Seminarians Humberto Díaz, Mauricio Romero, Francisco Camacho, and David García were recently photographed at Conception Seminary College in Conception, Missouri. The four college seniors will soon graduate from their university studies and move on to graduate-level studies in theology.
There are two ways a Catholic can be a priest: the common priesthood, and the ministerial priesthood. The common priesthood is made up of all the baptized members of the church. The Book of Revelation says that Jesus Christ “has made us into a Kingdom, priests for his God and Father” (Rv 1:6). The First Letter of Peter says, speaking of the whole church, “You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people of his own” (1 Pt 2:9).

All members of the church exercise their baptismal priesthood through their participation, each according to their own vocation, in Christ’s mission as priest, prophet, and king (Catechism of the Catholic Church, no. 1546). In the sacrament of baptism, immediately after pouring the water, the person is anointed on the top of the head with the sacred oil of chrism, as the celebrant prays that the person “may remain as a member of Christ, Priest, Prophet, and King, unto eternal life” (Order of Baptism of Children, no. 98).

The ministerial priesthood is made up of those who have been ordained as priests through the sacrament of holy orders. This is the priesthood that I will focus on in this article. The ministerial priesthood is at the service of the common priesthood of all the faithful (Catechism of the Catholic Church, no. 1547).

A Catholic priest is ordained to serve the people of God in three principal ways:

• By preaching the word of God and explaining the teachings of our faith,
• By celebrating the sacraments,
• And by pastoral governance, that is, exercising leadership by shepherding the community that has been entrusted to him.

When a priest is ordained, his hands are anointed with sacred chrism, dedicating them to the service of God and his people by consecrating the Eucharist, absolving sins, anointing the sick, and blessing people and things.

The priest stakes his life completely on Jesus Christ. Jesus is his Lord, his Savior, his teacher, his God and his people by consecrating the Eucharist, with sacred chrism, dedicating them to the service of God in three principal ways:

1. By preaching the word of God and explaining the teachings of our faith, bear fruit for generations after he is gone.

Of course, the priest is not God. Sometimes little children will get confused, and they see the priest presiding at the altar in the Mass, where the bread and wine become the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ, and then after Mass, as they greet the priest at the door of the church, they say, “Hi Jesus.” It’s cute, but it’s not accurate.

In the exercise of his ministry, by virtue of the sacrament of holy orders, the priest represents Jesus Christ, and he possesses the authority to act in the power and place of the person of Christ himself (Catechism of the Catholic Church, no. 1548). In particular, in the celebration of the Eucharist, the priest unites the offerings of the people to the sacrifice of Christ, and he makes present again and applies to our needs today the unique sacrifice of Christ on the cross (Catechism of the Catholic Church, no. 1566).

Nevertheless, the priest is still a human being, with human weakness and error. He is not perfect. He makes mistakes. He sins and needs to go to confession. The priest is not a robot. He has feelings. His heart can be broken. He mourns and grieves his losses. He sometimes gets hurt, tired, or discouraged. Sometimes he cannot live up to people’s expectations.

In the midst of his human brokenness, through the grace of God, the priest becomes a “wounded healer.” Because he has suffered, he can relate to other people in their suffering, and he can help them get through it. When he joins his own hardship and struggles to the cross of Christ, it helps him to become more compassionate.

A priest has hopes and dreams. He has his favorite foods and desserts. He has a sense of humor and enjoys being with friends. He goes on vacations. He has hobbies and pastimes. For example, here in our West Texas diocese, we have priests who play basketball, soccer, golf, and racquetball. We have priests who hunt, fish, hike, go camping, ride bikes, and work cattle. We have priests who make music, write, paint, do gardening, build computers, and play video games. One used to fly airplanes. Another regularly goes kayaking.

A priest has a family. He always remains a member of his family of origin. He maintains relationship with his parents, brothers, sisters, nieces, nephews, and others. He maintains contact with them and, when possible, he helps them and goes to see them.

A priest comes from a particular hometown and culture and generation, and all of that helps to make him the wonderful person that he is. But he is also called to go beyond his personal roots, to love and serve wherever the church sends him. This means that a priest often has to learn languages and customs that stretch beyond his natural comfort zone, but that’s what it means to be a missionary of Jesus Christ. A good priest blooms where he is planted and bears great fruit.

Priests come in all sizes, shapes, colors, and perspectives. Many of the priests and seminarians of our diocese did other kinds of work before entering the seminary, including teaching, engineering, counseling, journalism, restaurant management, banking, ranching, radiology, emergency medical services, social work, and the military.

Every priest who comes to a parish brings his own unique set of gifts and talents. He is not exactly the same as his predecessor. Therefore, we should not expect him to lead in exactly the same way. Each priest helps the parish to grow in a new way.

As we look to the future, we will need more priests to serve the needs of our people. If you know someone who you think has some qualities that would be good for the priesthood, mention it to him. God continues to call men from our local families and parishes to enter the seminary and prepare for the priesthood. If you would like more information about the priesthood or the seminary, I invite you to contact Father Ryan Rojo, our Diocesan Vocation Director, at 325-651-7500, or vocation@sanangelodiocese.org. His postal address is P.O. Box 1829, San Angelo, TX 76902.

I will be hosting an informative event called the Project Andrew Dinner on Tuesday, April 27, 2021, at the new parish fellowship hall of St. Margaret Catholic Church in San Angelo. Those who would like to attend to learn more about the seminary and the priesthood may contact their local pastor or contact Father Ryan Rojo at the email or phone number above.

Our priests pray for us every day. We should also pray for them and give thanks to God for their priestly vocation. We should ask the Lord Jesus to love them, sustain them, and draw them ever closer to his loving heart.

From the Bishop’s Desk

What is a priest?

Bishop Michael J. Sis
Diocese of San Angelo

Seminarian contact information

- Conception Seminary College (Undergraduate)
  P.O. Box 502
  Conception MO, 64433
  Seminarians: Jessie Ortiz, 1st year philosophy
             Francisco Camacho, 4th year philosophy
             Humberto Diaz, 4th year philosophy
             David Garcia, 4th year philosophy
             Mauricio Romero, 4th year philosophy

- Kenrick Glennon Seminary (Graduate)
  5200 Glennon Dr.
  St. Louis, MO 63119
  Seminarians: Deacon Kevin Lenius, 4th year theology
             Mike Elsner, 2nd year theology

- Notre Dame Seminary (Graduate)
  2901 S. Carrollton Ave.
  New Orleans, LA 70118
  Seminarian: Joshua Basse, 1st year pre-theology

Due to the pandemic, the seminarians of the Diocese of San Angelo continue to have limited opportunities for fellowship outside their schools. With that, we encourage the faithful to write our men at the addresses provided here. The young men will thus be reassured of the love and care of God’s people.
¿Qué es un sacerdote?

Hay dos formas en que un católico puede ser sacerdote: el sacerdote común, y el sacerdote ministerial. El sacerdociro común está formado por todos los miembros bautizados de la iglesia. El Libro del Apocalipsis dice que Jesucristo “nos ha hecho un reino, sacerdotes para su Dios y Padre” (Ap 1:6). La Primera Carta de Pedro dice, hablando de toda la Iglesia: “Ustedes son una raza elegida, un reino de sacerdotes, una nación consagrada, un pueblo suyo” (1 Pe 2:9).

Todos los miembros de la iglesia ejercen su sacerdocio bautismal a través de su participación, cada uno según su propia vocación, en la misión de Cristo como Sacerdote, Profeta y Rey (Catecismo de la Iglesia Católica, n. 1546). En el sacramento del bautismo, “inmediatamente después de derramar el agua, la persona es ungida en la coronilla con el óleo sagrado del crisma sagrado, dedicándolas al servicio a Dios y Padre” (Catecismo de la Iglesia Católica, n. 1547).

Un sacerdote católico está ordenado para servir al pueblo de Dios de tres formas principales:

• Predicando la palabra de Dios y explicando las enseñanzas de nuestra fe.
• Celebrando los sacramentos.
• Y por el gobierno pastoral, es decir, ejerciendo el liderazgo pastoraleando la comunidad que le ha sido encomendada.

Cuando un sacerdote es ordenado, los manos se unen con el crisma sagrado, dedicándolas al servicio de Dios y de su pueblo consagrando la Eucaristía, abrazando los pecados, ungiendo a los enfermos, y bendiciendo a las personas y a cosas.

El sacerdote apuesta completamente su vida por Jesucristo. Jesús es su Señor, su Salvador, su maestro, su mentor, y su compañero constante. En el ministerio de un sacerdote ordenado, actúa “en la persona de Cristo”. Esto significa que el sacerdote posee la autoridad de un sacerdote ordenado, actúa “en la persona de Cristo”. Esto significa que el sacerdote posee la autoridad de un sacerdote ordenado, actúa “en la persona de Cristo”. Esto significa que el sacerdote posee la autoridad de un sacerdote ordenado, actúa “en la persona de Cristo”. Esto significa que el sacerdote posee la autoridad de un sacerdote ordenado, actúa “en la persona de Cristo”. Esto significa que el sacerdote posee la autoridad de un sacerdote ordenado, actúa “en la persona de Cristo”.

Un sacerdote tiene una familia. Siempre sigue con sus padres, hermanos, hermanas, sobrinos, y sobrinas. Mantiene contacto con ellos y, cuando es posible, los ayuda y va a verlos.

Un sacerdote viene de una ciudad natal, una cultura y una generación en particular, y todo eso ayuda a formarlo en la persona maravillosa que es. Pero también está llamado a ir más allá de sus raíces personales, a amar y servir dondequiera que la Iglesia le envíe. Esto significa que un sacerdote a menudo tiene que aprender idiomas y costumbres que lo llevan más allá de su zona de confort natural, pero eso es lo que significa ser un misionero de Jesucristo. Un buen sacerdote florece donde está plantado y da buenos frutos.

Los sacerdotes viven en todos los tamaños, formas, colores, y perspectivas. Muchos de los sacerdotes y seminaristas de nuestra diócesis hicieron otros tipos de trabajo antes de ingresar al seminario, incluyendo ser maestro, ingeniera, consejero, periodista, administración de restaurantes, bancario, gandería, radiología, servicios médicos de emergencia, trabajo social, y el ejército.

Cada sacerdote que viene a una parroquia trae su propio juego único de dones y talentos. No es exactamente el mismo que su predecesor. Por lo tanto, no debemos esperar que él dirija exactamente de la misma manera. Cada sacerdote ayuda a la parroquia a crecer de una manera nueva.

Al mirar hacia el futuro, necesitaremos más sacerdotes para atender las necesidades de nuestra gente. Si usted conoce a alguien que crea que tiene algunas cualidades que serían buenas para el sacerdocio, digaselo. Dios continúa llamando a hombres de nuestras familias y parroquias locales para que ingrese al seminario y se preparen para el sacerdocio. El llamado de Dios generalmente no es un relámpago del cielo. Por lo general, es una invitación amable y amorosa.

O Lord, grant that our priests be detached from all worldly interests, and labor only for your glory. With a pure conscience may they persevere in their duties faithfully until their dying breath. And when death has claimed their bodies, and they place back into your hands the account of their faithful stewardship, may they enjoy in you, Lord Jesus, their divine teacher on earth, the everlasting reward of the crown of justice in the splendor of the saints.

Amen.
Bishop’s Calendar

April 2021
1  2 SAN ANGELO, Cathedral of the Sacred Heart, Mass of the Lord’s Supper at 7:00 p.m.
2  3 SAN ANGELO, Cathedral of the Sacred Heart, Service of the Passion at 7:00 p.m.
3  4 SAN ANGELO, Cathedral of the Sacred Heart, Easter Vigil at 8:30 p.m.
4  5 SAN ANGELO, Cathedral of the Sacred Heart, Spasmodic Pastoral Plan Implementation Committee at 10:00 a.m.
5  6 SAN ANGELO, Diocesan Pastoral Center, Pastoral Plan Implementation Committee at 10:00 a.m.
6–8 NEW ORLEANS, Notre Dame Seminary
9  10 SAN ANGELO, Christ the King Retreat Center, Diocesan Deacon Council meeting at 12:00 p.m.
10 11 WALL, St. Ambrose, 30th Anniversary Mass of Rev. Joseph Choutapalli at 6:00 p.m.
11 12 ROWENA, St. Joseph, Confirmation Mass at 9:30 a.m.
12 13 AUSTIN, Texas Conference of Catholic Bishops meeting
13 14 SAN ANGELO, St. Joseph, Confirmation Mass at 7:00 p.m.
14 15 SAN ANGELO, Cathedral of the Sacred Heart, Confirmation Mass at 5:00 p.m.
15 16 SAN ANGELO, Cathedral of the Sacred Heart, Marriage Jubilee at 2:30 p.m.
16 17 SAN ANGELO, Diocesan Pastoral Center, Foundation Board meeting at 10:00 a.m.
17 18 SAN ANTONIO, Ordination of Bishop Gary Janak at 2:00 p.m.
18 19 COLEMAN, Sacred Heart, Confirmation Mass at 6:00 a.m.
19 20 ABILENE, Holy Family, Confirmation Mass at 7:00 p.m.
20 21 WALL, Wall Brethren Church, Texas State Czech Heritage Society meeting at 8:45 a.m.
21 22 MIDLAND, Diocesan Pastoral Center, Pastoral Plan Implementation Committee at 10:00 a.m.
22 23 HOUSTON, Knights of Columbus State Convention
23 24 May 2021
1  2 MIDLAND, San Miguel Arcángel, Confirmation Mass at 3:00 p.m.
2  3 SAN ANGELO, Diocesan Pastoral Center, Presbyteral Council meeting at 11:00 a.m.
3  4 SAN ANGELO, St. Margaret, Project Andrew Dinner at 6:00 p.m.
4  5 SAN ANGELO, Diocesan Pastoral Center, Priestly Life and Formation Committee meeting at 10:00 a.m.
5  6 WALL, St. Ambrose, Confirmation Mass at 7:00 p.m.
6  7 OZONA, Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Confirmation Mass at 7:00 p.m.
7  8 HOUSTON, Knights of Columbus State Convention

