US bishops take action to address abuse crisis

By Julie Asher | Catholic News Service

Pledging to “heal and protect with every bit of the strength God provides us,” the U.S. bishops’ Administrative Committee Sept. 19 outlined actions to address the abuse crisis, including approving the establishment of a third-party confidential reporting system for claims of any abuse by bishops.

It also instructed the U.S. bishops’ canonical affairs committee to develop proposals for policies addressing restrictions on bishops who were removed or resigned because of allegations of abuse of minors or adults.

It initiated the process of developing a code of conduct for bishops regarding sexual misconduct with a minor or adult or “negligence in the exercise of his office related to such cases.”

The committee also said it supported “a full investigation into the situation” surrounding Archbishop Theodore E. McCarrick, former cardinal-archbishop of Washington, “including his alleged assaults on minors, priests and seminarians, as well as any responses made to those allegations.”

The statement, released by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, came out of the committee’s biannual meeting held Sept. 11-12 at USCCB headquarters in Washington.

The Administrative Committee consists of the officers, chairmen and regional representatives of the USCCB, including Bishop Joe Vásquez of Austin. The committee, which meets in March and September, is the highest authority of the USCCB outside of the full body of bishops when they meet for their fall and spring general assemblies.

“This is only a beginning,” the committee said in its Sept. 19 statement. “Consultation with a broad range of concerned parents, experts and other

Bishop calls for Novena of Reparation Oct. 9-17

Bishop Joe Vásquez has asked all parishes to celebrate a Mass of reparation on Oct. 9. He will conduct a Mass of reparation Oct. 9 at 6:30 p.m. at St. Mary Cathedral in Austin. The Mass will initiate a Novena of Reparation Oct. 9-17. Suggested ways to observe this novena:

- Offer daily prayers for victims of abuse.
- Offer prayers for the church and ministers.
- Fasting (two smaller meals and one regular meal).
- Pray daily “A Prayer for Our Church” (see Page 2).
- Acts of penance, mercy and service.
- Participate in daily Mass.
- Pray the rosary individually or as a group.

For more, visit www.austindiocese.org/response-to-sex-abuse-scandal.
THE MISSION OF THE CATHOLIC SPIRIT

As the official newspaper for the Roman Catholic Diocese of Austin, the Catholic Spirit is dedicated to providing information, education and formation for the Catholic community of Central Texas. This mission calls for the newspaper:

• to provide readers with an understanding of our Catholic faith and traditions;
• to be a primary source of information on Catholic issues relevant to the community;
• to be a unifying element for faith communities, both rural and urban, throughout Central Texas;
• to show respect for and appreciation of all cultural groups and traditions;
• to emphasize topics affirming the Catholic community and life, while acknowledging the humanity of the community and examining, with courage, topics that challenge and encourage growth in the faith.

HOW TO SUBMIT INFORMATION

Deadline for submission of articles or information for the Catholic Spirit is the 10th of the month for publication in the following month’s edition. Deadline for the November issue is Oct. 10.

Submit material in one of the following ways:

• E-mail to catholic-spirit@austindiocese.org.
• Mail to Catholic Spirit, 6225 E US 290 HWY SVRD EB, Austin, TX 78723.

Catholic Spirit has unrestricted editing rights.

HOW TO SUBSCRIBE

Subscription rates are $12 for one year. To subscribe, send a check payable to Catholic Spirit to Catholic Spirit, 6225 E US 290 HWY SVRD EB, Austin, TX 78723. Members of a parish in the Austin Diocese may receive the newspaper for a reduced rate. Contact your parish staff for more information.

ADDRESS CHANGES

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A Prayer for Our Church / Una Oración por Nuestra Iglesia

Heavenly Father,
In every age, you have been our refuge. Yet again and still, we stand before you asking for your protection on your holy church.

For the victims of abuse and their families, pour out your healing and your peace.

For the bishops of this country, continue to inspire their decisions, and guide them with your Spirit.

For the thousands of good and faithful priests, who have followed your call to serve you and your people in holiness, sustain them by your grace. For the faithful who are angry, confused, and searching for answers, embrace them with your love, restore their trust, console them with your clear Gospel message, and renew them with your sacraments.

We place our church in your hands, for without you we can do nothing. May Jesus, our High Priest and true compass, continue to lead her in every thought and action — to be an instrument of justice, a source of consolation, a sacrament of unity, and a manifestation of your faithful covenant.

Grant this through that same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

— Rita Thiron (Federation of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions)

OFFICIAL APPOINTMENTS

Bishop Joe Vásquez has made the following appointments:

• Franciscan Father Albert Haase, as the new chaplain at Cedarbrake Catholic Retreat Center in Belton, effective Sept. 1.
• Father Jayaraju Polishetty, administrator of Our Lady of Lourdes Parish in Gatesville and St. Thomas Parish in Hamilton, effective Oct. 1.
• Father Timothy Vaverek, pastor of St. Mary, Church of the Assumption Parish in West, effective Oct. 1.
• Father Adam Martinez has been granted retirement status.

OBITUARY

Deacon Otto Weilert, 84, died Sept. 7. Services were Sept. 14. Ordained in 1995, he most recently served at Ascension Parish in Bastrop and St. Mary of the Assumption Mission in String Prairie. He is survived by his wife Evelyn, their sons and grandchildren.

Padre Celestial,
Tú has sido nuestro refugio en cada etapa de la vida. Una vez más y como siempre, nos ponemos frente a ti pidiendo tu protección para tu santa Iglesia.

Te pedimos por las víctimas de abuso y por sus familias, derrama tu sanación y tu paz sobre ellos.

Por los Obispos de este país, para que continúes inspirando sus decisiones, y guiándolos con tu Santo Espíritu.

Por los miles de sacerdotes fieles y buenos que han seguido tu llamado a servirte a ti y a tus fieles en santidad, sostenlos con tu gracia. Por los fieles que están furiosos, confundidos, y en busca de respuestas, abrázalos con tu amor, restaura su confianza, consuélanos con tu mensaje claro del Evangelio, y renuénanos con tus sacramentos.

Por la Nuestra Iglesia en sus manos, porque sin ti no hay nada que podamos hacer. Que Jesús, nuestro Sumo Sacerdote y verdadero compás, continúe guiándonos en cada pensamiento y acción – a ser una fuente de consuelo, un sacramento de unidad, y una manifestación de tu fiel alianza.

Te pedimos nos concedas todo esto a través del mismo Jesucristo, nuestro Señor, que vive y reina contigo en la unidad del Espíritu Santo, un solo Dios, por los siglos de los siglos. Amen.

— Rita Thiron (Federation of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions)
Healing, forgiveness sought with Mass, novena Oct. 9-17

By Carol Zimmermann and Shelley Metcalf

Bishop Joe Vásquez will celebrate a Mass of reparation on Oct. 9 at 6:30 p.m. at St. Mary Cathedral in Austin in response to the sexual abuse crisis in the church. The Mass will be a time to seek forgiveness for the sins of abuse and to seek healing for the victims of abuse.

“Because we are a people of faith, we must gather together in prayer begging God for forgiveness for those who have abused children and vulnerable people,” Bishop Vásquez said. “In this painful time, we, as believers, turn to God and pray and fast for the church to find healing and restoration.”

Knowing that most people will not be able to attend the Mass at the Cathedral, the bishop asks that all parishes celebrate a Mass of reparation on Oct. 9. The Masses celebrated on Oct. 9 will initiate a Novena of Reparation, Oct. 9. The Masses and novenas are being celebrated by bishops who have often prostrated themselves before the altar in a posture of repentance. They have met in parish halls to ask church leaders what went wrong and how the church should move forward. Their bishops have issued multiple statements on the crisis and many also have begun to urge Catholics to pray and fast for the church for healing.

These Masses and listening sessions are scheduled to continue through the remainder of the year with many dioceses posting upcoming date for events on their websites. Some dioceses also are using social media to address the crisis and respond to questions. The Diocese of Colorado Springs, Colorado, for example held a Facebook Live question-and-answer session on the crisis Sept. 13 with Bishop Michael J. Sheridan. The bishop planned to continue the Mass of reparation Sept. 24 at St. Mary’s Cathedral in Colorado Springs.

Several dioceses held Masses for healing Sept. 14, the feast of the Triumph of the Cross, or Sept. 15, the feast of Our Lady of Sorrows, emphasizing the significance of these dates as appropriate times for penance and seeking God’s grace.

“I want to pray today with you for those who have committed terrible sins, sins of sacrilege, sins that cry to heaven for vengeance,” said Bishop Robert C. Morlino of Madison, Wisconsin, during a Sept. 14 Mass at Bishop O’Donnell Holy Name Oratory at Holy Name Heights in Madison. Some dioceses had Masses for healing in August. In the Archdiocese of New Orleans, more than 1,100 people attended an Aug. 28 “Mass for Forgiveness and Healing” celebrated by Archbishop Gregory M. Aymond, previous bishop of Austin.

In his homily, the archbishop said he was overwhelmed by the number of people who had packed the historic church to join him in prayer and he made reference to Hurricane Katrina. The 13th anniversary of the storm was the next day.

Today, he said, “we are hit by another storm.”

The archbishop asked for forgiveness from victims and survivors of abuse, Catholics disillusioned and scandalized by the crisis, and priests, deacons and seminarians who now bear the burden of being “tainted by the sins of others.”

“We are now called in many ways to move forward, yes, as a wounded church. But as a wounded church, we can move forward. When someone is wounded, they can still walk, and we must move forward, asking for God’s mercy and healing,” he said.

Similar pleas came from other bishops at healing Masses nationwide. Bishop Frank J. Caggiano of Bridgeport, Connecticut, said in a Sept. 14 homily as at a clergy Mass of reparation at St. Augustine Cathedral that the “leadership of the church has failed in many ways; it has been tarnished” and healing will take a long time.

He said the scars for those who have been abused “may never go away” but he also urged the congregation of about 800 not to be “afraid of our wounds. Let them become the cracks through which the grace of Christ gets in and one day will set us free.”

The bishop stressed that the church can only move forward through repentance by “works of mercy and acts of charity” and by being transparent in all things, ending the “culture of secrecy in the church.”

The congregation applauded at the end of his homily and at the end of Mass when the bishop urged everyone to support the priests.

Some bishops have stressed that in the midst of this crisis they will devote time in fasting and prayer for healing in the church.

Others called on diocesan Catholics to join them. Some bishops urged Catholics to fast on the Sept. 14 and 15 feast days; others suggested Friday meatless fasts, as in Lent.

Bishop Paul J. Bradley of Kalamazoo, Michigan, called on diocesan Catholics to join him in more intense prayer and fasting during the following nine Tuesdays, praying an extra rosary on each of those Tuesdays as a weekly novena, meditating on the sorrowful mysteries.

“We will pray and fast for healing for all victims of sexual abuse, for a conversion of mind and heart on the part of those in need of repentance, and for a renewal in our individual commitment to follow Jesus with conviction, joy, and purity of heart,” he wrote in an Aug. 19 letter.

Bishop Thomas R. Zinkula of Davenport, Iowa, similarly urged Catholics to “set aside time for prayer: for the healing of the victims of abuse, in reparation for the sins of omission and commission that have led to this crisis (and) for our own conversion.”

He also urged Catholics to take up Lenten practices of fasting and almsgiving to be in solidarity with victims and survivors of abuse. Fasting could simply be from meat or from electronics, he said, and almsgiving could mean volunteering with ministries or community organizations that care for victims of sexual and physical abuse.

“The key is to choose something that will help remind us of those who have suffered abuse at the hands of the church,” he wrote in an Aug. 22 letter to diocesan Catholics.

“We are called to solidarity and to a deeper holiness. Solidarity with victims of abuse requires us to make sure that we do everything in our power, as individuals and institutions, to protect the most vulnerable in our communities. Prayer, fasting and almsgiving are a start, and the constant foundation from which we will need to build,” he said, adding that efforts can’t stop there, but should be ongoing.
By Ricardo Gandara | Correspondent

To sum up Franciscan Father Albert (pronounced Al Bear) Haase’s story of a 35-year vocation to the priesthood as merely service to God and his people, is shortchanging a fulfilled life marked by destiny.

As a boy growing up in New Orleans, he dug holes in the backyard believing he would get to China. As a Franciscan, his first assignment was as a missionary in China. As a newborn, minutes out of the womb on Holy Thursday, Father Haase’s story goes that the tending doctor slapped his behind and said, “Let’s begin in the name of the Father, the Son…” He was ordained a priest in 1983.

There have been numerous “signs” like that throughout his 63 years. Two of his sisters are religious sisters as well. Courtney is a cloistered Franciscan nun in New Hampshire. His older sister Bridget is an Ursuline nun in Boston.

“It’s the holy water in my blood,” said Father Haase, motioning to his left wrist.

Now, the witty and upbeat priest is the new chaplain at Cedarbrake Catholic Retreat Center in Belton, which is owned and operated by the Diocese of Austin. In his new position, he has sacramental duties, such as celebrating Mass and hearing confession.

“I will like the feeling of the grass under my feet,” he said referring to the many miles he has logged as an itinerant preacher.

More importantly, he has a new role of guiding, teaching and developing spiritual directors. In October, he is presenting at retreats in Marble Falls and College Station. “This is where I talk about the spiritual journey being a process of transformation,” he said.

He will also be preaching and making presentations at parish missions throughout the diocese.

Father Haase said he often second-guesses leaving China where he entered at age 13 when his father committed suicide.

“Dad’s death gave me an unshakable faith in God as father. I had no physical father but I had a heavenly father,” he said.

He preaches about the traumatic event and is often approached by people who have also lost a loved one through similar circumstances.

“They say my talk gives them hope,” he said.

His writing has been a great blessing, he said.

“Writing has been the wonderful surprise of my life,” he said.


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“For example, he teamed up with a Protestant churches.

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Visit www.austindiocese.org to find links to his books, DVDs and CDs.

Visit www.austindiocese.org/cedarbrake for a schedule of retreats coming up at Cedarbrake Catholic Retreat Center in Belton.

Franciscan priest is on a mission at Cedarbrake

Come and Join Us

For the Annual Feast Day Celebration of Our Lady of Schoenstatt with

Bishop Joe Vásquez
Main Celebrant

Holy Mass, 11:00am Sunday, October 21

All are invited to stay after Mass for lunch, games, and fun activities for the entire family

Visit our website at www.schoenstatt.us or call 512-330-0602 for more details

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225 Addie Ro Rd Austin, TX 78746

Our Lady of Schoenstatt with

Our Lady of Schoenstatt

Feast Day

Our Lady of Schoenstatt

Successful people often have formative experiences that influence their lives. Father Haase’s came at 1983 when he was ordained a priest.

