Seminarian ordained

Seminarian Bala Anthony Govindu, at right, was ordained into the Sacred Order of the Diaconate, October 10, at Sacred Heart Parish in Abilene. Photos, information. Pg. 5

Fall Festival Listings

NOVEMBER 10
ST. JOSEPH – ROWENA
91st Annual St. Fall Festival
“’The Best Journey Always Leads Us to Home and Family’

NOVEMBER 16
ST. PETER’S — MERTZON
FALL FESTIVAL
Irion County Community Center
Details / Pg. 5

‘WHENEVER YOU HELPED THE LEAST OF THESE ...’
The Church’s work with Syrian refugees in Jordan

Catholic Relief Services, Caritas Jordan and the Catholic Churches of Jordan have come together to focus on an enormous undertaking: Caring and providing for the refugees of Syria who have fled their homeland because of the ongoing civil war and are attempting to re-establish their lives in neighboring Jordan. What might surprise you is that a large gift by an anonymous donor in West Texas has provided informal educations each day for almost 1,000 Syrian children. Special Report by Jimmy Patterson. (Photos by Andrew McConnell for Catholic Relief Services)

WHAT’S INSIDE:
Patterson: Six Cups of Tea / Pg. 3
West Texans come to the aid of children refugees / Pg. 11
Catholic priests in Jordan building bridges / Pg. 12
What Catholic Relief Services, Caritas are doing in Jordan / Pg. 13
Young Syrian refugee woman now helping others like her / Pg. 14
A Love Story: Syrian couple’s union is atypical / Pg. 14
Andrew McConnell photos / Pg. 24

Barron on Pope
As by now everyone in the world knows, Pope Francis offered a wide-ranging interview in September, which was subsequently published in 16 Jesuit-sponsored journals from a variety of countries. Pg. 8
FROM THE BISHOP’S DESK

Close of ‘Year of Faith’ reminds us to walk by faith, not sight

The Journey of Each Soul: “Follow Me”
— Mt 9:9

By Bishop Michael Pfeifer, OMI

The closing of the Year of Faith on the Feast of Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe, reminds us we walk by faith, not by sight each day. The Year of Faith has been an ecclesial journey, but implied the deepening of the spirit of faith by each person, each soul.

The journey of each soul consists in heeding the direct command and gentle invitation of Christ, “Follow me.” When Christ extended this invitation, “Follow me,” to the tax collector, Matthew, we read that he got up immediately and followed the One who called him to an unbelievable journey. His life would never be the same again. Christ extends to each one the same invitation: “Follow me,” each day, not just during the Year of Faith that ends on Sunday, November 24.

Little did Matthew know when he was called how his life would unfold. Neither do we fully understand how our life will turn out as each one of us heeds the command and invitation of Christ to “Follow me.” Matthew had the courage and trust in the Lord to walk into the mystery of life not knowing where the journey would take him.

Like Matthew, we are called daily to “leave all and follow” Christ. As we journey daily with Christ, none of us know where we are going to be led once we “get up and follow.” When we look down the road of life and see a road all marked out in front of us, we can be sure that it is not our path because the inner journey is one of mystery that gradually unfolds.

We hear in Scripture that on life’s journey we “walk by faith, not by sight.” As each one of us makes the journey, God does not give all the answers before we set out. However, God does promise never to leave us as we meet the great unknowns of our soul’s journey, and gave us Jesus as our Good Shepherd to lead us on the path of faith. And, Mary, our Mother and Sister in faith, is always watching over us.

In another Gospel, Christ tells us to take up our cross daily and follow him. Christ does not send us down a road to walk alone, but he asks us to follow Him—His example, and use the grace that comes to us from His cross. It is by following Christ that we find light and strength for all difficulties.

DIOCESAN BRIEFS

Clergy Changes
Fr. Rick Lopez OMI leaves diocese effective October 7, 2013.
Fr. Francis Onyekozuru assigned from Sacred Heart-Abilene to parochial vicar at St. Ann-Midland effective October 14, 2013.

David Kauffman in San Angelo
Friday, December 6, 2013 – 7:30 pm
SAN ANGELO — David Kauffman will be at Holy Angels Catholic Church on A&M Ave. in San Angelo for an Advent concert of sacred songs and prayer. Tickets are $10, for those 18 years of age and older. Priests, Religious and Seminarians are free. Deacons and their wives are $5 each. The nursery will be available at no cost for the younger children. Tickets are on sale at Trudo’s Religious Store, 624 W. Ave. N; Brother Leo’s Gift Shop, 2114 W. Harris Ave.; or any ACTS Core or Chapter members. For more information contact Susan Richard @210-287-3014 or JoAnn Turner @325-763-9400. Kauffman is a songwriter, composer, recording artist, music producer, screenplay writer, husband and father who creates music described as “good for the soul.”

Bread of Life
SAN ANGELO — Holy Angels will again host the Bread of Life Retreat/Youth 2000 weekend, January 24-26. The Franciscan Friars of the Renewal will lead the retreat.

For those who attended our last Bread of Life Retreat in 2012 you may remember that we almost ran out of room in the Parish Hall because of the large number of attendees - around 500. Please start planning now so you will be able to register early in case organizers are faced with having to limit registration. For more information, email Holy Angels at haedu61@verizon.net

‘An American Movement,’ Veteran’s Day
At 12:00 noon on Veteran’s Day, November 11, 2013, the Frontline Faith Project is sponsoring the second annual “An American Moment” and is requesting that all Americans take a moment of silent prayer to thank our military for their service, to pray for the peaceful repose of those who have died, and to pray for the intentions of those still living. During that moment of silence, I am asking that we all pray for world peace and that the Prince of Peace bring an end to war and terrorism that pervades our world today. Please join this national effort. Thank you, God’s peace. — Bishop Pfeifer

Rachel’s Vineyard
Come experience the tender mercy of Jesus Christ. Let Him shine on the darkness and pain of your abortion. Join us on our next Rachel’s Vineyard Retreat, Nov. 15-17, 2013, Lubbock, TX.
For more information: kathy.krilie@gmail.com or 806-577-5912.

Catholic Life Insurance Scholarships
Applications for the 2014 All American Scholar Program, sponsored by Catholic Life Insurance, are now available and must be received no later than March 1, 2014. Send your completed application package to: Catholic Life Insurance, Attn: All American Scholar Award, PO Box 659527, San Antonio, TX 78265.

The All American Scholar Program awards 35 non-renewable college scholarships in the amount of $1,000 each to graduating high school seniors. Applicants must be Catholic Life Insurance members who will be enrolled in a private or public college, university or trade school for the upcoming fall semester. Download applications at www.cliu.com. For more information, please contact Briana Frantz in the Communications Department at (800) 292-2548 or (210) 828-9921 ext. 141, or send an email to branch@cliu.com.

Franciscan sisters celebrate 100 years in United States
The Angelus

PITTSBURGH, Penn. — On August 15, 2013, the Feast of the Assumption, the School Sisters of St. Francis from the United States Province celebrated their 100th Anniversary of their presence and ministry in the United States. The celebration was held at Queen of the Angels Chapel at Mount Assisi Convent in Pittsburgh, Penn. Bishop David Zubik of the Diocese of Pittsburgh was the main celebrant and was joined by Bishop Michael Pfeifer, OMI, Bishop of the Diocese of San Angelo. Joining area priests were friends, relatives and benefactors who filled the chapel and later joined in a festive meal in the dining room.

After a journey of 18 days at sea on the Pretoria six pioneer Sisters of Czech, Slovak and German origin arrived in New York on August 15, 1913 and in Pittsburgh, Penn. by train on August 18, 1913. Thus began the presence of the School Sisters of St. Francis in the United States. They left behind all they knew in Europe to respond to the need to minister to the Eastern European immigrants in Pennsylvania with their work expanding to many places in the United States including New Jersey, Massachusetts, Ohio, West Virginia, Oregon, Texas and Arizona.

The global outreach of the congregation of the School Sisters of St. Francis includes Italy, Czech Republic, Slovak Republic, South America, South Africa, Central Asia, and India.
From the Editor

Six cups of tea: Samir’s smile

By Jimmy Patterson

MAFRAQ, Jordan — When he walked through the doorway he held a metal tray that contained a half-dozen small glasses and a kettle of tea. Steam poured from the pot as he gave each of us a helping. He looked at me as he poured the tea into my cup and offered a smile. Our server is Samir. He is dressed in a shiny gray suit, a bright blue shirt, a multi-colored tie and a pair of what look to be Ray-Bans. He and his older sister, Wafa, had spent the first few minutes of our visit boiling water in the family kitchen, preparing the tea. They are excited. Guests don’t come to Samir’s house every day.

We sit on the living room floor. There is no furniture in the house, a structure that sits a few blocks from downtown Mafraq, 15 minutes from Syria’s southern border. Samir’s mother, Fatima, sits on the floor with the rest of us. She tells of leaving her home in Aleppo and bringing her family to Jordan. The Jordanians have been good to her but she has not seen her husband or her eldest son in months. Both remained in Syria when the rest of the family fled to Jordan. Fatima’s other son, who is 18, battles behavioral issues brought on by the bitterness in what he sees as the unfairness of his family’s new normal.

After hearing how the Syrian war has destroyed what had been a peaceful life for Fatima, who had worked as a seamstress in Syria, we bid her, Samir and Wafa well and make our way to a waiting car on the street.

It is hard to leave these people, knowing that what you do or write or say about them will likely amount to little if anything in their larger struggle. As I turn to go, it is difficult to accept the simplest fact — that I will never see these people again.

Two hours later, after lunch with the priest at St. George’s Church in Mafraq, the parish which, along with Caritas Jordan and Catholic Relief Services, hosts the school that welcomes hundreds of Syrian children every day, we begin classroom visits in which both Caritas staff and even Syrian refugees—turned-volunteer teachers help educate the students.

(Please See PATTERSON/23)

Del Escritorio del Obispo

El fin del año de fe no recuerda que caminamos guiados por la fe, sin ver

[La Jornada de cada alma “Sígueme” (Mt 9:9)]

Por el Obispo Miguel Pfeifer

El fin del Año de Fe en la Fiesta de Nuestro Señor Jesucristo, Rey del Universo, nos recuerda que “caminamos guiados por la fe, sin ver” cada día. El Año de Fe ha sido una jornada eclesial, pero implicó el profundizarse del espíritu de fe por cada persona, cada alma.

La jornada de cada alma consiste en prestar atención al mandamiento directo y amable invitación de Cristo, “Sígueme.” Cuando Cristo extendió esta invitación, “Sígueme,” al recaudador de impuestos, Mateo, lemos que se levantó inmediatamente y siguió al Único quien le llamó a una jornada increíble. Su vida nunca sería lo mismo. Cristo extiende la misma invitación a cada uno de nosotros: “Sígueme.” cada día no solamente durante el Año de Fe que se finaliza el domingo, 24 de noviembre del 2013.

Poco sabía Mateo, cuando fue llamado como su vida se desarrollaría. Tan poco entendemos completamente como nuestras vidas resultarán mientras cada uno preste atención al mandamiento e invitación de Cristo de “Sígueme.” Mateo tuvo el valor y la confianza en el Señor de caminar en el misterio de la vida sin saber a donde lo llevaría la jornada.

Como Mateo, somos llamados diariamente a “dejar todo y seguir” a Cristo. Al caminar diariamente con Cristo, ninguno de nosotros sabemos a donde seamos guiados al “levantarnos y seguir.” Al ver el futuro camino de la vida y mirar un camino mejor marcado para nosotros, podemos estar seguros que no es nuestro camino por que la jornada al interior es una de misterio que gradualmente se desarrolla.

Leemos en la Escritura que la jornada de la vida es “caminar por testimonio del Señor Jesucristo, Rey del Universo.” (Mira OBISPO/23)
Students: Anything possible with faith in God

(Note from Bishop Pfeifer: I feature here the inspiring, faith-filled letter sent to me from the teenagers of Holy Spirit Parish in Sweetwater in preparation for their Confirmation.)

