Pope offers practical advice in latest exhortation

By Cindy Wooden | Catholic News Service

Naturally in a document on the Christian call to holiness, Pope Francis cited a heavenly host of saints — including some whose sainthood causes are ongoing and some who probably will never be canonized.

“A great cloud of witnesses,” he said, encourages each Christian to take steps toward holiness. “These witnesses may include our own mothers, grandmothers or other loved ones,” he wrote.

In “Gaudete et Exsultate” (“Rejoice and Be Glad”), the apostolic exhortation on holiness published April 9, Pope Francis quoted a myriad of experts — canonized saints — on the striving for holiness but, like much of the document, many of those quotations offered very practical advice rather than lofty thoughts.

In a footnote about how saints are happy and usually have a good sense of humor, Pope Francis quoted a prayer attributed to the English martyr, St. Thomas More:

“Grant me, O Lord, good digestion, and also something to digest. Grant me a healthy body, and the necessary good humor to maintain it. Grant me a simple soul that knows to treasure all that is good and that doesn’t frighten easily at the sight of evil, but rather finds the means to put things back in their place. Give me a soul that knows not boredom, grumbling, sighs and laments, nor excess of stress, because of that obstructing thing called ‘I.’ Grant me, O Lord, a sense of good humor. Allow me the grace to be able to take a joke and to discover in life a bit of joy, and to be able to share it with others.”

St. Ignatius of Loyola, the founder of the Jesuits, appeared repeatedly in the document, as did St. Francis of Assisi, St. Teresa of Kolkata, St. Teresa of Kalkuta, St. Teresa of Avila, St. Therese of Lisieux and St. John Paul II.

But Pope Francis also highlighted advice from the late Vietnamese Cardinal Francois-Xavier Nguyen van Thuan, whom the pope declared venerable in 2017. The Vietnamese cardinal had spent 13 years in prison under his country’s communist regime.

In the new document, Pope Francis said during his time in prison, the cardinal “refused to waste time waiting for the day he would be set free. Instead, he chose ‘to live the present moment, filling it to the brim with love.’ He decided: ‘I will seize the occasions that present themselves every day; I will accomplish ordinary actions in an extraordinary way.’”

Pope Francis also referred in the document to the “witness borne by the Trappists of Tibhirine, Algeria, who prepared as a community for martyrdom.” In 1996, the monks were kidnapped from their monastery and beheaded by a group of terrorists trained by the al-Qaida network. The monks’ story was treated in the film “Of Gods and Men.”

In January, the pope signed a decree formally recognizing the monks’ death as martyrdom; the announcement of a date and place for their beatification is expected soon.

The pope’s homage to the Trappist martyrs is part of a section on the importance of being part of a community, supporting and challenging one another. “Growth in holiness is a journey in community, side by side with others,” he wrote.

Such sharing works not only for the famous, formally canonized saints, he said. “In many holy marriages, too, each spouse becomes a means used by Christ for the sanctification of the other. Living or working alongside others is surely a path of spiritual growth.”

Holy spouses would have the advantage of knowing a saint and would probably agree with Pope Francis’ observation about the holy ones: “Their lives may not always have been perfect, yet even amid their faults and failings they kept moving forward and proved pleasing to the Lord.”

The pope encouraged Catholics to draw what inspiration they find useful from the lives of saints, but also said it is not a good idea to try to copy them exactly because that could “lead us astray from the one specific path that the Lord has in mind for each of us.”

And, he cautioned, devotion to a particular saint should never be slavish.

“Not everything a saint says is completely faithful to the Gospel; not everything he or she does is authentic or perfect,” the pope wrote. “What we need to contemplate is the totality of their life, their entire journey of growth in holiness, the reflection of Jesus Christ that emerges when we grasp their overall meaning as a person.”

Printed copies of “Rejoice and Be Glad” can be ordered from the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops at http://store.usccb.org/rejoice-and-be-glad-p7-599.htm.
MAY IS THE MONTH OF MARY
A GLOSSARY OF TERMS USED ALONG WITH MARY

Editor's note: The following information was adapted from the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops’ “A Marian Glossary” first published at myuscob.org.

May is the month of Mary, the Mother of God.

“She is that woman who rejoiced in the presence of God, who treasured everything in her heart, and who let herself be pierced by the sword. Mary is the saint among the saints, blessed above all others. She teaches us the way of holiness and she walks ever at our side. She does not let us remain fallen and at times she takes us into her arms without judging us,” writes Pope Francis in Gaudete et Exsultate, no. 176. Below is a brief outline of important terms about or related to the Blessed Mother.

ANNUNCIATION: The visit of the angel Gabriel to the virgin Mary to inform her that she was to be the mother of the Savior. After giving her consent to God's word, Mary became the mother of Jesus by the power of the Holy Spirit.

ASSUMPTION: This dogma recognizes the Blessed Virgin Mary's singular participation in her Son's Resurrection by which she was taken up body and soul into heavenly glory, when the course of her earthly life was finished.

HAIL MARY: The prayer known in Latin as the Ave Maria. The first part of the prayer praises God for the gifts he gave to Mary as Mother of the Redeemer; the second part seeks her maternal intercession for the members of the Body of Christ, the church, of which she is the Mother.

IMMACULATE CONCEPTION: This dogma recognizes the Blessed Virgin Mary's singular participation in her Son's Resurrection by which she was taken up body and soul into heavenly glory, when the course of her earthly life was finished.

MAGNIFICAT: The title commonly given to the Latin text and vernacular translation of the Canticle (or Song) of Mary that she recites at the time of the visitation. The canticle begins with “My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord.”

MARY: The mother of Jesus. Because she is the mother of Jesus-Son of God and Second Person of the Blessed Trinity — according to the flesh, she is rightly called the Mother of God (Theotokos). Mary is also called “full of grace,” and “Mother of the Church,” and in Christian prayer and devotion, “Our Lady,” the “Blessed Virgin Mary,” and the “New Eve.”

PRESENTATION: The presentation and dedication of Jesus to God by Mary and Joseph in the Temple (Lk 2:22-39), in accord with Mosaic Law concerning the first-born. At the Presentation, Simeon and Anna sum up the expectation of Israel for the long-awaited Messiah, the light of the nations and the glory of Israel, but also as a sign of contradiction. The presentation of the gifts, especially of bread and wine, is a preparatory rite for the liturgy of the Eucharist at Mass.

ROSARY: A prayer in honor of the Blessed Virgin Mary, which repeats the privileged Marian prayer Ave Maria, or Hail Mary, in “decades” of 10 prayers, each preceded by the Pater Noster (“Our Father”) and concluded by the Gloria Patri (Glory Be to the Father), accompanied by meditation on the mysteries of Christ’s life. The rosary was developed by medieval piety in the Latin church as a popular substitute for the liturgical prayer of the Hours.

VIRGIN BIRTH: The conception of Jesus in the womb of the Virgin Mary solely by the power of the Holy Spirit. The church’s confession of faith in the virgin birth affirms that Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit without human seed.

VIRGIN MARY: The mother of Jesus, who is honored as “ever-virgin” for her perpetual virginity.

VISITATION: At the annunciation, the angel Gabriel told Mary that she would be the mother of the savior. Gabriel also told Mary that her barren cousin, Elizabeth, had conceived a son in her old age. Mary went to visit her cousin and confirmed the truth of the angel's words. The time she spent with Elizabeth is referred to as “the visitation.”
St. Austin’s School celebrates 100th anniversary

By Carla Smith | Correspondent

Celebrating a century of history, St. Austin Catholic School knows a thing or two about Austin and about educating Austin's youth. As a parochial school to neighboring St. Austin Parish deep in the heart of downtown Austin, the school opened its doors in 1917. Today current and past school administrators, students, and alumni are celebrating the school's 100th anniversary.

It’s been 100 years of growth, distinction and success. Opened under the administration of the Dominican Sisters of Houston as Holy Rosary School, it was later renamed Newman School to reflect the sisters' working relationship with Paulist priests. It remained so until the 1941-42 school year when it became St. Austin Catholic School to reflect the sister's working relationship with Paulist priests. It remained so until the 1941-42 school year when it became St. Austin Catholic School. Since then both the school and city have grown.

Austin's substantial growth has naturally affected St. Austin, and its unique downtown location. The school's demographics encompass more than 40 ZIP codes and include students from all walks of life.

"Today a special alchemy is at work at St. Austin’s that transcends the strong faith, exceptional academics and active community participation," Principal Tara Cevallos said. "More than 40 percent of our students come from ethnically diverse backgrounds, more than 10 percent aren’t Catholic, and we have a huge range of economic diversity."

Solidifying a strong faith, exceptional academics and active community participation have been hallmarks of the school since its founding. Eighty-four percent of students score in the 50th percentile or greater on national reading tests, while 78 percent score similarly on math tests. The school of just more than 200 students in grades pre-kindergarten through eighth offers strong academics and a core Catholic identity.

Teachers need look no further than their front door to highlight school core values of respect, dignity, integrity and community. Located on the edge of the University of Texas, St. Austin's location may seem challenging to some, but it's considered a blessing by staff members.

"Our unique urban location and the disparity and diversity found in our neighborhood allow teachers to conduct real-life lessons underscores the realities of life beyond a school setting and also allow students to encounter social and economic hardships firsthand," Cevallos said. "Children learn a sense of community and respect for the blessings been bestowed upon them resulting in increased kindness and generosity. This is visible in the appreciation and acceptance our students have for diversity in all its guises."

Cevallos also added that being so close to UT, the State Capitol, the Bob Bullock Museum, and other local historic sites, gives faculty the opportunity to regularly and conveniently extend their lessons beyond textbooks and classrooms. Its location also provides students a firsthand look at how many faiths can work together.

"Our proximity to churches of many faiths allows students to understand the ecumenical nature of the world and that through honest and respectful conversation we can truly understand what it is to be part of a community," Cevallos said.

It's that sense of community that has served St. Austin's so well for so many years. This is evident in the many who have attended “Celebrating the Past and Present” centennial events, including a centennial kickoff Mass and reception, a gameday tailgate, and a “City Lights” themed gala. In April the school hosted a golf tournament and a bike-a-thon, and Bishop Daniel Garcia celebrated a “100 Years Together” Mass on April 20.

"St. Austin Catholic School has been and continues to be a blessing to many in our diocese," Bishop Garcia said.

He thanked the Dominican Sisters of Houston and the Paulist Fathers for their support of the school over the years.

Most alumni return to St. Austin to become staff members or to educate their children and grandchildren at the school they all consider a home away from home.

One such family honored during the centennial has had at least one family member in attendance since 1917. The Schneider family was recognized for their support of the school throughout the years. Four generations of the Schneider family have been positively influenced by the presence of the school, Bishop Garcia said.

"What a wonderful acknowledgement of the strong presence of Catholic education here in the Diocese of Austin," he said.

The celebrations of the anniversary will culminate at the school's Centennial Farewell Social on May 22.

The future of St. Austin's looks as promising as its past. Additional classrooms are being considered, as are new programs and expanded offerings for students on both ends of the learning curve. The little school nestled amongst city landmarks and that beat the odds has grown into an Austin landmark of its own and an oasis of education in an increasingly hectic downtown environment.

For more information on St. Austin Catholic School, call (512) 477-3751 or visit www.staustinSchool.org.

The students and faculty of St. Austin Catholic School in Austin formed a 100 to celebrate the school’s anniversary. (Photo courtesy Tara Cevallos)
Harker Heights symposium on NFP, chastity is May 19

By Carla Smith | Correspondent

Natural family planning methods help married couples respect God's design for married love and these methods abide by church teaching that human sexuality must be marital, unitive and open to life.

