

# NEWSMAGAZINE North Texas Catholic

Bringing the Good News to the Diocese of Fort Worth

Vol. 32 No. 6

November / December 2016



## Mother Teresa

How the new saint impacted the people of the diocese  
*their work with the poorest of the poor.*

Mother Teresa of Kolkata played an important role in  
discerning my vocation. I read her book, Total Surrender  
and it gave me the desire to give everything to God.

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**FRONT COVER:** Mother Teresa during her visit to Alberta, Canada, in 1982. (Photo by Anne Georg/iStockphoto.com) In the background are reflections on Mother Teresa from people in our diocese.



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# North Texas Catholic

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## God made us part of his life list—why not return the favor?

I recently read a magazine article about the 25 new sights and experiences people should have on their “life list,” or less delicately, “bucket list” — the list of things we would like to see and do in our lifetime.

The writer listed a variety of things to put on one’s bucket list — amazing, marvelous things — like touring the CERN super collider in Switzerland, trekking through the world’s longest cave in Vietnam, and observing the stars in Chile’s Atacama Desert.

This got me thinking about the psychology of life lists and how we probably all have one. Why is that? Because they’re more than just a random series of experiences. In a way, they’re concrete evidence of a meaning-filled life. They’re Exhibit A and Exhibit B. So it’s only natural that a life list includes things we care about a lot, things that we love, things we want our offspring to remember us by.

As Catholics we know that a life well-lived isn’t judged simply by the places we’ve seen or by the recognition we’ve earned. We know that a life filled with love for Jesus is what matters most in the end. Yes, there’s nothing wrong with visiting an exotic location, but we were made for more!

Imagine if we had a faith list to complement our life list, or if we had more elements of faith on our life list. Imagine if we pursued one faith goal with as much passion as a wanderlust-filled backpacker pursues the next off-the-beaten-path adventure. How would our lives change? Wouldn’t we agree the sooner we include God in our life lists, the better? As Matthew Kelly points out in his new book, *Resisting Happiness*, “The moment we open ourselves up to God’s plans is the moment miracles begin to happen in our lives.” Why wait until we’re close to “kicking the bucket?”

So give God some attention on your life list, or “faith list.” Make a pilgrimage to a Door of Mercy during this holy year (*Pgs. 16-17*); witness to the sanctity of life by participating in 40 Days for Life (*Pgs. 22-23*); live out one of the spiritual works of mercy by praying for the faithful departed (*Pgs. 32-33*); take time to help the poor, inviting family and friends to join you, like St. Teresa of Kolkata did (*Pgs. 18-21*); or make the time to learn more about Christ and share this gift with your family (*Pg. 28*).

Again, there’s nothing at all wrong with visiting a distant destination but at the same time, let’s remind ourselves that our ultimate destination is spending eternity with God. Getting there depends less on the places we’ve seen on our earthly voyage than the love we shared everywhere we went.

Juan Guajardo  
Associate Editor

# OUR SHEPHERD SPEAKS

## Faithful Citizenship:

*Do good and shun evil*



### DURING THE LAST SEVERAL WEEKS

I have found myself involved in frequent conversations with many people regarding the responsibility of Catholics to vote in the upcoming election with a good and well-formed conscience. Some people in these conversations have expressed troubled consciences because of their repulsion by the tenor and substance of the candidates' speeches and political platforms that are each at odds with the Gospel and the authentic teaching of the Church. Other people in these conversations have dismissed trouble from their consciences with the disclaimer that "sometimes you are left to choose the lesser evil." It is this second response that I would like to address as your bishop.

What troubles me is that many of the people who have offered me this response do not really seem to believe that what they judge to be the "lesser evil" is really all that evil to begin with. This most importantly includes those inherently evil actions that directly harm human beings and can never be justified by any circumstances: abortion, racism, physician assisted suicide, terrorism, the narrowing of religious liberty, the vindictive use of the death penalty, and the redefinition of marriage.

Yet, it also includes an array of social issues that, when considered in the abstract,

are not inherently good or evil, but which our present circumstances have made urgent in such a way that a failure to act would in reality result in direct harm and destruction to human life and to the common good of a just society. These issues would include the Reform and Implementation of a Just Immigration Policy, Methods of Law Enforcement, an Unprecedented Refugee Crisis, Proper Stewardship of Environmental Resources, and Economic Policies to Prioritize the Needs of the Poor.

It also concerns me that some Catholics choose to evaluate the Church's teaching and guidance on any of these issues by gauging the teaching according to whether or not it is in support of the positions of the candidates and party platforms. Others simply consider the guidance of the Gospel and teaching of the Church as having the status of just another voice among the din of voices chattering among biased sources in both social and mainstream media. I even had one friend offer encouragement to me by expressing that "he was glad to see that the Texas bishops had joined the anti-death penalty movement." The statement, while sincerely made in good will, portrays a common misunderstanding of fidelity to the Gospel and the bishops' responsibility to teach as being second place to that of political movements or partisan platforms in one's conscience formation.

I remind you that the formation of our conscience begins and ends with prayer. We humbly ask God to open our hearts and minds to his truth that enlightens us. We examine the facts and candidates as we can best discern them and not merely on the basis of biased sources. We evaluate a course of action through the study of Sacred Scripture and the authentic Magisterium of the Church. We look



BISHOP MICHAEL F. OLSON, STD, MA  
DIOCESE OF FORT WORTH

to Jesus Christ, the fullness of revelation. As the Second Vatican Council taught, "Always summoning one to love good and to avoid evil, the voice of conscience can, when necessary, speak to one's heart more specifically: do this, shun that" (*Gaudium et Spes 16*).

A well-formed conscience never becomes comfortable with evil. A well-formed conscience might have to tolerate lesser evils, but it can never grow complacent with them.

We are called to shun evil just as much as we are called to do what is good. While voting is required and essential in fulfilling my social responsibility as a faithful citizen, my faithful citizenship does not end at the ballot box. When our vote contributes to the establishment of policies that our well-formed conscience judges to be evil, we must work actively and specifically in other ways to promote and to defend the good that the particular evil undermines. Failure to do so is to sin seriously by omission.

I ask each of us to consider our faithful citizenship beyond election day. Whatever the outcome of the election, the examination of our conscience and the discernment of the right course of action for us as faithful Catholics will continue to grow in importance as we move forward as a nation in facing these grave matters in our fragmented society.

*+ Michael F. Olson*





# CLERGY ASSIGNMENTS FOR THE DIOCESE OF FORT WORTH

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



### PRIEST ASSIGNMENTS

**Rev. George Foley** has retired as Pastor of St. Jude Parish in Mansfield, and remains as Pastor Emeritus, effective September 1, 2016.

**Rev. Benet Fonck, OFM**, residing at St. Francis Village in Crowley, has been recalled by his Religious Order community, effective August 5, 2016.

**Rev. Federico Gayoso, TOR** (Paraguay Vice Province), new to the Diocese of Fort Worth, has been granted faculties and will be assisting at Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish in Fort Worth, effective August 22, 2016.

**Rev. Woon Pil Jeong**, new to the Diocese of Fort Worth, has been appointed Pastor of Korean Martyrs Parish in Hurst, effective August 19, 2016.

**Rev. Hoang Minh Nguyen, CMC**, has been assigned to Holy Family Religious and Retreat Center in Fort Worth, from Vietnamese Martyrs Parish in Arlington, effective September 1, 2016.

**Rev. Bonaventure Tuan Van Nguyen, CMC**, new to the Diocese of Fort Worth, has been appointed Parochial Vicar of Vietnamese Martyrs Parish in Arlington, effective September 1, 2016.

**Rev. Michael O'Sullivan, SAC**, new to the Diocese of Fort Worth, is residing at St. Patrick Cathedral in Fort Worth while assisting at St. Stephen Parish in Weatherford, effective August 30, 2016.

**Rev. John Lan Tran, SJ**, new to the Diocese of Fort Worth, will be serving at Montserrat Retreat House, effective November 1, 2016.

### ON BEHALF OF THE PERSONAL ORDINARIATE OF THE CHAIR OF ST. PETER

**Rev. Prentice Dean**, new to the Diocese of Fort Worth, has been appointed Pastor of St. Mary the Virgin Parish in Arlington, effective September 1, 2016.

**Rev. Timothy Perkins** has been transferred from Pastor of St. Mary the Virgin Parish in Arlington, and appointed as Vicar General of the Ordinariate, effective September 1, 2016.

**Rev. Christopher C. Stainbrook** has been transferred from Pastor of St. Timothy Parish in Fort Worth, and appointed Parochial Administrator of St. John Vianney Parish in Cleburne, effective September 1, 2016.

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## Catholic Schools Office announces free/reduced-price lunch and milk programs

The diocesan Office of Catholic Schools has announced its policy for free and reduced-price meals for children who are unable to pay for meals served under the National School Breakfast and Lunch, Free Milk, or Commodity School programs.

The following parochial schools will participate in the National School Lunch Program: All Saints, St. George, Our Lady of Victory, St. Rita, and St. Peter the Apostle, all in Fort Worth; Notre Dame Elementary, Wichita Falls; St. Mary's, Gainesville.

St. Maria Goretti School in Arlington will participate in the free and reduced-price milk program.

Under current guidelines, applicants for the free and reduced-price lunch program must list all incomes by source, such as Social Security, wages, child support, and pension for each household member.

Everyone wanting to participate in the

program must apply again this year at their respective schools, including children who qualified for free/reduced meals during the last school year. A child must be registered in school before an application will be accepted. Participants will be notified within one week after applying if their children qualify for free or reduced-price lunches or milk.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture prohibits discrimination against its customers, employees, and applicants for employment on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, sex, gender identity, religion, reprisal, and where applicable, political beliefs, marital status, familial or parental status, sexual orientation, or all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program, or protected genetic information in employment or in any program or activity conducted or funded by the Department. (Not all prohibited bases will apply to all programs

and/or employment activities.)

If you wish to file a Civil Rights program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, found online at [http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint\\_filing\\_cust.html](http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html), or at any USDA office, or call (866) 632-9992 to request the form. You may also write a letter containing all of the information requested in the form. Send your completed complaint form or letter to us by mail at U.S. Department of Agriculture, Director, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, by fax (202) 690-7442 or email at [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov).

Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339; or (800) 845-6136 (Spanish). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.



Photo by Kathy Hamer

## Sister Elizabeth Mary Fuhrmann professes final vows with Discalced Carmelite Nuns in Arlington

ARLINGTON — “I will Espouse You to me Forever,” proclaimed the program cover for the Solemn Profession Mass of Sister Elizabeth Mary, OCD.

The former Elizabeth Aileen Fuhrmann, accompanied by her large extended family and her mother, Sandra Fuhrmann, professed her final religious vows Sept. 24, at the Carmel of the Most Holy Trinity in Arlington.

Through her final (perpetual) profession of vows, Sister Elizabeth Mary gives herself totally to God and the Church, forever.

Bishop Michael Olson, using the marriage theme in his homily, noted that the day of solemn

vows marks, in the life of the religious, a true beginning, as well as a true ending of a courtship with Christ.

“Now she has completed this period of newness,” he explained, “having discerned that indeed she is married to Christ,” and that in holiness and love she will “give her life to Him and in service to his Church.”

The Discalced Carmelite community in Arlington models itself after Mary of Nazareth, who followed God’s will unconditionally. Prayer is at the center of their contemplative life. The sisters observe papal enclosure, meaning they do not leave the monastery except for medical care.

## St. Mary of the Assumption in Megargel turns 100

MEGARGEL — Parishioners of St. Mary of the Assumption Church gathered for the 100th anniversary of their parish Aug. 13.

While the parish has only 25 regular parishioners, the centennial festivities drew nearly 200, including Bishop Michael Olson.

“It was neat to have people come back who were just old Megargel people,” said Deacon Jim Novak, parochial administrator of St. Mary’s Church.

“To jump from 30 [people] to 200 is a lot of excitement for them,” Dcn. Novak added, pointing out that Megargel’s population is about 200.

The celebration included fellowship, food, and an afternoon Mass concelebrated by Bishop Olson, Father Albert Francis Kanjiranthumkal, HGN, St. Mary’s sacramental priest, and two visiting priests.

The centennial was reminiscent of the parish’s traditional celebrations of the solemnity of the Assumption of Mary. Starting in 1936, the church would hold celebrations each Aug. 15, drawing people from all over the state.

While those large celebrations are no more, the faith and friendship of the church community continues.

“Living here, and being a part of this big [Church] family and being a part of this history has just been amazing,” said Kimberli Cuba, a parishioner since 1992.

## New e-book featuring “The Flock” provides Advent preparation



(Illustration by Jean Denton)

Two simply drawn sheep, gazing at the sky with hopeful anticipation, is the perfect introduction to *Advent Waiting... with The Flock*. Designed to help parishioners look beyond the commercial hype surrounding Christmas

and spiritually prepare for Christ’s birth, the reproducible e-resource material pairs a clever cartoon strip with one of the day’s scripture readings and a thought-provoking reflection.

“It’s a light approach to the serious matter of preparing for the coming of the Lord,” explains Jean Denton. The journalist, illustrator, and former *North Texas Catholic* correspondent

authored the guide which features her cartoon series, “The Flock.” Centered around a cast of pensive but always quirky sheep, “The Flock” made its 1997 debut in the *North Texas Catholic* and has been featured in other U.S. diocesan publications over the years.

*Advent Waiting... with The Flock* is available at [www.pastoralcenter.com](http://www.pastoralcenter.com).



Photo by Adrean Indolos

## Scott Hahn touches on mercy, evangelization during talks

FORT WORTH — Renowned speaker and author Scott Hahn delivered three talks to packed audiences on Sept. 9 and 10 at St. Patrick Cathedral.

Drawing upon sacred Scripture, Church history, saints and popes, and some family stories, he illustrated how Catholics are called to share the Good News of Jesus.

Focusing his first talk on the Creed, he asked Catholics to take the time to recite it with gratitude and sincerity during Mass, saying it's not just "a seventh inning stretch after the homily."

Rather, it's a public statement that we are sons and daughters of God. Each time we proclaim the Creed, we renew our covenant with God, Dr. Hahn said.

His second and third talks intertwined mercy and the New Evangelization.

Pope Francis honored the connection between mercy and evangelism when he chose to begin the Holy Year of Mercy on Dec. 8, 2015 — the Feast of

the Immaculate Conception and the 50th anniversary of the end of the Second Vatican Council.

Since Vatican II, the popes have placed a special focus on evangelization.

But, Hahn said, evangelization is not just for popes or priests. At Mass, Catholics consume Jesus in the Word and Eucharist, and then are sent to share that gift with others.

That's best done through friendship, Dr. Hahn explained. "Friendship is the most natural context for sharing our joy, and friendship is the message of the Gospel. Jesus came to give us friendship with God..."

"Share the Gospel in friendship. You would recommend a restaurant or a movie to your friends and coworkers, so don't withhold the truths of all eternity. The only homily they might hear is your friendship. Share your joy. Don't hoard it. The world offers countless pleasures but not the joy that lasts."

## FROM NORTHTEXASCATHOLIC.ORG

Read these and many other stories in the local news, faith, and feature sections of our award-winning website, [northtexascatholic.org](http://northtexascatholic.org).

### A LOVE OF ART AND MOTHER TERESA

Marvin Girouard shares the story behind his rare collection of Mother Teresa paintings with the NTC.

### JESUS IS RIGHT AROUND THE CORNER

Through thick and thin, at home or away, Jesus is always right there with us, columnist David Mills reminds us.

### SEVEN SAINTS

Pope Francis recently canonized seven new saints! Learn more about this diverse, courageous, and steadfast group.

### LIFE IN THE STORM

Good Shepherd Church's Respect Life Ministry hosted Catholic speaker Chris Faddis, who shared how his faith-filled journey of trust in God helped him find meaning in suffering.

Follow us



## St. Maria Goretti students take to video cameras, green screens to deliver school announcements



Photo courtesy Brandon Smith

ARLINGTON— Instead of listening to morning announcements over the PA system, students at SMG School are having their announcements delivered via newscast, courtesy of fellow pupils. Filmed, edited, uploaded online, and then streamed in classrooms each day, the morning news program is the first of its kind in the diocese, said Music Education Specialist Brandon Smith (*center, back row*), who came up with the idea.

# Jurists must be instruments of mercy, justice, Archbishop Hebda says at Red Mass

by Joan Kurkowski-Gillen  
Correspondent

## **SPEAKING TO MORE THAN 100 LAWYERS, JUDGES, AND PUBLIC SERVANTS**

attending the 11th annual Red Mass, Archbishop Bernard A. Hebda, of the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis reminded his fellow jurists they are not only vendors of justice but instruments of mercy.

“Finding a way to be both just and merciful is a difficult task. And finding a way to be the Lord’s servant while pursuing professional excellence isn’t easy either,” the archbishop and Columbia Law School graduate admitted in his homily. “It’s for those reasons the Church has traditionally offered the Red Mass to ask for an outpouring of the Holy Spirit on all those involved in the administration of justice.”

Held September 29 in St. Patrick Cathedral, the Mass was concelebrated by Bishop Michael Olson along with Archbishop Hebda and Father Anh Tran, diocesan Judicial Vicar, who all wore scarlet vestments symbolizing the fire of the Holy Spirit. The color red is also associated with the martyrdom of St. Thomas More, the patron of lawyers and politicians.

An historic Catholic tradition dating back to the Middle Ages, the annual liturgy opened the court term in most European countries. The custom came to the United States in 1928 when Cardinal Patrick Hayes celebrated a Red Mass at old St. Andrew’s Church in New York City. The Mass focuses on the leadership roles of those present and asks for divine guidance from the Holy Spirit in their judicial and legislative endeavors.

The Red Mass Committee, led by attorney Robert Gieb, organizes the event for the diocese each year.

“We make a concerted effort to reach out to attorneys, judges, public officials, and their families,” Gieb said. “The Mass allows them to hear something from the Catholic perspective. It’s not proselytizing — just the Catholic viewpoint of the world we live in.”

This year’s diocesan Red Mass coincided



**Archbishop Bernard A. Hebda of the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis delivers the homily at the Red Mass at St. Patrick Cathedral. (Photo by Ben Torres/ NTC)**

with the Feast of the Archangels — Michael, Gabriel, and Raphael.

“They are perpetually ministering to God,” Archbishop Hebda suggested. “Wouldn’t it be wonderful if we, as lawyers and public servants, were as dedicated in our service as are the angels?”

The Pennsylvania native, who entered the seminary after practicing law for one year, encouraged his listeners to be faithful defenders of justice by recalling the words of three pontiffs. In the jubilee of 2000, St. John Paul II said the world needs men and women who courageously oppose the violation of human rights.

“What Catholic judges and lawyers involved in the administration of justice must possess is the awareness that their work, passionately supporting justice, equity, and the common good, belongs to the plan of God,” the archbishop said paraphrasing the late pontiff. “He asked all human beings to recognize one another as brothers and sisters.”

The faith-filled lawyer is therefore tasked with the mission of defending every individual — especially the weakest — and building a society on earth that follows the Gospel.

St. John Paul’s predecessor, Blessed Pope

Paul VI, voiced a similar appreciation for the work of justice.

“If you want peace, work for justice,” the speaker said recalling the iconic message from the Holy Father delivered during the Day of Peace in 1972. The quote was popularized on posters and is considered, by many, the core of Catholic social teaching.

Pope Francis added the element of mercy to the discourse on justice by reminding those in the judicial system that clients are not simply cases but people in pain.

“Pope Francis reminds us that mercy gets its hands dirty, it touches, it gets caught up with others and, if necessary, it gets personal,” he explained. “Getting personal applies to all involved — those accused of being perpetrators of injustice and the victims of injustice.”

Attorney Elizabeth Kerr, newly-elected to the Second Court of Appeals, attended the Mass with her husband.

“We try to come to the Red Mass every year,” said Kerr, a convert and St. Patrick Cathedral parishioner. “It brings out the gravity and importance of what lawyers and judges do. It’s always good to have a moral component in the back of your mind when you’re handling cases.”

## Mission outreach showcased at World Mission Sunday Mass



Seminarian Thomas Jones, left, with Father Thomas Craig, chairman of the Diocese of Fort Worth's Mission Council. (Photo by Matthew Smith/NTC)

By Matthew Smith

**AS CATHOLICS WE ARE** called upon to help others, for it is through giving that we receive much and grow. That's the message Bishop Michael Olson delivered during the Oct. 16 Diocesan World Mission Sunday Mass at St. Patrick's Cathedral.

A reception in the parish hall after the Mass brought home the reality of Bishop Olson's message. Representatives from about 10 mission and outreach organizations shared the goals and works of their respective groups with attendees.

The reception served as a precursor to Oct. 23's 90th anniversary of World Mission Sunday, a day Catholics are asked to donate toward the financial needs of missions throughout the world. The purpose being, Pope Francis recently said, to assist Christian communities in need and support the "proclamation of the Gospel even to the ends of the world."

Richard Benson, representing the Fort Worth Diocesan Mission Council and World Mission Rosary, said, when it comes to mission work, it all counts.

"It doesn't have to be across the ocean," Benson said. "It can be across the street."

Benson said he and others work with area parishes teaching the ins and outs of mission preparation.

"It can be confusing and daunting," Benson said. "That's where we come in with education programs and to try to put their expectations in line with what's really going to take place. No, you're not going to solve all the problems of the world. But you are going to be there. You're going to be present, be Christ's presence in that area."

Other tables featured photos of mission work throughout the world and pamphlets explaining the various groups' focuses.

One group present, St. Paula's Patrons, a widows' ministry of St. Ann Parish in Coppell, make a difference without leaving home.

"We needed a service project and this is what we came up with," member Mary Johnson said.

The group sews and collects clothes, which they give to religious and medical mission groups to distribute. Since 2011, more than 8,000 of their garments have gone to children in need in 19 countries.