September 15, 2013

From the Confirmation Class of Sweetwater / Roscoe

To Most Reverend Bishop Michael Pfeifer, OMI

In the letter you sent us, you wanted us to address the meanings of Confirmation, chastity, and the readings as they apply to our lives. We reflected on these topics as a class and this is our response:

Confirmation is a Sacrament through which we receive the Holy Spirit. It is the understanding that we are uniting our lives to God and celebrating our connection with the Lord in the Holy Spirit. This new journey that we are beginning together as the Confirmation class of 2013 is going to be a very joyful experience in our lives. In this transitional stage, we are opening a door and diving deeper into our faith. We know that this is not the end, but another stepping stone closer to God.

During the ceremony, we allow the Holy Spirit to fully enter our hearts and be our guide in our lives. The Holy Spirit awakens within us and we will feel the love that can never be matched. The Holy Spirit will become a more dominant part of our lives. Now that the Holy Spirit is guiding us, we can show it in our everyday lives. The gifts of the Holy Spirit are: knowledge, wisdom, understanding, courage, right judgment, reverence, and wonder and awe. From these gifts, we are then able to produce in our lives the fruit such as charity, chastity, peacefulness, and many others. We are given the gift of courage to stay strong in our faith and perform our duties well. We can use right judgment to know the right thing to do in a difficult situation. We can use wisdom to be great examples to the younger generation. We can use knowledge to teach and keep other people aware of our faith. If we move away from our hometown, we will become involved in the parish of our new city and continue our duties to evangelize the world. We will volunteer and participate in anything that involves our faith. We will give up time to help spread more knowledge about our faith.

Upon reflecting on the scripture readings for our Confirmation Mass, we realized that we will need to be patient when obstacles are put in our paths. We should never lose faith when times get tough. God puts hardships in our lives for a reason, and we just have to trust in Him and keep following His commandments. Anything is possible when you have faith in God. If you never lose faith, when you are faced with adversity good things will come to you. For instance, in the first reading, the Prophet Habakkuk was crying out to God. He was losing faith because God was not answering him, but God responded by saying that He will make things right if he does not lose faith in Him. Not losing our faith is important if we are to live out our lives according to God’s will, and receiving Confirmation will help us be strong in our faith.

(Please See CONFIRMATION/20)

Para seguir con el año de fe, nos comprometemos a ser fieles a Cristo

Por el Obispo Miguel Pfeifer, OMI

Al finalizar el Año de Fe, debemos continuar recordándonos del don precioso de fe el cual Dios nos da comenzando en nuestro bautismo, y recordarnos todo lo que hizo Cristo en su muerte y resurrección para darnos perdón y el Espíritu Santo para vivir vidas de fe con alegría y fidelidad. Para continuar el Año de Fe, cada uno individualmente, y especialmente como familia y como comunidad, debemos comprometernos a vivir nuestro discipulado como seguidores de Cristo, a ser fieles a su enseñanza y verdad. El gran modelo de cómo vivir nuestra fe es la primera y perfecta discípula de Jesús, su propia madre y nuestra madre, María, quien nos da el espíritu que deberíamos traer cada día a nuestras vidas cuando ella entregó su vida a Dios en fe y confianza, “Yo soy la servidora del Señor, que se cumpla en mí lo que has dicho.” (Lucas 1:38)

Misas para finalizar el Año de Fe
La fecha actual para finalizar el Año de Fe es el domingo, 24 de noviembre, 2013, pero como no podemos reunirnos juntos como un deanery en domingo para finalizar el Año de Fe, pido que tengamos una Misa especial en cada de las tres deaneries de nuestra diócesis, que se llevará a cabo el miércoles, 20 de noviembre a las 6:30 p.m. Por favor de hacer planes para estar presente para estas Misas especiales para darle gracias a Dios por nuestro don de fe y para comprometernos a vivir nuestra fe cada día de nuestras vidas.

La Misa para finalizar el Año de Fe se llevará a cabo en cada deanery y ya hagan planes para estar presentes con sus familias. Misas para finalizar el Año de Fe serán celebradas en las siguientes iglesias:

San Angelo Deanery – Sacred Heart Cathedral a las 6:30 p.m. el 20 de noviembre—El Obispo Miguel Pfeifer, OMI—celebrante y homilista principal.

Abilene Deanery—Sacred Heart Church en Abilene a las 6:30 p.m. el 20 de noviembre—Dean, Msgr. Fred Nawarskas—celebrante y homilista principal, u otro sacerdote.

Midland/Odessa Deanery—Holy Redeemer Church en Odessa a las 6:30 pm. el 20 de noviembre—Dean, Msgr. Bernard Gully—celebrante y homilista principal, u otro sacerdote.

Durante las Misas de las deaneries (20 de noviembre del 2013), para finalizar el Año de Fe, todos orarémos el Acto de Consagración a Cristo Rey. Esta consagración será rezada también en cada Misa en el día actual de finalización. La Fiesta de Cristo Rey, el domingo, 24 de noviembre del 2013, y en las Misas de anticipación.

Ministerio Numero Uno – Vida Familiar y Matrimonial
Para ayudarnos a continuar a vivir nuestra fe cada día, les pido que como seguimiento al Año de Fe, hacer lo siguiente: Pido que nos comprometamos a vivir el ministerio numero uno de nuestra diócesis que es Vida Familiar y Matrimonial, y de dar énfasis a la priori-
National audit: San Angelo Diocese in full compliance
The Angelus

During the month of September 2013, the Catholic Diocese of San Angelo completed an audit of its Safe Environment Programs with auditors from Stonebridge Business Partners of Rochester, New York, an independent firm commissioned by the United States Catholic Conference of Bishops (USCCB), to insure compliance with the USCCB Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People.

In a letter dated October 4, 2013, to Bishop Michael Pfeifer from Stonebridge Business Partners, they advised that “the Diocese of San Angelo is in compliance with the data collection requirements for the 2012/2013 Charter audit period.”

The Charter, originally adopted by the USCCB in November 2002, sets forth specific requirements which enable dioceses across the country to establish safe environment programs to protect children and youth from sexual and other kinds of abuse. During this audit, Diocesan Safe Environment Policies; Safe Environment Programs for church personnel, parents, and children; as well as procedures for assisting victims of sexual abuse were examined. As Bishop, I am happy to report that Stonebridge has informed the Diocese that, based on the analysis of the audit, the Diocese will continue its status of being in compliance with the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People.

Since implementation of the Charter, the Diocese has undergone nine previous annual audits in which we were found to be in full compliance with all articles of the charter.

“I am pleased with the results of this audit and grateful for the hard work of hundreds of people throughout our diocese in 29 counties; pastors, deacons, women religious, and lay leaders; who provide a safe and sacred environment for all of our children and youth in the many programs and ministries we provide for them. Once again, this audit has given us a great opportunity to step back and see what we have accomplished and explore areas where we can make adjustments or improvements,” said Bishop Michael Pfeifer, OMI, of San Angelo.

Since 2002 the Diocese of San Angelo has conducted background checks and Safe Environment Training for over 10,000 individuals who work with children and youth throughout the Diocese. In addition, over 14,000 parents and other interested parties have attended seminars that the Diocese has presented on Preventing Child Sexual Abuse. The Diocese will continue to move forward, continuing efforts, not only to provide a safe environment for our children and youth in our church programs, but to raise the awareness of child sexual abuse, and steps that everyone can take to help protect our children. In accord with the Charter, Bishop Pfeifer and the Bishops of USA invite all Churches and all agencies of society to join hands in efforts to prevent sexual abuse, especially of children, which, sadly, is rampant in all areas of society.
A culture of death is infiltrating field of palliative care

By Bishop Michael Pfeifer, OMI

Sadly, many in the field of hospice and palliative care—medical and nursing directors, nurses, social workers and chaplains—as well as physicians across the country, confirm that there is a clear trend towards hastening the death of patients. While disguised by some fancy terms, like permanent sedation, total sedation and others, the bottom line is this is euthanasia.

Medications used to manage pain and other symptoms are being misused to cause death. Sadly the intention to kill a patient, not just to treat pain and other symptoms, is becoming more common in palliative and end-of-life care settings.

It is important that hospice and palliative care physicians and nurses be well trained in the appropriate administration of medications and understand their potential to hasten death. When the staff is properly educated and the founding principles of hospice—to maintain dignity, to increase quality of life, and to provide comfort and pain control—are followed, hospice is a safe haven for a patient in need of expert end-of-life care.

For decades the praiseworthy goal of the hospice and the palliative care mission has been to relieve patients’ distressful symptoms but never to hasten death. However, it is becoming more common that permanent sedation and the withholding of nutrition and hydration are often done precisely with the intention that the patient die. Sedation has a legitimate place in the end-of-life care but must always be used only when absolutely necessary but not to cause death. Some hospice and palliative care services administer sedatives that in themselves do not cause immediate death, but knowingly cause conditions that result in death.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church states, “an act or omission which, of itself or by intention, causes death in order to eliminate suffering constitutes a murder”. Therefore, omission of nutrition or hydration that causes or hastens a patient’s death must be rejected.

Sadly, the culture of death has infiltrated the hospice and palliative care industry. At the same time we recognize that there are some healthcare professionals who courageously remain faithful to the original mission of hospice of providing care until the natural end of life of a patient.

A major difficulty facing patients and their families is that they do not know how to discern which healthcare providers can be trusted to care and to never kill. Hence, the first question to ask when looking for a pro-life hospice or palliative care program is—does every physician and nurse reject all justifications for intentionally causing the death of patients? Authentic hospice involves adding resources to uphold the dignity of the patient and the sanctity of life.

Patients who are in pain need relief that is safely administered and poses little or no risk of hastening death. They do not need—not do most want—death. The culture of life promotes ethical principles that guide the appropriate and judicious use of sedatives and opioids.

The needs of the most vulnerable among us cannot be truly understood or met without first recognizing the sanctity of human life. What is at stake affects not only patients but also the medical profession and all of society. Practices that are knowingly used to impose death are always unethical.

(Much information taken with permission from the article, The Rise of Stealth Euthanasia, from Ethics & Medics.)

To follow up on Year of Faith, pledge yourself to be faithful to Christ

By Bishop Michael Pfeifer, OMI

As we bring closure to the Year of Faith, we must continue to remind ourselves of the beautiful gift of faith which God gives us beginning in our baptism, and to remind ourselves of all that Christ did in His death and resurrection to give us forgiveness and the Holy Spirit to live joyful and meaningful lives of faith. To follow up on the Year of Faith, each one of us individually, and especially as family and as a community, should pledge ourselves to live our discipleship as followers of Christ, to be faithful to His teaching and truth. The great model of how to live our faith is the first and perfect disciple of Jesus, His own mother and our mother, Mary, who gives us the spirit we should bring to every day of our lives when she surrendered her life to God in faith and trust, “Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord, be it done to me according to your word.” [Luke 1:38]

Masses to close the Year of Faith

The actual date to close the Year of Faith is Sunday, November 24, 2013, but as we cannot come together at a deanery on Sunday to close the Year of Faith, I am asking that we have a special Mass in each of the three Deaneries of our Diocese, to take place on Wednesday, November 20 at 6:30 pm. Please make plans to be present for these special Masses to thank God for our gift of faith and to pledge ourselves to live our faith every day of our lives. The Mass to end the Year of Faith will take place in each Deanery and make plans already to be present with your families.

Masses to end the Year of Faith will be celebrated at the following churches:

San Angelo Deanery – Sacred Heart Cathedral at 6:30 pm, November 20, Msgr. Fred Nawarskas, dean, main celebrant and homilist.

Abilene Deanery – Sacred Heart Church, Abilene, 6:30 pm, November 20, Bishop Michael Pfeifer, OMI – main celebrant and homilist.

(Abilenian Church) – Sacred Heart Church, Abilene, 6:30 pm, November 20, Msgr. Bernard Gully, dean, main celebrant and homilist.

Midland/Odessa Deanery – Holy Redeemer Church in Odessa, 6:30 pm, November 20, Msgr. Bernard Gully, dean, main celebrant and homilist, or another priest.

During these deanery masses to close the Year of Faith, we will all pray the Act of Consecration to Christ our King. This consecration will then be prayed at each mass on the actual date of closure, the Feast of Christ the King, on Sunday, November 24, and in the Masses of anticipation.

Number One Ministry – Family Life and Marriage

To help us continue to live our faith each day, I am asking that as a follow-up to the Year of Faith, we do the following. I am asking that we pledge ourselves to live out the No. 1 ministry of our Diocese which is Family Life and Marriage, and to give new emphasis to the No. 1 priority of this ministry, which is respect for the precious unborn, to bring an end to abortion, and a new respect for all human life at every stage of life.

