Corpus Christi Procession
May 15, 2016
Sacred Heart Church, Abilene
Story, photos, Pg. 7
Bishop: ‘Religious freedom a fundamental right that comes straight from God’

By Loretta Fulton
Special to The Angelus

Historic Sacred Heart Catholic Church in Abilene was filled with splendor, majesty, beautiful music and stirring words on June 22 when Bishop Michael Sis conducted the annual Fortnight for Freedom Mass.

The Mass was solemn but joy-filled. As everyone was leaving the church, Sis playfully swapped "caps" with Jose Rodriguez, a sophomore at Abilene Cooper High School. Sis donned Jose's ball cap and Jose got to wear the bishop's zucchetto, a small head covering. The Italian word means "little pumpkin" and the cap resembles the top part of a small gourd.

As the two posed for photos, Jose was all smiles.

"I was kind of surprised," he said, when the bishop suggested the swap. Sacred Heart proved to be the perfect setting for the occasion, as

(Please See FREEDOM/21)

Midland retreat center breaks ground

West Texas Angelus

MIDLAND — Almost 100 guests helped celebrate groundbreaking ceremonies for Midland's first Christian retreat center on a crisp, springlike day in West Texas.

Symbolic shovels clutched by board members, volunteers and donors were driven into the dirt for The Way Retreat Center, a 20-acre facility that will accommodate 80 overnight visitors and have meeting space for 100 when the historic facility opens. The projected date of opening is December 2017.

The Way will be an $11 million project, and organizers have raised $7.7 million through June, thanks to major donors such as the Excelsior Foundation, the Henry Foundation, the J.E. and L.E. Mabee Foundation, the Permian Basin Area Foundation and literally hundreds who have given generously through the years.

Retreat center organizers have recently been issued a groundbreaking permit, which allows for completion of an invocation of ground. Members of The Way Retreat Center Board of Directors push a cross into the ground, where the retreat center’s chapel will be built, during groundbreaking ceremonies, June 29, 2016 in Midland. (Photos by Karen J. Patterson)

“We’ve had hundreds who have offered their support with their pocketbooks and with their hands,” board member Mike Canon said at the groundbreaking. “I don’t have to tell you how Midland and West Texas is special, and it is most especially because of our faith communities. One by-product of the strong faith communities has been the retreat programs that have flourished: Walk to Emmaus, Cursillo, ACTS, and the many teen retreats every year. These programs are invaluable in helping many Midlanders in their faith walks, and on their paths to the Lord.”

A Mass at the site on which the facility will be built was concelebrated June 28 by Fr. Patrick Akpanobong, St. Mary’s; Msgr. Larry Droll, St. Ann; Fr. Prem Thumma, St. Margaret-Big Lake.

In addition to spiritual retreats, The Way will also host corporate retreats, wedding receptions, Quinceñeras, family reunions and other events.

If you would like to help, visit The Way web site at thewayrc.com, or call 432-230-0138.

(Please See YOUNG ADULT/21)

Young adult ministries can often invigorate parish communities

By Jimmy Patterson
Editor

One of the objectives of the increased emphasis being placed on World Youth Day—USA San Angelo, on July 30, 2016 is to breathe new life into the critical area of young adult ministries and their importance to the life and future of the Church itself. In fact, Bishop Michael J. Sis wrote in the June 2016 West Texas Angelus that the WYD event in San Angelo, “will provide a springboard to launch a new era of vibrant young adult ministry in West Texas."

The importance of active, involved young adult ministries in churches cannot be overstated and often leads to an increased energy in the parish. The ideas and helpful skill sets brought by the newly involved can often help propel a parish’s ongoing programs for a new generation of parishioners.

“Young adults bring skills for social communications, social media and creativity that help us in our parishes to make a greater impact in the world around us,” Bishop Sis said. “These young adults know how to connect with our culture in ways that some of us middle age or older adults do not. They can help spread the message of the Gospel more effectively.”

At St. Mary’s in College Station, where Bishop Sis served in the early years of his priesthood, a number of young adults who were studying or had recently completed their college educations in finance, accounting or banking, were always included as members of the church’s finance council.

“Young adults can often bring their professional training to our parish councils that help other adults see more effective ways of doing things,” Bishop Sis said.
Préstamos de Día de Pago inducen a las personas más allá

En la mayoría de ciudades por todo el estado, hemos crecido acostumbrados a ver una gran cantidad de negocios que ofrecen préstamos de día de pago y por título de automóviles. Para aquellos que se encuentran en problemas financieros repentinos y sin buen crédito, sacando uno de estos préstamos a menudo parece ser la única solución. Algunos de estos prestamistas son capaces de pagar el préstamo y seguir adelante con éxito.

Sin embargo, la experiencia ha demostrado que demasiadas personas son atrapadas en un ciclo de crecimiento de deuda imposible debido a la forma en que estos préstamos están estructurados. En Texas, el promedio de interés y cuotas para los préstamos de título de automóvil es 567% TAE (tasa de porcentaje anual).

Los prestamistas ganan la mayor parte de su margen de beneficio de los prestamistas que se ven atrapados en un ciclo de deuda, sacando préstamo tras préstamo, sólo para hacer el pago de interés mínimo, antes de que se pague algo más. Debido a las altas tasas de interés y honorarios, es común que un préstamo a corto plazo de $500 le cueste al prestatario un total de $3,200 para repagar.

Como este modelo de negocio deja a la gente en la miseria bajo el pretexo de brindar un servicio, la gente se vuelve más y más dependiente de la ayuda de las iglesias y otras agencias de asistencia social. Mientras que nuestras agencias de caridad no son capaces de mantenerse al día con este patrón de aumento de la devastación financiera, los políticos permiten que esta práctica predatoria continúe.

Por supuesto, las personas necesitan tener acceso a préstamos. Sin embargo, cuando las prácticas de préstamos inducen a los pobres a endeudarse más allá de sus medios y atraparlos en deuda imposible, hay que hacer algo.

La cuestión de la carga de intereses de un préstamo ha sido un problema social importante a lo largo de la historia. En el mundo antiguo, la palabra “usura” se refiere a las tasas de interés que son exorbitantemente altas y superan los límites establecidos por la ley. Datando desde el Código de Hammurabi en la antigua Mesopotamia, legisladores y otras agencias del gobierno han restringido la práctica de interés en diferentes formas.

En el Antiguo Testamento, la Biblia dice que los intereses no son justos en la sociedad (Deuteronomio 23:19-20). En el Novo Testamento, Jesús dice a sus seguidores que no deben prestar dinero a interés (Mateo 5:27). Además, el Código de Hammurabi (aproximadamente 1800 a.C.) estableció leyes para regular los interés de los préstamos. Las tasas de interés eran altas, pero los préstamos se consideraban una forma de apoyo mutuo.

En el mundo moderno, el interés ha sido ampliamente considerado como injusto y fuera de lugar. En Estados Unidos, la legislación federal ha limitado los intereses a tasas más bajas. Sin embargo, en muchos estados, las tasas de interés son aún exorbitantes.

La función de los bancos es prestar dinero, pero también es responsabilidad de los bancos que protejan a los consumidores de prácticas fraudulentas y abusivas. Los bancos deben considerar los intereses de los consumidores y hacer que sean conscientes de los riesgos asociados con los préstamos.

En resumen, los préstamos de día de pago son una práctica social problemática. Se debe investigar más sobre las prácticas de préstamos para entender mejor los riesgos e incentivar a los prestamistas a adoptar prácticas más justas y responsables.

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Payday and Auto-Title Lending: Community Action & Alternatives

The Texas Catholic Conference, in association with local partners, will conduct a two-day Payday Lending Roadshow in San Angelo and Odessa on July 7 and 8. We invite community leaders, charitable providers, and elected officials to a community forum and strategy dialog concerning payday and auto-title loans in our communities. We will identify the impacts of payday lending, explore lending alternatives, and discuss how San Angelo and Odessa can best engage on this issue in the coming months.

San Angelo
July 7, 2016
5:30 PM to 7:00 PM
Southland Baptist Church
4300 Meadow Creek Trail
San Angelo, TX 76904

Including remarks by:
Bishop Michael Sis
Dr. Taylor Sandlin
Rev. Tim Davenport-Herbst
RSVP to Becky Ethington, 325-949-9633

Odessa
July 8, 2016
11:00 AM to 12:30 PM
St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Church
7601 North Grandview Avenue
Odessa, TX 79765

RSVP to Valerie Longoria-Bueno, executivedirector@ccodessa.org

Immigration office relocation

The Diocese of San Angelo Immigration Services Office in San Angelo has moved to St. Joseph Parish, 301 W. 17th St., and is open Mondays and Tuesdays from 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM.

Collection for Honduras, July 16-17

A special collection for the benefit of the Honduras dioceses of La Ceiba and San Pedro Sula will be taken up at parishes in the Diocese of San Angelo July 16 and 17. This year the partnership (Hermanamiento) among the dioceses of Tyler, La Ceiba, San Pedro Sula and San Angelo, celebrates its 15th anniversary. The collection to assist our fellow Catholics in the Honduran dioceses and parishes goes back even further, when it began as a means of providing relief from Hurricane Mitch. The collection is used now by partner parishes and dioceses to promote evangelization, provide basic education and extend assistance to the disadvantaged of the community.

The collection is divided between the two Honduran dioceses. In situations in which parishes from the Diocese of San Angelo are partnered with parishes in Honduras, what is collected benefits the partner parish directly.

Thank you in advance for your generosity! May God reward you!

Pictured in above photo: Radio is one of the best ways to reach Catholics in rural areas of Honduras. Leonor Spencer of Midland, left; Clementine Urista of San Angelo, and Diana Madero of Odessa visit the Catholic station in La Ceiba on a recent mission trip.

Festival information needed

Please email information and dates for fall festivals and family fairs to Jpatterson@sanangelodiocese.org so news of your event can be published the West Texas Angelus
Msgr. Droll steps down as diocesan vicar general; will focus on parish

By Jimmy Patterson
Editor

After 36 years of active involvement in diocesan administration, Monsignor Larry Droll is stepping down from his duties as vicar general for the Diocese of San Angelo. The move will allow Msgr. Droll to focus his attention on his service as a parish priest at St. Ann’s in Midland, where he has been assigned for 12 years.