Natural family planning (NFP) will be addressed at the Natural Family Planning Symposium May 19 at St. Paul Chong Hasang Parish in Harker Heights. Open to all, the event will consist of four keynote speakers, question-and-answer opportunities and breakout sessions.

There are many methods of NFP; they are based on helping a husband and wife to identify the fertile and infertile phases of the wife’s menstrual cycle in order to achieve or avoid pregnancy. Also known as Fertility Awareness or Fertility Appreciation methods, keynote speaker and longtime fertility care practitioner Agnes Bayer said the techniques are moral and they are proven.

“These methods are scientifically sound, evidence-based approaches of family planning built on understanding our natural reproductive physiology,” she said. “Grounded on this knowledge, women value their fertility and the way their bodies are designed to function as they nurture an appreciation for their fertility and female cycle.”

NFP is also a way of building joy-filled marriages: not only does it allow a couple to adhere to their Catholic faith, but also the methods are side-effect free and inexpensive. In addition, as they chart their cycles, women may encounter changes in their bodies and issues they might not otherwise notice.

“It’s empowering to and respectful of the dignity of women and makes fertility a shared gift for the couple,” Bayer said. “It is also healthy in that women are well aware of their cycles and understand the emotional and physical responses to the challenges life brings.”

Sheila Bosworth of the Couple to Couple League and the diocesan NFP Advisory Board also touts the fact that NFP is more effective than all contraception options except sterilization.

“Becoming more aware of your fertility allows you to avoid the risks of unplanned pregnancy and the side effects that come with drugs and devices of contraceptive methods,” Bosworth said. “NFP is also ‘green’ in that it has no negative influence on your body or the environment.”

Another topic to be discussed at the May 19 conference is raising chaste children. Bayer noted that today’s culture is increasingly more desensitized to behaviors that do not promote healthy sexuality. Parents must stay strong in raising Christ-centered children, she said.

Author and purity expert Audrey Werner said research shows looking at sexual images literally changes behaviors and results in predators not protectors. At the symposium, Werner will present “You Can Raise Pure Kids in Today’s Society.”

“Our culture has shifted dramatically in the past 60 years when divorce rates were low and sex was reserved for marriage between one man and one woman,” Werner said. “Today our kids are bombarded with sexual messages, but chastity produces a life free from guilt, shame and regret. Our kids can be the light in a lost and dying world when they live a life of chastity.”

Phi Le, the diocesan associate director of Family Life, is looking forward to this conference.

“I encourage pastors to consider bringing this type of symposium to their parishes, so that more people can learn about NFP,” Le said. “This is a great way to support married couples in our parishes.”

Organizers hope this event becomes an annual one. The symposium is free but registration is required by May 12 for those who would like to order lunch. Participants may also bring their lunch and register at the door. For more information and to register, contact Carolyn Hernandez, the St. Paul Chong Hasang Pro-life Coordinator, at (254) 458-1766.

For more information on NFP in the Diocese of Austin, visit www.austindiocese.org/natural-family-planning.

Ashes to Easter Mission Grant

Ashes to Easter is an annual Lenten mission project that affirms and encourages local missionary groups and other mission activities of the Diocese of Austin. This mission collection was spearheaded by Msgr. Tom Frank in the 1980s, and began as a parish project supporting works of charity and missions. Ashes to Easter became an annual diocesan project in 1991. By 1992, this mission project of placing alms into small coin boxes became a project of the Diocesan Mission Advisory Council.

The funds collected from the Ashes to Easter are used to provide grants to groups and organizations to aid in their mission efforts. Groups and organizations must complete an application to receive funds. We are still accepting applications. To apply for Ashes to Easter funds, applicants must submit a cover letter request, a narrative proposal based on the outline indicated in the application, and an endorsement letter dated for 2018 by the local bishop who provides endorsement of the mission work.

The deadline to apply for Ashes to Easter funds is July 1, 2018. Applications are available online at https://www.austindiocese.org/application-2018.

For more information, please contact Vianey Hernandez in the diocesan Missions Office at vianey-hernandez@ austindiocese.org or at (512) 949-2407.
By Mary P. Walker | Senior Correspondent

“We walk by faith, not by sight” (2 Cor 5:7) is not just a comforting Bible verse for Stephanie Lee, a parishioner of St. Mary’s Church of the Assumption Parish in West. Blind from birth, this verse describes her approach to life.

“I walk by God’s eyes every day, where he is leading me,” Lee said.

Her walk in faith, supported by her education, experience and determination, was instrumental in bringing Catholic radio to Waco and the northern part of the diocese. In January 2017, she accepted the job as station director of KYAR-FM 98.3 Catholic radio.

Lee, 31, is the daughter of Pat and the late Robert Lee, who died when she was 6. She has an older sister. Although Lee has never been able to see with her eyes, she grew up accepting her blindness as an inconvenience, not something that defined her. She credits her mother for encouraging her to excel and in fostering an “I can” attitude.

The family moved to West when Lee was 3 years old, the same year she started learning Braille. She quickly mastered the system, and was soon reading. Lee praised the West public school system, where she received one-on-one attention and services that allowed her to succeed.

The teachers and fellow students not only gave her an education, but also a social environment where she could challenge herself. For example, she played the snare drum in the marching band, with another student leading her through the practices and performances. Also, she earned the responsibility of being section leader.

Lee’s accomplishments in high school resulted in a full Presidential Scholarship to McLennan Community College, where she served as an ambassador and adviser to the college president. After two years, she transferred to Texas A&M University.

There, the size of the university and complexity of the campus made it difficult for her to thrive.

“I believe God was leading me to a smaller university,” Lee said.

In 2008, Lee began attending Baylor, where she lived first in a dorm and then in an apartment, taking a shuttle to classes. Using recorded books and a computer that “read” to her aloud, she earned undergraduate and graduate degrees in journalism. While at Baylor, Lee was an active member of St. Peter’s Catholic Student Center, serving as a lector, a ministry she continues today in her home parish. Father Anthony Odiong, who was then director of campus ministry, encouraged her spiritual growth and helped her through some difficult times.

After college, Lee began her career in radio as an on-air personality for a top 40 country station. She also worked at KWBU-FM, the National Public Radio affiliate in Waco. Her experience includes covering local news, weather and sports.

Although she enjoyed her work, Lee wanted her career to reflect her faith and hoped one day to work in Christian radio. In 2013, Father Will Stratton, who grew up in West, knew that RED-C Catholic radio in the Brazos Valley wanted to expand to other parts of the diocese. He introduced Lee to RED-C’s president, Dennis Macha.

Lee was instrumental in connecting RED-C to others who could help bring Catholic radio to the area. When KYAR came on the market for sale, RED-C was positioned to begin the complex negotiation to purchase the station and secure the funds for the $500,000 price tag.

Lee was the obvious choice for station director and was hired in January 2017.

“God clearly led our steps in hiring Stephanie. She has a solid education and experience in the radio industry and the desire to follow our faith in all things, which is so important to our RED-C mission,” Macha said.

Lee said, “I always felt the Holy Spirit was calling me to Christian radio. When Dennis called, I knew that was what I was supposed to do.”

Today, KYAR-FM 98.3 broadcasts programs from EWTN Global Catholic Radio Network and Relevant Radio. Technology, the Internet, and specially developed computer hardware and software allow Lee to manage the station from her home office. She is often accompanied by Molley, a dog she adopted from an animal shelter, who is the “light of her life.” Her “recording studio” for station messages is a quiet closet. She travels for station business with the help of volunteers.

Lee’s journey in faith has lessons for us all. Although she cannot see, she believes God gave her a “vision” to promote his kingdom by proclaiming his word as a lector and through Catholic radio. With God’s grace, a determined spirit, and the help of others, she walks in faith as she pursues this mission.
Upcoming retreats at Cedarbrake in Belton

Discovering Your True Self will be held May 23 from 9 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. at Cedarbrake Catholic Retreat Center in Belton. The retreat will be based on the book by Father Richard Rohr entitled, “The Immortal Diamond.” Deep within us is the true self; however, it has been hidden by who or what we think we should be. We will spend the day identifying the false images we hold on to as we ask the Lord to show us the beauty of our true selves. Bev Collin, assistant director of Cedarbrake, will present this day. The cost is $40 and includes lunch.

Summer Silence, or the Desert Solitude retreat, will be held June 8-13 at Cedarbrake. This retreat gives participants the time and the space to eat and pray in silence for three, four or five nights. It will include centering prayer as well as Lectio Divina, Ignatian prayer, Taize prayer, adoration and daily Mass. The cost for the retreat ranges from $325 to $815 depending on length of stay and size of room.

For more information or to register for these retreats, call Cedarbrake at (254) 780-2436 or visit www.austindiocese.org/cedarbrake.

Couples invited to marriage weekend

Married couples are invited to strengthen, renew and rekindle their marriage sacrament by attend an upcoming Worldwide Marriage Encounter Weekend July 13-15, Sept. 21-23 or 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 information, visit www.austindiocese.org or call (512) 667-9963 or e-mail wwmeaustin@gmail.com.

An invitation to upcoming ordinations

Henry Finch will be ordained to the transitional diaconate May 19 at 10:30 a.m. at St. Mary Cathedral in Austin. A reception will follow in Bishop's Hall.

Deacons Henry Cuellar, Andrew Dinh and Paul-Michael Piega will be ordained to the priesthood at 10:30 a.m. at St. Vincent de Paul Parish in Austin. A reception will follow in the parish activity center.

For more information about vocations in the Diocese of Austin, visit www.godiscalling.me.

Bishop Joe Vásquez hosted a reception for National Merit Scholars from the six Catholic high schools in the Diocese of Austin. Students and their families had the opportunity to visit with the bishop and receive a certificate of academic achievement. This year, 23 students were recognized as Finalists, Semi-finalists, Commended and National Achievement Scholars by the National Merit Scholarship Association. The National Merit Scholarship Program is an academic competition for recognition and scholarships that began in 1955. High school students enter the National Merit Program by taking the Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT) - a test that serves as an initial screen of approximately 1.5 million entrants each year - and by meeting published program entry and participation requirements. Additionally, 12 students were recognized by The College Board as a part of the National Hispanic Recognition Program (NHRP), which identifies academically outstanding Hispanic/Latino high school students. Each year the NHRP honors about 5,000 of the highest scoring students from more than 260,000 Hispanic/Latino juniors who take the PSAT/NMSQT. (Photo by Shelley Metcalf)
Young adults invited to TEC retreat June 22-24

By Catholic Spirit Staff

In a 2017 survey of young adults, the Diocese of Austin found that above all young people (between the ages of 16-39) long for community and personal connection. Young adults also expressed the need for more faith formation.

With these findings in mind, young adults are invited to the next Together Encounter Christ (TEC) of Central Texas, June 22-24.

TEC is a recognized movement of the Catholic Church and is in its sixth year as a Diocese of Austin sponsored retreat program. The retreat for young adults centers on the Paschal Mystery of Jesus and focuses on living the Catholic faith daily.

Msgr. Elmer Holtsman, a retired diocesan priest who lives at Eagle’s Wings Retreat Center and the TEC spiritual director, praised the format of the retreat.

“The three-day, lived experience of Holy Week opens the participant to the heart of the Paschal Mystery and prepares them to return to their home parish community to put it into action,” he said.

Msgr. Holtsman invites young adults to participate in the retreat, and he highly encourages priests, religious, youth ministry directors and Catholic educators to experience the retreat first-hand.

“It is a wonderful experience to see a young person begin the TEC retreat somewhat shy and withdrawn and joyful and happy as they return to their family and parish the third day,” he said.