Benson said the reception bolstered his faith in the importance of mission and outreach work.

"Because you see the level of enthusiasm in the different parishes and groups represented here today," Benson said. "It reaffirms what we're doing and establishes the bigger picture."

## For medical students, White Mass a reminder to see Christ in their patients

By Michele Baker

**BISHOP MICHAEL OLSON** celebrated a special Mass for healthcare professionals at St. Patrick Cathedral in Fort Worth on October 17, the eve of the Feast of St. Luke the Evangelist, patron saint of physicians and surgeons.

The event, known as a White Mass because of the white coats worn by doctors, drew nearly 80 physicians, medical students, and other medical professionals. Father George Thennattil and Father Christopher Stainbrook, who serve as hospital chaplains in Fort Worth, concelebrated the Mass which was hosted by the Catholic Medical Association of Students (CMAS) at the Texas College of Osteopathic Medicine at UNT Health Science Center.

"Treatment comes from outside but true healing comes from within," Bishop Olson said to those gathered. "It is the role of the physician and healthcare professional, through the stewardship of their gifts, to facilitate healing."

Andrew Hui, a second year medical student at TCOM, said that the bishop's remarks made a deep impression on him.

"When he touched on the

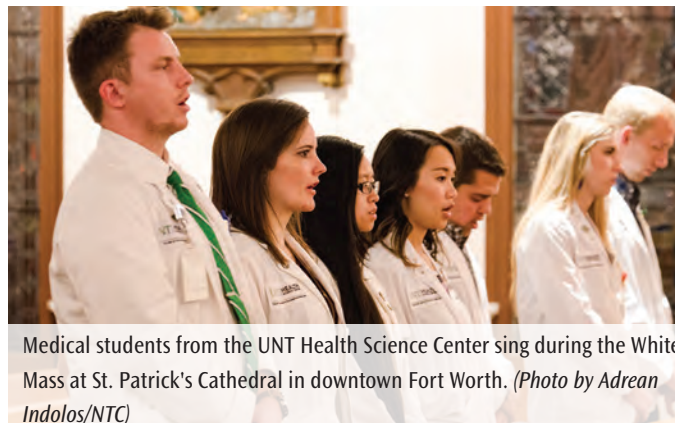
complacency that sometimes sets in among doctors, that was kind of a wake-up call to me," Hui said. "I have to remind myself that in this line of work you must be passionate about everything you do."

That passion, says Mary Mitchell, vice president of CMAS at UNT Health Science Center, becomes ministry when nourished by one's faith.

"It's great to have a community of people who have the same faith background and moral code," she said of her membership in CMAS. "It provides an important support system as we seek to live out our faith in our work."

Matthew Wise, president of the local CMAS chapter, agrees. He studied biology with a pre-med concentration at the University of Dallas. A parishioner at St. Patrick Cathedral, he said that his faith plays an integral role in how he views and carries out the duties of his future profession.

"I try to see Christ in each encounter I have with patients," he said. "This is easier said than done, but at the end of the day I want to be an instrument for Christ to heal through me."



Medical students from the UNT Health Science Center sing during the White Mass at St. Patrick's Cathedral in downtown Fort Worth. (Photo by Adrean Indolos/NTC)

BRIGHT  
FUTURES

# Ahead

“BEFORE CRISTO REY, I DIDN’T  
EVEN THINK ABOUT COLLEGE.  
IT WASN’T AN OPTION FOR ME.  
NOW, I’VE LEARNED SO MUCH.  
IT WAS TRULY A BLESSING  
TO BE ACCEPTED INTO THIS  
SCHOOL. *IT SAVED MY LIFE.*”

— Noe Rocha



Noe Rocha, a student at Cristo Rey Dallas, greets Father John Foley, the founder of Cristo Rey Network, during an August 24 gathering at Our Mother of Mercy Parish. (Photo by Donna Ryckaert / NTC)

➔ A NEW CRISTO REY HIGH SCHOOL, OPENING IN THE DIOCESE IN FALL 2018, WILL BRING HOPE TO UNDERPRIVILEGED STUDENTS IN SOUTH FORT WORTH, MAKING SURE THEIR TALENT AND POTENTIAL DOES NOT GO TO WASTE.

Stories by Joan Kurkowski-Gillen  
Correspondent

**N**OE ROCHA WOULD ADMIRE  
THE SMARTLY DRESSED  
STUDENTS WHO ATTENDED

ST. PHILIP THE APOSTLE SCHOOL IN  
DALLAS.

“Since I was little, I wanted to wear a tie and blazer to school but I never got the chance,” confided the 16-year-old who grew up in the crime-riddled Pleasant Grove neighborhood. “Catholic schools are super expensive and I knew my parents simply couldn’t afford it.”

Fortunately for Rocha, when Cristo Rey Dallas College Preparatory opened its doors last year in the southeast part of the city, the teenager became part of a revolutionary program in Catholic education. Using rigorous academics coupled with a unique corporate work-study program, the Cristo Rey Network gives economically disadvantaged youth the opportunity to attend a quality, faith-based school that prepares them for success in college and life.

Efforts are currently underway to open Cristo Rey Fort Worth High School in the Diocese of Fort Worth in fall 2018.

The Cristo Rey Network’s groundbreaking approach to education boasts impressive results: 92 percent of graduates enroll in college.

Cristo Rey’s caring teachers and safe environment are a far cry from the violent, drug-infested public school Noe Rocha attended as an eighth grader.

“Before Cristo Rey, I didn’t even think about college. It wasn’t an option for me,” he admitted. “Now, I’ve learned so much. It was truly a blessing to be accepted into this school. It saved my life.”

The appreciative sophomore shared his story before a roomful of community and

corporate leaders eager to hear more about Fort Worth’s proposed Cristo Rey campus. Father John Foley, a Jesuit and founder of the Cristo Rey Network, thanked supporters during an August 24 gathering at Our Mother of Mercy parish for being receptive to a program that makes a Catholic college preparatory education financially affordable to low-income families.

While struggling Catholic schools are closing, “we are the fastest growing educational institution in the Catholic Church in this country today,” Fr. Foley said. “We have thousands of kids all over the country in colleges on scholarship. Our kids graduate from college at more than twice the rate of other kids from the same socio-economic stratum.”

A distinctive component of the school’s funding model is corporate work-study which allows students to earn a large portion of their tuition. Local companies partner with Cristo Rey offering entry-level office positions to young people enrolled in the school. The corporate partner pays an annual fee to the work-study program — not the student — for services rendered.

The teenagers work one day a week at a job they share with other students and receive training to succeed in a professional environment. They are transported to and from the job site by the school.

“Seventy percent of the operating costs of the school are covered by the work-study program and another 10 percent comes from family cooperation,” said Fr. Foley, explaining that a student’s tuition is approximately \$1,000.

The remaining 20 percent of a school’s budget relies on fundraising.

Making work an integral part of the education process generated some unexpected feedback, the priest added.

“Across the board, the thing students like the most is that they have a job. They can’t believe they’re working for a Fortune 500 company,” he said describing the stories

of empowerment he hears. “The feeling (among students) is, don’t talk to me about problems because there’s only possibilities in my future.”

The U.S. Department of Labor approved the work-study model in all Cristo Rey schools and no student is allowed access to a

CONTINUED ON PAGE 12

## CRISTO REY BY THE NUMBERS

**100 percent** college acceptance

**92 percent** of Cristo Rey graduates enroll in college

**11,500** alumni

**\$35,000** average family income

**32** Cristo Rey schools nationwide

**2x** college completion compared to other low-income high school graduates

Statistics from Cristo Rey Network’s  
2016 Snapshot



A digital rendering of the Cristo Rey Fort Worth Campus at Our Mother of Mercy shows how the school will look once it is updated. (Courtesy Cristo Rey Fort Worth)

## INTERESTED IN BECOMING A CORPORATE WORK-STUDY PARTNER?

By offering a job through the work-study program, you can help Cristo Rey students pay for their tuition. All payroll, legal, and tax paperwork is handled by Cristo Rey Work-Study Program Staff. For information call:

**ALMA HERNANDEZ-BLACKWELL**, feasibility study coordinator at (817)975-0827, or **ROBERT STURNS**, job committee co-chair at (817)944-7184

Or email:  
[INFO@CRISTOREYFORTWORTH.ORG](mailto:INFO@CRISTOREYFORTWORTH.ORG)

### CRISTO REY CONTINUED

dangerous work site. Most jobs involve record-keeping, reception, data entry, or customer service. While earning a portion of their education, young people gain valuable experience and an understanding of the relationship between education and success in the workforce.

“They’re in an office setting to learn lifetime skills,” Fr. Foley continued. “It’s real work with real pay — not charity.”

Our Mother of Mercy parish and the Diocese of Fort Worth have donated the 17,000-square-foot Our Mother of Mercy school building at 1007 E. Terrell Avenue as the starting point for the high school. Plans include adding infrastructure to the 3½-acre site to accommodate more students.

Cristo Rey Fort Worth High School at Our Mother of Mercy will open with a freshman class of approximately 130 and add a grade level each year.

“We are working with the (Cristo Rey) Network to make sure the Fort Worth community is properly prepared for this high school, and I’m happy to say we’re well on our way to hopefully opening our doors in the fall of 2018,” explained Charlie Morrison, chairman of the Cristo Rey Feasibility Study Committee. “We have great vision to expand the facility within the property here as well as adjacent to us.”

Organizers have raised \$1.6 million towards the \$2.6 million

# Our Mother of Mercy School’s legacy will live on

**I**T WAS A DIFFICULT TASK BUT MICHAEL BARKS HANDLED THE CONVERSATION WITH COMPASSION AND UNDERSTANDING. Last spring, the president of Our Mother of Mercy School was charged with telling 55 students the doors of their historic elementary would close at the end of the 2015-2016 academic year.

As a youth, the retired army veteran experienced something similar when his Catholic elementary school in Virginia merged with another Catholic school a few miles away.

“So I could empathize with what they were feeling,” he added. “Anytime you tell children their school — a place where they felt

fundraising goal and received commitments from 22 companies willing to provide a shared job that will support four students. Thirty-five jobs are needed for the school’s inaugural freshman class. When the school reaches its ultimate student population of 550, it will require a total of 140 jobs from corporate partners.

“We want the community to

know that we would love for employers to open up their businesses to help support these students and ultimately, the cost of their education,” Morrison said.

Bishop Michael Olson initiated contact with Cristo Rey’s administrative office in Chicago and is looking forward to the impact one of its high schools will have on impoverished youth in the area

safe and secure for so many years — won't be a place they can come back to, it's difficult," said Barks.

Many former OMM youngsters now attend nearby parochial schools.

Our Mother of Mercy's work as an elementary institution ended, but its mission to educate the underserved will continue as the site of a Cristo Rey high school. Founded in 1996 by Jesuit Father John Foley, the network of schools provides a college preparatory Catholic education to young people in urban areas who come from low-income households. The new school's name — Cristo Rey Fort Worth High School at Our Mother of Mercy — reflects a desire to honor the school's legacy.

"I feel very good about that," said Barks, a member of the Cristo Rey Feasibility Committee. "All of the memorabilia in the school's foyer is going to stay, even the (memorial) bricks outside the door. It's part of the school's history and there's a lot of history. We've been here since 1929."

Our Mother of Mercy parish, along with the Diocese of Fort Worth, donated the school building and property for the proposed Cristo Rey campus.

"Our Mother of Mercy generously offered this school to maintain and expand its legacy as a parish community," explained Fort Worth Bishop Michael Olson during an August 24 press conference at OMM that provided a first look at plans for the campus. "Since 1929, they've educated those at the margins of society."

Former OMM Principal Carolyn Yusuf, who also serves on the feasibility committee, is excited about bringing the Cristo Rey experience to Fort Worth.

"I think it's something our kids need and it's great for the community," said the retired educator. "What I'm most impressed about is that students will get a quality Catholic education while learning corporate skills in the workplace."

Many former OMM youngsters can look forward to returning to the E. Terrell Avenue site for their high school years.

"I'm telling parents about the school and encouraging them to make sure their kids apply," she added.

Continuing Our Mother of Mercy's tradition of service and education is important, Yusuf told the *North Texas Catholic*.

"It's been an asset to the community — a hidden treasure — since 1929," she emphasized. "Every time you talk to someone, they have a connection to the school. Either they went to school here or they know someone who did."

and life of the local Church. Cristo Rey schools — which welcome students of all faiths — serve as a way to evangelize and include more people in the common good, he said.

"It offers us hope and an opportunity to come together at a time when our society and country are challenged by voices of discord and discontent," he continued. "As a people of all faiths, we can come together as a community to encounter God and other human beings as brothers and sisters. This is a wonderful

opportunity for us to grow in an understanding of human dignity."

Young people with households earning \$35,000 a year or less are eligible for Cristo Rey enrollment but other variables like family size and cost of living in an area are considered.

"It's a measure we will work through," Morrison said.

Students who are accepted will find that balancing college prep courses with the

work-study program requires dedication and commitment. Cristo Rey administrators said they will customize an education plan, provide job orientation, and do whatever is necessary to retain a student unless he or she absolutely refuses to stay in the school.

"Our students are very motivated. You've got to want to come here. Don't tell us your parents want you here," Fr. Foley said, revealing what he tells applicants. "You've got to want it and if you want it, we'll make it work."

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## IN MEMORY

# Sister Mary Devota Sweeney, SSMN, a dedicated educator and faithful servant of Christ, dies at 95

**VETERAN EDUCATOR SISTER MARY DEVOTA** (Mary Ruth) Sweeney, SSMN, 95, who helped design and supervise the building of Notre Dame and Nolan Catholic high schools in the Diocese of Fort Worth, died October 8 after an extended illness.

Bishop Michael Olson concelebrated a Mass of Christian Burial with Father Ray McDaniel and Father Jim O'Toole on October 12 at Our Lady of Victory Center. Friends shared memories of Sr. Devota during an Oct. 11 vigil service at the center. She marked her 77th year of religious life in February 2016.

Addressing in his homily the gathering of relatives, former students, and fellow members of the Sisters of St. Mary of Namur, the bishop described Sr. Devota's faith as very simple — saying it could not be analyzed or broken apart. It was a faith she received from her family in Wichita Falls and from the Sisters of St. Mary of Namur who taught her in grade school and gave a young Mary Ruth Sweeney an education, her formation, and an understanding of service.

"She shared with me many times that she cherished the women who educated her," the bishop told the mourners. "They were in many ways not only models for her, but mothers."

A dedicated classroom teacher, one of Sr. Devota's greatest crosses was being called to leadership in the religious order at a time when it was very much needed but unappreciated, he added.

"Sister loved being a Sister of St. Mary," Bishop Olson said emphatically. "And she shared that vocation with joy throughout her life. She was a religious — one who gave herself fully to Christ and answered his call to follow Him and serve his people."

Born prematurely on August 27, 1921 in Wichita Falls to Martin Francis and Sarah (Walsh) Sweeney, Mary Ruth Sweeney was declared dead at birth. The delivery nurse, who happened to be her aunt, pleaded with the doctor to resuscitate the tiny infant and she began to breathe. Her tenuous start gave Mary Ruth the firm belief that her life had special purpose.

The oldest of six children, she attended the Academy of Mary Immaculate in Wichita Falls,



**Sister Mary Devota Sweeney**

a school operated by the Sisters of St. Mary of Namur. Mary Ruth left a semester prior to graduation in order to enter the congregation's novitiate in Fort Worth on February 2, 1939. Given the name "Mary Devota," in honor of a deceased paternal aunt who had served as a Sister of Saint Joseph, the young novice made her first vows on August 15, 1941, and her perpetual profession on August 15, 1947.

After her first vows, she taught for five years at her congregation's school in Beaumont, and then for five years at Our Lady of Victory School in Fort Worth.

During her time as an educator, Sr. Devota served as a teacher and principal at her congregation's schools in Sherman, Houston, Dallas, and Hollister, California.

Rosemary Hayes, a member of the SSMN auxiliary, still has the holy cards Sr. Devota gave her in grade school. As mother superior of the order at the time, Sr. Devota often visited the schools operated by the SSMNs.

"We were always so excited when she came because she was the leader," remembers the graduate of the now closed Holy Name of Jesus School. "She was so kind to every kid. She knew their names and talked to them so sweetly."

In later years, Hayes knew the retired teacher and administrator as a friend.

"She was a lovely person and very religious,"

she adds. "Being in her presence, you could feel her holiness."

After moving to England in 1955 to serve as superior of St. Mary's Convent in Lowestoft, she was named provincial superior for the congregation's Western Province in 1958. She served in this capacity for six years, and later served again as a General Councilor, living in Belgium from 1971 to 1972.

She moved back to Texas to serve in various leadership roles at Catholic schools in Houston.

During her years as provincial for her congregation, Sr. Devota honed her skills as an expert in building design and architecture. When asked to help design and supervise the building of Notre Dame High School in Wichita Falls, Sr. Devota turned to an uncle in the lumber and brick business, learning many skills from him.

At Bishop Thomas Gorman's request, she continued using her expertise to assist in the design and building of Nolan Catholic High School in Fort Worth, Bishop Dunne Catholic High School in Dallas, and a novitiate facility at the University of Dallas.

Having earned her undergraduate degree from Our Lady of the Lake University in San Antonio in 1967, Sr. Devota continued her work as an educator and administrator in numerous schools, always stressing the importance of education among the women religious under her supervision.

Sister Dorothy Powers, SSMN, first met Sr. Devota at Our Lady of Victory Academy.

"She was just a perfect, gentle, lovely but strong-willed woman and a key figure in the province," Sr. Dorothy said. "There are so many stories of her kindness."

In 1992, Sr. Devota returned to Fort Worth, where again she faithfully served in various capacities until she retired in 2011. That year, Sr. Devota was selected by then-Bishop Kevin Vann to receive the *Pro-Ecclesia et Pontifice* Cross, an award given by the pope for distinguished service in ministry in the Catholic Church.

Memorial gifts in her honor may be made to Sisters of St. Mary of Namur, 909 W. Shaw St., Fort Worth, Texas 76110.

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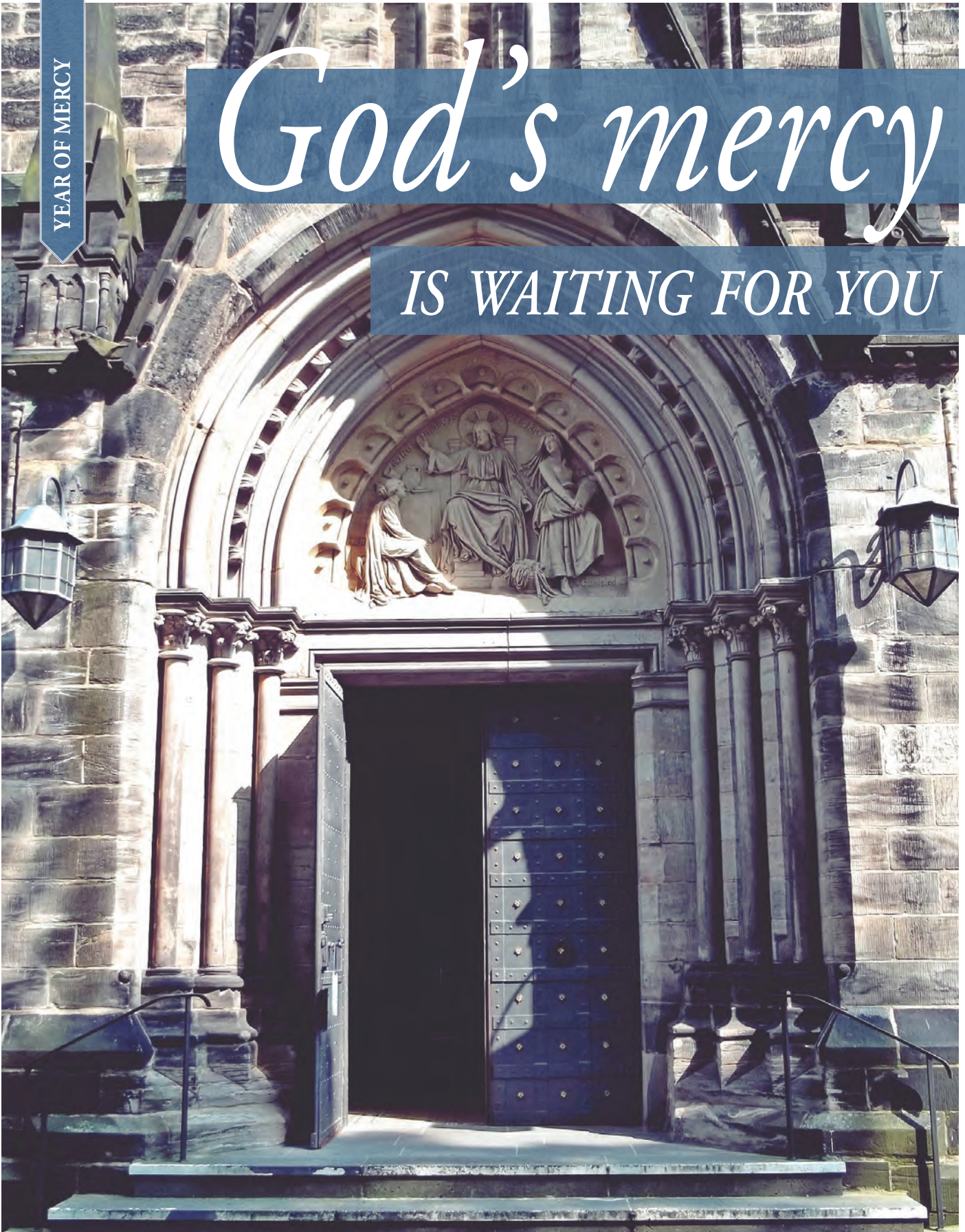
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YEAR OF MERCY

# God's mercy

IS WAITING FOR YOU



**T**HE HOLY YEAR OF MERCY ENDS NOV. 20 — THE FEAST OF CHRIST THE KING — BUT DON'T WORRY, THERE ARE STILL PLENTY OF “MERCY MOMENTS” LEFT.

