

CATHOLIC SPIRIT

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En Español: Páginas 19-22

US bishops agree to initiate three-year Eucharistic Revival

By Catholic News Service

The U.S. bishops spotlighted two major initiatives focused on the central role of the Eucharist Nov. 17, the second of two days of public sessions of their fall general assembly.

The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops approved a 26-page statement, “The Mystery of the Eu-

charist in the Life of the Church,” with 222 “yes” votes, and also OK’d plans for a three-year National Eucharistic Revival that will culminate with the National Eucharistic Congress 2024 in Indianapolis.

On other matters, they were invited to take a multicultural journey with young Catholics to Chicago next June; were urged to implement a framework for marriage and family ministry that they had approved at their spring assembly in June; agreed to begin review of the “Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People” earlier than planned; and heard how the pandemic may have slowed but not stopped a pro-life initiative called

“Walking With Moms in Need.”

They approved guidelines governing the USCCB’s financial investments that include wider limits on where money would be invested. The guidelines advance a policy of engagement on corporate practices that impact human dignity.

The prelates, meeting in person for a national gathering for the first time since 2019, also approved guidelines for the exposition of the Eucharist and Benediction, affirmed sainthood causes for three U.S. laypeople, approve revisions of statutes for the catechumenate and voted for revised English- and Spanish-language editions of the Order of Christian Initiation of Adults.

The bishops assigned a feast date to St. Teresa of Kolkata – Sept. 5, the death date in 1997 for the founder of the Missionaries of Charity. It will be an optional memorial on the U.S. liturgical calendar.

Their vote on the Eucharist statement came a day after their discussion of the document – a discussion that was markedly different than their debate in June about what it could potentially contain, namely a call for President Joe Biden and Catholic politicians who support abortion to be denied Communion. But the final document had nothing like that and is addressed to all Catholics in the United States.

It “endeavors to explain the centrality of the Eucharist in the life of the church,” said Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades of Fort Wayne-South Bend, Indiana, chairman of the bishops’ doctrine committee, in

a short presentation on the statement Nov. 16. It “addresses the fundamental doctrine about the Eucharist that the church needs to retrieve and revive.”

Even bigger than the statement is the plan for the three-year eucharistic revival, ending with the National Eucharistic Congress 2024 in Indianapolis. The bishops approved it 201-17, with five abstentions.

The revival will officially start on the feast of Corpus Christi, June 16, 2022, with a diocesan focus that will include eucharistic processions and other events of adoration and prayer around the country. In 2023, the emphasis will be on parishes and resources aimed at increasing Catholics’ understanding of what the Eucharist really means.

As chairman of the bishops’ Committee on Evangelization and Catechesis, Auxiliary Bishop Andrew H. Cozzens of St. Paul and Minneapolis, who was recently named bishop of Crookston, Minnesota, gave the bishops details about this planned revival just before they voted on it.

The revival could be a time of healing for the entire church, he said, as well as a movement of evangelization and a reawakening of understanding of the sacrament of the Eucharist for Catholics across the country.

Philadelphia Archbishop Nelson J. Pérez invited fellow bishops to a national gathering in Chicago in June to participate with young Catholics in a dialogue about issues of culture, racism and inclusion through the prism of faith.

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Bishop Joe Vásquez raises the Eucharist during the 2021 Diocesan Catholic Youth Conference. During their fall meeting in November, the U.S. bishops issued a statement on the Eucharist and initiated a three-year National Eucharistic Revival. (Photo by Joshua W. Guenther)



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THE MISSION OF THE CATHOLIC SPIRIT

As the official newspaper for the Roman Catholic Diocese of Austin, the *Catholic Spirit* is dedicated to providing information, education and formation for the Catholic community of Central Texas. This mission calls for the newspaper:

- to provide readers with an understanding of our Catholic faith and traditions;
- to be a primary source of information on Catholic issues relevant to the community;
- to be a unifying element for faith communities, both rural and urban, throughout Central Texas;
- to show respect for and appreciation of all cultural groups and traditions;
- to emphasize topics affirming the Catholic community and life, while acknowledging the humanity of the community and examining, with courage, topics that challenge and encourage growth in the faith.

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A CHRISTMAS REFLECTION

May our hearts be like Mary's: prayerful, reflective

By **Cassandra Palmer** | Catholic News Service

When you have good news to share, who is the first person you want to tell? Your closest friend or most respected mentor probably has the honor of receiving your first phone call before you share your joy with a wider audience on social media.

In Luke's Gospel infancy narrative, the Lord opts to privilege the lowly shepherds with premier access to his greatest news – Christ is born!

The angels' tidings of great joy and hope are offered first to those who most needed to hear it: the poor, vulnerable and outcast. These men needed to learn that they were as worthy of the Lord's grace as anyone else. No one earned the salvation that Jesus was initiating at his birth. He came to redefine love for all people.

The shepherds, in response, did not stay put in their fields with their flocks. Rather, they went straight to Bethlehem to see the holy infant. Imagine the shepherds' state of mind when they approached the scene -- they must have been bursting with excitement and awe to witness the sign the angels proclaimed!

Surely, visitors from the outskirt pastures would have been an unexpected sight. But then again, having had their own experiences with angelic messengers, perhaps Mary and Joseph were not surprised after all.

I imagine Joseph having a protective instinct. While everyone else looked adoringly at the newborn king, Joseph might have kept watch on the visitors, making sure his beloved was safe and comfortable.

Rather than posing any threat, these nighttime visitors had come to see and to be amazed by the mercy of the Lord. And amid the action, "Mary kept all these things, reflecting on them in her heart" (Lk 2:19).

Mary was quietly resting and recovering from childbirth, with her swaddled newborn

laid in a manger.

During their first midnight feedings, Mary surely practiced contemplative prayer, studying the curve of his earlobe and the patterns of his hair growth while he peacefully nursed to sleep. As she watched his eyelids flutter and counted his sleeping breaths, her heart was that of a new mother, swelling with the overwhelming love for her baby.

Outside there were people who desperately needed to see her son – to know firsthand that their suffering would "be justified by his grace" (Ti 3:7). Mary was aware that the child she bore would bring salvation to them all. But in these early moments of motherhood, all that mattered was that her baby was warm and dry.

All along, Mary's immaculate heart was fertile ground for God's love to grow. Later, her sorrowful heart was pierced again and again, seeing the suffering of her child for the sake of the sinful world. Now, Mary's heart starts collecting reflections of all that she sees and hears each time someone new meets her son.

By making the shepherds among the first to know of Jesus' birth, God signifies his preferential option for the poor. As a faithful student of Hebrew scripture, Mary could have had the words from Isaiah ringing in her ears: "They shall be called 'the holy people,' the redeemed of the Lord" (Is 62:12).

Like so many who would later encounter Jesus, the shepherds immediately started to tell their story to anyone and everyone who would listen. In this way, the shepherds were the first evangelists of their personal kerygma experience.

The mother of the church would continue to keep all these things, reflecting on them in her heart, praying for her people all the way through the crucifixion and beyond Pentecost into eternity.

Cassandra Palmer lives with her husband and children in Baltimore, where she is director of religious education at Our Lady of Victory Parish.

OBITUARIES

Father Robert "Bob" Kincl died Nov. 19 at the age of 79. He was ordained to the priesthood in 1967, and he served as a military chaplain for most of his priesthood.

Deacon Michael T. Gesch died Nov. 16 at the age of 75. He was ordained a deacon in 1998, and most recently served St. Thomas More Parish in Austin. He was a member of the parish's Stewardship Committee and served as the columbarium coordinator. He is survived by his wife Judy.

APPOINTMENT

Deacon Barry Ryan has been assigned to St. Patrick Parish in Hutto, effective Nov. 20.

ADVISORY

Anyone who knows the whereabouts of **Maximino Muñoz Casillas, Ruben Salcedo Hernandez** or **Areli Rios Jaramillo** is requested to notify James Sierra at (512) 949-2535.

Bishops also focus on young adults, families and moms in need

USCCB

Continued from Page 1

“Perhaps it was the Holy Spirit’s way of telling us bishops that we really needed to take time to listen to young people, those who minister to them and, especially, those who are in the peripheries, feeling unimportant and unloved, and often alienated from the church,” Archbishop Pérez said Nov. 17. He is chairman of the bishops’ Committee on Cultural Diversity in the Church.

He detailed the opportunity the coronavirus pandemic has provided in facilitating virtual gatherings between young Catholics and bishops over the last year and a half. More than 60 bishops have joined virtual gatherings as part of a process called “Journeying Together,” he said.

The gatherings have taken place online in the midst of a pandemic, under “social unrest, racial reckoning, and the polarization affecting U.S. society,” he said. The process created “an opportunity for bishops, young adults, youth ministers and campus ministers, and leaders of various other ministries with young people, to engage in respectful yet honest dialogue in matters of faith, culture, racism, inclusion and the issues that affect them as

young people,” he explained.

The chairman of the U.S. bishops’ Committee on Laity, Marriage, Family Life and Youth called on his fellow bishops to work “in every way possible” to implement the national pastoral framework for marriage and family ministry that they approved in June.

Archbishop Salvatore J. Cordileone of San Francisco said that addressing marriage and family life is vital in a time when families are under increasing threats from “sweeping ideological currents that destroy and undermine our sexual identity as man and woman and God-given vocations as father and mother, son or daughter.” Bolstering marriage and family ministry is an appropriate undertaking to start during the “Amoris Laetitia Family Year,” declared by Pope Francis, the archbishop said.

Titled “Called to the Joy of Love: A Pastoral Framework for Marriage and Family Life Ministry,” the document can serve as a practical guidebook to serve couples and families because it offers an adaptable set of principles and strategies for pastoral care, he said.

Archbishop Joseph F. Naumann of Kansas City, Kansas, chairman of the bishops’ Committee on Pro-Life Activities, told his fellow bishops that the Secretariat for Pro-Life Activities’ “Walking with Moms

in Need” initiative may have been slowed by the coronavirus pandemic, but it has by no means stopped helping expectant mothers from any walk of life. It was launched March 25, 2020, just as the pandemic began to take hold.

This initiative “has the capacity to take what is often seen as a partisan divide and transform it into pastoral unity, bridging the divide between Catholics who describe themselves using the labels of ‘pro-life’ or ‘social justice,’” he said. The initiative’s website is WalkingWithMoms.com.

In presentations at end of the Nov. 17 public session:

- Anna Gallagher, executive director of the Catholic Legal Immigration Network, told the bishops 3 million to 11 million people in the U.S. could soon benefit from some type of immigration reform.

- Auxiliary Bishop Mario E. Dorsonville of Washington, chairman of the USCCB’s migration committee, asked his fellow prelates to advocate, pray and walk with immigrants in their respective dioceses.

- From Haiti to Afghanistan, the work of Catholic Relief Services has focused on responding to the impact of climate change, natural disasters such as earthquakes, hunger, meager farm production and developing education for children, reported Bishop Frank J. Caggiano of Bridgeport, Connecticut, presi-

dent of the CRS board of directors. He gave the presentation with Sean Callahan, CRS president and CEO.

- Dominican Sister Donna Markham, president and CEO of Catholic Charities USA, told the bishops the national network of Catholic Charities agencies had provided \$5.1 billion in assistance in the last year, much of it connected to the economic fallout caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

- The synodal process the church is entering into is meant to show that “no one is unimportant in this time of listening,” said Bishop Daniel E. Flores of Brownsville. The bishop, a member of the USCCB’s Committee on Doctrine and voted its chairman-elect during the assembly, said the process over the next seven months must involve the participation of the whole church “listening together, praying together, discerning together.”

At sunrise Nov. 18 outside the hotel where the bishops held their assembly, Cardinal Joseph W. Tobin of Newark, New Jersey, Boston Cardinal Seán P. O’Malley and six other Catholic prelates joined survivors of sex abuse, some the victims of clergy in an invitation-only walk to pray for an end to the “evil” of abuse and call for a day of prayer for survivors and an end to the abuse.

Spotlight on ministry: Gloria Villarreal

Gloria Villarreal serves as senior accounting associate in the diocesan office of Parish Business Services. In this position, which she has held for two years, she works with parishes to help them maintain their financial records and follow proper accounting procedures.

“My primary responsibility is to help the diocesan Finance Department maintain proper financial management and accountability with the parishes in our diocese,” she said.

Villarreal has a “love for numbers,” which led her to step away from her work in the diocesan Tribunal Office where she served for three years. She also thoroughly enjoys working with pastors to help them balance their parish’s books.

“My greatest joy is to see priest after priest heave that sigh of relief when that accounting problem that has been keeping them up at night is finally resolved and their books are balanced,” she said.

On a weekly basis, Villarreal travels to different parishes to assist with their financial questions. Though each parish has its challenges, she enjoys using her skills to establish proper bookkeeping practices.

“I feel very privileged that in doing that which is a passion for me, I am able to make my little contribution to the growth of many of our parishes,” she said. “It is an honor for me to serve my church in this capacity.”

She said her parents’ commitment to stewardship and faithfulness have helped her develop her call to ministry.

“My parents have always been an amazing example of faith for me. I am so grateful to them!” she said.

