



NEWSMAGAZINE North Texas Catholic

Bringing the Good News to the Diocese of Fort Worth

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A PILGRIMAGE FOR ALL NATIONS

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FRONT COVER: Pope Francis walks with World Youth Day pilgrims as he arrives for a July 30 prayer vigil at the Field of Mercy in Krakow, Poland. (CNS photo/Paul Haring)



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North Texas Catholic

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The Church needs us — so take heart and pray

It should go without saying, there's been a lot of bad news on television, radio, online news sites, and social media lately. We're bombarded by it.

We're only eight months through the year and the list of disasters and tragedies is much too long: the Orlando massacre; the Bastille Day attack in Nice, France; the sniper attack on Dallas officers; other race-related shootings; floods; earthquakes; genocide against Christians and minorities in the Middle East, and elsewhere; ISIS; the murder of French Father Jacques Hamel. And the pain we've experienced in our own lives. With all that, we may want to harden our hearts, or close ourselves up to protect ourselves from the onslaught of heartbreak.

But we know this: in times of great fear and danger, God asks us to *not* close ourselves up — as contradictory as it may seem. To not be afraid — as tempting as it may be. To reach out and give of ourselves — as difficult as that is. I mean, even the Apostles hid in the upper room! And yes, Pope Francis knows the temptation of fear. As he said on the Feast of Sts. Peter and Paul: "Fear makes us immobile, it always stops us...It closes us to God's surprises."

But our Holy Father followed that up by also noting we are not alone, because we have God and He is always ready and glad to give us the grace to "open up a way out: from closure to openness, from fear to courage, from sadness to joy, from division to unity." It seems the world can really use some of that right now. We as the Church can give it. But not without prayer.

Yes, sometimes it can feel like prayer doesn't work or like it isn't enough or that it's the cliché response. In the hecticness of our lives, we tend to undervalue it. We forget it's truly a beautiful dialogue between us and our Heavenly Father. I know I am guilty of that.

Again, Pope Francis wisely reminds us that prayer is the primary "work tool in our hands." Just a few days before World Youth Day, he said prayer strengthens our faith and capacity to "fight beside God for the things that are truly important and necessary," because in prayer, "we are a pair: God and me..."

I think the people in these pages know that. For them to have shared their faith and done the various good works mentioned here, they must have first gone to God in prayer, received grace and courage, then gone out to serve in a world that is hurting and sometimes scary. So like them, let's pray hard, then go out and share God's love with others.

Juan Guajardo

Vincentians to host Friends of the Poor Walk Sept. 17 to gather funds for outreach

by *Jacqueline Burkepile*
Correspondent

ARLINGTON — Offering assistance to the poor and needy is a central focus for the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul, which has a presence at 12 parishes within the Diocese of Fort Worth.

The Fort Worth District Council of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul will raise funds for these services through their 9th Annual Friends of the Poor Walk/Run on Sept. 17 at Wimbledon Park in Arlington. Walker registration begins at 8 a.m., followed by Mass at 8:30 a.m. The walk will begin following Mass.

The Friends of the Poor Walk/Run began in 2008 as a national effort to encourage local St. Vincent de Paul councils to raise additional funds for their outreach to the poor. According to svdpusa.org, 240 walks occurred nationwide in 2015, with approximately 28,000 walkers raising more than \$2.9 million.

“The St. Vincent de Paul Society

is the place people call when they are in crisis,” said John and Otilie Kitowski, co-coordinators of the Fort Worth walk and co-presidents of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul at St. Bartholomew Church in Fort Worth.

Interested participants are encouraged to register as a walker or sponsor of a walker on the Friends of the Poor Walk/Run website. The money raised by the walk in Arlington will be distributed to each participating St. Vincent de Paul conference throughout the Diocese of Fort Worth to help local people in need.

The Kitowskis said the parish conferences help those who need immediate financial assistance with rent, medications, transportation, food, etc. Some of the money raised also supports the local St. Vincent de Paul food pantries and the Wichita Falls St. Vincent de Paul Thrift Store.

To register for, or donate to the Friends of the Poor Walk, visit www.svdpusa.net/walk/1515.

DIOCESAN, LOCAL & STATE NEWSBRIEFS

Local Knights of Columbus raise more than \$200,000 for vocations, deaf ministry

by *Lance Murray*
Correspondent

GRAPEVINE — Thank you. We appreciate you.

That was the simple, heartfelt message sent to the clergy and religious in the Fort Worth Diocese during the 21st Annual Priest and Religious Appreciation Dinner held Aug. 8, at St. Francis of Assisi Church in Grapevine.

More than 400 Knights of Columbus members, priests, deacons, sisters, religious, and family members filled the Family Life Center at St. Francis where Bishop Michael Olson was presented with a check for \$204,291 — money that is earmarked for vocations and deaf ministries.

Pat Henz, diocesan deputy for the Knight of Columbus, said it's the first time more than \$200,000 has been presented by the Knights in the diocese.

“The purpose of the dinner is to show our appreciation to our clergy,” Henz said. Many clergy and religious were in attendance, including Father-James Wilcox, director of vocations for the diocese.

The Fort Worth Diocese has roughly 8,600 Knights. Their state charity goal was \$86,000, Henz said.

“Not only did we meet our goal, we surpassed it,” he said.



Bishop Michael Olson accepts a check from the Knights of Columbus for \$204,291 at the 21st Priest and Religious Appreciation Dinner. (Photo by Lance Murray / NTC)

Over the last 20 years, \$2.2 million has been raised by the Knights in the diocese.

Deaf Ministries Director Connie Martin and Deaf Ministry members had a prominent place at the front of the hall, and the deaf choir signed a song for those in attendance.

During the event, Fr. Wilcox introduced 32 seminarians who were in attendance. The Knights also presented a check for \$4,000 collected in the “Pennies for Seminarians” program that encourages people to put money in jars.

Seminarian Rijo Philip said the backing from the Knights of Columbus is crucial to seminarians such as himself.

“It’s inspiring and motivating to know we have their support,” Philip said.



CLERGY ASSIGNMENTS FOR THE DIOCESE OF FORT WORTH



by Most Rev. Michael F. Olson, STD, MA

DEPARTURES

Rev. Augustine Park, Pastor of Korean Martyrs Parish in Hurst, has returned to his home diocese, effective July 26, 2016.

PAROCHIAL VICARS

Rev. Joseph Janizeski, TOR, new to the Diocese of Fort Worth, has been assigned as **Parochial Vicar** of St. Andrew Parish in Fort Worth, effective

August 15, 2016.

DEACONS

Deacon Jerome Caplinger, has been assigned to St. Mary Parish in Gainesville, effective June 29, 2016.

Deacon Guido Serrano, new to the Diocese of Fort Worth, has been assigned to St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish in Keller, effective July 11, 2016.

Correction to Fr. David Bristow story in July/August issue of the NTC

by *NTC Staff*

The article titled “A Catholic at Heart” featuring Father David Bristow and his retirement, which ran in the July/August 2016 issue of the *North Texas Catholic*, reported that Fr. Bristow was a priest 42 years. The wording of the story could have misled readers to believe he was a Catholic priest for 42 years. In actuality, he was ordained a Catholic priest in 1998 after completing the Pastoral Provision process established by St. John Paul II. Hence, he has served as a Catholic priest for 18 years.

Fr. Bristow formerly served in the Episcopal church, where he was ordained in 1974 and served until 1995.



After a year of discernment, 32 men express their desire to continue on the road to

Bishop Michael Olson poses with the 32 deacon candidates on August 6. (Photo by Adrean Indolos / NTC)

THE PERMANENT DIACONATE

By Joan Kurkowski-Gillen / Correspondent

AFTER A YEAR OF PRAYERFUL DISCERNMENT AND STUDY, 32 MEN, ASPIRING TO BECOME PERMANENT DEACONS IN THE DIOCESE OF FORT WORTH, WERE ADMITTED TO CANDIDACY DURING AN AUGUST 6 MASS CELEBRATED BY BISHOP MICHAEL OLSON IN ST. PATRICK CATHEDRAL.

During a brief calling and questioning of candidates, the men publicly expressed their desire to be ordained as deacons and the bishop accepted their declaration.

The rite of ascending to candidacy is simple, direct, and understated, Bishop Olson explained in his homily.

“The rite of reception of candidacy is truly marked by the simplicity of faith for it is faith that is required to hear the call and to say ‘yes,’” he suggested. “Faith begins with listening and hearing Jesus Christ.”

Becoming a deacon is not a lifestyle choice based on personal desires.

“Your formation requires that you take seriously the voice of the Father who tells you, and tells each of us, to listen to Jesus,” the bishop pointed out. “It requires that the man who heard a call has adequately discerned — through faith and prayer — that it is indeed the Lord who is calling him.”

Faithful and generous service to Christ and his Church involves preparation of mind and spirit as well as an intimate and meaningful conversion of heart to love one’s neighbor and give freely of oneself in service.

“Formation requires the cross — it requires the surrender of your self-will and full conformity to Christ as displayed by St. Stephen and St. Lawrence — two of the earliest deacons of the Church and martyrs in the life of the Church,” Bishop Olson said. “Make no mistake, all is lost by confusing enthusiasm with solid, authentic zeal of discipleship.”

Julian Mendoza called his time as an aspirant for the diaconate “life changing.”

“It’s been great — lots of prayer, discerning, and listening to the Lord because He’s the one in control of everything,” enthused the St. Catherine of Sienna parishioner as he waited for the Mass to begin with wife, Mary.

Mendoza said juggling work, studies, and family responsibilities is challenging, “but the Lord is making it work so far.

“If we just open ourselves up to the Lord, everything works out,” the diaconate candidate added.

St. Mark parishioner Eric Hunsberger has grown spiritually during the past year.

“We’ve listened to a lot of good speakers and learned about the diaconate as well as a better way to catechize,” added the candidate who attended the Mass with his 28-year-old son, Philip. “It involved a lot of reading and writing projects.”

Classroom meetings for the candidates will increase from one Saturday a month to twice a month. They also will receive parish assignments and are expected to complete 15 hours of service to the Church in addition to 15 hours of community ministry each month.

The Order of Deacon is a ministry of service to the Word of God, the sacraments of the Church, and works of heroic charity. Men, ordained as deacons, represent Christ in the world and are expected to model grace, justice, faith, and compassion in the community.

In addition to assisting with the sacramental life of a parish, deacons visit the sick and homebound, volunteer in prison ministry, assist with advocacy for the marginalized, and teach in various parish programs.

The class of 2020 is the fifth group of diaconal candidates trained in the Diocese of Fort Worth. Permanent deacons ordained for the diocese prior to 1989 received their formation in the Diocese of Dallas.

Deacon James Bindel came to the August 6 Mass to show support for the prospective deacons he met while teaching inquiry classes.

“It’s terrific to see the enthusiasm of these men and see how their prayer life and spirituality has changed,” said the deacon who

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SSMN jubilarians honored

Sisters reaffirm commitment to Christ, Church

By Lance Murray
Correspondent

EIGHT SISTERS FROM THE SISTERS OF ST. MARY OF NAMUR WERE HONORED FOR THEIR LONG RELIGIOUS LIVES AT A JUBILEE CELEBRATION AUG. 13 AT ST. ANDREW CHURCH IN FORT WORTH.

Cumulatively, the sisters have given 540 years of service to the Church and their order, which first came to Texas 143 years ago.

Sister Mary Michael Dittoe celebrated her 75th anniversary. Sisters Rita Claire Davis, Ann Vincent Kucirek, Louise Smith, and Francesca Walterscheid celebrated 70 years in the order.

Celebrating her 65th anniversary was Sister Teresa Honkomp, and celebrating 60 years were Sister Mary Helen Fuhrmann and Sister Charles Marie Serafino.

Celebrants also honored the memory of Sister Bernice Knapek, who died on Sept. 29, 2015.

A large number of people filled the chapel at St. Andrew's nearly to capacity, as Bishop Michael Olson was the celebrant for the Mass where the eight renewed their vows as sisters.

After the reading of Jeremiah 1: 4-9, Bishop Olson told the sisters even though they have had long religious lives, "You are young, and the youth you have is the youth the Lord has given you."

In renewing their vows, the sisters reaffirmed their commitment to Christ and the Catholic Church.

"It was Christ who changed your life by calling you so many years ago," Bishop Olson told each of them. "Through your vocation



Bishop Michael Olson (center) poses with SSMN jubilarians (left to right) Sr. Charles Marie Serafino, Sr. Rita Claire Davis, Sr. Teresa Honkomp, Sr. Mary Helen Fuhrmann, Sr. Ann Vincent Kucirek, Sr. Mary Michael Dittoe, Sr. Louise Smith, and Sr. Francesca Walterscheid during their celebration held Aug. 13. (Photo by Lance Murray/NTC)

as religious women, you are able to share love."

Bishop Olson told the sisters: "It is Him who helps you celebrate today. He has spoken and He will never abandon you."

He said, "May God grant [you] many more years of happy ministry, religious life."

Sr. Mary Michael Dittoe heard the call to religious life as the United States was entering World War II 75 years ago.

"My brother went in the Navy and I went in the convent," she said Saturday after greeting people arriving for the celebration.

At the reception following the Mass, Sr. Charles Marie Serafino smiled as she was surrounded by family.

She said she met some very young relatives for the first time at the celebration.

"When I woke up this morning and thought about my prayers, I thought 'this should be a day of thanksgiving,'" she said.

The SSMN order is older than both the Fort Worth and Dallas Dioceses.

The order was established in 1819 in Namur, Belgium in the aftermath of the French Revolution. It came to the United States in 1863 to Lockport, New York, and by 1873 had arrived in Waco, where the sisters founded Sacred Heart Academy.

Their arrival in North Texas preceded the establishment of the Dallas Diocese (1890) by 17 years and the Fort Worth Diocese, which was made independent of the Dallas Diocese in 1969, by 96 years.

Always stalwarts in Catholic education, the sisters established a system of several schools

across North Texas, including the well-known Our Lady of Victory Academy and College, a day school and boarding school for girls, which they opened in Fort Worth in 1910.

Here are brief biographies of the eight sisters:

Sister Ann Vincent Kucirek

Born in Omaha, Nebraska, Sr. Ann Vincent is the senior member of the community at age 96. During World War II, her brother was stationed in Waco and heard the sisters talk about their need for a teacher. He recommended that the order invite his sister, who accepted and taught that year. She then felt called to join the SSMNs. She has had a long career as a teacher and principal, among other roles with the order.

Sister Charles Marie Serafino

She was born in Dallas and met the SSMNs in her parish, St. Cecilia, while she was preparing for her first Communion. She graduated from high school in Duncanville and earned her bachelor's degree in education from the then North Texas State University in Denton. She entered the congregation two weeks later and continued her studies in theology, philosophy, liturgy, and scripture at the University of Dallas in Irving. She served for 38 years in Africa.

Sister Francesca Walterscheid

Born in Muenster, Sr. Francesca Walterscheid became a classroom teacher after completing her novitiate. She began teaching first grade at Shrine of the True Cross in Dickinson for two years, then at St. Ignatius Academy in Fort Worth for a year. Those posts were followed by many years of teaching at various schools in Texas and California, mostly in first grade classrooms.

Sister Louise Smith

A native of Rawlins, Wyoming, Sr. Louise Smith grew up in Denison, Texas, where she was educated by the Sisters of St. Mary at St. Xavier Academy. She attended Our Lady of

Victory College in Fort Worth after graduation. She entered the congregation on Feb. 2, 1946. She taught singing and piano, among other subjects.

Sister Mary Helen Fuhrmann

Born in Lindsay, Texas, Sr. Mary Helen Fuhrmann was educated by Sisters of Divine Providence and in 1956 she entered the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Mary of Namur. Sr. Mary Helen earned her bachelor of arts in elementary education at the University of Dallas, her master of arts in education at Texas Woman's University in Denton, and a certificate in spiritual direction from Mercy Center in Colorado Springs, Colorado. Her teaching career began at St. Mary's School in Fort Worth.

Sister Mary Michael Dittoe

Born in Wichita Falls, Sr. Mary Michael attended the Academy of Mary Immaculate in Wichita for three years before living as a boarder for eight years at St. Joseph Academy in Sherman. She entered the Sisters of St. Mary upon graduation. She followed three aunts into the Congregation — Sister Margarita, Sister Florence, and Sister Vincentia Dittoe. Sr. Mary Michael is celebrating 75 years as a religious, and count-

ing her years as a boarder, she has lived in the convent for 83 years.

Sister Rita Claire Davis

A native of Dallas, Sr. Rita Claire attended St. Edward Academy and OLV College before entering the Sisters of St. Mary in 1946. She spent many years in education, including elementary and high school classrooms in Dallas-Fort Worth and other places in the United States and Canada.

Sister Teresa Honkomp

Sr. Teresa James Honkomp was born in Wichita Falls and was educated at the Academy of Mary Immaculate. She entered the congregation in 1951 and earned her bachelor of science in education from Our Lady of the Lake College in San Antonio, and a master of education degree from Texas Woman's University in Denton. She has taught elementary, middle school, and served as principal at various schools.



The SSMN jubilarians standing in the front two pews at St. Andrew Church in Fort Worth were given a standing ovation as they celebrated their collective 540 years of service to Christ and his Church. (Photo by Lance Murray/NTC).

Diaconate candidates continued from page 5...

ministers at Our Lady Queen of Peace in Wichita Falls.

But it's still the beginning of a journey, he cautioned.

"These men still have four years of formation," Bindel continued. "It's not a summer thing and then you become a deacon. Preparation is lengthy. The Church discerns and the man discerns."

The diocese is blessed with a large number of high quality candidates who are "examples of

Christian leadership," according to Juan Rendon, director of permanent deacon formation.

After an intense year of monthly meetings, general study, prayer, days of recollection, and small group reflection, the men will begin specific theological and liturgical formation.

"Last year was for discernment. Now the attention is on Holy Orders," Rendon added. "We will meet more often for

intellectual, pastoral, and spiritual formation. The academic component is more intense."

Candidates will train for Proclamation of the Word and — God willing — will receive the Ministry of Lector next summer. In addition to intense study of liturgical principles and parish duties, the men will hone their skills as ministers of charity.

"They will be assigned to a hospitals, hospice, nursing homes,

and prisons," Rendon continued. "Pope Francis calls it the peripheries of human existence."

Rafael and Donna Zavala traveled from southern California to watch their son, Danny Zavala, continue his journey to become a permanent deacon.

"We feel so blessed that he's answered the Lord and wants to serve Him," said his mother who prayed a Rosary in thanksgiving. "We're so very proud."

TWO CITIES MOURN

Thousands say goodbye to officers killed in Dallas shooting — one with ties to Fort Worth's North Side

By Joan Kurkowski-Gillen
Correspondent

PATRICIO “PATRICK” ZAMARRIPA CONSIDERED HIS WORK AS A POLICE OFFICER SOMETHING MORE THAN JUST A CAREER IN LAW ENFORCEMENT.

