May 29, 2020

WASHINGTON – Seven U.S. bishop chairmen of committees within the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops have issued a statement in the wake of the death of Mr. George Floyd and the protests which have broken out in Minneapolis and in other cities in the United States.

Bishop Shelton J. Fabre of Houma-Thibodaux, chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee Against Racism; Archbishop Nelson J. Pérez of Philadelphia, chairman of the Committee on Cultural Diversity in the Church; Archbishop Paul S. Coakley of Oklahoma City, chairman of the Committee on Domestic Justice and Human Development; Archbishop Joseph F. Naumann of Kansas City in Kansas, chairman of the Committee on Pro-Life Activities; Bishop Joseph C. Bambera of Scranton, chairman of the Committee for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs; Bishop David G. O’Connell of Los Angeles, chairman of the Subcommittee on the Catholic Campaign for Human Development; and Bishop Joseph N. Perry, auxiliary bishop of Chicago, chairman of the Subcommittee on African American Affairs have issued the following statement:

We are broken-hearted, sickened, and outraged to watch another video of an African American man being killed before our very eyes. What’s more astounding is that this is happening within mere weeks of several other such occurrences. This is the latest wake-up call that needs to be answered by each of us in a spirit of determined conversion.

Racism is not a thing of the past or simply a throwaway political issue to be bandied about when convenient. It is a real and present danger that must be met head on. As members of the Church, we must stand for the more difficult right and just actions instead of the easy wrongs of indifference. We cannot turn a blind eye to these atrocities and yet still try to profess to respect every human life. We serve a God of love, mercy, and justice.

While it is expected that we will plead for peaceful non-violent protests, and we certainly do, we also stand in passionate support of communities that are understandably outraged. Too many communities around this country feel their voices are not being heard, their complaints about racist treatment are unheeded, and we are not doing enough to point out that this deadly treatment is antithetical to the Gospel of Life.

As we said eighteen months ago in our most recent pastoral letter against racism, Open Wide Our Hearts, for people of color some interactions with police can be fraught with fear and even danger. People of good conscience must never turn a blind eye when citizens are being deprived of their human dignity and even their lives. Indifference is not an option. “As bishops, we unequivocally state that racism is a life issue.”

We join Archbishop Bernard A. Hebda of St. Paul and Minneapolis in praying for the repose of the soul of Mr. George Floyd and all others who have lost their lives in a similar manner. We plead for an end to the violence in the wake of this tragedy and for the victims of the rioting. We pray for comfort for grieving families and friends. We pray for peace across the United States, particularly in Minnesota, while the legal process moves forward. We also anticipate a full investigation that results in rightful accountability and actual justice.

We join our brother bishops to challenge everyone to come together, particularly with those who are from different cultural backgrounds. In this encounter, let us all seek greater understanding amongst God’s people. So many people who historically have been disenfranchised continue to experience sadness and pain, yet they endeavor to persevere and remain people of great faith. We encourage our pastors to encounter and more authentically accompany them, listen to their stories, and learn from them, finding substantive ways to enact systemic change. Such encounters will start to bring about the needed transformation of our understanding of true life, charity, and justice in the United States. Hopefully, then there will be many voices speaking out and seeking healing against the evil of racism in our land.

As we anticipate the Solemnity of Pentecost this weekend, we call upon all Catholics to pray and work toward a new outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Let us pray for a supernatural desire to rid ourselves of the harm that bias and prejudice cause. We call upon Catholics to pray to the Holy Spirit for the Spirit of Truth to touch the hearts of all in the United States and to come down upon our criminal justice and law enforcement systems. Finally, let each and every Catholic, regardless of their ethnicity, beg God to heal our deeply broken view of each other, as well as our deeply broken society.
Statement of U.S. Bishops’ President on George Floyd and the Protests in American Cities

May 31, 2020

WASHINGTON — Archbishop José H. Gomez of Los Angeles and president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) has issued a statement on George Floyd and the protests in American cities that have taken place over the last several days. This follows the Friday statement from seven U.S. bishop chairmen of committees within the USCCB.

Archbishop Gomez’s full statement follows:

The killing of George Floyd was senseless and brutal, a sin that cries out to heaven for justice. How is it possible that in America, a black man’s life can be taken from him while calls for help are not answered, and his killing is recorded as it happens?

I am praying for George Floyd and his loved ones, and on behalf of my brother bishops, I share the outrage of the black community and those who stand with them in Minneapolis, Los Angeles, and across the country. The cruelty and violence he suffered does not reflect on the majority of good men and women in law enforcement, who carry out their duties with honor. We know that. And we trust that civil authorities will investigate his killing carefully and make sure those responsible are held accountable.

We should all understand that the protests we are seeing in our cities reflect the justified frustration and anger of millions of our brothers and sisters who are out to lose everything that they’ve worked hard for. It’s not their fault that they have been treated unfairly.

It is true what Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. said, that riots are the language of the unheard. We should be doing a lot of listening right now. This time, we should not fail to hear what people are saying through their pain. We need to finally root out the racial injustice that still happens today.

But the violence of recent nights is self-destructive and self-defeating. Nothing is gained by violence and so much is lost. Let us keep our eyes on the prize of truth and lasting change.

Legitimate protests should not be exploited by persons who have different values and agendas. Burning and looting communities, ruining the livelihoods of our neighbors, does not advance the cause of racial equality and human dignity.

We should not let it be said that George Floyd died for no reason. We should honor the sacrifice of his life by removing racism and hate from our hearts and renewing our commitment to fulfill our nation’s sacred promise — to be a beloved community of life, liberty, and equality for all.

After weekend of protests, bishops express sorrow over Floyd killing, racism

By Rhina Guidos
Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON (CNS) — Even as the United States still finds itself grappling with the coronavirus pandemic, outrage, grief and anger over the latest killing of an unarmed black man outweighed caution as hundreds of thousands turned out nationwide to protest and many of the country’s Catholic bishops joined the calls for justice.

"The outrage around the death of George Floyd is understandable and justice must be served," said Denver Archbishop Samuel J. Aquila in a May 30 statement referencing the killing of the 46-year-old Floyd, whose last moments of life were recorded on a widely disseminated video showing a white police officer in Minneapolis pushing down on his neck with his knee May 25. Floyd was later pronounced dead.

Four officers from the Minneapolis Police Department were fired May 26, including Derek Chauvin, with whom Floyd pleaded "Please, I can't breathe" as he held him down. Chauvin is facing third-degree murder and second-degree manslaughter charges.

"What did we expect when we learned that in Minneapolis, a city often hailed as a model of inclusivity, the price of a black life is a counterfeit $20 bill?" said Cardinal Blase J. Cupich of Chicago, in a May 31 statement saying he had spent the last few nights watching the protests "in great personal pain as the pent-up anger of our people caught fire across our country."

Floyd was apprehended by the group of officers after a deli worker called 911 saying he had paid with counterfeit $20 bill.

Cardinal Cupich said he's watched as "the city where I was born, the cities where I have lived, the city I pastor now, catch embers from the city where I was educated," and then he watched them "burn."

"Was I horrified at the violence? Yes. But was I surprised? No," he said.

Though protests were largely peaceful, small groups within the demonstrating masses have burned cars, broken into and looted businesses in cities such as Minneapolis, Los Angeles, Philadelphia, New York and Washington -- all which now have put curfews in place.

But in some localities, such as Coral Gables, Florida, and Flint, Michigan, authorities have dialogued and even prayed with protesters.

On May 30, police officers in Coral Gables kneed down with heads bowed and joined protesters, observing several minutes of silence, the amount of time reports say that Floyd spent under Chauvin’s knee. The same day, Sheriff Chris Swanson from Flint Township approached a mass of protesters, telling them he was putting down his weapons and is seen on video telling them: "The only reason we’re here is to make sure that you got a voice -- that’s it." Then they asked him to walk with them and he did.

But in other places, such as the environs of the White House, cars were burned, businesses were vandalized, and authorities

See SORROW, Page 23

Two additional priest assignments announced

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 and clergy effective July 1, 2020:

Father Joshua Gray as parochial vicar of Holy Angels Parish in San Angelo.
Father Giuseppe “Joe” Barbieri, C.P., as parochial vicar of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish in Odessa.

The diocese previously announced that Father Gray would become parochial vicar of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton in Odessa.

The following previously announced assignments are still accurate and will also go into effect on July 1, 2020:

Father Timothy Hayter as Parochial Vicar of St. Ann in Midland.
Father Balachandra Nagipogu as Parochial Vicar of St. Michael in Midland and the Catholic community in Greenwood.
Father Francis Njoku as Pastor of St. Margaret of Cortona in Big Lake, St. Francis of Assisi in Iraan, and St. Thomas in Rankin.

Father Michael Rodriguez as Pastor of St. Joseph in Stanton and St. Isidore in Lenorah.
Father Ryan Rojo as Director of Vocations and Seminarians.
Msgr. Timothy Schwertner returns to a new assignment in his home diocese of Lubbock.
Father Prem Thumma as Administrator of Sacred Heart Cathedral in San Angelo.
Deacon Clemente Villa returns to his position of Pastoral Coordinator of St. Joseph in Stanton and St. Isidore in Lenorah.

Reporting Sexual Abuse

The Catholic Diocese of San Angelo is firmly committed to creating and maintaining the safest possible environment for our children and vulnerable adults. If you or someone you know has been sexually abused by anyone who serves the Church, 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 trastorno o hecho por la Iglesia, estamos aquí para ayudarle. Para reportar incidentes, llame a Lori Hines, Coordinadora de Asistencia a Víctimas, 325-374-7609 (celular), o escriba a la Diócesis de San 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 tratar 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.
Racism is real

El racismo es real

Racism is real. On May 25, 2020, Mr. George Floyd died in Minneapolis, Minnesota. His tragic death caused an outpouring of grief and anger. What happened to Mr. Floyd was sickening. I can understand why people are outraged. It was another instance of a pattern that has been repeated far too many times – Michael Brown, Eric Garner, Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, and now George Floyd. Every human being deserves to be safe, but for African-Americans in this country, they have long lived in fear, doubting that their personal safety will be protected in our society.

To whatever extent there is any bias or racial prejudice affecting the decisions or job performance of any of our public servants, we as a society must root it out. We must continually review our systems of law enforcement and criminal justice, so that they may better reflect the values of fairness and accountability.

The response to the death of George Floyd began as a national outcry against the sin of racism. Some of that response was peaceful and prayerful, but there were also many shameful instances of mob violence, looting, and destruction. To attack and burn the buildings or vehicles of innocent bystanders is a sin against the Ten Commandments — “You shall not steal” and “You shall not covet your neighbor’s good,” to name only two. The promotion of chaos and anarchy does not serve the cause of justice. You cannot solve the problem of victimization by victimizing your neighbor’s good, to name only two. The promotion of chaos and anarchy does not serve the cause of justice.

You cannot solve the problem of victimization by victimizing your neighbor’s good, to name only two. The promotion of chaos and anarchy does not serve the cause of justice.

The prayer of St. Francis of Assisi, “It is enough for me to believe,” is a powerful witness to the life of faith, for it is through our faith that we can truly love. But the other half of the prayer, “and to utter it is a terrible thing,” must be understood as a call to act in love. For love is not just an abstract ideal; it is a way of life. It is a way of making the world a better place, of building community, of healing wounds and restoring relationships.

“Love your neighbor as yourself.” In this way, we see the true meaning of the commandment to love our neighbor as we love ourselves. For love is not just a feeling; it is an action. It is a way of living, a way of being in the world. It is a way of witnessing to the reality of God’s love and mercy.

The context of the commandment to love your neighbor is not just personal; it is also social. Love is not just a relationship between two people; it is a relationship within the community. It is a way of building a society where all are treated with dignity and respect, where everyone is valued and respected. It is a way of creating a world where peace and justice reign.

Racism is real. It is a sin that affects us all. We are called to be people of love and justice, to work for a world where all are treated with dignity and respect, where everyone is valued and respected. We are called to be peacemakers, to work for a world where peace and justice reign.

Bishop Michael J. Sis
Diocese of San Angelo

Obispo Michael J. Sis
Diócesis de San Ángelo

The Angelus JUNE 2020 Page 3

The Prayer Square

Prayer to end racism

Mary, friend and mother to all, through your Son, God has found a way to unite himself to every human being, called to be one people, sisters and brothers to each other.

We ask for your help in calling on your Son, seeking forgiveness for the times when we have failed to love and respect one another.

We ask for your help in obtaining from your Son the grace we need to overcome the evil of racism and to build a just society.

We ask for your help in following your Son, so that prejudice and animosity will no longer infect our minds or hearts but will be replaced with a love that respects the dignity of each person.

Mother of the Church, the Spirit of your Son Jesus warms our hearts: pray for us.


Oración para acabar con el racismo

María, amiga y madre de todos, a través de tu Hijo Dios ha encontrado un camino para unirse a todos los seres humanos, llamados a ser un solo pueblo, hermanas y hermanos entre sí.

