

BRINGING THE GOOD NEWS TO THE DIOCESE OF FORT WORTH



NORTH TEXAS CATHOLIC



The **Global**
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Saving a pain-filled world

Lost in the headlines of a pandemic year was the fact that Lithuania commemorated 2020 as the Year of Chiune Sugihara.

Sugihara was the quiet, unassuming man who worked for the Japanese consulate in Kaunas, Lithuania during World War II. He became an unsung hero after, in a course of six weeks, he issued Japanese transit visas to more than 2,000 Jews fleeing Soviet oppression and Hitler's invading army.

Fluent in Russian, Sugihara was sent only to establish the consulate in order to help the Japanese government gather intelligence on the military activities of the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany. Imagine his surprise when hundreds of Jewish refugees arrived at the consulate's doors in the summer of 1940! Consequently, he sought instruction from his foreign ministry in Tokyo. His superiors told him not to issue visas to anyone without proper papers — which would have ruled out almost all those desperate refugees.

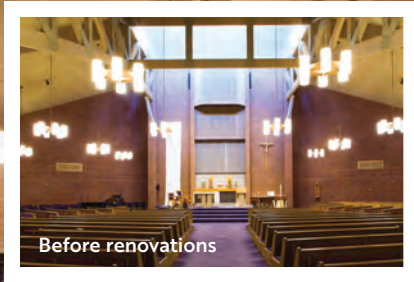
Sugihara decided to issue the visas anyway, working 20-hour days to write out more than 2,000 transit visas. According to the *Washington Post*, he was still writing visas on the train platform as he was evacuated after Soviet forces arrived in Kaunas.

Historians estimate that his heroic efforts saved about 6,000 lives in the immediate term and countless future generations from being wiped off the face of the earth. Sadly, his superiors didn't see it the same way, and when Sugihara returned to Japan, he was unceremoniously fired for his actions.

Despite the pain and collateral damage we see being caused today by people driven by greed, lust, and power, there are many more individuals in the mold of Sugihara. For proof, just take a look at our cover story in this issue (Pgs. 38-47) and be inspired by their example.

Their actions vividly tell us that while we can't stop a war or solve world hunger in one day, we have a much greater capacity to relieve suffering in our world than you or I might think. With a little grace, courage, and a willing heart, we can be the quiet heroes that are so needed in our world right now.

Juan Guajardo
EDITOR



Before renovations

Statues of Our Lady of Grace and St. Joseph flank the new, larger crucifix. (NTC/Juan Guajardo)

St. Michael renovation blessed



Crucifix, tabernacle, and statuary center attention on Christ

BEDFORD — Three years of liturgical planning, hard work, and sacred preparation came to fruition when Bishop Michael Olson blessed St. Michael Parish's newly completed altar, tabernacle, and statuary at evening Mass on Saturday, Sept. 25.

The liturgy celebrated the multiplicity of cultures present within the Bedford parish — *matachines* led a jubilant entrance procession which included Knights of Columbus, the Catholic Daughters of the Americas, and Guadalupanas.

Father Balaji Boyalla, SAC, the pastor of St. Michael who spearheaded the renovations, reports 42

different nationalities within his community. To help raise money for the project, parishioners sold traditional foods from their home or native countries.

The chancel (space around the altar) received many reverent and liturgically beneficial changes in the renovation, according to Fr. Boyalla, who wanted the altar and crucifix, previously located off center, to be placed directly in the middle of the sanctuary, leading to a clearer focus on the great sacrifice of the Lord and a more prayerful atmosphere within the church.

— Michelle McDaniel

Recharging marriages

COLLEYVILLE — As part of its recurring Marriage on Tap series, Good Shepherd Parish in Colleyville hosted Dana Nygaard, LPC, for a feature on date night conversations.

Based on her new book, *365 Dates to Renew Your Christian Marriage*, the speaker, counselor, and author led discussion and activities to encourage intentional conversation, which improves bonding, along with emotional and spiritual intimacy.



NTC/Kevin Bartram

A retreat to remember

LINDSAY — Dozens of Catholic students from the University of Texas at Arlington (UTA) came together for a day-long retreat at St. Peter Church in Lindsay on Sept. 18. The “Welcome Retreat,” organized by Jeff Hedglen, director of the University Catholic Community at UTA, touched on the topics of prayer and reconciliation, while offering the students opportunities for Eucharistic Adoration, Mass, and Confession.



NTC/Juan Guajardo

Red Mass emphasizes holiness, courage

 **Lawyers, judges, and public officials attend annual Mass**

FORT WORTH — Wearing crimson red vestments to symbolize the fire of the Holy Spirit, Bishop Michael Olson concelebrated the Red Mass with visiting Bishop Thomas John Paprocki of Springfield, Illinois, Father Jonathan Wallis, diocesan vicar general, Monsignor E. James Hart, chancellor and moderator of the curia, and a dozen diocesan priests.

More than 100 attorneys, law students, and members of the judiciary attended the evening liturgy.

The Red Mass gives the legal community an opportunity to pray for divine guidance and wisdom from the Holy Spirit so judicious and fair decisions are made for the common good.

During his homily and later at a reception following the Mass, guest speaker Bishop Paprocki discussed how holiness impacts

effective leadership using the lives of the saints as an example.

“God’s grace will give you the strength to charter a faithful course in your daily life just as it did the saints,” Bishop Paprocki assured those present.

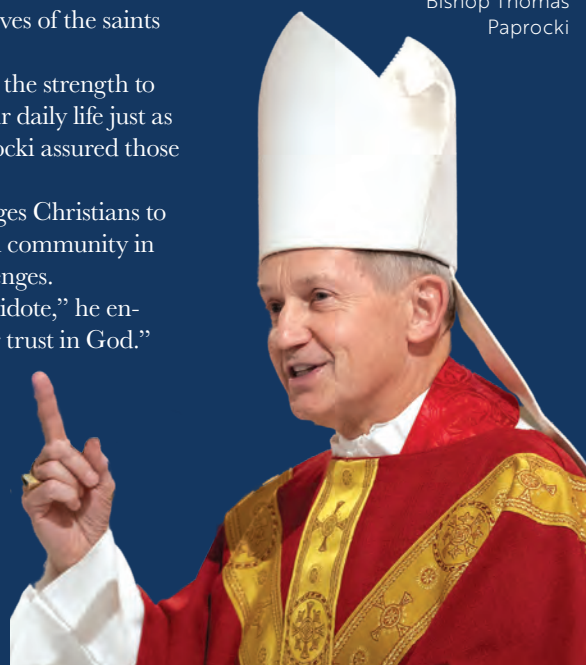
Living in a culture that urges Christians to abandon their beliefs, the legal community in particular faces growing challenges.

“Heroic courage is the antidote,” he encouraged. “It springs from our trust in God.”

The annual Red Mass was celebrated on Sept. 23 at St. Patrick Cathedral. Bishop Paprocki holds a law degree from DePaul University and is also a canon lawyer.

—Joan Kurkowski-Gillen

Bishop Thomas Paprocki



NTC/Rodger Mattison

White Coat Mass



Sacraments refuel medical profession

FORT WORTH — Now more than ever, the health care field continues to be on the minds of people at large because of the global COVID-19 pandemic. On Oct. 11, the Diocese of Fort Worth celebrated medical professionals during the annual White Coat Mass at St. Patrick Cathedral in Fort Worth.

The Mass is celebrated in conjunction with the Oct. 18 Feast of St. Luke, who is known as a Gospel writer and a physician.

This year's Mass was organized by students from the University of North Texas Health Science Center.

Bishop Michael Olson

celebrated the Mass attended by medical professionals, their families, and friends.

Ann Hollas, a second-year student at the Texas College of

Osteopathic Medicine, said the bishop's homily "stressed how it is so important to care for the physical health of people

and also the mind and soul — integrating that into our practice."

— Alice Murray



Ann Hollas, second from left, and other UNT Health Science students at the White Coat Mass. (NTC/Juan Guajardo)



Cardinal Patrick D'Rozario (NTC/Jayme Donahue)

God's big work in "little flock"



Cardinal visits local Bangladeshi faithful

FORT WORTH — Cardinal Patrick D'Rozario, archbishop emeritus of Dhaka, Bangladesh, during a Sept. 5 Mass concelebrated with Fort Worth Bishop Michael Olson at St. Andrew Church, spoke of opportunities for small groups to make huge positive differences.

Cardinal D'Rozario knows of what he speaks.

Of Bangladesh's roughly 170 million people, only about 400,000 — about 0.2 percent of the population — are Catholic, with Christians overall accounting for about 0.4 percent. Most of the country's Catholics consist of members of minority tribes. Bangladesh

is otherwise about 90 percent Muslim with a sprinkling of other religious denominations.

"We are a little flock in the midst of people belonging to other religions," Cardinal D'Rozario said. "But we are proud of being small and being humble. We are proud of being a tiny little community because God works through us."

Outreach and harmony are the goals of the Church in Bangladesh, he said, including outreach and aid to majority Muslim refugees fleeing Burmese persecution.

— Matthew Smith



Holy Cross Feast

DENTON — Students and parishioners from St. John Paul II Parish participated in Mass followed by a Eucharistic procession through the University of North Texas on Sept. 14 to celebrate the Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross. After the procession, Adoration was made available until 9 p.m.

◀ Students process across the UNT campus as Father Kyle Walterscheid holds the Blessed Sacrament. (NTC/Juan Guajardo)



International Fair

FORT WORTH — For the 43rd consecutive year, St. Rita Parish celebrated its annual International Fair. The event is the parish's longest running fundraiser and celebrates the diverse people and cultures who call St. Rita home. Funds went toward repairs and facility upgrades for the church and parochial school.

◀ Alma Cristobal Valenzuela, of the Danza Azteca group from Holy Name of Jesus Parish, performs at the St. Rita International Fair on Oct. 3, 2021. (NTC/Juan Guajardo)



Feast of St. Matthew

ARLINGTON — Parishioners at St. Matthew Church hosted a special procession and festival celebrating their patron on Sept. 26, 2021. The feast day celebration began with a bilingual Mass followed by a procession in which a large icon of St. Matthew was accompanied by clergy, laity, and *matachines* dancers.

◀ Parishioners carry a large image of St. Matthew during a feast day procession at St. Matthew Church on Sept. 26, 2021. (NTC/Ben Torres)

World Mission Rosary at Holy Trinity



Students and faculty pray for the world

GRAPEVINE — On Oct. 6, the students and faculty of Holy Trinity Catholic School in Grapevine prayed a living World Mission Rosary.

Sixth, seventh, and eighth grade students acted as beads, while fifth graders led the prayers.

The World Mission Rosary was started by the late Archbishop Fulton Sheen in 1951 to lead Catholics in

praying not just “for ourselves, but for the world.”

Each decade of the Rosary has different colored beads, which represents a specific continent.

By virtue of our Baptism, all Catholics are called to be missionaries at home and throughout the world, bringing the message of the Lord’s love, mercy, hope, and peace.



Ben Hickman lifts a globe during the World Mission Rosary at Holy Trinity Catholic School. (NTC/Juan Guajardo)



Ramon leads youth ministry



Victoria Ramon promoted to director of youth, young adult, and campus ministries

After two years as associate director of youth and young adult ministries for the Diocese of Fort Worth, Victoria Ramon has been promoted to director of youth, young adult, and campus ministry.



Victoria Ramon

She functions as a support and resource for all the youth and young adult coordinators, as well as campus ministers, helping them to grow their ministries at parishes and universities around the diocese.

The former director of youth ministry at St. Ann Parish in Burleson loves the curiosity and enthusiasm of teenagers.

Ramon said her biggest goal in her new position is “to help form missionary disciples from these emerging young adults,” and “to help them to encounter Christ and to share Him with the world.”

She is impressed with how young adults use technology and social media to share the Gospel:

“They’ve got so many ideas, and they see the world through possibilities, and so it really gets them to be creative in how they would want to spread the Good News,” said Ramon, who will complete a master’s degree from Franciscan University in December 2022.

– Michelle McDaniel

Deacon Leyva to lead Office of Hispanic Ministry



Formerly with the Office of the Permanent Diaconate, Deacon Rigoberto Leyva will guide Hispanic ministry

It is with “joy and humility” that Deacon Rigoberto Leyva embarks on a new stage in his service to the Church after being appointed in early September as the Director of Hispanic Ministry for the Diocese of Fort Worth.

He recognizes he has a great challenge ahead of him, since “there is much to do in the community.” Dcn. Leyva accepts this new appointment “full of enthusiasm and with great humility that our Bishop Olson has thought of this



Deacon Rigoberto Leyva

servant,” he said. Ordained in 2009, Dcn. Leyva worked in the Office of the Permanent Diaconate of the Diocese for the past five years. His first assignment was Our Lady of Lourdes Parish in Mineral Wells.

The Office of Hispanic Ministry was established more than fifteen years ago with the mission to guide and bridge communication between Hispanic parishioners and the Office of the Bishop.

– Violeta Rocha

First, we listen



Bishop Olson celebrates Mass to launch diocesan synodal process

By Joan Kurkowski-Gillen

During an Oct. 17 Mass in St. Patrick Cathedral, Bishop Michael Olson asked North Texas Catholics to pray for guidance and wisdom from the Holy Spirit as the diocese begins its participation in a two-year synodal process leading up to the 2023 Synod of Bishops in Rome.

Challenged by Pope Francis to “listen to the questions, concerns, and hopes of every church, people, and nation,” the Diocese of Fort Worth joins other dioceses around the world in the first stage of the process which focuses on listening and consulting with the People of God. At the request of the pontiff, bishops worldwide celebrated Mass Oct. 17 to launch the process of diocesan consultation.

“By offering this Mass with you, and other dioceses as well, we begin our part in what Pope Francis has called the synodal process — a period of preparation for when the Synod of Bishops meets in two years,” Bishop Olson said, welcoming the congregation. “We pray for the Holy Spirit’s guidance for all the bishops but also for our part in this process of preparation.”

More information about direct participation will come in the following weeks, he assured.

Father Jonathan Wallis, vicar general, and Paola Quintero-Araujo, director of the St. Junipero Serra Institute, will serve as co-contacts for the synodal process in the

diocese. By mid-November they will name a representative team of people who will develop questions used during the consultative listening sessions.

An open online survey/questionnaire will become available in early 2022 and be shared via the diocesan website, email blasts, and parish announcements.

Bishop Michael Olson at St. Patrick Cathedral in March. (NTC/Rodger Mallison)



The Vatican hopes for the widest, most diverse participation possible and “we will certainly do our best to make this happen at our local level,” Fr. Wallis said. “We will all have the opportunity to meet each other as created by the Father, redeemed by Christ, and led by the Holy Spirit.”

The pre-synodal diocesan phase continues until April 2022 and is followed by continental and universal levels. The theme for the three-part process is: For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation and Mission.

The word “synod” is of Greek origin and means “meeting of people,” Bishop Olson explained in his homily. After the Second Vatican Council in 1965, St. Pope Paul VI established the Synod of Bishops — a permanent structure with regular meetings that offers advice and recommendations on given topics suggested by the Holy Father. Priestly formation, evangelization in the world, and marriage and family life are some of the issues which have been tackled by bishops in previous synods.

The upcoming synod isn’t a referendum on the Sacred Scriptures, Apostolic Tradition, or the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, Bishop Olson stressed. Gospel truths and Church doctrine cannot be changed by the vote of any Church group, he emphasized.

Rather, the synodal process “is an invitation and opportunity to consider the many ways in which all the baptized are responsible for fulfilling the great

I certify that all information furnished on this form is true and complete. /s/ Juan Guajardo, Editor

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2) Free Distribution In-County	812	819
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commission to proclaim the Gospel to the ends of the earth and to the end of days for the salvation of the world,” he emphasized.

The synod’s objective is not to make the Church more popular, “but to make Christ known and loved,” the bishop added.

Formally opening the two-year synodal process with a solemn Mass in St. Peter’s Basilica on Oct. 10, Pope Francis urged the faithful in his homily to become “experts in the art of encounter” during the journey of deliberation and discernment. Like Jesus who walked alongside people listening to their questions and concerns, the global Catholic Church should take time to look

others in the eye and listen to what they have to say, he said.

“Nothing leaves Jesus indifferent; everything is of concern to Him,” the pope continued. “Encountering faces, sharing each individual’s history — that is the closeness Jesus embodies. He knows someone’s life can be changed by a single encounter.”

Following his example, the Church must approach this pre-synod consultation phase with openness, courage, and a willingness to be challenged by the presence and stories of others.

“So often God points out new paths in just this way,” Pope Francis explained. 🇺🇸



She is Not Alone

Respect life initiative provides expecting mothers
with the right help at the right time

By Susan Moses

An awareness campaign has communicated an extra lesson: God's timing is perfect.

Terri Schauf, the respect life coordinator for the Diocese of Fort Worth, was eager to begin Walking with Moms in Need, an initiative developed by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.

