The seminarians of the diocese, along with Bishop Sis and Father Michael Rodriguez, traveled on pilgrimage to New Mexico recently. They are seen here in front of the “miraculous staircase” in Loretto Chapel in Santa Fe. (courtesy photo)
See Page 2

Inside this issue:

- Bishop Sis announces Pastoral Planning Process (Page 3)
- The life of Padre Pio (Page 8)
- Columns from local Catholics (Pages 6, 7)
- Diocese welcomes FOCUS missionaries (Page 12)
Seminarians end summer with New Mexico pilgrimage

By Mike Elsner
Diocese of San Angelo Seminarian

In early August the seminarians of the Diocese of San Angelo were blessed to take part in a pilgrimage to New Mexico. The trip took place Aug. 1 through 5 and was led by Vocation Director Father Michael Rodriguez and Bishop Michael Sis. Destinations included stops in Hobbs, Isleta Pueblo, Chimayó, and Santa Fe. I was privileged to be one of the seminarians on the trip.

The journey began on a Wednesday morning with the 209-mile drive from the Diocesan Pastoral Center to Hobbs. In Hobbs, our group stopped at Our Lady of Guadalupe Catholic Church to visit a statue of the Virgin Mary. This church has recently received much attention due to accounts of it weeping. While this was only a brief stop, time was made for viewing the statue and for prayer.

Continuing our journey, we pilgrims drove an additional 330 miles to St. Augustine Catholic Church, in Isleta Pueblo. According to the sign outside of this quaint little mission church, St. Augustine was initially named St. Anthony when established in 1613. It is one of the oldest mission churches in the United States. The church was unfortunately burned down during the Pueblo Indian Revolt of 1680. It was renamed St. Augustine when rebuilt in 1716. Bishop Sis celebrated Mass and gave a lengthy explanation of the purpose of this destination on our journey. Bishop Sis explained that Isleta Pueblo was the place that Native Americans traveled annually from the San Angelo area requesting for the Spanish missionaries to teach them the faith, at the behest of the “Lady in Blue,” Sister Maria de Jesús de Agreda, who has become well known and holds a special place in the hearts of the people of San Angelo. After Mass, parish volunteer and tour guide Alan Cherino graciously spent time relaying the history of the church that he has attended since his childhood.

From Isleta Pueblo, the journey continued to Chimayó. In Chimayó, our group visited El Santuario de Chimayó and the Santo Niño Chapel. The Santuario de Chimayó is sometimes called the “Lourdes of the West” because of the number of people who visit each year seeking miraculous healing. It, like the actual Lourdes, has been an important pilgrimage site for many Roman Catholics. Several hundred thousand people come to visit the sanctuary every year. Inside this beautiful yet simple church, near the altar, there is an entrance leading to two small rooms. One, a prayer room, houses discarded crutches and hundreds of pictures of those who have come to the shrine seeking healing for themselves and their loved ones. The other room is the location of a small hole in the ground called El Poquito, or little well. This little hole contains the holy dirt of Chimayó. Many pilgrims to the site scoop small amounts of this dirt. It is believed to have healing properties, similar to the water from the grotto at Lourdes in France. According to legend, the site marks the spot where a Guatemalan priest who was killed by Indians was buried. This priest had been known to carry a little black crucifix with him when he was attempting to evangelize the Indians. Years after his death someone noticed a light shining from the spot. Upon investigation of the light, they discovered the little crucifix. It was taken to the church in Santa Cruz, but somehow mysteriously returned to the place that it had been found. This cycle repeated twice more. After the third time, the decision was made to leave the crucifix where it lay, and the small church was built on the site.

Just down the street from the Santuario sits the Santuario de Chimayó. In Chimayó, our group visited El Santuario de Chimayó and the Santo Niño Chapel. The Santuario de Chimayó is sometimes called the “Lourdes of the West” because of the number of people who visit each year seeking miraculous healing. It, like the actual Lourdes, has been an important pilgrimage site for many Roman Catholics. Several hundred thousand people come to visit the sanctuary every year. Inside this beautiful yet simple church, near the altar, there is an entrance leading to two small rooms. One, a prayer room, houses discarded crutches and hundreds of pictures of those who have come to the shrine seeking healing for themselves and their loved ones. The other room is the location of a small hole in the ground called El Poquito, or little well. This little hole contains the holy dirt of Chimayó. Many pilgrims to the site scoop small amounts of this dirt. It is believed to have healing properties, similar to the water from the grotto at Lourdes in France. According to legend, the site marks the spot where a Guatemalan priest who was killed by Indians was buried. This priest had been known to carry a little black crucifix with him when he was attempting to evangelize the Indians. Years after his death someone noticed a light shining from the spot. Upon investigation of the light, they discovered the little crucifix. It was taken to the church in Santa Cruz, but somehow mysteriously returned to the place that it had been found. This cycle repeated twice more. After the third time, the decision was made to leave the crucifix where it lay, and the small church was built on the site.

Looking back on 42 years of diaconal service in the Diocese of San Angelo

By Deacon Freddy Medina

As I spoke with various deacons this summer, we would almost always end up discussing how it’s been 50 years since the restoration of the office of permanent deacons in the U.S. We would talk about the differences in forming deacons now versus 1976 — the year the first class of deacons was ordained for service in the Diocese of San Angelo.

I spoke with three members of the deacon class of 1976, Deacons Antonio Gonzalez (Holy Redeemer, Odessa), Joseph Lopez (St. Charles, Eden), and Daniel Rocha (St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, N.M.), and they have many pleasant memories of their formation and of their 42 years of diaconal service to the people of God.

They recall that their bishop at the time was Bishop Stephen Leven, who was present at every class, taught some himself and once brought in Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen as a guest speaker for the class.

Then and Now: A Comparison

Class of 1976
- Formation took place at the Ramada Inn in San Angelo
- Wives were encouraged to attend
- Length of formation — two years of formal classes followed by one year of continuing education
- One week-long retreat every year
- Formation staff composed of priests and religious of the diocese
- Some participants flew to get to formation location
- 30 men ordained

Class of 2018
- Formation took place at Christ the King Retreat Center
- Wives were required to attend
- Length of formation — five years of formal classes followed by three years of continuing education
- Three weekend retreats and one five-day retreat
- Formation staff consisted of instructors from the Oblate School of Theology and priests, deacons, and deaconesses' wives of the diocese
- All participants drove to get to formation location
- 15 men ordained
From The Bishop’s Desk

A future full of hope

By Bishop Michael Sis
Diocese of San Angelo

For any organization to thrive, it is very important to plan for the future. This fall, we are launching a Pastoral Planning Process in the Diocese of San Angelo to help us formulate a new Pastoral Plan for the next few years. This is a way for us in the Catholic Church to work together to discern where God is calling us, and to set goals to move in that direction.

The last time our diocese did a pastoral plan was in 2003. That plan led to efforts with effects still being seen today, including: increased focus on vocation recruitment; lay leadership training and adult faith formation; commitment to young adult, campus, and young adult ministries; and an ongoing implementation of a program for Safe Environment training. Now we seek to build on the foundation of that success through the formulation of new goals. The best planning is based on input from a variety of different perspectives. For this reason, one of the key elements of our process is that it will give people throughout the diocese the opportunity to participate by giving input:

We need to hear from people who live in the 29 counties within our diocese. Your opinions of what it will take for our Church here in West Texas to grow and thrive in the future are an essential component of this process. To participate, you can come in person to our forthcoming listening sessions or focus groups, or you can fill out our survey, which will be made available soon, both online and on paper. This will help to assure that the priorities we pursue may meet the real needs of our people at this point in our history. The surveys will be distributed in September, and the listening sessions and focus groups will begin in late September.

Just what is “Pastoral Planning”? Many of us are familiar with a process used in secular organizations called “Strategic Planning.” In a strategic plan, the decisions are made purely based on cost-benefit analysis and a rational allocation of resources. However, in a pastoral plan, the direction of the Church, and the steps we take to move toward fulfilling our mission, are based on analysis plus discernment and prayer. We’re trying to seek what is God’s will, as followers of Jesus Christ. The pastoral planning process itself is intended to build up the community of faith through discerning where the Spirit is calling us.

It is vitally important for many people to share their thoughts about what is working well, and what is distracting us from achieving our mission. Just because a particular strategy worked in the past, that does not necessarily mean it remains effective in the present. As we address some of the questions that we invite people to think and pray about, in preparation for this Pastoral Planning Process, are the following:

• How can our churches be more welcoming?
• How can our experience of the Mass be improved?
• When we look around in our churches, is there any segment of our population that is missing, that we need to include more in our activities?

What are the needs of the world around us that we can do a better job of responding to?
• How can we be more effective in passing on the gift of faith to the next generation?
• How can we take the eternal truths of Jesus Christ, and bring them to new life here and now in West Texas?

In the upcoming weeks, we will be announcing information about opportunities to share our voices in this process. As the local bishop, I want to hear from as many of you as possible.

Pax,

By Bishop Michael Sis
Diocese of San Angelo

The Prayer Square

The Road Ahead

by Thomas Merton

My Lord God, I have no idea where I am going.
I do not see the road ahead of me.
I cannot know for certain where it will end.
Nor do I really know myself.
Nor do I think that I am following your will.
And yet, I feel that I am following somewhere.
And I know that if I do this,
I will lead me by the right road, though I may know nothing about it.
And I hope I have that desire in all that I am doing.
I hope that I will never do anything apart from that desire.

And I know that if I do this,
I will lead me by the right road, though I may know nothing about it.
And I hope I have that desire in all that I am doing.
I hope that I will never do anything apart from that desire.

See BISHOP, Page 23

Un futuro lleno de esperanza

Por Obispo Michael Sis
Diócesis de San Ángelo

Para que cualquier organización pueda prosperar, es muy importante planificar para el futuro. Este otoño, estaremos poniendo en marcha un Proceso de Planificación Pastoral en la Diócesis de San Ángel para ayudar a formular un nuevo Plan Pastoral para los próximos años. Esta es una manera para nosotros en la Iglesia Católica de trabajar juntos para discernir donde Dios nos está llamando, y para establecer metas para avanzar en esa dirección.

La última vez que se hizo un plan pastoral en nuestra diócesis fue en el año 2003. Ese plan dio lugar a esfuerzos con efectos que se ven aún hoy, incluyendo: mayor enfoque en la promoción vocacional; capacitación laica en liderazgo y formación de fe de adultos; compromiso con la juventud, adultos jóvenes, y ministerios universitarios; y una implementación que continuará de un programa para el entrenamiento de Ambiente Seguro. Ahora buscamos construir sobre el éxito de este fundamento a través de la formulación de nuevos objetivos. La mejor planificación se basa en las aportaciones de una variedad de diferentes perspectivas. Por esta razón, uno de los elementos claves de ese proceso es que le dará a la gente por toda la diócesis la oportunidad de participar dando su aporte.

Queremos oír de las personas que viven en los 29 condados dentro de nuestra diócesis. Sus opiniones en cuanto lo que se necesita para que nuestra Iglesia aquí en el oeste de Tejas crezca y prospere en el futuro son un componente esencial de este proceso. Para participar, puede venir en persona a nuestras próximas sesiones de escucha o grupos de enfoque, o puede llenar nuestra encuesta, que se pondrá a disposición muy pronto, tanto en línea como en papel. Esto ayudará a asegurar que las prioridades que perseguimos pueden satisfacer las necesidades reales de nuestro pueblo en este momento de nuestra historia. Las encuestas podrán distribuirse en septiembre, y las sesiones de escucha y grupos de enfoque comenzarán a finales de septiembre.

A propósito, ¿qué es “Planificación Pastoral”? Muchos de nosotros estamos familiarizados con un proceso que se usa en organizaciones seculares llamado “Planificación Estratégica”. En un plan estratégico, las decisiones se toman puramente basadas en el análisis de costos y beneficios, y una asignación racional de los recursos. Sin embargo, en un plan pastoral, la dirección de la Iglesia, y las medidas que tomamos para avanzar hacia el cumplimiento de nuestra misión, se basan en un análisis más discernimiento y oración. Estamos tratando de buscar lo que es la voluntad de Dios, como seguidores de Jesucristo. El proceso de planificación pastoral en sí tiene la intención de edificar en el crecimiento y desarrollo de las personas a través de discernir a donde el Espíritu nos está llamando.

Es de vital importancia de que muchas personas compartan sus pensamientos acerca de lo que está funcionando bien, y lo que nos está distrayendo de lograr nuestra misión. El hecho de que una estrategia en particular funcionó en el pasado, eso no significa necesariamente que siga siendo eficaz en el presente. Algunas de las preguntas que invitamos a la gente a pensar y orar, en preparación para este proceso de planificación pastoral, son las siguientes:

¿Cómo pueden nuestras iglesias ser más acogedoras?
¿Cómo se puede mejorar nuestra experiencia de la Misa?
¿Cuáles son las necesidades del mundo alrededor de nosotros a las cuales debemos responder mejor?
¿Cómo podemos tomar las verdades eternas de Jesucristo, y llevarlas a una nueva vida aquí y ahora en el oeste de Tejas?

En las próximas semanas, anunciaremos información sobre las oportunidades para poder compartir nuestras voces en este proceso. Como el obispo local, quiero oír de tantos de ustedes como sea posible. Si todos nosotros diéramos un poco de nuestro tiempo para proporcionar nuestro aporte, hará la Iglesia más fuerte para el futuro.

Después de reunir la sabiduría colectiva de nuestras sesiones de escucha, nuestros grupos de enfoque, y nuestra encuesta, un grupo de Católicos comprometidos de toda la diócesis examinará cuidadosamente todas las aportaciones compartidas y buscarán temas comunes. Este será un proceso de discernimiento en oración a medida que tratamos de entender a donde Dios nos está llamando como Iglesia diocesana.

