Pope says thirst for power leads to abuse, conflict

By Carol Glatz | Catholic News Service

In today’s climate of mistrust, rejection and nationalism, the world urgently needs peacemakers and politicians who protect and lovingly serve others, Pope Francis said in his annual message for the World Day of Peace Jan. 1.

Political life can and should be “an outstanding form of charity” when it is exercised with a “basic respect for the life, freedom and dignity of persons,” the pope said.

Holding political office and having political responsibility “constantly challenge those called to the service of their country to make every effort to protect those who live there and to create the conditions for a worthy and just future,” he said.

“One thing is certain: good politics is at the service of peace,” Pope Francis wrote. “It respects and promotes fundamental human rights, which are at the same time mutual obligations, enabling a bond of trust and gratitude to be forged between present and future generations.”

The pope’s message, which focused on “good politics at the service of peace,” was released Dec. 18 at a Vatican news conference led by Cardinal Peter Turkson, prefect of the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development.

Peace is a gift freely offered by God to all people, who are then called upon to be open to peace and to cooperate, making peace real in one’s home, family, community and country, the cardinal said.

“The pope’s message, which the Vatican sends to heads of state around the world, invited politicians in particular to manage and administer resources for the well-being of “all dwellers in the house,” Cardinal Turkson said.

Pope Francis’ wish and prayer for peace in 2019, he said, “is that politics — this oversight, through policies and laws, of resources of domestic, national and global households — may bring peace to all the citizens of the households, especially its youth, who may not be robbed of their hope in the future, because politics is so badly done that it deprives them of peace.”

In his message, Pope Francis said, “The thirst for power at any price leads to abuses and injustice.” He specifically mentioned the harm caused by “political vices.”

“Whether due to personal incompetence or to flaws in the system and its institutions,” the pope wrote, political vices “detract from the credibility of political life overall, as well as the authority, decisions and actions of those engaged in it.”

“These vices, which undermine the ideal of an authentic democracy, bring disgrace to public life and threaten social harmony,” he said.

Such vices include “xenophobia, racism, lack of concern for the natural environment, the plundering of natural resources for the sake of quick profit and contempt for those forced into exile,” he said.

War and “the strategy of fear” are also contrary to politics at the service of peace, he said.

“To threaten others is to lower them to the status of objects and to deny their dignity,” which is why any “escalation of intimidation and the uncontrolled proliferation of arms is contrary to morality and the search for true peace.”

Politicians and all citizens, he said, need to “reaffirm that peace is based on respect for each person, whatever his or her background, on respect for one’s own life, community, nation and world,” he said.

“Authentic political life, grounded in law and in frank and fair relations between individuals, experiences renewal whenever we are convinced that every woman, man and generation brings the promise of new relational, intellectual, cultural and spiritual energies,” he said.

Good politics, he added, “respects and promotes fundamental human rights, which are at the same time mutual obligations, enabling a bond of trust and gratitude to be forged between present and future generations.”

The full text of the pope’s message can be found at www.vatican.va.
THE MISSION OF THE CATHOLIC SPIRIT
As the official newspaper for the Roman Catholic Diocese of Austin, the Catholic Spirit is dedicated to providing information, education, and formation for the Catholic community of Central Texas. This mission calls for the newspaper:
• to provide readers with an understanding of our Catholic faith and traditions;
• to be a primary source of information on Catholic issues relevant to the community;
• to be a unifying element for faith communities, both rural and urban, throughout Central Texas;
• to show respect for and appreciation of all cultural groups and traditions;
• to emphasize topics affirming the Catholic community and life, while acknowledging the humanity of the community and examining, with courage, topics that challenge and encourage growth in the faith.

HOW TO SUBMIT INFORMATION
Deadline for submission of articles or information for the Catholic Spirit is the 10th of the month for publication in the following month’s edition. Deadline for the February issue is Jan. 10.
Submit material in one of the following ways:
• E-mail to catholic-spirit@austindiocese.org.
• Mail to Catholic Spirit, 6225 E US 290 HWY SVRD EB, Austin, TX 78723
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STAFF
Publisher: Bishop Joe S. Vásquez
Editor: Shelley Metcalf
Assistant Editor: Christian R. González
Advertising: Shelley Metcalf
Spanish translation: Gina Dominguez
Columnists: Mary Lou Gibson, Father Bruce Nieli, Bill Quick, Sara Ramirez and Deacon Guadalupe Rodriguez
Correspondents: Ricardo Gandara, Erendela J. Obregon, Carla Smith and Mary P. Walker

The annual “9 Days for Life” prayer and action campaign will run Jan. 14–22. Sponsored by the U.S. bishops’ Committee on Pro Life Activities, the “9 Days” observance leads up to the annual Day of Prayer for the Legal Protection of Unborn Children Jan. 22, the anniversary of the Supreme Court’s 1973 decisions in Roe v. Wade and Doe v. Bolton that legalized abortion throughout all nine months of pregnancy.

The overarching intention of the novena is that all human life will be respected. Each day of the “9 Days for Life” novena highlights a different intention is accompanied by a short reflection, suggested actions, and related information. Visit www.9daysforlife.com to join!

The 9daysforlife.com website provides ways for Catholics to join the novena and to access resources. Participants can receive the novena by downloading a free “9 Days for Life” app, or by subscribing to daily emails or text messages. A printable version also is available online.
Those who join the campaign are invited to pray a multi-faceted novena that includes a new intention, brief reflection, related information and suggested actions for each day. Participants also can follow “9 Days for Life” on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram.

“In addition to praying for the unborn and for an end to abortion, we will pray for respect for life at all stages; for those nearing the end of their lives, for children in need of adoptive homes, for those mourning the loss of a child through abortion, and many others,” the USCCB Secretariat of Pro-Life Activities said about the novena.
Hundreds celebrate Our Lady through the streets of Austin

A diocesan celebration in honor of Our Lady of Guadalupe was held Dec. 1 in downtown Austin. Participants gathered at St. Mary Cathedral and received a blessing from Bishop Joe Vásquez before they processed through the streets of Austin to San José Parish. Bishop Daniel Garcia celebrated Mass for nearly 850 people at San José Parish. Parishes throughout the diocese also celebrated Our Lady of Guadalupe on Dec. 12. The feast day celebrates the appearance of the Blessed Mother to San Juan Diego in the 16th century. (Photos by Gabriela Manzano)

By Catholic Spirit Staff

In the Diocese of Austin, there are 80 parishes and missions in rural areas with less than a thousand families. These churches may be the only Catholic presence for miles within their county. They are crucial to the Catholic community in Central Texas.

But at many rural parishes, emergency costs may be too great to bear on their own. Sometimes, these costs threaten their solvency. Through Encountering Christ, the diocesan capital campaign that began last year, the diocese will create a $3 million endowment to provide additional operational and emergency support for our rural parishes.

Rural parishioners not only face unique challenges — they often feel isolated from other parishes in the diocese. The Encountering Christ campaign is helping to address these issues, according to two pastors.

“Parishioners are beginning to feel more connected to the diocese through the capital campaign. They recognize the challenges we face as the Austin Diocese continues to grow exponentially,” said Father Darrell Kostiha, pastor of St. Joseph Parish in Cyclone and Sts. Cyril and Methodius Mission in Marak.

He was appointed pastor of the small communities of faith last June around the same time the Wave 1 parishes were preparing to launch the capital campaign in their communities. He saw firsthand how parishioners at both churches “pitch in and work hard to get things done for the greater good” as they held their annual picnics. They have applied that attitude to Encountering Christ as well.

“They recognized the need and benefit of the campaign not only for the diocese but also for their particular parish,” Father Kostiha said. “Even though it has been a difficult year for the farmers and ranchers, it shows their capacity and heart to see beyond themselves to help others.”

St. Joseph Parish has raised 143 percent of its campaign goal and will make facility repairs and improvements with their share of campaign funds.

Encountering Christ has provided a “good opportunity to explain how this relationship between the parish and diocese works, and especially for a parish our size,” said Father Uche Andeh, pastor of St. Margaret Parish in Giddings and St. Mary Mission in Pin Oak. “They (the Diocese of Austin) are there to help serve us, and make us better. They make my work easier, they make our ministries here flow a lot better.”

St. Margaret is at 167 percent of goal and is preparing for a new parish hall, while St. Mary has raised 183 percent of its goal and plans to use campaign gifts to build a reserve fund. Parishioners were especially excited to learn about the diocesan funds to be directed to struggling rural parishes.

“People were pumped about this,” Father Andeh said. “They see this as an opportunity for them to contribute to the wellbeing of the diocese.”

Currently, more than $34.8 million has been pledged to Encountering Christ. The second wave of parishes will begin the capital campaign in February.

For more information, visit www.encounteringchristcampaign.org or call (512) 949-2400.

Encountering Christ campaign helps our rural parishes
Priest celebrates God’s power often in midst of tragedy

By Catholic Spirit Staff

Holy Cross Father Frank Zlotkowski could have one of the most difficult of ministries. He is hospital chaplain, at times dealing with families who need comfort as a loved one dies or sitting with patients who are at the end of life and need prayer and closure.

“But there are also celebrations, births and successful surgeries,” Father Zlotkowski points out. He is the staff priest chaplain at the Seton Healthcare Family of Hospitals in Austin. He offices at Dell Seton Medical Center with Father Tommy Sebastian. On any given day, the priests and volunteers minister to as many as 1,300 patients in eight hospitals in Central Texas.

“I celebrate the power of God in the midst of tragedies,” he said. “I look for and attempt to look for and see the presence of Jesus in hospitals.”

His work goes hand in hand with Seton’s No One Dies Alone, a program in which volunteers sit with patients who are at the end of their lives and have no one with them.

“This is what Jesus would do,” Father Zlotkowski said.

The 72-year-old priest does not show his age. He has been in religious life for 54 years as a member of the Congregation of Holy Cross, an international religious community of priests and brothers.

The influence to his current work came when he was a 17-year-old high school student. His father was electrocuted in an industrial accident.

“It was the tragedy of that and a parish priest who was with me. I saw it as a gift in journeying with others in tragedy,” Father Zlotkowski said.

Eventually, he became a board certified chaplain with the National Association of Catholic Chaplains.

“The added training deals with the complexity of people’s lives,” he said, pointing out that many of the families he meets are not of the Catholic faith. He is the initial spiritual caregiver present in a hospital, but he also connects patients with their churches. He often calls on colleagues to intervene when a Spanish speaker is needed or a woman is needed to talk to a rape victim.

“The work is not therapy nor do chaplains offer magic.”

“I can walk into a room and people see me wearing this suit (his clerics) but I know my role. I will get people a drink of water, a box of tissues, sit in silence and talk to doctors. I’ve been called to be in that room to be with people. I learn of their situations. I may or may not use Scripture or prayer. I sometimes have to get out of the way,” he said.

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The approach goes with Father Zlotkowski’s motto of “listening to the who before the do. I first get names, and I listen to who people are. You go gently. I trust in God’s spirit to lead me where I need to be.”

He uses this example to make his point. “I can walk into an emergency situation and Mrs. Robinson is a Pentecostal woman who asks me, ‘Have you been saved?’ I don’t push back. I don’t react to triggers of fear, doubt and sadness. In Mrs. Robinson, I can hear her fear,” he said.

He doesn’t question his presence or purpose. “All ministries and life is a mystery. Why am I a priest? I don’t know. I trust God called me to be a priest and gave me this gift to do what I do,” he said.

End-of-life issues are a challenge for patients, their families and those who minister to them.

“It’s always frightening, but the staff here are under Catholic directives. First comes the dignity of the patient,” he said. It’s common to talk with families about insurance and paying for care. “We walk this journey together with religious and ethics directives.”

As a priest, he celebrates Mass daily and offers the sacraments, including reconciliation and the anointing of the sick. He also brings the Eucharist to Catholics before they die.

“I will say, John, my brother, go forth in this world in the name of the Holy Spirit who sanctifies you,” he said.

“It’s not all solemn. “There is joy in the majority of what I see in this ministry — the awesome joy of seeing in people the recognition of God,” he said.

Cedarbrake offers ‘School for Contemplative Living’

By Ricardo Gandara | Correspondent

Holy Cross Father Frank Zlotkowski celebrates Mass in a hospital chapel. He is a chaplain for the Seton Healthcare Family of Hospitals in Austin. (Photo by Ricardo Gandara)

Cedarbrake Catholic Retreat Center in Belton announces a new program for spiritual formation called the School for Contemplative Living.

Brian Egan, director of Cedarbrake, said the program is an innovative initiative designed to introduce participants to the rich spiritual tradition of Catholicism.

“I believe this program will bring a deeper appreciation for the saints and for the life of prayer to the Diocese of Austin. It’s also another way to promote Cedarbrake’s mission of helping people encounter Christ by giving them the tools and teachings of the saints to do just that,” he said.

“The School for Contemplative Living consists of three “semesters,” each consisting of six weekly sessions (Wednesdays from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.). Each semester is a stand-alone, independent experience, so it is not necessary to attend the previous semester to profit from the current or future semester. Each semester will include prayer techniques and teachings on the spiritual life. The program begins March 13.

Franciscan Father Albert Haase, chaplain of Cedarbrake, is the designer of the School for Contemplative Living.