Fr. Santiago Udayar, former pastor at St. Mary’s Church in Odessa, who has spent the last three years working on his Canon Law degree in Canada will become the diocese’s new vicar general effective July 25.

Msgr. Droll began his administrative role under former San Angelo Bishop Joseph Fiorenza in 1980, when he was appointed diocesan chancellor. His first task, as instructed by Bishop Fiorenza, was to locate property in San Angelo for a retreat center. That property would be located at the end of Van Zandt Street in east central San Angelo and would come to be home to both Christ the King Retreat Center and the diocesan Pastoral Center.

“With the help of a good Catholic layman in San Angelo, we found the retreat center site, and I think it’s been a great blessing for the diocese over the years,” Msgr. Droll said.

Shortly after the groundwork for the retreat center had been laid, Msgr. Droll was next put in charge of administering the annual diocesan appeal to raise money for the retreat center. Although a professional fundraising company directed the effort, Msgr. Droll served as the liaison between the bishop and that company.

The most labor-intensive part of Msgr. Droll’s administrative work has been his service on the priest personnel board, a body of priests that advise the bishop as to where priests should be assigned. Msgr. Droll, chairman of that committee, said there is a real challenge to consider where priests in the diocese could best serve as a need arises.

Msgr. Droll was also chiefly responsible for the creation of the diocese’s “20-Year Plan.”

The document, finalized in 1990, looked at staffing issues as it became apparent the diocese would have far fewer priests to serve in the coming years. Solutions to deal with the clergy shortage have included church consolidations; parishes in Big Spring, Sweetwater and Fort Stockton

Bishop blesses Holy Angels fountain

Submitted by Holy Angels Church

Holy Angels Catholic Church is proud to add a new addition to our church, Garden of Grace. The project began with plans to commemorate Tom Berscheidt who gave many years of dedication, leadership, and guidance to the youth of our parish. What was once a plan for a small fountain, developed into a beautiful plaza adjacent to the columbarium. A unique, one-of-kind fountain and mosaic became the centerpiece of the garden. A committee of eight members began planning in the spring of 2014. With the collaboration of the committee and many hours of work by experts in various fields, the unveiling and dedication took place on Thursday, June 9, 2016 with Bishop Michael Sis and Father Charles Greenwell.

The following is a description of the fountain and mosaic:

Three interlocking crosses contain the living waters of the Garden of Grace. “The Church standing tall,” exemplifies God’s miraculous creation of man and child coming together as one in Christ. The mosaic illuminates God’s infinite love and gift of grace sustaining us through life’s journey. Vibrant abundant flora encompasses our path as angels keep watch. The unity of the Holy Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, flow as rivers of faith, hope, and love. And finally, every eye is fixed on heaven, our eternal home, bringing endless joy and peace.

“And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and take you to myself, that where I am, there you may be also.” John 14:3

This beautiful sacred space is for inurnment services, prayer, and meditation.

Special thanks to all who worked on the project and for numerous monetary gifts from Holy Angels’ church family, friends and family of Tom Berscheidt, and our community.
New Evangelizations in the Diocese of San Angelo

Diocese’s history reflects a ‘church always on a mission’

By Msgr. Larry J. Droll

For example, he wrote in The Church in America (1999) about a new evangelization—“new in ardor, methods and expression” (#6). He urged an encounter with the Risen Christ, present in the life of the Church and calling people to conversion, communion and solidarity (#3).

The term “new evangelization” was popularized by Saint Pope John Paul II to encourage Catholics to spread the gospel message and invite people into the community of the Catholic Church. For example, he wrote in The Church in America (1999) about a new evangelization—“new in ardor, methods and expression” (#6). He urged an encounter with the Risen Christ, present in the life of the Church and calling people to conversion, communion and solidarity (#3).

There have been “new evangelizations” in this sense, in what is now the territory of the Diocese of San Angelo, in every century since Christians set foot in this area.

The 1500s

In 1528, Cabeza de Vaca and three men were shipwrecked near Matagorda on the Gulf Coast of Texas. They walked across what is now Texas to get to Mexico. Historians have shown two possible routes that would have brought them into the area now known as the Diocese of San Angelo. One route follows the Colorado River north from Matagorda until it intersects with the Concho River, extending west into the Middle Concho tributary. At one time the Colorado River was known as “San Clemente” and the Concho River was known as “Río de Nueces” (Pecans).

The other route shows Cabeza de Vaca traveling through what are now Pecos and Terrell counties.

There are stories of Cabeza de Vaca and his companions praying with the Indians they met along the way. Some people were healed through their prayers. Cabeza de Vaca reported, “Our method…was to bless the sick, breathe upon them, recite a Pater Noster and Ave Maria, and pray earnestly to God our Lord for their recovery. When we concluded with the Sign of the Cross, He willed that our patients would directly spread the news that they had been restored to health.”

In 1541, the conquistador Coronado may have traveled through the San Angelo or Big Spring areas in his search for the “Cities of Gold.” His advance party was led by Franciscan friar Marcos de Niza and there may have been other padres involved in the large expedition.

The 1600s

In the next century, the new evangelization began with the appearance of a “Lady in Blue” bringing the good news of Christ and the Church to the Jumano Indians at the confluence of the three branches of the Concho River. She was Sor María de Jesús de Ágreda of Spain, whose habit included a blue mantle. On the basis of her testimony and the reports of the Jumano, it is believed that she bi-located in prayer to the New World during the 1620s. She spoke of evangelizing the native people and described them accurately. She said she communicated to them in Spanish, but they understood her in their own language (like the Pentecost miracle).

Sor María instructed the Jumano to find the Franciscan friars and invite them to come to the Concho Valley to baptize those who had heard the Good News. And so it was that some Jumano went to Ysleta Pueblo (near Albuquerque, New Mexico) to make the request. In 1629, Fray Juan Salas and Fray Diego Lopez and three soldiers came to the campgrounds at the confluence of the Conchos and met 2,000 Jumano. They baptized many in the short time they were there.

In 1630, Fray Alonso de Benavides, overseer of the missions in New Mexico, journeyed to Spain and interviewed Sor María de Jesús de Ágreda. Her visits to the New World are mentioned in his Memorial.

Just ten years after her death, Sor María de Jesús de Ágreda was declared “venerable” by Pope Clement X, in honor of her heroic life of virtue. The cause of her beatification is currently underway in Rome. Her incorrupt body lies in a chapel of the Conceptionists convent in Ágreda, Spain, where she served as abbess for many years. She wrote many books, the most important of which is The Mystical City of God.

In 1631 Fray Juan Salas and Fray Juan de Ortega spent six months on the Concho River. A historical marker commemorating their missionary activity is found in San Angelo on Rio Concho Drive just west of Bell Street.

In 1684, Fray Juan Dominguez de Mendoza and Fray Nicolas Lopez came from the pueblo near El Paso, also called “Ysleta,” to establish Mission San Clemente, near the place where the Concho River joins the Colorado River. The Colorado was called the San Clemente River at the time. The mis-

The 1700s

The new evangelization in the 1700s came with the establishment of the Mission Santa Cruz de San Sabá in what is now Menard County. The Spanish built a presidio there and in 1757 the Franciscans established the mission to serve the Lipan Apaches. They began their evangelization and celebration of the sacraments, as well as gathering the Apaches in community around the mission.

On March 16, 1758, the Comanche Indians, enemies of the Apaches, attacked the mission and burned it down. Two Franciscan priests were killed, Fray Alonso Giraldo de Terreros and Fray Jose Santiesteban. The third priest, Fray Miguel de Molina, was wounded but escaped. A number of mission Indians were massacred as well. Not long after, a painting was done to commemorate the Mission Santa Cruz de San Sabá and the massacre.

The priests who died are popularly acclaimed as martyrs for the Christian cause, having given witness to Christ by their very lives.

The 1800s

Following Texas Independence from Mexico in 1836, the economy and settlement of Texas began to develop rapidly. By 1857, the Butterfield Overland Trail came from Kansas City, through Abilene, Robert Lee (Fort Chadbourne), across the Concho River

(continued)
Sacred Heart observes 17th-annual procession

By Kathy Hennessey and Erin Stamey

ABILENE — On Sunday, May 15, 2016 Sacred Heart Church in Abilene celebrated its 17th-annual Corpus Christi Procession and Coronation of Our Lady.

Rainy weather moved out and a wonderful cool evening greeted hundreds of Abilene parishioners as they processed through the Church grounds and surrounding streets, singing song, praying and adoring our Lord Jesus together.

The Knights of Columbus escorted the Blessed Sacrament, leading a procession of Altar Servers, flag bearers, angels, Queen’s Court as well as Legion of Mary, Guadalupañas, Cursillistas and the people from each of the Abilene parishes. Three altars were set up around the block. When the procession approached each altar, all listened to the scriptures, heard a homily, adored the Blessed Sacrament and received Benediction. Because this being the Jubilee Year of Mercy, the Knights also carried a large image of the Divine Mercy. The Queen’s Court also escorted a large image of Our Lady of Guadalupe. The procession culminated at Sacred Heart Church, where the Coronation ceremony took place. A final scripture reading with a homily began the ceremony itself, followed by a dance mostly by First Communicants dressed as white angels. Then as all sang songs in honor of Our Lady, all brought forward flower offerings to Our Lady, followed by the Coronation of an image of Our Lady as Queen of heaven and earth, accompanied by the Queen’s Court, a full court of young ladies in their colorful dresses.

Msgr. Robert Bush offered the Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament which was followed by a reception dinner was served in the parish hall.

The event took place as if Sacred Heart Church had become Heaven, with the Real Presence of Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament and His Mother at His side with all the choirs singing praises and honoring them.

Bonaventure left important legacy of theology, philosophy

By Mary Lou Gibson

Giovanni di Fidanza was four years old when he became seriously ill. According to legend, his parents took him to see St. Francis of Assisi for a possible healing. According to editor Bernard Bangley writing in Butler’s Lives of the Saints, when the boy’s health returned, Francis exclaimed “Buona ventura” (good fortune). So when Giovanni entered the Franciscan Order in 1243, he took the name of Bonaventure.

This was an interesting choice for Giovanni, who chose not to be a medical doctor like his father. Writer Tessa Paul says in The Complete Illustrated Encyclopedia of Saints that the Franciscan order at that time discouraged intellectual pursuits. St. Francis of Assisi was detached from formal learning and there were no books in the monasteries.