This number one ministry and priority were chosen as the special ministry for our Diocese as we began the 50th anniversary of our Diocese back in October, 2012. Our life of faith begins in our homes guided by our parents and other family members. This faith has its beginning in baptism, and is nourished especially by the Sacraments of our beautiful Catholic Church. So as we continue to live out the Year of Faith, we want to pledge ourselves as a family to be faithful to Christ, especially to attending Mass frequently and receiving our Lord in Holy Communion and also to celebrate often the beautiful Sacrament of Reconciliation, Confession, which not only takes away our sins, but gives us special grace and strength to deal with the temptations and struggles in our daily lives. And, I encourage our families—parents and children—to study together the Bible and the Catechism of the Catholic Church.

Priests and Pastoral Councils

To help us live this number one ministry of Family Life and Marriage, I am asking that our priests in all of our communities do the following: As we end the Year of Faith and enter into the new Liturgical Year with the First Sunday of Advent, December 1, 2013, I ask that at every Pastoral Council meeting in the coming year, that our number one priority, praying for and actively protecting the unborn, and to implement more forcefully the Corporal Works of Mercy and the Spiritual Works of Mercy, which are splendid ways to put our faith into action. I am also asking that, as a way to follow up on the Year of Faith, according to our number one ministry, that at each Pastoral Council meeting during the year, one of the special nine strategies of building up faith in all of our families that were given to the priests at a seminar some three years ago by John Roberto be studied and implemented in our parishes.

I call upon all the people of our Diocese to be involved in our pro-life ministry, especially for the unborn, to take part then in these Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy and to also give support to these particular strategies that help us to center on building up our faith in each individual family, our communities and throughout our Diocese.

Remember, our No. 1 ministry is Marriage and Family life, and our No. 1 priority is praying and working to show new respect and love for the precious unborn, and for a new respect for all human life at every stage of life. In accord with our No. 1 priority, I ask all of you, the people of our diocese, with our priests to pray for these intentions, to have each month a Mass in each Deanery specifically offered for the unborn and to bring an end to abortion, and to stress strongly the need for our priests and people to be involved in more prayer, letter-writing to the media, to our government...
Experience life after loss with ‘New Beginnings’

A New Beginnings Weekend will be November 22-24 at Christ the King Retreat Center in San Angelo.

By Judy Ford

Our journey through life includes many proverbial hills and valleys. The hills lead us onto higher highs, making us feel happy and alive. The valleys catch us off guard, leading us sometimes to be sad and lonely. One of the valleys many married people have endured is the loss of a spouse. This loss can be the result of death or separation or divorce.

Our Church wants to walk with people (Catholic and non-Catholic) through these valleys. One way the Church does this is the Beginning Experience weekend. It is a spiritual weekend designed to help these people in throes of great loss to move through the stages of grief. If you, while reading this article, are experiencing a “valley” in your life, please consider coming to our next Beginning Experience weekend.

The next opportunity to attend a Beginnings Experience weekend is November 22-24. It will be held at Christ the King Retreat Center in San Angelo. This weekend experience begins on Friday night at 8:00 p.m. and ends on Sunday afternoon by 4:00 p.m. For $115.00, each participant has his/her own room as well as all meals. The only thing you need to bring is comfortable clothes and a willingness to heal. The Beginning Experience weekend is open to men and women of all faiths who have suffered the death, separation or divorce of a spouse. If you are a single parent and need assistance to come to the weekend, please seek out your priest or minister and tell them about your situation.

One of the participants made these comments after the loss of her husband in a traffic accident. It had been four years since my husband’s sudden death. I was left with a 19-year-old son and 15-year-old daughter. My children and I were devastated and I spent the first few years helping them deal with the loss of their father. I put my grief on hold, making sure my son and daughter were on their way to recovery first. When my daughter left home I found myself with an empty nest and unable to move forward in the grief process. Feeling lost and lonely I attended a Beginning Experience weekend and at that weekend I came to understand that I was not alone. I learned to start to live anew as a single person and put closure to my marriage of 23 years. I became a team member and continue to be a part of this wonderful healing ministry.

For more information, visit www.beginningexperience.org, call Christ the King Retreat Center (325-651-5352) or call one of these team members: Judy (432-837-5640), Mary (512-990-4738), Jennifer (432-528-6243) or Brenda (432-288-2712). The Beginning Experience Team is committed to serve to bring about the healing grace of Christ in your life and the lives of your families.

San Angelo

San Angelo

Bishop Michael D. Pfeifer, at right, with students from Angelo Catholic School and the St. Joseph’s Youth Group, in San Angelo, who gathered for the Living Rosary at St. Joseph’s.

San Angelo

At left, parishioners from all parishes in San Angelo gather at St. Joseph’s Church to pray the Rosary for America and the forgiveness of sins.

Brady

Brady

Father Hilary Ihedioha, left, pastor of St. Patrick’s Church in Brady, hands the keys to a new truck to Arnold Valdez. Valdez won the vehicle in the St. Patrick fall festival.
The saint, sinner inside of us are not separate entities

By Ron Rolheiser

What are we ultimately, saints or sinners? What's deepest inside us, goodness or selfishness? Or, are we dualists with two innate principles inside us, one good and one evil, in a perpetual dual with each other?

Certainly, at the level of experience, we feel a conflict. There's a saint inside us who wants to mirror the greatness of life, even as there is someone else inside us that wants to walk a seedier path. I like the honesty of Henri Nouwen when he describes this conflict in his own life: "I want to be great saint," he once confessed, "but I don't want to miss out on all the sensations that sinners experience." It's because of this bi-polar tension inside us that we find it so hard to make clear moral choices. We want the right things, but we also want many of the wrong things. Every choice is a renunciation and so the struggle between saint and sinner inside us often manifests itself precisely in our inability to make hard choices.

But we don't feel this tension only in our struggle to make clear moral decisions; we feel it daily in our spontaneous reaction to situations that affect us adversely. Simply put, we are forever bouncing back and forth between being petty and being big-hearted, spiteful and forgiving, whenever we are negatively impacted by others.

For instance, we all have had this kind of experience: We are at work and in a good emotional state, thinking peaceful and patient thoughts, nursing warm feelings, wishing harm to no one, when a coworker comes in and, without good reason, slights or insults us in some way. In one instant, our whole inner world reverses: A door slams shut and we begin to feel cold and spiteful, thinking anything but warm thoughts, seemingly becoming different persons: moving from being big-hearted to being spiteful, from being saints to entertaining murderous feelings.

Which is our true person? What are we really, saints with big hearts or petty, spiteful persons? Seemingly, we are both, saints and sinners, since goodness and selfishness both flow through us.

Interestingly, we don't always react in the same way. Sometimes in the face of a slight, insult, or even positive attack and injustice, we react with patience, understanding, and forgiveness. Why? What changes the chemistry? Why do we sometimes meet pettiness with a big-heart and, other times, meet it in kind, with spite?

Ultimately, we don't know the reason; that's part of the mystery of human freedom. Certain factors obviously play in: for example, if we are in a good inner-space when we are ignored, slighted, or unfairly treated, we are more prone to react with patience and understanding, with a big heart. Conversely, if we are tired, pressured, and feeling unloved and unappreciated, we are more likely to react negatively, and return spite for spite.

But, be that as it may, ultimately there's deeper reality at work in all of this, beyond our emotional well being on a given day. How we react to a situation, with grace or spite, for the most part depends upon something else. The Church Fathers had a concept and name for this. They believed that each of us has two souls, a big soul and a petty soul, and how we react to any situation depends largely upon which soul we are thinking with and acting out of at that moment.

Thus, if I meet an insult or an injury with my big soul, I am more likely to meet it with patience, understanding, and forgiveness. Conversely, if I meet an insult or a hurt while operating out of my petty soul, I am more likely to respond in kind, with pettiness, coldness, and spite. And, for the Church Fathers, both of these souls are inside us and both are real; we're both big-hearted and petty, saint and sinner.

The challenge is to operate more out of our big soul than our petty one.

But we must be careful to not understand this dualistically. In affirming that we have two souls, a big soul and a petty soul, the Church Fathers are not teaching a variation of an old dualism, namely, that there are inside us two innate principles, one good and one evil, perpetually fighting for control of our hearts and souls. That kind of struggle in fact does go on inside us, but not between two separate principles.

The saint and sinner inside us are not separate entities. Rather the saint in us, the big soul, is not only our true self, it's our only self. The sinner in us, the petty soul, is not a separate person or separate moral force doing perpetual battle with the saint, it's simply the wounded part of the saint, that part of the saint that's been cursed and never properly blessed.

And our wounded self shouldn't be demonized and cursed again. Rather it needs to be befriended and blessed - and then it will cease being petty and spiteful in the face of adversity.

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

The field hospital is open: Reflections on pope’s interview

By Very Rev. Robert Barron

(The Pope Francis interview to which Father Barron is referring was given in August and released on September 19.)

As by now everyone in the world knows, Pope Francis offered a lengthy and wide-ranging interview to the editor of Civiltà Cattolica, which was subsequently published in sixteen Jesuit-sponsored journals from a variety of countries. As we’ve come to expect practically any time this Pope speaks, the interview has provoked a media frenzy. To judge by the headlines in The New York Times and on CNN, the Catholic Church is in the midst of a moral and doctrinal revolution, led by a maverick Pope bent on dragging the old institution into the modern world. I might recommend that everyone take a deep breath and prayerfully (or at least thoughtfully) read what Pope Francis actually said. For what he actually said is beautiful, lyrical, spirit-filled, and in its own distinctive way, revolutionary.

The first question to which the Pope responded in this interview is simple: “Who is Jorge Mario Bergoglio (his given name)?” After a substantial pause, he said, “a sinner whom the Lord has looked upon.” At the heart of the matter, at the core of the “Catholic thing,” is this encounter between us sinners and the God of amazing grace. Long before we get to social teaching, to debates about birth control and abortion, to adjudicating questions about homosexual activity, to disputes about liturgy, etc., we have the graced moment when sinners are accepted, even though they are unacceptable. Pope Francis aptly illustrated his observation by drawing attention to Caravaggio’s masterpiece, “The Conversion of St. Matthew,” which depicts the instant when Matthew, a thoroughly self-absorbed and materialistic man, found himself looked upon by Christ’s merciful gaze. Because of that look, Matthew utterly changed, becoming first a disciple, then a missionary, and finally a martyr.

I believe that this first answer given by Pope Francis provides the interpretive lens for reading the rest of the interview. He is confessing to be a sinner who has found grace and conversion and who has thereby been transformed into a missionary. On the basis of that master insight, he is able to survey both Church and society with astonishing clarity and serenity. One of the most commented upon remarks in the interview is the following: “This church with which we should be thinking is the home of all, not a small chapel that can hold only a small group of selected people.” What the Pope is signaling here is that the Church, as his predecessor Paul VI put it, doesn’t have a mission; it is a mission, for its purpose is to cause the merciful face of Jesus to gaze upon everyone in the world. It is not an exclusive club where only the morally perfect are welcome, but rather, a home for sinners, which means a home for everybody.

And this insight provides the right context for understanding another controversial remark from the interview: “The Church sometimes has locked itself up in small things, in small-minded rules. The most important thing is the first proclamation: Jesus Christ has saved you.” The Pope is not suggesting that rules — moral, spiritual, liturgical, etc. — are unnecessary or unimportant, but he is indeed suggesting that they are secondary to the central reality of encountering the living Christ. If the Church leads with moral regulation, it will appear, especially to our postmodern culture, asussy, puritanical, censorious. And it will most likely awaken a defensive reaction on the part of
We are called to godliness, even in the business world

By Carolyn Woo
Catholic News Service

Given my work in business education and particularly my last role as the dean of the business school in a Catholic university, I am often asked whether work in the business sector can be a vocation. The answer is simply, "Of course!" Business is a necessary good, not a necessary evil.

As such, it is worthy of the brightest mind, biggest heart and deepest faith. You would need to write a book to fully explore this topic, but know that the potential benefits of business are recognized in papal encyclicals, including "Centesimus Annus" and "Caritas in Veritate."

