“We must never turn our backs on our heritage of integrating newcomers into our culture.”

— Bishop Michael Sis

Coverage, pages 2, 4, 5
Jesuit priest to share thoughts on how not to say Mass

“Faith grows when it is well expressed in celebration. Good celebrations can foster and nourish faith. Poor celebrations may weaken it.”
— “Sing to the Lord: Music in Divine Worship” (USCCB 2007)

By Jimmy Patterson
Editor / West Texas Angelus

SAN ANGELO — Priests from throughout the Diocese of San Angelo will gather February 20-21 to hear how not to say the Mass.

No, really.

The Spring Priest’s Conference on the Liturgy at Christ the King Retreat Center will have as its featured presenter Fr. Dennis Smolarski, SJ, a Jesuit priest whose love for the liturgy led him to write the book, “How Not to Say the Mass: A Guidebook on Liturgical Principles.”

Fr. Smolarski delves into all aspects of the liturgy from introductory rites to concluding rites. Not surprisingly, much attention has been given to homilies.

Fr. Smolarski quotes from Bishop Fulton Sheen, who said, “A sermon is like drilling for oil. After the first 10 minutes, if you haven’t struck oil, don’t bore any longer.” Humorist Mark Twain also noted, “No sinner is ever saved after the first 20 minutes of a sermon.”

Twenty minutes for a homily? Arguments in favor of that length, Fr. Smolarski said, are hard to find and suggested that homilies are most effective if they are no longer than five minutes in daily Mass and between 8-10 minutes on Sundays. Homilies any longer, Fr. Smolarski said, should be confined to feast days or special celebrations.

“One thing priests can learn is to not overdo it,” he said. “The hardest sermons to write are the shortest.”

Another good rule of thumb: Only leave those in the pews with a maximum of 3-5 “nuggets,” as he calls items of advice meant to inspire. Remembering any more is not easy for the typical churchgoer.

Some of the best advice Fr. Smolarski ever heard in homily preparation is: Be prepared. Be clear. Be seated.

Fr. Smolarski earned a doctorate in computer science at the University of Illinois and teaches mathematics and computer science at the University of Santa Clara, Calif.

Vasquez: ‘Families will be torn apart’ by Trump’s wall, immigration plan

By Barb Fraze
Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON — The chairman of the U.S. bishops’ Committee on Migration criticized President Donald Trump’s executive memorandum to construct a wall along the U.S.-Mexico border, saying it would “put immigrant lives needlessly in harm’s way.”

Bishop Jose S. Vasquez of Austin, chairman of the U.S. bishops’ Committee on Migration, also criticized Trump’s memorandum on a surge in immigrant detention and deportation forces, saying it would “tear families apart and spark fear and panic in communities.”

Trump signed two executive memorandums on national security Jan. 25 during a visit to the Department of Homeland Security.

Earlier, White House press secretary Sean Spicer said the wall, a cornerstone of Trump’s election campaign, would “stem the flow of drugs, crime and illegal immigration” along the southern border. He also said Trump’s top priority was the nation’s security.

But hours later, Bishop Vasquez issued a statement saying that construction of the wall would “make migrants, especially vulnerable women and children, more susceptible to traffickers and smugglers.”

Additionally, the construction of such a wall destabilizes the many vibrant and beautifully interconnected communities that live peacefully along the border.

“Instead of building walls, at this time, my brother bishops and I will continue to follow the example of Pope Francis. We will ‘look to build bridges between people, bridges that allow us to break down the walls of exclusion and exploitation.’”

During a February 2016 visit to Mexico, Pope Francis traveled to the U.S. border at Ciudad Juarez and pleaded for the plight of immigrants. He said those who refuse to offer safe shelter and passage were saying that construction of the wall would “make migrants, especially vulnerable women and children, more susceptible to traffickers and smugglers.”

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El Cuidado de Crianza hace una Diferencia en la Vida de un Niño

Obispo Michael J. Sis

Una de las oportunidades más desafiantes y gratificantes para la práctica de las obras corporales y espirituales de misericordia es la experiencia de ser padres de crianza. Muchos de estos niños y adolescentes han sufrido un trauma y necesitan un lugar de amor y cuidado. La adopción de un niño puede ser un llamado muy especial. Se trata de dar un hogar permanente, un hogar que es el lugar de los niños para ir a llorar, a que se sientan cuidados y aceptados. Los buenos padres muestran amor y aceptación. No todos los niños de crianza se comportan de forma adecuada. El ser un padre de crianza es un llamado muy especial. Se trata de dar un hogar permanente, un hogar que es el lugar de los niños para ir a llorar, a que se sientan cuidados y aceptados. Los buenos padres muestran amor y aceptación. No todos los niños de crianza se comportan de forma adecuada. El ser un padre de crianza es un llamado muy especial. Se trata de dar un hogar permanente, un hogar que es el lugar de los niños para ir a llorar, a que se sientan cuidados y aceptados. Los buenos padres muestran amor y aceptación. No todos los niños de crianza se comportan de forma adecuada. El ser un padre de crianza es un llamado muy especial.
‘We will continue to seek to provide pastoral care, charitable assistance to new immigrants.’

(EDITOR’S NOTE: The following are prepared remarks delivered by San Angelo Bishop Michael J. Sis at an Interfaith Prayer Vigil on the Tom Green County Courthouse steps, January 31, 2017.)

Good evening. I’d like to start with a prayer, and then share a few words. Let us pray: “Lord God, we thank you for the chance to live in freedom in this beautiful country. Please guide this evening’s prayer vigil in a spirit of mutual respect. Lead our nation down the right path in this critical moment in our history. We depend completely on you, who live and reign forever and ever. Amen.”

One of the most controversial social issues of our day is the question of immigration. According to the United Nations, there are now more than 65 million people in the world who are forcibly displaced from their homes...

There are many places in the Bible that speak of the immigration experience:

- God inspired Abraham and Sarah to move from Ur of the Chaldeans and settle in the land of Canaan.
- Moses led the people of Israel out of Egypt to the Holy Land.
- Jesus, Mary, and Joseph were temporarily refugees in the foreign land of Egypt in order to escape the violence of King Herod.
- One of God’s commandments in the book of Exodus relates to migrants: “You shall not wrong a stranger or oppress him, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt” (Ex 22:21).
- Jesus teaches us in the Gospel of Mathew that, when we welcome the stranger, we are actually welcoming Christ himself, who will say in the Last Judgment, “I was a stranger and you welcomed me” (Matthew 25:35).

At the vigil, we will be judged according to how we have responded to him.

People have a basic human right to migrate, in order to find a safe place to live, and to be able to put food on the table.

Of course, every country has the right and responsibility to maintain the integrity of its borders and the rule of law. Those who enter a country, or seek refugee settlement, or apply for immigration status, should be carefully screened in order to protect the common good.

The U.S. government has a legitimate role in intercepting unauthorized migrants who attempt to travel to the United States. Illegal immigration should not be condoned or encouraged, because it is not good for society or for the migrant, who then lives outside the law and in the shadows.

What is needed is comprehensive immigration reform. The economy of the United States depends upon a certain amount of immigrant labor, but in the current system the number of available visas for workers is not sufficient to meet our demand for foreign laborers.

Rather than maintain a system that feeds upon keeping people in the shadows, it would make more sense to grant enough work visas for the workers that we need.

Speaking for the Catholic Church, we will continue to provide pastoral care and charitable assistance to new immigrants. We welcome immigrants to participate actively in our local congregations. We will continue to assist people to regularize their immigration status, and our agencies will continue to process and place refugees after screening by the federal government.

We believe that our faith calls us to welcome the stranger, to treat others with compassion, and to live with a spirit of solidarity for all human beings. Thank you all for caring enough to be here this evening. God bless you.

San Angeloans come together in wake of changes in federal immigration laws

By Jimmy Patterson
Editor/West Texas Angelus

SAN ANGELO — It is only through the taming down of harsh rhetoric, the elimination of hateful dialogue and the development of respect for each other that we can most effectively weather the current divisive political climate in America.

Perhaps it is the only way.

Retired Department of Defense General David Hawkins, now pastor at Christian Fellowship Baptist Church in San Angelo, was one of several speakers on hand for an Interfaith Prayer Vigil on the steps of the Tom Green County Courthouse, January 31, 2017, in San Angelo.

Pastor Hawkins’ remarks, as well as those made by David Currie, the event organizer, and San Angelo Bishop Michael J. Sis, led to repeated applause and a stirring, crowd-led a cappella rendition of “Amazing Grace” that brought the brief vigil to a fitting close.

An estimated 150, many of whom wore t-shirts and carried signs with calls for peace and inclusivity, were present for the brief but moving vigil.

Bishop Sis assured that the Catholic Church would continue to provide pastoral care and charitable assistance to new immigrants (see Bishop Sis’ complete remarks at left).

The vigil was held in response to the January 28 ruling by the Trump Administration that puts more stringent immigration regulations in place. We need to cover the hatred that is simmering and boiling is addressed. We need to cover the issues without castigating the person.”

Pastor Hawkins, who worked under three presidents while at DOD, did not condone Trump’s executive orders, but noted that President Bill Clinton “did similar things when he came in and had to learn from it.”

Hawkins said judging by Trump’s body language, Trump is beginning to realize the size and perspective of the job he has as president,” adding that he felt Trump would learn from his experiences in the early going.

Currie emphasized the event’s non-partisan nature, and stressed how an event such as the Interfaith Prayer Vigil gives legs to citizenship and brings to life the Constitution.

“I would like to call upon Republicans and Democrats alike that we don’t have a religious test in this country,” Currie said. “When we do, we violate our Constitution and the will of God.”

Currie said he felt what the country has encountered through the more stringent immigration regulations enacted by Trump will be looked back on as “a minor setback.”

“Maybe this is a mistake that helps us grow and realize that we don’t want to be this kind of country,” Currie said.
A framed picture of Our Lady of Guadalupe is seen at a house near the U.S.-Mexico border fence in 2016 in Ciudad Juarez, Mexico. President Donald Trump enacted two executive memorandums to deal with security, including one that calls for construction of a wall along the U.S.-Mexico border. (CNS photo/Jose Luis Gonzalez, Reuters)

USCCB issues statement strongly opposing Trump’s wall along U.S.-Mexico border

WASHINGTON — President Donald J. Trump in January issued an executive order to construct a wall at the U.S./Mexico border, to significantly increase immigration detention and deportation, and to disregard the judgment of state and local law enforcement on how best to protect their communities.

The U.S./Mexico border, spanning approximately 2,000 miles, already has roughly 700 miles of fencing and barriers that was constructed under the George W. Bush administration. In response to the decision to build a wall on the U.S./Mexico border, Bishop Joe Vasquez, Chair of the Committee of Migration and Bishop of the Diocese of Austin, stated:

"I am disheartened that the President has prioritized building a wall on our border with Mexico. This action will put immigrant lives needlessly in harm's way. Construction of such a wall will only make migrants, especially vulnerable women and children, more susceptible to traffickers and smugglers. Additionally, the construction of such a wall destabilizes the many vibrant and beautifully interconnected communities that live peacefully along the border. Instead of building walls, at this time, my brother bishops and I will continue to follow the example of Pope Francis. We will "look to build bridges between people, bridges that allow us to break down the walls of exclusion and exploitation.""

