their homeland, persecuted by radical Muslims. In short, we can envision the point of view of someone who is not us, even of someone who has lived a radically different life.

Once we are able to envision the life of another person, we are moved to action by their difficulties. We donate household items to St. Vincent de Paul and Catholic Charities upon seeing the difficulties of refugees, tornado victims, and the impoverished. We help the woman in a difficult pregnancy as we are able, providing food, clothing, or shelter for her and her child. In the end, imagination shapes our character, leading us

to live more virtuous lives.

Jesus Himself used stories, the parables, to teach and guide our actions. Through these stories, we are able to enter into the point of view of someone else — and, more importantly, examine our own actions. In the parable of the Good Samaritan, Jesus offers us an examination of conscience about being a good neighbor. We can see ourselves as the traveler, robbed and beaten by beggars, and in need of help. If we are honest with ourselves, we can identify with the priest and the Levite who pass him by with our excuses, revealing our failure to love our neighbors. We see the radical love of the Good Samaritan, who sacrifices so much of his time and money to help a man who he doesn't know. We imagine the difficulties of such a love of neighbor, which makes us better able to live like the Good Samaritan.

*Anamaria Scaperlanda Biddick, a graduate of the University of Notre Dame, is a freelance writer based out of Oklahoma City, where she lives with her husband and two daughters.*

## What is Satan's aim for man?

BY MARLON DE LA TORRE

**IT'S EASY TO DISMISS THE INFLUENCE OF THE DEVIL WHEN WE ARE NECK DEEP IN OUR HUMAN PLEASURES. IT BEGS THE QUESTION, DO WE ACTUALLY REALIZE WHAT WE'RE DOING WHEN THIS HAPPENS?**

When one begins to reflect on this question a bit further, the devil appears to be the last person we worry about because of our own self-consumption. One definite illustration of this behavior is the tendency to reject accountability for our own actions, creating a "right as I please attitude" because it's for the greater good of me. And here lies part of Satan's aim for man, the desire to draw him away from God and draw him inwardly to himself. Interestingly enough Satan's greatest aim (man's loss of humility) is also his greatest fear, when properly ordered in the human condition. The *Catechism* for example defines humility as the virtue by which a Christian acknowledges that God is the author of all good. This is exactly what Satan does not want. St. Peter (*1 Peter 5:6*) reinforces this definition even further: "So humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time."

### Satan's aim

Why is it so important for Satan to draw us away from God? Simply put, the further we distance ourselves from God the greater the opportunity to fall away from his grace and mercy. What better way for Satan to

come in and offer alternatives to God. Primary to this desire is an open disregard for the Divine and establishing a sense of entitlement. Let's keep in mind that Satan had a process in mind on fostering a sense of entitlement when he asked Eve: "Did God really say you shall not eat from any of the trees in the garden?" (*Genesis 3:1-3*) Satan offers our parents a proposition of choosing between satisfying their own desires versus their desire for God, a love of self over a love for God.

All this leads to a second and most devastating part of Satan's aim for man; the love of self above all other things. God becomes an afterthought, even though we may try to convince ourselves this is not so. He plays on our incessant need to be happy instead of faithful, ambivalent instead of prudent, prideful instead of humble. His very aim reflects the characteristic he chose to forever be associated with, pride.

### The gift of humility

Christ reminds us that he who humbles himself will be exalted (*Luke 18:9-14*). Humility serves as an action of self-abandonment. This means our will and intellect are directed toward a love for Christ and his Church. It reflects a willingness to die to self in order to gain eternal life. This virtue recognizes God as the author of everything good and clearly reveals to us that we are nothing without God.

Humility leads us to have a poverty of heart. This means our preference is Christ before anything else. St. Luke provides us with a great description of a poverty of heart in reference to the cost of discipleship when Jesus asks the Apostles to renounce everything for Him. (*Luke 14:33*).

All Christ's faithful are to direct their affections rightly lest they be hindered in their pursuit of perfect charity by the use of worldly things and by an adherence to riches which is contrary to the spirit of evangelical poverty. (*CCC, 2345*)

One of the central characteristics of humility is the willful act of poverty in spirit which helps us to recognize the awesome power of God and his goodness revealed through his Son Jesus Christ. In a practical way, we are asked to live out our beatitudinal call i.e. to be poor in spirit (*Matthew 5:3*) as a way of serving our fellow brothers and sisters in Christ not only spiritually but corporally as well. St. Gregory of Nyssa echoes this point, further describing that the "world speaks of voluntary humility as poverty in spirit; the Apostle gives an example of God's poverty when he says; for your sakes he became poor."

St. Gregory of Nyssa reminds us that there is a relationship between humility and our beatitudinal call. When we examine the beatitudes closely, they represent the heart of Jesus' preaching. The beatitudes fulfill the law of the commandments by placing into



Marlon De La Torre is the director of Catechesis for the Diocese of Fort Worth, and author of *SCREWTAPE TEACHES THE FAITH: A GUIDE FOR CATECHISTS*.

action the rule of the faith. *The Catechism (1717)* strengthens this point even further:

*The Beatitudes depict the countenance of Jesus Christ and portray his charity. They express the vocation of the faithful associated with the glory of his Passion and Resurrection; they shed light on the actions and attitudes characteristic of the Christian life; they are the paradoxical promises that sustain hope in the midst of tribulations; they proclaim the blessings and rewards already secured, however dimly, for Christ's disciples; they have begun in the lives of the Virgin Mary and all the saints.*

By nature of our baptismal call we are called to combat our own selfish desires through humility and abandonment to God's providence. Our actions should not contradict the Gospel but instead should be in unison with our Lord's desires for us as his children. St. Paul leaves us with a good reminder on how to keep ourselves in a humble manner within the mind of Christ: "Pray constantly... always and for everything giving thanks in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God the Father" (*1Thessalonians 5:17*).



# SEEKING GOD'S PATH VOCATIONS

*No one has greater love than this;  
to lay down one's life for one's friends (JOHN 15:13)*

BY FATHER JAMES WILCOX

**HOW OFTEN DO WE REALLY HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO SACRIFICE FOR ANOTHER? PERHAPS YOU CAN RECALL A TIME WHEN PARENTS HAVE MADE A SACRIFICE FOR THEIR CHILDREN AND WHEN SPOUSES HAVE MADE A SACRIFICE FOR EACH OTHER. THESE SELFLESS ACTS ARE DAILY OCCURRENCES FOR MANY.**

Giving of ourselves for those not part of our immediate family, perhaps even for our enemies, can be more challenging. Yet, this is how the Lord calls us to live — to love one another unto death.

No one has greater love than this; to lay down one's life for one's friends. (*John 15:13*)

The Vocations Office chose these words of our Lord and Savior as the theme this year to emphasize the importance of sacrifice in the lives of the priest, of those in consecrated life, and of the laity. These powerful words remind those who are called, that the life of the priest is one of sacrifice: to offer daily the Holy Mass; to pray for and serve the souls in his stead; and to be a beacon to the world of Christ's unending love.

Furthermore, these words remind all priests of their ordination day when they lay prostrate before the altar, praying in union with all present to God, calling on the intercession of the saints and the whole Church, asking that he be blessed, sanctified, and consecrated for the priesthood. He participates in a sign that will prepare him to give his life in a daily sacrificial offering for the people.

The priest daily celebrates the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass — The Holy Sacrifice. The Mass is the same sacrifice as the sacrifice of the cross, because in the Mass the victim is the same, and the principal priest is the same, Jesus Christ. The priest, *alter Christus capitis*, participates in this sacrificial offering by virtue

of his office.

Jesus Christ makes the ultimate sacrifice, remembered at the Mass, when He gave his life for each and all of us on the cross. Here He conquered death and opened the gates of heaven. At the altar, the priest consecrates the bread and wine, which is transubstantiated into the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ. On the cross, Christ shed his blood; in the Mass the graces of his sacrificial act are received by those participating.

The love of Jesus Christ has no limits: recall that among his friends was the betrayer and the denier, and those who fled his side. Yet, the sacrifice of our Lord is for them, for the Blessed Mother, for the Beloved Disciple, and for each of us. We are called to respond to Christ's love by loving one another and by following the example of laying down one's life for one's friends.

Those who answer the call to serve the Lord and his people in the sacrificial life of priesthood recognize the beauty in self-giving for the other person, including the other



Father James Wilcox was ordained to the priesthood in 2013 and serves as the Vocations Director for the Diocese of Fort Worth.

whom he may not like or not even know. In these small ways, the priest, as well as each person of goodwill, participates in the love of Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ places these words, lay down one's life for one's friends, between the command to love one another and calling the disciples friends, whom He has chosen. The priesthood is always a call from Jesus Christ, and it is a call to love, to sacrifice, and join Him in bearing everlasting fruit for his people.

## DAILY PRAYER LIST

### FORT WORTH SEMINARIANS 2015-2016

A Prayer for a Seminarian  
God our Father, Thank you for calling [name] to prepare for priesthood. Grant him the grace to grow closer to You through daily prayer. Help him form his personality as a credible witness to others. Bless him while he studies Your word and the teachings of the Church, and give him a generous heart to serve Your people. We ask this through Your son, Jesus Christ, our great High Priest. Amen.



Day of the Month	Thank you for your support and generosity. Please pray for the following seminarians:
1	Dcn. Joseph Keating; Dcn. Nghia Nguyen; Dcn. Matthew Tatyrek
2	Stephen Hauck
3	John Martin
4	Jason Allan
5	Jeffrey Ambreic-Quepons
6	Collin Becker
7	Jonathan Demma
8	Ricky Diaz
9	Eric Flores
10	Benjamin Grothouse
11	Kevin Hathaway
12	William Hayes
13	Cody Honkomp
14	Autin Hoodenpyle
15	Ed Hopkins
16	Thomas Jones
17	David LaPointe
18	Brandon LeClair
19	Harrison Lewis
20	Pedro Martinez
21	Samuel Maul
22	Brett Metzler
23	Maurice Moon
24	Joseph Moreno
25	Linh Nguyen
26	Rijo Philip
27	Derek Stanzel
28	Michael Sumcizk
29	Anthony Vecchio
30	Benjamin Vina
31	for those discerning vocations



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Pope Francis reaches out to Catholic school student Omodelei Ojo of the Brooklyn borough of New York as he is greeted by children upon arrival at John F. Kennedy International Airport Sept. 24 in New York. (CNS photo/Craig Ruttle)

# APOSTOLIC JOURNEY

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**A VISIT FOR THE AGES:** Pope Francis' historic trip to the United States and what it means to local Catholics





by Joan Kurkowski-Gillen  
Correspondent

**L**INDA SHEPTOCK STOOD THREE CITY BLOCKS AWAY FROM POPE FRANCIS DURING HIS LAST PAPAL MASS IN THE U.S. SEPT. 27, BUT THAT WAS CLOSE ENOUGH.

“We couldn’t get anywhere near the altar but it was amazing. I felt blessed to be in his presence,” says the St. Bartholomew parishioner who watched the liturgy on a large-screen display in downtown Philadelphia with daughter, Rebecca, a consecrated woman in the *Regnum Christi* community. When migrating groups blocked their view of the screen, the mother-daughter team tapped into a Livestream video of the Mass on their phones.

“Talking to people on our way there, I was surprised by how many non-Catholics showed up,”

she adds. “There were also many young families with children, but no one seemed bothered by the crowds. They were there for the experience of being in his presence. It was a joy to be surrounded by that faith.”

The Mass marked the end of the pope’s historic six-day trip that took him to Washington, D.C. and New York City before visiting Philadelphia. An estimated one million people packed the historic Benjamin Franklin Parkway for the outdoor liturgy.

Dressed in green vestments, the 78-year-old pontiff spoke about faith, family, and how little gestures of love open the door to the work of the Holy Spirit.

“Like happiness, holiness is always tied to little gestures, and those gestures are learned at home in the family,” he said.

The quiet things parents and grandparents do — like preparing a warm supper in the evening and offering a hug or blessing at bedtime — are little signs of tenderness, affection, and compassion that leave an impression.

“Love is shown by little things, by attention to small daily signs which make us feel at home,” the pope continued. “Faith grows when it is lived and shaped by love.”

Longtime Fort Worth resident Joan Grabowski, who now lives in Ledalero, Indonesia, watched coverage of the pope’s U.S. trip with several Divine Word Missionary priests at one of the world’s largest Catholic seminaries. The Indonesian viewers were particularly intrigued by the Holy Father’s Sept. 24 address to

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# In Washington, a humble friar IS DECLARED A Saint

by Ernest Doclar  
Correspondent

**E**VEN FOR A BUSTLING METROPOLIS LIKE WASHINGTON, D.C., USED TO MASSING VAST THROGS AT INNUMERABLE CITY-WIDE GATHERINGS, THIS WAS UNIQUE.

In the past the U.S. capital had welcomed victorious new presidents, beribboned military heroes, and record-shattering athletes. But at this spectacle the crowd focused on a humble Franciscan friar, Junipero Serra, who had simply answered God's call to preach the Gospel.

Just at daybreak, then through the afternoon, thousands had pressed toward and through several security checkpoints to enter the grounds of the Basilica of the Shrine of the Immaculate Conception. Faithful of various religious beliefs, a few unbelievers, some just curious surged toward the Basilica's east portico. Admission to the canonization was by ticket, even for the privilege of a spot in the standing room section. Tickets had been allocated to local parishes, religious groups, and the like. My ticket came because of my membership in the Serra Club, a band dedicated to the cause of religious vocations. We chose Serra as our patron because of his zeal in spreading the faith, a quality we promise to exercise in our ministry. Holding such a small paper rectangle became a prized gift. (Thankfully, we saw no scalpers selling the permits.)

A special altar had been erected for the Mass from which would come Pope Francis' pronouncement of Serra's sainthood. Washington's Archbishop Cardinal Donald Wuerl would make that formal request of the Holy Father. After, with just two words in Spanish from Pope Francis, *Así decretamos*, "We so decree," Fray Junipero Serra became Catholicism's latest saint and the first saint proclaimed as such on United States soil.

Certainly, one must recognize that not everyone present at the basilica Sept. 24, showed up to recognize Serra's sainthood. Pope Francis' appearance, his first in the USA, had to be a strong draw, perhaps the principal one. Then too, many of those present trekked to northeast D.C. to gawk at the Church's cardinals in deep-red vestments and bishops in more subdued crimson. Present also under an unobscured sun, priests in white surplices and



Pope Francis pauses in front of the sculpture of St. Junipero Serra in Statuary Hall at the U.S. Capitol in Washington Sept. 24. (CNS photo/Michael Reynolds)





A reliquary containing relics of St. Junipero Serra is seen as Pope Francis celebrates his canonization and Mass outside the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington Sept. 23. (CNS photo/Paul Haring)

the largest of Spain's Mediterranean Balearic Islands. Born into a pious Catholic family, from his earliest days Serra aimed to serve as one of God's foot soldiers. That's an apt description because during his life Serra trudged thousands of miles across Mexico and along California's coast.

Throughout, he spurned travel by horseback as St. Francis had commanded his followers. His goal was to bring Catholicism to the Native Americans in that land. To reach that end Serra founded nine mission churches, each one a day's journey from the other. After his death in 1784 his successors continued establishing missions, eventually an additional 12. Those missions lent their names to many of today's most populous cities in the Golden State: San Diego (Serra's first) Santa Barbara, San Gabriel, and San Francisco, to mention just four of the 21. No one has accurate figures on how many converts joined the Church, but it's likely that the numbers are in the thousands.

In his homily Pope Francis summed up St. Serra's contribution to the Church. Pope Francis remembered Serra's motto, "*Siempre adelante, nunca atras*," "Always forward, never back." The pontiff explained, "He was the embodiment of a Church which goes forth, a Church which sets out to bring everywhere the reconciling tenderness of God." And recalling Serra's dedication to his beloved natives, Francis continued, "He learned how to bring to birth and nurture God's life in the faces of everyone he met; he made them his brothers and sisters."

To echo the crowd at the canonization, "*Viva el Papa*." To which one might add: "*Viva Junipero Serra*."

black cassocks, and religious women and men in the traditional garb of their orders sweltered just like the rest of us. But most of us, reviewing the events of the day, felt that the long, hot wait to enter the area, the elaborate parts of the Mass, and especially the beautiful voices of the choir were reward aplenty. Whoever chose the musical selections wisely picked a variety of tunes in Spanish to honor both Pope Francis and St. Serra. Just as wisely, the choir rendered some songs in Chochenyo, the language of the Native American tribe of Northern California whom Serra preached to. Mass attendees responded to many of parts of the Mass not only in English but in the tongues of other peoples.

Two of my new-found Serra Club friends

from Melbourne, Australia, recounted a few different takeaways from the proceedings. One was amazed at the extent of security provided by Washington's police force, a large number of hired guards, and the U.S. Secret Service. Not everyone knows that the latter are charged with guarding any head of state like Pope Francis. "They were everywhere," my new friend commented.

My other Serran buddy, John Short, explained his reactions to the day's events, "Being here today was such a joyous occasion and the people were so friendly. I feel so blessed to be here."

Serra's journey to sainthood began in 1713 in the town of Petra on the island of Mallorca,

by Joan Kurkowski-Gillen  
Correspondent

## Witnessing history

Witnessing, along with 25,000 others, the first time a Saint has been declared on U.S. soil, local faithful shared their thoughts about St. Serra's canonization Mass on Sept. 23 at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception.

“

This is the first saint canonized on American soil, so this is historic. I knew a number of students were excited about the pope coming to the U.S. and looking for the opportunity to go.”

— Susan Hanssen,  
University of Dallas history professor

“

I was especially praying for Serrans, seminarians, and vocations as the pope canonized St. Junipero Serra. I prayed for each of you in my Mass intentions.”

— Fort Worth Bishop Michael Olson  
tweeting from Washington after the Mass

“

As the Mass is about to begin, the excitement is palpable. People are clapping to the lively Spanish music that the live band was playing. Some were even standing up and dancing.”

