Serving Catholics in the Diocese of San Angelo, Texas

Volume 42, No. 10 October 2022

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West Texas

Serving Catholics in the Diocese of San Angelo, Texas

Synthesis report complete, but bishop finds synodal path is just beginning

By Dennis Sadowski Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON (CNS) — While the report summarizing tens of thousands of U.S. listening sessions in the first phase of the Catholic Church’s synodal process has been submitted to the Vatican, the experience of synodality is just beginning.

The country reports, such as the one submitted by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops in August, are part of the two-year preparatory effort leading to the Synod of Bishops on synodality in October 2023 called by Pope Francis.

The pope has invited the church to become more collaborative and that involves listening and walking together — synodality — in response to the challenges the world poses to daily life.

“The local work doesn’t become obsolete because we published a national synthesis,” Bishop Daniel E. Flores of Brownsville, Texas, who is overseeing the effort for the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, told Catholic News Service.

The U.SCCB released the synthesis Sept. 19. It summarizes the concerns, hopes, pains and desires voiced by an estimated 700,000 participants who joined thousands of listening sessions and other events during the diocesan phase in the lead-up to the Synod of Bishops on synodality in October 2023.

“There are many things that can be addressed immediately. There are some issues raised that can be resolved at the local level. We don’t have to wait for the outcome of the Synod of Bishops,” said Bishop Flores, who chairs the USCCB Committee on Doctrine.

“There are some issues raised that can be resolved at the local level. They cannot be resolved at the national level. The great gift of the synodal style, which the Holy Father keeps insisting, is a manner of expressing the style of Jesus, which is always listening and always attentive and always responsive,” he explained.

The bishop compared the pope’s invitation to synodality to the act of planting a seed.

“If we can plant the seed once again of the church that understands its own identity as the body that has many voices but has cohesion that is given by the Holy Spirit, then we’re better off to fulfill our mission in the world, which is a witness that we don’t always have to be fighting each other and that we can, at the very least, assist each other in what is a very difficult life,” he told CNS.

Groundbreaking in Greenwood

By Father Patrick Akpanobong

On Nov. 28, 2018, Bishop Michael J. Sis, in response to the yearnings of the people of Greenwood, gave written permission to begin the Greenwood Catholic Community as a mission of San Miguel Arcangel Parish, Midland, with Father Patrick Akpanobong as pastor. This new community was created to help foster faith and fellowship among the people of God in Greenwood.

It was to bring a dream they have been longing for in the last twenty years to fruition and to alleviate travel distance to worship God and partake of the Eucharist. For many years, Catholics in Greenwood have been traveling to churches in Midland, Stanton, Sterling City, Midkiff, and St. Lawrence to attend Mass. Bishop Sis has also observed this reality, saying, “When I confirm teenagers in other parishes, it is not uncommon to meet students from Greenwood in the group.”

Greenwood, Texas, is a suburb of Midland and is a growing community with a vibrant independent school district. According to the U.S. Census Bureau release, the 2020 American Community Survey, there are 32,692 residents in Greenwood, with a median age of 29.7. Of this, 50.5% are males and 49.5% are females. Of these numbers, we estimate that at least two hundred families are Catholics.

On Aug. 22, 2022, on behalf of St. Rita of Cascia Mission, the bishop signed a contract of $1,813,610 with NC Sturgeon Contractors, the span of the project will be between 10 and 12 months. In line with making this dream a reality, on Sept. 17, 2022, the community gathered to perform a groundbreaking ceremony. Refreshments were served, pictures were taken, and guests through the intercession of St. Rita, this new community would grow.

The Catholic community of St. Rita of Cascia is very grateful to the U.S. Catholic News Service for its report summarizing tens of thousands of U.S. listening sessions in the first phase of the Catholic Church’s synodal process has been submitted to the Vatican, the experience of synodality is just beginning.

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Do you worship Mary?

Bishop Michael J. Sis
Diocese of San Angelo

The Prayer Square
Life and dignity of the human person prayer

God of all life,
Help us to appreciate the great gift that is human life formed in your image, a reflection of your holiness.
Help us to recognize you in all who bear your image: poor children not yet born, families affected by poverty and war, people of different abilities, people from other lands, and all who are victims of hatred and racism.
Help us to bear witness to the dignity of all whom you have created, regardless of stage of life, or wealth, or ability, or color, or creed.
May your justice reign forever!
Amen.

God is infinitely powerful. He can choose to act however he wants. He could, of course, act alone, but He chooses not to. He chooses to utilize helpers. What history shows us is that God first selected His mother Mary. Mary, as the mother of Jesus, is his mother.

Mary is the mother of God.
This title was officially declared in the Ecumenical Council of Ephesus in 431. The council clarified that Jesus Christ is one person, both human and divine, and Mary is the mother of this one person (Catechism of the Catholic Church, no. 495). Since Jesus Christ is God, Mary is the mother of God.

When we say that Mary is the mother of God, are we putting her on the level of God? No, Mary is not God, and never was. She is always the mother of God in the sense of existing before God. Christ the Son of God existed from all eternity. Mary did not exist at all until she was conceived in the womb of her mother Anne in about 14 B.C. Christ existed before Mary, but at a certain point in human history he became incarnate in the womb of Mary.

Since she gave birth to him, and raised him, she is his mother. A woman cannot comprehend why any Christian would have hostility and antipathy to Jesus Christ her divine Son. Throughout our history, the Church has strongly urged us “to be careful to refrain from Mary devotion, the Church strongly urges us ‘to be careful to refrain from devotion to the Mother of God’” (Catechism, 2674-2675: “Mary is the only mediator. Mary is wholly transparent to Christ. Mary points the way to Jesus. In our Marian prayer, we are basically doing two things: 1. Praising God for what he has done for her and through her. Asking her to pray for us.”

In his weekly Wednesday audience talks from 1995 to 1997, St. John Paul II taught that, in Marian doctrine and devotion, the Church strongly urges us “to be careful to refrain from all forms of devotion to Mary, the Mother of God, isolated from Jesus Christ.” He continues, “If it were not for her son Jesus, Mary would have been a poor Jewish country girl in a remote village of Galilee. In fact, everything that the Bible says about Mary has to do with her relationship with Jesus.

All Marian devotion ought to flow out of our love for Jesus, the Son of God. If the Church corrected us, Maran was isolated from Jesus Christ would not make any sense. Mary directs our attention to her son Jesus. Nothing would make more sense for people to love her son.

The last recorded words of Mary in the Bible are found in the Gospel of John, at the wedding feast of Cana, just before Jesus turns water into wine. Mary says to the helpers, “Do whatever he tells you” (Jn 2.5). We need to do the same — whatever is the will of Jesus. In our prayer, we should regularly ask Mary to pray for us so she can “do whatever the Lord tells her” (Catechism of the Catholic Church, paragraph 2675). Mary, who is human, is always subordinate to Jesus Christ.

Mary is not the only one who can be asked to pray for us. For example, it says, “O Mary, God has chosen you to be the mother of a child. You must love Jesus as a prophet. Love for Mary is not just a Catholic thing. For example, it says, “O Mary, God has chosen you to be the mother of a child. You must love Jesus as a prophet.

Love for Mary is not just a Catholic thing.
It’s not just Catholics who have great respect and devotion for Mary. Orthodox Christians and Anglican Christians have a great love for Mary. In fact, even the inhabitants of Jesus’ birthplace, the village of Galilee, had a great respect for Mary. The local people show Mary a great respect. For example, it says, “O Mary, God has chosen you to be the mother of a child. You must love Jesus as a prophet.

Mary is not a goddess or deity. We believe that there is one God the Father, through Jesus Christ his Son, in the unity of the Holy Spirit. The Mass and the sacraments are the Mass and the other sacraments (Directory on Popular Pastoral Theology, no. 1). Those prayers are directed to God the Father, through Jesus Christ his Son, in the unity of the Holy Spirit. The Mass and the sacraments are not directed to Mary or to any other saint.

To serve, not be served: Curia called to help bishops, bishops’ conferences

By Cindy Wooden
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Pope Francis’ reform of the Roman Curia in 2013 continues to bear fruit in the Vatican as a service not only to the pope, but also to dioceses and eparchies and to the work of bishops and bishops’ conferences around the world.

“The Roman Curia is not set between the pope and the bishops, but is at the service of both,” the pope wrote in Praedicate Evangelium (Preach the Gospel), his apostolic constitution on the reorganization of the Roman Curia.

The work of the Curia, he said, is “organically related to the College of Bishops and individual bishops, as well as to episcopal conferences and synods of bishops.”

The practical impact of the pope’s words became clear in early September when he announced that he had given the Latin American bishops’ council greater responsibilities and a papal fund previously controlled by the Curia and the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development was assigned a radically restructuring of its office.

The national and regional conferences of bishops prior to the Second Vatican Council, but their stature and influence — at least in the eyes of top Vatican officials — began shrinking in the late 1960s, when St. John Paul II and his closest aides tried to rein in their perceived power over the authority and ministry of a local bishop for his diocese.

In 1998, St. John Paul issued an apostolic letter, Apostolorum Sacerdos on the theological and juridical questions of bishops’ conferences. Telling conferences they could issue statements on doctrinal and moral issues, some bishops told their conferences to issue statements on doctrinal and moral issues, some bishops told their conferences to issue statements on doctrinal and moral issues.

