Inside this issue:

- Bishop Sis: Confession is ‘precious gift’ (Page 3)
- The Advent tradition of Simbang Gabi (Page 5)
- Ram Awakening college retreat (Page 7)
- Updates from the USCCB General Assembly (Page 11)

Bishop Michael Sis blessed the new pews at St. Ann Church in Sonora on Nov. 16, 2019. The new pews were recently installed after a year of repairs and renovations required due to a devastating flood that hit the city of Sonora in September 2018. See story, Page 2.
By Becca Nelson Sankey

After the flood on Sept. 21, 2018, that wreaked havoc on the close-knit town of Sonora and its only Catholic parish, St. Ann, lifelong parishioner Lizzie Chavez Taylor stepped inside the church to assess the damage. What she saw brought her to tears: the floor was steeped in water, and the pews — the backs of which bore the names of her family members who had donated them — were destroyed. “It was really hard,” she said. “All my sacraments were received here. It hurt to come in and see the aftermath.”

Just over a year later, on Saturday, Nov. 16, Chavez again became emotional at the sight of her church — only this time, she said with a tremulous smile, she was crying happy tears. After a difficult year of literally picking up the pieces wrought by a storm that damaged or destroyed more than 200 Sonora homes, St. Ann’s members had much to celebrate: God’s goodness, their strong faith and perseverance, and recent renovations to their parish.

“Our faith is so beautiful, and this is another sign of what God’s doing through all of us,” Taylor said just before the start of a special Mass officiated by Bishop Michael Sis and a blessing of the parish’s renovations. “His promises are true: he will never leave us or abandon us.”

Parish member Brenda Mungia also recalled the heartbreak of seeing her church, of which she’s been a member for 35 years, in such a state of disrepair. “I was married here, my boys were baptized here,” she said. “It was devastating, especially when they had to rip out all the carpet and the pews were all gone.”

As they prepared for the evening’s Mass and blessing, Sis and parish priest Felix Archibong also discussed the damage. “It looked like a lake all around these buildings,” Sis said, adding that the water “came into the church and parish hall. It ruined the pews and the floor coverings. It got the walls wet in the parish hall so they had to cut out the sheetrock for the first couple of feet.”

But the Catholic Diocese of San Angelo and its numerous parishes sprung into action, taking up a collection in October 2018 that helped with church renovations and also aided Sonora families who had lost their homes. Insurance money also helped cover the cost of the church’s repairs, Sis said.

“It’s still ongoing, just little things,” Archibong said of repairs, “but the major ones have been completed.”

Three-hundred forty-five families are members of the parish, Archibong said, the buildings of which include a parish hall built in 2008 or ‘09, and religious education and church buildings built in the 1920s and 1969, respectively.

Blessing the new work to the church “is an act of thanks to God for getting us through hard times,” Sis said. “It’s a way of asking God to use these things to foster the faith life of the people here. We’re dedicating them to God’s service.”

Sis marveled at St. Ann’s strength in the wake of devastation. “Even though this imperfect world brought tragic destruction, they didn’t lose their faith in God. They relied on God to give them strength to pick up the pieces and continue to persevere.”

It was a sentiment he repeated during his homily, when he urged those seated on the brand-new pews to face life’s difficulties — no matter how unexpected or disheartening — in an exemplary manner.

“Many of you made special donations to support the renovations, and many of you put in personal labor,” he said. “Everybody pitching in and putting in resources to make it happen … (proves) that you’ve accepted these tasks in an exemplary way.”

As the parish faced these tough times, they were brought a new priest, Father Felix, who came from St. Joseph in San Angelo. “The Lord sent you a pastor whose name is Felix. The name Felix means happy, and I think that’s a pretty good name for Father Felix Archibong,” Sis said as the congregation broke into applause. “I’m so grateful to God he’s here with you starting the next phase in the life of your parish.”

Taylor had echoed Sis’ sentiment prior to the Mass’ start. “God is good, and God has blessed our parish with Father Felix Archibong. And Bishop Sis is so amazing. It’s exciting, and today is a wonderful day. (It’s a) new beginning here at St. Ann’s.”

Bishop Michael Sis leads Mass in the newly renovated church of St. Ann in Sonora on Nov. 16, 2019. The church required extensive renovations and repairs after a September 2018 flood.

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**Report Emotional Abuse**

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

From the Bishop’s Desk

One of the most precious gifts that Jesus Christ gave the human race is the Sacrament of Penance. We also call it the Sacrament of Reconciliation or Confession. It provides the opportunity for a personal encounter with the infinite mercy of God, who grants us pardon and peace. In this sacrament we receive the grace of Jesus Christ. The regular use of the Sacrament of Penance helps us to grow gradually in holiness. It provides ongoing development and training of the conscience, helping it to become more sensitive and mature.

Christian Posture Toward Sin

Although Baptism brings the forgiveness of sins and the gift of new life, people still succumb to sin after being baptized. Knowing well our spiritual frailties, Jesus gave us the Sacrament of Penance for the forgiveness of sins committed after Baptism. Confession helps us to be honest with ourselves. It fosters accountability and personal responsibility. It helps us to purify our motives and to leave behind selfish patterns.

In a healthy spiritual life, we need to seek a balance between two extremes. On the one hand, we should not be overly lax, denying our own sins and ignoring God’s law. On the other hand, we should not be overly scrupulous, seeing everything we do as a sin or seeing ourselves as unworthy of forgiveness.

This traditional Act of Contrition is one option available to a penitent during the sacrament of reconciliation.

The precious don de la Confesión

Uno de los más preciosos dones que Jesucristo dio a la raza humana es el Sacramento de la Penitencia. También lo llamamos el Sacramento de la Reconciliación o la Confesión. Nos ofrece la oportunidad de un encuentro personal con la infinita misericordia de Dios, quien nos concede el perdón y la paz. En este sacrament recibimos la gracia de Jesucristo. El uso regular del Sacramento de la Penitencia nos ayuda a crecer gradualmente en la santidad. Proporciona la formación y desarrollo continuo de la conciencia, ayudándola a ser más sensible y madura.

La posición cristiana hacia el pecado

Aunque el Bautismo trae el perdón de los pecados y el don de la vida nueva, aún sucumbimos al pecado después de ser bautizados. Conociendo bien nuestras fragilidades espirituales, Jesús nos dio el Sacramento de la Penitencia para el perdón de los pecados cometidos después del Bautismo. La Confesión nos ayuda a ser honestos con nosotros mismos. Se fomenta la rendición de cuentas a uno mismo y a Dios. Esto nos ayuda a purificar nuestros motivos y dejar atrás los comportamientos egoístas.

Un estilo espiritual saludable, tenemos que buscar un equilibrio entre dos extremos. Por un lado, no hemos de ser demasiados relajados, negando a nuestros propios pecados e ignorando la ley de Dios. Por otro lado, no hay que ser demasiado escrupulosos, viendo todo lo que hagamos como un pecado o vemos a nosotros mismos como indignos del perdón.

La posición cristiana hacia el pecado

Algunas personas miran el pecado de una manera muy individualista, como si el pecado fuera algo “sola-mente entre Jesús y yo”, diciendo “Voy a confesar mis pecados por mí mismo.” Sin embargo, nuestro pecado también afecta a la comunidad. La Iglesia es el Cuerpo de Cristo. El pecado de cada uno de nosotros hiere el Cuerpo de Cristo, la Iglesia. El Sacramento de la Penitencia trae alivio a la herida, trayendo reconciliación con Dios y con la Iglesia. El sacerdote habla por la Iglesia, representa a la comunidad, y declara que somos perdónados.

Cómo ir a la Confesión

El Sacramento de la Penitencia se puede celebrar en una de dos formas – o bien privadamente, en una parroquia de la diócesis. O bien de manera pública, en unos actos especiales como la Pascua de Pascua o la Nochebuena de Navidad.

The precious gift of Confession

Bishop Michael J. Sis
Diocese of San Angelo

The precious don de la Confesión

Obispo Michael J. Sis
Diócesis de San Ángelo

The Prayer Square

Act of Contrition

O my God, I am heartily sorry for having offended Thee, and I detest all my sins because of thy just punishments, but most of all because they offend Thee, my God, who art all-good and deserving of all my love. I firmly resolve, with the help of Thy grace, to sin no more and to avoid the near occasion of sin. Amen.

This traditional Act of Contrition is one option available to a penitent during the sacrament of reconciliation.

However, our sin also affects the community. The Church is the Body of Christ. The sin of each of us wounds the Body of Christ, the Church. The Sacrament of Penance brings healing to that wound, bringing reconciliation with God and with the Church. The priest speaks for the Church, represents the community, and declares that we are forgiven.

How to go to confession

The Sacrament of Penance can be celebrated in either of two forms – either privately or communally. Many of our parishes offer communal Penance Services during the Lenten season.
### Advent Penance Services

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>December 2019</th>
<th>January 2020</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAN ANGELO, St. Joseph Church, 7:00 p.m.</td>
<td>SAN ANGELO, Sacred Heart Cathedral, Holy Day Mass at 10:00 a.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>SONORA, St. Ann Church, 6:00 p.m.</td>
<td>MIDLAND, Holy Cross Catholic High School basketball games</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>OZONA, Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church, 6:30 p.m.</td>
<td>SAN ANGELO, Diocesan Pastoral Center, Diocesan Liturgical Commission meeting at 11:00 a.m.</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>ABILENE, Holy Family Church, 7:00 p.m.</td>
<td>SAN ANGELO, Diocesan Pastoral Center, Priest Personnel Board meeting at 11:00 a.m.</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>5–10</td>
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<tr>
<td>STANTON, St. Joseph Church, 6:00 p.m.</td>
<td>ROME, Ad Limina Pilgrimage for Bishops of Region X</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>11</td>
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<tr>
<td>WALL, St. Ambrose Church, 7:00 p.m.</td>
<td>SAN ANGELO, Christ the King Retreat Center, TCCB-EC diocesan directors, Mass at 5:00 p.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STANTON, St. Joseph Church, 8:00 p.m.</td>
<td>SAN ANGELO, St. Margaret, Anniversary of Eucharistic Adoration Chapel, Mass at 6:00 p.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>13</td>
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<tr>
<td>SAN ANGELO, St. Mary Church, 7:00 p.m.</td>
<td>Deacon Nestor Perez (1993)</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>14</td>
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<tr>
<td>ROWENA, St. Joseph Church, 6:30 p.m.</td>
<td>Deacon Horacio Yanez (2015)</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>15</td>
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<tr>
<td>ABILENE, St. Francis of Assisi Church, 7:00 p.m.</td>
<td>Deacon Jose Esparza (2011)</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>16</td>
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<tr>
<td>ODessa, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, Holy Cross Catholic High School Board Meeting at 6:30 p.m.</td>
<td>Deacon Francis Beazley, OMI (1992)</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>17–27</td>
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<tr>
<td>SAN ANGELO, Pastoral Center, joint meeting of the Presbyteral and Finance Council at 11:00 a.m.; Presbyteral Council meeting at 2:00 p.m.</td>
<td>ROMAN, Ad Limina Pilgrimage for Bishops of Region X</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>28</td>
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<tr>
<td>STANTON, St. Joseph Church, 6:00 p.m.</td>
<td>SAN ANGELO, Christ the King Retreat Center, Diocesan Religious; Social at 5:00 p.m., Dinner at 6:00 p.m.</td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>29</td>
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<tr>
<td>SAN ANGELO, Sacred Heart Cathedral, 6:00 p.m.</td>
<td>San Angelo, Cathedral of the Sacred Heart, Mass at 12:10 p.m.</td>
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<td>16</td>
<td>30</td>
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<tr>
<td>MIDLAND, The Way Retreat Center, Hermannamion meeting at 2:30 p.m.</td>
<td>November 2019</td>
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<td>17</td>
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<tr>
<td>MIDLAND, The Way Retreat Center, Vocation Team meeting at 1:30 p.m.</td>
<td>December 2019</td>
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<td>18</td>
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<tr>
<td>SAN ANGELO, Holy Angels, RCIA presentation at 6:30 p.m.</td>
<td>January 2020</td>
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<td>19</td>
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<tr>
<td>MIDLAND, Sacred Heart Church, Christmas Mass at 12:00 noon in Spanish</td>
<td>January 2020</td>
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<tr>
<td>SAN ANGELO, Sacred Heart Cathedral, Immaculate Conception Mass at 12:10 p.m.</td>
<td>January 2020</td>
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<td>21</td>
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<tr>
<td>ABILENE, Six Brothers Brewery, Theology on Tap at 7:00 p.m.</td>
<td>January 2020</td>
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<td>22</td>
<td>6–10</td>
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<tr>
<td>SAN ANGELO, Christ the King Retreat Center, Annual Advent Dinner for Priests, Deacons, Wives, and Religious; Social at 5:00 p.m., Dinner at 6:00 p.m.</td>
<td>January 2020</td>
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<td>23</td>
<td>11</td>
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<tr>
<td>MIDLAND, St. Ann, 60th Anniversary Masses: English at 10:45 a.m.; Spanish at 1:00 p.m.</td>
<td>January 2020</td>
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<td>24</td>
<td>12</td>
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<tr>
<td>SAN ANGELO, Sacred Heart Cathedral, Mass at 6:00 p.m. followed by dedication of statue and memorial garden</td>
<td>January 2020</td>
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<td>25</td>
<td>13</td>
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<tr>
<td>SAN ANGELO, Cathedral, Christmas Mass at 12:00 noon</td>
<td>January 2020</td>
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<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>14</td>
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<tr>
<td>SAN ANGELO, Sacred Heart Cathedral, Christmas Mass at 12:00 noon in Spanish</td>
<td>January 2020</td>
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<td>27</td>
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<tr>
<td>SAN ANGELO, Sacred Heart Cathedral, Mass at 12:10 p.m.</td>
<td>January 2020</td>
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<td>28</td>
<td>16</td>
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<tr>
<td>SAN ANGELO, Sacred Heart Cathedral, Christmas Mass at 6:00 p.m. in English</td>
<td>January 2020</td>
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<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>17–18</td>
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<tr>
<td>San Antonio, Cathedral of the Sacred Heart, Christmas Eve Mass at 6:00 p.m.</td>
<td>January 2020</td>
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<td>19</td>
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<tr>
<td>MIDLAND, San Miguel Arcángel Church, 7:00 p.m.</td>
<td>January 2020</td>
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<tr>
<td>SAN ANGELO, Sacred Heart Cathedral, Mass at 5:00 p.m.</td>
<td>January 2020</td>
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</tbody>
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### Bishop’s Calendar

