The Inside Front

300 attend conference day, see diocese’s diversity first hand

By Becca Nelson Sankey

SAN ANGELO — One of the San Angelo Catholic Diocese’s many strengths is that it is diverse, saidSr. Adelina Garcia, associate director of Evangelization and Catechesis. With this blessing, however, comes the responsibility of examination.

Nearly 300 Catholics from throughout the diocese attended the annual Diocesan Conference Day on Oct. 15 at the McNease Convention Center. This year’s theme, “Catechesis & Culture: Embracing Our Diversity,” addressed multiculturalism within the Church.

“We’re in the process of the Encuentro, (a meeting that focuses on) how we’re addressing the growing population of Hispanics in our country,” Garcia said. “We are such a diverse diocese, so we wanted to focus on the gift we have in our culture and how that makes us a stronger Church.”

The local diocese is known for its myriad educational opportunities, of particular importance because there isn’t a Catholic university within the diocese.

(Please See CONFERENCE/20)

Sacred Heart celebrates 125 years

West Texas Angelus

ABILENE — The Sacred Heart Parish Community celebrated a big anniversary on Sunday, Sept. 18. In a commemoration of 125 years, members gathered for food, dancing, music, a historical talk and the sharing of memories.

The parish was created in September 1891 but the presence of Catholics in West Texas goes back to the 1500s and early Spanish adventurers and settlers. By the 1880s there were enough Catholics around Abilene that a priest would come in on a regular basis for Mass and the sacraments. The Bishop of Galveston, Nicholas Gallagher, came on a pastoral visit in 1885 and religious sisters from San Antonio came to fund raise in 1886.

(Please See SACRED HEART/22)

Church must do better accompanying young couples, being married examples, cardinal says

By Jimmy Patterson

AUSTIN — Cardinal Daniel DiNardo, of the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston, told diocesan delegates gathered in Austin in October that while the Church does an admirable job recognizing couples that have been married many years, it must do more to accompany young couples in preparation for the Sacrament of Marriage, as well as during the couple’s early years of marriage. It is then, he said, that most couples are most in need of help from those who can be examples.

“We’re not doing much for couples in the first seven years,” he said, speaking at the Texas Conference of Catholic Bishops’ legislative agenda session.

He challenged couples to find at least one other couple who could benefit from being accompanied. “Try to witness to just one young couple,” he said.

DiNardo also suggested that although the Church has good and resourceful marriage preparation available, it needs to start instructing on the Sacrament of Matrimony as early as the second grade.

“We start too late,” he said. “We need to start in the second grade. You build a repertoire in young people. Even if their homes are not ideal, you begin to show them what the sacrament of marriage and family life is like at that young age.”

DiNardo focused on Pope Francis’ Amoris Laetitia, which, he said, was a writing meant to be read slowly. DiNardo said the document is like a rhapsody, with themes, variations and synchronizations, and less like a symphony, where the path of the music is clearly defined.

The cardinal also encouraged those in attendance to focus on Chapters 4 and 5 of Amoris Laetitia.
From The Bishop’s Desk

With Holy Doors closing, where will we find mercy?

By Bishop Michael J. Sis

The Extraordinary Jubilee Year of Mercy will conclude worldwide on the Solemnity of Christ the King on November 20, 2016. On that day Pope Francis will close the Holy Door at St. Peter’s Basilica in Rome. In all other dioceses around the world, including San Angelo, the Holy Doors will be closing on Sunday, November 13.

At the beginning of the Holy Year, I designated four Holy Doors of Mercy in the Diocese of San Angelo:
• Sacred Heart Cathedral, San Angelo
• Outdoor Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe, Midland
• Eucharistic Chapel of Sacred Heart Parish, Abilene
• St. Mary Church, Odessa

Over the past year, thousands of people have made pilgrimages to these four special places and walked through these doors. What does it mean spiritually to pass through a Holy Door? When Saint John Paul II declared the last Jubilee Holy Year in 2000, he expressed it beautifully: “To focus on the door is to recall the responsibility of every believer to cross its threshold. To pass through that door means to confess that Jesus Christ is Lord; it is to strengthen faith in him in order to live the new life which he has given us.” (Incarcanismis Mysterium, 8)

Pope Francis asked that, in this Jubilee Holy Year 2016, we let the door be a symbol of Christ, who is the door to the Father and the door to the Kingdom of Heaven. Jesus proclaims in the Gospel of John, “I am the door. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture ... I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.” (John 10:9, 10b)

After November 13, 2016, the four Holy Doors in the Diocese of San Angelo will no longer bear that designation. This means the time is short to take the opportunity to receive the special plenary indulgence associated with passing through a Holy Door during the Extraordinary Jubilee Year of Mercy. A plenary indulgence is granted to the faithful who pass through a Holy Door during a Jubilee Year and fulfill the prescribed conditions for a plenary indulgence.

What are those conditions? According to Church teaching, they are the following: (1) truly repenting of our sin and letting go of our attachment to sin; (2) sacramental Confession; (3) reception of the Eucharist; and (4) praying for the intentions of the Pope. A member of the Church who has fulfilled those four conditions may acquire a plenary indulgence by carrying out any of the various particular actions which the Church has designated for plenary indulgences.

An indulgence can be obtained for oneself or for someone who is deceased, but it cannot be applied to other persons living on earth. In order to gain an indulgence, one must be in the state of grace at least at the time the indulgence action is completed.

While there are just a few more days to gain a plenary indulgence associated with passing through a Holy Door, there is no need to be anxious. This is because plenary indulgences may be obtained at any time by carrying out the

(Mira OBISPO/21)
DIOCESAN BRIEFS

A Harvest of Blessings: Rowena’s 94th annual fall festival, Nov. 13
10:30 a.m. - Flag and Raising and Balloon Release to honor all Veterans.
11 a.m. - 1:30 p.m. — Turkey and Dressing with all trimmings along with Rowena Style German Sausage. Plate for Adults and Plates to Go $10.00; children (10 & under) $5.00. Plates-to-Go are available at Drive Thru or Walk-Up windows.
11:30 a.m.-3 p.m. — Bingo and Children’s games and activities
1 p.m. — Live Auction of donated merchandise begins. Cotton auction begins at 2:00 p.m.
4:30 p.m. — Sausage Sandwich Supper $4.00 - includes tea and dessert

Parishioners will be preparing 9,000 lbs. of sausage. Uncooked sausage will be sold @ $5.00 while supply lasts. A Country Store, featuring needle work items, baked and canned goods and plants, will be open throughout the day. Handicapped parking and assistance during the meal will be available. All activities take place on church grounds.

Retirement Fund For Religious Collection to be taken in diocese, Dec., 10-11
WASHINGTON—The annual Retirement Fund for Religious collection will be Dec. 10-11 throughout the Diocese of San Angelo. In its 29th year, the collection is coordinated by the National Religious Retirement Office, and benefits nearly 33,000 elderly Catholic sisters, brothers and religious order priests whose religious communities lack adequate retirement funding.

The appeal raised $30.7 million in 2015, the sixth highest total in its history. As a result, the NRRO distributed $25 million to 401 religious communities across the county. Communities utilize the assistance to bolster retirement savings and subsidize such day-to-day expenses as prescription medications and nursing care.

Throughout the year, additional funding is allocated for religious congregations with the greatest needs. A portion of the proceeds also supports education in retirement planning and eldercare delivery.

The U.S. bishops initiated the Retirement Fund for Religious in 1988 to address the significant lack of retirement funding among religious communities in the U.S. Proceeds are distributed to eligible communities to help underwrite retirement and health-care expenses.

PRAY FOR OUR SEMINARIANS

Freddy Perez
3rd Year Theology
Assumption Seminary
Birthday: March 30, 1986
From: San Angelo
Favorite Food: Home-cooked Food
Likes learning random facts!

Thomas Shows
2nd year Theology
St. Mary’s Seminary, Houston
Birthday: July 12, 1989
From: Abilene
Favorite Food: Indian food and Rosa’s Café
Likes playing video games, running, making model miniatures, and practicing the harmonica

Bishop helps Abilene’s Holy Family celebrate 40th anniversary as parish

ABILENE — The year 2016 has marked a monumental time for Holy Family in Abilene as the parish commemorated the 40th anniversary of its founding with a special Mass and reception, October 8.

The anniversary Mass was presided over by Bishop Michael Sis, and concelebrated by Holy Family’s priests Rev. Msgr. Frederick Nawarskas and Fr. Adam Droll.

All four of Holy Family’s deacons – Dr. Daniel Vaughn, Gerald Schwalb, Gary Rhodes and Chuck Lambert – as well as seminarians Thomas Shows and Kevin Lenius were involved in the Mass as well.

In its 40 years, you can count on one hand the number of priests that have been in charge of Holy Family – if you don’t include the parochial vicars.

Msgr. Nawarskas has been probably the longest tenured of any of them as he came to Holy Family in July 1996.

“It’s a pleasure getting to learn as many people’s names as possible and being a part of their families and watching their children growing up,” he said.

“Some of the people that I baptized here are getting ready to get married and that’s very nice.”

Besides Fr. Droll, other parochial vicars assigned to Holy Family by Bishop Sis, and retired Bishop Michael Pfeifer during Msgr. Nawarskas’ time at Holy Family are Fr. Ruben Covos, Fr. Sam Matthiesen, Fr. Innocent Eziefule and Fr. Tony Franco.