Villarreal is a parishioner of St. Stephen Parish in Salado. She is the mother of Mia and aunt of Cutter, whom she has raised from a young age. (Photo by Gabriel Lujan)





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Blessed Virgin Mary, Old Washington	\$20,000	\$36,810	\$12,177.72	St. Joseph, Bryan	\$1,920,000	\$1,947,027	\$1,129,823.70
Christ the King, Belton	\$1,050,000	\$1,184,326	\$376,486.70	St. Joseph, Cyclone	\$115,000	\$167,358	\$140,513.00
Church of the Visitation, Westphalia	\$150,000	\$143,536	\$92,766.00	St. Joseph, Dime Box	\$90,000	\$78,985	\$59,875.00
Cristo Rey, Austin	\$845,000	\$464,636	\$78,571.50	St. Joseph, Elk	\$80,000	\$82,650	\$55,055.00
Dolores, Austin	\$365,000	\$398,313	\$101,793.00	St. Joseph, Killeen	\$795,000	\$863,830	\$355,503.87
Emmaus, Lakeway	\$2,740,000	\$2,387,560	\$1,027,534.14	St. Joseph, Manor	\$240,000	\$305,371	\$123,312.41
Good Shepherd, Johnson City	\$85,000	\$88,900	\$49,005.00	St. Joseph, Marlin	\$135,000	\$99,860	\$26,494.00
Good Shepherd, Lometa	\$50,000	\$81,930	\$44,749.89	St. Joseph, Mason	\$120,000	\$98,050	\$61,340.00
Holy Cross, Austin	\$365,000	\$578,355	\$248,765.38	St. Joseph, Rockdale	\$205,000	\$312,300	\$146,815.01
Holy Cross, Bertram	\$45,000	\$28,279	\$15,089.00	St. Joseph, Waco	\$225,000	\$205,359	\$74,190.00
Holy Family, Copperas Cove	\$595,000	\$762,105	\$422,173.01	St. Julia, Austin	\$285,000	\$171,023	\$50,270.96
Holy Family, Lexington	\$80,000	\$115,900	\$66,340.00	St. Louis, Austin	\$2,710,000	\$5,735,043	\$2,979,812.09
Holy Rosary, Frenstat	\$75,000	\$99,005	\$82,493.00	St. Louis, Waco	\$1,410,000	\$1,686,279	\$1,060,608.80
Holy Trinity, Corn Hill/Jarrell	\$260,000	\$346,605	\$248,267.00	St. Luke, Temple	\$1,065,000	\$1,074,072	\$609,145.30
Holy Trinity, Llano	\$115,000	\$142,640	\$95,178.00	St. Margaret, Giddings	\$200,000	\$322,510	\$119,130.00
Holy Vietnamese Martyrs, Austin	\$350,000	\$377,042	\$227,238.75	St. Margaret Mary, Cedar Park	\$1,700,000	\$1,204,349	\$621,523.32
Immaculate Heart of Mary, Martindale	\$120,000	\$64,615	\$29,420.00	St. Martin, Tours	\$135,000	\$72,620	\$43,382.50
Our Lady of Guadalupe, Austin	\$665,000	\$820,659	\$273,148.04	St. Martin De Porres, Dripping Springs	\$935,000	\$545,715	\$206,903.10
Our Lady of Guadalupe, Taylor	\$345,000	\$430,395	\$149,957.00	St. Mary Cathedral, Austin	\$1,380,000	\$1,226,952	\$847,755.89
Our Lady of Guadalupe, Temple	\$375,000	\$407,480	\$148,097.46	St. Mary Catholic Center, College Station	\$930,000	\$853,973	\$364,964.45
Our Lady of Lourdes, Gatesville	\$73,500	\$124,462	\$83,671.50	St. Mary, Bremond	\$195,000	\$318,720	\$206,205.00
Our Lady of San Juan, Moody	\$20,000	\$30,624	\$14,851.00	St. Mary, Caldwell	\$330,000	\$421,405	\$299,915.46
Our Lady of the Lake, Sunrise Beach	\$50,000	\$51,245	\$31,195.00	St. Mary, Ellinger	\$110,000	\$76,605	\$55,694.24
Our Lady of Wisdom University, San Marcos	\$165,000	\$256,861	\$168,653.49	St. Mary, Hearne	\$230,000	\$208,685	\$108,206.30
Our Mother of Sorrows, Burnet	\$215,000	\$212,610	\$123,945.00	St. Mary, Mexia	\$230,000	\$201,250	\$115,315.00
Sacred Heart, Austin	\$990,000	\$1,210,669	\$477,365.95	St. Mary, Pin Oak	\$20,000	\$37,000	\$27,000.00
Sacred Heart, Elgin	\$425,000	\$2,120,254	\$710,356.14	St. Mary, San Saba	\$100,000	\$163,040	\$73,914.00
Sacred Heart, La Grange	\$530,000	\$459,370	\$295,883.20	St. Mary, Temple	\$595,000	\$743,070	\$486,041.70
Sacred Heart, Lott	\$55,000	\$25,609	\$16,779.00	St. Mary, Wimberley	\$470,000	\$664,672	\$332,453.18
Sacred Heart, Rockne	\$255,000	\$408,410	\$306,040.90	St. Mary of the Assumption, String Prairie	\$120,000	\$133,800	\$86,085.00
Sacred Heart, Waco	\$535,000	\$679,140	\$447,489.00	St. Mary of the Assumption, Taylor	\$455,000	\$1,997,486	\$1,184,831.30
San Francisco Javier, Austin	\$225,000	\$399,900	\$137,830.22	St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception, Lampasas	\$180,000	\$184,795	\$100,563.56
San Jose, Austin	\$1,090,000	\$1,125,577	\$361,482.98	St. Mary of the Visitation, Lockhart	\$550,000	\$626,491	\$405,359.07
San Juan Diego, Stoney Point	\$30,000	\$52,455	\$18,330.00	St. Mary, Church of the Assumption, Waco	\$330,000	\$338,335	\$194,247.36
Santa Barbara, Austin	\$255,000	\$429,686	\$112,000.33	St. Mary, Church of the Assumption, West	\$895,000	\$435,979	\$251,864.33
Santa Cruz, Buda	\$1,710,000	\$1,169,422	\$569,792.77	St. Mary, Immaculate Conception, Brenham	\$955,000	\$493,754	\$247,272.32
Santa Rosa, Andice	\$1,055,000	\$803,509	\$591,075.92	St. Mary, Our Lady of the Lake, Lago Vista	\$395,000	\$422,058	\$291,153.09
Santa Teresa, Bryan	\$605,000	\$873,662	\$274,080.13	St. Matthew, Rogers	\$70,000	\$83,550	\$36,380.00
St. Albert the Great, Austin	\$1,415,000	\$590,481	\$252,796.74	St. Michael, Burlington	\$45,000	\$22,307	\$18,657.00
St. Andrew Kim, Austin	\$185,000	\$193,535	\$71,305.00	St. Michael, Uhland	\$105,000	\$108,350	\$50,385.53
St. Ann, Rosebud	\$95,000	\$76,608	\$36,436.95	St. Monica, Cameron	\$205,000	\$213,428	\$150,504.35
St. Ann, Somerville	\$75,000	\$95,995	\$49,760.22	St. Patrick, Hutto	\$565,000	\$687,359	\$259,686.62
St. Anthony, Bryan	\$720,000	\$829,191	\$565,588.77	St. Paul, Austin	\$820,000	\$651,730	\$357,523.90
St. Anthony Marie De Claret, Kyle	\$1,205,000	\$1,420,959	\$499,530.78	St. Paul, Smithville	\$240,000	\$70,776	\$53,374.66
St. Austin, Austin	\$2,030,000	\$1,362,786	\$913,936.53	St. Paul Chong Hasang, Harker Heights	\$880,000	\$2,906,862	\$1,996,397.51
St. Catherine of Siena, Austin	\$2,355,000	\$107,620	\$43,798.16	St. Paul the Apostle, Horseshoe Bay	\$545,000	\$625,524	\$410,497.49
St. Charles Borromeo, Kingsland	\$165,000	\$169,545	\$126,654.85	St. Peter, Goldthwaite	\$55,000	\$53,170	\$32,080.00
St. Elizabeth, Pflugerville	\$1,285,000	\$44,965	\$21,429.00	St. Peter Catholic Student Center, Waco	\$175,000	\$66,250	\$41,985.00
St. Eugene, McGregor	\$145,000	\$174,630	\$81,059.00	St. Peter the Apostle, Austin	\$540,000	\$407,416	\$124,963.58
St. Ferdinand, Blanco	\$300,000	\$353,580	\$200,207.08	St. Philip, China Spring	\$120,000	\$236,339	\$108,871.31
St. Francis of Assisi, Franklin	\$140,000	\$227,950	\$160,919.00	St. Stanislaus, Chappell Hill	\$165,000	\$124,560	\$65,200.64
St. Francis On the Brazos, Waco	\$255,000	\$320,908	\$105,630.62	St. Stephen, Salado	\$295,000	\$329,961	\$188,409.11
St. Helen, Georgetown	\$2,405,000	\$2,946,793	\$1,645,396.15	St. Theresa, Austin	\$2,575,000	\$2,478,574	\$1,355,716.61
St. Ignatius Martyr, Austin	\$1,750,000	\$1,650,597	\$856,027.76	St. Thomas, Hamilton	\$35,000	\$46,675	\$21,575.00
St. Jerome, Waco	\$1,030,000	\$1,191,051	\$626,975.71	St. Thomas Aquinas, College Station	\$1,310,000	\$1,867,363	\$1,114,237.16
St. John, Fayetteville	\$280,000	\$305,087	\$233,457.00	St. Thomas More, Austin	\$3,525,000	\$1,819,642	\$991,851.58
St. John Neumann, Austin	\$3,360,000	\$3,673,442	\$2,052,215.81	St. Vincent De Paul, Austin	\$2,465,000	\$1,469,934	\$893,457.37
St. John the Baptist, Waco	\$80,000	\$105,900	\$57,997.50	St. William, Round Rock	\$4,140,000	\$2,301,292	\$1,307,530.43
St. John the Evangelist, Luling	\$240,000	\$253,391	\$169,597.78	Sts. Cyril and Methodius, Granger	\$315,000	\$298,441	\$223,339.00
St. John the Evangelist, Marble Falls	\$435,000	\$756,535	\$426,509.94	Sts. Cyril and Methodius, Marak	\$90,000	\$93,855	\$65,171.30
St. John the Evangelist, San Marcos	\$835,000	\$589,509	\$262,571.45	University Catholic Center, Austin	\$230,000	\$117,907	\$66,005.56

* Totals as of 10/31/2021

Teacher, former student are now colleagues at HFCS in Austin

By Mary P. Walker | Senior Correspondent

When Jeanne Lyman became a fourth-grade teacher at Holy Family Catholic School in Austin 18 years ago, a freckled, pigtailed Lizzie Laster was in her class. She was a good student, respectful, polite and always smiling. While quiet in the classroom, Lizzie showed a boisterous side outdoors. Neither student nor teacher could have imagined that one day they would be back in fourth grade teaching together in the same school.

Laster said Lyman was one of her favorite teachers and a great influence in discerning her own vocation to teach.

"I've had teachers that made an impact on my life beyond education. I want to do that for other kids," Laster said.

Laster attended Holy Family through eighth grade and then moved to St. Dominic Savio Catholic High School. She graduated from Texas A&M University Corpus Christi and was a special

education teacher in public school for four years. Returning to Holy Family this fall as a fourth grade teacher, she not only brings this experience, but also a passion for Catholic education.

Growing up, Laster cherished her time at Holy Family and always wanted to return as a teacher. However, because her mother, Kelly, was the school's principal, teaching there would have presented a conflict. When Kelly left the school to become the Diocese of Austin's assistant superintendent of Catholic Schools last summer, her daughter applied for a teaching position.

Today, both teachers have a tremendous respect for each other's professional skills. Yet, there was an adjustment in how they related as peers. "Lizzie" is now "Elizabeth" and sometimes she has to remind herself that while Lyman, as a more experienced professional, can still teach her many things, they are also colleagues and it is okay to address her as "Jeanne."

When Lyman found out that her former student was coming back as a teacher, she was excited about working with her. She has fond memories of her first year at Holy Family, but had no inkling that she had inspired her pigtailed student to become a teacher. Lyman also expressed delight in the vocations of two other students from that year. Alex Smith is now a high school teacher, and Deacon Jakob Hurlimann is a seminarian for the Austin Diocese (and will hopefully

be ordained a priest next June).

Today, Holy Family has three fourth grade classrooms. Lyman and Laster, along with April Morley, each have a homeroom, but teach all of the students. Lyman teaches Texas history and reading. Laster teaches grammar, writing and science.

The current students enjoy knowing that one of their teachers had been taught by another teacher back when she was their age. In fact, Lyman has old class pictures in her room. Prominent is the class photo that includes a young Lizzie Laster, which the students love.

Today, Laster gets to experience some of the school projects that she did as a fourth grader through her students' eyes. She especially admires the classroom management skills of her former teacher, who is able to make learning fun, but also inspire the students to work diligently.

"I peek into her classroom and steal ideas," Laster said.

Lyman takes joy in knowing that her former student is a good teacher and has mastered the responsibilities of the job. She gave an example of Laster navigating a challenging situation, and said, "I sat back and watched as she took charge. I told her I was so proud of her."

Both teachers agree that Catholic education encompasses much more than strong academics. Transmitting the faith and Catholic values are fundamental to their jobs. They can freely express their beliefs, bring prayer into the classroom, and help students grow in their relationship with God and his creation.



Jeanne Lyman and Lizzie Laster are fourth grade teachers at Holy Family Catholic School in Austin. Lyman was Laster's fourth grade teacher when she attended the school. (Photo courtesy April Morley)

"I get to talk about God and our beautiful faith in all of the subjects," said Lyman, a member of St. Margaret Mary Parish in Cedar Park. She especially enjoys attending Mass with the students, hearing them sing and praise God, and seeing them at Sunday Mass at her parish.

Laster, a member of St. Vincent de Paul Parish in Austin, also appreciates the freedom to talk to her students about God and her relationship with Jesus. She was personally influenced by the faith she witnessed in Lyman during her fourth grade year and believes it is important for students to see that their teachers are persons of faith.

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Catholic health care options are plentiful in Central Texas

By Carla Smith | Correspondent

The health care industry has worked on the front lines in the battle against COVID-19 for nearly two years. Though this pandemic has posed many challenges, it has also been enlightening, according to the Catholic-affiliated hospitals that serve the Diocese of Austin.

“Working during Covid has been difficult, but we’ve also realized we are lucky,” said Raquel Webb, manager of Spiritual Care for St. Joseph Health, which has many facilities in Bryan/College Station and the Brazos Valley. “Working in Catholic health care, we have an organization that values human dignity, understands whole-person care, and uplifts the vulnerable. The pandemic made us realize that sick bodies, exhausted staff, and even down-in-the-dump souls have immense worth, need healing and comfort, and have the ability to manifest God to each of us as we make his healing presence known with each challenge we face.”

It is precisely that kind of healing and faith that motivates staff members not only at St. Joseph Health but also CHRISTUS Health in San Marcos and Ascension Texas, which operates Ascension Providence in Waco and Ascension Seton in Austin.