The program, to be implemented in dioceses across the nation, encourages parishes to identify local pregnancy and family resources that are able to assist mothers and families lacking material or emotional support. Parishes take inventory of the assistance available in their communities, raise awareness of them in the parishes, and encourage collaboration and

support for the resources.

The effort was scheduled to launch on March 25, 2020 — just as the country went into lockdown due to the coronavirus pandemic. After the initial delay, dioceses began the program on their own schedule. After other dates were proposed and declined, the Diocese of Fort Worth kicked off Walking with Moms in Need on May 31, 2021, the Feast Day of the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Just three months later, the new Texas law banning abortion after the baby's heartbeat can be detected went into effect. Most abortions take place after that developmental stage, so "There's going to be a lot of moms who are needing help and not knowing where to turn," Schauf said.

Bishop Michael Olson noted the providential timing of the program's launch in a Sept. 20 interview

with Father Robert McTeigue, SJ, on "The Catholic Current." The bishop said, "This is an opportunity for us to be proactive.... an opportunity to prepare our parishes to assist women if abortion was no longer a legal option for them at some stage in development, so that we would be aware of resources. It's an approach to help women beyond just simply closing the door to abortion for them but also opening up other practical resources for assistance to protect both mother and child."

Schauf admitted feeling frustration initially with the postponements of the program's launch, but she added, "Now that this law has come into play in Texas, I see God's hand and timing in it. We're trusting, and doing our due diligence, but also giving it to Him."

Continued on Page 14



Pregnancy Related Resources

in the Diocese of Fort Worth

Do you know an expectant mother in need of material and spiritual support? Here are just a few apostolates that may be able to help with everything from pregnancy tests and baby items to parenting classes.



FLOURISHING TREE OF LIFE

- 817-458-0123
- FlourishingTree.org
- 9900 E. Bankhead Hwy., Aledo, 76008



GABRIEL PROJECT

- 800-545-5935
- FWDioc.org/crisis-pregnancy
- Reaches throughout the diocese



GRACE HOUSE MINISTRIES

- 817-599-9080
- GraceHouseMinistries.net
- 919 E. Eureka Street, Weatherford, 76086



LORETO HOUSE

- 940-380-8191
- LoretoHouse.org
- 1100 N. Bonnie Brae St., Denton, 76201



LOVING CARE PREGNANCY CENTER

- 682-429-0724
- joanhilleren@gmail.com
- Serves teens in Hurst, Euless, Bedford, Grapevine, and Colleyville



MOTHER & UNBORN BABY CARE

- 817-870-2229
- UnbornBabyCare.org
- 1118 Pennsylvania Ave., Fort Worth, 76104



ST. VINCENT DE PAUL

- SVDPfw.org to find local conferences
- Provide food pantries and baby items

TAKING STEPS

To date, about eight parishes have started the groundwork for Walking with Moms in Need by assembling a core team from different ministries — pro-life, of course, but also social justice, Knights of Columbus, moms' group, and others.

After forming its core team in July, Holy Family Parish in Fort Worth completed an inventory of organizations that can assist expectant mothers or impoverished families.

The next step at Holy Family was to begin a monthly showcase of those organizations, so parishioners can attend a presentation each month to learn the scope of what services are available.

Meg Ruhter is coordinator of youth ministry for the parish and serves on the core team. She has seen a benefit already, when members of the Respect Life committee sat down with St. Vincent de Paul volunteers and explained their respective ministries.

Ruhter said, "It was very apparent, the need for this initiative. These groups are fighting for the same thing, and more happens when we collaborate."

One of the biggest questions Schauf is asked about the Walking with Moms in Need initiative is, "Is this a new ministry? Will this replace our existing ministries?"

The respect life coordinator explained its purpose is to support and bring awareness to existing ministries, so that Catholics will know where to refer individuals. Also, ministries which may have previously operated independently can unite behind the goal of helping mothers in need.

Ruhter at Holy Family agreed, saying "Organizations are fighting this battle already. Let's tap into what we have." For example, Holy Family's Respect Life committee hosts a baby item drive each October, and the St. Vincent de Paul chapter sponsors an angel tree in December. She hopes encouraging and coordinating the efforts of those ministries can increase their impact.

ASSESS, THEN ASSIST

Good Shepherd Parish is wrapping up its extensive research into local maternal support. About a dozen individuals are on



Angela Walters, Gabriel Project coordinator, and her husband, Bob, show off some of the baby items they donate to mothers in need. (NTC/Juan Guajardo)

the core team for Walking with Moms in Need at the Colleyville church.

They've inventoried organizations and agencies in the community that can help with housing, food, medical needs, adoption, employment, material resources for a baby, addiction recovery, and even counseling, according to Teri Gray, who heads up the Walking with Moms team at her parish.

Their next step will be to compile this detailed information into a database, said Gray, so that the 11,000 parishioners know where to refer others for help.

Representatives from more than a dozen of these agencies and organizations will be available to talk with participants of the Holy Trinity Catholic School Respect Life Fun Run/Walk, to be held at Good Shepherd on Oct. 30.

A parishioner of Good Shepherd since 1998, Gray hopes to reach every individual in the parish. She said, "You want mom to have the baby, but then where are you? You want to make sure everyone knows the resources. The entire parish could be like angels who know where to refer a pregnant mother in need."

Gray said the core team is focused on expanding awareness and education of pregnancy and family resources, but she hopes their efforts also yield more material support and volunteers, especially for Gabriel Project, which provides support to women in crisis pregnancies.

Kaci Cross is the mother of a toddler and a baby and has organized baby showers to benefit Gabriel Project at her home parish of Holy Family. Having children of her own has allowed her to experience the importance of family and community support when raising young children.

She explained why she volunteered for the Walking with Moms in Need core team. She said, "So many people don't have support. I want to network, to connect, to help women who don't have that community support.

"Parish staff and volunteers can only spread the word so much," Cross continued. "This will give us a whole parish of boots on the ground who know there is help if they see a mom struggling. This will be so many more touchpoints for moms in need." 🇹🇽

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Holy Land HEROES

Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem,
which supports Christians in the Holy Land,
meets for annual ceremonies

By Matthew Smith

Dozens of tour buses unloaded more than 800 Catholics from Texas, New Mexico, Arkansas, and Oklahoma on Oct. 15-17 in Fort Worth to participate in the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem's annual Rite of Solemn Investiture and Conferring of Promotions ceremonies.

The order, which rotates their annual meeting and ceremonies between locations in the four states, last visited Fort Worth in 2012.

Fort Worth Bishop Michael Olson, who concelebrated both day's Masses, called it an honor to host the Order's annual meeting.

"It connects us not only to other dioceses within our region and province but also to the Universal Church and particularly the Holy Land," Bishop Olson said. "It also gives us an opportunity to be hospitable."

The Order dates from 1096 and the First Crusade when knights fought to guard the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem. The Order has since spread throughout the world with knights and dames now supporting the Holy Land — which has experienced substantial decline

in Christian population — through prayer, presence, and financial support. That support has led to construction of numerous churches, schools, seminaries, community centers, and other outreach efforts.

Members of the Order during both day's Masses arrived in full regalia of white capes bearing the red Jerusalem cross of the Order for knights and black capes and veils for dames.

Bishop Olson, during the homily of the Oct. 16 Memorial Mass and Conferring of Promotions, spoke of the importance of new and existing members of the Order.

"It can never be simply a matter of joining a club in which we try to fit in," Bishop Olson said. "Our membership requires the belonging afforded us by Jesus Christ. The good news is that God has designed us for belonging and through Christ has called us to that mission and in the spirit has enabled us to fulfill it through service."

Cardinal Daniel DiNardo of Galveston-Houston delivered the homily during Oct. 17's Rite of Solemn Investiture.

Cardinal DiNardo reminded the newly invested that Christ came not to be served but to serve and to give His life in ransom for the many.

"Jesus' procession opens a way we can walk through and be with Jesus on the cross," Cardinal DiNardo said. "As knights of the Holy Sepulchre, you take this cross seriously. You wear it on your clothing.

"Just follow Jesus to the cross is the message, pure and simple, in prayer and in action that may sometimes get you into trouble but that's only because you're being a servant."

Cardinal DiNardo challenged members of the Order to bring others into the Church.

"Keep in your thoughts always our Blessed Lady," Cardinal DiNardo said. "She's an unraveler of all kinds of knots. Ask her to please be with you and to let you always walk toward her Son."

Daniel Ali, a convert from Islam who grew up as a Kurdish Iraqi freedom fighter, delivered the keynote address Oct. 17 at Fort Worth's Omni Hotel.

Ali spoke of the Order's positive impact in the Holy Land.

"You go to the Holy Land and come out an entirely different person," Ali said. "Everything speaks of the Lord."

Ali talked of schools, churches, and other facilities made possible in the Holy Land thanks to the Order; the 19,000 students receiving educations; and the difference the Order's presence and support



Knights of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem process in for Mass at Vietnamese Martyrs Parish in Arlington. (NTC/Ben Torres)

makes for Christian residents of the Holy Land.

Though Christians are now in the minority, Ali urged perseverance and faith.

“Never underestimate prayer,” Ali said. “It’s the most precise weapon of mass destruction against the forces of darkness you will ever encounter. I’ve been to [the Holy Land] and seen the difference the Order’s presence makes. You are like stars shining in heaven, ladies and gentlemen. Be proud of what you’re doing and keep doing it.”

Rick and Kathy Claeger of Houston’s St. Michael the Archangel Church were promoted to the rank of commander during the Oct. 16 ceremony.

Both spoke of their desire to defend and protect the faith in the Holy Land and of the life-altering effects of their visit to the same.

“I can honestly say it changed our life from the standpoint that we can’t read Scripture without envisioning the beauty of the Holy Land,” Rick Claeger said. “Having been there brings it alive.” 🇺🇸



Cardinal Daniel DiNardo, metropolitan archbishop of Galveston-Houston, promotes two dames. (NTC/Ben Torres)



good neighbors

Good Shepherd Parish and Catholic Charities Fort Worth partner to open new northeast campus for community assistance

By Matthew Smith

Catholic Charities Fort Worth President and CEO Christopher Plumlee billed the grand opening of the Good Shepherd Catholic Outreach Center & CCFW Northeast Campus a momentous occasion.

“This is the day the Lord has made,” Plumlee said. “Let us rejoice and be glad in it. I’m excited to show you what you can expect out of our anchor site here in the northeast. For five years, CCFW and Good Shepherd Catholic Community have worked together to realize this amazing

dream. It’s been a mutual goal born out of opportunity and a passion to end poverty.”

About 60 attended the Sept. 30 ribbon cutting event and tour of the new center at 6125 Colleyville Blvd.

Such a center may at first blush seem incongruous in upscale Colleyville.

“There’s actually a lot of need,” CCFW Board Chair and Good Shepherd parishioner Debra McNamara said. “Out of this campus we serve several zip codes: Watauga, Colleyville, Grapevine and other areas, and there’s actually a lot of working poor even within these more affluent communities.”

Through the partnership between Good Shepherd Church and CCFW, the center serves as home to Good Shepherd’s outreach ministries and CCFW’s transportation services and ChristCare case management services. About 20 staff and 22 volunteers will be based at the center.

“The big thing is our transportation hub for this area,” CCFW Communications Manager Alyse Chung said. “There are many here, in Southlake and surrounding areas, who utilize one of DFW’s low-cost transportation services, so there’s huge need for that here.

“The other big thing is ChristCare,



Members of the Catholic Charities leadership team cut the ribbon along with priests and laity of Good Shepherd Parish on Sept. 30. (NTC/Jayme Donahue)

which is basically like case management that we typically do out of parishes,” Chung continued. “Things such as help with rent, utilities, and other services.”

CCFW is also Tarrant County’s second largest transportation provider.

To that point, Plumlee highlighted the 22 fleet vehicles on site at the Colleyville campus.

“Nearly 40 Good Shepherd volunteer drivers work with supervisors and dispatchers on site to mobilize people who would otherwise not make it to critical [medical] appointments or be able to maintain employment,” Plumlee said. “We look forward to establishing a permanent transportation hub in this much neglected area of public transit.”

Plumlee spoke too of the facility’s call center and overall holistic approach to long-term case management.

“To help us enable those in need to achieve their bigger, brighter, and more hopeful future,” Plumlee said. “And that all starts with a single phone call for assistance.”

Chung and McNamara spoke of the combined strengths and talents Good Shepherd and CCFW bring to the partnership and the benefits of the new, more visible, location.

“We started five, six years ago at the parish but later bought this building,” McNamara said. “A building that’s going to allow us to have more visibility within the community and better reach and help


those in need.”

Father Michael Higgins, TOR, of Good Shepherd credited the vision of Father Richard Eldredge, TOR, who passed away in 2019, with making the center a reality.

It’s a vision supported by Christ’s commands to love God first and then love neighbor as self, Fr. Higgins, the pastor of the Colleyville parish, said.

“In other words, not just love them from afar, but get involved in their lives,” Fr. Higgins said. “It took a long time to get here, but it was based on a vision of having loved and worshiped God and putting that love and worship into concrete practice with our brothers and sisters in need.”

Plumlee called upon those present to support the center through prayer, donations, and volunteerism and spoke of the vision of each organization to help end poverty one family at a time.

“While things may look a little different as we get off the ground because of the continued variants of COVID-19, know that we are full steam ahead and we will remain maniacally focused and committed to changing the face of poverty here in the northeast part of our diocese,” Plumlee said. “We are gratified and profoundly blessed to have you on this exciting journey with us.” said. “We are gratified and profoundly blessed to have you on this exciting journey with us.” 

SAFE ENVIRONMENT

To Report Misconduct:

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

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

To Report Abuse or Suspected Abuse:

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

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

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





Sister Mary Francisca makes her profession of vows before Bishop Michael Olson on Aug. 21 at Carmel of the Most Holy Trinity in Arlington. (NTC/Juan Guajardo)

Fiat like Mary

Sister Mary Francisca professes her first vows at Carmel of the Most Holy Trinity in Arlington

By Kiki Hayden

Roses and sweet incense perfumed the chapel of the Carmel of the Most Holy Trinity in Arlington on Aug. 21. A stained-glass window bursting with colors lit the wall near the tabernacle. The Carmelite convent's usual silence was interrupted that morning by the chatter of family, friends, and admirers of Sister Mary Francisca of the Blessed Sacrament (née

Katherine Sartorius).

Her father, Deacon Kevin Sartorius, lined up with Bishop Michael Olson, several other priests, deacons, and altar servers in preparation for the beginning of Mass. Behind the grille, obscured by flowers and a statue of Our Lady holding the infant Jesus, the Carmelites prayed together. A few minutes before ten o'clock, wedding bells rang.

Two years ago on August 24, Sister received her habit and her

religious name. This morning, she took the next step in her vocation: her first profession of vows as a Carmelite nun. Like the Blessed Virgin Mary, Sister Mary Francisca replied “I do” to God’s call in her life.

During the first reading, a sister declared the word of the Lord from the *Song of Songs*: “Deep waters cannot quench love, nor rivers sweep it away...” And the congregation recited *Psalm 33*: “Blessed the people the Lord has chosen to be His own.” Dcn. Sartorius read the annunciation story from the *Gospel of St. Luke*.

During his homily, Bishop Olson turned to Sister Mary Francisca. “The seal [of love] is an ever-closer bond with Christ who so loved the world that He gave His life for us. Especially you... He who is your crucified spouse. Sister Mary Francisca, He chooses you as His bride.”

Sister Mary Francisca beamed at those words.

Bishop Olson described the Fiat of the Blessed Virgin Mary as a model for Carmelite sisters and for every Catholic living out their vocation: “The closer a person is to God, the closer he or she is to the people,” he said. “The fact that [Mary] is totally with God is the reason why she is so close with human beings, her children entrusted to her by Jesus on the cross.”

After the homily, Sister Mary Francisca answered “I do” to God’s calling in her life as she professed her vows and received a copy of the Rule and Constitutions of the Carmelites and a blessed crucifix. Reverend Mother Teresa Agnes carefully arranged a beautiful flower crown over Sister Mary Francisca’s white veil, then led Sister Mary Francisca around the chapel to embrace each sister warmly. During the prayers of the faithful, Mother Anne Teresa prayed for Sister Mary Francisca “that we may help her to grow in love and holiness.”

Before receiving Communion, the sisters recited the words of Jesus in *Mark 3:35*: “Whoever does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother,” says the Lord.” After receiving Communion, Sister Mary Francisca turned and almost glided

to her place in front of the statue of Our Lady.

At the end of Mass, Bishop Olson thanked the sisters for inviting him to celebrate this festive Mass. “I ask your prayers for my ministry as a bishop, for my own vocation, and for the good of the diocese.”