But from the beginning of his pontificate, Pope Francis has given a higher profile to bishops’ conferences and their teaching authority.

Papal encyclicals and apostolic exhortations repeatedly cite passages from the Bible, from the teaching of previous popes and from ecclesiastical councils like Vatican II. Pope Benedict XVI’s major documents also included early church theologians, ancient philosophers and contemporary thinkers, but not a statement of a national bishops’ conference.

But Pope Francis, in his 2013 apostolic exhortation, The Joy of the Gospel, cited the statements of his bishops’ conferences: the United States, France, Brazil, the Philippines, Congo and India. He also drew heavily on the work of the Latin American bishops’ council, known as CELAM, particularly its Aparecida Document, which — as archbishop of Buenos Aires — he was in charge of drafting.

The citations were a concrete sign of the collaboration he said is essential to his ministry as pope.

The Second Vatican Council affirmed that “episcopal conferences are in a position ‘to contribute in many and fruitful ways to the common task of the new evangelization,’ ” Pope Francis wrote in that 2013 document.

“Yet this desire has not been fully realized, since a juridical status of episcopal conferences which would see them as subjects of specific attributions, including genuine doctrinal authority, has not yet been sufficiently elaborated.”

His 2015 document, Laudato Si’, on Care for Our Common Home, gave papal status to the teaching of more than a dozen bishops’ conferences on the ethical and moral importance of protecting the environment.

But also, in the name of “healthy decentralization,” he has made changes to the Code of Canon Law and to standard Vatican procedures to grant greater authority to individual bishops, bishops’ conferences and synods of bishops of the Eastern Catholic churches in approving liturgical translations, setting up interdiocesan seminars, drafting programs for the formation of priests and publishing national catechisms.

Pope Francis’ document reforming the Curia said that with the church embarking “a mission of enrichment,” the Curia’s “structures and cultures,” it has “an immense store of successful experiences regarding evangelization.”

One role of the Curia has been to gather the wisdom, experiences and best practices of individual dioceses, bishops’ conferences or Eastern synods of bishops and share them with others.

Announcing its new structure Sept. 14, the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development said the pope is calling for a Curia that is “open to the multitude of peoples, languages and cultures,” and that it has “an immense store of successful experiences regarding evangelization.”

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María es la madre de Dios. Este título fue declarado oficialmente en el Concilio Ecuménico de Lyon en 431. El concilio aclaró que Jesús es una sola persona, tanto humana como divina, y María es la madre de esta única persona (Catecismo de la Iglesia Católica, núm. 495). Puesto que Jesús es Dios, María es la madre de Dios.

Cuando decimos que María es la madre de Dios, ¿esta- mos poniendo al nivel de Dios a María? No, María es madre de Dios. ¡Así lo hizo Dios! María nació de la Virgen María, pero Él también era Dios. María no es Dios, pero está en un nivel sagrado por estar próxima a Dios. Dios existió desde toda la eternidad. María no existió en ab- soluto hasta que fue concebida en el vientre de su madre Ana alrededor del año 14 a.C.

Cristo existió antes que María, pero en un momento deter- minado de la historia humana se encarnó en el vientre de María. Ya que ella lo dio a luz y lo crió, es la madre de Dios. Eso es lo que significa decir que María es la madre de Dios.

María es quien es gracias a Jesús. Si no fuera por su hijo Jesús, María habría sido totalmente olvidada en la historia. Habría sido simplemente otra pobre campesina judía en un remoto pueblo de Galilea. De hecho, todo lo que dice la Biblia sobre María tiene que ver con su rela- ción con Jesús. María dirige nuestra atención a su hijo Jesús. Nada la haría más feliz que estar cerca de él.

Toda devoción mariana debe ser de nuestro amor por Jesus, no de su nivel divino. María es más profundo por Jesús. La devoci- ón mariana aislada de Jesucristo no tendría ningún sentido. María dirige nuestra atención a su hijo Jesús. Nada la haría más feliz que estar cerca de él.

¿Ustedes adoran a María? Nuestra respuesta inmediata debe ser: “No, no adoramos a María, solo adoramos a Dios.” Si adoraríamos a María o a cualquier otra criatura de Dios, seríamos culpables de idolatría. El papa Juan Pablo II declaró: “No adoramos a María, adoramos a Dios.”

¿Por qué no ir directamente a Dios? ¿Qué sentido hay en llamar a María, la Madre de Dios, para que nos ayude a recorrer nuestras dificultades? ¿Incluso a una criatura tan humana como María? Porque son recordatorios de una persona quien es muy importante para nosotros. Son recordatorios de compañeros cristianos que son muy im- portantes para nuestra vida. Son recordatorios de un color, o el credo, o la habilidad, de personas de otras tierras, y niños todavía no nacidos.

La devoción mariana nunca debe ser adoración. No es una religión en sí misma. Como cristianos, debemos estar abiertos a la posibi- lidad de María dirigirnos a Jesús. María está directamente ordenada.

Todas las devociones a María deben tener una intencionalidad de cuerpo. Nada debe estar en la devoción mariana que no esté en la devoción a Jesús.

Oración por la vida y digni- dad de la persona humana

Dios de toda vida,

Aydúnamos a valorar el gran don que es la vida humana formada a tu imagen, reflejo de tu santidad.

Aydúnamos a reconocer en todos los que hayas creado, niños todavía nacidos, familiares afectados por la pobreza y la guerra, personas de habilidades diferentes, personas de otras tiendas, y todas las que están sufriendo de la pecaminosa en el mundo.

Aydúnamos a dar testimonio de la dignidad de todos los que están a tu servicio.

¡Que tu justicia reine para siempre!

Amén.

Véase CURIA, Página 18
The goal of the CHD is to break the cycle of poverty by helping low-income people participate in decisions that affect their lives, families and communities.

Retirement Fund for Religious
December 11, 2022

The Retirement Fund for Religious helps religious communities care for senior members.

October 2022

1 MIDLAND, St. Ann, Diocesan Schools Commission meeting at 9:30 a.m.
2 SWEETWATER, Holy Spirit, Confirmation Mass at 5:00 p.m.
3 SAN ANGELO, St. Joseph, Respect Life Sunday Mass at 11:15 a.m.
4–5 SAN ANGELO, Diocesan Pastoral Center, Priests’ Fall Convocation
6–7 ABILENE CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY, meeting with students at 11:00 a.m.
8–9 BIG SPRING, Holy Trinity, Deacon Convocation
10 CARLSBAD, St. Therese, Mass at 8:30 a.m.
11 SAN ANGELO, St. Margaret, Mass 10:30 a.m.
12 VIRTUAL, Diocesan Conference Day, 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.
13 SAN ANGELO, Glenmore Park, St. Mary’s Family Retreat
14 MENARD, Sacred Heart, Confirmation Mass at 9:00 a.m.
15 JUNCTION, St. Theresa, Confirmation Mass at 11:00 a.m.
16 SAN ANGELO, Christ the King Retreat Center, Diocese Mission Council meeting at 6:00 p.m.
17 SAN ANGELO, Holy Angels Cafeteria, Catholic Daughters of America meeting at 6:00 p.m.
18 SAN ANGELO, ASU Newman Center, Masses at 8:00 a.m. and 11:30 a.m.
19 SAN ANGELO, Diocesan Pastoral Center, Diocesan Liturgical Commission meeting at 1:00 p.m.
20 SAN ANGELO, Diocesan Pastoral Center, Presbyteral Council meeting at 11:00 a.m.
21 MIDLAND, St. Ann, Equestrian Order Mass at 5:15 p.m.
22 MIDLAND, Horseshoe Arena, Life Center Banquet at 6:30 p.m.
23 PIEDRAS NEGRAS, 50th Anniversary Mass of Bishop Alonso Garza at 7:00 p.m.
24 SAN ANGELO, Opening prayer for Dia de los Muertos event at 6:30 p.m.
25 SAN ANGELO, St. Joseph, Guest judge for Trunk “R” Treat at 7:00 p.m.

November 2022

1 SAN ANGELO, Cathedral of the Sacred Heart, Mass at 6:30 p.m.
2 SAN ANGELO, Calvary Cemetery, Blessing of the graves at 4:30 p.m., Mass at 6:00 p.m.
3–6 SOUTH BEND, IN, University of Notre Dame
10–12 WASHINGTON, D.C., USCCB Plenary Assembly
13–18 WASHINGTON, D.C., USCCB Plenary Assembly
19 SAN ANGELO, St. Mary, Baptism at 11:00 a.m.
20 ODessa, Far West Center, Cristo Missioner Event Mass at 7:00 p.m.
21 SAN ANGELO, Diocesan Pastoral Center, Pension Plan Committee meeting at 11:00 a.m.

