The Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ

St. Mary Church, Odessa
Friday, April 14, 2017

Photo courtesy of Jacob Ford / Odessa American.

Pictured is Dalyla Miranda (Mary) and Jaime Garza, Jr. (Jesus).
The Inside Front

Sweetwater teen receives Timothy Award at annual banquet

By Becca Nelson Sankey
West Texas Angelus

Thirteen-year-old Mia Valdez knew her name would be called as one of several honorees at the 8th annual Diocesan Awards Banquet in San Angelo on April 2, but she never dreamed she’d receive the top honor for youth, the Timothy Award.

Mia had stepped outside the room when her name was called; when she returned at her father’s urging, approximately 200 people in attendance were clapping with their eyes trained on her as she made her way to the front to accept her award from Bishop Michael Sis.

“It’s a big honor,” Mia said following the ceremony, still looking shell-shocked as she clutched the award.

Sr. Adelina Garcia, OFS, of the Office of Evangelization and Catechesis, which organizes the awards ceremony, said an adult Catechesis leader, an adult youth minister and one youth who have demonstrated exceptional leadership skills are selected each year from the Catholic Diocese of San Angelo. Timothy Award recipients embody the following characteristics: living as a disciple, setting a positive example, witnessing one’s faith, demonstrating Gospel values through service and exhibiting Christian leadership.

The Timothy Award is named for 1 Timothy 4:12, which reads: “Don’t let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith and in purity.”

1000s of new Catholics, including almost 500 in Diocese of San Angelo, welcomed into church

WASHINGTON — A married couple in their golden years, a couple inspired by their late daughter’s legacy, and a salesman who heard Jesus’ call to conversion on a stranger’s porch, are among the thousands who will be welcomed into the Catholic Church on Easter Vigil, April 15, in parishes across the United States. All have participated in the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA), a process of conversion and study in the Catholic faith for catechumens and candidates coming into full communion with the Church.

Floyds Schwartz obtained his bachelor’s degree before turning 20. He sold his family farm in Ballinger, his alma mater, and then went to work in retail before “serendipitously” landing a job as a door-to-door salesman for a life insurance company in 1994.

“Risks make faith essential for farmers,” Schwartz said at a recent gathering of agriculture leaders at Holy Trinity Parish in Big Spring. “Young people coming out of college today are not always guaranteed a paycheck in this business,” Fr. Wade said. “You’re only guaranteed a paycheck if you bring in a good crop.”

Risks make faith essential for farmers.

Gathering of ag leaders in Big Spring focuses on vocation’s challenges

By Jimmy Patterson
Editor / West Texas Angelus

BIG SPRING — Floyd Schwartz did not come by his position in farming by what one would ordinarily think of as the typical means. Many farmers hand down their tillage to children and a farm stays in a family often for many generations.

Floyds Schwartz obtained his 2,000 acres of farmland the hard way; he bought it a section at a time.

“The cotton Schwartz plants and harvests every year south of St. Lawrence makes him an expert in faith, as many farmers simply have to be. “Farmers have more faith than most people,” Schwartz said at a recent gathering of agriculture leaders at Holy Trinity Parish in Big Spring. “To drop a seed in the ground and then wait for it to grow, you have to have faith.”

Schwartz was one of about 50 people from the dioceses of San Angelo, Lubbock, Fort Worth, Amarillo and El Paso who attended the Vocation of the Agriculture Leader workshop April 25 in Big Spring.

Fr. Hubert Wade, who was raised in a farming family and is pastor of St. Mary’s in Ballinger, a community in Runnels County heavily reliant on agriculture, said today’s generation is more reluctant to assume control of a family farm simply because of the uncertainty inherent.

“Young people coming out of college today are not always guaranteed a paycheck in this business,” Fr. Wade said. “You’re only guaranteed a paycheck if you bring in a good crop.”

Runnels County’s main agriculture components are cattle, cotton, wheat, sorghum, dairy, sheep and goats, with an estimated market value of $53.8 million, according to the Texas Almanac.

The workshop was led by Jim Ennis, executive director of Catholic Rural Life and the current president of the International Catholic Rural Association. Ennis was in Texas to lead the same workshop in the Diocese of Victoria, and when Bishop Michael J. Sis learned of his visit, he extended an invitation for Ennis to visit the San Angelo Diocese. The Big Spring workshop was the first of its kind in the state.

“A common concern at the workshop is that the current economic model of agriculture requires large capital expenditure, so it is very difficult for a young person to get started in it,” Bishop Sis noted. “One participant said, ‘If you want to enter into agriculture, you either marry it or your inherit it.’ It is very rare for a person to get into agriculture today on his own. While the financial outlay is considerable, and the risks are great, it is a very beautiful and rewarding life. When the subject turned to faith in the agribusiness industry, (Please See AGRICULTURE/21)
CALENDARS

BISHOP MICHAEL SIS May 2017 SCHEDULE

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

Farming and ranching as Vocation

Of course, just because someone is involved in agriculture, that doesn’t mean they’re automatically a walking saint. Nevertheless, when it is approached properly, rural life builds character and is a path to holiness. I have observed over many years how rural life naturally builds on the dynamics of family life, responsibility, helping one’s neighbor, and a healthy rhythm of work, rest, and prayer.

We in West Texas know very well that agriculture includes plenty of blood, sweat, and tears. The work is hard. Sometimes there is not enough rain or ground water to make ends meet. The scale of modern farming typically requires plenty of credit and involves significant risk. The price of fuel and feed can seriously hinder profitability. Natural events such as fire, hailstorms, and disease can wreak havoc on an operation. Because so many people have gone wrong, farmers and ranchers realize how much we all depend on God to survive.

I believe there is a natural affinity for spirituality in the hearts of those who work the land. Rural life naturally feeds a sense of prayerfulness. For example, the expanding horizons of the open spaces leads us to ponder God. Looking at the stars at night, or the beauty of our West Texas landscapes, inspires us to think of the immensity of God the Creator.

Those who work to produce food and fiber have the privilege of collaborating in God’s creative work. Farming and ranching animals and tilling the earth is a direct response to God’s call to exercise faithful stewardship. It brings a tremendous sense of fulfillment to know that one is helping to feed and clothe the world. Through human work, God takes the raw materials of this world and sustains life.

The quiet and solitude that are experienced in the day of an agricultural worker provide a chance to get in touch with God and oneself. It allows us to think things through deeply and face the truth about our relationships.

Jesus himself came from a small town, as did most of his Apostles. He appreciated the peace and quiet of the wide-open spaces. For example, during his three years of public ministry, he had the practice of going up into the desert to pray. In the Gospel of Mark, verse 1:35 describes this dynamic in the life of Jesus: “Rising very early before dawn, he left and went off to a deserted place, where he prayed.” Many in West Texas do the same thing by going out into the country for quiet prayer time.

The world of agriculture is closely tied to our Catholic sacraments. The two consumables that Jesus Christ uses for the Eucharist are natural agricultural products -- wheat bread and grape wine with no additives. In the Chrism Mass in our Cathedral each year, the three oils that I bless come from olives, sunflowers, and cottonseed. The altar linens we use in Mass are usually made from natural fibers.

Whether we are involved in agriculture or in any other career, if we are to live out our vocations with integrity, all of us must find a way to integrate our daily work with our life of prayer. To lay a

(The Please See BISHOP/19)

From The Bishop’s Desk

Agricultura y la Ganadería como Vocación

Obispo Michael J. Sis

Cuando oímos la palabra “vocación” en el lenguaje de la Iglesia, a menudo pensamos en los sacerdotes, diáconos y hombres de la Iglesia. Sin embargo, la vocación es alguien que está llamado por Dios para ser utilizado por Dios para utilizar nuestros propios talentos personales en la forma que mejor sirve a la consistencia de la vida de nuestro Señor.

La agricultura es una de las profesiones más antiguas y nobles en el mundo. Es una vocación de Dios. Aquí en la Diócesis de San Angelo, celebramos el hecho de que muchos de nuestros hombres y mujeres católicos han recibido esta honorable llamada.

Por supuesto, el mero hecho de estar involucrado en la agricultura no puede causar estrago en una operación. Debido a que muchas cosas podrían salir mal, los agricultores y ganaderos se dan cuenta de lo mucho que dependemos de Dios para sobrevivir.

Creo que hay una afinidad natural para la espiritualidad en los corazones de los que trabajan en el campo. La vida rural alimenta de forma directa a la llamada de Dios en la creación. La cría de animales y el cultivo de la tierra es una respuesta directa a la llamada de Dios a ejercer una responsabilidad fiel. Aporta una gran sensación de satisfacción saber que
Diocese of San Angelo
Superintendent of Catholic Schools – Position Opening
The Diocese of San Angelo is seeking a Superintendent of Schools. The Superintendent of Schools is responsible for coordinating the educational programs of the Catholic Schools in the Diocese of San Angelo, and implementing diocesan guidelines and policies of the Texas Catholic Conference Education Department. There are currently three Catholic Schools in operation in the diocese. The Superintendent of Schools assists the bishop as well as the pastors of the sponsoring parishes, facilitates activities of the Diocesan School Commission, and provides consultation and expertise to the local school boards. The Superintendent also serves as a member of the board of directors for the upcoming Holy Cross Catholic High School in Midland-Odessa. Qualifications for this position include a Master of Education degree with at least 18 hours of Administration Supervision, and 5 years’ experience as a Catholic School principal. This position will become available on June 9, 2017 and is part-time with variable hours. Occasional travel is required. Interested applicants should contact Michael Wyse, Director of Human Resources, Diocesan Pastoral Center; PO Box 1829, San Angelo, TX 76902; (325) 651-7500; E-mail – mwyse@sanangelodiocese.org.

Rural Life Mass May 15
The 16th Annual Rural Life Mass for the Diocese of San Angelo will be celebrated at 6:30 pm, Monday, May 15, 2017, the Feast Day of St. Isidore, at the Rocking Chair Ranch, 15829 Susan Peak Rd., San Angelo. Pastors are invited to have a parishioner bring an offertory gift and join in the procession to the altar during the offertory. Deacon Charlie Evans, Rural Life Coordinator for the Diocese of San Angelo, is asking that each farmer and rancher bring a small bag of soil and/or a small bag of seed, grain, or fresh produces, cotton, home canned fruit, or vegetables, farm equipment, animals etc.

St. Margaret of Scotland Festival
St. Margaret of Scotland Catholic Church will have its spring festival on Sunday, May 21, 2017 at the Columbus Hall 3836 N. Bryant, in San Angelo. There will be a delicious BBQ brisket dinner served from 11:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m. for only $10 per adult plate and $6 per child plate. There will also be plates to go at $10 each. The festival will run from 11:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m. with activities such as a raffle, bingo, auction, silent auction, and games for all ages. Come for a day of family fun and fellowship. FMI contact St. Margaret's 651-4633.

9th annual Lady in Blue Mass May 21
SAN ANGELO — The 9th annual Sor María de Jesús de Ágreda / Lady in Blue celebration will be observed at 6:30 p.m., Sunday, May 21, at the Christ the King Retreat Center in San Angelo. Bishop Michael J. Sis will celebrate Mass in the retreat center chapel. Known as “The Lady in Blue,” Sor María de Jesús de Ágreda was a cloistered nun who lived in Ágreda, Spain in the 1600s. She is known for her evangelization of the Jumanos, a Native American tribe of West Texas and the American Southwest. The arrival of Franciscan missionaries as a result of María’s outreach to the Jumanos secured San Angelo’s place in history as the site of the first missionary efforts in Texas.

Women’s Conference Speakers, dates set
SAN ANTONIO - Registration is now open for the Pilgrim Center of Hope’s Catholic Women’s Conference happening July 28-29, 2017 at St. Mary’s University in San Antonio.

The annual conference, regarded as a “spa for the woman’s soul,” is a two-day event attracting thousands of women from across South and Central Texas, and is in its 16th year. The conference fosters an appreciation for the personal dignity of women, encouraging them to know and love God, and inspiring them to use their feminine gifts for the transformation of family and society. The conference is an event for healing, spiritual direction, and receiving tools for everyday living and resources for education. The Friday evening experience focuses on healing and renewal, with speakers and Eucharistic Adoration and Benediction. Saturday begins with Mass celebrated by newly-ordained Bishop Michael Boulette. Other aspects of the experience include vendor & ministry exhibitors, Reconciliation, a quiet Prayer Room, music, and more. American Sign Language interpretation will be provided.