“For the last 12 years before becoming the chaplain at Cedarbrake, I flew across the country preaching parish missions, retreats and workshops on the spiritual life,” he said.

“Many parishes have weekly Bible studies for those who are interested in learning about Scripture. But I discovered there was also a great hunger to learn more about prayer, the saints, and what the Catholic mystics can teach us about living a more prayerful and contemplative life. That gave birth to the idea of the School for Contemplative Living. Think of it as training in living a more intentional spiritual life.”

Beverly Collin, assistant director of Cedarbrake, highlighted a few of the topics to be covered over the course of the three semesters: an introduction to the great religious traditions like the Benedictines and Franciscans, different ways to pray with Scripture, how to listen to God’s voice in one’s life, dryness in prayer, and making sense of fasting and almsgiving.

“I’m excited about this new program because it will be a wonderful addition to the Institute for Spiritual Direction that has been located here at Cedarbrake for nine years,” Collin said.

The School for Contemplative Living is specifically designed for those who are eager to become more aware of God’s action in their lives, people involved in their parish’s RCIA program, adult faith formation directors, those who are thinking about entering the spiritual director training program, as well as those already trained as spiritual directors who are looking for continuing education, she said.

Father Haase and Collin will be the presenters of the School for Contemplative Living. Father Haase holds a doctorate from Fordham University with a specialization in the history of spirituality; Collin holds a master’s degree in pastoral theology from St. Thomas University.

For detailed information about the specific topics covered during each semester or to register for the classes, contact Cedarbrake at (254) 780-2436 or visit www.austindiocese.org/cedarbrake.
Gold Mass at Texas A&M honors faith and science

By Mary P. Walker | Senior Correspondent

On Nov. 14, Texas A&M University’s Catholic Faculty and Staff Network (CFSN), in partnership with St. Mary Catholic Center, sponsored a Gold Mass at All Faiths Chapel on the College Station campus. The mission of CFSN’s nearly 400 registered members is to be God’s hands and feet by serving and supporting all faculty, staff and students at the university.

A Gold Mass prays for and celebrates scientists, teachers, students and those who further scientific discovery. A&M is a top tier research university, at which thousands are associated with the sciences. The date for the Mass was specifically chosen to be the day before the feast of St. Albert the Great, the patron saint of natural scientists.

The Gold Mass follows in the tradition of special Masses for certain professions, and is promoted by the Society of Catholic Scientists, an international lay organization that fosters fellowship among scientists, and serves as a witness to the harmony between faith and reason.

In his homily, Father Augustine Ariwaodo said that scientists, professors, researchers and students may struggle between what they are learning and who God is. Yet, learning and discovery come from God.

“Even your learning is a gift. Without faith, it has no meaning,” Father Ariwaodo said.

According to the Catechism of the Catholic Church, faith and research should not be in conflict.

“Methodical research in all branches of knowledge, provided it is carried out in a truly scientific manner and does not override moral laws, can never conflict with the faith, because the things of the world and the things of faith derive from the same God” (159).

For Tim Logan, instructional assistant professor in the Department of Atmospheric Sciences, faith informs his scientific perspective, and he constantly finds God in his work. He points out that all of the natural sciences are represented in Scripture, and science is used to teach truths of the faith.

For example, Logan said Jesus used the ancients’ knowledge of the weather in Luke 12:54-56.

“Jesus makes it a point to call people out for proclaiming the direction of the wind and whether or not it will rain, but not acknowledging him as the son of the true God. So many Catholic scientists have shaped the natural world and their devout belief in God was most certainly the most important part of their lives. The list includes Newton, Brahe, Copernicus, Kepler, Galileo, Pascal, Father Mendel and Father LeMaitre,” Logan said.

Father Augustine Ariwaodo, associate pastor at St. Mary Catholic Center in College Station, celebrated the Gold Mass on Nov. 14 at the All Faiths Chapel at Texas A&M University. (Photo courtesy Katie Fitzgerald)
Preparations have begun for state legislative session

By Enedelia J. Obregón | Senior Correspondent

In preparation for the 86th Texas legislative session, the Texas Catholic Conference of Bishops held a training session for diocesan staff and parish social ministry directors on Dec. 12. The training session addressed how to lobby legislators on the eight topics the Texas bishops have deemed a priority for the legislative session, the Texas Catholic Advocate Day on March 26.

TCCB Executive Director Jennifer Carr Allmon and Rachana Chhin, public policy outreach coordinator, led the training on how to lobby legislators on the eight topics the Texas bishops have deemed a priority for the session: Life and Family Life, Immigration, Restorative Justice, Education, Healthcare, Social Concerns, Religious Liberty, and Creation.

The legislative session will convene Jan. 8. Another training session will be held Feb. 7.

As people of faith, we need to remember that Biblical figures lobbied for their people, Allmon said. In Exodus, the Lord tells Moses to tell the ancient Hebrews, “I will take you as my own people and I will be your God.” “There is a relationship, a covenant of community,” Allmon said.

The Lord then tells Moses to “Go, tell Pharaoh, king of Egypt, to let the Israelites leave his land.” Upon hearing this, Allmon said, Moses reacted as most people do: I can’t do that; I’m not a good speaker.

“The Lord then told Moses that Aaron would be by his side to help.” “You don’t have to be the lone voice,” Allmon said. “You can be one of many voices.”

“Having Catholic Texans from throughout the state lobby their legislators and pray for the conversion of others, including those in parishes, to advocate for issues important to the church and the common good.”

Those in attendance will then train them on their journey to holiness.

“Don’t look at them as Democrats or Republicans … They are fellow members of the Body of Christ. We are not there to judge them on how they vote. We are there to accompany them on their journey to holiness.”

— Jennifer Carr Allmon, executive director of the Texas Catholic Conference of Bishops

Those who cannot be at the State Capitol in person are invited to call, write or e-mail their legislators.

Legislators have until March 8 to file bills. The TCCB staff has not read all the bills before the legislature.

Catholic Advocacy Day will begin with a Mass on March 25 at 5 p.m. at St. Mary Cathedral celebrated by Cardinal Daniel DiNardo and resume at the Capitol the following day, March 26, at 8:15 a.m.

To receive updates or register for the Advocacy Day, go to www.txcatholic.org.

The Church continues to affirm the dignity of every human being, and to grow in knowledge and understanding of the gifts and needs of her members who live with disabilities.

Diocese of Austin

St. Helen Parish, Georgetown

Sat., Apr. 6, 2019 • 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

For more information, or to register, visit https://www.austindiocese.org/disabilities-retreat

Come and experience a day of spiritual renewal with prayer and activities in an integrated setting. This day of spiritual retreat offers a special opportunity to be attentive to God’s personal concern for those with disabilities, and their families, friends and caregivers.

Diocese of Austin • Secretariat of Life, Charity and Justice • Aging and Disabilities
Rachel M. Sutterer, Coordinator, (512) 949-2486

Advocacy Day 2019...at the Texas State Capitol

The Diocesan Advocacy Day Planning Team invites you to participate in this motivating experience of raising voices for our moral beliefs and an opportunity to live out the baptismal call “to participate in shaping the moral character of society that is a requirement of our faith.”

(Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship, no. 9)

Tuesday, March 26, 2019
8 a.m. - 3 p.m.
For more information, visit https://www.austindiocese.org
**Cedarbrake retreats coming up**

The Saying Yes Retreat will be offered Jan. 26 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Cedarbrake Catholic Retreat Center in Belton. Saying yes to God as Mary did so long ago can fill us with God’s joy and lead to our own transformation. Presenters and author, Sally Robb, will use her own life experiences to show how to say a deeper yes to our Lord. Cost is $40 and includes lunch.

A Healing Pilgrimage Retreat on the Feast of Our Lady of Lourdes will be held Feb. 11 from 9 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. at Cedarbrake. This retreat will have talks on the great love of Mary, the message of Lourdes and will include praying the rosary and Mass with the sacrament of anointing. Father Albert Haase, Beverly Collin and Brian Egan will facilitate the day. Cost is $40 and includes lunch.

For more information and to register, visit www.cedarbrake.org or call (512) 949-2497 or jill-holmaas@austindiocese.org.

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**Celebrate Martin Luther King on Jan. 12**

A commemoration of the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. will be held Jan. 12 at 11 a.m. at St. Louis Parish in Austin. Auxiliary Bishop Fernand J. Cheri of New Orleans will be the keynote speaker for this event, which will include music, worship and a reception. For more information, contact DeKarlos Blackmon, the coordinator for Black Ministry, at (512) 949-2471.

**Annual celebration of Catholic schools**

The 11th annual Celebrating Catholic Schools Awards Dinner and Reception will be held Jan. 19 beginning at 6 p.m. at the AT&T Executive Education and Conference Center in Austin. This annual semi-formal dinner honors the “unsung” heroes and the outstanding of each of the 22 Catholic schools in the Diocese of Austin and raises funds for Catholic school families who wouldn’t otherwise be able to afford a Catholic education for their child. Curtis Martin, the CEO of Fellowship of Catholic University Students (FOCUS), will be the keynote speaker. For more information, visit www.csdatx.org or call (512) 677-9963.

Couples: Book a 2019 ME weekend now

Married couples are invited to strengthen, renew and rekindle their sacrament of marriage by attending one of the 2019 Marriage Encounter weekends: Feb. 8-10 in Belton, March 29-31 in Round Rock, Sept. 6-8 in Round Rock or Nov. 1-3 in Belton. The emphasis of the Marriage Encounter ministry is on communication between husband and wife. For more information, visit www.austinme.org or call (512) 677-9963.

**Catholic Men’s Conference is Feb. 23**

The seventh annual Catholic Men’s Conference will be held Feb. 23 from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. at St. William Parish in Round Rock. This year’s theme is “No Man Left Behind: Winning God’s Way.” Speakers include Hector Molina, Vince Young and Jon Leonetti. Register at www.centexcatholic.com.

**Classes in Spanish for ministry leaders**

“Missionary Disciple” is a series of classes focused on forming leaders of ministries and parishes. Written by some of the most well-known catechetical leaders in the country, “Missionary Disciple” provides the practical skills, strategies and approaches that ensure a successful faith formation program that transforms parishes and creates a dynamic church. Classes will be held in Spanish on Jan. 19, Feb. 16, March 2, April 13, May 25 and June 29 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at San Juan Diego Catholic High School in Austin. For more information, call (512) 949-2492 or visit www.austindiocese.org/comunidad-latina.
Scholars expect bishops’ retreat will lead to spiritual renewal

By Chaz Muth | Catholic News Service

A week of prayer and discernment on their role as church shepherds may be exactly what the U.S. bishops need when they gather in retreat Jan. 2-8 near Chicago, two Catholic University of America scholars said.

The retreat at Mundelein Seminary, suggested by Pope Francis in September, comes as the bishops work to rebuild trust among the faithful as questions continue to revolve around their handling of clergy sex abuse.

“Prayer is essential to the work of the church and prayer is essential to the vocation and mission of the bishop,” said Susan M. Timoney, professor of pastoral studies and spirituality at the university in Washington.

“Even more importantly, you see the mark of Pope Francis, who is a Jesuit by training for whom the work of discernment is absolutely integral and crucial to the way in which priests and bishops and laypeople are called to live out their vocation,” Timoney told Catholic News Service.

Out of deep prayer should come spiritual renewal, said Joseph E. Capizzi, professor of moral theology and ethics at the university.

“We hope that that’s what it will do, (that) it’ll deepen each bishop’s commitment to his vocation, to the good of the church that he serves as shepherd, to his own understanding of what all that involves,” Capizzi said.

Capuchin Father Raniero Cantalamessa, preacher of the papal household, will lead the retreat, offering morning and afternoon reflections on the theme “the mission of the apostles and their successors.”

The retreat is among the steps the bishops are taking in response to the abuse scandal, which emerged anew in the summer. The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops at its fall general assembly in November was prepared to consider proposals to strengthen oversight of bishops’ actions, but a formal vote on them was bypassed at the request of the Vatican’s Congregation for Bishops, which cited the upcoming gathering of presidents of worldwide bishops’ conference at the Vatican to discuss the church’s response to clergy sex abuse.

“Discernment is in a sense the Christian way of exercising leadership and of discerning what it is that God is asking and responding to the will of God.”

— Susan M. Timoney, professor at Catholic University of America

Capizzi said he expects that some skepticism remains among the faithful as the bishops begin their retreat. He advised that the bishops must not be perceived simply as “checking boxes” to show they are addressing deeply held concerns about their ability to lead the church.

He also feared “at least for some of the (bishops), there will not be a spiritual awakening, there will not be that deepening of their vocation.”

“Like most Catholics, I’ll be praying for them when they’re there.”

Cedarbrake Catholic Retreat Center announces the publication of Fr. Albert Haase’s latest book!

Join Father Albert at Cedarbrake Catholic Retreat Center in Belton on Feb. 20 for a Day of Reflection on his book! Call (254) 780-2436 or go to www.cedarbrake.org to reserve your seat.

Good spiritual directors can be difficult to come by; this book offers Pope Francis to be yours. Ever wonder what advice the pope would give you to help you grow in holiness, to deepen your prayer life or to know God’s will?

