

CATHOLIC SPIRIT

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En Español: Páginas 19-22

New synod process launches soon in the Diocese of Austin

By Carol Glatz and Shelley Metcalf

The Vatican has issued the preparatory document and a “handbook” for dioceses as part of the global church’s preparation for the 2023 assembly of the Synod of Bishops, discussing the theme, “For a synodal church: communion, participation and mission.”

“Pope Francis invites the entire church to reflect on a theme that is decisive for its life and mission: ‘It is precisely this path of synodality which God expects of the church of the third millennium,’” the new document said.

As such, the preparatory document and its questions are “at the service of the synodal journey, especially as a tool to facilitate the first phase of listening to and consulting the people of God in the particular churches in the hope of helping to set in motion the ideas, energy and creativity of all those who will take part in the journey, and to make it easier to share the fruits of their efforts,” it said.

“The purpose of this synod is not to

produce more documents. Rather, it is intended to inspire people to dream about the church we are called to be, to make people’s hopes flourish, to stimulate trust, to bind up wounds, to weave new and deeper relationships, to learn from one another, to build bridges, to enlighten minds, warm hearts, and restore strength to our hands for our common mission,” the preparatory document said.

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The diocesan phase of the synodal process will run through April 2022. During this phase, a number of questions will help prompt reflection, input and ideas from the faithful. The questions fall under 10 general themes, and people can address what

is most pertinent to their respective situations and “share with honesty and openness about their real-life experiences, and to reflect together on what the Holy Spirit might be revealing through what they share with one another,” the document said.

However, the basic and most fundamental question guiding the process is: “How does this ‘journeying together,’ which takes place today on different levels – from the local level

to the universal one – allow the church to proclaim the Gospel in accordance with the mission entrusted to her; and what steps does the Spirit invite us to take in order to grow as a synodal church?” the document said.

Speaking at the Sept. 7 news conference, Cardinal Mario Grech, secretary-general of the Synod of Bishops, and others explained the main objectives and characteristics of a synodal process, which is “a spiritual process”

that requires listening to the Holy Spirit as well as to each other.

“The synod will succeed or fail to the extent to which we rely on the Holy Spirit,” the cardinal said.

What matters is the larger process that involves the entire people of God coming together to find common ground, which is not easy, he said. “So perhaps we have to insist more on how we can dialogue, converse, discern together in order to possibly reach this harmony.”

The document said, “Synodal listening is oriented toward discernment,” in which people listen to each other, to their faith tradition and to “the signs of the times in order to discern what God is saying to all of us.”

Widespread participation is an important part of the diocesan process, the document said, with no one being excluded.

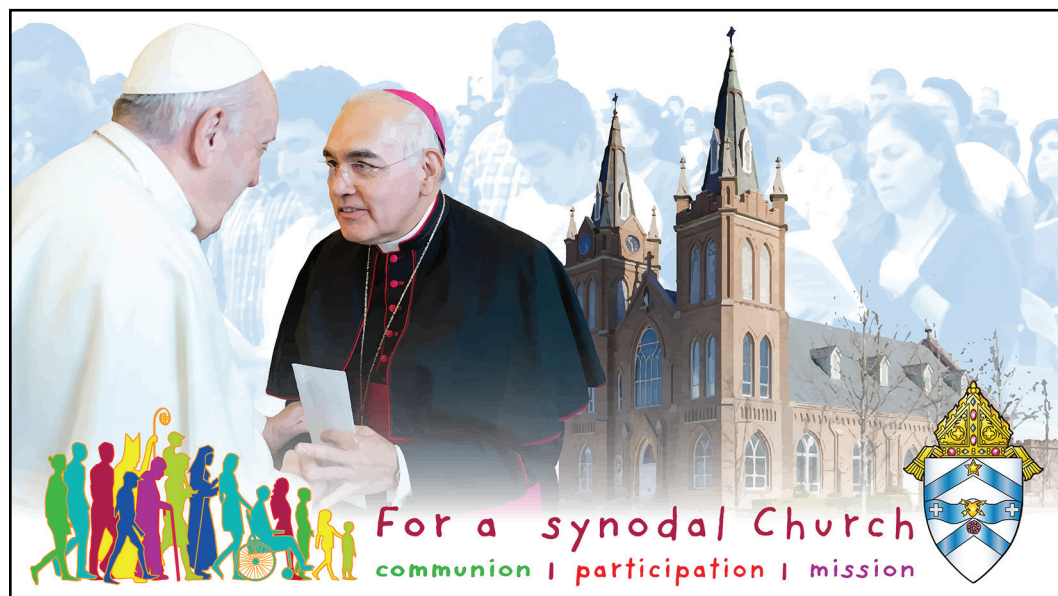
DeKarlos Blackmon, the diocesan contact person for Austin, explained that peoples of every demographic – culture, race, age, and station in life – are called to participate in this synodal process.

“Every group within the Christian faithful throughout Central Texas brings its own culture, language, history and experience for building up the Body of Christ,” he said.

The feedback generated throughout the diocesan phase of the listening process will be gathered into a “synthesis” to be written that will be forwarded to the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB). The USCCB will provide a synthesis of all the feedback from the U.S. dioceses for the gathering of bishops and auditors with Pope Francis at the assembly of the Synod of Bishops in Rome in October 2023.

Bishop Vásquez reminds the faithful that this spiritual process will help the people to listen and consult with each other and the wider community, particularly those on the margins of society. They invite local Catholics to pray for and to participate in the diocesan phase of the synod. More information will be forthcoming in parishes, on the diocesan website (www.austindiocese.org), and through diocesan social media channels.

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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

Finding great joy in the life to which God calls us



Sister Basil Marie is a Dominican Sister of Mary, Mother of the Eucharist. She was raised in Austin and attended St. Ignatius Martyr Catholic School and St. Dominic Savio Catholic High School in Austin. She currently lives at the Dominican Sisters' Texas Priory in Georgetown. In this column, Sister Basil Marie shares the story of how God called her to religious life while she was in high school. For more information on vocations in the Diocese of Austin, visit godiscalling.me.

By Sister Basil Marie, OP | Guest Columnist

The first time I pondered a potential religious vocation was in first grade, during a school assembly. We had been asked to share what we wanted to be when we grew up, and I was having trouble deciding between becoming a Dallas Cowboys' Cheerleader or a nun. When my turn came, I announced my plans to cheer for the Cowboys, and the thought of religious life didn't resurface until several years later.

My mom sacrificed tremendously to send me, an only-child, to Catholic school, where the seeds of my vocation were planted. I went to St. Ignatius Martyr Catholic School in Austin, and I was fortunate to have the faithful and joyful witness of priests, brothers and sisters of the Congregation of Holy Cross. I was attracted by their joy and found ways to spend as much time with them as possible, but I never considered the prospect of having a religious vocation myself. After finishing middle school, I attended St. Dominic Savio Catholic High School in Austin where I met the Dominican Sisters of Mary, Mother of the Eucharist. The first time I saw one of our sisters, I ran the other way. Even though I had never spoken to the sisters, I somehow knew that my heart was being tugged toward them and their radical witness to the joy of the Gospel.

Despite this tug from the Lord and ignoring what had been moving in my heart, I quickly got swept away by the desire to impress my friends, fit in and be popular. I tried to make myself into someone else and cut off any kind of relationship with God. By the end of my freshman year,

I began to realize the emptiness of the life I was trying to lead. That summer, I was invited to go to a Catholic youth conference, and I was excited at the idea of getting away from my regular life for a weekend.

At the conference I received the grace to open my heart to Christ, and I encountered him in the Eucharist, confession and prayer for what seemed like the first time. I left that weekend totally changed and I now wanted to give my whole heart and life to Christ. I finally understood the joy and "supreme good of knowing Christ Jesus, my Lord" (Phil 3:8).

I was paralyzed with fear at the thought of what people might think if I told them about my encounter with Christ, let alone the realization of my desire to enter religious life. I kept everything a secret for as long as I could (which was not very long) but knew I needed to talk to someone who would understand.

I went to my pastor, then Father, now Bishop Bill Wack, CSC. With his direction and encouragement, I stopped pretending and started talking with the sisters. They invited me to spend more time with them, to ask questions about their life, and eventually to visit the Motherhouse in Michigan. After my first discernment retreat, I was convinced that God had created my heart to serve him as a Dominican Sister of Mary, and I was filled with great joy. I felt drawn to their life of contemplative prayer, vibrant community life, dedicated study and apostolate of truth, and I couldn't wait to enter.

The next two years of high school helped me to mature and grow in my desire for my vocation. While everyone around me was deciding on which college to attend, I had great peace knowing God had something different in mind for me, even though I still struggled with the desire to "fit in." I found myself constantly explaining to my peers that I did indeed want to leave all and follow Christ, knowing only a radical self-gift would bring joyful fulfillment to my heart.

I entered religious life shortly after graduating high school and there is no greater joy I can imagine than serving the Lord as his bride. He is faithful to the promise he made "that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete" (Jn 15:11), and I still wake up every morning loving my vocation more than I did the day before.

OBITUARIES

Deacon Juan Garza died Sept. 5 at the age of 85. Ordained in 1984, he was a member of the first class of deacons formed in the Diocese of Austin. See story on Page 3.

Deacon Ed Faulk died Sept. 10 at the age of 74. He was ordained to the diaconate for the Diocese of Orange, California, in 1995. He served at St. Mary, Our Lady of the Lake Parish in Lago Vista from November 2011 until May 2019. He is survived by his wife Sandy. A Memorial Mass was celebrated Sept. 20 at St. Mary, Our Lady of the Lake Parish in Lago Vista.

ADVISORY

Anyone who knows the whereabouts of **Miriam Guzman Hernandez, Ruben Salcedo Hernandez or Mario Anthony Medel** is requested to notify Marimar Hernandez at (512) 949-2480.

Rest in peace: Deacon Juan Garza, a humble servant of the Lord

By Fred Afflerbach | Correspondent

A humble man from meager origins, Deacon Juan Garza, age 85, passed away in early September. For 37 years, Deacon Garza traveled the back roads of rural Central Texas, faithfully serving parishes in Rogers, Rosebud, Rockdale, Granger, Giddings and Cameron. In 1984, he was a member of the first diaconate class to be ordained in the Austin Diocese. He served under four bishops.

Deacon Garza lived in Rogers with his beloved wife of 66 years, Sophia. They raised 11 children and have more than 30 grandchildren.

Although Deacon Garza forged relationships in various Central Texas parishes, it was his beloved St. Matthew Mission in his hometown that was most dear to his heart. His hard work and prayer were instrumental in building the faith community.

Deacon Garza assisted Father Tom Hanus in celebrating the first Mass there in 1991. Before the new church opened, Catholics in Rogers were driving 15 to 20 miles to attend Mass.

"He is as much a part of St. Matthew as the stones, or the pews, or the prayers that have sucked into the walls," said Father Barry Cuba, the current administrator of St. Matthew. "Working with him was a way for me as a priest at Rogers to have a connection with the past and the history of the parish, and to feel instantly connected to the parish culture there. I considered it an honor to be able to

work with him and learn from him."

Deacon Michael Forbes, the director of diaconate formation in the Austin Diocese, said Deacon Garza touched countless hearts and souls during his long tenure.

"It would be an amazing statistic to hear how many babies he baptized, children he prepared for First Communion, how many young people he worked with in the parishes as well as nurturing the faithful, being a good listener," Deacon Forbes said.

For a busy man who worked with his hands to feed a large family, the decision to become a deacon did not come easily. In a recent interview, Deacon Garza said that late during his diaconate formation he had a crisis of confidence and faith. He only had a ninth-grade education. Eleven children at home needed to be fed and clothed. And he had a busy job as a mechanic. Then one day meditating before the Blessed Sacrament, he asked God, "Why are you bothering me?"

Garza said he was suddenly whisked to places he had never been: California, Chicago and New York. "I see a lot of people in Chicago sleeping on boxes, cold, tired, hoboes. I see a lot of kids on drugs. I see people starving, sleeping in the streets. And I look at them. There were old cars and boxes for houses. Back in church, I heard a voice: 'This is what I want you for.'"

Fluent in both Spanish and English, Deacon Garza worked to build bridges between cultures. Through the years, he brought the Blessed Sacrament to those in nursing homes, visited, coun-

seled and brought Bibles to inmates at the state prison in Cameron, led marriage classes and attended numerous quinceañeras.

Daughter Margaret Moreno remembers lively discussions on Sunday afternoons when Deacon Garza would quiz his children on the liturgy and the day's homily.

"When we got home (from church) we would go to church again because he was testing us," Moreno said. "So we learned to listen the first time, come back and report to him."

But Moreno said her father's greatest gift was teaching them how to treat each other with respect and love.

"The compassion and the gentleness had always been there," she said.

Father Tom Chamberlain worked with Deacon Garza from 1982-1989 at St. Monica Parish in Cameron and later at St. Matthew in Rogers. Father Chamberlain said Deacon Garza was "a humble servant of the Lord" and would willingly do whatever was asked of him.

And he apparently was a pretty good actor.

"He would sometimes play Juan Diego in our live presentation of Our Lady of Guadalupe," Father Chamberlain said. "I was always impressed; he was just the way I would picture Juan Diego. The way he walked, his mannerisms and just being a humble person; he just fit into the role the way I understand Juan Diego to have been. Ready to do whatever the Virgin asked him to do. That was Juan, a humble servant of the Lord."



Deacon Juan Garza passed away on Sept. 5 at the age of 85. He was ordained a permanent deacon in 1984 and served parishes in Rogers, Rosebud, Rockdale, Granger, Giddings and Cameron. He is survived by his wife, Sophia, and their children. (Photo courtesy Garza family)

For those considering entering the diaconate formation, Deacon Garza left behind a few thoughts: First, make sure your wife is on board. Second, don't try to be a priest, remember your role as a humble servant.

Deacon Garza never retired. He continued assisting at Mass through the summer of 2021. When asked about stepping down, he replied, "I've been reading the Bible all these years, and I don't see where Jesus says you can retire."

For more information about the permanent diaconate, visit www.austindiocese.org/diaconalformation or call (512) 949-2459.

Spotlight on ministry: Elizabeth Lagoe McAlonan

Elizabeth Lagoe McAlonan serves as the coordinator of Young Adult Ministry for the Diocese of Austin. Her primary responsibilities include helping parishes welcome young adults and offering support and resources to pastors, parish staff members and ministry leaders. McAlonan also facilitates the Ascend Program, which forms young adult leaders in the diocese.

"Young adults are in such a unique phase of life. Often there are so many transitions: jobs, entering into vocations, moving, etc. that make it difficult for young adults to feel rooted. My hope is that our parishes can be a welcoming place to land for young adults at each stage of this phase of life," she said.

McAlonan enjoys seeing young adults thrive as they find parish homes and establish their vocation.

"Witnessing young adults as they discern their vocation in life and as they become leaders in our parishes is a blessing to me," she said. "It is a joy to see the true gift that young people are and the richness they bring to our church!"

One of the biggest challenges of her ministry is the high turn over in leadership caused by the ever-changing state of life of many young adults. Her goal is to help parishes build long-lasting and fruitful ministries that can stand the test of time.

"Young people have so much to offer the church, and I'm honored to make space for them in our community to share the many gifts and talents they have," she said.

McAlonan and her husband, Keith, were married in August. They recently became parishioners of St. John Neumann Parish in Austin.

