For the latest on how the Diocese of San Angelo is responding to the coronavirus pandemic, visit https://sanangelodiocese.org/covid-19

- Statements and guidance from Bishop Michael Sis
- Find the Mass online, on tv, or on the radio
- Continue regular giving to your parish
- See event cancellations and updates

Inset: Father Rodriguez and the seminarians offered a blessing at the corner adjacent to Shannon Medical Center. Other healthcare facilities were also blessed later in the day.

Seminarians of the Diocese of San Angelo and Vocation Director Father Michael Rodriguez, all masked and socially distanced, processed around the block that houses the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart in downtown San Angelo on April 19, 2020. More photos can be found at https://www.sanangelodiocese.org/photoalbums.
Churches given okay to prepare for public Mass

West Texas Angelus

SAN ANGELO — Bishop Michael Sis knows his flock longs to return to the sacraments and community of regular Mass attendance, the loss of which has been one of the many sacrifices people the world over have had to endure in these days of social distancing and elevated health concerns during the ongoing coronavirus pandemic. Thanks to an April 27 executive order from Texas Gov. Greg Abbott allowing for a gradual reopening of businesses and services in the state beginning May 1, West Texas Catholics are one step closer to something resembling their normal Sunday.

“So many people are contacting us saying how hard it is to be without the Eucharist, and how hard it is to not be with their brothers and sisters around the altar of the church,” Bishop Sis said in a YouTube video describing how the process of returning to active church ministry will look in the diocese.

“Gradually, incrementally, we can bring back the activities in the life of our parishes,” Bishop Sis said, noting that it will not be an all-at-once return to things as they were before the church. “Part of the diocesan plan to reopen will involve the return of public Masses on a parish-by-parish basis as local leadership is able to show they can safely hold services while prioritizing the health of parishioners, staff, and volunteers. As the process moves forward, not all churches in the diocese will necessarily begin offering public Mass at the same time as preparations must be completed first.

Gaining approval for opening a parish for public Mass will involve training employees and volunteers in proper cleaning and disinfecting techniques, as well as acquiring necessary products: masks, gloves, hand sanitizer, cleaning products, and medical-grade masks. These are required of any individuals suspected of symptoms for COVID-19, as well as any signage describing hygiene best practices and a means of indicating appropriate seating for social distancing requirements.

Parishioners should expect a few other changes, too, such as frequently-touched items like song books and missalettes being removed from the pews, or a central-located collection box rather than a basket passed hand-to-hand through the congregation.

Parishes are asked to continue providing for remote viewing of the Mass, even after a parish is able to safely hold public Mass. The governor’s guidance still encourages church services be provided remotely when possible, and asks that churches take steps to protect those most vulnerable to severe COVID-19 symptoms by encouraging them to stay home or providing a special service or seating section for vulnerable populations.

A Message on Returning to Sacramental Life

Most Rev. Michael J. Sis
Bishop of San Angelo
April 30, 2020

We are living through a time of tremendous suffering in our world, facing the coronavirus pandemic as well as a major economic downturn. Along with our brothers and sisters around the world, we mourn the loss of those who have died, and we pray for all those impacted by COVID-19.

As Catholics, a major sacrifice for us has been the inability to gather together at the altar of the Lord and receive the Eucharist in the community of faith. We need the sanctifying grace of the sacraments, especially Confession and Communion. The eucharistic sacrifice is the very “source and summit of the Christian life” (Lumen Gentium, no. 11).

On Monday, April 27, 2020, Governor Greg Abbott issued Executive Order G418 relating to the reopening of some activities in Texas. On that same date, the Office of the Attorney General in Texas updated its Guidance for Houses of Worship During the COVID-19 Crisis. In light of those developments, the Catholic Church in the Diocese of San Angelo is now preparing for a phased reopening of the celebration of public Masses.

In some areas of our diocese, there are many new cases of COVID-19 every day. In other areas, there have been very few or no cases at all. The virus is still here among us, and it will be with us for some time to come. New flareups could occur at any time and place. Therefore, in order to protect innocent human life, our process of returning to Mass in our churches must be prudent and measured. We must not allow our excitement and zeal to hinder our good judgment.

When we gather together in person, we must follow the health protocols listed in the document Guidance for Houses of Worship During the COVID-19 Crisis. These require our parishes to take precautions that include the use of various supplies that need to be acquired, and which are not easy to find in some of the more remote parts of our diocese. They also require the training of parish staff and volunteers in new protocols to fight the spread of contagion.

In the Diocese of San Angelo, the return to the public celebration of Mass with distri-
From the Bishop’s Desk

The gift of Easter hope

This is an Easter unlike any we have ever seen. In the midst of a worldwide pandemic and an alarming plunge in the oil market, our lifestyle and our economy have been turned upside-down within a matter of weeks. Despite how much we wish it would just go away, this crisis is far from over. How wonderful it would be if we could just wake up on Easter morning with everything magically back to normal, like a special gift from the Easter Bunny, but our recovery is going to take some time. It will take patience, hard work, and hope.

Easter is a Christian holiday. After Jesus Christ had been tortured and killed on a cross, wrapped in a burial shroud, placed in a tomb, and the stone rolled in place, it seemed that all was lost for the early Christian community. Jesus was dead. At that point, people thought the Christian story was over, but the miraculous events of Easter Sunday transformed everything.

Because of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, we Christians are a people of hope. The sad reality of death has been transformed. Death is no longer a bottomless pit that swallows everything. Instead, for us, death is a bridge to eternity.

Not only death, but any situation in life takes on new meaning in the light of the Resurrection. Christians seek to live in the new life of the risen Christ, allowing God’s grace to transform our real human experiences into something more beautiful. Being a Christian is not just a matter of enduring the pain of this life. It is not a matter of simply outlasting our current hardships until they pass. Being a Christian is about letting God transform our experiences into occasions of his glory.

God can take any situation and find a way to use it to his glory and to our salvation. For example, in marriage and family life, God’s grace enables us to work through our misunderstandings and forgive mistakes, so that we can find a new level of joy together. When we lose a job, God’s grace empowers us to regroup, retool, network, and start over with something new. When we have sinned, God’s grace moves us to repent and receive healing mercy. When we face our weakness and vulnerability, feeling like we can’t go on, God’s grace gives us the strength to persevere.

On this Easter of 2020, many of us have fears and anxieties associated with the outbreak of COVID-19 and the downturn of our local economy. God’s grace can transform that fear into a deeper trust in him. In the midst of this coronavirus crisis, God turns self-pity to gratitude, selfishness to generosity, and despair to hope. Right before our eyes, regular human beings with all their imperfections and foibles are becoming hometown heroes through the invisible power of God’s grace. Just open your eyes and notice them – in hospitals, at grocery stores, and in your own family.

Living as people of hope is not the same thing as looking at life through rose-colored glasses. It is not about looking at the world through glasses. It is about facing the genuine realities of life, and finding the capacity to employ our suffering to enhance our spiritual lives. Our suffering has the potential to transform us and to make us better people. We can choose to look at suffering as a means for self-pity and self-interest or as an opportunity for becoming better people.

Not so very long ago, the church celebrated the feast of St. Therese of Lisieux. She used her suffering as an opportunity for conversion and growth. She shared, “When I am in need of grace, I say to myself, ‘O my God, I am a little drop of pure water. I am a little drop of water, and this drop of water is in need of grace. Do not think me a little drop, for I am a little drop of grace.’”

We need to recognize the grace of God in each and every situation in life, and find a way to employ it. As we do, the Church celebrates Easter, the cleansing of our hearts, the assurance of our salvation, and the promise of God’s love.

Bishop Michael J. Sis
Diocese of San Angelo

The Prayer Square

Prayer to Our Lady of Guadalupe

By Archbishop Jose H. Gomez
President, U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops

Holy Virgin of Guadalupe, Queen of the Angels and Mother of the Americas. We fly to you today as your beloved children. We ask you to intercede for us with your Son, as you did at the wedding in Cana.

Pray for us, loving Mother, and gain for our nation and world, and for all our families and loved ones, the protection of your holy angels, that we may be spared the worst of this illness.

For those already afflicted, we ask you to obtain the grace of healing and deliverance. Hear the cries of those who are vulnerable and fearful, wipe away their tears and help them to trust.

In this time of trial and testing, teach all of us in the Church to love one another and to be patient and kind.

Help us to bring the peace of Jesus to our land and to our hearts.

We come to you with confidence, knowing that you truly are our compassionate mother, health of the sick and cause of our joy.

Shelter us under the mantle of your protection, keep us in the embrace of your arms, help us always to know the love of your Son, Jesus. Amen.

El don de la esperanza Pascual

Esta es una Pascua diferente como la cual nunca hemos visto. En medio de una pandemia mundial y una caída alarmante en el mercado del petróleo, nuestro estilo de vida y nuestra economía se han volteado al revés en cuestión de semanas. A pesar de lo mucho que nos gustaría que simplemente se desapareciera, esta crisis está lejos de terminar. QuÉ maravilloso sería si pudieran despertar en la mañana de Pascua con todo de repente normal, como un regalo especial del Conejo de Pascua, pero nuestra recuperación va a tomar algún tiempo. Se necesitará paciencia, trabajo duro, y la esperanza.

La Pascua es una fiesta cristiana. Después que Jesús había sido torturado y muerto en una cruz, devuelto a la normalidad, como un regalo especial del Hijo de Dios de Pascua, pero nuestra recuperación va a tomar algún tiempo. Se necesita paciencia, trabajo duro, y la esperanza.

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Bishop Sis announces new assignments for Diocese of San Angelo clergy in June

On April 20, 2020, Bishop Michael J. Sis of the Diocese of San Angelo announced several new clergy assignments that will take effect this summer. The changes affect Catholic communities in Big Lake, Greenwood, Iraan, Lenorah, Midland, Odessa, Rankin, San Angelo, and Stanton.

The full announcement reads as follows:

For the sake of the service of the people of God in the Diocese of San Angelo, Bishop Michael Sis announces the following changes of assignment of clergy effective July 1, 2020:

- Rev. Joshua Gray as Parochial Vicar of St. Ann in Midland;
- Rev. Timothy Hayter as Parochial Vicar of St. Ann in Midland;
- Rev. Balachandra Nagipogu as Parochial Vicar of St. Thomas in Rankin;
- Rev. Michael Rodriguez as Pastor of St. Joseph in Stanton and St. Isidore in Lenorah;
- Rev. Ryan Rojo as Director of Vocations and Seminarians;
- Rev. Msgr. Timothy Schwertner returns to a new assignment in his home diocese of Lubbock;
- Rev. Prem Thumma as Administrator of Sacred Heart Cathedral in San Angelo;
- Deacon Clemente Villa retires from the position of Pastoral Coordinator of St. Joseph in Stanton and St. Isidore in Lenorah.

Catholic Charitable Foundation names 2020 grant recipients

By Mercedez Rassi

The Board of Trustees of the Catholic Charitable Foundation of the Roman Catholic Diocese of San Angelo would like to announce the following recipients of 2020 Catholic Charitable Foundation Grants:

- $2,000 — St. Theresa, Junction
- $3,000 — St. Mary, San Angelo
- $2,000 — St. James, Sanderson
- $5,000 — Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Ozona
- $3,000 — Catholic Charities Community Services Odessa, Inc., Odessa
- $3,000 — St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, Odessa
- $3,000 — St. Margaret of Scotland, San Angelo
- $2,000 — St. Ann, Sonora
- $5,000 — St. Thomas, Rankin
- $4,250 — St. Francis, Iraan
- $2,000 — St. Ann’s Catholic School, Midland
- $4,250 — Angelo Catholic School, San Angelo
- $5,000 — St. Mary’s Central Catholic School, Odessa

Catholic Charitable Foundation of the Roman Catholic Diocese of San Angelo

Necrology of Priests and Deacons

Please pray for our departed clergy

May

5 Rev. Clifford Blackburn, OMI (2005)
7 Rev. Msgr. Kevin Heyburn (2001)
9 Deacon Johnny Arguello (2019)
9 Rev. Tom Diab (2007)
9 Rev. Leo Diersing (1999)
14 Deacon Manuel Luevano (2019)
15 Deacon Wayne Rock (2006)

June

7 Rev. Ray Cott, OP (2005)
8 Rev. Felix Cubelo (2007)
17 Rev. Barry McLean (2012)
20 Deacon William Smith
28 Bishop Stephen Leven (1983)

Report a 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 cualquier persona que sirve a la Iglesia, y necesita un lugar para hablar con alguien sobre sus sentimientos de traición o hiedro 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.

