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Converging paths lead friends to priesthood

By Brian Bodiford
West Texas Angelus

In the mid-1980s in Guanajuato, central Mexico, a young couple, devout in their Catholic faith, decided to leave their home in search of a better life. They had friends and family in West Texas and were able to emigrate to the United States to find work. Their son today describes their close relationship with the Church as “one of the few things that transferred over from their life in Mexico.”

Over 9000 miles away and a decade later, in September 1995, a small boy amidst a huge crowd watches in fascination as an unfamiliar car rolls through the streets of Nairobi. Pope John Paul II was amidst a huge crowd watches in fascination as an unfamiliar car rolls through the streets of Nairobi. Pope John Paul II was on the last leg of an apostolic journey to Cameroon, South Africa, and Kenya. A historic occasion still remembered in the country, the visit had a personal effect on the young boy, who was influenced to become an altar server.

The stories of these families would eventually converge in San Angelo, Texas, years later, culminating in the forthcoming priestly ordinations of Freddy Martin Perez and Reginald “Reggie” Odima.

JOURNEYS FOR OPPORTUNITY

The Perez family eventually landed in Wall, Texas, where Freddy’s father worked in the cotton industry. Their story is one that is not uncommon in this part of the country. “I grew up with both parents being migrants,” Perez recalls, “and a couple of my friends were actually undocumented when I was growing up.”

The family would next move to San Angelo, where they operated a tortilla and burrito shop on the north side of town, selling to local building sites and businesses. The family became parishioners at St. Mary Parish. These roots continued to grow, and the family now owns their own restaurant, Amole’s Mexican Restaurant in Sweetwater, Texas. Perez notes that the communities of St. Mary in San Angelo and Holy Spirit in Sweetwater have both been supportive, taking in the family and helping to achieve the better life they came to Texas in search of.

Odima likewise eventually found his way to the territory of the Diocese of San Angelo, with a stop in the metroplex area along the way. After Reggie’s father passed away in early 2000, the family decided that the opportunities for the children in Kenya would be diminished with only one parent. With a brother already living in the United States, the family was able to move quickly, a process which Odima describes as almost overnight: “We got our visas and two weeks later we were gone.” Reggie arrived in Irving, Texas, with his mother and sister on December 18, 2000, at age 11. They were later joined by his other two brothers.

Odima’s mother worked to support the family, traveling two hours each way to work a part-time job in order to keep her children fed and sheltered. Odima...
Some vaccines are more acceptable than others

By Bishop Michael Sis
Diocese of San Angelo

Immunization from contagious diseases has brought many benefits to society. Our Church endorses the responsibility of physicians and parents to protect children and the general public from devastating illness.

When deciding whether to receive a vaccination, there are several factors that one takes into consideration. These typically include the effectiveness, possible side effects, availability of the vaccine, cost, and the common good. There is an additional factor that we, as people of faith, should take into account — the origin of the particular vaccine.

There are a number of vaccines that have been prepared from human cell lines, using tissues from victims of abortion. Of course, abortion is a grave crime against innocent human life. The cell lines in some vaccines were begun using cells taken from one or more fetuses aborted about 55 years ago. Since that time, the cell lines have grown independently. It is important to note that the descendant cells are not the cells of the aborted child. They never, themselves, formed a part of the victim's body.

The cells in these lines have gone through multiple divisions before they are used in vaccine manufacture. After manufacture, the vaccines are removed from the cell lines and purified. The vaccines do not contain any of the cells from the original abortion.

Nevertheless, the fact that a vaccine has its origin in elective abortion is still an ethical concern for us. In the 2008 Instruction Dignitas Personae, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith taught that “everyone has the duty to make known their disagreement and to ask that their health care system make other types of vaccines available.”

A statement from the Pontifical Academy for Life in 2005 holds that one may use these products, despite their distant association with abortion, at least until such time as new vaccines become available. (See “Conscience Exemption for Vaccines based on Fetal Tissue from Abortions” at www.usccb.org)

Sometimes alternative products, which are not associated with these cell lines, are available for immunization against certain diseases. If doing so is practicable, one should ask one’s physician to use an alternative vaccine, but there is no moral obligation to use products that are less effective or inaccessible. Parents should check with their physician regarding the efficacy and availability of these and any other vaccines.

If no alternative vaccine exists, one is morally free to use the vaccine regardless of its historical association with abortion. The reason is that the risk to public health, if one chooses not to vaccinate, outweighs the legitimate concern about the origins of the vaccine. This is especially important for parents, who have a moral obligation to protect the life and health of their children and those around them.

A very helpful source for further reflection on this topic can be found at the website of the National Catholic Bioethics Center at https://www.ncbcenter.org/resources/frequently-asked-questions/use-vaccines/.

A long-term solution is for researchers to keep working to ensure that future vaccines and other medicines are not based on cooperation with practices that demean human life. This applies to products and therapies that have a history in embryo research.

Catholic Bioethics Center

Editor’s note: June 23 is World Day of Prayer for Priests. On this day, please keep priests in the diocese and throughout the world in your prayers. The following prayer for priests was written by Pope Pius XII.

O Jesus, you are the eternal High Priest, the Good Shepherd, the Source of life. Through the singular generosity of Your most sensitive heart, You have given us our priests for the purpose of fulfilling in us that plan of sanctification which Your grace inspires in our hearts.

We beg You come to their aid with Your merciful assistance. O Jesus, may they possess faith which energizes their actions, and charity which permeates their endeavors.

Through their constant meditation, may your word, which is an outpouring of eternal wisdom, become the everlasting nourishment of their interior life; and may their conduct and suffering reflect the example of Your life and Passion, so as to serve for our instruction, and as a beacon of consolation in our sorrows.

O Lord, grant that our priests be detached from all worldly interests, and labor only for Your glory. With a pure conscience may they persevere in their duties faithfully until their drying breath. And when death has claimed their bodies, and they place back into Your hands the account of their faithful stewardship, may they enjoy in You, Lord Jesus, their divine teacher on earth, the everlasting reward of the crown of justice in the splendor of the Saints. Amen

Algunas vacunas son más aceptables que otras

Por Obispo Michael Sis
Diócesis de San Ángelo

La inmunización de enfermedades contagiosas ha traído muchos beneficios a la sociedad. Nuestra Iglesia respalda que es la responsabilidad de los médicos y los padres de proteger a los niños y el público en general de cualquier enfermedad devastadora.

El decidir si desea recibir una vacuna, hay varios factores que uno toma en consideración. Estos suelen incluir la eficacia, los efectos secundarios, la disponibilidad de la vacuna, el costo, y el bien común. Hay un factor adicional que nosotros, como personas de fe, debemos tener en cuenta - el origen de la vacuna en particular.

Hay un número de vacunas que se han preparado usando células celulares humanas, utilizando tejidos de víctimas de aborto. Por supuesto, el aborto es un delito grave contra la vida humana inocente. Las células celulares en algunas vacunas se comenzaron usando células tomadas de uno o más fetos abortados hace unos 55 años. Desde ese momento, las líneas de células han crecido de forma independiente. Es importante señalar que las células descendientes no son las células del niño abortado. Nunca, ellos mismos, formaron parte del cuerpo de la víctima.

Las células de estas líneas han pasado por múltiples divisiones antes de que se utilicen en la fabricación de vacunas. Después de la fabricación, las vacunas se retiran de las líneas celulares y se purifican. Las vacunas no contienen ninguna de las células del aborto original.

Sin embargo, el hecho de que una vacuna tiene su origen en un aborto electivo sigue siendo una preocupación ética para nosotros. En la Instrucción Dignitas Personae de 2008, la Congregación para la Doctrina de la Fe enseñó que “el deber de dar a conocer su desacuerdo y pedir que su sistema de la salud haga disponible otros tipos de vacunas.”

Un comunicado de la Academia Pontificia para la Vida en 2005 sostiene que uno puede usar estos productos, a pesar de su asociación con el aborto dis- tante, al menos hasta el momento en que las nuevas vacunas estén disponibles. (Ver “Exención de conciencia de vacunas basadas en tejido fetal de abortos” en www.usccb.org).

A veces productos alternativos, que no están asociados con estas líneas celulares, están disponibles para la inmunización contra ciertas enfermedades. Si es posible hacerlo, uno ha de pedirle a su médico de usar una vacuna alternativa, pero no hay obligación moral de utilizar productos que sean menos eficaces o inaccesibles. Los padres deben consultar con su médico acerca de la eficacia y la disponibilidad de éstos y cualesquiera otras vacunas.

Si no existe una vacuna alternativa, uno es moralmente libre de usar la vacuna, independientemente de su asociación histórica con el aborto. La razón es que el riesgo para la salud pública, si se opta por no vacunar, pesa más que la preocupación legítima sobre los orígenes de la vacuna. Esto es especialmente importante para los padres que tienen la obligación moral de proteger la vida y la salud de sus hijos y los que les rodean.

Una fuente muy útil para una reflexión más profunda sobre este tema se puede encontrar en la página web del Centro Nacional Católico de Bioética en https://www.ncbcenter.org/resources/frequently-asked-questions/use-vaccines/.

Una solución a largo plazo es que los investigadores sigan trabajando para garantizar que las futuras vacunas y otros medicamentos no se basen en la cooperación con las prácticas que degradan la vida humana. Esto se aplica a los productos y terapias basadas en aborto o en la destrucción de embriones humanos para obtener sus células madre.

La investigación médica ha hecho algunos avances significativos en esta área. Por ejemplo, la Administración de Alimentos y Fármacos de los Estados Unidos ha aprobado recientemente la vacuna Shingrix para la prevención del herpes zóster (culebrilla) y las complicaciones relacionadas. Este nuevo desarrollo es particularmente bienvenido desde una

(Mira OBISPO/22)
Midland workshop aims to build a culture of vocations

Vocation Office
Diocese of San Angelo

MIDLAND — A workshop was offered by the vocation office on May 5, 2018, at St. Stephen’s in Midland. This was a follow-up from the priests’ spring conference in February, “Building a Culture of Vocations.” At the February conference, priests learned how to foster a culture of vocations from within their own parishes. The priests were asked to send two to five parishioners that would be interested in learning and starting a vocations committee at a parish level.

The speakers were Rhonda Gruenewald, author of “A Hundredfold,” and Leticia Ramirez. Both are with Vocation Ministry in Houston. The workshop was offered in English and Spanish and was well attended with 50 guests from 11 separate parishes in our diocese.

Gruenewald and Ramirez helped everyone understand why it is important and necessary to have a vocations team ministry within the parish. They were given the tools and ideas to be able to create their own vocation ministries, to be able to spread the word and educate others, and to get others to promote and pray for vocations. Examples, handouts, online links, and testimonials were also provided.

At the end of the workshop, Gruenewald asked, “How many of you would be willing to start a vocation ministry in your parish?” She received a resounding 100 percent who would be willing, expressing great interest with excitement, enthusiasm, and great ideas. For example, they could offer adoration dedicated to vocations, make prayer cards, offer Masses to vocations, and interview priests about their vocations stories. Another important point made was that not only is this a responsibility of the priests, but that everyone should have a hand in promoting and educating others about vocations for the future of our diocese and the Church.