At the same time, these also point out the abuses, exploitation and idolatry that exist in business, free markets and globalization. The difference, as retired Pope Benedict XVI teaches, lies with the moral energies of leaders.

Despite authentic and encouraging actions undertaken by some businesses, there is a prevailing perception of the "real world" that renders the notion of vocation and sanctity in the workplace as a naive notion with limited applicability.

I can hear the skepticism in the unspoken but still screaming question of the audience when I talk about business as a vocation: Does she know the real world where I work? Where people do not tell the truth, do not share information, do not look out for one another and where life is a zero-sum game and scores are kept solely in profits?

I detect it in students who dread going into that "real world" when they are about to graduate. Their feeling reflects the fear of entering a world that, to different degrees, has shut its doors on goodness, generosity and godliness.

The new evangelization has focused on bringing Catholics back to the church so that the word of God and his sacraments can take hold of us and join us to him. At the same time, there is much work to be done for Catholics to bring God into the world.

What does it say about our faith if God is only relevant in "God's world" confined to church, families and communities where we play nice, act gracious, break bread and leave behind the "dirty" work of making a living?

Is "God's world" a retreat, a bubble, an escape from what is real? Did Christ not come into the real world to dwell among us with all our frailties, hurts, failings, needs, fears and pride? Did God not charge us to go into the world and proclaim his good news? How can we do that if we do not believe he is there? What good news would we have to proclaim?

Did God not take the fruits of our work and convert these into his own body and blood? Why do we assume that this "real world" is impenetrable to God's grace, his goodness, his wisdom, his power, his unbounded love and mercy?

Doesn't "Lumen Gentium" tell us that it is in the expanses of our daily life (including work) that we are to be the light of the world? "Now the laity are called in a special way to make the church present and operative in those places and circumstances where only through them can it become the salt of the earth. Thus every layman, in virtue of the very gifts bestowed upon him, is at the same time a witness and a living instrument of the mission of the church itself according to the measure of Christ's bestowal."

Contemplating God, even among humanity's greatest achievements

By Stephen Kent
Catholic News Service

While on Earth all eyes were focused on chemical attacks in Syria, mass shootings in Washington, D.C., and Nairobi, Kenya, titanic floods in Colorado and other misadventures of man and nature, something else happened that was out of this world.

We learned that Voyager 1, a space probe launched from the United States 36 years ago, has traveled farther than anyone or anything in history as it reached interstellar space.

The median age of people living in United States is 36.8 years meaning half the people in the country were not alive when the spacecraft left Cape Canaveral on Sept. 5, 1977.

The spacecraft weighs about 1,600 pounds and NASA says it would fit inside a cube about 13 feet on each side. It travels at 38,000 miles per hour. Its original mission was to fly by Jupiter and Saturn, sending back photos and scientific observations from those two planets. It arrived near Jupiter in March 1979 and near Saturn in November 1980.

This year, on September 12, NASA confirmed that Voyager 1 had reached interstellar space in August of last year. Voyager 1 is estimated now to be about 12 billion miles from Earth. It is so far away that radio transmissions take over 17 hours to reach Earth.

Long after the sun expands to swallow Earth entirely, Voyager may still be traversing the universe, silently charting entirely unknown territories.

Wow. Look at what we did. But before becoming too wound up about how stupendous all of this is, consider this: By studying meteorites and using radioactive dating techniques, scientists have determined that the solar system is 4.6 billion years old, give or take a few million years. The solar system in which we exist may be the only one in creation, or it may be one of thousands, many perhaps much larger.

These are most impressive facts and statistics. Even more impressive is this: At the beginning of the solar system, God is there. And at the end of everything, God is there.

Meanwhile, this is God who takes our calls, who knows us by name, who is the approachable God, the one of love and mercy.

It is not irreverent to contemplate God being mildly amused at his earthly creatures, so proud of going where no man has gone before without realizing it may be only one step within an infinitesimal amount of creation.
Making Sense of Bioethics

The ethics of donating money to charitable foundations

By Fr. Tad Pacholczyk

Private foundations and non-profit groups are frequently involved in advocating for particular causes, ranging from cancer research to protecting the environment. Some of these foundations rely almost exclusively on charitable donations to carry out their promotional work. Potential donors seeking to support these causes face the challenge of exercising “due diligence” so that their funds are properly utilized and not misdirected or otherwise targeted by the organization to support immoral projects.

An example of the need for this due diligence can be seen in the case of the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation, which promotes scientific research to cure type 1 diabetes. The ethical concern arises because this organization has gone on record in support of a highly unethical form of research, namely, human embryonic stem cell research. Similarly, we may need to consider whether it is appropriate to support the Susan G. Komen Foundation’s Race for a Cure, which seeks to promote breast cancer research and awareness. One of the rarely-discussed problems with the Komen Foundation’s activities is that some of the money they raise may be used to promote morally objectionable activities that run counter to their mission of fighting breast cancer: some of Komen’s funds are made available to Planned Parenthood, the largest abortion provider in the U.S., even though abortion of a woman’s first pregnancy has been shown to correlate with an elevated incidence of breast cancer. More than 28 different studies over a period of 45 years have shown abortion to be a significant risk factor for breast cancer.

In fiscal year 2009, Komen affiliates contributed around $730,000 to programs sponsored by Planned Parenthood, and in fiscal year 2010, they contributed about $569,000. In January of 2012, the Susan G. Komen Foundation courageously decided that it would discontinue its financial support of Planned Parenthood. In the media firestorm that ensued, Komen experienced the backlash reserved for those who dare to cross the pro-abortion lobby. After little more than twenty-four hours, the Komen Foundation withdrew under the pressure, reversed itself, and assured the public it would continue to make funds available to Planned Parenthood. This backsliding solidified the beliefs of many donors that the Komen Foundation could not be trusted with their funds.

Komen’s support for the abortion provider may stem from the fact that Komen’s founder, Nancy Brinker, is a long-time promoter of Planned Parenthood, having served as an advisory board member for the organization’s Texas affiliate. John Hammarley, a spokesman for Komen, indicated that about 20 of Komen’s 122 affiliates are responsible for the money that goes to Planned Parenthood and has claimed that those funds are used only for breast cancer treatment, education, or screening programs that happen to be affiliated with the abortion group.

Planned Parenthood, however, is not licensed to provide screening beyond Level 1 breast examinations – the same exam that can be done by a woman in her shower, or in any clinic or physician’s office. They do not even perform mammograms. Even if they did provide serious breast cancer screening, it would still remain a financial fact of life that an organization that receives money for Project A can divert other funds in its budget to Project B. Every dime that Komen provides to Planned Parenthood allows a different dime to be freed up for overhead, supplies, equipment and personnel to perform abortions.

When foundations have a generally sound list of activities, but promote an intrinsically immoral activity as well (e.g., abortion, human embryonic stem cell research, contraception, etc.), one must consider the serious matter of the fungibility of donated funds. If we engage in fundraising for such organizations, even if they assure us that specified funds will only be used for activities with an ethical profile, it can end up being little more than a shell game. In this sense, there is a real danger that our fundraising activities will not only engender scandal, but may even contribute to the perpetuation of grave evils like abortion and human embryonic stem cell research.

Our fundraising initiatives need to be carefully directed towards foundations and organizations without such connections to intrinsically immoral actions. Donors who are concerned about the use of funds by Komen may wish to consider alternative groups such as the National Breast Cancer Foundation, an organization that funds mammograms, or the Breast Cancer Prevention Institute, which offers information on avoidable risks including abortion. The Iacocca Family Foundation, to consider another example, promotes cutting-edge diabetes research without supporting human embryonic stem cell research. Some smaller, local organizations may also have suitable profiles for us to be able to support their work unreservedly. A determined decision to redirect our fundraising energies can also have a powerful practical impact, serving to evangelize and provide witness, as organizations become aware of the reasons why such efforts are being channeled away from them.

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.ncbc-center.org

Reflections from an Engaged Encounter weekend, Sept. 6-8

“This Encounter has brought us closer together and our relationship closer to God.”

[Note from Bishop Pfeifer: Several times a year at Christ the King Retreat Center in San Angelo, we have Engaged Encounter weekends for young people, and a few a little older, preparing for the Sacrament of Matrimony. I enclose here a few of the many reflections shared by the couples who made the recent Engaged Encounter weekend, September 6-8, 2013. These Encounters indeed bring couples preparing for marriage closer together in love and fidelity and bring their relationship closer to God. I am deeply grateful to the dedicated and generous team members, married couples, and priests who assist hundreds of young people to prepare well for this Sacrament. I share here first a reflection from the team members, Charlie and Kathy Keane and Dave and Linda Erickson for the reflections they sent me from the young couples whose lives were touched in a deep way by this Encounter.

“Our blessings multiply with each weekend as we have the opportunity to witness to these couples. Experiencing God’s presence during the weekend and seeing the reignited spark of faith in these couples just can’t be described in words! The Saturday night rap session was very engaging and offered us the ideal pathway into sharing our Catholic faith with the Catholic and non-Catholic attendees.”

“This weekend has helped me understand the commitment I am making is not only with my fiancée, but also with God. This will greatly affect our relationship together, because it allows us to be more like Jesus Christ’s example of an everlasting love for one another. This weekend opened my eyes and allowed me to know the person I thought I knew everything of, to know them even deeper. I also want to take the skills learned in this class and apply it to our marriage.”

“What has this weekend meant to me and our relationship? It has been special. It has brought us closer together and our relationship closer to God. The time we needed to spend together without other distractions from our daily lives and really think about everything that comes with a marriage. What marriage really means. We talk on a regular basis, but its not about this stuff. I’m glad we got to come and experience this.”

“I had heard people coming back from this weekend retreat being ‘in love’ again or having a deeper love for each other. I have to agree. It feels like a spiritual awakening for me as well as a romantic one for you and I. Although they seemed tedious, the writing assignments gave me time to reflect on...”

(Please See ENGAGED/21)
‘WHENEVER YOU HELPED THE LEAST OF THESE ...’

The Church’s work with Syrian refugees in Jordan

Anonymous Midlanders funding educations of almost 1,000 Syrian refugee children.

By Jimmy Patterson

MAFRAQ, Jordan — When Fatima left her home in Aleppo, in the northwest part of Syria, seeking a peaceful place to settle her family, the thought of her children’s education never entered into her decision as to whether she and her kids should escape the country and set out on a 335-mile journey. There were far more important things to worry about: Would her husband and oldest son survive the ongoing civil war in their homeland? Would the family have a home to return to when the conflict was over? Or would they even be able to return to Syria, home or no home?

Although Syrian families place a high priority on their children’s schooling, how her youngest son, Samir, and daughter, Wafa, would continue that education was unknown.

For most of the millions of Syrian children forced from their once-peaceful homes and schools, educations have ceased. Many spend their days now in what passes for a home. Some have not been able to attend school for over two years. Although the public schools are open to Syrian refugees whose families are registered with United Nations and who have the proper paper work, there is very limited capacity. Initially only 75,000 seats were available in the public schools for Syrian children, far below the needs.

As a member of the Caritas Internationalis confederation — the network of Catholic international humanitarian organizations from more than 200 countries — Catholic Relief Services closely collaborates with its sister agency Caritas Jordan to make up the gap in education available to Syrian refugee children.

Despite the harsh conditions now faced by the families that have fled, the schooling needs of nearly 1,000 Syrian children are being met by concerned Midlanders, who have requested to remain anonymous. Earlier this year, after one of the benefactors watched a televised report on the “CBS Evening News” about the conditions faced daily by the Syrian refugees who had flooded into neighboring Jordan, donors sent a check for $700,000 to ensure that at least some Syrian children could go on learning with limited interruption.

The people of Jordan have largely opened their hearts, homes and schools to the influx of refugees, old and young alike, and they are doing so in a manner befitting the gospel. The refugee

(Please See EDUCATION/15)
The Church’s work with Syrian refugees in Jordan

KARAK, Jordan — Watching Syrian refugee children flock to both Fr. Elie Kerzum and Fr. Wissam al-Massadeh is a powerful story of witness. As the two men walk into the courtyard of the school they oversee, scores of elementary- to high school-age children crowd around them. The two priests look over their shoulder as they both naturally say, "Praise God, I am happy for that," Fr. Elie said of the children’s welcome. "You have to love the place where you are. We are personally very poor in Jordan but with Caritas and people who help Caritas we can do, and we can help."