Catholic Charitable Foundation Grants:

- $1,800 — Sacred Heart, Menard
- $1,250 — St. Ambrose, Wall
- $3,977 — St. Thomas, Miles
- $3,000 — Holy Spirit, Sweetwater
- $4,250 — Holy Trinity, Big Spring
- $1,250 — Sacred Heart, Abilene

These funds are available to help Catholic parishes, schools, and organizations of the Diocese of San Angelo because of generous donors who have established unrestricted endowment funds at the Catholic Charitable Foundation. Each year, earnings from those endowment funds are awarded as grants by the trustees of the Foundation to support, serve, and otherwise benefit the pastoral, educational, and charitable activities of the Roman Catholic Church in our diocese. On behalf of all of the trustees of the Catholic Charitable Foundation, we extend our thanks to all of those who support our Foundation and to all of those who submitted a grant application.

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Mercedez Rassi is the Executive Director of the Catholic Charitable Foundation of the Roman Catholic Diocese of San Angelo.

Catholic Charitable Foundation Grants:

- $5,000 — St. Mary’s Central Catholic School, Odessa
- $2,000 — Sacred Heart, Abilene
- $1,250 — St. Ambrose, Wall
- $3,977 — St. Thomas, Miles
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Mercedez Rassi is the Executive Director of the Catholic Charitable Foundation of the Roman Catholic Diocese of San Angelo.
As lockdowns end, pope prays for prudence in behavior, judging others

By Cindy Wooden

Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Pope Francis began his early morning Mass praying that people would be prudent and obedient as governments begin lifting restrictions imposed to stop the coronavirus pandemic.

And, in his homily at the Mass April 28, he prayed that people would be prudent in their judgment of others, refraining from gossip and not believing lies and "fake news" about entire categories of people.

"At this time, when we are beginning to receive instructions for coming out of quarantine, we pray that the Lord would give his people — all of us — the grace of prudence and obedience to the instructions so that the pandemic does not return," he said at the beginning of the Mass in the chapel of the Domus Sanctae Marthae.

The pope's comments came two days after the Italian bishops expressed concern that the Italian government's plan for easing the pandemic lockdown in stages through June 1 had not made provision for the resumption of public Masses. The prime minister promised to study the issue to see if there were ways to do so safely.

In his homily, Pope Francis focused on the account from the Acts of the Apostles about the martyrdom of St. Stephen.

The pope said the story is "brutally" simple, the pope said. "The doctors of the law could not tolerate the clarity of his doctrine and, as soon as he proclaimed it, they went to ask if people would say that they had heard Stephen blaspheme against God, against the law. And after that, they pounce on him and stone him. That simple."

The dynamic is not new, he said. The Old Testament recounts similar stories about attacks on Susanna and Nabo and about Haman's persecution of the Israelites.

The stories are filled with "false news, lies that fire up the people and make them demand justice. It's a lynching, a real lynching," the pope said.

Often the lies are taken a step further, he said. In biblical times and still today, those making the false accusations and whipping up the mob then turn to a judge to get an official stamp of approval for unjust judgments, like when the chief priests went to Pilate to get him to condemn Jesus.

The same thing happened to Asia Bibi in Pakistan, the pope said. She spent eight years on death row after a conviction in 2010 based on insubstantial evidence. She had been accused of blasphemy in a dispute over a cup of water with a Muslim co-worker on a farm.

On a whole other level, he said, the same process of stirring up hatred and creating an "avalanche" of lies led to the Shoah, the slaughter of 6 million Jews by the Nazis during World War II.

"The Shoah was a case of this kind," he said. "An opinion against a people was created and repeated so often that it seemed "normal." People responded by saying, "Yes, yes, they should be killed," he said.

It is a way to "retaliate" if people one doesn't like, the pope said, but many "do not know that there is a little daily lynching that attempts to condemn people, to create a bad reputation for them, to dispose of them, to condemn them: it is the little daily lynching of gossip that creates an opinion," a prejudice.

"May the Lord help us to be just in our judgments and to not start or follow this massive condemnation that gossiping provokes," he prayed.

By Loretta Fulton

Father Fred: ‘There is cause for joy’

LORETTA FULTON

This Easter was supposed to be different.

A year ago, Msgr. Frederick G. Nawarskas, or "Father Fred" as he is better known, was so weak he couldn't make it down the aisle for the third Mass of Easter Sunday at Holy Family Catholic Church.

But the day after Easter, Monday April 22, he was in Hendrick Medical Center where he was diagnosed with esophageal cancer. Since then, he has undergone surgery at M.D. Anderson Cancer Center in Houston, followed by an experimental immunotherapy and chemotherapy.

Today Father Fred, who turned 80 on April 24, is cancer free. He is happy and joyously serving members of Holy Family, where he has been the priest since 1996.

"I'm one of the oldest priests in captivity," he joked.

Father Fred was looking forward to walking down the aisle this Easter Sunday, greeting parishioners at all the Masses. It would be so different from a year ago. The church would be packed for all the Masses required to accommodate the huge crowds on Easter Sunday. Music and flowers would add to the joyous celebration.

Then, the coronavirus hit. Bishop Michael Sis, following advice from medical professionals, mandated that no more than 10 people gather at a time for services in the Diocese of San Angelo. Adjustments had to be made, with deacons giving homilies on Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and for the abbreviated Easter Vigil homilies on Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Easter Sunday. The church would be packed for Easter Sunday, and for the abbreviated Easter Vigil.

"They've just about had it," he joked.

Since then, West Texas has fallen in love with Father Fred, who served parishes in San Angelo, Odessa, and Midland before being assigned to Holy Family in 1996. He joked that he has been at the church so long that members won't mind not seeing him on Easter Sunday.

"They've just about had it," he joked.

"Not likely. People are naturally drawn to Father Fred's humor, warmth, and grace. Holy Family was packed on the night of the special Mass in honor of his 50th anniversary of Father Fred's ordination to the priesthood. The church was packed with admirers. "They are here," the bishop said, "because of their love and respect for Father Fred."

Arriving in San Angelo proved to be a welcomed surprise for Father Fred and another young priest who came at the same time from Ohio. Neither had been another young priest who came at the same time from Ohio. Neither had been another young priest who came at the same time from Ohio. Neither had been another young priest who came at the same time from Ohio. Neither had been another young priest who came at the same time from Ohio. Neither had been another young priest who came at the same time from Ohio. Neither had been another young priest who came at the same time from Ohio.

"I heard horror stories about scorpions and rattlesnakes," he said in an interview for a story in the Abilene Reporter-News.

Instead, the two young men found a progressive diocese with gracious and welcoming people.

"We really fell in love with West Texas," he said.

Since then, West Texas has fallen in love with Father Fred, who served parishes in San Angelo, Odessa, and Midland before being assigned to Holy Family in 1996. He joked that he has been at the church so long that members won't mind not seeing him on Easter Sunday.

"They've just about had it," he joked.

This Easter was supposed to be different from I did last year," he said.

As bleak as the days have become since "coronavirus" entered our vocabulary, Easter Sunday can still be joyous. Churches may have been all but empty, there weren't vases of Easter lilies, flowered crosses, or traditional Easter music from church choirs and pipe organs. But it was still Easter Sunday, and for that, Father Fred says, we should all be thankful.

"I hope all of this will strengthen our faith in the risen Lord," he said.

This story originally appeared on the website spiritofabilene.com.
I am not alone!

By Father Joseph Uecker, CPPS

I humbly share this gift of my stay-at-home Triduum experience. I feel deeply indebted to Dan Schutte. The website is: https://www.danschuttemusic.com/wordpressstore/easter-triduum/. Did you ever fumble about with a key? What’s wrong? I know it’s the right key. Why won’t it work? You finally get it out of its hole. You pull it out only to find: No wonder, it’s not the right key. It’s the one next to it on your ring. Sure enough . . . and the door opens.

Pandemic . . . shelter in place . . . But it’s Holy Week, the Triduum . . . wash your hands . . . Don’t touch your face . . . No public liturgies this year . . . So, now what? What am I going to do to celebrate?

Thursday evening I set the table in my apartment for Mass. Holy Thursday alone? Something’s wrong with this picture. But I wasn’t alone for long. I had received several emails from different sources announcing a Triduum Virtual Celebration. I called someone else on line, not even Pope Francis; I wanted to do something myself, participate personally, so I decided to give Dan Schutte’s celebration a shot. Bullseye! “In every place and time, the blessed walk among us.” Hey, God, here’s the key! It’s music! I’m not alone! The whole Church is in my apartment. The door is open; folks, come on in. My deceased parents and brothers were especially present that night. St. Gaspar, CPPS (Missionaries of the Precious Blood) members, some of whom I knew, others way before my time.

I knew that I always loved music, but I never saw it as the key to my heart. God, why did it take you 78 years to find the key? You’re supposed to be omniscient and omnipotent, all the other omnis you can think of. Not complaining, God, just surprised. I’m not even thinking of wasted time. Without the past, there wouldn’t be the present. It all leads up to this. You do know best.

I knew I needed music long enough to get my earbuds so I could take advantage of the stereo and a much higher quality of music. The pictures fit the music so well. I felt lifted up and carried on the clouds. Then the theme came through as they sang “Let us glory in the Cross of Christ, our salvation and hope . . . and the triumph of God’s mighty love is stronger than death.” That song story punctuated by the refrain “Blessed are you, Lord Jesus Christ, Great is your mercy from age to age.” The Eucharistic Prayer made so much more sense that night. Not only did God find the right key. I think God also sprayed some WD-40 on the keyhole of my life. I am not alone anymore . . .

Por Padre Joseph Uecker, CPPPS


¿Alguna vez has tenido problemas con el cierre? No se lo cierres correctamente. ¿Por qué no sirve? Por fin entra, pero no da vuelta. La saca y . . . por supuesto, no es la llave correcta. ¿Es la siguiente en tu anillo? Eso sí . . . y se abre la puerta.


El jueves por la tarde arregló la mesa en mi apartamento para la misa. ¿Jueves Santo solo? Algo no es correcto. Pero no estuve solo por mucho tiempo. Había reyes y reinas y santos y profetas que anunciaban una Celebrazione Virtual del Triduo. No quería mirar otra persona en línea, ni siquiera el Papa Francisco. Quería hacer algo yo, y por eso decidí probar la celebración de Dan Schutte.

¡Perfecto! “In every place and time, the blessed walk among us!” (En todo lugar y tiempo, los santos caminan entre nosotros). ¡Oye, Diosito, aquí está la llave! Es la música. ¿No estás solo? Toda la Iglesia está aquí en mi apartamento. La puerta está aberida; entre santos peregrinos. Mis papás y mis hermanos difuntos están muy presentes esa noche, San Gaspar, miembros de la CPPS, algunos conocidos, otros antes de mi época.

Yo sabía que siempre me gustaba la música, pero nunca la vi como llave a mi corazón. Diosito, ¿por qué necesitabas 78 años para encontrar la llave correcta? Se dice que tú eres omnipresente, omnipotente, y todos los otros omnis que has. No estoy quejándome, Diosito; no más espera. ¿Son los dolores de la pandemia? Pero terminó en el triunfo del gran amor de Dios. ¿Qué nos decimos, hemos? ¡Diosito tenemos nosotros! Una meditación para terminar puso todo en perspectiva: “We rest in the mystery of God” (Descansamos en el misterio de Dios) en un tono menor, perfecto para nuestra pregunta de hoy: ¿Por qué Dios, por qué tantas personas tienen que morir? Pero terminar en “You are not alone!” (No estás solo!) . . . El composito que este Dios misterioso ca mina poderosamente entre nosotros a pesar o, mejor dicho, por la pandemia.