The death and resurrection of Jesus Christ is the core message of our Christian faith. Thus during the retreat, participants are offered the opportunity to encounter and integrate the Paschal Mystery into their lives as they transition to adulthood.

What the church celebrates annually through the seasons of Lent, Easter and Pentecost and through the sacraments of initiation, TEC condenses into a weekend experience.

“It provides a lived experience of the essential truths of our faith, drawing young adults to a commitment to Christ and empowering them to live as disciples of Jesus Christ in our world today,” said Matthew Moncada, co-director of TEC of Central Texas and parishioner of St. Ignatius Martyr Parish in Austin.

Through evangelization and catechesis, a community of adult mentors lead TEC participants in growing spiritually and in responding to the call to service in the church and the world.

In the years following the Second Vatican Council, Father Matthew Fedewa, a priest of the Diocese of Lansing, Michigan, was inspired by the renewed vision of the Catholic Church and the centrality of the Paschal Mystery to design a retreat experience that would bring the essentials of the Catholic faith into clear focus for high school seniors and young adults.

The first TEC weekend was held in October of 1965. During the following years, the movement was met with great success and was shared with other dioceses. Today, 80 TEC programs are active in 59 dioceses, including several outside the U.S.

TEC of Central Texas conducted its first retreat in March 2012. The retreat was made possible with the help of the National TEC Conference leadership and included team members from Louisiana, Colorado, Kansas, Nebraska and other TEC centers. This active community has grown and now includes priests, married couples, single men and women, as well as young adults and teens.

“TEC of Central Texas is truly intergenerational to include high school and college students, young adults in their 20s and beyond with active members in their 60s and 70s,” Moncada said.

During the retreat, participants experience a fresh, faith-filled atmosphere away from home, school and work, Moncada said.

“My first TEC was 27 years ago, and it met me where I was in my journey to know Christ in a deeper way. Christ has walked along with me through a blessed life of great joys and tough challenges. My encounter with Christ that weekend has made a lifelong impact to grow in faith,” he said.

He encourages young adults of the diocese to be a part of the retreat and be welcomed into a community of faith that goes well beyond the three-day weekend.

TEC of Central Texas is under the direction of the diocesan Office of Youth, Young Adult and Campus Ministry.

Alison Tate, the diocesan director of Youth, Young Adults and Campus Ministry, said strong retreat experiences are an objective of the current diocesan pastoral plan, so that people of all ages may grow in relationship with Jesus Christ.

“TEC offers an engaging retreat experience that is focused on the faith lives of older adolescents and young adults,” she said. “Ongoing advocacy for this diocesan program is important so that TEC can continue to serve as a resource for our many parishes who are not able to sustain their own retreat ministries for youth and young adults.”

TEC of Central Texas currently offers two retreats each year. Registration and more information for the June 22-24 retreat is now open at www.tec-ctx.org.

Fatima, Lourdes, Santiago de Compostela, Rome
Pilgrimage hosted by Fr. James Ekeocha, St. Luke Parish
October 8-19, 2018 - 12 Days - $3699 from Austin, TX (AUS)
Celebrate our faith and enrich our understanding and appreciation of special places associated with Mary, the Mother of God, and Christ’s disciples. Daily Mass and prayers together. Walk a small portion of El Camino to St. James Cathedral. Papal Audience at St. Peter’s Square, Vatican Museum, St. Peter’s Basilica and major basilicas in Rome.

For information, brochure, details: call or text: 979-587-0595, or email: kpappenfort@hotrr.com

In the diocesan Pastoral Plan, “Encounter that leads to Transformation,” an objective under Goal 1, Provide Spiritual Formation that Leads to Encounter, encourages us to attract, engage and inspire young people to deepen their relationship with Jesus Christ and the church, which is precisely what the TEC retreat does. For information on the pastoral plan, visit www.austindioceseplan.org.
Dripping Springs pastor focuses on growth, healing

By Ricardo Gandara | Correspondent

As busy as Father Charlie Garza is overseeing St. Martin de Porres Parish in burgeoning Dripping Springs, he has a vision that the church will become a center for people seeking healing from mental illness.

The young priest is working hard to fight the pain often caused by mental illness, and he is making good progress. All Father Garza has to do is look outside his office window. Work crews are taking out where the 22,550 square-foot, $4.8 million St. Dymphna Center will be built. The first phase of a 25-year master plan will have 12 meeting rooms, a parish hall, new offices and an industrial grade kitchen. Completion is expected in 2019.

For a parish that is already challenged to accommodate the 1,300 people who attend five weekend Masses — church capacity is 300 — the new building will realize his vision that St. Martin will partner with mental health groups to become a place where people can heal.

“St. Martin’s will be part of the solution,” Father Garza said. “And this will be new to us because the church generally has not supported people with struggles with mental illnesses.”

St. Martin will partner with mental health professionals from the National Alliance of Mental Illness and the Christi Center that helps people who have lost loved ones.

Tackling mental illness is relatively new ground for a church, but it is one that has hit home for Father Garza. The 38-year-old grew up in Plano and graduated from Texas A&M University in 2002.

“There was mental illness in my family, and in college I struggled during a period of depression,” he said. “I always asked God to heal me and he did. I also know God works through counselors and priests. I’ve witnessed the healing many times over,” he said. But the need for help continues to grow.

“Mental illness affects suicide, which is an epidemic,” Father Garza said. “During a four-month period in 2017, there were four suicides of young adults in the parish. I did more funerals for people who died from suicide than natural causes.”

Father Garza is also guided by Pope Francis’ calling for the church to be a place where people can seek help.

“He said, ‘heal the pain, heal the pain, and then we can talk about everything else. Before Jesus taught anyone, he healed them,’” Father Garza said. “Our mission is to seek a broken heart and to help them encounter God. Then, we will send those people to be missionaries to find more broken hearts,” he said.

Father Garza’s work caught the eye of the Dripping Springs Chamber of Commerce, which recently named him a “Hometown Hero,” an award recognizing local residents.

“People told us he’s compassionate. He motivates people in his church and the community to help out in the mental illness area,” said Susan Kimble, the interim executive director of the chamber. “Every single person told us that once you meet Father Garza, it’s like ‘wow.’ The goodness just oozes out of him. And, he’s so humble. One of our volunteers who attends St. Martin said Father Garza walks the walk. It’s common for him to take cuts from his personal budget to accomplish things the church needs.”

“The needs are plenty at St. Martin, in the parish. I did more funerals for people who died from suicide than natural causes.”

When the priest arrived in 2014, three weekend Masses attracted a total of about 900 people. Now, 1,300 come weekly, so the parish has added two Masses. To track the growth and development in the area, Father Garza keeps a map on a wall in a separate office.

“More than 11,000 homes are now planned in the area,” Father Garza said. “While there’s an estimate of 3,500 people in the city limits, the number is 35,000 in the extra territorial jurisdiction.”

Hence, the 25-year plan to address the growth. Once the parish completes construction of the St. Dymphna Center and pays for it, the second phase calls for a new church that can handle a capacity of up to 1,600 people. The third phase will include expansion to the St. Dymphna Center, adding a gymnasium and 12 to 20 more meeting rooms. The fourth and final phase will be a medical clinic similar to Sacred Heart Community Clinic located on the campus of St. William Parish in Round Rock.

“The clinic will focus on mental illness,” Father Garza said.

This article could easily reflect the objectives under Goal 2 of the diocesan Pastoral Plan, “Encounter that leads to Transformation.” However, it also reflects the vision of Goal 3, “Strengthen Christian Witness and Outreach to Transform Individuals and Communities.” Under the pastoral leadership of Father Garza, the people and community of St. Martin de Porres Parish in Dripping Springs are being transformed into true disciples. For information on the pastoral plan, visit www.austindioceseplan.org.
Pope Francis added a new Marian feast to the liturgical calendar. Catholics will mark the feast of “the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of the Church” on the Monday after Pentecost each year. This year the feast date is May 21.

The Gospel reading for the feast, which technically is called a “memorial,” is John 19:25-31, which recounts how from the cross Jesus entrusted Mary to his disciples as their mother and entrusted his disciples to Mary as her children.

The decree announcing the addition to the church calendar was released March 3 by the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Sacraments.

Pope Francis approved the decree after “having attentively considered how greatly the promotion of this devotion might encourage the growth of the maternal sense of the church in the pastors, religious and faithful, as well as a growth of genuine Marian piety,” the decree said.

Honoring Mary as mother of the church on the day after Pentecost also highlights for Catholics that Mary was present with the disciples on Pentecost, praying with them as the Holy Spirit descended.

Last December Bishop Joe Vásquez consecrated the Diocese of Austin to the Immaculate Heart of Mary last December.

“Mary is the greatest of all the saints, and as our great love and appreciation for her intensifies, she enables our love for her Son to grow even more deeply,” he said.

“I am grateful to Pope Francis for giving the church this special feast to honor Mary, the Mother of God. I believe it is significant that the Holy Father decided to place this celebration following the solemnity of Pentecost. In doing so, we are reminded of Mary’s unique role in salvation history.

“Also, Mary was recognized and honored in the early Christian community as the Mother of Jesus Christ. From the very beginning, the church looks to Mary to be our model as a disciple of Jesus Christ. Moreover, we look to Mary as the Mother of Our Savior and Mother of the church who is always leading us to a deeper relationship with her Son,” he said.
Conference examines how pope charts church’s path

By Matthew Gambino | Catholic News Service

Pope Francis’ five-year pontificate has not only had a broad impact on the Catholic Church, but it has also had widespread implications across human society, said speakers at a recent Villanova University conference.

Catholic prelates, theologians and lay experts in fields as diverse as economics, church history, social justice and the environment examined the pope’s vision for the church, how he is expanding the goals of the Second Vatican Council and how those efforts are being received during the April 13-14 conference.

It’s not that the pope is changing church teaching, but that he is challenging Catholics to undertake a “radical embrace of a church for the poor” in calling for a “return to the values of mercy, justice, love and care for God’s poor” in calling for a “return to the values of the Gospel, the values of human society, said Barbara Wall, whose Office for Mission and Ministry at Villanova organized the conference.

The gathering, “Pope Francis, a Voice Crying Out in the World: Mercy, Justice, Love and Care for the Earth,” featured 60 speakers and an audience of 150.

Massimo Faggioli, professor of theology and religious studies at Villanova and a conference co-organizer, said the pope’s interpretation of Vatican II “is the most important event in church history in the last four centuries.”

Rather than rolling back Vatican II, the pope believes it is essential to orient the Catholic Church “in the world of today,” and to recover “the missionary dimension of the church,” Faggioli explained.

He said Pope Francis already has left “important legacies,” although the popular pope has faced opposition, most acutely from within the U.S.

Faggioli cited issues the pontiff has raised over the past three years, including care for the environment and pastoral practices concerning married couples and family life. These have met with resistance, which Faggioli attributed to “a very active Catholic media system” in the U.S.

Francis’ writings — including “Laudato Si, on Care for Our Common Home,” “Amoris Laetitia,” “Evangelii Gaudium” and “Gaudete et Exsultate” — have generated criticism, but they still care about, more than the (institutional) church,” Faggioli said.

The universal call to holiness, which respects the dignity of conscience and engages with the world, resonates strongly with Pope Francis, he added.

Cardinal Joseph W. Tobin of Newark, New Jersey opened the conference framing the pope’s connection with Vatican II, asking whether the church should flee the world or become its field hospital.

He said the latter is the church’s true mission, using the pope’s popular image of a church that mercifully cares for those wounded on the world’s battlefield.