El factor más importante para el éxito de este programa es la oración. Y así, mientras nos embarcamos en esta nueva aventura, pido a todos los miembros de la Iglesia Católica aquí en el oeste de Texas a orar para que el Espíritu Santo nos guíe hacia un futuro lleno de esperanza para la Diócesis de San Ángel. Que Dios bendiga la obra de nuestras manos para que nuestras iglesias sean más acogedoras.

Por Obispo Michael Sis
Diócesis de San Ángelo

¿Cómo pueden nuestras iglesias ser más acogedoras?
Encuentro de Novios
El Encuentro de Novios en español se ofrece tres veces al año en la parroquia St. Elizabeth Ann Seton en Odessa. Este es un programa básico de preparación para el matrimonio, conducido en todo español, preparando a parejas para el matrimonio sacramental Católico. También le da la bienvenida a las parejas que se están preparando para la convalidación de su matrimonio.

Por favor, hable con su párroco o diácono para comenzar el proceso de registro. Actualmente hay suficiente campo para parejas comprometidas para asistir el siguiente fin de semana, que será el 14-16 de septiembre, 2018.

Para más información, por favor de ponerse en contacto con los líderes o visite el sitio de web que se encuentra debajo.

Los coordinadores son Ricardo y Lidia Ruvalcaba. El Padre Joe Uecker proporciona una guía para el equipo.

Teléfono: 432-230-4618
CEEOdessaEspanol@gmail.com
www.EncuentroCatholicodeNovios.com

Our Lady of Lourdes, Andrews, Parish Golf Tournament
Our Lady of Lourdes Parish will hold its parish golf tournament on Saturday, Oct. 20 at Andrews Golf Course, beginning at 8:00 a.m. All golfers who are interested are invited to participate and enjoy the community.

DIOCESAN BRIEFS
Retreats for Women/Girls Interested in Becoming a Sister
If you are a woman who wants to understand more about this call from God, you are invited to these retreats. Or if you know a woman who has interest in religious life, please share this information with her.

Pearl of Great Price Vocation Information days:
- October 14, 2018 in San Angelo
- February 23, 2019 in Abilene
Contact The Vocation office at 325-651-7500 or Sr. Elsa at 432-682-6303 for more information.

Retiro para Mujeres/ Muchachas Interesadas en la Vida Religiosa
Si usted es una mujer o muchacha que quiere entender más acerca de esta llamada de Dios, venga a estos retiros. O si usted conoce una mujer o muchacha que tiene interés en la vida religiosa por favor, comparte esta información con ella.

La Perla de Gran Valor –
- 14 de octubre, 2018 en San Angelo
- 23 de febrero, 2019 en Abilene
Para más información llame a la oficina de Vocaciones 325-651-7500 o llame a la Hermana Elsa 432-682-6303.

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 fear about 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. 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 uno siempre tiene el derecho de reportar abuso a las autoridades civiles, y la ley civil requiere que cualquier abuso de un menor de edad debe ser reportado.

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 usted o alguien que usted conoce ha sido víctima de abuso sexual por cualquier persona que sirve a la Iglesia, y necesita un lugar para hablar con alguien sobre sus sentimientos de traición o vergüenza por la Iglesia, estamos aquí para ayudarle. Para reportar incidentes, llame a Lori Hines, Coordinadora de Asistencia a Víctimas, 325-374-7609 (celular), o escriba a la Diócesis de San Ángelo, Ministerio de Asistencia a Víctimas, PO Box 1829, San Angelo, TX 76902. 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 uno siempre tiene el derecho de reportar abuso a las autoridades civiles, y la ley civil requiere que cualquier abuso de un menor de edad debe ser reportado.

CALENDARS

Bishop’s Calendar

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>September 2018</th>
<th>October 2018</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9 2:00 p.m.</td>
<td>SAN ANGELO, Christ the King Retreat Center, Mass for deacon aspirant retreat at 11:00 a.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-12 2:00 p.m.</td>
<td>TYLER, Hermannamiento meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13-14 2:00 p.m.</td>
<td>WASHINGTON, D.C., USCCB Doctrine Committee meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 2:00 p.m.</td>
<td>SAN ANGELO, Diocesan Pastoral Center, Presbyteral Council meeting at 11:00 a.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>20-23 2:00 p.m.</td>
<td>GRAPETVILLE, National Quinto Encuentro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 2:00 p.m.</td>
<td>SAN ANGELO, Diocesan Pastoral Center, Liturgical Commission meeting at 10:00 a.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>27 2:00 p.m.</td>
<td>WALL, St. Ambrose, Knights of Columbus Dinner at 7:00 p.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>29 2:00 p.m.</td>
<td>SAN ANGELO, McNease Convention Center, Mass at the San Angelo Women’s Conference at 10:00 a.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>29 2:00 p.m.</td>
<td>SWEETWATER, Holy Spirit, Confirmation Mass at 5:00 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 2:00 p.m.</td>
<td>AUSTIN, Texas Catholic Conference of Bishops, Fall General Assembly SAN ANGELO, Diocesan Pastoral Center, Finance Council meeting at 11:00 a.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 2:00 p.m.</td>
<td>SAN ANGELO, McNease Convention Center, Pregnancy Help Center dinner at 6:30 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-6 2:00 p.m.</td>
<td>MIDLAND, The Way Retreat Center, Annual Convocation of Deacons ODESSA, St. Joseph, Mass with Padre Pio Relics Tour at 6:00 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 2:00 p.m.</td>
<td>SAN ANGELO, Sacred Heart Cathedral, Mass with Padre Pio Relics Tour at 6:00 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 2:00 p.m.</td>
<td>SAN ANGELO, St. Joseph, Respect Life Mass at 11:15 a.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9-10 2:00 p.m.</td>
<td>SAN ANGELO, Christ the King Catholic Bishops meeting at 2:00 p.m.</td>
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</table>

Christ the King Retreat Center

Necrology of Priests and Deacons

Please pray for our departed clergy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>September</th>
<th>October</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
Consider the Cursillo

By Ann Rodriguez

WHAT IS IT?

The Cursillo is an experience which cannot be fully described; it must be lived and experienced firsthand to appreciate its fullness. It is a short but intense course in Christianity. It is three full days of sharing and living what is fundamental for being Christian. We have to come with open hearts and minds to take in all that is being heard.

WHO CAN ATTEND?

Since Cursillo is centered on the Eucharist, one must be able to receive Communion. If married, one should be married through the Catholic Church. If not married, one should be living the single life.

HOW DOES IT HELP YOU?

The Cursillo is designed for all who want to grow, and for all who yearn for a better life. It is for each and every person who is determined to live life and experience it to the fullest, to build individuals who are strong and courageous men and women of truth, who think, plan, and are sure of themselves. The Cursillo simply demonstrates that a life well lived is worth living.

How can you get involved?

You can get involved by contacting our English Precursillo chairperson, Amanda Porras, 432-661-6219, amandaporras1215@gmail.com; or our Spanish Precursillo Chairperson, Hortencia Cervantes, 432-258-0339, hortenciabriones1195@gmail.com.

Considere un Cursillo

Por Ann Rodriguez

¿QUÉ ES?

El Cursillo es una experiencia que no se puede describir completamente, debe ser vivida y experimentada. Es un curso corto pero intenso en el Cristianismo. Son tres días completos de compartir y vivir lo que es fundamental para ser Cristiano. Tenemos que dejar el corazón y la mente abierta para poder absorber todo lo que se escucha.

¿CÓMO LE PUEDE AYUDAR?

El Cursillo fue diseñado para todos los que quieren crecer, y para todos los que anhelan una vida mejor. Es para cada persona que está determinada a vivir la vida y disfrutar de ella al máximo, para establecer hombres y mujeres de verdad que sean fuertes y valientes, que piensen, planifiquen y son seguros de sí mismos. El Cursillo simplemente demuestra que una vida bien vivida es digna de ser vivida.

¿CÓMO PUEDE PARTICIPAR?

Usted puede participar por medio de ponerse en contacto con nuestra presidenta de Precursillo en inglés, Amanda Porras, 432-661-6219, amandaporras1215@gmail.com; o nuestra presidenta de Precursillo en español, Hortencia Cervantes, 432-258-0339, hortenciabriones1195@gmail.com.
By Father Ryan Rojo

It is not uncommon for a priest to be summoned to the bedside of an actively dying parishioner. For those of us in public ministry, “sick calls” are just as commonplace as the celebration of the Mass. In these opportunities for encounter, the sick faithful themselves are seeking the consoling balm of the anointing of the sick or viaticum (last Communion). An essential dimension of these rites, however, is the oftentimes overlooked "apostolic pardon.

Even the most seasoned priests admit to being unsure of its effect in the lives of their flock. What is this venerable prayer, and how is it related to our hope as Christian faithful who experience the mystery of death?

The misunderstanding surrounding the apostolic pardon might be related to a general misunderstanding about indulgences. Indulgences certainly receive a bad rap in light of their abuse during the time of the Protestant Reformation. They continue to serve, however, as awesome instances of grace related to the Church’s authority to “bind and loose.” In the Gospel of Matthew, our Lord assures the disciples that they enjoy the capacity as the twelve “to bind and loose” things of heaven and earth (Mt 16:19; 18:18). This same privilege is enjoyed by our bishops as successors to the twelve, and it is enjoyed by priests because of their relationship to the local bishop.

According to the Handbook of Indulgences, indulgences themselves are “the remission in the eyes of God of the temporal punishment due to sins whose culpable element has already been forgiven.” The sins of the faithful, alongside the culpable quality, are ordinarily remedied by sacramental penance (or confession). Justice demands, however, that personal restitution be made for our offending God. This restitution can be made after death in purgatory, or it can be satisfied in some way during the person’s lifetime.

Indulgences are, therefore, an act of mercy that aid the facilitation of our reclaiming holiness. The Church makes a further distinction in its understanding of indulgences: partial and plenary. Partial indulgences free a person from some of the temporal punishment due to sin, while plenary indulgences free a person from all punishment due to sin. The apostolic pardon is a formula of plenary indulgence.

In the past, various prayer books would have actual numbers of days remitted in association with the exercise of a particular devotion, but the Church has decided, through a lengthy and rigorous approach from such scientific precision. During the most recent Year of Mercy instituted by Pope Francis, many faithful capitalized on the opportunity to receive an indulgence for visiting one of four pilgrimage sites around the Diocese of San Angelo. Many other actions have indulgences related to their completion: a rosary, praying before a crucifix, or even just praying mentally.

The administration of indulgences, and by extension the apostolic pardon, are ordained by the norms and laws surrounding the Church’s ordinary dispensation of indulgences. The Code of Canon Law reminds the faithful that the efficacy of an indulgence hinges on that person being in a state of grace. In the ritual of viaticum, the apostolic pardon follows a penitential rite that can take the form of additions to the indulgence as they approach death, provided that they regularly prayed in some way. If the sick faithful are in themselves incapacitated in some way, the Church trusts that the anointing of the sick itself has the capacity to forgive sins.

A further reason for the apostolic pardon’s presence might be related to its placement in many copies of the Pastoral Care of the Sick (the handbook available to most priests used during sick calls). When visiting the sick, most priests will make use of the chapters related to the anointing of the sick. These chapters, however, do not ordinarily include the text of the apostolic pardon. This is because that in the consciousness of the Church, the anointing of the sick is not the sacrament that should ordinarily accompany death but viaticum (last Communion). That entire discussion aside, the priest must be conscious to mark the text of the apostolic pardon for the benefit of the faithful.

I would personally invite all the faithful to familiarize themselves with the two options of the apostolic pardon, and I would encourage everyone in the United States priests for this abundant gift at the time of their own death. For your own information, the text for the apostolic pardon is below:

“Through the holy mysteries of our redemption, may Almighty God release you from all punishments in this life and in the next. May he open to you the gates of paradise and welcome you to everlasting joy.

“By the authority which the Apostolic See has given me, I grant you a full pardon and the remission of all your sins in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Father Ryan Rojo is parochial vicar of St. Ann Parish in Midland.

Studying Marian apparitions and devotion

By Lorenzo V. Penafiel, Ph.D.

After reading the book Meet Your Mother by Dr. Mark Miravalle, professor of Theology and Mariology at the Franciscan University at Steubenville, Ohio, I did a little research on Mariology and then on Marian devotion. I finally ended up reading about Marian apparitions trying to learn why our Lady continues to appear all over the world and the relevance of her messages during these troubled times. I thought by sharing this little knowledge of Marian apparitions with others, especially young Catholics, they will learn the need to listen to her messages and understand the significance of Marian devotion.

A Marian apparition is a supernatural appearance of the Blessed Virgin Mary to a person or a group of individuals at a certain time at a given place or on various occasions. The purpose of such apparitions is to recall and emphasize some aspect of the Christian message. (1) The Virgin Mary appears to remind us of her maternal concern and her role of mediation in God’s plan.

Marian apparitions are held as evidence of the Virgin Mary’s continuing active presence in the life of the Church, through which “she cares for the bretheren of her Son who still journey on earth.” (2) For instance, in Lourdes, France, she appeared to St. Bernadette Soubirous describing herself as “the Immaculate Conception” and asked for penance and prayer for the conversion of sinners. When Our Lady appeared to the three children in Fatima, Portugal, she described herself as “Our Lady of the Rosary,” and urged the visionaries to pray, particularly the holy rosary, as well as to do penance for the conversion of sinners, and the consecration of Russia to her Immaculate Heart. As Our Lady of Guadalupe, the Mexican Virgin Mary is proclaimed herself as the spiritual mother of all mankind when she appeared to St. Juan Diego. As Our Lady of Banneux, she appeared in a small village in Belgium eight times to an eleven-year-old, Mariette Beco, describing herself as the “Virgin of the Poor” and promised to intercede for the poor, the sick, and the suffering.

