September 27, 2017, Holy Family Church, Abilene
Accompaniment of young adults essential to new evangelization

By Sister Adelina Garcia, OSF
Associate Director
Evangelization and Catechesis
Diocese of San Angelo

I serve as Vocation Director for my congregation, the School Sisters of St. Francis of the USA Province based in Pittsburgh, PA. When asked to take part in the Convocation for Catholic Leaders I felt it was a wonderful opportunity to network with other leaders, hear keynote speakers, and look for opportunities to collaborate.

Early on the group from the San Angelo Diocese decided to spread ourselves out for the breakout sessions to cover as much territory as possible in order to learn from others. I chose vocations as one of my breakouts for several reasons: my role in my congregation, my passion for young people in the Church, and empowering them to be leaders. Some obvious strengths of the panel were 1) their love of the priesthood and/or religious life 2) their dedication to their role in the Church 3) their commitment to their lifestyle 4) their joy of life. These were people who felt fulfilled, happy, and faith-filled. It was quite obvious by their appearance, their sharing, and their openness to others.

As we shared in small groups our experiences in vocation ministry and then with the large group were the following

(Please See VOCATIONS/22)

Share the Journey
#sharejourney

Arranging the Rosary for the group from San Angelo

By Jimmy Patterson
West Texas Angelus

ABILENE — An overflow crowd of refugees, immigrants, and migrants Wednesday, September 27, the official opening celebration of the “Share the Journey” effort in the Diocese of San Angelo.

As designated by Pope Francis, “Share the Journey” is a global campaign to support immigrants and refugees who often leave homelands because of persecution, poverty, persecution and violence.

Bishop Michael Sis emotionally told the congregation that many of the estimated 66 million displaced migrants and refugees — some of whom were in the Abilene church for the celebration — left their homelands because of persecution, just as the Holy Family did in biblical times.

“When you came here, many of you did so to escape violence of your homeland. You were running for your lives. And you were received with love here in this peaceful town of Abilene,” he said.

The service included the praying of an International Rosary, a unique and rare presentation of the prayer that recalled images of the original Pentecost, where people gathered together speaking different languages, yet hearing and understanding because of the power of the Holy Spirit. Parishioners prayed the Rosary in 10 different languages: Igbo, Tagalog, Kinyarwanda, Telugu, Swahili, Dutch, Kirundi, Spanish, French and Latin.

Congregants followed by responding — Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death — in English.

“I have been waiting for this day for a long, long time,” the bishop said enthusiastically.

Abilene is a satellite city of the International Rescue Committee, a nonprofit agency that resettles refugees, many of whom are from African nations. According to Gail Wheeler, Holy Family Business Manager, 16 nations are represented on the parish’s registration rolls.

Share the Journey organizers encourage Catholics the world over to participate in the effort by:

- Joining the #sharejourney campaign on social media.
- Meeting immigrants and refugees.
- Saying a daily prayer for all people and especially children who have fled their homes in search of peace and safety.
- Supporting the work of local and international Catholic agencies such as Catholic Charities and Catholic Relief Services.

Cover photo: Joseph Borchert, who prayed the Rosary in Dutch, shares a hymnal with Jane Nyanzungu, a native of the Congo, who prayed in Swahili.

Feast, celebration of Holy Family’s diversity follows praying of International Rosary

By Loretta Fulton

ABILENE — Swirls of color, aromas, and sounds filled the parish hall of Holy Family Catholic Church as guests poured in to enjoy an international dinner as part of the launching of Share the Journey, a two-year global campaign initiated by Pope Francis. The campaign to shine a light on the plight of refugees and migrants worldwide was launched Sept. 27 at various times around the world.

Bishop Sis had just concluded a moving service in the nave, accentuated by his stirring comments and the Holy Rosary prayed in 10 languages.

At the conclusion of the service, before everyone headed toward the mouth-watering aromas coming from the parish hall, the bishop gave special thanks to the reception committee at Holy Family, the St. Vincent de Paul Society and the international community living in Abilene for preparing the food and decorating the parish hall.

(Please See BANQUET/24)
The Process of Canonization

Compiled by Msgr. Robert J. Sarne. Congregation for the Causes of Saints, Rome, Italy

All souls in heaven are Saints. Formerly, the Catholic Church declared “Saints” as people who were outstanding in holiness either because they died as witnesses for the Faith (Martyrs) or because they lived a life of heroic virtue (Confessors). The exact number of canonized Saints is unknown because not all recognized as Saints have been officially canonized. For the first half of the Catholic Church’s history, Saints were canonized in various ways. Today, the process of canonization is very complex and thorough. A record of 50 Notre-Dames have been canonized in the past 30 years, and about 2,000 candidates are being evaluated today.

SERVANT OF GOD

The official process of canonization, called an “Agenda,” does not begin until five years after the death of the candidate. This period of time permits the Church to verify whether the candidate enjoys a true and widespread reputation of holiness and intercessionary prayer. When a Cause is officially begun the candidate receives the title “Servant of God.”

The first stage of the process begins with the official opening of the cause by the bishop of the diocese where the Servant of God died, and the appointment of a postulator, to assist in its promotion. The bishop consults various Officials for a Tribunal, to gather all the evidence for and against the Cause. Two theologians examine the Servant of God’s writings to make sure that there is nothing in them contrary to the faith and moral teaching of the Church. Afterwards they proceed to taking the testimony of witnesses who knew well the candidate.

VENERABLE SERVANT OF GOD

The second step toward canonization starts when all the evidence is studied by the Congregation for Causes of Saints in Rome. If the evidence reveals true holiness exercised by the Servant of God, the Cardinal Prefect of the Congregation informs the pope that the Servant of God either was a true Martyr or has lived a life of extraordinary and heroic virtue. The pope then orders the Congregation to issue the decree either of Martyrdom or

From The Bishop’s Desk

Fr. Stanley Rother: The first American Martyr

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

He grew up in a quiet little German farming community in Oklahoma. He died a brutally violent death in a peasant village in Guatemala. And now he is considered a martyr of the Catholic Church.

Father Stanley Francis Rother was born in 1935 in a farming home near Okarche, Oklahoma. He played sports, served as an altar boy, and was a member of the Future Farmers of America. Everybody expected that he would become a farmer after finishing school, but God had other plans.

After serving for five years in parishes in Oklahoma, Fr. Stanley volunteered to live in the parish of Santiago de Atitlán, Guatemala. For 13 years, he joyfully served his parishioners with much love and pastoral care. Following the example of Jesus, the Good Shepherd, he poured out all his heart in service of his flock.

He was a simple man who worked hard and spoke little. He shared with his parishioners the values he learned while growing up in Oklahoma — family, commitment, generosity, and perseverance. His life passion was to serve his brothers in Christ. He loved life, because he knew that life is a gift from God. He never sought honors or fame. He was just a good priest who was faithful to the Gospel.

Most of his parishioners at the parish of Santiago de Atitlán were members of the Tz’utujil Mayan people. They called him “Padre Francisco” in Spanish and “Padre Apá’s” in Tz’utujil. He learned both languages so well that he even helped to translate the New Testament into Tz’utujil.

He pursued many projects that empowered his people to improve their situation in life. He taught them agricultural practices that he had learned on the farm in Oklahoma. He brought them tractors and other farm implements that were no longer needed by the farmers back home. He introduced new crops such as wheat and soybeans. He helped them to create an agricultural cooperative, a radio station, a clinic, and a school. He provided training for local catechists.

During Father Stanley’s 13 years in Guatemala, a civil war broke out in the country, between the forces of the government and the guerrillas. Sometimes the Catholics got caught up in the middle of these social conflicts. Through the course of the civil war, thousands of Catholics lost their lives.

In the area around Santiago de Atitlán, some of the catechists of the parish began to disappear mysteriously. The military had recently come to town, and they told

(See SAINT/22)

(See BISHOP/21)

Padre Stanley Rother: El primer Mártir Americano

Obispo Michael J. Sis
Diocesis de San Angelo

Se crió en una pequeña comunidad tranquila agrícola alemán en Oklahoma. Murió una muerte brutalmente violenta en un pueblo campesino en Guatemala. Durante tres años, él fue un servidor del pueblo en el servicio de su rebaño.

Era un hombre sencillo que trabajaba duro y hablaba poco. Compartía con sus feligreses los valores que aprendió mientras crecía en Oklahoma: la amistad, la generosidad, y la perseverancia. Su pasión en la vida era ser de servicio a sus hermanos en Cristo. Amaba la vida, porque sabía que la vida es un regalo de Dios. El nunca buscó honores o fama. No era más que un buen sacerdote que era fiel al Evangelio.

La mayoría de sus feligreses en la parroquia de Santiago de Atitlán eran miembros del pueblo Maya Tz’utujil. La mayoría de sus feligreses en la parroquia de Santiago de Atitlán eran miembros del pueblo Maya Tz’utujil. Llevó a cabo la misión de los católicos que quedaban aislados en el Tz’utujil. Aprendió los dos idiomas tan bien que incluso aprendió a traducir el Nuevo Testamento a Tz’utujil.

Persiguieron muchos proyectos que empoderaban a su pueblo para mejorar su situación en la vida. Les enseñó las prácticas agrícolas que había aprendido en la granja en Oklahoma. Les trajo trastos usados y diferentes implementos agrícolas que ya no se necesitaban por los agricultores en Guatemala. Introdujo nuevos cultivos como el trigo y la soja. Les ayudó a crear una cooperativa agrícola, una estación de radio, una clínica, y una escuela. Él proveyó entrenamiento a los catequistas locales.

Durante los trece años del Padre Stanley en Guatemala, una guerra civil estalló en el país, entre las fuerzas del gobierno y la guerrilla. A veces los Católicos se quedaban atrapados en medio de estos conflictos sociales. En el curso de la guerra civil, miles de Católicos perdieron su vida.

Los predicadores de Santiago de Atitlán, algunos de los catequistas de la parroquia comenzaron a desaparecerse misteriosamente.

Los militares habían llegado recientemente a la ciudad, y les dijeron a los habitantes, en una reunión de la ciudad, que estaban allí para protegerlos. El Padre Stanley estaba en esa reunión con su pueblo, y él habló. Les preguntó a los soldados, “Si ustedes están aquí para protegernos, entonces ¿por qué es que mucha de nuestra gente se ha ido desapareciendo desde que llegaron?”

Luego de algunos años de muerte comenzaron a circular en la zona. Con el fin de encontrar un refugio seguro, muchas personas llegaron a dormir en la iglesia. Varios sacristanes y catequistas fueron secuestrados y asesinados. Con el tiempo, el nombre del Padre Stanley apareció en las listas de amenaza de muerte. Esto le presentó un duro dilema — dejar el
Odessa Fatima Procession
ODDESSA — St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish in Odessa will pray a Rosary and host a procession in honor of Our Lady of Fatima on Thursday, Oct. 12. The multi-lingual service will begin at 7 p.m. in the parish’s Chapel of the Risen Lord. The prayer service will commemorate the 100th anniversary of Mary’s last apparition at Fatima and the miracle of the sun which occurred on Oct. 13, 1917. The celebration will replicate many of the elements included in the evening procession scheduled daily at the Shrine of Our Lady of Fatima in Portugal. These include the recitation of the Rosary in multiple languages and the procession hymn, “In Fatima’s Cove.” All are welcome.

Victims Assistance Information
If you or someone you know has been sexually abused by anyone who serves the Church, and you need a place to talk with someone about your feelings of betrayal or hurt by the Church due to abuse, exploitation, or harassment, we are here to help you. To report sexual misconduct call Lori Hines, Victim Assistance Coordinator, 325-374-7609, or write Diocese of San Angelo Victim Assistance Ministry, PO Box 1829, San Angelo, TX 76902. If the sexual abuse occurred outside this diocese, the Victim Assistance Coordinator will assist in bringing the concern to the appropriate authorities.

