Engaged Encounter marks 40th year

By Becca Nelson Sankey

SAN ANGELO — Thirty-one years after saying “I do” themselves, Estela and Roel Zamora have discovered a secret to an even healthier and stronger marriage: helping engaged couples prepare for their own sacrament of matrimony.

The Zamoras, of Edinburg, about 477 miles south of San Angelo, were one of 26 couples who attended the Catholic Engaged Encounter District III Convention. Held biennially, District III couples who present Catholic Engaged

Same-Sex Marriage Ruling
WASHINGTON (CNS) -- The president of the U.S. bishops' conference called the Supreme Court's June 26 marriage ruling "a tragic error" and he urged Catholics to move forward with faith "in the unchanging truth about marriage being between one man and one woman."

Warm Welcome
Bishop Michael J. Sis pauses to greet a young parishioner at St. Ann's Church in Midland following the parish's confirmation Mass in May. (Photo by Alan P. Torre / aptorre.com)

Jesus: With us through the storms (Editor's Note: The following is the text of the homily delivered by San Angelo Bishop Michael J. Sis at the Fortnight for Freedom Opening Mass, June 21, 2015, at Holy Redeemer Church in Odessa.)

The Apostles are on a boat on the Sea of Galilee when they become caught in a sudden storm.
These are experienced fishermen, but they panic. The wind is blowing hostile all around them, the waves are breaking over the boat, it’s taking on water, and they’re afraid they’ll sink in the middle of the sea.
And where is Jesus? Sound asleep in the back of the boat!

(Let the love of Jesus burst forth from the hearts of all who hear his Word, and may the Holy Spirit guide the Church as we move forward in faith and love. Amen.)
Caring for our common home — and for those who come after us

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

Pope Francis promulgated 
*Laudato Si*,

his landmark encyclical on the environemnt, on June 18, 2015. The document encourages all people to care for the earth, our common home. With this article I would like to introduce some principal themes of the encyclical.

Much has been said in news reports about this papal encyclical. However, the best way to know what it really says is to read the document itself rather than rely completely on other people’s claims about it. It is a rich document to be reflected upon over time, through a process of dialogue and discernment. The document can be found online in English and Spanish at www.sanangelodiocese.org or at www.vatican.va.

The starting point of *Laudato Si* is to ask, “What kind of world do we want to leave to those who come after us, to children who are now growing up?” (160) We only have this one planet. This is the place where we and future generations have to live. The earth is a gift, not a possession. It was entrusted to us to administer, not to destroy.

A core theme of this encyclical is the teaching that we have a responsibility for the well-being of creation. Our duty toward nature and the Creator is an essential part of our faith. Pope Francis says there is a link between human ecology and natural ecology. He calls this “integral ecology.” His point here is that the well-being of persons and the well-being of the environment go hand in hand.

As Catholics we recognize a strong connection between respecting human dignity and caring for the natural world. The Holy Father says, “We are not faced with two separate crises, one environmental and the other social, but rather with one complex crisis which is both social and environmental.” (139)

Some claim that protecting the environment will hinder economic development. The Pope, however, says that care for the natural world need not compromise legitimate economic progress. In fact, he says, in sustainable development the following three things can all be pursued at the same time: economic development, care for the poor and vulnerable, and care for the environment. He expresses hope that businesses and communities can all work together to protect the environment.

(Please See BISHOP/20)

**Sobre el cuidado de la casa común**

By Bishop Michael J. Sis

El Papa Francisco promulgó *Laudato Si*, su encíclica hita sobre el medio ambiente, el 18 de junio de 2015. El documento anima a todas las personas a cuidar la tierra, nuestro hogar común. Con este artículo me gustaría presentar algunos temas principales de la encíclica.

Mucho se ha dicho en las noticias sobre esta encíclica papal. Sin embargo, la mejor manera de saber lo que realmente dice es leer el documento en sí en lugar de confiar por completo en las reclamaciones de otras personas al respecto. Es un documento rico como para reflejarse con el tiempo, a través de un proceso de diálogo y discernimiento. El documento se puede encontrar en línea en inglés y español en www.sanangelodiocese.org o en www.vatican.va.

El punto de partida de *Laudato Si* es preguntar: “¿Qué tipo de mundo queremos dejar a quienes nos sucedan, a los niños que están creciendo?” (160) Sólo tenemos este único planeta. Este es el lugar en donde nosotros y las generaciones futuras tienen que vivir. La tierra es un don, no una posesión. Se nos ha confiado para administrar, no para destruir.

Un tema central de esta encíclica es la enseñanza de que tenemos una responsabilidad para el bienestar de la creación. Nuestro deber hacia la naturaleza y el Creador es una parte esencial de nuestra fe.

El Papa Francisco dice que hay un vínculo entre la ecología humana y la ecología natural. El llama a esto “la ecología integral.” Su punto aquí es que el bienestar de las personas y el bienestar del medio ambiente van mano a mano.

Como católicos reconocemos una fuerte conexión entre el respeto de la dignidad humana y el cuidado de la naturaleza. El Santo Padre dice: “No hay dos crisis separadas, una ambiental y otra social, sino una sola y compleja crisis socio-ambiental.” (139)

Algunos afirman que la protección del medio ambiente puede entorpecer el desarrollo económico. El Papa, sin embargo, dice que la protección del medio ambiente no debe obstaculizar el desarrollo económico.

(Please See OBISPO/14)

**DIOCESAN BRIEFS**

Priesthood discernment retreat
ODESSA — Are you a young man, 10th grade and older, thinking about becoming a priest? You are invited to a Priesthood Discernment Retreat at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish, 7601 N. Grandview, Odessa, beginning Friday evening, July 31 and continuing through Sunday morning, August 2. Seminarians, priests and Bishop Michael J. Sis will be on hand during the retreat to share stories about hearing God’s call, what seminary is like, and the joys and challenges of being a priest. Those discerning a call will have an opportunity to meet other like-minded young men from around the diocese to discuss their thoughts about the future. The retreat will conclude with an opportunity to attend the “Kickball with Clerics” event planned by the Diocesan Vocations Office at Hogan Park in Midland (see announcement, Pg. 1). “Kickball with Clerics” will pit the clergy and seminarians of the San Angelo Diocese against the youth of the diocese on Sunday afternoon. There is no charge for the Priesthood Discernment Retreat. Food will be provided by various parish groups in the area. For more information or to register, please call Fr. Mark Woodruff at 432-202-0336 or talk to your pastor.

Controller position open at Chancery
The Diocese of San Angelo is seeking to fill the position of Controller. The Controller is responsible for oversight of all accounting, budgeting, and reporting functions of the Diocese in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles; leads all day-to-day financial operations in the areas of accounting, accounts payable, accounts receivable, payroll, and cash management; supervises the production of monthly financial statements and internal management reports; verifies accuracy of payroll; and is responsible for filing payroll tax returns and payroll tax deposits. Requirements: Bachelor’s Degree in Accounting or Finance, experience as a controller in a non-profit organization or as a public accountant dealing with non-profit clients, hands-on knowledge of Microsoft Office, Quick Books; supervisory experience, ability to set priorities and manage against timelines.

Applications should send a resume with references to Steve McKay, Diocesan Finance Officer at smckay@sanangelodiocese.org. Application deadline Thurs., July 9.

**GRN event to feature Colin Raye**
Guadalupe Radio Network for West Texas will host the 2nd annual Fishers of Men Dinner, 7 p.m., Saturday, October 3, 2015, Midland Center. This year’s keynote presenter is Collin Raye, former country music recording artist ... San Angelo Bishop Michael J. Sis will also be honored at the dinner. Also appearing will be the Texas Nuns and the Poor Clare Sisters of Perpetual Adoration.

**Correction**
In a story in the May *West Texas Angelus*, it was incorrectly reported that Sister Delia Herrera, chaplain at the Federal Detention Center in Eden, is a member of the Dominican order. Sister Delia is actually a Missionary Catechist of Divine Providence (MCDP). The *Angelus* regrets the error.
CALENDARS

BISHOP SIS’ SCHEDULE

JULY
11 — SANDERSON, St. James, Confirmation Mass at 4:00 p.m.
12 — MENARD, Sacred Heart, Confirmation Mass at 9:00 a.m.
16 — MIDLAND, San Miguel, Theology on Tap at 7:00 p.m.
29 — SAN ANGELO, Christ the King Retreat Center, Parish Office Staff Development Day from 9:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
31 — ODessa, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, Vocation Discernment Retreat

AUGUST
1 — ODessa, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, Vocation Discernment Retreat
2 — Kickball with Clerics, more info to be announced
24 — SAN ANGELO, Christ the King Retreat Center, Annual Seminarian Convocation
4 — ODessa, Holy Redeemer, 25th Anniversary Mass of Fr. Michael Rodriguez, 6:30 p.m.
11 — SAN ANGELO, Diocesan Pastoral Center, Diocesan Campus Ministry meeting, 11:00 a.m.
12 — SAN ANGELO, Diocesan Pastoral Center, Priestly Life and Formation Committee meeting, 1:30 p.m.
15 — EDEN, Detention Center, Mass, 1 p.m.
16 — SAN ANGELO, Christ the King Retreat Center, Mass at Deacons’ Retreat, 11:00 a.m.
18 — SAN ANGELO, Diocesan Pastoral Center, Presbyteral Council meeting, 11:00 a.m.
19 — SAN ANGELO, Diocesan Pastoral Center, Vocation Team meeting, 2:00 p.m.
23 — HOUSTON, St. Mary’s Seminary, Rite of Candidacy, 9:30 a.m.

CHRIST THE KING RETREAT CENTER

JULY
11 Deacon Formation
13 Heart of Mercy Prayer Group
15 Small Town Teen Acts Team Arrival
16-19 Small Town Teen
20 Heart of Mercy Prayer Group
23 Bishop Sis Staff Meeting & Lunch
23-26 Boys Chrysalis Flight
27 Heart of Mercy Prayer Group
27 Deacon Quarterly
29 Parish Staff Development Day

NECROLOGY AUGUST
7-Rev. Andrew DeMuth (1969)
10-Rev. Michael Barbarossa, OFM (1981)
14-Rev. Bernard Binversie (1992)
21-Deacon William Callan (1988)
21-Deacon Enemissio Samaniego (2008)
23-Deacon Efracio Hernandez (1998)
28-Deacon Mario Calderon (1998)

PRIESTLY ORDINATIONS JULY
8 — Fr. Romanus Akamike (1989)
19 — Bishop Michael Sis (1986)

AUGUST
2 — Fr. Francis Njoku (1997)
4 — Fr. Isidore Ochiabuto (2001)
4 — Fr. Michael Rodriguez (1990)
12 — Fr. David Herrera (1989)
13 — Fr. Lionel Fernando ([1987)
15 — Fr. Fabian Rosette (1980)
22 — Fr. Charles Okonkwo (1992)

SEMINARIANS OF THE MONTH: JUNE, JULY 2015

As I grow nearer to the priesthood ...