Pedimos tu ayuda al recurrir a tu Hijo, buscando el perdón por las veces en que hemos fallado en amarnos y respetarnos.

Pedimos tu ayuda para obtener de tu Hijo la gracia que necesitamos para vencer el mal del racismo y construir una sociedad justa.

Pedimos tu ayuda para seguir a tu Hijo, para que el prejuicio y la animosidad no infecten ya nuestras mentes o corazones sino que sean reemplazados por el amor que respecta la dignidad de cada persona.

Madre de la Iglesia, el Espíritu de tu Hijo Jesús alienta nuestros corazones: Ruego por nosotros.

De la Conferencia de los Obispos Católicos de los Estados Unidos “Abramos Nuestros Corazones: El Incesante Llamado al Amor,” una carta pastoral contra el racismo.

Mira OBISPO, Página 21

See BISHOP, Page 21
Catholic organizations benefit from San Angelo Gives

West Texas Angelus

Every year, on the first Tuesday in May, the San Angelo Area Foundation organizes a concerted effort to encourage giving to local nonprofits, a drive known as “San Angelo Gives.” Over the 24-hour period of May 5, $2,677,064 were raised for 190 local nonprofits through 10,483 individual donations.

Six local Catholic organizations raised a total of $10,210 in donations and prizes.

Angelo Catholic School was the top earning Catholic organization, and 11th overall, netting $53,900 from 128 donations.

Mount Carmel Hermitage in Christoval earned $22,237 from 105 donations. The hermitage was also the recipient of a $500 “Compassionate Community Caring Causes” prize awarded to the organization in each of three categories that raised the most during advanced giving from April 20 to May 4.

The Angelo State University Catholic Newman Center saw 52 donations totaling $13,935.

Catholic Outreach Services of San Angelo received $8,213 from 54 donations.

St. Margaret of Scotland Catholic Church in San Angelo had 24 donations equaling $8,175.

Rounding out the list of Catholic recipients was the Angelo Catholic School Scholarship Fund, which raised $2,250 from 14 donations. The scholarship fund was also the recipient of one of 20 “Stretch Goal” prizes of $1,000, awarded by the San Angelo Area Foundation to 20 organizations who helped push the total over the foundation’s goal of $2.5 million in total fundraising.

The generosity displayed during these difficult times will go a long way to help these organizations. Another coordinated donation drive will take place later this year. The #iGiveCatholic campaign is a nationwide day of giving specifically for Catholic organizations, schools, and parishes, and will be held on Dec. 1.

Sister Alicia Realino’s golden jubilee

By Mary Jaramillo

On Saturday, May 2, 2020, Sister Alicia Realino, Religious Teacher at St. Mary’s Central Catholic School, Odessa, TX, celebrated her Golden Jubilee as a Religious. Though the FOND (Friends of Oblates of Notre Dame) had planned a big celebration for this day, we were challenged by conditions imposed on gatherings due to COVID-19 to create a blessed experience for Sister. With inspiration and guidance from the Holy Spirit, the group was able to surprise Sister Alicia with a celebration via Webex.

Several FOND members and friends of Sister Alicia joined in to sing to her and read congratulatory messages. One message came from the Philippines from Sr. Erlinda “NINGNING” Hisug, OND, Superior General. Other messages were from close friends, Sisters Stella and Regina. Sister Alicia also received tributes from FOND members, past and present faculty, staff, students, and families of St. Mary’s Central Catholic School, the St. Mary’s Church Parishioners and the Filipino-American Association.

Fifty years ago, on that very day, Sister Alicia had made her vows to the Society of the Oblates of Notre Dame. Our Blessed Lady and Her Son, Our Lord and Savior, must have been very pleased as they looked down upon this event. Sister Alicia has indeed been blessed; and we in turn have been blessed by her presence. During her 50 years of service Sister Alicia had a broad international experience having served in the Philippines and Asia before coming to the United States. During her 14 years in Odessa, Sister Alicia has touched many lives, helped educate many children, brought individuals into the church, and brought many back to the church. For that, for her friendship and for her warm spirit, we are so grateful! Her friendship and faith have meant so much to so many.

We pray that Sister Alicia may be blessed many times over as she continues to serve and bless us with her readiness to help, to pray, to teach and to guide. Though we celebrated Sister Alicia’s Golden Jubilee while physically distant from each other, Our Father in heaven, his Son, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit brought us together as a community through this electronic medium. Congratulations Sister Alicia — wishing you the very best in this life.

CALENDARS

Bishop’s Calendar

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Because of the fluid nature of the implementation of Phase One of our return to public celebration of the Mass, please contact the bishop’s assistant, Lupe Castillo, for information about the bishop’s calendar.

325-651-7500
lcastillo@sanangelodiocese.org

Necrology of Priests and Deacons

Please pray for our departed clergy

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City of San Angelo public health official guided by Catholic faith

By Gloria Johns

As a lifetime member of St. Mary Catholic Church in San Angelo, and with a bachelor’s degree in biology and a minor in chemistry from Angelo State University, Sandra Villarreal, Director of Health Services for the City of San Angelo, has brought her faith to work with her for almost 24 years. In her opinion, it’s the perfect job.

“My purpose is to serve people, help people, not just the public out there, but my staff too,” she said. “It’s about what I can give, not what I’m supposed to be getting.”

Sandra began her career in public health as a medical technologist in the lab at Schleicher County Medical Center in Eldorado. She went on to work at West Texas Medical Association, then briefly for the City of San Angelo, before returning and eventually assuming the position of Director of Health Services for the City of San Angelo.

“I knew what God had led me to each place I’ve been been,” she says with assurance. “I know he’s had a hand.”

“I was afraid to move to Eldorado. But that job as a lab technician gave me the confidence to know how to do things, how to fix things. I could fix an expensive piece of equipment. I brought that confidence with me to WTMA. And people have been in my path for a reason also. A girl I knew at WTMA took a job with the City and later told me about a position there. Once I was at the City and getting to know the people in the department and what went on there, it put the thought in my mind that I might want to prepare for a director’s job someday. It was then I started and have since finished my master’s in public administration.”

“There’s a purpose that I don’t always see at the beginning, but it’s always been there when I look back. Trust and obedience goes along with that. A lot of people fight it. But I always know I’ve been led and I prepare. It took me hard work and a few years to get my MPA. Looking back I tell people all the time that I see God’s hand.”

According to the City of San Angelo website, The Health Services Department is responsible for public health issues ranging from restaurant inspections to immunizations to the public smoking ban. Additionally, the department is responsible for project management and grants administration. Under the purview of the department is environmental health for the City and Tom Green County, and nursing.

Most importantly, the Health Services Department is the epicenter of all things related to public health and the COVID-19 virus.

Sandra stated that the department first had conversations with the Department of State Health Services regarding COVID-19 in January. At the time, there was side-bar discussion more than anything about a virus in China, and that the number of cases was growing. The situation was being monitored. In February, PSAs in

world experience disruption in their daily lives.”

He added, “The faith community has always stepped in to enhance response efforts where our public health and clinical settings lack the capacity or expertise to comfort patients, families and whole communities.”

Redfield came to prominence during the emergence of HIV/AIDS in the early 1980s. As a military doctor serving at what was then the Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, he was the first to establish that the disease was not limited to gay men. In 1996, he founded the University of Maryland’s prestigious Institute of Human Virology in Baltimore with his colleagues Dr. William Blattner and Dr. Robert Gallo.

“He has magnificent credentials in public health. He was the first to develop a classification for AIDS and HIV, the Walter Reed classification, and was published in New England Journal of Medicine,” Blattner said. “He spearheaded the development of treatment regimens that were more reliable than the original treatments that were being rolled out.”

Blattner said he and Redfield participated in one of the first conferences on HIV/AIDS with St. John Paul II, then pope, in the late 1980s.

In 2011, Redfield worked with Baltimore-based Catholic Relief Services in Haiti to help treat those injured by a devastating earthquake. With the University of Maryland, Redfield had also been active in Haiti to stop the spread of HIV/AIDS, mirroring his earlier work with the U.S. government in Africa.

Blattner praised the CDC’s response to the coronavirus pandemic thus far, saying the decision to ban travel from China, where the virus originated, bought the country valuable time.

“Dr. Redfield was on top of this. I mean, as soon as there was a snippet of something going on, they were on it in terms of what was going on over there. And then rapidly started to develop strategies,” Blattner told the Catholic Review.

He noted that the highly publicized problems with COVID-19 testing kits were an early setback, but he said the components are fairly sophisticated and

By Tim Swift

Catholic News Service

BALTIMORE (CNS) — When Msgr. Richard Woy sees Dr. Robert Redfield, the director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, on television these days flanked by medical experts issuing the latest guidance on the novel coronavirus he doesn’t just see one of the top health officials in the U.S., he sees one of the faithful.

Msgr. Woy, rector of Baltimore’s Cathedral of Mary Our Queen, said when he met Redfield and his wife, Joyce, “they had been active parishioners here for decades.”

As Redfield helps lead the federal response to the growing threat of coronavirus, which causes the disease COVID-19, his pastor and friends say his years of work studying viruses along with his deep Catholic faith will help guide the country through the crisis.

“Dr. Redfield is not shy about his Catholic faith. And I think it does not compromise in any way his work as a scientist,” Msgr. Woy told the Catholic Review, the media outlet of the Archdiocese of Baltimore. “I do not believe he sees any contradiction between the two whatsoever.”

While they are spending most of their time in Atlanta, where the CDC is based, Msgr. Woy said the Redfields have returned to Baltimore on weekends and attended Masses at the cathedral in February, serving as extraordinary ministers of holy Communion.

Although Redfield was unavailable for an interview, he said in a statement that the faith community will play an important role as the pandemic continues.

In the Archdiocese of Baltimore, Archbishop William E. Lori has closed Catholic schools, issued a dispensation for Mass attendance and taken other measures to limit the spread of the disease. On March 14, the archbishop canceled all public Masses "until further notice.”

“I have witnessed firsthand the impact of the faith community’s work in global disease outbreaks,” Redfield said in his statement. "The same compassion, counsel and care will be just as important as we confront this new virus and as many Americans and others around the

Sandra Villarreal

structuring on basic hygiene such as hand-washing were recommended by the Centers for Disease Control. The snowball effect is, of course, what we have today. As of June 3, there were 64,880 confirmed cases in the State of Texas as reported by the CDC.

“We [City management] put things into practice very early on as far as closures and social distancing, and hopefully that mitigated or lessened what the effects have been.”

“The City departments have worked so well together on managing the crisis,” Sandra volunteered. “I’ve listened to counterparts [in other cities] and see other emails. Others don’t have it so good. It’s been a team effort. … The Health Department couldn’t have done it on its own. I’m so fortunate!”

Calls to the Health Department cover a range of topics from travel warnings, COVID symptoms, quarantine, isolation questions and where testing might be available. “We educate people on what the governor’s Declaration Orders are. Some people call with a concern regarding something they see at an establishment, a restaurant or business.

Sandra’s church ministry is music. Under normal circumstances she sings and accompanies herself on guitar at the 8 a.m. Mass at St. Mary each Sunday. I was one of those she ministered to for the first time some 30 years ago during Holy Week at St. Mary, listing to her most beautiful acapella of “Were You There.”

And I’m happy to share with you the prayer Sandra offers each morning upon waking.

Thank you Father for the dawn of a new day!
Help me today, to do the best that I can in all that I say and all that I do.
May all my thoughts, my words, my actions continue to be for your honor, your glory and your praise and not for mine.
Father in heaven let the Holy Spirit shine forth from my soul, so that all will see a reflection of you in me!
Amen!

(I certainly did!)
**Letter from a diocesan hermit on your return from isolation**

The way of life that many of you have been living since mid-April is only a slight taste of what my life is like as a diocesan hermit. For many of you it has been strange and hard for you live in a limited form of isolation and many of you are very eager to return to your former way of life. You are running back to a life that I left behind many years ago and flee a life that I have lovingly embraced and would never leave. I am writing this letter to you because Bishop Sis thought that I could help you in your transition back to the world and could help you deal with further isolation if the virus rebounds.

I think the best way to achieve this goal is to enlighten you of the virtues of the life you are leaving behind and warn you of the dangers of the life that you are returning to. I believe that human beings are the same today as they have been from the beginning: it is just that the props around us have been changed. All my life I have seen people running. Running from the truth, running from themselves, running from their families, running from their past and ultimately running from God. The most common way that people run is by distancing themselves so they cannot hear the truth, their conscience, and the Holy Spirit as he speaks to them in the depths of their souls. People can distract themselves in many ways. People can distract themselves with entertainment, work, TV, music, computers, social media, and all those devices that people have in their hands that they stare at while they push those virtual buttons. People think that they are living in “reality” and dealing with “reality” if they are living within the system that this world provides, but the truth is everyone, and I mean everyone, is running from reality. As a hermit what I am trying to do is to live in silence as much as the noise of this world as I can so that I can hear the truth about who I am, about the world, and about who God is. Some people think that if you become a hermit that you are running from reality, but the truth is that when you become a hermit you are just beginning the journey towards the Truth, the Way and the Life which God manifested to us in the Person of Jesus Christ, who is the ultimate reality that we need to embrace.