Diocese seeks West Texas Angelus editor
Jimmy Patterson, longtime editor, communications director and media relations director for the Diocese of San Angelo, will be leaving his position at the end of 2017 to pursue other opportunities. Jimmy, who has served the diocese since 2005, and his wife Karen, a contract photographer for the Angelus, will travel the country for several months before relocating to southeast Texas to be near family.

As a result, the diocese is searching for a newspaper editor knowledgeable in Quark Express (or similar publishing program) and Adobe Distiller who possesses skills in newspaper design, word and line editing, editorial content value and story placement, headline writing, and journalistic skills including fact checking, reporting, interviewing, and photographing on deadline. The ideal candidate will possess a strong knowledge of the Catholic faith, reside within the Diocese of San Angelo area, and be available for travel throughout the diocese for event coverage. This is a part-time position.

The ideal candidate will have a bachelor’s degree in journalism and newspaper experience. For further information, send Curriculum Vitae, resume, or queries to Mike Wyse, Chancellor, at the Diocesan Pastoral Center (mwyse@sanangelodioce.se.org) in San Angelo.

FALL FESTIVALS

October

St. Ambrose Fall Festival
78th St. Ambrose Church, Wall Saturday, October 15, 2017
Turkey, dressing, and sausage
Adults - $10, Children - $5, Plates to Go - $10, Sausage $5/lb.
dinner served 11:00 am-2:00 pm
Children's games 10:30am-4:00pm
Bingo 12:00pm-4:00pm
Live Auction 1:15 pm
St. Ann’s Church-Sonora
Sunday, October 15
11 a.m.-6 p.m
Silent Auction, raffle, games, Queen contest, food, entertainment.
Sacred Heart Church
October 21-22
Please come and enjoy food, games and a silent auction at Sacred Heart Church’s fall festival!
St. Stephen’s Catholic Church
Saturday October 28, 6-9 p.m.
Fall Festival and Silent Auction
4601 Neely Avenue
St. Stephen’s Catholic Church Women's Organization in Midland is hosting its Annual Fall Festival and Silent Auction in the Parish Hall at 4601 Neely Ave., Saturday October 28, 2017 from 6-9 p.m. Your admission into the festival is one bag of candy per family. There will be a cake walk, baked goods store, face painting, children's games, balconies, music, silent auction items, food and a lot of fun. Don't forget to wear your costume for the costume contest — let your imagination run wild and be creative. For more information, please call Jenina True at 983-286-6432.

November

St. Joseph's Fall Festival
Sunday, November 12
Rowena
95th Annual Fall Festival
Celebrating 110 Years of the Light of Faith
10:30 — Flag raising, balloon release to honor veterans.
11:00 — Turkey, dressing and all trimmings featuring Rowena Style German Sausage.
Games for all ages, country store and a live auction throughout the afternoon. Handicap parking and shuttle from parking lot to the hall. Sausage sandwich supper begins at 4:30 p.m. For more information contact: Church office at 325-442-3521 or 325-365-6447

BISHOP’S SCHEDULE

October

1 — CHRISTOVAL, Mt. Carmel Hermitage, First Vows of Brother Augustine Stegena at 10:00 a.m.
2 — BALLINGER, St. Mary Star of the Sea, Blessing of Chapel Mass at 6:00 p.m.
3 — SAN ANGELO, Diocesan Pastoral Center, Finance Council meeting at 11:00 a.m.
4 — SAN ANGELO, McNease Convention Center, Pregnancy Help Center dinner at 6:00 p.m.
6-7 — SAN ANGELO, Christ the King Retreat Center, Annual Diocesan Convocation
7 — SWEETWATER, Holy Spirit, Confirmation Mass at 5:00 p.m.
8 — STANTON, St. Joseph, Installation of Pastor, Rev. Patrick Aplanonbong at 8:00 a.m.
10-11 — SAN ANGELO, Christ the King Retreat Center, Priests’ Convocation
11 — SAN ANGELO, Diocesan Pastoral Center, Priest Personnel Board meeting at 2 p.m.
12-14 — CONCEPTION, MO, Seminary Board of Regents meeting
14 — ST. PATRICK, MO, Mass at Shrine of St. Patrick at 5:30 p.m.
17 — ODESSA, Holy Redeemer, Anniversary Mass of Perpetual Eucharistic Adoration at 6:30 p.m.
18 — SAN ANGELO, Angelo State University, Rams for Life meeting at 6:30 p.m.
19 — SAN ANGELO, Diocesan Pastoral Center, Vocation Team meeting at 2:00 p.m.
21 — SAN ANGELO, McNease Convention Center, Diocesan Conference Day
22 — OKLAHOMA CITY, OK, Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre, annual meeting
24 — BIG SPRING, Holy Trinity, Confirmation Mass at 6:30 p.m.
25 — ABILENE, Sacred Heart, Confirmation Mass at 6:30 p.m.
26 — SAN ANGELO, Diocesan Pastoral Center, Liturgy Commission meeting at 10 a.m.
31 — SAN ANGELO, Sacred Heart Cathedral, Vigil Mass of All Saints’ Day at 6:00 p.m.

November

1 — BIG SPRING, Cedar Hill Unit, Mass, 8a.m.
1 — BIG SPRING, Air Park Unit, Mass at 1:00 p.m.
2 — SAN ANGELO, Calvary Cemetery, All Souls’ Day Mass at 9:00 a.m.
2 — MIDLAND, Midland Beer Garden, 7112 W. Highway 80, Theology on Tap at 6:30 p.m.
3 — SAN ANGELO, Diocesan Pastoral Center, Deacon Meeting at 11:00 a.m.
4 — MIDLAND, St. Ann Catholic School, Diocesan Schools Commission meeting, 9 a.m.
4 — ODESSA, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, Spanish Engaged Encounter at 2:30 p.m.
4 — ODESSA, Holy Redeemer event, Mass at 8:30 p.m.
5 — ODESSA, St. Mary’s Central Catholic School, Junior High Odd Walk event, Mass at 3:00 p.m.

CHRIST THE KING RETREAT CENTER

October 27-29
10-11 DOSA Priest Fall Convocation
13-15 Deacon Formation
15 2022 Deacon Formation Pre-Apiscrapy (One Day)
16 Heart of Mercy Prayer Group
19 Staff Mass & Lunch
19-22 Lubbock Deacons’ Annual Retreat 2
23 Heart of Mercy Prayer Group
24 Deacon Quarterly
26-29 Women’s Walk to Emmaus
30 Heart of Mercy Prayer Group

November

1-CKRC Offices Closed for All Saints Day
1-Shannon Volunteers
3-5-DOSA Deacons’ Annual Retreat 2
6-8-Catholic Retreat Centers of Texas
10-12 Deacon Formation
12-2022 Deacon Formation Pre-Apiscrapy (One Day)
13-Heart of Mercy Prayer Group
17-18-First Methodist, Midland
20-Heart of Mercy Prayer Group
23-26 CKRC Closed for Thanksgiving Holiday
27-Heart of Mercy Prayer Group

NECROLOGY PRIESTS

October

5-Rev. William Meagher, OMI (1970)
7-Rev. Francis Schouteten, OMI (2002)

November


NECROLOGY DEACONS

October

4-Deacon Thomas Lambdin (1982)
8-Deacon Simon Franco (2008)
12-Deacon Peter Ballaro Jr. (1989)
21-Deacon Richard Blake

November

4-Deacon Thomas Lambdin (1982)
21-Deacon Richard Blake (1989)
8-Deacon Simon Franco (2008)
Update: Due to illness, the Diocesan Conference Day keynote speaker will no longer be Jennifer Allmon. Ms. Allmon has been replaced by Mr. Rachana Chhin. Mr. Chhin is a 25-year-old Catholic convert (via Buddhism and Evangelical Christianity) from Houston. He received his Bachelors degree from Baylor University where he studied International Affairs and the Great Books. He is now pursuing a Juris Doctorate and Masters in Catholic Studies at the University of St. Thomas School of Law in Minnesota.
CHRISTOVAL — Ronald and Wendy Stegenga had never stepped foot in West Texas when they felt the sudden inclination to pack up their lives in Minnesota and move here. It was a decision, Mr. Stegenga said, that would completely transform his family’s lives and the trajectory of their faith.

Evidence of that transformation was the poignant Mass of first vows for Stegenga’s son, Brother Augustine Mary, on Oct. 1, as a Carmelite hermit at Mount Carmel Hermitage in Christoval. The ceremony at the hermitage was attended by members of the community, as well as Brother Augustine’s family, who followed their parents to Texas from Minnesota.

“Wendy and I moved to Texas, and we asked all four of our kids if they’d like to live here,” said Stegenga, of Abilene. “They were never Mom and Dad followers; they lived their own lives, (but) one by one they said yes and came down. All of them have had an experience with our Lord in some manner, form or fashion” since moving to West Texas.

That includes Mr. Stegenga himself, who is a member of the class in formation to be ordained as permanent deacons in June 2018.

“It’s been an amazing journey,” he said of his family’s growth in faith since moving to Texas.

Stegenga was surprised that his son was called to become a monk, he said, but added that the family is blessed to have someone called in that capacity.

“It’s quite humbling,” he said. “Our son was never someone you’d call a religious person. Until you have that encounter with God and he takes over from there.”

In fact, Brother Augustine, 29, lived a very normal life, graduating college with a degree in law enforcement and working as a police officer in Minnesota.

But Brother Augustine “hungered,” his father said. “And when he came to Texas, he found out what he hungered for.”

“I thought of getting into law enforcement here, and there was something that stopped me,” Brother Augustine said.

After seeing the Carmelite monks and Father Fabian Rosette at Mass, Brother Augustine discussed his vocation with his spiritual director, who suggested he pray about it, he said.

“I was reading St. Faustina’s diary (“Divine Mercy in My Soul”), and the only time she mentioned the Carmelites was when I was praying to God” about becoming a Carmelite, Brother Augustine said.

He took it as a sign, adding, “I visited (the hermitage) and decided in my heart this was what I wanted to do.”

Fast-forward three years, and Brother Augustine’s life of prayer and solitude is much different than fast-paced city life as a peace officer, he said.

It’s “less busy, less dangerous,” Brother Augustine said. “It’s more time spent praying to the Lord. It’s not time spent working or worrying about things you have to worry about in the world.”

Asked whether he’s more content and peaceful with this new life, Brother Augustine said emphatically, and he’ll tell you, “Absolutely.”

In three more years’ time, Brother Augustine said he will have the option to extend his temporary vows for two years or to make his solemn profession of vows, which – like marriage – are for life.

“I never would have expected it,” he mused of the course his vocation has taken. “It was never something in my mind before. It’s surprising to see the different changes God has brought about. When one answers a call to God, change is going to happen. St. Paul says that the Holy Spirit is always with us, working within us. When we allow that to happen, that transformation, we grow more in the fullness of Christ.”
SEMINARIAN OF THE MONTH

David Garcia

Date of Birth: Age: 9/7/1998
Birthplace: Midland
Siblings: 2

Seminary: Conception Seminary
Level: Philosophy 1
What led you to enter the seminary? To see if God is calling me to pursue him as a priest, and also to help me become the best Christian gentleman possible
Home Parish: San Miguel Arcangel
Favorite Saint: St. Maximilian Kolbe
Favorite color: Green
Favorite sport: Football
Favorite Team: Texas Tech Red Raiders
Favorite Food: My parents' cooking
Favorite Dessert: Tres leches cake

Hobbies: Hanging out with friends, running, singing, watching college football
Objectives: to be more knowledgeable about the Catholic faith and to serve the Lord the best I can.