In “Practical Holiness: Pope Francis as Spiritual Companion,” you will find the keys to discovering the answers to those questions. With anecdotes about people and stories about saints, this exploration of Pope Francis’ apostolic exhortation, Rejoice and Be Glad: On the Call to Holiness in Today’s World, reminds us that there is no cookie-cutter approach to holiness and encourages us to rediscover our unique way of living out the Beatitudes and Jesus’s two-fold command of love. Readers will navigate through the “five great expressions of love of God and neighbor” — essential for any Christian in our self-absorbed, digital culture.

Available from Amazon.com or your favorite Catholic bookstore!
Death penalty is fruit of laws lacking humanity, mercy, pope says

By Junno Arocho Esteves | Catholic News Service

The death penalty is an inhumane form of punishment that ignores the primacy of mercy in the name of justice, Pope Francis said.

Meeting a delegation from the International Commission against the Death Penalty Dec. 17, the pope set aside his prepared remarks and spoke off the cuff, the Vatican said.

In his prepared text, which was handed to the delegation, the pope said his recent revision of the Catechism of the Catholic Church’s teaching against capital punishment was an important step in recognizing that the death penalty was “a consequence of a mentality of the time — more legalistic than Christian — that sanctified the value of laws lacking in humanity and mercy.”

“The church could not remain in a neutral position in the face of today’s demands to reaffirm personal dignity,” the pope said.

Pope Francis ordered a revision of the catechism’s paragraph on capital punishment, 2267, in August to assert that “the death penalty is inadmissible because it is an attack on the inviolability and dignity of the person” and to commit the church to working toward its abolition worldwide.

The development of the church’s teaching, he said, is consistent with “defending the dignity of human life” and is a step that all countries should follow.

“As has happened in the heart of the church, a similar commitment must be made by all nations,” the pope said. “The sovereign right of all countries to define their legal system cannot be exercised in contradiction with their obligations under international law, nor can it represent an obstacle to the universal recognition of human dignity.”

Countries that have not abolished capital punishment but have adopted a moratorium on executions also should ban the death penalty as a possible punishment for crime, Pope Francis said.

A temporary moratorium, he said, “cannot be lived by the condemned person as a mere prolongation of the waiting period for his or her execution.”

He also implored countries that continue executing prisoners to adopt a moratorium with the goal of abolishing “this cruel form of punishment.”

“The suspension of executions and the reduction of offences punishable by death as well as the prohibition of this form of punishment for minors, pregnant women or persons with mental or intellectual disabilities, are minimal targets to which leaders around the world should commit themselves,” he said.

He also called for an end to the “unfortunately recurrent phenomenon” of extrajudicial executions, which occur both in countries with and without capital punishment. All lethal use of force that is not strictly used to defend one’s self or another person, the pope said, “can only be regarded as an illegal execution, a crime of the state.”

Pope Francis called for “a truly humane justice” that protects the rights and safety of people while based on an “ethic of care.”

In this way, the pope said, “it is possible to address the ethical and moral problems that derive from conflict and social injustice, to understand the suffering of the concrete people involved and to arrive at other types of solutions that do not deepen these sufferings.”
Many mourn death of Guatemalan girl near border

By Julie Asher | Catholic News Service

Three U.S. Catholic bishops Dec. 18 joined their voices in mourning the death of a 7-year-old Guatemalan girl shortly after she crossed the U.S.-Mexico border with her father and they turned themselves in to U.S. Customs and Border Protection seeking asylum.

The girl, who was identified by the Guatemalan government as Jakeline Caal, died the first week of December.

“Our prayers and heart-felt condolences go out to Jakeline’s family. The death of a child is always a moment of great sadness, a jarring disruption of the natural order of life,” the bishops said in a joint statement.

“From this tragedy, we must remember this profound human consequence of our failed immigration policies, including also that restrictions on the flow of asylum seekers at the border can push more families to seek entrance between ports of entry which place them at greater risk,” they said.

The statement was issued by Bishop Joe S. Vasquez of Austin, who is chair- man of the U.S. bishops’ Committee on Migration; Bishop Mark J. Seitz of El Paso; and Bishop Gerald F. Kicanas, administrator of the Diocese of Las Cruces, New Mexico.

“Jakeline’s death is a tragic reminder of the desperate situation that many fleeing violence, persecution, and poverty face — both in their home countries and now at our border,” they said.

The Washington Post reported that the girl and her father, Nery Caal, 29, were taken into custody Dec. 6 around 10 p.m., south of Lordsburg, New Mexico. They were among 163 migrants who turned themselves in at the border.

“Some seven hours later, she was put on a bus to the nearest Border Patrol station but soon began vomiting (and having seizures). By the end of the two-hour drive, she had stopped breathing,” the Post reported. Border Patrol agents administered CPR and she was flown to a hospital in El Paso, where she later died.

Officials said the girl initially appeared healthy and an interview raised no signs of trouble, according to the news story. Her father, who was described as Spanish-speaking in initial accounts, signed a form indicating she was in good health, authorities said.

Critics of the Border Patrol and the Trump administration said later that the girl’s father speaks a Mayan dialect that officials supposedly didn’t really understand.

“Jakeline’s death is a tragic reminder of the egregious disregard for the safety and care of persons in the custody of U.S. officials.”

The Washington-based organization said it joined “in prayer for this girl’s family members who grieve her loss.

“We also pray for all of those making the treacherous journey across the desert and are reminded of Abraham, Sarah, Mary, Joseph and countless others who made similar journeys in the light of hope,” it said in a statement issued Dec. 14, the day news reports circulated about the girl, identified by the Guatemalan government as Jakeline Caal, who died the first week of December.

The inspector general’s office in the Department of Homeland Security said Dec. 14 it would investigate the circumstances of the child’s death.

The three Catholic bishops said they welcomed such an investigation, “in the light of hope,” it said in a statement issued Dec. 14, the day news reports circulated about the girl, identified by the Guatemalan government as Jakeline Caal, who died the first week of December.

They echoed that sentiment, saying that in celebrating Christmas “and the birth of Jesus, himself a child whose parents were told ‘there is no room,’ we continue to recognize and affirm that seeking asylum and protection is legal.”

“As a nation, we have the obligation to receive distressed individuals and families with welcome, compassion and humane treatment,” they added.
**Messengers of Hope**

**SPECIAL SECTION • JAN. 2019**

By Misty Poe and Robert W. Hitworth

**SUPERINTENDENT AND ASSIST. SUPERINTENDENT OF CATHOLIC SCHOOLS**

As Catholic Schools Week approaches, there is so much to be thankful for in the Diocese of Austin. Everyone associated with our Catholic schools has demonstrated a willingness to make them places of authentic encounter with Christ. With the support of these dedicated people, we are able to witness the daily transformations in the lives of our students. They happen when a student who feels insecure about their reading ability stands up in front and reads the reading for Mass. Or when a student with a learning difference experiences an encounter with Christ in the person of a classmate or teacher and feels welcomed and accepted for who they are - a child of God.

Catholic schools in the Diocese of Austin are filled with some amazing Messengers of Hope, especially the faculty, parents, students and benefactors. "Messengers of Hope" is the theme for Catholic schools this year. With the cooperation of these Messengers of Hope the children are growing in their faith and schools are flourishing. While the national trend in Catholic schools is declining enrollment, the student population in the Diocese of Austin increased by more than 160 students over the past three years. Through a variety of means the Office of Catholic Schools has sought to hear and understand the needs and desires of the families who desire Catholic education. The answers challenged our schools to respond and has brought about meaningful transformations. These transformations include new programming, financial accessibility and meeting the needs of exceptional students.

In 2017, St. Louis Catholic School in Austin began offering a Montessori program. The response was so great the school opened a second Montessori class this year. The Cathedral School of St. Mary and St. Mary Catholic School in Taylor are transitioning to a classical model of instruction. While the Catholic schools in the diocese already provide a remarkable $5.4 million in tuition assistance, more is needed. The Encountering Christ Capital Campaign will provide a $5 million endowed fund for additional tuition assistance. Families come to Catholic schools with students who have a variety of needs. Catholic schools in the Diocese of Austin are working diligently to increase their capacity to serve students with learning differences. Nine of 22 schools now have a Learning Specialist or Certified Language Therapist on staff. The goal is for each school to have one.

Consider getting involved with Catholic education and becoming a Messenger of Hope. In the words of Pope Francis "Hope opens new horizons making us capable of dreaming what is not even imaginable."

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**Number of Schools**

- National: 6,352
- Texas: 269
- Austin Diocese: 22

**Number of Students**

- National: 1,835,376
- Texas: 71,887
- Austin Diocese: 5,235

**Diocese of Austin Financial Aid Awards**

- 2016-2017: $5,415,821
- 2017-2018: $5,890,631
- 2018-2019: $5,819,738
Cathedral School of St. Mary
Austin (PK-8)
910 San Jacinto Blvd., Austin, 78701
www.smcschoolaustin.org

Cathedral School of St. Mary continues to live the mission of enriching students and their families by fostering a diverse community. Students reach their full potential with the guidance of our caring faculty. Recently, the Cathedral School implemented a Catholic Classical curriculum teaching truth, beauty, goodness, and wisdom centering on Christ and God’s creation. Cathedral School is a small, close-knit community of under 200 students in which students, faculty, and staff are devoted to walking in the word of God.

CONTACT: Esme Hoang, (512) 476-1480, admissions@csmaustin.org

Holy Family Catholic School
Austin (PK-8)
9400 Neenah Ave., Austin, 78717
www.holyfamilycs.org

Holy Family Catholic School is located on a beautiful campus in Northwest Austin. The school serves 583 students PK4 – 8th grades. Holy Family is a diocesan school that works with parents to nurture the growth of the whole child – spiritually, intellectually, socially, emotionally and physically. Our school is Catholic – promoting the teachings of the church. The school offers a variety of competitive athletic teams, award-winning robotics and theatre arts, along with many after school activities such as dance, choir, creative movement, student council and academic competitions. In 2017-2018, the elementary team won the state PSIA championship. Holy Family’s elementary or middle school teams have won the state championship for the last seven years.

CONTACT: Ellen Vento, (512) 246-4455, evento@holyfamilycs.org

Holy Trinity Catholic High School
Temple (9-12)
6608 West Adams Ave., Temple, 76502
www.holytrinitychs.org

Holy Trinity Catholic High School seeks to form the Christian leaders of tomorrow. Now in its 20th year of service to Central Texas, Holy Trinity continues to strive to develop the intellect, educate the heart, and form the character of each student by giving witness to Gospel values. The highly qualified faculty and staff provide students a unique Catholic, college preparatory curriculum. Each year Holy Trinity students receive National Merit Program recognition, and 100 percent of Holy Trinity graduates are accepted to college. Holy Trinity students have the opportunity to participate in athletics, community service, award-winning visual and performing arts and a wide range of student clubs and activities, including the Forensics Team, which is currently seeking its 12th State Championship title.

CONTACT: Isabelle Brogan, (254) 771-0787, ibrogan@holytrinitychs.org
Reicher Catholic High School

Waco (9-12)
2102 North 23rd St., Waco, 76708
www.reicher.org

At Reicher Catholic High School faith meets rigorous academics. Together with St. Louis Catholic School in Waco and St. Mary’s Catholic School in West, we offer the greater Waco area an opportunity for seamless, Catholic college preparatory education for PK through 12th grade. Reicher’s immersive and comprehensive curriculum transforms young people into analytical thinkers and leaders — concerned with advancing the greater good. Reicher’s holistic approach toward education has a proven 63-year track record of academic and athletic excellence. Our motto is “Discover Where You Belong.”

CONTACT: David Hurtado, (254) 752-8349, dhurtado@reicher.org

Sacred Heart Catholic School

La Grange (PK3-6)
545 East Pearl St., La Grange, 78945
www.sacredheartschoollg.com

For 88 years, Sacred Heart has combined Catholic faith and rigorous academics into high standards for student achievement. Our mission is focused on forming young disciples and our curriculum is conducive to the individual’s spiritual, intellectual, social and physical growth. Sacred Heart promotes opportunities and attitudes for Christian service through community service projects such as a food drive for the AMEN Pantry, Toy Drive for Christmas, making ornaments for the city Christmas at the Schemekenfest celebration, Veterans Day program, collecting food for the local animal shelter, and making seasonal decorations for the local nursing home. Spiritual growth and religious values are taught through daily prayers and a Gospel reading and attending weekly Mass. The students take turns at Mass serving as readers, cantors, gift bearers and altar servers.

CONTACT: LaDonna Voelkel, (979) 968-3223, voelkell@shcs-lg.org

St. Austin Catholic School

Austin (PK3-8)
1911 San Antonio St., Austin, 78705
www.staustinschool.org

St. Austin Catholic School, along with our Paulist priests, has been honored to educate Austin-area students for 101 years. St. Austin has a contemporary urban campus located in the heart of downtown Austin, between The University of Texas and the Texas Capitol. Our diverse school population is comprised of 210 students who come from more than 39 Austin area ZIP codes. Each day our students receive an authentic education that prepares them to be Christ-centered, academically strong, moral community leaders. St. Austin is proud to have earned the distinction of being a National Blue Ribbon School and with our small class sizes, we are able to continue this legacy of excellence year after year. We invite you to schedule a private tour to learn more about the authentic education our students receive.

