Bishop Bradley completes pastoral visit to Rome

Bishop Bradley along with Msgr. Michael Osborn, Vicar General/Director of Vocations completed a week-long pastoral visit to Rome and the Vatican. During the trip the two visited the Pontifical North American College in Rome where Deacon Max Nightingale and Deacon Jeff Hanley, diocesan seminarians, are finishing their studies. God willing, the two will be ordained to the priesthood this coming June.

During his time in Rome, Bishop Bradley had a front row seat during Pope Francis’ General Audience on Wednesday, February 15th which was held indoors at the Paul VI Hall (which is typical during the winter months). He wrote in his daily reflection on the trip (available at catholickalamazoo.blogspot.com/) “The Paul VI Hall holds about 4,000 pilgrims and it was filled beyond capacity. These Audiences are such amazing reality checks about the universality of our Catholic Church. There were people there from all over the world, and the papal message was delivered in at least eight different languages. Of the 10 or so bishops who were sitting with me within yards of the Holy Father, one was from Spain, another from Austria, France, Ireland, Nigeria and Chile.”

Bishop Bradley was able to personally greet Pope Francis and extend greetings on behalf of the entire diocese that he practiced greeting the pope in both English and Spanish with the following, “Holy Father, I bring you greetings of love and fidelity from the Clergy and all the Faithful of the Diocese of Kalamazoo, and those many others who have great respect and admiration for your teaching authority.”

During his time in Rome, Bishop Bradley also had meetings with officials at the Curial Offices including the Congregation for Religious and the Congregation for the Evangelization of People’s, also known as the Propagation for the Faith. Among the many churches and chapels he visited the bishop was able to celebrate Mass at all four major basilica’s in Rome which include: St. Peter’s Basilica, St. John Lateran, St. Paul Outside the Walls and St. Mary Major.

Men invited to learn more about vocation to the permanent diaconate

Bishop Paul J. Bradley is officially issuing a “call” to men in the Diocese of Kalamazoo inviting them to discern their vocation to the permanent diaconate. Currently there are 13 men in formation for the permanent diaconate who, God willing, will be ordained by Bishop Bradley this coming September. These men began their journey to the diaconate in 2011.

Permanent deacons within the Diocese of Kalamazoo are assigned to both pastoral ministry as well as a particular area of ministerial focus. Deacon Ken Snyder (see feature on page 7) is on the pastoral staff for the Parish Collaborative of St. John Parish, Albion and St. Mary Parish, Marshall and also assigned to hospice ministry. Deacon Louis Zemlick (also ordained in 2012) is on the pastoral staff of St. John Bosco, Mattawan and also conducts a radio ministry by producing a weekly “Epiphany” radio show (see photo above) that he underwrites to air on WKZO on Sunday mornings at 11 a.m. In his official Letter to the Faithful Bishop Bradley affirms the important role Deacons play in the life of the Church.

By Vicki Cessa

“I think it’s just what we’re called to do as Christians.” That’s how St. Catherine of Siena parishioner Margie Stinson explains how she first became involved with helping a Syrian refugee family. She, along with other Catholics within the Diocese, have formed volunteer groups to assist with a variety of needs from driving to tutoring English. Stinson now helps manage an overall schedule of volunteers. Elsie Romano issued a similar invitation last fall to her friends and fellow St. Thomas More parishioners. Recently she helped organize an informational meeting bringing together representatives from Bethany Christian Services, Samaritas and current volunteers — all who are assisting in some way the close to 30 refugee families that have resettled in the Kalamazoo area.

Romano spoke warmly about her experience with a refugee family of seven members and the call to provide friendship. She told of inviting the family over for dinner to her home and was surprised when they showed up with five different entrees to share. “They were insistent on sharing,” she recalled and remarked that the experience was symbolic of the volunteer experience. “We think we’re giving but really we are the ones receiving.”

Josh Fitzgibbons, a young father who also volunteers, underscores the blessings of watching his own one-year-old become friends with the refugee family two-year-old.
"Pretty is what pretty does."

I can remember my grammy imparting these words of wisdom to me often when I was a little girl. Sometimes it was in response to my own expressed insecurities and other times it was to remind me that what’s on the surface isn’t what’s most important.

A more dramatic example can be found in the Gothic novel, The Picture of Dorian Gray. In this classic a man never ages but his crimes and countless ugly actions are instead reflected in his portrait. On the surface, he is "pretty" until in the end his life’s crimes catch him up with.

The call to go beyond making our surface look pretty can be a good starting point for our Lenten journey where we are invited to go deeper in our faith, strengthening our relationship with Jesus and hopefully others as well.

Last month Pope Francis, while exploring the Gospel during his Sunday Angelus examining the rich text of the Sermon on the Mount, departed from his prepared text to mention the damage done by insulting our sisters and brother. He said, "Insulting: we are used to insulting, it is like saying, ‘Good morning.’ And that is on the same line as killing. Anyone who insults his brother kills his brother in his heart. Please, do not insult! We earn nothing by doing so."

Imagine if every time you made a snarky comment at someone’s expense, or expressed an opposing opinion by peppering your opposition with ugly personal attacks, the penalty was as dire as if you had killed someone. It’s a pretty dramatic example but appropriate. Physical injuries heal while the sting of an insult lingers not only in our minds but chips little by little as the Pope says, at our heart.

As I read the Pope’s words, and even watched the video where his passion and emphasis is even more evident, I couldn’t help but wonder if he was giving a shout-out to Americans as we continue to be embroiled in what is likely one of the most dramatic and hostile times. The rancor is high; the internet insulting memes are everywhere. And what good is it?

Agitators and memes are everywhere. And what good is it?

On January 27th, Bishop Paul J. Bradley released the following statement affirming the Catholic Church’s commitment to the refugee, immigrant and migrant communities:

"The Catholic Church in the Diocese of Kalamazoo, which is composed of, and enriched by, priests, religious Sisters as well as lay faithful from many different countries, reaffirms our solidarity with all as well as all people who are poor, homeless, marginalized and in need. At this particular time, in the face of newly-announced government restrictions on immigration policies, and the resulting anxiety and confusion this is causing among many here in our Diocese, we stand with them, and remain opposed to any laws that may be unjust. We pledge to accompany our sisters and brothers who find themselves in difficulty due to changes in these immigration policies through our prayerful support and by continuing our many other ministries and programs which provide essential services. We pledge to pursue resolutions that are just and proper to the dignity we all share as sons and daughters of God."

"In the words of Cardinal Daniel DiNardo, President of the United States Catholic Conference of Bishops:

‘Achieving “one nation under God” has not always been easy, but each earlier period of immigration has ultimately strengthened our society. Those who seek to do us harm must be kept from our shores, but those fleeing persecution in need of hope and ready to help us build a better America must be welcomed. We need not sink into the darkness of isolation. Comprehensive immigration reform and a humane refugee policy are equally necessary and possible. We join our voice with the Holy Father and the universal Church in a continued witness to the love that unites us, praying for the strength to resist the fear that divides us.’ (Statement on National Migration Week, January 8-15, 2017)

Bishop Bradley continues, “While it is essential to ensure that our country is protected and that we have secure borders, we cannot do so at the expense of one of our nation’s most cherished values: to welcome the stranger, in the spirit of the very heart of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Guided by God’s Holy Spirit, let us pray for the wisdom and courage to live up to our Catholic values and our nation’s values here in our own Diocese and throughout our country, and to allow all people to live here in freedom and without fear.”

Cover story continued — Local refugee families

“They’ve become buddies,” he said. His volunteerism has run the gamut from providing rides to friendship to consulting on where to buy the right electronic cord for a DVD player. “You don’t have to do anything heroic,” he adds. “Can just can be something very simple.”

Refugee families resettling in the area through local agencies such as Bethany Christian Services and Samaritas come to the area oftentimes without any money, possessions and without speaking any English. Having a network and community helps them in their transition. Volunteers may offer rides to doctor’s appointments or the grocery store or to one of the many churches or host places offering English as a Second Language (ESL) tutoring. Also ESL tutors are needed and training is provided.

More information

Locally:
Samaritas: www.samaritas.org
Bethany Christian Services: www.bethany.org/kalamazoo
Elsie Romano, St. Thomas More parishioner: elsieromano@att.net
Margie Stinson: St. Catherine of Siena parishioner: edmargie@sbcglobal.net
Nationally & Internationally:
Catholic Charities USA: www.cccusa.org
Catholic Relief Service: www.crs.org

Stay in the know – follow us on social media!

Like us on Facebook: The Catholic Diocese of Kalamazoo
Follow us on Twitter: @KzooDiocese @BishopPBradley
Watch our videos on our YouTube Channel: DioceseofKalamazoo1

Pope Francis MARCH Intentions

Support for Persecuted Christians
That persecuted Christians may be supported by the prayers and material help of the whole Church.