Fr. Covos is currently being loaned by the diocese to the United States Air Force and is stationed in Dover, Delaware while Fr. Matthiesen is now in Big Spring.

“They are all very nice and I’ve enjoyed them,” Msgr. Nawarskas said. “They all brought something through their homilies and reflections that they shared with the congregation. Each one was unique and had a different prospective on the divine revelation.”

Adrienne and Gerry McAuliffe were founding members of Holy Family, and Joan beamed with pride at the reception as she looked back on the past four decades.

“It has been absolutely wonderful to see the number of families that have come to join Holy Family,” she said. “It has reached out to so many different people from refugees to people in Abilene to those stationed at Dyess Air Force Base. We just love it."

Holy Family has also seen growth that makes it the largest church in the Abilene deanery – something that Taylor said nobody ever envisioned.

“It’s been through the grace of God and a lot of prayer and work

Mrs. McAuliffe shared one of her fond memories from the early days of the church after it opened on the south side of town.

“We would go to Adoration at 5 a.m. and then Fr. Kelly would have us come over for coffee afterwards,” she said. “(Holy Family) was something that evolved and kept getting better and before you knew it, we were a part of the town.”

Joan and Bernie Taylor were also founding members of Holy Family, and Joan beamed at the reception as she looked back on the past four decades.

(During the Mass, the Bishop delivered his homily at Holy Family’s 40th anniversary Mass, October 8 (Photo by Brandon McAuliffe).)
Adversity can keep us from — and eventually lead us to — God

By Becca Nelson Sankey
The Angelus

Strength is born from struggle and, sometimes, in darkness, there is a divine gift not easily discernible. Such was the message delivered by Sally Robb at the 2016 Catholic Women’s Conference at the Clarion Hotel, Oct. 21-22. Robb was one of four women who spoke at the conference, which was the Heart of Jesus, Mary and Joseph Foundation’s first in San Angelo.

Robb, who has a master’s degree in Theology and hosts the radio show Thread of Grace, discussed in detail her own personal plights, including the countless seizures, 10-month coma, surgery and subsequent brain damage one of her six children endured. The gift, Robb said, is that her daughter is now able to see the beauty in everyone. “She is the image of love, so radiant, so beautiful,” Robb said. “It is an honor to have her as my daughter.”

Her daughter also sees God’s gifts in difficult times, having once said in prayer, “Right now it’s too dark for me to see it is mercy, but I know that it must be. And I thank you.”

“Annunciation leads to Assumption,” Robb said. “Her saying ‘yes’ leads to a union with God that if you knew her you would see.”

So many times, though, we distance ourselves from God, Robb said.

“They are so filled with shame and condemnation,” Robb said.

On a board next to Robb, covering a photo of the Virgin Mary cradling an infant Jesus, were black clouds scrawled with words such as “abortion,” “critical spirit” and “judgment.”

“Jesus wants to put his hand on top of yours, and He wants to wipe away the darkness so you can begin to see how beautiful you are to Him, how infinitely He desires you, that none of this separates you from Him,” she said, plucking each cloud from the board one by one.

“My heart is burning within me to reject the darkness,” Robb said.

“My heart is burning within me to reject the darkness,” Robb said.

“Everything that comes to us is a gift He’s giving us. The beloved uses every single thing that happens to us as a possibility to draw us closer to Him.”

(Please See WOMEN/19)

The Dignity and Nature of Women

(Editors Note: Part 1 in our series of 4.)

By Lisa Martinez

As America seethes with anxiety, anger and confusion about the state of our country and those who will lead, it is easy to assume that our best days are behind us. How can we ever turn things around? What can lead us to a better tomorrow?

I would submit that our rescue will not come from the government or from the private sector, but from our own homes, workplaces, schools and churches. We, the people of America, are the only ones who can restore it. Each of us doing what we can, when we can. By

being honest and trustworthy with those around us, by showing up and working hard. By caring for our families, helping out a friend, giving to a neighbor in need. By choosing to do the right thing time after time.

But in order to be that kind of person, we need those who can show us how to be that kind of person. A teacher, a mentor, a model...for St. John Paul II, that would be women! His vast teaching on women is rich in its potential to empower and to transform. Indeed, the influence and impact of St. John Paul on various areas of our society and culture are only now being fully recognized and appreciated.

In this series of articles, we will survey his teaching about women and his belief that women recognizing and living from their true vocation, will have a significant impact on all relationships — be it as mother, wife, sister, daughter, friend or colleague. In this way, women will lead a conversion of society and culture, which is part of the mission in God’s plan.

At the heart of the matter, John Paul believed that women first learn to love; lay their lives at the service of others in order that others may love. “For example, the young carer is called to bear witness in the daily service of the sick, the aged, the disabled, for God, and thereby help the sick and others to love Him more. And they are to be at the heart of every interpersonal relationship; to be at the heart of every family, every school, every office, every community.”

Women will lead a cultural change

John Paul believed that physical and spiritual motherhood lived authentically would bring about a lasting change in society. This type of womanly influence may be most effective in the family, but is also needed through her participation at all levels of society. How does a woman live her physical and spiritual motherhood in an authentic way? By becoming aware of, and acting on, the mission that God has specifically given to her. God has given her the feminine traits of self-gift, empathy and entrustment of the human person, and these are meant to be used at the service of the Church and society, especially within the family. Indeed, this is one of the main ways in which God acts, and can transform, the world.

John Paul says that women first learn to love; lay their lives at the service of others in order that others may love. “For example, the young carer is called to bear witness in the daily service of the sick, the aged, the disabled, for God, and thereby help the sick and others to love Him more. And they are to be at the heart of every interpersonal relationship; to be at the heart of every family, every school, every office, every community.”

(Please See DIGNITY/21)
A smile on the face of God can lead us from our darkness

By Jimmy Patterson
Editor
West Texas Angelus

Wow. What a month. In fact, what a year. Such vitriol in seemingly every corner of our daily existence, the banner of inelgance and the torch of bitterness carried by the very ones who would seek to lead us. It’s no wonder studies show we are more irritable, depressed, and angry these days. Heaven help us.

Many have lost friends — both real and virtual — over this election, a cycle that has proved to us once and for all to never discuss religion and politics if you have any hope of keeping the peace.

The election cycle conditioned many to hate, and we have been led to believe that hate is OK, especially when it is necessary to advance your political ideologies for “the good of America.” After all, our very futures rely on our leaders, and if you don’t believe me, well then, you know what you can do with it.

Unfortunately for us all, the one we are being called to follow is not God. If it were, we wouldn’t be having these troubled times, nor would we be involved in this divisive speech. If we placed our trust solely on God, perhaps we wouldn’t have fallen so far, so hard, so fast.

But here we are.

I guess we could all let forth with a big, friendly smile, right?

Trite, you say? Yet, is it not the absence of a pleasant outward demeanor that has landed us all here in the first place? We all owe ourselves a few days of smiles after what we have just been through. And those who especially need one — both on the receiving and giving end — are those who have been so misled to believe that all of what ails us is solvable through the election of one flawed human being, regardless of who that person is.

Our collective national psyche is now more in tune with Nat King Cole’s “Smile, though your heart is breaking,” rather than Frank Sinatra’s, “When you’re smilin’, the whole world smiles with you.”

My father taught me to smile always. At strangers, at work, especially at home, to neighbors and to strangers. He never sat me down and told me, smile always even though you may not feel like it. He just did it. It is often better to learn by example rather than mere words. The lessons last longer.

We can overcome the nastiness of the last several months. In fact, the simple fact that the election is over will hopefully provide the path back to a better collective mood of joy ... if, that is, it is the path upon which we follow Christ and his teachings. As a friend on Facebook posted recently, “Now that the voting is over, maybe we can all go back to posting pictures of our food.”

I certainly don’t mean to minimize the seriousness of the issues at stake. They are critical to all of us and should be thoughtfully studied and considered. While the issues are of the highest importance, the presentations of those who would lead us resembled more a playground fight between two bullies. There is nothing to be gained other than to, well, learn from it and make sure it doesn’t happen again.

(Please See PATTERSON/15)
In these times of trouble, remember to praise the Lord

By Fr. Knick and Sandie Knickerbocker

"Fr. Bob, what are we to do? The country is falling apart; we hear conflicting Church teachings; the daily news reports injustice, immorality, and violence. I don't know what to think or pray anymore."

"Just praise the Lord," Fr. Bob replied.

"Praise the Lord? I don't understand. What is there to praise?"

As the Lord tells us through the Psalmist, 'He that offers praise as a sacrifice glorifies me' (50:23 NAB).

So what are we praising when we praise the Lord? Are we praising the dire condition of our world; or our weakness, willfulness, and sin; or the tragedies we see and experience? No, when we offer God the sacrifice of praise, we acknowledge that God is God, worthy to be praised and glorified, not for "what he does, but simply because HE IS. ...By praise, the Spirit is joined to our spirits to bear witness that we are children of God [Rom 8:16]. Praise embraces the other forms of prayer and carries them toward him who is its source and goal; the 'one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist' [I Cor. 8:6] CCC 2639.

In praising the Lord, we sacrifice our desire to understand and to control other people and the circumstances in which we live. The writer of the Letter to the Hebrews reminds us that "...here we have no lasting city, but we seek the one that is to come. Through him [Jesus] let us continually offer God a sacrifice of praise, that is, the fruit of lips that confess his name (13:14-16).

