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Odessa parishioners celebrate dedication of new church
After lengthy construction, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish has new altar, seating for 1,100

By Christopher Wilcox
Director of Music and Liturgy
St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish

ODESSA — After one and a half years of worshiping in a temporary space, not even temperatures in the 20s could keep the parishioners of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton from attending the dedication of their new church and altar. On Sunday, Jan. 14, close to 1,500 filled the expanded church that now seats 1,100 to participate in the dedication that was presided over by Bishop Michael J. Sis.

During the entrance procession, Fr. Rodney White, dean of the Midland/Odessa deanery, carried in the relics of Saints Elizabeth Ann Seton, Vincent de Paul, Pius X, and Teresa of Calcutta, which were placed beneath the new altar. In his opening remarks Bishop Sis told those present that they were witnessing history, and that it’s not very often one is able to take part in the rite of dedication of a church and blessing of a new altar. He congratulated the parishioners for building a beautiful house of God.

In his homily, Bishop Sis said, “Together you’ve demonstrated generosity in your life of stewardship as a community. Through careful planning you and your predecessors have built the most architecturally harmonious parish plant in the whole diocese of San Angelo. These buildings give glory to God, and God is the source of all beauty.” The bishop explained that the buildings are important because of what takes place in them, and that the liturgy is the summit toward which all the activity of the church is directed and the font from which all the life of the church flows. He spoke of the growing parish and neighborhood and that the church expansion will allow more people to come and join us here in our faith, and in doing the most important thing we do as Catholics: the Holy Mass. He continued on saying, “As the years go by this beautiful building will be a place where for generations, thousands of souls will come to see Jesus, and to know personally of his love. That day in the Gospel passage, Jesus responded to Zacchaeeus by going to stay at his house. And today Jesus comes to stay in this house too.”

In the second reading, St. Peter talked about living stones. Bishop Sis said that all of us are living stones: “We are not dead and our church is not dead. We are alive and we celebrate life together here in his Church where we meet Jesus Christ who is the source of life.”

Bishop Sis closed his homily by asking those present what kind of stone they are going to be. A stone that is thrown and used to hurt people, a stone that is used to build walls to keep people away, or a stone that is used to build bridges. He challenged everyone to build bridges among people and bridges between people and God, saying, “I know that you are very good builders and I look forward to many years of continuing to build the Kingdom of God with you who are living stones.”

Following the Creed, the Litany of the Saints was chanted, and the bishop placed the relics of Saints Elizabeth Ann Seton, Vincent de Paul, Pius X and Teresa of Calcutta beneath the altar. The bishop then prayed the Prayer of Dedication and consecrated the new altar with Chrism. He was then joined by Father Mark Woodruff, pastor of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, in anointing the walls of the church. After the anointings a brazier was placed on the altar with twelve bricks of charcoal. The bishop then poured incense into the brazier saying, “Lord, may our prayer ascend as incense in your sight. As this building is filled with fragrance so may your Church fill the world with the fragrance of Christ.”

After the bishop incensed the altar, deacons Gary Brooks and Salvador Primera incensed the people and the walls of the church. The bishop then presented the deacons with a lighted candle saying “light of Christ, shine forth in the Church and bring all nations to the fullness of truth.” The deacons then lit the altar candles, Paschal candle and the candles in the twelve places the walls were anointed.

At the conclusion of the two and a half hour liturgy, Father Mark Woodruff thanked all those who made the expansion possible. He also thanked Monsignor Bridges, who was the founding pastor of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, and thanked him for being present. The bishop thanked both pastors for their dedication to the church and its people. St. Elizabeth has only had two pastors in its 36 years as a parish.

St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish sits in northeast Odessa and serves those living in the northeast part of town.
The Kingdom of God

By Bishop Michael Sis
Diocese of San Angelo

Jesus Christ preached about many things during his earthly ministry. Of all the things he taught, the central topic in his preaching was the Kingdom of God. In some passages it is called the “Reign of God,” the “Kingdom of Heaven,” or simply the “Kingdom.”

These are just different ways of saying the same thing.

Since the Kingdom of God is so predominant in the teaching of Jesus, we cannot really understand him unless we have some idea of what the Kingdom of God is. It is not a country. It does not issue passports. The Kingdom of God is not a typical kingdom. The clearest way to summarize the Kingdom of God is this: it is the situation where God’s will is being done. Wherever God reigns, where God calls the shots, where God rules — there is the Kingdom.

We find references to the Kingdom of God in both the Old and New Testaments. This theme is especially frequent in the synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark, and Luke), showing that God’s kingdom is the central theme of Jesus’ message. When he begins his public ministry in Mark 1:14, his very first words are these: “This is the time of fulfillment. The Kingdom of God is at hand. Repent and believe in the Gospel.” Later, Jesus created many parables as teaching devices to explain the Kingdom of God.

St. Paul also writes about the Kingdom of God in some of his letters. For example, in Romans 14:17, he offers a very helpful description: “The Kingdom of God is ... a matter of justice, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit.” This makes perfect sense when we think about the fact that when people follow the will of God, it brings about justice, peace, and joy.

Is the Kingdom of God something already present now, or is it a future reality? It is actually both. Jesus inaugurated the Kingdom in his earthly ministry, and it continues to grow, like the growth of a mustard seed. Right now, at our point in human history, we are in the phase of the gradual growth of the Kingdom of God.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church states, “the renewal of the world is irrevocably underway” (no. 670). The Kingdom of God is already present among us, but it is not yet completely fulfilled. It will be completely fulfilled at the end of history, with the Second Coming of Christ.

Is the Kingdom of God the same thing as the Church? Not exactly. The Church is at the service of the Kingdom. The Church proclaims the Kingdom and works toward its establishment. The Church encourages people to obey the will of God. And the more that happens, the more God reigns.

In our prayer life as Christians, we say the Lord’s Prayer everyday. In that prayer, we are actually praying for the coming of the Kingdom of God when we say, “Thy Kingdom come; thy will be done.”

From The Bishop’s Desk

Parishioners gather at the blessing of the candles during the Mass of the Presentation of the Lord, sometimes also known as Candlemas, Dec. 2, at Sacred Heart Cathedral in San Angelo. (photo by Rose Pezel)

The Prayer Square

Communications Prayer

Editor’s Note: This prayer was written by Pope Francis, and published on Jan. 24, 2018, on the occasion of World Day of Communications. It is based on the Prayer of St. Francis, but adapted to relate to our need for good communication today.

Lord, make us instruments of your peace. Help us to recognize the evil latent in a communication that does not build communion. Help us to remove the venom from our judgements. Help us to speak about others as our brothers and sisters.

You are faithful and trustworthy; may our words be seeds of goodness for the world; where there is shouting, let us practice listening; where there is confusion, let us inspire harmony; where there is ambiguity, may our words be seeds of goodness for the world; where there is exclusion, let us offer solidarity; where there is sensationalism, let us use sobriety; where there is superficiality, let us raise real questions; where there is prejudice, let us awaken trust; where there is hostility, let us bring respect; where there is falsehood, let us bring truth. Amen.

El Reino de Dios

Josucristo predicó acerca de muchas cosas durante su ministerio terrenal. De todas las cosas que él enseñó, el tema central de su predicación era el Reino de Dios. En algunos pasajes se le llama el “Reino de Dios,” “el Reino de los Cielos”, o simplemente el “Reino.” Estas son sólo diferentes formas de decir lo mismo.

Puesto que el Reino de Dios es tan predominante en la enseñanza de Jesús, realmente no podemos entenderlo a menos que tengamos una idea de lo que es el Reino de Dios. No es un país. No emite pasaportes. El Reino de Dios no es un reino típico. La forma más clara de resumir el Reino de Dios es la siguiente: es la situación donde se hace la voluntad de Dios. Donde Dios reina, donde Dios manda, donde Dios gobierna — allí es el Reino.


San Pablo también escribe sobre el Reino de Dios en algunas de sus cartas. Por ejemplo, en Romanos 14:17, él ofrece una descripción muy útil: “El Reino de Dios...consiste en la justicia, la paz, y la alegría en el Espíritu Santo.” Esto tiene mucho sentido cuando pensamos en el hecho de que, cuando las personas siguen la voluntad de Dios, trae la justicia, la paz y la alegría.

¿Es el Reino de Dios algo ya presente ahora, o se trata de una realidad futura? En realidad, son ambas cosas. Jesús inauguró el Reino en su ministerio terrenal, y continuó creciendo, al igual que el crecimiento de una semilla de mostaza. En este momento, en nuestro punto de la historia humana, nos encontramos en la fase del crecimiento gradual del Reino de Dios. El Catecismo de la Iglesia Católica dice, “la renovación del mundo está ya decidida de manera irrevocable” (670). El Reino de Dios ya está presente entre nosotros, pero no se ha cumplido todavía por completo. Se cumplirá en su totalidad al final de la historia, con la Segunda Venida de Cristo.

¿Es el Reino de Dios lo mismo que la Iglesia? No exactamente. La Iglesia está al servicio del Reino. La Iglesia proclama el Reino y trabaja para su crecimiento. La Iglesia anima a la gente a obedecer la voluntad de Dios. Y cuanto más pasa eso, más reina Dios.

En nuestra vida de oración como cristianos, rezamos el Padre Nuestro todos los días. En esa oración, en realidad estamos orando por la venida del Reino de Dios cuando decimos, “Venga tu Reino; hágase tu voluntad.”

Si realmente vamos a permitir que Dios sea nuestro rey, y no sólo un padre de figuras, entonces él realmente regirá sobre nosotros. Él será el rey de la totalidad de nuestras vidas. Él será nuestro rey no sólo en la luz del día, sino también en la noche. El reinará no sólo sobre nuestra vida pública, sino también en nuestra vida privada. Él será nuestro rey no sólo el
‘Be My Witness’ program attendees bond, share experiences

By Alicia and Higenio Fuentes
St. Margaret of Scotland Parish

SAN ANGELO — The “Be My Witness” program, which was begun during the 2017 Lenten season at St. Margaret of Scotland Parish in San Angelo, Texas, came to its conclusion on Dec. 18, 2017. This evangelization program, which brings the good news of Christ to all, was initially begun in March 2017 and consisted of twelve sessions: six held once a week during the 2017 Lenten period, and six sessions held to coincide with the 2017 Advent season.

The response to the initial announcement was such that the responding numbers of parishioners were divided into three groups conducted in English and one group conducted in Spanish. The numbers within each group were such that group leaders were able to interact with their group members to attain a harmony of faith sharing amongst the attendees while meeting the program’s intended purpose — following the life of Christ. In November the “Be My Witness” program resumed for the final six sessions, which brought about the completion of the program. The program was initially opened to all parishioners and even included some from St. Joseph’s and St. Mary’s in San Angelo.

Prior to the commencement of the program, five assessments focusing on certain aspects of parish life were completed by a random number of parishioners. The topics covered by the assessments included Evangelization Matters, Sunday Matters, Welcome Matters, Belonging Matters, Witness Matters and Mission Matters. These assessments disclosed how parishioners perceived services were being conducted and the way leaders, liturgical ministers and the choir aided in providing a service meeting the needs of parishioners. These assessments also helped determine what the parish could do to interact with both parishioners and outside agencies to further evangelization needs, thereby drawing more people to the life of Christ.

Prior to each nightly session, a brief fellowship period was held during which a meal was shared with everyone, with food and drinks provided by different attendees. Being able to sit down and have a brief social period aided in establishing a feeling of community among everyone.

