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WEST TEXAS ANGELUS

Serving Catholics in the Diocese of San Angelo, Texas

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A servant laid to rest: Msgr. James Bridges was the first priest ordained in the diocese



Rev. Msgr. James P. Bridges

Born: Aug. 15, 1929
Ordained: May 26, 1962
Died: Feb. 8, 2024

Msgr. James P. Bridges died at the age of 94 on Feb. 8, 2024. His parents were Monte Ray Bridges and Lena Maude King. He and his twin sister were born in Plainview, Texas, on Aug. 15, 1929, and raised in the Baptist faith in Lamesa, Texas, by their grandparents. At age 20, he was managing the biggest restaurant in Lamesa, where the local Catholic priest often patronized. His acquaintance with that priest led him to extensive study of the history of Christianity and the Catholic faith, and he fell in love with the church.

He converted to Catholicism in 1952 and entered the seminary in Louisville, Kentucky. He was ordained to the priesthood for the newly formed Diocese of San Angelo on May 26, 1962, having earned two master's degrees in religious studies and education. He served in the following churches: St. Joseph in Fort Stockton, St. James in Sanderson, St. Ambrose in Wall, Sacred Heart in Abilene, Sts. Joachim and Ann in Clyde, St. Joseph in Rowena, St. Thomas in Miles, St. Joseph in Stanton, St. Isidore in Lenorah, St. Mary in Odessa, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton in



See BRIDGES, Page 6

The funeral Mass for Msgr. James Bridges was held at St. Stephen Catholic Church in Midland. After the Mass, Msgr. Bridges was laid to rest in the parish columbarium.

WEST TEXAS ANGELUS PHOTOS

From the Bishop’s Desk

Removing obscene materials from school libraries

In public schools and county libraries across the country, including West Texas, there are sexually graphic and obscene materials available to children. There has been a coordinated effort to include those objectionable materials in public schools, either in the libraries or as part of classroom instruction.

Providing obscene or vulgar literature to minors off school grounds can be considered a crime, but when it is distributed by teachers or librarians in a public-school classroom or library, it is legal in many places. Our children are being exposed to these immoral and corrupting materials during school hours in the name of education.

Various national organizations are trying to indoctrinate the next generation with immoral subject matter through public school systems. For example, the American Library Association, GLSEN, Planned Parenthood, and the Human Rights Campaign are a few of the groups making sustained efforts to advocate for the inclusion of graphic, sexually explicit books in schools and public libraries. These materials do not belong in the hands of minors.

It is not appropriate to expose children to sexually explicit, obscene, or pornographic literature. If you are concerned about these materials in your local schools and libraries, you are not alone. There is a way for you to protect your children from unnecessary exposure to vulgar, pornographic materials by reclaiming your parental rights at the level of the local school district.

You can petition on a local level to have obscene materials removed from public school settings. You can remind school district officials, school personnel, and librarians that certain books can be removed because they are pervasively vulgar or because they do not meet an agreed-upon standard of educational suitability. Local concerned citizens can seek to get involved in the process by which community standards are defined.

I recently asked the staff at the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops Secretariat of Laity, Marriage, Family Life and Youth to help me find a resource with step-by-step actions. They directed me to the Capitol Resource Institute, a national pro-life public policy organization that focuses on public education, religious freedom, parental rights, and the dignity of human life. On their website,



Bishop Michael J. Sis

Diocese of San Angelo

<https://takebacktheclassroom.com/>, they offer a free “Remove Porn in Schools Toolkit,” which can be downloaded through their site. This article is based on that toolkit. Their website also includes a research engine for parents to look up what pornographic books are presently in their public-school libraries depending on the state.

The “Remove Porn in Schools Toolkit” offers a step-by-step process that anyone can follow to pursue the removal of harmful materials from public schools and libraries. Here is a summary of those action steps:

1. Become acquainted with your local school district’s current policy for challenging an objectionable book or other item.
2. If necessary, use a search engine to find the policy online, and if you are unable to access the source in full, contact your local school district administrator to request the policy in writing. Save a paper trail of all your correspondence with the district employees.
3. Find out what is in your public-school library. You can use a search engine to obtain publicly available information. For example, you can begin with a search such as <”School Name”, “County”, “State”, library media center>. If the school website requires login information, you could use your child’s login information from the school, accessing the information from any computer.
4. On the library page of the school or district website, search for a library catalogue. Some common operating systems for library cataloguing are called Follett Destiny and Alexandria. If you see either of those in your search, you have found the catalogue for books that children can check out from the school’s library. Follett Destiny may give you the option to search all the libraries in the entire district or county.

When you find what may be questionable books, you can search for book reviews on websites such as *Amazon.com*. You could also visit your local public library to peruse the book, make copies, or photograph examples of obscene passages or graphics that will help you make your case for removal.

5. When you find a book that you believe should be challenged, keep a record of the relevant information, such as the number of copies on the shelf, which schools have the title available for checkout, etc.

6. Save all correspondence between you and the district concerning your book challenge. This could be helpful in the future.

7. Continue to check your district’s school libraries for obscene materials, since they could obtain new titles at any time. This will also help you to confirm when a successfully challenged book has been removed.

8. You could also use the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) to create an open records request. If you do this, it is important to be very specific. For example, you could request printouts of all purchase orders for library books in a given year.

Which books should be challenged? New books are published all the time. You could look at the American Library Association’s list of most challenged books. You could also consult websites like <https://takebacktheclassroom.com/> to view excerpts from those books which have already been found in schools.

The Toolkit includes some helpful resources, such as a sample Book Removal Tracker chart to help keep your project in order, a template for a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request, and a model policy that you could propose to the local school district. In that model policy, it contains wording that empowers the community and the elected school board members to make important decisions about sensitive materials, with the aim of establishing a more transparent system for evaluating and potentially removing inappropriate materials from a library. You could advocate for a policy like this to be passed by the local school board in your district.

I hope that concerned parents and people of goodwill will find these steps to be helpful in raising their voices for the well-being of their children.

Want to join the National Eucharistic Congress? Financial aid now available

By Gina Christian
OSV News

The organizers of the National Eucharistic Congress are making it easier for cash-strapped families to attend the July 17-21 gathering in Indianapolis.

The congress will cap the National Eucharistic Revival, a three-year grassroots initiative launched in June 2022 and sponsored by the nation's Catholic bishops to enkindle devotion to the real presence of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist.

The congress — to which young adult pilgrims will travel on foot along four cross-country routes — is expected to draw some 80,000 participants. The event is the first such national congress in the U.S. in 83 years, and in 48 years since the 1976 International Eucharistic Congress in Philadelphia.

Now, a new "Solidarity Fund" has been unveiled by the U.S. Catholic bishops to help those in need of financial assistance to cover the registration costs of the five-day congress.

"Led by our bishops, we have raised nearly one million dollars to give away so people from all over the country can join us in Indianapolis and return home filled with the Holy Spirit and empowered to bring renewal to their families, churches and communities," Kris Frank, vice president of growth and marketing for the National Eucharistic Congress, told OSV News.

Full event passes, which do not include transportation, housing or meals, cost \$360 per individual, \$299 per parent and \$250 per teens ages 13–18. Children age 12 and under are free.

Group fees range from \$299–\$349 per person, while admission for priests, deacons, seminarians, and religious has been set at \$299.

Attendees traveling to the congress can hope for a dip in gas and diesel prices in

2024, but airfare projections for the coming year remain mixed, with some analysts predicting slight drops but others pointing to stabilized prices that will nonetheless remain on the higher side.

With group room blocks now sold out, lodging costs at surrounding hotels are anywhere between well over \$100 to more than \$600 per night during the congress.

"The Solidarity Fund allows us to take the financial burden off individuals and groups to ensure this moment is affordable and accessible to anyone who wishes to join us for this historic event," Frank said.

Applicants must be able to demonstrate financial need and be prepared to secure their own lodging for the congress. Secondary criteria include coming from an underrepresented area or group, and seeking support to bring a larger group to the gathering.

Religious, seminarians and diocesan-organized groups in those dioceses supported by Catholic Extension will be directed to apply for funding through Catholic Extension.

The online application form for the Solidarity Fund can be accessed online at [eucharisticcongress.org/solidarity-fund](https://www.eucharisticcongress.org/solidarity-fund).

Congress organizers also are accepting donations to the fund.

"The aim of the National Eucharistic Congress has always been that our church would experience profound and personal revival," Frank said, "so that we can be sent to share Christ’s love with a world that desperately needs it."

To apply to the National Eucharistic Congress Solidarity Fund, visit <https://www.eucharisticcongress.org/solidarity-fund>.

To donate to the Solidarity Fund, visit <https://pushpay.com/g/necsolidarityfund>.

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Gina Christian is a multimedia reporter for OSV News. Follow her on X at @GinaJesseReina.

Vatican announces synod assembly dates; formation of study groups

By Cindy Wooden
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY — The second assembly of the Synod of Bishops on synodality will meet Oct. 2–27 and will be preceded by several formal studies coordinated by the synod general secretariat working with various offices of the Roman Curia.

The Vatican announced the dates for the assembly Feb. 17, indicating that the desire of some synod members to spend less time in Rome was not accepted. The fall assembly will be preceded by a retreat for members Sept. 30–Oct. 1, the Vatican said.

And in response to a formal call by members of the first assembly of the synod, Pope Francis has agreed to the establishment of "study groups that will initiate, with a synodal method, the in-depth study of some of the themes that emerged."

In a chirograph, or brief papal document, released Feb. 17, the pope said that "these study groups are to be established by mutual agreement between the competent dicasteries of the Roman Curia and the General Secretariat of the Synod, which is entrusted with coordination."

However, the papal note did not list the topics to be studied nor the members of the groups. The synod office said it hoped the approved groups and their members could be announced by mid-March.

Pope Francis' note focused on the obligation of the offices of the Roman Curia to work with the synod since both bodies, though distinct, are established "to promote in a synodal spirit the mutual relations of the bishops and of the particular churches over which they preside, among themselves and in communion with the Bishop of Rome."

In their synthesis report at the end of the first synod assembly, members voted to ask Pope Francis for several studies before the 2024 assembly, including on "the terminological and conceptual understanding of the notion and practice of synodality" itself; and another study on "the canonical implications of synodality," conducted by "an intercontinental special commission of theological and canonical experts."

Synod members also called for further theological study on the permanent diaconate and said, "theological and pastoral research on the access of women to the diaconate should be continued, benefiting from consideration of the results of the commissions specially established by the Holy Father, and from the theological, historical and exegetical research already undertaken."

"If possible," members said, "the results of this research should be presented to the next session of the assembly."

After a request of the women's International Union of Superiors General, Pope Francis established a commission to study the historic identity and role of women deacons. The commission worked from 2016 to 2019, and the pope gave a report on it to the superiors general, but it was not made public. He set up a second commission in 2020 after the Synod of Bishops for the Amazon; its results have not been published either.

The assembly of the synod on synodality also said, "We believe the time has come for a revision of the 1978 document *Mutuae Relationes*, regarding the relationships between bishops and religious in the church. We propose that this revision be completed in a synodal manner, consulting all involved."

On several occasions after his election in 2013, Pope Francis said he had

Eliminación de materiales obscenos de las bibliotecas escolares

En las bibliotecas y escuelas públicas por todo el país, incluido el oeste de Texas, hay materiales sexualmente gráficos y obscenos disponibles para los niños. Ha habido un esfuerzo coordinado para incluir esos materiales objetables en las escuelas públicas, ya sea en las bibliotecas o como parte de la instrucción en el aula.

Proporcionar literatura obscena o vulgar a menores fuera de las instalaciones escolares puede considerarse un delito, pero cuando la distribuyen maestros o bibliotecarios en el aula o la biblioteca de una escuela pública, es legal en muchos lugares. Nuestros niños están expuestos a estos materiales inmorales y corruptores durante el horario escolar en nombre de la educación.

