Ft. Stockton Catholics unite as one church on Pentecost: a fitting day for unification

By Jimmy Patterson
Editor
West Texas Angelus

FORT STOCKTON — Amid the celebration of the Feast of Pentecost — perhaps no more fitting a day for the unification of two parishes — Bishop Michael J. Sis led Catholics in Fort Stockton through a Mass that celebrated not only the birth of the greater Church itself, but also the beginning of Our Lady of Guadalupe Catholic Parish. The Mass also included the Confirmation of 20 youths in their own public high school auditorium, an occurrence Bishop Sis had never before heard of or participated in.

“We have so much to celebrate today,” Bishop Sis (Please See FORT STOCKTON/5)

Faithful asked to defend their faith

At the Opening Mass of Fortnight for Freedom, Bishop Michael J. Sis encourages Catholics to be watchful of threats to their religious liberty.

Stories, Photos
Pgs. 12-13

Photo at left by Alan P. Torre

‘The love of a Christian marriage pours forth’

Editor’s Note: The following is the homily delivered by Bishop Michael J. Sis at the annual diocesan Marriage Jubilee Mass, celebrated Sunday, June 29, 2014, at the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart in San Angelo.

Today we are celebrating the anniversary of your marriages on the same day the Church is celebrating the Solemnity of Sts. Peter and Paul. There are some really interesting connections between the gift of marriage, and Sts. Peter and Paul.

Peter was the first pope. He was the focal point of unity of the early Church just like today’s pope is the focal point of unity for Catholics around the world.

Paul, while not a follower of Jesus until after the Resurrection, was the (Please See MARRIAGE/20)
Mayor, bishop join to stress importance of water conservation

Note from Bishop Sis: Recently I met with Dwain Morrison, the mayor of San Angelo and a member of the Church of Christ, to discuss our continuing need to care for the precious resource of water. The following reflections come from that conversation.

While our shared statement was directed to the people of San Angelo through the San Angelo Standard-Times, in which the following was originally published, I believe these same principles apply to all of us throughout the Diocese of San Angelo.

Without water, there is no life. Speaking in a united voice as the mayor of our city and the bishop of this diocese, we encourage all members of our society to have a sense of respect and stewardship for the resource of water, which is essential to us all.

We are grateful for the gift of rainfall in recent weeks, but because we never know when the next rain will come, it is our responsibility to exercise caution and foresight in the way we use it.

Water management and public policy should be guided by the ethical principles of equity, stewardship, accountability, respect for human dignity, the common good and solidarity among all people, and acknowledgment of the interdependence between people and the natural world.

These principles are essential to assure that there will be sufficient clean water for those who need it today, as well as those future generations who follow us. We must teach these values to our children and set good examples as adults.

We who believe in God and in the power of prayer must continue to pray for rain, and in doing so acknowledge our complete dependence on God to sustain our lives. At the same time, we must remain mindful of our need to conserve the water God has given us.

(Please See BISHOP/20)

Alcalde, obispo se unen para enfatizar la importancia de la conservación de agua

Recientemente me reuní con Dwain Morrison, el alcalde de San Ángelo y un miembro de la Iglesia de Cristo, para discutir nuestra necesidad continua de cuidar el precioso recurso del agua.

Las siguientes reflexiones vienen de esa conversación. Aunque nuestra declaración que compartimos fue dirigida a la gente de San Ángelo por medio del San Angelo Standard Times, creo que los mismos principios aplican a todos nosotros por toda la Diócesis de San Ángelo.

Sin agua, no hay vida. Hablando en una voz unida como el alcalde de nuestra ciudad y el obispo de esta diócesis, animamos a todos los miembros de nuestra sociedad a tener un sentido de respeto y corresponsabilidad del agua, la cual es esencial para todos nosotros.

Estamos muy agradecidos por el don de la lluvia en semanas recientes, pero nunca sabemos cuando las siguientes lluvias vendrán. Por eso, es nuestra responsabilidad de ejercer cautela y previsión en la manera que la usamos.

El manejo del agua y la política pública han de ser guiadas por los principios éticos de equidad, corresponsabilidad, contabilidad, respeto por la dignidad humana, el bien común y solidaridad entre toda la gente, y el reconocimiento de la interdependencia entre la gente y el mundo natural.

Estos principios son esenciales para asegurar que habrá suficiente agua limpia para los que la necesitan hoy, como también para las generaciones futuras que (Mira AGUA/18)

DIOCESAN BRIEFS

West Texas Angelus receives national recognition

The West Texas Angelus received a third place and honorable mention in the recent Catholic Press Association annual awards, distributed June 21, in Charlotte, N.C. The Angelus’ third place award was for In-depth News/Special Reporting for “Whenever You Helped the Least of these.” Jimmy Patterson’s series of articles continues to serve as the editor of the West Texas Angelus.

Two religious sisters with roots in our city will have a celebration this year: Sr. Estela Tovar will have a celebration at St. Stephen Parish in Midland at Noon on Saturday, September 6, with a Mass celebrated by Bishop Joe Vasquez.

Sisters to celebrate 50th jubilees

Two religious sisters with roots in our diocese who are celebrating their 50th Jubilees of Religious Profession this year:

Sr. Mary Theresa Mendez, of the School Sisters of the Third Order of St. Francis, grew up in Rowena. Her celebration will be at the Sancta Maria Convent, Our Lady of the Angels Chapel, Panhandle, Texas, at 10 am on Monday, July 14, with a Mass celebrated by Bishop Patrick Zurek. For more information contact www.panhandlefranciscans.org

Sr. Estela Tovar will have a celebration at St. Stephen Parish in Midland at Noon on Saturday, September 6, with a Mass celebrated by Bishop Joe Vasquez.

Save the Date

The Diocese of Amarillo will sponsor the Southwest Liturgical Conference’s 53rd annual Study Week, January 21-24, 2015, at the Amarillo Civic Center in Amarillo. For more information, visit www.swlc.org.

Ordination videos

DVDs of Most Rev. Michael J. Sis’s Ordination/Installation Mass as sixth Bishop of San Angelo are now available. To obtain a copy, please send $15 per DVD to: Diocese of San Angelo Pastoral Center, PO Box 1829, San Angelo, TX 76902. Attention: Ordination Video. Please denote “Ordination Video” in the memo field of your check. Make sure your return address is clearly noted either on your check or in an accompanying note.

Divine Mercy is focus of official logo, prayer of World Youth Day 2016

VATICAN CITY (CNS) -- The official logo and prayer for World Youth Day 2016 were unveiled in the event’s host city -- Krakow, Poland -- by the city’s archbishop, Cardinal Stanisław Dziwisz. The Vatican released the information the same day, July 3. The logo and prayer focus on the theme chosen by Pope Francis from the Gospel of Matthew: "Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy."

The logo, created by Monika Rybczynska, 28, with help from Emilia Pyza, 26, features a red and blue flame of Divine Mercy flowing from a gold cross that is surrounded by a red outline of the map of Poland. A gold dot represents the city of Krakow on the map and symbolizes the youth. The red, blue and yellow colors represent the official colors of Krakow and the city’s coat of arms.

The prayer begins with a line from St. John Paul II’s homily at the dedication of the Shrine of Divine Mercy in Krakow in 2002: "God merciful father, in your son, Jesus Christ, you have revealed your love and poured it out upon us in the Holy Spirit, the comforter, we entrust to you today the destiny of the world and of every man and woman."

The Archdiocese of Krakow is the former see of St. John Paul and is home to the Divine Mercy shrine. St. John Paul had a great devotion to Divine Mercy, the recognition of God’s mercy as demonstrated in his sending his son to die for the sins of humanity. The international gathering is scheduled for July 26-31, 2016, with Pope Francis and youth from all over the world.
I started the fall after I graduated from Central High School in San Angelo after a very normal kind of life. I grew up going through public high school, playing video games any chance I got between going to school, hanging out with friends, and, of course, making my obligatory appearance at Mass on Sunday. From an early age I started thinking about the priesthood based largely on seeing the priestly example of my uncle, Msgr. Larry Droll and other joyful examples of priestly life. By the time I started high school, I wasn’t terribly sure anymore about the priesthood because I started dating and wondered if marriage was going to be the path I would be taken on. In the summer before my final year of high school, I ended up going on a vocations retreat in the diocese where I felt like one thought was hammered over and over again: go to seminary for a year and try it out. If it doesn’t work out, then at least you tried and know that it is not for you. That was probably the most comforting thing I had ever heard. Once someone signs up for seminary, that doesn’t mean they have signed their life away. All it means is that the person is seriously considering how God is working in their life and priesthood is a possibility. Now after seven years of “trying” seminary, I am preparing to be ordained a deacon.

For all of you parents out there, let me give you a little perspective of how my parents influenced my vocation. The most fundamental things they did were to raise me in the Catholic faith and make sure to take me to Mass every Sunday. The home is the domestic church and the first place where a child should be exposed to the Church and to be drawn into the community and it is also the first seminary. They never told me that I had to become a priest but always that whatever I chose would be good for them as long as I thought it was God’s will.

Please See DROLL/22)

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From the Editor

**A constant reminder of the goodness of people**

By Jimmy Patterson

Karen and I drove from one side of Ireland to the other recently during a memorable week in which we celebrated our 30th wedding anniversary. Ireland is a magical place, a sort of “Never, Never Land” in the real world, where all things seem beautiful and all people good.

Of course, in my life, I have developed a habit of believing in the friendliness of most all people, so take that into account if you continue reading.

The only part of Ireland that disagreed with us was the road system in Dublin. It is a snarled jumble of jammed one-way roads where street signs are all but impossible to see. The Irish put their street signs on the sides of their buildings for reasons we were never quite able to understand.

After an hour of driving the streets of Dublin trying to find our hotel for the last two days of our trip, I finally tossed up my hands, grumbled mightily and told Karen I was going to pull over, swallow what pride remained, and ask the person how to get where we were going.

I walked into an office building in the Dublin business district and saw two women behind a piece of glass at what looked like a help desk. The luck of the Irish must extend to its visitors, I thought. I’ll just ask these ladies where the hotel is, and ten minutes later we’ll be there.

Frustrated almost beyond anything resembling acceptable, I told the ladies our story and mentioned Karen was sitting in the car. They could see the futility on my face, hear it in my voice.

I got a big “Awww,” which sounds interesting when sprinkled with an Irish brogue.

“Go get your wife, bring her in here and have a seat. We’ll fix you a spot of tea or some coffee, you can relax, get your wits about you and we’ll get you along your way to where you’re going.”

The two women, Debbie and Dorothy, sat us down and just chatted with us for an hour. Not part of an hour. An entire hour. They told us about their lives, and asked us about ours and when the coffee and tea was gone they pulled out a map and showed us where our hotel was.

We had a similar experience a few years ago in The Bronx, of all places. I pulled off the wrong exit and found myself at a gas station there, unable to get back to Manhattan. I walked into a gas station and told my story and instantly, three men turned around to help me. Each of them walked outside with me. And each of them, of course, told me a different way to get back.

My point is not that I get lost a lot. I do. My bigger point is that people are essentially good. Most everywhere. Today we get so wound up in the bad, the negative stuff we read on the Internet and newspapers, and see on TV that we forget that at our fundamental core, we were made to be good and helpful, and most of us, I dare say, are just that. It is refreshing to see, and a blessing to be constantly reminded of. Even if it takes getting lost to be reminded.
Southwest Teens to Steubenville Mary’s Church, Sendoff of Droll at 6:30 p.m.

Diaconal Ordination of Adam Sacred Heart Cathedral – Mass at 8:00 a.m.

Confirmation at 11:00 a.m.

Family Gym- Youth Gathering at 3:30 p.m.

Seminarian Summer Game Between Clergy, 1615 Rio Concho–Softball Texas Bank Sports Complex, a.m.

Installation of Father Hilary David Herrera at 5:00 p.m.

Anniversary Mass of Father of Guadalupe – 25th

Barbarossa,OFM (1981)

Boeding (1989)


(1992)

Jer23:24 bit.ly/1nFX44k

Followers of Christ offer witness not merely by words. Jesus says: “By their fruits you will know them.”

What’s causing large increase in youth from Central America coming to U.S.? Violence is a large factor. nydn.us/TsDxw9 #migration

Followers of Christ offer witness not merely by words. Jesus says: “By their fruits you will know them.”