Attendees of the “Be My Witness” program hosted by St. Margaret of Scotland Parish in San Angelo, along with Father Santiago Udayar, pastor of St. Margaret Parish (far left); and Sister Hilda Marotta, OSF (front row, third from left), and Sister Adelina Garcia, OSF (front row, far right), both of the Office of Evangelization and Catechesis. (Courtesy photo)

CALENDARS

BISHOP’S SCHEDULE

FEBRUARY

2 — SAN ANGELO, Sacred Heart Cathedral, Mass of the Presentation of the Lord at 6:00 p.m.
3 — SAN ANGELO, Holy Angels Parish Hall, Knights of Columbus Diocesan Conference Commencement Day
3 — MIDLAND, St. Ann, Mardi Gras Dinner at 6:00 p.m.
4 — MIDLAND, Our Lady of Guadalupe, Mass at 8:00 a.m.
4-6 — BILOXI, MS, Bishops’ meeting
8 — MIDLAND, St. Stephen, Project Andrew Dinner, Social at 6:00 p.m., Dinner at 6:30 p.m.
9-10 — SAN ANGELO, Diocesan Pastoral Center, Deacon Candidate interviews
11 — ABILENE, Holy Family, Adult Confirmation Mass at 3:00 p.m.
13 — SAN ANGELO, Diocesan Pastoral Center, Presbyteral Council meeting at 11:00 a.m.
14 — ODESSA, UPB Mesa Building, Ash Wednesday Mass at 12:00 noon
14 — MIDLAND, Midland College Chapel, Ash Wednesday Mass at 5:30 p.m.
16 — SAN ANGELO, Diocesan Pastoral Center, Liturgical Commission meeting at 10:00 a.m.
18 — EDEN, St. Charles, Mass at 11:00 a.m.
18 — SAN ANGELO, Sacred Heart Cathedral, Rite of Election at 3:00 p.m.
20-21 — SAN ANGELO, Christ the King Retreat Center, Priests’ Spring Conference
21 — SAN ANGELO, Diocesan Pastoral Center, Deans’ meeting at 1:00 p.m.

MARCH

1-4 — Men’s Walk to Emmaus
5 — Heart of Mercy Prayer Group
7 — Lenten Day of Reflection
9-11 — Deacon Formation
11 — Inquiry Session for the Permanent Diaconate
12 — Heart of Mercy Prayer Group
15 — Staff Mass & Lunch
18 — Confirmation Retreat
19 — Heart of Mercy Prayer Group
23-25 — Engaged Encounter
25 — Natural Family Planning
30 — CKRC Offices closed in observance of Good Friday

CHRIST THE KING RETREAT CENTER FEBRUARY

2-3 — First Central Presbyterian Women’s Conference
4 — Confirmation Retreat
5 — Heart of Mercy Prayer Group
9-11 — Deacon Formation
11 — Inquiry Session for the Permanent Diaconate
12 — Heart of Mercy Prayer Group
15 — Staff Mass & Lunch
16-18 — Engaged Encounter
18 — Natural Family Planning
19 — Heart of Mercy Prayer Group
20-21 — DOSA Spring Priests Convocation
22-25 — Men’s Small Town ACTS Retreat
25 — St. Ambrose First Holy Communion Retreat
26 — Heart of Mercy Prayer Group

MARCH

1 — Confirmation Retreat
2 — Deacon Mark Reeh (2005)
3 — Deacon Ray Smith (2014)
4 — Deacon Pedro Sanchez (2013)
5 — Deacon David King (2006)
7-8 — Men’s Walk to Emmaus
9-11 — Deacon Formation
11 — Inquiry Session for the Permanent Diaconate
12 — Heart of Mercy Prayer Group
15 — Staff Mass & Lunch
18 — Confirmation Retreat
19 — Heart of Mercy Prayer Group
23-25 — Engaged Encounter
25 — Natural Family Planning
30 — CKRC Offices closed in observance of Good Friday

NECROLOGY PRIESTS

FEBRUARY

10 — Rev. Leo E. Lavoie (1978)
12 — Rev. Leopold J. Bujinowski (1976)
14 — Rev. George Fey, CPPS (2013)
21 — Rev. Tom Kelley (2005)
22 — Rev. Francisco Lopez (2014)

MARCH

12 — Rev. Leopold J. Bujinowski (1976)
14 — Rev. George Fey, CPPS (2013)

NECROLOGY DEACONS

FEBRUARY

2 — Deacon Pedro Sanchez (2013)
5 — Deacon David King (2006)
21 — Deacon Ray Smith (2014)
20 — Deacon Mark Reeh (2005)
Diocese hosts ‘Serving Students with Special Needs’ workshop

By Sister Hilda Marotta, OSF
Director, Office of Evangelization and Catechesis
Diocese of San Angelo

SAN ANGELO — The “Serving Students with Special Needs” workshop was held Jan. 14, 2018, at the McNease Convention Center in San Angelo. This workshop, hosted by the Office of Evangelization and Catechesis, was sponsored by Loyola Press, A Jesuit Ministry. Luci Holloway, Educational Sales Consultant from Loyola Press, was the presenter for this event.

The National Directory for Catechesis states: “All persons with disabilities have the capacity to proclaim the Gospel and to be living witnesses to its truth within the community of faith and offer valuable gifts. Their involvement enriches every aspect of Church life. They are not just recipients of catechesis—they are also its agents.”

It continues, “All persons with disabilities or special needs should be welcomed in the Church. Every person, however limited, is capable of growth to holiness.”

The focus of this workshop was to learn how to begin and implement programs for students with special needs in one’s parish. It proved to be a very fruitful gathering. Holloway began the presentation with the call of the Church—all members of the Body of Christ are called to holiness. She identified various kinds of disabilities and how to recognize and address them at the parish level. Models of catechesis were addressed recognizing that there is not only one model to be used. She spoke of the importance of working with personnel from schools and community agencies that can be resources to parishes. She also spoke of the Multiple Intelligences identified by Howard Gardner and the importance of teaching to student strengths. In order to be effective in meeting the needs of the children, one needs to be aware of the many ways people learn.

She introduced the “Adaptive Program Finding God” from Loyola Press as a resource to assist with the catechesis for students with special needs.

All recognized the importance of reaching out to families of students with special needs. It is important to identify the needs of the students and meet them with special needs. Many times people are not aware of students with special needs in the parish, thus failing to respond to their needs.

Participating parishes/missions were: St. Vincent Pallotti, Abilene; Our Lady of Guadalupe, Ft. Stockton; St. Mary, Brownwood; Sacred Heart Cathedral, St. Joseph, and St. Mary, San Angelo; St. Peter, Mertzon; San Miguel Arcángel, Midland; Our Lady of San Juan, Holy Redeemer, and St. Joseph, Odessa; Holy Spirit, Sweetwater; and St. Ambrose, Wall.

We are grateful to Luci Holloway and Loyola Press for sponsoring this workshop for the Diocese of San Angelo.

If you are aware of a special need individual in your parish and need information on how to provide catechesis, please contact your parish office or the Office of Evangelization and Catechesis at evangletioncatechesis@sanangelodiocese.org or 325-651-7500.

Luci Holloway presents to workshop attendees on Jan. 14. In the foreground are some of the catechesis resources discussed at the workshop, which participants were given time to work with.

The RCIA workshop “La Jornada: Iniciación Cristiana para Adultos y la Formación de Discípulos Comprometidos” will be held in Spanish on March 10, 2018, at the McNease Convention Center from 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. The presenter for the day will be Dolores Martinez from San Antonio, TX.

This day will be an opportunity to learn more about the RCIA process. The different steps, rituals and appropriate music will be covered, along with a question and answer period. Spanish resources will be made available.

For more information, see the flyer on page 11 or contact the Office of Evangelization and Catechesis at 325-651-7500 or evangletioncatechesis@sanangelodiocese.org.

Taller de RICA programado para marzo

El taller de RICA “La Jornada: Iniciación Cristiana para Adultos y la Formación de Discípulos Comprometidos” será presentada en español el 10 de marzo de 2018 en el Centro de Convenciones McNease de las 9:30 a.m. a las 3:30 p.m. La presentadora del día será la Dra. Dolores Martinez de San Antonio, TX.

El día será una oportunidad para aprender más del proceso del RICA. Se cubrirán las etapas (pasos), ritos y música apropiada, con tiempo para preguntas para incluida en el día. Recursos en español serán disponibles.

Para más información vea el volante en la pagina 11 o contacte la Oficina de Evangelización y Catequesis 325-651-7500 o correo electrónico evangletioncatechesis@sanangelodiocese.org.

TCDS briefs

Bishop’s Ash Wednesday campus Masses in Odessa, Midland

Bishop Sis will celebrate two Masses for local university communities on two college campuses in the diocese on Ash Wednesday, Feb. 14.

The first Mass will be held at noon on the campus of The University of Texas of the Permian Basin (UTPB) in Odessa on the second floor of the Mesa Building in the MPR room.

The second campus Mass of the day will be held in the chapel at Midland College at 5:30 p.m.

Friday fish fry during Lent at St. Margaret, San Angelo

St. Margaret of Scotland Parish and St. Margaret of Scotland Parish, located at 2619 Era Ave., will be selling fried fish dinners every Friday during Lent (except Good Friday).

Dates: Feb. 14 – Mar. 23, 2018
Time: 5:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.

Cost: Adults, $10; children, $5; active duty military, $8
Includes drink and dessert
Takeout available

For more information, please call 432-638-2482 or fdhymel@suddenlink.net.

Lenten Penance Service Schedule, San Angelo Deanery

March 1 – St. Joseph, San Angelo, 7:00 p.m.
March 12 – St. Mary, Ballinger, time tbd
March 14 – Sacred Heart Cathedral, San Angelo, time tbd
March 15 – St. Charles, Eden, 6:00 p.m.
March 19 – St. Joseph, Rowena, 6:30 p.m.
March 19 – St. Mary, San Angelo, 7:30 p.m.
March 21 – Our Lady of Guadalupe, Eldorado, time tbd
March 21 – St. Patrick, Brady, time tbd
March 21 – St. Margaret, San Angelo, time tbd
March 22 – St. Ambrose, Wall, time tbd
March 26 – Newman Center, San Angelo, 7:30 p.m.

Religious Life Workshop

There will be a day of informative sessions about religious life for those who feel they may be hearing the call to be a religious sister, or for those who simply want more information on religious life, at St. Stephen Parish in Midland on Saturday, March 3, from 9:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

For more information, contact Kristie Garcia in the diocesan vocation office, kgarcia@sanangelodiocese.org, or 325-651-7500, or see the flyer on page 23.

Victims Assistance Information

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

By Dennis Sadowski
Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON — Catholic bishops are looking to “transform” Catholic schools in response to decades of declining enrollment that has forced hundreds of schools to close since 2000.

The effort, said the chairman of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops’ Committee on Catholic Education, encompasses a wide-ranging look at issues facing Catholic schools and a renewed effort to help parents better understand that the spiritual development of a child goes hand in hand with academic achievement.

“The concern of the bishops is that Catholic schools are valuable, Catholic schools transform lives,” said Bishop George V. Murry of Youngstown, Ohio. “It’s not only talking about academics. It’s not only a matter of discipline, but it’s a matter of preparing the whole person for college and for heaven.”

In an interview with Catholic News Service following a Jan. 17-18 meeting at USCCB headquarters that included 30 bishops, educators and representatives of Catholic education organizations, Bishop Murry said the goal is to ensure that Catholic schools will remain a vibrant and important part of family and church life.

Sponsored by the University of Notre Dame, the meeting was the sixth in a series since 2009 looking at the future of Catholic education.

Forming the backdrop are sobering statistics on school closings and declining enrollment.

Figures from the National Catholic Educational Association show 1,393 Catholic school closings or consolidations from 2007 to 2017 compared with 287 school openings. During the same period, enrollment declined by 19 percent to less than 1.9 million students. Enrollment peaked in 1965 at more than 5.2 million students.

The bishops and the educators focused on four trends during the meeting:

-- The changing relationship across Catholic school leadership including those between bishop and pastors, pastors and principals, and principals and teachers.

-- The evolving landscape of Catholic school governance as more advisory boards of lay leaders take shape.

-- Expanding access to Catholic schools through educational choice.

-- Charter school expansion.

Also underlying the bishops’ concerns are shifting demographics, tuition costs and changes in the practice of the faith, all of which influence whether parents decide to enroll their children in Catholic schools.

Bishop Murry said the simple message that Catholic schools transform lives must become the church’s basic refrain.

“Many parents don’t see particular value in the religious formation that occurs in a Catholic school,” Bishop Murry said. “So how can we challenge some of those ideas so people come to a better understanding of why it is important to develop the entire person?”

Pastors, he explained, are diligently working to bring parents into parish schools to see firsthand the advantages a Catholic education has in developing the “whole person.”

“Pastors with parishes with schools, pastors with parishes without schools, parish school of religion directors have been working together to say it is a genuine value for the future to train the whole person, not just the mind or the body -- the mind academically, the body in sports -- but also to develop the spiritual life,” the bishop told CNS.