To all the Faithful in the Diocese of Kalamazoo: The Most Rev. Paul J. Bradley, Bishop of Kalamazoo, has granted special dispensation from the law of abstinence for Friday, March 17th, to those who wish to participate in St. Patrick’s day celebrations. Members of the faithful who choose to receive the dispensation are required to choose another penance for that day in accord with Lenten observance.

Sign-up for our weekly E-newsletter that offers a quick read of what’s happening in the Diocese and offers sneak peeks at events and resources.

The Good News for the Catholic Diocese of Kalamazoo

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Mission Statement of The Good News: The Good News is the official newspaper of the Catholic Diocese of Kalamazoo. The Bishop of Kalamazoo is the publisher and president. The Good News is an extension in the print medium of the teaching authority of the Bishop. Therefore, it must always and at all times present Catholic teaching in an orthodoxy, authentic and balanced fashion. In mission and goals proceed from this fundamental reality.

The Good News is an extension of the teachings of the Catholic Church. It is intended to be a source of information and education for laypeople.

The Good News is intended to enable its readers to grow in their Catholic faith, to develop as mature, well informed Catholics and to deepen their commitment to, and relationship with, the Lord, their Catholic faith and their Church.
THE BISHOP’S PERSPECTIVE

“An urgent call from sin to hope in Jesus”

With the turn of the calendar from February to March, we also turn the liturgical season from Ordinary Time to the beautiful 40-day Season of Lent, which will lead into the glorious 50-day Season of Easter. These next 90 days are the annual grace-filled months we are given to focus on and celebrate the central mystery of our faith: “Christ has died; Christ is risen; Christ will come again.” And since this great mystery of faith impacts each and every human being in the most personal way possible — in the way our eternal salvation is attained — these days of Lent are more than a special liturgical season; they are grace-filled opportunities for each of us to “turn away from sin and be faithful to the Gospel,” as we were urged to do on Ash Wednesday.

At the same time, we keep very clear the most important fact of our spiritual lives: “we are dust, and unto dust we shall return” — as we also heard on Ash Wednesday; but, because of what Jesus has accomplished through His gift of redemption that we celebrate in the Paschal Mystery, our human death will lead us directly to join in Christ’s victory over sin and death.

So, these 40 days that we traditionally see as penitential and opportunities to grow in our faith through extra prayer, some required practices of fast and abstinence, and through works of charity (almsgiving) are days not to be glu or sad, but rather to be even more hope-filled as we celebrate the love and mercy of Christ in our lives.

In Pope Francis’ Message for Lent 2017, he wrote: “Lent is the favorable season for renewing our encounter with Jesus, living in His Word, in the sacraments and in our neighbor.” Much of our Holy Father’s message is inspired by one of Jesus’ most powerful parables, known as the “Parable of Lazarus and the Rich Man.” The pope beautifully reflects on that parable as a way to help us to realize that these days of Lent are an invitation for each of us to, in his words, “renew our encounter with Christ.” Of all the relationships in each of our lives, the most important one — the primary one — is our relationship with God, who has revealed Himself to us most intimately in His Son Jesus Christ, who, in turn, has reconciled the world with God. Our relationship with Jesus must be strong — deep — personal — intimate, and Lent provides us with this beautiful season to refocus on that most primary of all our relationships. But, as Jesus so clearly told us, our relationship with Him is not just to stop there; our relationship with Him must be lived out in our relationships of love, justice, mercy and compassion with our neighbors. And it is only in that way — through our deep love for God and our real love for our neighbors — that we will be able to embrace the gift of salvation Jesus has won for us.

Pope Francis reminds us that our “encounter” with Jesus is deepened through personal prayerful reflection on God’s holy Word, through regular reception of the sacraments, and through our care and love for Jesus as we see Him in our neighbors.

Recently I had the wonderful privilege of being in Rome on a pastoral visit with our two Deacons, Jeff Hanley and Max Nightingale, who, God willing, will be ordained priests for our Diocese in June. Among the many sacred places I visited and beautiful experiences I had, the best of all was being fortunate to be present at the General Audience of Pope Francis, and the great privilege of greeting him personally and extending to him the greetings and prayerful support of all the priests and people of our Diocese and of our Kalamazoo community. In his catechesis for that General Audience, Pope Francis focused on St. Paul’s reflection on the virtue of hope, and that as those who know and love Jesus — those who have encountered Jesus in faith, we should “boast in no one and nothing else than to boast of the abundant grace we receive in Jesus Christ through the gift of faith…”[and] to boast of our affiliations… for even in the most difficult moments, we know that the mercy and goodness of the Lord remains with us [and] that nothing can separate us from God.” No matter what the circumstances of our lives, even if we are going through great times of suffering, or trial, or even temptation, we should never lose hope — because Jesus overcomes all of that, and as long as we can stay connected with Him — as long as our encounter with Jesus remains vibrant, personal, intimate and strong — we can boast and brag and rejoice because Jesus will ultimately see us through those problems as we share in His victory. At the end of the General Audience, attended by more than 4,000 pilgrims from every continent in the world, he concluded with these beautiful words in Italian: “la speranza non delude”, which means “Hope will not disappoint!” And then, like a good teacher, the Holy Father had all of us — bishops, priests, people — repeat that phrase over and over together with him: “Hope will not disappoint!”

My brothers and sisters in Christ, Jesus will never disappoint us.

That is why we need to renew our relationship/our encounter with Jesus, and this season of Lent is the time to do so. How do we do that is up to each of us; that we do so is critically important for our salvation. As Pope Francis told us in his Lenten message, “the season of Lent urgently calls us to conversion”. There is truly an urgency that

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“Un llamado urgente del pecado a la esperanza en Jesús”

Con el cambio del calendario de febrero a marzo, también cambiemos de tiempo litúrgico del Tiempo Ordinario al hermoso tiempo de 40 días de Cuaresma, que nos llevará al glorioso tiempo de 50 días de Pascua. Estos próximos 40 días son los momentos llenos de gracia que nos dan para enfocarnos y celebrar el misterio central de nuestra fe: “Críostos ha muerto; Cristo ha resucitado; Cristo vendrá otra vez.” Y puesto que este gran misterio de fe afecta a cada ser humano de la manera más personal posible — en la forma en que se alcanza nuestra salvación eterna — estos días de Cuaresma son más que un tiempo litúrgico especial; Son oportunidades llenas de gracia para cada uno de nosotros para “apartarnos del pecado y ser fieles al Evangelio,” como se nos instó a hacer el Miércoles de Ceniza. Al mismo tiempo, mantenemos muy claro el hecho más importante de nuestra vida espiritual: “somos polvo y en polvo nos convertiremos” — como también lo hemos oído el Miércoles de Ceniza; Pero, a causa de lo que Jesús ha logrado a través de Su regalo de redención que celebramos en el Misterio Pascual, nuestra muerte humana nos llevará directamente a unirnos a la victoria de Cristo sobre el pecado y la muerte.

Por lo tanto, estos 40 días que tradicionalmente vemos como penitenciales y oportunidades para crecer en nuestra fe a través de oración extra, algunos requieren prácticas de ayuno y abstinencia, y a través de obras de caridad (limosna) no son días para estar tristes o decaídos, al contrario son para estar más llenos de alegría cuando celebramos el amor y misericordia de Cristo en nuestras vidas.

En el Mensaje del Papa Francisco para la Cuaresma 2017, escribió: “La Cuaresma es la época propicia para renovar nuestro encuentro con Jesús, viviendo en Su Palabra, en los sacramentos y en el prójimo.” Gran parte del mensaje de nuestro Santo Padre está inspirado en una de las parábolas más poderosas de Jesús, conocidas como la “parábola de Lázaro y el hombre rico.” El Papa reflexiona maravillosamente sobre esa parábola como una forma de ayudarnos a comprender que estos días de Cuaresma son una invitación para que cada uno de nosotros, en sus palabras, “renovemos nuestro encuentro con Cristo.” De todas las relaciones en nuestras vidas, la más importante — la principal — es nuestra relación con Dios, quien se ha revelado a nosotros más íntimamente en Su Hijo Jesucristo, quien a su vez ha reconciliado al mundo con Dios. Nuestra relación con Jesús debe ser fuerte — profunda — personal — íntima, y la Cuaresma nos proporciona este hermoso tiempo para reenfocarnos en esa, la más primordial de todas nuestras relaciones.

Pero, como Jesús tan claramente nos dijo, nuestra relación con Él no es sólo derramarnos allí; Nuestra relación con Él debe ser vivida en nuestras relaciones de amor, justicia, misericordia y compasión con nuestro prójimo. Y es sólo así — a través de nuestro profundo amor por Dios y nuestro verdadero amor por nuestro prójimo — que podremos abrazar el don de la salvación que Jesús ha ganado para nosotros.

El Papa Francisco nos recuerda que nuestro “encuentro” con Jesús se profundiza a través de una reflexión personal y orante sobre la sagrada Palabra de Dios, a través de la recepción regular de los sacramentos y de nuestro cuidado y amor por Jesús al verlo en nuestro prójimo.

