The Angelus

The Inside Front

Former ESL instructor now voice of hope for WT immigrants

By Loretta Fulton
Special for The Angelus

ABILENE — Maricela Villalobos didn’t think anything about making the 80-mile trip from Comanche to Abilene early one morning to seek assistance from Nelly Diaz on an immigration issue.

She was first in line, waiting for Diaz to open the door at 9 a.m. It was worth getting up early to be in Abilene before the long lines began to form in front of Diaz’ office.

Villalobos, like hundreds of others, has learned that nobody is more professional, knowledgeable, or compassionate about immigration issues than Diaz. Villalobos, who has gladly made that trip from Comanche many times to seek help from Diaz, is gaining legal status for her husband, who is in Mexico.

“We’re going to do things right,” she said proudly.

Villalobos couldn’t have found a more competent and caring person than Diaz to help her.

“She’s awesome,” Villalobos said.

“She makes you feel real comfortable and explains things really well.”

Diaz is the supervisor of the Abilene and San Angelo Immigration Services Offices for the Diocese of San Angelo, a job she has held fulltime since 2013. She is in her San Angelo office, at St. Joseph Catholic Church, on Mondays and Tuesdays and in the Abilene office, at Holy Family Catholic Church Wednesdays through Fridays.

Diaz is planning to retire Dec. 31, 2018, after a long career of service to others. The road to her current job as immigration services supervisor for the diocese started when she was a volunteer with the English as

St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Construction

St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish is enlarging its church. Work began on July 5, 2016. The church, which currently holds 550, will eventually hold 1,100 and will be the largest church in the Diocese of San Angelo, according to Fr. Mark Woodruff, St. Elizabeth’s pastor. The $6.2 million dollar project will be completed in September. The photo above shows the new front wall of the enlarged church. (Courtesy photo)

Faith leaders take stand for fairness in evolving border, immigration issue

By Jimmy Patterson
Editor / West Texas Angelus

MIDLAND — Religious leaders in Midland joined together in March to affirm the incalculable value of human dignity, emphasizing how much positive difference immigrants have made — and continue to make in our country.

The interfaith vigil, at Our Lady of Guadalupe Church, featured six speakers presenting from various faith traditions — Catholic, Baptist, Unitarian, Hindu and Muslim.

One of those presenters, Harry Nutter, lay president-elect of the Unitarian Universalist congregation in Midland, drove home the urgency of striving for peace, fairness and right relations among all peoples.

“While we slept,” Nutter said, “dead bodies of those fleeing the horror in the Middle East washed up on the shores of the Mediterranean. While we ate, those fleeing religious and ethnic persecution in Asia and Africa embarked on perilous journeys into the unknown. While we dressed, some fled violence in Central America and found themselves abandoned in the Sonoran Desert. And while we celebrated holidays here, some of our neighbors lived in fear they would be torn from families they have loved for years while having participated in the economic life and social fabric of this country.”

San Angelo Bishop Michael J. Sis stressed the value of the immigrant both as a person and as an integral part of the history and current economic and societal makeup of our country.

“From the very beginning, the United States has been a nation of immigrants from around the world,” the bishop said. “They bring new energy, hope, creativity and innovation. More than 25 percent of all new business creation and related job growth has been by immigrants. And today, 40 percent of this country’s Fortune 500 companies were founded either by immigrants or by the children of immigrants. We must never turn our backs on welcoming newcomers into our culture.”

Bishop Sis added that the church teaches that governments have the right to impose reasonable limits on immigration,
Looking at life, love through ‘Easter Eyes’

By Most Rev. Michael J. Sis
Bishop of San Angelo

When I was a child, Easter Sunday was a day for receiving a basket full of candy from the Easter Bunny, dressing up extra special for Mass, and enjoying a good meal with my family. From my young perspective, the best part was the hollow chocolate rabbit. I especially enjoyed biting off the ears.

As the years went by, I came to learn that the real meaning of Easter is not about Peter Cottontail, chocolate bunnies, or marshmallow Peeps. The important point is that Jesus Christ has risen from the dead. He was abandoned by most of his followers, publicly humiliated, tortured, killed on the Cross, placed in the tomb, and from all appearances it seemed like everything was lost. Everyone thought that the Christian experience was finished. Lifeless tomb. Story over.

But God is a God of surprises. Jesus Christ was resurrected to new life on Easter morning.

Mary Magdalene was one of the very few followers of Jesus who had remained faithful to him until the bitter end. She never ran away, denied him, or betrayed him. She had the courage to remain faithful to Jesus during his Passion, even if it would cost her tremendous sacrifice. And she had the privilege of being the very first disciple to encounter the risen Lord Jesus Christ on Easter Sunday morning. So Mary Magdalene was the first witness of the Resurrection.

One of the most important forms of Christian art is the icons. Icons are typically flat boards that have been prayerfully painted with sacred images of Christ or the saints. It’s very curious that when Mary Magdalene is depicted in icons, she is traditionally shown holding an egg. Why an egg?

The egg comes from a pious tradition concerning Mary Magdalene. According to the story, in the days of the early Church, Mary Magdalene somehow managed to attend a banquet given by the Emperor Tiberius Caesar.

One of the things being served at the banquet was eggs. At a certain point, the emperor happened to come near Mary Magdalene while she was holding a plain white egg in her hand. When she met the emperor, she boldly proclaimed, ‘Christ is risen!’

The emperor laughed and said that since the rising from the dead was about as likely as the egg in her hand turning white while she held it. Before he finished speaking, the egg in her hand turned a bright red, and she continued to proclaim the Christian faith to everybody at the party.

Our custom of coloring Easter eggs finds its origin in that ancient story. As it turns out, the egg is actually an excellent symbol of the true meaning of Easter — much better than a bunny or plastic grass or chocolate.

Think about it. If you look at the outside of the egg, it looks pretty dead. It has a hard, lifeless shell, like a rock. From the outside you can’t tell, but there’s actually life in there. Eventually the little chick pecks its way through, and emerges full of life.

Thus, the hard shell of an egg symbolizes the tomb of Christ, and the cracking of the shell and emergence of new life symbolizes his Resurrection from the dead on Easter morning.

As we experience the Easter season this year, I propose that we learn to look at reality with “Easter Eyes.” What I call Easter Eyes is the ability to view any situation, no matter how seemingly problematic, through the perspective of the Resurrection, and see that there is life hidden in that situation. Here are some examples:

In the Diocese of San Angelo we have many prisons. From the outside, you can drive by a prison and see the walls, the fences, and the barbed wire, and it looks like a pretty dead, lifeless place. Of course, things are not easy in a prison. There is loneliness, abandonment, despair, and even abuse. However, my experience of ministering in prisons has shown me that, within the confines of those walls, there is also much life inside.

Those in prison are human beings with heart and soul and mind. God’s grace is at work there, through the dedicated service of the chaplains and volunteers who go to pray with them there. Conversion happens, God touches hearts, friendships are made, and lives are changed. Many put their time to good use through spiritual reading and Bible study. Some, I can say, “There’s life in there,” behind those lifeless walls. That’s looking through Easter Eyes.

Here is another example. Throughout our diocese there are nursing homes and assisted living centers. There are many faithful volunteers and clergy who go regularly to visit the residents there. This work of mercy calls for much love and patience, but I highly recommend giving (Please See BISHOP/20)

Mirando la Vida, el Amor a través Ojos de Pascua

Ospis Miguel Sígs

Cuando yo era un niño, el Domingo de Pascua era un día para recibir una canasta llena de dulces del Conejo de Pascua, vestirme muy especial para la Misa, y disfrutar de una buena comida con mi familia.

Desde mi punto de vista, la mejor parte fue el conejo de chocolate hueco. Me gustaba especialmente morder las orejas.

A medida que pasaron los años, llegué a saber que el verdadero significado de la Pascua no se trata de Peter Cottontail, conejos de chocolate, o de Peeps de esponja.

El significado de la Pascua es que Jesús resucitó de entre los muertos. Fue abandonado por la mayoría de sus seguidores, públicamente humillado, torturado, dado a muerte en la Cruz, colocado en la tumba, y por toda apariencia parecía que todo estaba perdido. Todo el mundo pensaba que la experiencia Cristiana se había terminado. Tumba sin vida. Fin de historia.

Pero Dios es un Dios de sorpresas. Él nos trajo de vuelta, le dio una nueva vida en la mañana de Pascua.

María Magdalena fue una de los muy pocos seguidores de Jesús quien habían permanecido fieles a él hasta el final. Ella nunca se escapó, ni lo negó, ni lo traiicionó.

Ella tuvo el valor de permanecer fiel a Jesús, incluso después de su Pasión, aunque le costara un tremendo sacrificio. Y ella tuvo el privilegio de ser el primer discípulo de encontrar con el Señor Jesucristo resucitado en la mañana de Pascua. Así que María Magdalena fue el primer testigo de la Resurrección.

Una de las formas más importantes de arte Cristiano es el icono. Los iconos son típicamente tablas planas cubiertas con imágenes sagradas de Cristo o los santos. Es muy curioso que, cuando María Magdalena se representa en iconos, tradicionalmente se muestra sosteniendo un huevo en su mano. ¿Por qué un huevo?

El huevo en esta imagen proviene de una referencia bíblica con relación a María Magdalena. Según la historia, en el tiempo de la Iglesia primitiva, María Magdalena, de alguna manera u otra, pudo asistir a un banquete ofrecido por el Emperador Tiberio César. Una de las cosas que se sirvió en el banquete fueron huevos. En un momento determinado, el emperador se acercó a María Magdalena y le dio un huevo con la condición de que ella sostenía un huevo blanco normal en su mano. Cuando se encontró con el emperador, ella audazmente proclamó: “¡Cómo ha resucitado!”

El emperador se rió y dijo que el que Cristo se resucitara de entre los muertos era tan probable como que el huevo (Mira OBISPO/20)
Fr. Kennelly, former diocesan priest, dies in Ireland

Rev. Stephen Kennelly, 75, died on March 10, 2017, after a brief hospitalization in County Kerry, Ireland.

A native of Ireland, he was born in Ballylongford, County Kerry, on January 9, 1942. He was the third of five children born to Stephen and Bridget Kennelly. He attended the Ballylongford Boys National School and then high school at St. Joseph College in County Kilkenny, Ireland, after which he attended University College in Dublin. He entered the seminary at St. Patrick’s College, Carlow, Ireland and was ordained on June 7, 1969 in the Diocese of Kildare and Leighlin, Ireland. Shortly after his ordination, Father Kennelly entered the Diocese of San Angelo on September 13, 1969. During his years of priestly ministry with the Diocese of San Angelo, he served the communities of St. Joseph, Rowena; St. Boniface, Olfen; Sacred Heart, Abilene; St. Joseph, Odessa; Our Lady of San Juan (now San Miguel Arcángel), Midland; Sacred Heart, McCamey; and Good Shepherd, Crane. After receiving permission to join the missionaries of the Society of St. James the Apostle, he also served the people of Peru and Ecuador for many years.

After his medical retirement in February 2002, he returned to his homeland in Ireland where he lived with his sister and brother-in-law, Mae and Pat Dowling. His funeral Mass and interment took place in Ballylongford, Ireland.

Bishop Pfeifer: Santa Muerte is sinister, infernal

By Bishop Michael Pfeifer, OMI

The cult Santa Muerte several years ago was called by Cardinal Ravasi, President of the Pontifical Council on Culture, as being sinister and infernal. This diabolical cult of the Santa Muerte has been burgeoning on both sides of the U.S.-Mexico border. The Santa Muerte cult is in no way saintly, holy and is rather, as the cardinal has said, a celebration of devas-tation and of hell; it is a terrible blasphemy against god and it is a false religiosity promoted by organized crime and drug traffickers. These groups celebrate death, it is no way the true religion which celebrates life and justice and the dignity and sacredness of each person. La Santa Muerte has been called the “la religiosidad de narcos” – drug traffickers who falsify religion.

The Santa Muerte is a skeletal figure of a cloaked woman with a scythe, a blade in her hand and promotes a diabolical devotion that leads people away from true worship of Christ and loving devotion to his mother. Our Lady of Guadalupe and respect for the saints. This cult is worshipped especially by drug dealers in Mexico and by the terrified people who live in drug-torn neighborhoods and sadly this satanic devotion is growing stronger in Texas, especially along the border, and in other states. The devotion to the Santa Muerte, a female figure dressed like a nun, goes directly against the true teaching of our Catholic Church and intends to put one in connection with the enemy of Christ, Satan. From a Christian perspective, we have every assurance based on the word of God that Christ has already defeated sin and his last enemy – death – death through his death and resurrection. And Jesus has given us the holy spirit to guide us on the right path as we live each day with Christ preparing us for a holy death that will open the gates of heaven for us.