#### December 2019

1. BRONTE, St. James, Mass at 8:00 a.m.
2. SAN ANGELO, Diocesan Pastoral Center, Vocation Team meeting at 1:30 p.m.
3. SAN ANGELO, Holy Angels, RCIA presentation at 6:30 p.m.
4. MIDLAND, The Way Retreat Center, Hermannamion meeting at 2:30 p.m.
5. ODessa, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, Holy Cross Catholic High School Board Meeting at 6:30 p.m.
6. SAN ANGELO, Pastoral Center, joint meeting of the Presbyteral and Finance Council at 11:00 a.m.; Presbyteral Council meeting at 2:00 p.m.
7. SAN ANGELO, Christ the King Retreat Center, Annual Advent Dinner for Priests, Deacons, Wives, and Religious; Social at 5:00 p.m., Dinner at 6:00 p.m.
8. MIDLAND, St. Ann, 60th Anniversary Masses: English at 10:45 a.m.; Spanish at 1:00 p.m.
9. SAN ANGELO, Sacred Heart Cathedral, Immaculate Conception Mass at 12:10 p.m.
10. ABILENE, Six Brothers Brewery, Theology on Tap at 7:00 p.m.
11. SAN ANGELO, Diocesan Pastoral Center, Priestly Life and Formation Committee meeting at 1:00 p.m.
12. SAN ANGELO, Christ the King Retreat Center, Annual Advent Staff Dinner; Social at 6:30 p.m.; Dinner at 7:00 p.m.
13. SAN ANGELO, Sacred Heart Cathedral, Our Lady of Guadalupe Mass at 12:10 p.m.
14. MIDLAND, Our Lady of Guadalupe, Mass at 12:10 p.m.
15. SAN ANGELO, Cathedral of the Sacred Heart, Mass at 6:00 p.m. followed by dedication of statue and memorial garden
16. SAN ANGELO, Sacred Heart Cathedral, Christmas Mass at 12:00 noon in Spanish
17. MIDLAND, Our Lady of Guadalupe, Procession at 5:30 p.m., followed by Mass at the Shrine
18. SAN ANGELO, Theology on Tap at 7:00 p.m.
19. SAN ANGELO, Angelico Catholic School, Diocesan Catholic Schools Commission meeting at 9:00 a.m.
20. SAN ANGELO, Christ the King Retreat Center, Staff Advent Day of Prayer at 9:00 a.m.
21. ODESSA, Holy Redeemer, Mass at 6:00 p.m. followed by Posadas
22. SAN ANGELO, Mass at County Jail at 9:00 a.m., followed by visit to Juvenile Detention Center
23. SAN ANGELO, Sacred Heart Cathedral, Christmas Eve Mass at 6:00 p.m. in English
24. SAN ANGELO, Sacred Heart Cathedral, Christmas Mass at 12:00 noon in Spanish
25. SAN ANGELO, Sacred Heart Cathedral, Mass at 12:10 p.m.
26. SAN ANGELO, Sacred Heart Cathedral, Mass at 12:10 p.m.
27. SAN ANGELO, Sacred Heart Cathedral, Mass at 12:10 p.m.
28. SAN ANGELO, Sacred Heart Cathedral, Christmas Mass at 12:00 noon in Spanish
29. SAN ANGELO, Sacred Heart Cathedral, Christmas Mass at 12:00 noon in Spanish
30. SAN ANGELO, Sacred Heart Cathedral, Mass at 12:10 p.m.
31. JANUARY 2020

### Christ the King Retreat Center

#### December 2019

1. Heart of Mercy Prayer Group
2. Bishop’s Annual Advent Party for Clergy
3. Heart of Mercy Prayer Group
4. Bishop’s Annual Advent Party for Staff
5–10. Deacon Formation
10–12. Deacon Formation
13. Heart of Mercy Prayer Group
14. DOSSA Staff Mass & Lunch
15. Confirmation Retreat
16. Heart of Mercy Prayer Group
17. Engaged Encounter & Natural Family Planning
18. TLC-EC Directors Meeting
22–29. Men’s Small Town ACTS Retreat
30–Feb 2. Men’s Small Town ACTS Retreat

#### January 2020

1. CKRC Offices closed for New Year’s Day
5–10. Holy Trinity Seminarians’ Silent Retreat
10–12. Deacon Formation
13. Heart of Mercy Prayer Group
15. DOSSA Staff Mass & Lunch
19. Confirmation Retreat
20. Heart of Mercy Prayer Group
27–29. TLC-EC Directors Meeting
30–Feb 2. Men’s Small Town ACTS Retreat

### Necrology of Priests and Deacons

#### December 2019

- Rev. John A. Pierce (1979)
- Rev. Larry Cyr, CPPS (2017)
- Rev. James Aaron (1999)
- Deacon Nestor Perez (1993)

#### January 2020

- Rev. Francis Beazley, OMI (1992)
- Deacon Paul Klein (2015)
- Rev. Patrick Ryan, OMI (1975)
- Deacon Jose Espera (2011)
- Bishop Thomas Tschoepe (2009)
- Deacon D.J. Goetz (2003)
- Deacon Jack Peterson (1987)
- Deacon Horacio Yanez (2015)
New Presbyteral Council members, officers selected

West Texas Angelus

SAN ANGELO — The Presbyteral Council of the Diocese of San Angelo has four new members. The council is made up of members that are selected through either appointment by the bishop or election to the council by a vote of their fellow priests, as well as ex officio members who are on the board due to their positions in diocesan leadership.

The Presbyteral Council serves in an advisory capacity to support the local bishop in the governance of the diocese. The existence of the council is prescribed in the Code of Canon Law.

Newly elected members of the Presbyteral Council are Abilene Deanery representative Father Albert Ezehanya, at-large member Father Anthony Franco, and Midland-Odessa Deanery representative Father Reggie Odima. Also new to the council by the appointment of Bishop Michael Sis is Father Ryan Rojo.

Elections and appointments occurred in October. Three of the new members are beginning 3-year terms which will expire in October 2022. Father Ezehanya’s term will be shorter, as he was elected to serve the final year of a post vacated by the retirement of Msgr. Robert Bush.

The Presbyteral Council also includes ex officio members Vicar General Father Santiago Udayar and Chancellor Mike Wyse; elected members Father Patrick Akpanobong (at-large), Father Bala Anthony Govindu (San Angelo Deanery representative), and Msgr. Fred Nawarskas (at-large); and appointed members Father Felix Archibong and Father Emilio Sosa.

The membership of the council also voted for new officers, Father Bala Anthony Govindu will serve as the new Chairman of the Presbyteral Council. Father Anthony Franco was elected vice-chairman and Father Ryan Rojo was elected as secretary.

Filipino Pre-Christmas tradition, Simbang Gabi, celebrated in San Angelo

The Filipino-American Catholics of San Angelo are celebrating Simbang Gabi this year for the sixth time since 2013. Celebrating the Simbang Gabi at St. Mary’s Catholic Church in San Angelo was the idea of Rev. Fr. Joey Faylona, pastor of the parish. Because of the growing number of Filipino-American families moving to San Angelo recently, the attendance and the festivities have also increased a lot since then.

Simbang Gabi, (meaning “Night Mass”) is a nine-day series of Masses, or a novena. At St. Mary’s the celebration begins on Dec. 15 and ends on Dec. 23. Before the Mass that starts at 7:00 p.m., the celebrants sing Christmas songs in Tagalog, the Philippines’ national language. After Mass they gather at the church’s social hall for a buffet dinner and entertainment. Groups are assigned to donate and the social hall, to cater the dinner, and provide the music and entertainment—which includes children’s participation. This is the style of the Simbang Gabi celebration in San Angelo, which is not only following a Filipino religious tradition but also a means for the Filipino-American community to celebrate the advent of Christ’s birth with their social gathering.

The origin of the Simbang Gabi in the Philippines can be traced back to the early days of the Spanish colonization of the country in the 17th century. At that time the novena was held in the evening, hence Simbang Gabi (Night Mass), which is common in the Hispanic world. However, it was difficult and inconvenient for many, especially those in rural areas — mostly field workers and shopkeepers — who were tired after working the whole day and had to walk long distances to go to church. In 1669 a decree by Pope Sixtus V allowed the Masses before dawn as a compromise. Since then Simbang Gabi in the Philippines starts at pre-dawn hours, usually at 4 a.m. That is why sometimes the novena is called Misa de Gallo, or Rooster’s Mass. However, there are churches in large cities where the Masses are held in the evening. With many churches offering Simbang Gabi and transportation no longer a problem, the younger generation prefer the evening Mass because they will always find some form of partying after going to church.

Simbang Gabi has become a part of the Philippine culture and Filipinos of all walks of life still celebrate it all over the country as a preparation for Christmas. The churches are well-decorated, and spaces are provided for the Nativity Scene and a Christmas tree. Outside the church there are food vendors for those who want to have breakfast before going to work. For those having breakfast at home, it is not unusual to invite friends and relatives to join them. As a tradition, the breakfast consists mostly of various kinds of rice cakes and pastries with chocolate or ginger tea for a beverage.

In major cities in the United States where there are large Catholic Filipino communities, Simbang Gabi is celebrated either in the evening or at pre-dawn hours. In Puerto Rico the celebration is a series of nine consecutive days of Masses at dawn ending at Christmas Eve, which they call “Misas de Aguinaldo” (Masses of Gift). In Spain and in Spanish-speaking Roman Catholic countries in Latin America, the celebration is either a nine-day series of Masses before Christmas, or just a single Mass on Christmas Eve. And of course, the festive celebrations that follow vary according to local customs.

You are all invited to celebrate Simbang Gabi at St. Mary’s Catholic Church.

Lorenzo V. Penafiel, PhD

Faithful celebrate Mass during a previous year’s Simbang Gabi at St. Mary Church in San Angelo. Originating in the Philippines during the 17th century, Simbang Gabi, meaning Night Mass, is a nine-day series of evening or early morning Masses in preparation for Christmas.
Culture of vocations in San Angelo Diocese recognized in national report

By Brian Bodiford
West Texas Angelus

The culture of vocations is thriving in the Diocese of San Angelo, according to a recent aggregation of national data.

The CARA Report, published periodically by the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate at Georgetown University, looks occasionally at the rates of ordinations in dioceses in the United States. Their most recent review of this data spanned the years 2015, 2016, and 2017, and included two categories: an ordinand-to-parishioner ratio and total ordinations over three years.

The Diocese of San Angelo came in 17th in the list of greatest ratio of ordinands to parishioners, with seven ordinations over the three-year period and a total Catholic population of around 85,000 parishioners.

Other Texas dioceses recognized were Victoria (number 20 with eight priestly ordinations and 104,000 Catholics) and Austin (number 12 in overall ordinations, with a total of 17 new priests ordained).

The ordinations referenced in this time period were those of Father Felix Archibong, Father Adam Droll, Father Balá Anthony Govindu, and Father Ryan Rojo in 2015; Father Tony Franco in 2016; and Father Josh Gray and Father Timothy Hayter in 2017. Today these priests serve communities in Eden, Midland, Odessa, San Angelo, and Sonora.

While these young priests were ordained by the current Bishop of San Angelo, Michael Sis, it was Bishop Emeritus Michael Pfeifer who largely oversaw their recruitment and education. “It gives me great joy I had a hand in (these men) reaching their goal,” Bishop Pfeifer said.