The largest and oldest Catholic hospital in the Diocese of Austin, Ascension Seton has been serving patients since 1902 when it was founded by the Daughters of Charity.

Also under the Ascension umbrella is Ascension Providence in Waco, which includes primary care clinics, specialty clinics and Ascension Living Providence Village, which allows seniors to move from independent living, to assisted living and skilled nursing as their health care needs evolve.

St. Joseph’s Health has also been around for many years, with its history going back to 1935 when the Sisters of St. Francis of Sylvania, Ohio, opened its first facility.

CHRISTUS Santa Rosa Hospital-San Marcos is the newest member of the CHRISTUS Santa Rosa Health System family. Formerly known as Central Texas Medical Center, the hospital was acquired by CHRISTUS Health in April 2020 and continues a long tradition of care and treatment, building on CHRISTUS Santa Rosa’s 152-year legacy when the ministry was established in San Antonio. Bringing advanced care to San Marcos and nearby communities while doing God’s work is a paramount mission of all CHRISTUS staff.

“CHRISTUS is Latin for Christ and proclaims the core of our mission,” said Vice President of Mission Integration Sarah Hill. “That mission is to extend the healing ministry of Jesus Christ, and if you think about his ministry, he sought to heal people in a holistic manner, caring about mind, body and spirit and he especially sought to help those most vulnerable. We seek to follow in his footsteps to care for all persons.”

These Catholic facilities are dedicated to healing the sick while aligning care with Catholic health care ethics and practices, serving the poor and marginalized, and creating spiritually centered workplaces. They are also very proud of the level of service they provide and offer throughout the diocese.

“Our ministry has provided more than \$540 million in charity care this past year,” said Ascension Seton Chief Mission Integration Officer Derek Covert. “We constantly look for ways to serve the health care needs outside the walls of our hospitals.”

Ascension Seton has plans for growing its reach, including a unique contract with Austin Independent School District and Dell Medical School at The University of Texas, where it is helping train the doctors of the future. The group runs the region’s only comprehensive children’s hospital and pediatric Level I trauma center and the region’s only Level I adult trauma center. It is also currently



The Diocese of Austin is home to several Catholic hospital networks. For more information about the facilities within the Ascension Seton network, visit www.seton.net. For more information about the facilities with the Ascension Providence network, visit www.providence.net. For more information about St. Joseph Health, visit www.st-joseph.org. For more information about CHRISTUS Health, visit www.christushealth.org.

expanding its primary care footprint across Central Texas with several new clinic locations to be announced in the coming months, in addition to expanding Dell Children’s Hospital and building a new state-of-the-art Dell Children’s Medical Center in Williamson County.

CHRISTUS Health is also leading the way in percentage of charity-care expenditures and its multi-hospital regional operations allow the sharing of key resources and leading practices to provide access and connect patients to care in their own and nearby communities.

St. Joseph Health prides itself on both its Level III and Level II trauma centers, the highest in the region, along with five Brazos Valley hospitals and more than 30 clinics. It has also received numerous awards of excellence for its service in the Brazos Valley and beyond.

Franciscan Sister Penny Dunn, vice president of Mission Integration for St. Joseph Health, said

their mission is to make the healing presence of God known by improving the health of the people they serve.

“Our Catholic identity is prevalent throughout our facilities and is supplemented with Masses and daily prayer. In addition, employees embrace our faith-based care and understand their role as ministers of Christ and being the hands and feet of Jesus while ministering in a sacred space where healing, new life, persevering prayer and the call to one’s Heavenly home occurs,” she said.

Covert said it all comes down to care and caring, and as one of the nation’s leading nonprofit Catholic health systems, Ascension Seton’s mission is also rooted in the loving ministry of Jesus as healer, which guides everything they do.

“By fostering spirituality in the workplace, we create a model community of mutual care that serves and benefits not just our associates, but everyone we serve,” Covert said.

Day of reflection focuses on moving forward with faith

By Kanobia Russell-Blackmon | Correspondent

Voices singing, “We’ve come this far by faith,” opened the Day of Reflection Concerning the Black Apostolate held on Nov. 6 at Holy Cross Parish in Austin. Celebrating the opening liturgy imbued with the rich cultural gifts of the Black community, Bishop Joe Vásquez reminded the faithful that every time Christ meets people, they cannot remain the same.

So, too, the Christian faithful are called to see each other in the image and likeness of God regardless of background, culture or socioeconomic status. Bishop Vásquez stressed the importance of the faith of the Black apostolate in view of the opening hymn, saying “faith brought us this far and will take us even farther because with faith there is always hope.” Our encounters with Christ, and one another in faith, create opportunities of transformation, he said.

The facilitator of the day of reflection was Father Oscar J. Pratt II of the Archdiocese of Boston and uncle of Lauren Warner, the diocesan coordinator of Black Ministry. Father Pratt, a graduate of the New England Conservatory of Music, has a storied history in music, ministry and pastoral care, and this was made evident throughout the day.

During the morning session, Father Pratt reinforced the importance of being in a relationship with God. Explaining that God’s greatest commandment, “loving God with your whole being and loving neighbor as yourself,” he said people are called to see the whole person with faith, loving them for who they are without discrimination.

Emphasizing that “God works in and through us,” Father Pratt expressed to the fully engaged group that “God will use the obstacles in this world to help us to grow faith.” In response one woman

in the audience expressed how she nearly skipped the session but felt that God put her there.

As a cradle Black Catholic, she explained, “The fact that my family chose to remain Catholic, despite everything that has happened to us as a people in the Catholic Church, tells me I belong in this church.”

Father Pratt said to transform society, we must love society and the world. As people of God, we are called to love one another and work together toward the common good, but we must remember that “transforming ‘self’ starts with ‘loving self.’”

He said although we are different and look different, each of us is made in the image and likeness of God. In response to this, Sharon Agnew of Los Angeles explained that the Imago Dei really puts the onerous on one’s self.

“I cannot proclaim to be a Catholic – to be a Christian – and harbor ill will against somebody,” she said.

With words of encouragement, Father Pratt inspired the faithful to deepen their faith and relationship with God and their relationship with others moving forward by stressing that we are the church that should be united together in faith, committed to evangelizing others. Margaret Ferdinand-Huntley, a parishioner of St. Margaret Mary Parish in Cedar Park agreed.

“We can’t stop, we can’t give up, we have to keep moving, we have to educate others,” she said.

Gene Schneider, a parishioner of St. Theresa Parish in Austin, felt the day was highly beneficial because it reinforced the importance of “accepting other people the way they are and accepting me the way I am.”

Juliette Henderson, a parishioner of Holy Cross Parish in Austin, said one thing she took away from the presentation was “the concept of the dignity of others



Father Oscar J. Pratt II of the Archdiocese of Boston led the Day of Reflection Concerning the Black Apostolate on Nov. 6 at Holy Cross Parish in Austin. (Photo by Kanobia Russell-Blackmon)

and communion with others and how you cannot be a Christian and treat others differently than you would treat yourself.”

Sileryia Perry, also a parishioner of Holy Cross Parish in Austin, encouraged her two teen daughters to attend because she wants them to have their own intimate relationship with God. “They want to know him for themselves, and I always tell them that part of that is being in the church and getting to know their church family,” she said.

Lauren Warner, the diocesan coordinator for Black Ministry, challenged the participants to take this experience out to others. “Let’s go, church! Let’s raise our voices, knowing who and whose we are; and let’s share this with the world,” she said.

Bishop Vásquez encouraged all to rely on their faith when facing obstacles or challenges in life.

“We still move forward in faith. We cannot stop moving forward,” he said.

For more information on Black Catholic Ministry in the diocese, visit www.austindiocese.org/black-catholics.

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SVdP conferences walk to raise awareness for those in need



Many people gathered for the Friends of the Poor Walk held Sept. 25 at St. Albert the Great Parish in Austin. Hosted by the Society of St. Vincent de Paul Diocesan Council of Austin and the St. Albert the Great Conference, the purpose was to raise awareness about poverty and raise funds for those in need in Central Texas.

Father Charlie Garza, pastor of St. Albert the Great Parish, opened the event with a prayer. With smiles and laughter, walkers followed the walking course on the parish property until they reached the finish line. Mission phrases were posted along the route to remind participants of the importance of helping others.

The Friends of the Poor Walk started in 2008 as a national program to raise awareness about the challenges faced by our neighbors in need. It is also a fundraising opportunity for local SVdP Conferences to raise funds to help those in need in their respective communities. (Photos courtesy Kanobia Russell-Blackmon)



Retreats at Cedarbrake

Dec. 11: Retiro en Español Con Padre Bruce Nieli, CSP
 “Escuchando a Jesus con Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe.” Como la Madre de America puede ayudarnos a escuchar en oracion las cuatro voces de su Hijo Jesucristo: La voz de la unidad—Amor Intimo; La voz de la verdad—Amor Eterno; La voz de la bondad—Amor Sacrificado; y La voz de la belleza—Amor Universal. El costo sera de \$35 por persona.

Jan. 7-9: Biblical Institute focuses on writings of St. Paul
 The fourth annual Biblical Institute will be held on Jan. 7-9, 2022. The topic will be the “St. Paul before the Gospel Narratives.” How does St. Paul’s theology and message stand alone from the four Gospels? What and how was Paul’s good news communicated prior to the written Gospels about Christ’s person, message and reality? The presenter will be Father Seán Charles Martin, a priest for the Diocese of Dallas. Cost is \$270 for a private room, \$230 for a shared room and \$130 for commuters.

Jan. 20: Cedarbrake “On the Road Retreat” at St. John Vianney, Round Rock

Join Franciscan Father Albert Haase as he gives a day retreat on the Lord’s Prayer at St. John Vianney in Round Rock. As early as the second century, the Lord’s Prayer was referred to as a “Summary of the Entire Gospel.” The retreat is from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Cost is \$40, which includes lunch. Please register through Cedarbrake.

**Jan. 28-30: Hurdles of the Soul
 Challenges along the Spiritual Journey**

In this workshop, through lectures and DVD presentations, Franciscan Father Albert Haase will address six hurdles that must be negotiated on the spiritual journey. Time will be allowed for questions, optional discussion, and Mass on Sunday. The cost is \$270 for a private room, \$230 for a share room and \$130 for commuters.

Feb. 4-6: Annual Spiritual Directors Workshop

This weekend workshop titled, “God is the Principal Agent,” is offered as continuing education and formation for spiritual directors. This workshop will focus on St. John of the Cross’ perspectives and practical wisdom that he offers for the ministry of spiritual direction. Holy Cross Brother Joel Giallanza will present. The cost is \$270 for a private room, \$230 for a share room and \$130 for commuters.



To register, call the Cedarbrake office at (254) 780-2436.
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The retreat schedule is dependent on COVID-19 restrictions.

Revival hopes to re-instill Eucharistic awe and wonder

By Chaz Muth | Catholic News Service

Toni Guagenti of Virginia Beach, Virginia, was raised in a traditional churchgoing Catholic family and educated in the teachings of the church, yet as an adult she views the consecrated host as a symbol of Jesus and not the real presence of Christ.

It appears as though Guagenti's understanding of the Eucharist is the same for a majority of U.S. Catholics, and church leaders are trying to figure out what to do about that.

A 2019 Pew Research Center study showed that 69% of all self-identified U.S. Catholics said they believed the bread and wine used at Mass are not Jesus, but instead are "symbols of the body and blood of Jesus Christ." The other 31% said they believed in the real presence of Jesus in the Eucharist.

Though that study has been criticized by several Catholic scholars, it got the attention of the U.S. bishops, who will be discussing what they consider a catechetical crisis at their upcoming fall general assembly in Baltimore in November.

"I think it shows a lack of catechesis over at least two generations now of people," said Bishop Alfred A. Schlert of Allentown, Pennsylvania. "Also, when we look at the amount of people who are not practicing their faith, who have left the church and really have become a nondenominational person in any respect, I think that would be really emblematic of why the number is so high."

Guagenti grew up one of eight children in a Lima, Ohio, household where her parents were actively involved in their parish and the religious education of their children.

"We would fill a pew," she said in referring to the Guagenti family's church life, "so it was very much a part of my family, my extended family, my cousins. It was woven in the fabric of our family."

Before receiving her first Communion, Guagenti said, she was provided with detailed instruction about church teaching on the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist and said

that education continued throughout the rest of her childhood.

That instruction would have included the church doctrine of transubstantiation during which the bread and wine have changed their substance from what they fundamentally are – through the instrument of the ordained minister's words of consecration – to the total and real presence of Jesus Christ, that is his body and blood.

"We were taught pretty strict what the Eucharist meant," Guagenti said, meaning she learned that "it is the body of Christ. This is very sacred. You have to feel like you deserve that you are able to take this pure peace of the Lord into you."

Though Guagenti did believe in the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist throughout her childhood and adolescence, her acceptance of transubstantiation changed in adulthood.

"It's like Santa Claus, OK, we sort of know eventually he doesn't exist, but you still believe in the spirit of the giving," she said. "It's pretty impossible to me that millions of churches across the world have the actual body of Christ. The bread is sanctified, it's consecrated by those who are living the word, breathing the word, teaching the word of Christ. That's good enough for me."

This view of the Eucharist has alarmed many U.S. bishops because belief in the real presence of Christ in the consecrated host is a central church teaching.

Auxiliary Bishop Robert E. Barron of Los Angeles – a high-profile church leader who is the founder of the Catholic evangelization organization Word on Fire and host of an award-winning documentary about the Catholic faith that aired on PBS stations – didn't mince words about the Pew study.

"It's hard to describe how angry I feel," he said on his website just after the study was released, saying he blamed himself, his brother bishops, other priests, catechists and parents, really anyone else responsible for spreading the faith.

He was among the first church



Bishop Joe Vásquez elevates the Eucharist during Mass at Holy Cross Parish in Austin on Nov. 6. The real presence of Christ in the Eucharist will be the focus of the upcoming three-year revival. (Photo by Kanobia Russell-Blackmon)

leaders to call this a crisis in catechesis.

"This should be a wake-up call to all of us in the church," Bishop Barron said. "We need to pick up our game when it comes to communicating even the most basic doctrines."

