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Texas dioceses will release names of clergy credibly accused of abuse

By James Ramos
Catholic News Service

HOUSTON — In an action to be more transparent, the 15 Catholic dioceses in Texas will release the names of clergy who were credibly accused of sexually abusing a minor, according to an Oct. 10 statement issued by the Texas Catholic Conference of Bishops in Austin.

“We believe this is in the path of healing, accountability and transparency,” said Archbishop Gustavo Garcia-Siller of San Antonio. “We are called as bishops to be more accountable and more responsible. This is the just and right thing to do.”

At a Sept. 30 meeting, the Texas bishops had agreed on jointly releasing the names, as part of “ongoing work to protect children from sexual abuse” and “promote healing and a restoration of trust” in the Church, according to the statement.

Archbishop Garcia-Siller recognized that this effort will be most painful for the survivors of abuse and said the Catholic Church remains committed to supporting victims in every way. He echoed other Texas bishops and encouraged anyone affected by abuse to come forward to officials.

Since the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People was adopted by U.S. bishops in 2002 in Dallas, Archbishop Garcia-Siller said, “the story has changed.”

He noted the drastic decrease in cases of abuse due to zero tolerance. In San Antonio, and across the church, he said he saw a clear improvement in the atmosphere at parishes and schools, with an increased awareness, attention and support for measures from laity and clergy to create safer and healthier communities.

But still, the archbishop said, “the efforts will never be enough. (Each) case of abuse is a tragedy.”

The release of clergy names is expected to come no later than Jan. 31, 2019. The Personal Ordinariate of the Chair of St. Peter, whose chancery is located in Houston, will join the 15 Texas dioceses in releasing names.

The 15 are: the Galveston-Houston and San Antonio archdioceses and the Austin, Amarillo, Beaumont, Brownsville, Corpus Christi, Dallas, El Paso, Fort Worth, Laredo, Lubbock, San Angelo, Tyler and Victoria dioceses.

The list will reflect the deep examination of nearly 70 years of diocesan records and files, dating back to at least 1950 and up to the present day. For dioceses founded more recently, like the Diocese of Tyler (1986), their respective lists will begin at their founding dates, said the Texas Catholic Conference of Bishops, which is the public policy arm of the state’s Catholic bishops.

Because there are more than 8.5 million Catholics and at least 1,320 parishes in Texas, the Catholic conference said compiling the names is a “major project,” noting that dioceses will coordinate with the dozens of religious orders that work in many Texas dioceses to also examine their information.

“We are committed to eradicating the evil of sexual abuse in the church and promoting healing among the faithful and those injured by this crime,” Cardinal DiNardo said.

The dioceses planned to issue their own release, along with the statement of the bishops.

These efforts by the Texas bishops, Archbishop Garcia-Siller said, also reflect the pope’s call for truth and accompaniment, or walking with others, in the church.

In an Oct. 6 statement, Pope Francis said: “We will follow the path of truth wherever it may lead.”

Ramos is a staff writer and designer for the Texas Catholic Herald, newspaper of the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston.

Bishop Sis: Release of names ‘expression of accountability’

By Bishop Michael Sis
Diocese of San Angelo

The release of these names is an expression of accountability in our ongoing attempt to create a safe environment for all. Child sexual abuse is a crime against God and humanity. When carried out by a representative of the Church, it is especially troubling, and it can cause deep emotional and spiritual wounds.

I offer my apology to anyone who has been hurt by any person affiliated with the Catholic Church, as well as for any time that any minister of the Church has failed to live up to Christ’s call to authentic holiness of life. I pledge to continue doing everything I can to safeguard the people of this diocese.

Ongoing training and vigilance are essential to this project. I expect anyone who serves in any ministry of the Church in the Diocese of San Angelo to know and follow diligently our policy of Ethics and Integrity in Ministry. Since 2002, we have conducted background checks on 14,223 individuals and have had 10,522 people attend an Ethics and Integrity in Ministry workshop.

I am committed to create a healthy environment, to fully investigate all allegations that are brought forward, to take necessary corrective actions to remove perpetrators from ministry, and to help victims find healing.

To Report Sexual Abuse

The Catholic Diocese of San Angelo is firmly committed to creating and maintaining the safest possible environment for our children and vulnerable adults. If you or someone you know has been sexually abused by anyone who serves the Church, and you need a place to talk with someone about your feelings of betrayal or hurt by the Church, we are here to help you. To report incidents, call Lori Hines, Victim Assistance Coordinator, 325-374-7609 (cell), or write Diocese of San Angelo, Victim Assistance Ministry, PO Box 1829, San Angelo, TX 76902. If the incident occurred outside this diocese, our Victim Assistance Coordinator will assist in bringing your concern to the attention of the appropriate diocese.

Please keep in mind that one always has the right to report abuse to civil authorities, and civil law requires that any abuse of a minor must be reported.

Obispo Sis: Publicación es una expresión de responsabilidad

Por Obispo Michael Sis
Diócesis de San Ángelo

La publicación de estos nombres es una expresión de responsabilidad en nuestro esfuerzo continuo para crear un ambiente seguro para todos. El abuso sexual infantil es un crimen contra Dios y la humanidad. Cuando se lleva a cabo por un representante de la Iglesia, es especialmente perturbador, y puede causar profundas heridas emocionales y espirituales.

Yo pido perdón de cualquiera que haya sido herido por alguien afiliado a la Iglesia Católica, y también por cualquier momento en que un ministro de la Iglesia no haya cumplido con el llamado de Cristo a una vida de santidad auténtica. Me comprometo a seguir haciendo todo lo que pueda para proteger al pueblo de esta diócesis.

La formación continua y la vigilancia son esenciales para este proyecto. Exijo que cualquier persona que sirve en cualquier ministerio de la Iglesia en la Diócesis de San Ángelo conozca y siga diligentemente nuestra política de Ética e Integridad en el Ministerio. Desde 2002, hemos llevado a cabo verificaciones de antecedentes de 14,223 personas y hemos tenido 10,522 personas asistir a un taller de Ética e Integridad en el Ministerio.

Estoy comprometido a crear un ambiente sano, de investigar a fondo todas las acusaciones que se nos presenten, de tomar las acciones correctivas necesarias para eliminar los responsables del ministerio, y para ayudar a las víctimas a encontrar sanación.

Para Reportar Abuso Sexual

La Diócesis Católica de San Ángelo está firmemente comprometida a crear y mantener el ambiente más seguro posible para nuestros niños y adultos vulnerables. Si usted o alguien que usted conoce ha sido víctima de abuso sexual por cualquier persona que sirve a la Iglesia, y necesitan una persona que hablen con alguien sobre sus sentimientos de traición o herido por la Iglesia, estamos aquí para ayudarle. Para reportar incidentes, llame a Lori Hines, Coordinadora de Asistencia a Víctimas, 325-374-7609 (celular) o escriba a la Diócesis de San Ángelo, Ministerio de Asistencia a Víctimas, PO Box 1829, San Ángelo, TX 76902. Si el incidente ocurrió fuera de esta diócesis, nuestra Coordinadora de Asistencia a Víctimas le ayudará a trazar su precisión a la atención de la diócesis correspondiente. Por favor, tenga en cuenta que uno siempre tiene el derecho de reportar el abuso a las autoridades civiles, y a la ley civil requiere que cualquier abuso de un menor de edad debe ser reportado.
The meaning of suffering

By Bishop Michael Sis
Diocese of San Angelo

There are many different things that might cause a person to consider giving up on religion. One of them is the experience of going through deep suffering without knowing how to make sense of it.

One of the most precious treasures of our Catholic faith is the Christian meaning of suffering. Those who have a solid Christian understanding of the meaning of suffering are sustained by their faith through tragedy and hardship. They actually grow in wisdom and holiness as they pass through afflictions.

However, those who lack that understanding are less well equipped to handle life’s pains. When suffering comes along, they think that somehow God has failed them. Some people think that, “If I get close to God, then everything in my life should go well. If I have faith, then God will bless me with health, wealth, and abundance.”

But that’s not true. Faith and prayer do not provide an automatic force field against all suffering. To be close to God doesn’t mean that you will never suffer. For example, Jesus is the eternal Son of God, totally innocent and intimately close to God the Father, yet he suffered torture and death on the Cross.

If a flood or hurricane or tornado comes our way, it’s not just going to hit the homes of the evil sinners. Some good and faithful people will also be hurt. Jesus teaches in Matthew 5:45, “God makes his sun rise on the evil and the good; he sends rain on the just and the unjust.”

The good and holy person does not have an automatic protection against suffering. Jesus never promised to protect us from all pain, but he does promise to walk with us through the pain. This natural world in which we live, on this side of heaven, is not perfect. It has a few kinks in it. In our life, there will be storms, and cancer, and car accidents.

We don’t choose our afflictions, but we can choose what we’re going to do with them. We will be more resilient in our suffering if we will face it with a perspective that is guided by the wisdom of our faith. Here are seven things that we as Catholic Christians can do with our suffering:

1. **We pray.**

For the Christian, the tragedies of life become an occasion for leaning on the grace of God. Our prayerful union with God can carry us through our pain and afflictions. For example, Psalm 23 helps us to pray to the Lord: “Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff comfort me.”

Our prayer in the midst of suffering includes asking for strength and patience, as well as giving thanks to God for his blessings. Even in the midst of the most troubling of hard times, there are always some things that we can be grateful for.

Saint Teresa of Avila illustrates how a person of prayer approaches the troubles of life when she writes, “Let nothing disturb you. Let nothing frighten you. All things pass. God does not change. Patience achieves everything. Whoever has God lacks nothing. God alone suffices.”

2. **We increase our desire for heaven.**

We allow our suffering to lead us to a greater spirit of detachment from the material things of this world, and to increase our desire for the joys of heaven. In our Christian world view, this earthly life is not all there is. In heaven there are no floods, or hurricanes, or cancer.

3. **We accept the help of others.**

We must be humble enough to accept help when we need it. We recall how Simon of Cyrene helped Jesus carry his Cross along the Via Dolorosa. If Jesus was willing to accept help, then so can we.

4. **We increase our desire for heaven.**

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See BISHOP, Page 22
Diocesan Tribunal office holds advocate training workshops

Diocesan Tribunal office holds advocate training workshops

Left: Mary Ellen Payton, Assistant Case Manager for the Diocesan Tribunal; Father Bhaskar Mendem; Father Tom Barley, Judicial Vicar of the Diocese of San Angelo; Father Balachandra Nagipogu; Father Felix Archibong; and Father Bala Anthony Govindu after an advocate training session in San Angelo. The priests pictured met for advocate training with the staff of the diocesan marriage tribunal to learn about the annulment process and marriage preparation process. Similar training sessions will be held in the Abilene and Midland/Odessa deaneries once arranged with the priests of the deaneries. (Angelus photo)

There will be an advocate training session in Big Spring at Holy Trinity Church on Sunday, Nov. 18, from 4:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. If you wish to attend, please notify the parish office at bigspring@sanangelodiocese.org or 432-714-4930. The tribunal invites people who wish to become advocates, as well as those on marriage preparation or RCIA teams.