B = Birthday | O = Date of Ordination | D = Date of Death

Christ the King Retreat Center

October 2022

1–2 Engaged Encounter
5–6 DOXA Priest Fall Convocation
13–16 Women’s Walk to Emmaus
20–23 Lubbock Deacons Retreat 2

November 2022

1 CKRC Offices Closed in Observance of All Saints Day
4–6 DOXAs’ Retreat 2
9 DOSA Staff Meeting, Mass & Lunch
18–20 Worldwide Marriage Encounter
24–25 CKRC Offices Closed for Thanksgiving

Fall Festivals

Saturday, Oct. 1
St. Francis of Assisi, Abilene
826 Cottonwood St.
325-672-6695

Sunday, Oct. 2
St. Patrick Parish, Brady
406 S. Bridge St.
325-597-2324

Sunday, Oct. 2
St. Lawrence Parish, Garden City
2400 FM 2401
432-379-2300

Friday and Saturday
Oct. 7 and 8
Our Lady of Lourdes Parish, Andrews
201 NE Avenue K
432-523-4215

Saturday, Oct. 8
Holy Family Parish, Abilene
5410 Buffalo Gap Rd.
325-692-1820

Sunday, Oct. 9
St. Boniface Parish, Odem
1118 County Road 234
325-442-2893

Sunday, Oct. 16
St. Ambrose Parish, Wall
8602 Loop 570
325-651-7551

Saturday, Oct. 22
St. Ann Parish, Colorado City
Mitchell County Jailhead Building
Downtown Colorado City
325-728-3252

Saturday and Sunday
Oct. 22 and 23
Sacred Heart Parish, Abilene
837 Jeanette St.
325-677-7951

Sunday, Oct. 23
Angelo Catholic School
2315 A and M Ave.
325-949-1747

Saturday, Nov. 12
St. Mary Queen of Peace Parish, Brownwood
1103 Main Ave.
325-646-7455

Sunday, Nov. 13
St. Joseph Parish, Rowena
506 Edwards
325-446-3521

Please contact the bishop’s assistant, Lupe Castillo, for information about the bishop’s calendar.
325-651-7500 | lcastillo@sanangelodiocese.org

Bishop’s Calendar
Brother Juan Macias Marquez, OP

“Why you?” “Why won’t you be given here in West Texas?” These are questions I often receive from the parishioners of the Cathedral and Basilica of St. Augustine. I will most likely be assigned to give shape to our life. These practices have shaped Dominion of Our Lord who was chaste, poor, and obedient. I evangelical counsels and have been promoted as the basis and my superiors. These vows are traditionally called the obedience to God, St. Dominic, the Blessed Virgin Mary, my brothers in diocesan seminaries, being a Dominican sprawled out over nearly the entire earth.

As the Order of Friars Preachers, is over 800 years old. Originally from Midland, Texas, born and raised. I am a landscape of West Texas. The intrigue prompts people against the backdrop of the flat, dusty, and oil-rig-filled environment in West Texas. The intrigue prompts people from all walks of life to ask questions. What am I?

I have to say that not coming back to prove the good people of West Texas is a cross I bear, but I trust that the Lord has led me to where I am for a good reason. It has been a blessing for me as well to witness already the wonderful things he has done with my small sacri- rifice that might have never been accomplished if I had never left home. Leaving has been an adventure but it has been incredibly rewarding and joyous and never one I would take back. Being a Dominican is as wonderful as it is simple. We are poor friars, meaning brothers, preachers, praying for the salvation of souls. For this end we were founded. We are brothers living a fraternal life wholly consecrated to the Lord in the work of sacred study for our own salva- tion and for all those we meet. This simplicity of life is why I chose to join the order. I knew I wanted to be con- sected to God and I found that this was an ideal path in which I wanted to do that. The order’s breadth and diversify is also encouraging. The order consists of friars, both priests and lay brothers. It is also composed of nun, active sisters, lay men, and women, and diocesan priests living in Dominican confiteraties. This great array of Dominican expression has led, in the grand providential scheme of God, to a host of different Dominican saints showing forth in their own way the holiness and love of God. These saints range from the towering intellectual St. Thomas Aquinas to the bold and incendiary St. Catherine of Siena. From the frighteningly penticental St. Rose of Lima to the master administrator St. Pius V. The list goes on and I am proud and humbled, not to mention instructed, greatly by this cast of characters who have gone before me and are part of the cloud of witnesses (Heb 12) and urging me, my brothers and sisters, and all the Catholic faithful on toward union with and burning love of God.

Meeting between pope and Soviet leader changed world politics

On Sept. 3, Sister Megan Grewing professed her perpetual vows as a sister of the Congregation of Divine Providence Sept. 3 at the Sacred Heart Chapel of Our Lady of the Lake University in Houston. This brings back many impressive memories of the official visit that the Texas Catholic Bishops had with Pope John Paul II a few months before this visit. I vividly recall how the pope, during the luncheon with the bishops in his personal dining room, spoke freely and at length with much hopeful enthusiasm about the expected results of this meeting. The pope as a young man lived under Na- zism and communism in his native Poland. The pope stressed that both he and Gorbachev knew very clearly the thinking of each other, and Pope John Paul commented, “I can speak his language,” as the pope was fluent in Rus- sian. 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Help support your parish through an endowment

By Mike Wyse
Chancellor, Diocese of San Angelo

As we enter the new school year, we reflect that this time of year is a time for starting again. School teachers started preparing lesson plans, students started getting their supplies and backpacks ready, parents started buying new clothes and supplies for their children, and many students, who recently finished high school, are starting something new called “college.” In our parishes across the diocese, religious education formation programs have begun again, pastors are calling their parishioners to renew their service in new ministries, and many parishes are gearing up for their annual paraliturgical events. We know that these things are not without costs and that our parishes struggle to provide services and ministries in the never ending task of spreading God’s word.

With all this happening, you can start something, too. There is a wonderful opportunity for you to start something new in your parish to help offset the annual operating expenses of your parish and to be a source of personal income. In many parishes, kind and generous people have started permanent endowments in order to encourage parishioners to support both the immediate needs of the parish with regular donations, and the long term needs with planned giving toward the parish’s endowment.

Many parishes in our diocese have permanent endowments through the Catholic Charitable Foundation for the Roman Catholic Diocese of San Angelo, which was established in May 2010. Since that time, many parishes have benefited from the generosity of people who have contributed to the foundation and established endowments for their parishes.

Currently, The Catholic Charitable Foundation has endowments that benefit the following parishes:

- Holy Family Parish, Abilene
- Holy Family Catholic Church Endowment Fund
- Morgan and Gene Knapp Memorial Endowment Fund
- The James D. and Kathleen J. Webster Endowment Fund
- Vicki and Joann Vestal Endowment Fund
- Maxwell A. and Marlene Del Davis Memorial Fund

We will be selling brisket and sausage plates beginning at 10:30 a.m., and your children can come and drive-thru. Thank you to the Holy Angels cook team for preparing the meal; we appreciate your team’s dedication to helping Oktoberfiesta. If you have previously attended Oktoberfiesta, you know the meal is delicious and the servings are plentiful, so come hungry.

Are you looking for some fall fun? Well, look no further than Angelo Catholic School’s Oktoberfiesta on Oct. 23.

We assist at funerals by praying the rosary for the deceased and engaging in spiritual works needed by the parish. Each legionary is asked to attend each meeting as they can. For all those who want to be associated with the Legion of Mary but cannot commit to coming to the meetings, there is an auxiliary membership that enables them to join in the prayer of the Legion and they are welcome to attend meetings when they want more information about joining one, please contact the church nearest you. For more information, please contact:

- Abilene—Steven Teech at 619-992-3580.
- Big Spring—Gloria Rodriguez at 432-813-1230.
- Midland, San Miguel Archangel—Lorenzo Losoya at 432-269-1445.
- Odessa, St. Mary—Rabbi Esquivel at 432-269-2256.
- Odessa, St. Anthony—Socorro Morale at 432-212-2737.
- San Angelo—Chris Garcia at 325-651-7500 or lanima@sanangelodice.org, or Kelly Onia at 325-651-7500 or kombal@sanangelodice.org for more information on establishing an endowment for your parish.

ACS Oktoberfiesta returns after two-year break

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After a two-year hiatus, we once again have vendors, children’s games, and a live auction. We will have vendors selling children’s books, t-shirts, air fresheners, wood art and much more. With so many choices, come start your Christmas shopping early. Food vendors will also be on hand to sell lemonade, popcorn, snow cones and funnel cakes in the afternoon. They will make a great treat to munch on while your children play in the games area. Games include go-fish, ring toss, bowling, bounce houses and more! Wristbands for unlimited game play are available for purchase.

Our live auction is back this year as well, and we are EXCITED! Just a few of the wonderful items up for bid include an Airbnb weekend trip to Fredericksburg, tickets to Epic Waters Indoor Water Park, a custom wood art and much more. Wristbands for unlimited game play are available for purchase.

The local unit of the Legion of Mary is called a praesidium, and holds a weekly church. Each legionary is asked to attend each meeting as they can. For all those who want to be associated with the Legion of Mary but cannot commit to coming to the meetings, there is an auxiliary membership that enables them to join in the prayer of the Legion and they are welcome to attend meetings when they want more information about joining one, please contact the church nearest you. For more information, please contact:

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What is the Legion of Mary?

By Joann Turner
Pope John Paul II, in his address to the Italian Legionaries on Oct. 30, 1982: “Yours is an eminently Marian spirituality, not only because the Legion glories in carrying Mary’s name and banner, but above all because it bases its methods of spirituality and apostolate on the dynamic principle of union with Mary, on the truth of the intimate participation of the Virgin Mary in the plan of salvation. In other words, you intend to turn your service to every person, who is the image of Christ, with the spirit and the solicitude of Mary.”