How are we to praise the Lord? The Eucharist is the ultimate sacrifice of praise. "It is 'the pure offering' of the whole Body of Christ to the glory of God's name" (CCC 2643). The liturgical expressions of praise to the Holy Trinity, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, known as doxologies, have been used in the Eucharistic celebration and in other liturgies and prayers since the early centuries of the Church. (‘Doxology’ is an oral expression of praise and glorification). We praise the Lord in every aspect of the Mass: in our decision to participate fully in the Liturgy of the Word and Sacrament through attentiveness, prayer, and "in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with all [our] heart..." (Eph 5:19 RSVCE).

Abilene Pro-Life Work

On October 15, 2016, Dr. Jim Sulliman, left, in photo at left, and Doug Eichorst joined other members of West Texans for Life and the Catholic Pro-Life Committee of the Abilene Deanery in a 100-Minute Prayer Vigil in front of the Federal Building and U.S. Post Office in downtown Abilene to protest the 100th Anniversary of Planned Parenthood.

第二部左图为Knick & Knickerbocker/20)

Carmen Elizabeth Castillo, at right, daughter of Ignacio & Melissa Castillo, all of St. Vincent Pallotti Church in Abilene, presented checks totaling $636 to Dr. Jim Sulliman, Chair of the Catholic Pro-Life Committee of the Abilene Deanery, at the Committee's September 2016 meeting, for the benefit of the Crossroads Pro-Life Walks Across America organization. The checks were collected at Carmen's Quinceñera Mass on August 13, 2016 at St. Vincent, and it was Carmen's request that the collection taken up at that Mass be donated to the Crossroads Pro-Life Walks Across America organization, after she was inspired by the Pro-Life witness of the Crossroads Pro-Life Walkers who stopped in Abilene this past summer on their Walk from Los Angeles to Washington.
Texas Conference of Catholic Bishops

Each year during October the Church observes Respect Life Month. During this time, we pray and reflect on the precious gift of life and recommit ourselves to working toward a culture that truly welcomes and protects human life in our society, from conception to natural death. Catholic teaching on abortion and euthanasia is very clear, as is our commitment to the ongoing work of improving living conditions, education, and health-care access for all, especially the poor and those without resources.

This year we bishops draw particular attention to our consistent call for the abolition of the death penalty in Texas, as we recognize this is undeniably a pro-life issue.

Catholic Social Teaching is a distinct body of Church doctrine and an essential part of Catholic faith (Sharing Catholic Social Teaching, Challenges & Directions, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops). Rooted in the Scriptures, our Church’s teaching develops over centuries as the Church encounters new social realities and challenges. The same Holy Spirit who inspired the Scriptures is with the Church as we “read the signs of the times” in each new culture and age (Gaudium et Spes, no. 4).

Today, the Catechism of the Catholic Church provides a comprehensive summary of Catholic doctrine.

Catholic teaching unequivocally states that “if non-lethal means are sufficient to defend and protect people’s safety from the aggressor, authority will limit itself to such means ...” (Catechism of the Catholic Church, no. 2267). This simply means if alternatives to the death penalty exist that serve to protect society from violent criminals, society “must limit itself” to these other means. There can be no doubt such means exist today in the United States, including in the State of Texas.

Pope Saint John Paul II wrote that conditions suggesting the legitimate use of capital punishment are “very rare, if not practically non-existent” (Evangelium Vitae, no. 56). Pope Francis has stated that “it is impossible to imagine that states today cannot make use of other means than capital punishment to defend people’s lives from an unjust aggressor” (Address to Delegates of the International Association of Penal Law, Vatican City, October 24, 2014).

In the Catechism of the Catholic Church, the Church teaches that these non-violent ways of preserving public order “are more in keeping with the concrete conditions of the common good and more in conformity with the dignity of the human person" (no. 2267). In fact, in our country and in the State of Texas the death penalty not only does not correspond to the common good, it actually does great harm to it.

First, the death penalty is disproportionately used on the poor, racial minorities and the vulnerable. The death penalty in and of itself perpetuates the notion that life is in some instances disposable, or can be judged of no worth. It is well documented that those who can least afford a defense are most likely to receive a death penalty; more than 90% of those on death row cannot afford an attorney. In 1990, the U.S. General Accounting Office reported “a pattern of evidence indicating racial disparities in charging, sentencing and imposition of the death penalty.” Furthermore, the death penalty has been applied to persons of limited mental capacity. These realities contribute to a callous disregard for the dignity of human life. The death penalty negatively influences our children’s moral formation and our culture as it fails to allow for mercy and redemption.

Secondly, scarce public resources are devoted to the death penalty, thus injuring the common good. The cost of housing and feeding a prisoner for a life sentence is three times lower than the court costs incurred by a lengthy appeals process for a prisoner on death row (Death Penalty Information Center, deathpenaltyinfo.org).

Thirdly, innocent people are killed by the government on our behalf. There are at least 23 documented cases of innocent people who were executed in the United States in this century for capital crimes. The American Bar Association has concluded that administration of the death penalty is “a haphazard maze of unfair practices with no internal consistency” and has called for a moratorium on executions.

The Catechism does not recognize the prospect of deterrence as justification for the death penalty. But even if it did, states without the death penalty have either similar or lower crime rates than Texas (Death Penalty Information Center). The notion that the death penalty deters crime is false. It also feeds into the false belief that violence is the only remedy for violence.

As a Church we accompany our brothers and sisters, children, parents and loved ones as we see them suffer from the heinous and violent actions of others. Only God can console them, yet we offer what comfort we can with our presence and prayer. The healing that comes from forgiveness has been a powerful force in the lives of many families who have experienced violence. Through our varied ministries, we offer counseling, personal support, and the grace of the sacraments to assist in the healing process. Our ministry of healing and forgiveness is rooted in Jesus’ command to “be merciful, just as your Father is merciful” (Luke 6:36).

Our call to abolish the death penalty is not a call to deny justice. On the contrary, it is a call to the whole community to recognize that the death penalty does not fulfill justice, nor does it console the inconsolable. Rather than seeking vengeance, forgiveness offers a victim’s family and the accused true healing that comes through restorative justice.

Capital punishment vitiates our hearts’ capacity for mercy and love. Due process for the accused, the incarceration of the guilty, and the protection of the community serve justice and mercy. As a Church, we strive to walk with those who have time to repent. As Scripture says, God “takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that they turn from their ways and live” (Ezekiel 33:11). Our prison ministries are founded on the mission given to us by the Lord to offer a call to repentance to those who have lost hope, or whom the world has given up for lost.

May God give us the grace to witness to the dignity of human life. May the Lord console the suffering, protect our community, and grant conversion to those responsible for the inflicting of death and violence upon others. In this Year of Mercy, may we be stewards of mercy to all.
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Protecting Human Life

Made in the image of God, all of our social obligations and rights flow from the inherent value of human life. The Catholic Church teaches that human life is intrinsically valuable and should be protected from conception to natural death; including the calls to end abortion, prevent euthanasia, stop the destruction of human embryos, and oppose cloning.

• Support state funding to abortion alternative providers.
• Support ban on research using fetal tissue acquired from abortion.
• Oppose all public funding to abortion providers, including funds for contraceptives.
• Support the protection and improvement of air, land, and water quality in Texas.
• Support efforts to reform the statute governing end-of-life care to involve patients, families and physicians in protecting life and dignity, while preserving ethical standards of care.
• Support programs to encourage adoption and to assist families with parenting support.

Children and Families

The Church supports legislation that promotes strong, stable and healthy families. The Catholic Church recognizes parents as the primary educators of their children and supports the freedom of parents to choose a school for their children with a safe, productive learning environment, and rejects the notion that a parent’s address and income level should determine a child’s educational or child care opportunities.

• Promote the permanency of marriage between one man and one woman.
• Support abstinence-only education in Texas schools.
• Support conscience protection legislation to ensure that charities have the religious liberty protection to fulfill their mission without violating deeply held religious beliefs related to the life and dignity of the human person and traditional family structures.
• Support school choice tax credit scholarships to provide educational choices for families.
• Support Texas public school students’ receipt of in-state college tuition and financial aid.
• Support foster care system improvements, especially related to children aging out of foster care.
• Support increased recruitment, formation, and support for foster care families.
• Support quality, affordable before- and after-school care for public and private students.

Health and Human Services

Health care is essential for the proper development of life. Justice demands that medical and behavioral health care be easily available for all. Particular care must be offered to those who have special needs because of age, addiction, physical or mental disability.

• Support improvements to Texas’ critical public health safety net, especially expanding opportunities for acquiring health insurance, including expanding Medicaid and the Children’s Health Insurance Program.
• Support access to basic and preventative health care for low income uninsured women, as well as prenatal and pediatric care for children.
• Support care for persons who are aging, live with disabilities, or need mental health services.

Justice for Immigrants

Catholics derive our special concern for the immigrant from the many biblical accounts of immigration. The Catholic Church supports immigration reform that is merciful, charitable, and compassionate to those here simply working for a better life, while also recognizing the legitimate responsibility of the federal government to maintain control of our nation’s borders.

• Support comprehensive immigration reform including a pathway to citizenship.
• Oppose efforts to compel local and state agencies to enforce federal immigration laws.
• Oppose efforts to reduce access to education and healthcare for immigrants.
• Oppose efforts that hinder immigrants’ ability to get Texas drivers’ licenses and IDs or birth certificates for immigrants’ citizen children.
• Support care for unaccompanied minors and reunite families separated by migration.
• Support alternatives to family detention of migrants and refugees.
• Support continued state and federal cooperation with refugee resettlement.

