‘God gives us the grace to accomplish everything’

By Jimmy Patterson
Editor / The Angelus


Isaac Sokolowski, a huge fan of the Heat, was chill, on the couch, cheering on his team when his father walked up to him and handed him a book. In the middle of the game.

“You might like this,” Mr. Sokolowski said.

Isaac’s response was not untypical. “Dad, I’m watching the game right now.”

A couple of commercial breaks, clock stoppages and free throws later, Isaac’s attention had turned. He was no longer watching the game. He was reading the book.

(Please See ELIAS/20)

Go in Peace ...

Mary Sue Brewer, secretary to six bishops, retired from the Diocese of San Angelo in January. Employed by the diocese since February 1962, Mary Sue, pictured at her retirement party with Bishop Michael J. Sis, left, and Bishop Michael D. Pfeifer, OMI, is the only secretary to the bishop the diocese has ever had. Story, photos, Pgs. 12-13.

Learning from Dr. King’s heroic example

By Denise Morris

SAN ANGELO — The church organ hummed in the background and shouts of “Amen!” and “Yeah!” ushered from the packed house while Gloria Pope gave the MLK Day sermon at St. Paul Baptist Church.

“We are talking today about what can you do for others,” Pope said to a congregation that was crowded into the side aisles, balcony and narthex. “We are talking about a man… who said it really is a matter of service.”

The noonday service honoring Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. is an annual ecumenical event attended by leaders and members from a number of churches in San Angelo. The

(Please See MLK/20)
Lent 2015 and avoiding the Temptation of Indifference

By Most Rev. Michael J. Sis
Bishop of San Angelo

Pope Francis has written a message to all Catholics, giving his advice on how to approach the season of Lent in 2015. As you enter into this penitential time, deciding what will be your particular Lenten practices this year, it would make sense to consider the advice of the Pope.

The key word in his Lenten message is “indifference.” The kind of indifference he is talking about is lack of interest in or concern about our neighbor and God. He says “this selfish attitude of indifference has taken on about our neighbor and God. He says “this act of egoism, of indifference, has become a matter of concern for us.”

To overcome the temptation of indifference, the Holy Father offers three brief biblical passages for our reflection. The first is 1 Corinthians 12:26, where St. Paul says that the Church is the body of Christ, and we are all members of that body. St. Paul says, “If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together.”

By sharing in the sacramental life of the Church, especially the Eucharist, we become members of the communion of saints. As such, we are united with one another in God. Rather than withdraw into ourselves, we are to reach out and do something in service of others, even helping those who live far away from us.

The second biblical passage is from Genesis 4:9. In that passage, after Cain has killed his brother Abel, God asks him, “Cain, where is your brother Abel?” Cain replies, “I do not know; am I my brother’s keeper?”

(Feature: See BISHOP/21)

La Cuaresma y el Evitar la Tentación de la Indiferencia

By Miguel Sis
Obispo de San Angelo

El Papa Francisco ha escrito un mensaje para todos los católicos, dando su consejo de cómo enfockar en la Cuaresma de 2015. Al entrar a este tiempo penitencial, decidiendo cuales serán nuestras prácticas particulares de Cuaresma este año, tendría sentido el considerar el consejo del Papa.

La palabra clave en su mensaje de la Cuaresma es “indiferencia”. La clase de indiferencia de que él habla es la falta de interés en nuestro próximo y en Dios. Él dice “esta actitud egoísta, de indiferencia, ha alcanzado hoy una dimensión mundial, hasta tal punto que podemos hablar de una globalización de la indiferencia.”

El Papa Francisco quiere que nunca nos olvidemos de las necesidades de otros. Él nos enseña que nos preocupemos de los problemas, los sufrimientos, y las injusticias que nuestros hermanos y hermanas alrededor del mundo tienen que aguantar.

La Cuaresma es una oportunidad para nosotros de luchar contra la tentación de indiferencia por medio de la renovación interior. El Papa Francisco dice, “Necesitamos oír en cada Cuaresma el grito de los profetas que levantan su voz y despertan nuestra consciencia.”

Para superar la tentación de la indiferencia, el Santo Padre ofrece tres pasajes bíblicos cortos para nuestra reflexión. El primero es el de 1 Corintios 12:26, donde San Pablo dice que la Iglesia es el cuerpo de Cristo, y todos somos miembros de ese cuerpo. San Pablo dice, “Si un miembro sufre, todos sufren con él; y si un miembro es honrado, todos se alegran con él.”

Por medio de compartir en la vida (Mira OBISPO/19)
How to Catch a Monkey

Editor's Note: Bishop Michael J. Sis presided over Mass and blessed a new hall at St. Isidore Mission in Lenorah, January 25. The occasion also marked the final stop in the bishop’s year-long journey to visit every parish and mission in the diocese before his one-year anniversary as shepherd of the Diocese of San Angelo. He accomplished that with two days to spare. At Lenorah, Bishop Sis delivered the following homily, based on that Sunday’s readings, the Third Sunday of Ordinary Time.

I don’t know if any of you have ever had the need to catch a monkey before, but just in case you ever do need to catch a monkey, I’m going to tell you how to do it.

First you get an enclosed basket, and attach it to the ground or a big tree so it can’t be carried away. You put a little bitty hole in the basket, and inside you put a banana. The monkey comes along and smells the banana. The hole is just big enough for him to squeeze his little arm through. So, he sticks his empty hand through the hole in the basket and grabs the banana. Now that he has the banana, he’s not gonna let go of it.

But he can’t get his hand out because the hole is too small for his hand with the banana in it. And that crazy little monkey will not let go of that banana, even to escape you, because he wants to hold on to it and eat it.

And, with the monkey’s arm stuck in the basket and the monkey refusing to let go of the banana, all you have to do is go over and grab the monkey and you’ll have him.

The reason I am telling you the story about the monkey trap is because a monkey trap is a really good symbol for how you and I can grow as human beings. You and I become trapped when we refuse to let go of things that we need to let go of.

Like what, for example? Think of some things in your life that it’s time to let go of. Maybe it’s an old comfortable, unproductive routine. You know it’s not getting you anywhere and you need to let go of it.

Maybe it’s stubbornness in insisting on your own way

(Please See JONAH/21)

Seminarian of the Month

Josh Gray

My name is Joshua Gray. I have been in seminary for almost six years, and what a journey it has been. I first heard the call to enter seminary at the age of 7 when I received first communion. The Lord placed a desire in my heart to become a priest. I enjoyed religion classes the most in school. I desired to learn more about Jesus and to know his will. When I graduated from high school, I did not have certainty concerning what I should do with my life. I went before the blessed sacrament and I asked Jesus what I should do. He told me in clear words that still resound in my heart: Become a priest. Until that point I had doubts. All it took was for me to let go and simply ask the Lord what I should do. I joined seminary and from there I have had the opportunity to go to Honduras for a missionary trip, to study philosophy in northwest Missouri, to travel to Costa Rica to learn Spanish, to study theology in northern Chicago, and even make a pilgrimage to France. The journey has been great and I go forward in joy, following the peace in my heart, because I follow Christ. The important thing to keep in mind is that seminary is a place where the priesthood is discerned, not where someone goes who has to become a priest. Let St. John Paul the Great’s words echo onward, “Be not afraid.”
National Catholic Schools Week

Catholic schools strive to help students form faith, knowledge and character

By Elizabeth Canon Moore

Today we stand on the shoulders of the clergy, lay people and countless parents, volunteers and church members who have paved the way for students who attend St. Ann’s Catholic School in Midland.

Catholic Schools Week, January 25-31, was the perfect time to celebrate all of those who have played an integral role in shaping the St. Ann’s Catholic Education of many students for over 64 years. This year’s theme for Catholic School Week, “Catholic Schools: Communities of Faith, Knowledge and Service.” It was a special time to celebrate the values of a Catholic education through a week of masses, open houses and other events. It provided a great opportunity for St. Ann’s to spread the message of its mission, which is to “join with families to form students in faith, knowledge, and character.” Their vision is simple, but vital: “Educating the Saints,” and their core purpose, is to “help in leading all souls to heaven.”

Catholic Schools Week was a perfect time to give thanks to the many who have contributed in shaping the lives of so many students who have attended St. Ann’s, and who have since been productive, successful members of our society. According to Pope Francis, it is a responsibility of Catholic educational institutions to “express the living presence of the Gospel in the field of education, science and culture.” He adds that these institutions must “know how to enter, with courage, into the Areopagus contemporary cultures and to initiate dialog, aware of the gift they are able to offer all.” Therein lies the mission of St. Ann’s. Many St. Ann’s graduates have become successful business professionals, educators, civic leaders, medical professionals, home-makers, craftsmen and clergy.

My family’s story with St. Ann’s School began over 60 years ago and spans three generations of students. It began with my father, Mike Canon, who was in St. Ann’s first-ever kindergarten class in 1950. Our story continued when my brother, Christopher, and I began attending St. Ann’s in 1987, and it lives on today through our daughter Clare Moore, a kindergartner, and soon, our second daughter, Catherine (Cate) Moore, who will begin pre-school next year. In the words of Pope Francis, as members of the Canon Family, our hope is that “school can and should function as a catalyst, being a place of encounter and convergence of the entire educational community with the single objective of shaping and helping students grow as mature, simple, honest, and competent persons who know how to love faithfully, to live their lives as a response to God’s call and their future professions as a service to society.”

I ask you to support Catholic schools in your community, not just during Catholic Schools Week, but throughout the entire year.

The Value of Service: Giving glory to God through good works

By Heather Bredimus

St. Ann’s School-Midland

“It’s not our job to toughen our children up to face a cruel and heartless world. It’s our job to raise children who will make the world a little less cruel and heartless.” This quote from L.R. Knost, acclaimed author and founder of Little Hearts/Gentle Parenting Resources, poignantly gives reason to one of the most important and distinguishing qualities of Catholic education: the value of service.

Service learning has been a paramount objective in all three Catholic schools within the Diocese of San Angelo. Found in the crest of St. Ann’s Catholic School in Midland, the vision of “Educating the Saints” is powerfully clear as faculty and staff join with families to form students in faith, knowledge, and character. Throughout their shared history, the schools of the Permian Basin have always encouraged students to develop a lifelong commitment to the service of others.

A great example of a school-wide effort from students in grades Pre-K through 6th to collaborate on a service project that would reach a local community in an impactful and unforgettable way was the...
Bishop visits combined RCIA, religious education classes at St. Ambrose, Wall

The Angelus

WALL — Bishop Michael Sis recently was invited to visit the RCIA and Religious Education classes at St. Ambrose Parish in Wall. He came to talk to the combined classes about the Sacrament of Holy Orders and vocations. Prior to the meeting, everyone enjoyed a pizza party and birthday cake. They were celebrating the recent birthdays of Bishop Sis and St. Ambrose pastor Fr. Joe Choutapalli.