In order that the public may be allowed to participate in the devotion to a Marian apparition, the Roman Catholic Church must establish its authenticity through processes of formal investigation of the facts and recognition of the apparition. The positive criteria to be met are: (a) moral certainty of a private revelation; (b) evaluation of the personal qualities of the person in question, i.e., mental balance, honesty, moral life; (c) evaluation of the content of the revelation, that it does not disagree with faith or morals of the Church; and (d) the revelation results in healthy devotion, such as greater prayer, works of charity, and conversion. Alleged apparitions may be rejected if there are glaring errors in the facts, doctrinal errors, psychological disorders on the part of the person or persons associated with the alleged apparition, or grave immoral acts committed by the person(s) during the incident. “If no reason exists for forbidding devotion connected with the site of a Marian apparition, then liturgical worship of God and pious practices may be allowed, and her message may be followed as a guide in one’s spiritual life. All the honor given to Mary at a particular place is owed to her as Mother of God. It is not directed to her because she appeared at a certain place. The locale is an occasion for veneration, not the reason for it.” (3)

Mirsacles attributed to an apparition are evidences of its authenticity. The miracle may occur during the apparition, like the image of the Virgin Mary that was left on St. Juan Diego’s tilma (Our Lady of Guadalupe), and the “Miracle of the Sun” in Fatima (Our Lady of Fatima). Miracles can happen long after the apparitions, such as medical and spiritual healings or conversions, as in the case of devotion to Our Lady of Lourdes.

Following the Code of Canon Law and centuries of Christianity, hundreds of apparitions have been reported. (4) According to the Marianum Pontifical Institute in Rome, of the 295 reported apparitions studied by the Holy See through the centuries, only 12 so far have been canonically approved by the Roman Catholic Church. The well-known apparitions approved by the Catholic Church are Our Lady of Guadalupe (1531), Our Lady of Lourdes (1858), and Our Lady of Fatima (1917). The latest canonical approval in May 2008 is Our Lady of Lais, France, whose apparitions date back to 1664-1718. Some apparitions are approved on a local level by a Church ordinary. Our Lady of Akita, whose apparitions in Japan occurred in 1973, was approved by the local bishop in 1984. Our Lady of Good Help (apparitions in 1859) in Champion, Wisconsin, was approved in December 2010 — the first recognized apparition in the United States. The latest is the approval of Our Lady of the Rosary in San Nicolas, Argentina (apparitions 1983-1990) by the local bishop two years ago on May 22, 2016. (5)

Although there have been hundreds of alleged apparitions reported during the 20th century, only the following have Vatican approval so far in addition to Our Lady of Fatima: Our Lady of Bauruaraing, Brazil (1932), Our Lady of Banneux, Belgium (1933), and Our Lady of Kibeho, Rwanda (1981). Our Lady of Akita, Japan (1973) is the only one with a local approval by the bishop. All the other alleged apparitions are classified as (a) no decision, (b) no investigations, or (c) no investigation. There are fourteen apparitions identified as “approved for faith expression only,” as of the date of this article. (6)

It is believed that Marian apparitions have affected the lives of millions of Roman Catholics all over the world in
Helping teens stay Catholic for Life: NCYC

By Joan Schwartz

“I cannot see how any Catholic teen who attends this would ever be a fallen-away Catholic,” I remarked to my sister, Donna, as we were reluctantly leaving the National Catholic Youth Conference (NCYC) last November in Indianapolis, Indiana. NCYC was an indescribable spiritual experience for me as an adult. I can only imagine the impression it stamped on teenagers. For youth, I believe it would be like a spiritual tattoo, staying with the teens for life. NCYC provides very strong religious muscle to likely forever strengthen the attendees, both teens and adults alike.

United in attendance with approximately 25,000 Catholic teenagers and adult sponsors, 250 priests, 100 deacons, 40 bishops and archbishops, one cardinal, and countless sisters, I believe many Catholics who participated felt as I did that NCYC was a once-in-a-lifetime experience.

Examples of quotes written by teens on their experiences with NCYC are as follows:

“The relationship you build with God is something that will change the way you practice your faith for the rest of your life.”

“This was one of the greatest experiences of my life.”

“I wish everyone could experience something like this. Before we left, I didn’t feel as close to God, but now I can say with 100 percent confidence that my faith has deepened.”

“NCYC was a one-of-a-kind, unforgettable, amazing trip. I will cherish every moment. I can only imagine the impression it stamped on me.”

“Amen.”

“No words can explain how amazing this
tBy Jimmy Patterson

Karen and I drove back to Texas in May on our way to our grandson Nolan’s baptism. We stopped in Palo Duro Canyon for a couple nights’ rest and on our way out of town, our directionally-challenged GPS took us off of I-27 and through the streets of Amarillo.

I pulled to a stop for a funeral procession and saw a kid on a bicycle. I watched him for a few moments. He was 18, or maybe 20, and not a kid at all. When the hearse drove by, he stopped his bike, stood up and stepped off as the mourners passed. I don’t know who he was, but I wish I did. He had been taught right. It was a little thing, but it stayed with me.

I will never forget another scene that played out shortly after we started this journey, or pilgrimage, or trip, or whatever it ends up being. One day in January, we pulled up to a red light in San Antonio and watched a young woman sharing lunch with a homeless man. She had only gone and bought the man a Whataburger, she gave him her time — and then ate with him.

It was a little thing. A still, small voice. The kind you have to listen for, but know is always there.

When Karen and I visited a friend's ranch for an overnight stay in Pecos, New Mexico, last month, we rode a cart around the property one day. Natural beauty was whichever way your head happened to be turned. We stopped the cart at one point and looked across at the far bank of the Pecos River, which runs through the property, and saw a red flower that had almost willfully pushed itself up and through a tiny crack in giant granite rock. I think of that flower and that kid on the bike and that girl and her homeless friend and their Whataburgers most every day now.

Little things. Still small voices.

A couple weeks ago, Karen and I had the privilege of hearing that small voice again, this time in the person of a 93-year-old man who twice a month teaches a Sunday School class to about 400 people at a Baptist church. Seems not entirely uncommon, I guess. Until you see the 93-year-old man standing three feet in front of you and realize he was once the leader of the free world.

President Jimmy Carter shrugged off any notion that he was an evangelizer when a man on the front row asked if he preferred being president or being an evangelist. Not only is he both, but the president confessed that on no less than a dozen occasions while he was commander-in-chief, he would sneak out of the White House on Sunday mornings to teach Bible classes, unannounced, at churches inside the city. Never told the media. Just showed up and did it. It's not a suspense novel co-written with James Patterson or a contract with Netflix or even jumping out of an airplane at 90. It's just, you know, a little thing. "Jesus loves me, this I know ..."

President Carter told the story of the minor prophet Nathan, and the small but important job of telling King David that maybe he might have a few skeletons in his closet, so he might want to go a little easier on his kingdom. Especially when cheating and murder and a child are parts of the story (2 Samuel 12). The president said it didn't matter how small or insignificant we view ourselves or our mission, like Nathan and his job we all fit together to make a bigger picture.

I get up before the birds. My early mornings are the tomorrows I wasn't promised yesterday. The bird outside my window in the northern Georgia mountains begins his song every morning at the same time. Between 5:45 and 5:50. (Still, small voice. Little thing). I soak in a lot of the written word before the day itself rises with the glimmer of the blue dawn poking through our RV window. One of my favorite writers is Philip Yancey. In his book about Job, Disappointment With God, one chapter in particular resonates. Essentially, Yancey says that with every media story of a school shooting, a terrorist attack, a hate crime, racial strife, an immigrant boat sinking or a natural disaster in a third-world country, the veneer of the global, collective good is slowly chipped away.

Conversely, he also theorizes that perhaps the same holds true on the other side. For every act of good, for every story told, for every kindness shared, those chips in the world's veneer of goodness are replaced; picked back up and hand glued into place by you and by me, and together, we make sure the light outweighs the dark, and the cracks on the world's sidewalk are mended.

Karen and I celebrated Mass at St. Francis of Assisi Catholic
Speaking of Saints

Padre Pio’s influence, ‘celebrity’ still felt today

By Mary Lou Gibson

Before Mother Teresa, the most famous “living saint” was Padre Pio. He was born Francesco Forgione on May 25, 1887, into a poor farming family in Pietrelcina, Italy. Often sickly as a child, Francesco was very pious and was drawn to the priesthood at an early age.

At age 15, he entered the novitiate of the Capuchin friars at Morcone and took the name of “Pio” in honor of Pope Pius I whose relic was in his local chapel. He was ordained in 1910 and in 1916 was drafted into the army with many other young priests. Ann Ball writes in Modern Saints that he became ill and was diagnosed with tuberculosis in the military hospital. His Capuchin superiors sent him to the monastery in San Giovanni Rotondo to die — instead he lived another 51 years.

While at prayer before a large crucifix one September day in 1918, he experienced excruciating pain and collapsed. When the friars carried him to his bed, they noticed wounds in his hands and feet. Ball writes that the doctor who examined him could not find any natural cause for the wounds. They bled continuously until his death 50 years later.

Ian Wilson writes in Stigmata that Padre Pio pleaded with his fellow friars to keep his condition a secret. But word leaked out that an Italian priest had the stigmata and the story became headline news in papers around the world by 1920. The stigmata is the spontaneous appearance of the wound marks of our crucified Lord (www.catholiceducation.org).

His celebrity status alarmed Church authorities and the Vatican who tried to minimize his contact with the public. He was prohibited from giving interviews or writing of his experiences. He was allowed to say Mass only at a very early hour. This 5 a.m. Mass soon became the highlight of the day for the hundreds of pilgrims who came to the monastery hoping to see him and get his blessing. Hundreds more waited for several hours every day to come to him for confession. He heard confessions for 10 to 12 hours every day and the confessional became his chief contact with his fellow man. He used the confessional to bring both sinners and devout souls closer to God. By 1934 Padre Pio was again allowed to perform public duties and often advised people to “Pray, hope and don’t worry.”

The stigmata caused Padre Pio pain every day. Rosemary Ellen Guiley writes in The Encyclopedia of Saints that the wounds bled constantly and the blood had the scent of roses and violets. He could not close his hands because of the wounds and had to wear special mittens at all time except during Mass.

Padre Pio’s legacy lives on in the hospital he had built near the monastery, The House for the Relief of Suffering was dedicated in 1956 and is open to anyone who appeals for assistance. Padre Pio promoted Prayer Groups for adults and children in the late 1940s and early 1950s. Today more than 200,000 people worldwide belong to Padre Pio Prayer Groups.

Padre Pio died on September 23, 1968, and more than 100,000 people attended his funeral. St. John Paul II recognized Padre Pio as a saint on June 16, 2002. He lived under six popes; four of them personally acknowledged his sanctity. And for one of them, Padre Pio had a special message. In 1947, he told newly ordained Karol Wojtyla, “You will be pope.” Wojtyla took the name John Paul II upon his election to the papacy in 1978.

Note: Even though many people considered Padre Pio a saint during his lifetime, the Catholic Church does not consider the stigmata or the other spiritual phenomena attributed to him as proof of his holiness. The Church has not made saints of all those known to have had the stigmata. Ian Wilson reported on a study made by a French medical professor, Dr. A. Imbert-Goubeyre, who compiled a list of stigmatics from the 13th century to about 1894. The list, although not authenticated by modern standards, included 280 women and 41 men with only 62 being beatified or made saints.

Mary Lou Gibson writes about the saints for the West Texas Angelus from her home in Austin.
Relics of Saint Pio of Pietrelcina to visit the Diocese of San Angelo

By Saint Pio Foundation

Following the historic tour of the United States in 2017, relics of Saint Pio of Pietrelcina — better known as Padre Pio — will resume touring several archdioceses and dioceses in the United States of America from Feb. 6 to May 11 (first part), and from Sept. 6 to Nov. 11, 2018 (second part). The relics will also be touring for the first time in Mexico and Canada. The 2018 tour follows last year’s sensational and headlining tour that attracted an estimated 250,000 faithful. In addition, some of the most important secular media covered this event, including FOX NEWS, NBC, The Wall Street Journal, and The New York Times, to mention just a few.

The relics will be at St. Joseph Parish in Odessa on Saturday, Oct. 6, 2018, from 12:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m., and at Sacred Heart Cathedral in San Angelo on Sunday, Oct. 7, 2018, from 9 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

The relics of Saint Pio available for public veneration will be the following: Saint Pio's glove; Saint Pio's crusts of the wounds; Cotton-gauze with Saint Pio's blood stains; A lock of Saint Pio's hair; Saint Pio's mantle; and Saint Pio's handkerchief soaked with his sweat hours before he died.

The Most Reverend Michael J. Sis, Bishop of the Diocese of San Angelo, will celebrate a Mass in honor of Saint Pio in Odessa at 5 p.m. on Oct. 6 and in San Angelo at 6 p.m. on Oct. 7. The Saint Pio Foundation, which is sponsoring the tour on the occasion of the 50th commemoration anniversary of his passing, will sell books and items related to Padre Pio in the entryway of the Cathedral.

St. Pio was born on May 25, 1887, in Pietrelcina, Italy, and baptized Francesco Forgione. He first expressed his desire for priesthood at age 10. In order to pay for the preparatory education, his father, Grazio Forgione, emigrated to the United States in 1899, where he worked for several years.

The future saint entered the Capuchin order at age 15, taking the name Pio. He was ordained a priest in 1910 at the age of 23. During his lifetime, Padre Pio was known as a mystic with miraculous powers of healing and knowledge, who bore the stigmata. Stigmata is the term the Catholic Church uses to speak about the wounds an individual receives that correspond to the crucifixion wounds of Jesus Christ. They can appear on the forehead, hands, wrists, and feet.

His stigmata emerged during World War I, after Pope Benedict XV asked Christians to pray for an end to the conflict. Padre Pio had a vision in which Christ pierced his side. A few weeks later, on Sept. 20, 1918, Jesus again appeared to him, and he received the full stigmata. It remained with him until his death on Sept. 23, 1968.

Pope John Paul II canonized him in 2002.

