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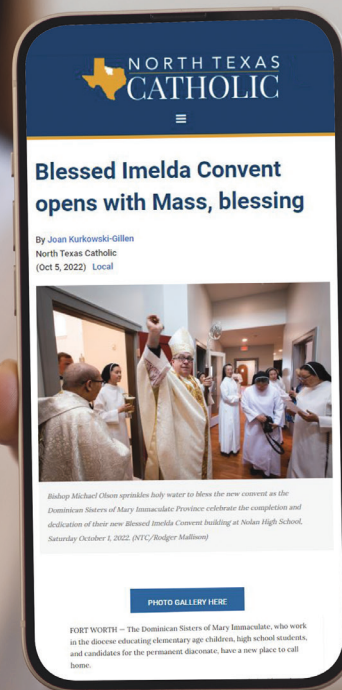
NORTH TEXAS CATHOLIC



blessed are
those who
mourn

NOVEMBER – DECEMBER 2022
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Justice and compassion are owed to those on both sides of the border

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



 @BpOlsonFW

The Catholic Church in the State of Texas knows well not only the plight of those migrants and refugees who enter our country on a daily basis, but also the suffering of the vulnerable victims of human trafficking who receive compassionate care and assistance through many men and women who serve in our ministries of outreach and assistance, with a record of consistent cooperation with government authorities at local, state, and federal levels.

The ongoing humanitarian crisis at our southern border vexes our political life as a state and as a nation. The situation has variously prompted fear, compassion, anger, and righteous indignation, leaving many Texans with a sense that we are powerless before chaos.

The movement of migrants and refugees need not be chaotic if the federal government were to follow an orderly process for the just adjudication of asylum claims at the ports of entry between Texas and Mexico, with due cooperation from state and local authorities.

The United States can and should be faithful to its history based upon principles of freedom, equality, and justice as an international leader in responding generously and compassionately to people in crisis who seek to be free of persecution and the unjust oppression by international cartels. Towards that end, several principles must guide our compassion for our response to be just and effective.

First, sovereign nations have the right and duty to control their borders. This

exercise of sovereignty is first for the common good of citizens, and then, prudentially, in service of the human dignity of all.

Secondly, no one benefits from the collapse of the rule of law, especially the vulnerable. The deliberate denial and lack of attention at the federal level to the large influx of people across our southern border undermines the just rule of law. This federal dereliction has compounded the dangerous political and financial influence of international gangs and of nations hostile to the United States of America. The gradual erosion of border integrity only compounds the terrible crimes of the drug trade and human trafficking perpetrated by gangs that especially prey upon vulnerable women and children, resulting in such horrible tragedies as the death last June of 53 migrants trapped in a tractor trailer near San Antonio.

It is not in accord with our American values to ignore the critical distinction between those who seek entry for aid and those who seek entry for profitable exploitation. It is just as incorrect and irrational to imply that everyone arriving at our border is our enemy as to imply that everyone arriving at our border is our friend. The discernment of friend from foe, refugee from migrant, perpetrator from victim, presupposes the application of the rule of law, requiring the cooperation of government at all levels.

Thirdly, without the just rule of law, refugees and asylum seekers cannot be protected from exploitation. Those who flee wars and persecution should be protected by the

larger community. This requires accountability and that, at a minimum, migrants have a right to claim refugee status without incarceration and to have their claims fully considered and processed by a competent governmental authority in an amount of time that is reasonable, as measured by the urgency of the situation and the importance of respect for human dignity.

Government policies that respect the basic human rights of migrants and refugees are necessary and must be directed to maintaining the cohesive family unit, especially those with young children. Regardless of their legal status, migrants, like all persons, possess inherent human dignity that should be upheld at every stage of the legal process and not have their privacy exploited in the media by political stunts performed for partisan purposes or financial gain.

Finally, the partisan polarization in our nation has fomented a chaos bringing us to the present moment of this humanitarian crisis. A concerted international coalition against the cartels is necessary; a failure to form one is a source of many injustices. We now face the legitimate concern that without each level of government discharging their respective responsibilities, we will damage severely the secure well-being of people and the common good of our towns, state, and nation. The ignoring of the humanitarian crisis at our border jeopardizes our capacity to assist and to comfort migrants, refugees, and the residential and native poor who are already here among us. Justice and compassion are owed to people on both sides of the border. 🇺🇸

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Those who have mourned show others the Lord is present to the brokenhearted.



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On the end times

Recently I came across a book by Douglas Rushkoff, an author, lecturer, and expert on the effects of new media and cyberculture on society.

A self-declared “humanist” who is “often mistaken for a futurist,” Rushkoff, in *Survival of the Richest*, shared an up-close look at the mentality of a group of tech and hedge-fund billionaires who are doing everything in their power to create doomsday bunker-paradises to save themselves from the apocalypse. Sorry, no invites for the rest of us.

He shared how these ultra-wealthy and powerful men are consumed with prepping for “the Event” — “their euphemism for the environmental collapse, social unrest, nuclear explosion, solar storm, unstoppable virus, or malicious computer hack that takes everything down.”

I don’t see eye to eye with Rushkoff on certain things, but I shared in his astonishment at these billionaire preppers’ fixation on escaping from a world that has been abused and exploited (partially by them) rather than thinking up sensible solutions to benefit society and ease the suffering of others. For instance, bringing health care and education to those in need, making their companies more sustainable and ecologically friendly, and advocating for practical, compassionate legislation to our most pressing challenges.

I feel sad for them really, especially since it brings to mind Jesus’ parable of the rich fool (*Luke 12:16-21*), who was single-mindedly focused on storing up treasures on earth, rather than in heaven.

We will soon transition into Advent where we’ll hear more on the end times from the Scriptures. The readings during Advent call us to not be weighed down and distracted by the things of this world. They tell us, rather, to be vigilant and alert for Jesus’ return “for you do not know on which day your Lord will come” (*Mt 24:42-44*).

Those billionaires are right in at least one sense: We can and should prepare for the final judgment. But, the word of God clarifies that this “prepping” is achieved not by hiding behind closed doors, safeguarding one’s possessions, or looking out for one’s best interests. Rather, it’s done by becoming rich in what matters to God, by “putting on the Lord Jesus Christ” and looking outwardly to serve others, not inwardly to serve ourselves. This issue of the *NTC* shares many stories of local men and women who are doing just that, looking outwardly. Take a look, and if you wish to start prepping, go do the same.

Juan Guajardo
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Views from the Pews

Parishes, ministries, and apostolates have kicked into high gear this fall, providing many opportunities to grow closer to God and each other, and to serve the community.

40 Days Kickoff. Although abortion is illegal in Texas, the fight to protect life is not finished. 40 Days for Life's peaceful, silent prayer vigil outside Planned Parenthood runs through Nov. 6 to offer hope and resources for those in crisis pregnancies.

Campus Ministry Day. Students from universities in the Diocese of Fort Worth gathered on Sept. 17 for the first Campus Ministry Field Day, which included Mass, community service projects, and field activities.

CCFW Day of Service. Catholic Charities Fort Worth hosted its first Day of Service on Oct. 15. Staff and volunteers completed five service projects on campus and four in the community, from painting to packing food bags.

VIEW THE PHOTOS



View NTC photo galleries by scanning the QR code or visiting North-Texas-Catholic.smugmug.com.



NTC/Juan Guajardo



NTC/Juan Guajardo



NTC/Ben Torres



St. John the Apostle students in 2018 photo. (NTC/Jayme Donahue)

Eagles soar to earn Blue Ribbon

 St. John the Apostle Catholic School repeats national honor

NORTH RICHLAND HILLS — What’s the likelihood that a school will be selected as a National Blue Ribbon School? It’s more likely that a person will be struck by lightning sometime during their lifetime,

which is roughly 1-in-3,000.

On Sept. 16, the U.S. Department of Education named St. John the Apostle Catholic School a 2022 National Blue Ribbon School, a recognition the school

also received in 2008.

Lightning is rare, and it can strike twice. The comparison ends there, however, because the National Blue Ribbon School distinction is earned.

National Blue Ribbon Schools (NBRS) is an official program of the U.S. Department of Education to honor the highest performing public and private schools. U.S. Secretary of Education Miguel Cardona recognized 297 schools nationwide for excellence in education, including 24 nonpublic schools. The U.S. has more than 130,000 schools.

The NBRS recognized and commended St. John the Apostle on its diverse student population, an exemplary outdoor education program, and its exceptional Institute for Excellence in Writing.

Father Jack McKone, pastor of St. John the Apostle Parish, said, “The honor of being recognized as one of the top 24 private schools in the United States is the fruit of countless hours of hard work by our principal Mrs. Amy Felton, the school administration, and our incredible teachers.”

An in-person award ceremony will take place Nov. 3 and 4 in Washington, D.C.

Good Shepherd Parish supports Ukrainian refugees

COLLEYVILLE — The Russian invasion of Ukraine earlier this year has become a prolonged battle for the country driving millions of Ukrainians to flee their homes as refugees.

It’s a conflict that has drawn the attention of the world and inspired a Catholic parish in Colleyville to take action.

As of Oct. 1, about 11 million Ukrainians fled their homes, with roughly 2 million of them fleeing to neighboring Poland, where news reports say they generally have been warmly received and aided. Poland is due west of Ukraine.

In the small village of Harmęże in southern Poland, a community of a little more than 600 people, the Third

Order Regular Franciscans have taken in Ukrainian refugees. The order is part of the Center of St. Maximilian Kolbe at the friary and church of the Immaculate Mother of Jesus.

At first there were about 150 refugees. Now they number about 50, said Father Michael J. Higgins, TOR, pastor of Good Shepherd Parish

in Colleyville, which is also staffed by Franciscan Friars of the Third Order Regular.

Fr. Higgins’ parishioners mounted an ongoing campaign earlier this year to financially assist the Polish friars in caring for the displaced Ukrainians.

Good Shepherd Parish has raised \$89,251 for the support of the refugees, and the Colleyville church forwards the funds through the Fort Worth Diocese to the Polish friars each month.

— Lance Murray



Ukrainian refugees in Harmęże, Poland. (Courtesy photo) ►

Young Adult Mass draws record attendance



About 500 attended the Young Adult Mass at St. Patrick Cathedral Sept. 8. (NTC/Juan Guajardo)

FORT WORTH — Marie-Lynda Akano didn't mind spending part of her birthday in church. According to the 31-year-old, attending the Sept. 8 Diocesan Young Adult Mass on the Feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary only added more meaning to her celebration.

"I'm so blessed to share a birthday with the Blessed Mother. I couldn't miss this!" enthused the St. Mary of the Assumption parishioner. "Mary is our spiritual mother and I want to live a life that follows her example and serves God in the best way."

Approximately 500 participants from young adult groups across the diocese came to the Mass at St. Patrick Cathedral.

During his homily, Father Brett Metzler, who concelebrated the Mass with Father Jason Allan, Father Jonathan Demma, and Father Pedro Martinez, advised his listeners to follow Mary's example of humility and devotion to Jesus when confronting life's challenges.

"As young adults, there are a lot of things that are difficult in today's world, and I think our Blessed Mother's life and her intercession can really help us — particularly her humility," he told the congregation.

Members of the young adult group at St. Patrick Cathedral served as hosts for the Mass and dinner that followed in the parish hall.

Alejandro Delgado, vice president of St. Patrick's young adult group, would like to see more diocesan liturgies for 18- to 35-year-olds.

The 26-year-old Texas A&M graduate said, "We're young and devoted to the Church. This large turnout shows me there is a community of young adults that wants to grow in their faith."

To end the evening, Father John Robert Skeldon, rector of St. Patrick Cathedral, offered a reflection on the idea of magnanimity in the spiritual life and faith journey using the Old Testament books of *Jonah* and *Ruth*.

— Joan Kurkowski-Gillen

PHOTO GALLERY



Scan the QR code to see more photos from the Young Adult Mass.

New faces bring experience to diocesan schools and Safe Environment office



Pamela
Jarvis

Diocesan learning specialist finds keys to unlocking brains with learning differences

Public, private, and parochial — Pamela Jarvis has helped students with learning differences in all three school settings during her career, which extends more than two decades.

As the newly hired diocesan learning specialist, Jarvis supports the principals and teachers of the 17 Catholic schools in the Diocese of Fort Worth as they meet educational needs of students with learning challenges.

With a master's degree in special education from Abilene Christian University, Jarvis brings previous experience as a special education teacher in Fort Worth public schools and as the founder and executive director of a small private school for students needing accommodations due to cognitive or motor skill differences.

Since she began in August, she's visited most of the schools and been "overwhelmed by how dedicated and committed the principals and teachers are to their calling."

She emphasizes the necessity to know the individual child and determine the student's strengths.



Patrick
McGrail

Assistant director for Office of Safe Environment has law enforcement background

With 29 years in law enforcement, Patrick McGrail could retire and write a screenplay of an action movie, with tales of recovering stolen heavy equipment tracked across the border and training new recruits in tactical and pursuit driving.

Instead, he retired from law enforcement and is using his experience and background as assistant director for the Office of Safe Environment.

His responsibilities include helping with investigations into concerns of abuse; background checks for clergy, employees, and volunteers; and leading training for facilitators and participants in safe environment awareness sessions.

McGrail spent 29 years with the Hurst Police Department, but many of those years he was assigned to a state task force for cargo and heavy equipment theft. A certified mental health officer, he also investigated crimes against children. He said, "What I've done for years makes a difference for victims and their families, but getting out in front of it, being able to attack it from a different angle attracts me to this position."



Lindsay
Karant

Diocesan school nurse consultant provides support, information to campus staff

Although Lindsay Karant will use lessons learned first in the U.S. Air Force and then as a school nurse during COVID-19, she's most excited about adding the faith component to her work as the new diocesan school nurse consultant.

In the Catholic school setting, nurses can consider the whole person's health — physical, spiritual, and mental, according to Karant.

In her new role, she views herself as an information collector and disseminator for the school nurses and health representatives at the 17 Catholic schools in the Diocese of Fort Worth.

Nurses or health aides screen students' hearing and vision, check for scoliosis, and review immunization records. Some of this data is reported to the state health department.

She also stays abreast of any new health requirements for schools from the state, and she ensures each school is informed and compliant.

Karant provides an extra level of support to the eight schools in the diocese that have a health aide rather than a school nurse.



Find the full versions of our Around the Diocese stories at NorthTexasCatholic.org

Calling on the Holy Spirit



Legal community attends annual Red Mass

FORT WORTH — When choices aren't black and white, and the correct path obscured by a gray fog, the Holy Spirit's direction is essential — and that's the purpose behind the Red Mass.

On Sept. 29, Bishop Michael Olson celebrated the 16th annual Red Mass at St. Patrick Cathedral. He began his homily by invoking “the guidance and protection of the Holy Spirit on all judges, civic officials, magistrates, and lawyers who are to be engaged in the authentic ministry of justice and law directed to human flourishing and the common good of our society.”

In addition to Bishop Olson, a dozen priests concelebrated the Mass and wore red vestments, which symbolized both the Holy Spirit and the 800-year-old tradition of French judges opening



Former U.S. Congressman Daniel Lipinski, Ph.D., delivers an address.

the court's term in red robes.

In the Diocese of Fort Worth, probate attorney Robert Gieb founded the Red Mass in 2006. He explained, “Because we come together in the Mass, our gathering is truly transcendent, affording those assembled the gift of an encounter with the perfect and loving order of the Holy Trinity.”

Nearly 200 attended the Red Mass,

which was followed by a reception dinner and address by former U.S. Congressman Daniel Lipinski, Ph.D.

The former congressman observed that, in the current tumultuous period, both sides of the political divide fear where the nation is heading. “Catholics are the hope for our nation, but it will only happen if we have the courage to be Catholic first,” he said.



Nine men admitted as deacon candidates



Bishop Olson institutes Alan Vu as lector. (NTC/Juan Guajardo)

FORT WORTH — “Christ was the first servant and I want to follow Christ.”

That's the reason Jose Rafael Mateo gave for wanting to become a permanent deacon for the diocese.

The St. Michael parishioner is eager to serve those in need, those on the peripheries of society, and “those who need to hear the voice of the Lord.”

Mateo is one step closer to achieving that goal after Bishop Michael Olson officially accepted him and eight other men into the diaconate program during the Rite of Admission to Candidacy for Holy Orders. Alan Vu and Scott Elder were also instituted as lectors during the Mass Sept. 24 at St. Patrick Cathedral.

The new candidates include

Kendall Robert Coffey, Scott Alan Elder, Weldon Alan Franklin, Wilfried Axel Lampka, Pedro Juan Lara Loreda, Jose Rafael Mateo, Thang Cao Nguyen, Hoang Huy Trinh, and Michael Hugh Waldon.

A deacon's responsibilities include assisting at liturgies, preaching, and performing charitable acts.

As aspirants, the men spent the past two years discerning a call to the diaconate while taking introductory courses in theology, pastoral ministry, and liturgy.

For the next three years, the candidates will continue to discern while studying homiletics, Canon law, biblical studies, and completing a two-year hospital ministry internship.

—Joan Kurkowski-Gillen



Father Brijil Lawrence, SAC, chairman of the Diocesan Mission Council, visits with Barbara Vanikiotis.

by the Diocesan Mission Council. Other parishes help educate villagers in Bolivia, Guatemala, and Haiti.

Reminding the congregation we are all called to spread the Gospel message through conversion, prayer, and acts of charity, Bishop Michael Olson marked World Mission Sunday a week early with a Mass celebrated Oct. 16 at Weatherford's St. Stephen Church.

Exhibits set up in the parish hall allowed visitors to see different types of missionary work supported by the diocese.

Mission work also serves the needy in North Texas. The mission team at St. Catherine of Siena in Carrollton helps the homeless as well as participates in food bank and community farm projects.

"We think locally because a lot of people say, 'I can't go [overseas]. I don't have the time, money, or energy,'" said Barbara Vanikiotis. "So we tell them you can do something right here to help people."

—Joan Kurkowski-Gillen

Mission opportunities far and near

WEATHERFORD — Witnessing families trapped in a cycle of poverty drew Cecilia Villanueva to mission work in Honduras.

Working as a translator during a medical mission trip in 2009, the St. Stephen parishioner saw 13, 14, and

15-year-olds who were already married and pregnant.

Villanueva and her husband, Gus, began their involvement in Educate the Children Honduras as a way of giving children — especially girls — the opportunity for a better future. Through

sponsorships and donations that pay for tuition, classroom supplies, and teacher salaries, ETC Honduras allows youngsters to receive an education in a Catholic school beyond the sixth grade.

