Bishop Garcia is installed as bishop of Monterey, California

By Shelley Metcalf | Editor

Since Pope Francis appointed Bishop Daniel Garcia as the fifth bishop of Monterey, California, countless people have asked him, “How did you land that job?”

The small diocese sits on the Pacific Coast just north of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles. It includes the well-known areas of Pebble Beach and Carmel as well as the rural areas of the San Benito Valley.

“Upon hearing about my appointment to the Diocese of Monterey, many people immediately commented about the beautiful terrain,” Bishop Garcia said in his homily at the Mass of Installation on Jan. 29 at Madonna del Sasso Parish in Salinas, California. More beautiful than the scenery are the people, he said.

“Let us not forget what is most important and most beautiful — the people living here, those who work here and those who serve here. They are who enable our diocese to be a beautiful reflection of God's beauty and goodness,” the bishop said.

The Monterey Diocese has 46 parishes and 18 Catholic schools and a population of about 200,000 Catholics. Bishop Garcia thanked those who welcomed him so graciously and said he looks forward to walking with them and serving them.

“My brothers and sisters in Christ … I come to you first and foremost as a pastor for that is what I do best and that is what I am trained for,” he said. “It is my desire to get to know you and for you to get to know me. I come to share with you my gifts … with joy and hope we will learn from each other as we continue to build upon what has already been established and given to us in this local church.

“I want you to help me to wash the feet of our brothers and sisters around us especially those who are most vulnerable and often get lost in the midst of our policies, our politics and structures in the church and outside of the church,” Bishop Garcia said.

Garcia, 58, was ordained a priest for the Diocese of Austin on May 28, 1988, by Bishop John E. McCarthy. He was raised in Cameron, a small town east of Temple. In 2014, Bishop Joe Vásquez appointed then-Father Garcia as vicar general and Moderator of the Curia for the Diocese of Austin. Pope Francis appointed him as the first auxiliary bishop of the Diocese of Austin in 2015.

Bishop Garcia thanked his family, friends, brother priests and fellow co-workers from Central Texas for their love and support.

“God weeps each and every time that one of our brothers and sisters is missed,” the new bishop said.

Bishop Garcia briefly reflected on the readings of the Mass saying that Jesus calls each of us to love one another as he loves us. The Eucharist is where we as Catholics are strengthened, he continued.

“Sunday after Sunday, and day after day, we gather around an altar such as this one not because we are perfect but because we are not. We gather to seek the Lord’s guidance and wisdom to become more like him. It is from this table of the Eucharist and this table where the Word of God is proclaimed that we are strengthened by Christ for one another,” he said.

Several representatives from the people of the Diocese of Monterey welcomed Bishop Garcia during the Mass of Installation on Jan. 29. (Photo by Shelley Metcalf)

Names published
The Diocese of Austin published a list of clergy and religious who have been credibly accused of sexual abuse against a minor.

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La Diócesis de Austin ha publicado una lista de clero y religiosos que han sido acusados creíblemente de abuso sexual de un menor. Para más información en español, visite www.austindiocese.org.
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
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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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Deacon Guy Helou (center) was ordained a permanent deacon in the Maronite Rite – Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon of Los Angeles by Bishop Abdallah Elias Zaidan. The ordination was celebrated Jan. 13 at Our Lady’s Maronite Parish in Austin; Bishop Joe Vásquez concelebrated the Mass. Deacon Helou was in formation with the permanent diaconate class of 2019, who will be ordained on March 30 at St. William Parish in Round Rock. (Photo courtesy Ina Alvarado)

OFFICIAL APPOINTMENTS
Bishop Joe Vásquez has made the following appointments:
• Father James A. Misko as Vicar General and Moderator of the Curia for the Diocese of Austin, effective Jan. 21. He will also continue to serve as pastor of St. Louis Parish in Austin.
• Father Thomas Reitmeyer as pastor of St. John Vianney Parish in Round Rock.
• Father Francisco Rodriguez III as pastor of Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish in Temple and St. Matthew Mission in Rogers.
• Indian Missionary Society Father Virchand Lakra as parochial vicar of St. Paul Chong Hasang Parish in Harker Heights, effective Jan. 10.

The Presbyteral Council of the Diocese of Austin represents the priests of the diocese and assists Bishop Vásquez in the governance of the diocese to promote the pastoral good of the people of God. The following members have been re-elected as officers for 2019: Chairman: Father Tim Nolt; Vice Chairman: Father Chris Downey; Secretary: Father Daniel Liu.

Bishop Joe Vásquez welcomes the following priests who are now serving in the Austin Diocese.
• Schoenstatt Father Francisco Rojas who serves at the Marian Shrine of Our Lady of Schoenstatt.
• Father John A. Jamnicky who is retired and living at the St. John Paul II Residence for Priests.
• Father Biju Chitthoth, with the Archdiocese for the Military Services, who is assigned at Carl R. Darnall Army Medical Center at Fort Hood.
• Paulist Father John F. Duffy, who is retired and in residence at St. Austin Parish in Austin.
• Holy Cross Deacon Karl M. Romkema Jr. who serves at St. Ignatius Martyr Parish in Austin.

OBITUARIES
Deacon William “Dave” Shoemake, 77, died Jan. 2. He was ordained in 1979 for the Archdiocese of San Antonio and later moved to Belton where he was assigned to Christ the King Parish. Deacon Shoemake was survived by his wife of 52 years, Elaine, and their children and grandchildren. The Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated Jan. 5 at Christ the King Parish in Belton and entombment followed at the Guardian Angel Catholic Cemetery in Walls.
Mrgr. Alois J. Goertz died Jan. 20 in San Antonio. He was raised in Rockne, and he was ordained in 1948. He served at parishes in Weimar and La Vernia and in campus ministry for the Archdiocese of San Antonio. He is also remembered for his book “Rockne,” which details the history of Rockne and String Prairie. The Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated Jan. 25 at Sacred Heart Parish in Rockne.

ADVISORY
Anyone who knows the whereabouts of Kathleen Kokernot or Brooke Amber Malcik is requested to notify Gloria Villarreal as soon as possible at (512) 949-2482.
 Monterey Diocese welcomes Bishop Daniel Garcia

Continued from Page 1

hurt by our actions, or by our words, or by our gestures or by our thoughts, but also by our indifference to their struggles,” Bishop Garcia said.

“It is time for you and me to change the way we treat one another, especially the least among us and those who are different from us,” he said. “If our church is to be one that is to grow, we must first and foremost make people feel welcome and help people to see that they do belong and that they do have gifts that are honored and are treasured.”

Bishop Garcia also gave thanks for the great work of the Franciscans, including St. Junipero Serra, who is buried at the Carmel Mission very near the city of Monterey. Bishop Garcia’s home is also located at the Carmel Mission.

St. Serra was a Franciscan missionary from Spain, he and his fellow Franciscans founded many Catholic missions in California.

“May St. Junipero Serra intercede for us today as we continue the mission of spreading the good news to all that we encounter,” Bishop Garcia said.

During Vespers on the night before Bishop Garcia’s installation, Bishop Gerald Wilkerson, the retired auxiliary bishop of Los Angeles who served the Diocese of Monterey after Bishop Richard Garcia’s death, welcomed Bishop Garcia to the Diocese of Monterey.

“The people of Monterey come from all over the world, and each has brought the beauty of their culture and their language to share with this diocese. We are one body in Christ,” Bishop Wilkerson said.

Through Bishop Garcia’s leadership and “the hard work of clergy, religious and faithful of this diocese of Monterey, the seeds of faith planted by the missionaries who came before us will rise up and will nourish a new generation,” he said.

Father James Misko is new vicar general

Bishop Joe Vásquez has appointed Father James Misko (right) as vicar general of the Diocese of Austin. Father Misko, 48, will also continue to serve as pastor of St. Louis Parish in Austin.

The appointment became effective Jan. 21. The vicar general has the executive power in the diocese concerning all administrative matters.

“Father Misko has extensive experience working with the diocesan administration, having competently served under both Archbishop Aymond and myself for the past 11 years,” Bishop Vásquez said.

Father Misko was ordained a priest by Bishop Gregory Aymond on June 9, 2007. He has been pastor of St. Louis Parish in Austin since 2014. Prior to that he served as pastor of Christ the King Parish in Belton and as associate pastor of St. Elizabeth Parish in Pflugerville.

Father Misko is a member of the College of Consultants, and he has served on the Presbyteral Council since 2011. He currently serves as the chair of the Priest Advisory Council for the Encountering Christ Capital Campaign. (Photo courtesy St. Louis Parish in Austin)
From the desk of Bishop Joe S. Vásquez

January 31, 2019

To my beloved faithful of the Diocese of Austin:

With a contrite heart, today I have published a list of clergy and religious who have been credibly accused of committing sexual abuse against a minor. Simultaneously, my brother bishops throughout Texas are also publishing similar lists. It is my prayer and hope that publishing this list will help to bring healing from the hurt and anger caused by the lack of accountability and transparency on the part of church leadership.

The victims of sexual abuse by clergy have experienced much pain; we must continue to pray and care for our brothers and sisters who have suffered greatly. I apologize to the victims and their families for the diocese’s failures. The Church must always be willing to recognize and correct its failings.

To compile this list, I engaged outside professionals who worked with diocesan staff, most of whom are laypersons, to review 70 years of archived documents. The list contains the names of priests, deacons, or religious about whom the Diocese of Austin has received a credible allegation of committing sexual abuse against a minor. If the diocese receives additional credible allegations, the list will be amended. If you believe a name is missing from this list, please contact the diocese.

In 2002, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops implemented the Charter for the protection of children. The Charter, coupled with the implementation of our Ethics and Integrity in Ministry (EIM) program, has had a significant impact in reducing the abuse of minors by clergy. Yet, we must remain vigilant in protecting children from harm.

If you have suffered sexual abuse and have not reported it, please report the abuse to law enforcement authorities. If the sexual abuse occurred by a minister in the church, please also contact our Office of Ethics and Integrity in Ministry (EIM).

As Bishop of this Diocese, I remain committed to the care of all the People of God, especially those who have been sexually abused by the Church’s ministers. I ask the intercession of Mary, the Mother of Jesus and our mother, to pray for us, as we strive for holiness and truth. May she look with tender compassion on those who have been hurt just as she lovingly stood by her Son at the foot of the cross.

Faithfully in Christ,

Most Reverend Joe S. Vásquez
Bishop of Austin

The list of those with a credible allegation of sexual abuse of a minor

On Jan. 31, Bishop Joe Vásquez fulfilled his pledge to the faithful to publish the names of clergy or religious men and women about whom the diocese has received a credible allegation of sexual abuse of a minor. An independent review team, outside legal counsel, and members of diocesan staff reviewed the clergy and religious personnel files (including the confidential files) of the diocese to search for allegations of possible sexual abuse of a minor. The findings were then brought before the Diocesan Review Board. This board, established in 2002, is composed primarily of laity. Its function is to review claims of sexual abuse of minors by individuals serving in ministry.

For a name to be placed on the list, the diocese must have knowledge of a credible allegation. This means that after review of reasonably available, relevant information in consultation with the Diocesan Review Board or other professionals, there is reason to believe the allegation is true. The determination that an allegation is credible does not mean a crime was committed or proven.

There are 22 names on the list: most are priests, though there are two deacons and one religious brother. Twelve on the list are deceased; of those who are alive, most have been removed from ministry and laicized. There is one individual who was dismissed as a seminarian studying for the Diocese of Austin; he is currently a priest in Jamaica.

All allegations have been reported to authorities as required by law.

The list of names follows. The list as well as additional information to help the faithful with understanding the process for creating the list are available at www.austindiocese.org.