By Praveen K. Lakkisetti

“Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth.” (Col 3:2)

As I reflect on the priesthood, I am excited and challenged to enter into Christ’s mission of proclaiming the Gospel to the ends of the earth. For me, this is a happy and a fruitful task in offering my life in the service of the Church and God’s people through the gift of priesthood.

Consider traveling to a new place for the first time. Or think of a situation of going to a place or meeting a person you most cherish. Still better, imagine getting back home for vacation after a long time! You certainly feel a great longing to reach the place, meet the person. As the arrival time gets closer, a sense of haste overwhelms to such an extent that other things do not really matter. Eyes begin to water and there will be a whole range of chemical reaction in the body. It takes some time to get back to normal mode of being after such a situation. Most of us experience such nostalgia when meeting dear ones or reaching cherished places after long flights. In those moments, general issues are kept aside and begin to focus on the particulars. This kind of experience is very true in my case as I wish and long to embrace priesthood after long years of formation. I could see the joy in the eyes of those being ordained to sacred orders – shedding tears of joy, manifesting a profound sense of faith, accomplishment and acknowledgement.

As I grow close to the priesthood, I need to focus on particular matters of importance. This does not take away the general obligations that are pertinent to formation. Shift needs to be made to focus on Christ’s charism like looking for a dear one in a crowded section of arrivals in an airport. To follow Christ authentically through sacred priesthood demands that I put away my many false images and put on the image of Christ and focus on the essentials.

On the road to priesthood, which is spread through long years of formation, it is likely that one carries a lot of burden, which is not worth carrying. At every stage, a check list needs to assist in eliminating the things of least importance and thus focus on issues that really matter. In other words, it calls for an effort to shed scales of those matters that do not constitute for priestly identity. Focusing on priestly concerns is to add flesh to the broad frame of priestly identity that one desires. This notion of ‘adding flesh’ is to be done cautiously through a proper discernment of motives. The anatomy of priestly character is not to be damaged with a mixture of those viruses that are not priestly. Through a personal encounter with Christ, the priestly identity gets richer and facilitates to grow in communion with God. “The basic principle of spiritual unceasing union with God the Father through his Son, Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit. This is the foundational call to discipleship and conversion of heart.” (PPF, no.106-7) This is the hallmark identity of discipleship that needs to get richer as one reaches close to priesthood. In the light of prayer and reflection, The Holy Spirit accompanies the seminarian to put on Christ and grow in a deep priestly character. “The whole formation to candidates for priesthood aims at preparing them to enter in communion with the charity of Christ the Good Shepherd. Hence their formation in its different aspects must have a fundamentally pastoral character.” (PV, no. 57)

Having gone through a profound Christlike experience, the priest radiates the joy of being a priest and manifests Christ to others. As one sets out on a priestly journey to encounter Christ in the community of faithful, it calls for strengthening the identity and preparedness. “Take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.” (Ephesians 6:17)

Praveen K. Lakkisetti is a seminarian at Assumption Seminary in San Antonio.

Discernment can be difficult part of journey

By Tony Franco

A seminary will tell you that discernment is something that continues until you graduate, or don’t. It took five years but I finally experienced the full meaning of that wisdom. There comes a day when you truly discern, when you honestly allow yourself to consider the possibility that maybe you’re not called to be a priest. Maybe you don’t have what it takes to be a good priest. Maybe God really isn’t with you in your choice. It was a year ago that I allowed myself to truly dwell in that possibility, and it was not a pleasant experience.

Who is truly worthy? It’s not hard to consider yourself unworthy if you take a long, honest account of your transgressions and shortcomings, both past and present. An honest discernment can cause you serious doubt and make you feel discouraged. Anyway, that was my experience a year ago, and that is exactly where the enemy wanted me to remain.

But we have an advocate. Jesus paid for our transgressions on the Cross. Even more, His Resurrection has made us His brothers, children of the Father, Somos Hijos del Reino. I thank God with all my heart for the Love he has allowed me to experience. I feel it from Him directly and from the people He surrounds me with. He has touched me deeply and intensely. That has allowed me to let go of doubt. He has replaced my discouragement with joy and peace. I feel more sure than ever that He is my help and my comforter. He is merciful and keeps calling me, and telling me to not be afraid. His Presence is real and I pray He guides me during this coming final year of seminary. Que Dios Quiera!

Tony Franco is a seminarian at St. Mary’s Seminary in Houston.
FALL FESTIVALS / FAMILY FAIRS
Fall Festival / Family Fair season is fast approaching. Please send details about your special parish event to jpatterson@sanangelodiocese.org as soon as possible to ensure ample exposure before your event day arrives.

ST. MARY, STAR OF THE SEA
Sunday, September 13
BALLINGER
Harvest Blessings, the 2015 fall festival at St. Mary's, Star of the Sea, in Ballinger, will be Sunday, September 13, 2015. A traditional Mexican beef and Chicken Fajita dinner will be served from 11 a.m.-1:30 p.m. Live auction begins at 12:30 p.m. Buy a chance to win a $1,200 Gas Grill, a 40-inch LCT TV or a $250 Wal-Mart Gift Certificate. Also featured: Children's games, Bingo, Fancy Stand, Silent Auction and a Handmade Quilt Raffle. For more information, contact 325.365.2687.

IMMACULATE CONCEPTION FESTIVAL
Sunday, September 27
KNICKERBOCKER
Mesquite-cooked brisket & sausage plate with all the trimmings served from 11 a.m.-2 p.m. Adults $10, children (12 & under) $8. Live Auction begins at 1 p.m. Raffle – Games – Country Store – Music by the Old Hat Band

ST. MARY FALL FESTIVAL
Sunday, October 4
BROWNWOOD
The 2015 Fall Festival will be held on Sunday, October 4, 2015 from 10:00 am to 5:00 pm at St. Mary Queen of Peace Catholic Church at 1103 Main Avenue. There will be live and silent auctions. Our top raffle prize is $2,000. Also included in the raffle this year are Four Tickets to a Cowboy game with a Parking Pass. Third prize is $1,000, and a 55-inch Smart TV flat screen for a fourth prize. Raffle tickets are $5.00 each. Music will be provided by a DJ and other groups throughout the day. There will also be a cake walk, a country store, a loteria, a children's area, children's rides, children's art contest and a car show. From our many food booths, roasted corn, gorditas, Filipino food, hamburgers and curly fries, flautas, menudo, homemade cookies and more. The approximate schedule for this festival's activities is as follows: CHILDREN'S AND YOUTH ACTIVITIES: 10 am-5 pm; COUNTRY STORE: 10 a.m.-5 pm; CAKEWALK: 10 am till sold out; SILENT AUCTION:10 am-3 pm; LIVE AUCTION: 3-5 pm; FOOD: 10-5 pm. Bring your family and friends to help celebrate our Fall Festival. All proceeds from this year's activities will go into our fund for the renovation of our Parish Hall.

ST. LAWRENCE
The 2015 St. Lawrence Fall Festival is Sunday, October 4. Details to follow.

San Angelo builder Todd Whittley, second from right in inset photo above, recently completed work on a new rectory at St. Ambrose Parish in Wall.

Whittley said the job took about six months when weather delays were factored in, something that both priest and parishioners were all very understanding about.

"We're all farmers here, so we're more excited about the rain helping us than getting behind on the construction schedule. Nobody ever rushed me. We even had the open house and dedication with umbrellas."

-- Jimmy Patterson

Generous SA builder completes Wall rectory

HAT TRICKS
What happens when you tell 50 pre-Kindergarten graduates at the annual Kindergarten Promotion ceremony at St. Mary's Catholic School in Odessa to throw their mortar boards (above)? Photographer Alan P. Torre captured the scene in May.
Stanton’s Msgr. Schwertner celebrates 50 years in the priesthood

By Raquel Polson

STANTON — Parishioners in Stanton celebrated Msgr. Timothy Schwertner’s 50th Anniversary of Ordination, May 31, 2015, assisted by Deacon Clemente Villa and Tommy Flores. Both St. Joseph’s in Stanton parish and St. Isidore Mission of Lenorah were present as the Mass was celebrated at the Stanton Community Center. A luncheon followed with wonderful fellowship.

Msgr. Tim was born on June 28, 1938 in western Lubbock County, on a farm near Lubbock and Smyer. In January of 1946 his family moved to Slaton, where they joined the St. Joseph’s Parish, and he, along with two older brothers, were enrolled in St. Joseph’s School. After graduating from the eighth grade, Schwertner enrolled in St. John’s Minor Seminary in San Antonio as a seminarian for the Diocese of Amarillo. He graduated from high school in May of 1957 and enrolled in Assumption Seminary the following September. After completing four years of college and four years of Theology, he was ordained to the priesthood on May 30, 1965 in St. Joseph’s Parish in Slaton by Bishop Lawrence DeFalco of the Amarillo Diocese.

Following a summer as a substitute, he was assigned to Sacred Heart Parish in Plainview as one of two associates where he served for five years. He was then assigned to Holy Cross Parish in Post with a mission, Blessed Sacrament, in Wilson. While pastor of Holy Cross, he was able to purchase a large building that is the present church and hall. St. Jude in Tahoka was added temporarily as a mission the following January. The “temporary” assignment lasted until March of 1973. Msgr. Tim was transferred to Immaculate Conception in Muleshoe with St. Mary Magdalene in Earth as its mission. He served there for six years until June of 1979. Under his service at Immaculate Conception, a large debt on the parish hall/classroom complex was paid off and the church got new pews, and a new parish hall/classroom complex was built at the mission, St. Mary Magdalene.

(Please See SCHWERTNER/22)

Diocesan finance director retires

By Jimmy Patterson

Editor / West Texas Angelus

SAN ANGELO — There has been, in a number of offices at the Diocesan Pastoral Center, a good amount of stability through the years. Bishop Michael Pfeifer served as the diocesan shepherd for 28 years. Mary Sue Brewer, assistant to all six bishops, worked for the diocese for more than 50 years. Both have recently retired.

In June, the diocese announced the retirement of Chief Financial Officer Regina Bodiford, who worked for the Church since 2001, and for three years prior to that served the Church as an outside contract certified public accountant.

Bodiford said her decision was due to two factors: the desire to spend more time with her young grandchild, in Houston, and the simple fact that “I’m already older than I had hoped to be when I retired.”

Bodiford and her husband, Mike, also a CPA, with Armstrong & Backus in San Angelo, have two sons: Jason, an anesthesiology resident in Houston, and Brian, who teaches college English and works for the diocese at the pastoral center.

