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A diverse group from around the diocese gathered at Christ the King Retreat Center in San Angelo on March 23 to review the findings of the pastoral planning process and offer insights. Read one participant's impression of the event on Page 2.
By Deb Michalewicz

After an action-packed day, I gratefully entered the doors of Christ the King Retreat Center on Friday evening. I immediately felt as if I were coming home to Gramma’s. The lights were low and warm, and the scents wafting from the kitchen were appealing and homey, and the greeting was genuine and comforting. At the same time, the magnificent décor celebrated and evoked the sacred season of Lent and reminded me of my purpose there for almost the next 24 hours.

Immediately after supper we went right to work. To me that felt like going into Gramma’s garage which my Grampa, Dad, and I usually did right after lunch. Grampa was a diesel engine mechanic, had top notch tools, and used them to showcase his latest engine rebuild project. As I looked around the main conference room at CKRC, I realized Bishop Sis had called leaders from most of the 29 counties in the Diocese and offered top of the line resources for his people to engage in the Diocesan Pastoral Planning Leadership Summit on March 22 and 23, 2019. Additionally, the consulting firm of Essential Conversations had previously facilitated a diocesan survey which repeatedly invited to respond. Furthermore, over 1000 Catholics engaged in multiple listening sessions around the diocese on numerous specific topics. The firm then condensed and presented all information gleaned in clear, concise compilations. This was NOT going to be business as usual!

Accordingly, I moved on from Gramma and Grampa’s and began the hard work requested by my bishop. We began with prayer calling for a “Future Full of Hope” in both English and Spanish. For the next couple of hours, we examined the compilations and identified six major themes which seemed to reflect the thoughts and comments of all responses presented.

The next morning after breakfast we went to the chapel and prayed our beautiful Catholic Liturgy of the Hours at www.ebreviary.com. Next in the conference room, we met an additional 70 people who had also responded to Bishop Sis’ request to begin discerning God’s call for the People of God in the 37,000 square miles of our Diocese of San Angelo. Essential Conversations’ Dominic Perri facilitated introductions by a simple raising of hands each time we identified with a particular gender, age, ethnic background, formal education level, or occupation group. I was surprised at the significant diversity in the makeup of our team — especially the ages of the leaders represented. We were 20-year-olds all the way through 70-year-olds. Diverse collaboration is a powerful tool. Again, NOT business as usual!

We were then asked to empty ourselves to create space for the Holy Spirit to work through us. Then came the defining instruction of our day — “Imagine the Diocese of San Angelo 3 to 5 years from now. What would it be like if...” Fill in the blank.” So I sat back, closed my eyes, and began dreaming as did most of the other team collaborators. Silence prevailed. Then slowly and hesitantly at first, then a little more quickly and then faster and then very fast came the thoughts and feelings as co-conspirators began to call out hopes, dreams, and visions. Each and every suggestion was recorded on wall charts in alternating colors. Most comments were in English; some were in Spanish and immediately translated for the bilingual. Incidentally, those who were more comfortable working in Spanish had the blessing of two excellent translators speaking though headphones to them throughout the entire process.

We blew through the scheduled breaktime. We sustained ourselves with an occasional burst of freshly-baked oatmeal or chocolate chip cookie energy. The dreams kept being called out. The Spirit was present and on fire! We decided we would delay lunch so each and every vision could be expressed and recorded. It was then I had to channel my inner Gramma who was a “Rosie the Riveter” and get the job done. WE CAN DO IT!

We all looked exhausted! What an experience!! Fortunately, the CKRC kitchen came through again with a delicious, healthy, and plentiful lunch of build-your-own chicken fajita salads. Dominic remarked he had NEVER seen a bowl of guacamole that large in his entire life! Aaaaahh ... Texas hospitality at its best! But we weren’t finished yet! Back to work, y’all!!

We were all totally amazed to count over 100 “What ifs?” recorded on our wall charts! Dominic said this was phenomenal participation! Yet there was still more to do. Each of us was handed nine three-quarter inch diameter sticky dots. We were asked to review the 100+ dreams and use the dots to indicate our priority. Nine measly dots for 100 dreams? WE CAN DO IT! Then, visually before our eyes, the collective “dots” created a rough road map of the direction God seemed to be calling the people of the Diocese of San Angelo. Exhilarated, we immediately moved into party-mode and began taking photos of new table friends in front of the multicolored Dream Charts.

Exhausted and wrung out but feeling blessed beyond belief, I slowly strolled out of the retreat center. I sort of didn’t want to leave, like at Gramma and Grampa’s, but I knew each of us would be called back in some capacity to do whatever would come next to assist Bishop Sis for the benefit of our diocese. More shall be revealed! Thanks be to God!!

Reporting Sexual Abuse

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

La Diócesis Católica de San Angelo está firmemente comprometida a crear y mantener el ambiente más seguro posible para nuestros niños y adultos vulnerables. Si usted o alguien que usted conoce ha sido víctima de abuso sexual por cualquier persona que sirve a la Iglesia, y necesita un lugar para hablar con alguien sobre sus sentimientos de traición 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.

Linda Foster provided simultaneous translation for summit participants whose preferred language is Spanish. Bishop Michael Sis joined her at the table set up for the translation broadcast equipment and listened to summit participants as they discussed the future of the diocese. (Angelus photo)
Real-life struggles and the power of the Paschal Mystery

By Bishop Michael J. Sis, Diocese of San Angelo

Life is a strange blend of Good Friday and Easter Sunday—a combination of pain and joy. As we prepare for Holy Week this year, I suggest that we all prayerfully ponder this aspect of our real-life experience, and allow our Catholic faith to give it new meaning. Our typical human tendency is either to focus only on the struggle (which can lead to despair) or to focus only on the fun times, ignoring the pain as if we were living in a dream world.

The Cross is central to understanding our faith. It is the most well-known and universal symbol of Christianity. During the Stations of the Cross, we pray, "We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you, because by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world." The Cross is a paradox. It is both a brutal instrument of torture and a symbol of the greatest triumph in history. It is both the sign of Christ’s suffering and the trophy of his victory.

Some people would prefer a kind of "Christianity lite" without the Cross, in a comfortable routine, expecting God to keep everything smooth and easy. However, Jesus never promised us a rose garden. He never tried to get people to follow him by claiming that it would be a leisurely path. In fact, Jesus said, "If anyone wishes to come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me" (Mt 16:24).

The Paschal Mystery is at the heart of Christianity. It is the one, inseparable event of the Death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ. Through our participation in the Mass, we participate personally in the Paschal Mystery, which we call the Eucharistic sacrifice (U.S. Catholic Catechism for Adults, p. 224). We are enabled to pass through death from this life into eternal glory, "just as God enabled the people of ancient Israel to pass from slavery to freedom" (p. 167). In fact, Jesus enacts his Paschal Mystery in all the sacraments of the Church. Every spring, in the most important liturgical season of the Christian year, we remember, celebrate, and share in the Paschal Mystery in the Easter Triduum.

The Easter Triduum includes Holy Thursday, Good Friday, Holy Saturday, and Easter Sunday. It all goes together. There is no Easter without Good Friday, and there is no Good Friday without Easter. The Paschal Mystery allows us to embrace the whole picture of our personal Christian path, including both pains and joys, sacrifices and rewards, health and illnesses, life, death, and resurrection.

When Jesus died on the Cross on Good Friday, his followers felt defeated and lost. It seemed like the whole project was a failure. Then, when they encountered the Risen Lord on Easter Sunday, they were transformed. The Resurrection is about transformation.

Sometimes the troubles of our lives make us feel like we are in a hopeless situation. In those difficult times, the poison of the devil would lead us to despair, but the antidote to that poison is the gift of hope.

God wants to give us hope, and he wants us to show others that there is a reason to hope. That reason is Jesus Christ. In his Resurrection on Easter Sunday morning, Christ has won the victory of life over death, of peace over violence, of healing over brokenness, of wisdom over ignorance, of forgiveness over revenge, of fortitude

From the Bishop’s Desk

Mira OBISPO, Página 22
Employment Opportunities

Details on these and other employment opportunities can be found online at https://sanangelodiocese.org/job-openings.

Comptroller, Diocese of San Angelo
The Roman Catholic Diocese of San Angelo has an excellent opportunity for a Comptroller. The Diocese numbers over 86,000 Catholics in 45 parishes and 21 missions in the 29 counties that encompass the diocese.

POSITION DESCRIPTION
Responsibilities include assisting with the annual audit, performing general accounting duties, and coordinating various insurance tasks. In addition to the general job duties, the Comptroller will be required to update - at times create - a variety of spreadsheets, assist in special projects at the direction of the Chief Financial Officer, and provide management with ad-hoc reports as necessary.

Duties and Responsibilities
- Review and approve receivables and cash receipts.
- Input general journal entries.
- Send out customer statements.
- Complete balance sheet reconciliations.
- Perform imports into accounting software.
- Review completed bank reconciliations.
- Assist with annual budget for the diocese and parishes.
- Compile audit schedules as requested.
- Assist in the implementation of new systems, processes, and policies as needed.
- Other duties as assigned.

Skills Required:
- Fundamental accounting experience is preferential with proficiency in multi-location accounting.
- 3-5 years of relevant experience in accounting, bachelor’s degree required.
- Competence with Microsoft Office, particularly Microsoft Excel.
- Abila MIP experience a plus, ability to adapt to new software required.
- Good math and logic aptitude with the ability to choose the right mathematical method or formula to solve a problem.
- Exceptional communication, grammar, spelling and proof-reading skills with the ability to follow-up effectively with all levels of staff.
- Excellent customer service skills.
- Capability to prioritize multiple tasks, organize workload, adapt quickly to change and deliver under the pressure of deadlines.
- Ability to work independently and in a time sensitive environment.
- Capacity to maintain a high level of confidentiality.

Principal, Angelo Catholic School
Angelo Catholic School is looking for a new Principal to begin work on July 1. The requirements for the Principal Job include:
- A practicing Catholic with a commitment to ongoing formation in catechetical and spiritual development as defined by and monitored by the local ordinary and superintendent.
- Master’s degree.
- 18 credit hours in administration and supervision courses or valid, appropriate state certification for a principal or the successful completion of an appropriate state certification examination.

If you or someone you know is interested in the principal job at Angelo Catholic School, please contact the school office at 325-949-1747.