The list of names

Please note: This information is provided for the welfare of the Christian faithful. The assignments of each individual are listed; however, this is not an indication that abuse occurred at any of these locations.

Aguilar, Ricardo
Diocese or Religious Order: Diocese of Austin
Current Status: Laicized
Birth: 1959
Ordination: 1999
Removal from Ministry: 2011
Laicization: 2017
Assignments: Bastrop – Ascension; Taylor – Our Lady of Guadalupe; Temple – Our Lady of Guadalupe

Clogan, Paul M.
Diocese or Religious Order: Diocese of Portland, Maine
Current Status: Deceased
Birth: 1931
Ordination: 1999
Death: 2012
Assignments: Austin – St. Catherine of Siena; Bryan – St. Joseph; Horseshoe Bay – St. Paul the Apostle; Llano – Holy Trinity; Mason – St. Joseph

Delaney, Daniel Joseph
Diocese or Religious Order: Diocese of Austin
Current Status: Deceased
Birth: 1946
Ordination: 1973
Death: 2008
Assignments: Austin – Sacred Heart; Bryan – St. Joseph; Granger – Sts. Cyril & Methodius

To report abuse

Texas Abuse Hotline: (800) 252-5400
www.txabusehotline.org
Diocese of Austin, Office of Ethics and Integrity in Ministry
(512) 949-2447 or emily-hurlimann@austindiocese.org
Drinan, Daniel Michael  
Diocese or Religious Order: Congregation of Missionaries, Sons of the Immaculate Heart of the Blessed Virgin Mary  
Current Status: Laicized  
Birth: 1948  
Ordination: 1977  
Removal from Ministry: 2004  
Expulsion: 2006  
Laicization: 2014

Assignments: Martindale – Immaculate Heart of Mary; San Marcos – St. John the Evangelist; Uhland – St. Michael

Eggerling, Milton  
Diocese or Religious Order: Diocese of Oakland, previously of the Diocese of Sioux Falls  
Current Status: Deceased  
Birth: 1921  
Ordination: 1954  
Death: 2008

Assignments: Austin – Austin State Hospital/School for Deaf (Chaplain), St. Louis (In Residence)

Faust, Claude  
Diocese or Religious Order: Diocese of Austin  
Current Status: Deceased  
Birth: 1914  
Ordination: 1939  
Death: 1973

Assignments: Luling – St. John; Martindale – Immaculate Heart of Mary; Rockne – Sacred Heart

Gallagher, James  
Diocese or Religious Order: Diocese of Austin (Deacon)  
Current Status: Deceased  
Birth: 1932  
Diocesan Ordination: 1984  
Death: 2005

Assignments: Gatesville – Our Lady of Lourdes; Hamilton – St. Thomas

Garcia, Jim Castro (aka Santiago)  
Diocese or Religious Order: Archdiocese of Kingston, Jamaica  
Current Status: Priest for the Archdiocese of Kingston, Jamaica  
Birth: 1968  
Ordination: 2017


Assignments: None

Greenwell, James H.  
Diocese or Religious Order: Third Order Regular of St. Francis, previously of the Order of Friars Minor  
Current Status: Deceased  
Birth: 1924  
Ordination: 1954  
Death: 2012

Assignments: Cameron – Blessed Sacrament; Marlin – Santa Maria del Pilar, St. Joseph; Temple – Our Lady of Guadalupe; Waco – Sacred Heart, St. Francis, VA Hospital (Chaplain)

Hand Jr., Chester Culver  
Diocese or Religious Order: Diocese of Austin  
Current Status: Deceased  
Birth: 1920  
Ordination: 1986  
Death: 2002

Assignments: Austin – St. Margaret of Scotland

Kinder, Conrad  
Diocese or Religious Order: Society of the Divine Word  
Current Status: Deceased  
Birth: 1891  
Ordination: 1921  
Death: 1978

Assignments: Luling – St. Rose; Martindale – Immaculate Heart of Mary

Krol, Michael Francis  
Diocese or Religious Order: Diocese of Austin  
Current Status: Deceased  
Birth: 1919  
Ordination: 1945  
Death: 1996

Assignments: Bastrop; Bremond – St. Mary; Hamilton – St. Thomas; San Saba – St. Mary; Wallis – Guardian Angel (now within the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston)

Muller, Gerald  
Diocese or Religious Order: Congregation of Holy Cross (Religious Brother)  
Current Status: Restricted  
Birth: 1927  
Vows: 1946  
Removal from Ministry: 2017

Restricted: 2017

Assignments: Austin – St. Edward’s University, St. Catherine of Siena

Nowery, C. Richard  
Diocese or Religious Order: Congregation of Holy Cross  
Current Status: Deceased  
Birth: 1938  
Ordination: 1968  
Death: 2018

Assignments: Austin – St. Ignatius, Martyr

O’Connor, James R.  
Diocese or Religious Order: Diocese of Austin  
Current Status: Laicized  
Birth: 1942  
Ordination: 1969  
Removal from Ministry: 2004

Laicization: 2018

Assignments: Prison Ministry, Tribunal; Austin – Brackenridge Hospital, Cristo Rey, Emmaus Retreat Center (In Residence), Oratory of Saint Gregory the Great, St. Louis, St. Mary Cathedral (In Residence), Vercelli House (In Residence), Bellmead – St. Joseph; Bremond – Conventus S. Maria (In Residence); Corn Hill Jarrell – Holy Trinity; Georgetown – St. Helen; Hamilton – St. Thomas; Hearene – St. Mary; Kyle – St. Anthony; Taylor – St. Mary; Temple – St. Mary; Waco – St. Joseph (In Residence), St. Mary, of the Assumption; Wallis – Guardian Angel (now within the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston); West – St. Mary, of the Assumption

Ozuna, Rafael Rendon  
Diocese or Religious Order: Diocese of Austin (Deacon)  
Current Status: Laicized  
Birth: 1944  
Diaconate Ordination: 2007  
Removal from Ministry: 2010

Laicization: 2013

Assignments: Kilteen – St. Joseph; Temple – Our Lady of Guadalupe

Reyes, Longinus Juventius (aka Lonnie)  
Diocese or Religious Order: Diocese of Austin  
Current Status: Removed from Ministry, Retired  
Birth: 1942  
Ordination: 1969  
Removal from Ministry: 2004

Retirement: 2004

Assignments: Chancellor, Vice-Chancellor, Mexican American Ministry; Austin – Cristo Rey, El Hogar del Pueblo, St. Julia, St. Louis; Luling – St. John; Waco – St. Louis

Robles, Victor G.  
Diocese or Religious Order: Diocese of Austin, previously of the Society of Jesus  
Current Status: Removed from Ministry, Retired  
Birth: 1953  
Ordination: 1986  
Removal from Ministry: 2002

Assignments: Bryan – Santa Teresa

Tijerina, Alberto Matta  
Diocese or Religious Order: Diocese of Austin, previously of the Diocese of San Angelo  
Current Status: Removed from Ministry  
Birth: 1954  
Ordination: 1980  
Removal from Ministry: 1993

Assignments: Georgetown – St. Helen; Round Rock – St. William

Walches, Vincent  
Diocese or Religious Order: Diocese of San Diego, previously of the Society of the Divine Word  
Current Status: Deceased  
Birth: 1919  
Ordination: 1946  
Death: 1995

Assignments: Giddings – St. Francis, St. Margaret; Luling – St. John the Evangelist

Willemsen, Adrianus Johannes (aka Andy, Andrew, Andre)  
Diocese or Religious Order: Diocese of Austin, previously of the Congregation of the Mission of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul  
Current Status: Deceased  
Birth: 1928  
Ordination: 1954  
Death: 2012

Assignments: Bremond – St. Mary

Wozniak, Louis J.  
Diocese or Religious Order: Diocese of Austin  
Current Status: Removed from Ministry, Retired  
Birth: 1926  
Ordination: 1951  
Removal from Ministry: 2015

Retirement: 1999

Assignments: Andice – Santa Rosa; Austin – St. Louis; Bastrop – Ascension; Bremond – St. Mary; Georgetown – St. Helen

To report abuse  
Texas Abuse Hotline  
(800) 252-5400  
www.texasabusehotline.org  
Diocese of Austin, Office of Ethics and Integrity in Ministry  
(512) 949-2447  
e-mail: emily-hurlimann@austindiocese.org
Couples invited to Marriage Encounter

Married couples are invited to strengthen, renew and rekindle their sacrament of matrimony by attending an upcoming Marriage Encounter weekends: 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.austindiocese.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.

National Marriage Week is Feb. 7-14

National Marriage Week (Feb. 7-14) and World Marriage Day (Feb. 10) are opportunities to focus on building a culture of life and love that begins with promoting and supporting marriage and the family. The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops provides preaching resources for priests and a virtual retreat for couples. The diocesan Office of Family Life will offer a free webinar for married couples on Feb. 14 from 6 to 7 p.m. to conclude National Marriage Week 2019. For more information, visit www.austindiocese.org/family-life or contact Phi Le at phi-le@austindiocese.org or (512) 949-2470.

Retreat for couples getting married

Engaged couples preparing to be married in the church are invited to a “Together in God’s Love” retreat March 15-17 at Cedarbrake Catholic Retreat Center in Belton. This weekend retreat focuses on Catholic marriage as a visible sign of the Holy Trinity and the relationship of Christ to the church. The weekend includes talks on faith, communication, sexuality and stewardship in the context of a Catholic marriage. The cost is $350 per couple, which includes lodging, meals and materials. To register and for more information, contact Phi Le in the Office of Family Life at (512)949-2470 or phi-le@austindiocese.org.

Upcoming retreats offered at Cedarbrake

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 Catholic Retreat Center in Belton. 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.

The Practical Holiness – Pope Francis as Spiritual Companion retreat will be offered at Feb. 20 from 9 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. at Cedarbrake. Franciscan Father Albert Haase, chaplain of Cedarbrake, will present this day based on the “five great expressions of love of God and neighbor” that Pope Francis believes are essential for any Christian. The cost is $40 and includes lunch.

The Ash Wednesday Retreat will be held on March 6 from 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. at Cedarbrake. Lent is a time to follow Christ even more interiorly as he shows us the way to live his Father's will. The retreat will include Mass and the distribution of ashes. The cost is $40 and includes lunch.

A Silent Lenten Retreat will be held March 8-10 at Cedarbrake. Mass will be celebrated Saturday and Sunday. Spiritual direction will also be available. Come take advantage of the quiet as you enter into the Lenten season of preparation. Cost is $210. All rooms are private.

For more information and to register, visit www.austindiocese.org/cedarbrake or call (254) 780-2436.

Project Andrew, a day of encounter for men

Bishop Joe Vásquez invites all single, young men between the ages of 15 and 45 for Project Andrew on March 9 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at St. Mary Cathedral in Austin. This is an opportunity to encounter priests, religious brothers and seminarians from the diocese who have been called to the priesthood or consecrated life and have found pure joy in their vocation. The day includes Mass, prayer and adoration, lunch and conversations and reflections about the priesthood and religious life. The deadline to register is March 6. For information and to register contact the diocesan Vocation Office at (512) 949-2430 or visit www.godiscalling.me.

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 Catholic Retreat Center in Belton. 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.

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By Kanobia Russell-Blackmon | Correspondent

A commemoration of the legacy of Martin Luther King Jr. brought together people of all cultures, backgrounds and ages from across the Diocese of Austin. The annual event was held Jan. 12 at St. Louis Parish in Austin. Auxiliary Bishop Fernando Cheri of New Orleans was the keynote speaker. He was joined by Bishop Joe Vásquez, Auxiliary Bishop Daniel Garcia and Father James Misko, pastor of St. Louis Parish and the recently appointed vicar general of the Diocese of Austin.