The Legion of Mary was founded in Dublin, Ireland, on Sept. 7, 1921. It is a lay Catholic organization of men and women whose members are giving service to the church on a voluntary basis in all most every country.

The object of the legion of Mary is the glory of God through the holiness of its members developed by prayer and active co-operation in the work of Mary and the church.

The local unit of the Legion of Mary is called a praesidium, and holds a weekly meeting, which starts off with a Rosary. Prayers requests are shared and discussions are held on the spiritual works of mercy that need to be done in the coming week.

The works of the Legion

The Legion sees as its priority the spiritual needs of their community. The members participate in the life of the parish through taking the Eucharist to the sick, both in their homes and in hospitals. We assist at funerals by praying the rosary and engaging in spiritual works needed by the parish. Each legionary is asked to attend each meeting as they can. For all those who want to be associated with the Legion of Mary but cannot commit to coming to the meetings, there is an auxiliary membership that enables them to join in the prayer of the Legion and they are welcome to attend meetings when they want more information about joining one, please contact the church nearest you. For more information, please contact:

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Remembering Archbishop Fiorenza’s time in West Texas

Archbishop Emeritus Joseph A. Fiorenza, the longtime bishop of Galveston-Houston and a tireless social justice advocate throughout his priesthood, episcopacy and in retirement, died September 19, 2022. He was 91.

The following is excerpted from 50 Years: The Story of the Diocese of San Angelo, which was printed to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the diocese in 2011.

The Most Rev. Joseph Fiorenza, fourth bishop of the Diocese of San Angelo, was involved in many things that set forward progress in the diocese: the establishment of Christ the King Retreat Center and the adjacent cemetary; the settlement of many religious orders in the diocese; and the beginnings of two of the diocese’s largest parishes: St. Stephen in Midland and St. Elizabeth Ann Seton in Odessa.

There were other physical accomplishments, to be sure, but in the five brief years he served (1979-84), Bishop Fiorenza, who retired as Archbishop of Galveston-Houston, feels that perhaps his longest-lasting accomplishment while here was something more intangible.

“The thing I hope I achieved that was most important was to help the people in West Texas feel they were a part of the larger church, a diocesan family, that they were not separate and individual congregations with a relationship to other churches; that they were part of a larger family over which there was a chief shepherd, the bishop,” Bishop Fiorenza said in 2010 from his chancery in Houston. “If that idea was successful then I think that would be my best achievement. They were beginning to understand it when I left, and Bishop Pfeifer, who is a great bishop and a wonderful holy man, has pushed that same idea.”

Bishop Fiorenza said it was not uncommon to find a congregationalist mentality in many of the parishes when he began his tenure as Bishop of San Angelo in September 1979.

“When I went to San Angelo that was the mentality,” he remembered. “It was more congregationalist. The people knew there was a bishop, but they weren’t quite sure who he was or what he was supposed to do. A lot of the small towns of West Texas are far removed from the bishop and they didn’t quite understand that they were part of a larger church. They thought the church was the congregation and that was not unusual for a small diocese.

One of the Bishop Fiorenza’s main developments was the retreat center, which, once built, became the first place where Catholics or — as it would prove later on — people of any number of religions could retreat. Like many other things he accomplished, Bishop Fiorenza built the retreat center to bring people together.

“We had no place to gather people,” he said. “Priests would go into San Antonio to make their retreats. We just needed to help the people of a large area have the same sense they all belonged to the same diocesan family.”

Bishop Fiorenza’s first task as bishop was establishing Midland’s St. Stephen Parish, amid much controversy. The church had been approved by the Most Rev. Fiorenza’s predecessor, Bishop Leven, but the Oblates in mid 1977 squelched the establishment of St. Stephen, saying Bishop Leven was not well when he signed papers declaring it a church.

“The Oblates objected to the starting of a new parish there,” Bishop Fiorenza said. “It’s sad, but it’s history.”

They objected to Rome that the parish was started while Bishop Leven was ill and that he didn’t do the proper consultation. That caused a big eruption. After Leven died and they made this objection, it became a contentious issue and the apostolic delegate suppressed it and said wait till you get a new bishop and he will resolve it.

Bishop Fiorenza was that new bishop and would, after a while, finalize the establishment of St. Stephen.

The priest’s pension fund was down to $25 when Bishop Fiorenza came to San Angelo. His decision to sell the IHM property along the Concho River to rescue the fund from being nearly penniless. When the fund was headed in the right direction, Bishop Fiorenza and the diocese would purchase a smaller house on San Angelo’s southwest side, still in use by San Angelo’s bishop today.

Bishop Fiorenza is a Houstonian through and through, and, in fact, with the exception of the five years he served as bishop in San Angelo, has spent his entire life in and around Houston and the Coastal Bend region. When he was appointed bishop in West Texas, he knew he was in for something far different than what he was accustomed.

“|I was going to San Angelo without great knowledge or experience of West Texas whatsoever. I quickly learned to like it very much. San Angelo is a very nice city but compared to Houston it was very, very small. It was different experience for me, and an enjoyable one; I loved the wide-open spaces. The diocese was just getting started. As a newly ordained bishop with a lot of enthusiasm I was very anxious to be able to serve the Church there very well.”

75-year-old baptismal font back in service at Sacred Heart Parish in Menard

A 75-year-old baptismal font has been put back in service at Sacred Heart Church in Menard following a recent renovation project. A gift a year ago by Mr. and Mrs. John Decker, whose adult grandchildren still attend Mass at the parish, the font was used until 1997 when a total immersion font was installed. That font was rarely used and fell into disrepair. Parishioners were pleased to have it removed. The font was restored in a Manassas, Va., shop and returned to Sacred Heart where it was dedicated in baptisms during Sunday Mass. Father Mark Woodruff is Sacred Heart’s pastor.

By Catholic News Service

JERUSALEM (CNS) — The patriarchs and leaders of Christian churches in Jerusalem praised King Abdullah II for defending rights of Christians and Muslims in the Holy Land.

The king, in his speech to the U.N. General Assembly Sept. 20, said, "Today, Christianity in the Holy City is under fire. The rights of churches in Jerusalem are threatened. This cannot continue. Christianity is vital to the past and present of our region and the Holy Land. It must remain a part of our fabric of life.

"The city is holy to billions of Muslims, Christians and Jews around the world," the king said. "Any policy or development that denies Jerusalem's legal and historical status quo triggers global tensions and deepens religious divides. The holy city must not become a place for hatred and division."

King Abdullah, who continues to claim the traditional title of custodian of Jerusalem's Muslim and Christian holy sites, has long complained that Israel is violating status quo agreements by allowing Jewish settlements in traditionally Christian and Muslim neighborhoods and, more recently, by not enforcing a 1967 agreement that allows Jews to visit the compound around the Al-Aqsa Mosque but not to pray there. Jews refer to the area as the Temple Mount, the site of ancient Jewish temples.

In a statement published Sept. 27, the patriarchs and heads of the churches in Jerusalem — Orthodox, Oriental Orthodox, Catholic, Anglican and Protestant — thanked the king for "his true and honest description of the Christian reality in the Holy land, especially in Jerusalem."

"We also applaud his majesty's public commitment to protect our communities' historical and legal status quo, thus preserving our safety and future," the religious leaders said. "His majesty's spearheading efforts to ring the bells of warning around the deteriorating situation of Christian basic human rights sends a strong message to the world regarding the clear and present dangers surrounding the Christian heritage and presence in Jerusalem and the rest of the Holy Land."

Cardinal Parolin calls Putin's nuclear threat 'repugnant'

NEW YORK (CNS) — Russian President Vladimir Putin’s warnings that he would consider using nuclear weapons is a "repugnant threat" that shows the urgency of moving to eliminate nuclear weapons from arsenals around the world, said Cardinal Pietro Parolin, secretary of state of the Holy See.

"The threat "illustrates just how close the world has come to the abyss of nuclear war. This looming threat, with devastating implications for all humanity, constitutes that nuclear weapons are a costly and dangerous liability," which undermines international security," the cardinal said Sept. 26 at the U.N. high-level meeting to commemorate the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons.

In a speech Sept. 21, the pope said, "I want to remind you that our country also has various means of destruction ... and when the territorial integrity of our country is threatened, to protect Russia and our people, we will certainly use all the means at our disposal. It's not a bluff," he said during his televised address, according to the Associated Press.

Noting Pope Francis’ insistence that “the ultimate goal of the total elimination of nuclear weapons becomes both a challenge and a moral and humanitarian imperative,” Cardinal Parolin told his U.N. audience that nations possessing nuclear weapons seem to be "increasing their reliance on nuclear deterrence" rather than moving toward disarmament.