ABOUT THE RELICS

In the Catholic Church, relics are physical objects associated with a saint or candidate for sainthood — part of the person’s body or something with which he or she was in contact. Relics are not worshiped, but treated with religious respect. Touching or praying in the presence of such an object helps a faithful individual focus on the saint’s life and virtues, so that through the saint’s prayer or intercession before God, the individual will be drawn closer to God.

ABOUT THE SAINT PIO FOUNDATION

The Saint Pio Foundation is a premier national charitable organization that promotes awareness of Saint Pio and his mission by working with institutions and individuals who share the same vision to serve “those in need of relief of suffering.” Funds raised by the Saint Pio Foundation are used to provide grants to American Catholic healthcare, educational, social, religious, and cultural partner organizations. More information about Saint Pio Foundation can be found at http://www.saintpiofoundation.org.

V National Encuentro of Hispanic/Latino Ministry

WASHINGTON—This September, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops will be convening a gathering of more than 3,000 delegates from across the U.S. for the V National Encuentro of Hispanic/Latino Ministry with the theme, "Missionary Disciples: Witnesses of God's Love.”

The event will be a crucial turning-point for the Hispanic/Latino Ministry of the U.S. Catholic Church. The four-day event will focus on discerning ways in which the Church in the U.S. can better respond to the Hispanic/Latino presence and strengthen the ways in which Hispanics/Latinos respond to the call to missionary discipleship. It will be led by U.S. bishops and delegates in diocesan leadership roles from across the country as well as leaders of Catholic ecclesial movements and Catholic organizations and institutions.

As a priority activity of the USCCB’s Strategic Plan for 2017-2020, the event is the culmination of a two-year process of evangelization, mission and consultation through a series of Regional and Diocesan Encuentros held thus far in 9 regions and 143 U.S. dioceses. So far, the Regional and Diocesan Encuentro’s have had more than 51,000 leaders participate, and more than 26,000 people have been trained as missionary disciples.

Currently, Latinos make up 40 percent of the 74 million self-identifying Catholics in the United States, based on a weighted average of recent surveys from the Public Religion Research Institute and the Pew Research Center, adjusted by a proprietary model of the V Encuentro Research Team to include the imputed affiliation of children who were not included in the surveys.

Bishop Michael F. Olson of the Diocese of Fort Worth will be hosting the national event that will be held in Grapevine, Texas, from Sept. 20-23.

Stay Connected with the Diocese of San Angelo

DOSA Mail

The official Flocknote of the Diocese of San Angelo. Receive texts or emails with important news, updates, and messages from the diocese.

Two ways to join:
1) Text DOSA to 84567
2) Visit https://app.flocknote.com/dosamail

Social Media

Diocese of San Angelo on Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/DioceseofSanAngelo
Bishop Michael Sis on Twitter: @SABishopMike

On the Web

www.sanangelodiocese.org
The Angelus

PARISH FESTIVALS

St. Peter Mission, Mertzon
Sunday, Sept. 9
St. Peter Mission Parish will hold their Fall Festival on Sept. 9 at the Mertzon Community Center. The festival will include a brisket meal.

Good Shepherd Parish, Crane
Saturday, Sept. 15
Good Shepherd Parish in Crane will hold their Fall Festival on Sept. 15 at the Crane County Exhibition Building.

St. Joseph Parish, Stanton
Saturday, Sept. 15
St. Joseph’s festival will take place at the community center located at 301 St Theresa St. Stanton, TX 79782.

St. Mary, Star of the Sea Parish, Ballinger
Sunday, Sept. 16
“Good Friday Fish Fry” will be held Saturday, Sept. 15, and Sunday, Sept. 16, at the Knights of Columbus Hall, 3636 N. Bryant, in San Angelo. A meat feature barbecued brisket, German sausage, homemade potato salad, potato salad, cole slaw, desserts, and tea/coffee will be served.

St. Therese Parish, Carlsbad
Sunday, Sept. 16
St. Therese Catholic Church of Carlsbad will hold its Fall Festival on Sept. 16, at the Knights of Columbus Hall, 3636 N. Bryant, in San Angelo. A meat feature barbecued brisket, German sausage, homemade potato salad, potato salad, cole slaw, desserts, and tea/coffee will be served.

St. Mary Queen of Peace Parish, Brownwood
Sunday, Oct. 7
St. Mary Queen of Peace Fall Festival & Show
1103 Main Avenue, Brownwood Texas Sunday, October 7, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Sacred Heart Parish, Coleman
Sunday, Sept. 30
Activities will begin at 11 a.m. with a delicious authentic Mexican dinner. There will be a country store, silent auction, raffle (with exciting prizes), and outdoor and indoor games & activities for young and old, which include: Bingo, train ride for the children, cake walk, horse show tournament, and much, much more.

St. Francis of Assisi Parish, Abilene
Friday, October 5
Saturday, October 6
Come join us to share in this festival. We will have all sorts of food vendors to help with your appetite. We will have ice cream and snow cones that will be a hit.

Holy Spirit Parish, Sweetwater
Sunday, Oct. 7
The day’s activities begin at 10:30 a.m. with a Flag Raising and balloon release ceremony honoring all veterans. The day’s activities will include at 4:00 p.m.

St. Ann Parish, Midland
Saturday, Sept. 29
The carnival dates are September 27-30. The parish fair booths will open Saturday, following the Run to the Fair on September 22 and 29. Last year the Fair booths began using credit card swipers and tickets, eliminating cash at 98% of our booths. We will continue the same process this year. There will be four ticket booths available throughout the blacktop to purchase your Fair tickets (they will accept cash and card). Tickets will also be available for purchase at the Parish office starting September 10. Thank you to our Fair booth ticket underwriter, Weidelt IT.

St. Patrick Parish, Brady
Sunday, Oct. 7
Ed Davenport Civic Center, Brady, TX
This year the Fair will begin with a 2018 Chevrolet 1500 2wd Silverado Crew Cab Truck Texas Edition. MSPR $42,520. Winner responsible for 25% Federal Income Tax on truck.

St. Boniface Parish, Offen
Sunday, Oct. 14
A lunch meal of homemade sausage, turkey, and dressing will be served from 11:00 a.m. until 1:00 p.m. Dinner, take-out and drive through plates-to-go will be available. Adult plates are $10 and children’s plates (under 10 years) are $5. All plates to-go are $10. Dirt- in guests enter Offen from the North on FM 1874 and Drive Through Plates (tickets are free). Tickets are available from the West on County Road 234. Handicap parking and shuttle bus available. Homemade raw sausage will be for sale at $5 per pound. Pre-ordered raw sausage not being accepted through October 9th and payment should be mailed to St. Boniface Church, 1118 County Road 234, Rowena, TX 76878. Other activities for the day include: 12 p.m.- games and concessions, 1 p.m. - live auction, 3 p.m. - helicopter drop, 4 p.m. - raffle, and homemade items for purchase at the “sales table.” All sausage to-go plates will be sold during the auction. For more information call 325-365-8875 or 325-442-2893.

Holy Spirit Parish, Sweetwater
Sunday, Oct. 14
Holy Spirit Catholic Parish Annual Jamboree will be held Sunday, October 7, 11:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. There will be entertainment, bingo, games for the kids, andLOTS of different foods.

St. Ann Parish, Colorado City
Saturday, Oct. 20
Mitchell County Railroad Building 10 a.m.-11 p.m.
Live Music
Bingo
Food Booths
Game Booths
Silent Auction
Raffle [Top Prize $1,000 Visa Gift Card]

St. Ann Parish, Sonora
Sunday, Oct. 21
On Sunday October 21, from 11:00 a.m. until 6:00 p.m. St. Ann Catholic Church in Sonora will have its Fall Festival. The Sutton Co. Civic Center, 170 N. Main Ave. The day’s activities begin at 10:30 a.m. with an enchilada/gordita dinner will be served, and there will be a variety of food and drink booths. Activities include a gala auction for entertainment and more will be available. For more information, please call the church secretary at 325 387-2278.

St. Ambrose Parish, Wall
Sunday, Oct. 21
79th St. Ambrose Fall Festival Turkey, dressing, and sausage dinner served 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.
Adults - $10; Children - $5; Plates to go - $10
Sausage - $5/lb
Entertainment: 12:15 p.m.
Children’s games: 10:00 a.m.
Bingo: 12:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.
Live Auction: 1:15 p.m.
A shuttle bus available from the Wall School parking lot from 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

St. Joseph Parish, Rowena
Sunday, Nov. 1
Theme: “Children – Catholic Raised”
The day’s activities begin at 10:30 a.m. with a Flag Raising and balloon release ceremony honoring veterans.

A mid day meal consisting of turkey and dressing with all the trimmings, will also include Rowena style German sausage. A live auction begins immediately following the meal.

Games for all ages, including bingo, will be held. A Country Store featuring handmade items, cake, and goods will be open and will be open throughout the day. A Sausage Sandwich Supper will be held.

Uncooked sausage will be sold by the pound as well as the supply lasts. Handicapped parking will be available as well as a shuttle bus.

Assistant will be provided to those who need help in being seated for the meal.

For more information call the church office at 325-442-3521 or 325-365-6447.
The Angelus SEPTEMBER 2018 Page 11

The Cathedral Church of the Sacred Heart
San Angelo, Texas

Choir Open House
Come along and try it! Fun, food, fellowship and some singing
Cathedral Choir Thursday 6th September 6:30 - 8:00 PM
Spanish Choir Tuesday 4th September 6:00 - 7:00 PM
Cherub Choir (5-8 y.o.) Tuesday 11th Sept 5:15 - 6:00 PM
Children's Choir (9-13 y.o.) Wed 12th Sept 5:15 - 6:00 PM
Spanish Children's Choir Friday 14th Sept 5:15 - 6:00 PM

Information at www.shcsa.org/music

The Cathedral Church of the Sacred Heart
San Angelo, Texas

Choral Scholar Auditions
for paid positions in the Schola Cantorum for the 2018-2019 Season are now open

Registration and info at www.musicrecruit.net

“Inspire and Equip”
men's conference
featuring keynote speaker
Dr. Marcellino D'Ambrosio
Saturday, September 8, 2018
St. Mary’s Catholic Church and School Gymnasium
612 E. 18th St., Odessa, Texas
Registration 7:30 am - First Speaker 8:30 am
Eucharistic Adoration and Sacrament of Reconciliation
Mass Celebrated with Bishop Michael Sis
Spanish Language
Break-out Session Featuring
Deacon Joel Gutierrez
Additional Speakers Include
Deacon Michael Lopez
Mike Hernandez
$35 earlybird registration - $40 at the door

Name: ____________________________
Address: ____________________________
City: __________________ State: ______ Zip: _______
Phone: __________________ Cell/Text Y/N: ______
Email: ____________________________
Parish: ____________________________

Checks payable to
West Texas Catholic Men
P.O. Box 7641
Odessa, TX 79760

For more information contact
Rey Sanchez 432-833-0247
Steve Robichaud 432-352-5195
Israel Tijerina 432-973-1731

Email: wtccatholicmen@gmail.com
Registration online at: wtccatholicmen.com

The Heart of JMJ Foundation is Hosting the 3rd Annual
CATHOLIC WOMEN’S CONFERENCE
For the Diocese of San Angelo
SEPTEMBER 28-29, 2018
At the McNeese Convention Center
500 Rio Concho Drive
San Angelo, Texas 76903

“Outrageous Love - Mercy at the Well”
An event that will help examine our daily lives so that we can receive healing and peace within ourselves

Speakers Include:

Heather Benson
Margo Fenelon
Julie Alexander

Price of Admission is $35 when you register between June 1 - September 15, $60 after September 15, and includes boxed lunch on Saturday, September 29
Special hotel rates are available at PEARL ON THE CONCHO HISTORIC HOTEL, (325) 655-8500 & RED LION HOTEL, (325) 655-2828
Make your reservation by phone and mention “Catholic Women’s Conference”
For more information, visit www.HeartJMJ.org
Diocese welcomes FOCUS missionaries

For the first time, FOCUS (Fellowship of Catholic University Students) has come to the Diocese of San Angelo in the form of four FOCUS missionaries. Kassandra Leal, Brittany Betik, Juan Villasana, and Alex Horvat. The missionaries were commissioned by Bishop Michael Sis during Mass at the Angelo State University Newman Center on Aug. 15. The Mass was attended by students and supporters of the Newman Center on hand to witness the commissioning of the new missionaries. Father Francis Onyekozuru, Director of the Newman Center, described the FOCUS mission as “a new form of outreach to our college students as we strive to accompany and serve them one student at a time.”

To learn more about FOCUS, visit www.focus.org.

Below, from left to right: Lisa Martinez, campus minister for Midland and Odessa; Sister Adelina Garcia of the Office of Evangelization and Catechesis; Deacon Freddy Medrano; FOCUS missionary Brittany Betik; FOCUS missionary Juan Villasana; Bishop Michael Sis; FOCUS missionary Kassandra Leal; and Father Francis Onyekozuru, ASU Newman Center director. (courtesy photos)

Menard parish receives new crucifix, candlesticks through generosity of donations

In June 2018, the Catholic Charitable Foundation for the Roman Catholic Diocese of San Angelo awarded a grant to assist Sacred Heart Parish in Menard with the purchase of a processional crucifix and two processional candlesticks.

On Sunday, Aug. 19, 2018, Father Innocent Eziefule, parochial administrator of the parish, blessed the new processional items.

The parish wishes to thank Colonel and Mrs. Terry and Cee Cee Kelley, who generously made up the difference between the cost of the items and the grant. They also wish to thank the Catholic Charitable Foundation for the Roman Catholic Diocese of San Angelo and note that they are very proud of their new candlesticks and crucifix.

Father Innocent Eziefule blesses the new processional crucifix and candlesticks, Aug. 19, at Sacred Heart Church in Menard. (photos and copy courtesy Xio Wagner, parish secretary)
President of U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops Renews Commitment for Greater Effectiveness and Transparency in Disciplining Bishops

By Catholic News Service

ROME — One hundred migrants, most from Eritrea, arrived at a Catholic-run center near Rome late Aug. 28 after officials from the Italian bishops’ conference negotiated their release from an Italian coast guard ship.