Varias organizaciones nacionales están tratando de adoctrinar a la próxima generación con temas inmorales a través de los sistemas de escuelas públicas. Por ejemplo, la Asociación Estadounidense de Bibliotecas, GLSEN, Planned Parenthood, y Human Rights Campaign son algunos de los grupos que realizan esfuerzos sostenidos para abogar por la inclusión de libros gráficos y sexualmente explícitos en las escuelas y bibliotecas públicas. Estos materiales no deben estar en manos de menores.

No es apropiado exponer a los niños a literatura sexualmente explícita, obscena, o pornográfica. Si a usted le preocupan estos materiales en sus escuelas y bibliotecas locales, no está solo. Hay una manera de proteger a sus hijos de la exposición innecesaria a materiales pornográficos vulgares al reclamar sus derechos de paternidad a nivel del distrito escolar local.

Usted puede solicitar a nivel local que se eliminen los materiales obscenos de las escuelas públicas. Puede recordarles a los funcionarios del distrito escolar, al personal escolar, y a los bibliotecarios que ciertos libros pueden eliminarse porque son predominantemente vulgares o porque no cumplen con un estándar acordado de idoneidad educativa. Los ciudadanos locales preocupados pueden intentar involucrarse en el proceso mediante el cual se definen los estándares comunitarios.

Recientemente le pedí al personal de la Secretaría de Laicos, Matrimonio, Vida Familiar y Juventud de la Conferencia de Obispos Católicos de los Estados Unidos que me ayudaran a encontrar un recurso con acciones paso a paso. Me dirigieron al Capitol Resource Institute, una organización nacional de políticas públicas provida que se centra en la educación pública, la libertad religiosa, los derechos de los padres, y la dignidad de la vida humana. En su sitio web, <https://takebacktheclassroom.com/>, ofrecen un “Kit de herramientas para eliminar pornografía



Obispo Michael J. Sis

Diócesis de San Ángelo

en las escuelas” gratuito, que se puede descargar a través de su sitio. Este artículo se basa en ese conjunto de herramientas. Su sitio web también incluye un buscador de investigación para que los padres busquen qué libros pornográficos se encuentran actualmente en las bibliotecas de sus escuelas públicas, según el estado.

El “Kit de herramientas para eliminar la pornografía en las escuelas” ofrece un proceso paso a paso que cualquiera puede seguir para eliminar materiales dañinos de las escuelas y bibliotecas públicas. Aquí hay un resumen de esos pasos de acción:

1. Familiarícese con la política actual de su distrito escolar local para impugnar un libro u otro artículo objetable.
2. Si es necesario, utilice un buscador para encontrar la política en línea y, si no puede acceder a la fuente completa, comuníquese con el administrador de su distrito escolar local para solicitar la política por escrito. Guarde un rastro en papel de toda su correspondencia con los empleados del distrito.
3. Dese cuenta de lo que hay en la biblioteca de su escuela pública. Puede utilizar un buscador para obtener información disponible públicamente. Por ejemplo, puede comenzar con una búsqueda como <“Nombre de la escuela”, “Condado”, “Estado”, centro multimedia de la biblioteca>. Si el sitio web de la escuela requiere información de inicio de sesión, puede usar la información de inicio de sesión de su hijo en la escuela, accediendo a la información desde cualquier computadora.
4. En la página de la biblioteca del sitio web de la escuela o distrito, busque un catálogo de la biblioteca. Algunos sistemas operativos comunes para la catalogación de bibliotecas se llaman Follett Destiny y Alexandria. Si ve alguno de ellos en su búsqueda, ha encontrado el catálogo de libros que los niños pueden sacar prestados en la biblioteca de la escuela. Follett Destiny puede brindarle la opción de buscar en todas las bibliotecas de todo el distrito o

condado.

Cuando encuentre libros que puedan ser cuestionables, puede buscar reseñas de libros en sitios web como *Amazon.com*. También puede visitar la biblioteca pública local para examinar el libro, hacer copias, o fotografiar ejemplos de pasajes o gráficos obscenos que le ayudarán a defender su eliminación.

5. Cuando encuentre un libro que crea que debería ser cuestionado, mantenga un registro de la información relevante, como la cantidad de copias en el estante, cuáles escuelas tienen el título disponible para prestar, etc.

6. Guarde toda la correspondencia entre usted y el distrito relacionada con su desafío de libros. Esto podría resultar útil en el futuro.

7. Continúe revisando las bibliotecas escolares de su distrito en busca de materiales obscenos, ya que podrían obtener nuevos títulos en cualquier momento. Esto también le ayudará a confirmar cuándo se ha eliminado un libro cuestionado con éxito.

8. También puede utilizar la Ley de Libertad de Información (FOIA, por sus siglas en inglés) para crear una solicitud de registros abiertos. Si hace esto, es importante ser muy específico. Por ejemplo, podría solicitar copias impresas de todas las órdenes de compra de libros de la biblioteca en un año determinado.

¿Cuáles libros deberían cuestionarse? Se publican nuevos libros todo el tiempo. Puede consultar la lista de los libros más cuestionados de la Asociación Estadounidense de Bibliotecas. También puede consultar sitios web como <https://takebacktheclassroom.com/> para ver extractos de aquellos libros que ya se han encontrado en las escuelas.

El kit de herramientas incluye algunos recursos útiles, como un modelo de un cuadro de Seguimiento de Eliminación de Libros para ayudarle a mantener su proyecto en orden, una plantilla para una solicitud de la Ley de Libertad de Información (FOIA), y un modelo de política que podría proponer al distrito escolar local. En ese modelo de política, contiene una redacción que faculta a la comunidad y a los miembros electos de la junta escolar a tomar decisiones importantes sobre materiales sensibles, con el objetivo de establecer un sistema más transparente para evaluar y potencialmente eliminar materiales inapropiados de una biblioteca. Usted podría abogar por que la junta escolar local de su distrito apruebe una política como esta.

Espero que los padres preocupados y las personas de buena voluntad encuentren útiles estos pasos para alzar sus voces por el bienestar de sus hijos.

¿Quieres unirte al Congreso Eucarístico Nacional? Hay ayuda financiera disponible

Por Gina Christian
OSV News

Los organizadores del Congreso Eucarístico Nacional están buscando apoyar a familias con problemas de liquidez para que asistan a la reunión del 17 al 21 de julio en Indianápolis.

El congreso culminará el Avivamiento Eucarístico Nacional, una iniciativa de tres años, lanzada en junio de 2022 y patrocinada por los obispos católicos del país para avivar la devoción a la presencia real de Jesucristo en la Eucaristía.

Se espera que el congreso, al que peregrinos viajarán a pie a lo largo de cuatro rutas a través del país, atraiga a unos 80.000 participantes. El evento es el primer congreso nacional de este tipo en los EE.UU. en 83 años y en 48 años desde el Congreso Eucarístico Internacional de 1976 en Filadelfia.

Los obispos católicos de Estados Unidos han presentado un nuevo "Fondo de Solidaridad" para ayudar a aquellos que necesitan asistencia financiera a cubrir los costos de inscripción del congreso de cinco días.

"Dirigidos por nuestros obispos, hemos recaudado casi un millón de dólares para donarlo para que personas de todo el país puedan unirse a nosotros en Indianápolis y regresar a casa llenos del Espíritu Santo y capacitados para traer renovación a sus familias, iglesias y comunidades" dijo a OSV News Kris Frank, vicepresidente de crecimiento y marketing del Congreso Eucarístico Nacional.

Los pases completos para el evento, que no incluyen transporte, alojamiento ni comidas, cuestan \$360 por persona, \$299 por padre o madre de familia y \$250 por adolescente de 13 a 18 años. Los niños menores de 12 años entran gratis.

Las tarifas para grupos oscilan entre \$299 y \$349 por persona, mientras que la entrada para sacerdotes, diáconos, seminaristas y religiosos se ha fijado en \$299.

Los asistentes que viajen al congreso pueden esperar una caída en los precios de la

gasolina y el diésel en 2024, pero las proyecciones de precios de los boletos de avión este año siguen siendo mixtas: algunos analistas predicen ligeras caídas, pero otros apuntan a precios estabilizados que, no obstante, no obstante, seguirán siendo elevados.

Ahora que los bloques de habitaciones para grupos están agotados, los costos de alojamiento en los hoteles de los alrededores oscilan entre más de \$100 y más de \$600 por noche durante el congreso.

"El Fondo de Solidaridad nos permite aliviar la carga financiera de individuos y grupos para garantizar que este momento sea posible y accesible para cualquiera que desee unirse a nosotros en este evento histórico", dijo Frank.

Los solicitantes de becas deben poder demostrar necesidad financiera y estar preparados para asegurar su propio alojamiento para el congreso. Los criterios secundarios incluyen provenir de un área o grupo subrepresentado y buscar apoyo para traer un grupo más grande a la reunión.

Religiosos, seminaristas y grupos organizados diocesanos en las diócesis apoyadas por Catholic Extension deberán solicitar financiación a través de Catholic Extension.

Se puede acceder al formulario de solicitud en línea para el Fondo de Solidaridad en [eucharisticcongress.org/solidarity-fund](https://pushpay.com/g/necsolidarityfund).

Los organizadores del congreso también están aceptando donaciones para dicho fondo.

"El objetivo del Congreso Eucarístico Nacional siempre ha sido que nuestra Iglesia experimente un avivamiento profundo y personal", dijo Frank, "para que podamos ser enviados a compartir el amor de Cristo con un mundo que lo necesita desesperadamente".

Para donar al Fondo de Solidaridad, visite <https://pushpay.com/g/necsolidarityfund>.

Gina Christian es reportera multimedia de OSV News. *Síguela en X en @GinaJesReina.*

El Vaticano anuncia las fechas de la asamblea sinodal y la formación de grupos de estudio

Por Cindy Wooden
Catholic News Service

CIUDAD DEL VATICANO — La segunda asamblea del Sínodo de los Obispos sobre la sinodalidad se reunirá del 2 al 27 de octubre e irá precedida de varios estudios formales coordinados por la secretaría general del sínodo en colaboración con diversas oficinas de la Curia Romana.

El Vaticano anunció las fechas de la asamblea el 17 de febrero, indicando que no se aceptó el deseo de algunos miembros del sínodo de pasar menos tiempo en Roma. La asamblea de otoño será precedida de un retiro para los miembros del 30 de septiembre al 1 de octubre, dijo el Vaticano.

Y en respuesta a una llamada formal de los miembros de la primera asamblea del sínodo, el Papa Francisco ha acordado el establecimiento de "grupos de estudio para iniciar, con método sinodal, la profundización de algunos de los temas surgidos".

En un quirógrafo, o breve documento papal, publicado el 17 de febrero, el Papa dijo que "estos grupos de estudio se constituirán de común acuerdo entre los dicasterios competentes de la Curia Romana y la Secretaría General del Sínodo, a la que se confía la coordinación".

Sin embargo, la nota papal no enumeraba los temas a estudiar ni los miembros de los grupos. La oficina sinodal dijo que esperaba que los grupos aprobados y sus miembros pudieran anunciarse a mediados de marzo.

La nota del Papa Francisco se centraba en la obligación de las oficinas de la Curia Romana de trabajar con el sínodo, ya que ambos organismos, aunque distintos, están establecidos favoreciendo con espíritu sinodal las relaciones de los obispos y de las Iglesias particulares

entre sí y en comunión con el Obispo de Roma.

En su informe de síntesis al final de la primera asamblea sinodal, los miembros votaron pedir al Papa Francisco varios estudios antes de la asamblea de 2024, incluyendo sobre la comprensión terminológica y conceptual de la noción y la práctica de la sinodalidad en sí; y otro estudio sobre "las implicaciones canónicas de perspectiva de la sinodalidad", realizado por "una comisión internacional a propósito de teólogos y canonistas".