Protecting The Poor and Vulnerable

The Catholic Church has always served the poor and the vulnerable by providing services and advocating for the public good. In difficult economic times, those unable to help themselves are in particular need of society’s compassion. We call on state leaders to craft a balanced approach to addressing the social and economic needs, including adequately funding essential public services.

(Please See TCCB/21)
Abilene cautioned about payday lending

By Loretta Fulton
Special to The Angelus

ABILENE — Bishop Michael Sis didn't mince words when he led a forum in Abilene Oct. 28 on the evils of the payday and auto title loan industry.

He told of a Texas-based payday lending company that was fined $14 million by the federal government because its training manual taught employees how to ensure that borrowers are unable to repay the loans in a short amount of time, making it necessary for them to continually renew loans at high cost in interest and fees.

"That's not free market," Sis said, "that's exploitation and manipulation."

Other words like "usury" and "abuse" left no mistake that the bishop of the Diocese of San Angelo is strongly in favor of cities in Texas passing ordinances to partially regulate the payday loan industry. The reason city ordinances are needed in Texas is that the state Legislature has continually refused to pass laws regulating the business.

Sis served as vicar general under Bishop Joe Vasquez in the Diocese of Austin before becoming bishop in San Angelo.

Vasquez has testified before the state legislature in trying to get state regulations passed.

The influence of Vasquez, plus hearing stories of abuse from his own flock in the Diocese of San Angelo, led Sis to be a vocal leader in getting cities in Texas to pass ordinances.

"That's what fuels it for me," Sis said.

His efforts were successful when the San Angelo City Council unanimously approved on first reading a vote to reign in payday lenders during a Nov. 1 vote. A second reading of the proposed ordinance and its adoption are scheduled for Nov. 15.

People who seek loans from payday lenders typically cannot get loans from traditional sources like banks. Many are poor, making the high interest rates even harder to repay.

Clients served by Catholic social service ministries in the diocese frequently tell of abusive practices of the lenders, Sis said, calling those practices a "clear example of usury."

Sis was the opening speaker for the forum in Abilene. Other speakers were from the Baptist General Convention of Texas and Texas Appleseed, a social justice law center based in Austin. Many in the audience were from Catholic

(Please See PAYDAY/18)

(Please See SAINTS/19)
A Walk though The Doors

Above, Fr. Steve Hicks, third from right, with Fr. Ryan Rojo, parochial vicar at the Sacred Heart Cathedral, third from left, and with Fr. Fabian Maria of Jesus Crucified, center, Brother Joseph Mary, second from right, and other brothers from the Mt. Carmel Hermitage, after the hermits entered the cathedral through the Holy Doors of Mercy, at right. Above, the hermits walking through the Doors of Mercy. (Courtesy photos).
"You are a section in the pipeline of God’s mercy, with a valve at each end. The abundant supply will never end. The question is whether you will keep those valves open for inflow and outflow. Will you keep yourself open to receiving the mercy of God, and will you continue to pass it on?"

— Bishop Michael J. Sis

Photos by Karen J. Patterson

Related Stories, Photos:
Bishop Sis’ column on the closing of the Year of Mercy, Pg. 3
A Walk through The Doors, Pg 11

By Effie Caldarola
Catholic News Service

It was all over Facebook when I checked my posts the other day. There was Pope Francis, clad in the typical hospital green scrubs, with a mask as well, visiting the newborn section of an Italian hospital, including the intensive care unit where five little ones struggled for survival due to early births or other complications.

Facebook loves stories about babies, dogs and cats. If you can get all three in one story, Facebook really eats it up. But if instead you bring in a smiling pope dressed in hospital scrubs holding a baby, that’s a winner as well.

What I loved about the Pope Francis story was that it was just one more chapter in the pontiff’s “Mercy Friday” visits. I wish all of his monthly Fridays had attracted as much attention.

On a recent Friday, he visited 20 former prostitutes at a charity that assists women who have been trafficked. These particular women were from Africa, Italy and Eastern Europe, and the pope’s visit not only comforted them on their difficult journey, it also called attention to one of the great problems of our age: human trafficking.

We are still in the Extraordinary Jubilee Year of Mercy, which Pope Francis proclaimed from Dec. 8, 2015, until Nov. 20, 2016. This Year of Mercy is called “extraordinary” because it fell out of the normal 25-year rotation for jubilee years. It’s a bonus year, one might say, and when it was announced, it garnered all kinds of attention in church bulletins and in the Catholic press.

But you know how it goes with the news cycle. Something else comes along and our attention is diverted. Before you know it, Nov. 20 will be here and we’ll ask ourselves, Just what did I do in the Year of Mercy?

Sometimes, I think our efforts are stymied by the thought that we have to do something big to make it count. So then we procrastinate and do nothing.

During the Year of Mercy, the U.S. Catholic bishops’ website has had suggestions for performing acts of mercy, and here’s one of them: Eat lunch with someone who may be homeless. Now, really, how tough is that?

Do you work in an office or in a school where, at lunchtime, some people seem always to be alone? How much effort does it take to join them?

Or do you have an elderly relative who might love a chatty phone call today? Hey, that’s mercy, too.

A good place to start would be to reread the corporal and spiritual works of mercy, our Christian road map to compassionate action.

Kerry Weber actually beat Pope Francis to the punch on mercy by writing a great little book a few years ago called “Mercy in the City.” It recounts her efforts during Lent to perform each corporal work of mercy. It’s entertaining and inspiring to see her moving around New York City endeavoring to visit a prison or spend the night in a homeless shelter.

Weber’s book would make a great text for a faith formation class, and it’s a great idea as well.

What if we kept a mercy journal as we try to delve into practices of mercy? Just a simple little notebook in which we chronicle each effort, and its outcome might focus our attention on mercy.

Some of Pope Francis’ other ventures included a Friday visit to sick children during a trip to Poland and a visit to elderly priests. He spent one Friday with developmentally disabled patients at a L’Arche community.

Great leaders lead by example. Pope Francis has set the course. What will we do?
Making Sense of Bioethics

The many problems with surrogacy

By Fr. Tad Pacholczyk

Sometimes when there is infertility in marriage, couples make the decision to seek out the services of a surrogate in order to have a child. A surrogate is a woman who agrees to be implanted with an embryo produced by in vitro fertilization (IVF) and to hand over the newborn baby to the couple upon completion of the gestation and birth. In recent years, gestational surrogacy has become a multi-million dollar industry, attracting a broad clientele ranging from married couples to single women, gay couples to anyone else with the desire for a baby and the ability to finance the undertaking. Surrogacy raises grave moral concerns, and powerfully undermines the dignity of human procreation, particularly when it comes to the women and children involved in the process.

One of the significant moral concerns around surrogacy is that it introduces fractures into parenthood by multiplying parental roles. Surrogacy coerces children into situations where they are subjected to the unhealthy stresses of ambiguous or split origins, perhaps being conceived from one woman’s egg, gestated by another woman, raised by a third, and maybe even dissociated from their father by anonymous sperm donation. Such practices end up being profoundly unfair and dehumanizing for the children caught in the web of the process. One woman, who was herself conceived by anonymous sperm donation, describes her own experience of engaging a surrogate in a 2008 New York Times interview, speaks frankly: “We encountered the wink-nod rule: Surrogates would never say they were motivated to carry a child for another couple just for money; they were all motivated by altruism. This gentle hypocrisy allows surrogacy to take place. Without it, both sides would have to acknowledge the deep cultural revulsion against attaching a dollar figure to the creation of a human life.”

Indeed, surrogacy involves turning human life into a commodity on multiple levels, as Kathleen Sloan recently described in testimony given to a Minnesota state commission studying the issue. A seemingly unlikely opponent of the procedure, Sloan works as a pro-abortion feminist and director of the National Organization for Women in Connecticut. On gestational surrogacy, however, she agrees with pro-life criticisms, noting how it involves “children intentionally severed from genetic and biological sources of identity, human rights be damned. In essence, it is the ultimate manifestation of the neoliberal project of capitalistic commodification of all life to create profit and fulfill the narcissistic desires of an entitled elite.”

Those narcissistic desires are readily catered to by an IVF industry that generates offspring in the laboratory for clients. In this process, extra embryonic humans are produced, stored and oftentimes orphaned in freezers, or even discarded outright by throwing them away as “biomedical waste.” In fact, the process of IVF, central to the practice of surrogacy, generally ends up killing more babies than it delivers. Coupled with the fact that contracting couples can pressure the surrogate mother to undergo an abortion if the in utero child appears to be “imperfect,” or to eliminate a twin through “selective reduction” in a multiple pregnancy, it can hardly be disputed that children are pawns in the merciless endgame of satisfying parental and customer desires and corporate profit motives.

A woman’s reproductive powers and her God-given fecundity should never be reduced to the status of a “gestator for hire” or a “breeder” as they are sometimes called by industry insiders, nor should women be exploited by allowing payment for harvesting their eggs. A woman’s procreative powers ought to be shared uniquely through marital acts with her husband, so that all the children born of her are genetically and otherwise her own. All children merit and deserve this loving consideration and assurance of protection at the point of their fragile and sacred beginnings.

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.
Catholic Voices

Why are outward signs of faith considered offensive?