Christ the King Retreat Center

April 2021
2  CKRC Offices Closed in Observation of Good Friday

May 2021
1–2 Engaged Encounter (Virtual)
2–9 Deacon Formation
15 ACTS Core Team
19–20 Seminarians
23 Confirmation Retreat (Virtual)
31 CKRC Offices Closed in Observance of Memorial Day

Necrology of Priests and Deacons

Please pray for our departed clergy

April
2 Deacon Lazaro Servier (2009)
3 Deacon Edward Martinez (1985)
3 Deacon Alan Neff (2016)
4 Deacon Andres Hernandez (2013)
7 Deacon Jerry Treviño (2017)
16 Deacon Eliseo Carrillo (1989)
21 Rev. Thomas Leahy, SAC (1969)
22 Deacon Jesus Vasquez (2018)

May
5 Rev. Clifford Blackburn, OMI (2005)
7 Rev. Msgr. Kevin Heyburn (2001)
14 Deacon Manuel Luevano (2019)
15 Deacon Wayne Rock (2006)

Reporting Sexual Abuse

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

Reportar Abuso Sexual

La Diócesis Católica de San Angelo está firmemente comprometida a crear y mantener el ambiente más seguro posible para nuestros niños y adultos vulnerables. Si usted o alguien que usted conoce ha sido víctima de abuso sexual por cualquier persona que sirve a la Iglesia, y necesita un lugar para hablar con alguien sobre sus sentimientos de traición o hecho por la Iglesia, estamos aquí para ayudar. Para reportar incidentes, llame a Lori Hines, Coordinadora de Asistencia a Víctimas, 325-374-7609 (celular), o escriba a la Diócesis de San Angelo, Ministerio de Asistencia a Víctimas, PO Box 1829, San Angelo, TX 76902. Un interpreter de español está disponible. Si el incidente ocurrió fuera de esta diócesis, nuestra Coordinadora de Asistencia a Víctimas le ayudará a trazar su preocupación a la atención de la diócesis correspondiente. Por favor, tenga en cuenta que uno siempre tiene el derecho de reportar el abuso a las autoridades civiles, y la ley civil requiere que cualquier abuso de un menor de edad debe ser reportado.
Menard: After 263 years, the ‘voice of the mission’ is heard once more

By Terrell Kelley

“A bell is always the voice of the temple where it hangs. The bell that you are hearing today represents the long-lost voice of the Mission Santa Cruz de San Sabá. Its message today, as it was 263 years ago, remains one of hope and solidarity.” These beautiful words, addressed to “my fellow Menardians,” were written by Spanish Ambassador — and Honorary Citizen of Menard — Juan Romero de Terreros on the occasion of the recent commemoration of the 263rd anniversary of the destruction of the mission and the martyrdom of twelve brave Spaniards, including two Franciscan priests, Padre Presidente Fray Alonso Giraldo de Terreros and Fray José de Santiesteban Aberín. Of note, the martyred Padre Presidente, who was in charge of the mission effort, was an ancestor of Ambassador Terreros.

The annual commemoration was organized by the Menard County Historical Commission, with visitors from San Antonio and Lampasas County joining local Menardians to honor the memory of the brave Spaniards who gave their lives in the effort to bring the Holy Catholic Faith to the Lipan Apache.

To commemorate this, we gathered together March 14 on a breezy Sunday at the mission site located about two miles east of Menard on FM 2092. Across from us was the modest alfalfa field on the south bank of the Rio San Sabá where history was changed so many years ago when the tiny Mission Santa Cruz de San Sabá was destroyed by hostile Comanche, Tonkawa, Tejas, and Taovaya warriors 263 years ago on March 16, 1758.

The destruction of this tiny mission by an estimated 2,000 braves that cold morning changed history for the Spanish Empire, Texas, Mexico and the United States. It was a tragic event of long-term international importance.

This was highlighted by Ambassador Terreros in his letter. He pointed out that what happened so long ago only a few miles from the Menard County courthouse is also an important part of Spanish history, marking the high water mark of the Spanish Empire in Texas. Father Terreros and the other Spanish martyrs are also remembered in similar commemorative ceremonies in Menard’s sister city of Cortegana, Spain, which sent a letter expressing their respect for Father Terreros as “a figure remembered with pride in his native land, and, we know, with admiration and reverence in Texas.”

As in past years, Mark Wolf, a direct descendent of a survivor of the mission massacre, came from San Antonio to share with us his ancestor’s emotional words describing what happened on the banks of the San Sabá so long ago. (Mark also was a key player in the discovery of the mission site in 1993.)

Noted Spanish colonial living history reenactors Joe Gonzalez and his wife Stella also joined us again, as did other Spanish colonial reenactors from San Antonio. Joe’s portrayal of Father Miguel de Molina, the only surviving priest from the mission, was riveting as he related fray Molina’s documented account of the mission massacre.

Considered by the Catholic Church to be hallowed ground, Father Innocent Eziefule, pastor of Menard’s Sacred Heart Catholic Parish, blessed the mission site and offered prayers for the martyred Spaniards.

Perhaps the most emotional portion of the ceremony was the laying of the memorial wreath by Father Innocent and Mark Wolf, followed by the tolling of the mission bell as the name of each fallen Spaniard was read by “Father Molina.” The “long-lost voice of the Mission Santa Cruz de San Sabá” again echoed against the surrounding hills, resounding across the centuries and the thousands of miles that lay between Menard and her Spanish sister city of Cortegana.
St. Vincent mainstay to retire after 36 years of service

By Loretta Fulton

Every priest serving St. Vincent Pallotti Catholic Church in Abilene since 1985 has at one time or another said the same words when confronted with an issue that needed a decision.

“Let’s talk with Lydia,” they would say.

That’s been the observation of Monica Garcia, a longtime church member and one of the many admirers of Lydia Rodriguez, who is retiring in April as St. Vincent administrative assistant after 36 years.

“She’s like the backbone of our church,” said Garcia, director of clinical education in speech pathology and an instructor in the Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders at Abilene Christian University.

After April, the current priest, Father Emilio Sosa, and his successors won’t have Rodriguez to consult any longer. They’re used to her being a volunteer consultant after she retires. And that probably wouldn’t be hard to do. Lydia already was a member of St. Vincent when she was hired as secretary to Father Jim Lynes in 1985, and she loves the parish with her whole heart.

An invitation-only catered dinner will be held for Rodriguez on April 9. After that, less formal come and go receptions will be held between Masses on dates to be determined. Her last day in the office hasn’t been determined yet because she is training her replacement, who also is a member of St. Vincent.

Rodriguez, 68, was born in Sweetwater and grew up in Roscoe, just west of Abilene. She and her husband, Carlos, have nine children — four of his, four of hers, and one from their marriage. And they have twenty grandchildren in Abilene, San Antonio, and Jenks, Oklahoma.

“Pretty much all of them are here,” Rodriguez said.

Even so, trips to Jenks and San Antonio will be on the retirement list after Rodriguez rests up a bit. She doesn’t see herself sitting still for long and isn’t sure about the word “retirement.”

“I don’t know how long I can do that,” she said.

Rodriguez started work in the St. Vincent church office on April 8, 1985. Since then, she has worked with eight priests, three associate priests, and two sisters. Her first job was answering the phone and taking messages for Father Jim Lynes, who was priest at St. Vincent from 1985 to 1988. Since then, it’s been a constant learning curve.

“I learned that every priest I worked for had their own ways of doing things,” Rodriguez said. “So, I had to learn again.”

Rodriguez proved to be quick learner and the person that everyone in the church has called on from time to time. That may be for an official record or for something less formal like a bit of historical knowledge.

Through the years, Rodriguez added to her official duties, taking on bookkeeping chores, creating the bulletins, keeping records of the church sacraments, and working at the popular Cinco de Mayo Festival. She especially enjoyed the festival, but tackled the other jobs with enthusiasm. A source of pride for Rodriguez is preparing the audit for the diocese. Every time the parish got a new priest, an audit was required. Getting the requested items to the diocese made Rodriguez nervous, but apparently she had no need to worry.

“The audits were always good,” she said, “so I guess you can say I was doing my job well.”

Rodriguez can rest assured that everyone she knows at St. Vincent, including clergy and lay members, believes she has done her job well.

Working in the parish office has proven to be a learning experience for Rodriguez beyond official duties. With each new priest, she learned more about her faith and watched it deepen.

“My faith has grown through the years,” she said. “I’m very proud to be a Catholic.”

Loretta Fulton is a freelance writer in Abilene.

World Water Day and Earth Day remind us that creation is sacred

Loretta Fulton

World Water Day, March 22, and World Earth Day, April 22, focus on our responsibility for the reverence and enhancement of all creation. These days call all of us to develop a new respect and appreciation for “Mother Earth,” our home, for all the gifts that we receive from Earth, especially water, that we people and all living things need to survive. On these two ecological days we celebrate the beauty and wonder on God’s creation which has its origin in a plan of love and truth. The natural world around us is nothing more and nothing less than God’s work of art, his own gallery.

We are to respect it and care for it. Our mandate from God is to complete the work of creation, to perfect its harmony and growth for our own good and that of all of our universal neighbors. As guardians of the environment, we are to ensure the proper balance of the ecosystems on which we depend.

The creation that surrounds us is a “chalice of grace.” It is precious because it reveals God’s abundant goodness. This grace, this goodness, is found everywhere and to treat it with disrespect and abuse is blasphemy. The imprint of the creator, as the patron of the environment St. Francis teaches us, is found in all of creation, especially in humans.

The environment is sacred as it comes from the holy hands of our creator, and to ruthlessly exploit it is a sacrilege.

Our engagement of the world must transcend politics, personal policy, and science and focus on human ecology, which calls for a conversion of political, economic, cultural, and social systems as well as individual lifestyles, and sharing all of Earth’s goods with all inhabitants. We are living in a time of crisis, fracturing the environment in countless ways including global climate change. We see damage in the nature that surrounds us, but we also see it in men and women. Science and technology have contributed much to progress and enrichment of the gifts of creation. However, there are moral limits of their use and application which sometimes have deleterious effects on the environ-
Having no power, yet possessing all

By the Carmelite Nuns of Our Lady of Grace Monastery

On the morning of Sunday, Feb. 14, during Mass, between the consecrations, everything went off at Our Lady of Grace Monastery: light, heat, telephone, water. For almost a week, we were cut off from the “outside world.” The roads were much too dangerous with the ice and snow.

Meanwhile, the sisters were busy collecting ice and snow to melt and gathering wood for our one wood-burning stove in the refectory. That was the only room with heat, so we prayed, ate, recreated, and slept there. We lost the use of a lot of conveniences, running water being the most felt. So, we “roughed it.”

But we had the richest of treasures — holy Mass! Thanks to the sacrificing devotion of our good chaplain, Father Anthony Sloan, we had Mass every day — even the day his car got stuck in the snow on the hill leading up to the chapel. So, like St. Paul, we experienced “having nothing (no power), yet possessing ALL” (the infinite graces of Holy Mass!).

Reflections from some of the sisters:

“God is with us, showing us that without him we can do nothing.”

“The love of God helped me make it through those days of darkness, in cold and freezing moments not knowing when things would be back to normal. The love and support of the sisters made things easy and bearable. I thought of the people out there with no place to stay, no food on their table, no heat to warm them. In my prayers, I shared with them, with my heart and mind, what we have.”

“This unusual experience helped me understand in a real but small way what so many very poor people experience every day. Also, what so many street people, both old and especially the young, face each day with the added danger of many and various things. The sisters going out to chop ice for melting made me think about how our Blessed Mother had to go to the town well each day for water. Now we can have a deeper sense of gratitude to our good God for all the blessings he has given us which at times we can overlook.”

“Now I know why God loves the poor so much and is found so easily among them: He is all they have. Thank you, Lord, for this experience of the power of your love, suffering, and mercy.”

Everything is up and running now, but we cherish that experience. And we couldn’t be more grateful for the tremendous outpouring of care and concern of so many “Good Samaritans” — there were about 90 voice mail messages waiting for us once the phone service was restored! We even received a plentiful supply of water and food. THANKS TO EVERYONE FOR YOUR KINDNESS, AND GOD BLESS YOU!!
Sowing to the Spirit

By the time you read this Lent will be over, and we will be in the Easter Season: Alleluia! It is a good time to remember what the Apostle Paul says in his Letter to the Galatians about sowing to the Spirit. At the end of his Letter he writes, ’’Do not be deceived; God is not mocked, for whatever a man sows, that will he also reap. For he who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption; but he who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life. And let us not grow weary in well-doing, for in due season we shall reap, if we do not lose heart, for in due season we shall reap” (6:7-10 RSVCE).