Los miembros del Sínodo también pidieron más estudios teológicos sobre el diaconado permanente y dijeron que "siga adelante la investigación teológica y pastoral sobre el acceso de las mujeres al diaconado, ayudándose de los resultados de las comisiones instituidas a este propósito por el santo Padre, y de las investigaciones teológicas, históricas y exegéticas ya efectuadas".

"Si es posible", dijeron los miembros, "los resultados deberían presentarse en la próxima Sesión de la Asamblea".

Después de una solicitud de la Unión Internacional de las Superiores Generales, el Papa Francisco estableció una comisión para estudiar la identidad histórica y el papel de las mujeres diáconos. La comisión trabajó de 2016 a 2019, y el Papa entregó un informe a las superiores generales, pero no se hizo público. Creó una segunda comisión en 2020, después del Sínodo de los Obispos para la Amazonia; sus resultados tampoco se han publicado.

La asamblea del sínodo sobre la sinodalidad también dijo: "Nos parece que el tiempo está maduro para una revisión de los ‘criterios sobre las relaciones entre los Obispos y los Religiosos en la

CALENDARS

Please pray for our clergy



March

- 1

Deacon Johnny Rodriguez (B)
- 3

Rev. Joshua Gray (B)
- 5

Deacon Antonio Gonzales (B)
- 7

Deacon Victor Ramirez (B)
- 10

Rev. Arockiaraj Gali (D — 2021)
- 10

Rev. Stephen Kennelly (D — 2017)
- 10

Deacon Charles Lambert (B)
- 10

Deacon Bonifacio Rodriguez (D — 2017)
- 11

Deacon William Brady (B)
- 11

Deacon Albert Libertore (D — 1977)
- 12

Deacon Fred Greene (B)
- 14

Rev. George Fey CPPS (D — 2013)
- 15

Deacon Cosme Ureta (D — 2011)
- 15

Rev. Msgr. Benedict Zientek (D — 2023)
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Deacon Allan Lange (B)
- 21

Deacon Frank Trudo (D — 1992)
- 23

Rev. Paul Kodakarakaran (B)
- 25

Rev. Anthony Sloan (O — 2000)
- 26

Deacon Audon Saldivar (D — 2000)
- 26

Rev. Serran Braun (D — 1999)
- 26

Rev. Kevin Lenius (B)
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Deacon Steve Zimmerman (B)
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Rev. Prem Thumma (B)
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Deacon Alexander Perez (B)
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Rev. Freddy Perez (B)
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Deacon Alexander Chick (B)
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Deacon Harry Pelto (B)
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Rev. Santiago Udayar (O — 1989)

April

- 2

Rev. Ignatius Edet (B)
- 2

Deacon Lazaro Sevier (D — 2009)
- 3

Deacon Edward Martinez (D —1985)
- 3

Deacon Alan Neff (D — 2016)
- 4

Deacon Andres Hernandez (D — 2013)
- 4

Deacon Hector Mendez (B)
- 4

Rev. Jim Nugent, C.Ss.R (D — 2012)
- 7

Deacon Jerry Treviño (D — 2017)
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Deacon Apolonio Gutierrez (B)
- 12

Rev. Patrick Akpanobong (B)
- 13

Deacon Mario Torres (B)
- 13

Rev. Innocent Eziefule (B)
- 16

Deacon Eliseo Carrillo (D — 1989)
- 17

Deacon Daniel Holguin (B)
- 17

Rev. Msgr. James Plagens (D — 2015)
- 17

Rev. Lee Zimmerman, CM (D — 2000)
- 19

Rev. John Lavin (D — 1983)
- 20

Deacon Claudio Sanchez (B)
- 21

Rev. Thomas Leahy, SAC (D — 1969)
- 22

Deacon Jesus Vasquez (D — 2018)
- 23

Rev. Louis Droll (D — 2006)
- 23

Deacon Walter Hammons (B)
- 24

Rev. Msgr. Fred Nawarskas (B)
- 24

Rev. Balachandra Nagipogu (O — 2006)
- 25

Deacon Dwain Hennessey (B)
- 25

Deacon Marcos Mata (B)
- 25

Deacon Juan Muñoz (D — 2007)
- 29

Deacon Robert Daigle (D — 1986)
- 30

Rev. Gilbert Rodriguez (B)
- 30

Rev. Joe Barbieri (O — 1988)

B = Birthday | O = Date of Ordination
D = Date of Death
(Dates of birth and ordination given for living clergy; date of death for deceased.)



Please contact the bishop’s assistant, Lupe Castillo, for information about the bishop’s calendar.
325-651-7500 | lcastillo@sanangelodiocese.org

March 2024

- 4

SAN ANGELO, Diocesan Pastoral Center, Priest Personnel Board meeting at 3:00 p.m.
- 4–8

SAN ANGELO, Christ the King Retreat Center, Annual Priests’ Retreat
- 7

SAN ANGELO, McNease Convention Center, Guadalupe Radio Network Fishers of Men Dinner at 6:00 p.m.
- 8–10

SAN ANGELO, Christ the King Retreat Center, Diaconal Formation weekend
- 14

SAN ANGELO, Diocesan Pastoral Center, Presbyteral Council meeting at 11:00 a.m.
- 16

GREENWOOD, St. Rita of Cascia, Dedication of new church at 10:00 a.m.
- 16

SAN ANGELO, St. Margaret, Mass at 5:00 p.m.
- 17

SAN ANGELO, St. Margaret, Masses at 8:00 a.m. (Spanish) and 10:00 a.m. (English)
- 18

SAN ANTONIO, Mexican American Catholic College, Texas Catholic Conference of Bishops Spring meeting
- 21

SAN ANGELO, Diocesan Pastoral Center, Priest Personnel Board meeting at 11:00 a.m.
- 21

MIDLAND, St. Ann, Adult Confirmation Mass at 7:00 p.m.
- 22

SAN ANGELO, Diocesan Pastoral Center, Finance Council meeting at 11:00 a.m.
- 22

MIDLAND, The Way Retreat Center, Project Andrew Dinner at 6:00 p.m.
- 23

SAN ANGELO, Sacred Heart Cathedral, Palm Sunday Procession and Mass at 4:00 p.m.
- 24

SAN ANGELO, Sacred Heart Cathedral, Palm Sunday Procession and Spanish Mass at 12:00 noon
- 24

SAN ANGELO, Holy Angels, Seder Meal at 5:30 p.m.
- 26

SAN ANGELO, Sacred Heart Cathedral, Chrism Mass at 11:00 a.m.
- 26

SAN ANGELO, Diocesan Pastoral Center, Deans’ meeting at 1:30 p.m.
- 28

SAN ANGELO, Sacred Heart Cathedral, Mass of the Lord’s Supper at 6:30 p.m.
- 29

SAN ANGELO, St. Margaret, Procession and Stations of the Cross at 12:00 Noon
- 29

SAN ANGELO, Sacred Heart Cathedral, Service of the Passion at 6:30 p.m.
- 30

SAN ANGELO, Sacred Heart Cathedral, Easter Vigil at 8:30 p.m.
- 31

SAN ANGELO, Goodfellow Air Force Base, Mass at

- 31

9:00 a.m.
SAN ANGELO, Sacred Heart Cathedral, Easter Sunday Spanish Mass at 12:00 Noon

April 2024

- 4

MIDLAND, Holy Cross Catholic High School, Mass at 12:00 noon
- 6

SAN ANGELO, Lady in Blue events
- 7

COLORADO CITY, St. Ann, 50th Anniversary Mass at 10:30 a.m.
- 7

GARDEN CITY, St. Lawrence, Confirmation Mass at 4:00 p.m.
- 8–10

NEW ORLEANS, Notre Dame Seminary visit
- 10–12

CONCEPTION, MO, Conception Seminary visit
- 13

BIG LAKE, St. Margaret of Cortona, Confirmation Mass at 6:00 p.m.
- 14

ROWENA, St. Joseph, Confirmation Mass at 11:00 a.m.
- 14

SAN ANGELO, Sacred Heart Cathedral, Marriage Jubilee Mass at 3:00 p.m.
- 15

SAN ANGELO, Christ the King Retreat Center, Diocesan Mission Council meeting at 4:00 p.m.
- 17

SAN ANGELO, Diocesan Pastoral Center, Priestly Life & Formation meeting at 1:30 p.m.
- 20

SAN ANGELO, Angelo Catholic School, Diocesan Schools Commission meeting at 9:30 a.m.
- 20

SAN ANGELO, Holy Angels, Confirmation Mass at 5:30 p.m.
- 21

OZONA, Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Confirmation Mass at 11:00 a.m.
- 22

SAN ANGELO, Cathedral Endowment Fund Board meeting at 12:00 p.m.
- 23

SAN ANGELO, Sacred Heart Cathedral, Mass at 12:10 p.m.
- 24

SAN ANGELO, Diocesan Pastoral Center, Catholic Foundation meeting at 10:00 a.m.
- 24

COLEMAN, Sacred Heart, Confirmation Mass at 6:00 p.m.
- 25

ODESSA, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, Confirmation Mass at 7:00 p.m.
- 26–28

HOUSTON, Texas Knights of Columbus 120th Annual State Convention



Christ the King Retreat Center

March 2024

- 1

Tex-Mex Border Bishops
- 4–8

DOSA Priests’ Annual Retreat
- 8–10

Deacon Formation
- 11

Heart of Mercy Prayer Group
- 13

Pastoral Staff Lenten Day of Reflection
- 14–17

Men’s Walk to Emmaus
- 20

Staff Meeting, Mass & Lunch
- 22–24

Engaged Encounter w/ NFP
- 25

Heart of Mercy Prayer Group

- 29

Closed in Observance of Good Friday

April 2024

- 1

DOSA Staff Easter Picnic
- 4–7

San Angelo Women’s ACTS
- 8

Heart of Mercy Prayer Group
- 12–14

Deacon Formation
- 19–21

Engaged Encounter w/NFP
- 22

Heart of Mercy Prayer Group
- 25–28

Spiritual Exercises 4-day Silent Retreat

Special Collections

Operation Rice Bowl, sponsored by Catholic Relief Services — Lent, Feb. 14 – March 28

Be sure to pick up a Rice Bowl from your parish to collect donations for Catholic Relief Services during Lent.

The Catholic Relief Services Collection — March 10

Across the globe, war, natural disasters, political strife, extreme poverty, and human trafficking combine to affect families in ways often unimaginable, leaving many separated for long periods of time. The Catholic Relief Services Collection (CRSC) values families and works to provide for their needs by protecting vulnerable children, reuniting families, and encouraging legislation that reflects the importance of family in society.

Catholic agencies that prioritize the family and protect the life and dignity of each person are supported by funding from this collection. These agencies include international relief and development organizations, programs for refugee resettlement, immigration legal services, advocacy and emergency relief, and evangelization and pastoral ministry. Your diocese’s support of The Catholic Relief Services Collection helps international relief and solidarity efforts here at home and around the world.

Pontifical Collection for the Holy Land — March 29

This pontifical collection collects funds for support of the holy places, but above all for those pastoral, charitable, educational, and social works which the church supports in the Holy Land for the welfare of their Christian brethren and of the local communities.

New principal is familiar face at St. Ann’s School

By Brian Bodiford
West Texas Angelus

“I’m definitely learning a lot,” Tracy Owen said of her new job as principal at St. Ann’s Catholic School in Midland. Learning at St. Ann’s is nothing new for Owen. She was a student there herself from pre-kindergarten through 8th grade.

“I work with a lot of my former teachers,” she said. “Ms. Wilmes was actually my computer teacher,” she said, referring to Joan Wilmes, superintendent of schools for the Diocese of San Angelo and Owen’s predecessor in the role of St. Ann’s principal. “Several teachers that I knew as my instructors are now my colleagues, which is really kind of cool.” One of the current teachers at the school was also a classmate of Owen’s when she was a student. These connections to St. Ann’s throughout her life haven’t been confined to Midland, either. One of her Catholic school connections was already waiting for her at Eastern New Mexico University. “When I went off to college, my advisor was actually my 5th grade teacher,” she said.