During the month of the Blessed Virgin Mary (May 1-31), registration is offered at the special rate of $55.

Visit CWCSanAntonio.com for schedule, registration, and further details.

Candidate for Holy Orders

Photos from Installation of seminarian Reggie Odima as a Candidate for Holy Orders at Assumption Seminary in San Antonio.

“Although it was on April Fools Day, April 1, it will be a memorable day because I will always remember that day as the day that I called myself, “a fool... a fool for Christ, as St. Paul in his letters challenges all Christians to be.” I was reminded of Saint Paul’s words in the homily given that day by my Bishop, Micheal Sis. I was blessed to have my bishop there, under special invitation, to install Michael English, my classmate from San Antonio, and me as candidate. I was also blessed to have my family there to join me on this special day. As I now look forward to ordination, I thank you for your continual prayers and I ask for more prayers as we, as a community, prepare for my diaconate ordination. This ministry is for the service of you, blessed people of God! I pray for you, too!”

Top photo, Reggie Odima with his family and to the left of Bishop Sis, center. In photo at left, Reggie Odima with Bishop Sis.

Dates for diaconate ‘Come and See’ Sessions

Below are the dates and locations of informational sessions on future Deacon Formation Classes. Anyone who wishes to find out about the diaconate and the joining requirements should attend.

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Location</th>
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<tr>
<td>Friday May 19, 2017</td>
<td>St. Ann Parish</td>
<td>6:30 to 8:00 p.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Saturday June 3, 2017</td>
<td>Holy Trinity Parish</td>
<td>10:00 – 11:30 a.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wednesday July 12, 2017</td>
<td>Holy Family Parish</td>
<td>6:30 to 8:00 p.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Saturday July 15, 2017</td>
<td>Sacred Heart Cathedral</td>
<td>10:30 a.m. to 12:00 noon</td>
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<td>Rocking Chair Ranch</td>
<td>10:00 – 11:30 a.m.</td>
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<td>20 E. Beauregard St.</td>
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HOLY FAMILY PARISH
5410 Buffalo Gap Rd., Abilene

SACRED HEART CATHEDRAL
20 E. Beauregard
San Angelo
Prayer — the basis for all spiritual formation (and not just for future priests)

By Kevin Lenius
Seminarian / Diocese of San Angelo

Throughout my five years spent as a seminarian for the diocese, there has been one area of formation that has been continually stressed as the most important for our lives as future priests. No, it hasn’t been how to preach a homily without people falling asleep or how to assign a penance in the confessional. It has been prayer, and prayer stressed as relationship. I figured I had an “ok” prayer life before I entered seminary. I went to Mass regularly, prayed the obligatory before meal prayers, and even found some time to sit before Jesus in adoration. Yet, I was in for a big surprise in seeing where Jesus would take my prayer life throughout seminary.

While prayer still has its very difficult moments and I have to constantly struggle to maintain a regular rhythm of prayer, my prayer life has been completely transformed and has soared to heights I didn’t even think possible before seminary. Prayer has turned from time spent saying words to God, to time spent being with Jesus.

Prayer is an essential part of the life of a Christian, and the Church calls all of us to enter into prayer. Yet, it can often be viewed as a compartmentalized area of our life. We end up having our time at work, our time at home, and our time in prayer all separated from one another. Because it is such a struggle to blend our prayer-life into the rest of our daily schedule, and even figure out what exactly we’re supposed to be doing in prayer, I wanted to share a few points that seminary formation has given me over the years that have allowed me to let Jesus develop a new prayer life in me.

1. Prayer is all about relationship. I found that my early days in seminary were very exciting and challenging as I went about seminary business. Yet I felt that my days were simply punctuated with little bits of time for silent prayer and I felt that I needed to go “accomplish” my prayer time. And while I know that it was good for me to take the time to pray, I knew something wasn’t clicking. It wasn’t until later in my formation that I was helped in realizing that prayer is not something we “do” and have to fill time with different whispered words, but it is something we enter into; it is a relationship. Just as I often went into my friends’ rooms on the dorm floors without an agenda and to just hang out, so I learned that Jesus was waiting for me in prayer to simply spend time with me. I realized that he not only loves me … he likes me and wants to just spend time with me! We need only to listen to his voice, and this listening leads me to my next point.

2. Silence cultivates prayer. One thing I quickly learned by going to seminary and temporarily stepping away from the world was that our world is extremely noisy. We are constantly surrounded by TV in our houses, music plugged into our ears, and smartphones always in our hands. It’s no wonder that I complained that I felt like I couldn’t hear Jesus’ voice when I got to seminary! Taking the time to be silent for small periods of my day was difficult at first, but over time I grew to love silence and crave it. And because I was taking the time to be silent, Jesus’ voice became clearer in my prayer as I was able to listen to his heart. Jesus tells us that he abides in our hearts and will make his home with us (John 14:23). If silence is not a part of your life, don’t panic! I simply suggest that a small time for silence is extremely helpful in realizing that prayer is not something we “do” and have to fill time with different whispered words, but it is something we enter into; it is a relationship. Just as I often went into my friends’ rooms on the dorm floors without an agenda and to just hang out, so I learned that Jesus was waiting for me in prayer to simply spend time with me. I realized that he not only loves me … he likes me and wants to just spend time with me! We need only to listen to his voice, and this listening leads me to my next point.

3. Prayer always leads us to and flows from the Mass. One of the biggest realizations I’ve had is that my personal prayer time is not a solitary experience in itself. A life spent with Jesus leads us to the rest of his body, the church, and the greatest prayer of the Church is the Mass. I began to see Mass not as a Church service where there are many formal prayers said, but as one great prayer where the entire church is brought together to truly live and experience the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus! All my time in quiet prayer feeds me in my personal relationship with Christ where I listen to him in my heart and through Scripture, but this time is not fulfilled without the greatest prayer we can enter into. It is in Mass that we hear the Word of God, offer ourselves and our petitions, and receive the very body of Christ given to us out of his great love shared from the Cross. All prayer leads to and flows from this great wellspring of our faith. Prayer leads us to the one who loves us and is constantly searching for us.

Kevin Lenius is a 1st year Theology student at St. Mary’s Seminary in Houston.
some people would consider a form of Bible study although they may follow certain familiar steps.

All sessions begin with an opening prayer and song. A short video is then shown in which people describe their spiritual lives and the influences in their lives which may include family members, friends, and the environment in which they found themselves during different periods in their lives. They describe the circumstances which made them leave their faith and then what influenced them to return to the Catholic faith. After the video, there is a period of reflection concerning what was depicted. Group members are then free to share their feelings about what they observed.

During the time these sessions have been conducted, people have begun to share their own personal feelings and situations as they are connected to the video previously shown. Initially, group members were instructed that no one would be required to speak up or read during the sessions if they felt uncomfortable doing so. As we near the end of the first six sessions, we find group members overcoming their initial shyness and voluntarily sharing certain events in their lives with other members of the group.

After a period of reflection, the session proceeds with a Scripture reading. After a moment of reflection, group members asked what portion of the Scripture touched their lives and stood out for them. Group members provide personal examples and experiences as they pertain to the Scripture reading. Whereas in the beginning of the program group member participation may not have been easily shared, presently there is a strong group participation which has grown during this short six-week period. This sharing of individual experiences has made group members come together as one. Group members share the word of Christ in all these sessions.

(See Please Witness/23)

Standing, from left to right, Albert Serrano, Marcus Hogeda, Mike McEligot, Vangie McEligot, Dora Garza, David Aguirre, Nora Roberts, Susan Reddy, Mary Lou Serrano, Maria Vasquez, Gloria Martinez, Rae Flannery, Higinio Fuentes. Kneeling, Virginia Jungman, Marta Barley, Noemi Avalo, Alicia Fuentes, Liz Longoria.

At Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish in Fort Stockton, Pastor Serafin Avenido’s leadership and support for the Be My Witness program has been instrumental in organizing Phase 1 and 2 Teams. The Be My Witness Phase 1 Parish Leadership Group includes Pastor Serafin Avenido, Bahola Aguirre, Margarita Arroyo, Minnie Dominguez, Alonzo Martinez, Analyn Napay, Nilo Napay, Connie Villarreal, and Mary Ann Terrazas White. Their role is to conduct RENEW Parish Assessments to evaluate what strengths of the parish life are effective for Evangelization, to assess what the areas of opportunities for growth are, and to develop a shared vision for the parish and create a plan to fulfill that vision.

Phase 2 Team roles are to invite members of the parish to join small prayer groups to become missionary disciples and to participate in the parish plan for evangelization outreach. The Small-Community Phase 2 Team and Leaders for the Spanish prayer group are Olga Tavarez, Rita Zapata, Socorro Gonzales, Maria Galindo, and Margarita Arroyo.

The English prayer group is led by Small-Community Leader Delma Sanchez.

Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish has two Be My Witness Small Christian Community Groups. They meet with their groups once a week for six sessions during Lent and six sessions during Advent for faith sharing.

One of the objectives of the small prayer group communities is to invite, create and expand into other Small-Christian Community Groups. The groups just recently completed the Lenten Season sessions. Positive comments were expressed by many of the parishioners of the faith-sharing groups. They look forward to their next six sessions during Advent.

The Small-Christian Community Groups encourages you with this: “If you are thinking about forming a Small-Community Group in your parish, do not hesitate. You’ll really enjoy it, and the time spent together builds unity, bonding, and spiritual growth!”
Fishermen, women and youth

The St. Stephen's Women's Organization and the Knights of Columbus Council 12657, in Midland, hosted its annual Fish Fry with the Youth Group, which provided the dessert for the April 7 occasion.

Members of the Women’s Organization are seen in the top photo. At right are the Knights of Columbus, and below the youth group.

(Courtesy photos)
Stations of the Cross-St. Francis Youth, Abilene

Jesus is crucified

Jesus falls for the third time

Jesus is risen

Jesus meets the women of Jerusalem
the Catholic Churches of South Odessa. Deacon Rodriguez died March 10, 2017. (Courtesy photo by Martha Camarillo).

Funeral for Deacon Bonifacio Rodriguez

Gathered for the Funeral Mass of Deacon Bonifacio “Barney” Rodriguez, March 28, 2017, at St. Anthony’s Church in Odessa, with San Angelo Bishop Michael J. Sis, center, are Deacon Alex Sosa, Deacon Alex Perez, Deacon Ricardo Torres, Deacon Paul Hinojos, Deacon Flabio (Fly) Franco, Deacon Fred Camarillo Sr., Deacon Antonio Gonzalez, Deacon Gary Brooks, Deacon Sal Primera, and Deacon Clemente Villa. Deacon Rodriguez was ordained August 28, 1976, and served the Catholic Churches of South Odessa. Deacon Rodriguez died March 10, 2017. (Courtesy photo by Martha Camarillo).

Acts of Love in Carlsbad

As an act of serving others during Holy Week, parishioners and children of St. Therese Church of Carlsbad donated stuffed animals and blankets to the Tom Green County Crisis Intervention Unit so that children in crisis in Tom Green County could have some measure of comfort during difficult times. The Crisis Intervention Unit was begun by Stewart Dickson in 1999. Its mission is to provide on-scene services to children and families in need 24 hours a day. Crisis intervention is emotional first aid designed to help a person cope during difficult circumstances such as accidents, natural disasters, burglaries, family violence, sexual assault, child abuse, elder abuse, suicide, and death (Courtesy Photo).

Pentecost Vigil brings a holy conclusion to sacred Easter season

By Rev. Ryan Rojo
Parochial Vicar
Sacred Heart Cathedral-San Angelo

A common critique lodged against the Catholic Church is that we do not give due honor to the third Person of the Most Holy Trinity, the Holy Spirit. The Western Tradition — both Catholic and Protestant alike — has traditionally placed a greater emphasis on the salvific work of the second Person, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, Testament to this reality is the primacy of the crucifix in our sanctuaries and the prominence of the Blessed Sacrament — the Body and Blood of Jesus — in our devotional life.

