

The Inside Front

Former ESL instructor now voice of hope for WT immigrants

Diaz commutes between San Angelo, Abilene to help

By Loretta Fulton Special for *The Angelus*

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

She was first in line, waiting for Diaz to open the door at 9 a.m. It was worth getting up early to be in Abilene before the long lines began to form in front of Diaz' office. Villalobos, like hundreds of others, has learned that nobody is more professional, knowledgeable, or com-

passionate about immigration issues than Diaz. Villalobos, who has gladly made that trip from Comanche many times to seek help from Diaz, is gaining legal status for her husband, who is in Mexico.

"We're going to do things right," she said proudly.

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

"She's awesome," Villalobos said.
"She makes you feel real comfortable and explains things really well."

Diaz is the supervisor of the Abilene and San Angelo

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

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

(Please See **DIAZ**/21)



Nelly Diaz doesn't mind that her first name is misspelled on the sign in front of her office in Abilene. It frequently is, she said, but that doesn't keep people from finding her and seeking her assistance on immigration matters. Photo by

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

By Jimmy Patterson Editor / West Texas Angelus

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

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

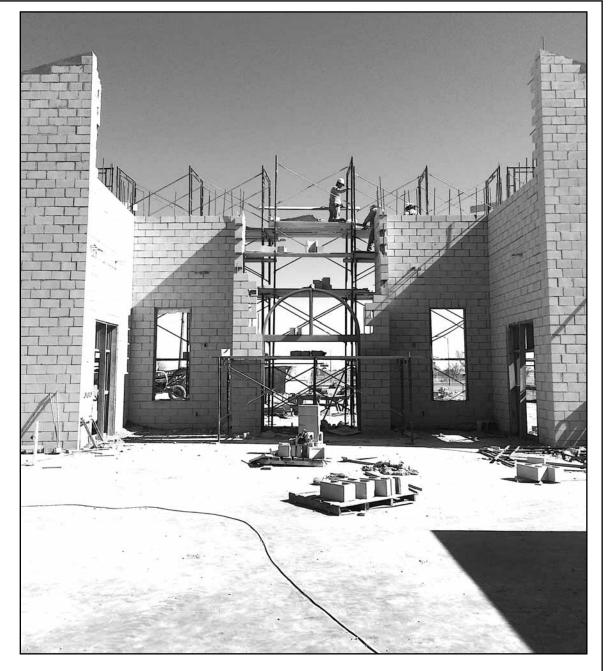
One of those presenters, Harry Nutter, lay president-elect of the Unitarian Universalist congregation in Midland, drove home the urgency of striving for peace, fairness and right relations among all peoples.

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

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

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

Bishop Sis added that the church teaches that governments have the right to impose reasonable limits on immigration,



St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Construction

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

CALENDARS

BISHOP MICHAEL SIS APRIL SCHEDULE

- SAN ANTONIO, Assumption Seminary, Candidacy Mass at 10:30

2 - ROWENA, St. Joseph, Confirmation Mass at 9:30 a.m

2 — SAN ANGELO. Sacred Heart Cathedral Gym, Diocesan Awards Banquet at 4:30 p.m.

- AUSTIN, Texas Catholic Conference of Bishops Spring Meeting

at 11:30 a.m. 4 — AUSTIN, State Capitol, TCCB Advocacy Day

- SAN ANGELO, Sacred Heart Cathedral, Chrism Mass at 11:00

6 — SAN ANGELO Sacred Heart Cathedral. Vocation Team meeting at 2:00 p.m.

8 — SAN ANGELO. Sacred Heart Cathedral, Vigil Mass of Passion Sunday at 5:00 p.m. 9 — SAN ANGELO.

Holy Angels, Passover Seder at 5:30 p.m. 13 — SAN ANGELO,

Sacred Heart Cathedral, Holy Thursday Mass at 7:00 p.m. 14 — SAN ANGELO.

St. Margaret, Good Friday Stations of the Cross Procession at 1:00 p.m., Soup lunch at 11:30 a.m.

- SAN ANGELO, Sacred Heart Cathedral, Service of the Passion at 7:00 p.m.

15 — SAN ANGELO, Sacred Heart Cathedral. Easter Vigil Mass at 8:30

- MERETA, Holy Family, Easter Mass at 10:45 a.m

19 — BALLINGER, St. Mary, Star of the Sea. Confirmation Mass at 6:00 p.m.

- SAN ANGELO, Catholic Foundation Board Meeting at 10:00

- ODESSA. Catholic Charities of Odessa Banquet of Hope at 6:00 p.m.

21 — ODESSA Catholic Charities of Odessa Meeting at 8:30

- SAN ANGELO. Christ the King Retreat Center, Diocesan Staff Picnic at 6:00 p.m.

22 — SAN ANGELO, St. Joseph, Confirmation Mass at 10:00 a.m.

22 — SAN ANGELO. Holy Angels, Confirmation Mass at 5:30 p.m.

23 — WALL, St Ambrose, Confirmation Mass at 9:00 a.m.

23 — SAN ANGELO. St. Mary, Diocesan Adult Confirmation Mass at

3:00 p.m. 25 — BIG SPRING, Holy Trinity, Vocation of the Agricultural Leader Workshop from 9:00 a.m.

to 1:00 p.m. 26 — BIG LAKE, St. Margaret of Cortona. Confirmation Mass at 7:00 p.m.

27 — ODESSA, St.

Elizabeth Ann Seton. Confirmation Mass at

6:00 p.m. 28 — DALLAS, Knights of Columbus State Convention

29 — MIDLAND, St. Ann, Confirmation Mass at 5:00 p.m.

30 — MIDLAND, San Miguel Arcángel, Confirmation Mass at 5:00 p.m.

MAY 2017

1 — ODESSA, St. Mary, Confirmation Mass at 6:30 p.m.

2 — SAN ANGELO, Diocesan Pastoral Center, Presbyteral Council Meeting at 11:00

3 — ABILENE, Holy Family, Confirmation Mass at 7:00 p.m. 4 — SAN ANGELO,

Diocesan Pastoral Center, Priestly Life and Formation Committee Meeting at 10:00 a.m.

5 — SAN ANGELO Lakeview Stadium, West Texas Deaf Olympics at 10:00 a.m.

5 — SONORA, St. Ann, Confirmation Mass at 6:00 p.m. 6 — FORT STOCK-

TON, Our Lady of Guadalupe, Confirmation Mass at 10:30 a.m.

6 — OZONA, Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Confirmation Mass at 6:00 p.m.

7 — GARDEN CITY, St. Lawrence, Confirmation Mass at 10:30 a.m.

7 — SAN ANGELO. Sacred Heart Cathedral, Confirmation Mass at 6:00 p.m.

9 - SAN ANGELO, Diocesan Pastoral Center, Liturgy Commission Meeting at 10:00 a.m.

10 — ODESSA, Holy Redeemer, Confirmation Mass at 7:00 p.m.

11 — ODESSA, St. Joseph, Confirmation Mass at 6:00 p.m.

12 — SAN ANTONIO, St. Mary's University, Baccalaureate Mass at 5:30 p.m.

— SAN ANGELO, St. Margaret of Scotland, Confirmation Mass at 9:00 a.m.

15 — WALL, Rural Life Mass at 6:30 p.m.

16 — STANTON, St. Joseph, Confirmation Mass at 6:30 p.m.

17 — MIDLAND. St. Stephen, Confirmation Mass at 6:30 p.m.

18 — KNICKERBOCK-ER, Immaculate Conception, Confirmation Mass at 6:30 p.m. 19 — ABILENE, Holy

Family, 50th Anniversary Jubilee Mass for Msgr. Fred Nawarskas

20 — ABILENE, St. Vincent Pallotti, Confirmation Mass at

5:30 p.m. 21 — ABILENE, St. Francis of Assisi, Confirmation Mass at 9:00 a.m.

(Continued on 14)

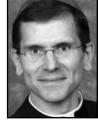
From The Bishop's Desk

Looking at life, love through 'Easter Eyes'

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

When I was a child, Easter Sunday was a day for receiving a basket full of candy from the Easter

Bunny, dressing up extra special for Mass, and enjoying a good meal with my family. From my young perspective, the best part was the hollow chocolate rabbit. I especially enjoyed biting off the



As the years went by, I came to learn that the real meaning of Easter is not about Peter Cottontail, chocolate bunnies, or marshmallow Peeps.

The meaning of Easter is that Jesus Christ has risen from the dead. He was abandoned by most of his followers, publically humiliated, tortured, killed on the Cross, placed in the tomb, and from all appearances it seemed like everything was lost. Everybody thought that the Christian experience was finished. Lifeless tomb. Story over.

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

Mary Magdalene was one of the very few followers of Jesus who had remained faithful to him until the bitter end. She never ran away, denied him, or betrayed

She had the courage to remain faithful to Jesus during his Passion, even if it would cost her tremendous sacrifice. And she had the privilege of being the very first disciple to encounter the risen Lord Jesus Christ on Easter Sunday morning. So Mary Magdalene is the first witness of the Resurrection.

One of the most important forms of

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

As we experience the Easter season this

year, I propose that we learn to look at reality with "Easter Eyes." What I call Easter Eyes is the ability to view any situation, no matter how seemingly problematic, through the perspective of the Resurrection, and see that there is life hidden in that situation. Here are some exam-

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

Those in prison are human beings with heart and soul and mind. God's grace is at work in their lives, especially through the dedicated service of the chaplains and volunteers who go to pray with them there. Conversion happens, God touches hearts, friendships are made, and lives are changed. Many put their time to good use through spiritual reading and Bible study. Some serve as mentors for fellow inmates who are searching for meaning. Prisoners are sometimes able to participate in the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults, join the Church, and receive the Sacraments.

Because of this experience of the positive fruits of prison ministry, when I see a prison, I can say, "There's life in there," behind those lifeless walls. That's looking through Easter Eyes.

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

(Please See BISHOP/20)

Mirando la Vida, el Amor a través Ojos de Pascua

Oispo Miguel Sis

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

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



Obispo Sis

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

El significado de la Pascua es que Jesucristo ha resucitado de entre los muertos. Él fue abandonado por la mayoría de sus seguidores, públicamente

humillado, torturado, dado a muerte en la Cruz, colocado en la tumba, y por toda apariencia parecía que todo estaba perdido. Todo el mundo pensaba que la experiencia Cristiana se había terminado. Tumba sin vida. Fin de historia.

Pero Dios es un Dios de sorpresas. Jesucristo fue resucitado a una nueva vida en la mañana de Pascua.

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

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

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

El huevo en esta imagen proviene de una tradición piadosa con relación a María Magdalena. Según la historia, en el tiempo de la Iglesia primitiva, María Magdalena, de alguna manera u otra, pudo asistir a un banquete ofrecido por el Emperador Tiberio César.

Una de las cosas que se sirvió en el banquete fueron huevos. En un momento determinado, el emperador se acercó a María Magdalena, mientras que ella sostenía un huevo blanco normal en su mano. Cuando se encontró con el emperador, ella audazmente proclamó: '¡Cristo ha resucitado!"

El emperador se río y dijo que el que Cristo se resucitara de entre los muer tos era tan probable como que el huevo

(Mira OBISPO/20)

DIOCESAN BRIEFS



Ag workshop April 25 in Big Spring to feature Catholic Rural Life Exec Director Jim Ennis

Jim Ennis, CRL Executive Director of Catholic Rural Life (CRL) and currently the president of the International Catholic Rural Association, will present the Vocation of the Agricultural Leader workshop in Big Spring on April 25, at Holy Trinity Catholic Church from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm.

Ennis participated in meetings in Rome in December 2016 culminating in a presentation of the newly published document, Vocation of the Agricultural Leader, to Pope Francis. The pope was very passionate about the subject of agriculture during his address. "Your concern for rural life, grounded in the vision of the Church's social doctrine, is an eloquent expression of that imperative to 'till and keep the garden of the world' to which we have been called, if we wish to carry on God's creative activity and to protect our common home,"

Bishop Michael Sis invited Catholic Rural Life to come to the Diocese of San Angelo, Texas, because "so many of the men and women in our diocese make their living off the land. I think it is a message we need to hear in the agricultural heart of our great state."