By Effie Caldarola
Catholic News Service

I am settling into my cramped seat in a small aircraft when I smell it: the nauseating odor of fried food in close quarters. I turn, ready to glare, when I see that the culprit, a middle-aged man, is bowed in prayer over his meal, hands folded, eyes closed.

All is forgiven. I am a pushover for religious witness. As a person of faith, I welcome the expressions of others on their faith journey, whether my own tradition or another. I like to see people seeking God.

On a recent drive home, it was a Jewish man and his young son I spotted walking from the synagogue, dressed in matching black pants, jackets and black hats, sporting the traditional Jewish side curls.

Another day, it is my friends who work in a refugee resettlement, who are converts to Islam, wearing their tight-fitting head coverings.

I love Ash Wednesday’s dark smudges, Good Friday’s public processions.

However, in our pluralistic society, some take offense at outward signs of faith.

What is offensive to others?

The writer Leah Libresco was curious about that so she commissioned a survey of two groups, one Christian and the other agnostic and atheist. She asked the Christian group if they would expect someone to be uncomfortable by certain actions, and she asked the non-believers if they are uncomfortable by those actions.

For example, "pray with physical object." I envision someone silently praying with her rosary.

Of the Christian group, 23 percent thought this might make others uncomfortable, but only 12 percent of the agnostics and atheists replied they would be uncomfortable. Good news so far.

Likewise, only 5 percent of nonbelievers reported discomfort if you decline food or beverage for religious reasons while 15 percent of Christians expected they might be uncomfortable. So maybe saying no to that hamburger because it’s a Lenten Friday isn't offensive.

But here's a kicker: What made the nonbelievers uncomfortable, way more than the Christians expected, was someone saying, "I'll pray for you," or asking to pray with you.

(Please See CALDAROLA/23)

The first time the word ‘smile’ appears in the Bible is in Genesis 33. It comes when Jacob and his brother Esau make peace with one another. The two had a long-running contentious relationship, and after having been separated for several years, they see each other again. First they embrace and weep. Then they attempt to exchange peace offerings in the form of livestock, a custom at the time. But Esau turns down Jacob’s offering, insisting he has plenty of sheep and cattle. But Jacob insists. Finally, a look of joy comes across both and they forget their differences, choosing instead to remember the love that had always been there.

“What a relief to see your friendly smile,” Jacob tells his brother. "It is like seeing the face of God."

What beauty is contained in those words.

Your friendly smile is like seeing the face of God!

That would be the finest compliment anyone could ever pay me.

Every time my wife goes to the grocery store, she goes with a list and a mission. If she comes upon a cashier and finds he is having a bad day or is otherwise noticeably irritated or grumpy, she makes it her personal goal to make that person smile.

On many more occasions than not, she succeeds. Before she walks away, bags in hand, the cashier is not just smiling, but is having a conversation with her.

Other times, the smile is fleeting, but at least it was there for a moment and took the place of a lonelier, unhappy expression.

Two things happen for sure when my wife carries out her mission at the store: It makes her feel better that someone’s day was brightened. And it makes the person on the receiving end feel better. Maybe, for whatever reason, he or she hadn’t felt that in a while, or maybe the smile spreads because someone took the time to make a difference. Or maybe both.

So smile. Though your heart may be breaking. As George Weigel recently wrote, our country will survive this, too. If it doesn’t, we’re already beyond repair.

The only way it will not survive is if we turn from God — and stay turned away from each other.

So smile. As Job said, “I will forget my complaints. I will change my expression. And I will smile.”

If Job can do it, so can we.

Trite? Ridiculous? Consider St. Teresa of Calcutta’s words: “Peace begins with a smile.”

And that is just what is needed and what we can make happen.
Catholic Voices

Our timidity in the face of God’s abundance

By Fr. Ron Rolheiser

My youth had both its strengths and its weaknesses. I grew up on a farm in heart of the Canadian prairies, a second-generation immigrant. Our family was a large one and the small farm we lived on gave us enough to live on, though just enough. There were never any extras. We were never hungry or genuinely poor, but we lived in a conscriptive frugality. You were given what you needed, but rarely anything extra. You got just one portion of the main course at a meal and one dessert because these had to be measured out in a way that left enough for everyone. And I lived happily inside that, taking for granted that this was the way life was meant to be, assuming that all resources are limited and you shouldn’t ever be asking for or taking more than what’s necessary.

And such a background has its strengths: You grow into adulthood with the sense that there’s no free lunch, you need to earn what you eat. You know too that you shouldn’t be taking more than your share because the goods of this world are limited and meant to be shared with everyone. If you take more than your share, than there won’t be enough for everyone. Resources are limited, so if anyone gets too much, someone gets too little.

But such an upbringing also has its downside: When everything has to be measured-out to ensure that there’s enough for everyone and you live with the underlying fear that there might not be enough, you can easily end up with a sense of scarcity rather than of abundance and an inclination towards stinginess rather than generosity.

A mindset of scarcity rather than of abundance debilitates us in several ways: First, it tends to leave us standing before life’s abundance too timid to celebrate life with any exuberance. Life is too equated with frugality and you are forever haunted by guilt in the face of life’s goodness and especially before any experience of luxury, not unlike the discomfort felt by Jesus’ disciples when they are face to face with a prodigal woman lavishly anointing Jesus’ feet with expensive perfume. Inside a mindset of scarcity there’s the perennial temptation to falsely idealize suffering and poverty and have them replace grace and abundance as God’s real gift to us.

More crippling still is the fact that a sense of scarcity too often gives us a concept of a God who is limited and who is frugal rather than prodigal. But that isn’t the God of Jesus.

Allow me just one, rather pointed, illustration: A seminary professor whom I know shares this story. He’s been teaching seminarians for many years and in recent years, when teaching about the sacrament of penance, is frequently asked this question: “When can I refuse absolution? When do I not grant forgiveness?” The anxiety expressed here is not, I believe, triggered by a need for power but by a very sincere fear that we have to be rather scrupulous in handling out God’s mercy, that we shouldn’t be handing out cheap grace. And, undergirding that fear, I believe, is the unconscious notion that God, too, works out of a sense of scarcity rather than of abundance, and that God’s mercies, like our own resources, are limited and need to be measured out very sparingly.

But that’s not the God whom Jesus incarnated and revealed. The Gospels, rather, reveal a God who is prodigal beyond all our standards and beyond our imagination. The God of the Gospels is the Sower who, because he has unlimited seeds, scatters those seeds everywhere without discrimination: on the road, in the ditches, in the thorn bushes, in bad soil, and in good soil.

Moreover that prodigal Sower is also the God of creation, that is, the God who has created and continues to create hundreds of billions of galaxies and billions and billions of human beings. And this prodigal God gives us this perennial invitation: Come to the waters, come without money, come without merit because God’s gift is as plentiful, available, and as free as the air we breathe.

The Gospel of Luke recounts an incident where Peter, just after he had spent an entire night fishing and had caught nothing, is told to cast out his net one more time and this time, Peter’s net catches so many fish that the weight of the catch threatens to sink two boats. Peter reacts by falling on his knees and confessing his sinfulness. But, as the text makes clear, that’s not the proper reaction in the face of over-abundance. Peter is wrongly fearful, in effect, wanting that over-abundance to go away; when what Jesus wants from him in the face of that over-abundance is to go out to the world and share with others that unimaginable grace.

What God’s over-abundance is meant to teach us is that, in the face of limitless grace, we may never refuse anyone absolution.

Ronald Rolheiser, a Roman Catholic priest and member of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, is president of the Oblate School of Theology in San Antonio, Texas. He is a community-builder, lecturer and writer. His books are popular throughout the English-speaking world and his weekly column is carried by more than seventy newspapers worldwide.

The problem with our ‘You go girl’ culture

By Most Rev. Robert Barron

Auxiliary Bishop of Los Angeles

Two recent films, Deepwater Horizon with Mark Wahlberg and Sully starring Tom Hanks, represent something of a breath of fresh air, for both movies feature men who are intelligent, virtuous, and quietly heroic. If this strikes you as a banal observation, that just means you haven’t been following much of the popular culture for the past twenty years.

One of the distinctive marks of films and television programs the last couple of decades has been the Homer Simpsonization of men. Don’t get me wrong: I’m a big fan of the The Simpsons and laugh at Homer’s antics as inevitably show up. And she has to show her worth in a domineering way, that is to say, over and against the men. For her to appear strong, they have to appear weak. For a particularly good case in point, watch the most recent Star Wars film.

Now I perfectly understand the legitimacy of feminist concerns regarding the portrayal of women in the media as consistently demure, retiring, and subservient to men. I grant that, in most of the action/adventure movies that I saw growing up, women would typically twist an ankle or get captured and then require rescuing by the swashbuckling male hero—and I realize how galling this must have been to generations of women. And therefore, a certain correction was undoubtedly in order. But what is problematic now is the Nietzschean quality of the reaction, by which I mean, the insistence that female power has to be assert

(Please See BARRON/23)
**Is dialysis required? / Scruffy character in church**

By Fr. Kenneth Doyle
Catholic News Service

Q. My Dad is almost 89 years old. In 1987, he had a double bypass. Right now he has slow-growing prostate cancer, diabetes and high blood pressure. He is also suffering from depression (my mom passed away in 2010), and he looks forward to dying.