During the past few months you experienced the silencing of some of the noise in your life that distracts you from reality. Perhaps you had your TV going morning till night and you sought out other ways to distract yourselves. As you return to your “normal” way of life be more deliberate about your choices and think about what you are embracing and what you should not embrace of this world. The sins of humanity have perverted and distorted this world from God’s original plan. Therefore Jesus came to bring about his kingdom once more upon this earth. The ways of this world are not the ways of God and wisdom of this world is contrary to the wisdom of God, therefore if you wish to live in the kingdom of God on this earth and be a part of the mission of the church, which is to continue the mission of Christ to establish his kingdom, you need to be very careful of what you embrace and reject of this world. If you listened to the truth while you were in a limited isolation you will be able to make better choices as you return to this world. Although the forced isolation by our government is ending, if you are wise you will continue to remain in silence as much as you can so that you can continue to listen to reality.

**Diocese hires COVID-19 Coordinator**

The Diocese of San Angelo has hired diocesan seminarian Mike Elsner to the position of diocesan COVID-19 Coordinator. Elsner will serve in this role part-time through the end of the summer, at which point he will return to his seminary studies.

In this role, Elsner will help to gather information and resources related to the current COVID-19 epidemic. He will also assist parishes that may need help locating sanitization products or other items necessary to hold public Mass.

**Two seminarians make Dean’s List**

Conception Seminary College in Conception, Missouri, has announced that Diocese of San Angelo seminarians David Garcia and Mauricio Romero are among 15 students to make the spring Dean’s List for the college. Placement on the Dean’s List indicates that the student is a full-time student who has maintained at least a 3.70 GPA on a 12 credit hour class load for the semester.

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**The church’s liturgical response to injustice:**

**Mass texts for peace and justice**

By Father Ryan Rojo

The tragic murder of George Floyd ignited a response unlike anything seen in our nation. The church strongly condemns racism in all its forms, which is clearly stated in the Catechism of the Catholic Church: “Every form of social and cultural discrimination in personal rights on the grounds of sex, race, color, social conditions, language, or religion must be curbed and eradicated as incompatible with God’s design” (CCC 1935). Many Catholics, both clergy and lay alike, have taken seriously this call in their own witness at peaceful rallies, demonstrations, and social media movements.

Believers are invited to evaluate the signs of the times with the spiritual lens of the church’s prayer. There has always been a sense in our tradition that the art of prayer forms right belief, and the privileged place for spiritual formation is within the context of the Mass. The church contains within its spiritual arsenal Mass texts specific to peace and justice. In the Roman Missal, in the section entitled “Masses and Prayers for Various Needs and Occasions,” there exist two sets of Mass texts for The Preservation for Peace and Justice. Any priest is free to use these texts in lieu of the usual weekday and/or weekend options, as long as the day is not impeded by another obligatory celebration. I encourage parishioners to coordinate with their pastors to use these fantastic texts to help Christian believers contextualize the current world events within the context of the Gospel. In addition to these texts, there are others that might be beneficial for our current situation, including texts for the preservation of harmony and for use in a time of civil disturbance.

Below is the first set of texts from the Roman Missal. I am personally struck by the Collect’s couching of peace within justice, admitting that there is no peace without justice. I also appreciate the Offertory Prayer’s naming Jesus as the King of Peace, while acknowledging that the Eucharist is itself a vehicle for peace and justice in the world. I invite parishioners to use these texts in their own personal
Paths

By Tom Burke

My Uncle Glenn told me a story many, many decades ago about his father who went by the nickname “Pappy.” I, as I have since the age of 16, reflect on that story and take heart from it.

Uncle Glenn told me that Pappy worked for a private railroad company in Hamlet, North Carolina. Uncle Glenn was quick to inform me that, back East, there are many private railroad companies. Usually, these have a standard route that takes passengers and goods between townships on a daily basis. He stated, “It’s kind of like a milkman who runs the same route each day.” He said that these private companies still exist and ownership has passed along from generation to generation within families.

Pappy had worked for the same private railroad company, laying railroad tie and track, for over 40 years. At his advanced age, the supervisor limited Pappy to small tasks of toting light loads to fellow workers, as the younger workers actually did most of the manual labor.

One day, while the gang was working on the track, the strangest thing happened. A private train came up to where they were working and stopped. My Uncle painted a vivid picture: a steam locomotive, followed by a coal car, followed by a private car, followed by a caboose.

From the private car stepped a well-dressed man, wearing a three-piece suit. He stood on the lower step, reached for his watch at the end of a job, checked the time and looked around until he spied someone who appeared to be the supervisor. He walked towards the man. They exchanged a few words, then the supervisor pointed in the direction of Pappy, located some distance away.

The well-dressed man walked upon the uneven ground and came to Pappy. The two shook hands and stepped away from the crew for about an hour. At the end of that time, the man checked his watch, shook Pappy’s hand and climbed aboard his private boxcar. The train, letting out a few belches of steam, began to move slowly down the track and away from the workers.

When the train disappeared around the bend, every man gathered around Pappy, for this was really something. They asked in one voice, “Pappy, who was that?” Pappy answered, “Well, that’s the president of our railroad company.”

The men were impressed. They asked Pappy, “We know you have been with the company for many years, but do you know the president that he would stop and meet with you privately?” Pappy replied, “Well, you see, that man and I started with this company on the same day, laying railroad tie.” It made sense to his fellow workers, but one of them asked, “Pappy! If you and he started on the same day with this company … what happened? I mean, did you punch out a supervisor? How did he become the president and you’re still laying railroad track?”

You could have heard a pin drop as Pappy began his reply. “Well,” he said, “when I started with this company, times were hard and money was scarce. When I came to work for the company, I came to work for the paycheck. That man,” he paused, “that man came to work for the company.”

As I reflect upon this story, I am always drawn back to my Catholic faith. Many times throughout my life, I have found myself deposited before another fork in the road. Just as Pappy learned many decades into his career, choices have consequences.

To assist me in better choosing to walk upon the pathways of God throughout my life, I find myself drawn spiritually to many saints. Oftentimes, saints were placed at a crossroads. For example, there is St. Francis of Assisi who chose freely to leave his family and his father’s accumulated wealth. As he set foot upon a godlier path, many new decisions arose. One decision is oftentimes overlooked … his choosing of a symbol of the cross. Francis chose the “Tau” symbol because it is the last letter in the Hebrew alphabet and, as he would later write, he sought to remain on God’s path to the very end.

I pray that, whenever you and I are set before another fork in the road, we will take a moment and ask our risen Lord for grace to choose God’s way and to persevere to the very end of that trail. I pray that when, at the end of our lives, we meet Christ in heavenly glory, he will remind us gently that we came to work for the company.

The Road Not Taken
By Robert Frost

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveler, long I stood
And looked down one as far as I could
To where it bent in the undergrowth;

Then took the other, as just as fair,
And having perhaps the better claim,
Because it was grassy and wanted wear;
Though as that passing there
Had worn them really about the same,
And both that morning equally lay
In leaves no step had trodden black.
Oh, I kept the first for another day!
Yet knowing how way leads on to way
I doubted if I should ever come back.

I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.

Tom Burke is the director of Christ the King Retreat Center.

No place like home

By Mike Wyse

It was Thanksgiving Day, November 1972. I was a young soldier, and a few days earlier my family and I had just returned to Marfa, Texas, after completing a three-year tour of duty with the Army in Berlin, Germany. We were attending Thanksgiving Mass at St. Mary Church in Marfa where we had been married four years earlier.

For those who have never experienced being out of the country for an extended period, you can’t imagine how good it feels to finally come home to this great country. But there is no way I was prepared for the feelings I experienced as Mass began. The Mass began with “America the Beautiful,” and I was suddenly overwhelmed with feelings of pride and gratitude. A happiness I could not describe came over me. I could not sing for the tears in my eyes and the lump in my throat. That age-old saying is certainly true: “There’s no place like home.”

The question of a very good friend asked me if I would sponsor him for his initiation into full communion with the Catholic Church. For many years this is something I had been hoping for, and of course I was more than happy to say yes. We had anticipated the event happening at the Easter Vigil this year, but that didn’t happen. The coronavirus had taken the joy from the anticipated event and we had no idea when it would be rescheduled.

A couple of weeks ago, we found out that the celebration would take place at the Vigil of Pentecost. I felt good for my friend but I didn’t expect much. Yes, we would be at the cathedral. Yes, the bishop would be there to celebrate, but it wouldn’t be the same. We would all be wearing masks and the church would be practically empty and it would be a fairly sterile celebration. At practice on Saturday afternoon, it was just as I expected. We were all there, dutifully wearing our masks, holding our hands, and keeping what has become known as “social distancing.”

We rehearsed, went through the motions, listened to all the precautions we would be taking, and received our final instructions to be back at 4:30 pm for the 5:00 celebration. “Some celebrations,” I thought. “Boy, was I wrong!” As soon as the music began and I heard the joyful lyrics of “All Creatures of our God and King,” something happened inside of me. I saw the bishop with the priest and deacons processing in and, as he passed, blessing everyone. The feelings of joy I experienced were suddenly overwhelming. Suddenly the Mass came alive, moving our hands, and keeping what has become known as “social distancing.”

We could hardly see because my eyes were filled with tears and my heart was filled with joy. My heart felt like it would burst because it couldn’t contain all the wonderful feelings it held. It was a joy I couldn’t describe. I suppose I could compare it to the joy and happiness folks feel the first time they fall in love, or when one holds their first-born for the first time and looks into those innocent eyes, or one of those rare moments when you experience the presence of God in a very personal way. I really can’t describe it adequately, but it was all of that, and more.

In the Gospel I heard the words Jesus spoke when he said if you thirst, come to me and drink. I heard how he wept, I heard how we struggle and groan and how the Spirit comes to our aid. I heard the bishop describe how the candidates had struggled through all of this in order to come to this moment of initiation. I closed my eyes and just absorbed the beautiful melodies between each of the readings. And then came time for Communion. After not being able to attend Mass for two months, the feelings of joy were again indescribable.

It was as if we had come out of a desert to a welcoming oasis of cool water.

As the Mass progressed and I watched the ancient rites and pageantry unfold, I came to fully realize that the Mass is our story; the Mass is the focal point of our worship; in the Mass we find the essence of who we are as Catholics. What a wonderful gift Christ gave us when he left us the Mass. And during this unusual Vigil of Pentecost, I had the privilege of experiencing those same feelings I had experienced on that Thanksgiving Day in 1972. After two long months without being able to attend Mass, I had come home.

Mike Wyse is Chancellor of the Diocese of San Angelo.

Religious Freedom Week
June 22–29

The theme of this year’s Religious Freedom Week is “For the Good of All.” Religious Freedom Week takes place from June 22–29 each year, beginning on the feast day of Sts. Thomas More and John Fisher, including the Nativity of St. John the Baptist, and ending with the feast of Sts. Peter and Paul.

During Religious Freedom Week, Catholics are encouraged to pray and act each day for religious freedom. The theme of “For the Good of All” was chosen to emphasize that religious freedom is good for people of all beliefs, not only Catholics.


You can also sign up to receive religious freedom updates from the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops by texting FREEDOM to 84576.
**Water, wind, and fire**

In Scripture and Christian tradition there are a number of symbols used by the Holy Spirit to reveal himself to us, three of which are water, wind, and fire. These three are used in the account of the events on the Day of Pentecost in Acts 2. Luke, the author of the Book of Acts, begins his account by writing, "When the Day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly a sound came from heaven like the rush of a mighty wind, and it filled the house where they were sitting. And there appeared to them tongues as of fire distributed and resting on each one of them. And they were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance" (2:1-3 RSVCE). After a description of the coming of the Holy Spirit, Peter preaches that it is the crucified and risen Jesus who has received the Holy Spirit from the Father and has poured it out on his followers (2:33). When his hearers ask the apostles, "Brethren, what shall we do?", Peter says, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (2:38). What do these symbols tell us about the Person of the Holy Spirit, the Third Person of the Holy Trinity?

We especially think of the association of water and the Holy Spirit in the sacrament of baptism. In the Book of Acts, before his Ascension Jesus said to the apostles, "John baptized with water, but before many days you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit" (1:5). In other words, water would now become the bearer of the Holy Spirit. Peter tells his listeners to repent and be baptized because this is the entrance sacrament of the church. As the Catechism of the Catholic Church teaches, "Just as the gestation of our first birth took place in water, so the water of baptism truly signifies that our birth into the divine life is given to us in the Holy Spirit" (669). In the third chapter of the Gospel of John, Jesus says to Nicodemus that one must be born anew, and this birth is "of water and the Spirit" (3:3-5). The apostle Paul in his First Letter to the Corinthians says those who are baptized are baptized into one body and drink of one Spirit (12:13). This one Spirit of which we drink is the "living water" of which Jesus spoke when he encountered the Samaritan Woman at the Well (Jn 4). This water "lives" because the Holy Spirit lives and moves in this baptismal water. As Jesus says to the woman, "Whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst; the water that I shall give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life" (4:14). A person is baptized with water only once in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, because this water is the "living water" of the Holy Spirit, for which we never need to thirst again.