The Santa Muerte engages in satanism and many of its followers, Santa Muertistas, have committed heinous crimes in the name of the skeletal folk so called saint. Human sacrifice, narco-assassinations and other lurid crimes have been committed in Mexico and in some cases in the U.S. by devotees who believe that saint death sanctions and blesses these nefarious deeds. Santa Muerte is not a saint and brings spiritual harm to her devotees; this satanic devotion appeals to the devil for other worldly help, to gain money and material benefits, to commit crimes, to bring vengeance, for protection for drug dealers from officers of the law. Sadly, Santa Muerte is one of the fastest growing religious movements in the USA, and as I have done for many years, I encourage all the faithful to not become involved in this false and diabolical devotion. Please encourage store owners, who often do not know the diabolical meaning of Santa Muerte, not to promote the sale of these images, especially of candles of the Santa Muerte, that are placed among true candle figures of Christ, Mary and the saints. Report these cases of stores who sell these diabolical figurines to your local priests.

Cardinal Ravasi points out that the Santa Muerte is not a religion just because it is dressed up like religion. The cardinal stresses the importance to impress on young people that criminal groups have no religion and that their activities run counter to the true teaching of our religious, human, social and cultural values.

To counteract this satanic cult it is important to be faithful to Christ, our good shepherd, who has conquered sin, death and Satan himself and to live by the guidance of the Holy Spirit and call on the protection of Our Lady of Guadalupe and remember that the true saints and saints in our catholic faith are women and men, who down through the ages have witnessed by holy lives to the Risen Savior, have resisted temptation and have been faithful followers of Jesus even to the point of shedding their lives in martyrdom. These are the true saints and saints that we want to imitate and follow.

San Angeloan elected Mission Board vice chair

The Angelus

Clementina Urista, lifelong parishioner of the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart has been elected vice-chair of the Texas Mission Council. She will lead the TMC in concert with Chair, Ken Eppes of Dallas, in staging and staging the organization’s annual conference.

Urista has been involved in parish and community activities for most of her life and is currently an Extraordinary Eucharistic Minister and assists with Confirmation classes at the cathedral. She serves on the San Angelo Catholic Diocese Hermanamiento leadership team and on the boards of several community organizations in San Angelo.

Urista is program manager for Foster Grandparent and Senior Companion Programs of the Concho Valley.

The Texas Mission Council is a collaborative organization dedicated to the promotion and support of mission activities in the state of Texas. The TMC exists to create awareness and support through the collaborative efforts of diocesan mission directors and representatives of mission organizations serving in Texas, as well as mission-minded individuals and groups. The TMC holds and annual conference in San Antonio each February Texas is the only state that has a statewide Catholic mission council.

Victims Assistance Information

If you or someone you know has been sexually abused by anyone who serves the Church, and you need a place to talk with someone about your feelings of betrayal or hurt by the Church due to abuse, exploitation, or harassment, we are here to help you. To report sexual misconduct call Lori Hines, Victim Assistance Coordinator, 325-374-7609, or write Diocese of San Angelo Victim Assistance Ministry, PO Box 1829, San Angelo, TX 76902. If the sexual abuse occurred outside this diocese, the Victim Assistance Coordinator will assist in bringing the concern to the appropriate authorities.

San Angeloan elected Mission Board vice chair

The Angelus

Clementina Urista, lifelong parishioner of the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart has been elected vice-chair of the Texas Mission Council. She will lead the TMC in concert with Chair, Ken Eppes of Dallas, in staging and staging the organization’s annual conference.

Urista has been involved in parish and community activities for most of her life and is currently an Extraordinary Eucharistic Minister and assists with Confirmation classes at the cathedral. She serves on the San Angelo Catholic Diocese Hermanamiento leadership team and on the boards of several community organizations in San Angelo.

Urista is program manager for Foster Grandparent and Senior Companion Programs of the Concho Valley.

The Texas Mission Council is a collaborative organization dedicated to the promotion and support of mission activities in the state of Texas. The TMC exists to create awareness and support through the collaborative efforts of diocesan mission directors and representatives of mission organizations serving in Texas, as well as mission-minded individuals and groups. The TMC holds and annual conference in San Antonio each February Texas is the only state that has a statewide Catholic mission council.

Victims Assistance Information

If you or someone you know has been sexually abused by anyone who serves the Church, and you need a place to talk with someone about your feelings of betrayal or hurt by the Church due to abuse, exploitation, or harassment, we are here to help you. To report sexual misconduct call Lori Hines, Victim Assistance Coordinator, 325-374-7609, or write Diocese of San Angelo Victim Assistance Ministry, PO Box 1829, San Angelo, TX 76902. If the sexual abuse occurred outside this diocese, the Victim Assistance Coordinator will assist in bringing the concern to the appropriate authorities.
Rite of Election

Bishop Michael J. Sis, above, celebrating the Rite of Election at San Miguel Catholic Church in Midland, as the elect at San Miguel Church, below left, stand. Below right, Bishop Sis addresses the elect at Sacred Heart Cathedral in San Angelo. (Photo above and below left by Karen J. Patterson. Photo below right by Becca Sankey).
Miles Dedication

Top photo, Bishop Michael J. Sis prays with parishioners at the dedication of the St. Thomas Parish Hall in Miles. Above, Lucille Schwertner, at left, who, along with her family donated the statue of St. Thomas the Apostle, with Fr. Ariel Lagunilla and Bishop Sis.

Above right, members of the St. Thomas parish council, finance committee and Parish Hall committee, including, left to right, John Werner, Cecil Kalina, Steve Schwertner, Dennis Lange, John Lange, Rita Pitts, Steve Glass, Patricia Hohensee and Juan Ornelas.

At right, parishioners and visitors fellowship at the new St. Thomas Parish Hall. The Mass and dedication was celebrated February 25, 2017.
The Angelus

AMMAN, Jordan — After meeting with church leaders in northern Iraq, a U.S. bishop said he will advocate differently for Iraqi religious minorities.

Bishop Oscar Cantu of Las Cruces, New Mexico, told Catholic News Service by phone that the Iraqi Catholic clergy do not want to see a safe corridor set up for Christians, as some in Washington have suggested.

Although security is paramount, they prefer to see reconciliation take place, enabling Iraq’s diverse mosaic of religions and ethnicities to live side by side. But that means trust would need to be rebuilt, and that could prove tricky given the regional and local players involved in Iraq’s multifaceted sectarian conflict.

“We don’t want to live in a ghetto. That is counterproductive. That makes us a target for our enemies. We have to live in a secure but integrated community where Chaldeans, Syriac Catholics, Sunni Muslims, etc., have relationships with each other,” Bishop Cantu told CNS, recounting the remarks made by Syriac Catholic Archbishop Yohanna Moshe of Mosul, Iraq.

He said the archbishop told him: “We need an integrated reality, rather than a ‘Gaza’ where there’s a wall and someone is guarding people going in and out.”

Bishop Cantu chairs the U.S. bishops’ Committee on International Justice and Peace. In that capacity, he led a small delegation Jan. 11-13 to see and hear Christian perspectives in the aftermath of the Islamic State assault in 2014 and the current U.S.-led coalition’s battle to flush out the militants.

“Catholic clergy ‘really want to establish some normalcy in the midst of displacement,’” Bishop Cantu said. He said he was amazed by the speed which Chaldean Catholic Archbishop Bashar Warda of Irbil has started a Catholic university to provide education and direction to the young people, who thousands of Christians have lost personal dignity by being displaced Christians from camps into homes with a rent assistance program.

Meanwhile, Archbishop Moshe has built a church, an elementary school and a new Catholic University of Qaraqosh, serving both Christians and Muslims, on land provided by the Kurdish authorities. All of these facilities were lost when Islamic State militants invaded Mosul and the surrounding villages in June and August 2014.

Still, “there is a reality of the wounds created by the neighbors who turned on neighbors,” said Bishop Cantu. He was told that after Christians went back to check on their properties following the liberation from Islamic State, in some instances, “neighbors went in, looted and later burned their homes.”

The terrifying escape from Mosul for a number of Dominican Sisters has left a profound “sadness in their eyes and voices that question what’s the best for these Christians,” Bishop Cantu said, “whether it is to stay in the midst of anguish and terror or seek safety and security elsewhere in the world.” The displaced Dominicans have been helped other displaced Christians with shelter, provisions and most recently, by setting up and running a school.

“I was so taken by their commitment to stay as long as there are Christians in Iraq,” Bishop Cantu said.

Both Bishop Cantu and Stephen Colecchi, director of the U.S. bishops’ Office of International Justice and Peace, made a similar visit to northern Iraq two years ago. This time they were also joined by Bill O’Keefe, vice president for government relations and advocacy at Catholic Relief Services.

O’Keefe told CNS that, after speaking with internally displaced Christians in Iraq, he realizes the immense challenges they face.

“The physical damage to their traditional Christian villages is severe, and security and trust aren’t present to make them comfortable in going back,” O’Keefe said.

“They need to have their security and their full human rights respected to be able to return.”

He said it’s not clear how that will be accomplished. However, O’Keefe said it was “the responsibility of the central Iraqi state, the Kurdish government (in the north), and other players involved to come up with a vision where minority rights are respected and adequate security is provided.”

O’Keefe felt there was “a bit of a lost hope as the Christians have to grapple with the vulnerability they find themselves in.”

Although he said CRS is looking very seriously at rebuilding in the next phase, the message the delegation got from Iraqi Christians is that “rebuilding needs to follow security.”

“They weren’t ready yet to talk about specific plans for rebuilding. Rather they need to know how safety and security will be provided, which would allow them to stay,” O’Keefe said.

“Whatever the problem which needs to be solved and it’s inherently a political one.”

To that end, Colecchi said the U.S. bishops’ Office of International Justice and Peace in Washington will advocate for the U.S. government to do a “much better job of working with all the political entities in the region to come up with a political solution to create an inclusive Iraq.”

“Rights are based on citizenship, the rule of law, equal protection, and where towns and villages have good degree of self-rule so they can shape their own destiny and have a real voice in decisions and more immediately impact their community,” he said. “That’s how you create protection.”

Both Archbishops Moshe and Warda seek Washington’s help to build local institutions, train police forces, and the judiciary, Colecchi said. But the primary need is to create the rule of law and citizen rights.

Archbishop Warda welcomed last year’s resolution by the U.S. Congress declaring that Islamic State has committed genocide against minorities in Iraq and Syria, Colecchi said. He said the archbishop felt the resolution would focus the world’s attention on the horror as well as force Iraqis to acknowledge that genocide has taken place and to make sure it will not happen again.

WASHINGTON (CNS) -- As Christians in the Middle East recently looked back on 2016, they wondered if there would be much to celebrate amid mounting challenges, particularly for those displaced by conflicts in Iraq and Syria.

"As much as we are pleased that our homeland is free of the Islamic State, we are concerned about what lies ahead," Father Emanuel Youkhana told Catholic News Service by phone. He referred to Iraq’s Christian towns of Qaraqosh, Batnayeh and Bartella, recently regained by the Iraqi military from Islamic State.

"The trail of death and destruction left by Islamic State was being fully revealed by Islamic State militants throughout the Nineveh Plain was hindered by me from returning to their family properties. Infrastructure, including drinking water and electricity, has been badly damaged, and what can we then say about the paramount need for security," Fr. Youkhana said.

He urged the international community to help Christians and other religious minorities to return home after their forced displacement by the Islamic State.

The militants invaded the Nineveh Plain three summers ago, imposing an extremist, violent form of Sunni Islam and forcing thousands of Iraqi Christians to flee for their lives. Many escaped with just the clothes on their backs, losing their homes, property and their livelihoods.

A number of displaced Christians venturing back to Qaraqosh to assess the damage told CNS that they could not live there again unless they get compensation and guarantees of protection from the international community. Houses have been burned, either to create a smoke-screen against coalition aircraft bombing Islamic State in support of Iraqi forces, or apparently out of spite, while beloved churches have been violently ransacked.

Father Youkhana and others have expressed concerns that Iraq’s Christians may once again be caught in the country’s sectarian violence, this time by Shiite Muslims. If this happens, it will impede the Christians’ ability to return home.