It's one of several outreach mission programs endorsed

Advancement Foundation wins awards

 Stewardship, foundation effort recognized

ANAHEIM — At its annual conference, the International Catholic Stewardship Council awarded the Diocese of Fort Worth Advancement Foundation the Award for Excellence in two categories: Diocesan Stewardship Effort and Total Foundation Effort.

According to Renée Underwood, CFRE, chief development officer of the Advancement Foundation, the stewardship award recognized

the Day of Stewardship and Parish Stewardship Awards, which reinforce the importance of stewardship and evangelization among Catholic faithful.

The Total Foundation Effort Award, she said, reflects the comprehensive support the Advancement Foundation provides to the diocese, including resources for capital campaigns, investments, and development.

Detroit Bishop Donald Hanchon, Rachel Martinez, Renée Underwood, Wendy Collins, and ICSC's Margaret Keightley.





Tatiana Daniel prays at the White Coat Mass. (NTC/Kevin Bartram)

Vocation of healing



White Coat Mass prays for health care profession

FORT WORTH — Can medicine and religion coexist? Or must Catholics check their faith outside the door of their health care workplace?

The integration of health care and faith was at the forefront of the annual White Coat Mass, celebrated on Oct. 17, the eve of the feast of St. Luke, the patron of physicians.

Bishop Michael Olson celebrated the Mass at St. Patrick Cathedral with about 150 health care workers and their families in attendance.

Father Linh Nguyen, parochial vicar of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish in Keller and chaplain of the Catholic Medical Association of Students at the Texas College of Osteopathic Medicine, delivered the homily.

Fr. Nguyen encouraged health care providers to recognize the humanity and soul of their patients, who often come from a place of hopelessness, vulnerability, and suffering. The lens of faith helps professionals see beyond the diagnosis to the person.

Ann Kurian, MD, and her husband Derek Nieber, MD, have recently moved to the diocese and were attending the White Coat Mass for the first time, but the experience of integrating their faith with their practice of medicine is well established for the two physicians.

Dr. Kurian, a surgeon, said she prays for peace, calm, and guidance before each operation, a habit which she finds especially important for emergency surgeries.

Dr. Nieber, a cardiovascular and thoracic surgeon, said his specialty often deals with patients facing the possibility of a negative outcome. His faith, he said, helps him “not be afraid to connect with patients, to be sympathetic, to provide peace and comfort.”

CLERGY ASSIGNMENTS

BY MOST REV. MICHAEL OLSON

REV. SAM FERIX ANTONY JESU ANTONY, SAC

New to the Diocese of Fort Worth, has been appointed **Parochial Vicar** of Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary Parish in Decatur; St. Mary Parish in Jacksboro; and St. John the Baptizer Parish in Bridgeport, effective August 22.

REV. JOSE FELICIANO TORRES CASTRO, OFM CAP

Returning to the Diocese of Fort Worth, has been appointed **Parochial Vicar** at Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish in Fort Worth, effective August 17.

VERY REV. STEPHEN HAUCK

Has been appointed **Vicar Forane** of the North Deanery without prejudice to his current assignment as Pastor of St. Martin de Porres Parish in Prosper, effective August 18.

REV. BRIJIL LAWRENCE, SAC

From Pastor of Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish in Abbott and Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary Parish in Penelope, to **Pastor** of St. Teresa of Calcutta Parish in Fort Worth, effective Sept. 5; and will continue as Chairman of the Diocesan Mission Council for a period of one year.

REV. PATRICK NGOC NGUYEN, CRM

Parochial Vicar of Vietnamese Martyrs Parish in Arlington, has been **recalled** by his religious order, effective August 8.

REV. GEORGE PULLAMBRAJIL

Resigned from Presbyteral Council, College of Consultors, and Vicar Forane of the North Deanery, effective August 16.

REV. ALPHONSUS TRI VU, CRM

Returning to the Diocese of Fort Worth, has been appointed **Parochial Vicar** of Vietnamese Martyrs Parish in Arlington, effective Sept. 22.

REV. MANUEL HOLGUIN

Leave of absence extended to March 1, 2023.

DEACON THOMAS ADAMS

New to the Diocese of Fort Worth, has been appointed to St. Martin de Porres Parish in Prosper, effective August 29.

DEACON BRADLEY SAMUELSON

From Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish in Wichita Falls, to St. Rita Parish in Fort Worth, effective August 26.

DEACON DANIEL ZAVALA

From St. Patrick Cathedral in Fort Worth, to St. Teresa of Calcutta Parish in Fort Worth, effective Sept. 5.

Guiding Light



NTC/Juan Guajardo

DENTON — After an almost three-year wait, St. John Paul II Church in Denton installed stained-glass windows in the parish’s church on Aug. 28. Father Kyle Walterscheid, whose parish serves college students at the University of North Texas and Texas Woman’s University, chose to feature several doctors of the Church.



SCAN ME



See the full story online at NorthTexasCatholic.org or by scanning the QR code.

Permanent vows for Sister Megan

Megan Grewing’s faith formation at Sacred Heart Parish in Muenster opened her heart to God’s call to a religious vocation.

Sr. Megan, 38, professed her perpetual vows as a Sister of the Congregation of Divine Providence at Sacred Heart Conventual Chapel in San Antonio on Sept. 3. The church was filled with about 160 people, according to Sr. Megan, with half being family and loved ones from



Sister Megan Grewing

Muenster.

For Sr. Megan being a religious sister and working as a licensed counselor at Gratia Plena Counseling in Houston are both important aspects of her vocation and mission. “Everything gets redeemed through the cross,” she said.

— Kiki Hayden

Sister Katherine takes solemn vows

“Every father wants his daughter to marry the best person possible. She has married Jesus and I couldn’t ask for better,” said Randy Bollig, co-founder of Loreto House pregnancy center in Denton.

On Aug. 28, his daughter, Sister Katherine Chantal, professed solemn vows with the Sisters of the Visitation, a cloistered contemplative order of nuns in Toledo, Ohio.

Now serving with 15 other nuns, 48-year-old Sr.



Sister Katherine Chantal

Katherine said her life of prayer “brings me such a sense of peace and joy. I have a deep understanding of what God has asked me to do in my life. And there is a joy that comes from knowing that I’m doing what He is desiring. It’s just a beautiful life.”

— Jerry Circelli

HUMBLE START great potential

Inaugural Mass celebrated at St. Teresa of Calcutta,
the 92nd parish in the diocese

By Susan Moses

Could the 92nd parish in the Diocese of Fort Worth have a more suitable patroness than St. Teresa of Calcutta?

The first Mass at the parish which bears her name was modest, small, and humble, much like the diminutive saint who served the poorest of the poor. However, the celebration of Mass was joyful, prayerful, and holy — again like the saint — despite being held in a portable building with industrial carpeting and stackable chairs.

Father Brijil Lawrence, SAC, newly appointed pastor for the parish in far north Fort Worth, celebrated the parish's inaugural Mass on Sept. 4 with concelebrating priests Monsignor E. James Hart, diocesan chancellor and moderator of the curia, and Father Sojan George, pastor of St. Francis of Assisi Parish in Grapevine. Bishop Michael Olson was unable to be the principal celebrant as scheduled due to illness.

In his homily, Fr. Lawrence stated that the purpose of establishing this parish community was identical to why the Apostles formed the first Christian communities: for the salvation of souls. "And our salvation is in Christ crucified

— the same message the Apostles preached, and the same message Christ taught His Apostles. Christ crucified is our wisdom today," he said.

The Pallottine priest, who also heads the diocesan mission council, concluded the homily with a prayer from the Liturgy of the Hours that he found fitting for the community's first Mass.

"May the Lord, who is the beginning and end of all that we do and say, come to our actions with His grace and complete them with His all-powerful help," he prayed.

GETTING TO MASS

Deacon Daniel Zavala, the coordinator of parish life, has been working "fast and furious" to prepare for the first Mass even before Bishop Olson announced the creation of the 92nd parish in the diocese on Aug. 1. The 31-acre property, at 13517 Alta Vista Road, was the former home of Our Lady of Grace High School and had existing portable buildings which required significant renovations to accommodate the celebration of Mass.

In working with contractors, city officials, and even the fire department,



More than 150 faithful attended the first Mass celebrated at St. Teresa of Calcutta Parish on Sept. 4, 2022. (NTC/Juan Guajardo)

Dcn. Zavala said he encountered “lots of roadblocks, but all along I could see God working in this.”

Located north of U.S. Highway 170 and east of I-35W, St. Teresa of Calcutta Parish was established due to tremendous population growth in Tarrant and Denton counties.

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

Dcn. Zavala spent the four weekends before Sept. 4 visiting those four churches to announce the creation of the new parish.

He said, “I’ve heard a lot of buzz. There’s a lot of people who live right here, literally, and they drive a long way. They love their parishes, of course, but they are

very excited that we’re putting something closer to home.”

A GRAND CELEBRATION

Where does one find greeters, lectors, altar servers, and a cantor for the first Mass? Dcn. Zavala recruited many of them from St. Patrick Cathedral, where he served previously.

Aaron Medina, director of music and liturgy at St. Patrick, is accustomed to playing the magnificent pipe organ in the cathedral’s choir loft. At St. Teresa of Calcutta Parish, he played an electric keyboard from the back corner.

He found the unassuming liturgy impactful, saying, “I was touched and honored to play at the first Mass. To be with the whole community — it’s a wonderful

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SEE THE VIDEO



Scan the QR code to view the video from the inaugural Mass on Sept. 4.



Altar servers for the first Mass at St. Teresa of Calcutta Parish process toward the building being used temporarily as the worship space on Sept. 4, 2022. The parish is the 92nd in the Diocese of Fort Worth. (NTC/Juan Guajardo)

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place, a humble start. I want to see what it's like as it grows."

The pastor expressed a similar thought. Fr. Lawrence said, "The first Mass has been a blessing to us. First of all, to give thanks to God for bringing His people together in this part of the diocese to worship together as a family. It is the beginning, the first step in the building up of this place of worship, and to bring many more families together to learn, to practice [the faith], and to cherish each other's company."

He continued, "A new parish is always a blessing from God, to remind us that the Church is growing. For the entire diocese, it's a very important moment. The very fact this parish is here is making our Christian presence [felt] in this place."

The inaugural Mass filled the portable building, which seats 100, plus an overflow building, which seats 50. Many young families attended, including several parents

with babies in arms, one of whom was Dcn. Zavala's five-month-old grandchild, who had a Mother Teresa doll.

"Excitement is the word to describe the day," said Julio Castillo, who participated in the Mass with his wife and daughter. Parishioners at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton in Keller, the family has carefully observed progress at the property each time the parents take their daughter to nearby John M. Tidwell Middle School.

On Sept. 4, Castillo admitted that he checked what time the Mass started at least three times and arrived almost 30 minutes early for the 5 p.m. Mass, despite living only four minutes away. "It's our first time to attend a first Mass," he said. "We were nervous. We didn't want to miss it."

COMING NEXT

At the conclusion of Mass, Fr. Lawrence observed, "Seeing the crowd today, we will look for another place" for

weekend Mass, and the portable building will serve as a chapel for daily Mass.

Dcn. Zavala has discussed with school administrators the possibility of using Tidwell Middle School as a temporary facility for weekend Mass in the short term.

Next steps, according to the deacon, include setting up a parish office, hiring staff, and holding a parish town hall to recruit religious education volunteers and to determine preferred times for daily and weekend Masses.

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

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

POWERFUL PATRONESS

The first Mass at St. Teresa of Calcutta Parish was held Sept. 4, the day before the



◀ Father Brijil Lawrence, SAC, was appointed as the pastor of St. Teresa of Calcutta in North Fort Worth. (NTC/Juan Guajardo)



◀ Deacon Daniel Zavala distributes Communion during the inaugural Mass. He is the coordinator of parish life for St. Teresa of Calcutta. (NTC/Juan Guajardo)

25th anniversary of the saint’s death.

Her patronage of the simple facility is represented by an eight-inch bust of the saint mounted on the wall near the altar and a large painting of her at the back.

This tiny religious woman began a humble ministry serving the dying and destitute of the slums of Calcutta, and the religious order she founded has grown to more than 5,000 sisters serving in 760 homes in 139 countries.

Dcn. Zavala said he studied and prayed with quotes from Mother Teresa during his diaconate formation. She was “totally in

cooperation with the Holy Spirit in everything she did. It’s great we have a parish named after her,” he said.

Fr. Lawrence, who grew up in India, said, “Dedicating this church to her name and directing our prayers through her intercession is also a moment for us to know what she has done as a person and to relive the Christian charity in our own different ways, wherever we are. And so, it’s very apt that Mother Teresa is the patroness of this parish, standing as a model for all parishioners.” 🇺🇸

SEE MORE PHOTOS



Scan the QR code to view the photo gallery from the inaugural Mass on Sept. 4.



An off-duty police officer keeps a watchful eye as St. Peter the Apostle Catholic School students file past. (NTC/Juan Guajardo)

Safer Schools

Off-duty police officers are an important component of enhanced security on school campuses in the Diocese of Fort Worth

By Sandra Engelland

The schools in the Diocese of Fort Worth are boosting their security in a big way this fall by adding off-duty police officers on campuses.

“After the Uvalde tragedy, everyone started to re-evaluate their approach and what measures could be done to protect

our children,” said Mike Short, director of security for the diocese.

At Robb Elementary School, 19 children and two teachers lost their lives on May 24, 2022, after an 18-year-old gunman entered the school and barricaded himself in a fourth-grade classroom.

When Short, Superintendent Brinton Smith, and other diocesan administrators looked at what would improve safety the

most, the answer was clear.

Smith said, “The best form of security is for students to have a police officer on campus if anything happens. As much as we appreciate technical security, like cameras and door [access controls], you can’t do any better than having a police officer on campus.”

The new School Resource Officers, or SROs, are contracted with First



Officer Cierra Balderas helps Holly Nguyen water plants in the greenhouse at St. Joseph Catholic School in Arlington. (NTC/Ben Torres)

Responder Protective Services and sourced from the police departments near the school, Short said. Specific officers are assigned to each school, so students, families, and staff see familiar faces and the officers get to know the campus community they serve.

“The SRO program is designed to build trust in police officers, act as a deterrent, and provide rapid response if anything happens. They’re on-site to ensure the safety of students and staff,” Short said.

SROs began showing up on diocesan school campuses in late August, and families and staff members have been very supportive of the new initiative, Short said.

Joe Trausch, senior business development manager for First Responder Protective Services, said the off-duty officers are eager to provide school security “because they believe it’s important.”

The feedback he’s received from school officials and the officers has been overwhelmingly positive, he said.

“Our officers have really enjoyed it because the schools have really appreciated them and supported them,” Trausch said. “It takes a lot of people to put a project like this in place, and we’re very glad and excited to help the Fort Worth Diocese put this together.”

Short said officers also are helping educate school community members about mental health concerns and what to watch for on social media to better protect campuses.

In addition, they train school faculty and staff on standard response protocols, he said. They focus on five different responses: a lockdown, which means there’s an intruder or immediate hazard requiring the locking of classroom doors; securing the building from an outside hazard; evacuating in case of fire; sheltering for a tornado; and holding in classrooms for a less serious issue, like a hallway spill that requires cleaning.

FUNDED BY THE FAITHFUL

While SROs have been a fixture in public high schools for many years and are now often seen on campuses for lower grades, they are funded by tax dollars. Private schools must come up with their own funding.

Diocesan security and school administrators estimated the new SRO program, along with improving building security at several older schools, would cost \$2 million this year.

Enter the Advancement Foundation, a separate nonprofit from the diocese, which

can raise funds for specific needs within the Diocese of Fort Worth.

Renée Underwood, chief development officer of the Advancement Foundation, said that all funds collected are used for the purpose the donor requests.

“When we were first approached about schools’ security, we learned they would need about \$2 million for the first year,” Underwood said. “That’s a significant grant needed. Everything we’re able to do is through the stewardship of good and faithful Catholics.”

School officials sent emails and letters home to families and parishioners and posted on diocesan social media about the security upgrades. The Advancement Foundation is receiving donations for school security almost daily, Underwood said.

Donors can contribute through the Catholic School Security page on [AdvancementFoundation.org](https://www.advancementfoundation.org) or mail in a donation. All gifts are tax deductible.

MORE SAFEGUARDS

In addition to the SROs, Smith said that diocesan security and school personnel are working on building modifications

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SEEN, APPRECIATED, AND CELEBRATED

Deaf Ministry in Diocese of Fort Worth observes
50 years of outreach, inclusion

By Matthew Smith

Several area Catholics lined the front of the altar toward the conclusion of an Oct. 2 Mass at St. Patrick Cathedral to sign the closing hymn, delivering at once a grand finale of sorts and a celebration of fellowship.

The Mass, concelebrated by Bishop Michael Olson and Father Ken Robinson, marked the 50th anniversary of the founding of the diocese's Deaf Ministry, which serves deaf and hard-of-hearing Catholics as well as their family members.

Through five decades, Bishop Olson noted in his homily, Deaf Ministry has helped uproot complacency, isolation, and indifference throughout the diocese both for hearing and hearing-impaired faithful.

"Deaf Ministry has enabled both with the capacity to listen to God as He speaks to us through His word and then together to put the gift of faith into action through conversion and service," Bishop Olson said.

The bishop commended those served by, as well as those serving the ministry, and called upon both to continue doing their part.

"The Lord has called us, and He expects us to share the gifts He gives us," Bishop Olson said. "He expects us to find ways to bring His love to the world."

Such is synonymous with the ministry's aims, said Connie Martin, diocesan coordinator for Deaf Ministry.

"It brings community in a different way," Martin said. "The religious aspect is that it opens doors to build relationships between the hearing and the hearing impaired. It's a great example of 'we can do this

together,' and it brings out inclusion."

The ministry, among other services, offers five interpretive Masses each week, two in Fort Worth and one each in Arlington, Grapevine, and Wichita Falls, Martin said.

A Deaf Community Mass is also celebrated the first Sunday of each month at St. Rita Church in Fort Worth. Deaf parishioners participate as cantors, lectors, ushers, and extraordinary ministers of the Eucharist.

"We want to get people involved, draw them into participation," Martin said.

"It's in sign language but also spoken," Martin said. "Because many deaf people, about 90 percent of them, have hearing family members. That way the family can worship together instead of going to different parishes."

Fr. Robinson signs the Mass and Martin interprets his homily.

"We have a social after the Mass," Martin said. "I think that's another draw. Not only is Mass in sign language great, but there is socialization time too since many of the attendees don't otherwise get to see their friends."