“Unfortunately, we live in a very secular society. We are blessed that we’re not as secular as many of the countries in Europe. But we are a very secular society, and fewer and fewer people see the value of that spiritual development. I think that becomes the task of evangelization. Just programs to get people into church are not enough. We have to change hearts.

“It’s not simply a matter of an intellectual decision. It’s a realization that I want the very best for my son or my daughter. And part of the best is that child is eventually in heaven,” he said.

Bishop Murry, 69, speaks from experience. His parents, practicing Methodists at the time, took the unusual step of enrolling him in St. Bartholomew School in Camden, New Jersey, midway through his third-grade school year.

He recalled that he “didn’t do well in public school” and that the atmosphere at St. Bartholomew turned his life around.

He credited Sister Mary Pauline, a member of the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament, the order founded by St. Katharine Drexel of nearby

(Please see EDUCATION/23)
From the Editor

Hi! I’m ( kinda) new here: An introduction

By Brian Bodiford

Greetings, dear reader. I hope you’re enjoying this month’s Angelus. There are a lot of good things happening in our diocese, and it’s my goal to share some of it with you every month. You’ll notice that much of the content of the paper is similar to what you’re used to (if it ain’t broke, don’t fix it, right?), and that some new recurring features have begun to appear (“the Prayer Square” — you can thank Bishop Sis for the idea, and blame me for not fixing it, right?), and that some new ideas have been incorporated into the newspaper to Pete Micale, who was preceded Jimmy in editorial duties. I’m pleased to call the diocese home and fortunate enough to have been able to help out in a variety of ways around the office. In those college days, I don’t think there was ever a time that I looked the short distance from the reception desk into Pete’s office and envisioned myself in his shoes, but — 14 years and a degree in English later — I couldn’t help but apply when the position became available, and now here I am, coincidentally at the very same desk Pete used to prepare the Angelus from. I’m looking forward to the opportunity to get more involved and learn more about the people of the diocese.

But enough about me. Let’s get to the real reason this paper exists — you. At its heart, this newspaper has always been for and about you, the people of the diocese. In Jimmy’s first issue (June 2005), he asked for help from the people of the diocese: “A newspaper about people has to receive input from those same people if it has a chance to grow and flourish. So if there’s someone in your parish doing good; someone going above and beyond, not only for the Church but in his or her community, we’d like to hear about him or her.” This, more than anything else, is the legacy I’d like to see the West Texas Angelus continue to evince. This is your paper, and we’re going to need your help to keep it the best it can be. I’m eager to hear from you. Tell me what you like and what you’d like to see more of. Please drop me a line anytime at bnbodiford@sanangelodiocese.org. I look forward to your input.

Lastly, before I leave you to continue perusing the February issue, I want to extend some final thanks: to Jimmy, again, because I can’t do it enough; to Bishop Mike for entrusting me with the responsibilities of the diocesan newspaper; to my family and loved ones for putting up with me as I fretted and stressed over the new job; and to each and every person who submitted anything to this issue — photographs, stories, ideas, anything at all. It really is a community effort to get this newspaper out every month. I look forward to continuing to work with each and every one of you out there.

Music changes at the cathedral

SAN ANGELO — Over the last three months the style and presentation of music at Sacred Heart Cathedral has been undergoing a transformation. Under the stewardship of Mr. John Webber, the new Director of Cathedral Music Ministries, several new or expanded opportunities are available for the New Year. In addition, membership in the cathedral choirs will be open to parishioners from other parishes in the diocese. This is your diocesan cathedral; if you feel called, come join us and help make this vision happen.

Children’s Choir - open to children in Grades 2-8 who love to sing.

Rehearsals are Wednesday from 5:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m., and the choir will sing at the 10:00 a.m. Mass every other Sunday in the spring semester. New members are welcome. The children’s choir is affiliated with the Royal School of Church Music, and uses the “Voice for Life” curriculum. The choir rehearses in the music room.

Choral Scholarships – for talented singers from 10th grade through college. Twenty positions are available. This program is about to start — and it doesn’t involve a weekday rehearsal.

Music Reading Class – for those who would like to sing but feel they would benefit from further skills in music reading. The class meets Thursday from 5:30 p.m. to 6:15 p.m. in the music room.

For more details, or to get involved in any of these programs, contact John Webber at jwebber@sanangelodiocese.org or call the cathedral office at 325-658-6567.

Music Reading Class

This program is about to start — and it gives us much to celebrate and provides an opportunity to advocate for greater inclusion. Eighty-four percent of the students are Hispanic/Latino -- and 19 percent are non-Catholic.

We celebrate proven academic excellence in an environment where all students are challenged to excel. Catholic school students have a 99 percent on-time graduation rate. Eighty-four percent attend four-year colleges and others continue their studies at community or technical colleges. Poorer and more at-risk students show the greatest achievement gains. Latino and African-American students in Catholic schools are more likely to continue at high school and college than their peers in public schools. Students with special needs are more likely to continue at high school and college than their classmates. Catholic schools benefit most from Catholic schools.

We celebrate the contribution of Catholic schools to society. Take the cost of education. In Catholic schools, the elementary mean cost (per pupil) is $5,936 and secondary is $15,249. This is significantly below public school costs. Lastly, at the results of a Catholic school education. Research demonstrates that our graduates are more likely to vote, be more civically engaged, be more tolerant of diverse views, less likely to be incarcerated and are more committed to service as adults. Graduates also enjoy higher earning potential.

(See more in CONTRIBUTIONS/23)
Fr. Knick and Sandie Knickerbocker

Lent as the family’s spring training

By Fr. Knick and Sandie Knickerbocker

By the fortuitous design of God’s providence, February 14, Ash Wednesday, is not only the beginning of Lent but also the beginning of baseball spring training! George Weigel, the biographer of Pope St. John Paul II, in an article written in First Things (June, 2016) says that “Baseball is by far the most Catholic of the sports on which we lavish such attention and passion.” The Catholic essence of baseball can be seen as we look at ways in which spring training teaches us about the disciplines we can undertake in our Catholic families during Lent.

First, baseball has no time limit. Unlike football, basketball, and soccer there is no clock to determine the length of a game. The Season of Lent may last a certain number of days, but the discipline of Lent is preparing us for eternal life. Moreover, the Season of Lent will come around again next year, and the penitential aspect of Lent is always present, to a greater or lesser degree depending on the time of the Church Year, in the liturgy of every Mass. I remember sitting in the right field bleachers in Minute Maid Park in Houston watching the Astros play the Texas Rangers. In front of us was a youth church group of about thirty boys and girls. Some of them seemed somewhat interested in the game, while most of them were more interested in each other. In the bottom of the seventh inning, one of the girls turned around and asked, “How much longer is this game going to last?” I replied that I hoped the game would last a long time since the Astros had two men on base and nobody out. She looked very disappointed, and I did not have the heart to tell her that if the game were tied at the end of nine innings, extra innings would be played until one of the teams won. I certainly did not tell her that a perfect baseball game could last forever! As Catholics, the spring training of Lent prepares us to live forever in heaven.

Second, baseball is a team sport, with individual achievement subordinated to the good of the team. It is true that there are endless statistics kept on each player’s performance, but the excellence of the individual player must be woven into the performance of the team. No team wants to have a player who is playing primarily for himself. In baseball, the individual player learns to lose himself to find himself (See Mk 8:35 and parallels). In Catholic family life, we extol the achievements of individual members of the family, but those achievements must be subordinated to the life of the family. There is no better time of year than Lent for family members to adopt personal disciplines in coordination with the family as a whole. We can ask ourselves, “What family disciplines can we adopt during our Lenten spring training that will bring us together as a family?” For example, a family can attend Mass together, go to Confession, have a meal together every evening, pray the Rosary or some other family devotional practice daily, do volunteer work in the parish, visit family members or parishioners who are homebound or in nursing homes, and extend hospitality to people in the parish who might live alone and to the parish priest, inviting them to share a meal.

Third, in baseball a really good hitter succeeds only three out of ten times. A player whose batting average is consistently .300 is sought after by many teams. If that hitter were discouraged by making an out seven out of ten times, he would spread that discouragement among his teammates. In baseball, one must learn the virtue of perseverance in the face of failure. It is true that there are endless statistics kept on each player’s performance, but the excellence of the individual player is part of the excellence of the team. It is true that there are endless statistics kept on each player’s performance, but the excellence of the individual player must be woven into the performance of the team. No team wants to have a player who is playing primarily for himself. In baseball, the individual player learns to lose himself to find himself (See Mk 8:35 and parallels). In Catholic family life, we extol the achievements of individual members of the family, but those achievements must be subordinated to the life of the family. There is no better time of year than Lent for family members to adopt personal disciplines in coordination with the family as a whole. We can ask ourselves, “What family disciplines can we adopt during our Lenten spring training that will bring us together as a family?” For example, a family can attend Mass together, go to Confession, have a meal together every evening, pray the Rosary or some other family devotional practice daily, do volunteer work in the parish, visit family members or parishioners who are homebound or in nursing homes, and extend hospitality to people in the parish who might live alone and to the parish priest, inviting them to share a meal.

(Speaking of Saints)

Spiritual brotherhood leads 7 from Florence to found Servite order

They were a band of brothers, but not related by blood or family ties. Instead, they were drawn together out of concern about the immorality and blood feuds that characterized life in 13th century Florence. There were seven of them, ranging in age from 27-35, all from prominent Florentine families and working as cloth merchants. The eldest was Buonfiglio Monaldo who became their leader. The others were Alexis Falconieri, Benedict dell’Antella, Bartholomew Amidei, Riccovero Uguccione, Gerardino Sostegni and John Buonaguianta. They joined the Confraternity of the Blessed Virgin around 1225, and it was that spiritual bond that changed their lives. They shared a mystical experience on the Feast of the Assumption in which Mary appeared to them. Rosemary Guiley writes in The Encyclopedia of Saints that she told them to withdraw from the world and live a life of prayer and solitude as hermits. She assured them that she would always protect and assist them.

This radical life change presented its own difficulties. Editor Michael Walsh writes in Butler’s Lives of the Saints that four of the men were married and had to make provision for their families. Eventually, they all gathered at a dilapidated farmhouse, La Carmarzia, outside Florence where they intended to live in extreme mortification and penance.

In May 1234, Mary again appeared to them and directed them to Mt. Senario where they built a simple church, La Carmarzia, outside Florence where they intended to live in extreme mortification and penance. Eventually, they adopted a black habit and modeled their congregation after the rule of St. Augustine and the Dominicans. They were known as the Servants of Mary, or Servites, in 1240. They accepted others into the community and became friars, rather than monks, living in towns and not monasteries.

In 1253, the order spread throughout Italy and into other parts of Europe. Rev. Clifford Stevens writes in The One Year Book of Saints that the friars modified their strict monastic lifestyle and eventually became more like mendicant friars. They were one of five original Catholic mendicant orders. Their objectives were the sanctification of their members, preaching the Gospel, and encouraging devotion to the Mother of God.

All of the original band were ordained except Alexis Falconieri. John Delaney writes in the Dictionary of Saints that Falconieri felt he was not worthy enough and devoted himself to the necessities of the community. And it happened that he was the only one of the seven still alive when the order was approved by Pope Benedict XI in 1304.

The principal devotion fostered by the friars was that of the Seven Sorrows of the Blessed Virgin. Guiley writes that they gave the Church the Feast of the Seven Sorrows of the Blessed Virgin Mary and made the novena of the Sorrowful Mother a popular devotion.

The original band of seven was canonized as the Seven Holy Founders of the Servite Order by Pope Leo XIII in 1888. Their February 17 feast day is the date of the death of Alexis Falconieri. Today, the order includes friars (priests and brothers), contemplative nuns, active sisters and lay groups.

The Servites arrived in the United States in about 1852 when Fr. Antoninus Grudner began working among the German-speaking Catholics in New York City and then in Pennsylvania. The Basilica of Our Lady of Sorrows in Chicago is their American mother house.

Mary Lou Gibson writes about the saints for the West Texas Angelus from her home in Austin.
team couples and a priest. The experience is couple focused, and they write and share as a couple on the various topics. Many engaged couples say it is a life-changing experience.