Recientemente tuve el maravilloso privilegio de estar en Roma en una visita pastoral con nuestros dos Diáconos, Jeff Hanley y Max Nightingale, quienes, si Dios quiere, serán ordenados sacerdotes para nuestra Diócesis en junio. Entre los muchos lugares sagrados que visité y las bellas experiencias que tuve, lo mejor de todo fue tener la suerte de estar presente en la Audiencia General del Papa Francisco y el gran privilegio de saludarlo personalmente y de extenderle los saludos y el apoyo omnibus de todos los sacerdotes y la gente de nuestra diócesis y de nuestra comunidad de Kalamazoo. En su catequesis para esa audiencia general, el Papa Francisco se centró en la reflexión de San Pablo sobre la virtud de la esperanza, y que como aquellos que conocen y aman a Jesús — aquellos que han encontrado a Jesús en la fe, deberíamos “jactarnos” en nadie ni nada más que “jactarnos de la gracia abundante que recibimos en Jesucristo por medio del don de la fe… y alardear de nuestras afilicaciones…” porque incluso en los momentos más difíciles sabemos que la misericordia y la bondad del Señor permanecen con nosotros y nada no puede separar de Dios.” No importa cuáles sean las circunstancias de nuestras vidas, aunque estemos pasando por grandes momentos de sufrimiento, juicio o tentación, nunca debemos perder la esperanza. — Porque Jesús vence todo eso, y mientras podamos permanecer conectados con Él — mientras nuestro encuentro con Jesús permanezca vibrante, personal, íntimo y fuerte — podemos jactarnos y alardear porque Jesús en última instancia nos acompaña en esos problemas mientras compartimos su victoria. Al final de la Audiencia General, a la que asistieron más de 4,000 peregrinos de todos los continentes del mundo, concluyó con estas hermosas palabras en italiano: “la speranza non delude”, que significa “la...
“The Bishop’s Perspective

we take seriously this calling to deepen our relationship with Jesus and to live our relationship with our neighbor with love and compassion. Flowing from Pope Francis’ Lenten message, I offer the following four suggestions to consider:

1) Find ways for additional times of prayer and devotions, through the prayers of the Stations of the Cross, more time in prayer before the Blessed Sacrament, coming to daily Mass as much as possible, canceling at least 15 minutes a day (or even 10, or 5) for “time with Jesus”.

2) If you are unable to attend daily Mass, spend time with the Scripture Readings for each day of Lent, and ask Jesus to help you to come to know Him in His Word.

3) Receive the sacraments as frequently as possible, especially the Holy Eucharist and regular times for confession/reconciliation. Through the sacraments we come to know Jesus intimately. And all of these practices will lead us to…

4) Encounter Jesus in our neighbors. The more we come to know Jesus, and the more that we realize that Jesus loves each and every person unconditionally, how can we allow hatred for others, indifference towards others, or a self-focused perspective on life keep us from greater love for and compassion toward the needs of every human person who is our neighbor? That is what leads us to acts of charity/alsm giving/the practice of the corporal and spiritual works of mercy.

May the Holy Spirit truly lead us during these next three months of special graces and renewed opportunities to a true conversion of our hearts so that we can renew our encounter with Jesus in His Word, Sacraments, and Neighbors. These are challenging times in our own country and throughout the world. We must stand against any ploys of the Tempter to further divide us than we already are. The only way to break down hatred, ignorance, prejudice, racism or bigotry is to begin with each and every one of us — united with Jesus — to speak out against anything that separates us from the love of Christ. As those who know Jesus, we speak out for the dignity of all people, for just immigration laws that are followed with compassion and protecting family life, as we stand for religious freedom, and as we reach out to all those who are unable to speak for themselves. As followers of Jesus, we are to be the “salt” and “light” for the world, to add zest and flavor and to dispel darkness. As followers of Jesus, who ourselves are renewed in our encounter with our Neighbor, we will bring Hope to the world that is filled with division, fear and anger. Hope in Jesus will never disappoint!

May this Season of Lent be a time of personal conversion and growth in our love for Jesus and our neighbor, for each of you and for all of us, and lead us all to Easter joy!
Pastoral Letter Excerpt:
Bishop calls parishes to time of renewal

Following is an excerpt from “Moving Forward in Hope: Charting the Course for the Future,” Bishop Bradley’s pastoral letter released October 2016

“It is for this reason that I have directed all our priests, and in particular the pastors of our 28 Collaboratives, to initiate a time of spiritual renewal for all parishioners during these weeks and months of initial adjustments. I have asked each priest, in consultation with their lay leaders, to determine which published format or program of spiritual renewal to follow for their respective parish(es). The most important thing is to make this time of spiritual renewal a first priority for all our collaboratives for these next weeks and months so that we will hear more clearly Jesus’ voice, and realize more deeply who we are, as individuals, as parishioners, as members of the Diocese of Kalamazoo in union with me as the bishop of this Local Church, as Catholics in the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Catholic Church being led by our Holy Father Pope Francis, and as joyful and faithful followers of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior. In other words, we need to move forward in hope. Are there problems and challenges that we still are facing? Yes there are, we have identified them, and are trying to resolve them, and all of us need to work together to find solutions for them, while we pay as much, if not more, attention to the new opportunities that are being presented to us.”

Visit www.diokzoo.org to download print versions in English or Spanish or listen to Bishop Bradley’s narration of the entire letter.

Catholic Charities invites you to learn more about its life-saving impact on the Southwest Michigan community

Last year Catholic Charities Diocese of Kalamazoo served more than 8,300 people across Southwest Michigan in the following ways:

**Impacted Youth Homelessness:**
Provided shelter or housing to 287 youth for a total of 13,783 nights of care.

**Addressed Infant Mortality:**
Helped 81 percent of Caring Network clients reduce their risk factors and have healthier homes.

**Established Safety:**
Connected more than 96 percent of youth in shelter to safe and stable housing.

**Created Hope:**
More than 766 clients were provided case management services, helping them to identify and achieve life goals toward self-sufficiency.

**Provided Help:**
Distributed more than $91,000 worth of goods directly to clients in need. Items were given out 996 different times.

These statistics and more are being shared at the agency’s “Mission Possible Tours” throughout the year. These one-hour tours provide an opportunity to witness first-hand the mission and values of the organization and hear testimonials from clients. Recently Bishop Paul J. Bradley and members of the Diocesan Pastoral Center staff attended a “Mission Possible” tour at The Ark Shelter.

“I had heard of the Ark, but visiting and hearing first-hand from the made me realize the full scope of the amount of youth they assist,” said Nina Laney, Enrollment and Retention Specialist for the diocese.

“It was so inspiring to learn of the positive impact the program has on those teens in need, some who may feel like there is nowhere else to turn.”

Upcoming tour dates are:

**CARING NETWORK**
1441 South Westnedge, Kalamazoo
March 20, April 26, May 25 — 6:30-7:30 PM

**THE ARK SHELTER**
990 West Kilgore, Kalamazoo
March 7, April 13, May 15 — 12:00-1:00 PM

**BARAGA MANOR APARTMENTS**
301 Washington, Otsego
March 29 — 12:00-1:00 PM

Visit ccdok.org (events tab) to learn more or call 269-381-9800 to RSVP today.

The Other Six Days

Welcome the Newcomer

In response to the Appeals Court ruling, Most Reverend Joe Vasquez, Bishop of Austin, Texas, and Chair of the Committee on Migration stated: “We welcome the decision of the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals. We respect the rule of law and the American judicial process. We remain steadfast in our commitment to resettling refugees and all those fleeing persecution. At this time, we remain particularly dedicated to ensuring that affected refugee and immigrant families are not separated and that they continue to be welcomed to our country. We will continue to welcome the newcomer as it is a vital part of our Catholic faith and an enduring element of our American values and tradition.”

—The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

Last month, this column told the story of a lay person protesting against abortion. Here is the story of a lay person, originally from Kalamazoo, now living in Atlanta, GA, protesting the executive order on immigration. In her words:

“When I heard that they were going to ban immigrants from several Muslim majority countries I went to the Atlanta airport. Anxious families huddled with lawyers who had rushed out in sweats and t-shirts to offer their services for free. Peacefully and quietly, a crowd of support grew. The authorities wouldn't tell us if they were detaining anyone. Our U.S. Representative John Lewis arrived and we asked him if he could find out if anyone was being held in custody. He was polite and respectful when he questioned the immigration officials, but they refused to answer his questions. ‘That’s fine,’ he said. ‘Why don’t we sit down and stay a while.’ And he sat down. And we sat down. And all of us waited.

Eventually, Homeland Security escorted Congressman Lewis and U.S. Rep. Hank Johnson into the detention area. They came back and reported that eleven people, including elderly and children, were being held. We waited some more. By the last hours of Saturday night, they finally released the last detainees including a 76 year-old elderly woman with a heart condition. ‘This is America,’ Rep. Lewis said, ‘We can do much better.’