The Catholic Church’s attempt to remedy this situation has recently found expression in the Charismatic Renewal, a movement that places great weight on the supernatural workings of the Holy Spirit. The Charismatic Renewal has proven to be a most amiable gift to the Church that has produced much fruit, but the critique is all the same: What are we doing to enflame the fire of Pentecost in our local, parish communities?

The Solemnity of Pentecost remains the Church’s ordinary celebration in honor of the Holy Spirit. As we know, the entire action of the Sacred Liturgy is enlivened and effected by the power of the Holy Spirit, but Pentecost is the moment where Catholics — as a universal Church — concentrate particularly on the action and working of the Holy Spirit.

The Third Edition of the Roman Missal, in addition to reclaiming a sacral vernacular, also answered the Church’s call to re incorporate the tradition of the Pentecost Vigil into the liturgical life of the Church. The Congregation for Divine Worship, the Church’s official liturgical arm, released in 1988 a “Circular Letter Concerning the Preparation and Celebration of the Easter Feasts.” In this letter, the Church continues:

This sacred period of fifty days concludes with Pentecost Sunday ... Encouragement should be given to the prolonged celebration of Mass in the form of a Vigil, whose character is not baptismal as in the Easter Vigil, but is one of urgent prayer, after the example of the Apostles and disciples, who preserved together in prayer with Mary, the Mother of Jesus, as they awaited the Holy Spirit.

The Easter Season begins with a most magnificent Vigil complete with God’s word, hymns, and solemnity. The Pentecost Vigil, truly equal in dignity, concludes this most sacred time with God’s word, hymns, and solemnity.

Pius Parch, a liturgical commentator from the early 20th Century, tells us that the Pentecost Vigil developed as a practical alternative for those who were unable to receive the Sacraments at the Easter Vigil (The Church’s Year of Grace, 202). The contemporary spiritual potential, however, is manifold for many parish in the Diocese of San Angelo. We are graced to have many ministerial outreach programs in our parishes that — we hope — are enlivened by the activity of the Holy Spirit. Could a pastor be so creative so as to include these many groups in the liturgical celebration of the Pentecost Vigil? Could the scriptural and homiletic richness of the Pentecost Vigil be a tool to revitalize their ministry? Could the story of Babel, or the richness of Ezekiel’s ‘dry bones’, aid our everyday work in God’s Church?

Every cathedral has the unique task of being a witness of liturgical excellence to the entire diocese (Sacrosanctum Concilium 4). The Cathedral Church of the Sacred Heart in San Angelo will be celebrating the Pentecost Vigil in its entirety on Saturday, June 3, 2017 at 5 p.m. It is our hope that this opportunity will enliven the graces of the Easter Season, through the power of the Holy Spirit, in the hearts of our faithful. Please feel free to join us for this joyous occasion.

And it is certainly my hope that this liturgical celebration takes root in the hearts of our many, wonderful parishes throughout the Diocese of San Angelo.

Fr. Ryan Rojo is parochial vicar of the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart in San Angelo.
In the late 1650s, the Quebec mission that was founded by Samuel de Champlain in 1608 was a little settlement of fewer than 2,000 inhabitants and greatly in need of apostolic leadership. It was to this territory that Pope Alexander VII appointed François Montmorency-Laval as vicar apostolic. Paul Burns writes in Butler’s Lives of the Saints that this was the newly established apostolic vicariate of New France, as the French settlements in North America were then known.

François (Francis) was well prepared for this mission assignment. He was born in the Eure region of northwestern France in 1623 into a distinguished family. His father was Hughes de Laval and his mother was Michelle de Péricard. He began his education with the Jesuits at their school in La Flèche where he showed an early interest in an ecclesiastical career.

Burns writes that he was appointed canon of Evreux Cathedral by the bishop who was his uncle. This happened before he was ordained a priest. Francis moved on to study for the priesthood at Clermont College in Paris, but was called away to take charge of the family business after his two older brothers died. He was finally able to return to his studies and was ordained in 1647. He quickly received appointment as archdeacon of Evreux where he was responsible for administering church property and appointing the clergy. After several years in this post, he became the vicar apostolic of the missionary territory of Tonkin (the northern part of what is now Viet Nam). But, Burns writes, that Francis never actually went there because this was a time of wars between warlords of the north and south.

Francis then entered a meditative period and spent the next four years in retreat at the school of spirituality in the Hermitage at Caen, near the Normandy coast. Because of his previous appointments, Francis was considered an important figure in church circles.

Matthew Bunson writes in John Paul II’s Book of Saints that soon after his appointment as vicar apostolic of New France in 1658, Francis was consecrated a bishop on December 8 of that year. Shortly thereafter Francis sailed for Canada and reached Quebec in June 1659. There, he found a frontier diocese in need of organization and stability. His diocese included all of North America except for the British-held lands of New England and the Spanish settlements. When he arrived in Quebec, Francis said that his sole mission was to be “a bishop according to God’s Heart.”

For the next 30 years, Francis devoted his life to the mission Church. He founded parishes and defended the Native tribes from exploitation by European merchants. He also attempted to limit the sales of alcohol and to regulate the fur trade. He returned to France in 1662, and, according to Burns, obtained many privileges for the Church in Canada from King Louis XIV.

He founded a seminary in Quebec and in 1674 when Quebec became a diocese, Francis became its first bishop. He spent the next several years erecting a cathedral dedicated to the Immaculate Conception and restoring a shrine of St. Anne at Baupré. He is also responsible for starting the Catholic school system in Canada.

He was an active bishop for 10 years but his health began to deteriorate from the many years of intense activity in harsh conditions, and he resigned the see in 1684. He spent the last years of his life in retirement in the seminary he had founded and died there on May 6, 1708.

Burns writes that in 1712 the see of Quebec extended over the whole territory of New France covering Canada and most of the present U.S. excluding the English colonies in the east and the Spanish territories in the south. There are now more than 150 dioceses in modern Canada.

Francis de Montmorency-Laval was beatified by Pope John Paul II in 1980 and is considered the father of the church in Canada. On April 3, 2014, Pope Francis made him a saint by “equipollent canonization” or “declared by decree.” His feast day is May 6.

Mary Lou Gibson writes about saints from her home in Austin.
Abiding in Jesus

We all want to go to heaven, right? The Baltimore Catechism teaches that "God made me to know Him, to love Him, and to serve Him in this world, and to be happy with Him for ever in heaven." While we're on earth, the Holy Spirit is forming us for happiness in heaven by the Fruit of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control—His essence (Gal 5:22-23, RSVCE). The tradition of the Church adds three other fruits of the Spirit: generosity, modesty, and chastity.

"God is Love" (1 Jn 4:8, 16) and love is his first gift, containing all others. "God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has given us our sins, restores the image of God in us lost through sin, incorporates us into His life in the Trinity, and gifts us with the grace to love as He has loved us. Because "He...has grafted us onto the true vine..." He will give us power to bear the fruit of the Spirit. "The more we renounce ourselves the more we 'walk by the Spirit' (CCC 733-36). The fruit of the Spirit is love in action.

Several Scripture commentaries point out that Paul writes 'fruit' (singular) instead of 'fruits' (plural), suggesting that life in the Spirit is integrated and whole, not fragmented or divided. Love, joy, and peace are united in our relationship with God in Christ: love (reverence and devotion) for Him, joy (delight and contentment) in Him, and peace ('tranquility of order') from Him (St. Augustine). In the power of His Holy Spirit, we are able to live this love, joy, and peace in our relationships. Patience is long-suffering with others as God is long-suffering with us. Kindness — kindheartedness — is compassion and mercy and is inseparable from goodness, which is righteousness. Faithfulness is steadfastness and perseverance in our relationship with God and others. Gentleness is meekness flowing from humility — not to be confused with weakness. Self-control is discipline of self. Generosity is unselfishness and magnanimity. Modesty is propriety in appearance and behavior. Chastity is moral purity.

The fruit of the Spirit is just that. It is not our fruit that we produce on our own. It is the work of the Spirit of Love manifested in the life of the Christian believer. "I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. Every branch of mine that bears no fruit he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes that it may bear more fruit. You are already made clean by the word which I have spoken to you. Abide in me and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me. I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing" (Jn 15:1-5).

How do we abide in Christ, the "true vine," who enables us to cooperate with His Spirit? We do this primarily in and through the Sacraments, Scripture, and prayer. We are united with Christ in His death and resurrection in the Sacrament of Baptism. We receive Him in the fullness of His being in the Sacrament of the Eucharist, His Precious Body and Blood. His Spirit is "fanned into flame" in us in the Sacrament of Confirmation. In the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation, we are cleansed of the barriers that hinder our cooperation with Him. 

Matthew Kelly points out in his book "Rediscover Catholicism," that we have forgotten our story, and in doing so, we have allowed the world to forget it as well.

Two thousand years ago, a small group of people captured the attention and intrigued the imagination of the entire Western world. At first, these people were thought to be of no consequence, but as they began telling the stories of Jesus Christ, people began to join this quiet revolutionary group 100 at a time. They are the original followers of Jesus of Nazareth and the first members of what we know today as the Catholic Church.

We have come a long way from our humble beginnings. And yet, as great as our achievements may be, as great as our numbers are today, we seem unable to capture the attention and intrigue the imaginations of the people of our own time the way our spiritual ancestors did.

As the centuries have passed, much has changed. Our Church’s history is not without blemish; our future will not be without blemish. But our contribution as a Church to the needs of the world is unmatched, and it’s needed today more than ever before. Kelly notes:

• There is genius in Catholicism, if we will just take the time and make the effort to humbly explore it.
• There is nothing wrong with Catholicism that can’t be fixed by what is right with Catholicism.
• If sixty-seven million Catholics in the United States stepped it up a notch, something incredible would happen.

So let’s decide, here and now, today, to begin to explore the genius of our faith, to be part of the solution.
Seminarians engage in democratic process

By Jimmy Patterson
Editor / West Texas Angelus

AUSTIN — Seminarian Kevin Lenius’ first Catholic Advocacy Day was summed up by one important takeaway: social-media driven angst and fury-filled rants often found on venues such as Facebook and Twitter are not reality.

And that’s a good thing.

The real political process, the one that matters and makes a difference in the lives of Texans and Americans, is in the interpersonal communication between elected lawmakers, their offices and constituents on a day-to-day level and found in lawmakers’ offices and often initiated by constituents on days like April 4, 2017. Catholic Advocacy Day was an example of democracy in action, and of the people taking citizens the opportunity to plant conversational seeds with their elected representatives, a vital takeaway: social-media driven angst and fury-filled rants often found on venues such as Facebook and Twitter are not reality.

By Jimmy Patterson
Editor / West Texas Angelus

AUSTIN — Catholics from across Texas spilled into Austin in April for Catholic Advocacy Day, a biennial event during which lawmakers are lobbied on a school choice bill because of the group’s assurances that he would conduct more research on the school choice bill because of the group’s assurances that he would conduct more research on what God seems to be asking of us in these situations with those who He communicated that while we do need to secure our border and protect our country from criminals entering illegally, we cannot let bureaucracy blind us to those good people who are already here and who deserve our love and protection. Indeed, Christ himself was once an immigrant along with Deacon Freddy Medina, Director of the Diocesan Office for Hispanic Catholics, who organized the trip. Three seminarians — Deacon Tim Hayter, Thomas Shows and Kevin Lenius — and deacon candidate Tom Collier and his wife, Pat, of Midland.

Catholic school students, attended from the Diocese of Lubbock, Bishop Michael J. Sis led the San Angelo contingent, along with Deacon Tim Hayter, Thomas Shows and Kevin Lenius — and deacon candidate Tom Collier and his wife, Pat, of Midland.

Catholics from the diocese visited with four state lawmakers on issues as wide ranging as school choice, immigration reform, foster care and adoption reform, healthcare, abortion and payday lending. State representatives Tom Craddick of Midland; Drew Darby of San Angelo, and Stan Lambert, of Abilene, met with the San Angelo group. A representative from Brooks Landgraf’s office answered questions on behalf of the Odessa lawmaker who was not in attendance for the group’s visit. “I think we had all of our questions answered,” said Bishop Michael J. Sis. “But we did not always agree with the answers we received.”