CONTACT: Kelley Berlin, (512) 477-3751, kberlin@staustinschool.com
St. Dominic Savio Catholic High School

Austin (9-12)
9300 Neenah Ave., Austin, 78717
www.saviochs.org

St. Dominic Savio Catholic High School is a co-educational college preparatory school preparing young men and women to become faith-filled, visionary and inspirational leaders in service to the church and the world. Savio provides a college preparatory curriculum to 403 students that encourages intellectual and creative thinking with nearly 40 Pre-AP and AP level courses. There are more than 50 clubs and competitive teams for students to choose from in academics, athletics, faith formation, fine arts, foreign languages, leadership, social awareness and technology. The Class of 2018 earned more than $7.1 million in scholarships and completed over 7,160 hours of community service. In 2018-2019, 11 students received National Merit Recognition, totaling 82 students who have received National Merit recognition since the school opened in 2009.

CONTACT: Holly Bologna, (512) 388-8846, hbologna@saviochs.org

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St. Gabriel's Catholic School

Austin (PK-8th)
2500 W imberly Ln., Austin, 78735
www.sgs-austin.org

St. Gabriel’s Catholic School provides an extraordinary private school experience for students in Pre-K 3 through 8th grade. With a commitment to core values of integrity, caring and excellence, our students thrive academically and spiritually through a comprehensive Social Emotional Learning program, meaningful service learning partnerships and projects as well as challenging Project Based Learning opportunities. With a commitment to an innovative curriculum and a rich Catholic education, our students excel through cutting-edge maker space and coding programs, engaging creative and performing arts, a robust foreign language program offering Latin, Mandarin and Spanish, and much more. This year we are proud to incorporate our advanced Robotics program to all 3rd and 4th grade students!

CONTACT: Farah Golab, (512) 327-7755, fgolab@sgs-austin.org

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St. Helen Catholic School

Georgetown (PK-8)
2700 East University Dr., Georgetown, 78626
www.shcs lions.org

St. Helen Catholic School is committed to educating the whole person to see with Christ’s eyes. We strive to encourage each child to attain their full academic potential, foster a commitment to know, love and serve God and others, guide students to become conscientious and successful members of the community, and respect and celebrate each child’s individuality. We are a warm and inviting community where students, staff and parents work together to foster joyful disciples through wisdom, faith and family.

CONTACT: Maranda Nemec, (512) 868-0744, mnemec@shcs lions.org
St. Ignatius Martyr Catholic School
Austin (PK-8)
120 West O’torf St., Austin, 78704
www.school.st-ignatius.org

At St. Ignatius, we believe a Catholic school education offers young people the means to gain knowledge and to develop understanding and wisdom, which are essential to serve effectively and prosper in a global society. Our priests and faculty believe in fostering hearts that are compassionate and nourished by Catholic teachings and values; minds that are curious and well-trained in the humanities and sciences; lives that are active and committed to citizenship, service and social justice. The Holy Cross priests and sisters of the school and parish are present for the students through classroom visits, weekly Mass, teaching and encouraging with an emphasis on faith formation and excellence in education. Our school community lives by the Holy Cross motto: Ave Crux, Spes Unica - Hail the Cross, Our Only Hope!

CONTACT: Michelle Fontana, (512) 442-3602, mfontana@st-ignatius.org

St. Joseph Catholic School
Bryan (PK-12)
600 South Coulter Ave., Bryan, 77803
www.stjosephschoolbcs.org

Founded in 1894, St. Joseph Catholic School is in its 125th year of providing quality Catholic education to families in the Brazos Valley. The elementary campus is a hub of academic, social and spiritual growth. St. Joseph Junior High and High School students keep active schedules with Mass participation, choir, band, art, broadcast journalism, Latin, Spanish, competitive athletics and the core curriculum. St. Joseph offers Pre-AP and AP courses in science and English, and juniors and seniors have the option to attend dual credit courses at nearby Blinn College. Among St. Joseph’s recent athletic successes are a second place finish at the 2018 State Cross Country Meet and making it to the second round of football playoffs.

CONTACT: Sarah Badillo, (979) 822-6641, sbadillo@stjosephbcs.org

St. Joseph Catholic School
Killeen (PK-6)
2901 East Rancier Ave., Killeen, 76543
www.sjcskilleen.org

St. Joseph Catholic School in Killeen has served the diverse population of the Killeen/Fort Hood area since 1955, educating students in Catholic values, traditions, providing a firm foundation in academics and fostering respect and service. Our students are taught a faith-based curriculum in a caring, family environment that emphasizes spiritual growth and religious values through daily prayer and weekly Mass.

CONTACT: Deacon Jim DiSimoni, (254) 634-7272, office@sjcskilleen.org
Since 1956, St. Louis Catholic School has been a steady presence in North Central Austin, serving families from more than 39 ZIP codes. In 2017, we added a Catholic Montessori track for students ages 3-5, the first of its kind in the Diocese of Austin. Students at St. Louis Catholic School follow a rigorous curriculum guided by dedicated teachers. Instruction is tailored to the needs of each child, setting them up for success in the classroom and beyond. The academic experience is enhanced by electives, service opportunities and extracurricular activities. Students participate in the regional and diocesan level science fair as well as PSIA. Our mission at St. Louis Catholic School is to form children in wisdom and holiness.

CONTACT: Rosalie Dowling, (512) 664-6622 ext. 245, rosalie.dowling@slcsaustin.org

St. Louis Catholic School
Austin (PK-8)
2114 St. Joseph Blvd., Austin, 78757
www.slcsaustin.org

St. Louis Catholic School
Waco (PK-8)
2208 North 23rd St., Waco, 76708
www.stlouiswaco.org

St. Mary’s Catholic School
Taylor (PK-8)
520 Washburn St., Taylor, 76574
www.stmarystaylor.org

Educating for wisdom and virtue, centered on Christ! St. Mary’s Catholic School carries a rich legacy filled with 122 years of faith, academics and service formation for PK3 - 8th grades. Founded in 1896 by Dominican Sisters, St. Mary’s has recently returned to its roots by implementing the Classical and Catholic methods of our outstanding educational history. Our faculty engages students in classic literature novel studies, integration of the humanities (History+Literature+Religion), Socratic discussions, formal logic, Latin, active learning experiences such as our Junior Master Gardener program, and the daily pursuit of Truth, Beauty, and Goodness in all learning. With twice-weekly Mass, service activities both in and out of school, competitive athletics, fine arts, Spanish, technology, advanced credit, and Cultural Arts class, our students become servant-leaders for Christ as they grow in wisdom. St. Mary’s offers bus transportation from Round Rock and Hutto.

CONTACT: Kim Bohac, (512) 352-2313 ext. 213, admissions@stmarystaylor.org
The mission of St. Mary’s Catholic School is a commitment to academic excellence and the spiritual development of our students toward a life of prayer, service and love. Students at St. Mary’s Catholic School celebrate Mass weekly and have opportunities to altar serve and lector. We are proud of our accelerated academics, community service and extensive extracurricular activities including PSIA, NJHS, Student Council, God Squad, basketball, volleyball, golf, track and cheerleading. Our expanded middle school electives program includes robotics, multimedia, Falcon TV, band, choir, drama, creative writing, visual art, dance and film study.

CONTACT: Renee Morales, (254) 778-8141, rmorales@stmarys-temple.org

St. Mary’s Catholic School
West (PK3-8)
507 West Spruce St., West, 76691
www.stmaryswest.com

Founded in 1899, St. Mary's Catholic School has a history of providing a quality Catholic education in mind, body, spirit and service. Online programs are implemented to enhance math, reading and social studies skills. Junior High students have the opportunity to participate in the extracurricular activities including NJHS, athletics and student council. St. Mary’s focus on Catholic identity includes weekly school Mass, traveling classroom vocations cross, monthly adoration, and allowing Gospel values to permeate all areas of education. Each year our Mustangs serve a greater community by collecting new shoes and toiletry items to donate to a local youth program, donate more than 1,100 canned goods to stock the local food pantry and host an annual “baby shower” for Jesus to collect baby items to donate to Care Net Pregnancy Center. St. Mary's Catholic School students make a difference in the community and world in which we live.

CONTACT: Ericka Sammon, (254) 826-5991, ericka.sammon@stmaryswest.com

St. Michael’s Catholic Academy
Austin (9-12)
3000 Barton Creek Blvd., Austin, 78735
www.smca.com

As stated in the four pillars of our mission, a St. Michael's education inspires lives of service, courage, personal integrity and intellectual curiosity, and the ways in which we guide our students along this essential pathway are many. Community work, a hallmark of Catholic education, is where spiritual growth and servant-leadership take concrete form. St. Michael’s service program makes the concept of love for the human family and commitment to social justice vivid and relevant. Across the curriculum we promote and provide a moral and ethical framework to give students a sound, solid footing from which to make informed decisions with true authenticity. From Fine Arts to Robotics – from Independent Study to Athletics – students are empowered to discover where their passions and talents intersect. At St. Michael’s Catholic Academy we know each of our students and are committed to their individual success.

CONTACT: Leah Espanza, (512) 328-2323, ext. 309, lesparza@smca.com
At St. Theresa's Catholic School, we continue to emphasize both high academic standards and values that build character, integrity and compassion. Our celebration of St. Theresa's feast day is a school-wide favorite pictured here. Studying about our patron saint, students bring flowers to honor her, leading the community in song. Our full offering of sports teams keeps our students active outside the classroom. Our fall sports season was very successful for our student athletes with our golf, cross-country, volleyball and football teams having fun and winning C APPS Championships. Located on a wooded 21-acre campus in Northwest Austin, our school is a ministry of St. Theresa Parish and serves almost 400 students. St. Theresa's is dedicated to educating our students in a Catholic, community-oriented, and academically excellent environment.

C O N T A C T: Andrea Bizzanelli, (512) 451-7105, abizzanelli@st-theresa.org

San Juan Diego Catholic High School

San Juan Diego Catholic High School is pleased to be celebrating its first year in a new facility SJD provides students a college preparatory education along with an unparalleled corporate internship experience throughout all four years of their high school experience. On their new campus, students enjoy a 60,000-square-foot building with a dedicated math and science center, a gymnasium, library, technology/resource center, and a fine arts facility. San Juan Diego is proud to be making a difference in the lives of many first-generation college bound students and their families. Corporate partnerships with businesses such as Dell, Seton, IBM, and the law offices of Vinson & Elkins help to support students who would otherwise not benefit from this experience.

C O N T A C T: Travis Butler, (512) 804-1935, tbutler@sjdchs.org

Santa Cruz Catholic School

Santa Cruz Catholic School offers an outstanding education, extracurricular programs, and an athletic program that includes track and field. In addition to an exemplary educational curriculum, Santa Cruz now has four sisters (Dominican Sisters of Mary) who play a vital role in forming the whole child: mind, body and spirit. Our sisters, priests and staff instill in our students that “to be saints is not a privilege for a few, but a vocation for everyone.” We invite you to take a tour with us at any time to see our beautiful campus and ask about our complimentary “Shadow Program” for your child.

C O N T A C T: Heather Vallilee, (512) 312-2137, hvallilee@sccstx.org
Many blessings to Bishop Daniel Garcia

Editor: Bishop Vásquez, Bishop Daniel Garcia has been appointed Bishop of Monterey, California. What were your thoughts when you heard this news?

Bishop Vásquez: First of all, I am grateful to our Holy Father, Pope Francis, for appointing Bishop Garcia to be the fifth bishop of the Monterey Diocese. I am very proud of Bishop Garcia; he has been extremely helpful to me in shepherding this diocese. I am most grateful to God for all that he has done as vicar general, Moderator of Curia and as auxiliary bishop.

Bishop Garcia has proven himself to be not only a good administrator but also truly a good pastor, good shepherd, someone who really knows the hearts of the people, understands them, and is willing to serve. For all of his work here in our diocese, I am most grateful. At the same time I am sad because I am losing a good friend, a good assistant, a good helper to me. I will truly miss him. However, I know that he has many wonderful gifts that he brings to the church, and he will undoubtedly use those great gifts in serving the people of Monterey.

Editor: With his appointment, a hole is left in diocesan leadership. When and how will the next vicar general be chosen?

Bishop Vásquez: Since Bishop Garcia’s appointment was announced at the end of November, I have been working to develop a plan to appoint the next vicar general. I need to appoint a priest who will be able to help me continue to shepherd this diocese. The vicar general often represents the bishop of the diocese and is able to carry out the vision and the plans of the bishop to be able to serve the people well. I will probably have to bring a priest from a parish which will create some difficulty because that means I will leave a hole in the parish from which he comes. I ask everyone to pray that the Holy Spirit guide me so that I may choose the right priest to be able to serve the people of God and help me shepherd this diocese.

Editor: What is the role of the vicar general and the Moderator of the Curia?

Bishop Vásquez: The vicar is the one who literally stands in behalf of another. Thus, the vicar general is the priest who speaks or acts on behalf of the bishop. He is given the authority to carry out certain functions in my name. For instance, he can celebrate confirmations in my name when I am not able to do so. He can attend certain meetings and communicate my ideas when I am not present. He can meet with other priests and express my vision, or my plans, or my ideas.

The Moderator of the Curia (curia refers to the diocesan staff) is one who oversees and supervises on my behalf all of the different departments of the diocese. He works with the personnel and staff to make sure the diocese is operating effectively.