As a drum major for justice, King believed in standing up for peace and righteousness, Bishop Vásquez said.

“He spoke out against the injustice and evil of racism and advocated for equal rights for blacks,” the bishop said. Considering the current social climate in the U.S., Bishop Vásquez expressed the importance “that we remember [King’s] legacy and continue to stand against injustices.”

Bishop Cheri, known for his singing and preaching, began his talk by asking all to stand and sing an old spiritual, “If anybody asks you who I am, tell ’em I’m a child of God.” This hymn, coupled with the “Call of Simon the Fisherman” (Lk 5:1-11), set the stage for his presentation entitled “Changing Lanes.”

Bishop Cheri said changing lanes is a part of life and one should not simply give up as soon as life throws a curve ball. Invoking King’s words, “Let no man pull you low enough to hate him,” Bishop Cheri encouraged people to not place limitations on themselves because in changing lanes people should not allow the past to paralyze them in the present.

This comment resonated with the staff of the diocesan Office of Life, Charity and Justice. Luisa de Poo, the associate director for Pro-Life Activities, said she often cautions those who have endured obstacles of racism or injustices to not live in a wound.

Bishop Cheri challenged the faithful to not let events that happened to them in the past stop them from moving forward or discourage them from accomplishing their goals.

Reflecting on the presentation, Wilhelmina Delco said, “I took away from his message that life is full of change and you should not be afraid to change lanes.” Delco knows about change as she was the first woman and the second black speaker pro tempore of the Texas House of Representatives.

Sonia Eva Vega-Perez, a parishioner of St. Monica Parish in Cameron, agreed and added the message she takes with her is that “love always wins and hate never gains anything but division.”

Bernard Little, the faithful navigator of Knights of Peter Claver Assembly No. 40, appreciated how Bishop Cheri wove the story of Jesus’ calling of Simon Peter, “exhorting him to ‘change lanes’ and step out on faith to try something different.”

Little, who is a convert to Catholicism, explained, “This was the basis of Dr. King’s message, and Bishop Cheri reminded us that Dr. King called us to change lanes, particularly as to how we view one another.” Considering the various cultures and traditions highlighted throughout the prayer and worship service, Little felt that the cultural presentations were “not only beautiful in their own right, but their inclusion should stand as a stark reminder to us all that God’s presence is everywhere.”

The St. Augustine Choir from Holy Cross Parish opened the service with an African hymn, “Siyahamba.” The hymn was meant to emphasize a spirit of community from the perspectives of those from the African diaspora. The choir from St. Louis Catholic School, in songs written by Michael Hoffer, reminded participants to follow the path of the Lord because God gives the courage to brave the storms of life.

Belizean drummer Bernard Busano of St. William Parish in Round Rock presented a song by V. Michael McKay which challenges the faithful to love each other with the love of the Lord. Geraldine Jones of St. Joseph Parish in Killeen and Patricia Macy of St. Austin Parish led the congregation in a litany and prayer for promoting harmony and justice.

The Diocese of Austin, through its Secretariat of Life, Charity and Justice, has issued a clarion call every Catholic to be a drum major for justice. During the celebration, the first Drum Major for Justice Award was presented to Johnnie Dorsey. The award was established to acknowledge an individual who truly espouses the ideals of what it means to dedicate one’s life to the promotion of social justice and the dignity of every human life, combined with a strong sense of obligation to the civic community, one’s parish community and family life. The award commemorates the legacy and sacrifice King gave to the world and is presented to an individual who perpetuates King’s convictions “to make justice, equality and opportunity a reality for all people.”

The award’s name comes from King’s Drum Major Instinct sermon, during which he said, “If you want to say that I received an award that carries some of the greatest words that Dr. King has spoken,” Dorsey said.

Bishop Vásquez was pleased with the diversity of those in attendance at the commemoration for King.

“There were people of different race, culture and language which is a great sign since honoring the life of Dr. Martin Luther King should never be seen as exclusive to one ethnicity,” the bishop said.

In consultation with the diocesan offices of Social Concerns and Hispanic Ministry, the commemoration program was coordinated by the diocesan Black Catholic Advisory Committee under the leadership of Susan Morris of St. Louis Parish in Austin.

Dekarlos Blackmon, the diocesan secretariat director of Life, Charity and Justice who also coordinates the Office of Black Ministry, said it was paramount to make the King celebration inclusive of all.

“This commemoration was a visible sign that we can all sit around the table of the Lord without regard to distinction, expressing in the words of St. John Paul II that there is no black church, no white church, no American church, but the one church of Jesus Christ that is a home for blacks, whites and people of every culture and race.”

—Dekarlos Blackmon, Diocese of Austin Secretariat Director of Life, Charity and Justice

I was a drum major, say I was a drum major for peace. I was a drum major for righteousness.”

Dorsey, who retired a year ago as the diocesan director of Black Catholic Ministry, was surprised and humbled to receive the award.

“As I walked up the aisle to receive the award from Bishop Vásquez, I was overwhelmed by the thought that I had been chosen to receive this very meaningful award. Dr. King’s legacy has led to changes in law and social justice and I am humbled to know that I received an award that carries some of the greatest words that Dr. King has spoken,” Dorsey said.

Bishop Vásquez presented the first Drum Major for Justice Award to Johnnie Dorsey during the commemoration commemorating the legacy of Martin Luther King Jr. on Jan. 12 at St. Louis Parish in Austin. (Photo by Kanobia Russell-Blackmon)
By Carla Smith | Correspondent

The word “hospice” can be a scary and confusing word. It conjures images of a loved one’s mortality, but the root word for hospice is the same as that of “hospital” and “hospitality.” These words imply healing and service, which is the primary goal of hospice care.

Though it first began as a ministry in the 1960s, hospice has now evolved into big business. But by putting patient and family first, Guiding Hospice Care in Round Rock provides compassionate comfort to those with a terminal illness as well as their families, all while maintaining the dignity of human life.

Guiding Hospice is Central Texas’ only family owned and operated facility and patients are treated as family, and families are supported now and after death. No one is left behind and no one is forgotten.

Families take care of their own with more compassion than a corporation would. Our patients and families are treated as we would treat our own family members,” said Debbie George, the facility’s chaplain and spiritual counselor. “Our loved ones are important and beloved sons and daughters of God and deserve to be treated as such.”

George entered the hospice world after hearing a radio ad about Guiding Hospice and how it upholds Catholic end-of-life ethical concerns. The ad mentioned a need for Catholic chaplains and she signed up. That was nearly two years ago and she has since found a calling.

“If someone had told me I would be working as a hospice chaplain and involved in hospice education, I would have asked what they were smoking,” she jests. “But as I reflect back, I realize the Lord has been preparing me for this for many years, and I’m happy to report hospice education has become my mission.”

And justifiably so, as George was a math teacher for 25 years, which she says perfectly prepared her for educating others about hospice as they both try to make sense out of very complex concepts and communicate them in terms anyone can understand. George is also experienced in Catholic rites and teachings, as she was a liturgist for 18 years where she helped families prepare loved one’s funerals and prepare them to live without them.

Guiding Hospice programs and services begin at admission but don’t end at death. Bereavement Care is offered before, during and after death and anticipatory grief support during the illness is offered through grief counseling, caregiver support groups and social work resources. Guiding Hospice offers 13 months of ongoing bereavement support following a death, which is much more than the industry standard.

These and other healthy grieving opportunities are also supported through chaplain-facilitated weekly support groups and the arrangement of religious rituals upon death. Guiding Hospice serves members of all faiths and the Catholic faith is particularly supported with an on-staff Catholic chaplain.

“Chaplaincy and spiritual counseling are very important to our Catholic community and to Guiding Hospice,” George said. “Our chaplains are dedicated to bringing weekly holy Communion, praying the rosary, and helping a family choose funeral readings, all of which open up a world of possibilities for a new kind of life forever with the Lord.”

By getting to know both patients and families, the hospice workers create complete and customized programs to meet medical and personal needs. Care and services are provided to patients where they reside, in the home or an in-patient facility. They are developed around allowing the patients to complete their journey where they wish.

Guiding Hospice also facilitates Community Bereavement Services such as prayer services and other memorials. Scheduled in four different areas of the diocese, they are offered to anyone wishing to remember and pray for a deceased loved one regardless of present or past patient status.

George said the agency’s staff as well as a host of volunteers are integral to the level of hospice and palliative care Guiding Hospice provides. Activities include reading to patients, sharing musical events, going for walks and partaking in hobbies with patients.

“That many of our patients are in facilities far away from the comforts of home and the familiarity of family,” George said. “To have visitors in the form of comforting and friendly volunteers is a welcome opportunity and brightens their days.”

She highly recommended families and patients apply for hospice services early in a patient’s diagnosis. She said care for loved ones and family members is much-needed even early on when someone is seriously ill.

George will be participating in a seminar at Cedarbrake Catholic Retreat Center in Belton on April 27 entitled “The Spirituality of Hospice.” The half-day program will discuss what hospice is and what it is not, the history of the hospice movement, and how hospice care is pro-life and within the teachings of the church. Attendees will have opportunities to ask questions and bring their concerns to hospice professionals and presenters who understand their anxieties and are earnest and passionate about what they do.

“I must come to this ministry from my personal prayer; otherwise I am just doing stuff, good stuff, but no particularly God-driven stuff,” George said.

For more information, contact Guiding Hospice at any time of day at (512) 368-7275 or visit www.guidinghospicecare.com.
By Junno Arocho Esteves | Catholic News Service

Although Mary would not be considered an “influencer,” like many social media personalities, she still became the most influential woman in history by trusting “in the love and promises of God, the only force capable of making all things new.”


“Are you willing to be an ‘influencer’ like Mary, who dared to say, ‘Let it be done’? he asked. “Only love makes us more human and fulfilled; everything else is a pleasant but useless placebo.”

Despite sweltering temperatures in Panama City, hundreds of thousands of young men and women made their way to St. John Paul II Park on the penultimate day of World Youth Day. They brought sleeping bags and tents, prepared to spend the night at the field — praying the rosary, making new friends — before celebrating Mass with Pope Francis at 8 a.m. Jan. 27. The pope did not spend the night, but returned later in the evening to the apostolic nunciature.

Arriving in his popemobile, Pope Francis made his way through a sea of colorful flags and banners people waved excitedly.

After the pope took his place on the stage, young adults from Panama and the Palestinian territories gave their experiences of finding faith and hope amid doubt, sickness and addiction.

Erika de Bucktron, a 42-year-old mother of four from Panama, spoke of the fear and difficulties she faced when doctors said her pregnancy was at high risk after diagnosing her unborn daughter with Down syndrome.

Throughout her pregnancy, she said, she and her husband abandoned themselves in God’s hands and, after the birth of their daughter, decided “to love her with all our hearts, without making any difference with our other children, who also welcomed her with so much love.”

Panamanian Alfredo Martinez Andron, 20, recalled his experience of falling into a life of drugs and crime. His addiction, he said, ultimately led to a 12-month prison sentence. Despite attempts to reform following his release, he fell back again into drug use.

Ultimately, he found help at a Catholic-run halfway house that helped and encouraged him “in my path toward reintegration.”

“I want to tell the young people of the world that God loves us and never abandons us. We are the masters of our own actions, but if we are with God, everything will be OK,” Martinez said.

Nirmeen Odeh, a 26-year-old Palestinian woman, gave the final testimony of the evening, recalling that despite being born and raised in the Holy Land, she was apathetic to Christianity, especially coming “from a place where many of my simple rights are violated.”