This "living water" grows the image of God in us, while, as St. Paul says in his Letter to the Romans, it burses our sinful self. In his words, "How can we who died to sin still live in it? Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life" (6:2b-4).

Moreover, as St. Cyril of Jerusalem points out in his Jerusalem Catechesis, "Water comes down from heaven as rain, and although it is always the same in itself, it produces many different effects, one in the palm tree, another in the vine, and so on throughout the whole creation. It does not come down, now as one thing, now as another, but while

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**St. Antony of Padua, miracle worker**

Exciting news always travels fast. So in early 13th century Italy when people heard that the Franciscan friar was coming to preach, shop keepers closed their shops. People hurried to the church, sometimes staying all night to be present for one of the friar’s sermons.

Antony of Padua was a teacher and preacher of such renown in the nine years of his mission that he spoke outdoors many times in the manner of modern day revivalists. Historians described his preaching style as magnetic. He had great learning and knowledge of the Bible. Many people reported that his preaching was a life changing event for them.

A native of Lisbon, Portugal, Antony was born in 1195 into a noble family and baptized Fernando Bulhon. He entered the Augustinian canons in Coimbra, Italy, at a young age. He was living and studying in the priory when he heard the story of some Franciscans who were martyred in Morocco. He was profoundly moved by what he heard and petitioned to be admitted to their order and took the name of Antony.

He was on his way to Morocco when fate intervened. Antony became severely ill and had to return to Europe. His ship was blown off course by a storm and he found himself at Messina in Sicily where he stayed and was assigned to take care of a small hospice for lay brothers at Monte Paolo.

It was during an ordination ceremony of Dominicans and Franciscans that Antony was pressed to preach when no other speaker was available. Bernard Bangley writes in *Butler’s Lives of the Saints* that Antony gave an extemporaneous sermon that was an astonishing and superb Christian message. After that Francis of Assisi authorized Antony to preach and teach and appointed him lector in theology, the first person in the order to hold such a post.

He was elected provincial for northern Italy in 1227 and he traveled extensively to the friaries under his charge. For the next three years he wrote his “Sermons for Sundays,” and then later in Rome he was commissioned to produce “Sermons for Feast Days.” Richard McBrien writes in *Lives of the Saints* that Antony became known as the “hammer of the heretics” because of his preaching against the Albigensians who rejected both civil and ecclesiastical authority and denied the goodness of the flesh. Jim Griffith writes in *Saints of the Southwest* that Antony’s preaching reformed the city of Portugal and earned him the nickname “the Wonder Worker” for the many miracles he performed.

He was also known as the “Friend of the Poor” because he encouraged people to be generous with their poor. His devotion to the poor lives on in the custom of “Saint Antony’s Bread,” the charity that was devoted to the relief of the needy and starving and still flourishes today.

Antony made Padua his city of residence from 1227-1231, and the center of his great preaching mission. He had a remarkable effect on both religious and civic life, reducing crime, reconciling enemies, denouncing usury and freeing debtors from prison. McBrien writes that Antony was instrumental in getting a law passed during the last months of his life so that debtors who were willing to sell their possessions to pay their creditors would not be imprisoned. This was the forerunner of bankruptcy laws.

Antony’s role as “finder of lost objects” relates to an incident in his own life. Jenny Schroeel writes in *The Book of Saints* that a novice took one of Antony’s books without his permission. Antony prayed for its return and the novice brought it back to him.

Antony died in 1231 at the age of 36 near Padua. He was canonized a year after his death and was made a doctor of the church in 1946 by Pope Pius XII. St. Antony of Padua is the most popular wonder worker of the Latin Church and his devotees and statues are found everywhere. His feast day is June 13.

The mission of San Antonio de Valero, later known as the Alamo, was named in honor of St. Antony by the Franciscan missionaries in 1718.

Mary Lou Gibson writes about the saints for the *West Texas Angelus* from her home in Austin.
Ministering to youth here and now

“The youth are the future of our church.” I cringe anytime I hear somebody use this phrase. I understand that most that use this phrase are well-intentioned. However, I don’t believe that they realize the message they are inadvertently conveying.

By saying that the young people are the future of the church, we imply that they are lesser members of the church, if they currently have a place at all. However, the Catechism of the Catholic Church reminds us that by the nature of baptism, we are all members of the church. “The person baptized is incorporated into the church, the Body of Christ, and made a sharer in the priesthood of Christ” (CCC 1279). Our belonging in the church is not dictated by age, but simply by our initiation through baptism.

While it is true that today’s young people will one day make up the majority of the church, that does not mean they should not have a voice today. The statistics show that young people are leaving the church at an alarming rate. They may choose to distance themselves from the church for many reasons, including but not limited to, “a clergy ill-prepared to engage effectively with the sensitivities of the young … [and] the passive role assigned to the young within the Christian community” (Christus Vivit, 40). Some suggest one of the reasons for their exodus is that young people do not feel a sense of belonging. While one could argue as to who bears responsibility in developing that sense of belonging, I believe telling young people they are the future of the church does so because they focus on one’s age rather than one’s knowledge and maturity than some twice their age. We must always keep in mind that just because somebody’s experiences are different than our own does not make them worthless or insignificant.

Pope Francis also reminds us that “Those of us who are no longer young need to find ways of keeping close to the voices and concerns of young people … We need to make more room for the voices of young people to be heard” (CY 38). In order for us to help young people find their place in the faith community, we must be willing to listen to their experiences and needs. I have had innumerable conversations with people who share their frustration that young people are no longer drawn into the ministries at their particular parish. Yet, too often the ministry is being run the same way it was twenty years ago. Today’s young people do not respond to things that worked in the past. Their worldview and experiences are different. Their needs and the needs that they see needing to be addressed in the world are different. Or a community may look at what they deem a successful youth ministry program at a neighboring parish and think they must copy it exactly in order to achieve the same success. Yet, Pope Francis reminds us, “Today, in fact, we see a tendency to ‘homogenize’ young people, blurring what is distinctive about their origins and backgrounds, and turning them into a new line of malleable goods” (CY 186). Every community is different, and in the same way, the young people in that community are different. We must look at the needs of those in our community and address them in ways that work for our realities.

The ways that we give young people a place of belonging in our community will look different, but that is the beauty of our Catholic faith — it is not a one-size-fits all faith. We must be willing to truly listen to the young people and then respond in a pastoral and real way to the things they are sharing with us that takes into account their backgrounds, cultures, and experiences.

Some who use that cringe-worthy phrase that youth are the future of the church do so because they focus on the negative things they hear about young people. They don’t think the youth are at a place in their lives where they can contribute to the faith community. Pope Francis reminds us that to think this way only “is to stigmatize young people as ‘the next generation’” (CY 186). “We adults can often be tempted to list all the problems and failings of today’s young people. Perhaps some will find it praiseworthy that we seem so expert in discerning difficulties and dangers. But what would the result of

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The greatest pandemic

The pandemic that we continue to experience in various forms has spread to every country in the world. The devastation that it has caused to individuals, marriages, families, economies and countries cannot possibly be calculated. Mutations of its essence make it that much more difficult to recognize and realize, and that much easier for it to spread. Unlike so many past pandemics where symptoms are easily recognized and carriers are separated from the rest of society in order to stop the spread to others, in this pandemic those who are often the most dangerous to others are those who actually appear to be the picture of mental and physical health … people you trust and who you would never expect to be someone who would pass something horrible on to you.

Unless healthy “cells” are able to recognize the deadly invasion and they are strong enough to defeat this destroyer of life, the death toll will continue to mount minute by minute. It is not possible to make an accurate guess as to the number of lives that have been, and are being, and will be lost before this pandemic ends. It is a number that God only knows.

This greatest of all pandemics did not have its start in Wuhan, China. While the final number of COVID-19 related deaths will be large, it will never become number one on the list … never be the “greatest” pandemic in terms of lost lives. Nor is the one that prevailed in Greece, Italy, Asia Minor, and Egypt known as the Antonine Plague of 165 AD that killed an estimated 3 million. The Byzantine Empire was the location of the Bubonic Plague that caused 25 million deaths in 541–42. Up to 50 million may have perished from the 1918 “Spanish Flu Pandemic” and an astonishing 75-200 million perished from the “Black Death” that ravaged Asia, Africa, and Europe from 1346 to 1353. Still, all of these together do not approach the loss of life caused by the deadliest pandemic of all, and pale by comparison.

The “greatest pandemic” did not originate in diseased animals, impure conditions, or things beyond human control. Quite the contrary. It began not long after the “beginning” … in perfect conditions … in a beautiful garden. Once one person was “infected,” the disease quickly spread to the entire population of the world. The first man and woman who contracted this infirmity might be said to have practiced the first “self-quarantine” in history … they attempted to hide themselves out of sight … it is precisely how God knew they were no longer in perfect health.

Over the years, the pandemic of sin has affected us all. Unlike wearing masks to keep a virus from spreading, those who are most compromised by sin often wear masks in order to compromise others. Indeed, the disease itself is often masked by looking like something very good. “And no wonder, for even Satan masquerades as an angel of life” (2 Col 11:14).

The pandemic of sin has caused inestimable deaths through its many mutations. In just one of its manifestations, the World Health Organization reports that approximately 56 million babies are killed each year in their mother’s womb. In New York City, many more thousands of Black babies are aborted each year than are born. Under the mask of “reproductive rights” we have legalized murder. And abortion, while the most blatant manifestation of our sinful pandemic, is joined by many other “variants” that are causing OUR deaths, as well.

What amazes many doctors is how patients resist taking curative treatments that can lead to better health. They refuse for many varying reasons. Some malady that could easily have been eradicated at the start, becomes deadly because the person didn’t want to accept necessary procedures or to make necessary changes, because “I’m never giving up smoking no matter what the doctors say!” Or maybe it has to do with drinking, or diet, or something else that is causing their health to decline. Millions of times, “self-will” can more accurately be listed as the “cause of death.”

It is no different with sin. We are told that “the wages of sin is death” (Rom 6:23). And while this pandemic claims the lives, we do not need science to come up with a cure because God has already given it to us. All we have to do is follow the four steps: “Jesus and pray, fast, sacrifice, forgive, and above all else, love one another, as he loves us. Simple … if we all did it, we put an immediate end to this longest lasting of all pandemics. Given the history of mankind, there is no reason to believe this will happen. It is up to each individual to make that choice and more and more of us are making choices with dire consequences for our “eternal health” and our eternal life. Evil has duped vast numbers into believing that “the cure is worse than the disease” and we see an increasing refusal to relinquish self-will before time runs out.

Jesus never said it would be easy. Throughout time, we have many examples of others who have fought hard to conquer sin and put an end to the “dis-ease” that they had been carrying. From the “prodigal son” to the “good thief,” to Mary Magdalen, to Paul, Augustine, and countless others, we have been shown the way to permanent health. The “Great Physician” has told us what we must do to be cured! He has shown us how to defeat what appears to be sure death. It is not possible to make an accurate guess as to how many of us have chosen, are choosing, and will choose to follow his prescriptions and continue the “treatment” before this pandemic comes to “the end” … it is a number that God only knows.
Churches worldwide try to balance religious freedom, protecting health

By Bronwen Dachs
Catholic News Service

From Zimbabwe, where churches are closed and data costs make attending Mass online prohibitively expensive for most Catholics, to Australia, where churchgoers successfully petitioned authorities to allow places of worship the same number of people as bars, churches are reopening cautiously amid widespread controversy.

Across the world, churches are trying to balance observing religious freedom with protecting people’s health. “Some people feel churches should be opened” in Zimbabwe, which is under a strict lockdown, said Yvonne Fildah Taka-wira-Matwaya, who chairs the bishops’ justice and peace commission. “Because data is very expensive, most people are not able to catch live-streaming of Masses,” she said.

Even before the COVID-19 outbreak, Zimbabwe was in economic crisis, and more than half of its 15 million people needed food aid.

In Australia, Archbishop Anthony Fisher of Sydney started a petition urging the state government of New South Wales to allow places of worship the same number of people as bars, and churches received permission to admit up to 50 people at services beginning June 1.

The coronavirus lockdown was necessary but “came at a cost -- not only to the economy, but also to the spiritual and mental health of our people,” Archbishop Fisher said.

In the United Kingdom, some bishops have criticized a government policy to place churches in the same high-risk category of public places as pubs, restaurants and theaters, which will not be allowed to reopen until after July 4.

Cardinal Vincent Nichols of Westminster said May 31 it was “time to move to the phased opening of our churches.”

In Switzerland, churches launched a petition to observe the “human right to freedom of religion” as services remained forbidden until early June. In Germany, the bishops’ conference said the widely criticized ban on religious services was necessary, reported the Catholic news agency KNA.

“A church that endangers life and health betrays its own mission,” said Father Hans Langendoerfer, secretary of the German bishops’ conference, noting that “like all freedoms, the freedom of religion is tied to responsibility.”

