

CATHOLIC SPIRIT

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En Español: Páginas 19-22

With hope and optimism, Catholic schools welcome students back

By Mary P. Walker | Senior Correspondent

Although uncertainty due to the pandemic continues, the Catholic schools in the Austin Diocese are excited to welcome students back.

“The schools are working hard to ensure that students, faculty and staff return to a safe and nurturing environment, just as they did last year,” said Misty Poe, superintendent of Catholic schools for the Diocese of Austin.

Going forward in hope, gratitude and optimism, diocesan Catholic schools reflect this year’s theme, “Christ makes all things new.” Enrollment has increased with the total number of students up by 256 over last year. Additionally, 130 new school employees across the diocese have joined other faculty and staff.

St. Austin Catholic School in Austin is embracing a particular challenge. Because construction begins in December for a five-story combined school and parish building, the entire school has temporarily moved to San José Parish for the next two years.

Principal Tara Cevallos explained the new construction will offer a better use of space and allow the school to expand to two classes per grade. In addition, the new school will have a modern science lab and workspace for students to learn robotics, coding and circuitry.

“We are getting ready to move into an innovative building that will allow us to grow exponentially in the future,” Cevallos said.

In the meantime, the school had to move to make room for the construction. San José Parish offered their help, and Cevallos said they are thrilled to have moved to a Catholic environment. Bus service is offered to help families get to the temporary school campus.

The San José location offers sufficient classroom space, with other space for non-classroom activities. As there is no gymnasium, physical education classes will be held outdoors. Once a week, nearby San Juan Diego Catholic High School’s chemistry lab will be available to St. Austin middle school students.

St. Joseph Catholic Academy in Killeen is also embracing change. Enrollment has grown from 85 to 240 students in two years. With demand for Catholic education growing, the academy is adding ninth grade this year, with plans to continue adding high school grades.

“It’s a fun challenge!” said headmaster Dirk Steffens. He explained the school’s classical education model is a different way of learning. Parents want this to continue for their children in a Catholic environment beyond eighth grade. Increased enrollment prompted the school to hire more faculty and staff and add two portable buildings. Also, the school has purchased a bus that takes students from Copperas Cove to Killeen.

In Bryan, St. Joseph Catholic School is welcoming their new principal, Julia Mishler. She brings 15-years’ experience in education as an English teacher, instructional coach, assistant principal and principal in the public school system. Her experience includes serving as the first principal of a new middle school in College Station.

Mishler believes “the Lord provided a lot of guidance” in her decision to come to St. Joseph Catholic School, with elementary and secondary campuses serving students in pre-K through 12th grade. She looks forward to experiencing the rich traditions and culture of the 127-year-old school, which is expected to increase enrollment by about 30 students.

After the school year is underway, she will lead a strategic planning process involving the school community.

Reflecting on the resiliency of the diocesan schools as they dealt with the pandemic last year, Mishler is concerned, but not alarmed about how it will affect this year.

“No matter what the circumstances require, we have plans in place. We will take it one day at a time and try to keep our kids safe, while providing the best education possible,” Mishler said.

Tim Cullen, the new president of Holy Family Catholic School and St. Dominic Savio Catholic High School in Austin, will lead these schools in the shared governance model of administration, which was created in 2013 to help the schools work together to provide a positive Catholic educational environment in north Austin.

Cullen said the schools are not “merged,” and continue to maintain their separate boards, identities and traditions.

Referring to the proximity of the schools, Cullen said, “It makes sense for us to build relationships across the parking lot.” He expects the schools to “naturally and organically” find ways to collaborate, and presently several staff members are shared between the schools.

Cullen brings 35 years’ experience



Missionaries of the Sacred Heart Father Richard O'Rourke, the pastor of St. Paul Chong Hasang Parish in Harker Heights, visited the students at St. Joseph Catholic Academy in Killeen during the first week of school. St. Joseph now serves pre-K3 through ninth grades. (Photo by Kim Clark)

in education. He most recently led St. Anthony School in Maui, Hawaii, then a newly consolidated school.

Although he and his wife love Hawaii, they wanted to move back to the mainland to be closer to family. When he saw the announcement of the job opening and researched both schools, he felt compelled to apply. He praised the dedication of both school communities, the leadership of the principals, and the warm welcome he has received.

“I am very excited about going forward. I believe that if we are sincere in honoring our covenant with God in serving our children, we will be given what we need,” Cullen said.

For more information about the 20 Catholic schools in the Diocese of Austin, visit www.csdatx.org.

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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.

HOW TO SUBMIT INFORMATION

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CALLED BY NAME

With great confidence, we trust in God's love and gentle hand



Father Tom Frank was ordained to the priesthood on Dec. 18, 1970. He officially retired in 2014, but continues to serve in parishes throughout the diocese when needed. He now lives at the St. John Paul II Residence for Priests in Georgetown. He shares these stories of his life as a priest in hopes that young men and women may know they too are

"Called by Name." For more information on vocations in the Diocese of Austin, visit godiscalling.me.

By Father Tom Frank | Guest Columnist

As I look back on my years as a priest and even the years before I was ordained, it is clear God has been with me on this journey and he has put many wonderful people on this path to journey with me. Here are just a few instances from over the years where I have witnessed God's gentle hand.

When I was growing up in Waco, my parents became close friends with the priests of our parish. They were invited often for a meal and sometimes they would phone my mom to see if they could come over – they were like a part of our family.

Near the end of my university days, I had a lengthy conversation with one of those priests. I told him I thought I would join the military because I felt thankful for all that my country represented and meant to me. He told me it was not necessary to serve in the military to show gratitude for our country. He told me he thought I would make a good priest. He said that I should give it a try – that I owed it to myself to try the seminary. My parents were much in favor and encouraged me.

The first year I studied Scripture, theology, liturgy and prayer, and I met new friends. And the thought of being a priest began to grow within me. In my third year, each student had a spiritual director, and I often went to my director for confession – not that I had any great sins or errors, but whatever it was, that priest always listened, never got after me, never scolded me and always encouraged me to continue trying to do better. This has always stuck with me – not to judge, always forgive and encourage.

One of my early assignments was to Santa Teresa Parish in Bryan – one day I had a call from the parish in Hearne. Their pastor was on vacation and there had been a terrible car wreck – three members of the parish had been killed – a mother and two young children. A priest was needed for the funeral and burial. Three caskets in the center aisle; three caskets being lowered

into the earth; everyone was in tears and no consolation was afforded that day. Afterwards, I drove home to Waco, told my mom what had happened and that I just wanted to lie down for a while. I was so moved with this sadness and discovered that day that within me was deep empathy for the pain and loss of others.

I came home to Waco one day and found my dad at the table by himself. He told me my mom was outside – they had had some kind of disagreement – and that I needed to go out and talk to her. I said, "Dad, I can't be priest or confessor or counsellor to you and Mom. I can only be your son." The next morning, they were both fine – I think he shared with her what I had said to him.

One Sunday morning, I celebrated the early Mass at St. Mary Parish in Lockhart and then went over to the parish hall for breakfast. I knew they were serving menudo (I'm a big fan of menudo) and started enjoying a large bowl, when I received a call from Martindale – a mission of Lockhart at that time – wondering where I was, as it was past time to begin the Mass there. I left the menudo and took off to Martindale, arriving some 25 minutes late for the Mass. I was full of embarrassment and apology – the little church was still full – no one had left – more than 200 people waited for me to celebrate Mass and to be blessed. It was a surprise and joy to me that none of those folks gave up on the Mass and none of them gave up on me.

Some 20 years ago, three acres of land next to St. Elizabeth Parish in Pflugerville became available. We purchased those acres and wanted to designate it as part of the parish. I did not want to put up a fence and instead suggested Red Tip Photinia along the new property line (because I really liked the looks of that bush). One of the dedicated and knowledgeable parishioners came to me and said "Father Tom, you could plant the Photinia along the property line and in 10-15 years, they'll all be dead. Or you could plant Live Oak trees along that line and 25 years from now they will be alive and well." I was by the parish recently and those Live Oaks are healthy and looking great and strong. I am thankful for that wise advice and thankful I listened.

Five different assignments over more than 43 years and now seven years retired and continuing to assist in our parishes as needed. Some days have been difficult but in general, being a Catholic priest has been and continues to be a great joy for me. Receiving forgiveness, feeling empathy, recognizing the faith and care for the Mass that others have, consulting on the best way forward, plus great confidence in the love of God – yes, it is a fulfilling life.

For anyone just thinking about the possibility of priesthood or religious life, I suggest beginning as I did – just try it and let God do the rest.

Salado parish thanks Snyder for 20 years of dedicated service

By Carla Smith | Correspondent

For the last 20 years, Laura Snyder has devoted herself to religious education and faith formation at St. Stephen Parish in Salado. As she retires, she knows her experience of teaching the faith and leading children and parents closer to Christ will stay with her for the rest of her life.

"God had a plan, and I was blessed to be RE director. It truly was a vocation and not just a job. Besides, do you ever really retire from the church?" she asked. "In the end I will miss the children the most. They make my heart happy and bring me joy with their smiles, hugs and unconditional love. Our children are our future."

Her 20-year stint as the director of religious education officially ended with planning and participating in the parish' Vacation Bible School, which was held over the summer.

"I have always loved VBS because you really have an opportunity to meet new families and develop relationships that continue through the years," Snyder said. "Some of our best catechists have come from VBS."

Snyder has seen the Faith Formation program at St. Stephen Parish grow from an average of 30 students to a one-time high of 248. Even during last year's challenging year, the program that serves 4-year-olds through high schoolers still ministered to nearly 100 kids.

This is a testament to Snyder's vision and hard work, said Father Jude Uche, the pastor of St. Stephen.

"Laura's planning skills and passion for evangelization for youth are amazing," Father Uche said. "These talents only compliment her principal gifts of a strong faith in God, generous heart, caring spirit and a kind and humble nature."

Those strengths came in handy with the numerous hats Snyder wore during her many years of serving everyone from preschoolers to potential Catholics in a vibrant program dedicated to enriching and challenging the lives of adults and youth alike. Snyder personally saw to it that all who wanted to learn did so in a loving and caring environment.

She directed the children's program, oversaw the high school program, was involved in first Holy Communion and Confirmation preparation, led the Vacation Bible School (VBS) and Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults (RCIA) program and served as the parish's Ethics and Integrity in Ministry (EIM) coordinator. She also taught first reconciliation and Holy Communion sacramental classes.

"Being RE director involved many different responsibilities, but if it involved children at the church I was involved in some capacity," Snyder said. "I planned and coordinated what I could and what I was asked to, but since I love teaching, I also found a way to teach throughout the year."

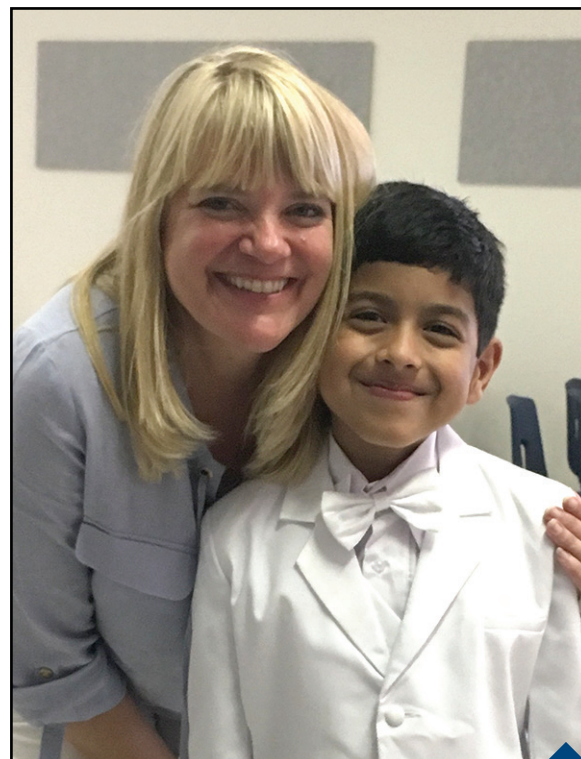
She said the most memorable part of her job was working with the people, particularly the children.

"I have been able to watch children grow up in the church, go off to college, get married and have children of their own. I have been around long enough that children of past students are now part of our program. It has brought me so much joy to watch them grow in their faith and grow up in the church."

When Snyder is not feeding the faith of others, she feeds her own through the Women of Faith group and hopes to go on more pilgrimages now that she has some free time.

"There's still so much to learn and experience," she said. "As women of all ages, we come together to learn from each other and to grow spiritually, understanding our sacred call as women while deepening our relationship with each other and our community."

Snyder also serves on the board of directors for Salado Family Relief, which raises funds for various projects benefitting students and others in need. She will also continue to maintain the parish's website and social media pages.



Laura Snyder, here with a first Holy Communion recipient, served as the director of religious education at St. Stephen Parish in Salado for 20 years before she retired earlier this year. (Photo courtesy Laura Snyder)

Her legacy also endures as her son is on St. Stephen's Finance Committee and her daughter teaches theology at Holy Trinity Catholic High School in Temple. Snyder knows the church will always be a part of her life. Thanks to her devotion and most capable replacement, the children and the future of faith formation at St. Stephen Parish are in good hands.

Spotlight on ministry: Gustavo Rodriguez

Gustavo Rodriguez serves as the director of Evangelization and Catechesis for the Diocese of Austin. He has worked in that particular diocesan office for more than nine years, and he has served in ministry in the diocese for nearly 20 years. In his role as director, Rodriguez oversees the catechetical and sacramental formation and religious education programs in parishes across the diocese, as well as the adult formation program for ministry leaders.

"In short, I help create opportunities for an encounter with Christ for people of all ages in our diocese," he said. "I get to help the young and the not so young grow in their faith."

His greatest joys include those moments of epiphany when a person discovers something new about the Lord or about our Catholic faith.

"I love these moments when you can see the joy permeate their face," Rodriguez said.

The COVID-19 pandemic has introduced new challenges to religious formation programs across the diocese, he said.

"Many of our catechetical leaders continue to be overwhelmed as they try to connect with families and keep the lines of communication open. However, I am amazed at how well our catechists have been able to provide strong formation opportunities even in the midst of the pandemic," he said.

As the church celebrates Catechetical Sunday on Sept. 19, Rodriguez encourages all of the faithful to reflect on their role, by virtue of their baptism, in handing on the faith and being a witness to Gospel.

"We may not all be called to teach in a classroom, but we are all called to serve and to help our loved ones learn about the love of our Lord and Savior," he said.

Rodriguez has been married to his wife Natalie for 15 years. They have two children and are parishioners of St. Mary Cathedral Parish in Austin. Contact him at gustavo-rodriguez@austindiocese.org or call (512) 949-2542. (Photo by Shelley Metcalf)



OFFICIAL APPOINTMENTS

- Deacon Joseph F. Kudra Jr. has been appointed to St. Louis Parish in Waco, effective Aug. 16.
- Deacon Jesse Casarez has been appointed to St. John Neumann Parish in Austin, effective Sept. 6.

ANNOUNCEMENT

Bishop Joe Vásquez recently established the Santa Barbara Catholic Community in Hornsby Bend as a parish. The community has been meeting and celebrating Mass since the 1980s, and it became a mission in 1992 first of St. Joseph Parish in Manor and then of Cristo Rey Parish in Austin. Currently about 350 families make up the parish, which is located in east Austin off FM 969. Father Froylan Jerez Rivera serves as the administrator of the parish, which is part of the Austin Central Deanery. For more information, visit the parish website at santabarbaracatholicchurch.org.

