Inside this issue:

- USCCB General Assembly (Bishop Sis, Page 2; Stories, Page 14–15)
- Advent traditions (Page 5)
- Advent penance services and Christmas Mass schedules (Page 11)
High school students gather for Area Catholic Youth Conference

By Brian Bodiford
West Texas Angelus

SAN ANGELO – The Diocese of San Angelo’s Office of Evangelization and Catechesis hosted a multi-diocese Area Catholic Youth Conference at the McNease Convention Center in San Angelo on the weekend of Nov. 16–18, 2018. High schoolers traveled in from as far away as Corpus Christi to attend the conference.

The weekend conference was emceed by Orin Johnson and Shannon Cerneka of Oddwalk Ministries, who also hosted one of the breakout sessions available to teens at two different times on Saturday. The duo shared an hour-long session on bullying. Other breakout session topics included: “Healthy Relationships,” presented by Katie Hernandez; “Finding Meaning in Life,” presented by Jim Sullivan, therapist and executive director of the Pastoral Care and Counseling Center in Abilene; and “What to Do, What to Be,” presented by Bishop Robert Coerver of the Diocese of Lubbock.

Catholic musician and performer Joe Melendez and speaker Damon West provided the keynote presentations for the weekend.

On Saturday morning, Melendez pumped the crowd up with energetic performances of some of his Catholic hip-hop music, interjected with stories of how he came to embrace his life as a performer devoted to sharing his faith. Appearing on MTV at the age of 15, Melendez was later awakened to the love God has for his children and has spent his life sharing the Gospel in his own way, both as a teacher and a touring performer and retreat leader.

West took the main stage on Saturday afternoon and shared his story of redemption with the attending youth. West’s powerful testimony took the audience through his time in prison after receiving a 65-year sentence for his role in a series of burglaries perpetrated to sate his drug habit. The former college quarterback told the gathered youth that he has since come to see his arrest as a rescue, finally leading him away from the troubled life he had been living since a game day injury sparked a turn to hard drug use and addiction. West credits a prison ACTS Retreat as the best day of his life in lock-up. Three years into his parole, West now tours the country sharing his motivational story of how he regained his faith and survived his time in a particularly rough facility of the Texas criminal justice system, eventually finding a way to live a life of usefulness.

Liking his time behind bars to any difficulties people may face throughout their lives, West used a metaphor he heard from another inmate to share one of his most lasting messages. If the difficulties people face are envisioned as boiling water, he told the audience, then there are three ways people can react to the water: like a carrot, an egg, or a coffee bean. Carrots get soft under the circumstances; eggs get hard; but coffee beans transform the boiling water into coffee. West encouraged conference attendees to be coffee beans, to let their faith and attitude transform the world around them.

Throughout the weekend, attendees also had the opportunity to experience fellowship with one another during breaks in scheduled conference sessions. Games and a photo booth were available to those who wished to relax and share their thoughts on the weekend. Rows of exhibitor booths were also available for the students to shop, meet with the conference presenters, or learn more about the various vocations available to the faithful.

Saturday night closed out with Adoration, followed by a dance with music from local DJ Edward Hernandez. Sunday morning featured one final presentation by Melendez and a final Mass, during which a collection was taken benefitting “Youth on the Margins,” an outreach project sponsored by the National Federation for Youth Ministry. After Mass, attendees were dismissed to head home and share their experiences and faith with others in their home dioceses.

World Youth Day near the Concho River

By Sister Adelina Garcia
West Texas Angelus

SAN ANGELO — World Youth Day is held somewhere around the world every three years. Our diocese has been represented in Toronto, Canada; Cologne, Germany; Sydney, Australia; Madrid, Spain; and Krakow, Poland. Individual diocesan parishes may have attended other WYDs, such as St. Joseph, San Angelo’s trip to Denver in 1993. -Editor

Over 700 people attended listening sessions, held at churches around the diocese. In addition to the general listening sessions, around 300 people attended smaller focus groups. Surveys were also made available to the people of the diocese, with more than 600 returned in English and over 100 completed in Spanish.

Dominic Perri of Essential Conversations Group, the consulting firm that is coordinating the pastoral planning process, called the response to listening sessions, focus groups, and surveys a “very robust turnout.” He went on to say the level of interest was “extraordinary for a diocese the size of San Angelo.”

The planning process will continue each year with “virtual reporting” webinars in English and Spanish in February. A leadership summit at Christ the King Retreat Center in San Angelo will follow in March. Next month’s Angelus will include more information on these portions of the process.

In the meantime, the results of the listening sessions, focus groups, and surveys will be compiled and examined. Bishop Michael Sis said that the information gathered in the listening portion of the process “needs to be studied carefully and thoroughly” so that it can be utilized properly in helping determine the future direction of the diocese.

Reflections on the USCCB General Assembly

By Bishop Michael Sis
Diocese of San Angelo

The General Assembly of the Catholic bishops of the United States was held in Baltimore on November 12–15, 2018. It was a time of prayer, listening, and discernment. In the week prior to the meeting, we prepared through prayer and fasting, asking the Holy Spirit to guide our deliberations. We began the meeting with a day of prayer in the presence of the exposed Blessed Sacrament. I believe that the prayerful focus had a positive impact on the meeting.

Much of our time in Baltimore was spent listening. We heard profoundly moving testimony from victims of sexual abuse as well as from those who assist them on their road to healing. We listened to heartfelt reports from the chairmen of the National Review Board and the National Advisory Council. We also heard from the experiences of various bishops around the country affirming the need for a more effective system for the evaluation and discipline of bishops. Throughout the days of the General Assembly, there was a palpable sense of openness to discipleship and following the will of God.

In preparation for the meeting, some of the committees of the USCCB produced documents for our consideration: 1) Standards of Accountability for Bishops, 2) a proposed Special Commission for the Review of Complaints against Bishops for violations of these Standards of Accountability, and 3) a Protocol regarding how to deal with Bishops who have been removed from office. In addition, we were provided a document proposing reporting mechanisms for claims of violations of these Standards of Accountability.

We were informed at the very beginning of the meeting that the Vatican asked that we not put these documents up for a vote prior to the upcoming worldwide meeting on the protection of minors in the Church, to be held in the Vatican on February 21–24, 2019. The reason for this delay is to work toward a unified global approach to these vitally important matters.

We also discussed the procedures that are already in place for holding bishops accountable. Complaints about any bishop are to be directed to the metropolitan archbishop of the local ecclesiastical province. In our province, the metropolitan is Archbishop Gustavo García-Siller in San Antonio. His address is 2718 W. Woodlawn Avenue, San Antonio, TX 78228-5124. Likewise, complaints about any archbishop are to be directed to the senior bishop of the province.

In our November meeting, we heard from a national spokesperson for Catholic seminaries regarding their efforts to promote celibate chastity. Along with the various seminary faculties, we bishops share a strong desire to provide a healthy seminary environment and effective formation for a lifetime of faithful celibate priestly ministry.

In our discussions of the highly disturbing case of Archbishop Theodore McCarrick, there was a strong sense that he must be thoroughly investigated by the Vatican. We were reminded that the Holy See Press Office issued a communique on October 6, 2018, stating that Pope Francis has ordered a thorough investigation of the matter of the accusations against Archbishop McCarrick, along with a complete study of the entire documentation in the Vatican regarding McCarrick, in order to evaluate the case objectively. The communiqué said, “the Holy Father accepted the resignation of Archbishop McCarrick from the College of Cardinals, prohibiting him by order from exercising public ministry, and obliging him to lead a life of prayer and penance. …the Holy See will, in due course, make known the conclusions of the matter regarding Archbishop McCarrick.”

See BISHOP, Page 20

Reflexiones sobre la Asamblea General de la USCCB
(La Conferencia de Obispos Católicos de los Estados Unidos)

Por Obispo Michael Sis
Diócesis de San Ángelo

La Asamblea General de los Obispos Católicos de los Estados Unidos se llevó a cabo en Baltimore los días 12–15 de noviembre de 2018. Fue un tiempo de oración, escucha, y discernimiento. En la semana antes de la reunión, nos preparamos mediante la oración y el ayuno, pidiendo al Espíritu Santo que nos guíe en nuestras deliberaciones. Empezamos la reunión con un día de oración en presencia del Santísimo Sacramento expuesto. Creo que el enfoque espiritual tuvo un impacto positivo en la reunión.

Gran parte de nuestro tiempo en Baltimore se pasó en escuchar. Hemos escuchado testimonios profundamente impactantes de víctimas de abusos sexual, así como de aquellos que les ayudan en su camino hacia la sanación. Escuchamos a informes sinceros de los presidentes de la Junta Nacional de Revisión y el Consejo Asesor Nacional. También escuchamos de las experiencias de varios obispos de todo el país que afirmaron la necesidad de un sistema más eficaz para la evaluación y la disciplina de los obispos. A lo largo de los días de la Asamblea General, había una sensación palpable de apertura a discernir y seguir la voluntad de Dios.

En preparación para la reunión, algunos de los comités de la USCCB produjeron documentos para nuestra consideración: 1) Normas de Responsabilidad para los Obispos, 2) una propuesta de una Comisión Especial para el Examen de Quejas en contra los Obispos por violaciones de estas Normas de Responsabilidad, y 3) un Protocolo con respecto a como tratar a Obispos que han sido destituidos de su cargo. Además, los comités de la USCCB produjeron un documento proponiendo mecanismos de cómo reportar las reclamaciones de violaciones de estas Normas de Responsabilidad.

Nos informaron al comienzo de la reunión que el Vaticano pidió que no pusiéramos estos documentos a votación antes de la próxima reunión mundial sobre la protección de los menores en la Iglesia, que se llevará a cabo en el Vaticano el 21–24 de febrero de 2019. La razón para este retraso es para poder trabajar hacia un enfoque global unificado a estas cuestiones de vital importancia.

El portavoz del comité que organiza la reunión mundial en febrero es el Padre Hans Zollner. Él escribió en la edición del 23 de noviembre del periódico del Vaticano, L’Osservatore Romano, que el encuentro en febrero de presidentes de las conferencias de obispos nacionales implicará que los participantes traten y compartan soluciones posibles a la crisis de abuso sexual. Dijo que el Papa Francisco quiere reunir y armonizar mejor las experiencias de las diversas conferencias episcopales nacionales, debido a que la plaga de abuso sexual implica a todos los países, y que requiere una respuesta que es firme y universal.

A pesar de que fue una sorpresa para nosotros aprender que el Vaticano había pedido el retraso en la votación de las propuestas específicas que teníamos ante nosotros en noviembre, creo que el retraso en realidad ha llevado a un examen más al fondo de las propuestas. En lugar de centrarse sobre la aprobación de los documentos específicos en este momento, hemos escuchado y reflexionado en una forma que es más profunda y más amplia de lo que probable hubiera sido de lo contrario. Estamos tratando con problemas que son mucho más complejos de lo que parecía al principio, y las soluciones a estas cuestiones graves merecen un desarrollo adicional.

También discutimos los procedimientos que ya están en su lugar para hacer responsable a los obispos. Las quejas sobre cualquier obispo deben ser dirigidas al Obispo Sis, Página 21
### December 2018

**Bishop’s Calendar**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>SAN ANGELO, Angelo Catholic School, Diocesan Schools, Commission meeting at 9:00 a.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>SAN ANGELO, Sacred Heart Cathedral, Mass at 12:00 noon</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>SAN ANGELO, St. Paul Presbyterian Church, San Angelo Living Together at 5:00 p.m.</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>SAN ANGELO, West Texas Counseling and Guidance interfaith breakfast at 8:00 a.m.</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>SAN ANGELO, First United Methodist Church, Advent lunch at 12:05 p.m.</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>SAN ANGELO, Diocesan Pastoral Center, Priest Personnel Board at 10:30 a.m.</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>SAN ANGELO, Christ the King Retreat Center, Annual Staff Dinner at 6:30 p.m.</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>SAN ANGELO, Sacred Heart Cathedral, Immaculate Conception Mass at 12:00 noon</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>SHEFFIELD, Good Shepherd, Mass at 11:00 a.m.</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>SAN ANGELO, ASU Newman Center, Mass at 8:30 p.m.</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>SAN ANGELO, Diocesan Pastoral Center, Liturgical Commission meeting at 10:00 a.m.</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>ELDRADO, Our Lady of Guadalupe, Procession at 5:00 p.m. and Mass at 6:00 p.m.</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>SAN ANGELO, Diocesan Pastoral Center, Priestly Life and Formation Committee meeting at 11:00 a.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>SAN ANGELO, Holy Angels, RCIA session at 6:30 p.m.</td>
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**December 2018**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>SAN ANGELO, Sacred Heart Cathedral, Mass at 12:00 noon</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>2-8 CHICAGO, Mundelein Seminary, Spiritual Retreat</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>SAN ANGELO, Sacred Heart Cathedral, Mass at 12:00 p.m.</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>MIDLAND, St. Stephen, Youth</td>
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**January 2019**

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<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<td>1</td>
<td>SAN ANGELO, Sacred Heart Cathedral, Mass at 10:00 a.m.</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>SAN ANGELO, Sacred Heart Cathedral, Mass at 12:00 p.m.</td>
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### Necrology of Priests and Deacons

Please pray for our departed clergy.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>December</th>
<th>January</th>
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**Christ the King Retreat Center**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>December 2018</th>
<th>January 2019</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3 Heart of Mercy Prayer Group</td>
<td>1 CKRC Offices Closed in Observance of the New Year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Bishop’s Annual Advent Party for Staff</td>
<td>6-11 Holy Trinity Silent Retreat</td>
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<tr>
<td>8 Diocesan Formation</td>
<td>11-13 Diocesan Formation</td>
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<td>10 Heart of Mercy Prayer Group</td>
<td>14 Heart of Mercy Prayer Group</td>
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<td>14 DOSA Staff Advent Day of Prayer</td>
<td>21 Heart of Mercy Prayer Group</td>
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<td>17 Heart of Mercy Prayer Group</td>
<td>25–27 Engaged Encounter</td>
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<tr>
<td>20 Staff Mass &amp; Lunch</td>
<td>27 Natural Family Planning</td>
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<tr>
<td>24–25 CKRC Offices Closed in Observance of Christmas</td>
<td>28 Heart of Mercy Prayer Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31 CKRC Offices Closed in Observance of the New Year</td>
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Rich December traditions embraced in diocese

West Texas Angelus

As the air cools and the days grow shorter, December awakens in many a sense of expectation or anticipation: the contemplative patience of Advent as we await the birth of the Lord, the line counting down of days before a New Year full of fresh promise. As we go about our routines, punctuated with the perennial search for the perfect Christmas gifts for our loved ones, the gathering of ingredients for holiday dinners or hot apple cider, the search for a can of black eyed peas for New Year’s good luck before the shelves are empty (constantly accompanied by the familiar crooning of Bing Crosby and Mariah Carey wherever you find yourself), the ringing bells, the twinkling lights, the lines of children waiting to share their lists of wants—likely considerably longer than Ms. Carey’s—with a certain red-suited visitor from up north, it’s clear that this month is more heavily clothed in tradition than most other times of the year.