Prendi mi vela el Sábado de Gloria al anochecer en la Oscuridad Santa, al oír “We embrace your holy night” (Abrazamos tu noche santa). Era oscuro en mi almohada como Santas y Profetas en el tiem po en lugar de la oscuridad santa el Señor Resucitado brilló porque “God’s mighty love is stronger than death” (El amor poderoso de Dios es más fuerte que la muerte). Ese tema, primero de “una distancia,” pero poco a poco, suavemente pero también firmemente venciendo esa oscuridad en el triste momento, pero en esa oscuridad santa el Señor Resucitado brilló porque “God’s mighty love is stronger than death” (El amor poderoso de Dios es más fuerte que la muerte).

Mis amigos de la vida, que nos salutó al invitarlos, invitándome a mi mundo como agua puesta ante una persona mui riendo de sed: “God’s mighty love is stronger than death” (El amor poderoso de Dios es más fuerte que la muerte). Estoy invitado a tomar: “Let all who thirst come to the living stream.” (Todas las personas que están hambrientas y sedientas) (Vengan, todos los que tienen sed, al corriente) (Vengan, todos los que tienen sed, al corriente).
Longing for Mass

By Tom Burke

Over the past weeks, I have visited with Catholics who have told me that they become emotional when they realize how much they miss the Mass and their inability to receive the Eucharist.

Our common yearning for being in the real presence of God is not new. Take, for example, Psalms 42 and 43. From the days of King Solomon, the people of Israel were expected to make regular pilgrimages to Jerusalem. There, located on the highest elevation within the old city, was Zion, the Temple of the Lord. Each descendant of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, regardless of age or gender, was expected to visit Zion. On many occasions, Jesus was a pilgrim, entering Jerusalem and the Temple safeguarded therein.

In Psalms 42 and 43, we read the words of the psalmist who laments his inability to make a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. Perhaps it was his advanced age, or perhaps it was an illness, or perhaps something else. Regardless, the author poignantly expresses some of the same feelings of loss that many Catholics experience these days.

Just as Jesus’ apostles and disciples must have felt some 2,000 years ago, we wait in locked rooms with the deep desire to rise and go to Jesus. As Christians, we have not yet learned the lessons entrusted to us in those sacred stories at the end of each gospel?

In the April 13 issue of America, Fr. Tomáš Halík, a professor of sociology at Charles University in Prague, writes, “The day before his papal election, Cardinal Jorge Bergoglio quoted a passage from the Book of Revelation in which Jesus calls on his followers to knock and knocks. He added, ‘Today Christ is knocking from inside the church and wants to get out.’” Halík reminds us that the sepulcher is empty. Jesus is risen and alive in our midst. As disciples, are we able to see Jesus in our midst … outside of our modern day sepulchers, in our own life and in the lives of others?

The four gospels inform us that, after Jesus rose from the tomb, many could not recognize him … even while he appeared physically before them. Are we unable to recognize the transcendent Lord? Can we not recognize our risen Lord in the selfless acts of brave men and women who serve us as first responders and hospital clinicians? Is not Christ made manifest in you through your ability to abide simply within the new limits placed upon your freedoms? Could we not bring your ability to abide simply within the new limits served us as first responders and hospital clinicians? Is not Christ made manifest in you through your ability to abide simply within the new limits placed upon your freedoms? Could we not bring your ability to abide simply within the new limits?

By Mike Wyse

It is Sunday, April 19, 2020, Sunday within the Octave of Easter, and my wife and I have just finished attending Mass via the web page provided by Holy Angels Parish in San Angelo. No doubt, many of you have also done this, and not just today but for the past month. There is a saying, “Everything changes but remains the same.” As I listened to the first reading tell us how early Christians devoted themselves to meeting and breaking bread in their homes, I was starkly reminded of that old saying. How ironic. So many centuries ago, as the Church grew, we had to build churches and basilicas to enable our faithful to come together to praise and worship as a community. Yet here we are in the year 2020, centuries later, families gathered together and worshipping in our homes once again.

As we sat at home and began Holy Week with the Palm Sunday Liturgy, memories of years past raced through my mind like the swift waters of a river rushing to the ocean. I remembered the Palm Sunday processions, as we held our palms and walked, sometimes outdoors into the church, other times around the church, but always in a spirit of anticipation of the coming events of the Holy Week Triduum. I remembered Holy Thursday and the presentation of the Holy Oils to the assembly, and the final procession at the end of Mass when the Blessed Sacrament was taken to a place of repose, and coming back to the church later in the evening to spend time with Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament in remembrance of his night in the Garden of Gethsemane. I remembered Good Friday service and the prayers we said for the whole world, coming up and venerating the holy cross, and touching the wood with a sense of awe.

Most of all, I remembered the Easter Vigil Liturgy. In over 60 years, I don’t think I missed it more than a few times. I remembered the Easter fire, sitting in the dark, holding our candles, and listening to the readings describe how we became the people we are. As I listened to Fr. Greenwood chant the Exultet, I remembered how I had the privilege of cantoring this age old prayer for over 25 years. I thought of the many hours over the years that I prepared and rehearsed the music for the Easter Vigil Liturgy. I remembered the sound of the bells chimes of the Gloria, the smell of incense, and the feel of the cool water as the priest blessed us with the new Holy Water. I remembered how the Easter Vigil was held at midnight in the ‘old days,’ and how strange it seemed at first when we began to celebrate the Liturgy earlier in the evening. But it didn’t seem to detract from the wonder and joy of the celebration. I remembered how, when the Liturgy was over, the family would get together and continue to celebrate over a late-night meal.

I really missed all of that this year. I miss exchanging the Sign of Peace. I miss seeing the same people at Mass every week. And if we went for a few weeks and didn’t see someone in church, we would check up on them to make sure they were okay. Most of all, I miss being able to receive Communion. But, we live in a wonderful age. Because of our technology, we can still bring the Mass to everyone on webpages, Facebook, and probably other media platforms of which I am unaware. I suppose you could say we’re very fortunate to be able to do this. But it’s just not the same.

Through all of this, I have developed a new appreciation for our churches, our symbols, our people, our liturgies, and especially the Holy Eucharist. I have also developed a new appreciation for those who are homebound, who are never able to come to church, and week after week are relegated to participating at the Mass at home on their TV or computer. When the time comes for us to return to our churches to worship, I think I will always remember to pray for the homebound, giving thanks that I have been blessed to be able to come and worship with all of my brothers and sisters, and hopefully, never take that privilege for granted again.

Mike Wyse is the chancellor of the Diocese of San Angelo.
The angelus is stayed on thee, because he trusts in thee. Trust in "Thou dost keep him in perfect peace, whose mind and heart? Isaiah received a revelation in the form of a song that would be sung in the land of Judah: "Peace be with you." These are Easter words at his tomb. In the midst of the turmoil, trials, and sufferings we’ve experienced during and since Lent, Jesus gives us this gift as he gave it to the Apostles in his post-resurrection appearances. He is echoing the words he spoke to them before his passion: "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid" (Jn 14:27). He was assuring his disciples that after he departed from them, the Father would not abandon them but would send the Helper, the Holy Spirit.

The Old Testament prophet Jeremiah quoted the words of the Lord: "I am peace to Israel, said the Lord; and they shall find rest among the Gentiles" (Is 52:7). He encounters a young messenger who was the standard greeting, as in 1 Kings 19:20. In the midst of the turmoil, trials, and sufferings we’ve experienced during and since Lent, Jesus gives us this gift as he gave it to the Apostles in his post-resurrection appearances. He is echoing the words he spoke to them before his passion: "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid" (Jn 14:27). He was assuring his disciples that after he departed from them, the Father would not abandon them but would send the Helper, the Holy Spirit.

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Providing effective pastoral care for youth

In Christus Vivit, Pope Francis “encourages communities to examine, respectfully and seriously, the situation of their young people, in order to find the most fitting ways of providing them with pastoral care” (103). While elements of pastoral care are universal, how we practice pastoral care will take as many varied forms as people we encounter.

While pastoral care will take on a variety of forms, it has several distinct features that provide direction to our comprehensive ministry efforts. Pastoral care includes, but is not limited to:

• Developing life skills of adolescents, including but not limited to building relationships and healthy conflict resolution skills;
• Helping guide young people in making important life decisions;
• Fostering spiritual development;
• Creating networks of care and support;
• Providing resources and programs for parent education and effective parenting skills;
• Assisting families in strengthening family life by improving family skills;
• Providing and connecting young people and families to support services; and
• Collaborating with the larger community in providing aid to at-risk youth.

At its basic form, “the ministry of pastoral care is a compassionate presence in imitation of Jesus’ care of people” (Renewing the Vision, p. 42). Pastoral care is being present for young people and their families when they are in need. This can include when they are experiencing anxiety, depression, and suicidal ideation. But it is also being present and journeying with them during divorce, grief, unemployment, moving to a new town, or anything else in life that causes them to struggle.

Pastoral care is not counseling, unless you are a licensed counselor. Most of us engaged in ministry or journeying with young people are not licensed counselors. Rather than trying to fill that role, we must educate ourselves in knowing the warning signs if something is wrong and referring them to somebody who is qualified to offer the help we cannot give.

We can practice pastoral care by engaging in empathetic, active listening. This means not listening in order to give advice or to try to fix things but simply listening to what is being shared with us. We are not to tell them or imply that what they are feeling is not legitimate. Rather, we should validate their feelings. It is not our place to decide how somebody responds to what is going on in their life, but simply accept their feelings as reasonable. If we don’t know what to say, it is okay to simply not say anything. It is better to be honest in that we don’t know how to respond than to say something that will either make the situation worse or show us to be untrustworthy.

We must remember that pastoral care is not just about the young people, but the entire family. As with all aspects of our ministry, we must keep in the forefront the reality that families are the biggest influence on young people and a vital part of their faith journey. As such, pastoral care is being present to the entire family when they are in need. That need will look different for each family. Again, it is not our job to judge their needs, but to simply offer our presence and our help.

The parable of the Good Samaritan found in the Gospel of Luke (10:30–37) can be a beautiful model for pastoral care and accompanying young people during difficult times. We may not always know young people that cross our path. There may even be times when we don’t necessarily like them. Yet, if we are willing, we can be open to see and respond to the complex needs of today’s young people like the Good Samaritan did.

First, we must be like the Good Samaritan and see the hurt. Others passed by the man who was beaten, but the Good Samaritan saw him and, unlike the priest and Levite who passed by earlier, did not avoid him or refuse to help him. When working with young people, we must know how to recognize the signs that they are hurting and be willing to enter into that hurt with them. If we are not naturally able to see when they are struggling, we must pray for the grace to see.

After seeing the beaten man, the Good Samaritan was moved with compassion. The Good Samaritan did not judge the man or belittle the ways he was hurt. In the same way, we must see the ways that young people are hurting and be moved with compassion. Too often, the struggles young people are facing are demeaned simply because of their age. Their stress, pressures, and struggles are real and genuine. Just because somebody’s struggle is different than ours does not make it less valid. Like the Good Samaritan, we must simply be willing to help them without judgment or condemnation.

The Good Samaritan then responds to the hurt he sees. He takes action. He did what he could with what he had. He was moved with compassion and took action. We can practice pastoral care by being present, by being a careful listener, and by offering our presence and our help in the myriad ways that young people need and that God has placed in our path.

At its basic form, “the ministry of pastoral care is a compassionate presence in imitation of Jesus’ care of people.” (Renewing the Vision, p. 42).

James R. Sulliman, PhD

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M‘others’ Day

Others … the references made to the importance of loving and serving others are found throughout Scripture. John (15:12-13) tells us “This is my commandment: Love one another as I have loved you. Greater love no one has than this: to lay down one’s life for one’s friends.” We read in Hebrews (13:16) “And do not forget to do good and to share with OTHERS for with such sacrifices God is pleased,” while Peter (1 Pt 4:10) states, “Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve OTHERS, as faithful stewards of God’s grace in its various forms.” But while all of us are created in the image of God, which is to say the image of love, how exactly is God, which is to say the image of love, developed? Let us consider the ways by which the image of love is formed. It was a joy to watch them be surrounded by her grandmother, sometimes an aunt or another relative but almost never is it a male because we men are students when it comes to love—our teachers, with the exception of Jesus, are almost always women and we are life-long learners. Most of us, however, are suited to do these two most important things. As a result, many people develop an attitude of “personal superiority” as opposed to love for others. If someone else does not step in and assume the mother role in regard to these essential tasks during their early years, it can lead to divisiveness, destruction, and despair.