‘Who can hide in secret places so that I cannot see them?’ says the Lord, ‘do I not fill heaven & earth?’ Jer23:24 bit.ly/1nFX44k

Pope’s Audience: Your First Name Is “I Am a Christian,” Last Name “I Belong to the Church”

#PopeFrancis: Sometimes it’s hard to walk with others, they cause problems, even scandal. But being Christian means belonging to church

Sarah Reinhard @peerybingle

Dug up: The Best. Christmas Story Retelling. EVER. - See if you don't just melt: [youtube_sc...

to...

fb.me/GZRKahnB

Catholic News Svc @CatholicNewsSvs

#PopeFrancis: Sometimes it’s hard to walk with others, they cause problems, even scandal. But being Christian means belonging to church

Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Church Graduation Mass 5-18-2014

Andrews’ Our Lady of Lourdes honored its class of Andrews High School seniors during a graduation Mass, May 18, 2014.

Bishop Burbridge @BishopBurbridge

Followers of Christ offer witness not merely by words. Jesus says: “By their fruits you will know them.”

Benedictine Sisters @BenedictineSis

‘Who can hide in secret places so that I cannot see them?’ says the Lord, ‘do I not fill heaven & earth?’ Jer23:24 bit.ly/1nFX44k

Benedictine Sisters @BenedictineSis

‘Who can hide in secret places so that I cannot see them?’ says the Lord, ‘do I not fill heaven & earth?’ Jer23:24 bit.ly/1nFX44k

Rome Reports @romereports

Pope’s Audience: You cannot be a Christian on your own!

Knights of Columbus @KolC

Knights of Columbus Earns Top Rating from A.M. Best for 39th Consecutive Year: Citing the Knights of Columbus’... bit.ly/1ry6Rx9

Catholic Digest @CatholicDigest

Our Lord loves you and loves you tenderly; and if he does not let you feel the sweetness of his love, it is...
Fort Stockton Consolidation

UNIFICATION

(From 1)

told the nearly capacity auditorium at Fort Stockton High School. “Pentecost was the birth of our Catholic Church, one thousand, nine hundred and eighty-one years ago. It is when the Holy Spirit descended on the Apostles and God gave those leaders the strength and unity they needed to move forward Christ’s Church. The Holy Spirit breaks down barriers between people and builds bridges for us so the Church can function as one. And that is what we are doing here for the church in Fort Stockton.”

The process of the coming together of St. Joseph’s, one of the oldest churches in the diocese dating to the 1870s, and St. Agnes, a church consecrated in 1983 by Fr. Joe Vasquez, then-pastor in Fort Stockton and now Bishop of Austin, has been a gradual process that has taken many years. Bishop Sis attributed the consolidation to three main reasons:

- the diminishing number of available ordained priests,
- a desire to more efficiently use financial resources,
- and, the coordination of staff and volunteers.

The consolidation of the churches was made official following a May 10, 2014, vote by the diocesan presbyteral council. Sis reassured those in attendance that there is no plan to make changes to the existing Mass schedule in Fort Stockton and the people would continue to be served by pastor Fr. Serafin Avenido, along with deacons Danny Holguin, Luis Villarreal and Reuben Reyes.

“With this change we are declaring one unified parish whereby all assets, properties and liabilities of the two parishes will now belong to one new parish,” the bishop said. “A new sacramental parish register will begin, and the first names to appear in that register are the 20 candidates who will be confirmed today.”

Our Lady of Guadalupe was officially accepted as the name of the new parish when the presbyteral council voted to consolidate the parishes. It was one of a handful of potential names submitted by the parish. This name was chosen for a number of reasons: Our Lady of Guadalupe is patroness of all the Americas and a strong devotion to her exists especially in the southwest portions of Texas and the United States. Also, the announcement that Bishop Sis was named to succeed Bishop Michael D. Pfeifer came on December 12, 2013, the Feast Day of Our Lady of Guadalupe.

“The Holy Spirit is the soul of the Church,” the bishop said. “And Jesus Christ sent the Holy Spirit to guide the Church and you in this community as you face the future with one of the gifts of the Holy Spirit: Courage.”

The Fort Stockton consolidation was the third church unification in the diocese since 2008, when Big Spring’s three parishes and a mission in Coahoma combined to form Holy Trinity. Last year, Sweetwater’s parishes consolidated to form Holy Spirit Church.

“The Holy Spirit will be a source of unity and will build this community strongly if the Holy Spirit is active in you.”

— Bishop Michael J. Sis

June 8, 2014

Fort Stockton High School

The Confirmation Class at Fort Stockton’s Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish. Their names are the first entered into the registry of the newly formed, unified church. (Photos by Alan P. Torre)
USCCB Spring Meeting

Bishops focus on religious liberty, upcoming synod

By Carol Zimmermann
Catholic News Service

NEW ORLEANS — During their June 11-13 spring general assembly in New Orleans, the nation's Catholic bishops voted to extend their Ad Hoc Committee on Religious Liberty and to approve work on a limited revision of their quadrennial document aimed at guiding Catholics in election decisions.

They also were urged to promote and support Catholic families by paying close attention to the upcoming synod on the family at the Vatican and to promote the World Meeting of Families next year in Philadelphia.

The bishops heard about the progress made and the work that still needs to be done on efforts to protect children from sexual abuse. They received a report about their aid to typhoon victims in the Philippines and were advised about the work being done to make sure religious educational materials conform to the Catechism of the Catholic Church.

The public sessions of the meetings took place June 11 and the morning of June 12 before the bishops went into executive session.

"It is always a great joy for us to be together," Archbishop Carlo Maria Vigano, apostolic nuncio to the United States, told the bishops at the start of their meeting. "There is "unity and strength from the Holy Spirit when you gather as one church," he added.

The nuncio emphasized the need to be in solidarity not only with each other but also with Catholic leaders and the faith community in the Iraqi city of Mosul, where Christians were among the hundreds of thousands of people who began fleeing June 9 after Islamist forces took over much of the city.

"We join with them in solidarity and hope that the international community will not remain insensitive" to the attacks, he said.

Prior to the vote on a three-year extension of the Ad Hoc Committee on Religious Liberty, Baltimore Archbishop William E. Lori, its chairman, compared the body's work to the "humble beginnings of the pro-life movement."

The ad hoc committee was formed in 2011 and the "need for its sustained work is at least as great as when it started," he told the bishops.

Several bishops said they appreciated the materials the committee provided them and their dioceses and felt the work was important.

Another item the bishops unanimously approved was a limited revision of the 2007 statement "Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship" and the draft of a new introductory note for it. The revision and draft will be presented for a vote by the U.S. bishops at their annual fall assembly in November.

The document has been issued before every presidential election for almost four decades.

A note in the current introduction, revised in 2011, clarifies that the document "does not offer a voters' guide, scorecard of issues or direction on how to vote," but instead "applies Catholic moral principles to a range of important issues and warns against misguided appeals to 'conscience' to ignore fundamental moral claims, to reduce Catholic moral concerns to one or two matters, or to justify choices simply to advance partisan, ideological or personal interests."

The bishops also voted to permit the Committee on Clergy, Consecrated Life and (Please See USCCB/21)

Bishops urged to promote families at assembly

By Carol Zimmermann
Catholic News Service

NEW ORLEANS — The U.S. bishops, gathered in New Orleans for their spring general assembly June 11-13, were urged to promote and support Catholic families.

At the close of the morning’s session June 11, the bishops were advised to pay close attention to the Vatican's extraordinary Synod of Bishops on the family Oct. 5-19 and to promote the World Meeting of Families September 2015 in Philadelphia.

The bishops, by their applause, also showed support for a letter to be sent to Pope Francis, inviting him to the Philadelphia meeting.

Read by Archbishop Joseph E. Kurtz of Louisville, Kentucky, president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, the letter said that the pope's presence would "add significance" to the gathering and "deepen the bonds of affection" among Catholic families worldwide. He said the responses were to remain confidential, but that he could reveal the trends the answers revealed.

They indicate that Catholics were eager to respond to questions about family life, he said, and many expressed a desire to hear a more clear explanation of church teaching about marriage and families.

He also said many parents indicated that they are "at a loss" for how to transmit the faith to their children and that they also face challenges from today's economy, busy schedules and a culture they have described as being "hostile" to their faith.

The synod will bring together presidents of bish-
Catholic Daughters of America announces scholarship winners

The Angelus

Court Our Lady of Grace #1734, Catholic Daughters of the Americas, Rowena, sponsored three high school graduates for the Texas State Court Memorial Scholarship. Each was awarded a $500.00 scholarship.

Brylee Matschek is a graduate of Ballinger High School and valedictorian of the class of 2014. She will attend Texas A&M University in the fall where she will major is Agribusiness with plans to pursue a career in business and financing. She is the daughter of Bruce and Kelly Matschek of Rowena.

Jessica Kalina is a graduate of Miles High School and the daughter of Cecil and Gayle Kalina. Her goal is to major in Agribusiness at Texas Tech University to receive her undergraduate degree and then go on to obtain a Masters degree in accounting.

Ben Schwertner graduated from Lubbock Cooper High School and is the son of Mike and Jill Schwertner of Lubbock. He will attend the University of Texas at Austin to pursue a degree in Athletic Training. Ben also received the Graduate's Award which is presented each year by the local CDA Court to a graduating son of daughter of a court member. His mother has been a member of the Rowena court since 1993.

Bishop celebrates his first Lady in Blue Mass

The Angelus

IVIE RESERVOIR — On Friday, June 20, Our Lady of Guadalupe in Millersview hosted a Mass at O.H. Ivie Reservoir. The Mass was celebrated by Bishop Michael Sis, of the Diocese of San Angelo, with six priests and three deacons as co-celebrants.

There were 111 faithful in attendance from around the diocese and from other faiths. Music was provided by St Ambrose Parish Choir from Wall.

The intentions of the Mass were to thank God for his blessing of recent rains, and to pray for his continued blessings. The Lady in Blue was honored at the Mass. The Lady in Blue, Sister Maria de Jesus De Agreda, was a Franciscan nun who lived in Spain in the early 1600s. She was a sister of the Immaculate Conception who, from 1620-1631, made more than 500 apparitions along the Concho River to native Jumano Indians. These apparitions prepared the way for Spanish missionaries who would visit the region in the late 1600s.

Bishop Sis called us to live a life modeled after Sister Maria's example of evangelization, and though her missions were extraordinary by the grace of God, we all have within us the call to evangelize within our abilities and with God's grace, especially to those living outside the periphery and are often forgotten or ignored.

Our Lady of Guadalupe and Father Yesuratnam Mulakaleti extend their sincerest gratitude to Bishop Sis, all the clergy in attendance, the St. Ambrose choir, and all in attendance for sharing in this special Mass, and we especially thank our Lord, through Him, all things are made possible.

Earlier in the day, the bishop presided over a Lady in Blue Mass at Holy Angels Church in San Angelo.

Early childhood education center to open at St. Mary’s in Brownwood

The Angelus

BROWNWOOD — St. Mary, Queen of Peace is pleased to announce the grand opening of St Mary’s ABC Academy, for children ages 3-5, at 3 p.m., Tuesday July 29.

The Most Reverend Michael J Sis, Bishop of San Angelo, will be in attendance to bless the academy. All are invited to share with us in the grand opening of our pre-school on Tuesday, July 29.

The motto of St Mary’s ABC Academy is “Achieve, Believe, Create.” This is alive in all aspects of the program. St Mary’s ABC Academy is sure to be the premier early childhood education center in Brown County with an environment that nourishes each child’s appetite for learning, cultivates their joy in discovery, and strengthens their relationship with God, family and community.

St. Mary, Queen of Peace understands the importance of a quality education for young children.

“We have worked very hard to create an exciting learning environment that will help children grow spiritually, cognitively, emotionally, physically and socially,” said Amy Perez, program director. “Decades of research shows that preschool builds a foundation for success in school and in life.”

Ninety percent of brain growth occurs before most children enter kindergarten. “We will take advantage of this period of rapid development to lay a strong educational and social foundation for school and beyond,” Perez said.

St. Mary’s ABC Academy believes children can achieve success with the guidance of passionate teachers, purposeful
Speaking of Saints ...  

**St. Maria Goretti: A model of purity, innocence — and forgiveness**

By **Mary Lou Gibson**

In the 1950s, almost all Catholic school children were very familiar with the story of Maria Goretti, the young Italian girl who paid for her virginity with her life. We heard how she tried to fight off her attacker, the teenage son of a neighboring farmer. The nuns told us how brave she was as she lay dying in the hospital and that she showed compassion to her murderer saying “Through love of Jesus, I forgive him with all my heart.”

She was acclaimed as a model of purity and innocence and praised as a martyr for chastity and the Christian life. It was not a goal that Maria had sought or even thought about. She was the third of seven children born into a farm family in 1890 near Ancona, Italy.