ADVISORY

Anyone who knows the whereabouts of **Aubery James Davis Young** is requested to notify Patricia Thompson at (512) 949-2473.

OBITUARIES

Deacon Dwight Mahoney, retired and residing in Groesbeck, passed away Aug. 9 in Plano. Ordained for the Diocese of Austin on June 28, 2003, he spent many years at St. Mary Parish in Mexia, and he also assisted at St. Mary Parish in Bremond. The Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated Aug. 14 at St. Mary Parish in Mexia, and he was buried at St. Mary Catholic Cemetery in Bremond.

Deacon Rodolfo (Rudy) Gonzalez died Aug. 17. Ordained in 1998, Deacon Gonzalez served at St. John Parish in San Marcos, and for more than 20 years, he served Santa Cruz Parish in Buda. He retired in August 2020 and resided in Kyle. He and his wife Bertha celebrated their 50th anniversary this past April. The Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated Aug. 24 at 10 a.m. at Santa Cruz Parish in Buda. Burial followed at San Miguel Cemetery in Uhland.

Rural Life Mass gives thanks for the harvest



Bishop Joe Vásquez celebrated the 32nd annual Rural Life Mass Aug. 11 at St. Mary Parish in Hearne. Sponsored by the Austin Diocesan Council of Catholic Women, the Mass gave thanks for the recent harvest and honored the work of farmers and ranchers throughout the diocese. During the Mass, the ADCCW honored Anthony Scamardo (above), a cotton farmer and lifelong parishioner of St. Mary in Hearne, and Missionary of Faith Father Richard Dee Du, associate pastor of St. Mary in Bremond and St. Francis of Assisi in Franklin, for their commitment to agriculture. (Photo by Shelley Metcalf)

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Future deacons, Knights 'retreat' to the streets of downtown Austin

By Fred Afflerbach | Correspondent

No food. No money. No phone. A group of 26 men – including 22 members of the Knights of Columbus – hit the Austin streets in an elemental manner. For three days and two nights, they set aside comforts, carrying only a backpack with toiletries, medicine and a sleeping bag. They slept outdoors and made cardboard signs to beg for money to buy food.

The first such “street retreat” took place in 2003, organized by Alan Graham, a parishioner of St. John Neumann Parish in Austin, a member of the Knights of Columbus and founder of Mobile Loaves & Fishes, a nonprofit serving the city’s homeless. Since 2006, this retreat experience has become an annual rite of passage required of all candidates enrolled in the diaconate formation program in the Diocese of Austin.

“When men follow the words of Jesus to take ‘no food, no sack, no money in their belts’ (Mk 6:8), we have found that a great outpouring of grace takes place in their lives,” explained Deacon Guadalupe Rodriguez, associate director of the formation program and a member of St. Mary Cathedral Council 14055 in Austin.

Together with a team of three other

permanent deacons, he ate, slept and begged alongside the candidates, shepherding them through the long hours in which the men saw life from a new perspective.

“A lot of these men are very successful engineers, doctors, lawyers,” said Deacon Rodriguez, who has helped organize the retreats since 2013. “But on the streets, they learn to be very vulnerable, to depend on the Lord.”

The men began each day with Mass at St. Mary Cathedral and then fanned out to intersections with their hand-made cardboard signs. They met with people living in “tent cities” and ate most meals at a homeless shelter. The group also spent time together talking about their experiences and praying during a daily Holy Hour. At 10 p.m. they evangelized by handing out rosaries and pamphlets in Austin’s busy entertainment district.

The sting of casual dismissal was the toughest part of the weekend for Robert Tavarez, a parishioner of St. Vincent de Paul Parish in Austin and a charter member of the parish’s Knights of Columbus Council.

“Rejection after rejection after rejection — everybody walks past,” Tavarez said, describing his experience panhandling as well as attempting to share the faith and hand out rosaries. “It was very saddening that so many people did not care.”

Nevertheless, Tavarez found the group discussions with his fellow retreatants fruitful.

“Hearing what they encountered, how God touched them, how the Holy Spirit was driving them was very



Chris Sperling (center) and Misael Montoya (right) talk to a man who lives in a homeless camp in Austin. Sperling and Montoya were among the 26 men who participated in a “street retreat” last spring. (Photo by Spirit Juice Studios/courtesy of Knights of Columbus Supreme Council)

inspirational,” he said.

Hector Medrano, a parishioner of St. Paul Parish in Smithville and member of the St. Paul Council of Knights, manages the landscaping around the State Capitol. He said living homeless for a weekend has made him rethink his relationship with material possessions.

“All of the things that we think we need ... we don’t need them,” he said. “I didn’t need a bed. I didn’t need anything at all. It was a great experience. I felt like I was living as a disciple of Christ.”

An immigrant from Mexico, Medrano recounted a striking encounter he had with a homeless man who is in the process of becoming a citizen.

“He told me his story coming from Slovenia to Germany and then the United States,” Medrano recalled. “And he also told me he inherited a bad habit, which he is working on. I was so humbled because he asked me to pray with him about it, and it was just beautiful.”

Kyle Hammons joined the Knights in 2002, right out of high school. A parishioner of St. Mary of the Assumption Parish in String Prairie, he said the weekend retreat opened his eyes and heart to the homeless.

“They have a voice. They cry out and who listens? As Christians, as children of God, we all need to listen to one another,” he said. “One of the most profound things from the weekend is just the simplicity of God and the fact that he is love. Being among

the homeless was just such a blessing. We’re God’s children, and we’re all connected.”

Although taking to the streets may seem extreme to some, Deacon Rodriguez said the men have never suffered any accidents or significant problems while on retreat.

“The benefits and blessings that a man discovers by relying on God, divine providence, outweigh the risks and the dangers,” he said.

Noting that the word deacon comes from “diakonia,” the Greek word for service, Deacon Guadalupe added that the church’s documents about diaconal formation say that a man who wants to be a deacon should have a natural inclination toward service.

“And you see that natural inclination to serve in the Knights, even before they’re called to be a deacon or even to be a priest,” he said. “That’s just a beautiful connection of how Knights are bearing fruit in the church.”

Editor’s note: This story originally ran in Columbia Magazine, which is the official magazine of the Knights of Columbus. For more information about the magazine, visit www.kofc.org/columbia.

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Fellowship group challenges Catholic men to be 'fishers of men'

By Alfredo E. Cardenas | Correspondent

Before COVID-19, the Central Texas Fellowship of Catholic Men had more than 1,100 men from 45 parishes in the Diocese of Austin participating in fellowship and prayer weekly. About 1,000 men attended the group's eighth annual conference held Feb. 8, 2020. This year, with the pandemic still waging, the ninth annual Catholic Men's Conference was held on July 10 at St. William Parish in Round Rock with an in-person audience of close to 400 and another 75 joining via live stream.

"A year ago, 1,000 men filled the Travis County Expo before the coronavirus pandemic made such gatherings impossible," the group's Events Director Susana J. Garza said. "Due to a long year of being home-bound with no fellowship to attend in-person, we were pleased to have launched an in-person event for the men to attend ... we are certain that these numbers will go back up and exceed for the 2022 conference."

The mission of the Fellowship of Catholic Men is to help men become stronger disciples of Christ: by strengthening the man, it strengthens the family; by strengthening the family, it strengthens the church; and by strengthening the church, it strengthens society. The theme for this year's conference, promoted to men ages 18 to 65, was "Come follow me," as Jesus said in the Gospel of Mark.

The conference's objective centered on the quote, "He must teach us how to be disciples. If we follow in his path, close enough to hear his voice, he will teach us how to make another disciple."

Mike Bonin, the incoming president of the Fellowship of Catholic Men, said he was thrilled to welcome men to the event.

"When I entered the doors to registration, I could feel the presence and power of the Holy Spirit," he said.

Father James Misko, vicar general of the Diocese of Austin, celebrated the opening Mass for the day and invited the men to trust in the Lord's call.

"God is always calling you. Listen to his call and then (follow him) encounter him. Allow God's call to affect you — then go and do what God asks of you. Trust his call. God has called you to be here. What will be the quality of your response?" he asked.

During the conference, three nationally known speakers shared their faith with the attendees. Professor and author Marcellino De'Ambrosio, also known as "Dr. Italy," often appears on Catholic television and radio networks.

"Come follow me' means to drop everything and come live with me," De'Ambrosio told his audience. "Being a disciple is much more than attending Bible study once a week."

He said Jesus had a profound respect for women and had an inti-

mate relationship with his mother, but men are in charge of prayer in Jewish culture. So, according to tradition, St. Joseph taught Jesus to pray and he took primary responsibility to form Jesus in worship.

While he was God incarnate, in his human nature Christ still had much to learn as a child. So Jesus learned his humanity from Joseph, De'Ambrosio said.

"Early childhood is supposed to be for mentoring; it is never too late to be a mentor to young children; being a dad, granddad, Godfather, uncle," he said. It is never too late to begin forming disciples by modeling discipleship.

Former professional football player Matt Birk, a pro-life advocate and founder of the HIKE Foundation for at-risk children, spoke during the lunch portion of the conference.

"As a football player, my foundation was the fundamentals that I practiced every single day of my career," Birk said. "I didn't rely on my talent — it wasn't enough. What I love about the Catholic faith is we have the fun-



A man and his sons pray the rosary at the beginning of the ninth annual Catholic Men's Conference held July 10 at St. William Parish in Round Rock. (Photo by Rafael Riojas courtesy Central Texas Fellowship of Catholic Men)

damentals at our disposal — the Mass, Eucharist, Confession, Adoration, the rosary — fundamentals at our disposal that we can practice every single day."

Birk emphasized that faith had nothing to do with talent. "We just have to keep showing up," the former NFL center said.

John Sablan, a Third Order Dominican and founder of World Ablaze Inc., an apostolate with a mission to

help make disciples for Christ, said he came from a broken home which offered him an "example of failed male leadership." Unfortunately, that example led him to a road of inevitable failure as a husband and a father. Fortunately, a priest administered a "deliverance prayer" to him at a young age, which helped him turn his life around and salvaged his marriage and family.

"The problem with us men is we don't know where to begin," Sablan said. "The expectation for mothers is to love; fathers must choose to love."

Citing St. John Paul II, Sablan reminded participants that "As the family goes, so goes the world.' But, as the man goes, so goes the marriage. Know your role. Choose to serve, protect and defend your family. Commit to that role."

The Fellowship of Catholic Men invites all men to the 2022 conference slated for Feb. 19 at a location yet to be determined. Dennis Daniel, executive director of the group, said, "Between now and February, we ask each man to answer three questions: Am I fishing for men? Is my parish fishing for men? Are we catching anything?"

The group also invites all Catholics to join them at a Round Rock Express baseball game Sept. 25 at the Dell Diamond in Round Rock. Tickets can be purchased at centexcatholic.com.

Join CTFCM at the ballpark!

Saturday, September 25

3400 E Palm Valley Blvd Round Rock, TX 78665
First Pitch by Fr. James Misko @ 6:50 PM

Tickets at centexcatholic.com

Franciscan roots run deep at St. Francis Parish in Waco

By Alfredo E. Cardenas | Correspondent

With each passing day, St. Francis on the Brazos Parish in Waco is working to overcome the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. As more and more parishioners are vaccinated, many of them on parish grounds, they are making their way back to the parish which will celebrate its 100th anniversary in 2024.

Franciscan Missionaries of the Third Order Regular have served the parish since its inception in 1924. The current church was built in the 1930s and resembles other traditional Franciscan missions in Texas, notably Mission San José in San Antonio.

Father Eduardo Jazo, a member of the Third Order Regular of St. Francis and pastor of St. Francis on the Brazos Parish, said the parish is working hard to restore ministries to what they were prior to the pandemic.

St. Francis has hosted vaccination clinics on the parish grounds and practiced all social distancing protocols established by the Diocese of Austin. It has stopped streaming Sunday Masses and now invites parishioners back to the church to participate

St. Francis on the Brazos Parish in Waco was built in the 1930s to resemble other traditional Franciscan missions in Texas. The parish will celebrate its 100th anniversary in 2024. (Photo courtesy St. Francis Parish)



in the Mass and to receive the Body of Christ in person.

However, much to his surprise, some unexpected and underserved Spanish-speaking Catholics in Florida, Monterey and Mexico City have contacted Father Jazo to bring back the virtual Mass. Plus, some local parishioners do not feel comfortable with indoor Mass, he said.

Father Jazo noted that before returning to indoor Mass without restrictions, they were holding outdoor Mass on the church grounds, and the attendance was about 250, while the indoor Mass count has dropped to 200.

The pandemic has also hurt the parish's finances, but they are trying to address the financial shortfall in creative ways, Father Jazo said. The parish has reactivated a brick memorial to St. Francis begun some 20 years ago by Father Fernando Hernandez. Under the program, people can purchase a brick with an inscription for \$100. The parish will dedicate the bricks on Easter Sunday, and the funds will be used to restore the parish facilities with new paint and other needed repairs.

This fall the parish returns to its regular religious education program; classes are offered on Wednesday nights, and all students are invited to attend Mass as part of the class. Last year's program was limited to those receiving their sacraments, and in the spring 120 students received their first Holy Communion and 50 students were confirmed.

Father Jazo said COVID-19 curtailed the parish's youth ministry program last year. The parish tried to establish virtual programs, "but kids were having too many Zoom classes already, so it

did not work out," he said.

Still, young people are active in the parish. Of the 25 high school graduates from the parish this year, many were active in the Danza group, served as altar servers and helped in the religious education program. Plus, this summer the parish held a successful Vacation Bible School program, with 90 students participating, which was the maximum the program could handle.

The parish has an active core of volunteers, including 25 extraordinary ministers of holy Communion, 33 lectors and 16 hospitality ministers. However with COVID, those volunteers have dwindled as well. Lately, though, visits to the homebound and to those in nursing homes have resumed. Father Jazo said every minister is asked to visit at least one homebound person, including those in nursing homes. Presently they are visiting about 15 persons on a regular basis.

St. Francis has five choirs – one for each of the four Spanish Masses and one for the English Mass. Eighty percent of parishioners are Spanish speakers, and Father Jazo makes it a practice to meet the parishioners in the language they feel most comfortable with: English, Spanish or a mixture of both. Religious education classes are held in English, as is the children's Mass.

St. Francis Parish is also known as the birthplace of the Cursillo Movement in the U.S. The movement, which is designed to help participants understand what it means to be Christian in today's world, was introduced at the parish in 1957. While the program is not as active as it once was, Father Jazo is confident that the Holy Spirit will inspire hearts to get involved.



Father Eduardo Jazo, TOR, the pastor of St. Francis on the Brazos Parish in Waco, processes into Mass in this undated photo. (Photo courtesy St. Francis Parish)

"Cursillo is not going to die here because it is where it was born," Father Jazo said.

Also, he believes the Holy Spirit is opening hearts to consider the call to the priesthood and religious life. Father Jazo is currently working with two parishioners who are discerning the call to the priesthood. He said the parish has been assigned a Franciscan friar who will work with youth to help them discern the call to the priesthood or religious life.

While the parish does not have a St. Vincent de Paul Society, helping the poor is part of Franciscans' mission thus a mission of the parish. The parish is restarting its food pantry that will donate food, clothes, furniture and other items to those in need.