He found out recently that he has only 35 percent kidney function. If dialysis is prescribed, from a Catholic point of view, would he have to undergo it? (Knox, Indiana)

A. The short and simple answer is "No." In your father's circumstances, he would be under no ethical obligation to start dialysis. Catholic moral teaching does not require us to use every possible treatment to preserve and prolong life.

Dialysis, in this case, could surely be judged an "extraordinary" or "disproportionate" means in terms of the benefit it might offer.

This moral principle is most clearly expressed in the "Ethical and Religious Directives for Catholic Health Care Services" published in 2009 by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, which states: "A person may forgo extraordinary or disproportionate means of preserving life. Disproportionate means are those that the patient's judgment do not offer a reasonable hope of benefit or entail an excessive burden, or impose excessive expense on the family or the community" (No. 57).

Your father can legitimately opt instead for what is sometimes termed "medical management without dialysis," involving palliative care to keep him as comfortable as possible.

Any moral decision depends, of course, on the attendant circumstances. If, on the other hand, your father were 30 years younger, with no life-threatening diseases, and dialysis were likely to offer him many more years of life -- and if, while in the throes of depression, he were motivated chiefly by a desire to end his life -- then the moral calculus might well produce a different result, and dialysis would be the proper moral choice.

I'm looking at your father's situation from afar and based on the information supplied. For your father's peace of mind, he might want to discuss his individual situation with a priest, Catholic ethicist or chaplain -- who, I am confident, would offer him this same comforting advice.

Q. A couple of weeks ago, a clean but scruffy fellow came into Mass and sat on the floor in the back of our church. When it came time for the sign of peace, he came forward to shake hands and people were a little put off. Then, when Communion came, he approached the altar before anyone else had left their pews.

A church usher quickly got behind him, gave him a "look" and then followed him to the back of the church. I thought this was un-Christian and felt sorry about the treatment he received. What if it were Jesus? (Wisconsin)

A. Within any group setting, there is a natural awkwardness when someone's appearance or behavior departs from the ordinary. As you rightly indicate, though, the Christian community is not about appearances. The man should not have been judged for his "scruffiness," and when he came up for the sign of peace, he should have been greeted warmly and with acceptance.

But the fact that he sat on the floor and that he approached the altar prematurely did create a natural concern. Perhaps the usher feared that the man posed a threat to the priest-celebrant -- although the "look" was clearly out of place.

The response of the worshipping community was, I hope, generally one of sympathy for the man with a desire to offer him assistance should he need it. I hope, too, that the usher, having followed the man to the back of church, engaged him in conversation to help determine his needs and to assure him that he was welcome.

Q. My wife passed away three years ago, and I miss her very much. We were married for 63 years. What are the church's thoughts on the hereafter? Will we still be man and wife? (Milford, Iowa)

A. Your question is one frequently asked by those who are mourning deeply the death of a spouse. The response should bring you some comfort.

In one Gospel story (Mark 12:18-27), a question is posed to Jesus by the Sadducees, who did not believe in an afterlife; they wanted to know about a woman who had had seven spouses successively, and which man would be her husband in heaven. Jesus explained that "when they rise from the dead, they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but they are like the angels in heaven" (Mk 12:25).

Some have interpreted these words -- erroneously -- to mean that there will be no continuing and special relationship in heaven between earthly spouses. Instead, what Christ simply meant was that the institution of marriage, as we have known it on earth, will be unnecessary in heaven. There will be no need for procreation because no one will ever die; human companionship will not be required to satisfy our loneliness because the desire for intimacy will be fulfilled by knowing the Lord personally.

Still, though, the church does believe that the relationships we have enjoyed on earth will be transformed and enhanced as they continue in heaven. A prayer frequently used at the end of funeral Masses has the priest saying, "Before we go our separate ways, let us take leave of our brother/sister. May our farewell express our affection for him/her; may it ease our sadness and strengthen our hope. One day we shall joyfully greet him/her again when the love of Christ, which conquers all things, destroys even death itself."

Questions may be sent to Father Kenneth Doyle at askfatherdoyle@gmail.com and 30 Columbia Circle Dr. Albany, New York 12203.
PAYDAY

(congregation)

congregations in Abilene, including Father Fred Nawarskas and Father Adam Droll of Holy Family Catholic Church, and several members of Holy Family and St. Francis congregations. Michael Barba, associate director of public policy for the Texas Catholic Conference of Bishops, also spoke.

Mary Cooksey, program director for the Abilene office of 211 Texas: A Call for Help, said in an interview that usury, the practice of charging exorbitant interest rates, making it virtually impossible to get out of debt, strips people of their dignity. "Victimizing anyone in any way is not right," Cooksey said. "Social justice is a very important thing to me. That's who I am."

Cooksey's agency coordinates with 40 charities, she said, and many of the clients are victims of payday loan practices.

The meeting in Abilene was held in Logsdon Chapel on the campus of Baptist-affiliated Hardin-Simmons University. A number of local Baptists were present for the forum, as well as people from other denominations.

Several people came from Highland Church of Christ, which also is leading an effort to get cities to pass ordinances that would regulate the payday loan practices. Bishop Sis, in opening the forum, noted the diversity of people present and said that even though he was involved and that the forum was being held at a Baptist institution, the issue has touched people of all faiths.

"It has to do with the well-being of our citizens," he said.

A similar forum was held in San Angelo, with the Nov. 1 vote coming as a result. The same thing can happen in Abilene, he said, if enough people get behind the movement.

"It doesn't take long to get it going," Sis said.

Counsel the doubtful, instruct the ignorant, admonish sinners, comfort the afflicted, forgive offenses, bear patiently those who do us ill, and pray for the living and the dead. I encourage all believers to continue practicing these merciful actions often, no matter what year it is.

Where do we find mercy for ourselves after the Jubilee Year of Mercy is over? The mercy of God is still available to us in many ways, for his mercy is everlasting. We should pray the Our Father every day, and that prayer includes the words, "forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us." That is a daily reminder both to open our hearts to receive mercy and to extend mercy to those around us.

Christ also gave us the profound experience of receiving mercy through the Sacrament of Penance. We don't have to wait until another Jubilee Year to go to Confession. Our priests make this beautiful sacrament available to us so that we may be reconciled with God through the saving power of Jesus Christ on a regular basis. Going to Confession is an act of hope. It is a reminder that we are works of art in progress, and God is the artist. God is the sculptor, and we are the clay. He works out the imperfections. He molds us and shapes us lovingly.

Another way to experience God's mercy after the closing of the Jubilee Year of Mercy is through the Jesus Prayer. I recommend the regular use of the Jesus Prayer as a simple way to keep in touch with the mercy of God throughout our lives. The typical formulation of the Jesus Prayer is this: "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner." This has been a very popular prayer since the first few centuries of Christianity. It is especially used in the spirituality of Eastern Orthodox Christians, but also among Catholics around the world.

The Jesus Prayer is often used as a tool for focusing our hearts in prayer. The way it is typically practiced is very simple. You relax and let go of distractions. Lead your mind from your head to your heart. Say the Jesus Prayer slowly and reverently, either mentally or quietly with your lips: "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner." Repeat the prayer peacefully and patiently, with attention to God's presence. The Jesus Prayer keeps the name of Jesus in our heart and reminds us to admit that each one of us is in need of God's mercy.

One of the most popular prayers of mercy among Roman Catholics is the Chaplet of Divine Mercy. This chaplet is typically prayed on Rosary beads, but it can also be practiced without beads, using the fingers to count the prayers. It can be prayed at any time, but many people pray it at 3:00 p.m. on Fridays, which is the Hour of Mercy. The Divine Mercy Chaplet is based on the apparitions of Jesus to Saint Faustina Kowalska, the Polish religious sister who is known as "the Apostle of Mercy." The particular prayers of the Chaplet of Divine Mercy are easy to find in many places online, such as www.thedivinemercy.org

As we say goodbye to the Extraordinary Jubilee Year of Mercy, we give thanks for so many graces poured out by God in this year. We then look forward and commit ourselves to giving and receiving mercy all the days of our lives.

A visual image from West Texas can serve to illustrate where we go from here after the closing of the Year of Mercy: You are a section in the pipeline of God's mercy, with a valve at each end. The abundant supply will never end. The question is whether you will keep those valves open for inflow and outflow. Will you keep yourself open to receiving the mercy of God, and will you continue to pass it on?
Following Robb’s presentation and a raffle prize drawing, women congregated in the hotel’s lobby to wait for the next speaker. One attendee, Deborah Montano, said she was impressed by the crowd. “It’s just terrific,” she said. “The speakers were so excellent, starting with Dr. Margarett Schlientz.”

Montano said she identified most, however, with Robb because the two are both mothers whose children have been seriously ill; Montano’s grown son had cancer when he was 7 years old. “Coming to something like this and listening to the experiences of others helps our young mothers,” Montano said.

“These ladies have such a heart and joy for Jesus,” added Yevonne Buckner, of San Angelo. “I’m just grateful they came to share with all of us.” Events such as the Catholic Women’s Conference reignite one’s faith, Buckner said. “It’s like breathing life into your spirit,” she said. “We’re set back on fire and go back out into the world to share it with others.”

For Diana Gutierrez, also of San Angelo, the biggest take-away from the conference was the sense of hope she felt.

“When you come to things like this, I don’t want to say we’re looking for something, but consequently you find something,” Gutierrez said. “I got (the feeling) that there’s still hope to be had.”