Calendar

Bishop’s Calendar

April 2019

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>SAN ANGELO, Diocesan Pastoral Center, Financial Council meeting at 11:00 a.m.</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>MIDLAND, San Miguel Arcángel, Adult Confirmation Mass at 7:00 p.m.</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>WALL, St. Ambrose, Mass and blessing of columbarium at 6:00 p.m.</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>WACO, St. Peter Catholic Student Center, Mass at 5:30 p.m.</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>GARDEN CITY, St. Lawrence, Theology on Tap at 7:00 p.m.</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>GARDEN CITY, St. Lawrence, Confirmation Mass at 10:30 a.m.</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>SAN ANGELO, Murphrey Performance Hall, Premier of film, The Needle and the Thread, at 3:00 p.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>8-12</td>
<td>SAN ANGELO, Christ the King Retreat Center, San Angelo Diocese Priests Annual Retreat</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>SAN ANGELO, Sacred Heart Cathedral, Christ Mass at 11:00 a.m.</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>SAN ANGELO, Sacred Heart Cathedral, Passion Sunday Mass at 12:00 noon</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>SAN ANGELO, Holy Angels, Seder Meal at 5:30 p.m.</td>
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May 2019

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>SAN ANGELO, Diocesan Pastoral Center, Liturgical Commission meeting at 10:00 a.m.</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>ABILENE, Holy Family, Confirmation Mass at 7:00 p.m.</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>SAN ANGELO, Holy Angels, Confirmation Mass at 6:30 p.m.</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>SAN ANGELO, Christ the King Retreat Center, Vocations Awareness Day</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>MIDLAND, San Miguel Arcángel, Confirmation Mass at 4:00 p.m.</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>SAN ANGELO, Sacred Heart Cathedral, Holy Thursday Mass of the Lord’s Supper at 7:00 p.m.</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>SAN ANGELO, St. Margaret, Good Friday Procession and Stations of the Cross at 11:00 a.m., light lunch at 11:30 a.m.</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>SAN ANGELO, Sacred Heart Cathedral, Service of the Passion at 7:00 p.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>SAN ANGELO, St. Ambrose, Easter Vigil at 8:30 p.m.</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>SAN ANGELO, Christ the King Retreat Center, Staff picnic at 6:00 p.m.</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>ST. LOUIS, MO, Kerrick-Glennon Seminar visit</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>OZONA, Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Confirmation Mass at 11:00 a.m.</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>MIDLAND, San Miguel Arcángel, Confirmation Mass at 4:00 p.m.</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>SAN ANGELO, Diocesan Pastoral Center, Catholic Charitable Foundation meeting at 10:00 a.m.</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>SAN ANGELO, Sacred Heart Cathedral, Christ Mass at 12:10 p.m.</td>
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<td>STANTON, St. Joseph, Confirmation Mass at 6:30 p.m.</td>
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Christ the King Retreat Center

April 2019

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<th>Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Heart of Mercy Prayer Group Deacon Formation</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Deacon Edward Martinez (1985)</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Deacon Jerry Treviño (2017)</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Deacon Andres Hernandez (2013)</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Deacon Alan Neff (2016)</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Deacon Wayne Rock (2006)</td>
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May 2019

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<td>Deacon Lazaro Sieriev (2009)</td>
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Necrology of Priests and Deacons

Please pray for our departed clergy

April

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<td>Rev. Clifford Blackburn, OMI (2005)</td>
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<td>Rev. Msgr. Kevin Heubyrn (2001)</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>Rev. Tom Diab (2007)</td>
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Statement of the bishops of the border between Texas and Northern Mexico

Press Release
March 4, 2019

I was a stranger and you welcomed me (Mt 25:35).

Driven by situations of extreme violence and poverty, many immigrants come to our border, in large caravans or small groups. We urge everyone to discover, in these brothers and sisters who are suffering, Christ in need, and to give them the support they require, without them being criminals, as they are sometimes perceived. The reality is different: many of them are victims of criminal elements in their own countries as well as along the course of their journey to the border. As bishops of the border between Texas and Mexico, we reaffirm our commitment to continue to provide all the help our migrant brothers and sisters need, each distinct diocese joining with various religious and civil organizations that work in support of the immigrant. We appeal to governments, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that they not adopt policies that have the effect of increasing the suffering of the most vulnerable.

In particular, we express our total disagreement with the policy of the government of the United States to send to Mexico migrants who are waiting for their turn to appear before a U.S. judge who will decide whether or not they receive asylum. We oppose this proposal for several reasons, among others: 1) It will force Mexico to organize camps for tens of thousands of refugees, thus effectively undermining their right to seek asylum in the United States, and depriving them of the support of family members on U.S. soil. 2) It will effectively put out of their reach the exercise of their right to procure legal representation in their case before the court. 3) It will create a situation in which many immigrants and refugees will no longer seek the legal process through established ports of entry, but will try to enter the United States through high-risk locations in order to avoid the authorities.

As pastors, we encourage our faithful to join ourselves to the God of hope and life, so that he may help us to welcome, protect, promote, and integrate immigrants, as requested by Pope Francis.

Let us not grow tired of doing good (Galatians 6:9).

Most Rev. Gustavo García-Siller, MSpS
Archbishop of San Antonio

Most Rev. Michael Boulette
Auxiliary Bishop of San Antonio

Most Rev. Daniel E. Flores
Bishop of Brownsville

Comunicado de los Obispos de la frontera entre Texas y la frontera norte de México

4 de marzo, 2019

Fui forastero y me recibieron (Mt 25,35).

Movidos por situaciones de extrema violencia y pobreza, muchos inmigrantes llegan a nuestra frontera, en grandes caravanas o pequeños grupos. Exhortamos a todas las personas a descubrir, en estos hermanos que sufren, a Cristo necesitado, y a brindarles el apoyo que requieran, sin asumir que ellos son criminales, como en ocasiones son percibidos. La realidad es otra: muchos de ellos son víctimas de elementos criminales en sus propios países y en el transcurso de su camino hacia la frontera. Como obispos de la frontera de Texas con México, reiteramos nuestro compromiso de seguir brindando toda la ayuda que nuestros hermanos migrantes necesitan, uniéndonos las distintas diócesis con varios organismos religiosos y civiles que trabajan en pro del inmigrante. Apelamos a los gobiernos, en nombre de Nuestro Señor Jesucristo, que no adopten políticas que tengan el efecto de aumentar el sufrimiento de los más vulnerables.

En particular, manifestamos nuestro total desacuerdo con la política del gobierno de los Estados Unidos de enviar a México a los migrantes que esperan su turno para presentarse ante un juez estadounidense quien decida si reciben, o no, el asilo. Nos oponemos a dicha propuesta por varias razones, entre otras: 1) Obligará a México a organizar campamentos para decenas de miles de refugiados, minando efectivamente así su derecho de buscar asilo en los Estados Unidos, y privándolos del apoyo de familiares en suelo estadounidense. 2) Prácticamente se les pondrá fuera de su alcance ejercer su derecho de procurar representación legal en su proceso ante la corte. 3) Creará una situación en la que muchos inmigrantes y refugiados ya no buscarán el proceso legal por los puertos de entrada establecidos, sino intentarán ingresar a Estados Unidos por lugares de alto riesgo para evitar las autoridades.

Como pastores, animamos a nuestros fieles a unirnos a Dios de la esperanza y de la vida, para que nos ayude a acoger, proteger, promover, e integrar al inmigrante, como lo pide el Papa Francisco.

No se cansen, hermanos y hermanas, de hacer el bien (Gálatas 6,9).

S.E. Mons. Gustavo García-Siller, MSpS
Obispo de Saltillo

S.E. Mons. Michael Boulette
Obispo Auxiliar de San Antonio

S.E. Mons. Daniel E. Flores
Obispo de Brownsville

S.E. Mons. Mario A. Avilés, C.O.
Auxiliar Bishop of Brownsville

S.E. Mons. Raymundo J. Peña
Bishop Emeritus of Brownsville

S.E. Mons. José Guadalupe Torres Campos
Bishop of Ciudad Juárez

S.E. Mons. Mark J. Seitz
Bishop of El Paso

S.E. Mons. Michael D. Pfeifer, OMI
Bishop Emeritus of San Angelo
Celebrating National Catholic Sisters Week, March 8-14

By Sister Adelina Garcia, OSF

On March 9, Sisters Joyce Detzel, Hilda Marotta, and Adelina Garcia had a meal and a viewing of the documentary Women of Spirit, the history of women religious in the United States. This was presented during the lunch hour at the McNease Convention Center in San Angelo. There was much excitement afterwards as the participants shared their newfound knowledge of sisters in the U.S. Some shared their own experience of sisters in school and college.

At the Pastoral Center on Monday, March 11, the Office of Evangelization and Catechesis ran a video on the School Sisters of St. Francis showing some of their history and present ministries. This was held in the library.

On Wednesday, March 13, Sisters Hilda, Joyce, Adelina, and Tita Iglesias held a gathering at Immaculate Heart of Mary parish hall in Sweetwater. Families gathered and shared a wonderful meal while viewing the School Sisters of St. Francis video. Afterwards, Sister Joyce spoke on National Catholic Sisters Week and a short video called “Jesus Calls Women” was shown. Opportunity was given for questions and sisters shared their own vocation stories. The different congregations (Oblates of Notre Dame, Congregation of Divine Providence and School Sisters of St. Francis) had displays and free informational material. The sixty-three participants all expressed excitement and gratitude for the evening. The four sisters received gift baskets from the parish.

On Thursday, March 14, the video loop of the School Sisters of St. Francis was shown to the study group at the Franciscan Resource Center along with the poster display of the sisters serving in the Diocese of San Angelo. This concluded our week-long celebration.

Much excitement was expressed at each of the gatherings as people were exposed to the history of religious life in the U.S.

Faith and family on the Eggemeyer farm

Catholic Rural Life

At 6 a.m. Billy Eggemeyer rises, fills his cup of coffee, catches a few minutes of the news and waits for his wife, Diane, to join him a little later. Together, the couple, both 63 and from Midkiff, Texas, ask the Lord’s blessing on their day by praying the Liturgy of the Hours.

By 7 a.m., Billy grabs some crackers, an orange and a jug of water, and hits the road for a 16-mile drive to his farthest piece of land where he works for the day. He returns home a little over 12 hours later.

“I don’t have any trouble sleeping!” he laughs. Billy, who grew up farming, traces his farming bloodline all the way back to his great-great grandparents who moved from Germany to Texas to farm. Then, as a sophomore at Texas Tech University, he got a call one night that his dad had been killed in a harvest accident. So he dropped out of school and took over the family farm. He was 19.

In the early 1980s he began buying land and hasn’t stopped, he said. The couple own 6,000 acres — 1,200 is farmed by Billy and 2,500 by two of his sons. They grow cotton, corn, wheat and milo. While no longer on the homestead, the Eggemeyers live only a mile and half from where Billy grew up.

“There’s no better life than to raise your family on the farm,” Diane said, reminiscing about days spent praying the rosary with their four kids amongst rows of cotton. “It’s a totally different way of living.”

“Dr. Billy is such a hard worker, he’s a natural leader,” Diane said. “He made this world and I just want to give it to my kids and the next generation better than I had it. God doesn’t make land anymore.”

That next generation includes his two oldest sons, who not only farm part of his land, but have bought some of their own as well. There’s still a chance the Eggemeyers’ youngest son, a sophomore at Texas A&M, will join the farm one day, too.

But in some ways, having the kids decide to come home is the easiest part. Billy questions how long family farming can last with the rising costs.

“You’ve got to farm a thousand to two thousand acres to make ends meet with the price of equipment and everything else,” he said.

But where there’s a will there’s a way, he added. Already he is seeing neighbors share the cost of harvesting equipment that they use on a rotating basis.

“My dream is that my sons and all the young people that are coming out here now can make it,” Billy said. “I want this community to last where their kids can grow up like my kids did.”

If Billy has his way, well, his farm will last for generations to come.

He said, “I’ve threatened my kids that if they sell this stuff I’ll come back and haunt them for the rest of their lives!”

Used with permission from Catholic Rural Life. Catholic Rural Life is a non-profit organization dedicated to sustaining and revitalizing an authentic Catholic culture in rural communities. To learn more or to become a member of CRL please visit CatholicRuralLife.org.
Charismatic Corner

By Dee Halbert

2019 has gotten off to an exciting start, beginning with the Mass of the Holy Spirit and Healing Service held at Sacred Heart Church in Abilene on Feb. 26. The service had 156 in attendance, and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit was joy-filled and abundant. The presence of the Lord was tangible as participants were saturated with healing prayer. Megan Roth, a young mother suffering with chronic fatigue disease reported: “I went into the Mass exhausted and in pain, I left feeling fine and no pain and I have more energy!”