Bishop Sis talked about the hierarchy of the Catholic Church and the apostolic succession from when Jesus selected St. Peter to lead his church all the way to current times. He then answered questions from the classes on topics including seminaries and convents, who pays for a priest’s education, why priests wear a little white collar and the role of women in the church today and in the future.

God made a priest

Editor’s Note: Midlander Dan Bertleson wrote the following piece dedicated to priests everywhere. Dan read, “God Made a Priest” at the January 15, 2015 Clergy Appreciation Dinner, sponsored by the Knights of Columbus, at St. Stephen’s Church. Dan told the audience that his composition was patterned after Paul Harvey’s famous “And on the 8th day, God made a farmer.”

By Dan Bertleson

And on the 8th day, God looked down on his planned paradise and said, “My people need a leader.” So God made a priest.

God said, "I need somebody willing to get up before dawn, say the Morning Mass, work all day in the office, counsel parishioners, eat supper and stay past midnight meeting with the Knights of Columbus." So God made a priest.

"I need somebody with arms strong enough to play church league softball and yet gentle enough to hold a dying child while giving him last rites. Somebody to look a 260 pound, tattooed welder in the eye and tell him he needs to change his life and then visit with the Rosary Altar Society and tell the ladies to be sure and come back real soon -- and mean it." So God made a priest.

God said, "I need somebody willing to sit up all night to hear the confession of a dying man. And watch him die. Then dry his eyes and go off to his next meeting. I need somebody who can plan an addition, raise the money, keep it under budget and have some left over to fix the bathrooms at the school. I need someone to get my people to tithe, but not talk about money, teach CCD to third graders and keep their attention, then teach adult RCIA and keep it all fresh and lively and to make his Homilies holy, but under seven minutes. And who, during Christmas and Easter season will put in forty hours by Tuesday noon and tired and worn out put in another forty hours before Midnight Mass. So God made a priest.

God had to have somebody willing to help set up the Church Fair and help tear it down and yet stop in mid-sentence and race to hear the confession of one of the Carnival Workers. So God made a priest.

God said, "I need somebody strong enough to lead a church of hard-to-please parishioners. It had to be somebody who'd shoot straight and not cut corners. Somebody who will get his parishioners to see what they don't want to see, do what they don't want to do, give what they don't want to give so that when they die, they will go where they always thought that they would go: heaven.

"Somebody who'd bale a family together with the soft strong bonds of sharing, who would laugh and then sigh, and then reply, with smiling eyes, when his nephew says he wants to spend his life 'doing what my Uncle the Priest does.'"

So God made a priest.
Pro-Life Mass
Sacred Heart Cathedral
San Angelo
January 22, 2015

Clockwise from top left, Fr. Lorenzo Hatch processes in before the Pro-Life Mass, January 22. Bishop Michael Sis, following the Mass at Sacred Heart Cathedral. Pro-Life Supporter Sharla Ynostrosa reads during the Mass. Above, diocesan pro-life director Jerry Peters. (Photos courtesy John Rangel).
Area Catholics share powerful experiences at Austin pro-life rally

By Sharla Ynostrosa

The Texas Rally for Life in Austin on Saturday, January 24, 2015 was an incredible experience. In my previous post I told you how our day began praying the rosary at the Planned Parenthood on Ben White. Beginning the day this way, really puts things in perspective, I mean, this is why we march. I can't adequately describe the feeling of standing in front of a fenced facility where abortions are performed. Just knowing that babies lives are taken from them at that place leaves a sick feeling in your stomach. A surgery center is suppose to be a place of healing, a place to help you get better. When someone goes to an abortion facility it isn't to get better, it is to pay an abortionist to end the life of their baby. It is a very sad and sobering experience.

Arriving at St. Vincent de Paul Church and seeing a packed parking lot was uplifting. Going into the Sanctuary and seeing the young children pantomime the Joyful Mysteries of the Rosary while the older youth lead the prayers was a much needed reminder about God's love and a visual image of the strong pro-life presence of families, and people of all ages. As we sat shoulder to shoulder, stood side by side, kneeled next to each other, with young adults from youth groups all across Texas standing along the walls, I was overcome with joy and peace and happiness, because together, with God, we are strong. A Pro-Life Mass was celebrated by Most Rev. Joe Vasquez, Bishop of Austin. He gave a wonderful homily, and the entire Mass was beautiful. I remember kneeling and praying at the end of Mass, thanking God for such an amazing morning.

Driving to get to the March took a little time but we made it. We found a parking place pretty quick. I was so excited when I saw all the people parking and walking towards the gathering area for the March. We ended up towards the front. The Knights of Columbus led the March. It was awesome, there were pro-life people everywhere! I loved all the different pro-life t-shirts, the banners, the signs! I loved when we prayed the mysteries of the rosary, sang the Divine Mercy Chaplet, and when someone would holler out, "We are" and the rest of us would holler back, "Pro-Life!" It was great!

Back to the signs, several of the teenagers held signs that said, "My Generation Will End Abortion" others held signs that said, "We are the
Youth 2000

St. Stephen’s Church, Midland, January 23, 2015

Top photo, Bishop Michael J. Sis addresses a large assembly of young people at Youth 2000, January 23, 2015, at the diocesan-wide event at St. Stephen’s Church in Midland. Above left, attendees hear from Fr. Joachim, a Franciscan monk. At right, Bishop Sis at Mass during the event, and the bishop with Msgr. Jim Bridges during Holy Communion. (Photos by Alan Torre / aptorre.com).
Confessions, questions about sacramental preparation, etc., parish office and to attend Mass each weekend? How long does it take to register at the parish? That person the connection makes our ministry so much more powerful. How long does it take to register at the parish office? That person the connection makes our ministry so much more powerful. How long does it take to register at the parish? That person the connection makes our ministry so much more powerful.

This makes it difficult for a priest to attend effectively to the needs of someone in an emergency situation at the personal level that is so common here in West Texas. But when we know the personal level that is so common here in West Texas. But when we know the personal level that is so common here in West Texas. But when we know the personal level that is so common here in West Texas. But when we know the personal level that is so common here in West Texas. But when we know the personal level that is so common here in West Texas. But when we know the personal level that is so common here in West Texas.

First, please don’t wait until the last minute to call a priest. Catholics should make it a habit regularly, at least quarterly, to go to Confession.

Second, pastors should be notified when a person enters a nursing home, is seriously sick at home, or is planning surgery or hospitalization.

Third, all too often many Catholics are not active in their faith or are not registered and active in a parish. This makes it difficult for a priest to attend effectively to the needs of someone in an emergency situation at the personal level that is so common here in West Texas.

Yes, we will get out of bed at any hour of the night for a real emergency, even several times in a given night, even when we have a full day of responsibilities ahead of us. However, our pastoral care will be more effective if all Catholics will be mindful of several things.

A point of learning may be helpful here – the Sacrament of Extreme Unction or Last Rites is now.

(Please See EMERGENCY/22)

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By Fr. Knick and Sandie Knickerbocker

Spiritual formation, i.e. formation of the whole person in Christ, involves growth, development, and learning. In Luke 2:40 we read, “The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom, and the favor of God was upon him.” Luke is telling us about Jesus’ own growing, developing and learning. Jesus grew and became strong, filled with wisdom, blessed by God in his home in Nazareth as the child of Mary and Joseph, devout Jews and holy parents—in their domestic church. The lifelong process of maturing physically, emotionally, intellectually, and spiritually was the way of Jesus and is the way of each of us. God finds favor in this process and blesses us in it. Jesus’ maturation—his total formation—sanctifies this process of growth and gives evidence of the holiness of gradual development.

In Familiaris Consortio, Pope St. John Paul II, writing about the right and duty of parents regarding education, quotes the Second Vatican Council Declaration on Christian Education: “Since parents have conferred life on their children, they have a most solemn obligation to educate their offspring. Hence, parents must be acknowledged as the first and foremost educators of their children. Their role as educators is so decisive that scarcely anything can compensate for their failure in it. For it devolves on parents to create a family atmosphere so animated with love and reverence for God and others that a well-rounded personal and social development will be fostered among the children….” By virtue of their ministry of educating, parents are, through the witness of their lives, the first heralds of the Gospel for their children.

In his book Stages of Faith, James Fowler reminds us that during the first stages of development it is through the primary caregivers that the child forms first and lasting impressions of the world that become the foundations for subsequent faith development. “The caregivers are thus educating or forming from the beginning.”

Too often we think of educating as imparting information, as intellectual development, as academics—at home, at church, at school. In fact, education is formation of the whole person and is taking place at every moment. Education is the completing of the person created in God’s image. God wants to bring to completion the good work He has begun in us. All education is formation, and we are being educated by all of life. We must be very prayerful and very intentional in being formed by Gospel values to counter formation by the false values of our secular culture—only for this life but for eternity.

There is a maxim that the faith is “caught” as well as “taught.” In our homes, what are our spouses, children and grandchildren “catching” from us in terms of morality and values? Are we consciously, prayerfully living...
Speaking of Saints ...

Gilbert of Sempringham wouldn’t let disability affect goodness as person

By Mary Lou Gibson

A physical disability can either limit a person’s life choices or point them in another new direction. This is what happened to Gilbert of Sempringham. He was born in about 1083, the son of a Norman named Jocelin. His father received the estate of Sempringham as a reward for his services to William the Conqueror. Gilbert was destined for a knightly career, but the physical disability he suffered from birth prevented him from following that career.

Instead, he was sent to study in Paris. He returned with a master of arts and opened a school at Sempringham for girls and boys. Paul Burns writes in “Butler’s Lives of the Saints” that such a co-educational school was most unusual for the time.

Gilbert received the churches of Sempringham and West Torrington from his father. He was not yet a priest but was appointed a vicar for church services. He could have had a comfortable life from the revenues from the two parishes, but he chose to live in poverty. Gilbert made his parishes a model of devout behavior.

He next became a household clerk for Robert Bloet, Bishop of Lincoln. When Bloet died, he was succeeded by Alexander who ordained Gilbert. So now Gilbert was the Lord of Sempringham as well as the parson of the parish.

There was a group of seven young women among his parishioners who lived under his direction in a house he had built for them. David Farmer writes in the “Oxford Dictionary of Saints” that Gilbert’s rule for these women was based on the Rule of St. Benedict. The community grew and lay sisters and lay brothers were added to help work the land.

Gilbert sought help for how the houses were to be ruled. Burns writes that he went to Citeaux hoping to have the house placed under Cistercian rule. But his request was refused because the Cistercians had taken on other new commitments. Pope Eugenius III, who was at the general chapter at Citeaux, persuaded Gilbert to retain responsibility. Bernard of Clairvaux helped him draw up the instruments of government. The pope appointed Gilbert the first Master General of the Order of Sempringham, generally known as the Gilbertines.