He also offered insight into how his efforts resulted in this notable number of ordinations. “I made it a top priority,” he said, noting that he was inspired by St. Pope John Paul II’s document Pastores Dabo Vobis and the promise to provide shepherds “if we did our part to encourage them.” With that in mind, he said, “going back, starting with the new millennium … we made a conscious effort to promote new recruitment.”

These recruitment efforts took various forms, according to Bishop Pfeifer: praying for more vocations; urging priests to seek out good candidates; encouraging each church to have a member on the pastoral council with a specific goal of encouraging more vocations; and advocating for vocations within families. “The first seminary is the home,” he said, again invoking St. John Paul II.

“The starting element of this is prayer,” Bishop Pfeifer maintained, noting that this can be prayer at the dinner table, during Mass, or by taking your parish’s vocations cross or chalice home for a week of dedicated prayer. “This is the work of the entire church.”

Though he is no longer the bishop of the diocese, Bishop Pfeifer knows that his successor shares his goal of continuing to increase vocations to the priesthood. In fact, the first time the two met was at a gathering of Texas bishops and vocation directors when then-Father Michael Sis was the vocation director of the Diocese of Austin.

Though encouraging vocations to the priesthood, diaconate, and religious life is a job for the collective efforts of the entire church, Bishop Pfeifer said, “of course we had good vocation directors who were leading this effort.”

The current vocation director for the Diocese of San Angelo is Father Michael Rodriguez, who has led the recent efforts to continue the trend of identifying and encouraging good candidates for the priesthood. In addition, he helps guide the current group of seven seminarians studying to be priests for the diocese.

Father Rodriguez’s time as vocation director overlapped with the studies of some of the men whose ordinations were cited in the CARA Report. “They were very excited about becoming priests,” he said. “They have a love for the church, a love for the liturgy, and the idea of serving the people.”

He continues to look for new candidates as well, and encourages the faithful of the diocese to help him in his search. People can help promote vocations by “joining parish vocation committees,” he said. “If they don’t have one, volunteer” by talking to the parish priest or Father Rodriguez. Most important to the ongoing effort is “taking time out of their busy day to pray for vocations,” he said.

“Gradually we are becoming more aware of vocations, gradually developing a culture of vocations,” Father Rodriguez assessed.

What qualities make for a good candidate for the seminary? Father Rodriguez has a few suggestions. “The qualities I look for in a seminarian are, first of all … not someone who isolates” himself, he said, “someone who has a social life, a prayer life.” Other qualities include “someone who is open to what God wants,” and someone who is a “normal, regular kid who feels that God is calling them.”

He encourages people to keep an eye out for good candidates not just in other families, but within their own family as well. “It is our desire to form a native clergy who understand the needs of the people of West Texas,” he said. “These vocations come from families of the local parish.”

For more information on how you can help encourage increased vocations to the priesthood within the diocese, or if you feel you are being called to ordained or religious life, please contact the vocation office of the Diocese of San Angelo at 325-651-7500 or vocation@sanangelodiocese.org.

Many Paths to Discipleship
Diocesan Day of Reflection
February 29, 2020
St. Mary Parish
11 W. Avenue N
San Angelo, TX 76903

Keynote Speakers
Ennie and Cana Hickman – Founders of Del Rey Collective

8:30am Registration – 9:00am- 5:00pm

What Path is GOD Calling You To?
Register: Call Kristie at 325-651-7500 or kgarci@sanangelodiocese.org
High School – Juniors and Seniors, College, Young Adults, Married Couples, Singles
Ram Awakening retreat provides prayerful weekend for college Catholics

By Christine Foley

On Friday, Nov. 22, students from the Angelo State University Catholic Newman Center ventured off to Olfen, Texas, to kick off Ram Awakening 3. After months of planning, prayer, and meetings, the weekend retreat began with staff setting up St. Boniface Catholic Church for the retreatants.

Awakening Retreats are put on by young Catholics across American college campuses and have roots going as far back as 1973. The retreats are a decentralized concept, but in general terms, the focus is to cultivate the Catholic soul by discussing Church teachings, encouraging the growth of one’s spiritual life, and pouring an incredible amount of love and prayer to each person in attendance. Without a debt, the third Ram Awakening retreat helped make all of this happen.

The retreatants entered into the parish hall and joined up with their families — students who they would spend their weekend growing close to in fellowship. Each family had around seven or eight members, led by a Mom and Dad (fellow students who had previously been on an Awakening Retreat). Perhaps the largest component to this retreat were the talks given by students on topics ranging from the Holy Spirit to prayer and everything in between.

Three talks were given on Friday, including one by Bishop Michael Sis in which he deeply discussed the sacrament of reconciliation, encouraging retreatants to not fear it but embrace it as a means of grace. Later, retreatants were given the opportunity to go to confession in the church. Priests from across the San Angelo Diocese heard confessions of several students. Demonstrations of God’s grace abounded and many retreatants felt encouraged to be open-minded and open-hearted to what the weekend had in store for them.

Powerful talks by students continued throughout Saturday and Sunday, and each family had the opportunity to reflect on each topic afterwards. Discussion questions were provided by each speaker, and these served as a catalyst for some insightful conversations amongst families. Staffers were in constant prayer for retreatants, that God may speak to them in bold ways and that they grow in their faith. Prayer in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament took place as well, as everyone involved in the retreat had the opportunity to spend time in adoration. The beautiful altar, calming music, and most importantly, the presence of Christ made for an intimate moment for everyone involved.

Tearful goodbyes took place at the end of Sunday Mass, as retreatants boarded the bus back to San Angelo in the afternoon while staff stayed back for a while to clean up and reflect. So much was poured into this retreat, and it was beautiful to see how the Holy Spirit had worked in the lives of everyone in attendance. The Awakening Community is incredibly strong and RAMA 3 absolutely enhanced the community of young Christian adults who are desiring a closer relationship with God.

‘Find your greatness’ at Odessa event

The Odessa Marriott Hotel and Conference Center will be the site of an upcoming workshop promising to help participants become the best versions of themselves.

Presented by Dynamic Catholic on Jan. 19, 2020, the event, “Find Your Greatness,” will cover “four habits that will transform your life.” Speaker Allen Hunt will lead participants in a discussion of how changing habits can change lives.

According to promotional material for the event, “our lives change when our habits change. Based on Matthew Kelly’s book The Four Signs of a Dynamic Catholic, this half-day event will introduce you to four simple habits that will help you reach your full potential.”

The event will be held on Jan. 19, 2020, from 2:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. at the Odessa Marriott Hotel and Conference Center, 305 E. 5th Street in Odessa, Texas.

Tickets are $25 and can be purchased at DynamicCatholic.com or by calling 859-980-7900.
Father Knick and Sandie Knickerbocker

**Who could have imagined?**

That he who is and who was and who is to come, the Great I AM, would descend to Earth—

That he would choose a humble virgin maid to give birth to him in loving obedience—

That he would bear our sins unto himself to free us from our human plight—

That he would rise to new life and take us into himself through baptism—

That he would feed us with his own Body and Blood, Bread of Life and Cup of Salvation—

That his Holy Spirit would transform us to witness to his Way, Truth, and Life—

That he would bestow on us the greatest gift, eternal life with him, his mother Mary, and all the saints and angels—

**That we would be born with him in Bethlehem?**

The One who says "I am who am" Descends to earth at Bethlehem. Our Maker is of woman born; No longer is mankind forlorn, For into man-made sinful waste Comes he who is from our sin chaste, To make us all to be like him Who came to earth at Bethlehem.

A virgin maid with open arms Here welcomes him with heart so warm, That all of us can know his love— Descends to earth by Spirit's dove; For Mary is the first to bear His life that now we all can share, As all who are baptized in him Are born with him in Bethlehem!

May we be born again with Jesus this Christmas, to live with him forever!

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

By Deacon Greg Kandra
Catholic News Service

Christmas is still weeks away, and already we're exhausted.

We've heard too much Mariah, endured too much tinsel, watched too many Hallmark specials, been bombarded with too many ads for champagne and candy and cars. The calendar is out of whack. Black Friday actually began on a Monday, and Christmas music began on Halloween and for weeks now the mail has been delivering fat catalogs from home-lover stalwarts like Harry & David and L.L. Bean.

Is it January yet?

In the middle of all this, we can easily forget a vital part of the Christian calendar: Advent.

I once preached a homily in which I blamed the tendency to merge Advent and Christmas into one vaguely wintery holiday blur we might as well call "Chradvent." It's all the same, isn't it? Might as well start early, right?

Well, no.

These weeks before Christmas are intended to make that singular holiday — and singular holy day — matter. Advent sets the stage, calling us to "prepare the way," building in our hearts a sense of yearning, anticipation and joyful hope. Dorothy Day once compared Advent to a woman expecting a child. "She lives in such a garment of silence," Day wrote, "as though she were listening to hear the stir of life within her.

Silence? It's hard to appreciate that when every day is filled with "Fa-la-la-la-lah!"

We're left to wonder: How can we recapture the mystery and quiet of this beautiful season? How can we transform the incessant bell-ringing bucksterism into something more like a prayer?

How can we make Advent matter?

I'd suggest three ideas, three approaches to these days that can help us experience Advent the way it was meant to be.

First, look. I live in New York City, and every corner during December gives you an eyeful. The lights, the decorations, the ads, the throngs — it's thrilling. And exhausting. But we can appreciate it more, I think, if we strive to see beyond the early Christmas onslaught, to what lies beneath. Just like 2,000 years ago, we are still a world in waiting. Waiting for salvation. Waiting for sustenance. Waiting for hope. And significantly, we are a world desperately waiting for light.

So much of what crowds these pre-Christmas days fulfills our ancient need to give this dark time of year light. We untangle chords, replace burned out bulbs and then we string wires around the house and over shrubbery for one explicit purpose: to beat back darkness and defy the night. God's first words in all of Scripture become our anthem in December: Let there be light! During these weeks, when we see these extravagant displays — tasteful or not — we are seeing something profound in creation and say, no matter what, there will be light.

We see in all this signs of hope.

Advent is about that hope, that expectation of the Sun of Justice. All of what we see around us, in ways large and small, reflects that. It is a prayer of anxious yearning.

Second, listen. Do you hear what I hear? The soundtrack of Christmas makes itself heard, and heard, and heard, during Advent — and sometimes, even earlier. On top of that, there is the noise from, well, life. Cable TV, the internet, modern media of all kinds cry out for attention. The news will not be ignored. Impeachment! Invasion! Floods! Snow! Sales! It all runs together after a while.

Where is that sacred silence that Day wrote about?

We need to seek it, wherever and however we can. It takes effort, but the effort is worth it. Turn down the volume. Click off the computer. Turn off the TV. Lower the lights and dim the plane. Work to make this season a time of gentleness, a time of quiet and thoughtfulness and peace.

Remember the carol: "The world in silent stillness waits to hear the angels sing." How can we hear the angels if the TV is screaming about how Wayfair has just what we need?

Carve out moments in your day to have some of that "silent stillness," and prayerfully reflect on something besides what you need to order on Amazon for delivery by Christmas.

The world during the time of Christ had its own noise, its own distractions, its own conflicts and troubles. But into that came the Prince of Peace. How can we prepare ourselves to welcome him today in our own time?

Finally, let just let it go. That anthem from Frozen can offer helpful advice during this stressful time of year. Too busy? Too distracted? Some things can wait. Let it go.

When I was growing up, every year we got a live Christmas tree, complete with roots, to plant when the holiday was done. That meant we often didn't get a tree or bring it inside until a day or two before Christmas. It made the last hours before the holiday more wondrous. And it taught me the invaluable lesson of patience — something at the heart, I think, of Advent. The decorating can wait. The wrapping can wait. This is a season about waiting, after all.

This season that follows, and starts Dec. 25, has more to it than the secular world may realize.

A couple of years ago, New York Cardinal Timothy M. Dolan wondered on his radio show, "You know, how come nobody writes devotions or prayers for the Christmas season? It's a real season, you know! It doesn't end for weeks." He had a point. It always saddens me to see Christmas trees tossed to the curb before New Year's. The Christmas season actually extends until the feast of the Baptism of the Lord, in mid-January. (I know of at least one parish that leaves its Nativity scene up in the church until the feast of the Presentation, in February.)

Developing a better sense of the separate season of Advent and Christmas — breaking up "Chradvent" — can help us have a better sense, as well, of why these times of year matter.

So save the Christmas greetings and wishes for later. Look to this time with gratitude and awe — the anticipation of what is coming and the joy of what will be.

Enjoying the sacred mystery of this season. Savor it. Embrace its quiet wonder.

Or, as a song might put it: Have yourself a merry little Advent.