She recalled working with former CFO Les Maiman, retired Bishop Pfeifer and Bishop Sis as highlights in her time at the diocese.

As for what she will miss most, Bodiford chuckled and said, “Hearing (chancellor) Mike Wyse’s 10 jokes and 20 stories a day.”

Bodiford is succeeded by Steve McKay, a Perryton native and longtime CPA in the Austin area. McKay has served in accounting capacities in both the public and private sectors, including the restaurant, computer software, propane and printing industries.

“Everyone has been very welcoming since we arrived,” McKay said. He and wife, Jan, a Big Spring native, have been married 33 years. The couple has three sons: Garrett, a senior at Texas A&M; Evan, an incoming freshman at Blinn College in Bryan, and Callie, 15, who will attend high school in San Angelo.

“The finance officer must be a person who is noted for personal honesty and integrity. Our conscientious interviewing and vetting processes have verified this to be true of Steve McKay. He brings a wealth of experience and a proven track record in the world of business, finance and accounting,” said Bishop Michael J. Sis. “I am very grateful to Regina Bodiford for her faithful service to the diocese. As she shifts gears into her retirement years, we thank her for all the good she has done for us, and we wish her a fruitful and joyful retirement.”

New vicar at St. Elizabeth named

Bishop Michael J. Sis, left, recently welcomed Fr. Balachandra Nagipogu, newly appointed parochial vicar at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Church in Odessa.
Photographers, both professional and amateur, capture the St. Stephen's-Midland Confirmation group.

Bishop Michael J. Sis, at right and below, speaks to the confirmation class at St. Joseph's in Odessa, believed to be the largest confirmation class in the diocese this year.

(Photo by Alan P. Torre).

(Photo by Alan P. Torre).

(Photo by Alan P. Torre).
First Communion at Our Lady of Lourdes Church in Andrews (8:30 a.m. Mass at right, 10:30 a.m. Mass, below right).

Courtesy photos

Bishop Michael J. Sis, with Fr. Joseph Ogbonna and the Our Lady of Lourdes-Andrews Confirmation Class (Courtesy photo).
Rowena Reunion
The Class of 1965 of St. Joseph’s Catholic High School in Rowena celebrated its 50th anniversary on May 23, 2015. The event included a Mass of Thanksgiving and a wonderful meal, with plenty of time to renew friendships.

Rev. William R. DuBuisson


Fr. DuBuisson entered St. Peter’s Novitiate on May 30, 1948 in Mission and professed vows as a member of the Congregation of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate on May 31, 1949. Fr. DuBuisson completed his studies in philosophy and theology at the DeMazenod Scholastate, now Oblate School of Theology, in San Antonio.

He was ordained to the priesthood on September 8, 1955 at St. Mary’s Church in San Antonio, by Archbishop Robert E. Lucey, DD. Fr. DuBuisson later earned a Master's degree in Canon Law at University of Ottawa in Ontario, Canada and a Licentiate in Canon Law at Saint Paul University, in Ottowa, Ontario, Canada. Fr. DuBuisson’s first assignment was Associate Pastor at Sacred Heart Parish in Edinburg. He also served as Professor at St. Anthony’s Seminary in San Antonio; Professor and Vice Rector at Notre Dame Seminary in Cotabato City, Philippines; Associate Pastor at Immaculate Heart Parish in Harlingen; Associate Pastor at Our Lady of Sorrows Parish in Houston; Pastor at Sacred Heart of Mary in Rocksprings; Pastor at Sacred Heart Parish in Del Rio; Associate Pastor at Our Lady of Guadalupe in Midland; Associate Pastor at St. Ann's Parish in Midland; Pastor at Our Lady of Lourdes Parish in Andrews; Pastor at Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish in Ozona, and Pastor at St. Ann's Parish in Sonora.

Fr. DuBuisson also served as Judge on the Appellate Court for the Dioceses of Texas; and as Judge and Adjutant Judicial Vicar for the Tribunal in San Angelo, Texas for many years. In 2009, Fr. DuBuisson retired and moved to Oblate Madonna Residence in San Antonio, Texas.

Fr. DuBuisson is preceded in death by his parents, William Robert DuBuisson, Jr. and Louise (Fox) DuBuisson, and his brother, Donald. In addition to his Oblate family, Fr. DuBuisson is survived by numerous cousins, nieces, nephews, and friends. Fr. DuBuisson will be remembered with respect and esteem by his Oblate brothers and all the people who were recipients of his pastoral care. Funeral services were at Immaculate Conception Chapel at 285 Oblate Drive, San Antonio, Texas 78216. A Vigil was held on Tuesday, June 30, 2015. Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated on Wednesday, July 1, 2015. Interment will follow at the Oblate Cemetery. Arrangements by Angelus Funeral Home, 1119 N. St. Mary’s St., San Antonio.

The First Family Integration Retreat was celebrated in May at Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish in Midland. The event was hosted by the "Angeles de Dios" ministry. (Photo by Alan P. Torre / aptorre.com)
Bishop’s statement on SC shootings, June 17

“The Catholics of West Texas grieve the loss of our brothers and sisters in Christ at Emanuel A.M.E. Church in Charleston, South Carolina, as they were cruelly murdered along with their pastor in a prayer meeting at the church Wednesday, June 17. We stand in solidarity with their family members and fellow congregants, and we pray for their consolation and peace. Their loss is our loss. Their pain is our pain. This brutal act of cowardice is an embarrassment to our nation. Racial prejudice is a grave sin that must be eradicated from our society.”

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

Pilgrimage to Alabama

The first “Catholic View for Women” pilgrimage to EWTN in Irondale, Ala., and to The Shrine of the Most Blessed Sacrament in Hanceville, Ala. was attended by 50 plus from across the country. Pilgrims from Holy Trinity Church in Big Spring included Suzanne Haney, Karen Stevens, Elaine Sayles and Kathy Sayles. Debra Schwartz and Martha Schwartz, St. Lawrence Parish, also attended. They are pictured here with Fr. Mitch Pacwa of EWTN Live.

Bishop’s statement on SC shootings, June 17

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

Interfaith dialogue takes willingness, openness, courage

By Becky Benes
Peace Ambassadors of West Texas

Since Vatican II, Catholic Doctrine and our popes have called for more open dialogue with people of other religions; yet, many Catholics still seem to walk in fear of the "other" or they believe that engaging in interfaith dialogues is being unfaithful.

Recently, a daughter of a dear Catholic friend revealed to me that her parents believed my involvement with interfaith initiatives were "non-Christian and non-Catholic." Therefore, they had avoided me and kept their children at bay out of fear that they would go astray. (I just thought our lives had just become too busy.) This child, now a college student, said that through her college courses and meeting people of other cultures and faith traditions, her heart and mind expanded to include the "other."

She had made many friends and was fascinated with their cultures and how they practiced their own faiths. She was amazed at the similar teachings and ideologies and how being with them had enhanced her own faith journey. However, her parents and other people in her church continued to discourage her interest in the "other."

She felt conflicted wanting to please her family and be true to her faith; yet at the same time, she wanted to be true to her heart. In speaking with me, I introduced her to the various Catholic doctrines about interfaith understanding and had her research Pope Francis' thoughts and actions on the subject. In so doing, she felt liberated and at peace discovering that interfaith dialogues are in alignment with Catholicism.

According to Vatican Radio, in November of 2014 while addressing the Turkish President Erdogan and other Turkish political leaders, Pope Francis encouraged and urged the audience to engage in more interreligious dialogues. He felt it would "help bring peace and end all forms of fundamentalism, terrorism and irrational fears." Pope Francis went on to stress the importance of religious freedom and respect for human dignity.

In June 2014, Pope Francis courageously invited and welcomed the Israeli and Palestinian presidents to the Vatican for evening prayers prior to their peace talks. The prayer summit included Jewish, Christian and Muslim prayers and was delivered in Hebrew, English, Arabic and Italian. He beautifully pulled them together as “one for the greater good of the whole in prayer.”

Interestingly, one year later in Phoenix, Arizona, the second "Freedom of Speech Rally" was held in front of a mosque to protest against Islam and express anti-Islamic views. The great news is that an equal amount of Americans...

(Please See BENES/22)
Ursula Giuliani: Rambunctious Italian youth turned saint

By Mary Lou Gibson

Ursula Giuliani was born into a moderately wealthy family in Urbino, Italy in 1660. As the youngest of seven sisters, she described herself as a feisty child.

"I was by nature passionate; every trifle excited me to irritation, and if it was a serious annoyance ... I stamped on the ground like a horse."

It was during these years of her youth that she began to be drawn to the contemplation of Our Lord’s passion. She was 17 when she had a vision of Our Lady. Paul Burns writes in “Butler’s Lives of the Saints” that this experience led her to enter the convent of the Poor Clare Capuchin nuns at Città di Castello in Umbria.

Three of her sisters had already become nuns and her father had hoped that his Ursula would make a brilliant marriage. She took the name Veronica in religion and her spiritual life intensified. Burns writes that she began to experience visions of Christ in his passion and that marks of the passion began to appear on her body, starting with the imprint of the crown of thorns on her head.

On Good Friday 1697, Christ’s wounds appeared on her body and she received the stigmata while rapt in prayer. Barbara Calamari and Sandra Dipasqua write in “Holy Cards” that at this same time Veronica suffered an intense pain in her heart and insisted that it was caused by the symbols of the crucifixion. After her death, surgeons removed her heart and found the symbols of the Passion exactly where she said they were.

According to Burns, as Veronica began to manifest the wounds, the convent superiors watched her night and day for any changes and reported her to the bishop. He made her wear sealed gloves so that she could do nothing to the wounds in her hands. Then, the Sacred Tribunal of the Inquisition ordered an investigation. Sarah Gallick writes in “The Big Book of Women Saints” that doctors put Veronica though many humiliating exams. In addition, she was confined for 50 days and deprived of the Eucharist. Eventually, no one could find a scientific explanation for her wounds.

Throughout this intense investigation, Veronica showed no signs of mental imbal-

ance and was totally practical and sensible in everyday life. Her superiors finally left her alone and allowed her to lead a normal life in the convent. She was appointed novice mistress, a position she held for the next 34 years. Although she was an avid reader of mystical writers, she would not allow her novices to do so. Instead, she told them that charity and obedience were the foundations of religious life.

In 1717, Veronica was elected abbess. She administered the physical and economic structure of the convent and negotiated with local land owners to divert some of their water and had plumbing installed to carry water all over the monastery. She received many spiritual gifts including being able to multiply the food for the convent so that they never ran out of supplies.

