

TRAYENDO LA BUENA NUEVA A LA DIÓCESIS DE FORT WORTH



NORTH TEXAS CATHOLIC



Hispanics let their voices be heard at the national V Encuentro

SOMOS LA IGLESIA

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ENCUENTRO'S LESSONS ARE FOR EVERYONE

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

 @BpOlsonFW



Our diocese recently hosted more than 3,000 Catholics from across the U.S. at the Fifth National Encuentro of Hispanic/Latino Ministry in Grapevine from Sept. 20-23. We caught up with Bishop Michael Olson to get his thoughts on the four-year process which aims to develop pastoral recommendations to better serve the growing Hispanic Catholic population in the U.S., train and form more Hispanic ministry leaders, and better utilize the gifts of the Latino community.

1 What has it been like to be host bishop of the V Encuentro?

Bishop Olson: I'm so proud of our people in the Diocese of Fort Worth, of our priests, of our staff, of our seminarians, of all the faithful who are here, who are taking active parts in the faith formation dimensions, but even more so who are serving as volunteers of hospitality, and how we've come together. I'm so grateful for that.

2 Throughout this long process of Encuentro, you've mentioned the idea of encountering Christ through Church, through discipleship. Can you speak to how the V Encuentro plays into that?

Bishop Olson: The word "encuentro" in Spanish means encounter. Encounter is, frankly, a value-neutral term. It's a dangerous term in itself, but a place of danger like that is also where we have the chance to meet Christ. The first and only encounter that ultimately matters is Christ, and Christ's decision that He should be encountered in other people as well, and that is His choice. "Where two or more are gathered in my name, there I am. When did we see you hungry? When did we see you thirsty?" That was Him in the poor and whoever was in need. He's in my brother and sister.

In all of that, the focus is an encounter with Christ, and what

is He asking us to do, and what is His agenda for us. It's going to look different for each of us, in each local church. So, as bishop, I'm really grateful that in a sense God in His providence has let us be the site where this can take place.

3 What kind of impact do you think the fruits of this Encuentro will have on our local Church, our diocese?

Bishop Olson: I'm hoping that it'll start with the Hispanic community, but not end there. I'm hoping it will bring what it should bring for everyone, but to the Hispanic community, conversion. Conversion of heart, which invites them and sends them as missionary disciples into the larger community. And in the larger community that everyone be changed by focusing on Christ, and doing as He asked. That we change our ways of doing things. I think also in our Hispanic community as well, that we give up sectarianism within our community — sectarianism that can be fostered unintentionally when it's a misuse of retreats and movements, where that becomes more about me than about our life of faith.

I'm hoping that it will lead to renewal within the Hispanic community, and our broader sense of the Church, of how we catechize. Evangelization is not just simply a sentiment of happiness and joy, but the substance of the Gospel, and the very rich deposit of faith that involves real education and faith formation, and not just exuberance or enthusiasm. That is my hope. A maturity that affects all of us as the Church and the Diocese of Fort Worth. That we take seriously the integrity of the deposit of faith. That we live that out for the sake, especially, of those who don't know Christ, or even those who don't know Him because they reject it and they're not interested in the selflessness that comes with the Gospel.

So that's the mission I think is before us. It involves the salvation of souls. I think God is prompting us in this Encuentro to really renew our desires according to His designs for us. 🇺🇸

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NTC/Jayne Shedenhelm



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Follow Me

When my faith is disturbed, I find it helpful to think back to the Apostles and their failures. Not to judge, or to point a finger, or take some sort of morbid solace from their stumbles. Rather, it's to gain hope for the future.

Look at the ways the disciples "failed" and then redeemed themselves.

Peter denied. Thomas doubted. They all quarreled at the Last Supper about who was "greatest." Peter, James, and John fell asleep in Gethsemane. All but John deserted Jesus at the foot of the Cross.

What a somber list! But look at what happened after.

Andrew and Philip spread the Gospel to the Greeks. James the Greater preached in Spain and was the first to be martyred. Thomas ministered in India. Matthew wrote the first of the Gospels and evangelized in Africa. Bartholomew preached as far as India before being martyred.

And Peter, who thrice failed, returned to being the man of faith and courage he was in *John 6* where he stuck by a despondent Jesus after the difficult Bread of Life discourse and uttered one of the most beautiful sentences recorded in Scripture: "Master, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life." Peter went on to feed and tend God's sheep, becoming the first pope and a foundation of the infant Church.

In short, those disciples became what Christ intended, giving it all up and following Him, even to the point of death.

But the past several weeks we've seen cardinals, bishops, priests who became something Christ didn't intend; who were something other than they said they were. While this violation of trust hurts everyone in our Church, especially the innocent victims and their families, the disciples' actions show we have a choice.

We cannot control other people or their behaviors, but we can control what *we* do and for *Whom* we do it. Even when the actions of others shake our faith, we hold the decision in our hands because we too received the invitation of "Follow me" (*Matthew 4:19, John 21:19*). Want to continue building and purifying God's kingdom on earth? Remember the Apostles and keep following Christ.

For the Kingdom,

Juan Guajardo, Editor



Former U.S. Senator Rick Santorum closed the Catholic Medical Association national conference with a keynote speech. (NTC/Kevin Bartram)

Rick Santorum focuses on family, faith, and healthcare

ADDISON — Former U.S. Senator Rick Santorum urged the laity to take ownership of Church leadership, discussed the value of life and healthcare, and touched upon the dangers of the current culture during the Catholic Medical Association’s Annual Educational Conference.

Santorum, who served as a U.S. Senator from Pennsylvania from 1994 to 2007 and sought the Republican Party’s nomination for president in 2012 and 2016, now works as an author and political commentator.

Santorum and his wife, Karen, had eight children including Isabella who was diagnosed with Edwards Syndrome and given a 10 percent survival chance past her first year.

Despite such odds, Santorum said he and his wife held true to their Catholic values of the sanctity of life.

Although his now

10-year-old daughter is completely disabled, Santorum said the love and lessons she imparts stretch beyond measurement.

“Because when you think of it, God looks down and sees that we are all completely disabled,” Santorum said. “God doesn’t need us, and we can do nothing without Him. So in that respect, what a great teacher all our kids are.”

His wife, Santorum said, often hears from women undergoing troubled pregnancies who had been advised to abort, as well as mothers of children suffering chronic health problems. He called upon the medical profession to uphold the value of life.

“Don’t treat them in a less or more way,” Santorum said. “But give that child a chance and treat them with the dignity that comes with parents who love and cherish that child.”

— Matthew Smith

Physician debunks crucifixion myths at medical conference

ADDISON — Through Scripture, historic records, archeology, at times graphic depiction, and even graffiti, Dr. Thomas McGovern discussed and dismissed myths concerning Jesus’ crucifixion.

A Fort Wayne, Ind. skin cancer surgeon, McGovern spoke Sept. 22 during the final day of the Catholic Medical Association’s Annual Educational Conference.

Following years of research, McGovern said he came to doubt several common findings.

Historic accounts of crucifixions indicate that Jesus never carried a two-part cross. He more likely carried the cross bar.

Evidence from the

Shroud of Turin indicates Jesus was nailed through the wrists, not the palms, he said.

Ancient graffiti depicting other crucifixion victims also indicates such and that Jesus’s feet were nailed not one on top of the other but to the side of the cross through His heels.

Jesus likely died from heart failure through a mix of exhaustion, shock, blood loss, pain, lack of fluids, and other factors, McGovern said.

Inquiry into the crucifixion, while interesting if somewhat gory, also teaches that our sufferings, as Christ’s sufferings, are not in vain.

— Matthew Smith



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Bishop Olson celebrated the Red Mass with Msgr. James Hart (left) and guest homilist Bishop Salvatore Matano of Rochester. (NTC/Ben Torres)

Red Mass invokes gifts of Holy Spirit for legal professionals

FORT WORTH — Everything about the Red Mass that took place at St. Patrick Cathedral on Sept. 27 suggested Pentecost — from the red vestments worn by the celebrants to the sweetness of incense filling the church as the congregation sang “Come Holy Ghost.”

Indeed, the readings from *Acts*, *Psalm 104*, *1 Corinthians*, and the *Gospel of John* came straight from the Lectionary readings for that rite marking the birthday of the Church. Yet this Mass, taking place in the midst of ordinary time, recalled and invoked the Spirit of Wisdom and Truth to guide the nearly 100 lawyers, judges, and public servants gathered.

As echoes of Senate Judiciary hearings and reports of abuse within the Church continue to reverberate among the faithful, the celebration could not have been timelier, guest homilist Bishop Salvatore

Matano pointed out. “I do not think it is an accident that we are here to invoke the Holy Spirit on those in the legal profession at this critical moment in the history of our nation and Church,” Bishop Matano, of the Diocese of Rochester, said. “Think about the gifts of the Holy Spirit and then think about what is happening in the legal world today.”

Bishop Matano went on to outline each of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, constructing a lesson that was at turns practical and poetic. He concluded his homily with an exhortation to those assembled.

The prelate said, “Never underestimate the significance of your vocation. Your work unites the law of God with the law of the land.

“Your faith is not a stumbling block to your profession. It is the means by which your profession becomes a vocation.”

— Michele Baker

Reynolds to leave CCFW but persist in fighting poverty

FORT WORTH — Heather Reynolds, President/CEO of Catholic Charities Fort Worth (CCFW), will leave the organization at the end of the year to become Managing Director of the Wilson Sheehan Lab for Economic Opportunities at the University of Notre Dame.

For 17 years, Reynolds has overseen the strategic direction for the Fort Worth-based, \$45 million nonprofit. With nearly 400 employees and four locations throughout the 28-county Diocese of Fort Worth, CCFW serves tens of thousands of people each year through its diverse services, poverty

solutions, and income-generating social enterprises.

Reynolds began her professional career at 22 as an intern in the clinical counseling department at CCFW, then progressed to full-time employment in fundraising. Reynolds took the helm as CEO at only 25 years old.

Reynolds has spearheaded the agency’s vision to end poverty, one family at a time, focusing on evidence-based solutions. She led the agency in adding to its robust portfolio of services, including an International Foster Care program, homeless services, a transportation department, and the launch of a research and evaluation department.





People pray the Rosary outside of Planned Parenthood on Sept. 26 after the 40 Days for Life kickoff rally. (NTC/Ben Torres)

40 Days for Life begins round-the-clock vigil to save lives

FORT WORTH — Pro-life advocates gathered on the curb between Planned Parenthood in southwest Fort Worth and the neighboring adoption center to pray and speak, beginning a new 40 Days for Life vigil.

Fort Worth’s annual 40 Days for Life kickoff took place on Sept. 26, led by Bobby Warren, the campaign coordinator for 40 Days for Life in Fort Worth. This began the constant prayer in front of the clinic for the next 40 days.

“It’s really a blessing because it’s a commitment to the Lord to be here 24 hours a day,” Warren said.

After a prayer and meditation led by Father John Robert Skeldon, the parochial vicar of St. Patrick Cathedral, Warren introduced the guest speaker, Lauren Muzyka, executive director of Sidewalk Advocates for Life.

“There are so many

stories... I could tell you where the prayer volunteers had no idea the effect they were having in the hearts and minds of those they would pass by, and the hearts and minds of those who work in these facilities, and in the hearts and minds of those who enter these



NorthTexasCatholic.org/video-gallery

facilities to take the lives of their innocent children,” she said to the group.

A large chart with time slots sat beside the road for people to sign up. “It’s quite the undertaking,” Warren said. “People come out and do that. They respond.”

The prayer vigil will continue until Nov. 4.

“It’s one of the easiest things you can do,” Warren said. “You just come stand and silently pray to save lives of babies.”

— Michelle McDaniel

Sacraments highlight Special Needs Workshop on Oct. 27

FORT WORTH — The annual Special Needs Workshop will take place on Saturday, Oct. 27 at the Catholic Center from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

The event is open to everyone who is involved with special needs ministry or who is affected by disabilities personally or in their family.

The event is led by Jason Whitehead, diocesan director of faith formation.

“Basically, I want to make sure everyone is on the same page of what the Church actually teaches in regards to the rights and responsibilities of everyone involved, regarding the sacraments in particular,” Whitehead said.

He will focus primarily on explaining what the Church teaches regarding the disabled in relation

to the sacraments. The workshop aims to encourage and strengthen parents by giving directors, coordinators, and catechists better training regarding those with special needs.

“I worked specifically in the autism and Asperger’s field for 10 years before coming to the diocese, so this is a big issue for me,” Whitehead said.

“It will be centered upon the sacraments, because the sacraments are a chief area of misunderstanding. We have families that have been ignored, saying, ‘well, your child’s not ready for the sacrament,’ and that needs to change.”

To RSVP, call **817-945-9358** by Oct. 23.

— Michelle McDaniel

Gold and Silver Mass to honor jubilee anniversaries on November 18

FORT WORTH — On Nov. 18, Bishop Michael Olson will celebrate a special Mass for all couples celebrating 25 and 50 or more years of marriage. The Silver and Gold Anniversary Mass will begin at 3 p.m. and be followed by a reception.

The Mass will be held at Our Lady of Fatima Parish in Fort Worth, located at 5109 E. Lancaster Ave.

The event is hosted each year by the Diocesan Office of Marriage and Family



Life to honor the permanence, faithfulness, and fruitfulness of Matrimony by celebrating the jubilee years of the couples. Couples have the opportunity to renew their marriage vows and receive an anniversary blessing.

Sister Rosemary Stanton, SSMN, celebrates 50th jubilee with friends, family



NTC/Ben Torres

FORT WORTH — Rosemary Stanton wanted to join the Peace Corps after graduating from Nolan Catholic High School in 1967, but her father, Baldwin Stanton, nixed the idea. However, within five years his daughter would begin a lifetime of ministry in Africa and Brazil as a Sister of St. Mary of Namur.

Family, friends, and former classmates of Sr. Rosemary gathered at Nolan on Sept. 15 for a Mass of Thanksgiving to celebrate the former missionary's 50 years

as a member of the religious order.

"Since then, I've been abundantly blessed by the experiences I've been given," said Sr. Rosemary, who spent nine years teaching religion and homemaking skills in Africa and 26 years in northeastern Brazil doing pastoral ministry in parishes and schools.

After returning to Fort Worth, Sr. Rosemary worked at her alma mater as a pastoral minister organizing liturgies and retreats. She also serves on her congregation's General Council — a team of five women who manage the needs and mission of sisters working in 10 countries.

— Joan Kurkowski-Gillen

DCN. JESUS ESTEBAN CARDENAS

Previously serving at St. Peter the Apostle Parish in Fort Worth, has been assigned to Our Lady of Lourdes Parish in Mineral Wells, effective Sept. 5, 2018.

REV. ALBERT HAASE, OFM

Previously serving and residing at St. Francis Village in Crowley, is departing the diocese, effective Aug. 15, 2018.

DCN. RIGOBERTO LEYVA

Previously serving at Our Lady of Lourdes Parish in Mineral Wells, has been assigned to St. Peter the Apostle Parish in Fort Worth, effective Sept. 5, 2018.

REV. WILSON VATTAPARAMBIL LUCKA, TOR

New to the Diocese of Fort Worth, has been appointed Parochial Vicar at St. Catherine of Siena Parish in Carrollton, effective Aug. 17, 2018.

REV. OSCAR SANCHEZ OLVERA, CORC

New to the Diocese of Fort Worth, has been appointed Pastor at Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish in Fort Worth, effective Aug. 22, 2018.

REV. JOHN SHANAHAN, TOR

Returning to the Diocese of Fort Worth from Franciscan University of Steubenville, has been appointed Parochial Vicar at St. Andrew Parish in Fort Worth, effective Sept. 12, 2018.

In Memoriam



SR. ANN VINCENT KUCIREK, SSMN

Aug. 13, 2018



ANN HEALEY

Aug. 21, 2018

Full obituaries are available at NorthTexasCatholic.org.



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A Page out of History

Seeds of faith planted by early missionaries ripen into a fascinating 500-year chronicle of the Diocese of Fort Worth

By Joan Kurkowski-Gillen

Anyone asked to author a book about the history of the Diocese of Fort Worth would find the task daunting. Preparing to celebrate its 50th anniversary, the widespread, flourishing diocese spans 28 counties and 24,000 square miles, numbering 90 parishes and one million baptized Catholics.

Seasoned writer Jerry Circelli was up to the challenge. After prodigiously researching, fact checking and editing material for two years, the longtime diocesan correspondent, along with French publisher *Editions du Signe*, produced a 316-page manuscript that makes the narrative of pioneering Catholic settlers, bishops, and religious communities in North Texas come alive.

Although the Diocese of Fort Worth is relatively young — established August 29, 1969 after being part of the Dallas Diocese for 79 years — its history really begins in the 16th century when early explorers planted the first seeds of faith along

the Gulf Coast. The book's title: "Beyond the Frontiers of Faith — The Story of an Intrepid 500-Year Faith Journey in Texas that Led to the Creation of Our Diocese" reflects the impact and travails of European missionaries who brought Catholicism to the Southwest, according to the author.

"Intrepid means 'resolutely fearless.' And that is what these early followers of Christ in our diocese were — resolutely fearless in the way they went about evangelizing," Circelli explained. "They had true grit and determination. There's a lot of inspiration we can draw from them."

But first people have to know them. Fascinating anecdotes and descriptive language entice the reader into learning more about forgotten figures in local Church history like Father Peter Anthony Levy. A missionary from France, the young priest was a circuit rider who administered sacraments and celebrated Mass for scattered Catholic families along a 1,000-mile trek from Gainesville north to Amarillo and the New Mexico border. The trip took several months and was probably slowed somewhat by

a mobile confessional stored in the back of his buggy.

The clergyman went on to open a church in Henrietta and served in other parts of the diocese. He's entombed in the wall of St. Mary Church in Gainesville.

"That's perseverance and one example of the remarkable history we have," Circelli pointed out.

A writer by trade and not a historian, the Utica, N.Y. native asked archivists and other experts to suggest material for the project. Time was spent visiting parishes, interviewing pastors, and looking through copious files at the *North Texas Catholic* and many libraries. A two-page synopsis of every parish in the diocese is featured in the book and celebrates the local Church's growth as it approaches a 50-year milestone.

"They all have marvelous histories and I wanted to give them the respect they deserve," the author explained. "I approached that part of the book in chronological order and, as I delved into each history, I could see the diocese evolving through the work of early priests."

Circelli relied on two "fountains of knowledge" — Sister Louise Smith, SSMN and Kay Fiahlo — to make sure dates and other details in the book were accurate.

A self-described history buff, Fiahlo spent several decades logging correspondence, documents, and religious articles associated with St. Patrick Cathedral and its early association with the city. Assisting with research and ensuring the book's accuracy was a labor of love.

"If you don't write down the history of the diocese, it will all go away. No one will remember," she stressed. "It's just so important we don't lose our history of the cathedral and all of these parishes."

Sr. Louise, who chronicles the past and present work of the Sisters of St. Mary of Namur in the diocese, believes "unless we preserve our history and make it available, we become invisible. This is also true of the history of our

Catholic forebears in Texas."

