As far as the east is from the west

Friends, West Texans and deacons Josh Gray, left, a Brownwood native, and Tim Hayter, right, of Fort Stockton, ready for their June ordinations to the priesthood. Story, Pg. 2.

(Photo by Jimmy Patterson)
Midland community leader visits Vatican for screening of ‘Silence’

By Jimmy Patterson
Editor / West Texas Angelus

MIDLAND — While he didn’t have the opportunity to meet Pope Francis, Dale Brown, longtime member of Midland’s Golf Course Road Church of Christ, was no less impressed on his fifth visit to Rome — this time as an executive producer of “Silence,” the recently released film by Martin Scorsese. Based on the 1969 novel of the same name by author Shusaku Endo, “Silence” tells the story of the violent religious persecution of Christians, and specifically Jesuit priests, in 17th century Japan. Liam Neeson and Andrew Garfield, who recently appeared as Private Desmond Doss in Mel Gibson’s “Hacksaw Ridge,” star in the Scorsese film.

Brown and other like-minded Christians were encouraged to help fund the movie by Mark Rogers, of a group called Wedgewood Circle. With the help of investors, patrons,

Holy doors close, but our mission of mercy continues

By Cindy Wooden
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY — The Year of Mercy brought more than 20 million pilgrims to Rome, but for Pope Francis, the idea always was that the celebration of God’s mercy would be local: have people experience God’s love in their parishes and send them out into the world to commit random acts of mercy.

While concrete works of mercy have a social impact, Pope Francis’ idea was deeply connected to evangelization, which is why Rome jubilee events were organized by the Pontifical Council for Promoting the New Evangelization. The pope had said he wanted the Holy Year to be “a new step on the church’s journey in her mission to bring the Gospel of mercy to each person.”

The pope’s constant refrain during the Year of Mercy, which began Dec. 8, 2015, was that no one is excluded from the mercy of God, who has shown his love for each person by sacrificing his son for the salvation of all. All can be forgiven, the pope taught over and over again. And once a person experiences just how loving and merciful God has been, the obligation is to reach out to others with that same love and mercy.

Pope Francis made no claim to having invented a church focus on divine mercy. The evangelical trend was already clearly present when St. John Paul II wrote an encyclical letter on mercy in 1980 and when he beatified and then canonized Sister Faustina Kowalska, known as the “Apostle of Divine Mercy.”

“I believe this is the time of mercy,” Pope Francis told reporters traveling with him to Brazil in 2013 on his first foreign trip as pope. “The church is mother. She must go out and heal wounds with mercy."

For Pope Francis — personally and for all Catholics — that healing is expressed most powerfully in the confessional where one is honest about one’s sins and where God’s forgiveness and mercy are expressed.
Encountering immigrants as Jesus would

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

One of the most controversial social issues of our day is the question of immigration. According to the United Nations, there are now more than 66 million displaced persons in the world.

The Catholic Church in the U.S. observes National Migration Week from January 8-14, 2017, and the World Day of Immigrants and Refugees is January 17. This is an opportunity for us to reflect on the circumstances facing immigrants, refugees, children, and victims of human trafficking. It is also an opportunity to examine our own attitudes toward migrants and to appreciate the many benefits that migrants bring to our communities.

The theme of this year’s National Migration Week is “Creating a Culture of Encounter,” reminding us of Pope Francis’ teaching that “faith is an encounter with Jesus, and we must do what Jesus does: encounter others.” Rather than isolate ourselves from others, Christians are called to recognize them as children of God worthy of our attention and respect.

There is no one in our country who is not descended from people who at some point migrated here from another continent. Even those whose families have been in this country for more than 10 generations ultimately have immigrant roots. In fact, even the Native American tribes are descended from immigrants. The indigenous pre-Columbian peoples of the Americas migrated from Asia by way of Siberia and Alaska thousands of years ago.

The United States of America is a better country due to the contributions of immigrants. Most of us can call to mind many people we know who are immigrants or children of immigrants. These are some of our neighbors, co-workers, classmates, fellow parishioners, relatives, and friends. They include our doctors, nurses, professors, construction workers, ranch hands, celebrities, and sports heroes.

Some of the most influential people in the U.S. have been immigrants, including Alexander Hamilton, Andrew Carnegie, Albert Einstein, Madeleine Albright, Arnold Schwarzenegger, Rupert Murdoch, Hakeem Olajuwon, Manu Ginobili, Salma Hayek, Jennifer Lopez, Archbishop José Gomez, and Archbishop Gustavo García-Siller. More than 40 percent of the largest U.S. companies were founded either by immigrants or by the children of immigrants. It is fair to say that this country was built by immigrants.

The Catholic Church has welcomed immigrants to the United States since the nation’s founding. Our Church has been vitally important in helping newcomers to integrate into American culture. The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops has the largest private refugee resettlement agency in the United States. Our migration and refugee services have helped to settle more than one million refugees in the U.S. since 1975.

Our Catholic perspective on migrants and refugees is rooted in Scripture and in our Theology. The Bible speaks repeatedly of the migration experience. Abraham and Sarah were inspired by (Please See BISHOP/18)
Best Seats in the House

St. Anthony receives new pews

St. Anthony’s Church, in Odessa, above, received a gift of new pews recently from St. Elizabeth Ann Seton. The donation was made when St. Elizabeth took delivery of new pews, a part of a major capital improvement project.

At left, Bishop Michael J. Sis presides over a Mass dedicating the new pews at St. Anthony.

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

Youth 2000 event coming to St. Stephen’s in Midland, January 27-29

MIDLAND — Youth 2000, a Eucharist-centered Retreat, will be January 27-29, 2017, at St. Stephen’s in Midland. All youths in Grades 7-12 are encouraged to attend. Cost is $50 for the entire weekend, including registration and Saturday meals. Described as a weekend for, of and by young people, those interested can visit ststephensmidlandtx.com to obtain registration forms. For more information, email youthministry@ststephens@gmail.com. Forms must be completed and returned with registration fee by January 17, 2017.

Trudo’s to host San Angelo author book signing

SAN ANGELO — Sharla Ynostrosa, local organizer of the 40 Days for Life effort in San Angelo, will sign copies of recently published first book, Adopted and Blessed, at 10 a.m., January 21, 2017, at Trudo’s Religious Store in San Angelo.

Adopted and Blessed is a collection of blog entries that detail her life and work in the pro-life movement in San Angelo.

Published in November by Christian Faith Publishing, the book jacket describes Adopted and Blessed as “Sometimes, women are faced with an extremely difficult decision. An unplanned or unwanted pregnancy can seem overwhelming for some. Sharing the message of a loving life option and letting women know that we care about them too is so important. My hopes and prayers are that more women will make the loving and beautiful choice — adoption. I was blessed to have been adopted at birth, and I wanted to share my stories in the hope that they will touch people’s hearts. The main reason I began writing was to promote adoption and let people know about the help that is available. Each story is unique and special in its own way and reflects my pro-life mission. If you are looking for something heartwarming, funny, or just true to life, you will find it in this book. If you are looking for some type of guidance or help, that is here too. My faith in God, my family, and my pro-life work are the main topics in these stories. The words come from my heart with a sincere desire to help others. Whether the stories are fun and upbeat or of a more serious nature, I always pray that God will guide my hands and give me the right words. Included in this book is a sweet story about my adoption as well as stories about my boisterous family life as a wife, mother, and grandmother of 10. There are some really touching stories about the people I have met while helping at the Sack Lunch Ministry at my parish as well as from the past four 40 Days for Life campaigns that have been held in our parish courtyard.”

2016 IN REVIEW: FEBRUARY-MARCH

February 4, 2016 — McNeese Convention Center, NAACP Freedom Fund Banquet in San Angelo.

March 20, 2016 — Following the Palm Sunday Mass at the Sacred Heart Cathedral, the “Pilgrim Cross,” crafted by Odessan Bill Ruiz, began its journey to more than 30 parishes in 29 counties in the Diocese of San Angelo. The journey of the cross was in advance of World Youth Day—San Angelo, July 30, in San Angelo. The Pilgrim Cross served as “prayerful preparation for our local World Youth Day event,” said Bishop Michael Sis, center in photo at left. Roselva Ruiz, volunteer WYD-San Angelo Chair, said the WYD event was in response to Pope Francis’ charge that “no young person should be excluded” from the WYD events.
Wall parish celebrates 75 years

By Becca Nelson Sankey

WALL — What St. Ambrose Church in Wall lacks in size, it more than makes up for in heart and history.

On Dec. 7, 2016, the parish marked 75 years in Wall, a close-knit Czech and German farming community 13 miles southeast of San Angelo. Parish members and their families marked the occasion with a special Mass presided by Bishop Michael Sis, followed by a turkey dinner and a reenactment of the church’s dedication from its youth group. An encore was held the following Sunday in the parish hall.

“I first learned about St. Ambrose Parish in Wall when I was a pastor at St. Mary’s in College Station,” Sis said. “Many of our student parishioners at Texas A&M were from St. Ambrose. These were young people from solid families with a strong Catholic faith life. I’m very impressed with the level of commitment to good stewardship that is demonstrated by the parishioners from St. Ambrose. There’s a strong spirit of community team work.”

That dedication is particularly exemplified during events held at the parish – from funerals and weddings to the annual fall festival to the 75th anniversary celebration, said Jodie Braden, a member for the past 22 years.

“We have various committees, small and big, and everybody pitches in,” added the Rev. Joseph Choutapalli, the parish’s priest the past three years. “When they make something, they make it big, and they work hard. We had a committee set aside for this alone, and they’ve been working for a year.”

“They’re so excited,” he added of the parishioners who attended the parish’s Sunday celebration. “Most of the people who put this together were the people in Wall in those days. For them, it’s a very awesome experience, and they feel so proud.”

Alfrieda Braden, 92, is Braden’s mother-in-law and has been a member of St. Ambrose since the parish’s founding in 1941. The man she would later marry and her father were among those who helped build the church by hauling gravel to the construction site, she said.

Alfrieda said she was 17 years old when she attended the church’s dedication. Her future husband was so proud of the church in Wall that he traveled from Wichita Falls, where he was stationed at the time, to attend its dedication.

“From the beginning, everybody helped – the whole community,” Alfrieda said.

Her daughter-in-law agreed. “Everybody has a job” when it comes to church-related events, Braden said. “The community is very, very involved.”

James “Bob” Zentner also attended the celebration on Sunday. Zentner was 12 years old when he served as an altar boy at the parish’s dedication Mass 75 years ago, he said.

“I remember that day very definitely because my father and mother came, and we went to a movie after the Mass,” Zentner said. “They flashed on the screen that the Japanese had bombed Pearl

Selected photos from the 75th anniversary of the dedication of the St. Ambrose Church in Wall, December 7, 2016. (Photos by Becca Nelson Sankey).

St. Ambrose especially remembers day that will live in infamy

2016 IN REVIEW: APRIL

April 8, 2016 — Bishop Michael J. Sis introduced the papal encyclical, Amoris Laetitia, to the people of San Angelo by way of a morning news conference. Pope Francis’ wide-reaching exhortation focuses on love in marriage and family, and was issued following two Synods of Bishops, worldwide consultative events in 2014 and 2015.

Bishop Sis said the best way to ensure the pope’s words in Amoris Laetitia are heeded is to continue to develop the Church’s formation and marriage support programs. “Amoris Laetitia, Bishop Sis said, “is a very positive work which seeks to make marriage more desirable and attractive.”