The next day we came back in the thousands. The organizers called first and got approved by Homeland Security, the metro, emergency services, and the airport. People carried signs with pictures of their families; some from decades ago, some from just a few weeks, but all of them were of immigrants. A man and his wife stopped me. ‘Your family looks like mine,’ he said in heavily accented English and we hugged.

Feeling overwhelmed by the crowd, I climbed up onto a short pillar next to a young man. It turns out he was from Michigan like me; a veteran from Detroit. Some translators who had assisted the armymen when he was in Iraq had been detained. ‘They risked their lives and the lives of those they love for me,’ he said. ‘I’m not letting this happen to them.’

A truck slowly drove past the crowd outside: it was a local gyro food-truck, and its owners, a wife and husband, were inside. Sobbing, they rolled down their windows and waved their thanks through their tears. Hand-lettered signs on their truck stated they were Iranian-American and how much it meant to them to see this happen to them.”

A crowd waved back. “Welcome!” they shouted. “We’re so glad you’re here!”

Diocesan Priests Retirement Fund

Diocesan Collection will assist priests with retirement costs

The special collection on the weekend of March 4 and 5, 2017, will support our diocesan priests’ retirement fund.

This collection directly benefits priests of the Diocese of Kalamazoo and is separate from the annual December collection for the Retirement Fund for Religious, which supports retired clergy and sisters of religious orders across America.

Welcome to the Newcomer

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

Last month, this column told the story of a lay person protesting against abortion. Here is the story of a lay person, originally from Kalamazoo, now living in Atlanta, GA, protesting the executive order on immigration. In her words:

“When I heard that they were going to ban immigrants from several Muslim majority countries I went to the Atlanta airport. Anxious families huddled with lawyers who had rushed out in sweats and t-shirts to offer their services for free. Peacefully and quietly, a crowd of support grew. The authorities wouldn’t tell us if they were detaining anyone. Our U.S. Representative John Lewis arrived and we asked him if he could find out if anyone was being held in custody. He was polite and respectful when he questioned the immigration officials, but they refused to answer his questions. ‘That’s fine,’ he said. ‘Why don’t we sit down and stay a while.’ And he sat down. And we sat down. And all of us waited.

Eventually, Homeland Security escorted Congressman Lewis and U.S. Rep. Hank Johnson into the detention area. They came back and reported that eleven people, including elderly and children, were being held. We waited some more. By the last hours of Saturday night, they finally released the last detainees including a 76 year-old elderly woman with a heart condition. ‘This is America,’ Rep. Lewis said, ‘We can do much better.’

The next day we came back in the thousands. The organizers called first and got approved by Homeland Security, the metro, emergency services, and the airport. People carried signs with pictures of their families; some from decades ago, some from just a few weeks, but all of them were of immigrants. A man and his wife stopped me. ‘Your family looks like mine,’ he said in heavily accented English and we hugged.

Feeling overwhelmed by the crowd, I climbed up onto a short pillar next to a young man. It turns out he was from Michigan like me; a veteran from Detroit. Some translators who had assisted the armymen when he was in Iraq had been detained. ‘They risked their lives and the lives of those they love for me,’ he said. ‘I’m not letting this happen to them.’

A truck slowly drove past the crowd outside: it was a local gyro food-truck, and its owners, a wife and husband, were inside. Sobbing, they rolled down their windows and waved their thanks through their tears. Hand-lettered signs on their truck stated they were Iranian-American and how much it meant to them to see this happen to them.”

A crowd waved back. “Welcome!” they shouted. “We’re so glad you’re here!”

Diocesan Priests Retirement Fund

Diocesan Collection will assist priests with retirement costs

The special collection on the weekend of March 4 and 5, 2017, will support our diocesan priests’ retirement fund.

This collection directly benefits priests of the Diocese of Kalamazoo and is separate from the annual December collection for the Retirement Fund for Religious, which supports retired clergy and sisters of religious orders across America.

Visit www.diokzoo.org to download print versions in English or Spanish or listen to Bishop Bradley’s narration of the entire letter.
Lenten scrutiny rites have powerful impact

Each year in the Diocese of Kalamazoo many people are fully initiated through baptism, confirmation, and Eucharist at the Easter Vigil. Those who have never been baptized are called catechumens until the Rite of Election where they become “the Elect.” Bishop Bradley celebrates the Rite of Election at St. Augustine Cathedral each year on the First Sunday of Lent. Following is an explanation of the scrutinies which occur during Lent at the parishes.

Those who have been baptized in Christian faith and will make a profession of Catholic faith, be confirmed, and receive First Eucharist are known as candidates; they may be received into full communion any Sunday of the liturgical year.

What are the “Scrutinies”? The scrutinies are liturgical rites that are celebrated on the middle three Sundays of Lent, at liturgies where the Elect are present. Part of their journey is that they have been received among us, the Rite of Acceptance, and they have been enrolled in the Book of the Elect in the Rite of Election.

Elements of the rite include:

**Invitation to Silent Prayer**

One of the most powerful moments of the scrutinies is how they begin. After the homily, the Elect are invited to come forward with their sponsors and to kneel down. Then, the whole assembly is invited to pray for them in silence.

**Intercessions for the Elect**

We then pray out loud together for the Elect.

**Prayer of Exorcism**

Then, we pray that they might be freed from the power of the Evil One and what is good is called forth and strengthened on their journey as they approach baptism.

**The Laying On of Hands**

In a silent ritual deliberately reminiscent of the rite used for ordination in the Sacrament of Holy Orders, the priest or deacon lays his hands for a brief moment on the head of each of the Elect. It is a solemn act of calling down the Spirit of Jesus to strengthen them and protect them.

**Dismissal of the Elect**

The Elect are then sent forth to reflect upon the Word and this powerful gesture of love on the part of this community, that cares for them so deeply, with the love of Christ.

A couple of years ago Jay Freel Landry, pastoral associate at St. Basil Parish, South Haven, led the parish in celebrating the Scrutinies, and the impact on the entire community was powerful. He says, “There was a preparation session for each scrutiny where we gathered our Elect, RCIA ministers, sponsors and godparents, and our baptized candidates — a representation of the parish community. By praying with the Scrutiny Gospel reading ahead of time each week, we identified the darkness of our lives that we wanted God to make bright; and named the blessed parts of our lives that we wanted God to strengthen — all of which were used confidently to write the scrutiny intercessions.”

Our one Elect that year was Amanda. She experienced a profound connection during the rite. “It felt amazing to have the entire congregation, the RCIA team, and Father Bob Flickinger kneel down with me in unison and support to show that they are experiencing the same things,” she said.

Kitty, a St. Basil parishioner, shared her transformative experience, as a participant. “I became ‘more blinded’ throughout the Church year, so during the Lenten season, scrutinizing myself, examining my life becomes major ‘exorcism,’ which, I read, is what the early Christians actually called it,” she explains. “We all need spiritual preparation for healing and strength. These prayers were so relevant to my life, as it was evidenced just one week later with the birth of our anticipated grandchild. The darkness became bright light, my fear became trust, and hope and love kept me going.”

**Source:** Creighton University and Jay Freel Landry, pastoral associate, St. Basil Parish, South Haven

**For additional information:**
http://www.such.org/who-we-teach/rite-of-christian-initiation-of-adults/
A Letter to the Faithful

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

We are blessed in the Diocese of Kalamazoo with our 28 Collaboratives, 59 parishes and more than 100,000 Catholics representing a diverse spectrum of cultures and life experiences to have a rich variety of pastoral needs. In order to be better prepared to respond to the various needs of our diocese I would like to invite all men to consider if God is calling them to the Permanent Diaconate, an Order within the Sacrament of Holy Orders.

To further the mission of the Church in the Diocese of Kalamazoo I am pleased to issue this formal Call for applicants to join in formation for a new class of Deacons to be ordained in 2022. The application process and the eventual selection of candidates will follow the directives established by the governing documents of the Church. All those interested or who would like more information on the application process should speak to their pastor.

From the one priesthood of Christ, all of the Baptized participate in the mission to proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ through the witness and holiness of their lives. The Church teaches that there are two ways to participate in this one Priesthood. The non-ordained constitute the common priesthood of Christ, building up the Kingdom of God by transforming society with Gospel values. The ordained ministerial priesthood—bishops, priests, and deacons—orders the charisms and gifts of the faithful to bring about unity in the Body of Christ.

The ministry of Deacons is clearly documented in Sacred Scripture, from the institution of the Diaconate in the Acts of the Apostles to the letters of Saint Paul. Until the fifth century, the Diaconate flourished in the western Church, but it then experienced a slow decline, until it was seen only as an intermediate stage for candidates preparing for the Priesthood. Even though the Council of Trent urged the restoration of the diaconate, it was not until the Second Vatican Council that the Church would restore the Diaconate as a proper and permanent rank of the hierarchy.