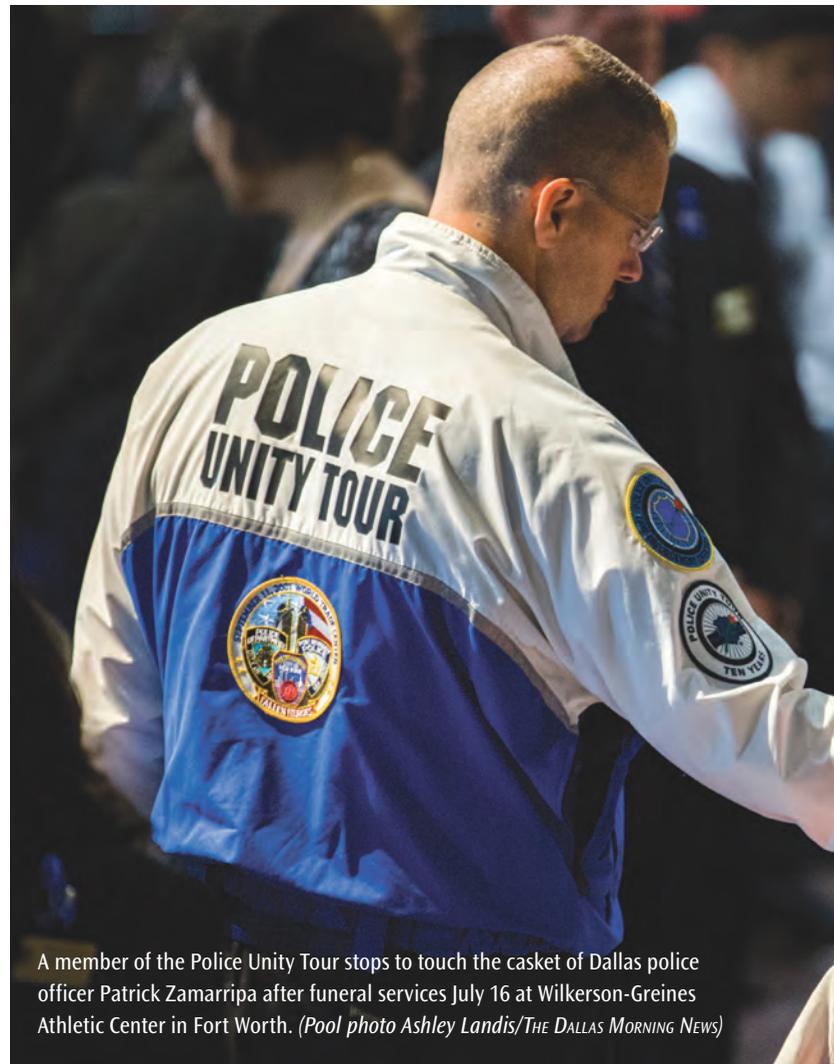
“He understood that it was a vocation — a calling — as one who is to keep peace,” Fort Worth Bishop Michael Olson told mourners who filled the Wilkerson-Greines Activity Center in Fort Worth for the July 16 public funeral liturgy honoring Zamarripa.

The 32-year-old Fort Worth native, who graduated from Paschal High School in 2001, was the youngest of five police officers ambushed and killed July 7 in downtown Dallas while safeguarding marchers protesting officer-involved shootings. Funeral services were held in mid-July for Dallas Officers Lorne Ahrens, 48; Michael Krol, 40; Michael J. Smith, 55; and DART Officer Brent Thompson, 43.

Representatives from police departments across the country and Canada attended the funerals and participated in long, motorcycle-led processions to each fallen officer's burial site.

Thompson, the first DART officer killed in the line of duty, was honored during a memorial service at The Potter's House in Dallas on July 13. An Arlington Honor Guard carried his flag-draped casket into the church where his wife of two weeks, Emily, eulogized him.

“I'm going to put on my badge and my uniform and return to the street along with all of my brothers and sisters in blue,” said the widow, a fellow DART officer.



A member of the Police Unity Tour stops to touch the casket of Dallas police officer Patrick Zamarripa after funeral services July 16 at Wilkerson-Greines Athletic Center in Fort Worth. (Pool photo Ashley Landis/THE DALLAS MORNING NEWS)

After a second, private funeral at Northside Baptist Church in Corsicana, the fallen officer was buried in a cemetery on his family's farm.

Mary Immaculate Catholic Church in Farmer's Branch was the site of a private funeral Mass for U.S. Army Veteran Michael J. Smith on July 13. A member of the Dallas Police for 28 years, the married father was known for his upbeat attitude and compassionate approach toward others.

In his homily, Father Michael Forge advised family and friends of the murdered officer to choose love over hate.

“Mike was always about choosing to love the other,” the pastor said.

Smith's wife, Heidi, is a teacher at the parish school where daughter, Caroline, is enrolled. Older daughter, Victoria, is a recent graduate.

A public service was held the following day at Watermark Church in Dallas where Smith worked security for a number of years.

The 7,000-seat Prestonwood Baptist Church was filled to capacity for the July 13 funeral service of Officer Lorne Ahrens. Mourners included police officers from the Los Angeles Sheriff's Department where Ahrens started his career. He joined the Dallas Police Department 14 years ago. His wife, Katrina, is a Dallas detective.

The Ahrens family lives in Burleson and attends Pathway Church but chose to have the slain officer's service in the large Dallas church to accommodate the crowd.

A gun salute, fly over, and flag presentation honored Michael Krol at the first of two funerals held for the Detroit native. After a memorial service July 15 at Prestonwood Baptist Church, the officer's body was flown to Michigan where he began his career in law enforcement as a jailer for the Wayne County Sheriff's Office.



A funeral Mass for Krol was celebrated at St. Robert Bellamine Catholic Church, which is located around the corner from his mother's home in Redford Township. Hundreds of officers and local officials came to pay their respects to the nine-year Dallas police veteran who moved to Texas in 2007 and lived in Fort Worth.

After the Mass, Krol was buried in Holy Sepulchre Catholic Cemetery.

On July 16, thousands lined the 23-mile route from Wilkerson-Greines to Dallas-Fort Worth National Cemetery to pay tribute to Officer Zamarripa, a U.S. Navy war veteran.

"I wish that I could think of words that adequately heal the fear, anger, and sorrow each of us, in our own way, feel about the death of Patrick Zamarripa, his fellow officers and all those who were hurt and

TOP RIGHT: Bishop Michael Olson blesses the casket of Dallas police officer Patrick Zamarripa during a funeral service July 16 at Wilkerson-Greines Athletic Center. (Pool photo Ashley Landis/*THE DALLAS MORNING NEWS*)

BOTTOM RIGHT: Davis Estrada, Erica Estrada, and Elisa Erica Elizondo during a candlelight vigil and Rosary for Dallas police officer Patrick Zamarripa at Marine Park in Fort Worth July 10. (Pool photo Ron Heflin / *THE TEXAS CATHOLIC*)

traumatized during the events of last week," Bishop Olson said to the gathering of family, friends, co-workers, and citizens who attended the hour-long Catholic liturgy. A choir from Immaculate Heart of Mary Church led worshippers in singing "On

CONTINUED ON PAGE 10



Dallas Police Honor Guard members salute during a ceremony for slain Dallas police officer Michael Krol outside of Prestonwood Baptist Church in Plano, July 15. (Pool photo Tom Fox/*The Dallas Morning News*)



FROM PAGE 9

Eagle's Wings" and "Here I Am Lord."

Referencing a reading from the Prophet Isaiah selected for the service, the bishop explained that humans are powerless to remove the veil of death, and the false solution of fighting death with death only serves to separate us from God and each other.

It's Christ's mission to lift the veil of death and its bitterness.

"It's a mission of selfless obedience. It's a mission of mercy and justice. It's a mission of sacrifice and love," he continued. "It's a mission that establishes peace that the world itself cannot give."

Described as kind, reliable, and vigilant by his family, Zamarripa grew up to become a natural mediator and peacemaker — roles he developed first at home and later with the Navy serving three tours of duty in Iraq. A desire to help others prompted him to enroll in the police academy and join the Dallas force in 2010.

"For him, to be a police officer, as with so many others, was to answer a call from God to be a peacekeeper," Bishop Olson observed adding the young father "served joyfully."

He asked the assembly of 5,000 people to pray "that the shadow of grief," experienced by the slain officer's family and friends, might be lightened by hope.

"We also pray for his colleagues in police service that they might be encouraged to pursue with fidelity an authentic mission of peacekeeping," the bishop said concluding his homily.

Father Stephen Jasso, TOR, pastor of All Saints Church, presided at a July 15 Rosary for Zamarripa at the Wilkerson-Greines Center. The officer's extended family is a longtime member of the Fort Worth North Side parish.

"His grandmother, Rosa,

comes to Mass here every Sunday," the pastor said. "Some of his brothers attend here. Others have moved, but the family is still very close to the parish."

During news coverage of the July 7 attack on Dallas police, Fr. Jasso heard the name Zamarripa and called one of the officer's brothers and later, his father.

"Since then, I've been praying for them and their son," said the Franciscan friar who offered a Mass for the slain officer the following morning. "They are one of the wonderful families with deep roots at All Saints. The whole parish has been praying for them and the other officers."

The murder of police officers in Dallas is tragic but, "It's a blessing that people come together during tragedies like this to support each other and strengthen their faith," Fr. Jasso said.

The pastor delivered a similar message to the crowd of people who turned out for Zamarripa's emotional Rosary vigil. There is more good in our nation than evil, Fr. Jasso told the congregation.

"When faced with difficult moments, we always come together in prayer," Fr. Jasso explained. "I'm convinced that the only way to extinguish the fire of hate, violence, and terrorism is with the power of love. We gather this evening because we love each other and have the hope of resurrection."

St. Bartholomew parishioner Lisa Losoya attended Trimble Tech High School with Zamarripa's mother, Valerie, and watched a young Patrick Zamarripa grow up.

"He was such a happy, respectful young man," says Losoya, who viewed a livestream of the funeral service at home.

"He loved his family, and his daughter meant the world to him. Patrick was a huge Texas Rangers fan and had lots of friends. The service was a wonderful tribute."

AFTER SUMMER OF SHOOTINGS, U.S. BISHOPS DEVELOP TASK FORCE ON RACE

By Mark Pattison / Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON (CNS) — Archbishop Wilton D. Gregory of Atlanta has been appointed as chair of a new task force of the U.S. bishops to deal with racial issues brought into public consciousness following a series of summertime shootings that left both citizens and police officers among those dead.

The task force's charge includes helping bishops to engage directly the challenging problems highlighted by the shootings. Task force members will gather and disseminate supportive resources and "best practices" for their fellow bishops; actively listen to the concerns of members in troubled communities and law enforcement; and build strong relationships to help prevent and resolve conflicts.

"By stepping forward to embrace the suffering, through unified, concrete action animated by the love of Christ, we hope to nurture peace and build bridges of communication and mutual aid in our own communities," said a July 21 statement from Archbishop Joseph E. Kurtz of Louis-



Atlanta Archbishop Wilton D. Gregory (CNS photo/Michael Alexander, Georgia Bulletin)

ville, Kentucky, president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops.

In addition to creating the task force and appointing its members, Archbishop Kurtz also called for a national day of prayer for peace in our communities, to be held Sept. 9, the feast of St.

Peter Claver.

The day of prayer, according to a July 21 USCCB announcement about the task force's formation, will "serve as a focal point for the work of the task force."

The task force's work will conclude with the USCCB's fall general meeting in November, at which time it will report on its activities and recommendations for future work.

"I have stressed the need to look toward additional ways of nurturing an open, honest, and civil dialogue on issues of race relations, restorative justice, mental health, economic opportunity, and addressing the question of pervasive gun violence," Archbishop Kurtz said.

"The day of prayer and special task force will help us advance in that direction."

Diocesan Tribunal Office relocates, *Petition process streamlined*

By Mary Lou Seeworster
Correspondent

IT TOOK ONLY SIX MONTHS FOR MEMBERS OF THE TRIBUNAL OF THE DIOCESE OF FORTH WORTH TO SEE THE BENEFIT OF CHANGES THAT POPE FRANCIS MADE TO THE PROCESS FOR DECLARING A MARRIAGE INVALID.

Between January and June of this year, the tribunal completed 225 cases with affirmative decisions — nearly the same number of cases the tribunal staff took an entire year to process in 2015.

“We have doubled our capacity of formal cases in 2016,” said Father Anh Tran, Judicial Vicar for the diocese.

He added that once the tribunal has caught up with older cases, the timeline for a judgment will decrease from three years to one year or less.

“My projection is that we’ll be caught up by June 2017, or a little later,” he said. “We just finished 2014 [cases] and we’re starting 2015.”

Mitis Iudex Dominus Iesus (The Lord Jesus, the Gentle Judge) is the papal document containing revisions to Canon Law that make the process of petitioning a tribunal faster, simpler, and more pastoral.

In addition to implementing changes that expedite the petition process, the tribunal also changed its address to a location that would provide more privacy for clients. The tribunal offices are now located on the campus of Nolan Catholic High School, with a separate address, 4503 Bridge Street, Fort Worth.

Fr. Tran noted that one of the most helpful changes is removal of the required automatic appeal to the Metropolitan Court in San Antonio for confirmation of the local tribunal’s decision.



Tribunal Staff from left to right: Patricia Aragon, Anna Marie Chamblee, JCL, Fr. Anh Tran, JCL, Linda McKinney, JoAnn Gordon, and Carlos Sacasa, JCL, are pictured in the new Tribunal office. (Photo NTC Staff)

“Now, the diocesan tribunal’s decision is final. There is no longer a need of confirmation of the second instance [appellate court],” he said. “But a person can always appeal if he or she wants to challenge the decision of the first instance court.”

Though this process is often called an annulment, Fr. Tran is quick to clarify that nothing is made ‘null.’

“There is no such thing as an annulment,” he said. “It is a process for declaration of invalidity of marriages. Annulment is a misnomer. We don’t annul a marriage... we just do the investigation and declare it invalid, if it proves to be.” That means a Church tribunal declares that a marriage thought to be valid according to Church law was actually invalid because it fell short of one or more of the essential elements required for a binding union.

The revised law also removed the fee for petitioning the tribunal. However, Fr. Tran said “we haven’t charged a fee for over 20 years. It costs zero dollars in the Diocese of Fort Worth.”

He added that the only time there might be a fee is if there is

a need for an evaluation from an expert, such as a psychologist or psychiatrist.

The revised law also allows for “a single clergy judge with two lay assessors,” Fr. Tran noted. Previously, two of the three judges were required to be clergy.

He explained that everyone serving on the tribunal must be a canon lawyer or given a mandate by Rome. Currently the diocese has five clergy and one lay canonist, who “rotate through the cases as they come up, to allow for cases to be fair and just.”

In addition to Pope Francis’ reformations to Canon Law, the tribunal has initiated other improvements in the diocese.

For example, there is now a judge and a Defender of the Bond who are bilingual, eliminating the need and time for translations. Fr. Tran explained that the Defender of the Bond is the canonist who defends the bond of the sacrament of marriage until proven otherwise.

There are also Tribunal Advocates. These are local Catholics whose main job is to help people through the annulment process and

answer their questions. They are usually based at parishes.

The tribunal offered three different 15-hour training sessions this year to prepare Tribunal Advocates to help Catholics begin the process of declaring a marriage invalid.

“Petitioners initiate the process with the parish and don’t come straight to the tribunal. So we’ve been doing more training for Tribunal Advocates throughout the diocese so they can help people at the initial moment. They have to be really prepared to help and they have to have an open heart and be non-judgmental,” Fr. Tran said.

He added, “the reason a person wants to declare a previous marriage invalid is because they love the Lord. They want to return to the sacraments, but also their faith has grown. They want to be a good example to their children and they want to be part of the Church... so the Tribunal Advocate needs to listen pastorally first and then help them get their documents in.”

Fr. Tran noted that the changes to Canon Law went into effect on the opening day of the Year of Mercy, Dec. 8, 2015.

“This is the Year of Mercy,” Fr. Tran said, advising couples needing a declaration to “come, start the process of declaration [of invalid marriage]. The Church has open arms for you. It requires something from you because you may have to recall some sad experiences, but it will free you from holding onto that burden.”

For additional photos of the new Diocesan Tribunal Office, visit the NORTH TEXAS CATHOLIC website at www.northtexasatholic.org and click on the "Photo Gallery" tab.

Deacon Rigoberto Leyva joins Permanent Diaconate Program, *Helps candidates find their gifts to ministry*

By Michele Baker
Correspondent



Deacon Rigoberto Leyva

DEACON RIGOBERTO LEYVA HAS JOINED THE STAFF OF THE DIOCESE OF FORT WORTH AS CO-ORDINATOR OF PASTORAL FIELD FORMATION FOR THE PERMANENT DIACONATE PROGRAM.

“My job is to assign the deacon candidates to places for their pastoral training,” he explained. “Whether it be hospitals, Catholic Charities, [nursing homes], or hospice work.”

More than mere record keeping and scheduling, Dcn. Leyva sees his new position as key to revealing the strengths that each man will bring to his ministry.

“The beautiful thing about the deacons is that we all have different gifts,” he said. “Some are intellectual; some are all heart. It is a beautiful gift of the Holy Spirit.”

With a class of men poised to begin the recently reinstated diaconate formation program in the diocese, Dcn. Leyva will have more than enough to keep him busy. Hard work, however, is nothing new to him.

Born and raised in Chihuahua, Mexico, Dcn. Leyva came

to the United States in 1991 with little more than the clothes on his back. He worked a string of jobs to support himself, and in 1992 met his wife, Maria, who started him on the spiritual journey that would change his life.

Dcn. Leyva admits that up to that point in his life, he’d been completely unchurched. Meeting Maria changed all that. By the time the couple married at Our Lady of Lourdes in Mineral Wells in 1993, Leyva had been brought into the Church, joined a charismatic prayer group, and was beginning to feel the need to deepen his faith.

“I was with the prayer group for a year and I got to the point where I started to feel a more intense sense of searching,” he said.

His search led him to the Light of Christ Institute (now the St. John Paul II Institute), a spiritual formation program for lay ministers offered by the Diocese of Fort Worth. Upon completing the three year course of study, Dcn. Leyva was approached about participating in formation classes for the permanent diaconate, something he’d never even dreamed of before.

Dcn. Leyva, who spoke English as a second language and didn’t have a high school diploma at the time, faced unique challenges going through deacon formation, which he started in 2004. He persevered through prayer and the encouragement of many people, most notably, Father Jeff

Poirot, pastor of Holy Family Church in Fort Worth.

“Father Jeff supported me through the deacon formation [program] and I am especially grateful to him,” Dcn. Leyva said. “And I’m also grateful to Father Balaji Boyalla, the pastor at Our Lady of Lourdes [in Mineral Wells].”

Even now, Dcn. Leyva marvels at the fact that he was able to make it through despite the gaps in his formal education. Since his ordination on Sept. 26, 2009, he’s made up for lost time

by earning his GED, getting some college credits under his belt, and making plans to earn a degree in Pastoral Theology. And this is all while continuing to serve at Our Lady of Lourdes, where he works with couples, visits the sick, baptizes, and officiates at marriages.

“To answer a divine call is not always easy,” Dcn. Leyva said. “You have to be a good listener and always discerning. But this is what the Lord does for the people who listen to Him.”

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Joel Rodriguez, newly appointed director of Hispanic Ministry has a goal in mind:

Ignite the fire of faith in people

By Michele Baker
Correspondent



Joel Rodriguez

JOEL RODRIGUEZ, NEWLY APPOINTED DIRECTOR OF HISPANIC MINISTRY FOR THE DIOCESE OF FORT WORTH, IS ALL ABOUT FIRE.

“Our Catholic faith is a fire fueled by charity, by compassion, by love of God and neighbor” he said. “In these times it’s important to have a living faith that goes beyond a set of rules.”

For Rodriguez, who became Catholic in 2006, the first sparks of faith started when he was a child growing up in a devout Seventh Day Adventist home.

“I was in church almost every day growing up,” he remembered. “My mother taught me love for Jesus and love for the Bible.”

Born in Brooklyn, Rodriguez moved to Puerto Rico at 12 when his family relocated there to serve as missionaries. He grew up seeing his parents welcoming strangers into their home, feeding the hungry, and visiting the sick.

“From a very early age I was taught to share my faith,” he said. “And I had that example from my parents.”

However, as often happens, Rodriguez fell away from the church in which he was raised when he went

to college. And although he’d married a Catholic who practiced her faith, he and his wife, Zory, never once argued about their different faith traditions. Then, in 2003, his youngest son came into his office with a coloring page from his first Communion preparation. The illustration depicted the Blessed Sacrament in a monstrance and a lesson on the real presence based on the Bread of Life discourse in Chapter 6 of John’s Gospel.

“I became very uncomfortable. I thought, I had to ‘save’ my family from Catholicism,” Rodriguez said. He consulted with an uncle who was a Seventh Day Adventist theologian and started studying with the intention of refuting Catholic teaching and practices.

“I’d learned logic and critical thinking,” Rodriguez said. “So I was taught to read and confirm.”

Using this procedure led Rodriguez to a realization that he’d learned a great deal of misinformation about Catholicism. His search for the truth eventually led him to the book, *Rome Sweet Home*, written by famous convert and apologist Scott Hahn, with whom Rodriguez began to correspond by e-mail. Rodriguez eventually bought a copy of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (which he hid from his wife and studied secretly) and began attending Sunday Mass with his family.