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Austin couple makes it their mission to mission

By Carla Smith | Correspondent

“Life is a mission. Every man and woman is a mission; that is the reason for our life on this earth. To be attracted and to be sent are two movements that our hearts, especially when we are young, feel as interior forces of love; they hold out promise for our future and they give direction to our lives,” Pope Francis writes in his 2018 World Mission Day message.

This year the church celebrates World Mission Sunday on Oct. 21. The day is set aside for Catholics worldwide to recommit themselves to the church’s missionary activities through prayer and sacrifice.

On World Mission Sunday every parish will take up a special collection, which goes to support priests, religious men and women and lay leaders who offer the Lord’s mercy and concrete help to the most vulnerable communities in missions around the world.

Bill and Susan Stavinoha, parishioners of St. Thomas More Parish in Austin, have made it their mission to share their time, talent and Christ with the world, most recently in Honduras.

The Stavinohas, both of whom work in the medical field, were looking to find volunteer opportunities that aligned with their Catholic faith and professions when they heard about Mission Doctors Association. They attended a meeting in 2010 and the rest, as they say is history.

The couple has participated in missions in Mexico and Peru but recently returned after spending the first part of the year in Honduras working in a home that cares for disadvantaged children. This was their fourth time to work in Honduras, where they helped in the surgical center. It’s a place they truly feel is established and ready to meet the challenges that are faced.

“With limited resources it is always challenging to care for a patient’s physical ailments and maintain respect for one’s dignity,” Susan said. “We are often redirected to the essential premises and basic promise of our medical profession.”

Mission Doctors Association was founded in 1959 and today offers both short and long-term options for Catholic doctors and their families interested in serving in Africa or Latin America to share their gifts and live their faith in missions. The group was also selected this year to participate in the Diocese of Austin’s Missionary Cooperative Plan, which assigns groups to make appeals at parishes in support of their missions.

The Stavinohas try to live by practicing what they preach and following St. Francis of Assisi to preach the Gospel at all times and use words if necessary. A daily reminder of this was painted on the side of a church the couple passed daily on their way to the clinic in Honduras, reminding them of the power of actions, prayer and helping others.

“Jesus was explicit and plain in telling Peter how to follow him in John 21 when he instructed him to ‘feed my lambs, tend my sheep, and feed my sheep,’” they said. “But how often do we, while distracted by our attempts to find the right words, walk past the lambs and the sheep on our very own trail?”

The diocesan Office of Mission and Mission Education strives to promote a passion for missionary activity through mission education throughout the diocese and is available to support anyone looking to answer the call of evangelization, said Vianey Hernández, the diocesan mission coordinator.

The office also provides free educational materials and resources to assist teachers and leaders in passing on the mission of the church. Additionally, the office can provide groups with pre-mission training and post-mission debriefing as well as help guide leaders in planning local mission experiences within the diocese.

There is also an app available through Missio (www.missio.org), the official online platform of the pope’s Pontifical Mission Societies, which allows people to sponsor a fundraiser for an overseas mission project or embrace an existing one. Big or small, local or overseas, opportunities to serve in and support missions are available on many levels and in many forms, Hernández said.

“For those who are unable to participate in international trips, their call is to serve at home,” she said. “Whether in their own parish, community or diocese, they can serve and evangelize where they are and support missions through prayer and financial contributions.”

In the meantime, the Stavinohas said they hope to continue supporting missionary work in Honduras and are humbled by what they have witnessed.

“We have repeatedly witnessed the active embrace of human dignity expressed in so many ways by ordinary people with extraordinary love and respect for one another,” they said. “God willing, we will continue to volunteer for four months yearly and may we all quietly put our feet on the path illuminated by our Lord as we walk the walk and trust in the Holy Spirit to guide us along.”

For more information on missions, contact the Office of Mission and Mission Education at (512) 949-2407 or e-mail vianey-hernandez@austindiocese.org.
Upcoming retreats

Listening to the Voice of God retreats will be offered from 9 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. on Oct. 23 at St. John the Evangelist Parish in Marble Falls and on Oct. 30 at St. Joseph Parish in Bryan. The journey is a process of being transformed by the Spirit of God into the image of Christ for others. Franciscan Father Albert Haase, popular author and retreat director, will facilitate this day. The cost is $40 and includes lunch.

Reflections on the Spiritual Journey will be offered Nov. 2-4 at Cedarbrake Catholic Retreat Center in Belton. Dorothy's journey in the Wizard of Oz can give us an insight into the steps and curves of the true spiritual journey home. Come along, click your heels and enjoy this journey down the Yellow Brick Road of Life. Franciscan Friar Johnpaul Cafiero, a former police officer and currently the chaplain for the Illinois State Police, will present this weekend. The cost for this retreat is $225 for a private room, $180 for a shared room and $100 for commuters.

For more information and to register, visit www.austindiocese.org/cedarbrake or call (512) 780-2436.

Volunteer training for prison/jail ministry

The Criminal Justice Ministry of the Diocese of Austin in conjunction with TDCJ’s Travis County State Jail will host a volunteer training/orientation session Oct. 13 from noon to 4 p.m. at the diocesan Pastoral Center. For more information, visit www.austindiocese.org/volunteer-with-the-tdcj. To register, contact John Gilluly at (512) 949-2460 or john-gilluly@austindiocese.org.

A conversation on dating and marriage

Love and Responsibility: A Conversation on Dating and Marriage will be held Oct. 26-27 at St. John Neumann Parish in Austin. The weekend will feature presentations, small group discussion, social events, prayer, fellowship and more. Space is limited so register now! For more information and to register visit www.jpiievents.com or call (512) 766-5798. This event is presented by the National Catholic Singles Conference and CatholicATX, a young-adult ministry of the Diocese of Austin.

Men: Are you being called to the diaconate?

Men between the ages of 30 and 59 sensing God’s call to the permanent diaconate should discuss this with their pastors and obtain his permission to attend (with their wife, if married) one of the following Inquiry Sessions (offered in Spanish and English):

- Oct. 21 at the Pastoral Center in Austin
- Nov. 18 at St. John the Evangelist Parish in San Marcos
- Dec. 16 at St. Mary Parish in Temple
- Jan. 20 at the Pastoral Center in Austin
- Feb. 17 at St. Mary Parish in Brenham
- March 17 at Eagle’s Wings Retreat Center in Burnet
- May 5 at the Pastoral Center in Austin

These sessions will explore the diaconate, discernment methods, qualities and characteristics sought in applicants, the formation journey, the wife’s participation in formation and the application process. For more information, call (512) 949-2459 or visit www.austindiocese.org/diaconalformation.

Celebrate Our Lady of Guadalupe on Dec. 1

A diocesan celebration in honor of Our Lady of Guadalupe will be held Dec. 1 in downtown Austin. The event will begin with a procession. Attendees will gather at 7:30 a.m. at St. Mary Cathedral in Austin for announcements and depart in procession at 8 a.m. The procession will end at San José Parish in Austin, where Mass will be celebrated at 10 a.m. with fellowship to follow. For more information visit www.austindiocese.org/olg-celebration.

Marriage Encounter Weekend coming up

Married couples are invited to strengthen, renew and rekindle their marriage sacrament by attending an upcoming Worldwide Marriage Encounter Weekend Nov. 2-4. The emphasis of Marriage Encounter is on communication between husband and wife, who spend a weekend together away from the distractions and the tensions of everyday life, to concentrate on each other. For more information, visit www.austindiocese.org or call (512) 667-9963 or e-mail wwmeaustin@gmail.com.
Christmas in Rome Sweepstakes

Read two articles this October and get a chance to win.

Enter at Aleteia.org/ChristmasInRome
All parishes, schools will participate in #iGiveCatholic

By Catholic Spirit Staff

Gaining steam and impact, the Diocese of Austin will join 28 other dioceses for the third year to participate in #iGiveCatholic, a Catholic giving day on Nov. 27.

The #iGiveCatholic campaign is a quick 24-hour online effort organized by The Catholic Foundation of the Archdiocese of New Orleans to support the work of Catholic schools, parishes, ministries and other organizations. Throughout this giving day designed to directly support parish projects, Catholic school initiatives, or Catholic organizational efforts, individuals can go to the iGiveCatholic.org home page and click on any specific ministry listed there to make a donation with a credit card.

Last year 17 partner dioceses (more than 600 ministries) collected more than $3 million in gifts on the international giving day (#GivingTuesday) with #iGiveCatholic. The Diocese of Austin raised more than $95,000 from 800 donations. More than 25 parishes participated in the diocesan campaign, as well as six Catholic organizations and 11 Catholic schools.

This year all parishes and Catholic schools in the Austin Diocese will have the opportunity to receive online gifts through a new partner GiveGab. #iGiveCatholic is held each year in conjunction with #GivingTuesday, which is celebrated on the Tuesday following Thanksgiving (in the U.S.) and the widely recognized shopping events Black Friday and Cyber Monday.

For up-to-date information from the Diocese of Austin, visit us online www.austindiocese.org
On Facebook search “Diocese of Austin”
On Twitter, go to @AustinDiocese

#GivingTuesday kicks off the charitable season, when many focus on their holiday and end-of-year giving. All Catholic schools, parishes and Catholic organizations affiliated with the Diocese of Austin can be recipients of donations at www.iGiveCatholic.org.

Scott Whitaker, the diocesan secretary director of Stewardship, Development and Communications, invites all Catholics to consider giving to their parish, school or favorite Catholic organization on #GivingTuesday.

“The #iGiveCatholic campaign is an opportunity to impact our Catholic community in a positive way. Even a gift of $25 makes a difference,” Whitaker said.

Contact Margaret Kappel at (512) 949-2444 margaret-kappel@austindiocese.org for more information.

To give back on Giving Tuesday: Nov. 27, visit www.iGiveCatholic.org.

CATHOLIC SPIRIT
CENTRAL TEXAS
By Kanobia Russell-Blackmon | Correspondent

It was a day for spiritual reflection, healing and nourishment. Close to 900 women attended the third annual diocesan Catholic Women’s Conference Sept. 8 at Westlake High School in Austin. The day was also a celebration of the Blessed Mother.

Bishop Joe Vásquez opened the conference with the Mass of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary. The music was led by His Own, a music trio of women.

During his homily, Bishop Vásquez expressed gratitude to women for living out their Catholic faith and “for being women committed to loving the church and serving others and bringing the Good News of Jesus Christ to many places.”

The bishop highlighted the importance of family and women in the church. He reminded the participants the only perfect family was the Holy Family, and this is the example we must follow. He said much is owed to women and mothers in the church.

“The church is in good hands because we have good dedicated women who love their families, love their children, and love their husbands,” Bishop Vásquez said.

Continuing to focus on the role of Mary and women in the church, Judy Landrieu Klein spoke about the importance of Mary and women in the church today. Klein is a Catholic theologian, founder of Memorare Ministries, and author of “Mary's Way: The Power of Entrusting Your Children to God.”

In her keynote address, she revisited the concept of what it means to be women in Christ, expressing that Mary is the ideal model of the Christian woman. Klein also referenced St. John Paul II’s love for the Blessed Mother and his promotion of women in the church, saying, he described women as “teachers of peace, lovers of others, and bearers and guardians or life.”

During Klein’s personal testimony, she admitted there was a time she was angry at some of the men in her life and about things that happened to her. She admitted that once she came to know Mary, it changed her life.

“She gave me the gift of forgiveness for the people who had hurt me. She gave me an understanding of myself as a woman that I had not learned in this culture. She gave me mercy and love for men,” Klein shared.

She encouraged women to embrace Mary because “this is the moment to become women in the image of Mary who will transform the church and the world through love.” She went on, “You ladies are the new evangelization of the church and the world. You ladies are what’s meant to happen in the church right now to change and transform the culture,” Klein said.

“We don’t do this in the image of the world. We do it in the image of Our Lady,” she said.

In her closing words, Klein challenged women to ramp up their prayer life. She explained that God wants to dialogue with all of us and that he is ready to listen, saying, “God knows you, he loves you and he has a plan and purpose for your life, particularly at this moment in time.”

The conference also included several breakout sessions, each with a speaker who shared personal testimonies and their relationships with the Lord. Participants were able to go to confession and spend time in prayer with others.

Participants expressed energy and hope after hearing the powerful messages from Bishop Vásquez, Klein, and the other speakers. Krystal Mercado, a participant, expressed, “I just want to go home and share that love that I received and all the gifts that I received and continue to use everything that I learned today in my everyday life.”

Other participants were equally as energized and hopeful. Michele Jeanmarie explained, “I got from the conference how faith is so deep, how faith is so real, it is almost tangible.”

Rhonda Butler said it was important to take what was discussed at the conference into the greater world. “If we can have the togetherness that we have here and the communal spirit and the love of Christ and put it out there in schools and everywhere else, it would be a whole new world,” she said.

Juliana Rueda, the diocesan coordinator of evangelization and outreach, led the preparations for the women’s conference. She was very pleased with the turnout and the feedback from participants.

“My hope is that women who attended the conference had an opportunity to reconnect to their faith and were inspired to continue sharing the Good News of Christ from Generation to Generation,” Rueda said.

Plans are in the works for the 2019 Catholic Women’s Conference. Details will be announced as they are available at www.austindiocese.org.
HopeAustin seeks to end hunger one child at a time

By Enedelia J. Obregón | Senior Correspondent

Hundreds of schoolchildren with no food at home don’t look forward to weekends.

To improve their situations, Monica von Waaden and Zee Narimar started HopeAustin, a nonprofit that provides weekend meals to students who receive subsidized meals at school but are food insecure at home. The program now serves 240 children in 20 schools in the Round Rock Independent School District (RRISD) and 100 children in three schools in the Leander Independent School District (LISD).

“There is a growing need, even in schools in neighborhoods considered wealthy,” von Waaden said.

RRISD provides free food services for 266 homeless students and 38 foster students. Several weekend food programs serve 1,240 students weekly. The district has 2,755 students receiving free or reduced lunches, not including educational-employment and pre-kindergarten programs, since those students eat for free under Texas Education Agency guidelines. LISD has more than 9,000 students enrolled in free or reduced lunch programs.

HopeAustin is entering its third year. The founders — whose children are out of school — met when Narimar’s youngest and von Waaden’s oldest were in elementary school. They built years of experience organizing volunteers in PTA programs school such as the RRISD PTA Clothes Closet. Von Waaden, a parishioner at St. Thomas More Parish in Austin, also volunteers with Mobile Loaves and Fishes, a nonprofit that feeds the homeless.