Of the estimated 4 million deaf or hard-of-hearing people in the U.S., about 10 percent reside in Texas. How many live in the diocese is hard to say, Martin added.

"I send a newsletter out to about 90 families," Martin said. "Of that maybe one or two people will be deaf in the family."

Fr. Robinson agreed that local numbers are difficult to gauge.



The Deaf Ministry choir signs a song during a special 50th Anniversary Mass on Oct. 2, 2022 at St. Patrick Cathedral. (NTC/Ben Torres)

“Many deaf Catholics come to Mass but [not always] to our Deaf Community Mass,” Fr. Robinson said.

“They may not know how to sign or may simply want to fit in at their parish. But the reality is, if you look around, you’ll see them in every single one of our parishes.”

Martin moved to Fort Worth from Chicago in 1990 and became involved with the ministry in 1992.

“I’m Catholic,” Martin said. “I was in school for being an interpreter, heard that the diocese needed help, and volunteered.”

Fr. Robinson became involved in 1994 after a priest who had offered Masses with an interpreter retired.

“I agreed to celebrate Mass but not necessarily sign,” Fr. Robinson said. “But over time it just became easier to learn to sign, which is something you never stop learning.”

Fr. Robinson characterized his experience as a blessing.

“I get an opportunity to celebrate with a group who’s sort of in the woodwork,” Fr. Robinson said. “With deaf people or all special ministries, it’s important to get some PR occasionally so that the members of those ministries are known about and don’t just disappear into the woodwork.”

Martin said the Knights of Columbus have played a huge role: establishing Deaf Ministry in 1972 and funding it entirely until the mid-1990s, when Deaf Ministry became a diocesan program. The Knights still provide significant financial support for deaf ministry annually, and they join the community for social events periodically.

Knight Carlos Ortiz, of St. Mary the Virgin Council, was on hand Oct. 2 to assist with the social

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Fr. Ken Robinson at a monthly Deaf Ministry Mass at St. Rita Parish. (NTC/Jayme Donahue)



FIFTY YEARS AND COUNTING: Deaf Ministry Coordinator Connie Martin teaches seminarian Michael Marincel sign language during summer 2019. Marincel seeks opportunities to practice and improve his ASL while studying theology at the Catholic University of America. (NTC/Ben Torres)

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following the Mass.

“It makes me feel good and strengthens my faith to see that even with hardships, these people still believe in God and practice their faith,” Ortiz said, adding that he organizes bowling events for the deaf community and the Knights.

Jenny Thompson, an interpreter for the ministry, said she became involved about 30 years ago.

“Being part of the ministry has definitely helped feed and grow my faith,” Thompson said.

From retreats to friendships formed, parishioner David Cassanova, who has been deaf all his life, credited the ministry with helping his faith and day-to-day life.

“I’m a retired engineer but did teach some hearing people at work how to communicate better with deaf people and interact and exchange ideas,” Cassanova said.

Parishioner Emily Sainer spoke of the ministry’s role in her catechesis and socialization. Her mother, Julie Sainer, benefited as well.

“Deaf Ministry was pretty much my first interaction with deaf people besides my daughter,” Julie Sainer said.

Which, Thompson said, plays into the ministry’s inclusion aspect by encouraging deaf and hard-of-hearing parishioners to branch out and by fostering relationships and understanding among hearing parishioners.

“One big misconception is that deaf people can’t do something,” Thompson said. “That they don’t understand or don’t get it. They may need a little facilitating, but they get it. They just can’t hear.”

Martin agreed.

“We don’t look at it as a disability,” Martin said. “It’s an inability to hear. But deaf people can do anything and are very proud. They’re just, ‘My ears don’t work. So what?’” 🇺🇸



**DEAF
MINISTRY**



Scan the QR code to see more photos from the Deaf Ministry’s 50th Anniversary Mass and reception.

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

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to make schools safer, like secure vestibules where a visitor must be identified on camera and audio before a door is unlocked and visitors are admitted first to an office area.

They also want schools to have an adequate number of cameras and access controls.

Short said they expect that older diocesan campuses will need modifications to improve security.

“We’re working with the Advancement Foundation for the special

SUPPORT THE SRO PROGRAM



The SRO program, plus improving building security at older schools, is estimated to cost \$2 million this year. Scan the QR code to donate.



security fund, not just funds for SROs.”

Short said the diocese is also working to expand the Guardian Ministry program, which provides screened and trained volunteers for church security, to

include school events, especially Nolan Catholic High School games.

“We’re hoping to expand that to other schools,” he said. “It’s more eyes and ears and help to assist officers.” 🇺🇸

TEACHING HEALTHY

boundaries

Safe Environment program provides children with the tools to stay safe

By Susan McFarland

Healthy boundaries are essential for all of God's children. Whether at church, on a playground, in school, at a friend's house, or even in their own home, children need to understand what is appropriate and what is not in their day-to-day lives.

To help children comprehend what a healthy boundary looks like, and to tell an adult if someone violates those boundaries, is at the core of the Safe Environment training offered by the Diocese of Fort Worth. This training is taught at every level from pre-K through 12th grade at Catholic schools and in religious education classes or youth ministry at parishes within the diocese.

"Teaching them the concept of healthy boundaries regarding the personal space around them and with their own person is essential for them to comprehend what is right from wrong," said Lisa Pilch, Safe Environment coordinator and assistant coordinator of religious education at Sacred Heart Parish in Wichita Falls.

The program, titled Empowering God's Children (EGC), is a very effective method of equipping all God's children — especially young children — with a proper

understanding of what is appropriate and safe, Pilch said.

"EGC aptly conveys the important fact to the children that they have a voice and will be heard. The videos they view are brief but provide a rich amount of age-appropriate vocabulary for their comprehension," she said. "This program is NOT a church version of a health or sex-ed class at all. The common buzzword throughout the EGC program is 'boundaries' along with the knowledge that it is okay to set them yourself. The children are filled with an awareness going forward in their lives for their protection."

Pilch said after viewing the EGC videos, discussions are held in a relaxed atmosphere among their peers, enabling the seeds that were just planted to germinate in a way that is beneficial to each child, and can be further developed as they mature throughout their youth.

"The children joyfully participate! It is a wonderful program to meet the needs of children at whatever level of understanding they may be [at] and send them into society with a wonderful amount of edification to draw from as needed," Pilch said.

Sandra Schrader-Farry, director of the diocesan Office of Safe

Environment, said the idea is that when children enter pre-K they will have lessons they can take through grade 12 and never have to take the same lesson twice.

"They build on what they learn," Schrader-Farry said. "It's a solid educational plan."

Schrader-Farry encourages parents to ask questions or ask to see a lesson plan.

"By being transparent with the material, we hope parents will support the lesson plan at home and help



continue the discussion,” she said. “At the end of the day, we want our children to learn what healthy boundaries are, how to speak up and who to talk to, and to think about what a good and healthy relationship should look like.

“We want them to engage in looking out for themselves and friends, and when something isn’t right, to speak up.”

Schrader-Farry said that more often than not, sexual abuse happens from within a close circle.

“Stranger danger is still a problem, but makes up less than 10 percent [of abuse cases],” she said. “More often it’s someone a child has a trusting relationship with.”

Adrian Garcia, director of religious education at St. George Parish in Fort Worth, facilitates classes for the

youth. He also prefers not to use the words “stranger danger,” because often strangers are there to help — such as police officers, firefighters, and other emergency personnel.

Garcia said whether at home or in a public setting, the more knowledge youth have, the more they are empowered.

“You can say ‘no’ to anybody. Speak up,” he tells his students. “Never be ashamed ... we pray it doesn’t happen, but if it does, just know you are never at fault.”

“They shouldn’t have to face an ordeal that could be traumatizing for the rest of their life,” Garcia said.

Cheyenne Marrinan, coordinator and facilitator of the Safe Environment program at Holy Family of Nazareth in Vernon, St. Joseph in Crowell, and St.

Mary in Quannah, has been involved with the program for 20 years.

“Seeing the growth for us, it’s really been a great tool and a jumping off point to start the conversation at home,” Marrinan said. “We host the classes on Wednesday night. We encourage parents to stay and watch the video. We want them to go home and continue the conversation.”

Marrinan said it is all about protection, understanding, and teaching children boundaries.

“It’s great education for parents and children. It’s not scary; it’s good material,” she said. “Our job is to be an advocate for those around us, and what better way than to educate everyone starting when they are young. It teaches the child some empowerment of their own.” ✨

LEARN
MORE



Scan the QR code to read the program overview for the Empowering God’s Children program.



Centennial Celebration

St. Mary Parish marks 100+ years of Catholic community in Graham

By Matthew Smith

“Oh more, more than I ever hoped for,” Jim Burkett answered when asked what his parish, St. Mary Church in Graham, has meant to him.

Fellow parishioner Sandra Peavy, a church member for 60 years, agreed.

“It’s been so exciting to watch how the parish has changed and grown,” Peavy said. “We were a little white frame building when I first married.

“We’ve had priests come from all over the world here, which has added to the diversity of the parish, which is so exciting,” she added.

Graham native Coral Juarez spoke of St. Mary’s impact on her life.

“It’s a big part of who I am,” Juarez said. “A big part of what I believe, and participation in the parish helps draw me closer to God and to be able to thank Him for everything He’s done for me and my family.”

Juarez and others gathered for a Sept. 24 Mass celebrating St. Mary’s 100th anniversary concelebrated by Bishop Michael Olson and St. Mary Pastor Father Eugene Nyong.

Juarez, a member of the parish choir, sang the Psalm during the Mass. In a post-Mass celebration in the parish hall, she and her mother and sister led children

CELEBRATE
MORE



See the photo gallery of the 100th anniversary Mass and festivities for St. Mary Parish in Graham.



through “Jesus Loves Me” and “*Yo Tengo un Amigo que me Ama.*”

“I’m grateful to God that He gave me the voice I have,” Juarez said. “Every time I sing, I ask God to help me be His voice through my voice and to help me hear His words through the words I’m singing.”

The Mass also marked the 25th anniversary of Fr. Nyong’s ordination as a priest. Fr. Nyong also pastors St. Theresa Church in Olney.

Young County’s Catholic roots stretch back to the 1850s when Father Michael Sheehan, a chaplain at Fort Belknap, celebrated Masses throughout the area, followed by missionary priests after Fr. Sheehan was assigned elsewhere.

Subsequently, Joseph Novakowski, a coal miner from nearby Newcastle, constructed an altar out of wooden crates and salt boxes and adorned it with a picture of Our Lady of Czestochowa, according to Diocese of Fort Worth and Young County Historical Commission records.

Missionary priests used the altar for Mass in Novakowski’s home.

“We are celebrating even though COVID delayed us a year,” Bishop Olson said. “Your parish is so strong and has a rich legacy of good, of helping each other as brothers and sisters in the Lord and patiently sharing the Gospel with others.”

Bishop Olson and others said St. Mary Parish dates to 1921.

“Early in 1921, a group met in the home of C.A. Graves on Plum Street, and a priest from Fort Worth celebrated the first Mass in Graham,” according to Young County Historical Commission records.

The church’s first building, a wooden structure with a bell tower, was built in 1922.

Bishop Thomas K. Gorman, of the Diocese of Dallas-Fort Worth, dedicated the present church building in 1965. The church served as a mission church for years with priests coming from Breckenridge to celebrate Mass.



Father Eugene Nyong gathers with parishioners during a celebration at St. Mary Parish in Graham in honor of its 100th anniversary. (NTC/Rodger Mallison)

St. Mary became a parish in 1969, the same year the Diocese of Fort Worth was established. The parish includes about 550 members.

True to Peavy's sentiments of diversity, St. Mary's parishioners and 19 priests "represent the historical immigration to our area over these last 100 years," according to the diocesan account of the church's anniversary.

"Likewise, we remember our 100 years," Bishop Olson said. "All the marriages celebrated here. All the Baptisms that have been administered here. Even the funerals."

After Mass, the bishop touched upon St. Mary's big picture role.

"Locally, today was a wonderful celebration of a centennial that's just the start of the spread of the Gospel here in Young County and beyond," Bishop Olson said. "More broadly, everything that takes place in a local parish is connected to the Church of the Diocese and the Universal Church.

Especially, how St. Mary in Graham collaborates and cooperates with St. Theresa Parish in Olney in sharing a priest and helping each other with works of charity and education in the faith."

Expounding on the parable of the rich man and Lazarus in the *Gospel of Luke*, Bishop Olson spoke during his homily of the duty all Catholics have to serve others.

"Our destiny, our eternal life in heaven, is conditioned by our willingness to be inconvenienced for the sake of other people," Bishop Olson said. "The parable reminds us that, while we are in this world, we have to listen to the Lord, who speaks from sacred Scriptures, and live according to His will and not our own."

The parable's point being that distraction by and focus on material gain can cause one to lose sight of the far more important callings of family, community, and Christian charity and generosity, leaving us self-centered and insensitive to the needs of others, Bishop Olson said.

Fr. Nyong, who has served as St. Mary's priest since 2016, spoke of the parish family.

"People in this parish are really active and really helping out," Fr. Nyong said. "That takes a lot of stress off my shoulders when you have people willing to help out."

The parish provides a friendship meal every month, offering food to all in the community, among other outreach measures, Fr. Nyong said.

Burkett cited the Knights of Columbus' annual professional rodeo, now in its 24th year, and the annual sausage fest.

"All the money we make we dole back into Young County," Burkett said.

Dave and Joan Deis joined the parish about a year ago after moving from Albuquerque, New Mexico.

"Very welcoming," Joan said of St. Mary. "It's nice to be part of a parish that's so involved in the community. We see people from church as we go about town." 🇺🇸

A Holy Home

The new Blessed Imelda Convent provides Dominican Sisters of Mary Immaculate with a place for prayer, study, and community

By Joan Kurkowski-Gillen

The Dominican Sisters of Mary Immaculate, who work in the diocese educating elementary age children, high school students, and candidates for the permanent diaconate, have a new place to call home.

Located on the grounds of Nolan Catholic High School, the Blessed Imelda Convent houses nine sisters in a setting conducive to the order's conventual lifestyle.

In the presence of visiting sisters, benefactors, and people involved in the construction project, Bishop Michael Olson offered a Mass of Blessing Oct. 1 inside the building's intimate oratory.

"We have not simply built a domicile in which teachers might be housed safely and comfortably, but a convent in which vowed religious sisters, Dominican sisters, might live out the most essential aspect of their consecrated life that extends beyond the beautiful ministry of the education and formation of children," the bishop said in his homily.

Designed by architect Scott Martsoff with substantial input from the religious order, the oratory's interior reflects the Dominican contemplative and communal tradition. The natural light-filled oratory is at the center of the 8,000-square-foot building with the community's 14 bedrooms and shared living spaces surrounding it.

"The centrality of this oratory manifests Christ who is the capstone," the bishop pointed out. "Yet, also in Dominican life, the library is essential to understand Christ better and to preach eloquently, through your lives in community, the Word."

In seeking God's blessing and protection for the convent, the bishop asked not only for intercessory prayer from St. Dominic, St. Catherine, St. Thomas

Aquinas, and Blessed Imelda, but also St. Therese of the Child Jesus, whose feast day is Oct. 1.

"The greatest saint of modern times exemplifies the confidence and single-hearted love for Jesus and Mary needed by the Church in religious life today," he said.

Sister Anna Imelda, OP, teaches first- and third-year theology at Nolan and tries to help students establish a relationship with Christ.

"Hopefully, that desire to love will [inspire] them to know more about Christ," she explained.

Starting her eighth year at Nolan, the veteran educator said her ministry in the diocese is a blessing and the new convent offers a comfortable place for prayer and rest after a busy day.

"It's very conventual for our living," Sr. Anna continued. "At the center is the oratory and across from it is the library, which reminds us of our balance between faith and reason."

Rising at 5 a.m. for morning prayer, meditation, and daily Mass, the convent's residents then depart for their various ministries. Five teach in elementary schools — St. Rita, St. Joseph, St. John the Apostle, St. Peter the Apostle, and Holy Family — one is assigned to Nolan, one is the director of elementary faith formation at St. Jude Parish, and one works for the diocese in the deacon formation program. Sister Ann Bosco Nguyen, OP, is the convent superior.

Celebrating her silver jubilee as a Dominican this month, Sister Anne Frances Ai Le, OP, teaches theological virtues and introduction to philosophy to men studying for the diaconate.

"I'm actually from this diocese," said the assistant

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▲ Bishop Michael Olson sprinkles holy water inside and out of the Blessed Imelda Convent. (NTC/Rodger Mallison)

◀ Sisters and guests participate in the first Mass and Blessing of the Blessed Imelda Convent. (NTC/Rodger Mallison)

GETTING BACK TO basics

New approach for diocesan education programs casts a wider net

By Susan Moses

When it comes to teaching a firm foundation in the faith, the Diocese of Fort Worth is relying on the tried and true: the Bible and the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. By offering classes in more locations and a lower cost, the Department of Catechesis and Evangelization is hoping to cast a wide net and enroll more individuals in classes that prepare them to teach and defend the faith.

The diocese's two programs of adult education — the St. Junipero Serra Institute and the St. Francis de Sales program — have revised their curriculum to focus on the Bible and the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* for the first two years of a three-year plan. The third year, to be offered in the future, will allow concentrations according to ministry.

The reason for concentrating on the Bible and the *Catechism*, according to Diocesan Director of Evangelization and Catechesis Jason Whitehead, is simple. The Bible is the inspired word of God, and the *Catechism* is the “standard reference, the guide for one to understand

what it is that the Church actually teaches and [believes]. Pope St. John Paul II [who commissioned the tome] declared the *Catechism* the ‘sure norm’ for teaching the faith,” Whitehead said.

The difference between the St. Junipero Serra Institute and the St. Francis de Sales program boils down to frequency. Classes in the St. Junipero Serra Institute are held weekly, and the St. Francis de Sales program offers monthly classes. Both programs allow participants to earn a certification credit, which will require a final paper, or to audit the classes without homework.

First-year classes in both programs cover topics including revelation, sacred Scripture, the Incarnation, the Holy Spirit, and the four last things. The weekly format of the St. Junipero Serra Institute allows those topics to be explored in more depth.

The courses are being offered at multiple times and locations, including at parishes in Wichita Falls, Weatherford, Burleson, Bedford, and Fort Worth. An online class allows the flexibility of



Amber Flores, daughter of a catechist, takes notes during the Catechism I class offered through the St. Francis de Sales Program on Sept. 19, 2022 at St. Peter the Apostle Church in Fort Worth. Flores wants to become a catechist like her mother. (NTC/Juan Guajardo)

asynchronous learning. Both programs offer classes in English and Spanish.