For more information about Young Adult Ministry in the diocese, contact McAlonan at elizabeth-lagoe@austindiocese.org or (512) 949-2468. (Photo by Gabriel Lujan)



A simple 'yes' changed everything for these two educators

By Audrey Scott | Guest Correspondent

One day they said simply, “yes” and everything changed.

Erin and Phong Vu never could have imagined the life that would unfold from accepting the invitation to teaching with the Alliance for Catholic Education (ACE).

Erin, a former ACE teacher and now the principal of Holy Family Catholic School in Austin, singled out placement night – when newly accepted ACE teachers learn where they’ll spend their next two years teaching.

“I love ACE because they have this flair for the dramatic. The night you get your placement they had all these trifold boards set up, and they go from east to west,” she said. “I’m from Jacksonville, Florida, and they started there. With every step, I was getting further from home.” On one of the last boards, Erin saw her photo among seven others. “Finally, I see Tucson, and it said high school English and St. Augustine Catholic High School.” One of her housemates, Phong Vu, was also there that night.

“I met Phong and said hi, and he was really quiet, but he was also placed at the same high school teaching biology and science, so it was great,” Erin said. “We had two years where we carpooled every day, and at the end of the two years, we decided to get married. Well, we got engaged between the first and second years of ACE and got married at the end of the second year. So, by the time we went out for graduation we were actually already married.”

As the two described their first meeting, sitting shoulder-to-shoulder, filling the Zoom screen with their smiles, Erin asked, “Did I miss anything for you?”

“No, that’s about right. You did a good job,” replied Phong. They complement and compliment each other – making a dynamic team.

And for the first time, ACE is recognizing a team with the Michael Pressley Award for Excellence in Catholic Education. The award is given annually to graduates of the ACE Teaching Fellows program who have distinguished themselves in making significant contributions to the ministry of Catholic education. ACE is celebrating Erin and Phong, both members of ACE

16 in Tucson, and the 11th (Erin) and 14th (Phong) cohorts of the Mary Ann Remick Leadership Program, for their outstanding service to Catholic schools.

“At the time, we thought we’d stay in Tucson one more year. Long story short, we stayed 12,” Erin said. She, Phong and their five children recently moved to Austin from Tucson as Phong begins his tenure as the principal of San Juan Diego High School and Erin as principal at Holy Family Catholic School.

Their work as school leaders, coupled with their efforts in pursuing additional degrees and licensure through the Remick Leadership Program, and Erin as a coach for the Latino Enrollment Institute, combined with the sacramental and vocational witnesses they are as a married couple committed to this work together – all while raising five children – are remarkable.

“Since our initial ‘yes’ to ACE in 2009, it’s been interesting to see what our little yeses have led to. Doors open and things unfold, and it’s led us to a network of people and a community of faith,” Erin said.

“I had this subtle call to become a teacher, but my entire life I was always supposed to become a doctor,” Phong said. “That’s what I was told I was supposed to do. I come from a disadvantaged background. My parents are immigrants and never went to school. I grew up not knowing English until kindergarten. I had great educators along my way that helped me become better. My senior year in college I finally said, ‘I feel like I was meant to become a teacher.’”

A friend of his from high school, Patrick O’Brien, (ACE 15, Phoenix) encouraged him to apply to ACE. Phong answered, “Yes!” to the call he’d been trying to drown out, but his parents weren’t as sure.

“This wasn’t the path they had planned for me. But my parents are awesome and are very devout Catholics, so once you throw God in there it’s hard to say no,” Phong said. “They love what we both do. They see the passion there and see it was an authentic call.”

Although initially skeptical, Phong’s parents became incredibly supportive. “With our careers as teachers and now as leaders, they see that this truly is a mission that we’re trying to make God known, loved and served beyond just



Erin and Phong Vu, now the parents of five children, met as teachers for the Alliance for Catholic Education (ACE) and soon got married. The family recently moved to Austin where Phong begins his tenure as the principal of San Juan Diego High School and Erin as principal at Holy Family Catholic School. (Photo courtesy Erin and Phong Vu)

our own family,” he said. “They see the life that we built for ourselves: our marriage, our kids and our family.

“It’s all those little yeses along the way — of ACE and then Tucson and staying in Tucson and Remick — they’ve all led to one amazing blessing after another, and again we can’t ask for a better life. It’s just wonderful.”

The yeses continue and new doors have opened.

“We often reflect, pray and discern together where we are supposed to be right now, and every time there was this real sense of peace that we’re right where we’re supposed to be,” Erin said. “Recently it felt like Austin was where everything unfolded, and it was like, ‘Okay, Holy Spirit, I guess that’s where we’re going.’”

And so they embarked together. “Whatever needs to be done, we just do it,” Phong said.

“It’s that friendship, that partnership, that working together,” Erin said. “Phong put it nicely that it’s not work and kids, it’s that blending. And we’re

both leaving communities (in St. Augustine and Our Mother of Sorrows), where that’s the nature of things. Family doesn’t mean just mom, dad, kids, it’s everyone.”

The Vus look forward to continuing the mission in their new school communities, as well.

“Faith flows into everything that we do,” Erin said. “Striving to share the Catholic faith with all of the family, the children and the parents and the friends of a school, and the whole community. We look forward to helping these children to be the fullest version of themselves.”

This story was reprinted with permission from the Alliance for Catholic Education.

Religious communities from Mexico minister at Sacred Heart in Austin

By Enedelia J. Obregón | Senior Correspondent

Sacred Heart Parish in Austin now has two priests, three religious sisters and one religious brother to fully minister to the more than 900 overwhelmingly immigrant families who worship there.

Bishop Joe Vásquez officially welcomed the three men from the Discípulos de Jesús and three women from the Discípulas de Jesús during an outdoor Mass at Sacred Heart.

In his bilingual homily, Bishop Vásquez focused on discipleship, which is reflected in the names of the two orders. He told the more than 500 people in attendance that we have all been chosen as disciples.

“We didn’t choose Christ; he chose us,” the bishop said. “After he invites us, we still have to choose. It’s our decision. What will we choose?”

The two priests: Father Alejandro Ballesteros and Father Luis Alfonso Martinez Gallo, now serve as associate pastors alongside Father Mark Hamlet, the pastor of Sacred Heart. Brother Alejandro López serves as the pastoral assistant.

Sister Margarita Ruíz, is a pastoral assistant. Sister Veronica Villegas oversees Pastoral Juvenil, and Sister Olga Rivera is the director of Religious Education. Sister Lucero Espitia, who served at the parish for several years, has returned to San Luís Potosí, SLP, Mexico, where the religious orders are headquartered, to profess her final vows. She plans to return in about a year.

Two priests and one brother from the Discípulos de Jesús and three religious sisters from the Discípulas de Jesús are now ministering at Sacred Heart Parish. The religious communities are headquartered in San Luís Potosí, Mexico. (Photo by Gabriel Lujan)

The arrival of the newcomers was delayed by more than a year by the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent visa delays. Bishop Vásquez initially invited the order to Austin in 2016. He knew of the Discípulos in Houston from when he was auxiliary bishop of the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston. After he came to Austin, Mother Superior María Guadalupe Navarro told the bishop they were interested in coming to Austin, so he sent a letter to all the parishes. Father Hamlet quickly responded. Five years ago the first sisters arrived.

Father Hamlet said what inspired him to invite the Discípulos and Discípulas was their history and charism of evangelization, discipleship and community in formation.

The orders arose from the Comunidades de Alianza Nueva, which grew out of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal movement in the Archdiocese of San Luís Potosí about 45 years ago. As parishioners delved deeper into their Catholic faith, they formed lay communities taking simple and permanent vows and living in community. The lay communities eventually requested the establishment of religious orders.

In 1986 Father Pablo Cárdenas Cantú and Sister Isabel de la Cruz Crespo Ruíz founded the orders. In 1993 they received initial diocesan approval. In 1999 they received canonical approval as an institution of consecrated life.

The superior general of the Discípulos de Jesús, Father Luís Humberto Ríos, was also present at the Mass at Sacred Heart. He said the importance of lay communities in evangelization and catechesis stems from the Second Vatican Council. He said the consecrated help the lay groups and the lay groups help the consecrated in their evangelization.



After an evening Mass on Aug. 21, Bishop Joe Vásquez blessed the Discípulos and Discípulas de Jesús who now serve at Sacred Heart Parish in Austin. (Photo by Gabriel Lujan)

“Lay people can enter into the realities (everyday lives) in which priests cannot go,” Father Ríos said. “Lay people can bring the church to those places.”

The religious communities reflect familial life to a degree.

“That is why we live in community,” he said. “We eat together and study the Bible together, reflecting how families live.”

Sacred Heart provides a place for their communal life. The priests live in the rectory and the sisters in a convent, which has been modified for communal life as well as prayer life.

Sister Rivera said living in community strengthens the women and men in religious life for the mission they are undertaking.

They have divided the parish ministries, some of which were started at the behest of parishioners. There is an Al-Anon group that arose from the request of families of those attending Alcoholics Anonymous.

“It offers families a space to vent,” she said of the ministry. “We try to attend to the needs of the parish and look for community resources that could help them.”

Many of the families come from rural areas in Mexico and don’t know how to read or write, so they are looking into literacy classes.

“While our work is spiritual such as teaching them to pray, we need to tend to their human needs as well,” Sister Rivera said.

Father Gallo said it is important to build communities and families that reflect God’s

image. Discipleship begins at home in the family, which is the domestic church, as St. John Paul II said.

The church, he said, is not just lived in the temple on Sundays. While worship is necessary, church is also lived with parents and children and in community.

To support lay people, Father Gallo has a radio program heard in Mexico via Radio Maria Guadalupe Network. He has also started a program via Facebook at noon on Saturdays focusing on Lectio Divina and the Sunday Gospel.

Father Hamlet said in a parish that is about 95 percent Latino, the adults have been cut off from family traditions yet remain very Catholic. They need evangelization in their language and in their culture, he said.

He sees these families evangelizing and transforming not only their parish, but also the diocese and beyond. He said about 40% of vocations in San Luís Potosí come from lay groups.

“I think we will have vocations,” he said.

Father Hamlet is pleased with how the religious men and women have been accepted into the Sacred Heart community and he is looking forward to the future.

“I don’t see our parish as an outpost just providing sacraments. If you make a list of the things that make us Catholic, such as traditions that make us a community, I think we have it all,” he said.



Young educator, pastoral musician now leads Black Ministry Office

By Kanobia Russell-Blackmon | Correspondent

With a passion for education, music and theology, Lauren Warner is ready to take on a new challenge and new position as coordinator of Black Ministry for the Diocese of Austin. Warner is excited about the opportunity to bring her skills and talent to this role to “assist those who work in parishes, and even Catholic schools, to be able to accomplish whatever is necessary for those communities.” She endeavors to help where needed.

“I think that when it comes to positions at the diocesan level, only so much can be done without the input of people in parishes, who actually have the experiences of ‘being in the trenches’ as the cliché goes,” she said.

A native of Los Angeles, namely, Inglewood, Warner was raised staunchly Catholic. She holds graduate degrees in education and pastoral theology.

She moved to Austin in July 2019 to join the theology faculty at St. Michael’s Catholic Academy because she desired “to branch out and try a new city in a new state.”

She has enjoyed her move to St. Michael’s, which has enabled her not only to grow and learn new things, but also to bring her own perspective and something new to the school. After two years at the school, Warner was named chair of the theology department.

Warner’s love for music has also led her to serve as a pastoral musician at her parish, Holy Cross in Austin.

Black Ministry, like Hispanic Ministry, is part of the Diocese of Austin’s Secretariat of Life, Charity and Justice. The goal of the ministry is to provide support to all matters related to the promotion of continued integration of African-American Catholics into parish and community life, and activities related to the spiritual, educational

and societal well-being of Catholics of African descent.

As the new coordinator, Warner wants to be a resource and support system to all parishes across the diocese because people from the African diaspora are throughout the diocese. Warner believes her experience and background in pastoral music, liturgical ministry and education give her a broad perspective of different ways to approach her new role. She plans “to work collaboratively with the Black apostolate and other diocesan offices to support our parishes and communities.”

Diverse peoples of various cultures comprise the universal church and the local church of Austin. For this reason, it is important to have ethnic ministries in the Diocese of Austin, she said.

“As church teaching has come to show us, there is beauty in people bringing the diversity of their rich cultural gifts to the table and using those gifts to worship God and building up the kingdom,” she said.

Warner is a proponent of the pastoral need for the Christian faithful to experience the celebration of the Eucharist within their own culture.

“We need ethnic ministries not only to support and affirm the varied ethnic communities in our diocese, but also to help educate other Catholics who are unaware of the church’s invitation to express the genius and talents of people’s cultural identity,” she said. Warner advocates for all cultural groups to more readily support one another when hosting various events.

Black Ministry will host A Day of Reflection Concerning the Black Apostolate on Nov. 6 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Holy Cross Parish in Austin. This is Warner’s first major activity since taking the helm of Black Ministry. She encourages all Catholics to participate to experience how the Black apostolate worships, thinks and lives.

“We can get so complacent in our own practices, that very often we hold on to those things as status quo, which in the long run can be a deterrent to implementing change and encouraging



Lauren Warner is the new coordinator for Black Ministry in the Diocese of Austin. She invites everyone to A Day of Reflection Concerning the Black Apostolate on Nov. 6 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Holy Cross Parish in Austin. (Photo by Gabriel Lujan)

cultural growth in our community,” she said.

The day of reflection is “a chance for everyone to come together, to be able to hear Black voices and understand the experiences and practices of the Black community,” she said.

The day of reflection will be facilitated by Father Oscar J. Pratt II of Boston and will focus on the need for more meaningful encounter and accompaniment, leading to transformation. Bishop Joe Vásquez will open the day with Mass.

Warner said the day is “not only about encountering God in the person of Christ, but also about seeing Christ in each other, regardless of how we look, or any preconceived notions we may have.” Just as Bishop Vásquez encouraged people to participate in the Encuentro process, Warner encourages people to accompany the Black apostolate “as they discuss their hopes and desires for the Black Catholic community in Austin and share very real ways to make such desires a reality.”

For more on the day of reflection and to register, visit austindiocese.org/black-ministry-dor. To contact the Black Ministry call (512) 949-2449 or email lauren-warner@austindiocese.org.

Conference focuses on ‘Christ Our Hope’



Christ Our Hope, a gathering of parish leaders and volunteers coordinated by the diocesan Office of Life, Charity and Justice, was held Aug. 28 at St. Elizabeth Parish in Pflugerville. More than 100 people from across the diocese joined Bishop Joe Vásquez; Father James Misko, vicar general; and Father Jim Olnhausen, a retired diocesan priest who lives in Bastrop, for presentations on evangelization and ministry.

“God works in mysterious ways, but he is working. Never lose hope that he will resolve our problems,” Father Olnhausen said during his presentation. “We are a sinful church as well as we are a glorious church. It is a balancing act. We are never completely wicked because there are many, many saints among us ... we must pray and treat everyone with love,” he said. (Photos by Camille García)

Texas bishops highlight programs to help pregnant women

By Carol Zimmermann and Shelley Metcalf

Amid heated discussion surrounding the new abortion law in Texas, which bans abortions from six weeks, Catholic bishops have emphasized the importance of a long-running state program to help pregnant women.

"Texas has invested hundreds of millions of dollars in programs for pregnant moms and families," said a statement issued by the Texas Catholic Conference of Bishops, two days after the new law went into effect.

The conference, which is the public policy arm of the state's Catholic bishops, was referring to the state-funded program Alternatives to Abortion, which started in 2005. The program provides funds for pregnancy centers that offer counseling services and resources to women in crisis pregnancies.