Many of Sister Mary Francisca’s friends from Tulsa, Oklahoma made the pilgrimage to the convent. Among them, Sister Miriam Stephania, Sister Mary Kenechukwu, and Sister Jacinta Maria stood out in their royal blue habits. Friends of Dcn. Sartorius via his work at Catholic Charities of Eastern Oklahoma, the Immaculate Heart of Mary sisters were not surprised by Sister Mary Francisca’s vocation. “She had mentioned it at the dinner table a few times,” said Sister Mary Kenechukwu.

“Do you get to wear your flower crown all day?” asked friend and neighbor Catherine Schmidt in the visitor’s parlor.

Sister Mary Francisca nodded, smiling.

Kristie Bell, a neighbor, said that her daughter, Lily, was the maid of honor.

“I was appointed that this morning,” Lily Bell said.

Laughing, Jennifer Sartorius, mother of the bride, asked, “Can I claim Him as my son-in-law?”

Sister Mary Francisca grinned at her father. She patted her new brass and ebony crucifix. “I’ll think of you every time I put it on,” she said.


“She’ll wear that [crucifix] virtually all the time,” Deacon Sartorius told the *North Texas Catholic*. He proudly showed photographs of his sons melting down brass to pour into a mold of Jesus’s body and carefully preparing ebony wood to form the cross. ✚




SAINT FRANCIS VILLAGE

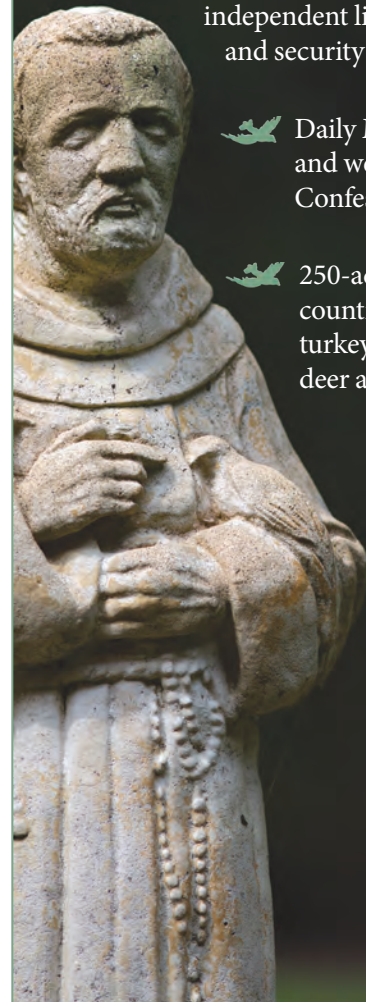
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Barbie Fitzgerald, music teacher, and pre-kindergartner Max Pence share a laugh during a music lesson at St. Martin de Porres Catholic School in Prosper. (NTC/ Ben Torres)

A Day in the Life:

CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

During mid- to late-September, photographers from the *North Texas Catholic* visited some of our Catholic schools in the Diocese of Fort Worth to visually celebrate the hard work of teachers in making learning safe, fun, and effective for students from kindergarten to high school. Check out the rest of our school photos by visiting us online at NorthTexasCatholic.org and clicking on the “Galleries” tab.



Students Molly Kahlig and Luis Pichardo designed this year's spirit shirt for Immaculate Conception Catholic School in Denton. (NTC/ Jayme Donahue)



CREDITS:


1. Math teacher Jaime Taylor helps a high-schooler with an advanced math problem at Sacred Heart Catholic School in Muenster. (NTC/Juan Guajardo)

2. A Pre-K4 student works on a lesson during a class taught by Stacie Polk at St. Mary Catholic School in Gainesville. (NTC/Juan Guajardo)

3. A fifth-grader raises her hand during a math lesson at St. Martin de Porres Catholic School in Prosper. (NTC/Ben Torres)

4. Landry Towery plays with an educational toy in Sacred Heart Catholic School's Montessori-certified kindergarten program. (NTC/Juan Guajardo)



A wooden Tau cross, a symbol of the Franciscan Order, hangs from a brown leather cord. The cord is knotted and rests on a light-colored, textured fabric. The background is a solid, warm yellow color.

Today, Franciscans secular and religious wear the Tau cross as a sign of their commitment to Jesus Christ.
(Shutterstock/Wirestock Creators)

PAX ET BONUM

Local Secular Franciscans
continue walking in the footsteps
of St. Francis of Assisi

By Mary Lou Seewoester

During the 13th century, many lay people felt a strong desire to follow St. Francis, with lives of prayer and service to the poor. Many even wanted to take the same vows as St. Francis, but family obligations and other responsibilities did not allow them to join the First Order of priests and brothers, the Friars Minor, or the Second Order of St. Clare.

So, in 1221, St. Francis established a third order for lay people and wrote its first Rule himself. He called them the Brothers and Sisters of Penance and counseled them to live the Gospel in the ordinary circumstances of their lives. Later they became known as the Third Order of St. Francis and in 1978 became the Secular Franciscans (OFS).

Notable Secular Franciscans throughout history include 22 popes, St. Francis de Sales, St. Joan of Arc, Michelangelo, Dante, Christopher Columbus, Louis Pasteur, and the parents of St. Therese of Lisieux.

Today, there are more than 300,000 Secular Franciscans worldwide, and the United States has more than 12,000 professed members in at least 600 fraternities. Three of those fraternities serve the Diocese of Fort Worth: Immaculata Fraternity in Colleyville, St. Clare Fraternity in Crowley,

and St. Bonaventure Fraternity (for Spanish speakers) in Fort Worth.

Carol Lieser, OFS, minister of the Immaculata Fraternity, explained that Secular Franciscans, like other Franciscan orders, follow a Rule and Constitution that are canonically established by the Church. Unlike other Franciscan orders, they do not wear habits but do receive a Tau cross when they profess, which they are encouraged to wear daily. They do not live together in community but do meet regularly with their fraternities. And although they make a public profession, they do not take vows.

“But we do make promises to live our lives with chasteness, poverty, and obedience,” Lieser said. “Poverty is recognizing with all humility that everything you have is given to you by God. God owns it and you are called to use whatever you’re given in service to others.”

Secular Franciscans live, pray, and serve in their individual parishes throughout the diocese and gather monthly with other seculars for prayer, formation, planning, and fellowship.

Immaculata’s 17 members and two candidates (who will profess in October) come from parishes in Frisco, Plano, Arlington, Fort Worth, Colleyville, and Coppell.

Fraternities are guided by an elected

minister or president, and each fraternity has a spiritual assistant or spiritual director — usually a priest of the First Order (OFM) or Third Order Regular (TOR).

Father John Mark Klaus, TOR, parochial vicar at Good Shepherd, has been the spiritual assistant for Immaculata Fraternity for six years. He said in addition to wearing the Tau cross, Secular Franciscans can be identified by their service in parish ministries. They are lectors, Eucharistic ministers, acolytes, and teachers of religious education.

“I’ve always been impressed by their prayer life and, following the example of St. Francis, they are there for service to the community,” he said.

“I’ve been able to see the fraternity grow spiritually and see their commitment to the fraternity and to one another as brothers and sisters,” he added.

In addition to their individual parish ministries, Secular Franciscans also work together to serve the poor in the spirit of St. Francis. The Immaculata Fraternity, which was established in 1990, has donated to food pantries, served at homeless shelters, given diapers to new mothers, offered financial help where needed, and at one time,

Continued on Page 26

Members of the Immaculata Fraternity of Secular Franciscans meet at Good Shepherd in Colleyville. They are led by Carol Lieser, OFS, (first row, left). Father John Mark Klaus, TOR, (second row, far right) is the group’s spiritual assistant. (NTC/Kevin Bartram)





Jean Cate, Mona Edwards, Bob and Celia Wittman, and Patty Lovell make their professions as the St. Clare Fraternity of the Secular Franciscan Order welcomes them. The five new seculars were received into their order on September 12, 2021 at St. Francis Village in Crowley. (NTC/Rodger Mallison)

From Page 25

even helped build homes for the poor.

Lieser said she was drawn to the Franciscans “because of the idea of simplicity of life and because they weren’t just contemplatives. Yes, we do pray but our prayer goes into action. So, we call ourselves active contemplatives.”

“Prayer is a resource that helps us stay on the path,” she added. “And that helps us keep our [Franciscan] promises. It’s a grace and a gift.”

A well-known and often quoted Franciscan maxim comes directly from Article 4 of the Secular Franciscan Rule: Secular Franciscans should devote themselves especially to careful reading of the Gospel, going from Gospel to life and life to Gospel.

Carmine Esposito, OFS, minister of the St. Clare Fraternity, explained from Gospel to life and life to Gospel.

“We’re trying to establish our relationship with Christ in the way that St. Francis had,” he said. “It’s learning about contemplative prayer, bringing prayer more into our lives, and delving into Scripture more. Then we try to incorporate what we learn

in the Gospel into our lives.”

For Lieser, the phrase means that “for everything I do, I figure out a way to bring Christ into it and to make it a Franciscan action.”

Esposito, a member of St. Francis Cabrini Parish in Granbury, said the St. Clare Fraternity was established in 1964 and currently has 36 members and six candidates. Eighteen members are from St. Francis Cabrini, others live at St. Francis Village in Crowley, and still others come from parishes as far away as Lipan and Tolar. The fraternity has supported Mission Granbury, a Hood County nonprofit community organization, and the St. Francis Village food bank.

Esposito and his wife, Lucy, made their profession together in 2016 after three years of formation. Candidate formation usually lasts between 18 months and three years.

“From day one, it’s a discernment process because you are making a lifelong commitment,” he said. “Not everyone wants to make that commitment. Formation gives individuals time to decide.”

Esposito explained that formation is not like trying to recruit someone to a team or a club. Rather, it is “striving to enrich your

spiritual life ... and formation leading up to profession doesn’t end. Continuing formation keeps you engaged and strengthens your prayer life.”

For Maria del Carmen Jimenez, OFS, minister of St. Bonaventure Fraternity, prayer is an important part of being a Secular Franciscan. She said the group meets daily for prayer via conference call, and on Saturday mornings to study the Rule of St. Francis.

St. Bonaventure Fraternity was established in 2018, and its 12 professed members all belong to Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish in Fort Worth, where the group will gather when they are ready to return to in-person meetings. The fraternity serves the parish by bringing Eucharist to the sick and homebound.

Pax et Bonum, meaning “Peace and All Good,” was a greeting that St. Francis often used. When Franciscans use the greeting today, it means “to have in our hearts the joy that Francis had in doing good for others,” Jimenez said.

“The example is more important than words,” she added. “We are living the way that Francis did ... and the spirit of Francis is contagious.” 🇺🇸

RAISED for the ROLE

Christopher Plumlee
takes reins of Catholic
Charities Fort Worth

By Mary Lou Seewoester

During his first weeks as President and Chief Executive Officer of Catholic Charities Fort Worth, Christopher Plumlee just listened.

Plumlee, who assumed his new role at CCFW on Sept. 7, planned a “listening tour” with the nonprofit’s 278 employees to learn “what’s working exceedingly well, where we have some gaps, and where we need additional resources.”

For the long-term, however, Plumlee wants “to do more, faster.”

“My goal is to bring more minds, hearts, and wallets to Catholic Charities’ door ... Our story is so compelling, our mission is so engaging that the more who hear it will understand that we’re not trying to give folks a fish. We’re trying to teach them to fish for a lifetime.”

Plumlee has been immersed in the work of Catholic Charities since he was about 10 years old, often attending Catholic Charities functions with his father, Frank Ennis Plumlee, who was Chair of the Board for Catholic Charities Dallas.

He said he once asked his father why they were going to food drives, clothing drives, and toy drives. His father responded by opening “an old, worn, tattered Bible he inherited from my grandmother and reading *Matthew 25:35-40*.”

The verse begins: “For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me ...”

Bishop Michael Olson commented on Plumlee’s commitment to CCFW’s mission of lifting people out of poverty.

“Christopher Plumlee holds a compassion and an understanding of how Catholic Charities Fort Worth serves God and our neighbor, a compassion



Christopher Plumlee at CCFW’s main campus. (NTC/Juan Guajardo)

and understanding he learned by accompanying his father’s work for Catholic Charities Dallas and in his own experience as a board member and chair of Catholic Charities Fort Worth,” he said.

“This commitment first to love God and to help those in need and his willingness to work with all people of good will is at the heart of Christopher’s leadership through service in our mission to eradicate oppressive poverty,” he added.

Plumlee served as chair of the CCFW Board for the past 16 months and as a board member for an additional 4 ½ years.

He has 25 years in senior leadership at several corporations, including Bank of America, Dell, and Hewlett Packard. He also started a sales consultant firm, Elevate Strategy Group, and has served on corporate advisory boards.

Plumlee said he and his wife, Natalie, always pray over major

decisions. So, before accepting the top position at CCFW they “sat down and prayed about it.”

“We’ve been very blessed that God has given us great guidance and direction,” he said.

A motivating factor in accepting the new role at CCFW was “the people,” Plumlee said.

“There’s an incredible team already in place. They are the best people — the hardest working, most creative, most dedicated, and most focused,” he said.

In leading CCFW, Plumlee expects to “get out into the marketplace, let people know the incredible work that God has called us to do and ask them ... to come on this mission with us.”

“We have a real responsibility to give back to our brothers and sisters — those who need a hand up and those who need to be fed or nourished and all those things that speak to *Matthew 25:35-40*.” 🇺🇸



STAYING FOCUSED ON Advent

Ideas for how to live liturgically this Advent season

By Katie Hoffman

It seems like Advent season sneaks up on us every year, doesn't it? With school back in session, schedules get busier, and the days get shorter. Halloween and Thanksgiving come and go, and people turn their attention to Christmas shopping and the new year. The true meaning of Advent can get lost in the chaos.

It is easy to get distracted by the material aspect of preparing for Christmas, but it is important to take time and focus on the true meaning of those four weeks — waiting and preparing for the birth of Jesus.

To stay focused on the true meaning of Advent, here are seven ways you can live liturgically at home this Advent season.

1. SET UP AN ADVENT WREATH

While an Advent wreath makes for a great Christmas decoration, it is so much more than that. Lighting the candles each week can help us visualize the passage of time and focus on what is to come at the end of the four Sundays. The wreath itself is also chock-full of symbolism.

The evergreens that make up the wreath symbolize continuous life. The circular shape of the wreath symbolizes the eternity of the Lord, who has no beginning or end. The four candles

(CNS/Nancy Wiechec)

represent the four weeks of Advent — each of which has its own special significance. The purple candles are the liturgical color that signifies a time of prayer, penance, and sacrifice. The pink candle is the liturgical color for joy and is lit on the third Sunday of Advent to signify the joy that is felt at the birth of Jesus.

Set up an Advent wreath in your home and light the appropriate candles before you eat dinner each night to bring you back to the spirit of Advent each evening.

2. CREATE A PRAYER INTENTIONS MANGER

Look around in your Christmas decorations for a small manger. If you can't find one, make one! Once you have your manger, find a special place in your house to put it. Cut a piece of paper into small strips, then write your prayer intentions on them. Fill the manger with your prayer intentions and keep them on your heart for the rest of Advent.

3. MAKE AN ADVENT TREE OF KINDNESS

One way to help children prepare for the birth of Jesus is to make an Advent Tree of Kindness. This craft project

allows them to physically see the good deeds they do for others during Advent.

All you need to make an Advent Tree of Kindness are a few pieces of red and green construction paper, a marker, and some stickers. It takes only about 15 minutes to make. You can find the instructions on how to make one at bit.ly/advent_tree.

Each time your child does a good deed, they can add a sticker to the tree! It is a great way for them to practice loving one another as they head toward Christmas.

4. PARTICIPATE IN YOUR PARISH'S ANGEL TREE PROGRAM

While it might be named something different at each parish, the Angel Tree program is a way to help families in need during Advent. There is usually a physical Christmas tree set up in a prominent location of the church decorated with paper ornaments. These are not your normal Christmas ornaments though; they have the needs or gifts requested by poor families for Christmas.

Your family can take an ornament home, purchase the requested item, and return it to the

church to help a family in need this Advent season.

Look around your church this Advent to find an Angel Tree!

5. VISIT A LIVE NATIVITY SCENE

While traditional Nativity scenes are a great way to see what the birth of Jesus might have been like, a fresh way of seeing one is to visit a live Nativity scene. To create one, people dress up as characters in Jesus' birth story and set the scene of the birth. The Nativity is sometimes accompanied by Christmas hymns, so it makes for a great family outing.

Check with your local church or Catholic school to see if it is hosting a live nativity scene this year — some of them even make a tradition out of it.

6. LISTEN TO (OR CREATE YOUR OWN) ADVENT SONG PLAYLIST

Listening to Christmas music is a great way to put you in the spirit of the season. A number of Christian Christmas music playlists are available already, but if you cannot find one that you like, make your own! Here is a playlist available on Spotify: bit.ly/AdventPlaylist21.

7. DONATE YOUR TIME, TALENT, OR TREASURE

What better way to prepare for the birth of Jesus than to physically live out our faith? Consider donating your time by volunteering at a homeless shelter, food pantry, or even by doing an extra chore around the house. Donate your talents by singing in the choir or helping decorate the church. Donate your treasure by giving money to an organization in need.