For more information on how you can become involved in vocation ministry in your parish, speak to your parish priest or contact the Vocation Office of the Diocese of San Angelo at vocation@sanangelodiocece.org or 325-651-7500.

Rhonda Gruenewald of Vocation Ministry speaks to attendees at the “Building a Culture of Vocations” workshop at St. Stephen Parish in Midland, May 5, 2018. (courtesy photo)
ACS celebrates end of school year

By Becky Trojcak
Principal, Angelo Catholic School

Angelo Catholic School has been winding up to wind down the school year. ACS held their Multicultural Fair on May 10, 2018. There were many countries represented, including India, Germany, Mexico, the Philippines, China, Scotland, USA, Italy, and a few more. The students and their parents prepared food from each country, and the teachers and students made a booth for each country with information about the country. The students held a parade and dressed in the countries’ native costumes. Each class performed a song, dance, or musical to represent the country. After all performances everyone was invited to taste food from these countries and enjoy fellowship. It was a wonderful evening for the families.

ACS awarded the Accelerated Readers with a hot dog dinner in the park. The students played with water guns, bubbles and various games. They had a great time.

End of the year field day took place on May 22. Students in each grade level enjoyed water slides, playing tug-of-war, an obstacle course and various other games throughout the day.

Graduations were held at the final school Mass on Thursday, May 24 — the last day of classes for students. The eighth grade and kinder graduations were well attended and then parties with pizza from Home and School Association were enjoyed. Getting ready for summer with a fun time at the end of the school year is a nice way to end the year.

This summer on June 28 at 6:00 p.m. in the Holy Angelo Parish Hall, Angelo Catholic School will have a dinner and motivational speaker — Jason Douglas. He has been on CBS, Fox New and many other shows. Tables are $600.00 and $800.00, or individual tickets are $35.00. Come support Angelo Catholic School and enjoy a great entertaining evening. Call the school office for more information: 325-949-1747.

May God bless all the students, families and staff of ACS with a safe and happy summer!
I have been a Catholic all my life. I received the Sacrament of Baptism, First Communion, Confirmation, and Marriage in Albert Lea, Minnesota. My encounters with God have lead me to minister to those in need. I remember feeling a little intimidated at the first “Come and Go” meeting with 20 members. As numbers dropped, I still felt called to keep going. When I was 29 I thought that it was the beginning of the end. I came to see the call as a calling. I knew that the prayers and support of the parishioners of St. Vincent de Paul and St. Joseph, and Father Emil led me to and through this journey. My best and most important supporter is my wife, Martha. I could not and would not be here today. By taking me off the path, God returned me to the faith.

I was called to become a deacon. It is not a call to a full-time ministry but to a call to serve. It is a call to be Jesus to someone. Under the ministry of the Holy Spirit, I have become more merciful, accepting, and love others as they are. I am thankful to all those communities that have supported me in so many ways, two of them I ask to keep praying for me always.

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Speaking of Saints

Saintly Hungarian king still honored nearly 1000 years later

By Mary Lou Gibson

Being born into a royal family does not always bring happiness and success. The reign of King Ladislaus of Hungary (1077-1095) is an example of years that were good and other years marked by war and violence. King Ladislaus (also known as Lазло) lived through years of political intrigue, battles against invaders, and expansion of territory. He also continued the work of St. Stephen who, a century earlier, had introduced Christianity into Hungary.

Ladislaus was born in 1040 at Neustria. He was the second son of King Béla I of Hungary. He and his younger brother, Géza, grew up in the court of Poland where his parents had taken refuge.

When Ladislaus’ uncle, Andrew, became King of Hungary, he recalled his brother, Béla, to the country and designated him his successor because Andrew had no heir. But then things got complicated. As Omer Englebert writes in Lives of the Saints, Andrew had a son, Solomon, and all the plans for succession were upset. There were intrigues, many troubles, some foreign interference, and much bloodshed.

Finally, in 1063 Ladislaus and his brother, Géza, acknowledged their cousin, Solomon, as lawful king in exchange for receiving their father’s former duchy — one third of the kingdom. For the next 20 years, the throne of Hungary passed successively to Andrew, his brother, Béla, then to Solomon, Andrew’s son, then to Géza, Ladislaus’ brother, and finally in 1077 to Ladislaus.

Sometime during all these years, Ladislaus married Adelaide, the daughter of the King of Bavaria. John Delaney writes in the Dictionary of Saints that he encouraged Christian missionaries and built many churches. He also allowed religious freedom to Jews and Mohammedans, and, according to Delaney, was venerated for his zeal, piety and moral life.

King Ladislaus defended his country against the invading Tartars and subjugated the Serbs and Bulgars. He was known to show extraordinary bravery on the battlefield. Dom Basil Watkins, OSB, writes in The Book of Saints that Ladislaus annexed Dalmatia and Croatia from the Byzantine Empire and helped establish borders that his country had until the First World War. Delaney describes King Ladislaus as one of the great national heroes of Hungary who made it a great state extending its borders and defending it against invasion.

King Ladislaus used his power for the good of his people and what he judged to be the will of God. John Shea writes in Lives of the Saints that his life in the palace was most austere and he took no time for vanity, pleasure, or idle amusements. Shea writes that King Ladislaus was generous and merciful to his enemies as he watched over a strict and impartial administration of justice.

King Ladislaus was so much admired in the West that the English, French, and Spanish begged him to lead armies of the First Crusade. But before he could do so, he died at Nitra, Bohemia, on June 30, 1095. He was buried in the cathedral of Grosswardein. Legends depict him as a pious knight-king and he still lives in the sagas and poems of his people.

Ladislaus was canonized in 1192 by Pope Celestine III. His feast day is June 27.

A blue-flowered plant called the Star Gentian (Gentiana cruciata) is traditionally known as “St. Ladislaus’s Herb” in Hungary.

Mary Lou Gibson writes about the saints for the West Texas Angelus from her home in Austin.
Catholic Charitable Foundation offers stewardship opportunities, disburses grants
By Steve McKay
Secretary and Treasurer
The Catholic Charitable Foundation for the Roman Catholic Diocese of San Angelo

In the Old Testament book of Deuteronomy we read, “However, be on your guard and be very careful not to forget the things your own eyes have seen, nor let them slip from your heart as long as you live, but make them known to your children and to your children’s children.”

Through designated endowment funds in The Catholic Charitable Foundation for the Roman Catholic Diocese of San Angelo, many donors throughout the diocese are making known to today’s generation and future generations the importance of being a Christian steward.

As the USCCB noted in its U.S. Bishops’ Pastoral Letter on Stewardship, “As Christian stewards, we receive God’s gifts gratefully, cultivate them responsibly, share them lovingly in justice with others, and return them with increase to the Lord.” One way many throughout our diocese have returned God’s grateful gifts is through generous contributions to the Foundation. A gift to the Foundation is a gift that serves our Catholic community forever! These gifts hold great potential for helping parishes sustain and even grow their ministries for current and future generations.

Henri Nouwen in A Spirituality of Fundraising explains it this way: “Even a seemingly small act of generosity can grow into something far beyond what we could ever ask or imagine — the creation of a community of love in this world, and beyond this world, because wherever love grows, it is stronger than death. So when we give ourselves to planting and nurturing love here on earth, our efforts will reach out beyond our own chronological existence.”

In the chart at right, grants awarded by the Foundation for 2018 are listed. These grants are the result of acts of generosity from Foundation donors. In addition, this year $193,523 was distributed to parishes, schools and institutions who have Management Agreements with the Foundation for the management of their endowments. An experienced Investment Committee, advised by a leading investment management consultant, monitors our Foundation investments. Our Foundation investments reflect our Catholic identity in our investment choices.

For additional information on how to establish an endowment or leave a legacy gift to the Foundation in your will, please visit our website www.catholicfoundationsanangelo.org or contact Steve McKay at smckay@sanangelodiocese.org.

Charismatic Renewal at 50
By Msgr. Robert Bush
Pastor, Sacred Heart Parish, Abilene

I have been asked to give a presentation at Holy Angels Parish in San Angelo regarding the beginnings of the Charismatic Renewal in our diocese fifty years ago. It was the summer of 1968. I had been in the seminary studying for the priesthood for seven years, discerning the priesthood. I had pretty much made up my mind to be a priest, but had some questions as to whether or not I could function adequately as a priest. I was ordained a deacon on Pentecost Sunday in June of 1968 at Sacred Heart Cathedral in San Angelo.

I was assigned to work for the summer at St. Joseph Church in Odessa where Father Bernard Gully was pastor. I was to be there for two months. Almost as soon as I arrived there, Father Gully invited me to go to a prayer meeting in Midland — at the home of John and Jan Leary, who lived at the time in a house next to St. Ann’s Church. When we arrived that Wednesday evening, I saw that people were crowded in the living room — sitting in chairs and on the floor. They were in the middle of prayer. I don’t remember much of the meeting itself, but afterwards, the people there were all friendly and inviting. My impression of it all was that it “was nice.” After we left, I thought that I had done that and was finished with it.

A few days later, another seminarian, Larry Drol, arrived. We were to spend the summer together. Father Gully asked me to take Larry to the prayer meeting. We went and again arrived in the middle of the meeting. I noticed that people were offering spontaneous prayer and giving testimonies of their experience of the week. I remembered that some were testifying how their prayers they had prayed the previous week had been answered. I also noticed that in addition to them singing lively songs, most of them in the group at times were praying in some languages I had never heard before — and some were singing in those languages as well!

After the meeting, we were again welcomed graciously. They invited us to attend the prayer meetings each Wednesday. We agreed to come if there was nothing else going on at St. Joseph parish. (It so happened that there was NEVER anything going on at that time during the summer!) As we attended, we received explanations on the dynamics of the prayer meeting — the “speaking in tongues” the “prophecies,” etc., as they were called. They asked us to look for evidence in the scriptures about these and other things we noticed were happening in the prayer meeting. We did — and found the evidence!

Toward the end of the summer, John Leary had been invited to go to Lubbock to give his testimony as to how he got involved in all of this (which is now called the Charismatic Movement in the Catholic Church). When we got back, it was past midnight; we decided to spend the night in Midland, since the next day we were scheduled to attend a day of renewal in San Angelo. That night they proposed that we continue in prayer. I was too tired, but Larry decided to stay up.

The next day, on the way to San Angelo, Larry told me that they had prayed over him and he had spoken in tongues. I was happy for him. He was scheduled to go to Fort Stockton the following week to help out with a Vacation Bible School. That Monday, the prayer meeting people called and invited me for supper that same evening; they said that afterwards “we could pray.” I understood what that meant and agreed. They prayed for me for an infilling of the Holy Spirit and I did speak in tongues — just a little. Because it was late, I spent the night there in Midland.

On the way back to Odessa, I felt renewed; the surroundings looked fresh and new (even though the area had no rain that summer). I knew I was different. A few days later, I realized that any doubts regarding my vocation were put aside. God is with me and any problems concerning being a priest were solved — since God is with me!