Burns writes that Veronica said that she received an increasing sense of the love of God to which she responded with total dedication in suffering. Her confessor asked her to keep an account of her mystical experiences, so by the time of her death in 1727, there were over 22,000 pages written. As a result, Gallick notes that Veronica was one of the best documented examples of extraordinary mystic experiences.

Fr. Herbert Thurston, S.J. writes that Veronica exhibited “perhaps the most remarkable known” case of physical phenomena of mysticism. The sheer volume of her documentary evidence caused the process of her beatification and canonization to be a lengthy one. Burns writes that the investigation of her life was completed over 100 years after her death. She was canonized by Pope Gregory XVI in 1893. Her July 9th feast day is not on the General Roman calendar but is observed by the Franciscans.

(Note: “The Complete Illustrated Encyclopedia of Saints” describes the Stigmata as “the appearance of wounds on the hands, feet and in the ribs, in imitation of those made by the nails that pinned Christ to the Cross.” St. Francis of Assisi was the first Christian to manifest the marks in 1224. To date, the Catholic Church has recognized 62 men and women as stigmatics and St. Veronica Giuliani is on this list.)

Austin-based Catholic writer Mary Lou Gibson writes about the saints for the West Texas Angelus and for other Catholic publications.
The Angelus JULY 2015

Making Sense of Bioethics

The banking of sperm and eggs before cancer treatments

Fr. Tad Pacholczyk

Both chemotherapy and radiation can affect sexual organs and how they work. The American Cancer Society addresses the potential effects on male fertility this way: “Chemo may lower the number of sperm cells, reduce their ability to move, or cause other changes.... Because permanent sterility (infertility) may occur, it’s important to discuss this issue with your doctor BEFORE you start chemo. You might want to think about banking your sperm for future use.”

Various moral concerns arise in the wake of the proposal to freeze reproductive cells like eggs or sperm. Catholic teaching has always stressed the importance of the marital act in bringing about new human life. Even if sperm were procured in a morally-acceptable way — i.e. not through withdrawal or masturbation — the subsequent use of the sperm sample would involve techniques that were either directly immoral (such as in vitro fertilization or intracytoplasmic sperm injection), or at least of a dubious moral character (such as Gamete Intrafallopian Transfer [GIFT] or intrauterine insemination [IUI]).

These latter two techniques, GIFT and IUI, have never been directly mentioned in official Church documents, so the question of whether they might be morally allowable continues to be discussed among Catholic moral theologians. GIFT involves collecting sperm after the marital act, placing it near an egg — but separated by an air bubble — within a thin, flexible tube called a catheter. After insertion into a woman’s reproductive tract, the sex cells are injected into her fallopian tube so fertilization can occur inside her body, rather than in a petri dish. Meanwhile, IUI (also known as artificial insemination or AI) involves the placement of sperm into a woman’s uterus by a catheter or a means other than a natural act of intercourse.

An important Vatican document known as Donum Vitae (On the Gift of Life) emphasizes that morally acceptable interventions used in procreation cannot be a substitute for the marital act but should serve to facilitate that act to attain its natural purpose. Even when sperm is collected in an acceptable manner, by using a silastic sheath during marital relations (i.e. a perforated condom without any spermicide), it still appears that the subsequent steps of GIFT and IUI involve a substitution/replacement of the conjugal act by injecting the sex cells into the woman's body via a cannula. In other words, the marital act does not itself cause a future pregnancy but only enables the collection of sperm, which is then used for another procedure that brings about the pregnancy.

For these reasons, GIFT and IUI do not appear to be morally acceptable, and I generally discourage married men undergoing cancer treatments from banking their sperm, since there do not appear to be any legitimate procreative uses once the sample has been stored.

The situation is more nuanced when it comes to the question of banking a woman’s eggs or ova. We can identify at least one technique for assisting procreation called LTOT, or Low Tubal Ovum Transfer, that would be morally acceptable and could be carried out using previously-frozen eggs. Originally designed for women with blocked, damaged, or diseased fallopian tubes, LTOT re-locates her egg, placing it into the fallopian tube below the point of damage so that her husband’s sperm, introduced into her body by the marital act, can reach the egg and bring about fertilization. LTOT, however, is performed only rarely, and it can be challenging to find a reproductive specialist who routinely does the technique.

There are, moreover, safety concerns about the process of egg retrieval from a woman’s body, about the high-dose hormones used, and about cryopreservation of the eggs. Strong chemicals are used in the freezing process, and no one knows how much the eggs might absorb. Moreover, there has been little systematic follow-up of children born from frozen eggs, so it remains unclear whether they face increased health risks when they arise from an egg that has been frozen and thawed.

In principle, nevertheless, if the egg harvesting step could be carried out with low risk to women, if the egg freezing process would not cause any deleterious effects on children who might later come into being, and if the eggs were only used for morally legitimate purposes like LTOT, freezing a woman’s eggs would appear to be morally allowable.

Another emerging method of preserving fertility for cancer patients relies on the removal and freezing of sections of the ovary (rather than individual eggs). This ovarian tissue can later be grafted back into a woman’s body following chemotherapy allowing her to again ovulate naturally and, in some cases, conceive naturally. A number of babies have been born as a result of this technique, and insofar as a woman were enabled to conceive a child through marital acts with her husband, this approach also would not seem to raise any fundamental moral concerns.

Rev. Tadeusz Pacholczyk, Ph.D. earned his doctorate in neuroscience from Yale and did post-doctoral work at Harvard. He is a priest of the diocese of Fall River, MA, and serves as the Director of Education at The National Catholic Bioethics Center in Philadelphia. See www.ncbcenter.org

Living in peace on the social media stage

By Erick Rommel

Catholic News Service

This past weekend, I attended a concert at an outdoor amphitheater. We had lawn seats and were among the first to arrive. As soon as we entered, we claimed our spot and waited for the show to begin.

Slightly in front of us was a group of girls in their late teens. They did nothing but take selfies for an entire hour.

It would be easy to criticize, but why? They were having fun and they weren't affecting me. What reason is there to pass judgment?

Witnessing the scene caused me to think. What happened when each of those girls posted several pictures to social media? Every friend who wasn't there received a barrage of images, showing an incredible time they missed. Combine that with every other message and image we absorb daily on Instagram, Twitter, Facebook and countless other platforms.

It's easy to understand how all of us experience some degree of social media fatigue or feel as if we're missing out.

When we read a social media feed, we're creating a mental image of one person having a great time, completing dozens of activities. In reality, we're seeing dozens of photos of the same event, but creating unrealistic expectations of what we should be doing, based on what we see from others.

We need to change our mental image of the world around us. We need to step away from the fatigue and the guilt. We need to start celebrating what we do, not regretting what we don't. Most important, we need to accept that some things we do aren't exciting. They may even be unworthy of social media.

When we can make those changes, we'll discover how awesome we truly are. We should never feel guilty about doing what we want.

Who cares what others think? We should eat a meal because it's what we want to eat, regardless of calories, fat content or whether it's organic. When we're done, we should be able to veg on the couch and binge-watch our new favorite show, if that's what we want to do. After all, sleep is acceptable.

There should be no obligation to check social media. I doubt we'll miss anything. If we do, at some point someone will tell us in person.

And instead of being jealous of what others have, appreciate the small things you have. We should be glad for the money we have. We should be glad we can pay our bills. We should be glad we can afford a snack, pay for gas. In the end, we should appreciate these little things we take for granted the most.

Only when we've taken these steps can we look at our social media feeds without fatigue. You may want to make small changes each year. Remove friends from your lists and add others. That's OK. It will help us remember who we were and allow us to celebrate who we've become.
"A watershed moment for the Church and for humanity"

By Michelle Martin

Catholic News Service

CHICAGO — Pope Francis' encyclical on the environment is "a watershed moment for the Church and for humanity and for the planet," said the pope's "cathedral home," Chicago Archbishop Blase Cupich said.

He met with the media June 18 at the Archbishop Quigley Center to share the salient points of the document, "Laudato Si', on Care for Our Common Home."

"It's time for the church to be bold — to speak about major issues — and to achieve a new level of relevance in people's lives," he said.

"We may not know all the science has to learn about climate change, but we do know enough to realize that it's time to act."

The archbishop noted thatencyclical was not just for Catholics or to people in any specific country, but to everyone on earth.

The news conference was attended by representatives from other religious traditions as well as environmental advocates who have been part of the Chicago Archdiocese's encyclical working group, convened by the Office of Peace and Justice months ago.

Catholic advocates emphasized that the 180-page document breaks new ground in terms of teaching about humanity's responsibility to care for creation.

"It's a gesture that the situation has become urgent, and that caring for the earth is a moral issue."

"Our faith dictates that we have to care about and for humankind and we can't do that without caring for the environment," said Archbishop Cupich.

"We do need, he said, to see the earth on the environment as a fundamental matter of right and wrong."

The encyclical is clear, he said, that the climate crisis and other ecological problems are not just scientific, political or spiritual issues.

"The pope identifies the ecological crisis as essentially a spiritual problem," he said. 

"The gap is that the relation between humanity and the planet is an ecological sin that requires repentance and firm purpose of amendment. The cause is the same as all sin, selfishness."

"That sin has led the earth to fall into "serious disrepair," and that has a disproportionate effect on the poor and vulnerable, Archbishop Cupich said.

"He's asking us, you and me, to forsake our 'self-centered sinfulness' for the love of our planet and to avoid selfishness.

"The pope clearly states that the care for the earth is a moral obligation to care for all of God's creation, from our bodies that sustains and governs us' for our children, our grandchildren."

"In short, we see the assault on the environment as a fundamental matter of right and wrong." "Our faith dictates that we have to care about and for the earth, for the planet is an ecological sin that requires repentance and firm purpose of amendment. The cause is the same as all sin, selfishness."

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"The planet is an ecological sin that requires repentance and firm purpose of amendment. The cause is the same as all sin, selfishness."

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"We thank you for being with us each day."

"A prayer for our earth"

All-powerful God, you are present in the whole universe and in the smallest of your creatures. You embrace with your tenderness all that exists. Pour out upon us the power of your love, that we may protect life and beauty. Fill us with grace, that we may live in brothers and sisters, harming no one. O God of the poor, help us to rescue the abandoned and forgotten of this earth, so precious in your eyes. Bring healing to our lives, that we may protect the world and not prey on it, that we may sow beauty, not pollution and destruction. Touch the hearts of those who look only for gain at the expense of the poor and the earth. Teach us to discover the worth of each thing, to be filled with awe and contemplation, to recognize that we are profoundly united with every creature, as we journey towards your infinite light. We thank you for being with us each day. Encourage us, we pray, to make the world a better place for our children, and for generations to come. Amen. Threats to the earth are threats to the human family. When we destroy or pollute our earth, we destroy or pollute ourselves. The earth is our home and we are its custodians. We need to take action to preserve and protect it for future generations. Protect our environment. We must resist the 'throwaway culture' that values profit over people and nature. 