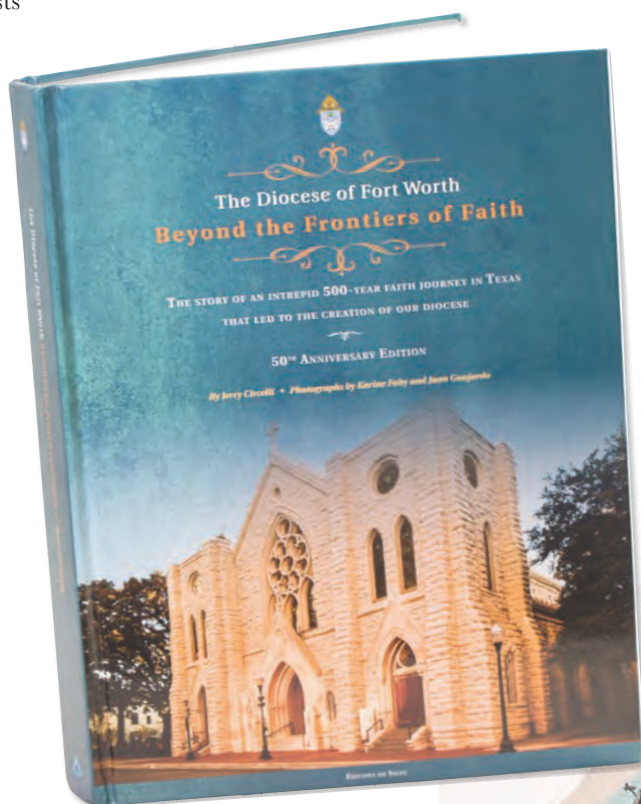
The ministry of the SSMNs, who brought Catholic education to the area, and the San Antonio-based Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word, founders of the first hospital in Fort Worth, is highlighted in the book.

Designed with a generous supply of historic photos, interesting pullouts, and custom-drawn

maps illustrating the travels of early explorers in the diocese, the hardcover book will encourage conversation and is worthy of display.

While researching and writing "Beyond the Frontiers of Faith," Circelli enjoyed coming face-to-face with the early priests and sisters who helped establish what eventually became the Diocese of Fort Worth.

"These were Catholics whose faith in Christ was unwavering," he said. "What surprised me the most was the fortitude these people had. It's important to realize that when we talk about building the Church and evangelizing, we can draw inspiration from pioneers of the early Church in North Texas." 🇺🇸



Beyond the Frontiers of Faith will be available to purchase at parishes for \$37 this fall. (NTC photos/Juan Guajardo)



HEART *OF* PRAYER

Sister Jacinta of Jesus professes solemn vows as a Carmelite

By Joan Kurkowski-Gillen

Sister Jacinta of Jesus remained stoic and focused as she professed solemn vows making her a Carmelite for life. It was only at the end of the 90-minute liturgy, held Aug. 18 at the Carmel of the Holy Trinity monastery in Arlington, that the 35-year-old's demeanor changed.

Separated by a wooden grille from the rest of the congregation, the newest charter member of the contemplative order spied her family, seated in the front pew of the chapel, and beamed.

"She was glowing," said her father, Tony Gienger. "She's at peace with this. She's been at peace with this since the day she entered."

Bishop Michael F. Olson concelebrated the morning Mass along with several diocesan priests. Father Luis Castaneda, a Carmelite friar, presided during the Rite of Religious Profession.

A cradle Catholic who grew up in rural northwest Kansas, Jody Lyn Gienger was a soil scientist, employed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service, when she joined the Carmelites in November 2012.

A cloistered order dedicated to praying for the special intentions of others, the Carmelites and their isolated, peaceful lifestyle attracted the young professional.

"I knew she was looking into different religious orders but I was surprised when she chose the Discalced Carmelites," admitted Sr. Jacinta's mother, Joan Gienger. "She found the Carmelites on their website and the prayer life intrigued her. That's what drew her."

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.

Sr. Jacinta's parents, her sister, Kari Toon, and a gaggle of young nephews and a niece try to make the 750-mile trek from Kansas to Arlington twice a year. The close-knit family always enjoyed doing things together.

"I take games and books and she plays with the grandchildren through the grille," explained her mother. "They get to know her and she gets to see their personalities and hear the noise."

The most difficult part of her daughter's life in Carmel is the familial separation.

"But you don't say no to God," Joan Gienger said, adding lightheartedly, "people who do that end up in the belly of a whale for three days."

Accepting God's will is a process, she continued.

◀ Sister Jacinta of Jesus beams after professing solemn vows Aug. 18 at the Carmel of the Holy Trinity monastery in Arlington. (NTC/Ben Torres)

“If that’s what God wants of your child, blessings will come with it. You want your child to be happy.”

The formation period for a Carmelite is six years or more and includes one year as a postulant and two years in the novitiate. Then a young woman takes temporary vows and wears the white veil for three years. Time is spent getting to know the young woman before she enters the convent.

“Sr. Jacinta is at the point of making solemn vows and receiving the black veil which is the final commitment,” said Mother Anne Teresa, the prioress who chose the nun’s name to honor St. Jacinta Marto, one of the recently canonized Fatima children.

The Arlington monastery currently houses 10 charter sisters and one sister who professed temporary vows.

“She certainly is a person of prayer,” the mother superior said, describing the community’s newest permanent member. “That is the first element we look for. The perfection comes with time, and that’s God’s work. Not our work. We all want to imitate Him as we’re told to pick up our cross and follow Him.”

Seven hours spent in prayer each day includes daily Mass, chanting the Divine Office, and silent, mental contemplation. The nuns strive to accept God’s will for them each day.

“And we find it in the work we do — simple tasks within the monastery,” she explained. “There also is prayer. For a Carmelite, it’s very important.”

During the Rite of Religious Profession, Sr. Jacinta voiced a desire to totally consecrate her life to the service

of God and his people as a cloistered Carmelite nun until death.

“So, with my sisters, I may spend all my days giving praise to God and offering prayer and sacrifice for the good of all mankind.”

In his homily, Bishop Olson reminded the congregation that religious vocations within religious life are distinct and not interchangeable. Each has its own nature and beauty.

“And the vocation call Sr. Jacinta is accepting and promising to live out perpetually is not just a general or universal call. It has the particular character of a Carmelite,” the bishop said.

The vocation to Carmel is not a vehicle for self-understanding, he asserted. It is a gift of love and sacrifice — even if nobody else knows that in detail except Christ.

“That is the vocation you have accepted in gratitude and in love not only for your own sake, but also for the sake of your sisters and really for the sake of all of us gathered in the Church,” the prelate added. “The Church needs your vocation in Carmel more than ever.”

As she prepared to profess permanent vows of chastity, obedience, and poverty, Sr. Jacinta spent time in retreat and praying “for what the Lord is inspiring me to do.” The nun also took comfort in knowing her vocation, as a Carmelite, is part of a larger picture — the Lord’s plan.

“We’re here to pray for people and the Church. We pray for the sick and people going through difficult times,” Sr. Jacinta said. “Nobody knows we exist. That’s part of who we are.” 🇺🇸

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Fr. Bob Sieg distributes the Eucharist during Mass at St. Francis Village. He and the other Franciscan friars serving the Crowley retirement community have been recalled by their religious order. (NTC/Ben Torres)



A COMMUNITY *of* SERVICE

After 53 years, Franciscan friars depart St. Francis Village, leaving a legacy of faith, service, and caring

By **Mary Lou Seewoester**

When St. Francis Village, a faith-based retirement community, opened in 1965, about a dozen retired Franciscan friars lived in the friary there. Six years ago, when Father Bob Sieg, OFM, became the full-time chaplain, there were nine friars, then five, and last year there were only three.

So, after 53 years, the Order of Friars Minor (OFM) has closed the Maximilian Kolbe Friary at St. Francis Village and has recalled the remaining friars to locations offering the community life that is a vital part of Franciscan spirituality.

Two of the remaining three friars, Father Tom Fox, OFM, and Father Albert Haase, OFM, left for new assignments in August. Fr. Sieg leaves St. Francis Village in October.

Fr. Sieg explained that in addition to “living a simple lifestyle of care and love in the spirit of St. Francis,” the friars also are called to live, work, and pray in community with other friars.

As the number of friars dwindled to a fraction of what is

customary for an authentic community, “we lost the family and community aspect of our lives, and we have to get back to that,” Fr. Sieg said. “The focus must be on community.”

He said the order plans to close about 10 Franciscan friaries.

Over the years, the Franciscan Friars cared for the spiritual needs of St. Francis Village residents by offering daily Mass, Confession, Anointing of the Sick, and even Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults (RCIA).

“We are very much like a parish, though it’s not a canonical parish,” Fr. Sieg said.

Though most of the friars were retired, Fr. Sieg said “they wanted to keep on doing things — to be of service. This is not a nursing home, so when they did come here, they wanted to be involved in various ministries.”

Fr. Sieg said the retired friars also “helped out in a number of parishes in the diocese ... wherever there was a need.”

Sharon Bubel, a Secular Franciscan who has lived at St. Francis Village for three years, said she appreciated that the friars also offered Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament every Friday and a special blessing for the sick and elderly once a month. She said Fr. Sieg also was active with the AOK (Acts of Kindness) group, which met monthly to determine if any of their fellow residents had a short-term need they could address, such as a ride to medical appointments.

“That is very Franciscan,” she said. “There are two qualities that make this a very Franciscan place: peace and love. That’s what St. Francis was all about. And the friars really exemplify that. It’s their loving and caring demeanor, but also their willingness to serve.”

David Tolson, executive director of St. Francis Village, agreed. “Their whole spirituality is very giving and self-sacrificing. It’s not about what they have. It’s about what they give,” he said.

Tolson explained that Secular Franciscans established St. Francis Village to provide affordable retirement living for

Secular Franciscans and retired Franciscan Friars from across the country.

“But, it never quite worked out to be just Secular Franciscans because here in the Southwest, there weren’t enough to make it economically possible,” he said.

Tolson said St. Francis Village was the vision of Father Philip Marquard, OFM.

“He saw that low income people had Section 8 housing and

other benefits. The well-off people really didn’t need it, and the ones missing out were the middle class. So he wanted this to be affordable for the middle class,” Tolson said.

Though the original intent was formation of a Catholic community, St. Francis Village also opened its doors to non-Catholics and the friars ministered to them as well.

“I think that’s really what God intended,” Tolson said. “Our Catholics and Protestants get along great out here.”

Currently about 40 percent of the community’s 500 residents are Catholic and 60 percent are non-Catholic. Eighteen residents are Secular Franciscans.

Fr. Sieg said when he moved to Texas from St. Louis, he expected a warmer climate, but soon discovered the “great warmth” of St. Francis Village residents.

“The warmth of the people here is just so wonderful,” he said. “There’s a spirit of faith and love and care for one another.”

Tolson said to maintain the spirit of St. Francis, the search to replace the friars began by talking with other Franciscan orders, retired priests from other orders, and with Bishop Michael Olson.

“Everything we do here goes through the bishop. He’s been extremely helpful to us,” Tolson said. “We would love for retired priests to come out here to live.”

“But it’s really about trusting God’s will,” he added. “It’s His plan if we don’t get in the way. . . . He’s taken care of this village for over 50 years, and this place continues to be very blessed.” 🍌



Franciscan OFM priests recently residing at St. Francis Village include Fr. Robert Leonhardt (seated), Fr. Thomas Fox (left), Fr. Richard Baranski (center), and Fr. Lambert Leykam (right), who called his 19 years at St. Francis Village “a friar’s dream.” (NTC/Jerry Circelli)



Seminarian Issac McCracken attends a Mass with family and members of the St. John Paul II Shepherd's Guild. (NTC/Jayne Shedenhelm)

With an increased emphasis on prayer and education, Bishop's Guild becomes

St. John Paul II Shepherd's Guild

to foster and support vocations to the priesthood

By **Matthew Smith**

Pope John Paul II, during the 41st World Day of Prayer for Vocations in 2004, said, "Our primary duty is to pray to the Lord of the Harvest for those who already follow Christ very closely in the priesthood and religious life, and for those whom He in His mercy continues to call to such important ecclesial service."

Taking inspiration from those words, the Diocese of Fort Worth's Bishop's Guild is now the St. John Paul II Shepherd's Guild, a change Bishop Michael Olson

announced during a recent Gratitude for Vocations event.

"It's a call for renewal and clearer focus of what this ministry is," Bishop Olson said. "Calling it the Bishop's Guild draws attention to the bishop as if he were somehow the center of things. I think the focus of priestly formation is really directed toward the formation of shepherds who, in imitation of Jesus, defend the sheep and lead them to Him."

"After discussion and consultation, we decided to renew the mission and focus and change the name, given that John Paul II worked very hard to articulate the focus

of priesthood and the responsibilities we all have in fostering vocations."

Bishop's Guild Coordinator Elizabeth Becker called the name change more than cosmetic.

"Because it represents the new focus areas of prayer and education and, of course, continued financial support for our seminarians," Becker said. "And we felt the name change would help refocus our efforts toward those priorities — prayer and education specifically."

While the former Guild goal of financially supporting the education of diocesan seminarians remains in place, the

method of achieving the goals has broadened, she said.

“St. John Paul II reminds us to ‘thank the Lord for the gift of vocation, for the grace of priesthood, for priestly

vocations,’” Becker said, which can be expressed by generous prayer and time spent learning about the priestly formation process. “Increase in prayer and education are integral parts of the mission of the Shepherd’s Guild.

“Joining the Shepherd’s Guild is an expression of gratitude for the gift of the priesthood and is another way to participate in the pastoral work of fostering and supporting vocations,” she said.

One of his chief responsibilities, Bishop Olson said, involves fostering vocations and formation of priests, but he’s not alone in that.

“Priestly formation, because it is the work of the holy Church, should not be secret and people should know what it entails,” Bishop Olson said. “It is the role and responsibility of each of us in helping priests.”

In that way the Bishop’s Guild, founded in 2012, serves as an instrument of evangelization.

Guild members, through various levels of commitment, cover the costs seminarians incur throughout their nine years of school at a cost of about \$52,000 per year.

Father Jonathan Demma, of St. John the Apostle Parish in North Richland Hills, hailed the Guild’s more holistic focus.

“I applaud the choice of St. John Paul II, a patron who brings a wonderful example of what it means to be a shepherd,” Fr. Demma said. “The new focus also highlights the responsibility of everyone in the diocese to respond.”

Fr. Demma, who himself was recently ordained, characterized the support of Guild members as evangelization in action.

“I know I very much appreciated events like [Gratitude for Vocations] because of the interaction and support they brought

To learn more about the St. John Paul II Shepherd’s Guild, visit advancementfoundation.org/membership or call 817-945-9443

from members of the Guild,” Fr. Demma said. “And I can’t say enough how much the cards and letters we received from members of the Guild meant while we were

in seminary. They made us feel connected to our diocese and reminded us... as we went through seminary, that we were being formed to serve our diocese.”

Diocesan Vocations Director Father Jonathan Wallis, who also serves as dean of students at St. Joseph Seminary in Louisiana, called the name change impactful.

“It ensures that we help the diocese, as a whole, realize that we all have a part to play in fostering vocations,” Fr. Wallis said. “It helps those in the diocese become more aware of the importance and process of fostering vocations and, through the educational component, helps spread word of the need for that and what exactly that entails....”

The Guild’s mission also addresses practical needs.

“We need to spread the word and pray,” Fr. Wallis said. “We also need to be here to help our young men answer the will of God.

Through the involvement and contributions of Guild members that helps our diocese say, ‘Yes, we can help our seminarians cover the cost of education, which is very high, and allow them to concentrate on the things they need to focus on.’”

Pedro Martinez, a third-year theology student at Assumption Seminary in San Antonio, spoke of the difference the Guild made in his life.

“Without your financial help I would not have been able to join the seminary,” Martinez said.

Through his time of discernment, Martinez said the most valuable lesson he learned was to trust in God.

“If this is the vocation God is calling me to, He is going to help me,” Martinez said.

But it’s more than simply financial support, said second-year seminarian Reed Proctor.

“I know a lot of us have remained in the seminary because of the prayers and spiritual support of [the Guild] and members of our diocese,” Proctor said.

Proctor’s father, Dan Proctor, said he also appreciates the role of the Shepherd’s Guild.

“Through events such as this, you realize how much it’s not just your individual parish. You see the tremendous support of the whole diocese,” Proctor said. “It’s

so comforting to realize so many are praying for not just your son, but all the seminarians as well.” 🇺🇸



ADD YOUR PRAYERS

Join with others in the diocese and pray for seminarians. See **Page 47** for a day-by-day prayer calendar to help you pray for our seminarians by name.



Seminarian Brett Metzler prays during Mass August 5 at St. Patrick Cathedral. (NTC/Jayme Shedenhelm)



Blessing of the Children: "Let the children come to me; do not prevent them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. Amen, I say to you, whoever does not accept the kingdom of God like a child will not enter it."

Matthew 19:13-14



PROTECTING

God's Flock

Looking into the Diocese of Fort Worth's continued efforts to protect the most vulnerable in the kingdom of God

By Susan Moses
and Juan Guajardo

A dozen years ago, then Vicar General Father Michael Olson and Chancellor Father E. James Hart painstakingly went through hundreds of personnel files of all the priests who had served in the Diocese of Fort Worth, whether currently active, retired, or deceased.

As part of the diocese's vigorous push to remove and bring to justice any abusive clergy, they combed pages of documentation searching for red flags that might indicate any signs of sexual misconduct. That experience instilled an uncompromising attitude in the future prelate to uphold zero tolerance of sexual abuse.

Building an environment in the Diocese of Fort Worth where abusers are held accountable and where the repercussions of sexual abuse of minors are handled transparently has been a strenuous and lengthy undertaking. In North Texas, as in much of the world, there was a time when clergy who abused children in the '70s and '80s were sometimes unpunished and unfettered, reassigned and given the opportunity to repeat their crime in silence.

While the Diocese of Fort Worth had enacted policies on sexual misconduct in the mid-1990s, they weren't as comprehensive as the ones that would come a few years later. In 2002, the *Boston Globe* broke news that the Archdiocese of Boston had quietly settled hundreds of claims of child sexual abuse against at least 70 priests over ten years.

In response to the Boston scandal, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) met in Dallas in June 2002 and passed the *Charter for the*

Protection of Children and Young People. The Dallas Charter, as it came to be known, comprises 17 articles designed to achieve four objectives: promote healing and reconciliation with victims/survivors; guarantee an effective response to allegations of sexual abuse of minors (which includes mandatory reporting to public authorities); ensure accountability; and protect the faithful in the future.

When the measure passed with a 239-13 secret ballot, Bishop Wilton Gregory, then president of the USCCB, stated that "from this day forward, no one known to have sexually abused a child will work in the Catholic Church in the United States."

The Diocese of Fort Worth embraced the Dallas Charter, fully implementing the policies even before the Vatican officially recognized them later that year. But to enact the Dallas Charter, the diocese had to grapple with some painful parts of its past.

A DARK CHAPTER

The Diocese of Fort Worth was not immune to the painful chapter of priest abuse scandals that shook dioceses around the world in the early 2000s, including Boston, Dallas, Palm Beach, Fla., and others.

Of the more than 450 priests who had served in the Diocese of Fort Worth since its founding in 1969, eight were accused of "improper sexual behavior with minors," then-Bishop Joseph Delaney stated in a 2004 diocesan report. Thirty victims reported abuse by those eight priests with the majority of the abuse taking place in the '70s and '80s.

At the time, three of the accused priests were deceased. Two were religious order priests who had been removed from ministry. Three were diocesan

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priests who had also been removed from ministry.

By June 2005, the diocese publicly released the names of the eight priests who had been accused of sexual misconduct with minors, making it one of the few in the nation to identify their accused. A subsequent release of 700 pages of confidential diocesan documents detailed the histories of the accused priests and portrayed a pre-Charter leadership that struggled to respond to incidents of sexual abuse, sometimes handing out light punishments to the accused, such as reassignment, mandatory counseling, or supervision by another priest.

The aftermath for the victims ranged widely. Some never saw justice completely served as the statute of limitations expired. Some received settlements. Some accepted free counseling (which is offered in all cases). Some saw their abuser defrocked. Some saw their abuser charged and imprisoned. In the case of one abusive priest, victims settled claims and saw the name of the former priest scrubbed from church facilities.

Bishop Kevin Vann and then-Vicar General Michael Olson in a 2006 *Star-Telegram* interview sharply rebuked their predecessor, calling the handling of sexual abuse accusations a “huge moral failure.”