ARMED WITH RESOURCES FROM THE PONTIFICAL COUNCIL FOR THE PROMOTION OF THE NEW EVANGELIZATION, WE'VE COME UP WITH A LIST OF WAYS YOU CAN FINISH THE YEAR OF MERCY STRONG:

#### ■ PERFORM WORKS OF MERCY.

When Pope Francis called for the Year of Mercy last year, he didn't mean it as something abstract. He urged Catholics to go out and live mercy concretely.

Be merciful to others and consider performing some of the corporal or spiritual works of mercy. Help at a soup kitchen, volunteer at Catholic Charities, lend a listening ear to someone who is grieving, visit an elderly neighbor, or make a homecooked meal for someone.

Too busy, you say? Some of the works of mercy can be done from the comfort of your own home, like praying for the living and the dead.

#### ■ CELEBRATE MERCY THROUGH PRAYER.

Prayer goes hand-in-hand with mercy, as it helps us experience and live out God's mercy.

The following prayers and devotions all have elements and ties to divine compassion and mercy: the Liturgy of the Hours, Eucharistic Adoration, the Way of the Cross, the Rosary, and last, but not least, the Chaplet of Divine Mercy.

#### ■ TAKE PART IN THE SACRAMENTS.

The sacraments themselves are some of the greatest sources and validations of the Father's mercy and care for us.

Take some time to reflect on and thank God for the graces you've received from the sacraments. Frequent the Eucharist faithfully for, “in the Eucharist, Christ gives us the very body He gave up for us on the cross, the very blood which He poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.” (*Matthew 26:28*) Haven't been to Communion in a while? Now is a great time to seek the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

#### ■ ATTEND THE CLOSING MASS FOR THE YEAR OF MERCY.

The diocese is hosting a closing celebration Mass for the Year of Mercy Nov. 19 at Our Mother of Mercy Church at 1001 E. Terrell Ave., Fort Worth. The Mass starts at 5 p.m. and all are invited. The same weekend, churches designated as Secondary Doors of Mercy sites will also celebrate Masses of Thanksgiving. See the link on the right for locations.

#### ■ RECEIVE THE PLENARY INDULGENCE.

It's not too late to receive this great grace! All of the Doors of Mercy in the diocese will remain open until Nov. 20. Crossing the threshold of the doors is one of the required ingredients for receiving this special indulgence.

What is the indulgence? It's a special pardon that removes all of what is called “temporal punishment” due to our sins — even those that have already been forgiven. As Pope Francis pointed out last year, it's like God the Father “forgetting completely the sin committed.”

So how do you receive this great gift of mercy?

- Go on a pilgrimage and enter the Doors of Mercy. There is one in every deanery of the diocese.
- Receive the sacrament of Reconciliation and the Eucharist within a week before or after you make the pilgrimage to the Holy Doors.
- Make a profession of faith and pray for the intentions of our Holy Father, Pope Francis.

Go to [fwdioc.org/jubilee-mercy-about](http://fwdioc.org/jubilee-mercy-about) for a printable guide of times and locations of Holy Doors in our diocese!

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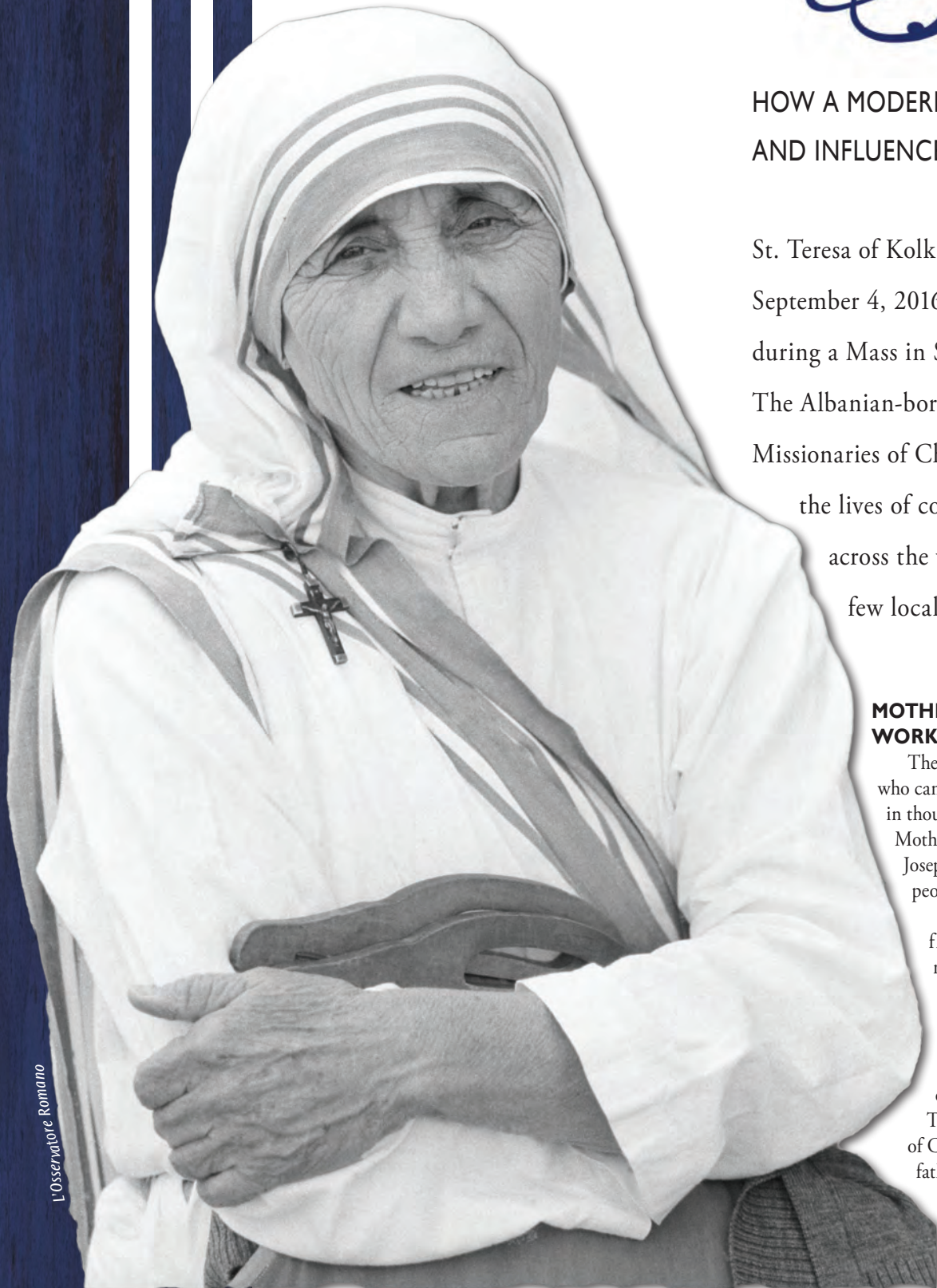
HOW A MODERN SAINT FROM HALFWAY AR  
AND INFLUENCED THE PEOPLE OF THE DIO

St. Teresa of Kolkata was canonized September 4, 2016 by Pope Francis during a Mass in St. Peter's Square. The Albanian-born founder of the Missionaries of Charity influenced the lives of countless people across the world. Here are a few local stories.

## **MOTHER TERESA INSPIRES WORK WITH HOSPICE**

There aren't too many people who can say they spent an hour in thoughtful conversation with Mother Teresa of Kolkata. Gini Joseph Kempen is one of those people.

The American Airlines flight attendant met the recently-canonized saint in 1995 during a family trip to India to visit relatives. Her aunt was an early member of the religious order started by Mother Teresa — the Missionaries of Charity — and Kempen's father simply picked up the



# WORLD

# e FOR THE EARTH

WAY AROUND THE WORLD IMPACTED

By Joan Kurkowski-Gillen / Correspondent

HE DIOCESE OF FORT WORTH.

phone to arrange a meeting with the Nobel laureate and friend he's known and supported since the 1950s.

"She was so much shorter than I expected — a tiny, little thing," remembers Kempen, who was 26 at the time and wanted to meet the woman *Time Magazine* declared a "living saint" in 1975.

The airline worker attended morning Mass inside the convent's plain, pew-less chapel and recalls seeing the frail, 85-year-old missionary kneel on a hardwood floor, then help distribute Communion to worshippers in the hot, humid room. Benefactors frequently donated fans to the convent but sisters told the Joseph family Mother Teresa wouldn't accept the luxury, "as long as other people didn't have it."

The memory Kempen holds most dear is "those few hours I spent there with her sitting next to me on a bench, holding my hand and talking to me about what God wants us to do," she says. "It was a turning point in my spiritual life."

After witnessing poverty in the poorest area of Calcutta, now Kolkata, and learning about Mother Teresa's work with orphans and the dying, the young India-born American began reassessing her life. She became a hospice volunteer and trainer and later used those skills to care for an ailing mother-in-law who battled Alzheimer's disease.

Kempen, who still has a pendant and rosary given to her during the visit, never viewed Mother Teresa as mystical or otherworldly. The bond forged was more personal.

"I just knew her as a woman who inspired me and put me on a course that was my life's purpose," she insists. "She was a catalyst for the direction I took."

## FORT WORTH VISIT EMPHASIZED "BATTLING POVERTY BEGINS IN THE HOME"

Mother Teresa's work with the poor and powerless was just beginning to attract worldwide attention when she came to Fort Worth in May 1976.

The humanitarian was in the United States to receive the *Pacem in Terris* Peace and Freedom Award from the Catholic Interracial Council and visiting several American cities was part of her itinerary.

Bob Walters was part of the crowd giving Mother Teresa a standing ovation as she took the Fort Worth Convention Center stage. The late Father Robert Wilson introduced the speaker and described her ministries for the awestruck audience.

"Her presence on stage was almost overwhelming," recounts Walters, a longtime admirer of the missionary who was eager to see her in person. "In addition to my strong emotions, I felt something physically sweep over me — like a breeze suddenly hitting the face or stepping out from the shadows into the sunlight. I knew in my heart I was in the presence of the saint."

Employed at the time as a research scientist in the local aerospace industry and the father of three young children, Walters wondered how he could meet his family obligations and still help Mother Teresa's work in India.

Speaking in a soft, muted voice, the would-be saint addressed his inner-conflict.

"What touched me the most was when she said, 'please do not come to Kolkata to help us with poverty. Work on the poverty in your own



St. Teresa of Kolkata, foundress of the Missionaries of Charity, is pictured with an unidentified woman during a 1976 visit to the U.S. (CNS photo/Robert S. Halvey)

home.’ At the moment, I knew my job was to stay in my home and be the best father I could be to my three children,” the St. Francis of Assisi parishioner revealed.

Today, Walters is a longtime advocate for the unborn and other respect life issues along with his wife, Angela, who is the diocesan Gabriel Project director.

“Mother Teresa had a special place in my heart especially after that evening in the Fort Worth Convention Center,” he said. “I looked forward to the day when she would be officially declared a saint.”

### UNSTAMPED LETTER ANSWERED A PRAYER

Pat Pelletier still remembers the August day in 1985 when she opened her post office box to find an unstamped letter. Its arrival seemed almost providential.

Her husband, the late Chuck Pelletier, was sitting in a lawyer’s office waiting to be deposed in a lawsuit that challenged his pro-life work in Tarrant County. The letter came from Mother Teresa who was responding to a note and newsletter sent a few weeks earlier by Pat regarding the couple’s outreach to pregnant women in crisis.

It read:

*Dear Pat, Thank you for your kind letter and newsletter. I’m glad and thank God for all the good and beautiful work you are all doing to help mothers in distress and care for helpless little ones. May God enlighten you so you may know how to help each person that comes to you and may He strengthen you in your difficulties. Keep the joy of being loved by God in your heart as your strength for He is faithful. God Bless You, Mother Teresa.*



Mother Teresa with an ailing man in an undated photo. (CNS photo courtesy Catholic Press Photo)

“It was so very meaningful for us to receive [the letter] that day,” Pat says, reflecting on the circumstances. “We were going through a very difficult time in our life and it gave us a sense of relief knowing we were doing the right thing.”

The last sentence in the note written by Mother Teresa was the answer to a prayer for Chuck Pelletier, who passed away in January 2016 after decades of working to change people’s hearts about abortion.

“Those words were

## Witnesses to a saintly life

Interviews by Joan Kurkowski-Gillen



“Mother Teresa once typed me a little note that said: “You will see the face of Christ in the poor.” We’re all poor in some way — spiritually or materially. Because of her, I have not thought of success as having a lot of money. I see success as doing God’s will.”

— SUZETTE CHAIRES  
PARISHIONER, ST. MARIA GORETTI



“I concelebrated the canonization Mass with the pope and found the whole ceremony very inspirational. When Pope Francis declared Mother Teresa a saint, tears fell from my eyes.... I had the opportunity to talk and be with Mother Teresa in India. We think of saints as living long ago or far away from us. Now, I feel there are saints in our neighbor who we talk with and are living among us.”

— FATHER AUGUSTINE KOLAPURAM  
PASTOR, ST. CATHERINE OF SIENA



“Mother Teresa of Kolkata played an important role in discerning my vocation. I read her book, *Total Surrender*, and it gave me the desire to give everything to God. I remember thinking of [her] and what God achieved through her order of Sisters. Knowing what God could do with a group of women — totally dedicated to Him — really helped me not to be afraid of where He was calling me... ultimately to religious life!”

— KIM BROWN  
ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR OF VOCATIONS

very special to him,” his wife said.

Over the years, the Pelletiers shared copies of the letter with others but kept the treasured original in a safe deposit box. It is now considered a third-class relic.

“We always felt like a little angel carried it and dropped it off in the box,” said Pat, who still wonders how the correspondence made its way from India to Texas without postage.

“I was just thrilled about the canonization. Watching Mother Teresa declared a saint during the Year of Mercy is so special because she was merciful to so many people.”

### TRIP TO INDIA LEAVES LASTING IMPRESSION

Reading the *City of Angels*, a book by Dominique Lapierre about the unsung heroes working in the slums of Kolkata, changed — and almost ended — Father Jim O’Toole’s life.

After 21 years as an Air Force chaplain, the diocesan priest left military service and set his sights on traveling to India.

“I was inspired by the priest in the book and decided to go there,” remembers the now retired pastor. “The year was 1989 and Mother Teresa’s charities were going full blast.”

The enthusiastic volunteer lived with the Missionaries of Charity brothers and worked in the home for the dying.

“We would pick people up on the streets, take them to the home and wash, clean, and feed them,” Fr. O’Toole says, describing the care given without benefit of protective gloves or masks. “The home was a big open ward that was spotlessly clean. Beds were pulled aside and the floors were mopped with a solution that would burn your skin.”

Fr. O’Toole never met Mother Teresa. She left Kolkata the day he

arrived and returned three and half months later. By that time, the Texan was seriously ill with typhoid fever, hepatitis, and tuberculosis and was rushing home for treatment.

But, while celebrating Mass at the convent every morning and spending time at the leper colony, Fr. O’Toole came to understand the living saint through her fellow sisters and other colleagues. According to the people who knew her best, Mother Teresa was a tireless, dedicated, and stubborn soul.

“I was told that if she didn’t get her way, there were temper tantrums but it was always about something for the poor,” he explains. “When they wouldn’t give it to her, she would get upset.”

Fr. O’Toole remembers Mother Teresa’s worldwide headquarters as a 12’x12’ room with two manual typewriters and one telephone. The sparsely furnished office received thousands of dollars in donations a day and dispersed the money to missions around the world.

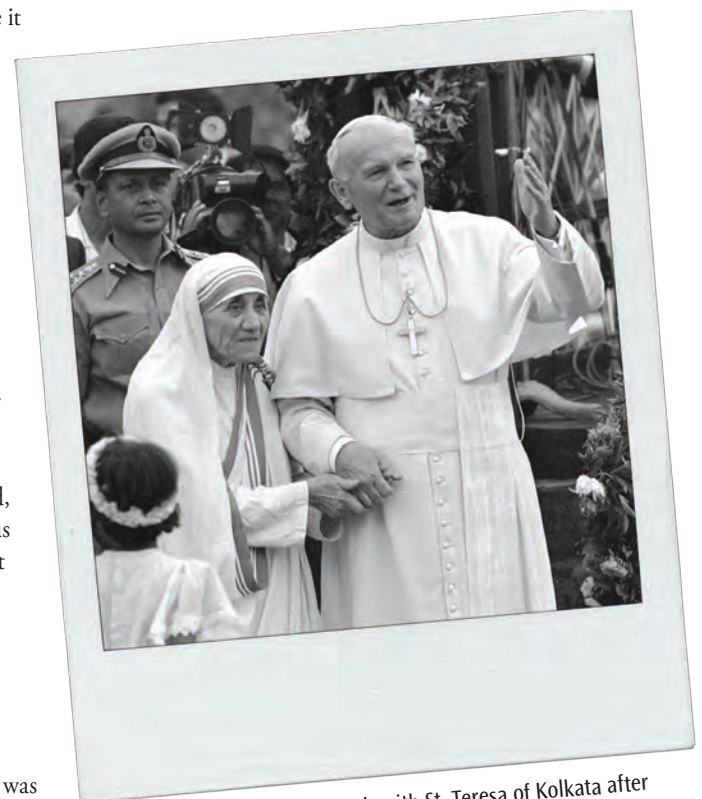
“Someone once advised her to put some of the money in a bank or invest it for interest but that never happened,” he says, sharing one of the many stories he heard. “She said, ‘God sent us the money He wants us to have today and He’ll send us that He wants us to have tomorrow.’”

It took Fr. O’Toole a year to recuperate from the near-deadly illnesses contracted in India but he doesn’t regret the experience.

“There’s no question the work those sisters and Mother Teresa did was monumental and heroic,” he suggests. “For me, it was the high point of my life. I haven’t found anything that was more satisfying.”



An undated file picture shows St. Teresa of Kolkata holding a child during a visit to Warsaw, Poland. (CNS photo/Tomasz Gzell, EPA)



Pope John Paul II holds hands with St. Teresa of Kolkata after visiting Mother Teresa’s home for the destitute and dying in 1986 in India. (CNS photo/Luciano Mellace, Reuters)

# EVERY life COUNTS

During 40 Days for Life, local faithful are praying and fasting around the clock to end abortion

By Susan Moses  
Correspondent

**EACH FALL THE SIDEWALK** outside Planned Parenthood in Fort Worth becomes a 24/7 testament to the power of prayer.

That dedicated prayer, along with fasting, makes up the major ingredients of 40 Days for Life, the peaceful prayer vigil to protect the unborn. By emphasizing a positive, prayerful presence outside abortion facilities, the pro-life prayer demonstration (which has reached its 10-year mark in Fort Worth) aims to show God's love and mercy to clients and workers of those clinics.

The 2016 campaign, kicked off by Bishop Michael Olson on Sept. 28, includes more than 350 faithful signed up to spend an hour each week in prayer in front of the Planned Parenthood abortion clinic at 6464 John Ryan Drive in southwest Fort Worth.

These are the stories of some of those faithful seeking to, as Bishop Olson put it, "speak with a prophetic voice as did Christ, to speak of mercy, justice, compassion, and love," in order to lead people to conversion and a heart filled with respect for the sanctity of life.

## GOD IS NOT LIMITED BY TIME,

said Celia Ledbetter, and that's why she prays at Planned Parenthood each week before the sun even rises.

### MORE 40 DAYS!

Approximately every week during the 40 Days for Life campaign, the NTC will feature updates and brief "vignettes" detailing how the vigil is going. These can be found at [NORTHTEXASCATHOLIC.ORG/LOCAL-NEWS](http://NORTHTEXASCATHOLIC.ORG/LOCAL-NEWS)

"There's not a time of day that God can't touch someone's life, so I pray that God will touch hearts and speak to the women who enter the building. I know that God's power is unleashed by prayer,"

said Ledbetter, who has participated in the 40 Days for Life prayer vigil for several years.

Another person on the sidewalk in the early morning hours is Robert

Johnson, who prays at the abortion clinic at 4 a.m. "I like to talk out loud to the Lord, and I enjoy the quiet and

solitude that time of day."

Johnson also noted that his presence serves as a witness to the truck drivers making predawn deliveries to the hospital across the street. "They know why I'm here and they honk in support. It makes me feel good."