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Bishop Michael Sis on Twitter: @SABishopMike

On the Web

www.sanangelodiocese.org
By Richard and Linda Light
Holy Trinity Parish, Big Spring

On Sunday afternoon, May 6, 2018, Bishop Sis offered a Mass and Jubilee Celebration at the Sacred Heart Cathedral for those who celebrated the Sacrament of Matrimony for 25, 30, 35, 40, 45, 50, and over 50 years. Sixty-seven couples attended this beautiful occasion. During the ceremony, we renewed our vow to love and cherish each other. Bishop Sis gave a very insightful homily on the occasion. During the ceremony, we renewed our vow to love and cherish each other. Bishop Sis gave a very insightful homily on agape love which is the total giving of oneself to another by putting the other’s needs first.

We were in attendance and were asked to briefly share our love story.

Richard’s version: I attended McMurry College in Abilene. McMurry had a mandatory Wednesday chapel service. There was a different program each week. On this one occasion, a singing group of college students from Harding-Simmons University in Abilene provided the program. As a not very committed student, I was sitting in the back of the balcony studying for a test. At the end of the program each singer stepped forward and introduced themselves. When my now-wife Linda introduced herself as Linda Ritter from Anson, Texas, I spontaneously elbowed my buddy and said, “I am going to marry that girl.” He laughed aloud and said, “Sure you are, she is famous and on stage and you are back here studying for a test!” I was not sure about the gift of prophesy at that time in my spiritual walk, but by declaring this, I prophesied a future which came to be.

Two weeks later I saw her at a party and introduced myself with much fanfare so that she would remember me. I called her for a date. She agreed only to a coke date at the student center. We did not know ourselves. When my now-wife Linda introduced herself as Linda Ritter from Anson, Texas, I spontaneously elbowed my buddy and said, “I am going to marry that girl.” He laughed aloud and said, “Sure you are, she is famous and on stage and you are back here studying for a test!” I was not sure about the gift of prophesy at that time in my spiritual walk, but by declaring this, I prophesied a future which came to be.

This is how Linda remembers events: Richard and I met on what was called a “blind date.” We did not know each other, went to separate colleges, and lived in different towns. The afternoon I met Richard, God spoke to me and said, “He will be very important to you.” After only a few dates, it was apparent the we were falling in love with each other. At that point we decided to quit dating. We were both strong Christians from church-going families, but Richard was Catholic and I was Baptist. We knew that we could not marry and go to different churches. I was devastated, so I signed out of my college dorm and went home to spend the weekend with my family. When I got home, my dad immediately knew something was up and asked me what was wrong. I told him Richard and I had decided to stop dating because he was Catholic and I was Baptist. Then my father said the words that changed my life forever. He said, “Linda, the most important thing in life is your relationship to Jesus Christ, not which church you attend.” I went back to college on Sunday afternoon and on Monday called Richard. We continued dating, got engaged, and married one and a half years after we met. I took instruction from Father Bridges, who was pastor at Sacred Heart in Abilene, and became a Catholic the spring before we married. I learned to love Jesus, Mary, and all the saints, in a whole new way in the Catholic church. On August 11, 2018, we will celebrate 46 years of marriage.

Richard’s account continues: I had never felt this spark of emotion before. I knew that God had revealed to me my future wife. We indeed did receive the Sacrament of Marriage on August 11, 1972. We lived on $295 a month for two years until we finished our college degrees. We would most often go hungry at the end of most months until our next pay check. Our intense agape love and hope for a better future brought us through these difficult times and gave us strength and courage that we could do anything together.

During this time of financial drought, Linda and I agreed to tithe 10% of our meager income. We were following the example of Abraham (Gn 14:18-20) and the instruction given to Moses (Lv 27:30-34) in the Bible. Their stories of survival gave us hope that God our loving Father would provide for all our needs. We continued our marriage in faith. God has indeed provided for us financially. He has given us three wonderful Christian daughters, three amazing sons-in-law who are also Christians, and five fantastic grandchildren. We have been blessed to give of our time, talent, and treasure back to God through the Catholic Church. Linda has led a choir for 35 years. I have served as a catechist and in administration during these years. We took a vow at our wedding to cherish each other in good times and bad, in sickness and in health, until death do us part. Life has thrown us a few curve balls in these 46 years, but our agape love for each other, our parents’ examples of faith and love, and our faith in a loving Father have sustained us over time. One thing that has helped sustain our marriage is that neither one of us has tried to re-make the other into our image of who he/she should be. We have respected each other’s gifts and encouraged one another in the development of those gifts.

I often reflect back on that day in the chapel service at McMurry College where I said to my buddy, “I am going to marry that girl,” and how over time this has unfolded into a wonderful life together. She is the love of my life and the best is still to come.
Bishop announces new clergy assignments for July

SAN ANGELO — Bishop Michael J. Sis has announced the following clergy assignments within the Diocese of San Angelo, effective July 2, 2018:
- Rev. Serafin Avenido, pastor at Holy Trinity Parish in Big Spring
- Rev. Lorenzo Hatch, pastor at Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish in Fort Stockton and St. James Parish in Sanderson
- Rev. Emilio Sosa, pastor at St. Vincent Pallotti Parish in Abilene and Our Mother of Mercy Mission in Merkel
- Rev. Anthony Govindu, parochial administrator at St. Frances of Rome Parish in Odessa
- Rev. Adam Droll, parochial vicar at St. Stephen Parish in Midland
- Rev. Tony Franco, parochial vicar at St. Joseph Parish, St. Anthony Parish, and St. Martin de Porres Mission in Odessa
- Rev. Josh Gray, parochial vicar at Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish in Midland

The Diocese of San Angelo is also pleased to announce that Rev. Anthony Sloan will return to his ministry as chaplain of Our Lady of Grace Carmelite Monastery in Christoval, effective June 1.

Please pray for these priests as they prepare for their new ministry assignments, and for all clergy of the Diocese of San Angelo.

DIOCESAN BRIEFS

2018 San Angelo Catholic Women’s Conference
Save the Date — Friday, September 28 to Saturday, September 29, 2018
The 3rd annual Catholic Women’s Conference will be held in San Angelo at the McNease Convention Center on September 28 and 29, 2018.
Featured speakers for this year are Heather Renshaw, Marge Fenelon, and Julie Alexander.
Please SAVE THE DATE! More information coming soon!
For more information, contact the Heart of JMJ (Jesus Mary Joseph) Foundation at www.heartjmj.org.

To Report Sexual Abuse
The Catholic Diocese of San Angelo is firmly committed to creating and maintaining the safest possible environment for our children and vulnerable adults. If you or someone you know has been sexually abused by anyone who serves the Church, and you need a place to talk with someone about your feelings of betrayal or hurt by the Church, we are here to help you.
To report incidents, call Lori Hines, Victim Assistance Coordinator, 325-374-7609 (cell), or write Diocese of San Angelo, Victim Assistance Ministry, PO Box 1829, San Angelo, TX 76902. If the incident occurred outside this diocese, our Victim Assistance Coordinator will assist in bringing your concern to the attention of the appropriate diocese.
Please keep in mind that one always has the right to report abuse to civil authorities, and civil law requires that any abuse of a minor must be reported.

Para Reportar Abuso Sexual
La Diócesis Católica de San Ángelo está firmemente comprometida a crear y mantener el ambiente más seguro posible para nuestros niños y adultos vulnerables. Si el incidente ocurrió fuera de esta diócesis, nuestra Coordinadora de Asistencia a Víctimas le ayudará a traer su preocupación a la atención de la diócesis correspondiente. Por favor, tenga en cuenta que siempre tiene el derecho de reportar el abuso a las autoridades civiles, y la ley civil requiere que cualquier abuso de un menor de edad debe ser reportado.

Organ Dedication Concert

Maestro Hector Olivera

Concert Hall in Odessa, TX

Saturday, June 16, 2018 at 7:00pm
Free

For more info 432-367-4657 or music@setonparishodessa.org

Renowned organist to perform dedication concert in Odessa

ODESSA — Since entering the Buenos Aires Conservatory as a child prodigy at age six, Maestro Hector Olivera has become one of the most sought after and revered international concert organists of the present time. The Times Reporter describes an event, a happening, a joyful celebration of the sheer power and pressure that a true virtuoso like Hector Olivera can unleash in a concert hall.

Born in Buenos Aires, Mr. Olivera began playing the pipe organ when he was three. At age five he played for the legendary Eva Perón; at twelve he entered the University of Buenos Aires and by eighteen had performed for heads of state and celebrities throughout Latin America. When offered a scholarship at the renowned Juilliard School of Music in New York, he moved to the United States.

Three years later, Mr. Olivera’s outstanding professional concert career was launched when he won the AGO’s National Improvisation Contest.

Mr. Olivera has performed solo concerts throughout the USA, Europe, Asia, Australia, Central and Latin America and as guest soloist with prominent symphony orchestras worldwide.

Whether in a prestigious venue like Carnegie Hall, Royal Albert Hall, Cathedral of Notre Dame in Paris, Constitution Hall, Walt Disney Concert Hall in Los Angeles, or in conjunction with a celebrated event like the Olympic games or the Classical Newport Music Festival, the most sophisticated and demanding organ aficionados claim that Maestro Hector Olivera is “one of the greatest organists in the world today.”
Sor María presents an example of holiness and prayer for West Texas

A re-enactment of the historical baptism of native Jumano people along the banks of the Concho River, May 20, 2018 (Angelus photo)

The Lady in Blue Celebration 2018

Chief Cearcasa, right, of the Jumano Nation performs a traditional smudging ceremony at the site of the baptism of the Concho River, May 20, 2018 (Angelus photo)

Chapel de Jesús, left, and the Lady in Blue Committee present a cross for the Lady in Blue in the Courtyard of San Angelo park before the unveiling of the new statues, May 20, 2018 (Angelus photo)

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The statue of Sor María de Jesús de Ágreda, the Lady in Blue. She is depicted handing a cross to a Jumano girl, symbolic of the faith shared by Sor María and accepted by the Jumano people. (Angelus photo)

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Members of St. Thomas Catholic Church in Miles pulled together to sponsor their Bi-Annual Garage and Tamale Sale on May 5. After a week of processing donated Garage Sale treasures and the making of 200 dozen homemade tamales, the group was proud to have raised $2,500 to put toward the debt on the new parish hall. (courtesy photo)

The Marienfeld Lay Carmelite Community of Midland celebrated their 30th anniversary on May 18th, 2018. They were given a Day of Reflection at Our Lady of Grace Carmelite monastery in Christoval by Fr. Terry Sempowski from Darien, Illinois. Pictured are: Fran Havlak, Catarina Garza, Mike Scammel, Faustino Rodriguez, Wanda Anderson, Donna Repman, Rosa Vitela, Kay Donna Machicek, Cora Rodriguez, Joe Acosta, Nancy Acosta, Diane Eggemeyer, Laticia Aguirre and Denise Scammel (Not pictured: Emma Galindo and Priscella Fuentez). For more information about the Lay Carmelites, call 432-535-2316. (courtesy photo)

Graduates’ Mass at Holy Spirit Parish, Sweetwater, May 20. (courtesy photo)
May our children be saints and heroes

By Michael Barba
Texas Catholic Conference of Bishops

My great grandmother used to say: “ anyone can have children; not anyone can be a mother or father.” Our abuelita’s difficult lesson makes me wonder what it means to be a good father.