In regard to the announcement of the planned surge in immigrant detention and deportation forces, Bishop Vasquez added:

"The announced increase in immigrant detention space and immigration enforcement activities is alarming. It will tear families apart and spark fear and panic in communities. While we respect the right of our federal government to control our borders and ensure security for all Americans, we do not believe that a large scale escalation of immigrant detention and increased use of enforcement in immigrant communities is the way to achieve those goals. Instead, we remain firm in our commitment to comprehensive, compassionate, and common-sense reform. We fear that the policies announced today will make it much more difficult for the vulnerable to access protection in our country. Everyday my brother bishops and I witness the harmful effects of immigrant detention in our ministries. We experience the pain of severed families that struggle to maintain a semblance of normal family life. We see traumatized children in our schools and in our churches. The policies announced today will only further upend immigrant families."

"We will continue to support and stand in solidarity with immigrant families. We remind our communities and our nation that these families have intrinsic value as children of God. And to all those impacted by today's decision, we are here to walk with you and accompany you on this journey," Bishop Vasquez said.

At the Jan. 25 White House briefing, Spicer reiterated that Mexico would end up paying for construction of the wall. He said Trump would work with Congress on finding money to pay for the construction, noting, "there are a lot of funding mechanisms that can be used."

Trump's second executive memorandum also directed John F. Kelly, secretary of homeland security, to look at how federal funding streams can be cut for states and cities that illegally harbor immigrants. Trump said such "sanctuary cities" create a problem for taxpayers.

"You have American people out there working" and their tax funds are sent to places that do not enforce the law, he said.

The executive memorandums did not address the issue of DACA, the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program, nor did they discuss emigration from the Middle East, which Spicer said would be addressed later in the week.

In 2006, President George W. Bush signed the Secure Fence Act, which authorized several hundred miles of fencing along the 2,000-mile U.S. frontier with Mexico. The Associated Press reported that legislation led to the construction of about 700 miles of various kinds of fencing designed to block both vehicles and pedestrians, primarily in Texas, New Mexico, Arizona and California. It said the final sections were completed after President Barack Obama took office in 2009.

AP reported that a 1970 treaty with Mexico requires that structures along the border cannot disrupt the flow of rivers that define the U.S.-Mexican border along Texas and 24 miles in Arizona.

The bishops of Arizona, which includes 389 miles of border with Mexico, reiterated their call for comprehensive immigration reform.

They said their "hearts and prayers go out to refugee families who have faced terrible violence and lost their own homes and now need a new place to live."

"Focusing on building a new border wall has the potential to take us away from these important considerations that impact vulnerable families and will ultimately be useless. Pope Francis has called for bridges, not walls, between people," the four bishops said in a statement.

In a blog, Cardinal Daniel N. DiNardo of Galveston-Houston reiterated the migration commission concerns about the border wall and an increase in deportations and detentions.

"The Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston is committed to an immigration policy that protects human rights, dignity and the homeland at the same time," he added.
Catholic Foundation of San Angelo accepting applications for 2017 grants

- Grants totaling $36,500 will be available in 2017 from Unrestricted Endowment Funds at the Catholic Foundation of San Angelo for projects and programs of parishes, schools, and Catholic organizations throughout the diocese. Interested parties can apply for a grant by reviewing the guidelines for a grant and completing the Grant Application found at www.catholicfoundationsanangelo.org.

- The Board of Trustees will usually only fund grant requests between $500 and $3,000 for programs and projects that can be completed or substantially completed within one year of receiving the grant. No grants will be made for travel expenses.

- All applications must include the pastor’s signature and are due by 5 p.m. on April 1, 2017. The Board of Trustees will review the Grant Applications and approve grants addressing some of the most critical needs throughout the Diocese of San Angelo at a meeting in April. All grants made will be paid before June 30.

- Any person that would like to assist the Catholic Foundation in this endeavor in the future should consider making a tax-deductible donation to its Unrestricted Endowment Fund. A donation to this endowment fund is an investment in the future of the diocese, addressing the needs of the Church for years to come. The income and gain from the fund is distributed through the Spend Rate adopted by the Trustees each year. The principal of the gift is preserved in perpetuity.

Agricultural Leader Workshop in Big Spring

BIG SPRING — The Diocese of San Angelo and Catholic Rural Life invite you to participate in Vocation of the Agricultural Leader Workshop 9 a.m.-1 p.m., Tuesday, April 25, 2017 at Holy Trinity Catholic Church in Big Spring. This workshop is for anyone involved or interested in agriculture — producers, processors, consumers and anyone willing to consider how our Catholic faith informs all aspects of agriculture.

- Farming is not easy work. Given the complexities of agricultural production—the natural elements, changing climate, global competition, and constant pressure to make a living while being good stewards of the natural resources—there is a great need for ethical leadership in addressing these challenges and understanding our relationship to others, God and the environment.

- The workshop will include a presentation of a newly released document titled Vocation of the Agricultural Leader. Most Rev. Michael Sis will participate. Jim Ennis, executive director of Catholic Rural Life, is the keynote presenter.

- Contact Dcn. Charlie Evans at cevans@sanangelodiocese.org to make your reservation or call 432-634-6170 with questions. A workshop fee of $25 will cover lunch and a copy of Vocation of the Agricultural Leader. No registration fee for students, but a reservation is required to plan for lunch.

**Clergy Appreciation Dinner**

Bishop Michael J. Sis, center in top photo and photo at right, with women religious of the diocese, above, and priests, at right, who attended the annual Clergy Appreciation Dinner at St. Stephen’s Church in Midland, January 19, 2017.

Photos by Alan Torre / aptorre.com)

Pope Francis: Conversion should include changing way of thinking, not just living

VATICAN CITY (CNS) -- True conversion means Christians must not only change their way of living, but also transform their way of thinking in order to respond to Christ’s call to proclaim the Gospel, Pope Francis said.

"It is a transformation of thought. It is not about changing garments but habits!” the pope said Jan. 22 during his Angelus address.

- The pope reflected on a recent Sunday Gospel reading (Mt. 4, 12-23), which describes Jesus beginning his ministry in Galilee, a place that was a not only a geographic "periphery," but also considered religiously impure because it was "full of pagans."

- "Great things for the history of salvation were certainly not expected from Galilee," the pope said. Yet, "the light of Christ is spread precisely from the periphery."

- Jesus’ "style and method" was going out to encounter people rather than waiting for them to come to him, the pope said. Like his call to the fishermen to follow him, Jesus calls each person not in "an extraordinary or sensational way but in our everyday lives. And there — in this dialogue with him in our everyday lives — our heart changes."

- After reciting the Angelus prayer, Pope Francis led the people in St. Peter’s Square in praying a Hail Mary for the victims of an avalanche that buried a hotel in the Apennine Mountains after a series of earthquakes in central Italy.

- The pope also thanked rescuers who had saved nine people. As of Jan. 23, the death toll stood at six, but another 22 people were missing and believed buried underneath mounds of snow and ice.

- "With prayer and affection, I am close to the families whose dear ones were among the victims," the pope said. "I encourage all those who are committed with great generosity in rescue efforts and assistance, as well as the local churches, which are doing their utmost to alleviate the sufferings and difficulties."
Generation Not Lost
Young adults are witnesses, millenial saints

By Fr. Francis Onyekozuru
Director, Newman Center
Angelo State University

SAN ANTONIO — During one of the keynote sessions at the annual SEEK2017 conference for college students in San Antonio, I went to the very back to take a panoramic view of the incredible crowd and experience. It was worth soaking in like a sponge. Then it occurred to me that our generation is actually not lost.

Ours is a generation of young people challenged by the tragedies of technological brainwashing, and the aggressive dive toward atheism with its simultaneous proactive efforts to relegate God to the background. It is a generation challenged by terrorism, refugee crises, division, and hate. It is a generation of young people faced with the tricks of declarationist nominalism and ideological colonization. It is a generation born into a world of chronic capitalism with its offspring of instant gratification, consumerism, and pressuring materialism.

None of these young people asked for any of these, yet they find themselves having to navigate through them to follow God. Despite being born into these challenging times, this generation is sincerely striving to pull towards the God who created us. They swim to the God who is with us and to the Spirit of God without whom there is no Church; without whom there is no faith; and without whom every generation would be lost.

Seeing thousands of college-age young adults kneeling down, sitting on the floor or standing up in Eucharistic Adoration without their parents twisting their arms or compelling them is, in itself, hope-inducing. Thousands of young adults standing in long lines for hours, yearning to go to Confession shows the profound impact of this gracious Sacrament and highlights their efforts to be buddies with God.

Seeing a great number of clergy and religious in their clerical and religious attire bearing witness to Christ by their very presence is, in itself, spirit-soaring.

Our generation is actually trying to follow Christ. This generation of young people is remarkably seeking to do the right things. Whoever said that this is a cursed generation, whoever said that our generation is lost, whoever said that there is no hope for this generation, such a person may have it all wrong. Such a person may want to experience what these 13,000 young people experience, to hear what we hear, to see what we see, and to feel what 13,000 young folks feel. This experience proves that this generation is rising up. They are cheering up. They are looking up. They are hoping up and marching up. They are persevering upward and looking up to the Maker of our being.

With this experience, we have witnessed young saints with tattoos and body piercings! We witnessed saints that rock out to pop songs, hip-hop, rock-n-roll, country, reggae, jazz, and gospel music. We witnessed millenial saints, although scarred or dented by the world into which they were born, remain resolute like soldiers militating against all odds. Thus, they are bona fide members of the Church militant.

Ours is not a lost generation, but a generation that is swimming against the heavy current of the ungodly oceans surrounding us.

God is alive! The young are alive! Hope is alive! May this realization bring consolation and relief to the hearts of parents and grandparents who wonder where our generation is heading.

SEEK inspires college students to evangelize at home campuses

By Ann Franco-Guzman
Catholic News Service

SAN ANTONIO — In need of reigniting the fire for his Catholic faith, Jeremy Martins found the flame he needed during SEEK 2017.

"SEEK is the log I was waiting for," said Martins, a junior at Benedictine College in Atchison, Kansas. "It has been two years since a real encounter with Christ."

He told Catholic News Service that the conference, sponsored Jan. 3-7 by the Fellowship of Catholic University Students, known as FOCUS, generated a new excitement even though he previously had committed two years of his life to mission work that involved evangelizing young people and help them overcome "the poverty of spirit" in their lives.

Martins was not alone. About 13,000 people, almost exclusively young adults, attended the biennial SEEK conference at San Antonio's Henry B. Gonzalez Convention Center. The five-day event focused on the theme "What Moves You."

"I know that if they are from my university and attended SEEK, we can now bring this experience that we have had together back to campus with us. We can talk about it and show what we learned on our university campus," Martins told Catholic News Service.

Speakers at SEEK included Father Mike Schmitz, director of youth and young adult ministry for the Diocese of Duluth, Minnesota; theologian Edward Sri; Sister Bethany Madonna, a member of the Sisters of Life; and Sarah Swafford, founder of Emotional Virtue Ministries.

Father Schmitz reminded his listeners to "not be confused by this age. But be transformed by the renewal of your mind. Our call is to live like Jesus."

Austin Palen, a junior at Kansas State University, came away with "pages and pages of notes" from the talk.

Kylee Mernagh, a freshman at the school, also appreciated how Father Schmitz urged participants to "strap our boots on" in order to live their faith in the world. She attended the conference with several of her sorority sisters from Pi Beta Phi.

"It was helpful knowing we'd see these people at everyday events," she said afterward. "Knowing what it seems that everyone is thinking differently, you're not the only person with morality. You know others have similar values."

Mernagh said her sorority sister brainstormed about encouraging Catholic members from other fraternities and sororities to not be afraid of living their faith. "If each house took one hour of adoration, how cool would it be?" she said.

It's such reactions that conference organizers hoped would resonate in the future among the college-age participants.