San Angelo Bishop Emeritus Michael D. Pfeifer; the contingent of Catholics from the Diocese of San Angelo, with Bishop Michael Sis, at the state capitol; Bishop Sis, Bishop Six with Rep. Tom Craddick, of Midland; Bishop Sis with Brownsville Bishop Daniel Flores, meet with representatives of the Speaker of the Texas House, Rep. Joe Straus. (Photos by Karen J. Patterson)
Making Sense of Bioethics

At the heart of the tragedy of drug and alcohol addiction

By Fr. Tad Pacholczyk

Addiction can be extremely harmful, and in some cases, fatal for those individuals ensnared by it. It can be seriously destructive and damaging to those around them. Who is to blame when it comes to addiction? Family and friends may think to themselves, “Why can’t Jane just stop drinking?” Or, “Doesn’t Joe understand that his gambling addiction is bankrupting the family?” Or, “Can’t Bob see how his substance use affects his marriage and his relationships?”

But those facing addiction, it seems they ought to be able to recognize their behavior as harmful, and turn away from it by a resolute decision. Family and friends, however, can face years of frustration when they see their loved ones fall in a slow motion “crash and burn,” spiraling downwards as they lose control of their lives, or unable to step away from their addiction.

The individual caught in the web of addiction objectively falls prey to a loss of personal freedom. His will becomes weakened, and he becomes enslaved in a way that limits his ability to recognize the right order of goods in his life. By repetitively choosing the addictive behavior, it becomes ingrained, and the ability to choose better, alternative behaviors becomes enfeebled, if not seemingly impossible. For these reasons, there is almost always diminished personal responsibility in situations of addiction.

To be accountable for our acts, we must freely choose those acts, but the internal pressure and downward spiral of the addiction may have already co-opted the individual’s ability freely to choose otherwise. Eventually this bondage can appear to be permanent, and addicted individuals can imagine themselves pathetic and hopeless to such a degree that they almost give up.

In the words of a formerly-addicted individual: “I believe that I did not have a choice to stop…. It never became clear to me that I could live and choose another life. The idea of consoling the addiction from my physicians and friends took place. Willpower plays a small role here, but it too cannot work if one has a malfunctioning brain. I speak for myself here… I could not stop.”

Period.

“Now, I have stopped. Not just because of the intervention, but because I have turned my life and my will over to the God of my understanding. That is something 12 step programs have taught me.”

This radical loss of freedom lies at the heart of the tragedy of addiction. Because we are creatures of habit, the choices we make, either for good or for evil, form us in one direction or the other, so we become individuals who are either capable or incapable of choosing the good freely. Virtue is a habit of good, while vice is a habit of evil. Early choices leading down the road towards addiction, freely made, can quickly snowball into vice, addiction and a loss of freedom. As one recovered addict graphically described it:

“My beef is with those who claim that they never chose to become an addict or never chose to hurt their families.

“While we likely didn’t intend to end up helpless, dysfunctional people who [hurt] our loved ones, the choices we made put us at risk of ending up in a sorry state where we were capable of doing things we would have never dreamed of. Unless you were raised on Mars, we all deep down knew the risk of our choices, especially if you’re talking about coke, crack, meth, or heroin but we chose to roll the dice anyways. At a certain point, when I was starting to do coke almost every weekend, I knew that it would be wise to stop, but I chose not to because I was having fun and I told myself it will never happen to me.

“By the end, I was going on solo three day benders with alcohol and cocaine, and I landed in treatment…. my point is that I made the choice to try the substance, the choice to begin to use the substance more regularly, and the choice not to quit when I could have.”

While there may have been significant moral culpability at the beginning of an individual’s descent into addiction, it is still critical for us to never stigmatize, patronize or abandon those who are in the throes of addiction.

They may feel they are defined entirely by their addiction, unlovable and wretched, rather than seeing that they are, in fact, human beings who are precious to God and those around them, and even now endowed with some tiny space of remaining freedom. That tiny space will become key to determining whether they ultimately choose the behavioral changes needed to improve their situation and recover their ability to recognize the right order of goods in their lives.

We should support, encourage and love them in ways that will help lead them toward those good choices and successful outcomes.

Rev. Tadeusz Pacholczyk, Ph.D. earned his doctorate in neuroscience from Yale 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.

CALENDARS (continued)

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Discerning the call to a religious life

By Maria-Pia Negro Chin

Catholic News Service

This month, Pope Francis’ prayer intention, according to the Apostleship of Prayer, is “that young people may respond generously to vocations and seriously consider offering themselves to God in the priesthood or consecrated life.”

What makes young men and women want to offer their whole life to God in this way? Discerning “the call” to a religious life is different for each person. Sister Jennifer Barrow, who professed her first vows last year, said that she first thought about religious life in high school and in college. “I really did not know what it meant,” she said, reflecting on her journey.

After college, she completed a year of service with Mercy Volunteer Corps, a volunteer program of the Sisters of Mercy of the Americas. While volunteering in Texas, she realized she was attracted to “the joy of the Sisters (of Mercy), their prayerfulness and the care they show in community, the way they engage in service.”

Afterward, Sister Barrow went to law school while embarking on a discernment process with a spiritual director and a vocation minister. During this time of inquiry, she also visited the Mercy community and went on retreats. The charism of the Sisters of Mercy resonated in her heart, and after law school, she applied to become a Sister of Mercy, a process that takes at least seven years.

Like many other religious and priests, Sister Barrow prayerfully engaged in discernment during this process. Discerning the voice and call of the Holy Spirit from other calls or desires in life can help people, especially young people, to become who they were created to be.

God calls people with different backgrounds, personalities and life experiences.

Discerning the llamado a una vida religiosa

By Maria-Pia Negro Chin

Catholic News Service

Este mes, la intención de la oración del papa Francisco, según el Apostolado de la Oración, es “por los jóvenes, para que sepan responder con generosidad a su propia vocación; considerando seriamente también la posibilidad de consagrarse al Señor en el sacerdocio o en la vida consagrada”.

¿Qué hace que los jóvenes quieran ofrecer toda su vida a Dios de esta manera?

Discernir “el llamado” a una vida religiosa es diferente para cada persona. La hermana Jennifer Barrow, quien profesó sus primeras votos el año pasado, dijo que sus primeros pensamientos en este sentido fueron “se consagrar a la vida religiosa”.

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¿Qué hace que los jóvenes quieran ofrecer toda su vida a Dios de esta manera?
Catholic Voices

A volunteer’s experience

By Effie Caldarola
Catholic News Service

The Jesuit Volunteer Corps was young -- and so was I -- when I first arrived at a remote Alaskan village to teach school at a Jesuit boarding school for Native Alaskan students as a member of the Jesuit Volunteer Corps.

There were no cellphones yet, and the internet did not exist. In the village of St. Mary’s, and in other villages on the far-flung Alaskan tundra, there was no television reception. A phone existed for the village -- just one -- and it was in one man’s home for general use.

St. Mary’s, a commercial hub, had an airport a few miles away where jets landed a couple of times a week, weather permitting, bringing mail and supplies. No road system existed, and still doesn't for most of Alaska’s Bush.

When our contingent of volunteers arrived, a Jesuit brother met us at the airport and loaded us on a flatbed truck for the bumpy trek to St. Mary’s. I grew up on a Nebraska farm, so I know what lonely stretches of land look like. But nothing prepared me for miles of treeless tundra with no evidence of human habitation.

When we arrived at the village, culture shock hit. The volunteer's women's dormitory was surprisingly modern, but as I gazed out of my second-story window, watching the Andreafsky River wind its way toward its confluence with the mighty Yukon, I panicked.

We had a school nurse, and the village had a minimally trained health aide. I'm going to get appendicitis here, I surmised. There will be a blizzard and the jets won't fly and I will die here.

I ended up staying three volunteer years, some of the happiest of my life.

This was in the 1970s. Rural Alaska has changed in the years since. The discovery of oil on the North Slope swelled state coffers and brought modernization and new village schools. The boarding school at St. Mary's closed in the 1980s.

But the Jesuit Volunteer Corps lives on, and adventures and challenges endure for those who want to give a year of their lives to service.

The Jesuit Volunteer Corps started in Alaska in 1956 in another Jesuit boarding school. By the 1960s, the organization had spread throughout the Northwest and beyond. The Jesuit Volunteer Corps became a template for subsequent volunteer groups, including the Peace Corps.

Gradually, regional Jesuit Volunteer Corps organizations grew up -- the Midwest, East, South and Southwest joined the Northwest. These coexisted as separate agencies until four of the regions and Jesuit Volunteer International merged, with headquarters in Baltimore.

All Jesuit Volunteer Corps share the four core values: spirituality, simple living, community, and social and ecological justice.

Ignatian discernment is the heart of Jesuit spirituality, and after long, prayerful discernment, Jesuit Volunteer Corps Northwest decided to remain autonomous, rooted in the region and its long history.

'It has found a happy partnership with AmeriCorps, a national program. In 2010, Jesuit Volunteer Corps Northwest was awarded a three-year National Direct AmeriCorps award, which has been renewed in three-year increments since.

Most members of Jesuit Volunteer Corps Northwest are also AmeriCorps members, and receive an education award at year’s end. This helps more young people from diverse economic brackets afford to serve for a year and lowers the cost for agencies needing volunteers.

AmeriCorps funding is threatened by the Trump administration’s proposed budget cuts, which include the Corporation for Public Broadcasting and the National Endowment for Arts and the National Endowment for the Humanities. It’s early. But budgets are moral documents, so we’ll be watching.

Meanwhile, Jesuit Volunteer Corps Northwest, national Jesuit Volunteer Corps and other Catholic volunteer organizations offer a chance to experience what I did when I climbed off that flatbed: service, spiritual growth, community, challenge.

‘If we lose self-respect, love for each other, we die’

By Father Eugene Hemrick
Catholic News Service

Is a new age of disrespect upon us? Are we experiencing growing impertinence, insolence and contempt? This leads us to ask what exactly respect is.

Our best answer can be found in the transfiguration of Christ.

To escape the crowds, Christ, Peter, James and John ascend a mountain in search of peace and quiet. Once settled down, Christ suddenly becomes transfigured, his face shines and his clothes become dazzling white. Elijah and Moses appear and converse with Jesus.

Experiencing the awesome moment, Peter exclaims, “Rabbi, it is good that we are here!”

As the they leave the mountain, Christ tells them not to mention the experience to anyone until the ”Son of Man has been raised from the dead.”

In the transfiguration, we have two essential qualities of respect: awe and reverential space. To be in awe is to realize that I am in the presence of greatness and to whisper, “Lord, it is good to be here!”

When Joshua encountered the commander of God’s army in the Old Testament, he fell face down to the ground in reverence, acknowledging the awesomeness of the moment and humbly paying it homage. Respect is a bow to awesomeness.

But why are the apostles exhort to tell no one of the transfiguration?

Theologian Father Romano Guardini states when we are in awe of another, awe "forbids obtrusiveness, keeps one at a distance, does not permit the breath of one’s own being to touch the revered object."

In other words, one doesn’t go public about reverential moments, nor try to promote the fact of personally being close to an awesome event. Respect stands back, creating reverential space and letting that which is awesome speak.

Poet Maya Angelou wrote, "If we lose love and self-respect for each other, this is how we finally die." Her observation raises serious questions about our present age.

Are signs of disrespect outweighing signs of respect?

Is respectful rhetoric dying? Is today's rhetoric becoming more awful than awesome? Is the desecrated spoken word overshadowing the sacredness of the spoken word?

Politics has always had a dark side, but it also has an awesome side. Is its dark side clouding out its awesomeness, thus creating repugnant politics?

Respect for other cultures is an American virtue. Have we entered an age in which we are demonizing other cultures and losing sight of the rich cultural gifts which bless us?

Maya Angelou's observation about respect is sobering. To the degree that respect exists is the degree to which we live or die.
A mellow heart in a bitter time

By Fr. Ron Rolheiser

In her novel, *A Good House*, Bonnie Burnard tells the story of a relatively happy family. But even happy families have unhappy moments where bitterness chills an otherwise warm house.

She describes one such incident: A young couple, solid and trusting in their relationship, are having a rather intimate talk one afternoon when the woman’s instincts tell her that her husband is hiding something from her, not necessarily at the level of infidelity, but something that he, for whatever reason, will not share with her.

Instantly a door begins to close inside of her, her warmth and trust harden, and she feels the need to protect herself, assert some independence from her husband, and let him know that there are aspects of her life that he doesn’t necessarily know about either. Their intimacy, so warm and trusting just minutes before, dissolves for a while into a certain coolness and distance. What’s happened here?