They had been on the ship, the Diciotti, for 11 days.

The Italian coast guard rescued some 180 migrants from an overcrowded boat at sea Aug. 15, but Italy’s interior minister, Matteo Salvini, refused to allow them to enter Italy. Eventually 13 were taken to Lampedusa for medical treatment.

The boat docked in Catania, Italy, Aug. 20 and Salvini still refused to allow the migrants off the boat, insisting that other countries in the European Union had an obligation to share the burden of caring for them. Under intense international pressure, he allowed the 27 unaccompanied minors aboard to disembark Aug. 22.

Then late Aug. 25, Salvini tweeted, “After so much hard work, insults, threats and inquiries, we finally have the solution for the ship Diciotti.”

Ireland and Albania each agreed to take 20 of the migrants; the Catholic Church in Italy offered to take the remaining 100. Returning to Rome from Ireland Aug. 26, Pope Francis said he was not involved in the negotiations, although he obviously had been regularly informed. He credited Father Aldo Buonaiuto, who works with people rescued from human trafficking, and Father Ivan Maffei, one of the undersecretaries of the Italian bishops’ conference.

Pope Francis told reporters that to “welcome the migrant, the stranger, is a mandate as old as the Bible. It is a moral principle.”

But, he said, for nations that must be done intelligently and with a plan for integrating the newcomers, particularly by teaching them the local language.

“The virtue of prudence,” he said, is “the virtue of governance,” explaining that a nation must be open to welcoming and helping migrants, but it also has to be realistic about the number of people it can absorb and the resources that will be needed to assist them as they get on their feet.

Domencio Alagia, director of Mondo Caritas, the church-run reception center where most of the Diciotti passengers were taken, said the center will provide them with medical care, psychological assistance and offer them a brief introduction to Italy.

Speaking to the Italian bishops’ news agency, SIR, Alagia said the migrants would remain at the center in Rocca di Papa only a few days before moving on to a variety of Italian dioceses where the local Caritas organizations would help them settle and learn the language.

Italian church helps migrants kept aboard coast guard ship

By Junno Arocho Esteves

Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY — The power of God’s name is manifested in the lives of people who live their faith in an authentic way, while it is taken in vain by those who live in hypocrisy, Pope Francis said.

By adhering to the commandment to not take the name of the Lord in vain, Christians can show the beauty of baptism and the Eucharist, as well as “the sublime union there is between our body and the body of Christ; he in us and us in him,” the pope said Aug. 22 during his weekly general audience.

“If there were more Christians who would take upon themselves the name of God without falsehood, practicing the first request of the Our Father — “hallowed be thy name” — the proclamation of the church would be heard more and become more credible,” he said.

Continuing his series of talks on the Ten Commandments, the pope turned to the Second Commandment, which he said is correctly interpreted as “an invitation to not offend the name of God and use it inappropriately.”

Recalling its Hebrew and Greek translations, Pope Francis said the Second Commandment means not taking upon one’s self the name of God “in a way that is devoid of content” and shrouded in hypocrisy, formalities and lies.

The commandment, he said, is a reminder for Christians of their baptism and the call “to live out our daily actions in a real and heartfelt communion with God, that is, in his love.”

However, Christians may also succumb to the temptation of “taking upon themselves the name of God in a hypocritical way” and “living a false relationship with God.”

A sincere relationship with God, the pope explained, is seen not only in the lives of the saints, but also in the lives of the “saints next door,” especially “parents who give their children the example of a coherent, simple, honest and generous life.”

The Second Commandment, he said, “is precisely the invitation to a relationship with God without hypocrisy, to a relationship in which we entrust him with all that we are.”
National pro-life conference calls leaders to be missionary disciples

By Joyce Coronel
Catholic News Service

PHOENIX — More than 100 diocesan, state and national pro-life leaders from across the U.S. gathered for the annual Diocesan Pro-Life Leadership Conference to discuss how best to build a culture of life. The conference took place just days before Pope Francis revised the Catechism of the Catholic Church to say the death penalty "is inadmissible because it is an attack on the inviolability and dignity of the person."

The reinstatement of the death penalty in some states was just one of a host of life-related issues the pro-life leaders came to discuss: Abortion, physician-assisted suicide, contraception and pornography all figured into the sessions, but the entire undertaking was seen through a spiritual lens.

The theme of the July 29-Aug. 1 conference, "Missionary Disciples Building a Culture of Life," pointed to the reality of each person being created in the image and likeness of God and that in baptism, each Christian is called to be both a missionary and a disciple.

Deacon Omar Gutierrez, director of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith office for the Archdiocese of Omaha, Nebraska, attended the conference alongside three others from that state. Deacon Gutierrez referenced Gov. Pete Ricketts, a Catholic who has strongly opposed abortion but who recently spearheaded an effort to bring back the death penalty.

"That's one of the challenges we're facing," Deacon Gutierrez said. "Trying to be authentically pro-life in so many different ways, standing up for the other life issues." (About two weeks later Nebraska executed its first death-row prisoner in 21 years, convicted murderer Cary Dean Moore, despite Catholic and other faith groups calling on Ricketts to commute Moore's sentence to life without the possibility of parole.)

A recent legislative effort to legalize assisted suicide in Nebraska was successfully blocked, the deacon added.

Another speaker was Sister Suzanne Gross, a Franciscan Sister of the Eucharist, who is program coordinator for the pro-life ministry for the Archdiocese of Hartford, Connecticut.

She talked about spoke of the collaborative effort between Catholics, Protestants, Jews and the disability community in Connecticut to defeat physician-assisted suicide.

"For four years straight now, they have not been able to get the bill out of committee," she noted in speaking about the rarity of this double wedding.

In preparing for this wedding, it brought to my mind, and to our culture has pushed on weddings and marriage," he said. "The sacramental nature of marriage sometimes gets lost with all the bells and whistles that come with a wedding.

"I watched as they went through the parts for Amber and Brianna," Gross said. "Every year they say it's going to happen."

The annual pro-life directors' conference is an opportunity to learn from other leaders, she told The Catholic Sun, Phoenix's diocesan newspaper. "Different parts of the country do different things and have different concerns and issues that arise. We always learn from the way they respond to these situations."

Jerry Peters, the pro-life director for the Diocese of San Angelo, Texas, said he and his wife, Kathy, attend the conference almost every year.

"It's about networking with other people, learning what's going on in other dioceses and learning from them. And maybe they can learn from us as well," Jerry Peters said. "In 2013, we got rid of three different Planned Parenthood abortion mills in our area."

The conference opened with a Mass celebrated by Phoenix Bishop Thomas J. Olmsted.

The failure to teach the truth of marriage has caused us to "become lukewarm in our faith, and our lives and our society suffer from the poisonous consequences of lies," the bishop said in his homily.

He said the 50th anniversary of "Humanae Vitae," Blessed Paul VI's encyclical, could be seen as "a mustard seed that Jesus is planting ares to this present generation" so that the truth about human life could be planted in the cultural soil of our time.

The national conference featured the People of Life awards, bestowed by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Secretariat for Pro-Life Activities on Catholics who have answered the call outlined by St. John Paul II in The Gospel of Life (Evangelium Vitae). The winners have demonstrated a lifetime of devotion to the pro-life cause and the promotion of the culture of life.

Honored this year were Msgr. Joseph Ranieri, coordinator of pastoral care for priests in the Archdiocese of Washington, and Janice Benton, executive director of the National Catholic Partnership on Disability.

Msgr. Ranieri assists his diocesan Project Rachel Ministry in many capacities. He also is an active member of the Project Rachel Ministry National Training Team for the USCCB.

James J. Hanson, the third recipient, received the award posthumously for his efforts to oppose assisted suicide and his personal witness to the dignity of each human life, even as he experienced a terminal illness himself. Hanson died at age 36 Dec. 30, 2017, from brain cancer.

Coronel is a staff reporter at The Catholic Sun, newspaper of the Diocese of Phoenix.

Twin sisters used to celebrating sacraments together share wedding day

By Allison Ochoa
Catholic News Service

MUNJOR, Kan. — Growing up in Munjor, and later Hays, fraternal twins Amber and Brianna Wooldridge were used to celebrating milestones together.

For their baptism and their birthday to first Communion, confirmation and graduation, pictures and home videos tell the story of sisters used to sharing the major events in each other's lives.

Fast forward to 2016 when Amber and Brianna, both newly engaged, began planning their weddings, Amber to Zach Binder and Brianna to Clay Kear.

The sisters were part of each other's plans from the beginning, both preparing to be the other's witness during her nuptial Mass. As the arrangements began to take shape, the pair and their husbands-to-be discovered that scheduling was going to be difficult. Initially both weddings were scheduled within weeks of each other.

Then, the joking began.

"We should do both weddings at the same time to save some money!" "He was joking, but it made sense," Clay told The Register, newspaper of the Diocese of Salina.

While the couples wanted their own separate days, Brianne said in the negotiations of having a double wedding started to become clear especially when considering that some attendants would otherwise be in both weddings and the twins' extended family members and friends who live out of town might have to choose to attend one wedding over the other.

"Yes, our family started joking about it a lot," said Amber, "but we thought, we've done all these other major milestones together so let's do it!"

Clay and Zach were on board with the idea as well.

While the couples did their formal marriage preparations through the Catholic Church separately, the four came together in front of family and friends this summer at St. Francis of Assisi Church in Munjor to celebrate their nuptial Mass.

As planned, the sisters served as witnesses for each other, with their brother, Tyler Wooldridge, serving as best man and witness for Zach and Amber's vows, and friend Philip Nowak serving in the same capacity for Clay and Brianna.

For celebrant Father Jarett Konrade, the July 7 double wedding was a first.

"I think there have been two or three times in my 13 years of priesthood where I've had two weddings in one day, but a double wedding is rare," he said. "In fact, it proved to be a little more challenging as the rites and rituals of the sacrament are generally written with only one couple in mind, so I had to adjust some of the wording to incorporate two couples."

Now, having been married for almost two months and living on opposite sides of Kansas, Clay and Brianna in Edgerton and Zach and Amber in Hays, the couples agree that sharing their wedding ceremony was truly something unique.

Brianna recalled watching a home video of the twins' baptism during a visit with some family members a week after the wedding.

"I watched as they went through the parts for Amber and then for me, and you know, I've done every sacrament with her so to me this (double wedding) was natural!"

"Brianna and Clay have become some of our closest friends through this process," said Zach. "You know, you do some sacraments like first Communion and confirmation as part of a group, but most times the sacrament of marriage is just one couple and isn't something you get to share."

Amber added, "Brianna and I have both found our soul mates so being able to share the day and the sacrament together was really special."

The sacramental aspect is something Father Konrade noted in speaking about the rarity of this double wedding.

"It was a cool thing because the sacramentality of marriage sometimes gets lost with all the bells and whistles that our culture has pushed on weddings and marriage," he said. "In preparing for this wedding, it brought to my mind, and hopefully the minds of the people in attendance, the sacramental nature of marriage."

As the couples look toward the future, they know the sacraments and their faith will be the foundation of their unions, and that their faith, like their wedding day, is meant to be shared.

"Our faith hasn't changed a ton, but our perspective has," said Zach. "We used to think that faith was an individual thing, but now we know it's about me making her more faithful and her doing the same for me."

Ochoa writes for The Register, newspaper of the Diocese of Salina.
The power of a compliment

By Father Ron Rolheiser

Thomas Aquinas once suggested that it's a sin to not give a compliment to someone when it's deserved because by withholding our praise we're depriving that person of the food that he or she needs to live on. He's right. Perhaps it's not a sin to withhold a compliment but it's a sad impoverishment, both for the person deserving the compliment and for the one withholding it.

We don't live on bread alone. Jesus told us that. Our soul too needs to be fed and its food is affirmation, recognition, and blessing. Every one of us needs to be healthily affirmed when we do something well so as to have resources within us with which to affirm others. We can't give what we haven't got! That's self-evident. And so, for us to love and affirm others we must first be loved, first be blessed, and first be praised. Praise, recognition, and blessing build up the soul.

But complimenting others isn't just important for the person receiving the compliment, it's equally important for the person giving it. In praising someone we give him or her some needed food for their soul; but, in doing this, we also feed our own soul. There's a truth about philanthropy that holds true for the soul: We need to give to others not just because they need it but because we cannot be healthy unless we are giving ourselves away. Healthy admiration is a philanthropy of the soul.

Moreover, admiring and praising others is a religious act. Benoît Standaert submits that "giving praise comes out of the roots our existence." What does he mean by that? When we are complimenting and praising others, we are tapping into what's deepest inside us, namely, the image and likeness of God. When we praise someone else then, like God creating, we are breathing life into a person, breathing spirit into them. People need to be praised. We don't live on bread alone, and we don't live on oxygen either.

The image and likeness of God inside us is not an icon, but an energy, the energy that's most real inside us. Beyond our ego, wounds, pride, sin, and the pettiness of our hearts and minds on any given day, what's most real within us is a magnanimity and graciousness which, like God, looks at the world and wants to say: "It is good! It is very good!" When we're at our best, our trust, speaking and acting out of our maturity, we can admire. Indeed, our willingness to praise others is a sign of maturity, and vice versa. We become more mature by being generous in our praise.

But praise is not something we give out easily. Mostly we are so blocked by the disappointments and frustrations within us in our lives that we give in to cynicism and jealousy and operate out of these rather than out of our virtues. We rationalize this of course in different ways, either by claiming that what we're supposed to admire is juvenile (and we're too bright and sophisticated to be impressed) or that the admirable act was done for someone's self-aggrandizement and we're not going to feed this ego. However, more often than not, our real reason for withholding praise is that fact that we ourselves have been insufficiently praised and, because of that, harbor jealousies and lack the strength to praise others. I say this sympathetically, all of us are wounded.