We continue to gather healing reports of body, mind, emotion, and spirit. The next Mass and healing service is scheduled for Monday evening, May 6, in Midland at Our Lady of Guadalupe Church. The exact time and additional info will be provided soon.

Several parishioners from our San Angelo Diocese also attended the annual regional Catholic Charismatic Conference in San Antonio, held at St. Mary Magdalene March 1 and 2, themed “Miracles Never Ending for You and Through You.” The presenter was Bob Cantor, who has ministered healing, deliverance and miracles in over 50 countries.

We personally witnessed healing of the blind, deaf and lame!


New priest assignments to take effect this summer

West Texas Angelus

For the glory of God and the service of the people of the Diocese of San Angelo, Bishop Michael Sis announces the following changes in assignments of priests:

Rev. Saul Alonso Garcia, MSP, will become parochial vicar of Holy Redeemer in Odessa on July 1, 2019.

Rev. Felix Archibong will become parochial administrator of St. Ann in Sonora on July 1, 2019.

Rev. Terry Brenon will become pastor of St. Patrick in Brady and St. Francis Xavier in Melvin on July 1, 2019.


Rev. Adam Droll will become director of the Newman Center at Angelo State University in San Angelo on July 1, 2019.


Rev. Bala Anthony Govindu will become pastor of St. Charles in Eden, St. Phillip in Eola, and Our Lady of Guadalupe in Millersview on July 1, 2019.

Rev. Juan Lopez Cortes, MSP, will become parochial administrator of St. Joseph in San Angelo on July 1, 2019.

Rev. Bhaskar Mendem will become pastor of Sacred Heart Church in Abilene on Feb. 26. Father Albert Ezeanya was the celebrant, with pastor Msgr. Bob Bush and Msgr. Bernard Gully concelebrating. Deacons Dwain Hennessey and Ron Stegenga and wife Wendy, Stephen Teehee, and Pat Johnson as altar servers. (courtesy photo)

Archbishop speaks on San Antonio Chick-fil-A decision

By Catholic News Service

SAN ANTONIO (CNS) — The marketplace, not elected officials, should decide whether a company should open an outlet in a particular location, said San Antonio Archbishop Gustavo Garcia-Siller.

In a March 27 statement, he said he has been asked what he thinks of the San Antonio City Council’s 6-4 vote March 21 “to exclude Chick-fil-A from the list of concessionaires that could operate at San Antonio International Airport” because the company is known for its support of traditional marriage.

“It is best in this circumstance that elected officials not restrict a restaurant chain’s right to conduct business,” Archbishop Garcia-Siller said. “Let the marketplace decide, and consumers will select which businesses to support — or not support — with their dollars, as they always do.”

He said the issue reminded him of a statement made in July 2012 “by my beloved former prelate, Cardinal Francis George of Chicago.”

Calvary Cemetery Cleanup

On Saturday, May 4, there will be a general cleanup of Calvary Cemetery in San Angelo. Cemetery personnel will remove and discard all unauthorized fencing and brick/stone/wire borders of any kind, including any items on the grave such as gravel/rocks, outdoor carpet, lights, etc. There will be no exceptions, so please remove anything you do not want thrown away by 7:00 pm, Friday, May 3. You may return flowers to graves on Sunday, May 5. Please keep in mind that only one flower arrangement per grave is permitted. We ask that no other decorations, other than a small American Flag on national holidays, be placed on graves.

Correction

On page 24 of the March 2019 issue of the West Texas Angelus, two Oblates of Notre Dame sisters were misidentified. The first photo was of Sister Maria Theresa Aragon; the third photo was of Sister Rosalia Sabud. We apologize for the error.

See SAN ANTONIO, Page 22
**Foundation receives generous donation**

Mr. and Mrs. Frank Cahill present a check to Bishop Michael Sis as a donation to the Catholic Charitable Foundation for the Roman Catholic Diocese of San Angelo. Frank Cahill is the executor of the estate of Jean Hays, from which the donation was made. The donation of $1.5 million will be added to the Catholic Charitable Foundation Unrestricted Endowment Fund, which accepts donations without a designated purpose. To learn more about the Catholic Charitable Foundation for the Roman Catholic Diocese of San Angelo and how you can contribute, visit www.catholicfoundationsanangelo.org. (Angelus photo)

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**The Tower, the Church, and the family**

The story of the Tower of Babel (Genesis 11:1-9) has influenced the heart and mind of our Western culture for centuries because of the timeless truth it proclaims. The story is about the human race after the Great Flood. Our race had failed to learn the lesson that human beings did not create themselves but are created for the glory of God. As St. Irenaeus said, "The glory of God is a human being who is fully alive" (Against Heresies). So, in the words of Genesis, these ancestors of ours said, "Come, let us build ourselves a city, and a tower with its top in the heavens, and let us make a name for ourselves." Here again is that capitulation to the original sin of Adam and Eve to glorify themselves and not God who created them.

The story of the Tower of Babel is the story of the first collective attempt to organize human beings for the purpose of making a name for themselves. This is an effort, on a collective level, to take the place of God. Although this is an impossible task, the effort has continued throughout human history. The result is not a group of human beings trying to glorify themselves but the tyranny of the few over the many.

Those tyrants who gain power, whether they are called kings, queens, presidents, prime ministers, dictators, leaders, or prophets, increasingly oppress the people whose confidence they initially win with the promise of their own glory. In the twentieth century alone, we saw National Socialists in Germany, Fascists in Italy, and Marxists in the Soviet Union attempt to accomplish what the builders of the Tower of Babel failed to do. In this century we see it now in Venezuela. To use the terms of St. Augustine, here is a picture of the City of Man attempting to take the place of the City of God. It never works. As St. Jerome says of the Tower of Babel, when those building the Tower were disbanded, it was for their own welfare: "The conspiracy was evil. The dispersion was of true benefit even to those who were dispersed." (Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture, LOT,169).

In our Western culture, in response to this attempt to collectively glorify ourselves, there has arisen an exaggerated secular individualism. In this exaggerated secular individualism, every person seeks to be his or her own master and becomes his or her own tyrant. Each person seeks to bend the lives of those around them to the purpose of his or her own individual life. We proclaim our individuality with the cars we drive, the homes we build, and the t-shirts we wear. This kind of individualism can lead to a competition with others that always seeks to beat the other guy in accumulating wealth and prestige.

We have heard some in our own extended families and a few friends speak of whether or not a certain person was "successful" in life, with success measured by money earned, the size of the house lived in, and membership in the right clubs. Recently it has been discovered that some of the very rich in our culture are buying admission for their children to prestigious universities with bribes to officials at schools and to the administrators of standardized entrance tests. As this attempt of selfish individualism collides with the collective attempt to glorify ourselves, we see the result of the Tower of Babel, a "confusion of tongues" which produces increasing anarchy in our culture.

The basis of both this collectivism and the

See KNICKERBOCKERS, Page 23

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**St. Gerald of Sauve-Majeure founded 11th-century French forest monastery**

Gerald was an 11th-century monk of Corbie, France, who had such severe head pains that he found it virtually impossible to pray, work, or study. Doctors were unable to do anything for him beyond the latest medical treatments of lancings, leeches, and herbal purgatives.

In 1050, the young monk left for Rome where he was ordained by Pope St. Leo IX. Omer Englebert writes in *Lives of the Saints* that Gerald (sometimes also Gerard or Geraud) continued to seek help and a cure for his affliction through pilgrimages to Monte Gargano, Monte Cassino, and apostles’ tombs.

Years later, he got his cure and the pains suddenly ended. Gerald attributed this to the intercession of St. Adelard of his native Corbie. Dom Basil Watkins, OSB, writes in *The Book of Saints* that Gerald next made a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. When he returned to France, the monks of St. Vincent of Laon asked for him as their abbot.

He spent the next five years trying to bring reforms to the monastery but was not successful. Finally, he left, taking two monks with him. They were joined by a recluse and five knights who wanted to live a life of fervor. This group visited the sanctuary of St. Denis near Paris, the Church of the Holy Cross at Orleans, and the tomb of St. Martin at Tours. In Poitiers they met William III, duke of Aquitaine, who offered to help them and directed them to a forest at Grande-Sauve, about six leagues from Bordeaux.

Gerald took possession of some land in 1079 and in 1081 laid the foundation stone for an abbey that would be called Notre Dame de la Grande-Sauve. The name refers to the “Silva Major,” the great forest that filled the whole region known as the “vineyard between two seas.” He established the monastery under the rule of St. Benedict and dedicated it to the Holy Virgin and the apostles St. Simon and St. Jude. This monastery became the center of a group of reformed monasteries. It had the support of the duke, the pope, and several generous benefactors, and prospered and grew rapidly.

As abbot, Gerald introduced the practice of having Masses and the Office of the Dead offered for 30 days for the soul of each monk who died at Sauve-Majeure.

Gerald was noted for his preaching and as a confessor. He is also the author of a *Hagiography* (lives of the saints) in which he mentions several holy personages. Englebert writes that when Gerald was ready to die in 1095, he received the last sacraments, blessed and embraced all his monks, then asked them to retire in order to give place to the angels and saints who, he said, were coming to fetch his soul and take it to heaven.

He was canonized in 1197 by Pope Celestine III and his feast day is April 5.

Note: The Grand–Sauve Abbey suffered damage during the Hundred Years’ War (1337-1453). It was repaired and fortified in the 16th century, but its privileges and influence declined. In 1667 the community became affiliated with the Congregation of St. Maur. The monastery later suffered damages from earthquakes and fires until the French government acquired the site in 1960. It is now open to the public under the management of the Centre des Monuments Historiques.

Mary Lou Gibson writes about the saints for the West Texas Angelus from her home in Austin.
Sacred Heart Parish observes the 261st anniversary of the destruction of the Santa Cruz de San Sabá Mission

By Terry Kelley

In the early morning hours of March 16, 1758, 2,000 hostile Norteño Indians riding horses stolen from the Spanish and armed with French muskets, crossed the San Saba River to destroy the Mission Santa Cruz de San Sabá. In the end, the mission was burned to the ground, and twelve Spaniards, including Father Alonso Giraldo de Terreros from Mendard’s Sister City of Cortegana and Father José de Santiesteban Aberin, died as Christian martyrs. Nine Spaniards were also wounded, while 17 of the hosts were killed and an unknown number were wounded.

Two-hundred and sixty-one years later, on March 16, 2019, Menard’s Sacred Heart Church joined with the Menard County Historical Commission to remember the tragic events which changed the course of Spanish history in Texas. The short ceremony was held at the Texas State Historical Monument on the north side of Highway 2092, about two miles east of the town of Menard. Today, there are no above-ground remains of the mission site, just a verdant field of alfalfa beside the beautiful Rio San Sabá. The ceremony included a wreath laying ceremony by the County Historical Commission and a blessing of the site by Father Innocent Eziefule, pastor of Sacred Heart Parish.

In his remarks, Father Innocent invoked the Prayer for Christian Martyrs, praying “Lord God, through your mercy, may those who have lived in faith find eternal peace. Bless this holy site of San Sabá where the blood of your servants Fathers Alonso Giraldo de Terreros and José Aberin de Santiesteban and their fellow Spaniards were shed as they sacrificed their lives for you, O Lord. Send your angel to watch over this holy site and welcome these Martyrs of the San Sabá into your presence, and with your saints may they rejoice in you forever.” At last year’s commemoration, Father Mamachan Joseph also blessed the site, memorably recalling that “the soil of Menard is sanctified by the blood of martyrs.”