Most often, it is another female who makes the great sacrifice of caring for another’s child. Sometimes it is a drawn to her because of her love which was, of course, a reflection of God, for as John (1 Jn 4:8) tells us so succinctly “God is love.”

Indeed, it is in the most stressful of times that love and our true nature is revealed. We learn very little about ourselves and others during good times but volumes during the most difficult ones. It is the mother of Jesus who never “abandons” him. While all but one of the apostles ran for their lives, it was Mary who was there with and for her son, regardless of personal danger, thinking first not of herself. Mary, who at this time of horror was caring for a young boy named John. It is Mary at the birth of Jesus, Mary at his death, Mary at his resurrection appearance. Mary’s love is the best way to teach. Thank God he had a son and not a daughter because otherwise we might not have known what love looks like in a male; it is females who have modeled love the best. In my 50 years as a professional therapist, teacher, and researcher, mothers, like Mary and my beloved friend Paula, have done the best job of loving others. And they, like Jesus, have taught others how to love, how to live, and how to die… and how to LOVE. They have taught us how important it is to love, serve, and forgive OTHERS, even to the point of giving up our life. It is up to me to make certain that their teaching was not in vain.

While we so often think and act like many things are “a matter of life and death,” we need mothers, teachers, models, and friends both past and present to show us the truth: when we give our lives to God and do everything we can to show God’s love to others, nothing is a matter of life and death … everything is a matter of death and life!

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.
Decree from bishop erects new mission church in diocese

West Texas Angelus

SAN ANGELO — The Diocese of San Angelo officially has a new mission church.

On April 30, 2020, Bishop Michael Sis issued a decree formally establishing a new church in the community of Greenwood, located East of Midland. The new church will be named St. Rita of Cascia and will be a mission church of San Miguel Arcángel Parish in Midland.

St. Rita of Cascia was an Italian nun who lived in the 14th and 15th centuries and was canonized by Pope Leo XIII in 1900. She is the patroness of impossible causes and has also been associated with the causes of abused wives and heartbroken women. Her feast day is May 22.

The full text of the decree follows.

DECREE ERECTING A MISSION
BY MOST REV. MICHAEL J. SIS,
BY THE GRACE OF GOD AND THE AUTHORITY OF THE APOSTOLIC SEE,
BISHOP OF SAN ANGELO,
DECREE ERECTING IN GREENWOOD, ST. RITA OF CASCIA, AS THE NEW MISSION OF SAN MIGUEL ARCÁNGEL PARISH OF MIDLAND, TEXAS

Canon 515 §2: It is only for the diocesan bishop to erect, suppress, or alter parishes. He is neither to erect, suppress, nor alter notably parishes, unless he has heard the Presbyteral Council.

Canon 516 §2: When certain communities cannot be erected as parishes or quasi-parishes, the diocesan bishop is to provide for their pastoral care in another way.

Willingly desiring in all things to promote the greater glory of God and desirous of providing for the good of souls;

And considering the petitions made to me by the pastor, Rev. Patrick Akpanobong of San Miguel Arcángel Parish in Midland and the lay faithful for the creation of Greenwood as a new mission;

And having ascertained that there are sufficient means and resources for the support of the priest(s) and for the proper maintenance of the temporal goods of the mission;

And, having heard the Presbyteral Council on the twenty-eighth day of the month of April, in the year of Our Lord two thousand twenty, I have decided that the proper care of souls requires the creation of the new mission in Greenwood, in Midland County near Midland, Texas.

Wherefore, having faithfully observed the requirements of the law, and to provide more suitably for the spiritual and pastoral care of souls;

Invoking the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, and of his Mother, the Ever-Blessed Virgin Mary, I, the undersigned Bishop of the Diocese of San Angelo, exercising my ordinary power, herewith create and erect, in accordance of canons 515 §2 & 516 §2, this new mission, namely, St. Rita of Cascia, in Greenwood near the city of Midland, Texas.

While the mission of St. Rita of Cascia will not have its own geographical boundaries, the boundaries of San Miguel Arcángel Parish in Midland are as follows:

Beginning at the intersection of the Missouri-Pacific Railroad and Midkiff Road and continue due South on an imaginary line to the Upton County line; Follow East on the Midland-Upton County line to the Glasscock County line; Follow North on the Midland-Glasscock County line to the Martin County line; Follow West on the Midland-Martin County line to the intersection with Midkiff Road; the point of beginning.

The boundary limits follow the center of roads or streets.

These boundaries include the new mission of St. Rita of Cascia.

I place the new mission under the protection of St. Rita of Cascia, whose name it will carry, and I name Rev. Patrick Akpanobong as the first pastor.

The new mission is assigned to the Midland Deanery. In the allocation of patrimonial goods, rights, and obligations, equity and justice must be observed, and the intention of founders and donors must be respected (c. 122, 1º–2º).

This decree is to take effect on the twenty-second day of the month of May, in the year of Our Lord two thousand and twenty. It is to be communicated to all interested persons, according to the norm of law.

Given at the Diocesan Pastoral Center in San Angelo, Texas, on this thirtieth day of the month of April, in the year of Our Lord two thousand and twenty.

Most Rev. Michael J. Sis
Bishop of the Diocese of San Angelo

Father Innocent Eziefule installed as pastor of Menard, Junction churches

By Terrell Kelley

Menard’s Father Innocent Eziefule received a very special birthday gift recently when he was appointed pastor of Sacred Heart Catholic Church on his birthday, April 13. The following day, Bishop Michael Sis formally installed the San Angelo Diocese’s latest pastor in a special Installation Mass celebrated at Sacred Heart Church in Menard.

Following the current COVID-19 guidelines, the number of attendees was restricted with the parish represented by members of the Pastoral and Finance Councils. Arnold Saucedo, of Menard, served as cantor, providing sacred musical support.

For over a year, Father Innocent, who is originally from Nigeria, has been serving as parochial administrator for both Menard’s Sacred Heart and Junction’s St. Theresa of the Child Jesus parishes. He will now be pastor to both.

Ordained in 2013 by the then-Bishop of San Angelo, the Most Rev. Michael D. Pfeifer, this will be Father Innocent’s first assignment as pastor, marking a major milestone in his priestly vocation.

Sacred Heart Catholic Church was originally established in 1899 with the construction of the original church, which is located on Bevans Street, making it the oldest church in the Diocese of San Angelo. In 1955, the parish outgrew the original church and constructed a larger one, which is now the parish fellowship hall. The third and current church, on Ellis Street, was constructed in the 1990s.
Sokolowski missionary family provides update on their work

Last year, the Sokolowski family from St. Stephen Church in Midland — Isaac, Sabrina, and their three young daughters — made the life-changing decision to become full-time foreign missionaries with the Family Mission Company. Sabrina recently provided an update on the family’s life in their new home in the Mexican state of Coahuila.

The family hopes to “inspire, encourage, and strengthen the faithful” with their mission work, and ask for “continuing fervent prayer and the building up of the domestic church in this time of coronavirus quarantine.”

Sabrina wrote: “God’s timing has been so perfect, and while we hoped to spend longer in language school, we are glad that we flew back to our mission post just before they cancelled our flights. We have been quarantined in our very small Pueblo General Cepeda since the end of March. There is a larger city about 45 minutes from us, but guards check leaving and going and don’t allow any non-essential travel to and from. We found out at the end of March that we are expecting another child, and praise God, I was able to find and contact a doctor whose passion is being a midwife via Facebook and begin prenatal care. Although our quarantined life does not allow for much outreach right now, we have been focused on adjusting to life in a new country, getting the girls in a healthy schedule, and forming and shaping our family prayer life. Daily we have gone on ‘family style prayer’ desert walks where we start with a song (‘This Little Light of Mine’ is a favorite right now), each give thanks, dad reads the readings, we petition the Lord, and close in ‘Our Father’ and ‘Salve Regina.’ It’s very simple and some days are harder to keep the peace among the kids, but being consistent has really paid off in that our oldest, who is three, is participating more and more because there is a constant order and she can confidently anticipate what’s coming next.

For Holy Week we had our neighbors over to celebrate Holy Thursday, and read Scripture, did the washing of feet, and enjoyed a fancy meal with a cake to remind us of Holy Thursday, and read Scripture, did the washing of feet. For six years, Frasco served as a theology teacher at Sacred Heart School in Dodge City, Kansas, prior to which he taught for five years at Magdalen Catholic School in Wichita. A former Spearville, Kansas, resident, he moved to Texas where he is a pilgrimage coordinator. He’s also an author, having written, “Reflection of the Son: A Scriptural Rosary and Marian Guide.”

Martin, married with six children, is owner of a nursing home and is an RCIA director. He also is Frasco’s brother-in-law. Matthiasen, married with five children, has farmed most of his life, and teaches CCD and RCIA.

“We decided to do this because we wanted to help evangelize in the Catholic faith,” Frasco explained. “What excited us is that we are allowing the Holy Spirit to lead us, and we have no idea where He is going to take this. We pray it helps people come to know Christ and his church more fully. Whether a person is on fire for the faith, somewhat interested, or not at all, it is our hope to stir minds and hearts.”

Frasco said that the three envision the videos being utilized in a variety of ways, “whether for personal use, RCIA, CCD, or for people to share with family and friends who have questions. We hope to have a couple of different priests come on as guests, deacons, our wives, our local bishop. The goal of our program is to remain positive, give practical advice, and be relatable.” You can find more information about the Rome Boys on their Facebook page: https://m.facebook.com/romeboys/.

And their YouTube channel: https://m.youtube.com/channel/UCiB8W36oMganUpgD79sElong.

This story originally appeared in the April 2020 issue of The Southwest Kansas Catholic.
Spread the Word, not the germs

On Wednesday, April 29, 2020, while filming Mass at Christ the King Retreat Center for Sunday, May 2 to be uploaded to the diocesan YouTube channel, participants donned face masks, part of the new requirements for upcoming public Masses as the diocese and the rest of the state of Texas prepare to gradually return to limited public gatherings.

Clockwise from top: Deacon Freddy Medina assisted as Bishop Michael Sis prepared the Eucharist; Edward and Nora Hernandez provided music for the Mass; seminarian Humberto Diaz kneels in prayer.

Parish life amid the pandemic

St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Church in Odessa reserved space for livestreaming equipment during Mass on Good Friday, April 10. Office Assistant and Server Coordinator Jessica Payno wrote that “with the guidance of Joe Detiveaux, (St. Elizabeth) has found a way to adapt to the livestream life. While Joe insists that it is a team effort, without his knowledge of technology, SEAS would be struggling to get it up and running. We are grateful for him!”

St. Ann Church in Midland organized a Eucharistic car parade for the afternoon on April 26. Over 150 cars participated in the parade, which included a blessing of Midland Memorial Hospital and a Benediction from the priests to the families in the safety of their cars. Pictured (left to right) are Msgr. Larry Droll, Father Ryan Rojo, Pat Collier, Youth Minister Francisco Tejada, Deacon Tom Collier, an unidentified marcher, and Msgr. Bernard Gully.

Seminarian professes faith

Kevin Lenius made his profession of faith at Christ the King Retreat Center on April 29, 2020, in a small, private ceremony with his fellow seminarians. Lenius is a 3rd-year theology student at Kenrick-Glennon Seminary in Saint Louis, Missouri. He and the other seminarians of the diocese are completing their academic year via distance learning and residing at Christ the King Retreat Center in San Angelo. The profession of faith in one step in the journey to the priesthood. The next major milestone for Lenius will be his ordination as a transitional deacon, Saturday, Aug. 1, 2020, at 10:30 am at Holy Family Church in Abilene.