Iraq’s majority Shiite population comprises the bulk of the country’s reconstituted national army, and as it liberates areas from extremist Sunni militants, Iraqi Christians have seen worrying developments.

Shiite slogans scrawled on places and property that have always been "100 percent Christian," Father Youkhana noted.

The Nineveh Plain, a region rich in oil and the breadbasket of Iraq, has drawn interest from regional and local powers seeking to exert influence there. Christians are challenged by the widespread devastation Islamic State militants have wrought to the area that has been their ancestral homeland for the past 14 centuries.

The trail of death and destruction left by Islamic State was being fully revealed by Islamic State militants throughout the Nineveh Plain was hindered by me from returning to their family properties. Infrastructure, including drinking water and electricity, has been badly damaged, and what can we then say about the paramount need for security," Fr. Youkhana said.

He urged the international community to help Christians and other religious minorities to return home after their forced displacement by the Islamic State.

The militants invaded the Nineveh Plain three summers ago, imposing an extremist, violent form of Sunni Islam and forcing thousands of Iraqi Christians to flee for their lives. Many escaped with just the clothes on their backs, losing their homes, property and their livelihoods.

A number of displaced Christians venturing back to Qaraqosh to assess the damage told CNS that they could not live there again unless they get compensation and guarantees of protection from the international community. Houses have been burned, either to create a smoke-screen against coalition aircraft bombing Islamic State in support of Iraqi forces, or apparently out of spite, while beloved churches have been violently ransacked.
U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops

When does the Triduum begin and end?
The Easter Triduum begins with the evening Mass of the Lord’s Supper on Holy Thursday, reaches its high point in the Easter Vigil, and closes with Evening Prayer on Easter Sunday.

May another Mass besides the Mass of the Lord’s Supper be celebrated on Holy Thursday?
Ordinarily, no other Mass may be celebrated on Holy Thursday. However, by way of exception, the local Ordinary may permit another Mass in churches or oratories to be celebrated in the evening, and, in the case of genuine necessity, even in the morning. Such Masses are provided for those who in no way are able to participate in the evening Mass.

How are the Holy Oils, consecrated and blessed at the Chrism Mass, to be received in the parish?
A reception of the oils may take place before the Mass of the Lord’s Supper. The oils, in suitable vessels, can be carried in procession by members of the assembly. A text for this can be found here.

Is the Mandatum, the washing of feet at the Mass of the Lord’s Supper, required?
No. The Roman Missal only indicates, “After the Homily, where a pastoral reason suggests it [ubi ratio pastoralis id suadeat], the Washing of Feet follows.”

When should the Good Friday Celebration of the Lord’s Passion take place?
Normally it should take place in the afternoon, at about 3 p.m., to enable people to assemble more easily. However, pastoral discretion may indicate a time shortly after midday, or in the late evening, though never later than 9 p.m. Depending on the size or nature of a parish or other community, the local Ordinary may permit the service to be repeated.

May a deacon officiate at the Celebration of the Lord’s Passion?
Although the Celebration of the Lord’s Passion appears to be a service of the Word with the distribution of Holy Communion, the Roman Missal does not permit a deacon to officiate at the celebration. Historically, even though the Eucharist is not celebrated on this day, the liturgy of Good Friday bears resemblance to a Mass. At one time it was called the “Mass of the Presanctified” (referring to the pre-consecrated hosts used at Communion, even when only the priest received Communion). This is also reflected in the prescribed vesture for the priest: stole and chasuble. The liturgy of Good Friday, as an integral part of the Triduum, is linked to the Holy Thursday Mass of the Lord’s Supper and the Easter Vigil on Holy Saturday. While there may be cases where a parish with multiple churches or chapels (e.g., mission churches or a cluster of parishes under one pastor) might rotate the liturgies among the various locations, it would not be appropriate for a community to celebrate only part of the Triduum.

May any of the readings at the Celebration of the Lord’s Passion be omitted?
The Lectionary for Mass does not indicate that any readings may be omitted at the Celebration of the Lord’s Passion. All three readings (Isaiah, Hebrews, and the Passion according to John) are required. It should be noted, however, for Palm Sunday of the Lord’s Passion, the Lectionary indicates that while all three readings provided should be used, there may be circumstances in which one or more of the readings at Mass could be omitted: “Given, however, the importance of the account of the Lord’s Passion, the priest, having in mind the character of each individual congregation, is authorized to choose only one of the two readings prescribed before the Gospel, or if necessary, he may read only the account of the Passion, even in the shorter form. This permission applies, however, only to Masses celebrated with a congregation.” Thus, the account of the Passion is never omitted.

Does the Church encourage any other liturgical celebrations on Good Friday?
On this day the Office of Readings and Morning Prayer could appropriately be celebrated with the participation of the people in the churches. Note that Evening Prayer is only prayed by those who do not participate in the Celebration of the Lord’s Passion.

Do devotions have a particular importance on Good Friday?
The Directory on Popular Piety and the Liturgy (2002) provides the proper perspective in paragraphs 142-145. Clearly the central celebration of this day is the Good Friday Celebration of the Lord’s Passion. In no way should manifestations of popular piety, either by the time or manner in which they are convoked, substitute for this solemn liturgical action. Nor should aspects of the various acts of piety be mixed with the Good Friday celebration, creating a hybrid. In recent times, Passion processions, celebrations of the Stations of the Cross, and Passion Plays have become more common. In such representations, actors and spectators can be involved in a moment of faith and genuine piety. Care should be taken, however,
to point out to the faithful that a Passion Play is a representation which is commemorative and they are very different from “liturgical actions” which are anamnesis, or the mysterious presence of the redemptive event of the Passion.

How does the Adoration of the Holy Cross on Good Friday begin?
The Adoration of the Holy Cross begins with one of two forms of the Showing of the Holy Cross. The First Form begins as the deacon or another suitable minister goes to the sacristy and obtains the veiled Cross. Accompanied by two ministers with lighted candles, the veiled Cross is brought to the center of the sanctuary in procession. The priest accepts the Cross and then, standing in front of the altar and facing the people, uncovers the upper part of the Cross, the right arm, and then the entire Cross. Each time he unveils a part of the Cross, he sings the acclamation, Behold the wood of the Cross. In the Second Form of the Showing of the Holy Cross, the priest or deacon goes to the church door, where he takes up the uncovered Cross. Accompanied by two ministers with lighted candles, he processes to the sanctuary, stopping at the door of the church, in the middle of the church, before entering the sanctuary, to sing the acclamation, Behold the wood of the Cross.

How is the cross venerated by members of the congregation on Good Friday?
After the showing of the Cross, the priest or deacon may carry the Cross to the entrance of the sanctuary or another suitable place. The first person to adore the Cross is the priest celebrant. If circumstances suggest, he takes off his chasuble and his shoes. The clergy, lay ministers and the faithful then approach the Cross. The personal adoration of the Cross is an important feature in this celebration and every effort should be made to achieve it. The rubrics remind us that “only one Cross” should be used for adoration. If the numbers are so great that all cannot come forward, the priest, after some of the clergy and faithful have adored the Cross, can take it and stand in the center before the altar. In a few words he invites the people to adore the Cross. He then elevates the Cross higher for a brief period of time while the faithful adore it in silence. It should also be kept in mind that when a sufficiently large Cross is used even a large community can reverence it in due time. The foot of the Cross as well as the right and left arm can be approached and venerated. Coordination with ushers and planning the flow of people beforehand can allow for this part of the liturgy to be celebrated with decorum and devotion.

When should the Easter Vigil take place?
The Vigil, by its very nature, must take place at night. It is not begun before daylight and should end before daybreak on Easter Sunday. The celebration of the Easter Vigil takes the place of the Office of Readings of Easter Sunday. The Easter Vigil begins and ends in darkness. It is a nocturnal vigil, retaining its ancient character of vigilance and expectation, as the Christian people await the Resurrection of the Lord during the night. Fire is blessed and the paschal candle is lighted to illumine the night so that all may hear the Easter proclamation and listen to the word of God proclaimed in the Scriptures. For this reason the Solemn Beginning of the Vigil (Lucernarium) takes place before the Liturgy of the Word. Since sunset varies at different locations throughout the country, local weather stations can be consulted as to the time of sunset in the area, keeping in mind that twilight concludes (i.e., nightfall occurs) somewhat later.

©2017, Diocese of Fort Worth

QUESTIONS: How would you summarize the meaning and significance for your own life of Jesus’ life, death and resurrection? How will you respond?

©2017, Diocese of Fort Worth
Abortion irreversible, but adoption the loving choice

By Sharla Ynostrosa

From what I read, State Representative Jessica Farrar is tired of women having to undergo a sonogram and hear their baby’s heartbeat before an abortion. She wrote this bill to try and make a point. Let’s have an honest dialogue about abortion and a woman’s right to choose. I think a woman should be told all aspects of any procedure she is having done and that definitely includes an abortion. It is time to be honest and realize that once a woman becomes pregnant, there are now two lives to consider. If the woman is dealing with an unplanned or crisis pregnancy then we need to reach out and help her find all the resources that are available.

There are many options depending on the woman’s age and circumstances. If she is young, there are maternity homes available that provide shelter for her and her baby. These homes allow the mother to finish school, work, and teach the young mother the proper life skills needed to be a good parent. There are also homes where the young woman can live until her baby is born if she is choosing adoption for her child. The mother is able to choose to have an open adoption or a closed adoption. The mother can also be involved in choosing her baby’s parents.

If a woman chooses abortion there is no going back. The abortion takes the life of her baby, and no matter what some people may say, she is going to carry that burden in her heart. Stop making it sound like abortion is no big deal and stop saying that the unborn baby is a blob of tissue. Be honest and tell the truth. You are not helping them by lying. Having an abortion means death for the baby.

If the young lady or woman is in her first trimester, give her the information about what is happening during this stage of development. Do the same thing with the second trimester and the third trimester. Yes, abortions are performed in the third trimester also. Late term abortions are available in some states.

Let them hear their baby’s heartbeat and show them the sonogram. Then if the young lady or woman still chooses to go through with the abortion at least she has been given all the facts. It is not about making them feel bad, it is about letting them know the truth. I do think that when given all the information about their baby’s development more than once, the young woman will choose life for her unborn baby. And that is good! Babies are a gift, they are not a choice. How did we get to this point? When did someone’s choice become more important than someone else’s life?

I keep on hearing about women’s rights. Are you talking about all women’s rights or just the women who are pro-choice? Is there an age restriction on those rights? What about the rights of the babies? Those who are aborted because their parents wanted a daughter instead of a son, or vice versa, you know, sex selection abortions. I am so tired of the hypocrisy. These poor babies, don’t you see, they are the innocent victims in all of this, in your childish games of satire and in the abortion industry where money is made from their deaths. Isn’t it ironic, how I hear you say that women can be anything they want to be, do anything they want to do until it comes to a crisis pregnancy. Then women are training young women from rural areas as primary school teachers. Other women joined her and a new Congregation of the Daughters of Charity began to take shape. Magdalene wrote a first Rule for the Congregation which became known as the Canossian Sisters of Charity. Pope Pius VII gave the Congregation provisional approval in 1816. Over the next 20 years, the houses spread to most major cities in northern Italy. Magdalene wanted the spirit of the Daughters of Charity to be detached from everything and from everybody and to be available to serve the Lord in every country. Magdalene focused on providing every young boy and girl an education. Burns writes that her practical work was sustained by an intense personal spirituality with mystical experiences that she tried to describe in her Memoirs. She wrote “I felt at a certain point as if I were enraputred in God. I saw God within me like a luminous sun. This absorption in the Divine Presence made me unable to stay on my feet. I had to lean against something. The strength of heavenly joy was almost suffocating.” (www.canossiansisters.org/who.html)

She had a special devotion to Our Lady of Sorrows, seeing Mary as becoming “mother of charity” as she stood at the foot of the cross. Burns noted that her inspiration was the gospel, especially Christ crucified. She always saw the crucified Christ in the poor, the sick and the suffering.

Magdalene extended her work to a men’s Congregation, the Institute of the Sons of the Congregation, and opened schools for boys in 1831.

Pope Leo XII gave the Congregation formal approval in 1828. Magdalene died in Verona on April 10, 1835. She was canonized by Pope John Paul II in 1998.