The Gilbertines were the only religious order to have been founded in England. The Order was based on a pattern of a double monastery. Editor Dom Basil Watkins explains in “The Book of Saints” that the nuns followed the Benedictine rule and the canons who were the community’s spiritual directors followed the rule of St. Augustine with all sharing a church.

As Master General, Gilbert continued his austere way of living, traveling frequently from house to house, mainly in Lincolnshire and Yorkshire. According to Farmer, he also worked at copying manuscripts, making furniture, and building. Gilbert was master-general of all the foundations until he went blind late in life. At the time of his death in 1189, there were 13 houses, of which nine were double monasteries and four for canons only. He also founded orphanages and leper hospitals.

Things did not always go well for Gilbert and the Order. In 1164, the Order came into conflict with King Henry II (1154-1189) over Thomas Becket. Gilbert was accused of helping Thomas of Canterbury (Thomas Becket) escape to the Continent after Thomas had been condemned for opposing the king at the council at Northampton in 1163. Farmer writes that Gilbert made no secret of his support for Becket and when he was summoned to the king, he obtained pardon and immunity for himself and his Order.

And years later when Gilbert was nearly 90, he faced problems from...
Making Sense of Bioethics

Esteeming our elders and fostering solidarity across generations

By Fr. Tad Pacholczyk

Occasionally we hear disturbing stories in the media about young people who perpetrate abuse against the elderly. In a widely reported 2009 story, for example, caretakers at the Quadrangle Assisted Living facility outside Philadelphia were charged in connection with the abuse of an elderly patient named Lois McCallister. Three employees, aged 19, 21 and 22 were caught on a surveillance camera as they taunted, mocked and assaulted the partially naked 78 year old woman.

She had begun complaining to visiting family members several months prior that someone was hurting her and hitting her. There were also initial signs of bruising on her hand and wrist. After bringing the bruises to the attention of the nursing home’s administrators, the family was informed that the allegations were unfounded, and were told the accusations were simply the result of the patient’s advancing dementia. Family members suspected there was more to it, and clandestinely installed the video camera, hidden in a clock in the victim’s room.

After capturing the assailants on tape, they concluded that the abuse suffered by their mother had been ongoing for some time. One of the young women charged in the case told investigators she was working on another floor the night the clock/camera captured the scene in the elderly woman’s room. A family member later told news reporters, “They called the third girl down from another floor and said, ‘Come down, we’re going to start.’

As a consequence of the abuse, the Department of Public Welfare eventually revoked the license for the facility, and the family filed a civil lawsuit against the parent company.

A tragic event like this leads to intense questioning about how these young people, charged with the special care of the older generation, could end up becoming so callous, inhuman, and brutal. What can be done to prevent this kind of “inter-generational disconnect” from occurring in the future? And what can be done to build up unity and respect between generations?

A nearly universal point of reference over the years, and a counsel of incalculable worth, has been the injunction enshrined in the Decalogue: Honor your father and mother. A decision to abide by this commandment invariably serves to strengthen the concern for children for their parents and elders, and helps forge a bond between the generations. The Book of Sirach offers similarly sage advice: “My son, take care of your father when he is old; grieve him not as long as he lives. Even if his mind fail, be considerate of him; revile him not all the days of his life; kindness to a father will not be forgotten, firmly planted against the debt of your sins…”

In a sense, it is precisely the weakness and vulnerability of the elderly that beckons us to manifest a greater respect towards them, and never to mistreat them in the strength of youth. As Pope John Paul II beautifully summed it up in his 1999 Letter to the Elderly: “…the signs of human frailty which are clearly connected with advanced age become a summons to the mutual dependence and indispensable solidarity which link the different generations…” Compassionately attending to the needs of the elderly draws the generations together and builds solidarity.

When the unique gifts of the elderly are invested and shared with the younger generation, this, too, builds up solidarity. Elderly people help us see human affairs with a sense of perspective tempered by experience, reflection and wisdom. Whenever grandparents contribute to the raising and formation of the grandchildren, even by doing something as simple as teaching them how to pray and think about God, they strengthen inter-generational ties, and build family unity.

We can foster intergenerational care and support within our families and communities in other simple ways as well, for example, through conscientious parenting, including small but important steps such as insisting on meal time together as a family (which builds up mutual respect and concern for others in the family); teaching compassion by visiting sick or elderly neighbors together; teaching children to welcome all human life, even when weak or handicapped; praying together as a family; decreasing media time and guarding against violent computer/video games, pornography and other practices that dehumanize people and make them seem like objects to be manipulated.

As we seek to build relational bridges across generations, and work to construct a society that esteems its elders, we simultaneously build up homes and communities that are liberated of the threat of abuse or neglect — places of safety, mutual support and love, even as the hairs on our head turn gray and our strength wanes.

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By Erick Rommel

A list of suggestions backed by a lifetime of wisdom, learning

Catholic News Service

Each of us has a set of life lessons. Some of these lessons make no sense and are nothing more than superstition, like the baseball pitcher who refuses to step on the chalk line between home plate and first base when walking to the dugout. Some people refuse to drink coffee or caffeinated soda after noon because they say it keeps them up at night, while others can have an espresso and go to sleep just fine.

Over the course of a lifetime, we incorporate different lessons into our lives. If we documented the most important of these, I wonder what they would tell us about the person we become later in life?

Andy Anderson doesn’t have to ask that question. His great-granddaughter published a list of the 99-year-old’s life lessons on the website Popsugar. He credits the list for his long and wonderful life.

The first lesson is one shared by many, "Always maintain a good sense of humor." He has two additional rules to help him find humor, "Try not to take yourself so seriously," and "Find something comical in every single situation."

Think about those lessons the next time you’re having a fight. Instead of finding reasons to be angry, look for reasons to laugh. If you do, those arguments might be much shorter.

Another lesson is the result of his most important life decision. He says, "Love at first sight is not a fable." He would know. He met his wife on a Saturday and married her the following week. They were married 67 years.

I’m sure that long relationship led to two of his other lessons, "Love is not always easy; sometimes you have to work at it," and "Your family is the most precious thing you will ever have in life."

He also imparts advice for those with work woes: "Having a bad job is better than having no job at all." He says "never be too good to start at the bottom," then it's easier to "make sure you're doing what you love."

Not all of Andy's life lessons are as profound. Andy also advises others to drink orange juice and eat sausage daily. I would hope not at the same time. I also question Andy's fashion sense when he says, "Everyone has too many clothes. Wear what you have and quit buying more."

Because our lives are different, the lessons we learn are different as well. Heeding advice from a 99-year-old's experience, we might uncover new lessons that can help us in the future. To me, the most important takeaway from Andy's list is that his lessons don't focus on "stuff" (excluding sausage and orange juice).

They're not about having the most money or traveling to the most places. They're about making the most with what we have.

Or, as he puts it, "Life is a gift you must unwrap. It's up to you to determine if what's inside will lead you to happiness or dismay. You have the power to make that decision for yourself."

I hope our decisions in life lead us to lessons that are as enlightened as Andy's. Life is too short for anything less.
By Jimmy Patterson  
Editor / West Texas Angelus

When she was hired in 1963 as the first bishop's secretary of the Diocese of San Angelo, Mary Sue Brewer, at the tender age of 21, had already held what she at one time considered the most important job she might ever be asked to perform.

As office manager at Wallace Lab, Mary Sue helped owner Wallace Moritz run a San Angelo photography studio that had established a national reputation for itself. But it was a particular part of that job that was, literally, very important.

“We processed a lot of the early ‘60s. The photos were his official photos, for-wanted to the lab in San Angelo by The King’s management team. Fifty-three years later, Mary Sue would still consider that job as a photo tech/eco- nomy specialist/plant manager as important. But clearly, she would consider it only the second-most important job she’s ever worked. After all, it’s hard to beat being known as “the only bishops’ secretary in the history of the Diocese of San Angelo.”

By Jimmy Patterson  
Editor / West Texas Angelus

Mary Sue Brewer has been the secretary of the Diocese of San Angelo for 53 years. She has been a breath of fresh air for all who have known her. She has been a devotion, loyalty and love — attributes that went both ways for the secretary and the six shepherds she served.

When she was hired in 1963 as the first bishop’s secretary of the Diocese of San Angelo, Mary Sue Brewer, at the tender age of 21, had already held what she at one time considered the most important job she might ever be asked to perform.

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She has built a loyal family of hundreds even though she never married. Engaged once to Leo McGowan, whom she describes as “a devout Catholic man,” Leo was killed in a fishing accident two weeks before their wedding in 1963. Over a half-century later, Mary Sue still cannot talk about his accident without becoming emotional.

She speaks ill of no one, and has only fond memories of those she has worked with and for over the years. Yet make no mistake, when she feels something should be addressed, she’ll do just that. That’s what she recently recalled the story of a bishop-lobby man on in her career telling that she felt was an inappropriate joke. When he began, she said, “Stop right there, Bishop. I don’t like those kinds of jokes.” And stop he did. It was the kind of whimsical quip she would never again hear cross his lips.

Mary Sue says her best friend in the last half-century was Msgr. Timothy Murphy, a priest who died in January 2004. Murphy, former vicar general for the diocese and a former pastor of Holy Angels in San Angelo, as well as many other parishes, helped start the Holy Angels Youth Organization (HAYO). Helping Fr. Murphy were Tom Burscheidt and Mary Sue. HAYO, Mary Sue said, gave her some of her best memories in the Church.

Her memories of the six different bis- hops paint a picture of devotion, loyalty and love — attributes that went both ways for the secretary and the six shepherds she served.

“We were very close to Bishop Finocchio. He loved to cook. He would always go to the store and buy pizzas and he would take all the store-bought toppings off and replace them with the toppings that his family had sent him from Sicily. He was a very loving man and would always come down the hall and hug everyone.”

I heard a big splash. His fishing line had become stuck in the tree above him and he had climbed the tree to untangle the line. When he did, the branch he was on snapped and he fell in the water. He walked right past me and said, “Don’t say a word!”

“Bishop Leven was a brilliant man. He spoke nine languages. Bishop Drury lived at the big man- sion on Old Christoval Road. I used to go there in the afternoons to work and one day the bishop was down at the river fishing. When I walked down to see him, I heard a big splash. His fishing line had become stuck in the tree above him and he had climbed the tree to untangle the line. When he did, the branch he was on snapped and he fell in the water. He walked right past me and said, “Don’t say a word!”