Regardless of how you give, your efforts are truly the hands and feet of Christ in action this Advent season! 🇺🇸



A young girl plays the part of the angel in a live Nativity scene. (CNS/ Mike Crupi, Catholic Courier)

Katie Hoffman is a freelance writer and columnist for the *North Texas Catholic*. She is based out of Burleson.

after

THE HOUR OF

death



er OF OUR th

A deep dive on the faithful departed, funerals, cremation, and eulogies

By Kiki Hayden
and Juan Guajardo

The first half of the old idiom coined by Christopher Bullock in 1716, “‘Tis impossible to be sure of anything but death and taxes,” certainly resounds more loudly this time of year.

The seasons of fall and winter call to mind our fleeting time on earth, and what’s more, the liturgical calendar of the Catholic Church has major feast days such as All Saints and All Souls to remind us of “the world to come.” The Church also dedicates November to the Holy Souls in Purgatory, reminding us to pray for those who have gone before us.

So, yes, the Church places great emphasis on death. But for good reason: Christians believe that humans are made of body and soul, created in the image and likeness of God. Thus, Catholics should show deep respect to both body and soul during and after death. How do we do that? The *NTC* dug deep into Church history and spoke with local priests to find out.

BODY AND ETERNAL SOUL

St. Paul wrote to the Corinthians, “Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own?” (*1 Corinthians 6:19*). He follows that up in his letter to the Romans, “If, then, we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him” (*Romans 6:8*).

In unequivocally declaring, “I look forward to the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come,” the Nicene Creed, an authoritative doctrinal statement of the Church, also points to the reality of not just body and soul – but an immortal soul.

Current Catholic teaching reinforces that of the early Church. Pope Francis, in a 2015 address to families, said while the death of a loved one is “heart rending,” it’s important to remember that “our loved ones have not disappeared into dark nothingness. Hope assures us that they are in God’s good and strong hands. Love is stronger than death.”

Since both body and soul are integral to the human person, the Catholic funeral service requires reverence to both the body and soul of the deceased. Father Thu Nguyen, diocesan director of liturgy and worship, said, “Funerary rites according to the Church’s teachings help us acknowledge the reality of the death and await the final judgment and resurrection of the glorified body, body and soul, for eternal [life].”

Therefore, the Church teaches that through funerary rites, we not only strengthen our hope and comfort the bereaved, but we also bury the deceased’s bodily remains with the respect and care befitting what was a Temple of the Holy Spirit.

HONORING THE BODY

“Human remains have dignity and respecting them is a way of affirming our faith in the resurrection,” Father Tim Thompson, pastor of Immaculate Conception Parish in Denton, explained. “The Church’s concern is that the resurrection not be denied.”

Although burying the body of the deceased remains preferable because it shows a greater respect toward the deceased, in 1963 the Vatican issued the instruction *Piam et Constantem*, which

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(NTC photo illustration/Juan Guajardo)



A view of the columbarium at Good Shepherd Parish in Colleyville. A columbarium is one way to respectfully store urns of cremated remains. (NTC/Juan Guajardo)

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explained that either burial or cremation is allowed as long as the belief in the resurrection is upheld and the remains of the faithful departed are respected: “Cremation does not affect the soul nor prevent God’s omnipotence from restoring the body; neither, then, does it in itself include an objective denial of the dogmas mentioned.”

Fr. Nguyen referred to the appendix in the *Order of Christian Funerals*, which states: “The cremated remains should be buried in a grave or entombed in a mausoleum or columbarium. The practice of scattering cremated remains on the sea, from the air, or on the ground, or keeping cremated remains in the home of a relative or friend of the deceased are not the reverent disposition that the Church requires.”

The instruction *Ad Resurgendum cum Christo*, regarding the burial of the deceased and the conservation of the ashes in the case of cremation, published by the Vatican in 2016, gave further reasons for these specifications:

“The reservation of the ashes of the departed in a sacred place ensures that they are not excluded from the prayers

and remembrance of their family or the Christian community. It prevents the faithful departed from being forgotten, or their remains from being shown a lack of respect, which eventually is possible, most especially once the immediately subsequent generation has too passed away.”

Fr. Thompson added, “The Church wants a sacred place to lay remains, that it be permanent, and that one’s remains are not kept as some sort of memento of the departed.”

He continued, “Human beings are not objects and should not be treated as objects for either work or pleasure. Human remains have a dignity which comes from that, though it is not the same. Bodies are often donated to science and are used for scientific purposes, and that is acceptable because it advances human knowledge and good. But bodies are never treated as a commodity to be used for any purpose. Mementos seem to be trivializing the dead.”

In the case of donating one’s body to science, it is important to note that after the laboratory studies the body, the family

should receive the remains and see to their proper burial.

Fr. Nguyen further distinguished between venerating the bodies of saints and treating bodies as keepsakes: “Relics are venerated and respectfully used in witnessing the holiness that God bestowed in this person.”

Echoing St. Paul’s admonishment that we are “not our own,” Fr. Nguyen continued, “For a person to have their loved one’s parts for sentimental or other reasons is not appropriate. Along the same lines, people [mistakenly] think that their bodies belong to them, and they can do anything they want with them while still living.”

To be clear, the Church’s decrees are about respect and honor, and God’s power to resurrect is not affected by our actions. The Christian apologist Marcus Minucius Felix, writing in either the second or third century, recalled a Christian argument that even burnt or mutilated bodies can be resurrected: “But who is so foolish... as to dare to deny that man, as he could first of all be formed by God, so can again be re-formed? Every body, whether it is dried up into dust, or is dissolved into moisture,

or is compressed into ashes, or is attenuated into smoke, is withdrawn from us, but it is reserved for God.”

This is good news for the martyrs, some of whom have been burned at the stake or have been mutilated in other ways. According to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, “In death, the separation of the soul from the body, the human body decays and the soul goes to meet God, while awaiting its reunion with its glorified body. God, in His almighty power, will definitively grant incorruptible life to our bodies by reuniting them with our souls, through the power of Jesus’ Resurrection” (CCC 997).

ON EULOGIES AND FUNERALS

The Church’s general rule discourages eulogies at Catholic funerals. The Vatican’s *Order of Christian Funerals* teaches that the funeral rite is meant to offer “worship, praise, and thanksgiving to God for the gift of the life which has now been returned to God. . . The Mass, the memorial of Christ’s death and resurrection, is the principal celebration of the Christian funeral.”

Fr. Thu explained, “The homily at the Mass is supposed to help the people to understand the message about body and resurrection. You’re using the sacred texts of the funeral rite to help [the mourners] understand the hope, the resurrection, and yes, the sorrow.”

The rationale is that eulogies may detract from that key message.

The *Order of Christian Funerals* does clarify that “a member or friend of the family may speak in remembrance

of the deceased before the final commendation begins.” Usually, dioceses allow for a eulogy to be given at the vigil (or wake) or the reception.

PRAYING WITH (AND FOR) THE DECEASED

On November 1, the Church celebrates the Solemnity of All Saints. According to Fr. Nguyen, the feast recognizes “all saints, both unrecognized and recognized through the canonization process,” many of whom do not have a specific feast day on which we honor their lives and works.

Additionally, Fr. Thompson said, “The Feast of All Saints implies that the category of saint is more ample than we imagine.”

On the feast of All Souls, we commemorate and pray for the faithful departed who have not yet attained the beatific vision of heaven because they have not been cleansed from the stains of sin. Catholic doctrine teaches that these souls reside in purgatory where they are perfected before they enter heaven. By praying and offering Masses and good deeds for these souls, the faithful on Earth help them in this process.

In Scripture, the author of Hebrews referred to the martyrs and saints as a “cloud of witnesses” (*Hebrews 12:1*).

As Catholics, we believe the faithful departed pray with us, pray for us, and receive the benefits of our prayers for them. Fr. Thompson said, “We pray for God’s mercy for those who have died. What God actually does with such prayers is a mystery. We pray for one another while on earth; such prayers do not need to stop simply because we have passed on.”

Scriptural basis for praying for the dead is found in 2 *Maccabees 12:38-44*, as well as other places in the Old and New Testaments.

As we commemorate our deceased loved ones on All Souls and All Saints, may we find solace in their communion

with the Lord. Someday we too will be in union with God and reunited with our loved ones. In the meantime, we can pray with them and for them. “For now, we see only a reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face” (*1 Corinthians 13:12*). ✚

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A JOURNEY WITH St. Joseph

In the Year of St. Joseph, let's visit
the five parishes that bear his name
in the Diocese of Fort Worth

By Susan Moses

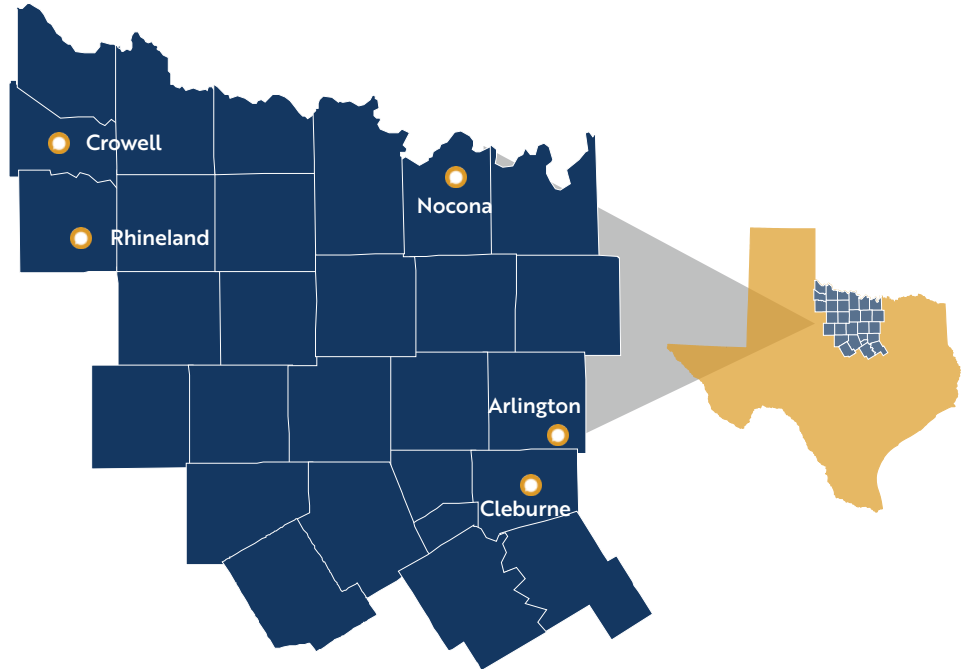


Illustration by Michael Sherman
Page 35 photos by Rodger Mallison

Setting out

To honor the 150th anniversary of the proclamation of St. Joseph as Patron of the Universal Church, Pope Francis declared a Year of St. Joseph “to increase our love for this great saint, to encourage us to implore his intercession, and to imitate his virtues and his zeal,” he wrote in his Apostolic Letter *Patris Corde (With a Father’s Heart)* on December 8, 2020.

To gain greater insights into the spouse of the Mother of God, the NTC made a pilgrimage to the five parishes that hold St. Joseph as their patron.



St. Joseph Parish, Cleburne

Families: 734 Established: 1888

Only five parishes in the diocese were established before this mission-style parish, which offers two weekend Masses apiece in English and Spanish. About 30 miles south of Fort Worth, the church is tucked into a neighborhood of modest, well-kept homes a block east of Main Street.

DON'T MISS: The church's three cornerstones, including the cracked, tan sandstone rock dating back to 1741, which was taken from the tower of San Jose mission in San Antonio.

THE ATMOSPHERE: Like St. Joseph, it's quiet, calm, and peaceful. The well-worn wooden pews, the wooden ceiling, and wood paneling in front of the sanctuary will remind you of St. Joseph the carpenter.

THE SAINT'S PRESENCE: A large statue of St. Joseph holding the baby Jesus stands outside the front doors, and a second large statue of the saint holding lilies welcomes visitors in the vestibule. But in the nave and sanctuary, religious imagery emphasizes Mary and Jesus. (Isn't that like their humble protector?)

THE COMMUNITY: Long-time member Steve Talavera said the parish demonstrates its faith by actions more than words, like the silent saint — so called because Scripture does



not record any of his remarks. The congregation gathers for service days in the community, pro-life rallies, and cleaning days in the parish. “One of the ways we follow St. Joseph’s example is by helping people in need,” Talavera said.

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St. Joseph Parish, Rhineland

Families: 154 Established: 1895

Known as the “cathedral in the cotton patch,” the German Gothic church is visible from miles away, as the only structures that rival its height in Knox County are wind turbines. Step inside the immaculate church to find beautiful stained-glass windows, an ornate hand-carved altar, and arches that soar to the heavens.



BENEVOLENT GUARDIAN:

A statue of the guardian saint stands atop the high altar, as if he’s watching over Jesus in the tabernacle.

PRAY WITH THE SAINT:

The church is usually open in the day for private prayer, so if you can’t make it for Mass, stop in for a respite as you travel to or from Lubbock.

DREAMS BECOME REALITY:

Like St. Joseph, who received specific instructions in dreams and followed them, this church (and town) embodies the dream of Father Joseph Reisdorff. Construction on the current church began in 1927, but the Great Depression and World War II delayed completion to 1951. Parishioners made the bricks, six at a time, for a total of more than 80,000.

David Albess, whose

grandfather helped build the church, remembers scaffolding in the nave when he attended Mass in his youth. He said the patron saint fits the community, mostly hard-working farmers with a deep spirituality. Whether it’s making bricks or sausage, parishioners follow the example of St. Joseph: working and providing for the family.

FEAST DAYS: Plan a visit on the third Sunday of March (close to St. Joseph’s feast day) or the second Sunday of October, when the Knights of Columbus host a sausage and fried chicken dinner. About 1,200 hungry Texans eat (and bring home) 1,000 lbs. of fried chicken and 3,500 lbs. of sausage, made according to the secret recipe of two parishioners in their 90s.

St. Joseph Parish, Crowell

Families: 15 Established: 1910



From Nazareth south to Bethlehem. To the temple in Jerusalem. To Egypt and back. The head of the Holy Family led Mary and Jesus roughly 240 miles until they returned to Nazareth. We covered almost 200 miles on our journey to Crowell, sailing into Foard County faster than the Blessed Family fleeing King Herod. The 8 a.m. Mass makes for an early start when you’ve got miles of country roads to cover.

FIND IT: On Main Street on the north edge of town. The church, with its arched entrance and single bell, reflects its heritage as a mission.

CHECK OUT: At the foot of a statue of St. Joseph with lilies — the flowers symbolize chastity, and often in a group of three to recall the Holy Trinity — an icon of St. Joseph sits. The image dates to the 1880s and came to the town with Czechoslovakian settlers.

REASON TO VISIT: If you’re camping at Copper Breaks State Park or enjoying a weekend of stargazing with the telescopes and observatories at Three Rivers’ Comanche Springs Campus, you’re a short drive away. The friendly parishioners at St. Joseph Parish will welcome you.

THE COMMUNITY:

Several of the farming and ranching families who constitute this parish are descendants of the families that founded the parish. Mark Halsell was baptized at the Crowell church, as were his children and grandchildren. He said, “There are no strangers here. We’re an extended family, and this parish gets us through sorrows and happiness.”

A SAINT LIKE US:

Halsell called St. Joseph “relatable” to the parishioners, who believe in strong families and work hard. Many of the ranchers or farmers have day jobs to help support the family.

St. Joseph Parish, Nocona

Families: 60 Established: 1948

The love of parishioners for this red brick parish, with a matching parish hall and education building surrounded by a white wrought-iron fence, is obvious when you enter the impeccably maintained and decorated church.

Their patron is honored with an outdoor statue, holding lilies in one hand and baby Jesus in the other. Ten beautiful stained-glass windows, installed in 2012, include two of St. Joseph: at the nativity of Jesus and His presentation at the temple.

THE FAITHFUL: When bells begin ringing 15 minutes before Mass, parishioners are already arriving. They linger at the conclusion of the celebration, too. Hobie Meekins, lifelong member and president of the parish's finance council, said it's a friendly parish, where everyone grew up together. They typically celebrate St. Joseph's feast day in March with a pot-luck meal.

FATHER FIGURE: Several young families occupied the pews, calling to mind St.



Joseph's role as the foster father of Jesus. Like all good fathers, St. Joseph shared his love, faith, and knowledge as he raised his Son.

The *Gospel of Luke*, in verses 2:40 and 52, describes the young Jesus as growing in wisdom, with Joseph and Mary as His daily examples and teachers.

EXTRA INCENTIVE: The church is just blocks from charming historic downtown Nocona with restaurants and shopping.

The town, on U.S. Highway 82 a few miles south of Oklahoma, also boasts a classic car museum and tours of the baseball glove factory.