Then too in some of us there's a hesitation to praise others because we believe that praise might spoil the person and inflate his or her ego. Spare the rod and spoil the child! If we offer praise it will go to that person's head. Again, more often than not, that's a rationalization. Legitimate praise never spoils a person. Praise that's honest and proper works more at humbling its recipient than spoiling him or her. We can't be loved too much, only loved wrongly.

But, you might ask, what about children who end up self-centered because they're only praised and never disciplined? Real love and real maturity distinguish between praising those areas of another's life that are praiseworthy and challenging those areas of another's life that need correction. Praise should never be undeserved flattery, but challenge and correction are only effective if the recipient first knows that he or she is loved and properly recognized.

Genuine praise is never wrong. It simply acknowledges the truth that's there. That's a moral imperative. Love requires it. Refusing to admire when someone or something merits praise is, as Thomas Aquinas submits, a negligence, a fault, a selfishness, a pettiness, and a lack of maturity. Conversely, paying a compliment when one is due is a virtue and a sign of maturity.

Generosity is as much about giving praise as about giving money. We may not be stingy in our praise. The 14th century Flemish mystic, John of Ruusbroec, taught that "those who do not give praise here on earth shall be mute for all eternity."

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.ronrolheiser.com.

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The McCarrick mess

By Bishop Robert Barron

Auxiliary Bishop of Los Angeles

When I was going through school, the devil was presented to us as a myth, a literary device, a symbolic manner of signaling the presence of evil in the world. I will admit to internalizing this view and largely losing my sense of the devil as a real spiritual person. What shook my agnosticism in regard to the evil one was the clerical sexual abuse scandal of the nineties and the early aughts. I say this because that awful crisis just seemed too thought-through, too well-coordinated, to be simply the result of chance or wicked human choice. The devil is characterized as "the enemy of the human race" and particularly the enemy of the Church. I challenge anyone to come up with a more devastatingly effective strategy for attacking the mystical body of Christ on earth than the sex abuse of children and young people by priests. This sin had countless direct victims of course, but it also crippled the Church financially, undercut vocations, caused people to lose confidence in Christianity, dramatically compromised attempts at evangelization, etc., etc. It was a diabolical masterpiece.

Sometime in the early aughts, I was attending a conference and found myself wandering more or less alone in the area where groups and organizations had their booths. I came over to one of the tables and the person there said, "You're Fr. Barron, aren't you?" I replied affirmatively, and she continued, "You're doing good work for the Church, but this means that the devil wants to stop you. And you know, he's a lot smarter than you are and a lot more powerful. I think I just mumbled something to her at that moment, but she was right, and I knew it. All of this has come back to me in the wake of the Archbishop McCarrick catastrophe. St. Paul warned us that we battle, not against flesh and blood, but against "powers and principalities." Consequently, the principal work of the Church at this devastating moment ought to be prayer, the conscious and consistent invoking of Christ and the saints.

Now I can hear people saying, "So Bishop Barron is blaming it all on the devil." Not at all. The devil works through temptation, suggestion, and insinuation — and he accomplishes nothing without our cooperation. If you want to blame someone for the sin of Robert McCarrick, look at Luca Signorelli's image of the Antichrist in the Orvieto Cathedral. You'll see what I mean. Archbishop McCarrick did wicked things and so did those, it appears, who enabled him. And we have to come to terms with these sins.

Before I broach the subject of how to do this, permit me to say a few words about unhelpful strategies being bandied about. A first one is indiscriminate scapegoating. The great philosopher René Girard taught us that when communities enter into crisis, people typically commence desperately to cast about for someone or some group to blame. In the catharsis of this indiscriminate accusation, they find a kind of release, an ersatz peace. "All the bishops should resign!" "The priesthood is a cesspool of immorality!" "The seminaries are all corrupt!" As I say, these assertions might be emotionally satisfying at some level, but they are deeply unjust and conducive to greater and not less dysfunction. The second negative strategy is the riding of ideological hobby horses. So lots of commentators — left, center, and right — have chimed in to say that the real cause of the McCarrick disaster is, take your pick, the ignoring of Humanae vitae, priestly celibacy, rampant homosexuality in the Church, the mistreatment of homosexuals, the sexual revolution, etc. Mind you, I'm not saying for a moment that these aren't important considerations and that some of the suggestions might be right. I am saying that launching into a consideration of these matters that we have been debating for decades and that will certainly not admit of an easy adjudication amounts right now to a distraction.

So what should be done? The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) has no juridical or canonical authority to discipline bishops. And even if it tried to launch an investigation, it has, at the moment, very little credibility. Only the Pope has jurisdictional and disciplinary powers in regard to bishops. Hence I would suggest (as a lowly back-bencher auxiliary) that the bishops of the United States — all of us — petition the Holy Father to form a team, made up mostly of faithful lay Catholics skilled in forensic investigation, and to empower them to have access to all of the relevant documentation and financial records. Their task should be to determine how Archbishop McCarrick managed, despite his widespread reputation for iniquity, to rise through the ranks of the hierarchy and to continue, in his retirement years, to function as a roving ambassador for the Church and to have a disproportionate influence on the appointment of bishops. They should ask the ecclesial version of Sen. Howard Baker's famous questions: "What did the responsible parties know and when did they know it?" Only after these matters are settled will we know what the next steps ought to be.

In the meantime, and above all, we should ask the heavenly powers to fight with us and for us. I might suggest especially calling upon the one who crushes the head of the serpent.

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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.
DEACONS

Continued from Page 2

candidates. The classes were taught in English, but some of the candidates would translate for their classmates who had difficulties following along in English. All three men discussed how their whole families would show up for the weekend. Deacon Peña had all 11 of his children there each month; other candidates brought their complete families as well. Older children assisted in caring for the younger children. They would pray, share meals, and take classes together. They really felt blessed.

Deacon Antonio Gonzalez recalled how his classmate Deacon Ignacio Cisneros (deceased) owned a plane and occasionally the two families would fly from Odessa to San Angelo to attend formation.

Their ordination was a bit different from how we do it today. Bishop Leven held six distinct ordinations on three different days. Two ordinations a day were held in different towns so parishioners and family members could attend without having to travel to San Angelo. In comparison, the Class of 2018 had one ordination liturgy at a centralized location (Big Spring) for all in the diocese who wished to attend.

The deacons have been very busy over the past 42 years. Deacon Lopez has preached, baptized, prepared couples for marriage, witnessed marriages, assisted at Masses and funerals, taught faith formation, participated in hospital ministry and many, many other things in his service to the Lord.

Deacon Gonzalez stated he has performed well over 2,000 baptisms. He was very proud to attend and be part of the ordination of the Class of 2018 where his son Edward was ordained to the Order of Deacons, following in his father’s footsteps.

Deacon Freddy Medina is the director of the Diocese of San Angelo’s office of diaconal ministry.

Letter to an angry friend

By Greg Erlandson

Catholic News Service

My friend, thank you for writing.

You have every right to be angry. The recent revelations about sexual abuses and what Cardinal Daniel N. DiNardo calls the “grave moral failures of judgment on the part of church leaders” are tremendously disheartening.

In terms of scale, the revelations about Archbishop Theodore E. McCarrick, now resigned from the College of Cardinals, and the grand jury report on six dioceses in Pennsylvania are dwarfed by the revelations of sexual abuse by clergy that came out in 2002 and its aftermath.

But many people have said what you told me: This feels worse. The wounds from earlier scandals have not fully healed, and the recent revelations have a kind of multiplier effect: Our anger becomes cumulative. Our patience even shorter. Our sense of betrayal larger.

In many ways the “clergy sexual abuse” crisis has always been a “trust in leaders” crisis. Priests moved around. Cover-ups and lies. Now a shepherd who was a predator, and allegations that others knew and did nothing.

As one woman told me, “Cardinal McCarrick said all the right words. He was practically a poster boy for the bishops’ 2002 charter and its aftermath. Yet all his words were lies. How are we to trust any of them now?”

I find it hopeful, however, that bishops are speaking out. Bishops from Albany, Fort Worth, Pensacola-Tallahassee, Oklahoma City and Anchorage are releasing their own statements expressing shame and calling for investigations. Some call for a greater role for the laity. They have been plain in their criticism and their sorrow.

The president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, Cardinal DiNardo, has committed himself and the church to “pursue the many questions surrounding Archbishop McCarrick’s conduct to the full extent of its authority.” Because the real authority to investigate and punish bishops resides in Rome, he adds that where the authority of the Catholic conference is limited, “the conference will advocate with those who do have the authority.”

Bishops are speaking up, but I am not sure how many Catholics are hearing them. The secular press pays little attention, and there are fewer diocesan news outlets these days. Bishops are having a harder time getting their voices heard. One theologian went so far as to tell me that the bishops have lost the communications war.

Meanwhile, when the Boston scandals broke in 2002, social media was in its infancy. Today, social media is driving a great deal of the anger and frustration, and all sorts of accusations are floating about that confuse and dishearten people further.

You are right that we need a thorough cleansing of the church. My hope is that this is an opportunity for purification and renewal. This great institution we once trusted in needs to pray for our church, pray for her purification, and our own.

I find these words of St. Bridget of Sweden particularly powerful:

“Show me the way and make me ready to follow it. It is dangerous to delay, yet perilous to go forward. Answer my petition and show me the way... Give peace, O Lord, to my heart!”

Erlandson, director and editor-in-chief of Catholic News Service, can be reached at gerlandson@catholicnews.com.

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Can we pay others to donate a kidney?

By Father Tad Pacholczyk

Often we envision donating our organs after we are dead, but we can also choose to become an organ donor while we are alive if we share part of our liver or donate one of our kidneys. The proposal to give one of our two kidneys away though does raise some ethical and safety concerns. There can be long-term risks for the donor. Donating a kidney, moreover, could then be therapeutic for us — only for someone else — and in fact might slightly increase our own risk for experiencing renal failure in the future.

Clearly we have a general duty to respect the integrity of our body. This means we shouldn’t cause injury to it, or damage it, for example, through surgeries or treatments that are not necessary to preserve our health or save our life. In light of these considerations, donating one of our kidneys would seem to run counter to our responsibility to maintain bodily integrity.

Yet the notion of integrity can also be understood in a broader sense, namely, as functional integrity, so that if one of our kidneys were removed without imposing undue risk, and without a significant loss of blood filtering function, then we could say that the functional integrity of our renal system was preserved. In that case, the removal of one of our kidneys, as a sacrificial act and for a proportionate reason, such as saving or improving another person’s life, could be justified. This is what the Church affirms.

A further ethical concern, however, centers on the fact that the decision to donate must be made freely by the donor, and consent should be given without any undue pressure. This means that offering payments for organs is fundamentally coercive and unethical.

We face a serious shortage of available kidneys for transplant in the U.S. Average wait times for a kidney are approaching five years, and about 15-20 people die each day while waiting for an organ — the majority for a kidney. In August of 2018, I participated in a conversation with some of the health policy team at the White House as they considered possible strategies for increasing the supply of live donor kidneys. We discussed the ethical, legal, economic and health implications of some proposed solutions, including the proposal to reward organ donation by providing various non-cash benefits.

During the White House meeting, some parties to the discussion offered recommendations that the government provide lifetime guaranteed coverage, or lifetime health insurance, to every person who becomes a living kidney donor. I emphasized that we should not be “encouraging” donation by offering “incentives” to donors as a direct benefit at all. Offering lifetime health insurance or similar proposals would, in my view, constitute a form of payment or “valuable consideration” offered to the donor, and would again raise the problem of improperly incentivizing the donation of organs, pressuring someone to consider donating as a way to secure lifetime health insurance coverage.

When Congress passed the National Organ Transplant Act in 1984, this concern about incentivizing donations was directly addressed. This law prohibits the purchase of organs or any exchange of “valuable consideration.” This same law, however, clearly permits reimbursement of various expenses associated with the transplant, such as travel costs to get to the hospital in order to have the kidney removed, temporary housing at the time of surgery, lost wages incurred in connection with the donation of the organ, etc.

Providing reimbursement of expenses should not be viewed as encouraging or incentivizing the donation itself, but rather as eliminating disincentives, or “removing hindrances or roadblocks.” An organ donor should not have to assume extra personal expense or take on other heavy burdens to be able freely to help out another patient who would benefit from receiving his or her kidney.

From the ethical point of view, our ultimate goal should be not so much to “incentivize donation,” as to “support or encourage personal generosity” on the part of those individuals who may desire to donate freely one of their kidneys. The distinction is an important one. At the end of the day, we want people to become organ donors, not organ vendors. Human organs and tissues, because of their close connection and connection to our human identity, cannot be reduced to commodities to be acquired or sold on an open market. We must do what we can, legally and otherwise, to safeguard the generosity of the organ donor’s freely chosen act and prevent conflicts caused by the poor and disadvantaged, from being exploited because they need money, health care, or other “incentives.”

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

Bilingualism is our Catholic treasure

By Hosffman Ospino

Catholic News Service

How many languages do you speak? I speak two, English and Spanish. I can also read comfortably in two other languages. My wife and children are bilingual and so are most of the people with whom I worship every Sunday.

If you attend any major Catholic gathering throughout the United States, chances are that talks are offered in the two predominant languages in which most Catholics worship in the country, namely English and Spanish.

Yet, bilingualism is not limited to English and Spanish. Besides speaking English, millions of Catholics in our country speak Tagalog, Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese, Creole, French, Portuguese, Arabic, Swahili, among many others.

Most dioceses throughout the country celebrate the sacraments in various languages, including Latin. The Archdiocese of Los Angeles alone celebrates Mass in more than 40 languages!

U.S. Catholicism today is a de facto bilingual experience. Well, a multilingual one, to be exact, but for tens of millions of people it is bilingual. We are at peace with it. It is who we are. This is our treasure.

El ser bilingüe es una realidad con la que vivimos a diario. Es lo que somos. Éste es nuestro tesoro.

Bilingualism and biculturalism are clear marks of being a U.S. Catholic. We have grown in the appreciation of these realities. Yet, this was not always the case.

