More than 400 parishioners from the Diocese of San Angelo traveled to Austin on Jan. 25, 2020, for Mass at St. Louis Church followed by participation in the annual pro-life march at the Texas State Capitol. The marchers from the Abilene Deanery are shown here standing outside the statehouse. The total number of participants in the event was between five and six thousand. See more pro-life news on Page 6.
Pope urges bishops to teach discernment, including on political issues

By Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Sometimes the political choices people face can seem like a choice between supporting a "snake" or supporting a "dragon," but Pope Francis told a group of U.S. bishops their job is to step back from partisan politics and help their faithful discern based on values, said Cardinal Daniel N. DiNardo of Galveston-Houston.

Meeting the bishops of Texas, Oklahoma and Arkansas Jan. 20, Pope Francis mentioned how, in an election, "you sometimes seem to be caught, you know, are you going to vote in one sense for a snake or you going to vote for a dragon?" Cardinal DiNardo said.

The pope's advice to the bishops was "teach your people discernment by stepping back from the sheer politics of it" and focus on the values at stake, Cardinal DiNardo told Catholic News Service. "If you try to step back and say, 'but here are the major moral issues that we face,' that's what is most important.

The region's 26 bishops, including auxiliaries and retired bishops, spent about two-and-a-half hours talking with Pope Francis in English and Spanish. The pope responded in Italian so his answers could translate the responses into English.

The topics were wide-ranging and included the clerical sexual abuse crisis, migration, the challenges of a media-permeated culture and forming Christian consciences, especially in a time of deep political divisions.

Cardinal Daniel J. Burns of Dallas said, "I am really looking forward to sitting, digesting, re-discussing with Pope Francis, Bishop Edward M. Scharfenberger of Joliet, Ill., one of five Texas dioceses representing one political division.

Cardinal DiNardo said the clerical sexual abuse crisis, migration, the challenges of a media-permeated culture and forming Christian consciences, especially in a time of deep political divisions.

Bishops from Arkansas, Oklahoma and Texas concelebrate Mass in the crypt of St. Peter’s Basilica during their "ad limina" visits to the Vatican Jan. 20, 2020. The bishops were making their "ad limina" visits to report on the status of their dioceses to the pope and Vatican officials.

Cardinal DiNardo said the clerical sexual abuse crisis, migration, the challenges of a media-permeated culture and forming Christian consciences, especially in a time of deep political divisions.

The "ad limina" visits are "very important for deepening our sense of personal communion" with the pope, the successor of Peter, he said. "It's not just the office, it's the affection for your father spiritually that we need to cultivate, because it is part of the gift that is the communion of the church.

"The narrative" that Pope Francis and many of the U.S. bishops "are on different pages," he said, is "overblown."

Sometimes that impression may arise when a bishop reacts to a news or social media report about something the pope has said. "It is our responsibility to hear him in his own words and to resist the temptation that sometimes hits across the spectrum of the church to jump to a conclusion because of some line that was quoted here or there."

Even in the fast-paced world of social media, "we can afford to be judicious and thoughtful," he said. "It's part of our intellectual responsibility."

Cardinal DiNardo said the pope and the bishops recognize the value and importance of media. However, he said, some on social media "may represent only a small number of people, but they make a lot of noise, and we try to sift through that," both in what is said about the pope and what is said about the church and bishops.

Bishop Flores said he was surprised by how much Pope Francis knew about the life and witness of Blessed Stanley Rother, the Oklahoma native martyred in Guatemala in 1981. After his name appeared on a death list, Blessed Rother went back to Oklahoma, but refused to stay.

"It was very moving to hear the Holy Father, the successor of Peter, recount to us a story we all know so well," the bishop said. It showed the pope's awareness of "that missionary spirit and how it is alive in the United States."

"He talked about the importance of pastors who accompany their people," Bishop Flores said. "I found that encouraging, because they are the unsung heroes who accompany their people, day in and day out."

Pope Francis also encouraged the bishops to be pastors, in a real sense, spending time with their faithful "not just at confirmations and on the big feast days," he said. The pope said, "The people have a nose for the deep reality of the church, and that is where the bishop is, there is the church."

The pope's words were "profoundly pastoral, profoundly theological and ec-clesial — a sense of church" — as well as obviously flowing from a deep spirituality, Bishop Flores said.

On migration, Bishop Flores said the pope was clearly knowledgeable about and grateful for the decades of work the Catholic Church in the United States has done to welcome migrants and refugees and was encouraging of what the bishops are doing now, especially to speak of "the dignity of the immigrant and the just treatment" of them.

Cardinal DiNardo said the conversation also touched on the fact that "some people think when you deal with those issues that's not church teaching, you know, that's politics."

Pope Francis, he said, encouraged the bishops to spend time reflecting on and sharing with their people the difference between "politics as ideology and Catholic social teaching, which stresses the human person and how we are always called to be at their behalf."

"We need to be voices for the immigrants" who do not have a voice, "pushed as they are by many different sides," the cardinal said. The question of migration policy is complicated, but Christians must come down on the side of "the poor and those who are in need. The immigrants, at one point he mentioned, they really represent to us the face of Christ suffering. The suffering Jesus."

Bishop Burns was among the Texas bishops who voiced their opposition to Gov. Greg Abbott's announcement that the state would no longer resettle refugees.

The church as a mother takes care of people in need, he said. "And while every country has a right to protect its border, every person has a right to a better life."

What really is needed, he said, is immigration reform. "It's taking all too long."

Contributing to this story were Cindy Wooden, Carol Glatz and Junno Arocho Esteves.

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Reporting Sexual Abuse

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

Reportar Abuso Sexual

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

Por primera vez en mi vida, he participado en una visita ad limina a Roma el 19-24 de enero de 2020, junto con otros veinticinco obispos de Texas, Oklahoma y Arkansas. Nuestros tres estados conforman la Región 10 de la Iglesia Católica en los Estados Unidos. Los obispos de cada una de las quince regiones han estado haciendo esta ronda de visitas desde noviembre pasado.

De acuerdo con el Código de Derecho Canónico de la Iglesia, cada obispo que preside sobre una diócesis en particular es requerido de hacer esta visita cada cinco años, o según lo programado por la Santa Sede, para informar sobre la vida de la Iglesia en la diócesis. El número de años entre estas visitas ha variado a lo largo de los siglos. Por muchos años, la práctica era de hacer la visita ad limina cada cinco años. Por esta razón, las visitas se les conoce tradicionalmente como “quinquenial”, que significa “cada cinco años.” Sin embargo, debido al crecimiento de la Iglesia por todo el mundo, las últimas visitas se han llevado a cabo aproximadamente cada ocho años, siendo que cinco años no es suficiente tiempo para visitar todas las diócesis del mundo.

El nombre oficial de estas visitas es visitatio ad limina apostolorum, que significa “la visita al umbral de (las tumbas de) los apóstoles.” El viaje es en realidad una peregrinación religiosa, un camino de fe en la cual visitamos y celebramos la Eucaristía en las basílicas patriarcales de San Pedro y San Pablo, donde se encuentran las tumbas de los dos grandes apóstoles bajo los principales altares. También visitamos y ofrecemos la Misa en las basílicas de Santa María la Mayor y la Santa Justa.

Más allá de la dimensión de ser una peregrinación, el ad limina incluye juntas con ambos, el Papa y los oficiales de los dicasterios de la Curia Romana. Un dicasterio es una subdivisión administrativa del gobierno de la Iglesia, como la Congregación para la Doctrina de la Fe, la Congregación para el Clero, o la Congregación para el Cultivo Divino. Durante una semana en Roma, visitamos once diferentes dicasterios.

Yo fui el celebrante principal en nuestra Misa en la Basilica de San Juan de Letrán en el último día de nuestra visita. Esa basílica de hecho es la iglesia catedral del Papa como Obispo de la Arquidiócesis de Roma. Por esta razón, es la iglesia católica de más alto rango en el mundo, incluso superior a la Basílica de San Pedro en el Vaticano. Una inscripción en la fachada de esta basílica la llama “Iglesia Santísima de Letrán, de todas las Iglesias de la ciudad y del mundo, la madre y la cabeza.”

La catedra, o el asiento oficial de enseñanza del Papa, se encuentra en la Basílica de Letrán, no en la Basílica de San Pedro.

Para prepararse para la visita ad limina, cada diócesis prepara un informe exhaustivo por escrito sobre el estado de la diócesis. Estos informes se presentaron en el verano pasado, seis meses antes de nuestra visita, para que el personal de los diversos dicasterios del Vaticano pudieran estudiarlos y responder a las cuestiones planteadas en los informes. En la Diócesis de San Ángelo, nuestro informe era de 162 páginas, sobre los años de calendario 2011-2018. Varios miembros de nuestro personal diocesano nos ayudaron en la preparación de este informe.

¿Por qué es que todos los obispos diocesanos en la Iglesia Católica por todo el mundo están obligados a realizar esta visita ad limina?...

From the Bishop’s Desk

Ad limina visit to Rome

For the first time in my life, I participated in an ad limina visit to Rome on January 19-24, 2020, along with twenty-five other bishops from Texas, Oklahoma, and Arkansas. Our three states make up Region 10 of the Catholic Church in the United States. The bishops of each of the fifteen regions have been making this round of visits since last November.

According to the Canon Law of the Church, every bishop who presides over a particular diocese is required to make this visit every five years, or as scheduled by the Holy See, to report on the life of the Church in the diocese. The number of years between these visits has varied over the centuries. For many years, the practice was to make the ad limina visit every five years. For this reason, the visits are traditionally referred to as “quinquennial,” which means “every five years.” However, due to the growth of the Church around the world, recent visits have taken place about every eight years, because five years is not enough time to cycle through all the dioceses in the world.

The official name for these visits is visita ad limina apostolorum, which means “visitation to the threshold of (the tombs of) the apostles.” The trip is actually a religious pilgrimage, a journey of faith wherein we visit and celebrate the Eucharist in the major patriarchal basilicas of St. Peter and St. Paul, where the tombs of those two great apostles are located under the main altars. We also visit and celebrate Mass in the basilicas of St. Mary Major and St. John Lateran.

Beyond the pilgrimage dimension, the ad limina includes meetings with both the pope and officials of the various Vatican dicasteries. These reports were submitted last summer, six months in advance of our visit, so that the staff of the various Vatican dicasteries could study them and respond to issues raised in our reports. In the Diocese of San Angelo, our report was 162 pages, covering the calendar years 2011-2018. Varios miembros de nuestro personal diocesano me ayudaron en la preparación de este informe.

The official report on the visit is submitted to the Holy See, to report on the life of the Church in the diocese. During one week in Rome, we visited eleven different dicasteries.

I was the principal celebrant in our Mass at the Basilica of St. John Lateran on the last day of our visit. That basilica is actually the cathedral church of the Pope as the Bishop of the Archdiocese of Rome. For this reason, it is the highest-ranking Catholic church in the world, even higher than St. Peter’s Basilica in the Vatican. An inscription on the façade of this basilica calls it the “Most Holy Lateran Church, of all the churches in the city and the world, the mother and the head.”

The cathe dra, or official teaching seat of the Pope, is located in the Lateran Basilica, not in St. Peter’s Basilica.

To prepare for the ad limina visit, each diocese prepared an exhaustive written report on the state of the diocese. These reports were submitted last summer, six months in advance of our visit, so that the staff of the various Vatican dicasteries could study them and respond to issues raised in our reports. In the Diocese of San Angelo, our report was 162 pages, covering the calendar years 2011-2018.

See BISHOP, Page 21

The Prayer Square

Prayer to live the Gospel, be disciples

Loving Father,
Open our hearts to hidden realities:
your love for all people,
your presence in the community,
your call to justice and peace.
May the sacraments stir in us that same love for those with whom we worship and all members of our human family.

Christ Jesus,
Help us to imitate your example:
healing the sick,
welcoming the stranger,
assisting the poor and vulnerable.
May the sacraments remind us of your love and self-giving,
which we strive to imitate.