Delaney writes in The Dictionary of Saints that he had differences with Henry II over the appointment of seculars to ecclesiastical positions. He also refused to contribute to King Richard I’s war chest to finance foreign wars in 1197 and when he defied King John on several occasions, Hugh earned the nickname “Hammering.”

He also criticized the Forest Laws, which allowed royal foresters to punish the poor who hunted in and collected firewood from the king’s forests and even excommunicated some foresters. Cowan writes that Hugh used his power of excommunication rather than monetary fines, so that the punishment would fall equally on the rich and the poor.

Hugh was also fond of children and animals and reportedly kept a wild swan as a pet. Sean Kelly and Rosemary Rogers write in The Saint-a-Day Guide that the bird followed him everywhere, attacking anyone who approached, and would “bury its head and long neck in Hugh's wide sleeves.”

When Hugh returned from a diplomatic mission to France for King John in 1199, he fell ill and after several months, died on November 16, 1200. The kings of England and Scotland accompanied his body on its return to Lincoln. He was canonized by Pope Honorius III in 1220, the first Carthusian to be so honored. His feast day is November 17.

His shrine in Lincoln Cathedral was a place of major pilgrimage until the Reformation, when it was dismantled and his remains have never since been found.
(From 7)

We praise the Lord in our faithfulness to Him in season and out, in adversity, need, sorrow, disappointment, loss, temptation: "I will bless the Lord at all times; his praise shall continually be in my mouth. My soul makes its boast in the Lord; let the afflicted hear and be glad. O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt his name together! I sought the Lord, and he answered me, and delivered me from all my fears" (Ps 34:1-4).

"Bless our God, you peoples, loudly sound his praise; He has given life to our souls, and has not let our feet slip" (Ps 66:8 NAB).

"Praise the Lord from the heavens, praise him in the heights; praise him, all you his angels...all you his hosts...sun and moon...you shining stars...you highest heavens...you waters above the heavens. Let them praise the name of the Lord, for he commanded and they were created...." (Ps. 148:1-5).

"Praise the Lord! Praise God in his sanctuary, praise him in his mighty firmament! Praise him for his mighty deeds, praise him according to his exceeding greatness! Let everything that breathes praise the Lord! Praise the Lord! (Ps 150).

St. Augustine speaks to us profoundly of the relationship of praise to mercy and love: "O Lord, my God, let my soul praise You that it may love You. Let it recount to You Your mercies that it may praise You for them all" (Confessions 5, 1). The Holy Spirit enables us to recognize God's mercies, which leads us to praise Him in all circumstances; praising God engenders love for Him.

CONFERENCE

(From 2)

"Our formation program tries to do that," Garcia said. "We have to be creative."

Diocesan Conference Day is one such educational opportunity, she said. This year, the conference brought in speakers including Carol Ann Hunt of Midland, who presented "The Joy of Love: Pope Francis' Apostolic Exhortation on the Family"; Ansel Augustine, who discussed "Young Adults: Energy Boost of the Church"; Marcos Martinez, presenter of "Culture of Encounter"; and Bethany Brunell and Nik Ruiz, who shared "WYD: A Bird's Eye View of the Global Church," about their experiences attending World Youth Day last summer in Krakow, Poland.

Approximately 30 people attended the first breakout session of the latter workshop, including Sammy Vasquez, who attends St. Margaret's Parish in San Angelo. "Father sent me down here," Vasquez said with a laugh, referring to his pastor at St. Margaret's.

Vasquez has been a Catholic his whole life but only recently began taking advantage of the diocese's educational offerings. "It's good so I can learn something and take back to church what I've learned today," he said. "I'm enjoying it now."

Vasquez pointed to the notebook in his lap, where he had written the word "catechesis." "I didn't even know what this word meant until today," he said.

Kelly Butler and Maria Ayala, of St. Ann's in Midland, also sat in on the World Youth Day breakout session.

"They do have good workshops here," Butler said. "They always do a really good presentation. Last year it was (about) globalization as well. This is my third year, and I think it's the most impressive one I've been to, I think because of the verve of the speaker."

"You think you know what they're going to say, but it's always something different," added Ayala, who also attended the conference for the third consecutive year. "You always learn a little more about your diocese, what they're doing outside the Church."

For several young people who attended World Youth Day, "outside the church" was nearly 6,000 miles and another continent away, in Krakow, Poland.

"There were people from Italy, of course we from America, some from France, Australia, Brazil, Portugal and Spain," said Brunell.

Though the backgrounds of those in attendance were diverse and varied, "We still celebrated one common thing: the Eucharist and Body and Blood of Christ," Ruiz said. "For us to be at World Youth Day and see such amazing cultural differences but come together and share one
of prisoners, and encourages rehabilitation and forgiveness for those re-entering society.
- Oppose the use of the death penalty in Texas.
- Support efforts to improve access to medical care for the incarcerated in Texas.
- Support reintegrating parolees into society.
- Support efforts to improve the training and supervision of correctional officers in dealing with incarcerated offenders.
- Support revision of capital jury sentencing instructions to prevent concealment of jurors’ individual capacity to impose a sentence less than death.

About the Texas Catholic Conference
The Texas Catholic Conference advocates on behalf of the Roman Catholic Bishops of Texas for policies and programs that support the life and dignity of every human person from conception through natural death. This Legislative Agenda is the result of a rigorous process of reflection and consultation. Under the guidance of the Texas Bishops, TCC staff conducts policy assessments—with the input of diocesan departments, ministries, and agencies—to assess public policy needs and opportunities across the state. The Bishops extensively review and discuss the proposals before setting the legislative priorities for the upcoming session. Because of that, our public policy positions are based in Catholic social and moral teaching to uphold the sanctity of life, help the poor and vulnerable, and promote the common good.

The Texas Catholic Network is a grassroots program that enables the more than 7 million Catholics from across Texas to effectively communicate with each other and the members of the Texas Legislature. This work is carried out through Texas Catholic Network “Archangels” Program, a network of volunteers who help inform parishioners about the legislative agenda and encourage them to communicate with lawmakers about legislation that supports our faith and Catholic social teaching. As a member of the Texas Catholic Network, you can:

- Act as a source of information and promote participation in the grassroots network to congregations in their parishes.
- Activate, coordinate, and monitor the grassroots responses to Texas Catholic Conference action alerts.
- Voice the Texas Catholic Bishop’s concerns and positions on public issues and legislation to local state legislative offices.
- Attend public education and informational meetings on the Texas Catholic Conference’s behalf.
To join the Texas Catholic Network, or for more information, visit www.TXcatholic.org.

DIGNITY
(From 5)

are called to live in a communion of love, and in this way to mirror in the world the communion of love that is in God, through which the Three Persons love each other in the intimate mystery of the one divine life. For no human being, male or female, created in the image and likeness of God, can in any way attain fulfillment apart from this image and likeness.

John Paul states, “To say that man and woman are created in the image and likeness of God means that they are called to exist ‘for’ others, to become a gift. This likeness reveals that the human person, who is the only creature on earth which God willed for its own sake, cannot fully find himself except in a sincere gift of self.” This is a fundamental point in his thought, because it is through this gift of self that women must put to the service of rebuilding the culture. This self-gift is the definition of the person, corresponding to the fundamental biblical truth about man and woman, created in the image and likeness of God. It is not an interpretation or abstract definition, because it indicates what it means to be human, while emphasizing the value of the gift of self, the gift of the person.

A woman’s dignity is closely connected with the love that she receives by the very reason of her femininity; it is likewise connected with the love that she gives in return. Woman can only find herself by giving love to others. This refers not only to the spousal relationship of marriage. It means something more universal, based on the very fact of her being a woman within all the interpersonal relationships which shape society and the interactions between all persons. This concerns each and every woman, independently of the cultural context in which she lives, and independently of her spiritual, psychological and physical characteristics, as for example, age, education, health, work, and whether she is married or single. All women can be made aware of, and so be able to act, from this call to love others.

Lisa Martinez is the founder and executive director of The Greenhouse for Women, a Catholic women’s ministry based on the teaching of St. John Paul II. This center for women will be launching next year in the Diocese of San Angelo. Further information can be found at www.thegreenhouseforwomen.org.
SACRED HEART

(From 2)

With a growing Catholic community whose needs demanded a permanent parish and priest, land was purchased and a building constructed. The first pastor, Fr. Henry Brickley from Illinois, tended to a flock of Mexican, Irish and German immigrants. Among the early parishioners were Gus Ackerman, who ran the local saloon and the police and fire chief, J.J. Clinton. The first church building was 26 feet wide by 50 feet long and was very hot in the summer and cold in the winter. But it had an organ and crucifix and cracks in the floor that mystified the young children. It was paid for through donations from Catholics and Protestants in town as well as bazaars and oyster suppers.

The pastors stationed in Abilene had to tend to both a local congregation and Catholics in the surrounding areas. Missions were established in Clyde, Merkel, Baird, Putnam, Hamlin, Aspermont, Spur, Dickens, Jayton, Colorado City, Big Spring, Goldwaite, Ballinger, Winters as well as other places. A priest in the early days spent much of his time on the road. Given the poor conditions of those roads and occasional bad weather, mass was frequently cancelled due to the lack of availability of a priest. But the willingness of a priest to travel all over this mission territory, and the understanding of the Abilene community to their pastor’s frequent trips led to the recognition of Sacred Heart as “the Mother Church of Catholicism in the Big Country.”