Countless Catholics in the 19th and early 20th centuries were asked — in some cases forced — not to speak their maternal languages in order to learn English and “fit” in a society that was suspect of difference.

For many, speaking another language was the equivalent to a deficit, an obstacle, almost an illness that begged for a cure: the cure of assimilation and monolingualism. I have Mexican-American and Japanese-American Catholic friends who tell me stories about how their grandparents did not encourage their children to speak Spanish and Japanese to avoid punishment in school, catechetical programs and at the workplace.

Those languages that carried cultural and religious values, languages that were a part of our heritage, were considered by many as “asianing” or “foreign” words that fell into deafening silence.

It worries me that the winds of intoler-
Are we listening?

By Effie Caldarola
Catholic News Service

I was bustling around the house when the phone rang.

Morning multitasking consumed me: making the bed, grinding coffee beans, getting dressed for a doctor’s appointment, dashing out the door before the garbage trucks trundled down the street.

And, importantly, keeping the radio tuned up loud enough that National Public Radio could be heard throughout the house.

It was, after all, an explosive week in national news. President Trump’s visit with our NATO allies, the summit with Russian President Vladimir Putin, the incredible news conference that followed. Each day brought jaw-dropping revelations.

Ever the news junkie, I pushed aside my mystery novel each evening and immersed myself in the latest “breaking” news.

So, I felt a pang of impatience at the early morning phone call. I needed to hear what NPR's “Morning Edition” had to say.

A relative was calling, someone with whom I frequently chat. Often our comfortable conversations meandered on as we traded family news and debate the world’s problems.

This morning, I wasn’t rude or particularly brusque. But I glanced at my watch — repeatedly.

He hadn’t had time to listen to the news, so what, he asked, was the hubbub about? I gave a cursory rundown despite the fact that with the amount of news I’d devoured I could have written a book. I made sure to mention I was on my way to the doctor, indicating more immediacy than necessary. We said goodbye.

Slowly, I felt the pang of impatience turning to a pang of guilt. Why did I need to hear one more news story? Was I keeping well-informed in case the State Department called me for advice? What was I thinking? What was more important than that phone call?

Did I forget, as the spiritual writer Vinita Hampton Wright says, that we should “love as if loving is the first thing on our to-do list?”

We often hear that we don’t listen to each other today. But in my own life I think the problem is that often I half-listen. Sometimes, like this particular morning, I am halfheartedly present. I forget that love should be the first thing.

One of my favorite prayer books is Hearts on Fire: Praying with Jesus. This pocket-size volume offers prayers, poems and insights from Jesuits ranging from St. Ignatius himself to Father Daniel Bernigan.

The prayer “Teach Me to Listen” by Jesuit Father John Veltri begins by praying that I listen to those “nearest me.” Sometimes those are the ones we most easily tune out.

Maybe it’s the 3-year-old asking “why” for the 30th time in an after-school story or your spouse chatting about something while you absent-mindedly check your phone. We’re not entirely present.

Father Veltri goes on: “Help me to be aware that no matter what words I hear, the message is, ‘Accept the person I am. Listen to me.’”

Accept the person I am. Isn’t that what that toddler is really saying? That teenager? Your spouse? Isn’t that what we’re seeking when we share? Acceptance. This is who I am. Hear me. Love me.

Often we blame social media and those ubiquitous smartphones for our lack of attention, and they most certainly play a part. But we’re in control here. We can put those phones down. We can prioritize loving in the present moment.

It’s no coincidence that the people who are the best listeners are the most prayerful people we know. It’s a good bet that those who listen to the Spirit first thing each day are also listening in each moment.
Bishop Sis sends letter to parishes regarding priest named in Pennsylvania grand jury report

SAN ANGELO — On August 17, 2018, Bishop Michael Sis sent a letter to the priests of the Diocese of San Angelo following the revelation that one priest accused of sexual misconduct by a Pennsylvania grand jury also served in the diocese. Bishop Sis asked that his letter be read aloud or distributed in print during all Masses on the weekend of Aug. 18–19 or Aug. 25–26.

The full text of this letter, in English and Spanish, is included here.

ENGLISH

Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

In recent days, the Church in the United States has experienced a crisis, triggered by the sexual abuse allegations against the former Cardinal Theodore McCarrick of Washington and the release of the grand jury report from Pennsylvania on August 14. These shocking allegations have led to feelings of hurt, anger, betrayal, frustration, and disgust. As a human being and as a Catholic, I share in these same feelings.

What makes the latest news especially troubling for us in West Texas is the fact that one of the priests listed in the Pennsylvania grand jury report, Father Thomas Kelley, left the Diocese of Erie, Pennsylvania, and served as a parish priest in the Diocese of San Angelo from 1994 until his death in 2005. Fr. Tom Kelley served in our churches in Fort Stockton, Sanderson, Imperial, Coyanosa, and at Our Lady of San Juan in Midland, which later became San Miguel Parish. We have not found any allegations of sexual misconduct by Fr. Kelley while serving in our diocese, but the Pennsylvania grand jury report states that he committed serious immoral actions in the Diocese of Erie before coming here. We are still studying the background of this situation.

Anyone who has been harmed by someone representing the Church should inform the diocese so that we can protect others by removing offenders from ministry and offer healing to those who have suffered abuse. Mrs. Lori Hines is the Victim Assistance Coordinator for our diocese. Her telephone number is 325-374-7609. This number is always available at all of our parish offices and on our diocesan website, as well as in every edition of the West Texas Angelus newspaper.

I would like to use this troubling development as an occasion to reiterate our policy of Ethics and Integrity in Ministry and our Code of Ethics that is expected of anyone who serves in any ministry in the Diocese of San Angelo. These policies can be found in English and Spanish on the Safe Environment page of the website of our diocese. I expect all those involved in the ministry of the Church in the Diocese of San Angelo to follow those norms diligently.

As your bishop, I hereby offer my apology to anyone who has been hurt by any person affiliated with the Catholic Church, as well as for any time that any minister of the Church has failed to live up to Christ’s call to authentic holiness of life. I pledge to continue doing everything I can to safeguard the people of this diocese.

We must never grow complacent in our commitment to maintain a safe environment in our Church activities, where the well-being of every single person is protected. Please pray for all victims and their families, as well as our bishops, priests, deacons, and lay ministers in the Church. May Christ the Good Shepherd assist us in our solemn duty to care for the flock entrusted to us.

Sincerely yours in Christ’s service,
Michael J. Sis
Bishop of San Angelo

Atentamente, en el servicio de Cristo,
Michael J. Sis
Obispo de San Angelo

ESPAÑOL

Hermanos en Cristo,

En los últimos días, la Iglesia en los Estados Unidos ha experimentado una crisis, a partir de las acusaciones de abuso sexual contra el ex cardenal Theodore McCarrick de Washington, y luego la publicación del informe del gran jurado de Pennsylvania el 14 de agosto. Estas acusaciones impactantes han llevado a sentimientos de dolor, enojo, traición, frustración, y repugnancia. Como ser humano y como católico, yo también comparto estos mismos sentimientos.

Las últimas noticias son especialmente tristes para nosotros en el oeste de Texas porque uno de los sacerdotes enumerados en el informe del gran jurado de Pensilvania, el Padre Thomas Kelley, dejó la Diócesis de Erie, Pensilvania, y sirvió como sacerdote aquí en la Diócesis de San Ángelo desde 1994 hasta su muerte en 2005. El Padre Tom Kelley sirvió en nuestras iglesias de Fort Stockton, Sanderson, Imperial, Coyanosa, y en Nuestra Señora de San Juan en Midland, que luego se convirtió en la Parroquia de San Miguel. No hemos encontrado ninguna acusación de mala conducta sexual por parte del Padre Kelley mientras servía en nuestra diócesis, pero el informe del gran jurado de Pennsylvania informa que el comportamiento inmoral del Padre Kelley antes de venir aquí. Todavía estamos estudiando el trasfondo de esta situación.

Cualquier persona que haya sido perjudicada por alguien que representa a la Iglesia debe informar a la diócesis para que podamos proteger a los demás mediante la eliminación de los ofensores del ministerio y ofrecer sanación emocional a aquellos que han sufrido abusos. La Sra. Lori Hines es la Coordinadora de Asistencia a Víctimas en nuestra Diócesis. Su número de teléfono es 325-374-7609. Este número está siempre disponible en todas las oficinas de nuestras parroquias, en nuestro sitio web diocesano, así como en cada edición del periódico West Texas Angelus.

Respondiendo a estos acontecimientos trágicos, quiero reiterar nuestra política de Ética e Integridad en el Ministerio y nuestro Código de Ética que se exige de cualquier persona que preste servicios en cualquier ministerio en la Diócesis de San Ángel. Estas políticas se pueden encontrar en inglés y español en la página web de Ambiente Seguro de nuestra diócesis. Exijo que todos los involucrados en el ministerio de la Iglesia en la Diócesis de San Ángel sigan esas normas con diligencia.

Como su obispo, yo pido perdón de cualquiera que haya sido herido por alguien afiliado a la Iglesia Católica, y también por cualquier momento en que un ministro de la Iglesia no haya cumplido con el llamado de Cristo a una vida de santidad autentica. Me comprometo a seguir haciendo todo lo que pueda para proteger al pueblo de esta diócesis.

Nunca debemos volverse complacientes en nuestro compromiso de crear un ambiente seguro en nuestras actividades de la Iglesia, donde el bienestar de cada persona sea protegido. Por favor oren por todas las víctimas y sus familias, así como por nuestros obispos, sacerdotes, diáconos, y ministros laicos en la Iglesia. Que Cristo, el Buen Pastor, nos ayude en nuestro deber solemne de cuidar al rebaño que se nos ha confiado.

Call for prayer for rain and safe, good harvest

By Father Tom Barley,
Dean of San Angelo Deanery

At our recent deanery meeting the priests of the San Angelo Deanery agreed to make this September a time of daily prayers for rain and a safe and good harvest. We invite you to join with us in these prayers.

We also invite you to invite other churches in your local area to participate in prayer for this community. May God bless our own congregations for our farms, ranches, small towns and our cities.

Congratulations from the West Texas Angelus

The West Texas Angelus wishes to offer congratulations to the following individual and parish for recent noteworthy accomplishments:

Letizia Lopez, Development Director and secretary at Angelo Catholic School, was selected to attend the 9th annual Catholic Leadership Certificate Program at the University of Notre Dame. The program ran from July 7 to July 14 and included participants from around the world.

According to a press release, the program is “sponsored through a collaboration between Nonprofit Certificate Education in the Mendoza College of Business and the Nanovic Institute for European Studies in the Keough School of Global Affairs” and is “an eight-day program designed to give Catholic leaders a deeper understanding of their role in their organizations and their responsibilities to their subordinates and colleagues. Top experts and Notre Dame faculty educate the fellows on topics important to effectively lead nonprofit Catholic organizations, such as organizational development, people-centered leadership, strengths based leadership, culture and mission, strategic planning, negotiation, fundraising and leveraging polarities.”

St. Joseph Parish in Stanton, Texas, was named Business of the Month for August 2018 by the Martin County Chamber of Commerce. Along with offering their congratulations, the Martin County Chamber of Commerce stated that “Saint Joseph’s Church supported the Chamber throughout the years and have helped sponsor events.”

Letter to the Editor

Editor’s Note: Opinions expressed in letters to the editor are those of the writer.

American war hero, statesman John McCain has passed to his eternal rest

I found out of his passing in the wee hours Sunday a.m. He was a courageous American; when he was captured in Vietnam he always refused to give his captors any extra information other than his name, rank, and serial number. The five years that he spent in captivity were not very humane in the treatment that he received. Later he became a Senator vowing to work for all Americans. He will be greatly missed by all Americans. He was truly an American hero. In this, we will be at a loss, but the heavens and our mighty God will be at a plus with John. Our dear friend we will miss you, for the great man that you were. Sleep with the angels. Adios.

Robert Villegas

Dean of San Angelo Deanery
PATTERSON

Continued from Page 7

Church, in Blairsville, Georgia, last Sunday. The church has a 360-degree, largely undisturbed view of the Georgia pines and the Southern Appalachians through transparent windows around the sanctuary. It’s like looking through a piece of stained glass that God himself designed.

John Barone, a deacon at the church, spoke on essentially the same theme as President Carter, only as told through the lens of the Gospel. No matter who we are, no matter how great or small, known or unknown, it is left to us to carry forth the good.

Deacon Barone said if Christ could call on that band of misfits he called disciples to spread good, then we, too, are just as capable of being a disciple with a message just as vital. Maybe it’s a small message. But it’s still significant when it comes to handing the chips back together.

The original 12, Barone said, were far from perfect. They laughed at others who were different and lacked spiritual understanding. One was hot tempered, one a traitor, another a taxman, and still another a revolutionary. They lacked humility and faith, and occasionally they didn’t even listen during the homily. Sometimes, they even missed the point entirely. But Christ just kept having faith in the faith of the 12 regardless their nasty flaws.

All of us — we’re just everyday 21st century Nathans and Matthews and Andrews, Mary Magdelenes and Mathas and Veronica. With just one job.

I’ll likely never put a Christian bumper sticker on my car or have a license plate with a biblical message or wear a rainbow wig and hold up a sign that says 'John 3:16' at a Ranger game. But I can sit in the pews at a football game and feel rewarded simply by hearing the homily. Sometimes, they even missed the point entirely. But Christ just kept having faith in the faith of the 12 regardless their nasty flaws.

"See to it that no one misses the grace of God." - Hebrews 12:15

Jimmy Patterson is the former editor of the West Texas Angelus. He and his wife, Karen, are traveling the country in 2018, writing and photographing their experiences. You can read and see more at their Livin’ the Dash blog at jimmylep.wordpress.com.

SCHWARTZ

Continued from Page 7

of the most beautiful Adorations in which I have ever participated, and the reverence by thousands was profound.