“I thought it was better to be distant from Christianity so as not to be bothered by others,” Odeh said. “With all the struggles and weariness of daily life, I wasn’t interested in faith. However, I was curious about the idea of God! It fascinated me.”

After participating in World Youth Day 2016 in Krakow, Poland, Odeh said she took a “leap of faith” and began receiving the sacraments.

“God begins to write his great love story precisely through people’s problems, frailties and flaws, the pope said. Just as he embraced Peter after his denials, Jesus helps Christians stand up when they have fallen, the pope added.

Thanking Martinez for his testimony, Pope Francis said the experience of the young Panamanian shows that, without strong roots that are firmly grounded, “it is impossible to grow.”

Older people, he continued, must ask themselves what foundations they are providing to help young people grow instead of lobbing criticisms against them.

“It is easy enough to criticize and complain about young people if we are depriving them of the jobs, education and community opportunities they need to take root and to dream of a future,” he said.

“Without education, it is difficult to dream of a future; without work, it is very difficult to dream of a future; without a family and community, it is almost impossible to dream of a future.”

The pope said that young men and women also need to be rooted in a community and a home that prepares their hearts and give them a sense of belonging.

Odeh’s experience, he explained, is proof that this belonging also gives a sense of identity that allows young people to “live the joy that comes from being found by Jesus.”

Pope Francis encouraged young people to not be afraid of opening their hearts to Christ and “embrace life with all its frailty and flaws, but also with its grandeur and beauty.

“Do not be afraid,” he said, “to tell him that you, too, want to be a part of his love story in this world, that you are ready for something greater.”

IN OUR WORLD

Be ‘influencers’ for God, pope urges at World Youth Day

Pilgrims attend the World Youth Day prayer vigil at St. John Paul II Field in Panama City Jan. 26. (CNS photo/Paul Haring)
By Carol Glatz | Catholic News Service

At the upcoming meeting on protecting minors, Pope Francis wants leaders of the world’s bishops’ conferences to clearly understand what must be done to prevent abuse, care for victims and ensure no case is white-washed or covered up.

“The pope wants it to be an assembly of pastors, not an academic conference — a meeting characterized by prayer and discernment, a catechetical and working gathering,” Alessandro Gisotti, interim director of the Vatican press office, told reporters Jan. 16.

“The first step must be acknowledgment of the church’s failure to prevent abuse, to care for the victims and to make sure that no case is covered up or buried,” he said.

In a separate communique, the Vatican press office said the meeting “has a concrete purpose: The goal is that all of the bishops clearly understand what they need to do to prevent and combat the worldwide problem of the sexual abuse of minors,” Gisotti said, reading from a written communique in Italian and English.

Pope Francis knows that a global problem can only be resolved with a global response,” he said.

The pope announced in September that he was calling the presidents of the world’s bishops conferences, the heads of the Eastern Catholic churches and representatives of the leadership groups of men’s and women’s religious orders to the Vatican to address the crisis and focus on responsibility, accountability and transparency.

Gisotti said, "It is fundamental for the Holy Father that when the bishops will come to Rome have returned to their countries and their dioceses that they understand the laws to be applied and that they take the necessary steps to prevent abuse, to care for the victims and to make sure that no case is covered up or buried.”

He acknowledged the “high expectations” surrounding the meeting and emphasized that “the church is not at the beginning of the fight against abuse.”

“Pope Francis guaranteed his presence for the entire duration of the meeting,” the communique said.

The meeting will include a penitential liturgy Feb. 23 and a closing Mass Feb. 24, Gisotti said.

“Pope Francis guaranteed his presence for the entire duration of the meeting,” the communique said.

The meeting is a stage along the painful journey that the church has undergone, the committee said, “not only will we fail to bring healing to victim survivors, but the very credibility of the church to carry on the mission of Christ will be in jeopardy throughout the world.”

The members also had sent participants a questionnaire so they could “express their opinions constructively and critically as we move forward, to identify where help is needed to bring about reforms now and in the future, and to help us get a full picture of the situation in the church.”

Pope Francis, they said, “is convinced that through collegial cooperation, the challenges facing the church can be met. But each of us needs to own this challenge, coming together in solidarity, humility and penitence to repair the damage done, sharing a common commitment to transparency and holding everyone in the church accountable.”

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Reunited birth mother, daughter march for life together

By Zoey Maraist | Catholic News Service

The bus ride from Fairfax to Washington took only half an hour. But for two of the passengers, the trip was about 45 years in the making.

Carole Tessier met her birth mother, Margaret Teece Nagella, almost a year ago. Now they were traveling together to the annual March for Life.

Abortion became legal in the U.S. Jan. 22, 1973. A few weeks later, an 18-year-old high school senior in Ravenna, Ohio, realized she was pregnant. Margaret, the oldest of a Catholic family of nine, knew from the very beginning that she would carry her child to term.

“There was no question in my mind. I really didn’t even consider abortion,” she said. “I knew it was an option, but it wasn’t an option for me.”

Still, she was scared and overwhelmed. The baby’s father was deployed overseas. She was hesitant to tell her parents. So Margaret went to Anscestry.com. Knowing her adoptive mom was interested in testing her own DNA, Carole bought her a kit. And then, after a quick moment of reflection, Carole bought one for herself.

A few months later, she was sitting at her computer when the results came to her inbox. In addition to her heritage, she found the name of her mother and grandmother.

Carole soon found their addresses and sent them each a letter and photos. Then she waited.

“A few years before all of this happened,” said Margaret, “I had a feeling in my spirit that one day my daughter might try to find me, and it would happen through my mother. One day at work, my mother calls me and she was beside herself with excitement. I went to my mom and sat in her kitchen with her. She had the letters and photos that Carole sent. She had put one in a frame, and she had mapped out the route to Carole’s house. She was good to go.”

Margaret and her mother, Irene Teece, sent a bouquet of multicolored roses to Carole to let her know they would get in contact soon. First Irene sent a letter. Then Margaret.

“I took my time because I wanted it to be special. I wrote an eight-page letter,” she said. Weeks later, Margaret, Irene and Carole met in Pennsylvania. What followed was nearly a year of getting to know one another. Carole met many of her biological family members, and her adoptive family and friends met them.

“It’s come full circle,” Carole said. “When I first met her, I told Carole that I felt like Moses’ mother,” Margaret said. “She sacrificed her son to give him a better life and I felt the same with Carole. I felt I had to offer her up to somebody who could give her the life that she deserved.”

Carole was always thankful. “She chose life for me when many others in her shoes might not have. I have always felt so incredibly blessed because of her selfless act and have always felt this previously unknown mother was a hero. Now, God has given me this most amazing gift by allowing me to finally know and love her,” she said.

As the women told their story, other riders on the bus, kids and adults from All Saints Church in Manassas, Virginia, sang songs and ate chicken sandwiches.

Seven of the Tessiers’ nine children, ages 4 to 19, joined their parents and grandma on the ride.

“As the bus pulled up to the Mall, the All Saints group enthusiastically clambered out.

“Let’s go save some babies!” said one child.

IN OUR WORLD

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St. William Catholic Church – Round Rock – PEC Auditorium

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For additional information in Spanish, call Joe Clark at (512) 567-2219 or in English call Carol Troy at (512) 826-5910.

Donations will be accepted to defray speaker expenses.
Crowd marches for different reasons but same message: Defend life

By Kurt Jensen | Catholic News Service

The ritual sights of the annual March for Life never seem to change.

Tens of thousands congregate on the National Mall on a brisk winter morning. Many of them have arrived after hours on the road as part of bus caravans.

They listen to speeches and then march up to the U.S. Supreme Court to mark the 1973 Roe v. Wade decision that legalized abortion nationwide.

The speeches and the marchers each year call for respect for all life and an end to abortion, but there’s nothing monolithic about the marchers. In fact, there’s great texture there and a diversity of faith traditions.

Alexander Kvenvolden and wife Aleah, at the march for the second year, had come all the way from Seattle by themselves. Despite the damp chill and the remains of a snowfall on the ground, Alexander was in khaki shorts. "I like shorts all the time," the software developer explained.

"They had both been active in Students for Life while in college. "I’m also super-stoked about (rally speakers) Ben Shapiro and Abby Johnson (founder of And Then There Were None)," Alexander said.

Ahead of his remarks to the rally, Shapiro, a commentator and editor-in-chief of The Daily Wire, did a pre-rally podcast from the stage. He took a call from Vice President Mike Pence to appreciative whoops from the crowd. Later, Pence and his wife, Karen, made a surprise appearance at the rally.

"It’s an extraordinarily important event," Pence said of the march. “Forty-six years ago this month, the Supreme Court turned (away from) the inalienable right to life.

Before Pence called in, Shapiro took a question submitted to him online on whether it would have been right to have killed an infant Adolf Hitler, as if that alone would have prevented the Holocaust.

“And the truth is," Shapiro said, "that no pro-life person on earth would kill baby Hitler, because baby Hitler wasn’t Hitler, adult Hitler was Hitler." He said instead, the idea would presumably be to move the baby Hitler “into a better house where he would not grow up to be Hitler, right? That’s the idea.”

In the crowd of marchers, Franciscan University in Steubenville, Ohio, was well represented by about 400 students. It was one of the larger groups — they’d had a five-hour bus caravan to get to the nation’s capital. Sophomore Abigail Kehoe was marching for the second time.

What brought her back? “The babies,” she replied. She’s part of a group that sometimes prays in front of an abortion clinic in nearby Pittsburgh.

Kent and Karen Powell, were attending for the first year and brought their 8-year-old daughter, Channing.

“We’ve seen it happen, but never had a chance to come," Kent told Catholic News Service. Their church is a member of Charis Fellowship, a network of places of worship formerly known as the Fellowship of Grace Brethren Churches.

The couple used to participate in the annual Life Chain surrounding abortion clinics on the Sunday before the Supreme Court begins its term in October. “It’s the least we can do for life," Kent said.

Colorado Christian University, an interdenominational institution in Lakewood, Colorado, sent more than 30 marchers.

“It’s just an amazing experience, and I want to put action where my words are,” said recent graduate Kaity Clevenger, attending the march for her second year. “It’s a good place to start.”

She and senior Maddisen Baumann said they volunteer at the Alternative Pregnancy Center in Denver.

The Diocese of Toledo, Ohio, was represented by about 200 marchers. Henry Keller, a homeschooled teen, said, “I’ve always been attracted to this huge group of people who just want to stand up for life. We can get there and spread the word to the world.”

A group of about a hundred teens and adult chaperones from Holy Trinity Catholic High School in Temple and St. Dominic Savio Catholic High School in Austin traveled to Washington for the March for Life.

More information on their experience will be in the March issue of the Catholic Spirit.
Lord’s Prayer is reaching out for father’s loving embrace, pope says

**By Carol Glatz | Catholic News Service**

To pray well, people need to have the heart of a child — a child who feels safe and loved in a father’s tender embrace, Pope Francis said.

If people have become estranged from God, feel lonely, abandoned or have realized their mistakes and are paralyzed by guilt, “we can still find the strength to pray” by starting with the word, “Father,” pronounced with the tenderness of a child, he said.

No matter what problems or feelings a person is experiencing or the mistakes someone has made, God “will not hide his face. He will not close himself up in silence. Say, ‘Father,’ and he will answer,” the pope said Jan. 16 during his weekly general audience.

After greeting the thousands of faithful gathered in the Paul VI audience hall, the pope continued his series of talks on the Lord’s Prayer, reflecting on the Aramaic term, “Abba,” which Jesus uses to address God, the father.

“It is rare Aramaic expressions do not to get translated into Greek in the New Testament,” which shows how special, important and nuanced “Abba” is in reflecting the radical and our new relationship God has with his people, the pope said.