Then-Father Olson also emphasized the diocese’s push to better protect children and vulnerable adults, and bring healing for victims. “It’s fallen to us, in a sense, to heal and to do what we can to heal — specifically for these misdeeds, and I would say bad judgments in handling them.”

Looking back on how cases were handled in the early days of the diocese, Director of Communications Pat Svacina agreed with Vann and Olson’s assessment that “it was a moral failing.”

“But the distinction is that since 2002, the Diocese of Fort Worth has diligently reached out to anyone who was abused, looked to find any clergy that may be engaging in abuse or displaying warning signs of grooming,

and has been proactively and transparently publicizing the names of those folks and calling for victims through that time.”

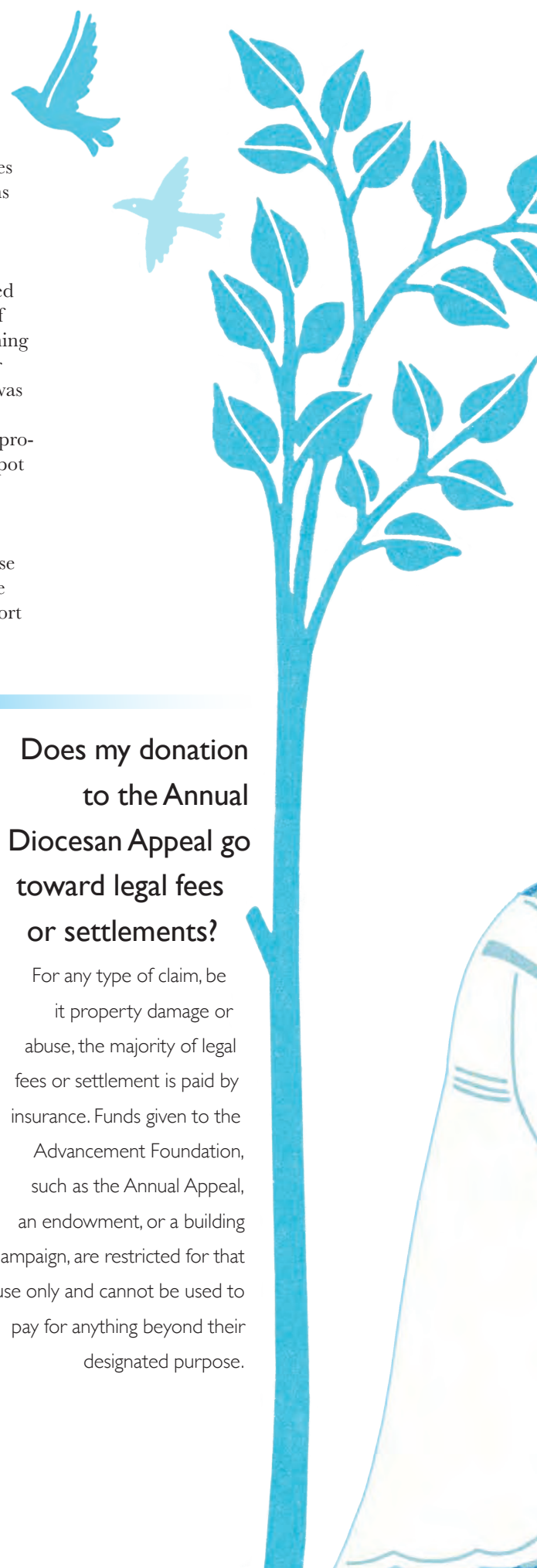
TURNING POINT

As headlines worldwide revealed more allegations and convictions of priests, change was already happening in the Diocese of Fort Worth. Prior to the Dallas Charter, the diocese was forging new measures to deal with instances of abuse and developing protocols for teaching people how to spot and prevent abuse.

Nevertheless, the Charter was a much-needed shot in the arm for the Church in the U.S., and one case in particular showed the immediate impact it made in the Diocese of Fort Worth.

Ordained in 1979 for the Diocese of Fort Worth, Father Rudolf Renteria was the last of the eight accused priests not to have faced justice by the time of the Charter’s inception. In 1981, he was accused of “improper sexual touching” of a 14-year-old boy at St. Matthew Parish in Arlington, where he had served for three years. Bishop Delaney had confronted Fr. Renteria shortly after the incident and reassigned him to a rural parish, with no further disciplinary action. Over the next two decades, Renteria bounced around a few more parishes before being assigned to hospital chaplaincy work in Dallas, where he ministered for several years without incident.

Equipped with the clear and stringent new policies of the Dallas Charter, the diocese tolled the bell for justice. Not two weeks had passed since the drafting of the Charter before the Diocese of Fort Worth addressed the ‘81 Renteria incident. Archives showed



Does my donation to the Annual Diocesan Appeal go toward legal fees or settlements?

For any type of claim, be it property damage or abuse, the majority of legal fees or settlement is paid by insurance. Funds given to the Advancement Foundation, such as the Annual Appeal, an endowment, or a building campaign, are restricted for that use only and cannot be used to pay for anything beyond their designated purpose.



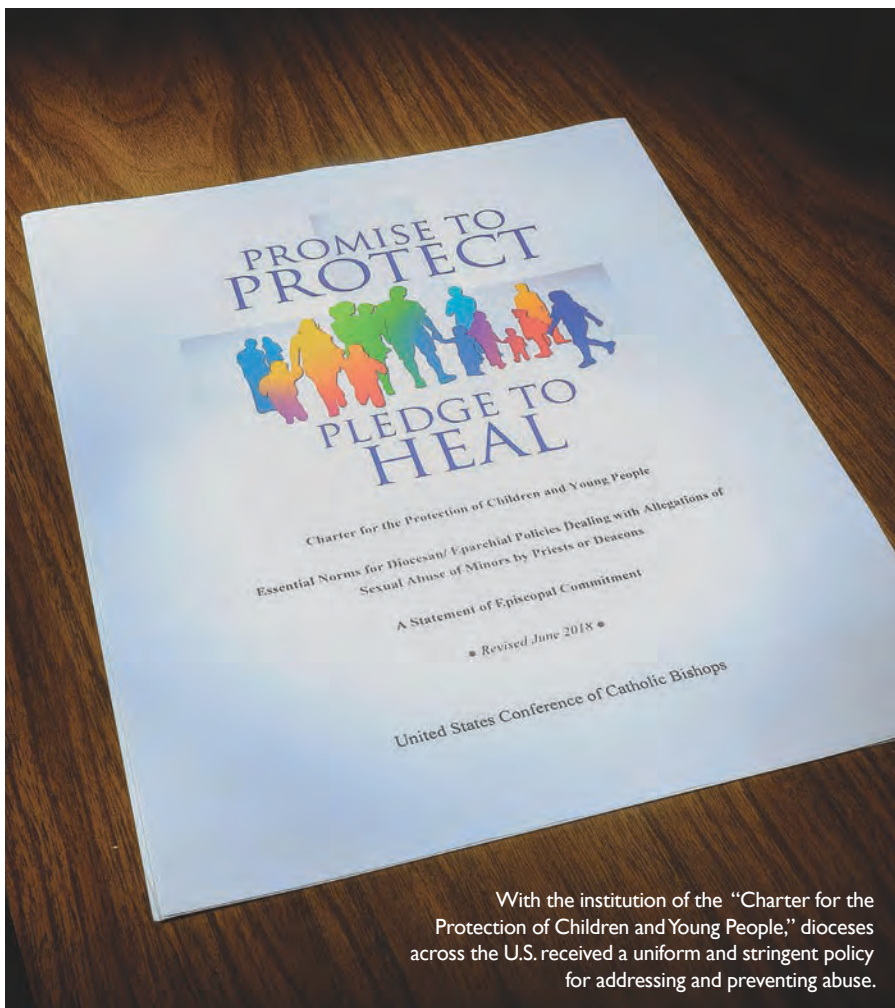
Do priests and bishops go through Safe Environment training?

Yes. This summer Bishop Olson and the seminarians completed a Protecting God's Children® awareness session. All priests take the course and subsequent renewals. Even priests who are current with their Safe Environment training in another diocese must complete a

program here before they can begin ministry in the diocese.



Photo illustration/Rick Musacchio, Tennessee Register



With the institution of the "Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People," dioceses across the U.S. received a uniform and stringent policy for addressing and preventing abuse.

Fr. Renteria was promptly removed from ministry on June 29, 2002, and forbidden from presenting "himself as a priest in any capacity."

The Renteria move cemented Fort Worth as one of the first dioceses to voluntarily embrace and actively begin implementing the Charter's policies, even as it awaited Vatican approval.

In 2006, Bishop Vann, third bishop of the diocese, petitioned Pope Benedict XVI to laicize Renteria. The pope decreed his dismissal from the clerical state in 2010.

A TIME OF HEALING

Following Bishop Delaney's death in 2005, Bishop Vann and Vicar General Olson advanced a zero-tolerance policy on sexual abuse, implementing several new measures.

Late in 2007, the diocese posted a "List of Priests with Credible Accusations of Sexual Misconduct with

Minors," on its website. The report lists those priests who served in the Diocese of Fort Worth and had "a credible allegation" made against them. The list also details what actions have been taken against them. Fort Worth is the only diocese in Texas that publicly shares this information at this time.

That same year, Bishop Vann stated in the *NTC* that the diocese had implemented an enhanced mandatory sexual abuse prevention program for children, youth, employees, clergy, and volunteers.

More changes to make the diocese a safer place came over the years. In 2008, the position of Safe Environment Coordinator was established in parishes and schools in order to help with implementation of the program. In 2009, the diocese began automated background checks on priests, religious, employees, and volunteers. And in 2010, the diocese

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FROM POLICY TO ACTION

In the Diocese of Fort Worth, the task of implementing the Dallas Charter is spearheaded by the Office of Safe Environment. But the spirit of the Charter is also put into action by passionate Safe Environment coordinators, facilitators, and volunteers at the parish level, like (clockwise) **Richard Mathews**, diocesan director of Safe Environment; **Kim Harbert**, Safe Environment coordinator at St. Mark Parish in Denton; and **Holly Robin**, Safe Environment coordinator at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Catholic School, among many others.

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began publishing on its website a “List of Priests who have been Laicized.” These are priests, who because of credible accusations of child sexual abuse, have been canonically reduced to a lay state and can no longer function as priests.

TRANSPARENT AND ACCOUNTABLE

After his installation as fourth bishop of the Diocese of Fort Worth, Bishop Michael Olson forged on with creating a safer Church, assuring laity that he was “fully committed” to upholding the Charter and preventing future tragedies.

As one of his first acts, he directed the diocese to participate in Child Abuse Prevention Month (April), to raise awareness about ways to prevent child sexual abuse.

The focus continued on full accountability and transparency in all cases of sexual misconduct involving Church staff or clergy — something that Bishop Olson said is necessary to help victims heal and for “the safety of the Church’s faithful parishioners.”

Making a public call for victims to come forward after any reported incident of child sexual abuse that takes place at a parish or diocesan property is one part of that. But the diocese goes beyond the requirements of the USCCB Charter by making calls for victims even in cases of sexual misconduct not involving minors.

Aside from addressing clergy, the policy includes all staff, teachers, and volunteers, as a 2016 case at St. John the Apostle Parish in North Richland Hills proved. When the diocese received reports of an adult volunteer abusing a child, officials quickly alerted police and Child Protective Services. A diocesan representative visited the parish the same week of the reports to encourage any additional victims to contact the diocese’s Victims Assistance Office. Thanks to prompt action on the part of the victims, law enforcement, and the

Church, the accused volunteer was arrested on sexual abuse charges in 2017.

According to a *Star-Telegram* report at the time, Bishop Olson said, “It is not easy to speak about the reports of abuse to a parish community. It is important, however, for [people] to know that the diocese is ready to reach out to those who have been hurt and need help, [so] that we might assist in any way we can.”

INCREASING THE INTENSITY

By 2017, the Safe Environment Program had trained and processed criminal background checks on 27,498 volunteers, 946 educators, 942 employees, 127 priests, 75 deacons, and 41 candidates for ordination. On its annual Safe Environment audits, the USCCB noted the diocese’s excellent compliance with the Dallas Charter measures.

However, Bishop Olson was concerned that “familiarity breeds complacency” with the program and he charged the Safe Environment Office to enhance the program.

A new training program with face-to-face training and two-year renewals was launched in July, after several months of planning. As of Sept. 30, more than 4,000 people had been trained through 156 awareness sessions.

Kim Harbert, the Safe Environment coordinator for St. Mark Parish in Denton, believes the in-person training is more effective than the previous online program. Harbert has attended multiple sessions, and she appreciated that participants find the three-hour commitment “well worth it, for us all to be advocates for such an important issue. It’s all of our responsibility.”

In addition to a more robust training program, criminal background checks became more intensive too, including checking national databases of individuals who have been removed from

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How are bishops and cardinals being held accountable?

In mid-September the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops’ Administrative Committee announced that they would implement a four-part plan of action to address and prevent any misconduct or abuse by bishops.

- 1 The Administrative Committee, of which Bishop Olson is a member, approved the establishment of a confidential third-party reporting system that will receive and address complaints of sexual abuse or misconduct by a bishop.
- 2 The Committee also called for the development of policies addressing restrictions on bishops who were removed or resigned because of credible allegations of sexual abuse or harassment.
- 3 It initiated the process of developing a Code of Conduct for bishops regarding sexual abuse, harassment, or misconduct — something which was not addressed in the 2002 Charter.
- 4 Finally, it expressed support for a full lay-driven investigation into the Archbishop Theodore McCarrick situation and responses made to the allegations.

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youth-serving organizations and those who have had professional licenses suspended or revoked.

Although training and criminal background checks are the primary occupation of the Safe Environment Office, they also oversee three other activities that are critical to their pledge to protect and to heal.

First, the office works with a victims' assistance coordinator who helps arrange counseling and encourages victims to file a police report.

Also, the office offers to have the bishop meet with the victim and to provide pastoral care and services focused on healing.

The Safe Environment Office also facilitates and coordinates a sexual misconduct review board for the diocese. Composed of lay men and women with expertise in psychology, law, criminal justice, and children's health, the board reviews individual allegations to advise the bishop on all aspects of those incidents. The Conduct Review Board does not conduct investigations.

The board also advises the bishop on the diocese's implementation of the Charter and gives input into the training program.

Bishop Olson is pleased with the enhancements to the Safe Environment program.

"I have great confidence in where we are going, that it's the right way to go and the enhanced intensity is what's needed to make sure it's at the forefront of our minds," he said.

With changes sure to come to the Charter after the U.S. bishops' meeting

this November, the diocese's intensity isn't letting up.

MOVING FORWARD

This summer's Pennsylvania Grand Jury report sent shockwaves around the nation as it unearthed more than 300 abuse claims dating back 70 years. As a result, officials in 12 additional states have announced investigations into multiple dioceses. Civil authorities are demanding transparency and accountability in abuse allegations.

Since the Dallas Charter, transparency and accountability have driven the Diocese of Fort Worth's handling of child sexual abuse cases, past and present. Strong policy and equally strong application have gone hand-in-hand to ensure the protection of minors.

Richard Mathews, director of Safe Environment for the Diocese of Fort Worth, said the diocese's transparency has two aspects: clarity of policies,

programs, and procedures; and regular reporting of both compliance and noncompliance.

Mathews acknowledged that although transparency can be painful, it's necessary and essential to creating a safe environment.

"By being transparent, we become vulnerable to criticism, being second guessed, and even at times having to acknowledge failures and

shortcomings," he said.

"Being transparent can be painful, embarrassing, and humbling work. But transparency is also beneficial because through it, not only do we obey God, but we also seek accountability and we bear each other's burdens. We're called to shed light." ✚

How many people have been trained by the new Protecting God's Children® program?

4,132 laity, clergy, seminarians, staff, contractors, and volunteers

135 Safe Environment facilitators

45 Safe Environment coordinators

156 awareness sessions.

SAFE ENVIRONMENT

To Report Misconduct:

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

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

To Report Abuse or Suspected Abuse:

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

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

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





To see the list of clergy with credible allegations of sexual abuse of a minor, visit fwdioc.org/safe-environment

TOLLING FOR TRANSPARENCY

Texas dioceses to join Fort Worth in publishing names of clergy accused of sexual abuse

To promote healing and ensure a safer environment for children, the 15 dioceses in Texas plus the Ordinariate of the Chair of St. Peter announced Oct. 10 that they will publicly release the names of clergy who have been credibly accused of sexual abuse of a minor.

Until now, only the Diocese of Fort Worth had publicly disclosed the names of priests and religious credibly accused of sexual abuse, a move made in 2005 and which continues today as part of Bishop Michael Olson's zero-tolerance policy for sexual abuse of minors. The list has been published online since 2007.

"The protection of our children is a moral obligation and is of paramount importance to the Diocese of Fort Worth," Bishop Olson said in an Oct. 10 letter to the faithful. "When it comes to the protection of children, complacency is unacceptable.

"In that regard, publicly identifying clergy and religious brothers and sisters who are the subjects of credible allegations of sexual abuse against a minor serves an important role in eradicating the evil of sexual abuse and in helping the diocese to identify and assist those who have suffered from abuse."

Texas Catholic Conference Executive Director Jennifer Allmon said in a press release Oct. 10 that the bishops' decision "was made in the context of their ongoing work to protect children from sexual abuse, and their efforts to promote healing and a restoration of trust in the Catholic Church."

"This is an action in response to the faithful's call for greater accountability and transparency," said Cardinal Daniel DiNardo of the Archdiocese of

Galveston-Houston and president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. "Every bishop in our state has made a statement expressing his concern for all who have been hurt and I want to express my personal sorrow at such fundamental violations of trust that have happened.

"We are completely committed to eradicating the evil of sexual abuse in the Church and promoting healing among the faithful and those injured by this crime," Cardinal DiNardo added.

The Diocese of Fort Worth will continue publicly displaying its list of accused priests online the diocesan website. Director of Communications Pat Svacina said the list — along with a list naming priests who have been laicized — is kept as accurate and up-to-date as possible. Currently, it lists 15 priests, one permanent deacon, and one religious brother.

The statewide plan primarily affects the 14 other Texas dioceses and the ordinariate. They have a deadline of Jan. 31, 2019, to publish their lists and are currently reviewing files of bishops, priests, and deacons dating back to 1950. Like in Fort Worth, the dioceses will also continually update the lists.

With approximately 8.5 million Catholics and 1,320 Catholic parishes in Texas, the effort to compile and publish the lists represents a "major project," Allmon said.

Nevertheless, it's an "encouraging" collegial action Bishop Olson stated.

The disclosures — along with actions already in place, such as mandatory background checks and mandatory notification of civil authorities in cases of abuse — will augment Safe Environment programs in all Texas dioceses. 🇺🇸

DEFINING DREAMS

Hispanics gather at Fifth National Encuentro in Grapevine to voice concerns and increase involvement

By Joan Kurkowski-Gillen

They came from parishes across the country proudly bearing names like Garcia, Cruz, Gomez, and Esparza. Three thousand delegates, arriving in Grapevine for the Fifth National Encuentro of Hispanic/Latino Ministry, reflected the changing face of the U.S. Catholic Church.

The four-day (Sept. 20-23) bilingual summit, hosted by the Diocese of Fort Worth, was organized by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops to discern ways the Church can best respond to the fastest-growing segment of American Catholicism.

And, as representatives from 159 dioceses discussed ways the Church can evangelize, improve leadership, and embrace the gifts of a thriving Hispanic/Latino culture, they approached the conversations with purpose, optimism, and a missionary spirit.