Caritas is the social service mission of the Catholic Church – an institution in many countries across the globe, as well as a federation of Catholic agencies devoted to serving the poor. The poor the Caritas Jordan works in partnership with in the United States, known by its formal name Catholic Relief Services. This is how generations of Americans here at home, in Midland, are making a direct impact on the children of Syria.

On a recent Thursday in October as the sun began to set, the students assemble in the playground area. "Who can recite your ABCs?" Fr. Elie asks. "Pey, s, m, a, i, t, n, j, k, l, p, p, y, y, y, y, y, " asks at least 100 Syrian children enthusiastically sing "One banana, two bananas." The_recitations are all done fluently in English.

Out of sight, far from the bright lights and a half a world away from the admiration both deserve but all done fluently in English.
Syrian woman in Jordan fights off depression, helps other refugees

By Jimmy Patterson

ZARQA, Jordan — The day Tehane left Homs, the Syrian town where she had grown up, the warplanes thundered overhead. From one came a bomb. The percussive boom, fire and collapse of her home served as the moment everything changed for the 25-year-old university art student, who, in a single moment, became a “refugee,” on the run from an unchecked civil war that was destroying her homeland.

Following a lengthy journey across Syria, the neighboring country of Jordan became Tehane’s new home. She, her husband and their two small children arrived in Zarqa like over a million others who have walked days through deserts into often dank, dimly-lighted living quarters in unfamiliar cities of Jordan and Lebanon, two of the several countries in the region that have opened their borders to the refugees. Zarqa is an industrialized town in the north central part of the kingdom that, by American standards, was poor even before the refugees arrived. But it was now home for the family, and together they would make of it what they could — as soon as Tehane could bring herself to accept her new life.

Severe depression froze her every move for months. Separated from extended family and friends in unfamiliar cities of Jordan and Lebanon, Tehane and her husband, Halah, were alone in a million others who have walked days through desert into often dank, dimly-lighted living quarters. It is dim and non-descript. There is no furniture. When visitors arrive, they remove their shoes, and one of the couple’s children pulls out a mattress, little more than a piece of foam, covered with a gently-worn sheet. The guests in the home lean back against a living room wall for comfort, and listen as the couple begins their story.

A Love Story: Syrian couple’s bond unlike others in Middle East

By Jimmy Patterson

ZARQA, Jordan — To reach Azhar and Halah’s front door in Zarqa, a visitor must squeeze through a narrow space between two buildings, perhaps no more than three-feet wide, cross a damp alley where water drips from a pipe above and runs under foot into a drainage ditch, and duck under a staircase where a non-descript heavy, metal door waits. Inside, the home smells musty. It is dim and non-descript. There is no furniture. When visitors arrive, they remove their shoes, and one of the couple’s children pulls out a mattress, little more than a piece of foam, covered with a gently-worn sheet. The guests in the home lean back against a living room wall for comfort, and listen as the couple begins their story.

Azhar and Halah’s history is unlike many of the other refugees who have come from Syria since the fighting took over their once-peaceful country in the Middle East.

Back home, Azhar drove a taxi on a regular route from Syria to Saudi Arabia, a long trip across an often bleak desert region. He met Halah on one of those drives and they ended up getting married — and that is where their story takes a turn that many here do not.

“I am 24,” Azhar said. “I am 33,” Halah added.

Marriages in which the woman is older than the man are uncommon in the Arabic world. Even more unusual is the couple’s reason for getting married. But their reason was universal.

“We fell in love,” Halah said.

Many marriages here start at much earlier ages for women and are often arranged by families as part of cultural tradition.

“When we got married,” Azhar said, “even our friends were not OK with it.”

The couple asked not to be photographed. Their names are changed at Azhar’s request. At 24, he is at the age...
TEHANE

(From 14)
friends, from her home and her education, she also unwillingly dealt with the reality that she was now stuck in a country not her own. Her future, even her closest tomorrows, was shrouded in uncertainty. Tehane’s pain kept her confined to bed. She was virtually immobilized, with no emotional desire or physical strength to face the day or whatever life threw at her next.

After several months a friend called and told Tehane of an opportunity in Zarqa to help people who were facing the same day-to-day hurt she had been feeling herself. Soon after, Tehane realized she was the one person on the planet who had the power to make herself better. If she didn’t pull herself up, no one else could. Working as a volunteer social worker with Caritas Jordan, a humanitarian non-governmental organization, “is the only thing that got me away from the depression,” she said.

The organization provides comprehensive relief and care to more than 140,000 Syrians in Jordan. The activities are largely supported by the American-based Catholic Relief Services. On top of that, the education and counseling care for children is supported nearly in full by generous donors in Midland.

When not visiting refugees at their homes, Tehane works in Caritas Jordan’s Zarqa Center, organizing paperwork and helping with office tasks. But her heart is in her home visits, where she can reach out and directly help people work through the same feelings she had when she was first forced to come here.

“I get weak and feel sad in some homes. Sometimes, when I see the man of the house and he is crying, I cry. It happens a lot,” Tehane said. “I thought I had a miserable life but when I saw other families hurting even more than I was, I realized I’m OK; I have all I need.”

Strength is perhaps the most important requirement when working as a social worker with Caritas, through which she sees her fellow Syrians enduring all manner of conditions. None would likely choose their current arrangement — if they had choices here in the Middle East.

“When I ask people about their hopes, they tell me they only expect the worst,” Tehane said. “They tell me the way they are now forced to live as refugees is not like they are used to and they have nothing to make them think that anything will get better.”

There are hundreds of stories of courage in the urban refugee centers of Jordan; few are like Tehane who used her courage to change her life and the lives of those with whom she comes in contact from her homeland. The young woman who walked away from a stifling depressive state 18 months ago and other women like her are indeed role models: six other Syrian women in Zarqa are now helping others as social workers as well.

EDUCATION

(From 11)
children are being made to feel comfortable, safe, secure and loved. At Caritas Jordan, a partner to CRS, Catholics and Muslims work side by side to ensure life is made as bearable as possible for those who now find themselves without a country.

The Syrian children are being taught an informal education program created by CRS professionals from both the United States and Jordan. Math, languages (Arabic and English in this case), recreation and other core subjects common to a routine school day for children around the world are offered.

“The fundamental core values of Caritas and CRS are at work every day here in Jordan: to treat the individual person with dignity. That’s what drives us,” said Michelle Ryan, Head of Programs for CRS Jordan.

Educational opportunities for the refugees, regardless of their age, have been both problematic and limited. Barriers that would not normally exist in a typical American school setting arise here, where the Ministry of Education welcomes the Syrians and allows them, at the encouragement of King Abdullah II and the Jordanian government, to utilize the educational facilities available in the kingdom.

“The public schools now run on a two shift system whereby Syrians go for half a day and Jordanians go for half the day,” Ryan said. “However public school facilities and resources are being stretched beyond capacity. Teachers are not being paid additional salary or wages for the extra hours worked.”

CHANGING YOUNG LIVES

The difference being made through these educational programs is unmistakable. In Karak, 129 kilometers south of the capitol city of Amman, almost one-hundred children flock to the side of Fr. Wissam Al-massadeh, a Jordanian-born Catholic who has been a priest for four years. Fr. Wissam has taught the elementary-age Syrian children in his parish school the alphabet, the days of the week, months and seasons of the year, and playful children’s songs. The students gathered in the blacktop playground area on this beautiful day in southern Jordan recited all of these things — in English. The love and respect the young people have for this man of another faith tradition is obvious. And it’s no wonder why the young students care so much for him. “In the beginning, I could only think, ‘We cannot do anything with these people’” Fr. Wissam said. “I began asking myself, ‘Why, Lord, are you giving me all this work to do?’ I have two parishes, two big schools to oversee. I have 300 students. And now I have 2,000 Syrian refugees? One day recently, someone asked me how many parishioners I have. I told him 2,300. Eighty families in my church, and with the Syrians, I now have 2,300. I consider them my parishioners."

Because CRS and Caritas help people in need regardless of creed, there is no religious education of the children who are of diverse faiths. Rather, Fr. Wissam simply goes through each day simply being who he is. Without words, he leaves a lasting impression on the children, all of whom are desperately in need of an authority figure at this point in their lives. Fr. Wissam said none of the children have ever asked him what religion he is.

Stories like the one in Karak play out at schools in five different locations across Jordan. Midland generosity plays a role in each of the towns: Amman, Madaba, Mafraq, Zarqa and Karak.

CUTTING LOOSE

Four times during the school year, host parishes stage a “Let Kids Be Kids Day,” which resembles the annual carnivals and fairs found in many American schools every fall.

On October 9, the most recent Kids Day at Zarqa School, a teacher spoke of one Syrian boy named Omar. Manal Hejazeen conveyed Omar’s story of a band of armed men who came into their neighborhood and summoned all the residents into the street outside their homes. For some reason, Omar’s family did not hear the command of the men who had come into the neighborhood.

“The men started shooting people. Nearly the whole village was killed in front of his eyes,” Manal said. “Why do the children love Kids Day? They can move, they can play. Maybe they can laugh. They don’t have this from a long time ago with war, shooting, killing. So this is their time to breathe, to see something that makes them happy. They are not happy. These things help to make them happy.”

The impact of the generosity of Midlanders to the Syrian refugee students in Jordan may be no more obvious than on a picture a student in Karak recently drew. On a piece of pink construction paper cut in the shape of a heart, one of Fr. Wissam’s students has drawn a clock with the hands pointed to 3:30, the time of day the Syrian refugees’ class day begins.
On October 20, 1964, the Council was ready for the major and long-awaited schema 13, now called, “On the Church in the Modern World.” The debate lasted until November 10, close to a certain rift within the majority between a more complex e important was in the minds of the bishops. No council had ever attempted such a document: speaking to the whole world outside. It addressed things like world peace and a just socio-economic order. The Council presented the Church as a helpmate with the world, not in opposition to the world. Cardinal Cento introduced the document saying that dialogue is the preferred mode of operation of the Church in relationship to the world and asked for criticism so the document could be made better.

There were four major chapters that laid down principles and exalted human dignity and this was addressed to all people of good will. The issues were 1) The human vocation: quest for the transcendent 2) The Church in service to God and to humanity 3) How Christians should conduct themselves 4) Some special responsibilities of Christians.

There was a certain rift within the majority between a more...
Infallibility; woman’s blog on scripture

By Father Kenneth Doyle
Catholic News Service

Q. What is the church's foundation for declaring itself to be infallible when the pope speaks "ex cathedra" and with the entire magisterium supporting him? I understand that the church made this declaration around 1870 A.D., and it seems a little curious to arrive at that conclusion nearly 2,000 years after the life of Christ.

How many teachings on faith and morals have been declared infallible, and what are some of them? And if something has not been defined as infallible, are we free to question and discuss? (Hudson, Wis.)

A. The doctrine of infallibility, while sometimes misunderstood by Catholics and others, is clearly defined by the church's Code of Canon Law. Canon 749, Section 1, explains that the pope may teach infallibly when he proclaims by definitive act that a certain doctrine of faith or morals is to be believed by the faithful. He must clearly state that he intends to teach that doctrine as infallible and irrefutable.

The consensus among theologians is that only twice in the church's history has the Holy Father by himself exercised this prerogative: in 1854 with the dogma of the Immaculate Conception and in 1950 with the Assumption.

But there is a second manner of infallible pronouncements (Canon 749, 2), and this happens when the college of bishops, joined in an ecumenical council, proclaim that a certain truth is to be held by all the faithful. An example would be at Nicaea in 325 A.D., when it was declared that Jesus is "of the same substance" (nature) as God the Father.

The doctrine of infallibility did not suddenly appear in 1870. Rather, it is founded on Christ's promise to the apostles that he would send the Holy Spirit, who "will guide you to truth" (Jn 16:13). That secure sense of protection from error on fundamental teachings was part of the early history of the church and is reflected in St. Augustine's fifth-century statement, "Rome has spoken; the case is concluded."

Infallible declarations have been issued only sparsely during the church's two-millennium history and have usually been formulated in response to particular issues disputed.

But, as the Catechism explains (No. 892), even the ordinary teaching of the bishops, as successors of the apostles and joined with the pope, are to be followed "with religious assent." So where does that leave Catholics as to their freedom "to question and discuss" noninfallible teachings?