The cost for the St. Francis de Sales program is \$50 annually. The St. Junipero Serra Institute divides its curriculum each year into four courses, which run \$25 for a six-week course.

The diocese is increasing the availability of these programs while reducing the cost. Whitehead explained, “What I’m committed to is ensuring that people’s schedules, finances, and life don’t get in the way of them being able to learn more about the faith.”

TEACHERS AND STUDENTS

An increase in locations necessitated an increase in instructors. Whitehead said that all the teachers in both programs have “fidelity, unwavering commitment to handing down the faith, and an excitement to serve. They were the most zealous responders” to his request to teach.

Deacon Rigoberto Leyva, the diocesan director of Hispanic Ministry, recruited several deacons to teach the Spanish-language classes.

Dcn. Leyva said, “Deacons are well-trained to catechize. No doubt, they are pastoral and will connect with people. It’s a great opportunity for the community to get to know the deacons, and for deacons to get to know the people.”

Dcn. Leyva has found parishioners receptive and ready to learn more about the Catholic faith as he personally invites them to attend the St. Francis de Sales programs, which are being offered in Spanish in six locations.

Whitehead said the classes are targeted toward those who simply want to know more about their faith and those who teach the faith to children, youth, and to adults interested in joining the Church.

In Whitehead’s visits to parishes

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Scan the QR code to learn more or register for classes in the St. Junipero Serra Institute.





A student laughs during the Catechism I class offered through the St. Junipero Serra Institute on Sept. 12, 2022. (NTC/Juan Guajardo)

From Page 31

through the years, he has encountered parishioners who would like to help with religious education but aren't comfortable with their own grasp of the faith. He said these programs remedy the problem of "You can't teach what you don't know. You can't give what you don't have."

A SOLID FOUNDATION

Whether participants enroll in a course because they are motivated to teach or because they just want to learn more about the faith, an understanding of the *Catechism* is critical, according to Whitehead.

He said the new universal *Catechism* was written in the 1980s and promulgated in 1992 to communicate the faith wholly and systematically because of an ongoing "crisis in catechesis" which continues today. "The changes in our programs emphasize the systematic teaching of the faith. There are certain truths that must be understood first in order for people to effectively

understand other truths."

For example, Whitehead cites the first paragraph of the *Catechism*.


"God, infinitely perfect and blessed in Himself, in a plan of sheer goodness freely created man to make him share in His own blessed life. For this reason,

at every time and in every place, God draws close to man. He calls man to seek Him, to know Him, to love Him with all his strength. ..."


Whitehead observed, "It starts with 'What is man's purpose? Why are we here?' The answer to that dictates absolutely everything else. If you don't know why you're here, you don't know what your destination is." Other truths build on that primary understanding.

Whitehead said a "working knowledge of the *Catechism* is particularly handy" for all Catholics, especially catechists and those discussing the faith with non-Catholics or fallen away Catholics.

"You don't have to know all the answers," he said, "just where to find them." 🇺🇸



Scan the QR code to learn more or register for classes in the St. Francis de Sales program.



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





Dominican sisters pose with Bishop Olson as they celebrate the completion and dedication of their new Blessed Imelda Convent. (NTC/Rodger Mallison)

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director of intellectual formation, who grew up in St. George Parish. Her mother, Thiem Dao, is a Christ the King parishioner.

Philosophy is a challenging subject, but Sr. Anne tries to make it interesting.

“I remind them every time we cover a philosophical concept that it’s not just a class, but philosophy for the purpose of their theological studies,” she said.


Founded in 1958, the Congregation of Dominican Sisters of Mary Immaculate traces its roots to Vietnam. The order is based in Houston and counts 103 sisters, seven novices, and three postulants in its membership.

They arrived in the Diocese of Fort Worth in 2011 at the invitation of then Bishop Kevin Vann and lived in a south Arlington home donated by the Daskocil family before moving into a building near Nolan.


Having the religious order in close proximity to the high school “brings us so much joy,” said Kristy Webb, Nolan’s president.

Noticeable in their floor-length white habits, the sisters are often part of the

**MORE
PHOTOS!**



See photo galleries from the blessing of Blessed Imelda Convent and other major diocesan events at:
North-Texas-Catholic.smugmug.com.



crowd at football and volleyball games.

“We see them walking on campus. They are praying for us and praying for Nolan,” Webb said. “The students love it. They watched the building’s progress and some actually helped with the move-in process.”

Sister Maria Theresa, OP, the religious order’s provincial, traveled from Houston to attend the special liturgy and open house along with 30 other sisters.

“We are so richly blessed by Bishop Olson for allowing us to serve here in the diocese and gifting us with this beautiful convent,” she said. “It is so conducive to our way of life as religious [women], and Dominican spirituality as well.”

The new space provides room for additional sisters.

“This convent can hold up to 12 sisters

and there are nine here, so we hope to grow,” the provincial added.

After Bishop Olson blessed the interior and exterior of the white brick building with holy water, the convent’s superior presented him with a metal statue of St. Michael the Archangel.

“So many graces abound this day,” Sr. Ann Bosco said, addressing the bishop and other benefactors. “On behalf of our sisters, I offer our deepest heartfelt gratitude. We are eternally indebted to you for your boundless love and gracious support of religious women at large and particularly to our Dominican sisters.”

The convent is named for Blessed Imelda Lambertini, the patroness of first communicants, who lived with a Dominican order until her death at age 11 in the 14th century. 🇺🇸



Tracey Garman, RN, of St. Jude Parish (at right), and Denise Brown, RN, with Texas Health Resources Faith Community Nursing, conduct a flu vaccine pop-up clinic at St. Jude Parish in Mansfield on Oct. 9. (NTC/Ben Torres)

Wellness where you Worship

Spiritual and physical health converge with Faith Community Nursing

By Susan McFarland

From wellness classes and blood drives to vaccination clinics and help with medical resources, caring for others is the force behind a growing nursing program within the diocese. But it's more than straight-up medical care that drives these nurses to continue their work. At the heart of the program is the people they serve.

Providing spiritual, psychological, and social care to parishioners is fulfilling work. And it's something Nancy Banks keeps

doing at age 82.

"When you get to my age, I have everything I need... I just want to help other people," Banks said. "It's who I am as a volunteer."

Banks, a parishioner at St. Joseph Church in Arlington, began as coordinator of the Parish Nursing Program after retiring from her nursing job in 2006.

"It's about reaching people who don't have access to resources," she said. "It's about helping others, especially the older people in wheelchairs to make sure they receive Communion, or [that] any other

needs [are met]."

Banks said as she visits people to pray with them after they return from the hospital, she often hears concerns about medical issues they are having.

"A lot of times they are anxious to get home and don't listen to aftercare instructions," Banks said. "They don't want to bother the doctor with questions, so I say, 'OK, bother me. I'll listen to you.'"

Since Banks began her work, the parish has held numerous clinics, from wellness seminars to senior lunches. The well-established program at St. Joseph is



◀ Aura Archila was one of 80 parishioners to receive a flu vaccine from Denise Brown, RN, during a pop-up clinic at St. Jude Parish. (NTC/Ben Torres)

what prompted Father Daniel Kelley, former pastor of St. Joseph and current pastor of St. Jude Church in Mansfield, to start a program at his current parish.

“I believe that starting the parish nursing program is very important,” Fr. Kelley said. “I have seen some very successful blood drives at St. Joseph, including during the pandemic.”

Fr. Kelley said Texas Health Resources, who partners with the church, has good ideas for community wellness.

“I have seen a lot of good things happen while I was at St. Joseph, including flu vaccinations, blood pressure checks, and other events,” Fr. Kelley said.

The Faith Community Nursing (FCN) program at Texas Health Resources is a specialty of nursing that focuses on the intentional care of the spirit combined with traditional nursing practice.

FCN partners with registered nurses within congregations to provide health-related programs tailored to meet the needs of the church and its surrounding neighborhood. Nurses who serve in the role have an active nursing license, have a minimum of two years of experience as a registered nurse, and are a spiritually mature member of the faith community.

Denise Brown, faith community nursing program manager at Texas Health Resources, is director for the Fort Worth area. The program is affiliated with all faiths.

Brown said she studied theology but was called to medical missions.

“God had a different path for me,” Brown said.

Her new journey aligned with the wishes of her heart — to work from home, serve the church, and be a nurse.

Brown said nurses get asked all the time about medical issues, be it which doctor to call, what ailment they think a person has, or how to handle a medical condition.

“If you’re a nurse, you have a health ministry in your church. You just don’t know it,” she said. “Once people find out you are a nurse, people start calling you, asking questions. Because you are a nurse, that’s an extension of what you do.”

But in doing so, a lot of nurses unknowingly face liabilities for information they share and lose protection otherwise given at their workplace.

“It’s very easy to make a mistake and think, ‘I do this all of the time,’ but outside of the hospital you are on your own,” she said. “Helping nurses understand boundaries is very important.”

The program at Texas Health Resources educates nurses on the legalities while providing support for educational programs and vaccination clinics.

Brown said many times people will feel more comfortable coming to a nurse with certain prayer requests they would otherwise not share with someone else,

especially regarding abuse, neglect, sexuality, or past trauma.

“A nurse can minister in the moment or refer out to a specialist,” she said. “It’s encouragement. They can quote Scripture and pray . . . they provide a different level of care to those they reach.”

Those are reasons Tracey Garman, a parishioner at St. Jude, answered the ad Fr. Kelley placed in the bulletin to start the program at the Mansfield parish.

Garman said, “In passing I asked what the ad was all about.”

After Fr. Kelley explained the program, Garman thought, “What should I do? That would be a huge undertaking.”

Feeling called to help, Garman, despite her hesitancy, reached out to Banks.

“She was a wealth of information. She gave me contact information and next steps,” Garman said. “Then I met Denise Brown and jumped in full-scale.”

After a nursing career that spanned more than 20 years, Garman retired from her job last year, but she wasn’t ready to stop working, so this role was perfect.

Garman recently completed a nine-week foundation course in faith community nursing taught by Texas Health Resources.

“It was very intense; I felt like I was in one of my master’s classes,” she said.

Garman said the ministry is about creating a health and wellness team, building relationships with parishioners, gaining trust, and educating others about what the program offers.

“It’s not about me practicing clinical care. I cannot treat a parishioner as a patient,” she said. “I’m just making sure their access to health care is addressed and they are given prayers and resources.”

Garman said she is blessed to have a supportive parish. During a recent blood drive that she coordinated, 71 people showed up and donated 56 units of blood.

“I was so pleased with their generosity and their willingness to serve,” Garman said, adding she wasn’t sure prior to the event what kind of response she would have. “The power of prayer is real.” 🇺🇸



NTC/Rodger Mallison

Sisters who **Serve**

The Ladies Auxiliary of the Knights of St. Peter Claver continue their commitment to aiding the Church and local community

By Joan Kurkowski-Gillen

When Janae Tinsley joined the Ladies Auxiliary of the Knights of St. Peter Claver in 1998, the busy technology specialist shied away from active participation. But a family tragedy made her recommit to the organization dedicated to helping others.

“After my sister, Michelle, died in 2002 from an aneurysm, my whole life turned upside down,”

recalled the cradle Catholic who grew up going to St. Rita Parish in Fort Worth. “She was such a loving, giving person. To honor her, I decided to become more involved and engaged.”

Tinsley’s six-year term as the group’s Texas State Deputy recently ended — a post that required her to recruit, retain, and reclaim members. The Nolan Catholic graduate was the first Fort Worth woman elected to a KPC state office.

“I was the voice for Texas as far as leadership,” added the parishioner of Our Mother of Mercy in Fort Worth, who also served on the National Court Board of Directors.

Founded 113 years ago, the Knights of St. Peter Claver is a fraternal African American Catholic lay group — similar to the Knights of Columbus — dedicated to serving the Church and less fortunate. The Ladies Auxiliary was formed in 1922

Janae Tinsley (third from left), and fellow members of the Ladies Auxiliary of the Knights of St. Peter Claver are shown at Our Mother of Mercy Church on Aug. 28, 2022.

to provide women with the same opportunities for service.

An international organization based in New Orleans, the KPC Ladies Auxiliary has 9,000 members nationally and 1,400 in the Lone Star State.

“We’re here to render service to the priest, the Church, and the community,” Tinsley continued. “The beauty of our organization is the whole family can belong.”

Although the median age of members is between 65 and 70, youngsters and teens are encouraged to join the organization as Junior Knights or Junior Daughters. Being at least seven years old and having made first Communion are the only requirements.

The Knights and Ladies of St. Peter Claver try to emulate the work of their namesake — a Jesuit priest from Spain who ministered to slaves in the New World during the 17th century.

“Peter Claver met the ships in Cartagena (present-day Columbia) and even though he didn’t speak their language, he comforted them,” said Linda Campbell, the two-term Grand Lady of the Ladies Auxiliary at Our Mother of Mercy Parish. “And that’s what we want to do — help those in need regardless of age, creed, or color.”

During the height of the slave trade in the early 1600s, the missionary frequented the ships where men and women were kept in pens and chained like animals. Bringing medicines, food, brandy, and lemons to the suffering occupants, he treated them with human dignity and reminded them of God’s love.

During 40 years of ministry,

Claver instructed and baptized more than 300,000 slaves using simple pictures to explain the Christian faith. His efforts urging plantation owners to treat their workers humanely often ostracized him from well-to-do society.

Today, the apostolate that bears the saint’s name assists victims of natural disasters, seminarians, college students, and families struggling with hunger. When Katrina, a category 5 hurricane, took nearly 2,000 lives and cut a path of destruction across Mississippi and Louisiana in August 2005, the Saint Peter Claver Foundation offered immediate assistance.

“Our [Saint Peter Claver] Foundation — the charitable arm of the KPC — provided money to the people who needed it,” Campbell pointed out.

Homeless residents of New Orleans, seeking shelter in North Texas, were helped by the KPC Council and Court #89 at Our Mother of Mercy.

“Our parishioners found them places to live in the Fort Worth area until they were able to return home. A lot of them stayed,” the Grand Lady recalled. “We got them clothing and other things they needed.”

Locally, the Knights and Ladies provide scholarships to graduating high school seniors, collect school supplies for students, and participate in the Mickey Leland Hunger Fellowship Program. Named for a Catholic anti-poverty activist from Houston who died during a mission trip to Ethiopia in 1989, the state-wide project provided canned goods to the Tarrant Area

Food Bank last year.

Campbell said joining the KPC Ladies Auxiliary 22 years ago has made her a more caring person.

“I no longer just see a person who needs help. I see the face of Jesus in the people we’re helping,” she enthused. “I’ve always been a giving person but that has increased in me over the past few years.”

Years spent in the Ladies Auxiliary enhanced Tinsley’s life as well, both personally and spiritually. A bond exists within the order that extends beyond state borders.

“I could not have gotten through the grieving process without the Ladies Auxiliary. That’s when I realized what the sisterhood was all about,” she contended. “Ladies in Texas cities and even across the country reached out to me because they knew the relationship I had with my sister.”

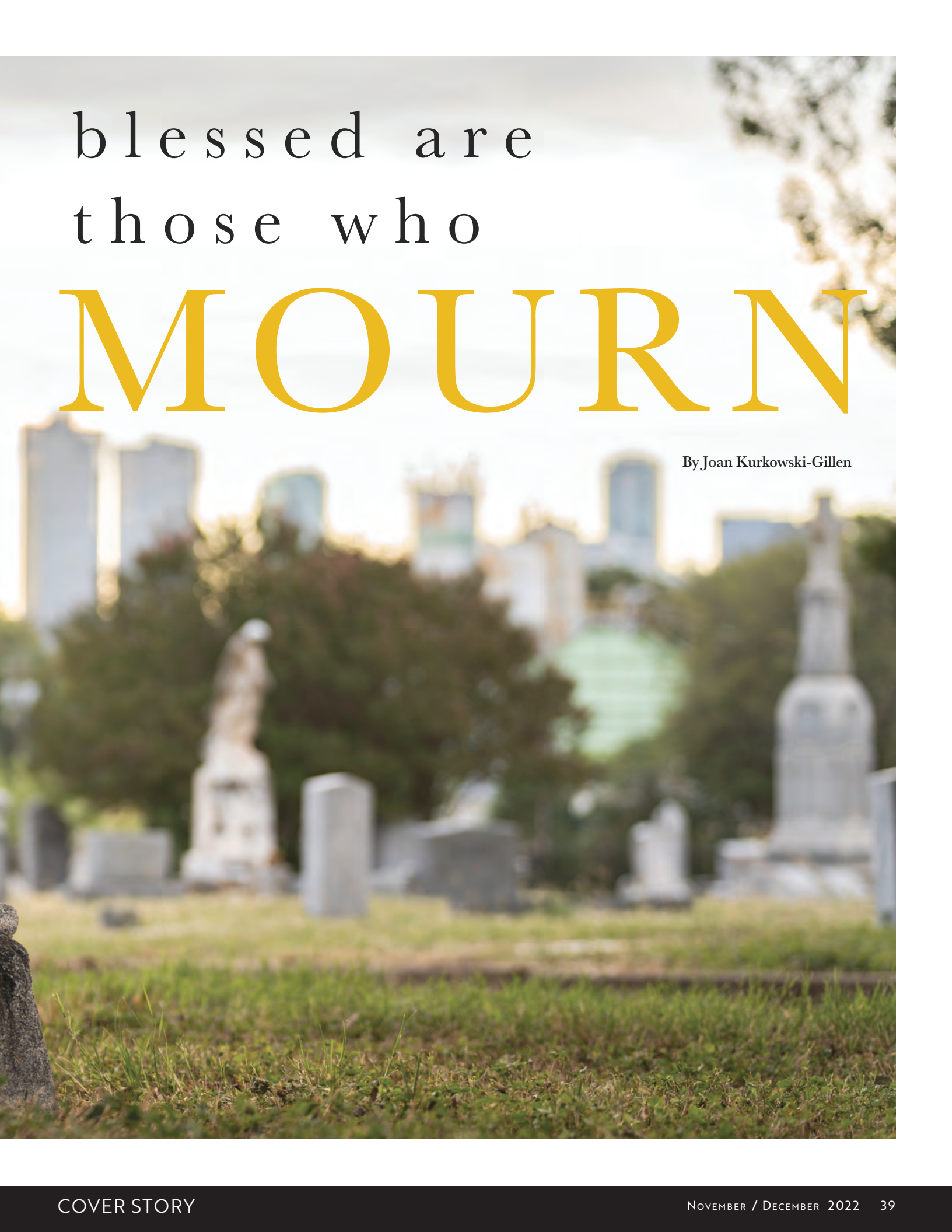
The Knights and Ladies of St. Peter Claver meet separately each month and jointly once a quarter. A highlight every year is the annual diocesan Martin Luther King Jr. Mass organized by both groups and held each January to commemorate the slain civil rights leader’s birthday.