Today, the Canossian Daughters of Charity are present in six continents and 36 countries where they spread the apostolic options of education, evangelization and pastoral activity, assistance to the sick and suffering, formation of the laity and spiritual exercises. They are also praying to St. Magdalene for the many young women who are caught up in the sex trafficking epidemic of our day (www.franciscanmedia.org/saint-magdalene-of-canossa).
Easter allows us to bid our pasts farewell

By Fr. Knick and Sandie Knickerbocker

Easter is a time when God gives us the grace to kiss the past good-bye. It is a time to open the curtains and let in the sunshine of a new life in Christ. It is a time of accepting our forgiveness from the Father for Jesus sake, which means we are now able not only to forgive others but also to forgive ourselves.

Each Easter we remember again the man whom Hugh T. Kerr and John M. Mulder in their book, *Conversions*, call "the foremost Christian apologist of the 20th century" and the man who "has in our time instructed more people in the reasonableness of Christian faith than all the theological faculties in the world" (p.199). The man is C.S. Lewis (1898-1963) known as "Jack" to his friends. He has helped us understand that Easter is a time when God gives us the grace to kiss the past good-bye and welcome our new life in Christ.

But, how does Lewis do this? How did he become a Christian apologist who instructs so many people in the reasonableness of Christianity? To learn this we can turn to Lewis himself, who tells us the story of his own conversion in his autobiographies, *Surprised by Joy* and *The Pilgrim's Regress* and makes reference to it from time-to-time in his letters. And we can see how his own conversion gave him the grace to kiss the past good-bye, let Easter possess him, and show him the way to present Christ so effectively to others.

Lewis was raised in the Church of Ireland, part of the Anglican Communion of Churches, and confirmed at the age of 15. He later said that, although he allowed himself to be confirmed to please his father, for him it was a lie because by that time he was a convinced atheist.

After serving in the British infantry in World War I and being wounded in the Battle of Arras, he resumed studies at Oxford University where he had matriculated shortly before entrance in the army. He subsequently took three first class degrees, studying Classics, Philosophy, and English Literature, and was elected a fellow in English at Magdalen College Oxford.

However, the Holy Spirit was pursuing him and would speak to him in a way he could understand, a way for which he was prepared by his study of ancient, medieval, and renaissance literature. He was especially attracted to pagan myth with its stories of the interaction of gods with people, particularly its stories of dying and rising gods.

At Oxford, Lewis had friends who were Christian and who shared his love of ancient myth. On the evening of September 19, 1931, two of these friends, J.R.R. Tolkien and H.V.D. Dyson, had dinner with Lewis at Magdalen College Oxford. After dinner, the three friends talked about myth, paganism, and Christianity, a conversation that went into the early hours of the morning. Lewis wrote about this conversation to another friend, Arthur Greeves. Lewis acknowledged that he had always been mysteriously moved by the pagan myths about dying and rising gods and the idea about a god sacrificing himself to himself. What Tolkien and Dyson showed him that night was that "the story of Christ is simply a true myth: a myth working on us in the same way as the others, but with this tremendous difference that it really happened." Lewis was able to see that pagan myth was God's prevenient grace working through poets and story-tellers in order to prepare us for the revelation of Christ, whose story has all the characteristics of a myth but which really happened. As Lewis wrote in Surprised by Joy, "Here and here only in all time the myth (Please See KNICKERBOCKERS/22)
### A Message from Bishop Michael J. Sis

**Pastoral Programs**

- Seminarians and Vocations
- Parish Assessments
- Retired Priests and Religious Brothers
- Family Life
- Marriage
- Eucharistic Life
- Diocesan Office
- Diocesan Website
- Spiritual Ministries
- Catechesis
- Hispanic Ministry
- Liturgy
- Church Communications

**Seminarians and Vocations**

- Seminarians
- Vocations
- Vocations Office

**Finance Office**

- Financial Statements
- Financial Records

**Insurance**

- Insurance Policies
- Benefits

**Other Income and Fees**

- Retreat Center Fees
- Other Income

**Social Services**

- Social Services
- Office of the Bishop

**Human Resources**

- Human Resources
- Personal Data

**Social Services**

- Social Services
- Social Services

**Other Income and Fees**

- Other Income
- Other Income

**Annual Report, Year in Review**

**Clergy, Religious & Seminarians in Service to the Diocese**

- 87 Diocesan Priests
- 45 Parishes
- 21 Missions

---

**DIOCESAN FINANCE COUNCIL**

The Diocesan Finance Council is a consultative body for the diocesan bishop and, as with parish finance councils, is required by the Code of Canon Law, the universal law of the Catholic Church. The specific responsibilities of the diocesan finance council, as outlined by canon law, include reviewing the annual budget, annual financial statements and the independent auditor’s report, and providing consultation in specific financial areas. The members of the Diocesan Finance Council appointed by the bishop for five-year terms are:

- David Elyer
- Josey Light
- Rev. Patrick Apolonski
- Steve McKay, CFO
- Gary Baker
- Very Rev. Santiago Udayar
- Dewey Bryant
- Mike Wyse
- Angela Crowahed

---

**Pastoral Programs**

- Seminarians and Vocations
- Parish Assessments
- Retired Priests and Religious Brothers
- Family Life
- Marriage
- Eucharistic Life
- Diocesan Office
- Diocesan Website
- Spiritual Ministries
- Catechesis
- Hispanic Ministry
- Liturgy
- Church Communications

---

**Diocesan Finance Council**

The Diocesan Finance Council is a consultative body for the diocesan bishop and, as with parish finance councils, is required by the Code of Canon Law, the universal law of the Catholic Church. The specific responsibilities of the diocesan finance council, as outlined by canon law, include reviewing the annual budget, annual financial statements and the independent auditor’s report, and providing consultation in specific financial areas. The members of the Diocesan Finance Council appointed by the bishop for five-year terms are:

- David Elyer
- Josey Light
- Rev. Patrick Apolonski
- Steve McKay, CFO
- Gary Baker
- Very Rev. Santiago Udayar
- Dewey Bryant
- Mike Wyse
- Angela Crowahed

---

**Pastoral Programs**

- Seminarians and Vocations
- Parish Assessments
- Retired Priests and Religious Brothers
- Family Life
- Marriage
- Eucharistic Life
- Diocesan Office
- Diocesan Website
- Spiritual Ministries
- Catechesis
- Hispanic Ministry
- Liturgy
- Church Communications

---
Making Sense of Bioethics

I am not intrinsically disordered

By Fr. Ted Pacholczyk

I have met several priests over the years who ended up leaving the active ministry of the priesthood. Two of them have been on my mind and in my prayers recently, having left the priesthood and the Church over issues connected to homosexuality. I ran into one of them some time ago as we were boarding the same flight. Filling me in on the decisions he had made, he shared: “I was never happy with the Catholic Church’s view that homosexuality is inherently...” and then he paused, “...what’s the phrase they use?” I replied: “Homosexual acts are intrinsically disordered.” “Ah, yes, intrinsically disordered,” he replied. “It’s a harsh institution that would call me intrinsically disordered, and I couldn’t remain in a Church that held those views.” The second priest who left had similarly decried how the Church, on account of his homosexuality, saw him as intrinsically disordered—which he took to mean that he was an evil person.

I was saddened at the way both of these former priests misconstrued the teachings of the Church, and disappointed that they couldn’t see how we are not defined by our inclinations and proclivities, even if some of them may be disordered and in need of purification. As fallen creatures, every person faces disordered desires within, and no person is perfect except, we Christians believe, Jesus himself.

Once when I was speaking with a person who was paralyzed, he shared how members of the disability community had given him some good advice after his accident: “Don’t say you are a disabled person, because that lets the disability define you. Say instead that you are a person with a disability.” With a similar emphasis, people shouldn’t pigeonhole themselves by saying: “I’m a homosexual,” but instead say: “I’m a person with homosexual inclinations.” Our inclinations don’t define us, since we are free and have the power to consider our disordered desires can be very difficult, but contributes significantly to our own growth and spiritual maturation.

When referencing men and women “who have deep-seated homosexual tendencies,” the Catechism of the Catholic Church emphasizes that such individuals must be accepted “with respect, compassion, and sensitivity. Any sign of unjust discrimination in their regard should be avoided. These persons are called to fulfill God’s will in their lives and, if they are Christians, to unite to the sacrifice of the Lord’s Cross the difficulties they may encounter from their condition.” These persons, thus, are children of God, unique and loved by the Lord and called to the pursuit of goodness, chastity and holiness.

The notion of an “intrinsically disordered” act (sometimes also called an intrinsically evil act) has been part of the Church’s moral teachings for millennia. Such acts, as Pope John Paul II noted in his 1993 encyclical Veritatis Splendor, “are by their nature incapable of being ordered to God, because they radically contradict the good of the person made in his image.” Even the best of intentions, he stressed, cannot transform an act that is intrinsically evil into an act that is good or justified.

Many kinds of acts fall under the heading of an “intrinsically evil,” representing seriously damaging choices for those who pursue them and for those around them. A few randomly chosen examples would include: prostitution, torture, slavery, trafficking in women and children, adultery, abortion, euthanasia, and homosexual acts. As noted in the Catechism, homosexual acts “are contrary to the natural law. They close the sexual act to the gift of life. They do not proceed from a genuine affective and sexual complementarity.” Or as noted in another important teaching document called Persona Humana, “homosexual relations are acts which lack an essential and indispensablefinality.”

Even though men and women may engage in intrinsically disordered acts at various points in their lives, that fact clearly does not make them “intrinsically disordered persons” or “evil individuals.” We’re reminded of the old adage that we are to love the sinner and hate the sin. The Catechism sums it up well: “Man, having been wounded in his nature by original sin, is subject to error and inclined to evil in exercising his freedom,” but the remedy is found in Christ and in “the moral life, increased and brought to maturity in grace.”

Thus, intrinsically disordered acts, while always destructive to ourselves and to others, do not put us outside of the eventual reach of grace and mercy, nor beyond the healing effects of repentance. Rather those acts and their harmful effects should beckon us towards the loving gaze of the Lord as he invites us to seek a higher path, one in which we renounce wrongdoing and resolutely embrace the freedom of the sons and daughters of God.

Rev. Tadeusz Pacholczyk, Ph.D. earned his doctorate in neuroscience from Harvard and did post-doctoral work at Harvard. He is a priest of the diocese of Fall River, MA, and serves as the Director of Education at the National Catholic Bioethics Center in Philadelphia. See www.ncbcenter.org

The cross and divine mercy

By Maria-Pia Negro Chin

Catholic News Service

Have you found yourself wondering if Jesus loves you? Think you don’t deserve this love? If you want these doubts dispelled, try praying the Stations of the Cross.

Based on scriptural accounts from the time when Jesus was condemned, leading to his death and when he was laid in the tomb, these 14 stations really help you to remember his sacrificial love for us.

Back in college, the Way of the Cross (another name for the stations) helped me meditate on Jesus’ passion and resurrection at a time when my Lenten journey kept hitting a wall. I kept thinking I needed to earn salvation through my own efforts instead of realizing that it was a gift.

Praying the Way of the Cross with Scripture, meditations and songs put things back into perspective. By reflecting on these stations, Jesus’ sacrifice acquires new meaning.

Think of Jesus carrying his heavy cross, Jesus falling while people surrounded him, how he saw his mother, how he comforted those who were sad for him, how he was nailed to the wood, his cross being laid in the tomb.

This act of love was not easy. We know that Jesus’ crucifixion was not the end of the story. Thinking of the cross is a way to acknowledge the means of our salvation.

Training our will to do God’s will and to glorify him can be difficult but it does not compare to the gift we have received on the cross. Praying, fasting, almsgiving — as well as the sacrament of confession and getting rid of sinful habits — can strengthen us, help us grow in virtue and draw us closer to God during Lent amid our own crosses.

Jesus told St. Faustina Kowalska, the 20th-century Polish nun who received the message (Please See Chin/23)

La cruz y la divina misericordia

By Maria-Pia Negro Chin

Catholic News Service

¿Se ha encontrado preguntándose si Jesús le ama? ¿Cree que no merece este amor? Si desea que estas dudas se disipen, trate de rezar el Vía Crucis.

Basados en los relatos de las Escrituras desde el momento en que Jesús fue condenado, llevando a su muerte y cuando fue puesto en la tumba, las 14 estaciones del Vía Crucis realmente le ayudan a recordar su amor por nosotros.

Cuando estaba en la universidad, el Camino de la Cruz (otro nombre para el Vía Crucis) me ayudó a meditar sobre la pasión y el sacrificio de Jesús en un momento en que mi corazón de Cuaresma se encontró con una pared. Pensaba que necesitaba ganar la salvación a través de mis propios esfuerzos en lugar de darle cuenta de que era un regalo.