The family had moved to the Pontine Marshes area when Maria was eight. They hoped to better their fortunes by becoming tenant farmers. However, it was not a good place for them. Disease was rampant there and Paul Burns writes in “Butler’s Lives of the Saints” that Maria’s father died when she was 10. She was left to look after the house and the younger children while her mother, Assunta, worked longer hours in the field.

Maria never received any formal education and could not read or write. She longed to receive her First Communication and that became her focus. According to her biographers, Maria seemed to grow spiritually throughout the spring of 1902 so that when the local priest examined her, he found her well prepared for the Sacrament. Her mother got her a dress and a friend brought her a pair of new shoes to wear for the ceremony on May 29, 1902. During the month of June, Maria received Communion four more times.

The family shared living space over an old barn with the Serenelli family. Maria was almost 12 now and was becoming a beautiful young woman. She attracted the attention of Alessandro Serenelli, who was nearly 20 years old and had previously made some sexual advances to Maria. Burns reported that

(Please See SAINTS/23)

**Young people should focus on vocation, not just a job or profession**

By **Fr. Knick and Sandie Knickerbocker**

At an increasingly younger age, our young people are being asked to consider what career or profession or job they will pursue after high school so they can focus on the appropriate curriculum in high school—college prep, health care, general, technical, etc. Then they are asked to choose courses in high school based on what they think they want to do after they graduate. In some school systems, this process begins as early as middle school. Unfortunately, there is very little input from the family or the Church in this process.

For Christians, the focus should be on “vocation”—not just job or career or profession. Vocation comes from the Latin vocare, which means “calling” and involves the whole person in Christ. Quoting Pope John Paul II, “It is essential for us to understand that Jesus has a specific task in life for each and every one of us. Each one of us is handpicked, called by name—by Jesus! There is no one among us who does not have a divine vocation!” Each of us is God’s beloved, His one-of-a-kind creation, and He is calling each of us. To what vocation, what life’s work, is God calling you, your child, teen, or young adult, and how do you discern God’s calling? In any discernment process, the guidance of the Holy Spirit through prayer is of utmost importance, as well as input from those who know us best: family, friends, teachers, pastors.

In choosing a vocation, we should consider not only our talents, interests, and abilities, but also our spiritual gifts and temperament. At Baptism each of us received spiritual gifts, which are fanned into flame by the Holy Spirit at Confirmation. Spiritual gifts are discussed by Paul in his Epistles; they include compassion, serving, encouragement, leadership and teaching, as well as others. A spiritual gifts inventory can be helpful in this regard. Your temperament is the way you were “hard wired” by God at your conception. The classical temperament types are sanguine, choleric, melancholic, and phlegmatic. (For an in-depth understanding of your temperament blend, read The Temperament God Gave You, The Classic Key to Knowing Yourself, Getting Along with Others, and Growing Closer to the Lord, by Art & Laraine Bennett - a Catholic couple. This book provides a deeper, fuller, richer understanding of personhood than psychology alone.). Generally, we are more aware of our own and others’ natural talents—music, sports, academics, building and repairing—than we are of spiritual gifts. Temperament, natural talents, and spiritual gifts are from the Lord and should be recognized, encouraged, and used faithfully.

It is helpful to understand our calling, our vocation, on several levels. Each level of calling is in relation to Christ in community. Our primary vocation is to be holy—holiness of heart and life—to be Christian, disciples of Christ. Our relationship with Jesus Christ and His Church is the foundation for any other calling. Being preceded "doing." We must know who we are and to whom we belong before we can rightly discern what we are to "do."

The next level of calling has to do with our relationship with Christ and others in a particular community. You may be called to the vocation of marriage in the community of the family, the Domestic Church. You may be called to consecrated single life in relation to Christ and His Church while living in the world. You may be called to the Sacramental Priesthood in the communities of the Church and the brotherhood of priests, for the sake of those in the Church and in the world-at-large. You may be called to the Permanent Diaconate in service to the communities of the Church and society. Perhaps you are called to religious life in the community of the Church in a religious order, living in community with your brothers or sisters—either cloistered in prayer for the Church and the world or out in direct service to the Church and the world.

The third level of calling has to do with the way we use the talents and gifts God has given us to earn a living or contribute to the particular community to which God has called us. It is a valid observation that persons who have chosen a vocation that uses their natural talents and interests as well as their spiritual gifts, in the context of their temperament combination, have a sense of true fulfillment. In many instances, what we refer to as midlife crisis is the result of choosing a career or working at a job that does not allow us to use fully our spiritual gifts, as well as our talents and abilities.

We adults — parents, grandparents, priests, deacons, teachers, friends — should take seriously our role of prayerfully helping and encouraging our children, teens, and young adults, as well as other

(Please See KNICKERBOCKER/21)
Making Sense of Bioethics

Clearing the air around marijuana use

By Fr. Tad Pacholczyk

A June article in the New England Journal of Medicine (NEJM), written by researchers from the National Institute on Drug Abuse and the National Institutes of Health, points out that marijuana is not the harmless drug that many imagine. Rather, it is associated with "substantial adverse effects, some of which have been determined with a high level of confidence."

These negative outcomes include the risk of addiction, symptoms of chronic bronchitis, an elevated incidence of fatal and non-fatal motor vehicle accidents, and diminished lifetime achievement and school performance in cases of long-term use, especially beginning in adolescence. We can add that the decision to use a drug recreationally for the purposes of dissociating ourselves from reality through induced euphoria raises significant moral concerns, and, like all unethical human choices, can be expected to correlate with significant adverse ramifications.

Part of the unethical character of drug abuse flows from the fact that we are treating something good, namely our personal, conscious experience as if it were an evil to be avoided. Recreational drug users seek to escape or otherwise suppress their lived conscious experience, and instead pursue chemically-altered states of mind, or drug-induced pseudo-experiences. Any time we act in such a way that we treat something objectively good as if it were an evil by acting directly against it, we act in a disordered and immoral manner.

The decision to pursue inebriation and drunkenness, similarly, is a choice directed against the good of our human conscious experience that raises serious moral concerns. The responsible enjoyment of alcohol, meanwhile, presupposes that a moderate use of the fruit of the vine can aid us in the pursuit of certain aspects of friendship and interaction by stimulating conversation with others, and by diminishing the hesitations that people may have when they interact with each other. The moderate use of alcohol also appears to offer positive physiological effects on health. The notion of the "responsible enjoyment of marijuana and other mind-altering drugs," meanwhile, is a dubious concept, given that the more powerful and varied neurological effects of these substances readily take us across a line into the more powerful and varied neurological effects of drugs," meanwhile, is a dubious concept, given that the more powerful and varied neurological effects of drugs".

The NEJM article also notes that adults who smoke marijuana regularly during adolescence have decreased neural connectivity (abnormal brain development and fewer fibers) in specific brain regions. Although some experts have disputed a cause-effect relationship for this phenomenon, studies of brain development in animals strongly suggest a causal effect. The authors surmise that the effects of marijuana on brain development may help to explain the association between frequent marijuana use among adolescents and significant declines in IQ, as well as poor academic performance and an increased risk of dropping out of school. These deleterious effects speak to us of the fundamentally unethical character of inhaling, injecting or otherwise ingesting harmful chemical substances into our bodies.

The litany of marijuana's adverse health effects raises major doubts about the wisdom of promoting its legalization for recreational purposes. The authors note that the health effects of a drug (whether legal or illegal) are related to its "availability and social acceptability." They conclude, "In this respect, legal drugs (alcohol and tobacco) offer a sobering perspective, accounting for the greatest burden of disease associated with drugs not because they are more dangerous than illegal drugs but because their legal status allows for more widespread exposure," leading to more abuse and more harmful effects. It's critical for us to acknowledge these negative effects rather than seeking, like drug addicts, to dissociate ourselves from this reality.

The responsible use of alcohol may become nearly impossible for them, necessitating complete abstinence to maintain their freedom. Marijuana, despite some contentious debates about the matter, similarly has a significant addictive potential, as noted in the NEJM article:

"Approximately 9 percent of those who experiment with marijuana will become addicted… The number goes up to about 1 in 6 among those who start using marijuana as teenagers and to 25 to 50 percent among those who smoke marijuana daily. According to the 2012 National Survey on Drug Use and Health, an estimated 2.7 million people 12 years of age and older met the DSM-IV criteria for dependence on marijuana, and 5.1 million people met the criteria for dependence on any illicit drug (8.6 million met the criteria for dependence on alcohol)… Indeed, early and regular marijuana use predicts an increased risk of marijuana addiction, which in turn predicts an increased risk of the use of other illicit drugs."

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Whenever we look at alcohol, marijuana, or other more powerful drugs, additional moral concerns arise due to the risk of addiction, which threatens authentic freedom and constitutes a serious form of human bondage. Alcohol, of course, poses a significant risk of addiction for some people, and the

Inspiration comes from life ... not age

By Erick Rommel

Catholic News Service

When a child challenges an adult, they hear one statement more than anything else: Children should be seen and not heard.

Some people continue to use that refrain long after the person has moved past childhood. Those who use that statement as a weapon have a limited comprehension of the world. They're so obsessed with insulating their point of view that they dismiss insightful and inspiring individuals who happen to be young yet could broaden their world.

I can't imagine anyone dismissing Dillan Barmache because of his age. The California boy may be 14, but his challenges make the obstacles most of us face appear incredibly small. As a featured speaker at his class graduation, the teen spoke about the power that comes from self-expression.

"We all want to share who we are, we all want to share our thoughts and ideas and questions and worries, and I think every individual has that right," he said.

That's fairly insightful for a teenager who has never spoken a day in his life.

Dillan is autistic and nonverbal. As a child, he frequently became frustrated because he was unable to share the ideas in his head.

That changed when a school instructor taught him to speak using an iPad. With that technology, our world is no longer denied Dillan's voice.

Next year, Dillan starts high school. And though it's still early, he's already thinking about earning a psychology degree in college.

Another teen who shouldn't be dismissed is Griffin Furlong, who recently graduated as valedictorian of his class and will attend Florida State University this fall. He's known for never missing a day of class and never skipping assignments.

"Everyone thinks I try to make good grades because I'm smart," he said. "Not true. I perform the way I do in the classroom because I have everything to lose."

Griffin isn't speaking metaphorically. He is homeless. He spent most of his high school years living in shelters and on the couches of family and friends. He'd prefer to forget the past, but bad experiences have served as inspirations that help him bring an important point of view to others.

"Don't dwell on the past. Use it as motivation for your future," he told his classmates. "It's amazing what you can do with your life when you have motivation, ambition and most importantly, a purpose."

These young men have used their voices and experiences to share a lesson that empowers many of us, regardless of age. If they refuse to be silent, why should we find it acceptable to say nothing, to refuse to share our experiences with others?

The next time you feel you shouldn't speak up because of your age, or your lack of experience, or your education, or for any other reason, think of these young men. They are young, they are untrained. At this stage in life, they lack the traditional measures of expertise, but what they have to share from life so far is greater than anything learned from age alone.
By Fr. Ron Rolheiser

I have come to set the earth on fire and how I wish it were already blazing…. Do you think that I have come to establish peace on earth? No, I tell you, but rather division. From now on a household of five will be divided, three against two and two against three.

This saying of Jesus is one of the most misunderstood teachings in all of scripture and, because of this, from the time of Jesus’ birth until this very day, we have been able to cloak a lot of our lack of charity, lack of respect, bitterness, and hatred inside the mantle of prophecy, claiming that the divisions we cause are the divisions to which Jesus is referring when he said he is bringing fire to the earth. But we are wrong. Why?

First, the fire that Jesus passionately longs to bring to this earth is not the fire of division and polarization, but the fire of the Holy Spirit, the fire of Pentecost, namely, the fire of charity, joy, peace, goodness, understanding, and forgiveness. And this fire unites rather than divides. Moreover, in answer to his question: “Do you think that I have come to establish peace on earth?” the answer is: absolutely, without doubt. Jesus came precisely to bring peace to this earth, as the angels proclaim at his birth, as his entire ministry attests to, and as he powerfully witnesses to in his death. Jesus came to bring peace to the world; no one may doubt that.

Then how does division enter? And why does Jesus tell us that his person and teaching will bring about polarization, hatred, and division? If the fire that Jesus brings to this earth is meant to unite us, why does it so often divide us?

It is not Jesus’ message that divides; it is how we react to that message that divides. We see this already at the time of his birth. Jesus is born, and some react with understanding and joy, while others react with misunderstanding and hatred. That dynamic has continued down through the centuries to this very day when Jesus is not only misunderstood and seen as a threat by many non-Christians, but especially when his person and message are used to justify bitter and hate-filled divisions among Christians and to justify the bitterness that invariably characterizes our public debates on religious and moral issues. Jesus still divides, not because his person and message are one-sided, divisive, or hate-filled, but because we too often use them in that way.