The study prompted the U.S. bishops to plan a three-year eucharistic revival to help address what they see as a catechetical crisis and perhaps one of many reasons why so many churches have fewer members in their congregation with each passing year.

It's also one of the driving forces behind the U.S. bishops' proposed document on the "The Mystery of the Eucharist in the Life of the Church."

"I think the greater problem is we've lost what St. John Paul II referred to as eucharistic wonder and awe," said Bishop Michael F. Burbidge of Arlington, Virginia.

"How often do we take the most precious gifts for granted?" Bishop Burbidge asked. "Our own family members, we take for granted the gift of life itself, the gift of health and I think that's happened with the gift of the Eucharist, that it's just something we've lost, that wonder and awe. Without that wonder and awe, belief or participation will not be sustained."

John Grabowski, an associate professor of moral theology and ethics at

The Catholic University of America, found Guagenti's reverence for the Eucharist striking, considering her lack of belief in the Real Presence.

"But it's probably not isolated," Grabowski said. "People who have grown up in Catholic families, in Catholic education, who have Catholic habits of mind and practice, even if they don't have a strong, personal faith at a given point in their lives, those habits are still there at some level and still kind of directing the way they operate and navigate."

He hopes the U.S. bishops' three-year eucharistic revival takes hold in parishes and small groups of people throughout the country.

"I am hoping that we can move the needle in a significant way so that more than just one third of Catholics in the United States recognize the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist," Grabowski said.

"I'm hoping we can kind of go all in as a church and really take on this catechetical crisis and give people a deeper, better understanding of this mystery," he said, "that is again supposed to be the very source and summit of our life as Christians and the very source and summit of the church. Every crisis is an opportunity."

Teens share defining moments in their lives when they turned to God

By John Shaughnessy | Catholic News Service

Sixteen-year-old Roch Egan remembers the moment as a turning point in his faith – the day when his mother was near death.

“Five years ago, my mom had a miscarriage, and she almost died at home and in the hospital,” recalled Roch, a member of Holy Rosary Parish in Indianapolis. “I remember that night praying like crazy. Ever since then, I’ve gotten so much closer to God. I trust him more.

“Now, I like to think of God as a friend, even though I know he’s much more than that. I can go to him whenever I need him. My faith is what my life is for now.”

Roch shared that turning point in his faith during the opening day of the National Catholic Youth Conference in Indianapolis Nov. 18.

He was one of the 12,000 youths from across the country attending the three-day event, and many of

them came with their own story of turning closer to God and wanting to deepen their relationship with him even more.

In a year when masks were required to attend the conference, the youths may have had to hide their smiles, but they still freely expressed the joy of their faith and their bond with God.

At 18, Ava Yurczyk shared that her Catholic faith is the focal point of her life.

“It’s what I base my values, my decisions around,” said Ava, a member of St. Luke Parish in Shoreline, Washington, in the Archdiocese of Seattle.

A high school senior, Ava turned to her faith in God when she was trying to make a decision that countless peers will be making this year -- choosing the right college.

“I’ve always felt called to be a caregiver, which has led to my desire to be a nurse in a neo-intensive care unit,” she told The Criterion,

Indianapolis’ archdiocesan newspaper. “I wanted to find a place where I could combine deepening my faith along with my education – and being around people who can support me and so we can grow together.”

That desire led her to choose the University of Mary in Bismarck, South Dakota, as her college destination.

“The second I stepped on campus, I turned to my dad and said, ‘I could live here for four years,’” Ava recalled. “I knew it was the place for me.”

She also feels confident in her choice knowing the Catholic university is named after the Blessed Mother.

“I know I’m going to be a mom someday, and I’ve turned to Mary for that calling. I’ve found comfort in my relationship with her,” she said.

Miguel Saucedo was seeking a measure of comfort and hope in his

life about a year ago.

“I was struggling. I was lonely,” said Miguel, a member of the Church of the Annunciation Parish in Shelbyville, Kentucky, in the Archdiocese of Louisville. “Then I realized there was somebody who knew more about me than I do myself. God has been there for me from day one.

“I asked him to promise me to help me through everything I was going through. I heard something pop into my head -- ‘I promise.’ I actually did cry when that happened. I cried tears of joy.”

At 16, Valentina Chavez has the same deep love of her faith that brings so many Catholic youths to the National Catholic Youth Conference every two years.

“For most of us, our faith has always been there for us since we were born,” said Valentina, a member of St. Patrick Parish in Indianapolis. “We’re here for a reason ... And God is always here for us.”

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Pope encourages young people to be the critical conscience of society

By Carol Glatz | Catholic News Service

Pope Francis told young people that, with Jesus, people can find the courage to swim against the current, to be free and authentic, and to stand up for their dreams and ideals of truth, love, justice and peace.

“Be the critical conscience of society. Don’t be afraid to criticize. We need your criticism,” he said, citing for example, the disapproval coming from many young people about environmental destruction. “Be passionate about truth, so that, with your dreams, you can say, ‘My life is not captive to the mindset of the world. I am free, because I reign with Jesus for justice, love and peace!’”

Celebrating Mass on the feast of Christ the King in St. Peter’s Basilica Nov. 21, the pope directed much of his homily to the world’s young people. This was the first year that the world’s dioceses were celebrating World Youth Day on the local

level on the feast of Christ the King rather than on Palm Sunday. Pope Francis had announced the change last year.

As the church begins its journey toward the next intercontinental celebration of World Youth Day in Lisbon in 2023, the pope asked young people to reflect on the image in the day’s Gospel reading of Jesus standing before Pontius Pilate and declaring, “I am a king.”

“We are struck by Jesus’ determination, his courage, his supreme freedom,” the pope said, because he could have tried to defend himself or compromise to avoid being condemned to death.

Instead, Jesus did not hide his identity and he took responsibility for his own life and for his mission to testify to the truth, he said.

Jesus came without duplicity to show his kingdom is different from the kingdoms of the world,” the pope said. “God does not reign to increase his power and to crush

others; he does not reign by force of arms. His is the kingdom of love,” a kingdom of people who give their lives for the salvation of others.

Pope Francis encouraged young people to let Jesus’ freedom “resonate within us, to challenge us, to awaken in us the courage born of truth.” He encouraged everyone to look for and face the truth about themselves: what they are ashamed of, the ways they may be deceitful or duplicitous and the ways they displease God.

“It is good to stand before Jesus, who is truth, in order to be set free from our illusions,” to see life as it really is, “and not be deceived by the fashions of the moment and the displays of consumerism that dazzle but also deaden,” he said.

Pope Francis urged young people not to be “enchanted by the sirens of the world, but to take our lives in hand, to ‘take a bite out of life,’ in order to live it to the full!”

With the freedom of Jesus “we

find the courage we need to swim against the current,” which is “not the daily temptation to swim against other people, like those perpetual victims and conspiracy theorists who are always casting blame on others,” he said. It is going against “the unhealthy current of our own selfishness, closed-mindedness and rigidity that often seeks like-minded groups to survive.”

One swims against the tide “so as to become more like Jesus. For he teaches us to meet evil only with the mild and lowly force of good. Without shortcuts, without deceit, without duplicity,” the pope said.

“Thank you above all, because in a world that thinks only of present gain, that tends to stifle grand ideals, you have not lost the ability to dream! This helps us adults, and the church as well,” which also needs to dream and be filled with youthful enthusiasm to be witnesses of the God who is always young, he said.



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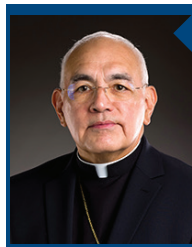
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BISHOP'S INTERVIEW

May we tune our hearts and minds to Christ this Advent



Bishop Joe S. Vásquez is the fifth bishop of the Austin Diocese, which is home to more than 610,000 Catholics. For details, visit the diocesan website at austindiocese.org.

Editor: Bishop, the season of Advent is upon us. During this liturgical season we are preparing our hearts for Christ. How does Christ make all things new?

Bishop Vásquez: Advent is a blessed time of the year because we are filled with hope, longing and expectation. During the season of Advent, our attention is drawn to the day when Christ will return at the end of time. We are preparing ourselves for that great event of Salvation when Christ will come triumphant as King and Lord of all.

We are not only looking forward to celebrating Christ's birth (his first coming), but also we are looking forward to when Christ will come again and renew the face of the earth. The entire book of Revelation is filled with hope for a church that has been persecuted, suffered and endured trials and tribulations. Christ overcomes all these things, as he destroys sin and death forever. Indeed, Christ makes all things new!

In Revelations we read, "Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth. The former heaven and the former earth had passed away, and the sea was no more." When Jesus comes again, he does not intend to do away with creation. When he comes, he will renew us and completely transform us, thus making all things new.

As Catholics we experience this renewal and transformation through the celebration of the sacraments. Christ encounters in every sacrament. Sacraments are outward signs instituted by Christ that give us grace. The sacraments keep us united with Christ, and as we participate in the sacraments, we continue to be renewed.

Editor: Liturgically, our priests and deacons wear purple during the four weeks of Advent. Why?

Bishop Vásquez: The purple we wear in Advent is a little different from the purple we wear during Lent. Lent is truly a penitential season. It is about us turning away from sin and asking Christ to renew us in this season of Lent. But in Advent, our primary focus is on hope and anticipation. Therefore, this purple shows our longing for Christ to come.

During the season of Advent, we remember and celebrate that Christ came once in history and that he will come again at the end of time. But he is also present daily in our lives. If we are open and truly aware of Christ in the present, we will encounter him -- in people and in situations. He is encountered in your son or daughter, in your spouse, in your friends or family members. He is present when you gather together and pray, and especially at Mass. And he can be found where we may not expect to find him -- in the hospital or in nursing homes, in the homeless, refugee, immigrant, single parent, or that person who is living alone because they have lost their spouse or family. Christ can be found in many places if our eyes are tuned to him.

Editor: How do the sacraments, particularly the Eucharist, help us to understand that Christ makes all things new?

Bishop Vásquez: In our Catholic faith we believe Christ is truly present in the Eucharist. At Mass the wine and the bread are transformed by the Holy Spirit and become truly the body and blood, soul and divinity of Jesus Christ. We are blessed to experience this as Christ offers himself to us in the Eucharist just as he offered his life for us on the cross at Calvary. This gift that Christ offers renews us and transforms us to be more like Christ. The Eucharist is not simply taking Christ into our bodies and into our spirits but truly, as Cath-



Two lit candles on an Advent wreath mark the second week of Advent. During this season, we are not only looking forward to celebrating Christ's birth (his first coming), but also we are looking forward to when Christ will come again and renew the face of the earth, Bishop Vásquez said in this month's interview. (CNS photo/Octavio Duran)

olics, we believe Christ becomes more evident in our lives as we receive him in the Eucharist and allow his grace to grow within us.

As St. Augustine of Hippo said all other types of food we take into our bodies are assimilated in us. But when we consume the Eucharist, we take Christ into our body, and we are assimilated to him -- we become transformed into who he is not the other way around. This is a marvelous exchange about how Christ renews us through the Eucharist.

Editor: The pandemic is ongoing. Many have lost loved ones; many have been sick. How can we comfort our neighbors?

Bishop Vásquez: Let us not forget those individuals who have suffered and lost so much during the pandemic, whether through illness, death or isolation. We know especially those in nursing homes and hospitals endured great suffering. Let's not forget the first responders, doctors, nurses and health care workers who have worked so selflessly during this pandemic.

We have a responsibility to reach out with a phone call or

a visit to these individuals. We could send a card or prepare food for them. Especially during these holidays, let's reach out to those who are sad or alone and invite them to celebrate the coming of Christ with us. There are so many opportunities over the next several weeks to invite others to Mass and to celebrate how Christ does indeed make all things new. Christ is truly present in us, as we come together as friends and family.

Editor: What is your prayer for the diocese as we prepare for Christ's coming?

Bishop Vásquez: As we look with hope to the day when Christ will come in glory, may our eyes be opened today to the ways in which Christ is present. May we find him especially in those who are suffering, lonely, abandoned or forgotten. Christ, Our Hope, come and make yourself known to us. Amen.

A CHRISTMAS REFLECTION

This Christmas let's reconsider how we give, receive gifts

By Louis A. Gamino | Columnist

Are you struggling with the prospect of buying Christmas gifts this year, like I am?

My wife Marla's grandma crocheted a bright red Christmas stocking for her decades ago. Marla still hangs it on our mantle each year for Santa to fill with goodies. But the swell and bounty of annual gifts have taken a toll on the soft yarn. More than once, Marla has repaired sections pulled apart by the size and weight of gaily wrapped stocking stuffers. Marla fondly remembers her grandma each time she stitches that fragile stocking, cherishing its sentimental value.

That Christmas stocking reminds me of a homily by now-Bishop Michael J. Sis of San Angelo during Mass at the diocesan Pastoral Center in Austin some years ago. The Old Testament reading from minor prophet Haggai (1:1-8) challenged the Jewish communi-

ty after their return from exile in Babylon. Instead of setting about to rebuild the Jerusalem temple as the centerpiece of a pious community, the people appeared more concerned with first meeting their daily needs for food and clothing. In a stark image, Haggai warned against such shortsightedness, "And whoever earned wages, earned them for a bag with holes in it" (verse 6).

Bishop Sis capitalized on that image of misplaced financial priorities. "Only God satisfies," he reminded us. That message hit home with me. Trying to obtain security simply through accumulating wealth doesn't work. Especially during a frantic holiday season, cultural expectations about gift-giving can quickly become a path to excess. As Haggai warns, we can pack as much as we want into a "bag with holes," but possessions will merely run through it, like Marla's overstuffed Christmas stocking.

Why not take a clue from Haggai and reconsider our Christmas

gift exchanges? Gifts can be a very meaningful way to show love if given from the heart with the intention of building up the other person. The holes in my wife's stocking don't matter because her grandma's love is embedded in the artistry and cannot slip away. Such love in a homemade gift reflects the Creator's love – the only thing that can truly satisfy our yearnings.