After earning a degree in ENMU’s education department, Owen quickly returned to her first school. Her first teaching job was as a 3rd grade teacher at St. Ann’s, a post she held for 9 years. For around 4 years after that, she served as vice principal for elementary at the school. That role eventually evolved into assistant principal for elementary and has now led to her current position after a stint as interim principal for about a month early this year.

Administration was not initially a goal for Owen. “I wanted to just teach. I knew I wanted to teach in Catholic education,” she said. After a few years of teaching, Wilmes asked if she would ever consider administration. Owen had a response: “I said no.” It took a few more years and another ask before Owen earned a master’s degree in educational leadership at the University of Texas Permian Basin and a graduate-level certificate in Catholic school leadership from Loyola Marymount University and took her first steps into campus leadership. The Loyola program, she said, “was where I really fell in love with the leadership aspect.” It was there she understood what makes Catholic education different — “getting to work first as a minister of the faith before everything else,” she relayed.



Tracy Owen is the new principal at St. Ann's Catholic School in Midland.

WEST TEXAS ANGELUS

Crediting her parents’ sacrifices to send her and her sister to St. Ann’s, Owen always knew the value of a Catholic education. It’s what drew her back to Catholic education in the first place. “The great and unique thing about Catholic education,” she said, is “you get to do what you don’t get to do elsewhere, which is teach, but also teach about God, teach about Jesus, teach about our Catholic faith.” Being in Catholic school leadership means being a minister as well as being a principal.

“We’re not just a school; we’re a community,” Owen said. “The people here want you to be a better Catholic, want you to be a better person. They’re invested in you as a person. That is just a thing that you cannot replicate.”

That community, for Owen, has included many people that helped guide her return home. Specifically, Owen mentioned former teacher and current superintendent

Wilmes, confirmation and first Communion preparation leader Jan Matchus, and 5th grade teacher-turned-college advisor Dr. Mary Kallus as important in forming her love for Catholic education and for St. Ann’s School specifically. “The biggest ones are my parents,” she said, who worked to give their children a Catholic education and introduced her to the community of St. Ann’s before kindergarten. “My family support system is still part of this school as well.”

Catholic education, Owen said, is “truly a huge gift that you can give to your child.”

There are four Catholic schools in the Diocese of San Angelo: Angelo Catholic School in San Angelo, Holy Cross Catholic High School in Midland, St. Ann’s Catholic School in Midland, and St. Mary’s Central Catholic School in Odessa.

Roman Catholic Diocese of San Angelo



Office of Evangelization and Catechesis

Directors of Religious Education

Coordinators of Religious Education

Coordinators of Youth Ministry

Youth

Scouts

Diocesan Annual Awards Banquet

April 14, 2024

12:30-3:30 p.m. | Mass @ 11:30 a.m.

Sacred Heart Parish, Abilene

Keynote Speaker

Kevin Pantoja

Keynote Speaker



~ Awards for Nomination ~

Companion on the Journey Award (Adult Leaders) | St. Timothy Award (Grades 7-10) | Christus Vivit Award (Grades 11-12)

Reporting Sexual Abuse




The Catholic Diocese of San Angelo is firmly committed to creating and maintaining the safest possible environment for our children and vulnerable adults. If you or someone you know has been sexually abused by anyone who serves the Church, and you need a place to talk with someone about your feelings of betrayal or hurt by the Church, we are here to help you. To report incidents, call Lori Hines, Victim Assistance Coordinator, 325-374-7609 (cell), or write Diocese of San Angelo, Victim Assistance Mini-

stry, PO Box 1829, San Angelo, TX 76902. If the incident occurred outside this diocese, our Victim Assistance Coordinator will assist in bringing your concern to the attention of the appropriate diocese. Please keep in mind that one always has the right to report abuse to civil authorities, and civil law requires that any abuse of a minor must be reported. To report about a bishop, the Catholic Bishop Abuse Reporting Service can be accessed by visiting ReportBishopAbuse.org or by calling 800-276-1562 (national hotline).

Reportar Abuso Sexual

La Diócesis Católica de San Ángelo está firmemente comprometida a crear y mantener el ambiente más seguro posible para nuestros niños y adultos vulnerables. Si usted o alguien que usted conoce ha sido víctima de abuso sexual por cualquier persona que sirve a la Iglesia, y necesita un lugar para hablar con alguien sobre sus sentimientos de traición o herido por la Iglesia, estamos aquí para ayudarle. Para reportar incidentes, llame a Lori Hines, Coordinadora de Asistencia a Víctimas, 325-374-7609 (celular), o escriba a la Diócesis de San Ángelo, Ministerio de Asistencia a Víctimas, PO Box 1829, San

Ángelo, TX 76902. Un intérprete de español está disponible. Si el incidente ocurrió fuera de esta diócesis, nuestra Coordinadora de Asistencia a Víctimas le ayudará a traer su preocupación a la atención de la diócesis correspondiente. Por favor, tenga en cuenta que uno siempre tiene el derecho de reportar el abuso a las autoridades civiles, y la ley civil requiere que cualquier abuso de un menor de edad debe ser reportado. Para reportar sobre un obispo, se puede acceder al Servicio de Reportes de Abuso de Obispos Católicos visitando ReportBishopAbuse.org o llamando al 800-276-1562 (línea directa nacional).



Catechesis of the Good Shepherd

We are so excited to have 10 newly certified Level II catechists in our CGS Ministry! Please help us to thank all of these women who participated in the Level II Formation course. Newly certified catechists for our parish include Ashley Miramontes, Carissa Viktora, Maria Ayala, Keturah Ashton, Stacey Wilson, Kristina Daigle, Brigitte Brorman, Mone' Thompson, and Sarah Guice. They join 3 other level II certified catechists already serving in our ministry. This Level II formation included 16 days of formation spread over three months, so thank you to all of these women for their gift of time to the children of our parish!

<https://www.stannsparish.us/catechesis-of-the-good-shepherd>

BRIDGES

Continued from Page 1

Odessa, and St. Stephen in Midland.

While serving as associate pastor at Sacred Heart Parish in Abilene, he was also principal at Central Catholic High School. After four years he was made pastor of St. Joseph Parish in Rowena, which had a K–12 Catholic school.

During his four years there he built a new church in Miles. Father Bridges returned to Abilene where he built the new parish of Holy Family. In 1979 he was the founding pastor of St. Stephen's, a new parish in Midland. As many in Midland were opposed to a new parish, St. Stephen's was put on hold and the bishop assigned him to St. Mary's in Odessa, with permission to build a new parish in Odessa named St. Elizabeth Ann Seton. The new sanctuary was completed debt free during the worst economic times West Texas had ever seen.

With St. Elizabeth Ann Seton stabilized and growing, Father Bridges returned to Midland to continue the work of developing St. Stephen's, which became the largest parish in the diocese. Believing in his life-long theme that if you take care of the poor, God will take care of you, he founded St. Vincent de Paul in Abilene, Catholic Charities of West Texas, and the West Texas Food Bank in Odessa. He also founded Helping Hands in Midland, which provides almost \$2 million annually in direct aid to the poor. He trusted God implicitly and knew that God is completely trustworthy.

THE WORLD IS TOO SMALL
FOR WHAT I INTEND TO DO



BASED ON THE TRUE STORY

CABRINI


FROM THE DIRECTOR OF SOUND OF FREEDOM

COMING INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY
MARCH 8

ANGEL
angel.com/cabrini

ARE YOU CALLED?
DISCERN THE VOCATION OF

DEACON



How does living the life of a deacon bring joy to you and your loved ones?
Being a deacon brings joy to EVERY aspect of your life. It makes me a better father, husband and friend. Being a deacon brings you into contact with more of God's people, this is a wonderful gift that exposes you more to the beauty and joy that is God's family.

DIOCESE OF SAN ANGELO | OFFICE OF DIACONAL MINISTRY


DEACON FORMATION

ABOUT US

God calls every person to a vocation. Deacons are empowered to serve the People of God. The ministry of the deacon is service. That service is exercised in three distinct areas: Word, Liturgy, and Charity. Discerning whether you have a vocation to the diaconate is a multi-year process because it takes time to understand what God is calling you to do with your life.

The discernment process involves learning about the ministry of the deacon, growth in prayer life, continued reception of the sacraments (Eucharist and Penance), meeting with a spiritual advisor, demonstrating the qualities of being a deacon, informed consent by your spouse (if married), and support of your pastor.

CONTACT US
Deacon Freddy Medina • 325-651-7500
deaconoffice@sanangelodiocese.org
www.sanangelodiocese.org/diaconal-ministry



Parish Book Praises

The Return of the Prodigal Son: A Story of Homecoming by Henri J.M. Nouwen

By Sara Dube
Special Projects and Assistant to the Director of Evangelization and Catechesis

Hello reader! Since this is the first official release of Parish Book Praises, I'd like to take a few sentences to introduce you to this new initiative of the Office of Evangelization and Catechesis.

Parish Book Praises are monthly reviews of resources available for lending at the Diocesan Library at the Pastoral Center of the Diocese of San Angelo. These resources are highlighted each month at random from a different section of the library and reviewed for relevancy and readability.

We would like to encourage you not only to explore the resources that are highlighted in Parish Book Praises as individuals but also to encourage exploration within your parish faith community. Ask questions about the resources that nourish you or even the absence of resources. Make connections. Grow.

Now, without further ado, let's take a look at our first PBP resource ...

"My son, you are with me always, and all I have is yours. But it was only right we should celebrate and rejoice, because your brother here was dead and has come to life; he was lost and is found" (Lk 15:31-32).

The Return of the Prodigal Son: A Story of Homecoming by Henri J.M. Nouwen was published in 1992 and can be found in the Growth and Spirituality section of the Diocesan Library. Do not be fooled by its over 30-year-old publishing date! I believe that it is a relevant resource to this day of thoughtful accompaniment into a space of spirituality that I feel we do a disservice by completely avoiding. It is the space that draws you away from faith because it whispers from your heart, "not enough," and it is a space that the author, Nouwen, is intimately acquainted with. That space is self-doubt.

Before you journey into this resource, ask yourself, "How has self-doubt affected the bonds of my faith? My family? My personal connections? How do I reconcile this sense of self-doubt?"

The synopsis

"For many years, I tried to get a glimpse of God by looking at the varieties of human experience ... to understand the ... hunger and thirst that only a God whose name is Love could satisfy. ... However, ... I have been led to an inner place where I had not been

before. ... It is the place where I am held safe in the embrace of an all-loving Father who ... says, "You are my beloved son, on you my favor rests" (Nouwen, 1992).

Nouwen begins his writing with a memory: The first time he ever saw Rembrandt's painting of The Prodigal Son was as a poster in a community for people with disabilities where he struggled to reach a discernment of continuing his ministry there on a permanent basis. It was a first sight so profound that it moved him to search for the meaning deep within himself and in different copies of the painting for years afterward. Why did he connect with this painting in such an inescapable way? The answer, simply, was that it touched on a space within him so hidden that he had yet to discover it for himself. It was a space of self-doubt that had been immovably self-assured and unreconciled for a large part of his life. With that revelation in mind, he continues his journey of reflection in three parts:

1. The Younger Son, or the story of a humbling space of becoming and accepting we are beloved;
2. The Elder Son, or the story of recognizing resentment bred in complacency; and
3. The Father, or the story of transformation.

All these parts are told in sequence with the intent of drawing closer to the story of Rembrandt through the stories of his own life and that of The Prodigal Son to answer Nouwen's question of self-discovery.

"This is not an intellectual question. It is a question of vocation. I am called to enter into the inner sanctuary of my own being where God has chosen to dwell" (Nouwen, 1992).