St. Joseph Parish, Arlington

Families: 3165 Established: 1988



St. Joseph Parish in Arlington stands out from the other parishes in the diocese that share the Protector of the Holy Church as patron. Constructed this century, its tan brick facility is modern, its location is suburban, and its size is grand. As you approach the property south of I-20, its tall spire with the gold cross is visible from several blocks away.

DON'T MISS: On the southeast corner outside the church, a bronze statue depicts St. Joseph talking with a youthful Jesus, who looks up at him with rapt attention.

HEAVENLY GAZE: Once inside, the lofty architecture and stained-glass windows at the roofline direct your attention heavenward. My thoughts drifted to St. Joseph's amazement at the message from the shepherds at the nativity, his reflection at the words of Simeon in the

temple, and his astonishment of finding his 12-year-old Son in His "Father's house."

BETHLEHEM BEAT: The congregation is very diverse, with parishioners originating from countries around the world, appropriate for a church named after the patron of immigrants and travelers. St. Joseph, no stranger to long voyages, would have met people from surrounding countries as he traveled to the census in the city of David and later when he fled to Egypt.

Michelle Doscocil, whose father-in-law donated the land for the parish and its school, said encountering people from "all over the world opens my eyes to different lifestyles and ethnicities, and gives me an appreciation for our multicultural world."

At certain Masses, elements from several cultures are integrated into the liturgy.

Back home again

Despite the distance and diversity of settings and size, the five parishes are more alike than different.

Each dedicated to the Patron of

the Universal Church, they share a reverence for Jesus and a strong sense of community.

As for this pilgrim, reflecting on

St. Joseph during the journey, coupled with a deliberate reading of the infancy narratives in *Matthew* and *Luke*, gave me a newfound appreciation for the saint's courage, obedience, humility, and trust.

Next stop, Holy Family Parish? 🇺🇸



▲
Dr. Tram Nguyen
FOUNDER, HAND-IN-HAND SHARE MISSIONS

A WORLD OF good

Story by Susan Moses
Photos by Juan Guajardo

Led by their faith, local Catholics tackle global issues

Headlines can cause heartache. Images from around the world can drain our optimism with depictions of hunger, persecution, illness, and poverty. Storms wreak tragic devastation on communities. Can local Catholics make a difference with problems of, literally, global proportions?

Just look around the pews and you'll find individuals and organizations helping with international issues. Like the Good Samaritan from the *Gospel of Luke*, their love for their neighbor doesn't recognize nationality.

For some it's a professional calling, others balance their passion to serve with their career and family commitments. But each of them demonstrates "whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me" (*Matthew 25:40*).

HEALING THE SICK

Dr. Tram Nguyen remembers when she found her passion.

The Vietnamese immigrant was about 15 years old when she saw an ad for Operation

Smile, an organization that repairs cleft lips and palates in children around the world. Her "heart froze," she said, and she knew, "I wanted to be like them. I wanted to be part of that team."

Two decades later, she's formed her own team, Hand-in-Hand Share Missions, which includes physicians, therapists, dentists, optometrists, and others. Since its founding in 2015, the organization has made nine mission trips to some of the poorest villages in Vietnam and provided care to more than 10,000 patients.

Although medical care is its primary focus, Hand-in-Hand Share Missions also builds clean water systems for communities rife with intestinal parasites and provides funds for education. An orphanage for mentally and physically disabled children is another special project. The nonprofit funds a therapy room and caretakers for the children, who previously were chained to their beds.

Mission days begin with Mass at 6:30 a.m., "to keep the Lord at the center of the mission," the Vietnamese Martyrs parishioner explained, and includes prayer as their

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work begins and ends each day.

Nuns and priests in Vietnam, along with the international Catholic relief agency Caritas, sustain their efforts between mission trips. Stateside, parishioners in the Diocese of Fort Worth make up most of the practical and financial support.

Nguyen has always made a habit to “share my gifts – whatever I have. I’ve always had a passion for helping others wherever I’m at... to do something to give back, to share with other people.”

In high school and college, that drive manifested as painting residents’ nails at a nursing home. In medical school, she tutored students in the local school and organized fundraisers to purchase school supplies and meals for them.

During her residency program at Baylor Scott & White Medical Center in Temple, she accompanied a physician on missions to Nicaragua each of her three years there. Not only did the service fuel her passion, but it taught her invaluable lessons she applied on subsequent missions to Vietnam.

COVID travel restrictions have forced Hand-in-Hand to concentrate on domestic mission work. As they did last year, the nonprofit will provide free health screenings, dental work, and vaccinations at Vietnamese Martyrs Parish in Arlington on Saturday, Nov. 6 from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Last year about 500 benefited.

Building a team is critical for any mission’s success and longevity, according to Nguyen. A big plus for local missions — it allows teen volunteers to join. She said, “Youth are able to see the work that we do, and see us, as a Christian, as a Catholic, how we live... so that the kids when they grow up say, ‘I want to be a Catholic like that.’”

REMAINING FAITHFUL, EVEN UNDER PERSECUTION

Many Christians learn about religious persecution through media accounts from distant countries. Not Precious Ogiefa. She knows it first hand. Having lived in Nigeria from birth up until 2017, she experienced it in both subtle and explicit ways.



Her parents worked their hardest to shield her and her three younger siblings from the ugly reality of persecution in her homeland.

Still, Ogiefa’s first exposure to it came early in life. “I was too young to know this, but my mom told me stories,” the St. Maria Goretti parishioner said of growing up in Taraba in northern Nigeria, with a predominantly Muslim population.

“When the crisis started, they [Islamic terrorists] started burning people’s houses, burning people alive, killing, and shooting people,” Ogiefa recalled. “As long as you’re a Christian, they’ll skip the Muslim’s house and destroy the Christian’s house.”

Her father, a surgeon, was well-liked and respected in the community, as he often served Muslim patients and leaders at the hospital

he managed. That relationship with their Muslim neighbors may have saved their lives, Ogiefa explained.

Although their home was spared during the attacks, violence continued

in Taraba, and the family decided to flee south, where there is a greater Christian population.

“I would say that’s the first persecution I ever witnessed, even though I was not

really old enough to understand what was going on,” she said.

As she grew older, Ogiefa started noticing more signs of Christian persecution. For her devout Catholic family, going to Mass weekly was a way of life. But being in the sacred space of the local Catholic church was at times frightening. Islamic terrorists would attack churches frequently – especially around major feast days.

“Going to church became so scary because you never knew where it’s going to be and who it’s going to be,” Ogiefa said. “In our church, they tried to get metal detectors, get more security, but still, that peace of mind is not there. You’re just uneasy in your spirit because you don’t know what’s going to happen.

“So many churches I know have been bombed with people inside... a lot of priests too have been kidnapped and killed, some kidnapped and really beaten just because [persecutors] didn’t agree with the way of our religion.”

Of course, religious persecution exists outside of Nigeria. In fact, Christian persecution continues to be one of the biggest human rights issues. According to Open Doors USA, in 2020 more than 340 million Christians lived in countries where they experienced high levels of discrimination or persecution, ranging from arrests and imprisonments without trial to physical retribution and murder.

Tension and the plight of persecution continues in Nigeria, she said, and lots of attacks don’t make the news. For instance, a few years ago,

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Emily Breclaw

LEARNING SPECIALIST, NOLAN CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL





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a terrorist attack in northern Nigeria left two young sisters orphaned after fleeing to the south. Ogiefa's in-laws adopted them.

Even so, Nigeria's Catholics maintain a strong faith. Ogiefa recalled a fellow Nigerian Catholic saying after a spate of persecution: "At the end of the day, it's Jesus Christ. He died for us, and He already told us these things are going to happen, so consider it all joy when you're being persecuted."

Asked what a Catholic can do in the face of persecution, Ogiefa responded: First, pray "that the Good Lord may change the hearts of those carrying out these heinous acts," remembering *John 16:33*. Second, live out your Catholic faith as best and fully as you can, not taking it for granted.

Ogiefa has taken her advice to heart. Since becoming a member of St. Maria Goretti's diverse parish, she's been dedicated to giving back through the Society of St. Vincent de Paul.

STEWARDS OF GOD'S CREATION

Dr. Natalie Hubbard was excited about the opportunity to integrate her Catholic faith into her life science lessons when she joined the Nolan Catholic High School faculty in 2007.

She uses available resources including "a good, faithful community; good science; a great property." This year, she's added a "piece from the pope" — Pope Francis' 2015 encyclical "*Laudato*

Si: On care for our common home."

Hubbard and Emily Breclaw, outdoor learning specialist at Nolan, collaborate on biweekly lessons for honors or Advanced Placement biology students on the encyclical, which expounds upon the care of creation and the use of resources.

The students read the document, observe nature, and participate in lively classroom discussions about the material.

Hubbard noted that the issue "is important for the Church. It's not a political thing." Pope Francis, Pope Benedict XVI, and St. John Paul II all spoke and wrote about respecting creation, she said, and she expects future popes will also.

Breclaw hopes that by reading *Laudato Si*, the students "learn to look at things differently... thinking 'What can I do in my sphere of influence? How can I be a better steward with my friends and family and in my own place?' rather than having the goal of 'I need to change the whole world.'"

Hubbard added, "It's our responsibility to be caretakers of what God has given us. We're helping them think about, 'What can you do, even individually?'"

The teachers have been impressed with the students' level of interest, application of critical thinking, and realization that their generation will be charged with solving problems created by misuse or misallocation of environmental resources.

Julianna Broadway, a junior in AP biology, finds the challenges posed by Pope Francis in *Laudato Si* a little frightening, but mostly hopeful.

"Every generation has their problem they have to solve," she said, citing slavery and woman's suffrage, among others. "My

generation's thing we have to solve will be the environment.”

Freshman Betsy Weber, an honors biology student, was surprised to find “relatable writing” in the Vatican document.

In an observation, she reflected on being part of a larger natural world. “God didn’t create everything just

for beauty’s sake, but for a purpose. Whenever I see a creature as simple as a lizard, living out the purpose that was blessed upon him by God, I am then reminded of the various and numerous purposes that us as humans (and I myself) have been born into this world to do.”

Although much of the encyclical

still lies ahead, Hubbard and Breclaw are pleased with the students’ progress so far. Hubbard said, “What does *Laudato Si* matter if it’s not inspiring thought?”

INVESTING IN FUTURES

“Holy moments” is how Gus Villanueva describes instances where God makes His presence known. He and his wife, Cecilia, are council members for Educate the Children – Honduras, and each time he travels to Honduras to visit the three schools affiliated with the diocese, he experiences several holy moments.

Public education in Honduran villages ends at sixth grade, and in 2005 ETC-H opened two schools in remote areas to provide education from seventh through 11th grade. On one of his early visits to Honduras, Gus noticed several young children not attending elementary school and inquired why.

He learned their parents couldn’t afford the mandatory uniform for the public school, so he immediately equipped 17 kids with uniforms, shoes, and backpacks. Since then, ETC-H steps in to furnish essentials for younger students without means to buy them.

Which brings us to one of those holy moments. On a subsequent trip to Honduras, a grandmother stopped Gus and thanked him. “You spared me,” she said. “I could only afford to send one of my four grandkids to school, and I was praying about which one to send. I don’t have to worry about that now.”

In 16 years, Gus estimates that almost 1,000 students in the villages have graduated from 11th grade. The opportunity for education has transformed the children, he said. “You see the spirit of the young adolescent coming through. We see their hopes, their wishes, their desires for their future.”

Gus, who has made about 20 trips to Honduras, begins his day praying,

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▲ Gustavo and Cecilia Villanueva
MISSION COUNCIL MEMBERS, EDUCATE THE CHILDREN - HONDURAS



▲
John Tenny
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF ORANT CHARITIES

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“Lord, open my eyes to what You want me to see and do.” By surrendering to the Lord, he says, the Holy Spirit has guided ETC-H to open a third school, sponsor college scholarships, and build a house for an especially destitute family.

Cecilia, who is preparing for her fourth trip to Honduras, explained how the couple became

involved. About 10 years ago, they agreed, with much persuasion, to be translators for a medical mission to Honduras. She said, “It was a big eye opener for the two of us. To be in the thick of it, to speak to the people and look into their eyes and hear them talk — there is no way to describe how God touches your heart.”

Since then, the St. Stephen parishioners have helped sustain the

project begun by a group of faithful from the Diocese of Fort Worth who visited Honduras after the devastation of Hurricane Mitch in 1999. They estimate about 90 percent of the current financial support of ETC-H comes from individuals within the diocese.

Cecilia understands that not everyone can do mission work in Honduras, but she insists everyone can find their mission, even if it’s the lonely senior citizen three blocks away.

“Look around and see where you can do mission,” she said. “Because that’s what it’s all about....If you just change one person for the good, you will actually change many people for the good.”

GIVING DRINK TO THE THIRSTY

Orant Charities was founded by Seth Morgan and Michael Tenny, members of Immaculate Conception Parish in Denton and St. Mark Parish in Argyle, respectively.

Its board of directors comprises Denton-area Catholics.

Most of its funding originates within the Diocese of Fort Worth.

But John Tenny, the executive director of Orant Charities, is quick to point out that this charity is not Texan. The nonprofit is a local/international partnership, and he defines local as the boots-on-the-ground, 53-person field staff of Malawians. The international is the cowboy-boots-wearing Texans who provide fundraising and management advice.

Orant Charities came into existence about 15 years ago. After a study to determine where money and manpower would make the biggest impact, the charity focused on one of the poorest communities on earth, a community of about 36,000 in central Malawi.

By concentrating on a small geographic area, they can respond to a broad spectrum of needs and “touch people multiple times,” said Tenny, the son of the co-founder. Health care, education, clean water, business micro-loans, farming cooperatives — their programs make impacts across all ages and stages of life in this community of subsistence farmers.

Orant began operations in Malawi by opening a health clinic, then added a mobile



Xergio Chacin
 DIRECTOR OF IMMIGRATION SERVICES, CATHOLIC CHARITIES FW

health clinic. Between them both, tens of thousands of patients, mostly children, receive medical treatment annually.

Health care is closely associated with clean water. Each year, Orant has drilled and repaired an increasing number of water wells. In 2020, the non-profit drilled 14 new wells and repaired almost 100 others.

In Malawi, free education stops after eighth grade, and Orant provides scholarships for impoverished students,

mostly girls, to continue their education through high school. This year, three recent graduates will attend a university, thanks to Orant funding.

Each year, Malawians endure a hungry season from November until the March harvest. Orant educates farmers on best farming practices, including irrigation and fertilizer, and provides loans for fertilizer and seed.

Another economic boost is the micro-loan program for women with small businesses. The program targets

women, who are more likely to spend profits on family, according to Tenny.

Orant has an unlikely tool in its quest to assist the least of these. “I would say one of the big improvements we have had is using data to track everything,” said Tenny.

For example, frequent repairs to a specific water well may indicate excessive use, and a second well in that area may be needed.

Orant will soon launch electronic medical records in its clinic — the first in Malawi. Tenny is “extremely excited” about its potential.

He explained, “It allows you to treat patients better, and on another level it allows us to understand what are the needs based on the areas.... It will give us so much more data to understand how to improve people’s lives.”

WELCOMING THE STRANGER

Administrations change, policies shift, and immigration and refugee services offered by Catholic Charities Fort Worth adapt to the protocols of the day.

However, the imperative to welcome the stranger is constant.

Xergio Chacin, director of Immigration Services and dental clinic at CCFW, said, “The Bible is explicit about our responsibility to immigrants — time after time [Scripture references] the orphan, the widow, and the stranger.”

Shalaina Abioye, CCFW’s director of refugee services, added, “We’re all human beings and we should respect that human dignity. Jesus was a refugee — I think people forget about that.”

CCFW provides legal assistance with immigration to individuals who are eligible to apply for immigration benefits. Immigration services is a self-supporting department, funded by client fees. Chacin noted no one is denied services if he is unable to pay, however.

The staff of nine serves about 4,000

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Happy Thanksgiving

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From Page 45

clients in an average year. Services begin with a consultation to determine if the immigrant is legally qualified to apply for immigration benefits, and if so, help the client prepare and file his application and provide administrative legal representation.

Chacin, a fully accredited immigration representative, said the organization focuses on keeping families together, along with humanitarian relief.

According to Chacin, immigration services at CCFW are robust yet affordable. He quipped, “We don’t have a fancy office. Bring your own Coke.”

If CCFW did not offer these services, immigrants would navigate the complex system on their own, use a different nonprofit with limited services, pay expensive fees at a private firm, or fall victim to predatory practitioners.

A special class of immigrants are refugees, who flee their country because of persecution, war, or violence. Refugees complete an extensive background check and then are invited by the U.S. government to resettle here, following an annual admissions cap set by the White House.

Refugee services at CCFW also assist special immigrant visa holders, such as the Afghans who served as interpreters, security officers, and drivers for U.S. forces in Afghanistan.