In effect, from the time of his birth until today, we have perenniaily used Jesus’ to rationalize our own anger and fears. We all do it, and the effects of this are seen everywhere: from the bitter polarization within our politics, to the bitter misunderstandings between our churches, to the hate-filled rhetoric of our radio and television talk-shows, to the editorials and blogs that demonize everyone who does not agree with them, to the judgmental way we talk about each other inside our coffee circles. We are all venting, mostly unhealthily, but forever under the guise of bringing the fire of love and truth to the planet. However, if the truth be told, more often than not, the fire we are bringing is more the fire of Babel than of Pentecost. Our moral fevers invariably bring about more division than unity.

Several years ago, for example, I was at a clergy meeting at which each of the priests present was asked to state publicly what he felt was the salient gift that he brought to his ministry. One of the priests, who had a long history of being a problem-child to both his bishop and his parishioners, self-confidently described himself in this way: “My gift is that I’m an agitator! I stir things up! I don’t let people get comfortable. I bring Christ’s fire! I’m prophetic!” He was certainly right about the agitation, the discomfort, and the fire. His bishop had no end of phone calls attesting to that. But there was a lot of skepticism as to his being a prophet. His approach to things and his rhetoric too much resembled that of an ideologically-driven talk-show host who divides the world up too-neatly between angels and demons, absolute right and absolute wrong, and has a too-facile division as to who is on God’s side and who is on the devil’s side. That kind of talk is mostly bitter, hate-filled, one-sided, and high divisive, but it justifies itself under the banner of truth and love, self-proclaiming itself as prophetic.

Daniel Berrigan rightly suggests that a real prophet makes a vow of love, not of alienation. It is easy to get this in reverse, and we frequently do.

Granted, there is a fire that divides, even while remaining the fire of love and Pentecost. But it is as fire that is always and everywhere respectful, charitable, and inclusive, never enflaming us with bitterness, as does so much of our contemporary religious and moral rhetoric.

Ronald Rolheiser, a Roman Catholic priest and member of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, is president of the Oblate School of Theology in San Antonio. He is a community-builder, lecturer and writer. His books are popular throughout the English-speaking world and his weekly column is carried by more than seventy newspapers worldwide.

Bill Maher and not understanding either faith or the Bible

By Very Rev. Robert Barron

I don’t know what possesses me to watch “Real Time With Bill Maher,” for Maher is, without a doubt, the most annoying anti-religionist on the scene today. Though his show is purportedly about politics, it almost invariably includes some attack on religion, especially Christianity. Even during a recent interview with former President Jimmy Carter, whom Maher very much admires, the host managed to get in a sharp attack on Carter’s faith. Just last week, his program included a brief conversation with Ralph Reed, the articulate gentleman who used to run the Christian Coalition and who is now a lobbyist and activist on behalf of faith-related causes.

For the first three or four minutes, Reed and Maher discussed the social science concerning children raised in stable vs. unstable families, and Reed was scoring quite a few points in favor of the traditional understanding of marriage. Sensing that he was making little headway, Maher decided to pull the religion card, and from that point on things went from bad to worse. Maher said, “Now you’re a man of faith, which means someone who consciously suspends all critical thinking and accepts things on the basis of no evidence.” Astonishingly, Reed said, “yes,” at which point, I shouted at the TV screen: “No!” Then Maher said, “And I believe that you take everything in the Bible literally;” and Reed replied, “yes,” at which point I said, “Oh God, here we go again.” Maher then did what I knew he would do: he pulled out a sheet of paper which included references to several of the more morally outrageous practices that the God of the Bible seems to approve of, including slavery. Pathetically, Reed tried to clear things up by distinguishing the chattel slavery of the American south from the slavery practiced in the classical world, which amounted to a kind of indentured servitude. “Oh I get it,” Maher responded, “God approves of the good kind of slavery.” The audience roared with laughter; Reed lowered his head; Maher smirked; and the cause of religion took still another step backward.

I would like, in very brief compass, to say something simple about each of the issues that Maher raised. Faith, rightly understood, does not involve any surrender of one’s critical intellectual powers, nor is it tantamount to the acceptance of things on the basis of no evidence. What Bill Maher characterizes as “faith” is nothing but superstition or credulity or intellectual irresponsibility. It is an ersatz “knowing” that falls short of the legitimate standards of reason. Real faith is not infra-rational but rather superrational, that is to say, not below reason but above reason and inclusive of it. It is beyond reason precisely because it is a response to the God who has revealed himself, and God is, by definition, beyond our capacity to grasp, to see, fully to understand. It involves darkness to be sure, but the darkness that comes, not from an insufficiency of light, but from a surplus of light. If you are ever tempted to agree with Bill Maher on the nature of faith, I would invite you to read any page of Augustine, Thomas Aquinas, John Henry Newman, C.S. Lewis, or G.K. Chesterton and honestly ask yourself the question, “Does this sound like (Please see BARRON/22)
‘War never again’: A preferential option for diplomacy

By Stephen Kent
Catholic News Service

Some things just hit the irritation button as soon as they arise, such as a recent article I read saying that France would restrict coverage of the 70th anniversary of D-Day. The French government gave two French broadcast networks exclusive rights to the main celebration at Normandy. Luckily, they dropped restrictions on live video coverage after international backlash.

Was the Normandy invasion and the subsequent liberation of Europe something that the French copyrighted? As I recall, they had not been doing a good job of managing their affairs under Nazi occupation. What would they say on air? "D-Day is presented for a private audience and any rebroadcast of the accounts of this invasion are strictly forbidden without permission."

The French have a word for it. So do I: chutzpah.

Then there is diplomacy. The United States has had a long-standing policy of not negotiating with terrorists. But with some fancy diplomatic footwork, it found it acceptable not to deal with terrorists but fine to talk with their agents.

As a result, a U.S. Army soldier held by the Taliban in Afghanistan for almost five years was set free in exchange for five top Taliban leaders held by the U.S. in Guantanamo. They must live under some restrictions in Qatar for a year in a deal brokered by the Qatar government. During a deluge of criticism of the deal, U.S. officials said it was an important diplomatic move because it opened negotiations between Taliban and Afghan leadership.

At least diplomacy was given a boost by President Barack Obama when speaking to the graduates of the U.S. Military Academy in West Point. The default to military action will no longer be assumed, Obama said. Instead, diplomacy, economic strength, international law and international unity will be looked to replace military intervention.

Diplomacy, rather than war, has been church policy for many decades. Last fall, Pope Francis appealed to "lay aside the futile pursuit of a military solution" to the Syrian civil war and instead seek "a peaceful solution through dialogue and negotiation."

Pope Paul VI, in a 1965 visit to the United Nations, said, "No more war, war never again." St. John Paul II, too, spoke strongly against war, criticizing the United States invasion of Iraq.

There are many methods, other than war, to have renegotiations on the line. Money is always an effective means. The U.S. Department of the Treasury tracks foreign assets in order to freeze funds, using banks, not bullets, to achieve a purpose.

Diplomatic and economic leverage must have new meaning. It has been almost 50 years since Pope Paul VI called for "war never again."

The history of the last half-century has provided more than enough evidence to show the futility of war as an instrument of national policy. It is more than time to make diplomatic and economic leverage the preferential option in the conduct of foreign affairs.

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Kent, retired editor of archdiocesan newspapers in Omaha and Seattle, can be contacted at considersk@gmail.com.

Celebrating a devoted vocation to the priesthood

By Moises Sandoval
Catholic News Service

My friend, Father Juan Romero, celebrates his golden jubilee as a priest this summer. "It was worth it," he says in an email. To be able to say that, no matter what your calling, is a blessing, for nothing could be worse after 50 years than to conclude otherwise. And I can add that Father Juan's priesthood has been honorable and a blessing to all of us who have known him.

I am planning to be at his anniversary Mass, appropriately being celebrated at the historic church of Ranchos de Taos in New Mexico. Taos and its Hispanic culture are Father Juan's homeland and, although he grew up in Lincoln Heights in East Los Angeles and was ordained by his archdiocese, he never forgot the culture at the root of his vocation.

No matter where he served -- Texas, Washington, D.C., or a half-dozen parishes in California -- no one could ever mistake where he came from and whom he was sent to serve.

In some indigenous cultures, religious leaders are chosen by the community. Having known Father Juan for about four decades, I am confident that, given the choice, the people of Taos and northern New Mexico would have chosen him as one of their religious leaders.

In his book, "Catolicos: Resistance and Affirmation in Chicano Catholic History," historian Mario T. Garcia has a section on Father Juan titled "Community Activist," an apt description because he has always been an activist for his community.

In California, he invested three decades of his life supporting the farm workers, picketing alongside them, lending the use of the family home in Los Angeles for use by Cesar Chavez and his staff -- even going to jail for almost two weeks, along with other clergy and Chavez himself, for disobeying an unjust court injunction.

He was an activist in many other ways, serving as executive director of a group that lobbied for Hispanic bishops, celebrating Mass in Spanish and many other issues of justice.

Father Juan also participated for many years in writing a history of the Hispanic church in the United States, a group I chaired for 19 years. As a native son of Taos and a distant relative of Father Antonio Jose Martinez, a distinguished 19th-century pastor excommunicated by Archbishop Jean Lamy, the first French bishop of New Mexico, Father Juan felt that Father Martinez had been unjustly treated and dedicated most of his writing to correct that injustice. He tried in vain to have the excommunication reversed. But he was not then, or now, discouraged.

I met Father Juan through his father, Tobias, in 1973. Tobias had moved his family, consisting of his wife and three sons, to Los Angeles during World War II, where he worked for Lockheed Martin. The eldest son, Toby, became an officer in the Air Force, but the next son, Gilbert, became a priest, and Juan, the youngest, did too. When their mother died at age 58, Tobias retired and became a Claretian priest.

The day I met Tobias, he was an incongruous figure standing alongside younger seminarians on the picket line in Arvin, California. The auxiliary bishop of Denver had invited me to accompany him and superiors of religious orders of men in showing support of Chavez's farmworkers.

Father Juan was not the only activist in the family. Father Gilbert, too, was an activist in his own way and, though like his younger brother he is retired, he will be at the jubilee Mass, celebrated within the thick adobe walls of the Ranchos church.

I find it odd that Archbishop Lamy, who excommunicated Father Juan's relative, used to hate adobe churches.
Bishop stresses guarding of religious freedom: ‘If you don’t, you will lose it’

By Jimmy Patterson
Editor
West Texas Angelus

MIDLAND — With a backdrop of patriotic bunting and a collection of close to two dozen 4th degree Knights of Columbus in attendance, San Angelo Bishop Michael J. Sis delivered a powerful homily to open the 3rd Annual Fortnight for Freedom in the Diocese of San Angelo. The Mass was celebrated at Midland’s St. Stephen’s Church on the Vigil of the Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ.

Bishop Sis noted a number of global examples of the persecution of Christians and the tragic end result when religious freedoms are not protected by governments around the world.

But, the bishop added, such stories of horror are not confined to faraway places. Examples of persecution and religious bias — while certainly not on the level of the terror and violence in parts of Africa and Asia — are also happening here in the United States.

“Our religious freedom existed prior to the state. Regardless who the government is or where you live, being a human person gives you the right to religious liberty.”

— Bishop Michael J. Sis, June 21, 2014, St. Stephen’s Church

Archbishop: Catholics should be free to serve with ‘eucharistic heart’

By Maria Wiering
Catholic News Service

BALTIMORE — The Eucharist conforms Catholics to “the pattern of Christ’s self-giving love” and compels them to see the dignity of the poor and perform acts of mercy, Baltimore Archbishop William E. Lori said at the June 21 opening Mass for this year’s Fortnight for Freedom.

The Mass coincided with the feast of Corpus Christi.

“By entering the dynamic of Christ’s self-giving eucharistic love, we are impelled ... to work for a loving and just society where the dignity of human life is respected from conception until natural death and all the stages in between,” he said in his homily.

More than 1,000 people packed the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary for the opening of the third annual Fortnight for Freedom, two weeks dedicated to prayer, education and advocacy for religious freedom.

Concelebrating the Mass were Auxiliary Bishop Martin D. Holley of Washington; Auxiliary Bishop F. Richard Spencer of the U.S. Archdiocese for the Military Services; Auxiliary Bishop Denis J. Madden of Baltimore; Bishop Mitchell T. Rolinski, an auxiliary bishop of Baltimore and bishop-designate of Springfield, Mass.; and a dozen priests.