Below: Fr. Yesu Mulakaleti, parish priest of St. Mary, Star of the Sea Church in Ballinger, graciously hosted an advocate training class on Tuesday, Aug. 7, 2018. There were approximately 30 advocates in attendance from the surrounding area. (courtesy photo)

CALENDARS

Bishop’s Calendar

November 2018

1 ODESSA, UTPB, Mass at 12:00 p.m.
8 ODESSA, St. Mary, 25th Anniversary of Adoration Chapel Mass at 6:30 p.m.
10-16 BALTIMORE, USCCB General Assembly
18 SAN ANGELO, McNease Convention Center, Multi-diocesan Youth Conference Mass at 10:00 a.m.
20 ABILENE, Holy Family, RCIA presentation at 6:30 p.m.
26 SAN ANGELO, presentation to women’s ministry group at 6:30 p.m.
28 SAN ANGELO, St. Mary, high school presentation at 7:00 p.m.
30 SAN ANGELO, Diocesan Pastoral Center, joint meeting of Finance Council and Presbyteral Council at 11:00 a.m., meeting of Presbyteral Council at 2:00 p.m.

December 2018

1 SAN ANGELO, Angelo Catholic School, Diocesan Schools Commission meeting at 9:00 a.m.
2 SAN ANGELO, St. Paul Presbyterian Church, San Angelo Living Together at 5:00 p.m.
4 SAN ANGELO, Diocesan Pastoral Center, Priestly Life and Formation Committee meeting at 11:00 a.m.
4 SAN ANGELO, Holy Angels, RCIA session at 6:30 p.m.
5 SAN ANGELO, First United Methodist Church, Advent luncheon at 12:05 p.m.
7 SAN ANGELO, Christ the King Retreat Center, Annual Staff Dinner at 6:30 p.m.
8 SAN ANGELO, Sacred Heart Cathedral, Immaculate Conception Mass at 12:00 noon
9 SHEFFIELD, Good Shepherd, Mass at 11:00 a.m.
9 SAN ANGELO, ASU Newman Center, Mass at 6:30 p.m.
12 SAN ANGELO, Sacred Heart Cathedral, Presentation at 1:00 p.m.
13 SAN ANGELO, Sacred Heart Cathedral, Vocation Team Meeting at 1:00 p.m.
14 SAN ANGELO, Sacred Heart Cathedral, Annual Staff Dinner at 6:30 p.m.
16-18 SAN ANGELO, Christ the King Retreat Center, Seminarian Gathering
18 SAN ANGELO, Diocesan Pastoral Center, Vocation Team meeting at 1:00 p.m.
19 AUSTIN, Association of Catholic Professionals Luncheon at 11:30 a.m.

Christ the King Retreat Center

November 2018

1 CKRC Offices Closed in Observance of All Saints Day
2-4 DOSA Deacon’s Annual Retreat #2
5 Heart of Mercy Prayer Group
7 Shannon Volunteers
9-11 Diocesan Formation Group
12 Heart of Mercy Prayer Group
13 San Angelo Deaconry Finance Workshop
19 Heart of Mercy Prayer Group
22-23 CKRC Offices Closed in Observance of Thanksgiving
26 Heart of Mercy Prayer Group
29 Staff Mass & Lunch
30 Bishop’s Annual Christmas Party for Clergy

December 2018

1 Heart of Mercy Prayer Group
3 Heart of Mercy Prayer Group
7 Bishop’s Annual Advent Party for Staff
8 Diocesan Formation
10 Heart of Mercy Prayer Group
12 DOSA Staff Advent Day of Prayer
14-16 Seminarian Winter Gathering
19-20 Staff Mass & Lunch
24-25 CKRC Offices Closed in Observance of Christmas
30 CKRC Offices Closed in Observance of the New Year

Necrology of Priests and Deacons

Please pray for our departed clergy

November

12 Rev. Robert Vretau, OMI (2013)
19 Rev. Frank Zimmerman, CM (1999)
24 Deacon Lero Beach (2016)
27 Rev. Michael Dwyer, MSC (1997)

December

1 Rev. John A. Pierce (1979)
4 Rev. Larry Cyr, CPPS (2017)
5 Rev. Angel Vizcarra, OP (2014)
12 Deacon Nestor Perez (1993)
Dr. Joseph White gives the keynote presentation, “Crossing the Generational Divide: Strengths and Challenges” at the Diocesan Conference Day, Oct. 20 in San Angelo. (Angelus photo)

SAN ANGELO — The diocesan Office of Evangelization and Catechesis hosted the annual Diocesan Conference Day on Oct. 20, 2018, at the McNease Convention Center in San Angelo. Around 200 people attended the single-day conference featuring Eucharist, various breakout sessions, and two keynote speeches from featured presenter Dr. Joseph White.

White, a practicing clinical child psychologist as well as a full-time curriculum and catechetical consultant for Our Sunday Visitor, travels the country speaking with ministry and catechetical leaders about religious education and meeting the needs of parishioners. He has previously served as the Director of Family Counseling and Family Life for the Diocese of Austin and as a parish Director of Faith Formation. Raised as an evangelical Protestant, White found himself searching for a faith home in graduate school and was drawn to the cathedral near his university. This search brought him to Catholicism; post-doctoral work at Texas A&M brought him to Texas.

White’s first keynote presentation, “Crossing the Generational Divide: Strengths and Challenges,” focused on the challenges of generational differences and how to best cater religious education efforts to the ideas of generational identities of the people served by the church, or in some cases, the parents of children in religious education.

During his presentation, White cited statistics that 53 percent of American adults have left the faith of their childhood, with only nine percent returning. Fully 10 percent of adults in the United States are estimated to be ex-Catholics.

This trend of people leaving the faith of their youth is something that church leaders should be aware of. “Somehow, we’re not connecting with young people today,” White said.

White’s presentation focused on the differences between how various generations view themselves, as well as what values these different generational cohorts hold dear. For example, some of the differences between Generation X (those born roughly between 1965 and 1980) and Generation Y (1980 to 1998) include: Gen X tends toward structure, punctuality, and linear activities, while Gen Y prefers things unstructured, asynchronous, and non-linear; while Gen X has the mentality of “live to work,” Gen Y has flipped the script and instead views their goal as “work to live”; Gen X-ers as a whole seem to be more focused on the individual, while those in Generation Y are more focused on the culture as a whole.

What might be surprising to some of those who fall into the Generation X category, though, are what Generation Y (the age group also sometimes defined as the oft-
Movie review: Gosnell: The Trial of America's Biggest Serial Killer

By John Mulderig
Catholic News Service

NEW YORK — Gosnell: The Trial of America's Biggest Serial Killer (GVN) is a powerful dramatization of the Philadelphia police investigation and state prosecution that finally ended the infamous, decades-long career of abortionist Kermit Gosnell.

As proven in the procedure of the title, Gosnell, besides legally slaughtering the unborn, frequently perpetrated infanticide and endangered his adult clients with filthy conditions.

As it follows the work of police detective James Wood (Dean Cain) and assistant district attorney Alexis "Lexy" McGuire (Sarah Jane Morris), the film effectively indicts not only Gosnell himself — played here by Earl Billings — but the political bias of officials who shielded and enabled him. In a similar vein, it should be noted that, rather than being backed by anyone in Hollywood, the movie itself had to be financed via crowdfunding.

Gosnell's long-overdue downfall begins when he's fingered for selling painkiller prescriptions to addicts. The FBI and Drug Enforcement Administration are determined to restrict their investigation to the drug transactions, assuming whatever else goes on in Gosnell's facility comes under the sacrosanct heading of "reproductive rights."

But Wood doggedly insists on pursuing evidence that an immigrant woman died there due to Gosnell's flagrant disregard for medical regulations. Accompanying the feds on their raid of the place, he discovers a house of horrors, with whole fetal bodies and various tiny body parts squirreled away in cabinets and a refrigerator.

Some of the corpses recovered are shown to have been born alive and then murdered. So, with the reluctant support of her boss, Dan Molinari (Michael Beach), McGuire brings her case to court.

Screenwriters Phelim McAleer, Ann McElhinney and Andrew Klavan, adapting McAleer and McElhinney's 2017 best-seller, Gosnell: The Untold Story of America's Most Prolific Serial Killer, keep the focus on the deceptively avuncular, weirdly unflappable physician's breaches of current statutes. They obviously do so in the hope of winning over independent minded moviegoers.

Thus, as directed by Nick Searcy, who also plays Gosnell's hard-driving defense attorney, Mike Cohan, the script mostly leaves it to viewers to recognize the wholly arbitrary distinction between extinguishing life within the womb and doing so, perhaps only moments later, outside it. A significant exception comes via the testimony of Dr. North (Janine Turner), a law-abiding peer of Gosnell's.

Brought in by the prosecution to show how far Gosnell has transgressed accepted norms, even in an industry devoted to death, North is then cross-examined by Cohan. Cohan, for his own reasons, takes North through the details of her work in a way that reveals what pro-life journalist Nat Hentoff, using a phrase of novelist William Burroughs', used to call "the naked lunch at the end of the fork," the stark reality of what every abortion involves.

Well-written and acted, with touches of humor thrown in to relieve the grim subject matter, Gosnell gets its point across more easily than a documentary might. Some parents, moreover, may see in this sobering and informative movie too good an opportunity for reinforcing pro-life values in older teens to let the relatively few objectionable elements it includes stand in the way.

The film contains mature themes, images of body parts and medical gore, a couple of mild oaths and about a half-dozen crude terms. The Catholic News Service classification is A-III — adults. The Motion Picture Association of America rating is PG-13 — parents strongly cautioned. Some material may be inappropriate for children under 13.

Mulderig is on the staff of Catholic News Service.

Good Shepherd Parish, Crane — Adoration and Children's Mass

Good Shepherd Parish in Crane held Adoration and a Children's Mass on Oct. 24. There were 125 children and youth in attendance, along with their family members. (courtesy photos)
Liturgical leaders gather in Atlanta to discuss Christian unity

Press Release
Federation of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions

Nearly 150 leaders from 85 dioceses gathered in Atlanta, Georgia, October 2-4, for the 49th annual national meeting of the Federation of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions (FDLC). Their focus was “The Body of Christ: A Prophetic Sign of Unity and Concord.” Specifically, they addressed the current state of division in the country, in the world, and among the Christian communities. They examined pastoral activities which might alleviate them.

Father Ryan Rojo and Father Lorenzo Hatch of the Diocese of San Angelo were in attendance.

The members of the FDLC were greeted by Archbishop Wilton Gregory of the Archdiocese of Atlanta. He expressed his deep gratitude for the Federation’s members for “the leadership, scholarship, and resources which you provide to aid in the authentic implementation and celebration of the liturgy.”