Whatever your own traditions, common or unique, celebrated with family, church, or neighbors, the sense of community fostered by these shared experiences can certainly define the season-long time.

In celebration of the different December traditions undertaken throughout our diocesan community, the West Texas Angelus asked some of the clergy of our diocese to write a bit about the traditions they hold dear. Their responses are shared below.

The Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe

By Father Freddy Perez

Date celebrated: Dec. 12

December is a month of the advent of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is also a month in which we celebrate Mary, the mother of God, in two important devotions for the Church. As patrons of the United States, on Dec. 8 we will celebrate the feast of the Immaculate Conception, which is a holy day of obligation. On Dec. 12 we celebrate Our Lady of Guadalupe, Empress of America.

As a Mexican born in the United States, both of these titles of Mother Mary have grown on me as a point of grace and thanksgiving for the participation of Mary in our story of salvation. Culturally speaking, as a citizen of the United States our patroness is Mary of the Immaculate Conception. To me this speaks of us as a country striving for a pure relationship with each other, as Mother Mary had a relationship with God that would make her the woman to whom Jesus would be born without stain of sin. As a country, we should aim for our relationships to be without stain.

As a Mexican whose parents are from the central Mexican state of Guanajuato, the Celebration of Mary as Our Lady of Guadalupe was a cultural connection that would give my parents a taste of home with a familiar face. That longing for a taste of home would encourage my parents to share in the local activities as they did back in Mexico. The “Matachines” would be something that as a child I would take in as a form of prayer expressed in dance—and just like my father would when he was young and was a “danzante” that would blend native practices with Christian symbolism. Giving public witness to our devotions as a sign of thanksgiving and taking part in processions was common, along with the Masses that would be offered. After the packed Masses would be the time of fellowship and a shared meal as many like to offer thanksgiving by sharing a tamalito, some sweetbreads, or a warm cup of atole with a community that is ever diverse and growing.

The celebrations are not just confined to the church; people often host dinners with the dancers. As a people, our traditions and practices only continue if we invite others to share in our experience. I often hear people ask, “Why is it so important to do these celebrations?” I invite you to take part in your local celebrations and ask those who participate why it’s so important. You will be surprised by the answers that vary from the personal thanksgiving to traditions that can be traced back to somebody’s humble little pueblo. May our Blessed Mother, under the patronage of Mary the Immaculate Empress of America, bless you to discover her Son, Jesus Christ.

La Fiesta de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe

Por Padre Freddy Perez

Fecha celebrada: 12 de diciembre

Diciembre es un mes del advenimiento de nuestro Señor Jesucristo. También es un mes en el que celebramos a María, la madre de Dios, en dos importantes advocaciones para la Iglesia. Como patrona de los Estados Unidos el 8 de diciembre, celebraremos la fiesta de la Inmaculada Concepción, que es un día de obligación, el 12 de diciembre celebramos a Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe como Emperatriz de América.

Como Mexicano nacido en los Estados Unidos, estas dos advocaciones de la Madre María han crecido en mí como un punto de gracia y acción de gracias por la participación de María en nuestra historia de la salvación. Hablando culturalmente como ciudadanos de los Estados Unidos, nuestra patrona es María de la Inmaculada Concepción, esto me habla de un país que lucha por una relación pura entre sí. Como la Madre María tuvo con Dios una relación que la haría mujer a la que nacería Jesús sin mancha de pecado, como país nuestras relaciones debieran ser sin mancha.

Como Mexicano con padres del centro de México del estado de Guanajuato, la Celebración de María como Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe fue una conexión cultural que les daría un sabor de hogar con un rostro familiar en México. Ese anhelo de probar el hogar anidaría a mis padres a compartir las actividades locales como lo hicieron en México. Los “Matachines” serían algo que de niño tomaría como una forma de oración que se expresaría en la danza, tal como lo haría mi padre cuando él era joven y era un “danzante” que combinaría las prácticas nativas con el simbolismo cristiano. Dar testimonio público de nuestras devociones como un signo de acción de gracias por ser parte de las procesiones fue común junto con las Misas que se ofrecerían. Después de las Misas, sería el momento de la convivencia y una comida compartida que a muchos les gustaría ofrecer acción de gracias compartiendo un tamalito, algunos panes dulces o una taza de atole caliente con una comunidad que es siempre diversa y creciente. Las celebraciones no solo se limitan a la iglesia, las personas a menudo organizarían cenas con los danzantes y amigos. Como pueblo, nuestras tradiciones y prácticas solo continúan si invitamos a otros a compartir nuestra experiencia.

A menudo escuché “¿por qué es tan importante hacer estas celebraciones?” Los invitaban a participar en sus celebraciones locales y preguntan a quienes participan por qué es tan importante. Te sorprenderán las respuestas que varían desde la acción de gracias personal o las tradiciones que se remontan al humilde pueblo de alguien. Que nuestra Madre Santísima, bajo el patrocinio de María, la Inmaculada Emperatriz de América, los bendiga para que descubran a su Hijo, Jesucristo.

Simbáng Gabi

By Father Serafin Avenido

Dates celebrated: Dec. 16–24

Simbáng Gabi is a “nine-day series of masses practiced by the Roman Catholics and Aglipayans in the Philippines in anticipation of Christmas and to honor the Blessed Virgin Mary. This is similar to the nine-day series of dawn masses leading to Christmas Eve in Puerto Rico called Misa de Aguinaldo.” “Simbáng Gabi originated in the early days of Spanish rule over the Philippines as a practical compromise for farmers, who began work before sunrise to avoid the noon day heat out in the fields” (Wikipedia, “Simbáng Gabi”).

Filipino-American communities in the USA celebrate Simbáng Gabi in many different ways. Some celebrate them at 4 a.m. or 5 a.m., while some celebrate them in the evening. Like in the past, the timing is adjusted to the convenience of the community. In Houston, some parishes celebrate it at 4 a.m. In Odessa, the people of St. Mary Parish celebrate the Simbáng Gabi Masses at 5 a.m.

Simbáng Gabi, in almost all cases, is also an occasion for people to share some snacks or meals after the Mass.

Las Posadas

Por Deacono José Villagran

Fechas celebradas: 16 a 24 de diciembre

“En el nombre del ciego os pido posada, pues no puede andar mi esposa amada”. Recuerdo estas las palabras que cantábamos en las noches de navidad cuando participábamos de las posadas. ¿Por qué son estas noches o posadas?

“Según señala el SIAME, las posadas comenzaron en 1587, con el fraile agustino Diego de Soria, quien solicitó al Papa Sixto V un novenario previo a la Navidad que ayudara a desterrar algunas prácticas indígenas de tiempos prehispánicos. Los recién convertidos acogieron con gusto estas misas de aguinaldo, que fueron complementadas con villancicos, piñatas, con su rico simbolismo; representación de autos sacramentales, como La Adoración de los Reyes Magos, que dieron paso a las pastorales, y en donde predominaba una sana convivencia familiar y vecinal” (Acrupresa, 2014).

Estas posadas en mi niñez, dejaron impresas en mi mente la voz de mi mamá y mi comunidad, tratando de que aprendiéramos sobre nuestro Dios por medio de nuestra cultura. Entre cantos, velas y risas, caminábamos de un lugar a otro pidiendo posada. Mi mamá me trató de explicar que recordábamos como José y María ya embarazada, fueron a empadronarse a la ciudad de Belén y que ya se acercaba la Navidad cuando el niño Jesús había nacido.

En aquellos días yo solía esperar la mejor parte para un niño; la comida, los dulces y la piñata. Al ir creciendo me di cuenta de que la mejor parte era el aprender de mi Señor a través de mí familia y mi comunidad; de sus tradiciones. Por ello entendí que “Dios amó tanto al mundo que envió a su único hijo” (Jn 3:16); que mi Dios me ama tanto que quiso salvar mi humanidad para que yo pudiera compartir en su divinidad. Recuerdo cuando tenía alrededor de unos 8 años, me tocó participar en una pastorela. En ella, represente el papel del diablo que trataba de detener a los pastores para que no llegaran a adorar al niño Jesús. Cada vez...
Recognizing the importance of organ donors in Texas

By Dr. Joseph Nespral

Texas Organ Sharing Alliance encourages religious and community leaders to understand the importance of organ donation because every day 22 people in our country die while waiting for an organ. Every 10 minutes someone new is added to the organ donor waiting list. Nationwide, over 115,000 people are waiting for organ donations. In Texas, over 11,000 people are awaiting organs. More than half — 8,100 people — are in need of kidneys, according to the Organ Procurement and Transplant Network, which is part of the US. Department of Health and Human Services.

Finding an organ match is not an easy process. The donor must match blood type and size and other factors, and the organs must be procured and transplanted in recipient bodies quickly. But it can be done. It has been done thousands of times.

A healthy donor can donate up to eight organs: the heart, pancreas, small intestine, two lungs, two kidneys and a liver. In some cases the liver can be divided and a small portion transplanted into a child, the rest into an adult. In those cases, nine lives can actually be saved through organ donation.

In 2017, TOSA transplanted a record 568 organs in Central and South Texas. A record 170 individuals provided 568 organs to patients — that’s a 22 percent increase from 2016. This increase has provided hope to thousands of individuals who are still awaiting organ transplants. And it gives us renewed hope and faith that more people are realizing how they can sign up to save lives.

Nevertheless, there are still those who have reservations about organ donation, and many myths exist that prevent others from registering. Some believe that emergency room doctors will not try to save organ donors. That is categorically false. Every physician in our state who is a part of the Texas Organ Sharing Alliance has taken an oath to try to save every patient to the best of their abilities. But once all efforts have been exhausted, if the person is not on the donor registry, then permission must be received from a grieving family and many times confusion and emotions get interjected into the situation, all while the clock ticks down and as a sick patient waits helplessly somewhere.

We are grateful that all mainstream religions in the United States support organ donation, including Baptist, Catholicism, Episcopal, Greek Orthodox, Islam, Judaism, Lutheran, Mormon, Methodist and Presbyterian. Our religious leaders recognize the benevolent gift of organ donation, and we encourage other community leaders to also endorse organ donation and to spread the word within their towns, organizations and businesses.

Every year we celebrate National Donor Sabbath in the fall to raise awareness about the necessity for more people to sign up to be life-saving donors in our state. Our TOSA staff is committed to help educate every Texan on the importance of organ donation, and we welcome the opportunity to visit with organizations, parishes and communities. For more information, please visit www.TOSA1.org or call 866-685-0277.

Dr. Joseph Nespral is CEO of Texas Organ Sharing Alliance. Founded in 1975, TOSA is one of 58 federally-designated organ procurement organizations in the United States. TOSA is committed to a mission of saving lives through the power of organ donation by providing organ donation and recovery services to Central and South Texans wishing to donate, and to those waiting for a life-saving organ transplant.

News of immigrant caravan serves as reminder of conditions in Honduran partnership dioceses

By Clementine Urista, M.P.S.

As we listen to news or read the newspapers, the mention of La Ceiba and San Pedro Sula, Honduras, hits close to my heart. Our Hermanamiento partnership with the dioceses of La Ceiba and San Pedro Sula, Honduras, and Tyler, Texas — established after Hurricane Mitch made landfall in October 1998 — opened doors that I never could have imagined or experienced, “a third world way of life.”

When visiting La Ceiba or San Pedro Sula, assaults and gang-related confrontations have not occurred, which has been a blessing; however, alertness and prudence have been prevalent in our way of self-protection. Their way of life on a daily basis is “fear.”

On Sept. 9 through Sept. 14, 2018, Tyler, Texas, hosted the Hermanamiento XVII, in which we embraced our brothers and sisters from La Ceiba and San Pedro Sula with their pain and suffering. We shared in their work of service to help others in their ministries while their country is in constant turmoil. In the midst of all the troubled times in Honduras, they pray and seek to have a better way of life. Make no mistake, they are people of great faith.

Dr. Alma S. Pérez and I visited with the ladies from the Casa de Cursillos “Betania” in the Diocese of Tyler, Texas, who had traveled 1.5 hours to cook for us this particular week in Tyler. They shared their stories of being immigrants. One of the ladies had not seen her family for 21 years. Tears of sadness ran down her face and she expressed the longing to one day see her family again. “It is a sacrifice to leave your home, family, and culture to have a peaceful way of life,” she said. They voiced that they wanted to be treated with respect, dignity, and the opportunity to see their children grow in the absence of fear.

I ask for daily prayer for all the immigrants that are wanting a better way of life and to avoid judgment since we have not walked in their shoes in order to have the understanding of seeking another way of life. “Do not be afraid — I am with you! I am your God — let nothing terrify you! I will make you strong and help you; I will protect you and save you” (Is 41:10, Good News Translation).

Clementine Urista is a member of the diocesan Hermanamiento team. The Hermanamiento is a partnership between the dioceses of San Pedro Sula and La Ceiba, Honduras, and Tyler and San Angelo, Texas. An annual collection for the Honduran partnership dioceses is taken up in the Diocese of San Angelo annually in July. For more information, contact Father Bala Govindu, partnership chair, at bgovindu@sanangelodiocese.org.

Ministry of the Third Cross and ACTS

By Peggy Hensley

United in spiritual movement, the Ministry of the Third Cross recently sponsored an ACTS retreat at a juvenile correctional facility in October. The MOTC team spent three exhilarating days introducing the God in each of us to the 18 teenage girls and the God that was in each of them. By being present with them and each other, we found a mutual encounter of love. Many talents are hidden there. Ericka gave voice to the emotions generated in the following illustrated poem. She represents herself uplifted in the clouds.

This is one small way to take the Church, the Body of Christ, to the Body of Christ. It is a truly transformational experience. If you would like to join us, please contact Fr. Tom Barley at the Diocesan Pastoral Center, 325-651-7500, or Deacon Andy Gonzalez at St. Joseph Church in San Angelo, 325-653-5006.