In our faith, we understand the meaning of the phrase “a wedding is a day, a marriage is a lifetime.” Besides marriage preparation, we also need to ensure effective marriage enhancement programs are in place to serve those couples who have effectively prepared for marriage, but now need help to keep their marriages strong and spiritual. There are a couple of programs that have started in the diocese that can help fill this need for continued growth in a marriage. One of these programs is called “Faith and Nourishment for Newlyweds,” which recently started in San Angelo at Holy Angels Parish. Couples meet regularly to nourish their marriage and their faith.

The other marriage enrichment program is called “The Choice Wine.” This nine week long program is designed to take married couples and walk them through the 7 Steps to a Superabundant Marriage. The basis of it is called “Faith and Nourishment for Newlyweds” of the program’s website: “integrating the latest findings from modern science with the timeless teaching of the faith and the wisdom of the saints, The Choice Wine: 7 Steps to a Superabundant Marriage places authentic marital happiness within every couple’s reach. By opening to couples the interior life of the Holy Family at Nazareth, The Choice Wine helps couples to experience a foretaste of Paradise, in their marriage and family.”

The meetings are held in the home of the facilitating married couple for a small number of couples, or can be held in the parish hall for a larger number of couples. The program concludes with the couples renewing their sacramental vows of matrimony, along with a nice dinner afterward. The event reminds the couples of the Wedding Feast at Cana and the first miracle of Jesus. The Choice Wine program is based on this miracle, and seeks to bring benefits to participants’ marriages and family lives. It is a powerful program and the couples have attested to the ideal marriage enrichment it has provided them. See http://paradisusdei.org/the-choice-wine/ for more information.

In today’s society, our faith needs more than ever good marriage enrichment programs that will strengthen sacramental marriages. The family is the lifeblood of the parish, and the best way to ensure strong families is to ensure strong, faithful, sacramental marriages with God at the center. May God bless you and strengthen your marriage and family.

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**Bishop Emeritus Pfeifer to offer Mass for the sick in San Antonio**

By Bishop Michael Pfeifer, OMI
Diocese of San Angelo

I have been invited, as I was last year, by the Oblate priests in charge of the beautiful Our Lady of Lourdes - Tepeyac Grotto in San Antonio, to celebrate a special healing Mass for the sick and afflicted on Sunday, Feb. 11, 2018. Feb. 11 is the annual day that our recent popes, including Pope Francis, have designated as a World Day of Prayer for the Sick. In proclaiming this beautiful World Day of Prayer for the Sick, Pope Francis gave us the theme for this year’s Day from the words that the dying Jesus spoke to the apostle John: “Woman behold your Son . . . Son behold your Mother.”

As we reflect on the life and work of Christ, we see that he spent much of his time working to take care of the sick and afflicted, who suffer from many physical, psychological, emotional and spiritual afflictions. The Grotto of Our Lady of Lourdes, staffed by the Oblates of Mary Immaculate, is one of the special holy places of healing for people who suffer from many different types of illnesses, so the Grotto is an ideal place for this annual Mass of healing for the sick. Thousands of people come each week to the Grotto for the Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, celebration of Mass, to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation and for healing and other services.

The Grotto of Our Lady of Lourdes in San Antonio is named after the world-famous Grotto of Our Lady of Lourdes in France where Mary appeared to St. Bernadette in 1858. As a sign of who she was and to show her ongoing motherly loving care, Mary left a stream of healing water that has brought healing, comfort and God’s love to millions of people. The Lourdes Grotto in San Antonio, an exact replica of the Grotto in France, was dedicated on December 7, 1941 — Pearl Harbor Day. So, this holy place provides a beautiful setting for the healing Mass that I will celebrate for hundreds of people on the World Day of Prayer for the Sick on Feb. 11, 2018. During the Mass, Reconciliation will be celebrated by several priests, and several priests will assist me with the anointing of the Sick.

One of my constant ministries in the San Antonio area, as it was in the Diocese of San Angelo, is reaching out to the sick and afflicted, who suffer from many physical, psychological, emotional and spiritual afflictions. The Grotto is one of my special places of prayer for Mass and Adoration and helping with other ministries. During my years in San Angelo, I always had a healing Mass for the Sick on the World Day of Prayer for the Sick. I always encouraged on this special day for the priests of the diocese to have special healing Masses in their local parishes.

As we reflect on the life of Christ, we see that he spent much of his time healing the sick of various diseases and sickness and driving out the demonic spirits that afflicted many people, as still happens today. Caring for the sick, praying and supporting those who assist them is one of the principle ministries of the bishop, priests and deacons. And thank God, we have always had in our diocese hundreds of generous lay volunteers who assist us with this primary ministry – visiting hospitals, rest homes and the home bound, praying for the sick and serving as ministers of Communion.

As we pray for the sick on this special Day of Prayer, we remember that at one time or another we all are sick and need spiritual, sacramental and physical care. May all of our people join in prayer for the sick and afflicted on the World Day of Prayer for the Sick and may many, many more people join in reaching out to the sick and afflicted.

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**World Day of Prayer for the Sick Mass with Anointing of the Sick**

Sunday, February 11, 2018

2:00 pm Mass with Anointing of the Sick

**Celebrant:** Bishop Michael Pfeifer, OMI
Diocese of San Angelo

We invite you to our World Day of Prayer Mass with Anointing of the Sick at the Oblate Lourdes/Tepeyac Grotto in San Antonio.

Join us in asking our Blessed Mother’s intercession for the healing of our bodies and souls.

Our Lady of Lourdes Grotto Sanctuary
5700 Blanco Rd.
San Antonio, Texas 78216
(210) 477-0926
Everybody has a purpose in life, even if it sometimes feels like it’s more common to not know what that purpose is. A suggestion from another person might be what it takes to realize that purpose; sometimes it takes someone who has already answered God’s call in a particular way to see the qualities necessary in another for them to answer a similar call. This is the idea behind a Project Andrew Dinner.

The dinners, which encourage priests to invite those they feel may have the qualities to be a good priest to come and learn more about the priesthood, take their name from the disciple Andrew, who brought his brother Simon to meet Jesus.

The Diocese of San Angelo will have its first Project Andrew Dinner on Feb. 8 at St. Stephen Parish in Midland. Bishop Michael Sis will host the event, sponsored by the diocesan Office of Vocations. The evening will include dinner, presentations on the priesthood, and the opportunity for the high school- and college-aged men invited to get to know some of the priests of the diocese and learn more about the ministerial priesthood.

Bishop Sis notes that accepting an invitation to the dinner does not obligate an attendee to anything. “It is simply an opportunity to learn a little more about the priesthood and the seminary,” he says. “Even if the young man never seeks to enter the seminary, at least he has learned something about our Catholic faith.”

While this is the first Project Andrew Dinner for our diocese, the idea itself is not new. “This sort of activity has already been carried out in other dioceses for a number of years,” says the bishop, but the diocesan vocation leadership feel that now is a good time to try one here.

Bishop Sis notes that he believes “there are many young men in the Diocese of San Angelo who would make wonderful priests. They just need the opportunity to learn more about it and how to discern it well.”

If you would like more information about the seminary or are contemplating a call to the priesthood, contact Father Michael Rodriguez at 325-651-7500 or vocation@sanangelodiocese.org.
LA JORNADA: 10 DE MARZO DE 2018
Iniciación Cristiana para Adultos y la Formación de Discípulos Comprometidos
MCNEASE CONVENTION CENTER, SAN ANGELO

Vengan a conocer lo que es el Rito de Iniciación Cristiana para Adultos (RICA), y cómo se lleva a cabo este proceso en la vida de la Parroquia.

El día incluirá presentaciones sobre el proceso de RICA, música, oportunidad para preguntas y recursos sugeridos.

EL HORARIO
9:00  Hospitalidad
9:30  Oración de la Mañana (Laudes) e Introducción de la Presentadora y del día
10:00  Comenzando con el fin en mente:
¿Porque celebrar los Sacramentos del Bautismo, Confirmación y Comunión? El lenguaje y la Estructura del Rito
10:30  Primera Etapa y Primer Rito:
   el Precatecumado y el Rito de Llegar a ser Catecúmeno
11:00  Segunda Etapa:
   El Catecumenado, la catequesis y la Palabra de Dios en la vida del Catecúmeno / Celebraciones de la Palabra
12:00  Almuerzo
1:00  Segundo Rito:
   Rito Parroquial de Envió al Rito de Electión / Rito de Electión
2:00  Tercera Etapa:
   Tiempo de Purgación e Iluminación
2:30  Tercer Rito:
   Ritos de Iniciación, Bautismo, Confirmación, Eucaristía
3:00  Cuarta Etapa:
   La Mistagógica y la vida de un Discípulo Comprometido
3:30  Oración de clausura
   Salida

¿QUIEN DEBERÍA VENIR A ESTE TALLER?
Personas encargadas de la Iniciación Cristiana para Adultos; Catequistas para Adultos; Sacerdotes; Diáconos; Músicos en ministerio parroquial

Por favor envíe por correo el registro a:
OFFICE OF EVANGELIZATION & CATECHESIS | 804 FORD ST., SAN ANGELO, TX 76905 | 325-651-7500 | evangelizationcatechesis@sanangelodiocese.org

LA JORNADA:
Iniciación Cristiana para Adultos y la Formación de Discípulos Comprometidos
10 de Marzo de 2018 | McNease Convention Center, San Angelo

CUOTA: $25.00
(incluye almuerzo)
Debe: 2 de Marzo de 2018

Parroquia / Misión:

Ciudad Parroquial:

Nombre:

Dirección de envió:

Ciudad / Estado / Código Postal:

Teléfono de contacto:

Email de contacto:
A Message from Bishop Michael J. Sis

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

As your Bishop, one of my duties is to administer the material resources of the Church with responsible stewardship. This includes regularly providing an account of income and expenditures. In order to inform you of the financial condition of the Diocese of San Angelo, our practice is to print an annual summary of our diocesan financial report. In this section of the February edition of the West Texas Angelus, we present a basic summary and introductory explanation. If you would like more details, please see our audited annual financial statements at this website: www.sanangelodiocese.org/finance-office.

The sacrificial giving of our Catholics in West Texas is what sustains the ministry of our parishes and our diocese. I deeply appreciate the dedicated service of all our priests, deacons, religious, staff, and volunteers, who pour out their energies in the mission of the Church.

All of our efforts in the Church depend completely on God’s help. He has blessed us in so many ways. We seek to respond to his goodness by developing the gifts he has given us and returning them to him cheerfully with increase. I am deeply grateful for your prayers and support. May the Lord continue to bless and protect you.

In the joy of Christ’s service,
Most Rev. Michael J. Sis
Bishop of San Angelo

PARISH LIFE

85,300+ REGISTERED PARISHIONERS
45 PARISHES & 21 MISSIONS
10 MINISTRY & OUTREACH OFFICES
3 ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS
10 DIOCESAN FAMILY

Clergy & Religious in Service to the Diocese

- Diocesan Priests = 37
- Religious Brothers = 5
- Order Priests = 7
- Permanent Deacons = 69
- Extern Priests = 13
- Religious Sisters = 21
- Seminarians = 10
- Retirement Priests = 8
- Seminary Education = 2
- Military Chaplains = 2
- Retired Bishops = 1
- Diocesan Outside of Diocese = 2

NATIONAL COLLECTIONS FY 2016-17

Latin America 22,756
Central & Eastern Europe 22,756
Pastoral Solidarity in Africa 22,756
Black Indian Missions 25,820
Catholic Extension Society 25,820
Rice Bowl 26,624
Catholic Relief Services 53,712
Holy Land 36,075
Catholic Home Missions 42,291
Communication Campaign 40,933
Peter’s Pence (Holy Father) 37,521
Honduras Partnership 40,020
World Mission Sunday 44,695
Campaign for Human Dev 39,851
Archdiocese Military Service 36,758
Retirement for Religious 82,484
Basilica of National Shrine 18,640
Disasters 77,041
Subtotal 704,923

DIOCESE COLLECTIONS FY 2016-17

Catholic Schools Collection 48,543
Parishes in Areas of Need 35,764
Diocesan Priests’ Retirement 72,899
Camps Ministry 41,692
Seminary Education 45,361
Mission Co-op Program 37,843
Subtotal 272,102

Total 977,025

Revenues Year-Ended June 30, 2017

Expenses Year-Ended June 30, 2017

Combined Statement of Financial Position

Assets
Cash and cash equivalents $1,233,171
Short-term investments 15,806,914
Accounts receivable 3,065,751
Other prepaid assets 20,069
Property and equipment, net 1,693,686
Total Assets $21,910,801

Liabilities
Accounts payable $377,865
In-Parish Funds 479,561
Deposits 17,952
Parish Savings Deposits 11,806,033
Accrued pension liabilities 4,228,826
Total Liabilities 16,960,189

Net Assets
Unrestricted 2,362,216
Temporarily restricted 183,984
Permanently restricted 2,041,417
Total Net Assets 4,586,612
VATICAN CITY — People have a responsibility to check the source of what they share on social media to ensure it is not "fake news" designed to further prejudices or increase fear, Pope Francis said.