Nationally famous singer and songwriter Cynthia Jordan from San Angelo was also on hand to sing her hauntingly beautiful song, “El Corrido de San Sabá,” about the tragic events of that day.

We were also especially pleased that Mark Wolf, a direct descendent of Juan Leal, a survivor of the Mission Massacre, joined us again from San Antonio to share with us his ancestor’s moving words describing what happened on the banks of the San Saba so long ago. Also coming from San Antonio for the event was José Gonzalez and his wife, Stella. Both Joe and Stella are living history re-enactors and Joe is a docent at both the Alamo and the Goliad Missions. Joe participated as Father Miguel de Molina, a Franciscan friar who, although wounded, was the only priest to survive the attack on the mission.

The destruction of the mission had far reaching effects, going well beyond the San Sabá Valley. While the Presidio and its Spanish Colony remained active for over a decade afterwards, the mission was never rebuilt, and its site was lost until its rediscovery in 1993.

The mission system was the principal vehicle used by the Spanish Empire to colonize its territories. Interestingly, Father Junipero Serra was in Mexico awaiting assignment to the San Sabá Mission when it was destroyed. So instead of Texas, Saint Junipero Serra was sent further west where he established the world famous chain of beautiful missions, bringing the Holy Catholic Faith and Spanish culture to California.

The subsequent military campaign to punish the Wichita, Tejas, Tonkawa, Comanche, and other tribes in what the Spaniards called the “Norteño” (“Northern”) alliance was the largest Spanish military expedition ever organized in North America and was formed up at the old mission site and led by the commander of the San Sabá Presidio. It failed, however, due to several factors, and had a major influence in the later decision by the Spanish government to withdraw all military forces in Texas, except in San Antonio, back to the Rio Grande.

Thus, Menard’s Presidio de San Sabá represents the high water mark of the Spanish Empire in Texas. After the destruction of the mission, Spain, and later the Republic of Mexico, never attempted to re-establish a permanent presence in Central Texas. Moving into this vacuum, the Comanche quickly established themselves as the Lords of the Texas Plains, with the lonely ruins of the Presidio as a sad reminder of Spanish Imperial overreach. It wasn’t until the 1860s, almost a century later, that Anglo Texans were finally able to re-establish a permanent presence in the San Sabá Valley. (Samuel Colt and his six-shooter certainly played a key part in making this possible.) In fact, the first Anglo Texas child born in Menard County was born in 1863 in the ruins of the Presidio, which was still serving as a shelter and refuge more than one hundred years after its founding.

Menard’s Sacred Heart Parish is both proud and humbled that its “soil has been sanctified by the blood of martyrs.” It reminds us all of the incredible courage and sacrifice of those brave men and women who brought the Catholic faith to our beautiful part of Texas centuries ago. May we be made worthy of them.

"The Destruction of Mission San Sabá in the Province of Texas and the Martyrdom of the Fathers Alonso de Terreros, Joseph Santiesteban," the first painting by a professional artist of a historical scene in Texas. Painted in 1765, about six years after the event, on commission from mining magnate Pedro Romero de Terreros, cousin of the martyred priest and sponsor of the mission. The artist is believed, on stylistic grounds, to have been Jose de Paez (the mural is not signed).

The only known full-sized copies of the 7 ft x 10 ft mural are in the Menard County Courthouse and the Menard Public Library. Mexico considers the painting to be a “National Treasure” and keeps the original at the National Institute of Anthropology and History in Mexico City.
St. Ann’s Church, Sonora, to hold festival

On Sunday, May 5 from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m., St. Ann’s Catholic Church in Sonora will have a Festival! Please join us in celebrating the 90th anniversary of our parish. The festival will be held at the Sutton County Civic Center and Pavilion, located at 1700 N. Crockett Avenue. There will be a variety of food and game booths.

Activities for adults and children include a Fun Run, bounce houses, Silent Auction, a country store, Bingo and more!

Mariachi Espuelas de Plata from San Antonio will play from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m.

Please note: there will be only one Mass on that day, at 10 a.m. For more information, contact the church secretary at 325-387-2278.

Rural Life Mass

The Diocese of San Angelo will celebrate the annual Rural Life Mass on Wednesday, May 15, 2019, at 5:00 p.m., celebrated by Bishop Michael J. Sis.

Hosted by St. Theresa of the Child Parish in Junction, Texas, with Father Innocent Eziefule and Father Knick Knickerbocker.

The Mass will be held at The Weitz Ranch, located in London, Texas, 18 miles northeast of Junction on HWY 377: turn right (south) onto KC 350, at the cemetery, then follow the road and signs to The Weitz Ranch.

A meal will be served immediately after Mass. In the event of inclement weather, Mass will be at St. Theresa of the Child Jesus Parish in Junction.

Please bring your lawn chairs; we will be celebrating Mass next to the Llano River.

For additional information, contact Deacon Floyd Schwartz. 432-270-0569 or 432-397-2268, schwartz.floyd@gmail.com.

Women’s ACTS Retreat, June 13–16

ACTS is an acronym for Adoration, Community, Theology, and Service; and it is these four themes that are the focus of the activities of the weekend.

The retreatants gather on Thursday evening and spend the weekend at Christ the King Retreat Center. This year the San Angelo ACTS is having a Women’s Retreat June 13 to June 16. The cost for the weekend is $230, and there are scholarships available, so cost should not be a factor in deciding to go. Everyone gathers on June 13 at St. Ambrose Church Hall in Wall, Texas, around 6:00 p.m. and from there the ladies will be transported to Christ the King Retreat Center.

The weekend will be spent learning about our faith, coming together in Mass and prayer time, making new friends, and renewing old friendships. Our weekend will culminate back at St. Ambrose Church at 9:00 a.m. for Mass with our families followed by a breakfast reception! The women will return to their families renewed and restored!

The director for this year’s ACTS is JoAnn Turner, 325-763-9400, and her co-directors are Carol Halfmann, 325-340-7806, and Jennifer L. Torres, 325-277-7767. If you are or know a woman who is interested in going or have questions, please contact one of the directors and they will be happy to help you!
Save the date! Hispanic Pastoral Musicians Conference

Sessions in English and Spanish
- Basics of Music
- Building a Choir
- Chants of the Misal Romano
- Intro to the Misal Romano
- Learn the Mass of Renewal
- Wedding, Quinceañera, Funeral Liturgy & Music Planning

Registration is now open!
Visit https://sanangelodiocese.org/2019hpmc

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

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Bishop Michael Sis on Twitter:
@SABishopMike

On the Web
www.sanangelodiocese.org
Recent Events in the Diocese

Diocesan Marriage Jubilee Mass

A jubilarian couple contemplates their wedding rings while receiving a blessing from Bishop Michael Sis at the Diocesan Marriage Jubilee Mass, March 24, 2019, at the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart in San Angelo. The Marriage Jubilee Mass honored couples whose sacramental marriages have reached a milestone anniversary and included a renewal of marriage commitment. (Angelus photo)

The couple with the second-longest sacramental marriage in attendance were Earl and Maryann Halfmann of St. Ambrose Parish in Wall, who have been wed for 70 years. (Angelus photo)

The longest-married couple at the Diocesan Marriage Jubilee Mass were Guillermo and Marcelina Serna of St. Margaret of Scotland Parish in San Angelo. The Sernas celebrated 71 years of sacramental marriage. (Angelus photo)

Ash Wednesday

On Ash Wednesday, March 6, 2019, Bishop Michael Sis visited all three universities in Abilene — Abilene Christian, Hardin-Simmons, and McMurry — for Ash Wednesday services. Pictured above are members of the Knights of Columbus who came out to participate in the service at McMurry University. At left, Abilene Christian University student Gerald Zuñiga stands with Bishop Sis during preparation for the service at Hardin-Simmons University. (photos by Loretta Fulton)

The annual Diocesan Awards Banquet, hosted by the Office of Evangelization and Catechesis, was held at the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart on March 31, 2019. The banquet honors the work done by the youth and youth ministers throughout the diocese during the previous year. In addition to recognizing achievements throughout the year, special awards are given to those who go above and beyond in their ministries.

Clockwise from top: Jessie and Jessica Ortiz won the Companion on the Journey Award for their work as coordinators of youth ministry at San Miguel Arcángel Church in Midland; Janie Davila of St. Ann Church in Colorado City received the Companion on the Journey Award for her work as a religious education teacher; Jacob Martinez of the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart in San Angelo was recognized with the Timothy Award for his exceptional example as a leader among his peers. (Angelus photos)

Retirement Mass for Deacon Antonio Gonzalez

Deacon Antonio Gonzalez was honored during a retirement Mass at Holy Redeemer Church in Odessa, March 3, 2019. Along with the recognition of his faithful years of service, Deacon Gonzalez received a plaque from Father Juan Fernando Bonilla-Sanchez, pastor of Holy Redeemer Parish (above) and a hug from his son, Deacon Edward Gonzalez (inset). (photos by Alan Torres/APtorre Photography)

Diocesan Awards Banquet

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Please save the date for our next Vino Veritas event. It will be taking place on Wednesday, April 24 (just 3 days after Easter Sunday). If you haven't had the opportunity to attend one of our two previous events, it's a fun and relaxing Catholic social event served with good wine, good food, and enjoyed with good people. Our first Vino Veritas with Bishop Mike Sis and our second Vino Veritas with Fr. Rodney White vs. Fr. Ryan Rojo were both SOLD OUT!!! So please be sure to get your tickets EARLY before the tickets are all gone again.

Papal document addresses challenges of evangelization in the digital age

By Junno Arocho Esteves
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — While digital communications and social media can be used as a tool of evangelization and a place of dialogue with others, they also can be lonely environments where young people fall prey to humanity’s worst vices, Pope Francis wrote.

In his new apostolic exhortation to young people, “Christus Vivit” (“Christ Lives”), the pope warned that as the digital environment continues to become the norm, it has had a “profound impact” on young people’s ability to communicate and develop relations with others.

“The fresh and exuberant lives of young people who want to affirm their personality today confront a new challenge: that of interacting with a real and virtual world that they enter alone, as if setting foot on an undiscovered global continent,” he said.

Calling young people to be missionary disciples and to set out to areas their elders have left largely untouched, Pope Francis said young people should be encouraged to fill social networks with “God, fraternity and commitment.”

The document, released April 2, includes the pope’s reflections on various issues discussed during the 2018 Synod of Bishops on young people, the faith and vocational discernment.

Among other challenges facing young men and women in the modern world, the pope addressed the advantages and pitfalls of digital communication, which has shaped today’s “ideas of time and space, our self-understanding, our understanding of others and the world, and our ability to communicate, learn, be informed and enter into relationship with others.”

The digital environment, he warned, also can be a world of “loneliness, manipulation, exploitation and violence” that has the power to create “a delusional parallel reality that ignores human dignity.”

“Digital spaces blind us to the vulnerability of another human being and prevent us from our own self-reflection. Problems like pornography distort a young person’s perception of human sexuality,” the pope said.

Additionally, he continued, an “approach to reality that privileges images over listening and reading has influenced the way people learn and the development of their critical sense.”

In fact, during a briefing on the document at the Vatican press office April 2, a journalist asked if the Vatican really expected to reach young men and women with a 183-page exhortation.