The answer seems to depend on the particular teaching -- how fundamental it is and how solidly embedded in the history and tradition of the church.

Q. Is there anything wrong with a woman writing a reflection on the readings for the Mass each day on her own personal blog? I am the volunteer coordinator for Catholic ministry at a local women's prison and teach an RCIA (Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults) class for those inquiring into the faith. I believe that I know the basics of our faith very well, and I am loyal to the magisterium of the church. I know that only ordained clergy can give a homily in the context of a Mass, but does what I am doing violate any rules?

A. I applaud what you are doing and encourage you to continue it. True, Canon 767 of the church's Code of Canon Law says that "among the forms of preaching, the homily, which is part of the liturgy itself and is reserved to a priest or deacon, is pre-eminent."

But what you are doing is apart from the context of the Mass and is clearly not a homily. You are simply reflecting on the daily readings -- and you have every right to do that. I would think that many might benefit from a feminine perspective.

An age that is out of order requires reordering

By Father Eugene Hemrick
Catholic News Service

Reports of an unsteady economy, people out of work, the growing gap between the haves and have-nots, and barbaric atrocities entering our living rooms daily cause us to wonder, "Is this now an accepted part of daily life?"

These experiences are but a few bombardment of our human psyche, causing us to question if they are one reason why some disturbed people go over the edge.

Life has always been complicated, but never has our psyche had to digest its complexities as it does today. Our senses are drinking in more than they ever saw or heard before at a speed unlike before. Not only that, but we have now created virtual-reality sensations never experienced by past generations. We have entered a "new order" in need of reordering. How can we cope with it?

When God created the world, God put order in it. To seek that order is to practice the virtue of temperance, and it is temperance we need most in order to cope effectively.

To generate order, we need to stop what we are doing and earnestly reflect on the causes of the disorder we keep witnessing. Conscientious reflection on what is adversely affecting us is our optimum means for generating order.

For example, let's ask ourselves: Is our electronic age and media, as wonderful as they are, generating more tensions than peace of mind? What do we need in our daily life to correct this? Have we entered an age of hyper stimulation that is damaging our psychological well-being? If so, how do we control its intake? Have we entered an age of fascination with the bizarre? If so, why are we fascinated with it?

Temperance not only prompts restraint. It especially encourages us to avoid being matter-of-fact and to actively seek the causes of disorder. Equally important, it inspires us to reflect on the beautiful order within God's creation and to rededicate ourselves to it for the well-being of all.

Our Holy Father's 2013 Monthly Intentions

NOVEMBER
Suffering Priests. That priests who experience difficulties may find comfort in their suffering, support in their doubts, and confirmation in their fidelity.

Latin American Churches. That as fruit of the continental mission, Latin American Churches may send missionaries to other Churches.

DECEMBER
Victimized Children. That children who are victims of abandonment or violence may find the love and protection they need.

Prepare the Savior's Coming. That Christians, enlightened by the Word incarnate, may prepare humanity for the Savior's coming.

Daily Offering Prayer
Jesus, through the Immaculate Heart of Mary I offer you my prayers, works, joys and sufferings of this day in union with the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass throughout the world. I offer them for all the intentions of Your Sacred Heart: the salvation of souls, reparation for sin and the reunion of all Christians. I offer them for the intentions of our bishops and of all Apostles of Prayer, and in particular for those recommended by our Holy Father this month.
Now showing at St. Ann’s: ‘Superheroes of Our Faith’

By Heather Bredimus
Development Director
St. Ann’s School

All Saints’ Day, the day on which Catholics celebrate all saints, arose out of the Christian tradition of celebrating the martyrdom of saints on the anniversary of their death. When martyrdoms increased during the persecutions of the late Roman Empire, a common feast day was instituted in order to ensure that all martyrs, known and unknown, were properly honored.

For the past five years, the third grade class of St. Ann’s Catholic School in Midland, Texas has celebrated these unlikely heroes of modern day children. On November 1, the saints are studied, exhibited, and honored in both traditional and innovative presentations during and after Mass. Mrs. Tracy Owen, a third grade teacher at St. Ann’s School, guides her students as they select and prepare exhibitions for a “Saint Museum.”

“Superheroes of our faith” is how Mrs. Owen describes the importance and impact of these inspiring individuals. She created this fantastic project to illuminate the depth of faith and passion that we all aspire to have for our God. This study will also hope to serve as inspiration for her students’ future choices of confirmation saints.

On the morning of All Saints’ Day, the entire student population of St. Ann’s School will join together at church in praise of God. The Mass will begin with the sounds of the junior high band playing the familiar tune of “When the Saints Go Marching In.” As the congregation

Students at St. Ann’s School in Midland dress up as their favorite Superhero saints each year as part of the school’s All Saints Day celebration. (Courtesy photo)

instills in the people of Syria that God still loves them.

“When we took in the Iraqi people in Jordan, we did not experience what we are experiencing now,” Suleiman said. “The Syrians have lost their faith. In other wars, people have lost everything but their faith. Not this war. This war, the Syrians are asking us, ‘Is God still there?’ For them, God doesn’t exist anymore. It is something new we are facing.”

Suleiman said he spoke with a young boy, no more than 6, who admitted that he was one of Caritas’ greatest challenges in the region.

“Wael Suleiman, Caritas Jordan

‘We are one human family. The only solution is solidarity.’

realized that she had forgotten one of her daughters in Syria,” Suleiman said. “She looked at her children who had come with her and it wasn’t until then that she realized one was missing.”

The family left Syria in such a hurry and under such emotional duress that the mother left her 2-year-old asleep in her bed. There is no way for the woman to return to Syria to check on the child, or to ever learn what happened to her.

“Nothing is possible to that mother,” Suleiman said. “She is living in a very bad moment. She is thinking, ‘What if my child has died?’ We have no words to help her. I cannot tell her that God is there. That God loves her.”

Suleiman’s uncle, Michael Suleiman, was a professor at Kansas University, and an educator in America for 40 years. His uncle’s book, “Arab in America,” was a widely read work on his experiences of being Arab in the United States. The same questions his uncle once had, Wael Suleiman has long had. Suleiman learned at an early age of the disparity in the way people are treated. As a young boy, he was rarely, if ever, exposed to anything that could be considered a preferential option for the poor. One day when he was just seven, Suleiman came home from school in Jordan and asked his father why rich children were treated differently than the others. His father told him to go out and play like the other boys and girls. But the younger Suleiman persisted, and by the time he was 10, he had taken himself out of private school and enrolled in the Jordanian public school system so he could interact with children of all types.

Suleiman said he is working on his own book, which he is calling, “Noah’s Ark.”

The book is his dream of building a bridge between not only Arabs and Americans but between all people. He recently wrote a letter to Jesus asking him to come again, a second letter to the United Nations and a third letter to unborn children telling them what they should expect when they enter into the world.

What those unborn children will experience, and what Suleiman would want for them are different worlds that he wishes he could join together peacefully.

“We are one human family,” Suleiman said. “It is our responsibility as human beings – you have brothers and sisters in the world and they are a part of us all. And in the end, we are created by one father. Christians, Muslims, Jews, we are all one people. The only solution is solidarity. With solidarity, people can feel love. With solidarity, maybe the people feeling that God is no longer there can feel that He is there and that there is still love.”
professionals have to deal with a child’s emotional concerns and to work with feeling blocks. The child tosses the block and whatever emotion is exhibited when the block stops tumbling is discussed for that particular session. Subjects the workers and students talk through include respect, love, help, justice, hope and solidarity. Emotions routinely faced include anger, sadness, surprise, confusion and happiness.

When the children make progress, Qaqash says the parents from Syria are happy because of the way their child responds to the caring work of the therapy professionals.

“Children often talk only about their homes, they don’t know how to express what they feel about other damage inflicted during the war. Most children who come here are afraid of airplane sounds and fireworks,” said Qaqash.

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Sometimes before a psychologist or counselor sees a child, a teacher can be the first person outside the home to notice that a child might be having difficulties.

Manal Hejazeen, who teaches Jordanian children during the traditional classroom time in the morning and Syrian refugee students in the afternoon, has seen children suffering from many troubles and feelings.

“Sometimes they ask me to have another class so I can stay with them,” Hejazeen said. “Many of them are too shy to talk, or too frightened inside. All of them want to go back home. They will tell me, ‘Miss, my school in Damascus was damaged, when we go back we are not going to have a school.’”

“She will say, ‘There is a war, my father is dead, my uncle is dead.’ You can see the tears inside of their eyes but they cannot cry.”

(Catholic Relief Service is the international arm of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. It supports the impoverished, vulnerable communities in nearly 100 countries, through local partners like Caritas.)

\[VATICANO\]

(From 16)

esquema sobre los sacerdotes y esta vez el asunto era entrenamiento. El programa de entrenamiento tenía que ser aprobado por Roma, pero la creación del programa estaba en manos de las conferencias de los obispos. Esto fue expresión del deseo de los obispos de tener la voz más fuerte posible en lo que pasaba. Esto era asunto de “centro-periferia”. El documento puso énfasis en la formación espiritual de los seminaristas para ayudarles a responder a la llamada a la santidad. También dio importancia al estudio de las Escrituras.

El tercer período se estaba cerrando y todo parecía bien. Un cuarto período era cierto ahora, pero probablemente sería corto y sin eventos importantes. La gran mayoría de los obispos había afirmado una vez tras otra al Concilio en casi cada asunto, a pesar de los ataques de la minoría que se portaban como “pit bulls” en muchos asuntos.

Pero llegó un huracán, pegando un mar tranquilo. Comenzando el lunes, 16 de noviembre, el primer día de la última semana, una semana que llegó a reconocerse como la sentencia nera, la semana negra. Emociones occuparon eventos que eran bastante difíciles para la mayoría. El Papa Pablo VI intervino en tres esquemas: 1) Pospuso el voto en el esquema Sobre la Libertad Religiosa. 2) Envió una “nota preliminar explicativa para la Constitución Sobre la Iglesia que interpretaron el significado de la colegialidad en el capítulo 3.

Aunque las acciones de Pablo eran bien intencionadas, causaron mucha ansiedad a la gran mayoría de los obispos y alimentaron las sospechas que los “pit bulls” estaban usando al papa como su instrumento para obtener lo que no pudieron conseguir en las deliberaciones del Concilio.

1) Un gran problema ocurrió el martes y miércoles cuando algunos obispos se opusieron a la Declaración Sobre la Libertad Religiosa y querían posponer la votación hasta el período siguiente. Tuvieron éxito en esto y se pospuso la votación. Muchos obispos, especialmente americanos, estaban furiosos y hicieron una petición al Papa Pablo a reconsiderarlo. No lo hizo. El punto es que, a pesar del furor, la mayoría estaba de acuerdo que el texto del año siguiente era un texto mejor.

2) El Papa Pablo también hizo sugerencias al decreto Decreto Sobre el Ecumenismo. Esta vez las sugerencias eran una orden: Si Uds. no las incluyen en el texto, yo no publicaré el decreto. En su mente el problema era cómo proceder. Los cambios no tenían substancia y el decreto fue aprobado sobrecederamente.

3) Otro cambio del último momento era con la Constitución Sobre la Iglesia y tenía más substancia. El resentimiento principal entre los obispos era “al último momento,” que no ofreció a los obispos la oportunidad de repasarlo. Parecía a unos obispos como si el Papa estuviera diciéndose al Concilio qué significaba su propio documento. Esto ocurrió al principio de la peor semana del Vaticano II. El precio de este documento era alto. El Papa les dio una victoria a los que oponían la colegialidad que lo usaron para decir que el status quo no se había cambiado.

En su discurso que cerró este tercer período, el Papa Pablo habló de la Iglesia como monárquica y jerárquica, aunque la mayoría habría preferido primacial y colegial. Pablo también proclamó a María como Madre de la Iglesia, aunque el Concilio intencionalmente evitó este título. Parecía a muchos que el Papa Pablo estaba diciendo: “Yo soy el papa y puedo hacer que lo quiera.” Ese día, la carta de Pablo era triste cuando lo llevaron fuera de la basílica y parecía que hubo una gran falta de confianza entre el Papa y los obispos. Los documentos habían sido publicado a gran costo. La cuestión era si la confianza pudiera ser reparada. ¿El fin del Concilio sería algo semejante al fin de este período?