St. Paul, he said, wrote to the Romans that they were now “children of God, for you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you received a spirit of adoption, through which we cry, ‘Abba, Father!’”

Jesus teaches his disciples that “Christians can no longer consider God a tyrant to be feared,” but instead feel a sense of trust growing in their hearts in which they can “speak to the creator, calling him ‘Father,’” the pope said.

The term “Abba,” the pope said, “is something much more intimate and moving that simply calling God, ‘Father.’” It is an enduring term, something like “dad,” “daddy” or “papa.”

Even though the Lord’s Prayer has been translated using the more formal term, “Father,” “we are invited to say, ‘papa,’ to have a rapport with God like a child with his or her papa.”

Whatever term used, it is meant to inspire and foster a feeling of love and warmth, he said, like a child would feel in the full embrace of a tender father.

“To pray well, one must have the heart of a child, not a heart that feels adequate” or self-satisfied, he said.

People must imagine this prayer being recited by the prodigal son after he has been embraced by his father, who waited so long, who forgave him and only wants to say how much he missed his child, Pope Francis said.

“Then we discover how those words take on life, take on strength,” he said. People will then wonder, “How is it possible that you, God, know only love? That you don’t know hate? Where inside of you is revenge, the fury over your wounded honor? And God will respond, ‘I know only love.’”

The father of the prodigal son also displays the maternal qualities of forgiveness and empathy, the pope said. Mothers especially are the ones who keep loving their children, “even when they would no longer deserve anything.”

“God is looking for you even if you do not seek him,” he said. “God loves you even if you have forgotten him. God sees a glimpse of beauty in you even if you think you have uselessly squandered all of your talents.”

“God is not just a father, he is like a mother who never stops loving” her child.

At the end of the general audience, in preparation for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity Jan. 18-25, Pope Francis said, “ecumenism is not something optional.”

The purpose of the week of prayer and encounter, he said, is to foster and strengthen a common witness upholding “true justice and supporting the weakest through concrete, appropriate and effective responses.”

**Priest says Christian churches have grown closer in 50 years of dialogue**

**By Beth Griffin | Catholic News Service**

From a Catholic perspective, Christian churches and denominations are closer than ever after 50 years of ecumenical engagement and dialogue, even if the overall picture of Christian unity today may look sad, as doctrinal disagreements lead to more schisms.

This was Atonement Father James Loughran’s message at a Jan. 25 prayer service in Garrison.

The priest, who is director of the Graymoor Ecumenical and Interreligious Institute, preached at one of eight ecumenical prayer services held to mark the Jan. 18-25 Week of Prayer for Christian Unity.

“Building up relationships across denominational lines is vital if we are to grow with ecumenical hearts and not only ecumenical heads,” he said.

“If we love one another, we have to be able to appreciate diversity.”

Dialogue continues between the Catholic Church and leaders of the Orthodox, Methodist, Lutheran, Reformed, Presbyterian, Baptist churches and other denominations, he said.

“Enthusiasm for ecumenism is not as vigorous in the United States as it was 40 years ago when it was new and exciting,” Father Loughran told Catholic News Service. He attributed this to the slow nature of the process and a lack of trust in God.

“We don’t depend on God for the ecumenical movement as we should. It’s a sin of rupture that divides us, not a grace,” Father Loughran said.

“Anybody who is a believer is striving for a relationship with God. We can only comprehend if we get to know one another,” he said.

The prayer service at Graymoor, the headquarters of the Franciscan Friars and Sisters of the Atonement, was part of the worldwide observance of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. The week is a collaborative effort of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity and the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches.

Since 1968, the two groups have met to choose a theme and prepare texts and resources for the observance. The theme for 2019 is “Justice, only justice, you shall pursue,” from Chapter 16, Verse 2, of the Book of Deuteronomy.

The Week of Prayer began as an octave of prayer, sermons and conferences encouraged by Pope Leo XIII and Anglican leaders.

The event was celebrated for the first time in January 1908 at Graymoor by Father Paul Watsson and Mother Lurana White, the Episcopal co-founders of the Society of the Atonement.

In 1909, the Franciscan Friars and Sisters of the Atonement and 13 of their lay associates were received into the Catholic Church. The Atonement priests, sisters and brothers work for reconciliation and healing through the unity of men and women with God and one another, in fulfillment of the mandate from the Gospel of John: “That they all may be one.”

According to Father Loughran, Father Watsson — who has been given the title “servant of God” because his canonization cause has been opened — was inspired by St. Clare and St. Francis of Assisi to uphold the dignity of the poor and sick and to work for justice.

Early in the 20th century, the priest warned of the dangers of opiate and said addiction is a disease, not a vice. St. Christopher’s Inn, the homeless shelter and alcohol and drug treatment facility he established at Graymoor in 1903, has gained international renown for its long-term success rate.

“Transformation stories there border on the miraculous,” Father Loughran said.

Father Watsson also was a founder of the Catholic Near East Welfare Association, Catholic Medical Mission Board and the Union That Nothing Be Lost, which still funds charitable, missionary and ecumenical efforts.

New York Cardinal Timothy M. Dolan opened the Atonement co-founder’s sainthood cause in 2015, and the results of a meticulous archdiocesan investigation were sent to the Vatican Congregation for Saints’ Causes in 2017. In December 2018, a supplemental inquiry was officially closed and accepted by the congregation.

Father Brian F. Terry, minister general of the Friars of the Atonement, said since the founder’s cause was opened, thousands of people from many countries have contacted the Father Paul of Graymoor Guild to report favors received through Father Watsson’s intercession and to request prayer cards and medals. As yet, there have been no reported miracles.
BISHOP’S INTERVIEW

An invitation to represent our beliefs at the state capitol

Editor: Bishop, the 86th State Legislature is now in session. What is on the Texas bishops’ legislative agenda for this session?

Bishop Vásquez: Every other year as the legislature meets, the bishops look forward to this time because it is our opportunity for us as the Catholic bishops of this great state of Texas to engage our legislators and to express very clearly to them what we would like to see happen in this legislative session.

One of the things we are advocating for is life and family life, which is our biggest priority. This means we seek laws that not only will protect the child in the womb, but also support and preserve every human life at every stage of development.

The bishops support increased funding to abortion alternatives for expectant mothers, and we seek to eliminate all funding for abortion providers. We also support good foster care, which has been a challenge in our state over the last few years. There is a need for increased recruitment and formation of foster, adoptive and biological parents. The bottom line is that we seek to minimize the threats to innocent human life, from fertilization to natural death, and seek to promote strong, stable and healthy families.

The bishops also advocate for better immigration policies. We want to ensure that those immigrants coming to our country are coming here legally. We want to make sure that their inherent rights are also preserved. We support care for unaccompanied minors, and we seek alternatives to family detention. We also support the reunification of immigrant families.

We also oppose the death penalty. We want to protect the common good by deterring offenses and by rehabilitating offenders. We want to keep people out of prisons and jail by helping them to reform and change.

The education of our children is also on the bishop’s agenda. We support parental choice in education, and we want to make sure our children are safe in schools. We also want every person to have access to quality health care. We also want to promote the stewardship of the earthly resources God has given us. We must find ways to conserve energy and to make clean water available to all.

These are just a few of the items that we are asking our legislators to consider during this legislative session.

Editor: Many Catholics from across the state will gather at the capitol on March 26 for Catholic Advocacy Day. What is the significance of this day?

Bishop Vásquez: Over the last several years the bishops have made an increased effort to encourage Catholics to come to Austin for a day of advocacy. On that day we encourage Catholics to speak with one voice to our legislators. In years past, we have had great representation and participation from all the 15 dioceses in our state. We have had great turn out from our Catholic schools and wonderful participation from adults through the Knights of Columbus, social justice groups and others from across our state.

It is a sight to behold to see parents, children, young adults and people from all walks of life speaking out on behalf of what we value as Catholics.

We want to make sure that our voice is heard clearly by our legislators; we want to let them know what we believe and what we hold to be true. We want those values to be passed on behalf of what we value as Catholics.

We want to make sure that our legislators have an opportunity to engage our legislators and our officials who represent us.

Editor: What do you hope the faithful will accomplish during that day?

Bishop Vásquez: I sincerely hope that the faithful will come to Austin in great numbers, and that during that day each person will make their voice known. I hope our legislators will listen to them and understand the importance of each issue that is brought before them. We are advocating for very serious topics. We want laws that are just and that are good for all. We come together to advocate for the common good, which serves all people well. We are not trying to limit ourselves to advocating for Catholic issues, but we are speaking for the common good and for what is good for all the people in this great state.

Editor: For those who are unable to come to Austin for Advocacy Day how can they participate?

Bishop Vásquez: I hope that they write or call their legislators and take the opportunity to visit with their legislators when they come back to their home districts. Legislators are representing the people, which is a great and noble profession. Thus our legislators must listen to the people so that they can speak on our behalf.

No matter what time of year it is, we are called to be faithful citizens, and as such we must keep abreast of what is happening in our government. We should have continued contact with our lawmakers in order to thank them when they do well, and express concern when they fail to uphold the life and dignity of the human person.

For more information, visit www.austindiocese.org/advocacy.

Editor: What is your prayer for the 86th State Legislature?

Bishop Vásquez: I encourage everyone to pray for our government and our government officials — for our president, for our legislators here in the state, and for all of those who hold public office. My prayer is that God, with the power and the wisdom of the Holy Spirit, will guide and lead our elected officials so that they may enact good and just laws for the common good that will serve to strengthen the people of this great state of Texas.

Communicating with your legislators

The state hosts www.fyi.legis.state.tx.us/Home.aspx where you can enter your address and find your legislators. An original letter or e-mail is a good way to contact your legislator. Here are a few tips to help maximize your impact:

• Be brief. Keep your letter to one page.
• Address it appropriately. The Honorable “Full Name”, Texas Senate or House of Representatives, Austin, Texas 78701; Dear “Senator or Representative”
• Introduce yourself. For example: I am a parishioner of St. John Catholic Church in Waco or I am Catholic nurse at Seton Medical Center in Austin.
• Be direct. Briefly state why you are writing, then write one paragraph on the issue and explain your position.
• Be specific and bring it home. Explain why this topic is important to you and other people in your community.
• Request follow-up. Include your mailing or e-mail address and request a reply.
• Sign your letter in blue or green ink (if printing and mailing).

The Texas Catholic Conference of Bishops has more tips at www.txcatholic.org.
Deacon formation leads couples in a new direction

By Deacon Michael Beauvais | Guest Columnist

One of my favorite words in Scripture is the Greek word ‘metanoia,’ which is translated as repentance, a word that implies a change in direction. The idea is that most of the time we are walking in the wrong direction, much like the disciples on the road to Emmaus. Rather than following Jesus we are too busy striking out on our own, going our own way, perhaps even running away. Metanoia is the call to realize that we may be on the wrong path and we need to change direction. We want us to be is to our lives. We are seeking God’s path rather than our own. And we are more aware of the need to trust in God’s providence more than ever before; our comfort zone has shifted from being concerned with the things that require us to embrace opportunities we would not necessarily choose ourselves. We were called to trust in God’s providence more than we ever had before; our comfort zone was stretched; we were led in a new direction.

The entire formation process is a series of experiences that caused Marian and me to see our lives in a new light. Formation focuses on the four pillars: the human, the pastoral, the intellectual and the spiritual aspects of ordained ministry and growth in all of them causes one to expand their comfort zone. Marian and I came to see new experiences not as comfortable or uncomfortable but rather as growth opportunities. Each opportunity caused a shift in both of us, moving us from being concerned with the affect it had on our lives, to seeing them more as opportunities to grow in service to others and to each other.