“When I began studying the *Catechism*, the Bible started to make sense to me in a way it never did before,” Rodriguez said. “I started seeing connections between the Old and New Testaments.”

In the spring of 2005, as Pope John Paul II lived out his final days,

the passion Rodriguez had discovered for his newfound faith began burning brightly. He could no longer hide it; he wanted to become Catholic. He approached Father George Foley, pastor of St. Jude Parish in Mansfield where the Rodriguez family attended Mass.

“I had to wait to begin RCIA,” he remembers. “So I took Bible class with my mentor, Bill Bellman, [parish director of RCIA].”

And on April 16, 2006, Rodriguez was brought into the Church. That didn’t mean, however, that he left RCIA. He spent another five years with the Spanish-language

program at the parish and became a catechist. Five years later Rodriguez is now a candidate in the Permanent Diaconate Program for the diocese as he begins a new chapter as Director of Hispanic Ministry.

“Being Catholic is organic; it is alive,” Rodriguez said. “It is a living faith flowing from the Living God.”

When asked what his plans are for the Office of Hispanic Ministry, Rodriguez can barely hide the light dancing behind his eyes.

“I want to get people uncomfortable so they can begin searching,” he said. “I want to see people on fire with their faith.”

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*Gifts to Annual Diocesan Appeal
Impact Lives, Give Hope*

Seminarian Brett Metzler in the midst of demolition during the St. Mary's School remodel in Gainesville. (Photo courtesy Will Hayes)



HOW IS THE LOVE OF CHRIST MADE VISIBLE? IT IS SEEN IN A RELIGIOUS WOMAN SITTING WITH A GRIEVING FAMILY OR A SEMINARIAN PLANNING A VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL.

Although not as obvious, the love of Christ can be expressed in audiovisual equipment or religious education materials. In these and many more ways, the Annual Diocesan Appeal helps extend the love of Christ throughout the diocese.

For the 2017 appeal, which begins in September, the diocese has determined a need of \$3,150,000 to assist ministries in four categories:

GRATITUDE AND SUPPORT FOR THE CLERGY — *to support the healthy and holy formation and education of men for the priesthood and permanent diaconate.*

Each year, the Appeal allocates a significant portion of its funds for the future of the diocese: our seminarians. Priestly formation and education can take up to nine years, but seminarians' service to the diocese begins much earlier in their training.

For example, seminarians Will Hayes and Brett Metzler spent their summer at St. Mary Parish in Gainesville, where they

expanded their pastoral experience by visiting the sick, teaching RCIA and confirmation classes, and preparing for a future Vacation Bible School.

Organizing the second annual *Quo Vadis?* retreat, a three-day event for high school boys to explore the priesthood and seminary life, was a significant responsibility for Hayes and Metzler. At first they planned to cap attendance at 20, but as more registrations arrived, they expanded the retreat to accommodate 25, then 30. Ultimately 32 young men took part in the discussions, prayers, and activities that introduced them to the priestly vocation.

Hayes recalled, "One of the best parts of our summer was spending time with the people of the Fort Worth Diocese. In seminary, we get absorbed in our studies and reading, so it's beneficial to get into the parish and 'smell like the sheep,' as Pope Francis says."

HOPE AND HEALING FOR THE POOR — *to aid the disadvantaged, the disabled, and those who are most in need of God's healing grace.*

Plans for the 2017 Appeal include grants to Catholic Charities, prison ministry, and needy parishes and schools. Another beneficiary will be deaf ministry,



Sisters Rafaela Landeros, MCSH, (far left) and Sister Leonor Santillan, MCSH, (far right) spend time with the posada crew at St. Paul Parish, in Electra. (Photo courtesy Sr. Soledad Quintero)

which serves about 180 families.

A network of ten interpreters make Masses, Rosaries, funerals, baptisms, and other church events accessible to deaf individuals. According to Deaf Ministry Coordinator Connie Martin, they try to allow the individual to be as involved in the parish as possible. The deaf community also has a monthly Mass both in sign and voice, an adult Bible study, and two annual retreats.

“The Knights of Columbus have a long history of supporting our ministry. Extra resources from the Annual Diocesan Appeal would allow us to bring in an outside speaker at a retreat, or send someone from our diocese to a Catholic conference for the deaf. And of course, it would help us find and retain more interpreters,” Martin said.

“Sometimes an interpreter makes a hospital visit, and the patient’s eyes light up when they realize that the person who brings them the Eucharist can sign. The deaf are so appreciative of anything we do to help them. It’s a beautiful ministry,” she continued.

Rural and needy parishes also benefit from the appeal. Parishes in the northwest area of the diocese are able to bring in Missionary Catechists of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary, also known as “*Violetas*.”

Father Jack McKone, pastor of Sacred Heart in Wichita Falls and Dean of the Northwest Deanery, explained that Sister Soledad Quintero, SSMN, director of Hispanic Ministry at Sacred Heart, determines needs in the rural parishes. She coordinates the *Violetas* as they travel from Mexico and conduct Bible study, sacramental preparation, and catechist training for a few weeks.

The sisters also provide seasonal retreats and celebrations for Our Lady of Guadalupe and other cultural traditions.

“These sisters are hard-working and loving, wonderful women. They will meet anyone, anywhere to help reach the corners of the diocese,” Fr. McKone said. “The priests can’t get to everything, and the *Violetas* bring comfort to the people. We are blessed to have them.”

LOVE AND STRENGTHENING FOR FAMILIES —
to bind us closer to Christ through our love and respect for one another in families committed to proclaiming the Gospel.

The Marriage and Family Life Office helps foster a sound family structure beginning with engaged couples and continuing with marriage enrichment activities and family conferences. The appeal also supports the work of the diocesan Tribunal Office.

FAITH AND FORMATION FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS —

to empower our children to grow in their Catholic faith in preparation for a life of Christian leadership and service.

Six Catholic schools in the diocese will receive assistance in the form of operating grants and tuition assistance, making Catholic education possible for many families.

Father Kyle Walterscheid, pastor of St. John Paul II University Parish in Denton, will receive help from FOCUS, a Catholic collegiate outreach whose mission is to share the hope and joy of the Gospel with university students.

In many urban and rural parishes, catechist training and religious education materials are provided with assistance from the Annual Diocesan Appeal.

“Some of our small, rural parishes have a very limited budget or trained volunteers. Help from outside is needed and appreciated,” said Fr. McKone.

Pat Miller, associate director of the Advancement Foundation, summarized, “The essence of the Annual Diocesan Appeal is a response to God’s call to embrace what He has given to us and share it lovingly with others. It’s people giving to people.”

To learn more about the Annual Diocesan Appeal, or to donate, please visit www.advancementfoundation.org/ada-about

ANNUAL
Diocesan Appeal
2016




Summary Report

The Annual Diocesan Appeal calls us to witness to God's grace in our lives by together sharing the Gospel message of *faith, hope* and *charity* with those most in need.

TOTAL GOAL
\$3,150,000

TOTAL COMMITTED
\$3,068,443 97.41% OF GOAL

TOTAL PAID
\$2,975,747 94.47% OF GOAL

 26 PARISHES OVER GOAL	 13 PARISHES OVER 125% OF GOAL	 \$285 AVERAGE GIFT	 102 GIFTS ABOVE \$2,500
 10,764 GIFTS RECEIVED	 1,227 NEW DONORS	For a report of giving by parish, visit www.advancementfoundation.org/ada-about	

HOW YOUR GIFTS WERE USED (Unaudited Figures as of 6/30/16)



7%
PERMANENT
DIACONATE



8%
YOUTH
MINISTRY



10%
CATHOLIC CHARITIES
FORT WORTH



11%
CAMPUS
MINISTRY



20%
SEMINARIANS



44%
PARISH & SCHOOL
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North Texas Giving Day provides way to support seminarians, diocesan ministries

By Lance Murray
Correspondent

WITH ONE CLICK OF THEIR MOUSE OR A TAP ON THEIR MOBILE DEVICE, CATHOLICS IN NORTH TEXAS WILL HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY FROM 6 A.M. TO MIDNIGHT ON SEPT. 22 TO HELP FINANCIALLY SUPPORT SEMINARIANS AND OTHER PROGRAMS AND MINISTRIES IN THE DIOCESE OF FORT WORTH.

That's when North Texas Giving Day, an online event created by the Dallas-based Communities Foundation of Texas in 2009, will help raise money for nonprofits nationwide.

Patricia Miller, associate director of the Advancement Foundation, said the Fort Worth Diocese

began participating in North Texas Giving Day in 2013, and that it has been a successful way to raise funds.

The mission of the Advancement Foundation is to educate, and motivate stewardship, attract resources in a fiscally responsible and transparent way, and to manage and distribute "solicited gifts for the immediate and long-term needs of the faith community of the diocese."

Miller said here's how the North Texas Giving Day works:

"Each participating organization has a profile page, which must be updated and approved by Communities Foundation of Texas annually," she said. "Donors can go to www.NorthTexasGivingDay.org

and search for the Diocese of Fort Worth or Catholic Diocese of Fort Worth to make their contribution on North Texas Giving Day."

Miller said that "unless a donor restricts their gift to a particular ministry or program of the diocese, all funds contributed [will] benefit seminarians."

Over the past three years, \$43,161 raised during the Giving Day has benefitted seminarian education and formation, Miller said.

The success the diocese has experienced is an example of the event's broader effects.

According to the North Texas Giving Day website, the endeavor has raised more \$119 million for



participating nonprofits in those seven years. In 2015, \$33 million was raised via 118,000 gifts to 2,020 nonprofits.

In the past three years of the diocese participating in North Texas Giving Day, a total of 219 donors have contributed \$69,550. The number of donors during that period has increased 158 percent — from 38 to 98 donors — and the amount of money donated yearly has increased 92 percent from \$19,255 to \$36,910.





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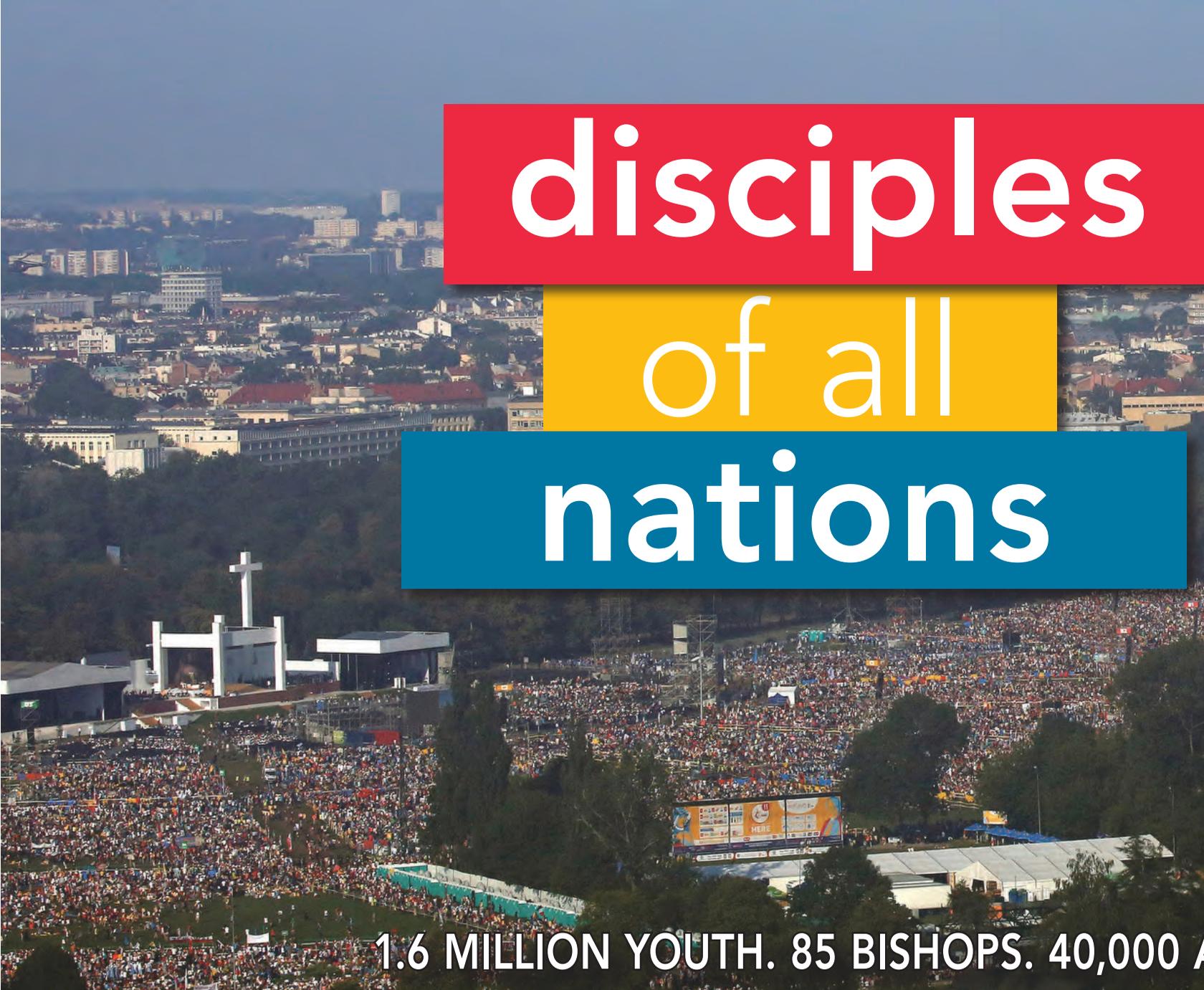
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1.6 MILLION YOUTH. 85 BISHOPS. 40,000 A

On a pilgrimage to WYD, hundreds of youth and young adults from the Diocese of Fort Worth experienced the joy and diversity of the Catholic Church

FOR CHRIS ACEVEDO, VISITING HOLY SITES IN ROME, THEN TRAVELING TO KRAKOW, POLAND FOR WORLD YOUTH DAY 2016 WAS THE SPIRITUAL JOURNEY OF A LIFETIME.

“Going to all the religious places I’ve only seen in pictures really amazed me,” said the 15-year-old Trinity High School sophomore.

Being in the presence of Pope Francis, and worshipping with 1.5 million young people from nearly every continent and nation, strengthened the teen’s prayer life.

“Seeing all these people from around the world who are Catholic like me was truly an incredible experience,” Acevedo added. “It definitely helped me grow in my faith.”

The St. Michael parishioner was one of 208 pilgrims from the Diocese of Fort Worth who attended World Youth Day — an international festival that allows young people to encounter Jesus Christ in the Gospel while surrounded by the universal Church. Initiated by Pope John Paul II in 1985, the event takes place every three years and gives young Catholics the opportunity to celebrate their faith in the company of the Holy Father.

Ensuring a close link between World Youth Day and the Jubilee Year of Mercy, Pope Francis chose the words of Jesus, “Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive

Pilgrims attend the Way of the Cross at Blonia Park during World Youth Day in Krakow, Poland July 29. (CNS photo/David W. Cerny, Reuters)

100 AMERICAN PILGRIMS. 6 DAYS. 1 FAITH.

by Joan Kurkowski-Gillen

mercy,” as the theme for the 2016 gathering.

Prior to arriving in Poland, the Fort Worth contingent — representing 33 parishes — spent several days in Rome then journeyed to Assisi, Prague, Auschwitz, and the birthplace of St. John Paul II in Wadowice, Poland.

Before their journey began, Jason Spoolstra, diocesan director of youth ministry, prepared participants to expect the unexpected.

“I told them, it wasn’t a vacation or a trip. It’s a pilgrimage,” he stressed. “Part of a pilgrimage is sacrificing and offering things

up along with daily prayer and visiting the holy sites.”

And, although the World Youth Day experience was successful and inspiring, it did include moments of disappointment and struggle. The pilgrims walked long distances to the different venues and shrines in weather that was warmer than anticipated. Staying hydrated and eating meals off schedule was sometimes an issue.

“What made me realize we had such a special group was in the midst of these trials, God still blessed us with so much grace and mercy,” Spoolstra explained. “We felt his will



CONTINUED ON PAGE 20

THE PLACES



FROM PAGE 19

and the youth had such a joyful spirit, even when we were tired, hungry, or thirsty.”

Several emotional moments highlighted the July 19-August 1 pilgrimage for many participants. While visiting Rome, the Fort Worth pilgrims celebrated Mass with Bishop Michael Olson at the Altar of the Chair of St. Peter in St. Peter’s Basilica. The bronze-gilded sculpture, above the famous altar, houses the remains of what many believe is the chair St. Peter used when he preached in Rome.

The papal basilica was relatively empty when the diocesan group arrived for the early morning Mass.

“Later in the day, there were tons of people around, so I really appreciated the intimacy of that Mass,” said Alyssa Gapinski, a parishioner at St. Frances Cabrini in Granbury. “It’s a wonderful memory.”

The 23-year-old college graduate learned about World Youth Day in Krakow during a Bible study class. An avid traveler, she decided to go on the trip and encouraged a couple of friends to go with her.

“Seeing a little bit of my Polish heritage along with other Catholics was something I was really excited about,” Gapinski said.

But the enormity of the event surprised and impressed the Michigan native. Watching Pope Francis arrive in Blonia Park for the welcoming ceremony was a sight she’ll never forget.

“We could see his little car driving around and he got pretty close to us,” she added. “I knew there would be a million people there but never in my life have I been in the same area with that many people.”

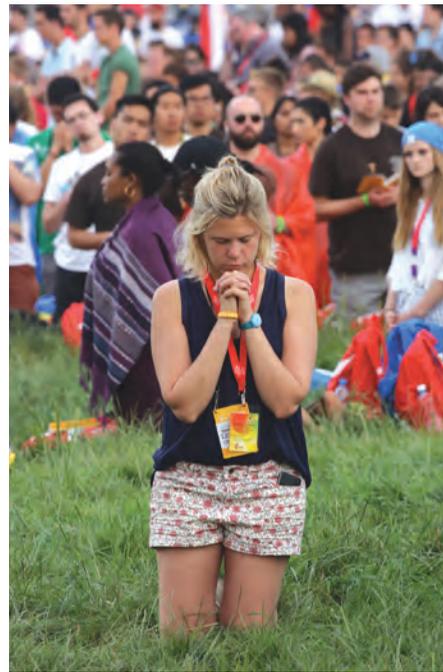
Knowing everyone in the throng of humanity shared the same faith was an

For more on World Youth Day, including blog posts from the Fort Worth pilgrims please visit northtexascatholic.org/wyd

overwhelming reality.

“For them to be Catholic too was the most moving thing I experienced on the trip.”

During their stay in Poland, the diocesan group also visited and celebrated Mass at the Shrine of Divine Mercy. The Krakow church is the resting place of St. Faustina Kowalska, a Polish nun and mystic whose apparitions of Jesus Christ inspired devotion to the Novena of Divine Mercy.



A young woman prays during the opening Mass for World Youth Day July 26 at Blonia Park in Krakow, Poland. (CNS photo/Bob Roller)

Delayed by long lines to tour the shrine and image of Divine Mercy, the group was late in leaving for a Matt Maher concert and Holy Hour at Krakow’s Tauron Arena. As they readied for another long walk to the venue, a priest came out of the shrine carrying a large monstrance signaling the start of an outdoor liturgy.

Spoolstra said his first reaction was to get the group moving toward the arena. God had other plans.

“Everyone was already walking toward the monstrance and it was as if Christ

was saying, ‘be with me here right now’ so we stayed,” the organizer said.

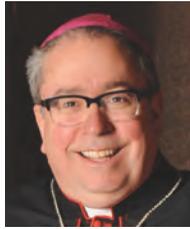
The Fort Worth pilgrims ended up praying the Divine Mercy chaplet at the Divine Mercy Shrine at the Divine Mercy hour.

“It was an opportunity that wasn’t planned. It just happened and turned out to be incredible,” Spoolstra enthused.

The young people never attended the crowded concert at the arena. By the time they arrived, the doors were closed for safety reasons.