— Emily Lataif, University of Dallas student



# The gift of *family*

by Joan Kurkowski-Gillen  
Correspondent



Pope Francis and the WMOF, which took place Sept. 22-27, shone a spotlight on the importance of family as the domestic church

Pope Francis blesses family members who gave a testimony at the Festival of Families in Philadelphia Sept. 26. (CNS photo/Paul Haring)

**G**OD GAVE CREATION TO THE FAMILY. That's the message Pope Francis gave to the thousands of people who turned out for the 8th World Meeting of Families (Sept. 22-27) in Philadelphia.

The world's largest gathering of Catholic families blended prayer and religious instruction with lectures about faith from speakers like Rick Warren, author of *The Purpose Driven Life*, Boston's Cardinal Sean O'Malley, L.A.'s auxiliary Bishop Robert Barron, creator of the "Catholicism" series, and many other prominent teachers of the faith.

A three-hour Festival of Families, attended by 500,000 people, provided one last highlight of the conference Saturday Sept. 26, before the closing open-air Mass celebrated Sunday afternoon. The crowd at the festival was treated to musical performances by Aretha Franklin and Andrea Bocelli, but the primary incentive for standing hours along the scenic

Benjamin Franklin Parkway was to see the first pope elected from the Americas.

After listening to six families talk about the challenges of raising children while enduring trials such as persecution, disabilities, and poverty, Pope Francis spoke "off script" about the "marvelous task" of being a family.

"God gave the most beautiful thing he had — the world — to a family, to a man and woman, so they would grow, multiply, and make the land fruitful" he said to a delighted audience. "Families have a citizenship that is divine. Within the heart of a family, truth, goodness, and beauty can truly grow."

But family life is difficult, the pope admitted. Children cause headaches and "plates can fly" during a quarrel. And "I won't speak about mothers-in-law," he quipped.

"Just as there are difficulties, there is the light of the Resurrection," he pointed out. "While there are problems in every home, they can be overcome with love."

The pope also thanked the large crowd for their presence and their witness "that it's worth being a family!"

A particularly poignant moment during the evening came when Dr. Gianna Emanuela Molla, an Italian gerontologist, read a letter her mother, St. Gianna Beretta Molla, a physician herself, wrote to her husband highlighting the Christian virtues of marriage. The younger Dr. Molla's life was spared when her mother refused to have an abortion or hysterectomy to treat a life-threatening uterine fibroid. Septic peritonitis took the young mother's life seven days after giving birth to her daughter in 1962. She was canonized in 2004.

"We wanted to spend as much time as possible at the conference, but we did take the time to see the St. Gianna exhibit at the Cathedral (of Sts. Peter and Paul)," explained Michael Arth, who with his wife Lisa, traveled to Philadelphia. The Arths are parishioners of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish in Keller.

Dealing with the “sea of humanity” that filled hallways and streets required patience, but the conference was worth the effort, the airline pilot said. “The speakers were good, but it was the experience of being around so many faithful Catholics that made this a great event,” Michael Arth continued.

Through their involvement with the Marian-based Schoenstatt movement, the Arths had the opportunity to meet people from Europe and South America.

Representatives from more than 100 countries attended the World Meeting of Families with the largest numbers of participants coming from the U.S., Canada, Mexico, Pakistan, and Vietnam.

Initiated by Pope John Paul II in 1992 to explore family bonds and the role of families in society, the first World Meeting of Families took place in Rome two years later. Since then, it’s been held every three years, each time in a different country.

This year’s conference in Philadelphia featured keynote addresses on subjects like the U.S. immigration system and its effect on families, how to be God’s image in a secularized society, and using the beauty and joy of family to attract others to the faith. Breakout sessions discussed interfaith marriage, divorce, dating, healing from domestic violence, and infertility among other topics. A separate youth track offered musical performances and activities.

Lisa Arth described the World Meeting of Families as vibrant, enthusiastic, and positive.

“The discussions centered around how to bring the Catholic family back together as a real foundation for change in the world and society,” explained the mother of four grown children. “Yes, we’re up against some obstacles, but we can overcome them with God’s help — which involve the teachings of the Church.”

Commercialism, changing attitudes toward moral issues, and the dehumanization of the

elderly are some of the roadblocks facing families.

“It’s good to know the challenges, so we can figure out the remedy,” Lisa Arth continued. “That’s what was discussed — what can we do? How can we change the way we think? We have to view the family not as an institution, but as a community of love.”

For the Festival of Families, the Arths sat in front of one of the huge Jumbotrons that lined Benjamin Franklin Pkwy. They likened the experience to being at a drive-in theater. The long wait for the pope was punctuated with entertainment from local musicians and vendors hawking pope dolls, t-shirts, and cotton candy.

WMOF exhibitor, Sheryl Collmer, watched as Franciscan priests donned stoles and heard confessions under the trees.

When the Holy Father arrived, he spoke to the theater of humanity as if the

multitude was seated in his living room.

“How beautifully he spoke about the Incarnation and the birth of God into a family,” said the director of Evangelization Outreach for Theology of the Body Evangelization Team (TOBET) in Irving.

Using humor and familiar expressions, the pope inspired and “made people’s hearts grow three sizes,” Collmer said, borrowing a line from the Dr. Seuss Christmas classic “How the Grinch Stole Christmas.”

Families have struggled, but she was struck by the joy-filled stories parents shared with the pope on stage.

“If we never hear about the joys, how is that a testimony to family life?” Collmer asked in her blog post on the Diocese of Fort Worth website. “It’s important more than ever to share the joy.”

“Families have a citizenship that is divine. Within the heart of a family, truth, goodness, and beauty can truly grow.”

— Pope Francis



Pope Francis stops to kiss a child as he makes his way in the popemobile to Independence Hall in Philadelphia Sept. 26. (CNS photo/Jim Bourg, Reuters)



# MEMORY AND MOTION: What Pope Francis

by Cindy Wooden  
Catholic News Service

**P**HILADELPHIA (CNS)—POPE FRANCIS SPEAKS OFTEN ABOUT MEMORY AND MOTION, THE IMPORTANCE OF REMEMBERING WHERE YOU CAME FROM AND SETTING OFF WITHOUT FEAR TO SHARE THE GOSPEL.

That's what he did in the United States. He circled the Statue of Liberty in a helicopter and flew over Ellis Island not preparing to condemn the world's great superpower, but to reflect on its history and promise as a land that welcomes people, makes them part of the family and allows them to thrive.

Over the course of six days in the United States, Pope Francis let the U.S. public see who he really is with touching blessings, strong speeches, prayerful liturgies, and an unplugged proclamation of the beauty of family life, even when it includes flying planes.

With constant television coverage and a saturated social media presence, Pope Francis was no longer just the subject of screaming headlines about the evils of unbridled capitalism and a "who-am-I-to-judge" attitude toward behaviors the Catholic Church describes as sinful.

Instead, he repeatedly admitted his own failures and reminded people they, too, have fallen short. He urged them to trust in God's mercy and get a move on proclaiming that to the world — first with gestures and maybe with words.

Sin is sin even for Pope Francis. Human life is sacred at every stage of its development, and that includes the lives of convicted murderers, he said during the visit. People are blessed and at their best when they are part of a family composed of a mother, a father, children, and grandparents. The well-being of a nation is served by businesses and enterprises that make money, but that do not make money their god.

The pope's proclamation of the Gospel in Washington, New York, and Philadelphia Sept. 22-27 focused on reinvigorating people's faith, hope, trust and commitment to loving God, serving others and living up to the founding ideals of the United States: equality, opportunity for all, religious liberty and the sacred dignity of every creature — human

At home and abroad, Pope Francis scrutinizes people and identifies something good and beautiful. He affirms their core concerns and challenges them to grow.

especially, but also the earth.

Pope Francis had never been in the United States before landing in Washington Sept. 22. He was welcomed to the White House and became the first pope to address a joint meeting of Congress. He joined leaders of other religions in honoring the dead and comforting their surviving family members at Ground Zero in New York. He addressed the United Nations. And, in Philadelphia, using a lectern once used by Abraham Lincoln, he called for respect for religious freedom and for eth-



Pope Francis talks with Sister Marie Mathilde 102, during his unannounced visit to the Little Sisters of the Poor residence in Washington Sept. 23. (CNS photo/courtesy of the Little Sisters of the Poor)



Pope Francis blesses a prisoner as he visits the Curran-Fromhold Correctional Facility in Philadelphia Sept. 27. (CNS photo/Paul Haring)

# Pope Francis taught America

Pope Francis identifies beautiful in them. concerns, and he

nic and cultural differences.

At home and abroad, Pope Francis scrutinizes people and identifies something good and beautiful in them. He affirms their core concerns, and he challenges them to grow.

For the Catholic Church — in the United States as elsewhere — the key challenge is “not about building walls, but about breaking them down,” as he told the bishops, clergy, and religious of Pennsylvania Sept. 26.

From the beginning of his trip — Sept. 19 in Havana — the pope made it clear that with all the important meetings he would have, his primary purpose was to join the celebration of the World Meeting of Families in Philadelphia Sept. 26-27.

And he insisted it be a celebration, not a

funeral or simply a session for rallying the obedient, loyal troops before they set out to battle.

The big challenge, he told more than 100 bishops who came to the meeting from around the world, is to recognize just how many beautiful families God has blessed the Church with.

“For the Church, the family is not first and foremost a cause for concern, but rather the joyous confirmation of God’s blessing upon the masterpiece of creation,” he told the bishops Sept. 27. “Every day, all over the world, the Church can rejoice in the Lord’s gift of so many families who, even amid difficult trials, remain faithful to their promises and keep the faith!”

Tossing aside the text he had prepared for the nighttime Festival of Families Sept. 26, Pope Francis had tens of thousands of people watching him with awe or with laughter or with tears as he described the blessing of real-life families.

“Some of you might say, ‘Of course, Father, you speak like that because you’re not married,’” he admitted. But he proved he knew

what he was talking about. “Families have difficulties. Families — we quarrel, sometimes plates can fly, and children bring headaches. I won’t speak about mothers-in-law,” he quipped.

But mothers-in-law deserve a break and understanding, if one applies the pope’s words to the bishops the next morning and to hundreds of thousands of people gathered on Philadelphia’s Benjamin Franklin Parkway for the event’s closing Mass.

Trust the Holy Spirit, he told the crowds. Recognize that God is at work in the world.

Treasure the little daily gestures that show love within a family. Affirm all those who do good, whether or not they are “part of our group.”

“Anyone who wants to bring into this world a family which teaches children to be excited by every gesture aimed at overcoming evil — a family which shows that the Spirit is alive and at work — will encounter our gratitude and our appreciation. Whatever the family, people, region, or religion to which they belong!” he said.

Pope Francis stands with Rabbi Elliot J. Cosgrove (left) and Iman Khalid Latif (right) at an interreligious gathering at the the 9/11 Memorial Museum in New York Sept. 25. (CNS photo/Jin Lee)



Pope Francis Kisses a woman as he arrives to give a talk at St. Patrick in the City Church in Washington Sept. 24. (CNS photo/Paul Haring)





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the U.S. Congress.

“As we watched together, we cheered as the pope addressed so many issues of Catholic social concern,” said the South Bend, Indiana native. “The next day at lunch, one priest asked me to summarize for him the main points of the pope’s address that he was unable to fully grasp because of the language difference.”

The Holy Father’s U.S. visit prompted discussions about immigration, abortion, and the democratic process.

“It was an amazing opportunity for us to share our cultures and, like the pope said, to dialogue about important issues,” Grabowski added.

Bishop Michael Olson, along with 50 other bishops, was eagerly watching in front of a large, hotel screen TV when the pope addressed Congress. An estimated 50,000 people filled the lawn outside the Capitol that day.

“I was just overwhelmed by the nature of history being made,” the bishop told WFAA shortly after the speech ended. “And I’m so proud of the pope today. So proud to be a Catholic and an American.”

Max Barrile’s view of Pope Francis was a little closer than a TV screen. The St. Joseph University sophomore saw the pope numerous times from the school’s Philadelphia campus thanks to the pontiff’s nightly lodging two blocks away at St. Charles Borromeo Seminary. Pope Francis, a Jesuit, also paid a surprise visit to the Jesuit-operated university Sept. 27 to bless a statue that celebrates Catholic-Jewish unity.

“Every time he left the seminary, all the students and everyone in the neighborhood lined City Avenue and watched the motorcade pass by,” said the 18-year-old, who snapped several photos. “He commands a following other popes haven’t had.”

Barrile said excitement grew as the pope’s visit to the City of Brotherly Love approached. Students who are not Catholic were as enthused as everyone else, he said, adding that he was “in awe” of the social justice topics the pope touched on.

“He’s doing a great job of talking about immigration and how we can lift up the poor. His message is really reaching my generation.”

Leo Lopez, a student at the University of Texas at Arlington and an active member of the university’s Catholic Community, agrees.

“I personally see him as someone I can relate to,” says the 23-year-old criminal science student. “Pope Francis doesn’t just target youth

— he targets everyone. He attracts people to the faith.”

Heather Reynolds, president and CEO of Catholic Charities Fort Worth, traveled to Washington, D.C. with her husband, John, to see the pontiff. There she heard the pope’s words of encouragement to the U.S. bishops at St. Matthew the Apostle Cathedral Sept. 23. During his speech, the pope asked the shepherds of the nation’s 76 million Catholics to be “pastors close to people, pastors who are neighbors and servants” and support their priests and welcome the immigrant.

“The Holy Father’s words remind me that we are not alone in our work to minister to the poor and realize a just society,” Reynolds blogged. “God is with us, the pope is with us, the faithful all around the world are with us.”

It’s easy to understand why people stand in long lines for the chance of seeing the pope, Father Mathew Kavipurayidam, TOR, told parishioners at St. Thomas the Apostle Church in Northwest Fort Worth during his Sept. 27 homily. As the pope approaches a crowd, he reaches out to everyone.

“He is all inclusive,” the pastor said. “He’s kind to all, has a broadminded attitude and generous heart.”

There is goodness in all of us, the priest said, adding, “the pope is teaching us we should also have a large heart.”

For Rebecca Sheptock, a Fort Worth native who now lives in Washington D.C., the best part of Pope Francis’ final moments in the United States was seeing a diverse group of people come together during the Mass.

“We couldn’t see the Holy Father directly, but we could see him on the screen. Most of the people were following along with the Mass book, singing the songs, and saying the responses,” explained the Our Lady of Victory, Nolan Catholic, and Loyola University graduate, who traveled to Philadelphia with her mother.

“No one was upset they got in late, or angry. They were just appreciative to be there with thousands of thousands of other people.”

Although quite a distance from the altar, the crowd was reverent and engaged in the liturgy.

“I wasn’t expecting that to happen, but it was beautiful.”

“Being in the presence of the Holy Father is a once in a lifetime experience for most people,” Sheptock said. “Just receiving a papal blessing is something special.”

A woman prays during the closing Mass of the World Meeting of Families with Pope Francis in Philadelphia Sept. 27. (CNS photo/Brian Snyder, Reuters)



Pope Francis looks out at the Statue of Liberty while flying over New York Harbor on his way to Philadelphia Sept. 26. (CNS photo/L'Osservatore Romano via Reuters)



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# Sister Bernice Knappek, SSMN, will be remembered for her joyful spirit

**J**OYFUL. THAT'S HOW NANCY EDER DESCRIBED LONGTIME FRIEND SISTER BERNICE KNAPEK, SSMN, 77, WHO PASSED AWAY SEPT. 29 SURROUNDED BY HER BIOLOGICAL FAMILY AND HER RELIGIOUS FAMILY, THE SISTERS OF ST. MARY OF NAMUR.

When Eder became nurse for the Catholic schools of the diocese in 1996, Sr. Bernice guided her transition from familiar hospital routines to school screenings.

"She taught me patience and that I had to look at things through a different lens, especially when it came to the schools with fewer resources," she recalls.

Eder frequently traveled with Sr. Bernice — particularly to outlying schools in the diocese. Once, they were on their way to Notre Dame School in Wichita Falls when they spotted camels

grazing on farmland in Henrietta.

"We had to stop, turn around, and look at the camels," Eder recalls. "Sr. Bernice took joy in the moment. She enjoyed not just people but animals and anything else that crossed her path."

A Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated by Father Ken Robinson Oct. 5 in St. Andrew Church in Fort Worth, followed by interment at Mount Olivet Cemetery.

Bernice Frances Knappek was born in Penelope, about 20 miles southeast of Hillsboro, on May 27, 1938 to the late John Knappek and Bertha Helona Knappek. She attended Catholic schools operated by the Sisters of St. Mary of Namur until she graduated high school 1956. Inspired by the religious women who taught her, the new graduate entered the Sisters of St. Mary of Namur community in September 1956. She pronounced her perpetual vows on Aug. 15, 1965.

"My relationship with Sr. Bernice goes back 59 years," says Sister Mary Helen Fuhrmann, who took the habit of an SSMN postulant the same year. In 1962, the two sisters became part of the second class to graduate from the University of Dallas.

Sister Bernice went on to receive a certificate of religious studies from Incarnate Word College in San Antonio in 1964 and a master's degree in administration from North Texas State University in 1983.

"We both became teachers and principals in the diocese," Sr. Mary Helensays, noting that Sr. Bernice also served a long tenure as principal at Our Lady of Victory School from 1984 to 1996.

Sr. Bernice served as associate superintendent of schools for the Dio-



Sr. Bernice Knappek (left) with Sr. Joan Markey at an event in 2010. (Photo by Donna Ryckaert / NTC)

cese of Fort Worth and later assistant principal and principal at Holy Trinity School from 2003 to 2009. But she always remained committed to the success of OLV.

"She was very joyful, faithful, and was very giving to all the families here," says Linda Petrey, current principal at Our Lady of Victory — the only school still owned and operated by the Sisters of St. Mary of Namur. "When she was principal, she always kept her door open during the day just in case anyone needed to talk to her."

Many alumni have contacted OLV since learning of the cherished principal's death.

"We're getting phone calls and emails," Petrey says. "Former faculty members have contacted me. The outpouring of prayers has been tremendous."