The review

Readability

Nouwen's writing style is simply worded and portrays an intimate narrative of thought that most people would reserve for a personal diary. The journey of reading *The Return of the Prodigal Son* felt, to me, easy because it was less of a read and more of a genuine encounter with the author as a person. Nouwen makes heavy use of "I" statements so there is no projection toward the reader. This is a story about Nouwen, told to you by Nouwen, with no argument for or against Nouwen. You, as reader, are simply sitting with the story of Nouwen like a confidante listening to a friend. There are no challenging words or concepts, just a radical vulnerability that propels you forward

and parallel to the author.

Relevance

Do you spend time reflecting on the source of your faith? Have you ever questioned your worth as a faithful or spiritual person? What do you do when you feel like you're not enough? Your ability is not enough? Your knowledge is not enough? Your faith is not enough?

This work by Nouwen is not going to tell you how to answer those questions but it is going to allow you to walk side-by-side with the author as he navigates that journey for himself. That sense of reader as passenger is the true blessing of relevancy in this work because each of us walks a unique journey of varying degrees of intimacy with our faith that simply cannot be prescribed a catch-all solution. That's why it's my opinion that *The Return of the Prodigal Son* remains relevant because it conceptualizes Nouwen's journey in a radically vulnerable way where he tells a story of the fragility of his own relationship with faith and invites you to do only one thing: witness his fragile faith and be comforted by his discomfort.

Rating

5/5 Praise Hands

Reference

Nouwen, H. J. M. (1992). *The Return of the Prodigal Son: A Story of Homecoming*. Doubleday.

Parish Book Praises is an initiative of the Office of Evangelization and Catechesis of the Diocese of San Angelo to introduce helpful resources to our parish catechists to inspire personal growth and dialogue within parish communities. All titles reviewed in Parish Book Praises can be found in the Diocesan Library of the Pastoral Center at 804 Ford Street, San Angelo, Texas, and are available for lending. Please contact the Office of Evangelization and Catechesis at 325-651-7500 or evangelizationcatechesis@sanangelodiocese.org for more information on available resources. You are also encouraged to submit titles to be added to the Diocesan Library.

Parish Book Praises are released on a monthly basis through the West Texas Angelus or through email. If you would like to receive Parish Book Praises directly in your inbox, please contact the Office of Evangelization and Catechesis at evangelizationcatechesis@sanangelodiocese.org.



Sanación después del aborto

Todos nosotros necesitamos la misericordia de Dios y Jesús está siempre dispuesto a perdonar y sanar. El Ministerio Proyecto Raquel de la Diócesis de San Angelo está aquí para ayudar a ofrecer la misericordia sanadora de Jesucristo a mujeres y hombres que han experimentado un aborto. Muchas veces, nuestro pecado, especialmente el pecado del aborto, puede hacernos sentir una gran vergüenza y culpa, pero debes saber que eres amado, Jesús desea perdonar, y que tienes un hogar en la Iglesia Católica.

Proyecto Rachel ofrece retiros confidenciales, asesoramiento individual con consejeros católicos y grupos de apoyo privados para quienes desean curación. Nuestro próximo retiro en español está programado para julio.

Si deseas curarte del aborto, debes saber que estamos aquí y que no estás solo. Llámenos a nuestra línea de ayuda confidencial al **(432) 236-9883** o envíenos un correo electrónico a projectrachel@sanangelodiocese.org.

Jesús está aquí para ofrecernos a todos su amor y misericordia. No tengas miedo.



Healing After Abortion

All of us are in need of God's mercy, and Jesus stands ever ready to forgive and to heal. Project Rachel Ministry of the Diocese of San Angelo is here to help offer the healing mercy of Jesus Christ to women and men who have experienced an abortion. Many times, our sin, especially the sin of abortion, may leave us feeling great shame and guilt, but know that you are loved, Jesus desires to forgive, and you have a home in the Catholic Church.

Project Rachel offers confidential weekend retreats, one-on-one counseling with Catholic counselors, and private support groups for those desiring healing. Our next retreat in English is scheduled for October.

If you desire healing from abortion, know that we are here and that you are not alone. Please call us at our confidential helpline at **(432) 236-9883** or email us at projectrachel@sanangelodiocese.org.

Jesus is here to offer all of us his love and mercy. Do not be afraid.

Charismatic Corner: Summary of Malines — Encounter with Christ through mystical patrimony

By Father Boniface Hicks, OSB

As the organizing body dedicated to serving Charismatic Renewal returns to the little Ark where the Renewal began in the Catholic Church, it is fitting to look back at the beginning and see some of the distance that has been covered. Who could ever have arranged for the worldwide impact that flowed from a nondescript group of college students praying in an unimpressive, little chapel on the second floor of an old retreat house? The small spark of the Duquesne Weekend quickly spread around the world and began to transform lives, raise up companies of fervent prayer and ignite communities. One of the ways that we see how impactful the Renewal was from the beginning is by looking at the development of the Malines documents.

It is the task of theology and the church’s magisterium to hold together religious experience and divine revelation. God’s mission is for everyone to encounter Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit and through him to receive and grow in a filial relationship with the Father. The church was founded to carry out that mission. Nothing less than the transformation of civilization itself and the salvation of each person is at stake: “The church has no other sacred reality to offer than her faith in Jesus, God made man. Her sole goal is to make possible the encounter of men with the person of Jesus. Moral and dogmatic teaching, as well as mystical and liturgical patrimony, are the setting and the means of this fundamental and sacred encounter. Beauty and culture are its fruits” (“On the Credibility of the Catholic Church” by Cardinal Robert Sarah published in the *National Catholic Register*, Aug. 14, 2021).

The fact that a theological commission was brought together to analyze the religious experience of the charismatic renewal is a testimony to how seriously the church viewed the Renewal within a very short time. The fact that the Holy Spirit helped them select a future pope (Benedict XVI) to be a part of that commission is ev-

idence for how God wanted to protect and promote the Renewal. And in returning to that first document it is amazing to see how clearly those theologians understood what was taking place, how much they trusted it, where they saw need for careful attention, and how they saw it fitting into the mystical patrimony of the church.

The theology and praxis of the Renewal has certainly matured in the last fifty years and the richness of that mystical patrimony shines forth even more clearly, but the original document already captured clear answers to the most significant questions and objections. It retains great value for showing how much our experience today is still true to the experience of those first days, and for acknowledging the authenticity and value of that experience for passing on the mystical patrimony of the church.

The subsequent documents are a study in the way the Renewal has steadily flowed into the rest of the church. The current of grace that welled up in 1967 has flowed into the mainstream church and freshened her evangelical mandates to proclaim good news to the poor (*Malines Document 2*), to become one (*Malines Document 3*) and to cast out demons (*Malines Document 4*). In each of those areas there is a danger and opportunity and the church, as a loving mother, guided the confluence of these sometimes rough waters into a single river of divine life. At the same time, the renewal of personal religious experience, which draws on the church’s mystical patrimony, has always needed to be balanced against the communal experience of the church, particularly in her liturgical patrimony (*Malines Document 5*).

The Charismatic Renewal is an incredible phenomenon with over 160 million people in the world baptized in the Holy Spirit. Who can imagine how to care adequately for such a massive number of participants? In Cardinal Suenens we witnessed the deft navigation of a loving shepherd who was as unwilling to accept the bad as he was zealous to cultivate the good. His Malines documents remain a testimony to the Lord’s care for the Charismatic Renewal as we seek a new Pentecost today. These doc-

uments continue to provide guidance and inspiration for those responsible for helping the Renewal flow fruitfully into the church for the salvation of souls and the transformation of civilization.

Father Boniface Hicks, OSB, is a Benedictine monk of St. Vincent Archabbey in Latrobe, Pennsylvania, the Director for Spiritual Formation for St. Vincent Seminary, and the Director of the Institute for Ministry Formation at St. Vincent Seminary.

Reprint from Pentecost Today Magazine 2022, Issue 1, National Service Committee of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal of the US @ www.PentecostTodayUSA.org.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!
JULY 26–27, 2024
Annual Diocesan Charismatic Conference

We are excited to announce that **Father Maurice Emelu** of EWTN’s teaching series “**The Faith**” and “**Word for a Wounded World**” will be our conference speaker.

Visit the DOSA Charismatic Service Committee at **CatholicCharismatic.com** for more information.

Catholic Charitable Foundation accepting grant applications from local organizations




The Catholic Charitable Foundation for the Roman Catholic Diocese of San Angelo is now accepting grant applications from Catholic parishes, schools, and organizations.

The grant guidelines are as follows:

1. All grants must be approved by the Board of Trustees.
2. The board will consider grant requests between \$500 and \$5,000.
3. All grant applications and all supporting documents are due at 5 p.m. on Monday, March 27, 2024.
4. Grant requests will not be considered at any other time.
5. All grant applications must have the approval of the pastor or, in the case of a non-parish organization, the approval of the chief administrator and must include the signature.
6. Only one grant application will be considered for each Catholic parish, Catholic school, or non-parish Catholic organization. Parishes with a school may submit one for the parish and one for the school.
7. Preference is given to projects or programs that can be completed, or substantially completed, within one year of the grant. The grant may be used in combination with other available funds necessary to complete the project or program.
8. Due to limited funds, not all grant requests will be approved and some requests may not be fully funded. Please continue your other fundraising efforts.
9. The Catholic Charitable Foundation Board of Trustees will consider completed grant applications at its spring meeting. All applicants of approved grants will be notified and checks will be disbursed no later than April 28, 2024.

For more information or to apply for a grant for your parish, school, or organization, visit <https://www.catholic-foundationsanangelo.org/grants>.



“DO NOT BE ANXIOUS ABOUT ANYTHING, BUT IN EVERY SITUATION, BY PRAYER AND PETITION, WITH THANKSGIVING, PRESENT YOUR REQUESTS TO GOD. AND THE PEACE OF GOD, WHICH TRANSCENDS ALL UNDERSTANDING, WILL GUARD YOUR HEARTS AND YOUR MINDS IN CHRIST JESUS.”
PHILIPPIANS 4:6-7

You're invited to Magnificat Prayer Breakfast



GUEST SPEAKER
CYNTHIA CERDA

9:00 A.M. - 12:00 P.M.
DOORS OPEN AT 8AM


ST MARGARET’S HALL
2619 ERA STREET
SAN ANGELO, TX 76905

APRIL 20, 2024

TICKETS ARE \$25 & MUST BE PURCHASED IN ADVANCE. TICKETS WILL NOT BE SOLD AT THE DOOR.

ONLINE: WWW.EVENTBRITE.COM (\$25 PLUS FEE) -USE QR CODE
MAIL IN: MAGNIFICAT, 1629 E. HARRIS, SAN ANGELO, TX 76903
(CHECKS PAYABLE TO MAGNIFICAT)

CONTACT: VICKIE (325) 812-3852; ELVIRA (325) 315-5978
TICKETS FOR PRIESTS, DEACON, RELIGIOUS BROTHERS AND SISTERS ARE COMPLIMENTARY. RESERVATIONS ARE REQUIRED.
CONTACT MARY: (325) 245-6663



Spring Cleanup

Calvary Cemetery

It's that time again for our spring cemetery cleanup at Calvary Catholic Cemetery.

This year's cleanup is scheduled for APRIL 27, 2024.

From 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. the gates will be closed while we work to tidy up and refresh the beauty of our cherished space to ensure it remains a serene place for everyone.

We kindly ask for your help in preparing for this day.

If there are personal mementos you'd like to keep, flowers, or any items you've placed on or around graves, grave markers, or in trees such as: garden decorations, solar lights, rosaries, wind chimes, statues, or any other heartfelt items, **please make sure to collect them by 6 p.m., April 26, 2024.** This includes items in vases, borders, bricks, gravel/rocks, garden ornaments, and unauthorized benches.