"Hundreds of pregnancy and parenting support programs and adoption services in our state provide practical resources to women and families facing overwhelming circumstances," the

group's Sept. 3 statement said.

The Texas Catholic Conference noted that "pregnant and parenting moms in need are in our parishes and our neighborhoods. As Pope Francis reminds us, our parishes must be 'islands of mercy in the midst of a sea of indifference.'"

The state's bishops also stressed that "everyone in the parish should know where to refer a pregnant woman in need." They said this work is also something that has been taken up on the national level with the initiative of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, Walking with Moms in Need, which helps pregnant women and mothers.

In a statement released in mid-September, Bishop Joe Vásquez urged the faithful to continue to build a culture of life.

"As Catholics, we must be committed to supporting women when they face such difficult times in their lives. These women should be able to turn to the church where they can find understanding, compassion and assistance," the bishop said.

He referenced the recent federal



A mother in Fort Worth holds her newborn son. (CNS photo/Callaghan O'Hare, Reuters)

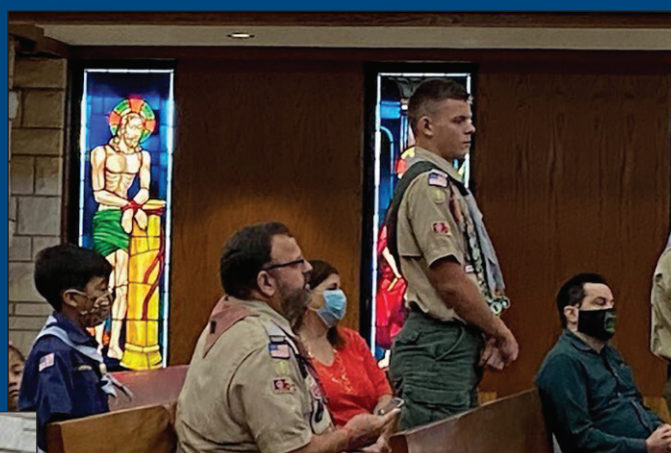
lawsuits filed against Texas to overturn the new abortion laws and asked the faithful to pray the laws stand.

"Let us continue to build a culture of life, from conception to natural death. Through the intercession of Our Lady of Guadalupe and her Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, may all in the Diocese of Austin protect and cherish all human life," he concluded.

The diocesan Office of Life, Marriage and Family runs a Pro-Life

Helpline, call (877) WE-CARE2 for help with a crisis pregnancy. For more information about Moms in Need, visit walkingwithmoms.com. For more information on the St. Gabriel's Pregnancy and Parenting Program, visit ccctx.org or call (512) 651-6100.

Mass honors the achievements of Catholic scouts and their leaders



The Diocesan Catholic Committee on Scouting (DCCS) serves to help parishes and scout leaders provide Catholic scouts continuing education in the Catholic faith through local scouting programs. Through leadership and skill development, Catholic scouts and scouters are formed in virtue and faith. The DCCS offers annual opportunities for growth through youth and family retreats, adult formation, scout chaplain formation, and youth religious emblem awards and activities.

The DCCS recently celebrated the accomplishments of Catholic scouts throughout the diocese at the annual Scout Recognition Mass, which was held Sept. 11 at St. Joseph Parish in Bryan. Father James Misko, vicar general of the Diocese of Austin, along with Father Will Rooney, DCCS chaplain, celebrated the Mass and honored scouts who earned religious emblems and adults who were nominated by their peers for awards. For information on youth awards and the DCCS, visit www.austindiocese.org/scouting. (Photos by Tressi Breecher)

Project Rachel helps find peace after abortion

Project Rachel is a compassionate and confidential ministry extending God's unconditional love and forgiveness to women and men who experience the tragedy of abortion. By offering a safe place for those who are suffering to be reconciled with God and his church, Project Rachel helps anyone suffering after an abortion (or as the result of a loved one's abortion) to experience God's mercy, forgiveness and peace. The next retreat will be held Oct. 29-31. For more information about the retreat or the ministry email project-rachel@austindio-cese.org or call 1-877-WeCare2 (1-877-932-2732).

Free counseling for healthcare workers

Catholic Charities of Central Texas is proud to assist healthcare professionals by offering three free counseling sessions for any medical professional in need of mental health support. Sessions are available virtually or in-person; weekend and evening appointments are available. Medical professionals may schedule their free mental health counseling sessions by contacting the Catholic Charities Counseling Services program at (512) 651-6150 or counseling@ccctx.org and mentioning that they are a medical professional.

Conference focuses on married, engaged couples

Married and engaged couples are invited to the first Together in Holiness marriage enrichment conference in the Diocese of Austin Nov. 6 at St. William Parish in Round Rock. Together in Holiness will feature presentations from speakers like Andrew and Sarah Swafford, as well as the sacrament of reconciliation, Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, Vigil Mass and more. Affordable, on-site childcare and full or partial scholarships are available. This is an initiative of the St. John Paul II Foundation. For more information, visit <https://forlifefamily.org/events/th21-atx/> or call Erin at (832) 779-1070.

Attention: Doctors, nurses and healthcare workers

The Catholic Healthcare Guild of Central Texas invites all healthcare workers to join us for the 20th annual White Mass to be celebrated by Bishop Joe S. Vásquez Oct. 19 at 6 p.m. at St. Mary Cathedral in Austin. The White Mass will be live streamed for those who wish to participate virtually. If unable to attend, please consider hosting a gathering at your local parish or hospital. Find the livestream at www.smcaustin.org/streaming-video-page and/or www.facebook.com/smcaustin.

Married couples invited to weekend retreat

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. The next weekend retreat will be held Nov. 5-7 at Cedarbrake Catholic Retreat Center in Temple. Details are available at austinme.org or email wwmeaustin@gmail.com or call (512) 677-WWME (9963).

Project Miriam offers day of encounter for young women

The diocesan Vocations Office will host Project Miriam Oct. 30 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at St. William Parish in Round Rock. Women between the ages of 16 and 35 are invited to this day of encounter with joyful sisters from various religious communities. Mass will be celebrated, and there will be time for prayer and discussion about religious life. Details are available at www.godiscalling.me or call the diocesan Vocations Office at (512) 949-2430.

Volunteers needed for Compassus Hospice

Compassus Hospice is seeking friendly volunteers, in the Central Texas area, to provide end of life support to patients and their families. Office administrative support and compassionate in person opportunities are available. Counties served include Williamson, Burnet, Blanco, Bastrop, Hays, Travis and Caldwell. For more information, email the volunteer coordinator at annette.rierson@compassus.com.

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Tuesday, November 2nd, 4:00 p.m.

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Visit www.olotr.com for updates.

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Church needs to hear God speaking through those who are hurting, pope says

By Carol Glatz | Catholic News Service

To listen to the Holy Spirit, members of the church must listen to each other and especially to those who are marginalized, Pope Francis said, explaining how dioceses are to help the church prepare for the Synod of Bishops.

This means that, for example, “the poor, the homeless, young people addicted to drugs, everyone that society rejects are part of the synod” because God says they are part of the church, he said.

“So often the ‘rejects’ become the ‘cornerstones’ and those who are ‘far off’ become ‘near.’ The marginalized, the poor, those without hope were elected to the sacrament of Christ. This is the way the church is,” he said.

The pope spoke to members of his diocese, the Diocese of Rome, in the Paul VI audience hall Sept. 18 as the global church gets set to begin a “synodal journey” toward the 2023 assembly of the Synod of Bishops, discussing the theme, “For a synodal church: communion, participation and mission.”

Pope Francis is scheduled to formally open the synod process at the Vatican Oct. 9-10, and the bishop of every diocese should open the process in his diocese soon thereafter. The diocesan phase, which runs until April, will focus on listening to and consulting the people of God.

The pope apologized for speaking at great length, but he said that as the bishop it was important he explain how the synodal process should work and why.

Essentially, he said, it will be a period of mutual listening in which everyone – cardinals, bishops, priests, religious and laypeople – plays a leading role and “nobody can be considered a plain bit player.”

The purpose is not to collect everyone’s individual opinions, he said, but rather to hear what the Holy Spirit is quietly – and perhaps surprisingly – saying through them.

This will require everyone dialogue in a way that is “familial,” where everyone recognizes their common humanity, reconciles differences and reaches out in order to encounter and

engage with others, he said.

“One of the evils of the church, rather, a perversion, is this clericalism that separates the priest, the bishop from the people. A bishop and priest

The synodal journey will require discussing viewpoints and expectations that are different and seeking out people who have been alienated “to hear not what they say but what they feel, even the insults,” Pope Francis said.

disconnected from the people is an administrator, not a shepherd,” the pope said.

The synodal journey will require discussing viewpoints and expectations that are different and seeking out people who have been alienated “to hear not what they say but what they feel, even the insults,” he said.

“Allow yourselves to meet (others) and be questioned (by them), let their questions be your questions, allow yourselves to walk together. The Spirit will lead you,” the pope told them. “Do not be afraid to enter into dialogue and allow yourselves to be shocked by the dialogue. It is the dialogue of salvation.”

“The Holy Spirit in his freedom knows no boundaries, nor does he allow himself to be limited by affiliations,” he said; if the parish is not to be “an exclusive club, then I suggest you leave doors and windows open” so everyone can be welcomed.

No one should be afraid, impatient or “rigid” in interpreting whatever difficulties emerge, he added, as long as people remain open and docile to the Spirit.

“God is not in a hurry,” and he can see beyond present circumstances and contrasts, he said. People need to “acknowledge the freedom of God’s action and (make sure) that there are no obstacles that could keep him from reaching people’s hearts.”

After Christ’s death and resurrection, God did not leave behind a “vacuum” that has to be filled by people insisting on taking his place or demanding the church be modeled on their cultural or historical beliefs -- leading the church to become like a country with “armed borders, guilt-mongering customs houses” with “a spirituality that blasphemes the gratuity of God’s engaging action,” Pope Francis said.

Instead, Jesus sent the Holy Spirit, who provides the “drive,” strength

and ability to be witnesses in words and deeds of God’s unconditional love and his immense hospitality that knows no bounds or borders, the pope said.

This is the church’s path and a synodal church moves in the world knowing the Holy Spirit “will be with us,” he said.

“There will always be debates, thanks be to God,” he said, “but the solutions must be sought by giving the floor to God and to the voices of those among us: praying and opening our eyes to everything around us; living a life faithful to the Gospel; and examining Revelation according to a hermeneutic of pilgrimage” that began in the “Acts of the Apostles”

and continues today.

Reading through Acts can “help us, showing us that communion does not suppress differences. It is the surprise of Pentecost when different languages are not an obstacle,” he said.

It will be thanks to the Holy Spirit that people will be able to “feel at home, different, but supportive along the journey,” he said.

Rather than “erecting hierarchical monuments,” he said, the church must make certain every feels “part of one great people, recipients of divine promises, open to a future where everyone can take part in a feast prepared by God.”

During this pandemic, the pope said, the Lord is encouraging the church’s mission to be a “sacrament of care. The world has lifted up its cry, shown its vulnerability – the world needs care.”

See more local information on the synod on Pages 1 and 13.



OCTOBER IS THE MONTH OF THE ROSARY

Make a pilgrimage to the Shrine and pray the rosary on the new rosary trail.

Come celebrate the joy of Our Mother at her Shrine. The rosary trail surrounds the Shrine and features all 20 mysteries of the rosary.

Meditation areas to sit and pray are located all along the path. Start with the Joyful Mysteries at the entrance by the Movement House.

To schedule a group visit email info@schoenstatt.us



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40 Days for Life fall campaign to end abortion has begun

By Catholic News Service

The national 40 Days for Life organization launched its fall campaign Sept. 22, with volunteers in over 1,000 cities across the country planning to pray, fast and hold 24-hour vigils outside abortion clinics.

They also will participate in outreach to the community to promote awareness about abortion and outreach directly to women considering abortion.

"With the changing abortion landscape, as well as things happening legislatively in the states and nationally in the Supreme Court, there has never been a greater time for this coordinated pro-life movement in our nation," said Shawn Carney, president and CEO of the Texas-based organization.

"Great strides are being made to end abortion, and we know these peaceful vigils make a difference,"

Carney said in a statement.

Regarding this "changing" landscape, he pointed to "the national angst and protests related to abortion, specifically concerning the Texas 'heartbeat bill,'" which bans abortions in the state after six weeks of pregnancy and allows an exception only in the case of a medical emergency.

On Dec. 1, the Supreme Court will hear oral arguments in an appeal from Mississippi to keep its ban on abortions after 15 weeks of pregnancy, and supporters of the law are urging the court to reexamine its previous abortion rulings, including 1973's Roe v. Wade ruling legalizing abortion nationwide.

Carney said the goal of the 40 Days for Life event, which will end Oct. 31, "is threefold."

The aim is "to empower pregnant women to choose life for their babies, to inspire abortion workers to step away from their industries, and

to work toward closing abortion facilities in our country and around the world," he said.

According to 40 Days for Life, about 25% of those leading the campaign are women who previously had abortions "and now want to empower women to choose life."

"We have heard story after story of women choosing life due to the outpouring of love and truth seen through the 40 Days for Life campaigns," said Carney. "So many lives have been saved through the efforts of our volunteers and the passion and purpose they have to end abortion."

The organization has a list of participating cities and locations in those cities posted on its website at 40daysforlife.com/location.

Since going national in 2007, 40 Days for Life has carried out more than 6,000 campaigns in 64 countries and "saved 19,198 lives, contributed to the closing of 112 abortion centers and helped 221 workers quit the abortion industry," according to a news release from the organization.

All of this has been accomplished, it said, "by holding community-led peaceful prayer vigils outside local abortion facilities twice a year worldwide."

In addition to its regular campaigns each spring and fall, the Texas



Prayer Vigil

Join Bishop Vásquez during the 40 Days for Life Campaign to pray the rosary for an end to abortion on **Oct. 9 at 7 a.m.** in front of the abortion facility at **201 E. Ben White Blvd., Austin, TX 78704.**



pro-life organization launched its first 40 Days for Life 365 campaign late last year after years of development. It's being rolled out in various locations around the nation.

One of those places is the Denver Archdiocese, where Planned Parenthood operates the nation's second largest abortion clinic, and the new campaign began this year on Aug. 14.

"We believe this will be a historical day that marks 'the beginning of the end of abortion'" at Planned Parenthood of the Rocky Mountains in Denver's Stapleton area, said Maria Elisa Olivas, community coordinator for Catholic Charities of Denver.

"This will be the day that the Christian community of Denver pledges to have someone praying for the unborn not just 40 days, but every day" this facility is open, she said in a statement issued as the campaign began.



Retreats at Cedarbrake

5602 N HWY 317, Temple, TX 76502

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, His word and holy Eucharist. Brian Egan, director of Cedarbrake, will lead the reflections. Mass will be celebrated. The retreat is 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 the Mass. Father Piega, who earned his advanced graduate degree (STL) from Rome in Sacred Liturgy, 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., includes Mass and lunch. Cost is \$40.

Nov. 30: Advent Dinner with Bishop Vásquez

Join us Tuesday evening, Nov. 30, for a wine and cheese social, followed by dinner and an Advent reflection by Bishop Joe Vásquez. Cost is \$30 per person.

Dec. 3-5: Silent Advent Retreat

Enter the silence of the season with time to meditate on God's love in sending us his Son! This weekend retreat will include group prayer, Eucharistic Adoration, Holy Mass and the sacrament of reconciliation. Cost is \$265 for a private room and \$215 for a shared room, all meals are included.