Since she was very young, Mary Sue was raised by her grandmother. Her par- ents had divorced and, she said, neither one of them wanted their children, so...
By Fr. Ron Rolheiser

Christian de Cherge, the Trappist Abbott who was martyred in Algeria in 1996, was fond of sharing this story: He had a very close Muslim friend, Mohammed, and the two of them used to pray together, even as they remained aware of their differences, as Muslim and Christian. Aware too that certain schools of thought, both Muslim and Christian, warn against this type of prayer, fearing that the various faiths are not praying to the same God, the two of them didn’t call their sessions together prayer. Rather they imagined themselves as “digging a well together”.

One day Christian asked Mohammed: “When we get to the bottom of our well, what will we find? Muslim water or Christian water?” Mohammed, half-amused but still deadly serious, replied: “Come on now, we’ve spent all this time walking together, and you’re still asking me this question. You know well that at the bottom of that well, what we’ll find is God’s water.”

There are important religious truths couched inside that story. First off, all religions worthy of the name believe that the first thing we need to affirm about God is that God is ineffable, that is, God is beyond all human imagination, conceptualization, and language. Everything we think and say about God, even within scripture and our defined dogmas, is more inadequate than adequate. It reveals some truth, but, this side of eternity, never the complete truth. No dogma and no religion ever provide an adequate expression of God. If this is true, and it is, then all religious truth is always partial and limited in its historical expression and cannot claim adequacy. All religions, all dogmas, and all expressions of theology, irrespective of denomination or religion, must humbly acknowledge their incompleteness. Only God is absolute, and an absolute knowledge of God lies at the bottom of the well, at the end of our religious journey.

That fact radically changes the way we need to conceive of ecumenism and interfaith dialogue. Since no one, us included, has the full truth, the way of ecumenism and interfaith dialogue should not be conceived, as has been so much the case up to the present, of one side winning the other side over: We, alone, have the truth and you must join us! Rather the way has to be conceived of precisely “digging a well together”, namely, as each of us, with an open heart, longing for those others who are not at our table, refusing all proselyting, becoming engaged through our own religious tradition in the search for deeper conversion. That search is precisely the search to get to the bottom of the well, knowing that, once there, we, as all other sincere, authentic religious searchers, will find both God’s water and unity with everyone else who is there.

The renowned ecumenist, Avery Dulles, called this the path of “progressive convergence”. Eventual unity among the various churches and various faiths will not come about by everyone in the world converting to one denomination or one religion. Rather it will come about, and can only come about, by each of us converting more deeply into our own tradition. As each of us and each faith move more deeply into the mystery of God we will progressively draw closer and closer to each other. Christian de Cherge’s story illustrates this wonderfully.

And this path, when correctly taken, does not lead us into relativism and the naïve belief that all religions are equal. Nor does it mean that we do not enthusiastically and openly celebrate our own religious faith tradition, stand ready to defend it, and stand ready to welcome anyone into it. But it does mean that we must humbly accept that, while we have the truth, the truth is not ours alone. God is not a tribal deity and God’s salvific intent is universal. God desires the salvation of those in other denominations and in other religious traditions just as surely as he desires our own. Hence, as Jesus teaches us, God has “other sheep”, loved individuals and loved communities who are not of our fold. God’s love and revelation embrace everyone.

The path to unity among Christians of different denominations and the path to unity among world religions is not then the path of proselytism within which any one tradition, Christianity included, claims absolute truth for itself and demands that union can be achieved only by everyone converting to its side. Rather it lies in “digging a well together”, that is, in each of us, within our own tradition, converting more deeply into the mystery of God and into all that asks of us. As we move deeper into the mystery of God we will find ourselves more and more one, as brothers and sisters in faith.

No religion is absolute, only God is absolute. Knowing that should make us less smug in the practice of our own religion, more respectful of other denominations and religions, and more willing to let God’s vision trump our own.

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.

By Very Rev. Robert Barron

Daniel Dennett, one of the “four horsemen” of contemporary atheism, proposed in 2003 that those who espouse a naturalist, atheist worldview should call themselves “the brights,” thereby distinguishing themselves rather clearly from the dim benighted masses who hold on to supernaturalist convictions. In the wake of Dennett’s suggestion, many atheists have brought forward what they take to be ample evidence that the smartest people in our society do indeed subscribe to anti-theist views. By “smartest” they usually mean practitioners of the physical sciences, and thus they point to surveys that indicate only small percentages of scientists subscribe to religious belief.

In a recent article published in the online journal “Salon,” titled “Religion’s Smart-People Problem,” University of Seattle philosophy professor John Messerly reiterates this case. However, he references, not simply the lack of belief among the scientists, but also the atheism among academic philosophers, or as he puts it, “professional philosophers.” He cites a recent survey that shows only 14% of such professors admitting to theistic convictions, and he states that this unbelief among the learned elite, though not in itself a clinching argument for atheism, should at the very least give religious people pause. Well, I’m sorry Professor Messerly, but please consider me unpuzzled.

Since I have developed these arguments many times before in other forums, let me say just a few things in regard to the scientists. I have found that, in practically every instance, the scientists who declare their disbelief in God have no idea what serious religious people mean by the word “God.” Almost without exception, they think of God as some supreme worldly nature, an item within the universe for which they have found no “evidence,” a gap within the ordinary nexus of causal relations, etc. I would deny such a reality as vigorously as they do. If that’s what they mean by “God,” then I’m as much an atheist as they—and so was Thomas Aquinas. What reflective religious people mean when they speak of God is not something within the universe, but rather the condition for the possibility of the universe as such, the non- contingent ground of contingency. And about that reality, the sciences, strictly speaking, have nothing to say one way or another, for the consideration of such a state of affairs is beyond the limits of the scientific method. And so when statistics concerning the lack of belief among scientists are trotted out, my response, honestly, is “who cares?”

But what about the philosophers, 86% of whom apparently don’t believe in God? Wouldn’t they be conversant with the most serious and sophisticated accounts of God? Well, you might be surprised. Many academic philosophers, trained in highly specialized corners of the field, actually have little acquaintance with the fine points of philosophy of religion and often prove ham-handed when dealing with the issue of God. We hear, time and again, the breezy claim that the traditional arguments for God’s existence have been “demolished” or “refuted,” but when these supposed refutations are brought forward, they prove, I have found, remarkably weak, often little more than the killing down of a straw-man. A fine example of this is Bertrand Russell’s deeply uninformed dismissal of Thomas Aquinas’s demonstration of the impossibility...

(Please See BARRON/23)
Catholic Voices

Renewing the holiday goodwill throughout the year

By Maureen Pratt
Catholic News Service

The powerful seasons of Advent and Christmas remind us about being good neighbors to those we know and those we don’t. But so often, comfort, compassion and joy fade quickly shortly after the seasons pass, and we retreat behind our Internet aliases, locked doors and store away our “goodwill to all” for another year.

Yet, two incidents from this past holiday season have stayed with me, challenging me to press forward in the new year with Christmas still fresh in mind and heart.

The first occurred as I was standing in a long line at the post office just before Christmas. Behind me, an older woman and younger man stood. She was leaning on the display case and he was cradling a large and obviously heavy box.

I couldn’t help but hear them chat about mutual acquaintances, his job, her assisted living community and the upcoming Christmas festivities. Clearly, they were good friends, and there was no trace of condescension or impatience as they talked and the wait dragged on. Then, suddenly, the woman standing behind them piped up in a cheery voice.

“I just have to tell you how refreshing it is to hear you two,” she said, patting the young man on the shoulder. “Really. It’s just so very nice. You must be good friends.”

The man smiled and said, “Oh, yes. We’ve known each other a long time.”

I’d never heard a stranger compliment two other strangers on simply being who they are -- longtime friends, one helping the other navigate the post office so she could send off a gift-packed box. But as I witnessed the positive result of the stranger’s outreach, I wondered, what if more of us, including me, did likewise? What if we encouraged others, even strangers, to be good, giving people?

The second incident happened to my mother and her friend a couple of weeks before Christmas. They’d just gone to a movie and were having dinner. The restaurant they’d chosen was crowded, the wait long. They were drooping by the time they finished their meal. But, when they asked for the check, the server’s response perked them right back up.

“Oh, you don’t have to worry about that,” she told them. “That man over there (she pointed out an older man dining with his wife) has paid for your meals.”

At first, they couldn’t believe it. The server explained that the man had told her someone had done something very nice for him in the morning and he was determined to pass along the good deed to someone he did not know.

When my mother told me what had happened, I could hear the uplift in her voice. For all the stories of bad things happening in 2014, the man’s gesture showed there still is a lot of good in the world.

What if I, and others, did similar, random gestures of giving throughout the year ahead? How many hearts would lift? How much hope would rekindle?

As 2015 unfolds, I hope to keep these two incidents close in heart and mind, and challenge myself to look for ways to move outside the norm and keep Christmas alive throughout the year.

Modern miracles exist among us

By Moises Sandoval
Catholic News Service

Frequently we read heartwarming stories about the generosity of individuals, institutions, communities and corporations toward causes where help is needed.

After a gunman assassinated New York policemen Rafael Ramos, 40, and Wenjian Liu, 32, as they sat in their patrol car on a Brooklyn street on Dec. 20, the Yankee Silver Shield Foundation, established in 1982 by the late George Steinbrenner, owner of the New York Yankees, announced that it would pay for the education of Ramos’ sons, one 13 and the other in college. Liu, recently married, had no children. The foundation has helped educate the children of a thousand policemen, firefighters and Port Authority employees killed in the line of duty.

For me, a favorite charity is Doctors Without Borders, serving in the worst medical crises worldwide. Currently, they are in West African countries risking their lives caring for Ebola victims. I also like the work of the American Friends Service Committee and Catholic Relief Services.

For most of us, giving is a season, and what we contribute comes from our abundance. However, there are special persons like Margaret Domashinski, of West Suffield, Massachusetts, who give of the very substance of their lives. She has been in the news recently because she donated one of her kidneys to Father Michael Whyte, since 2007 pastor of St. Catherine of Siena parish in West Simsbury, Connecticut.

Father Whyte has Type I diabetes that over the years, destroyed his kidneys. A year and a half ago, his doctors told him he could expect to live six months if he did nothing and only five to seven years on dialysis. A transplant would give him 20 to 25 years of life.

The priest announced his predicament at a Sunday Mass and parishioners formed a committee to help him find a kidney. Domashinski, a parishioner, later told a local TV news reporter in an interview: “I knew I was a match. I know that’s kind of spooky, but I did. I asked him, ‘What is your blood type?’ When he said ‘O positive,’ I told my husband, ‘I am a match for him.’”

A mother in her mid-50s with three daughters, ages 17, 13 and 10, she consulted them and her husband. With their full support, she offered her pastor a kidney after a daily Mass. After a year and a half with many tests confirming a near-perfect match, the surgery was performed last fall. Six weeks later, Father Whyte was back to work, feeling healthier and stronger.