Abioye said, “We’re grateful that our government did the right thing, because these individuals risked their lives for our military. Evacuating them ... was the right thing to do, and I’m glad that there are agencies here like Catholic Charities in Fort Worth that are ready to step in and help them rebuild their lives.”

Last year, the nonprofit helped 101 refugees, who achieved a 100 percent employment rate. This year, the agency is on pace to help resettle about 300.

Abioye described the 38-member refugee services department as compassionate and empathetic, especially when a refugee is reunited with a spouse, a sibling, or a child. She especially remembers a Somali child separated from his mother at the age of three and reunited last year, after 13 years apart.

Immigration policy is a political minefield, and Chacin, who has worked in immigration



Shalaina Abioye

DIRECTOR OF REFUGEE SERVICES, CATHOLIC CHARITIES FW

almost 20 years, doesn’t claim to have an ideal solution. A completely open or completely closed border is impossible and unsustainable, he said, making it “insanely difficult” to determine who may enter.

However, he does have some suggestions based on his experience. First, he said, be aware of the facts: that 99 percent of

immigrants just want to work and provide for their families, that collectively they contribute more than they take from the economy, and that immigrants are ineligible for public benefits.

Second, he recommended we remember, “We need to be Christians before we are proud Americans.... We have a higher standard, a higher calling.” 🇺🇸



DIVERSE

discipleship

At Midwestern State University, Debbie Veitenheimer invites students from many nations to explore and grow their Catholic faith

By Jenara Kocks Burgess

Walk into the Catholic Campus Center adjacent to Midwestern State University in Wichita Falls on a given Friday afternoon and, odds are, you'll find Debbie Veitenheimer and students of several different cultures singing the Divine Mercy Chaplet.

After more than 20 years as the director of the Catholic Campus Ministry at MSU, Veitenheimer is no stranger to that diversity and hasn't lost sight of the personal touch that is key to discipleship. Recently, Veitenheimer reflected on her time sharing the Gospel with students from different nations.

"This cradle Catholic who knew very little has grown into a woman of faith who begins every day knowing it is His, not mine," said Veitenheimer of her faith journey. "I did pursue a master's degree in pastoral ministry from the University of

Dallas along the way. But my classroom has been a formal one as well as a large informal classroom where the students are my teachers."

One of the biggest lessons both Veitenheimer and her students have learned over the years is about the diversity — and similarities — found in the universal Church. For instance, more than 20 years ago, the students at the Catholic Campus Center were predominantly from the Caribbean Islands. Now flags from 20 countries adorn the CCC ceiling, representing the diversity of all the students who have walked through those doors over the years.

"Today, it is a huge melting pot of students from multiple countries and cultures," Veitenheimer said. "Some days I will hear two or three different languages [besides English] spoken there. I am grateful that students from other countries who come to MSU find a home at the CCC. They are so far away from family and need that comfort and connection. Learning what it is to be a

Catholic in other countries is so intriguing to me."

Veitenheimer could fill a book with the stories of diversity, friendship, and faith that she has witnessed over the years. One of her favorites involved the CCC's ministry with Guatemala, which began when she took a missionary team there with the former pastor of Sacred Heart Parish in Wichita Falls, Father Jack McKone, in 2014.

A few years later, on a Sunday after Mass in July, one of her students said he met a new student at MSU from Guatemala and brought him to Mass. Veitenheimer met the student, Rodrigo, and found out he had a family business near the region where the CCC students had traveled for their Guatemalan mission trips.

"Rodrigo quickly became a part of our CCC family. He came to MSU to perfect his English, but he stayed because of the community he found at the CCC," Veitenheimer said. "The next summer he traveled with us to Guatemala for our



Debbie Veitenheimer stands in front of national flags representing the home countries of students at Midwestern State University Catholic Campus Center. (NTC/ Juan Guajardo)

mission trip. His family met us at the airport and his grandmother invited us into her home for lunch. She showed love to each of us as if we were her own.” Later that week, Rodrigo’s family invited the travelers to dinner at the family restaurant. “They treated us all to the best evening of delicious food and wonderful hospitality. The universal Church was so very evident in all of that experience,” she said.

Veitenheimer said it’s important to her that everyone who walks through the doors of the CCC is met where they are and yet encouraged to grow in depth, breadth, and

understanding alongside others.

“The feeling of belonging to a community that is grounded in faith really allows students the courage to explore their faith and know that no question is off limits,” she said. “The conversations I am privy to among the students are fascinating. Because students are from small towns, large cities, Texas, out of state, and out of the country, their unity comes in their desire to pursue Christ and grow their faith while in college.”

Jeff Hedglen, director of the University Catholic Community at UT Arlington,

said, “Debbie’s wide-open heart makes it easy for her to welcome students from all walks of life...She beautifully brings together the gifts of spirituality, pastoral care, and motherhood to welcome, guide, and nurture students from various backgrounds.”

Hedglen continued, “These qualities set the stage for students to encounter Christ in the sacraments and community life offered in the campus ministry setting.”

Veitenheimer’s background was in higher education and although she knew she wanted to work with college students outside the classroom when she started working at MSU more than 20 years ago, she wasn’t looking for a career in ministry at the time. While she was working at MSU in student development, the former MSU Catholic campus minister approached her about working part time with students in a faith capacity.

“It was as if God hit me over the head and said, ‘This is what I have been calling you to!’ I was truly shocked to feel the tug to apply for the job. I applied, and here I am, over 20 years later,” she said.

Veitenheimer said her Catholic faith has grown as she has worked alongside amazing young adults.

“I have grown an intimacy with Christ that I never knew possible. I have grown a solid prayer life. I have laughed and cried with students. I have taught, and I have been taught,” she said. “I have experienced so many different cultures from a lens of faith. I have seen Christ in the flesh right in front of me. I have hope for the future because of the college students who bless me with their presence, their curiosity, their passion, their authenticity, and their trust.” 🇺🇸



Culture Crush

With a Polish mother and a Ukrainian father, Mark Krasij never dreamed he'd be married to a woman from Colombia. But God and their common Catholic faith brought them together.

Now married two years and parents to Andrij, they have experienced the “exercise of mutual love, an interplay of give and take, for the good of the family,” as described by Pope Francis in his apostolic exhortation *Amoris Laetitia* (*The Joy of Love*), which was issued five years ago.

The document addresses the complexities and realities of family life at all stages. To couples like Mark and Laura, he writes, “Young love needs to keep dancing towards the future with immense hope.... Hope also bids us live fully in the present, giving our all to the life of the family, for the best way to prepare a solid future is to live well in the present.”

The Holy Father has announced an “*Amoris Laetitia* Family” year, so the *NTC* is expanding its regular feature The Domestic Church to explore how local families live with faith and love.



CULTURE CLUB: Laura moved to Texas from Colombia when she was nine, and Mark grew up in Connecticut with a Polish mother and a Ukrainian father. Although their heritage derives from different continents, Laura said the common experience of growing up in close-knit immigrant families unites them.

THE BEGINNING: The couple met at a mutual friend's birthday party. Despite their extended conversation, they did not exchange numbers, so Mark found her on social media afterwards. Their first date was to Mass at St. Sophia Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church in The Colony, where Mark plays the bandura, a traditional Ukrainian stringed instrument.

COME TOGETHER: Mark said, "In a country like this, where everyone's from so many different places, it seems like it's part of a big design. How can you bring different cultures together? Catholicism works in every culture. It brings so many people together that you wouldn't expect... next thing you know, I have a Colombian wife."

PRE-WEDDING JITTERS: After dating for five years, they were engaged on Divine Mercy Sunday in 2019.

Mark admitted to being apprehensive in the weeks leading up to the wedding. "It's an entirely momentous decision. As a Catholic, there's no going back; you have to go forward, just do your best, and build and build and build. It will probably take you in directions you weren't expecting."

MARRIED: On October 18, 2019, at St. Sophia with four

priests in attendance. The wedding incorporated elements of both families' heritage in the food, the attire, and the music.

TWO SHALL BECOME ONE: Marriage, followed 11 months later by a baby, was a big adjustment for the couple, who married when Mark was 41 and Laura was 34. Mark used to devote hours to playing the bandura and soccer, but now "our lives revolve around [Andrij's] schedule," admitted Laura, who said the baby is "God's gift to us."

AND BABY MAKES THREE: Laura is the coordinator of children's faith formation at Holy Family Parish in Fort Worth, and Mark is a senior lecturer in mathematics at University of Texas at Arlington. Thus far, they have been able to coordinate their schedules so that one of them can be home with their son.

BABY LESSONS: Laura said being a parent has taught her patience and forgiveness. Even on a bad day, her son greets her with a smile and open arms. "That's how God's love is for us. He's always there with open arms."

As a new parent, Mark has learned, "There's your time and there's God's time. There's your plan and there's God's plan... Better to trust in the One who knows everything than in your own limited knowledge."

BRINGING UP BABY: Mark said he wants his son to know that "God exists. I want him to come to that conclusion on his own, to reason through it. There's a moral order to the universe and it comes from Him; there's certain obligations that you have to other people

and to yourself and it comes from Him. You need to take care of yourself, love yourself, and have respect for others. He created them, too. You have a certain dignity as a human being that comes from God, so hold onto that."

Laura wants Andrij "to know that there's a God, to trust and love Him. To know that He's always there for him. To know that how much he loves Him, He loves him even more. And to always trust his life to Him and follow His example."

FIRST THINGS: Laura said, "it doesn't matter how strong your faith is, in all relationships there's always going to be ups and downs. But if you put God first, He will always bring you back to the main source, which is the family. He is our Father, and He created the family for a reason."

CATHOLIC CONNECTION: The couple grew up worshiping in different rites of the Catholic Church, but both are committed, faithful Catholics.

Mark, a mathematician, appreciates "the reasoned outlook [of the Catholic faith], where everything is rational and there's no objection to science... Having the theological perspective with the scientific perspective makes your intellectual experience that much more deep," he said.

He also values the Church's "direct link to Christ Himself and the Apostles."

Laura appreciates the saints, and she is inspired by Catholic mission work to relieve suffering in impoverished areas. However, she added, "I think the biggest thing in our faith is the Eucharist, where we're receiving truly the Body and Blood of Christ." 🇺🇸

THEY ARE: Holy Family parishioners Laura and Mark Krasij, with their son Andrij, at their home in Arlington. (NTC/Ben Torres)



The Parish is our Family

To commemorate the Year of St. Joseph, we are doubling up on Monsignor Josephs in this feature. During our visit to Blessed Sacrament Parish in Arlington, we spoke with Monsignor Joseph Pemberton, the pastor since 2016, and Monsignor Joseph Scantlin, the pastor emeritus, who served as pastor from 1995 - 2016. Msgr. Scantlin still hears confessions at the parish.

NAMESAKES: When Msgr. Scantlin was born at St. Joseph Hospital, the medical staff wasn't certain he would survive. When he recovered, a nurse suggested his parents, who had not selected a name, call him Joseph, after the patron of Fort Worth's Catholic hospital.

Msgr. Pemberton was named for Father Joseph Erbrick, a priest who was a good friend of the family.

PATRON SAINT: Both priests call St. Joseph their favorite saint. Msgr. Pemberton includes a daily prayer to St. Joseph in his morning prayers, and he has instituted a monthly votive Mass for St. Joseph at Blessed Sacrament Parish.

BORN AND RAISED: Both men attended diocesan Catholic schools before entering seminary.

ORDINATION: Msgr. Scantlin was ordained May 23, 1959, and Msgr. Pemberton was ordained April 29, 1977 — both at St. Rita Parish in Fort Worth.

BLESSINGS OF BEING A PRIEST: Msgr. Pemberton said, "Overall, the people are very warm and caring. I always am inspired by their faith. Their own spirituality helps us as priests grow in our spirituality.... I love saying Mass and the sacraments. To watch the people and see the energy of parishioners, their excitement about wanting to grow in their faith is an inspiration to any priest."



NTC/Juan Guajardo

Msgr. Scantlin said, “Our primary ministry is to the people that we serve, that we live with — we enter into their lives, their needs, their joys, their hearts.”

WORKING TITLE: Monsignor is a title bestowed on a priest due to exceptional service to the Church. Bishop Kevin Vann, the predecessor to Bishop Olson, honored Msgr. Scantlin in 2008 and Msgr. Pemberton in 2013. Msgr. Pemberton joked it was Bishop Vann’s last act “as he was literally walking out the door” to his new assignment as Bishop of Orange, Calif.

The two priests agree the title means more to the parishioners than to the priest. “They take great pride in knowing the pastor is a monsignor, more so than the monsignor himself,” they laughed together.

BUILDING IN PROGRESS: When Msgr. Scantlin was pastor, he emphasized strong community in a parish. Msgr. Pemberton followed him at Holy Family Parish and at Blessed Sacrament and describes him as “easy to follow because of his style of leadership. He invites, encourages [parishioners] to take on key roles in the parish. He believes in consensus and sharing responsibility and authority with the people of the parish.”

PARISH PEOPLE: “We’re blessed here at Most Blessed Sacrament with tremendous leaders, men and women who love the parish and want to do everything they can to give energy to the parish. They love serving here and being here,” said the current pastor.

AGING GRACEFULLY: “As I’ve gotten older, the joy and gift of saying Mass has become more and more important...I just have a deeper appreciation of it, that awesome role of standing at the altar, praying Mass with the people that have gathered there,” said Msgr. Pemberton.

A BIG FAMILY: St. Joseph is a good model for priests because “he took care of his family. That’s what a diocesan priest does,” said Msgr. Scantlin. “This parish is our family,” explained Msgr. Pemberton.

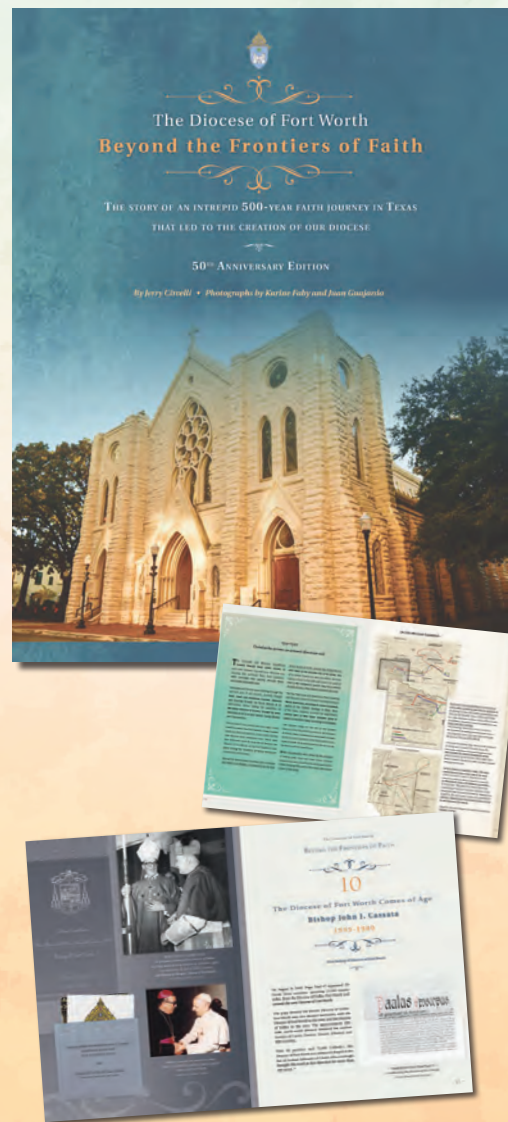
Msgr. Scantlin added, “You celebrate with them, you cry with them, you share their lives, their good fortune and their hurts. All those things that families do.”

A CENTURY OF PRIESTHOOD: In their 62 and 44 years of priesthood respectively, Msgr. Scantlin and Msgr. Pemberton have accumulated some wisdom to share.

Msgr. Scantlin said he’s strived to teach “fidelity to the life of Church, to the people of the Church. Be faithful to who you are and what God has called you to do.”

Msgr. Pemberton shared his intent at each parish, “If I have brought you a little closer to the Lord in how I served you and how I pastored you, then I feel I’ve done what God has called me to do.” 🇺🇸

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Outside of Ourselves

What causes a man to consider a call to the priesthood?

When we stop to think about our lives and the world we live in, it seems that serving Almighty God as His priest through the ministry of the Church would be very attractive. We live in a world created by God, after all. God took on our human nature in the incarnation of Jesus Christ. God sent His Holy Spirit on Pentecost to abide with us and lead us to Himself. Jesus Christ established the Church and the sacraments to strengthen us in our earthly journey.

The priesthood is not a human invention. The priesthood was established by Christ. Every priest is called to offer the Mass, to celebrate the sacraments, to preach the Gospel, and to be an instrument in the lives of others to lead them to salvation in Christ and eternal life. Why is it, then, that there are so few men willing to become priests? Why do so many other ways of life look more attractive than a life of sacrifice and service to God and His Church?