Editor: Do you expect the diocese will get another auxiliary bishop?

Bishop Vásquez: This is a question I am asking myself. If I were to seek another auxiliary bishop, I would begin by petitioning the Holy Father. We were blessed to have Bishop Garcia to be the first auxiliary of the Diocese of Austin. The diocese has certainly grown much over last several decades, and we will continue to grow. However, I really have to ponder this question very carefully. I need to take this to prayer to determine when and if this is the right time to petition for another auxiliary bishop. My first priority for the time being is to fill in the role of vicar general and Moderator of Curia.

Editor: As we begin the New Year there is much going on in the church and in our state. The legislature will convene soon. What are your hopes for the 2019 State Legislature?

Bishop Vásquez: I hope and pray our legislators will come together in the spirit of solidarity and always ask themselves, “How can we best serve the people in the state of Texas?” I pray they will work for the common good as they serve the people of this great state. There are many needs in this state. Pro-life issues are very important because each of us is made in the image of God. As Catholic Christians, we stand for life and defend life at all stages from conception until natural death.

The church supports legislation that promotes strong, stable and healthy families. We also know there are people here who need health insurance and access to quality health care. There is also the issue of immigration that must be addressed. The Catholic Church supports immigration reform that is merciful, charitable and compassionate to those here simply working for a better life. We must also make sure that we have the proper funding for our schools so that our children are well-educated. By educating our children, we will be providing for their future then they will be able to contribute to the good of the society.

Editor: What is your prayer for all of us in 2019?

Bishop Vásquez: Heavenly Father, I ask that you bless your church, protect it and continue to shower abundant blessings upon all of us. May we look to your Son, Jesus Christ as our Savior who is calling us to follow him in this New Year. May we look forward to that great day when you will come to establish your kingdom forever. Amen.
“SAYING YES,” with co-author Sally Robb, Jan. 26, 9 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.  

The Saying Yes retreat will be offered Jan. 26 from 9 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. at Cedarbrake Catholic Retreat Center. The retreat is based on the book, Saying Yes, by Sally Robb and Kristin Armstrong. Saying our yes to God as Mary did so long ago can fill us with God’s joy and lead to our own transformation. Our presenter and co-author, Sally Robb, will use her own life experiences to show us how to say a deeper yes to our Lord. Cost is $40 and includes lunch.

Continuing Education for Spiritual Directors, Feb. 1-3

Cedarbrake Catholic Retreat Center will offer a continuing education workshop/retreat for spiritual directors Feb. 1-3. Our chaplain, Franciscan Father Albert Haase and Beverly Collin will be the presenters. The topics will be “Practical Holiness according to Pope Francis” and “Exploring our Dreams in Spiritual Direction.” The cost is $235 for a private room, $185 for a shared room and $100 for commuter rate.

A Healing Pilgrimage Retreat, Our Lady of Lourdes, Feb. 11, 9 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

A Healing Pilgrimage Retreat on the Feast of Our Lady of Lourdes will be held Feb. 11 from 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. at Cedarbrake Retreat Center. This retreat will have talks on the great love of Mary, the message of Lourdes and include praying the rosary and Mass with the sacrament of anointing. Father Albert Haase, Beverly Collin and Brian Egan will facilitate the day. Cost is $40 and includes lunch.

Practical Holiness, Pope Francis as Spiritual Companion, Feb. 20, 9 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

The Practical Holiness, Pope Francis as Spiritual Companion retreat will be offered at Cedarbrake Feb. 20. Franciscan Father Albert Haase, chaplain of Cedarbrake, will present this day based on his latest book. With anecdotes about people and stories about saints, you’ll discover there is no cookie-cutter approach to holiness as we take a look at the “five great expressions of love of God and neighbor” that Pope Francis believes are essential. The cost is $40 and includes lunch.

School for Contemplative Living, Wednesdays, March 13 – April 24, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

The School for Contemplative Living at Cedarbrake Catholic Retreat Center is specifically designed for those who are eager to become more aware of God’s action in their lives. There will be 3 semesters. The first semester consists of six Wednesdays: March 13, March 27, April 3, April 10, April 17, and April 24 and costs $250 (includes lunch). Payment is required in full at the beginning of each semester. Registration is for the entire semester. Visit www.austindiocese.org/cedarbrake for more information.

Thanks to the generous supporters of the Catholic Charities
12th Annual Creating Hope in Central Texas Luncheon!

LEADERSHIP GIFTS
Erin and Boone Almanza  
Lisa and Chris Ansel  
Atchley and Associates  
Austin Pulmonary  
Ben E. Keith Beverages  
In loving memory of  
David and Ellen Beneke  
Victoria Beyson  
Judy and Patrick Castillo  
Capitol Vending and Coffee, Missy and Jim Daywood  
Linda and Bill Carson  
Sloan Conroy  
Cook-Welden Funeral Homes and Cemeteries  
Kate and Hank DeLisle  
Kathleen and Chris Earthman  
Peggy and Ed Fernandes  
Dianne and Greg Field  
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Kirsten and Scott Luke  
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Sarah and Jimmyn Mansour  
The Mulva Family  
Foundation  
Audrey and Louis Munin  
Cathy and Brent Muth  
AnnMarie Olson  
Joan Olson  
PMB Helin Donovan  
Anne and John Reyes  
Julie and Michael Scarpatto  
Ascension Seton  
David and DeeAnn Smith  
Cindy Mantalo and Fernando Sontrio  
St. John the Baptist Catholic Church, Fayetteville, VBS  
St. John Neumann Catholic Church, Austin  
Carmen and Raymond Vargas  
Most Reverend Bishop Joe Vázquez  
Barbara and Ed Weir  

TABLE CAPTAINS
Erin and Boone Almanza  
Sarah and Michael Antonora  
Ascension Seton  
Susan and Dan Bautch  
Michae Beasley  
Tina and Gilbert Bernal  
Jennifer Bibbo  
Ana Campos Bongking  
Claire and Rod Bordonel  
Joanne and Eric Boyce  
Astrid Burgalin  
Jennifer and Chris Cantu  
Amy Carr  
Nancy and John Carrano  
Linda Cartwright  
Allison and Robert Cavazos  
Annie Chavez  
Molly and Chris Chor  
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Sloan Conroy  
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Liz Johnson, St. Edwards University  
Pam Jape, San Juan Diego Catholic High School  
Reverend Cheryl Kimmel, Highland Park Baptist Church  
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Neal McMaster  
Liz Meikel  
Merryl Lynch—Ryan Leggett  
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Loori O’Leary  
Dr. AnnMarie Olson  
Jean Olson  
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Mary Pham  
Kristen Pierce-Vreeke  
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Misty Poe  
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Oblea Zapata, San Jose Catholic Church, Austin  

SPECIAL THANKS
San Juan Diego Catholic High School  
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WWW.CCCTX.ORG
By Deacon Guadalupe Rodriguez | Guest Columnist

Two thousand years ago the Holy Spirit went in search of servants (Acts 6:3) to help the apostles in the Lord’s vineyard, and it is no different today. Jesus is searching for a few good men to be permanent deacons of our church.

For men who have ever considered being a deacon, now is a good time to pray and meditate with Scripture. The “Basic Norms for the Formation of Permanent Deacons” encourages men to deepen their knowledge of the word “to hear its call and experience its saving power.”

As we consider the call to the diaconate, it is also good to spend time in adoration and in prayerful silence in order to listen for the call of the Holy Spirit. The Basic Norms also encourage men to seek the intercession of Mary, either through the rosary or other prayers.

God is always calling men to Holy Orders, but are we listening with the ears of the heart? Have we hardened our hearts or clouded our eyes with other pursuits or riches that we consider more important or necessary than God’s holy will upon our lives? As I talk to men about the diaconate of a deacon, I often hear “I want to concentrate on my career and my gifts.” “When I retire, I plan to answer this call but now is not the right time.” “I want to first build up my nest egg so that I am secure when I answer the call,” and “I have young children.”

When I hear these responses, I think of Luke’s Gospel when Jesus said to the young rich man, “Sell all that you have and distribute it to the poor, and you will have a treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.” When the young man heard this, he went away in sorrow because he had great wealth.

The call to the diaconate is not something that should make us sad! Deacons are not asked to give up our possessions. Our human gifts and talents are our greatest treasures and we will be truly complete and fulfilled when we offer them in service of God.

As the Basic Norms say, when it comes to the call from God there is always an “inexpressible dialogue between God and human beings, between the love of God who calls and the freedom of individuals who respond lovingly to him.” Yes, God is calling, but he is also giving us the freedom to respond.

Following Christ is our greatest hope and joy, but it can be a challenge if we don’t trust him completely. I think of Joseph in the middle of the night escaping to Egypt with Mary and Jesus at the angel’s request. He had to totally trust God’s call on his life.

When we answer God’s call, he will fulfill all our wishes and our holy desires. He will complete our dreams and aspirations in ways that we can’t even imagine! Our cup will be filled, packed down, and overflowing (Lk 6:38). The Basic Norms remind us that, “He who calls them, accompanies them and molds their hearts so that they can recognize His grace and respond generously to it.”

Having young children is not an obstacle to the call of God. When restoring the diaconate, the fathers of the Second Vatican Council envisioned permanent deacons with young families. The Basic Norms say, “When lived in faith, this family service is for the rest of the faithful an example of the love of Christ. The married deacon must use it as a stimulus of his diaconia in the Church.”

Likewise, “Married deacons should feel especially obliged to give clear witness to the sanctity of marriage and the family.”

Finally, I encourage men who may be discerning the call to the diaconate to act now! As St. Teresa of Calcutta would say, “Never keep God waiting.” Start praying now. Seek the guidance of your pastor, your wife and/or your spiritual director now. Open your heart and your eyes to the love of God and he will do wondrous deeds.

Are you being called to the diaconate?

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

- Jan. 20 at the Pastoral Center in Austin
- Feb. 17 at St. Mary Parish in Brenham
- March 17 at Eagle’s Wings Retreat Center in Burnet
- May 5 at the Pastoral Center in Austin

Each session (from 2 to 5 p.m.) will explore the diaconate, discernment methods, qualities and characteristics sought in applicants, the formation journey, the wife’s participation in formation, and the application process. For more information, call (512) 949-2459; e-mail diaconateformation@austindiocese.org; or visit www.austindiocese.org/diaconalformation.

For up-to-date information from the Diocese of Austin, visit www.austindiocese.org
Facebook: “Diocese of Austin”
Twitter: @AustinDiocese

Deacon Guadalupe Rodriguez is associate director of Diaconal Formation for the Austin Diocese. He also serves at St. Mary Cathedral Parish in Austin. Deacon Rodriguez can be reached at (512) 949-2410 or guadalupe-rodriguez@austindiocese.org.
SAINTS FOR OUR TIMES

17th century swordsman eventually becomes a saint

By Mary Lou Gibson | Columnist

Filippo (Philip) Latini was born in 1605 in Corleone, Sicily (now Italy) the third of six children. His parents tended a small vineyard and his father, Leonardo, was a skilled cobbler and leather craftsman and passed those skills on to Filippo. When the Spanish mercenaries occupied Sicily in the 1620s, Filippo’s life changed dramatically.

The mercenaries were skilled swordsmen and young Filippo became fascinated with their weaponry. The Spaniards taught him the art of swordsmanship, and he became an expert.

Over the next few years, Filippo’s skill with the sword gained him a reputation for being “the best blade in Sicily.” Editor Bernard Bangley writes in “Butler’s Lives of the Saints” that Filippo used his sword to protect women and peasant neighbors from abuse by soldiers.

Being an expert swordsman also brought him trouble, and he found himself involved in several brushes with the law. He was 19 when the most serious incident occurred. Bangley writes that he was in a duel and seriously wounded his opponent. This upset him so much that he ran to a local church seeking sanctuary. In that quiet place, Filippo reviewed his life and decided it was meaningless; he had to make some changes. One of the first things he did was to beg forgiveness from the wounded man, and later they became friends. In December 1631, he joined the Franciscans in Caltanissetta and became a Capuchin lay brother taking the religious name of Bernard. As a Capuchin friar, Bernard lived a simple life focusing on self-discipline. His early assignment in the friary was that of cook or assistant cook. He also cared for the sick and did many other tasks for the next several years as he moved from one friary to another in the province.

John DeLaney wrote in the “Dictionary of Saints” that Friar Bernard practiced severe austerities and penances; he was known for his gifts of miracles, prophecies, ecstasies and levitation.

Like Francis of Assisi, he had a loving and healing relationship with animals. Bangley writes that people brought their sick pets and farm animals to him. He practiced a ritual of praying the Lord’s Prayer over an animal and then leading it three times around a cross in front of his church.

Bernard had a special love for the Blessed Virgin Mary. Andie Rocha writes at www.etw.com that the Blessed Mother appeared to him and placed the Divine Child in his arms. She told Bernard of the day of his death four months in advance.

One biographer describes him as the gentle strength of his Sicilian homeland. For Bernard, going to church was a sumptuous feast of prayer and union with God. He also received Communion daily which was contrary to the custom of the time.

He liked to stay in church at night because, as he himself explained, “It wasn’t good to leave the Blessed Sacrament alone.” So he would stay until the other friars arrived.