A few years ago, von Waaden and two other women formed Chicktime Austin under the umbrella of a national volunteer organization called Chicktime. When the two other women left Chicktime Austin, she and Narimar formed HopeAustin.

“I grew up in a family that did philanthropy,” said von Waaden, who grew up in El Paso. “That’s just what we did. Three times a month we’d go across the border and take food to people.”

While overseeing the Clothes Closet, von Waaden saw a need for food among many of those families. The need is not just in neighborhoods considered to be poor, she said.

“Hungry children are everywhere,” von Waaden said.

Narimar grew up in India with a single mother. Extreme poverty and hunger were everywhere.

“She always provided meals for us,” Narimar said. “But it was difficult.”

She said it breaks her heart that there are still children going hungry in a country as wealthy as the U.S.

“Food is such a basic need,” Narimar said.

Since both women had spent years helping children and were especially concerned about hunger, they decided to focus on childhood hunger with their new nonprofit.

Putting their organizational skills to work, they began with a small storage unit that Chicktime had used. They began with 100 meals. Soon it was 400. Then 800. As they hit 1,000, they realized they needed larger storage space and moved to their present location.

Now, they rent an air-conditioned storage unit that can hold almost 3,000 prepared bags. In the unit they store the pre-packaged food they purchase and then gather three times in the fall semester and about four times in the spring semester to put together meal kits in plastic bags with the help of volunteers. Each bag contains nine items the children can prepare for consumption at home on weekends.

On a recent Sunday morning, dozens of volunteers from the Westwood High School baseball team, Young Men’s Service League from Round Rock and the National Charity League gathered to package 2,600 meals. In warm weather they meet in the morning; in cold weather they meet in the afternoon.

Volunteers lugged large cartons of items such as macaroni and cheese, tuna fish, applesauce and canned chips from the warehouse to outdoor tables for other groups to put in individual bags.

Another group — mostly moms — pressed as much air as possible out of the bags before tying them in a knot and placing them in large bins. The bags need to be small enough to fit in a child’s backpack.

Another group placed them where the cartons of food had previously been stored. On the day of delivery to schools, another small group will take the bags to the schools and leave them in the front office.

“Only the principal and counselor know who the children are,” von Waaden said. “It’s to protect their privacy.”

The two women and a handful of volunteers do the bulk of the shopping. St. Thomas More Parish recently held a food drive to stock the warehouse, and von Waaden said other parishes are welcome to do the same.

Narimar said the two are grateful to the many volunteers who help.

“We can’t do this by ourselves,” she said. “We need the help of the community and of businesses to end childhood hunger in the community we live in. If each one of us does something, it makes a huge difference.”

Even though she is not Catholic, Narimar remembers well the words of St. Teresa of Calcutta, “If you can’t feed a hundred people, then feed just one.”

For more information about HopeAustin, visit www.Hope4Austin.org or visit them on Facebook at www.facebook.com/Hope4Austin. To volunteer or hold a food drive, contact board@hope4austin.org or (512) 648-3613.
The Bishop John McCarthy Memorial Fund has been established.

Funds will be distributed to the Bishop John McCarthy Endowment in the Catholic Foundation, Maryknoll, Casa Marianella and St. Louise House of Austin.

Gifts may be mailed to 6225 E US 290 HWY SVRD EB Austin TX 78723 or made online at www.austindiocese.org (click Donate button).

Most Reverend John E. McCarthy, D.D.

Born: June 21, 1930

Ordained to the Priesthood: May 26, 1956

Ordained to the Episcopacy: March 14, 1979

Bishop of Austin: 1986-2001

Died: Aug. 18, 2018
Synod to showcase young Catholics’ needs, gifts

By Cindy Wooden | Catholic News Service

The Synod of Bishops meets Oct. 3-28 to look at the world and the Catholic Church through the eyes of teenagers and young adults and find ways to encourage their enthusiasm and dreams, help them sift through the possibilities life offers them to serve others and resist the temptations that come their way.

Pope Francis will preside over the synod, which will bring together more than 300 cardinals, bishops, priests, religious and lay experts, including young people.

In addition to their personal experience, synod participants will have at their disposal a working document that was based on: input from bishops’ conferences, religious orders, offices of the Roman Curia and Catholic organizations; on online survey open to anyone 16-29 years old; and a document prepared by more than 300 young people who met in Rome in March at the invitation of the pope.

But just to make sure, young voices are still ringing in their ears, Pope Francis has invited hundreds of young people to join synod participants Oct. 6 in the Vatican audience hall for an evening of music and of young people talking about the search for their identity, hopes for their relationships and ideas for living a life of service and self-giving.

The theme for the synod is: “Young people, the faith and vocational discernment.”

The synod is not focused on increasing vocations to the priesthood and religious life, although that obviously is one of the concerns the pope and participants will discuss.

The real topic is, in essence, the church, its present and its future.

Addressing the presynod gathering in March, Pope Francis said the church and its members must reach out, ask what God wants of them and continually find new ways to respond to the hopes and needs of the world’s people.

Of course, he said, everyone must “keep an eye on the roots” of the church and preserve its essential teachings, but they also must find creative ways to share those teachings and reflect on how the Gospel responds to people’s questions today.

Young people, he said, are the ones who can help the church fight “the logic of ‘it’s always been done this way,’” which he described as ‘a poison, a sweet poison that tranquiliizes the heart and leaves you anesthetized so you can’t walk.”

But to equip young people to take their rightful place in the church, church leaders must listen to them, be as honest as possible in responding to their questions and pass on to them the art of discernment.

Discernment, according to the synod working document, is a prayerful process that “leads us to recognize — and become attuned with — the action of the Spirit in true spiritual obedience. In this way, it becomes openness to new things, courage to move outward and resistance to the temptation of reducing what is new to what we already know.”

“Discernment is listening, first and foremost, that can also become a driver for our actions, the ability to be creatively faithful to the one single mission the church has always been entrusted with,” the document said.

But reaching young people, educating them in the faith, preparing them for discernment and helping them live as Christians in the world involve addressing myriad issues, so the synod is expected to be broad.

For example, in mid-September the bishops’ conferences of East Africa published a list of the priorities their delegates will address at the synod: “Catechesis to counter the impact of religious fundamentalism and Pentecostalism; (the) institutional vocational status of single persons with no particular consecration; training of spiritual directors; as well as formation for active citizenry in politics; dignity of women; and civil, social and political engagement.”

The East African bishops also have members who will address the synod on: Catholic education; digital technology; unemployment; the liturgy; “situations of war, violence and young migrants; the role of families and life choices; and formative and social accompaniment.”

The 300 young adults who met in Rome in March mentioned those issues, as well as others. But underlying all their concerns was a request that church leaders recognize them as full members of the Catholic community, take their concerns and questions seriously and make a commitment to being real role models and mentors.

The young adults, most of whom work for the church or are very active in their parishes or Catholic movements, said young Catholics need better education in what the church teaches. But they also need patient answers when they have questions about church teaching that do not seem to coincide with the values and practices they absorb from their cultures.

At the same time, speaking for themselves and their peers, the young adults did not just stretch out their hands asking for help. They also offered it, if church leaders were willing to open space for them.

“The church must involve young people in its decision-making processes and offer them more leadership roles” on a parish, diocesan, national and international level, they said.

“The young church also looks outward,” their statement said. “Young people have a passion for political, civil and humanitarian activities. They want to act as Catholics in the public sphere for the betterment of society as a whole. In all these aspects of church life, young people wish to be accompanied and to be taken seriously as fully responsible members of the church.”

God is patient, even with failures, pope tells young Lithuanians

By Cindy Wooden | Catholic News Service

Meeting young Lithuanians in Vilnius, Pope Francis said he wanted a relaxed conversation, like they were sitting in a pub drinking “a beer or a gira,” a slightly alcoholic beverage made from fermented rye bread.

Outside the city’s Cathedral of Sts. Stanislaus and Ladislaus, which has been destroyed and rebuilt several times, Pope Francis urged them to think about how God has been close to them, too, even amid tragedy.

Almost always, he said, it is through other people that God’s grace arrives to those in need. “It doesn’t drop from the sky. It doesn’t happen by magic, there’s no magic wand.”

“Don’t let the world make you believe that it is better to do everything on your own,” the pope told the young people. “Don’t yield to the temptation of getting caught up in yourself, ending up selfish or superficial in the face of sorry, difficulty or temporary success.”

Pope Francis told the young people, many of whom dream of emigrating for more opportunities, that their lives are not “a theater piece or a video game” with a final curtain or a lurking “game over.”

The important thing, he said, is to keep praying and keep moving forward, “seeking the right way without being afraid to retrace our steps if we make a mistake. The most dangerous thing is to confuse the path with a maze that keeps us wandering in circles without ever making real progress.”

“Jesus gives us plenty of time, lots of room for failure,” the pope said. But “he never jumps off the ship of our lives; he is always there at life’s crossroads. Even when our lives go up in flames, he is always there to rebuild them.”

Before joining the young people, Pope Francis stopped at the “Gate of Dawn,” one of nine gates that led into the ancient city of Vilnius. The pope mingled with dozens of orphaned children and the families that have adopted or fostered them. After praying silently for several minutes before the oversized icon of Our Lady, Mother of Mercy that marks the gate, the pope gave a brief talk and then prayed a decade of the rosary with thousands of people gathered in the street.

Noting how the icon and the gate were the only parts of the city’s fortified walls to remain after an invasion in 1799, Pope Francis said Mary teaches Christians that “we can defend without attacking, that we can keep safe without the unhealthy need to distrust others.”

The wounds of others are the wounds of Jesus, he said. And “charity is the key that opens us to the door of heaven.”

Vilnius was the first stop on Pope Francis’ Sept. 22-25 to Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia. The three Baltic nations are celebrating the 100th anniversary of their declarations of independence after World War I.
Pope revives catechism to say death penalty is ‘inadmissible’

By Cindy Wooden | Catholic News Service

Building on the development of Catholic Church teaching against capital punishment, Pope Francis has ordered a revision of the Catechism of the Catholic Church to assert ‘the death penalty is inadmissible because it is an attack on the inviolability and dignity of the person’ and to commit the church to working toward its abolition worldwide.

The catechism’s paragraph on capital punishment, 2267, already had been updated by St. John Paul II in 1997 to strengthen its skepticism about the need to use the death penalty in the modern world and, particularly, to affirm the importance of protecting all human life.

Announcing the change Aug. 2, Cardinal Luis Ladaria, prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, said, “The new text, following in the footsteps of the teaching of John Paul II in ‘Evangelium Vitae,’ affirms that ending the life of a criminal as punishment for a crime is inadmissible because it attacks the dignity of the person, a dignity that is not lost even after having committed the most serious crimes.”

“Evangelium Vitae” (“The Gospel of Life”) was St. John Paul’s 1995 encyclical on the dignity and sacredness of all human life. The encyclical led to an updating of the Catechism of the Catholic Church, which he originally promulgated in 1992 and which recognized “the right and duty of legitimate public authority to punish malefactors by means of penalties commensurate with the gravity of the crime, not excluding, in cases of extreme gravity, the death penalty.”

At the same time, the original version of the catechism still urged the use of “bloodless means” when possible to punish criminals and protect citizens.

The catechism now will read: “Recourse to the death penalty on the part of legitimate authority, following a fair trial, was long considered an appropriate response to the gravity of certain crimes and an acceptable, albeit extreme, means of safeguarding the common good.

“Today, however, there is an increasing awareness that the dignity of the person is not lost even after the commission of very serious crimes. In addition, a new understanding has emerged of the significance of penal sanctions imposed by the state. Lastly, more effective systems of detention have been developed, which ensure the due protection of citizens but, at the same time, do not definitively deprive the guilty of the possibility of redemption,” the new section continues.

Pope Francis’ change to the text concludes: “Consequently, the church teaches, in the light of the Gospel, that ‘the death penalty is inadmissible because it is an attack on the inviolability and dignity of the person,’ and she works with determination for its abolition worldwide.”

In his statement, Cardinal Ladaria noted how St. John Paul, retired Pope Benedict XVI and Pope Francis had all spoken out against capital punishment and pleaded for clemency for death row inmates on numerous occasions.

The development of church doctrine away from seeing the death penalty as a possibly legitimate punishment for the most serious crimes, the cardinal said, “centers principally on the clearer awareness of the church for the respect due to every human life. Along this line, John Paul II affirmed: ‘Not even a murderer loses his personhood, and God himself pledges to guarantee this.’”

Pope Francis specifically requested the change to the catechism in October during a speech at the Vatican commemorating the 25th anniversary of the text’s promulgation.

The death penalty, no matter how it is carried out, he had said, “is, in itself, contrary to the Gospel, because a decision is voluntarily made to suppress a human life, which is always sacred in the eyes of the Creator and of whom, in the last analysis, only God can be the true judge and guarantor.”

Cardinal Ladaria also noted that the popes were not the only Catholics to become increasingly aware of how the modern use of the death penalty conflicted with church teaching on the dignity of human life; the same position, he said, has been “expressed ever more widely in the teaching of pastors and in the sensibility of the people of God.”

In particular, he said, Catholic opposition to the death penalty is based on an “understanding that the dignity of a person is not lost even after committing the most serious crimes,” a deeper understanding that criminal penalties should aim at the rehabilitation of the criminal and a recognition that governments have the ability to detain criminals effectively, thereby protecting their citizens.

The cardinal’s note also cited a letter Pope Francis wrote in 2015 to the International Commission Against the Death Penalty. In the letter, the pope called capital punishment “cruel, inhumane and degrading” and said it “does not bring justice to the victims, but only forfeits revenge.”

Furthermore, in a modern “state of law, the death penalty represents a failure” because it obliges the state to kill in the name of justice, the pope had written. On the other hand, he said, it is a method frequently used by “totalitarian regimes and fanatic groups” to do away with “political dissidents, minorities” and any other person deemed a threat to their power and to their goals.

In addition, Pope Francis noted that “human justice is imperfect” and said the death penalty loses all legitimacy in penal systems where judicial error is possible.
Priest, a victim of abuse, wants to see change in the church

By Mark Pattison  | Catholic News Service

To be a voice for victims of clerical sexual abuse, Father Brendan McGuire realized he had to come to terms with the abuse he suffered at the hands of a priest when he was 18. It was a secret he had held for 35 years.

He told the story of his abuse in a homily delivered at five weekend Masses Sept. 8-9 at Holy Spirit Parish in San Jose, California, where he is pastor.

In a Sept. 18 interview with Catholic News Service, Father McGuire said although he always writes his homilies for distribution via email and social media, it was the first time he read it word for word from the pulpit so he wouldn’t overlook anything he wanted to say.