But Bonaventure saw that if the friars were to be effective as teachers, they needed to be educated. When he was elected minister general of the still-new Order in 1257, he inherited a situation of conflict revolving over how strictly to observe Francis’ teachings on poverty. Paul Burns writes in Butler’s Lives of the Saints that there were two groups in the Order: the Spirituals who insisted that poverty had to be the absolute mark of the Order and the Conventuals who argued that the huge growth in numbers required more organization, communal living and places in which to live.

Bonaventure sought a middle way. According to Burns, he supported specialist Franciscan houses in university towns at which friars would be prepared to become preachers and spiritual directors. This led him into a new controversy with the lay professors who saw the new order of mendicant friars as intruders in the teaching professors. Pope Alexander IV ordered the professors to cease their attacks in 1256 against the new teachers.

While studying theology in Paris, Bonaventure became intimate friends with Thomas Aquinas. They both received their doctorate in theology in 1257. Bonaventure became known for his intellectual and mystical qualities. He wrote the life of St. Francis and is recognized as the “Second Founder” of the Franciscans. As minister general of the Friars Minor, Bonaventure formed a set of constitutions on the rule which had a profound and lasting effect on the Order. Tim Noone and R.E. Houser, writing in Saint Bonaventure, stated that Bonaventure steered the Franciscans on a moderate and intellectual course that made them the most prominent order in the Catholic Church until the coming of the Jesuits.

Bonaventure left a legacy of important theology and philosophical works. The most famous is his Commentary on the Sentences of Peter Lombard which covers the whole field of (Please See SAINTS/22)
World Youth Day breaks you down and builds you up for God

By Nik Ruiz

World Youth Day is an experience unlike any other. It is not only a faith-fulfilling journey that not only strengthens your love for God but is also a pilgrimage that breaks you down to the center core of what being a Catholic really means.

I was blessed with being able to attend WYD 2011 in Madrid, Spain. The beauty of being surrounded by millions of my brothers and sisters in Christ overwhelmed me with joy, passion and happiness. I had never seen our faith so massive.

Every Sunday you sit in church with people who know you and whom you know, certainly a valuable piece of anyone’s spiritual journey. WYD opens doors that pilgrims might not otherwise have opened for them.

Priests often explain the global Church and how large it is, but you never really grasp that it’s not just huge, it is massive and it is ever growing.

The moment I walked into the WYD Mass, all I could do was smile; I absolutely could not grasp what seemed like hundreds of miles of Catholics who had all come together to celebrate the Body and Blood of Christ. Then and only then did I truly realize how big of a Church we really are; how beautiful, how grand and how glorious we as Catholics are. And how universal. I wanted to fall on my knees and cry at the amount of love we all share with our God.

As a soldier of Christ you would expect to be put through some sort of warfare against evil, whether it be personal or through some other means. But before we are soldiers we have to be trained, and we have to go through tests. For me WYD, and smaller pilgrimages like it, break you down to the core of your spiritual well-being in order to build you back up to become the soldier God needs you to be for him. This is what I am looking forward to when I go to Krakow. In my personal life as well as my spiritual life I feel the need to be broken down again, the need to be rebuilt so I can be a stronger soldier for Christ, filled with the Holy Spirit. It’s a hard journey but it is well worth it. I hope to bring back what I learn from this epic journey with Christ and to be able to share with all of you this beautiful experience. Something I hope will reach the hearts of many who strive to be rebuilt, and who long for a stronger relationship with God.

As my journey begins, I pray for all who read this that your spiritual journey will begin as well.

Nik Ruiz, is a young adult member of Holy Redeemer in Odessa, will travel to Krakow, Poland, with 10 others from the diocese for WYD later this month.

Fr. Bernard Getigan, left, welcomes the Diocese of San Angelo Pilgrim Cross to Good Shepherd Church in Sheffield June 6, 2016. The Pilgrim Cross has been making its way to parishes throughout the diocese since March. The journey will culminate July 30, 2016, in San Angelo for World Youth Day USA-San Angelo, a daylong event for young adults from around the diocese. The San Angelo Diocese is one of several dioceses in the United States to be celebrating a World Youth Day event simultaneous to when the World Youth Day event is happening in Krakow, Poland. (Courtesy Photo)
Steubenville Lone Star

Sacred Heart Catholic Youth Group
Abilene, Texas
Steubenville Lone Star 2016

St. Mary's
San Angelo

Cathedral of the Sacred Heart Catholic Youth Group
San Angelo, Texas
Steubenville Lone Star 2016

Diocese of San Angelo
Volunteer Staff
Steubenville Lone Star 2016
Dallas, Texas
Chipo Chung, second from left, portrayed Mary Magdalene in a scene from the 2016 TV miniseries, "A.D.: The Bible Continues." (CNS Photo).

Pope Francis elevates memorial of Saint Mary Magdalene to feast day

By Junno Arocho Esteves
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY — Recognizing St. Mary Magdalene’s role as the first to witness Christ's resurrection and as a “true and authentic evangelizer,” Pope Francis raised the July 22 memorial of St. Mary Magdalene to a feast on the church’s liturgical calendar, the Vatican announced.

A decree formalizing the decision was published by the Congregation for Divine Worship June 10 along with an article explaining its significance.

Both the decree and the article were titled "Apostolorum Apostola" ("Apostle of the Apostles").

In the article for the Vatican newspaper, Archbishop Arthur Roche, secretary of the congregation, wrote that in celebrating "an evangelist who proclaims the central joyous message of Easter," St. Mary Magdalene's feast day is a call for all Christians to "reflect more deeply on the dignity of women, the new evangelization and the greatness of the mystery of divine mercy."

"Pope Francis has taken this decision precisely in the context of the Jubilee of Mercy to highlight the relevance of this woman who showed great love for Christ and was much loved by Christ," Archbishop Roche wrote.

While most liturgical celebrations of individual saints during the year are known formally as memorials, those classified as feasts are reserved for important events in Christian history and for saints of particular significance, such as the Twelve Apostles.

In his apostolic letter "Dies Domini" ("The Lord’s Day"), St. John Paul II explained that the commemoration of the saints does not obscure the centrality of Christ, but on the contrary extols it, demonstrating as it does the power of the redemption wrought by him.

Preaching about St. Mary Magdalene, Pope Francis highlighted Christ's mercy toward a woman who was "exploited and despised by those who believed they were righteous," but she was loved and forgiven by him.

Her tears at Christ's empty tomb are a reminder that "sometimes in our lives, tears are the lenses we need to see Jesus," the pope said April 2, 2013, during Mass in his residence, the Domus Sanctae Marthae.

From the Editor

The last person in line makes effort, day worthwhile

Bishop’s Note: In addition to his duties as editor of the Wext Texas Angelus, Jimmy Patterson is the author of numerous children’s and non-fiction books.

By Jimmy Patterson

MIDLAND — The events surrounding the release of the new “Adventures of Willy Nilly & Thumper” book series in May were overwhelming. The numbers of books that are in the hands of children in Midland and other cities is nice, we believe over a thousand. The director of Midland’s Centennial Library, told us that the 2,229 people who came through the digital turnstiles May 14 represent the fourth-largest crowd in the library’s history.

Judging by the smiles splashed across the faces of hundreds of children, my faith in the love of reading was restored. Just when it seemed like every kid’s face on the planet is aglow with a blue light 24 hours a day, they turn out in droves to pick up good old-fashioned adventure stories. It was a great sight to witness. Reading — and books — are not dead yet.

With all the lines, all the kids, all the laughs and all the sore signing hands, there was one moment during the weekend that was, for me at least, a moment I won’t soon forget.

Late the next day, it was a late Sunday afternoon at Barnes & Noble. We were at the end of our four-day release. The line had dwindled down to nothing and we began to wrap things up when an older woman walked into the children’s department and up to our signing table. Dressed humbly with a slight hitch in her step, she pushed several strands of hair behind her ear and nudged up her glasses with a knuckle. She held out a copy of both Willy Nilly & Thumper books she had purchased at the store to be signed.

She said her name was Carla and I asked her if she liked to read. She said she did, but said she wasn’t very good at it.

“I only started when I was 60,” she said, a contrite, toothless smile spreading across her face. She later admitted she was 72.

“I’m old but not as old as you are,” Carla said as she smiled her sweet grin at Jim Henry, the books’ creator and co-author who had earlier made public that he was a first-time writer at 81. Jim laughed.

Carla told us how much she especially loved to read children’s stories. She said she was looking for a copy of the Velveteen Rabbit, although she was excited to read our books, too.

“We’ll have a third book out in November,” I told Carla, “so, I hope to see you here.”

She said she would try, if she could.

“I drive on the service road. I don’t like the highway,” she said.

“Why?”

“Because I’m old but not as old as you are,” she said with a sweet grin.

“I hope I can make it then,” she said. “I’m trying to read as many books as I can before I can’t anymore.”

She said she would try, if she could.

And then she told us she was going blind.

"I drive on the service road. I don’t like the highway," she said.
We chatted a little more as our illustrator, Marjorie Van Heerden, to freehand an illustration inside the front cover of her books.

"We’ll have a third book out in November," I told Carla, "so, I hope to see you here."

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She had driven all the way from Odessa. To most people, that’s not far at all. But it is to Carla.

“I drive on the service road. I don’t like the highway,” she said.

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Some days you wonder what you do makes a difference. And some days you get your answer.
By Fr. Knick and Sandie Knickerbocker

The knock on the door in the middle of the afternoon was unusual in our apartment complex in Bartlett, Tennessee, a suburb of Memphis. Most of us in the apartment complex worked during the day. I was home because I stopped to pick up a book I needed on my way back to my office at the Presbyterian seminary where I taught Church history.

I opened the door, and a young Muslim woman was standing there. She and her husband, who lived across the street, were medical doctors from Pakistan. He was doing his residency at the University of Tennessee College for the Health Sciences in Memphis, and she had taken time off from her medical practice to be a stay-at-home mom for their two pre-school boys. She asked if she could use our phone to pick up her boys in their apartment.