What’s happened is what happens to all of us, spontaneously and daily, in virtually all of our relationships, particularly with those with whom we are most intimate.

By Most Rev. Robert Barron

Auxiliary Bishop of Los Angeles

The Case for Christ is a film adaptation of Lee Strobel’s best-selling book of the same name, one that has made an enormous splash in Evangelical circles and in the media. The movie is the story of a young, ambitious (and atheist) reporter for the Chicago Tribune, who fell into a psychological and spiritual crisis when his wife became a Christian.

The scenes involving Lee and his spouse, which play out over many months of their married life, struck me as poignant and believable—and I say this with some authority, having worked with a number of couples in a similar situation. In some other cases, the non-believer sees the dawning of faith in his beloved as something akin to a betrayal. This latter situation strongly obtained in the Strobel’s marriage.

In order to resolve the tension, Lee used his considerable analytical and investigative skills to debunk the faith that so beguiled his wife. The focus of his inquiry was, at the suggestion of a Christian colleague at the Tribune, the resurrection of Jesus. If Jesus didn’t rise, his friend explained, Christianity crumbles like a house of cards. The narrative unfolds, then, as a kind of detective story, Strobel hunting down leads, interrogating experts, asking the hard questions.

I liked this for a couple of reasons. First, at its best, Christianity is not fideist, that is to say, reliant upon a pure and uncritical act of faith on the part of its adherents. There is always a reason and welcomes critical questions. Secondly, and relatedly, Christianity is a stubbornly historical religion. It is not a philosophy (though it can employ philosophical language), nor is it a spirituality (though a spirituality can be distilled from it); rather, it is a relationship to an historical figure about whom an extraordinary historical claim has been made, namely, that he rose bodily from the dead.

Now especially in recent years, many attempts have been made to mitigate the scandal of this assertion. Jesus was a great moral exemplar, a powerful teacher of spiritual truth, an inspiring man of God—and these are the ingredients that have reason and welcome critical questions. This, too, is a relationship to an historical figure about whom an extraordinary historical claim has been made, namely, that he rose bodily from the dead.

At each stage of the process, Strobel continued to wonder, question, balk, and argue, all the time maintaining the default position that Christianity is bunk. Nevertheless, it was becoming clear that the relentlessness of the counter-arguments and their stubborn congruence with one another was wearing him down. This is the challenge that Newman’s famous account of how we come to religious assent. It is very rarely by virtue of one clinching argument, Newman said, but rather through the slow, steady confluence of inference, hunch, intuition, experience, the witness of others, etc. This convergence of probabilities, under the aegis of what Newman called the “illative sense,” customarily leads the mind to assent.

In the course of their conversation, Strobel’s priest-archeologist interlocutor showed the skeptical journalist a reproduction of the Shroud of Turin, purported to be the burial cloth of Jesus. Gazing into the face of the image, Strobel asked, “What would have made him go through all of this?” The priest responded, “That’s easy: love.” As the arguments were jostling in his head, Strobel remembered that image and that explanation—and the filmmakers insinuate that this is what finally pushed him over into belief.

The Case for Christ is interesting for any number of reasons, but I think it is particularly compelling for its subtle portrayal of the psychological, spiritual, and intellectual dynamics of evangelization.
Sheikhoun with sarin gas, in violation of the Chemical

member of Congress, I would vote for

By John Garvey

(Good shot!) This is not the role the

cheering the volley from the sidelines.

a spectator but not a player, politely

Sunday afternoon crowd at Wimbledon,

his own. Congress stood by like a

Syrian air base, I worry that we have

allowed 324 people who underwent sexual

erenced a 2011 long-term study that fol-

psychiatrist at Johns Hopkins Hospital, ref-

Journal, Dr. Paul McHugh, former chief

accept their own body as it was created"

struggling with gender dysphoria (apparent

and surgery to mutilate the sex organs do

surgery? (Alexandria, Pennsylvania)

2297). That statement is generally consid-

persons are against the moral law" (No.

Q. For some time now, I have been dis-

turbed by the fact that, several times a
day, EWTN telecasts the Mass of that
day without indicating that these Masses
are prerecorded and not "live." Surely 99
percent of those watching feel that they
are participating in the liturgy of the Holy
Mass. This has significant import on the
spiritual lives of the network's viewers, especially on

Sundays.

I have written repeatedly to the net-

work urging them at least to precede
such Masses with a statement indicating
that the presentation is for inspirational
purposes only and not a real Mass, but
no adjustment has been made.

Do you agree with me that the station
needs to correct this? (While I am sure
this is unintentional, the network is
involved in a serious matter of deceptive
spiritual broadcasting.) (Merion Station, Pennsylvania)

A. On Sundays and other holy days of
obligation, a Catholic who is able to do so
has a serious obligation to attend Mass, i.e.,
to participate personally in the eucharistic
celebration. If prevented, however, by sick-
ness, infirmity due to old age, severe weath-
er or other emergency, the obligation ceases;
nor is that person then morally bound to
"make up" for the absence by watching
Mass on television (although this is certainly
worthwhile.)

If the person is legitimately impeded from
attending the Mass, it doesn't have to
"count" because there is no obligation in the
first place. Such a person is, in fact, watching
the televised Mass for (in your words)
"inspirational purposes" in which case it
matters not at all that the Mass has been
prerecorded.

In my own diocese, where I was once
responsible for arranging to have the
Sunday Mass televised, we filmed those
Masses on the previous Wednesday evening
(because studio time was less expensive and
priest-celebrates easier to find.) So, to
answer your question -- no, I don't think that
EWTN is involved in "deceptive broadcast-

ing" or needs to correct anything.

Q. Would you please print a prayer of
protection against tornadoes? Tornado
warnings get my full attention. Recently,
six tornadoes touched down here in
Middle Tennessee on the same day.
The television news had warned that
the last of the six was headed to the next
road over from ours. That is too close for
me. The next time we might not be so
lucky. (Columbia, Tennessee)

A. I am not aware of any specific prayer
against tornadoes, but I do know that St.
Medard is traditionally regarded as the
patron saint against bad weather. He was a
bishop in France during the first half of the
sixth century.

Legend has it that when he was a child, he
was once sheltered from a violent rainstorm
by an eagle that hovered over his head. That
is how he is commonly depicted in art, and
Christians have long invoked his aid in
stormy weather.

The prayer that is said admits of different
versions but generally goes something like this:

"Lord Jesus, though the intercession of St.
Medard, be with me during the storms of
my life and the storms of nature. Protect the
victims of hurricanes, tornadoes, earth-
quakes and other natural disasters. Send
helpers and multiply the supplies that are
needed for their aid. You calmed the storm
on the Sea of Galilee; deliver us now from
the storms that rage around us. Amen."

Q. Recently my seventh-grader came
home from his CCD class and said that
his teacher had taught them that all rich
people are "evil, going to hell and don't
work" and that all poor people are
"good, going to heaven and work hard."

In the teacher's defense, English is her
subject? (This whole affair, in fact,
has made me question whether to stay
with the Catholic Church.) (Roanoke,
Virginia)

A. First, to answer your theological ques-
tion. No, riches don't necessarily doom
people to hell. It depends what they do with
those riches, how they share them.

Joseph of Arimathea, described in
Matthew's Gospel as a rich man and a disciple
of Jesus (he could afford a rock-hewn
tomb for Christ's burial), is venerated by
the church as a saint.

Pope Francis, writing in 2014 to the
world's economic elite assembled in
Switzerland, said that "it is intolerable
that thousands of people continue to die
every day from hunger, even though substantial
quantities of food are available, and often
simply wasted." The responsibility to share
hangs heavily on individuals as well as on
nations.

In a homily at his morning Mass in May
2016, Pope Francis commented on the bibli-
cal warning that "you cannot serve both
God and mammon." He explained that the
problem comes when one begins to idolize
money. "Riches," said the pope, can become
"chains" that take away "the freedom to fol-

Jesus.

Riches, then, are a blessing that must be
managed: "They come with a moral duty to
help the needy. And the church in its
fundraising relies on the generosity -- the
sacrifice, even -- of its members to help
the vulnerable whom society tends to forget.

As for your own next move, you should
surely speak with the religious education
director or to your pastor. If that is actually
what your son's teacher said, she is wrong and
needs to be corrected; if -- and this is more
likely -- she was simply misunderstood, she
needs to correct that, too.

And as for your staying with the Catholic
Church, I trust that your allegiance does not
depend on the words of one CCD teacher.
It really has more to do -- doesn't it? -- with
the teachings of Jesus, the availability of the
sacraments and the long history of the
church as the protector of the poor.
By Carol Glatz
Catholic News Service

CAIRO — Placing flowers, lighting a candle and praying at the site where dozens of Coptic Orthodox Christians were killed by an Islamic State militant last year, Pope Francis and Coptic Orthodox Pope Tawadros II paid homage to those who were killed for their faith.

Pope Francis and Pope Tawadros walked in a short procession to the Church of St. Peter, where 29 people died and 31 were wounded Dec. 11. The faithful chanted a song of martyrs, and some clashed cymbals under the darkened evening sky.

Inside the small church, the leaders of several other Christian communities in Egypt as well as Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew of Constantinople sat before the congregation, which included family members of the victims.

A portion of one wall of the complex was splattered with blood, and pictures of those killed -- many with bright smiles to the camera -- were hung above. Some of the church's stone columns were laced with debris or spattered with blood from the explosion.

Each of the eight Christian leaders seated before the congregation, beginning with Pope Francis, read a verse from the beatitudes in the Gospel of St. Matthew. Pope Francis and Pope Tawadros then each said a few words in prayer, and everyone shared a sign of peace.

Led by Pope Francis, the eight leaders went to the back of the church, where each lit a small candle and placed white flowers beneath the photos of the martyrs. Pope Francis leaned low to touch the blood-stained wall and made the sign of the cross.

Earlier, in a historic and significant move toward greater Christian unity, Pope Tawadros and Pope Francis signed an agreement to end a longtime disagreement between the two churches over the sacrament of baptism.

The Coptic Orthodox Church had required new members joining from most non-Coptic churches -- including those who had previously been baptized as Catholic -- to be baptized again.

The Catholic Church recognizes all Christian baptisms performed with water and in "the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit." Orthodox who enter the Catholic Church are received as full members, but not baptized again.

In the joint declaration, the two leaders "mutually declare that we, with one mind and heart, will seek sincerely not to repeat the baptism that has been administered in either of our churches for anyone who wishes to join the other."

The document was signed during a courtesy visit with Pope Tawadros at the Coptic Orthodox Cathedral April 28. In his speech to Pope Tawadros and other Coptic Orthodox leaders, Pope Francis said, "The innocent blood of defenseless Christians was cruelly shed." He told them it was that innocent blood "that united us."

"Your sufferings are also our sufferings," he said, the first day of a two-day visit to Egypt's capital.

"How many martyrs in this land, from the first centuries of Christianity, have lived their faith heroically to the end, shedding their blood rather than denying the Lord and yielding to the enticements of evil or merely to the temptation of repaying evil with evil?"

"How many martyrs in this land, from the first centuries of Christianity, have lived their faith heroically to the end, shedding their blood rather than denying the Lord and yielding to the enticements of evil or merely to the temptation of repaying evil with evil," he said.

He encouraged Catholic and Orthodox to work hard to "oppose violence by preaching and sowing goodness, fostering concord and preserving unity, praying that all these sacrifices may open the way to a future of full communion, a humanity without brotherhood unhappy, pope says

CAIRO (CNS) -- The only kind of fanaticism that is acceptable to God is being fanatical about loving and helping others, Pope Francis said on his final day in Egypt.

"True faith," he told Catholics, "makes us more charitable, more merciful, more honest and more humane. It moves our hearts to love everyone without counting the cost."

The pope celebrated an open-air Mass April 29 in Cairo's Air Defense Stadium, built by the anti-aircraft branch of the Egyptian armed forces. The pope celebrated with Coptic Catholic Patriarch Ibrahim Isaac Sedrak of Alexandria and leaders of the other Catholic rites in Egypt.

After spending the first day of his visit in meetings with Muslim leaders, government officials, diplomats and members of the Coptic Orthodox Church, the pope dedicated the second day of his trip to Egypt's minority Catholic community.