Rezando el Camino de la Cruz con la Escritura, las meditaciones y las canciones ponen las cosas de nuevo en perspectiva. Al reflexionar sobre estas estaciones, el sacrificio de Jesús adquiere un nuevo significado. 

Piensen en Jesús llevando su pesada cruz, Jesús cayendo mientras la gente le rodea, cómo vio a su madre, cómo consoló a los que estaban tristes por él, cómo fue clavado en el madero, su muerte en la cruz antes de ser puesto en la tumba.

Este acto de amor no fue fácil.

Sabemos que la cruicifixión de Jesús no fue el final de la historia. Pensemos en la cruz es un forma de reconocer el cómo de nuestra salvación.

El entrenamiento de nuestra voluntad al entrar con humildad en la voluntad de Dios y glorificarlo puede ser difícil, pero no se compara con el regalo que hemos recibido en la cruz. La oración, el ayuno, la limosna, así como el sacrifício de la confesión y la eliminación de los hábitos pecaminosos, pueden fortalecerlos, ayudarnos a crecer en virtud y acercarnos a Dios durante la Cuaresma en (Mira DIVINA/23)
The Angelus APRIL 2017 Page 15

Catholic News Service

By Moises Sandoval
Catholic News Service

It may feel like it, but greatness has not deserted us

Catholic Voices

By Moises Sandoval
Catholic News Service

At a recent conference on economics and social rights at The Catholic University of America in Washington, reported by freelancer Julie Bourbon in the National Catholic Reporter, Bishop Robert W. McElroy of San Diego proposed three questions for Americans in the coming months:

Who are "the people" in the United States? What does greatness mean for the United States? And does nationalism concern itself only with the interests of the United States, or is it connected with our obligations to the international common good?

Indeed, the quest for greatness would be a good meditation during Lent and beyond. For if we are to achieve salvation, we need a clear vision of what greatness is and where we find it. Otherwise, how can we set a course for greatness in our lives and avoid its opposite, which goes by many names: bullying, cruelty, discrimination and oppression.

In the Scriptures, we find greatness in the parables of the good Samaritan, the prodigal son, the woman at the well, the miracle of the loaves and fishes, and many others. All model unconditional love, forgiveness and compassion.

History, too, provides many examples of greatness, Abraham Lincoln, Mahatma Gandhi, St. Joan of Arc and Betsy Ross among them. The prayer of St. Francis of Assisi sums up their gifts to humanity.

Our own times have been graced by great men and women, among them St. Teresa of Kolkata, the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., Archbishop Oscar Romero of El Salvador, Cesar Chavez and many others who have lived and sacrificed for others.

While working 30 years for the Catholic Foreign Mission Society of America (Maryknoll), I met unsung men and women in the jungles, altiplanos and bleak urban barrios who had heard and answered the cry of the poor. They were the voice of the voiceless.

One of them was Father Robert McCaill, a native of Goshen, Indiana, who worked in Bangladesh and lived in a hut just like those of his neighbors and, like them, subsisted on a diet of lentils, rice and vegetables. Not allowed to preach in a Muslim society, he celebrated Mass daily alone in his hut and spent his days caring for the sick, making his rounds on a bicycle. In 2015, he had been there 40 years.

Greatness is part of our country's historic national ideal, thankfully still deeply engrained in the overwhelming majority of us. It resonates in Emma Lazarus' poem inscribed on the Statue of Liberty: "Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free, the wretched refuse of your teeming shore. Send these, the homeless, tempest-tossed to me, I lift my lamp beside the golden door!"

Then, of course, we have prophets, men and women who speak truth to power in every age when fear turns others silent. Participants at the recent conference at Catholic University are among them:

Sister Carol Keehan, president of the Catholic Health

(See SANDOVAL/23)

Like people, nations must learn to forgive one another

By Fr. William J. Byron, SJ
Catholic News Service

Among the many things that President Donald Trump might learn from President Abraham Lincoln is the wisdom of national forgiveness.

National forgiveness is something for which we tend not to pray. Personal forgiveness is quite another story. We pray for that all the time.

But as we now look at broader, societal needs, we have to think about forgiveness writ large. Our nation should be our concern. Like ourselves individually, it stands in need of forgiveness for many faults and it is that for which we should now pray.

A proclamation for a National Day of Prayer, issued by Lincoln in 1863, read in part:

"And, insomuch as we know that by (God's) divine law, nations, like individuals are subjected to punishments and chastisements in this world, may we not justly fear that the awful calamity of civil war which now desolates the land may be a punishment inflicted upon us for our previous sins, omissions and wrongful actions. There is so much to think about when you begin to think of praying for national forgiveness.

Consider the moral flaws in our nation, some supported by law and custom, others tolerated by a permissive society. Your list and mine might not be exactly the same. We will overlap here and there; there will be entries on one person's list that do not appear on another's.

Collectively, if we are honest and, as Lincoln would have us be, humble, in the face of national failings, we will acknowledge a national need for God's forgiveness for our excesses, omissions and wrongful actions.

Greatness is part of our country's historic national ideal, thankfully still deeply engrained in the overwhelming majority of us. It resonates in Emma Lazarus' poem inscribed on the Statue of Liberty: "Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free, the wretched refuse of your teeming shore. Send these, the homeless, tempest-tossed to me, I lift my lamp beside the golden door!"

Then, of course, we have prophets, men and women who speak truth to power in every age when fear turns others silent. Participants at the recent conference at Catholic University are among them:

Sister Carol Keehan, president of the Catholic Health

(See SANDOVAL/23)

We readily admit that nobody's perfect, but we hesitate to admit, despite our allegiance to our country "right or wrong," that our nation can indeed be quite imperfect, morally flawed and in need of forgiveness.

Consider the moral flaws in our nation, some supported by law and custom, others tolerated by a permissive society. Your list and mine might not be exactly the same. We will overlap here and there; there will be entries on one person's list that do not appear on another's.

Collectively, if we are honest and, as Lincoln would have us be, humble, in the face of national failings, we will acknowledge a national need for God's forgiveness for our excesses, omissions and wrongful actions.

There is so much to think about when you begin to think of praying for national forgiveness. Take an imaginative leave of your easy chair and let your inner eye rise high above the earth to look down not just on your own nation, but on the inequalities, unjust wars, hatreds, indignities, exploitations and all other moral offenses around the world.

Let the spectacle of all this move you to beg God's forgiveness for the hardness of human heart that produces conditions like these. You are looking at the world from God's point of view now, so feel the pain as God might feel it in the bodies and minds of those who suffer. See the struggles on the scale that God sees them. Make an act of faith in the healing power of divine forgiveness that can bring a wounded world into balance and back to its senses.

And in considering the dimensions of the needed forgiveness, you can get a glimpse of the immeasurable dimensions of your forgiving God.

Jesuit Father William J. Byron is professor of business and society at St. Joseph's University, Philadelphia. Email: wbyron@sju.edu.

Cartoon Corner
Catholic Voices

Nothing is ever really ours and it’s all temporary

By Fr. Ron Rolheiser

Everything is gift. That’s a principle that ultimately undergirds all spirituality, all morality, and every commandment.

“Who do people say that I am?” He doesn’t ask what people are saying about his preaching or his miracle-working or his impact on the culture; he asks who they say he is. St. John’s Gospel commences with a magnificent assertion regarding, not the teaching of the Lord, but rather his being: “In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God...and the Word was made flesh and dwelled among us.”

Bishop Barron

I have been reading, with both profit and delight, Thomas Joseph White’s latest book, The Incarnate Lord: A Thomistic Study in Christology. Fr. White, one of the brightest of a new generation of Thomas interpreters, explores a range of topics in this text—the relationship between Jesus’ human and divine natures, whether the Lord experienced the beatific vision, the theological significance of Christ’s cry of anguish on the cross, his descent into Hell, etc.—but for the purposes of this article, I want to focus on a theme of particular significance in the theological and catechetical context today. Fr. White argues that the classical tradition of Christology, with its roots in the texts of the Gospels and the Epistles of Paul, understood Jesus ontologically, that is to say, in terms of his fundamental being or existential identity; whereas modern and contemporary Christology tends to understand Jesus’ being psychologically or relational-ly. And though this distinction seems, prima facie, rather arcane, it has tremendous significance for our preaching, teaching, and evangelizing.

In the famous scene at Caesarea-Philippi, Jesus turns to his Apostles and asks, “Who do people say that I am?” He doesn’t ask what people are saying about his preaching or his miracle-working or his impact on the culture; he asks who they say he is. St. John’s Gospel commences with a magnificent assertion regarding, not the teaching of the Lord, but rather his being: “In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God...and the Word was made flesh and dwelled among us.”

Following these prompts—and there are many others in the New Testament—the great theological tradition continued to speculate about the ontological essence of the Lord. Councils from Nicaea to Chalcedon formulated ever more precise articulations of the being, nature, and person of Jesus as the Logos of the early centuries—Origen, Ireneaus, Gregory of Nyssa, Maximus the Confessor, Augustine, etc.—tirelessly crafting the Incarnation into a theologically significant event.

However, commencing in the eighteenth century with the thought of Friedrich Schleiermacher, Christology took a decisive turn. Attempting to make the claims of the Christian faith more intelligible to a modern audience, Schleiermacher explained the Incarnation in terms of Jesus’ relationship to and awareness of God. Here is a particularly clear articulation of his position: “The Redeemer, then, is like all men in virtue of the identity of human nature, but distinguished from them all by the constant potency of his God-consciousness, which was a veritable existence of God in him.”

In other words, the theological significance of Jesus’ being today is to be understood as an ontological Christology. From my theological training in the seventies and eighties of the last century, I’m not sure that this change represents a severe decimation in Christian theology, but I think it does represent a clear shift.

The abandonment of ontological approach has myriad negative consequences, but I will focus on just a few. First, it effectively turns Jesus into a type of super-saint, different perhaps in degree from other holy people, but not in kind. Hence, on this reading, it is not the least bit clear why Jesus is of any greater significance than other religious figures and founders. If he is a saint, even a great one, well people can argue so is Confucius, so is the Buddha, so are the Sufi mystics and Hindu sages, and so in their own way are Socrates, Walt Whitman, and Albert Schleiermacher. If Jesus mediates the divine to you, well and good, but why should you feel any particular obligation to propose him to someone else, who is perhaps more moved by a saintly person from another religious tradition? Indeed, if "God-consciousness" is the issue, who are we to say that Jesus’ was any wider or deeper than St. Francis’ or Mother Teresa’s? In a word, the motivation for real evangelization more or less dissipates when one navigates the Schleiermacher highway.

More fundamentally, when the stress is placed on Jesus’ human consciousness of God, the spiritual weight falls overwhelmingly on the task of interior conversion. What I mean is our quest for God, our search for the divine, and our growth in spiritual awareness become paramount, rather than what God has uniquely accomplished and established. When the Church says that Jesus is God, she means that the divine life, through the grace of the intervention of Jesus, has become available to the world in an utterly unique manner. She furthermore means that she herself—in her preaching, her formal teaching, in her sacraments, and in her saints—is the privileged vehicle...
Today's art: Making form and chaos out of nothing at all

By John Garvey
Catholic News Service

I am not the first to notice that ideas and styles spread across the fine arts, regardless of medium or genre. In the middle of the 19th century, orchestras grew from 100 to 110 members, and symphonies were lush and tuneful.

Think of Wagner, Tchaikovsky and Saint-Saëns. Novels had as many characters as orchestras had musicians. Their prose was lush and their stories absorbing. Think of Dickens, Tolstoy, and, yes, even James Joyce.

Architecture expressed similar thoughts in stone and steel. The Paris Opera, where Saint-Saëns was played, has beautiful lines and lots of ornamentation.

A different thread runs through the arts today. Poetry no longer matters because it's a word game for an elite intellectual subculture.

The rest of us can't recite any contemporary poems because we can't remember them. They don't rhyme, they have no rhythmic structure and they're not about anything. Often, they're just jumbles of words and sounds.

John Cage's music is a jumble of sounds. And sometimes not even that. His piece 4′33″ is four minutes and 33 seconds of nothing at all.

Jackson Pollock represents the nothing-at-all style. His Black-Form paintings are a series of eight black canvases.

This kind of anarchy -- no story, no cadence, no song, no organized sense of shape, perspective or color -- has not arrived in architecture, because buildings have to stand up and we need to live in them.