Cardinal Oscar Rodrigues Maradiaga of Tegucigalpa, Honduras, spoke about Pope Francis’ impact as the world’s first Latin American pope, an aspect explored by several conference speakers from Africa and other points in the global South.

The conference also examined the pontiff’s theological insights on medical and sexual ethics, Catholic social thought, the media and Christian discipleship.

In Pope Francis’ view, the church’s mission of helping a person develop a mature conviction of Christian faith is more important than perpetuating a “punishment and reward system,” Faggioli said.

He echoed the presentation of Jesuit Father John O’Malley, professor of theology at Georgetown University and an expert on Vatican II.

Historically, church councils developed doctrine based on Roman legislative procedure, setting out laws and penalties for noncompliance with them. Church laws, or canons, dealt with Christians’ behavior, not the motivations for their actions, or the formation of their consciences.

At Vatican II, no new canons were issued, which was “a clue that something extraordinary was happening,” Father O’Malley said.

Rather than developing new laws to “isolate the church from external contamination,” the council gathered bishops from around the world who were “more intent on offering guidance for all … in the pursuit of holiness,” the Jesuit said.

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By Maria-Pia Negro Chin | Catholic News Service

Answer the call to missionary discipleship by addressing the needs of your church. Meet young people where they are and just listen. Improve catechetical resources and prepare future leaders.

These were some of the strategies discussed by more than 800 delegates representing 18 Catholic dioceses in Texas, Oklahoma and Arkansas, as they participated in a bilingual three-day Region X encuentro in San Antonio April 13-15.

Regional meetings are the latest phase of preparations for the U.S. Catholic Church’s Fifth National Encuentro, or “V Encuentro,” to be held Sept. 20-23 in Grapevine. Previous national encuentros were held in 1972, Sept. 20-23 in Grapevine. Previous national encuentros were held in 1972, 1977, 1985 and 2000.

Encuentro is a multiyear process to discern the needs, aspirations and faith practices of the 29.7 million Hispanic and Latino Catholics in the U.S. First came parish-level encuentros, then the diocesan gatherings and now the regional encuentros are taking place.


“What is the Holy Spirit calling us to at this moment as a region?” asked Ken Johnson-Mondragon, the Fifth National Encuentro’s research coordinator, as he presented to delegates in San Antonio a regional working document based on diocesan findings. He added that the conversations among participants while using the document as a discernment tool were most important.

The delegates worked in about 80 small groups to talk about challenges, opportunities and successful practices in areas like evangelization and mission, faith formation and catechesis.

Youth in Action, or Jovenes en Acción, is a training program for those working in pastoral juvenil. This program will equip leaders to encourage young people to put their faith into action. The course is for adults working with Latino middle and high school students or young adults. It requires participation in two in-person classes and four “on your own” sessions. All sessions will be given in Spanish. Space is limited.

For more information:
Angel Marie
Coordinator of Pastoral Juvenil
Office of Youth Young Adult Campus Ministry
www.austindiocese.org/agentes-de-pastoral-juvenil

### Classes:

**Classes:**

- **AUG. 1 & SEPT. 25**
  - 9 A.M. - 4 P.M.

**4 “ON YOUR OWN” SESSIONS IN AUGUST**

**COST:**

$40/PER PERSON

*We recommend that at least two people from your parish team attend this training program.*

“Encuentro” delegates urged to put faith into action

By Maria-Pia Negro Chin | Catholic News Service

According to the working document, Hispanic Catholics make up 6 million of the estimated 8.4 million Catholics living in the U.S. church’s Episcopal Region X. Some dioceses in the region, like Beaumont and Fort Worth, Texas; Oklahoma City; Tulsa, Oklahoma; and Little Rock, Arkansas, have seen their Hispanic population increase by more than 100 percent between 2006 and 2016.

“We have seen the growth of the Hispanic community in our region and we are seeing our needs within the church,” said Francisco Lariz of Fort Worth, who came to the Region X encuentro with 40 members of his diocese. “We hope that with our contribution we can all find the best ways to fulfill the needs of the future generations and of those who are here now.”

The encuentro weekend was full of honest and fruitful dialogue in both Spanish and English, bilingual presentations, and time for prayer and song. More than 20 bishops from the region accompanied the delegates throughout the weekend, with many choosing to participate in the small working groups’ conversations.

During the discussions, delegates representing different ministries and cultures, shared some of the early fruits of “V Encuentro,” which included increased participation, more resources for Hispanic ministry and a renewed openness to encountering Jesús in those most vulnerable.

“Parishioners are going beyond their comfort zones to take time to hear those in need,” said Lily Morales, a parishioner of St. Edward Church to reach out to those in prison. “It is urgent that the Catholic Church reaches out to them,” she said. “We cannot forget about them.”

San Antonio Archbishop Gustavo García-Siller told Catholic News Services that the “V Encuentro” process is for every parish.

“We had made a decision that the culture of encuentro will be part of the (archdiocesan) pastoral plan, so we are going to be embracing more and more parishes until our parishes are attached by the ‘Joy of the Gospel’ that is the heart of the whole of ‘V Encuentro,’” he said.

Listening and sharing experiences during the Region X encuentro gave delegates ideas on how to get more involved and serve their community.

“My mentality has changed,” said Silvia Hernandez-Martinez, a parishioner of St. Anthony in Columbus, a parish in the Dioceses of Victoria that is starting a Mass in Spanish as a result of “V Encuentro.”

Before, she said, she would only see the church’s need to share information in small towns like hers, but now she wants to inform others about the church’s resources. “This encuentro motivates me to be a bridge, to let the diocese know about our needs.”

Organizers explained the multiyear “V Encuentro” process seeks to activate at least 20,000 new Hispanic Catholic leaders nationwide. People such as Marco Elizalde, who traveled 12 hours to San Antonio with his Tulsa delegation.

Elizalde joined the church 10 years ago, and said he found out about the encuentro process when signing his son up to receive his first communion. Elizalde, who is a lector and is looking into becoming a deacon, said he was inspired by delegates’ discussions on leadership development and the different ministries Hispanic Catholics are joining.

“I saw willingness to follow the steps of Jesus Christ,” he told CNS. “Good things happen when you are able to become that tool to help others.”
By Cindy Wooden | Catholic News Service

Ordaining 16 men to the priesthood, Pope Francis urged them to be merciful with the people who approach them, especially in the confessional.

Marking the World Day of Prayer for Vocations April 22, the pope ordained 11 men for the Diocese of Rome, four for the Family of Disciples and one for the Sons of Divine Providence. The new priests ranged in age from 26 to 41 and came from Italy, Colombia, Croatia, El Salvador, Madagascar, Myanmar and Vietnam.

As is his custom for ordinations, Pope Francis used the homily prescribed by the Italian Missal but paused when he reached the description of how, through each sacrament, the new priests would minister to the people. “With the sacrament of penance, you will remit sins in the name of Christ and the church,” he read from the text. “And here I’m going to stop to ask you, please, never tire of being merciful. Think of your sins, your wretchedness, which Jesus forgives. Be merciful.”

After the Mass, Pope Francis went up to the window of his studio in the Apostolic Palace to lead the midday recitation of the “Regina Coeli” prayer with an estimated 30,000 people gathered below in St. Peter’s Square. He brought four of the new priests with him, inviting them to join him at the window to greet the crowd and give the people their blessing.

“We ask the Lord to send many good workers to labor in his field and also to increase vocations to consecrated life and to Christian marriage,” the pope told the crowd.

Pope Francis also commented on the day’s reading from the Gospel of John in which Jesus describes himself as the good shepherd.

“Jesus says to each person, ‘Your life is worth so much to me that in order to save it, I will give myself,’” the pope said. “It is precisely the offer of his life that makes him the good shepherd par excellence, the one who heals, the one who enables us to live a beautiful and fruitful life.”

Jesus tells his disciples that he knows his sheep and that his sheep know him. That relationship, the pope said, is the key to happiness and fulfillment.

The first step toward creating “a living relationship with Jesus,” he said, is “allowing ourselves to be known by him.”

“Don’t close yourself off; open yourself to the Lord,” the pope said. “He is attentive to each of us, he knows the depths of our hearts. He knows our virtues and our defects, the plans we have realized and the hopes that have been dashed. But he accepts us as we are, even with our sins, in order to heal us, forgive us and guide us with love so we can cross even the most arduous paths without losing the way,” Pope Francis said. “He accompanies us.”
Well done graduates! On behalf of Bishop Joe Vásquez, Auxiliary Bishop Daniel Garcia and the Office of Catholic Schools congratulations on your graduation. Out of the 1.8 million students enrolled in U.S. Catholic schools I am proud to say you are now an accomplished Catholic school graduate ready to begin your new journey. I pray you continue to build faith relationships and serve as a disciple of Christ as you enter a new chapter in your formation. God has created you for a special purpose and now is the time to take those gifts and talents to fulfill your dreams and goals, and to serve others for the greater good.

We are very thankful for the $21.2 million in scholarships that you have earned toward college and particularly grateful to your parents and guardians for entrusting Catholic schools to support and guide you toward a greater purpose. We will miss you; however, it will not be long before you, like so many others, return through our doorways as alumni or parents.

Blessings to you as you begin this new journey.

— Misty Poe, Superintendent of Catholic Schools
REICHER CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL

BACCALAUREATE
Friday, May 18 at 6:30 p.m.
Sacred Heart Parish, Waco

GRADUATION
Saturday, May 19 at 5 p.m.
Waco Hall, Baylor University

HOLY TRINITY CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL

BACCALAUREATE
Thursday, May 24 at 6 p.m.
St. Mary Parish, Temple

GRADUATION
Saturday, May 26 at 11 a.m.
Holy Trinity Catholic High School, Temple
ST. DOMINIC SAVIO CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL

BACCALAUREATE
Friday, June 1 at 5 p.m.
St. Vincent de Paul Parish, Austin

GRADUATION
Saturday, June 2 at 10 a.m.
St. Edward’s University Recreation & Convocation Center, Austin

ST. JOSEPH CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL

BACCALAUREATE
Thursday, May 17 at 6 p.m.
Christ the Good Shepherd Chapel, Bryan

GRADUATION
Friday, May 18 at 5 p.m.
Christ the Good Shepherd Chapel, Bryan
BACCALAUREATE & GRADUATION
Friday, May 25 at 6 p.m.
San José Parish, Austin

BACCALAUREATE
Friday, May 25 at 6:30 p.m.
St. John Neumann Parish, Austin

GRADUATION
Saturday, May 26 at 11:30 a.m.
St. Edward’s University, Recreation & Convocation Center, Austin
Permanent deacons: Ministers of word, liturgy, charity

The deacon has a three-fold ministry of word, liturgy and charity. First, deacons are ministers of the word — they must proclaim the Gospel, which includes evangelizing and preaching. This is an element of service in which deacons teach the faith and help others to love and to live the word of God. It is important that deacons help others incorporate the word of God in their daily lives.

The liturgical dimension of the diaconate is rooted in the sacraments; deacons are allowed to baptize, witness marriages, bury the dead and bring viaticum to the dying. One of the primary duties and responsibilities of a deacon is to assist priests at the altar for the Eucharistic celebration.

Third, deacons are ministers of charity. They are called to serve the poor and marginalized and to visit the sick, the imprisoned and the dying.

This three-fold ministry originates in the early church. The apostles realized a great demand on their time was placed on caring for those in need. In order for them to prioritize preaching and teaching about Christ, the apostles knew they needed help. So, they chose and ordained men to assist them. The first deacons’ duties were to provide care for the widows and the orphans and to distribute food among the needy.

Editor: What is the status of the permanent deaconate in our Diocese?