Craig Miller, FOCUS president, told CNS that he hoped that the most important thing participants take from the conference is "the knowledge that Jesus Christ loves them and that they all have a father who loves them and will be with them through everything."

"Knowing what you are made for gives you purpose and knowing that you are born as son or daughter of God brings you in relationship with your creator," he said.

(See SEEK/22)
Sacred chalice used for only third documented time in Menard during seminarians’ December visit

By Terrell Kelley
Chair / Menard County Historical Commission

MENARD— The chalice at right, made of pewter, shows its simple, yet appropriate design. The missionaries at Misión de Santa Cruz de San Sabá in 18th century Menard County were all Franciscans, and as followers of Saint Francis of Assisi, they took an oath of poverty, to include absolute simplicity in all aspects of their lives. The chalice certainly reflects those Franciscan virtues.

The chalice was graciously brought to Menard for a visit by diocesan seminarians, on December 19, 2016, by Milli Riley Williams, Director of the Fort Croghan Museum in Burnet, only after obtaining the approval of the Fort Croghan Board of Directors.

According to Milli, the chalice was found in a field near the Mission site during the 1880s by a John Chamberlain, a surveyor out of Burnet, who was working in Menard. He spotted a metallic glint in the ground, got off his horse and dug the chalice out of the dirt. Chamberlain took the chalice back to Burnet where it remained in his family until it was donated to the Fort Croghan Museum.

While it has not been authoritatively confirmed to date as coming from the Mission Santa Cruz de San Sabá, we have more than a 90 percent certainty that it is as purported to be.

Of note, we can actually date each time the chalice has been used in the celebration of Roman Catholic Mass over the last 259 years:

- The first was on the morning of March 16, 1758. Each of the three mission priests celebrated Mass daily, using a consecrated chalice. When 2,000 hostile Indians appeared, Father Santiesteban was still saying mass in the Mission Chapel. His body was subsequently found in the charred remains of the mission church, where he had been beheaded. After pillaging and burning the mission, the hostiles loaded up their loot and rode off. More than likely, the chalice was lost at some point only to be discovered 120 years or so later by Chamberlain.

- The second instance was on June 9, 2007 during the Mass at the Old Sacred Heart Church to celebrate the 250th Anniversary of the founding of the Mission. San Angelo Bishop Michael J. Sis officiating. Father Santiesteban was still saying mass in the Mission Chapel. His body was subsequently found in the charred remains of the mission chapel, where he had been beheaded. After pillaging and burning the mission, the hostiles loaded up their loot and rode off. More than likely, the chalice was lost at some point only to be discovered 120 years or so later by Chamberlain.

- The latest instance was on December 19, 2016, again at the Old Sacred Heart Church, with San Angelo Bishop Michael J. Sis officiating. Milli, once again, came from Burnet so that we could use the Mission Chalice for its original sacred purpose.

All pretty amazing, when you think about it. We certainly owe a lot to Milli and the Fort Croghan Board of Directors.

Knights and Ladies of the Holy Sepulchre gather in Midland

Front row, left to right. Lady Mary Gill, LHS; Lady Linda McGuire-Dreyer, LCHS; Lady Milla Gibson, LHS; Lady Celia Morales, LHS; Bishop Michael J. Sis, KC*HS; Lady Judy Duke, LHS; Lady LaVerne Morgan, LCHS; Lady Roberta Brandecker, LHS. Second row (l-r) Sir Lawrence Gill, KHS; Lady Barbara Stoltz, LHS; Lady Patricia Collier, LHS; Lady Martha Schwartz, LHS; Lady Carolyn Rhode, LC*HS; Sir Felipe Morales, KHS; Sir David Boutin, KHS; Lady Cathi Boutin, LHS; Lady Kathleen Webster, LCHS; Sir Robert Franklin Duke, KHS; Lady Betty Tomlin, LHS; Sir Thomas Morgan, KCHS; Sir Edward Brandecker, KHS. Third row (l-r) Sir Michael Stoltz, KHS; Sir Thomas Collier, KHS; Sir Floyd Schwartz, KHS; Sir Joseph Rhode, KC*HS; Sir Don Tomlin, KHS. Fourth row (l-r) Sir Michael Canon, KCHS; Lady Judith Canon, LCHS; Lady Donna Cox, LHS; Sir James Cox, KHS; Lady Christe Gasser, LHS; Sir Ron Gasser, KHS; Sir David Eyler, KCHS; Lady Allison Eyler, LCHS; Sir Richard Folger, KC*HS; Lady Lois Folger, LC*HS; Sir Michael Langford, KHS; Lady Patricia Langford, LHS; Sir Jim Webster, KCHS; Lady Dedria Dickman, LCHS; Sir Norbert Dickman, KCHS; Lady Lucy Thomas, LC*HS; Sir Bob Thomas, KC*HS; Lady Evelyn Martin, LGCHS; Sir Brian Martin, KGCCHS. At the above gathering, January 28, 2017, at the Petroleum Club of Midland, six members were invested: Sir Edward Brandecker, KHS; Lady Roberta Kalafut Brandecker, LHS; Sir James Cox, KHS; Lady Donna Cox, LHS; Sir Ron D. Gasser, KHS, and Lady Christe Gasser, LHS, and six were promoted (only two were able to attend: Sir James Webster, KCHS and Lady Kathleen Webster, LCHS).

Blessing of the Throat

Father Michael Holzmann blesses a young girl’s throat after Mass Feb. 3, the feast of St. Blaise, at Holy Cross Church in Nesconset, N.Y. The blessing invokes the intercession of the fourth-century bishop and martyr credited with saving the life of a boy who was choking on a fish bone. (CNS photo/Gregory A. Shemitz)
Speaking of Saints

‘Second Benedict’ brought reforms that helped establish Benedictine order

By Mary Lou Gibson

His birth name was Witiza and he was born into a noble Visigothic family in about 750. As a young man he was a courtier to King Pepin III and then Charlemagne. Later, as a soldier he took part in a campaign in Lombardy where he was nearly drowned in the Tesino near Paris while trying to save his brother. Editor Michael Walsh writes in Butler’s Lives of the Saints that after this incident, Witiza made a vow to quit the world entirely.

He left the army and went to the abbey of Saint-Seine where he was admitted as a monk and took the name of his patron, Benedict, the saint who 200 years earlier produced the Rule for monastic life. After about three years, he returned to Languedoc and lived as a hermit on family property on the banks of the river Aniane. He was soon joined by others. His disciples worked in the fields, did other manual labor as well as copying books.

Paul Burns writes in Butler’s Lives of the Saints that as the community grew, they moved to where a monastery could be built. In time, this monastery had more than 300 monks and it became the place where Benedict of Aniane guided monastic reform throughout France. As his influence grew, he was appointed to supervise all the monasteries in the region and to apply the Rule of St. Benedict to all of them.

David Farmer writes in the Oxford Dictionary of Saints that over many years the monasteries in the empire had suffered from lay ownership and Viking attacks. It was also a time in the Holy Roman Empire when ecclesiastical affairs were very much the business of emperors. So it was a natural progression that Benedict of Aniane was enlisted by the Frankish emperor Louis the Pious to apply the Rule of St. Benedict to all the monasteries in his domain.

Benedict’s zeal for monastic reform was fueled by the many abuses and the variety of observances that had crept into monasteries over the previous two centuries. By imposing the Rule of St. Benedict on all the monks throughout the Empire, Benedict of Aniane wanted to remove motives for jealousy and to encourage charity. Burns notes that he placed more emphasis on scholarship and spiritual reading and that as the community grew, they moved to where a monastery could be built. In time, it became a place where Benedict of Aniane guided monastic reform throughout France.

His reform legislation was enacted in 816 at the Council of Aachen. Richard McBrien writes in the Lives of the Saints that it stressed poverty, chastity, and obedience, and the importance of daily Mass, keeping of the liturgical hours, and standardizing intake of food and drink. Benedict emphasized teaching, writing and artistic work over manual labor for his monks who were also clerics. Like his patron and namesake, Benedict of Aniane had turned away from a very austere life to a more moderate community monasticism, according to Farmer. His reforms definitively established the Benedictines as a religious order.

Benedict of Aniane also compiled a book of homilies to be used by monks. His most important work was the Concord of Rules in which he assimilated the rules of St. Benedict with those of other patriarchs of monastic observance to show their similarity.

John Delaney writes in the Dictionary of Saints that Benedict of Aniane is considered the restorer of Western monasticism and is often called the “second Benedict.” His overall aim, according to Burns, was to enable monks to pass “from faith to sight” — for understanding to blossom into contemplation of God. These reforms marked the greatest turning point in Western monasticism since its foundation.

Benedict suffered various illnesses in his final years and died in his monastery in 821. His feast day is February 11. It is not on the General Roman Calendar but is a major celebration in Benedictine communities.

Mary Lou Gibson writes about saints from her home in Austin.
The Dignity and Nature of Women

The mission of women in culture and society

(Fourth in a 4-part series)

By Lisa Martinez

St. John Paul II taught that women influence society by applying their gifts in two areas of mission. We discussed the first area, the mission of motherhood, in last month’s article. This article concludes our series by discussing women’s mission of transforming our society for the better, for Christ.

Challenges to the mission of women

John Paul teaches that women should be in the frontline of efforts to build a culture of life. In fact, the affirmation of women’s dignity must be the basis of this new culture. He says that the very future of the world depends so much on the awareness women have of themselves. It is also important that proper recognition should be guaranteed to them. In the area of education for example, John Paul stresses that in this work women show a kind of cultural and spiritual motherhood which has great value for the development of persons and the future of society.

Promoting an awareness of the dignity of women is critical, since we have inherited a history that has conditioned us to a large extent. This means that often the dignity of women has not been developed and their rights unrepresented. Sometimes they have been shifted to the margins of society and even reduced to servitude. In every time and place, this conditioning has been an obstacle to the progress of women. Often women were assigned a second-rate or even marginal role. This did not allow them to express fully and the wealth of intelligence and wisdom contained in their femininity.

Certainly throughout history women have suffered from little regard for their abilities, and sometimes even scorn and prejudice. This has prevented women from truly being themselves and has resulted in a spiritual weakening of humanity. The growing presence of women in social, economic, and political life at all levels — local, national, and international — is thus very positive and should continually be encouraged.

The gifts that women offer

Looking firstly in the home, it is here that women most directly influence the culture, through their own families. John Paul believed that progress tends to be evaluated according to the criteria of science and technology, but this is not the most important measure. More critical is the social and ethical aspect that deals with human relations and spiritual values. In this area, society owes much to the “genius of women,” which begins with the daily relationships between people, especially within the family. Women impart values, faith and love — primarily in their own children — but when they cannot or will not do so, then society slides into a moral and spiritual decay. So women do play an essential role in raising and guiding families. It is families that make up a society, so the health of the family determines the health of society.

Without the contribution of women, society is less alive, culture weakened, and peace less stable. We can see the effects of this in our own world today, with instability and violence on the increase. Situations where women are prevented from developing their full potential and from offering the wealth of their gifts should be considered unjust, not only to women themselves but to society as a whole. Woman’s “genius” is vital to both society and the Church.

Looking particularly at evangelizing and renewing the urban culture of cities, the contribution of women is invaluable. It is here that one finds a culture of discrimination and indifference. The experience of rootlessness, anonymity and inequality are all too common, as well as a deep loss of confidence in institutions—political, legal and educational. It is here where women may be especially effective, as they may provide the antidote to this rootlessness, anonymity and inequality. The entrustment of the human person to women can and should lead to a restoration of society and culture.