Archbishop Gregory presided at the opening liturgy at the historic Basilica of the Sacred Heart in downtown Atlanta. On the feast of the Guardian Angels, he asked the assembly to recall their childlike fascination with their guardian angel’s protection, a duty which those angels have not abandoned.

FDLC’s Executive Director Rita Thiron brought the meeting’s theme into focus: “We gather at a time when our whole world seems fractured. Our country is torn by division and by news outlets and social media blogs which fuel the flame of debate. It seems like there is always a division of loyalties, of ideologies, and of purpose. When there is such division, one cannot have a common hope, cannot see a common solution, cannot see a way forward. Unity will elude us.”

An impressive group of presenters aided the discussions in Atlanta. Archbishop Gregory spoke on the debates caused by the translation of liturgical texts. Father Don Rooney, a consultant to the Bishops’ Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs, gave an historic and thought-provoking analysis of the schisms which have beset the Church with a special emphasis on 16th century reformers. He spoke hopefully of post-conciliar dialogue and recent efforts by Pope Francis to heal century-old divisions.

Wednesday was a local study day which was also attended by local clergy and lay leaders. They were treated to several workshops. First, Dr. Don Saliers of Emory University spoke eloquently about the poor and the psalmody which refers to them. Second, Dr. Eileen Jaramillo addressed the issue of candidates in the RCIA process and offered canonical, pastoral, and liturgical advice. Finally, the participants heard from Pastor Walter Still who spoke about ongoing dialogue and pastoral initiatives between Catholics and Lutherans.

Since its founding, the FDLC National Meeting has been co-sponsored annually by the FDLC and the National Association of Pastoral Musicians in recognition of its 42 years of forming pastoral musicians. Founding president Father Virgil Funk and current president Steven Petrunak accepted the award.

The FDLC’s highest honor, the prestigious Frederick R. McManus Award was presented to the National Association of Pastoral Musicians in recognition of its 42 years of forming pastoral musicians.

The FDLC was established in 1969 by the Bishops’ Committee on Divine Worship. At that time, members of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions from across the country were called together by the bishops in order to provide formation on the liturgical books, newly revised after the Second Vatican Council.

The Angelo Catholic School 4th grade service project is supporting the Kairos Team through prayer and making placemats. When the team goes into a prison, they meet with the inmates. A good meal is served and each inmate is given a placemat. The inmates are touched by the fact that children have made the placemats for them. Most of the inmates do not use the placemats for that purpose; however, they are given permission to hang the placemats in their cells.

(courtesy photo)
Speaking of Saints

As Jesuit order was suppressed, Spanish priest kept the faith

By Mary Lou Gibson

For more than 40 years (1773-1814), the Society of Jesus (the Jesuits) was formally suppressed in several European countries. The trouble began in April 1767 when Spanish King Charles III issued an edict expelling the Jesuits from his kingdom and confiscating their property.

Editor Bernard Bangley writes in Butler’s Lives of the Saints that Charles considered the Jesuits to be against his control and power, both in Spain and in the Spanish colonies. At the same time, Pope Clement XIV had been under considerable political pressure from several European monarchs to suppress the Jesuits in Portugal, France, the Two Sicilies, Parma and the Spanish Empire.

Father Joseph Pignatelli, a Spanish Jesuit, was among the more than 23,000 Jesuits affected by the suppression. He was born at Saragossa, Spain, in 1737 and left an orphan at age nine. He joined the Jesuits at Tarragona at the age of 16. During his student years, Joseph contracted tuberculosis and was in poor health the rest of his life.

Ordained in 1763, Father Joseph was forced to leave Spain after King Charles III’s edict. He joined 5,000 other Spanish Jesuits at the Catalan border where they boarded overcrowded ships and sailed for three weeks, looking for a port that would accept them.

Not only were Father Joseph and his fellow Jesuits now in exile, they had also been secularized by the Pope’s brief Dominus ac Redemptor (Lord and Savior), issued in 1773, dissolving the Society. He finally found refuge in Bologna where he lived for the next 20 years, counselling his secularized brothers and keeping the spirit of the order alive.

Some years later, Father Joseph learned that Catherine the Great refused to enforce the suppression in Russia. David Farmer writes in the Oxford Dictionary of Saints that the Jesuits continued to exist there and a foundation was made in Parma under the protection of its duke. Richard McBrien writes in Lives of the Saints that Father Joseph wrote to the superior of the Jesuits there and asked for readmission. He renewed his vows in 1797 and was made master of novices in 1799 at Colorno, the only Jesuit novitiate in Western Europe at that time. Shortly thereafter, Pope Pius VII gave formal approval to the Jesuit province in Russia.

The rapid growth of the Jesuits and their success in education and mission work were among some of the reasons the Society of Jesus came into conflict with certain civil powers in the mid 18th century, according to the Catholic Encyclopedia (edited by the Rev. Peter M. J. Stravinskas). Years later, Pope Clement asserted that he suppressed the Society because it could no longer attain its original ends and because he wanted peace within the church.

In 1804 the Society was re-established in the Kingdom of Naples with Father Joseph as provincial. Shortly thereafter, the French invaded and Father Joseph and his Jesuits were again displaced and forced out of Naples. In 1806 they were welcomed to Rome by Pope Pius VII who subsequently restored the Gesu and Roman college to the Society.

Finally, in 1814 Pope Pius VII restored the Society of Jesus throughout the world. Sadly, Father Joseph did not live to see this happen. He died at Rome in November 1811 and was buried in the church of Our Lady of Good Counsel.

Bangley calls Father Joseph Pignatelli the “second founder” of the Society of Jesus and credits him with the survival of the order. Pope Pius XII called him the “restorer of the Jesuits” when he canonized him in 1954. His feast day is November 28.

Mary Lou Gibson writes about the saints for the West Texas Angelus from her home in Austin.

Father Knick and Sandie Knickerbocker

Why families count

By Father Knick and Sandie Knickerbocker

In the Epistle of James, the author speaks about “the wisdom from above” (3:17). Wisdom is a vision of the truth that is the heart of reality. This wisdom is what we desperately need now in order to face the present crisis in the Catholic Church.

What is “the wisdom from above” and how can this guide us in understanding and responding to the crisis in the Catholic Church?

When we look at the Official Directory for the Roman Catholic Diocese of San Angelo, we find much information about the diocese, each parish and mission in the diocese, and clergy and lay persons who are employed by the diocese. The last statistic on the page for each parish and mission is the record of the number of families in that parish or mission. This way of counting our members distinguishes us from Protestant churches, because they count their members by individuals. This may seem like a small difference, but it is a window into the “wisdom from above” that James writes about.

Why do we count our membership by families and not by individuals? The answer to this is in #234 of the Catechism of the Catholic Church where we read: “The mystery of the Most Holy Trinity is the central mystery of the Christian faith and life. It is the mystery of God in himself. It is therefore the source of all the other mysteries of faith, the light that enlightens them.” This truth that God in his inner nature is a Trinity of Persons is called a mystery, because we could never have figured this out ourselves. As James says, it is “wisdom from above.” It is “revelation” given us by God himself.

You might ask, and rightly so, “What in the world does this have to do with why every Catholic parish and mission counts its members by families?” And, “What does that have to do with understanding and responding to the present crisis in the Catholic Church?” Let’s make the connection.

In the Book of Genesis we read: “God said, ‘Let us make man in our image, after our likeness’ … So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. And God blessed them and said to them, ‘Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it’” (1:26-28, RSVCE). In the light of the New Testament (for example, Mt 28:19-20) this is understood as the Three Persons of the Trinity saying among themselves, “Let us.” The Three Persons of the Trinity love perfectly as two persons love a third person together. It is the nature of this perfect circle of love to overflow in creation. And the heart of God’s creation is the human family of father, mother, and child, a “likeness” of God himself, who is a Trinity of Persons.

But there is a problem. Before our first parents, named Adam and Eve in Genesis, could come together and conceive a child and complete the work of God in creating a “likeness” of himself, we read, in the third chapter of Genesis, that the devil intervenes. In the figure of a serpent, he tempts Eve, and through her Adam, to sin. Before Adam and Eve conceive Cain, their first child, they sin, and they pass that sin to Cain who kills his brother, Abel, and we have been sinning ever since. We sin against God the Holy Trinity by sinning against the family of father, mother, and child, who are meant to be a likeness of God himself.

However, God does not leave us in our sin. The Son, the Second Person of the Holy Trinity, comes to us in a human family to save us from our sin. Here is the child who is conceived without sin in his human nature the way the child of

See KNICKERBOCKERS, Page 23
Coming Together as a Church Family

Children enjoying bowling and other activities that were available at Angelo Catholic School’s Oktober Fiesta in San Angelo, Oct. 28. (Angelus photo)

Members of the St. Stephen’s Women’s Organization pose with Father Adam Droll during the Mini Mall portion of the St. Stephen Parish Festival in Midland, Oct. 20. Left to right: Jimena True, Father Droll, Mary Hanel, Ann Carrillo, and Liz Madrid. (courtesy photo)

Father Freddy Perez hands out candy to festival goers at St. Stephen Church in Midland, Oct. 20. (courtesy photo)

Stay Connected with the Diocese of San Angelo

**DOSA Mail**

The official Flocknote of the Diocese of San Angelo. Receive texts or emails with important news, updates, and messages from the diocese.

Two ways to join:
1) Text DOSA to 84567
   OR
2) Visit https://app.flocknote.com/dosamail

**Social Media**

Diocese of San Angelo on Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/DioceseofSanAngelo

Bishop Michael Sis on Twitter: @SABishopMike

**On the Web**

www.sanangelodiocese.org
**DIOCESAN BRIEFS**

**Parish Festival — St. Joseph, Rowena**

*Sunday, Nov. 11*

Theme: “Texas Born – Catholic Raised”

The day’s activities begin at 10:30 a.m. with a Flag Raising and balloon release ceremony honoring all veterans.

A mid-day meal consisting of turkey and dressing with all the trimmings, will also include Rowena style German sausage. A live auction begins immediately following the meal.

Games for all ages, including bingo, will be held. A Country Store featuring handmade items, canned goods and plants will be open throughout the day. A Sausage Sandwich Supper will be held.

Uncooked sausage will be sold by the pound as long as the supply lasts. Handicapped parking will be available as well as a shuttle bus. Assistance will be provided to those who need help in being seated for the meal.

For more information call the church office at 325-442-3521 or 325-365-6447.

**Parish Festival — Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Ozona**

*Saturday, Nov. 17*

Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish in Ozona will hold their Fall Festival on Saturday, Nov. 17. All vendors and parishes are invited to attend. A dance will conclude the evening.

FMI: 325-392-3353

**Come Encounter Jesus Mission**

Holy Spirit Parish, Sweetwater

*Sundays, Dec. 2–Wednesday, Dec. 5*

Holy Spirit Parish in Sweetwater will be hosting a mission, Come Encounter Jesus, at the Parish, 511 W Alabama Avenue, from Sunday, Dec. 2 to Wednesday, Dec. 5.

The mission is presented by Father Blaise Czaja, CP.

Morning Mass will also be offered Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday from 9:00 a.m. to 10:30 a.m.