Parishioners of St. Stephen Church in Midland organized a surprise motorcade on April 8 as a show of appreciation for their priests and parish staff.
Bishops around country consecrate U.S. to Mary amid COVID-19 pandemic

WASHINGTON (CNS) — Bishops throughout the United States consecrated the country to Mary as the nation continues to struggle in the midst of the coronavirus pandemic.

Bishops in Canada also used May 1 to rededicate their country to the Blessed Mother. ArchbishopJose H. Gomez of Los Angeles, president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, led a "Renewal of the Consecration of the United States of America to the Blessed Virgin Mary" May 1. The sparse, 37-minute ceremony at Our Lady of the Angels Cathedral in Los Angeles was livestreamed on Facebook, YouTube and the websites of the Los Angeles Archdiocese and the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops.

Alternating between English and Spanish, Archbishop Gomez said: "In this difficult time we turn to the Blessed Virgin Mary, mother of the church. She intercedes with her Son for all are affected in this way by the pandemic ... We implore her maternal care for her children."

Archbishop Gomez noted Mary's history in the United States. "The first missionaries came to this country under the mantle of Our Lady of Guadalupe. Later, the bishops consecrated her as patroness of the United States of America," he said. "The Virgin Mary has accompanied this great nation since our beginnings," he added. "Now in this difficult hour, we renew our consecration to her."

The United States has been hit harder than any other nation in deaths connected to COVID-19, with 62,547 known coronavirus fatalities as of April 30, with about 2,000 more people dying each day. Although federal and state health officials have been advocating strict measures to "flatten the curve" of infections and fatalities, none have said that deaths have yet reached their peak. Some Americans have loudly grumbled about the slow pace of "reopening" states to travel and commerce, while health officials fear a second wave of infections.

"Mary was the first person to consecrate herself to Jesus, the first to offer her whole heart to do his will, to set his beautiful plan of redemption," Archbishop Gomez said. "We ask God to give us that same faith, that same courage ... the strength to follow Jesus, to seek his holiness and his kingdom."

The ceremony featured Marian hymns including "Regina Coeli," "Hail, Holy Queen" and a contemporary English-Latin setting of the Magnificat. It also featured the recitation of two decades of the rosary: the fifth Sorrowful Mystery, the crucifixion and death of Jesus, followed by the fifth Glorious Mystery, the coronation of Mary as queen of heaven.

At its conclusion, Archbishop Gomez said, "Our Holy Father, Pope Francis, is encouraging us to rediscover the beauty of praying the rosary at home in the month of May. We are still in quarantine in our homes." He noted that "one of the many saints in Los Angeles was the venerable (Father) Patrick Peyton, who coined the "family rosary" and the phrase "The family that prays together stays together."

"Maybe we can dedicate ourselves," Archbishop Gomez said, "to find time to come together as a family to pray the rosary in our homes."

A similar liturgy of consecration took place at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington May 1, led by Archbishop Wilton D. Gregory of Washington, who prayed: "In this time of pandemic, we come to you, our sign of sure hope and comfort. Today we renew the act of consecration and entrustment carried out by those who have gone before us."

Because of local and federal social distancing and self-isolation mandates in an effort to halt the spread of COVID-19, the rededication liturgy at the basilica was not open to the public, but livestreamed on social media platforms.

This consecration reaffirms the bishops' previous consecrations of the United States to Mary. In 1792, the first bishop of the United States, Bishop John Carroll, consecrated the nation to Mary under the title Immaculate Conception, and in 1846, the bishops unanimously chose Mary under that title as the patroness of the nation.

In 1959, Cardinal Patrick O'Boyle of Washington again consecrated the United States to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. This was the year when construction of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington was completed. The national shrine was elevated to minor basilica status by St. John Paul II Oct. 12, 1990. This was renewed by the U.S. bishops Nov. 11, 2006.

Archbishop Gregory prayed for Mary's "intercession for the needs of our country, that every desire for good may be blessed and strengthened, that faith may be revived and nourished, hope sustained and enlightened, charity awakened and animated."

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By Mark Pattison
Catholic News Service

Contributing to this story was Richard Szczepanowski, managing editor of the Catholic Standard, newspaper of the Archdiocese of Washington.
Pope asks Catholics to pray rosary in May, composes new prayers to Mary

By Cindy Wooden
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY (CNS) -- Pope Francis asked Catholics to make a special effort in May to pray the rosary, knowing that by doing so they will be united with believers around the world asking for Mary's intercession in stopping the coronavirus pandemic.

"Contemplating the face of Christ with the heart of Mary, our mother, will make us even more united as a spiritual family and will help us overcome this time of trial," the pope said in a letter addressed to all Catholics and released by the Vatican April 25.

The month of May is traditionally devoted to Mary and many Catholics already are in the habit of praying the rosary at home during the month, he noted. "The restrictions of the pandemic have made us come to appreciate all the more this 'family' aspect, also from a spiritual point of view."

"You can decide according to your own situations" whether to pray individually or in groups, he said, noting that "it is easy also on the internet to find good models of prayers to follow."

Pope Francis wrote two prayers to Mary that can be recited at the end of the rosary, prayers he said he would be reciting "in spiritual union with all of you."

Both prayers acknowledge Mary's closeness to her son's followers and ask for her protection and for her intercession just as she interceded with Jesus on behalf of the newlyweds at Cana who had run out of wine for their wedding feast.

"We know that you will provide, so that, as at Cana in Galilee, joy and celebration may return after this time of trial," one of the prayers read.

Pope Francis' prayers also include specific intentions for those who are sick, for those who care for them, for those who have died and for those who mourn for them, for scientists seeking cures and vaccines and for government leaders who must find a way to protect their people.

"Mary Most Holy, stir our consciences, so that the enormous funds invested in developing and stockpiling arms will instead be spent on promoting effective research on how to prevent similar tragedies from occurring in the future," one of the prayers said.

"Beloved Mother, help us realize that we are all members of one great family and to recognize the bond that unites us, so that, in a spirit of fraternity and solidarity, we can help to alleviate countless situations of poverty and need," it continued. "Make us strong in faith, persevering in service, constant in prayer."

New Prayers from Pope Francis

FIRST PRAYER:
O Mary,
you shine continuously on our journey
as a sign of salvation and hope.
We entrust ourselves to you, Health of the Sick,
who, at the foot of the cross,
were united with Jesus' suffering,
and persevered in your faith.

"Protectress of the Roman people,"
you know our needs,
and we know that you will provide,
so that, as at Cana in Galilee,
joy and celebration may return after this time of trial.

Help us, Mother of Divine Love,
to conform ourselves to the will of the Father
and to do what Jesus tells us.
For he took upon himself our suffering,
and burdened himself with our sorrows
to bring us, through the cross,
to the joy of the Resurrection.
Amen.

SECOND PRAYER:
"We fly to your protection, O Holy Mother of God."
In the present tragic situation, when the whole world is prey to suffering and anxiety, we fly to you, Mother of God and our mother, and seek refuge under your protection.

Virgin Mary, turn your merciful eyes toward us amid this coronavirus pandemic. Comfort those who are distressed by their loneliness, who have lost their loved ones, and who at times are buried in a way that grieves them deeply. Be close to those who are concerned for their loved ones who are sick and who, in order to prevent the spread of the disease, cannot be close to them. Fill with hope those who are troubled by the uncertainty of the future and the consequences for the economy and employment.

Mother of God and our Mother, pray for us to God, the father of mercies, that this great suffering may end and that hope and peace may dawn anew. Plead with your divine Son, as you did at Cana, so that the families of the sick and the victims be comforted, and their hearts be opened to confidence and trust.

Protect those doctors, nurses, health workers and volunteers who are on the frontline of this emergency, and are risking their lives to save others. Support their heroic effort and grant them strength, generosity and continued health.

Be close to those who assist the sick night and day, and to priests who, in their pastoral concern and fidelity to the Gospel, are trying to help and support everyone.

Blessed Virgin, illuminate the minds of men and women engaged in scientific research, that they may find effective solutions to overcome this virus.

Support national leaders, that with wisdom, solicitude and generosity they may come to the aid of those lacking the basic necessities of life and may devise social and economic solutions inspired by farsightedness and solidarity.

Mary Most Holy, stir our consciences, so that the enormous funds invested in developing and stockpiling arms will instead be spent on promoting effective research on how to prevent similar tragedies from occurring in the future.

Beloved Mother, help us realize that we are all members of one great family and to recognize the bond that unites us, so that, in a spirit of fraternity and solidarity, we can help to alleviate countless situations of poverty and need. Make us strong in faith, persevering in service, constant in prayer.

Mary, Consolation of the afflicted, embrace all your children in distress and pray that God will stretch out his all-powerful hand and free us from this terrible pandemic, so that life can serenely resume its normal course.

To you, who shine on our journey as a sign of salvation and hope, do we entrust ourselves, O Clement, O Loving, O Sweet Virgin Mary. Amen.
Most of us are familiar with Pope Francis’ comment that today the church needs to be a field hospital. What’s implied here?

First, that right now the church is not a field hospital, or at least not much of one. Too many churches of all denominations see the world more as an opponent to be fought than as a battlefield strewn with wounded persons to whom they are called to minister. The churches today, in the words of Pope Francis, have often reversed an image in the Book of Revelation where Jesus stands outside the door knocking, trying to come in, to a situation where Jesus is knocking on the door from inside the church, trying to get out.

So how might our churches, our ecclesial communities, become field hospitals?

In a wonderfully provocative article in a recent issue of America magazine, Czech spiritual writer, Tomas Halik, suggests that for our ecclesial communities to become “field hospitals” they must assume three roles: A diagnostic one – wherein they identify the signs of the times; a preventive one – wherein they create an immune system in a world within which malignant viruses of fear, hatred, populism, and nationalism are tearing communities apart; and a convalescent one — wherein they help the world overcome the traumas of the past through forgiveness.

How, concretely, might each of these be envisaged?

Our churches need to be diagnostic; they need to name the present moment in a prophetic way. But that calls for a courage that, right now, seems lacking, delayed by fear and ideology. Liberals and conservatives diagnose the present moment in radically different ways, not because the facts aren’t the same for both, but because each of them is seeing things through its own ideology. As well, at the end of the day, both camps seem too frightened to look at the hard issues square on, both afraid of what they might see.

To name just one issue that both seem afraid to look at with unblinking eyes: our rapidly emptying churches and the fact that so many of our own children are no longer going to church or identifying with a church. Conservatives simplistically blame secularism, without ever really being willing to openly debate the various critiques of the churches coming from almost every part of society. Liberals, for their part, tend to simplistically blame conservative rigidity without really being open to courageously look at some of places within secularity where faith in a transcendental God and an incarnate Christ run antithetical to some of the cultural ethos and ideologies within secularity. Both sides, as is evident from their excessive defensiveness, seem afraid to look at all the issues.

What must we do preformatively to turn our churches into field hospitals? The image Halik proposes here is rich but intelligible only within an understanding of the Body of Christ and an acceptance of the deep connection we have with each other inside the family of humanity. We are all one, one living organism, parts of a single body, so that, as with any living body, what any one part does, for disease or health, affects every other part. And the health of a body is contingent upon its immune system, upon those enzymes that roam throughout the body and kill off cancerous cells. Today our world is beset with cancerous cells of bitterness, hatred, lying, self-protecting fear, and tribalism of every kind. Our world is mortally ill; suffering from a cancer that’s destroying community.

Hence our ecclesial communities must become places that generate the healthy enzymes that are needed to kill off those cancer cells. We must create an immune system robust enough to do this. And for that to happen, we must first, ourselves, stop being part of the cancer of hatred, lying, fear, oppression, and tribalism. Too often, we ourselves are the cancerous cells. The single biggest religious challenge facing us as ecclesial communities today is that of creating an immune system that’s healthy and vigorous enough to help kill off the cancerous cells of hatred, fear, lying, and tribalism that float freely throughout the world.