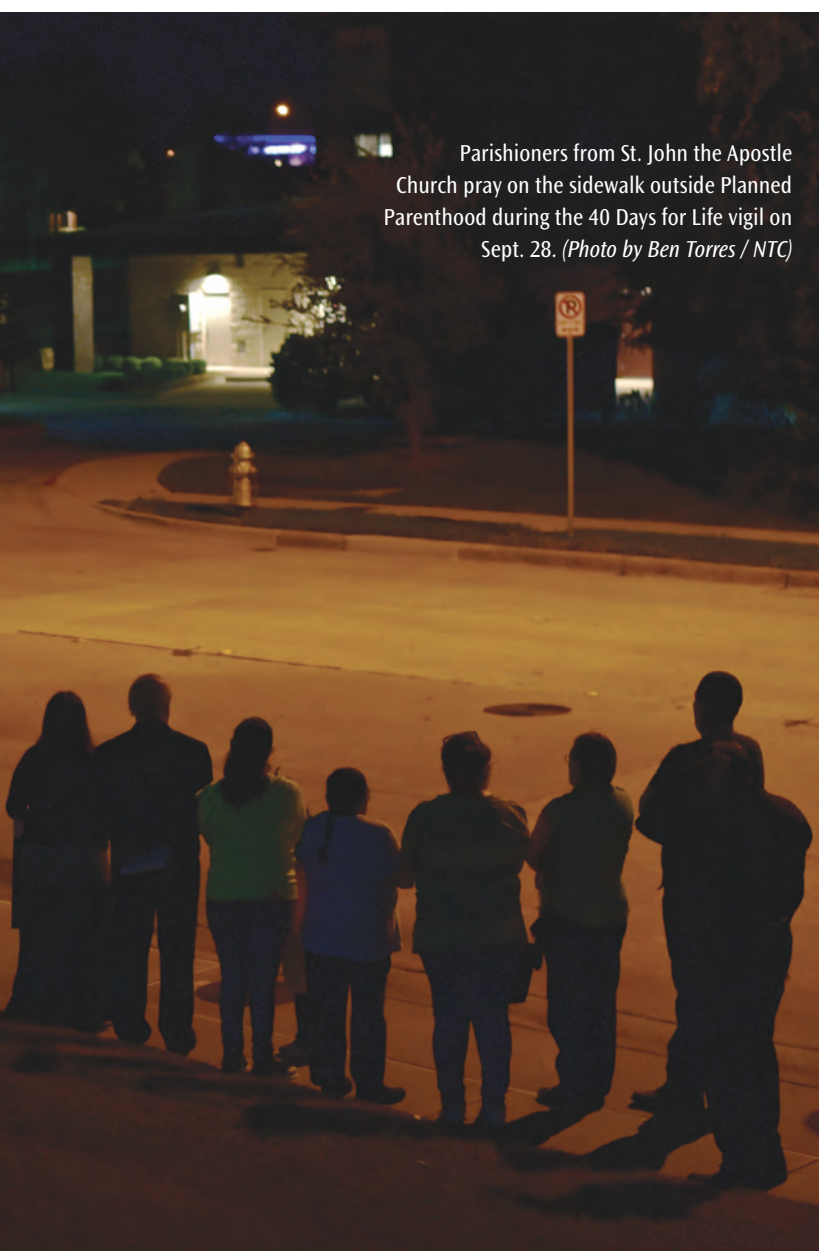
Johnson is still troubled by the memory of a family member who had an abortion more than 40 years ago. "She already had three kids and she didn't want another one. Her kids turned out good, and I think about who this baby would have grown up to be," he said.

## ALTHOUGH THE CONCRETE SIDEWALK IS HARD,

it's outmatched by the power of prayer. Each week during 40



Parishioners from St. John the Apostle Church pray on the sidewalk outside Planned Parenthood during the 40 Days for Life vigil on Sept. 28. (Photo by Ben Torres / NTC)



Connie Stallworth prays the Rosary at the Planned Parenthood entrance on Oct. 10. (Photo by Susan Moses / NTC)

Days for Life, Connie Stallworth spends an hour on her knees in front of Planned Parenthood. She has participated in the prayer vigil since 2007, when it was first launched nationwide.

“The prayer demonstration is beautiful. It’s peaceful, loving, and positive,” said Stallworth, who is grateful to have raised two adopted children.

“I don’t think the young women understand what they are doing. They can’t understand. If they were truly informed, they wouldn’t do it. Instead they act out of fear and misinformation,” she continued.

40 Days for Life has grown exponentially since it began in College Station in 2004. This year, approximately 700,000 volunteers will pray and fast to end abortion in 636 cities across 36 countries.

“Great things happen when God’s people pray,” said Steve Rook, who serves on the leadership committee of 40 Days for Life Fort Worth. He often reflects

on a friend’s explanation that Planned Parenthood has lawyers, money, and politicians, but pro-life ministries have the power of the Almighty God.

Rook prays that God will change the hearts of the abortion facility’s clients and employees, and he also remembers the fathers of the unborn. “I pray often that the Lord would move him to want to be the protector of both the life he has generated and the woman with whom he has a relationship.”

Fort Worth is one of the few locations in the country that holds a round-the-clock prayer vigil, continuing through November 6.

To sign up or learn more, visit [www.40daysFortWorth.com](http://www.40daysFortWorth.com).



To see more photos from the 40 Days for Life prayer vigil please visit [NORTHTEXASCATHOLIC.ORG](http://NORTHTEXASCATHOLIC.ORG) and click on 'Photo Gallery'



Bishop Michael Olson blesses the audience during the 40 Days for Life kickoff rally outside of Planned Parenthood in Fort Worth. (Photo by Ben Torres / NTC)

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## CATHOLIC CHARITIES

### KNOW Poverty campaign gives guests firsthand look at CCFW's approach

Lisa Goodwin, a parishioner at Good Shepherd Parish in Colleyville (standing), speaks at a KNOW Poverty Campaign event held Sept. 20. (Photo by Donna Ryckaert/NTC)



Lisa Goodwin, a longtime parishioner at Good Shepherd Church in Colleyville, was "thrilled" to share her experiences as a supporter of Catholic Charities Fort Worth (CCFW).

The agency's KNOW Poverty Campaign offered Goodwin the recent opportunity to invite several of her friends to an informal lunch and tour of the agency's main campus, located in Fort Worth.

The campaign integrates the participation of agency volunteers, known as "ambassadors," who invite friends, family members, and coworkers to attend an hour-long visit to the campus. While enjoying light refreshments, the guests learn about the agency's bold mission to eradicate poverty and listen to firsthand experiences of clients who have benefited from CCFW's innovative approach to helping them achieve self-sufficiency.

"I began volunteering [with CCFW] in the 1990s, and every experience has always been so well organized, incorporating layer upon layer of opportunities to learn about social justice issues," Goodwin said. "I was really pleased to be able to introduce my friends to the work of Catholic Charities in such a personal and effective way."

One of Goodwin's guests, fellow Good Shepherd parishioner Daryl Bold, said that she enjoyed her visit to the agency.

"Some of the non-Catholic friends in our group were surprised to learn that services are available to anyone in need, regardless of their religious denomination or background," Bold noted. "This type of event is a good way of widening knowledge of, and support for, Catholic Charities beyond the parish level."

Participants in the KNOW Poverty Campaign tour the agency computer center, in which clients receive job training and attend skill-building workshops. They learn about the agency's transportation program, which provides, with the help of trained volunteers, more than 80,000 rides per year to residents of Tarrant county. The program provides a reliable, affordable way for clients to get to and from work and to medical appointments.

"It was so interesting to see how holistic Catholic Charities' approach is to ending poverty," Bold reflected, noting her group was also given the opportunity to tour the CCFW Assessment Center, where children in crisis receive medical, psychological, educational, and recreational services in a healing environment. "I hope to come back, to bring another group of friends to learn about Catholic Charities."

To participate as a host or guest in the KNOW Poverty Campaign, call 817-289-2781 or email [knowpoverty@ccdofw.org](mailto:knowpoverty@ccdofw.org).

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## LIGHTER & BRIGHTER



Sandra Moore-Hunt sings with the choir during a Mass marking the close of the centennial year of the Franciscan Handmaids of the Most Pure Heart of Mary Oct. 8 at St. Charles Borromeo Church in the Harlem section of New York City. The religious order, comprised mainly of women of African ancestry, was co-founded by Father Ignatius Lissner, a priest of the Society of African Missions, and Mother Theodore Williams in Savannah, Ga., in 1916 to educate black children and provide pastoral care to the state's black population. (CNS photo/Gregory A. Shemitz)



Marian devotees participate in a procession at the start of a Marian vigil led by Pope Francis in St. Peter's Square at the Vatican Oct. 8. (CNS photo/Paul Haring)



Items used by St. Mother Theodore Guerin, including a desk, sewing table, and chair, are on display at her shrine Oct. 6. The Sisters of Providence of St. Mary-of-the-Woods, Ind., planned to celebrate the 10th anniversary of canonization of their congregation's foundress Oct. 15. (CNS photo/Katie Breidenbach)



Visitors look out over the water in 2014 at the Shrine of St. Therese in Juneau, Alaska. The place of retreat with breathtaking views was designated a national shrine by the U.S. bishops Oct. 1. (CNS photo/Nancy Wiechec)



Mary holds the child Jesus in a 15th-century Florentine painting depicted on one of two religiously themed Christmas stamps being issued by the U.S. Postal Service. The image was adapted from a work by an anonymous follower of artists Fra Filippo Lippi and Pesellino. The original painting is in the collection of the National Gallery of Art in Washington. The stamp was to be available at post offices Oct. 18. A second stamp depicting the Nativity in silhouette against the dawn sky was planned for release Nov. 3. (CNS photo/U.S. Postal Service)



Tapestries showing new saints are seen as Pope Francis greets bishops during his general audience in St. Peter's Square at the Vatican Oct. 19. The new saints pictured are Manuel Gonzalez Garcia, Alfonso Maria Fusco and Elizabeth of the Trinity. They were among seven canonized Oct. 16. (CNS photo/Paul Haring)

### Comic Retreat

by: Brian Montfort



### Umbert the Unborn

by Gary Cangemi



### The FLOCK

by Jean Denton

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# GROWING AS A CHRISTIAN

## Experiencing the nearness of God through the Sacrament of Mercy

By JEFF HEDGLEN

### WHEN POPE FRANCIS

called for a Jubilee Year of Mercy, I thought this was such a genius move by the pastor of the Church. What a blessing to have a whole year to focus the world on the mercy of God and to shine a light on all the corners of the world where the mercy of God is most needed.

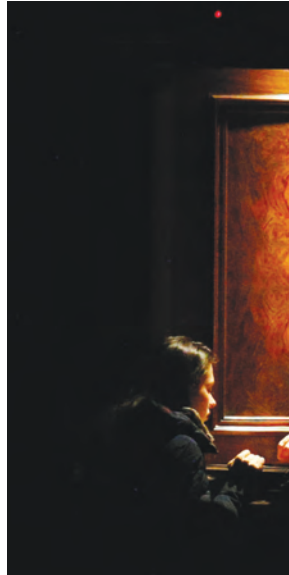
I wrote columns about it, gave talks about it, taught the corporal and spiritual works of mercy to college students, and even put a few of them into action. Little did I know, one of the corners of the world that would be deeply touched was my own heart.

The profound way I encountered the mercy of God this year was not through a newfangled way, in fact it happened through one of the seven most basic aspects of the Catholic Church, the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

Most of my life I had been an Advent, Lent, and retreat confession-goer. But just as the Year of Mercy was starting, the Lord stirred my heart to start going to the sacrament more regularly. This led me to a deeper examination of conscience. In the days of sporadic reconciliation, my time in the confessional felt more like I was in the emergency room taking care of the most serious offenses. But now that I was going every three to four weeks I began looking at all those Catholic apps and praying through the examinations of conscience that are included.

It is amazing what I discovered once the “glaring faults” were not glaring so brightly. I was able to see deeper into my soul and turn my focus to some other opportunities of growth in my journey to holiness.

One of the many surprises I encountered in the confessional was the varied types of penance I received. The one that struck me the most, and still impacts me today, happened early on when I finally got the nerve to



**‘For your penance, the next time you go to Mass say a prayer of thanksgiving for the mercy and forgiveness of God.’ I still tear up when I think about this beautiful penance.**

*(CNS file photo)*

confess something that had been on my heart for years. I held onto this for so long and getting the words out was excruciating. I was kind of dreading my penance. But what the priest asked me to do cut to the core of what this sacrament is all about. He said, “For your penance, the next time you go to Mass say a prayer of thanksgiving for the mercy and forgiveness of God.” I still tear up when I think about this beautiful penance.

But there was another huge change in my life that I attribute to my more frequent visits to the confessional. It came during the “consultation” part of the sacrament, when I shared with the priest that I was really struggling with and continually returning to a particular sin. He asked if I pray the Rosary daily. I begrudgingly admitted that I did not and he asked that I give this some thought.

I decided to give it a try and, though I shouldn’t have been, I was surprised by the impact this has had on my life of faith and my connection to Jesus. I guess growing up in the 1970s and ‘80s we did not pray the Rosary

all that much and so I never really incorporated this into my spiritual practice. But I can honestly say that, though I often miss a day (or more), when I am consistently praying and meditating on the mysteries of the life of Jesus, I am more at peace and I have greater strength to resist temptation when it comes.

More than anything, I think embracing this devotion has drawn me closer to the words of the Mother of Jesus that she first spoke at the wedding at Cana, “Do whatever He tells you.”

Possibly the greatest lesson I have learned in this jubilee year is that mercy is not so much about my need for it, rather it is about the Father’s superabundant supply, and all I need to do is turn my heart toward the unrelenting flow.



*Jeff Hedglen is director of Young Adult Ministry and Campus Ministry for the Diocese of Fort Worth*

## Are parents primary educators of their children?

BY MARLON DE LA TORRE

**ONE OF THE MOST** fascinating characteristics we possess as human beings is the desire and ability to learn. Every moment of our lives provides us with an opportunity to gain new insight into things and then begin the process of applying this new insight in our daily lives. We place hope that this new formative knowledge will help us gain a better handle on the challenges of the day and provide an advantage for how we will handle situations in the future. The irony here is that this process of learning is what God intended for us. His clear desire is to seek Him and know more about Him. This is why his Divine Revelation is so important for us to know and understand because it is a revelation of love which took on human form in the incarnation of his Son Jesus Christ.

Relating this position within a biblical context, the letter to the Hebrews tells us that it is impossible to please God without faith, since anyone who comes to Him must believe that He exists and that He rewards those who try to find Him (11:6). What the author in Hebrews is telling us is that we must have a basic or minimum understanding of faith in order to comprehend our journey toward salvation with Christ. In other words, our natural aim is to have an intimate relationship with Christ that will hopefully lead to a union of grace with God in Heaven (salvation).

### THE PARENT AS TEACHER (CATECHIST)

A child cannot learn unless he has someone to guide him and more importantly witness to him in a loving and charitable way. The premise of our human condition as created and ordered by God is to seek a relationship with Him if we freely desire. Our nature as children of God driven by our soul and intellect reflects a unique quality all of us possess, i.e., to seek a relationship with our Lord Jesus Christ.

When we place this understanding within an authentic Catholic religious education context, our role as parents takes on greater significance

because our principal aim is to help our children mature in intimacy with and in Christ. If this process is reflective of the parent child relationship, then at the moment of conception we as parents should be preparing our children for this relationship with Christ.

Pope Paul VI sheds further light on the primal importance on parents being primary witnesses of the Gospel toward their children in that “Modern man listens more willingly to witnesses than to teachers. And, if he does listen to teachers, it is because they are witnesses” (*Evangelization in the Modern World*, 41).

Our children mimic everything we do good and bad especially during early stages of development. These moments of imitation tend to stay with them as they mature in their intellect and will, which is why our behavior and demeanor can either strengthen or weaken their understanding of Christ and his Church. One of the most effective ways we can evangelize and catechize our children is what St. Augustine describes “to be a beggar before God.” This is an exercise in the virtue of humility (*Lk 19:9-14*) because it is an act of the will to submit ourselves before Christ.

### TEACHING OUR CHILDREN

The meaning of the Greek term *Paideia* refers to a child, but it also means the instruction of a child within the context of culture. Hence our principal aim is to introduce an authentic Catholic culture to our children, one that is visibly ordered to this way of living.

Parents often ask me, “what is the first thing they should teach their children about the faith?” The simple answer is show them how and what it means to live an active sacramental life in the Church, immerse them in the Word of God through prayer; faithfully participate in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass; begin the process of helping them understand their baptismal call. What these suggestions echo is that our children should know that they are part of God’s plan and that

they have a unique place in salvation history.

Children need to know that they are part of the family of God as reflected in their own family. This serves as a distinctive motive of credibility helps them mature in their Catholic faith. Here are a couple of suggestions to consider when catechizing your child:



Marlon De La Torre is the director of Catechesis for the Diocese of Fort Worth.

- Be a witness of Christian living to all. (*Jn 15:5*)
- Proclaim the Gospel, i.e., daily scripture reflections. (*Mt 28:17-20*)
- Engage and participate in an active sacramental life, e.g., confession and reception of the Holy Eucharist. (*CCC 1324*)
- Actively live a holy moral life in accordance with the teachings of the Catholic Church. (*Rom 2:14-16; CCC 1750-1754*)
- Promote and witness an active prayer life. (*Mt 5:23-24, 44-45; 7:21; 9:38; Lk 10:2; Jn 4:34*)

Parents are the primary educators of their children. There is no substitute for what you and I as parents can lovingly and intimately offer our children in light of Jesus Christ. From the moment of conception our parental responsibility should be in high gear and involve preparing our children for their ultimate journey with Christ in Heaven. We are called, as St. John Bosco would say, “to desire souls and nothing else.”

# VOCATIONS: SEEKING GOD'S PATH

## Live a fiercely faithful life and pray for our seminarians

By FATHER JAMES WILCOX

**RECENTLY I OFFERED** a series of homilies about living fiercely faithful, and I have taken some time in this article to reflect about how vocations to the priesthood are fostered in environments where Catholics fiercely live the Gospel message of Jesus Christ. A fiercely faithful life is based on disciplined discipleship, humility, and simplicity of life.

Before we dive in, it is important to explore the term fierce. Fierce comes from the Latin term for untamed, meaning brave, courageous, and proud. One definition of fierce

that I really like is “heartfelt and powerful intensity.”

Living fiercely faithful begins with a heartfelt love of Jesus Christ. Men who learn from their families about the love of Jesus Christ and all the people of the Church’s tradition — Mary, the apostles, the saints, the martyrs — are men who seek to live in this love. As each man in seminary is being formed into the man of Jesus Christ, a discipline of prayer and ministry helps him fall deeper in love with Our Savior.

A disciplined life of discipleship leads one to powerful humility.

It is odd to think of the humble as having power, but the prayer of Our Lady demonstrates this in the *Magnificat*: “He has cast down the mighty from their throne; and has exalted the humble and meek.” The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* reminds us that “humility avoids inordinate ambition or pride, and provides the foundation for turning to God in prayer (2559).” That is, humility is seeing through the eyes of God: no more than we are; and no less than we are.

Men in discernment for the priesthood are seeking to serve the Church from

the stance of humility. It is only with a humble heart that the priest can be available to the flock, especially to the lost sheep, at all times. When families and parishioners humbly and powerfully follow Christ, young men follow these examples toward priesthood.

The disciplined, humble disciple of Jesus Christ will lead one to a passionately intense life. This intensity will result in seeking a radical simplicity of life. St. Teresa of Kolkata is one of the best examples of this radical simplicity of life. When men are drawn to Christ, the desire for the frivolous things of life diminishes. Christ calls each of us to simplicity so that our faith can be lived fiercely. The simple life of priesthood is fed by the passion to serve others.

The challenge is a fiercely faithful life: disciplined discipleship, humility, and simplicity of life. This heartfelt powerful intensity for Jesus Christ is a great example for men to choose priesthood.

I just returned from a visit to a few of the men in formation. Their dedication to living fiercely faithful is inspiring. They are committed to growing into men of Christ and, God willing, into priests of Jesus Christ.

Your challenge: live fiercely faithful and pray for the 31 Fort Worth seminarians in formation now. Use the chart on this page to pray for each seminarian every day of the month. Pray that they persevere in discipleship, in humility, and in simplicity of life.



Father James Wilcox serves as the Vocations Director for the Diocese of Fort Worth.

### DAILY PRAYER LIST

#### FORT WORTH SEMINARIANS 2016-2017

**A Prayer for a Seminarian**  
God our Father, Thank you for calling [name] to prepare for the priesthood. Grant him the grace to grow closer to You through daily prayer. Help him form his personality as a credible witness to others. Bless him while he studies Your word and the teachings of the Church, and give him a generous heart to serve Your people. We ask this through Your Son, Jesus Christ, our great High Priest. Amen.

Day of the Month	Please pray for the following seminarians:
1	Deacon Stephen Hauck
2	Deacon John Martin
3	Jason Allan
4	Jeffrey Ambreit-Quepons
5	Collin Becker
6	Jonathan Demma
7	Ricky Diaz
8	Eric Flores
9	Benjamin Grothouse
10	Kevin Hathaway
11	William Hayes
12	Joseph Hoffschwelle
13	Cody Honkomp
14	Austin Hoodenpyle
15	Ed Hopkins
16	Thomas Jones
17	David LaPointe
18	Brandon LeClair
19	Harrison Lewis
20	Pedro Martinez
21	Samuel Maul
22	Brett Metzler
23	David Molinar
24	Maurice Moon
25	Jose Morales
26	Joseph Moreno
27	Hai Nguyen
28	Linh Nguyen
29	Rijo Philip
30	Diego Soto-Deniz
31	Benjamin Vina

**OFFICE OF Vocations**  
DIOCESE OF FORT WORTH

# We need the stability of the Lord

especially now during turbulent times

By Anamaria Scaperlanda Biddick

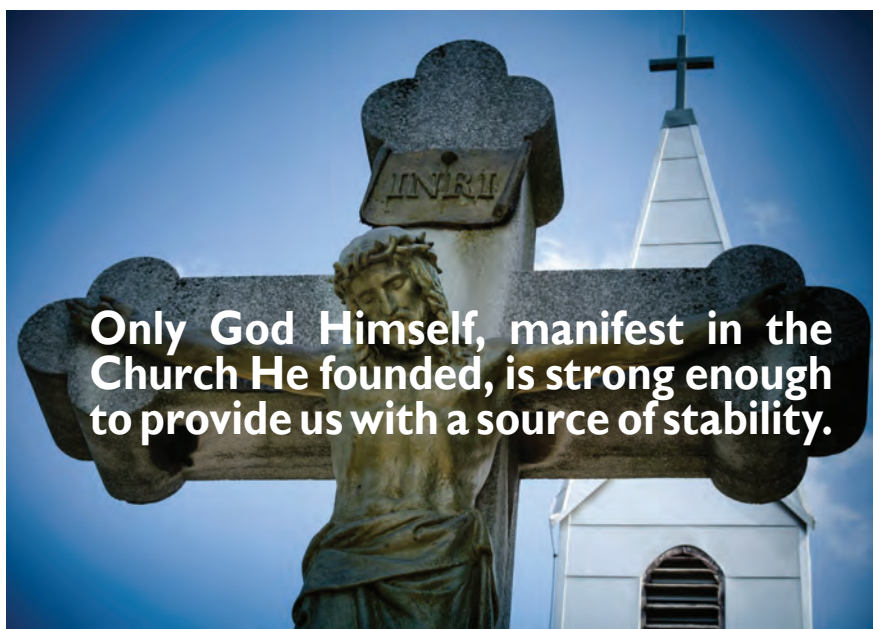
## “WHAT IS THAT SOUND?”