For more information, contact the parish office at 325-235-3318 or sweetwater@sanangelodiocese.org.

**Retreats for Women/Girls Interested in Becoming a Sister**

If you are a woman who wants to understand more about this call from God, you are invited to these retreats. Or if you know a woman who has interest in religious life, please share this information with her.

**Pearl of Great Price Vocation Information days:**

February 23, 2019 in Abilene

Contact The Vocation office at 325-651-7500 or Sr. Elsa at 432-682-6303 for more information.

**Contemplating the diaconate?**

The Diocese of San Angelo ordained a group of fifteen new permanent deacons in June 2018. The next deacon class has already begun the formation process. In a few years, we plan to begin the discernment of new members of a subsequent class. Completion of the Basic and Advanced Formation classes offered by the San Angelo Diocesan Office of Evangelization and Catechesis (or their equivalent) will be required of all men prior to the start of deacon formation in future classes. The classes are an excellent means for all who want to learn more about the faith, and the perfect foundation from which the deacon formation program would start. Please take advantage of current ongoing classes. More information on Basic and Advanced Formation is available by contacting the Office of Evangelization and Catechesis at 325-651-7500 or evangelizationcatechesis@sanangelodiocese.org.
Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish welcomes you to a teaching and exposition of Sacred Relics. Over 150 relics will be shown, some believed to be as old as 2000 years.

Among the treasures will be relics of St. Thomas More, St. Maria Goretti, St. Thérèse of Lisieux (the “Little Flower”), St. Francis of Assisi, St. Anthony of Padua, St. Thomas Aquinas, and St. Faustina Kowalska.

In addition, there will also be present one of the largest remaining pieces of the True Cross in the world.

presented by Father Carlos Martins of the Companions of the Cross

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 19, 2018
1401 E GARDEN LN, MIDLAND
See www.treasuresofthechurch.com for more information

Popular exhibit of relics of the saints to visit Diocese of San Angelo
Display features pieces of Jesus’ Cross

Media Release

Just days before the start of Advent, the faithful have the opportunity to venerate the sacred remains of the Church’s heroes.

Father Carlos Martins, CC, a Custos Reliquiarum (ecclesiastically-appointed curate of relics), will return to Texas in November with an exhibit of more than 150 relics of saints canonized by the Catholic Church. Immensely popular, it is highlighted by one of the largest remaining relics of the True Cross in the world.

Father Martins begins each exposition with a presentation and teaching on relics which provides the catechetical and spiritual basis for the Walk with the Saints that follows the talk. The point of the teaching is the presentation of the basic Gospel message of Jesus Christ: that God is here right now and wants to be encountered; He touches us through the lives and the sacred remains of His saints.

“God never disappoints ... he always ‘shows up,’” remarks Fr. Martins. “There are healings at every exposition. Hundreds, perhaps even thousands, have been reported to me.” Though a great number of miracles have been physical (his website lists a sample of these), he admits that the most spectacular is the healing of faith where a new and deeper relationship with God and His saints is formed in the faithful. “It is a most wonderful thing to see a parish, school, or prison renewed after an exposition. That is the basis for this ministry’s existence.”

Standing-room-only crowds are typical at each location he visits. He regularly receives invitations from bishops and pastors desiring to host an exposition Cardinal Daniel DiNardo, Archbishop of Galveston-Houston and President of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, who has had over 50 expositions in his Archdiocese alone, says, “As models and intercessors, the saints are our benefactors, aiding us with the example of their lives and by their prayers, something that Fr. Martins has worked hard to instill in every Catholic.”

Since converting from atheism 22 years ago, Father Martins has been entrusted with an extensive Vatican collection for use in his ministry Treasures of the Church. He tours the world with the collection that includes St. Maria Goretti, St. Therese of Lisieux (the "Little Flower"), St. Francis of Assisi, St. Anthony of Padua, St. Thomas Aquinas, St. Ignatius Loyola, and St. Faustina Kowalska.

The Vatican has issued a special Plenary Indulgence for all those who attend this exhibit.

See www.TreasuresOfTheChurch.com for an up-to-date listing of exposition times and locations. Admission is free.

The location and time of the event in the Diocese of San Angelo is as follows:

Monday November 19 at 7:00 pm
Our Lady of Guadalupe Church
1401 E Garden Lane
Midland, Texas 79701
(432) 682-2581
The third graders at St. Ann Catholic School in Midland presented the school’s annual Saints Wax Museum on All Saints’ Day, Nov. 1. (courtesy photo)

The altar at St. Joseph Church in San Angelo on All Souls Day, Nov. 2. (courtesy photo)

Attendees of the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart’s Oct. 31 festivities. At left, a young St. José María Escrivá. Below, the cathedral’s Parochial Vicar, Father Josh Gray, horsing around. (photos by Rose Pelzel)

Father Chinnapureddy Pagidela blesses graves at St. Lawrence Parish near Garden City on All Souls Day, Nov. 2. (courtesy photo)

"Often we tire at the thought of looking back, of asking 'What happened in my life, my family, my people,' but today is a day for remembering."

Pope Francis, All Souls Day Mass, Nov. 2, 2018
White Mass honors medical, health care personnel in Galveston-Houston area

By James Ramos
Catholic News Service

HOUSTON — Members of Galveston-Houston's massive health care and medical communities, including doctors, nurses, medical students and other medical and health care personnel, were encouraged to wear white coats to represent their professions at the annual White Mass at Houston's Co-Cathedral of the Sacred Heart.

White is a symbol in the Catholic Church of hope and comfort to the ill and hospitalized. The Mass honors those who work in the healing medical professions.

Father Lawrence Jozwiak, rector of the co-cathedral of the Sacred Heart, was the main celebrant of this year's Mass Oct. 20, with Father Desmond Daniels of the archdiocese's Catholic Chaplain Corps, who ministers at Houston Methodist Hospital, concelebrating.

Many of the area's health care professionals in attendance serve in the Texas Medical Center, a burgeoning hub that employs more than 106,000 people. The center is comprised of the largest concentration of medical facilities in the world, including the world's largest children's hospital and cancer hospital, as well as the 75-plus medical facilities spread throughout the 10-county archdiocese. These locations are served by Catholic doctors, nurses and other medical professionals, as well as Catholic priests, chaplains and pastoral care workers.

In his homily, Father Jozwiak encouraged those who work in health care, including counselors, technicians, therapists, nurses, doctors and the many others who work alongside these professionals.

Afterward the priest offered a special blessing for all medical professionals attending. During the blessing, a litany of the saints was chanted over the members, invoking prayers from patrons of those who work in medical fields, including St. Luke.

Following the Mass, at a reception and dinner, Dr. Michael Brescia spoke about "The Nature and Treatment of Human Suffering.” Brescia is Catholic doctor and co-founder and executive medical director of Calvary Hospital in New York City. He is known for his invention of the arteriovenous fistula, which saves many affected by renal disease, as well as his efforts to support those dealing with end-of-life care at Calvary, the nation's only facility dedicated to hospice and palliative care for cancer patients.

With the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston, Baylor St. Luke's Medical Center, Catholic Healthcare Professionals of Houston and San Jose Clinic co-hosted the White Mass.

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Ramos is a staff writer and designer for the Texas Catholic Herald, newspaper of the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston.

Nations are built by migrants, pope says

By Carol Glatz
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY — Countries do not develop by themselves; they are built by migrants, Pope Francis said.

And migrants often choose to travel to a new land in a group, like those currently traveling through Central America and heading to the border between the U.S. and Mexico, he added, in off-the-cuff remarks Oct. 29 to a group of Scalabrinian Missionaries.

The missionaries, who were in Rome for their general chapter meeting, minister to migrants, refugees and displaced persons.

The pope thanked them for the work they do, noting the biblical mandate for “welcoming the stranger” and the importance of knowing how to do that act of charity well.

“It is true that today there is a surge in being closed to the stranger and there are also many situations of trafficking of foreign people; the foreigner is exploited,” he said.

“The pope said, in his experience, his home country of Argentina "is a cocktail of waves of migration."

Recalling how many migrants were well received where his father worked after the Second World War, "Argentina has experience in welcoming because there was work and there was also a need."

"Because migrants build a country, just like they built Europe. Because Europe was not born just like that. Europe was made by many waves of migrants over the centuries," he said.

The importance of community, he told the religious institute, can be seen in how often migrants make their journey together as a group, like “the caravan that is going from Honduras to the United States.”

Sometimes (a migrant) has to go alone, but it is normal to stick together, because we feel stronger" that way during the journey "and that is where the community is," he said.

The pope urged the religious to feel and work like a community, just like the migrants they help. Even though, for example, a soccer player is free to act on his or her own, this possibility does not exist for members of a religious order because in religious life, "free agents fail."

"Feel like migrants, yes, feel like migrants in need, migrants before the Lord," knocking on his door in prayer, like migrants knock on the door of receiving countries, and live like "migrants among yourselves," sticking together in community life, he said.

Bible has power to transform lives, pope says

By Junno Arocho Esteves
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY — Through God’s word, Christians can taste the sweetness of his love like honey and also feel the sharp sting of a sword that purifies them from sin, Pope Francis said.

"The double edge of this 'sword' may at first wound, but it proves beneficial, for it cuts away everything that distances us from God and his love," the pope said Oct. 31 to members of the American Bible Society.

"I pray that, through the Bible, you will taste and feel deep within yourselves the Lord's tender love and his healing presence, which searches us and knows us," he said.

Founded in 1816, the American Bible Society translates, publishes and distributes the Bible around the world. Members of the delegation meeting with Pope Francis were in Rome for the society's annual retreat.

Meeting with the group before his weekly general audience in St. Peter's Square, the pope expressed his gratitude for their commitment to "transform lives through God's word."

"No other book has the same power," the pope said. "In its word, we recognize the Spirit who inspired it for only in the Spirit can Scripture truly be received, lived and proclaimed, for the Spirit teaches all things and reminds us of all that Jesus said."

Scripture removes every form of "falsehood and duplicity" while often breaking "through our own plans and preconceptions," Pope Francis said.

"God's word judges thoughts and intentions," the pope said. "Letting ourselves be read by the word of God thus enables us to become in turn 'open books,' living reflections of the saving word, witnesses of Jesus and proclaimers of his newness."

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Synod on Young People

By Cindy Wooden
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY — The Catholic Church and all its members must get better at listening to young people, their questions and concerns, and include men and women in church decision-making processes while increasing the presence of women in leadership roles, and the participation of women in church bodies at all levels.

While the synod's final document spoke of friendship, affection, sexuality and "sexual inclinations," those issues were not the center of concern in the lengthy final document, which was released Oct. 27.

The synod, which began Oct. 3 and was to conclude with a Mass Oct. 28, brought together 267 voting members — cardinals, bishops, 18 priests and two religious brothers — and 72 experts and observers, including three dozen men and women under 30 to discuss "young people, the faith and vocational discernment."