We understand how important these items are to you and the memories they represent. However, to maintain the cemetery's beauty and respect for all, items that don't follow our guidelines will need to be removed and won't be saved. We encourage everyone to take a moment to familiarize yourselves with the cemetery rules posted at the main cemetery entrance, on our website, and Facebook page.

Thank you for your understanding and cooperation. Together, we can keep Calvary Cemetery a beautiful, peaceful place for reflection and remembrance.

Calvary Cemetery
325-651-7500
sanangelodiocese.org/calvary-cemetery

Colorado City parish to celebrate major anniversary

St. Ann Parish in Colorado City will celebrate their 50th anniversary with a Golden Jubilee celebration on April 7.

Pastor Father Michael Udegbumam and the parish community have extended an invitation to all priests of the diocese to attend.

Mass will begin at 10:30 a.m. A meal and reception will follow in the fellowship hall.

Women's ACTS Retreats coming soon

Calling all women age 21 and up! The San Angelo Women's ACTS team is preparing a very special experience just for you! Come on a faith-filled journey surrounded by women ready to share God's mercy and love. It is a retreat that is designed to re-ignite your faith and bring you into a closer relationship with God and his church community. It all happens Apr. 4-7 at Christ the King Retreat Center. FMI, Carol Halfmann, Director, 325-340-7806.

Small Town Women's ACTS Retreat

Save the date: May 2-5, Christ the King Retreat Center in San Angelo. FMI: Michele Halfmann, Director, 325-656-6888.

Save the date!



Diocesan Marriage Jubilee

Saturday, April 14, 2024

Bishop Sis will celebrate a special Mass to offer prayer for those who are celebrating major milestone anniversaries of their sacramental marriages this year.

For more information or to register yourself and your spouse for this event, please contact your parish office.

HOLY WEEK

AT SACRED HEART CATHEDRAL

20 E. Beauregard Ave. • San Angelo

PALM SUNDAY

OF THE PASSION OF THE LORD

Blessing of the Palms and Procession
Assemble in the Courtyard 15 minutes before Mass to take part in the procession.

Bishop Michael J. Sis, celebrant
Saturday, March 23, 4 pm vigil &
Sunday, March 24, noon (Spanish)
Msgr. Larry Droll, celebrant
Sunday, March 24, 10 am & 6 pm

CHRISM MASS

Tuesday, March 26, 11 am
with Schola Cantorum
(no confessions or 12:10 pm Mass)
Annual Mass where the sacred oils are blessed and diocesan priests renew their priestly promises and fidelity to the Bishop.

STATIONS OF THE CROSS

LAS ESTACIONES DEL VÍA CRUCIS

in the Cathedral
Tuesday, March 26, 6:30 pm

PROCESSION TO WAY OF THE CROSS

Good Friday, March 29, noon
Join Bishop Sis in a citywide procession from St. Margaret of Scotland Catholic Church to the Christ the King Retreat Center.

SACRED TRIDUUM

Bishop Michael J. Sis, principal celebrant

MASS OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

Holy Thursday, March 28, 6:30 pm
with Schola Cantorum
(no confessions or 12:10 pm Mass)

LITURGY OF THE LORD'S PASSION

Good Friday, March 29, 6:30 pm
Veneration of the Cross & Holy Communion
(no confessions or 12:10 pm Mass)

GRAND EASTER VIGIL

Holy Saturday, March 30, 8:30 pm
with Schola Cantorum and brass
(no confessions or 4 pm Mass)

EASTER SUNDAY OF THE RESURRECTION OF THE LORD

March 31 Mass celebrants
Msgr. Larry Droll, 10 am
Bishop Michael J. Sis, noon (Spanish)
(no Vespers or 6 pm Mass)

St. Gianna's Hope

A Mass for Infant Loss and Miscarriage

Saturday, April 27th @8am


Can we add you and your child to our St. Gianna's Hope prayer list? Scan this QR code to learn more about our ministry and to provide us with your name so that we can pray for you.



Read the Angelus online

Sign up for DOSA Mail (see below) to get the WTA and other news from the diocese in your inbox.

Past issues available at:
sanangelodiocese.org/west-texas-angelus



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Two ways to join:
1) Text DOSA to 84576
OR
2) Visit
<https://app.flocknote.com/dosamail>

Social Media

Diocese of San Angelo on Facebook:
<https://www.facebook.com/DioceseofSanAngelo>

Bishop Michael Sis on X (formerly Twitter):
[@SABishopMike](https://twitter.com/SABishopMike)

On the Web

www.sanangelodiocese.org



ALAN TORRE | APTORRE PHOTOGRAPHY

Priests, deacons, and women religious were among the honored attendees at the annual Knights of Columbus Clergy Appreciation Dinner, held Feb. 9 at the Youth Activity Center at St. Ann Parish in Midland.



ALAN TORRE | APTORRE PHOTOGRAPHY

First Communion at St. Mary's Central Catholic School in Odessa, Feb. 10, 2024.



COURTESY

A new tabernacle was recently installed at Our Lady of Lourdes Parish in Andrews. At the same time, the location of the tabernacle was moved from beside the altar to its center. The tabernacle was blessed by pastor Father Joseph Ogbonna during Mass Feb. 13.



COURTESY

Ash Wednesday was Feb. 14 this year. At St. Mary, Star of the Sea Parish in Ballinger, Sydney Rawles and her children Landis and Pierce happily displayed their ashes.



S PANGAN | APTORRE PHOTOGRAPHY

The annual Knights of Columbus Casino Knight benefiting St. Mary's Central Catholic School was held on Feb. 10, 2024, at the Odessa Marriott. The following was shared in announcing this year's honoree: "Each year, we have the honor of acknowledging an individual or organization that has made a significant impact on our event. It is our privilege to announce this year's honorees for 2024: Mr. Javier and Maria Salgado. Before our relocation to the Marriott, the Salgados played a vital role behind the scenes, ensuring the culinary satisfaction of all attendees. For eighteen years, they diligently curated the menu for our event, generously catering to our sponsors and guests. At times, they even absorbed additional expenses to maximize contributions to SMCCS. Furthermore, their three children, all SMCCS alumni, have excelled in the fields of medicine and education, reflecting the family's commitment to excellence. The enduring legacy of the Salgados within our event is deeply cherished and esteemed, embodying the essence of community service. We express heartfelt gratitude to the Salgado family for their invaluable contributions."

Author Flannery O'Connor shared her faith through fiction

By Russell Shaw
OSV News

Flannery O'Connor was not an evangelist. She was an artist, one of the most gifted American fiction writers of the 20th century. But a profoundly Catholic theological vision informs her art, giving her stories resonance and depth that sound deep — and sometimes deeply disturbing — spiritual chords.

Explaining why she often wrote about grotesque characters in bizarre situations, O'Connor remarked that in an age of disbelief like this one, "You have to make your vision apparent by shock — to the hard of hearing you shout, and for the almost blind you draw large and startling figures."

Another time she said, "All my stories are about the action of grace on a character who is not very willing to support it." Then, with her characteristic mixture of ruefulness and realism, she added, "But most people think of these stories as hard, hopeless, brutal, etc."

Today, 60 years after her death, that sort of reaction to O'Connor's fiction is more and more giving way to the realization that these are richly imagined analogies of faith flung in the face of skeptical secularism by a master storyteller.

Writing in the *New York Review of Books*, author Joyce Carol Oates cited O'Connor's "unshakable absolutist faith" as the foundation of her creative work. Faith, said Oates, provided O'Connor with "a rationale with which to mock both her secular and bigoted Christian contemporaries in a succession of brilliantly orchestrated short stories that read like parables of human folly confronted by mortality."

The only child of a real estate agent named Edward F. O'Connor and Regina Cline O'Connor, Mary Flannery O'Connor was born March 25, 1925, in Savannah, Georgia. Her great-grandparents were Irish immigrants, and the family had remained staunchly Catholic, members of a religious minority in the Protestant Bible Belt. As a child, Mary Flannery attended parochial schools until her father's failing health forced a move to the Cline family home in Milledgeville, Georgia. There she attended Peabody High School, drawing cartoons and writing for the school paper.

In 1942, she entered Georgia State College for Women, located near her home. It was then she began to use the name Flannery O'Connor on school assignments. She graduated with a degree in social science.

In 1946, she was accepted by the prestigious Writers' Workshop at the University of Iowa and went there to study journalism. While there, she met important writers like Robert Penn Warren and John Crowe Ransom, began writing fiction and started attending daily Mass. After Iowa, she spent time at an artists' colony near Saratoga, New York, writing and socializing with other writers and attending Mass with the domestic staff.

Taken ill in 1950 while traveling home for Christmas, she was diagnosed with lupus, the inflammatory connective tissue disease that had also killed her father. She moved home for good and lived with her mother, settling into a routine of writing, tending her collection of peacocks and other exotic birds, exchanging letters with a growing number of correspondents, going to church with her mother, now and then lecturing on college campuses, and battling lupus.

Her illness she viewed with cool courage touched by humor. "I had a blood transfusion Tuesday," she wrote a friend not long before her death, "so I am feeling summum better and for the last two days I have worked one hour each day and my my I do like to work. I et up that one hour like it was filet mignon."

Her first novel, *Wise Blood*, appeared in 1952 and received respectful but sometimes puzzled reviews. The story, she later told one of her correspondents, is about a "Protestant saint," Hazel Motes by name, "written from the point of view of a Catholic." Her second novel, *The*

Violent Bear It Away, about a reluctant teenage prophet named Tarwater, came out in 1960.

In between, she produced a slow but steady stream of short fiction. The stories were collected in two volumes, *A Good Man Is Hard To Find* (1952) and the posthumously published *Everything That Rises Must Converge* (1965).

The unraveling of hypocrisy is a favorite theme with O'Connor, and a story called "Revelation" is a particularly striking example of that. Mrs. Turpin, a middle-aged farm woman possessing sublime self-satisfaction and a keen eye for the faults of those she considers her inferiors, gets the shock of her life when a crazed girl in a doctor's office throws a book at her, tries to choke her and tells her, "Go back to hell where you came from, you old wart hog."

It's the start of Mrs. Turpin's conversion. That evening, as she stands beside her hog pen, the conversion comes to completion in the vision of a "vast horde of souls" mounting to heaven.

Leading the way are many of those she's always looked down on. Bringing up the rear are some like herself. "They were marching behind the others with great dignity, accountable as they had always been for good order and common sense and respectable behavior. ... Yet she could see by their shocked and altered faces that even their virtues were being burned away."

Mrs. Turpin walks slowly back to the house. The crickets are loud in the woods, "but what she heard were the voices of the souls climbing upward into the starry field and shouting hallelujah."

Beyond mere hypocrisy, O'Connor sometimes confronts monstrous evil that might best be described as demonic. In "A Good Man Is Hard to Find," an escaped killer called the Misfit slaughters a family whose grandmother confronts him at the end.

"No pleasure but meanness," he snarls at her.

"She saw the man's face twisted close to her own as if he were going to cry and she murmured, 'Why you're one of my babies. You're one of my own children.' She reached out and touched him on the shoulder. The Misfit sprang back as if a snake had bitten him and shot her three times through the chest."

"She would of been a good woman," he tells his companions, "if it had been somebody there to shoot her every minute of her life."

O'Connor rejected the stereotyped explanation that she wrote as she did because that was how writers of the so-called Southern Gothic school wrote.

"My own feeling is that writers who see by the light of their Christian faith will have, in these times, the sharpest eyes for the grotesque, for the perverse, and for the unacceptable. ... The novelist with Christian concerns will find in modern life distortions which are repugnant to him, and his problem will be to make these appear as distortions to an audience which is used to seeing them as natural; and

See O'CONNOR, Page 19

Did Pope Benedict XVI validly resign?