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Exchanging gifts

As Christmas approaches each year, stores hope and prepare for an onslaught of shoppers' peaks, which we've heard who will create not only record setting “Black Fridays,” but December's that will allow for a profitable year. Rarely will you ever see a store go out of business until the “HolyDay” season has ended. Financially, all other months pale in comparison to December because in no other month is there as much gift-giving.

People approach buying gifts for others from multiple perspectives. For some, it is an opportunity to find the most special thing imaginable that will bring joy to another. Others may not know the “perfect” gift and go the way of cash, check, or gift cards. Some people start their Christmas shopping the day after Christmas for the following year. Others begin and end on Christmas Eve. Some see buying gifts as a reflection of their love. Others see it as an arduous task.

There are also questions related to finances — how much should be spent … what will be the cost? “Does it look like I spent the same amount of money on both of my two nephews?” “Did we get a better gift for my mother-in-law than we did for my mother?” “I wish I knew how much she was going to spend on me so I would know how much to spend on her.”

“Last year my sister and her husband spent a lot more on our kids than we spent on theirs … don’t you think we should make up for it this Christmas?” These and countless similar questions add to the stress and subtract from the meaning of this extraordinary day.

When we “exchange gifts,” does one person or the other feel badly because they got “taken” or feel guilty because of the great disparity in price? An exchange is defined as “an act of giving one thing and receiving another (especially of the same type or value) in return.” If THAT is our mindset, however, then our “giving train” has been hijacked and we are on the wrong track.

As a kid, I grew up with parents who were models for giving to others. “When you do something for someone or give something to them, do it and never talk about it” my mom would often say, while one of my father’s admonitions was “Don’t do what other people do, do what’s right!” Indeed, they did countless things for other people who never realized the origin of the gifts they had received. Jesus said similar things many years before. In Matthew (6:6) he said “take care not to perform righteous deeds in order that others may see them; otherwise you will have no recompense from your heavenly Father” and adding when you give “do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing” (6:3).

Mom would tell me, as many parents tell their children, to not be concerned if people are ungrateful for the things that you do for them because God sees everything and he will reward you. Indeed, continuing in Matthew (6:4) we read “and your Father who sees in secret will repay you.” Many, many times throughout my life I have said this same thing or variations of it to others to help them believe that their acts of love will result in great benefits to them someday. But not any longer … not that they won’t be.

That is because there is something else that I have repeatedly said throughout the years and that is “Never give something or do something for someone and expect something in return” … no desire for an “exchange of gifts.” Only you know whether or not this is true for you. And, once again, we can turn to the words of Jesus. In Luke 14:13-14, he declared “Rather, when you hold a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind; blessed indeed will you be because of their inability to repay you.” BUT, if the only reason we do something is because we expect to be “repaid” someday in heaven, are we really doing what God asks of us?

The reason why we should help and be giving of ourselves to others is because Jesus “commands” us to “love one another.” Doing good is its own reward. Pleading our Heavenly Father should be our only thought … not what we can get out of our acts of kindness and mercy in this life or the next. Instead of thinking about the gifts God will give us in heaven in exchange for the ones we give others on earth, perhaps we might look at it from a different perspective. What can we do to repay HIM for the gift of his Son … what can we do in “exchange”? There certainly is no chance of us giving him something of equal cost … unless, of course, it is our lives.

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Dr. James Sullivan, a graduate of Rutgers University and Florida State University, has over 40 years’ experience in individual, marriage, and family therapy. He is also the Abilen-area pro-life coordinator for the Diocese of San Angelo.
Lay Carmelite ‘Come and See’

The Lay Carmelite Community invites you to a “Come and See” every first Saturday at St. Joseph Catholic Church (301 W 17th, San Angelo) after the 8:00 a.m. Mass. Come and learn about Carmelite spirituality. See if you have a calling to the Lay Carmelite Community. All are welcome. Phone Fran Havlak at 432-349-6852 if you have questions.

Bishop to celebrate Our Lady of Guadalupe Masses in San Angelo, Midland

Bishop Michael Sis will celebrate the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe with two Masses on Dec. 12.

The first will be a bilingual Mass at 12:10 p.m. at the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart in San Angelo. The bishop will then travel to Midland for a 5:30 p.m. procession and Mass at Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish and Shrine. This shows a continuation of Bishop Sis’ desire to celebrate Mass at a parish whose patroness is the Virgin of Guadalupe each year on her feast day—a practice he has undertaken since becoming the Bishop of San Angelo in 2014.

The Diocese of San Angelo has five churches named Our Lady of Guadalupe. They are located in Eldorado, Fort Stockton, Midland, Millsview, and Robert Lee.

Celebrated each year on Dec. 12, the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe commemorates the day in 1531 on which it is said St. Juan Diego was visited by an apparition of the Virgin Mary on a hill in what is now Mexico City, leaving her image on his cloak. There is now a basilica on the spot of the apparition that houses the original image given to St. Juan Diego.

EDICTAL SUMMONS

December 1, 2019
CASE: GESCH -- JENKINS
NO.: SO/19/58 Edictal Summons

The Tribunal Office of the Catholic Diocese of San Angelo is seeking Elizabeth Alice Jenkins.

You are hereby summoned to appear before the Tribunal of the Catholic Diocese of San Angelo, at 804 Ford Street, San Angelo, Texas 76905, on or before the 31st day of December 2019, to answer to the Petition of Michael Paul Gesch, now introduced before the Diocesan Tribunal in an action styled, “Michael Gesch and Elizabeth Jenkins, Petition for Declaration of Invalidity of Marriage.” Said Petition is identified as Case: GESCH -- JENKINS; Protocol No.: SO/19/58 Edictal Summons, on the Tribunal Docket of the Diocese of San Angelo.

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

Given at the Tribunal of the Diocese of San Angelo on December 1, 2019.

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

EDICTAL SUMMONS

December 1, 2019
CASE: CHARTERS (EVARO) -- HARVEY
NO.: SO/19/60 Edictal Summons

The Tribunal Office of the Catholic Diocese of San Angelo is seeking Tony Harvey.

You are hereby summoned to appear before the Tribunal of the Catholic Diocese of San Angelo, at 804 Ford Street, San Angelo, Texas 76905, on or before the 31st day of December 2019, to answer to the Petition of Kelli Dawn Charters (Evaro), now introduced before the Diocesan Tribunal in an action styled, “Kelli Charters (Evaro) and Tony Harvey, Petition for Declaration of Invalidity of Marriage.” Said Petition is identified as Case: CHARTERS (EVARO) -- HARVEY; Protocol No.: SO/19/60 Edictal Summons, on the Tribunal Docket of the Diocese of San Angelo.

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

Given at the Tribunal of the Diocese of San Angelo on December 1, 2019.

Reverend Tom Barley, MSW, MBA, M. Div., JCL
Judicial Vicar
Archbishop Gomez elected USCCB president; first Latino in post

By Dennis Sadowski
Catholic News Service

BALTIMORE (CNS) — Archbishop Jose H. Gomez of Los Angeles was elected to a three-year term as president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops during the bishops’ fall general assembly in Baltimore.

The native of Mexico was chosen Nov. 12 with 176 votes from a slate of 10 nominees. Archbishop Gomez, 67, is the first Latino to be elected president. He has served as conference vice president for the past three years, working alongside Cardinal Daniel N. DiNardo of Galveston-Houston, the outgoing president.

His term as president begins when the assembly ends.

The Los Angeles prelate has been a leading advocate of immigrant rights, often voicing support for newcomers as they face growing restrictions being implemented by the Department of Homeland Security and other federal agencies.

In a separate vote, the assembly elected Archbishop Allen H. Vigneron of Detroit, conference secretary, was elected vice president. He was elected on the third ballot by 151-90 in a runoff with Archbishop Timothy P. Broglio of the U.S. Archdiocese of the Military Services.

Under USCCB bylaws, after the election for president, the vice president is elected from the remaining nine candidates.

The two top officers begin their terms at the conclusion of the fall assembly Nov. 13.

In voting for a new secretary, the assembly elected Archbishop Broglio, 112-87, over Bishop Daniel E. Thomas of Toledo, Ohio. Archbishop Broglio will serve through the end of the term in 2021.

The bishops also voted for the chairman of one committee, chairmen-elect of five other conference committees and three representatives on the board of Catholic Relief Services, which is the U.S. bishops’ overseas relief and development agency.

In the first committee vote, there was a tie vote between Archbishop Thomas G. Wenski of Miami and Bishop George V. Murry of Youngstown, Ohio, for chairman of the Committee for Religious Liberty. Each candidate received 121 votes, but Bishop Murry, at 70, became chair.

Bishops OK new edition of Program of Priestly Formation

By Mark Pattison
Catholic News Service

BALTIMORE (CNS) — The U.S. bishops Nov. 12 adopted the sixth edition of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops’ Program of Priestly Formation for U.S. dioceses and religious orders.

The vote on the document, popularly known among the bishops as “the PPF,” was 226-4, with three abstentions. It needed two-thirds of the bishops’ ballots to pass.

The vote, before it can be implemented, must first receive a “recognitio,” or approval, from the Vatican Congregation for the Clergy.

“It is not an entirely new document,” said Cardinal Joseph W. Tobin of Newark, New Jersey, when introducing the document Nov. 11, the first day of the bishops’ fall general meeting in Baltimore.

“It retains and builds on those aspects of PPF 5 which have proven to be the most effective.”

One change is how a seminarian’s progress to ordination is tracked. What had been a seminary college or “pretheology” followed by graduate studies — known as the theologate — is being replaced by new terms: the “propaedeutic stage” with preparatory and introductory teaching lasting one to two years, and a “discipleship stage,” which is to last at least two years.

The PPF takes into account developments in the church and society in recent years.

“Weaknesses of ethical standards and a moral relativism have a corrosive effect on American public life as seen, for example, in marriage and family life, in business and in politics,” the PPF now says.

“Within the church, clericalism and abuse of power have had a corrosive effect. The scandals and criminal behavior of some clergy who have abused minors and engaged in sexual misconduct with adults, including seminarians, has caused great suffering for the victims and damaged the church’s witness in society and its credibility for the church and an overall lack of respect for religion. Both the nation and the church are summoned to renewal and to a real integrity of life.”

It also contains strict instructions:

“Any seminarian found to have pathological sexual attraction to minors is to be dismissed from the seminary with no possibility for readmission to the same or another seminary.”

Elsewhere in the document, which nears 300 pages in the version given to the bishops, it says: “The widespread availability of pornography on the internet is a pervasive reality, and a pernicious threat to human and moral development.” and “Catholic institutions are not immune to the persistence of racism in our society. … The evil of racism continues to be a factor in the social fabric of the United States.”

“Any seminarian who engages in sexual misconduct, whether with adults, including seminarians, has caused great suffering for the victims and damaged the church’s witness in society and its credibility for the church and an overall lack of respect for religion. Both the nation and the church are summoned to renewal and to a real integrity of life.”

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“Any seminarian who engages in sexual misconduct, whether with adults, including seminarians, has caused great suffering for the victims and damaged the church’s witness in society and its credibility for the church and an overall lack of respect for religion. Both the nation and the church are summoned to renewal and to a real integrity of life.”

The PPF’s focus is on benchmarks — the outcomes that must be achieved by the seminarian before advancing to the next stage in his formation, rather than on chronological times,” the cardinal said, adding that “new weight (is) given to stages rather than years.”

‘Faithful Citizenship' materials reflect pope's ongoing teaching

By Dennis Sadowski
Catholic News Service

BALTIMORE (CNS) — Current issues of the day and references to the teachings of Pope Francis can be found throughout the materials approved by the U.S. bishops to supplement their existing document on Catholic participation in public life.

The materials — an introductory letter and four videos — address concerns such as the common good, immigration, abortion, poverty, care for creation and the need for civil dialogue.

The bishops approved texts of the materials Nov. 12, the second day of their fall general assembly in Baltimore.

The letter was approved 207-24 with five abstentions; the vote on the video scripts was 227-5 in favor with four abstentions.

The materials supplement the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops’ existing document, Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship, which was developed as a guide help Catholics form their consciences in voting and other areas of public life.

The new materials have been under development since March. Archbishop Jose H. Gomez of Los Angeles, incoming USCCB president, chaired a working group that consisted of 13 chairmen of USCCB committees who drafted the materials.

They are meant to be used by individuals and parish study groups in the run-up to the 2020 elections.

During a discussion about the letter, Cardinal Blase J. Cupich of Chicago proposed an amendment to include an entire paragraph from Pope Francis’ apostolic exhortation Gaudete et Exultate (Rejoice and Be Glad) be included.

He said the paragraph — number 101 — encompasses the broad teaching of the pope’s pontificate including justice for a wide segment of marginalized people.

In the paragraph Cardinal Cupich cited, the pope acknowledges the church’s concern for the unborn, but also describes as “equally sacred” the lives of the poor and elderly people, human trafficking victims and others who are struggling to survive. The pope also addresses the need not to ignore injustice and points to widespread consumerism as a threat to those who live in “abject poverty.”