When reflecting on the formation experience for both of us, and especially open to each other, open to others and Christ has laid out for us if it had not have remained closed to the world into the blooming rose. We might have always been, but our relationship is more open. We are open to each other, open to others and especially open to God. It is not that we share more things now, but that we share more important things, we pray together, we share in the experiences of the ministry and we are more aware of the need to seek God’s path rather than our own. Formation did not make us the perfect couple, rather formation helped us see how important being the couple God wants us to be is to our lives. We are moving in a new direction. We are not there yet, we may never be, but we will always know the way to find the right path is not to be found in following our own plan but is dependent on seeking out the path God has laid out for the two of us.

When Marian and I began the journey of formation neither of us had any idea what it would mean for our relationship because we were certain our relationship was just fine. Formation helped us to see that with God, just fine is not good enough. God wants much more for us and formation was a beautiful way to find out how much we needed to include God in our life and to be open to serving him and those he sends our way. Any man feeling called to the diaconate may certainly find the formation journey a blessing to their marriage and family in light of the new direction it will lead them.

Deacon Michael and Marian Beauvais serve St. Anthony Parish in Bryan. Deacon Beauvais was ordained in 2016.
SAINTS FOR OUR TIMES

St. Claude, a Jesuit, was devoted to the Sacred Heart

By Mary Lou Gibson | Columnist

Claude de la Colombiere was a French Jesuit in the mid-17th century when he was appointed preacher to the duchess of York, Mary of Modena (wife of the future King James II) in London. He had a reputation as a preacher and chaplain as well as Catholics came to the Queen's Chapel at St. James Palace to hear him.

As it turned out, England was not a good place for a Jesuit priest who was not at all afraid of speaking his mind. Paul Burns writes in “Butler’s Lives of the Saints” that English Protestants believed that Claude was a scheming foreign Jesuit who wanted to make Britain Catholic again through court intrigue. On the other hand, English Catholics saw him as an innocent, non-political preacher and chaplain devoted to the Sacred Heart.

Claude was born into a wealthy family near Lyons, France, in 1641 and seemed almost predestined to become a Jesuit. He was educated in the Jesuit college at Lyons and joined the society there. Soon he became a preacher at the convents of the Visitation nuns in Avignon. After he completed his theological studies in Paris, he was tutor to the sons of the finance minister, Colbert, and later, the superior of Paray-le-Monial college in Burgundy.

Earlier in his priestly career in Avignon, Claude wrote sermons justifying Jesuit defense of free will against Jansenism, the theological movement that emphasized original sin, the necessity of divine grace and predestination. Burns writes that Claude stressed the doctrine of God’s unconditional love and forgiveness and often talked of the new and growing devotion to the Sacred Heart as a spiritual weapon against Jansenism.

In England, his life unfolded into a new drama when he became embroiled in this “Popish Plot” and was tried by the House of Commons in 1679. King Louis XIV of France intervened to save Claude from execution and after three weeks in prison where he was treated harshly, he was banished to France.

To his friends and priestly colleagues in France, Claude was a devoted preacher who consecrated himself to the Sacred Heart years earlier before making his final profession as a Jesuit. When he became the confessor of the nuns of the Visitation Convent, he met Margaret Mary Alacoque. Together they shared a devotion to the Sacred Heart and Claude saw her as an encouragement to his own devotion. Burns writes that Sister Margaret Mary had a vision and was told that Claude was Christ’s “perfect friend” and that his gift was to “lead souls to God.”

After Claude returned to France, he never recovered from his torment in England and lived an invalid life for the next three years. He died at Paray-le-Monial on Feb. 15, 1682.

The feast of the Sacred Heart was instituted in Poland a century later and officially extended to the whole church in 1856. The feast is celebrated on the third Friday after Pentecost.

Claude de la Colombiere was beatified in 1929 and canonized by Pope John Paul II on May 31, 1992. His feast day is Feb. 15.

ON MISSION

Our oldest mission sits on the eastern edge of diocese

By Father Tom Frank | Columnist

On Pentecost Sunday afternoon of June 4, 1995, Bishop John McCarthy blessed and dedicated the newest church building of the oldest Catholic parish of the Austin Diocese — Blessed Virgin Mary Parish in Old Washington on-the-Brazos. And I was there! A full choir from Holy Cross Parish in Austin sang rousing, joyful hymns. The bishop gave a powerful talk about the history of the parish. Then the matriarch of the mission, Martha Sweed Walker, shared inspirational words about the dedication and determined faith of the parishioners.

The mission, called Virgen de la Soledad (Virgin of Solitude), was established in 1849. C. Frank and Titan Walker were the first Catholics in the area and built a log house and a small adobe church. In 1857, the Church of the Holy Family was completed.

In 1936, on 7 acres of donated land, a frame church was built and re-dedicated to the Sacred Heart. When Bishop McCarthy came to the Austin Diocese, he and Martha Walker worked closely. Parishioners raised money, the bishop secured a grant from the Catholic Extension Society, and the current church was built in 1995 and re-dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary. A community center, other small buildings for religious education, offices and meetings, a pavilion, and a large open field for sports and parish gatherings have been added over the years. A Texas Historical Marker in front of the church recognizes it as the oldest African-American Catholic Community in Texas.

Blessed Virgin Mary Mission/Parish is currently served by the parishes in Brenham and Somerville. Deacon Limas Sweed (ordained in 2000) is the administrator and director of religious education. Members take care of supplies, maintenance and repairs, care for vestments and altar linens, and clean and decorate the church. Though many younger members have moved away, they return for the annual Sweed family reunion in September. Church members are so glad they never recovered from their torment in England and lived an invalid life for the next three years. He died at Paray-le-Monial on Feb. 15, 1682.

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By James Janknegt | Columnist

Can you imagine not having an imagination? Of course you can because you possess one of the great gifts bestowed upon human beings by God: imagination. Merriam-Webster defines imagination as the act or power of forming a mental image of something not present to the senses or never before wholly perceived in reality.

We can imagine places we have never been, people we have never met, even things that don’t have existence like unicorns or beings that are non-material like angels. Although we often take it for granted, it is horrific to think what life would be like without the ability to imagine. How could anything that does not exist come into being, if we could not form a mental picture of it first?

Granted, not every person has the same ability to imagine. Some people have greater faculties for imagining than others. Artists often have a more highly developed imagination. Matched with the technical skills of drawing, painting or sculpting, an artist can represent places and events that happened far away and long ago or haven’t even happened yet. An artist can show us people we haven’t met or creatures that don’t exist anymore (dinosaurs) or never existed (dragons).

The Christian artist can even use their imagination to show us events in salvation history that have both a physical and a spiritual dimension like Moses crossing the Red Sea or Jesus on Calvary. Certainly we can read about these events in Scripture and imagine them ourselves, but don’t these events take on a greater impact when a truly great artist unleashes his imagination and depicts these stories in shapes, lines, values and colors? This use of imagination is an enormous gift to the church and the world.

With the advent of photography, much of the artist’s ability to imagine seemed to be rendered superfluous. Photographs could now show us distant places, people and things. There was no longer a need for the artist to travel the world using his skill and imagination to send home pictures for those who could not travel. Next came television, the internet, computers, and iPhones; now we are awash with more images than any one person can process in a lifetime.

No wonder we take the ability to imagine for granted. Perhaps it would be to our benefit to occasionally block out all those random images, sit in a quiet spot, and let a picture of some spiritual reality (something that can’t be photographed) and spend time really looking at it, pondering it, letting the image soak into our minds and our souls. Maybe it would help us detox and create a space for the Blessed Trinity to speak deep truths to us via our imagination.

Revelation, which I painted with oil on canvas in 2014, depicts many events described in the book of Revelation that are difficult to imagine. The central panel is the Lamb on the throne, the river of life, and the tree of life, surrounded by the 12 apostles and the four living creatures. The left panel is the Woman clothed with the sun and the war in heaven surrounded by the nine choirs of angels. The right panel is the Whore of Babylon and the Beast surrounded by the unleashing of the scrolls, trumpets and bowls. I invite you to take some time with this piece and let your imagination run wild.
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@ccctex.org.

Feb. 9: St. William Parish in Round Rock will host a Sweetheart Dinner and Dance at the St. William Parish Evangelization Center. Dinner at 6:30 p.m. and dance from 8 to 11 p.m. Ticket prices are $40 per person, which includes dinner. Reserved tickets are $60. Details: Julio Campos at (512) 635-4707.

Feb. 10: A Polka Mass will be celebrated at 10 a.m. at Sts. Cyril and Methodius Parish in Graner. After the Mass, a fried pork steak dinner will be served for $10 per plate. This is sponsored by KJT Society #28.

Feb. 10: A Czech Mass will be celebrated at 5 p.m. at Holy Trinity Parish in Corn Hill. All prayers, readings and hymns will be in the Czech language to celebrate the feast of Sts. Cyril and Methodius, patron saints of the Czech Republic and of Slavic peoples. After Mass, a dinner will be served in the Parish Activity Center.

Feb. 12: JustMatters classes will be offered from 6:30 to 9 p.m. at St. Ignatius Martyr Parish in Austin. Classes will run for eight weeks with a week off for spring break. Details: Carol Filip at carolfilip@gmail.com.

Feb. 12: Adoration for young professionals from 7 to 8 p.m. at the Marian Shrine of Our Lady of Schoenstatt in Austin. Details: www.facebook.com/SchoenstattAustin.

Feb. 13: A school discernment dinner for men will be held from 7 to 8:30 p.m. at St. William Parish Austin. Details: www.goldiscalling.me.

Feb. 16: Girls Day Camp with Mary will be held from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Marian Shrine of Our Lady of Schoenstatt in Austin. Details: www.godiscalling.me. The cost is $25 per person. Register at rgardner@schoenstatt.us.

Feb. 17: San José Parish in Austin will offer an eight-part series on the Bible on Sundays from 12:45 to 2:30 p.m. The “Quick Journey through the Bible Timeline” will include a student workbook, Bible timeline chart and bookmark. The cost is $20 per person. Classes will be held in St. Joan School room 1-C. Register: (512) 444-7587.

Feb. 17: Inquiry session for those interested in the permanent diaconate from 2 to 5 p.m. at St. Mary Parish in Brenham. Details: (512) 849-2459 or diconateformation@austindiocese.org.

Feb. 18: 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.

Feb. 18: 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.goldiscalling.me.

Feb. 20: Total Consecration to Jesus through Mary begins.

Feb. 20: A Discernment Dinner for women will be held from 7:30 to 8:30 p.m. at St. Vincent de Paul Parish in Austin. Details: www.goldiscalling.me.

Saturday and Sunday

March 3: Annual Homecoming Festival begins at 10:30 a.m. at SPJST Hall in Caldwell. Auction at 12:30 p.m. Games for all ages throughout the day. Barbecue brisket plates $10 each. Auction at 12:30 p.m. Details: www.austindiocese.org/cedarbrake.

March 6: A high school discernment dinner for men will be held from 7 to 8:30 p.m. at St. William Parish in Round Rock. Details: www.goldiscalling.me.

March 8: Fried Fish Dinners on Fridays during Lent from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m. at St. Mary Parish in Caldwell. Plates are $10 each, drive-through only.

March 9: Project Andrew will be held from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at St. Mary Cathedral in Austin.

March 9-10: Rite of Election ceremonies will be held March 9 at 1 p.m. at St. Thomas Aquinas Parish in College Station and March 10 at 2 p.m. and 4:30 p.m. at St. John Vianney Parish in Round Rock.
BULLETIN BOARD

Official schedule

The official schedule for Bishop Joe Vásquez is listed below. Dates and times are subject to change.