In times of natural disasters, such as earthquakes and hurricanes, he would meditate in front of the tabernacle, praying “Easy Lord, be gentle with us!”

Bernard spent the last 15 years of his life in Palermo. He died there in 1667. On his deathbed, after receiving the final blessing, he joyfully kept repeating: “Let’s go, let’s go.” He was beatified by Pope Clement XIII in 1767, and canonized by Pope John Paul II in 2001. His feast day is Jan. 12.

SPECIAL COLLECTION

Peter’s Pence

The special collection for Peter’s Pence was taken up in parishes June 30-July 1. The collection helps Pope Francis provide emergency assistance to those in need because of natural disaster, war, oppression and disease. Totals are listed below by deanery. To report an error, contact the diocesan Finance Office at (512) 949-2423.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>PARISH</th>
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<tr>
<td>Brenham/La Grange Deanery Totals</td>
<td>$8,243.67</td>
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Mary Lou Gibson is a freelance writer and a member of St. Austin Parish in Austin.
Every year at Christmastime we hear the Christmas story. Whether it be Gospel proclaimed at Mass, popular carols that tell the story of Christ's birth, or Linus telling Charlie Brown what Christmas is all about, it's a story that we know well. In all the hustle and bustle leading up to Christmas, it can be a challenge to find time to truly reflect on the story and how it changes us.

I think about Mary and Joseph as they arrived in Bethlehem. What did they do for me? I wonder if the story would have been different had the innkeeper known the baby to be born was the Son of God. What would I have done in the same situation? While Mary and Joseph may not physically knock on the door of my home, Christ knocks each and every day through those in need. “Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me” (Mt 25:40). It’s up to me to decide whether to close the door or open it to welcome him inside.

At Catholic Charities, we see Christ in the face of each person who knocks on our door seeking help and hope. We welcome each person who comes to us, no matter their age, race, religion or economic circumstance. We hear their stories, their hopes and their dreams and work with them to ensure they have the tools and resources they need to thrive in their God-given gifts and dignity. We serve because our faith tells us that every life is precious, that each person has inherent dignity because we are made in the image and likeness of God.

As we welcome Christ through prayer and in the Eucharist, let us remember to welcome him in those we encounter in our daily lives — the mother working to give her child a safe and healthy start to life; the child struggling at school and at home because of depression and anxiety; and the family seeking safety and opportunity in a new country. Let us welcome him in those who look, think or act differently from us, remembering that they too have inherent dignity.

Last year at Catholic Charities we were honored to open the door to 13,823 of our neighbors at their time of need, and we know there is so much more work to do. As we begin the New Year, Catholic Charities is preparing to embark upon a new strategic plan so we can say “yes” to even more of our sisters and brothers looking to better their lives.

We are grateful to our supporters, volunteers, parishes and community partners who allow us to say “yes” and take a step closer to our goal of ending poverty in Central Texas. I invite you to join us in our mission by supporting our work with a financial or in-kind donation, or through your gift of time as a volunteer. To learn more about how you can get involved, visit www.cccctx.org.

Sara Ramirez is the executive director of Catholic Charities of Central Texas. She can be reached at (512) 651-6100 or sara-ramirez@ccctx.org.
A PERSONAL REFLECTION

Come, Holy Spirit and renew our hearts and our church

By Father Bruce Nieli, CSP | Guest Columnist

December 18, 2019, marks the 200th anniversary of the birth in New York City of Isaac Thomas Hecker, founder of my religious community, the Missionary Society of St. Paul the Apostle, commonly known as the Paulists. The church has named Father Hecker, a convert to the Catholic faith, a “Servant of God,” the first step in the process of formally declaring a person a saint. As a member of the Paulist Fathers, I wonder what would Isaac Thomas Hecker say regarding the current parallel crises in church and American society?

My short answer to the question is he would reiterate what he said during his lifetime: What is needed is “a new Great Awakening.” This put him in sync with movements of spiritual conversion which have historically been called “Great Awakenings.” These were movements in which responding to the Holy Spirit produced simultaneous renewal and reform in both the church and society.

Hecker’s words. This put him in sync with movements of spiritual conversion which have historically been called “Great Awakenings.” These were movements in which responding to the Holy Spirit produced simultaneous renewal and reform in both the church and society.

The closest thing in my lifetime to the Great Awakening movements of the Spirit was the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 1960s. During that time I made a decision to become a missionary priest. The great dream of Dr. Martin Luther King — an America gathered around the table of the Eucharist! — has become for me an America gathered around the table of the Eucharist!

“The radical and adequate remedy for all the evils of our age, and the source of all true progress, consist in increased attention and fidelity to the action of the Holy Spirit in the soul” was at the core of Isaac Hecker’s vision for the reform of the church and society.

For some time now, especially since the intensification of the current moral crises, I have made an effort to pay more attention to the movement of the Holy Spirit in my soul through increased fidelity to prayer, penance and spiritual discipline. I have a long way to go! “Come, Holy Spirit!” But if enough of us make similar moves, more and more will we become channels of the Holy Spirit, building a more humble, holier church and a more humble, holier nation. And we, like Isaac Thomas Hecker, will do our small but important part in renewing the face of the earth!

Paulist Father Bruce Nieli is an evangelist and missionary based at St. Austin Parish in Austin. A native of Long Island, NY, he was ordained in 1973. Father Nieli leads parish missions and retreats, and speaks at a variety of diocesan and regional conferences. He is fully bilingual and does presentations in both English and Spanish.

8th Annual CREATING HOPE Luncheon in the Brazos Valley

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

RSVP to attend, give or lead others to join us by calling Molly Kulpa at 979-822-9340 ext. 114 or molly-kulpa@ccctx.org.

www.CCCTX.org/CreatingHopeBrazosValley

Thursday, February 7, 2019 at 11:30 a.m. at St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic Church in College Station
GOOD NEWS
25

JANUARY 2019

FAITH THROUGH ART

Icon of Our Lady of the Sign is complex, very symbolic

By Bill Quick | Columnist

Last May I began a three-part series on icons of the Blessed Mother. I began with Our Lady of Tenderness, and in October I discussed the icon of Hodigitria or “She who shows the Way.” The third and final type of icon to be addressed in this series is of the Orans (from the Latin “to pray”) type which portrays the Theotokos with upraised hands in a posture of prayer. The particular icon I will reference in this writing not only has Mary in the posture of prayer, but she is also accompanied by Christ Emmanuel in a mandorla on his mother’s breast. This icon is referred to as Our Lady of the Sign.

The gesture of prayer with the upraised hands as depicted in the Orans icon type is very old and is referenced not only in the early Christian community, but also in the Old Testament. One of the earliest known images of the Orans type with Christ Emmanuel on the breast of the Blessed Mother Mary is from the fourth century. This image is located at a catacomb in Rome called “Cimitero Majore.”

Many times, as depicted in the referenced icon, seraphim and other celestial creatures are portrayed. This symbolizes Mary’s significance as the Queen of Heaven. The inscriptions found on either side of Mary’s halo are the Greek abbreviation for “The Mother of God”. The inscriptions within the mandorla, on either side of Christ, are the Greek abbreviation for “Jesus Christ.” Inside the three bars of the cross in Jesus’s halo are the Greek letters that together mean “I AM.” This, with the portrayal of Christ’s human image, indicates that he is fully divine and fully human.

The title of the icon of Our Lady of the Sign is derived from the prophet Isaiah who states: “Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign; the young woman, pregnant and about to bear a son, shall name him Emmanuel.” This prophecy of course was fulfilled with the Incarnation of Christ. The image of the Theotokos Orans with Christ Emmanuel on her breast depicts the very sign announced by Isaiah in his prophecy.

The icon of Our Lady of the Sign is complex and rich with symbolism and deep in mystery. Let us take a look at a few of its many revelations that are being expressed to us through its symbolic language. We see Christ Emmanuel displayed on Mary’s breast in a mandorla.

The three concentric circles of the mandorla that encircle Christ symbolize that he is present to the faithful from outside time and space and full of heavenly glory, mystery and majesty. Christ is present to us in this icon in three ways: (1) The Eternal Logos, (2) The Incarnate Word and (3) The Eucharistic Christ under the appearance of bread and wine.

The principle theme of this icon is the mystery of the Incarnation and Mary’s profound role in that event. We see that the ever prayerful and Immaculate Mary was chosen by God to bear his Son in her womb and give birth to the Savior of the world. The three stars on Mary’s outer garment represent her special relationship with the Holy Trinity — daughter of the Father, mother of the Son and spouse of the Holy Spirit.
Calendar of events

Mark your calendars for these events that are coming up across the Diocese of Austin. Send entries for this section to catholic-spirit@austindiocese.org.

Jan. 5: Mass for Life at 8 a.m. at San Jose Parish in Austin. Details: www.austindiocese.org/sidewalk-ministry.
Jan. 5: St. Albert the Great Parish in Austin will celebrate the feast of the Epiphany with its annual Boar’s Head and Yule Log Pageant at 7 p.m. This medieval Christmas celebration will feature music, dance, period costumes and a live Nativity scene. Tickets: www.boarshedaustin.com or call (512) 837-4179.
Jan. 9: A high school discernment dinner will be held from 7 to 8:30 p.m. at St. William Parish in Round Rock. Details: www.godiscalling.me.
Jan. 10: A high school discernment dinner will be held from 7 to 8:30 p.m. at Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish in Temple. Details: www.godiscalling.me.
Jan. 12: A commemoration of the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. will be held at 11 a.m. at St. Louis Parish in Austin. Auxiliary Bishop Fernando J. Cheri of New Orleans will be the keynote speaker for this event.
Jan. 12: TDCJ Volunteer Training/Orientation will be held at the Pastoral Center in Austin. This is a training for those who want to volunteer in the Texas Department of Criminal Justice system. Register: (512) 949-2460.
Jan. 15: Young professional men and women host their monthly Adoration at 7 p.m. at the Marian Shrine of Our Lady of Schoenstatt in Austin. Details: www.facebook.com/SchoenstattAustin.
Jan. 16: An Adult Discernment Dinner for men will be held at 7 p.m. at the Borromeo House in Austin. Details: www.godiscalling.me.
Jan. 18: People of the Austin Diocese are invited to begin 33 days of preparation prayer for Total Consecration to Jesus through Mary on Feb. 20. Prayers are done privately using the consecration preparation book. Visit www.TexasToJesusThroughMary.org by Jan. 18 to receive a free Montfort preparation prayer book by mail and for more information.
Jan. 19: Celebrating Catholic Schools at 8 p.m. at the AT&T Center in Austin. Details: www.csdatx.org.
Jan. 20: Inquiry session for those interested in the permanent diaconate from 2 to 5 p.m. at the Pastoral Center in Austin. Details: (512) 949-2459 or diaconateformation@austindiocese.org.
Jan. 21: Diocesan offices will be closed for the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday.
Jan. 23: A Discernment Dinner for women will be held from 7 to 8:30 p.m. at St. Vincent de Paul Parish in Austin. Details: www.godiscalling.me.
Jan. 24: Our Lady of the Angels Maternity Shelter will host its 18th annual Benefit Banquet from 6 to 9 p.m. at the Frank Mayborn Convention Center in Temple. Bishop David Konderla of Tulsa will be the keynote speaker. Details: www.ladyoftheangels.org/banquet-ticket-purchase.
Jan. 26: Texas Catholic Pro-Life Day begins with Mass then a Rally for Life at the State Capitol. Details: www.austindiocese.org/texas-catholic-pro-life-day.
Feb. 7: Catholic Charities of Central Texas will host the eighth annual Creating Hope Luncheon in the Brazos Valley at 11:30 a.m. at St. Thomas Aquinas Parish in College Station. To volunteer or to register, call Molly Kulpa at (979) 822-9340, ext. 114 or e-mail molly-kulpa@cccts.org.
Feb. 9: Sweetheart Dinner and Dance at the St. William Parish Evangelization Center in Round Rock. Dinner from 6:30 p.m.; dance from 8 to 11 p.m. Tickets are $40 per person. Reserved tickets are $60. Details: Julio Campos at (512) 635-4707.
Feb. 16: Green and White Night Dinner and Auction to support St. Louis Catholic School in Austin. Sponsorship and table packages available. Details: www.slcusaustin.org.
Feb. 16: Green and White Night Dinner and Auction to support St. Louis Catholic School in Austin. Sponsorship and table packages available. Details: www.slcusaustin.org/green-white-night.