Bishop Vásquez: The Diocese of Austin is extremely blessed to have a strong diaconate. We have more than 150 permanent deacons in active service. Additionally, we have about 70 retired deacons, about half of which continue to engage in some diocesan ministry assisting the church in many ways. Our diaconate formation program consists of four years of study and preparation, during which the deacon candidates learn about the church and how to integrate the church’s teachings throughout their daily lives.

The wives of our deacon candidates are invited to join in the formation process. The wives are called to assist the deacons in their ministries and to support their ministries; in fact, a man may not be ordained a permanent deacon without the consent of his wife. The church wants the wife and the husband, who is seeking and discerning the diaconate, to be united in their discernment.

We are blessed in the Diocese of Austin with deacons who are good, solid men who love the church. Daily they give themselves in service to others. Unfortunately, we don’t have enough deacons. Our diaconate is growing very quickly, so we need more men who are willing to serve the church in this ministry, particularly we need more men who are bilingual. Thankfully, we currently have about 45 men in formation, but we still need more.

Editor: Who can become a permanent deacon?

Bishop Vásquez: In order to apply to enter the diaconate formation process, a man has to be a man of the church, be at least 35 years of age and have the written support of his pastor. Then the candidates are interviewed by a committee of priests, deacons and lay persons. They also go through a psychological evaluation. Then we ask them about their marital status because as I said before, the man’s wife must be supportive of this decision as well. We want to make sure the man truly understands the ministry he is undertaking because it is a commitment for life.

Those men who are discerning the call to the permanent diaconate must have their pastor’s approval to attend one of our Project Stephen meetings. The monthly meetings are for interested men and their wives to meet, pray and discern whether to enter into formation.

Editor: What is your prayer for those serving as deacons and for those who are discerning the permanent diaconate?

Bishop Vásquez: The permanent diaconate has been a great blessing for the church. Pope Paul VI was wise in encouraging the restoration of the permanent diaconate, especially in today’s world when our priests have so many responsibilities. Our deacons are always willing to help meet the diverse need of our people. So I personally want to thank all of these men and their wives who serve our church in this capacity.

I have no doubt that God is calling men to the diaconate. May all men be open to the call and listen carefully to the Spirit to decide if they are called to serve the church as deacons.

My prayer for the deacons and those in formation is to be open to the gifts of the Holy Spirit. I pray they will continue to serve the people well, to love the church and to be truly servants of Christ. May Christ, who did not come to be served but to serve, be their model in all that they do.

Project Stephen helps men discern call to diaconate

Men who are discerning the call to the permanent diaconate are invited to attend Project Stephen, which meets every third Thursday of the month at 7 p.m. at the diocesan Pastoral Center in Austin. During the evening, deacons share about their own sense of call, their formation journeys and their lives of service. Participants learn the qualities and characteristics of a deacon, what he does and what it takes to become a deacon, and they pray before the Blessed Sacrament, study St. John Paul II’s wisdom about discernment and enjoy the fellowship of other men/couples in discernment. Couples are urged to discern together so wives are strongly encouraged to attend these sessions.

Prior to attending Project Stephen, men must discuss the possibility of the diaconate with their pastor and receive his permission to explore the call.

To attend the next Project Stephen meeting, send an e-mail to formationdirectors@austindiocese.org or call (512) 949-2459.

Editor: Bishop, this year the church celebrates the 50th anniversary of the restoration of the permanent diaconate. What does it mean to say that the permanent diaconate was restored?

Bishop Vásquez: This year we mark 50 years since the U.S. bishops asked the pope to restore the permanent diaconate in the U.S. The diaconate was actually established in the days of the early church; in the book of Acts we read how the apostles appointed men to attend to the needs of widows and the poor. St. Stephen (Acts 6) is typically referred to as the first deacon. However, after about the 5th century, the permanent diaconate declined.

During the Second Vatican Council, the need for permanent deacons became obvious, so Blessed Paul VI formally restored the permanent diaconate as one of the main orders of clerical state in the world. Therefore, the three main orders of the church: deacons, priests and bishops became more evident in the church. Each bishops’ conference was allowed to petition the pope to have the permanent diaconate restored. Paul VI was very clear that men had to be of a certain age, and they had to be reputable and respected by their peers and by their priests. Additionally, the men were to go through a formation process before eventually being ordained by their bishop. Thus, the permanent diaconate was restored.

Editor: What is a permanent deacon and what does he do?

Bishop Vásquez: The word deacon or “diakonos” means servant. A permanent deacon is one who is called by Christ to serve as a minister of service. Throughout his public ministry, Jesus came to serve, not to be served. Jesus Christ gave himself as a true servant of God to the people and to the world. Deacons must remember they are called to serve just as Jesus did — they must be willing to give themselves completely for the good of the people and the church.
**A PERSONAL REFLECTION**

**Fact: The Truth does set us free**

By Helen Osman | Guest Columnist

The world is an extremely complex place, and the simple answers we find on Facebook and Twitter are so very tempting. Here’s two points I try to remember before I hit the “share” button:

- **What’s the motive? Is the content presented so that it takes only a second or two for me to vehemently agree or disagree? Am I being psychologically manipulated by those whose goal is to encourage polarization and division? When I told a friend on Facebook that the post he had shared was completely fabricated, his reply was “I don’t care; I still think [the politician] is an idiot.” If we believe the truth sets us free (Jn 8:32), what happens to us when we distort the truth with fake memes, prejudice, and our stubborn ignorance?
- **What’s the source? Does the article cite any experts? If so, are they real experts, or just someone being quoted? If it sounds too ridiculous to be true, I trust my own intelligence.**

The number of websites claiming to be news sites has grown astronomically, very few employ journalistic technique, which includes checking accuracy and offering diverse views. Journalists aren’t perfect, but their professional reputation is what keeps them employed. I try to take a few minutes to check the post against a reputable fact-checking website. Professional journalists have nothing to gain — and we lose our souls — by spreading lies.

It’s encouraging to know more universities are offering media literacy courses. Although the Holy See’s ongoing call for media literacy expressed since the Second Vatican Council — even in this year’s World Communications Day message — has gone largely unheeded, some Catholic leaders are championing chivalrous endeavors in this arena. I hope we can make media literacy a mandatory part of young people’s education — including in their faith formation, and I encourage my fellow “digital immigrants” to become more skilled in media literacy.

We need to understand the difference between raw, unmediated information (sometimes outright “alternative facts”) and independent, verified reporting. We also need to accept the responsibility that comes with the ability to create our own media, using our smartphones. Mass communication allows us to be somewhat passive recipients of information. Digital media, by its very nature, requires us to be active sharers of information. Our faith compels us to be ethical and morally sound in our contributions.

The World Communications Day message can be found on the Vatican’s website at www.vatican.va.

**SPECIAL COLLECTION**

Retired clergy and religious totals

The special collection for Retired Clergy and Religious was taken up in parishes Dec. 9-10. Totals are listed below by deanery. To report an error, contact the diocesan Finance Office at (512) 949-2423.

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**WACO DEANERY**

China Spring, St. Phillip $491.00
Gateville, Our Lady of Lourdes $740.00
Lott, Sacred Heart $360.00
McGregor, St. Eugene $567.75
Martin, St. Joseph $638.30
Mesia, St. Mary $587.66
Moody, Our Lady of San Juan $103.00
Waco, Sacred Heart $1,523.76
Waco, St. Francis of the Brazos $770.00
Waco (Hewitt), St. Jerome $2,003.00
Waco, St. John the Baptist $177.00
Waco, Bellmead, St. Joseph $642.47
Waco, St. Louis $7,375.27
Waco, St. Mary of the Assumption $1,432.01
Waco, St. Peter Catholic Church $767.73
West, Church of the Assumption $1,519.00
Waco Deacon Celestine $1,400.94
Miscellaneous $100.00
Grand Totals $256,731.06
Let us rejoice, be glad: We are holy people

By DeKarlos Blackmon | Columnist

During the Octave of Easter, I visited Holy Family Catholic School in Austin to present an award to Madelyn Edwards, a seventh grader. Madelyn participated in the 2018 Dr. Martin Luther King Essay Contest on the theme, “Followers of Christ: A Rich Legacy of Equality for All People.” Drawing on the legacy of King, and the first disciples’ transformation by Christ, Madelyn reminded us that, “We must stand up, fight, and not cower.” It is courage that enables us to stand up and champion the concerns of those who look different from us. We do it because, as Madelyn’s peers at Holy Family Catholic School ably remind us, “We are ‘holy’ people!”

**SOCIAL JUSTICE**

**Discovering Your True Self: May 23**

Discovering Your True Self will be held May 23 from 9 a.m.-2:30 p.m. at Cedarbrake Catholic Retreat Center in Belton. The retreat will be based on the book by Father Richard Rohr entitled, “The Immortal Diamond.” Deep within us is the true self; however, it has been hidden by who or what we think we should be. We will spend the day identifying the false images we hold on to as we ask the Lord to show us the beauty of our true selves. Beverly Collin, assistant director of Cedarbrake, will present this day. The cost is $40 and includes lunch.

**Summer Silence (aka Desert Solitude): June 8 - June 13**

Summer Silence ranges from $325 to $815 depending on length of stay and size of room. The fee includes all meals, linens and prayer materials.

**What The World Needs Now: Boundless Compassion: July 25**

Boundless Compassion retreat will be offered at Cedarbrake Catholic Retreat Center from 9:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m. The retreat will be based on the book by Sister Joyce Rupp, “Boundless Compassion.” The Gospels tell us to be compassionate and the question is how? This retreat will invite and challenge us to look for ways in which we can develop and embrace Our Lord’s stance toward all of life. Beverly Collin, assistant director of Cedarbrake, will present this day. The cost is $40 and includes lunch.

The Institute for Spiritual Direction will begin training for people considering this ministry. The classes will start in January 2019. Applications are now being accepted. Visit www.austindiocese.org/cedarbrake.
Icons of Mary reflect different aspects of her holiness

By Bill Quick | Columnist

The Blessed Mother, Mary, is such an indispensable and important part of our faith that we have had a devotion to her from the earliest times of the church. The title of the Mother of God (Theotokos) is integral to the dogma of the Incarnation. Her unique role in the history of salvation gives rise to her importance and the many devotions to her. She is not only the mother of the Redeemer, but also the mother of the redeemed. She is our loving mother always pointing us to Christ.

The multiple aspects of Mary’s holiness are reflected in numerous icons. She is so closely intertwined with her son, Jesus, that in icons, she is most frequently portrayed accompanied by him. There are many types of Marian icons. Over the course of three columns, I will briefly address three types of commonly encountered icons.

We will cover Our Lady of Tenderness (at right), Hodigitria (She Who Shows the Way), which will be published in the October issue, and Orans/Lady of the Sign, which will be published in the January 2019 issue.

Our Lady of Tenderness is an example of the first type of icon (see image at right). There are many variations but all have the similar characteristic of the Mother and Child in a tender embrace, facing each other. In Russia, sometimes this icon is referred to as the “Sweet Kissing.”

This icon portrays the tremendous love between Jesus and Mary and, symbolically, between Christ and his church as well as mother and child.

Jesus said: “I give you a new commandment: love one another. As I have loved you, so you also should love one another. This is how all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another” (Jn 13:34-35). This icon has an emotional intensity revealed by the powerful but tender love of Jesus and Mary that by inference extends to all of us.

Furthermore, the prayerful viewer of this icon is invited into this loving and tender relationship. Observe the element of thoughtfulness of the Mother and Child. We see in this icon not only a child seeking and receiving comfort and love from his mother, but a somewhat far off, melancholy look. This brings to mind the prophecy of Simeon, “The child’s father and mother were amazed at what was said about him; and Simeon blessed them and said to Mary, his mother, ‘Behold this child is destined for the fall and rise of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be contradicted (and you yourself, a sword will pierce) so that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed,’ (Lk 2:33-35).