Diane Mills, who knew Sr. Bernice as the principal of OLV, as a fellow parishioner at St. Rita Church, and as a neighbor, will miss her friend's twinkling eyes and quick smile.

"She always had a smile and gentle, guiding hand for my children and for me," Mills says. "She taught me to look at others through God's eyes, without judgment."

The Sisters of St. Mary of Namur mourn the quick departure of their friend and sister but are rejoicing in the richness of her life.

"Sr. Bernice was dedicated to the mission of Catholic schools and worked tirelessly in any position she was asked to fill," says Sister Yolanda Cruz, SSMN. "Her joy, passion, service, caring, and welcoming spirit characterized her." Death leaves a void in the Province but her fellow sisters know Sr. Bernice would urge them to move forward.

"Sr. Bernice would be telling us, 'Come on now. Stop dwelling on this. I'm fine and quite happy, so go on with life and do what you want to do,'" Sr. Yolanda adds. "Her spirit and love will live in our hearts always."

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# Healing for Eternity

Father Michael Moloney, formerly Dr. Michael Moloney, feels right at home prescribing a healthy dose of God

Story and photo by Jerry Circelli / Correspondent

**WITH THE WISDOM THAT CAME FROM YEARS OF EXPERIENCE, DR. MICHAEL MOLONEY DISCOVERED THAT WHEN HE PRESCRIBED A HEALTHY DOSE OF GOD IN THE LIVES OF PEOPLE SUFFERING FROM VARIOUS MALADIES, THEY BEGAN TO FEEL BETTER.**

Trust in God, it seemed, led to less stress and alleviated the cause of many of their underlying physical and mental problems.

And once the good doctor got a taste of his own medicine, it completely transformed the way he would go about living his life, too. Following several years of discernment, he would decide to hang up his white coat and put away his stethoscope. The physician would take up a rosary, instead, and don the vestments of a Catholic priest.

Now Father Moloney, the former doctor, is in his fourth year of serving as a priest in the Diocese of Fort Worth.

"People often ask, 'Why did you become a priest? Why did you do that?'" Fr. Moloney said, still with a hint of melodic Irish brogue.

"The only answer I have is, I got a call. Then later there was a tap on my shoulder and a final push. And I've had peace about it ever since. Total peace."

Born in 1950 and raised on a farm in Waterford County, Ireland, Michael Moloney, at 16, entered a two-year pre-medical program in Dublin, Ireland. It set him on an eight-year track that led to his medical degree. Previously active in his faith, during his medical training, Fr. Moloney made

little time for God. "I just kind of drifted away."

In 1976, eager to launch his career, the young doctor traveled to America and began interviewing at hospitals and clinics. And in 1977, Fr. Moloney began work as an emergency room doctor in Sweeney, Texas. Before the year was out, Fr. Moloney doubled his income after accepting a position as a hospital emergency room doctor and clinic physician in Houston. Fr. Moloney worked hard at his job for the next three years, and in 1980 opened up his own private practice, which he kept going for the next seven years.

During this time, the physician was well-invested in the stock market, drove a Cadillac and a BMW, and accumulated a string of houses that he owned and leased out for additional income.

"It seemed like all of a sudden, I had everything. I was successful and had all these things," Fr. Moloney said.

But something was missing. He wasn't going to church and was a non-believer.

"I looked down the road and said, 'What else can I do? All I can get is more of the same. You know all I'm going to have in life is more of the same here. Is this what life's about? Is this it?'" Fr. Moloney recalled.

During his years in family practice, Fr. Moloney said he experienced a mystical encounter with Jesus and came to the realization that he needed to make a change in his life.

The conversion eventually led Fr. Moloney to give up his private practice and he entered a non-denominational seminary and theology school in Canada.

Ironically, it was while studying there that he grew closer to his Catholic roots.

"The more I studied theology there, the more Catholic I became," Fr. Moloney said. "I rediscovered my Catholic faith."

Back on track as a devout Catholic, Fr. Moloney returned to practicing medicine full-time in Houston from 1990 to 1996. He then decided to earn another medical degree, this time in public health, and began specializing in preventive medicine. All the while, he took a more holistic approach to medicine, integrating faith into his practice and praying with patients if they wished. Bringing God into the healing process worked, said Fr. Moloney.

While in the field of preventive medicine, Fr. Moloney in 2003 moved to North Texas, where he was appointed medical director of the Community Health Care Center of Wichita Falls.

In Wichita Falls, Fr. Moloney established a close friendship with Irish-born Father Aidan Donlon, now deceased. Fr. Donlon was a well-respected hospital chaplain and priest serving the Church in Wichita Falls, Iowa Park, and Elec-



Father Michael Moloney

tra. As chaplain of the Knights of Columbus Council 1473 in Wichita Falls, he established one of the strongest fundraising programs in the country to support seminarians.

Fr. Moloney became involved in that support program and found himself being drawn to the priesthood himself.

"All I can tell you," Fr. Moloney said, "is that the Holy Spirit tapped me on the shoulder and said, 'You're going!' And, literally, I obeyed."

In 2008 Fr. Moloney became a seminarian in the Diocese of Fort Worth and was ordained at St. Patrick Cathedral on June 9, 2012.

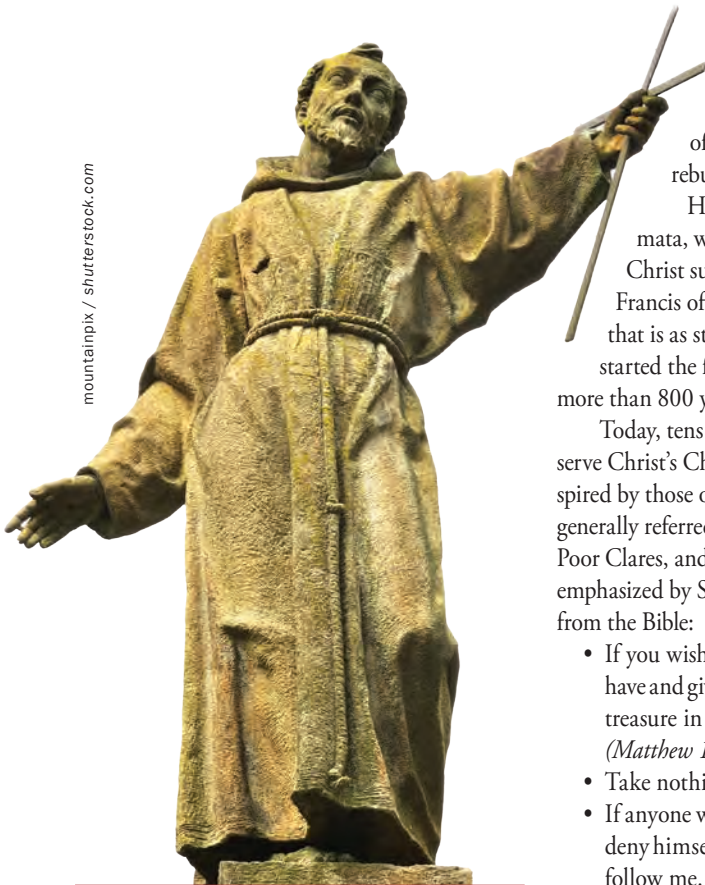
Fr. Moloney said his former vocation as a doctor and now as a priest have their similarities and their differences. Both require listening for people's "hurts and wounds" and both deal with healing.

"I feel better that what I'm dealing with now is the ultimate illness," Fr. Moloney said. "In other words, when you're treating medical illness, well, that is for this life. What I'm treating now, I'm treating for eternity."

"It's healing for eternity."

# Living life according to the Holy Gospel

The OFMs, OFM Caps, and Hermanas Franciscanas are following a humble path to Christ, walked by St. Francis



mountainpix / shutterstock.com

by Jerry Circelli  
Correspondent

**T**HERE IS ONE NAME, ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI, THAT COMES UP TIME AND AGAIN WHENEVER VOCATIONS TO THE RELIGIOUS LIFE ARE DISCUSSED.

The name is associated with a man who lived a minimalist lifestyle while sharing an infinite love for Christ.

Although history tells us he certainly was not born a saint, Francis was canonized only two years after his death in the 13th century. His legacy is one of a man who gave up a luxurious lifestyle and left his vices behind. After hearing the voice of God, he abandoned material possessions and zealously followed Christ, adopting a life of poverty. Along

the way, he did nothing short of fulfilling God's command to rebuild the Christian Church.

He bore the marks of the stigmata, with wounds resembling those Christ suffered during crucifixion. St. Francis of Assisi left a lasting influence that is as strong today as it was when he started the first of three religious orders more than 800 years ago.

Today, tens of thousands of Franciscans serve Christ's Church around the world, inspired by those original three orders — now generally referred to as the Friars Minor, the Poor Clares, and the Third Order. Their rules, emphasized by St. Francis, are taken directly from the Bible:

- If you wish to be perfect, go, sell what you have and give to [the] poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me. (*Matthew 19:21*)
- Take nothing for the journey. (*Luke 9:3*)
- If anyone wishes to come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. (*Luke 9:23*)

In the Diocese of Fort Worth, Franciscans serve the local Church and its followers through several orders. These include the Order of Friars Minor (OFM), the Order of Friars Minor Capuchin (OFM Cap), Third Order Regular (TOR), and Hermanas Franciscanas de la Inmaculada Concepcion (HFIC). (For past feature on TORs, see *North Texas Catholic*, Sept.-Oct. 2015 issue. For feature on Franciscan Friars of the Renewal, who served the diocese from 2007-2015, see Nov.-Dec. 2013 issue).

Among the Franciscans serving the local diocese is Father Thomas Fox, OFM, a retired priest in residence at St. Francis Village in Crowley. Like several other "retired" priests from the order, Fr. Fox can often be found

celebrating Mass throughout the diocese when needed. He is also involved in local hospital ministry.

"St. Francis is a fascinating person," Fr. Fox said. "In many ways, we consider him to be our primary vocations promoter because people find out about his life and it inspires them to want to follow."

In his own life, Fr. Fox took the Franciscan path 60 years ago when he entered the OFM religious order.

"I was excited to give my life to Jesus and follow Him as well as I could. St. Francis definitely had an impact on me," Fr. Fox said.

In all, there are seven OFM priests living at St. Francis Village, which was established by Secular Franciscans in 1965. The faith-based retirement community includes a Catholic Chapel where Mass is celebrated daily. Now in its 50th year, the community spans 250 acres and is home to about 500 residents living in nearly 400 housing units.

The seven priests live at the Maximilian Kolbe Friary and two nearby community homes. Like other religious communities, the fraternal structure of the order is an important part of its charism.

"We join religious life because we want to live with others who share our vision of life and our values, and to be supported by that," Fr. Fox said. "But also, this is our family... It strengthens me as a Franciscan and in the values of St. Francis, by seeing other people live it, too."

Father Lambert Leykam, OFM, who also resides at St. Francis Village, fits in the same "retired" category as Fr. Fox. He celebrates Mass whenever needed throughout the diocese. Like Fr. Fox, he was drawn to the order by the example set by St. Francis and those he inspired.

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# Prayers rise from Mount Carmel Answers flow from the sky

By Joan Kurkowski-Gillen  
Correspondent

**G**ail Yager's introduction to the Catholic faith was the gentle, compassionate voice of a Carmelite nun.

Her name was Maria and she was the Mother Superior of a group of cloistered sisters living in a home-turned-monastery on Sunset Terrace near downtown Fort Worth. The year was 1976.

"I was Episcopalian at the time and felt I was being called to the Catholic Church," says Yager, who was 39 years old.

Along with three other women, she reached out to the Carmelites seeking spiritual direction after visiting their chapel and realizing, "something special was going on there."

Mother Maria agreed to meet with the group in her office.

"I can remember her saying she would meet with us once, but it [spiritual direction] was not her vocation," Yager explains. "She offered to pray for us and suggested the Carmelite Center in Dallas."

Now 77 years old, the devout Catholic convert says, "my whole spiritual being was formed by the Carmelites."

## *Life in Carmel*

Praying for the special intentions of people — especially priests, the poor, the unemployed, the sick and suffering — is at the heart of contemplative life for the Discalced Carmelites in Arlington. The religious community is part of the Order of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Mount Carmel and models its quiet work and hidden service after Mary of Nazareth who followed, unconditionally, God's will. Each sister wears a scapular of the Patroness as part of her religious habit.

They observe papal enclosure — meaning the nuns do not leave the monastery grounds except for medical care, and no one enters the cloister except for necessary maintenance.

Mary Kay Swenson, the business manager

# Mount Carmel; A view from heaven

and development director for the Carmelites, says the monastery — relocated to a wooded, 56-acre Arlington site in 1984 — reflects the sisters' simple lifestyle.

"Quiet within the cloister creates a sense of peacefulness," she says. "It's not a vow but something they try to do to remain close to the Lord at all times."

The oasis of green within the enclosure is reminiscent of the Garden of Eden. Colorful flowers and leafy trees are nurtured to remind the residents of the presence of God.

The walls, made of unpainted cinder blocks, contrast with tile floors found throughout the interior. Bedrooms, called cells, are sparsely furnished with a bed, sink, chair, or kneeler.

"It's not dreary," insists Swenson. "Everything has a brown tone to it that coordinates with the Carmelites' brown habits. It's beautiful but it's a simple beauty."

The serene environment is conducive to the seven hours spent in prayer each day. Sisters attend daily Mass, chant the Divine Office, and set aside two hours for silent mental prayer.

"Even when we are working, recreating, or eating, we try to remain reflective," says Mother Anne Teresa, the prioress. "Each day, the nuns receive many requests for prayer by phone or mail, and they carry these intercessions in their heart and place them before God."

## Beginnings

The genesis of the Carmelite Order dates to the end of the 12th century when a group of Crusaders settled on the western slope of Mt. Carmel in northern Israel. Wanting to imitate the hermit-like life of the prophet Elijah, they lived in grottos and caves of the mountain and observed the Rule of Life given to them by St. Albert of Jerusalem in 1204.

By the end of the 13th century, the community was flourishing, but an invasion forced it to emigrate to Europe. During the 14th century, Blessed John Soreth organized a group of devout, holy women in Belgium into the first monastery of Carmelite nuns. Monasteries spread across the continent, and it was into the



Bishop Michael Olson dedicated this new statue of St. Teresa of Avila, who restablished the Carmelite order in the 16th century, on the saint's feast day, October 15. (Photo provided by Carmelite Sisters)

Carmel of the Incarnation in Avila, Spain that St. Teresa of Jesus (Avila) entered in 1534.

In 1562, Teresa of Jesus began her famous "Teresian" reform with the aim of re-establishing a true Carmelite life of silence, solitude, and small, sisterly communities for religious women as proposed in the Council of Trent. She founded the first monastery of Discalced Carmelite Nuns in Avila, under the patronage of St. Joseph. Discalced means "shoeless." Even today, Carmelites wear sandals without stockings, regardless of the weather, to show solidarity with the poor.

To maintain a community life that is simple and happy, St. Teresa limited the number of nuns in each monastery to 21.

After her death, members of her community carried the order's charism into France, Belgium, and Poland. The first group of Carmelite nuns came to America in 1790, and today there are approximately 60 monasteries across the U.S.

A \$5,000 donation from a New York attorney to Oklahoma City Carmelites helped fund the start of a new foundation of Carmel in Fort Worth. After looking for an appropriate site in North Texas, Mother Mary Magdalene and four other sisters settled in an old home perched on a steep bluff overlooking the Trinity River. Carmel of the Most Holy Trinity was officially established on October 2, 1958. Standing in for an ill Bishop Thomas K.

Gorman, Monsignor Vincent J. Wolf blessed the new Carmel, sealed the enclosure, and celebrated the first Mass in the tiny chapel.

## The move to Arlington

When the needs of the community outgrew the modest residence in downtown Fort Worth, a generous benefactor helped purchase 56 acres for a new monastery in Arlington where the sisters moved in 1984.

According to the order's online history, "It was ideal: secluded yet central to our wide circle of friends and altar bread customers ... so wonderfully suited to the monastic life."

The community continued to flourish in its new location. After a few years, making banners, greeting cards, and other artwork replaced the altar bread business as a means of financial support. Items are available for purchase by calling the monastery or using the nun's website [www.carmelnuns.com](http://www.carmelnuns.com).

"By making religious artwork, the nuns hope to share the beauty of God with others," says Mother Anne Teresa.

Several banners, made by the sisters, enhanced the interior of Daniel Meyer Coliseum when it was converted into the worship space for Bishop Kevin Vann's ordination as the third bishop of Fort Worth in 2005. A large banner designed by the sisters hangs at the Basilica of St. Theresa of Lisieux in San Antonio.

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The Carmelites participated in Bishop Michael Olson's ordination in 2014 by providing the crucifix over the altar.

Despite leaving behind family, friends, and the distractions of society, the nuns remain very much a part of the Church and the world, according to the prioress. Television viewing is limited but available in a common area along with Catholic and daily newspapers.

"Sisters scan the headlines," Mother Anne Teresa reports. "They try to stay current with what is going on."

Family visits are allowed through a grille that provides a barrier to the outside world. A quarterly newsletter, sent out by the sisters, shares news and information about the monastery.

In December 1999, the sisters welcomed more than 50,000 people to their enclave when the reliquary of St. Therese of Lisieux, the popular French Carmelite known as "The

Little Flower," stopped in Arlington during its U.S. tour.

Two special feast days highlight the Carmelite calendar. October 1 is the feast day of St. Therese of Lisieux and Oct. 15 is the feast day of St. Teresa of Jesus (Avila). On those days, the public is invited to celebrate evening Mass at the monastery, and the nuns are allowed to break a fast they maintain from Sept. 14 (feast of the Triumph of the Cross) until Easter Sunday.

While fasting, the sisters eat a main meal at noon and collation, "light" meals in the morning and evening. The community is also vegetarian, "not because we think it's wrong to eat animals," Mother Anne Teresa explains. "We forego eating meat as part of a penitential life. We do it as an offering."