Holy Spirit,
Make visible to our eyes what is invisible:
your call to your people,
your summons to live our faith daily as witnesses of justice and peace.
May the sacraments move us to engage in love-inspired action
that transforms us and the world.

Amen

From Sacraments and Social Mission: Living the Gospel, Being Disciples, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2011

Espacio de Oración

Oración para vivir el evangelio, ser discípulos

Padre amordado,
Abre nuestros corazones a las realidades ocultas:
tu amor por todas las personas,
tu presencia en la comunidad,
tu llamado a la justicia y la paz.

Que los sacramentos susciten en nosotros ese mismo amor por aquellos con quienes nos reunimos a adorarte
y por todos los miembros de nuestra familia humana.

Cristo Jesús,
Ayúdanos a imitar tu ejemplo:
sanar a los enfermos,
aceptar al extranjero,
ayudar a los pobres y vulnerables.

Que los sacramentos nos recuerden
tu amor y tu entrega
que nos esforzamos por imitar.

Espíritu Santo,
Haz visible a nuestros ojos lo que es invisible:
tu llamado a tu pueblo,
tu exhortación a vivir nuestra fe
todos los días como testigos de la justicia y la paz.

Que los sacramentos nos muevan a participar en acciones inspiradas en el amor
y que nos transformen a nosotros y al mundo.

Amén.

Extraído de Los sacramentos y la misión social: Vivir el evangelio, ser discípulos, Conferencia de obispos católicos de los Estados Unidos, 2011

Mira OBISPO, Página 20
New martyrs include religious priests, laity martyred in 20th century

By Carol Glatz
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY — Pope Francis recognized the martyrdom of six religious priests and brothers and seven laypeople who were killed in the 20th century “in hatred of the faith,” clearing the way for their beatification.

The pope approved the decrees during an audience Jan. 23 with Cardinal Angelo Becciu, prefect of the Congregation for Saints’ Causes.

Among the soon-to-be blesseds are three Spanish priests of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and seven laymen who were killed in Guatemala between 1980 and 1991.

Sacred Heart Missionary Fathers Jose Maria Gran Cirera, Juan Alonso Fernandez and Faustino Villanueva were all serving in different parts of the Guatemalan department of Quiche, where almost 90% of the population is indigenous Maya.

The guerrilla movement was very strong in Quiche, making it a scene of severe repression and horrific violence during Guatemala's 36-year civil war. Priests and religious were often targeted by government forces as they were often accused of supporting or carrying out subversive activities. More than 200,000 people, mostly indigenous Maya, were killed or disappeared during the conflict, which ran from 1960 to 1996.

The pope also recognized the martyrdom of three Capuchin priests, including Father Jose Domenech Bonet, from Spain who were killed in 1936 during their country's brutal civil war.

During the meeting with Cardinal Becciu, the pope also approved decrees recognizing the heroic virtues of an Italian bishop, a Brazilian nun, a French Capuchin priest and three founders of religious institutes, including Father Jose Plancarte Labastida of Mexico, who founded the congregation of the Daughters of Mary Immaculate of Guadalupe.

Correction: The Bishop’s Calendar in the January 2020 issue of the West Texas Angelus listed the location of the Feb. 1 Knights of Columbus Quad District Awards Banquet as St. Joseph Church in Rowena. The banquet was held at St. Thomas Church in Miles. We apologize for the error.
In Memoriam

Rev. Cornelius Joseph Scanlan, OMI

Rev. Cornelius Joseph Scanlan, OMI, was born in Dallas, Texas, on October 24, 1929, and died in San Antonio, Texas, on January 7, 2020 at the age of 90 years. Father Scanlan entered St. Peter’s Novitiate on May 23, 1952, in Mission, Texas, and professed vows as a member of the Congregation of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate on May 31, 1953. Father Scanlan completed his studies in philosophy and theology in San Antonio, Texas. He was ordained to the priesthood on May 30, 1959, at St. Mary’s Church in San Antonio by Archbishop Robert E. Lucey, DD.

Father Scanlan was licensed in Aircraft Engine Mechanics from Dallas Aviation School (1951) and received his private pilot’s license in 1981. He was known to give airplane rides to Oblates before entering the novitiate. He earned a BA in Liberal Arts at De Mazenod Scholasticate in 1956. His first assignments led him to Texas (McAllen, Brownsville, Crystal City, Dickinson, and later San Juan) and to Denver, Colorado, with Marriage Encounter. He ministered in San Angelo, Texas, in the early 80s where he was the first Director at Christ the King Retreat Center in San Angelo. He later served in the prison ministry in Big Spring, Texas. He was involved with the ACTS retreats as a liaison for the Diocese of San Angelo before coming to San Antonio. He was a member of the Board of Trustees of Oblate School of Theology in 1984. His assignments were extensive and included serving in Alaska. He previously served as pastor of St. Mary Magdalene Church in Bracketville, Texas, before coming to Oblate Madonna Residence in San Antonio in 2013.

Father Scanlan celebrated his 60th Anniversary of Priestly Ordination in 2019. He is survived by a brother, Patrick, and a niece and nephew and several cousins. His mother was German. He learned the language and kept in touch with his cousins in Germany, which he visited on occasion. Father Scanlan will be remembered with respect and esteem by his Oblate brothers and all the people who were recipients of his pastoral care.

Funeral services were held at Oblate Madonna Residence Chapel at 5722 Blanco Road, San Antonio, Texas. A Vigil/Rosary was held on Tuesday, January 14, 2020, at 7:00 p.m. The Mass of Christian Burial was Wednesday, January 15, 2020, at 10:00 a.m. He is buried at the Oblate cemetery in San Antonio, Texas.

Bryant relied on Catholic faith to see him through tough personal times

By Catholic News Service

CALABASAS, Calif. (CNS) — As the world mourned the loss of basketball great Kobe Bryant, his 13-year-old daughter Gianna and seven others killed in a tragic helicopter crash Jan. 26, many recalled how Bryant gave much credit to his Catholic faith for seeing him through the bad times and strengthening his marriage and family.

A shooting guard, Bryant was drafted into the NBA at age 17 and played his entire 20-season career with the Los Angeles Lakers. He entered the NBA directly from high school and won five NBA championships. He retired at the end of the 2015-2016 season.

News of Bryant’s death quickly prompted tributes on social media. On Twitter, Archbishop Jose H. Gomez of Los Angeles said “he was sad to hear the news” and offered prayers for him and his family.

In Rome for his region’s “ad limina” visit with Pope Francis, Archbishop Gomez told Catholic News Service Jan. 27 that Bryant “was a very good Catholic, a faithful Catholic” and remarked meeting the famed basketball player on several occasions.

“I remember one time going to the Lakers’ practice, and I had a good conversation with him,” Archbishop Gomez told CNS. “We are praying for the eternal repose of his soul, his daughter who also died and for the family. It must be a very challenging time for his family. So, let’s pray for him and pray for his family.”

Born in Philadelphia Aug. 23, 1978, Bryant was raised a Catholic and as a youth lived for a while in Italy. He and his wife, Vanessa, married at St. Edward Catholic Church in Dana Point, California, and raised their children Catholic. Bryant is survived by his wife and three other daughters. Gianna, also known as “GiGi,” was the couple’s second oldest daughter.

One of the darkest periods in his personal life happened in 2003 — when he was accused of raping a young woman while he was staying at a mountain resort hotel in Colorado; he was in the state for knee surgery and was staying near Vail in Eagle, Colorado. He was arrested on a rape charge.

He denied he had raped her but admitted that the two had consensual sex. The charges were eventually dropped. In 2004, his accuser filed a civil suit against him and in 2005 Bryant settled with her out of court for an undisclosed sum.

His marriage almost ended over it. In a GQ interview in 2015, he said he relied on his Catholic faith to get him through — and talking to a priest was “the turning point.”

“The one thing that really helped me during that process — I’m Catholic, I grew up Catholic, my kids are Catholic — was talking to a priest. It was actually kind of funny: He looks at me and says, ‘Did you do it?’ And I say, ‘Of course not.’ Then he asks, ‘Do you have a good lawyer?’ And I’m like, ‘Uh, yeah, he’s phenomenal!’ So then he just said, ‘Let it go. Move on. God’s not going to give you anything you can’t handle, and it’s in his hands now. This is something you can’t control. So let it go.’ And that was the turning point.”

Law enforcement officials identified the other passengers on the helicopter, who also perished: the pilot, Ara Zobayan; John Altobelli, head baseball coach at Orange Coast College in Costa Mesa, California, his wife, Keri, and their daughter Alyssa: Christina Mauser, a basketball coach at Harbor Day School in Newport Beach, California, where Gianna Kobe attended school; Sarah Chester and her daughter Payton, who was of middle school age.

USA Today reported the group was traveling in Bryant’s private helicopter to the Mamba Sports Academy in Thousand Oaks, California, for a girls’ basketball game. Bryant was expected to coach and Gianna was expected to play. The crash occurred around 10 a.m. local time; law enforcement officials said there were foggy conditions in the hills overlooking Calabasas, which is in Los Angeles County.

Among tributes to Bryant flooding the internet was a remembrance by Instagram user Cristina Ballestero, who described seeing Bryant at a weekday Mass at Holy Family Cathedral in Orange, California.

She recalled looking up to see the basketball star sitting in her pew, but she managed to “stay focused on Jesus, not this insanely talented basketball player my whole family has looked up to and watched our whole lives.”

“As we went up to Communion, he waited for me to go,” she recalled, adding that he complimented her on having a “beautiful voice” in singing the Mass hymns.

“His most inspiring trait was his decision to turn to his faith in God and receive God’s mercy and to be a better man after a regretful decision,” Ballestero wrote, referring to the GQ article. “I am heartbroken at the news of his death alongside his daughter Gianna. My prayers go out to his family, friends and loved ones.”

She also noted all the good works Kobe and his wife have done through their foundation and several other charities they are involved in and donate money to.

A tweet from Tommy Tighe at @theg-hissilent remembered seeing Bryant and his family at Our Lady Queen of Angels during Mass “and it’s something I’ve never forgotten.”

“May the crucified Christ and His sorrowful mother be with Kobe’s wife, daughters, and family,” Tighe tweeted.

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Jhumo Arocho Esteves in Rome contributed to this story.
WASHINGTON (CNS) — In marking the "sorrowful anniversary" Jan. 22 of the Supreme Court's ruling legalizing abortion nationwide, the chairman of the U.S. bishops' pro-life committee said the Catholic Church's pastoral response to all mothers in need "will soon intensify." The nation's Catholic bishops are being asked to invite the parishes in their dioceses to join a nationwide effort called "Walking with Moms in Need: A Year of Service" from March 25 of this year through March 25, 2021.


The archbishop noted that the special day of prayer marks the "tragic" Supreme Court decisions of Roe v. Wade and Doe v. Bolton of Jan. 22, 1973. The rulings in the companion cases legalized abortion through all nine months of pregnancy across the country.

"The church will never abandon her efforts to reverse these terrible decisions that have led to the deaths of millions of innocent children and the traumatization of countless women and families," Archbishop Naumann said.

"As the church and growing numbers of Catholics in parishes, schools, hospitals, counseling centers and pro-life activities respond to mothers in need, this year's initiative will bring focused attention to mothers in need," he said.

The archbishop said the initiative is intended to help parishes answer the call to foster a pro-life culture in their parishes, schools, hospitals and other activities operated by the church.

"Walking with Moms in Need: A Year of Service" seeks to encourage parishes to respond to the pro-life mission in seven ways:

1. Pray for the needs of mothers in need.
2. Share information with local pro-life organizations in the parish, diocese, and archdiocese.
3. Develop a network for assisting women in need.
4. Assist women seeking help through counseling, motherhood education, and adoption guidance.
5. Establish a pregnancy resource center.
6. Foster a pro-life culture in the parish community.
7. Participate in a local March for Life.

The archbishop asked Catholic bishops to support the initiative by using the program's promotional website www.walkingwithmoms.com. The site provides tools and resources for parishes and dioceses to carry out the initiative.