"Fake news grabs people's attention "by appealing to stereotypes and common social prejudices and exploiting instantaneous emotions like anxiety, contempt, anger and frustration," Pope Francis wrote in his message for World Communications Day 2018. The message is a reflection on the theme, "'The truth will set you free.' Fake news and journalism for peace."

"Fake news is so effective, he said, because it mimics real news but uses "news-speak" or "data" to deceive and manipulate.

The first to employ the fake-news tactic was the serpent in the Garden of Eden who convinced Eve she would not die by eating the fruit of the forbidden tree, he said. The Bible story shows that "there is no such thing as harmless disinformation; on the contrary, trusting in falsehood can have dire consequences."

Pope Francis praised educators who teach young people how to read and question the news and the information they see presented on social media. He encouraged efforts to develop regulations to counter fake news and praised tech and media companies for trying to improve ways to verify "the personal identities concealed behind millions of digital profiles."

"But, he insisted, individuals always will have the final responsibility for discerning the truth and for not spreading disinformation that is helpful to share on social media. "We need to unmask what could be called the 'snake tactics' used by those who disguise themselves in order to strike at any time and place" like the serpent in the Garden of Eden did.

The snake's power grows as people limit their sources of information to one outlet, especially if that outlet is a social media platform whose algorithms are based on providing users with more information like they have just read, the pope said.

"Disinformation thus thrives on the absence of healthy confrontation with other sources of information that could effectively challenge prejudices and generate constructive dialogue," he wrote.

People who repost or retweet such false information, the pope said, become "unwilling accomplices in the spread of biased and baseless ideas." One way to know if something should be checked and not be shared, he said, is if it "discredits others, presenting them as enemies, to the point of demonizing them and fomenting conflict."

"In the modern world, with the rapid and viral spread of news and information -- both real and fake -- lives and souls are at stake, he said, because the "father of lies" is the devil. True discernment, the pope said, means examining information and keeping what promotes communion and goodness, while rejecting whatever tends to isolate, divide, and oppose."

"We can recognize the truth of statements from their fruits: whether they provoke quarrels, foment division, encourage resignation; or, on the other hand, they promote informed and mature reflection leading to constructive dialogue and fruitful results," Pope Francis wrote.

Journalists, he said, have a special responsibility in the modern world amid the media "feeding frenzies and the mad rush for a scoop."

Pope Francis asked media professions to promote "a journalism of peace," which does not mean ignoring problems or being saccharine. It means "a journalism that is truthful and opposed to falsehoods, rhetorical slogans and sensational headlines."

A journalism of peace is at the service of all people, "especially those -- and they are the majority in our world -- who have no voice," he said. It is "a journalism committed to pointing out alternatives to the escalation of shouting matches and verbal violence."

Por Cindy Wooden
Catholic News Service

CIUDAD DEL VATICANO — La gente tiene la responsabilidad de verificar la fuente de lo que comparten en las redes sociales para asegurarse de que no se trate de "noticias falsas" diseñadas para fomentar prejuicios o aumentar el temor, dijo el papa Francisco.

Las noticias falsas captan la atención de las personas "poniendo el acento en estereotipos y prejuicios extendidos dentro de un tejido social, y se apoyan en emociones fáciles de suscitar, como el ansia, el desprecio, la rabia y la frustración", escribió el papa Francisco en su mensaje para la 52 Jornada Mundial de las Comunicaciones.

El mensaje es una reflexión sobre el tema, "La verdad os hará libres. Fake news y periodismo de paz. La Jornada Mundial de las Comunicaciones se celebrará el 13 de mayo en el Vaticano y en la mayoría de las diócesis. El mensaje del Vaticano fue lanzado el 24 de enero para la fiesta de San Francisco de Sales, patrono de los periodistas.

Noticias falsas son efectivas porque imitan noticias verdaderas pero usan "datos inexistentes o distorsionados" para engañar y manipular, dijo el papa.

La primera en emplear la táctica de las noticias falsas fue la serpiente en el Jardín del Edén que convenció a Eva de que no moriría si comía de la fruta del árbol prohibido, dijo el papa. La historia bíblica muestra que "ninguna desinformación es inocua; por el contrario, fíaarse de lo que es falso produce consecuencias nefastas. Si las noticias falsas son tan ingenuas como para ser verdaderas aparentemente leve puede tener efectos peligrosos".

El papa Francisco agradeció a maestros que les enseñan a los jóvenes cómo leer y cuestionar las noticias y la información que ven presentada en las redes sociales. Apoyó esfuerzos para desarrollar regulaciones para contrarrestar las noticias falsas y agradeció a compañías tecnológicas y de comunicaciones y sus esfuerzos para tratar de mejorar la manera de verificar "las identidades personales que se esconden detrás de millones de perfiles digitales."

"Pero, insistió, que el público siempre tendrá la responsabilidad final de discernir cuáles son noticias verdaderas y qué es útil compartir en las redes sociales."

Dijo que "se ha de desenmascarar la que se podría definir como la 'lógica de la serpiente', capaz de camuflarse en todas partes y morder."

El poder de la serpiente crece a medida que las personas limitan sus fuentes de información y solo reciben noticias de un solo lugar, y en ese lugar, donde algoritmos dan a los usuarios más información parecida, leen más información como la que acaban de leer, dijo el papa.

"El resultado de esta lógica de la desinformación es que, en lugar de utilizar una sana comparación con otras fuentes de información, lo que podría
Encuentro delegates urged to bring others to 'new encounter' with Christ

By Catholic News Service

LOS ANGELES — Los Angeles Archbishop Jose H. Gomez urged the crowd at the archdiocesan "V Encuentro" Jan. 27 to bring "the people of our times to a new encounter with Jesus Christ and the mercy and love of God."

He addressed more than 1,000 Catholic lay leaders, clergy and religious from 52 parishes in all regions of the tri-county Archdiocese of Los Angeles gathered at the Pasadena Convention Center.

Diocesan-level encuentros and regional encuentros are taking place around the country as part of a process of reflection and action leading up to the U.S. Catholic Church's Fifth National Encuentro, or "V Encuentro," to be held Sept. 20-23 in Grapevine, Texas.

(Editor's note: the diocesan encuentro for the Diocese of San Angelo took place Dec. 7, 2017, at Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish in Midland. The Region X Encuentro will be April 13-15 in San Antonio.)

"Let us walk behind Jesus and take up our cross -- following him and to bring the people of our times to a new encounter with Jesus Christ and the mercy and love of God," Archbishop Gomez told the crowd at the convention center.

"Let us reach out especially to those who are on the "peripheries" -- the homeless and the immigrant, the sick and the suffering, the child waiting to be born, the prisoner hoping for a second chance," he continued. "Let us walk together with Jesus and bring our nation and our world -- to the new encounter with Jesus Christ."

In his remarks, Archbishop Gomez also emphasized "this encuentro is not just about Latinos."

"It is about the whole church coming together -- men and women, black and white, Latinos, Africans, Asians, Europeans, the peoples of Oceania, all the beautiful diversity that makes up the family of God here in Los Angeles and throughout the United States," he said.

"We are all called to live as children of God and to proclaim Christ as missionary disciples."

He added, "The disciples at Emmaus set out at once to tell everyone of their encounter with Jesus Christ. This is our task now. This is the call of this Fifth (National) Encuentro."

Angelus News, the archdiocesan news outlet, reported that throughout 2017, the archdiocesan chapter of "V Encuentro" sponsored consultation and evangelization workshops with parish leaders throughout the Los Angeles Archdiocese. Attendees at these sessions reflected on the encuentro process and discerned ways of becoming missionary disciples to strengthen the entire Catholic Church by serving all its members, especially the underserved.

The Jan. 27 gathering offered an opportunity for archdiocesan delegates to reconvene and continue the consultation process until the April regional gathering in Visalia, California, and the "V Encuentro" in Grapevine.

"The vision of ‘V Encuentro’ is to become more aware of God’s love in our lives and to share it with others, especially those most in need," Ernesto Vega, coordinator of the archdiocesan encuentro, told Angelus News.

During the day, participants shared testimonials of healing and conversion based on opportunities they had during encuentro trainings to serve people in need.

"The ‘V Encuentro’ is a wake-up call for all Catholics, but especially our Hispanic/Latino communities to become agents of renewal for church and society," said Jesuit Father Allan Figueroa Deck, a theologian from Loyola Marymount University, who facilitated the reflection session titled "Take the Initiative."

"For 50 years, the encuentro processes have contributed a strong pastoral and social justice agenda to the church in the United States, one that resonates perfectly with Pope Francis’ call for pastoral conversion and missionary discipleship," he said.

To date, more than 3,000 participants have finished the "V Encuentro" process at 65 parishes and ministries of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles.

The training workshops have included themes such as family ministry in modern times, lifelong faith formation, accompanying the immigrant, current and emerging lay leadership formation, community outreach to the peripheries, access to education, priestly and religious vocations and young adult discernment, and models and methods of evangelization.

"In its spirituality, theological vision and commitment to engagement with others, especially those on the margins, the ‘V Encuentro’ calls the entire church to proclaim the Gospel with creativity and energy suitable for meeting the immense challenges of today’s world," said Father Figueroa Deck.

Cecilia Gonzalez-Andrieu, a Loyola Marymount University theology professor, led a reflection session on the importance of "accompaniment" in being a missionary disciple. The session was based on a skit that she prepared and that was performed by children from St. Odilia Parish to show how people can overcome their fear of sharing God’s love with others.

On Jan. 29, the U.S. Catholic Conference in Washington announced that delegate registration for the Fifth National Encuentro opens Feb. 20. In attendance will be 3,000 Hispanic/Latino ministry leaders/delegates from dioceses, ecclesial movements, schools, universities and Catholic organizations from across the country.

The delegates will represent more than 165 dioceses; they are being selected from among the nearly 250,000 people participating in the local process over the past year. Over 100 bishops are expected to lead diocesan delegations.

The national encuentro "is the summit experience" that comes at the midpoint of a four-year process, said Alejandro Aguilara-Titus, the USCCB’s national coordinator for the "V Encuentro."

"One of the most important outcomes of the (national) ‘V Encuentro’ is the discernment of priorities and recommendations that will guide Hispanic ministry in the United States for the next 10 to 15 years," he said in a statement.

Editor's Note: More details regarding the Fifth National Encuentro are available at www.ven-cuentro.org. This is an invitation-only event for diocesan delegates and other participants 18 years and older. Individuals will not be able to register separately.

Contributing to this story was the staff of Angelus News, the online news outlet of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles.
Can you lose your vocation by missing the chance?

By Fr. Ron Rolheiser

Recently I received a letter from a man who shared that he was still deeply haunted by something he’d heard in grade-school many years before. One of his religion teachers had read them a story about a priest who went to visit a childhood friend. While staying with his friend, the priest happened to notice that, while his friend was cheerful and affable enough, he seemed to be harboring some deep, residual sadness. When he asked his friend about it his friend confessed that he “had lost his salvation because he had felt a call to priesthood when he was young but had chosen instead to marry. Now, he felt, there was no existential redemption from that. He had had a vocation and lost it and, with that, also lost for good his chance at happiness. Though happily enough married, he felt that he would bear forever the stigma of having been unfaithful in not accepting his God-given vocation.

I was raised on stories like that. They were part of the Catholicism of my youth. We were taught to believe that God marked out a certain vocation for you, that is, to be a priest, a sister, a married person, or a single person in the world, and if you didn’t accept that, once you knew your calling, then you had “missed” or “lost” your vocation and the consequence would be abiding sadness and even the danger of missing heaven. Such were the vocation stories of my youth, and, truth be told, I went to the seminary to become a priest with that lingering as a shadow in my mind. But it was only a shadow. I didn’t enter religion because I felt it was the right choice. No, God made it clear, though some moral fears did play a part in it, as they should. Fear can also be a healthy thing.