Parishioners responded with “thunderous applause” at two Masses and “three standing ovations” at the others — atypical post-homiletic behavior, he said.

Since the homilies, Father McGuire said, he has heard from 45 men who told him they also had been abused.

Five of the men were priests, he added, and four of those had been abused while they were seminarians.

“One man was 95 years old. He’d been holding it for 60-plus years, 70-plus years,” the priest said. “I thought 35 was a lot.”

Growing up in Bray, Ireland, near Dublin, Father McGuire said he first met his priest-abuser when he was 14, and did not recognize the four years of “grooming” by the priest for his “final play,” with the priest saying during the attack that he had waited until young McGuire had turned 18 “so it wouldn’t be child abuse.”

While the future priest successfully fought off his abuser — “I was one of the lucky ones,” he said in his homily — others were not so lucky. The priest, who was not named in the homily, had preyed on dozens in New Hampshire and Massachusetts, was imprisoned in 2004 and died in prison two years later.

Father McGuire added he was driven to write his homily after reading the first 400 pages of the Pennsylvania grand jury’s report on abuse allegations in six dioceses in the state dating back to 1947. Father McGuire sighed and said, “There was a whole other level of detail that I had forgotten about. Especially grooming.” Having read that far, he noted, “I just got so angry about it all over again, how these guys were so systematic about it.”

Father McGuire told CNS he almost didn’t go through with the homily because of the celebrity it would bring.

“I didn’t want it. That’s one of the reasons I held back,” he added. “I’m a man of deep prayer. I pray for an hour in the morning, and an hour in the evening. … I’m a big discerner. I wrote this homily days in advance. I prayed over it for a long time. I didn’t want this to be about me. I really didn’t.”

Father McGuire wants to be more than merely an effective voice for abuse victims. He wants to see change in the church.

In his homily, he listed ways the church needs to change.

Father McGuire wants bishops to “listen attentively” to victims. “The pain never fully leaves us. That’s OK but your acknowledging it helps us heal,” he said. He also urged bishops to disclose the names of all accused priests, past and present, and to agree what he called “an attorney general-like investigation.”

“Let them verify that you are doing all you can to protect the children now,” he added.

He further wants bishops to “work with the pope to reform the governance of the church so that women have a voice of authority. I do not believe this travesty of justice would have happened if we had mothers and fathers at the decision-making tables; they would not have allowed other people’s children to be put in harm’s way because they would see their own child in them.”

Father McGuire asked parishioners to press bishops for accountability and to advocate for victims and “create a place of healing” to build “a community of true belonging where all the wounded are welcomed, as Pope Francis calls it, ‘a field hospital’ here in San Jose.”

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Today is ‘hour of the laity,’ archbishop tells Encuentro delegates

By Norma Montenegro Flynn | Catholic News Service

Hispanic Catholic leaders are living an important moment in the history of the Catholic church in the United States, and are called to rise and continue the work of building the church, Los Angeles Archbishop Jose H. Gomez said Sept. 23.

He made the comments during the closing Mass of the Fifth National Encuentro in Grapevine.

“The Encuentro has made us see our missionary reality and responsibility as Hispanic Catholics in the United States,” he said. “But most important, the Encuentro has made us reflect on the personal ‘encounter’ with Jesus Christ.”

Archbishop Gomez, who is vice president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, was the homilist. The archbishop invited participants to answer the call to be leaders by striving to be holy and to work united with their bishops.

“I believe that this moment in the church — is the hour of the laity. It is the time for saints,” Archbishop Gomez continued. “He is asking you to take your place in the history of salvation, and to do your part for the mission of his church.”

He also encouraged them to seek discernment as soon-to-be-canonized Blessed Oscar Romero did, by asking what God’s will for him was.

“He is asking you to take your place in the history of salvation, and to do your part for the mission of his church,” Archbishop Gomez concluded.

About 3,200 diocesan delegates, bishops and representatives from ecclesial movements and Catholic organizations participated in four days of dialogue and consultation to discern the priority issues for Hispanic ministry currently and for years to come.

The V Encuentro, as it also is known, surpassed its goal of identifying and preparing 25,000 new ministry leaders.

The three most pressing priorities identified focus on developing faith formation opportunities, strengthening families, and developing more paid positions for Hispanic youth and young adult ministries. Another important outcome of the Encuentro is the goal to develop initiatives that promote and create new pathways of leadership for young adults.

“The experience of the Encuentro surpassed all my expectations,” said Guzman Carriquiry Lecour, the Vatican’s secretary of the Pontifical Commission for Latin America, who encouraged attendees to continue being committed to their ministries and expand their leadership and outreach.

Father Raul Valencia is ready to put things into practice at his parish in Tucson, Arizona.

“We have had an encounter with ourselves, with Christ, and with many opportunities and hope, to strengthen the pastoral ‘hispana,’” he told Catholic News Service.

“What I bring to my diocese is this drive, this happiness and emotion that we carry after this gathering and looking at so many people involved in the same mission,” said Ricardo Luzondo, from the Archdiocese of San Antonio.

The V Encuentro is a multiyear process of missionary work, consultation, leadership development and community building. The last Encuentro took place in 2006.

Hispanics represent about 40 percent of U.S. Catholics and nearly 60 percent of millennial Catholics, according to research from the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate.
Pope discusses sex abuse, corruption of cover-up, China pact

By Cindy Wooden | Catholic News Service

The Catholic Church has grown in its understanding of the horror of clerical sexual abuse and of the “corruption” of covering it up, Pope Francis said.

Returning to Rome from a trip Sept. 22-25 to the Baltic nations, Pope Francis was asked about his remarks to young people in Tallinn, Estonia, when he said young people are scandalized when they see the church fail to condemn abuse clearly.

“The young people are scandalized by the hypocrisy of adults, they are scandalized by wars, they are scandalized by the lack of coherence, they are scandalized by corruption, and corruption is where what you understand — sexual abuse — comes in,” the pope responded.

Whatever the statistics say about rates of clerical abuse, the pope said, “if there is even just one priest who abuses a boy or a girl, it is monstrous, because that man was chosen by God to lead that child to heaven.”

The fact that child abuse occurs in many environments does not in any way lessen the scandal, he said.

But it is not true that the church has done nothing “to clean up,” Pope Francis told reporters. If one looks at the Pennsylvania grand jury report released in August or other similar studies, he said, it is clear that the majority of cases occurred decades ago “because the church realized that it had to battle it in a different way.”

“In olden times these things were covered up — but they were covered up also in families, when an uncle abused his niece, or a father raped his child; it was covered up because it was a very great shame,” Pope Francis said.

“That was how people thought in the last century.”

To understand what happened in the past, he said, one must remember how abuse was handled then.

“The past should be interpreted using the hermeneutic of the age,” Pope Francis said. People’s “moral consciousness” develops over time, he said, pointing to the death penalty as an example.

But, he said, “look at the example of Pennsylvania. Look at the proportions and you will see that when the church began to understand, it did all it could.”

In fact, the pope said, he has encouraged bishops to report cases to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, and he “never, never” granted amnesty to a priest found guilty of abuse.

Pope Francis did not mention by name Archbishop Carlo Maria Viganò, the former nuncio to the U.S., who claimed that Pope Francis knew of and ignored the sexual misconduct of former Cardinal Theodore E. McCarrick. And the journalists’ question about Archbishop Viganò was never asked because the pope insisted most of the questions be related directly to his trip to Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia.

But the pope did say “when there was that famous statement from an ex-nuncio, bishops from the whole world wrote to tell me they were close to me and praying for me.”

One of the letters, he said, came from China and was signed jointly by a bishop from the government-controlled Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association and a bishop from “the, let’s say, traditional Catholic Church.”

Reporters also asked the pope about the Vatican-China agreement for the nomination of bishops, which was announced Sept. 22 while the pope was in Lithuania, and about the suffering of Chinese Catholics who risked their lives to remain faithful to the pope and not accept the communist government’s control over the church.

Some Catholics in China “will suffer” and feel betrayed, he said, “but they have great faith” and in the end will trust the pope.

Pope Francis praised the team of Vatican negotiators who worked “two steps forward, one step back” for 10 years, but he insisted he bore all responsibility for the agreement and, especially, for regularizing the situation of seven bishops who had been ordained without Vatican approval.

With every “peace treaty” and every negotiation, he said, “both sides lose something” and for the Vatican that was complete control over the nomination of bishops.

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BISHOP’S INTERVIEW

Learn to read the signs of human trafficking

Bishop Vásquez: As the chair of Migration and Refugees Services for the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, I was invited to participate in a forum on human trafficking hosted by the Migrants and Refugees Section of the Vatican. Bishops, priests, men and women religious and laity from throughout the world came together to discuss human trafficking, which is one of the grimmest criminal challenges confronting our world today.

We discussed the efforts that are taking place in different dioceses and countries to eradicate human trafficking. At the end of the forum, we were invited to celebrate Mass with Pope Francis in which he remembered the victims of the Lampedusa tragedy who lost their lives in the Mediterranean Sea coming from Africa to Italy. At the end of Mass, the Holy Father –– in a beautiful gesture –– personally met and spoke with the families of the victims. The pope wanted to show them their country. Unfortunately, they do not have this opportunity.

Repeatedly Pope Francis has challenged us to open our hearts to those who are suffering. "The culture of comfort, which makes us think only of ourselves, makes us insensitive to the cries of other people, makes us live in soap bubbles which, however lovely, are insubstantial; they offer a fleeting and empty illusion which results in indifference to others; indeed, it even leads to the globalization of indifference. In this globalized world, we have fallen into globalized indifference. We have become used to the suffering of others: it doesn’t affect me; it doesn’t concern me; it’s none of my business!” Pope Francis said in 2013.

We must also learn to read the signs of human trafficking in people in our own communities. See the box for more information. Also, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops has wonderful resources to help individuals learn more about fighting human trafficking. Visit www.usccb/stopslavery for more information.

Editor: What is your prayer for all of those in danger of this dreadful crime?

Bishop Vásquez: My prayer is that we will work to end the scourge of human trafficking that robs a person’s God-given dignity. May we become the voice of those whose voices have been silenced so that all people will be respected and appreciated as God’s children.

Flags that can help identify victims of human trafficking

- Anxious, fearful or paranoid and avoids eye contact.
- Unexplained bruises or cuts or other signs of physical abuse.
- Appears to be in a relationship with someone who is dominating.
- Always has someone translating or answering questions for them.
- Not in control of their own finances.
- Unable to answer questions about where they live.
- Inconsistent details when telling their story.
- Has no identification such as a license, passport, etc.
- Inability to leave their job or residence.
- Is afraid of law enforcement or receiving help from an outside entity.

Find out more

Ask questions such as, “Can you leave your job or house when you want? Where did you get those bruises or is anyone hurting you? Do you get paid for your employment? Is it fair? How many hours do you work? (If foreign national) How did you get to the U.S. and is it what you expected? Are you being forced to do anything you don’t want to do? Are you or your family being threatened? Do you live with or near your employer? Does your employer provide you housing? Are there locks on doors or windows from outside? Do you owe debt to anyone?”

Take action

- Ask the person if you can help them find a safe place to go immediately.
- If they need time, create an action plan with them to get to a safe place when they are ready.
- Call and make a report to the human trafficking hotline at 1-888-373-7888. The hotline has language capabilities, so any individual can call directly if they choose.

For more guidance, call and talk through the case with USCCB Anti-trafficking program staff at (202) 541-3357.
By DeKarlos Blackmon | Columnist

Our U.S. bishops offer “Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship,” a teaching document on political responsibility. As we find ourselves in the 2018 election season, using this document to guide our civic engagement is a very helpful resource.

Recently, a nice lady asked me at a parish gathering, “Why can’t y’all just tell us who to vote for? I don’t know who to believe anymore!” This for me was a teachable moment as the hysteria and excitement about the federal mid-term elections has begun in earnest. Therefore, I took some time to explain to her how each of us must carefully take the time to form our consciences to make good and fruitful decisions before going to the polls.

It is important to recognize that none of us should expect others — particularly our parish priests and deacons — to tell us for whom to vote. It is not the responsibility of our clergy to tell us for whom to vote. Instead, our priests and deacons are obliged to teach the truth in an effort to aid us in the formation of our consciences through the assistance of the gifts of the Holy Spirit and the authoritative teaching of the Magisterium.

We must be careful not to attempt to separate “the right to follow our consciences” from “the duty to inform our consciences.” The Catechism of the Catholic Church teaches that the conscience is not merely a hunch to excuse doing whatever we want to do; rather the conscience “bears witness to the authority of truth in reference to the supreme Good to which the human person is drawn” (1777) because a well-formed conscience is moral judgment enlightened, upright and truthful (1783). In the Faithful Citizenship document, the bishops remind us, “participation in political life is a moral obligation … rooted in our baptismal commitment to follow Jesus Christ and to bear Christian witness in all we do” (13).

We are Eucharistic people committed to living lives patterned after Christ, lives in which we are to speak up and speak out for the good for each other.

Every time we come before the table of the Lord, we are called to once again recommit to that deeper relationship with our God and our neighbor. We cannot say we belong to Christ and then forsake our neighbor. Our love of God is inseparable from our love of neighbor as illustrated in the parable of the Good Samaritan.

Our love of God is exhibited by the way we treat and interact with our neighbor. You have heard that it has been said, “…whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me” (Mt 25:40).

While we will likely not agree with every public policy decision of the government, we have a responsibility to participate in the political process, helping to effect how “the least among us” are treated, and how the common good is fostered and furthered in our nation and our communities. Regardless of one’s political leanings, each of us has a responsibility to promote the faith for the good of society, as this furthers the kingdom of heaven on earth that Christ ushered in. We have a duty to work with civil authorities for the good of society in a spirit of truth, justice, solidarity and freedom.

May we continue to ask the God of wisdom and justice, through whom authority is rightly administered, to assist with counsel and fortitude all government leaders. Let us continue in keeping with the instruction given in the first epistle to Timothy, to pray for our nation and all who are in authority (1Tim: 2:1-3).


DeKarlos Blackmon, OBSSB, is the director of the Office of Life, Charity and Justice for the Austin Diocese. He may be contacted at (512) 949-2471 or dekarlos-blackmon@ austindiocese.org.

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Policies are updated, education on abuse continues

By Emily Hurlimann | Columnist

A few months ago as I planned to write this article, my intention was to report on the Ethics and Integrity (EIM) policy review and update, which began in the spring, and to highlight the EIM news of the past year. However, in August with the release of the Pennsylvania grand jury report, my plans changed completely. Therefore, here is an abbreviated annual report from the EIM office and my thoughts on how we move forward from here.