Finally, our convalescent role: Our ecclesial communities need to help the world come to a deeper reconciliation vis-a-vis the many injustices that motivate and are one of our strengths. Our churches are sanctuaries of forgiveness. In the words of Cardinal Francis George: “In society everything is permitted, but nothing is forgiven; in the church much is prohibited, but everything is forgiven.” But where we need to be more proactive as sanctuaries of forgiveness today is in relation to a number of salient “traumas of the past.” In brief, a deeper forgiveness, healing, and atonement still need to take place opposite the world’s history with colonization, slavery, the status of women, the torture and disappearance of peoples, the mistreatment of refugees, the perennial support of unjust regimes, and the atomic bomb dropped on another earth herself. Our churches must lead this effort.

Our ecclesial communities as field hospitals can be the Galilee of today.

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.rronrolheiser.com. Now on Facebook: www.facebook.com/rronrolheiser.

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I have lived in Santa Barbara, California, for the past four years. In that brief time, my neighbors and I have experienced a number of real tragedies. Just over two years ago, the terrible Thomas Fire broke out in my pastoral region, in the vicinity of Thomas Aquinas College (hence the name). For a frightening month it made its devastating way from Santa Paula through Ventura, Camaripera, Montecito, and eventually commenced to devour the foliage on the hills just north of my home. As I was standing one Saturday morning on my front lawn, staring uneasily at the flames, a retired fire captain stopped his car and yelled out the window, “Bishop, what are you still doing here? Embers are flying everywhere; this whole neighborhood could go up.”

We were all relieved when, just days later, rains finally came and quelled the flames. But the welcome rain became, in short compass, a deluge, prompting a mudslide in the fire-ravaged hills above Montecito. Twenty-five people were swept to their deaths. In November of that same year, 2018, a disturbed man walked into a crowded restaurant and bar called the Borderline, located in Thousand Oaks, in the far eastern end of my pastoral region. He opened fire at random and killed thirteen people, including a brave police officer who tried to stop him. On Labor Day this past September, thirty-five people, sleeping below-decks in a diving boat moored just off the coast of Santa Barbara, were burned to death as fire roared through their cramped quarters.

I have thought of all of these tragedies as we Santa Barbarans, along with the entire country, are dealing now with the coronavirus crisis. I think it is fair to say that, at the turn of the year, no one saw this coming. No one would have predicted that tens of thousands would be infected by a dangerous pathogen, that thousands would die, that we would be shut in our homes, that the economy would go into meltdown. What seemed just a short time ago a fairly stable state of affairs medically, politically, and economically has been turned upside down. Now, I don’t rehearse all of this negativity to depress you! I do so to make a theological point.

All of the tragedies that I’ve recounted are but dramatic examples of a general truth about the nature of things, a truth that we all know in our bones but that we choose, typically, to cover up or overlook. I’m talking about the radical contingency of the world, to give it its properly philosophical designation. This means, to state it simply, that everything in our experience is unstable; it comes into being and its passes out of being. Think of every plant, every animal, every insect, every cloud, indeed of every mountain, planet, or in the earth itself. If we allow for a sufficient passage of time: they all come to be and will eventually fade away. And though we habitually divert ourselves from accepting it, this contingency principle applies to each of us. Whenever we get really sick, or a good friend dies, or a virus threatens the general population, or the planet as we know it, we have to break through our defenses. Teilhard de Chardin, a theologian-scientist from the last century, said that he acquired a keen sense of his own mortality when, as a boy of three, he saw a lock of his newly cut hair fall into fire and burn up in a split second.

Why shouldn’t this perception, simple as it is, lead to existential despair, a Sartrean sense of the meaningless of life? Thomas Aquinas has the answer. The great medieval scholastic said that the contingency of a thing tells us that it doesn’t contain within itself the reason for its own existence. This is why we naturally and spontaneously look for the cause of a contingent state of affairs. Why did that cloud come to be? What is keeping that insect alive? Why am I writing this article? But if that cause is itself contingent, then we have to look for its cause. And if that cause is contingent, our search must go on. What we cannot do is endlessly appeal to contingent causes of contingent states of affairs. And thus we must come, finally, to some cause that is not itself caused and which in turn causes contingent things to be. And this, Aquinas says, is what people mean when they use the word “God.”

Critics of religion sometimes say that priests and ministers present themselves at moments of sickness and tragedy — in hospitals, nursing homes, and funeral parlors — because they are providing a pathetic crutch to those who can’t deal with the sadness of life. But this is hopelessly superficial. Religious leaders do indeed go to those places, precisely because it is there that people experience their contingency with particular acuteness and such experiences open the mind and the heart to God. When we are shaken, we seek by a very healthy instinct for that which is ultimately stable.

At the end of World War II and in the wake of September 11th, churches were filled across our country, and I would be willing to bet, when the coronavirus passes, they will be filled again. I would urge you to read this phenomenon not merely psychologically but metaphysically: tragedy sparks an awareness of contingency, and an awareness of contingency giving rise to a deeper sense of God.

Bishop Robert Barron is an auxiliary bishop of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles and the founder of Word on Fire Catholic Ministries.
**La tragedia, la contingencia y un sentido más profundo de Dios**

He vivido en Santa Bárbara, California, durante los últimos cuatro años. En ese breve tiempo, mis vecinos y yo hemos experimentado una serie de tragedias reales. Hace poco más de dos años, el terrible incendio Thomas estalló en mi región pastoral, en las cercanías del Colegio Santo Tomás de Aquino (en inglés Thomas Aquinas College, de ahí el nombre). Durante un mes espantoso, él devastador camino desde Santa Paula a través de Ventura, Carpinteria, Montecito, y finalmente comenzó a devorar el follaje de las colinas justo al norte de mi casa. Un sábado por la mañana, mientras estaba de pie en mi jardín delantero, mirando fijamente las llamas, un capitán de bomberos retirado tuvo de nuevo su coche y gritó por la ventana: “¡Monserré, ¿qué hace todavía aquí! Las brasas están volando por todas partes; todo el vecindario podría incendiarse”.

Todos nos sentimos aliviados cuando, unos días después, las lluvias finalmente llegaron y apagaron las llamas. Pero esa lluvia bienvenida se convirtió rápidamente en un diluvio, provocando un deslizamiento de lodo en las colinas devastadas por el fuego sobre Montecito. Veinticinco personas murieron arrastradas por el deslizamiento. En noviembre de ese mismo año, 2018, un hombre perturbado entró en un restaurante y abarrotado de gente llamado “Borderline”, situado en Thousand Oaks, en el extremo oriental de mi región pastoral. Abrió fuego al azar y mató a trece personas, incluyendo a un valiente policía que trató de detenerlo. El Dia del Trabajo el pasado septiembre, treinta y cinco personas que dormían bajo cubierta en un barco de buque amarrado justo en la costa de Santa Bárbara, murieron quebradas mientras el fuego rugía por sus estrechos camarotes.

He pensado en todas estas tragedias mientras nosotros, los habitantes de Santa Bárbara, junto con todo el país, nos enfrentamos ahora a la crisis del coronavirus. Creo que es justo decir que, a principios de año, nadie la veía venir. Nadie habría predicho que decenas de miles de personas se infectarían por un patógeno peligroso, que miles de personas morirían, que estaríamos encerrados en nuestras casas, que la economía se derrumbaría. Lo que parecía hace poco un tiempo un estado de cosas bastante estable desde el punto de vista de mi casa. Un sábado por la mañana, mientras el fuego rugía por nuestras casas, todo parecía estar en orden... pero no.

(Más textos sobre la crisis del coronavirus.)

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**Las iglesias como hospitales de campaña**

La mayoría de nosotros estamos familiarizados con el comentario del papa Francisco de que hoy la iglesia necesita ser un hospital de campaña. ¿Qué implica esto?

Primero, que ahora mismo la iglesia no es un hospital de campaña o, al menos, no mucho. Demasiadas iglesias de todas denominaciones ven el mundo más como un oponente que debe ser combatido que como un campo de batalla sembrado de personas heridas a las que se llama a atender. Las iglesias hoy, en palabras del papa Francisco, han cambiado con frecuencia una imagen del Libro del Apocalipsis, donde Jesús está fuera de la puerta llamando, tratando de entrar, por una situación donde Jesús está llamando en la puerta desde dentro de la iglesia, tratando de salir.

Así, ¿cómo podrían nuestras iglesias, nuestras comunidades eclesiales, llegar a ser hospitales de campaña?

En un artículo maravillosamente provocativo de un reciente número de America Magazine, el escritor espiritual checo Tomas Halik sugiere que para que nuestras iglesias eclesiales lleguen a ser “hospitales de campaña” necesitan asumir tres papeles: Uno diagnóstico, donde identifiquen los signos de los tiempos; uno preventivo, donde creen un sistema inmune en el mundo en el que los virus malignos del temor, odio, populismo y nacionalismo estén deshaciendo comunidades; y uno convaleciente, donde ayuden al mundo a superar los traumas del pasado a través del perdón.

Concretamente, ¿cómo podría ser imagi-...
Thinking through the rationing of ventilators

When ventilators are in short supply, several key ethical principles can assist clinicians:

1) Ventilators should not be rationed based on categorical exclusions such as a patient’s age, disability (e.g. being paraplegic) or other secondary traits, but rather on the basis of clinical data including likelihood of survival, organ function and other clinically relevant medical data or test results. Various medical “scoring tools” can be used to objectively evaluate this information about a patient’s status and to make comparisons among patients.

2) If two clinically similar patients arrive at the emergency room, the allocation of a ventilator to one patient over another can be done on a first-come-first-served basis, a lottery or another randomized approach.

3) It is generally immoral to take away without consent the ventilator of a patient still in need of it in order to give it to another patient who may die without it.

4) In situations where a patient on a ventilator is clearly deteriorating, and where Covid-19 and its complications can reasonably be expected to cause the patient’s death even with continued ventilator support, dialogue should be initiated with the patient or his designated health care agent to obtain consent to remove the ventilator. Obtaining free and informed consent helps resolve nearly every problematic angle in the ventilator rationing process. Scoring tools can be used to decide which patient’s health care agent should be approached first. Attention must always remain focused on establishing and maintaining honest and open communication with the patient, family and the health care agent throughout difficult triage situations.

5) Patients who relinquish a ventilator in triage situations, or who cannot be given a ventilator due to lack of availability, should receive not only alternative forms of medical treatment and palliative measures to manage their discomfort, but also spiritual support rooted in their particular religious tradition. This would include visits from a pastor, minister, priest, etc. where final requests, last sacraments, and other needs can be attended to.

During the Covid-19 crisis, some commentators have recommended taking tough choices out of the hands of front-line clinicians, and handing them over to dedicated triage officers or triage committees to decide. In a recent article in the New England Journal of Medicine (NEJM), for example, Dr. Robert Truog and his collaborators offer this approach as a way to “protect” clinicians:

“Reports from Italy describe physicians ‘weeping in the hospital hallways because of the choices they were going to have to make.’ The angst that clinicians may experience when asked to withdraw ventilators for reasons not related to the welfare of their patients should not be underestimated — it may lead to debilitating and disabling distress for some clinicians. One strategy for avoiding this tragic outcome is to use a triage committee to buffer clinicians from this potential harm.”

The main goal during triage, however, cannot be to “buffer clinicians” or “soften the angst” of what is clearly a difficult and challenging set of decisions. Nor is it to “save the most lives possible in a time of unprecedented crisis,” as proposed in the NEJM article. Nor is it to favor those with “the best prospects for the longest remaining life,” as others have suggested, by relying on a utilitarian calculus that favors the young and the strong.

The goal must instead be to make allocation decisions based on evidential practices, as far as possible, across the spectrum of patients, without turning to biased “quality of life” assessments. Even in a pandemic, the first priority remains the provision of outstanding patient care.

Triage scenarios involve emergency situations. In an emergency, as the plane’s engines flame out, the captain should not be sidetracked in favor of a remote “landing committee” working to bring the plane to a safe touchdown. Instead, passengers should be able to entrust themselves to a pilot with professional skills, instincts and expertise, somebody who is fully invested in the critical task at hand. The pilot’s personal involvement in the fate of his passengers mirrors the physician’s accomplishment of his patients in a time of crisis, with these front-line clinicians properly assuming a key role in making decisions about the allocation of limited medical resources.