Inspired by Vocation of the Business Leader (2012), CRL collaborated with ICRA, the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, farming organizations, and many other leaders around the world over the past three years to develop Vocation of the Agricultural Leader. It is a resource not only for all who are involved in agriculture and food production, but also for those who are concerned about where their food comes from. "At the heart of a sound vision of agriculture lies the theology of creation, the theology of the earth as a gift given by a loving Creator...the agricultural leader is more than a mere economic agent of production; rather, the leader plays a critical role in creating an authentic culture of life," states the document in

Presentations of Vocation of the Agricultural Leader are being made around the United States. You can order a copy of Vocation of the Agricultural Leader at www.catholicrural-

To register for the workshop in Big Spring on April 25, contact Deacon Charlie Evans, the Director of the Office of Rural Life, at cevans@sanangelodiocese.org. For more information call Deacon Evans at 432-634-6170.

Victims Assistance Information

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

Fr. Kennelly, former diocesan priest, dies in Ireland

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

> Ireland. Ireland, he was

born in Ballylongford, County Kerry, on January 9, 1942. He was the third of five children born to Stephen and Bridget Kennelly.

A native of

Fr. Kennelly He attended the Ballylongford Boys National School and then

high school at St. Joseph College in County Kilkenny, Ireland, after which he attended University College in Dublin. He entered the seminary at St. Patrick's College, Carlow, Ireland and was ordained on June 7, 1969 in the Diocese of Kildare and Leighlin, Ireland. Shortly after his ordination, Father Kennelly entered the Diocese of San Angelo on September 13, 1969. During his years of priestly ministry with the Diocese of San Angelo, he served the communities of St. Joseph, Rowena; St. Boniface, Olfen; Sacred Heart,

Abilene; St. Joseph, Odessa; Our Lady of San Juan (now San Miguel Arcángel), Midland; Sacred Heart, McCamey; and Good Shepherd, Crane. After receiving permission to join the missionaries of the Society of St. James the Apostle, he also served the people of Peru and Ecuador for many years. After his medical retirement in February 2002, he returned to his homeland in Ireland where he lived with his sister and brother-in-law, Mae and Pat Dowling. His funeral Mass and interment took place in Ballylongford, Ireland.

Bishop Pfeifer: Santa Muerte is sinister, infernal

By Bishop Michael Pfeifer, OMI

The cult Santa Muerte several years ago was called by Cardinal



Bishop **Emeritus** Michael D. Pfeifer, OMI

Ravasi, President of the Pontifical Council on Culture, as being sinister and infernal. This diabolical cult of the Santa Muerte has been burgeoning on both sides of the U.S.-Mexico border.

The Santa Muerte cult is in no way santa, holy and is rather. as the cardinal

has said, a celebration of devastation and of hell. it is a terrible blasphemy against god and it is a false religiosity promoted by organized crime and drug traffickers. these groups celebrate death. it is no way the true religion which celebrates life and justice and the dignity and sacredness of each person. La Santa Muerte has been called the "la religiosidad de narcos" - drug traffickers who falsify religion.

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

The Santa Muerte engages in satanism and many of its followers, Santa Muertistas, have committed heinous crimes in the name of the skeletal folk so called saint. Human sacrifice, narco-assassinations and other lurid crimes have been committed in Mexico and to some degree in the U.S. by devotees who believe that saint death sanctions and blesses these nefarious deeds. Santa Muerte is not a saint and brings spiritual harm to her devotees. this satanic devotion appeals to the devil for other worldly help, to gain money and material benefits, to commit crimes, to bring about vengeance, for protection for drug dealers from officers of the law.

Sadly, Santa Muerte is one of the

fastest growing religious movements in the USA, and as I have done for many years, I encourage all the faithful to not become involved in this false and diabolical devotion. Please encourage store owners, who often do not know the diabolical meaning of Santa Muerte, not to promote the sale of these images, especially of candles of the Santa Muerte, that are placed among true candle figures of Christ, Mary and the saints. Report these cases of stores who sale these diabolical figures to your local priests.

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

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

San Angeloan elected Mission Board vice chair

The Angelus

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

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

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

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

Rite of Election



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

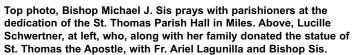




Miles Dedication







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

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





Christians in the Middle East

Bishops hear priorities of Iraqi Christians in Kurdistan

By Dale Gavlak Catholic News Service

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

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

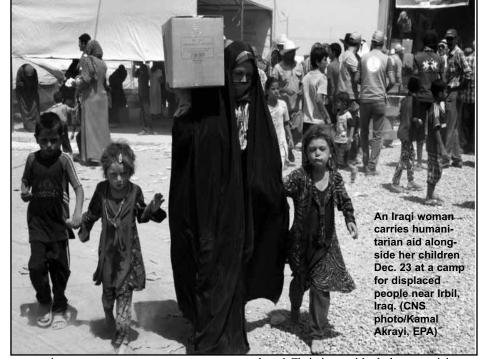
Although security is paramount, they prefer to see reconciliation take place, enabling Iraq's diverse mosaic of religions and ethnicities to live side by side. But that means trust would need to be rebuilt, and that could prove tricky given the regional and local players involved in Iraq's multilayered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

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

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

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

Catholic clergy "really want to establish some normalcy in the midst of displacement," Bishop Cantu said. He said he was amazed by the speed which Chaldean Catholic Archbishop Bashar Warda of Irbil has started a Catholic university to provide education and direction to the youth. Archbishop Warda also has restored personal dignity by moving displaced Christians from camps into homes with a



rent assistance program.

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

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

The terrifying escape from Mosul for a number of Dominican Sisters has left a profound "sadness in their eyes and voices that question what's the best for these Christians," Bishop Cantu said, "whether it is to stay in the midst of anguish and terror or seek safety and security elsewhere in the world." The displaced Dominicans have been helping other dis-

placed Christians with shelter, provisions and most recently, by setting up and running a school.

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

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

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

"The physical damage to their traditional Christian villages is severe, and security and trust aren't present to make them comfortable in going back," O'Keefe said. "They need to have their security and their full human rights respected to be able to return."

He said it's not clear how that will be accomplished. However, O'Keefe said it

was "the responsibility of the central Iraqi state, the Kurdish government (in the north), and other players involved to come up with a vision where minority rights are respected and adequate security is provided."

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

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

"They weren't ready yet to talk about specific plans for rebuilding. Rather they need to know how safety and security will be provided, which would allow them to stay," O'Keefe said. "That's the first problem which needs to be solved and it's inherently a political one."

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

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

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

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

Mideast Christians, especially those displaced, face mounting challenges

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

"As much as we are pleased that our homelands from which thousands of Christians were forced to flee from the extremists have been retaken, we are very concerned about what lies ahead," Father Emanuel Youkhana told Catholic News Service by phone. He referred to Iraq's Christian towns of Qaraqosh, Batnayeh and Bartella, recently regained by the Iraqi military from Islamic State.

The archimandrite is a member of the Assyrian Church of the East and heads the Christian Aid Program Northern Iraq,

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

Iraq's majority Shiite population comprises the bulk of the country's reconstituted national army, and as it liberates areas from extremist Sunni militants, Iraqi Christians have seen worrying Shiite slogans scrawled on places and property that have always been "100 percent Christian," Father Youkana noted.

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

The trail of death and destruction left by Islamic State was being fully revealed as the militants were flushed out. There were accounts that some Christians were tortured and crucified. Among the militants' threatening words still visible in red on the wall of a plundered electrical shop: "By God, we will break your cross."

"The volume of destruction carried out by Islamic State militants throughout the Ninevah Plain is hindering my people from returning to their family properties. Infrastructure, including drinking water and electricity, has been badly damaged, and what can we then say about the paramount need for security," Fr. Youkhana said.

He urged the international community to help Christians and other religious

minorities to return home after their forced displacement by the Islamic State.

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

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

The Triduum:

U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops

When does the Triduum begin and end?

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

May another Mass besides the Mass of the Lord's Supper be celebrated on Holy Thursday?

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

How are the Holy Oils, consecrated and blessed at the Chrism Mass, to be received in the parish?

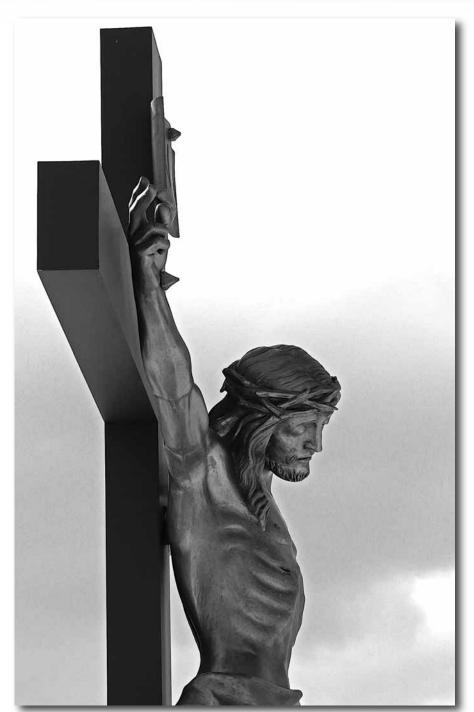
A reception of the oils may take place before the Mass of the Lord's Supper. The oils, in suitable vessels, can be carried in procession by members of the assembly. A text for this can be found here.

Is the Mandatum, the washing of feet at the Mass of the Lord's Supper, required?

No. The Roman Missal only indicates, "After the Homily, where a pastoral reason suggests it [ubi ratio pastoralis id suadeat], the Washing of Feet follows."

When should the Good Friday Celebration of the Lord's Passion take place?

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



May a deacon officiate at the Celebration of the Lord's Passion?

Although the Celebration of the Lord's Passion appears to be a service of the Word with the distribution of Holy Communion, the Roman Missal does not permit a deacon to officiate at the celebration. Historically, even though the Eucharist is not celebrated on this day, the liturgy of Good Friday bears resemblance to a Mass. At one time it was called the "Mass of the Presanctified" (referring to the preconsecrated hosts used at Communion, even when only the priest received Communion). This is also reflected in the prescribed vesture for the priest: stole and chasuble. The

liturgy of Good Friday, as an integral part of the Triduum, is linked to the Holy Thursday Mass of the Lord's Supper and the Easter Vigil on Holy Saturday. While there may be cases where a parish with multiple churches or chapels (e.g., mission churches or a cluster of parishes under one pastor) might rotate the liturgies among the various locations, it would not be appropriate for a community to celebrate only part of the Triduum.

May any of the readings at the Celebration of the Lord's Passion be omitted?

The Lectionary for Mass does not indicate that any readings may be

omitted at the Celebration of the Lord's Passion. All three readings (Isaiah, Hebrews, and the Passion according to John) are required. It should be noted, however, for Palm Sunday of the Lord's Passion, the Lectionary indicates that while all three readings provided should be used, there may be circumstances in which one or more of the readings at Mass could be omitted: "Given, however, the importance of the account of the Lord's Passion, the priest, having in mind the character of each individual congregation, is authorized to choose only one of the two readings prescribed before the Gospel, or if necessary, he may read only the account of the Passion, even in the shorter form. This permission applies, however, only to Masses celebrated with a congregation." Thus, the account of the Passion is never omitted.

Does the Church encourage any other liturgical celebrations on Good Friday?

On this day the Office of Readings and Morning Prayer could appropriately be celebrated with the participation of the people in the churches. Note that Evening Prayer is only prayed by those who do not participate in the Celebration of the Lord's Passion.

Do devotions have a particular importance on Good Friday?

The Directory on Popular Piety and the Liturgy (2002) provides the proper perspective in paragraphs 142-145. Clearly the central celebration of this day is the Good Friday Celebration of the Lord's Passion. In no way should manifestations of popular piety, either by the time or manner in which they are convoked, substitute for this solemn liturgical action. Nor should aspects of the various acts of piety be mixed with the Good Friday celebration, creating a hybrid. In recent times, Passion processions, celebrations of the Stations of the Cross, and Passion Plays have become more common. In such representations, actors and spectators can be involved in a moment of faith and genuine piety. Care should be taken, however,

Questions



April 16, 2017 The Resurrection of the Lord

Gospel Reading John 20:1-9

First Reading Acts 10:34a, 37-43 **Responsorial Psalm** 118:1-2, 16-17, 22-23 Second Reading Colossians 3:1-4

"The right hand of the Lord is exalted. I shall not die, but live, and declare the works of the Lord." — Psalm 118:16-17

By Jean Denton

've long wondered why "This is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad," was the responsorial psalm chosen for Easter, the most important celebration of the year for Christians.