I asked, even as I realized that it was the buzz of books and knickknacks, plates and bowls, tables and, well, everything, rattling as the earth shifted.

“Outside,” I ordered, and led the way to the safety of the front yard, where nothing could fall if the intensity of the quake increased. We stood there for a few minutes as the hum softened and then quieted altogether, waiting to ensure that the aftershocks of the tremor had abated. Later, we learned that this was the biggest earthquake in Oklahoma history.

The ground shifting beneath my feet has become an increasingly commonplace feeling and reality, both literally and metaphorically. The American political culture has reached new lows with this presidential election, in which suburban yard signs, rather than endorse a particular candidate, express fear at the prospect of the future of our country under either major party nominee. The historical centers of Western culture are attacked regularly by extremist Muslim terrorists, whose leaders have already displaced or murdered many of the ancient Christian communities in the Middle East. The First Amendment guarantee of Religious Liberty is in danger of being reduced from freedom to practice one’s religion in all spheres of life to freedom of worship. Relativism, long at play in reducing moral discourse to an expression of personal preference, now distorts scientific realities as people no longer accept the basic biological truth of male and female differentiation. None of this is even to mention technology’s role in our blindness to what is human in front of us, long-standing American consumerism, or the breakdown of the family.

In this world full of instability, what



can provide an anchor? What is strong enough to keep us from being a people unmoored and adrift, floating in the confusion of the culture?

Only God himself, manifest in the Church He founded, is strong enough to provide us with a source of stability. Throughout times of political and social upheaval, God has remained “a rock, a refuge, stronghold,” for those who seek Him, as the psalms say. God worked out of the evil Joseph’s brothers wrought, during the volatility of the famine, and led the whole family to health and safety. He led the Holy Family to safety in Egypt, far from King Herod’s dangerous rule. During the insecurity at the end of the Roman Empire, the faithful found refuge in and around the monasteries, which preserved the life and culture of the Church as well as their own souls.

We, too, are offered the stability and solidity found in life with the Lord. God

gives himself to us in the concreteness of the flesh, manifest in the sacraments, and in the rituals and customs of those who walk in his light. Through these traditions, the Church anchors our time: celebrations of feast and fast mark our seasons; the penitence of Fridays and the weekly resurrection marks our week; the Liturgy of the Hours, a morning offering, or the midday Angelus mark our days. By living out the pattern of life given to us by the Church, our days are imbued with an awareness of the unchanging cosmos and the nature of reality as gift. Through the prayers and practices of his Church, God anchors our days and provides much needed constancy amidst the ever-changing world.

*Anamaria Scaperlanda Biddick, a graduate of the University of Notre Dame, is a freelance writer based out of Oklahoma City, where she lives with her husband and two daughters.*

# From Paranoia to Metanoia

with Jesus

By Fr. Ron Rolheiser, OMI

**SOMETIMES WE'RE A MYSTERY** to ourselves, or, perhaps more accurately, sometimes we don't realize how much paranoia we carry within ourselves. A lot of things tend to ruin our day.

I went to a meeting recently and for most of it felt warm and friendly towards my colleagues, and positive about all that was happening. I was in good spirits, generative, and looking for places to be helpful. Then, shortly before the meeting ended, one of my colleagues made a biting comment which struck me as bitter and unfair. Immediately, a series of doors began to close inside me. My warmth and empathy quickly turned into hardness and anger, and I struggled not to obsess about the incident. Moreover the feelings didn't pass quickly. For several days a coldness and paranoia lingered inside me and I avoided any contact with the man who had made the negative comments while I stewed in my negativity.

Time and prayer eventually did their healing, a healthier perspective returned, and the doors that had slammed shut at that meeting opened again and metanoia replaced my paranoia.

It's significant that the first word out of Jesus' mouth in the Synoptic Gospels is the word, metanoia. Jesus begins his ministry with these words: "Repent [metanoia] and believe in the good news" and that, in capsule, is a summary of his entire message. But how does one repent?

Our English translations of the Gospels don't do justice to what Jesus is saying here. They translate, metanoia, with the word, repent. But, for us, the word repent has different connotations from what Jesus intended. In English, repentance implies that we have done something wrong and must regretfully disavow ourselves of that action and begin to live in a new way. The biblical word metanoia, has much wider connotations.

The word metanoia comes from two Greek words: *Meta*, meaning above; and *Nous*, mean-

ing mind. Metanoia invites us to move above our normal instincts, into a bigger mind, into a mind which rises above the proclivity for self-interest and self-protection which so frequently trigger feelings of bitterness, negativity, and lack of empathy inside us. Metanoia invites us to meet all situations, however unfair they may seem, with understanding and an empathic heart. Moreover, metanoia stands in contrast to paranoia. In essence, metanoia is "non-paranoia", so that Jesus' opening words in the Synoptic Gospels might be better rendered: Be un-paranoid and believe that it is good news. Live in trust!

**The posture of metanoia, on the other hand, is seen in Jesus on the cross. There, on the cross, we see Him exposed and vulnerable, his arms spread in a gesture of embrace, and his hands open, with nails through them.**

Henri Nouwen, in a small but deeply insightful book entitled, *With Open Hands*, describes wonderfully the difference between metanoia and paranoia. He suggests that there are two fundamental postures with which we can go through life. We can, he says, go through life in the posture of paranoia. The posture of paranoia is symbolized by a closed fist, by a protective stance, by habitual suspicion and distrust. Paranoia has us feeling that we forever need to protect ourselves from unfairness, that others will hurt us if we show any vulnerability, and that we need to assert our strength and talents to impress others. Paranoia quickly turns warmth into cold, understanding into suspicion, and generosity into self-protection.

The posture of metanoia, on the other hand, is seen in Jesus on the cross. There, on the cross, we see Him exposed and vulnerable, his arms spread in a gesture of embrace, and his hands open, with nails through them. That's the antithesis of paranoia, wherein our

inner doors of warmth, empathy, and trust spontaneously slam shut whenever we perceive a threat. Metanoia, the meta mind, the bigger heart, never closes those doors.

Some of the early Church fathers suggested that all of us have two minds and two hearts. For them, each of us has a big mind and a big heart. That's the saint in us, the image and likeness of God inside us, the warm, generative, and empathic part of us. All of us harbor a true greatness within. But each of us also has within us a petty mind and a petty heart. That's the narcissistic part of us, the wounded part, the paranoid part that turns self-protective

and immediately begins to close the doors of warmth and trust whenever we appear threatened. Such is our inner complexity. We are both big-hearted and petty, open-minded and bigoted, trusting and suspicious, saint and narcissist, generous and hoarding, warm and cold.

Everything depends upon which heart and which mind we are linked to and operating out of at any given moment. One minute we are willing to die for others, a minute later we would see them dead, one minute we want to give ourselves over in love, a minute later we want to use our gifts to show our superiority over others. Metanoia and paranoia vie for our hearts.

Jesus, in his message and his person, invites us to metanoia — to move towards and stay within our big minds and big hearts, so that in the face of a stinging remark our inner doors of warmth and trust do not close.



Oblate Father Ron Rolheiser, theologian, teacher, and award-winning author, is President of the Oblate School of Theology in San Antonio, TX. He can be contacted through his website at [www.ronrolheiser.com](http://www.ronrolheiser.com).

[www.ronrolheiser.com](http://www.ronrolheiser.com).



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Remembering the faith

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# DEPART

By Jacqueline Burkepile  
Correspondent

*Editor's Note: This story, originally published on northtexascatholic.org in 2015, features various updates and additional interviews from September and October 2016.*

*“IF JOB’S SONS WERE PURIFIED BY THEIR FATHER’S SACRIFICE (JOB 1:5), WHY WOULD WE DOUBT THAT OUR OFFERINGS FOR THE DEAD BRING THEM SOME CONSOLATION? LET US NOT HESITATE TO HELP THOSE WHO HAVE DIED AND TO OFFER OUR PRAYERS FOR THEM.”*

— St. John Chrysostom, CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH, 1032

**T**he Catholic Church celebrates All Souls’ Day every year on Nov. 2 — a day to remember, honor, and pray for those who have died.

The Church encourages prayer for the departed, teaching that the prayers of the faithful on Earth help cleanse the souls of those in purgatory so they can enter heaven.

The following is a look at how parishes across the Diocese of Fort Worth commemorate All Souls’ Day and honor deceased loved ones.

#### COMMITTED PRAYER

Throughout the month of November, various parishes provide a Book of the Dead, inviting Catholics to include the names of their deceased loved ones so the community can lift them up in prayer.

Father Kyle Walterscheid, pastor of St. John Paul II Parish in Denton, not only has a Book of the Dead at his church, but also reminds college students to pray for the dearly departed.

“I personally raise the intensity of my prayers for the dead each November, especially those who died this past year, and for their families that remain,” he said. “The month ends with the start of the holidays and an empty chair sits at many a thanksgiving table.

“Sadness, loneliness, and other feelings may overwhelm us until we are reminded that God has given us something to do: to pray for their soul to be released from purgatory, to reject anything about them that was not of God, and to verbally remind family members of the virtues they lived and taught regularly...”

#### THE SERVICE OF LIGHT

Another way to honor and pray for the faithful departed is through the “Service of Light,” which several parishes throughout the diocese offer. Oftentimes, parishes mail personal invitations to those who have lost loved ones within the last year. Names of the deceased are announced during the service, and their living family members light a candle in memory of them. Special

prayers and Scripture readings are also recited.

Holy Family Church parishioner Karen Roach, of Fort Worth, served in grief ministry for several years and began their parish’s yearly Service of Light in the early 1990s. She and her husband lost their 24-year-old son David in a tragic car accident in 1991. Roach believes this service helps people better cope with loss.

“David is still alive in my spiritual life because I know that he is with God. It is very beautiful to light a candle in memory of him,” Roach said.

Roach added that the Service of Light helps those grieving live as a new person. She said losing a loved one can drastically change peoples’ lives because they must carry on without him or her.

“It’s a loss you have for the rest of your life, but it doesn’t mean that you can’t find ways to be at comfort and to be the new you,” Roach said. “I had to learn how to live. The power of prayer and symbolism of Christ are just overwhelming.”

#### OUTDOOR MASSES

Sacred Heart Church in Wichita Falls remembers the deceased with several Masses throughout November. After their All Saints Day Mass, they recall the names of parishioners who died within the past year. Furthermore, the parish celebrates Mass in the cemetery on All Souls Day.

Sacred Heart parishioner Bob Butterfield attends and helps with the All Souls Day Mass every year. His grandson passed away in 2010 at the age of 20 while serving on active duty in the military. He and his wife, Irene, see these Masses as an important way to remember their grandson, and consider it a way to give back to their community.

“It’s just another way for us to honor him and to remember him in prayers, especially during the Mass. It just means more to us doing it right there at the cemetery where

he is buried,” Butterfield said.

St. Thomas Aquinas parishioner Theresa Switzer, who lost her husband in late November 2013, finds comfort in

**ALL SOULS DAY,** unlike All Saints Day, is dedicated to those who have died and not yet reached heaven. They are the souls who die in God’s grace and friendship but are still imperfectly purified. These souls, free of mortal sin but still in a state of lesser sin, must be purified and perfected in purgatory before they enter the joys of heaven.

*For more, see Catechism of the Catholic Church 1030-1032*

CONTINUED ON PAGE 34

# Annual Mass brings healing to families grieving death of unbaptized children

By Joan Kurkowski-Gillen  
Correspondent

**“YOU CAN SEE IT IN THEIR TEARS.”**

That’s how Pat Pelletier described the grief and sadness expressed by the 200 people who filled St. Patrick Cathedral for the Bishop’s Annual Memorial Mass for Babies Who Died before Baptism.

Concelebrated by Bishop Michael Olson and other diocesan priests, the Oct. 8 Mass was an opportunity to comfort families who have lost children to miscarriage, stillbirth, or abortion.

During the liturgy, participants were invited to place roses, in memory of their babies, on a side altar dedicated to the Virgin Mary — the mother of all humanity. The Knights of Columbus served as an honor guard for the ceremony.

The emotional tribute generated audible sobs from the congregation.

## FROM PAGE 33

the traditions Father Tom Kennedy offers their parish in Pilot Point. Their All Souls Day Mass in the cemetery provides a sense of peace and helps “keep our loved ones in a special place in our hearts.”

“[Our loved ones] are never



A woman and man place roses in front of a statue of the Virgin Mary during the Annual Memorial Mass for Babies who Died before Baptism at St. Patrick Cathedral. (Photo by Ben Torres / NTC)

“It’s a beautiful Mass. When they come back from the altar, they are more at peace,” explains Pat Pelletier, co-director of Mother and Unborn Baby Care Center.

Pelletier began organizing the special liturgy 20 years ago with her late husband, Chuck Pelletier, and has noticed “the number of individuals and families participating seems to grow each year.”

For many worshippers, the Mass symbolically represents the funeral their children never had.

**FROM THE BEGINNING** the Church has honored the memory of the dead and offered prayers in suffrage for them, above all the Eucharistic sacrifice, so that, thus purified, they may attain the beatific vision of God.

— *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 1032

forgotten but life does go on,” Switzer said. “It doesn’t mean you forget, but as time goes it gets easier. I’m not in that place yet.”

Originally, the Mass was held privately to help Catholic women suffering from the pain of abortion heal spiritually. Today the Mass welcomes anyone who has lost an unborn child regardless of how he or she died.

Sitting alone in the cathedral, a 57-year-old mother of two prayed for healing. The memory of her abortion, at the age of 17, still haunts her.

“I was very young,” she whispered tearfully. “I just didn’t know any better and was afraid to tell my parents.”

Seven years ago, the lapsed Catholic began going to church, went to confession, and repented.

“I’ve had friends who wanted abortion and I said don’t do it. You’ll be depressed and will feel bad for years,” she said, describing her post-abortion trauma. “I’m

here because I made a mistake — a really big mistake.”

The Memorial Mass is scheduled each year as close as possible to the Oct. 7th Feast of our Lady of the Rosary as a way of encouraging grieving parents to turn toward Mary for solace and comfort.

In his homily, Bishop Olson asked members of the congregation grieving the loss of a child who died before baptism to confidently ask the Blessed Mother for help and intercession.

“She understands the loss of a child intimately,” Bishop Olson emphasized. “Nobody loved Jesus more faithfully and more totally than the Blessed Virgin Mary. And nobody loves us more — except her son. She is our help, our intercessor, our example and our mother.”

Mary Klufa, also a St. Thomas Aquinas parishioner, said she understands it is a Christian duty to pray for the deceased.

Klufa also lost her husband, and sees her grief as a gift, because she “loved and was loved.” She added that her comfort comes from the Church praying for her husband,

as well as the hope that the Church will pray for her departed soul someday too.

“The Church brings us together to have us acknowledge that we are all in this together, the living and the dead,” Klufa said. “We all need to be working for the redemption of mankind.”

AS THE YEAR OF MERCY COMES TO AN END,  
ADVENT ARRIVES AND SO BEGINS THE  
CHURCH'S LITURGICAL SEASON OF WAITING FOR

# THE Word MADE Flesh

## BEING LIKE THE CHILD JESUS

By Jacqueline Burkepile

**J**ESUS COULD HAVE BEEN BORN IN A CASTLE, OR A BEAUTIFUL KINGDOM. Instead, Mary bore Jesus in a stable. She then “wrapped Him in swaddling clothes and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.” (*Luke 2:7*). He chose poverty, hardship, and simplicity over riches.

We live in a world where material goods are at the center of our society. We are told the lie that these things will fulfill us, but in reality, they will only make us temporarily happy. This is because we were made to live with God in eternity. We were made to love and serve Him with our whole hearts.

Jesus said in Matthew 6:24, “No one can serve two masters. He will either hate one and love the other, or be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.”

How often are our hearts divided between God and material things? How often do we choose to pay more attention to the television, our phones, or the computer? How often do we clutter our lives with everything else but God? This life and all its material goods are fleeting. God will judge based on how we loved and served Him. If our hearts are divided, it is difficult to completely love Him.

During his visit to the St. Francis of Assisi of the Providence of God Hospital on his journey to Rio de Janeiro, Brazil during World Youth Day in 2013, Pope Francis said, “The conversion of your patron saint is well known: the young Francis abandoned riches and comfort in order to become a poor man among the poor. He understood that true joy and riches do not come from the idols of this world – material things and the possession of them – but are to be found only in following Christ and serving others.”

She wrapped Him in  
swaddling clothes  
and laid Him  
in a manger,  
because there  
was no room for  
them in the inn.

– Luke 2:7



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CONTINUED ON PAGE 37

# The Infinity of Littleness

By Archbishop Fulton Sheen

**W**HEN WE SPEAK OF THE INCARNATION, WE MEAN THAT THE LIFE, THE TRUTH, AND THE LOVE OF THE PERFECT GOD TOOK ON A VISIBLE HUMAN LIKENESS IN THE PERSON OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOR, JESUS CHRIST.

The faith of the humble man tells him: this Child is the Incarnate Word, true God and true man; He is the Creator of the human race become man: He needs milk to nourish Him, but it is by his hand that the birds of the heavens are fed; He is born of a Mother, but He is the One who preexisted his own Mother and therefore He made her beautiful and sinless, as we would have done for our own mother if we but had the power; He lies upon straw on earth, and yet sustains the universe and reigns in Heaven; He is born in time, and yet He existed before all time, Maker of the stars under the stars; Ruler of

the earth an outcast of earth; filling the world, lying in a manger. The proud man sees only a Babe. But the humble man, illumined by faith, sees two lives in this Babe, in the unity of the Person of God. ...

The humble, simple souls, who are little enough to see the bigness of God in the littleness of a babe, are therefore the only ones who will ever understand the reason of His visitation.

He came to this poor earth of ours to carry on an exchange, to say to us, as only the Good God could say: "You give me your humanity, and I will give you my Divinity; you give me your time,

and I will give you my eternity; you give me your weary body, and I will give you Redemption; you give me your broken heart, and I will give you Love; you give me your nothingness, and I will give you My All." ...

The world, which is so bent on power, never seems thoroughly to grasp the paradox that as only little children discover the bigness of the universe, so only the humble of heart ever find the greatness of God. The world misses the lesson because it confuses littleness with weakness, childlikeness with childishness, and humility with an inferiority complex. It thinks of power only in terms of physical force, and of wisdom only in terms of the vain knowledge of the spirit of the day. It forgets that great moral strength may be hidden in physical weakness,

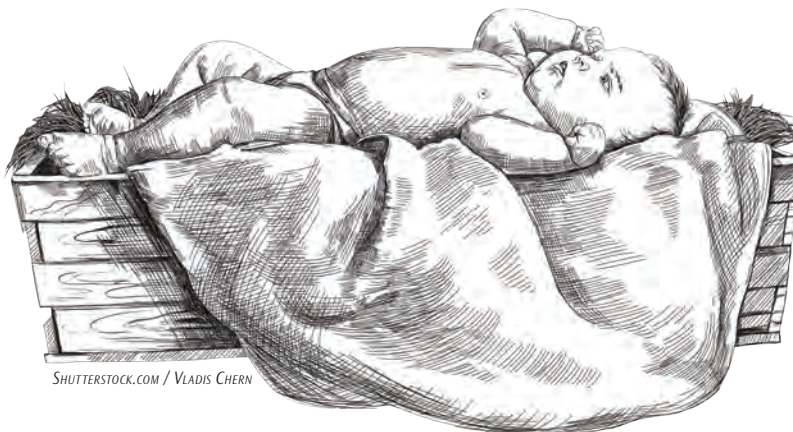
as Omnipotence was wrapped in swaddling bands, and that great Wisdom may be found in simple faith as the Eternal Mind was found in the form of a Babe. There is strength — strength before which the angels trembled, strength before which the stars prostrated, and strength before which the very throne of Herod shook in fear. It was the strength of that Divine and Awful Love which shrank from nothing to convince us of God's measure of what is really great and high. ...

Thus the birthday of the God-Man is the children's day, in which age, like a crab, turns backwards, in which the wrinkles are smoothed by the touch of a recreating hand, in which the proud become children, and the big become little, and all find their God.

Hence I speak not in words of learned wisdom, but in the words of a child. We all go stooping into the cave; we put off our worldly wisdom, our pride, our seeming superiority—and we become as little ones before the incalculable mystery of the humiliation of the Son of God. As such, we creep to the knee of the loveliest woman in all the world, the woman who alone of all women wears the red rose of motherhood and the white rose of virginity, the mother who in begetting Our Lord became the Mother of Men, and we ask her to teach us how to serve God, how to love God, how to pray to God.

**This text is an excerpt from *THE ETERNAL GALILEAN* by the late Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen (*Alba House, 1997*)**

The proud man sees only a Babe. But the humble man, illumined by faith, sees two lives in this Babe, in the unity of the Person of God.



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Most material things are not evil in themselves. Oftentimes, they help us in life. However, they become evil when we allow them to interfere with our relationship with God.

St. Therese of Lisieux said, "True love is found only in complete self-forgetfulness, and it is only after we have detached ourselves from every creature that we find Jesus."