The website includes:

- A resource guide for parishes
- A conversation guide for dioceses
- A step-by-step guide for fostering a pro-life culture
- Information about the national March for Life
- Information about Marches for Life in parishes
- Information about resources for parishes and dioceses

The program encourages parishes to use the "Walking with Moms in Need: A Year of Service" initiative as a way to bring families together and encourage them to discuss the pro-life mission.

"This is an opportunity to engage our communities in a way that reflects the love of Christ, who cares for all mothers and their children," the archbishop said.

"As we journey together this year, may we find new ways to build a culture of life and support those in need," he added.
O Night Divine: Local musicians return home for concert

By Gloria Johns

SAN ANGELO — On Friday, Dec. 27, 2019, San Angeloans were treated to the musical talents of Joshua Diaz, tenor, and Adam Torres, piano, in a holiday season concert. “O Night Divine,” at the First United Methodist Church in downtown San Angelo.

Their professional achievements are remarkable, and both can be considered products of the San Angelo community — the proverbial story of “local boys make good.”

Josh is an accomplished singer on the concert stage and in the recital hall. According to his website, he has performed as soloist with the Notre Dame Chorale, Notre Dame Chamber Orchestra, Peabody Symphony Orchestra, the Concert Artists of Baltimore, Mississippi Valley Orchestra, and the Minnesota Philharmonic Orchestra.

As a pianist, Adam is a regular performer with the Cheyenne Symphony, Sound of Towers (flute, clarinet, and piano trio), and regularly accompanies for private studios in Northern Colorado.

Amid the tradition of “local boys make good,” it’s a tradition now, and means as much, actually more than any of the grand concerts and stages. “My family is here, and so many familiar faces.” “It means a lot to be here.” “San Angelo has been good to us.”

Adam A. Torres, conductor and pianist, made his professional debut as a piano soloist with the San Angelo Symphony at age eleven. Adam appeared with the Colorado Symphony and Denver Young Artists Orchestra, narrating a performance of Gregory Smith’s The Animated Orchestra in Feb. 2015.

Previous assistant conducting positions include the Angelo State University Marching Band, Angelo State University Drama Department, San Angelo Symphony Chorale, and First United Methodist Church (San Angelo, Texas). He has conducted the Round Rock (2010) and Virginia (2012) symphonies.

As a pianist, Adam is a regular performer with the Cheyenne Symphony, Sound of Towers (flute, clarinet, and piano trio), and regularly accompanies for private studios in Northern Colorado.

Adam also maintains a small private studio of talented and dedicated students throughout the Northern Colorado region.

Sponsors for the evening were Pastor Scott Bradford, staff and congregation of first United Methodist Church, Jane Smith, the Torres Family and Diaz Family.

Seasoned musician inspires people to sing, raise voices 'in honor of God'

By Gina Christian

PHILADELPHIA (CNS) — With the start of the new year, a seasoned Philadelphia musician is taking on a new challenge as director of the Philadelphia Catholic Gospel Mass Choir.

Tonya Taylor-Dorsey was appointed to the post by the Philadelphia Archdiocese’s Office for Black Catholics, effective Jan. 1.

Established for the 2014 World Meeting of Families, the ensemble features voices from the archdiocese and neighboring dioceses. The choir has participated in parish revivals, the U.S. bishops’ listening sessions on racism and the annual “Soulful Christmas Concert” at Philadelphia’s Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts.

In addition, the choir regularly performs at archdiocesan observances such as the St. Martin de Porres Mass and the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. Day prayer service.

For Taylor-Dorsey, who has more than three decades of experience in parish music, the role once seemed unlikely for someone who was raised Presbyterian — and who “didn’t sing in the church choir growing up.”

“I wanted to be a concert pianist,” she said, citing "Fanfarinette" from Jean-Philippe Rameau's Suite in A Minor as her favorite piece to play.

Taylor-Dorsey’s musical ambitions led her to study at Michigan State University and the University of Texas at San Antonio. Diploma in hand, she returned to her native Philadelphia, and shortly thereafter landed a job as music director at St. Peter Claver in Center City until the parish was closed.

In 1993, she started a 13-year appointment as choir director at Our Lady of Hope parish in Philadelphia, during which time she staged annual concerts and produced a recording of the Hope Singers.

When she became the choir director at St. Martin de Porres Parish in 2006, Taylor-Dorsey decided to make her lifelong commitment to Catholicism official, joining the church under the guidance of then-pastor Father Edward Hallinan.

"During our first meeting, he asked me, "Why aren’t you Catholic?"” she recalled in an interview with Catho-

 Composer and pianist Tonya Taylor-Dorsey, music director of St. Martin de Porres Parish in Philadelphia, as of Jan. 1, 2020, is overseeing the Philadelphia Catholic Gospel Mass Choir. She is pictured in an undated photo.

Her composition "God's Angel" was featured in The Philadelphia Inquirer newspaper after she dedicated a 2012 performance of the song — originally written after her mother’s death — to the victims of the Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting. A number of Taylor-Dorsey’s vocal works have been sung throughout the United States.

Despite such musical prestige and prowess, though, she said she strives to "refresh and renew" her choirs, giving all participants a chance to grow musically and not simply "letting a few people do solos."

Selections for the Sunday liturgies at St. Martin de Porres are carefully chosen by Taylor-Dorsey in close collaboration with the parish’s pastor, Father Stephen Thorne, who also is a consultant for the National Black Catholic Congress.

In addition to her preparations for Sunday Mass, she also is in the process of setting the Book of Psalms to music, while managing the Tonya Dorsey and New Vision Foundation, which since 2008 has awarded more than 140 scholarships in the arts to school-age children.

Thoroughly practical and prolific, Taylor-Dorsey remains focused on the true source of her artistic inspiration.

"I give 100% credit to God," she said. "There are songs that I write where I truly could not tell you the process involved."

Taylor-Dorsey’s joy in music is central to her ministry, which she says is a simple one: "I want to encourage people to sing and raise their voices in honor of God."

Christian is senior content producer at CatholicPhilly.com, the news outlet of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia.
The Angelus: From sinner to repentant saint

Margaret of Cortona was a fallen woman. In the eyes of her 13th century Italian neighbors, she was a wanton sinner bound for hell because she lived openly with a man as his mistress.

She was born on a small farm in Tuscany. Her mother died when she was seven and her father married again. Her stepmother was harsh, violent and abusive. In her early teens, Margaret ran away from home hoping to find a happier life elsewhere. Margaret was a great beauty and she was soon seduced by the young lord of Montepulciano. Editor Michael Walsh writes in Butler’s Lives of the Saints that he induced her to elope with him one night to his castle among the hills. For the next nine years, Margaret lived with him openly as his mistress and caused much scandal.

She flaunted her status as her lover’s mistress by riding through the streets of Montepulciano on a superb horse and wearing beautiful clothes. Margaret was faithful to her lover and bore him a son. She had hoped they would eventually marry, but this was not to be. Kathleen Jones writes in Women Saints that in the Italian society of the time, a young man of rank would have to marry a girl of equal rank, so a marriage to a farmer’s daughter was unthinkable.

Margaret’s entire life changed with her lover was murdered. He was on a visit to one of his estates when he was assassinated by rival. Walsh writes that Margaret’s dog led her to his decomposed body in the forest.

Margaret saw the judgement of God in this event and was full of remorse for her past life. She took her son and left her lover’s home wearing a robe of penitence and returned to her father’s house to ask forgiveness, but her father refused to receive her.

This was the bleakest point of her young life. Margaret was destitute and had no family or friends. There were no shelters for homeless people and no social service agencies to help single mothers. So, Margaret turned to the church and sought shelter with the Friars Minor in Cortona. They had a reputation of gentleness with sinners.

Bernard Bangley writes in Butler’s Lives of the Saints that the next three years were a mixture of hope and despair as Margaret struggled trying to begin a new life. She and her son went to live in a small cottage where she devoted her time to nursing the women of the city and caring for the sick poor. After about three years, Margaret joined the Third Order of St. Francis. Her son went to school at Arezzo where he remained until he entered the Franciscan order.

Margaret devoted more time to prayer and began to experience ecstasies and visions. John J. Delaney writes in the Dictionary of Saints that her personal communications with God included messages that she delivered from him to the bishop of Arezzo, admonishing the bishop to stop fighting with the people of his diocese and Cortona. Before his death, the bishop had granted Margaret’s request for a charter to aid her work with the sick poor. She founded a hospital and the nursing sisters were Franciscan tertiaries whom Margaret formed into a congregation called the Poverelle.

From time to time, Margaret’s past life came back to haunt her. Sean Kelly and Rosemary Rogers write in Saints Preserve Us! that her prayerful association with the Franciscans caused the local gossips to circulate rumors about her relationship with them. Margaret’s sanctity and sincerity prevailed and she continued her work with the poor. In time, the people of Corona recognized her saintly qualities and later maintained that her only sin was that she loved too much.

When she died in 1297, she was 50 years old and had spent the last 29 years of her life in penance. Donald Weinstein and Rudolph Bell, writing in Saints and Society, hail Margaret as a great visionary and mystic, someone who took special care of pregnant women and protected the poor and sick. She was canonized by Pope Benedict XIII in 1728. Her feast day is February 22 and she is the patron of the homeless and single mothers.

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

See KNICKERBOCKERS, Page 22

The order of the soul: A Lenten reflection

The late Catholic philosopher, Father James Schall, SJ (d. 4/17/2019), wrote a book titled The Order of Things, and, indeed, many of the books and essays he wrote over a long and productive life concern the order of things. As we approach the Lenten Season, which is a time of self-examination, Father Schall can serve as a guide by leading us to examine the question of order and disorder in our lives.

When we raise the question of order, we begin by knowing there is a proper order for everything. As Christians we know by revelation there is an order in God Himself. God is a Trinity of Persons who is One God. In Jesus he has revealed to us that it is through the order of his Word that he creates and redeems all things (Jn 1:1-18). John in his Gospel drew on both the Greek philosophers and revelation in the Old Testament. In Greek philosophy the Word is expressed in the order and design of the universe. In the Old Testament the Word is the utterance of God that brought all things into being. In the Gospel of John it is revealed that the Word is the Second Person of the Holy Trinity who is the mediator of creation and has now become the mediator of redemption through the Incarnation of the Word in Jesus of Nazareth (See the Ignatius Catholic Study Bible, 161).

Because human beings are created through the mediation of God’s Word, there is a natural order to human life. The human family of father, mother, and child is an ordered likeness of God the Holy Trinity. When we fell into sin we brought disorder into our lives. Furthermore, because we are the heart of God’s creation, our chosen disorder plunged the entire creation into disorder. After the fall into sin, we are redeemed through God’s Word who comes to us in a human family — Jesus, Mary, and Joseph. Now the Holy Trinity works through redeemed humanity to restore order to his creation.

However, we can resist this return to our proper order, and that resistance occurs in our own soul.

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

See KNICKERBOCKERS, Page 22
Technology in youth ministry

Something is only new if you remember what life was like before it existed. Generation Z, which encompasses those currently in junior high and high school, have never known a life without smartphones and social media. Yet, so many who minister to this age group do not use technology to help engage these digital natives.

Before we look at some of the tools we can use to help engage this generation, let’s look at how they use technology in their everyday lives.

According to the Center for Generational Kinetics, which specializes in studying generations, specifically Millennials and Generation Z, the following are true of young people who make up Generation Z:

- 95% have their own smartphone
- Over 50% use their smartphone more than five hours a day and over 26% use it 10 hours or more a day
- Spend at least three hours a day on social media
- 30% believe YouTube advertisements are the most trustworthy
- They use different social media platforms for specific interactions and outcomes; Instagram to follow brands, Snapchat to post a video or a selfie, Facebook to check a group event.