ARCHDIOCESE OF GALVESTON-HOUSTON

Archbishop Emeritus Joseph A. Fiorenza

1931 – 2022

Fourth Bishop of San Angelo

1979 – 1984

Fourth Bishop of San Angelo
Updated data showing faith can aid in recovery prompts support, skepticism

By Brian Bodiford
Editor, West Texas Angelus

In 2020, according to data compiled by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, suicide was the 12th leading cause of death overall in the United States, an affliction that took from us over 45,900 lives that year alone. For people ages 15-44, suicide was the fourth leading cause of death. For ages 15-24, it was number three. For those ages 25-34 and, most tragically, for ages 10-14, suicide was the second leading cause of death behind unintentional injury.

Beyond those lost forever, the CDC estimates that in the same year, 12.2 million American adults gave serious thought to ending their lives. Of those, 3.2 million made a plan and 1.2 million American adults attempted suicide. As with many deaths from disease, prevention is possible. The CDC has recommendations for strategies that we can implement and advocate for.

(https://www.cdc.gov/suicide/pdf/NCIPC-Suicide-FactSheet-508_FINAL.pdf)

So what can we do to help reduce the number of suicides? Some of the CDC’s recommendations might seem tough to do anything about. We don’t usually have direct control over what mental health options are covered by an employer’s insurance; we aren’t all trained in crisis intervention. But other recommendations meld easily with what the church already does well: community engagement or fostering parenting and family skills, for example.

There are some life events that have been recognized as increasing the risk of suicidal thoughts and actions. Among these are a loss of housing, employment, or financial problems; relationship problems, a crisis in the previous or upcoming two weeks; and history of mental illness or criminal or legal problems. People experiencing problematic substance abuse are especially at risk, as are those from alcohol dependence and drug abuse 10 to 14 times more at risk than the general population; alcohol intoxication has been identified as a factor in 22 percent of deaths by suicide.

Reach out to those around you who are having a hard time. Don’t be afraid to ask if they’re okay, or even if they have had suicidal thoughts. Once a person has made up their mind to do something, nobody can stop them, but starting the conversation could save a life by letting a despairing person know they are not alone.

Above all, remember Christ’s new commandment: “Love one another. As I have loved you, so you also should love one another” (Jn 13:34). If someone reaches out to you for help, take them seriously, and most importantly, stay with them. Stay engaged with the person until the feeling passes or they are willingly connected with mental health professionals.

No matter what resources are available in your community, getting in touch with mental health professionals has never been easier.

Dial 988 to reach the Suicide and Crisis Lifeline.

If you’re not a talker, text 741741 to connect with a crisis counselor at the Crisis Text Line.

Project Destiny aims to make Abilene, San Angelo ‘Sacramental Cities’ for unborn

In early September, Bishop Michael J. Sis sent a letter to pastors of San Angelo and Abilene Catholic churches informing them of Project Destiny, an ecumenical effort to support pro-life propositions in the two cities, making each a “Sacramental City for the Unborn.” Ordinances are up for vote in San Angelo and Abilene this Nov. 8 that, if passed, would outlaw abortion within the city limits.

The bishop approved the participation of Catholics and Catholic parishes in the endeavor. In cooperation with Project Destiny in both San Angelo and Abilene, the diocesan pro-life groups have worked individually and together to promote the two initiatives with the cities in a four-foot square sign encouraging people to vote in favor of the pro-life initiative.

COURTESY
Project Destiny is a temporary, short-term campaign in support of these ordinances. Since advocacy of a policy does not support or attack any particular party or candidate, support of this ballot initiative does not violate restrictions placed upon churches by the IRS tax code.

Though abortion is currently illegal throughout the state of Texas, the benefits of passing municipal ordinances like this is that they would still be in effect locally if the state’s new law is overturned. Starting that October is Respect Life Month in the Catholic Church, Bishop Sis said in his letter to pastors. (Grist “can refer to a city that has identified this Sacramental City for the Unborn ordinance is a concrete expression of the right to life of our unborn brothers and sisters.”)

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You are invited!!
San Angelo Magnificat Prayer Breakfast
Saturday, October 15, 2022
9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.
St. Margaret’s Catholic Church Parish Hall
2619 Era Street San Angelo, TX 76903

“May my soul magnify the Lord, my spirit finds joy in God my Savior...God who is mighty has done great things for me, Holy is His name.” Luke 1:46

Come and bring a friend as we gather as Catholic women to share a meal, praise, pray, listen to Laurie’s testimony, and receive in the presence of the Lord.

Confession will be available during breakfast from 9:00-10:00 a.m.

Prayer team will be available from 12:00-1:00 p.m.

Tickets $20 each:
Tickets WILL NOT be sold at the door. Tickets must be purchased in advance with the following options:
Eventbrite: $20 plus processing fee www.eventbrite.com

Contact a Service Member:
Roxanne: (325) 650-0172
Elvira: (325) 315-5978
Vicky: (325) 812-3852
Betty: (325) 650-1154
Mary: (325) 245-6663

Tickets by Mail: Make checks payable to Magnificat
Our Lady of Fatima Chapter
1629 East Harris
San Angelo, TX 76905

Tickets for priests, deacons, religious brothers and sisters are complimentary, but reservations are required. Email: magnificatsanangelotx@yahoo.com

Guest Speaker: Laurie Walsh
Laurie Walsh, a retired therapist, probation officer and published author. She has worked with adults and teens specializing in cases of molestation, domestic violence, trauma and addiction. Laurie was the founder and coordinator of the Phoenix Magnificat Chapter for eight years and returned to Montana continuing as the Communications Regional Representative of Magnificat International. Laurie has been a featured speaker and trainer at various parishes, conferences and diocesan events in the U.S. Her greatest joy is giving her time to honor Our Mother Mary.

“And how does this happen to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?” Luke 1:43

Upcoming Event: Save the Date! April 22, 2023

CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF SAN ANGELO IMMIGRATION SERVICES

ASESORÍA SOBRE INMIGRACIÓN DE UN REPRESENTANTE ACREDITADO CON LICENCIA DEL DEPARTAMENTO DE JUSTICIA ESTÁ DISPONIBLE.

SE ACETAN CASOS DE:
- AJUSTE DE ESTADO - LIBERTAD CONDICIONAL ANTICIPADA
- DECLARACION DE APOYO - SOLICITUD PARA INMIGRAR FAMILIARES
- PROCESAMIENTO CONSULAR, EXENCIONES
- APLICACIONES DACA - RENOVACIÓN I-90 (TARJETAS VERDES)
- NATURALIZACIÓN - PERDONES - TIPS
- PROCESOS DE REFUGIADOS / ASILADOS
- ELIMINAR CONDICIÓN DE RESIDENCIA - DOCUMENTOS DE VIAJE
- VAWA PARA VÍCTIMAS DE VIOLENCIA DOMÉSTICA
- PERMISOS DE TRABAJO / SOLICITUDES DE RENOVACIÓN

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Comuníquese con Patricia Stokes Santana al 325.212.6192 para obtener más información! immigrationservices@sanangelodiocease.org

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MEEK FAMILY
University
Hosted by St. Ann’s Catholic Church
Midland, TX

Details
- October 7 & 8
- St. Ann’s Youth Activity Center
- Midland, TX
- $75/couple
- Childcare Provided
- Meals Provided
- Workbook Provided
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Develop your family culture, strengthen your marriage, and transform your parenting.

Mike and Alicia Hernon are on a mission to empower families to embrace their sacred calling as parents and spouses, strengthen marriages and families, and provide parenting and marriage resources.

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Retreat for catechists held at Midland parishes

By Mary Allison
DRE, St. Ann, Midland

The Midland parishes hosted a catechist retreat Aug. 12-14. Janie Garibay (Coordinator of Religious Education, Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish), Gretchen Lara (CRE, St. Stephen Parish), and Mary Allison (Director of Religious Education, St. Ann Parish) planned the retreat over the summer. We opened it to all past, current, and future catechists in Midland for all ages. Our theme was that of the then-upcoming Catechetical Sunday: “This is my body, given up for you” (Lk 22:19).

We had two main goals for our retreat: 1) to make the entire retreat bilingual, and 2) to make it useful for the upcoming year. To meet the first, every talk and every game were in both English and Spanish. We had English small groups, Spanish small groups, and bilingual small groups. The second goal we met with our activities in between the talks: we planned games catechists could use in their classrooms for their respective age groups, we had a Q&A where they could ask us anything, and we had small group discussion questions focused on how to practically apply what they heard in the talks in their classrooms this year.

We had four talks. We also offered confession and Mass.

We had just over 50 retreatants, though we designed the retreat so they could come to what they could and be with their families when they needed to. Friday night was hosted by St. Stephen Parish, Saturday by St. Ann, and Sunday by Our Lady of Guadalupe. We were pleasantly surprised to receive a blessing at Mass on Sunday.

In our survey, the catechists were overwhelmingly positive and grateful to have the opportunity to meet each other and build community. They also loved the opportunity for the sacraments and felt like they had the chance to grow spiritually and practically as catechists. One change they’d all like to see, and we agree, is to have the talks split so Spanish speakers go to one room and English speakers go to the other. This is just for ease of understanding.

Overall, we’d call it a success! While there are certainly things we learned and will change, we are proud of this first attempt! We already have discussed how to make it better for next year!
“To speak in general terms, we may say that the Christian is to the world what the soul is to the body.” Rather than a contemporary summary of the Second Vatican Council’s idea of the renewal of the vocation of the laity, this was a reflection offered by a second or third century Christian in a letter to a seeker named Diognetus. The question of the role of the layperson in the world arises not from a particular point in time but rather from the meaning of baptism and how those baptized share in the priestly, prophetic and royal mission of Jesus in the missionary life of the church.