Arriving at the stadium in a blue Fiat, the pope was slowly driven around the stadium's red running track in a small and low golf cart, far from the estimated 15,000 people seated in the stands high above. Yellow balloons and a long chain of blue balloons tied together like a rosary were released into the sky as a military helicopter circled high above the venue.

Helicopter gunships circled the perimeter of the stadium, while military jeeps patrolled Cairo's streets.

Surrounded by security, the pope managed to personally greet only one small group of children who were dressed as pharaohs and other traditional figures. They hugged the pope affectionately as security tightly closed in on the group.

In his homily, the pope used the day's Gospel reading of the two disciples' journey to Emmaus to highlight how easy it is to feel disappointment, despair and defeat when one is trapped by a false notion of who God really is.

The disciples could not believe that the one who could raise others from the dead and heal the sick could "end up on hanging on the cross of shame," the pope said. Believing Jesus was dead, all their dreams died with him on the cross and were buried in the tomb.

"How often do we paralyze ourselves by refusing to transcend our own ideas about God, a god created in the image and likeness of man," he said. "How often do we despair by refusing to believe that God's omnipotence is not one of power and authority, but rather of love, forgiveness and life."

Like the disciples, he said, Christians will never recognize the true face of God if they are trapped on the cross, rise up from the tomb of their limited understanding and shatter their hardened hearts like the "breaking of the bread" in the Eucharist.
Pope: U.S., North Korea need diplomatic solution to tensions

ABOARD THE Papal Flight FROM Cairo (CNS) — A diplomatic solution must be found to the escalating tension between North Korea and the United States, Pope Francis told journalists.

"The path (to take) is the path of negotiation, the path of a diplomatic solution," he said when asked about U.S. President Donald Trump’s decision to send Navy warships to the region in response to North Korea’s continued missile tests and threats to launch nuclear strikes against South Korea, Japan and the United States.

"What do you say to these leaders who hold responsibility for the future of humanity," the pope was asked, during a Q-and-A with journalists on the flight to Rome April 29 after a 27-hour trip to Cairo.

"I will call on them. I’m going to call on them like I have called on the leaders of different places," he said.

There are many facilitators and mediators around the world who are “always ready to help” with negotiations, the pope said.

The situation in North Korea, he added, has been heated for a long time, “but now it seems it has heated up too much, no?”

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OBISPO

(Para 3)

uno está ayudando a alimentar y vestir el mundo. Por medio del trabajo humano, Dios toma materia prima de este mundo y sostiene la vida.

La tranquilidad y la soledad que se experimentan durante el día de un trabajador agrícola ofrecen una oportunidad de ponerse en contacto con Dios y con uno mismo. Nos permite pensar profundamente en las cosas y enfrentar la verdadera identidad de nuestras relaciones.

Jesús mismo vino de una pequeña ciudad, al igual que la mayor parte de sus Apóstoles. Él apreció la tranquilidad de los espacios abiertos. Por ejemplo, durante sus tres años de ministerio público, tenía la práctica de alejarse de las multitudes y de salir al campo para tomar tiempo para orar en silencio. En el Evangelio de Marcos, el versículo 1:35 describe esta dinámica en la vida de Jesús: “Muy de madrugada, antes del amanecer, salió y se fue a un lugar solitario, donde oraba.” Muchos en el Oeste de Texas hacen lo mismo todos los días.

El mundo de la agricultura está estrechamente ligado a nuestros sacramentos Católicos. Los dos consumibles que Jesucristo utiliza para la Eucaristía son productos agrícolas naturales – pan de trigo y vino de uva, sin aditivos. En la Misa Crismal en nuestra Catedral cada año, los tres aceites que bendigo provienen de aceitunas, girasoles, y semillas de algodón. Los mantolos del altar que utilizamos en Misa se hacen generalmente de fibras naturales.

Ya sea que estemos envueltos en la agricultura o en cualquier otra carrera, si vemos a vivir nuestra vocación como un camino a la santidad, todos tenemos que encontrar una manera de integrar nuestro trabajo diario con nuestra vida de oración. Para sentar una base sólida para una espiritualidad vibrante de trabajo, quizás recomendamos dos libros clásicos de la espiritualidad Católica.

El primer libro se llama La Práctica de la Presencia de Dios (The Practice of the Presence of God). Fue escrito a mediados de los 1600 por el Hermano Lorenzo di la Resurrección. Él fue un monje que trabajaba en una cocina del monasterio, y su libro enseña una manera de descubrir la presencia de Dios en medio de las tareas más básicas y prácticas del trabajo diario.

El otro libro es de Jean Pierre de Caussade. Escrito a principios de los 1700, su título original era El Abandono en la Divina Providencia (Abandonment to Divine Providence). El título de este libro moderno en Inglés es The Sacrament of the Present Moment (Sacramento del Momento Presente). El autor enseña un método simple de la oración que eleva nuestro corazón a Dios durante todo el día, abriendo los ojos a las muchas maneras en que Dios está presente para nosotros, como si fueran pequeños sacramentos.

Mediante la adaptación de las ideas de estos autores Católicos a las circunstancias de nuestras vidas actuales hoy en día, podemos desarrollar una atención más sensible a la presencia de Dios en nuestras experiencias normales de nuestro trabajo diario. Por lo tanto, cuando oímos el sonido del silencio, o vemos el nacimiento de un becerrito, o olor a hierba recién cortada, o admiramos el colorido artístico de una puesta de sol, podemos abrazar esos momentos como pequeños sacramentos de Dios.

El mismo Jesús que está sacramentalmente presente para nosotros en la Eucaristía quiere ser nuestro compañero también durante nuestro trabajo diario. Esto incluye los momentos de conducir el tractor, alimentar a los animales, o manejar por un camino polvoriento en el campo.

Como obispo de una diócesis muy rural, yo aprecio profundamente la vocación de la agricultura. Rezo por todos los que trabajan bajo el sol caliente en las granjas y ranchos del Oeste de Texas. Cuando ofrezco la Eucaristía, los recuerdo a ustedes y a su trabajo, y los alzo en oración a Dios.

BISHOP

(From 3)

solid foundation for a vibrant spirituality of work. I would like to recommend two clas- sic books of Catholic spirituality.

The first book is called The Practice of the Presence of God. It was written in the mid-1600s by Brother Lawrence of the Resurrection. He was a monk who worked in a monastery kitchen, and his book teaches a way to discover God’s presence in the midst of the most basic, practical tasks of daily work.

The other book is by Jean Pierre de Caussade. Written in the early 1700s, its original title was Abandonment to Divine Providence. The modern English title of this book is The Sacrament of the Present Moment. The author teaches a simple method of prayer that lifts our heart up to God throughout the day, opening our eyes to the many ways God is present to us, as if they were little sacraments.

By adapting the insights of these Catholic authors to the circumstances of our active lives today, we can develop an attentiveness to the presence of God in the normal experiences of our daily work. Thus, when we hear the sound of the mockingbird, or witness the birth of a calf, or take in the beautiful smell of freshly cut hay, or admire the colorful artistry of a West Texas sunset, we can embrace those moments like little sacraments of God.

The same Jesus who is sacramentally present to us in the Eucharist wants to be our daily companion, including during the working part of our day. This includes driv- ing that tractor, feeding those animals, or rumbling down another dusty country road.

As the bishop of a rural diocese, I deeply appreciate the vocation of agricultur- e. I pray for all those who labor under the hot sun on the farms and ranches of West Texas. When I offer the Eucharist, I remember you and your work, and I lift you up to God in prayer.
AWARDS

(From 2)

in purity.”

For the Timothy Award, “each parish leader nomi-
nates one youth,” Garcia said. “That’s always hard for
them. It’s hard for us because we have to choose one
of them” as the final winner and recipient of the
award.

Of Mia, who is a member
of Holy Spirit parish in
Sweetwater, Garcia added: “We just decided
yesterday because we kept
looking at the nomination
forms. A lot of these we
don’t know (that the
winner will be) until the
day before.”

Bishop Sic, who doled
out the evening’s awards
and posed for photos with
each recipient, said it’s
important to recognize
youth who are doing good
work within their respec-
tive parish because they
are the future. “By recog-
nizing them, it lets them
know how much they
mean to us,” he said. “We
give great hope in them,
and by giving them these
awards, it’s a public
acknowledgement of their
importance to the Church.”

In addition to Mia, 20
other youth, including
Scouts who had earned
various merit badges, were
recognized with certifi-
cates. Nearly two dozen
adults also were recog-
nized, with the Companion
on the Journey Award
going to Sr. Luisita
Iglesia, OND, from Holy
Spirit in Sweetwater and
Victor Garza from St.
Mary in Odessa.

“When people serve
the Church as a volunteer, it’s
a tremendous personal
sacrifice,” Sic said. “I
think the main reason
why they need to be recognized
is not so much because of
how it might influence
their (future) behavior, but
rather because they
deserve gratitude.”

Events like the Diocesan
Awards have an additional
importance in that they are
team building, Sic said.
“Most of them are giving
their volunteer energies to
one parish, but that one
parish is a part of a whole
worldwide Catholic
Church,” he said. “To par-
ticipate in a diocesan
event builds one’s appreci-
ation for our diocesan
family.”

Mia’s mother, Brenda
Valdez, said she has a
large family in
Sweetwater, and all are
involved in their parish. “I
grew up in the same
church and moved away
and came back,” she
said. “I’m very involved, and I
try to be a good example of
service” to my four
dughters, including Mia.

Mia, apparently, has
taken notice, and Valdez
doesn’t have high hopes she
can demonstrate that learned
behavior to her peers.

“Our youth group (at St.
Mary’s) has gotten small-
er, I’m hoping we can
grow our youth group, and
hopefully she can help us
with that,” Valdez said.

The awards ceremony
included a catered meal, a
slide show of events during
the past year sent in from
each parish and an address
from keynote speaker
Alma Perez, of the
Immigration Integration
Project. In his closing
speech, Sic reminded the
individuals in attendance that
eighty wonderful leaders
never get an award.

“But their reward will
come in Heaven,” he said.
“Our rewards in Heaven
are infinitely better than
any diocesan award.”

The Bishop’s Award:
Companion on the Journey:
Catechesis: Sr. Luisita
Iglesia, OND, from Holy
Spirit/Sweetwater
Youth Ministry: Victor Garza
from St. Mary/Odessa
The Diocesan award for
outstanding youth, Timothy
Award: Mia D. Valdez from
Holy Spirit/Sweetwater
Other youth nominated
were:
John Benavides – Our Lady of
Lourdes/Andrews
Veronica Rodriguez – St.
Margaret of Cortona/Big Lake
Juliusa Munoz – St. Mary/Brownwood
Mary Anne Rosales – Sacred Heart/Cooper
Darian Espinosa – St.
Ann/Colorado City
Itzamara Carranza – St.
Lawrence/Garden City
John D. Ely – St. John/Big Wells
Ann/Midland
Arielle Tarin – St.
Joseph/Odessa
Ashley Ortiz – San
Miguel/Midland
Jonathan Flores – St.
Thomas/Midland
Megan Alyssa Chavez – Holy
Redeemer/Odessa
Briana Oroyo – Holy
Redeemer/Odessa
Christopher Dutchover – St.
Mary/Odessa
Jeremy Castro – St.
Joseph/San Angelo
Julia Williams – St.
Boniface/Odessa
Gavin Martinez – Our Lady of
Peace/Goodfellow
Drew Buitron – St.
Ann/Corpus Christi
Ann/Corpus Christi
Annie Ortiz – San
Miguel/Midland
Jessie Ortiz – San
Miguel/Midland
Austin Daigle – Holy
Redeemer/Odessa
Kristina Daigle – Holy
Redeemer/Odessa
Angelica Muniz – Holy
Redeemer/Odessa
Larry Cortez – St.
Joseph/Odessa
Amber Franke – St.
Joseph/Roswell
Holly Gaston – St.
Joseph/Roswell
Victor Garza – St.
Mary/Odessa
Kathy Prince – Our Lady of
Peace/Goodfellow
AFB
Angelica Lopez – St.
Joseph/San Angelo
Luiz Alvizo – St.
Joseph/Stanton
Nedda Alvizo – St.
Joseph/Stanton
Delia Samaniego – St. Ann/
Sonora
Jimmy Flores – St.
Joseph/Stanton
Marilyn O’Leary – St.
Ambrose/Wall

Directors of Religious
Education
Sr. Isabel Tadeo, OND –
Holy Redeemer/Odessa
Sr. Elizabeth Villegas, OND –
St. Joseph/Odessa
Waldean Halfman – St.
Boniface/Odessa
Sr. Luisita Iglesias, OND, from Holy
Spirit/Sweetwater
Coordinators of Youth Ministry
Beatrice Fanning – St.
Mary/Browwood
Terry Dulin – Sacred Heart/Cooper
Willie Hernandez (Scouting) –
St. Ann/Colorado City
Lenore Munoz – St. Ann/
Colorado City
Jesse Ortiz – San
Miguel/Midland
Josie Ortiz – San
Miguel/Midland

The Angelus

AGRICULTURE

(From 2)

Emnis agreed with what everyone in the room likely knew:
“You don’t find any atheists in agriculture,” Emnis said.