"A prayer for our earth"

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We enjoyed the best Honduras has to offer: Its people

By Msgr. Larry Droll

The 14th Annual Assembly of the Hermanamiento (Texas/Honduras Partnership) took place in La Ceiba, Honduras June 22-26. Representatives of the four dioceses in this partnership attended, including all four bishops: Bishop Michael Sis of San Angelo, Bishop Joe Strickland of Tyler, Bishop Angel Garachana of San Pedro Sula and Bishop Michael Linehan of La Ceiba. The four signed an agreement to continue this partnership, at a Eucharist offered in the La Ceiba Cathedral, St. Isidore.

Diocesan representatives reported on partnership activities in each diocese, expressing joy in the relationships between parishes. They discussed new possibilities for the future. They toured several parishes: Natividad de Jesus, St. Anthony Claret, and Immaculate Heart of Mary. Interesting trips were also made to other church-related ministries: schools, a home for the elderly, and a center for natural medicines. The Assembly ended with a lively morning at La Milagrosa Catholic School in Tela, with its 842 students.

Sr. Malachy Griffin, of San Angelo, reflected on the partnership: "For these fourteen years I have found the Honduras Partnership to be a gift. This year we enjoyed the best Honduras has to offer: its people! In a country of serious contrasts and contradictions, we were overwhelmed by the kindness, generosity, honesty, service, intelligence, creativity and faith of our sisters and brothers. These beautiful people come from a beautiful country. The mountains are magnificent, the sea a tranquil blue, the vegetation multiple shades of green, and we saw a myriad of colorful flowers and fruits.

"One scene that was played out at La Milagrosa will be etched in my memory forever. A group of junior high students took to the stage to perform a dance from the Garifuna culture. In the audience, a special needs child of about nine was dancing with the "official" group, several of whom invited and encouraged her to join them. I will never forget the look of pure joy on the face of a little one with Down Syndrome nor will I forget the welcome she received from the older students nor the roar of approval from the spectators."

Participating in this Assembly from the Diocese of San Angelo, besides Bishop Sis and Sr. Malachy, were Leonor Spencer of Midland, Clementine Urista of San Angelo, Diana Madero of Odessa and Msgr. Larry Droll of Midland. They expressed the hope that more parishes will join the partnership, to develop relationships with fellow Catholics in Honduran parishes or specific ministries. The experience expands participants' horizons of faith and appreciation for the Church universal.

At left, the group that traveled to Honduras for the 14th annual Hermanamiento assembly. Below, the group was entertained by a group of young dancers exhibiting the Garifuna culture.

(Courtesy photos)
The best that can be done in the circumstances

By Fr. Ron Rolheiser

It was William Auden, I think, who wrote that when grace enters a room everyone begins to dance.

Would this were so! More often the opposite happens, grace enters a room and instead of dancing we become discontent and our eyes grow bitter with envy. Why? Nikos Kazantzakis, the great Greek writer, tells a story of an elderly monk he once met on Mount Athos. Kazantzakis, still young and full of curiosity, was questioning this monk and asked him: “Do you still wrestle with the devil?” “No,” replied the old monk, “I used to, when I was younger, but now I’ve grown old and tired and the devil has grown old and tired with me.” “So,” Kazantzakis said, “your life is easy then? No more big struggles.” “Oh, no!” replied the old man, “now it’s worse. Now I wrestle with God!” “You wrestle with God,” replied Kazantzakis, rather surprised, “and you hope to win?” “No,” said the old monk, “I wrestle with God and I hope to lose!”

There comes a point in life when our major spiritual struggle is no longer with the fact that we are weak and desperately in need of God’s forgiveness, but rather with the opposite, with the fact that God’s grace and forgiveness is overly-lavish, unmerited, and especially that it goes out so indiscriminately. God’s lavish love and forgiveness go out equally to those who have worked hard and to those who haven’t, to those who have been faithful for a long time and to those who jumped on-board at the last minute, to those who have had to bear the heat of the day and to those who didn’t, to those who did their duty and to those who lived selfishly.

God’s love isn’t a reward for being good, doing our duty, resisting temptation, bearing the heat of the day in fidelity, saying our prayers, remaining pure, or offering worship, good and important though these are. God loves us because God is love and God cannot not love and cannot be discriminating in love. God’s love, as scripture says, shines on the good and bad alike. That’s nice to know when we need forgiveness and unmerited love, but it’s hard to accept when that forgiveness and love is given to those whom we deem less worthy of it, to those who didn’t seem to do their duty. It’s not easy to accept that God’s love does not discriminate, especially when God’s blessings go out lavishly to those who don’t seem to deserve them.

Allow me to share a story: When I was first ordained, I lived for a time in one of our Oblate rectories with a semi-retired priest, a wonderfully gracious man, who had been a faithful priest for fifty years. One evening, alone with him, I asked him: “If you had your priesthood to do over again, would you do anything differently?” The answer he gave me was not the one I’d anticipated. “Yes,” he said, “I would do some things differently. I’d be easier on people than I was this time. I’d risk the mercy and forgiveness of God more.” Then he grew silent, as if to create the proper space for what he was about to say, and added: “Let me say this too: As I get older I’m finding it harder and harder to accept the ways of God. I’ve been a priest for fifty years and I’ve been faithful. I can honestly say, in so far as I know, that in my whole life I’ve never committed a mortal sin. I’ve always tried my best and done my duty. It wasn’t easy, but I did it with essential fidelity. And you know something? Now that I’m old I’m struggling with all kinds of bitterness and doubt. That’s natural, I guess. But what upsets me is that I look around me and I see all kinds of people, young people and others, who’ve never been faithful, who’ve lived selfish lives, and they’re full of faith and are speaking in tongues! I’ve been faithful and I’m full of anger and doubt. Tell me, is that fair?”

In the end, we need to forgive God and that might be the hardest forgiveness of all. It’s hard to accept that God loves everyone equally — even our enemies, even those who hate us, even those who don’t work as hard as we do, even those who reject duty for selfishness, and even those who give in to all the temptations we resist. Although deep down we know that God has been more than fair with us, God’s lavish generosity to others is something which we find hard to accept. Like the workers in the Parable of the Vineyard who toiled the whole day and then saw those who had worked just one hour get the same wage as theirs, we often let God’s generosity to others warp both our joy and our eyesight.

But that struggle points us in the right direction. Grace is amazing, by disorienting us it properly orients us.

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, ronrolheiser.com.

Love, tolerance, Caitlyn Jenner and the making of distinctions

By Very Rev. Robert Barron

Last week, I wrote a piece on Bruce Jenner’s transformation into Caitlyn Jenner. I argued that the manner in which Jenner spoke of his transition reflected a Gnostic anthropological view of the human being. I didn’t say a word about Jenner personally; I urged no violence against him/her; I didn’t question his/her motives. I simply made an observation that the moral and spiritual context for transgenderism is, from a classically Christian standpoint, problematic.

Not surprisingly, the article garnered a fair amount of attention and inspired a lot of commentary, both positive and negative. Among the negative remarks were a number that criticized me for fomenting “hatred” against Jenner and against the transgender community. Though I’ve come to expect this sort of reaction, I find it discouraging and the fruit of some pretty fundamental confusions.

My great mentor Robert Sokolowski long ago taught me — in one of those lapidary remarks that strikes you immediately as right and important — that philosophy is the art of making distinctions. He meant that what brings together Plato, Aristotle, Augustine, Aquinas, Kant, Hegel, and Wittgenstein is a gift for clarifying how this differs from that, how one aspect of an idea profiles itself against another, how seemingly similar concepts are in fact distinct. In executing these moves, the great philosophers made muddy water clear.

What strikes me so often as I listen to the public conversation regarding moral issues is the incapacity of so many to make the right distinctions.

Some of the muddiest water surrounds the concepts of love/hate and tolerance/intolerance. In the spirit of Sokolowski, I would like to make what I hope are some clarifying differentiations. For the mainstream of the Catholic intellectual tradition, love is not primarily an emotion, but an act of the will. To love, Thomas Aquinas says, is to want the good of the other. Consequently, hatred is not primarily a feeling, but desiring evil for another, positively wanting what is bad for someone else. Given this, is hatred called for? When is hatred morally permissible? The simple answer: never. God is nothing but love, and Jesus said that we are to be perfect, as our heavenly father is perfect.

This is precisely why he told us to love even our enemies, to bless even those who curse us, to pray even for those who mal-treat us. Does this mean that our forebears were obliged to love Hitler and that we are obliged to love ISIS murderers? Yes. Period. Does it mean that we are to will the good of those who, we are convinced, are walking a dangerous moral path? Yes. Period. Should everyone love Bruce/Caitlyn Jenner? Absolutely, completely, unconditionally.

But here is where a crucial distinction has to be made: to criticize someone for engaging in immorality is not to “hate” that person. In point of fact, it is an act of love, for it is tantamount to willing good for him or her. Once the sense that there is objective good and evil has been attenuated, as it largely has been in our (Please See BARRON/23)
Our Faith

A son’s ‘bad angel; how to treat a former priest

By Father Kenneth Doyle
Catholic News Service

Q. My son, who is 19, has suffered from anxiety and depression since puberty, although it's only recently that we have recognized it for what it is. He began using marijuana in his early teens, dropped out of school, struggled to hold a job and was very unstable.

His girlfriend recently gave birth to their son, whom he loves dearly. He seems to want very much to become what he calls "a good man," but he keeps slipping. (The other day he told us he feels that he is a "pathological liar.") The trust in their relationship has been broken so many times that I don't think his girlfriend will take him back.

He keeps saying that he wants to return to Mass. (He says this on his own; believe me, I put no pressure on him, although I myself am a very committed Catholic.) But every Sunday morning, he seems to find some reason why he just can't get up and go to church.

My question is this: Is it possible, because of everything that he has done wrong in the past that a "bad angel" is influencing him not to go back to Mass or to reconnect with the church? I am shy about talking to our parish priest about it, but if this is a possibility, is there something that can be done to release him from this hold? When I see him so broken, I feel that my heart is wrapped in thorns. (New Zealand)

A. I do not believe that your son is under the control of a "bad angel." It's much more likely that he is in the throes of depression, which is an increasingly common disease in our fast-paced world, a medical condition with medical remedies.

My guess is that he simply does not have the psychic energy to act on his better instincts, his professed desires to be "a good man" and to seek strength through the Eucharist.

Your first goal, if you have not done so already, is to find a competent psychiatrist -- one experienced in treating young adults and one with whom your son would be comfortable in speaking.