Forgiveness

By Ericka

Love came within the People and in their words, and in their doings. It hit me so Deeply. I didn’t Understand. Tears rolled down my Face, for it Was such amazing Grace to be able To embrace The love... They did Not need words. To show how deeply They made us grow. In words and actions They made me Yearn for more.

“Forgiveness,” an illustration to accompany the poem by the same name, reprinted at right. Illustration and poem courtesy Ericka, a recent ACTS retreatant.
Tucker Foundation awards substantial grant to cathedral in its fall funding cycle

The Art and Eva Camuñez Tucker Foundation has awarded the cathedral’s music program $50,000. This grant recognizes the educational and cultural asset this endeavor is to the San Angelo area and to the diocese. The Tucker Foundation is very interested in supporting our wonderful adult volunteer singers, the paid professional staff singer program (the schola cantorum) and the children’s choirs. In particular the foundation is interested in the mentoring effects of the professional schola on the three children’s choirs, the only regular church children’s choir program in the diocese. This grant allows the cathedral to continue to pursue its vision of the purpose of truly sacred music — to surround the earthly liturgy in the sounds of heavenly splendor — giving worthy praise to God and helping those who experience it build up their faith. Now is the perfect time to have your child audition for this educationally sound and dynamic group. Contact John Webber, the Director of Cathedral Music Ministries, to set up an appointment.

Cathedral begins weekly Latin Mass
By Father Josh Gray

Over the past four years, the Cathedral has been offering Mass in the extraordinary form (in Latin) on an occasional basis. From this Advent onward, the Latin Mass will be offered each Sunday at 8 a.m. The Latin Mass has a long history, going back about 500 years. It was codified in 1570 by Pope Pius V. There are roots of these prayers, however, in the writings of St. Ambrose! Often people thought that Vatican II had banned the Latin Mass, but in fact, the opposite was true! In the document Sacrosanctum Concilium 36.1, it says, "Particular law remaining in force, the use of the Latin language is to be preserved in the Latin rites." On July 7, 2007, Pope Benedict XVI, in the Apostolic Letter Summorum Pontificum, wrote, "It is therefore permitted to celebrate the Sacrifice of the Mass following the typical edition of the Roman Missal, which was promulgated by Blessed John XXIII in 1962 and never abrogated, as an extraordinary form of the Church’s Liturgy."

Often people will comment that the Latin Mass or the English Mass is better than the other. We do not hold to these erroneous beliefs! Instead, we recognize that in the Liturgy, Christ becomes present, and we are united with him through Holy Communion. This truth is undeniable regardless of the language used in the liturgy.

The Latin Mass is a beautiful way to connect with the history of the Church as you are praying the same Mass that St. Padre Pio and hundreds of other saints have prayed over the centuries. This experience of the Mass is a great experience that will lead to a deeper appreciation of the Mass, as you will see how it has developed over the years.

If you are very familiar with the Mass in English, there are a few things that you should know about the Latin Mass. The participation of the congregation at the Latin Mass is interior, involving eye and heart. This means that you would not say responses or make any gestures in this Mass. Rather, you are invited into a spirit of contemplation as the Liturgy pulls you into a deeper relationship with Christ. Allow Christ to work within you!

For further information on the Latin Mass, please visit: https://padrejosh.com/praying-the-latin-mass. Latin Mass is offered every Sunday at 8 a.m. at the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart in San Angelo, Texas.

Parishes mark Month of the Rosary in October

Children interact with a large rosary made with candles on the gym floor at St. Mary Church in Odessa, Oct. 28. (courtesy photo)

The 8th grade CCD students of Holy Spirit Parish in Sweetwater, taught by Carmen Acevedo and Cassie Saenz, completed the month of the Rosary in late October. (courtesy photo)

Father Josh Gray serves as parochial vicar at the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart in San Angelo.
Father Knick and Sandie Knickerbocker

Advent Reflections
By Father Knick and Sandie Knickerbocker

If you were asked to name our three greatest innate needs, what would you answer? Food, security, meaning, love, peace? According to Father Leo Clifford, OFM, the three great needs with which we were created are life, knowledge, and love (Reflections with Fr. Leo Clifford, EWTN). We can fulfill these needs on the natural or human level and on the supernatural or divine level, as did our Blessed Mother Mary and St. Joseph.

In Genesis we read, "[The Lord God] breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being" (Gn 2:7 RSVCE). God is the source of life, and he instills the will to live in his creatures. In animals we see the survival of the fittest. In humans we see the need to hang on to life until the last breath. The Lord God also instills in us at our creation the need to seek life in him and even commands us to do so: "I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse; therefore choose life, that you and your descendants may live, loving the Lord your God, obeying his voice, and cleaving to him" (Dt 30:19–20).

On the natural level we try to find life and meaning in worldly success and material things, satisfaction of lust, adventures, or diversions. We become turned in on ourselves and remain empty. Even our dedication to good causes can leave us empty if not grounded in our relationship with Jesus Christ. However, on the supernatural level, Scripture and tradition teach that God is the only source of life. In fact, he IS life, and, therefore, life is sacred and to be respected. Jesus said to Thomas, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but by me" (Jn 14:6). The astounding news in the Gospels is that life in Christ is eternal, and it begins now! Jesus tells us, "I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and whoever lives and believes in me shall never die" (Jn 11:25–26). And, "I came that they may have life and have it abundantly" (10:10).

Our Blessed Mother Mary and St. Joseph entered into God's plan for fullness of life now and for eternity. They said "yes" to God. Through Mary's graced "yes" the Incarnation took place. "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us full of grace and truth" (Jn 1:14). During these Advent and Christmas seasons, God wants us to hear our "yes" to him so he can fill us with his eternal life: through the sacraments, in our prayerful relationship with him and his mother Mary, and through loving our neighbors and serving their needs.

With Mary and Joseph, we receive life, we revere life, and we promote its protection at all its stages, from natural conception to natural death.

On the natural level, knowledge is the fact or condition of knowing something, a knowledge gained through reason, experience, or by precept from another. We respect people who are well read or have a vast knowledge of a subject, academic or practical. The Catholic Church champions education and promotes the acquisition of knowledge and the ethical and wise use of it; but the Church recognizes a deeper kind of knowledge. Knowledge is one of the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit (see Isaiah 11:2). This supernatural knowledge is eternal and is more than that acquired by reason, experience, or precept from another. This knowledge helps us embrace the truths of faith: knowing and loving God; repenting, confessing, and being absolved of our sins; discerning good and evil; and helping others, especially helping them to know Jesus. This knowledge does not deny knowledge on the

Speaking of Saints
Saint John: Apostle, evangelist, writer, beloved of Jesus
By Mary Lou Gibson

Although they were probably two different people historically, Christian tradition says that John the Evangelist was John the Apostle. He was the youngest of the apostles and is also known as "the beloved disciple" and "the disciple Jesus loved." When Jesus first met John, he and his brother, James, were Galilean fishermen. When Jesus called them to follow him, this they did leaving “the boat and their father” (Mt 4:22b).

John and James were among the first disciples after Peter and Andrew. According to Mark 3:17, Jesus gave John and James the nickname “sons of thunder” because of their impulsive and ardent temperaments. Together with Peter, they became the closest disciples of Jesus.

Tessa Paul writes in The Complete Illustrated Encyclopedia of Saints that the belief that John was a favorite disciple comes from the facts of his life: being with Jesus at the miracle of the loaves and fishes, witnessing the transfiguration with Peter and James, and staying by the side of Jesus during the agony in the Garden of Gethsemane.

Paul Burns writes in Butler’s Lives of the Saints that John was the only apostle to stand at the foot of the Cross, where Jesus gives him charge of Mary. He was also the first to reach the empty tomb in response to Mary Magdalene’s dramatic announcement, but then stands aside to let Peter enter first. After Christ’s ascension and the descent of the Holy Spirit, John took a leading role in the first Christian community. Rosemary Guiley writes in The Encyclopedia of Saints that by tradition, John began his apostolic work among the Jews in the province of Parthia. In about the year 51, he joined other disciples for the first Apostolic Council in Jerusalem. He also attended the Council of 62 after which he went to Ephesus.

The tradition that identifies John as the author of the fourth Gospel goes back to the second century. John is also regarded as the author of the Book of Revelation and three letters or Catholic epistles. [Scholarly debate continues regarding the shared authorship of these five texts. -Editor]

Tom Cowan writes in The Way of the Saints that John’s version of the Gospel celebrates the power of love and the ways that love is the essence of Jesus’ message and the nature of God. John wrote: “God is love and those who abide in love, abide in God, and God in them.” This fourth version of the Gospel is the most mystical and poetic of the Gospels.

His missionary view of the Divine Spirit’s role in human life and history was captured in the Revelation, also known as the Apocalypse, according to Cowan.

John is often called “John the Divine” because of his theological brilliance. In art, he is represented with an eagle, symbolizing the heavenly or soaring quality of his Gospel. His brother, James, was martyred in the persecution under Herod.

Guiley describes an event in the year 95 when John was arrested and brought to Rome. He was thrown into a cauldron of boiling oil but emerged unharmed. Another legend says that he escaped death when he drank from a chalice of wine poisoned by the high priest of Diana.

The Lateran basilica in Rome is dedicated to John and to John the Baptist. He is the patron saint of Asia Minor and Turkey. His feast day is December 27.

Mary Lou Gibson writes about the saints for the West Texas Angelus from her home in Austin.
TRADITIONS
Continued from Page 5

The Angelus DECEMBER 2018 Page 9

que veo o participo de una pastorela, me ayuda a preguntar en retrospectiva, si yo estoy impidiendo a otros llegar al niño Jesús. Me ayuda a recordar que soy el “guardián de mi hermano” (Gn 4:9); responsable de llevarlos a ser adoradores “en espíritu y en verdad” (Jn 4:23).

En estos días ya soy padre de familia y encuentro gran gozo al trasmitir nuestras tradiciones a mis hijos; trasmitir en ellas el gran amor de Dios a ellos. En estos días doy la cultura de la muerte nos quiere arrancar nuestras tradiciones culturales y nuestras familias, las posadas pueden ser un lugar de vida y evangelización a nuestras familias. Sigamos mostrando a nuestras familias cuanto Dios los ama por medio de nuestras tradiciones, de nuestras posadas. El señor les bendiga y los llee de aguinaldos.

References:

The Posadas
By Deacon José Villagrana
Dates celebrated: Dec. 16–24

“En el nombre del cielo os pido posada, pues no puede andar mi esposa amada.” I remember these words we sang at the novenas for Christmas when we participated at the posadas. What are the novenas or posadas?

Aciprensa has an article in Spanish with good information. It states that las posadas started in 1587 with Fr. Diego de Soria, who asked Pope Sixtus V for a novenario (prayers for nine days before the date) before Christmas. This would help to expel some of the pre-Hispanic practices.

The article explains that the recently converted accepted with joy the Aguinaldo Mass (gift mass) with villancicos (Christmas songs), piñatas with their symbolism, and pastorelas (representations of the birth of Jesus from the Gospels), where there was a prevalence of healthy neighborly and family living (Aciprensa, 2014).

The posadas from my childhood impressed in my mind the voice of my mom and my community trying to teach us about our God by way of our culture. With songs, candles, and laughter, we walked from one home to the other asking for posada (lodging). My mom tried to explain to me that we were remembering how Joseph and Mary (already pregnant) went to register for the census to the city of Bethlehem, and she also tried to explain that Christmas, when we remember the birth of Jesus, was soon to happen.

Back in those days I used to wait for the best part of the posada for a child, which was the food, candies, and the piñata. Another memory I have was when I was about 8 years old and participated in a pastorela. I had the role of the little devil who attempts to stop the shepherds from going to worship the Baby Jesus. Now as an adult, when I attend or participate in a posada, I ask myself if I am stopping someone from going to Jesus. These memories help me to never forget that “I am my brother’s keeper” (Gn 4:9) and I am responsible for leading them to worship in Spirit and truth (Jn 4:23).

Today I also understand that the best part of these childhood memories was to learn about the Lord from the traditions of my family and community. I learned from them that “God so loved the world that he gave his only Son” (Jn 3:16). My God loved me so much that he wanted to save humanity so that I could share in his divinity.

Now as a father, I find joy in teaching our traditions to my children and sharing in those traditions the great love of God. In today’s world, where the culture of death is trying to destroy our traditions and families, las posadas can be a good place of life and evangelization for our families. Let us keep on showing our families how much God loves them by keeping our tradition of the posadas. May God bless you and continue to fill you with aguinaldos (presents).

References:

Review: ‘Instant Family’ shows rewards of adoption
By John Mulderig
Catholic News Service

NEW YORK (CNS) — It’s rare that a movie can reasonably be expected to accomplish something good in the real world. But director and co-writer Sean Anders’ blend of comedy and drama, Instant Family (Paramount) may be the exception.

This warm evocation of both the challenges and the ultimate rewards of adopting parenting, based on Anders’ own experience, may inspire at least a few viewers to investigate the possibility of taking kids in need under their wings. In that sense the film is not only obviously pro-family but, in a totally noncontroversial way, pro-life as well.

That said, however, it also has to be pointed out that Anders’ script, penned with John Morris, includes material appropriate for grown-ups only. That’s a shame, because youngsters might have profited from a more circumspect presentation of this mostly enjoyable story.

Somewhat impulsively, good-hearted, prosperous suburban couple Pete (Mark Wahlberg) and Ellie (Rose Byrne) Wagner decide to start a family by taking in three siblings: 15-year-old Lizzy (Isabela Moner), preteen Juan (Gustavo Quiroz) and little Lita (Jordan Nagai, “Juno”). With their father out of the picture, the trio has had a rough time of it in foster care.

At first, all goes deceptively well. But serious difficulties are not long in coming. Emotionally scarred Lizzy defies Pete and Ellie at every opportunity. Juan is accident prone and overly apologetic. And Lita indulges in tantrums of high-volume screaming whenever she doesn’t get her way.

Pete and Ellie eventually begin to long for a return to the placid lifestyle they once enjoyed. They also start to wonder if they can really cope with the commitment they’ve made.

They get help from the mismatched duo of social workers, buttoned-up Sharon (Tig Notaro) and free-wheeling Karen (Octavia Spencer), who have guided them through the process, as well as from the support group Sharon and Karen run.

The members of this circle include two gay men, the definitiveness of whose ability to model the divinely intended complementarity inherent in a traditional home the movie predictably ignores. Though the same-sex couple is thus put on an equal footing as candidates to adopt, this is treated more as an assumption taken for granted by the filmmakers and the audience alike than a point to be driven home.