Masses are celebrated on Sundays at 8 a.m. in Spanish, 10:30 a.m. in English and noon in Spanish, with the Saturday vigil in Spanish at 7 p.m. For more information about the parish, visit stfrancistorwaco.org.

Legion of Mary celebrates 100 years on Sept. 7

The Legion of Mary invites all to celebrate their 100-year anniversary with a Mass of Thanksgiving celebrated by Bishop Joe Vásquez Sept. 7 at 6 p.m. at St. Mary Cathedral in Austin. Founded Sept. 7, 1921, in Ireland by Servant of God Frank Duff, the Legion of Mary has spread throughout the world. For more information about the Legion of Mary, e-mail lomgoodcounsel@gmail.com.

Couples invited to Marriage Encounter weekend

A Worldwide Marriage Encounter Experience is a weekend opportunity for married couples to focus on their marriage, improve communication, deepen intimacy and spend quality time together, free of distractions. Couples are invited to experience the beauty of the sacrament of matrimony in a whole new way. The next weekend retreat is Nov. 5-7 at Cedarbrake Catholic Retreat Center in Temple. Early registration is recommended. For details, visit austinme.org, e-mail wwmeaustin@gmail.com or call (512) 677-WWME (9963).

FOCUS missionaries welcome college students back to school

By Carla Smith | Correspondent

As college students return to campuses for the fall semester, missionaries of the Fellowship of Catholic University Students (FOCUS) are present at several of the universities within the boundaries of the Diocese of Austin.

Baylor University in Waco, Texas A&M University in College Station, Texas State University in San Marcos and the University of Texas in Austin all have enlisted the help of FOCUS to win the hearts and minds of college students, build them up in the faith and send them out in the world as disciples. All FOCUS campus missionaries are trained in church teaching, prayer, Scripture, evangelization and discipleship to inspire active participation in the faith.

Matthew Miller, the team director for the FOCUS at Texas State, said missionaries start with the basics and build upon them throughout the year.

“We go back to the basics of the Gospel and encourage (college students) to become pre-occupied with the Word of God as they go about their daily college endeavors,” Miller said. “Our goal is to get students so in love with the Gospel and so serious about it that they then let it affect their lives in a profound way when it comes to making decisions and choices and evangelize to fellow students in ways our staff can’t.”

FOCUS has been active at Our Lady of Wisdom University Parish in San Marcos since 2012 and continues to grow with as many as 200 students participating in its Bible studies.

The FOCUS chapter at the University of Texas is also very active and is

celebrating 10 years on campus. Claire Jacob, the team leader at UT, said one of their goals is to mirror Jesus as he invited others to follow him and go make disciples of all nations.

“We work to instill in our students the need to sit at the feet of Christ, receive him, and then take courage to follow where the Holy Spirit leads,” she said. “Young people are searching desperately for truth and for challenge and FOCUS offers that to them in the very person of Christ.”

FOCUS is a nationwide group developed to invite students into a relationship with Christ, to inspire and equip them for a lifetime of Christ-centered evangelization and discipleship, and to establish friendships based on virtue and truth. The group also conducts mission trips and annual conferences attended by many.

Their outreach programs include “Varsity Catholic,” which targets college athletes; “FOCUS Greek” that serves fraternity and sorority houses; and “Lifelong Mission” which is dedicated to leading members to become missionary disciples in their families, parishes, workplaces and communities.

FOCUS is known for its passion for changing the world on college campuses across the country by meeting fellow students where they are, said Father Will Straten, pastor of St. Mary Catholic Center in College Station.

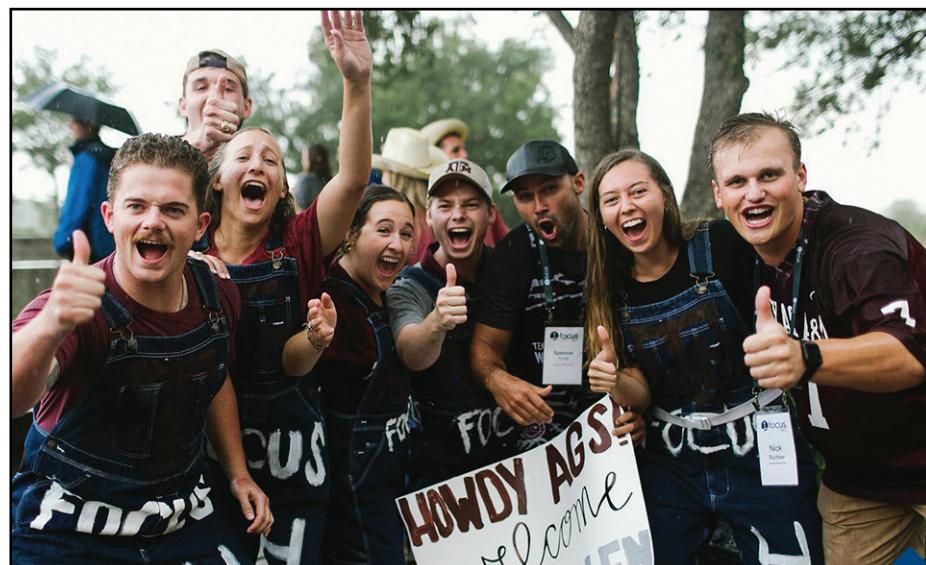
“The biggest strength of FOCUS is its ability to reach students on campus, on the sports field, in coffee shops, at bars, and other places besides the parish,” he said. “They are a huge asset to our ministry as they are close in age to the students they encounter and are

Special collection on Sept. 11-12 will help in Haiti

On Aug. 14 a 7.2 magnitude earthquake struck the western part of the island of Haiti, killing more than 2,000 people. The quake destroyed homes and businesses, leaving thousands without shelter and communities in need of resources. To help with recovery efforts, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops have asked that all parishes take up a second collection on Sept. 11 and 12. The funds collected will be administered by Catholic Relief Services and will provide humanitarian relief to those in need in Haiti, as well as other places in the world.

Virtual event benefits the work of Society of SVDP

The Society of St. Vincent de Paul Diocesan Council of Austin will host the Serving in Hope Virtual Benefit Sept. 22 at 6 p.m. The events will include stories of people helping people assisted by the society and it will offer ways to make a difference by supporting the council’s works of charity. Register at www.ssvdp.org/serving-in-hope or call (512) 251-6995 for more information.



FOCUS missionaries at Texas A&M University in College Station make it their mission to reach college students where they are at, said Father Will Straten, pastor of St. Mary Catholic Center in College Station. (Photo courtesy FOCUS)

able to relate with them on a human level.”

Father Straten who serves as the FOCUS chaplain at Texas A&M University said the FOCUS missionaries help build a bridge with those in Greek life, athletics and even the Corps of Cadets who may not come to St. Mary Catholic Center frequently.

“In short, they help us go out to the peripheries and reach the Aggie flock,” he said.

As all campuses wrestle with the COVID-19 pandemic, Jacob said FOCUS activities seek to respect social distancing guidelines.

“The Lord is so creative and thankfully, much of FOCUS’ mission fits perfectly with any protocols,” Jacob said. “We call a few students to gather and lead small group Bible studies led by both missionaries and students. We seldom have large group events and when we do, they are centered around sacramental worship.”

Winning the hearts of students by taking part in their interests, playing

their sports, listening to their music and ultimately becoming part of their lives, FOCUS missionaries work to invite all into discipleship. In small group settings, they seek to form student in the four habits of discipleship: prayer, sacramental life, church teaching and fellowship. From there, well-formed students are sent out to change the lives of others, Miller said.

“In obedience with Christ’s Great Commission laid out in Matthew 28:18, we invite well-formed students to begin reaching out to their friends and others on campus,” he said. “As missionaries, we know the joy it gives us to tell others about the Gospel and it’s a joy we are eager to share with all students.”

For more information about FOCUS, visit focus.org.

Food, protective gear, treatment, vaccines: Church fights COVID-19

By Lucien Chauvin | Catholic News Service

The Catholic Church continues to play a crucial role fighting the pandemic in developing countries nearly 18 months after COVID-19 gripped the world.

Catholic Relief Services is providing small loans and medical supplies in Nepal. The Tanzania Episcopal Conference is securing oxygen for hospitals. The Apostolic Vicariate of Iquitos, Peru, is running a front-line isolation center for people with the virus.

The vast list of programs and campaigns, which is growing as variants of the virus unleash new waves, has altered the way the church operates. The response has created goodwill, but it also presents a host of new challenges for the church and the broader society.

"The church should truly find a way to continue our efforts, but also explore new ways of fighting poverty. Most of the people tell us, 'We are going to die of hunger, not COVID.' This is the dilemma," said Jesuit Father Rigobert Minani, head of his order's social apostolate for Congo and Angola.

A number of common threads are prominent among the efforts the church has taken in different countries. Food, protective gear, medical attention and, most recently, access to vaccines are key issues.

Father Charles Kitima, secretary-general of the Tanzania Episcopal Conference, said the principal work for the church in his country today is guaranteeing that people who get sick with the virus have access to medical attention.

"The Catholic Church runs more than 500 health facilities in the country, and we need to make sure that our hospitals are ready to support anyone who comes to get assistance. People are poor, and they do not have insurance, and our mission is to care for life," he said.

He said that while the church's work at the start of the pandemic was making sure there were masks and protective gear, today it is treatment and getting people vaccinated. A top issue is oxygen.

The church-run Bugando Medical Center, one of the country's largest

hospitals with 900 beds, was using around 100 cylinders of oxygen a day in May, but it is now up to 300 cylinders a day. Father Kitima said the church was working with the government and international agencies, including the U.S. Agency for International Development, to secure oxygen. He said the situation has improved noticeably with the country's new president, Samia Suluhu Hassan. She took over in March after her predecessor, John Magufuli, a denier of COVID-19, died of the virus.

"We had been in a kind of tug of war with the government, which was saying there is no COVID. But since March, we have been on the same page and working toward the same goal," Father Kitima said.

Oxygen also has been a critical issue in Peru, where Breathe Peru, a program started by the Catholic bishops, has raised funds to acquire and install oxygen plants around the country. The program also includes the private Universidad San Ignacio de Loyola and Peru's National Society of Industries.

Breathe Peru has raised around \$2.7 million, allowing it to install 25 medicinal oxygen plants and 3,000 ventilators, as well as offer other supplies.

The program got its start with an initiative in Iquitos, in the northern jungle, that was the first city in Peru to be hit hard by the pandemic. The church in Iquitos mobilized quickly on many fronts, including organizing a public campaign to collect money for an oxygen plant.

Bishop Miguel Ángel Cadenas of Iquitos said the campaign worked on several levels. He said it created hope in the population when everything seemed bleak, and it got the government to act. Instead of one plant, the church was able to acquire five for Iquitos, which has a population more than 500,000 people.

"The campaign generated goodwill during a time of desperation. The church had a very positive impact," said Bishop Cadenas.

Church efforts, however, have been hampered by structural problems and, most recently, by misinformation about vaccines.

Bishop Cadenas said that while the church certainly helped with oxygen plants, its campaign could not fix the deeper issues that created the



Baburam Subedi washes his hands before entering a health facility in Panauti, Nepal, during the COVID-19 pandemic. Catholic Relief Services has installed 20 handwashing stations in Panauti. (CNS photo/Prakash Gopali, CRS)

problem. He said Iquitos, and Peru in general, was not ready for the pandemic and is still not ready as a third wave threatens the country.

Peru today has the highest per capita number of deaths from COVID-19, according to Johns Hopkins University. Eastern neighbor Brazil is fifth, while Colombia, to the north, is 10th worldwide.

"We have oxygen plants, but the bigger problem is lack of health care professionals. It is a structural problem not only in Iquitos, but in other parts of Peru and the world," he said.

Nripendra Khatri, communication coordinator for Catholic Relief Services in Nepal, agreed.

He said CRS, which has had a full-time program in Nepal since the 2015 earthquake, has had a multipronged response to the pandemic, offering financial assistance to small businesses, supporting information campaigns and providing medical supplies to local hospitals. The final component runs up against structural shortages.

"Outside of a few urban areas, health care infrastructure in Nepal is insufficient. On top of that, we do not have enough front-line health care workers to fight the pandemic," he said.

The newest complication is lack of vaccines and a rising tide of false information against them.

CRS in Nepal is preparing an information campaign that will target young people, encouraging them to get vaccinated. The country has vaccinated around 9% of its 28 million people.

Father Minani in Congo said the church needs to get ahead of anti-vaccine campaigns.

"There is false information about vaccines. The church has to preach in favor of vaccines," he said.

The Jesuits in Congo and Angola are running a COVID-19 information campaign that features the provincial for Central Africa, Father Rigobert Kyungu, on a poster calling for people to wear masks and get vaccinated.

The six Jesuit provinces released an open letter in May calling for "vaccine justice" with four key points, including patent waivers for vaccines, vaccine distribution prioritizing the most vulnerable sectors, wealthy countries funding distribution through the U.N. COVAX program, and international financial institutions canceling debt.

"We have to campaign for vaccine justice. As Pope Francis said in 'Fratelli Tutti,' people need to understand that we are in this together, and we have to ensure that all people have the same care," said Jesuit Father Xavier Jeyaraj, director of the Jesuit Social Justice and Ecology Secretariat in Rome.

Pope Francis and cardinals from Brazil, El Salvador, Honduras, Mexico and the United States released a series of public service announcements in August encouraging people from across the Americas to get vaccinated. Pope Francis said in his segment that vaccines "offer hope to end the pandemic, but only if they are available for all and if we collaborate with each other."

Vaccination is an act of love, pope says in ad campaign

By Carol Glatz | Catholic News Service

When each individual makes a small act of charity, like getting the COVID-19 vaccine, every gesture added together can transform the world, Pope Francis said in a global ad campaign.

"Being vaccinated with vaccines authorized by the competent authorities is an act of love. And contributing to ensure the majority of people are vaccinated is an act of love -- love for oneself, love for one's family and friends, love for all people," he said in a public service announcement released Aug. 18 in Rome.

The video message was part of a global effort by the U.S.-based nonpartisan, nonprofit Ad Council and the COVID Collaborative's "It's Up To You" campaign to increase people's confidence in COVID-19 vaccines by reminding them that the vaccines are safe, effective and save

people's lives. The Vatican's Dicastery for Integral Human Development also cooperated with the educational initiative.

The three-minute video in Spanish with English, Spanish and Portuguese subtitles features Pope Francis and six cardinals and archbishops from North and South America. Archbishop José H. Gomez of Los Angeles, president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, is among them.

The "It's Up To You" campaign has been inviting "trusted messengers" to deliver "fact-based and life-saving information to populations hesitant about the COVID-19 vaccines, helping them to make informed decisions for themselves and their families," it said in a joint news release with the Ad Council.

Lisa Sherman, president and CEO of the Ad Council, said, "The role of trusted messengers to educate and inspire their networks is undeniable." "We are extremely grateful to

(Pope Francis) and the cardinals and archbishops for lending their voices and platforms to help people across the globe feel more confident in the vaccines," particularly to the world's 1.3 billion Catholics, she said in the news release.

It said 72% of the adult population and 67% of Hispanic adults have currently been vaccinated against COVID-19 with at least one dose in the United States.

But COVID-19 cases are on the rise worldwide, especially in North, Central and South America. Some nations are still showing very low rates of individuals who are fully vaccinated, such as Honduras with only 5.5% of the adult population and El Salvador with 30%.