Bishop Fabio Fabene, undersecretary of the Synod of Bishops, said the task of informing young Catholics about the contents of "Christus Vivit" would fall to the Dicastery for Laity, the Family and Life.

“IT will be their task, and we will pass along this request so they can do a summary or find a way to pass along the content of this apostolic exhortation, even in the digital world, by using the language of young people,” Bishop Fabene said.
On Tuesday, March 26, 2019, thousands of Catholics converged on the State Capitol in Austin to meet with state legislators for Texas Catholic Advocacy Day. The day, held every two years during the biennial session of the Texas Legislature and organized by the Texas Catholic Conference of Bishops, affords Catholics the opportunity to meet with their state representatives and encourage support for pending bills that align with Catholic teaching.

These photos, provided to the *West Texas Angelus* by people who attended this year’s Advocacy Day, show some of the large group from the Diocese of San Angelo who traveled to Austin.

To learn more about the legislative agenda of the Texas Bishops and the work of the Texas Catholic Conference of Bishops, visit https://txcatholic.org.
**Our struggle for proper celebration**

We don’t know how to celebrate things as they’re meant to be celebrated. We want to, but mostly we don’t know how. Generally we celebrate badly. How do we normally celebrate? By overdoing things; by taking a lot of the things we ordinarily do, drinking, eating, talking, singing, and humoring, and bringing them to excess. For most of us, celebration means eating too much, drinking too much, singing too loudly, telling one joke too many, and hoping that somewhere in all that excess we will find the secret to make this occasion extraordinary.

We have this odd idea that we can find special joy and delight by pushing things beyond their normal limits. But there’s precious little real delight in this. Heightened enjoyment is found in connecting with others more deeply, in feeling our lives expanded, and in experiencing love and playfulness in a special way. But that doesn’t happen in a frenzy. Hence our celebrations are mostly followed by a hangover, physical and emotional. Surely why is genuine celebration so hard to do?

Perhaps the main reason is that we struggle congenitally to simply enjoy things, to simply take life, pleasure, love, and enjoyment as gracious and free gifts from God, pure and simple. It’s not that we lack this capacity for this. God has given us this gift. More at issue is the fact that our capacity to enjoy is often mixed with inchoate feelings of guilt about experiencing pleasure (and the greater the pleasure, the deeper our feeling of guilt). Among other things, because of this, we often struggle to enjoy what’s legitimately given us by God because, consciously or unconsciously, we feel that our experience of pleasure is somehow “stealing from God.” This is an uneasiness that particularly afflicts sensitive and moral souls. Somehow, in the name of God, we struggle to give ourselves full permission to enjoy, and this leaves us prone to excess (which is invariably a substitute for genuine enjoyment).

Whatever the reasons, we struggle with this and thus many of us go through life deprived of a healthy capacity to enjoy and, since nature will still have its way, we end up alternating between rebellious enjoyment (“pleasure we steal from God”) but feel guilty about) and dutiful discipline (which we do without a lot of delight). But we’re rarely able to genuinely celebrate. We rarely find the genuine delight we are looking for in life and this pushes us into pseudo-celebration, namely, excess. Put simply, because we struggle of give ourselves permission to enjoy, we ironically tend to pursue enjoyment too much and often not in the right ways. We confuse pleasure with delight, excess with ecstasy, and the obliteration of consciousness with heightened awareness. Because we cannot simply enjoy, we go to excess, burst our normal limits, and hope that obliterating our awareness will heighten the experience.

And yet, we celebrate. We have an innate need to celebrate because certain moments and events of our lives (e.g., a birthday, a wedding, a graduation, a commitment, an achievement, or even a funeral) simply demand it. They demand to be surrounded with rituals which heighten and intensify their meaning and they demand that they be shared in a special, highlighted way with others. What we cease to celebrate we will soon cease to cherish.

The same is true of some of our deeper loving, playful, and creative moments. They too demand to be celebrated: heights, depths, to be celebrated with and shared with others. We have an irrepressible need to celebrate: that’s good. Indeed the need for ecstasy is wired into our very DNA. But ecstasy is heightened awareness, not obliterated consciousness. Celebration is meant to intensify our awareness, not deaden it. The object of celebration is to heighten and intensify our feelings and sensations as to share them with others in an extraordinary way. But, given our misunderstandings about celebration, we mostly make pseudo-celebration, that is, we overdose things to a point where we take our own awareness and our awareness of the occasion out of the equation.

We have a lot to overcome in our struggle to come to genuine celebration. We still need to learn that heightened enjoyment is not found in excess, deeper consumption, more and more confusion, more and more intimacy, and heightened awareness is not found in a frenzied deadening of our consciousness. Until we learn that lesson we will still mostly trudge home hung-over, more empty, more tired, and more alone than before the party. A hangover is a sure sign that, somewhere back down the road, we missed a sign post. We struggle to know how to celebrate, but we must continue to try.

Joshua came and declared a wedding feast, a celebration, at the center of life. They crucified him not for being too ascetical, but because he told us he should actually enjoy our lives, assuring us that God and life will give us more goodness and enjoyment than we can stand, if we can learn to receive them with the proper reverence and without undue fear.

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**Frank Gehry and the quest for transcendence**

Though I reside in Santa Barbara, I am in Los Angeles a good deal for meetings and other events. When I’m in the city, I like to walk the downtown neighborhood. My favorite building to look at while I’m on these strolls is the Disney Theatre, home base of the LA Philharmonic and the creation of Frank Gehry, probably the best-known architect in the world. Like many of Gehry’s other buildings, the Disney is marked by shimmering metallic surfaces, curving planes, and an overall playfulness of design. Some have suggested that the theatre’s exterior looks like the pages of a score that have just fallen from the conductor’s podium. That it is a captivating work of art is testified to by the crowds that regularly gather round it to gaze and to take photographs. Soon after I arrived in the LA Archdiocese, I heard that Gehry was actually one of the finalists in the competition to design the new Cathedral here. To say the very least, it would have been interesting to see what he would have done with that assignment.

This connection came vividly to mind when I read a recent interview with Gehry, conducted in advance of his ninetieth birthday. After ruminating on his long and productive career, the architect said that he still harbored a great desire: “I would like to design a church or a synagogue. A place that has transcendence. I’ve always been interested in space that transcends to something — to joy, pleasure, understanding, discourse, whatever a space can do to be part of the dialogue.” We can easily recognize in this statement what I revealed his perspective as a pagan one. Please don’t misunderstand me: I have a deep respect for pagan religion. Once my mentor, Msgr. Robert Sokolowski, once told me, “If you stop being a Christian, I’d recommend becoming a pagan. Panagism is a noble religion, for it has to do with honoring the great natural necessities.” He meant that this ancient spiritual tradition, available in both mythic and philosophical expressions, had to do with ordering human beings toward a right relationship with the earth, the sea, the natural processes of life and death, etc. This was the “transcendence” that panagism evoked. I put the word in quotes because it did not signal, in that context, values that go beyond the world — values that lie beyond the self. There is a poetic and ecstatic passage in St. Augustine’s Confessions that articulates the fundamental difference between a biblical and a pagan conception of transcendence. The spiritual seeker wonders what is the object that truly corresponds to the aching within his heart: “What is the object of my love? And I asked the breezes that blow and the en- **me of my God who you are not, tell me something about him, and with a great voice they cried out ‘He made us.’”

To understand that citation is to grasp the difference between biblical religion and paganism. Augustine makes it eminently clear that, even as he reverences the goods of nature, he knows that his heart wants something more, indeed something infinitely more.

One of the distinctive marks of our time is a secularism that has got us stuck within the world that we can see and measure. What this ideology does with the Augustinian longing for God is to turn it to the neo-paganism evident in Frank Gehry’s statement. It is as though the desire that pushes us beyond this world to its Creator God, corralled, so that we end up effectively worshiping “the universe, the rain, the stars.” Mind you, I think that biblical believers carry an awful lot of the blame for the re-emergence of paganism, for we have obviously presented the Creator God in such an unconvincing manner to the culture. The Church ought to make this occasion extraordinary. Frank Gehry as it once sang it to Giotto, Michelangelo, Caravaggio, Dante, Gaudi, and the architect of Chartres Cathedral.

Once the great architect realizes that the deepest desire of his heart is for the living God, I would love to see the church he would build.

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Bishop Robert Barron is an auxiliary bishop of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles and the founder of Word on Fire Catholic Ministries.
Solidaridad con una madre que lamenta la muerte de su hijo

Al amanecer del Sábado Santo, católicos en varias partes de los Estados Unidos y muchos otros lugares del mundo — la mayoría mujeres — caminan a paso ligeramente hacia sus iglesias con un propósito definido.

La mayoría de quienes conozco participando de dicha procesión espontánea desde sus casas en este día son hispanos, por lo general inmigrantes. Es el grupo de católicos con quienes comparto de manera más frecuente. También sé que católicos de otros grupos culturales que hacen lo mismo.

Mientras muchos católicos habrían cumplido su participación en los ritos de la Semana Santa yendo a Misa el Jueves Santo y a los servicios del Viernes Santo, ciertamente esperando las celebraciones pasculares, estos católicos saben que todavía falta algo importante.

Hay un rito significativo que tiene un lugar especial en sus corazones, el cual está arreglado en lo mejor de la imaginación católica: acompañar a María, la madre de Jesús, el día después de la muerte de su hijo. Durante muchos siglos, los católicos hemos sentido una cercanía especial hacia la madre que llora la muerte injusta de su hijo en la cruz. La injusticia del hecho acrecenta su sufrimiento. Ninguna madre merece ser testigo de la muerte de un hijo o una hija, mucho menos si la muerte es fruto de la injusticia. María tuvo que padecer esto.

Algunas comunidades católicas recuerdan a María en este día como Nuestra Señora de la Solidad, recordando la manera como ella tuvo que habérselo sentido después de perder a su hijo, hallarse sin su tesoro más preciado y verse sin su refugio más íntimo.

Este tiempo sagrado nos brindó un propósito definido. Este tiempo sagrado nos brindó un propósito definido.

Era un momento para unirnos en solidaridad con las madres que lamentan la pérdida de sus hijos por causa de la violencia, la guerra, el hambre, la pobreza, el uso de drogas, el alcoholismo, la falta de acceso a atención médica de calidad y la carencia de beneficios sociales adecuados, entre otras realidades sociales que lamentablemente no afirmen el don de la vida.

Este es un momento para unirnos en solidaridad con las madres que lamentan que vivir separadas de sus hijos que cruzan fronteras sin saber si se volverán a reunir con ellos o no, madres que saben que sus hijos fueron absueltos y pasarán el resto de su vida batallando con las consecuencias, madres cuyos hijos están perdidos en medio de los redres políticos de nuestro país que las roban de oportunidad de vivir con dignidad.

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

Esta Cuaresma, seamos santos

Durante los últimos tres años escribiendo esta columna, mi esperanza es que algunas de ellas pudieran ayudar al menos a una persona en el camino de la fe, ya sea compartiendo testimonios o ejemplos de jóvenes inspiradores, opiniones sobre cómo alimentar la esperanza y fe o proporcionando sugerencias concretas.

Momentos cómo la Cuaresma, (etapa actual de nuestro tiempo litúrgico y nuestra preparación espiritual hacia la Semana Santa), son momentos para acercarnos a Dios y convertirnos en las personas que él quiere que seanamos. A medida que entramos más profundamente en estas semanas de Cuaresma, aquí hay algunos recordatorios que, junto a las prácticas tradicionales de Cuaresma de la oración, ayuno y dar limosnas, nos pueden ayudar a crecer en santidad:

- Tenga seguridad que su valor proviene de Dios.