Archbishop Lori is the chairman of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops’ Ad Hoc Committee for Religious Liberty, formed in 2011. In 2012, it published Archdiocese: Catholics should be free to serve with ‘eucharistic heart’

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Altar Servers help at the Fortnight for Freedom Mass June 21 at St. Stephen’s Church in Midland. (Photo by Alan P. Torre)
Pilgrims from San Angelo diocese return from Holy Land trip

The Angelus

Sixteen pilgrims from the dioceses of San Angelo and Dodge City, Kan., recently returned from a 10-day trip to the Holy Land, where the group spent time in Jerusalem and Tiberias.

Stops the group made took the pilgrims to the Sea of Galilee for a boat ride, the Mount of Beatitudes, Capernaum, Caesarea Phillipi, Cana, the Jordan River, Mt. Tabor, Bethlehem, the Dead Sea, Mount of Olives, Garden of Gethsemane, the Upper Room, Chapel of the Ascension, Via Dolorosa, and the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.

The pilgrims celebrated Mass in many locations in the Holy Land. Two priests, including Fr. Sam Mattheisen, of Abilene Holy Family Parish, accompanied those on the journey.

Those attending from the Diocese of San Angelo included Hannah Halfmann, Lexie Schaefer, Aaron Michalewicz, Teresa Michalewicz, and Charles Michalewicz; Fr. Mattheisen was the chaplain of the trip and a priest from Chicago, Fr. Stephen Newton, also attended.

The group enjoyed many great foods, lodged in nice hotels, and learned much by visiting many historic sites. Each person on the trip received a certificate signed by the mayor of Jerusalem saying they were officially pilgrims of Jerusalem. The tour was conducted by Regina Tours.

"We are seeking for the church and for church institutions no special privileges," he said. "We are seeking the freedom to serve, or as Pope Francis once put it, the freedom to proclaim and live the Gospel 'in its entirety.'"

He asked Catholics to keep "in the forefront of our hearts" people whom U.S. Catholic humanitarian agencies, parishes and individuals serve.

"Let us look at them not merely as statistics but as persons created in God's image and called to enjoy friendship with God," he said.

Catholic parishes and organizations throughout the country have planned events celebrating religious freedom and charitable works to coincide with the fortnight. In addition to participating in these events, Archbishop Lori urged Catholics in the Archdiocese of Baltimore to take "The Freedom to Serve Pledge," found at www.archbalt.org.

Among the Mass attendees were members of the Baltimore-based Little Sisters of the Poor, plaintiffs in a well-publicized lawsuit against the federal government over the HHS mandate. The U.S. Supreme Court granted the sisters a temporary injunction in January.

In an interview after Mass, Mother Loraine Marie Clare Maguire, the Little Sisters' provincial superior, urged Catholics to pray for religious freedom.

"Religious freedom is very important to us and to our mission of caring for the elderly," she told The Catholic Review, Baltimore's archdiocesan newspaper.

"You can't do anything without prayer, and the Eucharist is the summit of our prayer life. It's what brings us together as a community to pray."

The Fortnight for Freedom culminated with a July 4 Mass at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington.

Wiering is a staff writer at The Catholic Review, newspaper of the Baltimore Archdiocese.
**Our Faith**

**Placing more importance on sacrament of marriage critical**

By Father Kenneth Doyle  
Catholic News Service

Q. My fiance and I are planning to get married just three months from now. We were thrilled when our venue recommended a priest as our officiant, as it was very important to my fiance’s mother that our marriage be recognized by the church.

But a few days ago, his mother Googled that priest’s name and found articles reporting that he had been removed from ministry by the church because he is gay. The faith community where he currently ministers welcomes people of many Christian religions, but the Catholic Church would not consider his marriage ceremony a valid one.

To make things worse, my fiance’s mother has told us that she will not acknowledge our marriage or attend the ceremony unless it is a sacrament. (If she doesn’t go, I’m sure that she will make sure that the rest of his family does not attend either.)

I am devastated by her lack of support. Our intention was certainly to have our marriage be valid in the church’s eyes. Do you have any suggestions or can you recommend any priests who would be able to officiate? (Central Pennsylvania)

A. Your letter prompts several thoughts on my part, widely scattered. First, I am continually surprised by the growing number of couples for whom the "venue" (i.e. the place of the reception) is the primary focus -- and sometimes the exclusive concern -- when planning their wedding.

My view is that a wedding ceremony is above all else a spiritual event: You believe that God had a hand in bringing you together, you want to tell the Lord that you are grateful and ask him to bless your marriage, and you are inviting your friends to pray with you and for you.

So it disappoints me when -- over and over, lately -- I find couples selecting the reception hall first and then "backing into" a church that might be nearby and a priest who might happen to be available.

I'm sorry that the celebrant recommended by your venue is no longer functioning as a Catholic priest. Incidentally, though, he would not have been removed from ministry simply for being gay. A gay man can be a worthy and effective priest, as long as he is committed to remaining celibate. The same requirement applies to him as to a priest who is heterosexual.

Next, I'm not sure that I agree with your future mother-in-law's stance in not attending the wedding. Having made clear her preference and her principles, perhaps the better course in a situation like this might be to attend the wedding. It would keep the lines of communication open, with the hope that her son might decide to have the marriage blessed by the church at some future date.

Finally, having felt compelled to unload all of that on you, let me see what can I do to help. I appreciate and admire the fact that you and your fiance want to "rescue" the situation and have your marriage recognized by the church, not simply because you want to keep peace in the family, but because you would like to remain eligible to receive the sacraments, especially the Eucharist.

I suggest that you call the Catholic diocese in which the wedding will take place and ask whether they have any suggestions, perhaps the name of a retired priest who might be available for the wedding.

One possible complication, I need to point out, is that many dioceses do not normally give permission for a marriage ceremony outside of a church setting.

There are exceptions: I have done several weddings, for example, in "neutral" settings when a Catholic was marrying a Jew and the Jewish family would have felt uncomfortable in the presence of Christian symbols.

Perhaps there is a nearby Catholic church where, in advance of the date you have chosen, you and your fiance could be married by a priest by a quiet and simple exchange of vows; then you could do the "party part" at your chosen destination, and the priest might be willing to say a prayer of blessing as the meal begins.

Or, if you explain honestly to your diocese that the wedding has long been planned and that you didn't realize the complexities of having the church recognize the marriage but want very much to be married in the eyes of the church, the diocese might decide to give permission for a priest to do the wedding ceremony at the site you already have selected.

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Questions may be sent to Father Kenneth Doyle at askfatherdoyle@gmail.com and 40 Hopewell St., Albany, N.Y. 12208.

**When it’s hard to give without expecting a reward in return**

By Effie Caldarola  
Catholic News Service

A friend of mine is a church secretary. Her duties include greeting those who come to the parish seeking financial assistance. The poor rightly think of a church as a place to find help, and her parish has seen its share of supplicants.

"I can't pay my heat bill." "I'm behind on rent." "My electricity's been shut off." Any of the world's many woes might walk through the office door.

One afternoon, a lady on crutches appeared. I don't remember the exact nature of her plea, but everything, she said, was exacerbated by the unwieldy crutches she'd been forced to use for a seemingly painful leg problem.

The church doesn't usually hand out money, the secretary explained, but in coordination with other churches and agencies, they could refer her to food pantries, help with groceries or contribute directly to a utility company or a landlord. Not pleased with this response, the lady on crutches took a form to fill out and hobbled laboriously out the door.

I'm not sure what made my friend stand up from her desk that day and stretch to peer out the high window that looked out on the parking lot. But there, she saw the woman swing the crutches energetically over her shoulder and saunter quickly to her car.

Funny? Yes, but disconcerting as well, because one person's attempt to scam the system threatens to color our view of charity. We want our money to go to the deserving.

With that in mind, I read St. Ignatius of Loyola's famous prayer on generosity. One translation of the prayer reads, "To labor and not to seek reward." I think this is a challenging prayer for all of us who try to do good.

It's the responsibility of every charity to steward its money wisely and attempt to prevent any misuse of funds. That should go without saying.

But are there any guarantees that the gifts I offer will change the world? Forget it. That's not why we give. We give because everything we have has been given to us by a gracious God, and we want to share it.

We can't always ensure that our money or time will accomplish our purpose, but we give freely anyway. We don't give to "seek reward," whether that reward is self-satisfaction or a big "thank you."


Nevertheless, his book is timeless. Father Smith was the director of a street drop-in center in Tacoma, Washington, for six years. The hopelessness, substance abuse and suffering he recounts cut through the book like a jagged sore.

The violence, mental illness and despair of the streets made their way into his center. How could he do it for all those years? Where were the "rewards"?

No doubt he helped many but not always with the standard success stories. Often, he simply stood with the dying, the desperate, the addicted, and let them know that they were loved despite their failures.

Undoubtedly, he ran into many people carrying crutches that they didn't need and many who carried crosses they couldn't bear. But he was there for all of them, modeling how to labor without seeking reward.

It's the challenge of our Christian calling, not to see the results that reward us but to give freely and let God take over.
U.S. bishops laud court decision, but say fight will continue

By Carol Zimmermann
Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON — The Supreme Court’s June 30 ruling that certain businesses, based on their religious objections, can be exempted from a government requirement to include contraceptives in their employee health insurance coverage means "justice has prevailed," said two U.S. archbishops.

"We welcome the Supreme Court's decision to recognize that Americans can continue to follow their faith when they run a family business," said Archbishop Joseph E. Kurtz of Louisville, Kentucky, president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, and Archbishop William E. Lori of Baltimore, chairman of the U.S. bishops’ Ad Hoc Committee for Religious Liberty.

The court in its 5-4 ruling said that Hobby Lobby and Conestoga Woods, the two family-run companies that objected to the government mandate that employees be covered for a range of contraceptives, including drugs considered to be abortifacients, are protected from the requirement of the Affordable Care Act under the Religious Freedom Restoration Act.

Activists on both sides of the issue gathered outside the U.S. Supreme Court on a hot Washington morning awaiting the decision and when it was announced, supporters hailed it as a religious liberty issue and opponents called it a setback to women’s health care.

Although Catholic leaders and other religious groups hailed the decision as a victory for religious freedom, they also said the issue is not resolved since the government mandate requires nonprofit organizations such as Catholic charities, hospitals and schools to provide contraceptive coverage.

The USCCB statement of Archbishops Kurtz and Lori noted that the court left the door open about the cases currently winding their way through the courts objecting to the government’s accommodation that they direct a third party to provide the required contraceptive coverage.

"The court clearly did not decide whether the so-called 'accommodation' violates RFRA when applied to our charities, hospitals and schools, so many of which have challenged it as a burden on their religious exercise. We continue to hope that these great ministries of service, like the Little Sisters of the Poor and so many others, will prevail in their cases as well," the statement said.

Mark Rienzi, senior counsel for the Becket Fund for Religious Liberty, the religious liberty law firm that represented Hobby Lobby, the family-owned Oklahoma-based retailer, before the Supreme Court, told reporters after the ruling that the court’s decision bodes well for similar pending cases of nonprofit organizations.

An advocate of women’s rights and health holds a sign in front of the U.S. Supreme Court in Washington March 25. The Supreme Court heard oral arguments in lawsuits filed by for-profit companies Hobby Lobby Stores and Conestoga Wood Specialties against a federal requirement that employers provide contraceptive coverage in employees' health plans. The companies' Christian owners object to the mandate on religious grounds. (CNS photo).

Protect Religious Freedom Restoration Act, faith leaders tell Congress

By Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON — A coalition of leaders representing different U.S. religious faiths said in June 30 letter to congressional leaders they "are united in staunch support" to protect the federal Religious Freedom Restoration Act.

Earlier that day, in a narrowly tailored 5-4 ruling, the U.S. Supreme Court said closely held companies may be exempted from a government requirement to include contraceptives in employee health insurance coverage under RFRA, as the law is known.

The letter from religious leaders, including Archbishop Joseph E. Kurtz of Louisville, Kentucky, president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, said they are concerned Congress will alter the law to appease opponents of the court’s decision in the suits brought by Hobby Lobby and Conestoga Woods, the two family-run companies, against the federal government’s contraceptive mandate.

Passed with nearly unanimous bipartisan support in 1993 and signed into law by President Bill Clinton, RFRA says that the government "shall not substantially burden a person's exercise of religion" unless that burden is the least restrictive means to further a compelling governmental interest.

In their letter the coalition of religious leaders requested that government officials work to protect "the rights and liberties of individuals of all religious faiths, including the most vulnerable."