## Vocations

Currently, the monastery is home to eight chapter nuns — women who have professed solemn vows and are permanent members of

the community and two nuns who have taken temporary vows. They range in age from 25 to 80. Two women who are discerning a call to Carmel are expected for a "live-in" visit to the monastery this year.

Two much-loved guard dogs also live on the property.

"The vocation call is different for each person and they each have their own story," Mother Anne Teresa said.

Choosing a vocation to Carmel is a radical one, she admits.

"When one gives herself totally to the Lord, her love must be radical. She leaves behind family and friends, but she does so knowing God will shower his blessing and graces upon her. By leaving things behind, the Carmelite nun is free to offer herself to her Beloved in a life of prayer and sacrifice for the needs of others and the whole world."

For more on the Monastery of the Most Holy Trinity go to [www.carmelnuns.com](http://www.carmelnuns.com)

# Sister Jacinta of Jesus makes First Profession of Vows

By Joan Kurkowski-Gillen

Sister Jacinta of Jesus made her First Profession of Vows Sept. 5 during a Mass concelebrated by the Provincial of the Discalced Carmelites, Father Luis Joaquin Castaneda, and priests from the Dioceses of Fort Worth and Salina, Kansas.

A Kansas native who worked as a soil scientist before joining the Arlington Carmel in November 2012, Sister Jacinta knelt before Mother Anne Teresa, the prioress, and promised to observe vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience as a cloistered Carmelite nun.

"Even though she found joy in her family and work, she experienced a desire to serve our Lord and give her life for the good of others," Mother Anne Teresa explained. "Our Lord inspired her to pursue a religious vocation, and she felt especially drawn to the contemplative life."

Sr. Jacinta received the Carmelite habit in December 2013 after completing one year of postulancy. As a novice, she learned how to pray the Liturgy of the Hours and received instruction on the Carmelite Rule and Constitutions. The next stage in her spiritual journey, temporary formation, will last at least three years.

The newly professed sister's parents, relatives, and friends from Kansas witnessed the solemn ritual through the monastery grille. Also attending were two priests from her hometown. Father Leroy Metro is her spiritual director, and Father



Sister Jacinta of Jesus and Mother Anne Theresa, mother superior of the Monastery of the Most Holy Trinity in Arlington, flank artwork by the nuns that proclaims Sr. Jacinta's special day of profession.

Kerry Ninemire gave the homily during the Mass. Concelebrating priests from the Diocese of Fort Worth were Father Daniel Kelley, Chancellor of the diocese; Father Karl Schilken, Vicar General of the diocese; and Father Keith Hathaway and Father Michael Kwaku Boahene, parochial vicars at St. Joseph Parish in Arlington.

Following the Mass, Sr. Jacinta greeted her family and friends during a reception and chatted with them through the grille.

During the next few years, she will contemplate the meaning of her vows and study the lives



Mother Anne Theresa accepts Sister Jacinta of Jesus' First Profession of vows in the enclosure of the monastery chapel Sept. 5.

of Carmel saints especially St. Teresa of Avila, St. John of the Cross, and St. Therese of Lisieux.

"Sister will continue her hidden life of prayer and sacrifice for the good of the Church and all of God's people," Mother Anne Teresa said. "She will go more deeply into the discernment of her vocation and prepare to profess her solemn vows, if it be the will of God that she make her final commitment as a Carmelite nun."

Fr. Leykam explained that his parents were Secular Franciscans (laypeople who pledge themselves to live the Gospel in the manner of St. Francis) and several priests in his hometown



**TOP:** Pastor Fr. Alejandro Olivera (OFM Cap), left, and Associate Pastor Fr. Pedro Romero (OFM Cap) of Our Lady of Guadalupe Catholic Church in Fort Worth.

**ABOVE:** Some of the Franciscan OFM priests in residence at St. Francis Village include, Fr. Robert Leonhardt (OFM), seated. Standing from left, Fr. Thomas Fox (OFM), Fr. Richard Baranski (OFM), and Fr. Lambert Leykam (OFM).

near St. Louis, Missouri, were OFMs as well.

“They were people who wanted to follow St. Francis, like my mother and dad did,” Fr. Leykam said. “I’ve been around Franciscans all my life. I think maybe that’s where I got my vocation. I guess that’s where I came from, because somewhere along the line I got the idea that I wanted to become a Franciscan, too.”

Father Richard Baranski, OFM, is also part of the community of Franciscans residing at St. Francis Village. Serving as a Catholic chaplain at the Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base in Fort Worth, Fr. Baranski has been a member of the OFM religious order for 25 years, including the last seven years as a priest. Before that, he served as a brother.

“I’ve always felt at home with the OFMs,” Fr. Baranski said. He explained that he especially liked the fraternal charism of the order and the fact that brothers serve wherever they are needed, including where people are marginalized and excluded by society. “They are welcoming to all,” Fr. Baranski said of Franciscans.

Like the other six OFM priests at St. Francis Village, Fr. Baranski belongs to the order’s Sacred Heart Province in St. Louis.

Two other priests in the diocese belong to the Franciscan Order of Friars Minor Capuchin (OFM Cap), which grew out of the original OFM some 410 years after its founding.

The relationship of the orders is best described and simply stated by Father Lucas Alejandro Olivera, OFM Cap, pastor of Our Lady of Guadalupe Catholic Church in Fort Worth.

“Today, there is fraternity among all Franciscans,” Fr. Olivera said. “Back in history, we were more like cousins, not brothers. Now we are all brothers.”

Fr. Olivera and his associate pastor, Father Pedro Romero, are natives of Mexico and both hail from the Mexico-Texas vice province of the OFM Capuchins.

“We are not looking for prestige or titles or anything like that,” Fr. Olivera said in the spirit of a true Franciscan. “We are here to serve the people, live the Gospel, and be, as Saint Francis said, heralds of peace.”

Fr. Olivera continued, “Like Pope Francis is telling us nowadays, we have to smell like the sheep. We, as Capuchins, say we belong to the people; we belong to everybody, so in that way

we may spread the Good News of the Gospel.

“We are living with the people, sharing our lives with them and being available for everyone,” Fr. Olivera said. “We are open to everybody. If there is a need to serve in charitable ways or works, we are there.”

Everyone shares in the charism of Franciscans, Fr. Olivera said, and that centers on being brothers and sisters in Christ.

“We have one Father, so we are all brothers and sisters. And that is part of being a Franciscan,” Fr. Olivera said. “It’s also part of the Church — being brothers and sisters called to serve together because we are following Jesus Christ.

“As Christians, we are family, living that dream of St. Francis and treating each other like brothers and sisters. And that should be the dream of all humanity.”

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#### ORDER FRIARS MINOR (OFM) SERVING IN THE DIOCESE OF FORT WORTH

- **Fr. Richard Baranski** (OFM), chaplain Naval Joint Reserve Base Fort Worth
- **Fr. Benet Fonck** (OFM), semi-retired
- **Fr. Thomas Fox** (OFM), semi-retired, hospital chaplain
- **Fr. Albert Haase** (OFM), author, spiritual director, parish missions
- **Fr. Robert Leonhardt** (OFM), semi-retired
- **Fr. Lambert Leykam** (OFM), semi-retired
- **Fr. Robert Sieg** (OFM), chaplain St. Francis Village Chapel

#### ORDER OF FRIARS MINOR CAPUCHIN (OFM CAP) SERVING IN THE DIOCESE

- **Fr. Lucas Alejandro Olivera** (OFM Cap), pastor of Our Lady of Guadalupe Catholic Church in Fort Worth
- **Fr. Pedro Romero** (OFM Cap), associate pastor of Our Lady of Guadalupe Catholic Church in Fort Worth

#### HERMANAS FRANCISCANAS DE LA INMACULADA CONCEPCIÓN (HFIC) SERVING IN THE DIOCESE

- **Sister Iliana Hernandez** (HFIC), Director of Religious Education at All Saints Catholic Church in Fort Worth
-



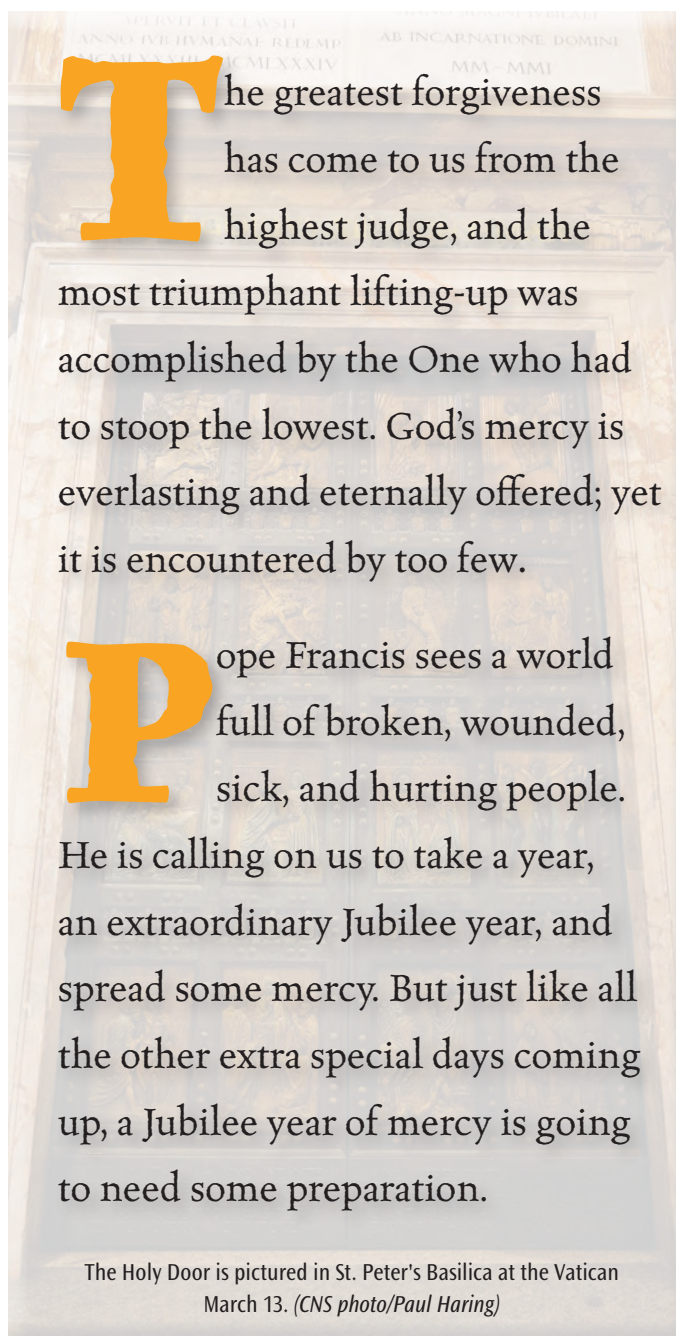
# Mercy is rooted in love, defined by action

By JEFF HEDGLEN  
NTC COLUMNIST

This is the season of “hurry up and wait.” We are waiting for Thanksgiving, and then waiting for Advent — the season of waiting, then through December we will be waiting for Christmas, and then we wait to turn a New Year. But along with all of this waiting is a lot of preparing.

As with all great celebrations there are a lot of tasks that need to be completed to make sure the event is as festive as it can be. Even a modest Thanksgiving for two can become a production worthy of being on the Food Network or Home and Garden Television. To be sure, few of us have the decorating chops of Martha Stewart, or the culinary prowess of Emeril Lagasse, but that doesn't mean we cannot prepare the feast, and our home, in a way that marks the importance of the upcoming holidays.

Taking some extra time and care to set the scene in our homes does so much to help us embrace the reality that Thanksgiving is not just another family meal, or that Christmas is not just another birthday celebration. Every decoration hung and light strung, along with every turkey basted and Christmas cookie tasted, as well as every Advent candle lit, Christmas



**T**he greatest forgiveness has come to us from the highest judge, and the most triumphant lifting-up was accomplished by the One who had to stoop the lowest. God's mercy is everlasting and eternally offered; yet it is encountered by too few.

**P**ope Francis sees a world full of broken, wounded, sick, and hurting people. He is calling on us to take a year, an extraordinary Jubilee year, and spread some mercy. But just like all the other extra special days coming up, a Jubilee year of mercy is going to need some preparation.

The Holy Door is pictured in St. Peter's Basilica at the Vatican March 13. (CNS photo/Paul Haring)

song crooned, and Mass attended, marks the extraordinary nature of the days

ahead.

Added to all of these standard extra special days is

something that has not happened since 1983, and before that 1933. This is of course the extraordinary Jubilee year of Mercy called for by Pope Francis that will begin on the feast of the Immaculate Conception, December 8, 2015.

The jubilee tradition has its roots in Judaism, when a jubilee year was celebrated every 50 years. It was meant to restore equality among all of the children of Israel, offering new possibilities to families that had lost property and even their personal freedom.

The Catholic tradition of the holy year began with Pope Boniface VIII, in 1300 and ordinary Jubilee years are observed every 25 years. But an extraordinary jubilee may be announced on the occasion of an event of particular importance. The holy year is always an opportunity for all to deepen our faith and to live with a renewed commitment to Christian witness.

Why an Extraordinary Jubilee year? Why a year dedicated to the Mercy of God? Pope Francis answered these questions when he announced the holy year: “I am confident that the whole Church, which is in such

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

# This open door offers access to God's mercy

By SHARON K. PERKINS  
NTC COLUMNIST

There's nothing as daunting, disappointing or disheartening as finding a door locked when you were expecting to find it open.

This has happened to me several times. Like taking a friend to a favorite restaurant a great distance away, just to find that it's closed on that particular day of the week. Or tracking down that special Christmas gift to the only store in town that has it in stock — just to get there three minutes too late.

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need of mercy for we are sinners, will be able to find in this Jubilee the joy of rediscovering and rendering fruitful God's mercy, with which we are all called to give comfort to every man and every woman of our time."

Mercy is not a new idea, but it needs a renewed emphasis. We are too quick to judge and too slow to forgive. We find it easy to push another down and sometimes it seems almost impossible to go out of our way to lift up our neighbor.

The greatest forgiveness has come to us from the highest judge, and the most triumphant lifting-up was accomplished by the One who had to stoop the lowest.

God's mercy is everlasting and eternally offered; yet it is encountered by too few.

Pope Francis sees a world full of broken, wounded, sick, and hurting people. He is calling on us to take a year, an extraordinary Jubilee year, and spread some mercy. But just like all the other extra special days coming up, a Jubilee year of mercy is going to need some preparation. I encourage you all to take a look at this website that is full of information and ideas. [www.iubilaeummisericordiae.va](http://www.iubilaeummisericordiae.va)

Even though the Jubilee year doesn't start until December 8, start praying now for inspiration and for the grace to find ways to live the year of mercy. Maybe you can

start a study group at your parish that learns about the Corporal and Spiritual works of mercy AND then go out and do them. Maybe you form your own Mercy Team that takes to the streets and serves the poor. Maybe you call Catholic Charities and volunteer with one of their programs.

The year of mercy goes both ways. Pope Francis wants us to receive mercy and be agents of mercy. To do this we have to prepare just like we do for any holiday. We have to decorate our hearts with the sacraments and then get to work putting food on the table and gifting ourselves to others. We must live the founding

verse of this Jubilee year, the verse that sums up "why" behind the Gospel and the real reason for the season: "Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful" (*Luke 6:36*). For mercy is rooted in love and defined by action. Let the preparations begin, let the mercy flow, and let the Jubilee year be a wave that refreshes the world.

*Jeff Hedglen is director of Young Adult Ministry and Campus Ministry for the diocese. His column received second place honors for best spiritual life column by the Catholic Press Association of the United States and Canada in 2014.*



# Mercy transforms our outlook

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Or like getting to my hotel room in the middle of the night, laden with luggage and wanting nothing more than to sink into a bed — to repeatedly scan a key card that wasn't properly activated. Or even returning to my car to discover that I've locked myself out of it, with the keys on the front seat in plain sight and no spare key in my purse.

Closed doors are a barrier that we usually don't think twice about; we simply open them and walk through. But locked doors — whether locked through our own carelessness or someone else's intention — are a different story.

They can stop us in our tracks, thwart our plans, or say to us, "you aren't welcome here," and there's nothing you can do about them. It takes an intervention of some kind to open a locked door.

And so I've also experienced those surprising moments when locked doors unexpectedly opened for me. Like when my optometrist took pity on me and remained open after hours because I was traveling the next day and needed new contact lenses. Or when a kind passerby helped me unlock my car (in the old days when you could get to the button locks with a wire coat hanger). Or when a friend gave me a spare key to her place so I could "crash" for a couple of



The Holy Door is pictured in St. Peter's Basilica at the Vatican April 11. Before celebrating vespers, the pope released a 9,300-word document officially proclaiming the 2015-2016 extraordinary Holy Year of Mercy. (CNS photo/Andrea Solaro, Reuters pool)

days in lieu of paying for a hotel. The liberation of walking through those locked doors was almost palpable, transforming my outlook and opening up new possibilities.

Advent is always like that for me — and even more so this year, in the beginning days of the Jubilee Year of Mercy. The Scripture readings for Advent are full

of promise, of God smoothing the way, straightening the paths, and opening all the locked doors of our own making. Beginning Dec. 8, 2015, the "Holy Door" of St. Peter's Basilica in Rome will be unsealed, becoming a "Door of Mercy through which anyone who enters will experience the love of God who consoles, pardons,

and instills hope" (*Misericordiae Vultus*, #3). That open door, and those designated holy doors at diocesan cathedrals all over the world, will signal a time of release, liberation, and transformation.

But it wouldn't really be Advent without the desire for conversion and recognizing the need to do penance. (That's one of the reasons we use the liturgical color purple in preparation for Christ's coming). Advent prepares me to receive the bountiful mercy of God through the gift of his Incarnate Son — but not simply for my own benefit. I, who have received mercy, am also to become a "door of mercy" for others. And so during Advent, I reflect upon ways that I withhold forgiveness, or remain unmoved by another's suffering, or continue to let my pride or anger or fear seal up that door that holds back the flood of Mercy who is Christ Himself. I begin to examine how the traditional spiritual and corporal works of mercy, and the admonition of Matthew 25, can become more fully manifest in my own attitudes and actions.