While access to vaccines is a challenge, "confidence in the vaccines also presents a hurdle," the news release said.

In his message, the pope said, "Thanks to God and to the work of

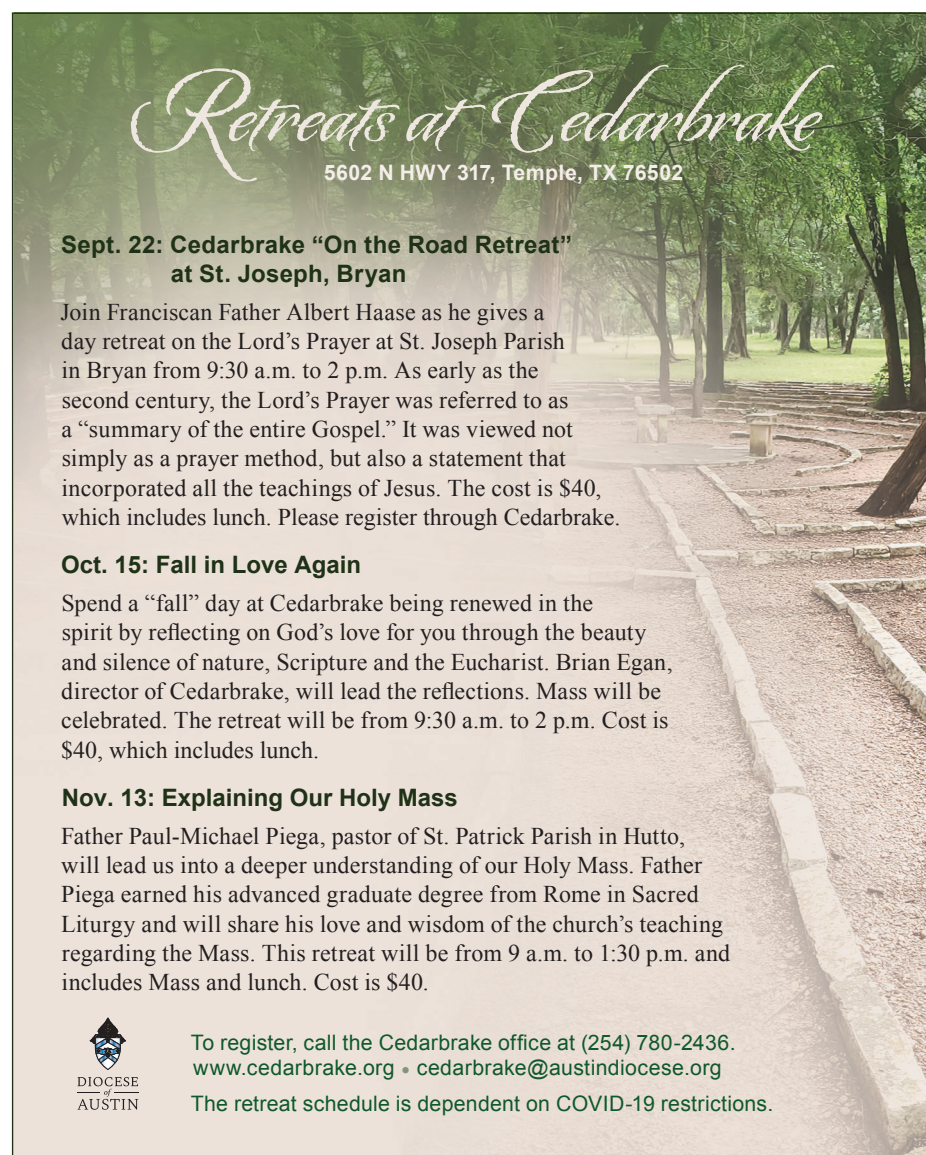
many, we now have vaccines to protect us from COVID-19. They grant us the hope of ending the pandemic, but only if they are available to all and if we work together."

Getting inoculated "is an act of love" for oneself, family, friends and all people, he said.

"Love is also social and political" as these individual "small gestures of personal charity" add up, "overflowing" into something universal that is "capable of transforming and improving societies," he said.

"Vaccination is a simple but profound way of promoting the common good and caring for each other, especially the most vulnerable," the pope said.

"I pray to God that everyone may contribute their own small grain of sand, their own small gesture of love; no matter how small, love is always great. Contribute with these small gestures for a better future. God bless you, and thank you," he said.



Retreats at Cedarbrake
5602 N HWY 317, Temple, TX 76502

Sept. 22: Cedarbrake "On the Road Retreat" at St. Joseph, Bryan

Join Franciscan Father Albert Haase as he gives a day retreat on the Lord's Prayer at St. Joseph Parish in Bryan from 9:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. As early as the second century, the Lord's Prayer was referred to as a "summary of the entire Gospel." It was viewed not simply as a prayer method, but also a statement that incorporated all the teachings of Jesus. The cost is \$40, which includes lunch. Please register through Cedarbrake.


Oct. 15: Fall in Love Again

Spend a "fall" day at Cedarbrake being renewed in the spirit by reflecting on God's love for you through the beauty and silence of nature, Scripture and the Eucharist. Brian Egan, director of Cedarbrake, will lead the reflections. Mass will be celebrated. The retreat will be from 9:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. Cost is \$40, which includes lunch.

Nov. 13: Explaining Our Holy Mass

Father Paul-Michael Piega, pastor of St. Patrick Parish in Hutto, will lead us into a deeper understanding of our Holy Mass. Father Piega earned his advanced graduate degree from Rome in Sacred Liturgy and will share his love and wisdom of the church's teaching regarding the Mass. This retreat will be from 9 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. and includes Mass and lunch. Cost is \$40.

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

 DIOCESE OF AUSTIN



Feast Day
Our Lady of Schoenstatt

Come and Join Us

For the Annual Feast Day Celebration of Our Lady of Schoenstatt with Bishop Joe Vásquez
Main Celebrant

Holy Mass, 11:00am Sunday, October 10

All are invited to stay after Mass for lunch, games, and fun activities for the entire family

Visit our website at www.schoenstatt-austin.us or call 512-330-0602 for more details

MARIAN SHRINE OF OUR LADY OF SCHOENSTATT
225 Addie Roy Rd. Austin, TX 78746

US Catholics urged to give to recovery efforts in Haiti

By Catholic News Service

The president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops has asked bishops across the country to take up a voluntary collection to help Haiti recover from a recent pair of natural disasters.

Saying that Haitians are likely to experience continuing hardships from an Aug. 14 earthquake and a tropical storm that swept through the ravaged southwestern part of the country days later, Archbishop José H. Gomez of Los Angeles made the request in a letter to bishops.

The magnitude 7.2 earthquake devastated communities in southwestern Haiti. Nearly 2,200 people died, more than 12,000 were injured and hundreds more were missing Aug. 20.

Money collected will be funneled to the Bishops Emergency Disaster

Fund and will be used to support the pastoral and reconstruction needs of the Haitian Catholic Church as well as efforts of Catholic Relief Services and possibly Catholic Charities USA.

The USCCB said in a news release Aug. 20 that if the money collected cannot be distributed in Haiti, funding will be used for other emergency relief where it is needed most as determined by the bishops' Committee on National Collections.

Archbishop Gomez acknowledged in the letter that many U.S. dioceses continue to feel the financial pinch of the COVID-19 pandemic but recognized that parishioners are generous and harbor deep care for people in need around the globe.

In addition, the bishops' Subcommittee on the Church in Latin America has approved \$10,000 grants to three dioceses in Haiti that have been most heavily affected by the disaster.



Kettney Francois poses outside the remains of St. Famille du Toirac church in Toirac, Haiti, Aug. 16, 2021. Francois was trampled in a frantic stampede of people trying to escape after a magnitude 7.2 earthquake hit during a funeral Mass at the church. (CNS photo/Laura Gottesdiener, Reuters)

Workers with CRS, the U.S. bishops overseas and relief agency, continue to distribute humanitarian aid in the affected region.

In the Diocese of Brooklyn, New York, Bishop Nicholas DiMarzio has asked all parishes through the New York boroughs of Brooklyn and Queens to schedule a special voluntary collection for victims of the earthquake during the next two weekends.

"We have all seen the painful images of devastation and heard of the deaths caused by the most recent earthquake in Haiti," Bishop DiMarzio said Aug. 19. "Our heartfelt prayers go out to all those affected by this terrible disaster. I ask the Lord to extend His blessings upon our brothers and sisters in Haiti during this difficult time."

The funds raised in the special collection at parishes will be sent by the diocese for distribution and direct assistance to those who have been affected, the diocese said.

The CEO of the Knights of Columbus, Patrick Kelly, announced that his organization has made an initial commitment of \$250,000 to assist those suffering on the island nation.

"Our prayers are with our neighbors in Haiti as they recover from yet another tragedy and seek once again to rebuild," Supreme Knight Kelly said Aug. 19. "Just as we reached out to provide aid following the 2010 earthquake, the Knights of Columbus will again reach out in

charity to help our neighbors in need in Haiti."

After the 2010 earthquake, the Knights became active in Haiti, providing over \$1 million in financial assistance to Haitians in need, in particular to help restore mobility to those injured in the quake.

Through its partnership with the Global Wheelchair Mission, the Knights of Columbus has delivered more than 1,000 wheelchairs to Haiti. In collaboration with Project Medishare, the Knights contributed major financial support for a sustainable prosthetics and rehabilitation program in Haiti and helped to create the Emilio B. Moure Clinic for Hope in Port-au-Prince.

The clinic, named for the Knights' late supreme secretary, houses materials and equipment, and it serves as a classroom for training Haitians who are eligible to be hired as prosthetic technicians.

"The Knights of Columbus is a fraternal organization with a deep sense of brotherhood among our members," Kelly said. "In keeping with the mission of our founder, Blessed Michael McGivney, we are also deeply committed to a charity which sees all humanity as brothers and sisters."



The Diocese of Austin
cordially invites the **Legal Community**
to the 30th Annual

Red Mass

Thursday, September 30, 2021, 6 p.m.

at **St. Mary Cathedral**
203 E. 10th Street, Austin, Texas

with Guest Speaker
Rev. Doug Jeffers
Associate Pastor, St. John Neumann Parish

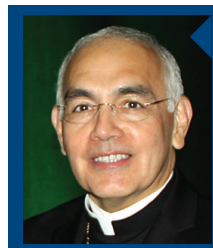
The Mass will be livestreamed.

For more information, visit
www.austindiocese.org/red-mass.



BISHOP'S INTERVIEW

May we realize the pure gift we receive in the Eucharist



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, we are continuing our series on the Mass, so having discussed the Liturgy of the Word, now our focus is on the Liturgy of the Eucharist. This part of the Mass begins with the bringing forth of the gifts. Why do we do this?

Bishop Vásquez: Yes, during the Mass, after having been fed at the table of the Word, we now seek to be fed at the table of the Eucharist. The Word and Eucharist together constitute one act of worship. The bread, wine and financial gifts, serve as symbols of the gift of ourselves and our willingness to care for others. This is an important moment that allows the entire assembly to actively participate in the celebration of the Eucharist. Through and with the priest, the faithful offer themselves to be transformed just as the bread and wine are transformed into the Body and Blood of Christ. Therefore, during the Eucharistic Prayer, when the priest takes the bread and the wine and lifts them up to God, he also lifts the people up to God to be transformed and to become Christ in the world today.

Editor: During the Eucharistic prayer, the priest acts in the person of Christ – in persona Christi. What does this mean?

Bishop Vásquez: Our Catholic tradition teaches that on the day of his ordination, the priest is changed and truly becomes the presence of Christ in the world. Thus, he is able to act in Christ's name and bring about the salvation Christ offers to the world. The priest standing at the altar does not represent himself, but he represents Christ. He speaks for Christ, and he acts in the name of Christ. His actions at the altar indeed are those of Christ. So, we have the assurance that this is not merely a man who stands here doing these things, but it is Christ who is present to us.

Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI said at the altar a priest is "in Christ, for Christ and with Christ, at the service

of humankind ... this means that in the sacred mysteries, the priest does not represent himself, but speaks for Christ."

The Catechism of the Catholic Church teaches, "In the ecclesial service of the ordained minister, it is Christ himself who is present to his Church as Head of his Body, Shepherd of his flock, high priest of the redemptive sacrifice, Teacher of Truth."

Editor: After the consecration and before we receive the Eucharist, we pray, "Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed." I find this to be a powerful prayer. What does it mean?

Bishop Vásquez: This prayer expresses our belief that the Body and Blood of Christ is a pure gift to us from God. We must never think we are owed this or that we merit this gift. The Eucharist is a sacrament we can receive often and even daily, and we must never take it for granted. For it is through God's great generosity and mercy that we are able to receive this gift.

As Catholics we must prepare our souls, minds, bodies and hearts the best we can to receive Christ in a fitting manner. If anyone is aware they have committed serious sin – mortal sin – we should go to confession before receiving the Eucharist. The sacrament of reconciliation prepares us to receive the Eucharist as wholeheartedly and as worthily as possible. The church asks us to prepare our bodies to receive the Eucharist by fasting for at least one hour before receiving. This is our way of expressing our hunger and desire to receive Christ, Our Eucharistic Lord in Holy Communion.

Editor: The Eucharist is the source and summit of our faith. Who may receive the Eucharist?

Bishop Vásquez: We know the Eucharist is the Body and Blood, soul and divinity, of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. The church teaches that the Eucharist is received by those who understand and believe who they are receiving. We are grateful to Pope Pius X who lowered the age at which a child can receive the Eucharist to 7, which is considered the age of reason. Therefore, in our religious education programs we instruct our children



In this month's interview, Bishop Joe Vásquez focuses on the Liturgy of the Eucharist and how the faithful are called to prepare to receive the Body of Christ. (Photo by Joshua Guenther)

in the faith as we teach them about the sacraments of the Eucharist and confession.

God indeed is present in the Eucharist. Through transubstantiation the substance of the bread and wine are completely changed to the body and blood of Christ while what we see, feel and taste remains unchanged. Those who receive the Eucharist should understand this so that when the minister presents the host and says, "The Body of Christ," the recipient may proudly declare "Amen."

Editor: If one is not able to receive the Eucharist, what should they do instead?

Bishop Vásquez: If one is not able to receive the Eucharist, the person may make a spiritual communion. This is a moment of prayer when the person says to God, "God, I know I am not able to receive you physically at this moment as I desire. Therefore, I ask you now to come to me spiritually." This simple prayer implores God to look upon us with compassion, love

and goodness and offer his grace to us.

During this pandemic, many people have found solace and consolation through spiritual communion. The Eucharist is the supreme act of God. Therefore, we should always desire to physically receive and joyfully embrace our Eucharistic Lord.

Editor: What is your prayer for those for all of us as we go forth to receive the Body of Christ?

Bishop Vásquez: Loving Father, may we receive the most precious gift of your Son's body and blood with humility and understanding of your True Presence. Through your Word and the Eucharist, may our lives be transformed so that we become the presence of Christ in our world. We ask this through Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns forever. Amen.

THE DOMESTIC CHURCH

Through the sacraments, each parish becomes a family of families

By Gustavo Rodriguez | Guest Columnist

Although all families are unique in their own way, they have a set of common experiences such as celebrations, challenges and struggles. Families, large and small, face life together as they experience happiness and overcome obstacles. How families respond to these experiences sets the foundation of the family unit. This unit is the nucleus of where we grow, learn and where our true development takes place. This sets the stage for how we respond and interact socially for the rest of our lives.