April 2016 — Sr. Elizabeth Swartz, SSND, superintendent of schools in the Diocese of San Angelo, was presented the “Lead, Learn, Proclaim” Award at the National Catholic Education Association Convention in San Diego.
The Way Retreat Center to provide peaceful environment for those on spiritual walks

Editor’s Note: A version of this article appeared in the Midland Reporter-Telegram in December.

By Jimmy Patterson

Over the next few months, on a rise northeast of Midland, a chapel will rise from the arid, level countryside. The chapel will be the centerpiece of The Way Retreat Center, an $11 million, 20-acre facility on 270 acres of land that will provide Christians with a peaceful, serene environment. Such an atmosphere is essential to anyone hoping to magnify his or her individual walk of faith through the retreat experience.

When it opens in December, The Way will sit atop the highest geographic point in Midland County. When we share that piece of information in our talks to groups in West Texas, the responses run from smiles to soft chuckles to good-hearted guffaws. And while the symbolism is clear, it is not the view of downtown Midland that will be enhanced as much as the view of the retreatant’s journey ahead.

More and more every day, as The Way continues to come together, our board, volunteers and supporters find ourselves blessed by many things. Primarily, two stand out: First, and most importantly, is the support we have received from across the Christian faith community in Midland. Second is the recurring sentiment voiced of how much the center is needed.

Our faith history

Just months after pioneers settled here, we built and filled our first churches. Methodists, Presbyterians, Baptists and Catholics were the first. Disciples of Christ soon followed. Take away the denominational tags, though, and you see truly who we all are: Christians on a journey.

John Howard Griffin, the noted historian and author of the Midland history, “Land of the High Sky,” wrote of how we widely practiced our faith in our earliest days and how it influenced our every phase of life.

“(Faith) left its imprint on the land, the people and the institutions,” Griffin wrote. “If one can scarcely imagine the typical West Texas town without its Saturday night dances, its gaming and saloons, neither can one imagine it without its Sunday morning strains of, “My Faith Looks Up to Thee,” and “Amazing Grace,” followed by the fiery words of the gospel sung and preached to the distant bawling of a cow somewhere out on the prairie.”

We have now come full circle. The Way will provide a facility for West Texans to practice their Christian faith amid the lowing of cattle, the whinnying of fillies and the bleating of an occasional lamb.

Overwhelming support

Support has come from all corners, and we are humbled and honored for that. We have received written letters of support from Golf Course Road Church of Christ, First Presbyterian Church, First United Methodist, Course Road Church of Christ, First Presbyterian Church, First United Methodist, and many other groups and individuals. Overwhelming support has come from all corners, and we are humbled and honored for that. We have received written letters of support from Golf Course Road Church of Christ, First Presbyterian Church, First United Methodist, Course Road Church of Christ, First Presbyterian Church, First United Methodist, and many other groups and individuals.

The Dignity and Nature of Women

Choosing virginity, and confirming oneself

By Lisa Martinez

(Third in a 4-part series)

St. John Paul II believed that women influence culture by applying their gifts in two areas of mission: the vocation of motherhood/virginity and by their contribution in all sectors of society and culture. In this article, we will explore the first area of mission for women, that of motherhood and virginity.

Virginity and the gift of self-virginity is a path on which women realize their womanhood in a way different from marriage. By freely choosing virginity, women confirm themselves as persons, as beings whom the Creator from the beginning has willed for their own sake. At the same time, they realize the value of their own femininity by becoming “a sincere gift.” That is, a gift for Christ and the Spouse of souls: a “spousal” gift.

In marriage this readiness, even though opened to all, consists mainly in the love parents give to their children. In virgins, we see that readiness opening to all, consisting mainly of the love parents give to their children.

(Photos by Becca Sankey Nelson)

2016 IN REVIEW: APRIL-MAY

April 25, 2016 — Bishop Prasad Gallela, Bishop of Cuddapah, India and a former priest in the Diocese of San Angelo, was kidnapped and beaten by unknown attackers who demanded money. Bp. Gallela was blindfolded, handcuffed and forcibly taken to an unknown location in his homeland. “They hit me and punched me, resulting in injuries all over my body,” Bishop Gallela said. The bishop served parishes in Big Spring, and the cluster of Miles/Olfen from 2000-2004. He was named Bishop of Cuddapah in 2008.

May 20, 2016 — Josh Gray, at right, a seminarian at Mundelein in Chicago, was ordained a deacon in the Diocese of San Angelo at his home parish, St. Mary, Queen of Peace, in Brownwood. Deacon Gray will be ordained into the priesthood in June.

May 22, 2016 — More than 100 celebrated Lady in Blue Day in San Angelo. Sor Maria de Jesus de Agreda, a 17th century nun, is said to have biliated to West Texas on hundreds of occasions without ever leaving her convent in Spain.
**In ’17, resolve to live like a saint**

**By Fr. Knick and Sandie Knickerbocker**

It’s a new calendar year! Have you made any resolutions? Has any of us considered a resolution to become a saint? The Church teaches that we are all called to be saints! — to grow in holiness by practicing heroic virtue. St. Gregory of Nyssa said, “The goal of a virtuous life is to become like God!” (CCC 1803). Seriously? How can we do that? Where do we start? In last month’s *Angelus*, we discussed the Theological Virtues. As we begin this new year of 2017, let’s consider the Cardinal Virtues as understood in the Christian tradition.

The Catechism illuminates the seven Christian virtues, the union of the Cardinal Virtues from ancient Greek philosophy—prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance—and the Theological Virtues—faith, hope and love. The Cardinal Virtues, also translated as wisdom, fairness, courage, and restraint or moderation, are the four principal human or moral virtues. Our English word cardinal comes from the Latin word cardo, which means “hinge.” Although all other virtues hinge on these four, in the Christian tradition the human/moral virtues are rooted in the Theological Virtues. What is the history of the Cardinal Virtues? In the Book of Wisdom 8:7 we read, “If anyone loves righteousness, her [Wisdom’s] labors are virtues; for she [Wisdom] teaches self-control and prudence, justice and courage; nothing in life is more profitable for men than these” (RSVCE). Some scholars think this book was written during the Jewish Hellenistic period, the 2nd or 1st century B.C., and the author knew well the Greek philosophical tradition.

Plato first discussed the Cardinal Virtues in the Republic (380 B.C.), and they entered into Jewish writings and Christian teaching by way of Plato’s disciple, Aristotle. Unlike the Theological Virtues, which are the gifts of God through grace, the four Cardinal Virtues can be practiced by anyone and, therefore, they are the foundation of natural morality: “…the acquired habit of right action by which man attains happiness—as the classical world understood it” (H. R. Williamson). These virtues are never dated because they derive from “the unchanging essence of man, the inherent structure of the soul…they are relevant to man in every age because they are relevant to man himself not to the age. They fit our nature and our nature’s needs” (Peter Kreeft). St. Ambrose, a Doctor of the Church, coined the term (Please See KNICKERBOCKERS/20)

![Fr. Knick and Sandie Knickerbocker](image)

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**Hondurans to celebrate Our Lady of Suyapa**

**Hermanamiento partners in Texas encouraged to celebrate Feast Day**

**By Sister Malachy Griffin**

The members of our San Angelo Diocesan Hermanamiento, or Partnership team, were introduced to Our Lady of Suyapa on their first visit to San Pedro Sula, Honduras, fifteen years ago. This might be the most famous religious image in the country and is kept in the basilica named in her honor and located in a suburb of Tegucigalpa. For many of our dioecesan folk the most amazing detail about this 18th Century statue was its size (6cm/2.3 inches). The statue is very detailed in spite of its diminutive size. It is a very old carving most likely done with devotion by an amateur artist. Her looks are angelic and reflect the nobility of her native race. Her joined hands show a prayerful attitude. She is dressed in a light pink robe with gold stars. She is adorned with valuable jewels. She appears to be covered with a cloak of gold stars and surrounded by a circle of silver rays. This description of her reminds one of “the woman dressed by the sun” mentioned in the Book of Revelations. This virgin is commemorated on February 3 when thousands of people from Honduras and elsewhere in Central America remember the day on which she was found.

The usual story about the finding of the statue is that it was miraculously discovered in January or February 1747 by a laborer, who on his way home one night, decided to sleep in a corn field. He felt a pain in his side and discovered that he was sleeping on something. A later version says he threw the object as far as he could without looking at it only to find it under himself again in the morning. It was the tiny statue of the Virgin! He took the statue home with him and set it up in his mother’s house on the altar there. It stayed in her house for 20 years until it was credited with its first miracle. Only then did it begin to attract the attention of the public. The first miracle was reported in 1768 and the family began collecting money for a chapel. In 1777 the chapel was finished. In 1925 Pope Pius XI declared the Virgin of Suyapa the Patroness of Honduras under the title Our Lady of Suyapa, and chose the date of February 3 as her feast day. In the 1950s a large basilica was built next to the chapel. The statue spends most time in the chapel but is moved to the large church for the celebration of her day and many other feast days. Her feast day is a celebration of the image being recovered after having been stolen on two separate occasions.

The statue is considered to have miraculous powers. The speedy ending of the Football War between Honduras and El Salvador is attributed to the statue. Many Honduran soldiers involved in the war reported visions of the Virgin of Suyapa, which calmed their fears during the fighting.

The Orden de los Caballeros de Suyapa, a group of all lay male caretakers, which began in the 20th Century, care for the statue and the chapel. They also escort the statue anywhere it travels around the country.

Because the Texas Dioceses of San Angelo and Tyler are partners with the Honduran Dioceses of San Pedro Sula and La Ceiba, it is encouraged that our parishioners give honor to Our Lady of Suyapa on February 3 and pray for her intercession on behalf of our Catholic brothers and sisters in Honduras.

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**2016 IN REVIEW: JUNE**

**June 16, 2016** — The Diocese of San Angelo announced that Msgr. Larry Droll, left, pastor of St. Ann’s in Midland and vicar general of the diocese since 2004, would step down from his administrative post to concentrate on his duties as parish priest, effective July 25. Msgr. Droll began his administrative duties as chancellor of the diocese in 1980, under then Bishop Joseph Fiorenza.

**June 29, 2016** — Officials with The Way Retreat Center broke ground on a 20-acre retreat facility in northeast Midland. The retreat center will serve the needs of retreatants in the Permian Basin and throughout West Texas and will host Walks to Emmaus, Cursillo, ACTS, Chrysalis and many other church-oriented retreats. The target opening date for the ecumenical facility is December 2017.

**June 25, 2016** — Tim Hayter, of Fort Stockton, was ordained a deacon in the diocese. Hayter, right, will be ordained a priest in June of this year.

**June 21-July 4, 2016** — Catholics in the diocese and across America observed the annual Fortnight for Freedom, to draw attention to religious liberty issues in the US.
St. Mary’s Students Feed the Homeless

Students from St. Mary’s Catholic School in Odessa helped Feed the Homeless as part of the school’s annual Advent outreach to the poor. At left, Brissa Hinojos, an 8th grader at St. Mary’s, registers a guest. Above, students deliver meals, and at bottom, students sing carols during the meal. (Photos by Alan P. Torre / aptorre.com).

June 3, 2016 — Colorado City native Tony Franco celebrated his priestly ordination at the Sacred Heart Cathedral in San Angelo. Fr. Franco is currently parochial vicar at St. Ann’s in Midland.