This moral loose end aside, mature moviegoers will appreciate the deftness with which Anders weaves amusing incidents with touching emotional interludes. Still, they will likely wish that some of the gags and a good deal of the dialogue had been cleaned up to appeal to a broader audience.

Viewers of faith also may be less than pleased by the mild irreverence of a scene in which an attempt to say grace over a holiday meal goes awry due to rela
tionships and contraception, a handful of profanities, a couple of milder oaths, at least one rough term, frequent crude and crass language and an obscene gesture. 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.

TCCB launches new foster care resources

West Texas Angelus

S AN ANGELO — In response to a call from the bishops of Texas, the Texas Catholic Conference of Bishops, the public policy arm of the church in the state, has launched a new initiative to encourage aid in the much-needed area of foster care.

There are currently around 30,000 children in the Child Protective Services foster care system in Texas.

Choosing the name St. Joseph Ministry, the TCCB has developed bilingual resources for individuals as well as parish toolkits to help guide people as to how they can best help the children in the state’s foster care system.

“Taking care of the orphan is a fundamental teaching of the Catholic faith,” the TCCB says on the St. Joseph Ministry webpage. Seeking to fulfill this call to care for these needy children, the ministry notes that it is not easy, but that there are many ways people can help to create “a nurturing network of support.”

For more information on how you or your parish can help with this worthy ministry, visit the St. Joseph Ministry website at http://tscatholic.org/stjosephministry/.

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

Catholic Outreach Services in San Angelo closes; local parishes to reorganize ministry

The board of directors of Catholic Outreach Services in San Angelo voted to shutter the ministry in late October. The facilities, located at 410 N. Chadbourne in San Angelo, were handed over to the diocese. The parishes in San Angelo have made the decision to reorganize the ministry, continuing the effort to provide assistance to those in need, but moving away from the thrift store model that was seen as duplicative of other services available in the city.

Details about the new ministry are forthcoming, including the reopening date, the exact nature of services to be provided, and what the new ministry will be called. Father Charles Greenwell, pastor of Holy Angels Parish in San Angelo, is spearheading the effort to find new leadership for the reorganized entity. Those interested in more information on how they can become involved in the leadership of this new organization should contact Father Greenwell at Holy Angels, 325-949-3308.

Our Lady of Guadalupe Feast Day procession, Mass to be held in Eldorado

Bishop Michael Sis will celebrate this year’s Our Lady of Guadalupe Feast Day, Dec. 12, at Our Lady of Guadalupe Church in Eldorado.

The day’s events will include a procession at 5:00 p.m., Mass celebrated by Bishop Sis at 6:00 p.m., and a blessing of the grotto after Mass followed by a reception and Matachines.

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.

Retiro para Mujeres/Muchachas Interesadas en la Vida Religiosa

Si usted es una mujer o muchacha que quiere entender más acerca de esta llamada de Dios, venga a estos retiros. O si usted conoce a una mujer o muchacha que tiene interés en la vida religiosa por favor, comparte esta información con ella.

La Perla de Gran Valor –
• 23 de febrero, 2019 en Abilene
Para más información llame a la oficina de Vocaciones 325-651-7500 o llame a la Hermana Elsa 432-682-6303.

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@sanangelodioce.se.org.

YOUTH 2000

January 11-13, 2019
St. Stephen’s Catholic Church
Midland, TEXAS

“It is your life that Jesus wants to enter with His word, with His presence
Pope Francis
Message for World Youth Day Rio

A weekend for, of, and by young people

Friday, January 11 6:30 p.m. -11:00 p.m.
Saturday, January 12 8:00 a.m. - 10:00 p.m.
Sunday, January 13 8:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

All youth, Grades 7 – 12, are invited!

Cost: $50
(Incl: Registration & Saturday Meals)

If you are interested in attending, fill out the Registration Form, attach a non-refundable check/cash of $50 & turn it in to your youth director/church sponsor. Make checks payable to St. Stephens. Return group registrations (forms and fee) by January 4.

For more information, email: ststepheusyouth@yahoo.com

Obtain registration documents: www.ststephensmidlandtx.com
**Advent Penance Services**

**West Texas Angelus**

Penance services will be offered throughout the diocese during Advent as we prepare for Christ's arrival and the Christmas season. Following is a list of dates and locations where these services will be available:

**Monday, December 3**
Wall, St. Ambrose Church, 7:00 p.m.
8602 Loop 50, Wall, TX 76957

**Tuesday, December 4**
Coleman, Sacred Heart Church, 7:00 p.m.
303 E College Ave, Coleman, TX 76834
San Angelo, St. Mary Church, 7:00 p.m.
11 W Avenue N, San Angelo, TX 76903

**Wednesday, December 5**
Abilene, Holy Family Church, 7:00 p.m.
5410 Buffalo Gap Rd, Abilene, TX 79606
Midland, San Miguel Arcángel Church, 7:00 p.m.
1100 Camp St, Midland, TX 79701

Ozona, Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church, 6:30 p.m.
1715 Martinez, Ozona, TX 79643

**Thursday, December 6**
Andrews, Our Lady of Lourdes Church, 6:30 p.m.
201 NE Avenue K, Andrews, TX 79714

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**Christmas Eve and Christmas Day Mass Times**

**West Texas Angelus**

No matter where your travels take you this holiday season, there’s bound to be a Christmas Mass nearby. Here are the Christmas Eve and Christmas Day Mass times at parishes around the Diocese of San Angelo:

**ABILENE**
Dyess AFB
7 BW/HC, 158 Avenue B, Dyess AFB, TX 79607
Dec. 24: 7:00 p.m.
Dec. 25: 10:00 a.m.

**Holy Family Church**
5410 Buffalo Gap Rd, Abilene, TX 79606
Dec. 24: 5:30 p.m., 8:00 p.m., 12:00 midnight
Dec. 25: 11:00 a.m.

**Sacred Heart Church**
837 Jeanette St, Abilene, TX 79602
Dec. 24: 6:30 p.m., 12:00 midnight
Dec. 25: 10:00 a.m.

**St. Francis of Assisi Church**
826 Cottonwood St, Abilene, TX 79601
Dec. 24: 6:00 p.m. (Children’s Mass), 10:00 p.m.
Dec. 25: 10:00 a.m.

**St. Vincent Pallotti Church**
2525 Westview Dr, Abilene, TX 79603
Dec. 24: 5:00 p.m. (Children’s Mass), 12:00 midnight
Dec. 25: 10:00 a.m.

**Andrews**
Our Lady of Lourdes Church
201 NE Avenue K, Andrews, TX 79714
Dec. 24: 7:00 p.m. (English), 10:00 p.m. (Bilingual)
Dec. 25: 9:00 a.m. (Bilingual)

**BALLINGER**
St. Mary, Star of the Sea Church
605 N 5th St, Ballinger, TX 76821
Dec. 24: 5:00 p.m. (Children’s Mass), 11:30 p.m. (midnight Mass and carsol)
Dec. 25: 9:30 a.m.

**BIG LAKE**
St. Margaret of Cortona Church
107 E 1st St, Big Lake, TX 76932
Dec. 24: 7:00 p.m.
Dec. 25: 11:30 a.m.

**BIG SPRING**
Holy Trinity Church
1009 Hearne St, Big Spring, TX 79720
Dec. 24: 5:00 p.m., 7:00 p.m.
Dec. 25: 10:00 a.m.

**BRADY**
St. Patrick Church
406 S Bridge, Brady, TX 76825
Dec. 24: 10:30 p.m.
Dec. 25: 9:30 a.m.

**BRONTE**
St. James Church
302 N Washington, Bronte, TX 76933
Dec. 25: 8:00 a.m.

**BROWNWOOD**
St. Mary Queen of Peace Church
1103 Main St, Brownwood, TX 76801
Dec. 24: 5:00 p.m., 12:00 midnight
Dec. 25: 9:00 a.m., 11:00 a.m.

**CARLSBAD**
St. Therese Church
11774 Beaumont, Carlsbad, TX 79934
Dec. 24: 6:30 p.m.

**CHRISTOVAL**
Mt. Carmel Hermitage
7637 Allen Rd, Christoval, TX 76935
Dec. 24: 12:00 midnight
Dec. 25: 12:00 a.m.

Our Lady of Grace Carmelite Monastery
6202 Co Rd 339, Christoval, TX 76935
Dec. 24: 12:00 midnight
Dec. 25: 9:30 a.m.

**CLYDE**
Sts. Joachim and Ann Church
103 Cherry St, Clyde, TX 79510
Not available at press time. Contact parish office at 325-677-7951.

**COLEMAN**
Sacred Heart Church
303 E College Ave, Coleman, TX 76834
Dec. 24: 10:30 p.m.
Dec. 25: 8:30 a.m.

**COLORADO CITY**
St. Ann Church
2005 Walnut St, Colorado City, TX 79512
Dec. 24: 6:00 p.m.
Dec. 25: 10:30 a.m.

**COYANOSA**
St. Isidore Church
48814 S Frank, Coyanosa, TX 79730
Dec. 24: 8:00 p.m.

**CRANE**
Good Shepherd Church
810 S Virginia St, Crane, TX 79731
Dec. 24: 10:30 p.m.

**DEN**
St. Charles Church
302 S Moss St, Eldorado, TX 76837
Dec. 24: 9:00 p.m.
Dec. 25: 11:00 a.m.

**ELDORADO**
Our Lady of Guadalupe Church
824 N Divide St, Eldorado, TX 76936
Dec. 24: 10:30 p.m.
Dec. 25: 11:00 a.m.

**EOLA**
St. Phillip Church
11937 Co Rd 5511, Eola, TX 76837
Dec. 25: 8:30 a.m.

**FORT STOCKTON**
Our Lady of Guadalupe Church
North Campus
4094 N HWY 18, Fort Stockton, TX 74935
Dec. 24: 6:30 p.m.
Downtown Campus
403 S Main, Fort Stockton, TX 74935
Dec. 24: 12:00 midnight
Dec. 25: 11:00 a.m.

**IMPERIAL**
Our Lady of Lourdes Church
103 Merrill Ave, Imperial, TX 79743
Dec. 25: 9:00 a.m.

**IRAAN**
St. Francis of Assisi Church
205 W 5th St, Iraan, TX 79744
Dec. 25: 9:30 a.m.

**JUNCTION**
St. Theresa of the Child Jesus Church
114 S 7th St, Junction, TX 76849
Dec. 25: 11:00 a.m.

**KNICKERBOCKER**
Immaculate Conception Church
12264 W Torres, Knickerbocker, TX 76939
Dec. 24: 6:30 p.m.

**LENORAH**
St. Isidore Church
3324 Co Rd 3400, Lenorah, TX 79749
Dec. 24: 6:00 p.m.

**LORAINES**
St. Joseph Church
403 S Hinson, Loraine, TX 79532
Dec. 25: 8:30 a.m.

**MCCAMER**
Sacred Heart Church
710 S Burleson, McCamey, TX 79752
Dec. 25: 11:00 a.m.

**MELVIN**
St. Francis Xavier Church
107 S Savage Ave, Melvin, TX 76858
Dec. 24: 7:00 p.m.

**MENARD**
Sacred Heart Church
609 Ellis St, HWY 83, Menard, TX 76859
Dec. 25: 9:00 a.m.

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See MASS TIMES, Page 20
Photos at right (top to bottom): Bishop Robert Coerver of the Diocese of Lubbock presenting "What to Do, What to Be"; Dr. Jim Sulliman presenting "Finding Meaning in Life"; Melissa Hernandez of the Open Arms Rape Crisis Center sharing advice on "Healthy Relationships"; conference attendees in small group discussion during Oddwalk Ministries' breakout session on bullying. (Angelus photos)

Area Catholic Youth Conference
Nov. 16–18, 2018
McNease Convention Center, San Angelo

Above: Joe Melendrez works the crowd during a performance on Nov. 17. (Angelus photo)

Left: Shannon Cermeka and Orin Johnson of Oddwalk Ministries provide music for Adoration on Saturday night, Nov. 17. (Angelus photo)

Students cut loose at the dance after a long Saturday conference, Nov. 17. (Angelus photo)

Youth participate in one of the keynote presentations in the main meeting room. (Angelus photos)

Conference attendees perusing the exhibitor booths between conference sessions. (Angelus photo)

Youth cut loose at the dance after a long Saturday conference, Nov. 17. (Angelus photo)
By Catholic News Service

BALTIMORE (CNS) — Cardinal Daniel N. DiNardo of Galveston-Houston, president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, said Nov. 14 he had opened the bishops' fall general assembly "expressing some disappointment," but "I end it with hope." "My hope is first of all grounded in Christ, who desires that the church be purified and that our efforts bear fruit," he told his fellow bishops in Baltimore with remarks closing the public sessions of the Nov. 12-14 meeting.

"We leave this place committed to taking the strongest possible actions at the earliest possible moment," Cardinal DiNardo said. "We will do so in communion with the universal church.

Moving forward in concert with the church around the world will make the church in the United States stronger, and will make the global church stronger."

The disappointment came when he announced at the start Nov. 12 the Vatican had requested the bishops delay voting on several proposals to address the sex abuse crisis and hold bishops more accountable for dealing with wayward priests and other church workers accused of sex abuse.

The directive said the proposals needed to be reviewed for conformity to canon law and that action on them needed to wait until after the February Vatican meeting for presidents of bishops' conferences worldwide to discuss the sex abuse crisis.

But throughout the assembly, the spotlight was on the widening abuse crisis in the U.S. church and action the U.S. bishops must take to address it. Much of the meeting time was devoted to frank presentations and discussions about abuse.

But there were other items on the agenda, including a pastoral letter on racism that was introduced to the body of bishops as an action item Nov. 13 and voted on the following day, Nov. 14.

They overwhelmingly approved the document, "Open Wide Our Hearts: The Enduring Call to Love - A Pastoral Letter Against Racism." It declares "racist acts are sinful because they violate justice." "They reveal a failure to acknowledge the human dignity of the persons offended, to recognize them as the neighbors Christ calls us to love," it adds.

The vote for passage was 241-3 with one abstention. It required a two-thirds vote by all bishops, or 183 votes, for passage.

Also on the final day's agenda the bishops gave unanimous support for the advancement of the canonization cause of Sister Thea Bowman on the diocesan level — the Diocese of Jackson, Mississippi, headed by Bishop Joseph R. Kopacz. It is the diocese where Sister Bowman grew up and also where she ministered in her last years while taking care of her aging parents and subsequently fighting cancer herself.