As I stood outside that day while she used our phone, I began to reflect on what I had learned over the years about Islam. I am still learning about this religion that is such a concern now for Christians as well as people of other religions. In a college course on Medieval History I had learned that Pope Leo III, in the year 800, crowned Charlemagne the Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire in an attempt to create a political Catholicism to oppose political Islam. By that time Muslim armies had swept across North Africa, through Spain, and into southern France, where they were defeated by the Frankish Christian army at the Battle of Tours (732). Muslims remained in Spain until 1492. The Crusades were an attempt to retake Christian holy places that had been conquered by Islam and protect Christian pilgrims, but it was too little too late. In the east, Muslim armies captured Constantinople, capital of the Byzantine Empire, in 1453. In the west, Muslim armies continued to threaten Europe, and Catholic forces defeated them at Lepanto (1571) and Vienna (1683). However, sporadic warfare against the west and Christianity continued. The attack that occurred on 9/11 was simply a continuation of the long warfare of Islam against the west and specifically against Christianity.

And yet, here were some friendly Muslim neighbors. How was I to reconcile our friendly relationship with what I know about Islam? I decided I need to be very clear about the differences in our two religions. How would I describe those differences in a few words?

As the Catechism of the Catholic Church teaches, "The mystery of the Most Holy Trinity is the central mystery of Christian faith and life. It is the mystery of God in Himself. It is therefore the source of all the other mysteries of faith...." (#234)

God, in His inner life, is a relationship of Persons. This relationship is one of perfect love as Two Persons love a Third Person together in this circle of love. It is the nature of this perfect love to overflow in fecund creativity. It is also the nature of this perfect love to rescue His creation when it falls away from Him. The Word of the Father, the Only-Begotten Son, through whom all creation is made, becomes Incarnate as one of us, lives, dies, and rises from the dead. He takes us into death with Him, leaves our sin in the grave, and raises us with Him in new life and through us redeems all creation. In the Eucharist, the source and summit of the Christian life (CCC #324), we die and rise with Him as we take into ourselves His Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity. As we take Him into us, we are too small to hold Him, so He takes us into Himself to redeem us that we may become the persons He created us to be. This truth is known to us by revelation through Scripture and Tradition.

In the act of creation, God creates us in His own image through His Word, the Wisdom of God. We reflect the Word of God in our reason and conscience, which are a participation in the Wisdom of God. All persons have these gifts of reason and conscience. This is why St. Paul teaches that Gentiles have the law written on their heart (See KNICKERBOCKER/22)
The Diaconal Ordination of Timothy Hayter
June 25, 2016 * Our Lady of Guadalupe Church * Fort Stockton

At right, with his family seated behind him, Deacon Timothy Hayter listens as Bishop Michael J. Sis speaks to him during Hayter’s ordination as a transitional deacon, June 25, 2016 in Fort Stockton. Below right, Bishop Sis presents the Gospels to Hayter; below center, Bishop Sis lays hands on the new deacon, and below left, Deacon Timothy prostrates, during the Litany of Saints.

Below right, Bishop Sis presents the Gospels to Hayter; below center, Bishop Sis lays hands on the new deacon, and below left, Deacon Timothy prostrates, during the Litany of Saints. In photo of Deacon Hayter’s family, pictured are, from right to left, Hayter’s father, Bob Hayter, and mother, Nancy Hayter, niece Kyra Balyeat, and sister Heather Balyeat. (Photos by Jimmy Patterson / West Texas Angelus)

The 25th Anniversary of the Dedication of Mount Carmel Hermitage

Clockwise from top, clergy from throughout the Diocese of San Angelo were among the 250 to help celebrate the hermitage’s 25th anniversary; Most Rev. Fernando Milan Romeral, O. Carm., Prior General of the Carmelite Order; Father Fabian Maria Rosette, O. Carm, Prior of the Mount Carmel Hermitage; Fr. Fabian’s mother, Rosita Bernal, center, with Carmelite sisters from the neighboring Our Lady of Grace Carmelite Monastery; a bagpiper greets the clergy and faithful at the conclusion of the anniversary Mass; Bishop Michael J. Sis, with Deacon Freddy Medina. Story, additional photos in the August West Texas Angelus. (Photos by Jimmy Patterson / West Texas Angelus)
Making Sense of Bioethics

Seeing through the intersex confusion

By Fr. Ted Pacholczyk

On rare occasions, babies can be born with ambiguous genitalia, and parents and physicians may be uncertain about whether a newborn is a little boy or a little girl. While testing for sex chromosomes is invariably part of figuring out these cases, the genetics alone may not always tell the whole story.

Both genes and physiological factors like hormonal conditions in the womb can contribute to our primary and secondary sex characteristics and, unsurprisingly, disorders in our genes or our in utero hormonal milieu can contribute to deflecting the development of our maleness or femaleness.

For the most part, our genetic sex (XX female or XY male) serves as the best guide to the true sex of an individual, though in rare situations, even the sex chromosomes themselves can have anomalies. For example, when somebody is born with Klinefelter Syndrome (XXY) they develop not only as a male due to the presence of the Y chromosome and its testosterone-producing influence, but also as a “feminized” male because of the influences of the additional X chromosome.

When strong hormonal influences are at play, as in another disorder called Congenital Androgenital Syndrome, a genetically normal XX female can have increased testosterone production by her adrenal glands, resulting in the development of external male-like genitalia, even though she also has ovaries, a vagina, and a uterus.

While the term “intersex” is sometimes used to describe situations where an individual has non-standard genital anatomy, it typically has a broader range of meanings. Some have argued that a person has to be born with both ovarian and testicular tissue to count as being intersex, but “intersex” is an imprecise term that can describe a range of situations in which a person is born with an internal reproductive anatomy or an external sexual anatomy that is not in accord with the typical expectations for femaleness or maleness.

Sometimes the suggestion is made that intersex individuals are, in fact, neither male nor female, but fluid, malleable or “bisexual,” with sexual identity residing somewhere between male and female. This kind of explanation is untenable.

Human beings, along with most other members of the animal kingdom, are marked by an ineradicable sexual “dimorphism,” or “two-forms,” namely, male and female. When problems arise in the development of one of these forms, this does not make for a new “third form,” or worse, for an infinite spectrum of different sexual forms.

Instead, intersex situations represent cases in which a person is either male or female, but has confounding physiological factors that make them appear or feel as if they were of the opposite sex, or maybe even both sexes. In other words, the underlying sex remains, even though the psychology or gender they experience may be discordant.

Put another way, intersex individuals may be "drawn away" from their intrinsic male or female sexual constitution by various anatomical differences in their bodies, and by opposing interior physiological drives and forces.

This can be further complicated because of strong cultural forces that contribute to the confusion by sanctioning a paradigm of complete malleability in human sexual behaviors that militates against an understanding of sex-based "hard-wiring."

Even though it may not be popular to affirm the fact, people suffer from sexual development disorders in much the same way that they suffer from other kinds of developmental disorders, whether of the cardiac/circulatory system, of the nervous/intellectual system or others. No one, of course, should be subjected to bias or mistreatment due to a bodily disorder they may have been born with, but in treating such persons, we always strive to return their cardiac or intellectual functions to their proper baseline, rather than inventing a new abnormal as the norm and defining that as a "treatment," as some are tempted to do with sexual development disorders.

While a newborn’s "intrinsic maleness" or "intrinsic femaleness" may be difficult to assess in certain more complicated intersex cases, the point remains that there is an "intrinsic" or "underlying" sexual constitution that we must do our best to recognize, respect, and act in accord with. We must carefully acknowledge, nurture and accept our given embodied sexual nature as male or female. Willfully denying or acting against that given nature will constitute little more

(please see BIOETHICS/22)

Opening new paths a key to joyful living

By Maria-Pia Negro Chin

Summer is almost upon us and so is graduation season. Marked by ceremonies, memories and speeches, this time of the year closes a chapter in students' lives and signals new beginnings.

This can be exciting and terrifying for a new graduate — or anybody about to start something new. Commencement speeches can remind graduates, and students just behind them, that just as one door closes, God opens another one leading to a new path.

At my college graduation from Loyola University Maryland, my classmates and I were reminded of life's ultimate goal: to witness God's love by being "men and women for others."

Jesuit Father Brian F. Linnane, our college president, said that he hoped our education and experiences gave us the tools to have a commitment and connection to something larger than ourselves. This, he said, would serve the betterment of the world and also take us closer to our purpose in life.

His parting words were "God bless you" and "be happy." But, what does ultimate happiness look like to you and your loved ones? There does not seem to be a single answer.

That's because "the keys to happiness take different forms for each of us, because each of us has different ways of finding meaning, a different combination of values and priorities that guide us," Father Linnane said back then.

He later cited a study of what made individuals happy. And even though happiness can look different for each person, there were some constants. Leading a healthy lifestyle, spiritual connectedness and lasting human relationships were main elements in the lives of those who were happy.

Trying to be healthier, more faithful to God and caring with our loved ones, Pacholczyk said, would bring us closer to the Lord, who listens to our feelings and our needs. And although there are no set formulas, "there are always ways to make ourselves closer to God," he said.

(please see CHIN/23)

Abriendo caminos nuevos

By Maria-Pia Negro Chin

El verano ya casi está aquí y con él viene la temporada de graduaciones. Marcada por ceremonias, memorias y discursos, en esta época del año se cierra un capítulo en la vida de los estudiantes y se marcan nuevos comienzos.

Eso puede ser emocionante y aterrador para un estudiante recién graduado – y para cualquiera a punto de comenzar algo nuevo. Los discursos de graduación les pueden recordar a los graduados que así como una puerta se cierra detrás de ellos, Dios les abre otra puerta que conduce a un nuevo camino.

En mi graduación de la Universidad de Loyola de Maryland, los discursos nos recordaron cual es la meta final de la vida: dar testimonio del amor de Dios y ser "hombres y mujeres para los demás".

El padre jesuita Brian F. Linnane, el presidente de la universidad, dijo que esperaba que nuestra educación y experiencias nos hayan dado las herramientas para tener un compromiso y conexión con algo más grande que nosotros mismos. Esto, nos dijo el padre, nos ayudaría a hacer del mundo un lugar mejor y también nos acercaría a nuestro objetivo en la vida.

Sus palabras de despedida fueron: "Dios los bendiga" y "sean felices". Pero, ¿Qué es la mayor felicidad para ti y tus seres queridos? No hay una sola respuesta. Esto se debe a que "las claves de la felicidad toman diferentes formas para cada uno de nosotros, porque cada uno de nosotros tiene diferentes maneras de encontrar el significado, una combinación diferente de valores y prioridades que nos guían" dijo el padre Linnane en aquel entonces.