But it can also be unhealthy. It’s not healthy to understand both God and your vocation in terms that can have you missing out on happiness and salvation on the basis of one singular choice made while you are still young. God doesn’t work like that.

It’s true that we are called by God to a vocation which we are meant to discern through conscience, through community, through circumstance, and through the talents that we’ve been given. For a Christian, existence does not precede essence. We’re born with a purpose, with a mission in life. There are many clear texts in scripture on this: Jesus, praying for entire nights to know His Father’s will; Peter conscripted on a rock to be led by a belt that will take him where he would rather not go; Paul being led into Damascus and instructed by an elder as to his vocation; Moses being called to do a task because he saw the suffering of the people; and all of us being challenged to use our talents or be stripped of them. We’re all called to mission and so each of us has a vocation. We’re not morally free to live our lives simply for ourselves.

But God doesn’t give us just one chance which if we miss it or turn down will leave us with no God-given new door every time we close one. God gives us 77x chances, and more after that, if needed. The question of vocation is not so much a question of guessing right (What very specifically was I predestined for?) but rather a question of giving oneself over in faith and love to the situation that we’ve chosen (or which more often than not has by circumstance chosen us). We should not live in unhealthy fear about this. God continues to love us and desire our happiness, even when we don’t always follow to where we are ideally called.

Recently I heard a homily in a church in which the priest compared God to a GPS, a Global Positioning System, that is, that computerized instrument, complete with human voice, that countless people have today in their cars and which gives them ongoing instructions on how to get to their destination. One of its features is this: No matter how many times you disregard or disobey its command, the voice never expresses impatience, yells at you, or gives up on you. It simply says “Recalculating.” Sooner or later, no matter how many times you disregard it, it gets you home.

Delightful as is that image, it’s still but a very weak analogy in terms of understanding God’s patience and forgiveness. None of us should be haunted, long-term, by sadness and fear because we feel that we’ve missed our vocation, unless we are living a selfish life. Selflessness rather than selfishness, a life in pursuit of service rather than a life in pursuit of comfort, not guessing correctly, constitutes one’s vocation. Our Christian vocation is to make what we are in fact living – married, priest, religious, single in the world – a life of selflessness and service to others. Happiness and salvation are contingent upon that, not upon guessing correctly.

The surprising message of Downsizing

By Most Reverend Robert Barron

When I saw the trailer for Alexander Payne’s new film, *Downsizing*, I thought the movie would be a light-hearted farce, a propaganda piece for left-wing causes. Here I was surprised again, for the film is a critique of that ideology.

Amounts, I will argue, to a not-so-subtle psychological exhaustion—both in the psychological exhaustion—both in the general years to discover that downsizing has become a popular trend, though the major downsizing that is currently happening in Europe than the shrinking and disappearance of original colony of the small? For the past roughly fifty years, the West in general, but Europe in particular, has experienced a population implosion, the number of births way below replacement level in England, France, Holland, and Germany. This has been prompted, of course, by a number of factors, but certainly one of them is a conviction that human beings are just bad for the planet, using up too many resources, raping the environment, etc. Wouldn’t it be best, many seem to think, if the human race just shrank down and went away? *Downsizing* gives dramatic expression to this conviction and, not so subtly, makes fun of it. I laughed out loud when, at the climactic moment of Paul’s escape, the camera pulls back and reveals the “blowing” of the door as a tiny pebble falling about two inches to the ground. Talk about going out, not with a bang, but with a whimper.

Contrasted to this despairing retreat is the vibrant compassion exemplified by Ngoc. She too sees the world as a painful place, but her resolution is not to retreat but to address the pain through love. And it cannot be accidental that the Vietnamese woman’s Christian faith is clearly emphasized, while no one on the European side exhibits the slightest interest in religion. In point of fact, it is precisely religious faith that will awaken courage and compassion, and it is precisely the lack of faith that conduces, by a short road, to spiritual and psychological exhaustion—both in the individual and in a culture.

I applaud *Downsizing* for making this contrast clear.
**Lenten listening: What do you hear?**

By Carolyn Woo
Catholic News Service

There is an ongoing debate in our home on how well my husband can hear. He doesn't always catch the conversation, and particularly so in noisy venues. Sometimes I will loudly convey a message from the bottom of the stairs to his office upstairs. (I guess that would be yelling, but it is such an unattractive image!) Almost always, David will work hard to get the message: In a crowd, he will cup one ear and lean toward the speaker; at home he will come into the room where I am; and frequently he asks for repetitions.

One day watching Dave, it hit me that Lent is a time to practice our hearing. For many of us, our spiritual listening skills are probably not much better than my husband's physical hearing. There is so much noise around us: news and messages demanding our attention, music through earbuds to facilitate our escape to some other world that we would rather be in, and background TV such an unattractive image!)

"Lent is a time to practice our hearing."

And it suddenly hit me that Lent is the time when we are, in a sense, "Louder together." We are called to refocus our attention inward toward the speaker; to listen with our hearts.

Lent invites us to do the same.

The ultimate goal of Lenten exercises is not to avoid punishment, but to end up in that kingdom in which the prodigal son made his home. Yes, Lent reminds us of our faults, but it does not end there. Such examination helps us to come to terms with what we might have missed or not acknowledged. Lent invites us to do the same.

The prodigal son found great mercy and a much better life when he returned to his father. But he had to take note, acknowledge his mistakes and reverse direction. Lent invites us to do the same.

Lent is a gift from the church for us to tune into what God is trying to tell us.

"Lent is a gift from the church for us to tune into what God is trying to tell us."

Lent is a time to practice our hearing.

Learning from my husband, perhaps the first step in listening to God is to say, "I can't hear." The second step is to assert and affirm our desire to hear, and to actively place ourselves in the presence of God.

For these 40 days of Lent, we can hang a "reserve" sign on certain moments of the day so we can listen to God through Scripture, the needs of another person and our hearts.

One of my Lenten practices is to keep a journal of my reflections from the daily readings and meditations: They seldom exceed five sentences. During the Easter triduum, I review these and somehow the act feels like a conversation.

Look, we are all a bit lost. But Jesus reassured us in John 10:27, "My sheep hear my voice; I know them, and they follow me." Lent is that time to turn our ears, minds and hearts to the shepherd's beckoning.

By Greg Erlandson
Catholic News Service

In the wake of Donald Trump's election as president, much has been made of the voters he attracted, usually identified as white, male, small town and rural, working class.

While such statistical generalizations obscure the fact that many who did not fit that stereotype also voted for him, it did attract a great deal of attention to that "other America" that resides between the crowded coastal states and media centers.

Books like *Hillbilly Elegy* by J.D. Vance became must-reads, and pundits were making postelection resolutions to get out of their media bubbles and visit that "other America" that so shocked them on Election Day.

Looking at the electoral map of red (Republican) and blue (Democrat) states, one immediately sees the huge scarlet swath that included the South, Midwest and upper Midwest -- what is often dismissively referred to as flyover country.

Those journalists wanting to see what makes this part of America tick clearly have a lot of ground to cover.

I grew up in California and now reside on the East Coast, but for many years I lived in Indiana, one of those red flyover states.

I enjoyed the riotous ethnic and racial diversity of the Washington area, and the church here reflects this diversity. My parish has a weekly Mass for Nigerian Catholics, thrashing with different rhythms, vivid colors and no concern that it all gets wrapped up in an hour.

Nearby, a parish serving a large Hispanic community is standing room only every Sunday.

"Caring for 'the other America' in the heartland"

The needs of these communities are great, and the church is keenly aware of them. It has sought to help immigrant families and to protect their rights. The bishops know personally young Dreamers brought to this country and growing up in their parishes, and they know also the church's strong biblical commitment to the poor and the stranger.

Yet I felt privileged to have experienced my Midwestern parish as well. There were high levels of engagement and stewardship, a simple, heartfelt appreciation of community, a sincerity and generosity that helped me appreciate the values and the spirit of the heartland.

Before the 2016 election, the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate, a Catholic social research organization, summarized its research about "town and country Catholics." It contrasted folks living in coastal states or major urban areas with folks in noncoastal states and rural areas.

CARA reported that Catholics living in rural and small town, noncoastal communities had higher rates of religious practice, higher rates of parish involvement, higher rates of financial support of their parish, higher rates of youth engagement as well.

"There may be fewer in the pews in rural America, but they are more connected to their faith and parish life than those anywhere else in the country," the report concluded.

The heartland is ailing, however. It is losing jobs. Its young people are migrating to larger urban areas. Many of the afflictions of the city fester also in the country.

America's small towns have been battered by the decline in families, with divorce and cohabitation increasingly common. It is beset by problems like opioid addiction. One pastor told me his church was experiencing almost a funeral a week due to drug overdoses.

Catholics have deep roots in these communities, and the church is uniquely positioned not only to serve the needs of its faithful people there but also to give voice to their suffering, as it does for the immigrant, the refugee, the city dweller.

The 2016 election may have caught political observers by surprise, but the church understands its call is to serve all the marginalized and the hurting, whatever their zip code.

Several former chairmen of St. Ann School's annual Mardi Gras Gala, which raises money for the school's endowment fund, gathered at a luncheon in their honor, Jan. 26, in Midland. The Mardi Gras Gala is celebrating its 25th anniversary. Front row, left to right: Patricia Ray, Karen Bertelson, Cindy Del Bosque and Judy Canon. Back row, left to right: Debbie Modawell, Monsignor Larry Droll, Allison Eyler, Sylvia Ochoa, Alleen Saenz, Britney Ramirez, Amanda Guebara, Melissa Lara, Bishop Michael Sis and Kari Rylander.

This year's Mardi Gras Gala was held on Feb. 3.
Making Sense of Bioethics

To be or not to be – parsing the implications of suicide

By Fr. Tad Pacholczyk

In recent years we have witnessed a growing tendency to promote suicide as a way of resolving end-stage suffering. Physician-assisted suicide is now legal in a number of states, and a number of other jurisdictions are considering laws to legalize the practice. A few years ago on Nightline, Barbara Walters interviewed an assisted suicide advocate who summed it up this way: “We’re talking about what people want. There are people who, even suffering horribly, want to live out every second of their lives, and that’s their right, of course, and they should do it. Others don’t want that. Others want out!”

Those favoring physician-assisted suicide argue that getting out of our final agony means essentially redeeming a “get out of jail free” card through committing suicide. At first glance, taking this step would indeed appear to end our troubles definitively. But what if this view of things is dead wrong, and we don’t actually end up escaping our sufferings? What if, instead, we stay put in a new situation where our trials are still present, and maybe even more intense, on account of the willful decision we made to end our own life?

I was recently reminded of this serious flaw in the “suicide solution” after watching a remarkable video adaptation of Shakespeare’s tragedy Hamlet, which Campbell Scott directing and starring in the title role. Listening once again to Hamlet’s timeless soliloquy “to be or not to be,” I was struck by how carefully Shakespeare addresses the vexing question of intense human suffering and the perennial temptation to commit suicide.

Hamlet muses about whether it is better to put up with the bad things we know about in this life than to step into the strange new land of death’s “undiscovered country,” a country about which we know very little, and from which no one returns. This leaves us, in Hamlet’s words, “puzzled” and in “dread of something after death.” He wonders aloud about the hidden purposes of suffering. He concludes by asking whether we shouldn’t rather “bear those ills we have fly to others that we know not of?”

Among those who end up committing suicide, whether physician-assisted or otherwise, many will face exterminating circumstances including severe depression or other forms of extreme mental pain. In such cases, it is clear that their moral responsibility will be greatly diminished, as fear and anguish constrict their ability to think and reason clearly. But this is not always the case, and some people, with clear mind and directed intention, do choose to end their lives, as in the case of Britney Maynard. She was the young woman in California who in the early stages of her brain cancer carefully arranged and orchestrated her own physician-assisted suicide, establishing months in advance the date and setting, who would be present in the room, what music would be playing as she did it, etc.

Such a decision is always a tragedy, and every life, even when compromised by disease or suffering, remains a great gift to be cared for. When freely chosen, suicide is a form of serious wrongdoing and is, in the words of the Catechism of the Catholic Church, “Gravely contrary to the just love of self. It likewise offends love of neighbor because it unjustly breaks the ties of solidarity with family, nation, and other human societies to which we continue to have obligations.” It leaves behind loved ones to contend with unresolved guilt, shame, and pain.