But there is a deconstructivist movement that has elements in common with it. Architects like Frank Gehry (Walt Disney Concert Hall), Rem Koolhaas (Seattle Public Library) and the Coop Himmelb(l)au (Gasometer in Vienna) design chaotic and unpredictable buildings with odd surfaces.

In my more cynical moments, I have suspected that all of these artists (except Frank Gehry, whom I kind of like) are playing a joke on us. My rule of thumb about art is, if I can do it, it's not art. And I could paint a canvas black; or not play my instrument for four minutes. Heck, I could do five minutes.

But to be fair, there is a deeper idea at work. John Cage once described music as "a purposeless play." It's "not an attempt to bring order out of chaos ... but simply a way of waking up to the very life we're living."

(See GARVEY/22)

Origin of Hail Mary / Religious marriage but not civil?

By Fr. Kenneth Doyle
Catholic News Service

Q. I have been wondering about the origin of the Hail Mary prayer. I realize that the first part is from the Scriptures, when Mary is greeted by her cousin Elizabeth, but when was the complete prayer introduced in the church and who were its authors?

(Northern New Jersey)

A. As to the first part of the prayer, you are half-right. The words in the very opening verse come from the angel Gabriel's greeting to Mary at the announcement: "Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with you" (Lk 1:28, Revised Standard Version Catholic Edition).

Then, as you indicate, the next verse repeats the pregnant Elizabeth's enthusiastic greeting of her cousin following Mary's 90-mile journey from Nazareth: "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb" (Lk 1:42).

The joining of those two verses first made its way into the texts of the Mass during the seventh century, as an oratory verse for the feast of the Annunciation, and became a widespread practice during the 11th century in the prayer of monastic communities.

The second half of the Hail Mary, the petition -- "Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death" -- came later. That first approach -- except for the word "our" -- in print in 1495 in the writings of Girolamo Savonarola and became part of the reformed breviary of Pope Pius V in 1568 following the Council of Trent.

The popularity of the prayer has continued to grow over the centuries. In hearing the confessions of small children, when it comes time to assign a penance, I often ask them, "Do you have a favorite prayer, one that you especially like to say?" Most of the time, by a wide margin, choose the Hail Mary.

And each night before I go to sleep, I follow a habit of some 50 years and recite three "Hail Marys," asking Mary to help me to be a good and faithful priest.

Q. My first husband of 28 years died three years ago. Both of us were practicing Catholics. I have since been blessed to meet another special man. He is Catholic and has never been married.

If I remarry, will I lose the financial benefits that will affect my retirement years? I know how short life is and don't want to wait 10 years until the restriction will not affect us financially. Is it possible to be married in the church without its being a civil union?

We have chosen to live together, which goes against everything I have been taught, and I feel like a hypocrite. Although in our minds we are totally committed as though we were married, we would still like to be married in the church. Can you offer any guidance?

(Indianapolis)

A. In the United States, when a Catholic priest officiates at a wedding, he does so in two capacities: first, in his religious role as a representative of the church, but also in a civil role as an agent of the state. The priest is obligated legally to then register the marriage in the appropriate civil jurisdiction.

There is, in fact, a provision in the church's Code of Canon Law (No. 1130-33) that does authorize a bishop to permit a marriage "celebrated secretly" -- but that is commonly interpreted as applying to cases where the civil law is unjust (e.g., a law that prohibits interracial marriages).

A priest who performed a marriage ceremony in the U.S., as you desire, would violate the law and himself to civil penalties -- not to mention that you yourself could be subject to criminal penalties for fraudulently collecting the financial benefits.

I know that this is an inconvenient answer and presents you with a hard decision. But your own action in creating a false identity would not seem to match that situation. We do not believe that what you have done constitutes a mortal sin, given the circumstances, but I would feel much more comfortable -- and you probably would, too -- if you could return to the path of truth.

Here is my suggestion: Why not create a new profile, revealing your true identity and noting your recent successes with the three long-term clients? Then, why not level with those three clients? Tell them who you are, why you shielded your identity at first and the discomfort you feel in having been untruthful? If, as you say, they are already well-satisfied with your work, they may retain you.

(See Doyle/22)

Questions may be sent to Father Kenneth Doyle at askfatherdoyle@gmail.com and 306 Columbus Circle Dr. Albany, New York 12203.

- - -

Doric (Northern New Jersey)

To: Father Doyle

Q. I have always observed the fast during Lent for years. But this year I find myself in a weird situation. Last summer, I decided no longer to eat any animal products -- a decision I made for my health.

So abstaining from meat on Fridays during Lent is no longer a sacrifice for me. Is there something else that I should do instead? (Virginia Beach, Virginia)

A. I am edified by your question; it shows that you have captured the spirit of Lent as a season of special penance -- with a particular focus on the Fridays, in order to unite ourselves with the suffering of Jesus on the cross.

In 1966, when the church was moving away from the age-old rule of Friday abstinence (except on the Fridays of Lent), the U.S. bishops noted that "the spirit of penance primarily suggests that we discipline ourselves in that which we enjoy most."

Since, for you, abstinence from meat no longer represents a burden, you would do well to go beyond the specific regulations prescribed by law and adopt a discipline of your own choosing -- perhaps by staying away from alcoholic beverages on Lenten Fridays or cutting back generally on food consumption during those days.

Or how about -- if your work situation allows it -- simply taking five minutes at 3:00 in the afternoon on Lenten Fridays to speak with Jesus quietly and thank him for his sacrifice?

Q. I apologize for the length of this question, but I want you to understand the complete context. I am a 21-year-old made from Africa. About a year ago I joined an online freelancing site and created my profile, in an attempt to develop business.

It was not successful at all, and I began to suspect the reason was that I am from a Third-World country. So I came up with a fake profile that said that I was from Canada, and I used someone else's picture. No sooner had I done this than the work started flowing in. I deliver good-quality work and my clients have been nothing but satisfied. (In fact, I now have three long-term clients that I work with every week.) I know that I am not scamming them, but the issue is that they don't know my real identity. So my question is this: Am I committing a mortal sin?

Would it help if I were to tithe these earnings, or would that be an insult to God? I am conflicted -- I am getting the job done, and it's not as though I were lying on a dating site and playing with someone's feelings. Please advise. (Africa)

A. Believe me, I sympathize with your plight -- especially since a cultural bias seems to have created it. I would almost like to be able to condone your fabrication, but I just can't do that. Truth is sacred, and the whole human enterprise hangs on our ability to trust in the word of another.

I do think that, in very rare cases, untruthfulness can be justified -- for example, when a landlord shielding a Jewish family during the Nazi era tells a Gestapo interrogator at the door, "There are no Jews here."

But your own action in creating a false identity would not seem to match that situation. I don't believe that what you have done constitutes a mortal sin, given the circumstances, but I would feel much more comfortable -- and you probably would, too -- if you could return to the path of truth.

(The Associated Press)

A different thread runs through the arts today. Poetry no longer matters because it's a word game for an elite intellectual subculture. The rest of us can't recite any contemporary poems because we can't remember them. They don't rhyme, they have no rhythmic structure and they're not about anything. Often, they're just jumbles of words and sounds. John Cage's music is a jumble of sounds. And sometimes not even that. His piece 4′33″ is four minutes and 33 seconds of nothing at all.

Jackson Pollock represents the nothing-at-all style. His Black-Form paintings are a series of eight black canvases. This kind of anarchy -- no story, no cadence, no song, no organized sense of shape, perspective or color -- has not arrived in architecture, because buildings have to stand up and we need to live in them.

But there is a deconstructivist movement that has elements in common with it. Architects like Frank Gehry (Walt Disney Concert Hall), Rem Koolhaas (Seattle Public Library) and the Coop Himmelb(l)au (Gasometer in Vienna) design chaotic and unpredictable buildings with odd surfaces.

In my more cynical moments, I have suspected that all of these artists (except Frank Gehry, whom I kind of like) are playing a joke on us. My rule of thumb about art is, if I can do it, it's not art. And I could paint a canvas black; or not play my instrument for four minutes. Heck, I could do five minutes.

But to be fair, there is a deeper idea at work. John Cage once described music as "a purposeless play." It's "not an attempt to bring order out of chaos ... but simply a way of waking up to the very life we're living."

(See GARVEY/22)
Texas / Nation

Texas history trots through town; trail riders visit Catholic school

HOUSTON (CNS) — Both Judy Fritsch and Father Benjamin Smaistrla were glad to see horses in the St. Ambrose Catholic Church parking lot.

While the principal and her staff rounded up the 300 St. Ambrose Catholic School students to the safety of the grass surrounding the blacktop, Father Smaistrla was the first to see them.

Led by flags and banners, the Sam Houston Trail Ride clopped down the road and made its annual stop at the northwest Houston parish, where Father Smaistrla is pastor.

Students, prekindergarten to eighth grade, welcomed the wagons, horses and riders with hoots, hollers and howdies from the riders, many clad in their finest Western wear.

They were bound for the world’s largest livestock show and rodeo, the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo, held March 7-26 this year.

The Sam Houston group is the second oldest trail ride to trek to the rodeo, having made the journey since 1955.

"We’ve been coming to St. Ambrose for years," Trail Boss Bruce Fraysur told the Texas Catholic Herald, newspaper of the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston.

Trail bosses like Fraysur ensure the safety of the riders, animals and equipment on the ride, as well as the public who watches along.

"What's your horse's name?" Fraysur asked a prekindergarten student holding a stick horse.

"Horsey!" the child shouted back.

"That's my horse's name, too!" Fraysur said, laughing as he watched other students gawk and pet a white horse a gallop away, some for the first time.

"This is what it's all about. We love seeing the kids," he said.

Stopped for lunch, most riders dismounted, heading to the chuck wagon, while others met with students. On the menu? Tuna and seafood lasagna for those observing the Lenten fast; a grill served up burgers for those who didn't. Parents and parishioners sat on the near-by grass enjoying the parish’s fish fry.

The Sam Houston Trail Ride's stop at the school was March 3, dubbed Go Texan Day. A hat tip to Texas history, the annual citywide designation rallies communities across the region to celebrate Texas heritage, and signals the beginning of the livestock and rodeo show.

It was the last full day of a 70-mile ceremonial ride from Montgomery to Houston.

For Father Smaistrla, the day brought many good friends to his parish. Father Smaistrla previously was a pastor at St. Mary Catholic Church in Plantersville, where he rode horses with some of his parishioners. Several of his then-parishioners are part of the Sam Houston Trail Ride.

Priests in the Galveston-Houston Archdiocese were saddled up to serve the faithful long before Father Smaistrla joined the clergy. Missionary priests traveled by horse to minister to rural towns throughout southeast Texas, according to archdiocesan history.

The trail ride gives students "a good sense of Texas history," Fritsch said, with some learning about the events that led to Texas statehood. "It's that touch with Old Texas that they like."

Dozens of horses, several wagons and support vehicles take part in the annual trail ride. Local fire departments provide water for the horses and livestock along the way.

Reminiscent of the pioneer spirit that forged the Old West, more than 3,000 continue to join the rodeo’s signature tradition and honor the trails that linked Texas settlements.

Today, trail ride groups are permanent social organizations with officers and leaders, and they honor different aspects of Texas heritage. Some take historical trails, like the Sam Houston riders who take the trail forged by Texas hero Sam Houston.

Besides honoring generations of Western heritage, Sam Houston riders also support high school scholarships. In all there were 13 trail rides, which converged in downtown Houston for a major parade March 4 to open the rodeo season.

Cardinal William Keeler, retired archbishop of Baltimore, dies at 86

WASHINGTON (CNS) — Cardinal William H. Keeler, Baltimore’s 14th archbishop, who was an international leader in Catholic-Jewish relations and the driving force behind the restoration of America’s first cathedral, died March 23 at his residence at St. Martin’s Home for the Aged in Catonsville. He was 86.

"Cardinal Keeler was a dear friend. A wise and gentle pastor," Archbishop Lori said in a statement March 23. "Cardinal Keeler will be greatly missed. I am grateful to the Little Sisters for their dedicated care for the cardinal."

Cardinal Keeler was the bishop of Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, when he was appointed the 14th archbishop of Baltimore in 1989. Pope John Paul II made him a cardinal in 1994. He retired in 2007. As president of the U.S. bishops’ conference from 1992 to 1995, he participated in a wide range of national and international issues.