This Advent, how can we meditate on detachment from worldly goods and pleasures, especially during a time when retailers everywhere push this materialism? How can we model Jesus' simplicity as He chose to come into this world as a helpless child lying in a manger? Will you put down your phone and pray for an hour? Will you go to an extra daily Mass? Will you spend time with Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament? Jesus is calling you and waiting. Jesus' heart and arms are open and ready to provide you with the ultimate satisfaction: his peace, forgiveness, love, and most importantly, Himself.

## GIVING THANKS TO GOD DURING OUR *Perpetual Advent*

By Jeff Hedglen

**E**VERY YEAR IT IS THE SAME. January is welcomed with a lot of optimism for the year ahead. I think about all the plans and events that await me and I wonder about what will come during the year then I blink my eyes and Thanksgiving is just around the corner.

Whether I like it or not, 2016 is winding down and before I know it I will be ringing in 2017. It is at this time of year I like to look back at the year and offer thanks for all that has happened. I like to think back on the highs and lows at work, the fun things that I got to do, time with family and friends that I was blessed to share, and some of my closest moments to God.

Yet, even while I am looking back at the year so far, I am excited about the celebrations to come. There will be time with family and friends, national holidays, and some pretty important Church feasts and solemnities to celebrate.

So many things to be thankful for, and in the midst of them all is a ceremony steeped in gratitude that we participate in weekly and for some, daily. The word Eucharist actually means thanksgiving. Paragraph 1328 of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* says this: "It is called Eucharist, because it is an action of

thanksgiving to God."

It is no accident that the source and summit of our faith happens when we are gathered around a table at Church. Jesus gave us the Eucharist while at a ritual supper that was a meal of thanksgiving recalling how God rescued the Israelites from slavery in Egypt.

Jesus knew from his own human experience that great celebrations occur at the table. His first miracle happened at a wedding where guests gathered at table. He had many meals with his disciples and his earthly ministry came to completion at the Passover table and the Altar of the Cross.

The same is true for us, whether it is the Thanksgiving table, or a tailgate serving as a table before the big game, or at a high chair on a first birthday with a baby's face smeared with cake, or a quiet romantic candlelit table for two. We celebrate and give thanks gathered at table.

The penultimate table is the altar of sacrifice, healing, and thanksgiving that we congregate around at each Mass. This Eucharistic celebration is at once an eternal re-presentation of the Paschal Mystery and a reminder that this is just the first act of a mystical story and that we still await the advent of act two, when Jesus comes again in glory.

The Church year begins five weeks before the secular calendar turns and this is fitting because December is a month filled with anticipation. Everything from school kids chomping at the bit for the end of the semester, to the slow build up of excitement for Christmas Day, to the big sigh that comes when the festivities wind down and a quiet moment with a child, friend, or loved one can be leisurely enjoyed.

Yes, there is so much to be thankful for and so much more to come. We are a Eucharistic people in a perpetual Advent. Everything that we have to be thankful for or to look forward to comes through the Father's love for us, which is perfectly framed by Pope Francis in this Jubilee Year of Mercy. All year he has reminded us that the Father's love is most perfectly conveyed in the bountiful expressions of divine mercy.

So, while we are being thankful, let us not forget to thank God for his unfailling mercy, his unrelenting love, and his promise to be with us until the end of the world, and beyond.

We are a Eucharistic people

in a perpetual Advent.

Everything that we

have to be

thankful for, or

look forward to,

comes through

the Father's love

for us...



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**November 6, Thirty-second Sunday in Ordinary Time.**

**Cycle C Readings:**

- 1) 2 Maccabees 7:1-2, 9-14
- Psalm 17:1, 5-6, 8, 15
- 2) 2 Thessalonians 2:16-3:5
- Gospel) Luke 20:27-38

By Jeff Hedglen

While reading this week's Scripture, a song from the 2005 David Crowder Band album, *A Collision*, came to mind. The only lyric in the song is, *Everybody wants to go to heaven but nobody wants to die*. The reading from 2 Maccabees describes how many members of the Maccabee family were tortured and martyred by the occupying Greek army. They all welcomed death rather than violating their faith because they knew they would see God upon their death.

To be sure, this is an extreme situation and few of us will ever



be required to choose faithfulness to Jesus over death, but the question all of us can ponder is: "How real to us is the prospect of eternal life?"

Years ago at a Bible study, my pastor asked for a show of hands of those in attendance who were ready to go to heaven that night.

*"The King of the world will raise us up to live again forever."*

— 2 Maccabees 7:9

Of the 50 or so people in the room only a few people raised their hands.

Believing in the Resurrection is one thing, but the process of taking part in it can be less than appealing because, of course, it involves our death.

Last year at a young adult retreat, I listened as one of the participants was explaining how fearful she was about a particular situation. I said, "Worst case scenario is that you will die and get to see Jesus."

**QUESTIONS:**

Which do you think is harder, to die for your faith or to live every day like it is your last? Are you ready to die if Jesus called you home today?

There was some laughter, but then the truth of my snarky comment began to settle in along with the realization that no matter what happens in this life, there is a greater, holier life that awaits us all.

A woman I worked with at my parish embodied this attitude and outlook on life. She was terminally ill and had the good fortune to be in her home as she passed to the next life. She had always said she wanted to die sitting up with her feet on the ground as though she had someplace to go, and that is exactly what happened.

Our faith calls us to the realization that we are destined to die, but it is not our ultimate destiny. Death is also a doorway to the presence of God.

**November 13, Thirty-third Sunday in Ordinary Time.**

**Cycle C Readings:**

- 1) Malachi 3:19-20a
- Psalm 98:5-9
- 2) 2 Thessalonians 3:7-12
- Gospel) Luke 21:5-19

By Sharon K. Perkins

During my childhood, long before the days of downloadable music and satellite radio, there was vinyl (which, curiously, is making a comeback!). In our home, there was quite a collection of record albums, and my mother exposed us to the music of Schubert, Beethoven, Chopin, and all the great composers. My favorites were the symphonies, and I learned to pick out the various instruments — oboe, flute, trumpet, harp, and tympani — that retained their distinct voices while combining in a beautiful,

harmonious composition.

Indeed, the word "symphony" literally comes from the Greek words meaning "sounding together," or a combination of different elements in harmony with one another.

Today's psalm depicts the kind of symphony that resonates throughout all of creation as a result of the Lord's coming to "rule the earth with justice." Harp, trumpets, and horns are

*He will rule the world with justice and the peoples with equity."*

— Psalm 98:9



complemented by the sounds of rivers clapping their hands and mountains shouting for joy.

But what does that symphony look like in terms of everyday living? St. Paul gives us a clue in his letter to the Church at Thes-

salonica, when he contrasts "disorderliness" with the harmony of community life when its members perform their daily occupations conscientiously and peacefully.

When performing a musical score, the orchestra is responsible for conveying the composer's vision while closely following the lead of the conductor through the various symphonic movements. Jesus cautions us about the importance of remaining faithful despite changing or alarming circumstances — not following deceptive counsel but focusing on his leadership.

We each have our own unique part to play in the Father's vision of peace and justice. Let's "keep calm and play on."

**QUESTIONS:**

Describe your experience of living in a community that is disorderly or disharmonious. What insights do today's readings offer for the healing of such a community?

**November 20, Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe.**

**Cycle C Readings:**

- 1) 2 Samuel 5:1-3  
Psalm 122:1-5
- 2) Colossians 1:12-20  
Gospel) Luke 23:35-43

**By Jean Denton**

**I**t's not easy to get your head around the concept of the kingdom of God and its meaning for your own life. Then, just when you think you understand, it eludes you again.

No surprise. After all, it's beyond us, right?

Wrong. It's not beyond us. God desires us to be drawn into his kingdom, and He sent his Son, as king, to bring us there.

This week's Scriptures describe Christ's place in the kingdom and his unrelenting, sacrificial effort to keep God's beloved children with



*"Today you will be with me in Paradise."*

— Luke 23:43

Him there forever.

Paul's Letter to the Colossians reminds us that Christ's life didn't begin with his earthly birth. No, He "is before all things." All things were created through Him, for Him, and in Him all things hold together. Mind-blowing.

With such knowledge, it's surprising that we don't feel smaller and less self-determined. But we often forget who lives in whose kingdom.

I'll never forget hearing that

confusion laid to rest by a casual comment of the late Bishop Joseph Delaney of Fort Worth. Lamenting oft-told stories of faithful people running into burning churches to rescue the Eucharist, he said, "They're going to save Jesus." He raised his eyebrows, "Save Jesus — from what?"

Another time, I heard Steve Colecchi, now director of the U.S. bishops' Office of International Justice and Peace, tell a gathering of parish social justice ministers not to get too stressed over their efforts to "save the world."

"Remember," he smiled, "that's already been

accomplished."

In Luke's Gospel this week, onlookers at Jesus' resurrection, as well as one of the criminals hanging beside Him, mockingly challenged Him to prove his power by saving Himself. Of course, there was no need. He was fully alive in the world that mattered: the kingdom of God.

But as savior of humanity, He would willingly give up his earthly life to ransom the lives of his Father's faithful children who suffer in weakness and sinfulness.

Christ the King powerfully "reconciles all things" for the sake of the kingdom of God. We are indeed drawn into his kingdom when we allow Him to rule our lives with his spirit of goodness, justice, and love.

**QUESTIONS:**

What do you believe is your place and your role in Christ's kingdom? How have you witnessed the kingdom of God influencing human society today?

**November 27, First Sunday of Advent.**

**Cycle A Readings:**

- 1) Isaiah 2:1-5  
Psalm 122:1-9
- 2) Romans 13:11-14  
Gospel) Matthew 24:37-44

**By Deacon Mike Ellerbrock**

**N**oah's neighbors were so engrossed in celebrating their good fortune that they were caught unprepared for the calamity of the flood. Had they invited the less-fortunate villagers, perhaps the party may have ended in joy.

Historically, lack of economic opportunity has led to civil wars and international conflicts, including terrorism. Hence, our economic choices involve ethical dimensions, moral issues, and global challenges. Let us beware: Poverty remains a scourge invoking God's wrath.



Today, 3 billion people (nearly half of humanity) live in "poverty," on less than \$2.50 per person per day. Half of those people are perpetually stuck in "extreme poverty," living on less than \$1.25 per person per day. The dollar distinction reflects the desperate reality that extremely poor people cannot save any money at all and thus are unable to invest in their children's future.

The amount of money necessary to lift those 1.5 billion people out of extreme poverty equals

only 0.7 percent of world gross domestic product, an amount equivalent to only four days of military spending by all nations!

To build peace on earth, converting a few swords into plowshares appears to be a no-brainer.

For another frame of reference, consider the Millennium Development Goals established by the United Nations in September 2000. Signed by the U.S. and 190 other nations, the goals commit each nation to allocate 0.7 percent of their annual income for official development aid to the poorest countries. Note that's 0.7 percent — not 70 percent or 7 percent of our nation's annual wealth. It is only

seven-tenths of 1 percent!

So, is America a generous country? Yes and no.

In absolute dollars, we donate more money in development aid than any other nation, yet we are also the biggest laggard in meeting our millennium goals commitment. In 2015, the U.S. contributed only 0.17 percent of our national income in development aid. That is about one-fourth of our official pledge. Though generous, we could do a lot better.

Advent is a time of spiritual reckoning. If the Christ child was welcomed by Magi from the East with gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh, is it not time to reverse the flow of wealth to feed his hungriest children?

**QUESTIONS:**

For the sake of our poorest neighbors, can we not reduce military spending by four days to welcome our infant Creator and Savior into his kingdom?

## December 4, Second Sunday of Advent.

### Cycle A Readings:

- 1) Isaiah 11:1-10  
Psalm 72: 1-2, 7-8, 12-13, 17
- 2) Romans 15:4-9  
(Gospel) Matthew 3:1-12

By Jean Denton

“Going to church” in the Protestant American South holds a certain amusing lore through which I fondly recall the small Louisiana congregation of my girlhood, although at the time I was embarrassed by some of its quirky traditions at worship services.

One was the singing of a favorite hymn, *Stand Up, Stand Up for Jesus*, in which congregants would eagerly remain on the edge of their seats during the organ’s introductory notes then suddenly (with great rustling of arms, legs, and hymnals) rise up as one and belt out, *Stand up! Stand up for*



*Jesus, ye soldiers of the cross!*

Another was “Roll Call Sunday,” when the preacher called the roll of church members and each family would stand and be counted as their name was called. That annual service unfailingly opened with an enthusiastic (by the pastor, at least) rendition of *When the Roll Is Called Up Yonder (I’ll Be There)*.

The Scriptures for this Second Sunday of Advent refer to a

*“Justice shall be the band around his waist, and faithfulness a belt upon his hips.”*

— Isaiah 11:5

similar call to accountability at the coming of Christ. But they emphasize a deeper requirement of faithfulness than symbolic acts of loyalty. Isaiah notes, “Not by appearance shall he judge.”

I would never question the true committed faith of the people of my childhood church. After all, they are the ones who first introduced me to Jesus. Today’s Gospel points out what they knew and modeled for me: Producing “good fruit” is the telling proof of one’s relationship and commitment to Jesus. (I’m just glad there wasn’t a hymn about every tree not bear-

ing good fruit being thrown into the fire.)

Jesus came to us in his day, and comes to us now, to re-create the peaceful world the Father intended. Isaiah declares the promise of Christ bearing the gifts of the Spirit — wisdom, understanding, right judgment, courage, knowledge, piety, and awe before God — gifts He offers us to serve God’s purposes well.

His overriding purposes are justice and peace brought about through compassion.

As we prepare the way of the Lord this Advent, let us rely on the gifts of Jesus’ Spirit to move beyond the mere appearances of faith. Let us commit to intentional acts of justice and love that will produce the good fruit Christ seeks.

### QUESTIONS:

What works of justice and compassion will you commit to this Advent? What particular gifts of the Spirit do you need in your efforts to produce “good fruit” for the Lord?

## December 11, Third Sunday of Advent.

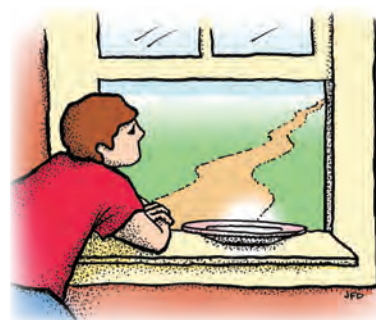
### Cycle A Readings:

- 1) Isaiah 35:1-6a, 10  
Psalm 146:6-10
- 2) James 5:7-10  
(Gospel) Matthew 11:2-11

By Jeff Hedglen

While I was studying for my degree in theology, a professor told us, “The secret to joy is waiting.” I had never considered waiting as criteria for joy. I had always thought of joy as something experienced in the moment at some event or in a person or thing. But as he expounded on this concept, I was reminded of my grandmother and finally understood the connection between joy and waiting.

There were four children in my family for 12 years and then Matthew came along. I was 15 when this happened. Growing



*“Be patient, brothers and sisters, until the coming of the Lord.”*

— James 5:7

grandma make homemade bread, but she always “accidentally” made too much dough and would use the leftovers for cinnamon rolls.

As this expectancy swirled in my mind, the days, hours, and minutes of waiting for grandma to come seemed merciful. But finally she arrived and, oh, the joy that filled my heart (and stomach).

This week’s readings tell of the pre-eminent experience of waiting and joy. In Isaiah we hear the

prophecy about the good things that will occur when the Messiah comes. The Letter of James exhorts us to have patience, and the Gospel reveals that Jesus is the long-awaited fulfillment of the prophecy.

The Israelites had waited centuries for the promised Messiah and He came. Now, we, the pilgrim Church, await the second coming of Jesus. We are in the days between the promise and the fulfillment, but even as we wait we encounter moments of joy as we each experience small morsels of the coming of Jesus daily in our hearts.

Yes, the secret to joy is waiting, but there is joy, too, in the anticipation.

### QUESTIONS:

How have you experienced joy from a time of waiting? What is something you currently are waiting to come to pass? How do you share this waiting with the Lord?

## December 18, Fourth Sunday of Advent.

### Cycle A Readings:

- 1) Isaiah 7:10-14  
Psalm 24:1-6
- 2) Romans 1:1-7  
Gospel) Matthew 1:18-24

### By Sharon K. Perkins

On more than one occasion, I've heard the Holy Spirit described as the "forgotten" member of the Trinity — and I can understand why. As a cradle Catholic, I think the only time I heard anyone preach or teach about the Holy Spirit was on Pentecost Sunday and at my confirmation, although in every sign of the cross the Holy Spirit is certainly mentioned. But in today's readings, the Spirit of God is front and center.

Reminiscent of the Genesis account of creation and the Spirit "sweeping over the waters," to-



*"For it is through the Holy Spirit that this child has been conceived in her."*

— Matthew 1:20

this claim is borne out in the first chapter of Luke's Gospel and also professed in the Nicene Creed.

day's responsorial psalm describes the earth and its fullness as being "founded ... upon the seas." In the great tradition of the prophets of Israel, Isaiah prophesies in the power of the Spirit that a "virgin shall conceive, and bear a son."

But most striking is the role of the Holy Spirit in the pivotal event of human history: the incarnation of the Son of God in the womb of Mary. Twice, Matthew's Gospel states that this happened "through the Holy Spirit," and

We're not talking about some anonymous, shadowy "force" that is the stuff of science fiction. In fact, Scripture describes a divine being so intensely personal that Mary has been identified as the "spouse" of the Holy Spirit in

an ongoing, eternal relationship. In other words, it is the unique union of Mary and the Holy Spirit that made Jesus' incarnation and birth possible — not only as a past historical event but continually and eternally (wrap your mind around that one!).

When we're not overwhelmed with holiday hype, we Catholics tend to think of Advent as simply a religious preparation for Christmas, a one-time occurrence until Dec. 25 rolls around again. In truth, Advent is an anticipatory celebration of the unceasing entry of Emmanuel, "God ... with us," into our hearts and lives. It's the Holy Spirit that accomplishes this, and when it occurs — if we're awake and alert — it's unforgettable.

### QUESTIONS:

What is your relationship with the Holy Spirit? How does Mary's title, "Spouse of the Holy Spirit," give you new insight about the mother of Jesus?

## December 25, Nativity of the Lord.

### Cycle A Readings:

- 1) Isaiah 52:7-10  
Psalm 98:1-6
- 2) Hebrews 1:1-6  
Gospel) John 1:1-18

### By Deacon Mike Ellerbrock

Why does Christmas bring out the best in us? Powerful enough to induce a 24-hour cease-fire with music among combatants in World War I, the image of an innocent infant in a barnyard manger offering peace and hope to a broken world causes hearts to pause and consider the possibility.

Beginning at home, could we be so moved as to rewrite the rules of life?

Who was this special child born to a virgin? If He was indeed the long-awaited Messiah (Anointed One) revealed by angels, a star, and a dove, what was

*"From his fullness we have all received, grace in place of grace."*

— John 1:16



his mission?

When the guns of war fell quiet that silent night along a 460-mile front in Belgium and France, Allied and German troops spontaneously broke into a volley of Christmas carols. Reverberating voices displaced the deafening roar of artillery fire. For a glorious moment, peace reigned instead of terror.

World War I altered history by unleashing dramatic advancements in the technology of warfare that killed 17 million and

wounded another 20 million in only four years. Evil was raw. The human toll and utter devastation of the land drove many survivors into deep pessimism about the human condition.

Two young British soldiers who experienced that war in the brutal, filthy trenches, J.R.R. Tolkien and C.S. Lewis, later bonded into lifelong friends. Despite the devastation of World War I, Tolkien held onto his Catholic faith, and he played a large role in Lewis converting from atheism to Christianity.

Leaping the existential abyss, Tolkien and Lewis chose Christ and his Gospel message. Soul

mates and literary colleagues, they inspired each other for decades to put their faith in print to explore the essential goodness of humanity redeemed by God's grace. Using mythology to spark the Christian imagination of generations, their legacy includes *The Hobbit*, *The Lord of the Rings*, *The Chronicles of Narnia*, and *The Screwtape Letters*.

Similarly, John's Gospel invites us into the Holy Family's sacred home where the "Word was made flesh," where there is "grace and truth," and where "light dispels darkness and believers become children of God." Giving is receiving. Unmerited gifts call forth our best instincts. Salvation arrives in a lowly infant under our care and trust. Goodwill and joy beckon all nations. Alleluia!

### QUESTIONS:

How does the Incarnation bring us "grace in place of grace"?

# NUESTRO PASTOR HABLA

## Ciudadanía fiel:

*haz el bien y evita el mal*



**DURANTE LAS ÚLTIMAS SEMANAS**, frecuentemente me he encontrado en conversaciones con mucha gente, acerca de la responsabilidad de los católicos de votar en las próximas elecciones con una buena y bien formada conciencia.

Algunas personas en estas conversaciones han expresado problemas de conciencia ya que les repugna el tenor y substancia del lenguaje y plataformas políticas de los candidatos, porque ambas están en desacuerdo con el Evangelio y las auténticas enseñanzas de la Iglesia. Otra gente en estas conversaciones ha hecho poco caso de sus problemas de conciencia con la disculpa de que “algunas veces uno tiene que elegir el menor de los males”. Esta segunda respuesta es la que yo quiero tratar, como su obispo.

Lo que me preocupa es que muchas de las personas que me han dado esta respuesta realmente no parecen creer que lo que juzgan ser el “mal menor” es realmente tan malo, para empezar. Lo más importante es que esto incluye esas malas acciones que directamente dañan a los seres humanos, y que de ninguna manera pueden ser justificadas: aborto, racismo, suicidio asistido, terrorismo, la limitación de la libertad de religión, el uso vengativo de la pena de muerte, y la redefinición del matrimonio.