"Advent" means "coming." And mercy — the love of God when it encounters the locked doors of human sin and suffering — is coming too. Get ready to walk through the door.

*Sharon Perkins is the director of Evangelization and Catechesis for the Diocese of Austin. She and her husband Mike are the parents of three adult children and former members of St. Rita Parish in East Fort Worth*

# A bright future

With transfer to Ordinariate, St. Mary the Virgin Parish reaches another milestone

by Joan Kurkowski-Gillen  
Correspondent

**M**EMBERS OF ST. MARY THE VIRGIN CHURCH GATHERED AUG. 29 TO CELEBRATE A MILESTONE IN THE LIFE OF THE FORMER ANGLICAN PARISH.

Father Thomas Kennedy became the first priest ordained to the Catholic priesthood at the Arlington parish since it transferred from the Diocese of Fort Worth into the Personal Ordinariate of the Chair of St. Peter on July 1.

Fort Worth Bishop Michael Olson performed the sacred rites of ordination during a morning Mass concelebrated with Monsignor Jeffrey N. Steenson, leader of the Anglican Ordinariate in the U.S., Father Timothy Perkins, parochial administrator of St. Mary the Virgin, and priests of the Diocese of Fort Worth and the Ordinariate.

Fr. Kennedy was assigned to serve as parochial vicar of St. Mary the Virgin Sept. 1.

St. Mary the Virgin made history in 1994 when it became the first Episcopal Church in the world to join the Catholic faith as a whole, bringing with it congregants, clergy, and property. This was accomplished under a pastoral provision established by Pope John Paul II, which permitted the ordination of married Episcopal clergy to the Catholic priesthood and the retention of certain Anglican traditions such as liturgical texts, sacred music, and customs of pastoral care.

Pope Benedict XVI broadened the opportunity for Anglicans to enter into full communion with the Catholic Church when he issued

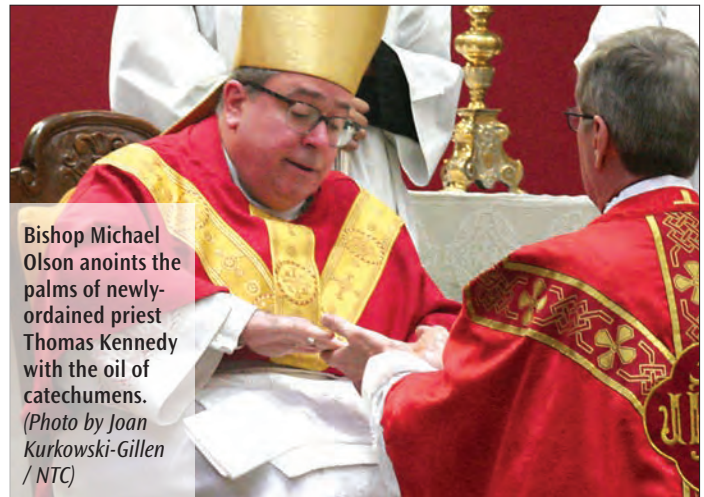
the Apostolic Constitution *Anglicanorum coetibus*, Nov. 4, 2009. The Personal Ordinariate of the Chair of St. Peter was established Jan. 1, 2012.

Ordinariates are equivalent to dioceses though national in scope. The Ordinariate of the Chair of St. Peter is based in Houston and oversees 70 priests and more than 40 parish or small faith communities in North America who come from an Anglican heritage but have entered into full communion with the Catholic Church. With the transfer, St. Mary the Virgin becomes the newest church of the Ordinariate.

"It's been a long time coming," according to Fr. Perkins, who was assigned to St. Mary the Virgin in 2013. "The transfer solidifies our place within the larger Church. Instead of being an 'unusual' diocesan parish, we're a particular part of the larger Catholic Church in communion and deep cooperation with the local diocese."

Many of St. Mary's 350-400 Sunday worshippers come from areas outside Arlington.

"It's had a unique identity from the beginning because it catered to people from a particular background," he explained, noting that many congregants are converts or have family members who were Anglican. "The focal point of our mission is restoring those separated from the Anglican tradition to the union and wholeness of the



Bishop Michael Olson anoints the palms of newly-ordained priest Thomas Kennedy with the oil of catechumens. (Photo by Joan Kurkowski-Gillen / NTC)

Catholic Church using language they understand."

Because of its location in Arlington and the diocese, Bishop Olson will continue to have a pastoral relationship with the parish.

"I look forward to continued collaboration with Msgr. Steenson and the priests and people of the Ordinariate as we work together to form

Catholic unity based on God's love," he told the *North Texas Catholic*.

Msgr. Steenson considers the transfer of St. Mary the Virgin into the Ordinariate, "the completion of a journey."

"Father (Allan) Hawkins led them into the Catholic Church in the early 1990s, and the transfer is an affirmation of that journey."

**Celebrating 50 Years of Catholic-Jewish Dialogue:**  
*In honor of the anniversary of Nostra Aetate, the Second Vatican Council's Declaration on the Relation of the Church with Non-Christian Religions*



**Bishop Brian Farrell**  
Secretary of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity



**Rabbi David Rosen**  
International Director of Interreligious Affairs of the American Jewish Committee and its Heilbrunn Institute for International Interreligious Understanding

Thursday, November 5, 2015  
6:30 p.m. Reception  
7:15 p.m. Lecture  
University Christian Church  
2720 S University Dr,  
Fort Worth, TX 76109




For tickets, go to [www.brite.edu/gates](http://www.brite.edu/gates)



**November 1, Solemnity of All Saints**

**Cycle B Readings:**

- 1) Revelation 7:2-4, 9-14  
Psalm 24:1bc-6
- 2) 1 John 3:1-3  
Gospel) Matthew 5:1-12a

**By Jeff Hensley**

In June I had the privilege of hearing a talk by a nun who will probably be one of the saints that future generations will honor.

Sister Rosemary Nyirumbe spoke of her work with women brutalized by the Lord's Resistance Army and other violent groups in Uganda and South Sudan. She and her sisters have provided a pathway for more than 2,500 of these women and their children to rebuild their lives. It has been redemptive, as the sisters have helped these women, often rejected and blamed for

*"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God."*

—Matthew 5:9



what happened to them when they returned to their villages, to regain their dignity through work, faith, and forgiveness.

On this solemnity of All Saints, we honor all the saints the Church has recognized. In the reading from Revelation, John, in a vision, stands "before the throne [of God] and before the Lamb." There he sees a crowd so large that he cannot count its members, coming from every

tribe and nation, washed clean by the blood of Jesus. They have prostrated themselves before God and are worshipping Him.

In the second reading from 1 John, John writes, "Beloved: See

what love the Father has bestowed on us that we may be called the children of God."

That one statement reveals the power that enables some of us to rise to the level of heroic self-sacrifice on behalf of God for

others — sainthood. That one statement gives the impetus to all of us to seek to rise to that level in our love of our families, our neighbors, and the stranger.

Jesus gives definition to what it means to be a child of God in the Gospel reading, with its extensive listing of the "blesseds" among them, "Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy."

Sister Rosemary stands as one example, along with a multitude of others who have gone before and been recognized as saints. May we seek to be among the blessed as well and find ourselves, washed in the blood of the Lamb, before the throne of God, among the worshippers.

**QUESTIONS:**

How is God calling you to enter more deeply into the spirit of the beatitudes?

**November 8, Thirty-second Sunday in Ordinary Time.**

**Cycle B Readings:**

- 1) 1 Kings 17:10-16  
Psalm: 146:7-10
- 2) Hebrews 9:24-28  
Gospel) Mark 12:38-44

**By Jean Denton**

Once when I was visiting the administrative offices of a large organization that serves the poor, a veteran staff fundraiser remarked, "Our experience has been that when it comes to actual donations, it is always the people who are only a step out of poverty themselves who are the most generous as a percentage of what they have."

His comment would have us believe that today's Gospel story, comparing the widow giving from her want with the wealthy giving



from their surplus, is an example of something that happens all the time.

"It makes sense," the staffer said, "because these are people who have experienced firsthand what it is like to be in poverty. They know the struggle, so naturally they want to help anyone who is in that situation."

It's fundamental solidarity.

I've witnessed it in my periodic visits to my church's twin parish in Haiti: In the offertory during Mass, there's no passing the plate. Instead, altar servers stand in the aisles holding small

*"They have all contributed from their surplus wealth, but she, from her poverty, has contributed all she had."*

— Mark 12:44

wooden boxes, each with a lock on the side and a money slot in the lid.

All at once (this is not an orderly procession) the people make their way to a box, crowding around to place coins and small bills — crumpled and grimy from the transactions typical of a poor, hard-labor economy — into the slot.

The scene looks like a free will offering flash mob.

Here is a poor community's members giving from their want out of their love for God and their

ardent trust that He will care for them together as a body of his people. Indeed, their shared life as a church community is what sustains them, both spiritually and materially — and gives them hope.

They exemplify this week's Old Testament reading in which a widow and her son, themselves a step away from starvation, share their last bit of flour and oil with the hungry prophet Elijah. Drawn together by mutual trust in God, they survive.

We are all called to this kind of solidarity in which we join in our brothers' and sisters' struggles. Sharing the hardship, we learn by necessity to trust — and survive — in God's care.

**QUESTIONS:**

When has your trust in God come up short of offering all you have? How can you be more "invested" in your faith community or the hardship of others?

**November 15, Thirty-third Sunday in Ordinary Time.**

**Cycle B Readings:**

- 1) Daniel 12:1-3  
Psalm 16:5, 8-11
- 2) Hebrews 10:11-14, 18  
Gospel) Mark 13:24-32

**By Jeff Hedglen**

It is a 30-year tradition for my parish youth group's annual weekend canoe trip: Before we leave the parking lot I ask the group to keep their eyes open for signs of God throughout the trip.

Then, on the second night of the trip, sitting around the campfire after the melted marshmallow and chocolate have finally been licked off all our s'more-stained hands, we tell the stories of how and where we saw God.

Basking in the glow of the fire under a star-filled night, the



wonder of the presence of God among us comes alive.

We have found God in the turtles sunning themselves on branches or in the way someone helped others who seemed to spend more time in the river than in their canoe. Sometimes the sign of God has been just in getting away from the busyness of daily life and listening to the crickets sing us to sleep.

That night always has

*“Learn a lesson from the fig tree.”*

— Mark 13:28

been one of my favorite nights of the year, and it exemplifies perfectly the gift of wonder and awe in the presence of God.

The idea of a sign from God usually comes to us in two ways. Either something happens that causes us to feel a need for a sign from God, or something we see or experience confirms for us the presence of God in our lives.

In this week's Gospel, Jesus addresses these two aspects of God's self-revelation when He says, “Learn a lesson from the fig

tree. When its branch becomes tender and sprouts leaves, you know that summer is near. In the same way, when you see these things happening, know that he is near, at the gates.”

Through this example, Jesus teaches us to pay attention to the created world because it reveals truth. But also, He implores us to prayerfully watch the things happening around us, for through them He reminds us that He is always near.

So whether a canoe trip, a cup of coffee with a friend, a typical day at work, or any of a million other experiences in your life, be on the lookout for signs of God in your life. You may be surprised where He shows up.

**QUESTIONS:**

What is a recent “sign of God” in your life? What is your favorite place to go to encounter God?

**November 22, Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe.**

**Cycle B Readings:**

- 1) Daniel 7:13-14  
Psalm 93:1-2, 5
- 2) Revelation 1:5-8  
Gospel) John 18:33b-37

**By Sharon K. Perkins**

One can always find lively debate on the Internet and on social media. Some of it is profound, some of it is trivial, and some is downright ridiculous. But sometimes even the trivial can convey a kernel of truth.

While searching for a movie critique, I stumbled across a popular online magazine piece in which three commentators were debating the relative merits of Batman's previous garb and the latest Bat-suit created for a cinematic battle



against Superman.

It seems that the recent iteration was more heavily armored and, as one writer commented, more appropriate for dueling with the Man of Steel. Trivial, indeed. But I was struck by another critic's objection to the new suit. He maintained that the additional bulk was “antithetical” to all that makes Batman who he is — including his “human vulnerability.”

After all, Batman, beneath his intimidating ensemble, is also completely human, and therein lies the

*“One like a son of man ...*

*received dominion, glory and kingship.”*

— Daniel 7:14

enduring appeal of the story. Bruce Wayne is more than he appears to be.

So what does a Batman suit have to do with a reflection on Jesus Christ, King of the Universe?

Some second-century Christians had great difficulty with the notion that Jesus, the divine Son of God, could be truly human, since material flesh and blood were evil, and only spirit was capable of divinity. This heresy, called “Docetism,” maintained that Jesus only “appeared” human, or was “clothed” in a phantom-like humanity. Scripture, however, tells us otherwise.

Psalms 93 is a hymn about

the Lord's royal garb; he is “robed in majesty,” “girt about with strength.” When He comes again amid the clouds, every eye will see Him and all will know without a doubt that He is king. Yet Pilate certainly didn't see Him that way. Jesus stood before him, fully human and completely vulnerable, on trial for being a king who is not of this world. Of this king it is written in Revelation, he is both the “firstborn of the dead” and “ruler of the kings of the earth.”

On this feast, we celebrate a King who is both fully human and fully divine — of Whom the early Church Father St. Irenaeus wrote that Jesus became what we are so that we could become what He is.

There's nothing trivial about that.

**QUESTIONS:**

Do you struggle more with Jesus' true divinity or his true humanity? How is Jesus, the King not of this world, ruler of your life and of your heart?



## November 29, First Sunday of Advent.

### Cycle C Readings:

- 1) Jeremiah 33:14-16  
Psalm 25:4-5, 8-10, 14
- 2) 1 Thessalonians 3:12-4:2  
Gospel) Luke 21:25-28, 34-36

### By Jean Denton

I was driving on an interstate highway one day with my daughter. We were chatting away when she interrupted the conversation to point out a highway patrol car parked among some trees in the median a good distance ahead. “You see the cop up there, don’t you?” she said, indicating I should probably slow down.

Indeed, I started to touch the brakes but then smiled and cut my eyes at her. “Seriously?” I asked with a slight tone of sarcasm. She looked at me and burst into laughter, “Oh, right.”

We both knew I’ve been driv-



ing “like a grandma” (slow) since I was 15. I’m not as attentive to watching for hidden patrol cars as she is. But I don’t have to be, because I so rarely drive over the speed limit.

The fact is I’ve never believed I was a very good driver, so I’ve always been overly cautious behind the wheel. It’s not so much that I’m conscientious about following the rules as it is that I’m extra-sensitive to risking the safety of everybody else on the road.

Too bad I’m not equally conscientious about how my attention

*“Be vigilant at all times and pray that you have the strength to escape the tribulations that are imminent and to stand before the Son of Man.”*

— Luke 21:36

to following the Father’s commandments and Jesus’ teachings affect everybody else around me. But that’s what God desires — of me and all of us.

The Scriptures for this first Sunday of Advent call us to constantly, faithfully follow God’s ways, because in this way we help open the world to God’s presence,

### QUESTIONS:

What kinds of daily distractions or inattention to faithfulness to Christ do you need to be more vigilant about? How do you believe God sees you standing before Him right now?

both now and at the end of time.

Paul explained in his first Letter to the Thessalonians, “May the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all ... so as to strengthen your hearts, to be blameless in holiness before our God.”

When we do stand before God, it will be our own failure to be faithful that will “catch you by surprise like a trap,” Jesus told his disciples.

God doesn’t hide among the trees in the median waiting to catch us for breaking his commandments. Instead, He wants us to “be vigilant” ourselves, so that our own lives always enhance the life of the world, so it is worthy of God’s presence.

## December 6, Second Sunday of Advent

### Cycle C Readings:

- 1) Baruch 5:1-9  
Psalm 126:1-6
- 2) Philippians 1:4-6, 8-11  
Gospel) Luke 3:1-6

### By Jeff Hensley

In the Gospel reading, John addresses the central theme of his preaching in quoting the prophet Isaiah, “Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight his paths. Every valley shall be filled. The winding roads shall be made straight ... and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.”

His words seem to echo those of the prophet Baruch in the Old Testament reading for this week. The prophets are saying, “Look out world, God is about to do something new, and it’s for you. In fact, it will be the very salvation of



*“Prepare the way of the Lord.”*

— Luke 3:4c

God!”

When we think of Jesus coming into the world, which is what we’re supposed to be doing during Advent, it can get to be pretty abstract. But my own family’s experience was that when Jesus came

into my father’s world, and my father, at the age of 16, accepted Him as his Savior, it all became very concrete.

My dad told stories of what his life was like as a child growing up in his home. It was very different from my own childhood experience.

His father would stay out all night, gambling and carousing, arriving home at dawn.

One story had my grandmother chasing my grandfather around the kitchen with a butcher knife, intending to do him harm. Fortunately she didn’t, but not for lack of trying.

The church where my father came to know the Lord is also where he met my mother in a Sunday school class. The rest is, as

they say, history.

My father became an elder and a deacon in his Presbyterian church, and as a child I almost never missed a Sunday service.

My father would understand the words of Paul quoted in the reading from Philippians: “And this is my prayer: that your love may increase ever more and more in knowledge and every kind of perception.”

But if Jesus had not come into our world, had He not brought the very salvation of God, the words never would have been written, and a degree of love the world never before had known would not have come to us to shape us in his person, the very substance of love and mercy.

### QUESTIONS:

How has the coming of Jesus into the world made a difference in your family’s history?

**December 13, Third**

**Sunday of Advent**

**Cycle C Readings:**

- 1) Zephaniah 3:14-18a  
Psalm) Isaiah 12:2-6
- 2) Philippians 4:4-7  
Gospel) Luke 3:10-18

**By Jean Denton**

Recently I was invited to lead a discussion on evangelization as part of a faith formation series hosted by a local group of Catholic young adults.