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.





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Catholic foster parents open hearts to over 100 babies in 43 years

By Kristi Anderson | Catholic News Service

When Travis and Rhonda Kitch met Ron and Jane Brown for the first time in 2008, they were already family.

It was the day the Browns, long-time foster parents, introduced the Kitches to their daughter, Grace, whom the Browns had cared for almost from birth.

The Kitches also had a 7-year-old son, Carson. Carson had a liver transplant as a baby, an open-heart surgery when he was 6 months old and another open-heart surgery when he was 3 years old. He also lost most of his hearing while he was ill, waiting for his liver transplant. The couple also experienced four miscarriages before beginning the adoption process in 2008.

“Our home-study paperwork wasn’t finalized when our social worker called asking if we wanted to know more about a toddler in Minnesota,” Rhonda recalled. “She indicated the child had had an open-heart surgery and a hearing loss.

“When she asked if we wanted to know more, there wasn’t any doubt that we wanted to learn more.”

Grace was placed with the Browns almost as soon as she was born. The Browns had been foster parents since 1978 and had seen almost everything in their years of service. But Grace had more obstacles to overcome than most of the 100-plus babies who had been placed in their care.

“We had five months to get her up to 12 pounds so she could have the surgery,” Jane recalled. “We had to wake her up to eat. We rejoiced at every ounce she gained.”

Grace’s surgery was successful and the Browns continued to nurture her until she was healthy enough to meet her forever family. Travis and Rhonda met Grace Aug. 4, 2008, when she was 17 months old.

“It was evident Grace was raised in a home filled with love,” Rhonda said. “We loved seeing the backyard where she played, the nearby park, the ease she moved throughout the home. Grace has only known love.”

“We got to learn about her routines, her favorite items and toys, see pictures of her growing up, hear all about her medical journey, and giggle

about silly stories,” she said. “We were so grateful we could always ask questions about her experiences and hear stories about our sweet toddler.”

Carson met his sister who shared his “matching scar” Aug. 5, 2008, and the Browns brought Grace to the Kitch home Aug. 8 of that year – their Forever Family Day.

“Everybody’s got a perfect match,” Jane said in an interview with The Central Minnesota Catholic, magazine of the Diocese of St. Cloud. “These are the things we can’t explain. How amazing that (Grace) was placed with parents who had a son with hearing aids so they already knew sign language.

“You can’t take those memories away from us. To see that baby, to watch how they change and grow and start smiling at you, and bonding with you, and then to hand them over to their adoptive parents, we can’t even explain it in words.”

Jane is an only child and always dreamed of having a big family. The couple has four children. But, if you ask the couple, their family really includes over 100 babies and the countless birth parents, adoptive parents and their families who entered their home and their hearts through foster parenting.

The Browns decided to become foster parents through Catholic Charities in 1978. Over the years, they did work with Stearns and Morrison counties and ended their 43-year stint as foster parents as a bridge couple with Lutheran Social Service.

“Every baby was new life for us,” Jane said. “Our commitment was with the adoption program, but our first priority was always with the birth parents because they gave birth. And bless their hearts, they didn’t have to do that.

“To place a child for adoption is such a great gift, one of the greatest gifts anyone could give. Our job was to support them along the way.”

The Browns worked with both the birth parents and the adoptive parents, and oftentimes, extended families, welcoming them all into their home.

If they wished, the birth parent or parents planned a “blessing ceremony” – where both the birth parents and the adoptive parents came to-

gether for the sake of the child. This was almost always done at the Browns’ home.

The Browns were the first foster family Jane Marrin worked with when she served as a social worker for Catholic Charities in the 1980s and ‘90s.

“They made it easy for me as a social worker,” Marrin said. “They are one of, if not the most, faith-filled couples I have ever met. Their example of treating everyone, and I mean everyone, as Christ is unparalleled.

“The way they welcome all life and treat everyone with dignity, from the birth parents to the social workers to the adoptive parents to the pediatricians to a person they just met on the street. They built their home and their lives on those principles. It is who they are.”

Now age 78 and 75, respectively, Ron and Jane Brown retired in June after 43 years of loving service. Reflecting on the myriad stories of love and loss, joy and hope, the couple said they are at peace with their decision.

“We’d love to keep doing it, but we thought it wasn’t fair to the babies if something should happen with our health,” Jane explained.

Their door will still be open to all – the families and birth parents who have remained in contact over the years, as well as the numerous international exchange students they’ve hosted and also their Cathedral High School family, particularly the hockey team.

Ron has been the assistant hockey coach at Cathedral in St. Cloud for 41 years.

“Each year we invite the team into our home for a meal,” Ron said. “It’s not about hockey. We talk about life and goals and plans for the future. It has become a tradition that we look forward to every year.”

Jane proudly sports a crooked finger, which she deems her “filming finger,” from all the years of traveling and filming the hockey games. She and Ron put together a scrapbook every year for each of the seniors.



Ron and Jane Brown of St. Cloud, Minn., shown in an undated photo, opened their home to more than 100 babies in 43 years of foster parenting. Ron, now 78, and Jane, now 75, retired as foster parents in June 2021, but said their door will still be open to all the families and birth parents who have remained in contact with them over the years. (CNS photo/Dianne Towalski, The Central Minnesota Catholic)

“Cathedral is our family,” Jane said.

The Browns modestly realize their lifetime of service has made an impact on countless people over the years, but what they really hope is that everyone who has come through their door knows that each one has had an impact on them, too.

“It’s humbling really,” Ron said. “To recognize the fact that you’ve been an important part of someone’s life, even for a short time.”

“They helped us realize what is important in life,” Jane said. “While we helped them become parents, they helped us become parents. If we were to say the biggest blessing of being foster parents, it would be the lessons it taught our children. We realized what we wanted to teach our kids – to be people who give to other people.”

“Everyone needs a purpose,” Jane said. “What better purpose than to be a volunteer for something that you love or feel strongly about? You do it because you want to. Never would we look at anything we did as a sacrifice. We would do it all over again.”

BISHOP'S INTERVIEW

Each Mass sends us forth to share the fruits of 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, this interview concludes our series on the Mass. Let's begin by finishing our discussion on the Liturgy of the Eucharist. Tell us about the importance of the Eucharistic Prayer.

Bishop Vásquez: The Eucharistic Prayers prayed at Mass have been developed throughout the centuries, and they are the heart and center of the celebration of the Eucharist. Each Eucharistic Prayer begins with the Preface Dialogue between the celebrant and the people: The Lord be with you ...and with your spirit ... lift up your hearts ... we lift them up to the Lord. That simple exchange is quite important because the priest draws the people into this moment and asks them to be prayerfully attentive to what is about to take place so that they may offer themselves with and through the priest. The priest continues with the Preface, which expounds on God's saving work in Christ, for which we give thanks.

I want to highlight the words which follow, "It is our duty and our salvation always and everywhere to give you thanks." These words remind us that the Eucharist is an act of thanksgiving and even in the midst of difficulties and challenges, we are called to give thanks to God. Expressing our gratitude to God at all times is not only our duty, but it is our salvation.

During the Eucharistic Prayer, the priest offers a prayer of praise and thanksgiving to God, the Father, for his wonderful gift of salvation and redemption. After the preface, the priest and people acclaim the Sanctus or the Holy, Holy, Holy, which unites our voices with the voices of the angels and saints in Heaven, in singing praises to God for what he has done for us through Jesus Christ.

This is followed by the epiclesis, as the priest invokes the Holy Spirit to consecrate the gifts of bread and wine to become the Body and Blood of Christ. We are asking the Holy Spirit

to sanctify these gifts which will then sanctify us when we receive them. The Spirit transforms us as well to become the Body of Christ.

The institution narrative follows as the priest repeats the words of Christ at the Last Supper. These words are taken from the accounts in the synoptic Gospels and Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians. Then in the Memorial Acclamation we proclaim Christ is truly present. The anamnesis recalls the passion, resurrection and ascension of Christ, but it is more than us remembering; it is a celebration of Christ's act of salvation. By God's grace, the singular event of Christ's Paschal Mystery is made present. Not a new offering and sacrifice but the one and only sacrifice of Christ. During the oblation, we are united to Christ's offering of his Body and Blood as the perfect sacrifice to God, the Father. Christ accepts our imperfect self-offering and unites it to his own perfect sacrifice.

We then offer the intercessions, a series of prayers interceding to God for the members of the church – living and dead – as well as the pope and the local bishop, and ourselves that all may be one in glorifying God for eternity. Finally, all of these prayers are united into what is called the doxology, which glorifies God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. This is followed by the people's "Amen."

Editor: My eighth-grade religious education teacher told us that the greatest Amen we say is at the end of the Eucharistic Prayer. She instructed us to say it "loud and proud." What do you think of that?

Bishop Vásquez: I agree! The doxology praises God, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit and it is important that we sing the Amen with pride, joy and anticipation as we are about to receive the Body and Blood of Christ. That simple word Amen means I believe this, I accept this.

The Communion Rite follows the doxology as together we say the Our Father, the prayer that Jesus taught his disciples to pray. In this prayer, we ask God to give us our daily bread, but not only the bread that sustains our life, but especially to give us this bread that is now on the altar, which gives us eternal life.



After this, there is the exchange of peace, which can take different forms and expressions. The bishop's conferences are allowed to decide which is the best way for the sign of peace to be expressed. It is important to remember that offering the sign of peace is not just a nice thing to do before we receive the Eucharist. It is a gesture of unity with one another and with Christ. This fulfills Christ's request for us to reconcile with one another before we bring our offering to God. It is a reminder that we must be at peace with our brothers and sisters in order to be at peace with God.

Editor: After we receive the Eucharist what should we do?

Bishop Vásquez: After Holy Communion, there is an opportunity to express praise to God, whether that's in song or a particular act of thanksgiving. At this moment, having received the Body and Blood of Christ, I encourage us to make this a time of intimate union with the Lord. Allow him to fully penetrate your heart.

These are precious moments to recognize Christ's gift of himself to us. We conclude the Liturgy of the Eucharist in the Prayer After Communion. This final prayer calls us to live out what we have just received in the Eucharist. This prayer calls us to heaven and to live it out here in our daily lives.

Editor: Then we begin the Concluding Rites of the Mass. What are the

Bishop Joe Vásquez offered a blessing for all healthcare workers at the end of daily Mass on Sept. 13 at St. Mary Cathedral in Austin. The Mass featured the Pandemic Crucifix, a replica of the crucifix Pope Francis brought to St. Peter's Square at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. The crucifix, as a symbol of healing and hope, is making its way to all Ascension Healthcare facilities in the U.S. (Photo by Shelley Metcalf)

key points of these last few minutes of the Mass?

Bishop Vásquez: The Concluding Rites are normally brief. Announcements may be made which give information on one or two events that all need to hear. The celebrant then blesses the people, after which the deacon or the priest dismisses the people – sending them to live what we have just celebrated. The Mass does not simply come to an end, rather, those assembled are sent forth to bring the fruits of the Eucharist to the world. We are called to go forth in mission, to be Christ in the world today by glorifying the Lord by our lives.

Editor: What is your prayer for all of us as we celebrate daily or weekly Mass?

Bishop Vásquez: I pray we may always be faithful to Christ's command to "do this in memory of me." As we listen to God's word and as we receive the Body and Blood of Christ, may we experience fullness of life and love. May this great act of thanksgiving make us hunger for the heavenly banquet we will one day enjoy with Christ. Amen.

SOCIAL JUSTICE

The synod process will benefit from the richness in our diversity

By F. DeKarlos Blackmon, ObISB | Columnist

As the month of October brings Respect Life Month, World Mission Sunday and the Synod of Bishops on Synodality, I have been reflecting on the common dignity of all people and the mission of the baptized. I am drawn particularly to the reality that each of us is made in the image and likeness of God with an inherent dignity that can never be taken away. If we stop and rest in the Lord, amidst the hustle and bustle of everyday life, we will find that we have been called to be in eternal union with God and in communion with one another.

This brings my thoughts to the ecclesiology of who we are as the church. Considering the nature of the Christian faithful, our ecclesiology underscores how the church is a communion of persons consciously in relationship with each other in response to God. The faithful are affected by this relationship as it is essential to the church as communion. This is the same communion as expressed by Christ in the Gospel, “...so that they may all be one, as you, Father, are in me and I in you, that they

also may be in us, that the world may believe that you sent me” (Jn 17:21). Baptism into the church is not just a singular experience between the individual and Christ. There should also be an authentic bond of fellowship among us. After all, it is through the sacraments of initiation that we are all one in Christ without distinction. So, while there is diversity in our vocations, our works, our ministries and the richness of our charisms, there is also a common dignity and a common mission of the Christian faithful.

As Christ promised that the Spirit would dwell in his disciples, the Christian faithful share in the experience of the indwelling not only of the Spirit, but also of the Son and of the Father. In the Gospel of John, Christ conveys, “Whoever loves me will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our dwelling with him” (Jn 14:23).

In “The Teaching Ministry of the Diocesan Bishop,” the U.S. bishops summarized this nature of the people of God as church: “In the creed we affirm our belief in the triune God and the salvific actions attributed to each of the persons of the Trinity. Rooted

in this faith, the believer also affirms credo in ecclesiam, that is, a living communion with and commitment to the Church which is the creation of Christ and the Spirit. To ‘believe in the Church’ means to believe that the Holy Spirit is so intimately united with and active in the Church that the living witness to the Gospel of salvation is found there. There is then, an ecclesial dimension essential to Christian faith and church teaching because the Church itself was founded by Christ to proclaim and to live the paschal mystery until he comes in glory” (13).

As we consider the Synod on Synodality which begins this month, let’s remember that synodality accentuates the diversity in our vocations and the richness of our charisms. The Holy Spirit is working through the hearts of each of the Christian faithful as we are “journeying together” with a common mission.