The great-granddaughter of slaves, Sister Bowman was the only African-American member of the Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration. She transcended racism to leave a lasting mark on Catholic life in the United States in the late 20th century.

Other agenda items for the last day of the meeting included the approval of a budget for 2019, which reflected increased expenses related to the new clergy sex abuse crisis and a downward trend in the USCCB's Office of Migration and Refugee Service's budget due to federal cuts in refugee resettlement funds.

They also heard reports on September's V Encuentro held in Grapevine, Texas, and October's Synod of Bishops on "Young People, the Faith, and Vocational Discernment."

Regarding the synod, Bishop Frank J. Caggiano of Bridgeport, Connecticut, who was a synod delegate, said the event was a moment of great grace that needs attention of church leaders now to implement it on the diocesan level.

The bishops voted for Bishop Gregory L. Parkes of St. Petersburg, Florida, as treasurer-elect of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. He'll take office for a three-year term next November at the end of the general assembly, succeeding Cincinnati Archbishop Dennis M. Schnurr.

Votes also were cast for a new chairman of the Committee on National Collections and chairmen-elect for the committees on Catholic Education; Clergy, Consecrated Life and Vocations; Divine Worship; Domestic Justice and Human Development; Laity, Marriage, Family Life and Youth; and Migration.

Among speakers who gave presentations on the abuse crisis and called for action was the chairman of the National Review Board, Francesco Cesareo, president of Assumption College in Massachusetts.

He called for broadening the scope of the "Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People" to include bishops. He also urged publishing complete lists of credibly accused clergy in all dioceses; improving the audit process; and enhancing accountability for bishops regarding cases of abuse.

He urged the bishops to take action and continue their conversations to abuse forward. If such action does not happen, "I fear for the future of our church," Cesareo said Nov. 13.

"We are facing painful times as a church," said another speaker, Father David Whitestone, chair of the bishops' National Advisory Council. "The depth of anger, pain and disappointment expressed by members of the NAC cannot begin to be expressed adequately in words."

He noted that progress has been made since the bishops adopted the charter, but he stressed that more needs to be done. "We can never become complacent. We must recommit to the ongoing care of all victims in their healing," Father Whitestone said.

During a late-afternoon open discussion on the crisis, the case of Archbishop Theodore E. McCarrick posed the most daunting questions for the bishops.

Several said they had been hearing from people in the pew that and the laity's questions revolved around how the hierarchy could allow Archbishop McCarrick to gain so much influence and rise to the highest ranks of the church hierarchy if they knew of the abuse of which he is accused.

The former cardinal-archbishop of Washington is accused of abusing a minor decades ago and having sexual contact with seminarians in more recent years. He denies the allegations.

During the discussion, there also were calls for bishops to examine their relationship with Jesus and with God and to ask themselves what it means to be a shepherd in their dioceses.

The bishops also heard presentations on proposals for addressing the abuse crisis, so they could discuss them, even though the Vatican had requested they postpone voting on them.

The proposals include establishing standards of episcopal accountability; forming a special commission for review of complaints against bishops for violations of the accountability standards; and establishing a protocol regarding restrictions on bishops who were removed or who resigned over claims of sexual misconduct made against them or for grave negligence in other areas.

The bishops also heard from Heather Banis, a trauma psychologist who is victim assistance coordinator for the Archdiocese of Los Angeles. She told them that helping victims and survivors of child sex abuse heal is a journey that involves showing them repeated trustworthiness.

It begins with listening, understanding, offering responses showing that they, the victim-survivors, are believed, she said.

Msgr. Todd Lajiness, rector of Sacred Heart Major Seminary in Detroit and president of the National Association of Catholic Theological Schools, outlined feedback given by some U.S. seminary rectors on promoting "celibate chastity" among seminarians as well as having listening sessions with seminarians, taking “a fresh look at boundaries,” and providing “new pathways for reporting” abuse allegations.

See ASSEMBLY, Page 22
Bishops assent to diocese's Sister Thea Bowman sainthood effort

By Mark Pattison
Catholic News Service

Baltimore (CNS) — The U.S. bishops assented to the canonization effort launched by the Diocese of Jackson, Mississippi, for a religious sister who was a trailblazer in almost every role: first African-American religious sister from Canton, Mississippi; the first to head an office of intercultural awareness; and the first African-American woman to address the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops.

Sister Bowman, Bishop Kopacz said, was "an ambassador of Jesus Christ and an apostle of reconciliation," adding she was "singing, teaching and inspiring until the very end."

He noted that "the church embraced Sister Thea from her early years, but there were times when she felt like a motherless child." It never deterred her, though, Bishop Kopacz said. "We pray that Sister Thea's voice will be a beacon of hope" to victims of clergy sexual abuse.

Bishop Kopacz liberally sprinkled his remarks with quotes from Sister Bowman.

"We unite ourselves with Christ's redemptive work when we make peace, when we share the good news of God within our hearts," she once said. "We celebrate the presence and proclamation of the word made flesh. It is never an escape from reality," she also said.

At another point, Sister Bowman told her audience, "Go! There is a song that will never be sung unless you sing it. ... Go tell the world, go preach the Gospel, go tell the good news."

Sister Bowman was a trailblazer in almost every role: first African-American religious sister from Canton, Mississippi; the first to head an office of intercultural awareness; and the first African-American woman to address the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops.

Sister Bowman led the Jackson Diocese's Office of Intercultural Awareness, taught at several Catholic high schools and colleges, and was a faculty member of the Institute of Black Catholic Studies at Xavier University in New Orleans.

She took her message across the nation, speaking at church gatherings and conventions, making 100 speaking engagements a year, but spreading cancer slowed her. Music was especially important to her. She would gather or bring a choir with her and often burst into song during her presentations.

In addition to her writings, her music also resulted in two recordings, "Sister Thea: Songs of My People and Round the Glory Manger: Christmas Songs and Spirituals."

When Sister Bowman spoke at the U.S. bishops' meeting in June 1989, less than a year before her death from bone cancer and confined to a wheelchair, she was blunt. She told the bishops that people had told her black expressions of music and worship were "un-Catholic."

Sister Bowman disputed that notion, pointing out that the church universal appreciates that the letter took note of the racism suffered by African-Americans and Native Americans, "We reveal a failure to acknowledge the person a saint."

By Dennis Sadowski
Catholic News Service

Bishops overwhelmingly approve pastoral letter against racism

By Mark Pattison
Catholic News Service

Baltimore (CNS) — The U.S. bishops overwhelmingly approved a pastoral letter against racism Nov. 14 during their fall general meeting at Baltimore.

The document, "Open Wide Our Hearts: The Enduring Call to Love — A Pastoral Letter Against Racism," was adopted by a two-thirds vote by all bishops, or 183 votes, for passage.

"Despite many promising strides made in our country, racism still infects our nation," the pastoral letter says. "Racist acts are sinful because they violate justice. They reveal a failure to acknowledge the human dignity of the persons offended, to recognize them as the beloved neighbors Christ calls us to love," it adds.

Bishops speaking on the pastoral gave clear consent to the letter's message.

"This statement is very important and very timely," said Bishop John E. Stowe of Lexington, Kentucky. He appreciated that the letter took note of the racism suffered by African-Americans and Native Americans, "two pieces of our national history that we have not reconciled."

"This will be a great, fruitful document for discussion," said Bishop Barry C. Knestout of Richmond, Virginia, in whose diocese the violence-laden "Unite the Right" rally was held last year. Bishop Knestout added the diocese has already conducted listening sessions on racism.

Bishop Robert J. Baker of Birmingham, Alabama, what he called "ground zero for the civil rights movement," said the pastoral's message is needed, as the civil rights movement "began 60 years ago and we're still working on achieving the goals in this document."

Archbishop Joseph F. Naumann of Kansas City, Kansas, said he was grateful for the pastoral's declaration that "an attack against the dignity of the human person is an attack against the dignity of life itself."

Bishop Thomas J. Olmsted of Phoenix said the letter will be welcome among Native Americans, who populate 11 missions in the diocese, African-Americans in Arizona — "I think we were the last of the 50 states to be part of the Martin Luther King Jr. national holiday," he noted — and Hispanics, who make up 80 percent of all diocesan Catholics under age 20.

"This is very important for our people and our youth to know the history of racism," he added.

Bishop Shelton T. Fabe of Houma-Thibodaux, Louisiana, chairman of the U.S. bishops' Ad Hoc Committee Against Racism, said an electronic copy of "Open Wide Our Hearts" would be posted "somewhat immediately," with a print version available around Thanksgiving.

"Also, there will be resources available immediately" now that the pastoral letter has been approved, including Catholic school resources for kindergartchen through 12th grade, added the bishop, who also is chair of other bishops' Subcommittee on Intercultural Affairs.

"Open Wide Our Hearts" conveys the bishops' grave concern about the rise of racist attitudes in society, Bishop Fabre said Nov. 13, when the pastoral was put on the floor of the bishops' meeting. It also "offers practical suggestions for individuals, families and communities," he said.

Every racist act — every such comment, every joke, every disparaging look as a reaction to the color of skin, ethnicity or place of origin — is a failure to acknowledge another person as a brother or sister, cre

Vatican asks USCCB to delay vote on sex abuse response proposals

By Dennis Sadowski
Catholic News Service

Baltimore (CNS) — At the urging of the Vatican, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops will not vote on two proposals they were to discuss at their Baltimore meeting regarding their response to the clergy sex abuse crisis.

Cardinal Daniel N. DiNardo of Galveston-Houston, USCCB president, informed the bishops as they opened their fall general assembly Nov. 12 that the Vatican wanted the bishops to delay any vote until after a February meeting with the pope and presidents of the bishops' conferences around the world that will focus on addressing clergy abuse.

Affected are proposed standards of episcopal conduct and the formation of a special commission for review of complaints against bishops for violations of the standards.

Cardinal DiNardo said he was disappointed that no action would be taken during the assembly, but that he was hopeful that the delay "will improve our response to the crisis we face."

The cardinal's announcement came two days after Pope Francis met with Archbishop Christophe Pierre, apostolic nuncio to the United States, at the Vatican. Archbishop Pierre returned to the United States Nov. 11 in time for the first day of the U.S. bishops' general fall assembly in Baltimore.

However, at a midday news conference, Cardinal DiNardo said the request to delay action came from the Congregation for Bishops.

The assembly planned to move forward with discussion of both proposals from the bishop's Administrative Committee.

The Administrative Committee consists of the officers, chairmen and regional representatives of the USCCB. The committee, which meets in March and September, is the high-
Reconciling a dual citizenship as a Catholic

By Father Ron Rolheiser

I live on both sides of a border. Not a geographical one, but one which is often a dividing line between two groups. I was raised a conservative Roman Catholic, and conservative in most other things as well. Although my dad worked politically for the Liberal party, most everything about my upbringing was conservative. And by all accounts, he was a staunch Roman Catholic in every way. I grew up under the papacy of Pius XII (the fact that my youngest brother is named Pius will tell you how loyal our family was to that pope’s version of things). Roman Catholicism was the one true religion and that Protestants needed to convert and return to the true faith. I memorized the Roman Catholic catechism and defended every word. Moreover, beyond being faithful church-goers, my family was given over to piety and devotions: we prayed the rosary together as a family every day; had statues and holy pictures everywhere in our house; wore blessed medals around our necks; prayed litanies to Mary, Joseph, and the Sacred Heart; and practiced a warm devotion to the saints. And it was wonderful. I will forever be grateful for that religious foundation.

I went from my family home to the seminary at the tender age of seventeen and my early seminary years solidly reinforced what my family had given me. The academics were good and we were encouraged to read great thinkers in every discipline. But this higher learning was still solidly set within a Roman Catholic ethos that valued all the things religiously and devotionally I’d been raised on. My studies were still friends with my piety. My mind was expanded by my piety.

But home is where we start from. Gradually though, through the years my world changed. Studying at different graduate schools, teaching on different graduate faculties, being in daily contact with other expressions of the faith, reading contemporary novelists and thinkers, and having academics who are also known as friends that I confess, put some strain on the piety of my youth. It’s no secret; we don’t often pray the rosary or litanies to Mary or the Sacred Heart in graduate classrooms or at faculty gatherings.

However, academic classrooms and faculty gatherings bring something else, something vitally needed in church pews and in circles of piety, namely, wider theological and critical principles to keep unbridled piety, naïve fundamentalism, and misguided religious fervor within proper boundaries. What I’ve learned in the academic circles is also wonderful and I am forever grateful for the privilege of higher education.

But, of course, that’s a formula for tension, albeit a healthy one. Let me use someone else’s voice to articulate this. In a recent book, Silence and Beauty, a Japanese-American artist, Makoto Fujimura, shares this incident from his own life. Coming out of church one Sunday, he was asked by his pastor to add his name to a list of people who had agreed to boycott the film, The Last Temptation of Christ. He liked his pastor too much to please him by signing the petition, but felt hesitant to sign for reasons that, at that time, he couldn’t articulate. But his wife could. Before he could sign, she stepped in and said: “Artists may have other roles to play than to boycott this film.” He understood what she meant. He didn’t sign the petition.

But chapter one is entitled simply “Is there a God?”

Stephen Hawking: Great scientist, lousy theologian

By Bishop Robert Barron

Stephen Hawking was a great theoretical physicist and cosmologist, perhaps the most important since Einstein. It is only right that his remains have been interred by the Catholic Church. He was, furthermore, a person of tremendous courage and perseverance, accomplishing groundbreaking work despite a decades-long struggle with the debilitating effects of Lou Gehrig’s disease. And by all accounts, he was a man of good humor with a rare gift for friendship. It is practically impossible not to admire him. But boy was he annoying when he talked about religion!

In the last year of his life, Hawking was putting the finishing touches on a book that is something of a follow-up to his mega-bestselling A Brief History of Time. Called Brief Answers to the Big Questions, it is a series of short essays on subjects including time travel, the possibility of intelligent life elsewhere in the universe, the physics that obtains within a black hole, and the colonization of space. But chapter one is entitled simply “Is there a God?”