- 58% feel uncomfortable if they do not have their phone for a few hours or less
- 67% experience a high level of stress when their phone is lost, broken, or stops working
- 56% become stressed when someone hides their phone
- 42% express high levels of stress when someone touches their phone without permission
- Due to their use of technology and the overload of information it brings, they have highly developed filters. If something does not catch their attention within the first eight seconds, they keep scrolling.

There is no denying that technology must be part of our ministries if we want to relate to young people in methods they use daily.

When using social media such as Instagram and Facebook, it is recommended that a minimum of two adults have full access to the account and that direct or private messages be printed for safety purposes. I would discourage the use of Snapchat because it is more difficult to document messages exchanged on that platform.

One commonly used website and app to help cultivate content for social media is Canva. They offer several free templates and photos that can be used, as well some premium content that can be purchased. When producing content for social media, we must keep in mind the young person’s highly developed filters and make sure we are striving for quality, and not just quantity. In other words, do not use clip art or other outdated images.

If you want to make sure that the same content is being shared across various platforms, you can use a program such as Hootsuite or Buffer. These programs will allow you to generate one post that will be pushed to all linked social media at the same time. They also allow you to schedule posts to be posted at a later time or date.

In communicating with this generation on the platforms they use, we must also look at how we use YouTube. Generation Z uses YouTube for a variety of purposes: trusted advertisements, to do research on companies they are considering working for, and to learn new information and new skills, to name a few. While not every ministry should create their own YouTube channel, we all need to be aware of good Catholic resources available that we can share with the young church.

We can also find ways to use technology in our classrooms and other ministry settings. One that I have seen work well is Kahoot! It allows you to create a quiz or trivia game and the teens, whether individually or as teams, use their phones to text their answer and Kahoot! gives real-time responses and standings. (Keep in mind an internet connection is needed.)

While using technology is essential in engaging the young church, we must not allow technology to take the place of relational ministry or forget the importance of the message. Yes, we must engage those in Generation Z in a way that is relevant to their reality, but we must do so without compromising the Truth of our faith. We must continue to engage them in a real, personal way by building relationships with them that shows that we care about them individually and about their lives.

Alison Pope is an associate director of the Diocese of San Angelo’s Office of Evangelization and Catechesis.

Was Jesus a ‘good Christian’?

It has now been fifty years since I began seeing people professionally. During that time, the concerns, issues, and problems that were presented were everything I could have imagined when I started out, and many of those that I couldn’t have. Often, regardless of the primary issue, a person has had to deal with enormous self-criticism, if not self-contempt, because they do not believe they are acting like a good Christian.

When asked why they think that to be true, they respond by saying that they are sad, angry, anxious, fearful, distraught, feel like they cannot handle what they are faced with, think that God has turned his back on them, and they hate! Given these thoughts and feelings, they feel estranged from him at a time in their lives when he is most needed. They believe that they are not a good Christian. After listening closely, my response is “You do know, that by your definition and standards, that Jesus was not a ‘good Christian’ either, right?” With astonished looks, they ask what I mean.

How can we read John 11:35, “And Jesus wept,” and think that there is anything wrong about sadness that we may feel ourselves, or in the empathy that we feel for others as we join in their sorrow?! If someone has never experienced sorrow in their lives, it would seem that they would have to either be very young or very uncaring. Sorrow is part of our human condition.

And when it comes to anger, Jesus did not “hold his tongue” when, in Matthew 23:27, he says “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, you hypocrites. You are like whitewashed tombs, which appear beautiful on the outside, but inside are full of dead men’s bones and every kind of filth.” Nor was he even-tempered when overturning the money changers’ table in the Temple. We are supposed to be angered by injustices, abuses, and those who lead others astray.

Regardless of how we want to do “the Father’s will,” it does not mean that doing so is always easy. Facing the horrors that a scourging and crucifixion entail, how could anyone not feel anxious, frightened, and despair. How could any “true man” not wish for that “cup” to pass from his hands because there does not seem to be any way to do what he is faced with doing. It is not referred to as the “agony in the garden” without reason.

“I pray and pray, and God does not answer my prayers” is almost a universal refrain in the song of plea. It is easy for us to forget that prayers should not be intended to have God’s will become ours, but rather that we may be helped to accept his. We may experience the feeling that God does not “hear” us many times throughout our lives but that does not make that feeling true, any more than did Jesus might have felt when he asked why he had been “for-saken.”

Lastly is the issue of hate. Even if someone begins to understand that having all of the aforementioned thoughts and feelings actually make them more like Jesus and not less, they may balk at the notion that it could be “Christlike” to hate! I do not think that is true. In fact, I don’t think we can be like Jesus unless we hate. But not how most of us think of hate. Instead of hate toward others, for it is never others that we are to hate but, instead, what some others may DO. We must always hate “sin” because sin separates us and others from ourselves, others, and, most importantly, from God. We cannot compromise with evil any more than light can be compromised by darkness. Indeed, we have been told “You are the light of the world!” (Mt 5:14).

Evil will always lurk when we are down and try to make us feel worse about ourselves when we are feeling low by trying to convince us that we are unworthy of anything but hell. If we use the standard that our understandably normal feelings of sadness, anxiety, fear, and the thought that God is not there for us, as evidence that we are bad Christians, then, logically illogical, Jesus was not a good Christian either. We are given hope that we may become more like Jesus in our journey back home because Jesus has shown us the way in becoming like us in all thoughts, all feelings, ALL things...but sin.

James R. Sulliman, PhD

Dr. James Sulliman, a graduate of Rutgers University and Florida State University, has 50 years’ experience in individual, marriage, and family therapy. He is also the Abilene-area pro-life coordinator for the Diocese of San Angelo.
ACS Dueling Pianos and Silent Auction Fundraiser February 22

Angelo Catholic School will be hosting a Dueling Pianos and Silent Auction on Saturday, February 22, at Holy Angels Parish Hall. Dueling Pianos is an event guaranteed to have you dancing and singing along to all of your favorite songs as our talented performers engage you in an unforgettable show! Doors open at 6 p.m. for an open bar cocktail hour featuring appetizers, wine and beer. At 7 p.m. the performers take to the stage! A silent auction will be running during the event as well! We hope that you will be able to join us for this amazing evening to support our school! Reservations can be made in the front office, by phone (325-949-1747) or by email (llopez@angelocatholicschool.org). Individuals: $40; Table for 8: $500. Your contribution of $500 would ensure a table for eight in the VIP area with your name/business name and logo displayed on the table as well as bottle service. For a contribution of $800, your business logo would appear on all printed and verbal promotional materials, in addition to everything that comes with the $500 tier donation.

Sponsored by The Law Office of Rick DeHoyos.

Owners of Trudo’s Religious Store selling business

After much prayer and reflection, we are announcing the sale of Trudo’s religious bookstore. We have enjoyed our time serving San Angelo, the diocese, and our customers each and every day! We are hoping that someone reading this is interested in continuing this ministry and making a difference in the world today. Now is such an important time in the battle to keep Christianity moving in a positive direction!

Trudo’s plays a vital role in the success, education, and sustainability of Catholicism and all faiths in and around San Angelo. Trudo’s has a large variety of books, rosaries, prayer cards, and much more! We also support the monks in Christoval by selling their goods made at the Mount Carmel hermitage.

Anyone who is interested in owning a profitable, faith-based business should contact us for more information.

Thank you and may God bless you all,
DeHoyos and Vega families

Contact Mark at 806-201-1925
or Trudo’s at 325-653-8011

Texas Catholic Historical Society memberships available

Parish leaders recently received a letter from the Texas Catholic Historical Society (TCHS), which is affiliated with the Texas Catholic Conference of Bishops, explaining their mission and membership opportunities. The TCHS “works to preserve and highlight the importance of the Catholic Church in Texas history and culture. The society encourages historical research and sponsors scholarly presentations covering the Church’s historical involvement in the lives of Texans.”

The letter lists several benefits that are included with membership:

- Meet and network with others at the next annual meeting at the University Catholic Center, 2010 University Ave in Austin, Feb. 28.
- Hear and present papers at the Texas State Historical Association’s annual meeting (held in conjunction with the TCHS meeting Feb. 28).
- Receive the TCHS’s annual scholarly journal, Catholic Southwest: A Journal of History and Culture, and a semiannual newsletter; members can also submit papers to Catholic Southwest.
- Be part of an effort to encourage scholarship and research into the influence of the Church on Texas history and culture.

Annual membership in the TCHS is $20 for individuals, $10 for students, and $25 for institutions such as parishes or libraries.

More information and membership opportunities are available at https://www.txcatholic.org/historical-society.
Many Paths to Discipleship
Diocesan Day of Reflection
February 29, 2020
St. Mary Parish
11 W. Avenue N
San Angelo, TX 76903

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

8:30am Registration – 9:00am- 5:00pm

What Path is GOD Calling You To?
Register: Call Kristie at 325-651-7500 or kgarcia@sanangelodiocese.org
High School – Juniors and Seniors, College, Young Adults, Married Couples, Singles
Sister Arzagon celebrates silver jubilee

Oblate of Notre Dame Sister Maria Theresa Arzagon celebrated 25 years as a vowed religious at a Mass of Thanksgiving at St. Mary Church in Odessa on Sunday, Dec. 8, 2019. The presider at the Mass was Father Bernardito Getigan, pastor of St. Mary Church, with assistance by Deacon Bobby Wright. Sister Arzagon is the DRE at St. Mary Church.

Pro-life San Angelenos gather to pray for an end to abortion

Sharla Ynostrosa, San Angelo-area pro-life coordinator for the Diocese of San Angelo, and Father Tom Barley were among the leaders at a prayer rally organized by the Concho Valley Defenders of Life. The prayer rally was held during the noon hour on Jan. 22, 2020, a date which marked the 47th anniversary of the U.S. Supreme Court's decision in Roe v. Wade, which declared access to abortion services to be a constitutional right.

St. Margaret of Scotland Church celebrates anniversary of adoration chapel

Knights of Columbus in their new uniforms led the procession at the opening of a Mass at St. Margaret of Scotland Church in San Angelo to celebrate the 15th anniversary of the church’s Eucharistic Adoration chapel, Jan. 31, 2020.

Pro-life supporters gathered and joined hands in prayer, silently lifting their thoughts to God. The Jan. 22 prayer rally was held on the lawn of the Tom Green County Courthouse in downtown San Angelo.

Above: Deacon Jesse Martinez, Father Adam Droll, Bishop Michael Sis, and Father Santiago Udayar at the anniversary Mass.

Right: Father Santiago Udayar, pastor of St. Margaret Church, prays during the Mass, Jan. 31.
Every January and February, the Guadalupe Radio Network sells raffle tickets for a stylish car at $25 each, or if you like a good deal, you can get five tickets for $100. This year, the GRN celebrates 20 years of being on the air, therefore they’ll be raffling off a luxurious 2020 Cadillac CT5.

With every purchase you make, you’re making it possible to share the truth and treasure of our faith and impact many families through the powerful means of Catholic Radio on our local listening areas on 91.7 FM Abilene, 91.5 FM San Angelo, 1180 AM Midland/Odessa (English), and 90.9 FM Midland/Odessa (Español).

Please contact the general manager at faustino@grnonline.com or 432-638-1150 to purchase your tickets or to help sell tickets at your parish and give your parishioners an opportunity to win.

The final day to purchase tickets for you, your loved ones and even your priests and deacons will be on Friday, February 28. You can even purchase online at: www.GRNonline.com.

Mark your calendars:
Guadalupe Radio Network events
Church needs 'evangelizing spouses' to fulfill its mission, pope says

By Cindy Wooden
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — If many Catholics marry today without fully understanding the permanence of their bond and the grace of the sacrament, it partly is the fault of bishops and priests who did not give them the best teachers — committed married couples filled with the Holy Spirit, Pope Francis said.

In his annual meeting with judges and staff of the Roman Rota, a church marriage tribunal, Pope Francis Jan. 25 said he marveled at the fact that for centuries, the church ignored the example of Aquila and Priscilla, the married couple described in several parts of the New Testament as evangelizing with St. Paul.