(Please See CAMINOS/23)
By Fr. Eugene Hemrick
Catholic News Service

Agitated over all the bizarre happenings in today's life? How about reducing them to satire and enjoying the ironies they produce.

Consider that even though we have time-saving air travel and super fast automobiles, we find ourselves frequently in endless lines and in stop-and-go traffic with cranky horns. Ironically, our so-called speedy life more often than not is filled by idling and a hurry-and-wait existence.

Smartphones should be called superphones because they help save lives, keep us in contact with dear friends, and in many cases save money. Ironically, they also often turn loved ones into strangers even though they may be nearby.

Even if people walk side by side, they might as well be miles apart because people are glued to the phones instead of being glued to the person next to them.

Smartphones are the latest addiction with which compulsive chatterers need to fill their day. Their melodious rings may be music to the ear of some, but they don't sound so sweet to those who have to endure the ill-timed annoying sounds coming from them.

A while ago, what some called home "entertainment centers" were truly an enjoyable form of entertainment. The bad side of them was that they produced an army of couch potatoes. Generations grew up sedentary, only knowing how to glare at screens.

Also consider that some feel we've reached the heights of freedom of speech because anyone is able to post on the internet whatever comes to mind. But not everything that is posted has worth and in many cases, it may not be true. It also may be used for evil purposes.

Music is intelligence in that it mimics speech and its ultimate purpose is raising the nobility of the human spirit. Yet much of today's speech, unfortunately, is cacophony. It is an affront to intelligence and especially to dignity.

Championing human rights, multiculturalism and solidarity offer amazing promise for the future. Ironically, we still face their age-old opponents of self-righteousness, racism, intolerance, bigotry and narrow-mindedness. These are death blows to progress.

These are enjoyable ways to understand the absurd and it reminds us that, as the Book of Ecclesiastes says, there is a time to laugh.

Cellphone obsession has become a serious epidemic and one that threatens our spiritual well-being.

Please give me a minute to explain. A neighbor gave her 14-year-old daughter a birthday party, and noticed how quiet the girl's friends were, until she went into the room and found them all on their cellphones.

She was shocked and immediately reacted, "Put down those phones right now, this is supposed to be a party. Have some fun." Later, after her daughter's initial embarrassment, they all became normally boisterous and had a happy time.

Then there's the recent practice some of us have witnessed, of zoning out during family meals. Focusing on the cellphone instead of on people in the room is discourteous and unacceptable.

Dinner is family time. It should be a loving exchange of ideas, and a sharing of feelings. Today, the family meal is treated by some as a pit stop. Youngsters have more important things on their minds than family unity.

I argue that there should be a rule in every home: no cellphones for one hour during the family meal. Family comes first and courtesy should be extended to all its members. Courtesy is politeness. It is having an attitude of respect toward others. This implies good manners, civility and respect.

But there are also other reasons to put the phone down. One of the more serious repercussions of cellphone obsession involves automobile accidents. Some throw caution out when driving and decide to text while on the road.

Texting while driving is taking a needless risk, and we are not just risking our lives when we do it, but the life of others. In this sense, it is a sin. We have always been taught not to put ourselves in the occasion of sin. To do so makes us vulnerable to possible disaster.

Some may question my use of the word sin in this context, but all sin involves actions that are displeasing to God. However, God loves you, and sin is doing something that hurts the one God loves. But there are things we can do to stop this.

To start, parents who have allowed their children to have cellphones need to assert their authority. They have to insist upon courtesy in all things, which means the following: No cellphones during the dinner hour.

The rest of us have to pay attention to our own behavior. We don't want to become like the type of people we sometimes encounter at the doctor's office — focused more on record keeping than on the patient.

I've had the experience (several times) of having a medical professional open up a laptop, or click a few times on a computer mouse, type in some statistics, and while still looking at the screen, ask a few questions without looking up. Eventually they say a few words, but before you know it, the visit is over.

I wonder how we've gotten to this point? We are diminishing our sensitivity to the feelings of others. We may not be able to control the behavior of others in the world but we can begin to change the behavior of those at home. And we can also examine our past actions in this matter and then begin to change ourselves.
Self-obsession robs us of the joy God intends for us

By Fr. Ron Rolheiser

Perspective is everything. When it’s lost, headaches and heartaches set in, take root and begin to dominate our lives.

When we lose perspective everything is reduced—the wide horizon, the depth of our minds, the compassion of our hearts, the enjoyment of our lives, and the consolation of our God.

When perspective is lost, the world turns upside down; contentment gives way to restlessness, humility to ambition, and patience to a hopeless pursuit of a consummation, renown and immortality that this life can never give.

I know. It’s happened to me, countless times; in fact it happens to me most all of the time. In my life, forever it seems, I keep losing perspective and becoming obsessed with a love I cannot have, with hurts that I cannot let go of, and with an ambition that leaves me too preoccupied, too self-absorbed and too hurried to fully notice what’s around me.

Like most everyone else, I spend too many hours waiting for a special phone call that doesn’t come, for a special letter that doesn’t arrive, for a special glance of affection that isn’t given and for a special daydream to turn into reality. Like most everyone else who’s lost perspective, I spend too many hours stewing about hurts, replaying again and again the real and imagined rejections, insults and misunderstandings that have come my way, and dwelling on where I’ve been cheated, where life is unfair, and where others have been given what I don’t have.

Like most everyone else, I am driven, restless, ambitious and I live a pressured life, a life too hurried and demanding to be fully enjoyed. Like most everyone else, I dwell too much upon my own emotional, sexual, and moral loneliness and this preoccupation robs me of most of the simple, and deepest, joys of life.

And, like most everyone I know, for me, it won’t be easy to die, to let go, to return, with grace and gratitude, to the dust of earth, content enough with the astounding fact that I have lived, felt life, walked the earth, been loved, and have been and remain part of the Body of Christ.

But to have perspective, I must be praying, mystically feeling the other world, and content enough in my anonymity to take my place, but no more that, among others, as one small but integral member of the billions of men and women who have walked, and will walk the earth and will, one day, be presented by Christ to his Father. It is not easy to keep perspective and to claim no more, and no less, than my true place in history.

When my own prayer and mysticism is too weak for me to properly do this, one of the things I can still do is to stay in touch with those who have kept things in perspective. One of the persons who has helped me in this is Pierre Teilhard de Chardin—the French scientist-priest-mystic-philosopher who died on Easter Sunday in 1955.

Like the rest of us, his life too had its share of hurts, ambitions, cold lonely seasons and obsessions. He spent most of his life unsure that anyone really understood him. But, and this is where he is rare, he invariably was able to put things into perspective, to regain the wide horizon and to see things, no matter how bad they appeared on the surface, as making sense in Christ.

Because of this, this perspective, he was a gifted man, gifted not just with extraordinary insight, but also with exceptional joy. He could see God in a stone. A chip of rock in the desert or an opera in Paris or New York, both held equal potential for delight. The simple pleasures of life, the elementary act of looking at the world and feeling its elements—the weather, the soil, the sun, the very dust—could give him a joy bordering on ecstasy.

It didn’t matter whether he was with his loved ones, at home in France, or away from his loved ones (and loved land), in exile in China, every kind of everyday experience could leave him feeling deeply grateful just for the fact of living, for the privilege of being part of what God is doing on this earth.

He could love deeply and he could also let go—and this letting go was what saved him from the always-present fear, ambition and loneliness that so often asphyxiates me.

He was able to keep things in perspective and so he didn’t need to dwell on past hurts, on present loneliness and on future fears. Thus, for example:

At age 35, in 1916, he found himself in the front lines, as a stretcher-bearer, in the First World War. Before the battle to recapture Douaumont, fearing that he might be killed, he wrote the following: “I tell you this: I shall go into this engagement in a religious spirit, with all my soul, borne on by a single great impetus in which I am unable to distinguish where human emotions end and devotion begins. And if I am destined not to return from those heights I would like my body to remain there, molded into the clay of the fortifications, like a living cement thrown by God into the stonework of the New City” (Hymns of the Universe, London, Fontana, 1970, p.51).

Humbling words, noble words, from a rare person with a rare faith. We all need to read and write words like this—and then, perhaps, we won’t live in restlessness and ambition, waiting for that special something that never comes.

Fr. 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.

Why the movie ‘Last Days in the Desert’ is so boring

By Bishop Robert Barron

Archdiocese of Los Angeles

With his latest film, Last Days in the Desert, Rodrigo García has accomplished something truly remarkable. He has taken a portion of the life of the single most compelling person who has ever lived and turned it into a colossally boring movie. As I watched Last Days in the Desert, I was reminded of many films that I saw in Paris as a doctoral student: lots of uninterrupted shots of natural scenes, many views of people walking around and saying nothing, endless close-ups of serious faces looking blankly into the middle distance. At times I thought that all of this meditative build-up would result in a spectacular payoff, but no—just more walking around and looking.

What made the film so tedious, however, was not simply its cinematic style. It was the fact that, like dozens of similar movies over the past fifty years, it portrayed Jesus simply as a human being, one spiritual searcher among many. I will confess to being amused by the breathless advertising around Last Days in the Desert, announcing that this movie is “reckless” and “daring” in its presentation of a more human Christ. Give me a break! What would be truly dramatic and eye-opening would be a film that compellingly shows that the carpenter from Nazareth is also God. In Ewan McGregor’s characterization, we see Jesus as a good, decent, honest man who is earnestly seeking his path. There is nothing miraculous, distinctive, or particularly supernatural about him. He is like any other religious founder, indeed like any spiritually alert person you might run into at church. Fine, but so what? Why, one wonders, should we pay any attention to him? Why would this figure be remembered after 2,000 years? Why would much of Western civilization be grounded in him?