In Italy and Vatican City, Masses with more than a few worshippers resumed May 18 after a 10-week suspension, but are subject to strict health protocols.

Pope Francis celebrated the feast of Pentecost May 31 with a Mass in St. Peter’s Basilica attended by about 50 people. At midday, he greeted hundreds of people wearing masks and respecting social distance in St. Peter’s Square. He greeted the crowd from the papal study window in the Apostolic Palace for the first time since the beginning of March.

Across Europe, most churches have opened with varying restrictions, reported KNA. But in Luxembourg, where most coronavirus restrictions have been relaxed, church services are still suspended.

“I think the government couldn’t care less about us. It disappoints me and makes me angry,” said Cardinal Jean-Claude Hollerich of Luxembourg.

Poland was one of the first European countries to allow public church services to start again, with limited congregations as early as April 20.

People older than 65, those with COVID-19 symptoms and people “with a fear of infection” can continue to stay home, but everyone else should return, Cardinal Kazimierz Nycz of Warsaw said as a dispensation allowing Catholics to stay away from Mass was canceled May 29.

In Hungary, Cardinal Peter Erdo of Esztergom-Budapest urged Catholics to “embark on their mission with a new impetus” when he reopened the Esztergom basilica May 31. Hungary reopened its borders with Serbia, Slovakia, Romania, Slovenia and Austria at the end of May.

In the German city of Frankfurt, health authorities urged churches to register the names of all who attend services after more than 100 COVID-19 infections were linked to a Baptist service where contact tracing proved difficult.

In Canada, it could be a year or longer before churches start welcoming large numbers of parishioners.

Edmonton Archbishop Richard Smith said it is no “normal.” Planning around the corner for churches, and it may take the development of a vaccine before a return to full public Masses.

“I want that to happen as soon as anybody wants it to happen. I just miss being with the people, being able to celebrate fully, worthily and joyfully, the way that we’re accustomed to,” Archbishop Smith said. “But these are the circumstances. We just have to accompany this with prayer.”

While Ontario churches remain closed to the public, they are discussing how they will reopen -- particularly the size of congregations -- when the time comes, said Neil MacCarthy, a spokesman for the Archdiocese of Toronto, noting that there is not a one-size-fits-all solution. Until then, “our priority should be love of neighbor, to take care of one another,” he said.

While churches in the Archdiocese of Vancouver are allowed to celebrate public Masses again, the limit on congregations of 50 people means most Catholics are still connecting through video. Some parishes have facilitated groups for young adults and daily rosary prayer through video.

In the Caribbean, the Diocese of St. George’s in Grenada resumed publicMasses in late May.

Bishop Clyde Harvey said he was “very proud” of how the churches were implementing safety rules. “In Grenada, a congregation is not a congregation of faceless people; although people have on masks, you recognize them behind the mask,” he said, according to the Trinidad-based Catholic News.

Masks combined with social distancing “is a bit uncertain, but you get used to it,” Bishop Harvey said.

In the East African country of Tanzania, churches never shut, and thousands of people have been attending Masses across the country. Unlike neighboring Rwanda and Uganda, which imposed strict lockdowns, Tanzanian President John Pombe Magufuli said churches and mosques needed to remain open as a spiritual refuge during the pandemic.

In South Africa, the Jesuit Institute criticized the government for allowing churches to open with a limit of 50 people, while the bishops’ conference welcomed the move as the country’s lockdown restrictions loosened June 1.

“A ban on friend and family visits remains in place, it seems illogical that people can gather in places of worship,” the Jesuits said. There is a difference between opening up businesses “for economic survival, particularly as people start to starve, and opening institutions that could function differently in these times,” it said. But the bishops said “a sense of deep depression due to spiritual longing is also a suffering and a disease.”

In Kenya, churches will open as soon as lockdown restrictions are relaxed, Bishop Dominic Kigen of Eldoret told Catholic News Service after the bishops met with government officials.

In Ghana, Masses may not exceed one hour and no more than 100 people may attend when churches reopen June 5. Masks must be worn and registers taken.

The situation in mainland China remains unknown. The bishops’ conference and the Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association jointly announced an extension to the suspension of all church activities in late April as other public gatherings and venues began opening. As well as Masses, this also put a stop to traditional Marian pilgrimages throughout May.

In the Philippines, Asia’s most Catholic nation, churches began reopening in late April with restricted numbers and no hymn singing.

Contributing to the report were Michael Sainsbury in Australia; Simon Caldwell in England; Jonathan Luxmore in Poland; Fredrick Nzwill in Kenya; Damian Avevor in Ghana; Mickey Conlon and Agnieszka Ruck in Canada.
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10:20 am Testimony of David & Araceli Sosa
10:45 am Bishop Sis - Talk on Divine Encounter in the Sacrament of Reconciliation
11:20 am Break for Lunch
Noon Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament
with Praise and Worship led by Sacred Sound
12:20 pm Divine Mercy in Song
12:40 pm Meditation on Divine Encounter
1:45 pm Mass with Fr. Albert Ezeanya

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St. Ann Church, Sonora, raffle

COURTESY
St. Ann Church in Sonora held a Cinco de Mayo raffle, with a grand prize of a 2020 Ford pickup truck. The winner of the raffle was Katrina Rodriguez from San Angelo, Texas.

Interfaith prayer service

Bishop Michael Sis spoke and prayed and spoke at an Interfaith Prayer Service at First Presbyterian Church in San Angelo, June 1, 2020, amid growing national protests following the death of George Floyd in police custody.

COURTESY
Bishop Michael Sis speaks and prayed and spoke at an Interfaith Prayer Service at First Presbyterian Church in San Angelo, June 1, 2020, amid growing national protests following the death of George Floyd in police custody.

Angelus contributor Gloria Johns was also a speaker at the prayer service. She visited with Bishop Sis after the conclusion of the service.

COURTESY
Angelus contributor Gloria Johns was also a speaker at the prayer service. She visited with Bishop Sis after the conclusion of the service.

Clergy from various faith, other speakers, and a singer came together June 1 to pray for an end to racism in the country following the death of George Floyd while in police custody. The event was held at First Presbyterian Church in San Angelo after rain prevented gathering at the initially planned location of the Tom Green County Courthouse.

Emcee Pastor Tim Davenport-Herbst of St. Paul Presbyterian Church summarized the event in this way: “We want to come together as a voice seeking the will of God. And the will of God is always, always on the side of justice.”

Speaker Gloria Johns encouraged continued action and dialogue from people of all races as she remembered another rally in her hometown of Indianapolis following another killing of a black man in America. She reflected how, following the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., people had questioned whether Robert F. Kennedy should continue with a planned appearance. After his words about Dr. King, she said “Indianapolis was quiet,” when much of the rest of the country experienced riots. Empathy from white members of society is a crucial step in overcoming racial disharmony, she said, adding that “empathy means accepting the reality that systemic racism in the United States does exist.”

Bishop Michael Sis agreed in his talk that “racism is real,” offering a series of questions people can ask themselves about their own experiences with other races before concluding with the Peace Prayer of St. Francis.

National Nurses Week

Bishop Michael Sis blessed the staff and residents of Arbor Terrace Healthcare Center in San Angelo on May 7, 2020, during National Nurses Week. National Nurses Week is observed each year from May 6 to May 12.

COURTESY
Bishop Michael Sis blessed the staff and residents of Arbor Terrace Healthcare Center in San Angelo on May 7, 2020, during National Nurses Week.

Knights of Columbus founder Father Michael McGivney moves closer to sainthood

ROME — The Vatican May 27 announced that Pope Francis approved the promulgation of a decree recognizing a miracle attributed to the intercession of the founder of the Knights of Columbus, Venerable Father Michael J. McGivney, a Connecticut priest who served his flock during the pandemic of 1890, before himself becoming ill and dying of pneumonia.

The pope's decision means that Father McGivney can be declared "Blessed," the step just prior to sainthood. An additional miracle attributed to Father McGivney's intercession will be required for his canonization as a saint.

McGivney is best known for founding the Knights of Columbus in 1882. Nearly a century before the Second Vatican Council, his prescient vision empowered the laity to serve Church and neighbor in a new way. Today, the Knights of Columbus is one of the largest Catholic organizations in the world with 2 million members in North and Latin America, the Caribbean, Asia, and Europe.

The miracle recognized as coming through Father McGivney's intercession involved an unborn child in the United States who in 2015 was healed in utero of a life-threatening condition after prayers by his family to Father McGivney.

A date will soon be set for the beatification Mass, which will take place in Connecticut. It will include the reading of an apostolic letter from the Holy Father and the bestowing of the title "Blessed" on Father McGivney.

Earlier this year, in an address to the Knights of Columbus Board of Directors, Pope Francis said the organization has been faithful "to the vision of your founder, Venerable Michael McGivney, who was inspired by the principles of Christian charity and fraternity to assist those most in need."

"Father McGivney has inspired generations of Catholic men to roll up their sleeves and put their faith into action," Supreme Knight Carl A. Anderson said. "He has been cause of the Church of our time."

"Good Samaritan," his cause for sainthood was opened in 1997. St. John Paul II — who was pope at that time — lauded Father McGivney's principles, stating in 2003, "In fidelity to the vision of Father McGivney, may you continue to seek new ways of being a leaven of the Gospel in the world and a spiritual force for the renewal of the Church in holiness, unity and truth."

In March 2008, he was declared a Venerable Servant of God by Pope Benedict XVI, who during his visit to St. Patrick's Cathedral cited the "remarkable accomplishment of that exemplary American priest, the Venerable Michael McGivney, whose vision and zeal led to the establishment of the Knights of Columbus."

Two recent books also tell the story of Father McGivney and his legacy: Parish Priest (2006), his biography; and The Knights of Columbus: An Illustrated History (2020).

More information is also available at www.FatherMcGivney.org.

* Image: CNS FILE PHOTO

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Knights of Columbus

The Guadalupe Radio Network has launched a new interview-style radio show called “Catholic Matters.”

The show airs weekly on Monday at noon. Each show begins with a brief segment covering local diocesan news, followed by discussions with local Catholics on a variety of topics.

Hosts Sammy Rodriguez Jr. and Faustino Rodriguez envision the show covering a wide range of points from a Catholic perspective, including updates on how the local diocesan leadership is responding to current events as well as more secular topics that affect local Catholics, such as the economy, business, and the oil and gas industry.

Interested potential guests can contact the Guadalupe Radio Network at 432-638-1150.

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‘Catholic Matters’ — new weekly show from the Guadalupe Radio Network

The Guadalupe Radio Network operates 3 English & 1 Spanish language Catholic radio stations in the Diocese of San Angelo:
- Abilene - 91.7 FM, KQOS
- Midland/Odessa - 1180 AM English
- Midland/Odessa - 90.9 FM (Español)
- San Angelo - 91.5 FM, KPDE

The GRN (Radio for Your Soul) is an EWTN Affiliate. The weekday programs (most are ‘live’ call-ins) are:
- 6 AM - Morning Glory
- 7 AM - Daily Mass (EWTN Chapel)
- 8 AM - Catholic Connection Tue-Thu
- 9 AM - More to Life with Greg & Lisa
- 10 AM - Women of Grace with Johnnette Williams
- 11 AM - Take 2 with Jerry and Debbie
- 12 PM - The Doctor Is In with Dr. Ray
- 1 PM - Call to Communion
- 2 PM - EWTN Open Line
- 3 PM - Chaplet of Divine Mercy
- 3:15 pm - Kresta in the Afternoon
- 5-7 PM - Catholic Answers Live
- 8 PM - EWTN Nightly News
- 8:30 PM - Patriotic Rosary Mon-Thu
- Rosary w/ Fr. Benedict G. Fri-Sun

Schedule exceptions for GRN shows:
- • Miércoles 11 AM - Construyendo el Reino de Dios (90.9 FM Español)
- • Mon. & Fri., 8 AM - GRN Alive
- • Sat., 11 AM - We Sing our Faith

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More information is also available at www.FatherMcGivney.org.
China makes preaching patriotism compulsory to reopen churches

By Catholic News Service

BEIJING (CNS) — Catholics are upset about a directive from China’s communist government asking priests to “preach on patriotism” as a condition for reopening liturgical services, suspended earlier this year because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Ucanews.com reported the Catholic Patriotic Association and the Chinese Catholic educational administration committee of Zhejiang province jointly issued a notice May 29 on the resumption of liturgical activities.

"Religious places that meet the conditions of epidemic prevention will resume services from June 2," it said while adding the patriotism requirement.

Father Liu of Hebei told ucanews.com it would be good to resume church activities, but the requirement on patriotism “is wrong. As members of the universal Catholic Church, we cannot accept and glorify what communists consider patriotic education.”

Jacob Chung, a Wenzhou parishioner, said the government’s move “has seriously interfered in the internal affairs of religion.”

A church observer in China who sought anonymity said the government was forcing religious leaders to add patriotism and Sinicization as part of religious teaching.