God works most often through individuals, especially those in the healing professions. I would suggest, too, that you do speak with your parish priest -- especially if he knows your son -- and invite him to find a casual way to approach your son and simply ask him how he is doing.

Hopefully, that might begin a dialogue that could lead to your son's return to the comforting grace of the sacraments.

I can only imagine your pain at seeing your child undergo such suffering. Continue to pray -- and I will, too -- that the Lord will ease your son's agony and your own.

Q. Our pastor recently left the priesthood, and now he is advertising on the Web that he is available to perform weddings or funerals (including weddings of gay/lesbian couples.) The Catholic priest who married us has also left the priesthood and is now a Presbyterian minister. Both of these men are quick to proclaim openly that they used to be Catholic priests.

My question is this: How does a faithful Catholic treat and respond to these men now? I am appalled at their behavior and wonder what we are doing wrong so that many men are leaving the priesthood. (Central New Jersey)

A. How you should treat these two men is how you should treat everyone: with kindness. No one can pretend to know the struggles they may have endured -- both in their years of active ministry and in their decisions to resign.

I would say: Be nice to them and leave any judgment to God. At the same time, though, I would be wary of any religious services offered by your former pastor. Having resigned from the Catholic priestly ministry, he no longer has faculties from the diocese, which means that he has no authorization from the church to celebrate Mass or to officiate at Catholic wedding or funerals.

As a result, Catholics would not fulfill their Sunday obligation by attending his service. (I would even wonder whether his marriage ceremonies are valid civilly, since most jurisdictions authorize clergy to officiate at weddings only if they are in good standing with the parent religious body.)

As to the "so many men" who are leaving the Catholic priesthood, you should be comforted to know that, these days, that is a fairly rare occurrence. (The peak years were the late 1960s and early 1970s.)

Grow old gratefully: Turn your later years into greater years

By Father William J. Byron, SJ
Catholic News Service

"Growing Old Gratefully" became our theme as we took a cue from a small book by Jesuit Father John LaFarge, "Reflections on Growing Old: Thoughts for turning the latter years into the best years of life." Father LaFarge, who was 82 when he wrote this book, saw old age as a gift, "a very precious gift, not a calamity; since it is a gift, I thank God for it daily."

We adopted that outlook and paid prayerful attention to the idea of gratitude.

The old American vernacular "much obliged" was used as a way of saying thanks. We noted that gratitude is at the base of moral obligation and declared ourselves to be much obliged to give praise and thanks to God every day.

Growing old gratefully is what poet Robert Browning had in mind when he opened his poem "Rabbi Ben Ezra" with these words: "Grow old along with me! The best is yet to be. The last of life for which the first was made. Our times are in His hand. Who saith 'A whole I planned, Youth shows but half; trust God: see all, nor be afraid!"

It takes faith to see hope and to live it, so we followed our faith to the Book of Jeremiah and prayed with the prophet: "Blessed are those who trust in the Lord; the Lord will be their trust," (Jer 17:7).

And we turned to St. Paul for the useful reminder that "we even boast of our afflictions, knowing that affliction produces endurance, and endurance proven character, and proven character, hope, and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us."

And we opened every session with the favorite prayer -- "Come, Holy Spirit" -- of America's best-known priest, Father Theodore M. Hesburgh, who died a few months ago, shortly before his 98th birthday and at whose funeral the printed program included this note:

"The Holy Spirit is the light and strength of my life, for which I am eternally grateful. My best daily prayer, apart from the Mass and brevity, continues to be simply 'Come, Holy Spirit.' No better prayer, no better results: much light and much strength."

Our days together were grounded in two scriptural passages: first, John 12:24-26 where Jesus speaks of the mystery of the wheat grain that must first fall into the ground as if to die and once it does, it brings forth fruit. This is the basis for what Father LaFarge called the mystery of "growth through diminishment" as he pointed out that the aging believer can unite his or her diminishment with the passion of Christ for the growth of others.

Similarly, we turned to Galatians 5:22-23 where Paul offers instruction on how to "live by the Spirit," pointing out that the "fruit" of the Spirit -- i.e., evidence that the Spirit is present within us -- is "love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control."

Plenty there to reflect on; more than enough to assist anyone who wants to grow old gratefully.
Navigating all the trappings of our modern world

By Father Eugene Hemrick
Catholic News Service

In 1976, you could drive to the United States Capitol, park there and be greeted by police officers who acted as tour guides. You could stand on its steps and watch the city wake up in the morning. Today, this is not allowed.

Welcome to the irony of the country's greatest symbol of freedom in which liberties of the past are in the past.

As a child, I would watch planes circle the skies and imagine the freedom that birds enjoy floating through space. These days, when I use my cellphone, I wonder if the plane flying above me is listening in on my conversation.

Welcome to the age of communication that allows us to reach out to others more extensively but one that also has diminished privacy dramatically.

We now possess high-speed automobiles that ironically often end up crawling because of congested traffic. We live in an age of fast food aimed at cutting time and speeding up eating habits. It is also the age of indigestion and the loss of enjoying slowly savored food.

We are never bored thanks to cellphones and home entertainment centers. Ironically, in the process, smelling the roses is becoming a lost art. Welcome to a new inventive world that is diminishing the art of silently enjoying the outside world.

Ironically, for every forward step we make, we take two steps back. Why is this? One reason is that even though we live in a world of novel inventions that are signs of progress, these inventions also have the potential to become addictions.

Speedy cars, lightning fast computers, larger television screens, bigger sound systems and phones that can be used for more than talking are just a few of the exciting inventions of our time. And yet, in employing them, we find ourselves taking two steps backs because of new needs they produce.

These uncontrolled needs drown us in anxieties that go with maintaining them. How do we prevent this from happening?

Ancient Greek philosopher Epictetus tells us, "If one oversteps the bounds of moderation, the greatest pleasures cease to please." Moderation is one good way we can avoid addictions that have the potential to consume us.

And, too, the privacy that seems to be fading into the past need not be if we take steps to protect and cherish it. We have technology that allows us the physical freedom to carry a phone wherever we go, exposing those around us to what we are saying to others. Yet, we should avoid this practice out of respect for the privacy of others and our own.

All it takes to go forward and not backward in this age is to be in control, to see the good in modern invention, while avoiding its pitfalls.

Living in the present:
'These are the good old days'

By Bill Dodds
Catholic News Service

"What time is it really?"
That's what our son, Thomas, wanted to know on a road trip across the United States back in 1989.

We crossed an invisible line, and suddenly we were in a different time zone, asking "but what time is it really?"

I remember when the kids were even younger and a snippet from Carly Simon's song "Anticipation" popped into my head one day, and I realized it applied to me, to us: "These are the good old days."

I had my doubts.

The children were running us ragged. We worried about the tight household budget, worried about work, an infinite to-do list and on and on. Even so, I thought, at some point down the road will I consider that moment "the good old days"?

But now I do, because they were.

In the blink of an eye, the children are grown. The house is quiet. My schedule is casual. My expenses minimal. My darling Monica is gone, taken by cancer. I don't kid myself that those days were perfect. There are no perfect times on earth, although, thanks be to God, there can be near-perfect moments. Seen in the rearview mirror of life, they sparkle and shine. They bring comfort and joy even as they stand in stark contrast to change and loss.

I see the children often. The grandkids are a hoot. My parents have passed away, but all my siblings are alive and well, and we laugh a lot when we get together.

I have good friends. Good health. I have work and want to continue doing it as long as I can and have a good life. But it is not a perfect life. There are good days but not perfect days. But I have now. Right now. I have here. Right here. I have life on earth.

In modern language, I'm called to be present, to be mindful. I can't let myself become so obsessed thinking about a future without Monica that I fail to appreciate and use the blessings I have right here, right now. And I can't allow myself to become lost in, obsessed with the past.

The truth is that at every age and every stage of a person's life, there are blessings and challenges. And with the passing of time and the grace of God, sometimes it's possible to see the deepest blessings have their roots in the harshest challenges.

Sometimes it's possible to notice one constant through it all: Emmanuel, God with us.
USCCB president calls Supreme Court's ruling on same-sex marriage 'tragic error'

By Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON — The president of the U.S. bishops' conference called the Supreme Court's June 26 marriage ruling "a tragic error" and he urged Catholics to move forward with faith "in the unchanging truth about marriage being between one man and one woman."

"Regardless of what a narrow majority of the Supreme Court may declare at this moment in history, the nature of the human person and marriage remains unchanged and unchangeable," said Archbishop Joseph E. Kurtz of Louisville, Kentucky.

"It is profoundly immoral and unjust for the government to declare that two people of the same sex can constitute a marriage," he said.

In a 5-4 decision, the Supreme Court June 26 said same-sex marriage is constitutional nationwide.

"Just as Roe v. Wade did not settle the question of abortion over 40 years ago," when it legalized abortion in the U.S. virtually on demand, Obergefell v. Hodges "does not settle the question of marriage today," Archbishop Kurtz said.

"Neither decision is rooted in the truth, and as a result, both will eventually fail," he added.

The court had several marriage cases to consider and bundled them under the title of the Ohio case, Obergefell v. Hodges. That case arose after the October 2013 death of John Arthur of Cincinnati. He and his longtime partner, Obergefell, had married earlier that year in Maryland. When the local Ohio registrar agreed to list Obergefell as the surviving spouse on Arthur's death certificate -- which is key to a range of survivor's benefits -- the state attorney general challenged the status because Ohio law bars same-sex marriages.

The other cases included: Tanco v. Haslam, the Tennessee case, and Bourke v. Beshear, the Kentucky case, which similarly challenge those states' refusal to recognize same-sex marriages performed in other jurisdictions, and DeBoer v. Snyder, the Michigan adoption case.

"The unique meaning of marriage as the union of one man and one woman is inscribed in our bodies as male and female," Archbishop Kurtz said in his statement. "The protection of this meaning is a critical dimension of the 'integral ecology' that Pope Francis has called us to promote.

"Mandating marriage redefinition across the country is a tragic error that harms the common good and most vulnerable among us, especially children. The law has a duty to support every child's basic needs."

"Today's Supreme Court decision will lead to many conflicts between the state and religious institutions and individuals. Through the centuries, those who have attempted to live their lives in a way that is consistent with their faith in God have always faced struggles. There is always a price to pay in being true to one's conscience. In these matters regarding the true nature of marriage, those of us who disagree with this Supreme Court decision will sometimes have to pay a heavy price.

"The Catholic Church will not perform same-sex marriages or promote them in any way. We will continue to teach the beliefs that have been passed on to us from Scripture and Christian tradition. Throughout all of this, we must resist any temptation to hatred, scorn, or violence. We must speak the truth as we understand it in our conscience, and we must always speak the truth in love.