I don’t pretend to be the ultimate arbiter of scientific questions, religion, in the developed sense of the term, is not asking and answering scientific questions poorly; rather, it is asking and answering religious questions poorly, a point Hawking makes in his book. It is a fact that in the last issue I mentioned — namely, why there should be a universe at all. Hawking opines that theoretical physics can confidently answer this question in such a way that the existence of God is rendered superfluous. Just as, at the quantum level, elementary particles pop into and out of existence randomly, Hawking suggests that the protodisorder that produced the Big Bang simply came to be out of nothing, without a cause and without an explanation. The result, Hawking concludes, is that “the universe is the ultimate free lunch.”

But the mistake — and armies of Hawking’s followers make it — is to equivocate on the meaning of nothing. While it is perfectly legitimate scientifically (or indeed religious) to say “nothing” designates absolute nonbeing; but what Hawking and his disciples mean by the term is in fact a fecund field of energy from which realities come into and to which they return. The moment one speaks of “coming from” or “returning to,” one is not speaking of nothing! I actually laughed out loud at this part of Hawking’s analysis, which fairly gives away the game: “I think the universe was spontaneously created out of nothing, according to the laws of science.” Well, whatever you want to say about the laws of science, they’re not nothing! Indeed, when the quantum theorists talk about particles popping into being spontaneously, they regularly invoke quantum constants and dynamics according to which such emergences occur. Again, say what you want about these law-like arrangements, they are not absolute nonbeing, in any case. Therefore, we are compelled to ask the question why should contingent states of affairs — matter, energy, the Big Bang, the laws of science themselves — exist at all? The classical response of religious philosophy is that no contingency can be explained satisfactorily by appealing endlessly to other contingencies. Therefore, says our friend Hawking, intelligent reality, which grounds and actualizes the finite universe, must exist. And this uncaused cause, this reality whose very nature is to be, is what serious religious people call “God.”

None of Hawking’s speculations least of all his musings about the putative “nothing” from which the universe arises are a logical way forward. May I say by way of conclusion that I actually rather liked Stephen Hawking’s last book. When he stayed within the confines of his areas of expertise, he was readable, funny, informative, and creative. But could I encourage readers please to take him with a substantial grain of salt when he speaks of the things of God?

Bishop Robert Barron is an auxiliary bishop of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles and founder of Word on Fire Catholic Ministries.
Preparación esperanzadora para el Advento

Por María-Pia Negro Chin
Catholic News Service

Se acerca la Navidad. Pero a jug-
por las decoraciones en las tien-
das, pareciera que la Navidad ha esta-
do aquí hace rato. La celebración tem-
trana puede restarle importancia al
gran día, pero afortuna-
damente tenemos el Advento para antici-
par la llegada de Jesús.

La escritora católi-
ca Katie Prejean
McGrady dijo el año
pasado, necesitamos
estas semanas para
preparar nuestros cora-
zeones, mentes y hogar-
res para “el mayor rega-
ño que se haya dado a la humanidad: la
presencia del Señor en el mundo”.

Existen diferentes tradiciones que
nos ayudan a reflexionar sobre la his-
toria de salvación de Dios y a antic-
imizarnos en este tiempo de Adviento.

Así, una tradición de la iglesia es
la corona de Adviento, y las famili-
as también tienen calendarios de
Adviento y árboles de Jesé. Aquí hay
más formas de prepararse entre el 2 y
el 24 de diciembre de este año.

Oración:

Hemrick

La escritora, Laurie Medina, de LifeTeen, escribe que este sacramento
nos permite hacer espacio para que
Jesús realmente nos toque esta
Navidad. “Tal vez todo lo que puedes
ofrecerle es un establo en mal estado
con un piso de tierra y un abrevadero
de madera lleno de heno”, dice ella.

“Eso está bien, porque sabemos que él
hace que incluso los lugares más lam-
entables y vergonzosos sean her-
mosos. Tomará todo lo que puedas
darle”. — Reflexión estructurada. Eliza
una guía de Adviento, como “Awaken
Hope” de LifeTeen o las guías litú-
rgicas de las hermanas Paulinas. El
Centro del Apostolado Católico tam-
bién ofrece recursos en español. Las
organizaciones como Catholic Relief
Services y Caritas de varios países
normalmente crean reflexiones de
Adviento que combinan la fe y
acción. También puede registrarse
para videos cortos diarios o brev-
iones interactivas (produced in inglés por Dynamic Catholic y Busted
Hal, entre otros). Mundo Catolico de
México tiene reflexiones diarias un
poco más largas durante el Advento,
disponibles en YouTube.

— Hacer una peregrinación. Vaya
to un santuario mariano local y lle-
gue que Nuestra Señora sea una com-
pañera en su viaje a Navidad, o asista
to un retiro en una parroquia cercana.

— Renunciar a las cosas. Al igual
que la Cuaresma, las prácticas peni-
tenciales de Adviento pueden permi-
tirnos crecer en nuestra fe. ¿Qué nos
impide ser la persona que Dios quiere
que seamos? Renunciemos a ciertos
 cosas para reemplazarlas con buenos
hábitos esta temporada.

— Escuchar música de Adviento.
En medio de tantas canciones de
Navidad, esto puede ser difícil, pero
FOCUS nos da una lista de canciones
(https://focusoncampus.org/content/10-
advent-songs-to-remind-you-its-not-yet-
christmas) que llenan nuestros
corazones de esperanza y alegría. El
canal de YouTube de Católicos en
Cristo también tiene cantos de
Adviento en español https://youtu.be/1RMLNCnPWto.

— Nuestra preparación y oración
también nos inspiran a enfocarnos en
los demás en lugar de en nosotros
mismos. El estar agradecido por el
desinteresado de Dios nos
recuerda:

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recuerda:

— Pray:

— Structured reflection. Choose an
Advent guide such as Mary DeTurris Pouss’
“Waiting in Joyful Hope,” LifeTeen’s
“Awaken Hope” or Laurie Medina’s
“Advent Christmas Grace.” Organizations
like CAFOD, Catholic Relief Services
and Pax Christi USA normally create Advent
reflections combining faith in action. You
also sign up for daily short videos or
interactive reflections (produced by Dynamic
Catholic and Busted Hal, among others).

— Go to confession. LifeTeen’s Laurie
Medina writes that this sacrament allows you
to make room for Jesus to truly touch you
this Christmas. “Maybe all you can offer him
is a shabby stable with a dirty floor and a
wooden trough filled with hay,” she says.

“Let’s try to reflect on the most pitiful and shameful of places
because we know he makes even the most pitiful and shameful of places
beautiful. He will take whatever you can
give him.”

— Make a pilgrimage. Go to a local
Marian shrine and have Our Lady be a com-
panion on your journey to Christmas, or
attend a retreat at a nearby parish.

— Give things up. Like Lent, Advent’s
penitential practices can allow us to grow
in our faith. What is keeping you from being
the person God wants you to be? Stop and
replace it with good habits this season.

— Listen to Advent music. Amid so
many Christmas songs, this might be hard,
but FOCUS gives you a list of tunes
(https://focusoncampus.org/content/10-
advent-songs-to-remind-you-its-not-yet-
christmas) that fill your heart with anticipa-
tion and joy.

— Give to others. Participate in parishes’
giving tree or service projects where
you can help children struggling
financially, donate groceries (anonymously)
to struggling families, assist an elderly
neighbor with shopping, gift wrap or shovel
snow.

— Go to others. Do you have a parishioner
who is far from family and needs
help making room for Jesus to truly
affect your life? Make a plan to keep in
contact with them.

— Give to others. Participate in parishes’
giving tree or service projects where
you can help children struggling
financially, donate groceries (anonymously)
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Abortion funding — cutting off the blood supply

By Father Tad Pacholczyk

Americans have long been disturbed by the fraud and waste that often surrounds the federal government's use of their tax dollars. They now have further reason to be concerned because of the way those tax dollars support the practice of abortion, even though such support, technically speaking, remains illegal.

The 1976 Hyde Amendment, a rider attached by Congress to federal spending bills each year, states that federal tax dollars can no longer be used to pay for abortions. Yet, approximately half a billion dollars of taxpayer money is received annually by Planned Parenthood, the largest provider of “pregnancy terminations” in the United States. While Planned Parenthood does not directly receive Medicaid reimbursements for the abortion procedures it performs, the inherent fungibility of funds means that any money provided to Planned Parenthood ends up supporting and indirectly financing their primary business, which is elective abortion. Taxpayer funding propels up the nation’s largest abortion chain, with more than 300,000 abortions carried out under the auspices of Planned Parenthood each year.

Many Americans object to taxpayer subsidies for this organization, seeking to avoid any cooperation or involvement in the serious evils it promotes. This is why pro-life Americans and individuals of conscience are urging that the organization be defunded, to put a stop to the domestic use of the stormy of the Hyde Amendment that happens every time Planned Parenthood takes advantage of some form of government funding.

Yet Planned Parenthood continues to expand like a cancer not only in the U.S., but also globally. As cancer tumors need oxygen for their continued growth, Planned Parenthood requires a lifeline of government aid to support its killing activities. As cancer tumors release special chemicals to make new blood vessels sprout nearby to nourish themselves, so Planned Parenthood continues to tap into a number of federal and state governmental funding sources, including Medicaid and grants from Title X of the Public Health Services Act. Eliminating this financial lifeline would significantly decrease the availability of direct abortion funding and diminish its promotion, much as using selective pharmaceuticals to shut down the growth of new blood vessels in tumors can starve them of their lifeline so they wither away.

The Alan Guttmacher Institute, which functions as a research arm of Planned Parenthood, has plainly acknowledged the importance of governmental subsidies: “Because Title X grants offer up-front funding to providers (rather than payment after-the-fact, as with Medicaid or private insurance), the program provides essential infrastructure support that allows health centers providing family planning services to keep their doors open for clients. Up-front funding helps supply a cash flow cushion for providers...”

Despite their “health care provider” veneer, Planned Parenthood is much more of a menace than a benefit to the health and well-being of Americans. The organization has faced a string of scandals ranging from the sale of baby body parts to overbilling and unsanitary clinic conditions, from cover ups of sexual abuse of minors to botched abortions, from falsified medical information to LGBT activism, to the promotion of offensive lies about non-existent facts to impressionable children. As House of Representatives member Diane Black notes, “Planned Parenthood is both the largest abortion provider in America and the largest recipient of Title X dollars. While Title X grants are intended to fund critical women’s health services for low income Americans, Planned Parenthood misuses taxpayer dollars to [subsidize] its abortion services. ... Abortion is not healthcare. It destroys one life and damages another.”

The United States needs to eliminate the financial lifeline of Planned Parenthood by defunding the organization of taxpayer dollars. Planned Parenthood supporters, however, argue that if this were to happen, low-income women would not be able to get needed healthcare. Yet, because of federally qualified health centers (community health centers) could be encouraged to take up the slack. They receive broad government funding and offer care regardless of the patient’s ability to pay, making available an even broader array of primary care services. Therefore, Planned Parenthood, so women would actually have more health care choices and options. Also, there are many more community health centers than Planned Parenthood clinics nationwide.

Jamie Hall and Roger Severino of the Heritage Foundation sum it up this way: “To ensure that taxpayers are not forced to subsidize America’s number one abortion provider, Congress should make Planned Parenthood affiliates ineligible to receive either Medicaid reimbursements or Title X grants if they continue to fund critical women’s health services to keep their doors open for clients. Taxpayer money from these programs should instead be redirected to the more than 9,000 federally qualified health center sites throughout the country that provide comprehensive primary health care for those in need without entanglement in abortion.”

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

El Adviento como invitación a practicar la hospitalidad

Por Hosffman Osipino Catholic News Service

Es interesante cómo los católicos y otros cristianos dedicamos épocas enteras del año a reflexionar sobre lo que significa “esperar.” El Adviento es una de ellas. Lo mismo es la Cuaresma, la cual estará pronto con nosotros. ¿Qué esperas este Adviento? ¿Qué planes hacer mientras esperas?

El término Adviento — “Adventus” en latín — nos recuerda que algo se acerca inminentemente. Cuando era niño, mi sentido de inminencia se reducía casi que exclusivamente al día de Navidad y a los regalos que sabía pronto recibirla. De hecho, mi atención se enfocaba más en los regalos que en cualquiera otra cosa. Más adelante aprendí, con la ayuda de una buena catequesis en mi casa y en mi parroquia, que el Adviento es mucho más que esperar regalos materiales. Tal como en el caso de las otras épocas litúrgicas del año, el centro del Adviento es Jesucristo.

Que el centro del Adviento sea Jesucristo puede sonar un tanto obvio a los católicos que están bien catequizados. Pero seamos honestos. Durante la época del Adviento, muchos católicos a nuestro alrededor parecen estar más preocupados por los regalos y las compras y las comidas especiales que en cualquier otra cosa que tenga que ver con Jesucristo. Aprendí que los cristianos vivimos en un estado permanente de espera, anhelando el regreso de Jesús el día final. Decimos constantemente, “Ven, Señor Jesús.” Durante el Adviento intensificamos esta súplica.

Debo reconocer que me tomó un buen tiempo hacer mía esta idea. Una vez lo hice, me ha llevado años desandarla y remerizarla. Mi vida y mi historia presentes son importantes. Sin embargo, la venida del Señor llevará esa vida y esa historia a su realización en Dios. Anhelo esto y lo espero con el resto de la iglesia.

¿Qué planeamos hacer mientras esperamos? Creo que las posadas, una tradición de Adviento bastante popular en los católicos hispano-latinoeuropeos y muchos católicos latinoamericanos nos da una buena idea: Practicar la hospitalidad cristiana.

La tradición se inspira en los pasajes bíblicos que describen el camino de María durante los últimos días de su embarazo y su Apósito José buscando una posada para hospedarse. Muchos lugares los rechazaron por razones distintas. Finalmente encontraron un espacio en un establo.

Las posadas con frecuencia se estructuran como una novena de Adviento. Cada día María y José, usualmente representados por niños, van a un hogar o a un grupo buscando hospedaje. Los peregrinos cantan una tonada popular. Después de ser rechazados varias veces, al final los reciben en un lugar. Entonces todos oran y celebran con un sentido profundo de fiesta.

Mira Ospino, Página 23

Advent as an invitation to practice hospitality

By Hosffman Ospino Catholic News Service

It is interesting that Catholics and other Christians dedicate entire seasons to reflect about “waiting.” Advent is one of them. So is Lent, which will soon be upon us! What are you waiting for this Advent? What to do while we wait?

The term Advent — “Adventus,” in Latin — reminds us that something is imminently coming. As a child, my sense of that imminent coming was focused on Christmas Day and the gifts that I knew I would receive. My focus, actually, was more on the gifts than on anything else.