Not that there's anything inappropriate in it, but I've always taken it to mean each day is a gift from God, so appreciate it. The verse just never seems momentous enough.

However, considered in the context of the incredible event of Jesus' life, death and resurrection, these simple words in Psalm 118 speak the powerful truth: This is The Day. This is it — the ultimate outcome of God's plan.

Indeed, we use that phrase, "This is it!" to signify a culmination, a moment of truth.

I remember once driving home from work on

an interstate highway, going the 65 mph speed limit, and being hit from behind (!) by another vehicle. As I struggled in vain to gain control of my car, that vehicle actually hit me again! Sure enough, my life flashed before my eyes and confused thoughts flew through my mind as I began careening and spinning off the road, but I distinctly recall saying to myself, "I guess this is

I knew intrinsically what "it" was: the end of my life, something I fully understood and always knew would come. (Amazingly, that wasn't "it." I

In today's reading from Acts, Peter excitedly recalls for his fellow witnesses "what has happened" since Jesus arrived: He was baptized, anointed by God with his Spirit and went among the people ministering and teaching; he was put to death and now he has been resurrected.

In effect, this is it!

As we celebrate Easter, Christ's life flashes before our eyes and we see as a single "event" his message, ministry, example, death and resurrection — something we always knew would come.

This is The day the Lord has made, the eternal day that fulfills God's desire for his beloved.

By believing in Jesus Christ the savior, we are drawn into this day and it becomes our truth. Let us rejoice and be glad.



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

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to point out to the faithful that a Passion Play is a representation which is commemorative and they are very different from "liturgical actions" which are anamnesis, or the mysterious presence of the redemptive event of the Passion.

How does the Adoration of the Holy Cross on Good Friday begin?

The Adoration of the Holy Cross begins with one of two forms of the Showing of the Holy Cross. The First Form begins as the deacon or another suitable minister goes to the sacristy and obtains the veiled Cross. Accompanied by two ministers with lighted candles, the veiled Cross is brought to the center of the sanctuary in procession. The priest accepts the Cross and then, standing in front of the altar and facing the people, uncovers the upper part of the Cross, the right arm, and then the entire Cross. Each time he unveils a part of the Cross, he sings the acclamation,

Behold the wood of the Cross. In the Second Form of the Showing of the Holy Cross, the priest or deacon goes to the church door, where he takes up the uncovered Cross. Accompanied by two ministers with lighted candles, he processes to the sanctuary, stopping at the door of the church, in the middle of the church, and before entering the sanctuary, to sing the acclamation, Behold the wood of the Cross.

How is the cross venerated by members of the congregation on **Good Friday?**

After the showing of the Cross, the priest or deacon may carry the Cross to the entrance of the sanctuary or another suitable place. The first person to adore the Cross is the priest celebrant. If circumstances suggest, he takes off his chasuble and his shoes. The clergy, lay ministers and the faithful then approach the Cross. The personal adoration of the Cross is an important feature in this celebration

and every effort should be made to achieve it. The rubrics remind us that "only one Cross" should be used for adoration. If the numbers are so great that all cannot come forward, the priest, after some of the clergy and faithful have adored the Cross, can take it and stand in the center before the altar. In a few words he invites the people to adore the Cross. He then elevates the Cross higher for a brief period of time while the faithful adore it in silence. It should also be kept in mind that when a sufficiently large Cross is used even a large community can reverence it in due time. The foot of the Cross as well as the right and left arm can be approached and venerated. Coordination with ushers and planning the flow of people beforehand can allow for this part of the liturgy to be celebrated with decorum and devotion.

When should the Easter Vigil take place?

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

(Please See TRIDUUM/21)



Abortion irreversible, but adoption the loving choice

Editor's Note: This letter is in response to the article written by, John C. Moritz of USA Today Network, Austin Bureau from the Sunday, March 19, 2017 Standard Times Newspaper. The article is about House Bill 4260 filed by Jessica Farrar, member of the Texas House. Moritz calls the bill satirical and Farrar describes it as, "men's health and safety."

By Sharla Ynostrosa

From what I read, State Representative Jessica Farrar is tired of women having to undergo a sonogram and hear their baby's heartbeat before an abortion. She wrote this bill to try and make a point. Instead of satire or trying to make a point, let's have an honest dialogue about abortion and a woman's right to choose. I think a woman should be told all aspects of any procedure she is having done and that definitely includes an abortion. It is time to be honest and realize that once a woman becomes pregnant there are now two lives to consider. If the woman is dealing with an unplanned or crisis pregnancy then we need to reach out and help her find all the resources that are available. There are many options depending on the woman's age and circumstances. If she is young, there are maternity homes available that provide shelter for her and her baby. These homes allow the mother to finish school, work, and teach the young mother the proper life skills needed to be a good parent. There are also homes where the young woman can live until her baby is born if she is choosing adoption for her child. The mother is able to choose to have an open adoption or a closed adoption. The mother can also be involved in choosing her baby's parents.

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

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

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

I keep on hearing about women's rights. Are you talking about all women's rights or just the women who are pro-choice? Is there an age restriction on those rights? What about the rights of the babies? Those who are aborted because their parents wanted a daughter instead of a son, or vice versa, you know, sex selection abortions. I am so tired of all the hypocrisy. These poor babies, don't you see, they are the innocent victims in all of this, in your childish games of satire and in the abortion industry where money is made from their deaths. Isn't it ironic, how I hear you say that women can be anything they want to be, do anything they want to do until it comes to a crisis pregnancy. Then women are

(Please See YNOSTROSA/22)

Speaking of Saints

From privilege came St. Magdalene of Corona, friend and helper of the poor

By Mary Lou Gibson

By all the standards of 18th century aristocracy, Magdalene Gabrielle di Canossa was destined for a life of

wealth and privilege. She was born on March 1, 1774 in Verona, Italy to a noble and wealthy family, Her father was the Marquis Ottavio of Canossa and her mother,



Marchioness Maria Teresa Szlugh, was a court attendant.

Magdalene's charmed life changed abruptly after her father's death when she was five. After a short period of mourning, her mother remarried and left Magdalene and her four brothers in the care of their uncle Jerome and estate servants.

These were sad years for Magdalene who endured sickness and misunderstandings with her family. Richard McBrien writes in Lives of the Saints that after Magdalene survived a serious illness when she was 15, she told her family that she wanted to become a nun. Her relatives were horrified when she left the family estate and joined the Carmelites for a short time. But she did not take to the strict rules of enclosure and decided that life as a cloistered nun was not what she wanted. Instead, she wished to help people in need, especially the poor. She later described her vocation as serving Christ in the

She left the convent and returned to manage the estate. For the next several years, Magdalene felt herself working with the sick in hospitals and in their homes. Editor Bernard Bangley writes in *Butler's Lives of the Saints* that she began to care for poor and abandoned girls she saw living in the slums of Verona.

She took several girls into her house and encouraged by her spiritual director, she increased her activities to include a refuge and a school in the poorest part of the city. In 1808, Magdalene took over a disused monastery and moved the school and teachers into it. Paul Burns writes in *Butler's Lives of the Saints* that the school prospered offering girls education in practical subjects. She also devised a plan for

training young women from rural areas as primary school teachers.

Other women joined her and a new Congregation of the Daughters of Charity began to take shape. Magdalene wrote a first Rule for the Congregation which became known as the Canossian Sisters of Charity. Pope Pius VII gave the Congregation provisional approval in 1816. Over the next 20 years, the houses spread to most major cities in northern Italy. Magdalene wanted the spirit of the Daughters of Charity to be detached from everything and from everybody and to be available to serve the Lord in every country.

Magdalene focused on providing every young boy and girl an education. Burns writes that her practical work was sustained by an intense personal spirituality with mystical experiences that she tried to describe in her Memoirs. She wrote "I felt at a certain point as if I were enraptured in God. I saw God within me like a luminous sun. This absorption in the Divine Presence made me unable to stay on my feet. I had to lean against something. The strength of heavenly joy was almost suffocating." (www.canossiansisters.org/who.html

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

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

Pope Leo XII gave the Congregation formal approval in 1828. Magdalene died in Verona on April 10, 1835. She was canonized by Pope John Paul II in 1998. Today, the Canossian Daughters of Charity are present in six continents and 36 countries where they spread the apostolic options of education, evangelization and pastoral activity, assistance to the sick and suffering, formation of the laity and spiritual exercises. They are also praying to St. Magdalene for the many young women who are caught up in the sex trafficking epidemic of our day (www.franciscanmedia.org/saintmagdalen-of-canossa/).

Easter allows us to bid our pasts farewell

By Fr. Knick and Sandie Knickerbocker

Easter is a time when God gives us the grace to kiss the past good-bye. It is a time to open the curtains and let in the sunshine of a new life in Christ. It is a time of accepting our



Knick and Sandie Knickerbocker

forgiveness from the Father for Jesus sake, which means we are now able not only to forgive others but also to forgive ourselves.

Each Easter we remember again the man whom Hugh T. Kerr and John M. Mulder in their book, Conversions, call "the foremost Christian apologist of the 20th century" and the man who "has in our time instructed more people in the reasonableness of Christian faith than all the theological faculties in the world" (p.199). The man is C.S. Lewis (1898-1963) known as "Jack" to

his friends. He has helped us understand that Easter is a time when God gives us the grace to kiss the past good-bye and welcome our new life in Christ.

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

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

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

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

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



In 'Who Am I to Judge?,' Sri calls the Church Christ's co-worker in salvation

By Brenda Lehr

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops states the following about mission: "Where does the idea of mission come from? What exactly is mission? It consists of continuing Christ's own mission. Mission, is from the Latin word 'to send,' it means obeying Jesus' command always to go to all the nations, to baptize, and to teach the faith. We look to Christ himself as the model of the truly loving missionary.'

Dr. Edward Sri, renowned theologian, author and professor at the Augustine Institute said, "Though people often say they want to make a difference in the world, we must realize that everyone is going to do that. Everyone is going to leave their mark and have an impact on other people's lives. The question is whether it will be a good or a bad impact."

Sri further explains we all know that God, for some mysterious reason, has chosen to involve us human beings in the building up of his eternal Kingdom. Following God's call is not always easy, but somehow his grace manages to work wonders within our fallen human nature. The first thing is to recognize that we are called by God. Paul writes in Eph. 4:1. "I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received.'

Some may ask, "What is it that makes us different and gives us this power to transform the world? What makes us different and powerful is not what we have or do; it is nothing but the message and power of the Cross of Christ.

The greatest moral evil of all time was the murder of God's Son, Jesus. Our faith gives us the certainty that God would not permit evil if he did not cause a good to come from that very evil. From this act of evil Christ won the Church for himself at the price of his own blood and made the

BOOK REVIEW

Church his co-worker in the salvation of the world. Therefore, Christ carries out his mission through the Church. Jesus dwells in us now and has made us belong to God. Our lives must be different because he empowers us to live for him and for no other. We must dare to be different for God's sake. That is why God worked so powerfully through St. Paul, because he was not afraid to be different as one belonging to God. Our world changes people, many are usually unwilling to be different, just so they can blend into the world, to be accepted, liked and to be just one of the crowd. People have to ask themselves whether they are willing to be different from others because they belong to God and act differently because the Cross of Jesus makes a difference in their life.

Because our God is merciful, he meets people right where they are. We must never let our fear of being different from others cripple God's beautiful plan for us and our world. We must never stop striving to be all that God created us to be.

Pope Saint John Paul II observed during his pontificate that the Church's mission regarding missionary work seemed to be slowing down because of difficulties due to changes in humanity's behavior in cultural, social and religious contexts. Carrying out this mandate faithfully demands patience and foresight, courage and humility, listening to God, and alert discernment of the "signs of the times."