Roughly every three years, the EIM Office and the diocesan EIM Review Board directs a review of the EIM policies. The primary focus of this year’s review was to re-organize and to clarify the processes to report allegations of abuse and other types of ethical misconduct. Due to the ongoing crisis, it is possible further revisions will be made to the policies. In conjunction with this policy update, the EIM page of the diocesan website has been re-modeled to permit users to easily find “click” on the type of situation they have a concern about. Then the user is guided through the procedures — from reporting to response. Visit www.austindiocese.org/eim for details.

What has changed?

There are now clearer definitions and expectations of ethical behavior and integrity in ministry. There are better defined reporting categories, i.e. abuse of a minor, past abuse of a minor who is now an adult, abuse of an elderly adult or an adult with a disability, and all other concerns about failure to exhibit ethical behavior and integrity in ministry. We also now have better defined diocesan response to allegations.

What did not change?

The requirement to report suspected abuse to civil authorities by the person with first-hand knowledge of the allegation remains. None of the EIM compliance requirements and procedures for adults have changed; all adults must submit an EIM application and must attend an EIM workshop every three years. At least two EIM compliant adults must serve in any program, organization or event that requires EIM compliance.

In 2016-2017

• More than 14,000 background checks were run; 5,081 were for new applicants.
• 246 pre-employment and lay presenter background checks were run.
• 322 EIM workshops were held, organized by 215 EIM site administrators at parishes, Catholic schools and Catholic organizations throughout the diocese.
• More than 12,000 adults were educated for the first time or as a re-fresher by 167 trained EIM workshop facilitators.
• Nearly 19,000 minors were educated using the “Called to Protect” programs by parish catechists, Catholic school teachers and 138 trained “Called to Protect for Youth” facilitators.
• Each diocese is audited annually by an outside firm to verify that the diocese is complying with the requirements of the U.S. bishop’s “Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People.” The Diocese of Austin has been found in compliance with the charter every year.

What now?

In light of the recent news and the current crisis in the church, what’s the point of all this information? Why are we dealing with all this again? These are just a few of the questions that have surfaced.

I believe with all my being that every person we educate in our training workshops for adults, and education programs for children and youth, has the opportunity to make a difference. More than 31,000 people — priests, deacons, religious sisters and brothers, teachers, children and youth, parish, school and diocesan employees and volunteers, and many others — in just this last year alone, are aware of what kinds of interactions are appropriate and safe and which are not. They also have tools to use in the event they learn about or observe interactions that aren’t appropriate and safe. Our children and youth are learning and they are telling trusted adults if something happens to them or a friend that does not feel right.

The work we — all of us in this diocese — have been doing for the last 16 years through the EIM Office, and others in dioceses throughout the U.S., has prevented abuse from happening. While we haven’t eradicated abuse, we now know what to look for and what to do to stop abuse.

Since the audits began, nationally there have been 78 substantiated reports of abuse of minors by priests or deacons. In the Diocese of Austin as Bishop Joe Vásquez said in last month’s Bishop’s Interview, there have been three cases — two of those clergy members have died and the other has been permanently removed from ministry.

Of course, one case of abuse is too many, but 78 cases nationally as compared to thousands in Pennsylvania alone in the years prior to 2002, tells me education and attention to policies and procedures have made a difference.

Knowing we are helping to prevent abuse from happening in the future does not erase or in any way diminish the pain and suffering of those who have experienced abuse. My heart aches for those men and women whose stories of childhood abuse we read about in the Pennsylvania grand jury report and for the seminarians abused by Theodore McCarrick.

My heart aches for the countless others whose allegations were handled poorly by church leadership, and for the children in the news stories we read and hear about almost daily. However, I know that the work we do together to prevent future abuse helps survivors know that we believe them and that we want to make sure it doesn’t happen to anyone else.

Yes, our church leaders have failed to protect the innocent in the past. As we continue to learn more about the devastating impact of sexual abuse on survivors, we must continue to work with them to find healing and peace. I know for a fact that our bishops — Bishop Vásquez and Auxiliary Bishop Daniel Garcia are committed to this as well.

I pray that the good and holy work of our dedicated priests and deacons will continue despite all of the hurt and outrage. As the associate director of Ethics and Integrity in Ministry of the Diocese of Austin, I will make sure the important work of preventing abuse continues. I am committed to helping to heal and protect. Will you join me?

Pastoral support for victims of sexual abuse

The Diocese of Austin is committed to providing confidential and compassionate care to victims of sexual abuse, particularly if the abuse was committed by clergy or a church representative. If you have experienced abuse by someone representing the Catholic Church, please contact the diocesan coordinator of victim assistance and pastoral support at (512) 949-2400.

How to report an incident of concern

The Diocese of Austin is committed to preventing harm from happening to any of our children or vulnerable adults. Go to www.austindiocese.org/reporting (or call the EIM Office at (512) 949-2447) to learn what to do, and how to report, if you suspect sexual or physical abuse and/or neglect of a child or vulnerable adult; and what to do if the suspected abuse is by clergy, or an employee or volunteer of any diocesan parish, school or agency.

For more information about Ethics and Integrity in Ministry in the Diocese of Austin, visit www.austindiocese.org/eim.
College Station family shares their story of mission

By Deacon Patrick Moran | Guest Columnist

More than 25 years ago, then-Father Gregory Aymond, former bishop of Austin and current archbishop of New Orleans, founded Christ Healer Medical Mission in partnership with the Diocese of Granada, Nicaragua. This vision was to bring Christ’s healing power through medicine. In 2014, my wife, Katy, who is an internal medicine physician, and our three children, Ben, Rachel and Rebecca, joined a medical mission trip to Granada. We enjoyed a great week of service, but quickly returned to our routines in College Station.

Then in 2016, with the permission of Bishop Joe Vásquez, we entered discernment to respond to a plea from the Archdiocese of New Orleans to consider relocating to Granada, Nicaragua, to serve as a family in mission under the direction of Bishop Jorge Solórzano. After prayerful discernment, we felt confident that the Lord was leading us to accept this assignment, and with our bishop’s consent and blessing, we packed up the family and arrived in Granada in August 2016.

As a family, we were assigned to serve in some of the small impoverished communities on the outskirts of Granada, and as time went on, Bishop Solórzano asked me to take over the direction of Caritas, similar to Catholic Charities. In the 104-year history of the Diocese of Granada, I was the first permanent deacon to serve there, and through my assignments, I believed I was living out the root of my call to the diaconate, the ministry of charity. We worked on countless projects always within the context of trying to facilitate encounters with Christ, who has the power to heal both our physical and spiritual wounds. Time and time again, we found those we came to serve were the ones who blessed us tremendously in our own faith journeys.

In his apostolic exhortation “On the Call to Holiness,” Pope Francis writes, “God wants us to be saints and not to settle for a bland and mediocre existence.” This zeal and hunger for God are what I have seen in the souls of the Nicaraguan people. They inspire me with their undying commitment to do what it takes to seek the Lord.

I have seen them running and riding bikes through plantain trees to make it to Mass. Once I saw a humble family of five all piled onto one bike. Each had their spot on the frame, with the infant held by mom on the handlebars. Despite poverty and struggles, they are unwilling to settle for a bland and mediocre existence. They have taught us to have a spiritual thirst, a willingness to run to Jesus as we strive to become saints.

One of my favorite memories was when I was scheduled to celebrate Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament and a Communion Service in one of the poorest neighborhoods in Granada. When it was time to depart for the benediction, it began to rain heavily. The truck was parked near an embankment, with water near my knees, so I had to take off my socks and shoes and roll up my pants to get into the vehicle. At this point, I was well over an hour late, so I didn’t know if anyone would still be there, but I knew I had to go even if only to repose the Blessed Sacrament.

As I drove through the muddy streets and pulled into the “parking lot” of the church, I could hear loud songs of praise over the sound of the pouring rain. The church was packed. They were so grateful to receive the wet, barefoot deacon and have the opportunity to celebrate Benediction and receive the Eucharist. As we prayed together, the presence of the Holy Spirit was overwhelming, and I understood the famous refrain, “The Lord hears the cry of the poor” like never before.

In April, we were making the 1-hour drive back home from a national Caritas meeting in Managua to Granada. Everything seemed normal, but at a couple of the roundabouts, we noticed small groups of retirees holding signs, protesting changes to the Social Security system. We did not think too much about it. However, on April 19, protests began to spread quickly, and we received a message that after-school activities at our kids’ Catholic school in Managua had been canceled. Forty-five minutes later they called again to say they were closing the school, and our children were sent home on a bus. We prayed. The bus had to take alternate routes to avoid protests and blocked roads, delaying their arrival by an hour or so, but they all got home safely.

By the time we woke on April 20, Nicaragua had changed. The peaceful country we had fallen in love with was different. Overnight, protests turned violent and dozens had lost their lives or gone missing. Families were killed, a young altar boy was killed for aiding the protesters, churches were attacked and looted. To date, an estimated 450 people have died, with thousands more wounded. All in a small country that has been unable to gather much help on the world stage.

The church has spoken out against the violence and continues to stand with the people. However, the economic effects of the conflict have been devastating. A thriving tourist industry has been destroyed as the second poorest country in our hemisphere is now poorer. Friends of mine who once provided for the basic needs of their families no longer have a job to do so. I receive messages every week from folks looking to find work of any kind.

Thus my family and I have adapted how we serve the mission to which we have been called. It became necessary to return home to Texas to see how the situation would unfold. From here, we are actively involved in coordinating relief efforts, ensuring the success of ongoing projects. We recently distributed 6,000 pounds of rice and beans through the Granada parishes to families at risk of going hungry.

I continue to travel to Nicaragua periodically. We have a small but dedicated team there to coordinate the ongoing projects. I recently was in Granada to celebrate the re-opening of our dental clinic and medical clinic. Struggling families now once again have access to quality, low-cost health care.

We change and grow. Mission must always remain flexible, looking for ways to serve given whatever circumstances present themselves. While our medical mission trips currently remain on hold, we have forged stronger bonds with local doctors who help us carry forward the mission begun 25 years ago by Archbishop Aymond.

The needs are greater than ever, so we will continue our call to serve, albeit in a new form. Our Nicaraguan friends have blessed us beyond measure, teaching us not to settle for a bland or mediocre existence. But to seek Jesus and continue to pursue our own path toward sainthood, one day at a time.
St. John XXIII was first pope to be named ‘Man of the Year’

By Mary Lou Gibson | Columnist

Angelo Giuseppe Roncalli’s life began Nov. 25, 1881, in the small village of Sotto il Monte near Bergamo in northern Italy and ended at the Vatican in Rome. At his death in 1963, Roncalli, now Pope John XXIII, had become one of the most influential popes in recent history.

His road to the papacy began when he entered the seminary at Bergamo at age 12 and went on to study in Rome. Roncalli’s studies were interrupted for service in the Italian Army. He returned to the seminary and graduated in 1904 with a doctorate in theology and was ordained a priest. Soon thereafter, he was appointed secretary to the new bishop of Bergamo, Giacomo Radini-Tedeschi.

When Italy entered into World War I in 1915, Angelo was recalled to military service as a chaplain. After the war ended, he was appointed national director of the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith in 1921. John Cogley writes in the “Encyclopedia Britannica” that Pope Pius XI named Roncalli as the apostolic visitor to Bulgaria in 1925 and made him an archbishop. He also served as apostolic delegate to Turkey and Greece. In 1935 anti-Jewish sentiment began with many acts of violence against the Jews and other ethnic minorities. Richard McBrien writes in “Lives of the Saints” that Roncalli did what he could to prevent the deportation of Jews after the German occupation of Greece.

In late 1944 Pope Pius XII sent Roncalli as papal nuncio to France. One of his tasks was to negotiate the retirement of bishops who were involved with the Nazis. He became Cardinal-Patriarch of Venice in 1952 and expected to spend his last years there in pastoral work. But in 1958 when Pope Pius XII died, Cardinal Roncalli went to Rome to participate in the conclave to elect a new pope. Rosemary Guiley writes in “The Encyclopedia of Saints” that Cardinal Roncalli’s name was put forward as a compromise candidate for the papacy. After 11 ballots, he was elected pope on Oct. 28, 1958, just before his 77th birthday. He took the name John XXIII, the first pope to take the pontifical name of John in more than 500 years. He proved to be an energetic man with a vision. One of his first acts was to enlarge the membership of the College of Cardinals from 70 to 87. He also became very visible in Rome, visiting local parishes, hospitals, prisons and convalescent homes. These actions earned him the nickname of “Good Pope John.”

A few months later, Pope John announced a new ecumenical council on Jan. 25, 1959, calling it a “new Pentecost.” This council, which became known as Vatican II (the Second Vatican Council), was one of his most lasting and influential decisions. In his opening address on Oct. 11, 1962, Pope John insisted that it had not been called to refute errors, but to update the church and to “let some fresh air in.” The council altered many practices of the church putting new emphasis on ecumenism and a new liturgy. He lived only to see the first of the council’s four sessions completed before dying on June 3, 1963.

Pope John was named “Time Magazine Man of the Year,” in 1962 for offering to negotiate peace between the Soviet Union and the U.S. He was the first pope to be so honored. Pope John XXIII was canonized on April 27, 2014, in a historic ceremony presided by Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI and Pope Francis. His feast day is Oct. 11 to commemorate the opening of the Second Vatican Council.

SPECIAL COLLECTION

Catholic Relief Services

The special collection for Catholic Relief Services was taken up in parishes March 10-11. The collection supports Catholic Church organizations that carry out international relief and solidarity efforts. Totals are listed below by deanery. To report an error, contact the diocesan Finance Office at (512) 949-2423.
FAITH THROUGH ART

Pondering an icon of ‘She who shows the way’

By Bill Quick | Columnist

In May I began a three-part series on icons of the Blessed Mother. I began with Our Lady of Tenderness; the second icon type of the Blessed Mother with Jesus to be addressed is the Hodigitria icon. Translated from Greek Hodigitria means “she who shows the way.” This is one of the oldest icon types of Mary and Jesus. The icon at right is a Hodigitria type. It is believed that the original of this icon came from Jerusalem and eventually made its way to Constantinople where it was re-found in the fifth century. During the period of the iconoclastic persecution, it was hidden in the wall of the Hedegon monastery. This icon was copied and it spread throughout Christendom, both east and west. There is an extremely old version of this icon residing in the Basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore in Rome.