In my family, I know every obstacle and challenge that comes our way will

be less of a burden when we seek support and guidance from each other. We seek solace from one another. We rely on family to accompany us through the good and the difficult times.

The beauty of being a part of a community of faith is that in addition to our immediate family, we also have our church family. Each of our parishes is a family of families. When a family attends Mass, they are one family of many – some parishes have several thousand registered families. Those many families are all one family – together we are the Body of Christ.

As a family of faith, we are collectively and individually called to deepen our relationship with God. Every time we celebrate a sacrament, we strengthen and build our family. As a family

of faith, we accompany each other as we baptize our babies, celebrate the Eucharist, witness the sacrament of matrimony or bury those who have died.

When we lose a loved one, we find support from our immediate families, but we are also surrounded by our family of faith. It is in moments like these that we live the Gospel. When we bury our dead, we comfort those who mourn. When we be-



come sick, we can receive the sacrament of anointing of the sick and we know our parish community is praying for our healing and support-

ing us in faith. As we find the love of our life, we share this love with our parish family as we profess our vows in the presence of God the Father. As we are blessed with children, we bring them to church, and our parish welcomes them at their baptism. It is truly a gift to be a part of the family of Christ!

Imagine what the parish family means to an elderly person who is alone and does not have much support. Imagine what it means to the newly arrived immigrant seeking refuge in this country. Many of our families are here today because a brave group of immigrants came before them seeking a new life.

This reminds me of my wife's family who arrived in here in 1734, established the first civil government in Texas and founded the Cathedral of San Fernando in San Antonio. There are hundreds of years of stories of triumph and challenge in our family that are deeply rooted in the Catholic faith. Stories of families coming together to overcome famine, epidemics, war and violence.

My wife and I were parishioners at Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish in Austin for many years, which is where we were blessed to be among so many amazing families who shared their talents and treasures with one another.

Strong family ties were established as Señora Mokarzel hosted her famous tamaladas and shared her knowledge with future generations; the Castros set up their hamburger stand at the annual church Jamaica; the Sustaita and Salas families shared their leadership and musical talents with the community; the Ramirez and Cobos helped establish the infrastructure; the Aguallo family decorating for Our Lady of Guadalupe feast day; and the Villaseñor family accompanied us as we buried the dead. We also learned about our Catholic teachings with the families of religious education and formation, and my wife and I received many wonderful marriage tips from the wedding preparation team. All of these families have accompanied us throughout our lives. Together as a family of families we continue living the Gospel in the world today.

Being part of a parish community means being a part of something that is greater than just ourselves. When we think of our families, I think we must include our godparents, the oldest members of our church community, our priests and religious and our brothers and sisters in ministry. May all our parishes be families of families where we find Christ not only present in the Eucharist but also present in each one of us as members of the Body of Christ.

Gustavo Rodriguez (center) has been married to Natalie for 15 years. They have two children: Sandra Josefina and Gustavo Ignacio. (Photo courtesy Rodriguez family)



Gustavo Rodriguez serves as the director of Evangelization and Catechesis for the Diocese of Austin. Contact him at gustavo-rodriguez@austindiocese.org or call (512) 949-2542.

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SOCIAL JUSTICE

The voting process must reflect equal and appropriate access

By F. DeKarlos Blackmon, OLSB | Columnist

Regardless of where people may find themselves on the political spectrum, if we were to have an open and honest conversation about voting after the last general election, a simple encounter with those who historically have felt marginalized would reveal their feelings that the right to vote is under attack. Unfortunately, it is all too easy for some voices to dismiss the very real concerns of those among the working poor and the marginalized. Dismissing the legitimate concerns of any of our brothers and sisters does not reflect our obligation to respect the dignity of all people.

My purpose is not to debate any particular piece of legislation; it is to express how each of us has a responsibility, a right and a duty to contribute to the common good by being active in the public square. One of the primary ways to be active in the public square is to exercise the civic responsibility to participate in the electoral process.

VOTING IS OUR CIVIC DUTY

Bishop Joe Vásquez of Austin reminds us that all people are called to work for and promote a society of truth and justice that benefits the common good for all people. “For this reason, the right to vote is a privilege and civic duty that citizens must take seriously,” he said recently.

Bishop Vásquez has also explained “the Catholic Church has a rich and historic tradition on morals and social teaching, which is the foundation that forms our conscience when we vote.” We are encouraged to zealously engage in the work of advocating for the weak and marginalized. While there are competing voices that will attempt to debate whether, or why, the church has been perceived to have fallen silent over the many years of political strife in the U.S., we should instead encourage each other to accept that a fundamental work of the Christian community is to apply Gospel values to the ordinary and extraordinary situations with which society is confronted (Living the Gospel of Life, 22).

In 2021 we find many young people who take for granted the high prices

paid for the freedoms in our society that Black Americans – and many other ethnicities – still have not realized. This is all the more a reason why we should consider the importance of every person’s active participation in the political process. In joyful hope, I choose to believe that when people know better, they will do better. So, as we renew our commitment to respect the dignity of people, we must continue to stand for the more difficult right and just, as opposed to settling for the easy wrongs of indifference, lack of interest and lack of concern.

Bishop Joe Vásquez of Austin reminds us that all people are called to work for and promote a society of truth and justice that benefits the common good for all people. “For this reason, the right to vote is a privilege and civic duty that citizens must take seriously,” he said recently.

As I write, I am reminded of a 2013 gathering of Christian Churches Together in Birmingham, Alabama, where we commemorated the 50th anniversary of Dr. Martin Luther King’s “Letter from Birmingham Jail,” the landmark moment in the pursuit for racial justice. When speaking about the letter, my friend, Bishop Shelton J. Fabre of Houma-Thibodaux challenged the whole church “to remember our collective past as a way to overcome historical ignorance and enact good public policy.”

Today, Bishop Fabre, the current chair of the USCCB Ad Hoc Committee Against Racism, continues to stress that the sacraments call us to “engage the conversion of human hearts in racial harmony,” in an effort “to transform attitude and action in ourselves and others.” As we remember our collective past, let us also carefully seek to encounter, dialogue and accompany each other in ways that respect the dignity of one another.

EQUAL ACCESS TO VOTE

In the “Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World,” the church teaches that the Christian faithful have a responsibility to support appropriate advocacy for “procedures which allow the largest possible number of citizens to participate in public affairs with genuine freedom” (Gaudium et Spes, 31). Considering

that voter restrictions had already increased prior to now — particularly after the U.S. Supreme Court stripped provisions of the Voting Rights Act in 2013 — the church expects that the conditions imposed upon those who seek to vote should reflect equal and appropriate access that reflects the dignity of every human person.

“It is fully in accord with human nature that politico-juridical structures be devised which will increasingly and without discrimination provide all citizens with effective opportunities to play a free, active part in the estab-

lishment of the juridical foundations of the political community, in the administration of public affairs, in determining the aims and the terms of reference of public bodies, and in the election of political leaders,” (Gaudium et Spes, 75).

People of good will must agree that “fraud and other subterfuges, by which some people evade the constraints of the law and the prescriptions of societal obligation, must be firmly condemned because they are incompatible with the requirements of justice” (CCC, 1916). However, public officials and political leaders must never nefariously use such a truth as the pretext to restrict access unjustifiably and excessively to the ballot box for the working poor and marginalized. The current contempt and bitterness that have bred the attempts to restrict voting for the marginalized is reminiscent of how unjust laws were used to permit limitations and constraints to equal access to voting in the past.

In their 2018 pastoral letter against racism, the U.S. bishops communicated unequivocally, “Many of our institutions still harbor, and too many of our laws still sanction, practices that deny justice and equal access to certain groups of people” (Open Wide Our Hearts, 10). For some, it appears that what is happening concerning voting across our nation does not seem to appropriately meet any standard of justice. If we are committed to

respecting the dignity of people, we must stand for what is right and just.

ADDRESSING INEQUALITY

The political firestorms, the social unrest and the absolute gridlock within legislatures are sure signs that we must focus more attention on not only charity and mercy, but also on our responsibility of addressing social inequality. Pope Francis tells us, “We must never forget that true power, at any level, is service, whose bright summit is upon the Cross.” Referencing the wisdom of Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI, we are reminded that while for man, authority is often synonymous with possession, dominion, and success, while for God authority is always synonymous with service, humility and love.

The Catechism presents to us the obligations of being faithful citizens who work for truth and the common good. The church teaches that political authorities should respect the fundamental rights of the human person, dispensing justice by respecting the rights of person, particularly families and the disadvantaged (CCC, 2237). We, citizens, have a responsibility to contribute to the common good in a spirit of truth, justice, solidarity and freedom. For out of profound gratitude, we must fulfill our rightful roles in the life of the political community (CCC, 2238) and exercise the right to vote (CCC, 2240).

In our daily lives may we continually recommit ourselves to be inspired by the Word of God and nourished by the sacraments, so that we may live with the Lord for eternity. Let us pray for one another, keeping before us that the will of God would never place us where his grace cannot sustain us. May the great challenges facing our state and nation today, and in our future, be met as great opportunities as we endeavor to become ever more faithful citizens!



DeKarlos Blackmon, OLSB, is the director of the Secretariat of Life, Charity and Justice for the Diocese of Austin. Contact him at (512) 949-2471 or dekarlos-blackmon@austindiocese.org.

A PERSONAL REFLECTION

May we be Spirit-filled Catholics pursuing a Spirit-filled America

By **Father Bruce Nieli, CSP** | Guest Columnist

At this stage of the pandemic, the U.S. is left with a soul that is hungering and thirsting. As Catholics we have an incredible opportunity to identify and fill that thirst as a thirst for the Holy Spirit and that hunger as a hunger for the Eucharist.

In the third Eucharistic Prayer we pray to God the Father: “May we who are nourished by the Body and Blood of your Son, and filled with his Holy Spirit, become one body, one spirit in Christ.”

St. Paul the Apostle teaches us that we are, indeed, “one body, and one spirit” (Eph 4:4). He further explains that “the love of God has been poured out into our hearts through the holy Spirit that has been given to us” (Rom 5:5).

We are thus united by the Holy Spirit not only individually to Christ but also to one another in Christ. We have

a center, individually and in human solidarity, in the Sacred Heart of Jesus, from which flows the Living Water of the Holy Spirit and the Precious Blood of the Holy Eucharist.

With this solidarity through the Holy Spirit and the Holy Eucharist, we more and more can become one nation. As a people we are sadly divided between pro-life and pro-poor factions. Catholic social teaching, with its seamless garment and consistent ethic of life approach to reverence for all life from womb to tomb, can truly unite our country spiritually and politically.

In Austin, I live on the corner of Guadalupe Street and Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. I have taken with me the banner of Our Lady of Guadalupe, Mother of America, with her image as a young pregnant, Native American woman, when I prayed before abortion clinics, marched with the United Farm Workers, and welcomed refugees at the U.S.-Mexico border. In her honor and at her request, a holy temple had

been erected centuries before, where the Eucharist would be celebrated for all the inhabitants of the Americas.

Martin Luther King’s great dream was for a table of brotherhood and sisterhood for all Americans. What better table than the table of the Eucharist!

And this solidarity through the Holy Spirit and the Holy Eucharist could bring about solidarity with all of creation, with Christ “the first born of all creation” (Col 1:15).

In “Laudato Si: On Care for Our Common Home,” Pope Francis writes, “In the Eucharist, fullness is already achieved; it is the living center of the universe ... Joined to the Incarnate Son, present in the Eucharist, the whole cosmos gives thanks to God. Indeed the Eucharist is itself an act of cosmic love ... The Eucharist joins heaven and earth; it embraces and penetrates all creation.”

What St. Paul writes in Colossians about Christ reconciling all of creation through the blood of the cross, the

pope identifies with Jesus’ Real Presence and action in the Eucharist, the Bread of Life come down from Heaven.

In the Eucharist, we are united with all “creatures of our God and King,” to quote St. Francis of Assisi. “Do this in memory of Me” makes all memories of deceased loved ones real and eternally present. We will never walk alone!

May we take the lead and accept the challenge and opportunity offered by Servant of God Father Isaac Thomas Hecker a century and a half ago, to pray and work for “a new awakening of the spirit of Christianity in America” — a truly Spirit-filled America: One Body, one Spirit, one nation, one creation!

Paulist Father Bruce Nieli is an evangelist and missionary based at St. Austin Parish in Austin. A native of Long Island, NY, he was ordained in 1973. Father Nieli leads parish missions and retreats, and speaks at a variety of diocesan and regional conferences. He is fully bilingual and does presentations in both English and Spanish.



Over the years, Black Catholics have set aside a day to reflect on pastoral needs. Continuing that tradition, Catholics of all cultures are invited to participate in this Day of Reflection.

Holy Cross Parish
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For more information or to register, visit
www.austindiocese.org/black-ministry-dor

A DAY of REFLECTION *concerning the* *Black Apostolate* **Faith • Encounter • Transformation**

Sacred Scripture illustrates many ways in which people not only encounter the Lord, but also are changed by their experiences. Father Oscar J. Pratt II of the Archdiocese of Boston will lead the Day of Reflection in response to the need for more meaningful encounter and accompaniment, leading to transformation.

Exploring *Faith: Encounter and Transformation*, we will consider how encounters of faith can shape our relationship with the Lord and how to better live in communion as the mystical body of Christ.

Join **Bishop Joe S. Vásquez**, **Lauren A. Warner**, and **Father Oscar J. Pratt II** as we explore the ways in which our encounters may authentically lead us to transformation.



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SAINTS FOR OUR TIMES

St. Rosalia, pray for us in the fight against COVID

By Mary Lou Gibson | Columnist

The Festino di Santa Rosalia (The Feast of St. Rosalia) is always a magnificent procession featuring the saint's relics in a grand chariot that is paraded through the town culminating in a grand spectacle of fireworks. It takes place every July 14 in Palermo, Sicily and is considered the most beautiful popular feast in all of Europe.

The chariot is shaped like a vessel and carries the statue of the Santuzza (Little Saint). A new chariot is constructed every year. It is filled with musicians and people dance around it singing hymns, prayers and acclamations as the celebration continues for the next five days with great enthusiasm.

The citizens of Palermo honor St. Rosalia with another important tradition. On Sept. 4, many of them walk barefoot from Palermo up to Mount Pellegrino. This is where the young Rosalia lived in a cave for the last 16 years of her life devoting herself to penances, praying and weaving

garlands of wildflowers that she strung around a large wooden crucifix.

No other woman is so beloved as Palermo's own St. Rosalia. Her image is everywhere in the city and there are always flowers nearby. According to legend, when St. Rosalia performed miracles,

Today St. Rosalia is invoked internationally against the plague and the citizens of Palermo asked for her protection against COVID-19 in 2020. Her feast day is Sept. 4.

people noticed the sweet odor of flowers that came from her presence.

Rosalia was born around 1130 into a noble family at the court of Roger II, king of Sicily. Her father was Sinibald, lord of Quisquina, who was descended from Charlemagne.

As she grew, her parents tried to arrange a suitable marriage for her, but Rosalia refused all the choices offered to her. She was 14 when she retreated from the world with her crucifix, her discipline and a few books, and left her father's castle by night.

She went to live in a cave at San Stefano Quisquina in southern Italy. She engraved her name in rocks and wood ("Ego Rosalia") declaring her existence to future hikers.