John Paul believed it was necessary that the widest possible space be open to women in all areas of culture, economics, politics, and in the Church itself, so that society is continually enriched by the gifts of femininity. Their presence would help force systems to be redesigned in what he called the “civilization of love,” rather than

The Greenhouse empowers, equips women to transform our culture

By Lisa Martinez

Executive Director

The Greenhouse for Women

Ladies, imagine …

Imagine a place where you could be with other women to share your struggles, to laugh together, to pray together. Imagine a place where classes would be available to ignite your faith and equip you for the mission God has given you. Imagine a place where you could come to pray, have some “me” time and ask God’s guidance in your life. Imagine a place where a first-time mom could come for companionship and a listening ear, with care available for her baby. Imagine a place where teen girls could come to do homework, talk or pray with a mentor and hang out with friends. Imagine a place where you could come daily to begin your day with exercise or end it with prayer. Imagine a place where you could meet up for a coffee with your friends, or browse through books, and have on-site childcare available for your kids.

Imagine a place where women help women. Imagine a place of sisterhood. Imagine a place that feels like home.

Inspiration becomes reality

The Greenhouse for women (lowercase intentional) is a new ministry and a 501(c)(3) nonprofit. It was born from the amazing teaching of St. John Paul II on femininity, which included this fervent belief: Women are necessary to transform our culture. And so, our mission is to nurture all women by empowering and equipping them to transform our culture for Christ. Women, especially mothers, instill values, instill faith, instill love. It is through these that they can change culture, one person at a time, by affecting their families, friends and all God has placed on their path.

Even the great leader of the Ponca tribe, Standing Bear, had this to say well over 100 years ago: “For it is the mothers, not her warriors, who create a people and guide her destiny.”

St. John Paul II has left an entire body of work unpacking the gifts women have to help the world. Educating and forming women in these gifts and empowering them to use them intentionally is our mission and priority. The greenhouse for women would provide a place where this could happen — a training center in our ongoing battle of renewing the culture for Christ. This new and innovative approach would nurture women physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually. A woman cannot love and influence those around her, unless she is strengthened, encouraged and loved herself. Our women’s center would not be a homeless shelter, nor a crisis or retreat center. It would be an entirely new way of supporting and nurturing women in their vocation and the first of its kind anywhere.

Our future offerings at the center

Our chapel will provide women a place for prayer and reflection as they seek the Lord’s guidance and love.

We will provide various classes on our faith, including St. JP II’s teaching on the dignity and vocation of women.

A café will be serving enjoyment and relaxation with friends. A small bookshop will offer titles to inspire and encourage. Also available will be an exercise area to bust stress and a nap room for refreshment.

By Lisa Martinez  Executive Director  The Greenhouse for Women  (Please See MARTINEZ/23)

The Angelus
The great blessing of matrimony

By Fr. Knick and Sandie Knickerbocker

In January we had the privilege of participating in the Celebration of Matrimony in a Mass for our older granddaughter, Katherine Knickerbocker, and Michael Stuart at St. Francis of Assisi Church in Cordova, Tennessee, a suburb of Memphis. It was a joy to be present for this celebration with two wonderful Catholic young adults. They invited me to preside at the Mass with our younger granddaughter, Clare Palasz, as Altar Server, and Sandie and our son-in-law, Rob Palasz, as Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion. It was truly a family affair, with our daughter-in-law, Janna, and her mother preparing the food for the reception; our daughter, Amy, and Sandie decorating the reception room; Amy arranging the flowers; our grandson, Daniel, serving as an usher; and our son, Jon, taking off work for a few days to be available for the various errands to be run and last-minute arrangements to be made.

The marriage preparation was conducted in Memphis by Father Rob Ballman, Associate Pastor of St. Francis, and by Sandie and me by phone every week and face-to-face conversations several times when we were visiting in Tennessee. It was my responsibility not only to preside at the Mass but also to preach the homily. It was the first time I had used the new Order of Celebrating Matrimony, and Katherine, Michael, and I went over the Rite together as part of the marriage preparation. They selected the Scripture lessons to be read from the list provided by the Church. The new Rite and the Scripture Lessons proclaim that Matrimony is a Sacrament of Creation and Redemption.

Matrimony is a Sacrament of Creation in that it was instituted by God in the creation of the first man and first woman to be the means through which God the Holy Trinity continues His creation of the human race. (Gen. 1:26-28) It is a Sacrament revealing the divine love of the Persons of the Trinity for one another. The human family is an icon of God Himself, who has revealed to us that He is a Trinity of Persons. When husband and wife have a child, the three of them are a "likeness" of God the Holy Trinity, in which the love of Two Persons is perfected when they love a Third Person together. A man and woman enter more deeply into that Triune Love which is God when they pledge themselves each to the other so long as they both shall live. This Sacrament of Creation cannot be destroyed, even by human sin.

Matrimony is also a Sacrament of Redemption in that it is a participation in the mystical union that exists between Christ and His Church. (Eph. 5:31-32) Jesus affirms the teaching of the Book of Genesis when he says, "From the beginning of creation, God made them male and female. For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh. So they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore, what God has joined together, no human being must separate." (Mk. 10:6-9) In this way, Jesus affirms Matrimony as both a Sacrament of Creation and Redemption.

Mass for the Unborn celebrated January 22

By Becca Nelson Sankey

Having recently published a book about adoption, Sharla Ynostrosa said she felt honored to read the rosary during the diocese’s Mass for Life Procession held on Jan. 22, which is the anniversary of the Roe v. Wade, the Supreme Court’s 1973 ruling that legalized abortion. For approximately 10 years, the San Angelo Diocese has held an annual procession and Mass to pray the ruling may someday be overturned. Around the country, the Church observed the Day of Prayer for the Legal Protection of Unborn Children on Jan. 23.

“I’m always at the Mass, but this is the first year I’ve led the rosary,” said Ynostrosa. “I was adopted at birth, so I was very honored (Bishop Michael Sis) asked me.”

More than 40 people, including altar servers, the Knights of Columbus and Bishop Michael Sis, participated in the Sunday afternoon procession, which started outside the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart on Beauregard and made the block, from Oakes Street, to Harris Avenue, to Chadbourne Street and back to Beauregard. The procession was followed by Mass, which was attended by a significantly larger crowd – many of whom feel strongly about ending abortion, Ynostrosa said.

“No matter what day, all these people would be here because it means something to all of us in different ways,” Ynostrosa said of the crowd in attendance, some of whom are members of different parishes.

Tony Schillo, a member of the Knights of Columbus, said the Mass for Life Procession has been an annual San Angelo occurrence for at least 10 years.

“The Knights have always been a part of it,” he said. “Our first mission in the Knights of Columbus is to be pro-life, from conception to natural death.”

Jerry Peters, pro-life director of the Catholic Diocese of San Angelo and a member of its Defenders of Life Committee, said Roe v. Wade “was a bad decision that went against our beliefs as Catholics. We have Mass every year and ask people to pray that this will be overturned – hopefully in the near future.”

Bishop Sis said the annual Mass is also a way of “asking God to strengthen our own resolve to give witness to the dignity of human life, and we pray for God’s intercession to protect the lives of the innocent who cannot speak for themselves. We pray God may give us the courage to defend their basic human right to life.”

Ynostrosa called herself a proponent of adoption as a loving option. She recently published “Adopted and Blessed: Words From My Heart,” a collection of blogs she penned about adoption.

Ynostrosa said she started blogging about the topic because she was disheartened by how little attention adoption seems to receive.

“I had this burning desire in my heart to reach people,” she said. “It was like the more I wrote, the more I had to say, and then I was encouraged to see if I could get my stories published. I think God has put this mission on my heart.”

The Procession for Life was held amidst the 9 Days for Life Novena, held Jan. 21-29. According to the Catholic Diocese’s website, the novena is an annual period of prayer that calls for cherishing the gift of every human life. During this time, Catholic are encouraged to gather in “prayer, action and fellowship,” according to the website.
My time at the SEEK 2017 Conference in San Antonio was like none I had ever experienced before. With 13,000 souls gathered in one place to praise our God, it was obvious to see the Holy Spirit at work within the masses. Nonetheless, words can barely begin to describe the graces and knowledge that I received from the five days I experienced it. Prior to SEEK, I knew that if I were to get the most out of this event then I had better prepare myself for what was about to come. My other peers and I prayed that all those attending the conference would go with open hearts; that everyone would be completely filled with Christ and His love. Little did I know what this small invitation would allow Christ to do in my own heart and thoughts, as well as in others.

As for myself, Christ most definitely filled my soul and took the utmost advantage of my desire for something more — my longing for Him. God spoke to me through the music and speakers. Most importantly, He healed my brokenness in Confession, Eucharistic Adoration, and daily Masses. My loving Father reminded me that I am His daughter, and with that I undeservedly receive His infinite love and mercy. From all that I learned and experienced, I am now more determined than ever to strive toward sainthood. In addition, I am also more eager to help all those around me in this journey toward sainthood. I am completely committed to our Lord and His divine will for me. At SEEK 2017, I found my lost love for Christ, and now that it is back in my possession, I will try with every last effort to serve and love as Christ did for us.

This SEEK experience has rekindled my yearning in seeking greater things.
Men and women clearly need each other and naturally gravitate towards arrangements of mutual support and lives of shared intimacy. Because women are frequently the immediate guardians of the next generation, they have a particular need to ascertain if there will be steady support from a man prior to giving themselves sexually to him. The bond of marriage is ordered towards securing this critical element of ongoing commitment and support.

Cohabitation, where a man and woman decide to live together and engage in sexual relations without marriage, raises a host of issues and concerns. Sex, of course, has a certain power all its own, and both sides may be tempted to play with it in ways that are potentially damaging, all the more so when they decide to cohabit.

One concern is that cohabitation can often become a rehearsal for various selfish patterns of behavior. It perpetuates an arrangement of convenience, popularly phrased as, “Why buy the cow when you can get the milk for free?” Even as many women try to tell themselves they are “preparing” for marriage by cohabiting with their partner, they may sense the trap of the “never ending audition” to be his wife, and become intuitively aware of how they are being used. Cohabitation also invites the woman to focus on lesser concerns like saving on rent or garnering transient emotional attention from her partner by moving in with him and becoming sexually available.

Even as a woman becomes attuned to the power of sex from an early age, she can eventually fall prey to an easy mistake. Aware that sexual intimacy is also about bonding, she may suppose that by surrendering this deeply personal part of herself through cohabitation, she now has a “hook” into a man and his heart. While such an arrangement can trigger various platitudes, (that he “cares for her,” “loves her,” etc.), experience shows it doesn’t typically help him reach the commitment reflected in those all-important words, “Will you marry me?”

Cohabitation, in fact, is a relationship that is defined by a holding back of commitment. The notion that it somehow allows both parties to “try” a marriage beforehand is conveniently make-believe, a kind of “playing house,” mostly because it’s impossible to try out something permanent and irrevocable through something temporary and revocable. As Jennifer Roback Morse has described it, “Cohabiting couples are likely to have one foot out the door, throughout the relationship. The members of a cohabiting couple practice holding back on one another. They reassure not trusting.” They don’t develop the elements crucial to a successful marriage, but instead keep their options open so they can always beat a hasty retreat to the exit. Or as Chuck Colson has put it: “Cohabitation — it’s training for divorce.”