Legend has it that St. Luke painted the original icon and that the blessing of Mary went with this icon and many miracles were associated with it. Accordingly, St. Luke is the patron saint of iconographers. This legend may be associated with the fact that St. Luke the Evangelist gives the most details about Christ’s childhood in his scriptural writing. It is thought he met Mary after Jesus’s death and acquired personal knowledge through this direct contact with the Blessed Mother.

In the Hodigitria icon the Theotokos (birth giver of God) holds the Child with her left hand and points to him with her right hand, drawing the attention of the beholder to her son Jesus. She who shows the way is pointing to Jesus. ‘The way is someone, not just something. Jesus says: “I am the way and the truth and the life” (Jn 14:6).

The Hodigitria icon type differs from Our Lady of Tenderness type in that in this icon the Mother and Child, rather than looking at each other gaze more toward the viewer. Jesus sits upright in his Mother’s arm. His outer garment is woven with golden thread symbolizing Christ’s splendor and radiance with this luminosity. His right hand is raised in blessing – the first two fingers reminding us that he is in fact fully human and fully divine. A scroll is held in his left hand. The scroll symbolizes Christ the Eternal Word, as well as his gift of the Gospel to us. In this icon we can see the majesty of Heaven enthroned on the arm of the Mother of God. It should also be noted that at the same time the figures in the icon gaze at the beholder, they are also immersed in thought. Scripture tells us on more than one occasion that the Blessed Mother pondered the things of God in her heart. This icon has a deep noetic component of how important it is to use our minds to understand the Word of God and to learn our faith. It invites us to ask God for his grace and wisdom to follow the way. St. John Paul II in his encyclical “Fides et Ratio” (Faith and Reason) urges us to use reason in the practice of our faith.

Spend time in prayer before this icon and the Blessed Mother (Hodigitria) will show you the way.

Bill Quick is an artist and iconographer and a member of the Diocesan Fine Arts Council. His work can be found at www.traditionalartandicons.com.
Christmas in Rome Sweepstakes

Read two articles this October and get a chance to win.

Enter at Aleteia.org/ChristmasInRome
Oct. 6: Candlelight rosary every Friday in October at 7:30 p.m. at the Marian Shrine of Our Lady of Schoenstatt in Austin. Parish groups are invited to participate and lead a decade of the rosary. Interested groups may register at the hospitality table at the entrance. For more information visit www.schoenstatt.us.

Oct. 7: The feast of Our Lady of the Rosary will be celebrated with Mass at 11 a.m. at the Marian Shrine of Our Lady of Schoenstatt in Austin. For more information visit www.schoenstatt.us.

Oct. 7: The KJZT (Catholic Family Fraternal of Texas) will host the Rosary Coast to Coast Campaign at 3 p.m. Details: http://rosarycoasttocoast.com/operations/

Oct. 7: Fatima Trinitarian 20 Decade Rosary is prayed every Sunday at 4 p.m. at St. Anthony Parish in Kyle (except on national holidays).

Oct. 7: Adult Discernment Dinner for men discerning the priesthood will be held from 7 to 9 p.m. at the Borromeo House in Austin. Details: www.godiscalling.me.

Oct. 8: The Diocesan Ministry Office will host an inquiry session on the Perpetual Adoration for young professionals and the application process. Details: www.austindiocese.org/diaconalformation or (512) 949-2459.

Oct. 21: St. Paul Parish in Smithville will host its annual festival Oct. 21 beginning with Mass at 10:15 a.m. Lunch will begin at 11:30 a.m. Live auction starts at 1 p.m. Games for all ages throughout the afternoon.

Oct. 21: St. Helen Parish in Georgetown will host its annual Fall Festival beginning at 10 a.m. on the parish grounds. International foods and fun games will be available for the whole family.

Oct. 21: The annual Our Lady of Schoenstatt Feast Day Celebration will be held at the Marian Shrine of Our Lady of Schoenstatt in Austin. Bishop Joe Vasquez will celebrate Mass at 11 a.m. Afterwards there will be lunch, games and fun activities for all ages. Details: www.schoenstatt.us.

Oct. 25: Clergy Appreciation Dinner sponsored by Worldwide Marriage Encounter at 6 p.m. at St. William Parish in Round Rock. Priests, deacons and religious are invited. Register: vicarynormamiranda@gmail.com.

Nov. 1: Solemnity of All Saints, a holy day of obligation. Diocesan offices will be closed.

Dec. 1: A diocesan celebration in honor of Our Lady of Guadalupe will begin at 7:30 p.m. at St. Mary Catholic Center in Austin. The procession will end at San Jose Parish in Austin, where Mass will be celebrated at 10 a.m. with fellowship to follow. Details: www.austindiocese.org/olg-celebration.

Days of reflection, spirituality

Oct. 6: Couples Time Out will be held from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m. at the Marian Shrine of Our Lady of Schoenstatt in Austin. The morning will include a talk by one of the Schoenstatt priests, private reflection time and will conclude with adoration. Babysitting is provided. Register: cto@schoenstatt.us.

Oct. 6: Project Miriam for young women discerning religious life will be held from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at St. Mary Cathedral in Austin. Details: www.godiscalling.me.

Oct. 9: Healthy Family... Healthy Society, a day of spirituality, will be held at Eagle’s Wings Retreat Center in Burnet. In a world filled with “fake news,” School shootings, Internet temptations, families today are facing many fears and trepidation. Pre-registration is required. Register: www.werc.org.

Oct. 13: A day of spiritual reflection on diverse abilities will be held from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Emmas Parish in Lakeway. This day of spirituality offers a special opportunity to be attentive to God’s personal concern for those with disabilities, and their families, friends and caregivers. Details: (512) 949-2486 or www.austindiocese.org/disabilities-retreat.

Oct. 19-20: Mercy & Mary Retreat at St. Theresa Parish in Austin. The retreat will feature bestselling author of Days to Morning Glory and acclaimed speaker Father Michael Gaitley. Registration is $49.95. Visit: https://events.marianmissionaries.org/events/mercy-mary-retreat-austin-tx/ or Leslie Key at s.leslie9@gmail.com.


Oct. 23: Listening to the Voice of God Retreat will be offered from 9 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. at St. John the Evangelist Parish in Marble Falls. Franciscan Father Albert Haase will lead this day. Cost is $35, which includes lunch. Details: www.austindiocese.org/cedarbrake.

Oct. 27: Listening to the Voice of God Retreat in Spanish from 9 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. at Cedarbrake Catholic Retreat Center in Belton. Father Jairo Sandoval will be the present- er. Details: www.austindiocese.org/cedarbrake.

Nov. 2-3: St. Mary Catholic Center in College Station will host a Two Day Equipping session. This two-day training, presented by Bart Schuchts from the John Paul II Healing Cen- ter, is designed to equip and prepare participants to do the works Jesus did throughout his ministry on earth. Details: healingthewholepersonbcs@gmail.com. Register: www.jpiliehealing-center.org.

Nov. 2-4: Married couples are invited to strengthen, renew and rekindle their marriage sacrament by attending the upcoming Worldwide Marriage Encounter Weekend. Details: www.austindiocese.org/ceradrake.

Nov. 2-4: The Spiritual Journey Retreat will be offered at Cedarbrake Catholic Retreat Center in Belton. Friar Johnpaul Cañero, Franciscan priest, a former police officer, and currently the chaplain for the Illi- nois State Police, will present this weekend. The cost for this retreat is $225 for a private room, $180 for a shared room and $100 for commute- r. Details: www.austindiocese.org/cedarbrake.

Nov. 7: The Life of the Beloved retreat will be offered from 9 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. at Cedarbrake Catholic Retreat Cen- ter in Belton. Father Nouwen writes, “As soon as we catch a glimpse of being God’s beloved, we are put on a journey-search of the call to become who we are.” Cost is $40. Details: www.austindiocese.org/cedarbrake.

Burse

The Diocesan Council of Catholic Women has completed a burse for the Clerical Endowment Fund (CEF) in honor of Holy Cross Father Frank Zlotkowski, chaplain for the Seton Healthcare Family.

The totals for the burse as of Aug. 31 are listed below by council:

Austin $2,106.00
Bastrop/Lockhart $528.00
Brenham/La Grange $652.00
Bryan/College Station $5,201.96
Georgetown/Round Rock $267.00
Killeen/Temple $241.00
Lampasas/Marble Falls $85.00
Waco $1,958.00
Previous Balance $5,172.84
Total $13,691.91

The Clerical Endowment Fund pro- vides low-cost loans to priests. Interest from the loans is used to educate diocesan seminarians. For information, con- tact Judy Edwards at (512) 846-0617.
The Gabriel Project at St. Austin Parish in Austin will host its 79th annual Jamaica beginning with Mass at 9 a.m. Jamaica will begin from 11 a.m. and end at 10 p.m. on the parish grounds. Activities include games for all ages, live entertainment and silent auction.

Oct. 6: St. Mary Mission in Pin Oak will host its festival Oct. 6 beginning with Mass at 3 p.m. under the oak trees. Dinner will begin at 4:30 p.m. Live auction will start at 6 p.m.

Oct. 7: St. John Vianney Parish in Round Rock will host Vianney Fest from noon to 5 p.m. There will be events and activities for all ages including food, games, music, live and silent auctions, sports games and more.

Oct. 7: Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish in Taylor will host its annual Jamaica in Murphy Park in Taylor. The day will begin with Mass at 8 a.m. There will be mariachis, ballet folklórico, a live auction and live music.

Oct. 7: The Gabriel Project at St. Austin Parish will host a Respect Life Baby Shower in Hecker Hall immediately following the 11:30 a.m. Mass. The shower will honor all St. Austin Gabriel Project families. There will be food, games and fun. See the baby registry at Target.com for needed items (enter “Gabriel” for first name & “Project” for last name). Details: nancy@ndclubofaustin.com or (512) 417-8309.

Oct. 7: St. Mary Parish in Hearne will have their annual Fall Festival beginning with a bilingual Mass at 10 a.m. Spaghetti, salad and dessert will be served in the parish hall. There will be games, food booths and the first crowning of the queen and princess of St. Mary Festival 2018. There will also be an evening dance.

Oct. 12: St. John the Evangelist Parish in Marble Falls will host a dinner and dance from 6 to 10 p.m. Information: (830) 693-5134 or stjohnmarblefalls@gmail.com.

Oct. 13: The Knights of Peter Claver and Ladies Auxiliary will sponsor the second annual Blue and White Scholarship Dance at the Millennium Entertainment Center in Austin beginning at 8 p.m. Tickets are $25 pre-sale. Details: (512) 217-9816.

Oct. 13: St. Mary Our Lady of the Lake Parish in Lago Vista will host its annual Oktoberfest from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. on the parish grounds. There will be food, music, games for all ages, a silent auction, petting booth, zip-line, classic car show and much more. Details: www.stmaryoktoberfest.org.

Oct. 13: St. Philip in China Spring will host its Oktoberfest from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. An authentic German meal of pork roast, sausages, potato salad, cole slaw/sauerkraut will be served for $10 per plate. Other activities will include a silent auction, arts and crafts, live music, children’s games and a bake sale.

Oct. 13: Bluebonnets over Regina Mater will be held from 4 to 6 p.m. at St. Edward’s University. $125 for couples and $75 per individual. Tickets: reginamater.us or contact Jennifer Kirsch at jeandpaul.kirsch@gmail.com.

Oct. 14: 112th annual Picnic and Homecoming will be held at Visitation Parish in Westphalia. Mass begins at 10 a.m., a meal will be served, as well as games and a live auction at 2 p.m.

Oct. 19-20: St. Paul Parish in Austin will host its annual Fall Festival on the parish grounds. Activities include games for all ages, cake walk, silent auction, food booths and live music.

Oct. 20: St. Ignatius Martyr Parish in Austin will host its annual Fall Fest from 11 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. on the parish grounds. There will be live music as a variety of food, beverages, entertainment, games and community.

Oct. 20: 3-on-3 Basketball Tournament at St. Louis Catholic School in Austin during the Fun Fest. All are welcome! Details: https://slcs3on3.org.

Oct. 20: St. Louis Catholic School in Austin will host its Fun Fest from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. There will be games for all ages, great food and fellowship.

Oct. 20: St. Luke Parish in Temple will hold its annual parish festival St. Lukefest from 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. on the parish grounds. There will be food trucks, live music, games and more.

Oct. 21: St. John the Evangelist Parish in Marble Falls will host its annual Fall Festival from 9 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. on the parish grounds. There will be many food booths and a variety of games for all. Activities include both a live and silent auction and live entertainment.

Oct. 26: St. Thomas Aquinas Parish in College Station will celebrate 20 years of Perpetual Adoration from 7 to 9 p.m. Details: www.stabcs.org/adore.

Oct. 28: St. Martin de Porres Parish in Dripping Springs will host its annual Fall Festival from 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. on the parish grounds. Activities will include live music, a silent auction, face painting, food and variety of games for all ages.

Nov. 3: St. Mary’s Catholic School in Temple will host “A Night in Vegas” beginning at 6 p.m. at the school gym. The evening will include appetizers, a live auction and a silent auction. The cost is $50 per person. For tickets, call (254) 773-4800.

Nov. 7: St. Mary Our Lady of the Lake Parish in Lago Vista will host Christmases in November Bazaar and Lunch from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. More than 20 arts and crafts vendors will have goods for sale. Lunch will be homemade soup.

REGISTRATION: SEPT. 17 - DEC. 31
Contact your youth ministry representative
WWW.AUSTINOCIOSE.ORG/DCYC

DIOCESAN CATHOLIC YOUTH CONFERENCE

KATIE PREJEAN MCGRADDY, PATRICK J. KIM, AND BRIAN GREENFIELD
Official schedules

The official schedules for Bishop Joe Vásquez and Bishop Daniel Garcia are listed below. Dates and times are subject to change.