Unfortunately, my own track record of gifting runs spotty. After all, who do you think stuffed all those frivolous knick-knacks into Marla's stocking? I have given in to the allure of overbuying, despite Haggai's warning. And too often I have given items like a sweater, cooking pan or umbrella I thought the recipient would want. Doing better means tuning in to what the other person finds most meaningful. This business of loving like the Creator requires being more thoughtful, which is definitely a challenge!

And what about gifts for the Christ child? "How can I repay the Lord for all the great good done for me?" (Ps 116:12). No doubt many faithful parents and teachers have instructed young children to draw a picture or make a craft to lay before Baby Jesus at the manger. Certainly, many adults display gratitude by making year-end gifts to the church, their parish or community. All are laudable efforts.

However, a different idea occurred to me while visiting relatives in Ohio this summer. I noticed my cousin-in-law's Bible on his desk. The leather-bound volume showed signs of exhaustive use – passages underlined, notes in the margins, gilt edging worn off, ribbon in shreds – a handbook for life, not a shelf ornament. Wouldn't a well-used Bible be the perfect gift to place at the Savior's feet on Christmas, a life testament to walking the Christian walk all year?

When gifting loved ones this Christmas, we can take a clue from Marla's grandma and avoid the Haggai trap of futile accumulation. Give with an intangible love that uplifts the recipient. I am working to get closer to this standard myself (and sure hope I don't have to eat these words later).

When giving to the Savior, let's remember to show him how we have put God's Word into practice. Soon enough in Lent we will be laying our frailties at the foot of the Cross, seeking forgiveness. For now, let's gift the Lord the joy that befits his coming. Merry Christmas!



Louis A. Gamino is a clinical psychologist at Baylor Scott White Health and a member of St. Luke Parish in Temple. Find more about him at www.LouisGamino.com.

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THE DOMESTIC CHURCH

Beginning a new liturgical year through Mary, full of grace

By Alison Tate | Guest Columnist

During this Year of the Domestic Church, we have discussed many aspects of family life and how we can share the faith within our immediate family as well as with our extended families. With the feasts of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary and Our Lady of Guadalupe, December holds a special focus on Mary. As we conclude this year and begin a new liturgical year, families may consider a practiced devotion to Mary in order to connect our daily lives with salvation history in a very real way.

In Mary's life, we see the Blessed Trinity at work. As Pope Francis prayed on the feast of the Immaculate Conception in 2016: "You (Mary) remind us that what comes first is the grace of God, the love of Jesus Christ who gave his life for us, the strength of the Holy Spirit which renews all things."

The liturgical celebration of the feast of the Immaculate Conception (Dec. 8) illustrates more than

Mary's story. At her conception Mary is bestowed with God's grace so that she may respond to a new covenant, and so that at the Annunciation, she may say "yes" to the will of God. Thus, the Immaculate Conception of Mary anticipates the Incarnation of Christ.

For each of us, the grace that God bestows allows us to respond to the will of God. God's graces are found through a variety of ways including many we have explored during this Year of the Domestic Church: prayer, study, service to others, stewardship, encountering Christ in the sacraments and building community. Our response to God's grace will look differently for each person, family and community, but there is no doubt that God's grace is abundant. Therefore, on Dec. 8, let us go to Mass with a renewed zeal to receive God's grace and participate in the same new covenant as Mary.

On the feast of Our Lady of Gua-



YEAR OF THE
**DOMESTIC
CHURCH**

dalupe (Dec. 12), we have the opportunity to respond in faith to God's love as Our Lady invited San Juan

Diego to so many years ago. Our Lady of Guadalupe and other sites of Marian devotion are "...special places of pilgrimage where the people of God seek to meet the Mother of God in order to find, within the radius of the maternal presence of her 'who believed,' a strengthening of their own faith," St. John Paul II writes in his 1987 encyclical "Redemptoris Mater." To be a pilgrim is to seek an increase in holiness. Marian sites near and far lead pilgrims to "find in Christ the path to the Father's house." This year may be a good time to make a trip as a family to participate in one of the many Our Lady of Guadalupe celebrations held in parishes across the diocese.

Other Marian devotional practices can also strengthen families during the season of Advent. Simple and accessible to all ages,

activities such as praying the rosary or a novena, attending daily Mass, wearing a scapular and participating in the sacraments are all opportunities we might consider with the goal of increasing our relationship with and knowledge of Mary.

When we see the headlines at the end of December touting the new year, my prayer is that we understand that our counter-cultural church has already celebrated the beginning of a new year. Through the season of Advent, the celebrations of Mary's faith and the coming of Christ at Christmas, may our families be strengthened and renewed. May our devotion to Mary, Mother of God lead us ever closer to God our Father. Mary is a gift to us, and we are blessed to know her life and faith.



Alison Tate is the director of the Office of Youth, Young Adults and Campus Ministry for the Austin Diocese. She can be reached at (512) 949-2465 or alison-tate@austindiocese.org.

Report abuse of a minor, elderly adult or an adult with a disability to local law enforcement or to the Texas Abuse Hotline at txabusehotline.org or (800) 252-5400 and to the diocese at austindiocese.org/report-abuse or (512) 949-2447.

Have you, or has someone you know, experienced abuse? Bishop Joe S. Vásquez and the Diocese of Austin are committed to providing compassionate care to persons who have experienced abuse, particularly if committed by clergy or a church representative. If you have or if someone you know has experienced such abuse, contact the diocesan Coordinator of Victim Assistance and Pastoral Support at EIM-VAC@austindiocese.org or (512) 949-2400.

EIM compliance is required for clergy, religious, seminarians, employees and for adult volunteers serving in any EIM compliance-required ministry, group or organization at all parishes, Catholic schools and diocesan agencies in the Diocese of Austin. Compliance must be updated/renewed at least once every three years throughout one's service in ministry. Visit austindiocese.org/eim-policies to learn more.

The Ethics and Integrity in Ministry (EIM) program of the Diocese of Austin promotes the protection of minors, elderly adults and adults with disabilities as well as ethical behavior in all ministries in the diocese.

ETHICS AND INTEGRITY IN MINISTRY

Online EIM Training available until Jan. 2, 2022

Employees and adult volunteers who have an existing EIM account and are due to update their EIM compliance should complete the online EIM training at austindiocese.org/workshop#EIMOnline or austindiocese.org/taller-de-eim. Persons who are due to update their compliance in winter/spring 2022 and prefer to do the online EIM training must do so prior to Jan. 2, 2022.

EIM Application

Prior to beginning service in ministry, new applicants must complete and submit an EIM Application for Ministry found at austindiocese.org/application. The EIM Application is submitted one-time only.

In-Person EIM Workshops

New EIM applicants, as well as those with an existing EIM account who have never attended an EIM Workshop, must attend an in-person EIM Workshop within 60 days of submitting the EIM Application to fulfill their initial EIM compliance requirement and remain eligible to serve in ministry. Login to your EIM account at eappsdb.com/austin and click [Sign up for a Workshop](#) (bottom right of Application Overview page) to find the list of currently scheduled workshops and to sign up. WORKSHOP NOTES: Pre-registration required. Arrive early. Do not bring children.

The EIM Workshop and online EIM training include frank discussions of sexual abuse. Contact Emily Hurlimann at (512) 949-2447 to discuss alternate training if you have experienced abuse.



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DISCERNING THE CALL

The path to the diaconate is a process of formation, transformation

By Deacon Mike and Marian Beauvais | Guest Columnists

In this column, our goal is to help men who are discerning the call to the diaconate and their wives understand that the diaconate formation process is just that, a process. In the years before ordination, a prospective deacon couple is formed and transformed in many ways. Here is how that has happened for us.

Deacon Mike: The one constant in our life is change. No matter how resistant we might be to change, and as I get older the more resistant to change I become, change will happen. Every day brings a new day; each day is different from the last, and we too are different in some small way from the person we were the day before.

Yet, all of us have a pattern to our lives, which comforts us. For some the pattern is being spontaneous but even that is a pattern of sorts. In my case the pattern of my life tends to be rather rigid. I like things a certain way and begin to feel uncomfortable when I am asked to adjust my morning, my day or my week with little notice.

Given all this, I admit the diaconate formation process was a drastic adjustment for me. The call to the diaconate does not prepare one for all that call entails. I probably should have known because we see repeatedly in Scripture how when God calls one, one's life undergoes a drastic

change. Formation is an introduction to a new life in Christ.

Marian: When we first started talking about the permanent diaconate, we knew there would be changes in our lives. What we didn't know was what type of changes would occur. We knew our lives wouldn't be the same carefree, do what we want, when we want type of life we had. But I don't think we could have even begun to imagine what God had in mind for us.

Deacon Mike: During the diaconate formation process, I learned what it is St. Paul meant by "it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me." It simply means, that in ministry our life belongs to Jesus, and by extension, it belongs to the Body of Christ. This does not mean we stop living our lives, but that our lives now flow between two banks, our family and the church.

Marian: We always said that even if the diaconate didn't turn out for us, we would forever be changed by the formation we went through. Since Mike's ordination, everything in our lives has been a bit topsy-turvy. We knew our weekends wouldn't be the same, and they aren't. We knew serving God's people would interrupt our family plans, which it has. There is always going to be something that must be done and what we want will be second to some degree, but God has truly blessed us over the years. His greatest blessing to me is being able to



Deacon Mike and Marian Beauvais have been married for 30 years, and they serve St. Anthony Parish in Bryan. Deacon Beauvais was ordained in 2016. He currently serves as part-time director of religious education at St. Anthony. Prior to becoming a deacon, he worked in the Texas Veterinary Medical Diagnostic Lab for 28 years. (Photo courtesy Mike Beauvais)

accompany my husband in this life as a deacon. I wouldn't change a single day of it. Over the last several years since Mike's ordination, I have seen the man I married 30 years ago dramatically change. God has given him a path that has transformed him into a truly remarkable servant of God's people. He has found a calling within a calling; he is a teacher.

Deacon Mike: I have found that where in my personal life I still become frustrated when schedules change, or plans must be modified, in my diaconate vocation I seldom feel these situations to be a burden. One of the things which

was a great test of my patience in formation was when our schedules would need to change with little notice. Now, when we suddenly have a funeral or our pastor is ill and we need to have a Communion service, I am at peace with it because the formation process has helped prepare me for it. Jesus, I trust in you!

Inquiry sessions about the diaconate

The Diaconate Formation Office will host inquiry sessions for men who wish to consider the permanent diaconate. The sessions will be held on the following Sundays from 2 to 5 p.m. with separate presentations in English and Spanish.

The sessions will explore the diaconate, discernment methods, qualities and characteristics sought in applicants, the formation journey, the wife's participation in formation and the application process.

Men between the ages of 30 and 59 sensing God's call to the permanent diaconate should discuss this with their pastors and obtain their pastor's permission to attend (with their wife, if married) one of the following sessions:

Dec. 12 at St. Joseph Parish Bryan

Jan. 9 at St. Elizabeth of Hungary Parish in Pflugerville

Feb. 13 at St. John the Evangelist Parish in Marble Falls

March 13 at St. Joseph Parish in Killeen

April 10 at Santa Cruz Parish in Buda

April 24 at the Pastoral Center in Austin

For details, contact (512) 949-2459 or diaconateformation@austindiocese.org.



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A REFLECTION ON ENCOUNTER

The transformational power of encounters with Christ and our neighbor

By Lauren Warner | Guest Columnist

Hailing from the great state of California, I am in my third year in Austin, and in my first year as diocesan coordinator of Black Ministry. Grateful for the opportunity to serve this local church as guided by Bishop Joe Vásquez, I am also grateful for the ministry to the Black apostolate and the opportunity to serve in this role as a young Black woman. The broad shoulders of our elders in the Black Catholic community — like Johnnie Dorsey of Austin and my grandfather, Oscar J. Pratt, Sr. of Los Angeles — are reasons I am able to assume leadership roles in our local church.

Recently, our diocese hosted a Day of Reflection Concerning the Black Apostolate on the theme, “Faith: Encounter and Transfor-

mation.” The theme of the day emerged as I reviewed “Encounter that Leads to Transformation,” our diocesan pastoral plan that was promulgated in 2015. During my review, as a theologian who teaches Sacred Scripture, I instinctively began to consider the many ways encounter leads to transformation

How many times have you had an experience of a sacrament, or multiple, that changed your life? Or have you been in prayer and heard God speaking to you which prompted you to make a change in your own life? What about those moments we have encountered others in whom Christ has inspired a change?

in the Old Testament and New Testament.

Let’s consider Moses and the burning bush. Many of us have either heard the story, or at least seen versions and depictions conjured up by some director or screenplay writer. Picture it: Moses is minding his own busi-

ness, tending to his father-in-law’s flocks, when he observes a bush on fire. What’s odd is that the fire is not consuming the bush, and thus, Moses is intrigued. As he moves closer to check it out, the bush begins to summon him. After the bush claims to be God and is sending Moses to set the Israelites free,

Moses does as God commands, and they live happily ever after ... right?

Now, for those of us who have actually read the biblical story, we know this is not how the saga progressed. Rather, Moses was not the confident leader depicted in movies exclaiming “Let my people go!” When God called and commissioned Moses to go to Pharaoh to deliver the Israelites out of Egypt, Moses questioned “Who am I that I should go?” (Ex 3:12). However, God provides Moses reassurance through signs, and after some haggling, Moses accepts his commission. It is through the encounter with God that Moses moves from being the insecure, Hebrew fugitive, to the confident, miracle producing, freedom fighter we have come to appreciate in the Old Testament.

In the New Testament there are many more examples of encounter and transformation. Just about any person who came into contact with Jesus was changed. The Pharisees, for example, who were challenged to consider their own sinfulness before throwing stones at another’s. And could you imagine the transformation for those who witnessed Lazarus being raised from the dead?

Consider the popular story of the Samaritan woman at the well. This foreigner was more than likely confused as to why this Jew, Jesus, was talking to her at the well. Jesus says “Whoever drinks the water I shall give will never thirst,” (Jn 4:14), tells her about her life, and

preaches to her about the worship of God. Recognizing that this man is different, she realizes that she is changed, and she goes back to her people to tell them about her encounter. I can’t imagine she just went back to her life as it was previously.