Many studies confirm that the divorce rate among those who cohabit prior to marriage is nearly double the rate of those who marry without prior cohabitation. Some researchers believe that individuals who cohabit are more unconventional to begin with, being less committed to the institution of marriage overall and more open to the possibility of divorce. Others suspect something more insidious — that living together slowly erodes people’s ability to make a commitment by setting them up into patterns of behavior that work against succeeding in a long-term relationship. Both may actually be true.

Various risks correlate strongly with cohabitation. Compared with a married woman, a cohabiting woman is roughly three times as likely to experience physical abuse, and about nine times more likely to be murdered. Children also tend to fare poorly when it comes to these live-in arrangements. Rates of serious child abuse have been found to be lowest in intact families; six times higher in step families; 20 times higher in cohabiting biological-parent families; and 33 times higher when the mother is cohabiting with a boyfriend who is not the biological father. Cohabiting homes see significantly more drug and alcohol abuse, and bring in less income than their married peers. Cohabitation is clearly bad for men, worse for women, and terrible for children.

“Marriage,” as Glenn Stanton notes, “is actually a very pro-woman institution. People don’t fully realize what a raw deal for women cohabitation is. Women tend to bring more goods to the relationship — more work, more effort in tending to the relationship — but they get less satisfaction in terms of relational commitment and security.” While marriage doesn’t automatically solve every problem, it clearly offers a different and vastly better set of dynamics than cohabitation for all the parties involved.

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

Parishioners honored

Alfie Braden, 93, at left, born January 4, 1924. Alfie was present at the dedication of St. Ambrose Church on Dec. 7, 1941.

Mary Lou Hand, 95, right, born on January 15, 1922. Alfie and Mary Lou are very active in the Church.

The two longtime members attended Senior Citizen Day at St. Ambrose. They also attend daily Mass and Adult Faith Formation Classes on Sundays.

Accepting help not always easy

By Maria Pia Negro-Chin

Catholic News Service

Last year, I saw a youth group doing an interesting exercise in trust. A few dozen teenagers were using their jackets as blindfolds as their group partner guided their walk around the church’s garden back to their meeting room.

The idea was for some of the teenagers to learn to guide others, while the other party learned to trust and accept help from their peers. It ultimately showed how accepting God’s loving help, even when we can’t see the path we are supposed to follow, will lead us to where we are supposed to be.

This reminded me of what Helen Alvare, law professor at George Mason University, had said during her keynote speech at the September 2015 World Meeting of Families in Philadelphia. She said that even when a “gospel of me” seems to be encouraged in today’s world, ”the way of happiness, of freedom, is the way of interdependent love.”

“We are made to open ourselves to God first and then to every single other neighbor, who like the injured traveler in the good Samaritan story, we happen to find across our particular path,” she said. “You really do find yourself when you lose yourself in the love of other people, beginning with family and moving out into the world.”

She also emphasized that human beings need to first be receivers of love to be givers of love. This made me realize that we learn to support others because we have first received help.

(See CHIN/23)

Aceptar la ayuda de otros

By Maria Pia Negro-Chin

El año pasado, vi a un grupo de jóvenes haciendo un ejercicio interesante. Unos cuantos adolescentes usaban sus chaquetas como vendas mientras su compañero del grupo guía su camino por el jardín de la iglesia de regreso a su sala de reuniones.

La idea era que algunos de los adolescentes aprendieran a guiar a otros, mientras que la otra mitad del grupo aprendía a confiar y aceptar la ayuda de sus compañeros. Al final este ejercicio demostró cómo aceptar la ayuda amorosa de Dios, incluso cuando no podemos ver el camino que debemos seguir, nos llevará a donde debemos ir.

Esto me recordó lo que Helen Alvare, profesora de derecho de la Universidad George Mason, había dicho durante su discurso en el Encuentro Mundial de Familias en Filadelfia realizado en septiembre de 2015. Ella dijo que, incluso cuando el “evangelio de mí” parece ser alentado en el mundo de hoy, el camino de la felicidad, de la libertad es el camino del amor interdependiente”.

“Estamos hechos para abrirnos primero a Dios y luego a cada prójimo que, como el viajero herido en la buena historia samaritana, encontramos a través de nuestro camino”, dijo. “Realmente te encuentras a ti mismo cuando te pierdes en el amor de otras personas, empezando por la familia y extendiéndose al mundo”.

También enfatizó que los seres humanos necesitan primero ser receptores de amor para ser donadores de amor. Esto me recordó que nosotros aprendemos a apoyar a otros porque primero hemos recibido ayuda.

Sin embargo, una medida que creemos, aceptar la ayuda de otros se vuelve aterrador porque requiere mostrar nuestras vulnerabilidades. Muchos de nosotros hemos sido criados creyendo que necesitamos resolver nuestros propios problemas, de lo contrario pareceríamos débiles. Estamos felices de ayudar a otros, pero tenemos dificultades para pedir o

(Mira ACEPTAR/23)
Gratitude and goodbyes highlight of family gatherings

By Effie Caldarola
Catholic News Service

The sun rose this morning in dramatic flourish of pink and orange. Never mind that later the clouds and the gray winter reasserted themselves as members of my family left for the airport. I am grateful for the memory of standing in the front room with my youngest daughter and marveling at the stunning moment that was today's brief sunrise.

Today was a day full of farewells, and hers would be the first. She would be on her way to the airport by 8 a.m. We hugged, many times, and I told her I wished that she and I had had the insomniac. And no matter how much seven people love one another, and are genuinely easy to get along with, there's an occasional moment of stress.

Nevertheless, the chaos that sometimes reigned was a benevolent ruler, and we had fun. But those goodbye days are tough.

My goodbye morning was full. A neighbor needed me because this was the day her second child would be born, and she had to be at the hospital to be induced by 8 a.m. Her best-laid plans were unsettled by a 2-year-old with a fever who suddenly couldn't go to day care as usual. A grandfather drove all night to spend the day, but I was needed to help bridge the gap between the parents' departure for the hospital and his arrival.

In the meantime, my three kids, one son-in-law and my 2-year-old granddaughter prepped for three trips to the airport while I played next door with a 2-year-old who had no idea his world was about to be rocked.

Even my husband was flying out on business. I felt lonely and as I looked at my little friend, I marveled at how it seemed just yesterday mine were that age and I had felt as if they were mine to keep.

Fortunately, I wasn't gone long and was home to spend the last couple of hours with a shrinking circle of family. By 1 o'clock, I was home from the airport to an utterly silent house. I started dusting, discarding the last stale Christmas cookie, putting the first of many loads of sheets and towels in the wash.

But it was also drawn into the silence, a silence filled with gratitude. I'm pulled toward poetry at such moments, a form of prayer for me.

So I took Mary Oliver from the shelf. Within her pages, she told me, "If you want to talk about this/ come to visit. I live in the house/ near the corner, which I have named Gratitude."

The night between trust and neglect often hard to discern

By Fr. William Byron, SJ
Catholic News Service

Every now and then, I spend a few hours with about 60 high school boys and girls and their parents listening to them talk about better parent-teen communication regarding sex, alcohol and drugs. The question for parents that keeps popping into my mind as I listen to both sides speak is: “Where does trust end and neglect begin?”

The teenagers want to be trusted. The parents want to trust. But parental unease surfaces as the potential for parental neglect in the face of possibly unwise and risky teenage behavior rises. Where do you draw the line between trust and neglect?

Surely, no parent wants to be guilty of neglect, just as all parents want to trust their offspring. The question provides a nice framework for great conversations, if both parents and teenagers are willing to talk. Doing it in groups with other parents and teens seems to improve the acoustics for the desired exchange.

The conversation, as I hear it, typically turns on issues of 1) curfew; 2) driving (who's in the car? who's at the wheel? where are you going?); 3) friends (who do you hang out with?); 4) honesty; 5) pregnancy; 6) the internet; and 7) trust.

In families, the participants seem to agree, there is a need for “consistency” and there has to be agreement on the “irreversibles” in the ongoing discussions about “boundaries.”

Communication is, of course, at the heart of dealing with these issues. The teens have to be permitted to speak openly about what they perceive to be double standards (e.g., some parents drink and drive). Parents have to explain their “need to verify” (e.g., call the parents of a teen who is hosting the party). Expert facilitators can be on hand to provide technical information on drugs and alcohol. It is helpful to dig a bit for answers to the question of why kids drink -- just to have fun? To try to cope? Or, just to see what it's like? Similarly, with drugs.

Notably absent from the conversations I’ve listened to is any discussion about religion (although most of the participants in my experience are Catholic). Nor is much said about the need to establish baseline respect for human dignity. That would cover respect for self and others as a bedrock principle of right, fair and just behavior.

I’ve also noticed that no one suggests the value of service projects in getting teens “out of themselves” and into growth-producing character development. Not that participants were unaware of this; they just didn’t bring it up.

No mention is typically made of shared work -- parents and teens working together on meaningful projects. That used to happen a generation or two ago when it was not uncommon for a small-scale family business to provide Saturday and summer employment for the kids. Those opportunities produced for the young a lot more than spending money.

And it is worth noting that the school that has hosted the gatherings I’ve attended had very little to do with the design, promotion and provision of the program. This was the work of one mother whose children are all grown with families of their own. She decided that it would be useful and just went ahead and put it all together in memory of one son she lost years ago in a drug-related death.

It would be too facile to say that anyone could do it. But it is not wide of the mark to suggest that this intergenerational exchange of experience and information could be happening on a much larger scale if more good people simply step up and decide to make it happen.
Catholic Voices

Not knowing how to admire can lead to dissatisfaction

By Fr. Ron Rolheiser

Several years ago, Roger Rosenblatt, in an essay in TIME magazine, offered this advice to his son who was graduating from high school and heading off to college: “Whatever you do in life, be sure to admire others who do it as well or better than you. My trade of journalism is sodden with people who seem incapable of admiring others or anything.”

The incapacity to admire others doesn’t just afflict journalists. It seems to be a universal disease today. We see it everywhere, in journalism, for sure, but also in the academic world, in professional circles of all kinds, and in church and family life. It seems none of us are very good at affording anyone (outside of a very select circle of “our own”) the gaze of admiration. Children are still good at admiring each other, among us, the adults, there’s little in the way of simple appreciative consciousness. We know how to criticize, but not how to admire.

Why? What’s causing this? Why do others and the things around us never seem good enough, never seem worthy of admiration? Why do we always find fault in everyone and everything?

We’d like to think it’s sophistication, a refined sense of truth, aesthetics, and historical consciousness offered to the Lord and things. Indeed there is a flaw in everything, something that’s either simplistic, acting out of self-interest, naive, in bad taste, overly-saccharine, ill-informed, or itself too cynical to merit admiration. Only God is perfect. Everything and everybody else have faults that can be criticized.

But our sophistication, enlightenment, and much of the sense of aesthetics are ultimately not the real reason why we find ourselves so easily offended, hypercritical, and so stingy in our admiration and praise. Something more basic lurks underneath, immaturity. In the end, our itch to criticize rather than admire is, more often than not, nothing more than a projection of our own unhappiness and a not-so-subtle plea that’s saying: “Admire me!” “Notice me!” “Why am I not being noticed and admired?”

Anthropology tells us that adulthood can be defined this way: A mature man or woman is a principle of order rather than disorder, is someone who helps carry the burdens and tensions of others rather than dumps his or her own tensions on them, is someone who helps feed others rather than feeds off of them, and is someone who admires others as opposed to demanding that others admire him or her. One of the defining traits of human maturity is the capacity to admire. If that is true, and it is, then our proclivity for criticism speaks of a lot more things than simply our enlightenment.

Thomas Aquinas once stated that to withhold a compliment from someone is a sin because we are withholding food that this person needs to live. That’s a challenging statement, but the challenge is more than that of providing food for others to live on. Admiring others also provides us with the food we ourselves need.