"Evangelizing spouses," the pope said, is "what our parishes need, especially in urban areas where the pastor and his priest collaborators will never have the time and energy to reach all the faithful who, while calling themselves Christian, do not frequent the sacraments and lack — or almost lack — knowledge of Christ."

In reforming the process for judging the validity or the nullity of a marriage, the church ignored the example of Aquila and Priscilla, the married couple described in several parts of the New Testament as evangelizing with St. Paul.

"Evangelizing spouses," the pope said, is "what our parishes need, especially in urban areas where the pastor and his priest collaborators will never have the time and energy to reach all the faithful who, while calling themselves Christian, do not frequent the sacraments and lack — or almost lack — knowledge of Christ."

In reforming the process for judging the validity or the nullity of a marriage, the pope said, he insisted on the procedure being marked by pastoral "closeness and gratuity," which are essential elements of evangelization that St. Paul found Aquila and Priscilla particularly capable of showing. They hosted the Christian communities in their own homes, reached out to draw others in and cared for those in need.

"Christian spouses," Pope Francis said, "should learn from Aquila and Priscilla how to fall in love with Christ and become neighbors to families deprived of the light of faith, not through their own fault but because they were left at the margins of our pastoral work — a pastoral work for the elite that forgets people."

"How I long for this message not to remain just a symphony of words, but to push priests, bishops and pastors to try, like the Apostle Paul did, to love married couples as humble missionaries ready to reach those squares and buildings of our cities where the light of the Gospel and the voice of Jesus don't reach and don't penetrate," the pope said.

In addition, he said, they obviously are the best suited to lead marriage preparation courses. Catholic married couples, he said, need to step up like Aquila and Priscilla and offer to work with their pastors, "not in an autonomous way, but certainly filled with the courage necessary to wake from lethargy and sleep their pastors who are perhaps too still or blocked by the philosophy of the little circle of the perfect. The Lord came to seek sinners, not the perfect."

Choosing to live among and minister only to a small group and preferring to spend time only with committed parishioners is not the way of the Gospel, he said. And the only way to reach out to those in need.

For more information and resources, visit foryourmarriage.org.

Spanish bishops launch marriage prep course that could last 2-3 years

By Catholic News Service

MADRID (CNS) — Catholic couples in Spain will undergo up to three years of marriage preparation under an initiative by their bishops to reverse the country's high rates of divorce.

The Spanish bishops launched Together on the Way ("Juntos en Camino"), a program to help couples to succeed in their vocation to marriage amid a divorce rate that sees about 40% of marriages collapse within five years and nearly 60% within 15 years.

The new course could last between two and three years; it replaces preparation courses that lasted between five and 20 hours.

Speaking at a news conference in Madrid mid-January, Bishop Mario Iceta Gavicagogeasoa of Bilbao said he did not believe previous courses were adequate.

"What can we do in five hours?" asked Bishop Iceta, president of the Spanish bishops' subcommission for family and the defense of life.

"To make a comparison, to be a priest you need to spend seven years in a seminary," he said, adding that it was not "sufficient" to prepare to be "a husband, a wife, a mother or a father" in less than a day.

He said that, as a parish priest, he would often bluntly tell couples that marriage preparation was not only an administrative process but a way of preventing the future collapse of their marriages.

"To make a comparison, to be a priest you need to spend seven years in a seminary," he said, adding that it was not "sufficient" to prepare to be "a husband, a wife, a mother or a father" in less than a day.

He said that, as a parish priest, he would often bluntly tell couples that marriage preparation was not only an administrative process but a way of preventing the future collapse of their marriages.

The new course, the bishop continued, was a response to the requests of St John Paul II and Pope Francis to "accompany people who have discovered the vocation to marry" and to prepare them well for marriage.
Inadequacy, hurt, and reconciliation

Even with the best intentions, even with no malice inside us, even when we are faithful, we sometimes cannot not hurt each other. Our human situation is simply too complex at times for us not to wound each other.

Here’s an example: Soren Kierkegaard, who spent his whole life trying to be scrupulously faithful to what God was calling him to, once hurt a woman very deeply. As a young man, he had fallen in love with a woman, Regine, who, in return, loved him deeply. But as their marriage was to be pre- approached, Kierkegaard was beset with an internal crisis, one both psychological and moral, within which he discerned that their marriage would, long range, be the cause for deep unhappiness for both of them and he called off the engagement. That decision hurt Regine, deeply and permanently. She never forgave him and he, for his part, was haunted for the rest of his life by the fact that he had hurt her so badly. Initially, he wrote her a number of letters trying to explain his decision and apologizing for hurting her, hoping for her understanding and forgiveness. Eventually, he gave up, even as he wrote page after page in his private journals second-guessing himself, castigating himself, and then, conversely, trying to justify himself again and again in his decision not to marry her.

Nearly ten years after that fatal decision, with Regine now married to someone else, he spent weeks trying to draft the right letter to her — asking for forgiveness, offering new explanations for his actions, and begging for another chance to talk with her. He struggled to find the right words, something that might bring about an understanding. He finally settled on this letter:

Crul I was, that is true. Why? Indeed, you do not know that.
Silent I have been, that is certain. Only God knows what I have suffered — may God grant that I do not, even now, speak too soon after all!
Marry I could not. Even if you were still free, I could not.
However, you have loved me, as I have you. I owe you much — and now you are married. All right, I offer you for the second time what I can and dare and ought to offer you: reconciliation.
I do this in writing in order not to surprise or overwhelm you. Perhaps my personality did once have too strong an effect; that must not happen again. But for the sake of God in heaven, please give serious consideration to whether you dare become involved in this, and if so, whether you prefer to speak with me at once or would rather exchange some letters first.

If the answer is ‘No’ — would you then please remember for the sake of a better world that I took this step as well.
In any case, as in the beginning so until now, sincerely and completely devoted, your S.K.

Well, the answer was “no.” He had enclosed his letter in another letter which he sent to her husband, asking him to decide whether or not to give it to his wife. It was returned unopened, accompanied by an angry note; his offer of reconciliation was bitterly rejected.

What’s the moral here? Simply this: We hurt each other; sometimes through selfishness, sometimes through carelessness, sometimes through infidelity, sometimes through cruel intention, but sometimes too when there is no selfishness, no carelessness, no betrayal, no cruelty of intention — but only the cruelty of circumstance, inadequacy, and human limitation.

We sometimes hurt each other as deeply through being faithful as through being unethical, albeit in a different way. But irrespective of whether there’s moral fault, betrayal, or an intended cruelty, there’s still deep hurt, sometimes so deep that, this side of eternity, no healing will take place.

Would that it be otherwise. Would that Kierkegaard could have explained himself so fully that Regine would have understood and forgiven him, would that each of us could explain ourselves so fully that we would be always understood and forgiven, and would that all of our lives could end like a warm-hearted movie where, before the closing credits, everything is understood and reconciled.

But that’s not the way it always ends; indeed, that’s not even the way it ended for Jesus. He was looked at as a criminal, as a religious blasphemer, as someone who had done wrong. His offer of reconciliation was also returned unopened, accompanied by a bitter note.

I once visited a young man in who was dying of cancer at age 56. Already bedridden and in hospice care, but with his mind still clear, he shared this: “I am dying with this consolation: If I have an enemy in this world, I don’t know who it is. I can’t think of a single person that I need to be reconciled with.”

Few of us are that lucky. Most of us are still looking at some envelopes that have been returned unopened.

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

‘1917’ and remembering who we are

I saw the film 1917 on the vigil of the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord, and I think there’s a connection between the movie and the liturgical celebration. Bear with me.

First, as everyone who has seen it remarks, the editing and cinematography of 1917 are so astounding that it appears to unfold completely in real time, the result of one continuous shot. Think of the famous scene from Scorsese’s Goodfellas, in which Ray Liotta and his date walk into the night club — but now stretched out for two hours. What this produces in the viewer is an almost unprecedented sense of being there, experiencing the events with the characters in the film. And to be inserted into the First World War is to put it mildly, horrific. Obviously, all wars are terrible, but there was just something uniquely appalling about World War I: the oppressiveness of the trenches, the rampant disease, the hopelessness of fighting over a few hundred yards of blasted earth, the constant bombardment (which play a prominent and disgusting role in 1917), and above all, the mass killing that was the result of combining antiquated military strategy and modern weaponry. As witnessed to by so many thinkers and writers who participated in it — Paul Tillich, J.R.R. Tolkien, Ludwig Wittgenstein, Ernest Hemingway, etc. — the First World War was represented, as did no other war to that date, a collapse, a sea change, a cultural calamity.

And a principal reason for the disaster of the War, too often overlooked in my judgment, is spiritual in nature. Almost all of the combatants in the First World War were Christians. For five awful years, an orgy of violence broke out among baptized people — English, French, Canadian, American, Russian, and Belgian Christians slaughtering German, Austrian, Hungarian, and Bulgarian Christians. And this butchery took place on a scale that still staggers us. The fifty-eight thousand American dead in the entire course of the Vietnam War would be practically a weekend’s work during the worst days of World War I. If we add up the military and civilian deaths accumulated during the War, we come up, conservatively, with a figure of around forty million. And what precisely were they fighting for? I would challenge all but the most specialist historians of the period to tell me. Whatever it was, can anyone honestly say it was worth the deaths of forty million people? Mind you, I am not advocating pacifism, but I am indeed invoking the Church’s just war principles, one of which is proportionality — that is, that there must be a proportion between the goods attained by the war and the cost involved in achieving those goods if the war is to qualify as justified. Did such a proportionality obtain between means and ends in regard to World War I? I think the question sadly answers itself.

My point, again, is that this moral catastrophe unfolded in the heart of Christian Europe, and increasingly in the West generally, was the moral disaster of the First World War, which was essentially a crisis of Christian identity. Something broke in the Christian culture, and we’ve never recovered from it. If their Baptism meant so little to scores of millions of combatants in that terrible war, then what, finally, was the point of Christianity? And if it makes no concrete difference, then why not just leave it behind and move on?

I wonder whether we might take the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord as an opportunity to think more deeply about the moral implications of being a son or daughter of God, and hence a sibling to everyone else in the Mystical Body of Jesus. And I wonder whether we might look long and hard at this wonderful and disturbing film in order to see what happens when Christians forget who they are.

Bishop Robert Barron is an auxiliary bishop of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles and the founder of Word on Fire Catholic Ministries.
Romer las cadenas de la pobreza con la ayuda de la educación católica

Hosffman Ospino
Catholic News Service
Caminando Juntos

‘1917’ y recordando quiénes somos

Vi la película 1917 la vigilia de la fiesta del Bautismo del Señor, y creo que hay una conexión entre la película y la celebración litúrgica. Tengan paciencia.

En primer lugar, como comentan todos los que han visto, el montaje y la cinematografía de 1917 son tan sorprendentes que parece desarrollarse completamente en tiempo real el resultado de una toma continua. Piensen en la famosa escena de la película Goodfellas (Uno de los nuestros en España y Buenos Muchachos en Hispánicoamericana), donde Ray Liotta y la chica con la que tenía una cita entran en el club nocturno, pero estirada durante dos horas. Lo que esto produce en el espectador es una sensación casi inédita de estar allí, experimentando los acontecimientos, los sonidos y los aromas de la película. Y ser insertados en la Primera Guerra Mundial es, por decirlo suavemente, horroroso. Obviamente, todas las guerras son terribles, pero hubo algo singularmente español en la Primera Guerra Mundial: la opresión de las trincheras, las enfermedades desfrenadas, la desesperanza de luchar por unos pocos metros de tierra arrasada, las ratas (que juegan un papel prominente y repugnante en 1917), y, sobre todo, la matanza masiva que fue el resultado de combinar una estrategia militar anticaudal y armamento moderno.

Como lo atestiguan tantos pensadores y escritores que participaron en ella —Paul Tillich, J.R.R. Tolkien, Ludwig Wittgenstein, Ernest Hemingway, etc.— la Primera Guerra Mundial, como ninguna otra guerra hasta esa fecha, un colapso, un cambio radical, una calma cultural.