A brief debate followed as Bishop Robert W. McElroy of San Diego said, in supporting Cardinal Cupich, that he was concerned the supplementary letter stating that abortion is the preeminent teaching of the church would open the door for people to ignore the pope’s call to consider other concerns as equally important.

Philadelphia Archbishop Charles J. Chaput disagreed with the stance, saying the church’s pro-life teaching remains its preeminent concern.

Archbishop Gomez also responded, explaining that the paragraph from the pope’s exhortation was not included in full, and only in part because of the directives of the full USCCB assembly in 2018 to keep the letter short. However, he added, the specific passage was being footnoted in the letter.

In a separate vote, the bishops did not approve Cardinal Cupich’s amendment to include the full paragraph but instead accepted a revised text developed by the working group overnight.

The vote was 143 to 69.

The letter, encompassing three schools and parish religious education programs are supportive environments that foster intellectual curiosity and encourage the development of love of God and neighbor. Rooted in the teachings of the Catholic faith, schools and programs provide an invaluable setting in which vocations to marriage, priesthood and consecrated life can be nurtured.

The Vatican’s “recognitio,” or approval, to the fifth edition of the PPF expired in 2015, according to Cardinal Tobin. The bishops chose not to seek renewal.

That year, though, the Vatican extended the recognitio for five-years, through 2020.

In 2016, a working group was selected by the committee to begin work on a sixth edition. In 2017, that group, run by Bishop Earl A. Boyea of Lansing, Michigan, began its deliberations.

In 2018, input from bishops was sought given the Vatican’s issuance the year before of the new Ratio Fundamentalis Institutionis Sacerdotalis (The Gift of the Priestly Vocation).

In his introductory remarks about the document, Cardinal Tobin said it “allows latitude for individual dioceses, provinces and regions” so bishops can “adapt this to individual circumstances.”

“The PPF’s focus is on benchmarks — the outcomes that must be achieved by the seminarian before advancing to the next stage in his formation, rather than on chronological terms,” the cardinal said, adding that “new weight (is) given to stages rather than years.”
Bishop Michael Sis was the speaker for the inaugural meal of the new San Angelo Magnificat group, Our Lady of Fatima, held on the morning of Nov. 16, 2019. The group’s Facebook page describes Magnificat as “a Catholic ministry that exists to evangelize and to encourage Catholic women to grow in holiness through opening more fully to the power and the gifts of the Holy Spirit.” Similar meals are planned for the future.

“I stand at the door and knock.” Jesus is calling all people to come back to him. On Saturday, Nov. 9, Legion of Mary members visited homes and evangelized by giving out information about the Catholic Church. They started with Mass with Father Michael Rodriguez, got their street assignment, and went out in pairs to each door. Three people prayed in the adoration chapel at the same time. They handed out 24 church bulletins, three prayer cards, 17 “How to pray the Rosary” pamphlets, 15 Divine Mercy pamphlets, 14 copies of “War of the Holy Pillar of Truth” information booklets, 11 copies of “One Blood of Christ” booklets, 14 DVDs on the importance of the Eucharist, and most importantly prayed the Our Father with 20 people outside their door. We are all called to evangelize in some way or another. We must remember there were only 12 apostles that Jesus told to go out to all the nations and preach the Gospel. If you would like to join the Legion of Mary in their next door-to-door evangelization effort, please contact Lynda Jones at 325-812-2546.

Father Ryan Rojo and Father Josh Gray recently led a group of pilgrims from the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart in San Angelo on a pilgrimage to Greece.

Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish in Ozona recently held a Festival Queen contest. The candidate that sold the most raffle tickets was crowned on the day of the festival. The candidates raised a combined total of $23,760 for the parish. The candidates were Roslynn Mondes, or Kaitlyn Tambunga, pictured with Father Hilary Ihedioha. Carlie Ramos was crowned queen, having raised $13,100 for Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church.

Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church in Ozona celebrated their second annual fall festival on Nov. 2, 2019. The grand prize winner of this year’s vehicle, which was a 2019 Ford Fiesta SE, was Jonatan Arredondo. Pictured with him are the festival’s Executive Committee: Father Hilary Ihedioha, parish council president Armando Arredondo, and finance council president Frank Tambunga.
Department of Stewardship and Development

**Job Summary:** The Director of Stewardship and Development is responsible for overall stewardship education and fund development for the diocese and The Catholic Charitable Foundation for the Roman Catholic Diocese of San Angelo; educating parishioners and donors on the needs of the diocese and The Catholic Charitable Foundation for the Roman Catholic Diocese of San Angelo; and developing new talent and financial resources to meet present and future needs of the diocese and The Catholic Charitable Foundation for the Roman Catholic Diocese of San Angelo.

**Other Requirements:**
- The Director of Stewardship works with the bishop and the diocesan finance officer in establishing links with parishes, schools and diocesan programs.
- The Director of Stewardship is responsible for overall stewardship education and fund development.

**Management Duties and Responsibilities**

**Stewardship Education:**
- Responsible for promoting stewardship as a way of life by planning, organizing and staffing outreach with a focus on education and training at the parish and diocese levels.
- Seeks to ensure that the theology of stewardship is integrated into all development efforts and is embraced at all levels of the diocese.
- Works closely with diocesan staff and Foundation trustees to develop and conduct stewardship education activities and materials for use by parishes and schools throughout the diocese.

**Fund Development Efforts:**
- Serve in executive director’s role for The Catholic Charitable Foundation for the Roman Catholic Diocese of San Angelo, whose purpose is to provide the diocese with a long-term funding base for identified current and future capital and operational needs.
- Recruit and work closely with Foundation trustees, members, to achieve revenue and investment objectives, and to reset those objectives annually.
- Identify and develop major contributors for the diocese and Foundation.
- Initiate a diocesan-wide planned giving program that will give the donor several options for making tax-wise gifts to their parish, the diocese, and the Foundation.
- Support diocesan and Foundation fund development through planning, research, grantwriting, donor solicitation, events, and direct-mail appeals.
- Identify and solicit foundations and corporations that might be supportive of diocesan programs or parish needs.
- Maintain a database of all foundations with potential to fund diocesan or parish needs.
- Responsible for parish, school and agency support by establishing links with parishes, schools and diocesan programs so that the Stewardship and Development Office is a resource to all.
- Responsible for regular and ongoing communication with pastors and parish leaders for the promotion of stewardship education and accountability for development efforts.
- Responsible for coordinating all development activities of the diocese so that each entity achieves maximum results without hurting the efforts of another entity, e.g., avoiding competing grant requests, financial appeals and other scheduled development activities.
- Responsible for the management of the stewardship and development budgets.
- Follows all policies as established by the bishop and the Foundation Board of Trustees.
- Develops and maintains databases of donors, prospective donors, grants awarded and endowment gifts.
- Works with Foundation Investment Committee to approve a recommended spend rate to be adopted by Trustees at their Annual Meeting.
- Writes letters in January to be included with checks to beneficiaries of all endowment funds.
- Writes an annual letter on behalf of the Foundation to donors of each individual endowment fund, including a financial report at year end showing the value of the fund at beginning of year, donations made, grants paid and administrative fees charged to the fund during the year, and the value of the fund at year end.
- Maintains confidentiality of donor information.
- Produce letters of thanks for contributions and grants.

**General:**
- Employment in and by the Church is substantially different from secular employment. Church employees must conduct themselves in a manner that is consistent with and supportive of the mission and purpose of the Church. Their public behavior must not violate the faith, morals or laws of the Church or the policies of the diocese.

**Qualifications:**
- Practicing Catholic in good standing.
- Excellent written, oral, and interpersonal communication skills required.
- Bachelor’s Degree required. Major in Business, Communications or Marketing preferred.
- Related experience in management and development will be considered.
- Computer skills including use of Microsoft Office applications, Development software and Internet search engines.
- Ability to work with and appropriately handle confidential information.
- Bilingual English/Spanish preferred.

**Working Conditions:**
- Schedule of hours: 40 hours per week.
- Prior approval of overtime is required.
- Travel to other cities in Diocese of San Angelo will be required.

**Application Procedure:**
- To apply, please submit the following materials, confidentially and as separate PDF attachments in one email to Steve McKay at smckay@sanangelodiocese.org.
- Cover letter that aligns your experiences and skills set with the current needs of the diocese as you understand them.
- Resume with all appropriate dates included.
- List of five references including names, relationship, phone numbers and email addresses. No references will be contacted without your knowledge and approval.

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**Secretary — Office of Evangelization and Catechesis**

The Office of Evangelization and Catechesis currently has a position available for a Secretary. Qualifications include a high school diploma and prior office experience; good communication skills, command of the English language, proficiency with Microsoft Office including Word, Publisher, Excel, Access. Applicant must have excellent time management skills, organizational skills, and the ability to maintain and create databases. Knowledge of Spanish is helpful. Hours are Monday – Friday, 9:00AM – 5:00PM with benefits, with occasional weekend work required.

Applicants should email resume with references to Office of Evangelization and Catechesis, evangelizationcatechesis@sanangelodiocese.org by December 20, 2019.
Pope adds feast of Our Lady of Loreto to universal calendar

By Carol Glatz
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Pope Francis has approved adding the Dec. 10 feast of Our Lady of Loreto to all calendars and liturgical books for the celebration of the Mass and the Liturgy of the Hours.

The decree, dated Oct. 7, feast of Our Lady of the Rosary, was published Oct. 31 by the Vatican Congregation for Divine Worship and the Sacraments.

According to tradition, the Holy House of Loreto was carried by angels from Nazareth to the Italian hillside town of Loreto the night of Dec. 9-10 in 1294 after making a three-year stop in Croatia.

The decree said the shrine in Loreto "recalls the mystery of the Incarnation" and helps visitors "meditate both on the words of the angel announcing the Good News, and on the words of the Virgin in response to the divine call." And it has been able to "illustrate powerfully the evangelical virtues of the Holy Family," it added.

Millions of pilgrims flock to Loreto each year to venerate the tiny cottage. It's Italy's most important and popular Marian shrine city and it was one of the shrines St. John Paul II visited the most.

"Before the image of the Mother of the Redeemer and of the church, saints and blessedes have responded to their vocation, the sick have invoked consolation in suffering, the people of God have begun to praise and plead with Mary using the Litany of Loreto, which is known throughout the world," the decree said.

In light of this, Pope Francis has decreed, by his own authority, that the optional memorial of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Loreto should be inscribed in the Roman Calendar on 10 December, the day on which the feast falls in Loreto, and celebrated every year.

"Therefore, the new memorial must appear in all calendars and liturgical books for the celebration of Mass and the Liturgy of the Hours."

Liturgical texts for the feast day were published in Latin with the decree, which said the translations would be approved by bishops' conferences and then published after confirmation by the Vatican dicastery.

Calendar on 10 December, the day on which the feast falls in Loreto, and celebrated every year.

Bishops hear follow-up Encuentro report, OK writing new pastoral plan

By Mark Pattison
Catholic News Service

BALTIMORE (CNS) — The U.S. bishops, aware of the growing numbers of Catholics in the country who are of Hispanic origin, voted to write a new pastoral plan for Latino Catholics that would be produced sometime between 2021 and 2024.

The action took place Nov. 12, the second day of the bishops’ Nov. 11-13 fall general meeting in Baltimore.

The bishops also heard a follow-up to the V Encuentro, or Fifth National Encuentro, held last year in Grapevine, Texas. The Encuentro is a four-year process, and 2019 is year four. Leading up to national gathering were parish, diocesan and regional encuentros.

Bishops in their comments detected an urgency in responding to the pastoral needs of Hispanic Catholics, who could constitute a majority of all U.S. Catholics by midcentury.

"It's really important that there's a sense of 'we've got to get this done,' or it might come up here or four or five years from now," said retired Auxiliary Bishop William J. Justice of San Francisco. He added that "it's only natural" that the fervor generated at the V Encuentro "has gone down a little bit," but if such a slide continues, "we're in trouble."

"There was much great enthusiasm generated in that process from my own people," said Archbishop Alexander K. Sample of Portland, Oregon. "Since the Encuentro occurred, people are in my ear, asking, 'What's next? What's going on? Where is all this going?'"

A few bishops spoke of the need to have Hispanic children enrolled in Catholic schools.

Noting that only 12% of Hispanic children in the Archdiocese of Los Angeles are enrolled in Catholic schools, Los Angeles Auxiliary Bishop David G. O'Connell said Catholic schools "are the best way we have to evangelize and educate our children — and the best way of all ... to foster vocations."

Cardinal Sean P. O'Malley of Boston asked that the forthcoming plan emphasize Catholic schools. "There's been no institutions in the United States that have pulled people out of poverty more than Catholic schools," he said. "I hope we will push very much" for that.

"When I was in school, it was free. Today that's not possible, but we have to work very hard," he added.

Bishop Thomas J. Olmsted of Phoenix said, "We really need to train leaders, not so much within the parishes, but within society." Bishop Mark E. Brennan of Wheeling-Charleston, West Virginia, said to consider also the need for Latino permanent deacons.