**Bishop Joe S. Vásquez**

Feb. 7: Catholic Charities’ “Creating Hope” Luncheon, St. Thomas Aquinas Parish, College Station, noon

Feb. 8: Capital Campaign Operational Meeting, Pastoral Center, 10:30 a.m. 

Feb. 15: Mass and School Visit, Holy Vietnamese Martyrs Parish, Waco, 6 p.m.

Feb. 16: Blessing of New Religious House for Dominican Sisters of Mary, Mother of the Eucharist, Georgetown, 10 a.m.

Feb. 17: Mass and Blessing of New Building, St. Martin de Porres, Dripping Springs, 11 a.m.

Feb. 19: Knights of Columbus Clergy & Religious Appreciation Banquet, St. Helen Parish, Georgetown, 6:30 p.m.

Feb. 20: Interviews with Diaconal Candidates, Pastoral Center

Feb. 21: Interviews with Diaconal Candidates, Pastoral Center

Feb. 22: Confirmation, Sacred Heart Parish, Austin, 7 p.m.

Feb. 23: Confirmation, St. Stephen Parish, Salado, 5:30 p.m.

Feb. 24: Confirmation, Sacred Heart Parish, La Grange, 3 p.m.

Feb. 25: Opening Mass of National Organization for Continuing Education of Roman Catholic Clergy (NOCER-CC) Convention, Austin, 4 p.m.

Feb. 26: Interviews with Diaconal Candidates, Pastoral Center

Feb. 28: Interviews with Diaconal Candidates, Pastoral Center

March 2: Mass and Reception for 110th Anniversary, University Catholic Center, Austin, 9 a.m.

March 3: Confirmation, St. Joseph Parish, Rockdale, 9 a.m.

March 4: National Merit Scholars Reception, Pastoral Center, Austin, 5 p.m.

March 5: National Merit Scholars Confirmation, St. Vincent de Paul Parish, Austin, 5 p.m.

March 6: Ash Wednesday Mass, St. Mary Cathedral, Austin, noon

March 7: Secretariat Directors’ Meeting, Pastoral Center, 9 a.m.

March 8: Monthly Budget Meeting, Pastoral Center, 8:30 a.m.

March 9: Rite of Election, St. Thomas Aquinas Parish, College Station, 1 p.m.

March 10: Rite of Election, St. John Vianney Parish, Round Rock, 2 p.m.

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March 30: Rite of Election, St. Thomas Aquinas Parish, College Station, 1 p.m.

EIM WORKSHOP

All clergy, religious, seminarians, employees and adult volunteers serving in a ministry requiring EIM compliance must submit an EIM Application for Ministry (one-time only) and attend an EIM Workshop at least once every three years. Go to www.eapsdb.com/austin to submit a new application or login to your existing account to find the list of workshops and to signup (use the Alternate Login if you don’t recall ID/password). Contact your parish EIM site administrator (insert name) if a paper EIM application or other assistance with EIM compliance matters is needed.

Workshop Notes: 1) attendees must pre-register at least 24 hours before workshop start time – walk-ins are no longer admitted, 2) arrive early - late arrivals are not admitted and 3) do not bring children to the EIM workshop. If you are a victim of sexual abuse and have concerns regarding your attendance at a workshop, contact Emily Hurlimann at (512) 949-2447 to discuss an alternative workshop arrangement.

**HAVE YOU, OR HAS SOMEONE YOU KNOW, EXPERIENCED ABUSE?**

Bishop Joe S. Vásquez and the Diocese of Austin are committed to providing compassionate care to persons who have experienced abuse, particularly if committed by clergy or a church representative. If you have or if someone you know has experienced such abuse, contact the diocesan Coordinator of Victim Assistance and Pastoral Support at leana-hinojosa@austindioce.com or (512) 949-2400.

**REPORT ABUSE**

Report abuse of a minor, elderly adult or an adult with a disability to local law enforcement or to the Texas Abuse Hotline at www.txabusehotline.org or (800) 252-5400 and to the diocese at www.austindioce.org/report-abuse or (512) 949-2447.

**REPORT UNETHICAL BEHAVIOR**

Report unethical behavior by a person serving in ministry at www.austindioce.org/other-concerns or (512) 949-2447.

**COURAGE**

A Roman Catholic Apostolate

To advertise, call (512) 949-2443.
El Obispo José S. Vásquez es el quinto obispo de la Diócesis de Austin, que es el hogar de más de 530,000 Católicos.

El Padre James Misko es el nuevo vicario general

El Obispo José Vásquez ha nombrado al Padre James Misko como vicario general de la Diócesis de Austin. El Padre Misko, 48, continuará sirviendo como pastor de St. Louis Parish en Austin. El nombramiento será efectivo el 21 de enero. El vicario general tiene poder ejecutivo en la diócesis, en lo concerniente a todos los asuntos administrativos.


Entrevista al Señor Obispo

Una invitación a representar a nuestras creencias en el capítulo estatal

Editora: Obispo, la 86ta Legislatura Estatal está ahora en sesión. ¿Qué hay en la agenda legislativa de los Obispos de Texas para esta sesión?

Obispo Vásquez: Un año sí y otro no, mientras la legislatura se reúne, los obispos esperan con ansia este tiempo por que es nuestra oportunidad para nosotros, como obispos Católicos de este gran estado de Texas para involucrarnos a nuestros legisladores y para expresarles a ellos muy claramente lo que nos gustaría ver que pasase en esta sesión legislativa.

Una de las cosas por las que estamos interviendo es la vida y la vida familiar, las cuales son nuestras más grandes prioridades. Esto significa que buscamos leyes que no sólo protejan a los niños en el vientre materno, pero también que apoyen y preserven cada vida humana en cada estado de desarrollo.

Los obispos apoyamos el aumento en el financiamiento para las alternativas al aborto para las madres en espera, y buscamos eliminar todo financiamiento para los proveedores de abortos. También apoyamos un buen sistema de padres de acogida – foster care, el cual ha sido un reto en nuestro estado por los últimos años. Existe una necesidad del aumento del reclutamiento y de la formación de padres de acogida, adoptivos y biológicos. Lo principal es que buscamos minimizar las amenazas a la vida humana inocente, desde la fertilización hasta la muerte natural, y promover familias fuertes, estables y saludables.

Los obispos también intervenimos por mejores políticas de inmigración. Queremos asegurarnos de que aquellos inmigrantes que vienen a nuestro país, vengan legalmente. Queremos asegurarnos de que sus derechos inherentes sean también preservados. Apoyamos el cuidado de los menosres que llegan sin acompañantes, y buscamos alternativas a la detención familiar. También apoyamos la reunificación de familias inmigrantes.

Nos oponemos también a la pena de muerte. Queremos proteger el bien común deteniendo ofensas y rehaciendo a los ofensores. Queremos mantener a la gente fuera de prisiones y ayudarlos a reformarse y cambiar.

La educación de nuestros niños se encuentra también en la agenda de los obispos. Apoyamos la opción de las escuelas de padres en lo relativo a la educación, y queremos asegurarnos de que nuestros niños estén a salvo en las escuelas. También queremos que cada persona tenga acceso al cuidado para la salud de calidad. Queremos promover también la corresponsabilidad de los recursos de la Tierra que Dios nos ha dado. Debemos de encontrar maneras para conservar energía y para hacer que el agua potable este disponible para todos.

Estos son algunos de los temas que estamos pidiendo a nuestros legisladores que consideren durante esta sesión legislativa.

Editora: Muchos Católicos de todo el estado se reunirán en el capítulo el 26 de marzo para el Día de la Intervención Católica ¿Qué significa este día?

Obispo Vásquez: A lo largo de los últimos meses, los obispos han hecho un mayor esfuerzo para animar a los Católicos a que vengan a Austin para participar en un día de intervención. En ese día animamos a los Católicos a hablar con una sola voz a nuestros legisladores. En años pasados, hemos tenido una gran representación y participación de todas las 15 diócesis de nuestro estado. Hemos tenido una gran participación de nuestras escuelas Católicas y una maravillosa participación de parte de adultos a través de los Caballeros de Colón, grupos de justicia social, y otros de a lo largo del estado. Es una vista magnífica del estado, y que durante ese día cada persona haga que se escuche su voz. Espero que nuestros legisladores los escucharán y entenderán la importancia de cada tema que es presentado ante ellos. Estamos interviniendo por temas muy serios. Queremos leyes que sean justas y buenas para todos. Nos reunimos para intervenir por el bien común, el cual sirve a toda la gente bien. No estamos tratando de limitarnos a intervenir por temas Católicos, sino que estamos hablando de la vida, y de lo que es bueno para todas las personas en este gran estado.

Editora: Aquellos que no pueden venir a Austin para el Día de la Intervención, ¿Cómo pueden participar?

Obispo de Austin: Espero que escriban o llamen a sus legisladores y tomen la oportunidad de visitar a nuestros hacedores de leyes para poder agradecerles cuando trabajan bien, y expresarles preocupación cuando fallan en defender la vida y la dignidad de la persona humana. Para mayor información, visite www.austindiocese.org/advocacy.

Editora: ¿Cuál es su oración para la 86ta legislatura estatal?

Obispo Vásquez: Los invitamos a todos a orar por nuestro gobierno y los oficiales del mismo — por nuestro presidente, nuestros legisladores aquí en el estado, y por todos aquellos que están en una oficina pública. Mi oración es por que Dios, con el poder y la sabiduría del Espíritu Santo, guíe y lideré a nuestros oficiales electos para que puedan promulgar leyes buenas y justas para el bien común que sirvan para fortalecer a la gente de este gran estado de Texas.
Evento de MLK anima a todos a ser ‘tambores mayores por la justicia’

Por Kanobia Russell-Blackmon | Columnista

Una conmemoración del legado de Martin Luther King Jr. reunió a gente de todas las culturas, antecedentes y edades de toda la Diócesis de Austin.

El evento anual fue llevado a cabo el 12 de enero en St. Louis Parish en Austin. El Obispo Auxiliar de Nueva Orleans fue el orador principal. A él se le unieron el Obispo José Vásquez, el Obispo Auxiliar Daniel Garcia y el Padre James Misko, pastor de St. Louis Parish y recién nombrado vicario general de la Diócesis de Austin.

Como un tambor mayor por la justicia, King creyó en ponerse de pie por la paz y lo que es justo. Dijo el Obispo Vásquez.

“El habló contra la injusticia y la maldad del racismo e intervinieron por derechos igualitarios para la gente negra,” dijo el obispo. Considerando el clima social actual en los Estados Unidos, el Obispo Vásquez expresó la importancia de que “recordemos el legado de King y continuemos poniéndonos de pie contra las injusticias”.

El Obispo Cheri, conocido por su cantar y su predicación, comenzó su plática pidiendo a todos que se pusieran de pie y cantaran un viejo tema espiritual, “si alguien te pregunta quién soy yo, diles que soy un hijo de Dios”. Este himno, junto con el “Llamado a Simón el Pescador” (Lc 5:1-11), prepararon el escenario para su presentación titulada “Cambiando de Líneas”.

El Obispo Cheri dijo que el cambiar de líneas es una parte de la vida y uno no debe simplemente darse por vencido tan pronto como la vida te ponga un reto difícil. Invocando las palabras de King, “no dejes que ningún hombre te tire tan abajo como para odiarlo”, el Obispo Cheri animó a la gente a no poner limitaciones en ellos mismos por que al cambiar de líneas la gente no debería de permitir que el pasado los paralice en el presente.

Este comentario resonó con el personal de la Oficina Diocesana de Vida, Caridad y Justicia. Luisa de Poo, directora asociada de Actividades Pro-Vida, dijo que ella, con frecuencia, advierte a aquellos que han sobrevivido a obstáculos racistas o a injusticias, a no vivir en su herida.