Los obispos volvieron a sus hogares con muchas preguntas en sus mentes.
Cross-incarnation-centered theology or a more
Incarnation-centered theology. The bishops
listed to more than 150 speeches and one item stood out: a repeated call
for a condemnation of Marxism. But the
resistance to that call came from some
bishops in Communist lands who feared
it would make their situation even more
difficult. Bishop Gérard Coderre of
Quebec stressed the obligation of the
Council to promote the position of
women in society. The threat of nuclear
warfare weighed heavily on the minds of
the bishops. He criticized the text for
being weaker than Pope John’s words in
his encyclical Pacem in Terris. Patriarch
Maximos Saigh said the Council must be
courageous in denouncing the danger
before such powerful nations the way
John the Baptist was courageous before
Herod.

The document spoke at length about
the holiness and goodness of the love
that bound husband and wife; only then
did it mention children as the fulfillment
of that love. Then it made the con-
sciences of the spouses the deciding fac-
tor for the number of children they
should have. It did not explicitly reaffirm
a condemnation of birth control. The pre-
vious year, John Rock, a Catholic doctor
who had participated in the creation of
the pill, had advocated for a change in
curch law. But three times the Council
Fathers were reminded that birth control
as such was not to be discussed in the
debates. Cardinal Suenens caused a sen-
sation when he said that “One Galileo
affair is enough for the Church. We must
avoid another.” He then called on Pope
Paul to make public the names of the
people on the papal commission. When
he finished his words were greeted with
great applause. Pope Paul was angry and
visibly upset. Cardinal Suenens “retract-
ed” his words by saying that this matter
“rested with the supreme magisterium.”

On November 6, the Council took up
the schema on the missions. According to
the Doepfner Plan, this schema was
greatly condensed. The Council wanted a
greater treatment and this basically killed
the Doepfner Plan. A curious incident
had occurred. The day before the session
in which the schema was presented, it
was announced that Pope Paul would
appear in person. This was the first time
since the 16th century that a pope had
appeared in person at Council deliber-
as. In doing so, he commended the
schema, although there was much dis-sat-
isfaction with it. Even after his speech,
the Council rejected it. Paul was morti-
fied.

The Council then turned to a schema
on religious orders. This schema called
for an adaptation to modern conditions.
aggiornamento. This was to be done
through the participation of all the mem-
ers of the institute. This text was not
universally accepted: it was sent back for
revision and returned the following year
and the text emphasized ressourcement,
returning to the sources, as well as
aggioramiento.

Personal opinion: The American sisters
really ran with the document. And they
are paying the price today. They did what
the Council asked them to do.

On November 12, the Council moved
to a schema on priests and this time the
subject was training. While the training
program was to be approved by Rome,
the creation of the program was in the
hands of the Bishops’ Conferences. This
was an expression of the desire of the
bishops to have as much say as possible
in what was going on. Again, this was a
center-periphery issue. The document
gave priority to the spiritual formation of
seminarians to help them answer the call
to holiness. It also gave prominence to
the study of Scripture.

The third period was rushing to a close
and all seemed well. A fourth period was
now a certainty, but it would most likely
be short and uneventful. The vast major-
ity of the bishops had given repeated and
unmistakable affirmation to the direction
the Council had taken on almost every
issue, despite the attacks of the minority
who acted like pit bulls on many issues.

But then came a hurricane, crashing on
a seemingly tranquil sea. Beginning on
Monday, November 16, the first day of
the last week, a week which came to be
known as the settimana nera, the black
week, events occurred which were really
difficult for the majority. Paul VI inter-
vened on three schemas. 1) He postponed
the vote on accepting the schema On
Religious Liberty. 2) He sent the council
a list of 19 changes to the Decree on
Ecumenism. 3) He sent a “preliminary
explanatory note for the Constitution on
the Church that interpreted the meaning
of collegiality in chapter three. No matter
how well intentioned Paul’s actions were,
they caused deep distress to the great
majority of bishops and fueled suspicion
that the “pit bulls” were using him as
their tool to obtain what they could not
obtain through deliberations in the
Council.

1) A big problem came on Tuesday and
Wednesday of the black week when
some bishops objected to the Declaration
on Religious Liberty and wanted to post-
pone the vote till the following period.
They were successful in this and the vote
was postponed. Many bishops, especially
Americans, were furious and led a peti-
tion to Pope Paul to reconsider. He did
not. The upshot is that despite the furor,
most agreed that the text which was sub-
mitted the following year was a better
text.

2) Pope Paul also made “suggestions”
to the Decree on Ecumenism. This time
the suggestions were an order. You don’t
include them in the text, and I will not
promulgate the decree. In his mind the
problem was the procedure. The changes
were not substantial and the decree was
approved overwhelmingly.

3) Another last-minute change was
with the Constitution on the Church and
was more substantive. The main resen-
tment among the bishops was the “last
minute” aspect, not giving the bishops
time to discuss it. The note sounded to
some bishops as if the pope were telling
the Council what the Council meant in
its own document. This was the worst
week of Vatican II. The price was high
for this document. The pope gave a vic-
tory to those who opposed collegiality
who used it as a way of stating that the
status quo had not changed.

In his closing address of this third peri-
od, Pope Paul spoke of the Church as
both monarchical and hierarchical,
although the majority would have much
preferred primatial and collegial. Paul
also proclaimed Mary as Mother of the
Church, although the Council expressly
avoided that title. It seemed to many that
Pope Paul was saying: “I am the pope
and I can do what I want.” That day,
Paul’s face was grim as he was carried
out of the basilica and there seemed to be
a great deal of mistrust between Pope
and bishops. The documents had been
promulgated, but at a great cost. The
question was whether or not trust could
be repaired. Would the end of the
Council be anything like the end of this
period?

The bishops left for home with many
questions in their minds.

**CONFIRMATION**

(From 4)

One of the fruits of the Holy Spirit is chastity. In the
Church’s eyes, sexual intercourse is the act of love
between husband and wife that connects them spiritually
and emotionally. As long as it is kept between husband
and wife with the good intentions of creating a family
out of love for each other, the act of love is not consid-
ered a sin. When a man and a woman come together in
the sacrament of marriage, God gives them the responsi-
Bility of creating a family and the opportunity to become
closer to God and to themselves as one. Holy matrimo-

ny is like a table which is built on four legs: the mar-
riage must be free, faithful, total, and fruitful. When a
husband and wife are sharing sexual intercourse, God is
with them. In a way, God is sharing the experience with
them. In our culture today, society sees the act of sexual
intercourse purely as a pleasurable thing. They do not
uphold the teachings of the Catholic Church, and they
do not respect the Holy Spirit nor the human body
which is His temple.

We see the role that the Holy Spirit plays in the world.
He is the guidance that the world needs. Sadly, our
world is broken and hurting; many are not allowing the
Holy Spirit to move in their lives, and we have seen the
consequences. The world needs more peace; it needs all
the gifts and fruits which can only be given by the Holy
Spirit. As Confirmation candidates, we would like to
take the Holy Spirit with us into whatever part of the
world we go to, and allow the Spirit to reach out to the
world through us.

Sincerely,
The 2013 Confirmation Class
of Holy Spirit Catholic Parish
Sweetwater/Roscoe
**ENGAGED**

*(From 10)*

myself as a person in our relationship as well as you as a person in this relationship—I need some time to really reach down in all my frustrations to decide is it you or me? How do I fix intense frustrations or problems that we run into in our daily lives as we live together, raise our children, work, play, etc. I felt like I was drifting from God. Not taking time to pray even, and I foresee using him as a guiding force for you and I as a couple and as parents. I had not made or had time to do this. As a counselor, I’m taught to reach down in my feelings, figure out the problem and work through a solution. I was only getting knee deep."

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“This weekend has been eye opening. We enjoyed all the lectures and personal stories that everyone has shared. We leave here with new love for each other and respect. We talked on issues that we haven’t wanted to talk about for fear of anger or hurt. We were able to address them with peace and love. I feel like we are closer now and have a better outlook on our future. Thank you for the great lessons we have learned this weekend.”

**AÑO**

*(Para 5)*

dad número uno de este ministerio, la cual es el respeto al precioso no nacido, de traer un fin al aborto, y un nuevo respeto por toda vida humana en cada etapa de vida. Este ministerio y prioridad número uno fueron seleccionadas como el ministerio especial para nuestra diócesis al darle comienzo a nuestro quincuagésimo aniversario de nuestra diócesis desde octubre del 2012. Nuestra vida de fe comienza en nuestros hogares guiados por nuestros padres y otros miembros de familia. Esta fe tiene su comienzo en el bautismo, y es alimentada especialmente por los Sacramentos de nuestra hermosa Iglesia Católica. Así que al continuar a vivir el Año de Fe, queremos comprometerlos a nosotros mismos como familia de ser fiel a Cristo, especialmente por medio de atender Misa frecuentemente y recibir nuestro Ministerio de la Palabra en Santa Comunión y también celebrar frecuentemente el hermoso Sacramento de Reconciliación, Confesión, que no solamente nos quita nuestros pecados sino también da gracia y fuerza especial para tratar con las tentaciones y batallas en nuestras vidas diarias. Y, animo a nuestras familias—padres de familias y niños—de estudiar juntos la Biblia y el Catecismo de la Iglesia Católica.

**Consejeros Pastorales y Parroquiales**

Para ayudarnos a vivir este ministerio número uno de Vida Familiar y Matrimonial, les pido a nuestros sacerdotes de todas las comunidades de hacer lo siguiente: Al terminar el Año de Fe y entrar el nuevo Año Litúrgico con el primer domingo de Adviento, 1 de diciembre del 2013, les pido que en cada reunión del Consejo Pastoral este año entrante, que tiempo de calidad sea dada para revisar nuestra prioridad número uno, rezar por y activamente proteger el no nacido, y de implementar más forzosamente las Obras de Misericordia Corporales y la Obras de Misericordia Espirituales, las cuales son una manera espléndida de poner nuestra fe en acción. También pido, como una manera de seguir en el Año de Fe, de acuerdo con nuestro ministerio número uno, que en cada reunión del Consejo Pastoral durante el año, una de las nuevas estrategias para edificar la fe en todas nuestras parroquias. Llamo a todos en la diócesis para que estén envueltos en nuestro ministerio de pro-vida, especialmente por el no nacido, de tomar parte en estas Obras de Misericordia, Corporales y Espirituales y de dar apoyo a estas estrategias particulares las cuales nos ayudan a centrar en edificar nuestra fe en cada familia individual, nuestras comunidades y para toda nuestra diócesis.

Recuerden, que nuestro ministerio número uno es la Vida Familiar y Matrimonial, y nuestra prioridad número uno es orar y trabajando para demostrar un nuevo respeto y amor por el precioso no nacido, y por un nuevo respeto por toda vida humana en cada etapa de vida. De acuerdo con nuestra prioridad número uno, les pido a todos, la gente de nuestra diócesis, con nuestros sacerdotes, de ora por estas intenciones, de tener cada mes una Misa en cada deanery específicamente ofrecida por el no nacido y de traer un fin al aborto, y de dar fuerte énfasis a nuestros sacerdotes y nuestra gente la necesidad de envolvernos en más oración, escribir cartas a medios públicos, a nuestros oficiales gubernamentales, y demostrar mucho más testimonio público y de hacer esto por los preciosos pequeños quien no tienen mas voces que la de nosotros.

Estas obras de misericordia, corporales y espirituales son:

**Obras Corporales de Misericordia**

- Alimentar al hambriento;
- Dar de beber al sediento;
- Vestir al desnudo;
- Visitar a los encarcelados;
- Proteger a los desamparados;
- Visitar a los enfermos;
- Enterrar a los muertos.

**Obras Espirituales de Misericordia**

- Instruir al ignorante;
- Aconsejar al dudoso;
- Convertir al pecador;
- Sufrir con paciencia;
- Perdonar al enemigo;
- Consolar al afligido; y
- Orar por los vivos y los muertos.