For the vote on the final document, 249 bishops and priests participated; two-thirds approval or 166 votes, were required to keep a paragraph in the document. The version they voted on had 167 numbered paragraphs.

The focus of the final document was on improving ways to support young Catholics' baptismal call to holiness, to welcome the contributions they make to the church and help them in their process of growing in faith and in deciding the state of life that would best correspond to what God wants from them.

The emphasis on the church listening to young people also led to an emphasis on the church listening to all people — including women — renewing communities and structures for a "synodal church" where all members listen to, support and challenge one another and share responsibility for the church's one mission of spreading the Gospel.

"Listening is an encounter in freedom, which requires humility, patience, willingness to understand and a commitment to working out responses in a new way," the document said. "Listening transforms the heart of those who love it, above all when they take on an inner attitude of harmony and docility to the Spirit of Christ."

The bishops said they heard from many young people a need for "courageous cultural conversion and a change in daily pastoral practice" to promote the equality of women in society and in the church.

"An area of particular importance in this regard is the presence of women in church bodies at all levels, including in leadership roles, and the participation of women in church decision-making processes while respecting the role of the ordained ministry," the document said. "This is a duty of justice."

However, the final document was amended before passage to remove one specific suggestion on where to begin promoting greater equality in the church. The draft document had called for "avoiding the disparity" at the synod between the men's Union of Superiors General, which has 10 voting members at the synod, and the women's International Union of Superiors General, which had three non-voting observers at the assembly.

The document acknowledged how, in some countries, young people are moving away from the church or question its teachings, especially on sexuality.

The church's response, the synod said, must be a commitment of time and patience as it helps young people "grasp the relationship between their adherence to faith in Jesus Christ and the way they live their affectivity and interpersonal relationships."

Church teaching that all people are called to chastity and to refraining from sexual relations outside the bond of marriage between a man and a woman must be presented clearly, but not with a judgmental attitude, it added.

The document mentioned young people's questions about homosexuality, sexual orientation and differences between men and women and called for "a more in-depth anthropological, theological and pastoral elaboration" on the church's position on those issues. The final document used the term "sexual inclination" rather than "sexual orientation" as the draft document had.

"The synod reaffirms that God loves every person and so does the church, renewing its commitment against all sexually-based discrimination and violence," the final document said. "It also reaffirms the decisive anthropological relevance of the difference and reciprocity between man and woman and considers it reducive to define the identity of persons solely on the basis of their 'sexual orientation.'"

The paragraph, listed under "Sexuality: A Clear, Liberating, Authentic Word," passed by the required two-thirds, but received the fewest favorable votes — 178 — while 65 bishops voted against it.

Members of the synod also praised young Catholics who are involved in their parishes or communities, who dedicate themselves enthusiastically to service projects, who offer their time and talent to the celebration of parish liturgies and who are willing to do even more. However, the document said, too often young volunteers are met by priests and other adults who doubt their commitment or preparation or are simply unwilling to share responsibility with them.

While young people can feel overlooked or ignored, the synod members said such attitudes are detrimental to the church and to its missionary mandate. The final document said young people challenge the church to be better and their questions force older church members to find clearer ways to express church teaching or to respond to new situations with the wisdom of faith.

"Their criticism, too, is needed because not infrequently we hear through them the voice of the Lord asking us for a conversion of heart and a renewal of structures," the synod members said.

The clerical sex abuse scandal and financial scandals in the Catholic Church are leading many people, not only young people, away from the faith, the synod acknowledged.

Appropriately responding to some bishops who felt the draft document's section on abuse gave too much prominence to the topic's importance in the United States, Ireland, Australia and Chile, the final document treated it in three paragraphs rather than the earlier five.

However, the final document, like the draft, said, "The Synod expresses gratitude to those who have had the courage to denounce the evil they have suffered: they help the church become aware of what has happened and of the need to react decisively" to ensure abuse does not continue to occur.

Behind the crime of abuse, it said, there lies a "spiritual void" and a form of exercising power that led some priests to believe their ordination gave them "power" over others rather than called them to serving others.

On "vocation," synod members emphasized how the basic, common Christian vocation is the call to holliness, which can and should be lived out in every state of life: young or old, single or married or in the priesthood or religious life.

"Vocation is neither a script a human being is called to recite, nor a spontaneous theatrical moment leaving no traces," the document said. God calls each person into a relationship with him, respects the person's freedom and yet has a plan for each person's life; discovering that plan requires prayer and self-examination.

The final document urged particular attention to marriage preparation programs as "a kind of 'initiation' for the sacrament of matrimony." and to careful selection of candidates for the priesthood and to seminary programs to ensure that future priests are men who can recognize the gifts of others, relate well to women and men of all ages and are devoted to serving the poor.

Young people who are poor or experience discrimination — especially migrants, victims of religious persecution and those struggling to find employment — received special attention at the synod and in the final document.

In fact, the synod said, "the world of young people is also deeply marked by the experience of vulnerabiliy, disability, illness and pain" and Catholic communities have not always done everything possible to welcome and assist them.

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Bishop Michael Sis met with the Awakened Young Adult Ministry from St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish in Odessa on Sunday Oct. 21. Bishop Sis presented a talk on "Why Catholic." Pictured are the members of the group with the bishop. (Photo courtesy Stephanie Hernandez)
Beyond criticism and anger, the invitation to a deeper empathy

By Father Ron Rolheiser

Recently I attended a symposium where the keynote speaker was a man a bit older than me. Since we both had lived through the same cultural and religious changes in our lives, I resonated with much of what he said and with how he felt about things. And in his assessment of both the state of affairs in our politics and our churches today, he was pretty critical, even angry. Not without reason. In both our governments and our churches today there isn’t just a bit- ter polarization and an absence of fundamental charity and respect, there’s also a lot of seemingly inexcusable blindness, lack of transparency, and self-serving dishonesty. Our speaker was plenty eager to point these out.

And for the most part, I agreed with him. I feel the same way that he does. The current state of affairs, whether you’re looking at politics or the church, is depressing, bitterly polarized, and cannot but leave you feeling frustrated and accusatory at those whom you deem responsible for the blindness, dishonesty, and injustice that seem inexcusable. But, while I shared much of his truth and his feelings, I didn’t share where he landed.

He landed in pessimism and anger, seemingly unable to find anything other than indignation within which to stand. He also ended very negative in terms of his attitude towards those whom he blames for the problem.

I can’t fault his truth and I can’t fault his feelings. They’re understandable. But I’m not at ease with where he landed. Bitterness and anger, no matter how justified, are not a good place to stay. Both Jesus and what’s noble inside of us invite us to move beyond anger and indignation.

Beyond anger, beyond indignation, and beyond justified criticism of all that’s dishonest and unjust, lies an invitation to a deeper empathy. This invitation doesn’t ask us to be stop being prophetic in the face of what’s wrong but it asks us to be prophetic in a deeper way. A prophet, as Daniel Berrigan so often said, makes a vow of love not of alienation.

But that’s not easy to do. In the face of injustice, dishonesty, and willful blindness, all of our natural instincts militate against empathy. Up to a point, this is healthy and shows that we’re still morally robust. We should feel anger and indignation in the face of what’s wrong. It’s understandable too that we might also feel some hateful, judgmental thoughts towards those whom we deem responsible. But that’s a beginning (a healthy enough starting point) but it’s not where we’re meant to stay. We’re called to move towards something deeper, namely, an empathy which previously we did not access. Deep anger invites deep empathy.

At the truly bitter moments of our lives, when we’re feeling overwhelmed by feelings of misunderstanding, slight, injustice, and rightful indignation and we’re staring across at those whom we deem responsible for the situation, anger and hatred will naturally arise within us. It’s okay to feel with them for a time (because anger is an important mode of grieving) but, after a time we need to move on. The challenge then is to ask ourselves: How do I love now, given all this hatred? What does love call me to now in this bitter situation? Where can I now find a common thread that can keep me heart? How do I respond with them for a time? How do I reach through, reach through the space that now separates me by my own justified feelings of anger? And, perhaps most important of all: From where can I now find the strength to not give in to hatred and self-serving indignation?

How do I call to love now? How do I love in this new situation? That’s the challenge. We’ve never before been called upon to love in a situation like this. Our understanding, empathy, forgiveness, and love have never before been tested in this way. But that’s the ultimate moral challenge, the “test” that Jesus himself faced in Gethsemane. How do you love when everything around you invites you to the opposite?

Almost all of our natural instincts militate against this kind of empathy, as does most everything around us. In the face of injustice our natural instincts spontaneously begin, one by one, to shut the doors of trust and make us judgmental. They also invite us to feel indignation and hatred. Now those feelings do produce an ugly, unattractive, unhealthy response. But that kind of cathartic feeling is a drug that doesn’t do much for us long range. We need something beyond feelings of bitterness and hatred for our long range health. Empathy is that something.

While not denying what’s wrong, nor denying the need to be prophetic in the face of the sin, the evil, the injustice, it calls us to a post-anger, a post-indignation, and a post-hatred. Jesus modeled that for us and today it’s singularly the most needed thing in our society, our churches, and our families.

Oblate Father Ron Rolheiser, theologian, teacher, and award-winning author, is President of the Oblate School of Theology in San Antonio, TX. He can be contacted through his website: www.ronrolheiser.com.

Now on Facebook: www.facebook.com/ronrolheiser

A new apologetics: Bishop Barron’s youth synod intervention

By Bishop Robert Barron

Auxiliary Bishop of Los Angeles

Innumerable surveys and studies over the past ten years have confirmed that young people frequently cite intellectual reasons when asked what has prompted them to leave the Church or lose confidence in it. Chief among these are the convictions that religion is opposed to science or that it cannot stand up to rational scrutiny, that its beliefs are not consistent with a primitive time, that the Bible is unreliable, that religious belief gives rise to violence, and that God is a threat to human freedom. I can verify, on the basis of twenty years of ministry in the field of online evangelization, that these concerns are crucial stumbling blocks to the acceptance of the faith among young people.

What is vitally needed today, as an aspect of the accompaniment of the young, is a renewed apologetics and catechesis. I realize that in some circles within the Church, the term apologetics is suspect, since it seems to indicate something rationalistic, aggressive, condescending. I hope it is clear that, contrary to the popular idea that it is out of place in our pastoral outreach, but I hope it is equally clear that an intelligent, respectful, and culturally-sensitive explication of the faith (“giving a reason for the hope that is within us”) is certainly a desideratum. There is a consensus among pastoral people that, at least in the West, we have experienced a crisis in catechesis these last fifty years. That the faith has not been effectively communicated was verified by the most recent Religious Landscape Study, from the Pew Research Center in America. It indicated that, among the major religions, Catholicism was second to last in passing on its traditions. Why has it been the case, over the last several decades, that young people in our own Catholic secondary schools have read Shakespeare in literature class, Homer in Latin class, Einstein in physics class, but, far too often, superficial texts in religion? The army of our young who claim that religion is irrelevant, says Bishop Barron, is a bitter fruit of this failure in education.