As part of his work with what is now the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, Cardinal Keeler developed a reputation for effectively building interfaith bonds. He is particularly noted for his work in furthering Catholic-Jewish dialogue. He was appointed moderator of Catholic-Jewish Relations for the USCCB.

"As a priest, bishop of Harrisburg and archbishop of Baltimore, the cardinal worked to bring the hope of Christ to people's lives," said Cardinal Daniel N. DiNardo of Galveston Houston, who is president of the USCCB. "He also built bridges of solidarity to people of other faiths as a leader in ecumenism and inter-religious affairs."

"Cardinal Keeler was a dear friend. The most fitting tribute we can offer is to carry forward his episcopal motto in our daily lives: 'Do the work of an evangelist,'" Cardinal DiNardo said in a statement.

He called the late cardinal "a servant of priestly virtue and gentlemanly manner" who is remembered by the USCCB for "his generosity of spirit in service to his brothers and the people of God."

Cardinal Keeler’s death leaves the College of Cardinals with 223 members, 17 of whom are from the United States. The College of Cardinals has 117 members under the age of 80 and eligible to vote in a conclave.

In his statement, Archbishop Lori remarked on "the respect and esteem" in which the cardinal was held by his brother bishops, and praised his leadership in Jewish-Catholic relations and in Orthodox-Catholic relations. Archbishop Lori also said he was known for his "prowess as a church historian" and had a "deep love and respect for the history and heritage of the Archdiocese of Baltimore."
Pope Francis

Pope asks children to promise Jesus they will never be bullies

ROME (CNS) — Pope Francis asked 45,000 children preparing for confirmation to promise Jesus they would never engage in bullying.

Turning stern during a lively and laughter-filled encounter March 25, Pope Francis told the youngsters he was very worried about the growing phenomenon of bullying.

He asked them to be silent and reflect on if there were times when they made fun of someone for how they looked or behaved. And, as a condition of their confirmation, he made them promise Jesus that they would never tease or bully anyone.

The pope ended his daylong visit to Milan by participating in an expanded version of the archdiocese's annual encounter for pre-teens preparing for confirmation. An estimated 78,000 people filled the city's famed San Siro soccer stadium; the archdiocese expects to confirm about 45,000 young people this year.

A boy named Davide asked the pope, "When were you our age, what helped your friendship with Jesus grow?"

First of all, the pope said, it was his grandparents. One of his grandfathers was a carpenter, who told him Jesus learned carpentry from St. Joseph, so whenever the pope saw his grandfather work, he thought of Jesus. The other grandfather taught him to always say something to Jesus before going to sleep, even if it was just, "Good night, Jesus."

His grandmothers and his mother, the pope said, were the ones who taught him to pray. He told the kids that even if their grandparents "don't know how to use a computer or have a smartphone," they have a lot to teach them.

Playing with friends taught him joy and how to get along with others, which is part of faith, the pope said. And going to Mass and to the parish oratory also strengthened his faith because "being with others is important."

A couple of parents, who introduced themselves as Monica and Alberto, asked the pope’s advice on educating their three children in the faith.

Pope Francis borrowed little Davide’s question and asked the parents to close their eyes and think of the people who transmitted the faith to them and helped it grow.

"Your children watch you continually," the pope said. "Even if you don’t notice, they observe everything and learn from it," especially in how parents handle tensions, joys and sorrows.

Pope Francis greets the crowd during an encounter with confirmation candidates at San Siro Stadium in Milan March 25. (CNS photo/Stefano Rellandini, Reuters)

Pope: Spread hope, preach Christ, don’t fret over numbers

By Cindy Wooden
Catholic News Service

ROME — Visiting Milan, the center of Italian fashion and finance, Pope Francis spent the morning with the poor and those who minister to them.

He had lunch at the city’s historic San Vittore prison, where all 893 inmates — men and women — are awaiting trial.

But Pope Francis began his visit March 25 on the outskirts of the city, at the "White Houses," a housing development for the poor built in the 1970s. Three families welcomed the pope into their apartments: Stefano Pasquale, 59, who is ill and cared for by his 57-year-old wife, Dorotee; a Muslim couple and their three children from Morocco; and the Onetes.

Nuccio Onete, 82, was home for the pope’s visit, but his wife, Adele, was hospitalized with pneumonia three days earlier, so the pope called her on the telephone.

The people of the neighborhood gave Pope Francis a handmade white stole, which he put on before addressing the crowd.

The fact that it was homemade, he said, "makes it much more precious and is a reminder that the Christian priest is chosen from the people and is at the service of the people. My priesthood, like that of your pastor and the other priests who work here, is a gift of Christ, but one sewn by you, by the people, with your faith, your struggles, your prayers and your tears."

Arriving next at Milan’s massive Gothic cathedral, Pope Francis met with the archdiocese’s pastoral workers and responded to questions from a priest, a permanent deacon and a religious sister, urging them to trust in God, hold on to their joy and share the good news of Christ with everyone they meet.

"We should not fear challenges," he said. "It is good that they exist" and Christians must "grab them, like a bull, by the horns."

Challenges "are a sign of a living faith, of a living community that seeks the Lord and keeps its eyes and heart open."

Asked by Father Gabriele Gioia about evangelization efforts that do not seem to result in "catching fish," Pope Francis said the work of an evangelizer — of all Christians — is to set out and cast the nets.

If Jesus had asked any of the other people there desperate for help, the pope said, "they would have said, ‘Yes, Lord, yes.’ But this was a strange man" because instead he started complaining about how he had no one to help him into the water and everyone else always managed to get in before him.

The man is like a tree planted near streams of water, but he cannot grow and prosper because his roots are dried up, "those roots don't reach the water, he couldn't take in the well-being of the water," the pope said.

"This is a terrible sin, the sin of sloth. This man was ill not so much from paralysis, but from sloth, which is worse than having a lukewarm heart," he said. "It is living, but only because I am alive and have no desire to go on, have no desire to do something in life, to have lost his memory" of what joy is.

But Jesus does not scold him, the pope said; he tells him to rise, take his sleeping mat and walk, which he does, disappearing into the crowd, without saying thank you or even asking Jesus his name.

"Sloth is a sin that paralyzes, makes us lame. It doesn't let us walk. Even today the Lord looks at each one of us, we have all sinned, we are all sinners," the pope said, but Jesus still looks and "tells us, ‘Rise.’"
RCIA draws formerly homeless man to Christ; now he helps others find way

UXBRIDGE, Mass. (CNS) — After Todd Smith's mother died, he was left with none of her.
TRIDUUM

(From 9)

What considerations should be given for the paschal candle used at the Easter Vigil? This candle should be made of wax, never be artificial, be replaced each year, be only one in number, and be of sufficiently large size that it may convey the truth that Christ is the light of the world. The paschal candle is the symbol of the light of Christ, rising in glory, scattering the darkness of our hearts and minds. Above all, the paschal candle should be a genuine candle, the pre-eminent symbol of the light of Christ. Choice of size, design, and color should be made in relationship to the sanctuary in which it will be placed.

In the case of mission churches and cluster parishes, can multiple paschal candles be used for the Service of Light? There should be only one candle for each church and put in place in the sanctuary, in that particular church. As the other candles in the congregation are lit, the other paschal candles could be lit and held (but not high, in order to maintain the prominence of the one principal candle) by someone at their place in the assembly. Once all the candles are extinguished after the singing of the Exsultet, the other paschal candles are put aside. On Easter Sunday morning, those candles could be taken to each of the missions and carried, lit, in the entrance procession at the first Mass at each church and put in place in the sanctuary.

How many readings should be proclaimed at the Easter Vigil? One of the unique aspects of the Easter Vigil is the recounting of the outstanding deeds of the history of salvation. These deeds are related in seven readings from the Old Testament chosen from the law and the prophets and two readings from the New Testament, namely from the Apostle Paul and from the Gospel. Thus, the Lord meets us once again on our journey and, “beginning with Moses and all the prophets, the things that are written in the law and the prophets, open up our minds and hearts, preparing us to share in the breaking of the bread and the drinking of the cup. The faithful are encouraged to meditate on these readings by the singing of a responsorial psalm, followed by a silent pause, and then by the celebrant’s prayer. Meditation on these readings is significant for this night that we are strongly urged to use all the readings whenever it can be done. Only in the case of grave pastoral circumstances can the number of readings be reduced. In such cases, at least three readings from the Old Testament should be read, always including Exodus 14.

How is the First Communion of the neophytes to be emphasized during the Easter Vigil? The celebrant, before he says. Behold the Lamb of God, may make a brief remark to the neophytes about their first Communion and about the importance of so great a mystery, which is the climax of initiation and the center of the Christian life. This is a night when all should be able to receive Holy Communion under both forms.

What directions are given for the celebration of Masses on Easter Sunday? Mass is to be celebrated on Easter Day with great solemnity. A full complement of ministers and the use of liturgical music should be evident in all celebrations. On Easter Sunday in the dioceses of the United States, the rite of the renewal of baptismal promises may take place after the homily, followed by the sprinkling with water blessed at the Vigil, during which the paschal candle has its proper place.

The Angelus APRIL 2017 Page 21

DIAZ

(From 2)

a Second Language program at her home church in Abilene, St. Vincent Pallotti.

She quickly learned that people coming to the classes needed information on obtaining citizenship more than they needed to learn proper English. Diaz would take them to Dallas to a Catholic charities office for that information.

People at the Dallas office told Diaz she needed to become a certified immigration official herself so that she could provide the service at home. She chuckles now remembering how she got started in her current career.

“All I wanted to do was teach an ESL class,” she said. “My intentions never were to get into immigration.”

Apparentlly, God saw things differently. Diaz became certified by the federal government, working through Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc., or CLINIC. Before becoming the full-time immigration services supervisor for the diocese, Diaz had been a Head Start specialist with the Abilene Independent School District and also had worked at the Abilene State Supported Living Center.

She loved those jobs, but Diaz has found her spiritual and professional home in serving immigrants and refugees.

“It’s a ministry for me,” she said. “I feel like there is no other ministry I could work at. It really is my heart.”

Bishop Michael Sis is among the many fans that Diaz can claim. He touts her knowledge of the complex legal rules that govern gaining legal status in the United States.

“I know of no one in the Diocese of San Angelo who has done more to assist immigrants to attain legal status than Nelly Diaz,” Bishop Sis said.

The bishop noted that followers of Jesus Christ are called to welcome and assist the immigrant and refugee in concrete ways.

“At the Last Judgment,” Sis said, “our Lord will judge each of us according to the criteria he puts forth in Matthew 25:31-46.”

In that passage, Jesus teaches that all people will be separated and judged according to whether they followed his command to care for the stranger and those who are hungry, thirsty, naked, sick, or imprisoned.

“Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me,” the Gospel passage says.

Diaz brings that spirit with her to work every day as she consults with immigrants or families trying to help a relative in another country gain legal status in the United States. She is trained to help in a number of ways that are governed by federal immigration law. The bishop made note of emphasizing that Diaz, and the diocese, work strictly within legal guidelines.

The immigration office provides services such as helping families find resources like ESL and life skills classes, assistance with becoming citizens or gaining legal status and even finding a tax preparer who speaks the person’s native language.

In the Diocese of San Angelo, Diaz sees clients primarily who are natives of Mexico or a Central American or African country. The Africans are refugees who are resettled in Abilene through a branch office of the International Rescue Committee.

In San Angelo and Abilene combined, 34 countries are represented, Diaz said. Most of the people she sees speak either English or Spanish but Diaz can call in an interpreter if needed.

A typical case that Diaz sees almost daily came recently from an Abilene woman who is a United States citizen and is married to a Mexican native deported from Abilene five years ago. By federal law, he could be barred from returning to the United States for another five years. Diaz is working with the family to gain a pardon so that the man can return to Abilene sooner to be with his wife and two young children, all of whom are U.S. citizens.

That is the kind of tearful story that Diaz hears on a daily basis, sometimes as many as 15 times a day.

“It’s sad,” she said. “My heart just hurts for them.”

Diaz combines compassion and professionalism to assist the people who come to see her, often making long drives. In Abilene, she works with the Dallas office of Homeland Security. In San Angelo, she is paired with the department’s San Antonio office. Those offices send liaisons to Abilene and San Angelo periodically to meet with Diaz.

“They make sure what I am doing is OK,” she said.

Diaz has a problem for Diaz, who keeps up with ever-changing immigration laws, with the assistance of webinars and in-person training sessions offered by CLINIC. Everyone’s vigilance has heightened since Donald Trump was sworn in as president in January, vowing to fulfill campaign promises to get tough on immigration.