Oct. 5: Capital Campaign Operational Meeting, Pastoral Center, 10:30 a.m.
Oct. 6: Annual Deacons’ Convocation, Holy Trinity Parish, Corn Hill, 8:30 a.m.
Mass and Dinner with Good Shepherd Society, 5 p.m.
Oct. 7: Confirmation, St. Anthony Parish, Kyle, 2 p.m. and 4:30 p.m.
Oct. 8: Mass of Reparation, St. Mary Cathedral, Austin, 6:30 p.m.
Oct. 10: Confirmation, Santa Cruz Parish, Buda, 6:30 p.m.
Oct. 11: Secretariat Directors, Pastoral Center, 9 a.m.
Oct. 12: Monthly Budget Meeting, Pastoral Center, 8:30 a.m.
Staff Lunch for Catholic Services Appeal, Pastoral Center, 12:30 p.m.
Oct. 13: CSA Parish and Good Shepherd Society Reception, 1 p.m.
Oct. 16-18: USCCB Committee Meetings, Washington
Oct. 20: Confirmation, St. Martin de Porres Parish, Dripping Springs
Oct. 21: Mass, Schoenstatt Shrine, Austin, 11 a.m.
Oct. 22: Mass and Dinner, Ascension Health Leadership Convocation, Fort Worth
Oct. 23: Presbyteral Council, Pastoral Center, 10 a.m.
Oct. 24: Mass at Diocesan Administrative Staff Retreat, Holy Trinity Parish, Corn Hill, 9 a.m.
Oct. 25: Catholic Charities Meeting, Pastoral Center, 8:30 a.m.
Lecture at University of St. Thomas, Houston, 7 p.m.
Oct. 30: Confirmation, St. Ferdinand Parish, Blanco, (with Good Shepherd, Johnson City), 6:30 p.m.
Nov. 1: Mass, St. Mary Cathedral, Austin, 8:30 a.m.
Nov. 2: Finance Council Meeting, Pastoral Center, 11 a.m.
Nov. 5: Secretariat Directors’ Retreat
Nov. 6: Monthly Budget Meeting, Pastoral Center, 8:30 a.m.
Capital Campaign Cabinet Meeting, Pastoral Center, 10 a.m.
Nov. 7: Catholic Foundation Annual Meeting, Pastoral Center, 11 a.m.
Nov. 8: Secretariat Directors, Pastoral Center, 9 a.m.
Young Catholic Professionals, 7 p.m.
Nov. 10-11: Diocesan Building Commission, Pastoral Center, 8:30 a.m.
Nov. 12: Monthly Budget Meeting, Pastoral Center, 10 a.m.
Dues Appeal, Pastoral Center, 12:30 p.m.
Nov. 13: CSA Parish and Good Shepherd Society Reception, 1 p.m.
Nov. 15: Annual Deacons’ Convocation, Holy Trinity Parish, Corn Hill, 8:30 a.m.
Mass and Dinner for Good Shepherd Society, 5 p.m.
Nov. 16-17: USCCB Subcommittee on Divine Worship in Spanish, Washington
Nov. 17: Secretariat Directors, Pastoral Center, 9 a.m.
Nov. 18: USCCB General Assembly
Nov. 19: Blessing of New Buildings, St. Edward’s University, Austin, 2 p.m.
Nov. 20: Secretariat Directors, Pastoral Center, 9 a.m.
Nov. 21: Campus Ministry Directors Meeting, Pastoral Center, 2 p.m.
Nov. 22: USCCB General Assembly

Creating Hope brings our community together to provide support for Catholic Charities’ mission to end poverty throughout the Central Texas. We invite you to participate and CREATE HOPE in our community by sharing amazing stories of those we serve.

RSVP to attend, give or lead others to join us by calling Kristen Erdem at 512-651-6132 or email kristen-erdem@ccctx.org or Cathy Olson Muth at 512-651-6158 or cathy-muth@ccctx.org.
www.CCCTX.org/CreatingHopeCentralTexas

Thur., November 29, 2018 at 11:30 AM at AT&T Conference Center - Ample Parking Available
Trabajando para terminar con el tráfico humano

El Obispo José S. Vásquez es el quinto obispo de la Diócesis de Austin, que es el hogar de más de 30,000 Católicos.

ENTREVISTA AL SEÑOR OBISPO

Editora: Obispo, recientemente usted asistió a una reunión en Roma sobre el tráfico humano. Por favor díganos sobre ésta reunión y por qué estuvo usted ahí.

Obispo Vásquez: Como el Presidente de los Servicios de Migración y para Refugiados de la Conferencia Católica de Obispos de Estados Unidos, fui invitado a participar en un foro sobre el tráfico humano ofrecido por la Sección de Migrantes y Refugiados del Vaticano. Obispos, sacerdotes, hombres y mujeres religiosos y laicos de alrededor del mundo vinieron para discutir sobre tráfico humano, el cual es uno de los retos criminales más grandes que enfrenta el mundo hoy.

Discutimos los esfuerzos que se están llevando a cabo en diferentes diócesis y países para erradicar el tráfico humano. Al final del foro, fuimos invitados a celebrar Misa con el Papa Francisco en la cual él recordó a las víctimas de la tragedia de Lampedusa, quienes perdieron sus vidas en el Mar Mediterráneo viniendo de África a Italia. Al final de la Misa, el Santo Papa Francisco en la cual él recordó a las víctimas de la tragedia de Lampedusa, quienes perdieron sus vidas en el Mar Mediterráneo viniendo de África a Italia. Al final de la Misa, el Santo Papa Francisco en la cual él recordó a las víctimas de la tragedia de Lampedusa, quienes perdieron sus vidas en el Mar Mediterráneo viniendo de África a Italia. Al final de la Misa, el Santo Papa Francisco en la cual él recordó a las víctimas de la tragedia de Lampedusa, quienes perdieron sus vidas en el Mar Mediterráneo viniendo de África a Italia. 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La iglesia planea establecer sistema independiente para reportar abuso

Por Julie Asher | Catholic News Service

Comprometiéndose a “sanar y proteger con toda la fuerza que Dios nos dé,” el Comité Administrativo de los obispos estadounidenses enumeró el 19 de septiembre, las acciones que tomarán para abordar la crisis sobre el abuso sexual, incluyendo el aprobar el establecimiento de un sistema de denuncia independiente que recibirá confidencialmente quejas sobre abuso sexual de menores por un obispo.

También se instruyó al comité de asuntos canónicos de los obispos estadounidenses a desarrollar propuestas sobre medidas para poner restricciones a obispos que fueron destituidos o renunciaron debido a acusaciones de abuso sexual a menores o adultos.

El comité inició el proceso de desarrollar un código de conducta para obispos con respecto al abuso sexual de un menor o adulto o “negligencia de un obispo en el ejercicio de su cargo relacionado con tales casos”.

El comité también dijo que apoya “una investigación completa de la situación” referente al caso del arzobispo Theodore E. McCarrick, ex cardenal-arzobispo de Washington, y “sus presuntos ataques contra menores, sacerdotes y seminaristas, así como cualquier respuesta realizada sobre esas acusaciones”.

El comunicado, presentado por la Conferencia de Obispos Católicos de Estados Unidos, fue el producto de una reunión semi-anual del comité realizada los días 11 y 12 de septiembre en la sede de la USCCB en Washington. El Comité Administrativo está formado por oficiales, directores y representantes regionales de la USCCB. El comité, que se reúne en marzo y septiembre, es la más alta autoridad de la USCCB fuera del organismo pleno de los obispos cuando ellos se reúnen para sus asambleas generales en el otoño y la primavera.

“Esto es solo el comienzo”, dijo el comité en su comunicado del 19 de septiembre. “La consulta con una amplia gama de padres de familia preocupados, expertos y otros laicos, junto con el clero y los religiosos, proporcionará medidas adicionales y específicas que se tomarán para reparar el escándalo y reestablecer la justicia”.

“Los recibimos con humildad y agradecemos la asistencia de todo el pueblo de Dios para hacernos responsables,” dijo el comité.

El comité reconoció que sus miembros se habían reunido en Washington en “un momento de vergüenza y tristeza”.

“Algunos obispos, por sus acciones o por su falta de acción, han causado un gran daño, tanto a las personas como a la Iglesia en general,” dijo el comité. “Ellos han usado su autoridad y poder para manipular y abusar sexualmente de otros”.

“Ellos han permitido que el miedo al escándalo reemplace la preocupación y el cuidado genuino de aquellos que han sido victimizados por abusadores,” continuó. “Por esto, nuevamente pedimos perdón tanto al Señor como a aquellos que han sido heridos. Volteando al Señor para obtener fortaleza, debemos hacerlo y lo haremos mejor”.

El obispo llama a una Novena de Reparación Oct. 9-17

El Obispo José Vásquez ha pedido a todas las parroquias que celebren una Misa de reparación el día 9 de octubre. El celebrará una Misa de reparación el 9 de octubre a las 8:30 p.m en St. Mary Cathedral en Austin, LA. La Misa iniciará una Novena de Reparación de Oct. 9-17. Mane- ras de observar esta novena incluyen:

- Ofrezca oraciones diarias por las víctimas de abuso.
- Ofrezca oraciones por la Iglesia y sus ministros.
- Ayuno (dos pequeños alimentos y uno regular).
- Orar diariamente “Una Oración por Nuestra Iglesia” (Vea Página 2).
- Actos de penitencia, misericordia y servicio.
- Participar en Misa diariamente.
- Rezar el rosario individualmente o como un grupo.


Practicando la ciudadanía fiel mientras que se acercan las elecciones de medio término

Por DeKarlos Blackmon | Columnista


Recientemente, una amable señora me preguntó en una reunión parroquial: “¿Por qué no pueden decirnos a quién votar? ¿Y no sé a quién crear! ‘Esto fue para mí un momento de enseñanza mientras que la historia y la emoción sobre las elecciones federales de mitad de periodo se encuentran comenzando en verdad. Por lo tanto, me tomé un tiempo para explicarle cómo cada uno de nosotros debe tomar el tiempo para formar nuestras conciencias para tomar decisiones buenas y fructíferas antes de ir a las urnas.

Es importante reconocer que ninguno de nosotros debe esperar que otros - particularmente nuestros sacerdotes y diáconos parroquiales - nos digan por quién votar. No es responsabilidad de nuestro clero decírnos por quién votar. En cambio, nuestros sacerdotes y diáconos están obligados a enseñarnos la verdad en un esfuerzo por ayudarnos en la formación de nuestras conciencias, a través de la ayuda de los dones del Espíritu Santo y la enseñanza con autoridad de los Magisterio.

Debemos tener cuidado de no inten- tar separar el derecho a seguir nuestras conciencias” del “derecho de informar a nuestras conciencias”. El Catecismo de la Iglesia Católica nos enseña que la conciencia no es meramente una corazonada para excusar el hacer lo que sea que queremos hacer; sino que la conciencia “Atestigua la autoridad de la verdad con referencia al Bien Supremo por el cual la persona humana se siente atraída…” (1777) por que una bien formada conciencia es “recta y veraz” (1783). En el documento sobre Ciudadanía Fiel, los obispos de Estados Unidos nos recuerdan que la “la obligación de participar en la vida política tiene sus raíces en nuestro compromiso bautismal de seguir a Jesucristo y dar un testimonio cristiano mediante todo lo que hacemos” (13).

Somos personas ecuménicas comprometidas a vivir vidas inspiradas en Cristo, vidas en las que debemos hablar fuerte y claro por el bien mutuo. Cada vez que venimos ante la mesa del Señor, estamos llamados a volver a comprometernos una vez más a una relación más profunda con nuestro Dios y con nuestro prójimo. No podemos decir que pertenecemos a Cristo y luego abandonar a nuestro prójimo. Nuestro amor a Dios es inseparable de nuestro amor al prójimo como se ilust- ra en la parábola del Buen Samaritano.

Nuestro amor a Dios se manifiesta por la manera en que tratamos a nuestros prójimos y nos relacionamos con ellos. Ustedes han escuchado que se dijo, “cuando lo hicieron con alguno de los más pequeños de estos mis hermano, me lo hicieron a mi.” (Mt 25:40).

Es muy probable que no estemos de acuerdo con todas las decisiones de política pública del gobierno, sin embargo, tenemos la responsabilidad de participar en el proceso político, ayu- dando a tener un efecto en cómo se tra- ta a “los más pequeños entre nosotros” y en cómo se fomenta y promueve el bien común en nuestro nación y en nuestras comunidades. Independientemente de sus inclinaciones politics, cada uno de nosotros tiene la responsabilidad de promover la fe para el bien de la socie- dad, ya que esto fomenta el reino de los cielos en la tierra que Cristo introdujo.

Tenemos el deber de trabajar con las autoridades civiles para el bien de la so- ciedad en un espíritu de verdad, justicia, solidaridad y libertad.

Que podamos seguir pidiendo al Dios de sabiduría y justicia, a través de quien la autoridad es correctamente administrada, que asista con ayudar con consejo y fortaleza a todos los líderes del gobierno. Continuemos, de acuerdo con las instrucciones dadas en la primera epístola a Timoteo, orando por nuestra nación y por todos los que tienen autoridad (2: 1-3).

Políticas de EIM están actualizadas, la educación sobre el abuso continúa

Por Emily Hurlimann | Columnista Invitada

Hace algunos meses, mientras planeaba escribir este artículo, mi intención era reportar sobre la revisión y actualización de Ética e Integridad en el Ministerio (EIM), la cual comenzó en la primavera, y subrayar las noticias de EIM del año pasado. Sin embargo, en Agosto con la emisión del reporte del gran jurado de Pennsylvania, mis planes cambiaron completamente. Por lo tanto, aquí tienen un breve reporte sobre las políticas de EIM y mis reflexiones sobre cómo avanzamos desde aquí.

Aproximadamente cada tres años, la Oficina de EIM y el Consejo de Revisión diocesano de EIM dirige una revisión de las políticas de EIM. El enfoque principal de la revisión de este año fue re-organizar y clarificar los procesos para reportar alegaciones de abuso y otros tipos de mala conducta ética. En conjunto con esta actualización de la política, la página de EIM diocesana ha sido remode- lada para permitir que los usuarios encuentren fácilmente y den “click” en el tipo de situación sobre la que tienen una preocupación. Entonces, el usuario es guiado a través de los procedimientos – desde el reporte hasta la respuesta. Visite www.austindiocese.org/eim para conocer los detalles.

¿Qué cambio? Existen ahora definiciones más claras y expectativas de comportamiento ético e integridad en el ministerio. Existen categorías para reportar más definidas, por ejemplo, abuso de un menor, abuso pasado de un menor que es ahora un adulto, abuso de un adulto mayor o un adulto con una discapacidad, y todas las otras preocupaciones acerca de fallas sobre el exhibir una conducta ética e integridad en el ministerio. También ahora tenemos una respuesta diocesana mejor definida a las alegaciones.

¿Qué no cambio? Permanece el requisito de reportar el abuso sospechado a la autoridades civiles por la persona que cuenta con conocimiento de primera mano. Ningunllo de los requisitos para el cumplimiento con el programa de EIM ni sus procedimientos para adultos han cambiado; todos los adultos deben enviar una aplicación de EIM y deben asistir a un taller de EIM cada tres años. Al menos dos adultos en cumplimiento con EIM deben servir en cada programa, organización y evento que requiera el cumplimiento con EIM.