Eventually I learned, thanks to good catechesis at home and at my parish, that Advent was much more than waiting for material gifts. As in the case of every other liturgical season, Advent is about Jesus Christ.

That Advent is about Jesus Christ may sound commonsensical to well-catechized Catholics. But let’s be honest, many Catholics out there seem more concerned during Advent about gifts and shopping and fancy meals than on anything that has to do with Jesus Christ.

I learned that Christians are permanently waiting for Jesus, longing for his return on the last day. We constantly say, “Come, Lord Jesus.” During Advent, we intensify that plea.

I must say that it took me a while to embrace the idea. Once I did, it has mesmerized me ever since. My present life and history are important. The coming of the Lord, however, will bring such life and history to fulfillment in God. I long for it. I await for it with the rest of the church.

What do we do while we wait? I think that the Advent tradition of las posadas among U.S. Hispanic and Latin American Catholics gives us a good clue: Practice Christian hospitality.

The tradition is inspired by the biblical passages describing the journey of Mary during the last days of her pregnancy, and her husband Joseph searching for an inn (posada, in Spanish) to stay. Many places rejected the couple, in various ways. Eventually they found space at a stable. Las posadas are often structured as an Adviento novena. Each day Mary and Joseph, usually children playing those roles, go to a home or to a group searching for a place to stay. The sojourners sing a popular tune. After several rejections, they are finally welcomed in one place. Then everyone prays and celebrates with a profound sense of fiesta.

See HOSPITALITY, Page 23
Catholic Voices

Path for reform goes through Rome

By Greg Erlandson

It is not often when a meeting of all U.S. Catholic bishops is described as having a "consensus of anger." But that is how one bishop described their recent fall assembly in Baltimore. Judging from comments, there was a lot to be angry about.

The-bishops were angry at their own. After all, this was to be the meeting when the bishops were going to set standards for dealing with errant peers following the latest wave of sex abuse stories — Archbishop Theodore E. McCarrick, the Pennsylvania grand jury report about alleged cover-ups and the subsequent flood of subpoenas and investigations.

They were angry at the media, which they felt were pummeling them unfairly for the sins of their predecessors, while ignoring or dismissing all the reforms that had been put in place since 2002 — the priests removed, the millions who received safe environment training, the improved seminary screening.

They were angry at factions in the Catholic Church who often seemed less concerned about the victims than about exploiting the crisis to attack bishops they didn't like, or attack Pope Francis himself.

And finally, only minutes into the fall meeting, many of them became angry at the Vatican. Cardinal Daniel N. DiNardo, president of the bishops' conference, began the meeting with the surprise announcement that the Vatican's Congregation for Bishops had asked them not to vote on key proposals: One concerned standards for the conduct of bishops. Another was for a special commission to review complaints against bishops.

The Vatican request, received only hours before the meeting started, generated widespread disappointment among many of the bishops, who had hoped that the meeting would result in concrete actions that would show they grasped the gravity of the situation and wanted to hold themselves accountable.

Although much anger in social media has been directed at the Vatican because of this decision, it was not as boneheaded a move as some suggest. The action items were drafted in a hurry, and the Vatican's defenders said the proposals had widespread implications concerning church law as it relates to bishops. While others took issue with this understanding of canon law, a number of U.S. bishops raised serious questions about the proposals in their open sessions.

For Catholic laity frustrated by yet more scandals, it is easy to lose sight of the fact that the meeting was an extraordinary outpouring of pain and remorse.

The bishops told personal stories of meeting with victims and holding listening sessions with parishioners. Many were plainly furious at what they saw as Archbishop McCarrick's betrayal of his episcopal responsibilities. Particularly eloquent were some of the younger and newer bishops, and almost all committed themselves to finding ways to hold themselves and their peers more accountable.

Bishop Christopher J. Coyne of Burlington, Vermont, outgoing chair of the bishops' communications committee, was particularly blunt. "We are just as broken as you are," he told Catholics during a Facebook Live session, "but I believe we are moving in the right direction."

In January, the bishops will go on a weeklong retreat at the request of the pope. In February, Cardinal DiNardo will join the presidents of other bishops' conferences in Rome to discuss further action. Cardinal DiNardo will take to that meeting not only the proposals the U.S. bishops have drafted and refined, but the clear sense of the bishops that more needs to be done if they are to win back the trust of their people.

Rome does indeed move slowly, but the U.S. bishops, who are clearly feeling the pressure from their people, are committed to applying pressure of their own.

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

Inspiration from the comics

By Richard Doerflinger

"America is in mourning. Deep, deep mourning for a man who inspired millions to, I don't know, watch a movie, I guess."

Thus wrote political humorist Bill Maher on the recent death of Stan Lee, beloved creator of the "Marvel Universe" featuring superheroes like the Avengers and Spider-Man. Maher said comic books are for kids, and grown-ups should move on to "big-boy books without the pictures."

This complaint is from someone who makes his fortune wisecracking on television.

Maher later added that "a culture that thinks that comic books and comic book movies are profound meditations on the human condition is a dumb (expletive) culture."

My response requires a spoiler alert, as I will comment on the latest episode of the Netflix series Daredevil, featuring one of Marvel's more complex heroes. Daredevil is the alter ego of attorney Matt Murdock, who was blinded — but had other senses greatly heightened — by a childhood accident.

He is angry over his blindness, the death of his father, his unhappy childhood in a Catholic orphanage and the urban injustices he can't fix legally. He becomes a vigilante by night, with a moral code — based in his Catholic upbringing — against deliberately taking human life.

That code is tested to its limit in season three, which begins with Daredevil damaged physically and spiritually by an explosion that has killed the woman he loved and turned him against God. How he defeats a new threat, finds loving support from friends who refuse to give up on him and recaptures his sense of his own identity and his place in the world is the rest of the story.

In the finale, having prevailed over nearly impossible odds at great cost, he ponders what his parish priest said years ago when he asked how a loving God could make him blind.

"He told me: God's plan is like a beautiful tapestry. And the tragedy of being human is that we only get to see it from the back, with all the ragged threads and the muddy colors. And we only get a hint of the true beauty that would be revealed if we could see the whole pattern on the other side — as God does." If not for his accident, he would never have become Daredevil and saved the lives he has been able to save.

"So, maybe it is all part of God's plan," he concludes. "Maybe my life has been exactly as it had to be."

Daredevil is not the only Marvel hero reflecting on the human condition.

Before he considers fighting crime as Spider-Man, Peter Parker hears from his beloved Uncle Ben that "with great power must also come great responsibility." At first he ignores that advice, leading to his uncle's death at the hands of a criminal Peter could have stopped. He remembers this whenever he is tempted to stop using his gifts to help others.

Captain America, surviving in a frozen state since World War II to be revived in the present, retains his old-fashioned sense of honor and personal moral responsibility — and the conflict between his value system and that of pragmatic technocrat Tony Stark (aka Iron Man) is key to the dramatic tension in the Avengers movies. The film Captain America: The Winter Soldier warns against placing too much power in one person or organization, or letting a utilitarian ethic drive our efforts to improve the world.

In these and other ways, comic book movies have given us some very positive messages about the human spirit. Negative messages are easier to find among politicians and the late-night comedians who comment on them.

Doerflinger worked for 36 years in the Secretariat of Pro-Life Activities of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. He writes from Washington state.
Continued from Page 11

MERETA
Holy Family Church
18370 Bledsoe Rd, Mereta, TX 79760
Dec. 24: 5:00 p.m.
Dec. 25: 10:00 a.m.

MERTZON
St. Peter Church
2633 Conover Ave, Odessa, TX 79763
Dec. 24: 9:00 a.m.
Dec. 25: 10:00 a.m.

MIDKIFF
St. Thomas Church
15100 N FM 2401, Midkiff, TX 79755
Dec. 25: 8:00 a.m.

MIDLAND
Our Lady of Guadalupe Church
1301 E Garden Ln, Midland, TX 79701
Dec. 24: 9:00 a.m.
Dec. 25: 12:00 midnight

SAN ANGELO
Holy Redeemer Church
2633 Conover Ave, Odessa, TX 79763
Dec. 24: 5:00 p.m. (English), 6:00 p.m. (Spanish), 11:00 p.m. (Bilingual)
Dec. 25: 10:00 a.m.

ODFEN
Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church
1118 Co Rd 234, Odessa, TX 79765
Dec. 25: 11:00 a.m.

ODFEN
St. Mary Church
612 E 18th St, Odessa, TX 79761
Dec. 24: 6:00 p.m. (Children’s Mass), 11:30 p.m.
Dec. 25: 10:00 a.m.

OLFEN
St. Boniface Church
1101 W Llano, Odessa, TX 79761
Dec. 24: 4:00 p.m.

OLFEN
Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church
118 S 14th St, Odessa, TX 79765
Dec. 24: 11:00 p.m. (carols at 10:30 p.m.)
Dec. 25: 11:00 a.m.

ROSENA
St. Thomas Church
110 HWY 67, Rankin, TX 79778
Dec. 25: 8:00 a.m.

ROWENA
St. Joseph Church
500 Edwards, Rowena, TX 76875
Dec. 24: 8:30 p.m.
Dec. 25: 9:30 a.m.

ST. LAWRENCE
St. Lawrence Church
20 E Beauregard Ave, San Angelo, TX 76903
Dec. 24: 5:00 p.m., 10:00 p.m.
Dec. 25: 9:00 a.m.

TOMMY
Our Lady of Guadalupe Church
511 W Alabama Ave, Sweetwater, TX 79556
Dec. 24: 5:00 p.m.
Dec. 25: 8:00 a.m.

WALL
Our Lady of Guadalupe Church
209 E Hackberry St, Sanderson, TX 79848
Dec. 24: 6:00 p.m., 11:00 p.m. (carols at 10:30 p.m.)
Dec. 25: 10:00 a.m.

WATSON
Our Lady of Guadalupe Church
2400 FM 2401, Garden City, TX 79739
Dec. 24: 9:00 a.m.
Dec. 25: 11:00 a.m.

WEATHERFORD
St. Ambrose Church
8602 Loop 570, Wall, TX 76957
Dec. 24: 6:00 p.m., 10:30 p.m.
Dec. 25: 9:00 a.m.

WINTERS
Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church
119 W College St, Winters, TX 79567
Dec. 25: 11:00 a.m.

BISHOP
Continued from Page 3

The communiqué further reported the following: “as Pope Francis has said: ‘We will follow the path of truth wherever it may lead’ (Philadelphia, 27 September 2015). Both abuse and its cover-up can no longer be tolerated and a different treatment for Bishops who have committed or covered up abuse, in fact represents a form of clericalism that is no longer acceptable. The Holy Father Pope Francis renews his pressing invitation to unite forces to fight against the grave scourge of abuse within and beyond the Church, and to prevent such crimes from being committed in the future to the harm of the most innocent and most vulnerable in society.”

We bishops left the November General Assembly convinced of the need for purification of the Church, so that we may be more faithful to our mission. There is much yet to be done, but it is clear that we are moving forward together with renewed commitment and hope.
OBISPO

Continúa de Página 3


En nuestra reunión de noviembre, escuchamos de un portavoz nacional de seminarios Católicos con respecto a sus esfuerzos para promover la castidad celibate. Junto con las diversas facultades del seminario, nosotros los obispos compartimos un fuerte deseo de proveer un ambiente de seminario saludable y una formación eficaz para un ministerio sacerdotal celibé y fiel por toda la vida.

En nuestras discusiones sobre el caso altamente perturbador del Arzobispo Theodore McCarrick, hubo un fuerte sentido de que debe ser investigado a fondo por el Vaticano. Se nos recordó que la Oficina de Prensa de la Santa Sede emitió un comunicado el 6 de octubre del 2018, declarando que el Papa Francisco ha ordenado una investigación a fondo de la cuestión de las acusaciones contra el Arzobispo McCarrick, junto con un estudio completo de toda la documentación en el Vaticano con respecto a McCarrick, con el fin de evaluar el caso objetivamente. El comunicado dijo, “el Santo Padre aceptó la renuncia del Arzobispo McCarrick del Colegio de Cardenales, prohibiéndole por orden de ejercer ministerio público, y obligándole a llevar una vida de oración y penitencia... la Santa Sede, a su momento, dará a conocer las conclusiones del caso en relación con el Arzobispo McCarrick.”

El comunicado informó, además, lo siguiente: “... como el Papa Francisco ha dicho: 'Seguiremos el camino de la verdad, dondequiera que nos pueda llevar' (Filadelfia, 27 de septiembre de 2015). Tanto el abuso y su cobertura ya no pueden ser tolerados y un tratamiento diferente para los Obispos que los han cometido o encubierto el abuso, de hecho, representa una forma de clericalismo que ya no es aceptable. El Santo Padre, el Papa Francisco, renueva su invitación urgente de unir fuerzas para luchar contra la grave plaga del abuso dentro y fuera de la Iglesia, y para evitar que vuelvan a perpetrarse crímenes como esos crímenes contra los más inocentes y vulnerables de la sociedad.”

Nosotros los obispos dejamos la Asamblea General en noviembre convencidos de la necesidad de una purificación de la Iglesia, para que podamos ser más fieles a nuestra misión. Todavía hay mucho por hacer, pero está claro que nos estamos moviendo juntos hacia adelante con un compromiso y una esperanza renovada.

Father Patrick Akpanobong looks on as Bishop Michael Sis blesses the new rectory at San Miguel Arcángel Church in Midland. The house was part of a full block of land purchased by the parish earlier this year. A “before” picture of the same staircase as it appeared at the time of purchase appeared in the February 2018 edition of the West Texas Angelus. (courtesy photo)

The students of the Angelo State University Catholic Newman Center won the university’s 2018 intramural volleyball contest and step show contest. The team of “Cathletes” are pictured here with their championship t-shirts. (courtesy photo)
some extra help? Or busy parents who need a babysitter during this busy season? Check with trusted adults about their suggestions and offer to help.

— Go from awareness to action. Find out more about issues affecting the world, such as the plight of refugees and asylum seekers, climate change's effects on people's livelihoods and issues of violence and intolerance against vulnerable communities. Donate to trusted relief organizations.

— Get involved in community service. Volunteer at a soup kitchen or nursing home. Make gift bags for the homeless (nonperishable foods or toiletries) and drop them off at a local shelter.

— Find out community needs. Check with school, parish and local nonprofits and gather friends to take action addressing these needs.