With women dressed in traditional white attire and men wearing dark suits as they advance up the aisle at the start of the liturgy, the occasion attracts attention from parishioners who want to know more about the organization and its mission.

“People always ask, ‘Who are you? What do you do?’” Tinsley said. The answer is simple, she explained: “We serve.” 🇺🇸



NTC photo illustration/Juan Guajardo



blessed are
those who

MOURN

By Joan Kurkowski-Gillen

After healing from losses of their own, parish volunteers help to heal other broken hearts

Losing a daughter and, weeks later, a sister in 2020 devastated Estella McKanna. The isolation, caused by a global pandemic, only compounded her grief.

“Everything was closed — including the churches — so there was no one to turn to. I couldn’t find the help I needed,” remembered the parishioner of St. Peter the Apostle Church in Fort Worth. “I had family support, but they couldn’t stand to see me cry. I couldn’t talk about what was going on inside me.”

She’d vent her grief at the only place open to the public — the cemetery.

Comfort came in late fall 2020 after finding a bereavement support group offered at St. Thomas the Apostle Parish in Fort Worth.

“In the group, I was listening to others and didn’t feel so alone,” the grieving mother explained. “Sometimes when you’re hurting, you forget others are in pain and suffering too.”

Reaching out to people grieving the loss of a loved one is a ministry of consolation. After the death of Lazarus, even Jesus mourned and supported the dead man’s family in their grief (*John 11:33-36*).

Today more parishes are responding to the promise of the Beatitude, “Blessed are those who mourn for they will be comforted,” by offering a

bereavement ministry. Grief is a universal emotion that affects everyone at some point, and the work needed to heal a broken heart requires time, effort, tears, and compassion. A support group is a safe, nonjudgmental place where participants can share their loss and let feelings flow.

“You need to put that grief into words, and talking about what you went through might help someone else,” said McKanna, who experienced enough healing to help start a grief ministry in her own parish. Guided by different facilitators, the St. Peter’s group meets on the first Saturday of the month.

In today’s world, people are very attached to electronics such as smart phones and iPads, “but those devices aren’t going to get you through the hard times, and neither will the medications doctors are willing to dispense,” she pointed out. “You need a group like this where people can get the help they need to go on in life. There are people who are hurting out there. I don’t want them to feel there’s nowhere to go like I did.”

WALKING WITH THE MOURNER

Dr. Maria Moneta de Castro uses her medical knowledge and time spent studying at the Center for Loss and Life Transition in Colorado to serve the grief ministry programs at St. Peter and Holy Family in Fort Worth,

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Estella McKanna holds a photo of her deceased daughter, Kelly Ann. (NTC/Juan Guajardo)



NTC/Juan Guajardo

Shirley Wells is a grief ministry facilitator at Holy Family Church in Fort Worth.

After the Hour of Our Death

Kiki Hayden and Juan Guajardo explore the Catholic Church's teachings on the reality of death and eternal life.



Further reading

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her home parish. The seminars she attends were developed by Alan Wolfelt, the bestselling author of several books on death including *Understanding Your Grief*, a guide used by many counselors.

A retired pediatrician who lost her husband 14 years ago in a motorcycle accident, de Castro still experiences bursts of grief and uses what she's learned to help others navigate loss.

"I've learned that you don't solve their grief. You walk with the mourner," she said, repeating the wisdom gleaned from workshops. "You accompany them on the journey."

De Castro remembers being in shock for weeks after the sudden death of her healthy, 53-year-old spouse on a Sunday afternoon. Family and friends

rushed to her side during the wake and funeral.

"But people get busy and after the first few weeks nobody calls you. I learned from that," she continued. "So I don't send a sympathy card right away. I do it later, and I do that with visits too."

The bereavement support sessions she facilitates with other volunteers offer presence and prayer to help participants cope with the tsunami of emotions they are feeling. Grief is a personal journey, but sharing and listening to others helps.

"After my loss, I felt the pain would always be with me, but I learned how to live with it," she affirmed. "It's never completely gone because you loved, you have that pain. The deeper the love, the deeper the pain."



NTC/Juan Guajardo

Dr. Maria Moneta de Castro facilitates bereavement support sessions at Holy Family and St. Peter the Apostle.

TO LOVE IS TO GRIEVE

After 20 years spent guiding teens through the loss of a parent, sibling, or close friend at The Warm Place, the one thing Shirley Wells knows is “to love is to grieve.” The former volunteer at the Fort Worth nonprofit also understands from personal experience that bottling up emotions following a death can cause lasting anxiety, anger, and stress.

As a 19-year-old college student, her father’s sudden fatal heart attack and pressure to help with his funeral arrangements led to a crippling fear that lasted 25 years. Relief came after sharing her story during a training workshop.

“After my father died, I couldn’t talk about it with anyone because you didn’t talk about death back then, and it became a fear,” explained Wells, a grief ministry facilitator at Holy Family. “When the event happens, it’s

important not to stuff feelings away because they will come back to haunt you in some way.”

Unresolved grief can lead to lasting depression, substance abuse, or other destructive behaviors.

“If you hold it in, you don’t heal. Talking about it begins the healing process, and that’s what these bereavement groups do,” Wells assured. “They walk with the person on their grief journey.”

One of four grief ministry volunteers at Holy Family, she always welcomes people to the parish’s monthly group meetings by telling her own story.

“When they know what we’ve been through it helps them,” she reiterated. “But there’s never total closure. If you loved that person, you grieve that person.”

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“I’ve learned that you don’t solve their grief. You walk with the mourner.”

— DR. MARIA
MONETA DE
CASTRO

A woman places a rose in front of the Marian altar at St. Patrick Cathedral during the Annual Memorial Mass for Children Who Died Before Baptism on Sept. 3, 2022.



NTC/Juan Gujardo

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GRIEVING WITH GREAT HOPE

Encouraging the grief-stricken as they navigate the emotional bridge to a new life is the focus of the Grieving with Great Hope ministry at St. Philip the Apostle Parish in Flower Mound. Started six years ago at the request of the pastor, Father Ray McDaniel, the five-week course is held each spring and fall and provides grief recovery support from a Catholic perspective.

“Why is it important to have a grief ministry for parishioners? Because it gives them comfort, consolation, and lets people know God is with them,” explained Denise Koch, who served as director of the ministry for three years.

Sometimes the grief-stricken, struggling with loss, blame God.

“I want people to understand that God never abandons you. Everything happens according to His providence,” she added. “This ministry gave me the opportunity not only to love and console people, but also to evangelize them on the teachings of the Church in a pastoral way.”

She recently led the discussion for a group of six women coping with the death of their fathers.

“They shared their stories, brought comfort to one another, and saw God at work in their suffering,” Koch recalled. “Each person in that group said it changed their lives

and are now in a place where they can accept their grief.”

The Grieving with Great Hope course ends with a candlelight ceremony in the church with a priest or deacon sharing their thoughts about life after loss.

“It’s really beautiful because it allows people to truly mourn and grieve in a very intimate setting,” she explained.

REMEMBERING THE UNBORN

The death of an unborn child is a loss that’s often not acknowledged.

“People gather around you when it is someone they could see, but no one saw this child,” said Pat Pelletier, president of Mother and Unborn Baby Care. “Closure is very difficult without a funeral.”

That’s why the dedicated pro-life advocate and her late husband, Chuck Pelletier, began hosting the Annual Memorial Mass for Children Who Died Before Baptism every fall more than 30 years ago. The liturgy, which includes families placing a rose on the Marian altar in memory of their children, helps begin the healing process for parents after a miscarriage, stillbirth, or abortion. It’s a spiritual, symbolic way of giving the child back to God and the Blessed Mother.

“What this Mass provides, in a sense, is a funeral and gravesite where they can put that rose,” said Pelletier thoughtfully. “Many will think of that baby every time they go into a church and see a Marian altar. They know

Acts of Remembrance

Columnist Walker Price reflects on ways we as Catholics can remember and help the Holy Souls in Purgatory.



Further reading



Helen Mahan and Deacon Michael Handler at St. Thomas the Apostle Church in Fort Worth.

the child is at peace, so now they can be at peace.”

Every person who comes to the Mass has a story that brought them there.

“We lost our little baby almost five years ago, but she is still dear to us and gives us another reason to long for our heavenly home,” wrote one St. Maria Goretti parishioner. “Thank you for giving us a sacred time and place to mourn and remember.”

HONORING THE DEAD

Deacon Mike Handler lost count of the many funeral liturgies he’s presided at since being ordained to the diaconate in 2020.

“If I’m asked to give the homily, I always strive to offer some hope to the family suffering a significant loss in their lives,” said the deacon assigned to St. Thomas the Apostle Parish. “But that is only the beginning.”

After the funeral, mourners — especially spouses — are left with a significant void in their life as they return

“Everybody on the bereavement team has lost someone, so we just share our stories and offer support.”

— HELEN
MAHAN

to a home that is now different. Sometimes family and friends will provide the support needed as a person moves through the emotional stages of grief.

“But when that’s not enough, the bereavement ministry is there to help,” Dcn. Handler continued. “This ministry does not offer professional counseling services, rather, it’s a ministry of presence and hope to the one grieving.”

Helen Mahan and Dee Martinez manage the monthly meetings and assist parishioners planning a funeral service at St. Thomas the Apostle Church. Ministry volunteers never give advice. They listen.

“Everybody on the bereavement team has lost someone, so we just share our stories and offer support,” Mahan said. “We always give our phone numbers to the people we are dealing with in case they have a bad day. We want to be available to them.”

Continued on Page 46

From Page 45

During November, the ministry sets up a table in the vestibule of the church with photographs of parishioners who died during the year.

“We want people to remember those lost as well as their own loved ones,” she added. “It’s a way to honor our dead and pray for the souls in purgatory.”

HEALING THE BROKENHEARTED

In her 1969 book *On Death and Dying*, psychiatrist and researcher Elisabeth Kübler-Ross identifies the five stages of grief as denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance. But there’s also a sixth step to recovery, asserted Bill Brewer.

“It’s when you can move forward on your own a little bit and give back,” explained the St. Frances Cabrini parishioner. “We see people wanting to help others because they know how hard it was.”

Brewer spent a year in denial after losing his first wife to a sudden bout of bacterial pneumonia at age 49. Reeling from the unexpected death, he moved to Granbury from Minnesota and joined the bereavement group at his new parish.

That’s where he met the woman he would eventually marry. Phillis Brewer, a widow, was leading the recently

launched Starting a New Life ministry at St. Frances Cabrini. For the past 25 years, the couple has jointly managed the grief ministry classes at their parish as well as helping other churches develop their own programs.

“Grief is a roller coaster. You could be laughing one minute and crying the next, but you are not crazy,” Phillis said, repeating the insight she shares with newcomers. “I want to assure people that life will be different, but it can be good, joyful, and productive. You can move forward.”

Different topics dealing with a variety of issues like stress and loneliness are introduced at each meeting of the 10-week sessions, which are held in the spring and fall.

According to the organizers, the first gathering is always sad.

“All they know is they’re hurting and don’t want to be there, but they know they need help,” Bill Brewer observed. “By the 10th week I have to ring a bell to get them to quiet down. There is more ministry between participants than anything we do.”

The Brewers end each class with a prayer for healing and keep God a focal part of the program.

People who came to the classes traumatized by loss begin to make strides toward a new but different life.

“That’s what we have seen for 25 years,” he said. “We see the Lord healing the brokenhearted.” 🇺🇸

An absence at the table

Read columnist Jeff Hedglen’s reflection on the passing of his uncle and the different tenor the holidays take on when people we love die.



Further reading

At the final hour

The graces of Anointing of the Sick



The beauty of the faith is helping people in need.

That’s how Father Binoy Kurian, TOR, approaches his work as the diocesan chaplain at Fort Worth’s downtown hospitals.

Most of the calls the Franciscan priest receives during his ministry are from families requesting last rites for a loved one near death. Arriving at the hospital to administer the Anointing of the Sick, he often finds the patient unresponsive. Witnessing the sacrament is an immense relief for the family and helps ease them into the grieving process.

“The family knows their loved one has been given access to the mercy of the Lord,” Fr. Kurian explained. “Through the sacraments we obtain grace.”

He sometimes receives letters from parents or other relatives of the deceased that say they were comforted knowing their loved one was anointed and forgiven.

In a February 2022 *North Texas Catholic* article Fr. Kurian explained, “Anointing of the Sick is not a farewell ceremony. It is a sacrament, a healing; a healing for the soul.”



Learn more about Fr. Kurian’s ministry to the sick and dying:





Since October 2021, CCFW Refugee Services has helped settle 495 refugees from five countries, including Afghan refugees seeking asylum.

Home away from home

By Mary Lou Seewoester

A year ago, a young couple and their baby arrived in Fort Worth from Afghanistan. Like most refugees who fled after U.S. Armed Forces withdrew from the Middle-Eastern Country, they brought very little with them to start over in America. But by August, with the help of Catholic Charities Fort Worth, the family became financially self-sufficient. The father works full-time in a warehouse and his wife cares for their child while working a flexible part-time job at home.

Amy Vallaster, the case manager who supported this family, said CCFW Refugee Services offers both financial help and physical donations such as household goods, diapers, baby wipes, and furniture. She said though finding employment is crucial, refugees arrive with many needs, all of which are “legitimate, important, and timely.”

Most of Vallaster’s clients are from Afghanistan and had to flee because they

had helped the U.S. military in some way. Once the Taliban took control, they feared for their lives.

“Most of them are dealing with heavy situations because they’re leaving a war zone,” she said. “We don’t ask about the details... but all of them are very brave; they want to do well and to adapt.”

Lorenzo Pablo, CCFW Refugee Services director, said since October 2021, the agency has served 495 refugees from Afghanistan, the Congo, Syria, Burma, and Ukraine. Refugee Services also supports an additional 279 Cuban and Haitian refugees, with a wait list of 130 from those countries. However, he noted that CCFW’s largest group of refugees is from Afghanistan. In fact, the agency recently received additional government funding from the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) to assist more Afghan humanitarian parolees.

Pablo explained that the term “parolee” refers to refugees whose status in the U.S. is temporary. However, he said these refugees apply for asylum or the Special Immigrant

Visa (SIV) which allows them to stay in the U.S. permanently. He said the ORR funds will provide rental assistance and an immigration officer to facilitate any immigration needs, such as SIV applications.

Refugee Services also helped 488 adult refugees improve their language skills with ESL classes, Pablo said. And 27 clients participated in Education Advancement for Refugees and Immigrants, a CCFW-funded program that helps procure and pay for additional training, licenses, or certifications to help improve the person’s employment level. Refugee Services also provided tutoring for 112 children and summer camp for 71 children.

Pablo, who became director of Refugee Services in May, said his immediate goal is to provide stability, clarity, and recognition for the staff of 47, many of whom were once refugees and “want to give back.”

“They are hard-working and have such humility and such a servant heart,” he said. “And that is the personification of who Christ is.” 🇺🇸





futures investor

Mike Brown spearheads annual dinners to support vocations, raising \$3.5 million in three decades

By Susan Moses

The way Mike Brown tells it, Father Aidan Donlon, SAC, was a visionary, and Brown just took the priest’s request and ran with it. Thirty-two years later, Brown is still running.

Back in 1991, Fr. Donlon and his friend Father Severius Blank, former pastor of St. Jude Thaddeus Parish in Burkburnett, told members of Knights of

Columbus Council 1473 that they should think about doing more for vocations.

Fr. Donlon shared his far-sighted vision: the Diocese of Fort Worth would be one of the fastest growing in the country, which would necessitate more parishes and more priests. The priest even foresaw a greater need for Spanish-speaking priests, Brown remembered.

“How he knew that 32 years ago, I don’t know,” said Brown, a Knight and parishioner of Our Lady

◀ Mike Brown and Father Michael Moloney hold the check representing funds raised for vocations at the 2022 Fr. Donlon Vocations Dinner. Each year's dinner has raised more than the previous one. (NTC/Juan Guajardo)

Queen of Peace Church in Wichita Falls.

In conversations with his friend Fr. Donlon, who was then serving as a hospital chaplain, Brown learned how the financial support of the Pallottines made seminary possible for the priest.

Impressed by the necessity to increase the number of priests and help finance their formation, Brown organized the first Fr. Aidan Donlon Vocations Dinner with the help of Council 1473, based at Our Lady Queen of Peace, and the city's Catholic community.

The charity dinner raised about \$3,700. A young seminarian, Michael Olson, attended that first event.

Its success inspired Brown to make the dinners an annual tradition. The Harvest Moon dinner, a smaller event held the first Saturday in October, was added later to provide seed money for the Fr. Donlon dinners.

Fr. Donlon died in January 2009, but the dinners continue.

In 31 years, the Fr. Donlon Vocations Dinners have raised more than \$3.5 million for seminarian education through tickets for the dinner, a live and silent auction, and a raffle. Each year has raised more than the previous. Brown explained, "I don't know how we do it, but we do."

Held on the third Saturday of February, all money raised goes toward supporting seminarians, which is a priority for Knights of Columbus councils worldwide.

Ron Alonzo, state secretary for the Texas State Council of the Knights of Columbus, traveled from Corpus Christi with his wife to attend the Harvest Moon dinner Oct. 1.

"It is truly a blessing to have these men continually support vocations for all these years. Simply put, priceless!" Alonzo remarked.

He said Brown and Council 1473 are known by Knights throughout the state for their success in fundraising for

vocations, and Council 1473 is likely the top donor in the state.

Brown believes the council has raised more for vocations than any of the 16,000 Knights councils worldwide.

IMPORTANT INVESTMENT

The faithful of the Diocese of Fort Worth finance seminarian education through the support of the St. John Paul II Shepherd's Guild, the Annual Diocesan Appeal, the Fr. Donlon Vocations Dinner, the Good Shepherd Sunday special collection, and other donations.

Brown considers supporting the expense of formation as "investing in the future of the diocese."

He continued, "Without financial assistance, [men discerning a religious vocation] may not become priests," acknowledging the 7-to-9-year seminarian journey is a large commitment even without having to pay an estimated \$50,000 per year in tuition, books, room and board, health insurance, and other expenses.

"They're dedicating their whole lives. We can surely help out on the finances, more than just pitching in at the special collection," said Brown, who runs a machine shop started by his late father.