"In the United States, freedom of religion has always included -- and should always include -- the right to live out one's religion and act according to one's conscience outside the walls of one's house of worship," the letter said.

"For over two decades, RFRA has protected Americans of all faiths from government coercion," it continued. "We have come together to write this letter with one specific plea: Do not amend or repeal RFRA, one of our nation’s most vital legal protections for the religious freedom and rights of conscience of every person of faith."

Signers of the letter said they representing more than...
Parish priest offering homilies training in Panhandle diocese

AMARILLO — Father Jim Schmitmeyer, pastor of St. Hyacinth's Church, Amarillo, is hoping to help fellow priests and deacons focus their energy and get more efforts from their preaching. Beginning in August, he'll be offering an ongoing series of preaching workshops at the Bishop DeFalco Retreat Center, 2100 North Spring, Amarillo.

“The DeFalco Preaching Institute is designed for Catholic priests and deacons who desire to excel in making the Word of God a living, dynamic Presence in the lives of their people,” said Fr. Schmitmeyer. “The Institute also fosters the development of the preacher’s spiritual life through engagement with up-to-date homiletic resources and ongoing support of fellow ministers of the Word.”

A foundational course, “Perspectives on Preaching,” will concentrate on communication strategies that distinguish various types of preaching: evangelistic, catechetical, theological and homiletic. Perspectives on Preaching will be offered August 3-6 and again on September 14-17.

Four follow-up workshops will be offered. They include:
- Hammers and Keyboards: Preaching and the Workplace, which will be offered Sunday, Oct. 5 and Monday, Oct. 6;
- Sentiment or Sacrament: Preaching at Weddings, set for Sunday, Nov. 2 and Monday, Nov. 3;
- Homeboys, Drugs and St. Dismas: Preaching in Jails and Prisons, which will be offered Sunday, Jan. 11 and Monday, Jan. 12, and;

All four follow-up workshops will also take place at the Bishop DeFalco Retreat Center.

“Preachers often work in a vacuum and seldom get the kind of feedback that could advance their skill and increase their confidence,” said Father Schmitmeyer. “My workshops offer homilists the professional support and encouragement they need.”

Articles of interest to preachers and on-line discussions are also featured at The Preacher’s Blog on the DeFalco Retreat Center’s website: www.bdr.org/preaching.

Bishop Mark J. Seitz of El Paso, addresses the House Judiciary Committee in Washington June 25 at a hearing about the unprecedented rate of unaccompanied and undocumented minors entering the U.S. from Honduras, El Salvador and Guatemala.

(CNS Photo)

The Texas bishops underscored their belief that a society dedicated to freedom and diversity must respect the freedom of its citizens to live and work in accordance with their religious convictions. As articulated by Pope Francis, “Religious freedom is not simply freedom of thought or private worship. It is the freedom to live according to ethical principles, both privately and publicly, consequent to the truth one has found.”

The Texas Catholic Conference

Texas Catholic Conference

Texas' Catholic Bishops are deeply concerned about the increasing number of unaccompanied children and mothers from Central America and Mexico who are crossing into the United States through our state. Some of these children, as young as four years of age, are reportedly being held in crowded conditions in Customs and Border Protection detention facilities until they can be processed and accepted into a temporary living shelter. So far this year, some 47,000 unaccompanied minors have been apprehended, with estimates that the number could grow to 90,000 by the end of September.

The Catholic Charities agencies across Texas have expanded their commitments with the U.S. Federal Emergency Management Agency— who has been tasked with leading the federal effort—and the Federal Office of Refugee and Resettlement to provide for the basic needs of these mothers and children while their cases are being resolved or they are reunified with their families. Not only does this include opening new temporary shelters, but also providing social workers, immigration lawyers, and medical personnel to meet immediate needs.

We must not lose sight of the fact that these are young, scared, and desperate mothers and children. They need and deserve our protection and support. Now is not the moment for inflammatory political rhetoric, but of compassionate and orderly resolution to the conditions of these women and children who are already in a difficult humanitarian situation. We are immensely grateful for the generosity of those who are selflessly giving of their time in bus stations and shelters to alleviate the confusion and desperation of the immigrants. We call on our fellow Texans to pray for the safety and wellbeing of these young refugees and for the continued efforts of both public and private aid officials in resolving this potential humanitarian crisis along the border.
FORTNIGHT

(From 12)

The bottom line, the bishop said, is that religious liberty includes more than just our ability to go to Mass on Sunday or to pray the rosary at home or to wear a medal.

“Our religious liberty also includes our freedom to live our everyday lives in harmony with our faith and our morals. Religion affects the decisions we make at work, in politics, in economics, and in everything we do. Because our faith is also about action.

Bishop Sis noted that there have been more Christians martyred for their faith in the last 100 years than in any other period of human history.

“There are so many examples of people not being allowed to practice their Christian faith around the world, but also even in our own country,” the bishop said. “We have challenges to our faith in America to which we need to be attentive. No matter were you live, if you are not vigilant about the threats to your religious liberty, you will eventually lose it.”

Bishop Sis touched on the Supreme Court case involving Hobby Lobby -- in which the Supreme Court sided in favor of the business in a case involving religious liberty and conscience. He also spoke on how some Catholic adoption agencies and foster care agencies are being driven out of business because of their decision not to place children in homes of same-sex couples, the bishop said.

Bishop Sis spoke, too, on the fundamental Christian practice of helping strangers in need, namely assisting immigrants in our country, which some states decry as being in violation of the law.

“When someone is hurting along the way, even though they may not be of our own ethnic group, or racial group or religion, we help them,” Bishop Sis said. “Why do we help them? Because that is what the teaching of Jesus tells us to do. Some states consider this help to be harboring undocumented immigrants and violating state law. But our faith teaches us to give a hand to someone in that situation.”

Bishop Sis’ statement on Hobby Lobby ruling

The U.S. Supreme Court’s decision today finding in favor of Hobby Lobby, exempting it and other entities from an Affordable Healthcare Act requirement that would have required the providing of insurance coverage of morning-after pills and similar birth control methods and devices is a victory for the people of the United States and the most fundamental religious freedom issues this country has held sacred for over 200 years.

The HHS Mandate is simply an unjust law. People of many faiths have stood together against this government coercion of conscience and its intrusion into religious affairs. The parties that have sued over this mandate include Evangelicals, Catholics, Mennonites, and members of other religious groups, and their legal efforts have been supported in briefs submitted by Orthodox Jews, Hindus, Muslims and others.

A society dedicated to freedom and diversity must respect the freedom of its citizens to live and work in accordance with their religious convictions. Hobby Lobby is very generous with its employees, providing good wages and strong health coverage. But because Hobby Lobby objected in conscience to covering only four objectionable drugs and devices — Plan B and Ella, and two types of IUD (hormonal and copper) — the government would have fined it $100 a day ($36,500 a year) per employee.

Catholic teaching has long advocated some form of universal, accessible, and life-affirming health care. However, this portion of the HHS mandate would have harshly penalized us and others who cannot, in good conscience, provide drugs and services that violate our religious beliefs.

This case was not about religious people trying to force their beliefs on others. It was about government officials trying to force their own beliefs on religious people. People do not give up their religious freedom when they open a family business. They should not have to check their values and religious convictions at the door when they enter the marketplace.

ACT

(From 16)

100 million Americans. Besides the USCCB president, the signers included leaders of the Assemblies of God, the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention, the Rabbinical Council of America and the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

Although the diverse religious leaders share very different perspectives on many issues, they said, they are all concerned by the potential consequences that any alteration to RFRA would create.

"Changing RFRA because some disagree with one particular application of the law would set a dark precedent by undermining the fundamental principle of religious freedom for all, even for those whose religious beliefs may be unpopular at the moment," the letter said.

"Congress has never passed legislation with the specific purpose of reducing Americans' religious freedom. It should not consider doing so now."

"Highlighting the good works that religious organizations are currently able to accomplish, the letter closed by compelling lawmakers to protect religious liberty within the U.S."

"The good works of these individuals of faith can be seen in soup kitchens, hospital, schools, hospices -- and yes, family-owned businesses -- and the letter said, "Jews, Muslims, Hindus, Christians, Buddhists, Sikhs and others all benefit when powerful government officials know that, as President Bill Clinton stated when he signed RFRA, government must meet 'a very high level of proof before it interferes with someone's free exercise of religion.'"

"Freedom of religion, like freedom of speech," it added, "must stand for all Americans, for all time."

AGUA

(Para 2)

Siguen. Hay que enseñarles a nuestros niños estos valores y poner un buen ejemplo como adultos.

Nosotros, quienes creemos en Dios y en el poder de la oración, debemos de continuo seguir el pedir por la lluvia, y al hacerlo reconocer nuestra completa dependencia en Dios que sostiene nuestras vidas. Al mismo tiempo, debemos de comprometernos como administradores responsables del mundo creado para usar el agua que se nos ha dado apropiadamente.

El buen cuidado de nuestro planeta se le ha sido encargado a seres humanos, no de usar recursos naturales y cosas vivientes como se nos plazca. La ganancia financiera inmediata y la ventaja individual han de ser ajustadas por la sostenibilidad a largo tiempo de los recursos para generaciones futuras.

Un futuro con suficiente agua depende no solamente en el cambio tecnológico sino también en el cambio de nuestras actitudes.

Instamos a la gente de San Ángelo y su industria y negocios que adopten el uso sostenible de agua por medio de practicar la conservación del agua, cosecha de agua pluvial, irrigación eficiente, usar compostaje y abono, por medio de usar plantas que son resistentes a la sequía para el paisajismo, y por medio de reparar las goteras en la plomería e instalar accesorios que son eficientes con el agua.

Instamos a los líderes de la comunidad a trabajar hacia una política pública que incorpora una diversidad de fuentes de agua y programas de conservación, incluyendo reclamación, desalación, y la búsqueda continua de suministraciones nuevas del agua.

Urgimos a la gente y el liderazgo de San Ángelo a compartir nuestra preocupación del desecho, la polución de aguas superficiales y contaminación de aguas subterráneas.

Necesitamos esforzarnos de desplegar una actitud de solidaridad de ver el uso del agua como un bien común. Todo ser humano tiene el derecho a las necesidades básicas de la vida, entre ellas comida, aire y agua. El acceso al agua para cumplir con las necesidades más básicas es un derecho fundamental de toda la gente.

Una sociedad sana vela por las necesidades de sus miembros más pobres y vulnerables. Así que, una póliza de agua justa ha de tomar en cuenta las circunstancias especiales del pobre.

Nuestra interconexión con nuestro próximo y con el resto de la creación es algo que se ha de celebrar y respetar. Todos estamos en esto juntos, y juntos podemos crear una cultura que honra sus obligaciones morales y civiles de cuidar el uno al otro y por nuestra agua, un don y recurso precioso.

Michael Sis, Obispo
Dwain Morrison, Alcalde
**PARISH FESTIVALS**

**SATURDAY, JULY 19 — SUNDAY, JULY 20**
*MIDLAND. San Miguel Arcangel* Family Fair will be July 19 & 20, 2014 Saturday 12:00 pm to 12:00 am and Sunday 12:00 pm to 10:00 pm

**SATURDAY, JULY 26**
*SAN ANGELO. St. Mary’s Jamaica Fest 2014 featuring AJ Castillo, Stefanie Montiel, Grupo Massore, Gabriel Zavala and DJ NRG*
- 12:00 PM - 11:45 PM
- Location: Bill Aylor Sr. Memorial Riverstage
- 16 E. Ave. A, San Angelo, Texas 76903

**SATURDAY, AUGUST 2**
*LORAIN. St. Joseph’s Mission, Loraine will have its Festival on August 2 from 11am-11pm. There will be music all day. All are welcome.*

**SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 7**
*BALLINGER. St. Mary’s Star of the Sea in Ballinger will have our fall festival on Sept. 7, at the parish center. Fajita meal will be served.*

**SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 21**
*Knights of Columbus Hall 3636 N. Bryan, San Angelo*
-SAN ANGELO. A barbecue brisket/homemade German sausage dinner with all the trimmings will be served from 11:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.
- Plates for adults, children and Drive-Thru-To-Go plates will be available. Adult and To-Go plates are $10; Children (10 and under) plates: $6. Cooked/Uncooked sausage and barbecued brisket may be purchased in the afternoon. An auction featuring donations from various merchants and parishioners will begin at 1:15 p.m. A Country Store, Silent Auction, Bingo and other games will be available throughout the afternoon. For more information, call St. Therese Catholic Church: 1-325-465-8062.