In Lent we engaged in self-examination and repentance of our sins. It was a time of cleansing, a taste of that life that is beyond this one, that is, a foretaste of the eternal life we shall receive in Christ. In other words, eternal life is not endless life, but a life after death, a new life, the life of theResurrected Christ. In other words, eternal life is not endless earthly life as we know it on this earth continuing endlessly and the eternal life promised by the Gospel. He writes, ’’Perhaps many people reject the faith today simply because they do not find the prospect of eternal life appealing” (no. 10). He says people want life now, but they confuse endless earthly life with eternal life, and “to continue living forever endlessly — appears more like a curse than a gift. Death, admittedly, one would wish to postpone for as long as possible. But to live always, without end — this, all things considered, can only be monotonous and ultimately unbearable” (no. 10).

This dilemma in which we find ourselves actually opens the door to the possibility of regarding death as something that can be good. It is here that the apostle Paul can help us as he teaches us about our death in relation to the death of Jesus, which was necessary for the Resurrection to occur. In his Letter to the Galatians, he writes, ’’I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me; and the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loves me and gave himself for me” (2:20). It is the death of Christ on Calvary and in each of us that kills the sin that is the result of “sowing to the flesh,” and eternal life is life with the Resurrected Christ. In other words, eternal life is not endless earthly life as we know it now, but is a new kind of life, a new kind of life that we can begin to experience here, a taste of that life that is beyond this one, a life not bound by time but bound by joy. This death with Christ, in Paul’s words, results in a “new

Pope Benedict addresses the difference between life as we know it on this earth continuing endlessly and the eternal life promised by the Gospel. He writes, ’’Perhaps many people reject the faith today simply because they do not find the prospect of eternal life attractive” (no. 10). He says people want life now, but they confuse endless earthly life with eternal life, and “to continue living forever endlessly — appears more like a curse than a gift. Death, admittedly, one would wish to postpone for as long as possible. But to live always, without end — this, all things considered, can only be monotonous and ultimately unbearable” (no. 10).

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See KNICKERBOCKERS, Page 23

Father Knick and Sandie Knickerbocker

Pope Benedict XVI points out that in the first World War was still raging in Europe when Vilmos (William) Apor was ordained a priest in 1915 for the diocese of Nagyvaradon, Hungary. He had been educated by the Jesuits from the age of 10 and had studied theology at Innsbruck University in Austria.

He served as a military chaplain to the Italian front before being transferred back to Gyula, Hungary, at the end of the war, where he became a parish priest. Vilmos soon became noted for his strong dedication to the poor and his tireless commitment and concern for social justice issues.

He was born in Transylvania, the mountainous region of northern Romania, on Feb. 29, 1892. Vilmos was the sixth child of a noble Hungarian family. His father died when he was very young.

As a priest, Vilmos displayed a fine sense of religious life. Matthew Bunson writes in John Paul II’s Book of Saints that he sponsored religious communities and parochial life. Early in his priestly career, he opened an office for the protection of women that became a predominant focus for him on his pastoral mission.

As the war wound down, Romania went on fighting against Hungary and Romanian soldiers occupied the town, deporting Hungarian prisoners inside Romania. Paul Burns writes in Butler’s Lives of the Saints that Vilmos succeeded successfully with Queen Mary of Romania for their release.

When he was appointed bishop in 1941 for the diocese of Györ, he was recognized for creating a golden age of denominational peace for 25 years. His episcopal motto was; “The cross strengthens the weak and makes gentle the strong.”

As bishop, his worst problem was the persecution of Jews in Hungary. Burns writes that Vilmos protested constantly against their deportation and sheltered refugees. When he read the racial laws enforced by the Nazis, he put himself in danger by protesting against them and working with the Popular Democratic Catholic Party in resisting the Nazis until the war’s end. In 1944 when Jews were being sent to death camps, he wrote to the Hungarian Primate to persuade him to take a strong stance against the government.

On Whitsunday (Pentecost) of 1944, he preached again against the treatment of Jews saying that everyone who allows torture must be regarded as a pagan, “even if he boasts of being a Christian,” according to Burns.

Things got much worse in the autumn of 1944 when the Russians advanced into Hungary. Vilmos gathered some 300 refugees into the cellars of the bishop’s palace. Many of these refugees were women and young girls who had taken refuge there.

On Good Friday 1945, the Russian troops demanded that Vilmos turn over the women and young girls to them. Burns writes the Vilmos refused and would not allow them to molest his refugees. He stood in front of them and was shot by a Russian officer, and the troops fled.

Vilmos died on Easter Monday (April 2) 1945. He was buried in the Carmelite Church. His remains are enshrined in the cathedral of Gyor. This martyred bishop of Hungary faced both Nazis and Communists and gave his life to defend the women and young girls in his care.

He was beatified on Nov. 9, 1997, by Pope John Paul II who said: “The heroic witness of Bishop Vilmos Apor honors the history of the noble Hungarian nation and is held up today for the admiration of the whole church.”

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

There are two “birthdays” that are of ultimate significance to us. If people were asked to state which two they were, we would expect to have many differing responses. Which two would you choose?

One mother might say “His first and tenth birthdays.” A 12-year old might be looking forward to his numbers 13 and 18. Quinceañeras make 15th birthdays a viable candidate for one of the two special days. Others choose 18 and 21. Then we have the significance of all the ones ending in zero as we leave one decade of our lives and enter a new one. Our 26nd and 65th birthdays are of particular importance for those who want to take early retirement and start collecting social security benefits and Medicare.

While all of these birthdays offer opportunities for celebration, any and all of them put together are of no importance whatsoever when compared to the only two that matter. The first of these is the actual day of our birth. This day varies greatly for each person.

Some of us enter this world amid luxury and wealth where economic hardships will never be known and “the way of life” is a way of “having it all.” As we age, we find that wealth makes that less likely. Perhaps Jesus was addressing this very thing when he said, “It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for one who is rich to enter into the kingdom of God.” (Mt 19:24). Wealth has the potential to hinder or totally stop the development of loving God and others. It is often a “carrot” that Satan puts in front of us in his effort to lead us astray, as we “love” things rather than loving others. It is easier to see love for God in the widow who gives all she has, than in those who give from their excess.

Another day brings a visit to someone’s home. This is a way of life which only a small percentage of people will ever experience. At the other end of the spectrum, others are born into a poverty that is hard to imagine. There is no doubting the many advantages for attaining financial success that some have over others on the very day they are born. Still, an individual can “squander his inheritance” like the prodigal son while disadvantaged others write a “rags to riches” personal story. In the end, it makes little difference because there is something far more critical than the socio-economic class to which we belong. When we enter this world, do we experience love, are we taught love, and, most importantly, do we learn to love?

Indeed, having a lot of money can often get in the way of feeling loved because love is best shown in difficult times amid great personal sacrifice. Having great wealth makes that less likely. Perhaps Jesus was addressing this very thing when he said, “It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for one who is rich to enter into the kingdom of God.” (Mt 19:24). Wealth has the potential to hinder or totally stop the development of loving God and others. It is often a “carrot” that Satan puts in front of us in his effort to lead us astray, as we “love” things rather than loving others. It is easier to see love for God in the widow who gives all she has, than in those who give from their excess.

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Ministries bring hope, comfort as immigration concerns grow at U.S.-Mexico border

After U.S. President Joe Biden’s inauguration, the Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Laredo, Texas, staff wondered if their immigration work would change quickly.

For years, they ran a waystation for the steady flow of immigrants and asylum-seekers crossing the U.S.-Mexico border. But when the pandemic, coupled with strict protocols and tough Trump-era immigration policies, made it nearly impossible for asylum-seekers to get court dates and even apply for asylum, Catholic Charities closed its La Frontera Shelter in Laredo.

Before then, the group joined other agencies and ran centers to help border towns like Laredo, El Paso and McAllen with the influx of migrants and refugees, who were in the country legally after traveling to the Texas border to present themselves to U.S. Border Patrol as asylum-seekers.

After Border Patrol processed their claims, they were sent from detention and processing centers to shelters like the La Frontera shelter in Laredo, where they stayed briefly before reuniting with their families across the country to await their court hearings.

Then, when the pandemic hit, Catholic Charities was notified that migrants and asylum-seekers were once again being processed, Teresa De La Garza, an immigration specialist at Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Laredo, said procedures rapidly changed.

In accordance with COVID-19 protocols, visitors could no longer stay at the shelter unlike before, but were sent immediately to their families. “It is more difficult now,” she said, citing low staffing and a lack of volunteers. “We’re trying to help even with all the changing circumstances.”

By March 24, she said she expected the U.S. government to begin processing those who had been delayed entry to the U.S. according to Migrant Protection Proto-

honey, and it is more important to use money to take care of you and your sisters.” Another visit leads to another question: “Mommy, why doesn’t your hair look nice like Margaret’s mommy?” The little girl feels badly when she is given the predictable response and tells her mother that if the little girl ever has money, she will make sure her mom gets her hands and hair cared for every day! She cries at night knowing that her mother has to go without so many of the things that other mamas have.

The next week, it is the little girl’s birthday, or more accurately, the seventh anniversary of her birth. Her mom has surprised her with a cake she has made. A wish is made and the candles are blown out. Mom leaves the room and brings back a small, beautifully wrapped box with holes on the sides and places it on the ground near her daughter. “Open it … it’s for you!” Tears pour from the little girl’s eyes as she sees and holds her puppy for the first time before putting it down and running to her mother’s arms where the flow of tears becomes even greater. This, in a most minimalistic way, is the remotest reflection of our second and most important birthday, the day our spirit leaves our body and we are born into eternal life. On Easter Sunday, Jesus taught us that our second “birthday” is the greatest and most glorious birthday of all.

If we have learned to love God and one another, we will become aware of all that God has done for us personally, as though we were all “only” children, like Jesus. He might say to one of us, “Do you remember when you were so upset and sat on your back porch and cried. And remember how that pretty little bird landed on the railing and seemed to be looking right at you and you smiled and stopped crying? I made that bird … just for you! It was no accident that he landed there … I sent him. And remember the time you sat by the small pond

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Father Choutapalli to celebrate anniversary

Father Joseph Choutapalli will celebrate the 30th anniversary of his priestly ordination with a Mass at St. Ambrose Parish in Wall, April 10 at 6:00 p.m.

Diocesan Marriage Jubilee 2021

All couples who are celebrating their church wedding anniversaries of 25, 30, 35, 40, 45, 50, and above in the calendar year of 2021 are invited to the Diocesan Marriage Jubilee bilingual celebration on Sunday, April 18, 2021, at 2:30 p.m. in the Sacred Heart Cathedral in San Angelo. Renewal of their commitment will take place within the Mass.

In light of the current coronavirus pandemic, social distancing will be practiced, and a couple need not be present to receive a certificate. Those who attend the Mass can pick up their certificates at the Cathedral that day. The certificates of those who do not attend will be sent to the corresponding parish office for distribution. Space is limited. Reserved seating will be available to the jubilarian couples; then, if space is available, family and friends may reserve seats on a first-come, first-serve basis. Livestreaming will be available for those unable to attend in person.

For registration information, please contact your pastor. The deadline to register for this celebration is Monday, April 5, 2021.

Date, location set for Rural Life Mass

The annual Rural Life Mass for the Diocese of San Angelo will take place on Thursday, May 13, 2021, at 6:00 p.m. at the Adolfo Tapia Dairy, 13153 Klattenhoff Road in Miles, Texas. A meal will follow at the parish hall of St. Thomas Parish in Miles, located six miles from the dairy.

St. Ann Parish in Sonora Cinco de Mayo festival

St. Ann Catholic Church in Sonora invites everyone to their 2021 Cinco de Mayo Music Fiesta. The parish festival will be held on Friday, April 30, from 6:00 p.m. to midnight, and Saturday, May 1, from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 a.m.

The festival will be held at the Sutton County Civic Center Pavilion, and all activities will be outdoors. An entry fee will be collected that grants admission for both days of the festival.

Friday’s entertainment will include Eldorado Matachinas dancers, Shaker Hymns, and David Lee Garza y Los Musicales. Saturday will see performances from Grupo Folklorico de Bendiciones dancers, Conjunto Mi Gusto, LA 45, Joe Treviño Band, Jaime De Anda, and Shelly Lares.

Raffle tickets will be $5 apiece, or $100 for a book of 20 tickets. The main prize of the raffle is a 2021 Jeep Rubicon. There will also be nine additional prizes given out during the raffle.

The festival will also include a country store, a silent auction, games, Loteria, food and craft booths, and contests to name a Queen, Little Miss, and Little Mister for the festival.

For more information, contact St. Ann Parish at 325-387-2278 or sonora@sanangelodiocese.org.

Holy Cross Catholic High School registration for the 2021-2022 school year is now open!

Visit our website to view all registration information.

www.holycrosschs.org

Click on the “admissions” tab for all registration information.

Please contact us at info@holycrosschs.org or 432-235-1094 for more information or any questions you may have.
Catholic groups, bishops pray for end to anti-Asian hate crimes, violence

By Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON (CNS) — Asian and Pacific Islander Catholic groups and a number of Catholic bishops have joined their voices with others in calling for an end to violence and hate crimes against Americans of Asian and Pacific Island heritage.

"We call on communities to engage in peaceful dialogue at the local and national levels to address prejudice and anti-Asian bias. We stand for the peaceful co-existence of all peoples, we pray for compassion and love, and work toward healing and unity," said a March 31 statement from the leaders of 16 groups representing Korean, Chinese, Indonesian, Filipino, Vietnamese, Hmong, Burmese, Indian and other Asian Catholics.

The statement was released by the Asian and Pacific Island Affairs section of the Secretariat of Cultural Diversity in the Church at the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops.