The Catechism (2221-2231) provides an answer by teaching that my wife and I have the first duty to educate our children and that we fulfill our duty by filling our home with tenderness, forgiveness, respect, fidelity, and disinterested service. We do this to teach our children the virtues of courage, moderation, justice, prudence, faith, hope, and love.

We begin to fulfill our duty by teaching infants a language and naming all things. In doing this, we give our children an interpretation of the order of heaven and earth. We define acts as good or evil and provide examples of what is beautiful or ugly. Above all, we do this through books and especially through the Book. (“Bible” is the correct English translation of the Greek word for “book.”)

Through the Bible and Great Books, we learn about right and wrong, good and bad, and why they are so. We inherit authority and wisdom about heaven and about humanity. In this way, our families become sacred units, founded on the permanence of the lessons we have inherited, and offering our children a wonder in the moral law.

This way of life is opposed to two prominent alternatives which we should avoid.

The first way provides merely for physical needs and wants, and neglects defining acts as “good” and “evil.” If we become devoted only to physical needs, we’ll eat, play, and live beside our children, but not think or believe together. We’ll lose the idea that the highest aspiration we can have for our sons and daughters in this life is for them to be wise—as priests, prophets, and philosophers are wise. We should set our sights higher than specialized competence and financial success.

The second alternative forgets what’s really important in a different way: when the morning paper replaces the morning prayer, the busy, cheap, and ephemeral replaces our daily devotion to the eternal. The internet’s newsfeed continues this trend in a way that is both limited and limiting: limited because it contains little concern with virtue and eternal happiness; limiting because it pulls us away from concern with that which is most our own: our soul, our spouse, and our children. When I’m scrolling through my phone or channel surfing, can I fill my home with tenderness, forgiveness, respect, fidelity, and disinterested service?

Let us take time to read out loud with our children. While each family is slightly different, one starting point for young children is the New Catholic Picture Bible. Next, let us recommit ourselves on a daily basis to being tender, forgiving, respectful, faithful, and helpful to our children. Finally, let us seek out good and great books which teach our children right from wrong. Whichever path we choose, let us educate our children in the hope that they may be saints and heroes.

Michael Barba is the Associate Director of Public Policy at the Texas Catholic Conference of Bishops.

Que nuestros hijos sean santos y héroes

Por Michael Barba
Texas Catholic Conference of Bishops

Mi abuela solía decir: “cualquiera puede tener hijos, pero no cualquiera puede ser madre o padre.” Esta difícil lección de nuestra “abuelita” me hace preguntarme qué significa ser un buen padre.

El Catecismo (2221-2231) da una respuesta al enseñar que mi esposa y yo somos los primeros responsables de educar a nuestros hijos y de cumplir con nuestro deber llenando nuestro hogar con ternura, perdón, respeto, fidelidad y servicio desinteresado. Esto lo hacemos para enseñar a nuestros hijos las virtudes del valor, la moderación, la justicia, la fe, la esperanza y el amor.

Comenzamos a cumplir con nuestro deber al enseñar a los bebés un idioma y al dar nombre a todas las cosas. Al hacer esto les damos a nuestros hijos una interpretación del orden del cielo y de la tierra, definimos actos como buenos o malos y proporcionamos ejemplos de lo que es bello o feo. Para esto, sobre todo utilizamos libros y especialmente El Libro (“Biblia” es la traducción al español de la palabra griega que significa “libro”).

A través de la Biblia y los Grandes Libros, aprendemos sobre lo correcto y lo incorrecto, lo bueno y lo malo, y por qué lo son. Heredamos la autoridad y la sabiduría sobre el cielo y sobre la humanidad. De esta manera, nuestras familias se convierten en unidades sagradas, fundadas en la permanencia de las lecciones que hemos heredado y ofrecen a nuestros hijos una maravilla a través la ley moral.

Esta forma de vida se opone a dos alternativas prominentes que debemos evitar.

La primera forma satisface meramente necesidades físicas y deseados, y descuida la definición de los actos como “buenos” y “malos”. Si solo nos dedicamos a cubrir las necesidades físicas, comeremos, jugaremos y viviremos al lado de nuestros hijos, pero no pensaremos ni creeremos juntos. Perderemos la idea de que la mayor aspiración que podemos tener para nuestros hijos en esta vida es que sean santos, como son santos los sacerdotes, los profetas y los filósofos. Deberíamos tener más allá de la competencia especializada y el éxito financiero.

La segunda alternativa olvida lo que es realmente importante de una manera diferente: cuando el periódico de la mañana reemplaza la oración matutina, lo ocupado, lo barato y lo efímero sustituye nuestra devoción cotidiana por lo eterno. El suministro de noticias por internet mantiene esta tendencia de una manera que es tanto limitada como limitante que contiene poca preocupación por la virtud y la felicidad eterna; limitante porque nos aleja de la preocupación de lo que es más nuestro: nuestra alma, nuestro cónyuge y nuestros hijos. Cuando estoy navegando con mi teléfono o recorriendo la lista de canales, ¿puedo llenar mi hogar con ternura, perdón, respeto, fidelidad y servicio desinteresado?

Tomemos el tiempo para leer en voz alta con nuestros hijos. Si bien cada familia es un poco diferente, un punto de partida para los niños pequeños es la Biblia Ilustrada. Luego volvamos a comprometer-nos diariamente a ser tiernos, indulgentes, respetuosos, fieles y serviciales con nuestros hijos. Finalmente busquemos libros buenos y grandiosos que les enseñen a distinguir entre el bien y el mal. Cualquiera que sea el camino que elijamos, educaremos a nuestros hijos con la esperanza de que puedan ser santos y héroes.

Serving Others in God’s Love

Religious Freedom Week
June 22—29, 2018

“[Religious] freedom remains one of America’s most precious possessions. And, as my brothers, the United States Bishops, have reminded us, all are called to be vigilant, precisely as good citizens, to preserve and defend that freedom from everything that would threaten or compromise it.”

- Pope Francis

Servir a otros en el amor de Dios

Semana de la Libertad Religiosa
22 al 29 de junio, 2018

People of faith are committed to serving others in God’s love in healthcare, child welfare, migration and refugee resettlement, education, and more. Religious freedom protects the space in which we can continue to serve. Religious Freedom Week begins June 22, the Feast of Sts. Thomas More & John Fisher. Join Catholics across the country to pray and act for the freedom to serve faithfully and with integrity. Learn more at www.usccb.org/ReligiousFreedomWeek!
**By Fr. Ron Rolheiser, OMI**

One of the richest experiences of grace that we can have this side of eternity is the experience of friendship.

Dictionaries define friendship as a relationship of mutual affection, a bond richer than mere association. They then go on to link friendship to a number of words: kindness, love, sympathy, empathy, gentleness, altruism, loyalty, understanding, compassion, comfort, and (not least) trust. Friends, the dictionaries assert, enjoy each other's company, express their feelings to each other, and make mistakes without fear of judgment from the other.

That basically covers things, but to better grasp the real grace in friendship a number of things inside that definition need explication.

First, as the Greek Stoics affirmed and as is evident in the Christian spirituality, true friendship is only possible among people who are practicing virtue. A gang is not a circle of friendship, nor are many ideological circles. Why? Because friendship needs to bring grace and grace is only found in virtue.

Next, friendship is more than merely a number of things inside that definition need explication. It is the experience of friendship.

When it is genuine, friendship is nothing less than a participation in the flow of life and love that’s inside of God. Scripture tells us that God is love, but the word it uses for love in this case is the Greek word agape, a term which might be rendered as “family,” “community,” or “the sharing of life.” Hence the famous text (“God is Love”) might be transliterated to read: God is family, God is community, God is shared existence, and whoever shares his or her existence inside of community and friendship is participating in the very flow of life and love that is inside the Trinity.

But this isn’t always true. Friendship and family can take different forms. Parker Palmer, the contemporary Quaker writer, submits: “If you come here faithfully, you bring great blessing.”

Conversely, the great Sufi mystic, Rumi, writes: “If you are here unfaithfully, you bring great harm.” Family and community can bring grace or block it. Our circle can be one of love and grace, or it can be a one of hatred and sin. Only the former merits the name friendship. Friendship, says St. Augustine, is the beauty of the soul.

Deep, life-giving friendship, as we all know, is as difficult as it is rare. Why? We all long for it in the depths of our soul, so why is it so difficult to find? We all know why: We’re different from each other, unique, and rightly cautious as to whom we give entry into our soul. And so it isn’t easy to find a soulmate, to have that kind of affinity and trust. Nor is it easy to sustain a friendship once we have found one.

Sustained friendship takes hard commitment and that’s not our strong point as our psyches and our world forever shift and turn. Moreover, today, virtual friendships don’t always translate into real friendships.

Finally, not least, friendship is often hindered (or derailed by sex and sexual tension). That’s one of nature and a fact within our culture and all other cultures. Sex and sexuality, while they ideally should be the basis for deep friendship, often are the major hindrance to friendship. Moreover, in our own culture (whose ethos prizes sex over friendship) friendship is often seen as a substitute, and a second-rate substitute, and for sex.

But while that may be in our cultural ethos, it’s clearly not what’s deepest in our souls. There we long for something that’s ultimately deeper than sex — or is sex in a fuller flowering. There’s a deep desire in us all (be that a deeper form of sexual desire or a desire for something that’s beyond sex) for a soulmate, for someone to sleep with morally. More deeply than we ache for a sexual partner, we ache for a moral partner, though these desires aren’t mutually exclusive, just hard to combine.

Friendship, like love, is always partly a mystery, something beyond us. It’s a struggle in all cultures. Part of this is simply our humanity. The pearl of great price is not easily found nor easily retained. True friendship is an eschatological thing, found, though never perfectly, in this life.

Cultural and religious factors always work against friendship, as does the omnipresence of sexual tension.

Sometimes poets can reach where academics cannot and so I offer these insights from a poet vis-à-vis the interrelationship between friendship and sex. Friendship, Rainer Marie Rilke suggests, is often one of the great taboos within a culture, but it remains always the endgame: “In a deep, felicitous love between two people you can eventually become the loving protectors of each other’s solitude. … Sex is, admittedly, very powerful, but no matter how powerful, beautiful, and wondrous it may be. If you become the loving protectors of each other’s solitude, love gradually turns to friendship.”

And as Montaigne once affirmed: “The end of friendship may be more important than friendship itself. The epiphanies of youth are meant to blossom and ripen into something everlastingly great.”

**Oblate Father Ron Rolheiser, theologian, teacher, and award-winning author, is President of the Oblate School of Theology in San Antonio, TX. He can be contacted through his website: www.rolrrolheiser.com. Now on Facebook: www.facebook.com/rolronrolheiser.**

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**Michelle Wolf and the throwaway culture**

**By Most Reverend Robert Barron**

Auxiliary Bishop of Los Angeles

The other night at the White House Correspondents’ Dinner, Michelle Wolf, who I’m told is a comedian, regaled the black-tie and sequined gown-wearing crowd with her “jokes.”