Amid the ongoing trade war with other countries and an economic slowdown at home, the Chinese Communist Party “is afraid of a counterrevolution. So they want people to hold on to patriotism,” he said.

He said the communists want to “suppress and transform” the church to sing the communist tune lest Christians criticize the regime.

Religious activities have been gradually resuming since June 2 in Sichuan province, Shaanxi province and Shanghai after the Joint Conference of National Religious Organizations held a video conference on May 30 about plans to reopen religious places.

The other terms in the notice issued by Zhejiang authorities, however, are associated with preventive measures against the COVID-19 pandemic.

The notice asked churches to avoid nonessential religious activities, reduce the number of participants and shorten religious activities.

In some provinces such as Sichuan, Christians were asked to seek authorities’ permission to resume religious services.

Shanghai Diocese has issued a circular limiting the number of people attending services and outlining preventive measures against the pandemic.

Paul Fang from Wenzhou Diocese said parishioners have made their spiritual needs and will not be lifted until at least June 8. Church officials have backed the strict measures, despite calls from opposition politicians to restart the economy.

"We have [made] health the priority (because) the infected and affected by COVID-19, but was daily working through doctors, nurses, health workers, volunteers and caregivers who have been on the frontline of this emergency, risking their lives.

"The number of cases of COVID-19 has been increased from nearly 1 million cases and more than 1,000 deaths. Nigeria has more than 28,600 cases and more than 1,000 deaths. South Africa has more than 37,000 cases and nearly 800 deaths. Egypt has more than 28,600 cases and more than 1,000 deaths. Nigeria has more than 11,000 cases."
Faithful friendship

I grew up in a close family and one of the hardest things I ever did was to leave home and family at the age of seventeen to enter the novitiate of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate. That novitiate year wasn’t easy. I missed my family intensely and stayed in touch with them infar as the rules and communication of the day allowed. I wrote a letter home every week and my mother wrote back to me faithfully each week. I still have and cherish those letters. I had left home but stayed in touch, a faithful family member.

But my life became a lot more complex and socially demanding after that. I moved to a seminary and began to live in a community with sixty others, with people entering and leaving constantly throughout my seven years there so that by the time I finished my seminary training I had lived in close community with over one hundred different men. That brought its own challenges. People you’d grown close to would leave the community to be replaced by others so that each year there was a new community and new friendships.

In the years following seminary, that pattern began to grow exponentially. Graduate studies took me to other countries and brought a whole series of new persons into my life, many of whom became lifelong friends. In more than forty years of teaching I have met with several thousand students and made many friends among them. Writing and public lectures have brought thousands of people into my life. Though most of them passed through my life without meaningful connection, some became lifelong friends.

I share this not because I think it is unique, but rather because it’s typical. Today that’s really everyone’s story. More and more friends pass through our lives so that at a point the question necessarily arises: how does one remain faithful to one’s family, to old friends, former neighbors, former classmates, former students, former colleagues, and to old acquaintances? What does fidelity to them ask for? Occasional visits? Occasional emails, texts, calls? Remembering birthdays and anniversaries? Class reunions? Attending weddings and funerals?

Obviously doing these would be good, though that would also constitute a full-time occupation. Something else must be being asked of us here, namely, a fidelity that’s not contingent on emails, texts, calls, and occasional visits. But what can lie deeper than tangible human contact? What can be more real than that? The answer is fidelity, fidelity as the gift of a shared moral soul, fidelity as the gift of trust, and fidelity as remaining true to who you were when you were in tangible human community and contact with those people who are no longer part of your daily life. That’s what it means to be faithful.

It is interesting how the Christian scriptures define community and fidelity. In the Acts of the Apostles we read that before Pentecost those in the first Christian community were all “huddled in one room.” And here, though physically together, ironi
cally they were not in real community with each other, not really a family, and not really faithful to each other. Then after receiving the Holy Spirit, they literally break out of that one room and scatter all over the earth so that many of them never see each other again and now, geographically at a distance, they can no longer speak to one another. Nonetheless they become real family, become genuine community, and live in fidelity to each other.

At the end of the day, fidelity is not about now often you physically connect with someone but about living within a shared spirit. Betrayal is not a question of separation but coming, of forgetting an anniversary or a birthday, of not being able to stay in touch with someone you cherish. Betrayal is moving away from the truth and virtue you once shared with that person you cherish. Betrayal is a change of soul. We are unfaithful to family and friends when we become a different person morally so as to no longer share a common spirit with them.

You can be living in the same house with someone, share daily bread and conversation and not likely be a faithful family member or friend; just as you can be a faithful friend or family member and not see that friend or family member for forty years. Being faithful in remembering birthdays is wonderful, but fidelity is about maintaining moral affinity.

To the best of my abilities, I try to stay in contact with the family, old friends, former neighbors, former classmates, former students, and old acquaintances. Mostly it’s a bit beyond me. So I put my trust in moral fidelity. I try as best I can to commit myself to keeping the same soul I had when I left home as a young boy and which characterized and defined me when I met all those wonderful people along the way.

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

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Laudato si’ athwart modernity

In preparation for my participation in a USCB sponsored symposium for the fiftieth anniversary of Pope Francis’s encyclical letter Laudato Si, I reread the famous and controversial document with some care. Many of the themes that struck me five years ago stood out again, but on this second reading I was particularly impressed by the pope’s sharply critical assessment of modernity. I think it’s fair to say that the Church has had a complex relationship with the modern, coming out strongly against it at the First Vatican Council and in a plethora of statements throughout much of the twentieth century, but affirming many elements of it very enthusiastically at the Second Vatican Council. One has only to consider here Vatican II’s document on religious liberty, Dignitatis Humanae, or of its magisterial document on the Church in the modern world, Gaudium et Spes, to see the Council’s favorable assessment of many key features of modernity. And certainly in the years that I was coming of age in the immediate wake of Vatican II, a positive attitude toward “the modern world” was pretty much expected of all right-thinking Catholics.

But this paradigm, he reminds us, is made possible by a more fundamental shift in attitude — what Francis terms “modern anthropocentrism” (para. 115). This is the tendency, on display in practically all of the great philosophers from the seventeenth to the nineteenth centuries, to place human subjectivity at the center of things, both epistemologically and metaphysically. The consequence of this Copernican revolution is the emergence, the pope argues, of a “Promethean vision of mastery over the world” (para. 116). It is instructive in this context to consider the difference between Aristotle’s and Descartes’ understanding of the purpose of science. For the ancient Greek thinker, philosophy commences in wonder and ends in contemplation of the intelligibilities on display in the world; whereas for the modern French thinker, philosophy begins and ends in a passion to “master nature.” No one, including Pope Francis, would want to go back on the real attainments that followed from the Cartesian paradigm shift, but the pope does indeed worry that the turn to subjectivity, at least in its extreme forms, has produced something wicked and dangerous. If nature simply lies before the dominant human subject as a thing to be manipulated, then the integrity of creation is compromised and the objectivity of knowledge that are embedded in nature are disregarded.

Practically every commentator on Laudato Si five years ago remarked that this was the pope’s “global warming” encyclical, and indeed that issue is amply discussed in the paragraphs following the one almost every pundit missed was Francis’ extraordinarily rich development of the point just made regarding the objectivity of moral values. The same technocratic and anthropocentric prejudice, he says, that gives rise to environmental disaster gives rise as well to population control through artificial contraception and abortion: “Instead of resolving the problems of the poor and thinking of how the world can be different, some can only propose a reduction in the birth rate. At times, developing countries face forms of international pressure which make economic assistance contingent on certain policies of ‘reproductive health’” (para. 50). Moreover, the setting itself of this.setCurrentForm paradox” (para. 51). Moreover, the setting itself of this paradox is a consequence of the modern, which Francis sees as the concomitant placing of the individual and his needs at the center conductus toward what the pope calls practical relativism: “Hence we should not be surprised to find, in conjunction with the omnipresent technocratic paradigm and the cult of unlimited human power, the rise of a relativism that sees everything as irrelevant unless it serves one’s own immediate interests” (para. 122). And finally, the domination of the ego over nature also finds expression, says Pope Francis, in a gender ideology that would give to the individual the right to define him or herself even at the physical level. Moreover, there is a clear link between this extravagant claim to freedom and the abuse of the physical environment: “Thinking that we enjoy absolute power over our own bodies today, we forget that not so long ago we were produced as a result of those ‘choices’ we have made. We are not the product of our own choices, but of a pre-existing anthropocentric project that has given us this freedom. … Freedom is not the absence of constraint, as moral and social structures have often subtly, into thinking that we enjoy absolute power over creation” (para. 155).

What this brief survey demonstrates is that the “Fox News vs. CNN” hermeneutic just won’t work if we are reading Laudato Si in full. Pope Francis takes positions that annoy both standard-issue liberals and standard-issue conservatives. This is because his overarching opponent is the philosophy of modernity, which in fact has produced both the “conservatism” and the “liberalism” that we know today. His appeal to a worldview that antedates the modern is what makes this encyclical particularly intriguing.
Es urgente proteger las posiciones de miniterio hispano

La tasa de desempleo en los Estados Unidos llega a cifras históricas. En mayo del 2020, cerca de una quinta parte de los trabajadores se declararon sin capacidad para trabajar y no tenían empleo. Más de 30 miliones perdieron sus trabajos en el transcurso de dos meses.

Entre las personas que perdieron sus trabajos o fueron puestas en licencia laboral sin un desenganche salarial en una economía severamente afectada por la primera ronda de la pandemia COVID-19 se encuentran muchos agentes pastorales. La mayoría de ellos carecían de estabilidad económica. Los ingresos laborales no son suficientes para los gastos del hogar, y el cuidado de los niños y padres enfermos.

Algunos agentes pastorales ordenados y consagrados también perdieron sus trabajos. Sin embargo, su status eclesiástico les otorga una especie de "red de asistencia social" que les permite mantenerse en el ministerio.

Nuestros agentes pastorales son vulnerables, pero no desamparados. La iglesia tiene un papel crucial en las vidas de muchos de estos agentes pastorales. Las iniciativas que avanzan para servir a los católicos hispanos no son comparables en cuanto a su calidad y efectividad.

Durante estos días de varios agentes pastorales en ausencia, su diáconos y sacerdotes tienen la responsabilidad de sostener esas comunidades. Sus decisiones deben ser guiadas por la evidencia empírica y la experiencia. Necesitamos contener al mismo tiempo en el presbiterio y en su iglesia.

En estos días parte de mi atención se ha centrado en los doctores y administradores de hospitales que se encuentran en las trincheras de la pandemia. Durante estos momentos críticos, muchos de ellos deben decidir en el instante quién recibe atención médica que pueda salvar la vida y quién no. El impacto mental y emocional de dichas decisiones es bastante significativo.

Hace poco me comunique con un amigo que es inmigrante y ha trabajado como agente pastoral en una diócesis por muchos años. Es un campesino del ministerio hispano. Las iniciativas que avanzan para servir a los católicos hispanos no son comparables en cuanto a su calidad y efectividad.

Su diócesis lo puso en una licencia laboral. Es posible que su posición desaparezca para balancear las finanzas de la diócesis, lo cual espero que no ocurra. Él y su esposa tienen 10 hijos; la mayor de 9 años y el más pequeño viene en camino. Él es el único que recibe un salario.

Tal no es el único caso del que tengo conocimiento. He escuchado de diversos casos de agentes pastorales trabajando en el ministerio hispano en varias partes del país contando cómo sus patrones diocesanos simplemente están desapareciendo.

Muchos administradores de diócesis, parroquias, colegios y organizaciones católicas confrontan situaciones difíciles en estos días con relación a quienes trabajan allí. Desafíos como ingresos severamente reducidos e insatisfactoria financiera los aquejan. El futuro de los ingresos y la capacidad para pagar sus salarios se encuentra amenazado.

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Ospino Ospino Cathloic News Service Caminando Juntos
Accelerating vaccine development

Creating a new vaccine and bringing it to market typically requires more than a decade of research and clinical testing. Many companies and research groups are working overtime to shorten this timeline dramatically in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Some have suggested it may be possible to develop a vaccine within a year or two, but such a feat would be a first, especially considering that no vaccine for any type of coronavirus has ever been successfully developed.

The former director at the Food and Drug Administration’s Office of Biotechnology put it this way: “Scientists have tried unsuccessfully for decades to develop a vaccine to prevent HIV/AIDS and a ‘universal’ flu vaccine that wouldn’t need to be reformulated and readministered every year. All have been duds.”

Another specialist in the field of infectious diseases, when asked about the prospects of a quick Covid-19 vaccine, demurred, saying it would require a “home run” and “nearly everything to go right.”

Some vaccines end up taking so long to develop that the original threat disappears by the time they become available, as happened, for example, with the Ebola virus vaccine after the original viral outbreak in Africa.

Nevertheless, scores of laboratories are now urgently working to develop a Covid-19 vaccine. Their haste in trying not only to save lives, but also to beat their competitors, raises the concern that biomedical researchers may succumb to temptations to cut corners ethically in the research and development phases of their work.