En la Jornada Mundial de la Juventud, los obispos aseguraron a los jóvenes que fueron amados por Dios, que sabe todo sobre nosotros (incluyendo nuestros errores) desde el principio. Uno de ellos dijo: “No eres un accidente, has sido amado por Dios... Esto significa que Dios desde la eternidad ha tenido un plan para tu vida”.

Obvio, otro recordó que incluso cuando nos sometemos a los males de la vida, las cosas mejoran cuando te acercas a Dios que “nunca te abandona”.

- Hable mucho a su madre.

Aunque a veces puede parecer que sus padres, abuelos o los adultos que lo criaron con amor y respeto, están en una onda completamente diferente, ellos se preocupan por usted, quieren escucharlo y tienen su mejor interés en el corazón. Los tiempos cuando ellos fueron adolescentes son muy diferentes, pero las emociones son las mismas y los mayores pueden darle una perspectiva.

- Pida apoyo.

Ser adolescente en la actualidad es estresante y esas presiones y ansiedades pueden generar hábitos poco saludables que no pueden alejar de Dios. Pero puede encontrar herramientas para enfrentar el estrés y desarrollar habilidades para resolver problemas. Además de la oración constante, hable con adultos confiables en los que se confía y busque a consejeros o terapeutas para ayudarlo a cultivar mecanismos para enfrentar retos.

- Hable cuando sea necesario.

Puede usar su voz para defender sus valores o indicar su desacuerdo con amigos o seres queridos.

La experiencia fue vívida. Esos momentos mezclan sin reservar una lectura popular de la Biblia, lo mejor de la vida de los Santos, el espíritu de la Semana Santa, una fusión de emociones y un sentido de unión crítico que muy raramente se observan en otros momentos del año.

Unidos en solidaridad con María, la madre de Jesús, en medio de su lamento por la muerte de su hijo, me siento con la obligación de compartir con ustedes los momentos de su sufrimiento, su dolor, su soledad y temor.

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María-Pia Negro Chin
Catholic News Service
Coming of Age

El dolor, la Cuaresma y la redención

"¿Qué haces para el dolor?", mi amiga de muchas décadas, me preguntó un día. Como ella siempre ha sido ejemplar católica, aunque ahora a los 91 años ya no le permiten manejar auto para asistir a la Misa y recibir Comunión diariamente, le di la respuesta del catecismo: "Lo ofrezco a Dios".

No era la respuesta que quería. Hoy día se está preguntando: ¿Cómo puedo dar al dolor? Mayer, la líder del grupo de mujeres de nuestra parroquia, me dijo que a veces, en solidaridad con las madres como María, quiere escucharlo y tiene su mejor interés.

La venida de la Cuaresma me recuerda que somos santos. Durante los últimos tres años escribiendo esta columna, mi esperanza es que algunas de ellas pudieran ayudar al menos a una persona en el camino de la fe, ya sea compartiendo testimonios o ejemplos de jóvenes inspiradores, opiniones sobre cómo alimentar la esperanza y fe, o proporcionando sugerencias concretas.

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Mira CHIN, Página 23

Moises Sandoval
Catholic News Service
Buscando Vida

la Cruz, salimos en desfile hacia la morada, a través de un llano venenoso.

Al mismo tiempo los penitentes se acercaban al hombre que entendía Cristo medio desnudo sangrando de los azotes. La marcha paraba cuando unos 30 metros separaban a los dos grupos. Seguía una liturgia de oraciones y alabanzas mientras que yo y mis hermanos tratabamos de enternecer al "empeloto" cargando la Cruz.

Mi favorito franciscano, el fallecido fraile Angélico Chávez — poeta, historiador, novelista, y, por supuesto paisano nuevomexicano — no veía a los penitentes como extranjeros.

En un libro titulado My Penitente Land: Reflections on Spanish New Mexico, sobre la relación de nuestra tierra natal de alto desierto y nuestro país, me escribió: "Todos nosotros somos penitentes en algún modo, por medio de orígenes de sangre y paisaje y una larga historia de sufrimiento". Para él, la "historia inti-ma de creencias y anhelos" fue labrada no sólo por la larga jornada de la historia sino también por la topografía y el clima.

Mira SANDOVAL, Página 23
It’s not just about the frozen embryos

Father Tad Pacholczyk
Making Sense of Bioethics

I remember a conversation I had with a married Catholic couple a few years ago. They were feeling lost and desperate over their inability to conceive a child. They were casting about for options. They understood there were moral concerns with doing in vitro fertilization (IVF), though they weren’t sure about the specifics, so they asked: “Would it be OK for us to do IVF as long as we don’t make any extra embryos and we’re careful to implant all the ones we make?” The thinking behind their question was understandable and they clearly recognized they would be wrong to produce and then store their embryonic sons and daughters in the deep freeze. It’s important to note, however, that the possibility of “spare” embryos ending up in “frozen orphanages” would not be the only reason, or even the main reason, that IVF is morally unacceptable. The immorality of IVF is primarily due to the fact that the process turns human procreation into a method of production in which children are made, not begotten.

Embryos certainly face grave risks whenever they are cryopreserved, and a significant percentage of them do not survive the steps of freezing and thawing. The cryostorage of embryos is a form of “collateral damage” that routinely occurs when IVF is done. Ethically speaking, doing IVF and making extra embryos would be more offensive than doing IVF without making extra embryos, in the same way that stealing jewels out of the bank vault and shooting the guards on the way out would be more objectionable than stealing the jewels nonviolently. Yet the action of absconding with the jewels remains seriously wrong in either case, apart from any considerations about whether the guards are harmed. Similarly, IVF does not become morally acceptable merely by eliminating the collateral damage associated with the process, whether it’s the freezing of embryos, the “selective reductions” of twins and triplets, or any of the other objectionable practices that tend to be part of the process.

The heart of the IVF process itself, the practice of joining sperm and egg together in the fertility clinic, remains an intrinsic evil, flowing from the decision to allow our offspring to be “manufactured.” The domain of procreation is a delicate arena, one in which our human vulnerability is uniquely laid bare. We have a particular responsibility to safeguard our own autonomy and the fundamental dignity of our children from damaging forces in this arena, which implies a duty to respect the marital act as the unique locus and setting for the engendering of new human life.

IVF is not really “a treatment” for infertility, given that the couple remains infertile after doing IVF as they were before they started the process, with the underlying cause of their sterility remaining unaddressed and unresolved. The procedure offers little more than a workaround to completely bypass the marital act — an expensive, complex, unwieldy substitute, not a genuine therapy.

Through IVF, husband and wife use their own (or even another person’s) sex cells to become “donors,” while constructing their own offspring through a kind of programmed project, with the marital act no longer a part of the equation. In the final analysis, however, only when the bodies of our children arise as the immediate fruit of our own bodily and spousal self-surrender can we say they have been freely and unconditionally received as gifts, rather than coerced into being as the result of human willfulness, financial planning, and scripted biological technologies. Only then can we say that we have not dominated the process of procreation nor preponderated over the origins of our offspring.

By yielding to the project of fabricating our children in the cold, clinical, and commercial venture that is in vitro fertilization, we act against the human dignity of IVF's offspring by sanctioning inequality and setting up a subclass of those who originate in petri dishes and test tubes rather than in the intimacy of the mutual spousal donation that receives life within the protective maternal heart.

These various explanations of the wrongness of IVF can seem distant and hard for infertile couples to accept. They yearn intensely for a child. The infertility industry appeals to their desire to be in control in an arena where control has been elusive, and part of the allure is also the carefully choreographed assembling of babies who have been planned, screened, and quality-controlled.

It is a tragic step when spouses opt for the production of their own offspring in glassware, because they move forward and violate the deepest meaning of their marital union, rather than holding firmly to the truth that their one-flesh communion is the unique and privileged interpersonal sanctuary in which a new and unrepeatable person appears by a Power and a Will that is not their own.

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

This Lent, be holy

For the past three years, my hope was that some columns could help at least one person along the way — either by sharing testimonies or examples of inspiring adults, opinions on ways to nurture hope and faith, or by providing concrete advice for action.

As we enter more deeply into these weeks of Lent, here are reminders that could help us grow in holiness, in addition to traditional Lenten practices like fasting and almsgiving:

-- Know your worth comes from God.

At World Youth Day, bishops reassured young people that they were loved by God, who knew everything about them (including our mistakes) from the beginning. One of them said: “You are not an accident, you have been planned by God. ... This means that God from all eternity has had a plan for your life.”

Another bishop reminded us that even when we feel lost, things get better when you get close to God, who “never abandons us.”

-- Listen to your elders.

Your parents, grandparents or the adults who lovingly raised you might seem like they are on a completely different wavelength, but they care about you. Want to listen and have your best interest at heart. Times might be different from their teenage years, but human emotions are the same and they might give you some perspective.

See HOLY, Page 23

Food for the journey

Laura Kelly Fanucci
Catholic News Service
Faith at Home

"Bring double the snacks. Leave half the clothes."

When I was a brand-new mother, preparing to bring our first baby on his first plane ride, a wise friend with older kids shared her advice for packing for family vacations. I stared down at the tower of onesies I’d folded, next to one scant bag of Cheerios.

"Half the clothes," she gently prodded, dividing my stack in two and handing half back to me. "Double the snacks."

Over the years, I learned she was right. Clothes can get cleaned, but hungry kids grow cranky fast. We need less luggage but more sustenance.

Now each time I pull out the suitcases, her words echo in my head. I remember to step back and take clothes out of our bags, opting for a simpler, lighter approach to vacations. But I always throw extra snacks into the kids’ backpacks.

Smarter packing equals happier travelers.

What parent wouldn’t plan for a trip as best they can? When turbulence jolts or car sickness hits, whether stuck on the runway or stuck in traffic, no one wants to be unprepared. Especially when travel will be long, we want to care for each child along the way.

The journey is the same, but the age will provide? Can we remember — as we pray, fast and give alms — that Lent is God’s gift to offer, not ours to control?

Scripture reminds us that God’s nature is generous, merciful, caring and compassionate: "Which one of you would hand his son a stone when he asks for a loaf of bread, or a snake when he asks for a fish? If you then, who are wicked, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give good things to those who ask him" (Mt 7:9-11).

If we wonder how God longs to guide us through this sacred season, we need only look to the ways we care for children — at our best, still only a sliver or shadow of the love God pours out on us.

Lent calls us to trust that God will care for us like a loving parent. Offering food and water for the journey. Caring for us, body and soul. Traveling with us through 40 days of penance and preparation.

We know that Lent is going to be hard. We know we’ll want to give up and give in to...
Solidarity with a mother grieving her dead son

As the day breaks on Holy Saturday, Catholics from neighborhoods across the U.S. and throughout the world — mostly women — hurry to church with a particular sense of purpose.

The majority of those I know who participate in this unofficial journey from home to church on this day are Hispanic, largely immigrants. It is the group of Catholics with whom I share more regularly. Catholics from other cultural groups do likewise.

While many other Catholics will have fulfilled their participation in the rituals of Holy Week by attending Mass on Holy Thursday and the services of Good Friday, those looking forward to the Easter celebrations, these Catholics are not done yet.

One important ritual holds a special place in their hearts, a practice profoundly grounded in the Catholic imagination: to accompany Mary, the mother of Jesus, the day after the death of her son.