Encounters like these happen for us, too! How many times have you had an experience of a sacrament, or multiple, that changed your life? Or have you been in prayer and heard God speaking to you which prompted you to make a change in your own life? What about those moments we have encountered others in whom Christ has inspired a change? I experience these moments with my parish family and friends, through my work, pastoral music, my students, my co-workers, and the inspiration of the people who continue to labor among the Black community in the face of unconscionable hatred and injustice.

God works in us and among us through so many ways. As the Christian faithful, we are so blessed to have each other — working together as the Mystical Body of Christ — and the sacraments in which Christ’s grace is offered to us. All people — regardless of race, ethnicity or socioeconomic background — must strive to see how we fit into the larger ecclesial community, and rightfully take our place. Together as men and women made in the image and likeness of God, we must endeavor to share our rich cultural gifts in an effort to provide the ever-meaningful encounter that has the power to lead us and others to transformation.

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Lauren Warner is the diocesan coordinator of Black Ministry, the Theology Department Chairperson at St. Michael's Catholic Academy in Austin, and a pastoral musician. Contact her at (512) 949-2449 or lauren-warner@austindiocese.org.

FAITH THROUGH ART

Letting our imaginations run free to create and reflect

By Mark Landers | Columnist

I firmly believe that we are all artists and creators. Allow me to explain. A typical list of the arts might include paintings, drawings, watercolors, photography, sculpture, installations, architecture, music (playing an instrument, singing, humming, etc.), theater (performing, set design, set construction, lighting, sound etc.), dance, literature and cinema (movies, TV, videos). I would also include creative activities like the culinary arts, marching in a band, landscaping, interior design, gardening, martial arts, and even discovering relationships, listening, mourning and caring for others.

But let's expand the list even further, to include all creative activities. At church, we participate in creating community, each in our own way – and the same at home, play or work. Are we not, in fact, called to do our part in realizing God's kingdom here on earth? Through our individual applications of our faith and beliefs, we interpret what actions are called for in our unique situations. The Catechism of the Catholic Church says, "Arising from talent given by the Creator and from man's own effort, art is a form of practical wisdom, uniting knowledge and skill, to give form to the truth of reality in a language accessible to sight or hearing. To the extent that

it is inspired by truth and love of beings, art bears a certain likeness to God's activity in what he has created" (2501). These words can and do apply to each of our lives.

In his book "Art and Faith: A Theology of Making," Makoto Fujimura writes, "... the ultimate understanding of the Gospel is

We are in the middle of Advent, so let's endeavor to read Scripture passages of the Nativity and picture them in our mind.

what we make, and what we love, with what we know, or that deepest realm of knowledge that is garnered through our making. This is the deepest cultivation of the soil of our minds and culture. This is the path to be 'filled with the Spirit,' with the fruit of the Spirit being 'love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law' (Gal 5:22-23). Such fruit, filled with love, is incarnated into what we make, this creating cultivated movement into culture at large."

I propose yet another way we are all artists and creators is through our imaginations, which we use, sometimes to our detriment (worrying about or picturing some negative possibility) and sometimes for our pleasure (imagining a vacation at the beach). Try combining Lectio Divina (praying with Scripture) and Visio Divina (praying with images) as a form of creative meditation.

We are in the middle of Advent,

so let's endeavor to read Scripture passages of the Nativity and picture them in our mind. Just as a painter would, think about the setting (stable, cave, etc.), the figures (Mary, Joseph, Christ child, shepherds), animals and angels.

Take time to envision each element in the scene. Now, place

yourself in the scene as a participant or an observer – remember, this is for your own meditation. Unlike a painter, you can experience this with all your senses, as a single image or an ongoing scene which you are privileged to witness or even participate in. And finally, as with all sacred art, allow yourself to be drawn beyond the immediate,

to where you can contemplate the beauty, goodness and truth that transcends all that you created in your mind. Be attentive. Be open.

Remember, each time you meditate will be different from the last time, so feel free to return to your vision, without expectations. Some sessions will feel dry or mundane while others will fill you with awe, wonder, a sense of connectedness or an awareness of God's self-giving love. Be patient with your art and let God speak to you through it. Feel God's presence and know his love as you let yourself create.

Mark Landers is a parishioner of St. Austin Parish in Austin and a member of the Diocesan Fine Arts Council. He and his wife, Christina, own and operate Landers' Studio, a woodworking shop and design studio. They design and construct custom furniture and high quality architectural piecework.



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Calendar of events

Mark your calendars for these events that are coming up across the Diocese of Austin. Send entries for this section to catholic-spirit@austindiocese.org.

Dec. 4: The ninth annual diocesan celebration in honor of Our Lady of Guadalupe will be held at St. Mary Cathedral in Austin beginning at 8 a.m. Details: www.austindiocese.org/olg-celebration.

Dec. 4: The Ladies Society of St. Joseph Parish in Rockdale will host a Christmas Bazaar from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. in the parish Religious Education Building. There will be homemade chicken stew, chicken salad, pimento cheese sandwiches, etc. Homemade baked goods will be for sale, and there will be a silent auction.

Dec. 4: All single young adults (18-35) are cordially invited to the annual MEGA Posada Juvenil at Santa Julia Parish in Austin from 6 to 9 p.m. This is an evening of prayer, fellowship and traditions like piñatas! Content will be in Spanish and English. Details: (512) 949-2466 or www.facebook.com/pjhaustin.

Dec. 4: An Advent Blessing and Tree Lighting will be held at 7 p.m. at the Marian Shrine of Our Lady of Schoenstatt in Austin. Bring your Advent wreaths to be blessed, sing Christmas songs and stay afterwards for hot chocolate and smores around the fire. Details: schoenstatt-austin.us.

Dec. 4-5: Dolores Parish in Austin will host its annual Christmas Bazaar from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Vendors will sell handmade Christmas items, jewelry, crocheted shawls, caps, baked goods and much more. Santa Claus will be available for photos at noon on both days. Admission is free.

Dec. 5: Mass will be celebrated in Spanish at 1 p.m. at the Marian Shrine of Our Lady of Schoenstatt in Austin. Details: schoenstatt-austin.us.

Dec. 8: The feast of the Immaculate Conception, a holy day of obligation, will be celebrated. Diocesan offices will be closed.

Dec. 11: Married couples are invited to Couples Time Out from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m. at the Marian Shrine of Our Lady of Schoenstatt in Austin. The morning includes a short talk by a Schoenstatt priest, private time for discussion and reflection and ends with Adoration. Babysitting is available. \$20 registration fee. To register e-mail cto@schoenstatt.us.

Dec. 11: Holy Trinity Catholic High School in Temple will host its annual Holiday Bazaar from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Dec. 11: Mary's Touch will offer a screening of "Guadalupe Mysteries" by Michael O'Neill. The screening will show footage of Mexico City including interviews with the bishop-rector of the Basilica, scientists who have studied the tilma, the postulator for Juan Diego, art historians, expert on apparitions, and local devotional artists. Get tickets (\$25) at www.marystouch.org. E-mail: info@marystouch.org.

Dec. 11-12: A special collection for Retired Clergy and Religious will be taken up in diocesan parishes. Details: www.retiredreligious.org.

Dec. 12: An inquiry session for men who are considering the permanent diaconate will be held from 2 to 5 p.m. at St. Joseph Parish in Bryan. Details: www.austindiocese.org/inquiry-info-session or (512) 949-2459.

Dec. 14-16: The diocesan Vocations Office will host the Heart of Jesus Retreat for single young men between the ages of 18 and 40. The retreat will focus on a man's true identity as a son, brother and father. The cost is \$35 per person. Details: hj.godiscalling.me or (512) 949-2430.

Dec. 15: A discernment dinner for women ages 18 to 35 will be held at 7 p.m. in the St. Luke Room at the University Catholic Center in Austin. Details: godiscalling.me or (512) 949-2430.

Dec. 24-Jan. 1: Diocesan offices will be closed for the Christmas holidays.

Jan. 7-9: A Worldwide Marriage Encounter Experience will be held at the Wyndham Hotel in Round Rock. This is a weekend opportunity for married couples to focus on their marriage, improve communication, deepen intimacy and spend quality time together, free of distractions. Details: austinme.org or contact wwmeaustin@gmail.com or call (512) 677-WWME (9963).

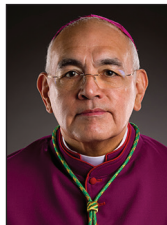
Jan. 9: An inquiry session for men who are considering the permanent diaconate will be held from 2 to 5 p.m. at St. Elizabeth Parish in Pflugerville. Details: www.austindiocese.org/inquiry-info-session or (512) 949-2459.

Jan. 15: The annual diocesan Commemoration of the legacy of Martin Luther King Jr. will be held at 11 a.m. at a location to be announced.

Jan. 17: Diocesan offices will be closed in observance of Martin Luther King Jr. Day.

Official schedule

The official schedule for Bishop Joe Vásquez is listed below. Dates and times are subject to change.



**Bishop
Joe S.
Vásquez**

Dec. 4: Mass & Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament for Diocesan Celebration of Our Lady of Guadalupe, St. Mary Cathedral, Austin, 8 a.m.

Dec. 5: Confirmation, St. Edward's Campus Ministry, Austin, 10:30 a.m.

Dec. 7: Interviews with Diaconal Candidates, Pastoral Center

Advent Dinner with Diocesan Finance and Building Councils, Austin, 6:30 p.m.

Dec. 8: Mass and Closing of the Jubilee Year for 150th Anniversary, St. Mary, Immaculate Conception Parish, Brenham, 6 p.m.

Dec. 9: Interviews with Diaconal Candidates, Pastoral Center

Dec. 10: Monthly Budget Meeting, Pastoral Center, 8:30 a.m.

Dec. 11: Mass for feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe, Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish, Austin, 11 a.m.

Advent Dinner with Diocesan Staff, Austin, 6 p.m.

Dec. 14: Interviews with Diaconal Candidates, Pastoral Center

Advent Dinner with Priests, Round Rock, 5 p.m.

Dec. 15: Mass & Blessing of Chapel at CHRISTUS Santa Rosa Hospital, San Marcos, 1 p.m.

Dec. 16: Catholic Foundation Meeting, Virtual, 11 a.m.

Dec. 17: Advent Dinner with Seminarians, Austin, 5 p.m.

Dec. 22: Simbang Gabi Mass, St. Peter the Apostle Parish, Austin, 5:30 p.m.

Dec. 24: Midnight Mass, St. Mary Cathedral, Austin

Jan. 3-7: Texas Bishops' Retreat, San Antonio

Jan. 8: Mass for Movimiento Familiar Cristiano, Santa Cruz Parish, Buda, 10 a.m.

Jan. 18: Get prepared for Total Consecration to Jesus through Mary by ordering your materials. Join thousands from throughout the diocese is this consecration, which begins Feb. 20. Visit www.TexasToJesusThroughMary.org by Jan. 18 to receive your free Montfort preparation prayer book by mail and for more information.

Jan. 20: A discernment dinner for men will be held from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. at St. Mary Cathedral in Austin. Details: godiscalling.me or call (512) 949-2430.

Jan. 22: Texas Catholic Pro-Life Day includes praying for an end to abortion and the restoration of the dignity of human life.

Jan. 22: Saints and Scholars, Celebrating Catholic Schools Dinner and Award Ceremony will be held from 6 to 9 p.m. at the Hyatt Regency in Austin. Details: csdatx.org/2022ccs or call (512) 949-2497.

Burse

The Diocesan Council of Catholic Women has completed a burse for the Clerical Endowment Fund (CEF) in honor of Schoenstatt Father Johnson Nellissery, pastor of St. Paul Parish in Austin.

The totals for the burse as of Oct. 31 are listed below by council.

Austin	\$870.00
Bastrop/Lockhart	\$2,949.53
Brenham/La Grange	\$576.00
Bryan/College Station	\$287.00
Killeen/Temple	\$431.00
Lampasas/Marble Falls	\$1,083.00
Waco	\$2,981.00
Previous Balance	\$2,813.79
Total	\$11,991.32

The purpose of the CEF is to aid in the education of the seminarians of the Diocese of Austin. For information, contact Judy Edwards at (979) 846-0617.

COURAGE

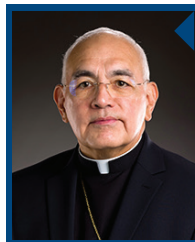
A ROMAN CATHOLIC APOSTOLATE

Spiritual support for men and women with same-sex attractions to help them live chaste lives in fellowship, truth and love.

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(512) 666-1043 or www.couragerc.org

ENTREVISTA DEL SEÑOR OBISPO

Sintonicemos nuestros corazones a Cristo en este Adviento



El Obispo José S. Vásquez es el quinto obispo de la Diócesis de Austin, que es el hogar de más de 610,000 Católicos.

Editora: Señor Obispo, la temporada de Adviento se acerca. Durante esta temporada litúrgica estamos preparando nuestros corazones para Cristo. ¿Cómo es que Cristo renueva todas las cosas?

Obispo Vásquez: El Adviento es un tiempo bendecido del año porque estamos llenos de esperanza, anhelo y expectativa. Durante la temporada de Adviento, nuestra atención es dirigida hacia el día en el que Cristo regresará al final de los tiempos. Nos estamos preparando para ese gran evento de Salvación cuando Cristo vendrá triunfante como Rey y Señor de todo.

No solo estamos ansiosos por celebrar el nacimiento de Cristo (su primera venida), sino también esperamos con ansias el día en que Cristo vendrá otra vez y renovará la faz de la tierra. Todo el libro de Revelaciones está lleno de esperanza para una iglesia que ha sido perseguida, ha sufrido y resistido pruebas y tribulaciones. Cristo supera todas esas cosas, ya que destruye el pecado y la muerte por siempre. ¡Cristo renueva todas las cosas!

En Revelaciones leemos, “Después vi un cielo nuevo y una tierra nueva, pues el primer cielo y la primera tierra habían desaparecido, y el mar no existe ya”. Cuando Jesús venga de nuevo, Él no se deshará de la creación. Cuando él venga, nos renovará y transformará por completo, renovando todas las cosas.

Como Católicos, experimentamos esta renovación y transformación a través de la celebración de los sacramentos. Cristo tiene un encuentro con nosotros en cada sacramento. Los sacramentos son señales externas instituidas por Cristo que nos brindan la gracia. Los sacramentos nos mantienen unidos a Cristo, y al participar en los sacramentos, continuamos siendo renovados.