El Obispo Cheri retó a los fieles a no dejar que los eventos que les sucedieron en el pasado les impidieran moverse hacia delante o los desanimaran de lograr sus metas.

Reflexionando sobre la presentación, Wilhelmina Delco dijo, “me llevo de este mensaje que la vida está llena de cambio y uno no debe de tener miedo de cambiar de líneas”. Delco sabe sobre cambios ya que ella fue la primera mujer y la segunda hablante temporal de la Casa de Representantes de Texas.

Sonja Eva Vega-Perez, parroquiana de St. Monica Parish en Cameron, estuvo de acuerdo y agregó que el mensaje que ella se lleva es que “el amor siempre triunfa y el odio nunca gana nada sino división”.

Bernard Little, el fiscal delegado de los Caballeros de Pedro Claver, Asamblea No. 40, apreció cómo el Obispo Cheri contó la historia del llamado de Jesús a Simón Pedro, “exhortándolo a ‘cambiar de líneas’ y salir con su fe a intentar algo diferente”.

Little, quien se convirtió al Catolicismo, explicó, “esta fue la base del mensaje del Dr. King, y el Obispo Cheri nos recordó que el Dr. King nos llamó a cambiar de líneas, particularmente sobre cómo nos vemos unos a los otros”.

Considerando las varias culturas y tradiciones subrayadas a través de la oración y el culto del servicio, Little sintió que las representaciones culturales fueron “no sólo bellas por si mismas, sino que su inclusión deben permanecer como un firme recordatorio para todos de que la presencia de Dios está en todos lados”.

El coro de St. Agustine de Holy Cross Parish abrió el servicio con un himno africano “Siyahamba”. El himno tuvo el propósito de enfatizar que el Dr. King “de hacer de la justicia, igualdad y amor siempre triunfa y el odio nunca gana nada sino división”.

Mientras caminaba en el pasillo para recibir el premio significativo, el legado del Dr. King tiene que llevar a cambios en la ley y en la justicia social y con humildad recibió un premio que lleva algo de las grandes palabras que el Dr. King habló,” dijo Dorsey. El Obispo Vásquez estaba complacido con la diversidad de la audiencia y la conmemoración de King.

“Había personas de diferentes razas, culturas y lenguas lo que es un gran signo ya que el honrar la vida del Dr. Martin Luther King nunca debe de ser visto como algo exclusivo a una etnicidad,” dijo el obispo.

En consulta con las oficinas diocesanas de Asuntos Sociales y Ministerio Hispano, el programa de conmemoración fue coordinado por el Comité Asesor diocesano de Negros Católicos bajo el liderazgo de Susan Morris de St. Louis Parish en Austin.

DeKarlos Blackmon, director diocesano de la Secretaría de Vida, Caridad y Justicia que también coordina la Oficina del Ministerio a Católicos Negros, dijo que fue muy importante hacer que la celebración de King fuera algo incluyente para todos.

“Esta conmemoración fue un signo visible de que todos podemos sentarnos alrededor de la mesa del Señor sin importar las distinciones, expresando, en las palabras de San Juan Pablo II que no hay una iglesia negra, ni blanca, ni Americana, sino una iglesia de Jesucristo que es el hogar de negros, blancos y la gente de cada cultura y raza,” dijo Blackmon.
La formación diaconal envía a las parejas en una nueva dirección

Por el Diácono Michael Beauvais | Columnista Invitado

Una de mis palabras favoritas en la Escritura es la palabra ‘metanoia,’ que se traduce como arrepentimiento, una palabra que implica un cambio de dirección. La idea es que la mayoría del tiempo estamos caminando en la dirección equivocada, como los discípulos en el camino de Emaús. En lugar de buscar a Jesús, estamos muy ocupados luchando por nuestra cuenta, yendo por nuestro propio camino, tal vez, incluso, huyendo. Metanoia es el llamado a darnos cuenta de que puede que estemos en el camino equivocado y necesitemos cambiar de dirección.

La mayoría de los hombres llamados al diaconado (después de hablar con el pastor y de asistir a una reunión de información) experimentarán una nueva dirección en su vida. De muchas maneras, esto es lo que la formación al diaconado significó para Marian y para mí. La formación nos mostró que la más grande diferencia entre el voluntariado en un ministerio y el ser llamado al diaconado reside en la necesidad de aceptar el hecho de que la formación de un diácono se encuentra con mayor frecuencia en las cosas que nos requieren dar la bienvenida a oportunidades que no necesariamente escogeríamos nosotros mismas. Fuimos llamados a confiar en la providencia de Dios más que nunca lo hemos hecho antes; nuestra zona de confort era estrecha; fuimos guiados en una nueva dirección.

Todo el proceso de formación es una serie de experiencias que hicieron que Marian y yo viéramos nuestras vidas en una nueva luz. La formación se enfoca en los cuatro pilares: los aspectos humano, pastoral, intelectual y espiritual del ministerio ordenado y el crecimiento en todos ellos causa que uno expanda su zona de confort. Marian y yo vimos nuevas experiencias no como algo cómodo o incomprensible sino como oportunidades de crecimiento.

Como oportuno causó un cambio en nosotros, moviéndonos de estar preocupados sobre el impacto que tenía en nuestras vidas, a verla más como oportunidades de crecimiento en el servicio hacia otros y mutuamente.

Cuando reflexionamos en la experiencia de formación para ambos, y especialmente en cómo ella impactó nuestra relación como una pareja, no puedo evitar verlo más como crecimiento que como cambio. La imagen que me viene a la mente es la de un capullo de rosa madurando lentamente hasta florecer en una rosa. Podríamos haber permanecido cerrados al mundo que Cristo había planeado para nosotros si no hubiera sido por la formación. Aún somos la misma pareja que siempre hemos sido, pero nuestra relación es más abierta. Estamos abiertos uno al otro, abiertos a los demás y especialmente abiertos a Dios.

No es que compartamos más cosas ahora, pero compartimos cosas más importantes, oramos juntos, compartimos las experiencias del ministerio y estamos más conscientes de la necesidad de buscar el camino de Dios más que el nuestro. La formación no nos hizo la pareja perfecta, sino que nos ayudó a ver que ayudó a ver qué tan importante es ser la pareja que Dios quiere que seamos para nuestras vidas. Nos estamos moviendo en una nueva dirección. No estamos ahí todavía, puede que nunca estemos, pero siempre sabremos que la manera para encontrar el camino correcto no es el seguir nuestro propio plan sino que depende de buscar el camino que Dios ha puesto para nosotros dos.

Cuando Marian y yo comenzamos el camino de la formación, ninguno de nosotros tenía ninguna idea de lo que significaría para nuestra relación por que estabamos seguros de que nuestra relación estaba bien. La formación nos ayudó a ver que con Dios, estar bien no es suficientemente bueno. Dios quiere mucho más que nosotros y la formación fue un hermoso camino para saber qué tanto necesitábamos incluir a Dios en nuestra vida y estar abiertos a servirle y a aquellos que Él envía a nuestro camino. Cualquier hombre que sienta el llamado al diaconado podrá encontrar la formación como una bendición a su matrimonio y a su familia a la luz de la nueva dirección en que la formación los guiará.

Un pequeño retiro en St. William

Un pequeño retiro para comenzar la temporada de Cuaresma con un análisis de la Pasión y del amor de Cristo por nosotros, se ofrecerá el 11 de marzo en inglés de 6:30 a 9 p.m. y el 12 de marzo de 6:30 a 9 p.m. en St. William Parish en Round Rock en el auditorio PEC. Será presentado por Frank Gamez, un orador internacional motivacional. Para detalles en inglés, contacte a Carol Troy al (512) 826-5910 y para detalles en español, contacte a Joe Clark al (512) 567-2219.

Para información actualizada de la Diócesis de Austin, visite nos en línea


En Facebook busque y siga a la diócesis en “@DioceseofAustin” y “@bishopjoesvasquez.”

En Instagram siga a la “dioceseofaustin” y a “bishopjoesvasquez.”

En Twitter, siga a la @AustinDiocese.
The freshman class at San Juan Diego Catholic High School in Austin designed a Jesse tree as part of their theology lesson during Advent. The ornaments of the Jesse Tree tell the story of God in the Old Testament, connecting the Advent Season with the faithfulness of God throughout history. (Photos courtesy Mary Ellen Durante)

Bishop Joe Vásquez visited St. Dominic Savio Catholic High School in Austin on Nov. 28. The students gave the bishop a tour of the school. (Photos courtesy Cristina Almanza)

Alexander Cannata, a student at St. Michael’s Catholic Academy in Austin, earned the rank of Eagle Scout. His project was renovating the school’s baseball concession stand. (Photo courtesy Laura Duggan)

The student council at St. Mary’s Catholic School in Temple unveiled the names of the school’s main hallways: Faith Avenue and Gratitude Lane. The school also held its annual Holiday Bazaar in December. (Photo courtesy Renee Morales)

Santa Cruz Catholic School in Buda hosted a concession stand at the Buda Trail of Lights. It raised more than $19,000 for tuition scholarships. (Photo courtesy Michelle Quintanilla)

St. Anthony Parish in Bryan hosted a dinner and reception for 15 couples celebrating milestone anniversaries and receiving Marriage Recognition Certificates in 2018. (Photo courtesy of Jo Ann Barrington)

Bishop Joe Vásquez concelebrated the Solemn Holy Qurbana (Mass in the Syro-Malabar tradition) with Bishop Mar Jacob Angadiath and the Syro-Malabar parish community of St. Alphonsa in Manor on the parish’s 10th anniversary. The parish has more than 100 families. Mass is celebrated on Sundays at 11 a.m. (Photos courtesy Father Dominic Perunilam)

Send photos by the 10th of the month to catholic-spirit@austindiocese.org. Publication is not guaranteed.
Parishes throughout the diocese celebrated the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe in December. Celebrations were held at St. Mary Parish in Brenham (above), Holy Trinity in Llano (first to right), Santa Teresa in Bryan (second to right) and at St. Mary Parish in Hearne (third to right). (Photos courtesy Marcela Perez-Maldonado, Rich Pedersen, Aida Seaton and Yuliana Pompa)

In recognition of the 100-year anniversary of Armistice Day, the Knights of Columbus in Lockhart rang the church bells 100 times. The bells rang at the 11th month on the 11th day at the 11th hour during Mass at St. Mary Parish in Lockhart. This was part of a special Veteran’s Day Flag Ceremony during which roses were given to widows of deceased knights. (Photo courtesy Pete Donahoe)

The Knights of Columbus of Caldwell hosted a Food for Families Food Drive at St. Mary Parish Hall in Caldwell on Dec. 5. Throughout the day, the people of Burleson County donated 12,864 pounds of canned goods and $26,168 to local food banks. (Photo courtesy Frances Pullin)

The younger children at St. Louis Catholic School in Austin prepared for Christmas with a performance of Advent songs at the last Mass before Christmas break. (Photo courtesy Carrie Vernieuw)

The Knights of Columbus from Holy Family Parish in Copperas Cove purchased 84 coats for the Coats for Kids drive at the Copperas Cove Independent School District. (Photo courtesy Rodney Frenchmen Davenport)

St. Monica Parish in Cameron honored Bishop Daniel Garcia with a dinner and reception on Dec. 30. The event celebrated the bishop’s recent appointment as bishop of Monterey, California. (Photos courtesy Denise Peneda)

Eleven parishioners of Cristo Rey Parish in Austin made professions to the Secular Franciscan Order. They have formed the first Spanish-speaking Franciscan fraternity in the Austin Diocese. (Photo courtesy Mark Guilford)

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