Con todo, también incluye una serie de asuntos sociales que cuando se consideran en abstracto

no son intrínsecamente buenos o malos, pero nuestras circunstancias actuales los han hecho en realidad urgentes, de tal modo que la falta de acción de hecho resultaría en daño directo y destrucción a la vida humana y al bien común de una sociedad justa. Estos asuntos incluirían: la reforma e implementación de una justa política migratoria, métodos de aplicación de la ley, una crisis de refugiados sin precedentes, correcta administración de los recursos ambientales, y políticas económicas que den prioridad a las necesidades de los pobres.

También me preocupa que algunos católicos elijan evaluar las enseñanzas y orientación de la Iglesia en cualquiera de estos asuntos midiendo la enseñanza de acuerdo a si apoya o no las posiciones de los candidatos y las plataformas del partido. Otros simplemente consideran que la orientación del Evangelio y la enseñanza de la Iglesia están al mismo nivel que el estruendo de las otras muchas voces parciales que surgen en los medios de comunicación tanto profesionales como sociales. Hasta un amigo me ofreció animó expresando que “él estaba muy contento de ver que los obispos de Texas se habían unido al movimiento contra la pena de muerte”. La declaración, aunque sincera y de buena voluntad, representa el malentendido común que la fidelidad al Evangelio y la responsabilidad de los obispos a enseñar está en segundo lugar, en la formación de nuestra conciencia, al de los movimientos políticos y plataformas partidistas.

Yo les recuerdo que la formación de nuestra conciencia empieza y termina con la oración. Con humildad le pedimos a Dios que abra nuestros corazones y mentes a su verdad que nos ilumina. Examinamos los hechos y a los candidatos lo mejor que podamos discernirlos y no solamente en base a fuentes parciales. Evaluamos un curso de acción por medio de la Sagrada Escritura y el auténtico Magisterio de la Iglesia. Dirigimos la mirada a



Monseñor Michael F. Olson, STD, MA  
Obispo de la Diócesis de Fort Worth

Jesucristo, la plenitud de la revelación. Como nos enseñó el II Concilio Vaticano “Llamándonos siempre a amar el bien y a evitar el mal, la voz de la conciencia puede, cuando es necesario, hablar a nuestro corazón más claramente: haz esto, evita aquello” (*Gaudium et Spes 16*).

Una conciencia bien formada nunca está cómoda junto al mal. Una conciencia bien formada puede tolerar los males menores, pero nunca puede sentirse satisfecha a su lado.

Estamos llamados a evitar el mal tanto como estamos llamados a hacer lo que es bueno. Mientras votar es requerido y esencial para cumplir mi responsabilidad social como ciudadano fiel, mi ciudadanía fiel no termina en la urna electoral. Cuando nuestro voto contribuye al establecimiento de políticas que nuestra bien formada conciencia juzgue que son malas, debemos trabajar activa y específicamente en otras formas para promover y defender el bien que esa maldad particular amenace. No hacer eso es pecar gravemente de omisión.

Pido que cada uno de nosotros considere nuestra ciudadanía fiel más allá del día de la elección. Sin importar el resultado de la elección, el examen de nuestra conciencia y el discernimiento del correcto curso de acción para nosotros como fieles católicos continuarán creciendo en importancia, a medida que avanzamos como nación enfrentando a estos serios asuntos en nuestra dividida sociedad.

*+ Michael F. Olson*



# El gobierno no debe luchar contra la pobreza acabando con los pobres



Padre Carmen Mele, OP

### EN EL CENTRO DE ESTUDIOS DE LOS DOMINICOS EN WASHINGTON EN LOS 1970s

TUVIMOS A UN PROFESOR DE LA MORAL QUE SOLÍA ECHAR EJEMPLOS LLAMATIVOS.

UN TAL EJEMPLO TENÍA QUE VER CON LOS MEDIOS MALOS PARA LLEVAR A CABO INTENCIONES BUENAS. EL PROFESOR-SACERDOTE DIJO QUE UNA PERSONA QUE DESEA ELIMINAR LA POBREZA NO DEBE MATAR A LOS POBRES PARA LOGRARLO.

### EL PRINCIPIO DE LA ENMIENDA HYDE

La idea de matar gente para superar la pobreza soñaba inimaginable en ese tiempo, pero tal vez no habíamos reflexionado en lo que pasaba en el Congreso entonces. En el año 1976 los congresistas a favor de la libre elección de aborto querían que Medicaid, el programa principal del gobierno para el alivio de la pobreza, pagara por los abortos. Razonaban que no es justo que se les niegue a las mujeres pobres un “servicio de salud” disponible fácilmente a las otras mujeres. Los representantes y senadores en pro de vida, en cambio, sabían que el aborto en la mayoría de los casos no tiene nada que ver con la salud. Además, creían que el gobierno no debe pedir al pueblo cooperar en un mal al pagar el aborto con dólares de impuestos. Ese año pasó la enmienda Hyde que prohibió que los fondos federales fueran usados para financiar abortos.

El principio de la enmienda de Hyde prohibiendo que el gobierno federal financie el aborto ha sido operativo por cuarenta años. Es un compromiso en el sentido que refleja una realidad política. La mayoría de los americanos favorece la restricción del aborto a los casos difíciles de la violación de mujer y el peligro de la muerte materna. Aunque se ha probado imposible pasar una enmienda a la Constitución en pro de vida, los sociólogos pueden demostrar como la enmienda Hyde a leyes ha resultado en menos abortos entre los pobres. Esta clase de gente es la más inclinada a buscar el aborto para resolver un dilema humano.

### LA CAMPAÑA PARA QUITAR LA ENMIENDA HYDE

Recientemente las fuerzas a favor de la libre elección han duplicado sus esfuerzos para tener al gobierno pagando abortos. El partido Demócrata incluyó esta medida en su plataforma política este verano. La organización Planned Parenthood abiertamente critica la enmienda Hyde como “no más que una intromisión restrictiva e injusta en el cubrimiento de seguro para millones de mujeres y sus familias de ingresos bajos”. En septiembre “Católicos a favor de la libre elección” – una organización decididamente no católica – lanzó una campaña nacional promoviendo el financiamiento público de aborto.

La campaña para quitar el principio de la enmienda Hyde debe ser resistida por varias razones. Primero, por promover el aborto la campaña impide que las mujeres pobres maduren. Es decir los seres humanos nos hacemos personas responsables por nuestras vidas y las vidas de otros al enfrentar las consecuencias

de nuestras acciones en modos morales y creativos. Segundo y más importante, la campaña alienta quitar directamente la vida humana. Aunque los proponentes a favor de la libre elección desconocen el hecho, los no nacidos son también seres humanos únicos. Ya se puede determinar aun sus características físicas con el análisis de DNA.

Tercero, la campaña aporta la cultura de violencia por sugerir el valor superior de enfrentar un problema con fuerza que puede ser resuelto en modos más gentiles. Cuarto y finalmente, la campaña respalda la mentira que el aborto es un procedimiento de salud. Ciertamente no es sano para el no nacido cuando se termina su vida. Además, generalmente no se hacen abortos por la preocupación genuina de la salud de la madre sino por otros motivos menos contundentes.

### ¿QUÉ SE PUEDE HACER PARA MEJORAR LA SITUACIÓN?

En lugar de eliminar la enmienda Hyde, nuestra sociedad debe resolverse a hacer el aborto sumamente raro y últimamente no existente. Debería fomentar un aprecio por la vida humana por recalzar la atención proporcionada a la comodidad y placer propio a la preocupación por los débiles. Que edificante es ver una familia apoyando a un hermano con el síndrome Down o a una madre que ya no puede más vivir sola. También tenemos que desarrollar una actitud más sana hacia el sexo. Se debe prohibir con penas el “sextear” (enviando por texto fotos de personas desnudas). Los adultos deberían reconocer que la intimidad sexual es un derecho sólo entre las parejas públicamente comprometidas y receptivas a tener a hijos.

Finalmente, debemos apoyar esfuerzos que proveen a los adolescentes de familias pobres con oportunidades para desarrollar sus talentos. Tal vez los muchachos harían más caso a sus estudios académicos si la parroquia tuviera una “misa bachillerato” para los graduados de la secundaria y la universidad.

### EL ABORTO ES MÁS UNA CUESTIÓN POLÍTICA QUE MORAL

El aborto no es la cuestión moral más grande de nuestros tiempos. La mayoría de la gente sabe que es malo y piensa que debe ser limitado considerablemente. Pero sí se constituye la mayor cuestión política. Algunos políticos quieren engrandecer su base de apoyo apelando a los intereses de los defensores de la libre elección. Hablan ingenuamente que el financiamiento público de aborto servirá de ayuda a los pobres. Ya están en marcha para quitar la enmienda Hyde con reclamos engañosos. Con el favor de Dios se detendrá su impulso.

El Padre Carmelo Mele, de la ORDEN DE PREDICADORES, es el director del INSTITUTO JUAN PABLO II y de la CATEQUESIS PARA ADULTOS HISPANOS de la DIÓCESIS DE FORT WORTH.

# Luz DEL MUNDO Sal DE LA

CÓMO UNA SANTA DE ESTA ÉPOCA  
TOCÓ LOS CORAZONES DE LA GENTE  
DE LA DIÓCESIS DE FORT WORTH

Santa Teresa de Kolkata fue canonizada el 4 de septiembre, 2016 por el Papa Francisco durante una Misa en la Plaza de San Pedro. La fundadora de las Misioneras de la Caridad, nativa de Albania, influyó las vidas de innumerable gente alrededor del mundo. Aquí tenemos unas pocas historias locales.



# LA TIERRA

## LA MADRE TERESA INSPIRA TRABAJOS CON ENFERMOS TERMINALES

No hay mucha gente que pueda decir que pasaron una hora en conversación reflexiva con la Madre Teresa de Kolkata. Gini Joseph Kempen es una de esas personas.

La azafata de American Airlines conoció en 1995 a la recientemente canonizada santa durante un viaje a la India para visitar a sus familiares. Su tía fue de los primeros miembros de la orden religiosa iniciada por la Madre Teresa—las Misioneras de la Caridad—y el padre de Kempen simplemente tomó el teléfono y arregló una cita con su amiga, ganadora del Premio Nobel, a la que él ha conocido y apoyado desde los 1950s.

“Ella era más bajita de lo que yo esperaba—diminuta”, recuerda Kempen, que entonces tenía 26 años y quería conocer a la mujer que *Time Magazine*, en 1975 había declarado “santa viviente”.

La azafata de aerolínea asistió a la Misa matutina dentro de la sencilla capilla sin bancas, y recuerda ver a la frágil misionera de 85 años hincarse en el duro piso de madera y ayudar a distribuir la Communion a los feligreses en el cuarto caliente y húmedo. Los benefactores frecuentemente donaban abanicos al convento, pero las hermanas le dijeron a la familia Joseph que la Madre Teresa no aceptaba ese lujo, “mientras los demás no lo tuvieran”.

El recuerdo que Kempen aprecia más son “esas pocas horas que pasé allí con ella sentada en un banco junto a mí, sosteniendo mi mano y hablándome acerca de lo que Dios quiere que hagamos”, dice ella. “Fue un momento decisivo en mi vida espiritual”.

Después de ver la pobreza en el área más pobre de Calcuta, ahora Kolkata, y conociendo

la labor de la Madre Teresa con los huérfanos y moribundos, la joven India nacida en América empezó a reconsiderar su vida. Se convirtió en voluntaria, y entrenadora de voluntarios, para cuidar enfermos terminales, y más tarde usó esos conocimientos para cuidar a su suegra que padecía de la enfermedad de Alzheimer.

Kempen, quien todavía tiene un dije y un rosario que le fueron dados durante la visita, nunca vio a la Madre Teresa como mística o sobrenatural. El lazo que las unió fue más personal.

“Sólo la conocí como una mujer que me inspiró y me puso en el camino que era el propósito de mi vida”, ella insiste. “Ella fue el catalizador para la dirección que tomé”.

## LA VISITA A FORT WORTH ENFATIZÓ “COMBATIR LA POBREZA EMPIEZA EN CASA”

El trabajo de la Madre Teresa con los pobres y los indefensos apenas empezaba a atraer la atención mundial cuando ella vino a Fort Worth en mayo, 1976.

La humanitaria mujer estaba en los Estados Unidos para recibir el Premio *Pacem in Terris* Peace and Freedom otorgado por el Consejo Católico Interracial; y visitar varias ciudades americanas era parte de su itinerario.

Bob Walters fue parte de la muchedumbre que dio a la Madre Teresa una ovación de pie cuando subió al escenario del Centro de Convenciones de Fort Worth. El fallecido Padre Robert Wilson presentó a la oradora y describió sus ministerios a la asombrada audiencia.

“Su presencia en el escenario era abrumadora”, cuenta Walters, admirador de la



Una imagen de archivo sin fechar muestra a Santa Teresa de Kolkata sosteniendo a un niño durante una visita a Varsovia, Polonia. (CNS foto/Tomasz Gzell, EPA)

misionera por mucho tiempo y que estaba deseoso de verla en persona. “Además de mis fuertes emociones, sentí que algo pasó físicamente sobre mí—como una briza que de repente roza la cara o como pasar de las sombras a la luz del sol. Supe en mi corazón que estaba en la presencia de una santa”.

En ese entonces empleado como investigador científico en la industria aeronáutica local, y padre de tres niños pequeños, Walters se preguntaba cómo podría él cumplir con sus obligaciones familiares y aún ayudar la labor de la Madre Teresa en la India.

Hablando en baja y suave voz, la que habría de ser santa, nombró su conflicto interno.

“Lo que más me conmovió fue cuando dijo, ‘por favor no vengas a Kolkata a ayudar a aliviar nuestra pobreza. Trabajen para aliviar la pobreza en su propio hogar’. En ese momento supe que mi trabajo era quedarme en mi casa y ser para mis tres hijos el mejor padre que yo pudiera”, reveló el feligrés de San Francisco de Asís.

Junto con su esposa, Angela, directora diocesana del Proyecto Gabriel, Walters es hoy un defensor de los no nacidos y de otras formas de respetar la vida,

“La Madre Teresa tenía un lugar especial en mi corazón, especialmente después de esa tarde en el Centro de Convenciones en Fort Worth”, dijo él. “Con entusiasmo esperaba el día cuando ella oficialmente sería declarada santa”.

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## UNA CARTA SIN ESTAMPILLA FUE LA RESPUESTA A UNA ORACIÓN

Pat Pelletier aún recuerda el día en agosto de 1985 cuando abrió su buzón y encontró una carta sin estampilla. Su llegada era casi providencial.

Su esposo, Chuck Pelletier, ya fallecido, estaba sentado en la oficina de un abogado esperando dar su declaración en una demanda judicial que desafió su trabajo pro-vida en el Condado Tarrant. La carta era de la Madre Teresa respondiendo a una nota y un boletín, que Pat le había enviado unas semanas antes, acerca de la ayuda que la pareja daba a mujeres embarazadas y en situaciones difíciles.

La carta decía:

*Estimado Pat, gracias por tu amable carta y el boletín. Me alegra y le doy gracias a Dios por todo el hermoso y buen trabajo que todos ustedes están haciendo para ayudar a las madres en apuros y el cuidado por los pequeños indefensos. Que Dios los ilumine para que sepan cómo ayudar a cada persona que viene a ustedes, y que los fortalezca ante las dificultades. Mantengan en sus corazones la alegría de ser amados por Dios como su fuerza, porque Él es fiel. Que Dios los bendiga, Madre Teresa.*

“Fue tan significativo para nosotros recibir la carta ese día”, dice Pat pensando en las circunstancias. “Estábamos pasando por un tiempo muy difícil en nuestra vida y la carta nos dio una sensación de alivio al saber que estábamos haciendo lo correcto”.

La última frase en la nota escrita por la Madre Teresa fue la respuesta a una plegaria de Chuck Pelletier, quien murió en enero 2016 después de décadas de



Madre Teresa atiende a un hombre enfermo en una foto sin fecha.  
(Foto cortesía de CNS/ Catholic Press Photo)

trabajar para cambiar los corazones de la gente acerca del aborto.

“Esas palabras eran muy especiales para él”, dijo su esposa.

A través de los años, los Pelletiers compartieron copias de la carta con otros, pero guardaron el preciado original en una caja fuerte. Ahora esa carta se considera reliquia de tercera clase.

“Siempre sentimos que un angelito la trajo y la depositó en el buzón”, dijo Pat, y todavía se asombra de cómo la correspondencia llegó desde India a Texas sin franqueo.

“Yo estaba emocionada acerca de la canonización. Ver a la Madre Teresa declarada santa durante el Año de la Misericordia es muy especial porque ella fue misericordiosa con mucha gente”.

## UN VIAJE A LA INDIA DEJA UNA IMPRESIÓN PERDURABLE

Leer *Ciudad de Ángeles*, un libro por Dominique Lapierre acerca de los héroes anónimos que trabajan en los barrios pobres

de Kolkata cambió—y casi terminó—la vida del Padre Jim O’Toole.

Después de 21 años como capellán en la Fuerza Aérea, el sacerdote diocesano dejó el servicio militar y puso sus miras en viajar a la India.

“Estaba inspirado por el sacerdote en el libro y decidí ir allá”, recuerda el ahora jubilado pastor. “El año era 1989 y las caridades de la Madre Teresa iban a toda velocidad”.

El entusiasmado voluntario vivió con los hermanos Misioneros de la Caridad y trabajó en el hogar para los moribundos.

“Levantábamos gente en las calles, los llevábamos a la casa, los lavábamos, los limpiábamos, y les dábamos de comer”, dice el P. O’Toole describiendo el cuidado que daban sin la protección de mascarillas o guantes. “La casa era una sala abierta impecablemente limpia. Movían las camas, y los pisos se desinfectaban con una solución que podía quemar la piel”.

El P. O’Toole nunca conoció a la Madre Teresa. Ella salió

de Kolkata el día que él llegó y regresó tres meses y medio después. Para entonces, el Tejano estaba seriamente enfermo con fiebre tifoidea, hepatitis, y tuberculosis, y corriendo a casa para recibir tratamiento.

Pero mientras celebraba Misa en el convento cada mañana y pasaba tiempo en la colonia de leproso, el P. O’Toole llegó a comprender a la santa viviente a través de sus hermanas y otros colegas. Según la gente que la conocía mejor, la Madre Teresa era una alma incansable, dedicada y obstinada.

“Me dijeron que si no se hacía su voluntad, hacía berrinches, pero siempre era por algo que afectaba a los pobres”, explica él. “Cuando no le daban lo que necesitaba, ella se disgustaba”.

El P. O’Toole recuerda la oficina matriz de la Madre Teresa como un cuarto de 3 x 3 metros con dos máquinas de escribir manuales y un teléfono. La escasamente amueblada oficina recibía diariamente miles de dólares en donativos y enviaba el dinero a misiones alrededor del mundo.

“Una vez alguien le aconsejó poner algún dinero en el banco o invertirlo para ganar intereses, pero eso nunca sucedió”, dice él, compartiendo una de las muchas historias que oyó. “Ella dijo, ‘Dios nos envió el dinero que Él quiere que tengamos hoy, y Él nos mandará lo que quiere que tengamos mañana’”.

Le tomó al P. O’Toole un año recuperarse de las casi mortales enfermedades que contrajo en la India, pero no se arrepiente de la experiencia.

“No hay duda que el trabajo que esas hermanas y la Madre Teresa hicieron fue monumental y heroico”, él indica. “Para mí, fue el momento culminante de mi vida. No he hallado nada más satisfactorio”.

Noe Rocha, estudiante de Cristo Rey Dallas, saluda al Padre John Foley, el fundador del Sistema Cristo Rey, durante una reunión el 24 de agosto en la Parroquia de Nuestra Señora de la Merced. (Foto por Donna Ryckaert / NTC)



*Futuros brillantes*

# *Adelante*

Una nueva escuela preparatoria Cristo Rey, que se abrirá en la diócesis en el otoño de 2018, traerá esperanza a los estudiantes desfavorecidos en el sur de Fort Worth, y asegurará que su talento y potencial no se desaproveche.

Por Joan Kurkowski-Gillen / Corresponsal

**N**OÉ ROCHA ADMIRABA A LOS BIEN VESTIDOS ESTUDIANTES QUE ASISTÍAN A LA ESCUELA DEL APÓSTOL SAN FELIPE EN DALLAS.

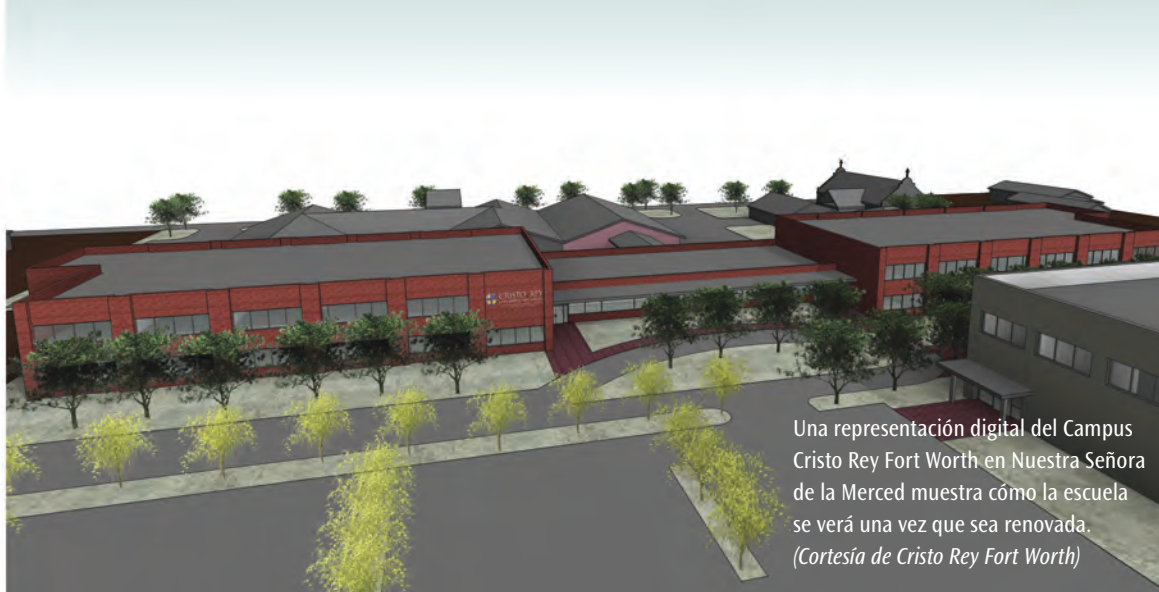
“Desde que era pequeño, yo quería usar corbata y blazer para ir a la escuela, pero nunca tuve la oportunidad”, dijo el joven de 16 años que creció en Pleasant Grove, vecindario plagado de crimen. “Las escuelas católicas son muy caras y yo sabía que mis padres simplemente no podrían pagarla”.