Immigrants are concerned about the tone that the new president has brought to the office. That fear is in this country illegally are careful not to stop getting by police for something as insignificant as a tail light being out, Diaz said. If they come to Diaz for help in becoming legal residents, she is eager to assist.

“There are programs that can help them,” she said.

Diaz has said she hasn’t heard of any issues with agents from the Border Patrol or the U.S. Office of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). In the past, local agents with those agencies have been courteous and helpful.

Sometimes, if the person they stop for a traffic violation doesn’t have a criminal background, agents will send them to Diaz to help them gain legal status.

“They’re really good about helping them out,” Diaz said.

But she is worried about how that might change with directives from the president.

“I am seeing a lot of concern,” she said.

Forty hours of many long ago sometimes stressful hours. But she is repaid many times over when, sometimes years later, she encounters people she assisted in getting family members into the United States legally.

This is my family,” they will say.

“This is who you helped me bring into this country.”

Diaz has many admirers, and remains a shining example of the passage from Matthew cited by Bishop Sis.

“I challenge all who read this article,” he said, “to pray with that biblical passage, remember Nelly’s example, and think about what more we can do to assist.”
Traditional artistic forms impose an order on the world, and offer us a way to understand it and appreciate its beauty. The point of postmodern art is to dispense with these structures and bring us face to face with brute reality. Ovid is right to speak of Chaos. That's exactly how Ovid describes the primal state of things: "the face of Nature in a vast expanse/ was naught but Chaos uniformly waste/ It was a rude and undeveloped mass/ ... congested in a shapeless heap."

I've been thinking lately about creating a Fine Arts Council at the university, whose charge would be not to appreciate this representation of the world, but to rebel against it. In the Catholic imagination, the God who created the heavens and the earth brought an order out of primordial Chaos. Or in Ovid's words, "God, or kindly Nature, ended strife -- / he bound the fractious parts in tranquil peace."

Perhaps if we can bring together enough people who see the world this way, they can inspire one another to a distinctively Catholic vision of the arts. I'm not sure what it would be. (I have already confessed to being no artist.) But I know it has to start in a different place than where the culture is today.

Garvey is president of The Catholic University of America in Washington. Catholic University's website is www.cua.edu.

KNICKERBOCKERS

From 11

must have become fact; the Word, flesh; God, Man. This is not a 'religion,' nor 'a philosophy.' It is the summing up and actuality of them all" (p.236). On September 28, 1931, Lewis took the final step. He and his brother, Warren, took a picnic to Whipsnade Zoo, with Warren driving his motorcycle and Jack in the side-car. As Lewis wrote in Surprised by Joy, "When we set out I did not believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and when we reached the zoo I did. Yet I had not exactly spent the journey in thought. Nor in great emotion. 'Emotional' is perhaps the last word we can apply to some of the most important events. It was more like when a man, after a long sleep, still lying motionless in bed, becomes aware that he is now awake" (p.37).

Christ spoke to Jack Lewis in a way that he could understand through the means of pagan myth and good friends who could show him the way that myth prepares us for the revelation of the true myth of Jesus Christ. Then he was able to kiss his atheist past good-bye and, with St. Paul, forget what lies behind and press on to what lies ahead (Phil. 3:13). In this pressing on, he was able to see truth in the Gospel, understood as true myth, that he was able to communicate to countless others over many years.

The difference in the presentation of Christ by Lewis is startling when it is compared with the way many scholars present Christ using the historical-critical method to study the Gospels. One has the impression from many of them that the Gospels are poor historical writing and the object is to see how much of these stories is really history and how much we can leave out. But Lewis, in such works as Mere Christianity, The Problem of Pain, Miracles, and The Chronicles of Narnia (seven children's novels, which is his own mythological story of Christ) gives us the picture of the whole Christ — winsome, demanding, loving, forgiving, leading us on to greater and greater Truth, who is Himself, speaking of the Way and the Life. Instead of seeing the Gospels as poor history, Lewis sees them for what they are: myth become fact.

During the Easter Season, the atoning death and resurrection of Christ are celebrated liturgically and in many other ways as we welcome His new life in us and kiss the past good-bye. If God gives us back something from our past, it will be a new gift that is no longer past but present and meant to be part of our future, part of our new creation in Christ, a new creation of ourselves that is part of his entire new creation, a new heaven and a new earth. As St. John says in Revelation: "Behold the dwelling of God is with men. He will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself will be with them; he will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain any more, for the former things have passed away" (21:3-4 RSV).

To Kiss the Past Good-bye Today I kissed my past good-bye And then I see He’s given back With sin and even all my good, The good was present in my past, And apple of the Father’s eye Delightedly unpacked I welcomed now — at last I could, What will in present, future last. For He is raised beyond the tomb For now He’ll always live in me And asks me to invite Him in As with Him hand-in-hand I go, To breathe away my circling gloom, With all my loved ones bend the knee Reveal in me what’s always been, To Truth we’re always meant to know.
face the truth about ourselves – our faults, our weaknesses, our sins – in light of the truth about God’s unwavering love for us. Only by living the way God intended for us, by living in union with Christ, can our hearts’ deepest desires be fulfilled.

But this is not the average person’s impression of Catholic morality and certainly not that of the majority of young people, most of which has been shaped by the culture’s individualistic outlook on life. He addresses the fact that every age has had its bullies who shame or oppress people because of race, religion, color, or gender. We should always fight against bigotry of this sort and treat all people with dignity.

Today we experience a new kind of bullying. It’s what Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI called the “dictatorship of relativism,” which, he said, “does not recognize anything as definitive and whose ultimate goal consists to be ‘reoperative’.”

Relativism is the idea that there is no objective truth, that each individual decides for himself what is right and what is wrong. A relativist would say that all truth claims are subjective, merely reflecting one’s personal feelings, opinions, or desires. You can have your truth, and I can have my truth, but there is no the truth to which we are all accountable.

The person who is not a relativist is often not tolerated in society. The pro-life woman, for example, who says that abortion is wrong is likely to be called “judgmental.” Someone who says that marriage is between a man and woman will be labeled “intolerant;” the Christian college student who says that premarital sex is wrong will be mocked and brushed aside as being “rigid” or “out-of-touch.”

In this way, the relativistic culture tends to marginalize those who hold traditional moral convictions. Since these views do not fit into their relativistic worldview.

In this environment, many good people feel paralyzed. They sense that there are real rights and wrongs in the universe – and there are things that are immoral for anyone to do – but they are not sure what to say or are afraid to voice their convictions. They are afraid they will be misunderstood or rejected by their coworkers, family and friends, so they keep silent, hiding their convictions – which is exactly what the relativistic culture wants.
From the Editor

We are here to bless, so who are we to judge?

By Jimmy Patterson

My truck eased to a stop at an always-busy intersection. You know the one. You’ve been there scores of times. Out my driver’s-side window stood a man, 40 maybe, a crinkled unkempt beard, torn and dirty sneakers, and a Pink Floyd t-shirt that mostly concealed what looked to be a crotchetoty bag.

I rolled down my window and gave him a nod. The gesture was returned, but he did not approach my truck. I said hi, asked him how he was. Rough day, he said. Bladder cancer, he told me as he fiddled with the bag that hung from the bottom of his shirt. I told him I hoped his tomorrow would go better.

He still did not approach my truck until I finally I stuck out my arm and gave him a small bill. God bless you, he said. I stayed there another couple of minutes, window still rolled down, until the light turned green.

Later that week, different intersection. You’ve been to that one, too. And you’ve probably seen him.

“Oh my last leg,” her sign says. Even the homeless are marketing themselves, I thought, a touch of cynicism clanking around my head.

I rolled my window down, looked at her and smiled. She was rough looking. It had surely been a tough life. “Hot day,” she said.

It had in fact been a very hot day, almost 90 and not even clear of March yet. She wasn’t complaining. Just stating fact. I shudder to think what it must be like for her.

“They say I’m on my last leg,” she said. “Hot day,” she added.

“I stumbled on a conversation, something about the material and spiritual heritage of the country,” she went on. “We believe all humans have the right to immigrate and seek a safe place to live.”

When people are subject to persecution or violence or war they have the right to immigrate and seek a safe place to live.”

Immigrants, the bishop added, are obliged to observe the laws and to respect with gratitude the material and spiritual heritage of the country that receives them. Illegal immigration, he said, should not be encouraged, saying that it is not in the long-term interest of society or for the immigrant, who then lives outside the law and in the shadows.

Billy Ashley, pastor of Midland’s Bethel Missionary Baptist Church, reminded the more than 200 in attendance of the Dream Act of 2010 which, according to U.S. Congress, estimates, would reduce the federal budget by $1.4 billion per year and increase federal revenues by 5 percent over a 10-year period. The Dream Act, which ultimately failed in the U.S. Senate after passage in the House, would have granted conditional residency with the ultimate goal of permanent residency for many undocumented residents.

The vigil also featured presentations by Ahmed el Sonbaty, Muslim Association of West Texas, Dr. Padmaja Patel and Fr. David Herrera, pastor of Our Lady of Guadalupe Church, who organized the event. The evening ended with the congregation being led in “Amazing Grace” by local musician Victor Ochoa. Alfredo Chaparro, of Midland, organized the event.

Dr. Patel, of the Hindu Association of West Texas, said it is the moral obligation of everyone to stand peacefully against the forces of division, hate, self-interest and uncompassionate nationalism.

“Bigotry and hatred are our only battles when we stand together in love,” she said, quoting Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. “Darkness cannot drive out darkness. Only light can drive out darkness. Hatred cannot drive out hate. Love can do that. Let us join working toward that day when there is peace among all people.”

Nutter reminded those in attendance that it is imperative we act on behalf of those facing danger or discrimination because of the current political environment.

“The time to act is now, and it is up to us to do so,” Nutter said. “It is not enough to speak truth to power. We must comfort and shelter those who suffer its abuse and injustice. To not do this ignores the universal call to love. As we move forward, let us listen and learn so we can bring the knowledge and wisdom necessary for this cause. Let us open our hearts with empathy, kindness, acceptance, fellowship and forgiveness, so that we can fill our labors with love. And despite our inevitable differences and disappointments, let us persevere as people of faith who know we are part of something larger than structure they live in. And on the street corner, no fans, no blissful cool air, and water only when someone decides to give it to them. Smiles or pleasant exchanges rare. Conversation rarer still.

We talked for a couple of minutes, she and I. Like her street corner colleague with the crotchetoty bag, she didn’t make a move toward my truck window yet. She never did, until she saw my arm finally extend outward with a small bill folded up, clutched in my hand. She hobbled over on her crutch, reached out and took the money. She smiled at me, thanked me, called me sweetheart, told me she loved me.

I kept my window down again until I drove off. Something about that piece of glass that seemed to serve as some sort of rude wall. The one between us and them.

We tend to make judgments about these street corner people when, in fact, we don’t know anything about them at all. But that doesn’t stop us.

What if they decided they didn’t want our money because they thought we had too much makeup or perfume or didn’t like our music or because we had loud pipes.

I went home after my two encounters that week and turned on social media which, I’m happy to say, I am doing less and less of these days.

I’ve been thinking a lot about one of the street corner people being arrested, followed by a howl of like-minded jurists. One person chimed in by saying he’d heard they bus them in because there’s so much more money to be made on our town’s corners.

INTERFAITH

(From 2)

but also teaches of the “natural human right to immigrate.

“We believe all humans have the right to find opportunities in their own homeland, to live in dignity, and to put their talents to work. When they cannot find employment in their home country to support themselves and their families, they have a natural human right to seek work elsewhere. When people are subject to persecution or violence or war they have the right to immigrate and seek a safe place to live.”

Bishop Michael J. Sis
Publisher

Jimmy Patterson
Editor
Media Relations Director

The West Texas Angelus
Official Newspaper of the Diocese of San Angelo, Texas

POSTMASTER: Send all address changes to:
 WEST TEXAS ANGELUS
P.O. Box 1829
SAN ANGELO, TX
76902-1829

Top photo, left to right, Alfredo Chaparro, event organizer; Bishop Michael Sis; Dr. Patel, Hindu Association of West Texas; Dr. Davi Herrerx, president-elect, Unitarian Universalist Church of Midland; Ahmed el Sonbaty, Muslim Association of West Texas, and Fr. David Herrera, pastor of Our Lady of Guadalupe Church; bottom photo, attendees at the Interfaith Vigil.