Almost all were in extremely bad taste and/or wildly offensive. One person who has become accustomed to that sort of coarseness in the comedy clubs and even on mainstream television.

However, she crossed over into the territory of the morally appalling when she indulged in this bit of witticism regarding Vice President Mike Pence: “He thinks abortion is murder, which, first of all, don’t knock it until you’ve tried it. And when you do try it, really knock it, you know. You gotta get that baby out of there.” One is just at a loss for words. I mean, even in the severely left-leaning crowd in Washington groaned a bit at that remark.

It might be helpful to remind ourselves what Ms. Wolf is referencing when she speaks of “knocking that baby out of there.” She means the vivisection of a child. And lest one think that we are just talking about “bundles of cells,” it is strict liberal orthodoxy that a baby can be aborted at any stage of its prenatal development, even while it rests in the birth canal moments before birth. Indeed, a child, who somehow miraculously survives the butchery of an abortion, should, according to that same orthodoxy, be left to die or actively killed. Sure sounds like fun to me; hey, don’t knock it until you’ve tried it.

I realize that these attitudes have been enshrined in American law for some time, but what particularly struck me about the Correspondents’ Dinner was how they were being bandied about so shamelessly for the entertainment of the cultural elite. Let’s face it, the people in that room — politicians, judges, writers, broadcasters, government officials — are the top of the food chain, among the most influential and powerful people in our society. And while the killing of children was being joked about — especially, mind you, the children of the poor, who are disproportionately represented among the victims of abortion — most in this audience guffawed and applauded.

Did this put me in mind of Friedrich Nietzsche. I’ve spoken and written often of the influence of this nineteenth-century thinker, whose musings have trickled their way down through the universities and institutions of the high culture into the general consciousness of many if not most people today. Nietzsche held that the traditional moral values have been exposed as ungrounded and that humanity is summoned to move, accordingly, into a previously unexplored space “beyond good and evil.” In such a morally unmoored universe, the Ubermensch (superman or overman) emerges to assert his power and impose his rule on those around him. Nietzsche had a special contempt for the Christian values of sympathy, compassion, and love of enemies, characterizing them as the ideals of a “slave morality,” repugnant to the noble aspirations of the Ubermensch. Through his many avatars in the twentieth-century nooses, Headlager, Foureaul, Ayn Rand, etc., Nietzsche, as I said, has exerted an extraordinary influence on contemporary thought. Whenever a young person today speaks of traditional ethics as a disguised play of power or of her right to determine the meaning of her own life through an exercise of sovereign freedom, we can hear the overtones of Friedrich Nietzsche.

All of which brings me back to the White House Correspondents’ Dinner. When we live in the space beyond good and evil, when morality is construed as entirely the invention of personal freedom, when nothing counts as intrinsically wicked, when any claim to moral authority is automatically shouted-down — in other words, when we live in the world that Nietzsche made possible — then the will of the most powerful necessarily holds sway. And when something or someone gets in the way of what the powerful want, then they just “gotta knock it out of there.” Michelle Wolf’s comment was not just a bad joke; it was a brazen display of power, designed to appeal precisely to those who have reached the top of the greasy pole.

One of the extraordinary but often overlooked qualities of a system of objective morality is that it is a check on the powerful and a protection of the most vulnerable. If good and evil are objective states of affairs, then they hem in and control the tendency of cultural elites to dominate others. When objective moral values evanescence, armies of the expendable emerge, and what Pope Francis aptly calls a cultura del descarte (a throwaway culture) obtains. One of the indicators that this has happened is lots of people in tuxedos and formal gowns, sipping from wine glasses, and laughing while someone jokes about the murder of children.

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Bishop Robert Barron is an auxiliary bishop of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles and the founder of Word on Fire Catholic Ministries.
By Maria-Pia Negro Chin
Catholic News Service

I had a little push to leave his comfort zone when participants at his parish’s encuentro were told to go out and evangelize. He and his girlfriend went to a park and found a homeless veteran in a wheelchair and just listened to him. Isaac ended up being transformed by the faith and joy of the veteran. He said: “If I can wake up every day and give glory to God, I am happy.” Isaac recalled.

Through his conversations with the veteran and other similar encounters, he discovered the joy of going to the peripheries and now wants to be a volunteer counselor for those in need in his parish. “Everyone needs help. We have to go out and extend our hands,” he said. One can evangelize just by accompanying others and listening to them, without judgment.

Telling a crowd of 800 people that he “is not so afraid anymore,” Isaac added that as the encounter with other people inspired how he wants to live his career.

“I want to accompany those who are going through financial hardships,” he said at the regional encuentro. “And give them hope that whatever struggles that they are going through, that God has a plan for them, and they have to keep fighting.”

Isaac hoped his experiences with V Encuentro inspire young people to go out and accompany others and to evangelize others in their own lives.

“I want to encourage everyone to not be scared to do more, to not be complacent, or to think God has called the wrong person, because he hasn’t,” Isaac said. “I want to encourage everyone to go out, just like St. Paul and all of the other disciples, and preach the good news to everyone, not just through your words, but through your attentive ears and your open heart.”

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

Called to go forth

Por Maria-Pia Negro Chin
Catholic News Service

¿Sabe que estamos llamados a evangelizar y compartir el amor de Dios con los demás? ¿Sabe que también usted está llamado a hacer esto?”

Recientemente asistió a algunas reuniones que me recordaron este llamado. A través del tema del V Encuentro, un proceso de varios años de una serie de reuniones previas al V Encuentro Nacional del Ministerio Hispano que se realizará en septiembre se recordó a las personas que “ellos también son discípulos Misioneros: Testigos del amor de Dios.”

Algunos de los testimonios que más me inspiraron fueron los de los jóvenes, que realmente abrazaron el llamado a “salir a las periferias” y a ser “agentes de evangelización” al acercarse a los demás. En un encuentro regional en Texas, un adolescente llamado Isaac animó a compartir las buenas nuevas a través de obras, incluso si es desafinado al principio.

“My miedo es lo que te hace pensar, ‘alguien más (que no tiene miedo) lo va a hacer’,” said Isaac, a 19-year-old from the Diocese of Amarillo, Texas. “But the truth is, we all have fears.”

“The encuentro process has taught me how important it is to accompany others,” he said. “As St. Paul reminds us, in order to help the good news, someone has to announce and preach it.”

Before Isaac said, he thought that he was being enough by going to Mass weekly and helping in his parish. “I did not think that it was up to me to evangelize. It wasn’t because I was being enough. … But because I was afraid,” he said. “I was afraid to get out of my comfort zone.”

Isaac tuvo un pequeño impulso para abandonar su zona de confort cuando se le dijo a los participantes en el encuentro de su parroquia que salieran y evangelizaran. Él y su novia fueron a un parque y encontraron a un veterano desamparado en una silla de ruedas y lo escucharon. Isaac fue transformado por la fe y la alegría del veterano. “El dijo: ‘Sí puedo despertarme todos los días y dar gloria a Dios, soy feliz’,” recordó Isaac.

A través de sus conversaciones con el veterano y otros encuentros similares, descubrió la alegría de ir a las periferias y ahora quiere ser un consejero voluntary para los necesitados en su parroquia.

“Todas necesitan ayuda. Tenemos que salir y extender nuestras manos”, dijo. Uno puede evangelizar simplemente acompañando a otros y escuchándolos, sin juzgarlos.

Diciéndole a una multitud de 800 personas que “ya no tiene tanto miedo”, Isaac agregó que sus encuentros con otros han inspirado cómo quiere vivir su carrera.

“Quiero acompañar a quienes atraviesan dificultades financieras”, dijo, en el encuentro regional. “Y dales la esperanza de que cualquier lucha que estén pasando, que Dios tiene un plan para ellos y tienen que hacerlo.”

El final de su charla durante el encuentro regional en Texas, Isaac dijo que él esperaba que sus experiencias del V Encuentro inspiraran a los jóvenes a salir a acompañar a otros y evangelizar a otros en sus propias vidas.

“Quiero alentar a todos a no tener miedo a hacerlo, a no ser complacientes, o a pensar que Dios ha llamado a la persona equivocada, porque no lo he hecho”, dijo Isaac. “Quiero alentar a todos a salir, al igual que a San Pablo y a todos los demás discípulos, y predicar las buenas nuevas a todos, no solo a través de sus palabras, sino a través de sus oídos atentos y su corazón abierto.”

Llamado a salir

By Greg Erlandson
Catholic News Service

I have been a news junkie almost all my life. I’ve read a daily newspaper since grammar school, progressing from comics to sports to the front page. I was the first one in my family to get up in the morning, so I was the first to fetch the newspaper from the driveway.

Since then, my addiction to reading has only grown. These days I listen to radio news, watch television news and read multiple newspapers. I try to keep up on all the articles friends send me via email. I have a smartphone so I’m not compelled not to read any of them. The second day went even more smoothly. The question now is: Will I do it again?

More and more people I run into are telling me they are taking steps of their own to prevent “chronic news funk,” a first world pathology whose symptoms consist of anger, depression and despair generated by too high an exposure to current events.

This is not a new disease. Both a pastor and a family counselor told me several years ago that spouses (usually wives) were complaining that their husbands were in perpetually angry moods, and it was affecting their relationships. The reason: Obama-era news funk due to hours spent watching Fox News. After one election, the priest even preached on the dangers of all this anger.

Now we are seeing Trump-era news funk: hours upon hours of MSNBC and CNN, or The Washington Post and The New York Times.

But it isn’t just presidential upset. Stories about corruption, sex abuse and torture, police and civilian shootings, mingles with scientific studies predicting catastrophes on a personal or global scale. It feels as if our world is convulsing with disasters.

Worse still is that what passes for news is often commentary, and what passes for commentary is little more than ad hominem attacks. The sewer that is social media only makes all of this worse.

Citizens have a duty to be informed, but that is a far cry from obsessing over the latest horrors or the latest stupidities.

As I try to decide how far to take my news-free experiment, a Jewish friend suggested recovering the Sabbath. We Catholics can make Sunday a real day of rest. Pope Francis would agree. In the new documentary Pope Francis: A Man of His Word, the pope says we need a day set aside to worship God and focus on those we love. “We are not machines,” he tells us.

For other ideas, go to a website called distressmetologo.com. It has lots of ideas and suggestions for people who work for a living, with children and have a lot of free time. One of the ideas is to “take a five days on, two days off” approach.

Finally, ban all screens from the bedroom. This used to apply only to televisions, but now it includes phones, tablets and laptops. Who knows, maybe even newspapers too.

It’s time to start streamlining again.

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Making Sense of Bioethics

Consenting to sex
By Fr. Tad Pacholczyk

Recent news articles exploring the post-#MeToo world of romance have noted the phenomenon of cell phone “consent apps,” allowing millennials to sign digital contracts before they have sex with their peers, sometimes strangers they have just met. Many of these apps are being refined to include a panic button that can be pressed at any time to withdraw consent. Lawyers reviewing the practice, as might be anticipated, have urged caution, noting that consent apps are not able to provide definitive proof of consent, because feelings may “change throughout an evening, and even in the moments before an act.”