After some years she moved back to Palermo to a cave on Monte Pellegrino,

her father's property. David Farmer writes in the "Oxford Dictionary of Saints" that she left an inscription there that reads "I have taken the resolution to live in this cave for the love of my Lord Jesus Christ." She died there 16 years later lying in a bed of water and lime. Stalagmites formed around her. The people of Palermo immediately recognized Rosalia as a saint, but over the years, they lost track of her until 1624 when a terrible plague hit Palermo.

Sarah Gallick writes in "The Big Book of Women Saints" that Rosalia appeared

to a stricken soldier and ordered him to make a pilgrimage to the top of Monte Pellegrino. He did so and returned with his health restored. People began to wonder if Rosalia could save the entire city and they searched for her cave. Entering her grotto probably for the first time in centuries, they found her skeleton. Her relics were moved to the cathedral in a great procession and the plague that had ravaged Palermo for a year suddenly ended. The recovery of her relics is commemorated by the July chariot procession.

Farmer writes that doctors and theologians authenticated Rosalia's bones in part through the devotional artifacts found with them.

Today St. Rosalia rests in the Monte Pellegrino Hermitage. She is invoked internationally against the plague and the citizens of Palermo asked for her protection against COVID-19 in 2020. She is the patroness of Palermo and her feast day is Sept. 4.

Mary Lou Gibson is a freelance writer and a member of St. Austin Parish in Austin.

FOR THE JOURNEY

We can do small things to bring more good news to the world

By Effie Caldarola | Catholic News Service

Ready for some good news? Who isn't? Just a quick look at headlines during the past few days is sobering.

With our first cup of coffee one morning, we learned about the murderous earthquake in Haiti. There's the grim U.N. Climate Report. The Taliban has overtaken Kabul, Afghanistan, and the terror felt there, especially by women and girls, is palpable. Fires rage on in California, the heat wave strikes the Pacific Northwest again, and the COVID-19 pandemic surges.

OK, did I say good news? Bad news comes in devastating waves. Sometimes, good news is like drops of soft spring rain.

For several years, my friends Tim and Ruth have been loyal to a man Ruth met while visiting the detained as part of her ministry. A Somali, he had fled his country because of

life-threatening violence. He languished in a jail two years here in Omaha, Nebraska, visited by Ruth and warehoused by the government while seeking asylum.

Three times, the local immigration judge ruled his plea credible, and he was finally freed from jail. Under surveillance, with nowhere to go and no employment, he was taken in by Tim and Ruth, who made their home his for months as his petition wound its way through a hostile system.

Each time the local judge reiterated that his asylum request was legitimate, the Virginia appeals court sent his request back to the Omaha courts on repetitive and flimsy technicalities.

Finally, some immigration leaders suggested he was never going to make progress in our system, and they assisted him in reaching Canada. (Don't ask how.)

In Canada, he was welcomed. His intelligence and credibility were recognized, and he was provided with housing, training and the possibility

that his wife and children, who had fled to South Africa, could eventually join him.

Before COVID-19, Ruth and Tim drove their two cars to Canada and left one for him. They decided they could get by with just one. Their commitment to him has been unwavering.

Today, the good news: His family made it to Uganda, where they were retested for COVID-19 and will await the next leg of their journey to Canada, where they've been accepted as permanent residents. Through Ruth and Tim's family, friends and members of our faith-sharing community, Ignatian Associates, money has been raised for airline flights and other needs.

They are a lovely family, and Canada is blessed to have them.

You won't see this family mentioned in any headlines this week.

There's a saying, "Yard by yard life is hard, inch by inch life's a cinch." The good that we do as individuals is often inch by inch, while headlines are yards of sorrow.

We can't send millions of dollars to Haiti, but we can donate something to Catholic Relief Services to help. We can't grant security to all the young people waiting for citizenship through the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program (DACA), but we can write our legislators and let them know we care about those young folks.

We can't solve the climate crisis on our own, but we can put up a clothesline in the backyard and turn off the dryer. We can compost and recycle.

It's easy to be disheartened by headlines with their yards of bad news. Maybe we should focus on walking that inch each day to bring good news to someone.

I'll never be as generous as Tim and Ruth, opening my home to a stranger and walking with him through years of struggle and exile. But their example challenges me to stretch those inches out a little.

Effie Caldarola is a freelance writer and columnist for Catholic News Service.

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.

Sept. 2: The Maria Goretti Network, a self-help support network for those affected by abuse and their families, meets virtually on the first Thursday of each month from 7:30 to 9 p.m. For more information about the meetings and the group, contact tbreaux@mgoretti.org or (713) 851-3708.

Sept. 5: St. John Parish in Fayetteville will host its annual Picnic on the parish grounds. Mass featuring polka music will be celebrated at 9 a.m. Barbecue beef, pork and sausage plates will be served beginning at 10:30 a.m. Activities for all age! Details: (979) 378-2244.

Sept. 5: Sts. Cyril and Methodius Parish in Granger will host its annual Bazaar from 11 a.m. to 11 p.m. A barbecue and sausage dinner with all the trimmings will be served for \$12 per plate. Barbecue by the pound will be available at the pit beginning at 7 a.m. The live auction will begin at 1:30 p.m. Fun games for all ages will begin at noon. The dance begins at 7 p.m. Details: www.sscmchurch.org.

Sept. 6: Diocesan offices will be closed for Labor Day.

Sept. 7: The Youth Ministry Summit for all parish youth ministers for formation and community will be held from 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Details: (512) 949-2464.

Sept. 11: The annual Scouting Bishop's Recognition Mass will begin at 10 a.m. Details: (512) 949-2464.

Sept. 13: Bishop Joe Vásquez will celebrate Mass at 12:05 p.m. at St. Mary Cathedral in Austin and welcome the Pandemic Crucifix: A Journey of Hope and Healing. The bishop will extend a blessing to all medical and health-care workers during the Mass.

Sept. 16: An Austin-area men's discernment dinner will be held from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. at St. Mary Cathedral in Austin. Details: (512) 949-2430 or godiscalling.me.

Burse

The Diocesan Council of Catholic Women has completed a burse for the Clerical Endowment Fund (CEF) in honor of Father Cesar Guzman-Diaz.

The totals for the burse as of June 30 are listed below by council.

Austin	\$853.00
Bastrop/Lockhart	\$517.00
Brenham/La Grange	\$1,183.00
Bryan/College Station	\$739.00
Georgetown/Round Rock	\$72.00
Waco	\$5,625.00
Previous Balance	\$3,335.79
Total	\$12,324.79

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

Sept. 17-19: "Together in God's Love" is a retreat for couples preparing to receive the sacrament of matrimony. The weekend includes talks on faith, communication, sexuality and stewardship in the context of a Catholic marriage. Details: (512) 949-2487 or luisa-depoo@austindiocese.org.

Sept. 19: Holy Trinity Parish in Corn Hill will host its annual Bazaar on the parish grounds. Mass will be celebrated at 10:30 a.m. A barbecue and fried chicken will be served from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. (adults \$12/children \$6; drive-through available until 12:30 p.m.). There will be live polka music during the meal, children's games, live and silent auctions and kolaches for sale. Hamburgers will be available at 2:30 p.m. Details: www.holytrinityofcornhill.org

Sept. 19: St. Joseph Parish in Marlin will host its Fall Festival beginning at 11 a.m. Chicken fajita plates will be served for \$10 each. Activities include a bake sale, live music, snow cones and a live auction at 2:30 p.m. Everyone is invited.

Sept. 22: The Society of St. Vincent de Paul Diocesan Council of Austin will host the Serving in Hope Virtual Benefit at 6 p.m. Listen to stories of people helping people and find out how to make a difference by supporting the council's works of charity. Register: www.ssvdp.org/serving-in-hope.

Sept. 22: Join Franciscan Father Albert Haase as he gives a day retreat on the Lord's Prayer at St. Joseph Parish in Bryan from 9:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. As early as the second century, the Lord's Prayer was referred to as a "summary of the entire Gospel." It was viewed not simply as a prayer method, but also a statement that incorporated all the teachings of Jesus. Cost is \$40 which includes lunch. Details: austindiocese.org/cedarbrake or (254) 780-2436.

Sept. 25: Holy Family Parish in Copperas Cove will host its seventh annual Fall Fest from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. on the parish grounds. Activities include a variety of food, games for all ages, train rides and more.

Sept. 25: The Central Texas Fellowship of Catholic Men will host a Family Night at the Dell Diamond in Round Rock. Father James Misko, vicar general of the Diocese of Austin, will throw out the first pitch at 6:50 p.m. as the Round Rock Express take on the Tacoma Rainiers. A portion of each ticket sold goes back to CTFM. Tickets can be purchased at https://fevo.me/ctfcm (Section Lawn - \$12.50 or Section 113 - \$20.50).

Sept. 26: St. Elizabeth of Hungary Parish in Pflugerville will host its annual Fiestita from 10:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. on the parish

Official schedule

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



Bishop Joe S. Vásquez

Sept. 4: Confirmation, St. Peter the Apostle Parish, Austin, 10 a.m.

Sept. 7: Interviews with Diaconal Candidates, Pastoral Center
Mass for Legion of Mary (100 years), St. Mary Cathedral, Austin, 6 p.m.

Sept. 8: Interviews with Diaconal Candidates, Pastoral Center

Sept. 9: Secretariat Directors, Pastoral Center, 9 a.m.

Catholic Charities of Central Texas Annual Meeting, St. Theresa Parish, Austin, 5:30 p.m.

Sept. 10: Diocesan Health Care Forum, 10 a.m.

Sept. 11: Scout Mass, St. Joseph Parish, Bryan, 10 a.m.

Sept. 12: Confirmation, St. Charles Borromeo, Kingsland, (joined by Our Lady of the Lake Mission, Sunrise Beach), 9 a.m.

Sept. 13: Mass, St. Mary Cathedral, Austin, 12:05 p.m.

Sept. 14: Priest Personnel Board, Pastoral Center, Austin, 9:30 a.m.

Sept. 16: Catholic Foundation, Pastoral Center, 11 a.m.

grounds. Activities include live music, dancing, games for all ages, live and silent auctions and fun for the whole family. Details: www.stelizabethpf.org.

Sept. 26: St. Mary of the Assumption Parish in String Prairie will hold its annual Homecoming Festival. Mass will be celebrated at 10 a.m. Barbecue brisket plates will be sold from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. There will be games and activities for all ages. A live auction will start at 1 p.m. Details: stmarysp.church

Sept. 26: St. Martin Parish in Tours will host its annual Picnic from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. on the parish grounds. A fried chicken and sausage dinner with green beans, dressing and cole slaw will be served for \$12 per plate. A live auction will begin at 1 p.m. There will also be a country store, games for all ages and fun for the whole family. Details: stmartins.tours@gmail.com.

Sept. 30: The Red Mass will be celebrated at 6 p.m. at St. Mary Cathedral in Austin. This is a Mass of the Holy Spirit celebrated annually at the opening of the judicial year.

Oct. 2: St Mary Parish in Pin Oak, located at 732 FM 2104 near Smithville, will host its annual Fall Festival on the parish grounds. An outdoor Mass will be celebrated at 3:30 p.m. to kick off the event. A barbecue pork and beef meal with all the trimmings will be served from 5-7 p.m. Adult and plates to go are \$12; plates for children under 10 are \$5.

Sept. 17: School Mass and Visit, Cathedral School of St. Mary, St. Mary Cathedral, Austin, 8:30 a.m.

Sept. 22: Confirmation, San Francisco Javier Parish, Austin, (joined by San Juan Diego Mission, Stony Point), 6 p.m.

Sept. 23: EIM Review Board, Pastoral Center, 9 a.m.

Sept. 24: Confirmation, St. Margaret Mary Parish, Cedar Park, 6:30 p.m.

Sept. 28: Archangels Mass, St. Michael Catholic Academy, 9:30 a.m.

Vocations Meeting, Pastoral Center, 1:30 p.m.

Sept. 29: Texas Catholic Conference of Bishops Meeting, San Antonio, 10:30 a.m.

Sept. 30: Red Mass, St. Mary Cathedral, Austin, 6 p.m.

Oct. 1: Monthly Budget Meeting, Pastoral Center, 8:30 a.m.

Blessing of Christus Santa Rosa Hospital & Chapel, San Marcos, 1 p.m.

Oct. 2: Annual Deacons' Convocation, St. William Parish, Round Rock

Oct. 3: Mass of Rededication, St. Jerome Parish, Waco, 11 a.m.

Oct. 4-7: Annual Priests' Convocation, Austin Marriott Hotel, Round Rock

Oct. 9: Catholic Services Appeal Parish and Donor Reception, St. William, Round Rock, 11 a.m.

Mass of Rededication, St. Mary, Church of the Assumption Parish, Taylor, 4 p.m.

Oct. 10: Mass, Schoenstatt Shrine, Austin, 11 a.m.

Other activities include a silent auction, cake wheel and live auction.

Oct. 3: The Catholic Church in U.S. celebrates Respect Life Sunday on the first Sunday in October. For details pro-life activities in the Diocese of Austin, visit austindiocese.org/life.

Oct. 9: St. Mary, Our Lady of the Lake Parish in Lago Vista will host its Oktobertfest celebration from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. on the parish grounds. Activities include a variety of foods, games for all ages, and live music. Details: www.stmaryoktobertfest.org.

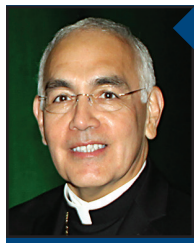
Oct. 10: Visitation Parish in Westphalia will host the Westphalia Picnic on the parish grounds. It will be bigger and better than ever and all are invited. Details: churchofthevisitation.org.

Oct. 10: The Marian Shrine of Our Lady of Schoenstatt in Austin will celebrate the feast day of Our Lady of Schoenstatt. Bishop Joe Vásquez will celebrate Mass at 11 a.m. and all are invited to stay for lunch, games and family fun. Details: www.schoenstatt-austin.us or (512) 330-0602.

Oct. 15: Spend a fall day at Cedarbrake Catholic Retreat Center in Temple being renewed in the spirit by reflecting on God's love through the beauty and silence of nature, plus his Word and the holy Eucharist. Brian Egan will lead this day of reflection, which includes Mass. Cost is \$40, which includes lunch. Details: austindiocese.org/cedarbrake or (254) 780-2436.

ENTREVISTA DEL SEÑOR OBISPO

Que nos demos cuenta del don puro que recibimos en la Eucaristía



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, estamos continuando nuestra serie sobre la Misa. Habiendo discutido la Liturgia de la Palabra, ahora nuestro enfoque es en la Liturgia de la Eucaristía. Esta parte de la Misa comienza con la presentación de las ofrendas ¿Por qué hacemos esto?

Obispo Vásquez: Sí, durante la Misa, después de haber sido alimentados en la mesa de la Palabra, ahora buscamos ser alimentados en la mesa de la Eucaristía. La Palabra y la Eucaristía, juntas constituyen un acto de culto. El pan, el vino y los dones financieros, sirven como símbolos del dar de nosotros mismos y de nuestra disposición de cuidar a los demás. Este es un momento importante que le permite a toda la asamblea participar en la celebración de la Eucaristía. A través del sacerdote y con él, los fieles se ofrecen a sí mismos para ser transformados tal como el pan y el vino son transformados en el Cuerpo y la Sangre de Cristo. Por lo tanto, durante la Oración Eucarística, cuando el sacerdote toma el pan y el vino y los eleva hacia Dios, también eleva a la gente hacia Dios para que sea transformada y se convierta en Cristo en el mundo de hoy.