While ending our life may seem to offer an “escape valve” for the serious pressures and suffering we face, we do well to consider the real effects of this choice both in this life, and in the life to come. In the next life, a preceding act of suicide may deny us the very relief we were seeking, and, in fact, lead to heavier purification in a new situation of our own making, or, heaven forbid, lead to a fate far worse than purgatory.

Our Lord and His Church care profoundly for those who commit suicide, and even though this act clearly involves grave matter, the Catechism reminds us that, “We should not despair of the eternal salvation of persons who have taken their own lives. By ways known to him alone, God can provide the opportunity for salutary repentance. The Church prays for those who have taken their own lives.”

Suicide affects us not only in the here and now, but has significant, even eternal, implications for the journey to that “undiscovered country” that awaits us.

The ecclesial imperative of educating Hispanic children in Catholic schools

By Hosffman Ospino

Catholic News Service

Millions of Catholics in the United States were educated in Catholic schools during the past two centuries. It is no secret that such education has yielded amazing fruits for this particular faith, community and for the larger society.

One could highlight the impact of Catholic education in “worldly” measures such as exposure to a holistic curriculum, preparedness to attend and complete higher education, and even social mobility.

According to the National Catholic Educational Association, 99 percent of students from Catholic high schools graduate and 85 percent of graduates go to a four-year college. That is an impressive record.

The list of well-known social, political, economic, intellectual and artistic leaders who attended Catholic schools is long.

By the middle of the 20th century, more than half of Catholic children, mostly Euro-American, attended Catholic schools. Today, Euro-American adult Catholics constitute one of the most educated bodies in our society.

Simply connect the dots.

Yet, the “worldly” measures tell only one side of the story. Perhaps the most important measures when highlighting the value and impact of Catholic schools are “ecclesial.” In other words, Catholic schools exist to be at the service of the church’s evangelizing mission.

Catholic schools are spaces where faith and life engage in dialogue in explicit ways. The spiritual dimension is the axis upon which the life of these institutions revolves. In Catholic schools, religion matters.

The vast majority of Euro-American Catholic priests, women religious and Catholic school teachers and administrators attended Catholic schools. So did most of the U.S. Catholic theologians and pastoral leaders I have met throughout my life.

When I meet Catholic women and men with awe-inspiring life commitments, clearly living the Gospel values at the service of God and others, I often ask them whether they ever attended a Catholic school. The answer most of the time is yes.

Just as these institutions have served well many generations of U.S. Catholics, with remarkable effects upon church and society, they also need to serve well the next generation of Catholics in our country.

There are about 14.6 million school-age Catholic children in the U.S. Of these, 8 mil

La educación de los niños hispanos en las escuelas católicas es una responsabilidad eclesial

By Hosffman Ospino

Catholic News Service

Millones de católicos estadounidenses fueron educados en escuelas católicas durante los últimos dos siglos. No es un secreto el que dicha educación se refleja en frutos abundantes que han beneficiado a esta comunidad de fe al igual que al resto de la sociedad.

Pudieramos resaltar el impacto de la educación católica en términos “seculares”. Por ejemplo, estas instituciones ofrecen a los estudiantes un currículo integral, les preparan con éxito para ir a la universidad e incluso facilitan la movilidad social.

Según la Asociación Nacional de Educación Católica, el 99 por ciento de los estudiantes en las escuelas secundarias católicas se gradúan y el 85 por ciento de los graduados se matriculan en instituciones públicas.

La lista de líderes en el campo social, político, financiero, intelectual y artístico que estudiaron en escuelas católicas es larga. A mediados del siglo 20, más de la mitad de los niños católicos estadounidenses, en su gran mayoría europeos, estudiaban en escuelas católicas. Hoy en día, los adultos católicos europeos constituyen uno de los grupos más educados en nuestra sociedad.

La conexión es clara.

“La conexión es clara. Seguro que los niños esta
den en escuelas católicas son personas que han
tenido una experiencia en estas instituciones
eclesiásticas, que han sido formadas por la
cultura católica y han sido educados con valores
católicos. Es importante que estas escuelas
católicas continúen siendo un punto de
cohesión para los niños hispanos en la sociedad
de hoy.”

(Mira OSPINO/22)
Catholic Voices

How can the church support people during the 'defining decade'?

By Jonathan Lewis
Catholic News Service

Meg Jay, author of The Defining Decade, claims that "our 20s are the defining decade of adulthood. Eighty percent of life's most defining moments take place by about age 35... Personality can change more during our 20s than at any other decade in life. ... When it comes to marriage, 30 is not the new 20."

Pope Francis has called a synod on "Young people, faith and vocational discernment" to discuss how the church can help young people live their faith "through a series of choices that find expression in the states of life." In short, the synod wants to help young people live out their vocation to holiness as lifelong Catholic by learning how to discern God's will in daily life.

In the U.S., it is taking young people longer to get to that "adult" stage of life. Growing up with "helicopter parents," the 2008 financial crisis and skyrocketing college debt means that for many young people, delaying adulthood is less a choice and more the hand they were dealt.

This requires a new pastoral approach to support this population.

The Catholic Church in the U.S. has been slow to respond to the reality of emerging adulthood. The last parish touch point for most Catholics is confirmation around age 13, and for a small percentage, youth ministry programs through age 18. The next sacramental touch point is marriage, with little to no pastoral outreach for the defining decade in between.

Young adults in this crucial period of life are searching for belonging, identity and mission. Without mentors to teach them or a peer community to belong to, young adults often view the church as irrelevant and look outside of it for meaning.

In the U.S., it is taking young people longer to get to that "adult" stage of life. Growing up with "helicopter parents," the 2008 financial crisis and skyrocketing college debt means that for many young people, delaying adulthood is less a choice and more the hand they were dealt.

This requires a new pastoral approach to support this population.

Where gladness and hunger meet

By Effie Caldarola
Catholic News Service

You may have heard this before: "The place to which God calls you is the place where your deep gladness and the world's deep hunger meet."

That line is from Frederick Buechner, an ordained Presbyterian minister, theologian and author.

Most of us, within the context of our busy lives, want to serve God, whether it's pursuing a whole new career or just finding a volunteer role. But sometimes we get bogged down in "what is God calling me to?" and we stand still.

"Maybe Buechner's quote is a good one to pray with during the new year."

Discovering the world's "deep hunger" isn't a challenge. Every day, the news bombards us with the cry of the poor in this weary world. We can all name organizations in our town that need help, and we all know our parish has hosts of ministries needing assistance.

We know where the hunger is. It's that "deep gladness" part that requires some prayer.

Years ago, when I was first married, I volunteered at a center that offered help to women caught in unexpected, and sometimes unwanted, pregnancies. I have always felt that as Christians, our response to women experiencing this situation should be bountiful and full of compassion, and that every woman should be treated with respect.

This was in the days before pregnancy tests were available at every drug store or supermarket, so we provided free pregnancy testing. Just as with home tests today, these required a urine sample. Sometimes women would produce one in our office, or sometimes they would come in with jam jars full of urine whose contents had splashed through and permeated the soggy paper bag they offered us.

Taking the specimen, we would run the test as we talked with the women about their fears and hopes. Surprisingly, it was only with the advent of HIV in the 1980s that the organization had belatedly begun using latex gloves.

Sharing the result, either positive or negative, was a grace-filled moment of intimacy with another woman. Reactions to either result might be happiness, fear, joy, relief and copious tears. We needed to be fully present to a woman at this moment.

The problem: I wasn't. Oh, I felt the intense emotion and reacted with compassion. But I'm really squeamish. Inevitably, I had a hard time handling someone else's urine. I could never be a medical professional -- I'm darn close to being a germaphobe.

I tried to subsume my interior repugnance in my sense of the sacredness of the moment, but finally I realized this wasn't working for me. Worse, I wasn't at my best for those whom I hoped to serve.

Deep gladness was missing. So I shifted my commitment and became the author of the organization's monthly newsletter, something I enjoyed and for which I had a wee bit of talent. I also produced handwritten thank-you notes for every single donation we received.

I loved this commitment. It was, as the old saying goes, right up my alley.

Often, we see a need, as when the bulletin screams, "The faith formation program needs 20 more teachers!" and we have a sense of "have to." Sometimes taking on a "have to" project works out. But sometimes, an interior battle rages and gladness is missing.

Questions to ponder in the new year: What kind of service would bring me fulfillment and gladness? What do I do well? When am I sharing at my best? What gets me excited to serve? Where will I be wholly present to another?

Answer those, and then run, do not walk, to make this commitment.

The reality of delayed adulthood requires that parishes realign priorities to invest in a lifelong ministry bridge from high school and college across the defining decade of young adulthood. It is no longer sufficient to walk young people to the threshold of adult faith, but to accompany them through it.

Young adults today are navigating a defining decade of life with great hopes, big questions and constant transitions.

What can parishes do?
First, listen to the needs and interests of young adults through one-on-one conversations or listening sessions.
Second, invite young adults to represent key leadership areas of parish life.
Third, build friendship into all touch points of parish life that continue beyond the celebration of the sacrament.
Fourth, mentor a young person or young couple. Everyone, no matter their age, can reach out and invest in mentoring someone else.

Last, offer small groups as young adult or intergenerational formation.

The Church has some of its own defining decades ahead of it. We would do well to turn our attention to young adults in their own defining moments.

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KNICKERBOCKERS

(From 8)

ace in the face of these odds. In Lent, family members can encourage one another in the ups and downs of life, to remain committed and to not give in to the flooding of negative thoughts that can wash away the truth. Each family must know what every other family can change from one pitch to the next. These coaches and the manager do not themselves play on the field. But in a family, there are no coaches or manager that are not playing the game. We are all in this together. However, any baseball team will have older, veteran players who have a responsibility to teach the younger players both by precept and example. Parents and older brothers and sisters have a responsibility to the younger members of the family to teach them the life lessons that form their character as Catholic Christians.

Sixth, in baseball we see the harmonious wedding of structure and freedom. The field itself teaches us that. The "diamond" is the same size in every ballpark. The bases are uniformly spaced. There are ninety feet between bases, and it is sixty six feet inches from the pitching rubber to home plate. However, there is no set size for the outfield or for foul territory. This combination of structure and freedom helps determine how the game is played in each particular ballpark. Likewise, in every Catholic family there is structure and freedom. Every family has virtues that are all required to learn to practice and habituate. These include the cardinal virtues of prudence, temperance, justice, and courage, as well as the theological virtues of faith, hope, and love. Above all, each family member must learn the virtue of humility. Humility allows us to accept God's forgiveness of ourselves and to extend that forgiveness to other family members. The way we live these virtues varies in each family depending upon its unique circumstances. In other words, virtue must be incarnated in the life of each particular family in that harmonious wedding of structure and freedom.

Seventh, if we follow baseball spring training, we become reacquainted with the unique language of baseball. Once again we hear the terms pop fly, foul ball, single, double, triple, home run, sacrifice bunt, steal, slide, change up, slider, curve, seam, cutter, and, or course, balls and strikes. We hear terms like dugout, bullpen, warm up, on deck, and in the hole. Like baseball, the Christian faith has terms that are unique and with which we can become reacquainted in Lent. We can learn again in a more profound way what is meant by Incarnation, Atonement, Resurrection, Ascension, High Priesthood, Parousia, Holy Trinity, Holy Spirit, Son of God, Word of God, Eucharist, Reconciliation, and so on. We also learn at a more profound level how God in His mercy personalizes these terms in our individual lives and in the life of our family. We learn in particular ways what St. Paul means when he says, "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me; and the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me" (Gal 2:20, RSVCE).

Finally, I remember my Dad teaching me how to hit a baseball. He taught me that there are many variations in the way the bat is held, in the position of the feet, and in the place to stand in the batter's box. However, there is one thing that is a constant: the batter must always "keep his eye on the ball." Just so, in our Lenten discipline as Catholics, we must always keep our eye on Jesus Christ. Lent is that spring training time in our Church year when we, once again, renew our commitment to keep our eye on Jesus Christ and to see everything else through Him, who is the Way, the Truth, and The Life (Jn 14:6).