Inspiration for days of dialogue was gleaned from speeches delivered by several high-profile bishops and Archbishop Christophe Pierre, Apostolic Nuncio to the United States, who quoted from Pope Francis' exhortation "Evangelii Gaudium" ("The Joy of the Gospel") to open the historic event. "What leads to a change of

heart in Christians is precisely missionary spirit," he told a ballroom crowded with lay ministers, parishioners, religious women, and clergy.

The Church in the United States is now 40 percent Hispanic, the prelate pointed out, adding, "We live in a time of epochal change. We, who announce the Gospel, cannot evangelize by neglecting the new forces at work affecting new generations who have their own expectations and aspirations, including those who are coming to this country."

KEEPING FAMILIES ENGAGED

Joined by other members of the Diocese of Fort Worth delegation, Joel Vega sat in the audience and listened. A catechist at St. Matthew Parish in Arlington, he sees firsthand what happens when Hispanic families are distanced from their faith. While most young Catholics prepare for first Communion as seven- or eight-year-olds, Vega's class is filled with ninth graders who never received the sacrament. Why the delay?

"It starts in the family," he explained. "They don't take their religion seriously so they just let time pass. Once they realize the child is growing up and hasn't been taught

anything, they take them to church."

Most of the 10 to 15 teens in his group don't know the Our Father or Hail Mary.

"We have to teach them from scratch," the volunteer continued. "I become the first teacher instead of the parents."

It's a story he shared during the Encuentro process starting at the parish level. He believes focusing on the family is a vital element in reaching all Hispanic Catholics — both new arrivals and those in the U.S. a long time.

"There's a mix and we're trying to find out why they delay religious education," he said.

After first Communion, the teens disappear again until Confirmation is needed to marry in the Church.

"Encuentro is trying to figure out how to keep those people engaged and help them grow," Vega added.

WELCOMING THE STRANGER

Accompanying others with the gifts of time and presence may provide an answer, suggested Bishop Daniel E. Flores during a Sept. 21 address to Encuentro delegates.

"In my Diocese of Brownsville, I

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Sister Nora Garcia, HCG, a delegate for the Diocese of Fort Worth, smiles as she holds a crucifix during the opening night procession of the V National Encuentro of Hispanic/Latino Ministry at the Gaylord Texan in Grapevine Sept. 20. (NTC/Ben Torres)

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learned from many faithful people what it means to accompany. Since 2014, thousands of immigrants from Central America have crossed from Mexico to Texas,” he said.

The bishop witnessed how parishioners greeted the new arrivals with a welcoming smile and embrace.

“From them I learned that Christian love accompanies, helps, listens, respects, encourages, and above all, perseveres,” the bishop added.

His words struck a chord with Alfonso Martinez who came to the U.S. alone from Mexico as a 17-year-old. After settling near All Saints Parish in Fort Worth, he worked construction.

“When I came to Texas, I felt so welcomed. Encuentro is helping me return some of that joy,” explained the delegate from St. Elizabeth Ann Seton in Keller who remembers taking formation classes at All Saints where parishioners were kind and helpful. “That’s something I want to show other people.”

Listening to fellow delegates who have similar dreams and are working to make them come true was encouraging.

“I think something good will come out of this process,” Martinez assured. “I don’t know how long it will take but I’m willing to put my effort there to help it become a reality.”

STAYING COMMITTED

Benjamin Mier’s Encuentro dream is tangible. The former gang member from Los Angeles hopes to build a rehab center to help others escape the lure of drugs and violence.

Brought to the U.S. from Mexico by his mother when he was seven, the delegate from the Diocese of San

Bernardino grew up in a dysfunctional home and a tough neighborhood.

“There wasn’t a day I didn’t fight on my way home from school,” Mier recalled. “It was survival of the fittest. My environment made me a gang member. I did drugs — you name it.”

What turned his life around? He credits God, his wife, and a retreat focused on street life for “pulling me out of the gutter.”

“I’ve been clean almost six years,” the California resident said. “God’s been showing me the way. He led

me to Encuentro and I’ve been sharing my experiences with the tables.”

Mier hopes his contributions to Encuentro will shine a light on the problem of disadvantaged youth who turn to gangs instead of God. As a volunteer, he counsels young people asking for help any time of the day or night.

“We, as Church, have to go out to the needy and meet them where they are. We can’t wait for them to find us,” he explained. “I’m like a sponge taking a lot of knowledge out of this experience.”

OVERCOMING BARRIERS

Empowering young people to become informed evangelists and Church leaders is one of the main objectives of V Encuentro. One of its goals is to form 20,000 new Hispanic leaders.

Various experts have stated that 60 percent of Catholics under the age of 18 are Hispanic.

As a middle school Spanish teacher in Everman, Lucia Cruz sees how political issues affect young lives. Worried about immigration status or isolated because of language barriers, many school families don’t become involved in the community. That

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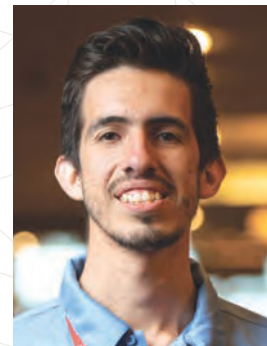
FACES OF ENCUENTRO

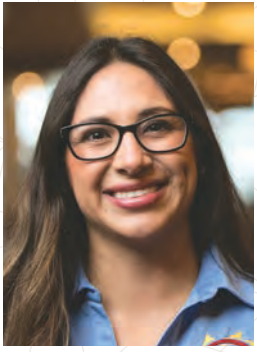


Check out our expanded “Faces of Encuentro”

feature at

NorthTexasCatholic.org/features-news





faces
of

ENCUENTRO

By Juan Guajardo

The National V Encuentro saw the attendance of almost 50 delegates from the Diocese of Fort Worth. These Catholics come from all walks of life — different countries of origin, different parishes, and different generations — from as young as 19, and from the U.S. and Mexico to the Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico.

These are the faces of Encuentro and the ones who represented our diocese's Latino community during the Encuentro process.

But there's one major common denominator connecting them: a deep love of God, and a desire to share that love in action with their communities, Hispanic and non-Hispanic alike. They also shared with us hope for a future where the Church continues growing in unity and welcome, and is not afraid to evangelize and reach those on the peripheries.

As delegate Maria Olvera of St. Mary Parish in Graham, put it: "I believe that out of this V Encuentro there will come a lot of benefits for the entire community, Hispanics as well as non-Hispanics, alike. I hope there will be a lot of spiritual fruits in our parishes, our communities, and our nation."



Paola Quintero-Araujo, diocesan director of the St. Junipero Serra Institute, leads Fort Worth delegates in preparing for their breakout and inter-regional sessions at the V National Encuentro of Hispanic/Latino Ministry Sept. 20. (NTC/Juan Guajardo)

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includes religious services.

“We interviewed people locally and regionally and heard the same thing all over,” the St. Ann parishioner explained. “People are afraid to go out, drive, go to Mass, or participate because of their immigration status.”

Children fear their parents will be deported.

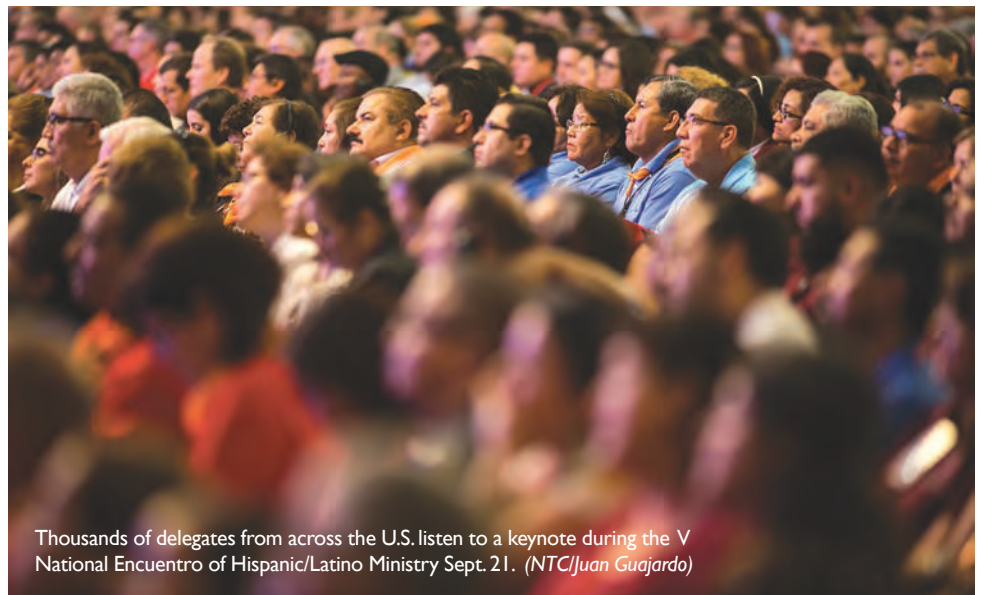
“I hope the bishops are listening to us and understand that this is the situation for many Catholics living in the country without documents,” the educator emphasized. “We need to build a Church where everyone is welcome regardless of skin color or mother language.”

The V Encuentro national meeting allowed her to talk about the needs of Hispanic Catholics with people from New York, Chicago, and other cities.

“We share the same concerns,” Cruz pointed out. “It’s not just an isolated situation. It’s not just Texas.”

CHANGE WILL HAPPEN

Rigoberto Gomez agreed. When the recent St. Joseph College graduate returned



Thousands of delegates from across the U.S. listen to a keynote during the V National Encuentro of Hispanic/Latino Ministry Sept. 21. (NTC/Juan Guajardo)

home to Brooklyn, New York, he took with him a message to other young Hispanics: Whatever you’ve feeling, you’re not alone.

“Are you angry with the way the Church is going? Well, there are people who feel exactly the way you do,” said the 20-year-old member of Jornada (Journey), a New York City Hispanic youth movement.

Encuentro provided an opportunity

for him to voice ways the Church can better serve young people in general and Hispanic youth specifically. Youth are the future of the Church but some feel the institution moves too slowly for today’s faced-paced society.

“Change is going to happen,” Gomez promised. “There are changes young people want... It may take time but it’s going to happen.” 🇺🇸

Young adults sing and dance after a morning plenary session on the last day of the national V Encuentro Sept. 23. (NTC/Ben Torres)



CALLING YOUNG ADULTS TO

STAND UP

Latino young adults in the Church are ready to do more

By Susan Moses

Young adults in the Church want to do more than stack chairs.

At the national V Encuentro, young adults had many opportunities to express their desire to contribute, in meaningful ways, to the evangelization mission of the Church. About a third of the 3,000 delegates were 35 or younger.

More than 100 bishops invited young adults to come to the table, literally. The prelates sat down with young adults over a relaxed dinner and learned how the Church can best respond to their realities

and needs. In turn, the young people requested pathways to train as leaders and chances to hold responsible positions in ministry.

The dinner's co-host, Brenda Noriega of the Diocese of San Bernadino, described the typical response when a young person approaches a leader in the parish with an offer to help. "Well, you can stack chairs." The crowd of 750 laughed ruefully.

"We are not the future. We are the present. We are ready. We are eager to do something," she said to the attendees, who included Cardinal Daniel DiNardo, archbishop of Galveston-Houston and president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops,

and Archbishop Christophe Pierre, the Vatican's apostolic nuncio to the U.S.

HOMETOWN HEROES

In the Diocese of Fort Worth, young adult delegates to V Encuentro are already working in leadership roles within their parishes.

Daisy Gaytan, a 27-year-old parishioner at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton in Keller, was invited to help prepare students for Confirmation at Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish in Fort Worth.

Instructing teenagers had never crossed

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Gaytan's mind. She was concerned her formation was inadequate, but she stepped out in faith. A religious sister provided her guidance and encouragement as she began teaching the youth.

"I became a student and a leader. I learn from them, and they learn from me," said the young catechist, who has taught for four years.

Leadership roles in youth ministry and faith formation are a natural fit for young adults.

Jonathan Cano has assisted with the youth group at St. Thomas the Apostle Parish in Fort Worth since he graduated from high school in 2017. He recruited two of his friends to help also.

"The teens can relate to us, and we can connect with them. They look to us as models," said the college sophomore, who plans to teach middle school science.

Cano was motivated to help because "the Church is responsible for the man I'm growing into." Close friendships and lessons on accepting and loving others that he gained as a student in his parish youth group make him want to give other teens the same opportunity.

Going through the Encuentro process has been educational for Cano. "I've learned solutions that I can take back to my church. I'm better prepared to handle situations."

Cano feels Encuentro, for him, has been a tremendous opportunity to listen and learn. However, he acknowledged that in small breakout sessions, the facilitators "look to us and make sure we give input. They ask, 'What do we think?' Our opinions matter."

YOUTH MINISTRY, AND MORE

Although well-suited to help with children and teen ministry, young adults voiced their hope to have the opportunity to contribute to the full range of ministries in a parish.

Selmy de Reza, a member of St. Rose of Lima Parish in Glen Rose, has volunteered in her parish youth group and young adult Hispanic group for several years, but she is ready for more.

The 31-year-old said, "We are here [at the national V Encuentro] to learn and

YOUNG CHURCH

Laura Espinosa of St. Francis Cabrini Parish in Granbury;

Jonathan Cano of St. Thomas the Apostle in Fort Worth; and

Selmy De Reza of St. Rose of Lima in Glen Rose were among the young adult delegates representing the Diocese of Fort Worth at Encuentro.

"I feel like I have a lot to offer, and I have a lot to learn being one of the youngest [at Encuentro]."

Jonathan Cano

"I love to serve the Lord and I want to do more. This was a great experience that opened my eyes to see [and understand] more of myself."

Laura Espinosa

"We are here [at the national V Encuentro] to learn and serve our Church in the rest of the ministries so we can grow. Our voice was heard, and we have a lot of hope."

Selmy de Reza



(L-R) Panelists Father Agustino Torres, CFR, Sister Norma Pimentel, MJ, and Nick Lopez share their thoughts on accompaniment during a plenary session Sept. 21. (NTC/Jayme Shedenhelm)



serve our Church in the rest of the ministries so we can grow. Our voice was heard, and we have a lot of hope.”

At the young adult dinner, the bishop at her table encouraged his dinner companions to become parish leaders in many areas, de Reza stated. “The bishop said, ‘If the parish tells you ‘no,’ pray about it and let God give you a new direction.’”

Young adults often hear “no” when asking for a larger role in the Church, said Juan Pablo Padilla, a panelist at V Encuentro. In his position as Coordinator of Pastoral Juvenil Hispana and Youth and Young Adult Ministry for the Archdiocese of Chicago, he has witnessed priests and ministry leaders closing the door to new leadership. Sometimes even literally, he said, citing instances of being denied use of meeting space.

But contrary to the stereotype, “Millennials do care. Millennials are fully engaged. Millennials have a lot of gifts and talents that go unnoticed. They are very capable of holding their own,” asserted Padilla. He and his fellow

panelists urged parishes to include at least one young adult on each advisory board.

“We’re definitely ready to have those roles. We’re dying for it. We want people to hear, to listen to us, and to overcome whatever stigmas people have placed on millennials. We have a lot to offer,” said Nick Lopez, a parishioner of St. Michael in Bedford and the director of campus ministry at the University of Dallas.

However, Lopez cautions that leadership goes beyond a title or an occupation.

“Certainly there is a finite amount of positions you can give a young adult in a parish,” he said. “But we can empower them to be

leaders on their campuses, in their homes, at their jobs, in their families, in their friend groups.

“As a body of Catholics, we forget sometimes that it’s not just up to our ministers, pastors, religious, or Church leadership. We have all been given the same Baptism . . . and we need to do a lot of things ourselves,” Lopez continued.

Lopez was one of three young adult Catholics chosen to represent the U.S. at a gathering in Rome last March to prepare for October’s Synod of Bishops where prelates are meeting to discuss “Young People, Faith, and Vocational Discernment.”

Many of the presenting bishops addressed the young adults, including Archbishop José Gomez of Los Angeles, who said, “Brothers and sisters, you are being called to lead — not through the desire for power. You are called to lead by your holiness.”

JUST A WHISPER

At V Encuentro, young adults spoke at 10 inter-regional sessions and 28 ministerial breakouts on topics from campus ministry to vocations. But one segment of Hispanic young adults was underrepresented: Dreamers and undocumented immigrants.

Fear of deportation can keep immigrants from attending church, and uncertainty about the future may keep Dreamers from becoming involved. However, several speakers throughout the conference encouraged the Church to seek out their voices.

Bishop Daniel Flores of Brownsville quoted Pope Francis’ claim that a lack of spiritual attention is the worst discrimination suffered by the poor. And who is poor?

“Immigrants who live in the shadow of society, who need human attention, who need God and the Gospel, and the sacraments,” the Brownsville bishop said.

At 19-years-old, Cano, the college student from St. Thomas the Apostle, appreciated the intentional inclusion of young adults throughout V Encuentro.

The youngest delegate from the Diocese of Fort Worth said the process has helped him develop a “good mindset and a good heart” — necessary tools for this “young kid trying to make a difference.”

After all, Cano asserted, “We are the future. Whatever we make [the Church] become — that’s our future.” 🇺🇸

PHOTO GALLERY



Exclusive photos from throughout the national V Encuentro are only a click away at NorthTexasCatholic.org/photo-gallery

In an interview, the Planned Parenthood director turned pro-life advocate and mother of seven, Abby Johnson, shares her

PRO-LIFE Perspective



Abby Johnson, the Planned Parenthood director turned pro-life activist, captivated the audience at Respect Life night on Sept. 28 at Holy Family Parish in Fort Worth. She will conclude Respect Life month with a talk at Good Shepherd Parish in Colleyville on Oct. 28.

Her dramatic story begins at Planned Parenthood in College Station as a volunteer, eager to help and defend women in crisis. In eight years, she worked her way up to clinic director, earning regional “Employee of the Year” in 2008.

However, after she assisted with an ultrasound-guided abortion of a 13-week-old, her eyes were opened to the

many
lies
she
says
keep
the
abortion
industry
running.

In a matter
of days, she quit
her position and has since
devoted her energies to pro-life
ministry.

In 2013, she founded And Then There Were None, a nonprofit that has helped more than 430 abortion workers leave their jobs.

In her presentations and her book *UnPlanned*, the Austin resident shares her unique view from both sides of the abortion divide with insight and compassion. A movie telling her story will be released in March. Here are a few highlights from her conversation with the *North Texas Catholic*:

A YEAR-ROUND CAUSE

Pro-life activism gets special recognition in October, but abortions happen all 12 months.

“I encourage people to pick a day of the week and commit to go, every single week, all 52 weeks of the year. It’s about the people that are being hurt by abortion in some way, We have to be out there.

“It’s not the calling for everybody, but I encourage people to get involved one way or another, whether its volunteering at a pregnancy center, going out in front of the clinic, getting involved in legislative affairs, or doing all three.”

PERSEVERANCE AND MOTIVATION

Even when Johnson worked at Planned Parenthood, she admired the tenacity of those who prayed outside the Bryan clinic. What has driven Johnson during the nine years she has worked to end abortion?

“I remember when I worked at Planned Parenthood we had volunteer escorts and they would drop out all the time. I remember saying one time, ‘There’s one thing I can say about the pro-life movement, these people who stand out in front of our clinic, they have been there for years. Some of them have been here the entire eight years I’ve been at the clinic. They have perseverance.’

“I didn’t understand it then, but I understand it now because there is an urgency. People are literally dying every single day, and that in itself has to keep you going. But if that’s the only thing that keeps you fired up, you’ll eventually burn out. It can’t just be about the death, feeling the urgency from the death. It has to be feeling the urgency because of lives transformed as well.