Popes Francis writes in Evangelii Gaudium, “Every Christian is a missionary to the extent that he or she has encountered the love of God in Christ Jesus: We no longer say that we are ‘disciples’ and ‘missionaries,’ but rather that we are always ‘missionary disciples’” (No. 120). Missionary discipleship can take many forms. One form is the presence of associations of lay faithful at work in the world. Associations have grown out of groups of lay Catholics coming together out of a desire to address a specific spiritual or social need. Associations have taken different forms in different contexts but all share a common example of the impact for good that missionary discipleship can bring to the mission of the church.

At three times in the 20th century, in the three cities in Italy, Catholic men and women came together to be agents of evangelization at home, on the job and in the world. Following the devastating effects of World War II in Europe, a laywoman, Chiara Lubich, and a small group of women and men decided to take up works of “spiritual and social renewal” as their desire for the sake of the church and the world, to “learn the art of living,” in Lubich’s words. The group’s name, Focolare, means hearth and seemed to define the family spirit of those who were meeting in the family home.

Today, Focolare hosts communities in 182 countries. Some Focolare members take vows of poverty, chastity and obedience and others are single and married. All members work in grassroots programs as diverse as creating small business opportunities in struggling economies to aiding the poor and vulnerable in the streets of Rome. Aimee Murphy is the founder of Rehumanize International, a nonpartisan, secular human rights organization, and the author of new Magnum series book, Rehumanize: A Vision to Secure Human Rights for All. Learn more about her work at: www.consistentlyaimee.com.
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Mary Lou Gibson
Speaking of Saints

BURNS writes that this time the provincial appreciated his determination and admitted him in 1571. Six months later he was sent to the college of Montesion on the isl-

Many years later, Paul’s words to the Corinthians (2 Cor 11:3–4) are directed similarly to us: “But I am afraid that, as with the serpent deceived Eve by his cunning, your thoughts may be turned to evil, even as it was with your ancestor Adam when you accepted the fruit of the tree in the garden that God said, “You shall not eat...””

James R. Sullivan, PhD

Gender dysphoria and the upcoming HHS non-discrimination mandate

The Pew Research Center just released findings describing a precipitous distancing from Christian values. While “approximately 90% of adults say it is not possible to have a true-life sex that is not the sex of birth,” the study observed that number, which includes children, had fallen to only 64% by 2020. The number of people in the U.S. who identify as religiously unaffiliated or “nones” skyrocketed from 10% in 2007 to 29% in 2020, the research showed.

The percentage of Americans who do not believe in God is accelerating. Under the many guises of “personal freedom,” we are rapidly transitioning from “One nation under God” to a nation with more and more “gods” “above” God, believing the lie that some how they can create some evil of their own devising. We henceforth can discern a very clear war in the Church and in the world, as more and more people are becoming adherents to the “Gospel of Self,” and like a child, getting itself out of God’s hands.

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I was in Rome last week to give a presentation to the Pontifical Academy of the Sciences. Perhaps at a later date I will share some of what I learned and learned at that conference. I was supposed to go to a meeting, we need a little time to sulk and heal our wounds until our deathbed, but then we need to give it up.

Nothing is as important as forgiveness. Nothing is as important as forgiveness. Nothing is as important as forgiveness.

A biblical formula for forgiveness

We work for seven times seven days, but then we need to give it up. We can hold a major grudge for seven years, but then we need to give it up. We can hold a massive soul-searing wound for forty-nine years, but then we need to give it up. We can hold a massive soul-shattering wound until our deathbed, but then we need to give it up.

This highlights something which is too often ignored in therapeutic and spiritual circles today, namely, that we need time to be able to forgive, and that the length of our journey of forgiveness is dependent upon the depth of the hurt. Thus, for example, if we are strongly up by a group of people, you will notice that there is usually a specific profile that restricts this important ministry to a narrow group. We want catechists to be witnesses of what they believe, do their best modeling of their faith through their actions and share the faith with joy.

However, these expectations apply practically to all the baptized. We all are called to be catechists.

Stay-at-home moms, teachers, doctors, nurses, lawyers, farmworkers, administrators, retirees, young adults, grandparents, tax accountants, factory workers, taxi drivers, academics, cooks, nuns, priests, deacons, married couples, single people, among many others, share the bonds of catechists from the very least, to have ignored this Irish official. In point of fact, many argue that her offer of forgiveness was the most significant component of the peace process and helped enormously to heal tensions within Irish society. That she took this identity and its obligations seriously and prudently points to her personal holiness rather than retribution was paramount in her mind. And so I am happy to honor Elizabeth II as the longest-serving monarch in British history, as the anchor for her country during turbulent times, and as the Queen who presided over the peaceful transition from the British Empire to the British Commonwealth. But I am especially pleased to honor her as an evangelist, and a faithful and upright, and unpresumptuous disciple of her Lord.

We work for seven years, then rest for a year (a Sabbath in the Catholic tradition).

We work for seven times seven, forty-nine years, forty-nine years, then have a jubilee where the world itself goes on sabbatical.

We work for a lifetime, then enjoy an eternal sabbatical.

This rhythm is also intended as the rhythm for how we move towards forgiveness: We can hold a major grudge of seven days, but then we need to give it up. We can hold a major grudge for seven years, but then we need to give it up. We can hold a massive soul-searing wound for forty-nine years, but then we need to give it up. We can hold a massive soul-shattering wound until our deathbed, but then we need to give it up.

Bishop Robert Barron
Word on Fire Ministries

Queens Elizabeth II: Faithful disciple

Bishop Robert Barron is the founder of Word on Fire Catholic Ministries and bishop of the Diocese of Winona-Rochester in Minnesota.
Nada es tan importante como el perdón. Es la clave de la felicidad y el imperativo espiritual más importante de nuestra vida. Necesitamos perdonar, hacer las paces con las heridas e injusticias que hemos sufrido para no morir enemigos y amargados. Antes de morir, necesitamos perdonar, a los demás, a nosotros mismos y a Dios, por lo que nos has pasado en esta vida.

Pero, eso no es fácil de hacer; es más, a veces es imposible de hacer. Es necesario decirlo porque hoy en día hay mucha literatura bien intencionada, en todo tipo de cirujanos, que da la impresión de que el perdón es simplemente una cuestión de quererlo y seguir adelante. Dejarlo pasar y seguir adelante.

No es tan simple. Todos sabemos que las heridas del alma tardan mucho, tiempo en sanar, y el proceso es insoportablemente lento, algo que no puede apresu- tarse. La herida de corazón no sólo está séptica en el momento en que afecta a nuestra salud física, la curación requiere tiempo. Al examinar la cuestión de la curación y el perdón, podemos decir que el proceso tardará mucho tiempo, y la comprensión de la espiritualidad judía y cristiana del sábad. La santidad del sábado no se limita a honrar un di a, pero el domingo nuevo también es una fórmula de perdón. Así es como funciona.

La teología y la espiritualidad del sábado nos enseñan que Dios creó el mundo en seis días y luego descansó en el séptimo. El descanso no se cambió en el sábado, sino que declaró este día de descanso para todos, y con ello Dios estableció un cierto ritmo para nuestras vidas. Ese ritmo se superpone que funciona así:

- Trabajamos durante seis días, luego descansamos un día.
- Trabajamos durante siete veces siete años, con lo que nos esfuerzamos por nutrir nuestra vida espiritual, especialmente la Eucaristía, la espiritualidad esencial para nutrir nuestro amor por la fe y por la palabra de Dios.

Al centro de toda catequética se encuentran muchas personas de todas las edades que practican su disciplina, sirviendo en sus comunidades como catequistas. Todos ellos son discípulos misioneros que entienden la importancia de compartir su fe.

Aunque los catequistas más importantes y esenciales, especialmente para los niños y los jóvenes, son los padres y las madres de familia, trabajan en todos los momentos y lugares en que se encuentran los catequistas en la parroquia y otros espacios amplios y fortalecen esa primera catequesis compartiendo la fe en grupos pequeños.

Muchos de los catequistas que llevan a cabo una tarea remedial aún no han aprendido este rabino, que no les acerca a un(a) catequista en su comunidad.

El gobierno, administrado por militares de Myanmar, ha dado instrucciones para que las fuerzas aéreas bombardeen una escuela durante aproximadamente una hora, a la que había un grupo de estudiantes de educación religiosa, el gobierno de Let Yet Kone, en el centro norte de Myanmar. Los estudiantes de la escuela murieron en un ataque aéreo, mientras que testigos dijeron a la agencia de noticias Myanmar Daily de que habían recibido órdenes de que hagan su trabajo de catequismo.

Hay traumas que sufrimos que dejan heridas mucho más profundas que las que dejaron empleadores que no trató injustamente y hay traumas que sufrimos por abuso, negligencia y años de injusticia que necesitan más de siete años para procesarse. Pueden ser heridas más profundas. Las formas no se curan en un mes, medio siglo, en hacer las paces con el hecho de que nos acosaran o de que sufrimos abusos emocionales o sexuales en nuestra juventud.