“It was a disappointment but, if we had

VISITING POPE
JOHN PAUL II'S
HOMETOWN



“I
celebrated
Mass
for our
pilgrims at
the church

where JP II was baptized,
confirmed, and received
Holy Communion in his
hometown of Wadowice. I
prayed in the small flat where
his father and he lived. It has
been very special for me.
Very moving and meaningful.
I now have my example as a
bishop.”

left when we were supposed to, the group would not have had the experience at the Divine Mercy chapel,” he conceded. “We felt it was providential that God had us there. It was a key moment.”

For many teenage pilgrims, getting to know two pontiffs better was another advantage of World Youth Day. Chris Acevedo saw Pope Francis pass by in a motorcade and heard his message of love and mercy with other young people. He also has a new appreciation for St. John Paul II after touring an artifact-filled museum and seeing the small apartment where the Polish-born pope grew up.

“I was four when he died so I have no



World Youth Day pilgrims hold candles during Eucharistic Adoration with Pope Francis at the July 30 prayer vigil at the Field of Mercy in Krakow, Poland. (CNS photo/Jaclyn Lippelmann, Catholic Standard)



The Fort Worth Diocese pilgrims spent two-weeks discovering the richness of the Church and deepening their faith. This sometimes included braving the elements, as seen in this photo taken at Blonia Park for the papal welcome July 28. (Photo courtesy Chris West)

memory of him,” the teenager admitted. “The museum was so full of information; I learned a lot of things I didn’t know before.”

Alyssa Gapinski is already looking forward to the next World Youth Day set for Panama — another country that figures largely in her family tree. Her maternal grandmother was born there.

“I honestly urge younger kids to go,” she said emphatically.

“We know there are millions of Catholics, but to see it, and realize there are young people halfway across the world who share the same beliefs you do, is a great way to connect with others and learn about the world around you.”

A compassionate welcome, a persevering accompaniment

National speaker explains Church response to same-sex attraction

By Susan Moses
Correspondent

EVENT COORDINATORS SCRAMBLED TO ADD EXTRA ROWS OF CHAIRS JUST BEFORE FATHER PHILIP BOCHANSKI BEGAN HIS PRESENTATION, “CHASTITY AND CLARITY, AN AUTHENTICALLY CATHOLIC RESPONSE TO HOMOSEXUALITY.”

Although 70 had made reservations, more than 150 showed up to hear and ask questions of the associate director of Courage who spoke at St. Joseph Church in Richardson August 11.

Courage, an approved international apostolate of the Church, helps Catholics with same-sex attraction live chaste lives. Founded in 1980, the organization now has chapters in more than 100 dioceses in 14 countries.

The original Courage members in New York wrote five goals for the organization, which serve as the guidelines for each Courage chapter. The first priority is to live chaste lives in accordance with the Church’s teachings on homosexuality. Other objectives reinforce that goal by committing to prayer, dedication, fellowship, and support.

A priest chaplain guides each chapter. Fr. Bochanski served as the chaplain to the Philadelphia chapter for five years before becoming the associate director of Courage International in January 2015.

Since the Supreme Court decided in June 2015 that



Father Philip Bochanski, associate director of Courage International, speaks at St. Joseph Church in Richardson on August 11. (Photo by Susan Moses / NTC)

same-sex couples have the legal right to marry, interest in Courage has spiked, according to Fr. Bochanski. He is aware of at least 15 Courage chapters initiated after the ruling.

Fr. Bochanski began his two-hour presentation by explaining what the Church actually teaches on homosexuality and why. Drawing on the Old and New Testaments, the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, and recent popes, he emphasized that each person is worthy of dignity and respect because every individual is made in the image and likeness of God.

He reviewed Jesus’ actions when He encountered two disciples on the walk to Emmaus. In Luke 24, Jesus welcomes each person where they are; He listens

compassionately to that person’s story; He teaches them, and He accompanies them in friendship as they complete their journey, Fr. Bochanski explained. The Catholic community is called to respond likewise to each person, he said.

Fr. Bochanski stated the Gospel requires each of us to live a chaste life, which means fidelity to a spouse in marriage, or abstinence for those who are not married. Inclinations are not sinful but the expression of inclinations has a moral component and can lead to sin, he said.

Christians must ask themselves, “Which desires should I follow, and which should I leave aside? Is this desire getting me closer to God’s plan?” He encouraged everyone to trust in the

goodness of God’s plan, and that if we follow God’s plan, we will be happy in this life and the next.

Courage provides a network of support and friendship, which society often undervalues, Fr. Bochanski said. Two people, walking side-by-side and absorbed in a common interest (Christ), can experience an authentic fraternal love and accompany each other on the road to holiness.

The Dallas-Fort Worth chapter of Courage has met since 1999. EnCourage, a spiritual support group for family members and friends of individuals experiencing same-sex attraction, also meets regularly.

To learn more or contact the local chapter of Courage, go to www.couragedfw.com.

Nolan graduate Katie Meili swims to **OLYMPIC BRONZE, GOLD**

By Joan Kurkowski-Gillen
Correspondent

MATTHEW COFFER, A 2007 NOLAN CATHOLIC GRADUATE, SAID IT BEST IN A COMMENT POSTED TO THE SCHOOL'S ALUMNI PAGE: "IT WAS A GREAT NIGHT TO BE A VIKING!"

He was referring to the pride and excitement generated by a stellar Olympic performance turned in by fellow Nolan alumna Katie Meili in the women's 100-meter breaststroke. The Colleyville native, who graduated from Nolan Catholic in 2009, posted a time of 1:05.69 to win a third place finish and Olympic bronze medal in the swimming event. Another American, Lilly King, outdistanced a Russian competitor to win the gold.

Meili is the first Olympic athlete in the school's 55-year history.

Meili also received a gold medal when the U.S. women won the 4x100 medley relay. The North Texan swam an impressive 1:04.93 in a preliminary leg of the race to give the U.S. first seed in the final competition.

"I'm just so happy," a beaming Meili told reporters moments after winning her bronze.

"It's a lot of hard work, but I've had so much support along the way," Meili said. "This medal belongs to so many more people than just me, and I'm really proud of them."

A good portion of that support came from the 25-year-old's former swim teammates at Nolan Catholic who gathered for a watch party in the school's auditorium August 8. They were joined by current students, faculty members, and friends of the Meili family who watched the athlete's swimming prowess blossom first at Columbia University, where she clinched a 2013 Division I NCAA bronze medal in the 100-meter breaststroke, and later at the invitation-only Swim MAC elite team in Charlotte, N.C.

But winning a medal at the Olympics was a long shot for Meili, according to sports analysts. That's not how the Nolan community felt.

"Everybody at the watch party knew it was going to happen," says Nolan Catholic President Erin Vader. "If there is power in prayer and posi-



U.S. swimmer Katie Meili poses with her bronze medal after swimming the 100-meter breaststroke final during the Olympics in Rio de Janeiro Aug. 8. (CNS photo/David Gray, Reuters)

tive thinking, the people here got her through it."

During the race, the mood in the room was electric and no one sat down.

"The sound was deafening. People were laughing and crying," Vader says describing the moment when TV graphics announced her bronze medal finish. "It was thrilling."

Stephen Montes, a Nolan classmate and friend of Meili, remembers her as "super supportive" of teammates when she swam the breaststroke and 200-meter individual medley in high school.

"Her practices were always intense," he recalls. "She was a great teammate — humble and down to earth. Regardless of how tonight turned out, we would be proud of Katie."

Nolan teammates Becky Russell '10 and Katie Reis '09 have kept up with Meili's competitive swimming through social media forums.

"She would give regular updates when she was swimming at Columbia and MAC Elite," Russell says. "I've watched her progress to international meets and get faster and faster. It's wonderful that she captured the swimming world's attention."

The Nolan alumna applauds Meili's decision to keep swimming after graduating from Columbia.

"She was never an Olympic shoo-in but at the same time, it was a very real dream."

A former swimmer, Reis says she's living vicariously through Meili.

"Her parents (Bill and Karen Meili) are great people and have supported Katie through all these years," she adds. "I'm glad they've seen her succeed."

Current and former Nolan students wore blue t-shirts inscribed with the words, "All Viking for Meili" as they watched the 2016 Olympic compete.

"Katie winning this medal makes our other athletes feel like the Olympics are possible and that's amazing," Vader says. "It gives them a new goal."

The encouragement and spirit displayed for Meili during her qualifying races and final is representative of the school's continuing support for its graduates. One of the institution's unofficial slogans is "Once a Viking, always a Viking!"

"We've been saying that a lot the last couple of nights. As one of our alumni on social media said (in support of Katie), #bleed blue," the president said, referencing Nolan's blue and white Viking colors. "And, right under that — #bleed red, white, and blue!"

Diocese to bring in national Catholic speakers to energize faithful, offer formation

By Susan Moses
Correspondent

TWO NATIONAL SPEAKERS WILL VISIT FORT WORTH DURING SEPARATE EVENTS IN SEPTEMBER WITH A COMMON PURPOSE: TO PROMOTE THE NEW EVANGELIZATION IN OUR DIOCESE.

In 2010, Pope Benedict XVI called for a New Evangelization, inviting Catholics to renew their relationship with Jesus and his Church by deepening their faith, believing in the Gospel, and going forth to make disciples. Pope Benedict XVI expressed the need to evangelize both the unchurched and those who were baptized but have experienced a crisis of faith.

The diocese is coordinating two events to advance the New Evangelization: Dr. Scott Hahn, who will offer Biblical and Church teachings, and Deacon Steve Mitchell, who will introduce Alpha, a program to reach seekers outside of the Church.

“Both Dr. Hahn and the Alpha training will offer substantive formation for Church leaders and members,” explained Marlon De La Torre, diocesan director of Evangelization and Catechesis. “Our goal is to strengthen, form, and train the faithful to be catechetical leaders, then we will see fruits from this formation for years down the road.”

DR. SCOTT HAHN: EXPLORING THE BIBLE FROM THE HEART OF THE CHURCH

With a passion for the Bible, Dr. Scott Hahn has traveled the world speaking on a wide variety of Scriptural and Catholic topics. A Presbyterian minister who converted to Catholicism, Dr. Hahn teaches at the Franciscan University of Steubenville and founded the St. Paul Center for Biblical Theology. Through his many books and talks, Dr. Hahn has deepened and energized the faith of Catholics and helped guide thousands of others to the Church.

His first talk is Friday, September 9 in St. Patrick’s Pastoral Center at 9 a.m. His presentation, “Creed, Covenant, and Conversion: Catechesis for the New Evangelization,” looks at the Great Commission to spread the Good News of Jesus from a Catholic, Biblical, and historical



(CNS photo / Paul Haring)



This September, the Diocese of Fort Worth is hosting two presentations by Alpha’s Deacon Scott Mitchell and three talks by Dr. Scott Hahn (right).

perspective.

On Saturday, September 10, Dr. Hahn will give two talks at St. Patrick Cathedral following the 8 a.m. Mass, which will be celebrated by Bishop Michael Olson.

In “The Father of Mercies,” Dr. Hahn will explain that mercy goes beyond justice, but not against it. In this Year of Mercy, he emphasizes that God’s fatherhood is the single most revolutionary concept of the faith and the everlasting source of mercy.

His second talk on Saturday morning will be “Evangelizing Catholics: The Joy of the Gospel and the New Evangelization.” He will discuss the foundations of the New Evangelization and why it is a great priority of the Church. This talk speaks of the joy of ongoing conversion and explores how we can share our faith with family members, friends, and co-workers.

All are welcome to Dr. Hahn’s talks, which are free and expected to fill to capacity. Online registration is requested at fwdioc.org.

ALPHA: ASKING QUESTIONS, PROVIDING MEANING

Is there more to life? What is my purpose? When those outside the Church, especially millennials, reflect on the bigger questions of life, Alpha creates a friendly, informal environment for them. Participants gather for ten meetings featuring food, a short talk, and open discus-

sions that introduce people to Jesus and encourage a new, deeper life in Him.

The international program has been used by 27 million people of many Christian denominations in 169 countries since its creation in 1990. This is the first time the diocese has sponsored formal training in Alpha, but it has been used as a tool for the New Evangelization by thousands of Catholic parishes in more than 70 countries.

“Alpha is person-centered, not program-centered,” said Jason Whitehead, assistant director of Evangelization and Catechesis for the diocese. “It takes a personal, friendship-based approach and reaches beyond the parish walls to go meet people where they are. In Alpha, participants discuss fundamental life questions, which further open them to the work of the Holy Spirit.”

Deacon Steve Mitchell, the national director for Alpha in a Catholic context, will present “Alpha: Evangelization in a Catholic Context” on Wednesday, September 14.

He will introduce Alpha, share its impact at other Catholic parishes, and detail the resources available to parishes interested in offering the program. His talk is offered at the Catholic Center in Fort Worth from 2:30 p.m. – 4 p.m., or at St. Patrick Cathedral’s Pastoral Center from 7 p.m. – 8:30 p.m. The event is free, and online registration is requested at fwdioc.org.

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CATHOLIC CHARITIES

Collaboration is key at CCFW



Xergio Chacin is the director of Immigration Services for Catholic Charities Fort Worth. (NTC/Juan Guajardo)

Staff members at Catholic Charities Fort Worth (CCFW) say they feel fortunate to be part of the agency's high-energy, collaborative workplace culture. According to Director of Immigration Services Xergio Chacin, CCFW's leadership enthusiastically supports the shared projects that connect the agency's many areas of service.

"Our CEO, Heather Reynolds, stresses the importance of collaboration, because the goal of this agency is to focus very intensely upon each client, and to offer an efficient, seamless experience," said Chacin. "And so, when we ask our clients, 'What are your needs?' We often learn that they could benefit from services in other areas. We work with our other departments to offer additional opportunities for assistance to that client. We see this is a way to effectively leverage our resources."

One such form of interdepartmental partnership is the way in which CCFW's Immigration Services, the Translation and Interpretation Network (TIN), and the Transportation Department are all working together to offer twice-a-week civics classes to CCFW clients.

"These clients are members of the Burmese community, all residing at a Fort Worth apartment complex. They are refugees, in need of extra assistance in preparing to

take their examinations for American citizenship," Chacin explained.

CCFW's Transportation Department provided the use of the agency's mobile unit, which is designed to serve as a fully-equipped classroom, to drive to the apartment complex, and a representative of U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) recently visited the class to offer information about the citizenship process. TIN provided an interpreter to assist with communication, Chacin said.

Meti Dibra, director of TIN, said that he values such opportunities to offer his department's services. "We currently work with approximately 300 contractors, who cover interpretation and translation needs in 75 languages, such as Spanish, Vietnamese, Burmese, Arabic, Farsi, and French, to name just a few," he explained, noting that TIN — one of CCFW's forms of social enterprise — is the premier full-service language access provider in DFW.

TIN serves school districts, hospitals, social service agencies, and the court system; all profits generated are returned to CCFW, Dibra said.

"We definitely value every collaborative effort between departments at Catholic Charities."

For more information, visit www.catholiccharitiesfortworth.org or call (817) 534-0814.

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LIGHTER & BRIGHTER



Jamaica sprinter Usain Bolt is seen wearing a Miraculous Medal after winning gold in the 100-meter final during the Olympics in Rio de Janeiro Aug. 14. It was his third consecutive gold in the event. (CNS photo/Dylan Martinez, Reuters)



Mercy Sisters Mary Quinn, Holly Cloutier, and Elizabeth Secord pose for a photo at Mercy Farm in Benson, Vt., June 20. (CNS photo/Cori Fugere Urban, VERMONT CATHOLIC magazine)



Students from various U.S. colleges receive instructions as they prepare to advocate for the voiceless on Capitol Hill in Washington July 26 during a legislative visit sponsored by Catholic Relief Services. (CNS photo/Chaz Muth)



Carmen Alvear and other parishioners from San Felipe de Jesus Parish in Brownsville, Texas, prepare a special meal for unaccompanied children from Central America who attend Mass at their church July 10. (CNS photo/Rose Ybarra, THE VALLEY CATHOLIC)



First-grader Cam Anderson joins his classmates in praying the Our Father on the first day of school at Christ the King School in Nashville, Tenn., Aug. 10. (CNS photo/ Rick Musacchio, TENNESSEE REGISTER)



A sheep looks over a wall in the cemetery at the Basilica of St. Patrick's Old Cathedral in New York City Aug. 9. The parish uses three grazing sheep to cut the graveyard's grass this summer. (CNS photo/Gregory A. Shemitz)

Comic Retreat

by: Brian Montfort

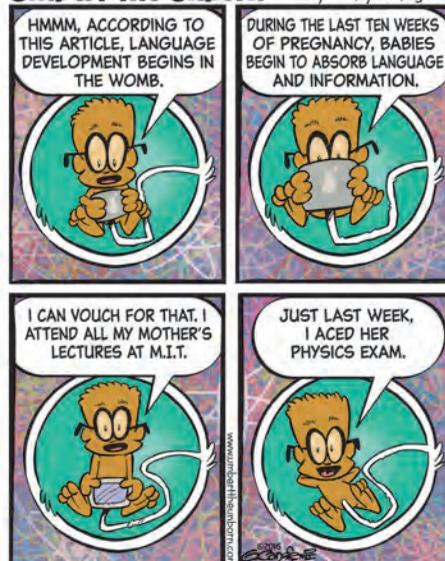


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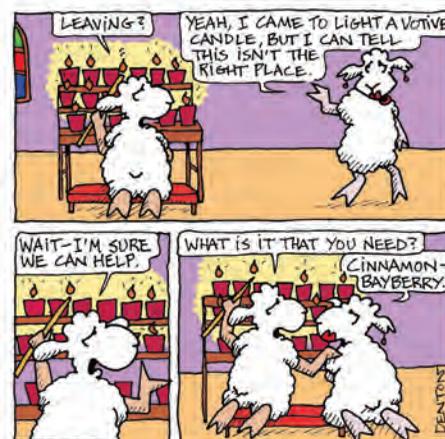
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GROWING AS A CHRISTIAN

Three-Minute Testimony

Do you have one?

BY JEFF HEDGLEN



Jeff Hedglen is director of Young Adult Ministry and Campus Ministry for the diocese. He is also the founder and primary convener of Camp Fort Worth's many editions. His column received second place honors for best spiritual life columns by Catholic Press Association of the United States and Canada in 2014.

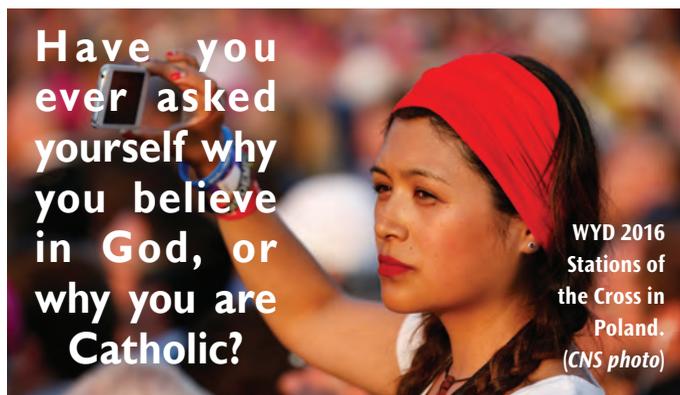
BEFORE THAT PROVIDENTIAL NIGHT IN DECEMBER OF 1981, I WAS A CRADLE CATHOLIC WHO WENT TO MASS WEEKLY BECAUSE MY FAMILY DID. I DID NOT MIND YOUTH GROUP ACTIVITIES, BUT I WAS NOT "ALL-IN."

Most significantly, I was a depressed and lonely 16-year-old who had just left the only life he had ever known when his family moved to Texas.

On that night, at a retreat, we were all asked a question: "Who are the two most important people in your life?" I thought for sure my mom would be one, certainly not my dad, because he's the reason we were in Texas. I had just left all my friends behind a few months ago, so I could not think of another person. After a few moments the leader asked us all: "Was one of those two people God?"

In that moment, my life and my understanding of God changed forever. Up to that point God had always been out there, somewhere, watching me from a distance. But, with these two simple questions I realized God could *be a person* in my life. This was new information, and in that moment my faith became personal. Nothing has ever been the same.