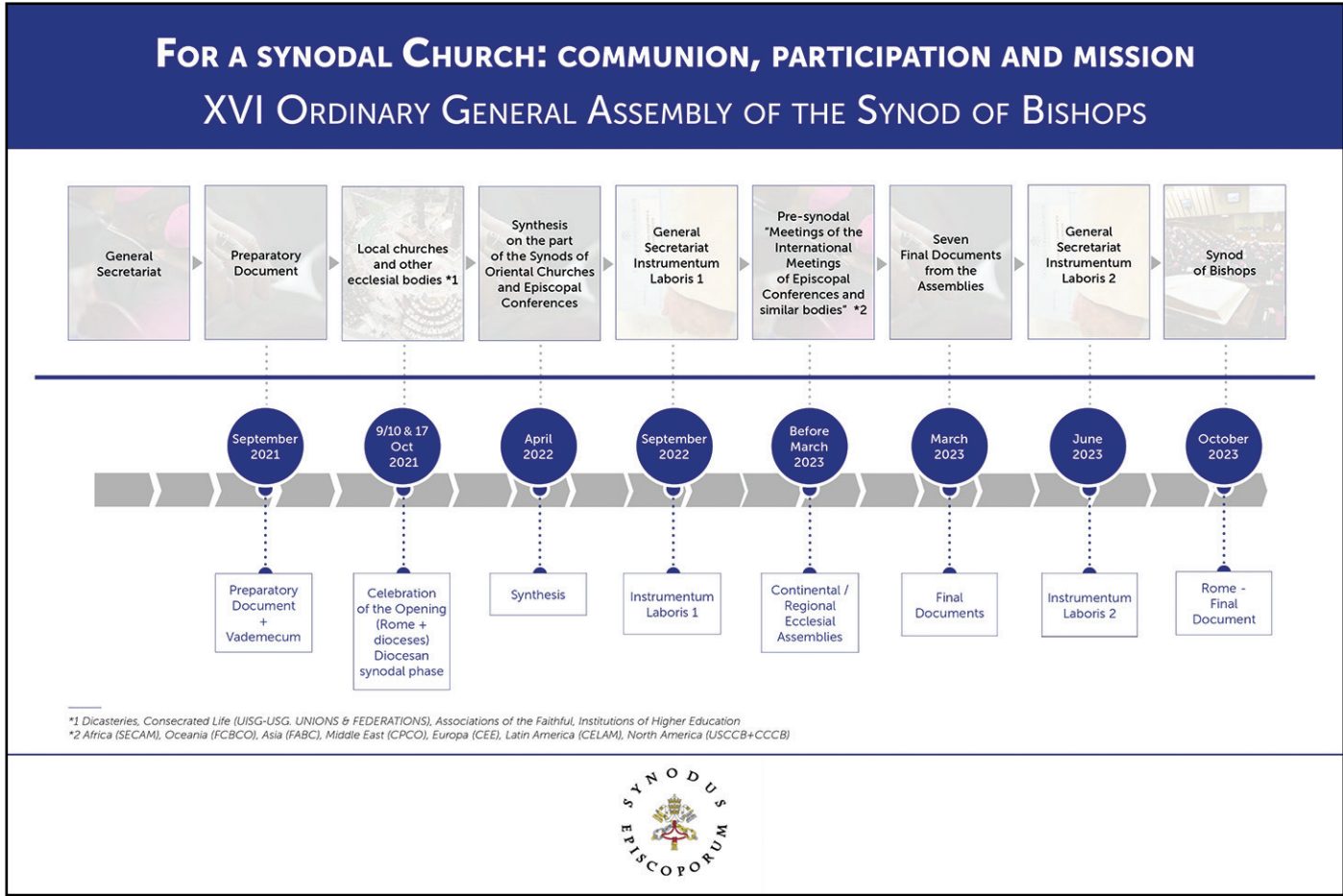
The preparatory document for the upcoming synod reminds the Christian faithful that the synodal journey “is intended to inspire people to dream about the church we are called to be, to make people’s hopes flourish, to stimulate trust, to bind up wounds, to weave new and deeper relationships, to learn from one another, to build bridges, to en-


lighten minds, warm hearts, and restore strength to our hands for our common mission.”

The fundamental question guiding the whole synodal process is: “How does this ‘journeying together,’ which takes place today on different levels – from the local level to the universal one – allow the church to proclaim the Gospel in accordance with the mission entrusted to her; and what steps does the Spirit invite us to take in order to grow as a synodal church?” The faithful are invited to offer our perspectives through broad consultation, taking into account the diversity of our stations in life and the richness of our varied charisms for the good of the whole people of God.

Remember, the Christian faithful’s involvement with the church as a communion of persons consciously in relationship with each another in response to God, highlights the reign of God. This communal dimension reveals that all power and authority come from God, and that the ministerial priesthood and the common priesthood of the faithful are coworkers in God’s beatific work of salvation. By journeying together, and in encountering and accompanying others through this process, we will be able to truly enter into an objective attitude of considering authentically the context of another’s journey toward salvation.

The Diocese of Austin invites the faithful throughout Central Texas to pray for and participate in the diocesan phase of the synodal process. No one should be excluded because every voice should be heard. Pope Francis will formally open the synodal process at the Vatican Oct. 9-10, and Bishop Joe Vásquez will open the synodal process in the Diocese of Austin Oct. 21 at 6:30 p.m. with a Mass at St. Mary Cathedral in Austin. The diocesan phase of the synodal process will run until April 2022. More information will be forthcoming in parishes, on the diocesan website, and through social media.





DeKarlos Blackmon, ObISB, 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.

THE DOMESTIC CHURCH

Sacramental grace helps spouses, families through daily challenges

By Alanna Heyl | Guest Columnist

Sixteen years ago, my husband Danny and I chose Matthew 6:25-34 as the Gospel reading for our wedding liturgy. In this passage Jesus tells his disciples, "...do not worry and say, 'What are we to eat?' or 'What are we to drink?' or 'What are we to wear?'" All these things the pagans seek. Your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given you besides. Do not worry about tomorrow; tomorrow will take care of itself." Over the years we have learned and relearned the wisdom of this Gospel passage as we have grown our family to include four children.

The pandemic has been an incredible reminder of the importance of trusting in God's care. Before, the worries of our family's life included getting dinner on the table each evening, helping our kids with their homework and non-stop weekends of soccer games and birthday parties. COVID-19 has added an element of great anxiety about the future that we are not alone in experiencing. Routines that we used to take for granted are no longer "normal," and material possessions suddenly seem much less

important. If Danny and I depended solely on "things" and "normalcy" for fulfillment in our marriage, we would surely be disappointed in ourselves and in one another.

Instead, Danny and I have come to find the one constant is our continued trust in God. Our regular attendance at Mass is the bedrock of this trust. Each week, as a family, we come to church and give thanks for all that God has given us. We share in the joy of worship within a community. We offer our own unique gifts and work, transforming our human endeavors into the work of God. We recognize where we often fall short. We receive the Eucharist, and we are nourished by God's love.

The spirituality of our family as a domestic church calls on us to replicate this love in the world, to everyone we meet. It also helps us to recognize that it is only through supernatural love that this is possible – love that is "strengthened and sanctified by grace" as Pope Francis explains in his apostolic exhortation "Amoris Laetitia."

It is the grace received through the sacrament of matrimony that gives us patience when something is forgotten at the store, attentiveness when we



are asked to read the same book (for what feels like the hundredth time) to our 4-year-old, and the humility to apologize

when in a moment of anger, we say something we did not mean. It is this grace that helps us to stay present to one another.

Pope Francis unpacks Jesus' teaching in Matthew 6:25-34 when he writes, "This is what we experience in the daily life of the family. We are constantly reminded that each of those who live with us merits complete attention, since he or she possesses infinite dignity as an object of the Father's immense love."

God, our Father, knows our needs and our worries. As his children we are called to trust in him. Similarly, within a family we love and take care of one another; not because of what each of us can produce or create, but because each one of us is valued for who we are. In our participation in the Eucharist every Sunday we experience God's sacrificial love for us, and we are reminded of the love that we are to show each other.

As a young, engaged couple, Danny and I could never have predicted the stress of a family of six, two careers, a global pandemic, or any other worries of the tomorrows that we have yet to experience. We did, however, have the blessing of this Gospel passage to begin and sustain our marriage. Today and through all life's transitions, may we always trust in God the Father's promise to provide.

Alanna Heyl teaches and serves as the theology department chair at St. Dominic Savio Catholic High School in Austin. Alanna, her husband and their four children are parishioners of St. Louis Parish in Austin. (Photo courtesy Heyl family)



HUMAN DIGNITY

Catholic Charities promotes respect for human dignity in every stage of life

By Sara Ramirez | Columnist

Every October we reflect upon and recommit ourselves to our foundational principle of Catholic social teaching: the life and dignity of each human person. In contrast to what Pope Francis describes as a "throw away culture" in which the unborn, the elderly and the poor are discarded, we are called to recognize and promote the inherent dignity of each and every human being at the moment of conception and in every stage of life.

At Catholic Charities of Central Texas, respect for life is at the core of our mission: "People of faith serving anyone in need by strengthening

families and promoting respect for human dignity and life." Each of our six programs combats the "throw away culture" by accompanying individuals and families when life is most challenging, when others have turned their backs, and when hope has been lost.

Starting at the very beginning of life, our St. Gabriel's Pregnancy and Parenting program walks with moms and dads – especially those going through a difficult or unexpected pregnancy – and provides life-affirming emotional, educational and material support. We continue to accompany parents for the first three years of their child's life, helping them gain the knowledge, skills and resources they need to provide a safe and healthy

start for their babies. This foundational work is critical to promoting respect for life, but it is just the beginning. Our Catholic Charities team journeys with our clients through life's twists and turns, ups and downs, affirming their dignity and worth in every circumstance.

When a family faces a financial crisis that threatens their ability to meet their most basic needs, Catholic Charities is here to help. Our Financial Stability and St. Michael's Veteran Services programs offer financial support and resource navigation so that families do not have to choose between paying their rent or providing food for their family.

When a family is affected by a

flood, wildfire, hurricane, tornado or pandemic, Catholic Charities is here to help. Our Disaster Response program helps to stabilize families in the immediate aftermath of a disaster, ensuring they are safe and secure with basic needs met. We walk alongside them until they have recovered to their pre-disaster state or better.

When an adult or child struggles with grief, anxiety, depression or sense of worth, Catholic Charities is here to help. Our Counseling Services program offers high-quality mental health services for individuals, couples and families to help overcome life's challenges.

See CCCTX on next page

DISCERNING THE CALL

With joy, deacons take on many responsibilities

By Deacon Rob Embry | Guest Columnist

As each one has received a gift, use it to serve one another as good stewards of God's varied grace. Whoever preaches, let it be with the words of God; whoever serves, let it be with the strength that God supplies, so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ to whom belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen. (1 Pt 4:10-11)

For many years, we have had deacons ministering in our parishes, Catholic schools and many other places. Still people come to me and ask, "What is a deacon? What can you do that the average Catholic in the pew can't?"

The best way to answer that is to

look at the source of all our ministry, Jesus Christ himself. At the Last Supper he commissioned his apostles to do three things. In the Gospels, Jesus asks the Father to consecrate the apostles in truth so that the world might believe that the Father has sent him. They are to proclaim the Gospel. He also told the disciples to take bread and wine and "Do this in memory of me," offering perfect worship to the Father by recalling Jesus' passion, death and resurrection. And in John 13, Jesus takes on the lowly task of washing the disciples' feet showing them that they must serve as he served.

The bishops of the church, by the commission of Jesus Christ through the ministry of the apostles, exercise

this three-fold ministry of Word, Liturgy and Service. Each bishop serves a local church as its chief administrator. He sanctifies the church as its chief liturgist and celebrant of the sacraments. And he leads the church as the principal teacher and proclaimer of the Gospel.

But as we read in the Acts of the Apostles, very quickly the apostles saw they needed help in fulfilling the ministry. Under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, they chose seven men to be their assistants in the distribution of food to the widows and orphans in the Jerusalem church. Tradition sees these men as the first deacons.

Some men are called to be priests, the bishop's collaborators in the ministry of governing, sanctifying and teaching. These men are sacramentally configured to Christ, the priest; they celebrate the sacraments of the church.

Deacons – the word comes from the Greek "diakonos" meaning servant – are sacramentally configured to Christ, the servant. Deacons serve by assisting the bishop and his priests as needed and in direct ministry to the whole church. Deacons seek out the under-served, finding unmet needs and filling them.

Obviously, we most often see deacons assisting at the altar, officiating marriages and baptizing babies. But also, deacons teach the faith from the pulpit, in the parking lot and in the parish classrooms. They counsel

couples who are struggling. They help couples prepare for marriage. They help prepare annulment cases. They minister in jails, hospitals and nursing homes. They minister to the homeless. They work with the Society of St. Vincent de Paul to visit people in financial need. They ride with police officers and fire fighters to be a spiritual support as the first responders' chaos and danger.

Any given day, we will find a deacon helping a single mother with two small children find the money to pay the rent, walking someone through the spiritual healing process of filling out annulment paperwork or sitting with a weeping young wife and her hostile husband who doesn't want the child she is carrying.

The ministry is varied and a source of spiritual joy beyond description.

The next formation class for the permanent diaconate will begin in 2023. Those men who are interested in learning more about the permanent diaconate are encouraged to attend an upcoming inquiry session to learn more about the diaconate. See the box at left for more information.

Inquiry sessions about the permanent diaconate

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

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

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

Nov. 14 at the Pastoral Center in Austin

Dec. 12 at St. Joseph Parish Bryan

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

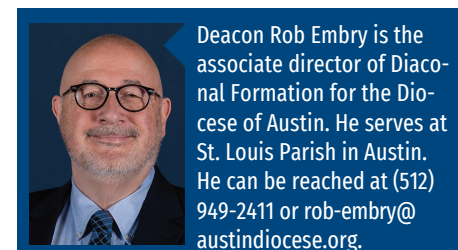
Feb. 13 at St. John the Evangelist Parish in Marble Falls

March 13 at St. Joseph Parish in Killeen

April 10 at Santa Cruz Parish in Buda

April 24 at the Pastoral Center in Austin

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



Deacon Rob Embry is the associate director of Diaconal Formation for the Diocese of Austin. He serves at St. Louis Parish in Austin. He can be reached at (512) 949-2411 or rob-embry@austindiocese.org.

CCCTX

Continued from previous page

When a person flees to the U.S. to escape violence or persecution, Catholic Charities is here to help. Our Immigration Legal Services team provides legal representation in immigration matters to help secure lawful status, work authorization and family unification for those looking to live out their God-given gifts and talents in a land of opportunity.

Along the journey of life, Catholic Charities is here to help. We recognize that every human person is sacred, made in the image and likeness of God. We see the face of Christ in each person who walks through our doors seeking help and hope in their time of

need. Our work is pro-life work, upholding the inherent dignity of every human person from conception to natural death, and every stage in-between.

To learn more about Catholic Charities of Central Texas and how you can join in our life-affirming work, visit www.ccctx.org.



Sara Ramirez is the executive director of Catholic Charities of Central Texas. She can be reached at (512) 651-6100 or sara-ramirez@ccctx.org.



St. Mary Parish in Bremond Annual Homecoming

FALL FESTIVAL

Sunday, October 17, 2021

Barbecue plates will be served from 11:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.

Polish Sausage, Beef & Trimmings - \$12

Barbecue chicken, sausage & brisket will be sold by the pound to go at the pit.

There will be games, prizes, refreshments and sandwiches. The auction begins at 1 p.m.

FAITH THROUGH ART

A personal invitation to CIVA art conference Nov. 4-6 in Austin

By Mark Landers | Guest Correspondent

As Catholics, we are called to live lives that reflect our faith. We profess a creed that, if it guides our daily lives, will shape our society into the Kingdom of God that Jesus proclaimed. In this column, over the years we have shared many outstanding works of religious art that help keep our Christian tradition alive, illustrate (and help us visualize) biblical themes and events, educate, inspire, uplift and provide glimpses of the transcendent. We can and should pray through our daily lives and all art, whether we are creating it or reflecting on it, can facilitate the Christian narrative.

Christians in the Visual Arts (CIVA), an international organization, will hold its biennial conference, Transcend 2021, Nov. 4-6 in Austin. Bishop Joe Vásquez will offer the opening prayer and blessing. The conference theme is “Beauty, Truth and Goodness, Contemplating the Transcendent Divine.” Details about

the conference are available at www.civaconference.org. Tickets are still available for non-members.

“The organization’s longstanding vision is to help artists, collectors, critics, professors, historians, pastors and arts professionals explore the profound relationship between art and faith,” according to the CIVA website.

“As men and women bear God’s image by all kinds of creative expression, CIVA equips those called to the visual arts to flourish in their holy vocation and to pursue it with excellence.

“The visual arts help the church to rehearse and remember the biblical story. The visual arts help congregations worship more deeply ... help Christian communities build a bridge to the non-believing world ... deepen times of personal devotion and prayer. As the church awakens to its need for art and the artists who make it, CIVA deploys its expertise and resources to help the church embrace the visual arts and bring work of quality and substance into its centers of worship and learning,” the organization says.