But as people arrived for that evening's session, their informal conversations were all focused on a fatal shooting that had occurred in our small city earlier in the day.

The entire community was shocked and in mourning, and this group felt particularly connected to the tragedy because the two victims were their peers: young people in their 20s, just starting out in promising careers,



committed relationships, and happily anticipating what lay ahead.

So the group began the gathering with an earnest prayer for these young adults and their families and friends.

Later, as we talked about Christ's call to all of us to go and make disciples, I prompted the group to consider what motivated them, personally, to evangelize. "Why do you want to share the Gospel and encourage others to live this life of Jesus?" I asked.

One participant, Joe, began his response simply, "To make the

*"Shout for joy ... the Lord is in your midst, you have no further misfortune to fear."*

— Zephaniah 14-15

world a better place."

Then he went deeper: "If everyone was caring and loving; if everyone lived the way of Jesus, with concern and compassion for everyone else, imagine how different humanity would be. Imagine what life would be like. There wouldn't be such terrible things as what happened today."

This third Sunday of Advent calls us to joyful expectation. It calls us to anticipate the coming of Christ to humanity. It calls us to imagine, as Joe does, life fully infused by the spirit of Jesus.

In Luke's Gospel, John the

Baptist reminds us also to prepare the way for it.

The crowd asks, "What should we do?" John exhorts them to treat everyone justly and with dignity. Additionally, today's readings tell us to spread the life of Christ. "Give thanks to the Lord, acclaim his name; among the nations make known his deeds," the prophet Isaiah says, and Paul tells the Philippians, "Your kindness should be known to all."

In effect, live and proclaim Jesus' Gospel.

Joe said it can transform humanity. Zephaniah said it will.

"Fear not," he prophesied, "the Lord your God is in your midst, a mighty savior."

Live Jesus' life. Spread his message. Expect joy.

**QUESTIONS:**

How can you prepare the way for Jesus to live within and among the people you know and encounter every day?

**December 20, Fourth**

**Sunday of Advent.**

**Cycle C Readings:**

- 1) Micah 5:1-4a  
Psalm 80:2-3, 15-16, 18-19
- 2) Hebrews 10:5-10  
Gospel) Luke 1:39-45

**By Jeff Hedglen**

In May of 1986 I started work as the youth minister of my parish. Later that year when plans were drawn up for a new parish hall, I was promised a youth room with all the bells and whistles of modern design. I was excited but, as often happens in a growing parish, the plans were put on hold until the church could raise the necessary funding.

Along the way, other priorities intervened, and the planned facility with the promised youth room was delayed. Finally, 20 years later,



the new hall including a state-of-the-art youth room was opened.

That experience came to mind as I was reading this week's Gospel when Elizabeth says to her cousin Mary, "Blessed are you who believed that what was spoken to you by the Lord would be fulfilled."

To be sure, the promise of a room dedicated to youth ministry pales in comparison to the promise of the coming of the savior of the world, but it reminds me that promises made and promises kept are a huge part of our life and faith.

*"Blessed are you who believed that what was spoken to you by the Lord would be fulfilled."*

— Luke 1:45

In our human life there are many promises. Parents promise to be there for their children, and there is an implicit promise that the children will grow up and leave some day. Siblings and friends have an inherent promise to have each other's backs and to love each other through good and bad times.

In our life of faith the Church promises to be faithful and provide the sacraments, and the Scriptures are full of promises.

In addition to the promise mentioned in the Gospel, the prophet Micah offers background for the promise that later is fulfilled in Mary when he states that from Bethlehem there shall come a ruler whose origin is from of old.

Micah lived around the year 700 B.C. That means that through him God made a promise that took 700 years to be fulfilled. This makes my 20-year wait for a dedicated youth space seem like nothing.

Sometimes it may seem that God is slow in keeping his promises, but as sure as a youth room would come to fruition at my parish, even surer is the hope that God will fulfill all that He has promised.

**QUESTIONS:**

What promises have you made that have yet to be fulfilled? How have God's promises been fulfilled in your life?



# NUESTRO PASTOR HABLA

## La Santa Madre Iglesia *siempre incluye a sus hijos*

La razón principal para la jornada del Papa Francisco a los Estados Unidos era participar y hablar en el Encuentro Mundial de las Familias en Filadelfia. “La Familia” no fue solamente el tema de su discurso a esa asamblea, más bien es la metáfora que infundió su enfoque total durante el tiempo que pasó con nosotros.

Mientras escuchaba con otros obispos, y entre otros hombres y mujeres, las palabras del Papa de aliento y llamado a la conversión, se me ocurrió que él presenta nuestra vida como Iglesia como ser miembros en una familia, en la familia de Dios para ser más precisos.

El Papa Francisco frecuentemente habla de la Iglesia en su papel de Madre, la santa Madre Iglesia, que ama a sus hijos y no los excluye de su vida. La Iglesia, como madre nuestra, incluye a todos sus hijos sin abandonar su responsabilidad de enseñarles amorosamente toda la verdad revelada por Cristo. Como una madre, la Iglesia nunca excluye a sus hijos, aun cuando no puede disculpar su comportamiento rebelde que, al mismo tiempo, niega el Evangelio y perjudica la

naturaleza humana. El Papa especialmente demostró este punto cuando habló a los presos—sus hermanos—recordándoles que su confinamiento no significa exclusión. En otras palabras, estos hombres—nuestros hermanos—rinden cuentas a la justicia al estar confinados, con todo, ellos tienen la responsabilidad de trabajar hacia su rehabilitación, y a usar bien su tiempo en reclusión para el bien de su prójimo en la sociedad. Ellos no pierden su dignidad humana ni dejan de ser miembros de la familia.

Como una madre, la Iglesia siempre incluye a sus hijos, que son sus hijos por el bautismo. La imagen usada por el Papa es la de un diálogo, esto es, una conversación respetuosa entre una madre y sus hijos; es una conversación que incluye a la gente aun si sus ideas no pueden ser incluidas por ser opuestas a la dignidad humana o a la plenitud del Evangelio. No es el diálogo de activistas que lo emplean deshonestamente para servir sus propios intereses.

El Papa Francisco, el Santo Padre, animó a nosotros, los obispos, a ser padres para nuestros sacerdotes y para nuestra gente—evitar la tentación de ser burócratas en lugar de ser padres. Los padres son, primero, miembros de una familia, ellos protegen a sus hijos; los acompañan y los guían a una libertad auténtica al vivir como contribuyentes al bien común; los padres aman a sus hijos y nunca les hablan con violencia aun cuando debidamente los reprendan y los animen a llevar una buena vida por el bien de toda la familia.

El Papa, especialmente, demostró este punto cuando nos habló a nosotros los obispos—sus



Monseñor Michael Olson

hermanos—recordándonos que debemos orar a Cristo por nuestro pueblo, para que cuando Él nos pregunte “¿dónde está mi hermana, y mi hermano y mi madre?” cada uno de nosotros pueda responder, “Aquí están. Te los regreso a Ti que me los encomendaste primero”.

Al corazón del llamado que nos hace Cristo a la conversión, está el volvernos verdaderamente miembros de su familia, como la Iglesia. Es una conversión que requiere que nos esforcemos a vivir nuestro llamado bautismal, a pesar del desorden por la fragmentación de la vida familiar que aflige a cada uno de nosotros. Entender la Iglesia como si fuera una familia, como el Papa Francisco la entiende, requiere que aceptemos nuestra membresía bautismal y sacramental en esa familia, con sus correspondientes responsabilidades de servicio, especialmente a los pobres y a quienes nadie oye. Requiere que no veamos la Iglesia como un fragmento más con el que construimos nuestra propia ideología interior que nos lleva a una polarización egoísta.

+ Michael F. Olson

+ Monseñor Michael F. Olson, STD, MA  
Obispo de la Diócesis de Fort Worth



Papa Francisco da una señal de bendición al final del festival de las familias en Filadelfia el 26 de septiembre. (CNS foto / Bob Roller)

# Viviendo de acuerdo al **EVANGELIO**

Los OFM, OFM Caps., y las Hermanas Franciscanas están siguiendo un humilde sendero a Cristo

por Jerry Circelli / Correspondent

**H**AY UN NOMBRE, SAN FRANCISCO DE ASÍS, QUE ESTÁ ASOCIADO A UN HOMBRE QUE VIVIÓ UN ESTILO DE VIDA MÍNIMO MIENTRAS COMPARTÍA UN INFINITO AMOR POR CRISTO.

Aunque la historia nos dice que ciertamente no nació santo, Francisco fue canonizado solo dos años después de su muerte en el siglo XIII. Su legado es el de un hombre que renunció a una vida de lujo y dejó atrás sus vicios. Después de oír la voz de Dios, él abandonó sus posesiones materiales y siguió celosamente a Cristo, adoptando una vida de pobreza.

A lo largo de su camino hizo nada menos que cumplir el mandato de Dios de reconstruir la Iglesia Cristiana, dejando una influencia perdurable que aún ahora es tan fuerte como cuando empezó la primera de tres órdenes religiosos hace más de 800 años.

Hoy, decenas de miles de Franciscanos sirven a la Iglesia de Cristo en todo el mundo, inspirados por esas tres órdenes originales—hoy en día generalmente se les conoce como los Frailes Menores, Hermanas Clarisas, y la Tercera Orden.

En la Diócesis de Fort Worth, los Franciscanos sirven a la Iglesia local y a sus seguidores a través de varias órdenes, incluyendo la Orden de Frailes Menores (OFM), la Orden de Frailes Menores Capuchinos (OFM Cap.), la Tercera Orden Regular (TOR) y las Hermanas Franciscanas de la Inmaculada Concepción (HFIC).

Entre los Franciscanos que sirven a la diócesis está el padre Thomas Fox, OFM, sacerdote retirado en *St. Francis*

*Village* en Crowley. Al igual que muchos otros sacerdotes de la orden ya “retirados”, al Padre Fox se le encuentra celebrando Misa por toda la diócesis cuando se le necesita. También ejerce su ministerio en hospitales locales.

“San Francisco es una persona fascinante,” dice el P. Fox. “En muchas formas, lo consideramos nuestro principal promotor de vocaciones porque la gente conoce su vida y los inspira a seguirla”.

En su propia vida, el P. Fox siguió la senda Franciscana hace 60 años cuando ingresó a la orden religiosa de los OFM.

“Estaba entusiasmado por dar mi vida a Jesús y a seguirlo tan bien como pudiera. San Francisco definitivamente tuvo un efecto en mí,” dijo el P. Fox.

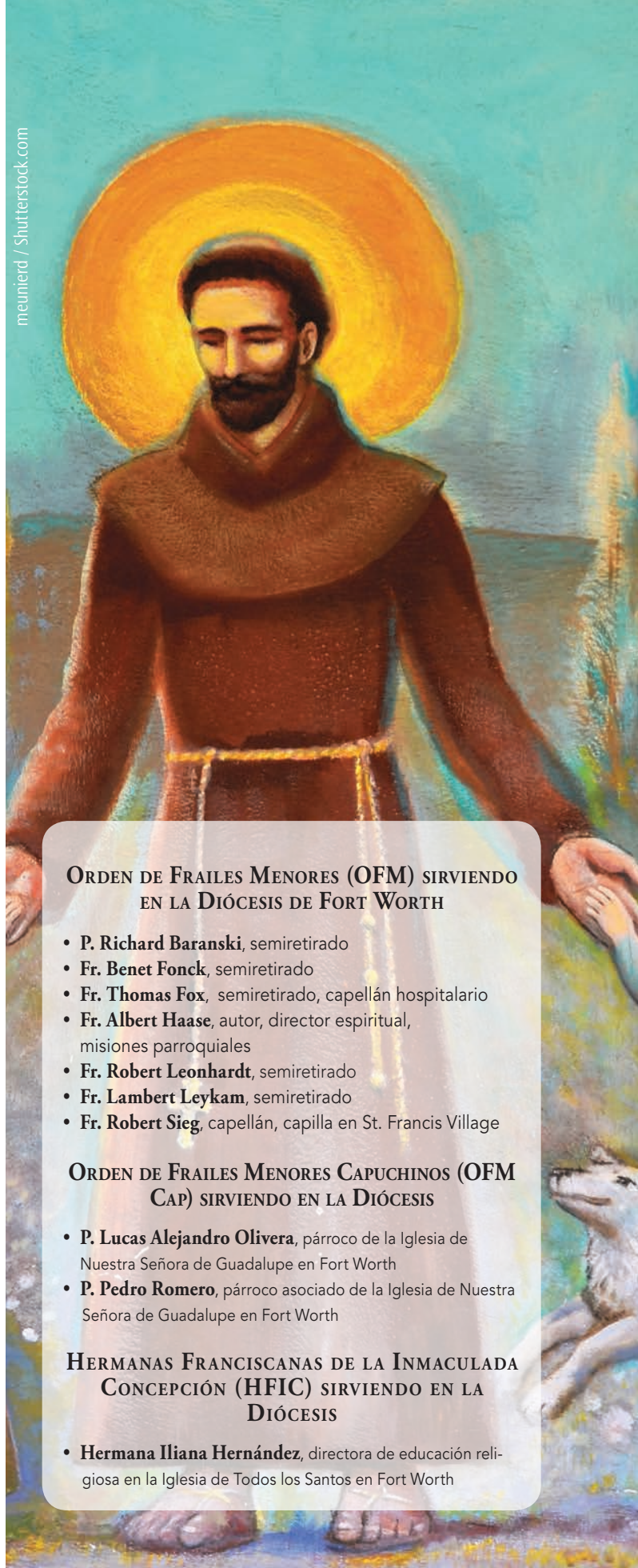
En total, hay siete sacerdotes OFM viviendo en *Saint Francis Village*, que fue establecida en 1965 por Franciscanos seculares. La villa, fundada en la fe para personas jubiladas, incluye una capilla católica donde se celebra Misa diariamente. Ahora en sus cincuentas, la villa se extiende por 250 acres y es el hogar de cerca de 500 residentes que viven en casi 400 viviendas.

Los sacerdotes viven en el Monasterio Maximilian Kolbe y en dos casas próximas. Como en otras comunidades religiosas, la estructura fraternal de la orden es una parte importante de su carisma.

“Nosotros ingresamos a la vida religiosa porque queremos vivir con otros que comparten nuestra visión de la vida y de nuestros valores, y que eso nos

CONTINUADO EN PÁGINA 47

meunierd / Shutterstock.com



## ORDEN DE FRAILES MENORES (OFM) SIRVIENDO EN LA DIÓCESIS DE FORT WORTH

- **P. Richard Baranski**, semiretirado
- **Fr. Benet Fonck**, semiretirado
- **Fr. Thomas Fox**, semiretirado, capellán hospitalario
- **Fr. Albert Haase**, autor, director espiritual, misiones parroquiales
- **Fr. Robert Leonhardt**, semiretirado
- **Fr. Lambert Leykam**, semiretirado
- **Fr. Robert Sieg**, capellán, capilla en St. Francis Village

## ORDEN DE FRAILES MENORES CAPUCHINOS (OFM CAP) SIRVIENDO EN LA DIÓCESIS

- **P. Lucas Alejandro Olivera**, párroco de la Iglesia de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe en Fort Worth
- **P. Pedro Romero**, párroco asociado de la Iglesia de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe en Fort Worth

## HERMANAS FRANCISCANAS DE LA INMACULADA CONCEPCIÓN (HFIC) SIRVIENDO EN LA DIÓCESIS

- **Hermana Iliana Hernández**, directora de educación religiosa en la Iglesia de Todos los Santos en Fort Worth



# Oraciones fluyen



Santa Teresa de Ávila (por François Gérard)

## El Cielo responde

Las Hermanas Carmelitas siguen el devoto camino de Sta. Teresa de Ávila

por Joan Kurkowski-Gillen /Corresponsal

**G**AIL YAGER FUE INTRODUCIDA A LA FE CATÓLICA POR LA SUAVE, COMPASIVA VOZ DE UNA MONJA CARMELITA.

Su nombre era María y era la Madre Superiora de un grupo de hermanas enclaustradas viviendo en una casa, transformada en monasterio, en Sunset Terrace, cerca del centro de Fort Worth. El año era 1976.

“En ese entonces yo pertenecía a la Iglesia Episcopal, pero me sentía llamada a la Iglesia Católica”, dice Yager, quien entonces tenía 39 años.

Yager y otras tres se acercaron a las Carmelitas, que a su vez, ofrecieron oraciones por ellas. Ahora de 77 años, la convertida en devota católica dice, “mi ser espiritual fue totalmente formado por las Carmelitas”.

### VIDA EN EL CARMELO

Orando por las intenciones especiales de la gente—especialmente por los sacerdotes, los pobres, los desempleados, los enfermos y los que sufren—está en el centro del corazón de la vida contemplativa para las Carmelitas Descalzas en Arlington. La comunidad religiosa es parte de la Orden de la Bienaventurada Virgen María del Monte Carmelo, y modela su silencioso trabajo y sencillo servicio en María de Nazaret quien hizo incondicionalmente la voluntad de Dios.

Ellas observan la clausura papal—significa que las monjas no salen del monasterio excepto para recibir atención médica, y nadie entra al claustro excepto para el mantenimiento necesario.

Mary Kay Swenson, gerente de negocios y director de desarrollo de las Carmelitas, dice que el monasterio—re-

ubicado en 58 acres arbolados en Arlington en 1984—refleja el sencillo estilo de vida de las hermanas.

“La quietud dentro del claustro crea una sensación de paz”, dice ella. “No es un voto, sino algo que ellas tratan de hacer para estar cerca del Señor a toda hora”.

Las paredes, hechas de bloques de cemento sin pintar, contrastan con los pisos de azulejo por todo el interior. Las recámaras, llamadas celdas, están escasamente amuebladas con una cama, lavabo, silla, o reclinatorio. El ambiente sereno es conducente a las siete horas que pasan en oración todos los días. Las hermanas asisten a Misa diariamente, cantan el Oficio Divino, y separan dos horas para orar mentalmente en silencio.