Hay heridas tan profundas y traumáticas que no es posible de morir de la muerte pueden hacer las paces con el hecho de que nos han ocurrido, dejaría y ir perdonar a la persona que nos causó el daño.

Por último, puede haber heridas demasiado profundas, demasiado destructivas y demasiado dolorosas para que alguien en su situación pueda encontrar las palabras para expresar lo que quiere de Dios. Hay heridas tan profundas que nos ha pasado en esta vida.

Hay que apreciar eso de que perdón parece de la gracia que de la fuerza de voluntad. Errar es humano, pero perdonar es divino. Este pequeño esfuerzo encierra una verdadera miseria de nuestras vidas. Ese ritmo se superpone que funciona así:

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Psychedelic drugs and new mental health treatments

Researchers are investigating a new generation of drugs for treating mental illness derived from psychedelic substances. A molecule known as psilocybin, for example, found in mushrooms, "appears to be helpful in treating patients with depression. Although these psychoactive substances can be abused for their hallucinogenic/psychotropic properties, several studies have shown they can improve therapeutic use in an ethically-sound way for the treatment of mental illness.

One strategy involves an approach known as “microdosing.” A microdose of a drug is large enough to cause a hallucinogenic, psychedelic experience. Anti-depressant benefits have been reported with doses of a tenth to a twentieth of the psychotic “tripping dose,” thereby avoiding a “bloom” of side effects.

A 2022 study published in the journal Nature by researchers from the University of British Columbia confirmed that at one month post-treatment, microdoses of psilocybin improved mood and mental health when compared to non-microdosed controls. In addition to psilocybin, a faster-acting psychedelic drug known as dimethyltryptamine, or DMT, is also being studied for its ability to provide psychological support for patients, with benefits reportedly lasting 3-5 months following treatment.

Psychedelic-assisted approaches show particular promise when combined with psychotherapy to treat depression or post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) or both. Following a microdosing session, an individual may report feeling more emotionally tender, more sensitive to their own feelings, and more open to breaking out of neurotic thought loops.

In the hands of a skilled therapist, it may be possible to use that period of reflection to find a way through past traumas. Integration becomes quite important, as the therapist seeks to “imprint” new insights and create new pathways.

Some clinicians recommend that without supportive interventions and appropriate psychotherapy, if a painful experience is unresolved, there is a risk of re-traumatization and severe stress. Individuals being treated with psychedelic drugs and psychotherapy might be targeted to confront unacknowledged and painful memories; alternatively, visceral, uncomfortable or frightening experiences may be provoked, potentially making matters worse for an individual who is seeking improved mental health. Accompaniment and therapy in psychiatry can be especially valuable.

An astute and trained, established, trusted and tested relationship with a psychotherapist is invaluable prior to turning toward approaches that rely on drug-induced alterations of one’s mental state.

Although the physiological safety of psychedelics is relatively well-established, psychological and psychiatric effects are less predictable, with efforts to determine the benefits and risks still in the early stages. A good measure of caution and supervision are required and these agents should only be used by skilled supervision. People undergoing treatments with psychedelic drugs. Experiencing a “bad trip” can leave individuals with flashbacks for years. If someone is already on the brink of psychosis or despair, the wrong experience can be very damaging.

When it comes to psychotherapy, moreover, not all practitioners will necessarily be equally competent. The adage, “Be careful who you allow to walk in the landscape of your mind,” implies that care and practical wisdom is required. A competent Catholic psychotherapist can assist with treatment from a holistic angle that integrates spiritual, religious and psychological dimensions, all of which are needed for caring therapies to be most effective.

Young people require special attention and protection from drug-induced effects. Early exposure to mind-altering drugs can turn into addiction. An addiction problem, in turn, can raise the prospect of pushing young people with fragile, still-developing nervous circuits “over the edge” and leading them into a future marked by struggles with drug dependencies.

For more extreme cases of depression, patients receiving larger psychedelic doses than microdoses have also sometimes reported enduring improvements. Advocates for the use of psychedelic substances note that psychedelic doses than microdoses have also sometimes reported enduring improvements. Advocates for the use of psychedelic substances note that larger doses than microdoses may be provoked, potentially making matters worse for an individual who is seeking improved mental health. Accompaniment and therapy in psychiatry can be especially valuable.

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When it comes to psychotherapy, moreover, not all practitioners will necessarily be equally competent. The adage, “Be careful who you allow to walk in the landscape of your mind,” implies that care and practical wisdom is required. A competent Catholic psychotherapist can assist with treatment from a holistic angle that integrates spiritual, religious and psychological dimensions, all of which are needed for caring therapies to be most effective.

Young people require special attention and protection from drug-induced effects. Early exposure to mind-altering drugs can turn into addiction. An addiction problem, in turn, can raise the prospect of pushing young people with fragile, still-developing nervous circuits “over the edge” and leading them into a future marked by struggles with drug dependencies.

For more extreme cases of depression, patients receiving larger psychedelic doses than microdoses have also sometimes reported enduring improvements.
Expanding the circle of protection

One of the maddening aspects of America's political landscape for Catholics is the inconsistencies of both political parties. In the case of the Democrats, many would oppose the death penalty but are just fine with abortion, while others proudly declare themselves pro-life and support the warehousing and execution of prisoners.

Yet the death penalty does not attract the same kind of debate and protest as abortion, even though opponents argue that the death penalty is inadmissible and the inalienable dignity of every human being and to accept that he or she has a right to live.

The Innocence Project, which uses DNA samples to review convictions, has exonerated 375 persons so far, 21 of whom were on death row when they were found to be innocent.

The church has grown increasingly critical of the practice. St. Pope Paul II updated the Catechism of the Catholic Church in 1997, including a quote from his encyclical Evangelium Vitae in saying that "the cases in which the execution of the offender is an absolute necessity are very rare, if not practically nonexistent."

In 2018, Pope Francis closed the door all the way, revising the catechism language to say bluntly that "the death penalty is inadmissible." In his encyclical Fratelli Tutti, the pope wrote that "the firm rejection of the death penalty shows to what extent it is possible to recognize the inalienable dignity of every human being and to accept that he or she has a right to live in this universe."

Unfortunately, the death penalty has not gone away. Oklahoma last month conducted the first of 29 executions scheduled for the next 30 months.

James Coddington was in many ways a classic death row inmate: Raised under horrendous conditions, he had no one to turn to for help, no one he could trust. He was a man of almost complete isolation, a man who had learned to keep his distance from others.

Over the past five months, the governors of Texas and Arizona have spearheaded an effort to transport asylum-seekers and other migrants, processed by federal immigration officials at the U.S.-Mexico border, to Washington and the New York metropolitan area. In effect, the governors are using migrants and refugees as tools to try to pressure political leaders and jurisdictions for their more supportive positions on migrants and asylum-seekers.

This new initiative has a historical precedent, and it is a negative one. It is reminiscent of the way some Southern states bought bus tickets for unwanted "migrants" and sent them to the Northeast after World War II. Even today, it is a sad sight to see people getting off buses at all hours of the day and night, exhausted, disoriented, some temporarily homeless, and wandering where they should go.

Most of these migrants do not have relatives or connections in the communities where they are sent being. Many wish to await adjudication of their cases or removal, but they have no choice in the matter.

In New York City, some migrants are being dropped off at the Port Authority Bus Terminal, and some are sent to Catholic Charities offices without any notice to municipal authorities or to our agencies. Catholic Charities agencies in New York City are helping by providing food and other critical resources, as is happening around the country.

These are the responsibility for migrants and others in need is always possible in critical situations, but it should be accomplished in a cooperative manner that respects the people being assisted. Certainly, the federal government could be more helpful to local officials who are concerned about added costs for social services and schooling for individuals.

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Words, and how we use them, have great power. During Senate confirmation hearings of Kentaji Brown Jackson to the Supreme Court, Justice Jackson told a beautiful story that speaks to that power. When a freshman at Harvard University, the future attorney was young, timid and far from her roots. She was a Black woman on a campus where she encountered those who came from auspicious prep schools and more affluent backgrounds.

Walking through the campus one evening, Justice Jackson said, "A Black woman in those circumstances was not looking at me passing on the sidewalk, and she looked at me. And I guess she knew how I was feeling. And she leaned over as we crossed and said, "Coraggio."

That one word will live with Jackson forever, and it has reminded her to encourage others. Just one word, spoken by a person who doesn't know you, can change someone's life.

Words, spoken and unspoken, can have a long life span and a remarkable ability to affect others. We talk to each other, we talk to God, we talk to community with others. But sometimes it's not headless, careless or even inappropriate. Sometimes it's not reflective, but idle chatter, or worse, gossip or pointed sarcasm.

We often look back on words as a lifetime of consequences, and we can be remembered for a lifetime, for good or ill. I would hate to think I have spent my life passing along words that would wound someone and that they have never forgotten. It is not a thought that I would want to have. What would we say if we could speak the words that would counter changed her life.

What did she see in her eyes? Like the woman encountered by Jackson, he "listening" with his heart.

Just recently, a close friend told of driving down the road and suddenly feeling completely overwhelmed by a situation with one of her children who was battling an illness. She pulled off the road and called her sister and poured out her fears in great, gasping sobs.