“People are waiting for another Lazarus to be raised from the dead or another 5,000 to be fed.”... God gives us miracles,” Father Whyte said. “This is one of them.”

In the spring of 2014, Domashinski went to Africa to do mission work in Uganda. Next summer, she and her daughters will go there to help build a new science center. Crediting her upbringing, she told a reporter that her parents told her: “You are not here just to be a piece of furniture.”
Our Faith

On the length of eulogies at funeral Masses

By Father Kenneth Doyle
Catholic News Service

Q. I have just watched Mario Cuomo’s funeral on television and I noticed that his son Andrew, the current governor, gave a 40-minute eulogy. I was wondering what the Catholic guidelines are with regard to eulogies at funeral Masses. (Albany, New York)

A. Andrew Cuomo’s eulogy at his father’s funeral has prompted a number of questions from Catholics. It has also created a certain awkwardness for parish priests, who are called upon daily to minister to grieving families while remaining faithful to the liturgical guidelines of the church.

The general rule is clear: Eulogies at Catholic funerals are discouraged. The General Instruction of the Roman Missal (the rubrics that serve as a preface to the large red book that the priest reads from at the altar) says simply in No. 382: "At funeral Masses there should usually be a short homily, but to the exclusion of a funeral eulogy of any kind."

The Order of Christian Funerals (published by the Vatican in 1989), however, gives an option that allows a balance between what is proper and what is pastoral. Section No. 141 of that document restates the prohibition of eulogies: "A brief homily based on the readings should always be given at the funeral liturgy, but never any kind of eulogy."

But further on, the same document (No. 170) allows that: "A member or friend of the family may speak in remembrance of the deceased before the final commendation begins."

The ritual's guidelines envision that such family remarks be brief (coming at the end, when the priest is waiting to pray over the casket), and many dioceses publish specific instructions on length.

In Syracuse, New York, for example, guidelines say: "If permission is granted for a eulogy to be given at the Mass, only one person should speak on behalf of the family and the remembrance should be well-prepared, written and limited to no more than three minutes in length."

The reason for limitations on eulogies has to do with the nature and purpose of a funeral Mass. The liturgy should be focused on the promise of eternal life and the eventual hope of reunion. It is not meant to be a canonization of the deceased.

Instead it is a tribute to the merciful love of Christ and to the victory over death won by Jesus, together with the prayerful plea that the merits of that victory be extended now to the person being prayed for.

Even the most liberal interpretation of the church's guidelines would never permit a 40-minute eulogy. (In the view of more than a few observers, Andrew Cuomo's speech came across as the centerpiece of the ceremony and overwhelmed everything else that the Mass stood for and sought to teach.)

Interestingly and somewhat prophetically, in a 2009 column posted on the New York Archdiocesan website, Cardinal Timothy M. Dolan observed that at funerals "the eulogy should be brief, rarely if ever more than three or four minutes; at times the eulogies go so long they overshadow the Mass."

Q. Recently, on Dec. 8, the feast of the Immaculate Conception (which is always a holy day of obligation) occurred on a Monday. Our church, a large suburban parish with three priests in residence, scheduled Masses for the feast only on Monday. (On Sunday evening, there was the regularly scheduled Mass at 6 p.m. but that was not a feast-day Mass and only "counted" for Sunday.) The times for the holy day Masses (7:30 a.m. and noon) were very inconvenient, if not impossible, for adults with jobs or for students in public schools.

It seems inconsistent to me to require Mass attendance but then to schedule the only Masses at times when most parishioners will not be able to attend. I happen to work in a downtown area with several convenient churches, but everyone is not as fortunate.

EWTN provides more flexible alternatives, but watching the Mass on television (when that is the only option) is not the same as being there in person (especially since one is unable to receive the Eucharist). (Philadelphia)

A. Your concern is valid. As you indicate, the Immaculate Conception (the patronal feast of the United States) is a holy day of obligation when Mass attendance remains mandatory even when the feast occurs on a Monday or a Saturday.

When the feast day falls on a Monday, having a vigil Mass the night before is problematic in many parishes: either because there is a regularly scheduled Sunday Mass in the evening or because the only priest has already celebrated a full schedule of Masses for the weekend.

One solution is to have a feast-day Mass on Monday evening as well as on Monday morning. In our parish, we had three Masses for the feast: the regularly scheduled weekday Mass at 8:15 a.m., a school Mass (to which all were invited) at 9 a.m. and an additional Mass at 5:30 p.m. on Monday.

As you suggest, as long as Mass is obligatory on feast days, we must do our best to accommodate parishioners' schedules. The last thing we need to do is to trouble people's consciences by making it impossible to attend.

Questions may be sent to Father Kenneth Doyle at askfatherdoyle@gmail.com and 40 Hopewell St., Albany, N.Y. 12208.

Peanuts, emeralds and family

By Father William J. Byron, SJ
Catholic News Service

This is not a religious story nor were its principals, both Catholics, religious professionals. In fact, one was a playwright; the other an actress.

When the young newspaperman and aspiring playwright Charles MacArthur was courting (we would now call it "dating") the young actress, later to become known as the first lady of the American theater, Helen Hayes, he bought a bag of peanuts from a street vendor and, with a great flourish, handed the bag to her saying, "I wish they were emeralds."

Many years later, as he was dying, she came to his bedside one day and he surprised her with an emerald bracelet saying, "I wish they were peanuts."

Helen Hayes and Charles MacArthur enjoyed a long and happy married life together, despite difficulties. And through it all, they managed to keep their values and values in perspective. They had their peanut days and their emerald days as they built a lasting marriage.

When I first heard that story, I thought it was just a beautiful legend, but I later had the opportunity to meet Helen Hayes personally and asked her if the story was true. She assured me that it was.

It says it all so neatly and well: how important it is to keep family values free of corrosive materialism. In our advanced, technologically sophisticated and affluent society, there is poverty, of course, but there is also sufficient material abundance to constitute a threat to all families, even those of modest means, of becoming possessed by their possessions.

The virus of materialism can strike any marriage. Awareness of that possibility can function as protection of the marriage. And the experience of peanut days, not just during courtship and the early days of marriage, but later as well, can help strengthen the bonds of love between husband and wife, and between spouses and their children.

Even without the benefit of a deathbed perspective, the believing Catholic, the man or woman of the Beatitudes, can figure out what is really important in life and act accordingly.


It would be great if the discussion this document hopes to stimulate will generate a few more peanuts-and-emeralds stories that can inspire an outlook that will strengthen contemporary family life.
By Carolyn Woo

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The name of the month January takes

its root from the mythical Roman god

Janus, with his two faces confronting the

past and the future. Because Janus could

turn his gaze in both ways, the Romans,

beginning in the reign of Caesar, made

the New Year a time to atone for the past

ailments, dysfunctions, illnesses.”

That hardly made for a cheerful Christmas message.

But what was he trying to say? To understand Pope

Francis' thinking, we may want to look at religious

orders.

Some religious orders were founded to carry out

reforms because its members felt as if inspiring exam-

ples of Christ's teachings were lacking. Reform was

needed to revitalize religion, spawn saints and to estab-

lish revitalized centers for meaningful worship. As time

passed, however, so did reforms. But the church saw

repeated religious renaissances.

One way to interpret Pope Francis' Christmas message

is to view it as a call for a much-needed renaissance and

revitalization of religion in postmodern times. Although

Pope Francis addressed the Curia, his message also

speaks to the world.

When I was traveling in Germany with a friend, he

said to me: "You Americans have big appetites." This is

true of humanity, not just Americans. For example, the

amount of food on supermarket shelves tempts us to

appease our appetites. The saying, "The more you get,

the more you want," holds true for many, as does a big

appetite for gossip and for forgetting to count the bless-

ings we have.

Down deep, we crave a healthy orderly life and know

that better controlling our lives is the best way to attain

true, lasting joy. We are especially happiest when doing

something good and wholesome for ourselves that leads
to doing something good for another.

I believe this is the underlining reason behind Pope

Francis' seemingly harsh words. He is calling for a post-

modern renaissance. He wants to lift our spirituality to

new heights. This requires change and, yes, death to dis-

orderly appetites and bad habits. And yet, when we

admit that these things enslave us and let go, we experi-

ence the joy of freedom.

And that's the joy Pope Francis desires for all of us.

When broken resolutions don’t have to die

By Carolyn Woo

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those New Year's resolutions that seemed

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the New Year a time to atone for the past

and appeal to Janus' forgiveness through

acts of kindness.

From their inception, New Year's reso-

lutions as expressions of the desire and

the agency for improvement are inheren-
tly self-critical and optimistic. There is

something fresh, renewing and energizing

about the ability to imagine a better future

through one’s efforts. It is the Charlie

Brown in us unbowed by the hard-nosed

realism of the Lucy. It is a vote for our-

selves saying that we will not just throw

in the towel.

Despite my spotty track record, I am

glad I have made my collective resolu-
tions over the years. Weight may not have

peeled off, but I have learned a lot about

nutrition, healthy foods and better eating

habits. These now inform my choices. I

may not exercise with an iron will, but it

has become part of my regimen, and I

miss it when I get away from it.

From actions prompted by past resolu-
tions that eventually took hold as habits, I

now take my vitamins daily, chug down a

big glass of water when I wake up in the

morning and explicitly acknowledge

God's presence in everything I am about
to do that day. I may not have gotten an

“A” for perfect execution, but taking the

long view, I see that not all is lost.

(Please See WOO/23)
Nation

Vatican: Archbishop Romero’s beatification will be soon

By Cindy Wooden
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY — Salvadoran Archbishop Oscar Romero will be beatified in San Salvador "certainly within the year and not later, but possibly within a few months," said Archbishop Vincenzo Paglia, the postulator or chief promoter of the archbishop's sainthood cause.

Speaking to reporters Feb. 4, the day after Pope Francis formally recognized that the slain Salvadoran archbishop was killed "in hatred of the faith" -- and not for purely political reasons -- Archbishop Paglia said the two decades it took to obtain the decree were the result of "misunderstandings and preconceptions."

During Archbishop Romero's time as archbishop of San Salvador -- from 1977 to 1980 -- "kilos of letters against him arrived in Rome. The accusations were simple: He's political; he's a follower of liberation theology."

To the accusations that he supported liberation theology, Archbishop Paglia said, Archbishop Romero responded, "Yes, certainly. But there are two theologies of liberation: one sees liberation only as material liberation; the other is that of Paul VI. I'm with Paul VI" in seeking the material and spiritual liberation of all people, including from the sins of injustice and oppression.