Late July — Eleven young adults from the Diocese of San Angelo joined more than 2 million others from around the globe at World Youth Day in Krakow, Poland. Simultaneous to the international celebration, many young people in the diocese celebrated World Youth Day-San Angelo. A Skype hookup briefly beamed a video feed of the group in Krakow to the pilgrims celebrating at the McNease Convention Center in San Angelo. The San Angelo event also served as the final destination for the Pilgrim Cross, which traveled to over 30 parishes in 29 counties throughout the diocese. At the San Angelo gathering, Bishop Sis encouraged pilgrims to “Bring Christ to your young adult world and bring your young adult world to Christ.”

July 8, 2016 — Parishioners at St. Mary’s Star of the Sea in Ballinger gathered for a retirement celebration for longtime pastor, Fr. Hugh Wade, who stepped down from his pastorate for health reasons.
Speaking of Saints

St. Timothy helped spread truth of Jesus with friend, colleague, St. Paul

By Mary Lou Gibson

Foremost among the early Christian disciples who traveled and preached the message that Jesus was “the Messiah and the Son of God” were St. Paul (after his conversion) and Timothy, his close companion and co-worker in preaching.

Much of what is known about Timothy comes from the Acts of the Apostles and in letters in the New Testament said to be from Paul and addressed to Timothy. Paul Burns writes in Butler’s Lives of the Saints that these letters to Paul and one to Titus, another disciple, are referred collectively as the Pastoral Epistles.

Timothy was born in Lystra, Lycania. His father was Greek and his mother, Eunice, was Jewish. Paul first met Timothy when he came to Lystra in Asia Minor where he converted Timothy’s mother and grandmother and baptized her son. Years later, he returned and found Timothy grown so virtuous, courageous and selfless that he made him his close companion and lifelong friend. Omer Englebert writes in Lives of the Saints that “there is no one to whom Paul gave higher praise than to Timothy.” According to Burns, Paul had Timothy circumcised to make him acceptable to Jewish Christians.

Paul later advised Timothy to “use a little wine for thy stomach’s sake” (1 Timothy 5:23). This led to Timothy’s traditional patronage of those who suffer from digestive distress.

Timothy traveled with Paul on many mission journeys to Phrygia, Galatia and Macedonia. They visited Ephesus and then went on missions to churches in Corinth, where the Corinthians opposed, Timothy remained to baptize, organize and confirm worship (2:1-7), women’s roles (2:8-15), and the selection of ministers in the Early Church (3:1-16). When Paul was forced to leave Beroea because of Jewish opposition, Timothy remained to baptize, organize and confirm worship.

(Please See SAINTS/20)

2016 IN REVIEW: JULY-AUGUST

July 25, 2016 — Longtime diocesan priest Fr. Santiago Udayar, left, was named vicar general of the diocese, replacing Msgr. Larry Droll, who served in the position since 2004. Fr. Santiago received word of his appointment as he was completing his studies of his studies at St. Paul University in Ottawa, Canada, where he was completing his studies for a Master’s Degree in Canon Law.

August 10, 2016 — Bishops and other officials representing four Catholic dioceses — San Angelo and Tyler, and San Pedro Sula and La Ceiba, Honduras — celebrated an extension of Hermanamiento at the Sacred Heart Cathedral, a partnership that begin in 2001. The partnership brings the communion of the Church and international goodwill between the four dioceses.

New vicar general participates as observer at USCCB fall assembly

By Fr. Santiago Udayar
Vicar General
Diocese of San Angelo

The 2016 Annual Fall General Assembly of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) was held from November 14-16, 2016, in Baltimore, Maryland. At the invitation of the president of Region X of the USCCB, Most Rev. George A. Sheltz (Auxiliary Bishop of Houston), our Bishop Most Rev. Michael Sis selected and sent me as a priest-observer to represent Region X (which comprises of Texas, Oklahoma, and Arkansas).

It was indeed a very unique opportunity for me as an observer to witness the USCCB as a permanent institution, fittingly adapting to the needs of the time and jointly exercising its pastoral functions with the intention “to promote the greater-good” which the Holy Mother Church offers to the entire humanity. I also witnessed the human and the humane sides of the successors of the Apostles while they were enacting certain particular legislations as “the teachers of doctrine, priests of sacred worship, and ministers of governance.” Throughout the 2016 General Assembly, I saw the Catholic Bishops of the United States collectively and cooperatively exercising their apostolic duties with undivided unity and absolute collegiality, submitting themselves to the will of God under the authority of Pope Francis, the successor of St. Peter.

Personally speaking, it was a very humbling experience for me to see our shepherds treating everyone with utmost respect and sincere fraternal love. I am very grateful to God for providing me this wonderful opportunity to witness the USCCB in action with commendable pastoral care and selfless devotion. I also thank our Bishop Most Rev. Michael Sis for selecting me to serve as the official observer for Region X for the November 2016 Plenary Assembly.
Pope: God of surprises at work in 2016

By Cindy Wooden
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY — Pope Francis described 2016 as a "packed year," one filled with initiatives that helped Catholics "see and touch with their hands the fruits of the mercy of God."

"The Lord always surprises us and goes beyond our expectations," the pope said Nov. 28, looking back at what happened over the past 12 months, especially in events related to the Year of Mercy.

While the jubilee celebrations dominated the papal calendar, they did not halt other activities and responsibilities, nor other surprises.

After decades of work and hope and prayer, Pope Francis finally was the first pope to meet with the Russian Orthodox patriarch. He and Patriarch Kirill of Moscow met briefly in Cuba in February and signed a joint declaration.

In April, after visiting with refugees on the Greek island of Lesbos, Pope Francis — without prior announcement — brought 12 of them back to Rome with him. The Vatican is providing the funds needed for their living expenses and the Rome-based Sant'Egidio Community is helping them with language lessons and logistics. The 12 all had the legal paperwork necessary to move to Italy.

In May, Pope Francis held a dialogue with the superiors general of women's religious orders, and established "an official commission to study the question" of the identity and role of the women described as deacons in the New Testament and early Christian writings.

The pope agreed and later named six men and six women to the commission, in addition to commission president Archbishop Luis Ladaria Ferrer, secretary of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. The commission held its first meeting in late November.

Here's a look back at some other items from the pope's 2016 diary:

"In January, Pope Francis became the third modern pope to visit Rome's main synagogue. He told the congregation that while the Catholic Church affirms that salvation comes through Jesus, it also recognizes that God is faithful and has not revoked his covenant with the Jewish people. He paid special tribute to a handful of Holocaust survivors present for his visit, saying, "their sufferings, anguish and tears must never be forgotten."

"In February, his meeting with Patriarch Kirill took place during a stopover on his way to Mexico for a pastoral visit that included intense personal prayer at the Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe and a special Mass in Ciudad Juarez at a site just a few yards from the U.S.-Mexican border. He insisted the migration crisis is not just about numbers, but "names, stories and families."

"In March, Pope Francis continued his practice of holding a Lenten penance service in St. Peter's Basilica, going to confession and hearing confessions. The sacrament was a centerpiece of the Year of Mercy celebrations, and the pope told priests, 'May every man and woman who comes to confession find a father; a father who is waiting, the Father who forgives.'"

"In April, the Vatican released Pope Francis' post-synodal apostolic exhortation on the family, Amoris Laetitia, insisting that God's plan for the family is that it be built on the lifelong union of one man and one woman open to having children. The pope called for an overhaul of marriage preparation programs and for the prayerful accompaniment of Catholic couples whose marriages have failed."

"In May, Pope Francis received the Charlemagne Prize and delivered a major speech on his vision for a Europe that overcomes division, economic struggles and fear of immigrants. "We are asked to promote an integration that finds in solidarity a way of acting, a means of making history," he said. "Solidarity should never be confused with charitable assistance, but understood as a means of creating opportunities for all the inhabitants of our cities — and of so many other cities — to live with dignity."

"In June, in a small, family-like gathering, Pope Francis helped retired Pope Benedict XVI celebrate the 65th anniversary of his priestly ordination. Even in retirement, he said, Pope Benedict continues to serve the church and "truly contributes with vigor and wisdom to its growth" from the 'little 'Mater Ecclesiae' monastery in the Vatican.""

"In July, Pope Francis joined hundreds of thousands of Catholic young people in Krakow, Poland, for World Youth Day and, like many of them, he paid a silent, prayerful visit to the Our Lady of Guadalupe Radio Network completed work on station enhancements, boosting its signal output from 1,000 watts to 25,000 watts. The increase allowed GRN to broadcast to a potential additional 150,000 listeners in West Texas and Southeastern New Mexico. The wattage increase will bring in listeners in Sweetwater, Iraan, Kermit, and Plains.

September 2016 — Odessa College and UT-Permian Basin welcome the arrival of Elsie Arzadon, named Campus Minister at both schools.

September 17, 2016 — Our Lady of Grace Monastery celebrated the Profession of Vows of Sister Mary Joseph.
By Rhina Guidos
Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON — It began with the fatal shootings of unarmed black men and women by police. It was exacerbated in the summer when, on July 7, a gunman in Dallas opened fire on police during a march, killing five officers in a presumed act of retaliation.

Catholic Church leaders such as Archbishop Wilton D. Gregory of Atlanta in August called on others "to resolve to address the issues that lie beneath these acts of violence." But no one imagined then that frustrations about race and racism in the U.S., which began with the police shootings, were about to get worse in the later part of 2016.

At a news conference during the U.S. bishops’ general assembly in Baltimore in November, Archbishop Gregory said the reaction to the presidential election had added to an existing tension this year over matters of race in the country.

Those who work with multicultural communities, such as Jordan Denari Duffner, a research fellow at Georgetown University’s Bridge Initiative, which studies Islamophobia, said comments made during the campaign led to "a general kind of anti-otherwise that has emerged." When it comes to Islamophobia, she said, anyone who "looks Muslim," be it because of the color of the skin or what they may wear, can evoke a reaction from others that can lead to attacks, she said.

This kind of "anti-otherwise" in the air, some say, has resulted in a rise of hate and racism. The Southern Poverty Law Center said that 10 days after the election, almost 900 reports of harassment and intimidation from across the nation were recorded. Many took place in public places or places of worship, at work, at schools and even in grocery stores.

In a recent column for Catholic News Service, Archbishop Gregory said "the belief that one group is superior to another due to race — is a grave moral disease whose recurrence, aggressiveness and persistence should

(See RACISM/22)

By Dale Gavlak
Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON — As Christians in the Middle East look back on 2016, they wonder if there will be much to celebrate amid mounting challenges, particularly for those displaced by conflicts in Iraq and Syria.

"As much as we are pleased that our homelands from which thousands of Christians were forced to flee from the extremists have been retaken, we are very concerned about what lies ahead," Father Emanuel Youkhana told Catholic News Service by phone. He referred to Iraq's Christian towns of Qaraqosh, Batnayeh and Bartella, recently regained by the Iraqi military from Islamic State.

The archimandrite is a member of the Assyrian Church of the East and heads the Christian Aid Program Northern Iraq, CAPNI.

Father Youkhana and others have expressed concerns that Iraq’s Christians may once again be caught in the country’s sectarian violence, this time by Shiite Muslims. If this happens, it will impede the Christians' ability to return home.

Iraq’s majority Shiite population comprises the bulk of the country’s reconstituted national army, and as it liberates areas from extremist Sunni militants, Iraqi Christians have seen worrying Shiite slogans scrawled on places and property that have always been "100 percent Christian," Father Youkana noted.