En 2016-2017 Más de 14,000 revisiones de antecedentes se llevaron a cabo; 5,081 fueron para nuevos solicitantes. 246 revisiones de antecedentes se realizaron antes de contratar a un empleado y para presentadores laicos. Hubieron 322 talleres de EIM, organizados por 215 administradores del sitio de EIM en parroquias, escuelas Católicas y organizaciones Católicas a lo largo de la diócesis. Más de 12,000 adultos fueron educados por la primera vez o por medio de un taller de actualización por 167 facilitadores de talleres de EIM. Cerca de 19,000 menores fueron educados usando los programas “Llamados a Proteger” por parte de catequistas, maestros de escuelas Católicas y 138 facilitadores del programa “Llamados a Proteger para Jóvenes”.

Cada diócesis es evaluada anualmente por una firma externa para verificar que la diócesis esté en cumplimiento con los requisimientos del “Estatuto para la Protección de Niños y Jóvenes” de los obispos de Estados Unidos. La Diócesis de Austin ha sido encontrada en cumplimiento con el estatuto cada año.

¿Y ahora qué? A la luz de las recientes noticias y de la actual crisis en la iglesia ¿Cuál es el punto de toda esta información? ¿Por qué estamos lidiando con esto otra vez? Estas son solo algunas de las preguntas que han surgido. Creo con todo mi ser que cada persona que educamos en nuestros talleres de entrenamiento para adultos, y programas educativos para niños y jóvenes, tiene la oportunidad de hacer una diferencia. Más de 31,000 personas – sacerdotes, diáconos, hermanos y hermanas religiosas, maestros, niños y jóvenes, empleados parroquiales, escolares y diocesanos, voluntarios y muchos otros- en solo un año, conocen cuáles son los tipos de interacciones apropiadas y seguras y cuales no lo son. También tienen las herramientas en el caso de que conozcan u observen interacciones que no son apropiadas y seguras. Nuestros niños y jóvenes están aprendiendo y diciendo a adultos en quién confían si algo les pasa a ellos o a algún amigo, que no se sienta que es correcto.

El trabajo que nosotros –todos nosotros en esta diócesis- hemos estado haciendo por los últimos 16 años a través de la Oficina de EIM, y otras diócesis a lo largo de Estados Unidos, ha prevenido que el abuso suceda. Mientras que no hemos erradicado el abuso, ahora sabemos qué buscar y hacer para pararlo. Desde que las auditorías comenzaron, a nivel nacional ha habido 78 reportes justificados de abuso a menores por sacerdotes y diáconos. En la Diócesis de Austin, como el Obispo José Vásquez dijo en la entrevista del mes pasado, ha habido tres casos –dos de esos miembros del clero han muerto y el otro ha sido removido permanentemente del ministerio.

Claro, un caso de abuso es demasiado, pero 78 casos comparados a miles ocurridos en Pennsylvania en los años anteriores al 2002, me dicen que la educación y atención a las políticas y procedimientos han hecho una diferencia. El saber que estamos ayudando a otros a prevenir que el abuso pase en el futuro no borra o disminuye, de ninguna manera, el dolor y sufrimiento de aquellos que han experimentado abuso. Mi corazón me duele por aquellos hombres y mujeres cuyas historias de abusos leímos en el reporte del gran jurado de Pennsylvania y por los seminaristas abusados por Theodore McCarrick.

Mi corazón se quiebra por las otras innumerables personas cuyas alegaciones fueron manejadas pobremente por el liderazgo de la Iglesia, y por los niños abusados que vemos en las historias en las noticias casi diariamente. Sin embargo, sé que el trabajo que hacemos juntos para prevenir abuso futuro ayuda a los sobrevivientes a saber que creamos y que queremos asegurarnos de que esto no le suceda a nadie más. Sí, nuestros líderes eclesiásticos han fallado en proteger a los inocentes en el pasado. Mientras continuamos conociendo más sobre el devastador impacto del abuso sexual en los sobrevivientes, debemos continuar trabajando con ellos para encontrar sanación y paz. Sé, que es un hecho, que nuestros obispos – Obispo Vásquez y Obispo Auxiliar Daniel Garcia, están comprometidos con esto también.

Oro por que el bueno y santo trabajo de nuestros dedicados sacerdotes y diáconos continúe a pesar del daño y la atrocidad. Como directora asociada de Ética e Integridad en el ministerio de la Diócesis de Austin, me aseguré de que el importante trabajo para prevenir el abuso continúe. Estoy comprometida en ayudar a sanar y proteger ¿Se unen a mí?

La Diócesis de Austin se compromete a proporcionar ayuda confidencial y compasiva a las víctimas de abuso sexual, especialmente si el abuso fue cometido por el clero o un representante de la iglesia. Si usted ha sufrido abuso, por parte de algún que representa a la Iglesia Católica, por favor comuníquese con el coordinador diocesano del asistencia a víctimas y apoyo pastoral al (512) 949-2400.

Cómo reportar un caso de abuso La Diócesis de Austin está comprometida con la prevención del daño a cualquier niño(a) o adulto vulnerable. Vaya a www.austindiocese.org/eim para conocer los procedimientos para reportar un caso de abuso sospechado de abuso físico o sexual.

Para mayor información sobre Ética e Integridad en el ministerio en la Diócesis de Austin visite www.austindiocese.org/eim.
Organización sin fines de lucro de Austin busca terminar con el hambre un niño a la vez

Por Enedelia J. Obregón | Corresponsal

Cientos de niños en edad escolar sin comida en casa no esperan con ansia los fines de semana.

Para mejorar su situación, Monica von Waaden y Zee Narimar fundaron HopeAustin, una organización sin fines de lucro que ofrece comidas de fin de semana a los estudiantes que reciben comidas subsidiadas en la escuela pero que no cuentan con una seguridad alimentaria en el hogar. El programa ahorra atiende a 2,240 niños en 20 escuelas en el Distrito Escolar Independiente de Round Rock (RRISD) y a 100 niños en tres escuelas en el Distrito Escolar Independiente de Leander (LISD).

“Existe una necesidad creciente, incluso en escuelas de vecindarios considerados ricos,” dijo Von Waaden.

RRISD proporciona servicios de comida gratis para 266 estudiantes sin hogar y 38 estudiantes del sistema fos- ter. Varios programas de comida de fin de semana sirven a 1,240 estudiantes semanalmente. El distrito tiene 2,755 estudiantes que reciben almuerzos gratuitos reducidos, sin incluir programas de empleo educativo y de pre-kindergarten.

HopeAustin está entrando en su tercer año. Las fundadoras, cuyos hijos no están en la escuela, se conocieron cuando el hijo menor de Narimar y el mayor de Von Waaden estaban en la escuela primaria. Ellas ganaron años de experiencia organizando voluntarios en programas de la asociación de padres de familia, tales como el Clothes Closet de la Asociación de Padres del RRISD. Von Waaden, una parroquia de St. Thomas More en Austin, también es voluntaria de Mobile Loaves and Fishes, una organización sin fines de lucro que alimenta a personas sin hogar.

Hace algunos años, Von Waaden y otras dos mujeres formaron Chicktime Austin bajo la guía de una organización nacional de voluntarios llamada Chicktime. Cuando las otras dos mujeres salieron de Chicktime Austin, ella y Narimar formaron HopeAustin.


Mientras supervisaba el Clothes Closet, Von Waaden vio la necesidad de comida entre muchas de esas familias. La necesidad no es solo en barrios considerados pobres, dijo.

“Hay niños hambrientos en todas partes,” dijo Von Waaden.

Narimar creció en la India con una madre soltera. La pobreza extrema y el hambre estaban en todas partes.


Ella dijo que le rompe el corazón que todavía hay niños pasando hambre en un país tan rico como los Estados Unidos.


Como ambas mujeres habían pasado años ayudando a los niños y estaban especialmente preocupadas por el hambre, decidieron centrarse en el hambre infantil con su nueva organización sin fines de lucro.

Al poner en práctica sus habilidades para organizarse, comenzaron con una pequeña unidad de almacenamiento que Chicktime había usado. Comenzaron con 100 comidas. Pronto fueron 400. Luego 800. Cuando alcanzaron las 1,000, se dieron cuenta de que necesitaban un espacio de almacenamiento más grande y se mudaron a su ubicación actual.

Ahora alquilan una bodega con aire acondicionado que puede contener casi 3,000 bolsas preparadas. En la unidad, almacenan los alimentos pre-ensayados que compran y luego se reúnen tres veces en el semestre de otoño y alrededor de cuatro veces en el semestre de primavera para armar los kits de comida en bolsas de plástico con la ayuda de voluntarios. Cada bolsa contiene nueve artículos que los niños pueden preparar para el consumo en casa los fines de semana.

En un reciente domingo en la mañana, doce comités de voluntarios del equipo de béisbol de Westwood High School, del Young Men’s Service League de Round Rock y de la National Charity League se reunieron para empacar 2,600 comidas. Cuando hace calor, se reúnen por la mañana; cuando hace frío se encuentran por la tarde.

Los voluntarios cargaban cartones grandes de productos como macarrones con queso, atún, puré de manzana y papas fritas en conserva de la bodega a mesas al aire libre para que otros grupos los colocaran en bolsas individuales.

 Otro grupo, en su mayoría madres, sacaron la mayor cantidad de alimento posible de las bolsas antes deatarlas en grandes contenedores. Las bolsas deben ser lo suficientemente pequeñas como para caber en la mochila de un niño.

Otros grupos de voluntarios hacen la mayor parte de las compras. La Parroquia de St. Thomas More organizó recientemente una colecta de alimentos, para abastecer el almácén y Von Waaden dijo que otras parroquias son bienvenidas a hacer lo mismo.

Narimar dijo que las dos están agradecidas con los muchos voluntarios que ayudan.

“No podemos hacer esto solos,” dijo. “Necesitamos la ayuda de la comunidad y de las empresas para acabar con el hambre infantil en la comunidad en la que vivimos. Si cada uno de nosotros hace algo, eso hace una gran diferencia”,

Aunque no es Católica, Narimar recuerda bien las palabras de Santa Teresa de Calcuta: “Si no puedes alimentar a un centenar de personas, solo alimenta a una”. Para obtener más información sobre HopeAustin, vaya a www.Hope4Austin.org o visiteos en Facebook en www.facebook.com/Hope4Austin. Para ser voluntario o realizar una colecta de alimentos, comuníquese con board@hope4austin.org o (512) 648-3613.

Apta la Fecha: Celebración Guadalupana

Una celebración diocesana en honor a Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe se llevará a cabo el sábado 1 de diciembre. El evento comenzará con una procesión. Los asistentes se reunirán a las 7:30 am en la Catedral de St. Mary en Austin para anuncios y saldrán en procesión a las 8 am. La procesión terminará en la Parroquia de San Jose en Austin, donde la Misa será celebrada a las 10 am y habrá un convivio a continuación. Para más información visite: https://www.austindioce.se.org/olg-celebration

Retiro en Español

Alegre y Regocijense se llevará a cabo el 27 de Octubre de las 9 a.m a las 2 p.m en Cedarbrake Retreat Center en Belton. El Padre Jairo Sandoval, pastor de San José Parish en Austin, compartirá su reflexión, sobre la Exhortación Apostólica del Papa Francisco que lleva el mismo nombre Alegre y Regocijense. El costo, que incluye comida y refresco será de $35 por persona. Register: (254) 780-2436.
Several women from Ascension Parish in Bastrosp attended the third annual Catholic Women’s Conference in Austin on Sept. 8. (Photo courtesy Priscilla Ruiz)

The Cross Country team at St. Mary’s Catholic School in Temple has had several top 10 finishes since the meets began in mid-August. (Photos courtesy Renee Morales)

The Cathedral School of St. Mary held a back-to-school event with the theme, “Our Future’s So Bright!” (Photo courtesy Esme Hoang)

St. Stephen’s KJT #112 held a Czech bake sale fundraiser at St. Albert the Great Parish in Austin. Down Home Ranch in Elgin was one of the recipients of the funds raised. (Photo courtesy Sarah Vitek)

Bishop Daniel Garcia celebrated the sacrament of confirmation Sept. 16 at St. Margaret Parish in Giddings. (Photo courtesy St. Margaret/Giddings)

Paola Mata, a parishioner of Sacred Heart Parish in Austin, has entered the convent of the Discipulas de Jesus (Disciples of Jesus) religious order as an aspirant. Bishop Joe Vásquez visited the parish to celebrate a Mass of Thanksgiving for Mata’s vocation. The Discipulas de Jesus joined Sacred Heart Parish in 2016; three sisters currently reside on the Sacred Heart parish grounds. (Photo courtesy Father Mark Hamlet)

Father Raj Selvaraj, pastor of St. Mary, Our Lady of the Lake Parish in Lago Vista, celebrated a Mass in Tamil in honor of Our Lady of Good Health. Father Selvaraj and the Knights of Columbus Council 10463 hosted an Altar Servers Appreciation Ceremony including pizza, salad and ice cream. (Photos courtesy Bobby Beck and Ron Smith)

Send photos by the 10th of the month to catholic-spirit@austindiocese.org. Publication is not guaranteed.
Around the Diocese

Father Jesse Martinez, associate pastor of St. Louis Parish in Austin, explained the meaning and importance of relics to the students of St. Louis Catholic School in Austin as they celebrated the feast of St. Louis, King of France. (Photo courtesy Carrie Vernieuw)

Father Doug Jeffers, associate pastor of St. Louis Parish in Austin, installed new officers of the parish’s Women’s Club. (Photo courtesy Karen Dunlap)

The 50-acre campus St. Michael’s Catholic Academy in Austin received upgrades to many of its facilities and buildings over the summer. Classrooms were updated, and the school has a new baseball field. Artificial turf was added to the football field and new landscaping was completed throughout the school grounds. (Photos courtesy Laura Duggan)

For the last 20 years, Father Stephen Nesrsta (far left), pastor of Holy Trinity Parish in Corn Hill, has hosted seminarians from the Czech Republic for five weeks each summer. In August, he gave the current group of visiting seminarians a tour of the diocesan Pastoral Center. (Photo by Shelley Metcalf)

St. Ignatius Martyr Parish in Austin welcomed catechumens as they prepare to complete their sacraments of initiation at Easter. (Photo courtesy Michelle Fontana)

St. Ignatius Martyr Catholic School in Austin welcomed grandparents to school Mass and a reception. Students and guests offered a special blessing for the grandparents. (Photo courtesy Michelle Fontana)

Holy Family Parish in Lexington held Vacation Bible School on Aug. 4 in the parish activity center. (Photo courtesy Thomas N. Olechowski)

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