"While these fundamental differences of worldview can be deeply painful in families, communities, and nations, I believe it is possible to dwell together peacefully in a society alongside those with whom we agree to disagree."

For more information about Catholic teaching on the true nature of marriage, please see this website: www.marriageuniqueforareason.org
The Confirmation Class at St. Joseph’s Church in San Angelo, above, and at left, receiving a blessing from Bishop Michael J. Sis.

(Photos by Alan P. Torre)
BISHOP

(From 2)

Bi-ethnies will work together to find sustainable energy solutions that will foster innovation and create jobs.

Pope Francis uses the term “throwaway culture” to describe one of the central causes of our current environmental problems. A throwaway culture fosters an insatiable desire for more things, more possessions, and wasteful discarding of things. It causes us to over-consume, harming the environment and harming people.

He offers some examples of this “use and throw away” logic, such as wasting natural resources, exploiting children, abandoning the elderly, practicing human trafficking, and throwing away unborn babies. He says we can counteract this cultural tendency by taking small steps toward simpler, fuller lives. This will help us to grow closer to God and closer to one other.

Rooted in our Judeo-Christian tradition, the Holy Father presents a comprehensive biblical and theological background for ecology. He points out that, in Genesis 2:15, humans are given the responsibility to “till and keep” the garden of the world. Created in God’s image, we human beings have a unique worth and a tremendous responsibility to be good stewards of the earth. The earth and its resources are a shared inheritance, whose fruits are meant to benefit everyone—not just those with lots of wealth and influence.

Pope Francis says that human life is grounded in three fundamental and closely intertwined relationships: with God, with our neighbor, and with the earth itself. When these three vital relationships are broken, either outwardly or within us, that rupture is sin. (66)

He says, “Since everything is interrelated, concern for the protection of nature is also incompatible with the justification of abortion. How can we genuinely teach the importance of concern for other vulnerable beings, however troublesome or inconvenient they may be, if we fail to protect a human embryo, even when its presence is uncomfortable and creates difficulties?” (120)

Another important concept in Laudato Si is that of “intergenerational solidarity.” Solidarity is a basic principle of Catholic social teaching. It is the virtuous attitude that says, “What happens to other people matters to me, even if I do not know those people personally.”

Intergenerational solidarity is the perspective that what happens to future generations matters to us today. Will our grandchildren and great-grandchildren have clean air to breathe and clean water to drink? Our concern for those who will inhabit the earth in future centuries should impact our decisions today regarding the way we care for our environment.

Of all the chapters in Laudato Si, the one that presents the most practical applications for our own personal life and spirituality is Chapter Six. For those who do not have the time to read the entire encyclical, but would like to read a manageable section for personal enrichment, I recommend Chapter Six. This chapter invites all people to the heart of ecological conversion. Pope Francis encourages us to aim for a new lifestyle, reshaping our habits and our consumer choices.

This chapter makes reference to some of the Catholic saints whose lives and writings help contribute to an ecological spirituality, such as St. Francis of Assisi, Saint Benedict, Saint Teresa of Lisieux, and Blessed Charles de Foucauld. St. Francis is quoted several times throughout the document. The Holy Father calls him “the example par excellence of care for the vulnerable and of an integral ecology lived out joyfully and authentically.” (10)

Chapter Six proposes that we live out the virtue of sobriety. While most people normally think of sobriety as refraining from drinking alcohol, in Laudato Si it is about the overall lifestyle of simplicity, moderation, temperance, and self-control. We should distinguish between our wants and our needs, in order to be free from unnecessary consumer spending.

The Holy Father says, “We need to take up an ancient lesson, found in different religious traditions and also in the Bible. It is the conviction that ‘less is more.’” (222)

Pope Francis offers in this chapter some very specific examples of actions and daily habits that express care for the environment. These include, among other things, water conservation, planting trees, adjusting the thermostat to save energy, wearing warmer clothes in winter, sorting and recycling trash, and turning off unnecessary lights. He says, “An ecological conversion can inspire us to greater creativity and enthusiasm.” (220)

A particular point in the encyclical that has drawn much criticism in media reports has been the question of climate change. Laudato Si is not intended to be a scientific document. The Pope is not speaking as a scientist or politician but rather as a moral and spiritual guide. He says, “The Church does not presume to settle scientific questions or to replace politics.” (188)

Regardless of one’s own position on the scientific question of the relative impact of human activities on climate change, there are many important ethical principles in this encyclical that are worthy of consideration by anyone. The Pope realizes that there are points subject to debate. He simply wants the debate to be honest and open, and he wants the social teachings of the Church to be part of the conversation.

In summary, Pope Francis in Laudato Si is calling each of us to renew our relationships with the created world, with one another, and with God. He asks all people to work together to protect the precious gift of our environment, and he speaks with a spirit of hope for what we can accomplish together.

The title of the document, Laudato Si, is taken from the Canticle of the Creatures, written by St. Francis of Assisi in 1224. The words in Umbrian Italian literally mean “Praise be to you,” expressing joyful praise of God in all his creatures. Pope Francis concludes the encyclical with two beautiful prayers, one with a particularly Christian perspective, and the other for anyone who believes in God.

I encourage personal and parish use of both of these prayers, and we have included one of them in this edition of the West Texas Angelus (See Pg. 12 for prayer and additional coverage)
LAUDATO

(From 13)

culture, the pope warns against, and seek ways in our daily lives to practice environmentally friendly behavior."

Across the country, the bishops of Alaska welcomed it "with joy and thanksgiving." In a joint statement quoting from it, Anchorage Archbishop Roger L. Schwietz, Juneau Bishop Edward J. Burns and Fairbanks Bishop Chad W. Zielinski said: "At the heart of Laudato Si' we find this question: 'What kind of world do we want to leave to those who come after us, to children who are now growing up?'

They noted that the pope deals with environmental issues within the context of the purpose of life and why human beings exist at all.

Detroit Archbishop Allen H. Vigneron described the encyclical as a "moment of grace for the church and for the world." He said the pope "offers a clear witness to the Creator's plan for the human family and our care of our common home, so that this wisdom will serve as the norm for how we should live together and care for those on the peripheries."

The Sisters of Mercy, based in Silver Spring, Maryland, said the pope "clearly connects concern for people who are poor with care for creation, which is central to us. ... We believe this is one of the great moral issues of our time and for us a compelling and urgent call to respond."

"In our ministries throughout the United States, Latin America, the Caribbean and the Philippines, we see vividly the links between climate change and environmental degradation and the plight of immigrants, women and children, and those victimized by violence and racism," the statement said. "We worry about even greater suffering given forecasts for increased climate refugees, environmental-related conflicts and food crises if we do not act."

Seattle Archbishop J. Peter Sartain said Pope Francis "put a human face on the issue of ecology and caring for creation. This teaching document, which is consistent with the teaching of his predecessor, Pope Benedict XVI and other recent popes, is an urgent call to Christians, people of other faith traditions and those of no faith to protect our earthly home and our brothers and sisters who inhabit it."

"The document also calls the church to a new role, said Bishop Thomas J. Paprocki of Springfield, Illinois.

"That role," he said, "is not in judging scientific questions, many of which remain unanswered definitively — including the analysis of the nature and the extent of humanity's contributions to climate change. Rather, the church's role, as in many other complex and practical decisions, is in proposing moral parameters within which any effective solution should be judged."

Joan Rosenhauer, executive vice president of U.S. operations for Catholic Relief Services, said the U.S. bishops' overseas relief and development agency is "continuously encouraged by Pope Francis' commitment to the poor, and the relationship between the environment and our well-being." She said the pope's message "resonates with CRS as we work to help the most vulnerable around the world adapt to the effects of climate change."

Colorado's bishops said they hope "this encyclical will motivate the many interested parties in Colorado and across the globe to dialogue and develop prudent and constructive action to protect the precious gift of creation that we have given."

"We also hope that it will inspire renewed solidarity in responding to the concerns and needs of those in the margins, especially the poor, vulnerable and young."

The Conference of Major Superiors of Men and the Leadership Conference of Women Religious, which represent the leaders of U.S. religious congregations, said they welcomed the pope's call to care for one another by caring for all of God's creation. These leaders pointed out the document also calls the church to a new role, which is "continuously encouraged by Pope Francis' commitment to the poor, and the relationship between the environment and our well-being." They said the pope's message "resonates with CRS as we work to help the most vulnerable around the world adapt to the effects of climate change."

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(Fortnight)

We study, educate ourselves, and try to be courageous witnesses for the truth.

As we face the uncertainty of the storms ahead, let us take Jesus in the boat with us, and respond, not with fear, but with faith.
**ECOLOGICA**

**ECOLOGY**

(From 14)

Capítulo Seis propone que vivamos la virtud de la sobriedad. Aunque la mayoría de la gente normalmente piensa de la sobriedad como abstenerse de beber alcohol, en *Laudato Si* se trata de la forma de vida en general de la sencillez, la moderación, la templanza y autocontrol. Debemos distinguir entre nuestros deseos y nuestras necesidades, con el fin de estar libres de gastos de consumo innecesarios.

El Santo Padre dice: "Es importante incorporar una vieja enseñanza, presente en diversas tradiciones religiosas, y también en la Biblia. Se trata de la convicción de que "menos es más"." (222)

El Papa Francisco ofrece en este capítulo algunos ejemplos muy concretos de acciones y hábitos cotidianos que expresan el cuidado por el medio ambiente. Estos incluyen, entre otras cosas, la conservación del agua, la plantación de árboles, ajustar el termostato para ahorrar energía, el uso de ropa más caliente en el invierno, clasificación y reciclaje de basura, y apagar las luces innecesarias. Él dice: "Una conversión ecológica lleva al creyente a desarrollar su creatividad y su entusiasmo." (220)

Un punto particular en la encíclica que ha atraido mucha crítica en los informes de los medios de comunicación ha sido la cuestión del cambio climático. *Laudato Si* no pretende ser un documento científico. El Papa no está hablando como científico o político, sino más bien como una guía moral y espiritual. Él dice: "La Iglesia no pretende definir las cuestiones científicas ni sustituir a la política." (188)

Independientemente de la posición propia de uno sobre la cuestión científica del impacto relativo de causas humanas en el cambio climático, hay muchos principios éticos importantes en esta encíclica que son dignos de consideración por cualquiera. El Papa se da cuenta de que hay puntos sométidos a debate. Él simplemente quiere que el debate sea honesto y abierto, y quiere que la doctrina social de la Iglesia sea parte de la conversación. En resumen, el Papa Francisco en *Laudato Si* está llamando a cada uno de nosotros para renovar nuestras relaciones con el mundo creado, con uno al otro, y con Dios. Le pide a todas las personas a trabajar juntos para proteger el don precioso de nuestro medio ambiente, y habla con un espíritu de esperanza por lo que podemos lograr juntos.