Many of the artists who have displayed their art in the Diocesan Fine Arts Council exhibits are members of CIVA. One of those artists is John Cobb, whose work has been previously featured in this column.

As part of the conference, Cobb’s Chapel Series of 19 paintings will be installed at St. David’s Episcopal Church in Austin. After the conference, it will be open to the public Nov. 6-10 and Nov. 13-17 from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Please call (512) 610-3500 to make a reservation to view Cobb’s work. “Chapel Ikons: Biblical Meditations on Living the Spiritual Life in the Modern World” by William Penn, a book that features Cobb’s paintings and meditations, is now for sale.

Mark Landers is a parishioner of St. Austin Parish in Austin and a member of the Diocesan Fine Arts Council.



“Nathaniel” by John Cobb will be one of the artist’s paintings featured at St. David’s Episcopal Church in Austin in November. (Photo by Holland Photo)



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

1610 East 11th Street, Austin

Saturday, November 6, 2021 • 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

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.



DIOCESE
of
AUSTIN

Hosted by:
Life, Charity and Justice • Black Ministry

Lauren A. Warner, MAPT
Coordinator of Black Ministry

www.austindiocese.org/black-ministry



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.

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

Oct. 3: St. Mary Parish in Hearne will host its Fall Festival and Homecoming on the parish grounds. The day begins with a bilingual Mass at 10 a.m. A meal of spaghetti and meatballs will begin at 11 a.m. A live auction will begin at 1 p.m. There will be games for all ages and a variety of foods. Details: www.stmaryhearn.org.

Oct. 3: The Third Order Franciscans will celebrate the Transitus of St. Francis of Assisi at 4 p.m. at Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish in Austin. Details: sacredheartsfo@gmail.com.

Oct. 7: 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.

Oct. 9: St. Mary, Our Lady of the Lake Parish in Lago Vista will host its Oktoberfest 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.stmaryoktoberfest.org.

Oct. 9: The next training for those who would like to be a Gabriel Angel will be from 9 a.m. to noon via Zoom. Learn how you can provide support and prayer for an expectant mother and her family during her pregnancy and help her find the support (material, emotional and spiritual) she needs. For more information and questions about the Gabriel Project contact Karen Candelas at (512) 651-6176 or karen-candelas@ccctx.org.

Oct. 9: After an extensive renovation, Bishop

Joe Vásquez will rededicate St. Mary of the Assumption Parish in Taylor at 4 p.m. A ticketed reception and meal will follow. Details: www.smtaylor.org or (512) 352-2175.

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.

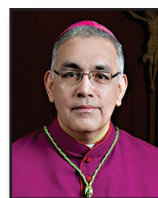
Oct. 16: St. Luke Parish in Temple will host St. Luke Fest from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on the parish grounds. There will food, a petting zoo, a silent auction and games for all ages. Details: (254) 773-1561.

Oct. 17: St. Helen Parish in Georgetown will host its Fall Festival from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. on the parish grounds. Festivities will begin at 5 p.m. on Oct. 16, then continue on Sunday with a silent auction, country store, inflatables and activities for all ages. Details: www.sainthelens.org/festival.

Oct. 17: St. Stephen Parish in Salado will host its Fall Festival from 10:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. at 5471 Thomas Arnold Road in Salado. Bar-

Official schedule

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



**Bishop
Joe S.
Vásquez**

Oct. 3: Mass with Dedication of Altar, St. Jerome Parish, Waco, 11 a.m.

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

Oct. 6: Deans' Meeting, Round Rock, 12 p.m.

Oct. 9: Prayer Vigil at Planned Parenthood, Austin, 7 a.m.

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

Mass with Dedication of Church and Altar, St. Mary, Church of the Assumption Parish, Taylor, 4 p.m.

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

Oct. 13: Meeting with St. Edward's University, Pastoral Center, 10 a.m.

Catholic Services Appeal Priest Luncheon, Pastoral Center 12 p.m.

Oct. 14: Secretariat Directors, Pastoral Center, 9 a.m.

Oct. 15: Interviews with Diaconal Candidates, Pastoral Center

Oct. 16-18: Annual Meeting and Investiture of Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulcher of Jerusalem, Fort Worth

Oct. 19: Presbyteral Council, Pastoral Center, 10 a.m.

White Mass, St. Mary Cathedral, Austin, 6 p.m.

Oct. 20: Mass at Diocesan Administrative Staff Retreat, Holy Trinity Parish, Corn Hill, 9 a.m.

Oct. 21: Opening Mass for Synod of Bishops, St. Mary Cathedral, Austin, 6:30 p.m.

Oct. 22: Mass and Visit, St. Louis Catholic School, Austin, 8 a.m.

Oct. 26: Interviews with Diaconal Candidates, Pastoral Center

Oct. 27: Mass and Blessing, St. Joseph Hospital Chapel, College Station, 10 a.m.

Oct. 28: Vocations Meeting, Pastoral Center, 10:30 a.m.

Oct. 30: Project Miriam, St. William Parish, Round Rock, 10 a.m.

Mass with Dedication of Altar, Emmaus Parish, Lakeway, 5 p.m.

Oct. 31: Confirmation, Holy Family Parish, Lexington, 10 a.m.

Nov. 1: Mass, St. Mary Cathedral, Austin 6:30 a.m.

Nov. 2: Priest Personnel Board, Pastoral Center, Austin, 9:30 a.m.

Nov. 3: Catholic Foundation Annual Meeting, Pastoral Center, 11 a.m.

Confirmation, St. Francis on the Brazos, Waco, 6 p.m.

Nov. 4: Finance Council, Pastoral Center, 11 a.m.

Welcome and Blessing at Biennial Conference of Christians in the Visual Arts, St. Mary Cathedral, Austin, 5 p.m.

Nov. 5: Monthly Budget Meeting, Pastoral Center, 8:30 a.m.

Nov. 6: Mass and Day of Reflection concerning Black Catholic Apostolate, Holy Cross Parish, Austin, 9 a.m.

Mass with "Sending Forth" for Latino Pastoral Leader Initiative, St. Mary Cathedral, Austin, 5 p.m.

Nov. 7: Confirmation, University Catholic Center, 11:30 a.m.

becue plates will be served, and there will be games for all ages, a silent auction and petting zoo. Details: saintstephenchurch.org.

Oct. 17: St. Mary Parish in Bremond will host its Fall Festival on the parish grounds. Barbecue Polish sausage and brisket (\$12 per plate) will be served from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. The auction will begin at 1 p.m. Other activities include a variety of foods and games for all ages.

Oct. 19: The Catholic Healthcare Guild of Central Texas invites all healthcare workers to the 20th annual White Mass to be celebrated by Bishop Joe Vásquez at 6 p.m. at St. Mary Cathedral in Austin. The White Mass will be live streamed at www.smcaustin.org/streaming-video-page and/or www.facebook.com/smcaustin.

Oct. 19: Young professionals are invited to adoration at the Marian Shrine of Our Lady of Schoenstatt in Austin at 7 p.m. A social and fellowship will follow in the Movement House. Details: schoenstatt-austin.us.

Oct. 20: A discernment dinner for women will be held from 7 to 9 p.m. in the St. Luke Room at the University Catholic Center in Austin.

Women between the ages of 18 and 35 are invited to this evening of prayer and discussion about religious life. Details: godiscalling.me or (512) 949-2430.

Oct. 21: Men from the Austin-area are invited to a discernment dinner from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. at St. Mary Cathedral in Austin. The evening will include dinner, prayer and discussion about discerning one's vocation. Details: godiscalling.me or (512) 949-2430.

Oct. 22: St. Michael's Catholic Academy in Austin will host Homecoming and Future Crusader Night at 5:30 p.m. on the school campus. There will be entertainment for the entire family including food, games, face painting, music and football. Details: smca.com/visit.

Oct. 23-24: The special collection for World Mission Sunday and the Propagation of Faith will be taken up in parishes across the diocese.

Oct. 24: St. Louis Parish in Waco will host a festival from 10:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. on the parish grounds. There will be live music, laser and archery tag for the kids, games for all ages, a petting zoo and delicious foods.

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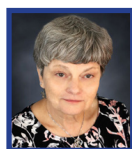
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SEE MORE EVENTS ON NEXT PAGE

EVENTS CONTINUED

Oct. 25: The St. Dominic Savio Catholic High School Eagle Classic Golf Tournament will be held at Crystal Falls Golf Club. It begins with an 8:30 a.m. shotgun start. Visit www.saviochs.ejoinme.org/eagleclassic21 to register to play, register your team and receive a \$100 price break, and/or purchase your sponsorship. Details: boosterpresident@saviochs.org.

Oct. 29-31: A Project Rachel retreat will be held. Project Rachel is a compassionate and confidential ministry extending God's unconditional love and forgiveness to women and men who experience the tragedy of abortion. Project Rachel helps anyone who is suffering after an abortion (or as the result of a loved one's abortion) to experience God's mercy, forgiveness and peace. Details: project-rachel@austindiocese.org or 1-877-WeCare2 (1-877-932-2732).

Oct. 30: Project Miriam will be held from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at St. William Parish in Round Rock. Women between the ages of 16 and 35 are invited to this day of encounter with joyful sisters from various religious communities. Mass will be celebrated, there will be time for prayer and discussion about religious life. Details: godiscalling.me or (512) 949-2430.

Oct. 31: Cathedral School of St. Mary in Austin will host its annual Fall Festival from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. There will be food, games, a silent auction, arts and crafts vendors and more.

Details: www.smcschoolaustin.org or (512) 476-1480.

Nov. 1: All Saints Day (note this is not a holy day of obligation when it falls on a Monday).

Nov. 5-7: 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. The weekend retreat will be held at Cedarbrake Catholic Retreat Center in Temple. Details: austinme.org or contact wwmeaustin@gmail.com or call (512) 677-WWME (9963).

Nov. 4: The Maria Goretti Network, a self-help support network for those affected by abuse and their families, will meet from 7:30 to 9 p.m. For more information about the meetings and the group, contact tbreaux@mgoretti.org or (713) 851-3708.

Nov. 6: On the first Saturday of each month, Father Kevin Rai will lead Marian Mornings from 8:45 to 11 a.m. at St. John Neumann Parish in Austin. The mini-retreat will begin with Mass and end with Holy Hour at 11 a.m. with prayer and a short break in between. Each Saturday's content will focus on a different aspect of Marian spirituality. Details: sjnaustin.org.

Nov. 6: Faith: Encounter and Transformation: A Day of Reflection Concerning the Black Apostolate will be held from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Holy Cross Parish in Austin. Join Bishop Joe 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. Details: www.austindiocese.org/black-ministry-dor or (512) 949-2449.

Nov. 6: Married and engaged couples are invited to the first Together in Holiness marriage enrichment conference in the Diocese of Austin at St. William Parish in Round Rock. Together in Holiness will feature presentations from speakers like Andrew and Sarah Swafford, as well as the sacrament of reconciliation, Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, Vigil Mass and more. Affordable, on-site childcare and full or partial scholarships are available. This is an initiative of the St. John Paul II Foundation. Details: <https://forlifeandfamily.org/events/th21-atx/> or call Erin at (832) 779-1070.

Nov. 13: Explaining Our Holy Mass, a day of reflection led by Father Paul-Michael Piega, will be held from 9 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at Cedarbrake Catholic Retreat Center in Temple. Father Piega will share his love and wisdom of the church's teaching regarding the Mass. This retreat will include Mass and lunch. Cost is \$40. Details: www.austindiocese.org/cedarbrake or (254) 780-2436.

Nov. 14: An inquiry session for men who are considering the permanent diaconate will be held from 2 to 5 p.m. at the diocesan Pastoral Center in Austin. Details: www.austindiocese.org/inquiry-info-session or (512) 949-2459.

Nov. 24-26: Diocesan offices will be closed for the Thanksgiving holidays.

Burse

The Diocesan Council of Catholic Women has completed a burse for the Clerical Endowment Fund (CEF) in honor of Missionaries of Father Benjie Magnaye.

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

Austin	\$395.00
Bastrop/Lockhart	\$353.00
Brenham/La Grange	\$437.00
Bryan/College Station	\$159.00
Killeen/Temple	\$1,006.00
Waco	\$5,970.00
Previous Balance	\$4,324.79
Total	\$12,644.79

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

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

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

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

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

ETHICS AND INTEGRITY IN MINISTRY

EIM Application

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

In-Person EIM Workshops are open

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

Online EIM Training available until Jan. 2, 2022

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

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



austindiocese.org/eim



(512) 949-2447



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ENTREVISTA DEL SEÑOR OBISPO

Cada Misa nos envía a compartir los frutos de 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, esta entrevista concluye nuestra serie sobre la Misa. Comencemos terminando nuestra discusión sobre la Liturgia de la Eucaristía. Platiquenos sobre la importancia de la Plegaria Eucarística.

Obispo Vásquez: Las Oraciones Eucarísticas oradas en la Misa han sido desarrolladas a lo largo de siglos y son el corazón y el centro de la celebración de la Eucaristía. Cada Oración Eucarística comienza con el Diálogo del Prefacio entre el celebrante y la gente: El Señor esté con ustedes...y con su espíritu...levantemos el corazón...lo tenemos levantado hacia el Señor. Ese simple intercambio es de gran importancia por que el sacerdote lleva a la gente a este momento y les pide que en oración estén atentos a lo que está por suceder de manera que se ofrezcan a sí mismo con y a través del sacerdote. El sacerdote continúa con el Prefacio, el cual habla sobre el trabajo salvífico de Dios en Cristo, por el cual damos gracias.

Quiero subrayar las palabras que siguen, “Es nuestro deber y salvación darte gracias siempre y en todo lugar”. Estas palabras nos recuerdan que la Eucaristía es un acto de acción de gracias e incluso en medio de las dificultades y retos, estamos llamados a dar gracias a Dios. Expresar nuestra gratitud hacia Dios en todo momento no solo es nuestro deber, sino también nuestra salvación.

Durante la Oración Eucarística, el sacerdote ofrece una oración de alabanza y agradecimiento a Dios, el Padre, por su maravilloso don de la salvación y la redención. Después del prefacio, el sacerdote y la gente claman el Sanctus o el Santo, Santo, Santo, que une nuestras voces a las voces de los ángeles y santos en el Cielo, cantando alabanzas a Dios por lo que ha hecho por nosotros a través de Jesucristo. Esto es seguido por la Epiclesis, mientras que el sacerdote invoca al Espíritu Santo para santifi-

car estos dones de pan y vino que se convierten en el Cuerpo y Sangre de Cristo. Le estamos pidiendo al Espíritu Santo que santifique estos dones los cuales, a su vez, nos santifican cuando los recibimos. El Espíritu nos transforma también a nosotros para convertirnos en el Cuerpo de Cristo.

La institución narrativa sigue mientras el sacerdote repite las palabras de Cristo en la Última Cena. Estas palabras son tomadas de los relatos de los Evangelios sinópticos y de la Primera Carta de Pablo a los Corintios.

Después en la Aclamación Memorial proclamamos que Cristo está verdaderamente presente. La anamnesis recuerda la pasión, resurrección y ascensión de Cristo, pero es más que el acodarnos; es una celebración del acto de salvación de Cristo. Por la gracia de Dios, el singular evento del Misterio Pascual de Cristo se hace presente. No en una nueva ofrenda y sacrificio, sino en el único sacrificio de Cristo. Durante la oblación, somos unidos a la ofrenda de Cristo de su Cuerpo y su Sangre como el sacrificio perfecto a Dios Padre. Cristo acepta nuestra entrega imperfecta de uno mismo y la une a su propio sacrificio perfecto.