Brown's dedication to raising money for vocations has impressed Father Michael Moloney, pastor of St. Mary Parish in Windthorst and St. Boniface Parish in Scotland.

Fr. Moloney attended Fr. Donlon Vocation Dinners before he entered seminary and remains a "great help" with the dinners, according to Brown.

Fr. Moloney observed, "Mike loves the Catholic Church. He sees the need for vocations; he feels the need for vocations. Somehow, God put this calling in him 32 years ago.

"His strong conviction has been maintained and never flagged all these years. It's rare, really. Most people would not be able," the pastor continued.

DINNER WITH FRIENDS

Brown chairs the dinner, but Knights and others help, including Tom and Nan Ruddy, members of Sacred Heart Parish in Wichita Falls, who have been loyal assistants for at least 25 years.

"A lot of people work hard to make it happen," said Tom Ruddy, who recruits his children and grandchildren to help at the February dinner, which is usually attended by more than 300 people. Some individuals donate a labor of love: handmade crafts, artwork, or quilts for the auction.

Nan Ruddy noted a secondary benefit to the dinner. Besides raising money for vocations, individuals from several parishes collaborate to plan and attend the event.

The dinners also raise awareness of the need for vocations and the urgency to pray for vocations, Tom added. Each year, Brown helps attendees maintain vocation awareness by giving them a custom keepsake, such as a keychain or a magnet.

"Mike gives a lot of thought to the dinners," Tom said, speculating that Brown plans future dinners two or three years ahead. "He is determined, and he even made it happen during COVID."

Brown will be 71 when the 32nd Fr. Donlon dinner is held in February, but he and the Knights "will continue as long as I keep going. Our whole goal is, we just want to help out the diocese."

"We're trying to reach out to the whole Catholic community. If we help somebody get ordained, it's going to affect somebody in the diocese somewhere," said Brown. "I don't look at it as a burden. It comes natural for me, what I'm trying to do. I don't need any accolades — the proof is in the pudding, seeing the new priests come through.

"The only thing I promote is vocations. If we've been supporting these men, and then they come through as parish priests, we've accomplished what we wanted to do," he said. 🇺🇸



Eyes on the Prize

Perseverance and sacrifice are essential elements to succeed at something that endures, like a marriage, a relationship with God, or long-distance running, cycling, and swimming competitions.

Keith and Jacquelyn Kotar, parishioners at Holy Redeemer Church in Aledo, have the opportunity to practice perseverance and sacrifice as competitive athletes, spouses, and parents of two daughters, one of whom has health challenges and subsequent medical debt.

The couple, with the support of their parish community, never gives up as they run the race “toward the goal, the prize of God’s upward calling, in Christ Jesus” (*Philippians 3:14*).

In *Amoris Laetitia (The Joy of Love)*, Pope Francis states, “The Christian ideal, especially in families, is a love that never gives up” (119). His apostolic exhortation focuses on the unique challenges and joys of families.

FAST FINISH:

Their relationship began at the finish line — Jacquelyn’s first triathlon. She was impressed by Keith’s calmness and humility, even though he’d won the silver medal.

CATHOLIC CURIOUS:

Keith wasn’t Catholic, but his father was, in addition to his best friend. He began attending Mass with Jacquelyn early in their relationship.

When Keith began asking a lot of questions about the faith, Jacquelyn advised him to attend RCIA. He entered the Church at Holy Redeemer Parish, where Jacquelyn worked as a part-time youth minister.

EARLY DAYS:

Married May 24, 2014, at Holy Redeemer, the first years of their marriage centered around training and competing in triathlons and running

events. When their older daughter Soren was a baby, she went along for the ride.

GOD’S PLAN:

When their second daughter, Emersyn, was born, she was diagnosed with a rare genetic syndrome that required lots of therapy and a strict medical diet.

Jacquelyn said, “I was never angry at God. On the flip side: I noticed every step of my life before Emmy was born, God was preparing us to be her parents” — including Jacquelyn’s celiac disease and Soren’s food allergies, which meant the family was already accustomed to accommodating special dietary needs.

CHURCH SUPPORT:

After she was born, Emersyn spent 13 days in the NICU, and the couple said they will never forget the meals and prayers from members of the Holy Redeemer Moms’ Group. Monsignor

◀ Keith and Jacquelyn Kotar, with their daughters Emersyn (left) and Soren, are parishioners of Holy Redeemer Church in Aledo. (NTC/Ben Torres)

Publius Xuereb visited them in the NICU. “We really feel like we’re part of that community,” said Jacquelyn.

LEAP OF FAITH:

For more than seven years, Keith worked long hours at Nolan Catholic High School, coaching cross country, track, and swimming and teaching AP physics, all the while training to compete in triathlons at the elite level. During track season, he might go three days without seeing his children.

Last fall, he took a “huge leap” and left the school to dedicate himself to coaching others at the club he founded, Fort Worth Triathlon and Track Club. He developed a six-month plan, and early success has convinced Keith it’s been a “God incident.”

KEEP IT TOGETHER:

Busy schedules at work, coaching, and competitions led them to discover that a Friday afternoon date, while their daughters are in school, is a good way to stay connected.

FAITH AT WORK:

Jacquelyn finds her job on the leadership team of the Fort Worth YMCA corresponds with Catholic values. “I learned an appreciation through my religious studies [major] and working with people of different backgrounds to love and accept all people. I’m thankful I work for an organization that values that.”

The website for Keith’s track club promotes three attributes: diligence, persistence, and humility — virtues the saints and Church encourage too.

PRAYER TO GO:

Jacquelyn was a student athlete in college, and workouts on the cross country team felt like a job to her.

It wasn’t until she became a recreational runner that she found a spiritual aspect to running.

Now, she looks forward to her long runs as extended prayer time, which she begins by praying the Rosary.

CATHOLIC KIDS:

The family embraces liturgical living. Originally initiated to benefit the kids, the parents discovered it’s “fun for the whole family, an unintended pleasant surprise.”

A family altar changes with the Church seasons, holy days, and saints’ feast days. Their daughters earn kindness coins for loving acts, and the family plans a special activity when the kindness jar is full.

RELIGIOUS ROOTS:

Jacquelyn grew up in Louisiana in a family and culture steeped in Catholicism. When she left for college, she joined a parish immediately.

She said, “I could go to Mass, and I felt centered. It was my safe space. I want that for my kids, that [Mass] is their comfort.” ✝



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The Arduous Good

Archbishop Fulton Sheen in his book, *The Priest is Not His Own*, states, “Once we understand that all trials come from the Lord, they lose their bitterness, and our heart is at peace.”

Archbishop Sheen is not saying God punishes His people through suffering. Rather, all our sufferings, trials, and temptations must pass before God’s vision before they are allowed. And if they are allowed, it is *only* because God has seen how He can weave salvation into our lives through them.

No suffering we endure is for naught. It has been allowed under God’s mysterious providence for the purpose of our good and our salvation. For this reason, in the depths of our world’s gloom, we confidently maintain hope.

St. Thomas Aquinas holds that the main difference between *mere desire* and the *passion of hope* is suffering. We desire tacos, we buy them easily, and we eat them. Desire satisfied. We do not hope for tacos.

We hope for state championships, for doctorate degrees, for well-adjusted and faithful children, for things that are “**arduous, but possible to attain.**” We accept the sacrifices and sufferings required to attain these *arduous goods* because we know the prize is worth it.

The *virtue* of hope, given to us at

Baptism, works similarly to the passion of hope. However, this *virtue* moves us to yearn for the greatest and most arduous of all goods, God Himself. When we exercise this virtue, we move toward God in love despite the difficulty of the journey. In fact, the suffering, sacrifice, and perseverance required may even increase our hope as our struggles draw us more deeply into God.



Fr. Brett Metzler

For Christians, we cannot forget that our pilgrimage to God will at times be arduous. Scripture says, “In the world you will have trouble, but take courage, I have conquered the world” (*Jn 16:33*) and “Beloved, do not be surprised that a trial by fire is occurring among you, as if something strange were happening to you” (*1 Pet 4:12*). We are assured that true discipleship will bring exhaustion and suffering.

We cannot forget, however, the heroic lives of those who have hoped for the arduous good despite similar challenges. The prophet Habakkuk lived when Israel was profoundly unfaithful to God. He was thus plagued by discouragement and trial. Yet, he hoped.

Both Moses and Elijah reached such depths of anguish at certain moments in their ministries that they begged God to end their lives — Moses, from profound frustration with his people’s relentless idolatry, and Elijah because of sheer

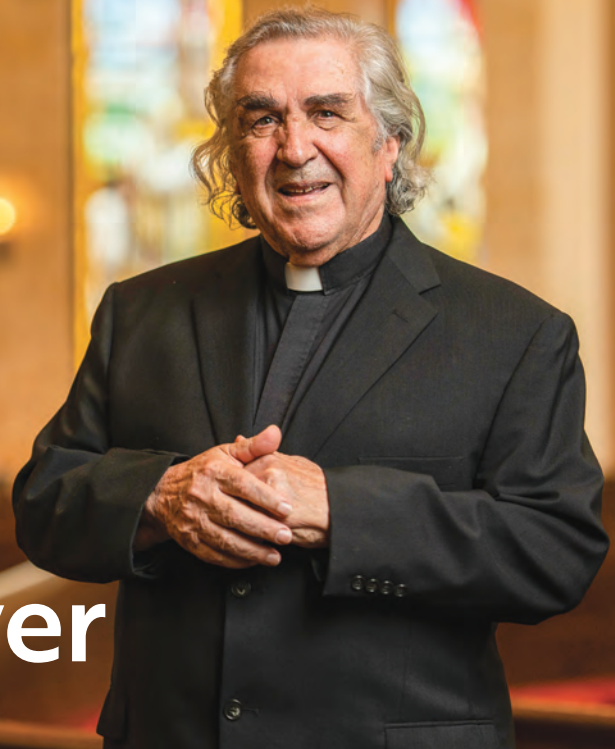
exhaustion in fighting against and running from a pagan queen. But they hoped. What kept them going was not merely the promise of God after death, but their relationship with Him now. Despite his trials, Habakkuk eventually says that even if things remain dark and bleak, “Yet will I rejoice in the Lord and exult in my saving God. God, my Lord, is my strength” (*Hab 3:18-19*).

To foster the virtue of hope in our lives, we cannot be surprised by our trials. We must see them as purifying opportunities for growth in virtue, as well as avenues to discover God on a more intimate level as sharers in the very cross of His Son. This is how James can say “Consider it all joy, my brothers, when you encounter various trials” (*James 1:2*), and Peter, “Rejoice to the extent that you share in the sufferings of Christ, so that when His glory is revealed you may also rejoice exultantly” (*1 Pet 4:13*).

Vocations to the priesthood and religious life are born in the families who teach their children this very lesson: the goal of Christian life is not ease or comfort, but the glory of knowing God. That in knowing Him, they love Him more deeply, and in loving Him, are willing to give all to follow Him and be living lights of hope in a dark world. ✚

Ordained to the priesthood in 2021, Father Brett Metzler serves as Director of Vocations for the Catholic Diocese of Fort Worth.

TAKE 5 WITH FATHER



Start with prayer

N.T.C./Juan Guajardo

HE IS: Monsignor Publius Xuereb, pastor of Holy Redeemer Parish in Aledo, and he has served at 10 other parishes and under all four bishops in his 53 years in the Diocese of Fort Worth.

TREASURED ISLAND: After the family's home on Malta was destroyed during World War II, his parents raised 11 children on the neighboring rural island of Gozo.

HARD TRUTH: As a young boy, he knelt on "cold, hard marble" at Mass and listened to his mother whisper the *Anima Christi* prayer after Communion.

Seventy-five years later, he still prays the *Anima Christi* after Communion. "The prayer that I heard her pray will be forever in my heart and keeps me united with my mother" who died 48 years ago, he said.

ORDAINED: May 11, 1968, in Malta.

WELCOME TO TEXAS: While visiting his brother in Dallas in 1969, he had a chance encounter with Fort Worth Bishop John Cassata, who invited him to transfer to Fort Worth. Msgr. Xuereb was one of 11 priests at his parish in Malta, and he recognized the newly created diocese had a great need for priests.

TRAVELING MAN: Anointing a dying man decades ago has led to a 40-year friendship with the Travelers, who seek Msgr. Xuereb for Mass and sacraments. "They are my extended family, and they have adopted me into theirs."

LISTEN UP: Parishioners must pay particular attention to three prayers during Mass, he said.

First, the prayer of offering at Mass. "When the priest is offering, he is offering your needs, your pain, your petitions, your thanksgiving, your everything."

"The words of consecration are important. Without consecration, there is no Eucharist."

The third prayer is silent meditation after Communion. "It's important. Open up your need, your thanksgiving."

HEALING TOUCH: Msgr. Xuereb restores broken statues of saints, praying with each saint as he reattaches an arm or reconstructs a nose.

An especially meaningful restoration was a six-inch statue of Jesus given by a grandmother to her grandson as he was drafted to fight in Vietnam. Msgr. Xuereb fashioned a new arm, but he didn't restore it completely to remind the veteran of the horrors of war.

CHRIST'S HEALING TOUCH: On the first Sunday of each month, Msgr. Xuereb offers a Mass of healing with Adoration, Benediction, and Anointing of the Sick. Prayer is dedicated for the unity of the family, those with special needs, those who are ill and their caregivers, and vocations.

FIRST FRUITS: Msgr. Xuereb inherited a green thumb from his mother, and he keeps her habit of presenting the first bloom of each plant to a statue of Mary or Jesus.

SPECIAL SAINT: In his youth, Msgr. Xuereb heard the preaching of Father George Preca, who spread the Gospel among children and laborers on the waterfronts of Malta.

This "second apostle of Malta" — St. Paul was the first — was canonized in 2007, and St. George Preca is the patron of the Knights of Columbus Council 17196 at Holy Redeemer.

WHY RETIRE? "I don't work. I love this place." The 80-year-old priest arrives at the church at 7 a.m. for 90 minutes of peaceful prayer and thanksgiving in front of the Blessed Sacrament each day. "Why do you want to retire? This is better than medicine." 🇺🇸



Un estudiante mira el índice del *Catecismo de la Iglesia Católica* durante la primera clase del otoño 2022 para el Instituto San Junípero Serra el 12 de septiembre en la Escuela Católica San Pedro Apóstol. (NTC/Juan Guajardo)

volviendo a las RAÍCES

El nuevo enfoque para los programas educativos de la Diócesis vuelve a lo fundamental

Por Susan Moses

La Diócesis de Fort Worth basa sus programas de formación en la verdad y lo que ha sido probado para enseñar los fundamentos de la fe: la Biblia y el *Catecismo de la Iglesia Católica*. El Departamento de Catequesis y Evangelización diocesano espera tener una red más amplia e inscribir más personas en cursos que los preparen

para enseñar y defender la fe con el ofrecimiento en más lugares y a un costo más bajo de sus clases de educación religiosa.

Los planes de estudio de los dos programas de educación para adultos de la Diócesis, el Instituto de San Junípero Serra y el Programa de San Francisco de Sales, se han revisado para enfocarse en la Biblia y el *Catecismo de la Iglesia*

Católica durante los primeros dos años de un plan de tres años. El tercer año, que se implementará más adelante, permitirá varias concentraciones basadas en los ministerios.

La razón para enfocarse en la Biblia y el *Catecismo* es simple, de acuerdo a Jason Whitehead, el Director Diocesano de Evangelización y Catequesis. La Sagrada Escritura es la palabra inspirada de Dios

y el *Catecismo* es la “referencia estándar, la guía para entender qué es lo que la Iglesia realmente enseña y cree. El Papa San Juan Pablo II, que autorizó la nueva revisión, llamó el *Catecismo* como la ‘norma segura’ para la enseñanza de la fe”, dijo Whitehead.

La diferencia entre las clases del Instituto San Junípero Serra y el programa San Francisco de Sales consiste en la frecuencia de los cursos que se ofrecen. Las clases del Instituto San Junípero Serra se llevan a cabo semanalmente, y el programa San Francisco de Sales ofrece sus cursos una vez al mes. Ambos programas permiten a los participantes tomar las clases con crédito para obtener la certificación, lo que requiere un trabajo final; o tomarlas como auditor, lo que no exige hacer tareas.

Las clases del primer año de ambos programas comprenden temas como la Revelación, las Sagradas Escrituras, la Encarnación, el Espíritu Santo y las últimas cuatro cosas. El formato semanal del Instituto San Junípero Serra permite discutir estos temas a profundidad.

Los cursos se ofrecen en distintos lugares y a diferentes horas en parroquias de Wichita Falls, Weatherford, Burleson, Bedford y Fort Worth. La clase en línea permite la flexibilidad del aprendizaje asíncrono. Ambos programas ofrecen clases en inglés y español.

El costo del programa San Francisco de Sales es de \$50 al año. El Instituto San Junípero Serra divide su plan de estudios en cuatro cursos al año de seis semanas cada uno y su costo es de \$25 por curso.

La Diócesis está aumentando la disponibilidad de estos programas, mientras que a su

vez se ha reducido el costo. Whitehead explicó: “El fin es garantizar que los horarios, las finanzas y la vida de los fieles no se interpongan en el camino de poder aprender más sobre nuestra fe”.

PROFESORES Y ESTUDIANTES

El aumento de las ubicaciones para ofrecer los programas requirió un aumento en la cantidad de instructores que se necesitaban. Whitehead dijo que todos los profesores en ambos programas tienen “fidelidad, un compromiso inquebrantable de transmitir la fe y entusiasmo para servir. Se escogieron los que respondieron con más fervor y entusiasmo” para enseñar.

El Diácono Rigoberto Leyva, el Director Diocesano de Ministerio Hispano, reclutó a varios diáconos para enseñar las clases en español.

El Diácono Leyva afirmó: “Los diáconos están bien capacitados para catequizar. Sin duda, tienen un enfoque pastoral y conectarán con la gente. Es una gran oportunidad para que la comunidad conozca a los diáconos y para que los diáconos conozcan a los fieles”.

Su experiencia es que los feligreses son receptivos y están ávidos y listos para aprender más sobre la fe católica. Por eso, los invita personalmente a asistir a los programas de San Francisco de Sales, que se ofrecen en español en seis ubicaciones diferentes.

Whitehead expresó que las clases están dirigidas a las personas que simplemente quieren saber más sobre su fe y para aquellos que imparten formación en la fe a los niños, jóvenes o a los adultos que están interesados en pertenecer a la Iglesia.

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Gabe Gutiérrez, el director del ministerio del campus del TCU Newman Center, lidera una clase para el Instituto St. Junípero Serra el 12 de septiembre. (NTC/Juan Guajardo)



Escanee el código QR para obtener más información o regístrese para las clases del programa de San Francisco de Sales.