"The rise in violence against Asian people across the country is alarming and horrific to all people of right reason," San Francisco Archbishop Salvatore J. Cordileone said in a March 30 statement.

He announced the archdiocese will hold an afternoon "Easter Peace Prayer Service" at St. Mary's Cathedral on Easter Saturday, April 10.

"We will pray for an end to violence and racism particularly against Asians, for healing for our nation, and for the flourishing of peace and justice in our land," he said.

The evening of March 31 Los Angeles Archbishop José H. Gomez planned to celebrate an outdoor "Prayer Vigil for Racial Acceptance" at Incarnation Church in Glendale, California, in solidarity with the Asian and Pacific Islander Americans. Auxiliary Bishop Alejandro "Alex" D. Aclan was to be the homilist.

"We stand in solidarity with the victims of racial violence across the United States as we uphold our commitment to the core values of Catholicism," Bishop Aclan said in a statement. "As we mobilize the faithful to take action against racism, we take Christian love, and not political interests, as our guide."

In a March 29 statement, Bishop Oscar Cantú of San Jose, California, said the Asian community "has been on my mind and in my prayers recently, given the disturbing rise of anti-Asian animus, prejudice, aggression and violence."

"It is disgraceful to see this in our American society in our modern times," the bishop said. He urged Catholics to embrace Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, "celebrate them, and love them as brothers and sisters!"

Protests and vigils have taken place around the country to demand an end to a growing wave of anti-Asian racism and violence and to remember victims of these attacks.

Two Jesuit universities, St. Louis University and Georgetown University, have held vigils online that also included discussion on challenges faced by the Asian American and Pacific Islander communities and ways to better advocate for them.

The general council of the Dominican sisters of Adrian, Michigan, also has called for an end to the violence against these groups and urged Congress to enact strong legislation against hate crimes.

The organization Stop AAPI Hate released figures in mid-March saying it had collected reports of 3,800 hate crimes throughout the U.S. in the past year against Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders.

Some of the more known reports include general harassment in public, such as being told to "go home" or to get out of the country, at restaurants and in grocery stores.

Among the most recent attacks was a March 16 shooting spree at three spas in the metro Atlanta area left eight people dead, including six women of Asian descent. Law enforcement is looking into the mass shooting as a hate crime.

"We must support all victims of violence and stand in solidarity with those who are vulnerable in our communities," said Atlanta Archbishop Gregory J. Hartmayer in a March 17 statement after the shooting.

Chicago Cardinal Blase J. Cupich echoed these comments in his March 18 statement about what occurred in Atlanta.

Bishop Oscar A. Solis of Salt Lake City, chairman of the USCCB’s Subcommittee on Asian and Pacific Island Affairs, also echoed the Atlanta archbishop’s call to stand in solidarity with the vulnerable in these communities.

In a March 22 statement, he said the Atlanta shootings have
Bishop Michael Sis led some of the priests and altar servers for the Chrism Mass in prayer in the sacristy of the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart before the beginning of the Mass.

Most of the priests of the Diocese of San Angelo were present as concelebrants at this year’s Chrism Mass.

The priests of the diocese publicly renewed their priestly promises during the Chrism Mass.

Bishop Michael Sis poured the natural perfume balsam into the vial of blessing oil before blessing it. He then poured the Holy Oil of chrism as a symbol of the Holy Spirit filling the oil with its power.

The principal concelebrants for this year’s Chrism Mass were (L-R) Msgr. Fred Nawarskas, dean of the Abilene Deanery; Father Santiago Uribe; vicar general for the diocese; Father Adam Droll, dean of the San Angelo Deanery; and Father Rodney White, dean of the Midland-Odessa Deanery.

Bishop Sis celebrated the Mass with a chalice believed to have been used in the 1750s at the Mission Santa Cruz de San Sabá near Menard. Read more about this historic mission on Page 5.
Many Paths to Discipleship
Diocesan Day of Reflection
Saturday, May 29, 2021

ST ANN PARISH--YOUTH ACTIVITY CENTER
1906 W. TEXAS AVE
MIDLAND TEXAS 79701-6564
9:00AM--5:00PM
REGISTRATION BEGINS AT 8:30AM
HIGH SCHOOL, YOUNG ADULTS, AND ADULTS
WELCOME

KEYNOTE SPEAKER: SR. STELLA MARIS HAMMAN
DISCIPLES OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST
FEMA funeral assistance available

West Texas Angelus

FEMA, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, has announced the availability of financial assistance for funeral expenses incurred as a result of COVID-19.

The funeral expenses assistance through FEMA was authorized by the Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act of 2021 and the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021, and is available to help with funeral expenses related to COVID-19. The disbursement of these funds will be implemented in April.

Those eligible for funds must meet the following requirements: the death must have occurred in the United States, including U.S. territories and the District of Columbia; the death certificate must indicate the death was attributed to COVID-19; and the applicant must be a U.S. citizen, non-citizen national, or qualified alien who incurred funeral expenses after Jan. 20, 2020. There is no requirement of citizenship status for the deceased.

Part of the application for funds will include documentation such as an official death certificate, funeral expenses documents, and proof of funds received from other sources.

For more information or to see if you qualify, visit https://www.fema.gov/disasters/coronavirus/economic/funeral-assistance.

Joining Catholic Church amid pandemic is 'courageous choice,' says priest

By Jai Agnish
Catholic News Service

NEWARK, N.J. (CNS) — At parishes across the Archdiocese of Newark, the Easter Vigil marked a significant milestone for catechumens ready to enter the fullness of the Catholic Church through the sacraments of initiation.

"The fact that there are this many people is truly a testament to the power of God's call in our lives," said Father Armand Mantia, archdiocesan director of the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults.

"In the midst of this pandemic, we still have 270 people who have heard God's call and have made the courageous choice to answer it at this unbelievable time in human history," he said. Close to 400 adults typically receive through the sacraments of initiation in a normal year, Father Mantia said.

"The faith journey of this year's group began last year and accelerated in February when the catechumens, in the presence of Newark Cardinal Joseph W. Tobin, took part in the Rite of Election ceremony at the Cathedral Basilica of the Sacred Heart in Newark.

"The Rite of Election starts this extremely powerful and extremely important Lenten season for these adults," Father Mantia told JerseyCatholic.org, the archdiocesan news site.

The rite is the liturgy through which the catechumens get the official approval to advance to the Easter sacraments. With the bishop's blessing, they become known as "the Elect." Catechumens inscribe their names in the Book of the Elect as a pledge of fidelity.

Usually, in a nonpandemic year, there are two Rite of Election ceremonies for all adults in the Newark Archdiocese preparing for their initiation into the church. Because of pandemic restrictions again this year, four smaller liturgies were held over one weekend at the cathedral.

Because the RCIA process takes place at a parishioner's local parish, the Rite of Election ceremony was the first time the entire group was together in one space. That makes it a special occasion for the catechumens, Father Mantia said. "When they come together and hear all those names called, they realize they are not alone," he said. "That God is really at work in the world."

After the Rite of Election, the Elect experience a ritual known as the scrutinies during Mass at their local parish during Lent.

"Now, scrutiny is not as the name would imply," Father Mantia explained. "It's not an intensive examination or a three-week final exam."

Instead, scrutinies are three powerful prayer services, which take place after the homily at Sunday Mass where the Elect are prayed for, asked to be strengthened, and asked to be purified of anything holding them back from accepting this new life.

"It's not absolution," he said. "It's not confession. It's to ask for a stronger and more powerful ongoing conversion to prepare for the Easter sacraments."

Following the scrutinies, the Elect participate in the Palm Sunday and Holy Week liturgies. At the Easter Vigil, they celebrate all three initiation sacraments in the local parish where they have been preparing and will worship following their baptism.

Father Mantia said he appreciated the hard work of parishes and members of the RCIA ministry who adapted their programs to meet the needs of the catechumens.

"It really does speak to the power of God's call, and also to the dedication of the people involved in this ministry who are willing to reinvent the wheel this year to be of service," he said.

Agnish is communications manager for the Archdiocese of Newark.

SEMINARIRN BURSE MATCHING GRANT CHALLENGE

This year, the Diocese of San Angelo is participating in a Seminarian Endowment Challenge through Catholic Extension to raise $300,000 for the Diocese of San Angelo Seminarian Burse. Throughout 2021, Catholic Extension Society will match donations made to the Seminarian Burse at $0.20 for every $1.00 donated up to $50,000 (maximum individual donation of $25,000). The diocese's goal is to raise $300,000 in 2021 to receive a matching grant from Catholic Extension for $50,000, raising a total of $300,000 for our Seminarian Burse in 2021.

GOAL: $300,000
$250,000 RAISED IN 2021
$50,000 MATCHING GRANT FROM CATHOLIC EXTENSION
$300,000 FOR OUR SEMINARIAN BURSE

As of March 26
$42,250

HOW YOU CAN HELP:
• Set up a recurring donation to the Seminarian Burse online at sanangelodiocese.org/donations or by scanning the QR code below
• You can also use the same page to make a one-time donation to the Seminarian Burse
• Mail checks or cash donations to Diocese of San Angelo, Office of Stewardship & Development, PO Box 1829, San Angelo, TX 76902. Please note the donation should go towards the Seminarian Burse in the Memo line of your check.
One of Dorothy Day’s favorite saints was Therese of Lisieux, Therese Martin, the saint we call “the Little Flower.” At first was Therese of Lisieux, Therese Martin, the Worker of all time, and her popularity is part of the spirituality because she understood it better than we could ever imagine. Her life and her popularity is part of the problem. Popular devotion has encrusted her person and spirituality in an over-simplistic piety that generally serves to hide her real depth. Therese termed her spirituality “the little way.” Popular piety, for the most part, thinks of her “little way” as a spirituality that invites us to live quiet, humble, simple, anonymous lives wherein we do everything, especially the small humble tasks asked of us, with fidelity and graciousness, unassuming, childlike, grateful to God just to be of service. While there is a lot of truth in that understanding, it misses some of the depth of Therese’s person and spirituality.

To understand Therese’s “little way” and its connection with justice for the poor, we need to understand certain things in her life that helped constellate the vision that lay behind her “little way.”

Therese of Lisieux had a very complex childhood. On the one hand, her life was touched by deep sadness, not least the death of her mother when Therese was four years old and several bouts of clinical depression from which she nearly died. She did not have an easy walk through childhood. On the other hand, she had an exceptionally graced childhood. She grew up in a family of saints who loved her deeply and honored (and often photographed) her every joy and pain. She was also a beautiful young girl, attractive and graced with a disarming warmth and sensitivity. Her family and everyone around her considered her special and precious. She was much loved; but this did not make for a spoiled child. We can never be spoiled by being loved too much, only by being loved badly. Her family loved her purely, and the result was a young woman who opened her heart and person to the world in an exceptional way.

Moreover, as she matured, she began to notice something. She noticed how when she was a child her every tear was noticed, valued, and honored, but that this was not the case for many other people. She recognized that countless people suffer heartbreaks and injustices, endure abuse, are humiliated, live in shame, and shed tears that no one notices and no one cares about. Their pain is not seen, not honored, not valued. From this insight, she articulated this ground metaphor that undergirds her “little way.”

Her words: “One Sunday, looking at a picture of Our Lord on the Cross, I was struck by the blood flowing from one of his divine hands. I felt a pang of great sorrow when thinking this blood was falling on the ground without anyone’s hastening to gather it up. I was resolved to remain in spirit at the foot of the Cross and to receive its dew. … I don’t want this precious blood to be lost. I want to gather it up for the good of souls.”

From this, we see that her “little way” is not about privatized piety, but about noticing and responding to the pain and tears of our world. Metaphorically, it is about noticing and “gathering up” the blood that is dripping from the suffering face of Christ which this face is presently suffering in our world. In the faces of the poor, the faces of those who are bleeding and shedding tears because of heartbreak, injustice, poverty, lack of love, and lack of being deemed precious.

Dorothy Day walked the streets of the poor, noticing their blood, drying their tears, trying in her own way to gather them up. Therese did the same thing mystically, deep inside the body of Christ. It is no surprise that Dorothy Day took her as her patron saint.

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We’re all becoming Platonists now — and that’s not good

One of the most fundamental divides in the history of philosophy is that between a more Platonic approach and a more Aristotelian approach. Plato, of course, saw the universal or formal level of being as more real, more noble, whereas Aristotle, while acknowledging the existence and importance of the abstract, favored the concrete and particular. This differentiation was famously illustrated by Raphael in his masterpiece The School of Athens, the central figures of which are Plato, his finger pointing upward to the realm of the forms, and Aristotle, stretching his palm downward to the particular things of the earth. This archetypal depiction has (and has) implications for how we think about religion, science, society, ethics, and politics. Just as most Beatle fans separate themselves rather naturally into Lennon or McCartney camps, so most philosophers can be, at least broadly speaking, characterized as either more Platonic or more Aristotelian in orientation. So far, so harmless, for each side complements and balances the other.

However, in the political arena, the options of the Platonist or Aristotelian offer a more challenging, and more dangerous, framework. Those who would ordain the individual to a grandly abstract construal of justice. So as to attain the right balance between the three great divisions of society — guardians, auxiliaries, and workers — the guardians, Plato’s philosopher-kings, can utterly control the lives of those in his charge, even to the point of censoring music and poetry, regulating pregnancy and childbirth, eliminating private property, and unifying the individual family. Though he revered Plato, Aristotle departs from this conception of the good society and took as his point of departure the aspiration and freedom of the individual — though certainly by our standards he was far from ideal in this area.