“Seeing these families who come together that

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Come observe October Respect Life Month with

Abby Johnson

SUNDAY, OCT. 28, 2018

6:30pm Respect Life Rosary

7:00pm Presentation by Abby Johnson

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Learn more about Abby, a former
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D. Free /Nominal Rate Distribution		
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E. Total Free Distribution	1,529	1,465
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16. Paid Electronic Copies	0	0

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are united to support these women, churches who come together to support these single moms in their communities — all of that is really beautiful and transforming our society. That really keeps me motivated every day.”

RAISING PRO-LIFE CHILDREN

The mother of seven encourages parents to talk with their children in an age-appropriate way about abortion, to pray with them for an end to abortion, and to include them in pro-life activities such as a rally for life or a prayer vigil at an

abortion clinic.

“They understand more than we think they do. . . . You are not doing them any favors by keeping silent on this issue. Because the reality is that we live in very different times, and kids are hearing about abortion earlier and earlier.

“We have to give our kids the freedom to think about these things and to make judgments and discernments. Life is very black and white for a child and that’s one of the beautiful things about children. Things are just right or wrong. There’s no gray area. So we have to teach our children compassion for women who have had abortions.”

ON MILLENNIALS

Johnson is encouraged by the passion of young pro-life activists. Because science and technology have advanced, this generation rejects the pro-choice argument that abortion is just removing tissue.

“Every kid that’s walking around today, the first picture they have of themselves is an ultrasound. That’s very powerful. . . . Most of these kids have seen their brothers and sisters in the womb before birth, so it’s very real to them.”

Johnson, an Austin resident, returns to our diocese on Oct. 28. More information about her presentation at Good Shepherd can be found at gcc.net/abbyjohnson. ↗

'THEY CUT US TO RIBBONS'

Amidst fierce battle, Mary kept her promises

By Francis Kennedy

This story is true. I know it's true because it happened to me. I ask no one to believe it; however, I must relate it so that those who have faith in the Good Lord will be strengthened in their faith.

I served in the Korean War from 1950 to 1952 as an artillery forward observer with the United States Army's Third Infantry Division. My reconnaissance sergeant, Corporal Dennis Sugrue, my radio operator, James Scully, and I became very close friends. We used to share with each other many personal stories about ourselves and our families.

One day after mail call, Dennis showed me a novena to the Blessed Virgin Mary sent to him by his sister Denise, a nun. The promises made to anyone who completed the novena were difficult to believe, to say the least. One promise was that if you made the novena, you would not have a violent death. Another was that no metal would pierce the skin. As in all infantrymen's wars, being shot at on a daily basis can be the norm. So the

novena was just what we needed.

I asked Dennis to please give the novena to me after he completed it, as I wanted to make it as soon as possible. Several weeks passed, and I had to nag Dennis about it. Each time he told me that he hadn't remembered to start the novena. Finally, he gave it to me and said, "You say it," and planned that he and Jim would pray it after I finished.

For the next nine days, I said the novena. Believe me, it was on the top of my priority list. When I finished, I believed that nothing could seriously harm me. Dennis and Jim never found the time to complete the novena. On June 3, 1951, Dennis, age 19, one of the finest men that God ever put on this earth, was killed from mortar and small arms fire.

Our good friend Jim, age 18, lost part of his leg from shell fragments and was returned to the States. Jim died several years ago, and I believe he probably never fully recovered from his war wounds.

I put 10 more months on the front lines after I lost my friends. The first replacement was killed after only three

EDITOR'S NOTE:

In honor of our veterans and with October being the Month of the Rosary of the Blessed Virgin Mary, we bring you this story courtesy of our friends at *Marian Helper Magazine*. To learn more about the Divine Mercy Chaplet and devotion, visit TheDivineMercy.org

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Corsairs provide close air support to U.S. soldiers advancing against enemy troops during the Korean War.



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days with me. The second replacement was with me a week and ended up missing in action. Later, he was listed as a prisoner of war. Needless to say, I was more than a little concerned about my well-being.

Then came the fierce battle at the hilltop known as “Little Gibraltar.”

At about 11 a.m., the whole front opened with artillery fire. I was in Korea at this time for about 18 months. In all that time, I never saw an artillery barrage anything like the amount that poured on us that day. It was relentless. There were only seconds between incoming rounds. As a trained, experienced forward observer, I was able to count at least 100 field pieces (howitzers, mortars, rockets, and artillery pieces) firing at us. They cut us to ribbons. I was completely frustrated. My radio had gone out, and after the first few incoming rounds, the telephone land lines were destroyed.

My primary responsibility was to direct our artillery on the enemy, but without communication, I was helpless.

Fortunately, seven other GIs and I were in a well-built bunker of heavy logs, large stones, and sand bags. It was hit at least eight or nine times without killing any of us! As I looked out from the bunker, all I could see were bodies and body parts.

Perhaps only the faithful will accept the following narrative. Amidst the barrage of incoming artillery, I heard myself say, “Oh, God, please, let me get home to see my son Pat, and I’ll never ask you for another thing the rest of my life.” (Patrick, my third son, was born after I left for Korea). As I said this, I distinctly felt a hand on my left shoulder. I started to turn to see who it was when I heard a voice within me say, “Oh, you of little faith. Didn’t My mother promise that no harm would come to you?”

I was stunned, but the terror, frustration, and despair I was

PROMISES MADE... AND KEPT

The promises referred to in Mr. Kennedy’s novena are shared by the ancient novena to St. Joseph, which oral tradition says offers the faithful protection from sudden death, drowning, “nor shall poison take effect on them — neither shall they fall into the hands of the enemy, or be burned in any fire or overpowered in battle.”

experiencing immediately vanished. I turned to my men and said, “Let’s go. We’re going to walk out of here.” They looked at me as if I were crazy, but they obeyed. If you can imagine walking the length of about 10 football fields in the rain and not even having one drop land on you, you can imagine what happened to us. For us, it was raining artillery. All eight of us walked off that hill, through the enemy’s artillery (and our own artillery, for by that time we had all been given up for dead, and our Air Force fighter planes were strafing the area), and still none of us were wounded.

After I arrived at battalion headquarters, I realized that the left side of my face was like raw hamburger, injured from the initial barrage. Captain Konimitsu Ito, one of the best combat soldiers I ever knew, got me to the aid tent where a doctor treated my face. I was given the needle along with the whiskey that “Konnie” Ito had given me earlier. It was the last thing I remembered for several days.

When I awoke, Captain Donald McConnell was in the tent with me. Mac and I were good friends going back at least five years. He mentioned that as far as he knew, of the 235 men to go up on the hill, I was one of 23 to survive. He reminded me that I had had a very difficult time at the aid station, as my frustration about the radio and phone lines being out made me feel guilty and helpless.

When I went to see the doctor, we had a fine talk.

“What puzzled me in my examination of your wounds,” the doctor told me, “was that, when I probed, I could find no metal at all. I even used a magnet, but found only wood,

mud, and stone.” I remembered the promises of the novena.

I’ve related this event only to my family and some of my closest friends, but after more than 65 years, I feel that it should be told. I went to one of my parish priests and told him how emotionally difficult it still is to share this with anyone. He suggested that I write it so that many people might see and benefit from the power of prayer.

I’m not sure that if I were to hear this story, I would believe it without reservation. However, it happened to me. I lived it, and I’ve got some of the wood, mud, and stone in my face to prove it.

Reflecting on some of my time in and return from combat, I realize that the novena to Our Lady was not the only thing that saw me through Korea. It was the many prayers and complete devotion of my mother and father to the Blessed Virgin Mary and the abundance of prayers and love of my wife, Jackie.

I owe my life to God, the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, my loving family, and Sr. Denise Sugrue. 🇺🇸

Francis Kennedy, then and now.
(Courtesy Marian Helper Magazine)

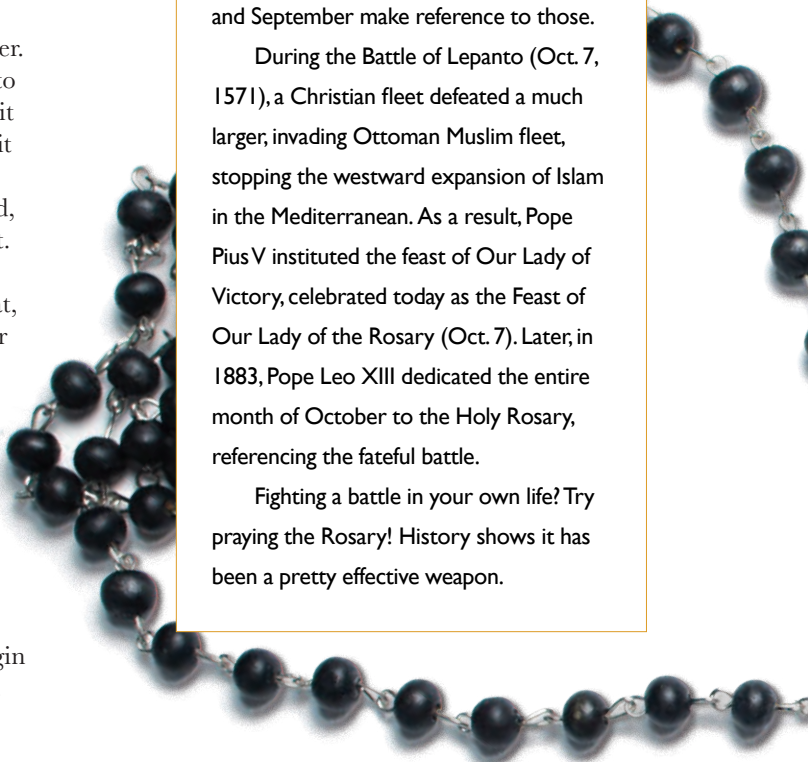


MONTH OF THE ROSARY

Ever wonder how October came to be dedicated to the Holy Rosary? The prayer — and more specifically, Our Lady of the Rosary — was credited with victory in a number of historic conflicts threatening Christendom. Many feasts during October and September make reference to those.

During the Battle of Lepanto (Oct. 7, 1571), a Christian fleet defeated a much larger, invading Ottoman Muslim fleet, stopping the westward expansion of Islam in the Mediterranean. As a result, Pope Pius V instituted the feast of Our Lady of Victory, celebrated today as the Feast of Our Lady of the Rosary (Oct. 7). Later, in 1883, Pope Leo XIII dedicated the entire month of October to the Holy Rosary, referencing the fateful battle.

Fighting a battle in your own life? Try praying the Rosary! History shows it has been a pretty effective weapon.





NTC/Ben Torres

Airing his Faith

Meet Dave Palmer, the voice behind Catholic radio in North Texas

By Joan Kurkowski-Gillen

Dave Palmer spends most of his days at Guadalupe Radio interviewing both local and nationally known personalities about issues facing the Catholic world. The mission of the Guadalupe Radio Network, “Radio For Your Soul,” is to share the Good News and draw people into the Church.

That is sometimes challenging, the St. Mary the Virgin parishioner admitted. The resignation of a U.S. cardinal accused of sexual abuse, and a Pennsylvania grand jury report detailing alleged abuse by more than 300 priests against 1,000 children over 70 years, has reopened old wounds and sparked new conversations in the Church.

Palmer interviewed Fort Worth Bishop Michael Olson about

the former cardinal’s alleged crimes, the violation of trust, and the diocese’s zero-tolerance policy regarding the abuse of children and vulnerable adults.

“We try to be honest but also show the Church in the best light. The Church is still the bride of Christ despite its flaws,” Palmer reasoned. “At the same time you can’t stick your head in the sand. It’s challenging to find that balance.”

The Catholic journalist measures success by the fruits of his labor and the network’s expansion. He frequently receives emails from people who want to share their conversion stories. One of the most recent came from a North Texas Protestant pastor who credits Guadalupe radio for bringing him into Catholicism.

“I see those testimonies quite often and that’s what keeps you going,” said the Dallas native and Jesuit Preparatory graduate. “Despite all the focus placed on the negatives, the Church is still

touching and attracting people. There's still a beauty there."

GRN doesn't gauge ratings numbers but Palmer is confident the number of listeners is growing steadily. Started by the La Promesa Foundation—a non-profit organization founded by lay Catholics—the network's first radio station was purchased for the Midland/Odessa area in 2000.

Over the next few years, stations in smaller markets were added but in 2006, organizers took a dramatic leap of faith and brought GRN to Dallas-Fort Worth, the 5th largest radio market in the U.S. Two stations, English language KATH 910 AM and Spanish KJON 850 AM, broadcast to more than 5 million people daily.

GRN is the only Catholic radio organization offering both English and Spanish stations in the same markets and can be accessed anywhere in the world through the network's free online app.

"More and more people are becoming aware of Catholic radio and we know that because we're getting a lot more requests for announcements and news," Palmer said. "That has spiked. People see one of our bumper stickers and tune in."

The tower for the 1,000-watt station is located in Little Elm so areas as far north as Muenster get a stronger signal than western or southern parts of the Fort Worth diocese.

"It's one of the challenges but that's where the app comes in," he added. "If you were in Africa, you could hear Guadalupe Radio crystal clear. That's the solution."

Today's ever-changing media landscape presents new opportunities and Palmer's career seems to reflect that paradigm. After graduating with a degree in journalism from Southern Methodist University in 1989, he earned a second degree in meteorology and worked as a TV weatherman for the National Weather Network. A satellite delivered his short form weathercasts to small TV networks in 30 to 40 markets every day.

During this time, the cradle Catholic, inspired by St. John Paul II's papacy, became more interested in his faith. But reading "Humane Vitae" — a 1968 encyclical written by St. Pope Paul VI



RADIO FOR YOUR SOUL



ENGLISH - 910 AM
SPANISH - 850 AM

Guadalupe Radio Network offers local and national programming. To hear Dave Palmer, tune into KATH 910 AM:

- GRN Live Friday mornings at 8
- The Good News show on Mondays at noon
- Interviews Saturday at 3 p.m.

Dave Palmer, general manager of Guadalupe Radio North Texas, at the studio in Irving. (NTC/Ben Torres)

about God's plan for married love and the transmission of life — really energized his spiritual journey.

"The scales dropped from my eyes and it had a huge impact on me," Palmer said. "I realized how countercultural it was. It made sense to me and, 50 years later, what Pope Paul predicted, we're living out."

Palmer enrolled in a pastoral religious studies program at the University of Dallas and taught theology at Bishop Dunne High School for several years.

"But I loved broadcasting," he continued. "I wasn't a weatherman anymore and wanted to do something faith-based."

He found his niche in the St. Francis Xavier Society — a Dallas organization dedicated to bringing Catholic radio to DFW.

After joining as a volunteer, the organization hired him full-time as the executive director of Radio Xavier. Within a few months, airtime was purchased on KSKY 660 AM and Palmer was co-hosting a two-hour Sunday morning program, Radio Xavier Live, with Suzette Chaires, a former TV news anchor.

When GRN expressed interest in the DFW market, the Board of Radio Xavier voted to let the much larger group take over in 2006. Palmer was named general manager and then executive director.

Twelve years later, the husband and father of three children is probably the only person in the bustling Metroplex (40,000 new residents arrive each year) who doesn't mind traffic jams. People listen to their favorite station in the car more than anywhere else, "so traffic is good for radio," he said logically.

"A car is like a private sanctuary. It's just you and the radio," Palmer observed. "Unlike a computer, there's no history mode. It [radio] is a very personal medium."

Privacy may be the reason why telephones lines light up when Catholic Answers welcomes only non-Catholics callers to its GRN program.

"People aren't ready to go to a parish or sign up for RCIA but they have questions," he said. "They are curious and that's the purpose Catholic radio serves. We're not preaching to the choir. We're moving hearts." 🇺🇸



LIVING IN HOPE

The Feast of St. Jude
October 28, 2018

Start by using the steps below to reflect on the Scripture verse. Then read Callie's meditation, reflecting on it slowly.

LECTIO



First you deliberately read the passage, noting phrases that move your heart.

MEDITATIO



Secondly, ponder these words and ask God in prayer, "What do you desire that I hear in this?"

ORATIO



Third, speak back to the Lord as your heart is moved.

CONTEMPLATIO



Finally, be still, trusting in His presence. Simply rest in the Word of God.

THE SCRIPTURE

FIRST READING FOR OCTOBER 28, 2018
FEAST OF ST. JUDE

Thus says the LORD:
Shout with joy for Jacob, exult at the head of the nations;
proclaim your praise and say: The LORD has delivered his people, the remnant of Israel.
Behold, I will bring them back from the land of the north;
I will gather them from the ends of the world, with the blind and the lame in their midst, the mothers and those with child;
They shall return as

an immense throng.
They departed in tears, but I will console them and guide them; I will lead them to brooks of water, on a level road, so that none shall stumble. For I am a father to Israel, Ephraim is my first-born.

— *Jeremiah 31:7-9*

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THE REFLECTION

One cannot help but see a parallel between Jeremiah's prophetic utterance and the story of the prodigal son, where a father eagerly, hopefully, and prayerfully awaits the return of his son who once left his family and his birthright. In that New Testament parable, the father knew full well the son was suffering — spiritually and bodily — as a result of that choice.

The sacrament of Reconciliation teaches us that "sunlight" is healing. Not hiding from wrongdoing but owning up to it and recoiling from ever returning to that state reconciles us to God. As a people we need repentance and need for God as "father of Israel" to gather us and bring us back. To take us from our grief and contrition and guide us to "return as an immense throng."

St. Jude is known by many as a saint we call upon when things seem hopeless or impossible. He was a popular intercessor from early in the Church's history through the Middle Ages, but this devotion waned to near obscurity afterward. That was until, in America, we faced the Great Depression followed by the Second World War. During this time, devotion to St. Jude, the Patron of Hope, inspired many across the nation to pray for his intercession at the

throne of God. Together they prayed that we may persevere and be preserved through times considered impossible.

The people who sought out his help in prayer knew that the national and global situation was more than daunting, but they also understood that in Christ nothing is without hope. St. Jude's mission among the saints, both in Scripture and even to this day, is to encourage us to "contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints" (*Jude 1:3*).

We currently live in a time when the Church is filled with the unknown. And yet we live in hope, for we know that even this evil time will not prevail on the Church. We know we serve the Lord of Truth and we are a people who will individually answer to the divine judge at His second coming.

Now is a very appropriate time to call upon St. Jude — Patron of Hope and patron of perseverance — in the face of corruption within the Church.

We are Catholic because of Jesus Christ and we are called to love, not to enable the Church, His Bride. Please join me in prayer to St. Jude that sin may be rooted out in us and all of His Body, that when Jesus comes again, He might present us "faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy" (*Jude 1:24*). 🇺🇸

Callie Nowlin, MTS, is a convert turned Director of Religious Education, catechist, and blogger with a passion for Scripture and helping others on their journey toward Christ.