Entonces ofrecemos las intercesiones, una serie de oraciones que intercedemos ante Dios por los miembros de la iglesia – los vivos y los muertos – así como por el papa y el obispo local, y por nosotros mismos, para que todos seamos solo uno en glorificar a Dios por la eternidad. Finalmente, todas estas oraciones se unen en la doxología, que glorifica a Dios: Padre, Hijo y Espíritu Santo. Esto es seguido por el “Amén” de la gente.

Editora: Mi maestra de educación religiosa de octavo grado nos dijo que el Amén más grande que decimos es al final de la Oración Eucarística. Ella nos enseñó a decirlo “fuerte y con orgullo”. ¿Qué piensa usted de eso?

Obispo Vásquez: ¡Estoy de acuerdo! La doxología alaba a Dios, el Padre, el Hijo y el Espíritu Santo y es importante que cantemos el Amén con orgullo, alegría y anticipación, ya que estamos a punto de recibir el Cuerpo y la Sangre de Cristo. Esa simple palabra Amén, significa que lo

creo, que lo acepto.

El Rito de la Comunión sigue a la doxología cuando decimos juntos el Padre Nuestro, la oración que Jesús enseñó a sus discípulos a orar. En esta oración, pedimos a Dios que nos de nuestro pan de cada día, pero no solo el pan que sustenta nuestra vida, sino especialmente que nos dé de este pan que está ahora en el altar, el que nos da vida eterna.

Después de esto, se da el intercambio de la paz, el cual puede tomar diferentes formas y expresiones. Se permite a las conferencias episcopales que decidan cuál es la mejor manera para expresar la señal de la paz. Es importante recordar que ofrecer la señal de la paz no es sólo una cosa linda que se hace antes de recibir la Eucaristía. Es un gesto de unidad mutua y con Cristo. Esto cumple con la petición de Cristo de que nos reconciliemos antes de llevar nuestra ofrenda a Dios. Es un recordatorio de que debemos estar en paz con nuestros hermanos y hermanas para estar en paz con Dios.

Editora: Después de recibir la Eucaristía, ¿Qué podemos hacer?

Obispo Vásquez: Después de la Santa Comunión, hay una oportunidad de expresar alabanza a Dios, ya sea cantada o en un acto particular de agradecimiento. En este momento, habiendo recibido el Cuerpo y Sangre de Cristo, le animo hacer de este un tiempo de unión íntima con el Señor. Permítanle entrar profundamente en su corazón. Estos son momentos preciosos para reconocer el don de Cris-

to, que él mismo nos dio. Concluimos la Liturgia de la Eucaristía en la Oración Después de la Comunión. Esta oración final nos llama a vivir lo que acabamos de recibir en la Eucaristía. Esta oración nos invita al cielo y a vivirlo aquí en nuestra vida diaria.

Editora: Entonces comenzamos los Ritos de Conclusión de la Misa. ¿Cuáles son los puntos clave de estos últimos minutos de la Misa?

Obispo Vásquez: Los Ritos de Conclusión son normalmente breves. Se pueden dar los anuncios con información sobre uno o dos eventos que todos necesitamos conocer. El celebrante entonces bendice a la gente, después de lo que, el diácono o el sacerdote despide a la gente – enviándolos a vivir lo que acabamos de celebrar. La Misa no se acaba simplemente, sino que los reunidos son enviados a llevar los frutos de la Eucaristía al mundo. Estamos llamados a ser misioneros, a ser Cristo en el mundo de hoy, glorificando al Señor con nuestras vidas.

Editora: ¿Cuál es su oración por todos nosotros mientras celebramos la Misa diaria o Dominical?

Obispo Vásquez: Oro por que siempre seamos fieles al mandato de Cristo “hagan esto en conmemoración mía”. Que mientras escuchamos las palabras de Dios y recibimos el Cuerpo y la Sangre de Cristo, experimentemos la plenitud de la vida y el amor. Que este gran acto de acción de gracias nos dé hambre del banquete divino que un día gozaremos con Cristo. Amén.

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.

LA IGLESIA DOMÉSTICA

La gracia sacramental ayuda a familias a través de retos diarios

Por **Alanna Heyl** | Columnista Invitada

Hace dieciséis años, mi esposo Danny y yo escogimos Mateo 6:25-34 como la lectura del Evangelio para nuestra liturgia matrimonial. En este pasaje, Jesús les dice a sus discípulos “Así que no se preocupen diciendo: ‘¿Qué comeremos?’ o ‘¿Qué beberemos?’ o ‘¿Con qué nos vestiremos?’”³² Los paganos andan tras todas estas cosas, pero el Padre celestial sabe que ustedes las necesitan.³³ Más bien, busquen primeramente el reino de Dios y su justicia, y todas estas cosas les serán añadidas. Por lo tanto, no se angustien por el mañana...” A través de lo años hemos aprendido una y otra vez la sabiduría del pasaje del Evangelio mientras formábamos nuestra familia que incluye cuatro hijos.

La pandemia ha sido un recordatorio increíble de la importancia de confiar en el cuidado de Dios. Antes, las preocupaciones de la vida de nuestra familia incluían poner la cena en la mesa cada noche, ayudar a nuestros hijos con sus tareas y fines de semana sin pausa de juegos de soccer y fiestas de cumpleaños. El COVID-19 ha agregado un elemento de gran ansiedad sobre el futuro, que no estamos ex-

perimentando solo nosotros.

Las rutinas que dábamos por sentadas ya no son ‘normales’ y las posesiones materiales parecen de pronto mucho menos importantes. Si Danny y yo dependiéramos solamente de “cosas” y “normalidad” para la satisfacción en nuestro matrimonio, estaríamos decepcionados seguramente de nosotros mismos y del otro.

En lugar de eso, Danny y yo hemos encontrado constancia en nuestra continua confianza en Dios. Nuestra asistencia regular a Misa es la piedra angular de esta confianza. Cada semana, como familia, vamos a la iglesia y damos gracias por todo lo que Dios nos ha dado. Compartimos en la alegría del culto divino dentro de una comunidad. Ofrecemos nuestros propios dones, únicos, y nuestro trabajo, transformando nuestros esfuerzos humanos en el trabajo de Dios. Reconocemos en donde fallamos. Recibimos la Eucaristía, y somos alimentados por el amor de Dios.

La espiritualidad de nuestra familia como una iglesia doméstica nos llama a replicar este amor en el mundo, a



AÑO DE LA

IGLESIA DOMÉSTICA

todos los que encontramos. También nos ayuda a reconocer que es sólo a través de un amor

supernatural que esto es posible – un amor que es “fortalecido y santificado por la gracia” como explica el Papa Francisco en su exhortación apostólica “Amoris Laetitia”. Es la gracia recibida a través del sacramento del matrimonio la que nos da paciencia cuando algo se olvida en la tienda, atención cuando se nos pide que leamos el mismo libro (cuando se siente que es la centésima vez) a nuestro hijo de 4 años, y la humildad de pedir perdón cuando en un momento de enojo decimos algo que no sentimos. Es la gracia que nos ayuda a estar presentes unos para otros.

El Papa Francisco explica la enseñanza de Jesús en Mateo 6:25-34 cuando escribe, “Esto es lo que experimentamos en la vida diaria de la familia. Se nos recuerda constantemente que cada uno de aquellos que viven con nosotros merece una completa atención, ya que él o ella posee dignidad infinita como objeto del inmenso amor del Padre”.

Dios, Padre nuestro, conoce nuestras necesidades y preocupaciones. Como sus hijos, estamos llamados a confiar en Él. De igual manera, dentro de una familia nos amamos y cuidamos mutuamente; no por lo que cada uno de nosotros pueda producir o crear, sino por que cada uno de nosotros es valorado por quien es.

Al participar de la Eucaristía cada domingo, experimentamos el amor sacrificial de Dios por nosotros, y se nos recuerda el amor que debemos mostrarnos mutuamente.

Como una pareja joven, comprometida, Danny y yo nunca hubiéramos podido predecir el estrés de una familia de seis, dos carreras, una pandemia global, o ninguna de las otras preocupaciones del mañana que aún tenemos que experimentar. Sin embargo, tuvimos la bendición de este pasaje del Evangelio para comenzar y sostener nuestro matrimonio. Hoy y a través de todas las transiciones de la vida, que siempre confiemos en la promesa de Dios Padre de proveernos.

Alanna Heyl enseña y sirve como la Jefa del departamento de teología en St. Dominic Savio Catholic High School en Austin. Alanna, su esposo y sus cuatro hijos son parroquianos de St. Louis Parish en Austin.

Con gozo, los diáconos toman muchas responsabilidades

Por el **Diácono Rob Embry** | Columnista Invitado

Cada uno según el don que ha recibido, minístrelo a los otros, como buenos administradores de la multiforme gracia de Dios. Si alguno habla, hable conforme a las palabras de Dios; si alguno ministra, ministre conforme al poder que Dios da, para que en todo sea Dios glorificado por Jesucristo, a quien pertenecen la gloria y el imperio por los siglos de los siglos. Amén. (1 Pe 4:10-11).

Por más de 50 años, hemos tenido diáconos que sirven en ministerio en nuestras parroquias, escuelas Católicas y muchos otros lugares. Aún así, la gente me pregunta, ¿Qué es un diácono? ¿Qué puede usted hacer que un Católico promedio en las bancas no puede?

La mejor manera de contestar es

mirar hacia la fuente de todo nuestro ministerio, Jesucristo mismo. En la Última Cena Él comisionó a sus apóstoles a hacer tres cosas. En los Evangelios, Jesús pide al Padre que consagre a los apóstoles en la verdad para que el mundo pueda creer que el Padre lo ha enviado. Ellos han de proclamar el Evangelio. También dijo a los discípulos que tomaran pan y vino y lo hicieran “en conmemoración mía,” ofreciendo el perfecto culto divino al Padre recordando la pasión, muerte y resurrección de Jesús. Y en Juan 13 Jesús toma la humilde tarea de lavar los pies de los discípulos mostrándoles que debían servir tal como él había servido.

Los obispos de la iglesia, por la comisión de Jesucristo a través del ministerio de los apóstoles, ejercitan este triple ministerio de la Palabra, Liturgia y Servicio. Cada obispo sirve

una iglesia local como su administrador en jefe. Él santifica a la Iglesia como su liturgista en jefe y celebrante de los sacramentos. Y él guía a la iglesia como el maestro y proclamador principal del Evangelio.

Pero tal como leemos en los Hechos de los Apóstoles, muy pronto vieron los apóstoles que necesitaban ayuda para cumplir con el ministerio. Bajo la inspiración del Espíritu Santo, escogieron a siete hombres para ser sus asistentes en la distribución de comida a las viudas y huérfanos en la iglesia de Jerusalén. La tradición ve a estos hombres como los primeros diáconos.

Algunos hombres son llamados a ser sacerdotes, colaboradores del obispo en el ministerio de gobernar, santificar, y enseñar. Estos hombres son sacramentalmente configurados a Cristo, el sacerdote; ellos celebran los

sacramentos de la iglesia.

Diáconos – la palabra viene del Griego “diakonos” que significa servidor – están sacramentalmente configurados a Cristo, el servidor. Los Diáconos sirven asistiendo al obispo y a sus sacerdotes como sea necesario y en ministerio directo a la iglesia. Los Diáconos buscan a los no servidos, encontrando necesidades no cubiertas y cubriéndolas.

Obviamente, con frecuencia vemos a los diáconos asistiendo en el altar, oficiando matrimonios y bautizando bebés. Pero también, los diáconos enseñan la fe desde el púlpito, en el estacionamiento y en los salones parroquiales. Ellos aconsejan a parejas que están luchando. Ayudan a parejas a prepararse para el matrimonio, a preparar casos de anulación.

[Ver Diáconos en la página 22](#)

Comunidades religiosas de México sirven en ministerio en Sacred Heart en Austin

Por Enedelia J. Obregón | Corresponsal

Sacred Parish en Austin tiene ahora dos sacerdotes, tres hermanas religiosas y un hermano religioso para servir en ministerio integralmente a más de 900 familias, mayoritariamente de inmigrantes que realizan el culto divino ahí.

El Obispo José Vásquez dio la bienvenida de manera oficial a los tres hombres de Discípulos de Jesús y a tres mujeres de Discípulas de Jesús durante una Misa al aire libre en Sacred Heart.

En su homilía bilingüe, el Obispo Vásquez se enfocó en el discipulado, el cual se refleja en los nombres de las dos órdenes. Dijo a las más de 500 personas reunidas que todos hemos sido llamados a ser discípulos.

“No escogimos a Cristo; Él nos escogió,” dijo el obispo. “Después de que nos invita, todavía tenemos que escoger. Es nuestra decisión ¿Qué escogeremos?”

Los dos sacerdotes: Padre Alejandro Ballesteros y Padre Luis Alfonso Martínez Gallo, sirven ahora como pastores asociados junto al Padre Mark Hamlet, pastor de Sacred Heart. El Hermano Alejandro López sirve como asistente pastoral.

La Hermana Margarita Ruíz, es asistente pastoral. La hermana Verónica Villegas supervisa la Pastoral Juvenil, y la Hermana Olga Rivera es la directora de Educación Religiosa. La Hermana Lucero Espitia, quien sirvió en la parroquia por muchos años, regresó a San Luis Potosí, SLP, México, donde las órdenes religiosas tienen su sede, para profesar sus votos finales. Ella planea regresar dentro de un año.

Los recién llegados se retrasaron por más de un año por la pandemia del COVID-19 y los subsecuentes retrasos de sus visas. El Obispo Vásquez invitó inicialmente a la orden a Austin en 2016. Él conoció a las Discípulas en Houston cuando era obispo auxiliar de la Arquidiócesis de Galveston-Houston. Después de que él vino a Austin, la Madre Superiora María Guadalupe Navarro le dijo al obispo que estaban interesados en venir a Austin, así que envió una carta a todas las parroquias. El Padre Hamlet respondió rápidamente. Hace cinco años llegaron las primeras hermanas.



El Padre Hamlet dijo que lo que lo inspiró para invitar a los Discípulos y Discípulas fue su historia y carisma de evangelización, discipulado y comunidad en formación.

Las órdenes se originaron de las Comunidades de Alianza Nueva, que surgieron del Movimiento Católico de Renovación Carismática en la Arquidiócesis de San Luis Potosí hace cerca de 45 años. A medida que los parroquianos profundizaban en su fe Católica, formaron comunidades laicas tomando votos simples y permanentes y viviendo en comunidad. Las comunidades laicas eventualmente pidieron el establecimiento de órdenes religiosas.

En 1986 el Padre Pablo Cárdenas Cantú y la Hermana Isabel de la Cruz Crespo Ruíz fundaron las órdenes. En 1993 recibieron la aprobación inicial diocesana. En 1999 recibieron la aprobación canónica como una institución de vida consagrada.

El general superior de los Discípulos de Jesús, Padre Luis Humberto Ríos, estuvo presente también en la Misa en Sacred Heart. Él dijo que la importancia de las comunidades laicas en la evangelización y catequesis deriva del Concilio Vaticano Segundo. Él dijo que los consagrados ayudan a los laicos y los grupos laicos ayudan a los consagrados en su evangelización.

“Los laicos pueden entrar en las realidades (vidas diarias) en las que los sacerdotes no pueden,” dijo el Padre Ríos. “La gente laica puede llevar a la iglesia a esos lugares”.

Las comunidades religiosas reflejan la vida familiar en cierto grado.