Therefore, what would a new apologetics look like? First, it would arise from the questions that young people spontaneously ask. It would not be imposed from above but would rather emerge organically from below, a response to the yearning of the mind and the heart. How would you react in a time like this? How do I love now, given all this hatred? What does love call me to now in this bitter situation? Where can I now find the strength to not give in to hatred and self-serving indignation?

Secondly, a new apologetics should look deep and long into the question of the relationship between religion and science. For many people today, scientific and rational views are simply equivalent or co-extensive terms. Many people today, scientists and religious people alike, have found a good deal of evangelical trac- tion in the ideology of self-invention is so firmly rooted in the culture, and liturgy. All of this provides a powerful matrix for evangelization. And as Hans Urs von Balthasar argued, the most compelling beauty of all is that of the saints. I have found a good deal of evangelical traction in presenting the lives of these great friends of God, somewhat in the manner of a baseless confidence in the ferocity, the good — what to believe and how to behave — is often counter-indicated, since the ideology of self-invention is so firmly established. However, the third transcendent, the beautiful, often proves a more winsome, less threatening, path. And part of the genius of Catholicism is that we have so consistently embraced the beautiful — in music, poetry, architecture, painting, sculpture, and hatred. Now those feelings do spontaneously begin, one by one, to shut the doors of trust and make us judgmental. They also invite us to feel indignation and hatred. Now those feelings do produce an ugly, unattractive, unhealthy response. But that kind of cathartic feeling is a drug that doesn’t do much for us long range. We need something beyond feelings of bitterness and hatred for our long range health. Empathy is that something.

While not denying what’s wrong, nor denying the need to be prophetic in the face of the sin, the evil, the injustice, it calls us to a post-anger, a post-indignation, and a post-hatred. Jesus modeled that for us and today it’s singularly the most needed thing in our society, our churches, and our families.

Oblate Father Ron Rolheiser, theologian, teacher, and award-winning author, is President of the Oblate School of Theology in San Antonio, TX. He can be contacted through his website: www.ronrolheiser.com.

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Memories of Grandma and the rosary

By Maria-Pia Negro Chin
Catholic News Service

My grandmother’s birthday is coming up, and she does not live in this country, so my family will not be able to see her. We will call her — she has not figured out Skype yet — and we will talk and laugh, talk about her great-grandchildren and her sisters, and wish we could celebrate together. This year, I want to thank her for everything we have learned from her example — including her faith in Christ through Mary.

Years ago, when she was visiting in back in Maryland, I caught a glimpse of her with her eyes closed and her hands going through her rosary beads, praying.

It took me back to her house in Peru and memories of her singing lullabies to my younger sister, her cooking, her checking her notebooks with tricky words for her daily crossword and her praying the rosary every morning.

I imagine her reciting all of the intentions people have asked her to pray for and naming every single aunt, uncle and cousin before she starts to pray.

The rosary is a simple yet deep tool to pray. It allows time to reflect on the mysteries, events in the lives of Jesus and Mary. Because the joyful, luminous, sorrowful and glorious mysteries are prayed on certain days of the week, a daily rosary only focuses on one set of mysteries and takes about 20 minutes to complete.

In the book 33 Days to Morning Glory, Marian Father Michael Gaitley writes that "praying the rosary does something to the soul. It allows Mary to share and form us according to the image of her son." He points out how the church-approved apparitions of Mary of Fatima brought the praying of the rosary for us to experience peace in our societies, families and nations.

When I think of people like my grandma who pray the rosary daily and hear their testimonies, I really feel like I should start praying it consistently. While searching for gifts for my grandma, I found a book called The Rosary: The Prayer That Saved My Life. In it, Immaculée Ilibagiza talks about how, to save her from rape and murder during the Rwandan genocide of 1994, Immaculée’s father gave her a rosary and told her to run to a local pastor for protection.

Immaculée and seven other women hid in a 3-by-4-foot bathroom for 91 days. There she "discovered how to pray the rosary, find the Blessed Mother and talk to the Lord." Prayers that had seemed repetitive and never made an impact before became her spiritual compass.

She says that in the midst of unbearable sufferings, she discovered the beauty and power of the rosary and that meditating on its mysteries delivered her from evil and helped her let go of the anger she had toward the men who killed her family. Talk about the power of prayer!

"Pray the rosary," says the prayer book I keep on my bedside table. And that's just what I do, with an increasing sense of gratitude and awe.

Recuerdos de abuelita y el rosario

By Maria-Pia Negro Chin
Catholic News Service

Se acerca el cumpleaños de mi abuela enero y he vivido este país, por lo que mi familia no podrá verla. La llamaremos para saludarla, hablaremos y nos iremos y añaremos poder celebrar juntos. Este año, también quisiera agradecerle por todo lo que hemos aprendido de su ejemplo, incluida su fe en Cristo a través de María.

Hace años, cuando ella nos visitaba en Maryland; la vi con los ojos cerrados y su rosario en las manos, rezando.

Me trajo recuerdos de su casa en Perú y los recuerdos de las canciones de cuna que le cantaba a mi hermana, su comida, sus cuadernos con palabaras difíciles para su crucigramas de cada día y su rezó del rosario todas las mañanas.

Me imagino que recita todas las intenciones que la gente le ha pedido que ore y nombra a cada tía, tío y primo antes de comenzar a orar.

El rosario es una herramienta sencilla pero profunda para orar. Permite tiempo para reflexionar sobre los misterios, eventos en las vidas de Jesús y María. Debiendo a que los misterios gososos, luminosos, dolorosos y gloriosos se rezan en ciertos días de la semana, un rosario diario solo se enfoca en un misterio y completarlo toma alrededor de 20 minutos.

En el libro 33 dias hacia un Glorioso Amanecer, el padre mariano Michael Gaitley escribe “rezar el rosario hace algo para el alma. Le permite a María compartir y formarnos de acuerdo a la imagen de su hijo”. Señala cómo las apariciones de María aprobadas por la iglesia a多人 y de la oración del rosario para que experimentemos la paz en nuestras sociedades, familias y naciones.

Cuando pienso en personas como mi abuela que rezan el rosario a diario y escuchen sus testimonios, realmente siento que debería comenzar a rezar de manera constante. Mientras buscaba regalos para mi abuela, encontré un libro titulado El Rosario: La oración que salvó mi vida. En él, Immaculée Ilibagiza habla sobre cómo, para salvarla de la violación y el asesinato durante el genocidio de Ruanda en 1994, el padre de Immaculée le dio un rosario y le dijo que corriera a buscar a un pastor local para su protección.

Immaculée y otras siete mujeres se escondieron en un baño de 3 x 4 pies durante 91 días. Allí "descubrió cómo rezar el rosario, encontrar a la Santísima Madre y hablar con el Señor". Las oraciones que antes parecían repetitivas y que nunca habían tenido un impacto se convirtieron en su brújula espiritual.

Ella dice que en medio de sufrimientos insuperables, descubrió la belleza y el poder del rosario y que meditar en sus misterios la libró del mal y la ayudó a dejar de lado la ira que sentía hacia los hombres que mataron a su familia.

El rezó del rosario de mi abuela era una de esas cosas que asumi que era "bueno pero no para mí" en lugar de ser un gran regalo. Ahora que soy mayor, estoy empezando a darme cuenta de lo contrario. Cuando la llame este mes, quiero agradecerle su ejemplo y preguntarle si puedo unirme a ella para orar por la familia.

Getting real about our challenges

By Greg Erlandson
Catholic News Service

Tracking the Catholic zeitgeist these days can be a dizzying experience. It helps to have a sense of history, and perhaps a sense of irony as well.

Once upon a time, it was liberal Catholics who were upset at the pope, who wanted more democracy in the church, who railed against the Curia and wanted a return to forgotten practices like the election by the priests and people of the diocese.

Today we have conservative Catholics upset at the pope, wanting more democracy in the church, railing against the Curia and wanting a return to forgotten practices like the election by the priests and people of the diocese.

A friend of mine has commented on the strange turn of events where liberal publications are now defenders of the papacy and conservative publications publish a steady drubbing of criticism. A few decades ago, renegade bishops became heroes to some progressives. Now a renegade papal nuncio is a hero to some conservatives.

This is occurring against the backdrop that unfortunately hasn’t changed — news reports of sexual abuse, accusations that a pope is not taking it seriously, divisions among bishops and between bishops and Rome.

Maybe this is business as usual, but it is surely wearying.

Also, with so many serious problems, there is no doubt, but they aren’t just the problems getting the headlines.

That some bishops — through cowardice or bad advice from lay lawyers and lay counselors, or cruel insensitivity and personal corruption — moved abusers instead of removing them or tolerated sinfulness so as to avoid scandal, there is no doubt. That there were bishops who did the right thing, who called a sin a sin, who might even have risked their episcopal careers to do so, there also is no doubt.

And while there are Catholics who are planning to boycott bishop appeals and parish collections as acts of protest, such gestures don’t hurt the wicked.

They hurt Catholic schools and hospitals and aid organizations. They hurt the priests who show up at hospitals to comfort the dying, who say Mass and hear confessions and also raise money from stingy parishioners to run complex and expensive parish plants. They hurt bishops who are increasingly forced to be more CEOs than shepherds and who are being scrutinized and second-guessed every step of the way.

We do face great challenges, all of us. The church is still in the midst of an epochal change it does not fully understand. Laymen and laywomen need to be more fully incorporated into the life of the church to do the work at hand, and there is much work to do.

We need to know how better to hand the faith on to the next generation. We need to know how best to encourage vocations that will stick. We need to know how to evangelize a hurting world that has lost its faith and lost its way.

We need a church that recovers what it means to be a family, a family that can disagree and argue passionately about things, but also that loves one another.

We need most of all to be missionary witnesses: showing the world that knowing and loving Jesus makes all the difference. And if that is not true for us now, then that is our biggest problem by far.

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

Sexual orientation: Hope for restoration and healing with SOCE

By Father Tad Pacholczyk

Sexual Orientation Change Efforts (SOCE) rely on professional therapy and counseling, often in a religious context, to assist those struggling with unwanted homosexual inclinations who would like to diminish their same-sex attractions and grow in their ability to abstain from same-sex behaviors. Many proponents of same-sex lifestyles argue that SOCE will restrict a practitioner’s ability to offer SOCE. A sweeping bill recently tabled in California, for example, would have labeled any sexual orientation therapies offered for a fee as “consumer fraud.” Are such laws sensible or unscientific? What do scientific studies indicate about attempts to change sexual orientation?

Peter Sprigg, Senior Fellow for Policy Studies at the Family Research Council in Washington, D.C., has provided a very helpful analysis of six studies published between 2000 and 2018 in a recent review article entitled, “Are Sexual Orientation Change Efforts (SOCE) Effective? Are They Harmful? What the Evidence Shows.” He concludes that SOCE “can be effective for some clients in bringing about significant change in some components of sexual orientation,” and that “few harms were reported.” Older reports from the literature, including 600 studies and five meta-analyses, support the same conclusions.