BIO

My name is David Garcia and I was born on September 7, 1998 in Midland. I have a family of five including myself. I grew up in a super close and supporting family which made my life so much easier. Growing up like any other child; I played sports, video games, and hung out with friends. At school I just worried about keeping my grades up and tried to be the best student I could. When I got to my high school years, something was just missing in my life. I entered CCD my freshman year, and two years later I received the Holy Spirit at confirmation which really changed my life. I soon got involved more in my parish and the parishioners took notice. A very particular parishioner showed me the diocesan seminarian poster. He said "look how happy those men are. That could be you one day". Ever since that day, the rest is history and I find myself at a seminary.

Amoris Laetitia: Families as principal agents of the New Evangelization

By Linda Erickson
Diocese of San Angelo

The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops is currently focusing much attention on our marriages and families. Several projects are in the works, such as the 2005 National Pastoral Initiative for Marriage which called attention to the meaning and value of married life for the Church and society. The bishops have also headed:
-- a research study on Catholics and marriage;
-- focus groups with married couples, priests, and canon lawyers;
-- an analysis of diocesan marriage preparation policies;
-- and dialogue with social scientists and theologians.

The most recent initiative being addressed is the bishops' reaffirmation of their strong support for marriage and the family by identifying "strengthening marriage and family life" as one of four strategic priorities of the USCCB for the current planning period of 2017-2020.

Our Church also has several marriage and family websites to go to for information. The "For Your Marriage" website offers practical help and advice whether you're seriously dating, engaged, or at any stage of married life. If you're planning a Catholic wedding, you'll find information on everything from choosing the music and readings to marrying someone who is not Catholic.

The "Marriage: Unique for a Reason" website is part of the Bishops' ongoing efforts to promote and defend marriage as the union of one man and one woman. It offers many educational resources for Catholics and others who want to better understand and articulate the Church's teaching on marriage.

Why are we so focused on marriages and families? Because families are uniquely important to the Church and families need to be rediscovered as the essential agent in the work of evangelization. In a family, we experience joy, trials, and love and relationships which, at times, can be wounded. The family is truly the "school of humanity" (Gaudium et Spes, 52), which is needed today.

The Gospels give us a perfect example for the Church. Jesus was born in a family, his first miracle was at the wedding of Cana and he announced the meaning of marriage as the fullness of revelation that restores the original divine plan (Mt. 19:3).

All families should, above all, be treated with respect and love and accompanied on their journey as Christ accompanied the disciples on the road to Emmaus.

"The Church will have to initiate everyone – priests, religious and laity – into this ‘art of accompaniment’, which teaches us to remove our sandals before the sacred ground of the other (cf. Ex 3:5). The pace of this accomplishment must be steady and reassuring, reflecting a closeness and compassion which, at the same time, heals, liberates and encourages growth in the Christian life" (Evangelii Gaudium, 169).

Let's us all remember to be life-giving and forgiving to each other as God asks us to be. I plan to do it with love and joy. God Bless!

Linda Erickson and her husband Dave Erickson are Engaged Encounter directors in the Diocese of San Angelo.
The Catholic family after Regensburg

By Mary Lou Gibson

Francisco de Borja y Aragón didn’t seek fame, but because of his birth, connection to royalty and life as a Duke followed by years as a Jesuit priest, it became his legacy. Francis was born at Gandía, near Valencia, Spain in 1510. His paternal great-grandfather was the infamous Pope Alexander VI (Rodrigo Borgia), and his maternal grandfather was Ferdinand V, king of Aragon.

After his education was completed, the young Francis was received at the imperial court of the emperor Charles V. In 1528 he met and married Eleanor de Castro of Portugal, the empress Isabella’s lady-in-waiting. The couple and their eight children lived with the emperor and empress and Francis appeared ready for a brilliant career in public life.

But then the empress died suddenly in 1539 and that event affected Francis profoundly. Richard McBrien writes in “Lives of the Saints” that he later marked the date at the day of his conversion to a life of prayer.

After his father’s death in 1542, Francis returned home to assume his role as the 4th Duke of Gandia. It was at this time that he met the first group of Jesuits to visit his part of Spain. He was so impressed by them that he founded a hospital and university for the Society.

When his wife died in 1546, Francis decided to give up his public life and join the Jesuits as soon as he could arrange his temporal affairs and resign his title in favor of his eldest son. Paul Burns writes in Butler’s Lives of the Saints that Francis chose the Jesuits because they were a source of controversy in the Church from their very beginnings and this appealed to Francis.

In 1548, he secretly pronounced the simple vows of a professed Jesuit, renouncing all titles, so that he would avoid being made a cardinal. Soon after, he traveled to Rome to see Ignatius of Loyola to arrange his official entrance into the Society of Jesus. He was ordained in 1551 and the news of a ‘duke turned Jesuit’ was the sensation of the day. Editor Michael Walsh writes in Butler’s Lives of the Saints that Francis was no friend of the Inquisition, and Ignatius appointed him commissary general of the order for Spain in 1554. Because Francis was no friend of the Inquisition, he went to Portugal in 1559 where he remained until becoming father general of the Jesuits in 1565.

Francis supervised the order’s expansion into Poland and France and established the first Jesuit missions in the Spanish colonies in America. Somehow Francis found time to write and one of his major works was a treatise on prayer. He also wrote a series of “Meditations” which included Ignatius’ structured approach to prayer. He stressed self-knowledge and humility, the humanity of Jesus, the Eucharist, and prayer.

Because Francis wrote in the vernacular, not in Latin, Burns wrote that he got into trouble with the Inquisition. Several of his works ended up on the Index of Forbidden Books in 1559. McBrien explains that it was thought dangerous to make works of spirituality available to the less educated lay by publishing them in the vernacular. The condemnation was formally withdrawn some years after Francis’ death.

Francis returned to Spain in 1571 at the pope’s request with Cardinal Bonelli to get Spain’s military help against the Turks. During that visit, Francis had an opportunity to see and bless his many children and grandchildren.

While on another trip to France in the winter of 1571-72, he became ill and had to be carried in a litter across the Alps. He died in Rome on October 1.

St. Francis of Borgia was beatified in 1624 and canonized by Pope Clement X in 1670. His feast day is October 10. He is the patron of Portugal. Francis was the third superior general of the Society of Jesus and is sometimes referred to as the second founder of the Jesuits.
Pro Life Mass
Bishop Michael J. Sis presided over a Pro-Life Mass, September 17, 2017, at St. Joseph's Church in San Angelo. Concelebrating the Mass were Fr. Emilio Sosa, pastor at St. Joseph; Fr. Felix Archibong and Fr. Tom Barley. Deacons Abel Fernandez and Andy Gonzalez also served at the annual Mass (Courtesy

Act of Consecration to Mary
Diocese of San Angelo

Note from Bishop Sis:
As you know, 2017 marks the 100th anniversary of the apparitions of the Blessed Virgin Mary to three shepherd children in the Portuguese village of Fatima. The 100th anniversary of the final apparition is October 13, 2017. Below is an adaptation of Pope Francis’ prayer offered at St. Peter’s Square on October 13, 2013. With this prayer I consecrated the Diocese of San Angelo to the Immaculate Heart of Mary at a public Rosary at Holy Family Parish in Abilene on Wednesday, September 27, 2017. This Act of Consecration may be used privately or publicly in any of our parishes on or around October 13, 2017, or any time, to entrust the people, parishes, and ministries of the Diocese of San Angelo to the maternal intercession of Our Blessed Mother. Mary preaches Jesus, and Jesus is the Savior of the world.

Blessed Virgin Mary,
with renewed gratitude for your motherly presence
we join in the voice of all generations that call you blessed.

We celebrate in you the great works of God,
who never tires of lowering himself in mercy over humanity,
afflicted by evil and wounded by sin, to heal and to save it.

We consecrate to your Immaculate Heart
all the people, parishes, and ministries in the Diocese of San Angelo.
Protect us through your prayerful intercession.

Accept with the benevolence of a Mother
this act of entrustment that we make in faith today.

We know that each one of us is precious in your eyes.
May we allow your sweet gaze to reach us,
along with the perpetual warmth of your smile.

Guard our life with your embrace; bless and strengthen every desire for good;
help us to resist temptation; give new life and nourishment to faith;
sustain and enlighten hope; awaken and animate charity;
guide us all on the path to holiness.

Draw forth the precious gift of many vocations to the priesthood,
the diaconate, the consecrated life, and holy matrimony.

Teach us your own special love for the humble and the poor,
for the excluded and the suffering, for sinners and the wounded of heart.

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Confirmation Class, Sacred Heart, McCamey, September 6, 2017

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for the excluded and the suffering, for sinners and the wounded of heart.

O Mary conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to you. Amen.
Bishop: Tiny church will serve its community ‘until the end of history’

By Becca Nelson Sankey
West Texas Angelus

CARLSBAD — Every time Alice Glass walks into the parish hall of St. Therese in Carlsbad, she’s amazed that the framed quilt hanging on the wall commemorating the parish’s 30th anniversary is her creation. “I look at that and think, ‘I can’t believe I made that,’” Glass said.

Glass is also incredulous that 30 years have passed since she made the quilt, which depicts the front façade of St. Therese, albeit with fewer trees. The parish is celebrating 60 years in the tiny town of Carlsbad, about 17 miles northwest of San Angelo, a landmark anniversary recognized with a Mass and lunch on Sept. 24. The parish’s 30th anniversary Mass was held on Oct. 1, the Feast of St. Therese, for whom the parish was named.

About 70 people filled the parish’s pews, listening intently as Bishop Michael J. Sis discussed St. Therese’s accomplishments in her short life. A French Discalced Carmelite nun, and the author of The Story of a Soul, Therese was 24 years old when she died of tuberculosis, the same ailment that brought people to Carlsbad’s sanatorium (now the San Angelo State Supported Living Center for individuals with intellectual disabilities).

Sis said there are a total of 36 officially declared doctors of the Church; four are females, and Therese is one of those. “You can be proud that your church is named after her,” Sis told the parishioners gathered. “She’s a doctor of souls. She’s a doctor of the truths of our Catholic faith.”

In addition to being named for a faithful follower of Christ, the parish has to its credit strong lay leadership that has helped it thrive the past 60 years. “It’s a very united parish because of the quality of its local leaders,” Sis said following the Mass. “That the parish, which is represented by young and old, continues to flourish ‘shows (its parishioners) are open to the continued guidance of the Holy Spirit,’” Sis continued. “It’s a sign of passing on the faith from generation to generation. When our church family becomes a part of our daily lives, then we live it at home, and we pass it on to our children.”

Glass and her husband raised their six children at St. Therese. They are two of the parish’s few remaining original members, Glass said, adding that they married in 1955, two years before St. Therese was built. “It was a mission for a long time,” Glass said of the Carlsbad parish. Eventually, she said, a chapel was built on the grounds of what is now the State Supported Living Center so that individuals with intellectual disabilities could be quarantined.

Since then, the church’s interior has changed, but “everything else is more or less the same. It’s family-oriented,” Glass said. “We’re all family. Everybody knows everybody. It’s small. When someone’s not here, we know (why). We always expect to see everybody on Sunday morning.”

Glass paused, then mused, “It’s interesting to think we’ve been here 60 years.” Asked how long St. Therese will continue on in Carlsbad, Sis had a simple yet profound thought of his own. “Until the end of history,” he said, then smiled.

Martin Luther King’s words on nonviolence need to be lived today, speakers agree

WASHINGTON (CNS) — The Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.’s support of nonviolence to bring about social change applies as much to today’s society as it did when Rev. King put his philosophy to paper 60 years ago, said speakers at an Oct. 2 news conference at the memorial dedicated to the civil rights figure in Washington.

That the news conference was scheduled in advance of, and held the day after, the Las Vegas shooting spree that killed 58 people and injured more than 500 only underscored the importance of Rev. King’s message, according to the speakers.