“Es por ello que vivimos en comunidad,” dijo. “Comemos juntos y

estudiamos la Biblia juntos, reflejando cómo viven las familias”.

Sacred Heart provee de un lugar para su vida comunal. Los sacerdotes viven en la rectoría y las hermanas en un convento, los cuales han sido modificados para la vida comunal así como para la vida de oración.

La Hermana Rivera dijo que vivir en comunidad fortalece a las mujeres y a los hombres en la vida religiosa para la misión que están tomando.

Han dividido los ministerio parroquiales, algunos de los cuales comenzaron a instancias de los parroquianos. Existe un grupo de Al-Anon que surgió por la petición de familias de aquellos asistiendo a Alcohólicos Anónimos.

“Ofrece a las familias un espacio para hablar,” dijo del ministerio. “Tratamos de atender las necesidades de la parroquia y de buscar recursos en la comunidad que puedan ayudarlos”.

Muchas de las familias vienen de áreas rurales en México y no saben leer o escribir, así que están buscando establecer clases de alfabetización.

“Mientras que nuestro trabajo es espiritual, tal como enseñarles a orar, necesitamos atender sus necesidades humanas también,” dijo la Hermana Rivera.

El Padre Gallo dijo que es importante construir comunidades y familias que reflejen la imagen de Dios. El discipulado comienza en el hogar en familia, la cual es la iglesia doméstica, como dijo San Juan Pablo II.

La iglesia, dijo, no solo es vivida en el templo en los Domingos. Mientras que el culto divino es necesario, la iglesia también es vivida con los

Dos sacerdotes y un hermano de Discípulos de Jesús y tres hermanas religiosas de Discípulas de Jesús están ahora sirviendo en ministerio en Sacred Heart Parish. Las comunidades religiosas tienen sus sedes en San Luis Potosí, México. (Foto por Gabriel Lujan)

padres y los niños en comunidad. Para apoyar a la gente laica, el Padre Gallo tiene un programa de radio que se escucha en México vía Radio María Guadalupe Network. También ha comenzado un programa vía Facebook al medio día los sábados, enfocado en la Lectio Divina y en el Evangelio del Domingo.

El Padre Hamlet dijo que en una parroquia que es alrededor de 95 por ciento Latina, los adultos han sido excluidos de las tradiciones familiares pero aún así permanecen muy Católicos. Ellos necesitan evangelización en su lengua y en su cultura, dijo.

Él ve a estas familias evangelizando y transformando no solo a su parroquia, sino también a la diócesis y más allá. Dijo que alrededor del 40% de vocaciones en San Luis Potosí vienen de grupos laicos.

“Creo que tendremos vocaciones,” dijo.

El Padre Hamlet está complacido cómo los hombres y mujeres religiosos han sido aceptados en la comunidad de Sacred Heart y espera con ansias el futuro.

“No veo a nuestra parroquia como un lugar que solo provea sacramentos. Si usted hace una lista de las cosas que nos hacen Católicos, tales como las tradiciones que forman como una comunidad, creo que las tenemos todas,” dijo.

Descansa en paz Diácono Juan Garza: Un siervo humilde de Dios

Por Fred Afflerbach | Corresponsal

Un hombre humilde de orígenes sencillos, el Diácono Juan Garza, de 85 años, falleció a principios de septiembre. Durante 37 años, el Diácono Garza viajó por los caminos menos transitados del Centro de Texas rural, sirviendo fielmente a parroquias en Rogers, Rosebud, Rockdale, Granger, Giddings y Cameron. En 1984 fue miembro de la primera clase diaconal que se ordenó en la Diócesis de Austin. Él sirvió bajo la dirección de cuatro obispos.

El Diácono Garza vivía en Rogers con su querida esposa de 66 años, Sophia. Ellos criaron 11 hijos y tienen más de 30 nietos.

Aunque el Diácono Garza creó relaciones en varias parroquias del Centro de Texas, fue su amada St. Matthew Mission en su pueblo natal la más querida para él. Su arduo trabajo y oración fueron instrumental en la construcción de una comunidad de fe.

En 1991, el Diácono Garza asistió al Padre Tom Hanus en la celebración de la primera Misa. Antes de que la nueva iglesia abriera, los Católicos en Rogers manejaban entre 15 y 20 millas para asistir a Misa.

“Él es parte de St. Matthew tanto como las piedras, o las bancas, o las oraciones que han absorbido las paredes,” dijo el Padre Barry Cuba, quien celebra ahora la Misa en St. Matthew. “Trabajar con él fue para mí una manera, como sacerdote en Rogers, de tener una conexión con el pasado, la historia de la parroquia, y sentir una conexión instantánea con la cultura parroquial. Considero un honor haber podido trabajar con él y aprender de él”.

El director de la formación diaconal

en la Diócesis de Austin, el Diácono Michael Forbes de St. William Parish en Round Rock, dijo que el Diácono Garza durante sus años de servicio tocó un sinnúmero de corazones y almas.

“Sería una estadística genial conocer cuántos bebés bautizó, cuántos niños preparó para su Primera Comunión, con cuánta gente joven trabajó en las parroquias mientras enriquecía a las familias, escuchándolas,” dijo el Diácono Forbes.

Para un hombre ocupado quien trabaja para alimentar a una familia numerosa, la decisión de convertirse en diácono no vino fácilmente. En una entrevista reciente, el Diácono Garza dijo que tarde, durante su formación diaconal había tenido una crisis de confianza y fe. Sólo contaba con una educación hasta noveno grado. Once hijos en casa que necesitaban ser alimentados y vestidos. Y tenía un trabajo como mecánico. Y, entonces, un día meditando ante el Santísimo Sacramento, le preguntó a Dios, “¿Por qué me estás molestando?”

Garza dijo que de pronto fue llevado a lugares que nunca había visitado antes: California, Chicago y Nueva York. “Veo mucha gente en Chicago durmiendo sobre cajas, con frío, cansados, vagabundos. Veo muchos niños drogados. Veo gente con hambre, durmiendo en las calles. Y los veo. Había carros viejos y cajas usadas como casas. Al regresar a la iglesia, escuchó una voz: “Esto es para lo que te quiero”.

Hablando fluido español e inglés, el Diácono Garza trabajó para construir puentes entre diferentes culturas. Y su trabajo no paró en el altar. A través de los años, llevó el Santísimo Sacramento a los débiles en los asilos, visitó, aconsejó y llevó Biblias a los encarce-

lados en la prisión estatal en Cameron, condujo clases matrimoniales y asistió a numerosas fiestas de Quince años.

El Diácono Garza nació en 1936 en la comunidad del Sur de Texas llamada Donna. Su padre falleció cuando él era un niño pequeño. A los 16 años, vivía solo, trabajando en las granjas de Bell County. En 1955, conoció a una joven en el cine, llamada Sophia, originaria de Rogers. Se casaron pronto y tuvieron 11 hijos.

Su hija Margaret Moreno, la cuarta, dijo que la vida de su familia habría sido muy diferente si su padre no hubiera completado su formación diaconal. Ella recuerda las conversaciones vivaces los domingos en la tarde cuando el Diácono Garza examinaba a sus hijos sobre la liturgia y la homilía del día.

“Cuando regresábamos a casa (de la iglesia) íbamos a la iglesia otra vez por que él nos examinaba,” dijo Moreno. “Así que aprendimos a escuchar la primera vez, regresar y reportarle a él”. Pero Moreno dijo que el regalo más grande de su padre fue enseñarles a tratarse mutuamente con respeto y amor.

“La compasión y la gentileza siempre han estado ahí,” dijo.

El Padre Tom Chamberlain trabajó con el Diácono Garza desde 1982 hasta 1989 en St. Monica Parish en Cameron y más tarde en St. Matthew en Rogers. El padre Chamberlain dijo que el Diácono Garza fue un “humilde siervo del Señor” y hacía voluntariamente lo que se le pidiese.

Y era, aparentemente un muy buen actor.

“Algunas veces actuaba como Juan Diego en nuestra presentación en vivo de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe,” Dijo el Padre Chamberlain. “Estaba impresionado; se veía de la manera en que yo me imaginaba a Juan Diego. La



El Diácono Juan Garza falleció el 5 de septiembre a la edad de 85 años. Fue ordenado diácono permanente en 1984 y sirvió parroquias en Rogers, Rosebud, Rockdale, Granger, Giddings y Cameron. Le sobreviven su esposa, Sophia, y sus hijos. (Foto cortesía de la familia Garza)

manera en que caminaba, sus manierismos y simplemente, siendo una persona humilde; le quedaba el personaje de la manera en la que yo entiendo que Juan Diego debe haber sido. Listo para hacer lo que fuese que la Virgen le pidiera hacer. Ese era Juan, un humilde siervo del Señor”.

Para aquellos considerando entrar a la formación diaconal, el Diácono Garza dejó algunos pensamientos: Primero, asegúrate de que tu esposa esté de acuerdo. Segundo, no trates de ser un sacerdote, recuerda tu papel como un servidor humilde.

El Diácono Garza nunca se retiró. Continuó asistiendo a Misa a lo largo del verano de 2021. Cuando se le preguntó sobre retirarse, contestó, “He estado leyendo la Biblia todos estos años, y no veo dónde dice Jesús que te puedas retirar”.

Diáconos

Continúa de la página 20

Sirven en ministerio en cárceles, hospitales y asilos. Sirven en ministerio a los que no tienen hogar. Trabajan con la Society of St. Vincent de Paul para visitar gente con necesidades financieras. Acompañan a oficiales de la policía y bomberos como apoyo espiritual en medio del caos y el peligro de los primeros respondientes.

Cualquier día, encontramos a un diácono ayudando a una madre soltera con dos niños pequeños a encontrar el dinero para pagar la renta, o ayudando a través del proceso de sanación espiritual de llenar la documentación para la anulación, o sentados con una joven esposa que llora y su hostil esposo que no quiere

el bebé que ella está esperando.

El ministerio es variado y una fuente de gozo espiritual más allá de una descripción.

La próxima clase de formación para el diaconado permanente comenzará en 2023. Aquellos hombres que estén interesados en aprender más sobre el diaconado perma-

nente están invitados a asistir a una sesión informativa para aprender más sobre el diaconado.

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

Around the Diocese

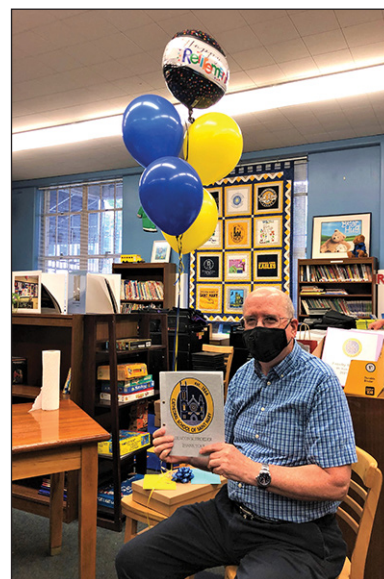


Father Jesse Martinez was installed as pastor of Santa Cruz Parish in Buda on July 11. (Photo courtesy Jessica Chaffee)

St. Helen Parish in Georgetown held a Summer Cookout on July 24. Parishioners were invited for a day of fellowship, games, food and music. (Photo courtesy Corina Peralez)



The Ladies of Charity of Austin presented a check to the food pantry at Cristo Rey Parish in Austin. (Photo courtesy Roni Cook)



Deacon Christopher Schroeder retired after teaching at the Cathedral School of St. Mary for 25 years. He prepared students to receive the sacraments of reconciliation and Holy Eucharist as well as establishing a firm foundation for their future years in school. (Photo courtesy Marian Alonso)



The St. Vincent de Paul Conference at St. Eugene Parish in McGregor packed school supplies to distribute to those in need. (Photo courtesy Mary Ellen Maddox)



Our Lady of Wisdom University Parish has a new student ministry called Caminantes, which translates to "walkers." The group walks together in their faith at Texas State University. They pray and worship in Spanish. (Photo courtesy Maritza Martinez)



Members of the Ladies Ancient Order of Hibernians attended a tour of St. Mary Cathedral in Austin on Aug. 27, in conjunction with their state convention. The tour was given by Ted Eubanks, a parishioner of the Cathedral. (Photo courtesy Marie O'Shaughnessy-Martin)



The staff from St. Ignatius Martyr Parish in Austin enjoyed a retreat together as they discussed the mission of the parish and serving the community. (Photo courtesy Michelle Fontana)

St. Mary's Catholic High School in Taylor has established its first six-man football team under the direction of athletic director and Head Coach Rick Cobia. (Photo by Heidi Altman)

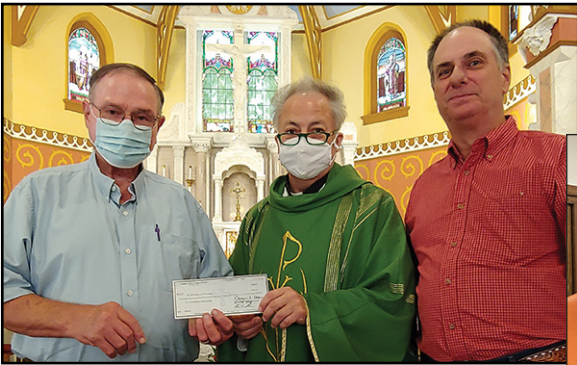


Third Order Dominican Laity celebrated the feast of St. Dominic on Aug. 22 at Dolores Parish in Austin. Dominican Sisters Lou Anne Willette and Margery Race were honored as each celebrated 60 years of religious life. Two members also made new commitments to the order. (Photos courtesy Dora Trevino)

Around the Diocese

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The KJT presented COVID-19 relief funds in the amount of \$500 to Sts. Cyril and Methodius Parish in Granger and St. Louis Parish in Austin. (Photos courtesy Angela Pavelka and Sarah Vitek)



This summer the diocesan Vocations Office sent out several seminarians and one deacon to the Community First! Village for their summer assignments. They worked with neighbors transitioning out of homelessness. Teens from St. Ignatius Parish in Austin visit the village twice a month to serve those in need. (Photos courtesy Lori Nava)



Father Brion Zarsky, pastor of St. Ferdinand Parish in Blanco, recently stacked 50 bales of hay for a parishioner who had surgery. (Photo courtesy Jenny Donovan)



As part of his journey to earn his Eagle Scout, Luke Sheguit, along with fellow scouts and leaders from BSA Troop 345, paved a patio and built a pergola benefitting the residents of the Mary House Catholic Worker, which provides housing to individuals diagnosed with critical and terminal illnesses. (Photo courtesy Sharon Sheguit)



St. John the Evangelist Parish in Luling held a Going Back to School Shoe Drive hosted by the local St. Vincent de Paul Society. (Photos courtesy Patricia Gonzales)



The Catholic Vocations Advocates of Central Texas provided lunch at Yowell Ranch in Killeen for the seminarians who attended the annual convocation at Cedarbrake in August. The seminarians also enjoyed a volleyball game with Bishop Vásquez. (Photo courtesy Debbie Yowell Farley)



Bishop Joe Vásquez celebrated Mass in Spanish at Sacred Heart Parish in Rockne. The parish now offers a monthly Spanish Mass on the second Sunday of each month at 10 a.m. (Photo courtesy Lily Chhin)



Dominican Sister Lois Paha celebrates 60 years of religious life this year. She worked for the Diocese of Austin in the Worship Office from 1989 to 2005. She currently serves as the director of Formation and Pastoral Services for the Diocese of Tucson. (Photo courtesy Adrian Dominicans)

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