PAPA

(Para 14)

poner en discusión positivamente los prejuicios y abrir un diálogo constructivo, se corre el riesgo de convertirse en actores involuntarios de la difusión de opiniones sectarias e infundadas", dijo el papa.

Personas que publican o retuitean información falsa, dijo el papa, se convierten en "actores involuntarios de la difusión de opiniones sectarias e infundadas".

Una forma de saber si algo se debe verificar y no compartir, dijo, es ver si presenta a otra persona "como enemigo, hasta llegar a la demonización que favorece los conflictos"

Con la difusión rápida de noticias e información, real y falsa, las vidas y las almas están en juego, dijo, porque el "padre de las mentiras" es el demonio.

El discernimiento verdadero, dijo el papa, significa examinar la información y ver lo que promueve la comunidad y la bondad, al tiempo que rechaza lo que "tiende a aislar, dividir y contraponer".

"Por sus frutos podemos distinguir la verdad de los enunciados: si suscitan polémica, fomentan divisiones, infunden resignación; o si, por el contrario, llevan a la reflexión consciente y madura, al diálogo constructivo, a una laboriosidad provechosa", dijo el papa.

El periodista, dijo, tiene una responsabilidad especial en el mundo moderno de los medios y "tiene la tarea, en el fresnecí de las noticias y en el borbollín de las primicias, de recordar que en el centro de la noticia no está la velocidad en darla y el impacto sobre las cifras de audiencia, sino las personas".

El papa Francisco pidió a profesionales que trabajan en los medios de comunicación que promuevan "un periodismo de paz", que no significa ignorar los problemas ni pintar condiciones mejor de los que están, pero significa periodismo "sin fingimientos, hostil a las falsedades, a eslóganes efectistas".

Un periodismo de paz sirve a todas las personas, "especialmente a aquellos -- y son la mayoría en el mundo -- que no tienen voz; un periodismo que no queme las noticias, sino que se esfuerce en buscar las causas reales de los conflictos, para favorecer la comprensión de sus raíces y su superación a través de la puesta en marcha de procesos virtuosos; un periodismo empeñado en indicar soluciones alternativas a la escalada del clamar y de la violencia verbal".

EDICTAL SUMMONS

January 31, 2018

CASE: JARAMILLO -- LUJAN (MENDEZ)

NO.: SO/18/06

The Tribunal Office of the Catholic Diocese of San Angelo is seeking the appearance of Ana Lujan (Mendez).

You are hereby summoned to appear before the Tribunal of the Catholic Diocese of San Angelo, at 804 Ford Street, San Angelo, Texas 76905, on or before the 28th day of February, 2018, to answer to the Petition of Jose Carlos Jaramillo, now introduced before the Diocesan Tribunal in an action styled, "Jose Jaramillo and Maria Lujan (Mendez), Petition for Declaration of Invalidity of Marriage."

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

Given at the Tribunal of the Diocese of San Angelo on this 31st day of January 2018.

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

EDICTAL SUMMONS

January 31, 2018

CASE: GAUNA -- FLORES (GONZALES)

NO.: SO/18/07

The Tribunal Office of the Catholic Diocese of San Angelo is seeking the appearance of Manuel Gauna (Gonzales).

You are hereby summoned to appear before the Tribunal of the Catholic Diocese of San Angelo, at 804 Ford Street, San Angelo, Texas 76905, on or before the 28th day of February, 2018, to answer to the Petition of Manuel Gauna, Jr., now introduced before the Diocesan Tribunal in an action styled, "Manuel Gauna and Isabel Gonzales, Petition for Declaration of Invalidity of Marriage."

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

Given at the Tribunal of the Diocese of San Angelo on this 31st day of January 2018.

Reverend Tom Barley, MSW, MBA, M. Div., JCL
Judicial Vicar
The Knights of Columbus Council #3071 held their annual Clergy Appreciation Dinner on Jan. 25 at St. Stephen Parish in Midland. Top: Grand Knights Austin Good (Council #12657) and Cory Rylander (Council #3017) pose with Father Timothy Hayter (center).

Left: Father Fernando Bonilla and Bishop Sis stand behind Sister Tita Iglesias, OND (seated at left), Sister Rosalia Sabud, OND, Sister Debbie Mumaw, OSF, Sister Rita Campos, OSF, and Sister Alicia Realino, OND.

Bottom: 4th Degree Knights Matt Babb, Rick Wiederstein, Kenny Kraweitz, and Jerry Hertel.

(photos by Kari Rylander)
**WITNESS**

(From 4)

**CHILDREN**

(From 18)

lising a rapport with everyone and making everyone feel welcome prior to the commencement of the nightly session.

Each nightly session was opened with a prayer followed by a hymn. What followed was the viewing of a short video in which people described their spiritual experiences influenced by their family members, friends and the environment they found themselves in. Some had even left the Church but eventually returned, and they described the circumstances leading to the resumption of their faith. This was followed by a period of reflection where group members were invited to share their feelings on what they had just seen. This faith sharing was followed by a scripture reading and another period of reflection. The night’s session was concluded with a closing prayer.

During the fellowship period before the start of the final session, Father Santiago Udayar, pastor of St. Margaret of Scotland Parish, addressed the attendees and stated how well the program had been conducted and received by all. Also in attendance were Sr. Hilda Marotta, OSF, and Sr. Adelina Garcia, OSF, whose ongoing support along with the diocesan Office of Evangelization and Catechesis proved to be invaluable for the “Be My Witness” Program.

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Ospino is professor of theology and religious education at Boston College. He is a member of the leadership team for the Fifth National Encuentro of Hispanic/Latino Ministry.

**BISHOP**

(From 3)

If we will truly allow God to be our king, and not just a figurehead, then he will really rule over us. He will be king over the entirety of our lives. He will be our king not only in daylight, but also at night. He will reign not only over our public lives, but also in our private lives. He will be our king not only on Sunday, but also when we go out on Friday or Saturday night.

We will obey his will not only in the public sphere, but also in our private sphere, in how we treat our spouse or children, but also in the way we carry out our work.

In the Lord’s Prayer, we pray “Thy will be done,” not “My will be done.” The prayer implies that we are submitting our will to the will of God. When God’s Kingdom comes, God’s will is done. We allow God to reign in our life. This means living a life of active obedience to God’s will. In Matthew 7:21, Jesus captures the connection between the Kingdom and following God’s will when he says, “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the Kingdom of Heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father in Heaven.”

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Ospino es profesor de teología y educación religiosa en la Universidad de Boston. Es miembro del equipo de liderazgo del Quinto Encuentro Nacional de Pastoral Hispana/Latina.

**OBISPO**

(Pará 3)

domingo, sino también cuando salimos el viernes o el sábado por la noche. Vamos a obedecer su voluntad no sólo en la forma en que tratamos a nuestro cónyuge o hijos, sino también en cómo llevamos a cabo nuestro trabajo.

En la oración del Padre Nuestro, rezamos “Hágase tu voluntad,” no “Hágase mi voluntad.” La oración implica que estamos sometiendo nuestra voluntad a voluntad de Dios. Cuando el Reino de Dios veine, se hace la voluntad de Dios. Permitimos que Dios reine en nuestra vida. Esto significa vivir una vida de obediencia activa a la voluntad de Dios. En Mateo 7:21, Jesús establece la conexión entre el Reino y seguir la voluntad de Dios cuando dice: “No todos los que dicen: ‘Señor, Señor,’ entrarán en el Reino de los Cielos, sino el que hace la voluntad de mi Padre en los Cielos.”

¿Es el Reino de Dios algo que hacemos nosotros, o más bien es algo que Dios hace por sí mismo? En el fondo, el Reino es la creación de Dios, pero nuestras acciones contribuyen a construir el Reino de Dios. En nuestras humildes acciones, tenemos el privilegio de ser colaboradores de Dios. Nuestro trabajo es el de ayudar a expandir el Reino de Dios. Todos debemos esforzarnos por lograr la situación en la que se hace la voluntad de Dios, tanto en nuestra vida personal como en la sociedad. Luego, al final de la historia cuando Cristo vuelva de nuevo, el Reino de Dios será completamente cumplido. Será un banquete eterno de alegría completa donde Dios destruirá la muerte y la injusticia para siempre. El limpiará las lágrimas de todos los ojos.

Por supuesto, no estamos allí todavía. No obstante, esperamos en ese futuro, y estamos sostenidos por esa esperanza. Por ahora, continuamos nuestro camino en este mundo imperfecto, haciendo lo que podemos para ser instrumentos del Reino de Dios.
We celebrate the centrality of faith in our Catholic schools. Catholicism gives shape to the climate and culture present within the walls of our schools. We teach faith. We model faith. We foster faith. Many parents want their children to be in a school environment that forms values and fosters ethical living. They should have that choice.

As we celebrate this week, we also raise the need for expanded state and federal support to ensure parents' right to choose the best school for their child. Much progress has been made across the country at the state level. At the federal level, there is now a new option provided by the 2017 Tax Cut and Jobs Act that offers parents the opportunity to save for their child's education. The popular 529 Savings Accounts, which more than 13 million families use to save for higher education, may now be used for tuition expenses in grades K-12. While this provision is a significant step, more needs to be done.

To ensure access to school choice for all children, particularly those of low and modest incomes, and in keeping with President Donald Trump's campaign promise, Congress should write a national education tax credit plan to create scholarship granting entities -- SGOS -- in every state. These organizations would raise funds from private donors and businesses using the benefit of a federal tax credit without taking any money out of the federal or state education budgets. The funding source would be a new stream of private money, stimulated by the federal tax break. Parental choice is just an idea if there is not funding to enact real change in the lives of students.

Especially this week: Celebrate, get involved and advocate on behalf of Catholic schools that matter and make such a difference in our society.

Editor's Note: More details on the research, statistics and church documents referenced in this guest commentary can be found at visit www.usccb.org and ncea.org.

CONTRIBUTIONS

(From 7)

Philadelphia, for her patience and caring attitude throughout third and fourth grade. “It was Catholic school that helped me to settle down and to focus,” Bishop Murry said.

As for rising tuition, Bishop Murry suggested two approaches. The first involves helping parents realize that 27 states and the District of Columbia have legislation providing financial assistance to parents who choose private or faith-based schools.

The second requires school leaders and clergy “to be courageous and undaunted in going to donors, people whose lives have been positively affected by Catholic schools and have been blessed with economic security ... and ask them to give back to Catholic schools,” he said.

“(We have) to get them involved, to not be afraid to talk to them and say we need your help in maintaining these schools,” Bishop Murry added.

The work ahead is expected to take time to unfold. Bishop Murry said. He hopes that regional or statewide gatherings of bishops will undertake the question of transforming Catholic schools. He also said another national gathering to discuss progress would be beneficial.

“It was an excellent meeting,” he said of two-day gathering. “The conversation was very, very good, very frank, and, I think, very helpful in terms of mapping out a plan to go forward into the future in revitalizing our schools.”

Follow Sadowski on Twitter: @DennisSadowski.

EDUCATION

(From 6)

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“(We have) to get them involved, to not be afraid to talk to them and say we need your help in maintaining these schools,” Bishop Murry added.

The church also is contending with the growth of charter schools. While publicly funded, charters schools are privately run. They offer parents an alternative to traditional public education.

However, oversight of charter schools is spotty and at time lax. Numerous charter schools nationwide have been found to be in disrepair, offer inadequate instructional resources or a narrow curriculum, and lack transparency and public accountability. And at some schools, student performance has been lower than at public schools in the same community.

Bishop Murry said that even the most successful charter schools are not a substitute for Catholic schools, “where the whole atmosphere is an atmosphere of living faith.”

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Religious Life

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~Mother Theresa~

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4. What Sisters do - Ministry

For more information please contact Kristie in the Vocations Office at 325-651-7500
Email – kgarela@sanangelodiocese.org
The Dedication of
St. Elizabeth Ann Seton
Odessa, TX
January 14, 2018

The view from the new choir loft as Dr. Dan Keast conducts. (photo by Alan Torre / APTorre Photography)

Above: an aerial photo of the new church building. Note the seam in the roof marking the size of the pre-existing building.

Left: Father Mark Woodruff and Monsignor James Bridges process in flanked by members of the Knights of Columbus. Woodruff and Bridges are the only two pastors who have served St. Elizabeth Ann Seton in its 36-year history. (photo by Alan Torre)

Below: the musicians and choir of St. Elizabeth. (photo by Christopher Wilcox)