The sister did not say, "Don't cry." She did not offer advice. She just listened and encouraged my friend tocry. She offered comfort, not platitudes. She was listening with her heart, and my friend was buoyed by her compassion. "Compassion," she said, "is listening to someone who is suffering with.

Sometimes, it's tempting to think we have answers to others' problems, even though it's impossible to completely understand another's suffering. But as the old saying goes, everyone we meet is fighting a hard battle.

So we try to present, to let someone know we are there if they need a friend or a shoulder to cry on. We listen, we talk a little less, perhaps, a little slower, and listen more. We bite our tongue to prevent the caustic comment. We think first, and as the comedians say, we read the room, but maybe with a little more grace. Maybe in the evenings, we reflect on the conversations we've had, the words we'vechosen.

Words last a long time. We should use them with grace and understanding, not with anger or with disdain. We don't know how they can change someone's life, but we can listen with our hearts and counter changed her life.

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On Aug. 24, The National Catholic Bioethics Center (NCBC) sent out a message rallying men and women of good will to write comments on the impending federal mandate to provide health care workers to perform gender confirmations and transsexual surgeries. The message notes that in addition to forcing “health insurors to cover the myriad surgical and pharmaceutical interventions that we now see around us,” the mandate would force “people to accept the view that it is possible to ‘transition’ from one sex to another” (The National Catholic Bioethics Center, Breaking News on Transgender and Abortion Mandates, August 24, 2022).

The USCCB and the NCBC are not alone in the fight against parts of this impending HHS mandate. They have been joined by the Catholic Medical Association, and the National Association of Catholic Social Workers. On Sep. 7, 2022, these organizations jointly sent 20 pages of comments to the HHS on this proposed mandate. The comments are very detailed, direct, and well-grounded, and they are accompanied by expert articulations of the effects of transsexual surgeries.

Transsexual surgery is a medical operation that tries to change someone from one sex to the other. It involves the surgical removal of a person’s healthy biologically formed reproductive and sexual organs. In many cases, it involves formulating artificial materials to mimic the real sexual and reproductive organs of an individual. It is typically very invasive as well as cosmetic. The terms “transsexual surgery,” “gender confirmations,” and “transgendering” are used interchangeably. They suggest that sex and gender can be changed and/or reassigned. They support the view that gender and sex could be reassigned through surgery and/or hormone therapy.

Transsexual surgery itself is also a misnomer because a person’s “sex” cannot be “transitioned” after its original formation. Sex is something that is formed and won the form before a person is born. It cannot be “transitioned” or be “transmuted” to the opposite sex after it has been created in that sex. Although surgery and hormone therapy along with attaching artificial genitalia, their skillfulness still does not change a person’s biological sex. No matter how real the plastic surgery on the reproductive organs may appear, it never creates the organs of the opposite sex (Anderson, When Harry Became Sally, pgs. 100-102). There is no adroitness and beyond, we have many hospitals, clinics, and healthcare facilities with numerous healthcare workers and surgeons that are qualified and competent.

We are all encouraged to compassionately and sensitively accompany our brothers and sisters who struggle with gender dysphoria. Work to discourage folks from transsexual surgeries. Encourage all to 2774-93 prevent and accord their birth-sex. Legally and civilly resist any affront to our freedom of religion. Contact every known entity that could change and prevent this part of this impending mandate to anyone that would listen. Create awareness about this through various news and social media platforms.

Bring it all to God in prayer. Despite the real sufferings that accompany gender dysphoria, Christ is always present in our midst and can and will help us. He promised to accompany us, without harming or destroying our healthy sexual and reproductive organs.

Father Francis Onyeozuru is parochial administrator of St. Mary Queen of Peace Parish in Brownwood.

MARIPOCO

Continued from Page 16

From the “shock foil” that could have become crushed-over fear, shame and anger.

The “shock foil” of the all ages and background were carrying walking sticks. Inquiries led to a booth where an evangelical organization was giving out walking sticks spread themselves around the whole fair ground. What creative ways we could find of carrying the word to others, instead of staying home of been alone and the Council for Christian Colleges and Universities.

A lay community called Sant’Egidio, recently visit, told how community members once found themselves in the surprising position of mediating a peace agreement in Mozambique. The community members were neither experts, politicians nor bureaucrats, but through their relationship as separatists, pedaling a person who has worked them, had never trusted. They could listen and understand the needs of both sides. For the first time, they had a chance to speak to each other. They kept us at home, talking with only those who lived.

Compassion can bring us out where we are exposed and vulnerable.

At Mass one day, a retired priest was presiding so the pastor could take holidays. A feeble, elderly man, the visiting priest had trouble finding the right book and microphones were heard from, needed to climb the same steps and took long pauses during prayers at the altar.

But at the sermon, he became a flame of fire. His sudden and powerful voice seemed angry in a way, but with an anger that pierced through things to the heart, rather than destroying things. Not only did he know the Bible thoroughly and had the local and broadest sight. His voice on preaching on the text, “I have come to set the earth on fire” (Lk 12:49), not the fire of destruction, but the fire of conversion, to turn our brothers and sisters: 95 percent have family members, 45 percent have experienced homelessness. The rate of suicide attempts in the general population is about 4.6 percent, but it is 41-46 percent for transgender and gender non-conforming folks (Beilby and Eddy, eds., Understanding Transgender Identities, pgs. 150-157).

Transsexual surgery adds to these sufferings, for it is the mutilation and sterilization of persons (adults and minors). It ought to be discouraged. Human biology is a precious gift that God gave us. You can’t change someone from one sex to the other. It involves the change someone from one sex to the other. It involves the gynecological procedures.

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ONYEKOZUR

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recognizes them as efforts to force gender ideology and abortion practice on religious hospitals and healthcare workers. The statement explains that if this federal mandate becomes law, it will force health care workers to perform gender transition procedures, require health insurance issuers to cover them, and entertain a mandate to perform elective abortions. "[T]hey threaten our ability to practice medicine, ... mandate health care workers to perform life-altering surgeries to remove per- haps the most vulnerable部位s of a person’s body, and to addict people to virtual religion free and bad medicine’” (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Public Affairs Office Statement, July 27, 2022).

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SYNOD

Continued from Page 1

The synthesis report was developed in much the same manner as the reports prepared by parishes and dioceses: through prayer, listening and inspiration from the Spirit. The team of writers convened by the USCCB gathered in August to discern what common themes emerged in the 290 documents received from throughout the country, two of the coordinators of the effort at the USCCB told CNS.

"There was a lot of listening to the Spirit in the way we went about writing," said Maureen McStravog, a consultant to the bishops on the process.

Richard Coll, executive director of the bishops' Department of Scopes and Human Development, who is coordinating the effort for the USCCB, called the writing process "prayerful and deliberate."

"As Bishop Flores said in his letter to the Vatican, we have really tried to reflect faithfully the statements and views and positions that we have heard," Coll said.

McStravog also described how she was struck by "the radical honesty" of the 14 regional reports in particular that resulted from the diocesan submissions.

"When the synod is really embraced it generated this time and place for reflection and sharing and our diocesan folks who led the process were really true to the process and wanted to go it well. I think that is what has come through," McStravog said. "The honesty or authenticity that comes through in the national report, it could be that way because the diocesan reports were that way. That was the dynamic."

The process is "prayerful and deliberate."

An example of the authenticity McStravog cited is the report’s statement about the church that is poor living its faith and not just a number that you see on a newscast," he told CNS.

"We can learn a lot once the national syntheses and the international ones come out, what the priorities are from some of our own experiences, and how things have turned around in the church," McStravog said.

Bishop Flores said that early skepticism about the synod process "prayerful and deliberate." The report readily discusses issues that give parishioners and nonparishioners alike cause for concern: racism, lingering wounds from the abuse crisis, the pain felt by divorced and remarried Catholics, the marginalization of LGBTQ+ people and families, and divisiveness largely based on political differences that has seeped into the church.

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He credited the willingness of people to listen and to welcome inspiration from the Holy Spirit for the change of mind. The next step in preparation for the Synod of Bishops is the continental phase. The North American report will be written by Canadian and U.S. church representatives once the "instrumentum laboris," or working document, to guide continental or regional ecclesial assemblies that will take place by March.

Bishop Flores expects that the synthesis reports generated at the continental level will greatly vary in their message to the church at the synod. He said he understands the invitation to synodality from the pope has been "ultimately about conversion."

"Conversion is the work of the Holy Spirit that you've got to understand the suffering of the other person and not just a number that you see on a newscast," he told CNS.

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leave far deeper wounds than those left by an unfair em-
ployer who treated us unfairly. There are wounds we
suffer from abuse, neglect, and years of injustice that need
an employer who treated us unfairly. There are wounds we

TOMONEY

Continued from Page 12

be necessary, too. For example, certain situ-
ations can be a leaven for the church.

In a time in which many
Catholics do not live out a vo-
cational expression of their faith, beyond participation in the Sunday liturgy, the associations offer a gauge for nurturing in lay men and women a com-
mitment to live more inten-
tional lives of missionary discipu-

LAMORSI

Sylvia Lamorsi is a writer, speaker, and both a number of books, including Everyday Sacrament: The Messy Grace of Parenting. Her work can be found at slamorsi.com.

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