When we look at modern views about sex, it’s not a stretch to sum up the above way: as long as two consenting adults are involved, the bases are covered. When it comes to “sex in the moment,” consent is touted as key, allowing for almost all mutually-agreed upon behaviors or practices.

Yet, a different approach to sex is fundamentally flawed, and it’s often the woman who is the first to notice. Even when consenting unmarried couples scrupulously use contraception, there remains an awareness, particularly on the part of the woman, that if something goes wrong, they would have to follow, and a concern about who will be left holding the bag if that were to happen. Sex between men and women involves real asymmetries and vulnerabilities, with men oftentimes being, in the words of sociologist Mark Regnier, “cherishing” in their sex desires than women, eager to forge ahead as long as there appears to be some semblance of consent.

Women often sense, rightly, that consent for a particular sexual act ought to be part of something bigger, a wider scope of commitment.

Consenting to sex, of course, signifies the surrendering of our self to another. Sex ultimately speaks of giving our self, and receiving another, in a total, rather than a fragmentary way. This is part of the reason why human sexuality holds a perennial fascination for us; it goes far beyond other forms of communication, exchange, and bonding. To give our self fully to another, and to receive that person fully, forms a bond with them that extends beyond the mere evening’s dawn. Human sexual union is not a mere joining of bodies, but is preeminently a joining of human hearts. It is, at its core, consenting to share one of the deepest parts of our self with another. As Dr. Angela Franks has perceptively noted:

“Sexuality is not simply a matter of something that I have, as though

my body is another possession just like my wallet or my car. If, as
Gabriel Marcel said, I am my body, then sexuality has to do with my very
person, which has a deep value. To use the language of Pope John Paul
II, when a person is reduced to being merely an object for another’s desire,
then the experience violates the core of one’s sense of self.”

In casual sexual encounters, the consent we give each other may seem
sincere and genuine, expressing our desires within the moment, but
this kind of consent is largely transactional and temporary. By consenting to
pre-marital or extra-marital sex, we declare, in effect, that we are giving
ourselves, our bodies and our hearts to each other, although in truth, our
giving remains partial and conditionally. If we may be out the door the
next morning or the next month. Our consent, limited and qualified as it is,
amounts to little more than an agreement to use each other as long as it’s
convenient, and when the break up occurs, we are hurt, because we
thought we had something special, even though we didn’t really want to
commit to anything special.

In the final analysis, human sexual activity calls for something much
deeper and more abiding than mere transactional consent, namely, the
irrevocable and permanent consent of spouses. Professor William May
describes it this way:

“In and through his act of marital consent … the man, forswearing all
possessory, … wives and husbands together, have given themselves the identity of
this particular man’s wife, and together they
have given themselves the identity of spouses. … Husbands and wives, irrevocably
because they have given themselves
irrevocably to each other in marriage, have established each other as
irreplaceable, non-substitutable, non-disposable persons and by doing so have capacitated themselves to do things that non-married individuals simply cannot do, among them to ‘give’ themselves to one another in the act proper and exclusive to spouses — the marital act — and to receive the gift of life.”

The deep enduring commitment of marital consent, a man and a
woman establish the foundation for personal sexual consent. In the
absence of that larger marital commitment, all other consents, even with
legalized authorization or electronic notarization, ring hollow.

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diocese of Fall River, MA, and serves as the Director of Education at The
National Catholic Bioethics Center in Philadelphia. See www.ncbcenter.org

Sacerdotes hispanos: Estado de la cuestión en el 2018

Por Hosffman Ospino
Catholic News Service

Aproximadamente 30 millones de hispanos en los Estados Unidos nos identificamos como católicos, quizás un poco más. Para poner la cifra en perspectiva, este número es más grande que la población entera de los países latinoamericanos y caribeños. Hemos de reconocer que un número que con frecuencia reciben poca atención al hablar de esta población es el de los sacerdotes hispanos. Seguir interpretando el encuestamiento como parte de la consulta del proceso del Quinto Encuentro Nacional de Pastoral Hispánica/Latina (V Encuentro), en los Estados Unidos hay aproximadamente 2.985 sacerdotes hispanos, de los cuales 280 están jubilados o en el presente no ejercen su ministerio.

No debemos asumir que a los católicos hispanos sólo les vamos a acompañar parcialmente sacerdotes hispanos. Sabemos que esa no es la realidad en la mayoría de las parroquias.

Sin embargo, es interesante lo que se puede observar al poner el número total de católicos hispanos junto al número de sacerdotes hispanos ejerciendo el ministerio actualmente: 30 millones y 2.705. Hay aproximadamente 11.000 católicos hispanos por cada sacerdote hispano ejerciendo el ministerio actualmente — la proporción para el total de la población católica estadounidense es de aproximadamente 2.000 católicos por sacerdote.

(Esperamos la consulta del V Encuentro, hay 4.473 parroquias con ministerio hispánico en los Estados Unidos. Este número refleja un crecimiento leve comparado a las 4.368 parroquias con dicho ministerio identificadas por el Estudio Nacional de Parroquias Católicas con Ministerio Hispano que condujo Boston College en el año 2014.

Si se asignara un sacerdote hispano actualmente ejerciendo su ministerio a cada parroquia que explícitamente sirve a la comunidad hispánica, cerca 1.768 comunidades parroquiales no tendrían ese privilegio.

El Centro de Investigación Aplicada en el Apostolado estima que en el año 2017 había entre 430 sacerdotes católicos en nuestro país. No perdamos de vista que una tercera parte de ellos son jubilados o parcialmente jubilados. Apenas el 8 por ciento de todos los sacerdotes en los Estados Unidos, tanto ejerciendo el ministerio como jubilados, son hispanos.

Mientras que dos terceras partes de los hispanos nacieron en los Estados Unidos, y el sector de la población católica hispánica que más rápido crece es de aquellos que nacieron en este país, la consulta del V Encuentro revela que el 76 por ciento de los sacerdotes hispanos son inmigrantes.

El Centro de Investigación Aplicada en el Apostolado reportó recientemente que cerca de 430 sacerdotes católicos serían ordenados en el año 2018 para servir en las comunidades católicas estadounidenses. De ellos, 334 respondieron a una encuesta anual. Aproximadamente el 20%

Hispanic priests: The state of the question in 2018

By Hosffman Ospino
Catholic News Service

The overall number of Hispanics who self-identify as Catholic is about 30 million, perhaps more. To put things in perspective, this number is larger than the entire population of most countries in Latin America and the Caribbean.

One number, however, that often gets little attention when talking about Hispanic Catholics is that of Hispanic priests. According to data collected as part of the Fifth National Encuentro of Hispanic/Latino Ministry process (V Encuentro), there are about 2,985 Hispanic priests in the U.S. Of these, 280 are inactive/retired.

We should not assume that only Hispanic priests can serve Hispanics Catholics. We know that such is not the case in most parishes.

Yet, putting the total number of Hispanic Catholics next to that of Hispanic active priests is quite revealing: 30 million and 2,705. There are about 11,000 Hispanic Catholics for every Hispanic active priest -- the ratio for the total U.S. Catholic population is about 2,000 Catholics per priest.

According to V Encuentro research data, there are 4,473 parishes with Hispanic ministry in the U.S. This reflects a small increase compared to the 4,368 similar parishes identified by Boston College's National Study of Catholic Parishes with Hispanic Ministry in 2014.

If we were to place one currently active Hispanic priest in every parish with Hispanic ministry, about 1,768 parish communities would not get that privilege.

The Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate estimated that in 2017, there were about 37,181 Catholic priests in our country. Let's keep in mind that about a third of them are retired or semiretired. Barely 8 percent of all priests in the U.S., active and retired, are Hispanic.

While two-thirds of Hispanics are U.S. born, and the fastest-growing sector within the Hispanic Catholic population is that of those born in the United States, V Encuentro research revealed that 76 percent of Hispanic priests are foreign-born.

CARA recently reported that about 430 priests would be ordained in 2018 to serve in Catholic communities throughout the country. Of these, 334 responded to an annual survey. Approximately 20 percent of the new priests this year are Hispanic. About half of the 30 percent who said they were foreign-born come from Latin American and Caribbean nations.
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Catholic Voices

The life-changing power of joy

By Olivia Clarke Silver

Catholic News Service

When you're in your 20s and 30s, you often feel invincible — like there's so much time to make mistakes because you'll fix them tomorrow. It's easy to boast that this is the time to do whatever you want.

But then something happens. Maybe you lose your job or your longtime friend stops returning your texts. Or, maybe you learn at age 35 that you have breast cancer — and that's what happened to me.

Like any tragedy, it's impossible to not be changed by what happens to you when you get your diagnosis. And at the same time, you want to interact with those who have experienced this similar life-changing event. The problem is that young adult cancer (cancer affecting those in their 20s and 30s in particular) is not as commonly discussed as the cancer your great-aunt or grandmother gets.

You're often the only one in a waiting room trying to squeeze in your oncology appointment between work conference calls. Or you must worry about whether the chemo drugs will take away your ability to have children — something you hoped for many years down the road after one of your online dates turns serious.

About a year after I got through cancer, I thought I was fine and could just go back to my old life as if nothing happened. I had successfully compartmentalized cancer — I carelessly fell back into the habit of thinking I could do whatever I wanted.

As a reward for beating cancer, I went on a pilgrimage to Italy with other young adults from my parish. During that trip, I realized that I had been changed by cancer; and that my attitude had to change. I'd like to say it was the prayer and visits to churches that changed my mind, but I believe God reached me through the people I traveled with. This small group of friends opened my eyes. I couldn't find joy in the same activities as before.

I came home from Italy and started volunteering to help a poor church, school and food pantry by raising money; getting new winter coats donated to the school; helping with social media and a newsletter; coaching a student slam poetry team; and creating an art mentorship program for the students. I found joy raising money for turkeys at Thanksgiving or by sharing the words of Pope Francis on the church's Twitter account I maintained.

Once I got started, I kept thinking about what else I should do. I thought about how to help others facing cancer.

In November 2017, I started an online community called Humor Beats Cancer. I wanted to create a place for those experiencing or having beaten cancer in their 20s, 30s and 40s to talk about their journeys, but with an added twist.

So much of what you read about cancer can foster hopelessness. I wanted people to be able to share uplifting stories and allow them to laugh at all the crazy stuff we experience. People get confused when they see someone with cancer laugh. How can someone be joyful during such a difficult situation?

When you have a disease like cancer, there is a real fear that your heart will go dark and the light in your eyes will go out. I wanted to help keep the joy alive by creating a place that offers empathy and hope. I wanted to create a place to remind young adults facing cancer what it was like before cancer when they laughed and felt joy so easily. Instead of reminding them that they could die, I wanted to remind them that they're still alive.

Pope Francis talks often about the importance of joy, particularly in the little things of life. He describes how being joyful with others brings us closer to God. And I believe that. If we can bring joy to someone's life, without asking for anything in return and so that they forget their insecurities or pain for a little bit — then we are practicing our faith. Joy changes lives and gives people hope — just like it has done for me.