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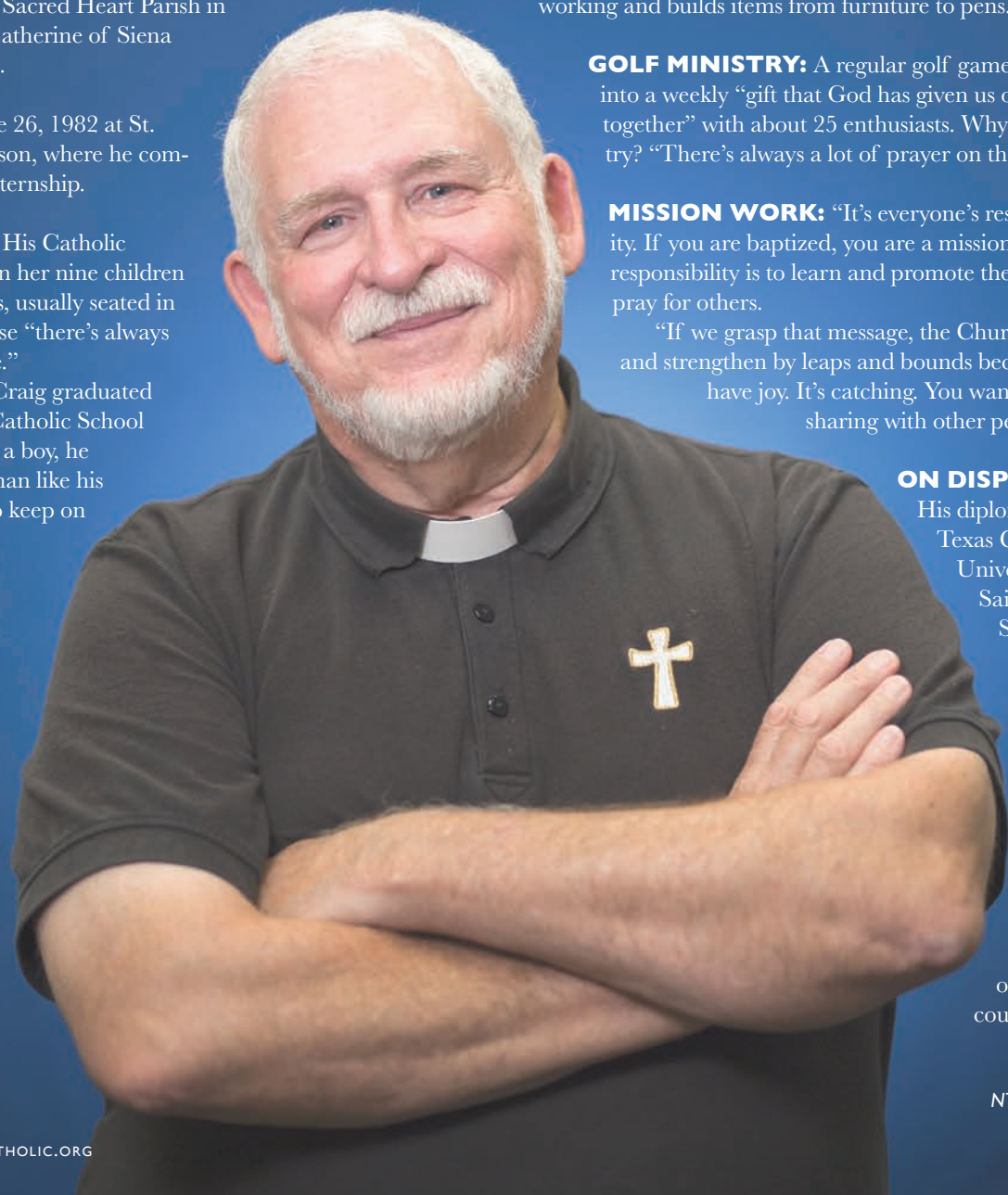
HE IS: Father Tom Craig, Director of Propagation of the Faith and Chairman of the Diocesan Mission Council since 2016. His pastoral service includes St. Vincent de Paul Parish in Arlington, Sacred Heart Parish in Muenster, and St. Catherine of Siena Parish in Carrollton.

ORDAINED: June 26, 1982 at St. Ann Parish in Burleson, where he completed his deacon internship.

GROWING UP: His Catholic mother made certain her nine children always went to Mass, usually seated in the front pew because “there’s always an opening up there.”

The oldest, Fr. Craig graduated from Notre Dame Catholic School in Wichita Falls. As a boy, he wanted to be a fireman like his father or a priest “to keep on Sister’s good side.”

FIRST CALL: As a student at Midwestern State University in Wichita Falls, he lost his draft deferment and faced the likely prospect of fighting in Vietnam. So he preemptively joined the Coast Guard



Reserves “because their primary mission was to save lives.” His sixth year in the Reserves coincided with his first year in seminary.

GOD’S CALL: Fr. Craig attended a college retreat and asked, “What do you want me to do now, Lord?” In prayer, this is what the Lord was calling me to. I have never turned back from that, just asked, ‘OK, what’s my next step?’”


BEST PART OF BEING A PRIEST: “Community, and being able to celebrate with them in all the different ways. Of course Sunday Eucharist and the sacraments.”

IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF JESUS: Fr. Craig enjoys wood-working and builds items from furniture to pens.

GOLF MINISTRY: A regular golf game has grown into a weekly “gift that God has given us of time together” with about 25 enthusiasts. Why is it a ministry? “There’s always a lot of prayer on the course.”

MISSION WORK: “It’s everyone’s responsibility. If you are baptized, you are a missionary. Our responsibility is to learn and promote the faith, and to pray for others.

“If we grasp that message, the Church will grow and strengthen by leaps and bounds because we’ll have joy. It’s catching. You want to keep sharing with other people.”

ON DISPLAY: His diplomas from Texas Christian University and Saint Meinrad Seminary are “in a box somewhere,” but his baptismal certificate is framed and hangs in his office. “That’s the only one that counts.” 

NTC/Juan Guajardo



Social services including food, housing, and counseling are provided from the mobile community center in the Las Vegas Trail neighborhood. (NTC/Ben Torres)

Bus Stop: Where Las Vegas Trail Meets CCFW Services

Shannon Rosedale, a Catholic Charities Fort Worth (CCFW) staff member, began spending time in the Las Vegas Trail (LVT) neighborhood in Fort Worth in March of this year. That’s when CCFW staff members started regularly rolling into the area in their brightly-painted, 45-foot bus, parking outside schools and apartment complexes and offering opportunities for residents to come aboard to meet with helping professionals in a welcoming space.

The mobile community center serves as a visible sign of hope in the impoverished area, Rosedale said. CCFW staff members are able to assess a client’s needs on the spot, and to offer immediate help with emergency food, housing, and utilities, as well as mental health and crisis counseling services. The bus is outfitted with desks, Wi-Fi-connected computers, and comfortable seating.

One recent encounter is typical of the work CCFW and partnering agency staff members are able to do from the mobile unit, Rosedale said.

“We invited one young man onto the bus after he told us that he had just become homeless, because a temporary job had just ended,” she explained.

Within the span of 35 minutes, CCFW arranged for the man to join a housing program, receive a bus pass, and had provided him with the necessary professional clothing for the area employer interview that Workforce Solutions had simultaneously arranged for him for the next day.

CCFW’s comprehensive and collaborative approach to eradicating poverty is, according to Dr. Brian Byrd, Fort Worth City Councilman for District 3, a game changer, as he works with community leaders and LVT residents to address the neighborhood’s overwhelming

needs. The mile-long strip on the city’s west side, known for its poverty and crime, stretches from I-30 south to Camp Bowie Boulevard, comprising a small slice of the 76116 zip code.

A dynamic community-wide partnership — known as #LVTRISE — of city officials, law enforcement, educators, social service agencies, and private companies has been created, with the goal of transforming the area into a safe and stable neighborhood. According to Byrd, Heather Reynolds, CCFW’s president and CEO, is an “indispensable” leader within the partnership.

“Heather is truly brilliant and innovative in her approach to ending poverty,” Byrd said.

“She consistently brings energy, productive ideas, and the means of implementing those ideas to the LVTRISE initiative. It is exciting to see it all moving forward, thanks in large part to Catholic Charities. Their work and their dedication has already helped and enriched so many people’s lives.”

To learn more, visit CatholicCharitiesFortWorth.org or UnitedWayTarrant.org/lvtrp or call 817-534-0814. 📍



Spiritual Reading and the Saints

As a student in elementary school, my teachers highlighted the importance of reading – often using this phrase, “reading is fundamental.” However, despite their repeated encouragement, I never quite understood how necessary reading was until I was of college age.

What this convenient phrase succinctly expresses is how an ability to read is the foundation by which a person is able to learn and to grow in understanding. For the Christian, reading is also important.

Spiritual reading is that reading whose purpose is to assist the believer to better know, love, and serve God, thereby becoming, by our cooperation with grace, more Christ-like. This means that we become more holy, especially in the life of prayer and the practice of Christian virtue.

The practice of spiritual reading, therefore, is an invaluable means by which the Christian can learn to better love and serve our Lord. So vital is this discipline that the Church’s program for forming men to the priesthood strongly encourages

its practice.

At the beginning of November, the Church celebrates the great solemnity of All Saints. The saints powerfully intercede for each of us by their prayer. They are examples of great holiness as they each strived to conform their lives to Christ during their time on earth. Their stories are indispensable sources of spiritual nourishment which help and inspire us to better know, love, and serve our Lord.

Learning to cultivate a love of spiritual reading is important for the life of the Christian — even more so for young men discerning a vocation to the priesthood. The lives of the saints and their witness to Christ can help a young man come to a better knowledge of who our Lord is. Their love of God can serve as a source of encouragement for a young man to love Him more. The saints’ readiness to do the will of the Lord can inspire a young man to follow God’s will for his life.

If a person, especially a young man discerning the priesthood, is unfamiliar



Fr. Matthew Tatyrek

Here are some of the books I have read and recommend:

- *The World’s First Love* by Archbishop Fulton Sheen
- *The Book of Pastoral Rule* by Pope St. Gregory the Great
- *The Interior Castle* by St. Teresa of Avila
- *The Rule of St. Benedict* by St. Benedict, OSB
- *The Living Flame of Love* by St. John of the Cross

with the practice of spiritual reading, a good place to begin would be with the saints. ✚

Ordained to the priesthood in 2016, Father Matthew Tatyrek serves as pastor of St. Peter Parish, Lindsay and as Vocations Liaison with the Vocations Office.

DAILY PRAYER LIST




Fort Worth Seminarians 2018-2019

Thank you for your support. Please pray for the following seminarians on the corresponding days of each month:

1  PEDRO MARTINEZ	2  THOMAS JONES	3  SAMUEL MAUL	4  BRETT METZLER	5  JASON ALLAN	6  LINH NGUYEN	7  JOSEPH MORENO
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8  DAVID LAPOINTE	9  COLLIN BECKER	10  AUSTIN HOODENPYLE	11  BRANDON LECLAIR	12  ERIC FLORES	13  BEN GROTHOUSE	14  HARRISON LEWIS
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15  DIEGO SOTO-DENIZ	16  JOSEPH HOFFSCHWELLE	17  JACOB DANIELL	18  AUSTIN EVANS	19  KYLE LANGE	20  BLAKE WINN	21  BLAKE THOMPSON
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22  REED PROCTOR	23  ISAAC MCCRACKEN	24  PAUL TRINH	25  BRANDON WOOLUMS	26  MIGUEL DE LA TORRE
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27  MICHAEL MARINCEL	28  TAYLOR STEWART
---	--

29
FOR AN
INCREASE IN
VOCATIONS

30
FOR
SEMINARIANS
TO HAVE THE
GRACE OF
PERSEVERANCE

31
FOR
SEMINARIANS TO
GROW IN SELF-
AWARENESS AS
THEY DISCERN

Prayer for a Seminarian

God our Father, thank you for calling [name] to prepare for the 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.



The Vision of Transparency

There is a lot of talk about transparency these days. What is real transparency?

Historically, there has been a societal reluctance to discuss child sexual abuse openly. Youth-serving organizations, schools, and churches have been criticized — and appropriately so — in the past for not acknowledging that child sexual abuse has taken place within those institutions, and thereby not forewarning, educating, and empowering people as to how they can protect children from abuse.

Transparency does not mean broadcasting everything to the world; but it is also not intentionally keeping secrets to protect self-interest at the risk of endangering others. Public revelations of incidents of abuse assist in the prevention of abuse by providing constant reminders that child abuse occurs in all sorts of places. You can't be self-righteous and say, "It can't happen here." Likewise, such revelations can help victims of abuse and their families to reach out for assistance, which is critical to them receiving healing and support.

TRANSPARENCY STARTS WITH:

1. Clear and well-publicized standards of ministerial behavior and appropriate boundaries for clergy, employees, and volunteers.

2. Reporting allegations of sexual abuse to civil authorities and cooperating

in their investigation.

3. Advising and encouraging victims and anyone having knowledge of or suspecting abuse to report to the appropriate civil and ecclesiastical authorities.



Richard Mathews

The Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People requires dioceses "to be open and transparent in communicating with the public about sexual abuse of minors by clergy within the confines of respect for the privacy and reputation of the individuals involved. This is especially so with regard to informing parish and other church communities directly affected by sexual abuse of a minor."

When an allegation of sexual abuse is received, it is immediately reported to the civil authorities. Separate from law enforcement's investigation, the diocese then takes steps to determine whether the incident could have taken place as described. For example, if an allegation is received that a particular priest abused a minor in a particular parish in a particular year — but an initial investigation reveals that the priest was not at that parish or was not in the country at that time or was not even ordained yet at that time — then this particular allegation could not be accurate or credible. If the incident could have taken place as described, they are initially deemed to be credible, and then the diocese conducts a further investigation.

If the investigation reveals proof or evidence that supports the allegation, then the allegation is deemed credible. The determination is not an admission that the alleged abuse occurred or an admission of liability. The standard for establishing that allegations are deemed to be credible is a far lesser standard than required by a civil court, where a preponderance of the evidence is required, or by a criminal court, which requires proof beyond a reasonable doubt.

Any priest who has served in the Diocese of Fort Worth since it was established, who has credible allegations made against him regarding sexual misconduct with minors, is removed from ministry (if still in active ministry). A list of those priests is posted on the Diocese of Fort Worth's website if the misconduct occurred in the Diocese of Fort Worth (regardless of whether the priest is in active ministry).

Finally, transparency plays an important role when allegations of sexual abuse are ultimately resolved through a settlement. Transparency requires that dioceses do not enter into settlements which bind the parties to confidentiality unless the victim/survivor specifically requests confidentiality. 📌

Richard Mathews is Director of Safe Environment for the Diocese of Fort Worth. A former prosecuting attorney, he also served as the General Counsel for the Boy Scouts of America and for Trail Life USA.



Growing with Intent

MARRIAGE AND FAITH: Bryan said, “In the beginning of our marriage we were as infants, learning our faith together and then learning to parent. Each new phase of our lives brings new wisdom and understanding which is often brought to fruition by some type of trial.”

Olga added, “It has not always been perfect or easy, but there is a sense of peace to know that we have both been open and willing to serve God and place Him at the center of our personal faith life and our family life.”

CATHOLIC SCHOOLS: After graduating from St. Maria Goretti Catholic School, the three Watson children attend Nolan Catholic High School. Bryan explained, “Many of the same issues that arise in public schools still exist in our Catholic school system; however, for the most part, our kids get to work those issues out in an environment where faith and reason abound. The kids have the chance to live out the faith throughout the school week and even partake in the sacraments.”

ON SUNDAYS: “Bryan and I from the onset made an intentional decision to never miss Sunday Mass regardless of how many games we had on our family calendar on any given weekend. Our children have been raised to use MassTimes.org whether we’re on vacation or away from our parish home due to an athletic event. This family practice has instilled in them a sense that God should always be placed above all the things that we might love to do on Sundays.” 🇹🇽



THEY ARE: Bryan and Olga Watson, with their children Jacob, Samantha, and Victoria. They are parishioners at St. Maria Goretti Parish in Arlington and have been married 23 years. (NTC/Ben Torres)



NTC/Ben Torres



Reflejando Realidades, Definiendo Sueños

Los hispanos se reúnen en el V Encuentro Nacional en Grapevine para expresar sus inquietudes y aumentar su participación

Por Joan Kurkowski-Gillen

Provenían de parroquias de todo el país y llevaban nombres como García, Cruz, Gómez y Esparza. Los tres mil delegados, que llegaron a Grapevine para el V Encuentro Nacional del Ministerio Hispano/Latino reflejaron el rostro cambiante de la Iglesia Católica de los Estados Unidos.

La reunión cumbre bilingüe de cuatro días (del 20 al 23 de septiembre), cuya anfitrión fue la Diócesis de Fort Worth, fue organizada por la Conferencia de Obispos Católicos de los Estados Unidos para discernir las maneras en que la Iglesia puede responder mejor al segmento de más rápido crecimiento del catolicismo estadounidense.

Los delegados de 159 diócesis discutieron las maneras en que la Iglesia puede evangelizar, desarrollar el liderazgo y acoger los dones de una cultura hispana/latina próspera, y abordaron las conversaciones con un sentido de propósito, optimismo y espíritu misionero.

La inspiración para los días de diálogo se extrajo de los discursos pronunciados por

varios obispos de alto perfil y el Arzobispo Christophe Pierre, el Nuncio Apostólico en los Estados Unidos, que citó la exhortación del Papa Francisco “*Evangelii Gaudium*” (“La Alegría del Evangelio”) en la apertura del acontecimiento histórico. “Lo que lleva a un cambio de corazón en los cristianos es precisamente el espíritu misionero”, dijo en un enorme salón lleno de ministros laicos, feligreses, mujeres religiosas y clérigos.

La Iglesia en los Estados Unidos es actualmente un 40 por ciento hispana, señaló el prelado, y agregó: “Vivimos en una época de cambio. Nosotros, los que anunciamos el Evangelio, no podemos evangelizar descuidando los nuevos elementos de la labor que afectan a las nuevas generaciones que tienen sus propias expectativas y aspiraciones, incluidos aquéllos que vienen a este país de otros lugares”.

MANTENER A LAS FAMILIAS COMPROMETIDAS

Junto a otros miembros de la delegación de

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Una mujer reza durante la Misa en el V Encuentro Nacional en el Gaylord Texan Resort and Convention Center. (NTC/Jayme Shedenhelm)



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la Diócesis de Fort Worth, Joel Vega se sentó en la audiencia y escuchaba. Él es catequista de la Parroquia de San Mateo de Arlington y sabe por experiencia lo que sucede cuando las familias hispanas se distancian de su fe. Mientras que la mayoría de los jóvenes católicos se preparan para hacer la Primera Comunión a los siete u ocho años, la clase que Vega enseña está llena de alumnos de noveno grado que nunca han recibido la Santa Eucaristía. ¿Por qué la demora?

“Empieza en la familia”, explicó. “No toman su religión en serio, por lo que simplemente dejan pasar el tiempo. Una vez que se dan cuenta de que el niño está creciendo y no se le ha enseñado nada, lo llevan a la iglesia”.

La mayoría de los adolescentes de su grupo no saben rezar el Padre Nuestro o el Ave María.

“Tenemos que enseñarles desde cero”, continuó diciendo el voluntario. “Uno se convierte en el primer maestro de la fe, en lugar de los padres”.

Es una historia que compartió durante el proceso del Encuentro desde su comienzo a nivel parroquial. Él cree que enfocarse en la familia es un elemento vital para llegar a todos los católicos hispanos, tanto a los recién llegados como a los que ya han vivido por mucho tiempo en los Estados Unidos.

“Hay una mezcla de razones y

estamos tratando de averiguar por qué retrasan la educación religiosa”, dijo.

Luego de hacer la Primera Comunión, los adolescentes desaparecen de nuevo hasta que necesitan la Confirmación para casarse por la Iglesia.

“El Encuentro está tratando de discernir y descubrir cómo mantener a esos jóvenes comprometidos y ayudarlos a crecer”, agregó Vega.

DAR LA BIENVENIDA AL EXTRAÑO

“Acompañar a los demás con los dones de tiempo y presencia puede proporcionar una respuesta”, sugirió el Arzobispo Daniel E. Flores durante su mensaje el 21 de septiembre a los delegados del Encuentro.

“He aprendido de muchos de los fieles de mi Diócesis de Brownsville lo que significa acompañar. Desde el 2014, miles de inmigrantes de América Central han cruzado de México a Texas”, dijo.

El Arzobispo ha visto cómo los feligreses saludaban y acogían a los recién llegados con una sonrisa y un abrazo de bienvenida.

“De ellos aprendí que el amor cristiano acompaña, ayuda, escucha, respeta, alienta y, sobre todo, persevera”, agregó el Arzobispo.

Sus palabras resonaron profundamente en Alfonso Martínez, quien llegó solo a los Estados Unidos de México cuando tenía 17 años. Luego de establecerse cerca de la Parroquia de

Todos los Santos de Fort Worth, trabajó en la construcción.