Editora: Durante la oración Eucarística, el sacerdote actúa en el nombre de Cristo – in persona Christi. ¿Qué significa esto?

Obispo Vásquez: Nuestra tradición Católica nos enseña que en el día de su ordenación, el sacerdote es transformado y se convierte, verdaderamente, en la presencia de Cristo en el mundo. Por lo tanto, es capaz de actuar en el nombre de Cristo y de propiciar la salvación que Cristo ofrece al mundo. El sacerdote que se encuentra en el altar, no se representa a sí mismo, sino que representa a Cristo. Él habla por Cristo, y actúa en el nombre de Cristo. Sus acciones en el altar son de hecho aquellas de Cristo. Así que, tenemos la seguridad de que no es solamente un hombre que se encuentra ahí haciendo estas cosas, sino que es Cristo quien está presente para nosotros.

El Papa Emérito Benedicto XVI dijo que en el altar, un sacerdote “está al

servicio de los hombres en Cristo, por Cristo y con Cristo.” Esto significa que en los sagrados misterios, el sacerdote no se representa a sí mismo, sino que habla por Cristo.

El Catecismo de la Iglesia Católica enseña que, “En el servicio eclesial del ministro ordenado es Cristo mismo quien está presente a su Iglesia como Cabeza de su cuerpo, Pastor de su rebaño, Sumo Sacerdote del sacrificio redentor, Maestro de la Verdad”.

Editora: Después de la consagración y antes de recibir la Eucaristía, oramos, “Señor, no soy digno de que entres en mi casa, pero una palabra tuya, bastará para sanarme”. Me parece una oración poderosa. ¿Qué significa?

Obispo Vásquez: Esta oración expresa nuestra creencia de que el Cuerpo y la Sangre de Cristo son un don puro de Dios para nosotros. Nunca debemos pensar que este es un don que se nos debe o que tenemos los méritos para recibir este don. La Eucaristía es un sacramento que podemos recibir con frecuencia y hasta diariamente, y nunca debemos de darlo por sentado. Ya que es a través de la gran generosidad y misericordia de Dios que somos capaces de recibir este don.

Como Católicos debemos preparar nuestras almas, mentes, cuerpos y corazonas lo mejor que podamos para recibir a Cristo de una manera apropiada. Si alguien está consciente de haber cometido un pecado grave – pecado mortal – debemos acudir a la confesión antes de recibir la Eucaristía. El sacramento de la reconciliación nos prepara para recibir la Eucaristía con todo el corazón y siendo tan dignos como sea posible. La iglesia nos pide preparar nuestros cuerpos para recibir la Eucaristía ayunando por al menos una hora antes de recibirla. Esta es nuestra manera de expresar nuestro hambre y deseo de recibir a Cristo, Nuestro Señor Eucarístico en la Sagrada Comunión.

Editora: La Eucaristía es la fuente y cúspide de nuestra fe. ¿Quién puede recibir la Eucaristía?

Obispo Vásquez: Sabemos que la Eucaristía es el Cuerpo y Sangre, alma y divinidad de nuestro Señor y Salvador Jesucristo. La iglesia enseña que la Eucaristía es recibida por aquellos que entienden y creen en quien están recibiendo. Estamos agradecidos al Papa Pío X que disminuyó la edad a la cual un niño(a) puede recibir la Eucaristía a los 7 años, que es



considerada la edad de la razón. Por lo tanto, en nuestros programas de educación religiosa instruimos a nuestros niños en la fe mientras les enseñamos también sobre los sacramentos de la Eucaristía y la confesión.

Dios está realmente presente en la Eucaristía. A través de la substanciación la sustancia del pan y el vino es completamente transformada en el cuerpo y la sangre de Cristo mientras que lo que vemos, sentimos y probamos permanece sin cambio. Aquellos que reciben la Eucaristía deben entender esto para que cuando el ministro les presente la hostia y les diga, “El Cuerpo de Cristo,” el que la reciba pueda con orgullo declarar “Amén”.

Editora: Si alguien no recibe la Eucaristía, ¿Qué deben hacer en su lugar?

Obispo Vásquez: Si alguien no puede recibir la Eucaristía, la persona puede hacer una comunión espiritual. Esto es un momento de oración en el que la persona dice a Dios, “Dios, sé que no puedo recibirte físicamente en este momento como yo desearía. Por lo tanto, te pido ahora que vengas a mí espiritualmente”. Esta simple oración implora a Dios para

que nos mire con compasión, amor y bondad y que nos ofrezca su gracia.

En la entrevista de este mes, el Obispo José Vásquez se enfoca en la Liturgia de la Eucaristía y en cómo los fieles son llamados a prepararse para recibir el Cuerpo de Cristo. (Foto por Joshua Guenther)

que nos mire con compasión, amor y bondad y que nos ofrezca su gracia. Durante esta pandemia, mucha gente ha encontrado solaz y consuelo a través de la comunión espiritual. La Eucaristía es el acto supremo de Dios. Por lo tanto, debemos de siempre desear recibirla físicamente y recibir alegremente a nuestro Señor Eucarístico.

Editora: ¿Cuál es su oración para aquellos de nosotros al pasar a recibir el Cuerpo de Cristo?

Obispo Vásquez: Padre amoroso, que recibamos el más preciado don del Cuerpo y Sangre de tu Hijo con humildad y entendiendo tu Verdadera Presencia. Que a través de tu Palabra y la Eucaristía, nuestras vidas sean transformadas para que nos convirtamos en la presencia de Cristo en este nuestro mundo. Te lo pedimos a través de Cristo nuestro Señor, que vive y reina por los siglos de los siglos. Amén.

Escuelas Católicas dan la bienvenida a alumnos que vuelven a clases

Por Mary P. Walker | Corresponsal

Aunque la incertidumbre por causa de la pandemia continúa, las Escuelas Católicas en la Diócesis de Austin están emocionadas de recibir de vuelta a sus los estudiantes.

“Las escuelas están trabajando arduamente para asegurar que los estudiantes, maestros y personal regresen a un ambiente seguro y enriquecedor, tal como lo hicieron el año pasado,” dijo Misty Poe, superintendente de las Escuelas Católicas en la Diócesis de Austin.

Avanzando con esperanza, gratitud y optimismo, las escuelas Católicas reflejan el tema de este año, “Cristo lo renueva todo”. Las inscripciones han aumentado con un total de número de estudiantes de más de 256 que el año pasado. Además, 130 nuevos empleados a lo largo de la diócesis se han unido al profesorado y empleados.

St. Austin Catholic School en Austin está dando la bienvenida a un reto particular. Dado que la construcción de un edificio de cinco pisos que será usado por la escuela y la parroquia se iniciará en diciembre, la escuela entera se ha mudado temporalmente a San José Parish por los próximos dos años.

La directora Tara Cevallos explicó que la nueva construcción ofrecerá un mejor uso del espacio y permitirá que la escuela se expanda a dos salones por grado. Además, la escuela nueva tendrá un laboratorio de ciencias moderno y espacio de trabajo para que los estudiantes aprendan sobre robótica, codificación y circuitos.

“Nos estamos alistando para mudarnos a un edificio innovador que nos permitirá crecer exponencialmente en el futuro,” dijo Cevallos.

Mientras tanto, la escuela se ha mudado para dar espacio a la construcción. San José Parish ofreció su ayuda, y Cevallos dijo que están emocionados por moverse a un ambiente Católico. Se ofrecerá un servicio de autobús para ayudar a las familias a llegar al campus escolar temporal.

Las instalaciones de San José ofrecen suficiente espacio para salón de clases, con otros espacios para actividades distintas a las del salón de clases. Como no cuenta con gimnasio, las clases de educación física se llevarán a cabo al aire libre. Una vez a la

semana, el laboratorio de química de la cercana San Juan Diego Catholic High School estará disponible para los estudiantes de secundaria de St. Austin.

St. Joseph Catholic Academy en Killeen también está enfrentando cambios. La inscripción ha crecido de 85 a 240 estudiantes en dos años. Con la creciente demanda por la educación Católica, la academia agregará el noveno grado este año, con planes de continuar agregando grados de preparatoria.

“¡Es un reto divertido!” dijo el director Dirk Steffens. Él explicó que el modelo clásico de educación de la escuela es una manera diferente de aprender. Los padres quieren que esto continúe para sus hijos en un ambiente Católico más allá del octavo grado. La creciente inscripción provocó que la escuela contratara a más maestros y personal y agregara dos edificios portátiles. También, la escuela compró un autobús que llevará a estudiantes desde Copperas Cove a Killeen.

En Bryan, St. Joseph Catholic School está dando la bienvenida a su nueva directora, Julia Mishler. Ella trae consigo 15 años de experiencia en educación como una maestra de inglés, entrenadora de instrucción, asistente del director, y directora en el sistema de escuelas públicas. Su experiencia también incluye servir como la primera directora de una nueva secundaria en College Station.

Mishler cree que “el Señor proveyó mucha dirección” en su decisión de ser parte de St. Joseph Catholic School, con campus de primaria y secundaria sirviendo a estudiantes desde PreK hasta el doceavo grado. Ella espera con ansias experimentar las ricas tradiciones y cultura de la escuela de 127 años, la cual espera aumentar el número de sus inscripciones con alrededor de 30 estudiantes. Una vez que el año escolar esté encaminado, ella liderará un proceso de planeación estratégica que involucre a la comunidad escolar.

Reflexionando sobre la resiliencia de las escuelas diocesanas mientras lidiaban con la pandemia el año pasado, Mishler está preocupada, pero no alarmada sobre cómo la pandemia las afectará este año.

“No importa lo que las circunstancias requieran, tenemos planes. Lo tomaremos un día a la vez y tratare-

mos de mantener a nuestros(as) niños(as) a salvo, mientras les proveemos de la mejor educación posible,” dijo Mishler.

Tim Cullen, el nuevo presidente de Holy Family Catholic School y de St. Dominic Savio Catholic High School en Austin, guiará a estas escuelas bajo el modelo de gubernatura de administración compartida. La gubernatura compartida entre las escuelas fue creada en 2013 para ayudar a las escuelas a trabajar juntas para proveer de un ambiente de educación Católica positivo en el norte de Austin.

Cullen dijo que la coordinación y colaboración sirven mejor a las familias de diferentes parroquias con niños(as) de edades de primaria y preparatoria. Sin embargo, las escuelas no están “fusionadas,” y continúan manteniendo sus mesas directivas, sus identidades y sus tradiciones separadas.

Refiriéndose a la proximidad de las escuelas, Cullen dijo, “Tiene sentido que construyamos una relación a través del estacionamiento”. Él espera que las escuelas “natural y orgánicamente” encuentren maneras de colaborar, y actualmente, varios miembros del personal son compartidos por las escuelas.

Cullen trae consigo 35 años de experiencia en educación. Él comenzó su carrera en las escuelas públicas de Ohio como un maestro de educación especial antes de cambiar a responsabilidades administrativas. Después se convirtió en superintendente de la



El Padre Richard O'Rourke de los Misioneros del Sagrado Corazón, pastor de St. Paul Chong Hasang Parish en Harker Heights, visitó a los estudiantes de St. Joseph Catholic Academy en Killeen durante la primera semana de clases. St. Joseph sirve ahora a estudiantes desde pre-K3 hasta el noveno grado. (Foto por Kim Clark)

Bishop Hoffman Catholic School en Fremont, Ohio. Después de ello, lideró St. Anthony School in Maui, Hawái, en ese entonces, una escuela recientemente consolidada.

Aunque él y su esposa aman Hawái, ellos querían regresar al continente para estar más cerca de su familia. Cuando él vio el anuncio de la vacante e investigó estas dos escuelas, se sintió obligado a aplicar. Él alaba la dedicación de ambas comunidades escolares, el liderazgo de sus directores, y la cálida recepción de la que ha sido objeto.

“Estoy muy emocionado de avanzar. Creo que si somos sinceros y honramos nuestro convenio con Dios de servir a nuestros niños, se nos dará lo que necesitamos,” dijo Cullen.

Para mayor información sobre las 20 escuelas Católicas en la Diócesis de Austin, visite www.csdatx.org.

Taco Vocacional es para jóvenes solteros

Adultos Jóvenes: ¿Qué es una vocación? ¿Cuál es tu vocación? Ven y escucha; Dios te esta llamando a algo magnífico. “Taco Vocacional,” es una serie de cuatro semanas donde veremos cómo oír la llamada de Dios y nutrirla. Únete a nosotros los martes comenzando el 31 de agosto al 21 de septiembre de 6:30 a 8:30 p.m. en el Pastoral Center en Austin. Para jóvenes solteros (18 a 35) contenido en español. Para obtener detalles, visite la página de la Pastoral Juvenil Hispana o llame al (512) 949-2466.

Profundas raíces franciscanas corren en St. Francis Parish en Waco

Por **Alfredo E. Cardenas** | Corresponsal

Con cada día que pasa, St. Francis on the Brazos Parish en Waco está trabajando para superar los efectos de la pandemia del COVID-19. Mientras que más y más parroquianos se vacunan, muchos de ellos en las instalaciones de la parroquia, estan regresando a la parroquia que celebrará su centésimo aniversario en 2024.

Franciscanos Misioneros de la Tercera Orden Regular han servido en la parroquia desde sus inicios en 1924. La iglesia actual fue construida en los años treinta y recuerda a otras misiones Franciscanas tradicionales en Texas, notablemente la Misión de San José en San Antonio.

El Padre Eduardo Jazo, miembro de la Tercera Orden Regular de San Francisco y pastor de St. Francis on the Brazos Parish, dijo que la parroquia está trabajando para restaurar los ministerios a lo que eran antes de la pandemia.

St. Francis ha ofrecido clínicas de vacunación en los terrenos de la parroquia y ha practicado todos los protocolos de distanciamiento social establecidos por la Diócesis de Austin. Ha dejado de transmitir las Misas Dominicales y ahora invita a parroquianos a que regresen a la iglesia a participar en la Misa y a recibir el Cuerpo de Cristo en persona.

Sin embargo, para su sorpresa, inesperadamente, algunos Católicos de habla hispana desatendidos de Florida, Monterrey y Ciudad de México han contactado al Padre Jazo para que vuelva a transmitir la Misa

de manera virtual. Además, algunos parroquianos locales no se sienten cómodos con la Misa en el interior del edificio, dijo.

El Padre Jazo hizo notar que antes de volver a la Misa en el interior sin restricciones, estuvieron celebrando Misa en el exterior en terrenos de la iglesia, y la asistencia era de alrededor de 250 personas, mientras que para la Misa en el interior de la iglesia, el conteo ha bajado a 200.

La pandemia también ha afectado las finanzas de la parroquia, pero están tratando de abordar la caída financiera de manera creativa, dijo el Padre Jazo. La parroquia ha reactivado un memorial de ladrillo a San Francisco que comenzó hacer alrededor de 20 años el Padre Fernando Hernández. Bajo el programa, las personas podían comprar un ladrillo con una inscripción por \$100. La parroquia dedicará los ladrillos el Domingo de Pascua, y los fondos serán usados para restaurar las instalaciones parroquiales con nueva pintura y otras reparaciones necesarias.