Y una de las principales razones del desastre de la Guerra, que con demasiada frecuencia se pasa por alto a mi juicio, es de naturaleza espiritual. Casi todos los combatientes de la Primera Guerra Mundial eran cristianos. Durante cinco terribles años, una orgía de violencia estalló entre bautizados: cristianos ingleses, franceses, canadienses, estadounidenses, rusos y belgas, que asesinaron a cristianos alemanes, austriacos, húngaros y búlgaros. Y esta carnecería tuvo lugar a una escala que todavía nos deja perplejos. Los cincuenta y ocho mil estadounidenses murieron durante todo el transcurso de la guerra de Vietnam son casi un “fin de semana de trabajo”, comparado a los peores días de la Primera Guerra Mundial. Si sumamos las muertes militares y civiles acumuladas durante la Guerra, llegamos —estimación moderada— a una cifra de unos cuarenta mil muertos.

Mira BARRON, Página 23

Inadecuación, daño y reconciliación

Fui cruel, eres verdad. ¿Por qué? Verdaderamente, no lo sabes. He estado callado, es cierto. Sólo Dios sabe lo que ha sufrido. Dios conceda que, aun ahora, no hable demasiado pronto, después de todo! Yo no podría casarme. Aunque tú fueras aún libre, yo no podría. Sin embargo, tú me has amado, como yo te he amado. Yo te debo mucho; y ahora tú estas casada. Bien, te ofrezco por segunda vez lo que puedo y me atrevo y debería ofrecerte: la reconciliación. Hago esto al escribir con el fin de no sorprender ni confundirte. Quizás mi personalidad hizo una vez demasiado fuerte un efecto; eso no debe suceder de nuevo. Pero por amor de Dios que está en el cielo, por favor, considera seriamente si te atreves a volver a estar envuelta en esto; y, si estás, si prefieres hablar conmigo cuanto antes o más bien creáramos algunas cartas primeras.

Si la respuesta es ‘NO’, por favor, entonces recordarás, por el bien de un mundo mejor, que yo di este paso también.

Mira ROLHEISER, Página 23
Christian girls and abortion

When Mother Teresa visited New Bedford, Massachusetts, in June 1995, she told those of us gathered at St. Lawrence Martyr Church: “Abortion is the greatest evil of today.” Never one to mince words, Mother Teresa’s courage, truthfulness and charity were palpable. Parents today need similar fortitude, honesty and love to be able to discuss the hard topic of unplanned pregnancies and abortion with their children.

Parental input and advice are critical when these situations arise. Even as children profess independence, parents exercise influence over them, whether for good or for ill. If a mother says to her daughter, for example, “You can’t have a kid now, because you’ve got your studies, your career and your whole future ahead of you, so I’ll give you money for an abortion” she is not merely offering advice, but being coercive and taking away any real choice her daughter might have had.

Likewise, when a boyfriend learns that his girlfriend is pregnant and informs her she doesn’t want to be a father right now, and will drive her to the abortion clinic, he abandons both his child and the mother of his child in their moment of greatest need.

To read testimonials of young women who have had abortions is heart-wrenching. Many times they seem to have less responsibility for the abortion than their parents or others close to them.

One woman described being only 12 years old when she had an abortion: “When Saturday came my mom drove me back across town, walked me in, paid for the abortion with money my boyfriend gave her, and left the building. I didn’t know it then, but they wouldn’t allow her to stay. The nurse told her I would be ready about 3:00, so I was there alone... It’s been 35 years since my baby was aborted and I still think about it every day. It wasn’t a quick fix and it wasn’t a solution to my pregnancy. It was a panicked response to our fears.”

Fear often stands behind the decision to abort. Young women are understandably frightened when they discover they are pregnant: “I’m afraid I’m not ready and I won’t be a good mother.” “I’m fearful my boyfriend won’t stand by me and support me — he’s just a kid himself.” “What will mom and dad think of the fact I’ve been having sex?” “My friends are people of faith and I’m afraid they’ll look down on me for this if they find out.”

Whenever we let fear direct our moral thinking, we tend to make bad judgments and poor choices that can haunt us long afterwards. Even good people who believe in love, life and family can make panicked choices when they feel cornered by shame and guilt. Major decisions are better made when emotions have calmed and the order of reason can once again fill our minds. This happens most readily when a person is surrounded by an abundance of loving support.

Wendy Bonano serves as the director of several pregnancy support centers in North Carolina. She regularly works with students from area universities and colleges, and in a recent article in the Family NC magazine, challenged parents to reflect on what their own sons and daughters are really up against in today’s society.

“I imagine you are thinking, ‘This would never be my daughter.’ I beg you to think again. More often than not, ‘good’ Christian girls in relationships are determined to abstain from intercourse and therefore are not actively using contraception. Therefore, it takes just one poor decision by either your son or daughter to create an unplanned pregnancy, regardless of all you’ve taught them.”

So why are good Christian girls getting abortions? Those who should be at their side in a moment of crisis may not be present. Mothers and fathers may not have fostered close relationships with their daughters. They may have never discussed the possibility of an unplanned pregnancy to let them know ahead of time that, even if they act contrary to their advice and conceive a child, they will still be there for them.

After more than ten years of helping single mothers at her clinics, Bonano makes precisely this point:

“Quite often there’s a piece missing from the ‘talks’ parents have with their daughters and sons. Without knowing it, we are leaving no doors open for our children to come back to us should they stray. We are making good, strong cases for purity until marriage and yet neglecting to communicate the message of grace: that we are there for them no matter what, and should they make a mistake — in this case, get pregnant — it is safe for them to come to us for help and support.”

Today more than ever, Christian children need to hear those supportive and reassuring words from their Christian parents...

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Opening doors to love

As Valentine’s Day approaches, so too does more awareness of love and how we express it to the diverse people in our lives. From an awesome agape-centered “I love you” lived out in actions toward a stranger to the “I love you” deep with years of togetherness shared by spouses, bringing God’s kindness to the world is one of the most wonderful actions we engage in and central to our Christian faith.

But sometimes kindness can be mistaken for condescension or a clumsy power play or prejudice. Or, our own “baggage” can make for heavy lifting when it comes to giving or receiving kindness from someone else.

A remembered scene from high school illustrates what I mean:

The school’s band director, male, and a female student were walking ahead of me toward a closed door. As we approached it, the band director grabbed the handle and swung the door open, then stepped aside to let the student and me pass through.

I saw this as a courteous gesture, but the other student saw it as something quite different. She stopped, turned to him and said, “Oh, you’re just doing this because you’re a man, aren’t you? Well, I can open my own door.”

She turned away and went through the open doorway, leaving the band director looking quite surprised (and still holding the door handle). As I walked through, I looked at him and said, “Thank you,” but I suspect my gratitude didn’t quite make up for my fellow student’s reaction. I still wonder if the band director ever dared to hold the door for someone else.

We’ve maybe (probably) been in the situation where the doors to a car are closing just as someone else rushes toward it, hoping to catch the same car rather than wait for another. In those fleeting moments, do we think, “Oh, well, he/she will catch another soon enough,” or, “Where’s the ‘door open’ button ... ah! There it is.”

Someone carrying a heavy load might obviously signal to us that our help in

See PRATT, Page 23

Breaking the chains of poverty through Catholic education

Hosfiman Ospino
Catholic News Service
Journeying Together

When I hear that a Catholic school closes or struggles to stay open, my heart aches. There are more than 14 million school-age Catholic children in our country, 5 million of them Hispanic.

If anything, we should be building Catholic schools, especially where Catholicism is growing. At the very least, we should keep those that exist open and primarily at the service of the new populations transforming the U.S. Catholic experience.

When I meet people like Father Mark Hamlet from the Diocese of Austin, Texas, a sense of hope invades me. He is impressive: a dynamic pastor, a passionate preacher, a blogger, a radio personality, an advocate and an entrepreneur. He is fluent in English and Spanish, and gets by in other languages.

He is also a family man. Literally. Father Mark is a widower, father of six children and has more than a dozen grandchildren. After the passing of his wife, Cynthia, he went to the seminary and was ordained a Catholic priest in 2010.

Father Mark’s passion for Catholic education is inspiring. During a recent trip to Austin, I met with him and learned about the organization he founded: Our Kids at Heart (https://ourkidsatheart.com/), which serves largely as a tuition fund.

The organization was established to support mostly Hispanic Catholic children from Sacred Heart Parish in Austin, living in conditions of economic disadvantage, to attend Catholic schools.

More than 150 children currently benefit from this initiative. This is not just a scholarship program but a subsidy effort. In other words, the principle is to empower Catholic families to send their children to Catholic schools and pay the costs by giving them a boost.

This idea of “a boost” is what makes the initiative captivating. The fund cultivates partnerships in which everyone invests: families, schools, philanthropists, the parish community and the diocese.

The model challenges two often taken-for-granted assumptions. One, Hispanic families will only send their children to Catholic schools if it is completely free. Hmmm, yes and no.

Free is attractive, yet even in places where tax credits or vouchers are available, Hispanic families are not necessarily flock-
Catholic Voices

Black history is Catholic history

In 1949, famed Harlem Renaissance writer Langston Hughes celebrated Negro History Week (the precursor to Black History Month) with members of the Oblate Sisters of Providence and their students at the all black and Catholic St. Alphonsus School in Wilson, North Carolina. "The Negro nuns had an assembly of tiny youngsters who did all by themselves a fine Negro History program," Hughes wrote in The Chicago Defender one week later. And of particular delight to the esteemed poet had been the students' apt recitation of his protest poem, "Freedom's Plow." "Who is America?" the students chanted. "You, me! We are America!"

Originally published in 1943, "Freedom's Plow" charted the long African American struggle for freedom, justice and equality from slavery to the present. During World War II, the poem had also served as a call to action for African Americans struggling against fascism abroad and at home. That students at the St. Alphonsus School had studied and memorized this poem as part of their curriculum for Negro History Week in 1949 is more than noteworthy. It stands as a powerful testament to the visionary leadership of the nation's black Catholic sisterhoods and their pioneering commitment to black historical truth telling within church boundaries.

During the Jim Crow era, schools administered by the African American sisterhoods became the first Catholic institutions to teach and celebrate black history and art in the United States. Perhaps of no great surprise, these black sistered Catholic schools were also the first American educational institutions to teach and champion black Catholic history. As a part of their annual Negro History Week celebra-

Shannon Dee Williams Catholic News Service

In the United States, where the roots of many black Catholics predate those of the vast majority of white and white ethnic Catholics by at least three centuries, popular and scholarly discussions and depictions of the American Catholic experience rarely include the church's black faithful. At best, black Catholics are presented as historical anomalies. At worst, they are altogether erased.

As one major consequence, recent calls for the Catholic Church to confront and make reparation for its long-standing histories of slavery and segregation have been met with genuine shock and confusion by far too many Catholics, religious and lay alike. There are also still many people who sincerely believe that there are no African American Catholics.

These realities stand as searing indictments of the church's enduring failure to tell the truth about itself and teach accurate and inclusive accounts of Catholic history in its schools, seminaries and parishes.

As we mark this 94th annual celebration of black history during February, I encourage all Catholics interested in justice, reconciliation and peace to commit to learning about the central place of black people in the church's long and complex history.

Black history is and always has been Catholic history. It is time for the church to embrace this fundamental truth.

Shannon Dee Williams is the Albert Lepage assistant professor of history at Villanova University. She is completing her first book, Subversive Habits: Black Catholic Nuns in the Long African American Freedom Struggle, under contract with Duke University Press.

Have an eco-conscious new year

Effie Caldarola Catholic News Service For the Journey

At a New Year's Eve party, someone asked everyone about their 2020 resolutions. Talk about deflating a celebration. Some people said they didn't make resolutions, and others came up with weak responses like "Drink more water."

That seemed like such an easy resolution that I've started drinking more water myself. Finally, a resolution at which I can succeed!