One concern involves safety testing. The bar for safety has always been very high for vaccines that are to be administered to healthy people, and typically tens of thousands of people need to be systematically tested before a new vaccine receives approval and becomes widely available. The first rotavirus vaccine (Rotarix) was tested on 72,000 healthy infants, while the newest shingles vaccine (Shingrix) underwent safety testing on about 29,000 people. And those tests were done only after extensive testing on animals had been completed.

Such large-scale testing is a formidable and meticulous task requiring a good deal of time and expense so that the purported treatment doesn’t unintentionally harm those it intends to help. In terms of Covid-19, the concerns about safety are even greater, since some developers are looking at novel and largely unproven technologies, like mRNA vaccines and DNA vaccines, raising further safety questions that may require additional time to sort through during the phase of clinical trials.

Another concern involves the proposal to shorten the timeline by soliciting young, uninformed volunteers who would be intentionally infected with the virus after having been given either the potential vaccine or a placebo. This “challenge trial” approach would enable researchers to assess the effectiveness of a proposed vaccine more rapidly than a traditional clinical trial, which would require waiting for some of the participants to become infected in the course of ordinary life.

Experts who favor this approach say that they have already heard from many people willing to volunteer. Carrying out a challenge trial for a virus with no known cure clearly involves risk. There is no way to predict what kind of reaction a volunteer may have from either the virus or the proposed vaccine; even the young and healthy could end up hospitalized or dying.

While it is not intrinsically unethical to take actions with a degree of risk for the good of the community, provided that it comes with the patients’ full and informed consent, questions about whether it would be prudent to do so need to be carefully addressed. Given the significant competitive pressures arising from many dozens of companies and research teams trying to get to the finish line first, big Pharma needs to remain vigilant about over-stepping the boundaries of reasonable risk.

A final concern in attempting to speed up vaccine development involves the use of human cell lines derived from abortions. A variety of cell lines are available for Covid-19 research and vaccine development, some originating from hamsters, mice or other mammals, some from insects, and some from humans. The cell lines from humans may come from acceptable sources, like human skin, or from problematic sources, like direct abortions. Regrettably, several of the Covid-19 vaccine candidates that are being developed today have relied on cell lines that were harvested from aborted fetuses. Scientists have a duty to avoid the use of such unethical derived cell lines and should instead select available alternatives as they ramp up their research programs.

Vaccines, of course, are real “game changers” in public health. As a society, we must continue to insist that vaccine development and production be held to the highest ethical standards. This is especially true during the accelerated push arising from the present pandemic, lest we foster practices meant to save lives by risking the lives of other vulnerable human beings.

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

Choose solidarity and protect your neighbor

One of my favorite parts of being Mexican is the notion or tradition of family. Our family extends far beyond our immediate family members. In my world, family includes our grandparents and the lifelong friends of our parents.

Family includes our godparents and our church friends. Family includes your neighbors and the neighbors back in our small rural towns in Mexico. I think you get my point — family, in a very traditional Mexican way, is a very wide net.

Growing up in this culture, my way of thinking was shaped in collectivist traditions. It's not my family, it's our family. It's not my experience, it's our experiences. It's not my home, it's our home. Even today, all of our family’s decisions are based on the greatest benefit to us all.

I bring this perspective to my work. It's not about my success, it's about our success.

I never thought of this part of my culture as different. It was just the way I grew up. Reflecting on this gift, I see how it has deeply influenced my practice of solidarity, especially through this pandemic. It's not about my health, it's about our health.

Yet for some believers, even Latino Catholics, this is not the case.

Today, one can argue that the traditional way of Latino culture is being impacted and shaped for many families by the individualistic American culture. Add to that the insurmountable misinformation propaganda efforts, it's created a wave of confusion, pain and anger for many Catholics and Christians.

Truth is, some aren't even seeing the need to practice solidarity anymore. There is so much pain and fear that people are not or cannot worry about their neighbor. With almost 39 million jobs lost, families are fearful for their future. Working with our social service providers on the ground, we're seeing the increasing need for food and financial assistance.

As an immigrant, I thoroughly understand the fear that comes from an uncertain future.

Edith Avila Olea
Catholic News Service
In Pursuit of Justice

Protect Hispanic ministry positions, a plea

The unemployment rate in the U.S. is reaching historical highs. As of May 2020, close to a fifth of adults willing and able to work were unemployed. More than 30 million lost their jobs within two months.

Among those losing jobs or being furloughed in a wounded economy hit hard by the first round of the COVID-19 pandemic are many pastoral leaders, mostly lay women and men. The impact upon their families has been devastating.

Some ordained and vowed religious leaders have also lost their jobs. However, their ecclesial status affords them a "safety net" that lay pastoral leaders simply lack. In time, most are reassigned somewhere else.

Recently I communicated with a friend, an immigrant working as a diocesan pastoral leader for many years and a true champion of Hispanic ministry. His initiatives are among the most successful pastoral efforts I have heard regarding outreach to Hispanic Catholics.

He was furloughed. His position may remain uncertain, in some cases grim. Many decisions these days about who gets and who stays seem defined mainly by financial pressures. Understandably, however, we must remember that we are an institution grounded in values of the Gospel. Charity, mercy and justice, and a long view of the church's evangelizing mission must guide our actions.

Hispanic ministry leaders appear to be more vulnerable when Catholic organizations and offices restructure or have to make hard decisions about budgets and personnel. It is no secret that positions associated with Hispanic ministry tend to be the last to be created, yet among the first to be eliminated when the tough gets going.

Reading these days about hospital
Thinking right or wrong before race

Carole Norris Greene
Catholic News Service

When we as human beings think primarily along racial lines, we unwittingly disqualify ourselves as objective and even reliable observers of an occurrence at hand.

Why?
Because far too many of us have not mastered the skill of not seeing self and our potential advantages or disadvantages, however remote, in a given situation.

In short, we are not inclined to die to self. Our instincts are to survive, to even prosper personally or figuratively through our family of origin and everyone else who is like us.

These thoughts came to mind recently when I heard of yet another killing of an unarmed black man by a white policeman.

The Minneapolis man identified as George Floyd, 46, died Memorial Day while in police custody. Videotape shared online by a bystander showed the officer kneeling on the man’s neck as the man suspected of a forgery begged for his life. Surrounding officers did not intervene.

Even when paramedics arrived minutes later to examine the man, the officer’s knee remained in place.

Remember Eric Garner? The unarmed black New York man died in 2014 after he was placed in a chokehold by a police officer, crying he could not breathe. A grand jury decided against indicting Officer Daniel Pantaleo.

But police don’t just limit their killing to minorities even though a disproportionate number of such excused killings involves people of color.

A 48-year-old white man from Arlington, Texas, died in August 2015 after being detained by Dallas County sheriff’s deputies. A deputy had pressed his knee into Joseph Hutcheson’s neck for far too long, killing him. All Hutcheson had done was act erratically in the police station, calling for help, saying his wife was threatening him. Hutcheson’s death was later ruled a homicide.

I am outraged at the thought of each of these killings because they were all avoidable deaths. Besides, suspicions of petty criminality in each of the aforementioned cases did not warrant the men’s deaths, and such terrible deaths at that.

I was once choked by an angry young man who did not like being challenged to be accountable. The panic that comes when air is closed off from the lungs is indescribable. I will never forget the horror of thinking I might die when the air did not immediately come back after his hands left my throat.

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To mask or not to mask

Greg Erlandson
Catholic News Service

Amid the Fray

I’ve been a bit puzzled about all the debate and outrage over wearing masks. I know some of it is weirdly ideological, but some of it seems to be a misunderstanding of why we have been asked to wear masks in the first place.

The objection is often phrased as a personal right: “If I choose not to wear a mask, it’s my own darn business whether I want to take that risk.” It reminds me of the debate about motorcycle helmet laws. “If I want to go running down the freeway on two wheels and have the wind blowing in my hair, it’s my own darn business.”

When it comes to wearing helmets, there is a kind of logic to such a position, if one does not think of the first responders who have to clean up the mess. (I remember my motorcycle accident when the nurse in the emergency room asked me if I knew what they call motorcycle accident victims? “Donors,”’ she answered her own question, with nary a smirk.)

But asking someone to wear a mask to prevent the spread of a virus is more akin to asking someone not to leave a loaded gun on the coffee table. The idea is not that you might get hurt, but that someone else might because of your carelessness.

We wear masks to protect others because the vast majority of us don’t know from day to day officers trained to subdue a suspect by placing a knee on the person’s neck need to take this kind of training one step further. They should take turns actually doing this to one another, testing the limits of their own tolerance before breathing becomes difficult and they need to tell their colleague to lighten up.

I am not being facetious here. If they don’t fully understand what they are doing to another human being, what incentive will they have to eliminate such brutality?

Organized protests should be against unarmed men killed in police custody or children of those entering the country illegally being caged, etc. But we must also distance ourselves from violence, from looting and the burning of properties — all those disgraceful things that muffle understandable calls against injustice based on videotaped actions.

All people of good conscience should be out there protesting injustices! And it is critical that protests not be seen as the duty mainly of the race of the victim.

When people look upon an issue as pertaining to another race and not their own, they may feel it is none of their responsibility and hold back critical support that their presence could lend.

Worse still, if one race blames another for chaos and responds with violence, the very foundation of society will be undermined.

Greene was an associate editor in CNS’ special projects department for nearly 22 years.

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Cartoon Corner

Catholic Voices

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But asking someone to wear a mask to prevent the spread of a virus is more akin to asking someone not to leave a loaded gun on the coffee table. The idea is not that you might get hurt, but that someone else might because of your carelessness.

We wear masks to protect others because the vast majority of us don’t know from day to day
**LATIN AMERICA**

Continued from Page 15

Mexico planned to reopen its economy June 1, but COVID-19 cases and deaths continue to increase, and critics say the country is undercounting the lives lost. The country has recorded more than 9,000 COVID-19 deaths, according to the health secretariat, which originally predicted a death toll of about 6,000.

Priests have questioned Mexico’s health policy, noting that the country responded slowly and never imposed a strict quarantine.

Government officials said they wanted to avoid hurting poor people working in the informal economy. The official response also promised “austerity” and government cuts rather than economic stimulus, leaving millions not enrolled in social programs to fend for themselves.

“If we had had a real quarantine of three weeks … this would have been controlled,” said Father Rogelio Narvaez, national director of Caritas, which has organized programs to feed the hungry and listen to people suffering psychologically.

The country now confronts a “crisis of hunger” and collapsed economy, he added.

Colombia, with 28,000 COVID-19 cases, has so far been spared some of the problems faced by neighbors like Brazil and Peru. But social distancing and lockdowns have taken a toll, with unemployment doubling to 20 percent in April, according to government figures.

Construction sites, factories and some shops have been allowed to reopen, but many people still struggle to make a living.

With live music venues closed and no one hiring musicians for parties, mariachi singer Maximo Gonzalez and his five-member band walk residential streets in Bogota. They play in front of apartment buildings, hoping residents will throw them tips from above.

“We’re professional musicians,” Gonzalez said. “But we have no other source of income now. The only thing we can do is entertain people at their homes and rely on their collaboration.”

Venezuelan migrant Alejandro Romero peddled sweets and cigarettes on Bogota’s streets before the pandemic, but police confiscated his wares when they saw him selling during the recent lockdown. Now he roams the city’s streets with his wife and child, asking for charity.

“The toughest thing is coming up with rent money,” Romero said as he waited for a free food package outside Our Lady of Lourdes Church in Bogota. “But, thankfully, there are humble people with good hearts who have helped us out.”

In some places, neighbors have joined to face the crisis together.

In El Salvador, senior citizens fear the virus, but they also fear being an economic burden to children who have lost their income during the lockdown that began in March, said Yessenia Alfaro, 43, coordinator in that country for Unbound, a Catholic-founded non-profit organization that works with families around the world.

Mothers who have children are volunteering to look after senior neighbors who do not have family nearby, checking on their welfare and providing food or helping them get medicines, Alfaro said.

Families in a low-income neighborhood on a hill overlooking Lima, Peru’s capital, have organized to stretch their budgets during the economic crunch, said Jael Lopez, 36, who coordinates Unbound’s program there.

Peruvians are allowed to leave their homes only to buy food or medicine. Because only about half of the country’s households have refrigerators, however, people in poorer neighborhoods must buy food more frequently, and crowded markets have become flashpoints for spreading the virus.

To limit exposure, some neighborhoods have chosen several people to shop for multiple families, Lopez said. Families also pool their supplies, with several people cooking food that is then delivered to the homes to keep contact minimal.

In Venezuela, malnutrition is on the rise as lockdowns have left thousands of people without work. In April, 18 percent of the children weighed by a Caritas health program were severely malnourished, said Jannel Marquez, Caritas Venezuela director.

Venezuela has had relatively few coronavirus cases, because few international flights arrive and because gasoline shortages have limited people’s ability to travel within the country. But Marquez warned that that contagion could pick up as people go back to work.

That could be devastating in the country, where hospitals have been underfunded for years, are short of personnel and frequently suffer from power and water shortages.