“Aun cuando estamos trabajando, en recreo, o comiendo, tratamos de permanecer pensativas”, dice la Madre Anne Teresa, la superiora. “Cada día, por teléfono o por carta, las monjas reciben muchas peticiones por oraciones, y ellas llevan estas intenciones en su corazón y las presentan ante Dios”.

### INICIOS

El génesis de la Orden de las Carmelitas data de fines del siglo 12, cuando un grupo de Cruzados se asentaron en la ladera occidental del Monte Carmelo en el norte de Israel. Viviendo en grutas y cuevas en la montaña, ellos observaban la Regla de Vida que les dejó San Alberto de Jerusalén en 1204.

Para fines del siglo 13, la comunidad estaba floreciente, pero una invasión los obligó a emigrar a Europa. Durante el siglo 14, los monasterios se extendieron por todo el continente, y fue en el Convento de la Encarnación en Ávila, España,



El Obispo Michael Olson dedicó esta estatua de Sta. Teresa de Ávila, quien restableció la Orden del Carmelo en el siglo 16. (foto cortesía de las Hermanas Carmelitas)

donde ingresó Santa Teresa de Jesús en 1534.

En 1562, Teresa de Jesús inició su reforma dirigida a restablecer la verdadera vida Carmelita de silencio, soledad, y de pequeñas, comunidades fraternales para religiosas. Ella fundó el primer monasterio de Carmelitas Descalzas (sin zapatos) en Ávila, España, bajo la protección de San José.

Después de su muerte, miembros de su comunidad llevaron el carisma de la orden a Francia, Bélgica

y Polonia. El primer grupo de monjas Carmelitas vino a América en 1790, y actualmente hay aproximadamente 60 monasterios a través de los E. U.

Una donación de \$5,000 dólares, de un abogado de Nueva York para las Carmelitas de la ciudad de Oklahoma, ayudó a fundar el comienzo de una nueva fundación del Carmelo en Fort Worth. El Convento de la Santísima Trinidad fue oficialmente establecido el 2 de octubre, 1958.

## La mudanza a Arlington

Cuando las necesidades de la comunidad sobrepasaron la modesta residencia a la sombra del centro de Fort Worth, un benefactor generoso ayudó a comprar la propiedad para un nuevo monasterio en Arlington, adonde las hermanas se cambiaron en 1984.

La comunidad continuó floreciendo en su nuevo local, haciendo pancartas, tarjetas de felicitación, y otros trabajos de arte para sufragar sus gastos. Estos artículos se pueden comprar llamando al monasterio o usando el sitio web de las monjas [www.carmelnuns.com](http://www.carmelnuns.com). “Haciendo artículos de arte religioso, las monjas esperan compartir la belleza de Dios con los demás”, dice la Madre Anne Teresa.

Se permiten visitas de familiares a través de una reja que es una ba-

rrera al mundo exterior. Un boletín trimestral con noticias, enviado por las hermanas, comparte noticias e información acerca del monasterio.

## Vocaciones

Actualmente el monasterio es el hogar de ocho monjas de capítulo—mujeres que han profesado votos solemnes y son miembros permanentes de la comunidad—y dos monjas que han tomado votos temporales. Ellas tienen entre 25 y 80 años. Están esperando a dos mujeres, que están discerniendo el llamado a ingresar al Carmelo, que vivirán “de visita” en el monasterio este año.

Elegir una vocación al Carmelo es muy radical, admite la Madre Anne Teresa. “Cuando una se da totalmente al Señor, su amor debe ser radical. Ella deja atrás familia y amistades, pero hace eso sabiendo que Dios derramará sus bendiciones y gracias sobre ella. Al renunciar a las cosas, la monja Carmelita está libre para ofrecerse a su Amado en una vida de oración y sacrificio por las necesidades de otros y de todo el mundo”.

## FRANCISCANOS...

sostenga”, dijo el P. Fox. “Pero también, ésta es nuestra familia... Como Franciscano, me fortalece ver a otra gente viviendo los valores de San Francisco también.

Los siete sacerdotes OFM en St. Francis Village pertenecen a la Provincia del Sagrado Corazón en St. Louis.

Otros dos sacerdotes en la diócesis pertenecen a la Orden de Frailes Menores Capuchinos (OFM Cap.) que surgió de la orden original OFM cerca de 410 años después de su fundación.

El Padre Lucas Alejandro Olivera, OFM Cap., párroco de la Iglesia de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe en Fort Worth y su párroco asociado, el Padre Pedro Romero, son nativos de México y ambos vienen de la viceprovincia México-Texas de los OFM Capuchinos.

“No buscamos prestigio o títulos o nada parecido”, dijo el P. Olivera en el espíritu de un verdadero Franciscano. “Estamos aquí para servir a la gente, vivir el Evangelio, y ser, como San Francisco dijo, heraldos de paz”.

El P. Olivera continuó, “como el Papa Fran-



Sacerdotes Franciscanos OFM en St. Francis Village son: P. Robert Leonhardt (OFM) sentado. Parados de izquierda a derecha, P. Thomas Fox (OFM), P. Richard Baranski (OFM), y P. Lambert Leykam (OFM). (Foto por Jerry Circelli / NTC)

cisco nos dice hoy en día, tenemos que oler como las ovejas. Nosotros, como Capuchinos, decimos que pertenecemos a la gente, le pertenecemos a todos, así podemos propagar la Buena Nueva del Evangelio.




Párroco P. Lucas Alejandro Olivera (OFM Cap), izquierda y párroco asociado P. Pedro Romero (OFM Cap) de la Iglesia de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe en Fort Worth. (Foto por Jerry Circelli / NTC)

“Estamos viviendo con la gente, compartiendo nuestras vidas con ellos y estando disponible para todos”, dijo el P. Olivera. “Estamos abiertos a todos. Si hay necesidad de servir en formas o trabajos de caridad, allí estamos”.



# JOR A

UNA  
a

A photograph of Pope Francis, dressed in white papal attire, standing in the open-top white popemobile. He is smiling and waving his right hand towards a crowd of people. The background is filled with photographers and bright camera flashes, indicating a high-profile event. The scene is set at night, with artificial lighting illuminating the Pope and the surrounding area.

Los medios de comunicación cubren la llegada de Papa Francisco para celebrar las vísperas con sacerdotes, hombres y mujeres religiosas, y laicos en la Catedral de St. Patrick en Nueva York el 24 de septiembre. (CNS foto/Paul Haring)



# ORNADA APOSTÓLICA

UNA VISITA PARA LOS SIGLOS: El histórico viaje del Papa Francisco a los Estados Unidos y lo que significa para los católicos locales

por Joan Kurkowski-Gillen / Corresponsal

**L**inda Sheptock estuvo a tres cuerdas de distancia del Papa Francisco durante su última Misa en los E.U. el 27 de Sept., pero eso fue suficientemente cerca.

“No pudimos llegar a ningún sitio cerca del altar, pero fue asombroso. Me sentí bendecida de estar su presencia”, dice la feligresa de San Bartolomé quien siguió la liturgia en una pantalla grande en el centro de Filadelfia, junto con su hija, Rebecca, una mujer consagrada en la comunidad de Regnum Christi. Cuando grupos en movimiento tapaban la pantalla, el equipo madre-hija veían la Misa en sus teléfonos.

“Hablando con la gente por el camino, me sorprendió cuántos no católicos estaban allí”, añadió. “Había también muchas familias jóvenes con niños, pero nadie parecía molesto por la muchedumbre. Estaban allí por la experiencia de estar en su presencia. Fue una alegría estar rodeada de esa fe”.

La Misa marcó el final del histórico viaje de seis días del Papa, que lo llevó a Washington, D.C. y a Nueva York antes de visitar Filadelfia. Se estima que un millón de gente llenó la histórica avenida Benjamin Franklin para seguir la liturgia al aire libre.

Portando sus vestiduras verdes, el pontífice de 78 años habló acerca de la fe, la familia y cómo los pequeños detalles de amor abren la puerta para que el Espíritu Santo haga su labor.

“Como la felicidad, la santidad está siempre ligada a pequeños detalles, y esos detalles se aprenden en casa con la familia”, dijo él.

Las cosas sencillas que los padres y abuelos hacen— como preparar una cena caliente en la noche y ofrecer un abrazo o bendición a la hora de acostarse—son pequeñas señas de ternura, afecto y compasión que dejan una impresión.

“El amor se muestra en cosas pequeñas, poner atención a las diarias señas que nos hacen sentirnos en casa”, continuó el Papa. “La fe crece cuando es vivida y formada por el amor”.

Joan Grabrowski, por largo tiempo residente en Fort Worth, y que ahora vive en Ledalero, Indonesia, vio la cobertura del viaje del Papa a los E. U. en compañía de varios sacerdotes Misioneros del Verbo Divino en uno de los seminarios católicos más grandes del mundo. Los espectadores Indonesios estaban particularmente intrigados acerca del discurso del Santo Padre al Congreso de los E.U. el 24 de Sept.

“Mientras veíamos juntos, aplaudíamos cuando el Papa mencionaba tantos asuntos de preocupación social católica”, dijo la nativa de South Bend, Indiana. “A la hora del almuerzo, al día siguiente, un sacerdote me pidió que hiciera un resumen de los puntos principales que el Papa trató y que él no pudo comprender totalmente por la diferencia de idioma”.

La visita del Santo Padre a E.U. estimuló discusiones sobre inmigración, aborto y el proceso democrático.

CONTINUADO EN PÁGINA 50



El Papa Francisco parado frente a la estatua de María de Guadalupe durante la Misa en el Madison Square Garden en Nueva York el 25 de Sept. (foto CNS/Andrew Burton)



## Visítenos para más información sobre la Jornada Apostólica

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

- Todos nuestros artículos sobre la visita a Cuba y a los E.U.
- Textos completos de las homilias, discursos
- Relatos de primera mano de nuestros bloggers

## Catholic Diocese of Fort Worth



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CONTINUADO DE PÁGINA 49

“Fue una gran oportunidad para que nosotros compartiéramos nuestras culturas y, como dijo el Papa, dialogáramos sobre asuntos importantes”, añadió Grabowski.

El Obispo Michael Olson, junto con otros 50 obispos, estaba entusiasmado en el hotel, viendo en una gran pantalla de televisión el discurso del Papa ante el Congreso. Se estima que 50,000 personas llenaron las áreas verdes afuera del Capitolio ese día.

“Yo estaba admirado de la naturaleza de la historia que estaba aconteciendo”, dijo el obispo a WFAA poco después que terminó el discurso. “Y estoy muy orgulloso del papa hoy. Muy orgulloso de ser católico y americano”.

La vista del Papa que Max Barrile tuvo fue un poco más cerca que una pantalla de TV. El estudiante de 2º. año vio al Papa numerosas veces desde el campus de la escuela de Filadelfia gracias a que el alojamiento nocturno del pontífice estaba a dos cuadras, en el Seminario de San Carlos Borromeo. El Papa Francisco, un Jesuita, en Sept. 27, también visitó sorpresivamente la universidad dirigida por Jesuitas, para bendecir la estatua que celebra la unidad Católico-Judía.

“Cada vez que él salía del seminario, todos los estudiantes y todos los vecinos se alineaban en la avenida y miraban pasar la comitiva motorizada”, dijo el joven de 18 años, quien tomó varias fotos.

“Él atrae seguidores como ningún otro papa antes”.

Barrile dijo que la excitación crecía al paso que la visita del Papa a la “Ciudad del amor fraternal” se acercaba. Los estudiantes no católicos estaban tan entusiasmados como todos los demás, y añadió que él estaba admirado de los temas de justicia social que el Papa mencionó.

“Él está haciendo un estupendo trabajo acerca de la inmigración y cómo podemos mejorar la vida de los

pobres. Su mensaje verdaderamente está llegando a mi generación”.

Leo Lopez, un estudiante en la Universidad de Texas en Arlington, y activo miembro de la comunidad católica universitaria, está de acuerdo.

“Personalmente, yo lo veo como a alguien con quien puedo relacionarme”, dice el joven de 23 años que estudia ciencias penales. “El Papa Francisco no solo tiene en la mira a los jóvenes – su propósito es llegar a todos. Él atrae a la gente a la fe”.

Heather Reynolds, presidente y Directora Ejecutiva de Caridades Católicas de Fort Worth, viajó a Washington, D.C. con su esposo, John, para ver al pontífice.

Allí, ella escuchó las palabras de aliento del Papa a los obispos de los E.U. en la Catedral del Apóstol San Mateo el 23 de Sept. Durante su plática, el Papa le pidió a los pastores de los 76 millones de católicos que sean “pastores cercanos a la gente, que sean vecinos y servidores”, que apoyen a sus sacerdotes y que acojan al inmigrante.

“Las palabras del Santo Padre me recordaron que no estamos solos en nuestro trabajo de servir al pobre y lograr una sociedad justa”, blogged Reynolds. “Dios está con nosotros, el Papa está con nosotros, los fieles de todo el mundo están con nosotros”.

Es fácil entender porqué la gente espera en largas filas por la oportunidad de ver al Papa, le dijo el Padre Mathew Kavipurayidam, TOR a los feligreses de la Iglesia del Apóstol Santo Tomás en el noroeste de Fort Worth en su homilía el 27 de Sept. Cuando el Papa se acerca a la muchedumbre, quiere alcanzar a todos.

“Él incluye a todos”, dijo el párroco. “Él es amable con todos, tiene una actitud tolerante y un corazón generoso”.

Hay bondad en todos nosotros, dijo el sacerdote, añadiendo, “el Papa nos está enseñando a tener, además, un corazón más grande”.

# En Washington, un humilde fraile es declarado *Santo*

por Ernest Doclar  
Corresponsal

**H**ASTA PARA UNA METRÓPOLIS TAN BULLICIOSA COMO WASHINGTON, D.C., ACOSTUMBRADA A GRANDES MULTITUDES EN INNUMERABLES ASAMBLEAS POR TODA LA CIUDAD, ESTO FUE EXTRAORDINARIO.

En el pasado, la capital de los E. U. ha dado la bienvenida a victoriosos nuevos presidentes, condecorado héroes militares y triunfadores atletas que han roto todos los récords; pero, en este espectáculo, la muchedumbre se enfocó en un humilde fraile Franciscano, Junípero Serra, que simplemente respondió al llamado de Dios de predicar el Evangelio.

Desde el amanecer y durante la tarde, miles se empujaban, y pasaban, varios puestos de control de seguridad para entrar a los jardines de la Basílica del Santuario de la Inmaculada Concepción. Admisión a la canonización era sólo por boleto, hasta por el privilegio de un lugar en la sección para estar parados. Yo tuve un boleto por ser miembro del Serra Club, un grupo dedicado a la causa de vocaciones religiosas. Escogimos a Serra como nuestro patrón por su celo en propagar la fe, cualidad que prometemos ejercer en nuestro ministerio.

Se había erigido un altar especial para la Misa desde donde el Papa Francisco pronunciaría la canonización de Serra. El Arzobispo de Washington, Cardenal Donald Wuerl, hizo la petición formal al Santo Padre. Entonces, con solo dos palabras dichas en español por el Papa Francisco, Así decretamos, Fray Junípero Serra se convirtió en el último santo del catolicismo, y en el primer santo proclamado como tal en suelo de los Estados Unidos.

Ciertamente, uno debe reconocer que no todos los presentes en la basílica el 23 de septiembre, fueron a reconocer la santidad de Serra. La presencia del Papa Francisco, primera en los EUA, tuvo que ser una fuerte atracción, quizá



El Papa Francisco se detiene frente a la escultura de San Junípero Serra en la sala de las estatuas en el Capitolio de los E. U. en Washington el 23 de Sept. (foto CNS/Michael Reynolds)

la principal. También muchos de los presentes caminaron desde el noreste del D.C simplemente para ver a los cardenales de la Iglesia en sus vestiduras rojo subido y a los obispos en un rojo más claro. Presentes también a pleno sol, sacerdotes en sotana y con sobrepelliz, y religiosas y religiosos en el hábito tradicional de su orden sudando copiosamente como el resto de nosotros. Pero la mayoría de nosotros, al revisar los eventos del día, sentimos que la larga, calurosa espera para entrar al área, las elaboradas partes de la Misa y, especialmente, las hermosas voces del coro fueron abundante recompensa. Quien haya seleccionado la música, sabiamente eligió una variedad de cantos en Español en honor de ambos, el Papa Francisco y San Junípero. Igualmente sabio, el coro interpretó algunos cantos en Chochoyeno, el idioma de la tribu Nativa Americana del Norte de California a quien Serra le predicó. Los asistentes respondieron, a muchas partes de la Misa, no solo en Inglés, sino en otros idiomas.

John Short, uno de mis nuevos amigos de un Serra Club de Australia, explicó su reacción a los eventos del día: "Estar aquí hoy fue una ocasión

jubilosa, y la gente fue muy amigable. Me siento bendecido de estar aquí".

La jornada de Serra a la santidad empezó en 1713 en Petra en la isla de Mallorca, la más grande de las islas Baleares en el Mediterráneo Español. Nacido dentro de una piadosa familia católica, desde sus primeros años, la meta de Serra fue ser uno de los soldados de infantería de Dios. Ésa es una apta descripción, porque durante su vida Serra recorrió a pie miles de millas a través de México y a lo largo de la costa de California. En todas partes desdeñó viajar a caballo, tal como San Francisco lo mandó a sus seguidores. Su meta fue traer el catolicismo a los Nativos Americanos de esa tierra. Para alcanzar ese fin, Serra fundó nueve iglesias misioneras,

cada una a un día de camino de la otra. Después de su muerte en 1784, sus sucesores continuaron estableciendo misiones, eventualmente 12 más. Estas misiones dieron nombre a muchas de las, hoy por hoy, más populosas ciudades del Estado Dorado: San Diego (la primera de Serra), Santa Bárbara, San Gabriel y San Francisco, solo para mencionar cuatro de las 21. Nadie tiene un número exacto de cuántas personas se unieron a la Iglesia, pero probablemente, miles.