**SUNDAY, OCTOBER 5**
*ST. LAWRENCE FALL FESTIVAL will be held on SUNDAY, OCTOBER 5, 2014 at the Parish Hall.

**MAY 2-3, 2015**
*ABILENE. St. Vincent Pallotti, May 2-3, 2015*

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**The Adult Catechism**

**Time for the church to ‘get with it’**

**EDITOR’S NOTE:** The United States Catholic Catechism for Adults was developed by an ad hoc committee of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. Washington Archbishop Donald Wuerl served as chairman of the editorial oversight board that developed the catechism. He is the author of many books, including *The Catholic Way and The Gift of Faith*, and was one of the editors for the best selling *The Teaching of Christ: A Catholic Catechism for Adults.*

**By Cardinal Donald Wuerl**
*Archbishop of Washington*

The Church needs to get with it." This, a parishioner let me know at a church reception not too long ago. Not that this was the first time I had heard the admonition.

Given all the media attention to same-sex marriage in recent months, I expected that this might be the focus of her indignation. But it was not.

Her annoyance grew out of the instruction her pastor had given to her daughter, who was planning her wedding. It turned out that the young woman and her fiancé were already living together and had been for some time - a situation not all that uncommon. The pastor pointed out that this was not right - certainly not moral.

This piece of straightforward and honest advice was the occasion of the demand that "the Church get with it."

All over the country, people are living together before they get married. "What can be wrong with that? They love each other." This, in short, was the gist of the position of the mother who was so upset - upset with the Church for suggesting that living together should come after the wedding, not before.

If we look around, we see many examples of where, in the minds of some, "the Church should get with it." Here are just a few that I regularly hear:

"Why is the Church so obsessed with abortion? A woman should be allowed a choice. After all, it is her body. Get with it!"

"Why is the Church opposed to embryonic stem cell research? Look at all of the potential cures that could be developed. Besides, television personalities are in favor of it." Usually left aside in the discussion is the difference between embryonic stem cells (derived from destroying a human embryo) and adult stem cells, whose use is not only moral but effective since reports say that all the actual successful medical advances are from this type of cells. Yet, the call is for "the Church get with it."

"Why is the Church opposed to sterilization? It is a good way to practice contraception without the need for pills or condoms. Why doesn't the Church get with it?"

And, of course, "Why is the Church so defensive about the definition of marriage? Surely you don't think that the coming together of two men or two women in any way different than the joining of a man and a woman if they love each other. The Church should get with it."

The list can go on and on. "What's wrong with pornography, manipulating the truth, cheating on an exam or tax return? The Church should get with it."

Two thousand years ago, Jesus came to tell us of a truly good, wholesome and right way to live. He taught us that we are made in the image and likeness of God, that there is a God-given plan for human living and that we are all capable of making our way through life as a family - responsible for each other and responsive to God's law.

Not everyone accepted this call to love one another. "As I have loved you, so you also should love one another. This is how all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another" (Jn 13:35).

As it was in the beginning of his mission, so it has always been in every generation since. There are those who have said, "This saying is hard; who can accept it?" (Jn 6:61). In effect, they announced that Jesus "had to get with it." The challenge that Jesus offered to those who would choose to follow him is the same that his Church presents today. Jesus tells us - reveals to us - who God is, who we are in relation to God (his adopted children) and how we should live if we are faithful to the call to be his disciple.

The one thing Jesus did not do was change his teaching, his message, his revelation just because some of those who heard it felt he was out of step with the times.

We should not be surprised that the Church continues to be faithful to Jesus' Gospel - his teaching. After all, it is his message. We are not free to change it. He said "go and do not sin anymore" (Jn 8:11), "Be perfect just as your heavenly Father is perfect" (Mt 5:48), and "Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness..." (Mt 6:33), not "get with it."

Life is not easy. Jesus certainly knew that sad fact. He reminded his followers "whoever wishes to come after me must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me" (Mt 16:24).

Jesus came to give us life, a rich, full, holy and happy life. He came "that they might have life and have it more abundantly" (Jn 10:11).

His new life fulfills our deepest longings. It makes what is good in human life far better and richer. It makes our struggling life authentically human.

Not everyone can accept this vision of life. It is certainly different from the worldviews that derive their inspiration elsewhere. For those, however, who do want to follow Christ, there is a clear path - not necessarily an easy one - but one that brings us through the challenges of this world and its problems, eventually to life eternal with God.

The series of articles, *The Teaching of Christ*, now in its fifth year, is intended to help us along Jesus' way by presenting and reviewing his teaching as it is received, applied, taught and lived today in his Church. In writing these articles I have found the review of the Catechism of the Catholic Church to be a helpful source of reflection on the faith. My hope is that these articles, in some way, may assist you in having that same experience. Our task together is to grow every day more deeply rooted in the great mystery of Christ's Word, his Gospel and the Church's teaching.
MARRIAGE

(From 1)

apostle to the gentiles. Paul, a Jew by birth, was the author of most of the books of the New Testament. These two men had a very important role in the establishment of our Catholic Christian Church. Let’s look at some of the connections between them and your sacramental marriage.

The first connection I see is that these two guys disagreed a lot, but they always found a way to work things out.

Peter and Paul had different personalities and very different backgrounds and they had different training and educations. They had different responsibilities in the Church. But what they shared was their commitment to Jesus Christ. In the same way, in a healthy Christian marriage, you have different personalities, different backgrounds, sometimes different training and educations, and different roles in a family, and what you share in your life together as a Christian couple is your commitment to Jesus Christ. Even when you disagree, you find a way to work things out.

The second connection I see is this: These two saints were willing to undergo great sacrifice and hardship in order to be faithful to their vocation. Your vocation is God’s special calling in your life, and the same is true for you.

We know that married life is not always easy. Sometimes married life creates heartbreak and struggle. Sometimes those troubles are caused by the pressures of the world around us. Sometimes that struggle is caused by husbands and wives themselves.

Bishop John McCarthy, the retired Bishop of Austin, used to say that one of the crazy things about family life is that we end up hurting most deeply the ones we love the most. It’s true for many people and for many of us.

In our imperfect human condition, in families and in marriages, you have heartbreak and pain and struggles. But, your marriage vocation is your pathway to Heaven. It is your path to holiness. It is the way your salvation is worked out, just like Peter and Paul had to follow their vocations as their path to Heaven.

The third connection I see is that Peter and Paul were conscious of the fact that they were completely dependent on the grace of Jesus Christ. That’s why Paul says in today’s second reading, “The Lord stood by me and gave me strength.” Both Peter and Paul knew they were weak human beings and they needed the help of Jesus.

In the same way, in your marriage life you depend on the strength of the sacrament you received when you got married in the Church. God is giving you this strength to live out this commitment in marriage, because his strength is stronger than your greatest strength.

I want to thank you for the witness you give to married life. You bless us in so many ways by living out your marriage covenant. I’m sure you probably know what an icon is. An icon is a religious picture. It is a reflection of God.

The Catholic Sacrament of Matrimony is an icon of the love of God. You show the rest of the world what the love of God is by living out your marriage covenant.

So how is it that your marriage is called to be a reflection of the way God loves us?

God loves us, first of all, in a way that is faithful. In the same way, a Catholic married couple is called to love faithfully. Also, God loves us in a way that is life-giving. Just as his love creates life, your married love also creates life. Furthermore, God loves us in a way that is permanent. In the same way, your love for one another is a permanent lifelong commitment, til death do us part.

God loves us in a way that is forgiving. God is always ready to forgive. In the same way, in a Christian marriage you forgive. By your forgiving each other as a couple, we look at you and see your forgiveness and we say, “That’s right, that’s the way God is. God forgives that way, and he is always ready to forgive.”

One more way a sacramental marriage reflects God: God’s love is not enclosed on itself. Rather, God’s love pours itself out in love for others. He does not just keep his love within the Holy Trinity. God is always pouring out his love into our world. In the same way, a healthy Christian couple does not just reserve their love for themselves. The more strong and healthy and confident their love is, the more they pour out that love into the world around them. A Christian couple’s love is not stuck on itself. It is not closed in on itself. It’s a love that pours forth life.

BISHOP

(From 2)

the same time, we must commit ourselves as responsible stewards of the created world to make proper use of the water we have been given.

Human beings have been entrusted to take good care of our planet, not to use natural resources and living things however we please. Immediate financial gain and individual advantage must be tempered by the long-term sustainability of resources for future generations.

A future with sufficient water depends not only upon technological change but also on a change in our attitudes.

We urge the people of San Angelo and its industry and businesses to embrace sustainable water use by practicing water conservation, rainwater harvesting, efficient irrigation, composting and mulching, by using drought-resistant plants in landscaping, and by repairs of plumbing leaks and installation of water-efficient fixtures.

We urge community leaders to work toward a public policy that incorporates a diversity of water sources and conservation programs, including reclamation, desalination, and the continuing search for new supplies of water. We urge the people and leadership of San Angelo to share our concerns about waste, the pollution of surface water and the contamination of groundwater.

We need to put forward an attitude of solidarity by viewing the use of water as a common good. All human beings are entitled to the basic necessities of life, among them food, air and water. The access to water to meet their most basic needs is a fundamental right of all people.

A healthy society looks out for the needs of its poorest and most vulnerable members. Therefore, a just water policy should take into account the special circumstances of the poor.

Our interconnection with our fellow human beings and with the rest of creation is something to be celebrated and respected. We are all in this together, and together we can create a culture that honors its moral and civic obligations to care for one another and for our water, a gift and a precious resource.

Bishop Michael Sis

Mayor Dwain Morrison
Vocations to seek a renewed recognition, or approval, from the Vatican for the National Directory for the Formation, Ministry and Life of Permanent Deacons in the United States. Vatican approval to the text would be for another five-year term.

The bishops, by applause, showed their support of a letter to be from Archbishop Joseph E. Kurtz of Louisville, Kentucky, president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, to Pope Francis, inviting him to attend the World Meeting of Families next September in Philadelphia.

Read at the meeting by Archbishop Kurtz, the letter said the pope's presence would "add significance" to the gathering and "deepen the bonds of affection" many Catholics feel for the Holy Father.

Archbishop Vincenzo Paglia, president of the Pontifical Council for the Family, said the Philadelphia gathering was a key factor in promoting family life, which he said is currently in crisis.

"The family today is living out a paradox," he told the bishops. "On the one hand, great value is given to the bonds of family, everywhere in the world" but he also noted that today's families are weakened and often "lose their way."

Philadelphia Archbishop Charles J. Chaput told the U.S. bishops the 2015 gathering "comes at a time when the church in the United States urgently needs an opportunity for joy and renewal. It's also a time of great confusion about the nature of marriage and the family."

"Our goal is to exclude no one from the excitement of this meeting. Our goal is to offer the beauty of Catholic teaching about marriage and the family with confidence and a spirit of invitation to every person of good will," he said. "That's the heart of our theme: 'Love is our mission; the family fully alive.'"

Archbishop Kurtz spoke about the upcoming extraordinary synod on the family at the Vatican, noting that it will take its cue from responses given in surveys of Catholic families worldwide. He said while the responses remain confidential, one trend they indicate is Catholics' eagerness to respond to questions about family life; many have expressed a desire to hear more clear explanations of church teaching about marriage and families.

He also said many parents indicated that they are "at a loss" for how to transmit the faith to their children and they also face challenges from today's economy, busy schedules and from living in a culture that they've described as being "hostile" to their faith.

The synod will bring together presidents of bishops' conferences, the heads of Eastern Catholic churches and the heads of Vatican offices to discuss "pastoral challenges to the family in the context of evangelization."

In his presentation June 11, San Francisco Archbishop Salvatore J. Cordileone, chairman of the USCCB's Subcommittee for the Promotion and Defense of Marriage, noted that the redefinition of marriage is not only occurring at the state level but federally.

He urged the bishops to move forward recalling the words of Pope Francis: "Challenges exist to be overcome! Let us be realists, but without losing our joy, our boldness and our hope-filled commitment."

A report by the bishops' national advisory council called the bishops effort to defend marriage "an urgent priority."

The report emphasized an agreement with issues on the bishops' agenda for the spring meeting and also urged the bishops to develop materials to help dioceses address "how it cares for those in pain" and alienated from the church.

The group asked the bishops to continue to review the federal government's Common Core State Standards initiative and to consider more diocesan programs to help men to get more involved in the church.

A report by the National Review Board, which monitors dioceses' performance in dealing with sexually abusive priests and creating a safe environment for children, said progress has been made but much work still needs to be done.