All of the complaints, Archbishop Paglia said, slowed the sainthood process and "strengthened his enemies," who, he said, included the late Colombian Cardinal Alfonso Lopez Trujillo, who believed the Salvadoran archbishop tended toward Marxism and thought his canonization would be seen as a canonization of the materialistic, political form of liberation theology criticized by the church.

"This mountain of paper, unfortunately, weighed down" the cause, the archbishop said. But the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith examined all his homilies and writings and cleared them.

Promoters of the cause, he said, collected "a mountain of testimony just as big" to counter the accusations and to prove that Archbishop Romero heroically lived the Christian faith and was killed out of hatred for his words and actions as a Catholic pastor.

In the end, Archbishop Paglia said, both a panel of theologians working for the Congregation for Saints' Causes and the cardinals who are members of the congregation voted unanimously to recommend Pope Francis recognize Archbishop Romero as a martyr.

"He was killed at the altar," Archbishop Paglia said, instead of when he was an easier target at home or on the street. "Through him, they wanted to strike the church that flowed from the Second Vatican Council."

Shooting him March 24, 1980, as he celebrated Mass in a San Salvador hospital chapel "was not caused by motives that were simply political," Archbishop Paglia said, "but by hatred for a faith that, imbued with charity, would not be silent in the face of the injustices that relentlessly and cruelly slaughtered the poor and their defenders."

Msgr. Jesus Delgado Avededo, Archbishop Romero's secretary and aide, said he met the archbishop the day he was installed in San Salvador; he came to the archdiocese with a reputation as being conservative. "The clergy did not like him at all, because the clergy of San Salvador were educated in the teachings of the Second Vatican Council and Medellin, the 1968 meeting of the Latin American bishops that called church workers to stand with the poor and for urgent and radical democratic and economic reforms throughout the continent.

Pope, in letter to Arizona teens, encourages work with migrants

By Nancy Wiechec
Catholic News Service

PHOENIX — Saying their letters had touched his heart, Pope Francis wrote a personal response encouraging teens in southern Arizona in their work aiding migrants.

"These young people, who have come to learn how to strive against the propagation of stereotypes, from people who only see in immigration a source of illegality, social conflict and violence," he wrote, "can contribute much to show the world a church, without borders, as mother of all; a church that extends to the world the culture of solidarity and care for the people and families that are affected many times by heart-rending circumstances."

The pope's letter, written in Spanish and dated Dec. 19, was responding to letters he received from Jesuit Father Sean Carroll, executive director of the Kino Border Initiative, and Kino Teens at Lourdes Catholic School in Nogales, Arizona.

The Kino Teens support the work of the initiative advocating for more humane and viable migration solutions.

"Your letter and the ones from the Lourdes Catholic School students have touched my heart, not only because of the drama they describe, but also for the hope they manifest," the pope wrote in his letter addressed to Father Carroll.

Father Carroll had written the pope about the Kino Teens and invited him to visit the border region in both Nogales, Arizona, and Nogales, in the Mexican state of Sonora.

The Arizona border with Mexico is one of the busiest for illegal crossings. It accounts for nearly 30 percent of all U.S. Border Patrol apprehensions.

Twenty Kino Teens wrote letters to the pope describing their experiences living on the border and serving migrants.

"He didn't say whether he was coming (to the border) or not, but he sent a beautiful letter expressing his gratitude for the letters and his support for what the young people are doing," said Father Carroll. "It was a wonderful response affirming the work of KBI and the Kino Teens."

Pope Francis is set to travel to the U.S. in late September and there had been rumors that he might make a stop along the U.S.-Mexico border. His only confirmed visits are to Washington, New York and Philadelphia for the World Meeting of Families.
MARY SUE

(From 13)

Mary Sue and her three brothers and sisters were left with their grandmother in San Angelo. That turn of events would provide a foundation in her formation. Remembering her grandmother as a devout Catholic, Mary Sue says priests and sisters were frequently at her house.

“Mommy, which was what we called our grandmother, wanted that influence around us,” she said. “We never missed anything at Immaculate Conception (which became Sacred Heart Church and finally Sacred Heart Cathedral in 1964). We were in the front pew for every procession. We didn’t miss anything.”

Mary Sue is fond of Pope Francis, calling him a “breath of fresh air for the Church.”

“He’s shaken up a lot of people who need to be shaken up,” she said. “He is for justice and for the poor and he speaks out on what is wrong.”

She has met two popes: Paul VI and Benedict XVI, and attended Pope John Paul II’s visit to San Antonio in 1987. She also has 10 rosaries blessed by 10 different popes and given to her by bishops through the years.

A priest at Sacred Heart Church in San Angelo first told Mary Sue about the secretarial opening at the chancery in the fall of 1961. Her response was, ‘Well, they’d never hire me, I don’t have any experience.’ But, out of nine candidates, they did hire her.

And it has proved to be a good hiring decision for the Church. At her retirement dinner, January 20, 2015, more than 80 people gathered in her honor and listened to the words of her sixth and last boss.

“This is a very historic night for our diocese,” Bishop Sis began. “Mary Sue began her service to the diocese on February 19, 1962. I was two years old.

“She has served all six of the bishops. Humanly speaking, that’s a privilege. Spiritually speaking, that’s a purgatory. I have never known anyone who has worked longer than this at a diocese. There probably are some. Maybe St. Peter’s assistant did, but I’ve never known anyone who has worked for a diocese as long as Mary Sue has worked for us.

“In my one year of knowing and working with Mary Sue, here’s how I would describe her service to the Church. She has served with dedication, perseverance, patience, kindness, a good sense of humor, a great memory, and a well-grounded practical realism, which is pretty typical of West Texas. She serves with professionalism, diplomacy, humility, respect, love for people, love for the Church, and love for God.

“After almost 53 complete years, she deserves to be able to have the opportunity for a restful and fun retirement. We are here out of love for you and we will miss you very much.”

Mary Sue intends to enjoy her retirement by volunteering in San Angelo and traveling when possible.

She said the one thing she wants to impart upon people as she leaves the chancery for the final time is this: Have your priests and religious over to your home for dinner more often. Those who serve in the Church desire personal interaction with parishioners and look forward to the opportunity to share in their lives.

OBISPO

(Para 2)

sacramental de la Iglesia, especialmente la Eucaristía, llegamos a ser miembros de la comunidad de los santos. Como tal, estamos unidos el uno al otro en Dios. En vez de encerrarnos en nosotros mismos, hemos de llegar a otros y hacer algo en servicio de ellos, hasta ayudar aquellos quienes se encuentran lejos de nosotros.

El segundo pasaje bíblico es del Génesis 4:9. En ese pasaje, después que Caín mató a su hermano Abel, Dios le preguntó, “¿Caín, dónde está tu hermano Abel?” Caín respondió, “No sé. ¿Soy yo acaso guardián de mi hermano?”

El Papa Francisco nos plantea la pregunta, “¿Dónde está tu hermano?” Él quiere que superemos la indiferencia y la dureza del corazón por medio de cuidar a ellos quienes son débiles, pobres, sufridos, y doloridos. Él dice, “Toda comunidad cristiana está llamada a cruzar el umbral que la pone en relación con aquellos que sufren. También permitimos que los sufrimientos de otros nos recuerden de nuestra colecta será para las comunidades necesitan ayuda. Como Católicos Cristianos, somos llamados a tomar acción individual y comunitaria para ayudar a los necesitados, tanto cerca como lejanos.

El tercer pasaje bíblico es “Fortalezcan sus corazones” tomada de Santiago 5:8. El Santo Padre nos anima a tener un corazón fuerte y firme, no de desesperarnos en un espíritu de impotencia cuando estamos saturados por reportes noticiosos del sufrimiento humano alrededor del mundo. No deberíamos subestimar el poder de la oración. Por medio de las acciones caritativas de la Iglesia, todos colaboramos con ayuda tanto para las personas cercanas como a las lejanas. También permitimos que los sufrimientos de otros nos recuerden de la incertidumbre de nuestras propias vidas y nuestra dependencia en Dios y en los demás.

En la Cuaresma 2015, el Papa Francisco nos llama como individuos y como comunidades eclesiales a ser firmes y misericordiosos, atentos y generosos, para que con la ayuda de Dios podamos superar la tentación de la indiferencia.

Durante la Cuaresma en nuestra Diócesis de San Ángelo, nos dedicaremos en varias acciones concretas para llegar más allá de nosotros mismos y ayudar a aquellos quienes están en necesidad alrededor del mundo. El Miércoles de Cenizas, recogeremos una colecta especial para las necesidades de la Iglesia en Europa Oriental. El Viernes Santo, nuestra colecta será para las comunidades Cristianas que sufren en la Tierra Santa. A lo largo de la temporada, cada uno de nosotros tenemos la oportunidad cada día de poner una contribución personal en las cajas de monedas que apoyan el trabajo caritativo internacional de Catholic Relief Services.

En un nivel local, servimos a nuestros prójimos necesitados por medio de las agencias católicas como Catholic Charities en Odessa, Catholic Outreach en San Ángelo. Helping Hands en Midland, y la Sociedad de San Vicente de Paul en varias partes de nuestra diócesis. Si su parroquia o misión no tiene una Sociedad de San Vicente de Paul, u otra forma de ayuda práctica para el pobre local, ¿porqué no empezar este año?

Este año, durante la Cuaresma, somos llamados a llevar a cabo nuestras prácticas tradicionales de la oración, el ayuno, y la caridad, dando atención especial a la batalla contra la tentación de la indiferencia. Oremos no solamente por nosotros mismos, sino también por nuestros hermanos y hermanas que sufren. Cuando ayunamos, podemos relacionar con lo que el hambriento del mundo sufre cada día. Por medio de la práctica de la caridad, hacemos algo concreto para ayudar a los necesitados, tanto cerca como lejanos.

El final, estas prácticas nos preparan para tomar pasos aún más grandes. Más allá de las acciones de caridad tan importantes, somos llamados a resolver cuestiones de justicia. Debemos mirar las causas del sufrimiento en nuestro mundo, considerando cómo y porqué tanto de nuestros hermanos y hermanas, tanto locales como globales, son dejados fuera de las márgenes sociales. Nos comprometemos a unirnos en solidaridad con ellos, tomando acción individual y comunitaria para edificar un mundo cuyas estructuras reflejen la justicia de nuestro Dios.

Nuestros hermanos y hermanas que sufren necesitan ayuda. Como Católicos Cristianos, nos damos cuenta de ello. Su situación nos importa, y hacemos algo para dar una mano.
ELIAS

(From 1)

The book was, “The Diary of Saint Faustina.” Isaac read it, and was fascinated. The one-time high school basketball player and U.S. Army paratrooper who had seen death both home and abroad, took a step toward his future during the fourth quarter of that Heat-Celtics game.