“It’s hard to find something in times like these that doesn’t sound like clichés,” said Bishop George V. Murry of Youngstown, Ohio, chairman of the U.S. bishops’ Ad Hoc Committee Against Racism. “As a society, we need to stop making excuses and commit to nonviolence.”

He added, “Pope Francis speaks of the earth as our common home. So it is. And so it is with our society... It is so easy to speak of human dignity,” he noted, “but do we believe it selectively — applying it to some people but not to others?”

Bishop Murry, who is African-American, acknowledged he has been the target of racism and segregation. One of the more frustrating episodes for him, he told Catholic News Service, was when a white airline passenger called for a flight attendant because he did not want to sit next to Bishop Murry.


In his essay, Rev. King wrote: “How is the struggle against the forces of injustice to be waged? There are two possible answers. One is resort to the all too prevalent method of physical violence and corroding hatred. The danger of this method is its futility. Violence solves no social problems; it merely creates new and more complicated ones. Through the vistas of time a voice still cries to every potential Peter, ‘Put up your sword!’ The shores of history are white with the bleached bones of nations and communities that failed to follow this command.”

One of the points Rev. King made about nonviolent resistance as an alternative is that it “does not seek to defeat or humiliate the opponent, but to win his friendship and understanding.”
Parishioners of St. Margaret Parish in San Angelo met on August 30, 2017, as part of the parish phase of the V Encuentro process. During the session, participants of V Encuentro focused on discerning the ways in which the Church in the United States can better respond to Hispanic/Latino presence and strengthen the ways in which to respond to the call of the New Evangelization as missionary disciples serving the entire church.

Pictured, top row, left to right, Higinio Fuentes, Alicia Fuentes, Marcus Hogeda, Vangie McEligot, Marta Bailey, Belia Pena, Susan Reddy, Gloria Martinez, Raymond De Leon, Maria Vasquez. Bottom row, left to right, Noemi Contreras, Ciria Sepeda, Liz Longoria.
In heaven, there will be no language barriers

Editor’s Note: The following remarks were delivered by Bishop Michael J. Sis at a September 27, 2017 International Rosary at Abilene’s Holy Family Church.

Why do humans speak so many different languages? Why can’t we all just speak one language? The Old Testament passage of Genesis chapter 11 tells the ancient story of the Tower of Babel to explain how it came to be that people spoke so many different languages. It says that, originally, everyone spoke the same language, but God chose to confuse human speech in order to limit the overreaching ambition of prideful humans.

Then, thousands of years later, on the Day of Pentecost in Acts chapter 2, God reversed the effect of the Tower of Babel through the action of the Holy Spirit. There were people there from every nation under Heaven, all speaking different languages. And the Holy Spirit made it possible for all those people to understand the Apostles in the world.

As long as we are living on this earth, we will speak a variety of different languages. But in Heaven, there will be no language barriers.

This event is a celebration of our unity in diversity.

When we pray the Rosary tonight, we will use lots of different languages. Some of you are wearing a beautiful variety of native clothing. We will share delicious foods from around the world.

As we do all these things, we pray that all of us will be open to the gift of unity that comes from the Holy Spirit. We pray that the Spirit will break down barriers of fear and pride, and make us truly one Body of Christ.

One of the curious things about Mary is that, in all the various times she has appeared to people in different countries over the centuries, they have understood her in their own language:

• Fatima: Portuguese
• Lourdes: not French, but Occitan
• Guadalupe: not Spanish, but Nahuatl
• There is something about Heaven that makes them feel at home, loved and respected.

Promote migrants

Since the time of Jesus Christ, God has always welcomed strangers. God’s mercy is a gift of unity that comes from the Holy Spirit.

As we do all these things, we pray that all of us will be open to the gift of unity that comes from the Holy Spirit. We pray that the Spirit will break down barriers of fear and pride, and make us truly one Body of Christ.

One of the people in Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost was Mary, the Mother of Jesus. She lived in Israel and spoke Aramaic. At the end of her earthly life, she was assumed body and soul into Heaven.

One of the curious things about Mary is that, in all the various times she has appeared to people in different countries over the centuries, they have understood her in their own language:

• Fatima: Portuguese
• Lourdes: not French, but Occitan
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There is something about Heaven that makes them feel at home, loved and respected.

We welcome migrants to participate actively in the Church, share their personal gifts, and receive the sacraments regularly in our local parishes.

Promote migrants

Educate, train, respect their religious freedoms

People have a right not to migrate – to continue living in their own homeland. It’s not fair to force someone to migrate.

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.

Every country has the right and responsibility to maintain the integrity of its borders and the rule of law, and to conduct screening of immigrants.

Pope Francis is calling us to do four things:

• Welcome migrants: in an orderly process that respects the laws of each country involved.
• Protect migrants from exploitation and human trafficking:
• Promote migrants: make available education, training, language courses, classes on local customs and culture. Respect their religious freedom.
• Integrate migrants into the life of the local community, encouraging them to share gifts and talents.

In the Last Judgment, Christ will judge each of us according to how we have responded to him.

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Walking on a wet roof at 36 weeks not easy for Dickinson mom-to-be

By Jimmy Patterson
West Texas Angelus

DICKINSON — A pitched roof is tricky to walk on in the best of circumstances. Add a night’s worth of torrential rainfall and it becomes even more harrowing. Alyssa Baker knows. She crawled through a hole in her roof forged by a pick axe at the hands of her husband. It was the early morning hours of Sunday, August 27, when Matt Baker pulled Alyssa through the opening and steadied her as she crab-walked down the roof to a waiting Jon Boat.

And she did it all while 8-and-a-half months pregnant. The Bakers, who live in Dickinson, one of the hardest hit areas, met at Texas A&M. Alyssa is a marriage and family counselor in private practice. Matt is a football, basketball and track coach at nearby Bayside Intermediate in League City. Originally from Lubbock, Baker’s great uncle is former Texas Tech football coach Spike Dykes.

At 2 that Sunday morning, unable to sleep, Baker watched as his next-door neighbor took his dog out. Everything seemed fine then. But when he got out of bed again at 3, the carpet in the bedroom was soaked. Another 30-45 minutes later and it was halfway up his mailbox at the curb and creeping higher and higher inside. Matt hurried Alyssa, and the couple’s niece, Elliott, who had recently moved in with them, into the attic. Matt shuttled himself between the attic and downstairs where the water continued to rise.

At one point, he remembered he hadn’t shut the power off before the flood began to rise. With water already high, he walked near an electrical outlet downstairs where a surge of power tickled his lower leg. He quickly turned and walked away. Oddly enough, through the flooding in the Baker house, the power never went off, including the air conditioner. Mrs. Baker, 36 weeks pregnant, was never without cool air, even while stuck the attic for several hours.

When the sun rose Sunday morning, Baker went outside and visited with neighbors, all of whom had it as bad or worse than he and his family. The floodwaters, the result of both the torrential rain and the raging Dickinson Bayou, had crested.

“We were told by 911 that we would be put on a rescue list, that the entire city was flooded and they would get to us as soon as they could,” Mrs. Baker said.

(Please See BAKERS/15)

Shuttle astronaut, NASA engineers help in Harvey rescues

By Jimmy Patterson
West Texas Angelus

DICKINSON — Harvey didn’t care where he hit or who he hurt. With trillions of gallons of rainwater in his system, he rampaged the Texas coast like a drunken sailor on a jacked weekend pass. Pushing and forging through neighborhoods posh and poor, Harvey twice slipped out of the back door before staggering in again for last call.

When he finally fell to the floor, down for the count, millions of victims were left to pick up the pieces of broken lives, soaked homes and dead vehicles.

“This affected everybody,” said Steve Stich, one of many citizens-turned-rescuers in the storm’s aftermath. “People with nice cars, people in nice houses. People who don’t have much.”

Stich is the Deputy Program Manager for the Commercial Crew Program, and former NASA Flight Director at the Johnson Space Center in Houston. On Saturday August 26, during the storm, Stich sent an email to his team letting them know the status of the storm, the known impacts to buildings at JSC, and to also let him know if they needed any assistance. The next morning, he received a return email from Mark Dub, a Crew Display and Equipment Specialist for NASA’s Commercial Crew Program who also has his private pilot’s license.

“Mark responded to my email and said, ‘Hey, I’m in my house and I have 18 inches of water inside right now. It’s forecast to rain more, they’re calling for 30 inches. I’ve moved things to the second floor, but the roof is leaking now.’”

Stich picked up the phone and called two friends, Dave Felan, a buddy from his men’s group at church who had a Jon Boat, and Mike Good, a coworker, who has had a few atypical journeys through the unknown.

Good, an astronaut, was aboard STS-125 Atlantis (May 2009) and STS-132 Atlantis (May 2010), two of NASA’s last space shuttle flights. STS-125 was NASA’s fifth and final Hubble servicing mission; STS-132 was a trip to the International Space Station. On the two flights, Good logged almost 30 hours in four spacewalks and with his shipmates made 383 Earth orbits and traveled over 10 million miles. So when it came to a Jon Boat ride across the flooded streets of Dickinson, failure was not an option.

Stich, Felan and Good figured they would hop in the boat and after a couple of blocks would make it to Dub’s house, rescue him and perhaps take on other necessary rescue missions afterward. That quickly changed when they realized the flooding had now extended east of I-45 and Dub lived west of I-45 some two miles. When they put in their boat east of the interstate, they would soon find out it was not to be a non-stop trip. Four unscheduled stops led to a dozen individuals being carried to the safety of the Way Retreat Center and Helping Hands of Midland.

(Please See NASA/15)
BAKERS
(From 14)

They called church friends – a police officer, and a Galveston county judge – who told them at least one person from the house should be on the roof so rescuers would be able to spot them and send help.

Matt walked back downstairs and retrieved a pick axe from the garage as Elliott sat bored in the attic and Aunt Alyssa lay flat, with nothing to do but stare up at attic insulation and practice her breathing exercises.

When he returned, Baker was positioned at an awkward angle to do much damage to the roof. He finally walked outside and climbed on top of his house. Adrenalin and better leverage allowed him to make fairly quick work of the shingles and roofing material and soon enough he had pounced a large enough hole to where he could pull his niece and wife free.

“I had to push myself up and out of the hole with Matt’s help, and then I was able to crab-walk down the roof to where the man in the boat was waiting for me.?” Mrs. Baker said.

Like so many others, the Bakers found help from strangers and friends alike. An added bonus were the former football, track and basketball players he had coached at Bayside Intermediate a few years earlier, including a boy who had fought leukemia as an eighth grader, had recovered and now stood alongside former schoolmates riffing sheet rock from the Baker’s home.

More than 50 families at Bayside Intermediate School had major or total damage on their houses by Harvey. An effort to assist the families has been established in Midland. An anonymous donation of $25,000 has been made with the promise of matching funds of $30,000 over and above the $25,000. To help, make your check to Helping Hands and write “League City/Hurricane Harvey” in the memo field. Send to Helping hands, 1301 Brinson Lane, Midland, 79703.

How to help

The Way Retreat Center and Helping Hands of Midland are partnering to help raise funds for more than 50 families whose children attend Bayside Intermediate School in League City, Texas. The principal of the school, Joey Thomas, and his wife, Irene, are former Midlanders, and parishioners at San Miguel Catholic Church. Many in Joey’s school family have lost everything. The campaign to help those affected by Harvey began with an anonymous Midland donation of $25,000, with a second donor promising an additional $30,000 in matching funds. (Individual donations have thus far exceeded $4,400.) 

Money raised will be used to purchase gift cards for the families, whose greatest needs are groceries, household supplies, children’s clothing and furniture.