“Our Lady of Chiquinquira Parish in Caracas has been handing out packages of grains and rice to people who used to go to the parish food pantry. The church is closed to avoid contagion, but the pastor, Father Luis Salazar, broadcasts his Mass through Instagram live. That has helped him stay in touch with parishioners while other priests struggle to reach the faithful.”

“We get about 2,000 people tuning into Mass on Sundays,” said Father Salazar, who is well known in Venezuela for his Instagram videos about biblical teachings. “Doing those videos helped me a lot.”

Contributing to this story were David Agren in Mexico and Manuel Rueda in Colombia.

**ROLHEISER**

**Continúa de Página 17**

can hablar más profundo que el tangible contacto humano? ¿Qué puede haber más real que eso? La respuesta es la fidelidad, la fidelidad como el don de un alma moral compartida, la fidelidad como el don de confianza y la fidelidad como permanecer auténtico al quién eras tú cuando ese nacimiento fue tan especial para ella, y no ser un miembro fiel de la familia o el amigo; lo mismo que puedes ser un amigo fiel y miembro de la familia y no ver a ese amigo o miembro de la familia durante cuarenta años. Ser fiel en recordar los cumpleaños es admirable, pero la fidelidad consiste más en recordar quién eras tú cuando ese nacimiento fue tan especial para ti. La fidelidad consiste en mantener la afinidad moral.

Buscando la mejor de mis posibilidades, trato de permanecer en contacto con la familia, los viejos amigos, los antiguos compañeros de clase, los antiguos estudiantes, los antiguos colegas y los viejos conocidos. Por lo general, eso me desborda un poco. Por tanto, pongo mi confianza en la fidelidad moral. Como mejor puedo, trato de comprometerme a guardar la misma alma que tenía cuando dejé el hogar siendo joven, lo cual me caracterizó y definí cuando me encontré con toda esa maravillosa gente a lo largo del camino.
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TEXTS

Continued from Page 3

prayer, petitioning God for true and lasting peace that only comes from our Father in heaven. These texts might give words to the frustration, anger, and confusion we feel in our hearts. May Jesus, who proclaimed peace to his disciples at the Resurrection, grant us lasting peace.

30. FOR THE PRESERVATION OF PEACE AND JUSTICE

Entrance Antiphon [Cf. Sir 36:18, 19]

Give peace, O Lord, to those who wait for you; hear the prayers of your servants and guide us in the way of justice.

Collect

O God, who have revealed that peacemakers are to be called your children, grant, we pray, that we may work without ceasing to establish that justice which alone ensures true and lasting peace. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

Or:

O God, who show a father’s care for all, grant, in your mercy, that the members of the human race, to whom we have given a single origin, may form in peace a single family and always be united by a fraternal spirit.

Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

Other prayers, p. 1298.

Prayer over the Offerings

May the saving sacrifice of your Son, the King of peace, offered under sacramental signs that signify peace and unity, strengthen, we pray, O Lord, concord among all your children. Through Christ our Lord.

Communion Antiphon [Mt 5:9]

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God.

Or: [Jn 14:27]

Peace I leave with you, my peace I give you, says the Lord.

Prayer after Communion

Bestow on us, we pray, O Lord, the spirit of charity, so that, sustained by the Body and Blood of your Only Begotten Son, we may be effective in nurturing among all the peace that he has left us. Who lives and reigns for ever and ever.

- - -

Father Ryan Rojo is parochial vicar at St. Ann Church in Midland and serves on the Diocesan Liturgical Commission.

OBISPO

Continuá de Página 3

discípulos en el gran evento de Pentecostés, el cumpleaños de nuestra Iglesia, había personas presentes “de todas las naciones bajo el Cielo” (Hechos 2:5). Mientras que las obras de la carne incluyen actitudes divisivas como el odio, la rivalidad, los celos, las disensiones, y las facciones (Gálatas 5:19-20), el Espíritu Santo trae la unidad de todos nosotros.

The social teachings of the Catholic Church make it clear that racism is wrong. For example, the documents of the Second Vatican Council say, “The Church proves, as foreign to the mind of Christ, any discrimination against men or harassment of them because of their race, color, condition of life, or religion” (Nostra Aetate, 5). “Since all men possess a rational soul and are created in God's likeness, since they have the same nature and origin, have been redeemed by Christ, and enjoy the same divine calling and destiny, the basic equality of all must receive increasingly greater recognition” (Gaudium et Spes, 29). This is a call to action.

What will be our response to the sin of racism? The events that have unfolded in recent years constitute a wake-up call for all of us to do some soul searching and prayerfully examine our own personal attitudes about race. Here are some questions that would be good to ponder:

• When was the last time I shared a meal with someone whose race is different from my own?
• When was the last time I visited the home of someone whose race is different from my own?
• When was the last time I had a good, heart-to-heart conversation with someone whose race is different from my own?

Let me conclude this reflection with the inspiring words of the mystic St. John of the Cross. He was a Catholic priest who lived about 400 years ago in Spain. He said, “Where there is no love, put love, and you will find love.”

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www.sanangelodiocease.org
When talking about the number of young people leaving the church, many respond that they will return when they’re older. Yet, studies are showing that is not true. Again, if we have given the message that they don’t have a place now, why would they believe that they’ll have a place later in life? We must recognize that youth and what they have to offer is valued and needed now. This time in their life is not simply a time of waiting. As Pope Francis writes, “Making the most of our youthful years entails seeing this season of life as worthwhile in itself, and not simply as a brief prelude to adulthood” (CV 135). Young people have gifts, talents, and skills now that they can share with the larger church. It is not a time of simply waiting for them to reach a specific age so that they can develop and use their gifts and talents now.

Young people are the church now just as much as any other member. “We cannot just say that young people are the future of our world. They are its present; even now, they are helping to enrich it” (CV 64). We have a responsibility to them, as initiated, baptized members of the community, not only to make room for them, but also to give them a place to belong and welcome them to the proverbial table with open minds, hearts, and arms. Without them, there is no future for the church.

**POPE**

**Continued from Page 9**

such an attitude? Greater distance, less closeness, less mutual assistance” (CV 66). Every person I have encountered who has spent a significant amount of time with a young person would tell you that young people are better than society and media give them credit for. If we are constantly looking for them to become a person makes, regardless of age, they would be right to leave and find a place where they are supported and helped to grow from their mistakes. The same is true for young people in our church. None of us is perfect, yet too often we expect perfection from young people. Our jobs as the adults in the community are to mentor them, to help them continue to grow and give them a safe place to discover how to develop their talents and gifts and to grow in faith. Young people bring a sense of hope and help to our communities that are desperately needed, especially in our current times. As Pope Francis reminds us, “We talk about youth and our job is to talk about youth and to talk about the happy youth” (CV 139). We must start a congregational shift so that all members of our congregations see the joy and hope the young people bring and encourage their presence and contributions.

**OSPINO**

**Continúa de Página 17**

Hace poco la migración estaba armando latinos en estados de pollo en Mississippi y para deportarlos. Recientemente, el presidente invocó la ley sobre producción durante un conflicto requiriendo que esos obreros no pare en instalaciones que han sufrido miles de infectados por el virus.

Pero la legislación para dar ayuda financiera a los que perdieron su empleo excluyó a los indocumentados. Ambos Republicanos y Demócratas carecieron de la valentía y compasión para incluirlos. Peor, en familias donde un miembro es indocumentado y el otro es ciudadano, todos fueron rechazados. Sólo California estableció un fondo de emergencia, dando $500 a cada adulto.

El Censo estima que hay 120,000 indocumentados que, según Kica Matos, directora del Centro sobre Inmigración y Justicia, contribuyen $124 millones en impuestos locales y estatales. No obstante, no reciben ninguna ayuda.

Edith Carapia, una trabajadora esencial infectada por el virus, suplicó desde su cama en el hospital al gobernador Ned Lamont, según el Hartford Courant: “Somos trabajadores esenciales. Urgentemente necesitamos su ayuda. Ya es tiempo que nos ayude. Póngase en nuestros zapatos. Piense en nosotros y ayúdenos”.

Matos cita a Martin Luther King Jr., quien dijo hace 55 años: “El tiempo siempre es clave para hacer lo que debemos”. Es es lo que tenemos que hacer para vencer el virus.
OSPINO

Continued from Page 18

doctors and administrators on the front lines of the pandemic is humbling. During these critical moments, who gets access to lifesaving care and who does not is often decided on the spot. The mental and emotional toll associated with such decisions is significant.

Ethics and medical experts have developed criteria that seems helpful, even when not always satisfactory to all. At stake are human lives. It seems to me that we also need some criteria to guide decisions about furloughing or laying off Hispanic (and other) pastoral leaders. I offer two.

On the one hand, remember that about 10% of all Catholic lay ecclesiastical ministers in the country are Hispanic. Losing even a handful of them will have significant effects on Catholic evangelization in an increasingly Hispanic church.

Since nearly half of all U.S. Catholics self-identify as Hispanic, dioceses and parishes should think twice before “letting go” Hispanic pastoral leaders. We need them with their pastoral competencies and experience more than ever. It has taken long decades to cultivate a critical mass of Hispanic Catholic pastoral leaders. The investment, personal and institutional, has been enormous. Although slowly, the numbers are growing. We must protect these gains.

On the other hand, we must make decisions with charity, mercy and justice. An employee with 10 children, a single mother, someone caring for an ill or elderly relative and parents with small children should be at the bottom of the list of any employee reduction formula in our Catholic institutions. At stake are human lives.

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

SORROW

Continued from Page 2

used tear gas on protesters.

"The looting, vandalism and violence we are witnessing in Minneapolis and throughout our nation dishonors the legacy of Mr. Floyd and further complicates a tragic situation," said Bishop Michael F. Burbidge of Arlington, Virginia, across the Potomac from Washington.

They were called echoed by Floyd's brother Terrence, who said on a national television show that the violence was "overshadowing what is going on because he (his brother) was about peace. ... (This is) destructive unity. That's not what he was about.”

Others said the tragic situation was being used for a variety of reasons and was a warning signal.

"COVID-19, the murder of George Floyd, the needless deaths of so many people of color, the shameless exploitation of social division for personal gratification or political gain -- these are apocalyptic events that are not meant simply to scare us -- to take our breath away -- but to warn us of serious trouble on the horizon as well as the true meaning the peril that is already among us," said Cardinal Joseph W. Tobin of Newark, New Jersey. "It's the fact that black and Latino we're all hurting."

"We desperately need to breathe, so that we can recognize that the efforts by people of great power to divide us are diametrically opposed to the plan God has for this world," he said.

Also referencing the pandemic in his Pentecost homily, Washington's Archbishop Wilton D. Gregory said the incident has served to reveal "the virus of racism among us once again even as we continue to cope with the coronavirus pandemic."

Denver's Archbishop Aquila reminded Catholics to keep church teaching in mind, not political preferences, when it comes to the killing.

"The Catholic Church has always promoted a culture of life, but too often our society has lost its sense of the dignity of every human being from the time of conception until natural death," he said. "Every Catholic has a responsibility to promote the dignity of life at every level of life. Too many have made their god their ideology, political party, or the color of their skin, and not the Gospel of Life and the dignity of every human being."

The archbishop added: "I encourage the faithful of the archdiocese to examine our consciences on how we promote a culture of life on all levels, to pray for the conversion of hearts of those who promote racism, to pray that our society may return to a culture of life, and finally and most importantly, to pray for the repose of the soul of George Floyd, for his family in their loss, and that justice may be served in his case."

In the Diocese of El Paso, Texas, Bishop Mark J. Seitz, who last year wrote a pastoral letter on racism, gathered with priests from his diocese and carrying a “Black Lives Matter” sign knelt in silence for eight minutes, the time Floyd was said to have spent under the officer's knee before becoming unconscious and later dying.

EDICTAL SUMMONS

June 1, 2020

CASE: LARA (PINO) -- FLORES

NO.: SO/20/36

The Tribunal Office of the Catholic Diocese of San Angelo is seeking ARTURO ACOSTA FLORES, Jr. You are hereby summoned to appear before the Tribunal of the Catholic Diocese of San Angelo, at 804 Ford Street, San Angelo, Texas 76905, on or before the 30th day of June 2020, to answer to the Petition of EVA ANGELINA LARA (PINO), now introduced before the Diocesan Tribunal in an action styled, “EVA LARA (PINO) and ARTURO FLORES, Jr., Petition for Declaration of Invalidity of Marriage.” Said Petition is identified as Case: LARA (PINO) -- FLORES; Protocol No.: SO/20/36, on the Tribunal Docket of the Diocese of San Angelo.

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

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

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

St. Mary’s Central Catholic School

The 2020 8th grade graduates from St. Mary’s Central Catholic School in Odessa at graduation Mass, May 14, 2020. The Mass was held at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Church in Odessa due to St. Mary’s not being large enough to accommodate the crowd while allowing for coronavirus social distancing requirements.

ALAN TORRE | APTORRE PHOTOGRAPHY

Holy Redeemer Church

Graduation Mass at Holy Redeemer Church in Odessa.