The Nineveh Plain, a region rich in oil and the breadbasket of Iraq, has drawn interest from regional and local powers seeking to exert influence there. Christians are challenged by the widespread devastation Islamic State militants have wrought to the area that has been their ancestral homeland for the past 14 centuries.

The trail of death and destruction left by Islamic State was being fully revealed as the militants were flushed out. There were accounts that some Christians were tortured and crucified. Among the militants’ threatening words still visible in red on the wall of a plundered electrical shop: "By God, we will break your cross."

"It’s worse than we expected," said teacher Wssam Rafou Poli, trying to exorcise the presence of the militants who occupied his house by emptying its entire contents onto the street to be burned.

"I cried when we entered the house," his wife Zeena said, comforting their young daughter, who was mourning her favorite doll, found filthy and ripped.

Syriac Catholic Patriarch Ignace Joseph III Younan told CNS he was horrified to see the terrible devastation and what he called "ghost towns" during a visit to northern Iraq in late November.

He celebrated the Eucharist "on an improvised small altar" in the incinerated sanctuary of the vandalized Church of the Immaculate Conception in Qaraqosh for the few who could attend the liturgy.

"I just wanted to strengthen their faith in the redeemer's altar and cross, although both were half broken behind us," the patriarch said. "I reminded them that we Christians are the descendants of martyrs and confessors, with a long history dating back to the evangelization of the apostles."

Patriarch Younan called for a "stable, law-abiding and strong government" to

(See MID EAST/20)
MENARD — On a crisp December day with more than just a hint of a winter chill in the air, seminarians from the Diocese of San Angelo were treated to a little history. Actually, they were treated to a lot of history. By discussion standards, what happened in and around Menard roughly 260 years ago doesn’t get much bigger or more historic.

El Paso-native Terrell Kelley, who grew up in nearby Ysleta, makes the significance of the Spanish Colonial history in the area so much so that he and his wife bought a ranch on the northern banks of the San Saba River just west of Menard, or Menardville as pioneers once called it. The Kelleys named their home Rancho del Presidio.

The presidio, the immediate west of their land, and the site of the Misión de Santa Cruz de San Saba, three miles to the east, were, as Kelley says, the “high-water mark” of Spanish colonial expansion in Texas before Spain’s decision to withdraw back to the San Antonio area.

The destruction of the San Saba Mission in 1758 had far-reaching strategic consequences for Spain, and subsequently, for Mexico, because it resulted in the decision to abandon any plan for colonization in Central Texas. This eventually allowed Natives Americans, in particular the Comanche, to establish absolute dominance over the century in what is now Texas, Oklahoma and a large part of New Mexico.

The establishment of missions was an integral part of Spain’s strategy of colonial expansion into Central Texas in the early part of the 18th century. The overall purpose was to turn the hostile Lipan Apache into loyal Spanish subjects through their conversion to the Holy Catholic faith and the introduction of Spanish civilization to the heart of Texas. Thus, it was believed, would lessen the threat to San Antonio, where devastating Indian raids were a constant threat. The construction and occupation of the Misión Santa Cruz de San Saba was part of that expansion effort, and the mission was the most ambitious effort ever attempted by Spain to bring Catholicism to the Lipan Apache.

In order to protect the mission, the Presidio de San Saba was started in 1727. However, the mission was located four miles east of the fort, a decision by the leader of the Franciscan missionaries, Fr. Alonso Giraldo de Terreros, who recommended that the site of the Presidio, Col. Diego Ortiz Puma, because of its security concerns. He thought that it was not wise to have the mission so far from the protection of the fort. Fr. Alonso, however, would not change his mind, so the mission remained separated from the presidio, but with a security force of eight Spanish soldiers and two cannons. Fr. Terreros’ decision would prove tragic.

According to Kelley, “It is important that we fully appreciate the central role played by the Catholic Church and the incredible courage and dedication of the priests and Spanish soldiers who died trying to establish the Holy Catholic Faith in Central Texas. That is why these sites need to be restored and preserved for future generations — so that the full and complete story of the pivotal role they played not only in Texas history, but of the Catholic Church in Texas, can be widely shared today and for future generations.”

The effort by the Menard community today builds upon an earlier restoration phase completed in 2011 by Menard County with the help of a $1 million grant from the Texas Historical Commission. Since then, the Menard County Historical Commission and the Presidio de San Saba Restoration Corporation have moved forward with the final restoration, known as Phase II.

“Continuing to work closely with THC, we now have an updated cost estimate for the completion of the effort,” Kelley said. “Allowed with that, we are reaching out for corporate sponsorship and the airport of our local state representatives in order to finish the job and to transfer the Presidio site to the State of Texas, where it will be placed under permanent THC management.”

Volunteers in Menard keep Spanish Colonial history, influence alive in region

Clockwise from left, Bishop Michael J. Sis listens to an explanation from Terrell Kelley, chair of the Menard County Historical Commission; a historical marker noting the site of the historic mission is roughly two miles east of Menard on FM 2092. The facade of the Presidio de San Saba, and seminarians, friends and representatives of the diocese pose with Seminarian Director Fr. Michael Rodriguez, second from left, and Fr. Albert Emanuel, pastor at Sacred Heart Church in Menard, second from right. Top right, another view of the presidio; at right, in story, Terrell Kelley explains some of the history of the area. (Photos by Jimmy Patterson)
Making Sense of Bioethics

It’s not wrong if it feels right, right?

By Fr. Tad Pacholczyk

Many people today believe that moral judgments and values are merely expressions of sentiment. They deny that moral values are fixed or universally true, and instead, argue that we have changing emotions that may or may not correspond to the moral feelings of those around us.

This can play out in various real-life situations when people say, for example, “You can’t really know what it’s like to have an unexpected pregnancy if you haven’t been in the situation yourself, so you can’t tell me it’s wrong to get an abortion.” The morality of terminating a pregnancy is not about feeling, so you can’t tell me it’s wrong to do that.

Those objective foundations begin with the recognition that all men and women have a shared human nature, so whatever is always morally good for one of us will also be good for any of us. If it is immoral for me to steal the electronics out of your house, it will likewise be wrong for you to rob me or anyone else: and it will be literally wrong for me to steal from the United States or the Pope to do so. If I rob others, it is objectively bad because it harms others by depriving them of their goods, and it transforms me into a thief, the kind of person who cheapens his humanity and degrades his integrity by stealing the goods of others. Even those who believe in a “feelings-based” morality are quick to deny certain actions as always wrong, at least when it comes to their own vehicles and homes being plundered, irrespective of whether the robbers might have their own moral sentiments favoring the practice.

To think clearly about morality, we need to start by acknowledging that certain moral duties do not depend on context or emotion, but are universally binding on us, having even a “commandment-like” quality. Professor William May, a remarkable teacher of moral theology at the John Paul II Institute for Studies on Marriage and Family, had a penchant for choosing clear and memorable examples when he would lecture. He used to tell his students that we all know certain actions are wrong, regardless of circumstances. One of his most graphic examples, recounted by his students even decades later, was his undeniable assertion that we all know barbecueing a baby is wrong. Similarly, he stressed that everyone recognizes the wrongness of adultery, an act, so often shrouded in secrecy, that attacks the good of our spouse and seriously violates an important duty by depriving them of their goods, and it transforms us as persons.

The first step is to decide what to concentrate your energies on in 2017. A way to do this is to choose a “word of the year.”

Doing this can be a North Star to direct and define your actions all at once. The word (or short phrase) could be something that you’ve been thinking about for a while, easily lived by, or a representation of something you want to change or improve.

Philosopher Alasdair MacIntyre notes that this emotive approach to moral thinking has gained broad societal approval: “To a large degree people now think, talk and act as if emotivism were true, no matter what their avowed theoretical standpoint may be. Emotivism has become embodied in our culture.” In light of our tendency to try to justify our misdeeds, it can be appealing to imagine that ethics are always “first person” — from my vantage point — and to suppose that no one else can identify moral obligations regarding another’s situation. “How do you feel about it?” becomes the guiding principle, and leads to the view that morals are relative, context dependent, and subject to emotional confirmation. Reducing ethics to feelings, however, is a seriously deficient approach.

Most of us are probably granted our opinions about morality by depriving them of their goods, and it transforms us as persons.

“The morality of terminating a pregnancy is not about feeling, so you can’t tell me it’s wrong to do that.”

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.

Tips on how to reach (and keep) your 2017 resolutions

By Maria-Pia Negro Chin
Catholic News Service

By now, you may have seen the heartwarming Polish Christmas ad that has been watched more than 12 million times. It tells the tale of an aging man trying to learn English alone at home, labeling household objects with Post-its before taking a trip to the United Kingdom and ... actually, it is probably best if you watch the video: www.youtube.com/watch?v=USRn-HM6A (warning, there is some cursing at the 1:30 mark).

This ad, besides bringing happy tears, also shows us how once we have a goal that is worthwhile, we can take steps to achieve them. With that in mind, here are some ways to think of New Year’s resolutions and the steps to follow through with them.

The first step is to decide what to concentrate your energies on in 2017. A way to do this is to choose a “word of the year.”

“One simple word that will help you decide between X and Y, and help you remember what’s important when you find yourself in an endless loop” of options that distract you from what matters to you, said Claire Diaz-Ortiz, an author, speaker and technology innovator, during a webinar.

Imagine what would happen to the practice of medicine if physicians could treat patients only if they personally experienced and felt the diseases their patients had. Consider the miscarriage of justice that would occur if judges ruled only when they could feel and experience everything the perpetrator felt and experienced.”

November 5, 2016 — The Oblates of Notre Dame (OND), a Filipina Congregation founded in Cotabato City, Philippines, celebrated its 25th year in the Diocese of San Angelo with a Mass concelebrated by Bishop Michel J. Sis and San Angelo Bishop Emeritus Michael D. Pfeifer, November 5, 2016, at St. Mary’s Church in Odessa. The OND congregation was founded in 1956 by two Oblates of Mary Immaculate, Bishop George Mongeau, OMI, DD, and Father George Dion, OMI.

November 9-16, 2016 — St. Ann’s Parish in Midland welcomed four visitors from its partner-parish in Honduras (photo, next page). The partnership agreement among the various dioceses in the “Hermanamiento” calls for reciprocal visits to learn about one another’s parish and programs and to deepen the relationship.

November 20, 2016 — Thomas Shows (right in photo at far right next page), a seminarian in the Diocese of San Angelo, was installed as an acolyte during a Mass in November. The Abilen-
Let's hear it again in support and praise of national service

By Father William J. Byron SJ
Catholic News Service

"Any definition of a successful life must include service to others," said President George H.W. Bush many times before, during and after his presidential years (1989-1993). The only structural change he made in the White House organization as president was to create the Office of National Service in 1989.

President Bush appointed me while I was president of The Catholic University of America to serve on his Commission on National and Community Service, later known, under President Bill Clinton, as the Corporation for National and Community Service.

President Bush also appointed George Romney, former governor of Michigan and an unsuccessful candidate for the Republican presidential nomination in 1968, to serve on the Commission on National and Community Service. Romney often remarked during our meetings that civilian national service should be as "visible as the post office."

I was reminded of that when his son Mitt was the Republican Party's nominee for president in 2012. Mitt said he would "think about" national service while he was running for the presidency, but he never did anything about it. Now that he and the president-elect are breaking bread together, perhaps they could begin a conversation about national service.