**ASSEMBLY**

**Continued from Page 14**

In his presidential address Nov. 12, Cardinal DiNardo took note of the historic nature of this year's meeting. "Whether we will be remembered as guardians of the abused or of the abuser will be determined by our action beginning this week and the months ahead," he said.

Archbishop Christophe Pierre, apostolic nuncio to the United States urged them to face the issue of clerical sexual abuse straight on, not to run from the challenges that confront them but "face them realistically and courageously."

Most of the first day of the assembly was set aside for prayer and reflection by the bishops in a makeshift chapel at the Baltimore Marriott Waterfront.

During that time, they heard from two victim-survivors what they have endured: Luis A. Torres Jr. and Teresa Pitt Green. Both painfully painted the landscape that brought the U.S. Catholic Church to the urgent need to address the sex abuse crisis.

The day ended with the celebration of Mass. In his homily, Archbishop Bernard A. Hebda of St. Paul and Minneapolis urged his brother bishops to give their all to addressing the abuse crisis and show a commitment to change what needs to be changed to put an end to any abuse.

Throughout the meeting, outside the hotel, protesters continued to gather to call for change and urge more action by the bishops to address the abuse crisis.

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**BOWMAN**

**Continued from Page 15**

included people of all races and cultures and she challenged the bishops to find ways to consult those of other cultures when making decisions. She told them they were obligated to better understand and integrate not just black Catholics, but people of all cultural backgrounds.

Catholic News Service reported that her remarks "brought tears to the eyes of many bishops and observers." She also sang to them and, at the end, had them all link hands and join her in singing "We Shall Overcome." Carl P. O'Malley, who served as bishop of the Diocese of St. Thomas in the U.S. Virgin Islands from 1985 to 1992, said Nov. 14 that Catholics in his former diocese "really revere Sister Thea and I'm really glad to see this coming to fruition."

By the mid-1990s, Catholic schools in Gary, Indiana, East St. Louis, Illinois, and Port Arthur, Texas, opened bearing Sister Bowman's name.

She also was the focus of books, including 1993's Thea Bowman: Shooting Star — Selected Writings and Speeches, 2008's This Little Light: Lessons in Life from Sister Thea Bowman, and 2010's Thea's Song: The Life of Thea Bowman.

Redemptorist Father Maurice Nutt, observing the 20th anniversary of Sister Bowman's death in 2010, said he believes the late nun is a saint. Though not officially canonized, "Sister Thea is canonized in the hearts of all who knew and loved her," he said.

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**RACISM**

**Continued from Page 15**

An amendment from Bishop Ramirez to include this language in the pastoral was accepted by the bishops' Committee on Cultural Diversity in the Church, which guided the document's preparation.

Bishop Curtis J. Guillory of Beaumont, Texas, said Nov. 13 the pastoral "gives us a wonderful opportunity to educate, to convert," adding that in hopes to avoid incidents, the document should give "consideration to our Jewish brothers and sisters." Bishop Fabre replied that while anti-Semitism is mentioned in the document, future materials will focus on anti-Semitism.

A proposed amendment to the pastoral to include the Confederate battle flag in the pastoral alongside nooses and swastikas as symbols of hatred was rejected by the committee.

"Nooses and swastikas are widely recognized signs of hatred, the committee commented, but "while for many the Confederate flag is also a sign of hatred and segregation, some still claim it as a sign of heritage."

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**DELAY**

**Continued from Page 15**

"We need to be clear where we stand and tell our people where we stand," he said.

Later in the morning session, just before the assembly adjourned for a day of prayer and penitence, Cardinal DiNardo opened his presidential address, pointing to the weakness within the church that has led to the clergy abuse crisis.

Repeatedly citing the words of St. Augustine, he said "in order that weakness might become strong, strength became weak."

He called for action to lift the entire brotherhood of bishops from a place of weakness that has allowed the clergy sex abuse crisis to exist. While there were to be no votes on specific action at the meeting, he said the deliberations the bishops would undertake would set them on the route to healing for the church and for victims of abuse.

He also held up his own weakness to victims, saying: "Where I have not been watchful or alert to your needs, wherever I have failed, I am deeply sorry."

Cardinal DiNardo urged the bishops to root themselves in the life and teaching of Jesus to lead the church and the victims of abuse to healing. He also called for the bishops to focus on the needs of victims so that "our example not lead a single person away from the Lord."

He also said that the bishops must be as accountable as anyone else in ministry in the church and that, like priests and other church workers, must adhere to the same standards of conduct identified in the "Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People."

"Whether we will be remembered as guardians of the abused or of the abuser will be determined by our action beginning this week and the months ahead. Let us draw near to Christ today sacrificing him our own ambitions and promptly submit ourselves totally to what he demands of us both in love and justice," he said.

In his seven-minute address, the cardinal said that he read that St. Augustine warned there are two extremes that pose dangers to the faithful — despair and presumption.

"We and the faithful can fall into despair believing that there is no hope for the church or (for) good change in the church. We can also believe that there are no hopes for healing from these sins," he said.

"But we must always remember that there is a thing called trusting faith and it leads us on our current journey. This trusting faith provides us roots, roots for a living memory. Our people need this living memory of hope," he said.

Presumption can lull the church into inactivity, he added, "by presuming that this will blow over, that things simply return to normal on their own. Some would say this is entirely a crisis of the past, and it is not. We must never victimize survivors over again by demanding that they heal on our timeline."

While the majority of abuse incidents occurred decades ago, the pain among victims "is daily and present," he continued and warned against leaving behind people who have been hurt by clergy.

"In justice we must search for every child of God whose innocence is lost to a horrific predator at any time decades ago or this very day," Cardinal DiNardo said.

He explained that healing can result through forgiveness, adding, "Let us not only be willing but also ready and eager to ask for forgiveness."

"Combating the evil of sexual assault in the church will require all our spiritual and physical resources," he said. "We must draw near to Christ in our sorrow, in humility and in contrition to better hear his voice and discern his will. It is only after listening that we can carry out the changes needed, the changes the people of God are rightfully demanding."

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Follow Sadowski on Twitter: @DennisSadowski

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Continúa de Página 18

**OSPINO**

Aprendemos dos cosas de las posadas durante el Adviento.

Uno, la vida es un camino largo y complejo que con frecuencia pone a las personas en situaciones difíciles. La última esperanza para ellas es muchas veces la apertura y la generosidad de otras personas que están en una mejor situación.

Dos, ser cristiano significa darles la bienvenida a otras personas con sentido de urgencia, especialmente a aquellas que están más necesitadas, tal como si estuviesemos dándole la bienvenida a una madre que está a punto de dar luz a un niño que pronto va a nacer. No podemos esperar mucho.

Si, al trazarse por la vida esperando el momento final de la historia, tenemos la responsabilidad de darnos la bienvenida unos a otros, apoyarnos unos a otros, dándoles prioridad a quienes son más vulnerables. Estas personas son el rostro de Cristo entre nosotros.

No podemos proclamar con integridad que anhelamos la venida de Jesucristo, ya sea en el ministerio de la Navidad o en el tiempo de la inmigrante, el refugiado, el pobre, el niño y el más vulnerable. El primer anhelo presupone los demás compromisos.

La apertura a darle la bienvenida a otras personas, especialmente a las más necesitadas, es un rasgo distintivo que nos define como nación.

Vivimos en circunstancias históricas que exigen tomar decisiones, la cual tiene un carácter netamente cristiano. Que el Adviento sea una oportunidad de hacer nuestra la invitación a practicar la hospitalidad.

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Hosffman Ospino es profesor de teología y educación religiosa en Boston College.

**HOSPITALITY**

Continued from Page 18

Two things we learn from las posadas during Advent.

One, life is a long and complex journey that often places people in difficult situations. Their last resource many times is the openness and generosity of others who are better off.

Two, to be Christian is to welcome others, especially those most in need, with a sense of urgency as if welcoming a mother about to give birth or a child to be born. One cannot wait long.

Yes, as we go through life waiting for history's final moment, we have a responsibility to welcome one another, to take care of each other, especially those who are most vulnerable. They are the face of Jesus Christ among us.

One cannot genuinely claim to long for Christ's coming, whether in the mystery of Christmas or on the last day, and reject his presence in the immigrant, the refugee, the poor, the child and the most vulnerable. The first presupposes the others.

Openness to embracing others, especially those most in need, is a core trait that defines us as a nation. We live in historical circumstances that demand renewing that choice; a profoundly Christian choice. May Advent be an opportunity to embrace the invitation to practice hospitality.

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Hosffman Ospino is professor of theology and religious education at Boston College.

**NEW Diocesan advisory board members named**

West Texas Angelus

SAN ANGELO — Bishop Michael Sis has announced the new list of Presbyteral Council and Priest Personnel Board members.

The Presbyteral Council, which advises the bishop on matters pertaining to the diocese, will include Father Patrick Akpanobong, Father Felix Archibong, Msgr. Robert Bush, Msgr. Larry Droll, Father Bernardito Getigan, Father Bala Anthony Govindu, Father Nilo Nalugon, Father Pat O. Akpan, Bishop Michael J. Sis, the Diocesan Chancellor Mike Wyse.

The Priest Personnel Board, which advises the bishop on clergy personnel concerns, will include Father Akpanobong, Msgr. Fred Nawarskas, Father Ryan Rojo, diocesan Vicar General Father Santiago Udayar, and diocesan Chancellor Mike Wyse.

Selection of membership in these bodies is varied, with some serving in an ex-officio capacity as determined by church law, some members appointed by the bishop, and others elected by the priests of the diocese.

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Knickersockers

Continued from Page 8

natural level, but builds upon it. In short, knowledge helps us grow in holiness.

The eternal knowledge we most need is to know the Lord our God and his will for us. This is the knowledge with which God grace Mother Mary. Even in her fear and lack of understanding, she gave her fiat, “Let it be done to me according to your word.” It was through her graced relationship with God that his Holy Spirit was able to effect the Incarnation for our salvation, as announced by the angel Gabriel. Mother Mary and St. Joseph, pray for us to seek and develop the gift of knowledge of God by submitting our will to God’s so that in and through us his kingdom will come and his will be done. Thereby, we will “grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and to the day of eternity.” Amen” (2 Pt 3:18).

What can we say about love that has not been said and written? We say we love all kinds of things — our spouse, our pet, ice cream, sunsets, a sports car, baseball, our flag. Perhaps we can actualize these loves to add enjoyment to our temporal lives, but what is the object of our need for love with which we were created? St. Augustine tells us “Thou hast made us for thyself, O Lord, and our heart is restless until it finds rest in thee” (Confessions).

We hunger and thirst for God, the living God, and a relationship with him. That is the greatest need that incorporates all needs and supercedes them. Without the dynamic of God in our lives, we cannot know his love for us or love him in return. We cannot have fullness of life and knowledge. St. John tells us, “We love [God], because he first loved us” (1 Jn 4:19), and in Ephesians we read St. Paul’s words, “walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us” (5:2).

Through Mary, Joseph, families to Him come And find in them their home Where God Himself now dwells--

Is named by Father His Emmanuel Who joins again in union heaven, earth And welcomes all to life in His Son’s birth. - - -

Father Knick Knickerbocker is a retired priest of the Diocese of San Angelo. He and his wife, Sandie, write a monthly column for the West Texas Angelus.

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The Priest Personnel Board, which advises the bishop on clergy personnel concerns, will include Father Akpanobong, Msgr. Fred Nawarskas, Father Ryan Rojo, diocesan Vicar General Father Santiago Udayar, Father Rodney White, and diocesan Chancellor Mike Wyse.

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KNICKERBOCKERS

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HOSPITALITY

Continued from Page 18

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Bishop Michael J. Sis
Publisher

Brian Bodiford
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Director of Communications
Testimonios de la celebración de Cristo Misionero en Odessa

Los Misioneros Servidores de la Palabra cada año celebran la fiesta de Cristo Misionero, cuyo evento se realiza en diversos lugares en el mundo, Africa, Europa, Asia y América. La mayor celebración se lleva a cabo en el centro Internacional de Espiritualidad Misionera (CIEM) ubicado en Cuautitlán Izcalli, México.

El pasado 10 de noviembre del presente año, dicha fiesta tuvo lugar en el oeste de Texas, en el Far West en Odessa, Texas. Donde un gran número de personas de la comunidad misionera y miembros activos de la parroquia Holy Redeemer y más feligreses de sus alrededores tuvieron cita en esta festividad donde el encuentro con cantos de animación y de meditación, acompañados de la palabra de Dios, permitió una convivencia en familia y espíritu misionero. Todo esto exhortaba a que, como Cristo Misionero, el enviado del Padre, todos llenos de regocijo estamos invitados a llevar el mensaje de salvación. La fiesta nos regaló hermosos momentos con Cristo en la Eucaristía y con la participación del coro “Cristo Vive”, “Coro el Nazareno”, grupo “Boanergues”, Jorge Morel y el padre Jhony Espadas desde Tijuana, México.

Agradecemos a Dios por este evento y a todos los que participaron, que el Señor les colme de bendiciones. Virgen del Magnificat, ruega por nosotros.

Testimonio de Marcos Luján, SP

Mis pensamientos sobre el retiro de Cristo Misionero: Adorar y alabar a nuestro Señor a través de la oración, la adoración, las escrituras (misa), el baile y el canto fue una experiencia grandiosa y edificante. Recibí el mensaje para servir a nuestro Señor, debo ser un apóstol y evangelizar a quienes me rodean. Estar lista para dar mi testimonio, si es a través de las palabras, de mi tiempo en servir o simplemente escuchar. Otros deberían poder ver al Señor que adoro, alabo y vivo en mis acciones diarias y en mis palabras que hablo. Es muy importante desarrollar mi relación con Él, hacer el tiempo para sentarme en silencio y escuchar a mi Señor. Escuchar de verdad sin distracciones de ninguna forma a mi alrededor. Para orar diariamente durante el día, para llenar mi mente con Sus palabras en las Escrituras. Cuanto más me enfoque en Él, más podré evangelizar a otros.

Testimonio de Rosa Torres

Exposition of sacred relics, Our Lady of Guadalupe Church, Midland
Nov. 19, 2018

Our Lady of Guadalupe Church in Midland was the site of an exposition of sacred relics on Nov. 19. The exposition began with a presentation by Companions of the Cross Father Carlos Martins, a Custos Reliquiarum, a title given to those specially appointed to care for relics. Over 150 relics were part of the exposition, some dating to the time of Christ — including one of the largest extant pieces of the True Cross (pictured, bottom left).

(photos by Alan Torre/APTorre Photography)