With this newfound connection to God, everything about my faith took on new meaning. Now I was meeting my friend everywhere I went. I encountered Him in people, creation, and especially the sacraments. I had



always believed what the Church teaches about the Eucharist, but now I *believe* it. As the years have gone on, the personal nature of this relationship with God has only grown and strengthened, and I am forever grateful for those two simple questions.

What you just read is my Three-Minute Testimony. We all have one, even if we have never thought it through. If you are reading the *North Texas Catholic* you most likely have some type of relationship with God, you are probably Catholic, and there are specific reasons for these two truths in your life.

Have you ever asked yourself why you believe in God, or why you are Catholic? Has anyone ever asked you either of these questions? Often we as Catholics are 'experience rich', but 'language poor' when it comes to our faith. We go to Mass and avail ourselves of the sacraments. We attend retreats or Bible studies. We pray before meals and even pray the

Rosary, but have we ever spoken to anyone about why we do any of these things and the impact they have on our lives?

It is pretty simple to build your own Three-Minute Testimony. You just answer these three simple questions:

1. What were you like before? Were you a crazy sinner, nominal Catholic, an atheist or maybe you always had some faith and it has grown throughout life?
2. What happened? Did you have a strong conversion experience or a slow and steady revelation of God in your life? Maybe it was a significant life event like the death of a family member, the birth of a child, or a retreat.
3. How has this changed you? Based on your encounter, or encounters with God, how are you different? What

impact has your faith in God had in your day-to-day life?

When you answer these questions with short, specific answers, you will have a three-minute story of your life of faith. Sure the story is really longer than three minutes, it is truly lifelong. But the reason for a Three-Minute Testimony is so you are ready with a short, well thought out explanation of why you believe when you are asked why you have faith.

Every single person has a story, and every story is unique. There is no right or wrong kind of story. The only way your story is less than perfect is if you do not know how to share it.

Imagine where we would be if the disciples had not shared their experience with Jesus. Christianity would not have made it out of the first century. Yet, here we are 2000 years later, and you are the next in line to share how Jesus has impacted your life.

World Youth Day *An Opportunity for Spiritual Progress*

BY MARLON DE LA TORRE

LATE LAST MONTH, POPE FRANCIS ATTENDED HIS SECOND INTERNATIONAL WORLD YOUTH DAY SINCE BECOMING PONTIFF. He and millions of pilgrims descended upon Krakow, the birth country of St. John Paul II, St. Faustina Kowalska, and St. Maximilian Kolbe to mark the celebration of Christ amongst the youth of the Church. For those pilgrims who had the opportunity of attending World Youth Day, it was truly an astonishing witness of faith amongst the Church's faithful displaying an ecclesial identity rooted in Christ.

And yet through all of the spiritual opportunities of the week (i.e. Mass, confession, keynote talks, catechesis, concerts, etc.) that identify with World Youth Day, it is important not to forget what the premise of a World Youth Day pilgrimage is all about: spiritual progress. What I mean by spiritual progress is not how much we'll be fed spiritually, instead the underlying tone of spiritual progress is what you and I are willing to offer and sacrifice for the kingdom of God. In other words, how far are we willing to sacrifice for others before ourselves?

HUMAN PROMOTION

When we think of progress from a secular point of view, it is typically associated with the personal fulfillment of one's desires or, in other words, a desire for self-promotion. If we take an honest assessment and application of what the term 'progress' truly means, our

first response would involve what the *Catechism* refers to as human promotion (1929). This involves the charitable recognition of the inherent dignity all of us possess as children of God. It serves as the genesis of human progress because it involves honoring and affirming the dignity of your fellow human being first and foremost before yourself.

PARTAKERS OF THE DIVINE NATURE

Our role in human promotion reflects our willingness to first recognize ourselves as children of God, and second not forget that those around us are also his children. Our participation in the life of Christ is an incarnational reality where the aim is to draw into his divine nature (CCC460). This communal character draws us to the same end: God.

The human person needs to live in society. [I]t is not for him an extraneous addition but a requirement of his nature. Through the exchange with others, mutual service, and dialogue with his brethren, man develops his potential; he thus responds to his vocation. . . . By means of society, each man is established as an heir and receives certain talents that enrich his identity and whose fruits he must develop.

— CCC 1879

Let's not forget that at the heart of our participation in the divine nature of Christ lies the Holy Eucharist. The Eucharist makes the

Church (CCC 1396). It unites us as one body in Christ, which explains why a pilgrimage like World Youth Day would be centered on the reception of the body and blood of Christ in the Holy Eucharist.

The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ? Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread.

— 1 COR 10:16-17

THE NATURE OF OUR SPIRITUAL PROGRESS

An important aspect of our identity as children of God is the vocation to seek God's Kingdom. This is done primarily by engaging in temporal affairs (i.e. our duties within society and family) and directing them in concert with his will. When we decide to go on a spiritual pilgrimage, we are initiating by virtue of our baptism, an opportunity to live out the universal call to holiness. What this entails is that our central mission is to be a witness of faith proclaiming the divine message of salvation to all men. Our kerygmatic activity sets the stage for spiritual progress to be made not just for ourselves; it also provides an opportunity to plant the seed of faith for those traveling with us. Thus our activity is essentially an ecclesial work in unison with Christ and his Church.



Marlon De La Torre is the director of Catechesis for the Diocese of Fort Worth, and author of *SCREWTAPE TEACHES THE FAITH: A GUIDE FOR CATECHISTS*.

RESPONSIBLE DISCIPLESHIP

It's very easy to get caught up in the secular aspects of a pilgrimage — especially at World Youth Day. A good way of keeping things in a Christ-centered perspective is to maintain a sense of discipleship throughout. One method of exercising our role as disciples is to serve as an intercessor of prayer (Romans 8:34) for the intentions of those in need. A second method is to meditate and reflect on the word of God through *lectio divina*. A third method is to prayerfully read and study the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* through the method of *lectio divina* to reflect on what Christ has taught and how we are to live out our doctrinal call. The fourth and most important method we can embrace as disciples is to associate our life with Christ and live out the mysteries of Christ in the sacraments (Jn 15:4-5) especially the Holy Eucharist (Jn 6:56).

In the end St. Paul (Col 3:12-15) places everything in perspective when he reminds us:

As God's chosen ones to exercise and put on compassion, kindness, lowliness, meekness and patience forbearing one another . . . and over all these put on love which binds everything together in perfect harmony.

SEEKING GOD'S PATH VOCATIONS

An Encounter for Change At World Youth Day

BY FATHER JAMES WILCOX



Father James Wilcox was ordained to the priesthood in 2013 and serves as the Vocations Director for the Diocese of Fort Worth.

I FINALLY SUCCUMBED TO THE WEATHER AND DUG THE WORLD YOUTH DAY-ISSUED PONCHO OUT OF MY BACKPACK. I TEND TO NEVER CARRY AN UMBRELLA AND WILL JUST RUN THROUGH THE RAIN FROM MY CAR TO THE BUILDING.

Getting a little wet never hurt anyone. As a priest who serves the souls in Fort Worth, I learned quickly that we never complain about rain. But this time I was not moving from vehicle to shelter; I was in the midst of joy-filled young adults from the diocese at the WYD papal welcome. So, the poncho became a necessity.

The rain was a true blessing as it kept us cool on this summer day in Krakow, Poland while we waited for the Vicar of Christ, Pope Francis. During this time, the young people on the pilgrimage shared stories of the journey so far.

We began this journey with Jesus Christ in the Eternal City of Rome, including the celebration of beautiful Masses at the historic basilicas. For most on the pilgrimage, the Mass celebrated by Bishop Olson at the Altar of the Chair of St. Peter was a distinct highlight to that point.

However, now here we were — a plane flight and long bus ride away in Krakow and a bit of a hike to Blonia Park, participating in World Youth Day activities and welcoming the Holy Father to the events. Blonia Park is a large open field divided into various sections to help organize the people and provide for a flow of foot traffic. As we would see in a few moments, it also provides a pathway for Pope Francis to come amongst the excited pilgrims in the popemobile. While we waited for him, there was music, entertainment, and people waving flags from their countries. (Of course we Texans proudly included the Lone Star flag as well!)

All this preparation and journeying and excitement can lead one to wonder the point of the whole excursion. The Holy Father answered that question quickly once he arrived and was able to greet us pilgrims: "So many young people from such a variety of nations, cultures, and languages but with one aim, that of celebrating Jesus who is living in our midst. Do you understand this? To celebrate Jesus who is living in our midst!"

The focus of 2 million pilgrims at WYD was not the walking, or the rain, or the flags, or the entertainment, or even the opportunity to visit a beautiful country like Poland. When we walked in the footsteps of St. John Paul II toward Blonia Park, it was all to have an encounter with Our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Through that encounter, we sought to understand the will of God and to receive the grace of courage to align our will with his.

In essence, all pilgrimages are journeys toward Jesus Christ. Our life is a pilgrimage. However, in a special way, the journey toward Christ is more intimate for the man who answers the call to priesthood or the young woman who is beacons to religious life. The call to serve, especially in the priesthood, is always a call from Jesus Christ. When one sets out on the pilgrim journey of faith, he or she must be open to knowing that we may be called to an extraordinary life of service.

At the welcome, Pope Francis asked the young people if they wanted a life with a lasting sense of fulfillment. He helped them answer the question: "To find fulfillment, to gain new life, there is a way, a way that is not for sale, that cannot be purchased, a way that is not a thing or an object, but a person. His name is Jesus Christ."

Those on pilgrimage know about relin-

quishing items that burden one during the journey. When the focus is a person — Jesus Christ — the things that we possess and the things that possess us become expendable. We strongly desire to reach the destination and to encounter the person of Christ, so we shake off materialistic needs, prideful habits, and selfish actions. When the love of the person to whom we journey grows deeper, we desire to have others with us on the journey. We seek to help them learn about the journey, join the journey, and have an experience of Jesus Christ.

While the beginning of the papal welcome was a little wet and required ponchos and umbrellas, the rain disappeared in time for the popemobile to drive through the crowds and for Pope Francis to arrive on stage. The Lord granted us comfort and a respite on this journey, which can be seen as a moment of grace.

Throughout the entire pilgrimage for World Youth Day with the diocese, the call to priesthood was heard and the call to religious life was felt — especially in our more than 200 traveling companions. These youth were serious about listening to the Lord, through the exhilaration of the pope's presence as well as during the difficulties of a long hot walk. May the flames ignited on this pilgrimage serve to light the path of their journey to serve the Lord.

It is now the task and the responsibility of all Catholics in the Diocese of Fort Worth to pray fervently for these young people, that they may have the courage to answer the call to follow Jesus Christ.



Live in the moment

Be present for those you love

By Kathy Cribari Hamer Beck

GOING BACKWARD, LET'S AGREE THAT I NEVER REMEMBER SAYING, "GOING FORWARD." BUT CURRENTLY, DURING THIS NEWS-RIDDEN ELECTION PERIOD, COMMENTATORS HAVE CHOSEN TO USE THOSE WORDS ABOUT A DOZEN TIMES A DAY.

The overused phrase is as annoying as the ubiquitous election season.

Since I am tired of hearing this, I beg the media: "Touch base, people! Drill down! Think outside of the box! Use fewer clichés!"

To state, "We will work harder going forward," is exactly the same as saying, "We will work harder."

Back in the '60s—my favorite decade—what phraseology did we use for conversations, news reports, and simple predictions?

Easy. We had a "magical tool" for speaking about the next day, the next week, or the next year. It was called "future tense." We learned it from the Sisters of Charity, who taught grammatically correct — and Catholic — communication.

What did we do to illustrate the future without saying, "going forward"? We said, "Tomorrow." "Sometime this summer." "Next election year." Or, "Whenever a good movie comes to the Uptown." Just kidding.

(In the '60s, the Uptown Theater's price for a movie was 15 cents, so we didn't have to plan too far ahead. But, going forward, if there was a Disney movie coming, we had to save up. Those movies cost a quarter.)

In the '70s and '80s, we also practiced parental language in a way that was more direct than today's. One day, my 8-year-old son John escaped and walked home from the mall — by himself. I raced home with the other kids, horrified for my son's safety.

"Dear God," I thought, "We have inadvertently encountered a non-biblical version of 'The finding of the child in the temple.'"

I prayed again: "Lord give us a temple."

When we got home my manner was unlike that of the Blessed Mother. I said, "John,



you are never, ever going to the mall again. Not with me, not with friends, not with Ms. Peninger. Not even with Santa Claus."

Nowadays I would have to say, "John—John, dear, I know you were exercising your independence, but that was not 'okay.' You frightened your momma, who now has white hair and has bitten off all her fingernails. I would like you to promise me that going forward, you will never do that again."

Looking back in the '60s, '70s, and even '80s, news broadcasters were also less pretentious than today's. They just read the news.

Nowadays, multiple news stations give us election bulletins, details about a politician's demeanor, truthfulness, and current polling data. After those summaries, we hear predictions, such as, "We'll see what happens after the debates; "going forward."

I dislike those words. However, I am extraordinarily fond of: "Right now." "Today." "The present." Four additional words, "Living in the moment" are 100 percent more important to add to our vocabularies than "going forward."

How do I know this? Because in the past 12 months a frenzy of my friends passed away, and it was heart wrenching. I found

myself "looking backward," regretting the hours I missed. I wish I'd spent more time "going forward" with them.

Joan Richardson, my daughter Julie's godmother, died in June 2015. Nancy Dalton died Jan. 4, 2016, after sharing Christmas with all her children and grandchildren. Jeanne Mallick died Jan. 7; four days later her son, Father Mark, celebrated her Mass of Christian Burial. My high school friend Nettie DiIorio died March 4, a few months after our 50th class reunion. Jean Crane died March 10, after having missed a Bible Study class at St. Andrew's. She had never missed one before.

And Maxine Howell, a dear friend and our daughter Lauren's godmother, died August 1. She was eager, I believe, for a heavenly encounter with Milo, the love of her life, who died in 2006.

At Maxine's funeral Mass, Fr. Tom paraphrased from 1 John: "My beloved, we are God's children now. We don't know what will come later, or exactly what Heaven is like, or what our place will be there, but we do know that by the Lord's testimony, we are children of the Father, right now."

He applied the words to Maxine: "She recognized we are children of one God and because of that we need to treat each other with the compassion and love that the Father has shown us."

This year's losses of so many lovely people have taught me something I already knew, but need to practice:

Live in the moment. Give to others. Don't wait. Be present for those you love. Right now.

Going forward, it might be too late.



Kathy Cribari Hamer Beck's column has been recognized repeatedly by the Catholic Press Association. For information about her book, ME AND THE CHICKENS, go to somethingelseagain.com.

Why politics matters and why it doesn't

By David Mills

SOON WE BEGIN THE THREE-MONTH SEASON OF LOUD DINNER-TABLE ARGUMENTS, BROKEN FRIENDSHIPS, GUYS SLUGGING EACH OTHER IN PUBS, AS WELL AS LOTS OF “HOW’S THE WEATHER?” NON-DISCUSSIONS OF POLITICS — OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE PERIOD BETWEEN THE MAJOR PARTY CONVENTIONS AND THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION.

For reasons I don’t need to go into, this year people will probably be even crankier and angrier than in past election years. Just saying the names “Clinton” or “Trump” can be like throwing meat into shark-infested waters.

We put a lot of emotion into politics, judge other people by their political choices, act as if the election were the one thing in life that really matters. In other words, we treat presidential politics as if it were religion, or Steelers football. Or else we bail, because it’s just too much to deal with.

The Church says: Yes, how we organize our political life matters a lot. It changes people’s lives. Some politicians and policies work better than others. When bad things happen politically, the poor and vulnerable get hurt the most. We must do what we can in our system to make things better.

The Church also says: Politics isn’t everything.

Pope Leo XIII started what we now call “Catholic Social Teaching” with his encyclical *Rerum Novarum*, published in 1891. (The Vatican website has the official translation.) He deals with the problems of “labor” (working people) who were often exploited by “capital” (the owners and employers) and offers a vision for the good society, where capital treats labor justly and charitably.

He’s pretty blunt about what this means.



“To misuse men as though they were things in the pursuit of gain . . . is truly shameful and inhuman,” he writes when he describes the employer’s responsibility. He calls for what’s now called a living wage, which he says is not the wage the market dictates.

Leo believes justice in this world matters. But he also tells us that suffering injustice trains us for the next world. “The Church, with Jesus Christ as her Master and Guide, aims higher still,” he writes. “She lays down precepts yet more perfect.”

The Church does this because she knows we’re meant for something bigger. Leo explains: “God has not created us for the perishable and transitory things of earth, but for things heavenly and everlasting. He has given us this world as a place of exile, and not as our abiding place. As for riches and the other things which men call good and desirable, whether we have them in abundance, or are lacking in them — so far as eternal happiness is concerned — it makes no difference; the only important thing is to use them aright.”

It’s not what we’re used to hearing. Even Catholic politicians tend to speak as if politics is the only thing that matters. Everyone wants our money and our votes and so they try

to make us feel that the next election is a choice between heaven (them) and hell (their opponents). The more excited we get, the easier they can manipulate us.

Pope Leo cared deeply about this world and especially about the life of the workers and the poor. But still, he continued, Jesus did not take away “the pains and sorrows which in such large proportion are woven together in the web of our mortal life. He transformed them

into motives of virtue and occasions of merit; and no man can hope for eternal reward unless he follows in the blood-stained footprints of his Savior.”

To take the two sides of Leo’s encyclical: First, we can do better ourselves and we can work to make the world better. How we live matters. Our political and economic choices change other people’s lives. The poor depend upon our making good choices. We shouldn’t bail out.

Second, the world will still be a painful place no matter what we do with our political choices. People don’t stop being sinful even if a nation elects the best politician with the best policies, and no nation ever does that. People will always suffer. The workers and the poor will still suffer the kind of exploitation Pope Leo condemned.

In both cases, the answer is Christ and his Church. Leo wrote at the end of *Rerum Novarum*: “Since religion alone can destroy the evil at its root . . . the primary thing needed is to return to real Christianity.” Treat politics seriously, but don’t expect it to save the world.

David Mills is editorial director of ETHIKA POLITIKA (www.ethikapolitica.org).



Teens participating in the Arlington Ulster Project march through Arlington during the city's July 4th parade. (Photo courtesy M...)

How Arlington's Ulster Project is turning fear and distrust into acceptance and respect

One bond of *FRIENDSHIP* at a time

By Joan Kurkowski-Gillen / Correspondent

Every year teens from Northern Ireland, participating in the Ulster Project, march in Arlington's annual July 4th parade along with their young American hosts.

The invitation to wave Old Glory and celebrate Independence Day with the rest of North Texas is more than just a gesture of hospitality.

Organizers of Ulster Project Arlington

want to give the Irish teens a parade experience that doesn't involve intimidation, hostility, and violence.

"Their idea of marching in a parade is negative because of Northern Ireland's Marching Day," said Michelle Hennessy, referring to the Twelfth of July, also known as Orangeman's Day.

The public holiday marks the 1690 victory

of Dutch Protestant King William of Orange over his Catholic father-in-law King James II of England. Until recently, Protestant Orangemen, accompanied by fife and drum bands, used the anniversary to antagonize Catholics by marching through their neighborhoods. Insults were exchanged and violence often ensued.

"We wanted to show them our parades are positive events," explained Hennessy, an Arling-

march through the streets of
(courtesy Michelle Hennessy)



“Not only do they have fun and do amazing things the entire month, they learn how to be a friend... and respect for other people.”

— Michelle Hennessy,
Ulster Project parent

ton mom hosting her sixth Irish visitor.

Part of a larger organization started in 1975 by Anglican priest Reverend Kerry Waterstone, Ulster Project Arlington brings 16 Catholic and Protestant teens to the U.S. each July where they share life-changing experiences. Screened for leadership potential, participants stay with a local family of the same faith who has a child of the same age and gender. The program is designed to encourage friendships and tolerance that is difficult to achieve in the walled enclaves that separate Catholic and Protestant children in Northern Ireland.

During their month-long stay in Texas, the teens complete service projects, attend “Discovery” sessions to discuss personal growth issues, and enjoy outings to Ranger baseball games and Six Flags. They are exposed to both Protestant and

Catholic worship services and meet as a group with counselors to talk about the deeply-rooted sectarian prejudices and stereotypes that have troubled both Irish and American societies for generations.