Q: Did Pope Benedict XVI validly resign even though he did not renounce the *munus*? (Scottsville, VA)

A: As many of us will recall, on Feb. 11, 2013, Pope Benedict XVI surprised the world when, after noting his advancing age and declining health, he announced: "For this reason, and well aware of the seriousness of this act, with full freedom I declare that I renounce the ministry of Bishop of Rome, Successor of St. Peter, entrusted to me by the Cardinals on 19 April 2005, in such a way, that as from 28 February 2013, at 20:00 hours, the See of Rome, the See of St. Peter, will be vacant."

The 1983 *Code of Canon Law* had already accounted for the possibility — however theoretical it might have seemed at the time of the drafting of the code — for a pope to step down.

As Canon 332, Paragraph 2 tells us: "Should it happen that the Roman Pontiff resigns from his office, it is required for validity that the resignation be freely made and properly manifested, but it is not necessary that it be accepted by anyone."

Thus, canonically only two elements are necessary for a papal resignation to be valid: 1. That the resignation come about as a result of a truly free choice on the part of the Holy Father — e.g., a resignation made under threat of violence would not "count" — and 2. That this resignation be "properly manifested." This latter aspect means that it should be public and obvious what the incumbent pope intends to do. Or, in other words, the pope privately expressing a wish to resign to a handful of close confidants would not effect a valid resignation; nor would a papal resignation take effect if the only evidence of it were rumors or secondhand accounts.

As far as anyone can reasonably discern, Pope Benedict XVI's resignation plainly fulfilled both of these criteria. There was no evidence that Benedict was coerced or pressured to resign, and he specifically mentioned that he was making this choice "with full freedom." And Pope Benedict clearly manifested his intention to step down; his resignation announcement was made at a meeting of the College of Cardinals and in front of several journalists.

At the time, different people had different feelings on the appropriateness of a contemporary pope deciding to abdicate



Jenna Marie Cooper
OSV News

Question Corner

for reasons of physical infirmity and old age. However, the general consensus among canon lawyers was that this resignation was nevertheless lawful and effective. Still, as you note, there was some limited speculation that Benedict XVI might not have resigned validly.

One such argument was that the resignation was invalid because Benedict supposedly did not resign the "*munus*" — a Latin term that, depending on the context, can be best translated into English as "office" or "duties" — of the papacy explicitly.

But, as I see it, this argument doesn't hold water because the papacy is technically nothing more than an "office" (albeit a deeply significant one). That is, unlike priestly or episcopal ordination, which can be primarily understood as a personal, sacramental configuring to Christ independent of any "job" or "position" that a priest or bishop might eventually hold, at the end of the day the role of pope is in some sense "just a job." There is no sacrament that makes a bishop into a pope; a newly elected pope essentially just accepts a new position as the head of a new diocese, the Diocese of Rome.

Therefore, if a pope is announcing his resignation from the papacy, it's already very strongly implied that he intends to renounce the papacy as an office or "*munus*," even if he doesn't specifically use the exact word "*munus*."

Jenna Marie Cooper, who holds a licentiate in canon law, is a consecrated virgin and a canonist whose column appears weekly at OSV News. Send your questions to CatholicQA@osv.com.

GRN RADIO PROGRAM SCHEDULE

GUADALUPE RADIO NETWORK

Radio for your soul can be heard on:

• Abilene - 91.7 FM, KQOS

• Midland-Odessa - 1180 AM, KLPF

• Midland-Odessa – 90.9 FM (Español)

• San Angelo - 91.5 FM, KPDE

POPULAR ENGLISH PROGRAMS

6:00-7:30 AM – GRN Catholic Drive Time

7:30 AM – Holy Mass - The Society of Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity

8:00 AM – Catholic Connections - Teresa Tomeo

9:00 AM – More 2 Life - Dr. Greg & Lisa Popcak

10:00 AM – Women of Grace - Johnnette Williams

11:00 AM – Take 2 - Jerry Usher & Debbie Georgianni

12:00 PM – The Doctor is In - Dr. Ray Guarendi

1:00 PM – Called to Communion - Dr. David Anders

2:00 PM – EWTN Open Line

3:00 PM – A Life Lived Joyfully with The Divine Mercy Chaplet

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Calvary ... torture, teaching, and thieves

In the four Gospels, we read the accounts of Jesus’ mistreatment, suffering, and death. Matthew tells us that when Jesus went before the Sanhedrin “they spat in his face and struck him, while some slapped him, saying, ‘Prophecy for us, Messiah: who is it that struck you?’” (Mt 26:67–68). After Jesus was taken to Pilate, Mark states, “So Pilate, wishing to satisfy the crowd, released Barabbas to them and, after he had Jesus scourged, handed him over to be crucified. The soldiers led him away inside the palace, that is, the praetorium, and assembled the whole cohort. They clothed him in purple and, weaving a crown of thorns, placed it on him. They began to salute him with, ‘Hail, King of the Jews!’ and kept striking his head with a reed and spitting upon him. They knelt before him in homage” (Mk 15:15–19). Luke adds, “Even the soldiers jeered at him. As they approached to offer him wine they called out, ‘If you are King of the Jews, save yourself’” (Lk 23:36–37). Even after his death, the denigration did not stop because “when they came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs, but one soldier thrust his lance into his side, and immediately blood and water flowed out” (Jn 19:33–34).

St. Augustine described the brutality of a crucifixion: “For the crucified, hanging on the tree, nailed to the wood, were killed by a slow lingering death. To be crucified was not merely to be put to death; for the victim



James R. Sulliman, PhD

lived long on the cross, not because longer life was chosen, but because death itself was stretched out that the pain might not be too quickly ended” (St. Augustine, *Tractates on John*, 36.4.). While the Romans were likely to think that nothing could exacerbate such a hideous torturous death, they were wrong.

From his “vantage point” high on the cross, Jesus, as man, did not just look down at the present, but Jesus, as God, could also see the future. A future where his sacrifice would be completely disregarded. A future where we would choose self-will over God’s will. A future increasingly separating from God. The pain caused by those visions were infinitely more torturous! His love would be rebuked, his forgiveness rejected, his suffering in vain. I think that if a medical examiner had been called to the hill of Calvary on that “great” Friday, his report would have

read that the cause of Jesus’ death was not suffocation, not loss of blood, but rather due to a broken heart.

And yet, as he was dying, he was still teaching! Luke (23:33–43) reports: “When they came to the place called the Skull, they crucified him and the criminals there, one on his right, the other on his left. They divided his garments by casting lots. The people stood by and watched; the rulers, meanwhile, sneered at him and said, ‘He saved others, let him save himself if he is the chosen one, the Messiah of God.’ Even the soldiers jeered at him. As they approached to offer him wine they called out, ‘If you are King of the Jews, save yourself.’ Above him there was an inscription that read, ‘This is the King of the Jews.’ Now one of the criminals hanging there reviled Jesus, saying, ‘Are you not the Messiah? Save yourself and us.’ The other, however, rebuking him, said in reply, ‘Have you no fear of God, for you are subject to the same condemnation? And indeed, we have been condemned justly, for the sentence we received corresponds to our crimes, but this man has done nothing criminal.’ Then he said, ‘Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.’ He replied to him, ‘Amen, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise.’” This exchange has massive significance that can easily be overlooked.

Jesus already had taught “How to get to heaven in six

See SULLIMAN, Page 18

The radical St. Louise de Marillac

To call sweet, gentle Louise de Marillac a radical is perhaps one of the finest compliments we can pay her.

She was born in Paris on Aug. 12, 1591, out of wedlock. It happened between the first and second marriages of her father, Louis de Marillac. Paul Burns writes in *Butler’s Lives of the Saints* that he recognized her as his daughter and made financial provision for her upbringing and education.

She was educated by the Dominican nuns at Poissy and desired to become a nun. Instead she heeded her confessor’s advice to marry Antony Le Gras in 1613, an official in the queen’s service. Theirs was a happy marriage for 12 years during which time Louise bore a son, Michael, and devoted herself to her household and family. Nothing in this part of her life foreshadowed the more radical things she would do later.

Before her husband died in 1625, Louise had already met Monsieur Vincent, the priest now known to us as Vincent de Paul. He became her spiritual adviser and she devoted the rest of her life to working with him and his Ladies of Charity in caring for the poor, the sick and neglected.

When Louise turned her home into a training center for candidates for the Ladies of Charity in 1633, she began one of the first non-cloistered religious orders for women. From these beginnings emerged the Sisters of



Mary Lou Gibson
Speaking of Saints

Charity of St. Vincent de Paul, or Daughters of Charity as Vincent preferred. This was the first of her many radical ideas which set her apart from the normal lifestyle of the average wealthy French widow in the mid 17th century.

The concept of sisters who devoted themselves exclusively to works of mercy and did not take solemn vows was so new that the new order was not formally approved by Rome until 1655. At that time nobody could imagine a religious order of women not behind the walls of the convent.

Louise took her vows in 1634, and in 1642 Vincent allowed four other members to take vows. When the order was formally approved, it was placed under Vincent and his Congregation of the Missions, with Louise as superior. Louise traveled all over France establishing the Daughters

in hospitals, orphanages, and other institutions. According to Kathleen Jones, writing in *Women Saints*, Louise looked for prudent and sensible girls, rejecting those of a melancholy nature because she believed the sick poor needed cheerful people around them.

Gilbert Markus calls their efforts “a radical breakthrough both in religious life and in pastoral theology” in his book *The Radical Tradition*. Markus explains how they changed the idea of how to treat the powerless of this world because “the powerless were not brought into a convent, but the convent went out to them.”

Throughout her life, Louise remained close to her son and his family and they were with her when she died in Paris in 1660. Her remains are in the main chapel of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity in Paris.

She was canonized by Pope Pius XI in 1934. Pope John XXIII declared her the patron of social workers in 1960. Her feast day is March 15.

Note: Burns writes that the Sisters of Charity, for centuries familiar as “butterfly Sisters” because of their distinctive headdress (that of a French 17th-century peasant costume), are still active all over the world.

Mary Lou Gibson writes about the saints for the West Texas Angelus from her home in Austin.

Women and the holy Mass

In the Catholic Church today there is discussion about the possibility of admitting women to the sacrament of holy orders. This has been talked about before, and throughout the history of the church there is a consistent “no” to the suggestion that women can be ordained deacons and priests. This issue becomes clear with the regard to the priest as the celebrant at Mass. It is not a question of the ability to say the words of the ritual or perform the ceremonies properly. In other words, it is not about what a person is able to “do” but who a person “is.” Holy orders are only for men.

Behind this “no” is the understanding of the relation of Christ to his church. In Ephesians 5:32, St. Paul compares the relation of Christ to his church with the relationship of a husband and wife in marriage. Christ is the bridegroom and the church is his bride.

This points to the centrality of the sacrament of holy matrimony and the centrality of the family in the life of the church and in any culture (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2201-2213). The first commandment God gives to human beings is to be fruitful and multiply (Gn 1:28). When husband and wife conceive and give birth to a child, the father, mother, and child become a human trinity, a likeness of God the Holy Trinity (see Gn 1:26).

When the first man and woman sin even before they conceive and give birth to a child, the family is the locus of the original sin. The fate of the first two children of the first husband and wife is that one brother kills the other brother. Thus, the family must be redeemed. When the Incarnation of the Second Person of the Holy Trinity takes place, Jesus is born in a human family, and the Holy Family proclaims the redemption of marriage and family.

All this is behind the celebration of the holy Mass, which is the wedding supper of the Lamb, a celebration of the salvation of the human race through the salvation of marriage and the family. When the priest elevates the host and the chalice with the precious blood, he says, “Behold the Lamb of God, behold him who takes away the sins of the world. Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.” In Revelation 19:9, we read, “And the angel said to



Father Knick and Sandie Knickerbocker

me, ‘Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.’” The holy Mass is a foretaste of the wedding banquet in heaven. We go forward to receive the body, blood, soul, and divinity of the Bridegroom who gives his life for his bride, the church.