En su homilía, el Papa Francisco resumió la contribución de San Junípero a la Iglesia. Francisco recordó el lema de Serra, "Siempre adelante, nunca atrás". El Pontífice explicó, "Él fue la personificación de una Iglesia progresiva, una Iglesia que sale a llevar a todas partes la reconciliadora ternura de Dios". Y recordando la dedicación de Serra a sus amados nativos, el Papa Francisco continuó, en la cara de todos los que conoció él aprendió cómo hacer nacer y nutrir la vida de Dios; él los hizo sus hermanos y hermanas".

Para hacer eco a la multitud en la canonización, "Viva el Papa". A lo que se puede agregar: "Viva Junípero Serra".



# El don de la familia



El Papa Francisco hace parar el papamóvil para besar a una criatura en su camino al Salón de la Independencia en Filadelfia, el 26 de Sept. (foto CNS/Jim Bourg, Reuters)

El Papa Francisco y el Encuentro Mundial, que tuvo lugar de Sept. 22 al 27, destacaron la importancia de la familia—la iglesia doméstica

por Joan Kurkowski-Gillen  
Corresponsal

**D**IOS DIO LA CREACIÓN A LA FAMILIA. Ése es el mensaje que el Papa Francisco dio a miles de personas que asistieron al 8º. Encuentro Mundial de las Familias del 22 al 27 de Sept. en Filadelfia.

El encuentro de familias católicas más grande del mundo combinó oración e instrucción religiosa con conferencias acerca de la fe, por oradores como Rick Warren, autor de *The Purpose Driven Life*; el Cardenal Sean O'Malley, de Boston; el Obispo Auxiliar de L. A., Robert Barron, creador de la serie "Catolicismo", y muchos otros prominentes maestros de la fe.

El Festival de las familias, que duró tres horas y al que asistieron 500,000 personas, proveyó un último realce a la conferencia el sábado, Sept. 26, antes de la Misa de clausura, al aire libre, celebrada el domingo en la tarde.

La multitud en el festival fue deleitada con interpretaciones musicales por Aretha Franklin y Andrea Bocelli, pero, el incentivo principal para estar parado por horas a lo largo de la avenida Benjamin Franklin era ver al primer Papa elegido de las Américas.

Después de oír a seis familias hablar acerca de los retos para criar niños mientras soportan aflicciones tales como persecución, discapacidad y pobreza, el Papa Francisco habló, sin apunte, acerca de la "maravillosa tarea" de ser una familia.

"Dios dio la cosa más maravillosa que tenía—el mundo—a una familia, a un hombre y una mujer, para que crecieran, se multiplicaran e hicieran fructificar la tierra", dijo él a una audiencia encantada. "Las familias tienen una ciudadanía que es divina. Dentro del corazón de una familia la verdad, la bondad y la belleza pueden crecer verdaderamente".

Pero la vida familiar es difícil, admitió el Papa. Los niños causan dolores de cabeza y "los

platos pueden volar" durante una pelea. Y "no voy a hablar de las suegras", él bromeó.

"Así como hay dificultades, hay la luz de la Resurrección", él apuntó. "Si bien hay problemas en cada hogar, éstos pueden superarse con amor".

El Papa también agradeció a la muchedumbre su presencia y su testimonio "de que vale la pena ser una familia".

Un momento particularmente conmovedor durante la noche vino cuando la Dra. Gianna Emanuela Molla, una gerontóloga Italiana, leyó una carta que su madre, Santa Gianna Beretta Molla, doctora también, escribió a su esposo resaltando las virtudes cristianas del matrimonio. La vida de la joven doctora Molla fue salvada cuando su madre rehusó tener un aborto o histerectomía para tratar un fibroma uterino. Peritonitis séptica cortó la vida de la joven madre siete días después de dar a luz a su hija en 1962. Ella fue canonizada en 2004.

Caminar con el "mar de gente" que llenaba

los pasillos y las calles requirió paciencia, pero la conferencia valió la pena, dijo Michael Arth.

“Los conferencistas fueron buenos, pero fue la experiencia de estar rodeado de tantos fieles católicos lo que hizo de esto un gran evento”, dijo Arth, quien con su esposa Lisa, viajó a Filadelfia. Los Arth son feligreses de la Parroquia de Sta. Elizabeth Ann Seton en Keller.

Representantes de más de 100 países asistieron al Encuentro Mundial de las Familias, con mayor número de participantes de los E.U., Canadá, México, Pakistán y Vietnam.

Iniciado por el Papa Juan Pablo II en 1992 para explorar los lazos familiares y el papel de las familias en la sociedad, el primer Encuentro Mundial de las Familias tuvo lugar dos años más tarde. Desde entonces, se ha efectuado cada tres años, cada vez en diferente país.

El encuentro de este año en Filadelfia tuvo discursos destacados sobre temas como el sistema de inmigración de los E.U. y sus efectos en las familias, cómo ser la imagen de Dios en una sociedad secularizada, y cómo usar la belleza y el gozo familiar para atraer a otros a la fe. Las sesiones de trabajo dialogaron, entre otros temas, sobre el matrimonio interreligioso, divorcio, sanar de la violencia doméstica, e infertilidad. Un programa separado para la juventud ofreció actuaciones musicales y otras actividades.

Lisa Arth dijo que el Encuentro Mundial de Familias fue vibrante, entusiasta y positivo.

“Las discusiones se centraron en cómo lograr que de nuevo la familia católica sea la raíz fundamental para el cambio en la sociedad y en el mundo”, explicó la madre de cuatro hijos adultos. “Sí, enfrentamos algunos obstáculos, pero podemos superarlos con la ayuda de Dios – que implica las enseñanzas de la Iglesia”.

Comercialismo, actitudes cambiantes tocante cuestiones morales, y la deshumanización

de los ancianos son algunos de los obstáculos que enfrentan las familias.

“Es bueno conocer los retos, para que podamos encontrar el remedio”, Lisa Arth continuó. Eso fue lo que se discutió – ¿qué podemos hacer? ¿Cómo podemos cambiar nuestro modo de pensar? Tenemos que ver a la familia no como una institución, sino como una comunidad de amor”.

Para el Festival de las familias, los Arth se sentaron frente a una de las inmensas pantallas de televisión alineadas en la avenida Benjamin Franklin. Ellos dicen que la experiencia fue similar a estar en un autocine. La larga espera por el Papa fue marcada con entretenimiento a cargo de músicos locales y por gente vendiendo muñecos representando al Papa, camisetas y algodón de azúcar.

Sheryl Collmer, expositora en el encuentro mundial, observó cómo los sacerdotes Franciscanos se ponían sus estolas y oían confesiones bajo los árboles.

Cuando llegó el Santo Padre, le habló a aquel “teatro de humanidad” como si la multitud estuviera sentada en su sala.

“Qué hermoso habló acerca de la Encarnación y el nacimiento de Dios en el seno de una familia”, dijo el director de Divulgación del Equipo de Evangelización de la Teología del Cuerpo (TOBET) en Irving.

Usando el sentido del humor y expresiones familiares, el Papa inspiró e “hizo que los corazones de la gente aumentaran tres veces de tamaño”, dijo Collmer, tomando una línea del cuento clásico Navideño “Cómo el Grinch robó la Navidad”

Las familias han batallado, pero lo que la impresionó fueron las alegres historias que los padres compartieron con el Papa en el escenario.

“Si nunca oímos de las alegrías, ¿cómo es eso un testimonio de la vida familiar? Collmer preguntó en su blog que aparece en el sitio web del North Texas Catholic. “Más que nunca es importante compartir las alegrías”.

“Las familias tienen una ciudadanía que es divina. Dentro del corazón de una familia la verdad, la bondad y la belleza pueden crecer verdaderamente”.

— Papa Francisco



El Papa Francisco ofrece su homilía durante la Misa de clausura del Encuentro Mundial de las Familias en Filadelfia Sept. 27. (CNS photo/Lisa Johnston, St. Louis Review)



Una mujer reacciona a las palabras finales de Papa Francisco durante la Misa de clausura del Encuentro Mundial en Benjamin Franklin Parkway en Filadelfia Sept. 27. (CNS photo/Brian Shyder, Reuters)



# EL AÑO DE LA MISERICORDIA

POR EL PADRE CARMELO MELE, OP



### UNA EXPERIENCIA DE LA MISERICORDIA

En septiembre yo estaba manejando a la casa de una parroquiiana. Le llevaba la Eucaristía después de la misa dominical. Con el camino vacío, me sentía tranquilo. De repente vi luces de rojo y azul destellando en mi retrovisor. Detuve mi coche al lado del camino. Desgraciadamente la policía hizo la misma cosa. Después de un minuto, el oficial llegó a pie a mi coche. Le pregunté si estaba yendo demasiado recio. Me contó que manejaba cuarenta y dos millas por hora en una zona de treinta. Le dije que lo sentía y que no vi las señales. Después de revisar mi licencia y seguro, me los devolvió diciendo algo como: “Está bien, señor Mele, tenga una buena tarde”.

El policía me mostró la misericordia. Tenía el derecho a multarme pero eligió no hacerlo. Tal vez se dio cuenta que no estaba violando el límite deliberadamente. De todos modos aprendí dos cosas por la experiencia. En primer lugar, tengo que ser más vigilante manejando, particularmente en los caminos locales. Tal vez más importante, me di cuenta del valor de la misericordia. Espero ser más inclinado que antes a mostrar la misericordia a los demás.

### EL JUBILEO EXTRAORDINARIO DE LA MISERICORDIA

El Papa Francisco ha declarado este año venidero como el “jubiléo extraordinario de la misericordia”. Explica el papa que la palabra misericordia sirve como la síntesis de

la fe cristiana. Pues, el Hijo vino al mundo para demostrar que Dios es fundamentalmente misericordioso. Un sabio describió a Dios en estos términos: es “la misericordia dentro de la misericordia dentro de la misericordia”. El papa Francisco quiere que imitemos esta grande misericordia de manera palpable. Dice: “Queremos vivir este Año Jubilar a la luz de la palabra del Señor: Misericordiosos como el Padre”.

### LA DIFICULTAD DE VIVIR LA MISERICORDIA HOY EN DÍA

Sin embargo, a veces estamos reuñentes a mostrar la misericordia. Una razón es que hemos oído historias del abuso de la caridad. Se reporta de hombres comprando drogas con el dinero que reciben mendigando en la calle. Asimismo, se habla de “reinas del bienestar” que prefieren aprovecharse de todas las fuentes de socorro posibles en lugar de buscar trabajo. Es cierto que la misericordia sin la justicia es la madre de la disolución. Pero la verdadera misericordia promueve la justicia. Permite al delincuente aprender de sus errores sin sacrificar la necesidad de participar en la familia. Ayuda a la madre de niños practicar la disciplina que vuelve a toda la familia en personas responsables. La esperanza es que por tratar a la persona con respeto ésta respondería como un verdadero hijo de Dios.

Hay otro motivo más apremiante para no mostrar la misericordia. Nuestras vidas son tan llenas de actividades que no nos permite a

contemplar la bondad que experimentamos diariamente. Por eso, no pensamos en cómo podemos servir a aquellos que andan en la miseria.

### EL MUNDO ACTUAL

En el mundo hoy millones de gentes caminan buscando nuevas tierras para establecerse. Las historias de los bombardeos en Siria produciendo refugiados nos mueven el corazón. Ni se puede sentarse tranquilo después de escuchar cómo la gente pobre en países africanos es maltratada. ¿Quién quiere echarles la culpa por desesperarse de sus tierras nativas?

La situación de los prisioneros en este país también grita por la misericordia. Muchos jóvenes pasan encarcelados los años más provechosos para estar con sus familias. No las ayudan a proveer la guía paterna. Ni las pueden apoyar con su salario. En muchos casos los prisioneros no han hecho crímenes violentos. Se han hecho víctimas de una política que quiere acaparar votos por parecer dura con los criminales.

### LA RESPONSABILIDAD DE TODOS

Todos sabemos que los gobiernos del mundo tienen que hacer algo para aliviar su sufrimiento. Sin embargo, hay papel para cada uno de nosotros. Queremos informar a nuestros representantes de la urgencia de algunas necesidades globales. Más importante, queremos realizar la misericordia en nuestras vidas cotidianas. A veces es tan sencillo como saludar a una persona que parece solitaria. También podemos

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patrocinar a los indigentes en países lejanos a través de las organizaciones caritativas de la Iglesia.

Que no nos olvidemos de rezar por aquellos en situaciones extremas. Pues la oración nos recuerda de la bondad de Dios hacia nosotros para que no la tomemos por dada. Con esta conciencia elevada responderemos a las necesidades de los demás con más empeño.

### POR QUÉ MOSTRAR LA MISERICORDIA

El dramaturgo inglés William Shakespeare escribió que la misericordia bendice dos veces: “bendice al que dé y al que reciba”. Es evidente cómo bendice al que la reciba, pero ¿cómo bendice al que la dé? Shakespeare provee la respuesta apropiada. Dice que la misericordia hace el dador más como Dios mismo cuyo atributo principal es el amor no condicional.

La quinta bienaventuranza en el Sermón del Monte promete algo tal vez más provechoso. Dice que aquellos que muestren la misericordia a los demás recibirán la misericordia de Dios. Es cierto que necesitamos la misericordia por todas nuestras faltas. Que no nos olvidemos a extenderla a otros.

Sean's fervor for pro-life proved too big for high school. He leapt into the diocesan Youth for Life program and joined the leadership team of its Respect Life program. His pro-life blogs on Catholic365.com have been shared by hundreds on Facebook.

"Unlike most teens, Sean is not concerned about what others think and do. He gets involved and gets it done," said Sue Laux, Youth for Life Coordinator.

Sean explained, "I was bullied when I was younger, and some adults advised me to back off on this 'sensitive issue' to prevent conflict. It sounded like they were telling me not to be myself and not to stand up for what I believe. But I need to do and say what God is calling me to do and say."

This summer Sean organized and spoke at the first rally in Fort Worth aimed at defunding its Planned Parenthood clinic. He expected 30, but a crowd of 200 showed up. He also traveled to Austin with Bishop Michael Olson and others from the diocese to lobby the legislature.

"Going to the state legislature and meeting Lieutenant Governor Dan Patrick taught me about the political side of the pro-life movement in addition to the Catholic side," Sean recalled.

With all of these endeavors, he has been awarded the Dr. Joseph Graham Fellowship

**"Unlike most teens, Sean is not concerned about what others think and do. He gets involved and gets it done."**

**- Sue Laux**  
Youth for Life coordinator

from Texas Right to Life, which provides him with extra training, resources, and a scholarship for his hours of service.

Now a freshman studying criminal justice at University of Texas at San Antonio, Sean explained, "My two passions are life and the family. I've wanted to be a police officer since I was three, so that I can protect both of them."

At UTSA, Sean has hit the ground run-

ning. Once again, he found an inactive pro-life club, and within a week, he became its president. Within two weeks, he organized prayer vigils at Planned Parenthood, began speaking in the common area twice weekly, and met the director of the pro-life office for the Archdiocese of San Antonio.

"Respect life activities in San Antonio are not as organized as Fort Worth," he commented. "I plan to coordinate a high school Lock-in for Life like our diocese does, speak to church youth groups, and get students active in pro-life. Plus, at UTSA, we have more opportunity to reach people and engage in a bigger field of debate."

Sean summed up his convictions, "I believe in the sanctity of life, that every human being has value, has dignity, and deserves to live, love, and be loved. Being pro-life, I embrace how precious life is and recognize it in everybody. When I do sidewalk counseling, I want to communicate God's compassion and mercy, and let these mothers know that both God and I love them and their babies, no matter what choice they make."

**BELOW:** Sean Gillen (third from left) with Bishop Michael Olson, Sue Laux, Coordinator of Youth for Life (to the right of Gillen), along with other pro-lifers from the Diocese of Fort Worth at this year's Advocacy Day at the Texas State Capitol. (Photo by Jerry Circelli / NTC)





# CHAMPIONING LIFE

(since before he could vote)

BY SUSAN MOSES / CORRESPONDENT

**G**et ready, San Antonio. The teen dynamo that has galvanized pro-life activities among youth in the Fort Worth Diocese is prepared to battle for the sanctity of life in the Alamo City.

In the last three years, Sean Gillen has organized multiple pro-life events, invigorated the Pro-Life Club at Fort Worth's Nolan Catholic High School, attended rallies in Dallas, Austin, and Washington, counseled pregnant mothers considering abortions, and spoken on the sanctity of life at schools and community meetings.

And most of this was done before he was even old enough to vote.

At his home parish of Most Blessed Sacrament in Arlington, Sean serves as an altar server, Eucharistic minister, and lector.

He also volunteered at the City of Arlington's animal shelter and Teen Court, earning Arlington's Volunteer of the Month Award for his role as a prosecutor. However, attending a pro-life event during his sophomore year changed his life.

"I was raised pro-life and knew abortion was wrong, but that day I felt a calling to serve God through pro-life ministry," said Sean, who graduated from Nolan in May.

The Bishop's Annual Respect Life Gala, which he attended twice as a volunteer and will attend this year as a guest, has also fueled his calling.

"That night the Holy Spirit really set my heart on fire," he continued.

With his passion for pro-life ministry ignited, Sean looked into the pro-life club at Nolan. Membership and activities were minimal, and Sean quickly found himself in charge of restoring life to the club.

"I put up flyers, ordered pizza, and 25 students showed up," explained Sean. "My goal was that everyone at Nolan would understand the Catholic teaching on the sanctity of life. I prayed that we would be thought-provoking."

Under his leadership, the club grew more than tenfold to become one of the most visible and active clubs on campus. He arranged speakers to address the students, and planned prayer vigils at Planned Parenthood, diaper drives, and a tour of Fort Worth Pregnancy Center.

His hands-on leadership included organizing pro-life weeks for Nolan his junior and senior years.

Michael Demma, Director of Respect Life for the Diocese of Fort Worth, said, "Sean is a natural leader. He's quiet and humble, but tenacious when he has to get something done. He's faced obstacles with courage, demonstrating how God can strengthen your heart."

CONTINUED ON PAGE 55