In Sri's book Who Am I to Judge?, he writes that the beauty of the Catholic moral vision makes sense out of life. It points to what makes us truly happy. It shows us the pathway to virtue, friendship, and lasting love. It also encourages us to

(Please See BOOKS/23)

APRIL 2017 APRIL 2017 The Angelus The Angelus Page 13

2016 Annual Report, Year in Review

A Message from Bishop Michael J. Sis

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

In order to inform you of the financial condition of the Diocese of San Angelo, our practice is to give you an annual summary of our financial report. In this section of the April edition of the West Texas Angelus, we present a basic summary and introductory explanation. If you would like more details, please see our audited annual financial statements at this website: www.sanangelodiocese.org/.

As your Bishop. I am responsible for administering the material resources of the Church as a good steward, and this includes providing an account of the contributions received and used. The sacrificial giving of our Catholics in West Texas is what makes possible the ministry of our parishes and our diocese. I deeply appreciate the dedicated service of all our priests, deacons, religious, staff, and volunteers, who pour out their energies in the mission of the Church.

All of our efforts in the Church depend completely on God's help. He has blessed us in so many ways. We seek to respond to his goodness by developing his gifts and returning them to him with increase. May he continue to bless and protect you.

I am eternally grateful for your prayers and support. In the joy of Christ's service,

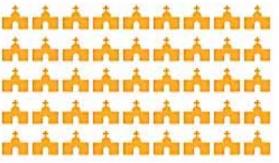
Most Rev. Michael J. Sis Bishop of San Angelo

DIOCESAN FINANCE COUNCIL

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

> David Eyler Joey Light Rev. Patrick Akpanobong Steve McKay, CFO Gary Baker Very Rev. Santiago Udayar **Dewey Bryant** Mike Wyse Angie Craghead

45 Parishes



21 Missions







RCIA Candidates

Total Expenses for Operations Expenses \$1,657,087 Offices in Support of Parish and Diocesan Administration \$2,660,191 **Pastoral Programs** \$1,197,595 Seminarians and Vocations \$239,371 Social Services

Operating Expenses

Pastoral Programs include the formation and coordination of those involved in evangelization and catechesis, youth ministry, young adult ministry, campus ministry, criminal justice, family life, mission awareness, pro-life, the permanent diaconate, and the Tribunal.

Seminarians and Vocations includes seminarian education and other religious personnel development pro-

Social Services include our diocesan efforts in immigration services, victim assistance, and other charitable caus-

> Offices in support of parish, diocesan administration

Office of the Bishop

Human Resources, which serves the over 700 employees of our parishes, schools, and diocesan offices.

Communications, which serves the diocese and parishes through media

relations, the diocesan website, and other communications support.

Finance Office, which serves as a resource to parishes with regard to financial matters, as well as overseeing parish internal audits, the Parish Savings and Loan Pool, and diocesan administration. This office also provides oversight with regard to the diocesan property and casualty, workers compensation, general liability, and umbrella liability programs, and assists the parishes and the diocese with related risk-mitigating activities.

CLERGY, RELIGIOUS & SEMINARIANS IN SERVICE TO THE DIOCESE





Sisters



Total Priests

Parish Assessments accounted for over 52% of the Kenedy Foundation, and the Scanlan operating income of the diocese for the fiscal year Foundation. We are always interested in learning 2015-2016. This income is calculated and paid by about new grant sources parishes as a function of regular parish income. Sixteen percent of the annual parish income is calculated at the end of each fiscal year on June 30. Then, over the course of the subsequent year, it is paid monthly from the parish to the diocese. This Rice Bowl, the Catholic Campaign for Human income supports the operation of the diocesan offices, which coordinate the functions of the Church

Revenue, Gains, and Other Support

\$610,326

\$527,479

\$601,372

\$501,309

\$330.618

Contributions are a source of funds given by individual donors. This type of income is not highly predictable from year to year. Contributions were up 19% from the previous year.

that reach beyond the local parish. This source of

income was down 9% over the prior year.

Angelus Support 5139,905

Interest and Dividends 4143,076

Retreat Center Fees include registration, meals, lodging and other fees collected in connection with the use of Christ the King Retreat Center.

Parish Assessments

Retreat Center Fees

Other Income and Fees

Contributions

Insurance Fund includes insurance premiums paid by the parishes and other related organizations for insurance coverage under diocesan plans.

Grants are financial awards given by private foundations and other non-government sources. The grants are not expected to be repaid by the diocese. The greater part of our grant support comes from the Catholic Extension Society, Catholic Home Missions

Other Income and Fees include insurance proceeds received and receipts for a variety of initiatives such as our diocesan criminal justice ministry, Operation

Development, our diocesan immigration services, and the annual Diocesan Conference Day. Amounts received by the Tribunal are also included in this cat-Angelus Support is calculated and paid by parishes

as a function of the number of households within the parish. This income helps cover the cost of publishing and distributing the West Texas Angelus.

Interest and Dividends reflects the returns on funds held by the diocese. A group of volunteer experts from around the diocese advises us in the prudent management of these funds.

Questions: If you would like more information or clarification about this report, or if you would like to make a contribution, please contact Steve McKay, Diocesan Finance Officer, at smckay@sanangelodiocese.org or at 325-651-7500. Please consider including your local parish or the Diocese of San

Balance Sheet

Cash and Investments

CASH AND INVESTMENTS

The diocese maintains assets for operations to support current programs, ministries, and future capital needs. Investments also include longerterm funds of the Parish Savings and Loan Pool. which are loaned to parishes for building proj-

PROPERTY AND EQUIPMENT

The diocese is required to report the real property, land and equipment that it holds for diocesan uses. This includes the land surrounding the pastoral center, Christ the King Retreat Center, the pastoral center offices, the bishop's residence, and the Newman Center in San Angelo

Parish Notes Receivable Seminary Burse Endowment Property and Equipment	1,007,914 2,341,475 1,693,325
Total Assets	\$ 23,264,133

\$ 17,267,545

ital Assets	<u> </u>	25,204,155
ccounts Payable	\$	254,892
ccrued Priests' Pension Plan Liability		3,362,888
ccrued post-retirement benefit liabilities		2,168,160
arish Savings Deposits		14,420,907
ther Liabilities		196,888

Total Liabilities \$ 20,403,735

\$ 2,860,398 Net Assets

Making Sense of Bioethics

I am not intrinsically disordered

By Fr. Tad Pacholczyk

I have met several priests over the years who ended up leaving the active ministry of the priesthood. Two of them have been on my mind and in my prayers recently, having left the

priesthood and the Church over issues connected to homosexuality. I ran into one of them some time ago by chance as we were boarding the same flight. Filling me in on the decisions he had made, he shared: "I was never happy with the



Pacholczyk

Catholic Church's view that homosexuality is inherently..." and then he paused, "...what's the phrase they use?" I replied: "homosexual acts are intrinsically disordered." "Ah, yes, intrinsically disordered," he replied. "It's a harsh institution that would call me intrinsically disordered, and I couldn't remain in a Church that held those views." The second priest who left had similarly decried how the Church, on account of his homosexuality, saw him as intrinsically disordered — which he took to mean that he was an evil person.

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

Once when I was speaking with a person who was paralyzed, he shared how members of the disability community had given him some good advice after his accident: "Don't say you are a disabled person, because that lets the disability define you. Say instead that you are a person with a disability." With a similar emphasis, people shouldn't pigeonhole themselves by saying: "I'm a homosexual," but instead say: "I'm a person with homosexual inclinations." Our inclinations don't define us, since we are free to decide whether we will act on them, or resist them. The process of resisting our disordered desires can be very difficult, but contributes significantly to our own growth and spiritual matura-

When referencing men and women "who have deep-seated homosexual tendencies," the Catechism of the Catholic Church emphasizes that such individuals must be accepted "with respect, compassion, and sensitivity. Every sign of unjust discrimination in their regard should be avoided. These persons are called to fulfill God's will in their lives and, if they are Christians, to unite to the sacrifice of

the Lord's Cross the difficulties they may encounter from their condition." These persons, thus, are children of God, unique and loved by the Lord and called to the pursuit of goodness, chastity and holiness.

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

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

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

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

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

CALENDARS (continued)

(Continued from 4)

21 - SAN ANGELO, Sacred Heart Cathedral, Marriage Jubilee at 3:00 p.m

23 — SAN ANGELO, Diocesan Pastoral Center, Finance Council meeting at 11:00 a.m.

24 — SAN ANGELO, St. Mary, Confirmation Mass at 6:30 p.m. 27 — SAN ANGELO, St. Mary, Ordination Mass of Transitional Deacons at 10:30 a.m.

COLEMAN, Sacred Heart, Confirmation Mass, 5 p.m. 28 — BRADY, St. Patrick, Confirmation Mass at 10:30 a.m. 29-June 2 — SAN ANGELO, Christ the King Retreat Center, Annual Diocesan Priests' Retreat

CHRIST THE KING RETREAT CENTER April 2017

Mar 31-Apr 2 Engaged Encounter

2 Natural Family Planning 3 Heart of Mercy Prayer 7-9 Deacon Formation

7-9 Beginning Exper.

10 Heart of Mercy 14 CKRC Office Closed — Good Friday 17 Heart of Mercy 18 Deacon Quarterly 21 DOSA Staff Picnic 24-27 Episcopal Diocese of NWTX Presbyters Conf. 26-30 San Angelo Women's **ACTS Retreat**

May 2017

1 Heart of Mercy Prayer Group CKRC Confirmation Retreat 8 Heart of Mercy Prayer Group 10 Mother's Day 12-14 Deacon Formation 15 Heart of Mercy Prayer Group

19-21 Engaged Encounter 21 Natural Family Planning 22 Heart of Mercy Prayer

25 DOSA Staff Mass/Lunch 26-27 Deaconate Ordination Overnight Stay 28- June DOSA Annual Priest

PRIEST ORDINATION DATES

APRIL

27 — Fr. Arockiaraj Gali (1993) **MAY**

8 — Fr. Mamachan Joseph (1986)

13 — Fr. Bhaskar Morugudi (1999)

 Fr. Hugh Wade (1977) 24 — Fr. Benedict Zientek (1958)

25 — Fr. Tom Barley (1991)

25 — Fr. Terry Brendon (1991) 25 — Fr. Martin Hubbs (2012)

26 — Msgr. James Bridges (1962)

- Fr. Charles Greenwell

(1982) 27 — - Fr. Luis Hernandez (1995)

- Msgr. Fred Nawarskas (1967)

27 *-*- Fr. Mark Woodruff (1972) 29 — Msgr. Bernard Gully

(1962)- Msgr. Timothy Schwertner (1965)

- Fr. Josey Faylona (2003)

31 — Fr. Gilbert Rodriguez

31 — Fr. Rodney White (2003)

The cross and divine mercy

By Maria-Pia Negro Chin Catholic News Service

Have you found yourself wondering if Jesus loves you? Think you

don't deserve this love? If you want these doubts dispelled, try praying the Stations of the Cross.

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

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

Praying the Way of the Cross with Scripture,

meditations and songs put things back into perspective. By reflecting on these stations, Jesus' sacrifice acquires new meaning.

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

This act of love was not easy.

We know that Jesus' crucifixion was not the end of the story. Thinking of the cross is a way to acknowledge the means of our salvation.

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

Jesus told St. Faustina Kowalska, the 20thcentury Polish nun who received the message

(Please See CHIN/23)

La cruz y la divina misericordia

By Maria-Pia Negro Chin Catholic News Service

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

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

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

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

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

Este acto de amor no fue fácil.

Sabemos que la crucifixión de Jesús no fue el final de la historia. Pensar en la cruz es una forma de reconocer el cómo de nuestra salvación.

El entrenamiento de nuestra voluntad al entrar con humildad en la voluntad de Dios y glorificarlo puede ser difícil, pero no se compara con el regalo que hemos recibido en la cruz. La oración, el ayuno, la limosna, así como el sacramento de la confesión y la eliminación de los hábitos pecaminosos, pueden fortalecernos, ayudarnos a crecer en virtud y acercarnos a Dios durante la Cuaresma en

(Mira DIVINA/23)

Catholic Voices

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

By Moises Sandoval Catholic News Service

At a recent conference on economics and social rights at The Catholic University of America in Washington,

reported by freelancer Julie Bourbon in the National Catholic Reporter, Bishop Robert W. McElroy of San Diego proposed three questions for Americans in the coming months:

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



Sandoval

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

which goes by many names: bullying, cruelty, discrimination and oppression?