Several years ago, the Holy See gave three reasons for the Church’s restoration of the Diaconate: (i) to enrich the Church with the functions of the Diaconate; (ii) to strengthen with the grace of Ordination those who already exercise the functions of service; and (iii) to provide sacred ministers when there is a shortage of priests. The restoration of the Diaconate was in no way intended to replace the essential role of priesthood, but rather be of service to it.

The Church in the United States has been blessed in many ways from diocesan ministry. Likewise, the Church here in our Diocese of Kalamazoo has benefited from the five classes of Deacons, with a sixth class preparing for Ordination this September.

A deacon is ordained for the service of the Bishop and the Church. As Bishop it is my duty to help fulfill the needs of the people of God I have been entrusted to Shepherd. We continue to need Deacons serving in our Diocese. In addition to the primary functions of charitable service and sacramental/liturgy ministry, areas of particular service may include ministry to our ever growing Hispanic population, serving as Parish Coordinators, or involvement with the new Evangelization. As I continue to work and develop our Diocesan Pastoral Plan, areas of focus will become more evident.

As the Church here in the Diocese of Kalamazoo continues to move forward. I am grateful to the men who will consider this special vocation and to their families who offer prayer and support. May the Lord bless them in their initial discernment and all those who will give them support and direction at this most important time in their lives.

Faithfully yours in Christ,

Most Reverend Paul J. Bradley
Bishop of Kalamazoo

Permanent Deacon Formation Informational Sessions

Eastern Deanery
Thursday, March 30 – 7 p.m.
St. Philip, Battle Creek • Parish Center

Southern Deanery
Tuesday, April 18 – 7 p.m.
Sacred Heart of Mary, Dowagiac • Parish Hall

Central Deanery
Saturday, April 1 – 10 a.m.
St. Monica, Kalamazoo • Community Hall

Married couples and single men are invited to come and learn about the Permanent Diaconate in the Kalamazoo Diocese.

Deacon Ken Snyder, St. John Parish, Albion and St. Mary Parish, Marshall, was ordained to the permanent diaconate in 2012. He is the Associate Dean of Students and Director of Campus Safety for Albion College. As Bishop Bradley calls a new class of men to discern a vocation to the permanent diaconate, The Good News caught up with deacon Snyder to learn more about how today’s Deacon juggles pastoral ministry with work and family.

When did you first begin to discern a calling to the permanent diaconate?

I began to seriously think and pray about [a vocation to the diaconate] in 1998 or 1999. In 2002 I met a deacon at a confirmation retreat and had a long conversation with him. After that I felt that this was something I was being called to, so I talked with my pastor at the time, Rev. Gordon Greene, and he encouraged me to begin the process.

What was the most challenging aspect of the 6-year program?

When I began the program I had a 15 year old, a 12 year old, and a 6 year old at home, a wife who worked full time, and a demanding full time job myself. Balancing all of that with the classes and other activities of the program, not to mention the hour drive each way for class and the other required programs and activities, was the most challenging aspect for me.

Generally what are your responsibilities as a deacon at both the parish level and any other assigned duties:

I assist at Mass, preach about once a month, teach confirmation, and work in Hospice.

What is the most enriching aspect of your ministry as a deacon?

It’s hard to pick one area. The entire experience of being a deacon is just wonderful, and I feel very privileged to be able serve God and His Church in this capacity.

How do you balance your full-time employment with pastoral duties?

Sometimes, I really don’t know, and I’m not always sure I do it well. Rev. Joseph Gray, and Rev. Craig Lusk, the two pastors I have worked with, have been very understanding and sensitive to the demands on my time, as has my boss at work, and that has been a blessing to help with balance. But as I got into the process of becoming a deacon and since being ordained, I look at my time like the loaves and the fishes—it never seems like it’s enough, but I give it to the Lord and somehow He makes the time I have sufficient to do what I need to do at home, at work, and for the Church.

What are some of the common misperceptions you’ve found that Catholics have about the diaconate?

That we are junior or wannabe priests. Speaking for myself, and those with whom I was ordained, this is simply not the case. We are content being deacons. When people say something about whether I’d rather be a priest, I respond that if being a deacon was good enough for St. Francis, it’s good enough for me. I think people also get confused on what deacons can and cant do sacramentally.

What advice would you give to a man who is considering the diaconate?

Don’t wait for ‘the right time’ to become a deacon. If God is calling you, He will work out the details that might be making you hesitate. God will make now the right time.
Conference on human trafficking draws hundreds

Last month Michigan Catholic Conference (MCC) hosted a day-long conference on the topic of human trafficking entitled, From Darkness to Light: Human Trafficking and Our Response. Close to 300 participants gathered at Lansing Catholic High School to hear from national, statewide and local speakers about the presence of human trafficking in communities and what is being done to address the problem. The day began with a welcome and invocation from Bishop Boyea and culminated in local news coverage from all three Lansing broadcast stations. Among the featured speakers was Bridgette Carr – Founding Director of the University of Michigan Human Trafficking Law Clinic; Andy Soper – Founder of the Manassah Project, a program designed for community education and advocacy for victims of human trafficking; and Joyce Dixon-Haskett, LMSW, ACSW – Clinical social worker and human trafficking survivor. In addition a variety of breakout sessions were offered lead by groups such as the Michigan State Police, Samaritas and Michigan Abolitionist project.

Lisa Irwin, diocesan Associate Director of Sanctity for Human life, along with Mary Hunt, [steward of Charity & Justice & Fellowship Mission], St. Catherine of Siena Parish, Portage, were among participants who came from all over the state to learn how to raise awareness of the issue of human trafficking.

"From Darkness to Light offered a view of human trafficking from many perspectives: law enforcement, the legal system, counseling and support of victims who are building a new life, and the stirring testimony of a sex trafficking survivor," said Irwin. “Participants learned the signs that indicate a person is being trafficked, and interacted with many organizations working to raise awareness about human trafficking and support victims.”

Most simply put, trafficking is when a person is compelled, through force, fraud or coercion, to provide some type of service or work. There are two main types of trafficking: labor and sex. Labor trafficking is more prevalent. The hard truth is that trafficking can happen anywhere to anyone (and is happening), and we all have a responsibility to be aware.

The conference was formulated and executed by Annie Bennett, MCC Communications and Outreach Associate. In 2016 Bennett participated in their 2016 GIVEN Forum in Washington, D.C. which brought together Catholic women leaders from across the United States for a week-long immersion in faith formation, leadership training, and networking. Bennett created the February 11th workshop to help leaders in the Church raise awareness.

“Human Trafficking conference gave me an awareness that it’s not something that happens in large cities or in other countries, it’s happening right here in Michigan and in our own city of Kalamazoo,” said Hunt. “Children of all ages have been robbed of their innocence and forced to live a life of slavery. Somewhere between 100,000 – 200,000 U.S. children are taken into trafficking each year. We have to work to end this now.” Irwin will be working on a diocese-wide plan in the coming months.

Keys to Identifying Human Trafficking Victims: Tearfulness or signs of depression. Unexplained bruises, cuts, or other signs of physical abuse. Never is alone and/or always has someone translating or answering questions on their behalf. Not in control of their own finances. Presents with secrecy or unable to answer questions about where they live. Inconsistent details when telling their story. Has no identification such as a license, passport, or other ID documents.

Screening Questions for Potential Victims: Can you leave your job or house when you want? Where did you get those bruises, or is anyone hurting you? Do you get paid for your employment? How many hours do you work? Are you or your family being threatened? What to Do When You Suspect a Case of Human Trafficking Ask the person if they can help them find a safe place to go immediately, call and make a report at the National Human Trafficking Hotline at (888) 3737-888. The hotline has language capabilities. Call the USCCB Anti-Trafficking Program staff at (202) 541-3357 if you need to talk through the case and gather more guidance.
Welcoming the Stranger

In the Hebrew Scriptures, that part of the bible we call the Old Testament, we find a strong religious challenge to always welcome the stranger, the foreigner. This was emphasized for two reasons: First, because the Jewish people themselves had once been foreigners and immigrants. Their scriptures kept reminding them not to forget that. Second, they believed that God’s revelation, most often, comes to us through the stranger, in what’s foreign to us. That belief was integral to their faith.

The great prophets developed this much further. They taught that God favors the poor preferentially and that consequently we will be judged, judged religiously, by how we treat the poor. The prophets coined this mantra (still worth memorizing): The quality of your faith will be judged by the quality of justice in the land; and the quality of justice in the land will always be judged by how orphans, widows, and strangers fare while you are alive.

Orphans, widows, and strangers! That’s scriptural code for who, at any given time, are the three most vulnerable groups in society. And the prophets’ message didn’t go down easy. Rather it was a religious affront to many of the pious at the time who strongly believed that we will be judged religiously and morally by the rigor and strictness of our religious observance. Then, like now, social justice was often religiously marginalized.