Editora: Litúrgicamente, nuestros sacerdotes y diáconos usan morado durante las cuatro semanas de adviento. ¿Por qué?

Obispo Vásquez: El morado que usamos durante el Adviento es un poco diferente al morado que usamos durante la Cuaresma. La Cuaresma es una temporada verdaderamente penitencial. Se trata de nosotros alejándonos del pecado y pidiéndole a Cristo que nos renueve en esta temporada de Cuaresma. Pero en Adviento, nuestro enfoque primario es en la esperanza y la anticipación. Por lo tanto, este morado muestra nuestro anhelo por la venida de Cristo.

Durante la temporada de Adviento, recordamos y celebramos que Cristo vino una vez en la historia y que vendrá otra vez al final de los tiempos. Pero él está también presente diariamente en nuestras vidas. Si estamos abiertos y verdaderamente conscientes de que Cristo está en el presente, tendremos un encuentro con Él – en la gente y en situaciones. Él se encuentra en su hijo o hija, en su cónyuge, en sus amigos o miembros de la familia. Él está presente cuando se reúnen y oran, y especialmente en Misa. Y él se puede encontrar donde no esperamos encontrarlo – en el hospital o el asilo de ancianos, en las personas sin hogar, en los refugiados, inmigrantes, padres o madres solteros, o esa persona que está viviendo sola por que ha perdido a su cónyuge o a su familia. Cristo puede ser encontrado en muchos lugares si nuestros ojos están sintonizados a Él.

Editora: ¿Cómo es que los sacramentos, particularmente la Eucaristía, nos ayudan a entender que Cristo renueva todas las cosas?

Obispo Vásquez: En nuestra fe Católica creemos que Cristo está verdaderamente presente en la Eucaristía. En la Misa, el vino y el pan son transformados por el Espíritu Santo y se convierten en el verdadero cuerpo y sangre, alma y divinidad de Jesucristo. Somos bendecidos de poder experimentar esto, ya que

Cristo se ofrece a sí mismo a nosotros en la Eucaristía tal como ofreció su vida por nosotros en la cruz en el Calvario. Este don que Cristo ofrece nos renueva y nos transforma para poder ser más como

Cristo. La Eucaristía no es simplemente tomar a Cristo en nuestro cuerpo y en nuestro espíritu, sino verdaderamente, como Católicos, creemos que Cristo es más evidente en nuestras vidas cuando lo recibimos en la Eucaristía y permitimos que su gracia crezca en nosotros.

Como dijo San Agustín de Hipona, todos los otros tipos de alimento que ponemos en nuestros cuerpos se asimilan en nosotros. Pero cuando consumimos la Eucaristía, tomamos a Cristo en nuestro cuerpo, y somos asimilados en Él – nos transformamos en lo que Él es y no al revés. Esto es un maravilloso intercambio sobre cómo Cristo nos renueva a través de la Eucaristía.

Editora: La pandemia continúa. Muchos han perdido a seres queridos; muchos han estado enfermos ¿cómo podemos dar consuelo a aquellos que han sufrido?

Obispo Vásquez: No nos olvidemos de aquellos individuos que han sufrido y perdido tanto durante la pandemia, ya sea a través de la enfermedad, la muerte o el aislamiento. Sabemos que especialmente aquellos en asilos de ancianos y en hospitales soportaron un gran sufrimiento. No nos olvidemos de los primeros respondientes, doctores, enfermeros y trabajadores del cuidado de la salud que han trabajado tan generosamente durante



Dos velas prendidas en la corona de Adviento marcan la segunda semana de esta temporada. Durante ella, no solo esperamos con ansias celebrar el nacimiento de Cristo (su primera venida), sino también estamos esperando con anhelo el momento en que Cristo vendrá otra vez y renovará la faz de la Tierra, dijo el Obispo Vásquez en la entrevista de este mes. (CNS foto/Octavio Duran)

esta pandemia.

Tenemos la responsabilidad de alcanzar a estos individuos por medio de una llamada o una visita. Podemos enviar una tarjeta o preparar comida para ellos. Especialmente durante estos días festivos, busquemos a aquellos que están tristes o solos e invitémoslos a celebrar la venida de Cristo con nosotros. Existen muchas oportunidades durante las próximas semanas para invitar a otros a Misa y a celebrar cómo Cristo, en verdad, renueva todas las cosas. Cristo está verdaderamente presente en nosotros, cuando nos reunimos como amigos y familia.

Editora: ¿Cuál es su oración por la diócesis mientras nos preparamos para la venida de Cristo?

Obispo Vásquez: Mientras miramos con esperanza hacia el día en que Cristo vendrá con gloria, que nuestros ojos sean abiertos hoy a las maneras en que Cristo está presente. Que lo encontremos, especialmente en aquellos que sufren, que están solos, abandonados u olvidados. Cristo, Nuestra Esperanza, ven y haz que te conozcamos. Amén.

Existen variadas opciones Católicas para el cuidado de la salud en Texas

Por Carla Smith | Corresponsal

La industria del cuidado de la salud ha trabajado al frente de la batalla contra el COVID-19 durante casi dos años. Aunque esta pandemia ha traído muchos desafíos, también ha sido esclarecedora, según los hospitales con afiliación Católica que sirven en la Diócesis de Austin.

“Trabajar durante el Covid ha sido difícil, pero también nos hemos dado cuenta de que tenemos suerte,” dijo Raquel Webb, gerente de Spiritual Care por St. Joseph Health, que tiene varias instalaciones en Bryan/College Station y en Brazos Valley. “Trabajando en el cuidado de la salud Católico, tenemos una organización que valora la dignidad humana, que comprende el cuidado integral de la persona y eleva a los vulnerables. La pandemia nos hizo darnos cuenta de que los cuerpos enfermos, el personal exhausto e incluso las almas deprimidas tienen un valor inmenso, necesitan sanación y consuelo, y tienen la capacidad de manifestar a Dios a cada uno de nosotros mientras damos a conocer su presencia sanadora con cada desafío que enfrentamos”.

Es precisamente ese tipo de sanación y de fe lo que motiva a los miembros del personal, no solo de St. Joseph Health sino también en CHRISTUS Health en San Marcos y de Ascension Texas, que opera Ascension Providence en Waco y Ascension Seton en Austin. Ascension Seton, el hospital Católico más grande y antiguo de la Diócesis de Austin, ha estado sirviendo a pacientes desde 1902 cuando fue fundado por las Hijas de la Caridad.

También bajo el grupo de Ascension se encuentra Ascension Providence en Waco, que incluye clínicas de atención primaria, clínicas especializadas y Ascension Living Providence Village, que permite a las personas mayores pasar de la vida independiente a la vida asistida y a la enfermería especializada a medida que evolucionan sus necesidades de atención médica.

St. Joseph's Health también ha existido durante muchos años, y su historia se remonta a 1935 cuando las Hermanas de San Francisco de Sylvania, Ohio, abrieron sus primeras instalaciones.

CHRISTUS Santa Rosa Hospital en San Marcos es el miembro más nuevo de la familia del Sistema de Salud CHRISTUS Santa Rosa. Anteriormente conocido como Central Texas Medical Center, el hospital fue adquirido por CHRISTUS

Estas instalaciones Católicas están dedicadas a curar a los enfermos mientras alinean la atención con la ética y las prácticas Católicas de atención médica, sirven a los pobres y marginados y crean lugares de trabajo espiritualmente centrados. Ellos también están muy orgullosos del nivel de servicio que brindan en toda la diócesis.

Health en abril de 2020 y continúa una larga tradición de atención y tratamiento, basándose en el legado de 152 años de CHRISTUS Santa Rosa cuando se estableció el ministerio en San Antonio. Llevar cuidados avanzados a San Marcos y las comunidades cercanas mientras se hace la obra de Dios es una misión primordial de todo el personal de CHRISTUS.

“CHRISTUS es Latín para Cristo y ello proclama el núcleo de nuestra misión,” dijo la Vicepresidenta de Integración de Misiones, Sarah Hill. “Esa misión es extender el ministerio de sanación de Jesucristo, y si se piensa en su ministerio, Él buscó sanar a las personas de una manera holística, preocupándose por su mente, su cuerpo y su espíritu, y buscó especialmente ayudar a los más vulnerables. Buscamos seguir sus pasos para cuidar de todas las personas”.

Estas instalaciones Católicas están dedicadas a curar a los enfermos mientras alinean la atención con la ética y las prácticas Católicas de atención médica, sirven a los pobres y marginados y crean lugares de trabajo espiritualmente centrados. Ellos también están muy orgullosos del nivel de servicio que brindan en toda la diócesis. “Nuestro ministerio, proporcionó más de \$540 millones en atención caritativa el año pasado,” dijo Derek Covert, director de integración

de misión de Ascension Seton.

“Buscamos constantemente formas de atender las necesidades de atención médica fuera de los muros de nuestros hospitales proporcionando inversiones comunitarias alineadas con nuestra misión, como la Diócesis de Austin, el St. John Paul II Live Center, la San Juan Diego Catholic High School y muchas otras organizaciones Católicas”.

Ascension Seton también se

enorgullece de sus asociaciones y planes para aumentar su alcance, incluyendo un contrato único con el Distrito Escolar Independiente de Austin y la Escuela de Medicina Dell de la Universidad de Texas, donde está ayudando a capacitar a los médicos del futuro. El grupo dirige el único hospital infantil integral y el centro de traumatología pediátrica de nivel I de la región y el único centro de traumatología para adultos de nivel I de la región. Actualmente, también está expandiendo su presencia de atención primaria en el centro de Texas con varias ubicaciones de nuevas de clínicas que se anunciarán en los próximos meses, además de expandir el Dell Children's Hospital y construir un nuevo Dell Children's Medical Center de última generación en el condado de Williamson.

CHRISTUS Health también está liderando el camino en el porcentaje de gastos de atención benéfica y sus operaciones regionales de múltiples hospitales permiten compartir recursos clave y prácticas líderes para brindar acceso y conectar a los pacientes con atención en sus propias comunidades y en las cercanas. St. Joseph Health se enorgullece de sus centros de trauma de Nivel III y Nivel II, los más altos de la región, junto con cinco hospitales de Brazos Valley y más de 30 clínicas. También ha recibido

numerosos premios de excelencia por su servicio en el Brazos Valley y más allá. Covert dijo que todo se reduce a la atención y al cuidado, y como uno de los principales sistemas de salud Católicos sin fines de lucro del país, la misión de Ascension Seton también está arraigada en el amoroso ministerio de Jesús como sanador, que guía todo lo que hacen.

“Nuestra identidad Católica nos llama a estar en solidaridad con los pobres. A menudo comenzamos las reuniones con oración y al fomentar la espiritualidad en el lugar de trabajo, creamos una comunidad modelo de cuidado mutuo que sirve y beneficia no solo a nuestros asociados, sino a todos los que servimos,” dijo Covert. Al ofrecer este tipo de atención excepcional junto con la fe Católica, los pacientes del centro de Texas y sus familias están en buenas manos a dondequiera que los lleve su viaje de atención médica.

La Hermana Franciscana Penny Dunn, vicepresidenta de Integración Misionera de St. Joseph Health, dijo que su misión es dar a conocer la presencia sanadora de Dios mejorando la salud de las personas a las que sirven. “Nuestra identidad Católica prevalece en todas nuestras instalaciones y se complementa con misas y oración diarias. Además, los empleados adoptan nuestro cuidado basado en la fe y comprenden su papel como ministros de Cristo, y son las manos y los pies de Jesús mientras sirven en ministerio en un espacio sagrado donde se produce la curación, la nueva vida, la oración perseverante y el llamado al hogar celestial”.

Para obtener más información sobre las instalaciones dentro de la red Ascension Seton, visite www.seton.net. Para obtener más información sobre las instalaciones con la red de Ascension Providence, visite www.providence.net.

Para obtener más información sobre St. Joseph Health, visite www.st-joseph.org.

Para obtener más información sobre CHRISTUS Health, visite www.christushealth.org.

LA IGLESIA DOMÉSTICA

Un nuevo año a través de María, llena de gracia

Por Alison Tate | Columnista Invitada

Durante este año de la Iglesia Doméstica, hemos discutido muchos aspectos de la vida familiar y cómo podemos compartir nuestra fe dentro de nuestra familia inmediata así como con nuestras familias extendida. Con las fiestas de la Inmaculada Concepción de la Santísima Virgen María y de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe, Diciembre pone un enfoque especial en María. Mientras concluimos este año y comenzamos un nuevo año litúrgico, las familias pueden considerar practicar una devoción a María para conectar nuestras vidas diarias con la historia de salvación de una manera muy real. En la vida de María, vemos a la Santísima Trinidad trabajando. Como oró el Papa Francisco en la festividad de la Inmaculada Concepción en 2016: “Tú (María) nos recuerdas que lo primero es la gracia de Dios, el amor de Jesús que dio su vida por nosotros, la fuerza del Espíritu Santo que lo renueva todo”.

La celebración litúrgica de la fiesta de la Inmaculada Concepción (8 de diciembre) ilustra más que la historia de María. En su concepción, María recibe la gracia de Dios de manera en que ella pueda responder a un nuevo convenio,

y así, en la Anunciación, ella pueda decir “sí” a la voluntad de Dios. Así que, la Concepción de María anticipa la Encarnación de Cristo.

Para cada uno de nosotros, la gracia que Dios derrama nos permite responder a la voluntad de Dios. Las gracias de Dios se encuentran a través de una variedad de maneras incluyendo muchas que hemos explorado durante este Año de la Iglesia Doméstica: a través de la oración, el estudio, el servicio a otros, la corresponsabilidad, el encontrar a Cristo en los sacramentos y el construir comunidad. Nuestra respuesta a la gracia de Dios será diferente para cada persona, para cada familia y comunidad, pero no hay duda de que la gracia de Dios es abundante. Por lo tanto, el 8 de diciembre, vayamos a Misa con un celo renovado para recibir la gracia de Dios y participar en el mismo, nuevo convenio de María.