President-elect Donald Trump, so far as I know, has never said anything about national service. Now he has to learn what Thomas Jefferson knew so well, namely, the power of language in the art of leadership. And I certainly hope that, as president, Mr. Trump will find effective language to speak out in support of national service. We surely need it.

We need the elder care, child care, urban cleanups and infrastructure repair that service can provide. Public elementary and secondary education is in need of help from volunteers. We need environmental protection.

We need to expose our youth to the maturation to be gained through service. So many young people are purposeless and adrift; national service is a solution for them as well as a benefit to the nation.

Civilian national service can be delivered by organizations like AmeriCorps, Habitat for Humanity, Jesuit Volunteer Corps and Teach for America. New service organizations might emerge if the spirit of service finds its way back into American life.

In my teenage years, service meant military service during World War II. In the postwar years, those of us who served were offered educational benefits under..."
Opening our churches to those less fortunate than us

By Fr. Ron Rolheiser

When we have been at our best, as Christians, we have opened our churches as sanctuaries to the poor and the endangered. We have a long, proud history wherein refugees, homeless persons, immigrants facing deportation, and others who are endangered, take shelter inside the churches. If we believe what Jesus tells us about the Last Judgment in the 25th chapter of Matthew’s Gospel, this should serve us well when we stand before God at the end.

Unfortunately our churches have not always provided that same kind of sanctuary (safety and shelter) to those who are refugees, immigrants, and homeless in their relationship to God and our churches. There are millions of persons, today perhaps the majority within our nations, who are looking for a safe harbor in terms of the sorting out of their faith and their relationship to the church. Sadly, too often our rigid paradigms of orthodoxy, ecclesiology, ecumenism, liturgy, sacramental practice, and canon law, however well-intentioned, have made our churches places where no such sanctuary is offered and where the wide embrace practiced by Jesus is not mirrored.

Instead, our churches are often harbors only for persons who are already safe, already comforted, already church-observant, already highly-sophisticated, already religiously solid, already church-observant ci-

tizens. That was hardly the situation within Jesus’ own ministry. He was a safe sanctuary for everyone, religious and non-religious alike. While he didn’t ignore the committed religious persons around him, the Scribes and Pharisees, his ministry always reached out and included those who were on the fringes of religious life, or non-existent. Moreover, he reached out especially to those whose moral lives where not in formal harmony with the religious practices of the time, those deemed as sinners.

Significantly too he did not ask for repentance from those deemed as sinners before he sat down at table with them. He set out not under the cultural conditions were weak or non-existent. Moreover, he reached out especially to those whose moral lives were not in formal harmony with the religious practices of the time, those deemed as sinners.

We need today in our churches to challenge ourselves in the process by which we enter into our consciousness. What she comes to understand it.

communication and the process by which we understand God’s distinctive manner of communication. What she comes to understand it.

But this is repugnant to the patience and humility required to let God’s always unerring, always disquieting communication be heard.

The Second Vatican Council clearly taught that the Bible is best construed as “the Word of God in the words of men.” More contemporary interpretive methods have helped us to appreciate the second part of that observation, but I fear that they have obscured the first. In their poet-

ry, their philosophy, their literature, their spiritual musings, human beings, across the centuries and across the cultures, have been saying lots of things about God, but the Bible is not so much human speech about God, but God’s speech about itself. As much as we revere Shakespeare, Homer, Aristotle, Dante, and T.S. Eliot, we don’t pronounce, after reading aloud their language, “This is the Word of the Lord.” But we say precisely that after we read the Bible. We are not meant to translate the biblical world into language accessible to us; rather, we are to allow ourselves to be “translated” (the word literally means “carried across”) into the space opened up by the Bible. To fully elaborate what this means would require many volumes of theology. But to get at least some sense of what I’m describing, attend to the Bible’s manner of speaking of grace, of participation in the divine life, of the conversation among the Trinitarian persons, and of the Word becoming flesh. None of this is the fruit of philosophical analysis or poetic musings. It is the stuff of revelation. Accordingly, we don’t control it. It controls us.

I mentioned above how the alien craft in “Arrival” don’t quite land. They are massively, overwhelmingly present to the earth, but they don’t touch down; the earth doesn’t hold them. That’s not a bad visual metaphor for God’s speech in the Scriptures.

Catholic Voices

Arrival and the unique manner of God’s speech

By Bishop Robert Barron

Auxiliary Bishop of Los Angeles

Like “E.T.,” “Close Encounters of the Third Kind,” “Starman,” “Independence Day,” and a host of similar films over the past thirty years, “Arrival” explores the theme of an alien visitation to earth. In this iteration, Louise Banks (played by Amy Adams) is a linguist expert, who is called upon by the U.S. military to facilitate conversation with visitors from another world, whose spacecraft have landed, for they hover a few feet off the ground) at a number of locations around the globe. This meditative film has a great deal to tell us about communication, language, and the patience required to enter into the cultural environment of a higher intelligence. As such, it speaks, whether its director and writer intended this or not, about God’s distinctive manner of commu-

nication and the process by which we come to understand it.

To her infinite surprise, Louise one night is whisked to a remote site in Montana, where she is briefed, encased in a suffocating protective suit, and then brought into the presence of the aliens, who turn out to be octopus-like creatures, moving slowly about in a liquid environment. After recovering from her initial astonishment, Louise commences to reach out to her strange interlocutors, writing a few simple words on a cardboard and indicating their meaning through gesture. Almost immediately, the creatures respond by squirting an ink-like substance that, presumably under their intelligent direction, forms itself into calligraphically rendered circuits. This is their unique, highly-sophisticated, and utterly alien language. Much of the quiet drama of “Arrival” occurs as Louise endeavors to understand this qualitatively different form of communication. What she comes to grasp is that any attempt at “translation” of this strange argot in the ordinary sense of the term would be futile. For as she enters into the world of the extraterrestrials, she comprehends that their symbolic system bears a distinctive, quasi-mystical relationship to time and that she is receiving from her conversation partners much more than mere information.

Lest I spoil the movie for those who haven’t seen it, I won’t go any further into it. But I would like to elaborate upon, at least tentatively, in regard to what we call divine revela-

cation. One of the core convictions of the Christian faith is that God has spoken to his people, that a real communication has come from his transcendent realm and entered into our consciousness. Furthermore, believers hold, this communication is codified in the Bible, which, accordingly, is not one book among many, not one more human attempt to express our convictions about God, but rather, in a real sense, God’s word to us, God’s language, God’s speech.

I am insisting on this point, because our approach to the Bible these past many years has been dominated by what the scholars call the historical-critical method. This is an interpretive approach that places exclusive emphasis on uncovering the cultural, historical, and linguistic set-

ting for a Biblical text and the intentional-

ity of that text’s human author. To be sure, these are altogether legitimate concerns, and whatever truths we learn in this regard are good. But the danger is that a hyper stress on the human and this-world-

ly dimension of the Scriptural texts can blind us to their sheer strangeness, to the divine manner in which they draw us up out of our world into another world. More to it, a confidently rational attitude toward the Bible can make the interpreter cocky. He can feel himself on firm ground, approaching biblical language as he would any other poetic and historical communication from the ancient world. But this is patently contrary to the patience and humility required to let God’s always unerring, always disquieting communication be heard.

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ry, their philosophy, their literature, their spiritual musings, human beings, across the centuries and across the cultures, have been saying lots of things about God, but the Bible is not so much human speech about God, but God’s speech about itself. As much as we revere Shakespeare, Homer, Aristotle, Dante, and T.S. Eliot, we don’t pronounce, after reading aloud their language, “This is the Word of the Lord.” But we say precisely that after we read the Bible. We are not meant to translate the biblical world into language accessible to us; rather, we are to allow ourselves to be “translated” (the word literally means “carried across”) into the space opened up by the Bible. To fully elaborate what this means would require many volumes of theology. But to get at least some sense of what I’m describing, attend to the Bible’s manner of speaking of grace, of participation in the divine life, of the conversation among the Trinitarian persons, and of the Word becoming flesh. None of this is the fruit of philosophical analysis or poetic musings. It is the stuff of revelation. Accordingly, we don’t control it. It controls us.

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Ringing in 2017: a new year of hope living in the spirit

By Fr. Eugene Hemrick
Catholic News Service

Some have suggested with the closing of the Year of Mercy, 2017 should be a Year of Hope. Weary, disillusioned and depressed describe just about every feeling of many people I know. The cause is not only our political malaise, but a world of violence and contradictions.

Add to this the fact that we have entered a pharmaceutical age in which commercials constantly remind us of illnesses we might contract and medicines to counter them; that is, if you don't get reactions more detrimental than the promised cure.

Where do we find hope that counters a seemingly hopeless 2017?

The first reading of the Mass from the second Sunday of Advent contains our answer. In it, Isaiah cries out,

"On that day, a shoot shall sprout from the stump of Jesse, and from his roots a bud shall blossom. The spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him: a spirit of wisdom and of understanding, a spirit of counsel and of strength, a spirit of knowledge and of fear of the Lord, and his delight shall be the fear of the Lord."

It is from the line of Jesse, the father of David, that Christ comes, possessing the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Two of those gifts in particular contain the hope we desire: wisdom and fear of the Lord.

Wisdom promotes good judgment, i.e., desiring truth and pursuing it to the best of our ability. More important, it includes enlisting God's wisdom in seeking truth.

It is said that each time St. Thomas Aquinas composed a part of his magnificent work, the "Summa Theologica," he raised it to God, seeking God's wisdom in his pursuit of truth. To succeed, truth needs humility and its gift of docility.

Unfortunately, the crowd's voice often crowds out God's voice.

What is particularly disillusioning presently is bashing truth. Worse than this, is the spirit in which it is done; vicious and godless. No wonder many are depressed. The necessary spirit he needs to continue what I believe borders on sacrilege. (Also, at the conclusion of the liturgy, instead of saying, "The Mass is ended. Go in peace," he says, "The Mass never ends; it must be lived by each of us today.")

His comments at the beginning of Mass have irritated me to the extent that I now turn to a different church unless he has finished that part, and then I return to my pew. Your thoughts? (Columbus, Ohio)


Ministers in wartime / Football commentary from the altar

By Fr. Kenneth Doyle
Catholic News Service

Q. I have long been a fan of the television series "M.A.S.H." that takes place during the Korean conflict. In a couple of the episodes, the priest on the show is asked by a soldier if he can perform a Methodist, a Jewish or a Presbyterian service for him.

In each case, the priest answers that he is allowed to perform services for all denominations. From what I gather, this type of service was also offered during World War II as well.

My question is this: Were ministers of all faiths permitted to say Mass, distribute Communion and hear confessions of Catholic servicemen during those battlefield and hospital-stay conditions?

(Woodbury, Minnesota)

A. In wartime situations, it has always been common to have interfaith services offered by chaplains of various religious denominations.

Needless to say, not every religion can supply a member of the clergy for every military outpost; so regularly, for centuries, clergy have presided at services -- open to members of all religions or of none -- consisting of scriptural readings, "sermonettes," words of spiritual comfort and prayers of blessing.

To your specific question, though, ministers of other faiths have never been permitted to celebrate Mass or hear the confessions of Catholic servicemen and women. The church's Code of Canon Law (No. 900.1) explains that "the minister who is able to confer the sacrament of the Eucharist in the person of Christ is a validly ordained priest alone."

Likewise, another provision (No. 965) notes that "a priest alone is the minister of the sacrament of Penance," and that "the priest alone validly administers the anointing of the sick." Of course -- and this happens regularly -- clergy of any faith may offer prayers of blessing and words of comfort over a sick or dying Catholic, but they may not absolve or anoint.