“Gift cards will give our people the opportunity to get exactly what they need when they need it,” Joey said. “Gift cards will provide them a choice when selecting clothes for their children.”

To help, make your check to Helping Hands and write “League City/Hurricane Harvey” in the memo field, and send to Helping Hands, 1301 Brinson Lane, Midland, 79703.

LEAGUE CITY — A lot of water didn’t bother Liliana Meijide. But she didn’t care too much for just a little water. As powerful and as destructive as he proved to be, Harvey had no effect on the sprinkling of Holy Water on the forehead of the three-month old daughter of Sarah and Joe Meijide, of League City. Within hours of Liliana’s August 26, 2017 Baptism, the city and region would be ravaged by the floodwaters of the costliest hurricane to make landfall in the U.S. history.

The outer bands of Hurricane Harvey had already drifted over southern Harris County. In fact, St. Mary pastor Fr. Howard Drabek was vacuuming up water that had begun to creep into the sanctuary, turning the carpet into a sponge, as Liliana’s Baptism began. Fr. Howard took a break long enough for the service before continuing his cleanup.

It was not only Liliana’s first hurricane, but visiting celebrant, Fr. Bobby Fish, Sarah’s brother, a priest in St. Paul, Minn., had never experienced such a storm either.

Meijide said despite the approaching storm, a crowd of about 40 witnessed the Baptism. Most made it home without delay; however Fr. Fish and Sarah Meijide’s parents, from San Antonio, were delayed in their returns.

“She didn’t like the baptismal water poured on her,” Sarah said of Liliana. “Other than that she was fine. Joey and I were stressed out and worried about her safety, but she just rolled with it.”

Sarah Meijide holds her baby Liliana as husband Joey, right, looks on, and Sarah’s brother, Fr. Bobby Fish, left, sprinkles Baptismal water on the newborn’s forehead, at St. Mary’s in League City during Hurricane Harvey. (Courtesy photo)

By Jimmy Patterson
West Texas Angelus

Editor’s Note: Joey Thomas is a former Midlander and currently a principal of Bayside Intermediate School in League City. Many of the families who have children at his school have suffered great losses because of Hurricane Harvey. Joey summarized his feelings in the weeks since the storm dumped massive amounts of rainfall on Southeast Texas and the Coastal Bend.

Just two weeks after Hurricane Harvey left his footprint on our area, the men of Saint Mary of the Expectation Church in League City had a beautiful ACTS weekend in which 29 members of the church strengthened their relationship with Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit.

While many of the 40 team members and 29 retreatants had lost all of their worldly possessions during the flooding, the Holy Spirit was with us every step of the way. Our family was never alone, not for one second. We realized through Hurricane Harvey that while we all experience difficulties, setbacks, and crises of many shapes and forms in our daily lives, it is our faith in Jesus Christ that allows us to handle these obstacles.

During the time leading up to the retreat our team endured setbacks such as job loss, severe illnesses, the death of a team member. (Please See ACTS/22)
**Catholic Voices**

**Eric Clapton, fidelity and killing all your Canaanites**

By Fr. Ron Rolheiser

In his autobiography, Eric Clapton, the famed rock and blues artist, shares very candidly about his long struggle with an addiction to alcohol. At one point in his life, he admitted his addiction and entered a rehab clinic, but he didn’t take his problem as seriously as was warranted. Returning to the clinic later in the year, he decided that he could still drink light spirits, beer and wine, but would give up hard liquor. You can guess the result. Before long he was again enslaved inside his addiction. He returned to the clinic, to appease friends, but convinced that he was still strong enough to handle his problems on his own.

But grace intervened. Just before his second rehab stint ended, he had a powerful experience within which he was shaken to his very soul by the recognition of his total helplessness and the mortal danger he faced from his addiction. On the basis of that grace, he finally gave himself over to the program with his whole heart, accepting that he could never touch alcohol again. He has retained his sobriety since.

His story can be helpful in understanding the meaning of certain texts in scripture which, when read literally, can give us the impression that God is arbitrary, cruel, and murderous. We see such texts, for example, in the Book of Exodus and the Book of Joshua where, before entering the Promised Land, God指令Israel to kill all the people and all the animals who at that time inhabit that land. Why such a command to exterminate others simply because they’re living in a certain place? Obviously we need to ask ourselves: Is this really the word of God? What kind of God would give this kind of command? And what about the people being killed, aren’t they too God’s people? Does God play favorites? What about the Canaanites whom Joshua is asked to exterminate, don’t they count? What can be behind this kind of command?

These texts, though divinely inspired and rich in meaning, clearly should not be taken literally. This command, while not exactly metaphorical, is archetypal, meaning that it’s meant to be taken literally as a command to kill what’s foreign to us, but rather as a counsel teaching that when we’re trying to enter a new way of living we must take all the necessary measures to ensure that we can properly enter that life and sustain it.

Metaphorically, we need to “kill” off every element inside us and around us which, if left unaddressed, might eventually compromise and choke off the new life we’re trying to live. Jesus, in fact, gives us the identical command, except he employs a softer metaphor: Don’t put new wine into old wineskins. People in Recovery Programs such as Alcoholics Anonymous tend to more quickly understand what’s asked of us in these texts. Like Eric Clapton they’ve learned from experience that to enter the promised land of sobriety demands that one kill off all of “the Canaanites,” that is, accepting that all half-measures won’t work but that some brute, raw, bitter renunciations have to be made.

This biblical image, the command from God to kill the Canaanites, can serve us well in other areas of our lives, particularly, I believe, in our struggles with making commitments and being faithful to them.

For example, consider someone entering a marriage. Like Israel they’re entering the “promised land,” but for them to establish this new life and remain faithful to it, they need to kill off a good number of things, namely, former romances, old relational habits of promiscuity and infidelity, the propensity to flirt with attractive temptations, the belief that one can have one’s cake and eat it too, and the local addiction to putting one’s own needs first and worrying mainly about taking care of oneself.

Every choice is a series of renunciations. To have a life-giving marriage means renouncing a lot of old habits, otherwise these old habits will eventually sabotage the marriage. There are things one must do before entering a marriage or any serious commitment.

But what about those “Canaanites” that already inhabit the land we’re entering? Who might they be today?

In terms of threatening to contaminate a marriage, I would submit that what must be killed off today in order to have a lifelong, life-giving marriage is our present cultural ethos about sex, namely, the belief that sex need not be confined to monogamy, permanent commitment, and marriage. If we don’t kill off that ethos as we enter a marriage, we will not sustain ourselves lifelong in that Promised Land.

To live lives of sobriety, commitment, and fidelity demands more than half-measures. An alcoholic in recovery knows that he or she cannot have it both ways. The same is true in terms of sustaining ourselves in any life-giving commitment.

New wine must be put into new wineskins and this demands some bitter renunciations.

God’s commands, properly understood, aren’t harsh and arbitrary. They’re wise and universal.

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**Peter Claver vs. Immanuel Kant**

By Most Rev. Robert Barron

Auxiliary Bishop of Los Angeles

One of the greatest heroes of the social justice wing of the Church is, quite rightly, the seventeenth century “slave of the slaves,” St. Peter Claver. Born in Barcelona, Claver joined the Society of Jesus, and was known, even as a young man, as a person of deep intelligence and piety. Spurred by what he took to be the direct prompting of the Holy Spirit, the young Spaniard volunteered to work among the poor in what was then known as “New Spain.” In Cartagena, he saw the unspeakable degradation of the captives brought in chains by ship from Africa, and he resolved to dedicate his life to serving them.

We have a wonderful letter that Peter Claver wrote to his Jesuit superior in which he vividly describes apostolic work that he did among the slaves, just after they came ashore in Cartagena. He speaks of hopeless people staggering off the ships, stark naked, starving, and disoriented. Many were so sick that they were barely able to stand. Peter, and his colleagues brought them fruits and water, and then, he tells us, they contrived to build a crude shelter, using their own coats and cloaks. For the dying, they lit a fire and threw aromatic spices onto the flames so that the sufferers might have a bit of comfort and delight before they died. He adds the touching detail that they employed friendly gestures and signs to communicate to those with whom they shared no common language: “This is how we spoke to them, not with words but with our hands and our actions.” I cannot imagine any decent person today who wouldn’t understand and deeply sympathize with everything that Peter Claver did on behalf of these poorest of the poor. They would be justified in seeing him as a seventeenth century anticipation of Mother Teresa.

However, as we continue to persevere Claver’s work, we must take note that many today would find puzzling, even off-putting. Immediately after caring for their physical and psychological needs, the saint commenced to instruct the slaves in the rudiments of the Christian faith. Once the new arrivals demonstrated a fundamental understanding, Claver continues, “we went on to a more extensive instruction, namely, about the one God, who rewards and punishes…We asked them to make an act of contrition…finally…we declared to them the mysteries of the Trinity, the Incarnation, the Passion.” In other words, just after ministering to their bodies and their troubled minds, he ministered to their souls.

Now don’t get me wrong: I wouldn’t exactly recommend that one move to evangelization quite as quickly as Peter Claver did! And I don’t think it’s either wise or fair to propose the Christian faith for those who are physically weak and psychologically traumatized. Nevertheless, it is eminently clear that the great saint, the slave of the slaves, did not drive a wedge between the Church’s “social justice” ministry and its evangelizing outreach. He most certainly did not think that his care for the marginalized began and ended with attention to their worldly needs. In fact, Peter Claver was proudest of the fact that, in the course of his work with the slaves, he baptized upon 1000 people.

I bring this up, because I’m concerned that afoot in our society and even in our Church today is the unhappy tendency to separate what Peter Claver kept very separate: the reduction of this: “Well, it doesn’t really matter what people believe, as long as they are decent and tolerant,” or of this: “Being a Christian finally comes down to dogmas seem to be at best private convictions and at worst sources of division and oppression. But all of this reflects, not the Church’s authentic self-understanding, but the Kantian prejudice that has formed the modern consensus. The massively influential philosopher Immanuel Kant held, of course, that religion is basically resolvable into ethics, that everything else that occupies religious people—liturgy, sacraments, prayer, preaching, pious practice, etc.—is finally about making us morally upright people.

But as Pope Benedict XVI reminded us, the Church has three fundamental and mutually implicating tasks: to care for the poor, to worship God, and to evangelize. Each of these calls out to the other two, and all forms of reductionism in their regard ought to be avoided. Keep in mind, too, that Pope Francis, whom no one could ever accuse of indifference to the physical and psychological suffering of the poor, also speaks of those on the “existential margins,” which is to say, those who are alienated from God and unacquainted with the Gospel. The “field hospital” of the Church—and how vividly that imagine calls to mind Peter Claver’s work—is meant for those who need care in body, mind, and soul.

Therefore, yes to social justice! And yes to evangelizing! And down with Kantian reductionism!
Tearing down statues easy ... tearing down prejudice not so much

By Greg Erlandsen
Catholic News Service

Watching TV images of crowds pulling down a statue of a Civil War soldier in North Carolina, I found myself thinking of a 16th-century pope named Paul IV. He was so loathed by Romans, Jews and Christians alike, that when he died, the people pulled down his statue on the Capitoline Hill, cut off its head, dragged it through the streets of the city and then dumped it in the Tiber River.

That historical anecdote communicates in shorthand the feelings of the people. For a Civil War soldier in North Carolina, I found myself thinking of a 16th-century pope named Paul IV. While Rome's citizens could not threaten him during his life, they were able to take out their frustrations on his statue in death.

The story reminds me of scenes of Eastern Europeans toppling the statues of Lenin or Iraqis pulling down statues of Saddam Hussein.

There is something about such outpourings of rage by men and women recently freed from their tyranny that is completely understandable.

Today's controversies surrounding the various Civil War statues seems something else entirely.

Some people worry that there is a purging of history taking place, but I think the controversies have less to do with the Civil War than with current political issues. For one thing, Americans are abysmal when it comes to history.