It has even reached the highest levels of the church. Bishop Nelson J. Perez of Cleveland, chairman of the bishops' Committee on Cultural Diversity in the Church, was part of a delegation that delivered V Encuentro materials to Pope Francis. "The Holy Father received the documents with interest and offered words of encouragement," Bishop Perez said, adding the pope told them, "Continue to go further."

Auxiliary Bishop Arturo Cepeda of Detroit, chairman of the committee's Subcommittee on Hispanic Affairs, said Encuentro follow-up will feature "three bold new initiatives": the development of emerging family ministries and resources for Hispanic families; a collection of best practices used in parishes and dioceses; and a V Encuentro social media campaign.

"In addition, our work continues on the Encuentro Youth and Young Adult Leadership Initiative," which Bishop Cepeda called "a direct pastoral response to the V Encuentro process." He added that its goal is "to form Hispanic/Latino young adults, and adults working this Hispanic/Latino youth and young adults through a solid certification program and to create a pathway towards degree programs."

Speaking on the pastoral plan OK'd by the bishops, Bishop Cepeda said: "We believe a new comprehensive plan will provide the church in the United States with the vision to guide and strengthen Hispanic ministry over the next 10 to 15 years."

He added the church is seeing "generational change from a larger immigrant population, which is still the reality in many dioceses, to a rapidly growing majority U.S. born Latino population. A new vision is needed."

He said the document will respond not only to the U.S. bishops' 2021-24 priorities and plans — approved at the fall meeting just the day before — but also to the recommendations of the V Encuentro process' ministry areas.

Bishop Cepeda said five elements would constitute the central focus of a comprehensive plan: championing the leadership development and formation of Hispanic and Latino youth and young adults; promoting vocations to the priesthood and religious life; promoting ministry models and resources for Hispanic families; "for the church to be an example and promoter of social justice and human dignity"; and identifying best practices in ministry with Hispanics in parishes, dioceses and other Catholic institutions.
The frustrating struggle for humility

It’s hard to be humble, not because we don’t have more than enough deficiencies to merit humility, but rather because there’s a crafty mechanism inside of us that normally doesn’t let us go to the place of humility. Simply put, as we try to be self-effacing, humble, and non-hypocritical, variably we take pride in that and then, feeling smug about it, we become judgmental of others.

Jesus gave us a wonderful parable on this but mostly we miss its lesson. We’re all familiar with the parable of the Pharisee and the Publican. Jesus tells the story of two men standing before God in prayer. The first man, a devout Pharisee, is a man who took the pursuit of virtue seriously and he thanks God that he’s devout and moral and also thanks God that he’s not as amoral as the Publican who is in the temple with him. The second man, a Publican, recognizes (honestly and without any rationalization) that he is amoral, that he is a sinner, and, within that recognition, humbly asks God to forgive him for his weaknesses. We know how Jesus assessed the two men. The Pharisee didn’t really pray while the Publican did. Moreover the parable highlights the internal blindness of the Pharisee in a way that’s impossible not to see. Everyone hearing this story cannot help but see his lack of humility.

What’s challenging however is to examine our own reaction to the story. We invariably see the difference between false pride and genuine humility. We see how arrogant it is for the Pharisee to say: “Thank God, I am not like that man!” But then, I would venture to guess that 98% of us hearing that story spontaneously nurse this feeling: “Thank God, I’m not like that Pharisee!” And, in doing that, we are him! Exactly like him, we’re brimming over with our own sense of virtue and, because of that, begin judging others. Our prayer is in fact usually the opposite of the Publican’s prayer. We are not praying out of our own sinfulness, but rather praying: “I thank you, God, that I’m not as blind to self and as judgmental as so many other people are!” It’s hard to be the Publican. Our very virtue and humility invariably coil back upon themselves and make us proud and judgmental.

What’s the answer? How do we break the vicious circle? There’s only one way and the Publican shows us that way. How? He prays out of his own sinfulness, for real. He’s a sinner and he honestly admits it. For our part, when we speak of ourselves as sinners mostly we don’t really mean it! We admit that we have our weaknesses and that sometimes we do sin, but then, like the Pharisee, we’re immediately thankful that we don’t have the weaknesses and sins of others. Mostly we think this way: “Admittedly, I have my faults, but at least I’m not as ignorant and self-serving as that colleague of mine!” “For all of my shortcomings, I still thank God that I’m not as narcissistic as my boss!” “I may not have much religious faith, but at least I’m not as hypocritical as so many of those church people!” “I may be a bit of a mess, but thank God I don’t have Jack’s faults!” Pride is forever sneaking around our defenses and keeping genuine humility at bay.

But there is one instance when it can’t do that, and that is when we are genuinely acknowledging our own sinfulness. When we are truly standing inside of our own sinfulness, like the Publican, then we judge no one — not even our own selves. As a Roman Catholic priest who has been hearing confessions for some 47 years, I can say without hesitation that people are at their very best when they are honestly confessing their own shortcomings. When we are genuinely standing inside the recognition of our own sin, we judge no one. In that space we never think: “Thank God, I don’t have Jack’s faults!” We know that our own suffice. Our prayer then becomes honest and, according to Jesus, it’s then that it’s heard in heaven.

And it’s precisely our sinfulness that we must existentially recognize and stand within. Our other weaknesses, our congenital and personal inadequacies, can be helpful in making us humble, but, since we aren’t personally or morally responsible for them, recognizing them doesn’t do the same thing for us as does recognizing our own sinfulness. We aren’t responsible for physical or psychological DNA. We aren’t responsible for our ethnicity or color. We aren’t responsible for the kind of family, neighborhood, and culture we were raised in. And we aren’t responsible for what happened to us in the playpen and on the playground when we were little. Yet all of these deeply impact both our weaknesses and our strengths. But since we aren’t responsible for these, ultimately we don’t have to be humble about them.

But we do have to be humble about our own sin.

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

A talk on the Hill

A couple of weeks ago, I had the distinct privilege of addressing an audience of Senators, Representatives, and Capitol Hill staffers in a beautiful room at the Library of Congress. This event was made possible by two Congressmen, Rep. Tom Suozzi of New York, a Democrat, and Rep. John Moolenaar of Michigan, a Republican. Both had seen videos of the speeches I had given at Facebook and Google Headquarters and wanted something similar for those who work in government.

At the outset of my talk, I specified that I would not be addressing the hot button issues that so often dominate discussions of religion and politics. I was quick to point out that this is not because I think those questions are unimportant or that they shouldn’t eventually be addressed. But I insisted that the rush to those matters around which there is radical polarization effectively precludes the possibility of finding deep points of contact between the spiritual and political worlds. And it was that common ground that I endeavored to explore in my presentation.

I began by engaging with the idea of vocation. We’re accustomed to using this term in an explicitly religious context, but I suggested that, with its full spiritual resonance, it applies just as well to other areas of life. I asked my audience to recall the moment when they first felt the summons to pursue a career in public service. I invited them to bracket the anxieties, disappointments, and opportunities of the present moment and to recover that moment, undoubtedly marked by enthusiasm and idealism, when they decided to enter into politics and to work for justice.

The passion to pursue righteousness in particular cases, I told them, is a function of something more basic and more mystical — namely, the call from Justice itself, the summons to be a servant of this great transcendent value. In a similar way, an artist is someone who has heard the call — as James Joyce did, for example — to be a knight for Beauty, and a philosopher or journalist or professor is someone who has heard the summons to serve Truth itself. But in Catholic theology, Truth itself, Beauty itself, Justice itself are simply names for God. Therefore, provided they search out the deepest ground for their commitment, all of these participants in the culture can and should understand themselves as having received a vocation with religious implications.

And once that connection has been made, I told my Washington audience, the great biblical texts dealing with vocation from God open up in a fresh way. I drew their attention to the marvelous story of the call of the prophet Samuel. When just a boy, Samuel heard the voice of God, but did not at first recognize it for what it was. It was only after several repetitions — “Samuel, Samuel” — and after the helpful intervention of the high priest Eli, that the young man was ready to listen to God. So, I said, God (under his title Justice itself) called you each by name, most likely called you repeatedly until you listened, and probably employed some other editor to interpret the meaning of his voice. Next, I referenced the strange and illuminating account in the sixth chapter of Isaiah regarding the call of the prophet Isaiah. Isaiah was ready to listen to God when he was and how the foundations shook. Both of these symbols indicate the manner by which God (under his title Justice itself) called you and how the foundations shook. Further of how smoke filled the place where he was and how everything shook, I referred to the great problem; it is a moral and finally spiritual problem. To legislate unjustly, I concluded, is therefore to stand athwart God who originally created the world in such a way that we must be a servant of Justice. And lest this analysis seem too abstract and distant, I drew their attention to the extraordinary letter that Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. wrote from the Birmingham City Jail in 1963, prompted by a group of white Christian ministers who were questioning King’s methods. In response, the great civil rights activist said that just laws ought always to be obeyed but that unjust laws can and should be opposed — always and despite the cost or inconvenience. And for justification, he reached to the very teaching of Aquinas that I just sketched. King was a political agent to be sure, but he had a keen sense that his activism was but an expression of finally moral and religious convictions.

My hope was (and is) that my presentation would both inspire and disarmify my audience. I wanted them to see both the high spiritual dignity of their call and the rather awful responsibility before God that they bear.

Bishop Robert Barron is an auxiliary bishop of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles and the founder of Word on Fire Catholic Ministries.
Una charla en Capitol Hill

Hace un par de semanas, tuve el privilegio de dirigirme a una audiencia compuesta por senadores, representantes y personal de Capitol Hill en una bella sala de la biblioteca del Congreso. El evento fue posible gracias a dos congresistas, el demócrata Tom Suozzi de Nueva York y el republicano John Mooolenar de Michigan. Ambos habían visto y escuchado de los discursos que pronuncié en las cuarteles generales de Facebook y Google, y querían algo similar para aquellos que trabajan en el gobierno.

Al comienzo de mi charla, especificué que no hablaba sobre los asuntos candentes que dominan las discusiones entre religión y política. Aclaré que no lo hacía porque creyera que eran cuestiones sin importancia o que no debieran ser tratadas en último término. Pero insistí que apuntar hacia esos temas que generan polarización imposibilita el encontrar puntos de vista comunes entre el mundo espiritual y el político. Y era justamente ese lugar común el que quería explorar en mi presentación.

Empiecé por explicar la idea de vocación. Estamos acostumbrados a utilizar esta palabra de forma religiosa o espiritual, pero les sugeri que, con toda su resonancia espiritual, aplicaba también a todas las esferas de la vida. Le pedí a la audiencia que recordara la primera vez que sintieron el llamado a dedicarse al servicio público. Les invitó a abstraer las ansiedades, desilusiones y oportunidades del presente, y recobrar ese momento, idealmente marcado por el entusiasmo y el idealismo, cuando decidieron entrar en política y trabajar por la justicia. Lapasión por perseguir lo justo en casos particulares se da en función de algo más básico e intemporal: a saber, la llamada a la Justicia misma, que nos arrastra a ser siervos de su gran valor trascendental. De una forma muy parecida, un artista es alguien que ha oído el llamado —como James Joyce por ejemplo— a ser caballero de la Belleza, y un filósofo, un periodista o un profesor es alguien que ha escuchado el llamado de la Verdad misma. Pero en la teología católica, la Verdad, la Belleza y la Justicia mismas son simplemente nombres para Dios. Por tanto, suponiendo que buscan el más profundo de los cimientos para su compromiso, todos los participantes de una cultura dependen de ellas como beneficiosas de una vocación con implicaciones religiosas. Una vez creada la conexión, le dije a mi audiencia de Washington como los textos bíblicos sobre vocación, como el de 2 Samuel 4:19, pueden ser entendidos como beneficiosos para todos los participantes de una cultura. En este sentido, se identifican como cristianos.

Una vez creada la conexión, le dije a mi audiencia de Washington como los textos bíblicos sobre vocación, como el de 2 Samuel 4:19, pueden ser entendidos como beneficiosos para todos los participantes de una cultura. En este sentido, se identifican como cristianos.
As clergy, we touch upon very holy realities when we baptize, consecrate the Eucharist, give absolution to sinners, or anoint the sick. These special moments engage divine grace in deep and important ways in the lives of those to whom we minister.

In the midst of these sacred realities, we remain, nonetheless, very human and fallible instruments. I remember one time when a bishop contrarily divulged in my presence that during the consecration that morning all he could think about was a good cup of hot coffee.

We clergy need to attend carefully to the graced realities we regularly handle lest we end up squandering or losing our sense of the sacred. The old adage reminds us: familiarity breeds contempt. An elderly priest and professor in Rome used to urge us as seminarians: “Seek the grace to celebrate each Holy Mass as if it were your first Mass, your last Mass, and your only Mass.”