Chicago resident Olivia Clarke Silver is a writer who works in public relations. She's a parishioner and parish leader at Holy Name Cathedral. Her website, Humor Beats Cancer, can be found at www.humorbeatscancer.com and on social media at @humorbeatscancer or @humorbeatcancer. She is a guest columnist for the Catholic News Service series "In Light of Faith."

The need for apologies

By Effie Caldarola

Catholic News Service

When former first lady Barbara Bush died recently, memories of her good qualities abounded.

In a culture where females are pressured to think a face-lift is just a negotiable, she was an attractive matronly figure and soft white hair. A champion of literacy and a woman devoted to family, she was also known as being "ferociously tart-tongued" according to her daughter-in-law, first lady Laura Bush. That's not always a bad thing, but it didn't serve her well in 1984.

That year, Geraldine Ferraro was the Democrats' candidate for vice president, the first woman ever nominated to a major party ticket, running with presidential hopeful Walter Mondale. They were up against President Ronald Reagan and his vice president, Barbara's husband George H.W. Bush.

In a highly publicized remark, Mrs. Bush referred to Ferraro as "that 4 million dollar ... I can't say it, but it rhymes with rich."

The requisite canned apologies were quickly rendered and accepted, but the remark lingered in my idealistic young mind as catty and beneath the dignity of a presidential race.

Of course, decades later, when we've become accustomed to degrading name-calling at the highest level, Mrs. Bush's comment seems tame indeed. Nevertheless, it lingered.

However, in an article after her death, I read her 1998 reflections on that comment, and it changed my perspective entirely.

"It was dumb of me. I shouldn't have said it," Mrs. Bush acknowledged. "It was not attractive, and I've been very ashamed. I apologized to Mrs. Ferraro, and I would apologize again."

Now, that's genuine. Can you imagine a public figure today using the words "dumb" or "shame" to describe a mistake they had made?

Today's apologies, if ever rendered, usually start with "I'm sorry if someone was offended ..." as if the real fault lies with those of us who took offense, oversensitive souls that we are.

That's, of course, assuming there is an apology.

The name-calling that marked the 2016 presidential race has never provoked any apologies, nor do many remarks that stain social media and public discourse nearly daily. The bar for civility has been plummeting from the top down, and it's trickling into everything from the comments section of social media to the comedy performed at the White House Correspondents' Association dinner.

Pope Francis recently provided a beautiful example of apology. When he visited Chile in January, he made some unfortunate remarks about victims of sexual abuse there, saying they were guilty of "calumny" for continuing to call out a bishop they feel complicit in an abuse case.

There was a huge uproar over the pope's remarks. Instead of digging in, retrenching and defending his comments, Pope Francis took criticism to heart, investigated further, and, according to Catholic News Service, "apologized for underestimating the seriousness of the crisis in Chile."

He asked for forgiveness and began to meet personally with those who had suffered from his remarks. It's almost unheard of to find such genuine public acknowledgement of error.

Perhaps because we live in such a litigious society, nobody wants to admit, "I did it." But I think it goes deeper than that.

The sacrament of reconciliation is neglected these days. Could one reason be a growing cultural disinclination to face the fact that we sometimes do and say shameful things? We make it complicated, giving ourselves excuses. We say "I'm sorry but ..." here's why it's really your fault.

It takes a humble, truthful and thoughtful person to acknowledge error publicly. It's both a gift to us, and an example we should follow.
speaks glowingly of the continual support offered by his mother. “She’s been my rock,” he says. After high school, Odima moved to San Angelo to attend Angelo State University, where he would later meet Perez and the two would venture together down the path to the priesthood that God had been calling them to.

JOURNEYS OF FAITH

After high school, both young men undertook the spiritual journey that accompanies youthful freedom and a search for meaning, each growing in their faith and purpose, each living out their own personal bildungsroman on the path to their true calling. It is here that their stories, spanning the globe to this point, begin to coalesce.

Perez found himself spending his spare time volunteering with House of Faith, an ecumenical Christian effort in San Angelo. It was there that he began to feel the first hints of the work that would eventually turn into his call to the priesthood. “That’s where I found my pastoral roots,” he says. “It’s really where I found my passion for ministry itself, for the marginalized.”

Father Rodney White, former vocation director for the Diocese of San Angelo, noticed this passion and saw something in Perez’s work with House of Faith. “I had actively tried to recruit Freddy,” White says, “and at the time he just wasn’t quite ready.” White noted that Perez “had a real heart for service” that would benefit him as a member of the clergy.

Meanwhile, Odima, who admits that he was not always as committed in his faith as he could have been, says that he refers to as a conversion while attending Angelo State University. While the initial spiritual push garnered from his glimpse of a papal visit in his native Kenya is still with him, it was during his time in San Angelo that he felt this “conversion of going back to God, kind of focusing back on my faith, going back to church.” The church that he became involved with was St. Mary Parish in San Angelo, the same parish that Perez called home.

“That community was so welcoming,” Odima says of the people of St. Mary’s. “They greeted me at the doors when I walked in, they greeted me when I was in the pew so I didn’t feel like a stranger,” and, perhaps most important, they invited him to come back.

Both Odima and Perez met Father David Herrera, who was the pastor at St. Mary’s at the time, as college students, and both cite him as one of their key influences and an example of what the priesthood could be, both for them and for the community. Perez says that Father David caused him to start “challenging what I was doing with my whole life. At the time I was just a college student ... kind of looking for myself.” Odima notes that the welcoming nature of the community at St. Mary’s was a reflection of the people of St. Mary’s parishioners last year, when both Perez and Odima were ordained transitional deacons in a joint ordination Mass at their home parish. They will continue this shared journey this month as both are ordained to the priesthood on Saturday, June 9, 2018, at 10:30 a.m. at the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart in San Angelo. St. Mary’s will again be home to rare festivities as they see the First Mass of Thanksgiving, celebrated at a new priest’s home parish, twice in the same weekend. Perez will celebrate his first Mass as a priest on the home parish on Saturday June 9, at 9:00 p.m. Odima’s first Mass will be on Sunday, June 10, at 12:00 p.m.

THE JOURNEY AHEAD

After years of school and studying in preparation for the priesthood, it is easy to conceive of this as the culmination of years of hard work, but both Odima and Perez are aware that while their ordination may signal the end of one phase of their lives, the real work is just beginning.

Perez excitedly looks forward to “getting to work!” Odima is anticipating “finally figuring out who I am.” He clarifies, saying about reaching the end of his time as a seminarian and the beginning of his time as a priest, “I’m excited to see who I’m going to become, the type of priest I’m going to become, the type of spiritual father I’m going to become ... the type of disciple I’m going to become.”

Those who know them will have no doubt that they are up for the challenge.

White, the former vocation director, could see from working with them that “they both have a great love of the Church and a love for serving, that they focus on their community, and that’s of such great import, for a priest to be firmly grounded in a community.”

This connection to community is something that Perez mentions when he speaks of the priests who influenced him growing up as the son of Mexican immigrants, including Father Herrera and Father Joe Vasquez (now the Bishop of Austin). Perez noticed these Hispanic priests, who looked like him and talked like him, fulfilled many roles within the parish community. A priest, he says, aside from being a pastor, is seen as a “problem solver,” part lawyer, part psychologist, a sort of community “everything-man.”

Odima, whose community stretches the globe, and who describes himself as “multi-national,” knows that his relationships with the community will be part of what defines him as a priest. Growing up in Kenya and the United States, he feels, has influenced how he sees people. “I see the need of taking care of people,” he says, “listening to people, knowing that everybody has a story and each person’s individual story is different. A lot of people have been through hardships that we can’t even imagine, but all it takes is listening.”

“I appreciate each person I meet. I appreciate each story I hear,” Odima continues. “Hopefully it calls me to always remember to listen to people.”

As is perhaps fitting for two newly-minted priests who have shared so much of their journey together, the first community they serve will also be shared. Both will be assigned to parishes in Midland for their first priestly post in July. Perez will serve as parochial vicar at St. Stephen Parish; Odima will serve as parochial vicar at Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish.

Both will similarly be working closely with priests who were influential in their own formation. At St. Stephen, Perez will be working with Father Rodney White, the former vocation director who helped guide him through his time in the seminary. He is “excited to work with him, seeing what life with the people,” and “really reach out to those who are in need to find God in one way or another.”

Meanwhile, Odima will once again find Father David Herrera, his former parish priest from San Angelo who was there when he first found his voca- tion, when he begins work at Our Lady of Guadalupe.

“There’s nothing more I can ask for,” he says. Odima loves the idea of working at his home parish with the people who he says make up a sometimes forgotten “middle ground” between the high-focus ages of confirmation and marriage.

St. Stephen and Our Lady of Guadalupe are roughly five and a half miles from each other. Odima and Perez, who have grown into their priesthood together, will begin this portion of their lives in close proximity as well.

First, though, comes the ordination.

Though their families’ stories begin on opposite sides of the world, this portion of their journey will culminate in the same Mass. Odima views this as “brothers getting ordained.” He notes that it is “the rare time where guys who know each other from before, and they’ve been through everything together, and they’re getting ordained together as deacons and as priests now.”

His excitement at sharing this experience with his spiritual brother is evident: “It’s pretty cool, man!”
Celebrating the Sacraments

Confirmation, Our Lady of Lourdes Parish in Andrews, April 29. (courtesy photo)

A candid shot from the Confirmation Mass at St. Ann Parish in Midland, May 5. (photo by Alan Torre, APTorre Photography)

The combined Confirmation classes of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish and St. Mary Parish in Odessa, totalling 114 candidates, May 12. (photo by Alan Torre, APTorre Photography)

First Communion, Good Shepherd Mission in Sheffield. (courtesy photo)

First Communion at St. Mary, Star of the Sea Parish in Ballinger, April 8. (courtesy photo)
Otherwise, this will be a beautiful monument, remembrance, without life and spirit. The making of a saint, like her, is primarily first and foremost, holiness of life.

We are enthralled, fascinated by the apparitions of the Lady in Blue that was a special gift from God, but the heart, the foundation of her life rested on a contemporaneous, constant prayer life striving for loving union with God. Then her holiness and profound spiritual life was manifested in loving and serving others beginning in her own community for which she was the superior for most of her life, even though she was often misunderstood by them who often criticized her. The key description of a saint is one who gives one’s life to Christ in surrendering love and by the power of the Holy Spirit shows this love in kindness and loving service especially to the poorest and most abandoned, and by so doing conforming totally one’s will to the will of God. This holiness of life was modeled in a profound, saintly way in the humble Sor María, whose only desire was to surrender her life to the Lord, and like Mary to whom she had a great devotion, to simply be the handmaid of the Lord. Her spiritual life was Trinity based — on God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit whose life she received in baptism. In her apparitions, this is the gift, the gift of baptism, she was inspired to share with her new friends the Jumanos and others. She had a profound devotion to Mary, the mother of Jesus, who would reveal marvelous mysteries to her about the life of her son Jesus.