Emnis said a definite need for education exists in the
country, noting that of 244 Catholic universities in the
U.S., none offer degrees in agriculture or ag-related fields.
Many on hand for the workshop also admitted they were
unaware of the church’s teachings on the vocation of
agriculture.

According to Emnis, and the Catholic Rural Life’s
Vocation of the Agricultural Leader supplemental reflection
book by CRL, the vocation calls for agriculture leaders:

- to affirm the significant role of farmers, ranchers
  and food leaders who serve in providing food for
  the world;
- to develop a resource offering key principles for
  agriculture leaders and to show how to apply ethical
  principles in day-to-day operations, and
- to encourage a deeper reflection upon agriculture as a
  vocation and the responsibilities it implies for current
  and future ag leaders.

“At the heart of a sound vision of agriculture lies the
theology of creation, and the theology of the earth as a gift
given by a loving creator,” Emnis said. “The land is not a
blank slate, a meaningless void, merely waiting for the
human being to impose or her design upon it. Rather,
the entire order of creation, from the lowest creatures up
to humankind, is permeated by God’s loving design.”

Emnis assured those in attendance that they are not
 Victims.

“You are a subject, and you have a calling and a respon-
sibility for that calling,” he said.

The workshop uses a model of faith reflection that pro-
cesses through three steps: See, Judge, Act. Participants
reflect together on the joys and challenges they encounter
in their work, and are in turn offered basic Catholic spiritual
and ethical principles that apply to their situation. Attendees
are encouraged to act in a way that promotes sustainable
practices that respect the dignity of the human person and
the continued fertility of the land.

Inspired by the document Vocation of the Business
Leader (2012), CRL collaborated with ICRA, the
Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, farming organiza-
tions, and many other leaders around the world over the
past years to develop the reflection book Vocation of the
Agricultural Leader, which was distributed at the
workshop. It is a resource not only for all involved in
agriculture and food production, but also for those concerned
about where their food comes from.

San Angelo diocese honored alongside nat’l organizations

The Angelus

AUSTIN — Abila, the leading provider of software
and services to associations, nonprofits, and govern-
ment entities, honored nine organizations, including the
Catholic Diocese of San Angelo, with its annual Abila
Excellence Award at its Abila User and Developer
Conference (AUDC) in Nashville, Tennessee, April 11-
13, 2017. Award winners included organizations
focused on a wide range of industries from childcare to
professional engineering to accounting.

The diocese was recognized “for using technology to
increase financial transparency, save staff time, reduce
paper use, and shift the finance department’s thinking
toward true fund accounting.

Other winners include the Certfied Financial Planner
Board of Standards, the Child Care Resource Center,
the National Society for Professional Engineers, the
American Industrial Hygiene Association, the National
Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the Emergency
Nurses Association, and the California Society of
CPAs.

The Angelus
EDICTAL SUMMONS  
April 21, 2017  
CASE:  BOY (RONQUILLO) --TEJADA  
NO.:  SO/17/03  ED. SUMM.

The Tribunal Office of the Catholic Diocese of San Angelo is seeking Lazarro Franco Tejada.  You are hereby summoned to appear before the Tribunal of the Catholic Diocese of San Angelo, at 804 Ford Street, San Angelo, Texas 76905, on or before the 31st day of May 2017, to answer to the Petition of Sandra Kay Boy (Ronquillo), now introduced before the Diocesan Tribunal in an action styled, “Sandra Kay Boy and Lazarro Franco Tejada.  Petition for Declaration of Invalidity of Marriage.” Said Petition is identified as Case: BOY (RONQUILLO) -- TEJADA; Protocol No.: SO/17/03, on the Tribunal Docket of the Diocese of San Angelo.  You may communicate with the Tribunal in person or in writing.  Failure to communicate within the prescribed period of time will be considered your consent for the Tribunal to continue its proceedings in the above-named case.  Given at the Tribunal of the Catholic Diocese of San Angelo on the 21st day of April 2017.

Reverend Tom Barley,  
M.S.W., M.B.A., M.Div., JCL  
Judicial Vicar

EDICTAL SUMMONS  
April 21, 2017  
CASE:  BENAVIDES (SANTOS) -- HERNANDEZ  
NO.:  SO/17/21  ED. SUMM.

The Tribunal Office of the Catholic Diocese of San Angelo is seeking Noe de los Santos Hernandez.  You are hereby summoned to appear before the Tribunal of the Catholic Diocese of San Angelo, at 804 Ford Street, San Angelo, Texas 76905, on or before the 31st day of May 2017, to answer to the Petition of Ana Elizabeth Silva Benavides (Santos), now introduced before the Diocesan Tribunal in an action styled, “Ana Santos and Noel Hernandez, Petition for Declaration of Invalidity of Marriage.” Said Petition is identified as Case: BENAVIDES (SANTOS) -- HERNANDEZ; Protocol No.: SO/17/21, on the Tribunal Docket of the Diocese of San Angelo.  You may communicate with the Tribunal in person or in writing.  Failure to communicate within the prescribed period of time will be considered your consent for the Tribunal to continue its proceedings in the above-named case.  Given at the Tribunal of the Diocese of San Angelo on the 21st day of April 2017.

Reverend Tom Barley,  
M.S.W., M.B.A., M.Div., JCL  
Judicial Vicar

EDICTAL SUMMONS  
April 21, 2017  
CASE:  GARIVAY -COLKLIN  
NO.:  SO/17/11  ED. SUMM.

The Tribunal Office of the Catholic Diocese of San Angelo is seeking John Charles Conklin.  You are hereby summoned to appear before the Tribunal of the Catholic Diocese of San Angelo, at 804 Ford Street, San Angelo, Texas 76905, on or before the 31st day of May 2017, to answer to the Petition of Lisa Garivay, now introduced before the Diocesan Tribunal in an action styled, “Lisa Garivay and John Charles Conklin, Petition for Declaration of Invalidity of Marriage.” Said Petition is identified as Case: GARIVAY - COLKLIN; Protocol No.: SO/17/11, on the Tribunal Docket of the Diocese of San Angelo.  You may communicate with the Tribunal in person or in writing.  Failure to communicate within the prescribed period of time will be considered your consent for the Tribunal to continue its proceedings in the above-named case.  Given at the Tribunal of the Catholic Diocese of San Angelo on the 21st day of April 2017.

Reverend Tom Barley,  
M.S.W., M.B.A., M.Div., JCL  
Judicial Vicar

EDICTAL SUMMONS  
April 21, 2017  
CASE:  WEBB -- OZBIR (ZUKNICK)  
NO.:  SO/17/06  ED. SUMM.

The Tribunal Office of the Catholic Diocese of San Angelo is seeking Tuba Senden Ozbir (Zuknick).  You are hereby summoned to appear before the Tribunal of the Catholic Diocese of San Angelo, at 804 Ford Street, San Angelo, Texas 76905, on or before the 31st day of May 2017, to answer to the Petition of Ashley Jordon Webb, now introduced before the Diocesan Tribunal in an action styled, “Ashley Jordon Webb and Tuba Senden Ozbir, Petition for Declaration of Invalidity of Marriage.” Said Petition is identified as Case: WEBB -- OZBIR (ZUKNICK); Protocol No.: SO/17/06, on the Tribunal Docket of the Diocese of San Angelo.  You may communicate with the Tribunal in person or in writing.  Failure to communicate within the prescribed period of time will be considered your consent for the Tribunal to continue its proceedings in the above-named case.  Given at the Tribunal of the Diocese of San Angelo on the 21st day of April 2017.

Reverend Tom Barley,  
M.S.W., M.B.A., M.Div., JCL  
Judicial Vicar

EDICTAL SUMMONS  
April 21, 2017  
CASE:  WEBB -- ANDERSON  
NO.:  SO/17/05  ED. SUMM.

The Tribunal Office of the Catholic Diocese of San Angelo is seeking Jennifer Sue Anderson.  You are hereby summoned to appear before the Tribunal of the Catholic Diocese of San Angelo, at 804 Ford Street, San Angelo, Texas 76905, on or before the 31st day of May 2017, to answer to the Petition of Ashley Jordon Webb, now introduced before the Diocesan Tribunal in an action styled, “Ashley Jordon Webb and Jennifer Sue Anderson, Petition for Declaration of Invalidity of Marriage.” Said Petition is identified as Case: WEBB -- ANDERSON; Protocol No.: SO/17/05, on the Tribunal Docket of the Diocese of San Angelo.  You may communicate with the Tribunal in person or in writing.  Failure to communicate within the prescribed period of time will be considered your consent for the Tribunal to continue its proceedings in the above-named case.  Given at the Tribunal of the Diocese of San Angelo on the 21st day of April 2017.

Reverend Tom Barley,  
M.S.W., M.B.A., M.Div., JCL  
Judicial Vicar

SEMINARIANS

(From 12)

have the ability to make an impact on laws. It also brings together our bishops along with a large number of Catholics from across the state to show a united front. When this is done over time and consistent-ly it can change one heart at a time, through the grace of God and us cooperating with it.”

Deacon Hayter said an apparent lack of knowledge and understanding of the issues exists, as well as a misunderstanding of where the Church stands on issues.

“It is important for Catholics to know and understand what the issues on the legal forefront are, as well as what Christ through the Church has to offer to these predicaments,” Hayter said. “In other words, the question is how can our faith shed light on the issues that we face as a society, and how do we enter into this dialogue in a way that is fruitful for those who such laws will later impact? The first step seems to be for us as Catholics to come to know and understand what the Church actually teaches about the issues and why.”

Both Hayter and Deacon Freddy Medina, who organized the event for the diocese, agreed that the highlight for them was the gathering of 20 bishops from across the state on the south steps of the capitol.

“It is so moving to see these holy men go to the political center of our state, knock on the door and ask to be heard,” Deacon Medina said. “And of course it was awesome to hear our Bishop Michael Sis speak on the capitols steps, asking for God to bless our legislators and asking our legislators to be bold and make positive changes to our laws to protect and empower all Texans.”

AUSTIN

(From 13)

tion in favor of the rights of the unborn.”

Three weeks after Advocacy Day, the Texas Senate voted to approve SB 4, which will punish local police officers if they do not fully cooperate with detainer requests issued by Immigration and Customs Enforcement. The Texas Conference of Catholic Bishops had lobbied vigorously for the bill’s defeat. SB 4 would also allow local peace officers to inquire into the legal status of people who are arrested or detained.

Bishop Sis said passage of the bill shows a continuing need for the federal government to take concrete steps to repair the nation’s broken immigration system.

Bishop Sis called Advocacy Day a good example of the democratic process in action. Although he deemed the day an overall success, he expressed a desire to have more attend from the Diocese of San Angelo on the next Advocacy Day in 2019.

Added Deacon Medina: “I believe we make a difference on Advocacy Day. Even if it just planting a seed with the representative or staff members that will grow and edify them to see the TCCB’s position in a more positive light than some day may bring forth changes.”
BOOKS

(From 11)

comes at a great cost to ourselves, people are intrigued. Patience, kindness, humility, gratitude, thoughtfulness, generosity, courage and forgiveness are all intriguing.

God wants our future to be bigger than our past. Not equal to our past, but bigger, better, brighter, and more significant.

One of the most incredible abilities God has given the human is the ability to dream. We are able to look into the future and imagine something better than today, and then return to the present and work to make that richly imagined future a reality.