But Jesus sides with the Hebrew prophets. For him, God not only makes a preferential option for the poor, but God is in the poor. How we treat the poor is how we treat God. Moreover the prophets’ mantra, that we will be judged religiously by how we treat the poor, is given a normative expression in Jesus’ discourse on the final judgment in the Gospel of Matthew, Chapter 25. We are all familiar, perhaps too familiar, with that text. Jesus, in effect, was answering a question: What will the last judgment be like? What will be the test? How will we be judged?

His answer is stunning and, taken baldly, is perhaps the most challenging text in the Gospels. He tells us that we will be judged, seemingly solely, on the basis of how we treated the poor, that is, on how we have treated the most vulnerable among us. Moreover at one point, he singles out “the stranger”, the foreigner, the refugee: “I was a stranger and you made me welcome … or … you never made me welcome.” We end up on the right or wrong side of God on the basis of how we treat the stranger.

What also needs to be highlighted in this text about the last judgment is that neither group, those who got it right and those who got it wrong, knew what they were doing. Both initially protest: the first by saying: “We didn’t know it was you we were serving.” And the second by saying: “Had we known it was you we would have responded.” Both protests, it would seem, are beside the point. In Matthew’s Gospel, mature discipleship doesn’t depend upon us believing that we have it right, it depends only upon us doing it right.

These scriptural principles, I believe, are very apropos today in the face of the refugee and immigrant crisis we are facing in the Western world. Today, without doubt, we are facing the biggest humanitarian crisis since the end of the Second World War. Millions upon millions of people, under unjust persecution and the threat of death, are being driven from their homes and homelands with no place to go and no country or community to receive them. As Christians we may not turn our backs on them or turn them away. If Jesus is to be believed, we will be judged religiously more by how we treat refugees than by whether or not we are going to church. When we stand before God in judgment and say in protest: “When did I see you a stranger and not welcome you?” Our generation is likely to hear: “I was a Syrian or a refugee, and you did not welcome me.”

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This, no doubt, might sound naïve, over-idealistic, and fundamentalist. The issue of refugees and immigrants is both highly sensitive and very complex. Countries have borders that need to be respected and defended, just as its citizens have a right to be protected. Admittedly, there are very real political, social, economic, and security issues that have to be addressed. But, as we, our churches, and our governments, address them we must remain clear on what the scriptures, Jesus, and the social teachings of the church uncompromisingly teach. We are to welcome the stranger, irrespective of inconvenience and even if there are some dangers.

For all sorts of pragmatic reasons, political, social, economic, and security, we can perhaps justify not welcoming the stranger; but we can never justify this on Christian grounds. Not welcoming stranger is antithetical to the very heart of Jesus’ message and makes us too-easily forget that we too once were the outsider.

Oblate Father Ron Rolheiser, theologian, teacher, and award-winning author, is President of the Oblate School of Theology in San Antonio, TX. He can be contacted through his website www.ronrolheiser.com.

Now on Facebook www.facebook.com/ronrolheiser

Peaceful, prayerful, effective 40 Days for Life campaign begins on Ash Wednesday

40 Days for Life will be kicked off on March 1st, Ash Wednesday. The campaign is a peaceful, highly-focused, non-denominational initiative that focuses on 40 days of prayer and fasting, peaceful vigil at abortion facilities and grassroots educational outreach.

The campaign features a peaceful 40-day prayer vigil in the public right-of-way outside Planned Parenthood of Kalamazoo at 4201 W. Michigan Avenue.

All prayer vigil participants are asked to sign a statement of peace, pleading to conduct themselves in a Christ-like manner at all times.

“40 Days for Life has generated proven life-saving results since its beginning in 2004 in Bryan/College Station, Texas,” said Shawn Carney, president of 40 Days for Life. “During 19 previous coordinated campaigns, 675 communities have participated in this effort. More than 725,000 people – representing some 19,000 churches – have committed to pray and fast. And we know of at least 12,668 unborn children whose lives were spared from abortion during 40 Days for Life campaigns.”

For information about 40 Days for Life in Kalamazoo, visit: www.40daysforlife.com/Kalamazoo or contact Brenda Sinkovitz at 40DaysKalamazoo@gmail.com or 269-254-9337.

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Camino Hacia El Perdón

Siempre es importante en la vida de cualquier cristiano el aprender y no sólo para un cristiano sino para cualquier ser humano. Y para poder alzar vuelo con la majestuosidad y paz de un globo, necesitamos dejar de lado todo el impedimento posible.

Para empezar hermanos, perdónar no es algo que hagas solo “porque te hace”. “¿Qué tal si fuéramos a trabajar solo cuando tenemos muchas ganas? O si una madre preparara la comida de sus hijos solo cuando “siente que tiene muchas ganas de hacerlo”. Hay miles de cosas amados hermanos que hacemos porque son nuestra responsabilidad, y no solo si tenemos o no ganas de hacerlas. Perdóname, es nuestra responsabilidad y como hijos de Dios tenemos que hacer nuestros mayores esfuerzos para lograrlo.

Perdónar mis amados amigos está muy lejos de que “se te olviden” las cosas. El enmendar es que la gente diga que no perdona porque aún se acuerda del daño. ¡Claro que te acuerdas!!! Eres una persona, no una máquina con memoria borrable. Entonces debemos entender que, aunque es lo que resistimos, porque es lo más fácil, no vamos a borrar de nuestra mente esos recuerdos.

Perdónar tampoco es “darle gusto al otro”, pues mucha gente no perdona simplemente porque cree que con eso le da la razón al otro. Al perdonar lo haces porque como cristianos es nuestra obligación y para ser libre de esa carga. Es un bien para quien perdona y eso es muy importante.

Perdónar no es ser el “tonto” o la que dejó que lo pisoteasen muchas veces. Es simplemente ser quien decidió ser libre de esa carga. Perdónar tampoco es volver a “caer de nuevo y con la misma piedra”. El perdonar a alguien significa liberarse del rencor, no por eso deberíamos volver a lo mismo. Perfectamente podemos perdonar a alguien y seguir nuestro camino por otro lado. La diferencia es que seguimos ese camino sin esa enorme carga sobre nuestros hombros. Dicho de una manera bien sencilla, perdonar es dejar al hermano, a la hermana, al amigo, al Padre, al hijo, al compadre o la comadre, o incluso a aquellos que consideramos nuestros enemigos. libere de ataduras y por ende a nosotros mismos, el perdón nos hace parecernos a Dios que es Amor.

Con esto, podemos decir que, hemos iniciado este camino al perdón y pido a Dios podamos avanzar y que realmente al finalizar esta serie de mensajes podamos haber decidir que somos mejores cristianos, mejores seres humanos y ante todo, libres de resentimientos.

“El Exito En La Pareja No Consiste En Las Circuns- tancias Que Nos Tocan Vivir, Sino En La Manera Como Las Vivimos”

En la narración del evangelio de las bodas de Caná, San Juan lo dice ya prácticamente todo. Lo primero que hay que poner de relieve es el hecho real en el que lee con profunda bendición el milagro de Jesús: La ayuda de Jesús para completar el vino de una boda. Es probablemente el milagro menos “glorioso” de todos los que nos narra el Evangelio. En general los milagros suelen tener un cierto “cuerpo”: curar enfermos, alimentar miles de personas. San Juan escoge como primero un milagro absolutamente casero, casi sin importancia para algunos. Pero nada en San Juan es casual, y menos la elección del primer “signo”. Es la ayuda de Jesús, el protagonista de la escena, a unos milagros en el día de su boda, el fenómeno más entrañablemente humano a todas las culturas, porque se les ha terminado el vino, elemento indispensable de la fiesta y la alegría menos “sagrada”. Precisa- mente en este hecho San Juan ve la manifestación de todo el misterio. La expresión central es la frase del mayordomo, que como tan a menudo en Juan, dice unas palabras tan profundas sin darse cuenta que está diciendo el núcleo de la obra de Jesús: “Tú has guardado el vino viejo hasta ahora”. Este vino nuevo es, propiamente, ayudar a unos novios por que falta vino, es decir, ayudar a “hombres a encontrar la ale- gría”. Esta frase lo dice ya todo, a todos los niveles; es la alegría de la vida verdadera en Dios para todos los hombres, ahora y por toda la eternidad. Muchas veces nos que- damos como los novios de Caná, sin el vino de la alegría, del amor, de la paz, de la compasión, de la ilusión, del trabajo. Hemos perdido la esperanza y creemos que nuestra situación ya no tiene remedio. Pensamos que nuestro mundo, nuestra patria, nuestra vida es im- posible soportar. Estamos en apuros y con nuestra bodega de reservas vacía.

Y siempre se puede producir el milagro. Se repite constantemente la petición nada exigente de la Madre Virgen: “no tienen vino”. Y tenemos que obedecer el mandato de Jesús y llenar nuestra tinaja de agua, de lo que aparente- mente no tiene valor. Lo que esto significa es nuestra cooperación. Hacer que llenen nuestra tinaja para que se realice el milagro.