An exception to this sacramental strictness comes with baptism: Canon 861.2 provides that "in a case of necessity any person with the right intention may confer the sacrament of baptism licitly." So if a serviceman dying on the battlefield wanted to be baptized a Catholic, a member of the clergy of any denomination (or a layperson, for that matter) could do so by pouring the water and saying the words of baptism.


Q. A discussion that is common between the more "orthodox" members of the parish and the more "progressive" ones is whether the faithful should use the "orans" posture during the Our Father.

I remember being instructed several years ago that we were to start stretching out our hands while praying the Lord's Prayer at Mass. I felt odd doing this at first but decided that I needed to follow along as instructed.

Years later, I noticed that our nun and our deacon did not observe this. So are we supposed to stretch out our hands when offering this prayer or not? (Missouri)

A. The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops is quite concise on the issue, saying in its guidelines that "no position is prescribed in the Roman Missal for an assembly gesture during the Lord's Prayer." There is simply no "rule" or guideline.

As you say, though, it has become common in some congregations for the faithful to adopt the "orans" posture -- with hands extended to the side and facing up or out. The priest, by contrast, is directed specifically in the rubrics to adopt the "orans" posture during the Our Father.

Some liturgists have pointed to this as a bit of an anomaly: Generally, the celebrant extends his hands during the parts of the Mass when he is praying aloud and alone, on behalf of the congregation; during the Our Father, he is praying not on behalf of the congregation but along with them -- as in the Gloria and the Creed, when his hands are joined.

Perhaps future liturgical guidelines will clarify this; in the meantime, though, I can't imagine that it matters a lot to God.

Q. A retired priest says one of the Sunday Masses each week at our parish.

During football season, after the opening hymn, he spends a couple of minutes commenting on the football game that our local team played the day before.

This, of course, produces giggles from the faithful. Besides the fact that it is not_vs the correct order of the Mass,

I know this is not considered "appropriate" commentary, even football games.

Regarding this, I imagine that it matters a lot to God.

As to his extemporizing at the dismissal of Mass, I have irritated me to the extent that I now turn to a different church unless he has finished that part, and then I return to my pew. Your thoughts? (Columbus, Ohio)

A. The first rule, I would think, is that the Mass should be offered with the reverence and dignity that the circumstances warrant: Jesus Christ is made present on the altar, offered to the Lord in sacrifice and then received back as gift to the faithful. This doesn't rule out occasional humor, light-hearted commentary or reference to contemporary events, even football games.

But if the priest you mention regularly spends as much time as you say reviewing the fortunes of the Ohio State Buckeyes -- "a couple of minutes" and then some more -- that seems a bit excessive. (Your use of the word "sacrifice," though, does sound a tad extreme.)

As to his extemporizing at the dismissal rite, why can't he stick to one of the four formulas offered in the Roman Missal -- including "Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by your life," which is what he seems to want to say?

BYRON

"We need to expose our youth to the maturation to be gained through service."

— Fr. Wm. Byron, SJ

(From 15)

"Of the so-called GI Bill of Rights. For every one month spent in uniform, we were entitled to two months of free higher education. We could enroll in private or public institutions and we did so in droves.

What Mr. Trump should consider now is a national service program that gives an educational benefit to any participant who wants it. The cost of higher education is far greater now than it was after World War II. So let Congress decide the amount of the benefit.

Perhaps a voucher worth $1,000, redeemable for tuition in any accredited college, could be given for every two months of service. And a limit of $10,000 might be placed on the amount any service provider would be given.

It could be argued that this would be a self-financing program. In function of the higher education, beneficiaries would receive higher-paying employment and therefore pay more in income taxes. Hence the program would, over time, be self-financing. That should certainly appeal to a successful entrepreneur who soon will be president."
God, as mentioned from Ur of the Chaldees (modern Iraq) and settled in the land of Canaan (modern Israel). Moses led the people of Israel out of Egypt to the Holy Land. Jesus, Mary, and Joseph were temporarily refugees in the foreign land of Egypt in order to escape the violence of King Herod.

Pope Francis points out that "the phenomenon of migration is related to salvation history, but rather a part of that history, One of God’s commandments is connected to it: ‘You shall not wrong a stranger or oppress him, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt’ (Ex 22:21); ‘Love the sojourner therefore: for you were sojourners in the land of Egypt’ (Dt 10:19);” (Mensaje para la Jornada Mundial del Emigrante y el Refugiado, 2017)

Jesus teaches us in the Gospel that, in welcoming the stranger, we are actually welcoming Christ himself, who will say in the Last Judgment, “I was a stranger and you welcomed me.” (Matthew 25:35) Sometimes Christ visits us in the disguise of the immigrant in need. In the end, we will respond to him in how we have responded to him.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church teaches that human beings have a natural human right to emigrate, and that immigrants ought “to respect with gratitude the material and spiritual heritage of the country that receives them, to obey its laws and to assist in carrying out civic duties.” (Catecismo de la Iglesia Católica)

In an address he gave at the Vatican on May 24, 2013, Pope Francis said, “The Church is Mother, and her motherly attention is expressed with special tenderness and closeness to those who are obliged to flee their own country and exist between rootlessness and integration. This tension destroys people. Christian compassion — this ‘suffering together’ — is expressed first of all in the commitment to obtain knowledge of the events that force people to leave their homeland, and where necessary, to give voice to those who cannot manage to make their cry of distress and oppression heard. They are all elements that dehumanize and make the Church Christian and the whole community to concrete attention.”

It is an unfortunate reality that, in the current age of global terrorism, all nations must exercise vigilance in protecting their sovereignty and security. Every country has the right and responsibility to maintain the integrity of its borders and the rule of law. Therefore, seeking a country, seeking refugee settlement, or apply for immigration status, should be carefully screened in order to protect the common good. Governments should use the best available intelligence and background checks. However, enforcement is not the only solution. Our Church is not in favor of an “enforcement only” immigration policy.

The Catholic bishops of the U.S. have long supported comprehensive and humane immigration reform. This is not an “open borders” policy, but rather one which would include components such as these:

- An opportunity for those who are living illegally in the U.S. to transition to legal status, requiring applicants to pass background checks, pay a fine, establish eligibility for resident status, and demonstrate good moral character;
- The centrality of family reunification, increasing the number of family visas available and reducing family reunification waiting times;
- A temporary worker program that is responsive to the needs of the economy, and
- Respect for human rights and due process for immigrants.

We support an enforcement of immigration laws that focuses first and foremost on dangerous and criminal activities, targeting primarily the drug and human traffickers, smugglers, and would-be terrorists. Enforcement should avoid racial or ethnic profiling. Unauthorized immigrants should not be detained for long periods of time without legal representation.

The economy of the United States depends upon a certain amount of immigrant labor, but in the current system the number of visas available for temporary labor is not sufficient to meet the country’s demand for foreign laborers. For example, when the state of Georgia recently enacted a tougher immigration law, it led to a shortage of needed laborers, and crops were left rotting in the fields. This triggered an estimated loss of about $140 million in agricultural losses in that state. It would make more sense for governments to grant enough work visas for the workers that are needed.

We believe that nations should work together to address the root causes that lead to migration. Those countries that are losing their citizens to emigration need to address the injustices and violence that cause their people to despair and leave, so that people may have a chance to prosper in their own homelands and support their families with dignity and peace.

We belong to the same Church no matter where we are from. Our Catholic identity is not based on a passport, but on our faith in Jesus Christ. Therefore, the Church in the United States will continue to seek to provide pastoral care and charitable assistance to new immigrants. We welcome immigrants to participate actively, share their personal gifts, and receive the sacraments regularly in our local parishes.

In three cities in the Diocese of San Angelo, Catholic agencies offer assistance in processing immigration paperwork:

- Nelly Diaz is the supervisor of Abilene Immigration Services and San Angelo Immigration Services at 325-212-6192.
- Ann Marie García is the contact person at Catholic Charities of Odessa at 432-332-1387.
- For more information about the position of the U.S. bishops regarding immigration, please go to www.usccb.org and search for “immigration.”

BOBISPO

(Para 3) Es justo decir que este país fue construido por inmigrantes. La Iglesia Católica ha dado la bienvenida a los inmigrantes a los Estados Unidos desde la fundación de la nación. Nuestra Iglesia ha sido vívida y provechosa en ayudar a los recién llegados a integrarse en la cultura americana. La Conferencia de Obispos Católicos de los Estados Unidos tiene la agencia privada más grande de reasentamiento de refugiados en los Estados Unidos. Nuestros servicios de migración y refugiados han contribuido al establecimiento de más de un millón de refugiados en los Estados Unidos desde 1975.

Somos una Iglesia Católica sobre los migrantes y refugiados. Jesus nos invita a nosotros a los cristianos a ser amigos de los refugiados, a buscar la paz y la justicia en el mundo, y a ser testigos de amor y paz. El educador de la Iglesia Católica enseña que los seres humanos tienen un derecho natural humano a emigrar, y que el inmigrante debe de “respetar con gratitud el patrimonio material y espiritual del país que lo acoge, a obedecer sus leyes y contribuir a sus cargas.” (CIC, 2241)

En un discurso que se dio en el Vaticano el 24 de mayo de 2013, dijo el Papa Francisco, “La Iglesia es madre, y su atención materna se manifiesta con particular ternura y cercanía a quien está obligado a escapar de su país y vive entre el desarraigo y la integración. Esta tensión destruye a las personas. La compasión Cristiana — este ‘sufriéndolo con’ — se expresa ante todo mediante el compromiso de conocer los hechos, de cuidar forzosamente la patria, y donde es necesario, haciendo intérprete de quien no logra hacer oír el grito de dolor y opresión. Todos estos elementos deshumanizan y deben impulsar a cada Cristiano y a toda la comunidad hacia una atención concreta.”

Esta es una realidad que, en la era actual de terrorismo global, todas las naciones deben ejercer una vigilancia en la protección de su soberanía y seguridad. Cada país tiene el derecho y la responsabilidad de mantener la integridad de sus fronteras y el estado de derecho. Los que entran en un país, buscan asentamiento de refugiados, o solicitan estado de inmigrante, deben ser examinados cuidadosamente con el fin de proteger el bien común. Los gobiernos deben utilizar las mejores sistemas de inteligencia y verificación de antecedentes disponibles. Sin embargo, la ejecución de leyes no es la única solución. Nuestra iglesia no está a favor de una política de inmigración que consiste de “ejecución de leyes solamente.”

Los obispos Católicos de los Estados Unidos han apoyado por mucho tiempo la ley que otorgue suficientes visas de trabajo para los trabajadores que no es suficiente para satisfacer la demanda del país para los trabajadores extranjeros. Por ejemplo, cuando el estado de Georgia promulgó recientemente una ley de inmigración más dura, esta dio lugar a una especie de trabajadores necesarios, y los cultivos se dejaron de cultivar en los campos. Esto provocó a una pérdida estimada de aproximadamente $140 millones en pérdidas en la agricultura en ese estado. Tendría más sentido que los gobiernos otorguen suficientes visas de trabajo para los trabajadores que se necesitan.

Cremos que las naciones deben trabajar juntos para hacer frente a las causas fundamentales que conducen a la migración. Los países que están perdiendo sus ciudadanos a la emigración necesitan que hagamos frente a las injusticias y la violencia que causan a su gente desesperación y el querer huir, para que las personas puedan tener la oportunidad de prosperar en su propia tierra y apoyar a sus familias con dignidad y paz.