These questions, in essence, are rhetorical. They do not really have an answer outside of the conversation that takes place in the heart of a man who begins to hear the stirrings of the question: "What if God is calling me to be a priest?"

Why do some men follow, and others allow other voices to take precedence in

their lives? While not a definitive answer, much of the reason is found in what a man expects or hopes for from life. I recently was able to visit the Grand Canyon. It was an amazing experience. Even if you think you are prepared for the sight of the Grand Canyon, it strikes you with its grandeur and immensity, and it leaves you with a greater appreciation of the majesty of God and the wonder of His creation.



Fr. Jonathan Wallis

Part of the experience was that I was surrounded by people who were sharing the same sense of awe and wonder. We all knew we were in the presence of something bigger than ourselves. This sense of awe led to asking deeper questions about life, about creation, and about the role we have to play in God's plan.

One of the negative consequences of COVID and the continuing pandemic is that we are more and more separated from each other. We do not share common experiences because we are not occupying the same space. However, the experience at the Grand Canyon was different. All of us who were there could not help but marvel and even express our wonder to total strangers.

It could be that one of the reasons we do not have more men who are willing to become priests is because our sense of wonder has been numbed. We are content with what we have. The breadth, and depth, and

height of our world has been reduced to the size of the screen of our favorite device.

We have drawn into ourselves more and more. The horizon of our lives is shrinking to that which serves us in the moment. Our aspirations are being reduced to what we want right now.

The call of Jesus Christ always calls us outside of ourselves. It does not require that we have everything figured out right now, but it does require a generosity of spirit that is willing to look beyond the immediate and trusts in the beauty and majesty of God.

Following Jesus Christ as His priest requires a man to put his own dreams and aspirations aside and to put his trust in the Lord. Following Christ fosters a vision of the world that looks beyond the immediate and leads to the eternal.

I pray that many young men from our diocese will be willing to look beyond the immediate, and to consider following Jesus Christ as His priest. Let us all pray that God may grant us a sense of wonder at His majesty, love for His Church, and the desire to serve Him in all things. 🇺🇸

Ordained to the priesthood in 2007, Father Jonathan Wallis, STL, serves as Vicar General, Director of Seminarian Formation, and Chaplain & Director of the Newman Center at TCU for the Diocese of Fort Worth.

Primero Escuchamos

El Obispo Olson celebra la Misa que marca el inicio del proceso sinodal diocesano

Por Joan Kurkowski-Gillen

El Obispo Michael Olson pidió a los católicos del norte de Texas durante una Misa celebrada el 17 de octubre en la Catedral de San Patricio que oren por la guía y la sabiduría del Espíritu Santo al inaugurarse la primera fase del proceso sinodal de la Diócesis, dos años antes de que el Sínodo de los Obispos se reúna en Roma en el 2023.

El Papa Francisco hizo un llamado a “escuchar las preguntas, las preocupaciones y las esperanzas de cada iglesia, pueblo y nación”. La Diócesis de Fort Worth se une a otras diócesis alrededor del mundo en la primera fase del proceso, que se enfoca en escuchar y consultar al Pueblo de Dios. A pedido del Sumo Pontífice, los obispos de todo el mundo celebraron una Misa el 17 de octubre para dar inicio al proceso de escucha y consulta en cada diócesis.

“Al ofrecer esta Misa con ustedes y con otras diócesis del mundo, damos comienzo a la parte que nos toca en lo que el Papa Francisco ha llamado el Proceso Sinodal Diocesano, un período de preparación para cuando el Sínodo de los Obispos se reúna en dos años”, dijo el Obispo Olson, a la vez que dio la bienvenida a la congregación presente. “Oremos para que el Espíritu Santo guíe a todos los obispos, y oremos también por



Por una Iglesia sinodal
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nuestra participación en este proceso de preparación”.

El Obispo de Fort Worth aseguró además que se brindará más información en las próximas semanas acerca de la participación directa en este proceso.

El Vicario General, el Padre Jonathan Wallis, y la Directora del Instituto San Junípero Serra, Paola Quintero-Araújo,

servirán de co-contacts para el Proceso Sinodal de nuestra diócesis. A mediados de noviembre se nombrará un equipo representativo integrado por varias personas que formularán las preguntas que se utilizarán durante las sesiones de consulta.

CONTINÚA EN LA PÁGINA 63

Ella no Está Sola

La iniciativa de Respeto a la Vida proporciona a las madres embarazadas la ayuda adecuada en el momento adecuado

Por Susan Moses

Una campaña de concientización ha transmitido una lección adicional: el tiempo de Dios es perfecto.

Terri Schauf, la coordinadora del programa de Respeto a la Vida de la Diócesis de Fort Worth, estaba ansiosa por comenzar Caminando con las Mamás Necesitadas, una iniciativa desarrollada por la Conferencia de Obispos Católicos de los Estados Unidos.

El programa, que se llevará a cabo en las diócesis de todo el país, alienta a las parroquias a identificar los recursos disponibles en la comunidad local, que podrían ayudar a las mujeres embarazadas y familias que carecen de apoyo material o emocional. Las parroquias hacen un inventario de la ayuda disponible en sus comunidades, crean conciencia sobre tales recursos en las parroquias y fomentan la colaboración y el respaldo de esos recursos.

El comienzo de esta iniciativa estaba pautado para el 25 de marzo del 2020, justo cuando

ocurrió prácticamente el cierre del país debido a la pandemia del coronavirus. Tras el retraso inicial, las diócesis comenzaron el programa de acuerdo a su propio itinerario. Luego de que se propusieran y se rechazaran diferentes fechas, la Diócesis de Fort Worth inició el programa de Caminando con las Mamás Necesitadas el 31 de mayo del 2021, Día de la Visitación de la Santísima Virgen María.

Tres meses más tarde entró en vigor la nueva ley de Texas que prohíbe el aborto una vez que se puedan detectar los latidos del corazón del bebé. La mayoría de los abortos tienen lugar después de esta etapa de desarrollo del bebé, por lo que “va a haber muchas mamás que necesiten ayuda y no sepan a quién acudir”, dijo Schauf.

El Obispo Michael Olson señaló la importancia del momento providencial del inicio del programa en su entrevista del 20 de septiembre con el Padre Robert McTeigue, SJ, en “The Catholic Current”. Monseñor Olson declaró que: “Ésta es una oportunidad para que seamos proactivos... una oportunidad para preparar

nuestras parroquias para apoyar las mujeres embarazadas cuando el aborto ya no es una opción legal para ellas a partir de dicha etapa del desarrollo del embarazo, de modo que estemos al tanto de los recursos disponibles. Se trata de un enfoque que intenta ayudar a las mujeres más allá de simplemente cerrarles la puerta al aborto, sino que además les abre otros recursos prácticos para ayudar a proteger tanto a la madre como al niño”.

Schauf admitió sentirse frustrada inicialmente cuando se aplazó el comienzo del programa, pero agregó: “Ahora que esta ley ha entrado en vigor en Texas, veo la mano de Dios en el momento oportuno. Confiamos y hacemos lo que nos corresponde, pero también lo ponemos en Sus manos”.

CONTINÚA EN LA PÁGINA 58



Recursos Relacionados con el Embarazo

en la Diócesis de Fort Worth

¿Conoces a una futura madre que necesita apoyo material y espiritual? Aquí hay sólo algunos apostolados que pueden ayudar con todo, desde pruebas de embarazo y artículos para bebés hasta sonogramas y clases para los papás.



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- FlourishingTree.org
- 9900 E. Bankhead Hwy., Aledo, 76008



GABRIEL PROJECT

- 800-545-5935
- FWDioc.org/crisis-pregnancy
- Se ofrece en toda la diócesis



GRACE HOUSE MINISTRIES

- 817-599-9080
- GraceHouseMinistries.net
- 919 E. Eureka Street, Weatherford, 76086



LORETO HOUSE

- 940-380-8191
- LoretoHouse.org
- 1100 N. Bonnie Brae St., Denton, 76201



LOVING CARE PREGNANCY CENTER

- 682-429-0724
- joanhilleren@gmail.com
- Sirve a adolescentes en Hurst, Euless, Bedford, Grapevine y Colleyville



MOTHER & UNBORN BABY CARE

- 817-870-2229
- UnbornBabyCare.org
- 1118 Pennsylvania Ave., Fort Worth, 76104



ST. VINCENT DE PAUL

- SVDPfw.org para encontrar conferencias locales
- Proporcioná despensas de alimentos y artículos para bebés

DANDO LOS PRIMEROS PASOS

Hasta la fecha, alrededor de ocho parroquias han sentado las bases para establecer el programa Caminando con las Mamás Necesitadas y han creado un equipo central compuesto de diferentes ministerios: el ministerio de Respeto a la Vida, por supuesto, pero también el de justicia social, los Caballeros de Colón, el club de las mamás y otros ministerios de la parroquia.

Una vez que los feligreses formaron su equipo central en julio, la Parroquia de la Sagrada Familia de Fort Worth completó un inventario de las diversas organizaciones en su área que pueden ayudar a las mujeres embarazadas o familias necesitadas.

El siguiente paso en la Sagrada Familia fue realizar una presentación al mes de esas organizaciones, de modo que los feligreses puedan conocer mejor el alcance de los servicios disponibles en cada una de ellas.

Meg Ruhter es la coordinadora de la pastoral juvenil de la parroquia y forma parte del equipo central. Ella ha visto ya el gran beneficio de esta iniciativa cuando los miembros del comité de Respeto a la Vida se sentaron con varios voluntarios de San Vicente de Paúl y explicaron sus respectivos ministerios.

Ruhter dijo: “La necesidad de esta iniciativa era muy evidente. Estos grupos luchan por la misma causa, y se logra más cuando colaboramos juntos”.

Una de las preguntas más comunes que se le hace a Schauf sobre la iniciativa de Caminando con las Mamás Necesitadas es: “¿Se trata esto de un nuevo ministerio? ¿Reemplazará este programa nuestros ministerios existentes?”

La coordinadora de Respeto a la Vida explicó que su propósito es apoyar y crear conciencia sobre los ministerios existentes para que los católicos sepan a cuál de ellos deben referir las personas que así lo necesitan. Además, los ministerios que anteriormente trabajaban de forma independiente pueden unirse y colaborar con el objetivo común de ayudar a las madres necesitadas.

Ruhter de la Parroquia de la Sagrada Familia opina igual y comentó que: “Varias organizaciones ya están librando esta batalla. Aprovechemos lo que tenemos. Por



Roxana Young muestra pañales y fórmula de bebé para las mamás que reciben ayuda en Flourishing Tree. (NTC/Juan Guajardo)

ejemplo, el comité de Respeto a la Vida de la Sagrada Familia organiza una colecta de suministros para bebés en octubre de cada año y el capítulo de San Vicente de Paúl patrocina el árbol de ángeles en diciembre”. Ella espera que este nuevo programa anime a los grupos de cada parroquia a coordinar juntos sus esfuerzos para lograr un mayor impacto de estos ministerios en su comunidad.

EVALUAR, LUEGO AYUDAR

La Parroquia del Buen Pastor está a punto de terminar su amplio estudio sobre el apoyo que ofrece a las mamás de la comunidad local. El equipo central de Caminando con las Mamás Necesitadas de la parroquia de Colleyville tiene aproximadamente una docena de personas.

Se ha realizado un inventario de las organizaciones y agencias de la comunidad que pueden ayudar con la vivienda, los alimentos, las necesidades médicas, la adopción, el empleo, los recursos materiales para un bebé, la recuperación de adicciones e incluso con asesoramiento, según Teri Gray, quien dirige el equipo.

Su próximo paso será compilar esta información detallada en una base de datos, señaló Gray, para que los 11,000 feligreses de la parroquia sepan a dónde referir las personas que desean obtener ayuda.

Gray, que ha sido miembro del Buen Pastor desde el 1998, espera poder llegar a todas las personas de la parroquia. Ella comentó: “Quieres que la mamá tenga el bebé, pero ¿qué haces tú? Quieres asegurarte de que todos conozcan los

recursos. Todos los feligreses podrían ser como ángeles que saben a dónde referir a una madre embarazada necesitada”.

Gray dijo que el equipo central de su parroquia está enfocado en ampliar el conocimiento y la educación sobre el embarazo y los recursos familiares, pero espera que sus esfuerzos también generen más apoyo material y muchos voluntarios, especialmente para el Proyecto Gabriel, que brinda apoyo a las mujeres que tienen embarazos de crisis.

Kaci Cross es la madre de un niño pequeño y un bebé, y ha organizado baby showers para beneficiar al Proyecto Gabriel en su parroquia de origen de la Sagrada Familia. Tener hijos la ha llevado a darse cuenta de la importancia del apoyo de la familia y la comunidad al criar niños pequeños.

Ella explicó la razón por la que se ofreció como voluntaria para el equipo central de Caminando con las Mamás Necesitadas de su parroquia y dijo: “Mucha gente no tiene apoyo. Quiero buscar en las redes los recursos que hay disponibles, y conectar y ayudar a las mujeres que no cuentan con el apoyo de la comunidad.

“El personal y los voluntarios de la parroquia sólo pueden correr la voz hasta cierto punto”, continuó Cross. “Esto nos dará una parroquia entera de personas comprometidas que saben que hay ayuda si ven a una mamá que tiene dificultades. De esta manera habrán muchos más puntos de contacto disponibles para las mamás necesitadas”. 📍

Diácono Rigoberto Leyva nombrado como Director de la oficina del Ministerio Hispano

Por Violeta Rocha

Con “alegría y humildad” el Diácono Rigoberto Leyva, emprende una nueva etapa en su servicio a la Iglesia al ser nombrado a principios de septiembre como el nuevo Director del Ministerio Hispano de la Diócesis de Fort Worth.

Reconoce que tiene ante sí mismo un gran desafío, pues “hay mucho que hacer en la comunidad”. El Diácono Leyva toma este nuevo nombramiento “lleno de entusiasmo y con gran humildad de que nuestro Obispo [Michael] Olson haya pensado en este servidor”, aseveró.



**Diácono
Rigoberto Leyva**

A más de una década de su ordenación como diácono permanente, el Diácono Leyva cree que cada oportunidad de servicio “es una bendición”. El recién nombrado Director del Ministerio Hispano asegura que “la oportunidad que se presenta es enorme. Es para mí una gran oportunidad para servir al pueblo, que es precisamente la razón por la que me

ordené como diácono: para servir a la Iglesia y al pueblo de Dios”.

El Ministerio Hispano fue establecido hace más de 15 años con el fin de unificar a la comunidad hispana dentro de cada una de las parroquias que integran la Diócesis de Fort Worth. Su misión es ser guía y puente de comunicación entre la feligresía hispana y la Oficina del Obispo.

“Nuestra comunidad hispana es muy grande y valiosa, por lo tanto, debe estar bien representada. Debe tener una voz, pero también alguien que la escuche y la guíe... Y espero entusiasmado poder servirle al pueblo de Dios”, añadió el Diácono Leyva.

En el poco tiempo que lleva como Director del Ministerio Hispano ha procurado conocer personalmente a los diferentes grupos diocesanos, tales como los Cursillos, la Pastoral Juvenil, los Talleres de Oración y Vida, y Kairos, entre otros, para “ver cómo puedo asistirles desde el punto de vista diocesano en sus diferentes actividades”.

El Diácono Leyva trabajó en la Oficina del Diaconado Permanente de la Diócesis por los últimos cinco años. Leyva señala que una de sus metas como director de este ministerio es unificar las diferentes culturas hispanas existentes en nuestra diócesis “bajo una sola enseñanza y bajo una sola catequesis”.

Además de servir como Director del Ministerio Hispano, el Diácono Leyva continuará en la Iglesia de San Pedro Apóstol de White Settlement, donde lleva sirviendo desde hace tres años. 📍

Victoria Ramón dirigirá ministerio con adolescentes, adultos jóvenes y estudiantes universitarios

Por Michelle McDaniel

Durante su tiempo como la Directora del Ministerio Juvenil de Sta. Ann en Burseson, a Victoria Ramón le encantaba la curiosidad y el entusiasmo que los adolescentes tenían. Ramón se podía conectar tanto con los jóvenes que se comprometían activamente con su fe, como con aquéllos que necesitaban aliento para hacerlo.

Ese entusiasmo por servir a los jóvenes la llevó a servir como Directora Asociada de los ministerios con los jóvenes y adultos jóvenes de la Diócesis de Fort Worth en el 2019. En dicho cargo colaboró con los que ejercen su ministerio con los jóvenes.



Victoria Ramón

El 21 de septiembre Victoria Ramón fue nombrada como la Directora de los ministerios con jóvenes, adultos jóvenes y estudiantes universitarios de la Diócesis de Fort Worth.

Sirve ahora como apoyo y recurso para todos los coordinadores de jóvenes y adultos jóvenes en las parroquias, así como para los ministros de los campus universitarios, ayudándolos a expandir sus ministerios en las parroquias y las universidades de la Diócesis.