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

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

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

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

One of them was Father Robert McCahill, a native of

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

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

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

Sister Carol Keehan, president of the Catholic Health

(Please See SANDOVAL/23)

Like people, nations must learn to forgive one another

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

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

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

But as we now look at broader, societal needs, we have to think about forgiveness writ large. Our nation should be our concern. Like ourselves individually, it



Byron

stands in need of forgiveness for many faults and it is that for which we should now pray.

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

"And, insomuch as we know that by (God's) divine law, nations, like individuals are subjected to punishments and chastisements in this world, may we not justly fear that the awful calamity of civil war which now desolates the land may be but a punishment inflicted upon us for our presumptuous sins, to the needful end of our national reformation as a whole people? ...

"We have grown in numbers, wealth and power as no other nation has ever grown. But we have forgotten God. ... It behooves us then, to humble ourselves before the offended Power, to confess our national sins and to pray for elemency and forgiveness."

Two years earlier, on Aug. 12, 1861, Lincoln called for a "day of humiliation, prayer and fasting for all the people of the nation." And this, for a people "afflicted with faction and civil war," was to be prayer "for the pardon of their past offenses and for a blessing upon their present and prospective action."

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

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

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

There is so much to think about when you begin to think of praying for national forgiveness.

Take an imaginative leave of your easy chair and let your inner eye rise high above the earth to look down not just on your own nation, but on the inequalities, unjust wars, hatreds, indignities, exploitations and all other moral offenses around the world

Let the spectacle of all this move you to beg God's forgiveness for the hardness of human heart that produces conditions like these. You are looking at the world from God's point of view now, so feel the pain as God might feel it in the bodies and minds of those who suffer.

See the struggles on the scale that God sees them. Make an act of faith in the healing power of divine forgiveness that can bring a wounded world into balance and back to its senses.

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

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

Cartoon Corner





Catholic Voices

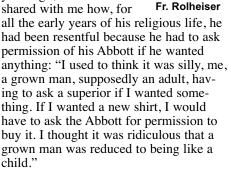
Nothing is ever really ours and it's all temporary

By Fr. Ron Rolheiser

Everything is gift. That's a principle that ultimately undergirds all spirituality, all morality, and every commandment. Everything is gift. Nothing can be ulti-

mately claimed as our own. Genuine moral and religious sensitivity should make us aware of that. Nothing comes to us by right.

This isn't something we automatically know. During a class some years ago, a Monk shared with me how, for



But there came a day when he felt differently: "I am not sure of all the reasons, but one day I came to realize that there was a purpose and wisdom in having to ask permission for everything. I came to

realize that nothing is ours by right and nothing may be taken as owned. Everything's a gift. Everything needs to be asked for. We need to be grateful to the universe and to God just for giving us a little space. Now, when I ask permission from the Abbott because I need something, I no longer feel like a child. Rather, I feel like I'm properly in tune with the way things should be, in a gift-oriented universe within which none of us has a right to ultimately claim anything as one's own.

This is moral and religious wisdom, but it's a wisdom that goes against the dominant ethos within our culture and against some of our strongest inclinations. Both from without and from within, we hear voices telling us: If you cannot take what you desire then you're weak, and weak in a double way: First, you're a weak person, too timid to fully claim what's yours. Second, you've been weakened by religious and moral scruples so as to be incapable of seizing the day. To not claim what is yours, to not claim ownership, is not a virtue but a fault. It was those kinds of voices that this monk was hearing during his younger years and because of them he felt resentful and immature.

But Jesus wouldn't echo these voices. The Gospels make it pretty clear that

Jesus would not look on so much that is assertive, aggressive, and accumulative within our society, despite the praise and envy it receives, and see this as admirable, as healthily seizing the day. I doubt too that Jesus would share our admiration of the rich and famous who claim, as by right, their excessive wealth and status. When Jesus states that it is harder for a rich person to go to heaven than for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle, he might have mitigated this by adding: "Unless, of course, the rich person, childlike, asks permission from the universe, from the community, and from God, every time he buys a shirt!" When Jesus tells us that children and the poor go to heaven more easily he is not idolizing either their innocence or poverty. He's idolizing the need to recognize and admit our dependence. Ultimately we don't provide for ourselves and nothing is ours by right.

When I was in the Oblate novitiate, our novice master tried to impress upon us the meaning of religious poverty by making us write inside of every book that was given us the Latin words: Ad Usum. Latin for: For use. The idea was that, although this book was given to you for your personal use, you ultimately did not own it. It's was just yours temporarily. We were then told that this was true of

everything else given us for our personal use, from our toothbrushes to the shirts on our backs. They were not really ours, but merely given us for our use.

One of the young men in that novitiate eventually left the order and became a medical doctor. He remains a close friend and he once shared with me how even today, as a doctor, he still writes those words, Ad Usum, inside all his books: "I don't belong to a religious order and don't have the vow of poverty, but that principle our novice master taught us is just as valid for me in the world as it is for any professed religious. Ultimately we don't own anything. Those books aren't mine, really. They've been given me, temporarily, for my use. Nothing belongs to anybody and it's good never to forget that!"

It's not a bad thing as an adult to have to ask permission to buy a new shirt. It reminds us that the universe belongs to everyone and that all of us should be deeply grateful that it gives us even a little space.

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. Now on Facebook: www.facebook.com/ronrolheiser.

Today, it matters more than ever who Jesus is to us

By Most Rev Robert Barron Auxiliary Bishop of Los Angeles

I have been reading, with both profit and delight, Thomas Joseph White's latest book, The Incarnate Lord: A Thomistic

Study in Christology. Fr. White, one of the brightest of a new generation of Thomas interpreters, explores a range of topics in this text—the relationship between Jesus' human and divine natures, whether the Lord experienced the



Bishop Barron

beatific vision, the theological significance of Christ's cry of anguish on the cross, his descent into Hell, etc.—but for the purposes of this article, I want to focus on a theme of particular significance in the theological and catechetical context today. Fr. White argues that the classical tradition of Christology, with its roots in the texts of the Gospels and the Epistles of Paul, understood Jesus ontologically, that is to say, in terms of his fundamental being or existential identity; whereas modern and contemporary Christology tends to understand Jesus psychologically or relationally. And though this distinction seems, prima facie, rather arcane, it has tremendous significance for our preaching, teaching, and evangelizing.

In the famous scene at Caesarea-Philippi, Jesus turns to his Apostles and asks, "Who do people say that I am?" He doesn't ask what people are saying about his preaching or his miracle-working or his impact on the culture; he asks who they say he is. St. John's Gospel commences with a magnificent assertion regarding, not the teaching of the Lord, but rather his being: "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God...and the Word was made flesh and dwelled among us." In his letter to the Philippians, St. Paul writes, "Though he was in the form of God, Jesus did not deem equality with God a thing to be grasped at," implying thereby an ontological identity between Jesus and the God of Israel.

Following these prompts—and there are many others in the New Testament—the great theological tradition continued to speculate about the ontology of the Founder. Councils from Nicea to Chalcedon formulated ever more precise articulations of the being, nature, and person of Jesus, and the most significant theologians of the early centuries—Origen, Irenaeus, Gregory of Nyssa, Maximus the Confessor, Augustine, etc.—tirelessly speculated about these same matters. This preoccupation with the being of Jesus signals, by the way, a major point of demarcation between Christianity and the other great religions of the world. Buddhists are massively interested in the teaching of the Buddha, but they are more or less indifferent to the ontology of the Buddha; no self-respecting Muslim worries about the existential make-up of Muhammad; and no Jew is preoccupied with the "being" of

Moses or Abraham. Fr. White points out that the time-honored practice of ontological speculation regarding Jesus comes to a kind of climax with the meticulously nuanced teaching of St. Thomas Aquinas in the High Middle Ages.

However, commencing in the eighteenth century with the thought of Friedrich Schleiermacher, Christology took a decisive turn. Attempting to make the claims of the Christian faith more intelligible to a modern audience, Schleiermacher explained the Incarnation in terms of Jesus' relationship to and awareness of God. Here is a particularly clear articulation of his position: "The Redeemer, then, is like all men in virtue of the identity of human nature, but distinguished from them all by the constant potency of his God-consciousness, which was a veritable existence of God in him." Armies of theologians—both Protestant and Catholic have raced down the Schleiermacher Autobahn these past two hundred years, adopting a "consciousness Christology" rather than an "ontological Christology." I can testify that my theological training in the seventies and eighties of the last century was very much conditioned by this approach. Fr. White strenuously insists that this change represents a severe declension in Christian theology, and I think he's right.

The abandonment of ontological approach has myriad negative consequences, but I will focus on just a few. First, it effectively turns Jesus into a type of super-saint, different perhaps in degree from other holy people, but not in kind.

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

More fundamentally, when the stress is placed on Jesus' human consciousness of God, the spiritual weight falls overwhelmingly on the side of immanence. What I mean is our quest for God, our search for the divine, and our growth in spiritual awareness become paramount, rather than what God has uniquely accomplished and established. When the Church says that Jesus is God, she means that the divine life, through the graceful intervention of God, has become available to the world in an utterly unique manner. She furthermore means that she herself—in her preaching, her formal teaching, in her sacraments, and in her saints—is the privileged vehi-

(Please See BARRON/23)

Today's art: Making form and chaos out of nothing at all

Catholic News Service

I am not the first to notice that ideas and styles spread across the fine arts, regardless of medium or genre. In the

middle of the 19th century, orchestras grew to 100 or more musicians, and symphonies were lush and tuneful.

Think of Wagner, Tchaikovsky and Saint-Saens. Novels had as many characters as orchestras had musicians. Their prose was lush and their stories absorbing. Think of Dickens, Tolstoy, Melville and Hugo.

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



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

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

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

Jackson Pollock represents the jumble style in painting. He didn't use an easel or a brush; he just dripped paint on the canvas. And while he was working, he once said, "I'm not aware of what I'm doing."

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

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

and we need to live in them.

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

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

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

(Please See GARVEY/22)

Origin of Hail Mary / Religious marriage but not civil?

By Fr. Kenneth Doyle Catholic News Service

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

(Northern New Jersey) A. As to the first part

of the prayer, you are half-right. The words in the very opening verse come from the angel Gabriel's greeting to Mary at the annunciation: "Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with you" (Lk 1:28, Revised



Standard Version Catholic Edition).

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

I know that this is an inconvenient answer and presents you with a hard choice, but your soul is worth far more than your pension. It sounds as though your new friend is a real blessing in your life, so I pray that you will marry in the church and take the financial hit.

Q. I have always observed the fast

and abstinence rules during Lent, but this year I find myself in a weird situation. Last summer, I decided no longer to eat any animal products -- a decision I made for my health.

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

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

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

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

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

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

It was not successful at all, and I began to suspect the reason was that I am from a Third-World country. So I created a fake profile that said that I was from Canada, and I used someone else's picture. No sooner had I done this than the work started flowing in. I deliver good-quality work and my clients have been nothing but satisfied.

(In fact, I now have three long-term

clients that I work with every week.) I know that I'm not scamming them, but the issue is that they don't know my real identity. So my question is this: Am I committing a mortal sin?

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

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

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

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

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

Questions may be sent to Father Kenneth Doyle at askfatherdoyle@gmail.com and 30 Columbia Circle Dr. Albany, New York 12203.

Texas / Nation

Texas history trots through town; trail riders visit Catholic school

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

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

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

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

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

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

"We've been coming to St. Ambrose for years," Trail Boss Bruce Fraysur told the Texas Catholic Herald, newspaper of the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston. Trail bosses like Fraysur ensure the safety of the riders, animals and equipment on the ride, as well as the public who watch and visit.

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

"Horsey!" the child shouted back.

"That's my horse's name too!" Fra

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

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

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



Members of the Sam Houston Trail Riders wave to students at St. Ambrose Catholic School in Houston March 3. (CNS photo/James Ramos, Texas Catholic Herald)

by grass enjoying the parish's fish fry.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Today, trail ride groups are permanent

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

Besides honoring generations of Western heritage, Sam Houston riders also support high school scholarships.

In all there were 13 trail rides, which converged in downtown Houston for a major parade March 4 to open the rodeo season.

Ramos is a staff writer and designer for the Texas Catholic Herald, newspaper of the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston.