Similar challenges exist in the world of medicine. Physicians who work with frail and vulnerable human beings every day must be attentive when it comes to the sacredness of their subjects and their profession.

One of the lesser-known lines from the famous Hippocratic Oath has always intrigued me: “In purity and holiness I will guard my life and my art.” Doctors face a range of unique temptations that the Oath enumerates: it counsels them to swear off “all mischief and in particular of sexual relations with both female and male [patients]” as well as all abortions and acts of euthanasia. To engage in any of these activities is to lose one’s way, forsaking the sacredness of the medical profession’s calling.

Yet some doctors, not unlike some priests and bishops, end up losing touch with this “sacred dimension.”

An article in the Irish Times, written by a physician in the run-up to the 2018 abortion referendum in Ireland, exemplified this loss and profanation of medicine’s sacredness.

Following a routine 20-week ultrasound of her third pregnancy, Dr. Caroline McCarthy described her sadness at the time: “In purity and holiness I had just heard the news that my baby would not live. His lungs could not develop properly without the fluid; he wouldn’t need his lungs or his kidneys until after birth, so the pregnancy would probably cancel to term.” She was told she had two options: “Carry my baby to term and he either be born dead or die shortly after birth.”

“If we carry to term,” she was told, “the fluid in the lungs could be injected to stop its beating.”

Shortly thereafter, her stillborn son was delivered: “I saw his perfect little face for the first time. I felt that same post-birth relief and elation as I had after the birth of my other two children. The midwife wrapped him in a towel and I held him close. I felt at complete peace with my decision and just sat holding and staring at my beautiful son. In the morning, the midwife helped us dress John. We spent the day holding and looking at him and taking photographs.”

It’s hard to miss the jolting unseemliness of the family’s taking photos of their dead child whose life they had just ended. Dr. McCarthy’s actions cannot be squared with her vocation as a mother or with her sacred calling as a physician to “do no harm.” That sacred calling translates into helping all those born with birth defects or afflicted by disease, without ever imposing death penalties onto them. Ahead of all others, physicians are tasked with grasping this key truth.

Hippocrates possessed unusual wisdom and foresight to codify these real dangers for the soul of the medical profession millennia ago. As we witness an unprecedented collapse of the sense of the sacred within the world of the healing arts today, we must assiduously pray for those who have turned their backs on that ancient and time-tested Oath, and vigorously support those fighting to uphold its tenets within medicine’s hallowed hallways.

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Rev. Tadeusz Pachelczyk, Ph.D. earned his doctorate in neuroscience from Yale and did post-doctoral work at Harvard. He is a priest of the diocese of Fall River, MA, and serves as the Director of Education at The National Catholic Bioethics Center in Philadelphia. See www.bioethicscenter.org.
The light at the tunnel's end is still far away

Greg Erlandson
Catholic News Service

Amid the Fray

It has been a rough 18 months for the U.S. bishops. Much as they would like it to be over, some observers, including a fellow bishop, think they still have a long way to go.

The cascade of bad news started in June 2018 with the revelation that credible accusations of sexual abuse had been leveled against then-Cardinal Theodore E. McCarrick. The flood of bad news continued, first with reports, investigations and scandals, then with the steady drip of dioceses opening their archives and detailing their own histories of dead, defrocked and, more rarely, active priests who had been accused of abuse.

Both the Vatican and the U.S. bishops have instituted major reforms to hold bishops accountable when accused of abuse or the cover-up of abuse, including a toll-free number that will allow allegations of abuse by bishops to be collected and investigated.

This is why there is an almost palpable hope among many church leaders that the worst is behind them and a bit of normalcy can be restored.

Not so fast, seems to be the conclusion of panelists at Georgetown University convened to discuss the crisis and its impact on the church. The Nov. 4 gathering was the official unveiling of a 50-page report titled "Lay Leadership for a Wounded Church and Divided Nation: Lessons, Directions and Paths Forward."

Jesus Father Gerard J. McGlone, himself a survivor of sexual abuse, set the tone for the proceedings when he declared that to say the church has moved beyond the crisis "is for a survivor to pour acid in our wounds."

Patricia McGuire, longtime president of Trinity Washington University, compared the crisis to an earthquake. The immediate effects may be visible, but people don't notice the tsunami that is slowly building out at sea.

"The collateral damage from this scandal is enormous," she said, a damage that includes the betrayal of people who most trusted the church as well as the disillusionment of those administrators, staff and volunteers who have given their lives in its service.

Three of the panelists were victims, including Juan Carlos Cruz. Cruz has the distinction of being publicly accused of abuse in Chile. Incredibly, he later met with the pope privately and convinced him that his story was true.

Following that meeting with Cruz, Pope Francis ordered an investigation of the church in Chile and ultimately asked for the resignations of all the country's bishops. Cruz has forgiven Pope Francis for his disbelief. "I believe he's the right person to help us" with this crisis, Cruz said.

He criticized bishops in other countries who have not yet begun the reforms that have been instituted in the U.S., and he also condemned those who are using the crisis to attack the pope. "They are weaponizing survivors to hurt Pope Francis," he said.

The lone bishop on the panel was Bishop Steven R. Biegler of Cheyenne, Wyoming. On the day of his ordination as bishop, Bishop Biegler recounted, he discovered that his predecessor, Bishop Joseph Hart, had numerous allegations against him. Two settlements had been paid to accusers.

Bishop Biegler ordered an investigation and took the case to Rome. While the Vatican supported the steps he took, Bishop Biegler acknowledged that the accusations and the publicity unsettled both Catholics in Cheyenne and some of his brother bishops.

The abusers have squandered generations of trust placed in the church, Bishop Biegler concluded. Earning that trust back will be a slow process.

"We have a long way to go," Bishop Biegler said. "We've only just begun." - - -

The report can be found at catholicsocialthought.georgetown.edu. - - -

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

St. Frances Xavier Cabrini: Dismissed and dissed?

Dorothy Day supposedly uttered that famous phrase, "Don't call me a saint. I don't want to be dismissed so easily."

Day, of course, now has her own cause for sainthood. And she was deeply devoted to many saints, and once said that we're all called to sainthood. But she had a point about saints being dismissed easily.

Case in point is the recent brouhaha in New York over a statue to St. Frances Xavier Cabrini, the first U.S. citizen to be canonized.

You've probably heard the story: The city of New York has monuments all over the place, but there's a woeful gap in the number of women versus men so honored. The first lady of New York, Chirilane McCray, Mayor Bill de Blasio's spouse, headed up a commission with the intent of narrowing that gap. Called the "She Built NYC" project, the commission decided to ask New Yorkers for their input on which women should be honored with a statue.

So far, so good.

New Yorkers nominated some 320 women. And the big winner? Mother Cabrini, with 219 votes.

Sad to say, however, when the commission picked seven winners to be memorialized around the city with monuments costing taxpayers about $5 million, St. Frances Cabrini didn't make the cut.

Why not? Part of the intent of the project was to raise awareness of women of color, a group often overlooked and undervalued. So, one excellent selection was Shirley Chisholm, America's first black congresswoman. But other selections were more debatable, and one had to wonder if a bit of anti-Catholic bias played into St. Cabrini's elimination.

St. Cabrini was an Italian immigrant during a time when Southern and Eastern Europeans faced hostility and discrimination in the U.S. They were often considered "non-white" at the time. With the suffering endured by so many immigrants today, it seems a good time to raise up a famous New York immigrant. But I'll leave it to others to ponder why St. Cabrini was "dismissed so easily."

In a city and state brimming with folks of Italian descent, plus a large Catholic population, the slight turned into a political fight, or opportunity, depending on your viewpoint. The Italian American governor of New York, Andrew Cuomo, a rival of the Italian American mayor de Blasio, quickly asserted that the state would build its own statue of St. Cabrini.

I imagine St. Cabrini and Day both chuckling over the fracas.

When I was young, Mother Cabrini, as we learned to call her, was a big deal in the American church. She was our only American citizen saint at the time, and a formidable woman. The youngest of 13 children, she worked with the immigrant population and founded the Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. She began a school for girls in the city, an orphanage in upstate New York and 67 organizations for the needy in the late 1880s.

St. Cabrini was no shrinking violet, no plaster statue with her hands meekly folded. She was a tough lady who rolled up her sleeves and fought discrimination against both women and Italians to make a mark on New York City.

Other strong American women saints in other cities followed: St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, a widow with five kids whose wealthy family shunned her when she joined the Catholic Church, changed the face of Catholic education and became the first U.S.-born saint in 1975.

The canonization of St. Katharine Drexel, an heiress who spent her fortune educating black and Native Americans, followed in 2000.

I hope Governor Cuomo does build a St. Cabrini statue, expressing the strength and vision of a woman who should not be dismissed easily.
BISHOP
Continued from Page 3
During Lent and Advent. The schedule of these services is available on our diocesan website. During a communal service, there is the opportunity for individual, private confession.

How often should a person go to Confession? If we are conscious of having committed a mortal sin, we must confess that sin in the Sacrament of Penance before receiving Holy Communion. If no mortal sin has been committed in that time, Confession is not obligatory. If we have committed a serious sin, we should seek Confession as soon as possible. Frequent Confession is spiritually valuable. For many people, about three or four times per year is a good typical rhythm for Confession, but some spiritual directors recommend once per month to promote dynamic spiritual growth.

What things should we confess? We should confess all those serious sins of which we are aware after a good examination of conscience, and which we have committed since our last Confession. Without being strictly necessary, confession of everyday faults (venial sins) is nevertheless strongly recommended by the Church (Catechism of the Catholic Church, no. 1458). This has the benefit of further growth in holiness and conversion. We also receive the forgiveness of venial sins through receiving the Body and Blood of Christ in the Eucharist (Catechism of the Catholic Church, no. 1416).

There are four parts to the celebration of the sacrament.

1. The priest extends his hand toward the sinner. This is an Act of Contrition. There are many forms of prayer of absolution. At the end of this prayer, we make the Sign of the Cross, thank the priest, and go and do our penance as soon as possible. The sacrament is complete when we have finished our penance.

2. Seal of Confession

The sacramental seal of Confession is a sacred trust. The priest must respect it absolutely. He must not reveal our sins or make use of what was told to him in Confession under any circumstance. There are priests who have been imprisoned or killed rather than violate the sacramental seal, including St. John Nepomucene of Prague.

3. Confession and Family Life

In the life of a family, it is good for us to be able to admit it when we make mistakes, say we are sorry, forgive one another, and learn from our mistakes. It is also very important for Catholic parents to bring their children to the church for Confession, and to let their children see that Mom and Dad also go to Confession. Children learn what they live, and this includes giving the Sacrament of Penance a central place in our spiritual life.

The Church is a hospital for sinners, and the divine physician is Jesus Christ. I encourage all members of the Church to experience God’s gift of mercy in the Sacrament of Penance.

OBISPO
Continúa de Página 3
de estos servicios está disponible en nuestra página web diocesana. Durante un servicio comunal, también existe la oportunidad para la Confesión individual y privada.

¿Cuánta frecuencia debe una persona tener la Confesión? Si somos conscientes de haber cometido un pecado mortal, debemos confesar ese pecado en elSacramento de la Penitencia antes de recibir la Sagrada Comunión (Catecismo de la Iglesia Católica, núm. 1415). Si queremos recibir el sacramento de Pena-

tancia, debemos ir a la Confesión. Después de confesar nuestros pecados y hacer reparaciones, podamos recibir la Comunión.

¿Qué cosas debemos confesar? Debemos confesar todos los pecados graves de las cuales somos conscientes después de un buen examen de consciencia, y que hemos cometido desde nuestra última Confesión. Sin ser es-

ticamente necesario, la confesión de las faltas diarias (veniales) es también muy recomendable. Las veniales graves no son obligatorias. Si hemos cometo-

da un pecado grave, debemos ir a la Confesión lo más pronto posible. Si hemos comete-

do un pecado venial, debemos ir a la Confesión de manera frecuente.

El sello sacramental de la Confesión es una confianza sagrada. No debe revelar nuestros pecados o hacer uso de lo que se le dijo en la Confesión en ninguna circunstancia. Hay sacerdotes que han sido encarcelados o muertos en lugar de violar el sello sacramental, incluyendo San Juan Nepomuceno de Praga.

La Confesión y la vida familiar

En la vida de una familia, es bueno que nosotras podamos admitir cuando cometemos errores, pedir disculpas, perdonar el uno al otro, y aprender de nuestros errores. También es muy impor-

tante que los padres católicos lleven a sus hijos a la iglesia para la Confesión, y dejen que sus hijos vean que mamá y papá también se confiesan. Los niños aprenden lo que viven, y esto incluye el Sacramento de la Penitencia un lugar central en nuestra vida espiritual.