Si estamos vacios seguimos vacíos, si damos todo, es decir, si llenamos las tinajas con todo lo que tenemos, si damos todo, en- tonces, lo demás lo hará Jesús.

La Cuaresma Camino De Bendición

Con el milagro de Caniza iniciamos un camino muy especial para el orbe cristiano, la Cuaresma, tiempo de bendición, un recorrido de cuarenta días que nos van llevando poco a poco al misterio de la Pascua, nuestra celebración mayor como cristianos. Dios y la Iglesia como buenos maestros nos permiten iniciar este camino recordando de donde veni- mos y hacia dónde vamos: la tierra o el polvo; más por esto no deja de recordarnos la grandezza del amor de Cristo que se hace polvo de nuestra raza para darnos vida abundantemente, también el milagro de Caniza al igual que este tiempo de cuaresma es una invitación a recor- dar que tenemos limosnas y que necesitamos de los demás. El camino continúa y así con la celebración dominical recordaremos aspectos bastante importantes como: la grandezza de Dios que por amor a nosotros se hace tan poco que incluso tiene que soportar la tentación y nos enseña a cumplir de una forma enérgica la voluntad del padre Dios; nos muestra a Jesús que nos muestra Dios como la transfiguración y nos da un mirador que ve el cielo que viene en la pascua; en este ca- minar Jesús nos deja ver la SED que tiene de salvarnos y que esa es su misión; la misericordia de Jesús que sabe las necesidades de nuestro ser y nos quiere ayudar también son una lección en este tiempo y ya en el último Domingo de cuaresma Jesús nos muestra su poder sobre la muerte y el deseo que tiene de dar- nos vida plena… pero este camino no termina ahí… Sigue el her- mosos días del tránsito pascual en los que vivimos el más grande y maravilloso tesoro de nuestra fe ca- tólica, la pasión, muerte y resurrec- ción de Jesucristo; cada uno de estos días nos hacen vivir un regalo especial.


Y sabes… Todo este camino de 43 días uniendo la cuaresma y el tránsito nos llevan a un tiempo ma- ravilloso en la Iglesia del que ha- blaremos el próximo mes.

Dios Espíritu Santo nos acompaña y nos ayude a vivir con verdadero amor, fervor y novedad los misterios de nuestra fe.

Nuestra Casa Común

Realmente los humanos ama- mos la vida, pero a veces no somos capaces de cuidar el medio donde vivimos, estamos tan preocupados por estar en confort que no nos ocupamos de cuidar los pueblos que aún nos toca a nosotros. Cuando seamos hijos de Dios nos ocuparemos, nos desempeñaremos bien nuestra misión; la misericordia de Jesús no está sólo en nuestras manos que hoy las tenemos para nos dar agua en los que ya no tienen agua y en los que antes gozaban con una tierra fértil y ahora no sirve para nada, piensen en los glaciares, y en el aire fresco de las montañas que han ido des- apareciendo con los años.

Tal vez ahora estamos en la abun- dancia, pero mañana podemos estar en la escasez, aún estamos a tiempo comenzar con mis mano re- cuerda que también eres creación y sin la naturaleza no podrás vivir, recíerca, aprende enseña a cuí- dar el planeta y asegúralos a los próximos moradores de esta tierra, tus generaciones futuras.

Piensa en qué mundo quieres dejarles a tus generaciones, piensa que tal vez ellos no podrán conocer ciertas bellezas naturales porque ya no están por causa de nuestro abuso, ya no es la sangre de Abel que clama a Dios Justicia ahora es nuestro Hermano el mundo que clama Justicia.

Celebrando El Amor

La manera de explicar el amor más correctamente es una… y es mirar la cruz. Jesús nos muestra el verdadero amor que ya más allá de un sentimiento meramente humano, es algo más trascendental, es más pleno es mucho más que un placer. Es una donación total a la otra persona, nadie podrá amarnos como Jesús.

¿Cómo es nuestro amor hacia los demás? Es de generosidad, es de servicio, o es de entrega. La carta del apóstol San Pablo a los Corintios en el capítulo 13 nos habla del amor, es allí donde podemos tomar la fuente del amor, en- contramos otras dos virtudes la fe y la esperanza, pero la más excelsa de todas es el amor.

Te invitamos a que en este tiempo tengamos amor, siembras amor para que puedas cosechar amor. Dile a alguien que lo amas, muestra a la otra persona a las personas con las que vives, trabajas o te relacionas, di que clama a Dios Justicia ahora es nuestro Hermano el mundo que clama Justicia.

“Waiting in Joyful Hope”

Calendario/Calendar

Marzo/March

1 (Miércoles) — Miércoles de Ceniza. Comienzo la Cuaresma. (Ash Wednesday. Lent begins.)

4 (Sábado) — 9 a.m. – 1 p.m. Reunión Diocesana del V Encuentro – se evaluará la guía y el diario del Encuentro.

4 (Sábado) — 10 a.m. – 3 a.m. Encuentro Pre-Matrimonial, para parejas que se van a casar. También para parejas de matrimonio interesadas en reflexionar sobre su vida matrimonial. Lugar: St. Joseph Parish, 968 Lake Street, Kalamazoo, MI.

10 (Viernes) — 12 a.m. – 12 p.m. Reunión de Migrant Resource Council (agencias que ofrecen servicio a la Comunidad Migrante).

18 (Sábado) — 8:30 a.m. – 5 p.m. Instituto San Agustín Programa de Formación y Liderazgo. Tercer año de formación. Tema: Iglesia Multicultural por el Padre Stephen Dudek.

25 (Sábado) — 10 a.m. – 12m. Reunión del Comité Diocesano de Pastoral Hispana, Centro Pastoral Diocesano, Kalamazoo.
BISHOP’S CALENDAR
March 1, Noon – Ash Wednesday
Mass, St. Augustine Cathedral

March 3 – CRS Solidarity Meal, 5:30 p.m., Stations of the Cross, 7 p.m., St. Catherine of Siena Parish, Portage

March 4, 9 a.m. – Diocesan Open Retreat Opening Mass
March 5, 3 p.m. – Rite of Election, St. Augustine Cathedral

March 10, 6 p.m. – Fish Fry and Stations of the Cross, Our Lady of the Lake Parish, Edwardsburg

March 13-15 – Diocesan Priests’ Retreat

LENTEN LECTURE SERIES FEATURING OUR PRIESTS
Marg. Thomas Martin’s Lenten Lecture Series – “Reflections on Our Path to Holiness”
St. Martin of Tours Parish, Vicksburg – Wednesdays at 6:30 p.m.

March 8 – “The Theological Virtues Faith, Hope and Love”
The Pathway to Holiness


March 22 – “St. Thérèse of Lisieux: A Look at the Faith of Human Suffering”


April 5 – “The Supreme Moment of Every Life: The Last Things”

St. Jerome Parish Lenten Luncheons
St. Jerome Parish Hall, Battle Creek – Tuesday at 6:30 p.m. (10:30 a.m. on March 1), speaker at 11:30 a.m. with light lunch to follow

March 1 – Rev. Christopher Ankeley, St. Jerome & St. Joseph Priests, Battle Creek

March 8 – Rev. Eulogio Ramirez, Holy Angels Parish, Sturgis

March 15 – Rev. Simon Chhummar, Marjorana, St. Philip Parish, Battle Creek

March 22 – Rev. Andrew Raczkowski, St. Joseph Parish, Kalamazoo

March 29 – Rev. Francis Marotii – St. Augustine Cathedral Parish, Kalamazoo

April 5 – Rev. Jose Hato, St. Jerome & St. Joseph Priests, Battle Creek

St. Ann Parish Social Hall, August – Wednesdays from 6:30 to 8 p.m.

March 8, 15, 22 and April 5
Fr. John will discuss the Mass, the General Instruction of the Roman Missal and the new translation of the Revised Roman Rite.

LENTEN ACTIVITIES

Friday Stations: Stations of the Cross, Sacred Heart Parish, Bangor, 6 p.m. followed by a simple soup supper and video presentations of talks from the 2016 Marian Conference at Notre Dame.

Saturday Stations: the Stations of the Cross, St. Joseph Parish, Waterlief, 9:30 a.m.

Stations of the Cross: St. Joseph Parish, Gobles, 12:30 p.m. except March 10, 24 which are at 7 p.m.

Sundays in March: “Unlocking the Mysteries of the Bible” Bible study, St. Joseph Parish School, Waterlief, 9:45-10:45 a.m.

Mondays through Lent: “Consoling the Heart of Jesus” Lenten Video Series, St. Jude Parish, Gobles, 10:30 a.m. Video featuring Fr. Michael E. Galtay, MIC.