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

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

The archdiocese said the cardinal will lie in repose March 27 at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Assumption in Baltimore. His funeral will be celebrated March 28 at the Cathedral of Mary Our Queen, also in Baltimore.

Pope Francis, in a papal telegram March 24, sent condolences to Baltimore Archbishop William E. Lori and the archdiocese, expressing gratitude for "Cardinal Keeler's years of devoted episcopal ministry" and his "long-standing commitment to ecumenical and interreli-

gious understanding. He called the cardinal a "wise and gentle pastor."

"One of the great blessings in my life was coming to know Cardinal Keeler," Archbishop Lori said in a statement March 23. "Cardinal Keeler will be greatly missed. I am grateful to the Little Sisters for their devoted care for the cardinal."

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

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

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

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

He called the late cardinal "a servant of

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

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

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

Pope Francis

Pope asks children to promise Jesus they will never be bullies

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

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

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



Milan. (CNS photo/Stefano Rellandini, Reuters)

The pope ended his daylong visit to Milan by participating in an expanded version of the archdiocese's annual

encounter for pre-teens preparing for confirmation. An estimated 78,000 people filled the city's famed San Siro soccer stadium; the archdiocese expects to confirm about 45,000 young people this year.

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

First of all, the pope said, it was his grandparents. One of his grandfathers was a carpenter, who told him Jesus learned carpentry from St. Joseph, so whenever the pope saw his grandfather work, he thought of Jesus. The other grandfather taught him to

always say something to Jesus before going to sleep, even if it was just, "Good night, Jesus."

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

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

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

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

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

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

By Cindy Wooden Catholic News Service

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Asked by Father Gabriele Gioia about evangelization efforts that do not seem to result in "catching fish," Pope Francis said the work of an evangelizer of all Christians — is to set out and cast the nets. Pope Francis greets the crowd during an encounter with confirmation candidates at San Siro Stadium in Milan March 25. (CNS photo/Stefano Rellandini, Reuters)



Resentment, complaints rooted in sin of sloth

By Carol Glatz Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY — People should stop blaming and complaining so they can be filled with God's joy and rise up to life's challenges, Pope Francis said.

Forgetting what joy is and languishing in self-pity come with the sin of sloth, the pope said March 28 in his homily during morning Mass at Domus Sanctae Marthae.

"It's a terrible disease: 'Well, I'm comfortable as is, I've gotten used to it. Life, of course, has been unfair to me.' You see resentment, bitterness in that heart," he said.

The pope's homily was a reflection on the Gospel of St. John reading in which Jesus heals a lame man at the

A large number of people who were ill, blind or crippled gathered at the pool because it was believed if a person immersed himself just when the waters were stirred by an angel, he would be healed. Jesus saw a lame man, who had been waiting by the poolside for 38

years, and asked him, "Do you want to be well?"

Pope Francis said, "This is beautiful; Jesus always

asks us this: Do you want to be healed? Do you want to

be happy? Do you want to make your life better? Do

you want to be filled with the Holy Spirit?"

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

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

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

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

"Sloth is a sin that paralyzes, makes us lame. It doesn't let us walk. Even today the Lord looks at each one of us, we have all sinned, we are all sinners," the pope said, but Jesus still looks and "tells us, 'Rise.'"

RCIA draws formerly homeless man to Christ; now he helps others find way

UXBRIDGE, Mass. (CNS) — After Todd Smith's mother died, he took care of other elders. After they died, he was left homeless

A piece of bread -- and the bread of life -- changed him.

Smith, 55, tells this story of his life, with help from other St. Mary Church parishioners in Uxbridge.

He and his father took care of his mother when she had cancer. She died in 2001 at age 65.

"I lost three-quarters of myself," Smith recalled. "I loved my mother. I haven't found that type of love 'til now."

Between then and now his life has been changed by the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults and the Light of the World evangelization program of the Diocese of Worcester.

Smith said that after his mother died, he became homeless. An elderly friend let him stay with her in exchange for taking care of her. He also took care of three other widows. After they died, he was homeless again.

"I lived in a junkyard," Smith told The Catholic Free Press, the diocesan newspaper. "Then we get to the good stuff: I went to the food pantry."

When he arrived at the People First Food Pantry Dec. 14, 2014, a worker there stuck out her hand -- to shake his and give him some bread.

"And then she put her arms around me and brought me inside for more food," Smith said. "That arm is special. ... It's God's hand. ... That bread just ... turned me around."

"You got the bread of life," Dwain Robbins, St. Mary's RCIA coordinator, told him

Smith's "angel" at the food pantry, who chooses to remain anonymous, did more than feed him. She and a Protestant minister helped Smith get a motel room. Others helped him obtain Social Security disability benefits, medical care and, eventually, an apartment.

When Smith asked about area churches, the food pantry angel told him about St. Mary's. So Smith met the pastor, Father Nicholas Desimone, who eventually helped him join the RCIA program.

He was received into the Catholic Church at the Easter Vigil in 2015. (He had been baptized in a Congregational church as a baby, but stopped attending services at age 18.)

"I felt God in me; I was flying high," Smith said of the night he became Catholic.

"We had to hold you down," Susan Leighton, St. Mary's administrative assistant, reminded him.

Leighton said Smith was very sick at the time. Parishioners were concerned he might not live to see the next Easter Vigil. They have stretched out the RCIA's post-vigil mystagogy so he can better understand what he has learned.

Mystagogy has its origins in Greek and means "to lead through the mysteries." It is a period of accompaniment for new Catholics as they better understand what it means to participate in the sacramental mysteries.

They taught him how to pray and study the Bible and he forced them to communicate the faith better, said Smith and fellow parishioners.

Now Smith is drawing others to Christ and the Catholic Church, including his father. A couple of his siblings also joined the Catholic Church, and he is working on a couple others.

How did he convince them to become

Catholic? "They knew I was wild and they were praying to God I'd get off the street."

Smith not only left the streets; he entered a family.

St. Mary's RČIA once was "very much a school model ... more about information," Robbins said. Now the program is more communal as candidates share their journeys. While it is not RCIA's role to meet a person's physical and emotional needs, the team did that with Smith.

RCIA team member Denise Rogan said Smith spends holidays at parishioners' homes, and Christmas gifts for him filled the church office.

"We all do things," Robbins said. "He's part of our lives now. We love him."

That community bond was strengthened with Smith's participation in the Light of the World retreat and in a small faith-sharing group.

"The Light of the World ... has awoken me," Smith said. "I said, 'This church is glowing in the night, beaconing everybody to come to it. ... They all become one with Jesus.'

OBISPO

(Para 3)

en su mano se convirtiera en color rojo mientras que ella lo mantuviera en su mano. Antes de que terminara de hablar, el huevo en la mano de ella se convirtió en un rojo brillante, y ella continuó proclamando la fe Cristiana a todos quienes estaban en la fiesta.

Nuestra costumbre de colorear los huevos de Pascua tiene su origen en aquella antigua historia. Como resultado, el huevo es en realidad un excelente símbolo del verdadero significado de la Pascua mucho mejor que un conejito o grama de plástico o chocolate.

Piénsalo. Si nos fijamos en la parte exterior del huevo, parece bastante muerto. Tiene una cáscara dura sin vida, como una piedra. Desde el exterior no se nota, pero realmente hay vida allí. Con tiempo, el pequeño polluelo picotea su camino hacia fuera, y emerge lleno de vida.

Por lo tanto, la cáscara dura de un huevo simboliza la tumba de Cristo, y el agrietamiento de la cáscara y la emergencia de una nueva vida simboliza su Resurrección de ante los muertos en la mañana de Pascua.

A medida que experimentamos el tiempo de Pascua este año, propongo que aprendamos a mirar la realidad con "Ojos de Pascua." Lo que llamo Ojos de Pascua es la habilidad de ver cualquier situación, no importa que problemático aparezca, a través de la perspectiva de la Resurrección, y ver que hay vida oculta en esa situación. He aquí unos ejemplos:

En la Diócesis de San Ángelo tenemos muchas prisiones. Al exterior, uno pasa por en frente de una prisión y se miran las paredes, las cercas, y el alambre de púas, y parece un lugar bastante muerto, sin vida. Por supuesto, las cosas no son fáciles en una prisión. Hay la soledad, el abandono, la desesperación, e incluso el abuso. Sin embargo, mi experiencia de ministerio en prisiones me ha demostrado que, dentro de los límites de esas paredes, también hay mucha vida.

Los que están en la cárcel son seres humanos con corazón y alma y mente. La gracia de Dios está obrando en sus vidas, especialmente a través de la dedicación de los capellanes y voluntarios que van para rezar con ellos allí. La conversión sucede, Dios toca los corazones, las amistades se forman, y las vidas cambian. Muchos utilizan su tiempo al máximo por medio de la lectura espiritual y el estudio de la Biblia. Algunos sirven como mentores de otros presos que están en busca de significado en sus vidas. Los presos a veces son capaces de participar en el Rito de

Iniciación Cristiana de Adultos, unirse a la Iglesia, y recibir los Sacramentos.

Debido a esta experiencia de los frutos positivos del ministerio en las cárceles, cuando veo a una prisión, puedo decir, "allí hay vida," detrás de esas paredes sin vida. Eso es mirar a través de los Ojos de Pascua

Aquí está otro ejemplo. Por toda nuestra diócesis hay hogares de ancianos y centros de vida asistida. Hay muchos cleros y voluntarios fieles que visitan regularmente a los residentes allí. Esta obra de misericordia exige mucho amor y paciencia, pero le recomiendo darle una oportunidad.

En mi experiencia de visitar a los residentes de hogares de ancianos, he encontrado que, a pesar de que llevan muchas cargas debido al envejecimiento y la enfermedad, podemos mirar en sus ojos y decir honestamente, "¡Dentro de ahí, hay vida!" Hermoso, único, y precioso. Eso es mirar con los Ojos de Pascua.

Me gustaría ofrecer un ejemplo más. Una noche estaba asistiendo a un banquete de recaudación de fondos de caridad en un hotel de lujo. En la mesa junto a mí estaba una pareja de mediana edad, juntos con su hija adulta. Ella tenía una condición médica grave, y ella era incapaz de hablar o sonreír o incluso alimentarse por sí misma. Sus padres amorosamente le daban sus ali-

mentos por cuchara, limpiando su cara después de cada bocado.

En medio de ese banquete lleno de gente, parecía que, para su hija, simplemente estar allí era una tremenda lucha. Su mamá y papá con paciencia, con atención, con toda tranquilidad la alimentaron, en un evento de alta sociedad llena de un montón de personas vestidas con trajes finos y vestidos elegantes.

¿Por qué harían tal esfuerzo? Porque podían mirarla con los Ojos de Pascua de Cristianos, y saber que, en el interior de su cuerpo paralizado, escondida detrás de su rostro inexpresivo, silenciosa pero real, se encontraba su maravillosa hija querida.

Dentro de ahí hay vida.

Debido a la victoria de Jesucristo en la mañana de Pascua, podemos ver las situaciones de nuestra vida con una nueva perspectiva - la familia, el matrimonio, los hijos adolescentes absorbidos en su teléfono celular, el vagabundo de la esquina, y nuestro propio dolor.

Si miramos cuidadosamente y arduamente, quietos y tranquilos, con paciencia, con suficiente fe, esperanza y amor, Dios nos permitirá descubrir que hay una chispa de vida, incluso en circunstancias aparentemente graves. Esa es una forma muy Cristiana de entender las cosas, y eso es mirar con los Ojos de Pascua.

BISHOP

(From 3)

it a try.

In my experience of visiting the residents of nursing homes, I have found that, even though they are carrying many burdens of aging and illness, we can look into their eyes and honestly say, "There's life in there!" Beautiful, unique, and precious. That's looking with Easter Eyes.

I'd like to offer one more example. One evening I was attending a charitable fund-

raising banquet in a luxury hotel. At the table next to me was a middle-aged couple together with their adult daughter. She had a serious medical condition, and she was unable to speak or smile or even feed herself. Her parents lovingly spoon-fed her, wiping off her face after each bite.

In the midst of that crowded banquet, it appeared that, for their daughter, just being there was a tremendous struggle. Her mom and dad patiently, attentively, peacefully fed her, in a high society event full of lots of people decked out in tuxedoes and evening gowns.