“It’s a fantastic thing for the Irish kids to do but it’s also a fantastic thing for our kids,” Hennessy suggested. “Not only do they have fun and do amazing things the entire month, they learn how to be a friend, leadership skills, and respect for other people.”

Hennessy’s eldest son became involved in the Ulster Project in 2005 and the St. Maria Goretti parishioner wanted her five other children to experience the program. Youngest daughter, Tara, is one of the 2016 Ulster Project teens.

“The Project showed me that religion or race doesn’t define a person and everyone has a right to his or her own beliefs,” says the Nolan

Catholic sophomore who is paired with Irish guest Blanaid Savage. “The Ulster Project helped me understand this by having discussions about segregation in our communities whether it be race in America or religion in Northern Ireland.”

Fifteen-year-old Matthew Ontiveros said being part of Ulster Project Arlington is an opportunity to make lifelong friendships. The Nolan Catholic junior went to a Protestant church service for the first time along with other Ulster Project teens.

“Just getting to know each other helps build trust and understanding,” Ontiveros opined. “And I’m doing things that even as a Texan, I haven’t done before.”

His parents, Cynthia and David Ontiveros, decided to get involved in the organization on the recommendation of friends. It’s a decision they’re glad they made.

“My son is thrilled and is having a good time,” said the elder Ontiveros, who lives in Grand Prairie. “My younger children are bringing their friends around to meet the Irish kids. They’re also enjoying the culture mix.”

To qualify as a host family, applicants are interviewed, receive a home visit, and must commit to all scheduled activities.

After their daughter, Lucy, hosted an Irish girl named Orla last summer, Krista and Britt Robinson were eager to welcome another Ulster Project teen into their home. Their son, Will, and Chris McGowan, both 15 and soccer enthusiasts, have become fast friends since McGowan arrived in Texas on June 27.

“It was just a neat experience to see Orla become part of our family last year. Our younger children took her in and started interacting and involving her in their life,” Krista recalled. “It gave them a new understanding and appreciation of how you can develop friendships across international lines and welcome someone into your home.”

Their new visitor has prompted discussions about Brexit and the differences between Catholicism here and the Catholic Church in Northern Ireland. Built during “The Troubles,” a period of intense sectarian violence in Ulster, the church where McGowan attends Mass resembles a bomb shelter.

“There are very few windows and it was designed to be more of a protective type area,” pointed out Krista, a St. Maria Goretti parishioner. “It’s solid, not ornate like the architecture here.”

While the Robinsons are caring for an Irish teen, their daughter, Lucy, is in Northern Ireland visiting her Ulster Project friend, Orla. The pair left Belfast for Republic of Ireland over The Twelfth holiday to avoid the towering bonfires and noisy demonstrations led by Orangemen lodges.

Although Ulster Project Arlington is changing fear and distrust into acceptance and tolerance one teenager at a time, the marches underscore the reality that there is still much work to be done.

Two years ago, Michelle Hennessy traveled to Northern Ireland with the Ulster Project and visited with every teenager her family hosted over the past decade. The families were gracious and took their American guest sightseeing.

“There are still huge walls dividing the city and there are gates that close at night for safety reasons,” she observed.

The graffiti-filled walls define the Protestant and Catholic neighborhoods and separate the populations. It’s a segregated way of life American youth find difficult to understand.

“But by the end of the month they do,” said Hennessy crediting the spirit of the Ulster Project for breaking down the barriers of suspicion and bigotry. “Considering what’s going on in our country right now, our kids are learning a lot.”

September 4, Twenty-third Sunday in Ordinary Time.

Cycle C Readings:

- 1) Wisdom 9:13-18b
Psalm 90:3-6, 12-17
- 2) Philemon 9-10, 12-17
Gospel) Luke 14:25-33

By **Jean Denton**

In the Gospel today, Jesus reminds us that we can't be his disciples, genuinely imparting his message and spirit, unless we are detached from our possessions.

OK, we think, we can eschew materialism and strive not to be influenced by the endemic consumerism of popular culture. We can share what we have with others. Yes, we can do that and so become effective disciples.

But what about the "possessions" that we think of as our daily bread: job, income, home — the things that provide our basic security? Becoming separated from



those things can make it hard to listen and attend to God's Spirit.

I saw it happen to a close friend of mine, a professional, when circumstances created a serious, unexpected reduction in his income. Approaching the end of his career, he saw his savings depleted and retirement plans dashed.

Suddenly, he felt that everything he'd worked for was lost, and he was overwhelmed by fears

about his future. He could hardly think rationally.

Most of us have experienced a situation in which an unexpected crisis hits and lays us low.

Often it can be so defeating that we can't feel God's presence or hear the gentle guidance of Jesus within us.

Today's reading from the Book of Wisdom describes the difficulty. "The corruptible body burdens the soul," Wisdom says, explaining, "The earthen shelter weighs down the mind that has many concerns."

It's not so much that we are materialistic but that our concerns about even basic material matters hinder us from looking into our

souls for answers from God. Jesus wants us to let go of those matters that weigh down our ability to follow Him.

My friend eventually let go of his fears, accepting the fact of financial insecurity, and trusted God to carry him forward.

Wisdom notes, "The deliberations of mortals are timid, and unsure are our plans."

We hate uncertainty and insecurity. Think of the panic that ensues when one's hard drive crashes "with all my stuff on it!"

Jesus calls us to carry our cross, not our stuff. He asks us to carry our uncertainty and insecurity and trustingly follow Him. That's the cross He can help us carry.

QUESTIONS:

When have you been so overburdened by earthly matters that you were unable to seek Jesus' guidance? What are the "possessions" that have the greatest hold in your life?

September 11, Twenty-fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time.

Cycle C Readings:

- 1) Exodus 32:7-11, 13-14
Psalm 51:3-4, 12-13, 17, 19
- 2) 1 Timothy 1:12-17
Gospel) Luke 15:1-32

By **Jeff Hedglen**

One of the greatest fears of my childhood was getting caught doing something bad and having to face my dad. It's not that he was extra mean or abusive, it's just that I did not want to disappoint him, and this caused a knee-jerk reaction of fear whenever such situations would arise.

Probably the worst and stupidest thing I remember doing happened when I was a senior in high school hanging out with friends. We were roller-skating in the street and then decided to



go to another friend's house. I'd borrowed my dad's car that night and jumped in and started driving with my skates still on. As you might expect, there was an accident. Thankfully, it was just a fender bender. It could have been a lot worse, but knowing that the next day I'd have to tell my dad what I had done caused me a terrible, sleepless night full of fear and trembling.

"I was mercifully treated."

— 1 Timothy 1:16

After I showed my dad his dented bumper I was expecting to never leave my room unless I was doing all my siblings' chores forever! But instead of getting the worst punishment of my life, I got something wholly unexpected: mercy.

Sure my dad gave me a talking-to about how our lives are defined by our choices and this was not a good choice on my part. He asked me to think about the kind of person I was going to be, and that was it!

This story came to mind as

I reviewed this week's readings. Each passage tells of God's mercy, whether it is God relenting on his plan to smite the Israelites, St. Paul reminding us that Jesus came into the world to bring God's mercy or, most expressive of all, the loving father full of mercy and forgiveness welcoming the prodigal son home.

Benny Hester has a song about the prodigal son with a line that perfectly illustrates God and his mercy: "The only time I ever saw (God) run was when He ran to me, took me in his arms, held my head to his chest and said, 'My son's come home again.'" This is one of my favorite images of God, running to us to deliver his mercy!

QUESTIONS:

When was a time when someone had mercy on you? When have you experienced the mercy of God?

WORD TO LIFE

September 18, Twenty-fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time.

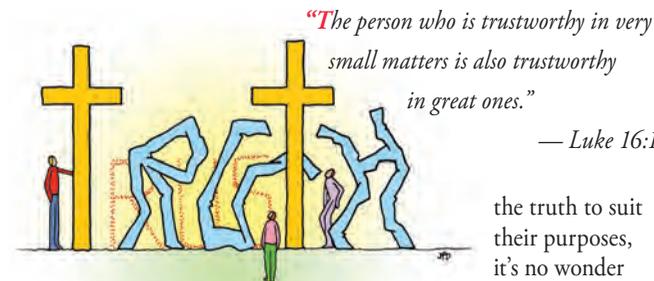
Cycle C Readings:

- 1) Amos 8:4-7
Psalm 113:1-2, 4-8
- 2) 1 Timothy 2:1-8
Gospel) Luke 16:1-13

By Sharon K. Perkins

In this presidential election year, much is made of political candidates and their levels of experience, their platforms and their ability to communicate with their constituents. But nothing seems to raise as much debate as a candidate's trustworthiness — or the lack of it. In fact, millions of dollars are spent on campaign advertising for the purpose of exposing dishonesty in one's opponent.

Why is this? I suspect that a candidate's many favorable qualities are often secondary to the public's perception of the



candidate's honesty. Whether it's engaging in deceitful business practices, cheating on one's taxes or fabricating information, even little falsehoods can add up to an unsavory reputation and seriously damage a contender's chances of getting elected.

In today's Gospel, Jesus' parable of the dishonest steward illustrates the significance of little things as an indicator of trustworthiness in larger matters.

Given the propensity of human beings — especially those in leadership — to bend

the truth to suit their purposes, it's no wonder that the letter to Timothy emphasizes the necessity of prayer for "kings and for all in authority," knowing that the common good of all people depends upon their integrity.

The prophet Amos warns those who "trample upon the needy" and persist in dishonest dealings with the poor in order to advance themselves: The Lord has a long memory and does not abide

QUESTIONS:

In what areas of your life do you tend toward deceit or dishonesty? What part do prayer and discernment play in your own political decisions?

injustice. Rather, God's brand of justice "raises up the lowly from the dust" in order to "seat them with princes."

In this season of accusatory campaign ads and reciprocal mudslinging, it behooves Christians, as "children of light," to discern carefully and to exercise their right to vote with prudence and responsibility. But today's readings also challenge us to look at our own attitudes about wealth and our behavior toward the poor.

You or I might not be running for office — but the common good of our fellow human beings depends on our integrity, wise stewardship, and fervent prayers for those who are elected to serve.

September 25, Twenty-sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time.

Cycle C Readings:

- 1) Amos 6:1a, 4-7
Psalm 146:7-10
- 2) 1 Timothy 6:11-16
Gospel) Luke 16:19-31

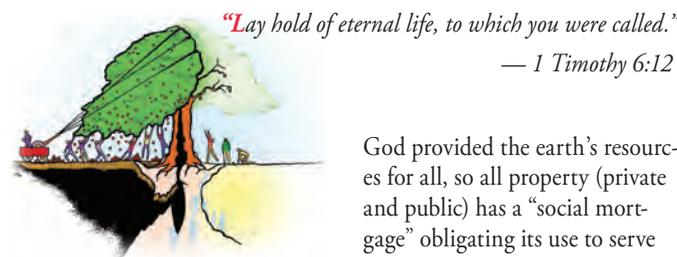
By Deacon Mike Ellerbrock

Ilove it when youth say what's on their mind.

For instance, they'll ask, "What's so special about poor people?" or, "If there is fire in hell, do you burn up and disappear?"

Likewise, adults often express confusion about Catholic social teaching's "preferential option for the poor." They ask whether the Church is saying that God loves the poor more than fortunate people, and if not, then what's the point?

The Church has profound



answers to these great questions that are addressed in this week's Scriptures.

Picture life in the garden before Adam and Eve brought sin into the world: There was no poverty, no alienation, and no competition among the species. Everyone lived in harmony; no one was without.

But sin corrupted life in Eden with consequences to this day. Division and conflict arose over the distribution of resources.

However, the Second Vatican Council, St. John Paul II, and Pope Francis have taught that

God provided the earth's resources for all, so all property (private and public) has a "social mortgage" obligating its use to serve the common good.

Thus, poverty is the principal manifestation of sin. Whenever and wherever we see poverty, we see the effects of sin.

God loves everyone equally. What he despises is poverty.

The Gospel shows starving Lazarus painfully begging for crumbs from the rich man's sumptuous table without receiving a scrap.

When they both died,

QUESTIONS:

In serving the common good, how can we do our part to proclaim and address the plight of the poor?

Lazarus was carried to heaven by angels while the rich man in purple garments fell into the netherworld. Tormented in flames, the rich man looks up and now begs for a cool drop of water from Lazarus' fingertip.

However, the chasm between them is so wide that no one can cross it. This isn't a physical description of hell such as Dante's burning inferno.

St. John Paul II said that we should not think of hell as a place, but as separation from God — an immense chasm of lost love whereby one truly knows, sees, and feels the pain of having chosen to reject one's Creator, Lord, and Redeemer. To be on the outside of heaven looking in, that is hell.

October 2, Twenty-seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time.

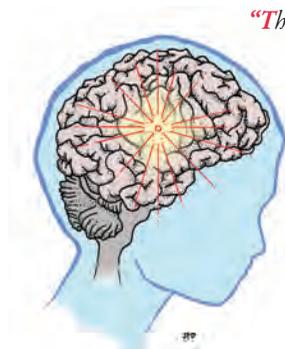
Cycle C Readings:

- 1) Habakkuk 1:2-3; 2:2-4
- Psalm 95:1-2, 6-9
- 2) 2 Timothy 1:6-8, 13-14
- Gospel) Luke 17:5-10

By Jean Denton

When Jesus walked the face of the earth, the science of psychology hadn't yet been invented. Sigmund Freud and psychoanalysis wouldn't come along for another 1,800 years. But this week's Gospel shows Jesus way out on the cutting edge of what the psychological world calls the power of positive thinking. The spiritual world calls it faith.

Jesus tells his followers they can accomplish unimaginable feats "if you have faith the size of a mustard seed." He uses a bit of hyperbole — being able to uproot a large tree by a simple voice command — to explain that faith can



"The vision still has its time, presses on to fulfillment, and will not disappoint."

— Habakkuk 2:3

strengthen us to overcome normal human limitations when we face challenges in life.

Today, psychologists continue to examine the effects of positive attitude. For instance, much has been written about improved responses to medical treatment credited to the positive mindset of patients. In one article, noted author and medical doctor Deepak Chopra suggested the "placebo effect" (improvement in patients given a placebo when they believed they received a prescrip-

tion drug) showed that positive thinking could produce a positive physical response.

"Expectations are powerful," he pointed out. "If you think you've been given a drug that will make you better, often that is enough to make you better."

Although he concedes that medical research has found no proof that positive thinking can actually cure disease, Chopra emphasizes, "The real point isn't to rescue a dying patient but to maintain wellness."

That's the real point for Jesus, as well.

Just as positive thinking is a source of strength for someone battling illness, faith gives us strength and hope in the "wellness" of God's spirit with us when we struggle.

Thousands of years before psychology, the prophet Habakkuk told us to seek God's positive promise when we are troubled: Write down the vision clearly, so you can read it, he said. "[It] will not disappoint . . . it will surely come."

Whoever relies on God's vision, he added, "because of his faith, shall live."

Faith, in fact, employs positive thinking. However, it is more. It opens our spirit to the vast possibilities of our life in God — where we will be rescued from dying.

QUESTIONS:

How do you describe the similarities of positive thinking and faith? How does your faith in Christ affect your response to difficult situations life throws at you?

October 9, Twenty-eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time.

Cycle C Readings:

- 1) 2 Kings 5:14-17
- Psalm 98:1-4
- 2) 2 Timothy 2:8-13
- Gospel) Luke 17:11-19

By Jeff Hedglen

I am terrible at sending thank you notes. If I don't do it right away it usually doesn't get done. It is not that I am not thankful; I am truly grateful for the service or gift I have received. I am just forgetful, especially when the next day is filled with more activity and soon the thought of thanking the individual slips from my radar.

My negligence in sending thanks in a note is much like my neglecting to give thanks in my prayer life.

When I teach about how



"He fell at the feet of Jesus and thanked him."

— Luke 17:16

to pray I use an acrostic for the word "pray":

Praise and thank God.
Repent for your sins.
Ask for what you and those you love need.
Yield to God's will in your life.

This can be used as a prayer formula or just as a guide to make sure you are, at least from time to time, including all the basic as-

pects of communication with God in your life of prayer.

I am pretty good at the asking part, and through music, Scripture, and Mass I regularly praise God. The examination of conscience and sacrament of reconciliation help me repent of my sins and I try to always end my petitions with the prayer: "God grant me all of these things, or in your wisdom give me something even better." This is my way of yielding to the Lord's right of way in my life.

What I too often miss is

thanking God for all He has given me and for answered prayers. Things often play out as they do in this week's Gospel.

I beg God for help and when He comes through for me, I am happy and go along my merry way glad to have my prayer answered. I tend to be like the nine lepers that do not return to thank God for the blessings that have been showered upon me.

It is not so much that God needs our thanks, but more that we need to thank God to complete the initial request. Just as it is the right thing to do to send a thank you note to a friend, so it is right to send a thank you prayer to God for the gifts He has given us.

QUESTIONS:

What are you most thankful to God for? How do you express your gratitude to God?

**October 16, Twenty-ninth
Sunday in Ordinary Time.**

Cycle C Readings:

- 1) Exodus 17:8-13
Psalms 121:1-8
- 2) 2 Timothy 3:14-4:2
Gospel) Luke 18:1-8

By Sharon K. Perkins

There's a saying that I hear fairly frequently these days, especially in response to someone who is asked to take on a ministry or mission for which he or she feels unprepared: "God doesn't call the equipped; he equips the called."

In other words, we can usually expect to feel inadequate and assume that when God invites, the "yes" comes before the preparation. For most people this is a scary proposition.

Today's readings give some insight into how God alleviates those fears that come with saying "yes" — and how He equips us to



"All Scripture is inspired by God ... so that one who belongs to God may be competent, equipped for every good work."

— 2 Timothy 3:16-17

become fully engaged in the work He gives us to do — much like Joshua unhesitatingly engaging Amalek and his armies in battle.

First, we must always recognize that we're not alone, but that "our help is from the Lord," the very creator of heaven and earth. Lifting our eyes to Him when we're in trouble, or even long before we sense trouble, is an exercise of trust that becomes habitual with practice.

A sure way of becoming

"equipped for every good work" is through the consistent learning and application of sacred Scripture. A surprisingly small percentage of Catholic adults are familiar with the Bible, and yet we have so many excellent resources at our disposal to help us overcome our ignorance that there's really no excuse for remaining uninformed.

Scripture is inspired by the very breath of God so that we can trust it to form us toward

competency.

Finally, the readings today emphasize the importance of persistence in proclaiming the word "whether it is convenient or inconvenient." Tenacity in the face of difficulty and discouragement, grounded in the confidence that God always desires to sustain us, is simply what faith in action looks like. It's what kept Joshua fighting Amalek all the way to a victory, and it's what kept the persistent widow petitioning the judge until he delivered a decision on her behalf.

God is asking us to be his partners in the work of salvation. Are you willing to become equipped for his work?

QUESTIONS:

Have you ever been asked to do something for which you have felt unprepared, even while knowing it was the right thing to do? How has knowledge of Scripture equipped you for being a disciple of Christ?

**October 23, Thirtieth
Sunday in Ordinary Time.**

Cycle C Readings:

- 1) Sirach 35:12-14, 16-18
Psalm 34:2-3, 17-19, 23
- 2) 2 Timothy 4:6-8, 16-18
Gospel) Luke 18:9-14

By Deacon Mike Ellerbrock

When I pointed out in a homily that not all saints are officially canonized, a woman said to me after Mass, "That may be true, but the great saints get to wear a crown in heaven, like St. Paul in today's epistle!" It got me to thinking: Are there trophies for us in heaven, blue ribbons as eternal accessories?

The real underlying issue in today's Scriptures is: Why is it OK for Paul to boast of his faith, but not for the Pharisee in the Gospel to declare his virtues superior to the tax collector? Actually, the



"Oh God, be merciful to me a sinner."

— Luke 18:13

distinction is clear.

Paul boasts of his unwavering trust in the Lord, not of his own earthly merits. Conversely, the Pharisee believes that his diligent efforts obligate God's praise and eternal reward, especially relative to the despised tax collector.