“St. Faustina was a nun who didn’t go to school,” he said. “The things she wrote were way beyond her intelligence level. It was divinely inspired. The real miracle was that I stopped watching the game and started reading the book.”

Seventeen months later, October 2013, Isaac Sokolowski entered Mt. Carmel Hermitage, a small community of Carmelite hermits southwest of Christoval. Sokolowski became a “postulant” in March 2014 and in January became a “novice,” two words he said he had never even heard of when he cracked open St. Faustina’s book less than three years ago.

Isaac, now called Brother Elias Mary, had always made good grades while at Midland Lee High School, the school he would graduate from in May 2008, but he never found fulfillment in school and he never really yearned for the education he could gain from college. Time serving God through prayer and work, he can look back on now and say, was what he was really searching for.

“I am still trying to fathom why I have been given a name so much bigger than I am. It keeps me humble because I can never fulfill that name,” he said.

Bro. Elias said as he continued to search for meaning in his life, God’s voice grew quiet. “I still prayed, ‘Show me the way; where do you want me to be?’ ” he said. “I came to visit the hermitage here and I remember it was on Divine Mercy Sunday 2013. I wanted to meet all the brothers, but you’re not allowed to just walk up to them and talk to them. When I visited Fr. Fabian (the hermitage prior) and we talked about what I wanted to do, which was to enter the hermitage, he said to me, ‘Well, we’re always looking for a few good monks.’ ”

“There is no mistake when God is calling you,” Bro. Elias said.

“It will be very clear. After visiting here for five days, which is the length of visit of your first stay when you are in discernment, and then later when I stayed here for a month, the Lord left no doubt in my mind that this is where he wanted me. It was completely clear.”

For many who choose the monastic life, detaching from the secular world, and their everyday life as they know it, can be a difficult part of the transition process. Brother Elias said he is grateful to have parents who have been supportive of his decision to enter a life where detaching even from family is necessary.

MLK

(From 1)

main speaker, Gloria Pope, is minister of Galilee Missionary Baptist Church along with her husband, the Reverend John S. Pope Jr.

“The word means to be a servant,” she continued. “No one wants to wait tables,” but all are called to share God’s love by acting in service.

Pope said Dr. King was calling for a “color blind society” that realizes “all men are created equal.”

“We have come a long way, but we still have further to go. We haven’t learned how to walk the earth as brothers and sisters.”

The congregation broke into applause and Pope’s own voice was so powerful the church’s old stained glass windows seemed to tremble. Pope broke into tears.

“If we knew how to love right, we wouldn’t serve some and not others. The only way to love right is to do it God’s way. You learn to do it unconditionally.”

Throughout her message, she held the rapt attention of everyone, including San Angelo Bishop Michael J. Sis, seated at the altar with ministers representing multiple churches in the area.

Sis gave the opening prayer, quoting from Dr. King:

“Help us to walk together, pray together, sing together, and live together until that day when all God’s children, Black, White, Red, and Yellow will rejoice in one common band of humanity in the kingdom of our Lord and of our God,” Sis read.

Ecumenical involvement in the community is important to Bishop Sis, as well as to his predecessor, Bishop Michael D. Pfeifer OMI. Sis said the annual event is a very good opportunity for Catholics of all races to express appreciation for the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

“He had the courage to speak out against injustice and violence, and he helped make our country a better place,” Sis said. “We can all learn from his heroic example.”
Pope Francis poses the question to all of us, “Where is your brother?” He wants us to overcome our indifference and hardness of heart by caring for those who are weak, poor, suffering, and in pain. He says, “Every Christian community is called to go out of itself and to be engaged in the life of the greater society of which it is a part, especially with the poor and those who are far away. The Church is missionary by her very nature; she is not self-enclosed but sent out to every nation and people.”

If we listen to the guidance of our Pope, all of our parishes, missions, and communities will become “islands of mercy in the midst of a sea of indifference.” This is a challenge that ought to motivate the way we approach the season of Lent.

The third biblical passage is “Make your hearts firm” from James 5:8. The Holy Father encourages us to have a strong and steadfast heart, not to despair in a spirit of powerlessness when we are flooded by news reports of human suffering around the world. We should not underestimate the power of prayer. Through the charitable actions of the Church, we all pitch in to help those near and far. We also allow the sufferings of others to remind us of the uncertainty of our own lives and our dependence on God and others.

In Lent 2015, Pope Francis calls us as individuals and as Church communities to be steadfast and merciful, attentive and generous, so that with God’s help we can overcome the temptation of indifference.

During Lent in our Diocese of San Angelo, we will engage in several concrete actions to reach out beyond ourselves and help those in need around the world. On Ash Wednesday, we will take up a special collection for the needs of the Church in the Holy Land. Throughout the season, we each have the opportunity to place a personal contribution every day into our Lenten coin boxes that support the international charitable work of Catholic Relief Services.

On a local level, we serve our neighbors in need through Catholic agencies like Catholic Charities of Odessa, Catholic Outreach in San Angelo, Helping Hands in Midland, and the St. Vincent de Paul Society in various parts of our diocese. If your parish or mission does not have a St. Vincent de Paul Society, or some other form of practical outreach to the local poor, why not get started this year?

In Lent this year, we are called to carry out our traditional practices of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving with the special focus of battling against the temptation of indifference. We pray not just for ourselves, but also for our suffering brothers and sisters. When we fast, we get in touch with what the hungry of the world are going through every day. Through the practice of almsgiving, we do something concrete to help those in need, both near and far away.

Eventually, these practices prepare us to take even bigger steps. Beyond the important actions of charity we are called to tackle matters of justice. We must look at the causes of suffering in our world, considering how and why so many of our brothers and sisters both locally and globally are left out at the edges of society. We commit ourselves to walking in solidarity with them, taking action both individually and communally to build a world whose structures reflect the justice of our God.

Our suffering brothers and sisters need help. As Catholic Christians, we notice them. Their situation matters to us, and we do something about it.

**JONAH**

— my way or the highway!

Maybe that banana we need to let go of represents our unhealthy, sinful habits. Maybe it symbolizes our relationships with so-called “friends” leading us down the wrong path. We think they are our friends, but if they were really our friends, they wouldn’t lead us down the wrong path. They would want us to be good and holy.

Another thing the banana might represent is resentment over past hurts, dwelling on old wounds and refusing to let go of stuff from the past that we need to just let go and let be.

Why don’t we let go of that banana in the monkey trap?

Maybe we think it is our source of security. Perhaps out of sheer habit or convenience. Maybe we lack hope in what God can do for us, and we don’t trust God enough to think we can get along without that banana.

Let’s look at the message of the Scriptures in today’s Mass: Jonah, in the first reading, lives in Israel. He knows about those people up in Nineveh. They are of a different language, a different culture, a different religion, and they have their sins. God calls Jonah to go to Nineveh to preach to them so they will repent and atone for their sins. Jonah doesn’t want to go to Nineveh because he refuses to let go of his negative impression of the Ninevites. He doesn’t want to leave his comfort zone in Israel. He runs from God’s call and takes the next boat bound for Tarshish, which is far, far away, on the other side of the Mediterranean Sea. And you know what happens: when he is on the ship, running away from God’s call, a big storm comes, and the crew on the boat throws him overboard and a big fish swallows Jonah and takes him to the shore and spits him out on the shore in the direction of Nineveh, and Jonah says, “OK, OK, God, I’ll go to Nineveh.” So he went and he preached to the people and they all turned away from their sins.

So, Jonah had to learn to let go of what was familiar and safe for him. He had to learn to let go of his resentment of those Ninevite people, so he could say yes to what God wanted him to do.

In the second reading, Paul says the world in its present form is passing away, so we should live with a spirit of detachment from earthly things, in order to be more fully devoted to the Lord’s work.

In the Gospel today, from Mark, chapter 1, Jesus finds Peter, Andrew, James and John, on a regular day of work in their job as fishermen, and he says to them, “Come after me, and I will make you fishers of men.”

Imagine how hard that would have been for those guys to leave behind their nets, their boats, their source of economic stability, and follow Jesus to go do who knows what. To leave it all behind and go. If something is truly valuable, then it’s worth a sacrifice.

Each one of us has a God-given mission in this life, and it usually comes through sacrifice.

Imagine how powerful Jesus must have been for those guys, to leave it all behind and follow him. The person of Jesus was so powerful and compelling, and their mission was so vitally important, that those early disciples were willing to let go of their safety nets and say yes to whatever God wanted them to do. Even though it was an unknown future.

Jesus is still that attractive and compelling today. The mission that he gives you is just as important.

I invite you all to do a little exercise. I want you to look at your hands. Clench your fists tight. Now look at them … What is it that you are refusing to let go of?

Now … open your hands. Look at them. What a great difference there is between that clenched fist, and that open hand. Think of the difference between the two of them. If your fists are clenched tightly, holding that banana in the monkey trap, then you can’t open up your hands to receive what God wants to give you. And you can’t put your hands to constructive and productive use. What can you do with a clenched hand like that? You can’t do very much that is constructive. You can do things that are destructive, but not constructive. If you want to do something constructive with your hands, you have to open them.

So, my advice is, don’t get caught in the monkey trap. Keep your hands open, to be available to receive gifts from God and to be of service to God. Keep your eyes open, to see the needs of people around you. Keep your ears open, to listen to God’s call to your mission in this world.

**Omission**

The Necrology for January was inadvertently left out of a recent edition of the Angelus. Here are the dates of priests and deacons deaths in our diocese for the month of January. Please pray for them.

10-Rev. Francis Beazley, OMI (1992)
16-Rev. Cyril Lange (1971)
19-Fr. Robert Kelly (1999)
23-Deacon Jose Esparza (2011)
24-Bishop Thomas Tschoepe (2009)
26-Deacon D.J. Goetz (2003)
26-Deacon Jack Peterson (1987)
EMERGENCY

(From 9)

called the Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick. It is not reserved only for the last moments of life or just before going into surgery. It is a sacrament that should be received as a matter of our spiritual and physical wholeness, and it can be received multiple times in one’s life. Many parishes offer Masses of Healing with sacramental anointing of those who request it. Please take advantage of this gift in your parish.

Receiving this sacrament does not mean you are going to die. However, we know not the day or the hour. (Matt 24:42 and 25:13)

Instead of being afraid, we should maintain spiritual preparedness.