Days of reflection, retreat

Jan. 4-6: Biblical Institute at Cedarbrake Catholic Retreat Center in Belton. Franciscan Father Bill Burton will present. Cost is $250 for a private room, $210 per person for a shared room and $125 for commuters. Details: www.austindiocese.org/cedarbrake or (254) 780-2436.
Jan. 12: Married couples are invited to Couples Time Out, a morning of prayer and reflection on the importance of God in marriage, will be held from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m. at the Marian Shrine of Our Lady Schoenstatt in Austin. Donation is $20 per couple/family. Babysitting is provided. Register by sending an e-mail to cto@schoenstatt.us.
Jan. 19-21: Together Encounter Christ (TEC), a retreat for teenagers and young adults, will be held at Eagle’s Wings Retreat Center in Burnet. Participants are invited to ignite their relationship with God with this week-end of prayer and witness. Details: www.tec-ctx.org.
Jan. 26: The Saying Yes retreat will be offered from 9 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. at Cedarbrake Catholic Retreat Center in Belton. Sally Robb will use her own life experiences to show us how to say a deeper yes to our Lord. Cost is $40 and includes lunch. Details: www.austindiocese.org/cedarbrake.
Feb. 7-9: Healing the Whole Person Retreat presented by the John Paul II Healing Center will be held at St. Joseph’s Christ the Good Shepherd Chapel in Bryan. More information: Becky Kramr at healingthewholeperson-bcs@gmail.com. Registration: www.jpiilearningcenter.org/events.
Feb. 8: Day of Equipping presented by the John Paul II Healing Center at St. Joseph’s Parish Activity Center in Bryan. More information: Becky Kramr at healingthewholeperson-bcs@gmail.com. Registration: www.jpiilearningcenter.org/events.
Feb. 8-10: Married couples are invited to strengthen, renew and rekindle their sacrament of marriage by attending the upcoming Marriage Encounter weekend at Cedarbrake in Belton. The emphasis of the Marriage Encounter ministry is on communication between husband and wife. Register: www.austinite.org/apply or (512) 677-9963 or wvmeaustin@gmail.com.
Feb. 11: A Healing Pilgrimage Retreat on the Feast of Our Lady of Lourdes will be held at Cedarbrake Catholic Retreat Center in Belton. Cost is $40 and includes lunch. Details: www.austindiocese.org/cedarbrake or (254) 780-2436.
Feb. 14: Celebration of Love from 6 to 9 p.m. at Eagle’s Wings Retreat Center in Burnet. Details: www.ewcrc.org.
Feb. 14-17: Come and See Retreat for young men at Holy Trinity Seminary in Irving. Details: www.godiscalling.me.
Feb. 18: Catholic Men’s Conference from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. at St. William Parish in Round Rock. Tickets are $50 each. Sponsored by Central Texas Fellowship of Catholic Men. Details: www.centексatholic.com.

Official schedule

The official schedule for Bishop Joe Vásquez is listed below (Bishop Daniel Garcia is transitioning to Monterey, California). Dates and times are subject to change.

Jan. 6: Diocesan School Advisory Board, Pastoral Center, 10 a.m.
Jan. 7: Ordination of Permanent Deacons, AT&T Conference Center, Austin, 5:30 p.m.
Jan. 30: “Francis Network” Meeting, Pastoral Center, 7 p.m.
Jan. 31: Finance Council, Pastoral Center, 11 a.m.
Feb. 1: EIM Review Board, Pastoral Center, 9 a.m.
Feb. 2-3: Diocesan Catholic Youth Conference, Waco Convention Center
Feb. 7: Catholic Charities’ “Creating Hope” Luncheon, St. Thomas Aquinas Parish, College Station.
Feb. 8: Confirmation, Sacred Heart Parish, Austin, 7 p.m.

Jan. 2-8: Family Life Education for Catechetical Leadership, Pastoral Center, 9 a.m.
Jan. 4: Bishop’s Mass of Martyrs,
Jan. 5: Secretariat Directors’ Meeting, Pastoral Center, 9 a.m.
Jan. 6: Bishop’s Mass of Martyrs.
Jan. 10: Secretariat Directors’ Meeting, Pastoral Center, 9 a.m.
Jan. 11: Monthly Budget Meeting, Pastoral Center, 8:30 a.m.
Jan. 12: Annual Commemoration honoring Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., St. Louis Parish, Austin, 11 a.m.
Jan. 13: Ordination Mass of Permanent Deacons, Our Lady’s Maronite Church, Austin, 11 a.m.
Jan. 15: Staff Farewell Lunch for Bishop Garcia, Pastoral Center, 12:30 p.m.

Bishop Joe S. Vásquez

Jan. 2-8: U.S. Bishops’ Retreat, Chico, CA
Jan. 10: Secretariat Directors’ Meeting, Pastoral Center, 9 a.m.
Jan. 11: Monthly Budget Meeting, Pastoral Center, 8:30 a.m.
Jan. 12: Annual Commemoration honoring Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., St. Louis Parish, Austin, 11 a.m.
Jan. 13: Ordination Mass of Permanent Deacons, Our Lady’s Maronite Church, Austin, 11 a.m.
Jan. 15: Staff Farewell Lunch for Bishop Garcia, Pastoral Center, 12:30 p.m.

BULLETIN BOARD

CATHOLIC SPIRIT
Muchas bendiciones para el Obispo Daniel García

El Obispo Daniel Garcia ha sido designado Obispo de Monterey, California, ¿Qué pensó cuando escuchó esta noticia?

Obispo Vásquez: Antes que nada, estoy agradecida con nuestro Santo Padre, el Papa Francisco, por designar al Obispo García como el quinto obispo de la Diócesis de Monterey. Estoy muy orgullosa del Obispo García; él me ha ayudado mucho en el pastoreo de la diócesis. Estoy muy agradecida con Dios por todo lo que él ha hecho como vicario general, Moderador de la Curia y después como obispo auxiliar.

El Obispo García ha probado no solo ser un buen administrador sino también un verdadero sacerdote, un buen pastor, alguien que realmente conoce los corazones de la gente, los entiende, y está dispuesto a servir. Estoy muy agradecida por todo su trabajo realizado aquí en la diócesis. Al mismo tiempo, estoy triste por que estoy perdiendo un buen amigo, un buen asistente, un buen ayudante. Lo voy a extrañar verdaderamente. Sin embargo, sé que tiene muchos dones maravillosos que aporta a la iglesia, y que sin duda, el usará esos grandes dones en el servicio de la gente de Monterey.

Editora: Con este nombramiento, se deja un hueco en el liderazgo de la diócesis. ¿Cuándo y cómo se elegirá el nuevo vicario general?

Obispo Vásquez: Desde que el nombramiento del Obispo García fue anunciado a finales de noviembre, he estado trabajando para desarrollar un plan para nombrar al siguiente vicario general. Necesito nombrar a un sacerdote que pueda ayudarme a continuar a pastorear a la gente de la diócesis. El vicario general con frecuencia representa al obispo de la diócesis y es capaz de llevar a cabo la visión y los planes del obispo para poder servir bien a la gente. Probablemente tendré que traer un sacerdote de una parroquia que lo creará cierta dificultad ya que eso significa que dejaré un hueco en la parroquia de la cual provenga. Les pido a todos que oren al Espíritu Santo para que me guíe de manera que yo pueda escoger el sacerdote correcto para servir a la gente de Dios y para ayudarme a pastorear a la gente de esta diócesis.

Editora: ¿Cuál es el papel del Vicario general y Moderador de la Curia?

Obispo Vásquez: El vicario general es literalmente aquel que se presenta en nombre de alguien más. Por lo tanto, el vicario general es el sacerdote que habla o actúa en nombre del obispo. A él se le da la autoridad para llevar a cabo ciertas funciones en mi nombre. Por ejemplo, puede celebrar confirmaciones en mi nombre cuando no me es posible. Puede asistir a ciertas reuniones y comunicar mis ideas cuando no estoy presente. Puede reunirse con otros sacerdotes y expresar mi visión, o mis planes, mis ideas. El Moderador de la Curia (la Curia se refiere al personal diocesano) es quien supervisa en mi nombre todos los diferentes departamentos de la diócesis. Él trabaja con el personal y empleados para asegurarse que la diócesis está operando efectivamente.

Editora: ¿Espera que la diócesis tenga otro obispo auxiliar?

Obispo Vásquez: Esa es una pregunta que me hago a mí mismo. Si fuera a buscar el tener otro obispo auxiliar, comenzaría por hacer una petición al Santo Padre. Fuimos bendecidos con tener al Obispo García como el primer obispo auxiliar de la Diócesis de Austin. La diócesis, cier- tamente, ha crecido mucho durante las últimas décadas, y continuaremos creciendo. Sin embargo, tengo que pensar sobre esta pregunta con mucho cuidado. Necesito orar sobre esto para determinar cuando y si este es el momento correcto para pedir otro obispo auxiliar. Mi prioridad por el momento es llenar el rol de vicario general y Moderador de la Curia.

Editora: ¿Qué piensa el Obispo García como el quinto obispo de la Diócesis de Austin?

Obispo Vásquez: Espero y oro por que nuestros legisladores se reúnan en un espíritu de solidaridad y siempre se pregunten a sí mismos, ¿cómo podemos servir mejor a la gente del estado de Texas?”. Oro por que ellos trabajen por el bien común mientras sirven a la gente de este gran estado. Hay muchas decisiones en este estado. Los asuntos pro-vida son muy importantes por que cada uno de nosotros está hecho a imagen y semejanza de Dios. Como Católicos Cristianos, actuamos por la vida y la defenderemos en todas las etapas, desde la concepción hasta la muerte natural.

La iglesia apoya la legislación que promueve familias fuertes, estables y saludables. También sabemos que hay gente aquí que necesita seguro médico y acceso a servicios de salud de calidad. También existe el tema de la inmigración que debe ser abordado. La Iglesia Católica apoya la reforma migratoria que es misericordiosa, caritativa, y compasiva hacia aquellos que simplemente se encuentran trabajando por una vida mejor. Debemos también asegurarnos de que tengamos los fondos apropiados para nuestras escuelas para que nuestros niños estén bien educados. Al educar a nuestros niños, les damos un futuro y entonces, ellos podrán ser capaces de contribuir al bien de la sociedad.

Editora: ¿Qué es su oración por todos nosotros en el 2019?

Obispo Vásquez: Padre Celestial, te pido que bendigas nuestra iglesia, la protejes y continúes derramando abundantes bendiciones sobre todos nosotros. Que miremos a tu Hijo, Jesucristo como nuestro Salvador que nos llama a seguirlo en este Nuevo Año. Que esperemos con ansia ese gran día en el que vendrán a establecer tu reino para siempre. Amén.
Cientos celebran a Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe a lo largo de las calles de Austin

Una celebración diocesana en honor de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe se llevó a cabo el 1 de diciembre en el centro de Austin. Los participantes se reunieron en St. Mary Cathedral y recibieron una bendición del Obispo José Vásquez antes de avanzar en procesión a través de las calles de Austin hacia San José Parish. El Obispo Daniel García celebro Misa para cerca de 850 personas en la San José Parish. Parroquias a lo largo de la diócesis también celebraron a Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe el 12 de diciembre. El día de su fiesta se celebró la aparición de la Santísima Madre a San Juan Diego en el siglo 16. (Fotos por Gabriela Manzano)

Sacerdote celebra el poder de Dios con frecuencia en medio de la tragedia

Por Ricardo Gandara | Corresponsal

El Padre de Holy Cross, Frank Zlotkowski puede que tenga uno de los ministerios más difíciles. Es el capellán del hospital, a veces lidiando con familias que necesitan apoyo mientras que mueren seres queridos. O a veces, sentándose con pacientes que están al final de la vida y necesitan oración y una sensación de cierre.

“Pero también hay celebraciones. Nacimientos y cirugías exitosas,” señala el Padre Zlotkowski. Él es el sacerdote capellán en Seton Healthcare Family of Hospitals en Austin. Él oficia en Dell Seton Medical Center con el Padre Tommy Sebastian. En cualquier día, los sacerdotes y voluntarios sirven en ministerio a tantos como 1,300 pacientes en ocho hospitales en el Centro de Texas.


El trabajo no es terapia ni los cape-

llanes ofrecen magia.

“Puedo entrar en un cuarto y la gente me ve usando este traje (indumentaria eclesiástica) pero yo conozco mi papel. Voy a conseguirle un trago de agua a la gente, una caja de pañuelos desechables, me siento en silencio y hablo con los doctores. He sido llamado para estar en ese cuarto con la gente. Conozco sobre sus situaciones. Puede o puede que no use la Escritura o la oración. A veces tengo que no estorbar,” dice.

“Hay gozo en la mayoría de lo que veo en este ministerio — el maravilloso gozo de ver en la gente el reconocimiento de Dios,” dijo.

Por Ricardo Gandara | Corresponsal

...
La campaña Encontrando a Cristo ayuda a nuestras parroquias rurales

Por Personal del Catholic Spirit

En la Diócesis de Austin existen 80 parroquias y misiones en zonas rurales con menos de mil familias. Estas iglesias puede que sean la única presencia Católica por millas dentro de sus condados. Son cruciales para la comunidad Católica en el Centro de Texas.

Pero en muchas parroquias rurales, los costos de emergencia pueden ser muy grandes para sostener por sí mismas. Algunas veces, estos costos amenazan su solvencia. A través de Encontrando a Cristo, la campaña capital dioceñana que comenzó el año pasado, la diócesis creará una dotación de $3 millones para proveer de apoyo adicional operativo y de emergencia para nuestras parroquias rurales.

Parroquianos rurales no sólo se enfrentan a retos únicos –con frecuencia se sienten aislados de otras parroquias en la diócesis. La campaña Encontrando a Cristo está ayudando a abordar esos temas, de acuerdo a dos pastores.

“Los parroquianos están comenzando a sentirse más conectados a la diócesis a través de la campaña capital y a reconocer los retos que enfrentamos mientras la diócesis de Austin continúa creciendo exponencialmente,” dijo el Padre Darrell Kostiha, pastor de St. Joseph Parish en Cyclone y Sts. Cyril and Methodius Mission en Marak.