Regarding the Civil War, only half of Americans can say when it took place. A third of us don't know that Abraham Lincoln was head of the Union Army. Fewer than one in five know what the Emancipation Proclamation did.

That the battle over the statues is not really about the Civil War they represent is consistent with the fact that the installation of many of these statues was often tied to more contemporary events. They were intended to send a message -- affirming Jim Crow laws and the rise of segregation during one period in history. Rejecting the civil rights movement later on.

And the statue battle today is more about immigration and a sense of victimhood in our multicultural land than about old warriors who were willing to sacrifice 600,000 blue and gray dead for the right to determine for themselves which human beings could own other human beings.

I think all of this controversy could be a good thing if Americans decided to learn a bit more about their past to better understand their present. Perhaps they could start with Ken Burns' epic documentary on the Civil War, with its haunting images and its first-person accounts of the brutality of slavery and the brutality of the war to end it.

We don't have to purge General Lee or General Jackson from our memories. Indeed, we would be the worse off if we forgot them.

As a country, however, we do need to empathize more strongly with our brothers and sisters who see the stars and bars, the tributes to old racists and the defense of new ones as a message that they are still not fully equal, still not fully accepted, still not fully free.

Tearing down statues is the easy part. Tearing down prejudice? That takes centuries.

Erlandsen, director and editor-in-chief of Catholic News Service, can be reached at gerlandson@catholicnews.com.

Certainty in heaven / dispensation / marijuana and morals

By Fr. Kenneth Doyle
Catholic News Service

Q. My mother passed away some time ago, and I wonder whether she is now in "God's eternal embrace." How can I be sure?

A. She was a good mother and she dearly loved the church, but we have been taught that everyone has some imperfections and, upon death, must be sent to purgatory before they can enjoy heaven. I would rest more easily if I knew that my mother were not suffering any longer. (Forest, Virginia)

Q. My widowed mother is getting ready to remarry, and she is very concerned that her fiance has never been baptized. How hard is it to get a dispensation to marry someone like that in the Catholic Church, and is it a lengthy process? (Mom says she's not getting any younger!) (Louisville, Ky.)

A. As you indicate, a Catholic who wishes to marry a non-Catholic (whether baptized or unbaptized) must first obtain permission from the Catholic Church. This requirement is rooted in a bishop's responsibility to safeguard the religious faith and practice of the Catholic party.

And so, for such a dispensation to be granted, the Catholic party must promise to continue to remain faithful to the Catholic religion and to do all within his or her power to see that any children of the marriage are baptized and raised as Catholics.

Beyond that pledge, it is not difficult to obtain the permission your mother seeks, and such dispensations are regularly granted.

Q. Recently, I was traveling on business in Toronto. Because that day happened to be the solemnity of the Assumption, I went in search of a church to attend Mass. I learned, though, that the Assumption is not a holy day of obligation in Canada, and no additional Masses were being offered beyond the normal weekday schedule.

I was determined to attend Mass anyway, and managed to do so, but it made me wonder: Do the obligations as determined in your home country hold when you are traveling and find yourself in a place with different norms? Or was the obligation lifted because it did not apply in the place where I happened to be that day? (northern Virginia)

A. You have no doubt heard the saying, "When in Rome, do as the Romans do." But in the case which you pose, following that maxim would be wrong! When traveling for brief periods, as you were, Catholics should follow the rules of their own country on Mass attendance.

Here is the technical explanation: The church's Code of Canon Law says that a particular nation's regulations govern those who have a domicile or quasi-domicile in that country and are actually residing there (Canon 12.3). Canon 102.2 defines a "quasi-domicile" as a place where one intends to reside for at least three months, whereas a stay in Canada for three months, you were obliged to observe the holy days as designated by the bishops of your home country, the United States; so your decision to attend Mass on the feast of the Assumption was the correct one even though you happened to be in Canada on that day.

And their rule actually makes things easier for us. Canon 1246 lists 10 holy days of obligation but allows national conferences of bishops to reduce the number or to transfer their observance to a Sunday, and there is considerable variation from country to country.

Vatican City observes all 10, the United States has six, while Canada keeps only two (Christmas and Jan. 1). Imagine the confusion if U.S. Catholics, when planning to travel for a few days in a foreign nation, were obliged in advance to learn that particular country's holy days.

Q. Many localities are in the process of decriminalizing the recreational use of marijuana. What is the church's view? Is using pot recreationally the same thing morally as having a drink? Is it OK in moderation? (Suffolk, Virginia)

A. The question as posed relates only to the recreational use of this drug. When used instead (with proper controls) for medical reasons, its use can not only be permitted but applauded; research has found medical marijuana effective for certain patients with epilepsy, bipolar disorders, cancer, etc. -- as well as for some children with severe autism.

But, as for recreational use, Catholic moralists in general would be opposed. The Catechism of the Catholic Church says: "The use of drugs inflicts very grave damage on human health and life. Their use, except on strictly therapeutic grounds, is a grave offense" (No. 2291).

Pope Francis -- speaking at the 2014 World Meeting of the Pontifical Academy for生命 Enrichment Conference in Rome -- spoke strongly against the legalization of drugs for recreational use.

With regard specifically to marijuana, the cannabis plant contains the mind-altering chemical THC, which often induces hallucinations and other toxic psychological and physical effects. THC reduces consciousness and diminishes the user's ability to reason.

Pia de Solenni, a moralist and theologian who was recently named chancellor of the Diocese of Orange in California, has noted that unlike taking a glass of wine to relax, marijuana cannot be used moderately.

"Once you've gone beyond the buzz," she says, "you actually lose control over your rational functions. It's wrong. It goes against our nature and who we're supposed to be."
Life was hard 50 years ago but better now for young people

By Moises Sandoval
Catholic News Service

En el otoño de 1959, cuando comencé mi trabajo de reportero para el periódico The Albuquerque Tribune, mi salario era $100 por semana. Ya estaba casado. Yo y mi esposa, quien se mantenía siempre ocupada con los quehaceres de la casa, ya tenemos dos hijos.

Lo que hoy se considera normal, en el mundo de los trabajadores, no era así para los trabajadores de la época. El Salario mínimo, que hoy es $10 por hora, en 1959 era $100 por semana. Las condiciones de trabajo eran duros y la vida era más difícil.

En aquel tiempo, los trabajadores tenían que lidiar con el desempleo, que era un problema crítico en ese momento. La inflación también era un problema, ya que el costo de vida estaba en aumento. Sin embargo, a pesar de estas dificultades, la gente seguía trabajando de forma efectiva.

La vida hace medio siglo era mejor para los trabajadores jóvenes

By Moises Sandoval
Catholic News Service

En el otoño de 1959, cuando comencé mi trabajo de reportero para el periódico The Albuquerque Tribune, mi salario era $100 por semana. Ya estaba casado. Yo y mi esposa, quien se mantenía siempre ocupada con los quehaceres de la casa, ya teníamos dos hijos.

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La vida hace medio siglo era mejor para los trabajadores jóvenes
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**Catholic Voices**

**iPhone turns 10, but technology remains unknown pilgrimage**

**By Brett Robinson**

Catholic News Service

This month marks a significant anniversary in the history of technology: It is the 10-year anniversary of the iPhone. Apple celebrated by unveiling yet another iPhone, this one called the iPhone X.

And now that the new iPhone's crowning technological achievement? Facial recognition software that takes your facial movements and animates them on the poop emoji. How far we've come.

Apple's captivating products are a ready reminder of the significant place that personal technology occupies in our culture. Global media outlets flock to northern California anytime Apple is ready to put something new on offer.

Millions around the planet watch live online as the CEO pronounces the quasi-ritual act of unveiling the newest gadget. It is a pilgrimage of sorts for many who desire to connect with something that seems to connect us all.

It used to be that a pilgrimage would put us in contact with something spiritual -- the birthplace of a saint or a place that seems to allow a deeper connection to the divine. It's a way to discover something about our tradition and something about ourselves that feels like home.

In 1994, Microsoft launched an ad campaign for its PC that asked, "Where do you want to go today?" There was a sense in the early days of the internet that we were headed somewhere new, down Al Gore's "information superhighway." It was a place of speed and utter convenience -- no more trips to the bank, the store or even the front porch to grab the newspaper. It was all at our fingertips.

This technological sense of travel or pilgrimage ushered in by the internet has sapped travel of its travail. How do we recover or renew our desire to move through the world in a way that is not frictionless but actually invites uncertainty and asceticism?

Shortly after St. James the Greater was beheaded by Herod in the first century, his body was miraculously transferred to Spain. In the centuries that followed, visiting the saint's relics in Spain became one of the most famous pilgrimages in the world. Tens of thousands continue to make the journey by foot every year over hundreds of miles on the famous Camino de Santiago, the Way of St. James.

The Santiago de Compostela Cathedral that houses the relics is breathtaking. Apple's new headquarters pales in comparison to the architectural achievements of that earlier time.

Before pilgrims reach the majestic cathedral, there is a stretch of road that lies between Burgos and Leon in Spain on the pilgrimage route known as the meseta. It is a 100-mile stretch of windswept plains and dry dirt roads that is extremely hot in the summer months and exquisitely boring to travel through.

Pilgrims have described the meseta as mind-numbing, dreary and tedious. One even compared it to a root canal. Many pilgrims opt to take an air-conditioned bus or train to avoid the dreaded meseta.

Strangely, others refer to the journey from Burgos to Leon as a "walking meditation" and "soul-reviving." One pilgrim said it was "quiet, serene, warm, sometime bare and, surprisingly, full of surprises." Another put it this way:

"The emptiness of the meseta offers little entertainment for our overstimulated senses. This part of the Camino can be a wonderful option to empty yourself and create a new mindset. The wonderful meseta has a lot of beauty to offer. This beauty does not like to be so obvious but will reveal itself after a few days walking. The beauty of the meseta may not be seen with the eyes in the first place."

So there's a paradox here. Same stretch of road, totally different reactions. So which is it, mind-numbing root canal or soul-reviving surprise?

The answer seems to lie in the imagination.

There are some that take the trip because it's a trendy, unique, off the beaten path type of vacation. They are tourists who enjoy collecting experiences. They go places to say they've been and take lots of pictures to post on Facebook.

They ride the air-conditioned buses past the meseta and count themselves among the proud denizens of our digital culture of speed and convenience.

And there are others who take the Camino pilgrimage because of a deep spiritual hunger. They are there with others, but their focus is on their relationship with God.

They seem to know something that the tourists don't know -- that the ascent of the mind to God requires a certain level of detachment from the world and its trappings like air-conditioned buses and iPhones.

Without passing through the arid and dusty windswept plains, there is less appreciation for the glorious mountain at the end.

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**The Fr. Martin controversy**

**By Effie Caldarola**

Catholic News Service

The Theological College in Washington, the national seminary of The Catholic University of America, recently canceled a lecture by Jesuit Father James Martin.

Father Martin was to speak on his popular book, "Jesus: A Pilgrimage." But the college announced that "in the interest of avoiding distraction and controversy" about his more recent book, "Building a Bridge: How the Catholic Church and the LGBTQ Community Can Enter into a Relationship of Respect, Compassion, and Sensitivity," they were discontinuing the Jesuit. A couple of other groups likewise canceled his appearances.

In doing so, they bowed to trolls and online vitriol, to organized cyber-bashing that appears all too frequent-ly in the comments section of online publications, to ad hominem attacks, to hatred. Personal insults and gay slurs have been hurled at Father Martin by a crowd of bullies masquerading as guardians of Catholic orthodoxy.

The college was not questioning the Catholic credentials of the book. "Building a Bridge" was endorsed by Cardinal Kevin J. Farrell, head of the Vatican's office on the family, and many other prelates.