El título del documento, *Laudato Si*, se toma del Cántico de las Criaturas, escrito por San Francisco de Asís en 1224. Las palabras en el italiano de la Umbria, literalmente significan "Alabado seas, mi Señor", expresando alabanza gozosa de Dios en todas sus criaturas. El Papa Francisco concluye la encíclica con dos hermosas oraciones, una con una perspectiva particularmente cristiana, y la otra para cualquier persona que cree en Dios. Animo el uso personal y paroquial de ambas oraciones, y hemos incluido uno de ellas en esta edición del *West Texas Angelus*.

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**BENES**

(From 9)

showed up to offer loving support of the Muslim community. This supportive group, orchestrated by a Christian Church, openly and willingly stood between the doors of the mosque to protect their Muslim American neighbors as they prayed. These Americans made a stand for religious freedom and actively lived out the teachings of Jesus, to love your neighbor.

Four days later, the Muslim community courageously opened the mosque doors and hosted a multi-faith prayer service to show what can happen when we come together in love and not hate. In so doing, some of the anti-Islamic protesters who attended the service experienced the often-overlooked foundation of the Islamic Faith -- peace. And they were forever changed.

When we open our hearts and our minds to our enemies and our neighbors and love them as Jesus taught us to do, we experience a shift in consciousness. Sometimes we realize that those we perceive as enemies are truly friends we have not taken time to meet or to understand. There are a plethora of factions promoting hate, prejudice, and division among people across the globe; as Catholics we are called to take a stand for human dignity and love.

The Peace Ambassadors of West Texas, a regional interfaith organization founded by Bishop Pfeifer, diligently does its part to educate and promote peace and understanding through building relationships with the "other." We invite you to join us this September as we embark on our 8th Season of Peace. This year's theme is Expressions of Peace.

We encourage you to reach across the aisle, meet your neighbor who is from a different faith, engage in a dialogue, and perhaps create a unique Expression of Peace. Whether it be a multi-faith meal, musical event, a dance, poetry reading, or a prayer service; we would love to hear about your experience.

You may be surprised that your own faith and experience of God expands and is enhanced.

It's something to consider.
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**SCHWERTNER**

(From 5)

Also in June 1979, monsignor was assigned to St. Michael’s in Levelland where he served 13 years. While there, Msgr. Tim started a mission in Sundown. He brought RCIA and Scripture Classes into St. Michael’s, and attended over nine years of scripture conferences to acquire a deeper understanding of the scriptures that he would pass along in his classes. He also went on sabbatical at the Vatican II Institute in St. Patrick Seminary in Menlo Park, Calif., to update his knowledge in spirituality, psychology and theology, always increasing his knowledge to teach and guide his parishioners. He conducted “Life in the Spirit” seminars several times and led 13 Parish Renewal weekend retreats in English and Spanish. Also during his assignment at St. Michael’s, the hall and school were remodeled and a new church building was constructed.

During his years in the Amarillo Diocese and later in the Lubbock Diocese, he was the chairman on the committee that started the Search Retreat for the youth and directed it until 1971 when his mother had a stroke.

After his assignment in Levelland, he served at St. Alice Parish in Plainview with a mission, San Jose, in Lockney for six years. In 1998, he was assigned to St. Elizabeth’s University Parish in Lubbock where he served more than three years. While at St. Elizabeth’s, he began plans for the new church building that he had a hand in designing, purchasing the property, and seeing that construction began for the new Pastor to complete.

Following his assignment in Levelland and several months at a Spirituality Center, Msgr. Tim was assigned under the Lubbock Diocese to St. Joseph’s in Rotan with two missions; at St. Mary’s in Aspermont and Sacred Heart in Ranchito. There he served many years on the Presbyteral Council, twice as president, and for several years on the priest’s personnel board. He was the director of continuing education for clergy once and dean twice. Msgr. Tim served in Rotan until 2010 when he was asked to retire.

In July of 2010, he began serving in the San Angelo Diocese as a “semi-retired” priest at St. Joseph’s parish in Stanton and its mission, St. Isidore in Lenorah.

He continues to serve in Stanton and Lenorah and he was able to celebrate his 50th year of ordination on Sunday, May 31, 2015 with parishioners who love him. Msgr. Tim stated about his service in Stanton and Lenorah and about his celebration, “My time here has truly been a blessing and a great joy. It was an honor to be able to celebrate my 50th anniversary of ordination here with such loving parishioners.”
Encounters in their respective cities convened June 12-14 at the Clarion Hotel in San Angelo. The convention marked 40 years since Catholic Engaged Encounter Inc. held its first weekend retreat.

The Zamoras have been Engaged Encounter presenters for several years. “The reason we keep doing it is because it enriches our marriage and keeps our marriage (at the center of) our lives,” Estela Zamora said.

“We’re serving our Lord and giving back to the Lord for all the blessings he’s given us,” Roel Zamora added.

The conventions, the Zamoras said, help presenters glean new ideas about marriage in the context of their Catholic faith and also reaffirm that they are on the right path in terms of the material they present to engaged couples who attend the retreats.

Dr. Eileen Raffianni Barbella followed the Rev. Hugh Wade Jr.’s Friday night presentation with two of her own on Saturday – “The Monastery of Marriage: Marriage as a Spiritual Discipline” and “Holy Matrimony: Joyful Witness.” In the former presentation, Barbella stressed the value of knowing one’s own identity.

“The virtue that emerges when you know your identity is fidelity,” Barbella told the couples gathered. “Identity precedes intimacy. We have to keep working on knowing ourselves.”

Fr. Wade, pastor of Ballinger’s St. Mary Parish, served as spiritual leader for the convention. An 18-year Engaged Encounter veteran who conducts about six retreats per year, Fr. Wade said the retreat’s time away for couples is crucial.

“We talk about different aspects of the Sacrament of Marriage,” he said. “We give (couples) the opportunity to listen to the presentation, to write their responses and to share with their intended spouses. I think it’s a fantastic marriage preparation program because it’s one of the few that pulls us out of our everyday life and forces us to reflect.

Most (engaged couples) don’t think outside of marriage other than the wedding day.”

As for the convention, Wade said, “It allows us to share ideas, concerns and different ways of thinking about what we are doing and allows us to help as many couples as possible.”

Charlie Keane, who with his wife, Cathy, is coordinator of Engaged Encounter’s Unit 4, said, “It gives a different outlook on what other communities are doing. We bring back ideas of what’s happening in a different district.”

Couples who attended the convention traveled from parts of Texas, Alabama, South Carolina, Florida and Louisiana, adding Estele Zamora: “If you want to be a minster of the Catholic Church, this is the one.”

The conventions, the Zamoras said, have been a ministry they love.

“We are known as secondary evangelists because we talk to couples about things they may have already forgotten or things that needed to be brought to the forefront,” Roel Zamora said. “We always knew our ministry was important.”

Added Estele Zamora: “If you want to be a minister of the Catholic Church, this is the one.”

BARRON

(From 14)

society, the only categories we have left are psychological ones. And this is why, in the minds of many, to question the moral legitimacy of transgenderism is, perforce, to "attack" or "hate" transgendered people. A very real danger that flows from the failure to make the right distinction in this regard is that moral argument evanesces. If someone who disagrees with you on an ethical matter is simply a "hater," then you don't have to listen to his argument or engage it critically. You are permitted, in fact, to censor him, to shut him down. Sadly, this is what obtains in much of the public arena today: the impugning of motives, the questioning of character, and the imposition of censorship. Just a few weeks ago, two Princeton faculty members, Cornel West and Robert George, had a public debate regarding same-sex marriage, West arguing for and George against.

What was so refreshing was that both men, who are good friends, actually argued, that is to say, marshalled evidence, drew reasoned conclusions from premises, answered objections, etc., and neither one accused the other of "hating" advocates of the rival position. May their tribe increase.

Distinctions are called for, furthermore, regarding the word "tolerance," which is bandied about constantly today. Typically, it has come to mean acceptance and even celebration. Thus, if one is anything shy of ecstatic about gay marriage or transgenderism, one is insufficiently "tolerant." In point of fact, the term implies the willingness to countenance a view or activity that one does not agree with. Hence, in the context of our wise political system, each citizen is required to tolerate a range of opinions that he finds puzzling, erroneous, repugnant or even bizarre. There are lots of good reasons for this toleration, the most important of which are respect for the integrity of the individual and the avoidance of unnecessary civil strife, but it by no means implies that one is obliged to accept or celebrate those perspectives. Thus, one should certainly tolerate the right of a person to become transgendered without feeling, at the same time, obliged to exult in that person's choice.

The ethical conversation has become, in the last fifty years, extraordinarily roiled. It would serve all of us to adopt an intellectual instinct of Thomas Aquinas. When he was confronted with a thorny question, he would typically begin his response with the comment "distinguo" (I distinguish).

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Rite of Admission to Candidacy

On June 27, 2015, at the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart in San Angelo, Bishop Michael J. Sis presided over a Mass that introduced the diocese’s latest group of diaconal aspirants as diaconal candidates. Those candidates and their wives, pictured above, include:

Top row Left to right: Andrew & Judith Davis, Holy Redeemer, Odessa; Israel & Audra Tijerina, Holy Redeemer, Odessa; Alan & Mary Lee Pelzel, St. Joseph, Rowena; Tom & Pat Collier, St. Ann, Midland; Roberto & Ann Marie Garcia, Holy Redeemer, Odessa; Ron & Wendy Stegenga, St. Joachim and Ann, Clyde; Orlando & Rosa Mendoza, Holy Redeemer, Odessa; Reynaldo & Diane Sanchez, St. Stephen, Midland; Edward & Maria Gonzalez, Holy Redeemer, Odessa; Jose & Leticia Gallegos, Our Lady of Lourdes, Andrews; Bobby & Candelaria Wright, St. Mary’s, Odessa.

Bottom row Left to right: Floyd & Martha Schwartz, St. Lawrence, Garden City; Joel & Rosalinda Gutierrez, St. Lawrence, Garden City; Tommy & Jessica Flores, St. Joseph, Stanton; Jesse & Jo Ann Martinez, St. Joseph, San Angelo; David & Ellie Mendez, Holy Spirit, Sweetwater; Dcn. Federico & Maria Medina Jr., Fr. Steve Hicks, Bishop Michael J. Sis, Fr. Romanus Akamike, Dcn. David & Brenda Workman, John & Bonnie Rangel, St. Joseph, San Angelo; Jose & Gabriela Villagrana, Holy Trinity, Big Spring; Carlos & Laura Barrios, Sacred Heart, Coleman; Carlos & Elfleda Reyes, St. Mary, Odessa.