One of the reasons we don’t live with so much heart’s ease, anger, bitterness, and depression is precisely because we no longer know how to admire. It’s hard to be happy and to feel good about ourselves when we don’t feel very good about anything or anyone around us. Without admiration we can never be happy – nor can we see straight, irrespective of how sophisticated, educated, emotionally intelligent, aesthetically fined-tuned, or hermeneutically-enlightened we are.

Hugo of St. Victor had an axiom which said: “Love is the eye!” Only when we see through the prism of love do we see correctly. Admiration is part of that. When we don’t admire, we aren’t seeing straight, and people when we are forever seeing what’s wrong in others that speaks volumes about our own interior state. Partly we see what’s out there, partly though what we think we see is largely colored by our own interior disposition. Thus an habitually negative eye says as much about the beholder as it does about the beheld.

Whenever our world feels grey, whenever we feel bitter and short-changed, whenever we are the first to judge, of one-thing and everything, we need to ask ourselves: “When was the last time I really admired someone?” “When was the last time I told someone that he or she had done something really well?” “When is the last time I looked at anything or anyone with the gaze of admiration?”

When we admire we get to feel good because as soon as we start admiring God, we get to feel like God. God is never grey, depressed, and cynical, and God’s first gaze at us, as both Scripture and the mystics assure us, is not one of critical disapproval but one of admiration. As Julian of Norwich puts it, God sits in heaven, completely relaxed, smiling, his face looking like a marvellous symphony. That’s hardly the description of how we – journalists, academics, artists, theologians, ministers, priests, and ordinary folks – normally look at the world.

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

Scorsese’s ‘Silence’ and the Seaside Martyrs

By Most Rev. Robert Barron

Auxiliary Bishop of Los Angeles

I have long been an ardent fan of Martin Scorsese’s films. Taxi Driver, Raging Bull, Goodfellas, The Aviator, Gangs of New York, The Last Waltz, Casino, etc. are among the defining movies of the last forty years. And The Departed, Scorsese’s 2007 crime drama, was the subject matter of the first YouTube commentary that I ever did. It is certainly the case, furthermore, that the director’s Catholicism, however mitigated and conflicted, comes through in most of his work. His most recent offering, the much-anticipated Silence, based upon the Shusaku Endo novel of the same name, is a worthy addition to the Scorsese oeuvre. Like so many of his other films, it is marked by gorgeous cinematography, outstanding performances from both lead and supporting actors, a gripping narrative, and enough thematic complexity to keep you thinking for the foreseeable future.

The story is set in mid-seventeenth century Japan, where a fierce persecution of the Catholic faith is underway. To this dangerous country come two young Jesuit priests (played by Adam Driver and Andrew Garfield), spiritual descendants of St. Francis Xavier, sent to find Fr. Ferreira, their mentor and seminary professor who, rumor has it, had apostatized under torture and actually gone over to the other side. Immediately upon arriving onshore, they are met by a small group of Japanese Christians who had been maintaining their faith underground for many years. Due to the extreme danger, the young priests are forced into hiding during the day, but they are able to engage in clandestine ministry at night: baptizing, catechizing, confessing, celebrating the Mass. In rather short order, however, the authorities get wind of their presence, and suspected Christians are rounded up and tortured in the hopes of forcing the priests out into the open. The single most memorable scene in the film, at least for me, was the crucifixion of Fr. Rodrigues and these courageous lay believers. Tied to crosses by the shore, they are, in the course of several days, buffeted by the incoming tide until they drown. Afterwards, their bodies are placed on pyres of straw and they are burned to course of several days, buffeted by the incoming tide until they drown.

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(Please See BARRON(23)

Bishop Barron
Keeping the sentiment of Valentine’s Day alive all year

By Bill Dodds
Catholic News Service

I wasn’t surprised this year when the Valentine’s Day candy was on store shelves only days after the Christmas candy had been there.

I suppose I could mutter tsk-tsk, but the truth is I’m part of the problem: a consumer who loves to consume chocolate. So just about any excuse to buy some now is a good excuse.

Yes, chocolate and flowers are traditional Valentine’s Day gifts -- or St. Valentine’s Day gift, but no bags of M&M’s or Hershey’s Kisses feature any reference to saintliness -- and they’re good options. In most cases.

But not the only option. Often, not even the best option. There are better ways to mark the occasion, to tell family members and friends “I love you.” A few suggestions:

Commit not-so-random acts of kindness. Be friendly, generous and considerate to those closest to you. To those, too, who are easy to overlook and underappreciate. Yes, some kindness is spontaneous, but some requires a little planning. Perhaps more than a little effort.

Listen. This suggestion seems so obvious and so simple, but it can be so easy to be distracted or pretty sure you covered all of this last week, right? It can help to keep in mind sometimes a person talks because he needs to talk, perhaps he has to go over what was talked about not too long ago. And it doesn’t mean your spouse, family member or friend wants you to offer an opinion or a solution. What your loved one wants is for you to listen.

I’m reminded of times when my late wife would come home from work and say, “I want to tell you what happened at the office today, but I don’t want you to offer solutions.” It took me a few times to learn she was serious about that. And to keep my “I can fix that!” attitude in check.

Hug. Enough said.

Recognize and let that loved one use his or her God-given talents. This can be tough, especially as sons and daughters grow older. Discover those gifts and interests. Begin to develop them and then strive to make a living using them.

Perhaps you come from a long line of teachers and she wants to ... go into business. Or maybe you’ve had a government job -- solid pay scale, good benefits -- and he’s leaning toward a career in music.

It isn’t just the gift holder who, at times, has to take a leap of faith. It’s also those who love him or her.

Chocolate and flowers. Yes. OK. But maybe something more tailored to what your loved one loves. A special kind of chocolate. A variety of flower that brings back happy memories.

Not just dinner out and movie, but dinner at a place he or she prefers. (Or at a new place when your first choice would be the old tried-and-true.) And a movie that he or she would give two thumbs-up, but you would rate it ... (Can a person give half a thumb?)

And, of course:

Pray for and with each other. Often.

Cremation and burial at sea; another view on ‘football priest’

By Fr. Kenneth Doyle
Catholic News Service

Q. I am a lifelong Catholic and served 28 years in the Navy. As a junior officer, I saw the ashes or bodies of deceased sailors buried at sea; I decided at the time that this is what I want done with my body after I die, and I have not changed my mind.

But regarding that decision that some of my fellow parishioners, and one of them said that a new directive from the church provides that a Catholic can no longer be buried at sea. (But in fact, he said that if someone were to be buried at sea, a priest is prohibited from celebrating any type of funeral service in a Catholic Church.)

If that is really the case, I don’t see what I am doing remaining in a Catholic parish; in fact, it might be time for me to change to a different Christian denomination that will be there for me at the end of my life.

(Virginia Beach, Virginia)

Q. I am aware that the Catholic Church has traditionally discouraged cremation, but I am confused as to why. For centuries, cremation has been accepted by most cultures as a somewhat more humane way of dealing with the remains of a loved one.

With a standard burial, the person’s remains are left to “rot in the ground.” Does it have something to do with an eventual “resurrection”? And is the doctrine of resurrection required for that resurrection? If so, what would be left of Christians from, say, A.D. 200? Surely by now there is nothing left of them to raise. (Corydon, Indiana)

A. The two letters above are typical of many that I receive and reflect people’s continuing fascination with the disposition of bodily remains. That interest was heightened in October 2016 when the Vatican issued an instruction regarding burial practices in the church.

That document was issued at the request of bishops in several nations in response to the growing practice of cremation and the lack of specific church guidelines on the disposition of cremains. The instruction reiterated that the church, while not opposed to the practice of cremation, continues to recommend a traditional burial.

The document specifies that either the body or the ashes of the deceased should be buried in sacred ground and that cremains should not be kept in private homes or scattered on land or at sea, nor “preserved in mementoes, pieces of jewelry or other objects.”

Burial in sacred ground, said the Vatican, prevents the deceased from being forgotten and encourages family members and the wider Christian community to remember the deceased and to pray for them.

Historically, cremation was linked to the burial practices of pagans, whose religious beliefs did not include the expectation of eventual resurrection and viewed death as the definitive obliteration of the human person. The Catholic Church began to allow cremation only in 1963, as it became more commonplace for both economic and sanitary reasons.

But the church’s Code of Canon Law has continued to resist the expectation for burial over cremation because the burial of human remains, in the church’s mind, reflects a greater esteem for the dignity of the human body as an integral part of the human person, whose body forms part of their identity.

That same instruction does note, though, that “cremation of the deceased’s body does not affect his or her soul, nor does it prevent God in his omnipotence from raising up the deceased body to new life.”

In response to the Indiana letter writer’s concern about the decomposed remains of the Christian buried in A.D. 200, we don’t know how the eventual reunion of body and soul will occur and leave that -- as the Vatican does -- to the wisdom of the Lord.

And as for the Virginia writer’s preference for burial at sea, he can relax. The new Vatican guidelines do not prohibit that, so long as the body or cremated remains are buried in a dignified and well-protected container. (Catholics should consult with their diocese for further instructions, since standards can vary from diocese to diocese.)

The church’s Order of Christian Funerals has a specific prayer for such a burial, asking that the Lord who calmed the sea in Galilee may grant peace and tranquility to the person deceased (No. 406).

Q. I am disturbed by a question you printed from an anonymous person requesting your thoughts on a retired priest who talks about the local sports team and concludes the liturgy with the words, “The Mass never ends; it must be lived by each of us today.” I know this priest well and have the honor of addressing him.

First, it must be noted that the vast majority of our city and our parish are strong fans of the “local football team.”

Our priest’s comments (which I never knew he was formulating) were intended to encourage conversation about the liturgy and faith, to encourage spiritual reflection and adoration and to inspire reflection on the meaning of life.

For example, the priest serves our parish. He is widely loved and respected and goes to great lengths to keep the liturgy fresh and relevant. Our priest is a humble and caring individual, and we are incredibly blessed to have him in our lives.

One final thought: Please make it standard policy to print the author’s name when you run a letter in your column; that will deter a “ring and run” anonymity. (Columbus, Ohio)

A. A few weeks back, I published in this column a letter from Columbus, Ohio. The writer complained about a priest in his parish who takes several minutes each Sunday to comment on the fortunes of the local football team -- the writer said it “borders on sacrilege” -- and uses his own wording for the dismissal rite.

The original letter and the above response from the deacon serve as an important reminder that a priest’s words and actions can be viewed in different ways by different members of a congregation. That is why I support the practice -- as canon law allows -- of gathering a small group of parishioners each week for a “debriefing” session; the homily and the entire liturgical celebration are reviewed, together with comments heard from the congregation.

As for your proposal to identify letter-writers by name, I would argue against that. The type of feedback I receive in the five years I have been doing this column -- nor, to my knowledge, in the history of the column which long predated me. Though I am normally a big fan of transparency, I think the anonymity gives writers the chance to speak honestly without subjecting themselves to the “slings and arrows” of their neighbors.

By Corydon, Indiana

Q. I am disturbed by a question you printed from an anonymous person requesting your thoughts on a retired priest who talks about the local sports team and concludes the liturgy with the words, “The Mass never ends; it must be lived by each of us today.” I know this priest well and have the honor of addressing him.

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By Corydon, Indiana
Las Cruces bishop hears Iraqi Christian concerns

By Dale Gavlak

AMMAN, Jordan — After meeting with church leaders in northern Iraq, a U.S. bishop said he will advocate differently for Iraqi religious minorities.