Este otoño la parroquia vuelve a su programa regular de educación religiosa; las clases serán ofrecidas los miércoles en la noche, y todos los estudiantes están invitados a asistir a Misa como parte de una clase. El programa del año pasado estuvo limitado a aquellos recibiendo sus sacramentos, y en la primavera 120 estudiantes recibieron la Sagrada primera Comunión y 50 estudiantes fueron confirmados.

El Padre Jazo dijo que el COVID-19 recortó el programa parroquial de ministerio juvenil el año pasado. La

parroquia trató de establecer programas virtuales, “pero los muchachos(as) ya recibían demasiadas clases en Zoom, así que no funcionó,” dijo.

Aún así, los jóvenes están activos en la parroquia. De los 25 graduados de preparatoria de la parroquia este año, muchos estuvieron activos en el grupo de Danza, sirvieron como servidores del altar y ayudaron en el programa de educación religiosa. Además, este verano la parroquia llevó a cabo un exitoso programa de Escuela Bíblica de Vacaciones, con 90 estudiantes participantes, que fue lo máximo que el programa podía manejar.

La parroquia tiene un núcleo activo de voluntarios, incluyendo 25 ministros extraordinarios de la Santa Comunión, 33 lectores y 16 ministros de hospitalidad. Sin embargo, con el COVID, estos voluntarios han disminuido también. Últimamente, sin embargo, las visitas a los confinados en el hogar y a aquellos en hogares de ancianos se han reiniciado. El Padre Jazo dijo que a cada ministro se le pide que visite al menos a una persona confinada en su hogar, incluyendo a aquellos en asilos de ancianos. En la actualidad se encuentran visitando alrededor de 15 personas en una base regular.

St. Francis tiene cinco coros – una para cada una de las cuatro Misas en español y uno para la Misa en inglés. Ochenta por ciento de los parroquianos son hablantes de español, y el Padre Jazo tiene por práctica el encontrar a los parroquianos en el lenguaje en el que se sientan más cómodos: inglés, español o una mezcla de ambos. Las clases de educación religiosa son en inglés, tal como la Misa de los niños(as). St Francis Parish también es



St. Francis on the Brazos Parish en Waco fue construida en los años 30's de manera similar a otras misiones Franciscanas en Texas. La parroquia celebrará su centésimo aniversario en 2024. (Foto cortesía de St. Francis Parish)

conocida como el lugar de nacimiento del Movimiento Cursillista en los Estados Unidos. El movimiento, diseñado para ayudar a los participantes a entender qué significa ser Cristiano en el mundo de hoy, fue introducido a la parroquia en 1957. Aunque el programa no es tan activo como lo fue una vez, el Padre Jazo tiene confianza de que el Espíritu Santo inspirará a los corazones a que se involucren. “El Cursillo no va a morir aquí por que aquí nació,” dijo el Padre Jazo.

También cree que el Espíritu Santo está abriendo corazones para considerar el llamado al sacerdocio y la vida religiosa. El Padre Jazo está trabajando en la actualidad con dos parroquianos que están discerniendo el llamado al sacerdocio. También, dijo que un fraile Franciscano ha sido asignado a la parroquia quien trabajará con los jóvenes para ayudarles a discernir el llamado al sacerdocio o la vida religiosa.

Las Misas son celebradas los domingos a las 8 a.m. en español, 10:30 en inglés y a las 12 p.m. en español, con la vigilia Sabatina en español a las 7 p.m. Para mayor información sobre la parroquia, visite stfrancistorwaco.org.

La vacunación es un acto de amor, dice el papa

Cuando cada individuo realiza un pequeño acto de caridad, como el de recibir la vacuna contra el COVID-19, cada gesto agregado puede transformar el mundo, dijo el Papa Francisco en un anuncio de una campaña mundial. “Ser vacunado con vacunas autorizadas por autoridades competentes es un acto de amor. Y contribuir para asegurarnos de que la mayoría de la gente esté vacunada es un acto de amor – amor por uno mismo, amor por nuestra familia y amigos, amor por todas las personas,” dijo en un anuncio para el servicio público emitido el 18 de agosto en Roma. El mensaje en video fue parte de un esfuerzo global por parte de la organización sin fines de lucro, basada en EU, no partidista Ad Council y la campaña colaborativa contra el COVID “It’s up to you” para aumentar la confianza de la gente en las vacunas contra el COVID-19 al recordarles que las vacunas son seguras, efectivas y salvan la vida de las personas. El Dicasterio Vaticano para el Desarrollo Humano Integral también cooperó con la iniciativa educativa. El video de tres minutos en Español con subtítulos en inglés, español y portugués muestra al Papa Francisco y a seis cardenales y arzobispos del Norte y Sudamérica.

LA IGLESIA DOMÉSTICA

Cada parroquia es una familia de familias

Por Gustavo Rodríguez | Columnista Invitado

Aunque todas las familias son únicas, tienen un grupo de experiencias comunes tales como las celebraciones, los retos y las luchas. Las familias, grandes y/o pequeñas, enfrentan la vida juntos mientras experimentan felicidad y superan obstáculos. La manera en que las familias responden a estas experiencias pone las bases de la unidad familiar. Esta unidad es el núcleo desde donde crecemos, aprendemos y donde nuestro verdadero desarrollo se lleva a cabo. Esto dispone el escenario para la manera en que respondemos e interactuamos socialmente por el resto de nuestras vidas.

En mi familia, sé que cada obstáculo y reto que se nos presenta es una carga menor cuando buscamos el apoyo y la guía mutua. Buscamos consolarnos unos a otros. Confiamos en que la familia nos acompañe en los buenos tiempos y en los difíciles.

La belleza de ser parte de una comunidad de fe es que, además de contar con nuestra familia inmediata, también tenemos una familia eclesial. Cada una de nuestras parroquias es una familia de familias. Cuando una familia asiste a Misa, es una de muchas familias – algunas parroquias tienen varios miles de familias registradas. Todas estas familias son todas una familia – juntos formamos el Cuerpo de Cristo.

Como una familia de fe, estamos llamados de manera colectiva e individual a profundizar en nuestra relación con Dios. Cada vez que celebramos un sacramento, fortalecemos y construimos nuestra familia. Como familia de fe, también nos acompañamos cuando bautizamos a nuestros bebés, celebramos la Eucaristía, somos testigos del sacramento del matrimonio o sepultamos a nuestros seres queridos.

Cuando perdemos a un ser querido, encontramos apoyo en nuestras fami-

lias inmediatas, pero también estamos rodeados por nuestra familia en la fe. Es en momentos como estos

en los que vivimos el Evangelio. Cuando sepultamos a nuestros muertos, consolamos a aquellos que están de duelo. Cuando nos enfermamos, podemos recibir el sacramento de la unción de los enfermos y sabemos que nuestra comunidad parroquial está orando por nuestra sanación y apoyándonos con fe. Cuando encontramos el amor de nuestra vida, compartimos este amor con nuestra familia parroquial mientras profesamos nuestros votos en presencia de Dios Padre. Cuando somos bendecidos con niños(as), los(las) llevamos a la iglesia, y nuestra parroquia les da la bienvenida durante su bautismo ¡Es realmente un regalo ser parte de una familia de Cristo!

Imagine lo que la parroquia significa para una persona anciana que está sola y no tiene mucho apoyo. Imagine lo que significa para el inmigrante recién llegado buscando refugio en este país. Muchas de nuestras familias están aquí hoy gracias a que un grupo de inmigrantes valientes vino antes que ellos, buscando una nueva vida.

Esto me recuerda a la familia de mi esposa que llegó aquí en 1734, estableció el primer gobierno civil en Texas y fundó la Catedral de San Fernando en San Antonio. Existen cientos de años de historias de triunfos y retos en nuestra familia que están profundamente enraizados en la fe Católica. Historias de familias uniéndose para superar la hambruna, epidemias, guerra y violencia.

Mi esposa y yo fuimos parroquianos de Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish en Austin por muchos años, y fue ahí donde fuimos bendecidos por estar rodeados de muchas familias increíbles que compartían talentos y tesoros. Se



establecieron lazos familiares fuertes cuando la Señora Mokarzel ofreció sus famosas tamaladas y

compartió su conocimiento con futuras generaciones; los Castro establecieron su puesto de hamburguesas en la Jamaica anual de la iglesia; Las familias Sustaita y Salas compartieron su liderazgo y talento musical con la comunidad; los Ramírez y Cobos ayudaron a establecer la infraestructura; la familia Agualló decoró para el festival de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe; y la familia Villaseñor nos acompañó mientras sepultábamos a los difuntos. También aprendimos sobre nuestras enseñanzas Católicas con las familias de educación y formación religiosa, y mi esposa y yo recibimos muchos consejos matrimoniales maravillosos por parte del equipo de preparación matrimonial. Todas estas familias nos han acompañado a lo largo de nuestras vidas. Juntos, como una familia de familias continuamos viviendo el Evangelio en el mundo de hoy.

Ser parte de una

comunidad de fe significa ser parte de algo que es más grande que nosotros mismos. Cuando pensamos en nuestras familias, pienso que debemos incluir a nuestros padrinos y madrinas, a los de más edad de nuestra comunidad eclesial, a nuestros sacerdotes y religiosos y a nuestros hermanos y hermanas en ministerio. Que todas nuestras parroquias sean familias de familias donde encontremos a Cristo, no solo presente en la Eucaristía sino también en cada uno de nosotros como miembros del Cuerpo de Cristo.



Gustavo Rodríguez (centro) ha estado casado con Natalia por 15 años. Ellos tienen dos hijos: Sandra Josefina y Gustavo Ignacio. Él puede ser contactado vía correo electrónico en gustavo-rodriguez@austindiocese.org o por teléfono llamando al (512) 949-2542. (Foto cortesía de la familia Rodríguez)

Velada con Jesús es el 17 de septiembre en Austin

¿Cuándo fue la última vez que hablaste, en la oración, con Jesús, en el Santísimo Sacramento? Acompáñanos a nuestra Velada con Jesús anual el 17 de septiembre de 7 p.m. a medianoche en St. Albert the Great Parish en Austin. Solteros jóvenes adultos (18-35) están invitados para una tarde de: alabanzas, Misa Interparroquial, refrigerio y Hora Santa. Contenido en español e inglés. Para detalles llamar (512) 949-2466 o visitar www.facebook.com/pjhaustin.

Ética e Integridad en el Ministerio (EIM)

Todo clero, religioso, seminarista, empleado y adultos voluntarios sirviendo en un ministerio que requiera el cumplimiento con EIM debe entregar una Aplicación para el Ministerio de EIM (sólo una vez) y asistir a un taller de EIM al menos una vez cada tres años.

Vaya a eappsdb.com/austin para enviar una nueva aplicación o para entrar a su cuenta existente para encontrar una lista de los talleres e inscribirse. Nuevos aplicantes y aplicantes existentes que nunca han asistido a un Taller de EIM, deberán atender un Taller de EIM en persona para cumplir con el requisito inicial de EIM.

El Entrenamiento de EIM en línea llenará 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. Contacte al administrador de sitio de EIM de su parroquia si necesita una aplicación de EIM en papel o cualquier otra asistencia.

Around the Diocese

On July 27, the Knights of Columbus of the Diocese of Austin hosted an appreciation dinner for clergy at St. Helen Parish in Georgetown. During the dinner, the Knights presented Bishop Joe Vásquez with a check for nearly \$64,000 to use for charitable works. (Photo by Father James Misko)



Bishop Joe Vásquez celebrated the sacrament of confirmation June 25 at San José Parish in Austin. (Photo by Chantal Flores Photography)



Father Pius Mathew presented the 2021 Lumen Gentium Award to Kathy and George Satsky, longtime parishioners of St. Mary Parish in Mexia. The parish also celebrated the Fourth of July with flags, pinwheels and balloons after each Mass. (Photos courtesy Michaelene Perry)



St. Mary of the Assumption Parish in Waco hosted a concert with refreshments on June 12. Parishioners also celebrated Father Joe Geleney's 20th anniversary as a priest. On June 19, Father Geleney led a Eucharistic procession around the block on which the parish is located. Afterwards, parishioners prayed the rosary, which was followed by adoration of the Blessed Sacrament and benediction. (Photos courtesy David Swinson)



The KJZT Society of Fayetteville along with the mayor of Fayetteville recognized June 14th as National Flag Day. This proclamation called upon citizens to lend their support and show their appreciation for the contributions made to local communities and the state of Texas by members of KJZT Family Life. (Photo courtesy Roxane Hartley)



Sts. Cyril and Methodius Parish in Marak celebrated Flag Day on June 13 with a procession of flags before Mass. The KJZT Junior Chapter #21 led the procession, and Father Ranjan Cletus celebrated Mass. (Photo courtesy Merlene Slavik)



St. Mary Parish in Brenham led a Corpus Christi procession around the parish grounds on June 5. (Photo courtesy Rosi Romero)

Seminarians from the Diocese of Austin assisted with Vacation Bible School at Holy Trinity Parish in Corn Hill. This year's theme was "Not your average Joe," and it focused on St. Joseph. (Photo courtesy Lucille D'Elia)



Bishop Abdallah Elias Zaidan ordained Msgr. Don Sawyer as a Chorbishop of the Maronite Rite of the Catholic Church on July 25 at Our Lady's Maronite Parish in Austin. (Photos courtesy Chorbishop Sawyer)



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

Around the Diocese

Austin Diocese
6225 Hwy. 290 East
Austin, Texas 78723

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at Austin, Texas



St. Austin Parish in Austin offered furniture and fixtures to parishes and schools across the diocese in preparation for a major construction on the parish campus. Our Mother of Sorrows Parish in Burnet and St. Joseph Catholic Academy in Killeen picked up useful items during the giveaway. (Photos courtesy Mitzi Eastman)



Sacred Heart Parish in Elgin hosted a retirement celebration for Father George Joseph on June 12. (Photo courtesy Tomas Segura)



Father Joe Deane, a resident of the St. John Paul II Residence for Priests in Georgetown, recently blessed the vegetable garden at the residence and named it "Brother Oliver's Garden." The garden is named for Father Deane's brother who recently died in Ireland. (Photo courtesy Father Jim Robertson)



Four students from Holy Rosary Parish in Frenstat recently made their First Holy Communion. (Photo courtesy Margaret Polansky)



Father Chris Ferrer, the judicial vicar of the Diocese of Austin, celebrated the 20th anniversary of his ordination on July 7. Bishop Vásquez presented him a certificate from Pope Francis to mark the occasion. (Photo courtesy Father Zack Rodriguez)

St. Mary Parish in Temple hosted its third Altar Server Jamboree. 40 youth participated in the day of games and learning about the role of altar servers. (Photos courtesy Theresa Mireles)



Four seminarians studying for the Diocese of Austin helped celebrate Mission Week at St. Patrick Parish in Hutto. They gave talks, broke bread, blessed homes and enjoyed a "High School Holy Hike" at Cedar Breaks Park. The week concluded with a parish picnic. (Photos courtesy Joann Budde)



At left, middle school youth from St. Mary of the Assumption Parish in West took a trip to West Texas and New Mexico led by Father Timothy Vaverek and several adults. The youth toured Carlsbad Caverns and hiked Devil's Hall and Guadalupe Peak. They attended daily Mass and enjoyed many games and activities. (Photo courtesy Jason Janek)

On July 18, the West Council 2305 of the Knights of Columbus celebrated the 100th anniversary of its charter with a Mass, lunch for its members, their families and distinguished guests, a program detailing the history of the council and a polka dance. (Photo courtesy Mike Lednicki)