Why would they go to all that trouble? Because they could look at her with the Easter Eyes of a Christian, and know that, deep inside her palsied body, hidden behind her expressionless face, silent yet real, was their wonderful, beloved daughter.

There's life in there.

Because of the victory of Jesus Christ on Easter morning, you can look at the situations of your life with a new perspective —

your family, your marriage, your teenagers absorbed in their smart phone, the homeless guy on the corner, and your own pain.

If you look long and hard enough, still and quiet, patient, with enough faith, hope, and love, God will allow you to discover that there is a spark of life even in seemingly dire circumstances. That's a very Christian way of understanding things, and that's looking with Easter Eyes.

TRIDUUM

(From 9)

What considerations should be given for the paschal candle used at the Easter Vigil?

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

In the case of mission churches and cluster parishes, can multiple paschal candles be used for the Service of Light?

The Roman Missal, not envisioning the pastoral situation of mission churches or cluster parishes, specifies that only one paschal candle is used. To accommodate the particular circumstances, the Secretariat of Divine Worship might suggest that the candles from the mission churches or other parish churches could be present at the Easter Vigil, having been prepared in advance, and blessed alongside the main candle (perhaps having deacons or other representatives holding them). In keeping

with the rubrics, for the lighting and procession only one candle should be lit (the principal one, or the one which will remain in that particular church). As the other candles in the congregation are lit, the other paschal candles could be lit and held (but not high, in order to maintain the prominence of the one principal candle) by someone at their place in the assembly. Once all the candles are extinguished after the singing of the Exsultet, the other paschal candles are put aside. On Easter Sunday morning, those candles could be taken to each of the missions and carried, lit, in the entrance procession at the first Mass at each church and put in place in the sanctu-

How many readings should be proclaimed at the Easter Vigil?

One of the unique aspects of the Easter Vigil is the recounting of the outstanding deeds of the history of salvation. These deeds are related in seven readings from the Old Testament chosen from the law and the prophets and two readings from the New Testament, namely from the Apostle Paul and from the Gospel. Thus, the Lord meets us once again on our journey and, "beginning with Moses and all the prophets" (Lk 24:27) opens up our minds and hearts, preparing us to share in the breaking of the bread and the drinking of the cup. The faithful are encouraged to

meditate on these readings by the singing of a responsorial psalm, followed by a silent pause, and then by the celebrant's prayer. Meditation on these readings is so significant for this night that we are strongly urged to use all the readings whenever it can be done. Only in the case of grave pastoral circumstances can the number of readings be reduced. In such cases, at least three readings from the Old Testament should be read, always including Exodus 14.

How is the First Communion of the neophytes to be emphasized during the Easter Vigil?

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

What directions are given for the celebration of Masses on Easter Sunday?

Mass is to be celebrated on Easter Day with great solemnity. A full complement of ministers and the use of liturgical music should be evident in all celebrations. On Easter Sunday in the dioceses of the United States, the rite of the renewal of baptismal promises may take place after the homily, followed by the sprinkling with water blessed at the Vigil, during which the

antiphon Vidi aquam, or some other song of baptismal character should be sung. (If the renewal of baptismal promises does not occur, then the Creed is said. The Roman Missal notes that the Apostles' Creed, "the baptismal Symbol of the Roman Church," might be appropriately used during Easter Time.) The holy water fonts at the entrance to the church should also be filled with the same water. On the subsequent Sundays of Easter, it is appropriate that the Rite for the Blessing and Sprinkling of Water take the place of the Penitential Act.

Where is the paschal candle placed during Easter Time?

The paschal candle has its proper place either by the ambo or by the altar and should be lit at least in all the more solemn liturgical celebrations of the season until Pentecost Sunday, whether at Mass, or at Morning and Evening Prayer. After Easter Time the candle should be kept with honor in the baptistery, so that in the celebration of Baptism the candles of the baptized may be lit from it. In the celebration of funerals the paschal candle should be placed near the coffin to indicate Christ's undying presence, his victory over sin and death, and the promise of sharing in Christ's victory by virtue of being part of the Body of Christ (see Order of Christian Funerals, no. 35). The paschal candle should not otherwise be lit nor placed in the sanctuary outside Easter Time.

DIAZ

(From 2)

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

She quickly learned that people coming to the classes needed information on obtaining citizenship more than they needed to learn proper English. Diaz would take them to Dallas to a Catholic charities office for that information. People in the Dallas office told Diaz she needed to become a certified immigration official herself so that she could provide the service at home. She chuckles now remembering how she got started in her current career.

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

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

She loved those jobs, but Diaz has found her spiritual and professional home in serving immigrants and refugees. "It's a ministry for me," she said. "I feel like there is no other ministry I could have done that fills my heart like this." Bishop Michael Sis is among the many fans that Diaz can claim. He touts her knowledge of the complex legal rules that govern gaining legal status in the United States.

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

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

"At the Last Judgment," Sis said, "our Lord will judge each of us according to the criteria he puts forth in Matthew 25:31-4."

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

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

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

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

In the Diocese of San Angelo, Diaz sees clients primarily who are natives of Mexico or a Central American or African country. The Africans are refugees who are resettled in Abilene through a branch office of the International Rescue Committee. In San Angelo and Abilene combined, 34 countries are represented, Diaz said. Most of the people she sees speak either English or Spanish but Diaz can call in an interpreter if needed.

A typical case that Diaz sees almost daily came recently from an Abilene woman who is a United States citizen and is married to a Mexican native deported from Abilene five years ago.

By federal law, he could be barred from returning to the United States for another five years. Diaz is working with the family to gain a pardon so that the man can return to Abilene sooner to be with his wife and two young children, all of whom are U.S. citizens.

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

many as 15 times a day.
"It's sad," she said. "My heart just hurts for them."

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

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

That's no problem for Diaz, who keeps up with ever-changing immigration laws, with the assistance of webinars and inperson training sessions offered by CLINIC. Everyone's vigilance has heightened since Donald Trump was sworn in as president in January, vowing to fulfill campaign promises to get tough on immigration.

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

"There are programs that can help them," she said.

So far, Diaz said she hasn't heard of any issues with agents from the Border Patrol or the U.S. Office of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). In the past, local agents with those agencies have been courteous and helpful. Sometimes, if the person they stop for a traffic violation doesn't have a criminal background, agents will send them to Diaz to help them gain legal status

Diaz to help them gain legal status. "They're really good about helping

them out," Diaz said.

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

"I'm seeing a lot of concern," she said. Diaz puts in many long and sometimes stressful hours. But she is repaid many times over when, sometimes years later, she encounters people she assisted in getting family members into the United States legally.

"This is my family," they will say.
"This is who you helped me bring into this country."

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

"I challenge all who read this article," he said, "to pray with that biblical passage, remember Nelly's example, and think about what more we can do to assist."

GRN RADIO PROGRAM SCHEDULE

The Guadalupe Radio Network (GRN) operates 3 English & 1 Spanish language Catholic radio stations in the Diocese of San Angelo:

- Abilene 91.7 FM, KQOS
- Midland/Odessa 1180 AM-English
- Midland/Odessa 90.9 FM (Español)
- San Angelo 91.5 FM, KPDE

The GRN (Radio for Your Soul) is an EWTN Affiliate.

The Top 10 weekday programs (most are "live" call-in shows) are:

- 7 AM Mass (EWTN Chapel)
- 8 AM Catholic Connection (Mon./Tues./Wed./Thurs.)
- 9 AM More to Life with Greg & Lisa
- 10 AM Women of Grace with Johnnette Benkovic
- 11 AM Take 2 with Jerry and Debbie
- 12 PM The Doctor Is In with Dr. Ray
- 1 PM Called to Communion (Mon./Tues./Thurs./Fri.)
- 2 PM EWTN Open Line
- 3 PM Divine Mercy Chaplet; Kresta in the Afternoon
- 5 PM Catholic Answers Live

Schedule Exceptions

The GRN produces 3 other shows:

- Wed., 1 PM A Good Habit
- Fri., 8 AM GRN Alive
- · Sat., 11 AM We Sing our Faith

For a complete schedule, or to listen live, please go to: www.grnonline.com



(From 17)

Traditional artistic forms impose an order on the world, and offer us a way to understand it and appreciate its beauty. The point of postmodern art is to dispense with these structures and bring us face to face with brute reality.

Cage is right to speak of chaos. That's exactly how Ovid describes the primal state of things: "the face of Nature in a vast expanse/ was naught but Chaos uniformly waste./ It was a rude and undeveloped mass/ ... congested in a shapeless heap."

I've been thinking lately about creating a Fine Arts Council at the university, whose charge would be not to appreciate this representation of the world, but to rebel against it.

In the Catholic imagination, the God who created the heavens and the earth brought an order out of primordial chaos. Or in Ovid's words, "God, or kindly Nature, ended strife -- / ... he bound the fractious parts in tranquil peace."

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

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

GARVEY — YNOSTROSA -

(From 10)

told they are not strong enough, not capable enough, that their lives will be easier if they have an abortion. Talk about a slap in the face! Being a mother is a gift and once again the innocent babies are the ones that die because of your "abortion is no big deal" propaganda!

What about the life of the unborn baby? Odds are at least half of the babies aborted are girls. Baby girls that will never get to grow up and become women. What about their rights? What about the baby boys that are aborted? Baby boys that will never get to grow up and become men. What about their rights? Shame on you and shame on us all for letting this hap-

When a couple is planning to have a baby, wanting to have a baby, excited about having a baby – guess what? Right from the very moment they find out they are pregnant everyone says it's a baby! Who says, "I'm pregnant but don't get excited until it's a baby?" I mean it, have you ever heard anyone say that?!

Well, when a woman finds out that she is pregnant and everyone is not excited, it's still a baby. And more than that, there is always a couple praying for a baby they can adopt, praying for a baby of their very

Adoption is a loving life option that is not talked about enough. Adoption for the "human babies" needs to be promoted and advertised to let women and men of all ages know that there is a life choice out there for their unborn baby. Not everyone is ready to be a parent, so let's share the

news about adoption. I was blessed to have been adopted at birth and I am so thankful for my life.

I pray that someday abortions won't be legal anymore. I also pray that someday all people will come to see the true horror of abortion and that no one will choose to have one. Help is available for women who want to keep their babies and adoption is an option for those who are not able to raise their babies.

In closing, here are some numbers for you to think about:

- ▶ Number of abortions performed in the United States since Roe vs Wade 1973 -59,322,090.7
- Number of abortions performed by Planned Parenthood since 1970 -7,681,442.5
- ▶ Number of abortions performed by Planned Parenthood this year – 72,096.5
- ▶ Number of abortions performed in the United States this year after 16 weeks gestation - 9,892.7

We don't need House Bills filed to make a point. We need to save the babies who are dying from abortion – By the time you read this article the number of abortions will be higher in the United States and in the world. Worldwide there is an abortion every second. How many babies died from being aborted while you were reading this article?

Sincerely, Sharla Ynostrosa Pro-Life Blogger and Author San Angelo

KNICKERBOCKERS

(From 11)

must have become fact; the Word, flesh; God, Man. This is not 'a religion,' nor 'a philosophy.' It is the summing up and actuality of them all" (p.236). On September 28, 1931, Lewis took the final step. He and his brother, Warren, took a picnic to Whipsnade Zoo, with Warren driving his motorcycle and Jack in the side-car. As Lewis wrote in Surprised by Joy, "When we set out I did not believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and when we reached the zoo I did. Yet I had not exactly spent the journey in thought. Nor in great emotion. 'Emotional' is perhaps the last word we can apply to some of the most important events. It was more like when a man, after a long sleep, still lying motionless in bed, becomes aware that he is now awake" (p. 237).

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

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

During the Easter Season, the atoning death and resurrection of Christ are celebrated liturgically and in many other ways as we welcome His new life in us and kiss the past good-bye. If God gives us back something from our past, it will be a new gift that is no longer past but

present and meant to be part of our future, part of our new creation in Christ, a new creation of ourselves that is part of his entire new creation, a new heaven and a new earth. As St. John says in Revelation: "Behold the dwelling of God is with men. He will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself will be with them; he will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain any more, for the former things have passed away" (21:3-4,RSV).