La Iglesia es un hospital para los pecadores, y el médico divino es Jesucristo. Animo a todos los miembros de la Iglesia a experimentar el don de la misericordia de Dios en el Sacramento de la Penitencia.
EDICTAL SUMMONS  
December 1, 2019
CASE: GOMEZ (MENDOZA) -- ACOSTA
NO.: SO/19/61*

The Tribunal Office of the Catholic Diocese of San Angelo is seeking Cisto Gonzales Acosta, Jr.
You are hereby summoned to appear before the Tribunal of the Catholic Diocese of San Angelo, at 804 Ford Street, San Angelo, Texas 76905, on or before the 31st day of December 2019, to answer to the Petition of Raquel Francisca Gomez (Mendoza), now introduced before the Diocesan Tribunal in an action styled, “Raquel Gomez (Mendoza) and Cisto Acosta, Jr., Petition for Declaration of Invalidity of Marriage.” Said Petition is identified as Case: GOMEZ (MENDOZA) -- ACOSTA; Protocol No.: SO/19/61*, on the Tribunal Docket of the Diocese of San Angelo.
You may communicate with the Tribunal in person or in writing. Failure to communicate within the prescribed period of time will be considered your consent for the Tribunal to continue its proceedings in the above-named case.
Given at the Tribunal of the Diocese of San Angelo on December 1, 2019.

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

EDICTAL SUMMONS  
December 1, 2019
CASE: MESA (CARDENAS) -- GUTIERREZ
NO.: SO/19/64

The Tribunal Office of the Catholic Diocese of San Angelo is seeking Michael Angelo Gutierrez.
You are hereby summoned to appear before the Tribunal of the Catholic Diocese of San Angelo, at 804 Ford Street, San Angelo, Texas 76905, on or before the 31st day of December 2019, to answer to the Petition of Cynthia Martina Mesa (Cardenas), now introduced before the Diocesan Tribunal in an action styled, “Cynthia Mesa (Cardenas) and Michael Gutierrez, Petition for Declaration of Invalidity of Marriage.” Said Petition is identified as Case: MESA (CARDENAS) -- GUTIERREZ; Protocol No.: SO/19/64, on the Tribunal Docket of the Diocese of San Angelo.
You may communicate with the Tribunal in person or in writing. Failure to communicate within the prescribed period of time will be considered your consent for the Tribunal to continue its proceedings in the above-named case.
Given at the Tribunal of the Diocese of San Angelo on December 1, 2019.

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

EDICTAL SUMMONS  
December 1, 2019
CASE: BUSTILLOS -- ESTRADA
NO.: SO/19/57

The Tribunal Office of the Catholic Diocese of San Angelo is seeking Irene Estrada.
You are hereby summoned to appear before the Tribunal of the Catholic Diocese of San Angelo, at 804 Ford Street, San Angelo, Texas 76905, on or before the 31st day of December 2019, to answer to the Petition of Edgar Bustillos, now introduced before the Diocesan Tribunal in an action styled, “Edgar Bustillos and Irene Estrada, Petition for Declaration of Invalidity of Marriage.” Said Petition is identified as Case: BUSTILLOS -- ESTRADA; Protocol No.: SO/19/57 Edictal Summons, on the Tribunal Docket of the Diocese of San Angelo.
You may communicate with the Tribunal in person or in writing. Failure to communicate within the prescribed period of time will be considered your consent for the Tribunal to continue its proceedings in the above-named case.
Given at the Tribunal of the Diocese of San Angelo on the December 1, 2019.

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

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Bishop Michael Sis on Twitter: @SABishopMike

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ELECTION
Continued from Page 11
man under USCCB bylaws because he is the older of the two candidates. Archbishop Wenski is 69.

The committee had been chaired by Archbishop Joseph E. Kurtz of Louisville, Kentucky, but he stepped down earlier this year to undergo treatment for bladder and prostate cancer. Bishop Murray will serve the remaining year of Archbishop Kurtz’s term.

Vote tallies for committee chairman-elect are:
-- Committee on Canonical Affairs and Church Governance: Archbishop Jerome E. Listecki of Milwaukee elected over Bishop Mark L. Bartchak of Altoona-Johnstown, Pennsylvania, 144-97.
-- Committee on Protection of Children and Young People: Bishop James V. Johnson of Kansas City-St. Joseph, Missouri, was elected over Bishop W. Shawn McKnight of Jefferson City, Missouri, 167-77.

Each chairman-elect will begin his three-year term as chairman at the end of the 2020 fall general assembly. In addition, several chairman-elect chosen last year will become committee chairmen at the end of this year’s assembly and will serve three-year terms:
-- Committee on Catholic Education: Bishop Michael C. Barber of Oakland, California.
-- Committee on Clergy, Consecrated Life and Vocations: Bishop James F. Checchio of Metuchen, New Jersey.
-- Committee on Domestic Justice and Human Development: Archbishop Paul S. Coakley of Oklahoma City.
-- Committee on Laity, Marriage, Family Life and Youth: Archbishop Salvatore J. Cordileone of San Francisco.
-- Committee on Migration: Auxiliary Bishop Mario E. Dorsonville of Washington.

A final vote was taken for three seats on the CRS board. Elected were Bishop Frank J. Caggiano of Bridgeport, Connecticut; Bishop Mark J. Seitz of El Paso, Texas; and Bishop Anthony B. Taylor of Little Rock, Arkansas.

CITIZENSHIP
Continued from Page 11
pages, reminds Catholics that “we bring the richness of our faith to the public square” and that “faith and reason inform our efforts to affirm both the dignity of the human person and the common good of all.”

It introduces the teaching of Pope Francis early on, saying that he calls people to “holiness” by requiring defense of the unborn and upholding the human dignity of poor people, the elderly facing “covert” euthanasia, and other people exposed to other harms. It also specifically mentions the pope’s teaching on migration, xenophobia and racism, abortion, global conflict and care for creation.

“In the United States and around the world, many challenges demand our attention,” the letter said.

The letter also urges Catholics, including those who seek public office, that participation in public parties should be influenced by their faith and not have their faith influenced by political stances.

One long paragraph is devoted to concerns for immigrants, including young people who remain in the United States under the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals and the Temporary Protects Status programs and those who are possible separation because of the threat of deportation.

A second long paragraph follows. It tackles racism; religious freedom concerns domestically and internationally; marriage as the union between one man and one woman; and the need to protect the environment.

The bishops write of their concern for polarization by saying that Catholics are challenged to “serve as models of civil dialogue” in all aspects of public life. The letter concludes with a prayer that calls for Catholics to “respond to the call to faithful citizenship, during election season and beyond.”

The four videos take on various themes and they were expected to be less than two minutes in length. They also will be combined into one six-minute video.

The first introduces Catholic participation in public life while the others look at human life and dignity, the common good and “Catholic love their neighbors.” Each video includes images of people serving others as well as the pope with voice overs that alternate between young people and a narrator, which gives the scripts depth. The bishops focus on how Catholics can engage in various issues with Catholic social teaching as their foundation.

Each segment also closes with a prayer followed by a scene that refers viewers to the Faithful Citizenship website at FaithfulCitizenship.org.

The bishops authored the development of the materials in June 2018 after a long discussion on how the main document could be improved and used more widely in parishes.

Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship was last updated in 2015. The bishops agreed not to change the document this time around, but to supplement it with the new materials that would reflect current concerns and the teachings of the pope.

Follow Sadowski on Twitter: @DennisSadowski

PRATT
Continued from Page 18
Taking others’ comments, ill-meaning or otherwise, personally (which, fortunately, my grandmother in the above scenario otherwise, personally (which, fortunately, taking others’ comments, ill-meaning or otherwise (which, unfortunately, taking others’ comments, ill-meaning or otherwise), I have not experienced a few unfortunate holiday gatherings, they pale against the warm memories of others such good and “Catholic love their neighbors.”

Each video includes images of people serving others as well as the pope with voice overs that alternate between young people and a narrator, which gives the scripts depth. The bishops focus on how Catholics can engage in various issues with Catholic social teaching as their foundation.

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Concern for inmates, prison reform is obligatory act of mercy, pope says

By Cindy Wooden
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Visiting the imprisoned is an act of mercy that has implications for all Christians and not just those involved in prison ministry, Pope Francis said.

Speaking Nov. 8 to participants at an international meeting of national and regional directors of Catholic prison ministries, Pope Francis urged greater efforts to reform prison systems, address the root causes of crime and ensure ministries, Pope Francis urged greater efforts to reform prison systems, address the root causes of crime and ensure ministries.

The aim of a prison sentence should be to educate and prepare people to return eventually to society as law-abiding and contributing citizens, he said, but that often is not the case because of a lack of “resources to address the social, psychological and family problems experienced by detainees.”

“You cannot talk about paying a debt to society from a jail cell without windows,” Pope Francis said. “There is no humane punishment without a horizon. No one can change their life if they don’t see a horizon. And so many times we are used to blocking the view of our inmates.”

“Take this image of the windows and the horizon,” the pope told the prison ministers, “and ensure that in your countries the prisons always have a window and horizon; even a life sentence — which for me is questionable — even a life sentence would have to have a horizon,” a way of offering hope to the inmate.

A related area that requires much more attention from the church and its members, he said, is helping people after they have been released from prison.

Often when leaving prison, a person finds himself in a world that is alien to him and that does not recognize him as trustworthy, even excluding him from the possibility of working to obtain a decent livelihood,” the pope said. “By preventing people from regaining the full exercise of their dignity,” they are exposed again to the lack of opportunity that often contributed to their committing a crime in the first place.

When I have experienced a few unfortunate holiday gatherings, they pale against the warm memories of others who more widely in parishes.

Follow Sadowski on Twitter: @DennisSadowski

Pratt’s website is www.maurreen-pratt.com.
March for Life theme borrows page from suffragist centennial

By Mark Pattison
Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON (CNS) — The March for Life, the annual march in Washington to protest legalized abortion in the United States, is tying itself in 2020 to the women's suffrage movement for the 100th anniversary of the 19th Amendment, which gave women the right to vote.

The theme of the march is "Life Empowers: Pro-Life Is Pro-Woman." Jeanne Mancini, head of the March for Life, remarked how two noted suffragists of their day, Alice Paul and Susan B. Anthony, were themselves staunchly against abortion. A video made to support the upcoming march, to be held Jan. 24, said the women called abortion "the ultimate exploitation of women."

An unnamed woman speaking in the video said 30 million female babies had been aborted since the twin 1973 Supreme Court rulings in Roe v. Wade and Doe v. Bolton that legalized abortion virtually on demand.

Mancini said speakers lined up for the pre-march gathering include Louisiana State Sen. Katrina Jackson, a pro-life Democrat who authored a bill in 2014 to require abortion doctors to have admitting privileges at nearby hospitals. It was ruled unconstitutional in 2017, but that ruling in June Medical Services v. Gee was reversed by the 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals. The U.S. Supreme Court said in October it would take up the case, its first abortion-related case since the death of Antonin Scalia and the retirement of Anthony Kennedy.

Also on the speakers' list is U.S. Rep. Christopher Smith, R-New Jersey, long a pro-life advocate, who has sponsored the Born-Alive Survivors Protection Act, which would bar the killing of any baby who survives an abortion. Two such survivors will speak as well, according to Mancini.

The 2020 march will be the 47th such march. "We march regardless," Mancini said during a Dec. 3 news briefing in Washington about the march. In 2016, "we had 'Blizzard-geddon,'" she added. An even stronger blizzard in 1982 that crippled the Washington region and its transportation network did not deter those hardy but few marchers who had already made it to the nation's capital.

The 2019 march was "the first one we marched during a government shutdown," Mancini added. She said she is working with the U.S. Park Service to assure that there would be no complications to conducting the march should the government be shut down again.

The March for Life now bills itself as "the world's largest human rights demonstration" and "the world's largest pro-life event." Mancini, during the news briefing, called it "the single unifying pro-life event" bringing together people from all points on the pro-life spectrum.

Mancini said more legislation on the abortion front is being advanced at the state level, and that the March for Life would be replicated elsewhere, including Virginia, Connecticut and Chicago.

While the march promotes legislation reflecting pro-life interests, it also aims to "change hearts and minds," Mancini said.

Tom McClusky, president of March for Life Action, which is the sister organization of the March for Life Education and Defense Fund headed by Mancini, also spoke at the briefing. "If Roe v. Wade is overturned or weakened," he said, "there will be even more action in the states."
probable that even fewer of these are people who identify as Catholic. At least 65% of the millennials living in Mexico and 40% of those living in the United States say they are Catholic, but those are still not as many as the 58% who identify as Catholic in the United States. However, we should not take this for granted; we need to continue to evangelize and to support the pastoral work of those who already do this important work.

Our faith guides our giving. Buying less is a great first step: to focus on Christ, resist greed and bring relief to your budget and the environment.

"Christmas is preferring the silent voice of God to the noisiness of consumerism," said Pope Francis.

Fanucci is a mother, writer and director of a project on vocation at the Collegeville Institute in Collegeville, Minnesota. She is the author of several books, including Every Day Sacrament: The Messy Life of Grace and blogs at www.motheringspirit.com.