Pertenece a cada una de estas Iglesias, no importa dónde se encuentren. Cada Iglesia, cada diócesis, es una unidad en el misterio de Cristo, el Cuerpo de Cristo. Cada Iglesia, cada diócesis, tiene su propia historia y su propia personalidad, pero en nuestra fe en Jesucristo. Por lo tanto, la Iglesia en los Estados Unidos seguirá trabajando para proporcionar cuidado pastoral y asistencia caritativa a los nuevos inmigrantes. Invitamos a los inmigrantes para que participen activamente, compartan sus dones personales, y reciban los sacramentos para que puedan encontrar un sentido de pertenencia en nuestro Cuerpo de Cristo.

En tres ciudades en la Diócesis de San Angelo, agencias Católicas ofrecen ayuda en el procesamiento de papeleo de migración.

- Nelly Díaz es la supervisora de Abilene Immigration Services y San Angelo Immigration Services.

Para obtener más información acerca de la posición del obispo de Estados Unidos con respecto a inmigración, por favor vaya a www.usccb.org y busque “immigration.”
through her welcome and defense of human life, those unborn and those abandoned and discarded."

In October, Pope Francis flew to Sweden to join Lutheran leaders beginning a yearlong commemoration of the 500th anniversary of the Protestant Reformation. The pope and Lutheran leaders signed a joint statement on the Christian faith and a common call of discipleship, formally pledged their communities would work together in peacemaking and social service.

In November, the pope closed the Year of Mercy, but before doing so, he created 17 new cardinals, including three from the United States: Cardinals Blase J. Cupich of Chicago; Kevin J. Farrell, the Holy See’s director of laity, family and life; and Joseph W. Tobin, recently appointed archbishop of Newark, New Jersey. Meeting Nov. 28 with people who had been involved in coordinating Year of Mercy events, Pope Francis said: "Something truly extraordinary happened and now it must be inserted into our daily lives so that mercy has a permanent commitment and a permanent lifestyle of believers."

Follow Wooden on Twitter: @Cindy_Wooden

Sinks in more and more. He points to his diocesan ordination last June, a 30-day Ignatian retreat in the summer of 2015 and a retreat last January as milestones in his formation and powerful moments that have helped shape him. He will also go on retreat at the Carmelite Hermitage near Christoval in January. He considers his biggest joy to be serving God’s people.

“Things kind of sink in at different times,” he admitted. “Leading up to the diocesan ordination was an extremely powerful experience. At this point, I guess I have embraced it, but it will continue to hit me at different times.”

Despite their differences, Tim Hayter’s and Josh Grays’s shared vocation will be what binds them together. Their points of origin in the diocese — small towns in the finest tradition of West Texas small towns — will continue to shape them as they serve others, and it will be what they do in God’s name that will provide the strongest bonds for their ordained friendship after seminary is completed and their priestly vows are celebrated.

“I knew when I met Tim … ‘There’s a cowboy right there,’” Gray said. “I grew up on a small, 30-acre farm with goats and sheep and they were a handful. Tim was in charge of the business operation of thousands of acres. I really got to know him better when we both lived with a family in Costa Rica, where we went to study Spanish one summer. We ate meals together, studied together occasionally and went on adventures together. That’s when we got to know each other. I really admire him and look up to him and I think he is going to be a great priest. I’m just happy to be his friend.”

Added Hayter: “We’re two people who come from different backgrounds on different sides of the diocese. He grew up very Catholic all the way through. We come from whole different worlds. And our friendship is proof that God can call people from all different backgrounds.”
MIDEAST

(From 11)
support the establishment of an eventual self-administrative province in the area under the central government in Baghdad. Meanwhile, about 5 million Syrians have fled the nearly six-year-old conflict, seeking refuge mainly in Europe. But the European Union tightened its external borders this year, overwhelmed by the arrival of more than a million refugees and migrants in 2015.

Pope Francis made a dramatic gesture in taking 12 Syrian refugees back to Rome with him from his visit to Lesbos, Greece, in April to see the conditions and perils experienced by thousands of refugees fleeing across the Mediterranean. The Vatican also assisted other Syrian refugees facing challenges in the region mid-June. While the Vatican is covering the living costs of about 21 refugees, they are being housed and resettled by the Community of Sant'Edigio, a lay Catholic community based in Rome.

The U.N. refugee agency, UNHCR, reported that the number of people fleeing war and persecution have soared four times over the past decade, to 24 people per minute or more than 65 million people forcibly displaced worldwide.

Franciscan Father Francesco Patton, the new custos of the Holy Land, who is provincial minister of the Franciscans in almost all of the Middle East, told CNS in November Christians in Aleppo, Syria, believe the world is unconcerned about their situation.

"They feel often abandoned by the other Christians," he told CNS. "They feel that many Christians are not interested in their suffering or what they are doing to remain Christians.

Many of them have lost everything. The only thing they haven’t lost is the faith."

Father Patton warned that Aleppo’s Christian population has sharply declined from 250,000-300,000 to 30,000-40,000 during the Syrian civil war.

The Franciscan friars and other Catholic religious orders and aid agencies have worked tirelessly to help the local communities with food, electricity, water, gas, diesel, restoring houses after bombardments, regardless of their religious background. Father Patton said the Franciscans also try to build the bridges necessary to one day have lasting peace in the region, and it starts with children.

Still despite these challenges, the custos said, "there are many, many signs of hope, but we need eyes to see the signs of hope. If we are blind, we cannot see signs of hope."

Contributing to this story were Doreen Abi Raad in Beirut, Rhina Guidos in Washington and Cindy Wooden in Vatican City.

SAINTS

(From 10)
new Christian converts. Rosemary Guiley writes in the “Encyclopedia of Saints” that Timothy next went to Thessalonica to report on the status of Christianity there and to support those believers who faced persecution from Rome. This report served as the basis for Paul’s First Letter to the Thessalonians believed to be the earliest writing in the New Testament, according to Guiley.

When Paul was in his second captivity in Rome, he wrote these words to Timothy: “I have fought the good fight I have finished the race; I have redeemed my pledge; I look forward to the prize that is waiting for me, the prize I have earned. The Lord, that judge whose award never goes amiss, will grant it to me when that day comes.” (II Tim. iv, 7-8)

It is believed that Timothy survived Paul by some 30 years, presiding as bishop of the church of Ephesus. It was in his old age that Timothy took strong exception to the lewd dancing in the streets for the pagan festival honoring Dionysius and was beaten and drowned to death in about the year AD 97.

In the fourth century, the relics of Timothy were transferred to Constantinople and placed in the church of the Holy Apostles. His feast day has been kept on January 26 since 1869 in the Roman calendar with Titus. It is also celebrated by the Church of England, the Episcopal Church in the US and the Evangelical, Lutheran Church in America.

KINNERBOCKERS

(From 7)
“Cardinal Virtues” in the fourth century. The Church takes the wisdom derived from the Greek philosophers, especially Plato and Aristotle, and opens it to the light of Christ. St. Augustine, who wrote from Plato, and St. Thomas Aquinas, who drew from Aristotle, both wrote on these four virtues.

Prudence is the first Cardinal Virtue, according to St. Thomas, because it is concerned with the intellect. The Catechism tells that “Prudence is the virtue that disposes practical reason to discern our true good in every circumstance and to choose the right means of achieving it.” (1806). In exercising the Christian virtue of prudence, we should consider what experience has taught us in similar situations, consult with persons of exemplary morality whose wisdom we trust, and put the situation in its proper context before drawing a conclusion regarding our actions.

To have the mind of Christ, we are to see our own actions through the eyes of Christ. According to H. R. Williamson, Christian prudence is almost identical with the correct judgment of our conscience. In the past and in present teachings, we see this virtue in the parables of the wise and foolish virgins (Matt 25:1-13) and the prudent and watchful servants (Matt 24:45ff), and in His admonition to “be wise as serpents and gentle as doves” (Matt 10:16).

Fortitude is the second Cardinal Virtue, as explained by St. Thomas, because it is concerned with the will. The Catechism teaches that “Justice is the moral virtue that consists in the constant and firm will to do our duty to God and neighbor. Justice toward God is calling to justice of our religion: Justice toward men disposes the will's mastery over instincts and moderates the attraction of pleasures and goods so as not to be surprised by deceit or trickery (and this is prudence)."

In this new year of 2017, let’s resolve to understand more deeply and to live more intentionally and prayerfully the Cardinal and Theological Virtues as we grow in holiness of heart and life—on our way to becoming a saint!

“Let us suppose the best mirror, the brightness of the Lord. Now, what is the brightness? Is it holiness? Yes. Is it virtues? Yes. Our lives have to reflect something of Jesus.” — Mother Angelica

RETREAT CENTER (cont’d), ORDINATIONS, NECROLOGY

CHRIST THE KING RETREAT CENTER

FEBRUARY 2017 (cont'd)
3-4 — First Central Presbyterian Church Women's Retreat
6 — Heart of Mercy Prayer Group
10-12 — Deacon Formation
13 — Heart of Mercy Prayer Group
16-18 — DOSA Mass/Meditation
17-19 — Engaged Encounter
19 — Natural Family Planning
20-21 — DOSA Priest Spring Conference
23-26 — Small Town ACTS Men’s Retreat
26 — CKRC Confirmation Retreat
27 — Heart of Mercy Prayer Group

MARCH 2017
2-5 — Men’s Walk to Emmaus
6-8 — Heart of Mercy Prayer Group
10-12 — Deacon Formation
13 — Heart of Mercy Prayer Group
20-22 — Fresh Start Conference
24-26 — 1st United Methodist Church - Midland
26-28 — CKRC Confirmation Retreat
28-29 — San Angelo Association of Realtors
30 — DOSA Staff Mass/Lunch
31-Apr 2 — Engaged Encounter

NECROLOGY

FEBRUARY

5-Deacon David King (2006)
20-Deacon Mark Reeh (2005)
21-Rev. Tom Kelley (2005)
22-Rev. Francisco Lopez (1994)

PRIEST ORDINATION DATES

JANUARY 2017
3-5 — Bala Anthony Godwin (2015)
10-12 — Emilio Sosa (2006)
28-30 — Knick Knickerbocker (2009)
SILENCE

(From 2)

The movie studies the oft-asked question of why God often remains silent amid suffering, long one of the most impenetrable walls that keep people from exploring faith or becoming faithful.

“I do believe that ultimately we’ll have to deal with that question,” Brown said. “If there is that God that we talk about from Scripture, how do you explain the existence of evil and pain? We see God as creator and more easily as a benevolent, good God that we believe from Scripture, yet we are trying to come to grips with that personal barrier of faith. Even those who accept the existence of God ask the questions does he love me or does he care. This movie brings that into pretty vivid focus.”

The screening of the movie at the Vatican that Brown enjoyed was also attended by Scorsese. It is not known if Pope Francis, a Jesuit, has viewed the film.

Brown, who is also a financial supporter of The Way Retreat Center, currently being constructed in Midland, is one of the film’s two top funders, along with Gaston Pavlovich, a film producer from Mexico.

While the film most certainly has a Catholic backdrop, it is not specifically or solely for a Catholic audience, Brown said. The time frame of the book and movie, in fact, is only about 100 years after the Protestant Reformation.