For centuries, Catholics have felt a unique closeness to the grieving mother whose son died on a cross, unjustly. The injustice exacerbates her suffering. No mother deserves to undergo the death of a child, much less if the death is unjust. Mary did.

Some Catholic communities remember Mary on this day as Our Lady of Soritude, evoking how she must have felt after losing her child and finding herself not only without her most precious gift, but also more vulnerable than ever as a woman.

The devotion to Our Lady of Sorrows, whose feast day is Sept. 15, finds strong echoes on Holy Saturday among Catholics in several Latin American countries. The devotion points to seven moments in the Gospels in which Mary experienced suffering.

Four of these moments are associated with the death of her son: meeting Jesus on his way to Golgotha, the crucifixion, taking her son’s body down the cross and the burial of Jesus.

I have participated in processions with Hispanic Catholics carrying the image or the statue of Mary portrayed as someone who grieves. I have joined Catholics gathered to say the rosary, engage in meditation and cry with Mary, the mother of Jesus, on Holy Saturday.

I once asked a group of Hispanic Catholics in a parish where I was during the days of Holy Week why they cried. Their answer was poignant: “We cry in solidarity with a mother grieving her dead son. We cry with others like her. Their suffering is our suffering.”

The experience was vivid. These moments unapologetically mix popular readings of the Scriptures, the best of Catholic devotional life, the spirit of Holy Week, a fusion of human emotions and a sense of critical analysis that one seldom sees at other times of the year.

United in solidarity with Mary, the mother of Jesus, as she grieves her dead son, I also find myself compelled to be in solidarity with the many other Marys, Marias and Maries in our society who grieve their children who died or those who are dying.

This holy time provides us with a unique opportunity to stand in solidarity with grieving mothers who lost their children to violence, war, hunger, poverty, drug use, alcoholism, lack of access to quality health care, and inadequate safety nets, among other social realities that fail to affirm life.

This is a time to stand in solidarity with grieving mothers resigned to live separated from their children as they cross borders while knowing that they may not reunite again, mothers who know that their children were abused and will spend the rest of their lives coping with the consequences, mothers whose children are lost in sociopolitical quagmires that rob them of a chance to live with dignity.

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

Spring cleaning, soul cleansing

By now almost everyone has heard of Marie Kondo.

Kondo is the attractive Japanese woman who has parlayed her penchant for decluttering into a personal brand that now includes a Netflix series and several books.

Her method helps you sort through household and personal detritus, throwing out, giving away, reorganizing, and always asking, as you look at that dress you haven’t worn in five years, “Does this bring me joy?” It doesn’t? Then out it goes.

At the library, I noticed an entire display dedicated to books about decluttering. Apparently Kondo’s success has given birth to a genre. Something about getting rid of “stuff” has touched a chord in our affluent society.

Kondo and her ilk are on to something valuable. But they only touch a small part of the problem. It’s spring housecleaning season, and they’ve got that. But we are also in the spiritual season of Lent, which touches on a deeper, more fundamental part of this issue.

The questions we should ask, along with “Does this crack me up?” “Is it keeping me in the cupboard spark joy?” are: Why do I buy so much stuff? What need, whatemptiness, what insecurity am I trying to fill?

Americans have joked about “retail therapy,” as if buying more can boost our mood and increase our happiness. But this is no joke.

We’re inundated by plastics that wash up on formerly pristine shores and seriously threaten the health of our seafood supply. Our landfills overflow. There’s not a market for all the clothes we donate. Recycling worldwide can’t keep up with us. Our “stuff” threatens the planet.

Climate change and overconsumption disproportionately impact the poor and oppressed, who beg for crumbs from our overladen tables.

Our consumption is a moral issue, a Lenten question.

Chapter 16 of the Book of Exodus, read at a recent novena I attended, portrays the Israelites escaping from Egypt, traveling through the desert. They begin to doubt the whole enterprise, as well as their faith in Moses and God. Grumbling ensues. God provides quail in the evening, manna in the morning.

But Moses cautions: Harvest the manna and consume it all — there’ll be more. But, folks have their doubts. Better tuck away some for tomorrow. Just in case. The result is stinking, maggot-filled left-over manna. What a metaphor for our burgeoning storage spaces and overflowing closets.

The Israelites’ insecurity made them question that God provides.

Is there some of that in our constant yearning for more? I thought of that the other day as I hauled items to a thrift store. It had taken me a while to deliver those clothes. Part of it was distance, but part of it was my reluctance to part with “stuff.”

I look at my large closet and see abundance. And I’m trying not to buy more. Yet, all the more excise to hesitate at giving away that black sweater that’s already in the bag. What if I want that later? What if I need it?

Need? How often do I buy from need? More likely, it’s impulse, momentary pleasure, insecurity. Does this spark joy? What about all those who do not have the means I have? Could my money be better spent on them? That’s a fundamental Lenten question.

The same preacher who read Chapter 16 to us offered this quote from Jesuit Father Ignacio Ellacuria, who was martyred in El Salvador in 1989: “Always remember that there is no conversion to God if there is no conversion to the oppressed.”

Lent is all about conversion. How does my consumption affect my conversion?
Review: ‘Unplanned’ shows reality of abortion

By John Mulderig
Catholic News Service

NEW YORK (CNS) — The hard-hitting, fact-based drama Unplanned (Pure Flix) dares its viewers to confront the reality of what happens when a baby is aborted.

That's an effective strategy on the part of co-writers and directors Chuck Konzelman and Cary Solomon, not least because the peculiar institution of our day thrives on concealment, muddled thinking and Orwellian euphemisms. But it also means that this emotionally unsparing film is not for the casual moviegoer of any age.

Adapted from the eponymous 2011 memoir by Abby Johnson (Ashley Bratcher), Unplanned traces her steady rise to become one of the youngest Planned Parenthood clinic directors in the country. Yet it also shows how she gradually became uneasy about the organization's marketing of abortion.

The conversion in her outlook reaches a dramatic climax when Abby is asked to assist a doctor performing the procedure and witnesses via sonogram what it actually involves. As the child in the womb tries to move away from the suction tube and medical containers quickly fill with blood, this scene may prove as upsetting for the audience as it was for Johnson.

Her new stance is welcomed by Abby's husband, Doug (Brooks Ryan), and parents Kathleen (Robin DeMarco) and Mike (Robert Thomason), all of them pro-life. It also brings reconciliation with some of the protestors she once considered adversaries, including 40 Days for Life activists Shawn (Jared Lotz) and Marliisa (Emma Elle Roberts).

Unsurprisingly, Abby's ornery former superior, Cheryl (Robia Scott), views her change of heart in a different light. Once Abby's mentor, infuriated Cheryl becomes the moving force in a lawsuit against her ex-protege as well as against Shawn. Kaiser Johnson steals this portion of the picture playing Shawn and Abby's unflappable lawyer, Jeff.

While Cheryl is clearly the villain of the piece, the script avoids demonizing all those associated with Planned Parenthood. Nor does it present all pro-life activists in a positive light. Whether this sense of balance will give Unplanned any traction with supporters of legal abortion is open to question, however.

Given that the full horror of slaughtering the unborn is on display here, the film contains gruesome images of abortion and dismembered fetuses, much medical gore, a mild oath, a few crass expressions and a vague sexual reference. The Catholic News Service classification is A-III — adults. The Motion Picture Association of America rating is R — restricted. Under 17 requires accompanying parent or adult guardian. (CNS photo/Unplanned.com)

Johnson hopes 'Unplanned' rating won't keep parents from taking children

By Catholic News Service

Dear Parents,

I wanted to take a few minutes before my movie, Unplanned, comes out in theaters to talk to you. Mom-to-mom. Parent-to-parent. As you know, the movie received an R rating from the MPAA, and I imagine that may make you nervous about allowing your children to see it. Setting aside that, it feels a little weird to have a movie made about my life, and even weirder to be told that my life is "rated R." I want to tell you, as a mother, what you can expect from the film: The movie does not have profanity. The Lord's name is not taken in vain or disrespected. There is no nudity, no immodesty, and certainly no sex or "suggestive" moments. None.

So why the R rating? For two scenes. Two scenes that the movie team was determined to re-create accurately, at my insistence, because they are important for people to see. The first is a CGI (Computer-Generated Imagery) recreation of what I saw on the ultrasound screen when I assisted in the abortion procedure that convinced me of the humanity of the unborn. You will see what I saw: a baby on an ultrasound screen in black and white 2D. You will see the abortion instrument, which looks like a big straw in real life and like a dark line on the ultrasound, introduced onto the screen. You will see the baby struggle against it. You will see the baby first slowly, then quickly disappear into the instrument as it does what it is designed to do. It is important for you to know that this was a CGI recreation and NOT footage from a real abortion. But it sure looks like what I saw. I think this scene is so important for teenagers and older children to see because it tells the truth about what our culture keeps trying to insist is a "right" and a "freedom." No one will be able to see this scene and then say they "don't know" the truth about abortion.

The second scene that was cited as a reason for the R rating is a scene that re-creates my awful experience with the abortion pill. Ashley, the actress who plays me, did a fantastic job capturing both my physical pain and my fear. I won't lie to you; that scene shows some blood. In real life I hemorrhaged so badly I thought I was going to die. The movie captures that without being gratuitous or gory. I think the producers walked that line well.

The rest of the film is not as intense as those two scenes. It will make you laugh, make you cringe, gasp, cry and cheer — all the things a good movie should. The difference with Unplanned is that it has the potential to change and save lives in the process.

So, should you take your kids to see this movie? I can't decide for you, but I will tell you that my 12-year-old daughter will see it. I can tell you my friends who have pre-screened the film plan on bringing their 10-, 11- and 12-year-olds along with their teenagers to see it, and I hope you will do the same. Our children are of the generation who is being lost to abortion. This is personal for them too. They are likely to hear and see more graphic content in most school health classes! I guess what I'm trying to say is, this movie is authentic. Yes, it's a movie about abortion, but even more so, it's a movie about the truth of forgiveness, repentance, and redemption, because that is what the story of my life, is really about.

See you at the movies,
Abby

Some of the youth from St. Lawrence Parish outside Garden City at a showing of Unplanned in Midland. St. Lawrence Parish, with the help of Choose Life Midland, purchased three theater buyouts in advance of the movie's premier. (courtesy photo)
By Carol Glatz
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — No one should be afraid that God has allowed there to be different religions in the world, Pope Francis said.

"But we should be frightened if we are not doing the work of fraternity, of walking together in life" as brothers and sisters of one human family, he said.

As is customary, at his general audience April 3, the first after his March 30-31 trip to Morocco, Pope Francis reviewed his visit.

"People might ask themselves, 'Why is it the pope visits Muslims and not just Catholics?'" the pope said.

Catholics and Muslims are both "descendants of the same father, Abraham," he said, and the trip was another step on a journey of "dialogue and encounter with (our) Muslim brothers and sisters."

The pope said he wanted to follow in the footsteps of two great saints: St. Francis of Assisi, who brought a "message of peace and fraternity" to Sultan al-Malik al-Kami 800 years ago, and St. John Paul II, who visited Morocco in 1985.

Pope Francis said people also may wonder why God allows there to be so many different religions in the world.

Some theologians say it is part of God's "voluntas permissiva" or "permissive will," allowing "this reality of many religions. Some emerge from the culture, but they always look toward heaven and God," the pope said.

"What God wants is fraternity among us," he said, which is why "we must not be frightened by difference. God has allowed this." But it is right to be worried when people are not working toward a more fraternal world, he added.