Now please don’t misunderstand me: a clear affirmation of the humanity of Jesus is part and parcel of Christian orthodoxy. In the language of the council of Chalcedon, Christ is “truly human and truly divine,” the two natures inhering in the unity of one person and coming together “without mixing, mingling, or confusion.” According to the Church, Jesus is not quasi-divine and quasi-human, in the manner of Achilles or Hercules, but rather completely human and completely divine. There has been indeed, throughout Christian history, the temptation toward a monophysite reading, according to which Jesus has only one nature, namely divine. On this interpretation, the Lord’s humanity is a simulacrum of a real human nature, as though God were merely donning the appearance of a human being. The orthodox Christian tradition has always stood athwart such a view. In fact, during the eighth century monothelitism (one will) controversy, the Church held that Jesus has a fully-constituted human nature, endowed with a human mind and human will. Therefore, it is perfectly permissible to speak of real development within Jesus’ human nature, as does the Gospel of Luke: “and Jesus advanced in wisdom and age and favor before God and man.” It is even appropriate to speak, as the letter to the Hebrews does, of Jesus being “tempted in every way that we are.” Thus Last Days in the Desert is certainly justified in portraying

(Please See BARRON/23)
A different kind of ABCs at this year’s commencements

By Carolyn Woo
Catholic News Service

I recently had the privilege to deliver commencement speeches at a few Catholic universities and colleges. Humbled by the fact that few people remember what their commencement speakers intoned at these ceremonies, I tried to keep the message simple and, hopefully, partially memorable.

This year, I focused on the unforgettable starting points for all of our learning journeys: our ABCs. Do you remember how your mom told you when you started school to pay attention to your teachers? Let me revisit this concept.

To start, the A in the ABCs stands for attentiveness, particularly attentiveness to people. Lost in an environment with a lot of stimuli and tethered to devices that constantly beep for our response, how well do we pay attention to people?

Working on the assumption that we can multitask well, which science has debunked, we sandwich the conversation with a grandparent between snaps, tweets, texts, alerts.

We may be hearing her update on the cancer treatment, but with eyes scanning incoming messages and thoughts wandering about whom we want to hang out with. We may miss the frailty, loneliness and spirit of the person who just said "everything is fine."

Interactions are the birthplaces of understanding, love, loyalty and intimacy. They call for and deserve what is within each of us to give: undivided attention. And if we cannot pay proper attention to people, how do we pay attention to God? How do we place ourselves in the presence of God?

When we were young, to step into that new school, we had to be brave. So let the B stand for bravery, which we evoke for new scary endeavors. Will I succeed? Will I belong? Will I matter? What if I make a compete fool of myself?

We can only find and shape these answers by doing, trying, learning and getting up. It takes courage to admit that we are not always right, that we can hurt others' feelings, that we can let people down.

It takes honesty to recognize the burden we place on others and grace to apologize. Be ready to pay for doing the right thing, honoring our integrity and protecting our soul. The good news is that we do not rely on ourselves alone.

It is God's power that we draw from, God's bounty that we rely on and the Holy Spirit who helps us become what God intends for each of us.

In the daily echoes of the playground monitor's urging to play nice, I find the seeds of my C-word: compassion. Playing nice is the drill in our practice to make room for others, to have a sense of others, to know how to be with others.

It is indispensable training for our journey of success. Authentic leadership requires us to advance others to a better place, and we seldom do that without empathy. People are not machines.

Jesus taught us that the sum of our efforts will be judged by how we treat others, particularly those who cross our paths and lack the essentials of a dignified existence.

Success is therefore not what we accumulate, but what we give away; not how high we climb, but how low we bend to heal those broken down by life; not what we do for our good, but what we do for the common good.

As the ABCs of our childhood have unlocked the world of knowledge for us, may these reframed ABCs give us new capacities for knowing: knowing the other, knowing life and knowing God.

Woo is president and CEO of Catholic Relief Services.
EDICTAL SUMMONS
June 23, 2016
CASE: GARCIA (GONZALEZ) -- LUERA
NO.: SO/14/50

The Tribunal Office of the Catholic Diocese of San Angelo is seeking David Hernandez Luera.
You are hereby summoned to appear before the Tribunal of the Catholic Diocese of San Angelo, at 804 Ford Street, San Angelo, Texas 76905, on or before the 31st day of July 2016, to answer to the Petition of Veronica Gonzales Garcia (Gonzalez), now introduced before the Diocesan Tribunal in an action styled, “Veronica Gonzalez and David Luera, Petition for Declaration of Invalidity of Marriage.” Said Petition is identified as Case: GARCIA (GONZALEZ) -- LUERA; Protocol No.: SO/14/50, on the Tribunal Docket of the Diocese of San Angelo.

You may communicate with the Tribunal in person or in writing. Failure to communicate within the prescribed period of time will be considered your consent for the Tribunal to continue its proceedings in the above-named case.

Given at the Tribunal of the Diocese of San Angelo on the 23rd day of June 2016.

Reverend Tom Barley,
MSW, MBA, M. Div., JCL
Judicial Vicar
to the Horsehead Crossing on the Pecos River. The Civil War was fought 1861-1865, with Fort Concho in San Angelo being founded in 1867. Ranching was beginning as a local industry and Ben Ficklin was established as the Tom Green County seat.

The new evangelization began in earnest. The first baptisms at Fort Concho are recorded in 1872 and 1873.

In 1871, the deed for St. Joseph Church in Fort Stockton was prepared for the Bishop Claude M. Dubois, Bishop of Galveston, whose diocese covered all of Texas then. Priests began to visit there in 1872. It took until 1875 to complete the formalities of the deed; that year is known as the beginning of the parish.

In 1874, Fr. Mathurin Pairier began to visit the San Angelo area. Developer Bart J. DeWitt deeded to Fr. Pairier the “Catholic Block” on September 22, 1874; this is now the site of Sacred Heart Cathedral. Fr. Pairier baptized Frederico Jacquez on May 31, 1881.

On February 9, 1880, property was obtained for a Catholic church in Ben Ficklin, although that community was destroyed by flood in 1882 and no church was ever built there.

The “Catholic Block” in San Angelo began to be developed with the construction of the Church of the Immaculate Conception in 1884, at the corner of Chadbourne and Beauregard Streets. The Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word arrived in 1887.

On September 22, 1881, Father Matthias O’Brien, S.J., performed the first Catholic baptism in Texas. It took until 1875 to complete the formalities of the deed; that year is known as the beginning of the parish.

In 1882 and the cornerstone of St. Ann’s Church was laid in 1896.

In 1883, although the first church wouldn’t be built until 45 years later. The first Catholic wedding was held in Abilene in 1884 and Sacred Heart was established as the first parish in 1891.

The 1900s

Many parishes and missions were established in the new century throughout the area now known as the Diocese of San Angelo.

Fire destroyed the wooden Immaculate Conception Church in San Angelo, leading to the 1906 construction of a red brick church on the corner of Beauregard and Oakes Streets; it was named Sacred Heart.

More Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word arrived in 1910 to start St. John’s Hospital in San Angelo. Abilene also had a Catholic Hospital opening in 1940, operated by the Sisters of Divine Providence of San Antonio.

A big event for Catholic evangelization took place on October 11, 1961, when the Diocese of San Angelo was established by Saint Pope John XXIII. The thirty-four county diocese was comprised of territory taken mostly from what by that time had become the Diocese of Amarillo, but also some counties from the Dallas-Fort Worth, El Paso, and Austin dioceses.

The red brick Sacred Heart Church had just been replaced by a larger modern church and it became Sacred Heart Cathedral. Most Rev. Thomas Drury was the first bishop and Bishop Thomas Tschoepe, the second bishop.

During the time of the third bishop, Most Rev. Stephen Leven, the diocese expanded its clergy by training and ordaining a large class of permanent deacons, whose role is proclaiming the gospel and being of service to those in need.

A new effort at evangelization took place during the ministry of the fourth bishop of San Angelo, Most Rev. Joseph Fiorenza, with the dedication of Christ the King Retreat Center in San Angelo in 1983, a place of spiritual renewal and growth. It was during this time that the Diocese of San Angelo ceded five counties to the new Diocese of Lubbock.

Several movements have flourished which have given new impetus to evangelization in the Diocese of San Angelo. Probably beginning in the 1950s, the Cursillo, a weekend renewal of Church teaching in Spanish, originally from Spain, was offered in the Diocese of San Angelo. The first Cursillo presented in English in the United States took place at St. Joseph Parish in San Angelo in 1961. The Cursillo continues to be offered in both languages to this day.

The SEARCH program, a weekend program of evangelization for teenagers, was first offered at St. Joseph’s Parish in Odessa, April 10-12, 1970. This program has become diocesan-wide and continues to this day.

The Catholic Charismatic Renewal began to provide a deepened experience of God through the Holy Spirit, beginning in Midland about 1968 and moving throughout the diocese. The fifth bishop of the diocese was Most Rev. Michael Pfeifer, OMI, serving from 1985 to 2013. As with many areas in the USA, the number of priests, both diocesan and those from religious orders, was falling. In order to continue evangelization and pastoral ministry to the people of the diocese, long range plans for coping with this crisis were made: re-structuring parishes, welcoming international clergy, offering various options for professional development of laity in theology and pastoral care, and naming a full-time vocation director. Bishop Pfeifer brought Renew, a movement that forms small faith communities at the parish level to foster spiritual renewal and evangelization. During his tenure, the evangelization outreach to parishes was expanded, including St. Dismas Retreats and the Ministry of the Third Cross. He will always be remembered for his passionate proclamation of the “gospel of life.”

The 2000s

Responding to Saint Pope John Paul II’s call for a new evangelization in The Church in America, a partnership (“hermanamiento”) began in 2001 between dioceses of Texas and Honduras. The partnership started with a response to Hurricane Mitch; but it progressed rapidly into developing enduring relationships among the dioceses and participants. The Dioceses of San Angelo and Tyler in Texas are now in a partnership with the Dioceses of San Pedro Sula and La Ceiba. The pope’s letter called for “developing bonds of communion with the local Churches in other areas of America through education, the exchange of information, fraternal ties between parishes and dioceses, and projects involving cooperation and joint intervention in questions of greater importance, especially those affecting the poor” (#37). In the encounter with one another, said Saint John Paul II, we encounter Christ.

ACTS retreats, weekends of evangelization, were brought to the Diocese of San Angelo in March 2006, with the Women’s ACTS retreat of St. Ann’s in Midland, held at Christ the King Retreat Center. This new method of evangelization has spread to many parishes of the diocese.

Under the leadership of Bishop Michael Sis, consecrated on January 27, 2014, there has been a new emphasis given to evangelization in campus ministry and vocation promotion. A Diocesan Mission Council has been established to promote missionary involvement, “across the sea and across the street.” He is calling for new energy in young adult outreach, as well, for those age 18-39.