Popper contended that the Platonic streak runs perilously through Western history, but manifested itself with particular destructiveness in the totalitarianisms of the twentieth century, which had their roots in Hegel and Marx. These highly influential Germans were, Popper held, basically Platonic in their tendency to subordinate the individual to the abstractions of “history” or “progress” or “the revolution,” and their practical political disciples in the twentieth century presided, predictably, over the piling up of corpses.

Why this little tour of the history of Plato’s influence on political thinking? I feel obligated to rehearse it because, in many senses, we are all becoming Platonists now — and this should worry us. Under pressure from the “woke,” politically-correct culture, almost all of us automatically think in terms of generic categories and not in terms of individuals. When considering, for example, an appointment or an election or the constitution of a board of directors, we hardly ever ask the question, “Well, who is the best-qualified person?” Rather, we wonder whether a candidate is African American, or Hispanic, or lesbian, or transgendered, or a woman, etc. Or we fret whether the right balance of minority groups will be met by hiring this or that man, or to what degree a given woman represents an intersectional crossing of generic traits. In so doing, we are trying, in the Platonic manner, to satisfy an abstract norm of justice by subordinating the particular qualities of individuals to collective categories.

An upshot of this political and cultural Platonism is that we are tending to reverse equity of outcome over equality of opportunity. The former is a function of compelling morality; the latter, congruent with a much more Aristotelian mindset, is a determination to level the playing field as much as possible so as to give everyone the same chance to achieve his or her goals. When the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. expressed his dream that his “little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin, but by the content of their character,” he was extolling the value of equality of opportunity, not equity of outcome. And he was explicitly distancing himself from the view that we should look first to abstract categories of race and skin color when making determinations of social status.

The “woke” movement today is decisively Platonist in orientation, and it carries with it that Platonism the totalitarian attitude that Karl Popper identified. It thinks in relentlessly abstract terms, seeing individuals only as instances of racial, sexual, ethnic, and economic types, and hence it is altogether willing to reorganize society so as to conform to its conception of justice. Read a book such as Robin DiAngelo’s White Fragility in order to see the “woke” program laid out with admirable clarity. All white people, she argues, simply by virtue of being white, are bearers of a privilege that they must acknowledge and are, without exception, racist. All black and brown people, again just by virtue of their ethnic heritage, belong to an oppressed class and must consider their white colleagues oppressive. An ethnically African American man who rejects the “woke” ideology is, on DiAngelo’s view, not truly “black!” Very much in the Platonist manner, everyone in the society must accept the new ideology or be seen as an opponent of justice. Appeals, such as Martin Luther King’s, to a color-blind society and equality of opportunity are pilloried as reactionary and supportive of the racist status quo.

The bottom line is this: any political program that subordinates the individual to collective categories and ideals is dangerous and will conduce, in short order, to opprobrium and profound injustice. I would suggest that we all take a good, hard look at the Platonic road down which we are heading — and head back the other way.

Bishop Robert Barron is an auxiliary bishop of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles and the founder of Word on Fire Catholic Ministries.
San José, esposo y padre inmigrante

El Papa Francisco invitó a todos los católicos a enfocarnos este año en San José, patrono de la Iglesia Católica. Es una invitación que vale la pena.

¡Siempre me ha fascinado lo mucho que los cristianos hemos dicho a través de los siglos sobre alguien cuyas palabras no están consignadas en documento alguno! Nuestra imaginación católica es bastante creativa. Leyendo algunos libros y artículos sobre San José, he llegado a dos conclusiones.

Por un lado, no podemos asumir que el silencio de los Escritores sobre las palabras de José significa que no haya dicho algo. Al meditar sobre las pocas escenas en las que la Biblia menciona a José, estoy seguro que dijo muchas cosas en sus oraciones, en sus interacciones con su amada María y en su discernimiento sobre cómo construirían una vida juntos.

José tuvo que decir mucho mientras buscaba con ansias un lugar para hospedarse en el momento en el que su esposa estaba a punto de dar a luz a un hijo decidido a hacer cualquier cosa por que estén bien. La vida viene con cosas peligrosas, y nadie lo veía más claramente que los cristianos hemos dicho a través de José, patrono de la Iglesia Católica. Es un enfoque más aristotélico. Platón, por supuesto, veía el nivel universal o formal del ser como algo más real, más noble, mientras que Aristóteles, aunque reconocía la existencia e importancia de lo abstracto, favorecía lo concreto y particular. Esta diferenciación fue famosamente ilustrada por Rafael en su obra maestra La Esfera de Atenea, cuyas figuras centrales son Platón, su dedo apuntando hacia arriba al reino de las formas, y Aristóteles, escribiendo de la manera de los Beatles se separan de forma bastante natural en los campos de Lennon o McCartney, la mayoría de los filósofos pueden ser, al menos en términos generales, caracterizados como más platónicos o más aristotélicos en su orientación.

Hasta ahora, todo es inofensivo, pues mientras que Aristóteles, los guardianes, los reyes filósofos de Platón, puedan controlar completamente las vidas de los que están a su cargo, incluso hasta el punto de censurar la música y la poesía, regular el embarazo y el parto, el padre de la ciudad, convierte en Platónicos todos. Desde los actuales guardianes de las tres grandes divisiones de la sociedad (guardianes, auxiliares y trabajadores), los guardianes, los reyes filósofos de Platón, pueden controlar completamente las vidas de los que están a su cargo, incluso hasta el punto de censurar la música y la poesía, regular el embarazo y el parto, el padre de la ciudad. Aunque reverenciaba a Platón, Aristóteles se apartó de esta concepción de la buena sociedad y tomó en cuenta de lo que se deduce de sus relaciones con María y Jesús, y sus acciones hacia ellos.

En mi propia reflexión sobre San José, trato de no idealizarlo a tal punto en que no me pueda relacionar con él para nada. Hay muchas reflexiones sobre San José, todas escritas con las mejores intenciones, las cuales tienden a minimizar su dimensión humana. Proyectar a José como un ser cuasi-angélico o un ser humano cuasi-perfecto nos roba la inspiración.

Sus relaciones y acciones revelan a un hombre comprometido con el bienestar de su esposa y de su hijo, decidido a hacer cualquier cosa para que estén bien. La vida viene con dificultades y es necesario madurar para llegar a entender que me inscribo. Lo hice al tiro, sin computadora. Mi hija Rosa, ejecutiva en el seguro de salud en Delray Beach, Florida, invirtió muchas horas en frente de una farmacia y por fin le consiguió cita. Para una vecina, dijo: "Hay 500,000 personas elegibles y solo 100,000 vacunadas". A Dorothy Day la cautivó la espiritualidad popular de Teresa porque la entendió más de doscientas personas. Además, en sus escritos, uno encuentra muy poco que pudiera ser considerado explícitamente pro-fético sobre justicia social. Escribió, como México que era, con un enfoque sobre la vida interior y sobre nuestra humanidad personal con Jesús. Esto no resulta exactamente el objeto de las protestas en las calles. Así que, ¿por qué Dorothy Day, cuya vida parece tan diferente, tuvo una afinidad con esta joven retirada del mundo?

A Dorothy Day la cautivó la espiritualidad de Teresa porque la entendió más allá de su equivocada interpretación popular. Entre todos los santos conocidos, Teresa de Lisieux sobresale como una de los santos más populares de todos los tiempos y como una de los santos más comprendidos de todos los tiempos, y su popularidad es parte del problema. La devoción popular ha inculcado a su persona y su espiritualidad en una piedad excesivamente simplista que generalmente sirve para esconder su verdadera profundidad. Teresa llamó a su espiritualidad "el camino". La piedad popular, fundamentalmente, piensa de su "camino" como una espiritualidad que nos invita a vivir una vida pacífica, humilde, sencilla y anónima, en la que hacemos todo, especialmente las humildes tareas pequeñas que nos piden, con fidelidad y dulzura, modestia, ternura, agradecidos a Dios únicamente por estar a su servicio. Aunque Teresa no había pensado en ello, su vida y su obra ya han proporcionado los principios que necesitamos para salvar a Estados Unidos del totalitarismo moderno, ya que el pensamiento político platónico, argumentó, subordinaba al individuo a una interpretación grandemente abstracta de la justicia. Para lograr el equilibrio y el equilibrio social, es necesario que los guardianes sepan lo que es el ser humano cuasi-perfecto.
Should we take whatever vaccine is offered?

On March 1, Massachusetts Governor Charlie Baker told residents in the town of Mattapan that when it comes to the various COVID-19 vaccines, “These are all very effective. People don’t need to pick one from another. People should get vaccinated. If you have a chance to get a vaccine, you should take it, whatever it is.”

The governor’s sweeping statement seems to imply, first, that everybody should get a COVID-19 shot, and second, that it’s not necessary to distinguish among the different vaccines currently on the market, like Moderna, Pfizer, Johnson & Johnson and eventually others.

Such a perspective fails to acknowledge the important factors that are part of deciding whether to receive a particular COVID-19 vaccine or any other vaccine.

When new or experimental treatments become available, including novel vaccines, and we have limited knowledge of their side effects, adverse events, efficacy, and long-term consequences, it’s important to realize that such treatments are never morally obligatory for an individual, nor for a whole population. Achieving herd immunity, while clearly an important goal, in no way demands that everyone must be immunized.

For those individuals who are young and in good health, for example, and with no comorbidities, the risk of adverse outcomes from a COVID-19 infection, statistically speaking, are very low, on a par with the generally low risks of being vaccinated. They may reasonably, therefore, decide to decline receiving an inoculation.

For those, meanwhile, who are more vulnerable to the coronavirus and its potentially damaging effects, like those who are obese, elderly, diabetic, or facing other comorbidities, it makes sense for them to consider the potentially safer path of vaccination, rather than risking a harmful (or deadly) encounter with the virus itself. Each person must make a careful determination about whether a COVID-19 vaccination is appropriate for his or her set of circumstances.

This is different from making decisions about other vaccines like the shingles vaccine or the annual flu shot. When people get older, their chance of getting shingles, for example, increases and the CDC recommends the shingles vaccine for those over 50. Similar to COVID-19, the older you are, the greater the risk, and the greater the need to consider the possibility of vaccination to avoid the painful effects of shingles.

But it is not mandatory that everyone should take the shingles vaccine — or the flu shot or the COVID-19 vaccine — because not everyone faces the same risks or would benefit from it to the same degree.

When deciding which vaccine to receive from the FDA-approved COVID-19 vaccines, some may be considerably more effective than others, and some may incur side effects for certain individuals.

For example, a compound called polyethylene glycol (PEG) has been identified as a possible trigger for rare allergic or anaphylactic reactions in some vaccine recipients, even in trace amounts. According to FDA documents, both the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines contain PEG, while the Johnson and Johnson vaccine does not. Thus, individuals with a PEG allergy effectively have only a single choice among the three emergency-use authorized vaccines in the US.

Another distinction among vaccines from Pfizer, Moderna, and Johnson & Johnson is their association with cell lines that were originally derived from human abortions. The Pfizer and Moderna vaccines are not directly produced or manufactured by relying on these abortion-related cell lines, while the Johnson & Johnson vaccine is directly grown in such cells. All three vaccine manufacturers, however, have carried out ancillary or side-testing procedures using these cell lines.

Using abortion-derived cell lines in scientific research and industrial development raises significant ethical concerns.

When several vaccine candidates are available that are equally safe and effective, Catholics may discern in conscience the need to receive a candidate that is not associated at all, or more distantly associated, with abortion-derived cell lines. People at relatively low risk may also decide to wait for a vaccine with no connection to abortion if one is not yet available. They can make these choices as matters of conscience to avoid entanglements with the morally unacceptable practice of abortion. All of us have a right to vaccines with no connection to these cell lines. Nonetheless, the church also reminds us that we are permitted to take, under protest, any of the currently available vaccines, even those most directly associated with cell lines from abortions, if we discern in conscience that there is a serious or proportionate reason to do so. We need to give each of these options real prayerful and thoughtful discernment.

Taken together, these considerations show us how it is important not to gloss over the distinctions among various COVID-19 vaccines and imply, as Governor Baker does, that everybody should get the first version that is available.

Rather, each of us needs to make careful decisions about our own health while also making conscientious choices in the light of legitimate moral concerns.

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St. Joseph, migrant spouse and father

Pope Francis has invited Catholics to focus our attention this year on St. Joseph, patron of the universal church. I commend him for this invitation.

I have always been fascinated about how much Christians have said throughout the centuries about someone for whom we have no record of having said anything! Our Catholic imagination is creative. I have been reading some books and articles about St. Joseph and have arrived at two conclusions.

On the one hand, we must not assume that the silence of the Scriptures about his words means that Joseph did not say anything. As I meditate upon the few scenes in the Bible that mention Joseph, I bet he said a lot in prayer, his interactions with his beloved Mary and their discernment about building a life together.

I am sure he had much to say when anxious to find shelter as his wife was about to give birth, when he had to flee to Egypt to protect his family and in the everyday interactions at home raising the child Jesus.

On the other hand, most of what we know and can infer about Joseph comes from what we extrapolate from his relationships with Mary and Jesus, as well as his actions toward them.

In my own reflection about Joseph, I want to be cautious about not idealizing him to a point at which one cannot relate to him at all. There are so many reflections about Joseph, all written with the best intentions, that tend to downplay his humanity. Projecting Joseph as an almost angelic being or nearly perfect human takes the inspiration away.