Victoria dice que su mayor objetivo en el nuevo puesto es “ayudar estos adultos jóvenes a convertirse en discípulos misioneros”, y “ayudarlos a encontrar a Cristo y compartirlo con el resto del mundo”.

Ella está impresionada de la forma en que los adultos jóvenes utilizan la tecnología y las redes sociales para compartir el Evangelio: “Tienen muchas ideas y ven el mundo a través de las posibilidades, lo que los lleva realmente a ser creativos con respecto a la manera que desean difundir la Buena Nueva”, dijo Ramón.

“Reconozco ahora, más que antes, la gran responsabilidad de este puesto, y sigo preguntándole al Señor cuál es Su voluntad para mí y qué me pide; pues, por la razón que sea, me ha llamado aquí en este momento”, explicó Ramón. “Me aferro a Cristo mientras sigo aprendiendo y creciendo en esta posición, y estoy realmente emocionada debido a esta nueva aventura por la que nos está llevando.

Victoria Ramón, de 33 años, se graduó de la Universidad de Texas en Arlington con una licenciatura en administración de empresas y está cursando una maestría en catequesis y evangelización de la Universidad Franciscana, que completará en diciembre del 2022. Ella y su esposo viven en el norte de Fort Worth y asisten a la Parroquia de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe. 📍



DESPUÉS DE LA HORA DE nuestra muerte

Columbario de la Parroquia del Buen Pastor en Colleyville. (NTC/Juan Guajardo)

Viaja con nosotros mientras exploramos las enseñanzas católicas sobre los fieles difuntos, la cremación y los elogios

Por Kiki Hayden
y Juan Guajardo

La primera mitad del antiguo refrán acuñado por Christopher Bullock en el 1716, “Es imposible estar seguro de otra cosa que no sea la muerte y los impuestos”, sin duda resuena más fuerte en esta época del año.

Las estaciones del otoño y el invierno son un símbolo de nuestro tiempo fugaz en la tierra y, aún más, el calendario litúrgico de la Iglesia Católica tiene días importantes de solemnidad religiosa como el Día de Todos los Santos y el Día de los Fieles Difuntos para recordarnos del “mundo por venir”. La Iglesia también dedica el mes de noviembre a las Santas Almas del Purgatorio, para recordarnos que debemos orar por aquéllos que nos

han precedido.

Sí, la Iglesia pone gran énfasis en la muerte. Sin embargo, lo hace por una buena razón: los cristianos creen que los seres humanos están hechos de cuerpo y alma, creados a imagen y semejanza de Dios. Por lo tanto, los católicos deben mostrar un profundo respeto por el cuerpo y el alma durante y después de la muerte. ¿Cómo hacemos eso? *North Texas Catholic* investigó profundamente la historia de la Iglesia y habló con algunos sacerdotes de nuestra Diócesis para averiguarlo.

EL CUERPO Y EL ALMA ETERNA

San Pablo escribió a los Corintios: “¿No saben que su cuerpo es templo del

Espíritu Santo que han recibido de Dios y que está en ustedes? Ya no se pertenecen a sí mismos” (1 Corintios 6, 19). En su Carta a los Romanos continúa hablando sobre este tema: “Pero si hemos muerto junto a Cristo, debemos creer que también viviremos con Él” (Romanos 6, 8).

Al declarar inequívocamente: “Espero la resurrección de los muertos y la vida del mundo futuro”, el Credo Niceno, una declaración doctrinal autorizada de la Iglesia, apunta también a la realidad no sólo del cuerpo y el alma, sino a un alma inmortal.

La doctrina católica actual refuerza la de la Iglesia primitiva. El Papa Francisco dijo en el 2015 en su mensaje a las familias que si bien la muerte de un ser querido es “desgarrador”, es importante recordar que “nuestros seres queridos no han desaparecido en la nada oscura. La esperanza nos asegura que están en las manos buenas y fuertes de Dios. El amor es más fuerte que la muerte”.

Dado que tanto el cuerpo como el alma son parte integral de la persona humana, los rituales funerarios católicos exigen reverencia tanto para el cuerpo como para el alma del difunto. El Padre Thu Nguyen, el director diocesano de Liturgia y Culto, dijo: “Los ritos funerarios según las enseñanzas de la Iglesia nos ayudan a reconocer la realidad de la muerte y esperar el juicio final y la resurrección del cuerpo glorioso, cuerpo y alma, para la vida eterna”.

Por lo tanto, la Iglesia enseña que a través de los ritos funerarios, no sólo fortalecemos nuestra esperanza y confortamos a los deudos, sino que también enterramos los restos corporales de los difuntos con el respeto y el cuidado propios de lo que era el Templo del Espíritu Santo.

HONRAR EL CUERPO

“Los restos humanos tienen dignidad y el respetarlos es una forma de afirmar nuestra fe en la resurrección”, explicó el Padre Tim Thompson, párroco de la Parroquia de la Inmaculada Concepción de Denton. “La Iglesia procura que no se niegue la resurrección”.

Aunque es preferible la sepultura

del cuerpo del difunto porque muestra un mayor respeto hacia el difunto, el Vaticano promulgó en el 1963 la Instrucción *Piam et Constantem*, que estableció que se permite el entierro o la cremación, siempre y cuando se mantenga la creencia en la resurrección y que se respeten los restos de los fieles difuntos: “La cremación no toca el alma y no impide a la omnipotencia divina resucitar el cuerpo; y, por lo tanto, no contiene la negación objetiva de la doctrina cristiana sobre la inmortalidad del alma y la resurrección del cuerpo”.

El Padre Nguyen se refirió al apéndice del *Orden de los Funerales Cristianos*, que dice: “Los restos cremados deben ser sepultados en una tumba o enterrados en un mausoleo o columbario. La práctica de esparcir los restos cremados en el mar, desde el aire o en el suelo, o mantener los restos cremados en la casa de un pariente o amigo del difunto no es una disposición reverente de los restos del difunto como la Iglesia lo requiere”.

La Instrucción *Ad Resurgendum cum Christo* relativa a la sepultura del difunto y la conservación de las cenizas en caso de cremación, publicada por el Vaticano en el 2016, dio razones adicionales para estas especificaciones:

“La conservación de las cenizas en un lugar sagrado puede ayudar a reducir el riesgo de sustraer a los difuntos de la oración y del recuerdo de los familiares y de la comunidad cristiana. Así, además, se evita la posibilidad de olvido de los fieles difuntos o que se muestre una falta de respeto a sus restos, sobre todo una vez pasada la primera generación del difunto”.

El Padre Thompson agregó: “La Iglesia quiere un lugar sagrado para depositar los restos, que sea permanente y que los restos de uno no se guarden como una especie de recuerdo de los fieles difuntos”.

Aseveró además que: “Los seres humanos no son objetos y no deben ser tratados como objetos ni por trabajo ni por placer. Los restos humanos tienen una dignidad que proviene de eso, aunque no es lo mismo. Los cuerpos se

donan a menudo a la ciencia y se utilizan con fines científicos, y eso es aceptable porque promueve el conocimiento y el bien de la humanidad. No obstante, los cuerpos de los difuntos nunca se tratan como una mercancía que se utiliza para cualquier propósito. Guardar las cenizas como un recuerdo sería trivializar a los muertos”.

En el caso de donar el cuerpo del difunto a la ciencia, es importante señalar que después de que el laboratorio estudia el cuerpo, la familia debe recibir los restos y ocuparse de su entierro de la forma apropiada y requerida.

El Padre Nguyen aclaró además la diferencia que hay entre venerar los cuerpos de los santos y tratar los cuerpos como recuerdos: “Las reliquias se veneran y se usan con respeto para dar fe de la santidad que Dios otorgó a esta persona”.

Es preciso aclarar que los decretos de la Iglesia tienen que ver con el respeto y el honor, y que el poder de Dios para resucitar no se ve afectado por nuestras acciones. El apologista cristiano Marco Minucio Félix, en uno de sus escritos en el siglo II ó III, recordó un argumento cristiano de que incluso los cuerpos quemados o mutilados pueden resucitar: “Pero, ¿quién hay tan necio ... como para atreverse a negar que el hombre, que podría ser formado por Dios en primer lugar, así también no se podría volver a formar? Todo cuerpo, ya sea seco en polvo, disuelto en humedad, comprimido en cenizas o atenuado en humo, es apartado de nosotros, pero está reservado para Dios”.

Ésta es una buena noticia para los mártires, algunos de los cuales han sido quemados en la hoguera o mutilados de otras formas. Según el *Catecismo de la Iglesia Católica*, “En la muerte ocurre la separación del alma y el cuerpo, el cuerpo del hombre cae en la corrupción, mientras que su alma va al encuentro con Dios, en espera de reunirse con su cuerpo glorificado. Dios en su omnipotencia dará definitivamente a nuestros cuerpos la vida incorruptible uniéndolos a nuestras almas, por la virtud

CONTINÚA EN LA PÁGINA 62

de la Resurrección de Jesús” (CIC 997).

LOS ELOGIOS Y FUNERALES

Como norma general la Iglesia desalienta los elogios o panegíricos en los funerales católicos. El *Orden de los Funerales Cristianos* promulgado por el Vaticano enseña que el rito funerario está destinado a ofrecer “adoración, alabanza y acción de gracias a Dios por el don de la vida que ahora ha sido devuelta a Dios ... La Misa, el memorial de la muerte y resurrección de Cristo es la principal celebración del funeral cristiano”.

El Padre Thu explicó: “Se supone que la homilía en la Misa fúnebre ayude a la gente a comprender el mensaje sobre el cuerpo y la resurrección. Se utilizan los textos sagrados del rito funerario para ayudar a los dolientes a comprender la esperanza, la resurrección y, sí, también el dolor y la pena”.

La razón para esto es que los elogios pueden restar valor a ese mensaje clave.

El *Orden de los Funerales Cristianos* aclara que “un miembro o amigo de la familia puede compartir unas breves palabras de conmemoración del difunto antes de la parte final de la Misa o liturgia del funeral”. Por lo general, las diócesis permiten que se haga un elogio en el velorio (velatorio) o en la recepción después de los ritos funerarios.

LA ORACIÓN CON (Y POR) EL DIFUNTO

La Iglesia celebra la Solemnidad de Todos los Santos el 1 de noviembre. Según el Padre Nguyen, la fiesta reconoce a “todos los santos, tanto a los no reconocidos como a los reconocidos mediante el proceso de canonización”, muchos de los cuales no tienen un día de fiesta específico en el que honramos sus vidas y obras.

El Padre Thompson añadió que: “La festividad de Todos los Santos implica que la categoría de santo es mucho más amplia de lo que imaginamos”.

En la fiesta de Todos los Santos, conmemoramos y oramos por los fieles difuntos que aún no han alcanzado la visión beatífica del cielo porque no han



(Ilustración fotográfica NTC/Juan Guajardo)

sido limpiados de las manchas del pecado. La doctrina católica enseña que estas almas residen en el purgatorio donde se perfeccionan antes de entrar al cielo. Al rezar y ofrecer misas y buenas obras por estas almas, los fieles aquí en la tierra ayudan a estas almas a alcanzarlo.

Como católicos, creemos que los fieles difuntos oran con nosotros, oran por nosotros y reciben los beneficios de nuestras oraciones por ellos. El Padre Thompson afirmó: “Oramos por la misericordia de Dios para los que han muerto. Lo que Dios hace con tales oraciones es un misterio. Oramos los unos por los otros mientras estamos en la tierra; tales oraciones no necesitan detenerse simplemente porque hemos partido de

la vida terrenal”. La base bíblica para orar por los muertos se encuentra en el Libro Segundo de los *Macabeos 12, 38-44*, así como en otros lugares del Antiguo Testamento y el Nuevo Testamento.

Al conmemorar a nuestros seres queridos fallecidos en las solemnidades del Día de Todos los Santos y el Día de los Fieles Difuntos, pedimos que podamos encontrar consuelo en la comunión de sus almas con el Señor. Algún día nosotros estaremos en unión con Dios y nos reuniremos con nuestros seres queridos. Mientras tanto, podemos orar con ellos y por ellos. “Así también en el momento presente vemos las cosas como en un espejo, pero entonces las veremos cara a cara” (1 Corintios 13, 12). 🇺🇸

DE LA PÁGINA 55

Una encuesta o cuestionario abierto en línea estará disponible a principios del 2022 y se compartirá a través del sitio web diocesano, los correos electrónicos masivos y los anuncios a nivel parroquial.

El Vaticano espera que la participación sea lo más amplia y diversa posible y “ciertamente haremos todo lo posible para que así suceda en nuestra Diócesis”, dijo el Padre Wallis. “Todos tendremos la oportunidad de encontrarnos como hermanos, todos creados por el Padre, redimidos por Cristo y guiados por el Espíritu Santo”.

La fase diocesana anterior al Sínodo continúa hasta abril del 2022 y será seguida de la consulta a nivel de todo el país y luego a nivel mundial. El tema del proceso que comprende tres partes es:

Por una Iglesia sinodal: Comunión, Participación y Misión.

La palabra “sínodo” se origina del griego y significa “reunión de personas”, explicó el Obispo Olson en su homilía. Posterior al Concilio Vaticano II, que ocurrió en el 1965, el Papa San Pablo VI estableció el Sínodo de Obispos, una estructura permanente con el fin de tener reuniones regulares que ofrecen consejo y recomendaciones acerca de ciertos tópicos que son sugeridos por el Santo Padre. La formación de los sacerdotes, la evangelización en el mundo, el matrimonio y la vida familiar son ejemplos de algunos de los temas que los obispos han discutido en sínodos anteriores.

“El próximo Sínodo no es un referéndum sobre las Sagradas Escrituras, la Tradición Apostólica o el *Catecismo de la Iglesia Católica*”, enfatizó el Obispo Olson. “Las verdades del Evangelio y la doctrina de la Iglesia no se pueden cambiar por el voto de ningún grupo de la Iglesia”, recalció.

Más bien, el proceso sinodal “es una invitación y una oportunidad para considerar las muchas formas en que todos los bautizados somos responsables de cumplir la Gran Comisión de proclamar el Evangelio hasta los confines de la tierra y hasta el final de los tiempos



para la salvación del mundo”, declaró el Obispo Olson.

“La finalidad del Sínodo no es hacer que la Iglesia sea ‘más popular’, sino dar a conocer y amar a Cristo”, añadió el prelado.

Al inaugurar formalmente el 10 de octubre el proceso sinodal de dos años con una Misa solemne en la Basílica de San Pedro, el Papa Francisco instó a los fieles en su homilía a convertirse en “expertos en el arte del encuentro” a lo largo de la jornada de la deliberación y el discernimiento. “Al igual que Jesús, que caminaba junto a la gente y escuchaba sus preguntas e inquietudes, la Iglesia Católica mundial debería tomarse el tiempo para encontrarse cara a cara con cada cual y escuchar lo que tienen que decir”, dijo el Papa.

“Nada deja indiferente a Jesús; todo le concierne”, el Papa añadió. “Encontrarse con los rostros, compartir la historia de cada individuo, ésa es la cercanía que encarna Jesús. Él sabe que la vida de alguien puede cambiar con un solo encuentro”.

Siguiendo el ejemplo de Jesús, la Iglesia debe abordar esta fase de consulta previa al Sínodo con apertura, valor y la voluntad de querer ser desafiada por la presencia y las historias de sus fieles.

“Dios señala muy a menudo nuevos caminos de esta manera”, señaló el Papa Francisco. 🇺🇸



Para más información sobre el Sínodo 2021-2023, visite fwdioc.org/sinodo-2021-2023

AMBIENTE SEGURO

Para Reportar Mala Conducta Sexual:

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

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

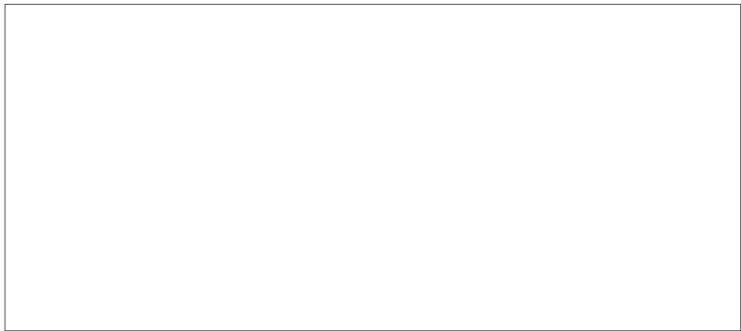
Para Reportar Abuso o si Sospecha de Abuso:

Si usted sospecha de abuso de un niño, anciano, o adulto vulnerable, o si ha sido informado de un abuso:

- ▶ Si alguien está en peligro inmediato, llame al 911
- ▶ Llame al Departamento de Servicios para la Familia y de Protección (DFPS) de Texas al (800) 252-5400.
- ▶ Reporte inmediatamente el presunto abuso a su supervisor, sacerdote o director, y presente el Aviso Confidencial de Preocupación con la información requerida por DFPS.

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





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