Like Paul, the humble tax collector gets it. Unable to proudly raise his face to God's, he simply bows and begs for God's mercy.

We cannot make deals with God, punching our ticket to paradise. Salvation is attained not

by virtuous acts — adherence to the law — but by our acceptance of Jesus' redemption on the cross, which was perfect and complete. We could never do enough good works to demand eternal residence with God.

Our task is to humbly accept God's gratuitous love and respond by living a life of gratitude. Hence, we are eucharistic people: The Greek term "eucharisteō" means to give thanks. We must do good works, not to earn salvation, but because it is the only logical response to Jesus' free and unmerited gift to us.

Note that Paul proclaims the crown is available to all, whereas the arrogant Pharisee bases his self-righteousness relative to other sinners.

The heavenly crown, trophy, or ribbons we might receive upon crossing that threshold may be the sacred privilege of seeing firsthand the wounds Christ bore for us. What greater testimony do we need of his love for us?

It has been said that the Bible can be summed up in one word: trust. Salvation history is written by the Author of Life. Throughout the Hebrew Scriptures and New Testament, God constantly promises his covenant with humanity and never fails us. Of that we can boast.

QUESTIONS:

Is doing good works out of guilt or fear a help or hindrance to our spiritual growth? How can we improve our conscience to better understand our motivations?

El papel del carácter en las elecciones de este año

POR EL PADRE CARMELO MELE, OP



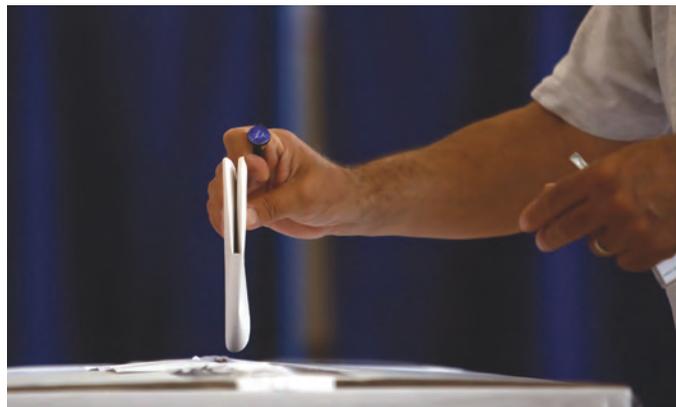
El Padre Carmelo Mele, de la ORDEN DE PREDICADORES (LOS DOMINICOS), ordenado como sacerdote en 1980, es el director del INSTITUTO JUAN PABLO II y de la CATEQUESIS PARA ADULTOS HISPANOS de la DIÓCESIS DE FORT WORTH.

UNA VEZ SE PUSO UNA FRASE PARTICULARMENTE NOTABLE ENCIMA DEL PIZARRÓN DEL AULA DE NUESTRA PRIMARIA. DIJO: “EL CARÁCTER ES LA VIDA DOMINADA POR EL PRINCIPIO”. LAS PALABRAS PROVEYERON ENSEÑANZA VALIOSA PARA CUALQUIER PERSONA DESTINADA A TENER RESPONSABILIDADES EN LA MADUREZ.

¿QUÉ ES EL CARÁCTER?

El carácter refiere a la particularidad de un ser. Una “r” y una “p” son caracteres de imprenta indicando sonidos distintos cuando están leídos con un vocal. Personas con rasgos peculiares a veces son llamados “caracteres”. Más interesantemente, el carácter es un juego de cualidades morales que cuentan qué tipo de persona uno es. Se dice que una mujer tiene carácter si se conoce por la honestad, la bondad, y la fidelidad. Se han formado estas virtudes por el esfuerzo diario para vivir según los principios de la rectitud. Por supuesto, la persona puede tener un carácter malo mostrando los vicios más que las virtudes. Pero dicho solo, el carácter sugiere la alta calidad moral.

Tener carácter es necesario para los líderes públicos. Los legisladores y otros gobernantes deberían ser reconocidos como gentes de alta estima. Pues, si ellos viven rectamente los demás serán inclinados a seguirlos.



(Shutterstock.com / Foto por Alexandru Nika)

Más importantemente, les hace falta el carácter bueno para resistir las tentaciones que acarrea la administración de la riqueza pública. Si los políticos aprovechan sus prerrogativas para el lucro personal, violarán el bien público.

EL LIDERAZGO

Asociado con el carácter es el don del liderazgo. Los oficiales públicos tienen que ser tanto efectivos como eficaces. Eso es, tienen que ser capaces para producir resultados beneficiosos. Tal capacidad necesita las virtudes de la justicia y la prudencia. La justicia es el sentido fino de saber lo que requiere la gente para mantener la dignidad humana. La prudencia es similarmente trascendente. Le informa al líder de la cosa que se debería hacer en la situación indicada y le mueve

a hacerla. La política, que se ha llamado “el arte de lo posible”, es sólo la disposición de la prudencia en el área pública. La experiencia siempre es útil para que se desarrolle la prudencia.

LA EVALUACIÓN DE LOS CANDIDATOS

Al evaluar a los candidatos para los oficios públicos hoy en día, la gente generalmente quiere enterarse de sus perspectivas en las cuestiones controversiales. Los interrogarán acerca de sus posturas sobre el control de armas, el aborto, etcétera, y votarán por aquellos cuyas posiciones más conformen a sus propias. Por supuesto, la postura en las cuestiones más controvertidas es un criterio importante para determinar a quien se quiere votar. Pero no es el único criterio, y en algunos casos no será ni siquiera lo más importante. El carácter, la suma

de la virtud moral del candidato, y el liderazgo también deben ser considerados. El tener todos los valores correctos no va a avanzar el bien público si el político no es capaz de implementarlos en la vida pública.

EL RETO DE ESTE AÑO

Este año los católicos enfrentan un reto más grande que lo usual cuando voten para el oficio de la mayor importancia en la tierra. Los caracteres de los candidatos de ambos partidos políticos han sido puestos en sospecha. Además, mientras las perspectivas de un candidato parecen corresponder a la doctrina social de la Iglesia, el otro tiene mucho más experiencia sirviendo al público. La situación ha causado a algunos ciudadanos pensar en estrategias para evitar votar por uno de los dos candidatos más prominentes. Si los votantes católicos van a votar por el uno o el otro, deberían considerar los factores mencionados aquí con la oración. Entonces, que voten por aquel candidato que piensan cumplirá más plenamente el bien público.

El Tribunal diocesano cambia sus oficinas; el proceso de petición se agiliza

Por Mary Lou Seewoester
Corresponsal

EN SOLO SEIS MESES EL TRIBUNAL DE LA DIÓCESIS DE FORT WORTH PUDO VER LOS BENEFICIOS DE LOS CAMBIOS QUE EL PAPA FRANCISCO HIZO AL PROCESO PARA DECLARAR INVÁLIDO UN MATRIMONIO.

Entre enero y junio de este año, el tribunal terminó 225 casos con decisiones afirmativas—casi el mismo número de casos que le llevó al personal del tribunal procesar en todo el 2015.

“Hemos duplicado nuestra capacidad de casos formales en 2016”, dijo el Padre Anh Tran, Vicario Judicial de la diócesis.

Él añadió que una vez que el tribunal ponga al corriente sus casos anteriores, el periodo para un juicio bajará de tres años a un año o menos.

“Mi proyecto es que estaremos al corriente para junio de 2017 o un poco más tarde”, él dijo. “Acabamos de terminar los casos del 2014 y estamos empezando los del 2015”.

Mitis Iudex Dominus Iesus (El Señor Jesús, Juez clemente) es el título del documento papal que contiene las revisiones a la Ley Canónica que hace que el proceso de petición al tribunal sea más rápido, más sencillo, y más pastoral.

Además de implementar los cambios para acelerar el proceso, el tribunal también cambió su dirección a una localidad que dará más privacidad a los clientes. Sus oficinas están ahora en el campo de Nolan Catholic High School, con una dirección separada, 4503 Bridge Street, Fort Worth.

El P. Tran indicó que uno de los cambios más provechosos fue eliminar la requerida apelación



De izquierda a derecha: Pat Aragon; Anna Marie Chamblee, JCL; Padre Anh Tran, JCL; Linda McKinney; JoAnn Gordon; y Carlos Sacasa, JCL, constituyen el Tribunal de la Diócesis de Fort Worth.

automática a la Corte Metropolitana en San Antonio para que confirmara la decisión del tribunal local.

“Ahora, la decisión del tribunal diocesano es final. Ya no se necesita la confirmación de la segunda instancia (corte de apelación)”, dijo él. “Pero una persona puede siempre apelar si él o ella quiere impugnar la decisión de la corte de primera instancia”.

Aunque a este proceso seguido se le llama anulación, el P. Tran rápidamente clarifica. “No existe tal anulación”, dijo él. “Esto es un proceso para declarar la invalidez de los matrimonios. Anulación es un nombre equivocado. Nosotros no anulamos un matrimonio... nosotros solo investigamos y lo declaramos inválido cuando se prueba que lo es”.

La revisión de la ley también eliminó la cuota de solicitud al tribunal. Sin embargo, dijo el P. Tran, “nosotros no hemos cobrado una cuota por más de 20 años. Cuesta cero dólares en la Diócesis de Fort Worth”.

Él añadió que solo puede haber una cuota si hay necesidad de una evaluación por un experto, como

un psicólogo o siquiatra.

Él explicó que todos los que sirven en el tribunal deben ser canonistas o tener un mandato de Roma. Actualmente la diócesis tiene cinco sacerdotes y un canonista laico, que toman casos alternos según llegan, para que éstos sean justos y equitativos.

Además de las reformas del Papa Francisco a la Ley Canónica, el tribunal ha iniciado otras mejoras en la diócesis.

Por ejemplo, hay un nuevo Juez y un Defensor del Vínculo que son bilingües, eliminando así el tiempo y la necesidad de traducciones. El P. Tran explicó que el Defensor del Vínculo es el canonista que defiende el vínculo del sacramento del matrimonio hasta que se prueba lo contrario.

También hay Defensores del Tribunal. Estos son católicos de la localidad cuya labor es ayudar a la gente durante el proceso de anulación y contestar sus preguntas. Ellos usualmente tienen su base en las parroquias.

El tribunal ofreció este año tres diferentes entrenamientos de 15 horas para preparar a los

Defensores del Tribunal a ayudar a los católicos a empezar el proceso de declarar inválido un matrimonio.

“Los solicitantes inician el proceso con la parroquia, no directamente con el tribunal. Así que hemos estado entrenando más Defensores del Tribunal

por toda la diócesis, para que ellos puedan ayudar a la gente al principio. Ellos tienen que estar verdaderamente preparados para ayudar y deben tener el corazón abierto y no prejuizar”, dijo el P. Tran.

Él añadió “la razón por la que una persona quiere declarar inválido un matrimonio anterior es porque aman al Señor. Ellos quieren regresar a los sacramentos, y también su fe ha crecido. Ellos quieren ser un buen ejemplo para sus hijos y quieren ser parte de la Iglesia...”

El P. Tran observó que los cambios a la Ley Canónica entraron en vigor el día de la apertura del Año de la Misericordia, diciembre 8, 2015.

“Éste es el año de la Misericordia”, dijo el P. Tran, aconsejando a las parejas que necesiten la declaración a “a venir a empezar el proceso de declaración [de invalidez de matrimonio].”

“La Iglesia tiene los brazos abiertos para ustedes. Se requiere que ustedes tal vez tengan que recordar algunas experiencias tristes, pero los liberará de llevar esa carga”.

Después de un año de discernimiento, 32 hombres expresan su deseo de continuar en el camino al

DIACONADO PERMANENTE

Por Joan Kurkowski-Gillen
Corresponsal

DESPUÉS DE UN AÑO DE ESTUDIO Y DISCERNIMIENTO PIADOSO, 32 HOMBRES, QUE ASPIRAN A SER DIÁCONOS PERMANENTES EN LA DIÓCESIS DE FORT WORTH, FUERON ADMITIDOS A LA CANDIDATURA DURANTE UNA MISA CELEBRADA POR EL OBISPO MICHAEL OLSON EL 6 DE AGOSTO, EN LA CATEDRAL DE SAN PATRICIO.

Al ser llamados y cuestionados brevemente, los candidatos públicamente expresaron su deseo de ser ordenados diáconos y el obispo aceptó su declaración.

El rito de ascender a la candidatura es simple, directo, y subestimado, explicó el Obispo Olson en su homilía.

“El rito de recepción en la candidatura es realmente marcado por la sencillez de la fe, porque fe es lo que se requiere para oír el llamado y decir “sí”, él sugirió. “La fe empieza oyendo y escuchando a Jesucristo”.

Fiel y generoso servicio a Cristo y a su Iglesia trae consigo la preparación de mente y espíritu, así como una íntima y significativa conversión de corazón para amar al prójimo y poder entregarnos libremente a servirlo.

“La formación requiere la cruz—requiere rendir la voluntad propia y conformarse totalmente a Cristo como nos lo muestran San Esteban y San Laurencio—dos de los primeros diáconos y mártires en la vida de la Iglesia”, dijo el Obispo Olson. “No se equivoquen, todo se pierde al confundir el entusiasmo con el sólido, auténtico celo del discipulado”.

Julián Mendoza definió su tiempo como aspirante al diaconado como “cambiar de vida”.

“Ha sido estupendo—mucha oración, discernimiento, y escuchar al Señor, porque él es quien controla todo”, dijo el feligrés de Sta. Catalina de Siena mientras con su esposa, Mary, esperaba que empiece la Misa.

Mendoza dice que hacer malabares con el trabajo, estudio, y responsabilidades familiares es un reto, “pero hasta ahora el Señor está haciéndolo funcionar”.

“Si tan solo nos abrimos al Señor, todo se



Obispo Michael Olson con los 32 candidatos para el diaconado permanente. (Foto por Adrean Indolos / NTC)

resuelve”, el candidato al diaconado añadió. “He aprendido a no preocuparme por el mañana porque Él se encargará de ello”.

Las reuniones de estudio para los candidatos aumentarán de un sábado a dos al mes. También serán asignados a las parroquias y se espera que completen 15 horas de servicio a la Iglesia además de las 15 horas de ministerio a la comunidad cada mes.

La Orden de Diácono es un ministerio de servicio a la Palabra de Dios, los sacramentos de la Iglesia, y los actos heroicos de caridad. Los hombres, ordenados diáconos, representan a Cristo en el mundo y se espera que modelen la gracia, la justicia, la fe, y la compasión en la comunidad.

Además de ayudar con la vida sacramental en la parroquia, los diáconos visitan a los enfermos y reclusos en casa, son ministros voluntarios en la prisión, defensores de los marginados, y enseñan en varios programas de la parroquia.

La clase del 2020 es el quinto grupo de candidatos diaconales capacitados en la Diócesis de Fort Worth. Los diáconos permanentes ordenados para la diócesis antes de 1989, recibieron su formación en la Diócesis de Dallas.

El Diácono James Bindel vino a la Misa el 6 de agosto para mostrar su apoyo a los futuros diáconos que conoció cuando enseñó en las clases de indagación y consulta.

“Es asombroso ver el entusiasmo de estos hombres y ver como su vida de oración y espiritualidad ha cambiado”, dijo el diácono

que sirve en Nuestra Señora Reina de la Paz en Wichita Falls.

Pero, es solo el principio de la jornada, observó él.

“Estos hombres todavía tienen cuatro años de formación”, continuó Bindel. “No es cosa de un verano y ya eres un diácono. La preparación es larga. La Iglesia discierne y el hombre también”.

La diócesis está bendecida con un gran número de candidatos de alta calidad que son “ejemplo de liderazgo cristiano”, según Juan Rendón, director de formación de diáconos permanentes.

Después de un intenso año de reuniones mensuales, estudio general, oración, días de retiro, y reflexión en grupos pequeños, los hombres empezarán su específica formación teológica y litúrgica.

“El año pasado fue para discernir. Ahora, nuestra atención está en las Órdenes Sagradas”, agregó Rendón. “Nos reuniremos más seguido para formación intelectual, pastoral, y espiritual. El componente académico es más intenso”.

Los candidatos se entrenarán para la Proclamación de la Palabra y—si Dios quiere—recibirán el Ministerio de Lector el próximo verano. Además del intenso estudio de principios litúrgicos y tareas parroquiales, los hombres afinarán sus habilidades como ministros de la caridad.

“Ellos serán asignados a hospitales, a cuidado paliativo, a hogares de ancianos, y a prisiones”, continuó Rendón. “Lo que el Papa Francisco llama la periferia de la existencia humana”.

Joel Rodríguez, recién nombrado director del Ministerio Hispano, tiene un propósito en mente:

Encender el fuego de la fe en el pueblo

Por Michele Baker
Corresponsal

PARA JOEL RODRIGUEZ, EL RECIÉN NOMBRADO DIRECTOR DEL MINISTERIO HISPANO DE LA DIÓCESIS DE FORT WORTH, TODO TIENE QUE VER CON EL FUEGO.

“Nuestra fe católica es fuego alimentado por la caridad, la compasión, por el amor a Dios y al prójimo”, dijo. “En estos tiempos es importante tener una fe viva que va más allá de una serie de reglas”.

Rodríguez, quien se convirtió al catolicismo en 2006, sintió las primeras chispas de la fe cuando era un niño creciendo en un devoto hogar Adventista.

“Yo estaba en la iglesia casi todos los días cuando era chico”, recuerda. “Mi madre me enseñó el amor a Dios y a la Biblia”.

Nacido en Brooklyn, Rodríguez fue a vivir a Puerto Rico a los 12 años cuando su familia se trasladó allá para servir como misioneros. Creció viendo a sus padres acogiendo en su casa a los extranjeros, alimentando a los hambrientos, y visitando a los enfermos.

“Desde muy pequeño me enseñaron a compartir mi fe”, dijo él. “Y tuve el ejemplo de mis padres”.

Sin embargo, como frecuentemente pasa, cuando Rodríguez fue a la universidad, se alejó de la iglesia en que había crecido. Y aunque se había casado con una católica que practicaba su fe, él y su esposa, Zory, nunca discutieron acerca de sus diferentes tradiciones de fe. Entonces, en 2003, su hijo menor entró a su oficina con una página que había coloreado en su preparación para la Primera Comunión. La imagen era del Santísimo Sacramento en una custodia y una lección sobre la Presencia Real basada en el capítulo 6 del Evangelio de Juan, sobre el discurso del Pan de Vida.

“Me sentí muy incómodo. Y pensé, tengo



Joel Rodríguez

que ‘salvar’ a mi familia del catolicismo”, dijo Rodríguez. Consultó con su tío que era un teólogo adventista, y empezó a estudiar con la intención de refutar las enseñanzas y prácticas católicas.

“Yo había estudiado lógica y pensamiento crítico”, dijo Rodríguez. “Se me enseñó a leer y a confirmar”.

Usando este proceso Rodríguez llegó a darse cuenta que él había aprendido una gran cantidad de información incorrecta acerca del catolicismo. Su búsqueda de la verdad eventualmente lo llevó al libro *Roma, Dulce Hogar*, escrito por el famoso converso y apologista Scott Hahn, con quien Rodríguez empezó a conversar por email. Rodríguez finalmente compró una copia del *Catecismo* (la escondió de su esposa y la estudió en secreto) y empezó a ir a Misa los domingos con su familia.

“Cuando empecé a estudiar el *Catecismo*, la Biblia empezó a tener sentido para mí

“Ser católico es orgánico; es estar vivo. Es una fe viva fluyendo del Dios Vivo”.

como nunca antes lo había tenido”, dijo Rodríguez. “Empecé a ver la relación entre el Antiguo y el Nuevo Testamento”.

En la primavera de 2005, cuando el Papa Juan Pablo II vivía sus últimos días, la pasión que Rodríguez había descubierto por su nueva fe empezó a arder brillantemente. Ya no pudo esconderla; quería ser católico. Se acercó al Padre George Foley, párroco de la Iglesia de San Judas en Mansfield adonde la familia Rodríguez iba a Misa.

“Tuve que esperar para empezar RICA”, él recuerda. “Así que tomé clases de Biblia con mi mentor, Bill Bellman [director parroquial de RICA]”.