His relationships and actions reveal a man in love with his wife and child, ready to do anything possible to ensure their well-being. Life throws us curveballs all the time, and Joseph had to handle quite a few in the handful of scriptural passages where he appears.

I am particularly drawn to the events associated with the flight to Egypt (Mt 2:13-23). There Joseph, spouse and father, becomes an immigrant, a refugee. As an immigrant myself and as someone regularly working with immigrants in ministry, the story hits home.

In his December 2020 apostolic letter...
Catholic Voices

At Easter, Christ defeats the lies that ensnare us

By Mary Marrocco
Catholic News Service

Who could forget the look on Ingrid Bergman's face, playing Paula in the movie "Gaslight," as she apprehends the possibility that she might be slowly going insane? She wonders because her husband is deliberately trying to unbalance her mind, so he can declare her incompetent and control her assets (concealing his even darker secret). One of his shrewdly torturous methods is to make the gaslights flicker and convince her she imagines it — till she ultimately blames herself for the fault that is external to her.

Her facial expression? Anguish.

We often think of "psychosomatic" as a pretense illness, a weak person's inability to cope with reality. But "psychosomatic" reflects the intimate, little-understood ways our psyche (soul) and soma (body) are intertwined. What affects the soul affects the body, and what affects the body affects the soul.

Paula feels physical pain because her soul is being tormented by the deceit of one she loves and trusts. The resulting inner conflict almost destroys her, until the lie is exposed and the truth restores her personal integrity and wholeness.

Deceit works on us this way: It divides us internally. Imagine what would happen if your skin were divided from your flesh, your sinew from your bones. Your body would be less even expected to speak the truth. This in turn expresses itself at the interpersonal level, where truth is no longer held as a high value.

Scripture calls Satan the "father of lies." There is an anguish unique to the human spirit internally rent by lies. The deceit might originate within the person or from somewhere else, or both, but either way the anguish — though not necessarily recognized or understood — is as deep and sharp as the deception sits in the soul.

It's the father of lies who tells humans they are not who they are: "Nobody wants you." "You are only a fetus, not a person." "You would be better off dead. It's best for your family."

The one being lied to in such ways is suffering death by a thousand cuts. The message will echo in the soul, and the person's blood will pour out again and again. The wounded person may wound others, building on this lie, which will in turn reopen his own wounds.

In Genesis, the serpent is "the most cunning" of all creatures, slithering into the soul of Eve to divide her from herself, her mate, her Lord and her rightful place in creation. She is thereby mortally wounded — as anyone suffering from lies is wounded unto death, often a long, slow, incremental death like Paula's.

At times, it seems there is nothing but lies, swirling anywhere, spoken by anyone, till nothing seems trustworthy. But there is an antidote.

What marks our present moment in history is how, once again, lying has entered the public as well as the private domain and taken up residence among us. Leaders are less and less even expected to speak the truth. This in turn expresses itself at the interpersonal level, where truth is no longer held as a high value.

It becomes acceptable to lie for a righteous cause or ideology. Could we not expect our mental health to suffer? The father of lies "is prowling around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour" (1 Pt 5:8), trying to convince us we, or "the other," are totally depraved. Worthless. Garbage.

This is not the word of God. In Genesis, not even Cain, the first murderer, hears such things about himself from God. Rather, God rearranges everything to protect Cain's life, which remains a divine gift.

God had already rearranged everything to protect the truth of Eve and Adam's goodness and beauty, even after the lie tore at them and brought them the toxic shame of their naked selves.

There is an antidote. The truth will set us free. It is the father of lies who taunts us: "If people saw you as you really are, they would be horrified. Hide! Attack! Defend! See, you are worthless."

This is not the word of God. In the Gospel narratives of the Passion, Christ does not speak thus to the soldiers who abuse him, nor to Judas who sells him, nor to Peter who (in the most intimate and therefore most cruel act of all) denies him.

Rather, with his words, actions and entire life — with his whole humanity and his full divinity — Jesus proclaims to them and each of us: "You are worth everything. You are my image. You were created for a purpose. I forgive you. You are my beloved."

Christ is the truth. And the truth will set us free. We need not fear or hide from it. We may need to learn again to recognize it, treasure it and divide the lie from the truth — rather than being divided by the lie. It is breathed into our inmost being. Truth is risen from the grave.

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One year later, measuring our gains and losses

One year ago, I left my office for what I thought was a few weeks. Soon I was wearing gloves to the grocery store and sanitizing the groceries when I got home. Spring was a time of fear and high alert.

At times it felt as if the days passed with unbelievable slowness as we all settled down into our bubbles. Thirty million cases and 537,000 dead later, today the 12 months feel like they rocketed by us. Suddenly we have arrived at a point where we are one or two shots away from feeling a little safer for the first time in a year.

At this transition point — not out of the woods yet but the end in sight — I have been thinking about the lessons learned and unlearned, the moments savored and the moments when my frustration got the better of me.

In March 2020, my world suddenly shrank. Friends, acquaintances, colleagues, children — all suddenly out of reach. It felt like the pandemic version of the rapture, with people disappearing from my life in an instant: I couldn't dine with or hug or just spend time indoors with them.

Easter, Fourth of July, Thanksgiving, Christmas: Holidays tumbled by in which any possibility of celebration was preceded by the logistics of COVID-19 testing, masking and social distancing. Dining al fresco was the new normal.

At the same time, much of the noise, the hustle and bustle of daily life, receded. Remember those first weeks, when skies cleared of smog and the cities grew measurably more still? I was struck by how clearly I could hear the bird calls; many had never paid attention to like the plaintive call of the mourning dove or the ray gun bursts of the cardinal.

I was one of the lucky ones who could still work from home, and the stories of the suddenly unemployed, fearful of eviction, of hunger or worse, pained me. Many charities, panicked at first, were surprised to see that giving was up, but no wonder: We who could give felt so blessed that our reaction was to share with others.

The pandemic was also a postgraduate course in scientific inquiry. Our scientists were learning on the fly, and so was I. Don't wear the N95 masks because hospitals needed them. But wear masks. Wipe down surfaces. But perhaps that was not necessary. Wash your hands. Make your masks tighter and thicker. Avoid gatherings. Unless in Florida.

I wasn't angry at the changing information. It heartened me that people were paying attention, trying to learn the behavior of a stealthy, lethal foe. Viruses may be the only threat mankind faces that could obliterate us (besides the threat we pose to ourselves, of course). Our most intrepid enemy is fiendishly clever and adaptable.

We can't wait to get back to our remembered "normal," but I predict that as we do, there will be moments of nostalgia. I feel it a bit now already: The time spent at home. No commutes. The Zoom cocktail hours with friends and family that we never did before. I prayed more. I exercised more. I waved at neighbors who had been strangers to me, happy to see others who shared my predicament.

In some ways, I had a George Bailey experience. Not COVID-19, but the quarantine was my Clarence, trying to convince us we, or "the other," are totally depraved. Worthless. Garbage. This is not the word of God. In Genesis, not even Cain, the first murderer, hears such things about himself from God. Rather, God rearranges everything to protect Cain's life, which remains a divine gift.

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"prompted national dialogue on addressing anti-Asian bias that has taken the form of numerous other acts of physical violence, verbal attacks and destruction of property against those of Asian descent over the last year that have left communities across the country traumatized."

The March 31 statement from the pastoral leaders of Asian and Pacific Islander Catholic groups said the March 16 mass shooting "deeply saddened" them and they offered their prayers "for the deceased and comfort for their families and friends."

"We strongly stand in solidarity with our brothers and sisters during this time of hostility and violence targeting the Asian community in many parts of the country," they said.

They pointed to Bishop Solis’ March 22 statement and noted that in May 2020, two months into the pandemic, three USCCB chairmen spoke out amid the rise of incidents of racism and xenophobia against Americans of Asian and Pacific Island heritage as a result of "fear and anxiety being fueled by the COVID-19 virus" having originated in China.

Bishop Solis was joined in that 2020 statement by Archbishop Nelson J. Pérez of Philadelphia, chairman of the USCCB Committee for Cultural Diversity in the Church, and Bishop Shelton J. Fabre of Houma-Thibodaux, Louisiana, chairman of the USCCB Ad Hoc Committee Against Racism.

"Together with our shepherds, let us be mindful of and turn to the fundamental truth that, 'because all humans share a common origin, they are all brothers and sisters, all equally made in the image of God. When this truth is ignored, the consequence is prejudice and fear of the other, and — all too often — hatred,"" the pastoral leaders said, quoting the bishops’ 2018 pastoral on combating racism, *Open Wide Our Hearts*.

"As Holy Mother Church celebrates the paschal solemnity of Jesus Christ — his suffering, death and resurrection — we place our hope and trust in a loving and merciful God who gave his only son, our Lord Jesus Christ, to redeem all of us from sin and death," they added.

In San Francisco, Archbishop Salvatore J. Cordileone noted that "brutal assaults that have been perpetrated against Asian-Americans here in San Francisco in recent days ."

"This is not San Francisco! On the contrary, our city has always been an epicenter of Asian-American culture, with recurring waves of Chinese, Filipino, Korean, Vietnamese, Japanese, South Asian, and other immigrants overcoming discrimination and hardship to contribute to the rich tapestry of this city's life," he said.

"In our own Catholic community we are blessed to be enriched by many vibrant Asian communities, which bring much vitality to our people's faith lives," Archbishop Cordileone said.

"As Catholics, we also belong to a global faith community that is the most diverse and multicultural institution in the world; and as Americans, we have a responsibility on the global stage to show respect for all people, affirming their human dignity," he added.

"We must lead by example in working toward the much spoken-of but ever elusive unity that is so needed and desired in our society right now," he added.

Father Peter Zhuai, director of Chinese ministry for the archdiocese, who is organizing the April 10 prayer service, said San Francisco's Chinese Catholic community welcomed "this call to pray together for unity and peace and end to violence and racism."

"Our path is strong and gives us hope we can stand together with all San Franciscans of good will for a better future," he said.

Added Father Moisés Agudo, archdiocesan vicar for Hispanics: "A rising tide of hatred must be met with a stronger swelling of love and prayer. The Latinos of the community of the Archdiocese of San Francisco look forward to joining with San Francisco Catholics to support our archdiocesan shop in prayer for peace and unity in this city that we love."

April is Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month.

**Border surge straining shelters, says Mexican bishops' migrant ministry**

*By David Agren*

*Catholic News Service*

PALENQUE, Mexico (CNS) — The Mexican bishops’ migrant ministry says people are arriving at the U.S.-Mexico border with illusions of easily entering the United States, but they risk being returned to Mexico under rules for expelling people rapidly during the pandemic.

In a four-page statement issued March 26, the migrant ministry said the situation is creating bottlenecks along the northern border as migrants, encouraged by stories of possible U.S. policy changes, are unable to apply for asylum and resort to crossing illegally into the United States.

The surge of migrants through Mexico has strained Catholic-run shelters, which are operating at limited capacity due to COVID-19 precautions. Donations have dropped due to the pandemic, the statement said.

"We look optimistically on the new migration policies being implemented by the present United States government," the statement continued. "(But) these policies have caused too much optimism in the migrant population, who are hopeful of being able to soon enter the United States and are mobilizing in various countries, especially in Central America and Mexico."

Ever-increasing numbers of migrants — including many unaccompanied minors — are arriving in the United States, even though the Biden administration has told migrants to stay put for the time being and says it is deporting single adults and families.

"Unaccompanied minors are not being deported, Biden told reporters in a news conference. But neither are many families, according to *The Washington Post*, which reported 60% of "family units" — made up of at least one parent and one child — detained by U.S. officials are remaining in the United States.

Some families detained along parts of the border cannot be returned to Mexico due to Mexico lacking space, the result of a new law prohibiting children being held in Mexican immigration detention centers. The bishops' ministry said the government "had not anticipated in advance" spaces for sheltering unaccompanied minors and families with children prior to changing its law. Mexican immigration officials routinely ask the shelters to house child migrants and families "without any support on the part of the federal government," according to the statement.

The shortage of space for minors is so severe that Sister Pascuala Chávez Medina, coordinator of a migrant shelter in Palenque, in southern Chiapas state, says she receives calls from as far away as Mexico City from immigration officials looking for places to house child migrants.

"I tell them that there's no space and I don't have the infrastructure necessary for adolescents, especially those in situations of risk," said Sister Pascuala, one of the Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul tending to the migrants passing through Palenque.

The Palenque shelter has filled up routinely to the point many solo male travelers are forced to sleep on the sidewalk outside and only receive meals and limited assistance.

"The only ones able to enter are women, minors and the sick. That's the priority," Sister Pascuala said, adding that since mid-March, the number of families arriving has declined for reasons she could not explain.

Many of the migrants arriving in shelters in Mexico report fleeing poverty, violence and the aftermath of twin hurricanes destroying Central America.

There is also the belief in Central America "that entry (into the United States) is very simple, especially if they come with families," said Alberto Xicoténcatl, director of the migrant shelter in Saltillo, in northern Mexico, where he estimates the flow of migrants is four times the normal numbers.

The migrant ministry statement said, "Human traffickers trick migrants, assuring them that they can enter the United States and request asylum, something which is not true."

"It's a strategy they use ... to get more customers."

With migrants arriving at the U.S.-Mexico border in record numbers, the Biden administration is resorting to an old tactic: asking Mexico to play the role of enforcer.