“Cuando vine a Texas, me sentí muy bien acogido. El Encuentro me está ayudando a devolver algo de esa alegría”, explicó el delegado de la Parroquia de St. Elizabeth Ann Seton en Keller, quien recuerda haber tomado clases de formación en Todos los Santos, donde los feligreses fueron siempre amables y serviciales. “Eso es algo que quiero también mostrar a otras personas. El escuchar a los compañeros delegados, que tienen sueños similares y están trabajando para hacerlos realidad, ha sido alentador”.

“Creo que algo bueno saldrá de este proceso”, aseguró Martínez. “No sé cuánto tiempo tomará, pero estoy dispuesto a poner mi esfuerzo para ayudar a que esto se convierta en una realidad”.

PERMANECER COMPROMETIDOS

El sueño de Benjamin Mier respecto al Encuentro es tangible. El ex pandillero del centro-sur de Los Ángeles espera construir un centro de rehabilitación para ayudar a otros a escapar del atractivo de las drogas y la violencia.

Fue traído a los Estados Unidos desde México por su madre cuando tenía siete años. El delegado de la Diócesis de San Bernardino creció en un hogar disfuncional y en un barrio difícil.

“No pasó ni un día en el que yo no tuviera que pelear en el camino a mi

El Obispo Daniel Flores habla en el V Encuentro Nacional en el Gaylord Texan Resort and Convention Center. (NTC/Jayme Shedenhelm)



Católicos de la región 12, constituida por Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Oregon y Washington, procesan con la Cruz de la región para la sesión de apertura durante el V Encuentro Nacional. (NTC/Ben Torres)

casa desde la escuela”, recordó Mier. “Se trataba de la supervivencia del más apto. Mi entorno me convirtió en miembro de una pandilla. Sucumbí a las drogas, de todo tipo”.

¿Qué cambió su vida? Él le da crédito a Dios, a su esposa y a un retiro centrado en la vida de la calle por “sacarme de la cuneta”.

“He estado limpio sin drogas casi seis años”, dijo el residente de California. “Dios me ha estado mostrando el camino. Me llevó al Encuentro y he estado compartiendo mis experiencias en las discusiones de grupo”.

Mier espera que sus aportaciones al Encuentro sirvan para iluminar y guiar a los jóvenes desfavorecidos que se dirigen a las pandillas en lugar de Dios. Él aconseja como voluntario a los jóvenes que piden ayuda a cualquier hora del día o de la noche.

“Nosotros, como Iglesia, tenemos que salir al encuentro de los que nos necesitan e ir a donde ellos están. No podemos esperar a que ellos nos busquen y nos encuentren”, explicó. “Soy como una esponja que absorbe y aprende mucho de esta experiencia”.

SUPERAR LAS BARRERAS

Uno de los principales objetivos del

V Encuentro es capacitar a los jóvenes para que se conviertan en líderes de la Iglesia y se formen en las enseñanzas del Evangelio. Varios expertos han declarado que el 60 por ciento de los católicos menores de 18 años son hispanos.

Como profesora de español de una escuela secundaria en Everman, Lucía Cruz ve cómo los problemas políticos afectan las vidas de los jóvenes. Muchas familias de su escuela están preocupadas por el estatus de inmigración o se sienten aisladas por las barreras del idioma y no se involucran en la comunidad. Esto incluye mantenerse al margen de los servicios religiosos.

“Entrevistamos a diferentes personas a nivel local y regional y escuchamos lo mismo en todas partes”, explicó la feligrés de Santa Ana. “La gente tiene miedo de salir, conducir, ir a Misa o participar debido a su estatus migratorio”. Los niños temen que sus padres sean deportados.

“Espero que los obispos nos escuchen y entiendan que ésta es la situación de muchos católicos indocumentados que viven en el país”, enfatizó la profesora. “Necesitamos construir una Iglesia donde todos sean bienvenidos, independientemente del color de la piel o de la lengua materna”.

El V Encuentro Nacional le permitió hablar sobre las necesidades de los católicos hispanos con personas procedentes de Nueva York, Chicago y otras ciudades del país.

“Compartimos las mismas preocupaciones”, señaló Cruz. “No es sólo una situación aislada. No es sólo en Texas”.

EL CAMBIO SUCEDERÁ

Rigoberto Gómez estuvo de acuerdo. Cuando el recién graduado de St. Joseph College regresó a su casa en Brooklyn, Nueva York, le llevó un mensaje a otros jóvenes hispanos: “*No importa lo que sea que estés sintiendo, no estás solo*”.

“¿Estás enojado por la forma en que va la Iglesia? Bueno, hay personas que se sienten exactamente igual que tú”, dijo el miembro de 20 años de *Jornada* (Viaje), un movimiento de jóvenes hispanos de la ciudad de Nueva York.

El Encuentro le brindó la oportunidad de opinar sobre las maneras en que la Iglesia puede servir mejor a los jóvenes en general y, específicamente, a los jóvenes hispanos. Los jóvenes son el futuro de la Iglesia, pero algunos sienten que la institución se mueve muy lentamente en comparación con la sociedad actual, que se mueve a un paso vertiginoso.

“El cambio va a suceder”, prometió Gómez. “Hay cambios que los jóvenes quieren... Puede tomar tiempo, pero va a suceder”. ✚

SÓLO EN LA WEB



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VENCEREMOS

Missionary Disciples
Witnesses of God's Love



Discipulos Misioneros
Testigos del Amor de Dios



Fortalecen las Raíces para dar Buen Fruto

Por Violeta Rocha

“**V** Encuentro me da una visión muy amplia de cómo crear comunidad, unirnos, conversar, ver qué queremos y cómo lo vamos a lograr juntos”, asegura Olivia Olvera Rubio, 28, quien como delegada de su Parroquia de Santa María, en Graham, era una de los 3,600 participantes del V Encuentro Nacional, del 20 al 23 de septiembre en Grapevine, en el que la Diócesis de Fort Worth sirvió de anfitriona, la diócesis de Fort Worth.

Olvera Rubio recientemente tomó la coordinación de Jóvenes y Pastoral Familiar en su parroquia. El V Encuentro es “una plataforma excelente para partir de ahí”, dijo entusiasmada de que las voces de su parroquia hicieran eco a nivel nacional. “Mi diócesis tiene muchas áreas rurales, y mi parroquia está en una de ellas, es muy importante ver los esfuerzos que se están haciendo para que se escuche la voz del pueblo, se está pidiendo formación a todos los niveles, y me estoy llevando grandes herramientas”, aseguró.

La presencia de más de cuatro cardenales y cien Obispos, veinte de ellos como oradores, trajo más esperanza a Olvera. “Escuchar a los Obispos que conocen de nuestros talentos y están dispuestos a hacer cambios, es un gran aliento, nos reaviva, mantiene nuestra

esperanza, y nos da lo que necesitamos para no rendirnos, ni darnos por vencidos”, aseveró la joven líder.

En la Parroquia de San Miguel, en Bedford, los delegados Barbara Mateo y su esposo José Mateo, están listos para compartir lo aprendido. Ellos señalan que aunque la comunidad hispana es pequeña, siempre se ha buscado la integración.

“Viviendo el V Encuentro es una afirmación de que se necesita ser una Iglesia sin divisiones, de no sólo crear puentes, sino cruzarlos, aprender los unos de los otros, para una verdadera integración parroquial”, dijo José Mateo.

Originarios de la República Dominicana, el matrimonio Mateo señala que “a través de nuestra cultura podemos enseñar a otros, por qué nos gustan los colores, por qué nos gustan las celebraciones”.

El alcance y potencial del V Encuentro, asegura Barbara Mateo, “sobrepasa las expectativas, porque nos hemos involucrado desde el nivel parroquial, hasta el nacional, y vemos cómo todos somos uno”.

Barbara Mateo agregó que el año pasado, aceptó el “reto” de dar catecismo en inglés en su parroquia, y dice que eso “ya es integración”.

Elizabeth García, delegada de la Parroquia de Todos Los Santos, una de las iglesias con más presencia hispana en

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la Diócesis de Fort Worth, dijo que el V Encuentro ha enseñado a “a tener una dignidad en cuanto al servicio...es un impulso para saber que la Iglesia somos todos, laicos y clero”, expresó agregando que “nuestra parroquia ha sido muy bien escuchada y representada porque es muy activa y ya existen clases de formación para los líderes. Es un empuje muy hermoso que está viviendo nuestra parroquia”.

Por su parte el Padre Manuel Holguín, párroco de la Parroquia de San Pedro el Apóstol, en White Settlement, dijo que llegar al V Encuentro Nacional, significa “esperanza, gozo de reunirnos en el Señor, inspirados por Él y siguiendo a la Iglesia en el caminar”, y agregó que los resultados de este proceso se verán “estando unidos en la Eucaristía, fortalecidos en nuestra fe, sabiendo que Cristo es nuestra dirección”.

Como diócesis, se conocieron “retos y oportunidades” que “se deben ver cómo crecimiento en la fe”, dijo Juan Rendón, director del Diaconado Permanente, en la Diócesis de Fort Worth.

El afirmó que los delegados “se han ido con un espíritu de entusiasmo y compromiso como discípulos misioneros, que se puede palpar...”

“El siguiente paso es la acción”, aseveró, agregando que con el liderazgo del Obispo Olson, “empezar ya, aprovechar este momento de gracia para que en todos los departamentos de la

diócesis implementemos las bases que ya están puestas”.

Los 300 voluntarios que asistieron a los participantes durante los cuatro días de congregación, son ya frutos de este V Encuentro, señaló Rendón.

“El número de voluntarios es reflejo de liderazgo, personas comprometidas, entregadas a la misión de la Iglesia a proclamar a Cristo...gracias a los voluntarios de hospitalidad los participantes se llevan una grata impresión de nuestra Diócesis de Fort Worth, hospitalaria, y que abraza el Evangelio”.

VOCES UNIDAS Y COMPROMISO

Las sesiones de consultoría se iniciaron a nivel regional, y posteriormente inter-regional, compartiendo después con la congregación en sesiones plenarios. El común denominador fue el desarrollo de liderazgo y capacitación pastoral, destacando la importancia de que más jóvenes tengan liderazgo a nivel diocesano, y no sólo en grupos juveniles. Enfatizaron también la formación en la fe, catequesis, migración, pastoral familiar, evangelización y misión, pastoral juvenil, vocaciones, liturgia y espiritualidad.

En conferencia de prensa, Mons. Gustavo García-Siller, Arzobispo de San Antonio, explicó que estos procesos, no resultarán en “un mismo plan para toda la nación...cada diócesis está en un proceso diferente pero los Obispos estamos asumiendo este caminar junto al pueblo de

Dios, por el bien de toda la Iglesia”.

Para José Mateo, las palabras del Obispo Mario Dorsonville-Rodríguez, auxiliar de la Arquidiócesis de Washington, resonaron en su corazón y dejaron mayor motivación “de ayudar al prójimo, antes de sólo hablar de Cristo”.

“Nuestros obispos nos están diciendo que ‘hay que sanar las heridas, hay que sanar primero, para que entonces las personas puedan entender quién es Cristo’...y que no sólo se le puede hablar de Cristo a alguien que tiene hambre, hay que acercarse con un plato de comida”, señaló Mateo.

El Obispo de Brownsville, Mons. Daniel E. Flores, dijo que “el pueblo que conoce a Jesús siente la necesidad de salir a las periferias donde viven los pobres... al acompañar con humildad y sinceridad para descubrir que es el Señor quien nos acompaña...”

“La fe de los pobres nos va a salvar,” señaló, agregando que “el pobre” también se encuentra en una jovencita que no quiere abortar, pero se siente sola, ó en un joven refugiado en drogas, en alguien que piensa en el suicidio.

Por su parte, el Obispo Oscar Cantú, Obispo co-adjunto de la Diócesis de San José, advirtió que no seamos plantas que se secan y ruedan por perder su raíz, “ahora es el momento de escarbar hondo para que nuestra raíz tenga agua, agua viva...todos queremos probar la dulzura de la fruta, pero tenemos que fortalecer la raíz”. ✝



El Obispo Michael Olson habla durante la sesión inaugural en el V Encuentro Nacional en Gaylord Texan Resort and Convention Center. (NTC/Jayme Shedenhelm)



José y Barbara Mateo llevan las ofrendas al Obispo durante la Misa en el V Encuentro Nacional. (NTC/Jayme Shedenhelm)

La Parroquia de San Bartolomé celebró una Misa especial ofrecida por la reparación del abuso y escándalo en la Iglesia. (NTC/Juan Guajardo)



PROTEGIENDO *el* REBAÑO *de* DIOS

Una mirada a los continuos esfuerzos de la Diócesis de Fort Worth para proteger a los más jóvenes y más vulnerables en el Reino de Dios

Por Juan Guajardo y Susan Moses

Hace una docena de años, el entonces Vicario General, el Padre Michael Olson, y el Canciller, el Padre E. James Hart, revisaron minuciosamente cientos de archivos de personal de todos los sacerdotes que habían servido en la Diócesis de Fort Worth, ya fuera que estuvieran activos, jubilados o fallecidos.

Como parte del vigoroso esfuerzo de la Diócesis para eliminar y llevar ante la justicia a cualquier clérigo abusivo, revisaron páginas de documentos en busca de señales de alerta que pudieran indicar una posible conducta sexual inapropiada. Esa experiencia inculcó una actitud intransigente en el futuro prelado para sostener una cero tolerancia al abuso sexual.

Construir un ambiente en la Diócesis de Fort Worth, donde se responsabiliza a los abusadores y donde las repercusiones del abuso sexual de menores se manejan de forma transparente, ha sido una tarea extenuante y prolongada. En el Norte de Texas, como en gran parte del mundo, hubo un tiempo en que los clérigos que abusaron de niños en las décadas de los 1970 y 1980 quedaron a veces impunes y fueron liberados, reasignados y se les dio la oportunidad de repetir su crimen en silencio.

Si bien la Diócesis de Fort Worth había promulgado políticas sobre conducta sexual inapropiada a mediados de la década del

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1990, las mismas no eran tan amplias como las que vendrían unos años más tarde. En el 2002, el Boston Globe publicó la noticia de que la Arquidiócesis de Boston había resuelto calladamente cientos de denuncias de abuso sexual de niños contra al menos 70 sacerdotes durante diez años.

En respuesta al escándalo de Boston, la Conferencia de Obispos Católicos de los EE.UU. (USCCB, por siglas en inglés) se reunió en Dallas en junio del 2002 y aprobó la Carta de Protección de Niños y Jóvenes. La Carta de Dallas, como se le llamó, comprende 17 artículos diseñados para lograr cuatro objetivos: promover la sanación y la reconciliación con las víctimas/sobrevivientes de abuso; garantizar una respuesta eficaz a las denuncias de abuso sexual de menores (que incluye el mandato de la notificación a las autoridades públicas); garantizar la responsabilidad y proteger a los fieles en el futuro.

Cuando la medida fue aprobada con una votación secreta de 239-13, el Obispo Wilton Gregory, que era entonces el Presidente de la USCCB, declaró que “desde este día en adelante, nadie que haya abusado sexualmente de un niño trabajará en la Iglesia Católica de los Estados Unidos”.

La Diócesis de Fort Worth adoptó la

Carta de Dallas e implementó plenamente todas las políticas, incluso antes de que el Vaticano las reconociera oficialmente más tarde ese año. Sin embargo, para promulgar la Carta de Dallas, la Diócesis tuvo que lidiar con algunos episodios dolorosos de su propio pasado.

UN CAPÍTULO OSCURO

La Diócesis de Fort Worth no estuvo inmune al doloroso y oscuro capítulo de los escándalos de abuso por parte de sacerdotes, que sacudieron a las diócesis de todo el mundo a principios de la década del 2000, incluidos Boston, Dallas, Palm Beach, Florida, Irlanda y Polonia.

De los más de 450 sacerdotes que habían servido en la Diócesis de Fort Worth desde su creación en el 1969, ocho fueron acusados de “conducta sexual inapropiada con menores”, declaró el entonces Obispo Joseph Delaney en un informe diocesano en el 2004. Treinta víctimas reportaron abusos por parte de esos ocho sacerdotes, y la mayoría de los abusos, tuvieron lugar en las décadas de los años 1970 y 1980.

En ese momento, tres de los sacerdotes acusados ya habían fallecido. Dos eran sacerdotes de órdenes religiosas, que habían sido removidos del ministerio. Tres eran sacerdotes diocesanos, que también habían sido removidos del ministerio.

La Diócesis de Fort Worth dio a conocer públicamente en junio del 2005 los nombres de los ocho sacerdotes acusados de conducta sexual inapropiada con menores, siendo una de las pocas diócesis del país que identificaron a sus acusados. Una publicación posterior de 700 páginas de documentos diocesanos confidenciales detallaba las historias de los sacerdotes acusados y presentaba a un liderazgo eclesial antes de la Carta de Dallas, que se le hacía difícil responder a los incidentes de abuso sexual, imponiendo a veces castigos leves a los acusados, como, por ejemplo, la reasignación, consejería obligatoria o supervisión por otro sacerdote.

Las repercusiones para las víctimas variaron ampliamente. Algunos nunca lograron que se hiciera justicia por completo, porque había expirado el plazo de prescripción. Algunos recibieron algún tipo de arreglo. Algunos aceptaron consejería gratuita (que se ofrece en todos los casos). Algunos vieron que sus abusadores fueron expulsados. Algunos vieron a su abusador acusado y encarcelado. En el caso de un sacerdote abusivo, las víctimas resolvieron los reclamos y hasta presenciaron el nombre del ex sacerdote borrado de las instalaciones de la parroquia.

El Obispo Kevin Vann y el entonces Vicario General, el Padre Michael Olson, en una entrevista con el periódico Star-Telegram en el 2006 reprendieron duramente a su predecesor y calificaron el manejo de las acusaciones de abuso sexual como una “gran falla moral”.

El entonces Padre Olson también enfatizó el esfuerzo de la Diócesis para proteger mejor a los niños y a los adultos vulnerables, y brindar sanación a las víctimas. “Nos corresponde a nosotros, en cierto sentido, sanar y hacer todo lo que podamos hacer para sanar, específicamente por las fechorías cometidas y diría también por las malas decisiones hechas al manejarlas”.

Al recordar cómo se manejaron los casos en los primeros años de la Diócesis, el Director de Comunicaciones, Pat Svacina, estuvo de acuerdo con la opinión del Obispo Vann y el Obispo Olson de que “hubo una falla moral”.

“No obstante, la diferencia es que desde el 2002, la Diócesis de Fort Worth se ha acercado diligentemente a cualquier

¿Pasan por la capacitación de Ambiente Seguro los sacerdotes y los obispos?

Sí. Este verano, el Obispo Olson y los seminaristas completaron una sesión de concientización de Protecting God's Children® (Protegiendo a los Niños de Dios). Todos los sacerdotes toman el curso y hacen las renovaciones posteriores. Incluso los sacerdotes que están al día con su capacitación de Ambiente Seguro en otra diócesis deben completar un programa aquí antes de que puedan comenzar el ministerio en la Diócesis de Fort Worth.



Facilitadores y coordinadores de Ambiente Seguro de diversas parroquias y escuelas católicas participan en una sesión de capacitación en la Parroquia de Santa Catalina de Siena de Carrollton. (NTC/Juan Guajardo)

persona que haya sufrido abuso, ha buscado a cualquier clérigo que pudiera estar involucrado en abusos o exhibiendo señales de advertencia de acicalamiento y ha estado publicando de manera proactiva y transparente los nombres de esas personas; y han hecho múltiples llamados a toda posible víctima durante ese tiempo”.