One of the six SOCE studies reviewed by Sprigg, “A Longitudinal Study of Attempted Religiously Mediated Sexual Orientation Change,” was published in the Journal of Sex and Marital Therapy in 2011. In this study, researchers Stanton Jones and Mark Yarhouse followed 61 men and women who opted to pursue religiously-mediated change efforts. At the end of the study, after tracking them through therapy for six years, they found that 53% of them self-categorized as some version of success, either as “Success: Conversion” (23%) or “Success: Chastity” (30%). That was more than twice the number (25%) who described the outcome as “Failure: Confused,” or “Failure: Gay Identity.”

Interestingly, the observed success rates in the study trended higher as the study progressed, for instance, the “Success: Conversion” results improved from 15 percent to 23 percent of the participants, while the “Success: Chastity” portion improved from 23 percent to 30 percent. In commenting on this phenomenon, Sprigg notes that “rather than relapsing into homosexuality after initial success in overcoming it, as SOCE critics claim, clients are more likely to achieve success the longer they persevere in the process.”

When participants reported “Success: Conversion” as an outcome, this did not indicate that all same-sex attractions were entirely reduced, but that “a reduction in homosexual attraction and an increase in heterosexual attraction” had occurred. Similarly, “Success: Chastity” was defined as “stable behavioral chastity and a reduction in homosexual attraction,” which, in the words of the report, can “be regarded as a successful outcome” by “conventionally religious persons.” As with most studies of this type, most participants reported some significant, but not complete, change.

This same research study by Jones and Yarhouse also assessed any reported “harms” from SOCE during the course of the change efforts. They evaluated psychological distress among the participants using a standardized checklist of symptoms, but the only statistically significant trends indicated “improving psychological symptoms” rather than harms to SOCE clients.

In his review of the literature, Sprigg examines the issue of SOCE “harms” from another angle as well, evaluating the methods and claims of a very influential paper by Ariel Shidlo and Michael Schroeder, two self-identified gay researchers whose work was sponsored by the National Lesbian and Gay Health Association and the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force (the latter being a political activist group).

Their paper, published in 2002, is one of the more widely-cited works asserting that clients who undergo SOCE may experience significant damage. Sprigg observes that the authors make no pretense of “being unbiased, nor of recruiting a representative sample of SOCE consumers.” Despite a scholarly veneer, their report offers almost entirely anecdotal reports of harm. It fails to offer compiled data, statistical evidence or data analysis and relies on a narrative approach and dubious claims regarding various harms and negative outcomes from SOCE.

The more robust and rigorous research studies reviewed by Sprigg, meanwhile, do not find notable harms to clients from SOCE, but, on the contrary, find very notable improvements both in the ability to resist homosexual behaviors and in their sense of sexual re-orientation.

Set within a broader religious and human framework, these statistically significant findings about SOCE from the field of psychotherapy help push back against the dogmatism of same-sex advocacy groups and even of some professional medical societies. Such dogmatism ignores the best interests of clients by seeking to restrict the availability of important and potentially helpful therapies when everyone should instead be supporting access to ministries of healing and change for those desiring to restore psychological and spiritual wholeness in their lives.

St. Oscar Romero, the saints and the dead

By Hosffman Osipno

Catholic News Service

On Sunday, Oct. 14, 2018, Archbishop Oscar Romero of El Salvador was officially declared a saint of the Catholic Church. Millions of people of Latin America, Hispanics in the United States and countless others throughout the world had already referred to him as a saint for decades. The institution confirmed what the people of God, moved by the Holy Spirit, knew intuitively.

We now enter November, when Catholics contemplate more closely the saints who inspire us. During this month, we also remember those who died. The memory of St. Oscar Romero invites us to think of holiness and death in unique ways. We now enter November, when Catholics contemplate more closely the saints who inspire us. During this month, we also remember those who died. The memory of St. Oscar Romero invites us to think of holiness and death in unique ways.

One can read — and hear — in many of his homilies that were preserved for posterity that he was profoundly in love with Jesus Christ and wanted others to live likewise. The risen Christ was his hope.

Many would see all this as rather ordinary, actually expected of someone who would self-identify as a Christian. We learn again that saints are ordinary women and men of faith who live ordinary lives while being constantly open to being formed and transformed by God's grace. That makes them extraordinary.

Like everyone else, St. Oscar Romero died; but his was an untimely death. Someone decided that his life was dispensable. The saint was assassinated while celebrating Mass on November 16, 1980. He was 53 years old.

It is tempting to romanticize the death of the martyrs — or death in general — as a sacrifice for a cause. The death of saints is more than just a sacrifice, it is a transformation. It is the transformation from a life lived in the service of others to a life lived in the service of God. The death of St. Oscar Romero is a reminder of the power of love and the beauty of sacrifice.

One of the reasons why St. Oscar Romero is considered a saint is because of his commitment to social justice and his willingness to risk his life for the poor. He was a priest who believed in the power of prayer and the importance of community. He was a man who lived his faith in a meaningful way.

St. Oscar Romero's death was a tragic event, but his legacy lives on. He is a reminder of the importance of standing up for what is right, even when it is difficult. He is a reminder of the power of love and the beauty of sacrifice.
Compost, compost, compost

By Effie Caldarola
Catholic News Service

At a recent volleyball game at Duchesne Academy of the Sacred Heart in Omaha, Nebraska, a spontaneous chant erupted: "Compost! Compost!"

Really? A bunch of high school girls chanted? What was I missing about garbage being coaxed into usable soil?

That's what a good educational background about Pope Francis' encyclical on the environment, Laudato Si', on Care for Our Common Home, can engender in a receptive student body.

This all-girl school became the first school in the city — public or private — to launch a composting program as part of a large-scale sustainability effort. Duchesne's achievement is something we should all cheer about.

The enthusiasm it has generated among students, staff and parents has been "inspiring," said my friend, Assistant Principal Eric Krakowski, who spearheaded the program.

It has proven so successful that parents are telling Krakowski they've begun composting at home, and students have eagerly volunteered to increase composting collection sites throughout campus.

How does this environmental commitment translate in practical terms? During one week in September, Duchesne collected 621 pounds of food waste and soiled paper products picked up by a composting company. They recycled 124 pounds of cardboard, 88 pounds of glass, 139 pounds of mixed recyclables, and sent 13 pounds of plastic bags and other plastics to Trex, which makes composite decking material.

Score: Landfill, 275 pounds.

Composted from the landfill, 985 pounds of mixed recyclables and sent of cardboard, 88 pounds of glass, 139 pounds of food waste and soiled paper products.

Diverted from the landfill, 985 pounds of waste. And that's just one week's effort.

Before the project was launched, a survey indicated 94 percent of students and staff felt sustainability was important to Duchesne — clearly "a mandate," said Krakowski. In 2016, anonymous donors, also inspired by Pope Francis' landmark social teaching, paid for the Omaha sustainability firm the Verdis Group to assess goals for a green campus.

One long-term goal is that by 2030, 100 percent of school waste can be diverted away from the landfill.

The figures above show that Duchesne is already diverting over 70 percent.

The lunch program was an obvious target. Out went plastic silverware and Styrofoam. Plates and utensils are now washed, and anything disposable should also be compostable. Locally sourced food became a priority.

Krakowski said another goal is "to become net positive in energy usage by the year 2030." The school, which has already achieved an Energy Star rating, hopes to launch a solar energy project this fall.

"This is probably the most fun I'm having in my job," said Krakowski, who said environmental issues are "a passion for me."

Duchesne's success raises the question: When will more Catholic institutions step up?

"Personally, I've been very disappointed that I don't hear "Laudato Si' talked about in our peerings with other schools," said Krakowski.

"We're not challenged to consume less as part of the Gospel message."

Duchesne Academy has a long, prestigious history in this Missouri River town. Founded in 1881 by Religious of the Sacred Heart, the statly old brick campus once housed a college, which closed in 1968.

Today, the school is part of a network of 24 Sacred Heart schools in the U.S. and Canada, which together espouse a goal of teaching "a social awareness which impels to action," which endeavors to teach "respect for creation and prepare students to be stewards of the earth's resources."

Clearly, these young women are embracing practices and attitudes toward consumption and respect for our planet that they'll carry through their lives.

"How about us? I'm not the only person in my crowd who now carries her own fork to events where I fear plastic will be the only choice."

Can we encourage bigger changes at parish events and schools? Recycle, reuse, reduce. Inspired by "Laudato Si'," Catholic institutions can lead the way.

"I talked about it with my church members," said Breiner.

"By the end of the day, I had more than enough to do it!"

Breiner did not win the national title, but she is not disappointed. She has embraced speaking at schools, community organizations and to people in government and other leadership roles.

"I have received a gift. This is where I'm meant to be, to advocate for others with disabilities. I'm doing what God wants me to do. There's beauty in disability. Even to see the beauty in those who help — it's everywhere."

Pratt's website is www.maureenpratt.com.
Parishioners of Sacred Heart Parish in Menard and St. Theresa of the Child Jesus Parish in Junction rallied together to pray the rosary in celebration of the 101st anniversary of the apparition of Our Lady of Fatima. Pictured are Menard parishioners in the Old Mission Church with Father Innocent Eziefule, Oct. 13. (courtesy photo)

Participants from a Women’s ACTS Retreat at The Way Retreat Center in Midland, held Oct. 12–14, concluded their retreat with a Mass at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Church in Odessa. (photo by Alan Torre/APTorre Photography)

Forty Hours Adoration was celebrated at St. Joseph’s in Rowena. Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament began on Friday evening, Oct. 5, and ended on Sunday, Oct. 7. A procession, with Father Ariel Lagunilla, pastor, carrying the monstrance throughout the church, marked the closing of the celebration. It has been the custom at St. Joseph’s to have Forty Hours Devotion each year on the first weekend in October.
maligned “Millennials”) described as their main goals in life. Among these goals were being a good parent, having a meaningful marriage, and helping others in need — somewhat traditional desires amongst a generation that is different than their predecessors in other ways.

White noted that the tendency for those in Generation Y to focus more on culture as a whole than on the individual, “actually mirrors where the Holy Spirit is leading our church right now,” citing Pope Francis’ desire to see the church as a family of families.

Given the correlation between self-identified values of Generation Y and the current direction of the church, it may seem counterintuitive that the church is sometimes failing to connect with younger generations of the faithful. To address this, White cited a study by the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate, which found that Millennials sometimes experience painful events for which they find no way to connect with the church, a lack of perceived connection between faith and daily life, and disagreements with the church on what are felt as key issues.

To combat these perceptions in the wake of painful events, White drew on the words of Pope Benedict XVI when he was asked about suffering: “I don’t understand it either.” Understanding the root cause of suffering, though, doesn’t change the fact that God understands and that Jesus has suffered himself. When asked difficult questions about the faith by those in pain, it is important to avoid the temptation to deflect and imply that the questioning is somehow seen as indicative of inadequate faith. White expressed the desire that people share that we all question things at times and offer to discuss the pain and questioning further. “Walk with us,” White offered as a suggestion of what to say to those in pain, “you’re still one of us.”