This icon in Greek is referred to as the “Eleusa” type, which means compassionate one; in Russian it is referred to as “Umilenic,” which encompasses several meanings including tenderness, compassion, intimacy and grace. Still, the overriding theme is the overpowering love Jesus and Mary have for one another and all of God’s children. Spend time in prayer before this icon and you also will certainly experience this love.

As St. Paul states in First Corinthians, “Love never fails … So faith, hope and love remain, these three; but the greatest of these is love.”

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.

SAINTS FOR OUR TIMES

St. Richard Pampuri served Christ via his hospital patients

By Mary Lou Gibson | Columnist

Erminio Filippo Pampuri was born in Trivolzi, Italy, in 1897, the 10th child of a prosperous family. He was only 5 when his mother died, and he was sent to Torino, Italy, to live with his grandfather. It was there he received his introduction to medical practices from his Uncle Carlo. This was the start of the young boy’s love of serving the sick.

He was 18 when he entered the University of Pavia to study medicine. Matthew Bunson writes in “John Paul II’s Book of Saints” he had previously thought about becoming a foreign missionary but chose medicine instead. When his sister entered the convent, he became a Franciscan tertiary saluting her for full commitment to the religious life.

His medical studies were interrupted by World War I. Bunson writes that he was conscripted into the army and served as a sergeant in the medical corps working in field hospitals, receiving a decoration for conspicuous bravery.

Erminio resumed his medical studies in 1918 and graduated in medicine and surgery in 1921. After completing his internship, he was registered at Pavia University as a general practitioner and surgeon.

Even though his professional schedule was busy, Tom Cowan writes in “The Way of the Saints” that he was devoted to parish life and founded a Catholic Action group. He was also active in the Conference of St. Vincent de Paul and other service organizations. In Milan, Erminio founded the Band of Fius X, a group dedicated to medical care for the poor. He also worked to raise funds to provide food and clothing to the needy.

He once wrote to his sister, “Pray that pride, selfishness, and any other evil passion will not prevent me from always seeing the suffering of Christ in my patients, treating him and comforting him.”

He began to think more about a religious vocation and in 1927 he became a Hospitaler of St. John of God. They were a religious community that ran hospitals and cared for the sick. Erminio took his vows in 1928 with the name Riccardo (Richard) dedicating his medical skills entirely to the service of Christ and his poor.

Riccardo was appointed the director of the dental clinic attached to the St. John of God Brothers’ Hospital at Brescia. His work among the sick became well known and he soon had a reputation for his healing skill as a doctor and for his sanctity. Cowan writes that mothers brought their babies and young children to him just to be touched. They credited him with calming their children after they had contact with him.

He managed to work for a few more years before thepleurisy that he contracted during the war began to worsen. He moved to Milan for treatment, but he soon developed pneumonia and prophesied when he would die. He died in the hospital of his Order on May 1, 1930. His body was taken back to Trivolzi where he was born. It remains there in a chapel dedicated to him.

Riccardo (Richard) Pampuri was beatified by St. John Paul II in 1981 and canonized by him on Nov. 1, 1989.

Today the more than 1,000 brothers in the Hospitaler Order of St. John of God offer a wide range of health and social services in 52 countries on five continents.

Mary Lou Gibson is a freelance writer and a member of St. Austin Parish in Austin.
**Parish and community events**

**May 5:** SpringFiesta for Christ the King Parish in Belton on parish grounds. Live music at 6 p.m., $5 entry for adults. Homemade salsa contest, $10 entry fee per team. Movie night for children. Washer tournament at 2 p.m., $10 per competitor. Details: (254) 939-0806 or www.ctkbelton.org.

**May 6:** SpringFest for Christ the King Parish in Belton on parish grounds from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Free entry. Unlimited kids’ games with $10 arm band. Live music. Food booths, barbecue, Mexican plates, live and silent auctions, and more! Details: (254) 939-0806 or www.ctkbelton.org.

**May 6:** St. Joseph Parish in Rockdale will host its annual Mayfest at the Knights of Columbus Hall on Highway 79 in Rockdale. The celebration begins at 11 a.m. and includes a barbecue beef and sausage dinner or a Mexican food dinner ($10 per plate). Details: (512) 446-2049.

**May 12:** Tiger Scramble Golf Tournament benefiting St. Joseph Catholic School in Killeen. Details: sjcskilleen.org.

**May 15:** Ninth annual Evening for the Ladies celebrating the Christ Child Society beginning at 6 p.m. at St. William Parish Hall in Round Rock. The Christ Child Society offers different programs to support children in need throughout the Austin area. These programs include the Layette Program, Bereavement Gowns “Angel Gowns,” Hygiene for Teenage Homeless Project, caps and mittens, and more. Tickets: Julie Schultz at (512) 468-9834 or Meg Beasley at (512) 810-8248.

**May 19:** St. Thomas Aquinas Parish in College Station will host 5K Run and Children’s 1K Walk. Details: www.sttbcos.org.

**May 20:** St. Margaret Mary Parish in Cedar Park will host its annual SpringFest from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. on the parish grounds. Activities include food booths, a petting zoo, cake walk, inflatables and games for all ages. Details: www.stmargaretemary.org or (512) 259-3126.

**May 20:** St. Margaret Mary Parish in Cedar Park will host a Fajita Dinner and Live Auction at 6 p.m. in the Benish Center. Details: www.stmargaretemary.org or (512) 259-3126.

**May 24:** Bishop Daniel Garcia will bless the new addition at St. Eugene Parish in McGregor at 6 p.m. The University of Notre Dame Folk Choir will perform at 6:30 p.m. at the Mass. Dinner and dancing will follow the Mass. Details: (254) 840-3174.

**May 26:** The University of Notre Dame Folk Choir will perform at 7:30 p.m. at St. Ignatius Martyr Parish in Austin. Details: Michelle Fontana at (512) 442-3602.

**June 2:** Corpus Christi Procession after Corpus Christi Mass at St. Mary Cathedral in Austin. Everyone is invited to process with Our Lord Jesus Christ from the Cathedral to the steps of Texas State Capitol, to the Texas State Cemetery, ending with reposition at Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish. Details: (512) 476-6182 or www.smcuastin.org.

**June 9:** The Austin Capital Area Chapter of the St. Mary’s University Alumni Association will host its 11th annual golf tournament beginning at 8 a.m. at Plum Creek in Kyle. Details: www.alumni.stmarytx.edu/austingolf.

**Reflection, spirituality**

**May 8:** “Seven Thousand Ways to Listen: Staying close to what is sacred” will be presented from 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. at Eagle’s Wings Retreat Center in Burnet. Cost is $35 per person. Register: www.ewrc.org or (512) 715-0017.

**May 12:** Couples Time Out from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m. at the Marian Shrine of Our Lady of Schoenstatt in Austin. Donation of $10 per couple/family. Babysitting is provided. Register at cito@schoenstatt.us.

**May 19:** Girls Day Camp with Mary from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Marian Shrine of Our Lady of Schoenstatt in Austin. Details: www.schoenstatt.us.

**May 20:** A Morning with Mary from 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at Emmaus Parish in Lakeway. Denise Bossert, Catholic writer and speaker, will be the guest speaker. Her latest book, “Stations of the Cross,” is about interceding for suffering souls and praying for a healing touch from the Redeemer of all things. Tickets are $25 per person. Details: info@mary-stough.org or (512) 965-4449.

**May 26-27:** Teen Girls Lock In from 5 p.m. May 26 to 10 a.m. May 27 at the Marian Shrine of Our Lady of Schoenstatt in Austin. Girls between the ages of 13 and 16 are invited to grow in faith at this overnight experience. Register: rgardner@schoenstatt.us.

**June 8:** Summer Silence Retreat hosted by Cedarbrake Catholic Retreat Center in Belton. Stay for three, four or five nights. A variety of prayer experiences will be offered along with daily Mass. Cost from $325 to $745 depending on length of stay. Details: www.austindiocese.org/cedarbrake or (254) 780-2436.

**July 25:** Boundless Compassion, a day of reflection, will be held from 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. at Cedarbrake Catholic Retreat Center in Belton. Cost: $40, which includes lunch. Details: www.austindiocese.org/ cedarbrake or (254) 780-2436.

**Burse**

The Diocesan Council of Catholic Women has completed a burse for the Clerical Endowment Fund (CEF) in honor of Paulist Father Bruce Niell, who is in residence at St. Austin Parish in Austin. The totals for the burse as of March 31, are listed below by council.

- **Austin:** Total $928.00
- **Bryan/College Station:** Total $812.00
- **Brenham/La Grange:** Total $463.00
- **Waco:** Total $1,994.00
- **Bastrop/lockhart:** Total $547.00
- **Killeen/Temple:** Total $547.00
- **Georgetown/round Rock:** Total $399.00
- **ACCW board:** Total $29.00
- **Previous Balance:** Total $3,642.76
- **Total:** Total $9,461.76

The Clerical Endowment Fund provides low-cost loans to parishes, interest from the loans is used to educate diocesan seminarians. For information, contact Judy Edwards at (512) 846-0617.
Official schedules
The official schedules for Bishop Joe Vásquez and Bishop Daniel Garcia are listed below. Dates and times are subject to change.

**Bishop Joe S. Vásquez**

- **May 4:** Monthly Budget Meeting, Pastoral Center, 8:30 a.m. Confirmation, St. Jerome Parish, Waco, 6:30 p.m.
- **May 5:** Confirmation, Our Lady of San Juan Mission, Moody, 10 a.m. Confirmation, Our Mother of Sorrows Parish, Burnet, 5 p.m.
- **May 6:** Confirmation, St. Mary Parish, Taylor, 11 a.m. Blessing of New Parish Center, St. Catherine of Siena Parish, Austin, 3 p.m. Confirmation, St. Paul Parish, Austin, 5 p.m.
- **May 8:** Meeting with Superior General of Missionaries of Faith, Pastoral Center, 1:30 p.m.
- **May 9:** Association of Catholic Professionals Luncheon, Hyatt Regency, Austin, 11:30 a.m. Confirmation, Christ the King Parish, Belton, 6 p.m.
- **May 10:** Secretariat Directors, Pastoral Center, 9 a.m. Capital Campaign Operational Meeting, Pastoral Center, 1:30 p.m.
- **May 11:** Vocations Meeting, Pastoral Center, 10:30 a.m. Baccalaureate Mass, St. Edward’s University, Austin, 6:30 p.m.
- **May 12:** Confirmations, St. William Parish, Round Rock, 10 a.m. and 1 p.m.
- **May 13:** Confirmation, Sts. Cyril and Methodius Parish, Granger, 10 a.m.
- **May 15:** Presbytery Council, Pastoral Center, 10 a.m. Confirmation, St. Julia Parish, Austin, 6:30 p.m.
- **May 17:** Baccalaureate Mass, St. Joseph Catholic High School, Good Shepherd Chapel, Bryan, 6 p.m.
- **May 18:** Vocation Team Meeting, St. Louis Parish, Austin, 4 p.m. Seminarian Family Reception, St. Louis Parish, Austin, 6 p.m.
- **May 19:** Transitional Diaconate Ordination, St. Mary Cathedral, Austin, 10:30 a.m. Confirmation, Emmanuel Parish, Lakeway, 5 p.m.
- **May 20:** Confirmation, St. Mary Cathedral, Austin, 9:30 a.m. Confirmation, San Jose Parish, Austin, 5:30 p.m.
- **May 22:** Capital Campaign Cabinet Meeting, Pastoral Center, 10 a.m.
- **May 24:** Baccalaureate Mass for Holy Trinity Catholic High School, St. Mary Parish, Temple, 6 p.m.
- **May 25:** Baccalaureate Mass for St. Michael Academy, St. John Neumann Parish, Austin, 6:30 p.m.
- **May 26:** Mass, Holy Vietnamese Martyrs Parish, Austin, 10:30 a.m. Confirmation, Holy Family Parish, Copperas Cove, 5:30 p.m.
- **May 27:** Confirmation, St. Mary Parish, Mexia, noon Confirmation, St. Paul Chong Hasang Parish, Harker Heights, 4:30 p.m.
- **May 28-31:** Priests’ Summer Gathering June 1: Baccalaureate Mass, St. Dominic Savio Catholic High School, St. Vincent de Paul Parish, Austin, 5 p.m.
- **June 2:** Confirmation, St. Margaret Mary Parish, Cedar Park, 10 a.m. and 1 p.m.
- **June 3:** Confirmation, St. Joseph Parish, Killeen, 5:30 p.m.
- **June 4:** Monthly Budget Meeting, Pastoral Center, 8:30 a.m.
- **June 6:** Blessing of New Education Center, St. Mary Parish, San Saba, 5:30 p.m.
- **June 7:** Secretariat Directors, Pastoral Center, 9 a.m.
- **June 10:** Confirmation, Holy Trinity Parish, Llano (with St. Joseph, Mason), 2 p.m.