For the first time during pandemic, on March 19, Mexico announced restrictions on travel at its southern border due to COVID-19. The same day, it revealed a deal with the United States to receive 2.7 million doses of the AstraZeneca vaccine, something leaders in both countries called unrelated to any action against migrants.

"The migrant ministry called the timing "suspicious."

The increased enforcement measures, the migrant ministry said, "have considerably increased the trafficking of persons by organized crime" along with activity by other groups "who look to capture migrants for their businesses (such as sex work) or to kidnap them."

**Smugglers, extortion and broken dreams: Migrants' road to U.S. has perils**

TENOSIQUE, Mexico (CNS) — Franciscan Father Gabriel Romero recalled a machete-wielding mob trying to break down the door to his migrant shelter in the middle of the night early this year. The friar blocked the door with his burly frame and yelled: "Back off!"

"You can kill me, but I'm unarmed and I'm not going to let you enter," Father Romero recalled telling the mob.

"They were paid by 'polleros'" he said, using a word for human traffickers. "We want people here to be safe, that they feel it's a peaceful place. But when people leave, it's ugly out there." Shelters like La 72, run by the Franciscans near the Guatemala border, offer a respite on a dangerous route for migrants to the U.S. border.

Migrants unable to afford the services of smugglers often stay in shelters, but advocates like Father Romero say they end up paying plenty in the form of inflated fees for taxi and vans rides or bribes and extortion payments demanded by crooked public officials. Smugglers offer to take them to the next town of Palenque for $250, said Father Romero, and get them through police and immigration checkpoints, which were recently reinforced by the Mexican government as part of an effort to impede the path of migrants.

Many migrants end up walking, especially now that the trains on which they used to steal rides are no longer operating.
conception of how animals and plants are raised, or how weather and disease and all the other realities of nature factor into our food production.

This may not seem like a terrible loss to you, but what happens when the child hears the psalms or the many agricultural metaphors used by Jesus in parables? Will they resonate with material and spiritual truth or just remain abstract images that are hard to connect with and understand?

Somehow God continues to communicate and reach souls even through all of the technological systems in which we find ourselves embedded. There is no limit to his abilities. But it’s still incredibly important for parents, priests and teachers of the faith to recognize how our tech environment can challenge our ability perceive God’s presence in the world.

Technology can be a blessing, and one of its primary blessings is its ability to remind us what it means to be human. The COVID-19 pandemic has forced us to spend inordinate amounts of time on screens. For some people, it’s their only form of human connection.

This is a gift, but the more profound gift is the sense of longing for true connection and true communion that has emerged in the last year. Those who have been cut off from attending Mass for so many months report a deep eucharistic hunger.

Notice how God, by way of the negative experience of the pandemic, is leading people back to the Eucharist. Technology is a powerful tool, but it pales in comparison to the power of God and his ability to use every bit of our earthly experience to reach us with his saving love.

Robinson is director of communications and Catholic media studies at the University of Notre Dame McGrath Institute for Church Life.

Patris Corde (With a Father’s Heart), Pope Francis wisely brings our attention to this moment in the life of Joseph as he risks everything in order to protect what he loves most, his family:

"The Holy Family had to face concrete problems like every other family, like so many of our migrant brothers and sisters who, today too, risk their lives to escape misfortune and hunger. In this regard, I consider St. Joseph the special patron of all those forced to leave their native lands because of war, hatred, persecution and poverty" (No. 5).

Contemplating the lives of many immigrant men who are part of my life, fathers and husbands, I grow in my appreciation of St. Joseph and what he could have said.

He must have said goodbye to friends and relatives. He must have worried how he was going to support his family. He most likely learned a few words to get by in the language of the new land. He surely must have lost sleep thinking about the safety of his family in a society that treated them as foreigners.

As an immigrant, I am sure that Joseph prayed aloud and in silence. He must have cried while expressing his frustrations. I can imagine having to explain himself to others many times; bless and curse; defend and justify. How do I know this? Because I have. I have also seen many immigrant fathers and husbands do likewise.

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

ROBERTA ROBINSON
Continued from Page 18

EDICTAL SUMMONS
April 1, 2021
CASE: CAMPA -- RODRIGUEZ
NO.: SO/21/09

The Tribunal Office of the Catholic Diocese of San Angelo is seeking ELVIRA RODRIGUEZ (PORTILLO).

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 April 2021, to answer to the Petition of RICARDO CAMPA, Jr., now introduced before the Diocesan Tribunal in an action styled, “RICARDO CAMPA, Jr. and ELVIRA RODRIGUEZ (PORTILLO), Petition for Declaration of Invalidity of Marriage.” Said Petition is identified as Case: CAMPA -- RODRIGUEZ; Protocol No.: SO/21/09, 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 April 1, 2021.

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

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BARRON
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como punto de partida la aspiración y la libertad del individuo, aunque ciertamente según nuestros estándares estaba lejos de ser ideal en esta área.

Popper sostuvo que la racha platónica corría peligrosamente a través de la historia occidental, pero se manifestó con particular descriptividad en los totalitarismos del siglo XX, que tenían sus raíces en Hegel y Marx. Popper sostuvo que estos alemanes altamente influentes eran básicamente platónicos en su tendencia a subordinar al individuo a las abstracciones de “historia” o “progreso” o “la revolución”, y sus discípulos políticos prácticos en el siglo XX presidieron, previsiblemente, la acumulación de cadáveres.

Por qué este pequeño recorrido por la historia de la influencia de Platón en el pensamiento político? Me siento obligado a ensayar porque, en muchos sentidos, todos nos estamos convirtiendo en platónicos ahí, y esto debería preocuparnos. Bajo la presión de la cultura políticamente correcta del “woke” (o “despertar”), casi todos nosotros pensamos dentro de categorías genéricas y en términos de individuos. Al considerar, por ejemplo, un nombramiento o una elección o la constitución de una mesa directiva, casi nunca hacemos la pregunta: “¿Cuál es la persona mejor calificada?”. Más bien, nos preguntamos si un candidato es afroamericano, o hispano, o lesbiana, o transgénero, o una mujer, etc. O nos preocupa si el equilibrio adecuado de los grupos minoritarios se logra contratando a este o aquel hombre, o en qué medida una mujer determinada representa un cruce interescendial de rasgos genéricos. Al hacerlo, estamos tratando, de manera platónica, de satisfacer una norma abstracta de justicia subordinando las cualidades particulares de los individuos a categorías colectivas.

Un resultado de este platonismo político y cultural es que tendemos a reverenciar la equidad de oportunidades más que la equidad del resultado. “El hombre negro” es una mera metáfora que se aplica a un conjunto de rasgos que conducen a la percepción de una clase media. Nos encargamos de los negros y marrones, también en virtud de su herencia étnica, pertenecen a una clase opresora y deben considerar opresivos a sus colegas blancos. ¡Un hombre étnico afroamericano que rechaza la ideología del “despertar” no es, en opinión de DiAngelo, verdaderamente blanco! Muy a la manera platónica, todo el mundo en la sociedad debe aceptar la nueva ideología o ser visto como un oponente de la justicia. Los llamamientos, como el de Martin Luther King, a una sociedad “dáltoniana” y a la igualdad de oportunidades son considerados reaccionarios y apoyan el status quo racista.

El resultado es este: cualquier programa político que subordine al individuo a categorías ideales colectivos es peligroso y conducirá, en poco tiempo, a la opresión y la injusticia profunda. Yo sugeriría que todos échemos un buen vistazo al camino platónico por el que nos dirigimos, y retrocedamos hacia el otro lado.

ROISHE
Continúa de Página 17
hay mucha verdad en ese modo de comprenderlo, se echa de menos algo de la profundidad de la persona y la espiritualidad de Teresa.

Para entender el “caminito” de Teresa y su conexión con la justicia en favor de los pobres, necesitamos entender ciertas cosas de su vida que ayudaron a formarla. Una de ellas fue su vida espiritual. La vida de su madre cuando Teresa tenía cuatro años, y varios episodios de depreseión clínica, a causa de los cuales estuvo a punto de morir. Su infancia no reflejaba un camino de rosas. Por otra parte, tuvo una niñez excepcionalmente agraciada. Creció en una familia de santos que la amaban profundamente y le honraban (y frecuentemente fotografaban) cada uno de sus gozos y dolores. Era también una joven bela, atractiva y agradada, con una cordialidad y sensibilidad que desarmaban. Su familia y todos los que estaban a su alrededor la consideraban especial y preciosa. Era muy amada; pero esto no contribuyó a malcriarla. Nunca podemos ser malcriados por ser demasiado amados, sino por ser amados de maner errónea. Su familia la amaba de manera pura, y el resultado fue una joven que abrió su corazón y persona al mundo de un modo excepcional.

Además, mientras maduraba, empezó a darse cuenta de algo. Observó que, cuando era niña, cada lágrima suya era tenida en cuenta, valorada y honrada; pero que este no era el caso de muchas otras personas. Reconoció que incontables personas sufren pesares e injusticias, padecen abusos, son humilladas, viven en la vergüenza y derraman lágrimas de las que nadie se da cuenta ni se preocupa. Su dolor no se ve, ni se honra, ni se valoriza. Desde esta perspectiva, articuló esta metáfora fundamental que apuntala su “caminito”:

Sus palabras: Un domingo, mirando un cuadro de Nuestra Señor en la Cruz, me impresionó la sangre que brotaba de una de sus divinas manos. Senti una punzada de gran pesar al tiempo que consideraba que esta sangre estaba cayendo al suelo sin nadie que se apresurara a recogerla. Estaba dispuesta a permanecer en silencio al pie de la Cruz y recibir su roce sagrado, pero que esa preciosa sangre se pierda. Emplearé mi vida recogiéndola por el bien de las almas.

De esto deducimos que su “caminito” no es cuestión de una piedad privatizada, sino de caer en la cuenta y responder al dolor y las lágrimas de nuestro mundo. Metafóricamente, es cuestión de caer en cuenta y “recoger” la sangre que está goteando del sufriente rostro de Cristo, que actualmente está padeciendo en nuestro mundo en los rostros de los pobres, los rostros de los que están sangrando y derramando lágrimas a causa de pesares, injusticias, pobreza, falta de amor y falta de ser considerados valiosos.

Dorothy Day anduvo por las calles de los pobres cayendo en la cuenta de su sangre, secando sus lágrimas, intentando recogerlas a su manera. Teresa hizo lo mismo místicamente, muy dentro del cuerpo de Cristo. No es extraño que Dorothy Day la escogiera como su santa patróna.

OSPINO
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toda clase de desafíos, y José tuvo que enfrentar un buen número de ellos en los pocos pasajes bíblicos en los que aparece.

En particular me llaman la atención los eventos asociados con la huida a Egipto (Mateo 2:13-23). Allí José, esposo y padre, se convierte en un inmigrante, un refugiado. Desde mi experiencia de inmigrante, y como alguien que acompaña a inmigrantes frecuentemente en el ministerio, la historia tiene una conexión personal.

En su carta apostólica Patris Corde, Con Corazón de Padre, (8 de diciembre del 2020), el Papa Francisco de manera sabia nos invita a reflexionar sobre este momento en la vida de San José, quien arriesgó todo para proteger lo que más ama, su familia:

“La Sagrada Familia tuvo que afrontar problemas concretos como las demás familias, como muchos habitantes herehmanos y hermanas migrantes que incluso hoy arriesgan sus vidas forzados por las adversidades y el hambre. A este respecto, creo que San José sea realmente un santo patrono especial para todos aquellos que tienen que dejar su tierra a causa de la guerra, el odio, la persecución y la miseria.” (n. 5).

Al contemplar las vidas de hombres y mujeres que se mueven a través de un camino migratorio, nos rememoramos el camino de la Cruz de Cristo. No es extraño que Dorothy Day la escogiera como su santa patróna.

SANDOVAL
Continúa de Página 17
celebración. Quizás todos realizábamos que la vacuna era para el virus del año pasado.

Desde entonces, el virus ha evolucionado en formas más amenazantes. COVID-19 es feroz; no va a pasar gentilmente al olvido. Recordé en ese momento las palabras de una mujer anciana en un anuncio televisado por la Yale Health TV sobre la vacuna que dijo: “Estoy aburrida de tener miedo”.

Hablando vivido ante la expectativa de vida, mi compañeros ese día y yo no éramos extranjeros a la muerte, el último acto de cada ser humano. No sabíamos qué pasará cuando se le vea nuestros abuelos, padres, vecinos, hermanos y familiares. La liturgia de la Cuaresma nos recuerda que somos polvo y al polvo volveremos. Algunos de nosotros ya hemos estado en las puertas de la muerte.

Además, realizamos que la muerte para casi todos no es un solo acto sino un proceso. palabras para sobrevivir en el idioma de la nueva tierra donde ahora se encontraba. Es muy posible que pasó noches de desvelo pensando en la seguridad de su familia en una sociedad que les consideraba como pesares.

Estoy seguro de que San José oró como inmigrante en voz alta y en silencio. Tuvo que haber lorado mientras expresaba sus frustraciones. Me lo puedo imaginar tratando de explicar un sinnúmero de veces lo que decía y hacía; briendo y maldiciendo; defendiendo y justificando. ¿Cómo lo sé? Porque yo lo he hecho. Porque he visto a muchos esposos y padres de familia inmigrantes haciendo lo mismo.