Catholic University of America quickly distanced itself from the cancellation. Father Matt Malone, editor of America Magazine, the Jesuit journal, defended Father Martin.

Father Malone called the attacks on Father Martin, an editor-at-large at America, "unwarranted, uncharitable and un-Christian," and decried the online barrage as "invasive that is as appalling as it is toxic."

This column is not an endorsement of "Building a Bridge," nor is it a book review. It's on my list, but I haven't read "Bridge" yet. That's not the point.

This summer, I spent prayerful mornings on my patio savoring Father Martin's meditations on his journey through the Holy Land in "Jesus: A Pilgrimage."

Someone rightly described Father Martin's writing as "gentle." When a friend asked me for good Catholic reading material for her daughter-in-law going through the RCIA process, I quickly said, "Anything by James Martin."

"Between Heaven and Mirth," "In Good Company" -- these books are easy reading that surprise you with how much you've learned, and how joyful you feel to be a Catholic.

"Bridge" has not been without critics, left and right. Cardinal Robert Sarah, head of the Vatican's office on liturgy, penned a Wall Street Journal op-ed in which he expressed disappointment that the book hadn't more thoroughly explained the church's view on sexuality. Father Martin responded by saying sexual morality was not the book's focus.

This exchange was healthy dialogue, what the church needs. Under Pope Francis, dialogue has been encouraged, and while that road is sometimes bumpy, it's yielding many graces. Father Martin has called his book an invitation to dialogue and prayer, and, in an interview with Religion News Service, specified that neither the book, nor he, would ever challenge church teaching.

Meanwhile, Father Martin's online presence bursts with praise and thanks for his book, while the online minority of haters fill posts and blogs impugning Father Martin's integrity, and hurling homophobic smears that insult Father Martin and gasoline in the swifts.

And we give in? Will we as church allow cyber bullies to silence a leading voice in the American church?

Although so far not employing actual violence, these right-wing zealots remind me of the anti-Catholic folks, who do threaten violence in an effort to curtail speech that they consider fascist. They took aim at Ann Coulter this summer. I disagree with just about everything Coulter represents, but her right to express her opinions should be inviolable.

What can the church do about trolls? We must stand firm for open dialogue and Christian respect. Giving in because we don't want "controversy" is a coward's way out.
Bishop Michael Sis, right, receives a check from George Huseman at the annual Knights of Columbus appreciation dinner in Brownwood, September 16, 2017. (Courtesy photo).

EDICTAL SUMMONS
September 12, 2017
CASE: DE LA O — HERNANDEZ (MOYA)
NO.: SO/17/65

The Tribunal Office of the Catholic Diocese of San Angelo is seeking Norma Sue Hernandez (Moya).

You are hereby summoned to appear before the Tribunal of the Catholic Diocese of San Angelo, at 804 Ford Street, San Angelo, Texas 76905, on or before the 31st day of October 2017, to answer to the Petition of Richardo De La O, now introduced before the Diocesan Tribunal in an action styled, “Richardo De La O and Norma Moya, Petition for Declaration of Invalidity of Marriage.” Said Petition is identified as Case: DE LA O -- HERNANDEZ (MOYA); Protocol No.: SO/17/65, on the Tribunal Docket of the Diocese of San Angelo.

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

Given at the Tribunal of the Diocese of San Angelo on the 12th day of September 2017.

Reverend Tom Barley
MSW, MBA, M. Div.,JCL
Judicial Vicar

FIND YOUR GREATNESS
Four habits that will transform your life

Featuring: JONATHAN FANNING
When: November 4, 2017
9:00 AM – 1:30 PM
Where: Holy Angels Catholic Church
2309 A&M Ave.
San Angelo, TX 76904
Tickets: $25.00
Purchase your tickets at DynamicCatholic.com or call 866-980-7900
BISHOP

(From 3)

the people in a town meeting that they were
there to protect them. Father Stanley was at
that meeting with his people, and he spoke
He asked the soldiers, “If you are here to pro-
tect us, then why is it that so many of our peo-
ple have been disappearing since you got
here?”

Death threat lists began to circulate in the
area. In order to find safe shelter, many people
came to sleep in the church.

Several priests and catechists were kid-
napped and killed. Eventually, the name of
Father Stanley appeared on the death threat
lists. This presented him with a stark dilemma
should he leave the country to save his life,
or continue serving his parishioners in their
time of need? He wrote, “I’ve invested too
much of my life here to run.” He went to
Oklahoma to visit family briefly and consult
with his bishop.

He was home for just two months, and his
family members could tell that his heart was
back in Guatemala. When he talked with his
bishop, he said, “Bishop, I have to go back to
Guatemala, because the shepherd cannot run at
the first sign of danger.” To another he said,
“If I speak, they’ll kill me, but if I keep silent,
what kind of a shepherd would I be?”

His bishop gave him permission to return to
Santiago de Atitlán, despite the looming death
threats. Father Stanley returned to his parish in
Guatemala in time for Holy Week, and it was
two days before Holy Thursday before the
death squad came for him. He told his parishioners,
“If they come for me, light the Easter candle
and sing Easter songs.” The fateful day of his
execution was July 28, 1981. Three men snuck
into the rectory in the middle of the night.

After a struggle, they left him dead. Today, the
fatal bullet is still lodged in the wall of that
room. No one has ever been prosecuted for his
killing.

The parishioners mourned the death of their
beloved pastor. They collected his blood rever-
ently and asked if they could keep his heart in
Guatemala. His body was sent to Oklahoma City
and entombed in a crypt at Resurrection
Cemetery. His heart remains enshrined among
his beloved Tz’utujil people in a side altar of
the Santiago de Atitlán church. It is an endur-
ing testimony to the way this priest gave his
heart to the people he was sent to serve.

All of us now have Father Stanley Rother as
a friend in Heaven and a shining example of
heroic Christian virtue. I was present in
Oklahoma City for his Mass of Beatification
on September 23, 2017, in the Cox Convention
Center. It was packed to capacity, while thou-
sands were unable to fit into the building.
The collection in the Mass was taken up for the
parishes where he served in Guatemala. It was
just the second time a beatification has taken
place in the U.S., and the first beatification of a
martyr born in the U.S.

Present in the Beatification Mass were his
brother, Thomas Rother, as well as his sister,
Sr. Maria Rother, ASC, who is a religious sis-
ter in the Diocese of Rockford, Illinois, and
also youth groups from American parishes, his
relatives and friends from Okarche, parishioners
from Guatemala, bishops from around the world, the
Cardinal Prefect of the Vatican Congregation
for the Causes of the Saints, and hundreds of
people who came to sleep in the church.

I could see in the eyes of those priests a deep
gratitude for being able to concelebrate in this
historic affirmation of a regular guy from a
small town who showed us what being a priest
means. Any Catholic priest can appreciate
these words of Father Stanley: “For myself I
am a Christian. For the sake of others, I am a
priest.”

A martyr is a witness to the love of Jesus
Christ. Martyrdom is what happens when love
confronts hatred. Jesus says in John 15:19: “If
you belonged to the world, the world would
love you as its own. Because you do not
belong to the world, but I have chosen you out
of the world — therefore the world hates you.”

During the persecutions of the Roman
Empire in 197 AD, Tertullian wrote, “Kill us,
torture us, condemn us, grind us to dust; your
injustice is the proof that we are innocent...
The more often we are mown down by you,
the more in number we grow; the blood of
Christians is seed.” In fact, the martyrdom of
Fr. Stanley Rother has become the seed of
many new vocations to the priesthood in
Santiago de Atitlán. That parish was founded in
1547. For over 400 years, they produced no
priestly vocations at all. Since Fr. Stanley’s
heroic death, they have produced an abundant
stream of new seminarians and priests.

In his Mass of Beatification in Oklahoma
City, one of the Communion hymns brought
me tears. It was Vencerá el Amor by Carlos
Colón. Here are the words of that song that
captures the message of our faith: “Love shall
overcome. It will not be overcome. It will
prevail. Though the night is long, still God’s
pow’r is unchanging. Love shall overcome;
after nights of bitter weeping, there comes a brighter
dawn for saints of God’s own keeping. Love shall
overcome: from these chains our God will free
us. We will pray, much as men pray, as we pray,
for us. And the tears we cried will be a precious
off ring. And the peace of Christ will reign
forever. Love shall reign, peace shall reign,
Christ shall reign. Love shall overcome.”

OBISPO

(Para 3)

país para salvar su vida, o continuar
sirviendo a sus feligreses en sus momentos
de necesidad. Él escribió: “He invertido
dos años de mi vida aquí para fugarme.”

Se fue a Oklahoma para visitar a la familia
brevemente y consultar con su obispo.

Estaba en casa por sólo dos meses, y
miembros de su familia se dieron cuenta de
que su corazón estaba en Guatemala.

Cuando fue a hablar con su obispo, dijo:
“Señor obispo, tengo que volver a
Guatemala, porque el pastor no puede co-
rrer a la primera señal de peligro.” Después
dijo a otro: “Si hablo, ellos me matarán,
pero si guardo el silencio, ¿quién clase de
pastor sería?”

Su obispo le dio permiso para regresar a
Santiago de Atitlán, a pesar de las ame-
nazas de muerte que se avecinaban.

Padre Stanley se regresó a su parroquia en
Guatemala a tiempo para la Semana Santa,
y era sólo cuestión de unos pocos meses antes
de que el escudrúlado de la muerte viniera
por él. Les dijo a sus feligreses, “Si vienen por
mí, prenda la vela de Pascua y canten caniones de Pascua.” El fatídico
da de su ejecución fue el 28 de julio de 1981.

Los soldados lo mataron en el patio de la
rectoría a media noche. Después de una
lucha, lo dejaron muerto. Hoy en día, la
bala fatal está todavía alojada en la pared
de la habitación. Nadie ha sido procesado
por su asesinato.

Los feligreses lloraron la muerte de su
amado pastor. Colectaron su sangre e in-

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Mira ROTHER/22)
observations: millennials are very generous and service oriented, they seek answers, and want to be successful. Challenges they face in life are: dealing with conflict, learning to look at different perspectives and the value of that, there are no simple answers in life. Characteristics of this age group is individualism versus group, lack of commitment and truth is subjective. Struggles that were identified by the group when working with those in formation was the lack of understanding of commitment, and seeing the needs of the larger group. These are good issues to cover when helping a person discern their vocation.

Accompaniment of young adults is very important. They have need of mentoring. Vocation ministry is everyone’s business. God calls people all the time. We need to invite young people to consider the possibility. Look at the people Jesus invited to be disciples. Processing people is very important. We want mature, healthy people who do not have a hidden agenda of seeking recognition, status, power or control. We look at what Pope Francis has been saying about the danger of clericalism and take note of that in inviting and processing candidates.

Blessings in working with young people in formation included their desire for community, and service to others. They have much to learn and our witness of authenticity and care and help in their faith journey.

LA VIDA

(From 18)

sores auxiliares; negocios, industrias e instituciones, seglares y religiosas, contratan empleados que no trabajan tiempo completo o contratan a trabajadores independientes. Muchos tienen que manejar a dos o más trabajos para sostenerse. Otros, según parece, se han rendido.

En Utah, uno de los estados con la tasa de desempleo más baja en el país, 3.1 por ciento, los empleadores dicen que no tienen los trabajadores que necesitan.

Aún, según un reportaje en el periódico The New York Times, el 31.7 por ciento de adultos en Utah no tenían empleo o buscaban trabajan en 2016.

Aunque puede haber muchas razones para explicar ese fenómeno -- la exportación de empleo a otros países, la perdida de membresía de los sindicatos, la epidemia de medicamentos opio, y la vejez de la población -- la falta de trabajo a tiempo completo y con beneficios debe causar gran desambio en el mundo laboral.