Conclusion

In century after century, the Holy Spirit of God has provided one “new evangelization” after another, to attract people to Christ and to the Catholic Church. In this article we have traced many of the institutional developments and new efforts at evangelization in each age.

In the ministry of Pope Francis, we hear a call for Catholic individuals to personally become “missionary disciples” to share the Joy of the Gospel. We can do so in thousands of ways, individually and as a part of dynamic groups and parishes. We are to be a “church always on mission.”
DROLL
(From 5)

have come together as one.
Where there were once three parishes in Big Spring and one mission in nearby Coahoma, there is now one parish: Holy Trinity. In Sweetwater, where there were formerly two parishes, is now served by one: Holy Spirit. In Fort Stockton, St. Joseph and St. Agnes have merged into one parish, Our Lady of Guadalupe, serving all.
The 20-Year Plan also helped alleviate the priest shortage by bringing more international priests to West Texas. What had been a small part of the original plan blossomed into a large-scale operation.

“So much so that now, half of our priests were born in other countries,” Msgr. Droll said. “When we put the plan together it was not yet a big thing and it was just beginning to happen, but it has certainly developed.”

Pastoral coordinators such as deacons, religious sisters and laypersons have also been placed in positions of administering some small parishes while having a priest celebrate the Holy Eucharist and other sacraments.
The final piece of the 20-Year Plan was to develop laypersons to take pastoral and administrative positions in the Church through their completion of the Loyola University program offered by the University that instructs people in pastoral the-
tions in the Church through their completion of the laypersons to take pastoral and administrative posi-

BISHOP
(From 3)

For many centuries, the councils of the Church prohibited the practice of taking interest on a loan. For example, the Council of Carthage in 345 forbade it in order to combat “the insatiable rapacity of usurers.” The Council of Vienne in 1311 decreed that anyone who taught that usury is not sinful should be punished in the same way as a heretic. However, through all of these declarations, it was never stated that interest in itself and under all conditions is a violation of justice.

With the development of large economic systems and a monetary economy, it became more possible to lend money at interest in a way that is not exploitative. By the end of the 16th century, theologians were teaching that a lender is entitled to charge a moderate rate of interest to compensate for the risk of the investment. Because of changing historical conditions, the Vatican in the 19th century issued several statements that people can lend money at interest, as long as the rates are equitable.

In summary, the practice of charging interest for a loan is not, in itself, sinful. However, whenever it is rooted in greed or charges exploitative rates of interest, it is the sin of usury. This social sin is spiritually harmful to the lender, and it wounds the human dignity of the borrower. It reduces the capacity of the poor to regain self-sufficiency.

What can be done to change our current situation of an unbridled payday lending industry that has trapped 15 million Americans in a quagmire of debt? I believe that the solution includes three elements.

The first element is consumer education. All of us should find ways to teach basic principles of responsible personal money management through schools, churches, and families. Pastors and other spiritual guides should seek to instill the virtues of self-control, budget planning, saving, and simplicity of lifestyle.

The second element of the solution is alternative lending sources. Even those who practice good management of their personal finances can sometimes find themselves in moments of unexpected hardship. Our society will be more healthy and stable if we can set up a variety of lending options such as credit unions, savings and loans, mutual lending, and emergency community assistance programs. This will provide accessible alternatives to payday or auto title loans.

The third element of the solution is laws that limit exploitative lending practices. On the state level, some of our Texas legislators, such as Tom Craddick of Midland, have introduced bills that would protect our citizens by placing fair and reasonable limits on the fees and interest rates for consumer loans. Unfortunately, these bills have been left pending in committee. On the federal level, the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau is considering policies that would curb the worst abuses.

Finally, on a local level, many cities in Texas are stepping in and creating municipal ordinances to regulate the practices of payday and auto title loan companies. Payments are made more manageable, principal is gradually reduced, and the fees and interest are kept at a reasonable level. So far, these ordinances have been passed in 35 Texas cities, including Dallas, Houston, San Antonio, El Paso, Temple, and Midland. It is my hope that more city governments in our area will take similar measures.

Through consumer education, alternative lending sources, and good laws, we can put an end to the scourge of usury that is afflicting our society.
The bishop cited a recent example in the diocese, noting how three young adult men in Abilene approached him about beginning a program that they felt would benefit religious communities. The idea was an application of their skills in Internet marketing.

The men, all of whom are new fathers, are, along with their wives, raising their families in the faith, listening to Catholic radio and living out the faith in their homes.

"It was their initiative, their skills and their love for the Church that allowed us to have that meeting," Bishop Sis said. "I told them we need about 10,000 more guys just like them in our diocese. They are studying Catholic Theology in their spare time, marrying in the Church, and raising their kids in the faith. That’s what happens when you engage young adults.

The bishop added that not only are new skill sets and ideas introduced through young adults, but new life itself.

“They bring life to parishes,” he said.

“Train young adult Catholics to assume appropriate leadership and give them the feedback and support they need to grow in their leadership skills.

Consider your time and energy invested in forming and teaching them to be an expression of your stewardship.

Find joy in their spontaneous joy and youthful energy.

Find ways to connect young adults with older adults.

— Bishop Michael J. Sis

(Encouraging Young Adult Involvement in Parishes)

(Previously published, June 2016 West Texas Angelus)

FREEDOM

Bishop Sis added bits of history to his sermon. The church, with its distinctive Spanish Colonial Revival architecture, was completed in 1931 and is recognized for its significance by a Texas Historical Marker on the front lawn.

The bishop reminded the congregation that religious freedom is under threat today, just as it was 2,000 years ago when St. Paul wrote to Timothy about the suffering he was enduring because of his faith in Jesus Christ. Paul wrote that he had been put in chains like a criminal, but the word of God is NOT chained. Paul warned that "all who want to live religiously in Christ Jesus will be persecuted." That is still true today, Sis said.

The Fortnight of Freedom, an observance which began in 2012, begins two weeks before the Fourth of July or Independence Day.

"The reason we do this," the bishop said, "is because religious liberty is being threatened in many ways, where the public expression of religion and traditional religious values is increasingly unwelcome."

"They bring a whole new supply of volunteers for various ministries. A parish that doesn’t include many young adults at a certain point gets old and exhausted. Volunteers can get worn out and start to lose hope for the future of their ministries because they don’t know who is going to take it over after them. When you have young adults getting active in the parish they are ready to work — and they want to get involved and share their talents. A parish whose volunteer leadership truly understands this sees the future of their very ministries assured by this new life."

There are several dioceses in the U.S. who will hold similar diocesan celebrations of World Youth Day, but San Angelo is one of only two dioceses in this country that are doing the Pilgrim Cross project.

The WYD-USA event in San Angelo begins at 9:30 a.m. July 30 at McNease Convention Center. A registration form and more information are included on page 18.

Freedom of Religion is guaranteed in the First Amendment to the Constitution, Sis noted, "but many voices in our contemporary culture tell us that religious faith has no right to affect how we do business in the world."

People in this country have been coerced by social and governmental pressures to comply with the social consensus, rather than conforming to their faith. But the Fortnight for Freedom serves as a reminder, the bishop said.

"Religious freedom is not a right created by the state," he said. "It is a fundamental human right to come from God."

The theme for this year’s Fortnight for Freedom is "Witnesses to Freedom." The bishop reminded the congregation that on June 22, the day of the Mass, the church remembers two martyrs from England, St. Thomas More and St. John Fisher. Both men were convicted of treason and beheaded for refusing to sign the Oath of Supremacy that declared King Henry VIII had power over the English Christians.

"But they were not traitors," Sis said. "They were, in fact, patriots. When the law of the king came into conflict with the law of Christ, they chose Christ." The two men bear witness to the fact that no government can make a claim on a person’s soul, the bishop said. In 1935, 400 years after their execution, the two men were canonized by the Church.

Christians today still are being persecuted, even beheaded for their faith, the bishop warned. In 2015, the Islamic State beheaded 21 Egyptian Christians on the beach in Libya.

"They refused to give up their faith," Sis said. "They paid the ultimate price."

Sis concluded his homily with words delivered in September 2015 by Pope Francis on the steps of Independence Hall in Philadelphia. Sis was there to hear the speech.

The pope described the world we live in today as one where various forms of tyranny seek to suppress religious freedom or try to reduce it to a subculture without a voice in the public square. Pope Francis responded by urging everyone to preserve and cherish freedom of conscience, religious freedom, the freedom of each person, each family, each people.

"May you defend these rights," Pope Francis said, "especially your religious freedom, for it has been given to you by God himself."

Following the Fortnight For Freedom Mass, many in the congregation stayed to visit with Bishop Sis and have their picture taken with him. He willingly obliged, smiling broadly as he stood side-by-side with parishioners.

Elizabeth Rodriguez, mother of Jose, said she and her son came to hear the bishop and to celebrate the special Mass. "It's always a blessing to have him here," she said.

Having the bishop come to town is always cause for rejoicing, but the message he brought concerning religious freedom made this visit even more special.

"It is very important to us," Rodriguez said, "to be able to express our faith without being persecuted."

Loretta Fulton is a freelance writer in Abilene.
BIOETHICS

(From 14)

than a prescription for disillusionment and dishonesty.

Pope Benedict, in a December 2013 address, echoed these concerns when he mentioned the errors found in various new philosophies where “sex is no longer a given element of nature, that man has to accept and personally make sense of…”

To live in an ordered way, with an ordered masculinity or femininity, is certainly one of the great challenges of our time, and we can only undertake this important task by insisting on the correspondence of our minds to reality — especially to the deeply inscribed reality of our unique embodiment as male or female.

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

SAINTS

(From 7)

scholastic theology. He was known as the “Seraphic Doctor” for his intellectual and mystical qualities. Burns noted that his work, “On the Triple Way” became the basis for virtually all future mystical writing.

He was nominated by Pope Clement IV in 1265 as archbishop of York, but he declined the appointment. A few years later in 1273, Pope Gregory X nominated him as cardinal bishop of Albano and told him he could not refuse the appointment. There is a story about how Bonaventure learned of his appointment. Tom Cowan writes in “The Way of the Saints” that he was washing dishes in the kitchen when the papal messengers arrived. He told them to hang the cardinal's hat, a symbol of the office, on a tree until he had finished cleaning up the kitchen's clutter. His motto was “Do common things well and be constantly faithful to small matters.”