There is a verse in Proverbs that never ceases to ignite passion for the Church. “Where there is no vision, the people will perish.” (Proverbs 29:19)

This is even true in different areas of our lives. In a country where there is no vision, the people will perish. In a marriage where there is no vision, people will perish. In a business, a school, or a family where there is no vision, the people will perish.

The Church has always had a vision, it’s just that to many people don’t know what the vision is.

The Catholic vision that people in search of is not the sole responsibility of

RELOJOSA

(From 14)

discernimiento durante este proceso. Discernir la voz y el llamado del Espíritu Santo comparándolos a otros llamados o deseos en la vida puede ayudar a las personas, especialmente a los jóvenes, a dirigirse hacia su real vocación.

Dios llama a personas con diferentes orígenes, personalidades y experiencias de vida.

Como reportera, además de conocer a sacerdotes diáconos de todo el mundo, una vez conocí a un hermano franciscano capuchino, que en su juventud había formado parte de una pandilla, más tarde persiguió una carrera en finanzas y luego se dio cuenta de que su vocación era servir a Dios y ponerse un hábito franciscano color marrón.

También conocí a una joven miembro de las Hermanas Pobres Bonaerenses de San José, que se planteó las interrogantes “¿Cómo sé que Dios me está llamando?” y “¿Dios me está llamando a vivir una vida para él como persona religiosa?” poco después de emigrar de El Salvador.

Recientemente hablé con dos jóvenes que, después de un largo proceso, están a punto de ser sacerdotes Maryknoll y serán enviados a uno de los más de 20 países donde la sociedad misionera sirve.

Todos sus experiencias vocacionales son únicas y la mano de Dios es evidente en los eventos que los llevaron al punto de discernimiento y tomar la decisión. Una vez que descubrieron su vocación, respondieron libremente al llamado de Dios; pero esto también era un proceso de discernimiento continuo y luego de compromiso vivificante.

La Escritura, la oración y la Eucaristía son elementos que tuvieron en común en sus recorridos para descubrir sus vocaciones y estos elementos perduran mientras responden a su llamada.

La hermana Barrow, que ahora se desempeña como abogada de interés público en la práctica de la ley de vivienda, les dice a los jóvenes: “No tengan miedo de iniciar el proceso de discernimiento”, que puede hacerse con oficinas de vocación diocesanas, con una comunidad religiosa o seminario mientras trabajan con un director espiritual.

“El discernimiento es realmente un compromiso para profundizar su relación con Dios y estar abierto a (dondequiera) que esto te lleve”, dijo.

-Maria-Pia Negro Chin is bilingual associate editor at Maryknoll Magazine.

CHIN

(From 14)

As a reporter, in addition to meeting diocesan priests from across the world, I once met a Capuchin Franciscan brother who used to be in a gang, later pursued a career in finance and then realized that his vocation was to serve God and don a brown Franciscan habit.

I also met a young new member of the Poor Sisters of St. Joseph, who had wondered, “How do I know God is calling me?” and, “Is God calling me to live a life for him as a religious person?” soon after emigrating from El Salvador.

Recently I talked to two young men who, after a long process, are about to become Maryknoll priests and will be sent to any of the 20-plus countries where the missionary society serves.

All of their vocation journeys are unique and God’s hand is evident in the events that led them there. Once they discovered their vocation, they freely responded to God’s call; but this, too, was a process of continuous discernment and then life-giving commitment.

Scripture, prayer and the Eucharist are also common themes in their journeys to discover their vocations — and remain a constant while answering their call.

Sister Barrow, who now ministers as a public interest attorney practicing housing law, tells young people: “Don’t be afraid to start the discernment process,” which can be done with a diocesan vocation office or with a religious community or seminary while working with a spiritual director.

“Discernment is really just a commitment to deepening your relationship with God and being open to (wherever) that leads,” she said.
of sin so we can renounce ourselves and more fully live in Christ. In the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick we are united with Christ in His passion for our sins and the good of the Church. He illumines our reading of Scripture, transforming His written Word into His Living Word; draws us into deeper union with Him in prayer; and is present within us in our daily routines. By His grace we are able to abide in Christ and cooperate with His Spirit.

The Fruit of the Spirit is holy intentions and actions—virtue—in contrast to the works of the flesh—vice—enumerated by St. Paul in Gal 5:19-21, as with love in Romans 1:28-31 and I Cor 6:9-10. He writes to the Ephesians, "Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them" (5:11). "Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit." (Gal 5:23-25). His fruit is light and life.

The Holy Spirit united Himself with Our Blessed Mother Mary to conceive Jesus. Jesus is the Fruit of the Spirit. Mary renounced herself—"Behold, the handmaid of the Lord," received Life, and was "full of grace." She is the embodiment of the Fruit of the Spirit. In this month of May dedicated to Our Blessed Mother Mary, we focus on union with Jesus through Mary in the power and love of the Holy Spirit. As we pray the Rosary with Mary, we ask her prayers to be docile to the Spirit and His fruitfulness as she was. As a Rosary intention we pray for the grace to abide in Jesus, the Vine; to renounce ourselves at a deeper level; and to receive, develop, and live the fruit of His Spirit. Each week let's focus on one aspect of the Fruit to live more intentionally in our relationship with Jesus, Mother Mary, and others, especially those closest to us: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, faithfulness, self-control, generosity, modesty, and chastity.

Editor's Note: The following poem, "To Kiss the Past Goodbye" was misprinted in the April edition of the West Texas Angelus. It is included here in its correct form. The Angelus regrets the error.

To Kiss the Past Goodbye

Today I kissed my past good-bye
With sin and even all my good,
And apple of the Father's eye
I welcomed now—at last I could,
For He is raised beyond the tomb
And asks me to invite Him in
To breathe away my circling gloom,
Reveal in me what's always been.

And then I see He's given back
The good was present in my past,
And delightedly unpack
What will in present, future last.
For now He'll always live in me
As with Him hand-in-hand I go,
With all my loved ones bend the knee
To truth we're always meant to know.

Other dioceses reporting hundreds of catechumens and candidates include:
- Diocese of Dallas: 945 catechumens and 1,230 candidates;
- Diocese of Little Rock, Arkansas: 252 catechumens and 324 candidates;
- Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend, Indiana: 187 catechumens and 208 candidates;
- Diocese of Salt Lake City, Utah: 273 catechumens, 153 candidates;
- Diocese of Tyler, Texas: 120 catechumens and 270 candidates;
- Diocese of Charleston, South Carolina: 160 catechumens and 317 candidates;
- Diocese of Pittsburgh: 444 catechumens and candidates;
- Diocese of Bridgeport, Connecticut: 78 catechumens and 241 candidates;
- Diocese of Jefferson City, Missouri: 106 catechumens and 172 candidates;
- Diocese of Tucson, Arizona: 111 candidates and 209 catechumens;
- Diocese of Youngstown, Ohio: 97 catechumens and 130 candidates;
- Diocese of Camden, New Jersey: 174 catechumens;
- Diocese of Paterson, New Jersey: 195 catechumens and candidates;
- Diocese of Warwick, Massachusetts: 114 catechumens and 101 candidates;
- Diocese of Springfield, Massachusetts: 53 catechumens and 105 candidates;
- Diocese of Manchester, New Hampshire: 95 candidates and 67 catechumens;
- Diocese of Wilmington, Delaware: 101 catechumens and 152 candidates;
- Diocese of Belleville, Illinois: 54 catechumens and 120 candidates;
- Diocese of Springfield, Illinois: 160 catechumens and 159 candidates;
- Diocese of Yakima, Washington: 115 catechumens, 145 candidates;
- Diocese of Lafayette, Louisiana: 55 catechumens and 96 candidates;
- Diocese of Reno, Nevada: 139 catechumens and 40 candidates;
- Diocese of Greensburg, Pennsylvania: 92 candidates and 44 catechumens;
- Diocese of Steubenville, Ohio: 39 catechumens and 52 candidates;
- Diocese of Rapid City: 27 catechumens, 83 candidates;
- Diocese of Shreveport, Louisiana: 40 catechumens, 89 candidates;
- Diocese of Bridgeport, Connecticut: 97 catechumens, 313 candidates;
- Diocese of Memphis, Tennessee: 60 catechumens, 200 candidates;
- Diocese of Gaylord, Michigan: 49 catechumens, 93 candidates;
- Diocese of Trenton, New Jersey: 200 catechumens, 508 candidates;
- In Minnesota, the Diocese of St. Cloud reports 17 catechumens, 76 candidates;
- Diocese of Crookston: 8 catechumens, 25 candidates;
- Diocese of Winona: 42 catechumens, 112 candidates;
- Diocese of Duluth: 11 catechumens, 69 candidates.

These numbers are based on participation in the Rite of Election and Call to Continuing Conversion, the final phase of the RCIA process celebrated at the beginning of Lent.

Not included are infant baptisms which, according to the 2016 Official Catholic Directory, totaled 683,712 for the year 2015. The OCD also reported that there were 39,721 adult baptisms and 71,809 people received into full communion during the same year, the latest with complete statistical data.

GARVEY

(From 15)

Garvey is president of The Catholic University of America in Washington, Catholic University's website is www.cua.edu.
PITTSBURGH (CNS) -- One reason there is such affection for Dan Rooney, said Cardinal Donald W. Wuerl of Washington, is that he was clearly a man of the people, a person of western Pennsylvania and a quintessential Pittsburgher.

"Whether he was Ambassador Daniel Rooney, Hall of Fame Pittsburgh Steelers president or just Dan, he reflected so well the qualities of this part of the world," the cardinal said. "He worked hard, he was a loyal friend, a good neighbor, he took seriously his duties to his family, his obligations to the community, his commitment to the Steelers, his love of the game, the need to be straightforward, honest and caring. He was a Pittsburgher. He was the best of us."

Cardinal Wuerl reflected on the beloved chairman of the Steelers in celebrating his funeral Mass April 17 at St. Paul Cathedral in Pittsburgh.

The congregation of more than 1,500 included former President Barack Obama, former Secretary of State John Kerry, U.S. Sen. Robert Casey and numerous local officials. Dozens of current and former Steelers were in attendance, as well as former NFL Commissioner Paul Tagliabue.

Concelebrating with Cardinal Wuerl were Pittsburgh Bishop David A. Zubik; Benedictine Archabbot Douglas Nowicki of St. Vincent Archabbey in Latrobe; Father Kris Stubna, rector of St. Paul Cathedral; Benedictine Father Vincent Zidek, pastor of St. Peter Parish on Pittsburgh's North Side; and Benedictine Father Paul Taylor.

Bishop Zubik spoke of a man who was a friend to the rich and not-so-rich, a man who had great vision as a businessman.

"He knew what it meant to be loyal to his country and to exercise God's many gifts in service to his country," he said.

Cardinal Wuerl had known Rooney for some 50 years from his time as a priest and bishop in the Diocese of Pittsburgh. In his homily, he spoke of "the wonderful story of a man with a huge and caring heart."

It began, he noted, with the great love Rooney had for his wife, Patricia. The cardinal spoke of a man who held his family close to himself, and personified the Rooney family as the Steelers family.

He recalled visiting Heinz Field with Rooney a few weeks before construction was completed in 2001. While the workers were friendly in greeting the then-bishop of Pittsburgh, Cardinal Wuerl noted, their real desire was to get a picture with the Steelers chairman.

"He symbolizes the quiet strength, character, resilience and joy of Pittsburgh," Cardinal Wuerl said.

But as much as Rooney was involved in Pittsburgh history and the story of the Steelers, the cardinal spoke of how proud Rooney was of his Irish heritage. He pointed to Rooney's efforts with the Ireland Fund that grounded his life. The cardinal pointed to the "Rooney Rule," which stipulates that NFL teams must interview at least one minority candidate for top coaching positions.

"He grew up learning on the streets of the North Side and the halls of North Catholic High School that you judge people by who they are, not the color of their skin or their national origin," he said.

Bishop Michael J. Sis of the Diocese of San Angelo, delivers the invocation at a session of the Texas House of Representatives, Thursday, March 9, 2017. (Photo courtesy Office of District 72 Rep. Drew Darby, San Angelo).

A House In Prayer

Steelers’ chairman known for quiet strength based on his faith