Él fue nombrado pastor de las pequeñas comunidades de fe el pasado mes de junio aproximadamente al mismo tiempo en el que las parroquias de la Ola 1 se preparaban para lanzar la campaña capital en sus comunidades. Vio de primera mano cómo los feligreses de ambas iglesias «colaboran y trabajan arduamente para hacer las cosas por un bien mayor» mientras celebraban sus picnics anuales. Ellos han aplicado esa actitud a Encontrando a Cristo también. “Ellos reconocieron la necesidad del beneficio de la campaña no solo para la diócesis, sino también para su parroquia particular,” dijo el Padre Kostiha. “Aunque ha sido un año difícil para los agricultores y ganaderos, esto muestra su capacidad y su corazón para ver más allá de sí mismos, para ayudar a otros”.

St. Joseph Parish ha recaudado el 143 por ciento de su objetivo de campaña y Sts. Cyril y Methodius están en el 113 por ciento. Ambas parroquias realizarán reparaciones y mejoras en las instalaciones con su parte de los fondos de campaña. Encontrando a Cristo ha brindado una “buena oportunidad para explicar cómo funciona esta relación entre la parroquia y la diócesis, y especialmente para una parroquia de nuestro tamaño,” dijo el Padre Uche Andeh, pastor de St. Margaret Parish en Giddings y de la misión St. Mary en Pin Oak. “Ellos (la Diócesis de Austin) están allí para ayudarnos a servirnos y mejorarnos. Facilitan mi trabajo, hacen que nuestros ministerios fluyan mucho mejor aquí”.

St. Margaret está en el 167 por ciento de la meta y se está preparando para un nuevo salón parroquial, mientras que St. Mary ha recaudado el 183 por ciento de su meta y planea usar los dones de la campaña para crear un fondo de reserva. Los parroquianos estaban especialmente entusiasmados de aprender acerca de los fondos diocesanos a ser dirigidos a parroquias rurales con dificultades.

“La gente estaba emocionada por esto,” dijo el Padre Andeh, “Ellos ven esto como una oportunidad para contribuir al bienestar de la diócesis”. Actualmente, más de $34.8 millones se han prometido a Encontrando a Cristo. La segunda ola de parroquias comenzará la campaña capital en febrero.

Para obtener más información, visite www.encounteringchristcampaign.org.

Abriendo nuestros corazones a Cristo en medio de nuestra cotidianeidad

Por Sara Ramirez | Catholic Charities of Central Texas

Cada año, durante el tiempo Navideño, escuchamos la historia de la Navidad. Ya sea en el Evangelio proclamado en la Misa, en villancicos populares que cuentan la historia del nacimiento de Cristo, o cuando Linus le está contando a Charlie Brown de qué se trata la Navidad; es una historia de María y José mientras celebraban sus picnics anuales. Ellos han aplicado esa actitud a Encontrando a Cristo también. “Ellos reconocieron la necesidad del beneficio de la campaña no solo para la diócesis, sino también para su parroquia particular,” dijo el Padre Kostiha. “Aunque ha sido un año difícil para los agricultores y ganaderos, esto muestra su capacidad y su corazón para ver más allá de sí mismos, para ayudar a otros”.

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EL PAPEL DE UN DÍACONO

Por el Diácono Guadalupe Rodríguez | Columnista Invitado

Hace dos mil años, el Espíritu Santo salió en busca de servidores (Actos 6:3) para ayudar a los apóstoles en el vínculo de Dios, y no es diferente hoy. Jesús está buscando hombres para que sean diáconos permanentes en nuestra iglesia.

Para los hombres que han considerado ser diáconos, ahora es un buen momento para orar y meditar con la Escritura. Las “Normas Básicas para el momento para orar y meditar con la palabra” anima a los hombres a profundizar en su conocimiento de la palabra "para escuchar su llamado y experimentar su poder salvador."

Mientras consideramos el llamado al diaconado, es también bueno pasar tiempo en adoración y en oración en silencio para escuchar el llamado del Espíritu Santo. Las normas básicas también animan a los hombres a buscar la intercesión de María, ya sea a través del rosario u otras oraciones. Dios siempre está llamando hombres a las Órdenes Sagradas, pero ¿estamos escuchando con los oídos del corazón? ¿Se nos ha endurecido el corazón o se nos han enturbiado los ojos por otras búsquedas o riquezas que consideramos más importantes o necesarias que la santidad de Dios en nuestras vidas?

Mientras hablo con hombres de toda la diócesis sobre el diaconado, con frecuencia escucho “quiero concentrarme en mi carrera y en mis dones,” “cuando me retiro, planeo escuchar este llamado pero ahora no es el tiempo correcto,” “quiero primero construir mi nido para poder estar asegurado cuando responda al llamado,” y “tengo niños pequeños.”

Cuando escuché estas respuestas, pienso en el Evangelio de Lucas cuando Jesús habló al joven rico, “vende todo lo que tienes y distribúyelo entre los pobres, y tendrás un tesoro en el cielo. Entonces ven y sigue”. Cuando el joven escuchó esto, se retiró triste por que tenía una gran fortuna. ¡El llamado al diaconado no es algo que nos deba entristecer! A los diáconos no se nos pide que renuncien a nuestras posesiones. Nuestros dones humanos y talentos son nuestros más grandes tesoros y serán verdaderamente completos cuando los ofrezcamos en el servicio de Dios. Como dicen las Normas Básicas, en lo que respecta al llamado de Dios siempre hay un “diálogo inexorable entre Dios y los seres humanos, entre el amor de Dios que llama y la libertad de los individuos que le responden con amor.” Si, Dios está llamando, pero también está dándonos la libertad de responder.

El seguir a Cristo es nuestra mayor esperanza y alegría, pero puede ser un reto si no confiamos en Él completamente. Pienso en José en medio de la noche, escapando a Egipto con María y Jesús tras la petición del ángel. Él había confiado completamente en el llamado de Dios para su vida.

Cuando contestamos al llamado de Dios, el satisface todos nuestros deseos santos; Él completará nuestros suenos y aspiraciones de maneras en las que no podemos imaginarlos! Nuestra copa será llena, aperada y desbordante (Le 6:38). Las Normas Básicas nos recuerdan que, “Es Él que los llama, los acompaña y quien moldea sus corazones para que puedan reconocer Su gracia y responder generosamente a ella.”

El tener niños pequeños no es un obstáculo para el llamado de Dios. Cuando restauraron el diaconado, los padres del Segundo Concilio Vaticano tuvieron la visión de diáconos permanentes con familias jóvenes. Las Normas Básicas dicen “Cuando vivida en la fe, este servicio familiar es para el resto de los fieles, un ejemplo del amor de Cristo. El diácono casado debe usarlo como un estímulo de su diaconía en la Iglesia”. De la misma manera, “Diaconados casados deben sentirse especialmente obligados a dar testimonio claro de la santidad del matrimonio y la familia.”

Finalmente, invito a los hombres que puede que estén discerniendo el llamado al diaconado a que actúen ahora! Como decía Santa Teresa de Calcuta, “Nunca dejen esperando a Dios”. Comiencen a orar ahora. Busquen la guía de su pastor, su esposa y/o su director espiritual ahora. Abran su corazón y sus ojos al amor de Dios y el hará obras maravillosas.

NOTICIAS SOBRE EL TALLER DE EIM

A partir del 1 de enero de 2019, todos los asistentes a un taller de EIM deben pre-registrarse/inscribirse al menos 24 horas antes de asistir a un taller. La Inscripción al Taller se cerrará 24 horas antes de la hora de inicio del taller.

¿Cómo registrarse si usted tiene una cuenta existente de EIM?

- Vaya a eappstdb.com/austin para iniciar sesión (use el Inició de Sesión Alternativo si usted no se acuerda de su ID/password).

¿Cómo registrarse si usted nunca ha metido una aplicación de EIM?

- Vaya a eappstdb.com/austin-register para completar y enviar una Aplicación de EIM (pida una aplicación en papel de su parroquia o del administrador del sitio de EIM de su escuela o parroquia, si es necesario).

Desde su cuenta, haga clic en Registrar a un taller (abajo a la derecha) para ver la lista de talleres y después en Registrar en el taller EIM al que desea asistir. Si no tiene acceso a una computadora y/o Internet, comuníquese con el administrador del sitio EIM de su parroquia o escuela para obtener ayuda.

Los asistentes sin cita ya no serán admitidos en los talleres de EIM. Esto asegurará que todas las personas que deben cumplir con EIM hayan presentado la solicitud y hayan tenido una verificación de antecedentes y que la asistencia al taller se acredite puntualmente a la cuenta de EIM de uno. Comuníquese con la oficina de EIM al (512) 949-2447 si tiene preguntas.

Hombres, atención: ¿Están siendo llamados al diaconado?

Hombres entre las edades de 30 y 59 años que se encuentren sintiendo el llamado de Dios a el diaconado permanente deben discutirlo con sus pastores y obtener su permiso para asistir (con su esposa, si son casados) a una de las siguientes sesiones informativas (ofrecidas en español e inglés):

- Ene. 20 en el Centro Pastoral en Austin
- Feb. 17 en St. Mary Parish en Brenham
- Marzo 17 en Eagle’s Wings Retreat Center en Burnet
- May 5 en el Centro Pastoral en Austin

Cada sesión (2-5 p.m.) explorará el diaconado, métodos de discernimiento, cualidades y características buscadas en quienes aplican, el viaje de formación, la participación de la esposa en la formación, y el proceso de aplicación. Para mayor información, llame al (512) 949-2459; correo electrónico diaconateformation@austindioce.org; o visite www.austindiocese.org/diaconateformation.
Around the Diocese

On Nov. 29, Catholic Charities of Central Texas hosted the 12th annual Creating Hope in Central Texas Luncheon. The luncheon raises awareness about the social services provided by CCCTX. More than $1 million was raised for the organization. (Photos courtesy Amy T. Carr)

St. Dominic Savio Catholic High School in Austin partnered with Catholic Charities of Central Texas to enact a poverty simulation for the freshman students. (Photos courtesy Cristina Almanza)

KJZT Society 93 made a donation to the St. Ignatius Food Pantry in Austin as part of the annual “Feeding Families Across Texas” fundraiser sponsored by the KJZT. (Photo courtesy Margie Horton)

The Guadalupanas from Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish in Taylor gathered to pray the rosary on 46 consecutive days from Oct. 28 to Dec. 12. There are 46 stars on the cloak in the image of Our Lady of Guadalupe. (Photo courtesy Emily Salazar)

The students and staff of Sacred Heart Catholic School in La Grange donated 220 toys for the Church Women United Toy Drive. (Photo courtesy LaDonna Voelkel)

The Catholic Daughters of the Americas at San José Parish in Austin decorated the images of Our Lady in the church and community center with candles, poinsettias, flowers and flags. (Photos courtesy Catherine Longoria)

The Archicofradia of the Immaculate Heart celebrated its 70th anniversary at St. John the Evangelist Parish in San Marcos on Oct. 21. Mass was followed by a reception with priests and a visiting seminarian. (Photo courtesy Anna G. Hernandez)

JustFaith graduates met with the executive director of the national office of JustFaith at St. Austin Parish in Austin to coordinate JustFaith and JustMatters classes in 2019. (Photo courtesy Pat Macy)

Send photos by the 10th of the month to catholic-spirit@austindiocese.org. Publication is not guaranteed.
Diego McCabe, a member of Boy Scout Troop 97, completed his Eagle Scout Service Project — the installation of three flagpoles and flags at St. Vincent de Paul Parish in Austin. The new flagpoles and flags were blessed by Father Ed Koharchik on Veterans Day. (Photos courtesy Jason McCabe)

St. Louis Catholic School in Austin celebrated veterans with a prayer service, flag ceremony, music, and reception. The fourth graders researched Native American tribes in the state of Texas and showcased their work by reenacting elements of their life and customs. (Photos courtesy Carrie Verriewe)

St. Austin Parish in Austin hosted “Kristallnacht Remembered: The 80th Anniversary,” a multi-media exhibit commemorating the night of Nov. 9, 1938, when Nazi soldiers destroyed synagogues and the homes of Jews in cities throughout Germany and Austria. In addition to moving displays and photography, attendees had a chance to compare and contrast traditions and symbols of Christianity, Judaism and Islam. The community also honored the 11 victims of the Tree of Life shooting in Pittsburgh at the three-day exhibit, which was open to the public. (Photos courtesy Jennifer Anderson)

Father Ryan Higdon, administrator of St. Louis Parish in Waco, blessed the Riders of the Son when they picked up toys collected by the parish. The toys were donated to Mission Waco, which distributed them to needy children in the area. (Photo courtesy Clara Jean Matustik)

The Knights of Columbus Council #3444 provided a turkey dinner for the women in residence at Our Lady of Angels Maternity Shelter in Temple. (Photo courtesy Rick Wyatt)

The students and staff at St. Mary’s Catholic School in West donated 1,159 non-perishable food items to the local KJZT members for the food pantry. (Photo courtesy Adrienne Janek)

St. Ignatius Martyr Parish and School in Austin held its annual Fall Fest, which featured live music, food, games and community. (Photos courtesy Michelle Fontana)

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