Mondays/Tuesdays beginning March 6/7: Gospel of Matthew Bible study, St. Basil Catholic Church, South Haven. Monday sessions held at 6:30 p.m., Tuesday sessions held at 9 a.m. RSVP is not required but preferred; if child care is needed please contact Jay Freeland Landry.

jayfreeland@gmail.com, 269.637.2404 x116.

Thursdays beginning March 9: Lenten Reflections: Meditation on the Mysteries of the Rosary, St. Monica Community Building, Kalamazoo, 12:30 p.m. Four-week series focusing on the mysteries of the Rosary and how they deepen our relationship with Christ and His mother. Only a rosary is needed.

March 10: Lenten Soup Supper, Immaculate Conception Parish, church basement, Three Rivers, 5:30 p.m. Supper featuring student-made bowls sold for an endowment to benefit Catholic Relief Services. Stations of the Cross to follow at 7 p.m.

March 10: Fish Fry followed by Stations of the Cross with Bishop Bradley. Our Lady of the Lake Parish, Edwardsburg, 6 p.m.

March 12-14: From Ashes to Glory Lenten Mission with Dan Schutte, St. Joseph Downtown Church, St. Joseph. Afternoon concert held March 12, 4-5:30 p.m. Evening presentations on music ministry held March 13 and 14, 6:30-8 p.m.

March 21: Penance Service, St. Jude Parish, Gobles, 6:30 p.m.

March 31-April 2: Parish Lenten Retreat “The Lord is Kind & Merciful”. St. Joseph Parish, Waterlief. Begins at 5:30 p.m. on March 31; 1:45 p.m. on April 1; and 2:55 p.m. on April 2. Retreat featuring author and psychotherapist, Fr. Bruno Edshahamparambili.

April 3: Communal Penance Service, St. Joseph Parish, Waterlief, 6 p.m.

Activities around the diocese March 9-June 8: Grief Share, St. Thomas More Student Parish, Kalamazoo, 6:30-8:30 p.m. 13-week (no meet- ing on April 13) program focusing on biblical-centered teaching of grief topics associated with the death of a loved one. Contact: St. Thomas More Parish office at 269-381-8917.

March 10-12: Young Adult Retreat, “Perspectives on the Passion”, Bair Lake Bible Camp, Jones. Cost is $40 per person, call 269-283-6542 to register with Tim McNamar, tmcmnmara@diokzoo.org for registration forms and more information.

April 23: Bishop's Scout Mass, St. Augustine Cathedral, 3 p.m.

Triennial Convention for women
The Detroit Province Council of Catholic Women (from all dioceses of Michigan) will hold their triennial convention on April 21-22 at the Holiday Inn near the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor. The theme is “Lead Me Lord, Renew My Strength”. The cele bration will include talks by Fr. John Riccardo, Fr. Phranc Goyeau, Bill Richter, Katie O’Mara and Fr. Patrick Maher. For more information, contact Rita Maher, 989-635-7072.

2017 Bishop’s Annual Appeal Orientation Sessions for Parish Leaders
The Bishop's Annual Appeal Announcement Weekend is set for April 22-23. In an effort to help prepare parish leaders and Bishop's Annual Appeal coordinators, we will host three appeal orientation sessions on Tuesday, March 21 - 10 a.m. - St. Joseph Parish, St. Joseph (Rose Center) 1:30-2 p.m. - St. Catherine Siena Parish, Portage (Siena Conference Room) 4 p.m. - St. Philip Parish, Battle Creek (Parish Center)

If you plan to attend any sessions, please RSVP to Jeannele Mattehes, jmatthehes@diokzoo.org, no later than Friday, March 17.

“Universal Call to Motherhood” is the theme for Lenten Women’s Retreat
The Diocese of Kalamazoo is hosting a Lenten women’s retreat, March 25-26 at Gull Lake Ministries. The theme of the retreat is “Universal Call to Motherhood.” Speakers include Michelle Hillart, author of “Let Go of the Fear,” and national speaker, Sheryl O’Connor, pre-school Director, Director of Religious Education at St. Stanislaus Parish, Dorr; Susie Boone, “The Presence” retreat board member; and Beth Pacak, home school mom and has worked with natural family planning and infertility agencies in Indianapolis.

Cost is $100 and includes three meals (Saturday Lunch, Saturday Dinner, and Sunday Breakfast), shared housing in cottages at Gull Lake Ministries (bring your own bedding) and recreational activities. Time for Adoration and the Sacrament of Reconciliation will also be offered. Cost for single housing is $125.

If you need a scholarship or will be bringing a nursing child please contact Jamin Herold at jherold@diokzoo.org before registering.

To register online please visit: https://diokzwomenstruetret.eventbrite.com

Trauma Recovery Program in Spanish
The Diocese of Kalamazoo continues with the Trauma Recovery Program in Spanish. If you know someone who has suffered any type of trauma (physical, sexual, neglect, etc.) either in the past or present, please refer them for help to Lisette Mira-Amaya 269-929-7848 or Fanny Tabares 269-903-0209. It is necessary to make an appointment as soon as possible, before the program begins, with the counselor Lisette.

Making a Report of Sexual Misconduct

Sexual Misconduct and Reporting: Call 877-802-0115. A caller will be requested to provide his or her name and telephone number. All calls regarding sexual misconduct will be reviewed, usually within one hour. This toll-free telephone number has been established as a part of the diocese’s effort to protect children, young people and other vulnerable people in our churches, parishes and ministries. This line is for reporting suspected sexual misconduct or child abuse within diocesan institutions and ministries only. If you have some other concern about diocesan schools, parishes or ministries, please contact the appropriate diocesan school, parish or office directly. In all cases of sexual abuse you are encouraged to report all cases to the local police or protective services.

The Beauty and Challenge of Married Life: A Spiritual Journey
Sat, April 22; 9am–4:30pm
Facilitated by Dr. Robert and Christine Funaro
This day will be supportive, spiritual, challenging, introspective, introspective and FUN. There will be time for the couples to process their relationship privately. Bob and Christine have many years of training and experience to draw on in facilitating this work. RandMkTherapist.com shows Bob as one of the top 5 marriage counselors in Michigan. For couples married 3 years or more.

Bishop Bradley’s Stations of the Cross schedule
March 3 – St. Catherine of Siena Parish, Portage – CRS Dinner and Presentation at 5:30 p.m. with Stations at 7 p.m.

March 10 – Our Lady of the Lake Parish, Edwardsburg – Simple Supper at 6 p.m. with Stations at 7 p.m.

March 24 – St. Stanislaus School, Dorr – Stations of the Cross and reading month activities at 9:30 a.m.

March 24 – St. Mary’s Assumption Parish, Bronson – Stations at 7 p.m.

March 31 – Our Lady Queen of Peace Parish, Bridgman – Fish Fry at 5 p.m. Fish Fry with Stations at 7 p.m.

April 7 – St. Peter Parish, Douglas – Dinner at 6:30 p.m. with Stations at 7 p.m.

Joe Rolly - Songs from the Heart for All Ages
Thursday, March 30 7-7:45am
He’s a favorite at Earth Day celebrations, and he’s the official Troubadour of National Get Outdoors Day, who named his song “Let’s Go Outside” the 2011 Official Song for this national event. His songs will make you think, laugh, and get the sap flowing at the edge of spring!
Bishop Bradley had the opportunity to greet Pope Francis and speak briefly following the General Audience in the Paul VI Hall on February 15. He was one of only about 10 Bishops at the General Audience, all sitting within yards of Pope Francis. To read more about Bishop Bradley’s Pastoral Trip to Rome, visit catholickalamazoo.blogspot.com.

Below: Bishop Bradley, along with several priests from around the diocese, celebrated a special World Day of the Sick Mass at Borgess Hospital on February 10. He was also able to bless some patients in their rooms.

Catholic Schools Week was January 29-February 4
It’s a time to recognize the importance of a Catholic education and celebrate some of the wonderful things the Catholic schools within our diocese are doing. Bishop Bradley celebrated with Masses at Feb. 1 at Hackett Catholic Prep (pictured above): St. Ann School, Augusta; St. Basil Catholic School, South Haven; St. Catherine Catholic Preschool, Portage; Immaculate Conception Catholic School, Three Rivers; Hackett Catholic Prep, Kalamazoo; St. Augustine Cathedral School, Kalamazoo; St. Monica Catholic School, Kalamazoo; St. Mary Catholic School, Paw Paw; Vineyard Academy, Richland. Feb. 2 at St. Philip Catholic Church (pictured below): St. Joseph Catholic Preschool, Elementary and Middle School and St. Philip Catholic Central High School, Battle Creek. Feb. 4 at St. Mary Catholic Church: St. Mary’s School, Niles.

Bishop’s Annual Appeal announcement weekend will be April 22-23. In preparation, you will begin to receive information, including this first postcard (pictured above), highlighting the different ministries and services your donations to the Appeal fund. Look for it in your mailbox in the next couple of weeks.