**Auxiliary Bishop Daniel E. Garcia**

- **May 4:** Monthly Budget Meeting, Pastoral Center, 8:30 a.m. Confirmation, St. Elizabeth Parish, Pflugerville, 6:30 p.m.
- **May 5:** Confirmation, St. Helen Parish, Georgetown, 10 a.m.
- **May 6:** Confirmation, Our Lady of San Juan Diego Catholic High School, San Jose Parish, 6 p.m.
- **May 26:** Confirmation, St. John the Evangelist Parish, Marble Falls, 10 a.m.
- **May 27:** Confirmation, Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish, Taylor, 10:30 a.m. Confirmation, St. Ignatius Martyr Parish, Austin, 5 p.m.
- **June 1:** Baccalaureate Mass, St. Dominic Savio Catholic High School, St. Vincent de Paul Parish, Austin, 5 p.m.
- **June 2:** Confirmation, St. Margaret Mary Parish, Cedar Park, 10 a.m. and 1 p.m.
- **June 4:** Confirmation, St. Mary Parish, San Saba, 5:30 p.m.
- **June 6:** Monthly Budget Meeting, Pastoral Center, 8:30 a.m.
- **June 7:** Secretariat Directors, Pastoral Center, 9 a.m. Priests Advisory Committee, Pastoral Center, 12 p.m.
- **June 9:** Confirmation, St. Ignatius Martyr Parish, Austin, 10 a.m.
- **June 10:** 100th Anniversary Mass, Sacred Heart Chapel, Latium, 10 a.m.

**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.

**Apoyo pastoral a las víctimas de abuso sexual**

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 abusos por parte de alguien que representa a la Iglesia Católica, por favor comuníquese con el coordinador diocesano del asistencia a víctimas y apoyo pastoral al (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.

**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/reporting (o llame a la Oficina de EIM al 512-949-2447) para saber qué hacer, y cómo reportar, si usted sospecha abuso físico o sexual y/o negligencia hacia un niño o adulto vulnerable; y qué hacer si el abuso que se sospecha, fue llevado a cabo por un miembro del clero, o un empleado o voluntario de cualquier parroquia diocesana, escuela o agencia.
Diáconos permanentes: ministros de la palabra, la liturgia y la caridad

Editora: Obispo, este año la iglesia celebra el quincuagésimo aniversario del restablecimiento del diaconado permanente. ¿Qué quiere decir que el diaconado permanente fue restablecido?

Obispo Vásquez: Este año marca 50 años desde que los obispos de Estados Unidos pidieron al papa que restableciera el diaconado permanente en los Estados Unidos. El diaconado fue, de hecho, establecido en los días de la Iglesia temprana, en el libro de los Hechos leemos cómo los apóstoles designaron a hombres para atender las necesidades de las viudas y de los pobres. San Esteban (Hechos 6) es típicamente referido como el primer diácono. Sin embargo, alrededor del siglo quinto, el diaconado permanente declinó.

Durante el Concilio Vaticano Segundo, la necesidad de diáconos permanentes se volvió obvia, así que el Beato Paul VI restableció formalmente el diaconado permanente como una de las órdenes mayores del estado clerical en el mundo. Por lo tanto, las tres órdenes principales de la iglesia: diáconos, sacerdotes y obispos se volvieron más evidentes en la iglesia. A cada conferencia de los obispos se le permitió pedir al papa que el diaconado permanente fuera restaurado. Paul VI fue muy claro que los hombres tenían que ser de cierta edad, y tenían que ser de buena reputación y respetados por sus contemporáneos y sus sacerdotes. Además, los hombres tendrían que pasar por un proceso de formación antes de eventualmente ser ordenados por el obispo. Por lo tanto, el diaconado permanente fue restaurado.

Editora: ¿Qué es un diácono permanente y qué hace?

Obispo Vásquez: La palabra diácono o “diáconos” significa servidor. Un diácono permanente es alguien llamado por Cristo para servir como un ministro de servicio. A través de su ministerio público, Jesús vino a servir, no a ser servido. Jesucristo se dio a sí mismo como un verdadero siervo de Dios a la gente y al mundo. Los diáconos deben recordar que están llamados a servir tal como Jesús lo hizo – deben estar dispuestos a dar su vida completamente por el bien de la gente y de la iglesia.

El diácono tiene un ministerio de tres facetas, de la palabra, liturgia y caridad. Primero, los diáconos son ministros de la palabra – deben proclamar el Evangelio, lo que incluye evangelizar y predicar. Esto es un elemento de servicio en el que los diáconos enseñen la fe y ayudan a otros a amar y a vivir la palabra de Dios. Es importante que los diáconos ayuden a otros a incorporar la palabra de Dios en sus vidas diarias.

La dimensión litúrgica del diaconado está enraizada en los sacramentos; a los diáconos se les permite bautizar, ser testigos de matrimonios, enterrar a los muertos y llevar el viático a los moribundos. Uno de los deberes primarios y responsabilidades de un diácono es asistir a los sacerdotes en el altar para la celebración eucarística.

Tercero, los diáconos son ministros de caridad. Están llamados a servir a los pobres y marginados, y visitar a los enfermos, los prisioneros y los moribundos.

Este ministerio de tres facetas se originó en la iglesia temprana. Los apóstoles se dieron cuenta que una gran necesidad en su tiempo era el cuidado de aquellos necesitados. Para que evangelizar y predicar sobre Cristo pudiera ser una prioridad, los apóstoles sabían que necesitaban ayudar en el cuidado de los necesitados. Así, que escogieron y ordenaron a hombres para que lo ayudaran. Las primeras obligaciones de los diáconos fueron cuidar a las viudas y a los huérfanos y distribuir comida entre los necesitados.

Editora: ¿Cuál es el estatus del diaconado permanente en nuestra Diócesis?

Obispo Vásquez: La Diócesis de Austin está extremadamente bendecida de tener un fuerte diaconado. Tenemos más de 150 diáconos permanentes en servicio activo. Adicionalmente, tenemos alrededor de 70 diáconos retirados, alrededor de la mitad de ellos siguen involucrados en algún ministerio diáconal asistiendo a la iglesia de muchas maneras. Nuestro programa de diaconado permanente consiste de cuatro años de estudio y preparación, durante los cuales los candidatos a diáconos aprenden sobre la iglesia y cómo integrar las enseñanzas de la Iglesia a través de sus vidas cotidianas.

Las esposas de nuestros candidatos al diaconado están invitadas a unirse al proceso de formación. Las esposas están llamadas a asistir a los diáconos en sus ministerios y a apoyarlos en sus ministérios; de hecho, un hombre no puede ser ordenado como un diácono permanente sin el consentimiento de su esposa. La Iglesia quiere que la esposa y el esposo, el cual está buscando y discerniendo el diaconado, estén unidos en su discernimiento.

Estamos bendecidos en la Diócesis de Austin con diáconos que son hombres buenos y sólidos y que aman a la Iglesia. Diariamente, ellos se dan a sí mismos en el servicio a los demás. Desafortunadamente, no tenemos suficientes diáconos. Nuestra diócesis está creciendo muy rápidamente, así que necesitamos más hombres que estén dispuestos a servir a la iglesia en este ministerio, particularmente necesitaremos más hombres bilingües. Por suerte, actualmente tenemos cerca de 45 hombres en formación, pero necesitamos aún más.

Editora: ¿Cuál es su oración por aquellos sirviendo como diáconos y por aquellos que se encuentran discerniendo como diáconos permanentes?

Obispo Vásquez: El diaconado permanente ha sido una gran bendición para la Iglesia. El Papa Paul VI fue sabio en animar el restablecimiento del diaconado permanente, especialmente en el mundo de hoy en el que nuestros sacerdotes tienen tantas responsabilidades. Nuestros diáconos están siempre dispuestos a ayudar a satisfacer las diversas necesidades de nuestra gente. Así que yo, personalmente quiero agradecer a todos estos hombres y a sus esposas que sirven a nuestra iglesia en esta capacidad.

No tengo dudas de que Dios está llamando a hombres al diaconado. Que todos los hombres estén abiertos al llamado y escuchen con cuidado al Espíritu para decidir si están llamados a servir a la Iglesia como diáconos.

Mi oración por los diáconos y por aquellos en formación es por que estén abiertos a los dones del Espíritu Santo. Oro por que continúen sirviendo a la gente bien, que amen a la iglesia y que sean verdaderos siervos de Cristo. Que Cristo, quien no vino a servir sino a servir, sea su modelo en todo lo que hacen.

Editora: ¿Cuál es su oración por aquellos que deseen explorar el diaconado permanente invitados al Project Stephen – una reunión mensual para los hombres y sus esposas para orar, escuchar y discernir en comunidad. El Project Stephen se reúne todo el año, el tercer jueves de cada mes, a las 7 p.m. en el Centro Pastoral de Austin. Los hombres deben primero discutir su interés con sus pastores y recibir su consentimiento para asistir. Cuando se inicie una nueva clase de formación (cada 3 años), se invitará a los hombres a aplicar. Para más información, envíe un correo electrónico a formationdirectors@austin-diocese.org.
Pastor de Dripping Springs se enfoca en el crecimiento y la sanación

Por Ricardo Gandara | Corresponsal

Mientras que el muy ocupado Padre Charlie Garza se encuentra supervisando St. Martin de Porres Parish en el floreciente Dripping Springs, él tiene la visión de que la iglesia se convertirá en un centro para la gente en busca de curación de enfermedades mentales.

El joven sacerdote está trabajando duro para luchar contra el dolor frecuente causado por la enfermedad mental, y está progresando. Todo lo que el Padre Garza quiere es que la parroquia y la iglesia sea un lugar donde la gente pueda buscar ayuda.

“La enfermedad mental tiene un efecto sobre el suicidio, que es una epidemia,” dijo el Padre Garza. “Durante un periodo de cuatro meses en 2017, hubo cuatro suicidios de jóvenes adultos en la parroquia. Hice más reuniones con las personas que murieron por suicidio y por causas naturales.