The parish grew during World War I and the Roaring Twenties and the need for a new parish became evident. A new parish priest, Fr. Henry Knufer, a German immigrant and a dentist in his pre-clerical life, began to fund raise in earnest. With pledges from both Catholics and Protestants totaling more than $18,000, the bishop of Dallas gave permission to buy land and build a new church. But the Great Depression hit, money tightened, and the plans for the church were forced to be modified.

The pastor was an accomplished builder so he and members of the parish joined in the construction. When Fr. Knufer wasn’t laying concrete or some other building trade, he was cooking for the workers or out looking for money. When first finished, the new church lacked plumbing, wiring, pews, and a confessional. It was in a rectangular shape rather than the originally conceived cruciform. There was a cry room in the back so that mothers and children could see the Mass but there was no real sacristy for vesting. But the parish had a new and much needed church, a sacred space which continues to serve the people of Sacred Heart today.

The parish priests always focused on religious education whether in the manner of formal classroom instruction for children on Sundays or citywide invitations for formal lectures on topics of interest to Protestants and Catholics alike.

In a town where Catholics were a minority, religious prejudice was a problem. While many Protestants helped fund Sacred Heart’s buildings, the Ku Klux Klan was also a fact of life before World War II. After tarring and feathering a priest in Sweetwater, Abilene churchmen joined the Knights of Columbus to ride shotgun for Fr. Knufer when he went on late night pastoral visits.

The arrival of troops stationed at Camp Barkeley outside of town led to a surge in communications at Sacred Heart. The pews were filled, many weddings were held, the debt was paid off, and money set aside so that during the 1950s and 1960s serious renovation of the church building could occur. Air conditioning and heating were installed, stained glass windows added, the basement, which today serves as the parish hall, was renovated. By the 1980s new educational facilities were built, a sacristy was added and the parking lot finished. Of course, modifications to the sanctuary dictated by Vatican Council II were implemented as well.

The current pastor of Sacred Heart, Msgr. Robert Bush, arrived in 1996. His twenty year tenure is the longest a priest has ever been assigned to Sacred Heart. The original immigrants from Mexico, Ireland, and Germany have been joined by new immigrants from Nigeria, Vietnam, and the Philippines. The focus remains as it was in 1891 with worship, celebration of the sacraments and religious education. The development of the church property continues with fund raising going on for a new parish hall. Although oyster suppers have given way to BBQ dinners as a profitable way to make money, the old stand-by church bazaars continue. The priests and people of Sacred Heart continue to serve the Lord as they look forward to what the next 125 years will bring.

Special thanks must go to Fr. Mark Woodruff, former pastor of Sacred Heart who wrote “A History of Sacred Heart Parish” in 1991 for the 100th anniversary and to Edward Schroeder, whose Hardin Simmons University master thesis “Sacred Heart and the Catholic Church in Abilene” published in 1973 were instrumental in the researching of this historical remembrance.

BYRON

(From 17)

Clashes with faculty are alluded to, but not described in detail. He had only one serious difference with Father Hesburgh, but that is simply acknowledged, not disclosed in any way. His one disagreement with his successor, Holy Cross Father John Jenkins (over the firing of football coach Ty Willingham), is mentioned along with an acknowledgment that although Father Malloy was still president, Father Jenkins had the right to make the decision.

By any measure, the Father Malloy presidency was a very successful one. There is much in this book worth pondering by anyone responsible for the advancement of any Catholic college or university — trustees, administrators or faculty.

› Permeate the place with international mindedness, Father Malloy would recommend.
› Pay special attention to alumni, including giving preferential admissions, within limits, for alumni sons and daughters.
› Work a service orientation into the undergraduate student experience as well as alumni activities.
› Tighten up the town and gown relationship as happened in the case of Notre Dame’s Center for the Homeless in the city of South Bend.
› Cultivate the Catholic character and emphasize ethics -- personal and social -- in all that the university does.

Notre Dame is a great Catholic university. Monk Malloy helped to make it even greater. His book will help you understand the how and why.

Jesuit Father William J. Byron is professor of business and society at St. Joseph’s University, Philadelphia. Email: wbyron@sju.edu.
I thought of Christopher Hitchens, the brilliant writer and outspoken atheist. When he was dying of cancer, he was offended by those who told him they were praying for him.

I didn’t blame him, even though I prayed for him myself. But writing to him and waving that in his face? That’s like saying, "I know what’s best for you, like it or not."

Truly, that’s not the purpose of prayer.

We offer to pray for people who share our convictions regarding prayer. But to impose my prayer verbally upon another who may not believe in prayer is wielding my certainty of truth like a bludgeon. That’s not kindness, but a smug expression of rightness.

So, in this era of political correctness, where do you stand on the issue of offensiveness?

If someone is uncomfortable with my Lenten ashes, too bad. I don’t want to give offense, but I feel assured that the majority of people will see my actions as my private witness. I’m not trying to be “in your face.” I’m trying to be in solidarity with people of faith, and that’s my right.

But if I cross that line that separates my behavior from an attempt to change others’ behavior, I may become legitimately offensive.

But aren’t we supposed to evangelize?

St. Francis of Assisi is thought to have said, "Preach the Gospel always; if necessary, use words."

The most effective witness we give is our lives, lives of mercy and compassion. That makes any outward sign of our faith impressive and legitimate. That kind of evangelization is rarely offensive and often powerful.

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CHIN

(From 14)

Jordan pursued both. They cleaned up a playground in Camden during the Mother Teresa Diocesan Day of Service. They also focused on the spiritual works of mercy by attending a talk on forgiveness, said a campus ministry coordinator.

With extra opportunities to partake in the sacrament of reconciliation at some parishes, the jubilee also was a chance to reflect on a simple fact: We are called to show mercy to all those we encounter, but we cannot do this if we do not first know mercy ourselves.

"As you can see, mercy does not just imply being a ‘good person’ nor is it mere sentimentality. It is the measure of our authenticity," Pope Francis said when he invited the youth to join him for World Youth Day.

Mercy also involves banishing indifference with concrete, little steps. Two home-schooled students from the Diocese of Portland did this by collecting towels for homeless families, according to The Catholic Sentinel, the diocesan newspaper.

The eighth-graders set up a mini-foundation called "Friends of St. Francis" and reached out to parishes, which yielded 520 donated towels.

When I read about these two school girls, the words of Pope Francis during World Youth Day echoed in my head: "To say the word ‘mercy’ along with you is to speak of opportunity, future, commitment, trust, openness, hospitality, compassion and dreams."

With the Year of Mercy heading to an end, young people continue to find opportunities to be merciful to others. This jubilee gave us the chance to realize that, as the pope says, to be "merciful like the Father" is not just "a catchphrase, but a life commitment."

Maria-Pia Negro Chin is bilingual associate editor at Maryknoll Magazine.

JOVENES

(Para 14)

pedir perdón y ser más tolerantes.

Este Año de la Misericordia nos brindó la hermosa oportunidad de reafirmar el amor de Dios mientras que nos llamaba a salir de nosotros mismos para servir a los demás.

El papa Francisco dijo recientemente que para tratar de imitar la misericordia de Dios se puede practicar el "dar" y "perdonar".

Los estudiantes de la pastoral universitaria de la Universidad de Rowan en Nueva Jersey siguieron ambas prácticas. Limpian un parque infantil en Camden durante el Día de Servicio Diocesano de Portland did this by collecting towels for homeless families, according to The Catholic Sentinel, the diocesan newspaper.

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Jornada Mundial de la Juventud resonaban en mi cabeza: "Decir misericordia junto a ustedes, es decir oportunidad, es decir mañana, es decir compromiso, es decir confianza, es decir apertura, hospitalidad, compasión, es decir sueños".

Con el Año de la Misericordia a punto de concluir, los jóvenes siguen encontrando oportunidades para ser misericordiosos con los demás. Este jubileo nos dio la oportunidad de darnos cuenta de que, como dice el Papa, para ser "misericordiosos como el Padre" no es sólo "un lema de impacto, sino de un compromiso de vida".

Madre Teresa y también se centraron en las obras de misericordia espirituales, asistiendo a una charla sobre el perdón, dijo una coordinadora de la pastoral universitaria.

El jubileo fue también una oportunidad para participar en el sacramento de la reconciliación en algunas parroquias, y adicionalmente reflexionar sobre un hecho simple: Estamos llamados a mostrar misericordia a todas las personas con las que nos encontramos, pero no podemos hacerlo si antes nosotros no conocemos la misericordia.

"Como ven, la misericordia no es ‘buenismo’, ni un mero sentimentalismo. Aquí se demuestra la autenticidad de nuestro ser discípulos de Jesús", dijo el papa cuando invitó a los jóvenes a unirse a la Jornada Mundial de la Juventud.

El don de la misericordia también implica desterrar la indiferencia con pequeños pasos concretos. Como ejemplo se puede mencionar a dos estudiantes de la Diócesis de Portland que hicieron esto mediante la recopilación de toallas para familias sin hogar, según menciona The Catholic Sentinel, el periódico diocesano. Las estudiantes de octavo grado crearon una mini-fundación llamada "Amigos de San Francisco" y pidieron donativos en parroquias, recollendo 520 toallas.

Cuando leí acerca de estas dos estudiantes, las palabras del papa durante la
Holy Family-Abilene turns 40

Scenes from Holy Family’s Celebration
October 8, 2016