The pope's comment about God's "voluntas permissiva" or "permissive will" clarified a controversy that erupted during the pope's trip in February to Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates.

He and Sheikh Ahmad el-Tayeb — a leading authority for many Sunni Muslims, signed a document on human fraternity that said, "The pluralism and the diversity of religions, color, sex, race and language are willed by God in his wisdom, through which he created human beings."

In his audience talk April 3, the pope clarified that God did not create religious diversity, but rather allows it to happen, as he created human beings who possess free will.

During the general audience, the pope also spoke about the many encounters and events during the two-day trip, making special mention of his visit with migrants — some of whom told him how their lives only became "human" again when they found a community that welcomed them as human beings.

"This is key," the pope said.

The Vatican supported the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, which was adopted by the majority of U.N. member states at a conference in Morocco in December, so that the international community could strengthen an approach that focused on welcoming, protecting, promoting and integrating migrants.

"It's not about assistance programs coming down from 'on-high' but about everyone working together "to build cities and countries that, even preserving their respective cultural and religious identities, are open to differences and know how to see their value" as part of a sign of human fraternity.

Reading from his prepared text about the church's work with migrants, the pope looked up at the people in the square and said that, in all honesty, "I do not like to say, 'migrants,' preferring to say, "people who migrate."

"We have fallen into a culture of adjectives. We use so many adjectives and sometimes we forget the substantive," that is, the noun or "the substance," he said.

When talking about people, it is better to remember the adjective should always go with a noun, "a person," he said.

"That way there is respect and no falling into this culture of adjectives that is too fluid, too airy" and lacking substance, he said.
Pope to celebrate Holy Thursday with prisoners

By Carol Glatz
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Pope Francis will celebrate the Holy Thursday Mass of the Lord’s Supper with prisoners in Velletri, about 30 miles south of Rome.

The pope will celebrate the Mass and the washing ritual at the Velletri Correctional Facility April 18, the Vatican announced April 3.

The late-afternoon visit will include a meeting with prisoners, prison staff, police and local leaders, as well as an exchange of gifts with the head of the facility.

The pope was to wash the feet of 12 prisoners, the Vatican said.

Pope Francis has made it a tradition to celebrate the Holy Thursday Mass with people who could not come to the Vatican or the Basilica of St. John Lateran for the celebrations.

His first year as pope in 2013, he chose a juvenile detention facility to celebrate Holy Thursday. The next year, he washed the feet of people with severe physical handicaps at a rehabilitation center. That was followed by men and women detainees at Rome’s Rebibbia prison in 2015, refugees in 2016, inmates at a jail in the Italian town of Paliano in 2017, and prisoners at Rome’s “Regina Coeli” jail in 2018.

OBISPO

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Cuando nos encontramos en una situación difícil, cuando todo parece perdido, sin esperanza, en una espiral sin fin de dolor, daño, y obstáculos, Dios puede tomar esa situación y transformarla. No es sólo una cuestión de soportar el dolor de la vida hasta que se acabe. No es sólo una cuestión de durar más que nuestras dificultades hasta que pasen. No es Dios simplemente suita el problema y hace todo fácil para nosotros. En lugar de todo eso, se trata de la necesidad de dejar que Dios transforme todas nuestras experiencias en ocasiones de su gracia.

Del mismo modo que se rompe la mariposa libera del capullo, transformada de ser un pequeño y feo gusano a una mariposa libre del capullo, transformada la situación invisible y omnipotente está trabajando.

Somos un pueblo de esperanza. La Pascua se trata de esperanza. La devastación y la tragedia de la Crucifixión no es la última palabra. La muerte y el odio no tienen la última palabra. Dios tiene la última palabra. Dios puede tomar cualquier situación y encontrar una manera de utilizarla para su gloria y para nuestra salvación. Siempre hay esperanza.

Debido a que somos personas de la Resurrección, incluso en cualquier situación en la cual parece que las cosas se han caído en pedazos y todo parece perdido, debemos levantarnos, poner un pie delante del otro, aceptar la realidad de la situación, y dejar que Dios haga algo hermoso de la situación.

En cualquier temporada del año, cada vez que pasamos por una fase de Viernes Santo en nuestro propio viaje personal, debemos permitir que la gracia de Dios nos transforme a través del poder del Misterio Pascual y nos lleve de la alegría de a una nueva victoria Pascual.

SAN ANTONIO

Continued from Page 7

Chicago," over the same issue: An alderman, with the Chicago mayor’s support, said he would deny Chick-fil-A a permit to build a location in a section of the city he represented. “Recent comments by those who administer the city government do not represent the will of the people. We envision a city that embraces all people, regardless of their beliefs,” said Ald. Emma Mitts, with the Chicago mayor’s support.

A spokesperson for the company issued a statement to a local Buffalo TV station stating that the company has no policy to discriminate against LGBT people.

"Recent coverage about Chick-fil-A continues to drive an inaccurate narrative about our brand. We do not have a political or social agenda or discriminate against any group," the spokesperson said. "More than 145,000 people from different backgrounds and beliefs represent the Chick-fil-A brand. We invite, indeed, for the discussion of religion, race, gender identity, sexual orientation or gender identity."

In his statement, Archbishop Garcia-Siller said: "Comments by some after the vote stated that the action was taken to reaffirm that San Antonio was a 'city of compassion.' San Antonio is truly a city of compassion that always comes together in mutual respect, especially in challenging times, recognizing the God-given dignity of every individual. This is what a family does."

"There were also comments that Chick-fil-A was rejected from the airport contract because their restaurants are not open for business on Sundays," the archbishop added. "However, many people admire the company because they do close on Sundays, saying corporately they take that stance in order to provide their employees a day to rest with their families and worship if they choose."

Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton said he was investigating the city of San Antonio for potential First Amendment violations in the action to deny a spot in the airport concession area to the national restaurant chain.
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individualist secular reaction is the great virtue of pride, the original sin. Pride causes us to strive to glorify ourselves at the expense of others. The antidote to this pride is the virtue of humility as expressed by St. Paul in his Letter to the Philippians when he says that the humility of Jesus that glorifies the Father enters us, and we are saved from the sin of pride (2:5–11).

This humility of Jesus that enters us in the Body of Christ, the Church, which stands in opposition to this continual attempt to repeat our original sin on the collective level and the individualist reaction to it. In the Church, the Body of Christ, every human being, made in the image of God (Gn 1:26, 27), is part of a greater whole and yet remains unique and unrepeatable in his or her own person. St. Paul writes eloquently about this in 1 Corinthians, Chapter 12, when he says we are all baptized by one Spirit into one Body, the Church, where we drink of the same Spirit. Nevertheless, the Body does not consist of one member but of many. Just as the human body has different parts — hand, eye — but all are part of one body, so the Church has different parts but is one Body. As the Apostle points out, when one member suffers, we all suffer because we are all part of one Body. We should say also that when one member is happy or joyful, we can all share in that one member’s blessing.

We are experiencing this now in our own parish and the Junction community in which some members are suffering from the damage done to their businesses and homes by a tornado. However, we also know the joy when we learn of the generosity of those who help in the recovery.

The chapter that follows this wonderful expression of the community in 1 Corinthians, Chapter 12, the “common unity” of the Church, is the Apostle’s great chapter on love (1 Corinthians 13). This is the love we are seeing right now in our parish and in our larger community. The love about which St. Paul speaks is the love that seeks the good of the other and does not seek to use the other for his or her own purposes. How different this is from either the attempt at collectivism or the radical individualist reaction to it of our secular culture! In both the collectivism and the individualist reaction love is too often equated with sexual desire and expression that is nothing but a living out of a narcissistic love of self.

In our contemporary culture it is evident that the family needs the truth of the Church for its own life. The family, as the Catechism of the Catholic Church teaches, is the domestic Church, the Church in the home (#2204). What St. Paul says about the Church as the Body of Christ can also be said of the family. Each family member has a unique place in the family and yet all are part of one family. Each member of the family is gloriously unique. There is no attempt to build up one and demean another. The Little Flower said that if you fill both a glass and a thimble with water, each one has the fullness of God’s creation (The Story of a Soul). Our daughter-in-law has just completed her master’s degree and has been accepted to a doctoral program. This is her individual accomplishment, and yet we all rejoice with her in this achievement. However, other members of our family are not called to achieve in this way. There are those who work with their hands, bringing healing and wholeness, those who take care of family and home as homemakers, those who play sports, one who is a philosopher, one who is an engineer, and one who is a pilot/flight instructor. We have those who learn in different ways — “outside the box.” Our culture calls this a “learning disability,” yet one in our family who learns in a different way is a poet, who says he could not write poetry if he did not learn the way he does. When we all gather around the dinner table to celebrate a birthday, an anniversary, or a graduation, we celebrate our individual uniqueness and yet are all one family. We help each other become fully who God created each to be.

The Tower of Babel teaches us the truth of what St. Paul says in Philippians 2 and 1 Corinthians 12 and 13. The language of the Church and the language of the Christian family is not a Babel of tyranny or anarchy that is the result of collectivism or the individualist reaction to it, but is the harmony of many who are one and of one family celebrating the uniqueness of each.

Father Knick Knickerbocker is a retired priest of the Diocese of San Angelo. He and his wife, Sandie, write a monthly column for the Catholic Press Association.

HOLY
Continued from Page 18

— Listen and be humble.

Try to understand someone else’s perspective and how he or she perceives the world. You might still have different opinions and point out problematic opinions or behavior — but do so with love and respect for the person. Make informed decisions. Disagreements are part of life and you can have civilized conversations about this.

— Be kind to others.

Make time to physically volunteer in one way or another and dedicate that time to causes you trust. Visit a home for the elderly, help in one way or another and dedicate your own community who might be struggling, even those you might find struggling, even those you might find offensive or hurtful. Defend those that seek the good of other people. Do not seek to use the other for his or her own purposes. How different is this from either the attempt at collectivism or the radical individualist reaction to it of our secular culture? In both the collectivism and the individualist reaction love is too often equated with sexual desire and expression that is nothing but a living out of a narcissistic love of self.

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SAN DOVAL
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Desde esa perspectiva, el desierto es el llave para nuestro encuentro con Dios. Por eso, Jesús fue allí para prepararse para su misión. Si la ciudad es el templo de la humanidad de controlar, de ser jefe del universo, el desierto es lo opuesto.

Allí la vida existe en su forma más elemental, suspendida por un hilo, su desierta es lo opuesto.

— Sea amable con los demás.

Tómese un tiempo para ser voluntario y apoye a causas u organizaciones en las que confíe. Visite un hogar para ancianos, ayude en un jardín comunitario, vaya al “Midnight Run” con su parroquia para alimentar a personas indigentes. Y recuerde que encontrarse con personas en las periferias puede incluir gente en su propia comunidad que podrían estar pasando por momentos difíciles, incluso aquellas que no les cae bien o que tienen actitudes molestas.

— Acepte desafíos.

No permita que el miedo al fracaso le impida tomar riesgos. No deje que el fracaso le impida intentarlo de nuevo. El fracaso y la vergüenza son parte de la vida y así es como aprendemos y crecemos. Alimenten su fe y coraje, no sus miedos. Nuestro llamado a crecer en santidad existe mucho más allá de la Cuaresma. ¿Cómo empezará hoy?

Que Dios los acompañe y guíe en esta Cuaresma y todos los días de sus vidas.

The Angelus
APRIL 2019
Page 23
SAINT PIO
COMES TO THE
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