The general sessions featured prayer, music, and keynote speakers. Fun “feel-good” music was perfectly balanced with traditional reflective music and deep meaningful prayer. The speakers were all outstanding and gave insights on how to get to know God better and to love him on a deeper level. Each of their stories was absorbing and memorable, the lens of the Gospel, Sister Miriam James Heidland, looked to be in her thirties and was a former collegiate Division I volleyball player. Born to teenaged parents and adopted into a loving Catholic family, she started drinking at age 12. By age 21, she had been a full-fledged alcoholic for several years, and her world revolved around partying and promiscuity. She began her road to recovery after waking up one morning ashamed of what she had done the previous night.

Her profession of her deep love for God, coupled with the story of her path from no religion and extreme emptiness during college to subsequently becoming a sister, spoke volumes to the teenagers. How inspiring and courageous of her to profess the low points of her life to thousands in attendance, not to mention a cardinal, a multitude of archbishops and bishops, and fellow sisters! All ears were glued to every word she spoke, as well as to every word of all the speakers. Each one a riveting story and a profound message.

NCYC also has strategic built-in fun! Many teens and some adults wear crazy hats which they randomly trade with total strangers. What a great way to meet other Catholics! I enjoyed hearing people, who I did not know, relay to me their experiences of trading hats. After Donna and I traded hats with all our friends, Friday, with thousands in attendance, we surprisingly ran into that same hat the next day! We then had a great conversation with the hat-wearer whom we had never seen before then.

Another fun theme is the discreet clipping of clothes pins onto people, trying to be unnoticed by the person being clipped. The clothes pins contain Bible verses or notes of inspiration. I had so much fun clipping my 100 clothes pins! I had brought them even enjoyable getting caught a time or two, as we met people that way, too. It was exhilarating to discover a new clothes pin clipped onto my purse, my hood, you name it. A third fun factor was many games in the exhibits. Teens had a lot of fun playing interactive educational and recreational games while going through the religious-themed “Themistic Village.”

You may be thinking, “Why should our kids travel across thousands of miles to get to this Catholic experience? They can get that locally.” Plus, as NCYC is held in November every two years, two days of school would have to be missed. To address this, there truly is no way to comprehend the profundity of NCYC until one has attended it. With thousands of like-minded Catholic teenagers, the unity can forever strengthen their foundation of faith. Most Catholic teens will be vastly outnumbered after high school by their collegiate peers who live their lives with little or no faith, much less Catholicism, similar to Catholic-raised Sister Heidland cutting out religion and mass when starting college. NCYC is an instrumental Catholic tool to empower our youth to deal with religious and other adversities after high school and beyond.

Paraphrasing one student’s feedback on NCYC, the teenager in part wrote, “Before NCYC, I had just about decided I was an atheist. I didn’t feel that God was really out there. Before I left for NCYC, I prayed, ‘God, if you’re really out there, this is your last chance.’ Now that I’ve been to NCYC, I feel his love for me.” The teen added that during Adoration, the initial thought of knees hurting quickly progressed to the feeling that God was standing right there.

I recently visited with Sister Adelina Garcia of our diocese who told me that, except for 2017’s conference, our diocese has attended every prior NCYC. She said in the past she has taken up to two buses, and other times, she had four kids attend. She said our diocese did not go in 2017 due to lack of interest. After experiencing NCYC, I strongly believe our diocesan youth need to again attend NCYC.

A San Antonio sponsor told me at NCYC that one person from San Antonio attended the 2015 NCYC. She said that for 2017, 55-65 youth attended, as well as the Archbishop of San Antonio. She said they flew, with the funding coming from both group fund-raising and personal financing from the families of the attendees.

Also, while at NCYC, I visited with Lake Charles, Louisiana, participants. Their distance is comparable to San Angelo’s distance. They took several buses for their 16-hour drive, leaving at 6:00 p.m. Wednesday to arrive Thursday. Donna’s group from Salina, Kansas, traveled by bus for ten hours. They said that sleeping on a nice chartered bus while the bus drove through the night was no problem. They could also do homework on the bus during our overnight trip.

With Catholic teens and sponsors from all over the United States, even Hawaii, attending NCYC, the youth of the Diocese of San Angelo would benefit greatly by joining the thousands of others at the next NCYC in November of 2019. The enthusiasm, the reverence, and the closeness to God make the effort very worthwhile. The Catholic bond forged and strengthened at NCYC is a vital lifeline that can endure throughout the lifetime of each of our youth. I will always be grateful to Donna for inviting me to join her Kansas diocese to attend the 2017 NCYC. The unforgettable, invaluable memories will truly always stay with me. While I now very much regret that all four of my children graduated from high school without getting to participate in NCYC, I hope to use my experience to have our San Angelo Diocese high school students at the next NCYC.

With this feedback, I strongly believe our diocesan youth need to again attend NCYC. For questions or more information, please contact Joan Schwartz at 325-234-3958 or Sister Adelina Garcia at 325-651-7500.

4. The Dictionary of Apparitions of the Virgin Mary by theologian Rene Laurentin (updated Dec. 2016) lists about 2,600 entries of Marian apparitions from throughout history. The writer has not seen the dictionary but assumes that it includes apparitions to Saints which other sources classify separately.

5. There are also apparitions “traditionally approved” by the Vatican without prior investigation, e.g., Our Lady of the Pillar, Zaragoza, Spain, 1852. For more information, visit the website at www.miraculouscenter.org.


Penafiel is a retired professor residing in the Diocese of San Angelo.

PENAFIEL

Continued from Page 6

five ways: a) the conversion of millions to Roman Catholicism; b) the construction of the largest Catholic Marian churches; c) the formation of countless Marian movements and societies; d) the spread of Marian devotions (such as the Rosary) to millions; e) the declaration of fifteen Marian dogmas and doctrines; and f) millions going on Marian pilgrimages.

Why so many apparitions? Dr. Mark Miravalle has a good answer. In a nutshell it is this: first, the Mother of Jesus, as the spiritual mother of all peoples, comes to all continents with her motherly message of a return to Jesus and his Gospel; second, we should thank God for sending Jesus; third, the Church has welcomed them with these extraordinary graces of conversion, healing, and other miracles to move our hearts back to Jesus and the Church; and lastly, it is a sign that we, as a human family, need more encouragement to live the Gospel of Jesus. These present-day apparitions tell us that we are not doing so well in living the Truth of the Gospel of Jesus and his Church.

Otherwise, we would not need so many reminders from our Spiritual Mother.(7)

As St. Pio of Pietrelcina said, “How many times must Our Lady appear to believe her?” Let us deepen our relationship with the Mother of God and increase our Marian devotion. Let us do our part as the Blessed Virgin Mary wants us to do. Otherwise, visit the Blessed Sacrament more often, and stop offending God. The rest we leave to Our Lady of Fatima’s promise that “Finally, my Immaculate Heart will triumph.”

Notes:
2. Papal Encyclical Lumen Gentium 62, Vatican

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S. Schwartz is a parishioner in the Diocese of San Angelo.
After it was completed, but before he could be paid, the man mysteriously disappeared. Adding to the mystery, the wood used to build the staircase is of a rare type not found in the area. The nuns visited all the local lumber yards, and there was no record of any wood or supplies being delivered for the project. Some people at the time thought that the mysterious carpenter was none other than St. Joseph himself. Whoever built the staircase, it and the chapel are sights to behold.

Our next stop in Santa Fe was the San Miguel Mission. The San Miguel Chapel is the oldest church in the United States. It was built between 1610 and 1626. It was partially destroyed in 1680 and was rebuilt in 1710. The church has undergone numerous rebuilds and restorations in its long history. Inside, behind the altar hangs a large altar screen. Michael told the story of Mother Michael surrounded by paintings of several saints. Above the statue are paintings of Christ as well as another depiction of St. Michael. Just below the screen, in front of the altar are several windows in the floor that reveal the original steps to the sanctuary from 1610 as well as the floor of an Indian occupation dating back to 1300. Although this church is more than 400 years old, it remains a beautiful testament to the rich heritage of our Catholic faith. Before heading back to the hotel, we took the opportunity to pray the rosary led by Father Michael.

The next day we made the long drive back to San Angelo. All of us enjoyed the trip and felt blessed to share the experience with Father Michael and Bishop Sis. It was interesting to see that we share a vibrant history with the people of New Mexico. This pilgrimage reminded me of how great it is to be a seminarian for the Diocese of San Angelo. Most of all, the trip brought to mind how proud I am to be a Catholic.
Continued from Page 18

The most important factor for the success of this program is prayer. And so, as we embark on this new adventure, I ask all members of the Catholic Church here in West Texas to pray that God is calling us as a diocesan Church.

As we seek to understand where we will be going, this will be a process of prayerful discernment as we seek to understand where our input, it will make the Church stronger for the future.

Let us celebrate and affirm bilingualism as our Catholic treasure.

Ospino is professor of theology and religious education at Boston College. He is a member of the leadership team for the Fifth National Encuentro Nacional de Pastoral Hispana/Latina.

La primera responsabilidad de los católicos y de nuestros líderes pastorales es evangelizar y acompañar a nuestras hermanas y hermanos en la fe con sus dones (lingüísticos y culturales) a la luz de los valores del Evangelio.

Sin embargo, algunos de ellos prefieren actuar primordialmente como garantes y reguladores de lo que creen debe ser un proceso de "americanización" — definido de manera ambigua en una sociedad altamente polarizada — asumiendo actitudes asimilacionistas como "sólo el inglés" ("Only English") para sus programas y liturgias.

Al hacer esto, estos católicos corren el riesgo de minimizar e incluso de rechazar el valor y el potencial de ser bilingüe y ser bicultural.

Muchas personas en nuestra sociedad, y en nuestras comunidades de fe, prontamente se alegran y adoran a los famosos y a los millonarios que deciden enseñarles a sus hijos un segundo idioma — en muchos casos ese idioma es el español. Lo irónico es que estas mismas personas con frecuencia caen en la trampa de no valorar a los hispanos y a los otros millones de personas en nuestro país que ya son bilingües.

A algunas personas les preocupa que si alguien habla español entonces no aprenderá inglés. Eso no es cierto. La inmensa mayoría de los hispanos nacidos en los Estados Unidos hablan inglés perfectamente — y muchos también hablan español.

Dos terceras partes de los adultos hispanos son bilingües. No olvidemos que 20 millones de hispanos en los Estados Unidos son inmigrantes, la mayoría adultos. Más que preocupación, lo que hemos de hacer es celebrar el gran número de estos hispanos inmigrantes que hablan inglés, algo que con frecuencia no se afirma.

Celebremos y afirmemos que el ser bilingüe es un tesoro que enriquece a toda la iglesia.

Ospino es profesor de teología y educación religiosa en Boston College. Es miembro del equipo de liderazgo del Quinto Encuentro Nacional de Pastoral Hispana/Latina.

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BILINGUAL

Continued from Page 18

ance and a narrow understanding of social and cultural integration may be winning the day in some sectors of our church and society. A narrowing past that many considered gone may be returning.

The primary responsibility of Catholics and our pastoral leaders is to evangelize and accompany our sisters and brothers with their (linguistic) gifts in light of the Gospel values.

Yet, some choose to act first as warrantors and enforcers of some form of "Americanization" process — defined ambiguously in a significantly polarized society — embracing assimilationist attitudes such as "only English" for their programs and liturgies.

In doing this, they walk a fine line that may lead them to minimize, if not reject, the value and potential of bilingualism and biculturalism.

Many in our society, and in our faith communities, are quick to rejoice and admire celebrities and wealthy people who teach their children a second language — Spanish in many cases. Ironically, these same people fall into the trap of underappreciating Hispanics and millions of others who are already bilingual.

Some people worry that if one speaks Spanish, one will not learn English. That is not true. The immense majority of U.S.-born Hispanics speak English fluently — and many also speak Spanish.

Two-thirds of Hispanic adults are bilingual. Keep in mind that 20 million Hispanics in the U.S. are immigrants, mostly adults. If anything, we should celebrate their widespread command of English, a fact that often goes unnoticed.

Let us celebrate and affirm bilingualism as our Catholic treasure.

Ospino is professor of theology and religious education at Boston College. He is a member of the leadership team for the Fifth National Encuentro of Hispanic/Latino Ministry.

BISHOP

Continued from Page 3

many people as possible. If all of us will give a little bit of our time to provide our input, it will make the Church stronger for the future.

After gathering the collective wisdom from our listening sessions, our focus groups, and our survey, a group of committed Catholics from around the diocese will sift through all the shared input and look for common themes. This will be a process of prayerful discernment as we seek to understand where God is calling us as a diocesan Church.

The most important factor for the success of this program is prayer. And so, as we embark on this new adventure, I ask all members of the Catholic Church here in West Texas to pray that the Holy Spirit may guide us into a future full of hope for the Diocese of San Angelo. May God bless the work of our hands so that we can be more faithful to the mission entrusted to us by Jesus Christ Our Lord.
SAINT PIO COMES TO THE DIOCESE OF SAN ANGELO

SAINT JOSEPH PARISH
907 S. DIXIE
ODESSA, TX 76761
SATURDAY, OCTOBER 6, 2018
(FROM 12:00 P.M. TO 4:30 P.M.)
MASS AT 5:00 P.M.

For information about the public veneration, please call (432) 337-2213, or send an email to odessa.stjoseph@sanangelodioce.se.org

SACRED HEART CATHEDRAL
20 E BEAUREGARD AVE
SAN ANGELO, TX 76903
SUNDAY, OCTOBER 7, 2018
(FROM 9:00 A.M. TO 5:30 P.M.)
MASS AT 6:00 P.M.

For information about the public veneration, please call (325) 658-6567, or send an email to sanangelo.cathedral@sanangelodioce.se.org.

Come and venerate the official relics of Saint Pio of Pietrelcina, on the occasion of the 50th commemoration anniversary of his passing.

The Mass in both locations, in honor of Saint Padre Pio, will be celebrated by The Most Reverend Michael J. Sis, Bishop of San Angelo.

Sponsored by the SAINT PIO FOUNDATION