Y el 16 de abril, 2006, Rodríguez fue recibido en la Iglesia. Esto no significó que el dejara RICA. Él pasó otros cinco años ayudando con el proceso en Español en la parroquia y fue catequista. Ahora, cinco años más tarde, Rodríguez es candidato al Programa de Diaconado Permanente para la diócesis, y empieza un nuevo capítulo como Director del Ministerio Hispano.

“Ser católico es orgánico; es estar vivo”, dijo Rodríguez. “Es una fe viva fluyendo del Dios Vivo”.

Cuando se le pregunta cuáles son sus planes para la Oficina del Ministerio Hispano, Rodríguez apenas puede esconder la luz que baila detrás de sus ojos.

“Quiero incomodar a la gente para que empiece su búsqueda”, él dijo. “Quiero ver a la gente ardiendo apasionadamente por su fe”.

Ayudando a los candidatos a descubrir sus dones para el ministerio

Diácono Rigoberto Leyva se une al Programa del Diaconado Permanente

Por Michele Baker
Corresponsal

EL DIÁCONO RIGOBERTO LEYVA SE HA UNIDO AL PERSONAL DE LA DIÓCESIS DE FORT WORTH EN EL PROGRAMA DE DIACONADO PERMANENTE, COMO COORDINADOR DE LA FORMACIÓN PASTORAL EN ACCIÓN.

“Mi trabajo es asignar a los candidatos al diaconado a los lugares donde recibirán entrenamiento pastoral”, explicó él. “Puede ser en hospitales, Caridades Católicas, o cuidados paliativos”.

Más que mantener records y programación, Diác. Leyva ve su nuevo puesto como instrumento para revelar las virtudes y capacidades que cada hombre trae a su ministerio.

“Lo bonito acerca de los diáconos es que todos tenemos diferentes dones”, dijo él. “Algunos son intelectuales; otros puro corazón. Es un hermoso regalo del Espíritu Santo”.

Con el grupo de hombres que empezarán el recién reinstalado programa de formación diaconal en la diócesis, Diác. Leyva tendrá más que suficiente para mantenerse ocupado. Sin embargo, trabajar arduamente no es nuevo para él.

Nacido y criado en Chihuahua, México, Diác. Leyva llegó a los Estados Unidos en 1991 con poco más que la ropa que vestía. Realizó una serie de trabajos para sostenerse, y en 1992 conoció a su esposa, María, quien lo encaminó en la jornada espiritual que cambiaría su vida.

El Diác. Leyva admite que antes de ese momento en su vida, él no sabía nada de la iglesia, pero conocer a María cambió todo eso. Para cuando la pareja se casó en Nuestra Señora de Lourdes en Mineral Wells en 1993, Leyva había entrado a la Iglesia, se había unido a un grupo carismático de oración, y empezaba a sentir



Diácono Rigoberto Leyva

la necesidad de profundizar su fe.

“Había estado un año en el grupo de oración y llegué a un punto donde sentí la necesidad de una búsqueda más intensa”, dijo.

Su búsqueda lo llevó al Instituto Luz de Cristo (ahora Instituto San Juan Pablo II), un programa de formación espiritual para ministros laicos ofrecido por la Diócesis de Fort Worth. Al terminar los tres años de estudio, se acercaron a preguntarle al Diác. Leyva si le interesaría participar en las clases de formación para el diaconado permanente, algo, dijo él, en lo que nunca había soñado.

Leyva, para quien el Inglés era su segundo idioma y que en aquel momento ni siquiera tenía diploma de preparatoria, enfrentó retos únicos durante la formación diaconal. Perseveró por la oración y el apoyo de mucha gente, notablemente el del Padre Jeff Poirot, párroco de la Iglesia de la

“Lo bonito acerca de los diáconos es que todos tenemos diferentes dones. Algunos son intelectuales; otros puro corazón. Es un hermoso regalo del Espíritu Santo”.

Sagrada Familia en Fort Worth.

“El Padre Jeff me apoyó durante [el programa de] formación diaconal, y le estoy especialmente agradecido”, dijo Diác. Leyva. “También estoy agradecido al Padre Balaji Boyalla, el párroco de Nuestra Señora de Lourdes [Mineral Wells].”

Aún ahora, al Diác. Leyva le asombra el hecho de que fue capaz de terminar el programa diaconal a pesar de no tener una completa educación formal. Sin embargo, desde su ordenación en septiembre 26, 2009, él ha recuperado el tiempo perdido: obteniendo su GED, algunos créditos universitarios, y haciendo planes para obtener una licenciatura en Teología Pastoral. Y hace todo esto mientras sirve en Nuestra Señora de Lourdes, donde él aconseja parejas, visita a los enfermos, bautiza, y oficia en bodas.

“Responder al llamado divino no es siempre fácil”, dijo Diác. Leyva. “Uno tiene que saber escuchar y estar siempre dispuesto a distinguir Su voluntad. Pero esto es lo que el Señor hace por la gente que lo escucha”.



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por Joan Kurkowski-Gillen

PARA CHRIS ACEVEDO, VISITAR LOS LUGARES SANTOS EN ROMA Y DESPUÉS VIAJAR A CRACOVIA, POLONIA PARA EL DÍA MUNDIAL DE LA JUVENTUD 2016 FUE LA JORNADA ESPIRITUAL DE TODA SU VIDA.

“Ir a todos los lugares religiosos que sólo había visto en imágenes, me asombró”, dijo el joven de 15 años, que cursa el segundo año en Trinity High School.

Estar en la presencia del Papa Francisco, y celebrando su fe con millón y medio de jóvenes de casi cada continente y nación, fortaleció la vida de oración del adolescente.

“Ver a toda esa gente de alrededor del mundo que, como yo, son católicos fue una experiencia

increíble”, añadió Acevedo. “Definitivamente hizo crecer mi fe”.

El feligrés de San Miguel fue uno de los 208 peregrinos de la Diócesis de Fort Worth que asistieron al Día Mundial de la Juventud — festival internacional que permite a la gente joven encontrar a Jesús en el Evangelio al estar rodeado de la Iglesia universal. Iniciado por el Papa Juan Pablo II en 1985, el evento tiene lugar cada tres años y da la oportunidad a los jóvenes católicos de celebrar su fe en compañía del Santo Padre.

Asegurando una relación cercana entre el Día Mundial de la Juventud y el Año Jubilar de la Misericordia, el Papa Francisco escogió las palabras de Jesús, “Dichosos los misericordiosos,

porque recibirán misericordia”, como tema de la reunión del 2016

Antes de llegar a Polonia, el contingente de Fort Worth—representando 33 parroquias—pasó varios días en Roma y viajó a Asisi, Praga, Auschwitz, y al lugar de nacimiento de San Juan Pablo II en Wadowice, Polonia.

Antes de iniciar la jornada, Jason Spoolstra, director diocesano del ministerio juvenil, preparó a los participantes para esperar lo inesperado.

“Les dije que no era una vacación o un viaje. Es un peregrinaje”, él enfatizó. “Parte de un peregrinaje es sacrificar y ofrecer algo junto con la oración diaria, y visitar los lugares santos”.

Y, aunque la experiencia del Día Mundial de

Peregrinos asisten al Vía Crucis en el Parque Blonia durante el Día Mundial de la Juventud en Cracovia, Polonia el 29 de julio. (Foto CNS/David W. Cerny, Reuters)

S

1.6 MILLONES DE JÓVENES. 85 OBISPOS. SEIS DÍAS. UNA FE.

Cientos de adolescentes y adultos jóvenes de la Diócesis de Fort Worth viven el gozo y la diversidad de la Iglesia católica

la Juventud fue fructífera e inspiradora, también incluyó momentos de desilusión y esfuerzo. Los peregrinos caminaron largas distancias a los diferentes lugares y santuarios en temperaturas más cálidas de lo anticipado. Permanecer hidratados y comer a las horas programadas fue a veces un problema.

“Lo que me hizo darme cuenta que teníamos un grupo especial fue que en medio de estas pruebas, Dios nos bendijo con gran gracia y misericordia”, explicó el joven ministro. “Sentimos Su voluntad, y los jóvenes tenían un espíritu muy alegre aun cuando estaban cansados, hambrientos, o con sed”.

Para muchos participantes, varios momentos

emocionales dieron relevancia al peregrinaje de julio 19-agosto 1. Mientras visitaron Roma, los peregrinos de Fort Worth celebraron Misa con el Obispo Michael Olson en el Altar de la Cátedra de San Pedro en la Basílica de San Pedro. La escultura de bronce dorado, sobre el famoso altar, guarda los restos de lo que muchos creen es la silla que San Pedro usó cuando predicó en Roma.

La basílica papal estaba relativamente vacía cuando el grupo diocesano llegó para la Misa temprano en la mañana.

“Más tarde había toneladas de gente alrededor, así que verdaderamente aprecié la intimidad de esa Misa”, dijo Alyssa Gapinski, feligresa de Sta. Francisca Cabrini en Granbury. “Es un



VEA LA PÁGINA 46

**EL OBISPO MICHAEL OLSON
HABLA SOBRE SU VISITA A
LA CIUDAD NATAL DE
SAN JUAN PABLO II.**



“Celebré
Misa para
nuestros
peregrinos
en la iglesia
donde

San Juan Pablo II fue bautizado, confirmado y recibió la Primera Comunión en su ciudad natal de Wadowice. Oré en el pequeño apartamento donde él y su padre vivieron. Ha sido muy especial para mí. Muy conmovedor y significativo. Yo, ahora, tengo mi ejemplo como obispo”.

CONTINUA DE LA PÁGINA 45

hermoso recuerdo”.

La joven de 23 años, graduada universitaria, supo del Día Mundial de la Juventud en Cracovia durante una clase de estudio bíblico. Ávida viajera, decidió ir y animó a un par de amistades a ir con ella.

“Ver un poco de mi herencia Polaca junto con otros católicos fue algo que realmente me entusiasmó”, dijo Gapinski.

Pero la enormidad del evento sorprendió e impresionó a la nativa de Michigan. Ver al Papa Francisco llegar al Parque Blonia para la ceremonia de bienvenida fue una imagen que nunca olvidará.

“Podíamos ver su carrito venir alrededor y él llegó bastante cerca de nosotros”, ella agregó. “Yo sabía que habría un millón de gente allí, pero nunca en mi vida había yo estado en el mismo



Los peregrinos de la Diócesis de Fort Worth pasaron dos semanas descubriendo la riqueza de la Iglesia y profundizando su fe. Esto incluyó a veces desafiando los elementos, como se ve en esta foto tomada en el Parque Blonia para la bienvenida del Papa el 28 de julio. (Foto cortesía de Chris West)

lugar con tantísima gente”.

Saber que cada parte de esa multitud humana compartía la misma fe fue una admirable realidad.

“Para ellos ser católicos también fue lo más conmovedor que experimente en el viaje”.

Durante su estancia en Polonia, el grupo diocesano también visitó y celebró Misa en el Santuario de la Divina Misericordia. La iglesia en Cracovia en donde reposa Sta. Faustina Kowalska, una monja y mística Polaca cuyas apariciones de Jesucristo inspiraron la devoción a la novena de la Divina Misericordia.

Retrasados por las largas colas para visitar el santuario y la imagen de la Divina Misericordia, el grupo salió tarde para el concierto de Matt Maher y la Hora Santa en la Arena Tauron en Cracovia. Cuando se preparaban para otra larga caminata a su destino, un sacerdote salió del santuario llevando una gran custodia marcando el inicio de una liturgia al aire libre.

Spoolstra dijo que su primera reacción fue mover al grupo hacia la arena, pero Dios tenía otros planes.

“Todos estaban ya caminando hacia la custodia y era como si Cristo estuviera diciendo, ‘quédate conmigo, aquí, ahora’, y nos quedamos”, dijo el organizador.

Los peregrinos de Fort Worth terminaron

rezando la Coronilla de la Divina Misericordia en el santuario de la Divina Misericordia, a la hora de la Divina Misericordia.

“Fue la oportunidad inesperada. Sucedió y resultó increíble”, dijo Spoolstra entusiasmado.

Los jóvenes nunca asistieron al concurrido concierto en la arena. Para cuando llegaron, por razones de seguridad, las puertas ya estaban cerradas.

“Fue una desilusión; pero, si nos hubiéramos ido cuando se suponía, el grupo no hubiera experimentado la Coronilla de la Divina Misericordia”, él admitió. “Sentimos que fue

providencial que Dios nos tuviera allí. Fue un momento decisivo”.

Para muchos de los peregrinos adolescentes, conocer mejor a los dos pontífices fue otra ventaja del Día Mundial de la Juventud. Chris Acevedo, junto con otros jóvenes, vio al Papa Francisco pasar en su comitiva y oyó su mensaje de amor y misericordia. También aprecia a San Juan Pablo II de una nueva forma después de visitar un museo lleno de objetos y de ver el pequeño apartamento donde creció el Papa nacido en Polonia.

“Yo tenía cuatro años cuando él murió, así que no lo recuerdo”, admitió el adolescente. “El museo estaba lleno de información; me enteré de muchas cosas que no sabía antes”.

Para más sobre el Día Mundial de la Juventud, incluyendo conversaciones de los peregrinos de Fort Worth, visite northtexascatholic.org/wyd

to the Knights of Columbus, the couple's surviving sons, and the emotional response to recent police tragedies, Shield a Badge with Prayer is experiencing a resurgence.

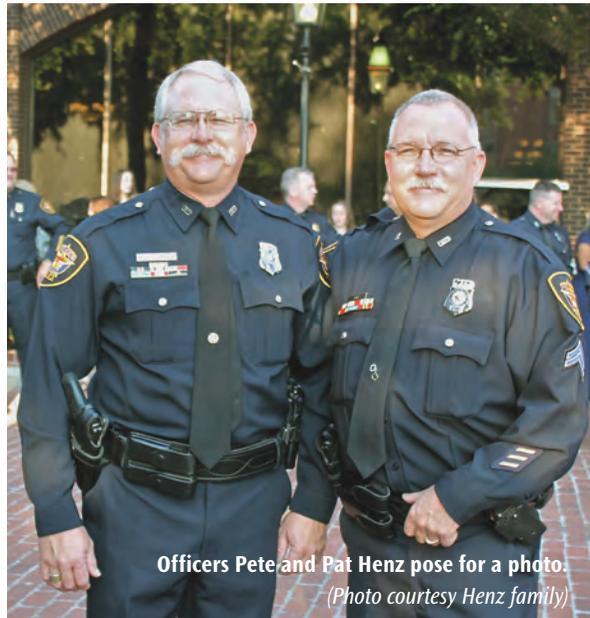
"The nice thing about the program is anybody can participate," explains Tim Henz, the primary coordinator who sends out prayer sponsor cards people can place in a Bible or tack onto a mirror as a reminder of their commitment. "My mother wanted to bring the community together. It's not just a Catholic thing and there's not a set prayer to say. It's very simplistic and that's what made it work."

To rekindle enthusiasm for the program and meet the demands of a growing Arlington police force, Henz reached out to his fellow Knights of Columbus members for help. When Shield a Badge started in 1988, Arlington had approximately 300 police officers. Today that figure has more than doubled.

"With that many officers it takes more time and more coordination," he explains. "I asked the 4th Degree Knights if they would sign up people after Mass and each council said, 'yes.'"

Working with a chairman from each Knight of Columbus group, Henz maintains a master list of participants and responds to requests from non-Catholic churches and individuals. A website, www.shield-a-badge.org, and occasional posts on the Arlington Police Department's Facebook page, also generates calls.

But nothing put the vulnerability of law enforcement in the spotlight more than the ambush and murder of five patrol officers in downtown Dallas on July 7. A lone sniper targeted police officers as they monitored a peaceful march organized to protest officer-involved shootings



Officers Pete and Pat Henz pose for a photo.
(Photo courtesy Henz family)

"I believe people want to pray for officers and this way, they get to pray for someone specific."

— Detective Pat Henz

in Louisiana and Minnesota.

In the aftermath of the tragedy, the slain officers were memorialized and North Texans reached out to show their appreciation to Dallas police and other departments.

"So many people want to do something for police officers but they don't know how to express their thanks and support," says Pat Henz, a Fort Worth police detective. Another brother, Peter, is a Cedar Hill police officer and a fourth Henz brother, Chris, is in marketing management.

Shield a Badge allows citizens to show their concern for first responders in a low-key, but significant way, according to the detective.

"I believe people want to pray for officers and this way, they get to pray for someone specific," says the 28-year police veteran. "It lets them feel they're doing something for the officer and the department."

One prayer sponsor recently told Henz she was sending an extra card to her officer in response to what happened in Dallas.

"She really wanted to let him know she was saying extra prayers not only for his safety,

but so he makes good decisions," Pat Henz continued.

A former patrolman and crime scene investigator before joining the major case unit, Pat Henz says police work is more than just dodging bullets and arresting bad guys. There's a mental facet to the job.

"You're on an emotional roller coaster every day," he points out. "At work, your senses have to be on, up, and alert because you don't know from one stop to another what's going to happen. You can go from a fatality accident to a disturbance call to someone crying because their house was burglarized."

Police officers come home mentally and physically drained.

"The next day, they do it all over again and that takes a toll," Henz admits.

Currently on a task force reviewing crimes against chil-

dren, the detective spends his days interviewing young victims and adult suspects. The power of prayer helps him deal with some of the worst perpetrators in society.

"What keeps me sane? It has to be prayer," he insists. "God gives me the strength to handle difficult situations."

His brother, Tim, believes their mother would be proud the program she started almost three decades ago is still "shielding" law enforcement with prayer. Co-workers often tell him how a card from their sponsor can "turn a week around" after dealing with non-stop crime calls, stress, and problems at home.

"It's a little thing but in the back of their mind they know somebody is praying for them," he says. "It makes a big difference."

To Report Misconduct

If you or someone you know is a victim of sexual misconduct by anyone who serves the church, you may

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- Or call the Victim Assistance Hotline (817) 945-9345 and leave a message.

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GOOD NEWSMAKER

How Catholics and non-Catholics alike are joining together to shield police officers

With Prayer



LEFT: Officer Tim Henz (center) is “secured” by brothers Pete (left) and Pat (right). Tim Henz was the first to go into law enforcement. (Photo by Cheryl Carpenter)

By Joan Kurkowski-Gillen
Correspondent

WHEN TIM HENZ JOINED THE ARLINGTON POLICE DEPARTMENT 33 YEARS AGO AT THE AGE OF 21, HE WAS ONE OF THE YOUNGEST MEN HIRED BY THE GROWING CITY TO PATROL THE STREETS AND HUNT DOWN LAWBREAKERS.

So it’s no wonder that his mother, Bernadette, spent a lot of

time on her knees praying for his safety. And it’s not surprising that she asked others to pray with her.

“After I joined the force I had a lot of people come up to me and say, ‘Hey, we’re praying for you’ and I realized most of them were part of mom’s prayer group or the women’s organization at St. Matthew’s [in Arlington],” the experienced officer recalls.

When two more sons, Pete and Patrick, chose careers in law enforcement, the concerned matriarch realized every officer could benefit from some earnest prayer for their safety. Armed with little more than a sign-up sheet

and table, Mrs. Henz launched her Shield a Badge with Prayer program in 1988 during a coffee and donut gathering after Sunday Mass.

The idea was simple. Participants received the name and badge number of an Arlington officer and showed their support by saying a daily prayer for his or her safety, good judgment, and safe return home. Except for an occasional card or note, no other contact was permitted.

Church members at St. Matthew were the first to sign up.

“Then word spread to their friends who belonged to [Most]

Blessed Sacrament and St. Maria Goretti and it took off from there,” Tim Henz says remembering the project’s early history. “Somebody who knew what mom was doing put it in the newspaper and other churches and individuals asked to adopt an officer.”

When Arlington Police Chaplain Harold Elliott talked about Shield a Badge with Prayer at national chaplaincy conferences, interest in the program spread to other states.

Twenty-eight years later, the gesture of saying a daily prayer for a specific person in law enforcement continues not only in Arlington, but in other police departments and cities across the country and Canada.

After the deaths of Bernadette and her husband, Peter, the program waned a bit but, thanks

CONTINUED ON PAGE 47