Yasmín Cuevas, la directora de educación religiosa de la Parroquia de San Pedro Apóstol, dirige la primera clase de Catecismo I para el programa de San Francisco de Sales el 19 de septiembre de 2022. (NTC/Juan Guajardo)

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Whitehead se ha encontrado a lo largo de los años con muchos feligreses que les gustaría ayudar con la educación religiosa, pero que no se sienten cómodos con su propia comprensión de la fe. Dijo que estos programas diocesanos solucionan el problema de “No puedes enseñar lo que no sabes. No puedes dar lo que no tienes”.

FUNDAMENTOS SÓLIDOS

Ya sea que los participantes se inscriban en un curso porque están motivados para enseñar o simplemente porque quieren aprender más sobre la fe, la comprensión del *Catecismo* es fundamental.

Whitehead prosiguió diciendo que el nuevo *Catecismo* universal se escribió en la década del 1980 y se promulgó en el 1992 para comunicar la fe de manera completa y sistemática debido a una continua “crisis en la catequesis” que enfrentamos hoy todavía. “Los cambios hechos en nuestros programas enfatizan la enseñanza sistemática de la fe. Hay ciertas verdades que se deben entender primero para que las personas puedan entender mejor otras verdades”. Citó

además el primer párrafo del *Catecismo de la Iglesia Católica*, que dice lo siguiente:

“Dios, infinitamente perfecto y bienaventurado en sí mismo, en un designio de pura bondad ha creado libremente al hombre para hacerle partícipe de su vida bienaventurada. Por eso, en todo tiempo y en todo lugar, se hace cercano al hombre: le llama y le ayuda a buscarle, conocerle y amarle con todas sus fuerzas...”

“El *Catecismo* comienza con una pregunta: ‘¿Cuál es el propósito del hombre? ¿Por qué estamos aquí?’ La respuesta a eso dicta absolutamente todo lo demás. Si no sabes por qué estás aquí, no sabes cuál es tu destino”, agregó”. Otras verdades parten de esa comprensión primaria.

Whitehead explicó que el “conocimiento práctico del *Catecismo de la Iglesia Católica* es particularmente útil” para todos los católicos, pero aún más para los catequistas y los que discuten la fe con personas no católicas o con católicos que se han apartado de la Iglesia.

“No tienes que saber todas las respuestas”, dijo, “sino sólo dónde encontrarlas”. 🇺🇸

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 al 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 abuso ha sido revelado a usted,

- ▶ 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



UN COMIENZO HUMILDE

Misa inaugural celebrada en la nueva Parroquia de Santa Teresa de Calcuta

Por Susan Moses

¿Podría la parroquia número 92 de la Diócesis de Fort Worth tener una patrona más adecuada que Santa Teresa de Calcuta?

La primera Misa de la parroquia, nombrada en su honor, fue modesta, pequeña y humilde, muy parecida a la diminuta santa que servía a los más pobres de los pobres. Sin embargo, la celebración de la Misa fue alegre, piadosa y santa, nuevamente como su bienaventurada patrona, a pesar de celebrarse en un edificio portátil con alfombras comerciales y sillas plegables.

El Padre Brijil Lawrence, SAC, recién nombrado párroco de la nueva parroquia ubicada en el extremo norte de Fort Worth, concelebró la Misa inaugural el 4 de septiembre junto a Monseñor E. James Hart, Canciller Diocesano y Moderador de la Curia, y el Padre Sojan George, párroco de la Parroquia de San Francisco de Asís de Grapevine. El Reverendísimo Obispo Michael Olson no pudo servir como el celebrante principal por motivos de salud.

El Padre Lawrence afirmó en su homilía que el propósito de establecer esta comunidad parroquial era idéntico



Los celebrantes de la primera misa en Santa Teresa de Calcuta se dirigen en procesión hacia el edificio que se utiliza temporalmente como espacio de culto, el 4 de septiembre de 2022. (NTC/Juan Guajardo)

a la razón principal por la que los Apóstoles formaron las primeras comunidades cristianas: la salvación de las almas. “Y nuestra salvación está en Cristo crucificado: el mismo mensaje que predicaron los Apóstoles, y el mismo mensaje que Cristo enseñó a Sus discípulos. Cristo crucificado es nuestra sabiduría hoy”, dijo el presbítero.

El sacerdote Palotino, que también encabeza el Consejo Misionero Diocesano, concluyó la homilía con una oración de la Liturgia de las Horas que consideró adecuada para la primera Misa de la comunidad. “Que el Señor, que es el principio y el fin de todo lo que hacemos y decimos, venga a nuestras acciones con

Su gracia y las complete con Su ayuda todopoderosa”.

LA PREPARACIÓN PARA LA MISA

El Diácono Daniel Zavala, el coordinador de la vida parroquial, ha estado trabajando “intensamente y diligentemente” para prepararse para la primera Misa, incluso antes de que el Obispo Olson anunciara el 1 de agosto la creación de la parroquia número 92 de la Diócesis. La propiedad comprende 31 acres y está ubicada en Alta Vista Road 13517. Era el antiguo hogar del Colegio de Nuestra Señora de Gracia y tenía

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Más de 150 fieles asistieron a la primera Misa celebrada en la Parroquia de Santa Teresa de Calcuta. (NTC/Juan Guajardo)

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varios edificios portátiles existentes que necesitaron renovaciones grandes para acomodar la celebración de la Misa.

Al trabajar con los contratistas, funcionarios de la ciudad e incluso con el departamento de bomberos, el diácono señaló que encontró “muchos obstáculos, pero en todo momento pude ver la obra de Dios durante este proceso”.

La Parroquia de Santa Teresa de Calcuta se estableció debido al tremendo crecimiento de la población en los condados de Tarrant y Denton. La nueva parroquia, ubicada al norte de la autopista US 170 y al este de la I-35W, está formada por áreas que se encuentran dentro de los límites de la Parroquia de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe de Fort Worth, la Parroquia de San Felipe Apóstol de Flower Mound, la Parroquia de Sta. Elizabeth Ann Seton de Keller y la Parroquia de San Francisco de Asís de Grapevine.

El Diácono Zavala visitó esas parroquias durante los cuatro fines de semanas antes del 4 de septiembre para anunciar la creación de la nueva parroquia.

Él comentó: “He escuchado muchos rumores. Hay mucha gente que vive en este área y, literalmente, manejan un trecho largo para asistir a Misa. Por supuesto, aman sus propias parroquias, pero están muy emocionados de que estemos abriendo una más cerca de sus casas”.

UNA GRAN CELEBRACIÓN

¿Dónde encontraron los saludadores, lectores, monaguillos y el cantor para la primera Misa de Santa Teresa de Calcuta? El Diácono Zavala reclutó a muchos de ellos de la Catedral de San Patricio, donde sirvió por un tiempo.

Aaron Medina, el Director de Música y Liturgia de San Patricio, está acostumbrado a tocar el magnífico órgano

de tubos de la Catedral. En la Parroquia de Santa Teresa de Calcuta tocó un piano de teclado eléctrico que estaba en una esquina del edificio que sirve como capilla.

Medina fue impactado por la sentida liturgia sin pretensiones y dijo emocionado: “Me conmovió y me honró tocar en la primera Misa de esta parroquia. Me fascinó estar con toda la comunidad; es un lugar maravilloso, un comienzo humilde. Quiero ver cómo será a medida que crece”.

El párroco expresó un pensamiento similar. Padre Lawrence afirmó: “La primera Misa ha sido una bendición para nosotros. En primer lugar, damos gracias a Dios por reunir a Su pueblo en esta parte de la Diócesis para rendirle gloria y alabanza juntos como familia. Es el comienzo, el primer paso en la edificación de este lugar de culto, y en el que se podrá seguir reuniendo a muchas más familias para aprender, practicar la fe y apreciar la compañía mutua en nuestra comunidad”.

El Diácono Daniel Zavala conversa con los fieles después de la primera Misa en la Parroquia de Santa Teresa de Calcuta el 4 de septiembre de 2022. Es el Coordinador de la vida parroquial en la parroquia recién formada. (NTC/Juan Guajardo)

Agregó además: “Una nueva parroquia es siempre una bendición de Dios, ya que nos recuerda que la Iglesia está creciendo. Es un momento muy importante para toda la Diócesis. El mero hecho de que esta parroquia esté aquí hace que nuestra presencia cristiana se sienta más en toda esta área”.

La Misa inaugural llenó el edificio portátil, que tiene una capacidad para 100 personas y otro edificio, que tiene una capacidad para 50 personas. Asistieron muchas familias jóvenes, incluidos varios padres y madres con sus bebés, uno de los cuales era la nieta de cinco meses de Zavala, que tenía una muñeca de la Madre Teresa.

“Emoción es la palabra para describir este día”, dijo Julio Castillo, que participó en la Misa con su esposa e hija. Ellos son feligreses de la Parroquia de Sta. Elizabeth Ann Seton de Keller. La familia ha observado atentamente el progreso gradual de la propiedad cada vez que los padres llevaban su hija a la cercana Escuela Intermedia John M. Tidwell.

Castillo admitió que durante el día del 4 de septiembre revisó al menos tres veces a qué hora comenzaba la Misa, y llegó casi 30 minutos antes de las 5 p.m. para asistir a la Misa, a pesar de que viven a sólo cuatro minutos de distancia. “Es la primera vez que asistimos a la primera Misa de una parroquia”, dijo. “Estábamos nerviosos. No queríamos perdérsola”.

LO QUE SIGUE

Al concluir la Misa, el Padre Lawrence observó: “Al ver la multitud de hoy, creo que buscaremos otro lugar para celebrar la Misa del fin de semana, y el edificio portátil servirá como capilla para la Misa diaria”.

El Diácono Zavala ha discutido con sus administradores la posibilidad de



utilizar la Escuela Intermedia Tidwell como una instalación temporera para la Misa del fin de semana.

Los próximos pasos serán, según el diácono, establecer una oficina parroquial, contratar personal y celebrar una junta parroquial para reclutar voluntarios de educación religiosa y determinar los horarios preferidos para las Misas diarias y de fin de semana.

La primera estructura permanente que se construirá en la propiedad será una instalación de usos múltiples que contará con una oficina, aulas para las clases de formación religiosa y un salón parroquial donde se celebrará la Misa. La iglesia permanente para celebrar las Misas se construirá en unos años.

La información actualizada sobre la Parroquia de Santa Teresa de Calcuta, incluido el horario de las Misas, está disponible en fwdioc.org/parish-finder.

PATRONA PODEROSA

La primera Misa de la Parroquia de Santa Teresa de Calcuta se celebró el 4 de septiembre, un día antes del vigésimo quinto aniversario de la muerte de la santa.

Su patrocinio de la sencilla instalación se destaca con un busto de ocho pulgadas de la santa montado en la pared cerca del

altar y un retrato grande pintado de ella colgado en la parte de atrás de la capilla.

Esta diminuta mujer religiosa comenzó un ministerio humilde al servicio de los moribundos y los indigentes de los barrios marginales de Calcuta. La orden religiosa que fundó la Santa Madre Teresa de Calcuta, llamada la Congregación de las Misioneras de la Caridad, ha crecido inmensamente y cuenta con más de 5,000 hermanas, que sirven en 760 hogares en 139 países distintos.

El Diácono Zavala dijo que estudió y meditó muchas de las citas de Madre Teresa durante su formación diaconal. “Ella estaba totalmente en colaboración con el Espíritu Santo en todo lo que hacía. Es maravilloso que tengamos una parroquia que lleva su nombre”, dijo.

Padre Lawrence, que nació y se crió en la India, añadió: “Dedicar esta iglesia a su nombre y dirigir nuestras oraciones a través de su intercesión sirve también para que conozcamos y reflexionemos sobre lo que la santa hizo como persona; y para revivir la caridad cristiana en nuestras propias y diferentes formas, dondequiera que estemos. Como tal, es muy apropiado que la Madre Teresa sea la patrona de esta parroquia y sirva como modelo a seguir para todos los feligreses”. 🇺🇸



POR SUS FRUTOS LOS Conocerán

El Ministerio Hispano cosecha frutos en su primer año bajo nuevo liderazgo

Por Violeta Rocha

Al año de asumir la dirección del Ministerio Hispano de la Diócesis de Fort Worth, el Diácono Rigoberto Leyva mantiene el enfoque de “acercarse a la gente”, ya que su prioridad desde el inicio de su nuevo cargo fue el estar en constante contacto con las parroquias y los ministerios hispanos. Su empeño ha dado numerosos frutos.

El ímpetu de eventos diocesanos, como la Conferencia de Matrimonios, los Rosarios en comunidad, los retiros y, más recientemente, los Talleres de Liturgia que dan continuidad en la formación de la fe, dan testimonio, de que “la gente responde y está lista para participar”, comentó el Diácono Leyva. Señaló la gran cantidad de personas que asisten a los diversos eventos, lo que se traduce en un gran sentido de pertenencia y una creciente participación de la feligresía hispana. Esto a su vez, lleva a cada una de sus parroquias a un mayor conocimiento de la fe católica y da paso a comunidades vibrantes que están dando frutos en tres importantes áreas: el Matrimonio y la Vida Familiar, la Pastoral Juvenil y la formación en la Liturgia.

“El hispano es luchador y servidor”, aseveró el diácono y añadió que “se han logrado muchos proyectos y se están realizando varios apostolados que el Señor Obispo ha confiado a mi dirección. Hemos podido construir bastante, gracias a Dios”. Leyva está muy agradecido por el trabajo en equipo con su asistente Irma Jiménez, así como con su supervisor Jason Whitehead, el director del Departamento de Catequesis.

Las juntas directivas de los ministerios que Leyva tiene a su cargo recibieron el pasado 9 de septiembre un reconocimiento de manos del diácono y firmado por el propio Reverendísimo Obispo Michael F. Olson, que destaca “el servicio que prestan a la Iglesia, a sus parroquias y a toda la Diócesis. Ellos trabajan con diferentes grupos, que no son todos necesariamente hispanos. Muchos de ellos se involucran con la comunidad anglosajona; lo que resulta en una mezcla de culturas que fomenta lo que ya traemos dentro, que es el amor por servir a los demás,” explicó Leyva sobre los ministerios Kairos, Cursillo, la Pastoral Juvenil y los Talleres de Oración y Vida.

“En todo lo que le hemos pedido ayuda, nos ha ayudado”, asegura Irasema Beltrán,

que forma parte del equipo de coordinación de Kairos, un apostolado diocesano integrado por setenta matrimonios y padres de familia, que además de ofrecer campamentos espirituales, resaltan el amor de Dios en la naturaleza, y sirven en sus propias parroquias como lectores, ministros de hospitalidad, ministros de Eucaristía y en otros ministerios.

Beltrán, feligrés de la Parroquia de la Inmaculada Concepción de Denton, valora que sean “escuchados”. Asevera que las clases de liturgia con el Padre Thu Nguyen, el Director de Liturgia y Culto de la Diócesis, “se dieron gracias a las charlas que tenemos con el Diácono Leyva, en las que nos pregunta siempre sobre nuestras necesidades. Le mencionamos que queríamos más formación e inmediatamente nos dijo que iba a traer a alguien que podía impartirnos una buena formación”, recordó Beltrán.

Así, además de otros ministerios y apostolados hispanos, comenzaron a participar de los talleres sobre la liturgia que el Padre Thu Nguyen dirige por toda

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TALLERES DE LITURGIA



Adrian Gómez, y su esposa Celia Gómez, toman apuntes mientras escuchan al Diácono Rigoberto Leyva, Director del Ministerio Hispano para la Diócesis de Fort Worth, en un taller de liturgia en español en la Parroquia de San Mateo de Arlington, el 16 de septiembre de 2022. (NTC/Ben Torres)



TALLERES DE MATRIMONIOS

El Diácono Rigoberto Leyva, izq., Director del Ministerio Hispano de la Diócesis, conversa con uno de los asistentes durante un receso del Taller de Enriquecimiento Matrimonial en español en el Centro de Formación Diocesano en Fort Worth el 17 de septiembre de 2022. (NTC/Ben Torres)



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la Diócesis, en los que enfatiza la importancia de la Misa y el Ritual; y les ayuda a tener un mejor entendimiento de los principales momentos de la Santa Misa.

“Es muy importante para el Señor Obispo educar a la gente litúrgicamente porque es donde está la riqueza de nuestra identidad como católicos”, dijo el Diácono Leyva. Debido a la exitosa participación en los talleres, Leyva tomó la iniciativa de llevar la valiosa formación a más feligreses hispanos.

“Nos llevan a comprender el significado de cada momento de la Misa y nos hace pertenecer de forma más profunda a Cristo y a nuestra Iglesia”, agregó.

La serie de seis charlas es una extensión del taller dirigido por el Padre Nguyen. En parroquias como las de San José y San Mateo de Arlington han asistido hasta 165 personas. “Otras parroquias lo han pedido también”, agregó el Diácono Leyva.

Martín Álvarez, feligrés de la Parroquia de San Juan Apóstol de North Richland Hills y miembro del comité de coordinación de Kairos, señala que gracias a “la apertura y acercamiento” del Diácono Leyva, se ha podido notar una mayor unidad a nivel diocesano. “En la comunidad hispana nos sentimos más apoyados e interesados en la Iglesia; nos sentimos integrados como Ministerio Hispano al resto de la Diócesis,” Álvarez dijo.

Más de 80 matrimonios hispanos participaron de la Conferencia de Matrimonios Diocesana, celebrada en el mes de junio en la Parroquia de San Miguel de Bedford. “Fue de mucho valor, sobre todo, porque hacía mucho tiempo que no se ofrecía nada parecido y nos damos cuenta de que somos parte del Cuerpo de Cristo,” Martín explicó. El evento fue muy exitoso y generó talleres mensuales adicionales. Como consecuencia, se pudieron dar charlas de enriquecimiento matrimonial en los meses de agosto, septiembre y octubre.

Reynaldo García, que ha sido miembro del Movimiento de Cursillo por 14 años, piensa que “el Diácono Rigoberto ha sido muy flexible, nos hemos sentido que está comprometido con nosotros y nos mantiene informados”, aseveró. “Nos tiene muy consentidos”.