In 1274, Bonaventure took a leading part in the Second Council of Lyons convened to heal the division between the Churches of East and West. He was successful in achieving the short-lived reunion, but died on July 15, 1274 while on a trip to Genoa. He was canonized in 1482 by Pope Sixtus IV.

Kenneth Woodward writes in Making Saints that St. Bonaventure was the first papally canonized saint whole life was investigated according to three theological virtues: faith, hope and charity and the four cardinal moral virtues: prudence, justice, fortitude and temperance.

KNICKERBOCKER

(From 11)

As Allah is portrayed in the Koran (and the hadith, a collection of the sayings and deeds of Muhammad), he is pure, unrestricted will. There is no understanding of the Natural Law of Human Nature that teaches that God gives reason and conscience to every human being. Because of his absolute freedom of the will, Allah can will one thing today and an opposite thing tomorrow. The Koran reflects this with various contradictory passages. The individual Muslim depends on the imam in the local mosque to interpret what the Koran says about the will of Allah in the present time. Muslim philosophers have developed the practice of “abrogation.”

It can be difficult for Christians to understand the nature of a mosque. There is no such thing as the separation of Church and state in Islam. The mosque is a center for religious, social, economic, and political life. For the Muslim, it is the duty of the political state to execute the will of Allah by enforcing sharia law. What this means depends on the particular imam in a particular mosque. The imam in one mosque may select those suras that teach war against all non-Muslims and that it is permissible to lie to, steal from, cheat, and kill the infidel (non-Muslim).

Today there are Muslims and former Muslims who are working for the reform of Islam by attempting to incorporate the Natural Law of Human Nature with its reason and conscience into Islamic philosophy. Ayaan Hirsi Ali, in her book, Heretic: Why Islam Needs a Reformation Now, says she believes that reason and conscience will triumph in the end (p.250). If this is successful, this would, in effect, permanently abrogate those suras in the Koran that teach violence against non-Muslims. We should support those Muslims who are working for this reform as well as proclaim to them the Gospel of Jesus Christ. In the meantime, we should remember that a teaching of Natural Law is the Natural Right to self-defense. The Catechism teaches "Love toward oneself remains the fundamental principle of morality. Someone who defends his life is not guilty of murder even if he is forced to deal his aggressor a lethal blow" (#2264). Moreover, parents have not only the natural right but also the duty to protect each other and their children. The Catechism teaches that "Legitimate defense can be not only a right but a grave duty for someone responsible for another's life, the common good of the family or of the state (#2265).

As I reflect on all this since we became friends with our Muslim neighbors in that apartment complex, I remember St. Paul's admonition to speak the truth in love (Eph. 4:15). I also remember Aristotle's statement that we love both the truth and our friends but that we should love truth more. Indeed, if we really love our friends, we should always live and teach the truth.
BARRON

(From 16)

the Lord as subject to temptation and discouragement. So far, so orthodox.

But if Jesus is merely human, the heck with him. What makes him compelling, fascinating, and strange is the play between his humanity and his very real divinity. In point of fact, all of the poetry and drama of Christianity—on display in Chartres Cathedral, Dante’s Divine Comedy, Aquinas’s Summa, John Henry Newman’s sermons, Chesterton’s essays, the mysticism of Teresa of Avila, and the ministry of Mother Teresa—is a function of this juxtaposition. To reduce Jesus to the human level alone is to render an altogether prosaic Jesus, which is precisely what we have in Last Days in the Desert.

There is a distinction between the Bible and practically all other spiritualities, religions, and philosophies of the world. Whereas those last three can articulate very well the dynamics of our search for God, the former is not primarily interested in that story. It tells, rather, of God’s search for us. Mind you, that first story is a damned good one, and it’s told over and again in spiritual literature from the Epic of Gilgamesh to Star Wars. It has beguiled the minds of some of the great figures in human history: Homer, Virgil, Cicero, Plato, Spinoza, Kant, Newton, and James Joyce. In a very real sense, the comparative mythologist Joseph Campbell was right: in all of the cultures of the world, one great song is sung and one great monomyth is repeated. But the Bible is not one more iteration of the monomyth. It is the deeply disorienting account of how the creator of the universe hunts us down, finally coming after us personally in Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus is not one more man looking for God; he is God in the flesh, searching for his people: “It is not you who have chosen me; it is I who have chosen you.”

Caminos

(Para 14)

Más tarde, él citó un estudio que se realizó sobre individuos felices. A pesar de que la felicidad puede lucir diferente para cada persona, hubo algunos factores constantes. El llevar una vida sana, una conexión espiritual y las relaciones humanas duraderas eran elementos principales en la vida de aquellos que estaban felices.

Tratar de ser más saludable, más fiel a Dios y cariñoso con nuestros seres queridos puede parecer simple, pero para cultivar estos rasgos se requiere trabajo y compromiso. El fomentar una vida espiritual, dar y recibir amor no son esfuerzos que uno puede hacer por uno mismo. Se requiere salir de uno mismo y mostrar sus vulnerabilidades y debilidades. Sin embargo, los beneficios de la salud, la fe y el amor hacen que nuestra estancia sea agradable para los demás, así como para nosotros.

Hace poco vi esto mientras trabajaba con jóvenes a punto de graduarse de la escuela secundaria. Su forma de vivir les había ayudado a cultivar su salud, fe y amor, y los graduados parecían felices. Tenían esperanza en el futuro, en alcanzar sus objetivos y cambiar el mundo.

Uno de ellos citó a George Eliot: “Por medio de los círculos y zigzags, de vez en cuando llegamos justo donde debemos estar”.

Este fragmento de sabiduría es un recordatorio de que el camino a través de las diferentes etapas de la vida rara vez es lineal. Pero el recorrido nos lleva donde Dios quiere que estemos. Ciertos capítulos de la vida nos ayudan a crecer. Pero cada hito tiene un propósito. Para Dios, cada nueva puerta (o nuevo capítulo) con el tiempo conduce a su objetivo final para nosotros: la salvación. Podemos trabajar en ser feliz y hacer felices a los demás a lo largo del recorrido.

Ojalá que crezcamos en salud, fe y amor en camino hacia la siguiente puerta.

CHIN

(From 14)

ones may seem simple, but to cultivate these traits requires work and commitment. Nurturing a spiritual life and giving and receiving love are not endeavors that you can do by yourself. It requires you to get out of yourself and show your vulnerabilities and weaknesses.

Yet, the rewards of health, faith and love make our sojourn enjoyable for others as well as for us.

I recently saw this while working with senior high school students. By leading lives that helped them to grow in health, faith and love, the graduates seemed happy. They were hopeful for the future and had the drive to reach their goals and change the world.

One of them cited George Eliot: “By loops and zigzags, we now and then arrive just where we ought to be.”

This bit of wisdom was a reminder that the path through the different stages of life is seldom linear. But the journey takes us where God wants us to be. Certain chapters in life help us to grow. But each milestone has a purpose.

For God, every new door (or new chapter) eventually leads to his ultimate goal for us: salvation. We can work on being happy and making others happy throughout the journey.

May we grow in health, faith and love as we walk toward the next door.

MAGDALENE

(From 10)

Pope Francis also mentions her specifically in the prayer he composed for the Year of Mercy: “Your loving gaze freed Zacchaeus and Matthew from being enslaved by money; the adulteress and Magdalene from seeking happiness only in created things; made Peter weep after his betrayal, and assured paradise to the repentant thief.”

Archbishop Roche explained that in giving St. Mary Magdalene the honor of being the first person to see the empty tomb and the first to listen to the truth of the resurrection, “Jesus has a special consideration and mercy for this woman, who manifests her love for him, looking for him in the garden with anguish and suffering.”

Drawing a comparison between Eve, who “spread death where there was life,” and St. Mary Magdalene, who “proclaimed life from the tomb, a place of death,” the archbishop said her feast day is a lesson for all Christians to trust in Christ who is “alive and risen.”

“It is right that the liturgical celebration of this woman has the same level of feast given to the celebration of the apostles in the general Roman calendar and highlights the special mission of this woman who is an example and model for every woman in the church.”

PRESTAMOS

(Para 11)

espirituales deben tratar de inculcar las virtudes del autocontrol de sí mismo, la planificación del presupuesto, el ahorro, y la simplicidad de estilo de vida.

El segundo elemento de la solución es fuentes de préstamos alternativos. Hasta aquellos que practican el buen manejo de sus finanzas personales a veces pueden encontrarse en momentos de dificultad inesperada. Nuestra sociedad será más sana y estable si podemos configurar una variedad de opciones de préstamos, tales como las cooperativas de crédito, el ahorro y préstamos, préstamos mutuos, y los programas de asistencia comunitaria de emergencia. Esto proporcionará alternativas accesibles a préstamos de día de pago o por título de automóviles.

El tercer elemento de la solución son leyes que limitan las prácticas de préstamos de explotación. A nivel estatal, algunos de nuestros legisladores de Texas, tales como Tom Craddick de Midland, han presentado proyectos de ley que protegen a los ciudadanos por medio de colocar límites justos y razonables sobre las tarifas y las tasas de interés para préstamos del consumidor. Por desgracia, estos proyectos de ley se han quedado pendientes en el comité. A nivel federal, la Oficina de Protección Financiera del Consumidor está considerando políticas que permitan contener los peores abusos.

Por último, a nivel local, muchas ciudades de Texas están interviendo y están creando ordenanzas municipales para regular las prácticas de las compañías de préstamos de día de pago y título de automóviles. Los pagos se hacen más manejables, el principal se reduce gradualmente, y las tasas e interés se mantienen a un nivel razonable. Hasta el momento, estas ordenanzas han sido aprobadas en 35 ciudades de Texas, incluyendo Dallas, Houston, San Antonio, El Paso, Temple, y Midland. Es mi esperanza de que más gobiernos de las ciudades de nuestra área tomen medidas similares.

A través de la educación del consumidor, fuentes de préstamos alternativos, y buenas leyes, podemos poner fin a la plaga de la usura que aflige nuestra sociedad.
A group photo of all attendees from the Diocese of San Angelo who attended Steubenville Lone Star in June in Dallas, above, and at left, priests attending from the Diocese of San Angelo include, from left, Fr. Ryan Rojo, Fr. Rodney White, Fr. David Herrera, Fr. Michael Rodriguez and Fr. Felix Archibong.

More Steubenville Lone Star photos,