Hostfman Ospino es profesor de teología y educación religiosa en Boston College.
Continued from Page 8

The experience of God’s love for us will be infinitely greater than all the combined love we have ever felt here on earth. The feelings in our hearts will be indescribable as we run to his arms with tears flowing from us when, at last, we truly have an understanding of his love for us. Regardless of the family that welcomes us into this life, we are assured of the perfect love that exists in God. The gift of love for our second birthday … our birth into oneness with them … oneness with God. And to get to that place, all we have to do is pray, sacrifice, serve, forgive, and love one another so that we can be a part of God’s gifts to all his children.

Christmas and Easter are the most significant days of the year as we celebrate the two “births” of Jesus. While our birth into this world is a day that we can’t possibly expect to remember, our second day of birth is one that will be impossible to forget. It will be never ending … just like God’s love.

Dr. James Sullivan, a graduate of Rutgers University and Florida State University, has 50 years’ experience in individual, marriage, and family therapy. He is also the Abilene-area profile coordinator for the Diocese of San Angelo.

Continued from Page 9

and the sun turned the water your favorite color of royal blue? If someone was sitting just a foot to either side of you, the reflection would not have produced that color … I wanted to comfort you in the loss of your loved one and to let you know we were near.” And, of course, that little puppy, like her birthday cake, was also “hand-made” for that little girl.

In Laredo, they’re offered rosaries, prayer and saint cards, food or a clean change of clothes. De La Garza said she hears an increase in visits from largely two immigrant groups: those locally deported under a public health situation such as the COVID-19 pandemic.

In the end, perhaps, what Christians speak about as eternal life, the fruit of what St. Paul says is the result of “sowing to the Spirit,” is joy. We turn to Jesus himself and end with his words to us in John 16. Here Our Lord speaks of his coming death and the sorrow this will bring to his followers. But he ends with the joy of the Resurrection, a joy that is not possible without his suffering and death. He says, “So you have sorrow now, but I will see you again and your hearts will rejoice, and no one will take your joy from you. In that day you will ask nothing of me. Truly, truly, I say to you, if you ask anything of the Father, he will give it to you in my name. Hitherto you have asked nothing in my name; ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full” (16:22-24).

As Charles Wesley sings: “Love divine, all loves excelling / Joy of heaven to earth come down / Fix in us thy humble dwelling / All thy faithful mercies crown.”

Father Knick Knickerbocker is a retired priest of the Diocese of San Angelo, ordained under the Pastoral Provision which allows for the reception of married former Episcopal priests into the Catholic Church. He and his wife, Sandie, write a monthly column for the West Texas Angles.

St. Margaret of Scotland Parish in San Angelo recently celebrated the inauguration of their new parish fellowship hall with a ribbon cutting ceremony and Mass, March 21, 2021.

Clockwise from top-left: Bishop Michael Sis cut a ribbon outside the new parish hall to celebrate the official opening of the new building; Bishop Sis blessed the entire building with holy water during Mass; present for the Mass were three former pastors of St. Margaret, Father Tom Barley, Father Chinnapureddy Pagidela, and Msgr. Larry Droll, Deacon Bobby Wright, Bishop Michael Sis, Deacon Jesse Martinez, and current pastor Father Santiago Udayar.
Morgan and Gene Knapp were committed parishioners at Holy Family Catholic Church in Abilene and two of the original parishioners when the parish was established in 1976. Morgan was a convert to Catholicism and Gene was a lifelong Catholic. Together, they were actively involved in many parish groups and events including choir (Gene was actually the organist for a while), RCIA, share groups, funeral ministry, Cursillo, and Fall Fest. The entire Knapp family, including children Karen Teneriello, Barbara Winters, Steve Knapp, David Knapp, and Amy Sack, formed many of their lifelong friendships while attending Mass, religious education, and other functions at Holy Family.

When Gene Knapp’s health began to decline in 2009, the Knapp children were able to lean on the loyal caregivers (both named Donna), who enabled Morgan and Gene to remain in their home throughout their illnesses. Morgan and Gene’s children would come for long weekends and holidays to help and visit their parents as much as possible. Meanwhile, the Holy Family community also provided support. Karen describes her parents’ friends from Holy Family as “absolute angels” who would bring her parents Holy Communion regularly and visit almost daily, including visits from Fr. Fred Nawarskas.

After Gene’s death and shortly before Morgan passed away, parishioners from Holy Family approached the Knapp children about starting an endowment fund in memory of their mom and dad. Karen and her siblings thought this was a beautiful way to not only remember their parents but also honor their lifelong commitment of supporting Holy Family Catholic Church. In 2011, the Knapp children created the Morgan and Gene Knapp Memorial Endowment Fund. The beneficiary of this endowment, Holy Family Catholic Church, receives an annual disbursement from the interest earned through the endowment. As the endowment grows, the amount benefitting Holy Family also grows and the gift lasts in perpetuity as the principal amount is never touched.

Karen and her siblings continue to support this endowment with yearly gifts. The family receives a yearly report on the endowment, explaining its growth and financial stability. According to Karen, these updates make her smile and, she imagines, also make her mom and dad smile, too.

To donate to the Morgan and Gene Knapp Memorial Endowment or any of our endowment funds, please visit: www.catholicfoundationsanangelo.org/give-now
Dear Friends,

Despite the tumult and uncertainty of 2020, the Catholic Charitable Foundation for the Roman Catholic Diocese of San Angelo is proud to report that the total assets of the Foundation continued to grow, reaching a value of $8,209,669 by June 30, 2020.

We truly give thanks to God through Jesus Christ for the growing Catholic community in the Diocese of San Angelo and for the many generous ways our faith is expressed through diverse contributions of time, talent, and treasure.

Endowments will continue to boost the long-term stability and growth of the Diocese of San Angelo and impact our mission long into the future. Each donor-created fund provides steady, reliable financial support for the purposes designated by each donor. On behalf of the Foundation and the Board of Trustees, I thank you for your prayers and generosity through this past year. Because of you, I am confident our Foundation will continue to grow and prosper despite any challenges that may come our way.

Sincerely,

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

DESIGNATED ENDOWMENT FUNDS

Angelo Catholic School Foundation Endowment Fund: The beneficiary is Angelo Catholic School.

Edward and Roberta Kalafut Brandecker Endowment Fund: Beneficiaries are Holy Family Catholic Church, retired religious, and the Diocese of San Angelo Priests’ Pension Plan.

Catholic Charities Odessa Endowment Fund: The beneficiary is Catholic Charities of Odessa, Inc.

Tom and Pat Collier Catholic Education Fund: The beneficiary is Catholic education in the Diocese of San Angelo.

Maxwell A. and Marlene Del Davis Memorial Endowment Fund: The beneficiary is seminarian education for the Diocese of San Angelo.

Matthew B. Fenner Memorial Endowment Fund: The beneficiary is seminarians from the Diocese of San Angelo with emergency or other financial needs.

Holy Family Catholic Church Endowment Fund: The beneficiary is Holy Family Catholic Church in Abilene.

Robert John Huot and Anne D. Huot Endowment Fund: The beneficiary is Seminarian Education in the Diocese of San Angelo.

Morgan and Gene Knapp Memorial Endowment Fund: The beneficiary is Holy Family Catholic Church in Abilene.

Most Rev. Michael D. Pfeifer, OMI, Bishop of San Angelo Endowment Fund: The beneficiaries are Angelo Catholic School in San Angelo, St. Ann’s Catholic School in Midland, St. Mary’s Central Catholic School in Odessa, Seminarian Education for the Diocese of San Angelo; the remainder is distributable at the discretion of the Board of Trustees of the Foundation to meet some of the more pressing needs of the diocese, to provide assistance to charitable and building projects in the poor communities of the diocese, or to assist those communities with special needs.

Our Lady of San Juan Endowment Fund: The beneficiary is Our Lady of San Juan Mission in Odessa.

St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Church Endowment Fund: The beneficiary is St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Church in Odessa.

St. Mary’s Central Catholic School, Odessa, Endowment Fund: The beneficiary is St. Mary’s Central Catholic School in Odessa.

St. Mary’s Catholic Church, Odessa, Endowment Fund: The beneficiary is St. Mary’s Catholic Church in Odessa.

Most Rev. Michael J. Sis Endowment Fund: The beneficiary is the Roman Catholic Diocese of San Angelo.

The James D. and Kathleen J. Webster Endowment Fund: The beneficiaries are Holy Family Catholic Church and the Unrestricted Endowment Fund of the Foundation.

Zappe Psencik Family Vocation Fund: Beneficiary is the Diocese to be used for education of priest and nuns

UNRESTRICTED ENDOWMENT FUNDS

Catholic Charitable Foundation Unrestricted Endowment Fund: This fund accepts donations in any amount. All donations received without a designated purpose will be placed in this fund.

Joe C. and Mary Multer Moeller Fund as given by their son, Msgr. Louis B. Moeller

Our Lady of San Juan Endowment Fund: The beneficiary is Our Lady of San Juan Mission in Odessa.

St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Church Endowment Fund: The beneficiary is St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Church in Odessa.

St. Mary’s Central Catholic School, Odessa, Endowment Fund: The beneficiary is St. Mary’s Central Catholic School in Odessa.

St. Mary’s Catholic Church, Odessa, Endowment Fund: The beneficiary is St. Mary’s Catholic Church in Odessa.

Most Rev. Michael J. Sis Endowment Fund: The beneficiary is the Roman Catholic Diocese of San Angelo.

The James D. and Kathleen J. Webster Endowment Fund: The beneficiaries are Holy Family Catholic Church and the Unrestricted Endowment Fund of the Foundation.

Zappe Psencik Family Vocation Fund: Beneficiary is the Diocese to be used for education of priest and nuns

GROWTH IN UNRESTRICTED ENDOWMENT FUND

- 2014: $757,032
- 2015: $676,131
- 2016: $652,734
- 2017: $680,936
- 2018: $705,668
- 2019: $2,307,092
- 2020: $2,241,431
GROWTH IN DESIGNATED ENDOWMENT FUND

2020 MEMBERS OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Chairman: Most Rev. Michael J. Sis, STL, DD  
Bishop of San Angelo  
President: Mrs. Lois Folger  
President of Folger Energy, LLC  
Treasurer: Mr. Steve McKay, CPA  
Diocesan Finance Officer (resigned 10/2020)  
Mr. Tim Dixon, CPA  
Diocesan Finance Officer (elected 11/2020)  
Secretary: Ms. Michelle Allen  
Attorney at Law  
Trustees: Reverend Timothy Hayter  
Parochial Vicar, St. Ann Parish  
Mr. David Boutin  
Retired (Ex market president—Frost Bank)  
Mr. Doug Burns  
Financial Advisor, Edward Jones  
Mr. Trey Berry  
President of O.H.B., Inc.

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

June 30, 2020

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>2020</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assets</td>
<td>$21,098</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investments</td>
<td>8,188,571</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Assets</td>
<td>$8,209,669</td>
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<tr>
<td>Liabilities and Net Assets</td>
<td>4,182,151</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liabilities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agency accounts</td>
<td>$4,182,151</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Liabilities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Net Assets Without Donor Restrictions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Administrative funds</td>
<td>198,477</td>
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<tr>
<td>Undesignated endowments</td>
<td>2,307,092</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Designated endowments</td>
<td>1,521,949</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Net Assets Without Donor Restrictions</td>
<td>4,027,518</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Liabilities and Net Assets</td>
<td>$8,209,669</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Catholic Charitable Foundation for the Roman Catholic Diocese of San Angelo was audited for the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 2020 by BDO USA, LLP. The Foundation received an audit report with no exceptions. Above is the Statement of Financial Position as reflected in that audit. The complete audit report is available on the website, www.catholicfoundationsanangelo.org, or upon request.

GRANTS AWARDED FROM UNRESTRICTED ENDOWMENTS IN 2020

- Angelo Catholic School: $4250
- Catholic Charities Community Services Odessa, Inc., Odessa: $3000
- Holy Spirit, Sweetwater: $3000
- Holy Trinity, Big Spring: $4250
- Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Ozona: $5000
- Sacred Heart, Abilene: $1250
- Sacred Heart, Menard: $1800
- St. Ambrose, Wall: $1250
- St. Ann, Sonora: $2000
- St. Ann's Catholic School, Midland: $2000
- St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, Odessa: $3000
- St. Francis, Iraan: $4250
- St. James, Sanderson: $2000
- St. Margaret of Scotland, San Angelo: $3000
- St. Mary, San Angelo: $3000
- St. Mary's Central Catholic School, Odessa: $5000
- St. Theresa, Junction: $2000
- St. Thomas, Miles: $3977
- St. Thomas, Rankin: $5000

$59,027 IN TOTAL GRANTS AWARDED

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT OUR GRANTS, PLEASE VISIT:
WWW.CATHOLICFOUNDATIONSANANGELO.ORG/GRANTS

O U R  M I S S I O N

The Catholic Charitable Foundation connects faith with charitable giving to serve the needs of our community through long-term support of ministries in the Roman Catholic Diocese of San Angelo.

O U R  V I S I O N

Our vision is to be the keystone for planned giving and socially responsible investing in the Roman Catholic Diocese of San Angelo to enable individuals, families and organizations to make a lasting impact in the work of parishes, schools, and other Catholic institutions within the diocese.

O U R  V A L U E S

In all that we do, The Catholic Charitable Foundation seeks to:
- be faithful to Jesus Christ,
- abide by the canon law of the Roman Catholic Church,
- follow all applicable civil laws,
- uphold the highest standards of ethics,
- utilize the talents of the laity,
- lead responsibly,
- respect donors’ intentions,
- manage resources efficiently, and
- serve and respond professionally.

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