To meet the needs of Catholics in the San Angelo area and those who come to our hospitals, there are two ways to approach it. First, if the person in need is a member of a parish and wishes that pastor to visit, the family should contact that priest through his parish during work hours. Second, if the party in need is not a member of a local parish, then the family should contact the floor nurse and request that the nurse or the hospital chaplain call the on-call priest. The priests in Tom Green County have developed an emergency on-call rotation system. A phone is passed to a different priest on a weekly rotation. The phone number is NOT for public distribution. It has been given only to the hospitals for use by the staff. The emergency on-call priest is to be available to help in emergencies. If the call is not an emergency and can be handled the next day, the priest may determine to wait to respond or refer the call to the appropriate pastor. Please understand that this is not a perfect system, but it sure beats calling from parish to parish and having no priests respond, or having two or three priests show up at the hospital for the same case.

Remember: 1) Contact the floor nurse or ER personnel as soon as possible. 2) Pray for the patient.

On a side note: When a person is admitted to a hospital, they should a) notify their priest before going in, b) notify the hospital that they are Catholic, c) if admitted into the hospital through the emergency room, the hospital might not record the religion of the person admitted. The family or patient should check later with the floor nurse to make sure that the patient's name is included on the Catholic census and therefore will be more likely to receive a Catholic visit while in the hospital.

If there is need for a priest to visit a person at home or a nursing home for an emergency, please call your local parish. If the need is an emergency and is after work hours or on a weekend, the answering service can contact the emergency on-call priest. Leave a callback number and directions for a house call. Again, please call as soon as possible to allow time for the priest to respond.

Another thing you can do is to pray for more vocations from your parish and from within your own family. You never know when God will call for the final journey, and you never know when God will call someone to a vocation of ministry in the Church.

WOO SERVICE

(From 4)

“Thanksgiving Feast” sponsored by St. Mary’s Catholic School in Odessa, TX.

On November 19, 2014, St. Mary’s opened its doors to hundreds of homeless within the Midland/Odessa region to offer shelter, food, and fellowship to the less fortunate within the community. Additional assistance was provided by Catholic Charities and the Jesus House as volunteers directed those in need to buses providing free transportation to the safe haven.

Students prepared for the hungry masses by cooking and baking a delicious lunch of ham, turkey, casserole and homemade pies, served by sixth graders in the school cafeteria. As the homeless were fed, the entire school population adapted as students munched on sack lunches packed and planned to eat in the gymnasium. The cafeteria walls were covered with elaborate art pieces and tables adorned with decorative placements created by younger students, and the air was filled with sweet sounds as the school orchestra played.

“Let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.”

(Matthew 5:16)

On January 25-31, 2015, students around the nation celebrated Catholic Schools Week. The theme this year is “Catholic Schools: Communities of Faith, Knowledge and Service.” It is important for all to remember that as teachers provide an exemplary education rooted in scripture and tradition from which a foundation of faith is built, it is only through service that students experience a gain of growth and maturity of that faith. Through service, students learn that part of living one’s faith is to respond to the call to serve others. And as an old saying is paraphrased, “Their actions will become habits. Their habits will become character. And character is everything.”

On February 7-8, 2015, Catholic churches within the Diocese of San Angelo will hold a second collection during all services to raise funds for the benefit of Catholic schools in our area. Please be generous and remember that these students of faith, these stewards of our faith, these stewards of our future, these stewards of our heritage need our support.

If unable to contribute to the special collection in February, please feel free to contact your local Catholic church and/or school for information about directing your donation.

YNOSTROSA

(From 7)

Pro-Life Generation!" Many of the signs were hand written on poster boards. One of these signs said, "1/3 of My Generation is Missing" another one said, "I Survived, but Roe v Wade won’t Survive Me!" Another one said, "A person is a person no matter how small!, Dr. Seuss!"

We marched several blocks to get to the capitol. The weather was perfect, and being with so many pro-life people of all ages, so many teenagers and young adults, was absolutely fantastic!

As we walked onto the Capitol lawn, pro-abortion protesters jumped out at us yelling in our faces, waving their signs with crude statements. We just kept walking and totally ignored them. We stood in the shade of the trees and listened to the guest speakers for the rally. Each one had a story to tell, Abby Johnson was the MC, and she shared a little of her story as she introduced each speaker. One speaker was Claire Culwell, and the story she told brought tears to my eyes. Claire was adopted when she was about 2 1/2 months old.

She was premature and only weighed a little over 3 lbs. when she was born, and she had several problems that required casting for her legs and lower body. She looked for her birth mother when she was grown, she is in her mid to late twenties now. The story her birth mother told her changed her life. Claire survived the abortion that killed her twin. I can't imagine hearing those words. Claire's story is one you should read about. If you go to the Texas Alliance for Life page and click on pictures from the Texas Rally for Life, you will see her beautiful picture, and you can read the rest of her story. When all the speakers were finished we walked back to our vehicles. There were at least 2,500 pro-life people there, I've heard different numbers, even as high as 6,000. That wouldn't surprise me, there were people as far as I could see and then some.

Jim and I headed back to San Angelo, tired from waking up at 2:00am, but energized from the wonderful experience the entire day had been. I was disappointed with the media coverage. The liberal media refuses to acknowledge the huge pro-life presence that is growing stronger each year. The liberal media refuses to acknowledge the young men and women who carry signs that say, "My Generation Will End Abortion!" You know what? I believe their generation will end it! Thanks be to God!

Sharla Ynostrosa blogs about pro-life issues at adoptedandblessed.blogspot.com
SAINTS

(From 10)

within the Order. Farmer describes a rebellion of the lay brothers who complained that there was too much work and not enough food. The complainers found support from some skilled craftsmen and magnates within the church. They went to Rome with their complaints, but Gilbert was upheld by Pope Alexander III. Gilbert accepted them back and improved their food and dress.

One of Gilbert’s long standing habits was to place a plate at his side at table.

Omer Englebert writes in “Lives of the Saints” that he said it was “the plate of the Lord Jesus” in which he put the best food. This became the custom in his Order and that food became the portion of the poor. What was left was for Gilbert himself.

Gilbert was more than 100 years old when he died on February 4, 1189 at Sempringham. He was canonized 13 years later by Pope Innocent III in 1202. The Order doubled in size over nearly 350 years with 26 monasteries. All the houses were dissolved by Henry VIII when he suppressed monasteries and were never revived. Gilbert’s shrine was a place of pilgrimage at the great double monastery with its vast church. Today, only crop marks remain near the surviving parish church at Sempringham.

The school that Gilbert started for boys and girls is the existing primary school at Sempringham and is still named after him: St. Gilbert of Sempringham Church of England School. The school’s motto is: “Energy and Persistence Conquers All.”

BARRON

(From 14)

ty of an infinite regress of conditioned causes.

But more to it, the percentage of atheists in the professional philosophical caste has at least as much to do with academic politics as it does with the formulation of convincing arguments. If one wants to transform a department of philosophy from largely theist to largely atheist, all one has to do is to make sure that the chairman of the department and even a small coterie of the professoriat are atheist. In rather short order, that critical mass will control hiring, firing, and the granting of tenure within the department. Once atheists have come to dominate the department, only atheist faculty will be hired and students with theistic interests will be sharply discouraged from writing dissertations defending the religious point of view. In time, very few doctorates supporting theism will be produced, and a new generation, shaped by thoroughly atheist assumptions, will come of age. To see how quickly this transformation can happen, take a good look at the philosophy department at many of the leading Catholic universities: what were, in the 1950’s overwhelmingly theistic professoriat are today largely atheist. Does anyone really think that this happened because lots of clever new arguments were discovered?

Another serious problem with trumpeting the current statistics on the beliefs of philosophers is that such a move is based on the assumption that, in regard to philosophy, newer is better. One could make that argument in regard to the sciences, which do seem to progress in a steadily upward direction: no one studies the scientific theories of Ptolemy or Descartes today, except out of historical interest. But philosophy is a horse of a different color, more akin to poetry. Does anyone think that the philosophical views of, say, Michel Foucault are necessarily better than those of Plato, Aristotle, Kant, or Hegel, just because Foucault is more contemporary? It would be like saying the verse of Robert Frost is necessarily superior to that of Dante or Shakespeare, just because Frost wrote in the twentieth century. I for one think that philosophy, so marked today by nihilism and postmodern relativism, is passing through a particularly corrupt period. Why should we think, therefore, that the denizens of philosophy department lounges today are necessarily more correct than Alfred North Whitehead, Edmund Husserl, Ludwig Wittgenstein, Jacques Maritain, Emmanuel Levinas, and Jean-Luc Marion, all of whom were well-acquainted with modern science, rigorously trained in philosophy and affirmed the existence of God?

I despise the arrogance of Dennett and his atheist followers who would blithely wrap themselves in the mantle of “brightness;” but I also despise the use of statistics to prove any point about philosophical or religious matters. I would much prefer that we return to argument.

Father Robert Barron is the founder of the global ministry, Word on Fire, and the Rector/President of Mundelein Seminary. He is the creator of the award winning documentary series, “Catholicism” and "Catholicism: The New Evangelization."

SANDOVAL

(Para 15)

Domashinski dijo durante una entrevista de televisión: “Síntet que era compatible. Sí que es poco escafofíz, pero yo sabía. Le pregunté, ‘¿Cuál es el tipo de su sangre?’ Cuando el dijó, ‘O Positivo’ le dije a mi esposo, ‘Soy compatible’.

Domashinski, una madre en sus cuarenta y cinco con tres hijas de edad 17, 13 y 10 años, consultó con ellas y con su esposo. Con su pleno apoyo le ofreció al pastor un rafón después de una Misa diaria. Después de año y medio de pruebas que confirmaron compatibilidad casi perfecta, la cirugía se llevó a cabo el otoño pasado. Seis semanas después, el padre Whyte regresó a su trabajo en plena salud y energía.

“El pueblo espera otro Lázaro…u otros 5,000 que sean alimentados… Dios nos da milagros; este es uno”, el padre Whyte declaró.

En la primavera de 2014, Domashinski fue a África para servir en una misión en Uganda. Vuelve este verano con sus hijas para ayudar a establecer un centro de ciencia. Atribuyendo todo a su educación, dijo durante una entrevista que sus padres le dijieron: “No estás aquí sólo para ser mueble”.

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Odessa

Bishop Michael Sis, far left, with UT-Permian Basin president, Dr. David Watts; with the Catholic Student Association at UTPB (near left). Above, with Fr. Joseph Uecker, sacramental minister for the CSA. (Photos by Alan P. Torre / aportre.com.)

Austin

Fr. Mark Woodruff, at right, pastor of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton in Odessa, addresses a crowd of volunteers at the church to kick off the parish’s campaign to raise awareness and funds toward the expansion of its current campus.

The kickoff event was December 14, 2014.

(Photos by Alan P. Torre / aportre.com)

Abilene

Youth groups at Abilene’s St. Vincent Pallotti recite the Rosary while elementary children enact the 5 decades of the Joyful Mysteries.

(Courtesy photo by John Rangel)