The best way we can honor Sor María, and promote her cause of sainthood, is to introduce new ways in our diocese, in our society, programs of spirituality and of prayer and programs of evangelization, that incorporate and imitate her holiness and spirit of service in our individual and community life and how as missionary disciples, as Pope Francis calls us to be, how we can share this holiness, this joyful message of the good news of the Gospel with others. These evangelization efforts need to be part of our diocesan ministries, and include our brother and sister Jumanos. They, and we, are all of us in need to be re-evangelized in God’s love and spirit of service of Christ. I suggest we form a prayer chain that will extend throughout the Diocese of San Angelo and beyond. Hopefully prayer cards will be printed again in her honor. This is a splendid way for us in West Texas to promote the canonization of this saintly messenger and missionary of God. Hopefully we will now give the same efforts of time, of talent, and at least some of the same financial aid and cost for this to happen, as we have provided for this beautiful monument to become a reality.

Holiness of life, as I have mentioned, is the main quality or condition for canonization, and without a doubt Sor María de Jesús de Ágreda meets this requirement in superlative manner. I like to think that the Lord gave us a sign, some call it a miracle, of her heavenly presence, while during the Mass I was offering at the retreat center a few years ago, an extra face appeared on the painting of Sor María that was in front of the altar. Her heavenly intercession was also manifested in 2010, when we offered a novena for God to work a miracle for precious baby Hayle who had major health problems, through the intercession of Sor María de Jesús de Ágreda. The next issue or condition for beatification and canonization is to review the orthodoxy of her writings, how they conform to sacred Scripture and the teaching and doctrine of the Catholic Church. Sor María was a prolific writer and her greatest work is the marvelous The Mystical City of God focusing on the life of the virgin mother of God. What is written in this marvelous presentation on Mary exceeds pure human sources. In 1627, two years after becoming abbess, she had a certain type of mystical experience. She felt a divine call to write the biography of the Virgin Mary, mother of God. She felt incapable of the task because of her lack of education, being a little girl from the mountain region of Spain, and therefore was reluctant to accept the assignment. Nevertheless, animated and asked by her spiritual director, under her vow of obedience, she felt she had no choice but to acquiesce to write. She was also writing a diary about her American teleportations, her paranormal activities, to a new world, which along with her community leadership caused her to be exhausted. The voluminous work of The Mystical City of God, one day would total nearly 800 pages.

Father Francis Andrew de la Torre was her father confessor during this period, and in 1637, he judged she had grown into such spiritual awareness that she should begin writing the long biography, The Mystical City of God, a task that took her 8 years to complete. Sor María shared some reflections on how she understood the divine revelation about the mysteries she was to feature in writing The Mystical City of God. She said she heard God say: “I have not revealed the mysteries [meaning about Mary] in the primitive Church, because they are so great, that the faithful would have been lost in the contemplation and admiration of them at a time when it was more necessary to establish firmly the law of grace and of the Gospel.”

She also added that the divine message she received stated, “it was because faith in the incarnation and redemption and the precepts of the new law of the Gospel were yet in the beginnings. Now mankind has greater need for this manifestation and necessity of writing these accounts.” Sor María pointed out that the call she received from God was to be descriptions and declarations of the life of the Blessed Virgin and not be mere opinions or contemplations, but reliable truth.

Next month: Bishop Pfeifer’s presentation continues as Sor María is ordered to destroy the text of The Mystical City of God.

Ellos quienes han recibido la vacuna previamente disponible para el herpes zóster (culebrilla) no se han de sentir culpables por haberla recibido, siendo que no había disponible alguna otra vacuna moralmente preferida. Todos nosotros deberíamos animar a los médicos y las compañías farmacéuticas a fabricar vacunas que no están vinculadas al aborto. La investigación científica médica, cuando se realiza correctamente, tiene mucho que contribuir a la construcción de una cultura de la vida.
PRIESTS (From 18)

What do we learn from these numbers? Three things.

One, Catholic parishes, dioceses, schools and organizations need to do much more to foster vocations to the priesthood among Hispanics. As the Hispanic population gears to becoming soon a numeric majority in the U.S. church, we need Hispanic priests to serve parishes with large numbers of Hispanic Catholics as well as every other Catholic in our nation.

Two, there is a major gap between the mostly U.S.-born Hispanic Catholic population and the mostly immigrant clerical leadership. This gap needs to be gradually balanced. Historically, immigrant priests served various immigrant Catholic groups that arrived in the U.S. Then the U.S.-born generation cultivated its own priests. Today, most Hispanics are not immigrants. We need to take the next step.

Three, we need to understand better the reasons and circumstances that prevent more Hispanic Catholics, particularly U.S.-born, from considering the priesthood as a calling. Also, we need to assess what we are doing and investing in our parishes and dioceses to mentor Hispanics to discern ecclesial vocations. In the fall of 2018, Boston College will launch a two-year national study to explore these realities.

In the meantime, let us heed the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, "The harvest is abundant but the laborers are few; so ask the master of the harvest to send out laborers for his harvest" (Mt 9:37-38).

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OSPINO (Pará 18)

ción. Dos, existe una brecha bastante amplia entre una población hispana que en su mayoría nació en los Estados Unidos y un liderazgo clérical que en su mayoría es inmigrante. Esta brecha necesita ser balanceada poco a poco. Históricamente, contingentes de sacerdotes inmigrantes acompañaron a los grupos católicos inmigrantes que llegaban a los Estados Unidos. Luego la población católica nacida en el país cultivó sus propios sacerdotes. Hoy en día, la mayoría de los hispanos no son inmigrantes. Necesitamos dar el siguiente paso.

Tres, necesitamos entender mejor las razones y circunstancias que no permiten que más católicos hispanos, especialmente aquellos nacidos en los Estados Unidos, consideren la llamada al sacerdocio. También necesitamos evaluar qué es lo que hacemos y qué tanto invertimos en nuestras parroquias y diócesis para acompañar a los hispanos en el discernimiento de vocaciones al servicio de la iglesia. En el otoño del 2018, Boston College lanzará un estudio nacional de dos años para explorar estas realidades.

Por ahora, escuchemos con atención las palabras del Señor Jesucristo, "La cosecha es abundante, pero los trabajadores son pocos. Rueguen al dueño de los sembrados que envíe trabajadores para la cosecha" (Mt 9:37-38).

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KNICKERBOCKERS (From 8)

we delight in the Lord through recreation, we are trusting his provision for our needs and praising him. We are affirming that there is more to life than making money and a fast-forward lifestyle.

In #901 of the Catechism of the Catholic Church, from Lumen Gentium, “The participation of lay people in Christ’s priestly office,” we read: “For all their works, prayers, and apostolic undertakings, family and married life, daily work, relaxation of mind and body, if they are accomplished in the Spirit—indeed even the hardships of life if patiently born—all these become spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. In the celebration of the Eucharist these may most fittingly be offered to the Father along with the body of the Lord. And so, worshipping everywhere by their holy actions, the laity consecrate the world itself to God, everywhere offering worship by the holiness of their lives.” He wants to re-create us in his image and renew us in Christ, thus he ordains rest and recreation.

Relational activity can take many forms, dependent on each person’s physical abilities, life circumstances, interests, financial means, etc. For one person climbing a mountain or running a 5-K is re-creational; for another, taking a walk in the neighborhood; for another recreation is leaving the full-time care of small children or a homebound loved one to walk outside to feel the breeze, listen to the birds, and look at the sky or play fetch with the dog. Recreation doesn’t have to be expensive. In most places, there are free or low-cost recreational opportunities indoors and outdoors for individuals and families, including persons with handicapping conditions. Some possibilities are municipal, state and national parks, campgrounds, hiking trails, bird blinds, lakes, streams, and rivers for water sports (or just danging your feet in the water), fishing, star gazing, photography, free musical, literary, and dance events, museums, zoos, community celebrations. If your preferred recreation is reading, writing, painting, or listening to music, try to balance it with time outdoors. Even necessary work such as mowing grass, tending the garden, or taking care of animals can bring us closer to the Creator if done in the right spirit. The possibilities are endless but require recognition, i.e., putting on the mind of Christ. God “gives us all things to enjoy” (I Tm 6:17b, NKJV). Enjoyment is related to joy, and Scripture tells us the joy of the Lord is our strength. Have you heard “vacation time” referred to as “deferred work”? Yes, we know the reality of returning to the daily routine after a recreational trip. Many of us experienced the need to rest after a vacation! However, that doesn’t negate the need to get away from our work routine to be with family and friends. The only vacations our children remember were visits to family and friends — where we had a free place to stay! It is important not to “over-plan” vacation time; all ages need some quiet, unscheduled time just “to be.” In terms of activities, take into consideration the varied ages, interests, and physical abilities of each family member or friend.

In an article entitled “Christians, Culture and Recreation,” Dr. Jeff Mirus writes, “Over the years I’ve noticed that those of us who are committed Catholics occasionally act as if we distrust even the simplest of life’s pleasures. Sometimes this takes the form of a disdain for literature and the arts, even as expressions of Christian culture. At other times it shows itself in a condemnation of any recreational activity which lacks a specific Catholic formation purpose. Life is impoverished by both these attitudes” (CatholicCulture.org, 8-7-16). Every activity of our lives doesn’t have to be "Christianized" or "Catholicized" to be worthwhile. We can let go of our evangelical, apologetic, and devotional practices to take time for rest and recreation just for the sake of enjoyment and fun. We don’t have to punctuate our fun with a group Rosary or Divine Mercy Chaplet for it to be holy and give glory to God. When we are faithful to God's example, his commands, and his Scriptural truths about rest and recreation, our lives will be vibrant worship of God the Creator, our Lord and Savior, and the Holy Spirit's transforming love and energy. The Holy Trinity will bless and sanctify our desire to honor them with "time out.

"The heavens are telling the glory of God, and all creation is shouting for joy. Come dance in the forest, come, play in the field, and sing, the glory of the Lord" ("Canticle of the Sun," Marty Haugen).

COPY, PHOTO

DEADLINE: Third Friday of every month. Photos should be in jpeg format.

Letters to the editor are welcome, and should be emailed to bbodiford@sanangeliocese.org.

Bishop Michael J. Sis
Publisher

Brian Bodiford
Editor
Director of Communications
Bishop Michael Sis celebrated the annual Rural Life Mass in the Diocese of San Angelo on May 15, 2018. This year’s Mass was held at Ste. Genevieve Vineyard in Fort Stockton and also featured a tour of the facility.

Above: Bishop Michael Sis during the Mass, utilizing a local Fort Stockton rock to hold pages in place.

Above right: Participants relaxing next to winery equipment.

Right: Mass in the vineyard. A large crowd turned out for the outdoor event on a day when temperatures reached a high of 99 degrees. (courtesy photos)

Superior General of OND sisters visits diocese

Bishop Michael Sis with sisters of the Oblates of Notre Dame after a visit with their Superior General, Sister Erlinda Hisug, OND, May 25. Picured, left to right, are: Sister Stella Marie Llerin, OND; Sister Alicia Realino, OND; Sister Erlinda Hisug, OND; Bishop Sis; Sister Nida Macahilo, OND; and Sister Tita Iglesias, OND. (Angelus photo)

The following Oblates of Notre Dame are currently serving in the Diocese of San Angelo: Sister Tita Iglesias, OND; Sister Alicia Realino, OND; Sister Rosalia Sabud, OND; and Sister Elizabeth Villegas, OND.