En la fiesta de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe (12 de diciembre), tenemos la oportunidad de responder con fe al amor de Dios, tal como Nuestra Señora invitó a San Juan Diego hace tantos años. Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe y otros



lugares de devoción mariana son “... lugares especiales de peregrinaje donde el pue-

lo de Dios busca encontrarse con la Madre de Dios para encontrar, dentro del radio de la presencia materna de ella ‘que creyó,’ un fortalecimiento de su propia fe,” escribe San Juan Pablo II en su encíclica de 1987 “Redemptoris Mater”. Ser peregrino es buscar un incremento en la santidad. Los sitios marianos cercanos y lejanos llevan a los peregrinos a “encontrar en Cristo el camino a la casa del Padre”. Este año puede ser un buen momento para hacer un viaje en familia para participar en una de las muchas celebraciones de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe que se llevan a cabo en las parroquias de la diócesis.

Otras prácticas devocionales marianas también pueden fortalecer a las familias durante la temporada de Adviento. Actividades sencillas y accesibles para todas las edades, como rezar el rosario o una novena, asistir a Misa diariamente, llevar un escapulario y participar en los sacramentos son oportunidades que podemos considerar con el objetivo de aumentar nuestra relación y conocimiento de María. Cuando vemos los titulares a finales de diciembre promocionando el nuevo año, mi oración es que entendamos que nuestra iglesia contracultural ya ha celebrado el comienzo de un nuevo año. Que a través del tiempo de Adviento, las celebraciones de la fe



Una imagen semejante a María Inmaculada es vista en el vitral de Caldwell Chapel en el campus de la Catholic University of America en Washington el 25 de mayo de 2021. (CNS foto/Tyler Orsburn)

de María y la venida de Cristo en Navidad, nuestras familias se fortalezcan y se renueven. Que nuestra devoción a María, Madre de Dios, nos acerque cada vez más a Dios nuestro Padre. María es un regalo para nosotros y tenemos la bendición de conocer su vida.



Alison Tate es directora de la Oficina de Jóvenes, Jóvenes Adultos y Ministerio Universitario para la Diócesis de Austin. Ella puede ser contactada en el (512) 949-2465 o escribiéndole a alison-tate@austindiocese.org.

Atención hombres: ¿Sienten el llamado a servir como diáconos?

La Oficina de Formación Diaconal ofrecerá una sesión informativa para hombres que deseen considerar el diaconado permanente. Las sesiones se llevarán a cabo los siguientes domingos de 2 a 5 p.m. con presentaciones separadas en inglés y en español.

Las sesiones explorarán el diaconado, métodos de discernimiento, cualidades y características buscadas en aquellos que aplican, el viaje de formación, la participación de la esposa en la formación y el proceso de aplicación.

Hombres de edades entre 30 y 59 años sintiendo el llamado de Dios al diaconado permanente deben discutirlo con sus pastores y obtener su permiso para asistir (y el de su esposa, si son casados) a una de las siguientes sesiones:

Nov. 14 en el Centro Pastoral en Austin
Dic. 12 en St. Joseph Parish en Bryan
Ene. 9 en St. Elizabeth of Hungary Parish en Pflugerville
Feb. 13 en St. John the Evangelist Parish en Marble Falls
Marzo 13 en St. Joseph Parish en Killeen
Abril 10 en Santa Cruz Parish en Buda
Abril 24 en el Centro Pastoral en Austin

Para mayor información llame al (512) 949-2459 o envíe un correo electrónico a diaconateformation@austindiocese.org.

El entrenamiento en línea de EIM no estará disponible después del 2 de enero de 2022

El Entrenamiento de EIM en línea llena el cumplimiento de los requerimientos de EIM sólo de aplicantes que tienen una cuenta existente de EIM y han asistido a un Taller de EIM, y está disponible en austindiocese.org/taller-de-eim.

Miembros del clero, empleados y voluntarios que deban actualizar su cumplimiento con EIM durante la primera mitad del 2022, que deseen usar la opción de entrenamiento en línea para hacerlo, deben completar y enviar la verificación de entrenamiento antes del 2 de enero, 2022. Después de esa fecha, aquellos que necesiten actualizar su cumplimiento sólo podrán hacerlo en un Taller de EIM en persona.

Contacte al administrador de sitio de EIM de su parroquia si necesita asistencia.

El poder transformador de los encuentros con Cristo y nuestro prójimo

Por Lauren Warner | Columnista Invitada

Proveniente del gran estado de California, estoy en mi tercer año en Austin y en mi primer año como coordinadora diocesana del Ministerio para personas Negras. Agradecida por la oportunidad de servir a esta iglesia local guiada por el Obispo José Vásquez, también estoy agradecida por el ministerio al apostolado negro y la oportunidad de servir en este papel como una joven mujer negra. Los hermanos de nuestros ancianos en la comunidad Católica negra, como Johnnie Dorsey de Austin y mi abuelo, Oscar J. Pratt, Sr. de Los Ángeles – son razones por las que puedo asumir roles de liderazgo en nuestra iglesia local.

Recientemente, nuestra diócesis organizó un Día de Reflexión sobre el Apostolado Negro sobre el tema “Fe: Encuentro y Transformación”. El tema del día surgió cuando revisé “Encuentro que conduce a la transformación,” nuestro plan pastoral diocesano que se promulgó en 2015. Durante mi revisión, como teóloga que enseña la Sagrada Escritura, instintivamente comencé a considerar las muchas formas en que el encuentro conduce a la transformación en el Antiguo y Nuevo Testamento. Consideremos a Moisés y la zarza ardiente. Muchos de nosotros hemos escuchado la historia, o al menos

hemos visto versiones y representaciones evocadas por algún director o guionista. Imagínelo: Moisés está ocupado con sus propios asuntos, cuidando los rebaños de su suegro, cuando observa una zarza en llamas. Lo curioso es que el fuego no está consumiendo la zarza y, por lo tanto, Moisés está intrigado. A medida que se acerca para comprobarlo, el arbusto comienza a atraerlo. Después de que la zarza afirma ser Dios y envía a Moisés para liberar a los israelitas, Moisés hace lo que Dios manda y ellos viven felices para siempre. ¿Verdad?

Ahora, para aquellos de nosotros que realmente hemos leído la historia bíblica, sabemos que no es así como la historia siguió. Más bien, Moisés no era el líder confiado que se muestra en las películas que exclaman: “¡Libera a mi pueblo!” Cuando Dios llamó y comisionó a Moisés para que fuera a ver al Faraón para liberar a los israelitas de Egipto, Moisés preguntó: “¿Quién soy yo para ir?” (Ex 3:12). Sin embargo, Dios le da seguridad a Moisés a través de señales, y después de un poco de convencimiento, Moisés acepta su misión. Es a través del encuentro con Dios que Moisés pasa de ser el fugitivo hebreo inseguro, al confiado luchador por la libertad, que produce milagros y que hemos llegado a apreciar en el Antiguo Testamento. En el Nuevo Testamento hay muchos más ejemplos de

encuentro y transformación. Casi cualquier persona que entraba en contacto con Jesús cambiaba. Los fariseos, por ejemplo, que fueron desafiados a

considerar sus propios pecados antes de arrojar piedras al pecado de otro. ¿Y podría imaginarse la transformación de aquellos que presenciaron la resurrección de Lázaro de entre los muertos?

Considere la popular historia de la mujer samaritana en el pozo. Esta extranjera probablemente estaba confundida sobre por qué este judío, Jesús, estaba hablando con ella en el pozo. Jesús dice: “El que beba del agua que yo le daré, no tendrá sed jamás” (Jn 4:14), le habla de su vida y le predica sobre el culto a Dios. Al reconocer que este hombre es diferente, se da cuenta de que ha cambiado y vuelve a su gente para contarles su encuentro. No puedo imaginar que ella simplemente haya vuelto a su vida de antes.

¡Encuentros como estos también nos ocurren a nosotros! ¿Cuántas veces ha tenido una experiencia de un sacramento, o de múltiples, que cambió su vida? ¿O ha estado en oración y escuchó a Dios hablándole, lo cual le impulsó a hacer un cambio en su propia vida? ¿Qué hay de esos momentos en los que nos hemos encontrado con otros en los que Cristo ha inspirado un cambio? Experimento estos momentos con mi familia parroquial y con mis amigos, a través de mi trabajo, de la música pastoral, de mis estudiantes, mis compañeros de trabajo y de la inspiración de las personas que continúan trabajando entre la comunidad negra frente al odio y la injusticia inconcebibles.

Dios obra en nosotros y entre



Un día de Reflexión sobre el Apostolado Negro se llevó a cabo el 6 de noviembre en Holy Parish en Austin. Lauren Warner coordinó el evento y habló acerca de cómo los encuentros con Cristo y nuestro prójimo nos transforman. (Foto por Kanobia Russell-Blackmon)

nosotros de muchas maneras. Como fieles cristianos, tenemos la bendición de tenernos unos a otros, trabajando juntos como el Cuerpo Místico de Cristo, y de tener los sacramentos en los que se nos ofrece la gracia de Cristo. Todas las personas, independientemente de su raza, etnia u origen socio-económico, deben esforzarse por ver cómo encajan en la comunidad eclesial mayor y entonces ocupar su lugar. Juntos como hombres y mujeres hechos a imagen y semejanza de Dios, debemos esforzarnos por compartir nuestros ricos dones culturales en un esfuerzo por brindar el encuentro siempre significativo que tiene el poder de llevarnos a nosotros y a los otros a la transformación.

Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe

La novena celebración diocesana en honor a Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe se celebrará el 4 de diciembre a las 8 a.m. en St. Mary Cathedral en Austin. Los católicos del centro de Texas se reunirán para celebrar y reflexionar sobre las apariciones de la Santísima Virgen María a San Juan Diego en Tepeyac, México, en diciembre de 1531. Nosotros, al igual que San Juan Diego, somos instados por Nuestra Señora a compartir el mensaje de esperanza y consuelo prometidos por Dios a personas de todas las culturas y lenguas. Información: www.austindiocese.org/celebracion-diocesana-de-nuestra-señora-de-guadalupe.

Posada Pastoral Juvenil Hispana

¿Te emocionan los preparativos Navideños? ¡Entonces esta invitación es para ti! Jóvenes adultos solteros (18-35) están cordialmente invitados a nuestra Posada Juvenil anual el sábado, 4 de diciembre, en Santa Julia en Austin de 7 a 9 p.m. Ven para una tarde de oración, convivio y tradiciones como ¡las piñatas! Contenido en español e inglés. Para detalles llamar (512) 949-2466 o visitar: www.facebook.com/pjhaustin.



Lauren Warner es la coordinadora diocesana del Ministerio para personas Negras, y directora del Departamento de Teología de la Academia Católica de San Miguel, y es también músico pastoral. Contacta con ella al (512) 949-2449 o lauren-warner@austindiocese.org.

Around the Diocese



The Knights of Columbus at St. Elizabeth Parish in Pflugerville recently presented a check for \$1,000 to the Pflugerville Pregnancy Resource Center. The money was raised during the knights' annual golf tournament. (Photo courtesy Bill Thomas)



The Knights of Columbus at St. Margaret Mary Parish in Cedar Park raised more than \$17,000 at their annual garage sale. The council was also presented with the Star Council Award. (Photos courtesy Susan Tull)



The Ladies of Charity-Lake Travis celebrated their 30th anniversary with a catered lunch, keynote speaker and Mass with Father David Leibham. (Photos courtesy Diane Hussey)



The Knights of Columbus and Columbiettes from Sacred Heart Parish in Waco celebrated Mass in honor of deceased members on Oct. 31. (Photo courtesy Sylvia Carrizales)



Sacred Heart Parish in Rockne held a Rosary Rally Oct. 16 at the intersection of FM 20 and FM 535. (Photo courtesy Nelda Thompson)



St. Louise House of Austin held a Game Changer event Oct. 23 to help support women and their children who are experiencing homelessness. (Photo courtesy Meredith Bryant)

St. Michael's Catholic Academy in Austin officially broke ground on its campus and curriculum expansion project, HALO (Hub for Advanced Learning Opportunities), a two-story building on the west side of the current academic building at the 50-acre Barton Creek Boulevard campus. (Photo courtesy Laura Duggan)



Gina Moore, a parishioner at Holy Trinity in Llano, recently returned from an 11-day pilgrimage to Italy. While in Rome she visited the seminarians who are studying at the Pontifical North American College and Father Sean DeWitt, a diocesan priest who works at the Apostolic Signatura in Rome. (Photo courtesy Gina Moore)



The second graders from St. Mary's Catholic School in Temple dressed as their favorite saints for All Saints Day. (Photo courtesy Marissa Giannotti)

Around the Diocese



Father Stephen Nesrsta, pastor of Holy Trinity Parish in Corn Hill, blessed the graves at the parish cemetery in early November. (Photo courtesy Helen Havelka)

Father Ed Koharchik blessed the new outdoor Stations of the Cross at St. Vincent de Paul Parish in Austin. Christopher Mercado constructed the stations as part of his Eagle Scout project. (Photo courtesy Mercado family)



Deacon Gus Coelho blessed pets on the feast of St. Francis of Assisi at St. Joseph Parish in Rockdale. (Photo courtesy Bonnie Holub)

The eighth-grade physics class at St. Joseph Catholic Academy in Killeen took a field trip to Texas A&M University and participated in a physics demonstration on Nov. 5. (Photo courtesy Francisco Maldonado)



The Service Life Program at St. Theresa Catholic School in Austin collected nearly 800 pounds of food for Caritas of Austin. Father Moses Iyogwoya celebrated All Saints Day with the students who dressed as their favorite saint. (Photos courtesy Andrea Bizzanelli and Linda Gockel)



The Sisters of Mary Morning Star, a non-cloistered contemplative community, recently held an open house at their convent in Waco. (Photo courtesy Karen Dunlap)

St. Martin de Porres Parish in Dripping Springs held its OctoberFest on Oct. 24 on the parish grounds. (Photo courtesy Norman Yu)



The Knights of Columbus Council at St. John Parish in Marble Falls provided essential services and ticket sales for the annual fall festival fundraiser at the parish. (Photo courtesy Keith Dunger)



Send photos by the 10th of the month to catholic-spirit@austindiocese.org. Publication is not guaranteed.

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