Seriously though, I don't make New Year's resolutions. But I do find it helpful during January to review important areas of my life. This year, I was inspired by internet exchanges about what people are doing or plan to do for the environment.

So, here are some of my environmental successes and "needs improvement." As the Benedictines say, "Always we begin again."

My neighborhood is outside city limits and not covered by city trash and recycling services. So, I've found a way for our trash pickup and more to choose the recycling option. It pains me to see how few people on our street pay for a recycling box. But we see it as part of our environmental stewardship.

On the other hand, I often forget to take my canvas bags to the grocery in lieu of plastic. Supposedly it was Albert Einstein who said the definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over and expecting different results. So, to do things differently, I've put a little sign on my car — "Bags?" Perhaps by doing this, I will develop a new habit.

A change I made this past year: After reading about the decimation of Canadian boreal forests by most of the toilet paper industry, I've started buying only 100% recycled toilet paper. At www.greenmatters.com, I've read about which brands get an A and which an F for sustainability.

In 2019, I joined my parish's Creation Care team, which cooperates with a composting company to collect all food waste and paper from parish dinners for composting soil. By recycling and composting, we aim to bring parish events to near zero waste to the landfill. Parish education on the environment is part of our commitment. Our parishes, in response to Pope Francis, should all have efforts like this.

The Atlantic recently ran an article about how much better people sleep in a cold bedroom. I was happy to see this, as I love a cold bedroom and our thermostat is always turned to 60 degrees at night. We try to remember to turn down the daytime heat when we will be gone, but we can do better there.

This winter, I attended a seminar on "Creating a Biodiverse Garden." Our yard has a way to go in being environmentally sustainable. But we will incorporate a list of new plants for our garden — native grasses, coneflowers, milkweed — that will help encourage birds and the right kind of insects. I've become a dedicated secondhand shopper. In my town, we have an upscale boutique that sells secondhand clothing to support a residence for homeless pregnant women. I can support a good cause while cutting back on new clothing, a major source of pollution and waste in today's world.

Knowing that meat production accounts for about 4% of greenhouse gas, according to the Environmental Protection Agency, I'd like to continue one meatless day a week, at least.

Writing to companies — like those big toilet paper companies that dominate the industry — is something I can do. It doesn't take long, and it costs only a stamp.

Every day I make choices — consumption, purchases, gas mileage — that affect the environment. May my choices in 2020 be prayerful and respectful of our Mother Earth under siege.
CARA study finds bishops are satisfied with their life and ministry

By Susan Klemens
Catholic News Service

MINNEAPOLIS (CNS) — Catholics may be surprised to learn that many U.S. bishops describe their lives as both all-consuming and satisfying, a priest-researcher said.

"These are guys who generally get up very, very early in the morning, pray about two hours every day and work about 10 hours a day," Father Stephen Fichter, a research associate at the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate in Washington, which conducted the survey. "(They) just really do some interesting things and there are a lot of difficulties that they're dealing with all the time."

Fichter is one of four co-authors of the book.

The study is the subject of a 2019 book published by Oxford University Press, Catholic Bishops in the United States: Church Leadership in the Third Millennium. Fichter is one of four co-authors of the book.

The researchers wanted to carry out a comprehensive study, develop a profile of bishops and chronicle the experiences of priests in their ministerial roles, Fichter said.

The average age of active bishop respondents was 66. They are white and theologically moderate or traditional. Some bishops described themselves as moderately progressive.

Of 429 surveys sent, 213 recipients responded. They included bishops ministering in the Latin and Eastern rites.

Respondents included bishops who head a diocese or archdiocese; auxiliary bishops; and retired bishops.

The survey, Fichter said, revealed demographic changes in bishops since 1995. Of the 126 Latin-rite bishops heading archdioceses or dioceses who responded, 97% were born in the United States. Meanwhile, 76% of the 33 Latin-rite auxiliary bishops who responded were born in the United States. (Because of the foreign-based nature of their churches, Eastern-rite bishops are more likely to be born outside of the U.S. than those in the Latin church.)

The average weekday for respondents was 9.8 hours. On average, bishops sleep 6.5 hours but 2.1 fewer hours than the average male their age, Fichter said.

Bishops spend an average of 108 minutes per day in prayer.

Overall, 97% are either somewhat or strongly satisfied with their life as a bishop, Father Fichter said. Bishops find most satisfaction in the sacraments and liturgy, sharing the Gospel and working with people. Their greatest hopes are in church leadership and personal relationships, Fichter said.

Topping their list of concerns and challenges are limited numbers of available priests, difficulty reaching people, secularism and religious freedom.

Respondents were not asked about the clergy sexual abuse crisis, Fichter explained, because the survey was conducted before the issue arose again with the start in February of 2016 of a months-long Pennsylvania grand jury investigation into alleged clergy abuse and supposed cover-up by church officials in six Pennsylvania dioceses, Fichter explained.

The lecture was part of the university's Cardinal Virtue presentations series, which aims to foster conversations around faith, culture and how they come together, Father James Burns, the school's president, said prior to Father Fichter's talk.

"We hear a lot about what laity and more recently clergy have faced, but we haven't had this in-depth look at bishops," Sider said. "I think it's helpful for the general population but also Catholics to understand who their bishops are."

Berhanu Belete, 48, attended the program to learn about the research methodology. Belete, who is completing a doctorate in business management at the university, said he sees similarities between Catholic bishops and the leadership of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, to which he belongs.

Aleksandra Denison, 37, a St. Mary's adjunct faculty member, said she attended to learn more about what the Catholic community beyond the university as well as what the bishops are thinking. She said she was surprised by the bishop respondents' average age.

"Bishops just coming into their position at 66, how long are they able to work without being tired and working to help people?" she asked.

The survey and the book offer a realistic snapshot of contemporary bishops, Father Fichter told The Catholic Spirit, newspaper of the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis, after his talk.

"I think that has great value for them, and I would also hope that the bishops themselves would read the book to see how they compare to their other brother bishops, what their struggles and concerns are," he said. "I would hope that the laity would read it for understanding of who the bishops are. ... I would hope this would humanize the episcopacy."

Klemens writes for The Catholic Spirit, newspaper of the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis.

Holocaust is 'an archetype' of man's capacity for evil, says archbishop

By Catholic News Service

PHILADELPHIA (CNS) — The anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp in Oswiecim, Poland, is "a solemn and mournful opportunity to reflect upon man's capacity for evil," said Metropolitan-archbishop Borys Gudziak of the Ukrainian Catholic Archeparchy of Philadelphia.

"Human sin has caused untold suffering in history," the archbishop said. "The Holocaust is an archetype of this sinful capacity. The Shoah is a quintessential sign of the potential of human depravity. Evil is real. It needs to be named and confronted."

The archbishop issued his statement on International Holocaust Remembrance Day, observed around the world Jan. 27. He said the remembrance was a time to honor all those who perished as well as "those who heroically sought to save the condemned."

Operated from 1940 to 1945, Auschwitz was the Nazi's largest camp and consisted of three parts: Auschwitz I, where many were imprisoned and murdered; the Birkenau extermination camp — also known as Auschwitz II — and Auschwitz III (Auschwitz-Monowitz), an area of auxiliary camps that included several factories.

"The Nazi crimes and those of their collaborators are too numerous to count as well as all anti-Semitism that regrettably is raising its ugly head in our country and in many countries of the world," Archbishop Gudziak said.

"We stand together with the Jews of the world and with all victims of genocide, violence, totalitarianism, and inhumane ideologies. We pray for all living, those yet unborn and especially for the children of the world that they may know the fullness life, liberty, justice and peace," he added.

In 1942, Auschwitz became the site of the mass extermination of over 1 million Jews, 23,000 Roma, 15,000 Soviet prisoners of war and thousands of Polish citizens of different nationalities.

The Nazis' systematic persecution and genocide led to the deaths of 6 million Jews in Europe.

"May each one of us, where we live and work, witness to the gift of human dignity that God gives us. All of us. No matter what our race, religion, nationality, gender or disability," Archbishop Gudziak said. "May we speak and write, think and act in ways that counter hate. May we build bridges, not walls. May the love of our faith be the true creed of our life."

"This is our hope: 'O Lord, we pray you: Never again!'" he added.
HEALING MASS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT & ANOINTING OF THE SICK

“I will never turn away one who comes to me”
(John 6:37)

Tuesday, February 11, 2020
Holy Trinity Catholic Church
10009 Hearn Street
Big Spring, TX 79720
6:00PM – 7:45PM

EVERYONE IS INVITED

REV. SERAFIN AVENIDO
HOST PASTOR

REV. ALBERT EZEANYA
CELEBRANT & PREACHER

PRAISE & WORSHIP
CONFESION
HOLY MASS

ADORATION
HEALING
TESTIMONY

SPONSORED BY HOLY TRINITY CATHOLIC CHURCH

BISHOP

Continued from Page 3

2011-2018. Several members of our diocesan staff assisted me in the preparation of this report.

Why is it that all diocesan bishops in the Catholic Church around the world are obliged to make the ad limina visits? It is to foster unity and solidarity in the Body of Christ. It strengthens the bond of communion in our worldwide Church. It gives us a chance to inform the Pope of what is happening in our area and to ask questions of him. We receive advice and suggestions for our ministry. It is also an opportunity for us as fellow bishops in a region to share ideas for best practices that will foster the life of the local Church.

The clearest scriptural roots for the ancient practice of bishops making official visits to consult with the Pope are found in the New Testament. In his Letter to the Galatians, St. Paul describes his second such visit. He writes, “after fourteen years I again went up to Jerusalem… James and Cephas and John, who were reputed to be pillars, gave me and Barnabas their right hands in partnership” (Gal 2:1, 9).

In Catholic teaching, a local diocese is identified as a “Particular Church.” There is a “mutual indwelling” between the Universal Church and the Particular Church. Each one dwells in the other. We do not stand alone. The practice of the ad limina visit is a vivid expression of that mutual indwelling.

The ad limina visit is also a meeting between two different dimensions of our Catholic faith: the synchronous and diachronic. “Synchronous” refers to the lived experience at one moment of time. “Diachronic” refers to the ongoing tradition of the faith “through time,” over the centuries. A synchronous view says, “This is us right now.” A diachronic view says, “This is who we have always been for 2,000 years.” When a local bishop makes the ad limina visit, these two perspectives come together.

For our ad limina visit, we stayed at the Pontifical North American College, which is the seminary in Rome maintained by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. While in Rome, Bishop Michael Pfeifer and I took the opportunity to visit with Father Stefano Cecchin, OFM, the vice postulator for the cause of beatification and canonization of Venerable Maria de Jesús de Agreda, the “Lady in Blue.” I also visited two religious communities who currently serve in Texas, the Apostles of the Interior Life and the Oblates of Mary Immaculate.

The aspects of this pilgrimage that made the deepest impact on me personally were meeting with Pope Francis, celebrating Mass at the Lateran Basilica, and praying at the tombs of Saints Peter and Paul. In those holy places, I prayed for God’s blessings upon all the priests and people of the Diocese of San Angelo. It is my prayer that this ad limina visit will bear positive fruit in all of our dioceses for years to come, and that it will help me — and all bishops — to be more effective in our ministry of unity.

Work for the Diocese of San Angelo

Secretary — Office of Evangelization and Catechesis

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

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KNICKERBOCKERS

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things (The Order of Things, 870).

As Catholics we are called to share the message of God's radical holiness and justice that have been revealed through the Church to us in Jesus Christ, especially in the sacraments. It is in the Eucharist that we behold and participate in the ultimate “what is” of which Father Schall speaks. The Eucharist is Jesus “in Person,” the heart of every personal relationship with Jesus, whether we recognize it or not. Here is he who was born of Mary in Bethlehem, who was crucified and risen leaving our sin dead in the tomb and rising with us in the birth of a resurrected self, the self we were always meant to be.