> To Kiss the Past Good-bye Today I kissed my past good-bye

And then I see He's given back With sin and even all my good, The good was present in my past, And apple of the Father's eye And I delightedly unpack I welcomed now — at last I could, What will in present, future last. For He is raised beyond the tomb For now He'll always live in me And asks me to invite Him in As with Him hand-in-hand I go, To breathe away my circling gloom, With all my loved ones bend the knee Reveal in me what's always been. To Truth we're always meant to know.

BOOKS

(From 11)

face the truth about ourselves – our faults, our weaknesses, our sins – in light of the truth about God's unwavering love for us. Only by living the way God intended for us, by living in union with Christ, can our hearts' deepest desires be fulfilled.

But this is not the average person's impression of Catholic morality and certainly not that of the majority of young people, most of which has been shaped by the culture's individualistic outlook on life.

He addresses the fact that every age has had its bullies who shame or oppress people because of race, religion, color, or gender. We should always fight against bigotry of this sort and treat all people with dignity. Today we experience a new kind of bullying. It's what Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI call the "dictatorship of relativism," which, he said, "does not recognize anything as definitive and whose ultimate goal consists solely of one's own ego and desires."

Relativism is the idea that there is no objective truth, that each individual decides for himself what is true and what is right and wrong. A relativist would say that all truth claims are subjective, merely reflecting one's personal feelings, opinions, or desires. You can have your truth, and I can have my truth, but there is no the truth to which we are all accountable. The person who is not a relativist is often not tolerated in society. The pro-life woman, for example, who says that abortion is wrong is likely to be called "judgmental;" someone who says that marriage is between a man and woman will be labeled "intolerant;" the Christian college student who says that premarital sex is wrong will be mocked and brushed aside as being "rigid" or "out-of-touch."

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

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

How do we talk about morality in an age that no longer believes in moral truth?

In his book, Sri also helps us to rise above the mainstream "anything goes" attitudes around us and gives us greater clarity and confidence in talking about morality with relativistic friends – greater clarity about how to think with a classical moral worldview and greater confidence in sharing that beautiful vision with others. Please add this insightful book to your reading list.

An answer to life's questions can always be found, if we look for it. Remember to just focus 20 percent on the issue and 80 percent on the answer.

Sri teaches that social harmony is built on the inner harmony of individuals. A great society is built not just on good laws, but fundamentally on men and women of great moral character.

Whenever we encounter the myth that one's personal life choices don't affect others, it's important to point out that there are two ways to fail in life. We can fail morally by doing things that directly hurt others. But we can also fail by lacking in virtue, by not being the best we could be.

A prayer at Mass reflects these two aspects of human failure. When we confess our sins at the start of the liturgy, we express sorrow not just "...for what I have done" (the sins we have committed), but also "for what I have failed to do" (the good we did not do).

This reminds us that the way we live our lives will affect others, for better or worse. Though people often say they want to make a difference in the world, we must realize that everyone is going to do that. Everyone is going to leave their mark and have an impact on other people's lives. The question is whether it will be a good or a bad impact.

It's not enough to go through life avoiding doing bad things that directly hurt other people. If we don't play the game of life with excellence, others will suffer the consequences.

Fr. Richard Rohr reminds us that "Every viewpoint is a view from a point, and we need to critique our own perspective if we are to see and follow the truth all the way through."

Brenda Lehr is a member of the Diocesan Mission Council and a Catholic book enthusiast.

BARRON

(From 16)

cle through which this life now flows into human hearts and into the culture. It is easy enough to see that the transition from an ontological Christology to a consciousness Christology has conduced toward all manner of relativism, subjectivism, indifferentism, and the attenuation of evangelical zeal.

One of my constant themes when I was professor and rector at Mundelein

Seminary was that ideas have consequences. I realize that much of what Fr. White discusses in his book can seem hopelessly abstract, but he is in fact putting his finger on a shift that has had a huge impact on the life of the post-conciliar Church.

Bishop Robert Barron is an auxiliary bishop of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles and the founder of Word on Fire Catholic Ministries.

SANDOVAL

(From 15)

Association of the United States, said: "Neither the individual nor the common good is being valued in this race to repeal" the Affordable Care Act.

Richard Trumka, president of the AFL-CIO said: "Pope Francis has called on Catholics to be a true sanctuary. The next few years will define who and what we really are, as a labor movement and as a

church. Will we stand true to our moral values when it could really cost us something? We will be tested."

David Clotier, professor of theology at Catholic University, said, "It's kind of organize or die at this point. There has to be a decisive coming to grips with what you stand for."

Pray that their voices are never silenced.

DIVINA

(Para 14)

medio de nuestras propias cruces.

Jesús le dijo a santa Faustina Kowalska, la religiosa polaca del siglo 20 que recibió el mensaje de la divina misericordia, que el amor y la misericordia de Dios son para todos: "He abierto mi corazón como fuente viva de misericordia. ... En la cruz, la fuente de mi misericordia fue abierta de ancho por la lanza para todas las almas, ¡nadie he excluido!"

Sabemos lo que representa la cruz, pero, a veces, podemos verla con tanta frecuen-

cia que olvidamos su significado o lo que nos llama a forjar.

Antes de rezar las 14 estaciones de la cruz el verano pasado, los peregrinos de habla inglesa en Polonia durante la Jornada Mundial de la Juventud escucharon a la hermana Gaudia, miembro de la Congregación de las Hermanas de la Madre de Dios de la Misericordia. Ella dijo a los jóvenes que cada vez que pensaba en la misericordia de Dios, una imagen de la cruz aparecería en su cabeza.

"El amor, la cruz y la misericordia significan una sola cosa: dar vida a los demás", dijo.

La hermana entonces le pidió a los jóvenes que sostuvieran sus crucifijos o rosarios y que pensaran en las palabras "por mí" al mirar la cruz. "(Jesús) se hizo humano por mí, dejó su sabiduría, su enseñanza en la Biblia, para mí. Él realizó muchos milagros entonces y ahora por mí. Él dio su vida por mí", dijo. "No podría haber hecho nada más que eso, dar su vida por nosotros".

Es difícil no sentirse amado después de eso. Podemos demostrar que estamos convencidos de este amor a través de nuestras acciones, y dando vida a nuestros vecinos. A medida que nos acercamos a la temporada de Pascua, podemos continuar trabajando en las formas en que encontramos el amor y la misericordia que Cristo ya nos ha dado.

Para orar el Vía Crucis, visite www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/human-life-and-dignity/global-issues/middle-east/israel-palestine/upload/via-crucis-via-de-la-fe.pdf o www.franciscanos.org/ora-cion/viacruz00.htm.

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

CHIN

(From 14)

of divine mercy, that God's love and mercy are for everyone: "I have opened my heart as a living fountain of mercy. ... On the cross, the fountain of my mercy was opened wide by the lance for all souls -- no one have I excluded!"

We know what the cross represents, but, sometimes, we can see it so often that we forget its meaning or what it calls us to do. Before praying the 14 Stations of the

Cross last summer, English-speaking pilgrims in Poland during World Youth Day heard from Sister Gaudia, a member of the Congregation of the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy. She told the young people that every time she thought of God's mercy, an image of the cross would appear in her head.

"Love, the cross and mercy are about one thing: giving life for others," she said.

The sister then asked the youth to hold their crucifixes or rosary beads and to think

the words "for me" when looking at the cross. "(Jesus) became human for me, he left his wisdom, his teaching in the Bible, for me. He performed many miracles then and now for me. He gave his life for me," she said. "He could not have done anything more than that, to give his life for us."

It is hard not to feel loved after that.

We can show we are convinced of this love through our actions, and by giving life to our neighbors. As we approach the season of Easter, we can continue to work

on the ways we encounter the love and mercy that Christ has already given to us.

To pray the Stations of the Cross, visit www.usccb.org/prayer-and-worship/prayers-and-devotions/stations-of-the-cross/scriptural-stations-of-the-cross.cfm or www.archwinnipeg.ca/wcm-docs/youth_resources/youth_resource-1238107982.pdf. To pray with a video series of the Stations of the Cross, visit http://bustedhalo.com/video/virtual-stations-of-the-cross.

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From the Editor

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

By Jimmy Patterson

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

what looked to be a colostomy

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



Patterson

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

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

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

I rolled my window down, looked at her and smiled. She was rough looking. It had surely been another bad day. I asked her how she was.

"Hot day," she said.

It had in fact been a very hot day, almost 90 and not even clear of March yet. She wasn't complaining. Just stating fact. I shudder to think what the summer will be like for me in my comfy home. And for her and others like her in whatever

structure they live in. And on the street corner, no fans, no blissful cool air, and water only when someone decides to give it to them. Smiles or pleasant exchanges rare. Conversation rarer still.

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

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

In those few moments we shared, she told me her son was graduating in May. Weird, I thought. Homeless people on street corners have kids? Families? I'd never given it any thought, I guess. But of course they do. It's may be one of the few similarities we in our cars share with them and their cardboard signs.

Or is it?

We tend to make judgments about these street corner people when, in fact, we don't know anything about them at all. But that doesn't stop us. What if they decided they didn't want our money because they thought we had too much makeup or perfume or didn't like our music or because we had loud pipes.

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

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

I have two takeaways from my visits with these people. Neither made a move to my truck for money until I made it clear I was going to give. My second was this: just maybe a moment of my precious time was as important as five or ten of my bucks. Maybe feeling like an equal to a guy in an air-conditioned truck was as valuable to them at that moment as whatever the money will be used for. Drugs? Booze? Food? Rent? A graduation gift? Whatever. But, why should we care?

It was pretty obvious the woman wasn't faking it. Maybe she can't get any work because she's got just the one leg. But the guy with the colostomy bag? How can we be sure he even has can-

Whether he does or does not shouldn't change our mission.

Jesus said the poor in spirit are blessed. And he doesn't need our help in deciding who is and who isn't. He's got this.

Not to judge, but I would venture a guess that those on street corners begging for money fit that blessed-be-the-poor-in-spirit definition. And, if they are lying about their station in life to get a five or ten spot, that's an even lower form of emotional poverty. I would guess. If they are lying about cancer, that, too, would seem to require fairly low self-esteem.

While I make no endorsements on how people should spend their charitable dollars or encourage people to wantonly fraternize with those who stand on street corners, it was clear to me that human interaction, an exchange of a smile, a kind word, may be just as valuable to them as a little folding money. Warmth is free to give away, and may change a perception in the next person you see who seems to have lost hope or walked away from their dignity.

They are, after all, just people. Sinners. Sorta

INTERFAITH

(From 2)

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

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

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

Billy Ashley, pastor of Midland's Bethel Missionary Baptist Church, reminded the more than 200 in attendance of the Dream Act of 2010 which, according to U.S. Congress, estimates, would reduce the federal budget by \$1.4 billion per year and increase federal revenues by \$2.3 billion over a 10-year period. The Dream Act, which ultimately failed in the U.S. Senate after passage in the House, would have granted conditional residency with the ultimate goal of permanent residency for many undocumented residents.

The vigil also featured presentations by Ahmed el Sonbaty of the Muslim Association of West

Texas, Dr. Padmaja Patel and Fr. David Herrera, pastor of Our Lady of Guadalupe Church, who opened the program. The evening ended with the congregation being led in "Amazing Grace' by local musician Victor Ochoa. Alfredo Chaparro, of Midland, organized the event.

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

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

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

"The time to act is now, and it is up to us to do so," Nutter said. "It is not enough to speak truth to power. We must comfort and shelter those who suffer its abuse and injustice. To not do this ignores the universal call to love. As we move forward, let us listen and learn so we can bring the knowledge and wisdom necessary for this cause. Let us open our hearts with empathy, kindness, acceptance, fellowship and forgiveness, so that we can fill our labors with love. And despite our inevitable differences and diswho know we are part of something larger than





Top photo, left to right, Alfredo Chaparro, event organizer; Bishop Michael Sis; Dr. Patel, Hindu Association of West Texas: Harry Nutter, presidentelect. Unitarian Universalist Church of Midland: Ahmed el Sonbaty, Muslim Association of West Texas, and Fr. David Herrera, pastor of Our Lady of appointments, let us persevere as people of faith Guadalupe Church; bottom photo, attendees at the Interfaith Vigil.