Las nueve estrategias que les pido a mis sacerdotes y líderes pastorales que enfoquen son:

1. Hacer la formación de fe familiar una meta de vida y ministerio de la congregación.
2. Utilizar los ministerios y programas de la iglesia para enseñar, modelar y demostrar prácticas familiares de fe y luego proveer los recursos para familias para que vivan esta practica en el hogar.
3. Crecer en prácticas en las cuales las familias ya están envueltas.
4. Incluir a toda la familia en la vida, programas, y en el liderazgo de la congregación.
5. Ofrecer programas de enseñanzas familiares y de entre generaciones.
6. Desarrollar una formación de fe familiar alrededor de hitos del ciclo de vida.
7. Ofrecer una variedad de proyectos apropiados al desarrollo del servicio familiar.
8. Proveer recursos en casa para las prácticas de fe familiar.
9. Usar el Internet para recursos y conectar a familias.

A nuestros sacerdotes se les pide que estudien la información más larga de estas estrategias que recibieron después del seminario de Roberto hace varios años.

**LA PREGUNTA BÁSICA**

¿Cómo podemos mejorar implementar estas estrategias en nuestro hogar, a un nivel parroquial y entre las parroquias, y a un nivel de deanery al enfocarnos a ayudar a nuestra gente vivir su fe Católica después de la celebración de los Sacramentos del Bautismo, Matrimonio, Confirmación y la mistagogia del RCIA?

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**EWTN Radio Católica**

Las estaciones de radio en las tres deaneries de la diócesis de nuevo están transmitiendo programas regulares en español cada fin de semana por las mañanas. Las siguientes son las estaciones y el horario donde usted puede escuchar EWTN y otros esfuerzos de programaciones católicos en español en Abilene, Midland-Odessa y San Ángelo:

**Abilene** — KKH (106.3 FM) está transmitiendo La Hora Católica de EWTN en español los domingos a las 10 a.m.

**Midland-Odessa** — Padre Gilberto Rodriguez, el Vicario Parroquial de la parroquia San Esteban (St. Stephen’s Church) de Midland, presenta el programa los sábados desde las 5-10 a.m. en KQLM (108 FM) con entrevista cada sábado con el Obispo Miguel Pfeifer, OMI a las 8:45 a.m.

Además, La Hora Católica de EWTN se puede escuchar los domingos a las 7 a.m.

**San Ángelo** — KSJT en San Ángelo está transmitiendo la Hora Católica de EWTN los domingos a las 7 a.m.

**EWTN en Español**

Radio stations in all three of the deaneries of the diocese are again running regular weekend programming on weekend mornings. The following is the stations and times where you can hear EWTN and other Spanish-programming efforts in Abilene, Midland-Odessa and San Ángelo:

**ABILENE** — KKH (106.3 FM) is airing EWTN’s Catholic Hour in Spanish, Sundays at 10 a.m.

**MIDLAND-ODESSA** — Fr. Gilbert Rodríguez, parochial vicar at St. Stephen’s Church in Midland, hosts a Saturday program from 5-10 a.m. on KQLM (108 FM). Additionally, EWTN Catholic programming can be heard Sundays at 7 a.m.

**SAN ANGELO** — KSJT in San Angelo is airing EWTN’s Catholic Hour Sundays at 7 a.m.
LOVE

(From 14)
when many young men are forced into fighting. And Azhar does not want to fight.

The couple’s two children, Haytham, Arabic for young hawk, and Ru’a, which means “dreams and visions” in their native tongue, have grown very fond of the schooling being offered them as part of Catholic Relief Services’ and Caritas’ informal education program. The program is operated in Jordanian classrooms each afternoon and this year has been funded by a generous donation by a small group of Midlanders. Haytham, especially, loves learning and, according to his father, talks of the subjects and his school day every night and into the next morning.

Azhar’s top priority now is keeping his family fed, safe and warm. He is grateful to the goodness of the Jordanian people that have welcomed him and his fellow countrymen, but remains discouraged about being uprooted from the home he loved so much. Both he and Halah lived in Daraa, a small town that was the starting point of the uprising against the Assad regime in 2011.

The family, despite its appreciation of the kindnesses received in Jordan, only wants to return home.

“Even if we are living here, we are not living. Only eating and sleeping. Syria is my home,” Azhar said. “I am not sad because I lost my home but because of what has happened to Syria.”

The young man’s grief is not only for the physical destruction that has toppled his country, but for the division it seems to have created among his fellow Syrians who, so recently, lived peacefully side by side.

Halah said she would rebuild Daraa if only she was allowed to return to her country. She would tend her garden and clean their home, which was four times the size of the space they are renting in Zarqa.

Despite the couple’s obvious love for each other, differences exist between them. Halah remains hopeful the fighting will end soon. Azhar believes peace is not at hand, if it happens at all.

“We are losing hope for going back,” Azhar said. “At the beginning we had hope. Now I see no hope. We thought we might be here two months. That was many months ago.”

Halah smiles briefly. She is asked about her hopes with the coming of each new day.

“I still wake up with a smile on my face,” she said.

YEAR

(From 6)

officials, and show much more public witness and to do this for the precious little ones who have no voice but ours.

These corporal and spiritual works of mercy are:

> Corporal Works of Mercy
> - To feed the hungry
> - To give drink to the thirsty
> - To clothe the naked
> - To shelter the homeless
> - To care for the sick
> - To visit the imprisoned
> - To bury the dead

> Spiritual Works of Mercy
> - Admonish the sinner
> - Instruct the ignorant

BISHOP

(From 2)
cultures and trials of life, and avoid the great stumbling block which is sin. Sin leads us down a road that appears to be easy and glamorous, but it is filled with deceptions. One handy way of knowing if we are avoiding sin on our journey, is to ask the question: Are we treating persons like things, and things like persons?

True faith, trust in God, leads to fidelity in doing good works for Christ and others. Faith is inextricably united with works. Faith and works go together like a hand and glove. Catholics are both/and people: both Scripture and Tradition, faith and reason, faith and works, grace and nature, liturgy and Sacraments. When Christians start dividing the two, the faith languishes. “Faith alone” neglects the truth that revelation necessitates the response of conversion and change.

As Matthew heeded the call of Christ, “Follow me,” Matthew wanted life not security, and he got it. Matthew was a tax collector of monies, and he learned his lessons the hard way—that money is cold comfort. When the fire of God’s love was kindled, he felt it and drew near instantly, and shared that love with others to the point of martyrdom.

Parents raise children to have faith through relationships—with each other, with their families, and their faith community. Pope John Paul II affirmed this when he said the goal of faith is an intimate relationship with Jesus. If we want children to enjoy friendship with Jesus, we need to invest our time, energy, wishes, hopes, and dreams in this effort.

Our faith journey of following Christ will mean that we have to prioritize, live by Gospel principles, and make hard decisions for Christ. It implies abandoning certain things, and perhaps even personal relationships, but it is the journey that will lead our soul to ultimate fulfillment and happiness.
Syrians are huge on education. We walk into what would be our last classroom of elementary-age kids on this day.

My eyes scan the room. I am looking for children I might have seen in some of the pictures CRS had sent me before leaving for Jordan. I see none. Instead, on the far side of the room, alone, sitting at a 4-student desk by himself, is Samir. He looks up and sees us as we come into the room. A smile spreads across his face.

For a boy who had only three weeks earlier started in this particular school, and who only hours before had served his same classroom visitors six cups of tea in his humble home, it seems like this moment may well stand higher when stacked alongside other moments in Samir’s life.

The Syrians forced to live in Jordan place different values on what is important in life than many Westerners do. There are no material goods here. Only the hope for love  a love that maybe puts a brighter shine on a child’s day or for a mother missing a husband or son.

When you least expect that you might make a difference in someone’s life simply by being a friendly face, you might be just what that person needs to get through the next rough spot. Like when you serve a glass of hot tea to a guest in your home.

fe, sin ver”. Al hacer cada uno la jornada, Dios no da todas las respuestas antes de caminar. Sin embargo, Dios sí promete nunca dejarnos mientras conocemos lo desconocido de la jornada de nuestra alma, y nos dió a Jesús como el Buen Pastor para guiarnos en el camino de fe. Y María, nuestra Madre y hermana en fe, siempre nos está protegiendo.

En otro Evangelio, Cristo nos dice que tomemos nuestra cruz diariamente y seguirla. Cristo no nos manda carmar solos por un camino, más bien nos pide que lo sigamos—su ejemplo, y usar la gracia que nos viene de Su cruz. Es por medio de seguir a Cristo que encontramos la luz y fuerza para todas las dificultades y tribulaciones de la vida, y evitar la gran caída la cual es el pecado.

El pecado nos lleva por un camino que parece ser fácil y glamoroso, pero está lleno de decepciones. Una manera útil de saber si estamos evitando el pecado en nuestra jornada, es de preguntarnos—¿Estamos tratando a personas como cosas y cosas como personas?

La fe verdadera, confianza en Dios, nos dirige a la fidelidad en hacer buenas obras por Cristo y otros. La fe es inextricablemente unido con obras. Fe y obras van juntas como mano y guante. Católicos son ambos: Ambos Escritura y Tradición, fe y razón, fe y obras, gracia y naturaleza, liturgia y Sacramentos.

When you least expect that you might make a difference in someone’s life simply by being a friendly face, you might be just what that person needs to get through the next rough spot. Like when you serve a glass of hot tea to a guest in your home.

PATTERSON

(From 3)

BARRON

(From 8)

those it wishes to reach. It ought to lead with its always-appealing central message, namely the saving cross of Jesus, and only then should it speak of the moral and spiritual disciplines that will bring people into greater conformity with Christ. If I might proffer a perhaps trite analogy: when attempting to attract a young kid to the game of baseball, you don’t begin with the rulebook; rather, you begin with the beauty and majesty and rhythm of the game—and then you trust that he will come in time to understand the nature and purpose of the rules from the inside.

One of Pope Francis’s gifts as a communicator is a peculiar feel for the memorable image: “Shepherds should smell like their sheep,” and seminarians and priests ought to be willing to “make a mess” come readily to mind. The most striking analogy in the interview is this: “I see the church as a field hospital after battle.” No doctor doing triage on a battlefield is going to be fussing about his patients’ cholesterol or blood sugar levels. He is going to be treating major wounds and trying desperately to stop the bleeding. What we find today, the Pope is implying, are millions of people who are, in the spiritual sense, gravely wounded. They are alienated from God, stuck in the no-man’s-land of moral relativism, adrift with no sense of direction, and tempted by every form of errant desire. They require, therefore, not the fine points of moral doctrine, but basic healing. Perhaps this explains why the Church’s altogether valid teachings on ethics are so often met with incomprehension or hostility: far more elemental instruction is required.

I will confess to sharing some of the misgivings of commentators who have lamented that the Pope’s criticism of excessive legalism gave comfort to the wrong people. NARAL (National Abortion Rights Action League) published an ad, which simply said, “Pope Francis, Thank You. Signed, Pro-Choice Women Everywhere,” and Planned Parenthood expressed its approval of the Pope’s call to Catholics not to “obsess” over the issue of abortion. I certainly understand that those who have stood on the front lines of the pro-life battles for years feel that the Pope has unfairly characterized them as fanatics.

In the end, I feel that this relatively casual interview, precisely because it is not a formal encyclical, will provide a route of access to the Church for many people who might otherwise not have bothered to pay attention. It might in fact appeal to many of the walking wounded today who are in desperate need of mercy and healing.

Father Robert Barron is the founder of the global ministry, Word on Fire, and the Rector/President of Mundelein Seminary. He is the creator of the award winning documentary series, “Catholicism” and the recently released documentary, “The Human Person.”

OBISPO

(Para 3)

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The Church’s work with Syrian refugees in Jordan

Clockwise from top left, many Jordanians, not just Syrian refugees, live in stark conditions, in Shoubak, Jordan; Samir, a Syrian refugee, brings hot tea to visitors at his home in Mafraq, Monday, October 8; A Syrian man seeks assistance in filling out a voucher for basic household needs at the Caritas Mafraq Center; A Syrian refugee overcome with emotion is embraced by Jordanian Princess Alia in Shoubak, Jordan; a Syrian woman, unable to obtain immunizations for her one-month-old infant, applies for health assistance with Caritas’ office in Amman, which will ensure her baby receives the proper care, and a group of exuberant Syrian children at school in the informal education program in Karak, Jordan. Photos by Andrew McConnell for Catholic Relief Services.