El Padre Garza también se guía por el llamado del Papa Francisco a que la Iglesia se vuelva más carismática. “Siempre le pedí a Dios que me curara y lo hizo. También sé que Dios trabaja a través de consejeros y sacerdotes. He sido testigo de la curación muchas veces,” dijo.

Pero la necesidad de ayuda continúa creciendo. “La parroquia se enfocará en la enfermedad mental, lo que Dios hizo en esa época, como ‘¡wow!’ La bondad exuda de él. Uno de nuestros voluntarios que atiende St. Martin dijo que Padre Garza es un ‘Hometown Hero,’ un premio que reconoce a residentes locales que impactan la comunidad creciente.

“La gente nos dijo que es compasiva. Él motiva a la gente en su iglesia y en la comunidad para ayudar en el área de la enfermedad mental,” dijo Susan Kimble, la directora ejecutiva interina de la parroquia.

Las necesidades son muchas en St. Martin. Cuando el sacerdote llegó en 2014, tres Misas de fin de semana atraían a cerca de 900 personas. Ahora, 1,300 vienen semanalmente, así que la parroquia ha agregado dos Misas. Para hacer un seguimiento del crecimiento y desarrollo en el área, el Padre Garza tiene un mapa en una pared de una oficina separada.

Por ello, el plan de 25 años para abordar el crecimiento. Una vez que la parroquia complete la construcción del St. Dymphna Center, que da servicio a la comunidad, el plan de 25 años para la parroquia se completará.

En Facebook busque y siga a la diócesis en “@DioceseofAustin” y “@bishopsjoevasquez.”
En Instagram siga a la “dioceseofaustin” y a “bishopsjoevasquez.”
En Twitter, siga a la @AustinDiocese.
Por Mary P. Walker | Corresponsal

“Por fe andamos, no por la vista” (2 Cor 5:7) no es sólo un verso reflexivo de la Biblia para Stephanie Lee, un miembro de St. Mary’s of the Assumption Parish en West. Ciega de nacimiento, estos versos describen su aproximación a la vida.

“Camino con los ojos de Dios todos los días, a donde Él me lleva,” dice Lee.

Su camino en la fe, apoyado por su educación, experiencia y determinación, fue instrumental en el llevar la radio Católica a Waco y la parte norte de la diócesis. En enero de 2017, ella aceptó el trabajo como director de la estación de KYAR-FM 98.3 Catholic radio.

De 31 años, Lee es la hija de Pat y el difunto Robert Lee, quien murió cuando ella tenía 6 años de edad. Ella tiene una hermana mayor. Aunque Lee nunca ha podido ver con sus ojos, ella creció aceptando su ceguera como una inconveniencia, no algo que la definiera. Ella da crédito a su madre por animarla a triunfar y procurar una actitud de “yo puedo”.

La familia se mudó a West cuando Lee tenía 3 años, el mismo año en que comenzó a aprender Braille. Ella rápidamente dominó el sistema, y pronto estaba leyendo. Lee alabó a su madre por animarla a triunfar y procurar una actitud de “yo puedo”.

Lee fue instrumental en conectar RED-C a otros que podían ayudar a llevar la radio Católica al área. Cuando KYAR salió al mercado para la venta, RED-C estaba lista para comenzar la compleja negociación para comprar la estación y asegurar fondos para el precio de venta de $500,000. Lee fue la obvia opción para ser la directora de la estación y fue contratada en enero de 2017.

“Dios claramente guió nuestros pasos para contratar a Stephanie. Ella tiene una educación sólida y experiencia en la industria radial y el deseo de seguir su fe en todas las cosas, lo que es muy importante para nuestra misión en RED-C,” dijo Macha.

Lee dijo, “Siempre sentí que el Espíritu Santo estaba llamándome a la radio Cristiana. Cuando Dennis llamó, yo sabía que eso era algo que se suponía que yo hiciera”.

Hoy, KYAR-FM 98.3 ofrece programas para EWTN Global Catholic Radio Network y Relevant Radio. La tecnología, el internet, y especialmente hardware y software computacional desarrollado permiten que Lee maneje la estación desde su oficina de casa. Con frecuencia está acompañada de Molly, un perro que ella adoptó de un albergue para animales, quien es “la luz de su vida”. Su “estudio de grabación” para mensajes de la estación es un clóset silencioso. Ella viaja por negocios relacionados con la estación, con la ayuda de voluntarios.

El viaje de fe de Lee tiene una lección para todos nosotros. Aunque no puede ver, ella cree que Dios le dio una “visión” para promover su reino proclamando su palabra como una líder en la radio Católica. Con la gracia de Dios, un espíritu determinado, y la ayuda de otros, ella camina en la fe mientras realiza su misión.

Director de estación de radio Católica camina guiada por la fe

Próximos Eventos

Una clase de Planificación Natural de la Familia (PNF) para parejas comprometidas se llevará a cabo el jueves 24 de mayo en el salón 2 en St. Anthony Mary Marie de Claret Catholic Church en Kyle de 7 pm a 9 pm. Esta clase cumple el requisito de seminario de introducción a la PNF para las parejas que se preparan para el matrimonio en la Diócesis de Austin. La clase consiste de dos partes: Enseñanzas de la iglesia Católica sobre sexualidad y matrimonio y repaso sobre nuestra fertilidad y cómo funciona nuestro cuerpo, métodos aprobados por la Diócesis de Austin, Introducción al método Creighton FertilityCare. La clase tiene un costo de $35 para pareja y se otorgará un certificado de asistencia al final de la sesión. Las parejas interesadas deben registrarse en: www.austinfcc.org/registration/ o llamar al (512) 474-2757 (puede dejar un mensaje).

El sábado 2 de junio, después de la misa vigilía de 5:30 p.m.: Todos están invitados a procesar con Nuestro Señor Jesús de la Catedral a los pasos del Capitolio del Estado de Texas, al Cementerio Estatal de Texas, terminando con reposición en la parroquia de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe. Para más información llame a la oficina de la Catedral al (512) 476-6182 o visite www.smaustin.org.
Como gente santa, defendemos las necesidades de todos

Por DeKarlos Blackmon | Columnista

Durante la Octava de Pascua, visité Holy Family Catholic School en Austin para presentar un premio a Madelyn Edwards, del séptimo grado. Madelyn participó en el concurso de Ensayos Dr. Martin Luther King del 2018 sobre el tema, “Seguidores de Cristo: Un Legado Rico de Igualdad para Toda la Gente”. Tomando del legado de King, y de la transformación de los primeros discípulos por Cristo, Madelyn nos recordó que, creados a imagen y semejanza de Dios, El nos creo para vivir en un estado de justicia para el Señor. (CNS foto/Max Rosi, Reuters)

Un curso que te ayudara a mejor preparar a la juventud, para poner la fe en acción. Este curso es para Agentes de Pastoral Juvenil. Requiere participar en 2 clases (en salón de clases) y 4 sesiones (de estudio independiente). El curso será proveído en español. El espacio es limitado.

www.austindiocese.org/agentes-de-pastoral-juvenil

¡JOVENES en Acción!

CLSAS (EN SALON DE CLASES):
4 DE AGO. & 15 DE SEP, 2018
9 A.M. - 4 P.M.

4 SESIONES EN AGO. (ESTUDIO INDEPENDIENTE): UNA SESION POR SEMANA

COSTO: $40 POR PERSONA

SE RECOMIENDA QUE PARTICIPEN AL MENOS 2 AGENTES DE PJ, DE SU EQUIPO.

Para más información:
Angie Marino
Coordinadora de Pastoral Juvenil
(512) 949-2466
angie-marino@austindiocese.org

El Papa Francisco saluda durante su visita pastoral a Alessano, en el sur de Italia, el 20 de abril. En su exhortación, “Gaudete et Exultate” (Regocíjense y alégrese), el papa dice que el camino a la Santidad está hecho de pequeños pasos en oración, en sacrificio y en el servicio a los demás. (CNS foto/Max Rosi, Reuters)

DeKarlos Blackmon es el director de la Oficina de Vida, Caridad y Justicia para la Diócesis de Austin. Se puede comunicar con él llamando al (512) 949-2471 o escribiéndole a dekarlos-blackmon@austindiocese.org.
Around the Diocese

Sacred Heart Catholic School in La Grange showed their support for Turtle Wing Foundation and Autism Awareness Month by wearing green. (Photo courtesy LaDonna Voelker)

Our Lady of the Rosary Cemetery in Georgetown hosted its annual Field of Flowers Day on April 8. Participants explored the nature trails and enjoyed the wildflowers, art and monuments throughout the cemetery grounds. (Photos courtesy Carolyn King)

Volunteers also made donation packages for the homeless and for shelter pets. (Photos courtesy Michelle Fontana)

St. Ignatius Martyr Parish in Austin had a community service day on March 3. Families from the parish and school came together to clean the church, campus and nearby Catholic cemetery. (Photo courtesy Rita Velasquez)

St. Martin de Porres Parish in Dripping Springs welcomed new members to the church during the Easter Vigil. The parish also held its third annual Easter Egg Hunt and Family Picnic. (Photos courtesy Emily Austin and Ian Manzak)

The Guadalupanas/nos Society from Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish in Taylor prays the rosary at the SPJST Nursing Home on the second Sunday of the month. (Photo courtesy Raymond Salazar)

Father James Ekeocha, pastor of St. Luke Parish in Temple, baptized Lauren Ernst during the Easter Vigil. (Photo courtesy Carla Hahn Clardy)

The Faith Formation Office at San José Parish in Austin hosts Friday Fish Fries every year during Lent. They are blessed with the help of many dedicated volunteers. (Photo courtesy Rita Velasquez)

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

The Engineering and Robotics Program at Reicher Catholic High School in Waco won first place at several competitions and qualified to participate in the First World Championship in Houston. They also traveled to local elementary schools to build excitement for robotics and engineering. (Photo courtesy Suzanne Hill)

Our Lady of the Rosary Cemetery in Georgetown hosted its annual Field of Flowers Day on April 8. Participants explored the nature trails and enjoyed the wildflowers, art and monuments throughout the cemetery grounds. (Photos courtesy Carolyn King)
Bishop Joe Vásquez celebrated the sacrament of confirmation on March 18 at Santa Rosa Parish in Andice. The parish also just completed their first Women’s Bible Study. (Photos courtesy Deanna Ramirez)

Bishop Joe Vásquez celebrated the sacrament of confirmation March 24 at St. Mary Parish in Wimberley. (Photo courtesy Cherie Glover)

Paulist Father Bruce Nieli and others from the Austin Diocese traveled to Memphis on Good Friday to celebrate the memory of Martin Luther King Jr. (Photo courtesy Father Nieli)

Father Payden Blevins celebrated First Holy Communion with the youth of St. Philip Mission in China Spring. (Photo courtesy Cathy Dominguez)

The eighth graders from St. Louis Catholic School in Austin reenacted the Stations of the Cross for students, faculty and parents on Holy Thursday. (Photo courtesy Jessica Chaffee)

The Little Flowers Girls Club of St. Margaret Mary Parish in Cedar Park visited the St. John Paul II Residence in Georgetown. The Little Flowers girls sang for and visited with the retired priests and planted flowers around several of the trees on the property. (Photos courtesy Angie Green)

The renovation of the sanctuary at St. Monica Parish in Cameron was completed in time for Easter Sunday. The parish’s First Communion class attended a retreat to prepare for the sacrament. (Photos courtesy Sonia Vega-Perez)

The Schoenstatt Movement of Austin held the eighth annual Good Friday Pilgrimage on March 30. The pilgrims walked from St. Mary Cathedral to the Marian Shrine of Our Lady of Schoenstatt. (Photo by Nathan Zamora)

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