White said that there are “certain things about our church and about our faith that don’t change, and won’t change,” noting that the content of the faith doesn’t change, but the cultural context within which it exists does. Recognizing these changes of context that each new generation brings with it will be key to adapting the message of Catholicism to current and future generations.

“The church can pay attention to the most effective way to work within that context or not, but I think if we don’t pay attention to that, we do that at our peril,” White said. Examples of this are found throughout history, dating back to St. Paul, he said, noting that when the apostle entered Athens and saw the many altars to different gods, he didn’t immediately tell them they were wrong; rather, he “finds a cultural connection” by focusing on an altar to an unknown god and asking to speak to the populace about his own God, unknown to them. On adapting the message to best connect with the audience, White said, “if it’s good enough for St. Paul, surely it’s good enough for us, right?”

“He had to pay attention, and he had to learn something about the culture, find that cultural connection point and begin there,” White said. “I think that’s something we’re called to do as well.”

The most important thing, he said, with regard to bridging the generations, is “that we need to be in dialogue with one another.” Citing Pope Francis’ statements on accompaniment, he said “it means going to where they are, walking side by side, and helping them get to where they need to be.” In order to effectively minister to any group of people, the church must be willing to listen.
**OBISPO**

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5. Ayudamos a aliviar el sufrimiento de los demás.

En la perspectiva cristiana, nuestra experiencia del sufrimiento nos lleva a hacer todo lo posible para ayudar a aliviar los dolores de otros que están sufriendo. Aceptamos el hecho de que no podemos cuidar de todo, pero podemos hacer algunas cosas para ayudarlos.

San Pedro expresa esto bellamente en 2 Corintios 1:3-4: “Bendito sea Dios, Padre de Cristo Jesús, nuestro Señor, Padre lleno de ternura, Dios del que viene todo consuelo. El nos conforta en toda prueba, para que también nosotros sean capaces de confortar a los que están en cualquier dificultad, mediante el mismo consuelo que recibimos de Dios.”

6. Unimos nuestros dolores al sufrimiento de Cristo.

Nuestro sufrimiento tiene sentido debido al sufrimiento de Cristo. En la Cruz, Dios mismo es una víctima inocente. En su sufrimiento inocente, se sacrifica por amor a nosotros. Paga el precio por nuestros pecados, y por lo tanto nos redime. Cuando elegimos a aceptar los elementos de dolor en nuestra vida, y los unimos a la Pasión de Cristo en la Cruz, entonces nuestro sufrimiento se convierte en una participación en la obra salvadora de Jesús. Tiene significado porque se convierte en sufrimiento redentor. Podemos ofrecer nuestro dolor y el sufrimiento como un sacrificio, unido con el sacrificio de Cristo, por el bienestar espiritual de los demás.

Esto se refleja en la enseñanza de San Pablo en Colosenses 1:24, “Ahora me alegro cuando tengo que sufrir por ustedes, pues así completo en mi carne lo que falta a los sufrimientos de Cristo para bien de su cuerpo, que es la Iglesia.” San Pablo también dice en Filipenses 1:29, “Y es una gracia para ustedes que no solamente hayan creído en Cristo, sino también que padezcan por él.”

**BISHOP**

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As Bill Withers said in his 1972 hit song “Lean on Me,” “We all need somebody to lean on...Please, swallow your pride...No one can fill those of your needs that you won’t let show.” After accepting the help of others in our time of need, we then pass on help to others whenever we are able. We all go through life taking our turns helping and being helped. This is part of the normal rhythm of life for a Christian.

4. We become more compassionate.

We have discovered how much we need to suffer, and we can better relate to other people in their suffering. We become more comfortable sitting by the side of those who are suffering. We become more willing to visit the sick and the dying, to remind them that they’re not alone. When we visit shut-ins and people in nursing homes, we are less anxious about them because we know what it means to suffer.

This experience of compassion is often included in the teachings of Pope Francis, particularly in his consistent theme of “walking with” the other.

5. We help alleviate the suffering of others.

In the Christian perspective, our experience of suffering leads us to do whatever we can to help alleviate the pains of others who are suffering. We accept the fact that we can’t take care of everything, but we can do some things to help them out.

St. Paul expresses this beautifully in 2 Corinthians 1:3-4: “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and God of all encouragement, who encourages us in our every affliction, so that we may be able to encourage those who are in any affliction with the encouragement with which we ourselves are encouraged by God.”

6. We join our pains to the suffering of Christ.

Our suffering has meaning because of the suffering of Christ. On the Cross, God himself is an innocent sufferer. In his innocent suffering, he sacrifices himself out of love for us. He pays the price for our sins, and therefore he redeems us. When we choose to accept the elements of pain in our life, and we join them to the Passion of Christ on the Cross, then our suffering becomes a participation in the saving work of Jesus. It has meaning because it becomes redemptive suffering. We can offer our pain and suffering as a sacrifice, joined with the sacrifice of Christ, for the spiritual good of others.

This is reflected in St. Paul’s teaching in Colossians 1:24, “Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I am filling up what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ on behalf of his body, which is the Church.” St. Paul also says in Philippians 1:29, “You have been given the privilege of serving Christ, not only by believing in him, but also by suffering for him.” St. Peter offers similar guidance when he says, “Rejoice to the extent that you share in the sufferings of Christ, so that when his glory is revealed you may also rejoice exultantly!” (1 Peter 4:13).

When we suffer, we do well to remember the words of Jesus: “If anyone wishes to come after me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me” (Luke 9:23). Our call to imitation and follow Christ is a call to embrace the crosses in our own lives. When I carry my cross, I am helping Jesus to carry his Cross, and Jesus is helping me to carry my own.

7. We look at the Cross.

For us Catholic Christians, the Cross is a source of comfort. It reminds us that we are not alone in our suffering, because God allowed himself to suffer with us. Jesus was not completely alone on the Cross, and we’re never completely alone in our suffering. We are intimately connected in union with Jesus, with God the Father, and with all the angels and saints. This consoling truth led Pope Francis to say, upon his election in March of 2013, “Christ’s Cross embraced with love never leads to sadness, but to joy.”

**Conclusion**

The Catholic spiritual tradition helps us to make sense out of suffering. The more we get in touch with this profound wisdom, the better we will be equipped to manage the tragedies in our own lives, and the better we can encourage our suffering brothers and sisters with the consolation of faith.

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**KNICKERBOCKERS**

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Adam and Eve was supposed to have been conceived. We can be redeemed from our sin by joining him in the Holy Family of Bethlehem and Nazareth, and through the Son in the Holy Family be joined in God who is a Trinity of Persons.

How does this help us understand and respond to the present crisis in the Catholic Church? The terrible sexual sins of priests, bishops, archbishops, and cardinals of the Church and the web of deceit woven in an attempt to cover up these sins are part of a larger picture in the Church and in our culture. Contraception, abortion, divorce, adultery, homosexuality, lesbianism, so-called same-sex marriage, and transgenders are all attacks on the family of father, mother, and child. The terrible sexual sins and web of deceit infecting the Catholic Church is a part of this attack on the family. The same one who tempted Adam and Eve in the Garden so long ago, Satan, that fallen angel, and his fellow fallen angels are still at work among us. These evil spirits cannot make us sin, but they can tempt us to do so even as Adam and Eve were tempted.

Why does the devil want to make the family the focal point of his attack? Because the family is the heart of God’s creation and is the likeness of God Himself. In attacking the family, the devil is attacking God the Holy Trinity.

The best way we can respond to this attack is to live our lives faithfully in our families. When we sin we have an advocate with the Father: Jesus Christ the righteous (1 Jn 2:1), who was born into this world without sin, just as the child of Adam and Eve was supposed to be born. Through the sacraments of the Catholic Church we open ourselves to the righteousness of Jesus, who is without sin, and whose family, the devil is attacking God the Holy Trinity.

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**OSPIO**

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En noviembre recordamos a familiares, amigos y muchas otras personas que murieron. Les recordamos con la esperanza de que estén disfrutando la promesa de la vida eterna en Dios. Nos dirigimos a ellos en oración y oramos por ellos confiando en que harán lo mismo por nosotros. Estamos en comunión por medio de la oración.

Recordar a los difuntos mientras pensamos en la manera como murió San Óscar Romero exige que hagamos una pausa y pensemos en aquellas personas que murieron antes de tiempo; aquellas personas que sus vidas fueron consideradas como desechables; aquellas personas que vivieron en circunstancias que nuestra propia sociedad creó y acortaron sus existencias acelerando su muerte.

Muchas personas han muerto por causa de la violencia, guerra, la pobreza, la falta de acceso a cuidados básicos de salud, corrupción, racismo, adicciones, abortos, por cruzar fronteras y mares, y muchas otras realidades que deberían causarnos dolor. La muerte en estos casos no es algo glorioso.

La memoria de San Óscar Romero nos exige que vivamos vidas en lo ordinario siempre dispuestos a ser formados y transformados por la gracia de Dios. Al mismo tiempo nos exige que denuncien con voz profética las acciones y circunstancias que acortan las vidas de las personas. Al hacer esto viviremos vidas extraordinarias.

San Óscar Romero, mártir y santo, en este mes que honramos a nuestros santos y recordamos a nuestros difuntos, ora por nosotros.

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**ROMERO**

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or indirectly, their death.

In November, we remember relatives, friends and many others who already died. We remember them with the hope that they are enjoying the promise of eternal life in God. We pray to them and for them trusting that they do likewise for us. We all are in communion through prayer.

Remembering the dead while thinking about how St. Oscar Romero died demands that we pause for a moment and think of those who died before their time; those whose lives were considered disposable; those who lived in circumstances created by our own society that shortened their existence and hastened their deaths.

Too many people have died because of violence, war, poverty, lack of access to basic health care, corruption, racism, addictions, abortion, endangering their lives by crossing borders and seas, and similar other realities that should pain us. Death is not glorious under these circumstances.

The memory of St. Oscar Romero compels us to live ordinary lives open to being formed and transformed by God's grace and to denounce with prophetic voice the actions and circumstances that shorten people's lives. In doing this, we will be extraordinary.

St. Oscar Romero, martyr and saint, in this month when we honor our saints and remember our dead, pray for us.

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**Hosffman Ospino es profesor de teología y educación religiosa en Boston College. Es miembro del equipo de liderazgo del Quinto Encuentro Nacional de Pastoral Hispana/Latina.**
Knights vs. Saints

St. Mary Central Catholic School of Odessa and St. Ann Catholic School of Midland face off on the field

The St. Mary Central Catholic School Knights and the St. Ann Catholic School Saints took to the field against each other on Oct. 4 at Ratliff Stadium in Odessa.

The evening included a moment of unity before the game, as both schools came together to pray and participate in a balloon release in memory of Elias De La Garza, a St. Mary’s 4th grader who passed away in a motor vehicle accident the night before the game.

(photos by Alan Torre/APTorre Photography)