Rather than trying to offload responsibility to a committee to “mitigate the enormous emotional, spiritual, and existential burden to which caregivers may be exposed,” as the NEJM article phrases it, front-line clinicians, together with their patients and/or their health care agents, should manage these critical decisions, with triage committees serving in advisory, rather than decision-making or adjudicating capacities.

If rationing becomes necessary, sound ethical principles not only enable responsible triage decisions to be made, but can also help clinicians to avoid panic and calmly accompany each patient entering a health care facility, including those facing their final days and hours.

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Father Tad Pacholczyk
Making Sense of Bioethics

In early March, I went to Sam’s Club to stock up for the coming shelter-in-place order. On a whim, I put yeast and a large bag of flour into my cart. Having never baked bread before, it was the definition of a random purchase. Something in me thought bread may be hard to come by, so I wanted the ingredients to bake it myself if need be.

As things became more uncertain with schools and businesses closing, public Masses suspended and all my speaking events canceled for the coming months, the very reality of “I’m not in control of any of this” began to live rent-free in my head.

The world seemed to stop, and answers were less clear each day. I found myself in my kitchen with nothing but time, a lot of all-purpose flour, and this shrink-wrapped pack of yeast, with the one thing I could control: learning how to bake bread.

A month into this, the yeast has definitely earned its spot in the fridge and my stand mixer has proven its weight in gold. The Great McGrady Bake Off happens daily, the 2-year-old ready to taste test everything.

So much has been lost in this pandemic — time with friends and family, the chance to worship together in our parishes, even the feeling of security and safety. Uncertainty reigns supreme.

With the loss of control came a great sense of fear and panic, but with that a remarkable chance to stop, to settle and to trust, not just in my own plans or desires but perhaps in the bigger plans of an all-knowing God who never permits an evil from which a greater good cannot be accomplished.

As churches had to close their doors, priests and bishops became very creative with how to reach their people. The first week that public Masses were suspended in my diocese we had a eucharistic procession throughout the whole parish territory, Jesus literally exposed in the monstrance on an altar in the back of a red Ford pickup.

Online conferences were developed, youth groups began gathering via Zoom and Skype, and a hunger began to grow within us all for the Eucharist and for our community. With that growing hunger, I am convinced we will see churches packed to the brim when this is over.

A time for the domestic church to flourish

Catholics love the family. To be Catholic, one could say, is tantamount to affirming family life in its manifold expressions. We affirm the many good things that happen at the heart of the home as essential to nurture individual lives and to build society.

Family life holds a special place in the Catholic imagination. It is in the family where we learn to relate to others, love, share our feelings, argue, listen, forgive, negotiate and grow in the great adventure of being human.

At the heart of the family, we learn about what is true, good and beautiful. The younger members of the family often rely on the guidance of the more experienced ones to discern values. We learn from one another as we face our mistakes and their consequences.

It is in the family where we first discover that God walks with us in history. Building upon the fragility of human love, one learns about God’s merciful and infinite love in Jesus Christ. In the context of the family, we learn to be in conversation with God through prayer.

From antiquity, Christians have referred to the family as a domestic church. So did the Second Vatican Council in its Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, Lumen Gentium (No. 11).

The events affecting our lives during this time of pandemic have led many Catholics to reencounter our families. Ironi-
Catholic Voices

Letter to my post-quarantine self

To my post-quarantine self:

I’m writing to remind you of how things were during the COVID-19 pandemic, to chronicle some lessons you learned, and to remind you of the kind of change you wished to see in your life after lockdown.

For starters, you should not quit your day job. You are neither a good barber nor hair colorist.

You are, however, a decent cook. You learned to make flavorful, satisfying meals out of the remnants of your pantry, drawing upon the “Italian peasant” part of your genome sequence and your grandparents’ legacy of living through the Great Depression.

You felt good to use the produce, canned goods and spices you had before buying more. You bought what was available, not what you craved. Your habits of consumption changed because of scarcity and limited windows of time to shop. You thought of the poor each time you sat down to eat, and you prayed for them.

You promised not to take for granted the opportunity to sit face-to-face with family members and friends, and you committed to putting away your phone when you were with them. Zoom and FaceTime were cheap imitations of the real thing, but they did foster connection when you needed it. You checked in on your grandmother more often and you made it a point to reach out to your single friends and those you knew were lonely.

You swore off judging anyone else’s parenting style (egregious and abusive behavior aside). You swapped stories with fellow parents of what it was like to be on video conference calls while holding a teething baby, worry about putting food on the table, navigate digital platforms to download your children’s homework, and make your home function as a school, office, gym, playground and cafeteria without any set change or intermission.

Some days were slow and some days flew by. You noticed your infant son’s hair come in a little more each day and understood how God could in fact number the hairs on your head. Sustained, careful attention turned out to be quite important.

You tried to keep a rhythm to your life: The Sabbath was for leisure while the rest of the week was for the circus. It was important to dress smartly for Mass and for holidays, to mark birthdays and feast days, to send cards and letters. You made sure to thank the ordinary heroes who were risking themselves for their families and the common good.

You smiled at people six feet away from you on your walks and when you had to wear a mask, you waved instead. You thought more intentionally about what it meant to love your neighbor. You stopped reading news after the dinner hour because it was too hard and the statistics were oppressive.

You were grateful for a reprieve from the culture wars and incessant political coverage, especially in an election year. You were sad the abortion clinics stayed open but grateful that the elderly, disabled and infirm got their due. You were hopeful that people would extend that radical solidarity to pregnant women and children in time.

You made lists of places you wanted to show your son when you could travel again: national parks, New York City and St. Peter’s Square. The latter two gained even more meaning and historical significance during this period.

It was a time of great anxiety, but hope was more prevalent. It was a time of darkness, but springtime—and Easter—eventually came.

Elise Italiano Ureneck is a communications consultant and a columnist for Catholic News Service.
Por Cindy Wooden
Catholic News Service

CIUDAD DEL VATICANO (CNS) -- El papa Francisco pidió a los católicos que hagan un esfuerzo especial en mayo para rezar el rosario, sabiendo que al hacerlo se unirán con los creyentes de todo el mundo para pedir por la intercesión de María para detener la pandemia de coronavirus.

"Sentimos juntos el rostro de Cristo con el corazón de María, nuestra Madre, que nos unirá todavía más como familia espiritual y nos ayudará a superar esta prueba", dijo el papa en una carta dirigida a todos los católicos y publicada por el Vaticano el 25 de abril.

El mes de mayo está tradicionalmente dedicado a María y muchos católicos ya tienen la costumbre de rezar el rosario en casa durante el mes, señaló. "Las restricciones de la pandemia nos han obligado a valorar esta dimensión doméstica, también desde un punto de vista espiritual".

"Ustedes pueden elegir, según la situación, rezar juntos o de manera personal, apreciando lo bueno de ambas posibilidades", dijo. "Pero, en cualquier caso, hay un secreto para hacerlo: la sencillez, y es fácil encontrar, incluso en internet, buenos esquemas de oración para seguir".

El papa Francisco escribió dos oraciones a María que se pueden recitar al final del rosario, oraciones que "yo mismo diré durante el mes de mayo, unido espiritualmente a ustedes".

Ambas oraciones reconocen la cercanía de María con los seguidores de su hijo y piden su protección y su intercesión igual como ella intercedió ante Jesús en nombre de los recién casados en Caná que se había llenado de vino para su banquete de bodas.

"Estamos seguros de que lo concederán para que, como en Caná de Galilea, vuelvan la alegría y la fiesta después de esta prueba", dice una de las oraciones.

Las oraciones del papa Francisco también incluyen intenciones específicas para aquellos que están enfermos, para quienes cuidan de hacer las cosas, para aquellos que buscan curas y vacunas y para los líderes del gobierno que deben encontrar una manera de proteger a su gente.

"Santa María, toca las conciencias para que las grandes sumas de dinero utilizadas en la incrementación y en el perfeccionamiento de armamentos sean destinadas a promover estilos de vida tranquilos para la mejora de los imbéciles para futuras catástrofes similares", dice una de las oraciones.

"Madre amantísima, acredita en el mundo el sentido de pertenencia a una única y gran familia, tomando conciencia del vínculo que nos une a todos, para que, con un espíritu fraterno y solidario, salgamos no de los peligros, sino de la adversidad que vemos en el mundo, que es el remanso", concluyó.

"Animar la firmeza en la fe, la perseverancia en el servicio y la constancia en la oración".

El texto de la carta y las oraciones en español: http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/es/letters/2020/documents/papa-francesco_20200425_lettera-mesedimaggi.html
The annual Texas Mission Council Conference was held on February 21–23, 2020. The theme was “Bringing Mission Home,” with guest speaker, Jesuit Father Fred Kammer. Father Kammer is a priest, an attorney, and a member of the Central and Southern Province of Jesuits. He is the director of the Jesuit Social Research Institute at Loyola University New Orleans. His topic was “God’s Justice: Our Mission.”

Father Kammer has served the poor and has been a strong advocate for social justice. He stated, “I think we still need to stay focused on racism and poverty as they continue to be major problems not just in the South, but across the whole country.” He stated that Pope Francis and leaders have said, “We have a serious problem in this country/world in terms of inequality, and we need to continue to address that.” We need to be able to speak and stand for justice for those who can’t speak for themselves.

Other guest speakers included:
Sister Denise LaRock, DC, a member of the Daughters of Charity Saint Vincent de Paul. Her religious community are women dedicated to serving those marginalized or living in poverty. Sister Denise is the coordinator of the Interfaith Welcome Coalition and a coordinator of the outreach at the Greyhound bus station for families seeking asylum coming from family detention or Border Patrol holds.
Sister Susan Mika, OSB, a Benedictine Sister who currently serves as director of the Benedictine Coalition for Responsible Investment (CRI). Sister Susan is very much involved, attending shareholder meetings to speak on their practices. She urges them to enhance their policies with the current United States immigration policies as part of the Interfaith Welcome Coalition (IWC).

Next year’s conference has been scheduled for February 19–21, 2021 in San Antonio, Texas, at the Oblate Renewal Center. Save the date!
Body and Blood? St. Paul tells us in Gal 5:22 that peace is a fruit of the Spirit. We can’t produce it ourselves, but we can ask the Holy Spirit to work in our hearts and minds to grow this fruit of Jesus we have already received in the sacraments. In the power and love of the Holy Spirit, the fruit of peace can grow in the quietness of listening prayer, in seeking and doing God’s will, in serving others, in faithful suffering, and in Spiritual Communion. We can receive peace as courage and confidence in Jesus Christ and in the joy of knowing we are children of the Father, redeemed by the Son, and sanctified by the Holy Spirit. Holiness of heart and life that brings peace grows through discipline and dying to self. In the Letter to the Hebrews we read, “For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant; later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it” (12:11). We trust that if our minds are fixed on Jesus, we, too, can experience the perfect peace with God Isaiah wrote about (26:3).

Because Jesus is our peace, we can live with him, in him, and through him in our attitudes and relationships as peace-makers. In the Sermon on the Mount in the Beatitudes, Jesus teaches us, “Blessed are the peace-makers, for they shall be called sons of God” (Mt 5:9). Not only are we to live peaceably but also to work actively to bring reconciliation between persons, beginning in our own families and extending into all relationships and to the larger community. "Strive for peace with all men, and for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord" (Heb 12:14).

In his first World Peace Day message January 2006, Pope Benedict XVI reminded us that in keeping with Jesus’ mission, the Church must proclaim the Gospel of peace, not only as an absence of war but as tranquility of order: "If peace is to be authentic and lasting, it must be built on the bedrock of the truth about God and the truth about man. This truth alone can create a sensitivity to justice and openness to love and solidarity, while encouraging everyone to work for a truly free and harmonious human family. The foundations of authentic peace rest on the truth about God and man.” In his second World Peace Day message in January 2007, Pope Benedict emphasized that respect for the human person is at the heart of peace and that “peace is both a gift and a task. As redemption and right relationship with God, peace is his gift to us. As right relationship with others, it is a task for us to achieve with the grace of God.”