MOMENTO DE CAMBIO

Mientras los titulares alrededor de todo el mundo revelaban más acusaciones y condenas de sacerdotes, ya la Diócesis de Fort Worth estaba haciendo cambios. Antes de la Carta de Dallas, la Diócesis estaba forjando nuevas medidas para tratar los casos de abuso y desarrollando protocolos para enseñar a las personas a detectar y prevenir el abuso.

Sin embargo, la Carta fue una acción muy necesaria para la Iglesia de los Estados Unidos y, en particular, mostró el impacto inmediato que tuvo en la Diócesis de Fort Worth.

El Padre Rudolf Rentería, que fue ordenado por la Diócesis de Fort Worth en el 1979, fue el último de los ocho sacerdotes acusados que no se había presentado ante la justicia en el momento del edicto de la Carta.

En el 1981 había sido acusado de “tocar sexualmente indebidamente” a un niño de 14 años en la Parroquia de San Mateo de Arlington, donde había servido durante tres años. El Obispo Delaney se había enfrentado al Padre Rentería poco después del incidente y lo reasignó a una parroquia rural, sin tomar más medidas disciplinarias. Durante las siguientes dos décadas, Rentería fue trasladado a varias parroquias más antes de ser asignado a la Capellanía de un hospital en Dallas, donde ejerció su ministerio durante varios años sin incidentes.

La Diócesis hizo resonar su clamor por justicia equipada con las nuevas políticas claras y estrictas de la Carta de Dallas. No habían pasado ni dos semanas desde la redacción de la Carta antes de que la Diócesis de Fort Worth abordara el incidente de Rentería del 1981. Los archivos mostraron que el Padre Rentería fue removido del ministerio el 29 de junio del 2002 y se le prohibió presentarse como “sacerdote en cualquier función”.

La acción tomada contra Rentería consolidó a Fort Worth como una de las primeras diócesis en acoger voluntariamente la Carta y comenzar a implementar activamente las políticas de la Carta, incluso

mientras todavía se esperaba la aprobación del Vaticano.

En el 2006, el Obispo Vann, el tercer obispo de la Diócesis, solicitó al Papa Benedicto XVI que laicizara a Rentería. El Papa decretó su destitución del estado clerical en el 2010.

UN TIEMPO DE SANACIÓN

Luego de la muerte del Obispo Delaney en el 2005, el Obispo Vann y el Vicario General Olson propusieron una política de cero tolerancia sobre el abuso sexual y se implementaron varias medidas nuevas.

A fines del 2007, la Diócesis publicó una “Lista de sacerdotes con acusaciones creíbles de conducta sexual inapropiada con menores” en su página web. El informe enumera a los sacerdotes que habían prestado servicios en la Diócesis de Fort Worth y contra los cuales se habían presentado denuncias “con una acusación creíble”. La lista también detalla qué acciones se habían tomado contra ellos. Fort Worth es la única Diócesis en Texas que comparte públicamente esta información en ese momento.

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Ese mismo año, el Obispo Vann declaró en el North Texas Catholic que la Diócesis había implementado un programa obligatorio más amplio de prevención de abuso sexual para niños, jóvenes, empleados, clérigos y voluntarios.

A lo largo de los años se hicieron más cambios para hacer que la Diócesis fuera un lugar más seguro. En el 2008 se estableció el puesto de Coordinador de Ambiente Seguro en las parroquias y las escuelas para ayudar con la implementación del programa. En el 2009, la Diócesis comenzó a verificar automáticamente los antecedentes de los sacerdotes, religiosos, empleados y voluntarios. La Diócesis comenzó en el 2010 a publicar en su sitio web una “Lista de sacerdotes que habían sido laicizados”. Esta lista comprende los sacerdotes que, debido a acusaciones creíbles de abuso sexual de niños, han sido reducidos canónicamente a un estado laical y ya no pueden ejercer como sacerdotes.

TRANSPARENTE Y RESPONSABLE

Después de su instalación como el cuarto obispo de la Diócesis de Fort Worth, el Obispo Michael Olson se enfocó en crear una Iglesia más segura, asegurando a los laicos que estaba “completamente comprometido” con la defensa e implementación de la Carta y la prevención de futuras tragedias.

Una de sus primeras acciones fue dirigir a la Diócesis a participar en el Mes de Prevención del Maltrato de Niños (abril) para crear conciencia sobre las maneras de prevenir el abuso sexual de niños.

El enfoque siguió siendo la responsabilidad y transparencia respecto a todos los casos de conducta sexual inapropiada que involucra al personal de la Iglesia o al clero, algo que el Obispo Olson ha insistido que es necesario para ayudar a las víctimas a sanar y para “la seguridad de todos los fieles de la Iglesia”.

Parte de este acercamiento es hacer un llamado público a las víctimas después de cualquier incidente reportado de abuso sexual de menores que tenga lugar en una parroquia o propiedad diocesana. La Diócesis va más allá de los requisitos del Estatuto de la Conferencia Episcopal de los Estados Unidos al hacer un llamado a las víctimas, incluso en casos de mala conducta sexual que no involucran a menores.

La política va más allá del clero e incluye a todo el personal, los maestros y los voluntarios, como lo demostró un caso en el 2016 en la Parroquia de San Juan Apóstol en North Richland Hill. Cuando la Diócesis recibió noticias de un adulto voluntario que estaba abusando de un niño, los funcionarios alertaron rápidamente a la policía y los Servicios de Protección Infantil. Un representante diocesano visitó la parroquia la misma semana de los informes para alentar a cualquier otra víctima a que se comunicara con la Oficina de Asistencia a las Víctimas de la Diócesis. Gracias a la pronta acción de parte de las víctimas, la policía y la Iglesia, el voluntario acusado fue arrestado por cargos de abuso sexual en el 2017.

Según un informe del periódico *Star-Telegram* en ese momento, el obispo Olson dijo: “No es fácil hablar a una comunidad parroquial sobre los informes de abuso. Sin embargo, es importante que la gente sepa que la Diócesis está lista para llegar a aquéllos que hayan sido lastimados y necesitan ayuda, para que podamos ayudarlos de cualquier manera que podamos”.

INCREMENTO DE LA INTENSIDAD

El Programa de Ambiente Seguro para el 2017 había capacitado y procesado verificaciones de antecedentes penales de 27,498 voluntarios, 946 educadores, 942 empleados, 127 sacerdotes, 75 diáconos y 41 candidatos para la ordenación. En sus auditorías anuales de Ambiente Seguro, la Conferencia de Obispos Católicos de los Estados Unidos señaló el excelente cumplimiento de la Diócesis con respecto a las medidas de la Carta de Dallas.

Sin embargo, al Obispo Olson le preocupaba que “la familiaridad genere complacencia” con el programa y le encargó a la Oficina de Ambiente Seguro que mejorara el programa.

En julio de este año, luego de varios meses de planificación, se lanzó un nuevo programa de capacitación en persona y que requiere ser renovado cada dos años. Hasta el 1 de octubre, más de 4,132 personas habían sido capacitadas a través de 156 sesiones de concientización.



Kim Harbert, la coordinadora de Ambiente Seguro de la Parroquia de San Marcos de Denton, cree que la capacitación en persona es más efectiva que el programa anterior en línea. Harbert ha asistido a múltiples sesiones y agradeció que los participantes encuentren que el compromiso de tres horas “bien vale la pena, para todos nosotros ser propulsores de un tema tan importante. Es la responsabilidad de todos”.

Además de un programa de capacitación más sólido, las verificaciones de antecedentes penales también se han vuelto más intensas, incluida la verificación de las bases de datos nacionales de personas que han sido retiradas de organizaciones que prestan servicios a los jóvenes y de aquellas a las que se le han suspendido o revocado sus licencias profesionales.

Aunque la capacitación y las verificaciones de antecedentes penales son la principal responsabilidad de la Oficina de Ambiente Seguro, su personal también supervisa otras tres actividades que son fundamentales para su compromiso de proteger y sanar.

En primer lugar, la oficina junto con el coordinador de asistencia a las víctimas, ayudan a concertar el asesoramiento necesario y alientan a las víctimas a presentar un informe policial.

Además, la oficina ofrece que el Obispo se reúna con la víctima y brinda atención pastoral y servicios centrados en la sanación.

La Oficina de Ambiente Seguro también facilita y coordina una Junta de Revisión de Conducta Sexual Inapropiada para la Diócesis. Compuesto por hombres y mujeres laicos con experiencia en psicología, derecho, justicia penal y salud infantil, la junta revisa las alegaciones individuales para asesorar al Obispo acerca de todos los aspectos de esos incidentes y en su evaluación de las denuncias de abuso sexual de menores por parte del clero y su idoneidad para el ministerio. La Junta de Revisión de Conducta no realiza investigaciones.

La junta también aconseja al Obispo sobre la implementación de la Carta de la Diócesis y da su opinión sobre el programa de capacitación.

El Obispo Olson está complacido con las mejoras al Programa de Ambiente Seguro. “Tengo una gran confianza en hacia dónde nos dirigimos, que es el camino correcto y que la intensidad mejorada es lo que se necesita para asegurarnos de que este programa sea prioridad en nuestras mentes”, dijo.

Con los cambios que seguramente se harán a la Carta después de la reunión de los obispos de Estados Unidos en noviembre, la intensidad de la diócesis no disminuirá.

SEGUIR ADELANTE

El informe del Gran Jurado de Pensilvania causó conmoción en todo el país al descubrir más de 300 acusaciones de abuso que se remontan a 70 años. Como resultado, los funcionarios 12 estados han anunciado que se harán investigaciones. Las autoridades civiles exigen transparencia y responsabilidad en las acusaciones de abuso.

Desde la Carta de Dallas, la transparencia y la responsabilidad han dirigido el manejo de los casos de abusos sexuales a niños en la Diócesis de Fort Worth, en el pasado y en el presente. Una política sólida y una aplicación igualmente firme han ido de la mano para garantizar la protección de los menores.

Richard Mathews, Director de Ambiente Seguro de la Diócesis de Fort Worth, dijo que la transparencia de la Diócesis tiene dos aspectos: la claridad de sus políticas, programas y procedimientos; y los informes regulares, tanto del cumplimiento como del incumplimiento de ellos.

Mathews reconoció que, aunque la transparencia puede ser dolorosa, es necesaria y esencial para crear un ambiente seguro.

“Al ser transparentes, nos volvemos vulnerables a las críticas, se nos cuestiona, e incluso a veces tenemos que reconocer nuestras fallas y deficiencias”, dijo.

“Ser transparente puede ser un trabajo doloroso, embarazoso y humillante. Pero la transparencia también es beneficiosa porque a través de ella, no sólo obedecemos a Dios, sino que también buscamos la responsabilidad y llevamos las cargas de los demás. Estamos llamados a arrojar luz”. 🇺🇸

AMBIENTE SEGURO

Para Reportar Mala Conducta Sexual:

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

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

Para Reportar Abuso o si Sospecha Abuso:

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

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

Para Más Información: Para inscribirse o informarse sobre nuestros programas de prevención de abuso, visite fwdioc.org/safe-environment



La Visión de Transparencia

Se habla mucho sobre la transparencia en estos días. No obstante, ¿de qué se trata la verdadera transparencia? Históricamente, ha habido una renuencia social a hablar abiertamente sobre el abuso sexual de niños. Las organizaciones, escuelas e iglesias que sirven a los jóvenes han sido criticadas — tal como fuera apropiado — en el pasado por no reconocer que el abuso sexual de niños ha tenido lugar dentro de esas instituciones y, por lo tanto, han fallado en prevenir, educar y capacitar a las personas sobre cómo pueden proteger a los niños contra el abuso.

La transparencia no significa transmitir todo al mundo entero; pero tampoco quiere decir que intencionalmente se mantenga algo en secreto para proteger el propio interés a riesgo de poner en peligro a otros. Las revelaciones públicas de incidentes de abuso ayudan a prevenir el abuso al proporcionar recordatorios constantes de que el abuso de menores ocurre en todo tipo de lugares. No se puede asumir una actitud farisaica y decir: “No puede suceder aquí”. Del mismo modo, tales revelaciones pueden ayudar a las víctimas de abuso y a sus familias a buscar ayuda, lo cual es fundamental para que reciban sanación y apoyo.



Richard Mathews

LA TRANSPARENCIA COMIENZA CON:

1. Tener normas claras y bien publicadas de comportamiento ministerial y límites apropiados para el clero, los empleados y los voluntarios.
2. Denunciar cualquier acusación de abuso sexual a las autoridades civiles y cooperar con su investigación.
3. Aconsejar y alertar a las víctimas y a cualquier persona que tenga conocimiento o sospecha de abuso a que informe a las autoridades civiles y eclesásticas apropiadas.

La Carta para la Protección de Niños y Jóvenes requiere que las diócesis “sean abiertas y transparentes en la comunicación con el público sobre el abuso sexual de menores por parte del clero dentro de los límites del respeto por la privacidad y la reputación de las personas involucradas. Esto es especialmente así cuando se informa al respecto a la parroquia y otras comunidades de la Iglesia directamente afectadas por el abuso sexual de un menor”.

Cuando se recibe una acusación de abuso sexual, se informa inmediatamente a las autoridades civiles. Independientemente de la

investigación de la policía, la diócesis toma medidas para determinar si el incidente pudo haber tenido lugar como se describe. Por ejemplo, si se recibe una acusación de que un sacerdote abusó de un menor en una tal parroquia en un año en particular, pero una investigación inicial revela que el sacerdote no estaba en esa parroquia o no estaba en el país en ese momento o que ni siquiera estaba ordenado aún en ese momento — entonces esta acusación en particular no se consideraría como precisa o creíble. Si el incidente pudo haber tenido lugar tal como se describe, se consideraría inicialmente que es creíble, y luego la diócesis realiza una investigación adicional.

Si la investigación revela pruebas o evidencia que respaldan la acusación, entonces la acusación se considera creíble. La determinación no es una admisión de que el supuesto abuso ocurrió o una admisión de responsabilidad. El estándar para establecer que las alegaciones se consideran creíbles es un estándar mucho menos estricto que el requerido por un tribunal civil, donde se requiere una preponderancia de la evidencia, o por un tribunal penal, que requiere prueba más allá de una duda razonable.

Cualquier sacerdote que haya servido en la Diócesis de Fort Worth desde que fue establecida y que tenga acusaciones creíbles contra él relacionadas con una conducta sexual inapropiada con menores de edad es removido del ministerio (si todavía estuviera en el ministerio activo). Se publica una lista de esos sacerdotes en el sitio web de la Diócesis de Fort Worth, si la conducta inapropiada ocurrió en la Diócesis de Fort Worth (independientemente de que el sacerdote esté en el ministerio activo o no).

Finalmente, la transparencia juega un papel importante cuando las acusaciones de abuso sexual se resuelven finalmente a través de un acuerdo. La transparencia requiere que las diócesis no hagan acuerdos que obliguen a las partes a la confidencialidad, a menos que la víctima o sobreviviente solicite específicamente la confidencialidad. 📌

Richard Mathews es el Director de Ambiente Seguro de la Diócesis de Fort Worth. Trabajó en el pasado como fiscal y se desempeñó por varios años como abogado general de Boy Scouts of America y de Trail Life USA.



EL ENCUENTRO Y SU LLAMADA ES PARA TODOS

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

 @BpOlsonFW



Nuestra diócesis recibió recientemente a más de 3,000 católicos de todos los Estados Unidos en el V Encuentro Nacional de Ministerio Hispano/Latino celebrado en Grapevine del 20 al 23 de septiembre. El *North Texas Catholic* hablo con el Obispo Michael Olson para reflexionar acerca del proceso de cuatro años, cuyo objetivo es desarrollar recomendaciones pastorales para servir mejor a la creciente población hispana católica de los EE.UU. y utilizar mejor sus dones y talentos en nuestra Iglesia.

1 ¿Cómo se siente de haber sido ser el obispo anfitrión del V Encuentro?

Obispo Olson: Estoy muy orgulloso de nuestra gente en la Diócesis de Fort Worth, nuestros sacerdotes, nuestro personal, nuestros seminaristas y de todos los fieles que están aquí y están tomando parte activa en las varias dimensiones de la formación de la fe; pero aún más, de los que están sirviendo como voluntarios de hospitalidad y de cómo todos nos hemos unido. Estoy muy agradecido de eso.

2 A lo largo de este largo proceso del Encuentro, ha mencionado la palabra “encuentro” y la idea de encontrar a Cristo a través de la Iglesia, a través del discipulado. ¿Podría hablarnos de cuál es el papel que el V Encuentro juega en esto?

Obispo Olson: La palabra “encuentro” es muy significativa. El término “encuentro” tiene francamente un valor neutral. Es un término peligroso en sí mismo, pero es ahí con sus peligros que tenemos la oportunidad de conocer a Cristo. El primer y único encuentro que realmente importa es Cristo, y la decisión de Cristo de que Él debe ser encontrado también en las otras personas, y ésa es Su elección. “Donde dos o más están reunidos en Mi nombre, allí estoy en medio de ellos. ¿Cuándo te vimos hambriento? ¿Cuándo te vimos sediento?” Ése era Él en los pobres y en los necesitados. Él está en mi hermano y en mi hermana.

En todo esto, el enfoque es el encuentro con Cristo, y discernir ¿qué es lo que Él nos pide que hagamos y cuál es su

agenda para nosotros? Va a ser diferente para cada uno de nosotros, en cada iglesia local. Así que, como Obispo, estoy realmente agradecido de que, en cierto sentido, Dios en Su providencia, nos haya permitido ser el lugar en que el Encuentro pudiera tener lugar.

3 ¿Qué tipo de impacto cree que los frutos de este Encuentro tendrán en nuestra Iglesia local, en nuestra Diócesis?

Obispo Olson: Espero que comience con la comunidad hispana, pero que no termine ahí. Espero que traiga lo que debería traer para todos, pero para la comunidad hispana, la conversión. La conversión de corazón, que los invita y los envía como discípulos misioneros a la comunidad en general. Que haya verdadero cambio en toda la comunidad al enfocarse en Cristo y hacer lo que Él pidió. Que cambiemos nuestra manera de hacer las cosas. Creo también en nuestra comunidad hispana, que abandonemos el sectarismo dentro de nuestra comunidad; el sectarismo que puede fomentarse involuntariamente cuando se hace mal uso de los retiros y movimientos, donde se vuelven más sobre mí que de nuestra vida de fe.

Espero que conduzca a la renovación dentro de la comunidad hispana y un sentido más amplio de la Iglesia y de cómo catequizamos; la comprensión de que la evangelización no es simplemente una sensación de felicidad y alegría, sino que se trata de la sustancia del Evangelio, y del depósito de fe muy rico que implica una educación real y formación de la fe, y no sencillamente sentir exuberancia o entusiasmo. Ésa es mi esperanza. Una madurez que nos afecta a todos como Iglesia y a la Diócesis de Fort Worth. Que tomemos en serio la integridad del depósito de la fe, y que la vivamos por el bien, especialmente, de aquéllos que no conocen a Cristo, o incluso aquéllos que no lo conocen porque lo rechazan y no están interesados en el altruismo y entrega que vienen con el Evangelio.

Creo que ésa es la misión que está ante nosotros. Implica la salvación de las almas. Creo que Dios nos está impulsando en este Encuentro a renovar realmente nuestros deseos, de acuerdo a Sus designios para nosotros. ✚



DIOCESE OF
FORT WORTH
CATHOLIC SCHOOLS



The mission of Catholic education in the schools of the Diocese of Fort Worth is to open the doors so that our students can see further than the walls that otherwise would enclose them in darkness. What does seeing deep into eternity really look like? It involves being able to recognize, to appropriate, and to cherish the eternal and transcendental goods of Truth, Beauty, and Goodness. These three transcendental goods depend upon each other within the envelope of eternity.



Most Rev. Michael F. Olson
Bishop of Fort Worth