Afortunadamente para Rocha, cuando Cristo Rey Dallas College Preparatory abrió sus puertas el año pasado en el lado sureste de la ciudad, el adolescente entró a formar parte de un revolucionario programa en educación católica. Aunando rigurosos cursos de estudio a un programa único de aprendizaje del trabajo empresarial, el Sistema Cristo Rey da a la juventud económicamente marginada la oportunidad de asistir a una escuela de calidad, basada en la fe, que la prepara para tener éxito en el colegio y en la vida.

Actualmente están en marcha los esfuerzos para abrir Cristo Rey Fort Worth High School en la Diócesis de Fort Worth en el otoño de 2018.

El innovador enfoque a la educación del Sistema Cristo Rey cuenta con impresionantes resultados: 92 por ciento de sus

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Una representación digital del Campus Cristo Rey Fort Worth en Nuestra Señora de la Merced muestra cómo la escuela se verá una vez que sea renovada. (Cortesía de Cristo Rey Fort Worth)

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graduados se inscriben en colegios o universidades.

Los cuidadosos maestros y el ambiente seguro están lejos de la violenta escuela pública, infestada de drogas, a la que asistía Noé Rocha como estudiante del octavo grado.

“Antes de Cristo Rey, ni

siquiera pensaba yo en ir al colegio. No era una opción para mí”, aceptó él. “Ahora, he aprendido mucho. Fue una verdadera bendición ser aceptado en esta escuela. Salvó mi vida”.

El agradecido estudiante de segundo año narró su historia frente a un cuarto lleno de líderes comunitarios y empresariales deseosos de saber más acerca del propuesto campus de Cristo Rey. Durante la reunión en la Parroquia de Nuestra Señora de la Merced, el 24 de agosto, el Padre Jesuita John Foley, fundador del Sistema Cristo Rey, dio las gracias a las personas que apoyan al programa que hace la educación preparatoria en un colegio católico económicamente asequible para las familias de bajos ingresos.

Cuando muchas escuelas católicas en dificultades están cerrando, “nosotros somos la institución educativa de más crecimiento en la Iglesia católica en este país hoy en día”, dijo el Padre Foley. “Tenemos miles de jóvenes becarios en colegios por todo el país. Nuestros jóvenes se gradúan del colegio a un ritmo más del doble que el de otros niños en el mismo estrato socio económico”.

Un componente característico del modelo de financiamiento de la escuela es el aprendizaje del trabajo empresarial que permite a los estudiantes ganar una gran parte de su inscripción. Compañías

locales se asocian con Cristo Rey y ofrecen puestos de primer ingreso en sus oficinas a los jóvenes inscritos en la escuela. La empresa asociada paga una cuota anual al programa de aprendizaje—no a los estudiantes—por los servicios prestados.

Los adolescentes trabajan un día por semana en un trabajo que comparten con otros estudiantes y reciben entrenamiento para tener éxito en un ambiente profesional. La escuela los transporta al lugar de trabajo y de regreso.

“70 por ciento de los costos de operación de la escuela los cubre el programa de aprendizaje, y otro 10 por ciento viene de la cooperación de la familia”, dijo el P. Foley, explicando que la inscripción de un estudiante es aproximadamente \$1,000.

El 20 por ciento restante del presupuesto de la escuela se obtiene de la recaudación de fondos.

Hacer que el trabajo sea una parte integral del proceso educativo causó inesperadas respuestas, agregó el sacerdote.

“Generalmente, lo que más agradó a los estudiantes es que tienen un trabajo. No pueden creer que están trabajando para una de las 500 empresas más grandes en los Estados Unidos (Fortune 500 company), dijo él, describiendo las vigorizadoras historias que oye. “El sentimiento (entre los estudiantes) es, no me hables de problemas porque en mi futuro solo hay

## CRISTO REY EN NÚMEROS

**100 por ciento** aceptación en universidades

**92 por ciento** de sus graduados se inscriben en universidades

**11,500** alumnos graduados

**\$35,000** ingreso promedio familiar

**32 escuelas** Cristo Rey en la nación

**El doble** termina la universidad comparado con alumnos de bajos ingresos graduados en otras preparatorias

*Estadísticas del Sistema Cristo Rey 2016*

### ¿LE INTERESARÍA ASOCIARSE AL PROGRAMA DE APRENDIZAJE DEL TRABAJO EMPRESARIAL?

Al ofrecer un puesto por medio del programa de estudio y aprendizaje, usted puede ayudar a estudiantes de Cristo Rey a pagar su inscripción. Todo el papeleo de la nómina de sueldos, legal y de impuestos es manejado por el personal del Programa de Estudios y Aprendizaje de Cristo Rey.

Para información llame a: **Alma Hernandez-Blackwell**, coordinadora del estudio de viabilidad, al (817) 975-0827, o a **Robert Sturns**, co-presidente del comité de trabajo al (817) 944-7184 o por email: **info@cristoreyfortworth.org**

posibilidades”.

El Departamento de Trabajo de los E. U. aprobó el modelo de aprendizaje del trabajo en todas las escuelas Cristo Rey y ningún estudiante tiene acceso a un lugar de trabajo peligroso. La mayoría de los trabajos implican mantener al día los registros, mantener al día la base de datos, recepción, y servicio al cliente. Al mismo tiempo que ganan parte de su educación, los jóvenes obtienen

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# Cada vida cuenta

Durante los 40 Días por la Vida, los fieles locales oran y ayunan para que termine el aborto

**C**ADA OTOÑO LA ACERA FUERA DE PLANNED PARENTHOOD ES TESTIGO, 24 HORAS AL DÍA LOS 7 DÍAS DE LA SEMANA, DEL PODER DE LA ORACIÓN.

La oración constante, junto con el ayuno, es el componente principal de los 40 Días por la Vida, una pacífica vigilia de oración para proteger al no nacido. Al hacer hincapié en una presencia positiva y piadosa afuera de los centros de aborto, la campaña anual, que ya ha llegado a sus 10 años en Fort Worth, tiene por objeto mostrar el amor y la misericordia de Dios a los clientes y trabajadores de esas clínicas.

La campaña de oración 2016, iniciada el 28 de septiembre por el Obispo Michael Olson, cuenta con el compromiso de más de 350 fieles de pasar una hora cada semana, orando frente a la clínica de abortos de Planned Parenthood en 6464 John Ryan Drive en el suroeste de Fort Worth.

Estas son las historias de algunos de esos fieles que buscan, como el Obispo Olson dijo, “hablar con una voz profética como lo hizo Cristo, de misericordia, justicia, compasión y amor”, para llevar a la gente a la conversión y a tener un corazón lleno de respeto por la santidad de la vida.

**DIOS NO ESTÁ LIMITADO POR EL TIEMPO**, dijo Celia Ledbetter, y por eso ella reza en Planned Parenthood cada semana, incluso antes de que sale el sol.

“No hay un tiempo del día que Dios no pueda tocar la vida de alguien, así que yo rezo para que Dios toque los corazones y hable a las mujeres que entran al edificio. Sé que el poder de Dios



Feligreses de la Iglesia del Apóstol San Juan oran en la acera fuera de Planned Parenthood durante la vigilia de 40 Días por la Vida el 28 de Sep. (Foto por Ben Torres / NTC)

se desencadena con la oración”, dijo Ledbetter, quien por varios años ha participado en la vigilia de oración de los 40 Días por la Vida.

Otra persona en la acera en las tempranas horas de la mañana es Robert Johnson, quien ora en la clínica de abortos a las 4 a.m.

“Me gusta hablarle en voz alta al Señor, y disfruto la quietud y soledad de esa hora del día”.

Johnson también indicó que su presencia sirve de testimonio a los choferes de camiones de carga que antes del amanecer hacen sus entregas en el hospital al otro lado de la calle. “Ellos saben que estoy aquí y tocan la bocina en apoyo. Me hace sentir bien”.

Johnson todavía está afligido por el recuerdo de un familiar que tuvo un aborto hace más de 40 años. “Ella ya tenía tres criaturas y no quería otra. Sus niños resultaron buenos, y yo pienso en lo que ese bebé hubiera llegado a ser”, dijo él.

**AUNQUE EL CONCRETO DE LA ACERA ES DURO**, el poder de la oración es superior. Cada semana durante los 40 Días por la Vida, Connie Stallworth pasa una hora de rodillas frente a Planned Parenthood. Ella ha participado en la vigilia de oración desde 2007, cuando se inició en toda la nación.

“La manifestación de oración es hermosa. Es pacífica, amorosa, y positiva”, dijo Stallworth, quien está agradecida por haber criado a dos hijos adoptivos.

“Yo no pienso que las jóvenes [que buscan abortar] entienden lo que están haciendo. No pueden entenderlo. Si estuvieran realmente informadas, no lo harían. Ellas actúan por miedo y falta de información”, ella continuó.

40 Días por la Vida ha crecido a un ritmo muy rápido desde que empezó en College Station en 2004. Este año, aproximadamente 700,000 voluntarios rezarán y ayunarán para que termine el aborto en 636 ciudades a través de

36 países.

“Grandes cosas pasan cuando el pueblo de Dios reza”, dijo Steve Rook, quien sirve en el comité de liderazgo de 40 Días por la Vida Fort Worth. Él seguido reflexiona en la explicación de un amigo, que Planned Parenthood tiene abogados, dinero y políticos; pero, los ministerios a favor de la vida tienen el poder de Dios Todopoderoso.

Rook ora para que Dios cambie los corazones de los clientes y empleados de las clínicas de abortos, y también recuerda a los padres de los no nacidos. “Yo rezo para que el Señor los mueva a querer proteger a ambos, la vida que han generado y la mujer con la que tienen una relación”.

Fort Worth es una de las pocas localidades en el país que tiene una vigilia las 24 horas del día, y que continúa hasta el 6 de noviembre.

Para inscribirse o para saber más, visite [www.40daysFortWorth.com](http://www.40daysFortWorth.com).

valiosa experiencia y entienden la relación entre la educación y el éxito en el trabajo.

“Están en una oficina aprendiendo aptitudes para toda la vida”, continuó el P. Foley. “Es trabajo real con pago real—no caridad”.

Nuestra Señora de la Merced y la Diócesis de Fort Worth han donado los 17,000 pies cuadrados del edificio escolar en el 1007 de la avenida E. Terrell como punto de partida para la escuela preparatoria. Los planes incluyen añadir infraestructura al sitio de 3½ acres para dar cabida a más estudiantes.

La preparatoria abrirá con una clase de 130 estudiantes de primer año y agregará un grado cada año.

“Estamos trabajando con el sistema (Cristo Rey) para asegurarnos que la comunidad de Fort Worth esté completamente preparada para esta high school y me complace decir que estamos en camino para abrir nuestras puertas en el otoño de 2018”, explicó Charlie Morrison, presidente del Comité de Estudio de Viabilidad de Cristo Rey.

Los organizadores han recaudado \$1.6 millones de los \$2.6 millones de la meta propuesta, y han recibido compromisos de 22 compañías dispuestas a proporcionar un trabajo compartido que apoyará a cuatro estudiantes. Se necesitan 35 trabajos para la clase inaugural de primer año. Cuando la escuela alcance su máxima población estudiantil de 550, requerirá un total de 140 puestos en sus empresas asociadas.

“Queremos que la comunidad sepa que nos complacería que los empresarios abran sus negocios para ayudar a sostener a estos estudiantes y a la larga, el costo de su educación”, dijo Morrison.

El Obispo Michael Olson

inició el contacto con la oficina administrativa de Cristo Rey en Chicago, y espera ver el efecto que una de sus escuelas hará en la juventud empobrecida del área, y en la Iglesia local. Las escuelas Cristo Rey—que aceptan estudiantes de todas las creencias—en cierta forma sirven como evangelizadoras e incluyen a más personas en el bien común, dijo él.

“Esto nos ofrece esperanza y la oportunidad de unirnos en el momento en que nuestra sociedad y país enfrentan a las voces de la discordia y el descontento”, continuó él. “Como personas de todas las creencias, podemos unirnos como comunidad para encontrar a Dios y a otros seres humanos como hermanos y hermanas. Esto es una estupenda oportunidad para tener una mejor comprensión de la dignidad humana.”

Los jóvenes de familias con ingresos de \$35,000 al año o menos son elegibles para inscribirse en Cristo Rey, pero también se consideran otros factores, como el tamaño de la familia y el costo de la vida en un área.

Los estudiantes que se acepten encontrarán que balancear los cursos académicos preparatorios con el programa de aprendizaje requiere dedicación y compromiso. Los administradores de Cristo Rey dijeron que personalizarán un plan de educación, proporcionarán orientación laboral, y harán lo que sea necesario para retener al estudiante a menos que él o ella absolutamente rehúse permanecer en la escuela.

“Nuestros estudiantes están muy motivados. Tú tienes que querer venir aquí. No nos digas que tus padres te quieren aquí,” dijo el P. Foley, revelando lo que él les dice a los candidatos. “Tú tienes que quererlo, y si lo quieres, juntos lograremos que funcione.”

## EN CAMINO AL ENCUENTRO

# “Se Hace Camino al Andar”

**HACE UNOS DÍAS ATRÁS ME ENCONTRÉ EN UNA CONFERENCIA CON UNA PROFESORA Y MENTORA, QUIEN LUEGO DE PLATICAR UN RATO ME OFRECIÓ UNAS PALABRAS DE CONSEJO, “SE HACE CAMINO AL ANDAR.”**

Estas palabras resonaron en mi corazón y medité mucho sobre esta frase. La biblia está llena de referencias a la palabra “camino”, ¿pero que es un camino? Un camino es, según el diccionario de la Real Academia Española, una jornada de un lugar a otro. Encontramos en la biblia varias referencias a la palabra “camino;” Reconócelo en todos tus CAMINOS, y Él enderezará tus veredas (Proverbios 3:6), Jesús le dijo: Yo soy el Camino, y la verdad, y la vida (Juan 14:6).



**Joel Rodriguez**

Muchos de los caminos hoy nacen por la necesidad de llegar a un lugar como meta, el camino provee esa dirección para nosotros seguir, así que armados con una meta y una dirección trazada solo nos falta tomar acción e iniciar la jornada. Como pueden ver, es la acción de la jornada la cual nos lleva cambiar de lugar, tanto físicamente como espiritualmente. Así, como católicos, nuestra jornada, es una que elegimos con nuestro Señor y Salvador Jesucristo quien nos invita a ser Sus discípulos y a la evangelización.

Nuestra Diócesis de Fort Worth ha sido elegida como sede del V Encuentro. Los Encuentros son procesos de reflexión y acción eclesial cada 4 años que invitan a todos los católicos en los Estados Unidos a una intensa actividad misionera, consulta y desarrollo de liderazgo, e identificación de buenas prácticas ministeriales en el espíritu de la Nueva Evangelización.

Nuestro Obispo Michael Olson, entendiendo las necesidades de nuestra comunidad, nos invita a esta jornada de discipulado de la Nueva evangelización, V Encuentro, que se llevará a cabo en septiembre 20 – 23, 2018 en el Gaylord Texan en Grapevine.

Sus sacerdotes compartirán más información sobre este evento y elegirán delegados parroquiales que junto con éste su servidor estaremos contribuyendo con artículos y recursos sobre el V Encuentro y nuestro ministerio hispano. ¡Ánimo! “Hagamos Camino al Andar.”

¡Viva Cristo Rey!

Joel Rodriguez es director del Ministerio Hispano de la Diócesis de Fort Worth.

Listening to the enthusiastic 40 Days for Life organizer talk about his determination to save unborn souls, it's hard to believe he was once ambivalent about the issue of abortion. His conversion of heart came after joining the Catholic faith and studying St. Pope John Paul II's *Theology of the Body*.

The late pontiff's thoughts on human sexuality, marriage, and family life helped the new convert connect what he was learning intellectually about Catholicism with a call to holiness.

"It kindled in me a desire to understand the meaning of the dignity of the human person, human body, and how it is intrinsically holy," says Warren, who was received into the Catholic Church in 1998. "Going down that path, I found a calling to the pro-life movement."

Warren's journey to the Catholic faith is best described as a struggle. Raised outside Los Angeles in the First Congregational Church, he fell away from the denomination choosing instead to have some "born again" experiences. It wasn't until he met and married his wife, a cradle Catholic, that Warren felt a real tug back to organized religion.

"But not the Catholic faith," he insists. "We were looking for a faith but not actively going to church."

His father-in-law's funeral in Mexico was a turning point in the search.

"I got all wrapped up in the liturgical aspect of death in the Catholic Church," Warren explains. "Through that whole process, I ran into some pretty strong Catholics and I realized my wife, though not practicing actively, was still very much tied to the Church."

Still arguing against Catholicism, he decided his best defense



Bobby Warren bows his head in prayer during the 40 Days for Life kickoff rally on Sept. 28. (Photo by Ben Torres / NTC)

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— Bobby Warren

was to learn more about the religion.

"As I began to read and study, the scales just fell off my eyes," he admits. "I realized I was wrong and the Church was right."

His wife studied the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* with him, "and we kind of drew each other along after that," the convert adds. "I have an appreciation for cradle Catholics like my wife. Even if they are just culturally or nominally Catholic, they hang onto their belief in the Eucharist and just don't give in. I'm thankful to those who held on even if they don't know their faith deeply. It was an entrée for me into the Church."

Experiencing his wife's pregnancies, sonograms, and births of their children provided an even greater understanding of the Church's teaching on the sanctity of life and prompted more involvement in the pro-life movement.

"It made me realize that if society says we can kill our own young, it can say just about anything. How can we justify any life?" he asks rhetorically. "I felt in my heart that I needed to stand up for the unborn."

Discovering the Protestant church where he was baptized and confirmed supported a woman's right to abortion cemented Warren's pro-life stance.

"I think all those things had an

effect on my call to this ministry," he affirms.

Confident 40 Days for Life will surpass last year's record-breaking numbers, the campaign coordinator encourages future participation, calling the experience, "the easiest hard thing you will ever do." Spending an hour at the peaceful, prayerful vigil requires no catechetical training.

"All you need to do is come to the sidewalk, have a heart for the unborn and pray," he urges.

Praying the Rosary in front of the Planned Parenthood building can make a person feel awkward or nervous — especially if they have never done it before.

"I get all of that," he says agreeably. "But when you pray and make that sacrifice to save lives, it's a powerful witness to those who drive by. The awkwardness leaves and you become a warrior on the sidewalk instantaneously."

People can support 40 Days for Life and pray to end abortion from their home but "being physically present has value," Warren argues. "How do people know we're the Church if we're not visible?"

## GOOD NEWSMAKER

After joining the Catholic Church and studying St. John Paul II's *Theology of the Body*, Bobby Warren became steadfast in

# SPREADING THE GOSPEL OF LIFE

By Joan Kurkowski-Gillen  
Correspondent

**W**HEN BOBBY WARREN AND HIS WIFE, MARIA, MOVED TO FORT WORTH FROM SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA, ONE OF THE FIRST THINGS THEY DID WAS FIND OTHER COUPLES AS PASSIONATE ABOUT PROTECTING THE UNBORN AS THEY WERE.

"You run into so many wonderful, dedicated people in the pro-life movement," says the young father quickly explaining that two of his eight children are in heaven. "I came from an area that wasn't very friendly to the pro-life cause. It was a blessing to see leaders like Bishop (Kevin) Vann and Bishop (Michael) Olson on the sidewalk with us praying."

And Warren has become quite familiar with one Fort Worth sidewalk in particular. The St. Patrick Cathedral parishioner is the 2016 campaign coordinator of 40 Days for Life — a round-the-clock, peaceful prayer vigil held on the public walkways outside Planned Parenthood. Fort Worth is one of 367 cities across the U.S. and 36 countries participating in the pro-life event started



12 years ago in College Station, Texas. It was designed to revitalize volunteers and change hearts and minds about abortion.

Becoming involved in 40 Days for Life was one of the first pro-life activities Warren joined

after his job relocated him to North Texas in 2008. "The only time I could pray was in the middle of the night," says the busy family man remembering the curious strangers who appeared after dark to converse with him and

Bobby Warren, director of 40 Days for Life Fort Worth, speaks during the campaign's kickoff on Sept. 28 outside of Planned Parenthood in Fort Worth. (Photo by Ben Torres / NTC)

other prayer warriors. "We saw everything — the homeless, people with mental disorders, and those ministering to them who would stop, ask what we were doing, and offer to pray for us."

Most night vigils were quiet but not always. Pro-choice supporters would sometimes drive by and scream at the small group manning the graveyard shift. Sympathetic police officers would cruise by to make sure everything was all right.

"There were some brave souls out on the sidewalk at night," observes Warren with a chuckle. "Afterwards we'd go to Ol' South Pancake House at four in the morning, sit around in fellowship for about an hour, go home and try to stay awake for the rest of the day."

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