Bishop Oscar Cantu of Las Cruces, New Mexico, told Catholic News Service by phone that the Iraqi Catholic clergy do not want to see a safe corridor set up for Christians from camps into homes with a rent assistance program.

"We don't want to live in a ghetto. That is counterproductive. That makes us a target," Bishop Cantu told CNS, recounting the remarks made by Syriac Catholic Archbishop Yohanna Moshe of Mosul, Iraq, and Bishop Oscar Cantu of Las Cruces, N.M., pose for a photo in Iraq. After meeting with church leaders in northern Iraq, Bishop Cantu said he will advocate differently for Iraqi religious minorities. (CNS photo/Stephen Colechici, USCB)

He said the archbishop told him: "We need an integrated reality, rather than a 'Gaza' where there's a wall and someone is guarding people going in and out." Bishop Cantu chairs the U.S. bishops' Committee on International Justice and Peace. In that capacity, he led a small delegation Jan. 11-13 to see and hear Christian perspectives in the aftermath of the Islamic State assault in 2014 and the current U.S.-led coalition's battle to flush out the militants.

Catholic clergy "really want to establish some normalcy in the midst of displacement," Bishop Cantu said. He said he was amazed by the speed which Chaldean Catholic Archbishop Bashar Warda of Irbil has started a Catholic university to provide education and direction to the youth. Archbishop Warda also has restored personal dignity by moving displaced Christians from camps into homes with a rent assistance program.

Meanwhile, Archbishop Moshe has built a church, an elementary school and a new Catholic University of Qaraqosh, serving both Christians and Muslims, on land provided by the Kurdish authorities. All of these facilities were lost when Islamic State militants invaded Mosul and the surrounding villages in June and August 2014.

Still, "there is a reality of the wounds created by the neighbors who turned on neighbors," said Bishop Cantu. He was told that after Christians went back to check on their properties following the liberation from Islamic State, in some instances, "neighbors went in, looted and later burned their homes." The terrifying escape from Mosul for a number of Dominican Sisters has left a profound "sadness in their eyes and voices that question what's the best for these Christians," Bishop Cantu said, "whether it is to stay in the midst of anguish and terror or seek safety and security elsewhere in the world."
A parishioner reflects on St. Ambrose’s 75th celebration in Wall

By Linda Grace

WALL — December 7, 2016 marked the 75th anniversary of St. Ambrose Catholic Church in Wall. Bishop Michael J. Sis presided over the celebratory Mass with co-celebrants Fr. Joe Choutapalli, Fr. Bhaskar Mendem, Msgr. Larry Droll, Fr. Yesu Mulakaletti, Fr. Joseph Vathalloor, Fr. Albert Eezanya and Deacons Allan Lange and Dan Shanahan. Msgr. Larry Droll, pastor at St. Ambrose from 1992-2004, shared comments. Through a certificate, His Holiness, Pope Francis, bestowed the Apostolic Blessing on the pastor and faithful of St. Ambrose Catholic Church.

A crowd estimated at 420 attended the anniversary celebration and reception following Mass. There was food, drink and memories being shared and made by young and old alike. Alfrieda Braden, 92, was in attendance. Her father as well as the man who would later become her husband, were among the men who helped build the church.

An additional celebration was held on Sunday, December 11 after the 9 a.m. Mass with about 300 people attending. Brunch was served with goodies provided by church members.

The youth group re-enacted the humble beginnings of the church in period costumes complete with saws, hammers, etc. that were used in construction of the church.

At the brunch that Sunday morning, along with the church directory, parishioners received a small wooden cross that had to be cut down on parish property. Bishop Sis saw the pine stump by the Rosary Walk Garden on May 20, 2015 while walking with Fr. Joe and the parishioners from the church to the new rectory for its dedication. Bishop Sis suggested that something special be made from the wood of the tree. A kind parishioner and friend helped make this suggestion a reality. The Crosses were handcrafted from the St. Ambrose pine tree and were blessed.

Photos of past First Communions were laid on each table. I found mine labeled 1961 — it brought back many memories including the fact that I was taller than everyone at that time — including the boys. Numerous photo memory books of the history of the church and its members were available including many weddings that took place in the church. Some of these wedding photos included several generations such as my family with three. I grew up in Wall, attended all 12 years of school and graduated from Wall High School. St. Ambrose Catholic Church was a big part of my world. Catechism classes each Wednesday after school. Annual picnics (that’s what they were called when I was growing up — now it is the fall festival) where each family would cook a turkey at home and bring it to the hall to be served. Easter with everyone dressed in their finest clothes complete with a hat (I was a tom boy and much to my mom’s chagrin. I did not like wearing the fancy dress with crinoline and bows). Midnight Mass at Christmas (mom made a pallet for us in the back of the station wagon where my brother and I slept while mom and dad attended mass).

The idea for the church originated with Bill and Hilda Mikulik. In the summer of 1940, Mr. and Mrs. Ben Halfmann settled in Wall. Mrs. Halfmann was pregnant with her second baby and needed to attend Mass. In those days, the nearest church was in San Angelo — some 13 miles away. Time spent traveling to attend Mass in San Angelo took valuable time away from the fields and providing for their families.

St. Ambrose Catholic Church was dedicated on December 7, 1941 by the Most Reverend Laurence Julius FitzSimmon, Bishop of the Amarillo diocese — the closest diocese at that time. Monsignor Pokluda was appointed as first pastor. The name St. Ambrose is in honor of the former Bishop of Milan, Italy from 374-397. Bishop Sis designed the church and its members were available including many weddings that took place in the church. Some of these wedding photos included several generations such as my family with three. I grew up in Wall, attended all 12 years of school and graduated from Wall High School. St. Ambrose Catholic Church was a big part of my world. Catechism classes each Wednesday after school. Annual picnics (that’s what they were called when I was growing up — now it is the fall festival) where each family would cook a turkey at home and bring it to the hall to be served. Easter with everyone dressed in their finest clothes complete with a hat (I was a tom boy and much to my mom’s chagrin. I did not like wearing the fancy dress with crinoline and bows). Midnight Mass at Christmas (mom made a pallet for us in the back of the station wagon where my brother and I slept while mom and dad attended mass).

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Oh my Jesus, I kneel down before you, O mi Jesus, you me arrodillo ante ti,
Oh Mein Herr, ich kneee vor Dir, O mi Jesus, you me arrodillo ante ti,
Amen.
Amen.
Amen.
Amen.

The Angelus
OBISPO

(Para 3)

frecuencia hay que separar hermanos.

Para llegar ser padres de crianza, hay algunos requisitos básicos por la ley estatal. Los padres de crianza pueden ser solteros o casados. Deben tener por lo menos 21 años, ser financieramente estables, y ser adultos maduros y responsables. Se someten a una verificación de antecedentes criminales y una comprobación de abuso / negligencia de todos los miembros del hogar de los 14 años de edad y mayor. Ambos padres en el hogar deben estar en el país legalmente, pero no es necesario que sean ciudadanos Americanos.

Los padres de crianza no deben tener más de seis niños en el hogar, incluyendo los hijos biológicos y los niños de crianza. Tienen que estar de acuerdo con una política de disciplina que no sea física. Se espera que asistan a veinte o más horas de entrenamiento cada año.

El estado de Texas paga una cantidad diaria para cada hijo de crianza en el hogar, pero la cantidad pagada por lo general no es suficiente para cubrir todos los gastos. Ser padre de crianza no se trata de hacer ganancias. Se trata de hacer una verdadera diferencia en la vida de un niño necesitado.

Las familias de crianza pueden especificar criterios para los niños colocados en su hogar, tales como la edad, la raza, y la religión. Hay una necesidad para las familias que hablan inglés, así como también para las familias que hablan español.

Con el cuidado de crianza, el objetivo es que el niño finalmente pueda volver a sus padres, salvo en raras ocasiones. Por lo general, un niño de crianza al final se reúne con sus padres. Si eso no ocurre, entonces el siguiente curso de acción es la búsqueda de familias que puedan hacerse cargo de ellos. Si eso no es una posibilidad, entonces el niño puede ser un candidato para la adopción.

Las parroquias también pueden asumir el papel de proporcionar un sistema de apoyo para los padres de crianza en la congregación. En general, esto hace que la experiencia de crianza tenga más éxito. Por ejemplo, en algunas iglesias, una comida es llevada a la familia de crianza una vez por semana, y un número de familias de la parroquia toman turnos para proveer esa comida. Cualquier parroquia que le gustaría obtener más información con el fin de explorar la posibilidad de proporcionar este tipo de red de apoyo puede contactar a Tony Rassetter del Departamento de Familia y Servicios de Protección de Texas en San Ángelo al 325-657-8833 o 325-262-1987. Su correo electrónico es anthony.rassetter@dfps.state.tx.us

Cualquier individuo o pareja que le gustaría obtener más información sobre cómo llegar a ser un padre de crianza puede ponerse en contacto con Jessica Neader del Departamento de Familia y Servicios de Protección en San Ángelo Texas al 325-657-8944. Su correo electrónico es jessica.neader@dfps.state.tx.us

Para encontrar un calendario de las próximas reuniones informativas para padres de crianza en San Álamo, Midland, Odessa, Abilene, Brownwood, o Big Spring, visite la pagina de web al www.adoptchildren.org y haga clic en el enlace de Foster Care y luego en el enlace de Information Meeting.


Washington March for Life

Pro-life advocates celebrate the annual March for Life in Washington Jan. 2. above. (CNS photo/Tyler Orsburn)

Pro-life advocates hold signs Jan. 27 during the annual March for Life in Washington, at right (CNS photo/Tyler Orsburn).

In the March Angelus, photos from the Pro Life March in Austin, January 28, 2017.

Related Story, Pg. 9.

SCHOOL

(From 9)

ful raises the mind and heart to God, who is the source of all beauty. Color and proportion and harmony and order all glorify God the Creator. In art class we also study about how people have used art through the ages as a way to express their faith.

In music class in a Catholic school, we learn about the beautiful gift of sacred music, and how music helps connect us with God.

Of course, a Catholic school should also have physical education and sports. God gave you your body. When you take good care of it, you’re expressing gratitude to God. Physical education and athletics teaches us to be good stewards of our body.

Sports in a Catholic school is not about praying in order to win. It’s not as if God is somehow more happy if the Catholic football team beats the Protestant football team down the street. It’s about practicing the virtues of teamwork, self-discipline, and sportsmanship, and recognizing that God still loves us whether we win or lose. It’s about the fact that the way we act when winning or losing makes a difference in the eyes of God.

When we do well, we glorify God. When we do poorly, we lean on God, who loves us anyway.

When we lose, we thank God for a good lesson in humility.

Catholic schools are based in the harmony that exists between:

• Religion and Academics
• Faith and Reason
• Prayer and Study
• Jesus Christ and daily life

It’s a joy to be with you here today to celebrate that. Of course, we all know that there are extra sacrifices that come along with having a Catholic school:

• It costs more money.
• Students have to study hard.
• There’s typically stricter discipline and a dress code.
• Parents make financial sacrifices.
• Teachers often work for lower salaries than in other schools.

Not only the current students and parents and teachers sacrifice to make it happen. In fact, the Catholic school is a project of the whole parish and the whole Church. Lots of people pitch in. And our sacrifices are worth it. They help form our young people into men and women of faith and character.

As your local Bishop, I want to congratulate and thank all of you who make St. Ann’s Catholic School a tremendous success. I am very proud of you. I also want to ask your prayers for the project to start a new high school in Midland, called Holy Cross Catholic High School, to serve Midland and Odessa and the surrounding area. It is a very big dream, and I believe in it, and I’m personally dedicating my own time and money to this project.