Agregó que la satisfacción de recibir un reconocimiento le comunica un gran mensaje de aliento. Es como si se dijera, “sigue mejorando, que aquí nosotros te vamos a apoyar”, dijo, e indicó que

Mayra Maciel y Porfirio García reaccionan con risa mientras escuchan al Diácono Rigoberto Leyva, durante un taller de enriquecimiento matrimonial español en Fort Worth, el 17 de septiembre de 2022. (NTC/Ben Torres)



TALLERES DE MATRIMONIOS

Saúl García reacciona con una sonrisa mientras discute un tema con el Diácono Rigoberto Leyva durante un Taller de Liturgia en español en la Parroquia de San Mateo en Arlington, el 16 de septiembre. (NTC/Ben Torres)



TALLERES DE LITURGIA

(I-D) Paola Ortiz, Luz Vázquez, Alejandra Matías, Javiera Jiménez, Verónica González, coordinadoras de los Talleres de Oración y Vida en la Cena de Premiación del Ministerio Hispano. (NTC/Annette Mendoza-Smith)



TALLERES DE ORACIÓN Y VIDA



TALLERES DE LITURGIA: Hispanos escuchan al Diácono Rigoberto Leyva, director del Ministerio Hispano de la Diócesis de Fort Worth, mientras conduce un taller de liturgia en español en St Matthew Catholic Parish en Arlington. (NTC/Ben Torres)



es causa de “alegría que, como hispano, pueda decirle a otro hispano, ‘ven, te voy a mostrar otra manera de vivir,’ porque yo vengo de aquí y a mí me ha convertido”, apuntó sobre la misión del Movimiento de Cursillo presente en 24 de las parroquias de la Diócesis de Fort Worth.

María Martínez es también miembro del apostolado de Cursillo en la Parroquia de la Santa Cruz en The Colony y explica que su parroquia está ubicada en la parte norte más lejana de la Diócesis. “A veces nos sentíamos que no llegaba mucha información acerca de las actividades e ideas que hay dentro de la Diócesis, pero ahora tenemos más acceso y se nos hace

más fácil ver todos los eventos que hay”. Prosiguió diciendo que es a través de las reuniones frecuentes con el Diácono Leyva y mediante sus correos electrónicos y/o llamadas que se enteran de cada actividad. “Así crecemos todos y nos hacemos más presentes”, aseguró.

Luis Miguel Urriaga, que es el Coordinador de la Pastoral Juvenil, describió el trabajo conjunto con el Diácono Leyva como una “bendición” que ha rendido abundantes frutos.

“El Diácono Leyva ha mostrado siempre una buena disposición para ayudarnos y ha creído en nosotros”, afirmó Urriaga. Resaltó “el humanismo,

la simpleza, la humildad y la cercanía” del Diácono. “Él nos deja trabajar por sí solos, pero a su vez sabemos que contamos con su apoyo,” agregó. Enfatizó la buena comunicación que se ha logrado para desarrollar a nivel diocesano su labor y apostolado, la cual es supervisada por el Diácono Leyva. Urriaga es feligrés de la Parroquia de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe de Fort Worth.

La Pastoral Juvenil comprende nueve grupos juveniles, siete que ya están funcionando completamente y dos que se acaban de formar.

Urriaga, 32, que es originario de Michoacán, México, indica que es palpable la inquietud y entusiasmo de la Pastoral Juvenil en la Diócesis. Mencionó como ejemplos los retiros juveniles diocesanos, celebrados en enero y abril del año en curso, a los que asistieron cerca de 150 jóvenes, el Rosario por la Paz en el Parque Bowman Spring en Arlington, el pasado

APRENDA
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mes de julio, en el que participaron cerca de 100 jóvenes, así como la Misa bilingüe en la Catedral de San Patricio el 8 de septiembre, Día de la Fiesta de la Natividad de la Virgen María.

“Una fe sin acción es nula”, indica el Diácono Leyva. Él tiene la esperanza de que se celebren más eventos similares en el futuro para que haya un buen “equilibrio entre el servicio y la espiritualidad”, dijo.

“Los jóvenes están muy activos y atentos. Ellos ven la necesidad y son el mejor testimonio que tenemos como Iglesia para saber qué está pasando afuera en el mundo. Ver alrededor de 100 jóvenes todos con su Rosario en mano fue maravilloso, y lo más hermoso fue el testimonio que se dio en público de lo que es ser un joven católico hoy,” concluyó diciendo el Diácono Leyva.

Por su parte, Deisy Martínez, 31, que ha sido parte de la Pastoral Juvenil desde el 2015, enfatizó la importancia de estar en comunicación e involucrarse con lo que hacen otros ministerios hispanos, como los Talleres de Oración y Vida o Kairos, que también ofrecen campamentos para jóvenes. Martínez le agradece al Diácono Leyva no sólo por apoyar a cada grupo, sino además por “mantenernos informados de los diferentes eventos para que así podamos participar.”

Los Talleres de Oración y Vida, que fueron aprobados por la Diócesis en el 2019, es uno de los ministerios diocesanos más recientes. San Miguel, Santísima Trinidad y San Pedro, son tres de las diez parroquias en las que este ministerio está presente. Se cuenta con 16 “guías”, como se les conoce a las personas líderes que dirigen cada taller, según Alejandra Matías, su directora.

“Desde que comenzó el ministerio

con Joel Rodríguez, el director anterior del Ministerio Hispano, se sentía el apoyo. Gracias a Dios el apoyo ha continuado con el Diácono Leyva”, añadió. “Sentimos ese respaldo; este ministerio nos ha ayudado a que se nos abran las puertas de otras parroquias, y a compartir diáconos y párrocos para ofrecer los Talleres de Oración y Vida”. Matías se siente muy entusiasmada de continuar trabajando y llegar a más parroquias con los Talleres, los cuales no sólo promueven una sólida relación con Dios, sino también el servicio a la comunidad parroquial.

Inspirado por un año “lleno de bendiciones”, el Diácono Leyva, apunta que, entre los retos a superar, está el poderse conectar poco a poco con todas las parroquias, “hasta los confines de nuestra Diócesis para atenderles y educarles en la fe”, dijo. Indicó que, entre sus mayores anhelos para los próximos años, está contar con “un plan pastoral diocesano en español que incluya la formación en la fe, la liturgia y la teología”, y cuyo punto de partida sea “lo básico y la fe que ya tenemos”. 🇺🇸

PASTORAL JUVENIL: Los adultos jóvenes de Graham y Olney cantan durante la Misa Diocesana de Jóvenes Adultos el 8 de septiembre de 2022 en la Catedral de San Patricio. (NTC/Juan Guajardo)



Pequeño, pero genial

El crecimiento robusto de un grupo de adultos jóvenes está arraigado en una parábola significativa del Evangelio



Miembros del grupo Semilla de Mostaza, el grupo de jóvenes adultos de la Parroquia de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe en Fort Worth, el 15 de septiembre de 2022. (NTC/Ben Torres)

LA PARÁBOLA DE LA SEMILLA DE MOSTAZA

También les propuso otra parábola: “El Reino de los Cielos se parece a un grano de mostaza que un hombre sembró en su campo. En realidad, esta es la más pequeña de las semillas, pero cuando crece es la más grande de las hortalizas y se convierte en un arbusto, de tal manera que los pájaros del cielo van a cobijarse en sus ramas”.

— Mateo 13, 31-32

Por Jerry Circelli

Un grupo dinámico de jóvenes adultos de la Parroquia de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe de Fort Worth encontró una manera de crecer en la fe y convertirse en una parte importante de la comunidad al seguir las enseñanzas de Cristo descritas en una breve, pero poderosa parábola.

Acertadamente llamado la “Semilla de Mostaza”, el grupo incluye alrededor

de 25 católicos solteros entre los 18 y 35 años, que profesan un profundo ardor por Cristo, que se han comprometido con la Iglesia y el servicio comunitario, y están motivados a establecer amistades significativas entre sí. El grupo de jóvenes se reúne semanalmente después de la Misa vespertina de los jueves en la Parroquia de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe.

Para los adultos jóvenes, que florecen

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DE LA PÁGINA 65

con el compañerismo y el mantenerse activos, la pandemia de COVID-19 tuvo un gran impacto, ya que redujo drásticamente sus actividades. Sin embargo, en octubre del 2021, al removerse muchas de las restricciones relacionadas con el virus, los jóvenes se pusieron en marcha de nuevo y el ministerio de la Semilla de Mostaza volvió a echar raíces.

Los miembros del grupo consideran este momento como un “renacimiento” y expresan su alegría al poder verse de nuevo e interactuar entre ellos. Están también muy agradecidos de que ahora pueden llevar a cabo su misión de ministerio de adultos jóvenes para hacer crecer su fe inspirados por el mensaje de la Parábola de la Semilla de Mostaza.

La fórmula del grupo para aplicar la parábola a su misión es simple e incluye tres etapas llamadas “Germinación, Alimentación y Fruto”.

La “germinación” (brotes) es la etapa inicial de los nuevos miembros durante la cual comparten información sobre ellos mismos y conocen más sobre sus compañeros en el ministerio.

La “alimentación” incluye la participación de los miembros del grupo en los eventos sociales parroquiales y diocesanos. Comprende además el estudio bíblico, la catequesis, el rezo del Rosario, los retiros y el compañerismo.

En la etapa final, que es la de dar “fruto”, los miembros sirven a su Iglesia y la comunidad a mediante las colectas de alimentos, las Horas Santas de Adoración de la Eucaristía, las actividades parroquiales y la evangelización, así como otras formas creativas de compartir y ayudar al prójimo.

“Aprendemos en nuestra Iglesia que si tienes una fe tan pequeña como

un grano de mostaza, puedes lograr grandes cosas”, dijo Adrián Romero, líder del grupo Semilla de Mostaza. “Ése es nuestro objetivo. Juntos unimos todos los días un poco de nuestra fe y se nos ocurren nuevas ideas”, añadió.

Romero, que trabaja en el campo de los recursos humanos agregó: “Cada mes tratamos de hacer al menos un evento social y un evento de servicio comunitario. Éstos pueden incluir a toda la parroquia, toda la comunidad o a otras parroquias porque todos somos parte de una misma Diócesis”.

Durante el año pasado se llevaron a cabo muchas actividades, que incluyeron servir comida a las personas sin hogar en conjunto con Under the Bridge Ministries, limpiar la basura en la comunidad como parte del programa

Keep Fort Worth Beautiful, ayudar a recaudar dinero para su parroquia, embellecer la iglesia mediante proyectos de grupo para pintarla y decorarla; y servir comidas después de las cuatro Misas dominicales.

El grupo también reza el Rosario al aire libre en la gruta de la Parroquia de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe y asiste a retiros católicos. Además, los miembros se han reunido para

juegos de voleibol de playa, cenas hibachi, noches de juegos y otros eventos divertidos y entretenidos que fomentan el compañerismo.

Eso no es todo. El grupo Semilla de Mostaza lleva a cabo noches de oración, sus miembros participan de eventos con el grupo de Jóvenes Católicos Profesionales en el área y se ha creado una serie de videos de Semilla de Mostaza para ayudar a otras personas a crecer en su fe.

“Estamos ganando impulso”, dijo Romero.

Luis Hernández afirmó también lo que dijo Romero. Hernández, un consultor de negocios local, acababa de

llegar al área cuando comenzó a asistir a la Parroquia de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe.

“Sabía que quería unirme a una organización, y qué mejor que unirme a una basada en la moral, los valores y las creencias del catolicismo”, dijo Hernández. “Todos me hicieron sentir como en familia y me sentí que éste era mi hogar”.

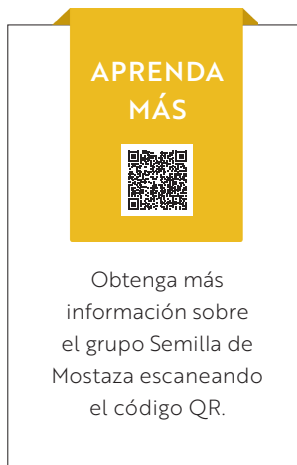
Juan Becerra, un arquitecto local, se describió a sí mismo como “un alma perdida” cuando se unió al grupo. El compañerismo y el sentido de propósito que descubrió lo hicieron seguir yendo al grupo. “Encontré una comunidad, una amistad y una familia con la que crecer”, dijo Becerra.

César Martínez, un pintor local, estaba lidiando con serias dificultades en su vida cuando se unió al grupo. Dijo que oró mucho para que Dios le mostrara que Él existía. Dios contestó sus oraciones, dijo Martínez, y agregó que las amistades que ha desarrollado a través de su participación en Semilla de Mostaza lo ayudan a mantenerse encaminado y fuerte en su fe.

Tania Magdaleno, una enfermera local, disfruta del compañerismo y el sentido de propósito que conlleva ser miembro de Semilla de Mostaza. “Al cabo de un largo día de trabajo, se siente bien compartir con el grupo. Todos tenemos una gran cosa en común, que es la fe en Cristo como el centro de nuestras vidas. Soy una firme creyente, tengo mucha fe y se siente bien estar cerca de otras personas que creen y sienten lo mismo”.

Romero, el líder del grupo, lo resume de la siguiente manera. “Nos asesoramos unos a otros”, dijo. “Tenemos un entorno en el que los adultos jóvenes se sienten cómodos para hablar sobre su fe y conocer a otras personas que tienen ideas afines. Nos sentimos que pertenecemos.

“Seguir a Cristo es lo número uno. Si no seguimos a Dios y estamos siendo formados constantemente en nuestra fe, realmente no tendría sentido nuestro ministerio. Estar centrados en Cristo es lo que nos empuja. Sin Dios, no podemos hacer nada. Todos queremos conectarnos más con Dios”. 🍀





La justicia y la compasión se deben a los que están en ambos lados de la frontera

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



 @BpOlsonFW

La Iglesia Católica en Texas conoce bien la actual crisis humanitaria en nuestra frontera sur que aflige migrantes y refugiados que ingresan a nuestro país a diario y que aflige también nuestra vida política en nuestro estado y nuestra nación. La situación ha provocado miedo, compasión, ira e indignación justificada, y deja a muchos tejanos con la sensación de que somos impotentes ante el caos.

El movimiento de migrantes y refugiados no tiene por qué ser caótico si el gobierno federal siguiera un proceso ordenado para la adjudicación justa de las solicitudes de asilo en los puertos de entrada entre Texas y México con la debida cooperación de las autoridades estatales y locales.

Los Estados Unidos puede y debe ser fiel a su historia basada en los principios de libertad, igualdad y justicia como líder internacional al responder con generosidad y compasión a las personas en crisis que buscan estar libres de la persecución y la opresión injusta de los carteles internacionales. Con ese fin, varios principios deben guiar nuestra compasión para que nuestra respuesta sea justa y eficaz.

En primer lugar, las naciones soberanas tienen el derecho y el deber de controlar sus fronteras. Este ejercicio de la soberanía es ante todo para el bien común de los ciudadanos, y luego, de forma prudente, para servicio de la dignidad humana de todos.

En segundo lugar, nadie se beneficia del colapso del estado de derecho, particularmente, aquéllos que son vulnerables. La negación deliberada y la falta de atención a nivel federal a la

gran afluencia de personas a través de nuestra frontera sur socava el justo estado de derecho. Esta negligencia federal ha agravado la peligrosa influencia política y financiera de las pandillas internacionales y de los países hostiles a los Estados Unidos de América. La erosión gradual de la integridad fronteriza sólo agrava los terribles crímenes del narcotráfico y la trata humana perpetrados por pandillas que se aprovechan especialmente de las mujeres y los niños vulnerables, lo que resulta en tragedias tan horribles como la muerte el pasado junio de 53 migrantes atrapados en un camión con remolque cerca de San Antonio.

No está de acuerdo con nuestros valores estadounidenses ignorar la distinción crítica entre las personas que buscan entrar al país porque necesitan ayuda y los que buscan entrar para la explotación lucrativa. Es tan incorrecto e irracional dar a entender que todos los que llegan a nuestra frontera son nuestros enemigos, como también implicar que todos los que llegan a nuestra frontera son nuestros amigos. El discernimiento y distinción entre amigo y enemigo, refugiado y migrante, perpetrador y víctima presupone la aplicación del estado de derecho, que requiere la cooperación del gobierno en todos los niveles.

En tercer lugar, sin un estado de derecho justo, los refugiados y solicitantes de asilo no pueden estar protegidos de la explotación. Las personas que huyen de las guerras y la persecución deben ser protegidos por la comunidad en general. Esto requiere rendición de cuentas y, como mínimo, que los migrantes tengan derecho a solicitar la condición de refugiado sin encarcelamiento y a que una autoridad

gubernamental competente considere y procese sus solicitudes dentro de un período de tiempo que sea razonable, dada la urgencia de la situación y la importancia del respeto a la dignidad humana.

Las políticas gubernamentales que respetan los derechos humanos básicos de los migrantes y refugiados son necesarias y deben estar dirigidas a mantener el núcleo familiar unido, especialmente aquellas familias que tienen niños pequeños. Independientemente de su estatus legal, los migrantes, como todas las personas, poseen una dignidad humana inherente que debe ser defendida en cada etapa del proceso legal y tienen derecho a que su privacidad no sea explotada en los medios de comunicación mediante trucos políticos realizados con fines partidistas o para obtener ganancias financieras.

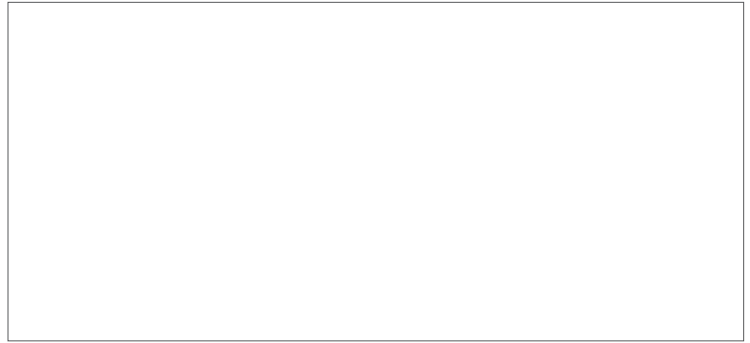
Por último, la polarización partidista de nuestro país ha dado lugar al caos que nos trae al momento presente de esta crisis humanitaria. Es necesaria una coalición internacional concertada contra los carteles; la falta de solidaridad es fuente de muchas injusticias. Ahora nos enfrentamos a la preocupación legítima de que si cada nivel de gobierno no cumple con sus respectivas responsabilidades, dañaremos gravemente el bienestar seguro de las personas y el bien común de nuestras ciudades, nuestro estado y nuestro país. Ignorar la crisis humanitaria en nuestra frontera pone en peligro nuestra capacidad de asistir y consolar a los migrantes, refugiados y los pobres residentes y nativos que ya están aquí entre nosotros. Se les debe justicia y compasión a las personas en ambos lados de la frontera. 🇺🇸

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