Durante los tres años que trabajó en el periódico, tuvimos dos hijos más. Aunque no recuerdo los detalles de nuestro seguro médico, me acuerdo que cubrió todos los gastos del embarazo: visitas al médico antes y después del nacimiento y las cuentas del hospital. Nunca perdímos sueño por pena de no pagar las cuentas médicas, aunque de vez en cuando nos temimos que no pudimos pagar por varios años.

Hoy, las cuentas por un embarazo pueden costar $30,000 o más, dejando a muchas familias destituidas.

Me maravillo de todo lo que pudimos hacer con los modestos ingresos que recibía. Un año ayudamos a una familia pobre que estaba enfrentando evicción dos días antes de Navidad. Yo pague la mitad del alquiler de su habitación, y Caridades Católicas pagó la otra mitad. Hasta compramos una casa que nos costó $12,000, con un préstamo de Tom Brennan, mi mejor amigo en la universidad. El recobró sus fondos pero no nos devolvió lo que le habíamos prestado unos cientos de dólares cuando ambos estudiamos periodismo en la Universidad de Marquette.

Nuestro hijo mayor Miguel nació en 1990, y Miguel nació en el salón de nuestra casa mientras nosotros andábamos de vacaciones. Aunque había pensado que nunca nos separaríamos, hoy no están, más sin embargo viven. Vencerá el bien sobre tantas vejaciones. Vencerán también, nuestras maldades.

ROTHER

(Para 21)

abundante de nuevos seminaristas y sacerdotes.

En su Misa de Beatificación en Oklahoma City, uno de los héroes de la Comunión me hizo llorar. Fue El Amor Vencerá por Carlos Colón. Estas son las palabras de esa canción que captura el mensaje de nuestra fe: “Vencerá el amor, aunque acusen temores; y aunque hay dolor, pasarán las maldades. Vencerá el amor aunque tristes extrañemos a quienes hoy no están, más sin embargo viven. Vencerá el bien sobre tantas vejaciones. Vencerán también, nuestras oraciones. Y esas lágrimas que juntos derramamos, unirán con paz nuestros corazones. Vencerá el amor, vencerá, vencerá el amor.”

SAINT

(From 3)

of Heroic Virtue, and the Servant of God is given the title “Venerable”. This means that the Servant of God either died as a true Martyr for Christ or led a life of heroic virtue and, is worthy of imitation by the Faithful.

BLESSED

When the Servant of God has been declared a Martyr he or she may be beatified, that is, declared “Blessed”. If, on the other hand, the Servant of God has been declared to have lived a life of heroic virtue, it must be proven that one miracle has been granted by God through the intercession of the Venerable Servant of God. Then, he or she is declared “Blessed.” For a healing to be considered a true miracle, a tribunal to gather all the evidence is established in the Diocese where the event took place. It must be determined that there is no scientific explanation for the cure and that the intercession of the Venerable Servant of God is proven. The Congregation for Causes of Saints conducts its study and judgment of the cure by the testimony of medical experts that no scientific reason can explain the recovery, and of theologians to consults to verify that the intercession of the Venerable Servant of God was requested. Once again the conclusions are presented to the pope who alone can declare that the event is a true miracle. Then the Venerable Servant of God may be beatified. When someone is declared ‘Blessed’, public ecclesiastical veneration is permitted by the pope but only in the diocese or country, or religious community to which the Blessed belonged. Churches may be dedicated to the Blessed but only with the permission of the Vatican Congregation for Divine Worship.

SAINT

For all those beatified, both Martyrs and Confessors, to be canonized one miracle is required. It must be proven that this event took place through the intercession of the Blessed and after the death or of her Beatification. When this has been proven, the pope proceeds to the ceremony of Canonization, which is an act of the infallible teaching authority of the pope. By this act, the Church declares that he or she is a Saint in heaven with God. It also means that the Saint is worthy of public veneration by the universal Church, and held up as a model for imitation and a powerful intercessor for all. Catholics do not “worship” the Saint but rather venerate him.

SAINT

(From 2)

VOCATIONS

(From 10)

ACTS

We entered the retreat center and were then truly blessed with a wonderful ACTS weekend. We entered the retreat center time and worn down from storm recovery, but we left full of energy and the Holy Spirit. It was a truly blessed weekend that we will all cherish and hold in joyful memory.

I would like to personally thank all of those in West Texas who supported us in both prayer and earthly giving. Your prayers have definitely been felt.

Blessings in working with young people in formation included their desire for community, and service to others. They have much to learn and our witness of authenticity and care and help in their faith journey.

We wondered if the retreatants would become of our precious ACTS retreat would be able to

and devastation. We eventually succumbed to prayer and let the Holy Spirit take over, in which we were then truly blessed with a wonderful ACTS weekend.

We entered the retreat center time and worn down from storm recovery, but we left full of energy and the Holy Spirit. It was a truly blessed weekend that we will all cherish and hold in joyful memory.

I would like to personally thank all of those in West Texas who supported us in both prayer and earthly giving. Your prayers have definitely been felt.
this is the place where our will is still free to choose Him. When we choose Jesus, we are choosing to relate to the Second Adam (Rom. 5:12–21). The First Adam and his sin is no longer dominant in our lives. When we choose Jesus, our reason and conscience are able to guide us as they were meant to do.

Today we live in a secular western culture that is being attacked by terrorists who are inspired by their understanding of the religion of Islam. The word Islam means “submission.” It means submission to the will of God, to the will of Allah, who alone is absolutely free. Islam teaches that human beings do not have free will. Allah is one, and the Christian proclamation that God is a Trinity of Persons who is perfect love and who creates us with freedom of will to choose the good, right, and true by choosing Jesus is anathema to these Muslim terrorists. The freedom of Allah means that he can choose to do one thing today and a contradictory thing tomorrow. This is known as “voluntarism.” Human reason and conscience as gifts of God's love and as reflections of His own wisdom and righteousness are meaningless concepts for Muslim terrorists.

As Pope Benedict explains, secular western culture is woefully inadequate to deal with the threat of Muslim terrorism. In the late Middle Ages there began what the Pope calls a dehellenization of western culture (#’s 31ff.). This means the removal of Greek thought from its prior union with the biblical revelation. Dehellenization continued in the Protestant Reformers in their emphasis on the Bible alone, and continued in philosophy, particularly with Immanuel Kant, and in theology, particularly with Adolf von Harnack. Reason began to be separated from faith.

Modern rationalism does not recognize the receptive nature of reason and that reason is meant to be receptive of the gifts of faith brings. Rather, reason becomes an independent faculty and, as a faculty separate from faith, it is incapable of seeing a picture of the whole truth. In other words, secular reason is incapable of seeing anything but "particulars." The result is over-specialization in which each discipline becomes ever more narrowly focused.

This has led to a secular western culture that is fragmented, with no basic belief that unifies the culture. The result has been an emphasis on the primacy of the freedom of the individual human will. It has become the right of every individual person to determine what is right and wrong, good and evil, true and false. It has become the right of every individual person to create his or her own reality.

This has led to the dominance of a romantic emphasis on feeling in western culture. It is usual to be asked how we “feel” about something rather than what we “think” or “believe” about it. This emphasis on individual feeling creates a terrible (one might say demonic) “inward turning” in the attempt of each individual to make him/herself a person he/she is not. This is the opposite of Jesus' teaching: "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it; and whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel's will save it" (Mk. 8:34b-35, RSVCE).

When we attempt to save our own lives, we discover our inner darkness, a darkness that is empty of meaning. We try to drive out our inner darkness by embracing one particular cause or ideology after another. But a particular cause or ideology is no substitute for the wholeness that is the light of Christ. When causes or ideologies fail us, we succumb to alcohol, drugs, pornography, and sexual fantasies, mistaking love for a desire to be loved.

This western secular culture based on the right of every person to will his or her own reality clashes with a Muslim terrorist culture that insists that only Allah is free to determine what is good, right, and true. And Allah is free to contradict himself from one day to the next. This is the perilous sea in which the Ark of the Catholic Church must sail today. We can be thankful for those moderate Muslims who listen to their God-given reason and conscience regardless of what Islam might teach them. Ayaan Hirsi Ali, in her book, Heretic: Why Islam Needs A Reformation Now, confesses her faith and says, “Ultimately I believe it is human reason and human conscience that will prevail.” (250)

A principal purpose of Pope Benedict’s lecture is to call the people of the West to return to the truth about God and human beings revealed by God and taught by Christianity in the providential union of faith and reason. And the basic learning and living of the truth of Christianity is done in the family. The Catholic family today can access this Lecture of Pope Benedict on line, study it, and use it as a guide to shape the spiritual formation of the Catholic family, as families become the center for the saving work of Jesus Christ in the Church and also the center for the renewal of our western culture. A useful way for a family to begin to read the writings of Pope Benedict is to do so devotionally using an anthology of his writings called Benedictus: Day by Day with Pope Benedict XVI, ed. Rev. Peter John Cameron, O.P., published by Magnificat/Ignatius Press.
BANQUET

(From 2)

“I thank you all,” the bishop said, “for your preparation and the gift of hospitality.”

The names of 14 countries were placed on tables, indicating some of the countries that refugees in Abilene come from. Abilene is home to a satellite office of the International Rescue Committee, a nonprofit agency that resettles refugees globally.

The first refugees arrived in Abilene in January 2004. Since then, the IRC has resettled about 100 refugees a year, from various countries, in Abilene. Many of them stay and some become citizens.

All are integrated into the community and are welcomed by the churches of Abilene. Abilene is home to four Catholic parishes and all of them, along with the St. Vincent DePaul Society, reach out to refugees.

In the parish hall, guests like Ryan Leveling, 18, had his plate piled high with foods from many different countries.

“I just took a little bit of everything,” said Leveling, a senior at Jim Ned High School in Tuscola, a small community about 20 miles from Abilene. “I’m not real picky — I’ll just eat anything they put in front of me.”

Leveling, who has an offer for a scholarship to run track at the University of Texas, is considering college in Europe. That’s one reason he was happy about the Share the Journey service the international dinner afterwards. He likes diversity, and he found it at the service and dinner.

At a nearby table, Agnes Mami, a native of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, sat with two daughters, enjoying a variety of food. All three ladies were dressed in colorful dresses, representative of clothing in the Congo, that Mami made.

Even though she’s from the Congo and was sitting at a table marked “Burundi,” Mami said she didn’t look for those foods from those particular countries.

“I wanted a chance to try other foods,” she said.

While guests dined on international foods, children with the Ballet Folklorico from St. Vincent Pallotti Catholic Church in Abilene entertained. They swirled and danced to lively music, bringing hoots and loud applause from the appreciative audience.

Tasting it all in was Father Isidore Ochiabuto, priest at St. Francis Catholic Church in Abilene. A native of Nigeria, Ochiabuto has been in the United States and in the Diocese of San Angelo 10 years. He arrived at St. Francis in July. He previously served in Fort Stockton, Big Lake, and Odessa.

Ochiabuto is from Nigeria and he sat at the table labeled “Nigeria,” but he was experiencing the international flavor of the event with foods from various countries. Many of the vegetables are the same, he explained, such as greens, yams, beans, and rice.

“It’s how they are prepared, that’s the difference,” he said.

Fr. Ochiabuto had filled his plate with lemon rice from India and Mexican enchiladas and beans. It was symbolic of how he sees humankind — people originate in different parts of the world, dress differently, speak different languages, and eat different foods.

“But we are all the same,” Ochiabuto said, “and Abilene is a beautiful place to experience that.”

Help after Harvey

Fr. Bernard Getigan blesses items brought St. Mary’s Central Catholic School children to donate to the victims of Hurricane Harvey. The blessing occurred during a Mass September 1, 2017. (Courtesy photo).