Wouldn’t it be awesome if a student here in the Permian Basin could go all the way from Pre-K through the 12th grade in a thoroughly Catholic environment? With God’s help, we can make it happen.
Scenes from the Youth 2000 Event, January 27-29 at St. Stephen’s Parish in Midland. In above left photo, Bishop Michael Sis process in with Msgr. Jim Bridges, pastor of St. Stephen’s, right; Fr. Balachandra Nagipogu; Deacon Steve Zimmerman, left, and Deacon Larry Salazar, third from left.

Photos by Alan Torre / aptorre.com
SWLC
(From 2)

I am sure — it was such an unforgettable experience that I closed my eyes and let myself be transported to a spiritual height I had never before experienced.

My second memory was created in Albuquerque, NM, at a SWLC. The folklore dancers had entertained us and we had enjoyed a banquet meal on Friday night, but we had one more surprise coming. The person in charge informed us that one of the priests of the Santa Fe diocese had received permission to form a small musical group and that the priest played wonderful Spanish music.

During a break in their playing, my husband approached the priest and commented to him how much his playing sounded like a well-known Panamanian musician during the 1960s named Lucho Ascárraga. The priest responded that Lucho had been his organ teacher many years ago in Panama. His band began to play, again, and when my feet became tired of moving under the table, I stood up and began to dance right there between the tables. I was not alone for long. I figured since I did not know anyone at the conference I would go over and introduce myself to the priest I had just met at our table and who was smiling and enjoying our display of Latin blood, was a priest from the diocese of San Angelo by the name of Monsignor Bernard Guly. It is a small world indeed!

In the last couple of years, the conference has included two new information tracks: one in RCIA and the other in architecture and renovation of churches. These two tracks are now permanent parts of the conference. I took full advantage of the RCIA workshops this time. It is a wonderful tool for those working in RCIA to enhance their knowledge and share experiences.

As a team director for FOCUS at Ave Maria University, Nick Smith described FOCUS as important to university campuses because the organization "counteracts the things that distract us in a way that really allows Jesus to enter into this culture of death and change it."

Martins said he was struck by Sri's comments about the importance of people changing their actions to reflect their beliefs in an effort to overcome relativism in the world.

"This stuck with me because I realized that although I was surrounded by Catholics in Benedictine College, I found myself going to Mass less and less," he explained. "I now realize I was changing my actions and justifying them by other Catholic's actions. This conference has helped me realize that I really need to act the faith taking it upon myself to change, so my actions reflect my beliefs."

In another presentation, John H. Carmichael, author of "Drunks and Monks," discussed the freedom of drunkenness and worldliness. "If you build your house on sand, it will wash away," he said. "Young people, you should build it on rock. Go deep into the heart of the Catholic Church."

With such encouragement, SEEK participants could head back to their homes or colleges with what Miller described as a strong relationship with God so that "this relationship allows us to live life at its fullest."

Among those in attendance were more than 200 college students from the Diocese of Salina, Kansas. Among them was Adam Urban, a senior at Fort Hays State University in Kansas. He coordinated the school's three charter buses. "Sitting in the back watching student after student go to confession, seeing 200-plus priests and knowing God's mercy was present, that's when I knew it was all worth it."

Contributing to this story was Karen Bonar, editor of The Register, newspaper of the Diocese of Salina, Kansas.

GREENHOUSE
(From 10)

and blessed sleep.

So that women with children can be fully engaged in all that the greenhouse has to offer, trained volunteers will provide childcare on-site.

The greenhouse will be open to women of any age or background, married or single. We have the support and blessing of Bishop Michael Sis and we are profoundly grateful for his guidance and leadership.

Next Steps
Fr. David Herrera, pastor of Our Lady of Guadalupe Church in Midland, has joyfully agreed to allow us to begin the greenhouse for women there, where we will use existing facilities on the parish grounds. This will allow us to begin our ministry even while we continue to secure the funding to build our own center.

We have had 50 women express an interest in serving and ministering as volunteers. Our future volunteers will be key in providing a hospitable, nurturing place for women. With that in mind, we will be providing a program of training and formation for our volunteers. We hope to open our doors in the fall, with these amazing women serving their sisters in Christ.

Carried by Papa John Paul

Allow me to close on a personal note: there is a lovely story about John Paul II as a young man in Poland during the time of the Nazi occupation. A young girl had emerged from a Nazi labor camp who could scarcely walk and was slowly dying. John Paul came upon her, picked her up and carried her a long way, to a safe place where she would be cared for. I love this story because it speaks of his character, his love, his selflessness. John Paul has taught me what a woman is for, what I am for — that I am made to influence and encourage and love all those who are in my life. That as a woman, I play an indispensable role in God’s plan to save the world! So in a very real sense, John Paul has also carried me to a safe place, and for that I love him and am forever grateful.

Lisa Martinez is the founder and executive director of the greenhouse for women, a Catholic women's ministry based on the teachings of St. John Paul II. The center will launch in the fall in Midland. More information can be found at thegreenhouseforwomen.org.
**KNICKERBOCKERS**

(From 11)

With the entrance of sin into human life and the wiles of Satan, Matrimony, as a Sacrament of Redemption, is a great healing relationship in the human family. It is a healing relationship not only for the husband and wife but also for all the other people whose lives are touched by the love of this couple. In fact, the love of the husband and wife is meant to turn outward to others and to communicate the love for them of Christ and His Church. This outward turn to others by husband and wife is seen especially in their love for their children, as father, mother, and child (children) grow into a likeness of God the Holy Trinity. The home is to be a holy household where each person prays for the others and helps them grow in holiness.

Therefore, the Sacrament of Matrimony is a great blessing for the husband and wife and also a great responsibility. In the Sacrament of Matrimony the husband and wife are means of grace for each other and become the persons God intends them to be. Each is responsible for helping the other toward final salvation. When God seals the Sacrament of Matrimony at the altar of the Church, He is commissioning the husband and wife to carry His love into the lives of all they meet. What a great blessing it is for the husband and wife to be a means of the grace of God for each other and for others in the Sacrament of Matrimony!

After the “Celebration of Matrimony” in the Mass, during the reception of Communion in the liturgy of the Eucharist, I invited non-Catholics present to come forward for a blessing. I said they not only would be coming to ask a blessing for themselves but also would be coming to ask the Lord to bless Katherine and Michael on this special day in their lives. I think our new liturgy and their desire to ask God to bless Katherine and Michael were the reasons why so many non-Catholics came forward. So, Katherine and Michael were a blessing during the Mass to many people. May God grant that they will continue to be a blessing to each other and to others!

**BARRON**

(From 16)

comfortable lives under the aegis of their former enemies. Would anyone be eager to celebrate the layered complexity and rich ambiguity of their patriotism? Wouldn’t we see them rather straightforwardly as cowards and traitors?

En una catequesis durante la Jornada Mundial de la Juventud en Polonia, el cardenal de Manila, Luis Antonio Tagle, habló sobre cómo en la cultura moderna el valor de uno mismo se mide por el éxito y parece que “el mayor pecado de nuestro tiempo es decir: ‘He fallado’”.

Japanese cultural elite depicted in the film. What I mean is that the secular establishment always prefers Christians who are vacillating, unsure, divided, and altogether eager to privatize their religion. And it is all too willing to dismiss passionately religious people as dangerous, violent, and let’s face it, not that bright. Respect and care for native peoples is important.

El cardenal filipino dijo a una multitud de 15.000 jóvenes peregrinos sobre la importancia de abrirmos a la misericordia, lo que significa aceptar cuando necesitamos ayuda.

Añadió que el ascenso del ser humano que se llama “self-made” o que sale adelante por sí mismo, hace que sea más difícil para muchas personas a abrirse a otros, incluyendo a Dios. Esto se debe a la idea de que “si usted permite que otros le ayuden, que le guíen, usted no califica como exitoso”, dijo.

**ACEPTAR**

(Para 14)

aceptar ayuda.

Pero esto puede impedirnos madurar o, en algunos casos, obtener la ayuda que realmente necesitamos.

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**CHIN**

(From 14)

Yet, as we grow older, accepting others’ help is scary because it requires showing our vulnerabilities to other people. Many of us have been raised to believe that we need to solve our own problems, otherwise we appear weak. We are happy to help others but have a hard time asking for or accepting help.

But this can prevent us from growing or, in some cases, from getting the help we truly need.

In a catechesis during the 2016 World Youth Day in Poland, Manila Cardinal Luis Antonio Tagle talked about how in modern culture, one’s self-worth is measured by success and that it seems like “the greatest sin of our time is to say, ‘I have failed.’”

The Filipino cardinal told a crowd of 15,000 young pilgrims about the importance of opening ourselves to mercy, which means accepting when we need help.

He added that the rise of the modern "self-made" human being makes it harder for many people to open up themselves to others, including God. This is because of the idea that "if you allow others to help you, to guide you, you do not qualify as successful," he said.

In trying to be self-reliant or self-made to an extreme, a person can confuse accepting others’ help with losing dignity. But, he continued, ‘that person will not allow anyone — even God — to touch his heart or her heart for it is an insult.’

The teenagers in the youth group received a valuable lesson about their spiritual journey through that exercise: their dependence on others and on God.

By accepting help, we recognize that we cannot do it alone. That we need God to guide us, to help us when we most need it. We open ourselves to receiving mercy.

Divine help comes through human hands and hearts. Accepting others’ help is a way to gracefully accept God’s help and to let others become instruments of his mercy.

**MARTINEZ**

(From 10)

only the ways of efficiency and productivitiy. Regarding the civilization of love, women can bring to every aspect of life, including the highest levels of decision-making, those essential qualities of femininity. This consists of objectivity of judgment as well as the ability to deeply understand the demands of human relationships.

The successes of science and technology have made it possible for many to achieve material well-being. While this favors some, it pushes others to the edges of society. This can lead to a gradual loss of sensitivity for the person, for what is essentially human. So we need women to offer that “genius” which belongs to them and which shows sensitivity to persons in every circumstance.

**Exhortation to women**

“The world and the Church need your specific witness,” John Paul declares. Catholic women who live by faith and charity and give honor to God’s name in prayer and service, have always had a critical role in passing on the genuine sense of faith and applying it to all life’s circumstances.

Today, at a time of deep spiritual and cultural crisis, this task has an urgency that cannot be emphasized enough. The Church’s presence and action in this age passes by way of woman’s ability to receive and keep God’s word. In light of her specific charism, woman is uniquely gifted in the task of passing on the Christian message and mystery in the family and in the world of work, study and leisure. Today, as the Church sets out again on her journey to proclaim Christ to the world, she needs women who contemplate the face of Christ, who keep their gaze fixed on him and recognize him in the weakest members of his Body.

Lisa Martinez is the founder and executive director of the greenhouse for women, a Catholic women’s ministry based on the teaching of St. John Paul II. This center for women will launch the film in Midland. More information can be found at www.thegreenhouseforwomen.org.
“I was a stranger and you welcomed me.”

— Matthew 25:35

San Angelo Interfaith Prayer Vigil
January 31, 2017
Tom Green County Courthouse Steps

Images from the January 31, 2017, Interfaith Prayer Vigil on the front steps of the Tom Green County Courthouse, including Bishop Sis, middle left, speaking to the 150 who attended, and, above, speaking to one of the attendees. At right, Pastor David Hawkins displays his Bible, which he told the gathering had been confiscated on two visits to foreign lands.

Photos by Karen J. Patterson