Although the film is based on a novel, Endo’s book is historical fiction. Several of the characters are composites of real Jesuit priests who encountered similar tortures in Japan in the 1600s while attempting to spread the gospel.

“One of my hopes would be that the folks in the Christian community will be prepared to meaningfully engage in a conversation around the whole idea of how can you reconcile the existence of a good and powerful God with the existence of evil and pain. Why do bad things happen to good people? Why does God not step in to stop it?”

“Having a theologically sound position, where can the Christian community best serve — and indeed what can we do for ourselves — to answer those questions and have those discussions knowing there isn’t going to be an easy answer that will satisfy everyone?”

Brown said not everyone has the sense around the world were closed, God adjust to good people? Why does God not step in

“Each time we bend down to the needs of our brothers and sisters,” he said, “we give Jesus something to eat and drink; we clothe, we help and we visit the Son of God.”

“Preaching God’s mercy has been a central focus of Pope Francis’ ministry since his election in March 2013, and the closing of the Holy Door in St. Peter’s Basilica Nov. 20 will not end that focus.”

“Celebrating a jubilee Mass Nov. 13 with the homeless and other people in precarious situations, Pope Francis prayed that as the Holy Doors in some 10,000 cathedrals, shrines and churches around the world were closed, God would open people’s eyes and hearts to the needs of others.

“The Year of Mercy was an occasion to help people recognize how merciful God has been to them and, then, in effect, he commissioned all Catholics to be “missionaries of mercy.”

Follow Wooden on Twitter: @Cindy_Wooden.
**RACISM**

*(From 11)*

frighten every one of us." Racism has "clearly not been cured in our nation," he said.

He warned that "whenever one can play on the fears of some people and depend upon the ignorance of others, racism flourishes. As a political strategy, such taunting may win votes, but it destroys national unity and our future."

Economic inequality, which plagues different communities, he said, has been used to pit one group of people against another and "when one group is made to feel that its economic situation results from the codding of another, the reaction is often a racist response," Archbishop Gregory said.

That's when a country starts seeing attitudes such as "immigrants are taking our jobs" and "public aid only rewards laziness," and "poor and struggling white people have been forgotten," he said.

He added that "conditions necessary for the transmission of racism were thoroughly mixed with such attitudes during the recent election process. Left untreated, the prognosis is bleak."

Sister Patricia Chappell, executive director of Pax Christi USA, said this election "showed the racial but also economic polarization that our country is in the midst of" and which had become apparent earlier in the year.

Sister Chappell, who is black and is a Sister of Notre Dame de Namur, said she has never seen the level of violence and hatred against so many groups -- Muslims, immigrants and others -- as she saw during the election and which has caused much concern.

Even in times of strife, those like Sister Chappell and Duffner say, some positive things have come about.

Duffner said solidarity between groups that have been targets of hate, such as between Jews and Muslims, or the black community and those who have been victims of Islamophobia, is visible. She noted that members of the Catholic Church need to do more to reach out to and humanize groups that were demonized during the election.

She cited figures from a 2016 Brookings Institute and Public Religion Research Institute poll that showed the difference between white Catholics and Catholics of other ethnic and racial backgrounds. It showed that, even as the church becomes more diverse, certain biases persist and are based on a person's racial background.

The summer 2016 Brookings/PRRI poll showed that more than half of white Catholics said discrimination against whites is "as critical as discrimination against non-whites." More than half supported a "Muslim ban" and said immigrants were a burden on the country because "they take jobs, housing and health care."

The figures were in contrast to Latino Catholics, the second largest ethnic group in the church. They said, by 62 percent, that "discrimination against whites is not as big a problem as discrimination against blacks and other minorities in the U.S." Latino Catholics overwhelmingly rejected a "Muslim ban" on immigrants, with only 25 percent in favor. They also overwhelmingly (74 percent) said immigrants strengthen, not burden, the country.

"As Catholics, we need to be aware of racial and religious biases," Duffner said.

For its part, Pax Christi USA has renewed its commitment to work for racial justice and equality, Sister Chappell said, will continue educating others and speak out against injustice. She added that to say that in order to "make America great again," one must ban Muslims from the U.S. and attack immigrants and minorities, "is not the way to develop relationships" that can help the country or humanity, Sister Chappell said.

The Trump campaign, she said, has to acknowledge comments made that played into the fears of others and that helped propel some in the white supremacist movement. During his campaign, he called for a pause on admitting Muslim refugees into this country until, as he described it, a system was in place for "extreme vetting" of them. He talked about deporting immigrants who are in this country without legal permission.

President-elect Donald Trump has on several occasions said he is not racist and his transition team released a statement Nov. 29 saying he denounces racism in all its forms.

"To think otherwise is a complete misrepresentation of the movement that united Americans from all backgrounds," the statement said. "For anyone to conclude these senseless acts are the result of the election is disappointing and gives an excuse for their appalling behavior."

But just to look at his Cabinet and administration picks, and one doesn't get the sense that Trump or his picks are allies of people who are marginalized and oppressed, Sister Chappell said.

"I don't see signs of him reaching out to those communities that traditionally continue to suffer from oppression," she said. "I hope he will. I am hopeful ... I want to hold him at his word and so for me right now, we have to wait and see."
2017

(Para 14)

Invite a Dios y al Espíritu Santo a guiarlo para encontrar lo que más importe en este momento de su vida. La palabra (o frase corta) podría ser la familia, respirar, orar, perseverancia, servicio a los demás — usted capta la idea. Pense en este paso puede ser la estrella del norte para dirigir y definir servicio a los demás — usted capta la idea. Pense en este paso puede ser la estrella del norte para dirigir y definir su camino. Un problema más seré específico, más alcanzable, más relevante para la temporada de la vida en que se encuentra (o realidad a la que se enfrenta).Está bien tener resoluciones más grandes, como acercarse a Dios, practicar la gratitud diaria, estar presente con los demás, vivir más sinceramente y recuperar la salud. Pero seccionarlas en pequeñas metas le empuja a tener un esquema de pasos concretos para realmente lograrlas.

Por ejemplo, si uno de sus objetivos es hacer una diferencia en su comunidad, puede tener pasos más pequeños que comprometerse a ser voluntario semanal en un lugar específico. Usted logrará sus propósitos a través de cambios pequeños y manejables a lo largo del tiempo.

Por último, siga intenando (perseverando) y resista la tentación de abandonar sus propósitos, si, por alguna razón, usted comienza a olvidarse de poner en práctica sus resoluciones. El año nuevo nos da una oportunidad para nuevos comienzos y oportunidades — pida a Dios que le de orientación y le de la fuerza para perseverar.

CALDAROLA

(From 15)

platforms for these fake stories. But the thing is, folks, it’s up to us to be better-informed, better-read citizens. First of all, if you are one of the many Americans who get most of your news on Facebook, please stop right now. If you must find your news online, always go to established news sources, like The New York Times, The Atlantic or our own Catholic News Service and a host of others.

If, while perusing Facebook or Twitter, you see a story that sounds compelling — and these fake sites are great at producing eyebrow-raising headlines — don’t click until you evaluate the source. Some fake sites try to sound suspiciously like real sites you trust. Tread carefully.

Leonard Pitts Jr., a syndicated columnist for the Miami Herald, has a great antidote for fake news. He made a pitch recently for a real newspaper that isn’t perfect, but isn’t fraudulent.

"So what, you ask, is this miracle medium?" Pitts asks in a Nov. 27 column. "It’s called a ‘newspaper.’

Real journalists have gone to journalism school. They know the First Amendment and journalistic ethics. They enhance our democracy rather than threaten it. Although imperfect, they are not "the lame stream media" as they’ve been foolishly tarred.

And they are not inventing lies to make money off gullible citizens.

WALL

(From 5)

Harbor.

Though Zentner is now a member of Holy Angels in San Angelo, he said visiting St. Ambrose is “like coming home.”

“I’m related to a lot of people here,” he said. While familial ties among the parish members are a hallmark of the church, Alfreda said she has watched its membership burgeon the past 75 years.

Another way to prepare for the next year is to organize your S.M.A.R.T. goals. These need to be specific, measurable, attainable, relevant to the season of life you are in, and timely. Without him even realizing it, these factors were part of the goal that the man from the commercial set to accomplish.

It is OK to have bigger resolutions such as to get closer to God, practice gratitude, be present to others, live more simply or get healthy. But breaking them into little goals pushes you to have a timeline of concrete steps to truly accomplish them.

For example, if one of your goals is to make a difference in your community, you can have smaller steps like committing to volunteer weekly at a specific place. You succeed through small manageable changes over time.

Lastly, keep trying and resist the urge to quit if, for some reason, you start slipping in your resolutions. The new year gives us a chance for new beginning and opportunities — ask God for guidance and strength to persevere.

MARTINEZ

(From 6)

MARTINEZ

In the example, for instance, it can express itself as concern for people, especially the neediest: the sick, the handicapped, the abandoned, orphans, the elderly, children, young people, the imprisoned and, in general, people on the edges of society. In this way a consecrated woman finds her Spouse, different and the same in each and every person, according to the words: “As you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me” (Mt 25:40).

MARTINEZ

spouse always found her Spouse, different and foremost a mother. A mother is the per-

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"S.M.A.R.T goals. Estas metas deben ser específicas, medibles, alcanzables, relevantes para la temporada de vida en la que se encuentra (o realista), y dentro de un marco del tiempo. Sin que se diera cuenta, estos factores eran parte de la meta que el anciano del comercio se propuso alcanzar. Estás bien tener resoluciones más grandes, como acercarse a Dios, practicar la gratitud diaria, estar presente con los demás, vivir más sinceramente y recuperar la salud. Pero seccionarlas en pequeñas metas le empuja a tener un esquema de pasos concretos para realmente lograrlas.

Por ejemplo, si uno de sus objetivos es hacer una diferencia en su comunidad, puede tener pasos más pequeños que comprometerse a ser voluntario semanal en un lugar específico. Usted logrará sus propósitos a través de cambios pequeños y manejables a lo largo del tiempo.

Por último, siga intenando (perseverando) y resista la tentación de abandonar sus propósitos, si, por alguna razón, usted comienza a olvidarse de poner en práctica sus resoluciones. El año nuevo nos da una oportunidad para nuevos comienzos y oportunidades — pida a Dios que le de orientación y le de la fuerza para perseverar.

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Youth from Arkansas, Oklahoma and Texas gathered in Beaumont, November 18-20, 2016, to celebrate their faith and experience the larger Church. The Diocese of San Angelo was represented by 87 participants from St. Mary-Brownwood, Holy Family-Abilene, St. Vincent-Abilene, St. Peter-Mertzon, St. Margaret of Cortona-Big Lake, San Miguel Arcangel-Midland and St. Ann-Midland.

The theme of the conference was “Take Courage” (Matt. 8:23-27), and keynote speakers included Paul George, Fr. Agostino Torres, and David Calavitta. Musical inspiration was provided by the Josh Blakesley Band. Workshops were offered for both adults and youth. Each day focused on a different aspect of courage: “Courage to Rely on God,” “Courage to Say Yes,” and “Courage to Go Forth.”

A vocation panel including Bishop Emeritus Michael Pfeifer, OM, was presented on Saturday and four people shared their story of facing difficult situations that required courage (two youth and two adults). Bishop Curtis Guillory, SVD and the Diocese of Beaumont were wonderful hosts.

Photos are selected scenes from the conference.

— Submitted by Sister Adelina Garcia, OSF
Office of Evangelization & Catechesis, Diocese of San Angelo