It is this resurrected self that participates in eternal life, that sees the right order of things because it participates in the right order of things as a soul restored to order by Jesus Christ. Pope Benedict XVI points out that if we forget that the endless time afterward would be eternal life as we generally think. But because eternity is not just endless time but another level of being, such a merely chronological distinction cannot be right (God is Near Us, 137).

Jesus, in the Gospel of John, reveals the connection between eternal life and the Eucharist when he says, “Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever eats the flesh of the Son of Man and drinks his blood, you have no life in you; he who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is food indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him. As the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so he who eats me will live because of me” (6:53-57).

At the center of the restored order of all things is the Eucharist, through which the Holy Trinity restores the right order of our souls and through them restores the right order of all creation.

Although the Holy Trinity restores the right order of our souls, this does not mean that our sin does not linger in its disorder in our lives. St. Paul writes of his own struggles as Jesus works to reestablish order in his soul. The apostle writes, “So I find it. They also want to do right, evil lies close at hand. For I delight in the law of God [i.e. God’s right order], in my inmost self, but I see in my members another law at war with the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin which dwells in my members. Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!” So then, I of myself, the law of God with my mind, but with my flesh I serve the law of sin” (Rom. 7:21-25).

In other words, God's desire to restore order in our souls is his desire to give us the happiness he has always intended for us. Lent is another step in our journey to our ultimate happiness that is found in eternal life, a life that is present even now and comes especially through Jesus in the Eucharist.

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

MOTHERS

Continued from Page 6

of pro-life Americans continue to advocate for women and children in courthouses and legislatures,” he said, “the church’s pastoral response is focused on the needs of women facing pregnancies in challenging circumstances. While this has long been the case, the pastoral response will soon intensify,” with the yearlong service project “Walking with Moms in Need.”

In “recognizing that women in need can be most effectively reached at the local level,” Archbishop Naumann explained, the year of service “invites parishes to assess, communicate, and expand resources to expectant mothers within their own communities.”

The U.S. bishops will be providing “resources, outreach tools and models to assist parishes in this important effort,” he said. “We pray that ‘Walking with Moms in Need: A Year of Service’ will help us reach every pregnant mother in need, that she may know she can turn to her local Catholic community for help and authentic friendship,” the archbishop added. The experience we have of Jesus restoring the right order of our souls is not dissuading young couples from the sacrament,” the bishop added.

YOUTH

Continued from Page 6

pants has been Mancini’s goal for some time.

“The way I see it, the March for Life is organically young grassroots. Like, we don’t really try really hard to bring young people to the March for Life. They are attracted to the issue now.”

That’s partly been the result of the organization’s aggressive use of social media. “Knowing that social media is a language that reaches young people, so there’s this pretty massive difference from eight years ago. I think we’re the most followed pro-life group on Instagram,” Mancini explained.

“When we do the surveys after the march to see who the favorite speakers were, by and large it’s always the young speaker, someone like Cata- lina, that people were excited to hear from, because they’re speaking for their generation.”

Young people “know that social justice begins in the womb, and they have such hopes that their generation will make abortion unthinkable.”

The long-established image of the marchers is of school groups in matching toboggan caps, and parish groups arriving by bus. But to anyone who has ever talked to marchers, a more nuanced picture emerges. Many are there as individuals or as couples who have come on their own.

Mancini has some personal experience with that as well.

“I’ve almost like a call,” she agreed. “Someone in my family came for the first time last year. I think he felt a certain call to come. It really changed his heart.

“He’s going to be back this year. ... He’s got all his work to rearrange and he has to come from way out West. The experience is really transformative. Something about standing up in a public way.”

“Just witnessing everyone standing up for pro-life” has an impact, Galinates added.

SPOUSES

Continued from Page 15

others, to listen to them and to try to understand the problems they face in their lives and their marriages.

“Often I’ve feared how God will judge us on these two things” closeness, and gratitude, the pope said. “In judging, have I been close to the heart of the people? In judging, did I open my heart to gratitude or was I concerned with commercial interests? God’s judgment on this will be very strong.”

And in seeking couples capable of evangelizing, the pope said, “we must be aware” that it is not priests who create them, but the Holy Spirit.

Such couples are out there, the pope said. “They are ready. They just haven’t been called.”

“We must be convinced—and I’d say, certain—that in the church such married couples already are a gift of God and not because of our merit, but because they are a fruit of the work of the Spirit who never abandons the church,” he said.

Pope Francis told members of the Roman Rota that they and their predecessors for more than 20 years have been discussing how a loss of faith and a serious lack of understanding of Catholic teaching can be a contributing factor to the lack of consent needed for a valid marriage.

To counter that, the church needs couples like Aquila and Priscilla, “who speak and live with the authority of baptism,” and are living witness of the beauty of Christian marriage and family life.

COURSE

Continued from Page 15

He explained that while it was an obligation for the church to prepare couples for marriage, the course was not compulsory in its entirety and could be adapted to personal circumstances.

“Each diocese establishes the formation that is required for couples seeking matri- mony,” he said.

Dioceses must consider the provision of “adequate formation, while at the same time not dissuading young couples from the sacrament,” the bishop added.

A statement posted on the website of the Spanish bishops’ conference said the new approach to marriage preparation was collectively approved a meeting of the bishops in No- vember.

The new course consists of 12 themes, including communication, conflict resolution, fidelity, the vocation to marriage and the beauty of sexuality.

The bishops envisaged that each of the themes would be studied over two or three sessions, usually two weeks apart.

Materials produced by the bishops for the course advise engaged couples who are having sexual intercourse to stop and wait until they are married, fortifying their chastity through sacraments of reconciliation and Communion.

They also warn couples of the dangers of pornography, saying it "commercializes and falsifies the beauty of the conjugal gift.”

“It is addictive and causes damage to the addicted person, including conditioning their capacity for a healthy and stable relationship,” the materials say.
OSPINO
Continued from Page 18

ing to Catholic schools. This assumption also feeds a model of economic dependent that falls short when philanthropic streams run dry.

Two, Hispanic families are not interested in Catholic education. Creative and collaborative initiatives like Our Kids at Heart prove otherwise. Work with Hispanic families, engage them, make the schools truly inclusive environments, and you will see the difference.

The organization introduces families, mostly immigrant, to the values of Catholic schools and invites them to send their children to these institutions. It is a process of conversion.

This is the biggest hurdle to overcome according to Father Mark. Many Hispanic and immigrant families do not see Catholic schools as their own. They think that they are completely out of reach. They often feel that they are not welcomed.

When Hispanic families get involved, things change. Besides traditional philanthropic sources, Our Kids at Heart relies on the fundraising efforts of these families. Families pay first for their children’s education, the fund helps them. That creates a sense of healthy stewardship.

This is a way of returning Catholic education to the poor, says Father Mark. Poverty continues to chain the lives of mostly immigrant, to the values of Catholicism more than any other organization. For many Hispanic families, Catholic education remains the path to overcoming the bundle of challenges that can keep them from achieving their goals.

Yes, let’s break the chains of poverty with the help of Catholic education. Nonetheless, make sure that Hispanic Catholic families participate in the process as active agents, not just as passive recipients.

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

PRATT
Continued from Page 18

holding doors or otherwise navigating with the bundle might be welcome.

But the physical presence of weight doesn’t have to be visible for us to be kind, patient and lend a hand; so many of the burdens that weigh people down cannot be seen, but are profoundly felt.

A door doesn’t have to be physical to be an impediment that we can help remove so someone else’s life can be a little easier, a little more hope-filled.

Job seekers or those working through various maze-like situations in health care, education or troubled relationships can benefit from the access we might be able to provide through our giving of time, counsel or other assistance, thus opening doors to opportunities, growth and strength.

Pain from past hurts, trauma that festers can surely affect the ease with which we open the door to our hearts, especially if our kind actions seem to be met with resistance or hostility. In those times we may wonder, “Is it worth it to try again?” Or, “Should I just save myself the extra trouble?”

A quick glimpse back to the miracle of Christmas we have just enjoyed, or forward to Lent and Easter upcoming: Love matters beyond roses, lace hearts and store advertisements. Love brings Christ’s light to all!

Pratt’s website is www.maureenpratt.com.

ROLHEISER
Continuá de Página 17

En cualquier caso, como al principio
asi hasta ahora, sincera, completa
devotamente, te S. K.
(Claire Carlisle, The heart of a Philos-

Bueno, la respuesta fue “no”. Él había incluido su carta en otra carta que envió al esposo de ella, rogándole que decidiera si entregarla o no a su esposa. Fue devuelta sin ser abierta, pero acompañada por una furiosa nota; su oferta de reconciliación fue amargamente rechazada.

¿Qué moraleja hay aquí? Simplemente esta: Nos hacemos daño unos a otros; a veces por egoísmo, a veces por descuido, a veces por miedos, a veces por intención cruel; pero, otras veces, también cuando no hay egoísmo, ni descuido, ni traición, ni intención cruel sino sólo crudelidad de la circunstancia, inadecuación e intolerancia humana.

En ocasiones, nos hacemos daño unos a otros tan profundamente por ser fieles como por ser infieles, aunque de diferente manera.

Poquín, al igual que en otras formas del mal, traición o una crueldad intencionada, hay siempre profundo daño, a veces tan profundo que, en este mundo, no tendrá lugar ninguna sana-

Ojalá fuera de otra manera. Ojalá Kierkegaard pudiera haberse expregado tan enteramente que Regine le hubiese entendi-
dido y perdonado; ojalá todos nosotros pudieramos explicarles tan enteramente que siempre fuésemos comprendidos y perdonados; y ojalá todas nuestras vidas pudieran acabar como una comodovedora película donde, antes de los créditos de cierre, todo queda entendido y reconciliado.

Pero eso no siempre es el modo de aca-
bar; en realidad, ni siquiera es el modo como acabó para Jesús. Murió siendo considerado un criminal, como un blasfemo religioso, como alguien que se había equivocado. Su oferta de reconciliación fue también devuelta sin abrir, acompañada por una amarga nota.

Una vez, visité a un joven que estaba muriendo de cáncer a la edad de 56 años. Ya postrado en cama y cuidado en un hospital para terminales pero con su mente aún clara, me comunicó esto: “Me estoy muriendo con esta consuelo: Si tengo un enemigo en este mundo, no sé quién es. No puedo pensar en una sola persona con la que necesite reconciliarme.”

Unos y otros de nosotros somos tan afortuna-
dos. Casi todos estamos aún mirando sobre que han sido devueltos sin ser abiertos.

BARRON
Continuá de Página 17

¿Y por qué precisamente estaban pe-
leando? Desafío a todos, excepto a los his-
torios más especializados de la época, que indiquen con convicción: ¿Alguien puede decir honestamente que volvió la pena la muerte de cuarenta millones de perso-
nas? No estoy abogando por el paci-
to de protesta, se negaron a cooperar
with the locura de la guerra, colocaron sus identidades religiosas por encima de sus identidades étnicas o nacionales? Esas pre-
guntas también se responden por si solas, lo que me lleva a la fiesta del Bautismo del Señor. Según la teología de la Iglesia, el Bautismo implica el injerto de una persona en el Hijo de Dios, lo que implica una par-
ticipación en la relación entre el Hijo y el Padre en la unidad del Espíritu Santo. Es
infinitamente más que la adhesión a un club o sociedad; es una participación en la vida interior de Dios. Otra forma de decirlo es esta: El bautismo inserta a la persona en el Cuerpo de Cristo, que es un or-
ganismo más que una organización. Por 

la guerra su bautismo significaba tan poco,

A door doesn’t have to be physical to be
an impediment that we can help remove so
someone else’s life can be a little easier, a
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Rolheiser’s website is www.maureenrolheiser.com.

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Bishops from U.S. Region X — made up of the dioceses of Arkansas, Oklahoma, and Texas — gathered with Pope Francis on Jan. 20 during a papal audience in the Papal Apartment of the Vatican. The Diocese of San Angelo’s Bishop Michael Sis (third from right) and Bishop Emeritus Michael Pfeifer (second from right) were among the bishops participating in the ad limina pilgrimage. See more coverage, Pages 2 and 3.