In a report on the work of the Subcommittee on the Catechism, Archbishop Leonard P. Blair of Hartford, Connecticut, and chairman of the Committee on Evangelization and Catechesis, noted how the bishops' subgroup reviews 25,000 pages of religious education materials a year to determine if they conform with the catechism.

He said that just as the bishops developed high school catechetical materials they should now focus similar efforts on a curriculum format for primary grades.

The bishops were also told how the $21 million in aid relief from U.S. Catholics to Catholic Relief Service helped with immediate and long-term aid and reconstruction of churches in the Philippines after last year's Typhoon Haiyan.

At the opening Mass June 11 at St. Louis Cathedral, Archbishop Kurtz urged his fellow bishops to encourage Catholics, society at large and each other. He also thanked New Orleans Archbishop Gregory M. Aymond for the "truly warm New Orleans welcome."

KNICKERBOCKER

(From 8)

adults, to discern vocation—God’s calling on each life and how to live out that calling, using all the talents and gifts God has given. In addition to the resources we have mentioned to help us in this discernment process, aptitude tests are very helpful, as well.

We should say at this point that many people have to work at whatever job or jobs are available in order to pay bills and put food on the table. They don't have the luxury of using their gifts and talents to earn a living. However, any work we do should be done with honesty and integrity and should be intentional participation in God’s work to build His Kingdom. We can be witnesses for Christ and the Church wherever we are. In particular, our interests, gifts, and talents should be used in our parish community to build up the Body of Christ.

The Holy Spirit guides us each step of the way with the prayers of the saints and angels, especially the grace, prayers, and assistance of our Blessed Mother Mary and the prayers of St. Joseph.

Everyone is called and gifted!

"Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not rely on your own insight. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make straight your paths."

Proverbs 3:5-6 (CRSV)
DROLL

(From 3)

Through this endeavor they have continued to support me by listening to my long, complaint-filled phone calls about how many more papers I have to work on still or whenever the car has broken down and what I am supposed to do about that since I live hundreds of miles from home.

For those siblings of a young man who might be thinking about the priesthood, let me tell you how I have seen the reaction of my sister to this experience. She knows just as well as any of my friends that I am a normal person. That includes knowing that I am still a sinner and that I still know how best to be a pain in her side. God isn’t calling me to the priesthood because I am perfect. I think part of the reason he calls me is so that I can grow in holiness and be an example like St. Peter of someone who loves the Lord but fails at it from time to time (cf. Matt 26:69-75).

These have been a few thoughts for any of you who will touch the lives of future priests. Love them. Support them. Correct them even if you see a need. We are normal guys with a unique calling. We have friends, families, joys, sorrows, achievements, and struggles. Not every day in the seminary has been a complete joy. Some days have been hard and there have been some doubts along the way. But more days than not have been a blessing and there has been a lot of growth in me over these seven years and I am sure more to come as I continue to discern the Lord’s will for the rest of my life. If you are available, come down to the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart on August 8, 2014 at 6:30 pm to participate in the ordination liturgy. Even if I have no idea who you are, I am being ordained for service to you and some day maybe I might even be a part of your parish.

Bring your kids, your friends, Catholic or not, no matter if you’ve never been to an ordination or witnessed a hundred. If you cannot come, I understand. Please keep me in your prayers. Know that I pray for the diocese and my future ministry in it often. God’s peace on all.

Pray for Adam as he will be Ordained a Transitional Deacon on August 8, 2014

SANDOVAL

(Para 11)

No importó donde Padre Juan fuese asignado -- en Texas, Washington, D.C., o en media docena de parroquias en California -- nadie pudo equivocarse de donde venía y a quienes eran los que él intentaba servir. En algunas culturas indígenas, el pueblo elige líderes a religiosas y religiosos. Habiendo conocido al Padre Juan por cuatro décadas, siento que si hubiera tenido la opción, el pueblo de Taos y el norte de Nuevo México lo hubieran escogido para ser uno de sus líderes religiosos.

En su libro, “Católicos: Resistencia y Afirmación en la Historia de los Chicanos Católicos”, el historiador Mario T. García tiene una sección sobre el Padre Juan titulada “Activista Comunitario”, descripción clave porque él siempre ha sido un activista para su comunidad. [1]

En California, invirtió tres décadas de su vida apoyando los trabajadores campesinos, hombro a hombro con los huélguitas, prestando la casa familiar para el uso de Cesar Chávez y su equipo, y hasta sufría encarcelamiento por dos semanas, acompañado por otros de clerics y Cesar Chávez, por desobedecer el juicio de un tribunal.

Fue activista de muchos otros modos sirviendo como director ejecutivo de un grupo clerico hispano que abogaba por los obispos hispanos, misa en español y muchos otros casos.

Padre Juan participó por muchos años en un grupo escribiendo la historia de la iglesia hispánica, donde yo presidi por 19 años. Como hijo nativo de Taos y un remoto familiar del Padre Antonio José Martínez (un distinguido pastor quien fue excomunicado por Arzobispo Jean Lamy, el primer obispo francés de Nuevo México), Padre Juan estaba convencido que Padre Martínez no había recibido trato justo. Dedicó mucho esfuerzo a corregir esa injusticia. No tuvo éxito pero nunca se desanimó.

Yo conocí al Padre Juan por medio de su padre, Tobías, en 1973. Tobías había mudado a su familia, esposa y tres hijos, a Lincoln Heights durante la Segunda Guerra Mundial, donde consiguió trabajo como contador por la compañía avionética Lockheed Martin. El hijo mayor, Toby, hizo su carrera en la Fuerza Aerea, pero los otros dos hermanos, Gilberto y Juan, se ordenaron sacerdotes. Cuando la mamá de ellos murió a los 58 años, Tobías se jubiló, ingresó al seminario y fue ordenado sacerdote por los Claretianos.

El día que conocí a Tobías estaba en la línea de huelga en Arvin, California entre seminaristas décadas más jóvenes. Yo estaba allí por invitación del obispo auxiliar de Denver, quien con superiores de varias congregaciones de varones mostraban su apoyo a los campesinos.

Así vi que Tobías, también Padre Gilberto, a su moda, eran activistas. Tobías falleció hace muchos años y el hermano mayor está enfermo, pero Padre Gilberto va a asistir a la misa de jubileo, celebrada dentro de las paredes gruesas de adobe de la iglesia de Ranchos.

Y me parece raro, que al Arzobispo Lamy, el que excomulgo al pariente del Padre Juan, no le gustaban las iglesias de adobe.

BARRON

(From 10)

rather, God spoke subtly and indirectly, precisely through human agents who employed distinctive literary techniques and who were conditioned by the cultures in which they found themselves and by the audiences they addressed. Thus one of the most basic moves in Scriptural exegesis is the determination of the genre in which a given Biblical author was operating. Are we dealing with a song, a psalm, a history, a legend, a letter, a Gospel, a tall tale, an apocalypse? Therefore, to ask, “Do you take the Bible literally?” is about as helpful as asking, “Do you take the library literally?”

A further implication of Dei Verbum’s statement is that there is a distinction between, as William Placher put it, “what is in the Bible and what the Bible teaches.” There are lots of things that are indeed in the pages of the Scriptures but that are not essential to the overarching message of the Scriptures, things that were in the cultural milieu of the human authors but that are not ingredient in the revelation that God intends to offer. A good example of this would be the references to slavery that Maher cited. The institution of slavery was taken for granted in most ancient cultures and is therefore it is not surprising that Biblical authors would refer to it or even praise it, but attention to the great patterns and trajectories of the Bible as a whole reveals that the justification of slavery is not something that “the Bible teaches,” which is precisely why the fight against slavery in the western culture was led by people deeply shaped by the Scriptures.

There is much more, obviously, that can be said concerning these two complex areas of theology. Suffice it to say the kind of conversation that Bill Maher and Ralph Reed had is decidedly not the best way forward.

Father Robert Barron is the founder of the global ministry, Word on Fire, and the Rector/President of Mundelein Seminary. He is the creator of the award winning documentary series, "Catholicism" and "Catholicism:The New Evangelization." Learn more at www.WordOnFire.org
ops' conferences, the heads of Eastern Catholic churches and the heads of Vatican offices to discuss "pastoral challenges to the family in the context of evangelization."

Another family issue addressed in the morning session highlighted the bishops' efforts in support of traditional marriage.

San Francisco Archbishop Salvatore J. Cordileone, chairman of the USCCB's Subcommittee for the Promotion and Defense of Marriage, noted that the redefinition of marriage is occurring at the state level and the federal level.

The Catholic Church opposes same-sex marriage. Catholic teaching upholds the sanctity of traditional marriage as between one man and one woman. It also teaches that any sexual activity outside of marriage is a sin.

He urged the bishops to move forward in their support of marriage, recalling the words of Pope Francis: "Challenges exist to be overcome! Let us be realists, but without losing our joy, our boldness and our hope-filled commitment."

He encouraged them to continue to "move forward in confidence with prayer and solidarity with all people, knowing that strengthening marriage and family is vitally important and necessary for the good of all."

GORETTI

(From 8)

he threatened to kill Maria if she told anyone. So Maria was home alone on that hot afternoon of July 5 when Alessandro came home and tried to drag her into a bedroom intending to rape her.

Editor Bernard Bangley writing in "Butler's Lives of the Saints" describes that Maria struggled against him with all her strength. Her refusal and desperate crying infuriated and frustrated Alessandro to the point that he threatened her with a knife. When she continued to fight against him, he repeatedly stabbed her over and over again — about 14 times.

Author Sarah Gallick reports in “The Big Book of Women Saints” that Maria's younger brother came home a little while later and found Maria soaked in blood on the kitchen floor. She was taken to the hospital in a mule-drawn cart. She underwent surgery without anesthesia but the surgeon said there was no hope and she received the last rites.

During the 24 hours before she died, Maria repeatedly prayed that her attacker would repent, but Alessandro refused to believe this. She also disclosed to the priest that she had been in fear of Alessandro for some time, but did not want to say anything lest it cause trouble with her family.

Alessandro was arrested, but because he was not yet 21, he avoided the death penalty and was sentenced to 30 years of hard labor. Gallick writes that he remained unrepentant and showed no signs of remorse or regret for many years. But in November 1910, he wrote to the local bishop, Msgr. Giovanni Blandini and asked him to visit.

According to a Wikipedia account, Alessandro told the bishop that he had had a dream in which Maria appeared to him and gave him lilies which burned immediately in his hands. He then expressed remorse for what he had done.

Alessandro now became a model prisoner and was released from prison after 27 years. One of his first acts was to visit Maria’s mother and beg her forgiveness. Ann Ball writes in “Modern Saints” that Assunta told him she could hardly refuse when Maria had been so willing to extend this forgiveness. He even testified at hearings for Maria’s beatification which began in 1929. Jill Haak Adels writes in “The Wisdom of the Saints” that Alessandro’s prison experience and subsequent remorse for his crime has been cited as an argument for the abolition of capital punishment.

What happened next in this story has almost a fairy tale ending. Alessandro became a gardener at a Capuchin monastery and lived to see Maria beatified in 1947 and canonized in 1950 as a martyr for chastity. He died at the monastery in 1970.

When Pope Pius XII beatified Maria in 1947, it was because her death had been that of a martyr and no miracles were required. The Pope called Maria “the St. Agatha of the 20th century.” Soon afterwards, people reported a shower of favors received through her intercession and the two miracles necessary for sainthood were speedily certified. The interval between her beatification and canonization was one of the shortest of any cause recorded at the Vatican, Ball wrote.

Maria’s canonization was not based on a single moment’s struggle against sin, Ball explained, but upon her practice of heroic virtue through her entire short life. As the cause for her canonization went forward, the prevailing thought among her supporters was that Maria would choose to die rather than to sin.

Richard McBrien writes in “Lives of the Saints” that the canonization ceremony was held in St. Peter’s Square and some 250,000 people attended. Among them were Alessandro, her mother, Assunta, and members of her immediate family. According to Wikipedia, Assunta was the first mother to ever attend the canonization ceremony of her child.

Maria’s remains are in the church of Our Lady of Grace in Nettuno, Italy. She became the patron saint of the Children of Mary and of teenage girls. Her feast is on the General Roman Calendar on July 6.

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ROWENA. The anticipated final step that would complete the renovation of St. Joseph Catholic Church in Rowena, came in time for the Easter celebration. Artist Crystal Goodman, created a mural of the Holy Family. The painting is located on the north wall in the vestibule of the church. Its completion marks the end of the almost two-year project during which parishioners saw the church beautifully renewed. (Courtesy photo)

ANDREWS. Photos, at left, of the Confirmation Class at Our Lady of Lourdes and, at right, students after their First Holy Communion. (Courtesy photos)