Can we reconcile what Jesus reveals and the Church teaches about peace, with his words "Do not think that I have come to bring peace on earth; I have not come to bring peace, but a sword" (Mt 10:34)?

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BISHOP

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naïve. Hope is realistic, and part of reality is the fact that there is more to the situation than meets the eye — God is at work now, just as he was on that first Easter morning. Because we are a people of hope, even in a situation where things have fallen apart and all seems lost, we can get up, put one foot in front of the other, and let God make something beautiful out of it.

In my faith tradition, we believe that hope does not come to us naturally. Hope is a theological virtue which is infused into the human heart by God’s action. We cannot acquire hope by our own human effort; we receive it as a gift bestowed by God. Therefore, when we find ourselves low on hope, we pray to God for more of it. He is always ready to give us a new dose of hope. Unlike the limited supply of coronavirus test kits, God’s supply of hope is infinite.

The coronavirus is highly contagious, but hope is contagious as well. When we are around a person of hope, God inspires us to become more hopeful. Likewise, when we live out the virtue of hope, God uses us as his humble instruments to instill the gift of hope in our neighbors.

For Christians, the message of Easter is not just about the historical fact that Jesus Christ rose from the dead nearly 2,000 years ago. It is also about the fact that God brings new life to us today, even when there seems to be only hopelessness, fear, and despair. For us, the true meaning of Easter is about opening ourselves up to the transformation of God’s new life, every single day.

God has not abandoned the human race. The same divine power that gloriously resurrected the body of Jesus on Easter morning is still operative in our world in 2020. God will transform us in this historic moment, if we will place our fears in his hands, trust in his grace, and ask for his gift of hope.

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PASTORAL CARE

he had. When we see young people hurting, it is easy to do nothing because we are not qualified or feel inadequate. It takes courage to see, care, and respond with whatever tools and gifts we have at our disposal. We may not have enough to fulfill the needs of that young person, but we can accompany them and help them find the help they need.

The Good Samaritan entered into a messy situation, but also knew his limits. Often, when working with young people, we don’t engage in pastoral care because of the messiness. Just like the Good Samaritan, we must enter into the messiness knowing our limits. The Good Samaritan didn’t know what he could do, but he tried to do what he wasn’t capable of doing. While we must use our skills of listening and entering into dialogue, we must also use our skills of referral. We must know how and when to refer young people and their families to those who are more qualified to offer the professional help needed.

After doing what he can and getting the man help, the Samaritan continues on his journey. He does not bring him into his own home or adopt him. Many of us will have the opportunity to journey with a number of young people, but we may not be privileged to journey with them for their entire lives. It is our job to do what we can during the time we are given, and then continue on our journey of faith and ministry to help others who are on our path.

That does not mean we don’t follow up. We see that the Good Samaritan intends to follow up when he tells the innkeeper that he will repay the innkeeper on his way back. When we perhaps casually refer young people to the help they need, our role does not end. We should try to follow up and check in. This may be difficult and at times the young person or their family may not want our further involvement. We must respect that, knowing that our sincerity in our compassion and caring will give the message that we truly want what is best for them.

Just like the parable of the Good Samaritan is a model for us, young people in need of care can teach others how to care for the people in their lives who are experiencing difficulties. Pastoral care is about having someone who cares. May we all be more like the Good Samaritan — seeing those who are hurting, reaching out in compassion, doing what we can with what we can, and helping them to find the care we cannot provide.

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

OBISPO

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en los hospitales, en las tiendas de comestibles, y en su propia familia.

Vivir como un pueblo de esperanza no es lo mismo como ver la vida a través de lentes color de rosa. No es ingenuo. La esperanza es realista, y una parte de la realidad es el hecho de que hay más de la situación de lo que parece - Dios está trabajando ahora, así como lo estaba en esa primera mañana de Pascua. Debido a que somos un pueblo de esperanza, incluir en una situación de lo que las cosas han desembocado y todo parece perdido, podemos levantarnos, poner un pie delante del otro, y dejar a Dios hacer algo hermoso de ella.

En mi tradición de fe, creemos que la esperanza no nos llega de forma natural. La esperanza es una virtud teológica que se infunde en el corazón humano por la acción de Dios. No podemos adquirir esperanza por nuestro propio esfuerzo humano; lo recibimos como un don concedido por Dios. Por lo tanto, cuanto nos encontramos bajos en esperanza, oramos a Dios por más de lo mismo. Él está siempre dispuesto a dar nos una nueva dosis de esperanza. A diferencia de la limitada suministro de kits de prueba del coronavirus, el suministro de esperanza de Dios es infinita.

El coronavirus es muy contagiosa, pero la esperanza es contagiosa también. Cuando está cerca de una persona de esperanza, Dios nos insufla una ser más esperanzador. Del mismo modo, cuando vivimos la virtud de la esperanza, Dios nos usa como sus humildes instrumentos para infundir el don de la esperanza en nuestros vecinos.

Para los cristianos, el mensaje de Pascua no es sólo sobre el hecho histórico de que Jesucristo se levantó de los muertos hace casi 2.000 años. También se trata del hecho de que Dios trae a una nueva vida a nuestros hermanos en Dios incluso cuando parece que hay una desesperación, el miedo y la desesperación. Para nosotros, el verdadero significado de la Pascua se trata de abrirnos a la transformación de la vida nueva de Dios, todos los días.

Dios no ha abandonado la raza humana. El mismo poder divino que gloriosamente resucitó el cuerpo de Jesús en la mañana de Pascua sigue siendo operativa en nuestro mundo en 2020. Dios nos transformará en este momento histórico, si ponemos nuestros temores en sus manos, confiamos en su gracia, y pedimos su don de la esperanza.

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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.
OPINO
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churches these days is quite revealing. I also miss my church, I must say.

The present circumstances, though, serve as an invitation to revisit with renewed appreciation other ways of being church, especially the domestic church.

Let’s not capitulate before the idea that only people outside our homes can share the faith. While the sacraments are central to our identity, Catholicism has not ended because an ordained minister is not available day and night.

Let us remember that the early Christian communities were family-based and gathered mainly in homes where many family configurations celebrated their faith in the risen Lord.

In most parts of the world, Catholics live and practice their faith primarily in the context of the domestic church. For millions of Catholics, having access to a priest or a large church 24/7 is a rare privilege.

Every now and then, we need to revisit what sustains our Catholic imagination. Yes, let’s hope for a return to our beautiful temples. Let’s also affirm the value of the family as domestic church, and let it flourish!

This is a perfect time for catechists of all ages to arise in the context of the home; a time for Gospel-inspired rituals and practices that make God present in the daily life of the family; a time to recognize the face of Christ in every member of our household.

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

SAINTS
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persecution of Christians. The surprised Emperor ordered his former guard to be beaten to death. Richard McBrien writes in Lives of the Saints that he was buried on the Appian Way close to the site of where a basilica was erected in his honor, possibly by emperor Constantine. He is appealed to as protection against plague.

A website account (catholic.org) states that according to historical records, Sebastian defended the city of Rome against the plague in 680. His association with the plague is thought to be because he survived being shot full of arrows. In pagan belief, pestilence was delivered by arrows shot by the gods above. His feast day is January 20 in the West.

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

EDICTAL SUMMONS
May 1, 2020
CASE: MARTINEZ -- VASQUEZ
NO.: SO/20/29

The Tribunal Office of the Catholic Diocese of San Angelo is seeking RUBEN SALAZAR VASQUEZ.

You are hereby summoned to appear before the Tribunal of the Catholic Diocese of San Angelo, at 804 Ford Street, San Angelo, Texas 76905, on or before the 31st day of May 2020, to answer to the Petition of MARIA ESTELA SANTILAN MARTINEZ, now introduced before the Diocesan Tribunal in an action styled, “MARIA MARTINEZ and RUBEN VASQUEZ, Petition for Declaration of Invalidity of Marriage.” Said Petition is identified as Case: MARTINEZ -- VASQUEZ; Protocol No.: SO/20/29, on the Tribunal Docket of the Diocese of San Angelo.

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

Given at the Tribunal of the Diocese of San Angelo on May 1, 2020.

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

EDICTAL SUMMONS
May 1, 2020
CASE: LEON -- CERRILLO
NO.: SO/20/30

The Tribunal Office of the Catholic Diocese of San Angelo is seeking PEDRO LOPEZ CERRILLO.

You are hereby summoned to appear before the Tribunal of the Catholic Diocese of San Angelo, at 804 Ford Street, San Angelo, Texas 76905, on or before the 31st day of May 2020, to answer to the Petition of ANGELICA PEREZ LEON, now introduced before the Diocesan Tribunal in an action styled, “ANGELICA LEON and PEDRO CERRILLO, Petition for Declaration of Invalidity of Marriage.” Said Petition is identified as Case: LEON -- CERRILLO; Protocol No.: SO/20/30, on the Tribunal Docket of the Diocese of San Angelo.

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

Given at the Tribunal of the Diocese of San Angelo on May 1, 2020.

Reverend Tom Barley, MSW, MBA, M. Div., JCL Judicial Vicar
Sister Imelda of Jesus Kenzinger, OCarm
1929–2020

Loretta was born in Chicago, but her parents moved to Corpus Christi when she was 8 months old because her father had a job opportunity there. She loved being close to the water and swimming. While in Texas, her two sisters, Margaret and Mary, and her brother, Martin, were born. At age 10, her family moved back to Chicago because of the war situation. She had completed her 5th grade at Incarnate Word Academy. Loretta always retained her love for Texas.

In Chicago, Loretta attended Saint Kilian’s Dominican Grade School and from there entered Aquinas Dominican High. She chose for her Confirmation name Clare. It was Saint Clare’s devotion to prayer and the Blessed Sacrament that inspired her. During these years, she enjoyed helping out in her aunt’s flower shop.

WWII deeply affected Loretta, so much so that she seriously thought of joining the military. However, she was too young. She eventually found the best way to help: “As a Carmelite, my vocation touches the church as I try to be always ready and available in a spirit of prayer to intercede for the needs of all people in the church.”

And not only in the church, but in the world over. Her favorite game was “What in the World” — which gives information about all the nations of the world. She belonged to God’s “Secret Service” — and still does!

Loretta’s call to Carmel blossomed and on September 5, 1944, she entered the Carmelite Monastery in Allentown, Pennsylvania. It is specially dedicated to Saint Therese of Lisieux (they also share a Birthday: January 2!). Besides being initiated into Carmelite contemplative life and prayer, she learned many a kitchen trick as she began her life-long post in the kitchen: canning, baking and cooking. Her kitchen work was always well seasoned with generosity, goodness, a willing smile, and most of all plenty of love for Jesus and her sisters.

On June 18, 1950, after years of preparation, Sister Imelda (the name she had chosen), made her Solemn Profession “until death.” Four years later she was chosen to be part of a New Foundation going to the Fargo Diocese (Carmel of Mary, Wahpeton, North Dakota).

Sister lost her mother, Ann Kenzinger, in May 1967 and her father, Frank Kenzinger, in June of 1971.

In 1986, the Community in Wahpeton was asked about the possibility of making a Foundation in the San Angelo Diocese. After much prayer, the sisters agreed. Anyone who felt God’s call could volunteer after weeks of prayer by all. Sister Imelda did not volunteer. She confided later that she thought it might be selfish, because she loved Texas so much! But when one of the original group needed to be replaced, Sister Imelda was asked if she was willing to go. (God works in wondrous ways! Of course, she agreed.

Sister Imelda found her joy in serving others. She also enjoyed doing artwork and loved geographical and historical books on the Bible and Carmelite Saints. She was gifted in painting and delicate artwork but didn’t spend much time at it. She was a precious community person, and we thank God from the bottom of our hearts for the gift she was and IS to us!

Sister is survived by her sister, Mary Jakubieck, of McHenry, Illinois, and many nieces and nephews.

She will be entombed in the Carmelite Mausoleum of St. Therese’s Valley in Coopersburg (Allentown), Pennsylvania.

Family and friends may share condolences at www.harper-funeralhome.com.