However, the Catholic Church also teaches that the church is the body of Christ (1 Cor 12:27–31). Speaking of the church as the body of Christ reminds us that both males and females are part of the church, while the understanding that the church is the bride of Christ seems to place an emphasis on the female.

It is at this point that we can speak about the role of women in the holy Mass. It is an ontological fact that of the two genders only the woman can bear in her own body both genders. Any woman has the potential to bear in her own body a male child. Therefore, at the celebration of the holy Mass, the women present are both symbols of the feminine nature of the church and of the fact that the church contains both female and male members. The priest, who must be a man, is the bridegroom and father, and the women present are both bride and mother.

It seems to us that rather than speaking only in the negative about the fact that only men can receive the sacrament of holy orders, we also need to stress the ontological fact that only women can be symbols of both genders and are symbols of both bride and mother. Our Lady of Guadalupe, the pregnant Mary, Patroness of the Americas, is the symbol of the woman’s role in the celebration of the holy Mass.

When I was ordained a Catholic priest fifteen years ago

under the stipulations of the Pastoral Provision by Bishop Michael D. Pfeifer, OMI, at Sacred Heart Cathedral in San Angelo, after I had concelebrated my first Catholic Mass, Bishop Pfeifer invited my wife to join us in the sanctuary so that he could bless our marriage. At the beginning of the Mass, he asked our daughter and granddaughter to come forward and give the consent of the family to my ordination. I do not think we appreciated the full significance of this at the time. It began to become clearer when Bishop Pfeifer gave us permission to have a home altar so we could celebrate daily Mass. At that time priests ordained under the Pastoral Provision could not be pastors and had to serve in a parish under the authority of a celibate priest as their pastor. I could celebrate Mass at the parish altar only when the pastor invited me to do so. Since a priest is encouraged to celebrate daily Mass, having a home altar was a way I could do that.

During the pandemic, when celebrating Mass was curtailed in many ways, I could still celebrate Mass at our home altar with my wife present at every Mass. We came to understand in a much clearer way the place of women in the Mass as a symbol of the church as both bride and mother.

Amid these discussions about the possibility of ordaining women as deacons and priests and the affirmation that only a man can be a deacon and priest, it seems to us that a concomitant emphasis needs to be placed on the symbolic presence of the woman in the Mass as both bride and mother capable of bearing in her body both genders. Instead of saying who a woman cannot “be,” we should be saying who, in fact, she “is.” Our Lady of Guadalupe is the perfect symbol of this truth. Our Lady of Guadalupe, pray for us.

Father Knick Knickerbocker is a retired priest of the Diocese of San Angelo and the spouse of Sandie Knickerbocker. Father Knickerbocker was ordained in the Catholic Church under the Pastoral Provision, which allows married former priests from Anglican traditions to become Catholic priests.

Praying the psalms

“God behaves in the psalms in ways that God is not allowed to behave in theology.”

That quip comes from Sebastian Moore and should be highlighted at a time when fewer people want to use the psalms in prayer because they feel offended by what they sometimes find there. More and more, we see people resisting the psalms as a way to pray (or desiring to sanitize them) because the psalms speak of murder, revenge, anger, violence, war-making, and patriarchy.

Some ask, how can I pray with words that are full of hatred, anger, violence, speak of the glories of war, and of crushing one’s enemies in the name of God? For others, the objection is to a patriarchal coloring in the psalms — where the divine is masculine and the masculine is too-much deified. For yet others, the offense is aesthetic. Their objection: “They’re bad poetry!”

Perhaps the psalms aren’t great poetry and undeniably do smack of violence, war, hatred of one’s enemies, and the desire for vengeance, all in the name of God. Admittedly, they’re also patriarchal in character. But does that make them a bad language for prayer? Let me suggest something to the contrary.

One of the classical definitions of prayer says, “prayer is lifting mind and heart to God.” Simple, clear, accurate. I suggest that the actual problem is that we seldom actually do this when we pray. Rather than lifting up to God what is actually on our minds and in our hearts, we tend to treat God as someone from whom we need to hide the real truth of our thoughts and feelings. Instead of pouring out mind and heart, we tell God what we think God wants to hear — not murderous thoughts, desire for vengeance, or our disappointment with God.

But expressing those feelings is the whole point. What makes the psalms particularly apt for prayer is that they do not hide the truth from God but express the whole



Father Ron Rolheiser

gamut of our actual feelings. They give an honest voice to what’s actually going on in our minds and hearts.

Sometimes we feel good and our spontaneous impulse is to speak words of praise and gratitude, and the psalms give us that voice. They speak of God’s goodness in everything — love, friends, faith, health, food, wine, enjoyment. But we don’t always feel that way. Our lives also have their cold, lonely seasons when disappointment and bitterness simmer or rage under the surface. The psalms give us honest voice where we can open up all those simmering feelings to God. Also, there are times when we are filled with the sense of our own inadequacy, with the fact that we cannot measure up to the trust and love that’s given us. Again, the psalms give us voice for this, asking God to be merciful and to soften our hearts, wash us clean, and give us a new start.

As well, there are times when we feel bitterly disappointed with God and need some way to express this. The psalms give us voice for this (“Why are you so silent?” “Why are you so far from me?”) even as they make us aware that God is not afraid of our anger and bitterness; but, like a loving parent, only wants us to come and talk about it. The psalms are a privileged vehicle for prayer because they lift the full range of our thoughts and

feelings to God.

However, there are a number of reasons why we struggle with that. First, because our age tends to eschew metaphor and, taken literally, some of the images in the psalms are offensive. Second, we tend to be in denial about our actual feelings. It’s hard to admit that we feel some of the things we sometimes feel — grandiosity, sexual obsessions, jealousies, bitterness, paranoia, murderous thoughts, disappointment with God, doubts in our faith. Too often our prayer belies our actual thoughts and feelings. It tells God what we think God wants to hear. The psalms are more honest.

To pray with full honesty is a challenge. Kathleen Norris puts it this way: If you pray regularly “there is no way you can do it right. You are not always going to sit up straight, let alone think holy thoughts. You’re not going to wear your best clothes but whatever isn’t in the dirty clothes basket. You come to the Bible’s great `book of praise’ through all the moods and conditions of life, and while you feel like hell, you sing anyway. To your surprise, you find that the psalms do not deny your true feelings but allow you to reflect them, right in front of God and everyone.”

Feel-good aphorisms that express how we think we ought to feel are no substitute for the earthy realism of the psalms which express how sometimes we actually do feel. Anyone who would lift mind and heart to God without ever mentioning feelings of bitterness, jealousy, vengeance, hatred, and war, should write slogans for greeting cards and not be anyone’s spiritual advisor.

Oblate Father Ron Rolheiser is a theologian, teacher, and award-winning author. He can be contacted through his website: www.ronrolheiser.com. Now on Facebook: www.facebook.com/ronrolheiser.

Q&A: Why does the church oppose IVF? What can be done about frozen embryos?

By Father Francis J. Hoffman
OSV News

When the Alabama Supreme Court recently recognized the personhood of embryos, it gave legal standing to something the church has clearly established: An embryo is a human being and should be treated with the dignity and rights due to all people, especially the most vulnerable who cannot speak for themselves. This is part of the reason the church opposes *in vitro* fertilization, in which embryos created in a laboratory are transferred to a woman for gestation. Father Francis J. Hoffman, a priest of Opus Dei well known as "Father Rocky" in his role as executive director and CEO of Relevant Radio, dives deeper into the church's teaching on IVF and the related issue of frozen embryos in this Q&A.

Q. I know there are very good reasons for the church to teach against IVF (*in vitro* fertilization), but what are they? Also, what forms are allowed, and what is the difference?

A. The church hopes and prays that God will bless married couples with children, but knows very well from experience and stories in the Bible that not every married couple receives the gift of children. So, to begin to answer your question, it needs to be stated that children are a gift from God — they are not a right. While every married couple has a right to try to have children, it is important to respect God's law and the law of nature for procreation.

In this regard the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* states: "A child is not something owed to one, but is a gift. The 'supreme gift of marriage' is a human person. A child may not be considered a piece of property, an idea to which an alleged 'right to a child' would lead. In this area, only the child possesses genuine rights: the right 'to be the fruit of the specific act of the conjugal love of his parents,' and 'the right to be respected as a person from the moment of his conception.' The Gospel shows that physical sterility is not an absolute evil. Spouses who still suffer from infertility after exhausting legitimate medical procedures should unite themselves with the Lord's cross, the source of all spiritual fecundity. They can give expression to their generosity by adopting abandoned children or performing demanding services for others" (Nos. 2378-2379).

There are several reasons why IVF is unethical. The first reason is that in the attempt to create new human life, IVF results in the disproportionate risk of loss of innocent human life. Innocent human lives are lost through IVF because "excess" human embryos created in the process are either discarded or placed in cryopreservation (deep freeze). Since human embryos are human lives, and human beings have an inherent right to life which is denied by cryopreservation or by being discarded, IVF is unethical. Pope Francis has been remarkably strong in his condemnation of our modern "throwaway" culture. Up to

90% of the human embryos that are created never make it. They never had a chance.

Again, the catechism, based on the instruction on respect for human life in its origin (*Donum Vitae*, Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, 1987), states: "It is immoral to produce human embryos intended for exploitation as disposable biological material."

It continues: "'Certain attempts to influence chromosomal or genetic inheritance are not therapeutic but are aimed at producing human beings selected according to sex or other predetermined qualities. Such manipulations are contrary to the personal dignity of the human being and his integrity and identity' which are unique and unrepeatable" (No. 2275).

The second reason IVF is unethical may be difficult for people to understand if they do not have an appreciation for natural law, but here it is anyway. Because IVF invades the sacred space of interpersonal human sexual relations and relies too much on technology, it winds up separating the spouses from each other and often separating the real parents from their offspring.

Here it will be helpful to reprint what the catechism teaches us in this regard:

"Techniques that entail the dissociation of husband and wife, by the intrusion of a person other than the couple (donation of sperm or ovum, surrogate uterus), are gravely immoral. These techniques (heterologous artificial insemination and fertilization) infringe the child's right to be born of a father and mother known to him and bound to each other by marriage. They betray the spouses' 'right to become a father and a mother only through each other.'

"Techniques involving only the married couple (homologous artificial insemination and fertilization) are perhaps less reprehensible, yet remain morally unacceptable. They dissociate the sexual act from the procreative act. The act which brings the child into existence is no longer an act by which two persons give themselves to one another, but one that 'entrusts the life and identity of the embryo into the power of doctors and biologists and establishes the domination of technology over the origin and destiny of the human person. Such a relationship of domination is in itself contrary to the dignity and equality that must be common to parents and children.' 'Under the moral aspect, procreation is deprived of its proper perfection when it is not willed as the fruit of the conjugal act, that is to say, of the specific act of the spouses' union. ... Only respect for the link between the meanings of the conjugal act and respect for the unity of the human being make possible procreation in conformity with the dignity of the person'" (Nos. 2376-77).

Finally, reproductive medical assistance or techniques allowed include any which respect the life of the embryo and the exclusive sexual union of the married mother and father. LTOF (lower tubal ovum transfer) and GIFT (gamete intra-fallopian transfer) are methods that the church

For information on fertility services in line with Catholic pro-life teaching, visit:

The Saint Paul VI Institute for the Study of Human Reproduction
at Creighton University, Omaha, NE
<https://popepaulvi.com/>

The JPPI Life Center
Austin, TX
<https://www.jppilifecenter.org/>

does not condemn.

Q. I understand that as a result of science there are many (millions?) of frozen embryos that have been preserved for different reasons, such as IVF. What is their designation by the church? What is permitted by the church? What are the accepted forms of use for them? If they are being destroyed for medical purposes, isn't this another slaughter of the innocents?

A. There is no good solution to the situation of frozen embryos. Biological science and the church are in agreement about their status: From the moment of conception, they are human beings. The church does not permit them to be destroyed. It would be best if their natural parents brought them to term.

Whenever we discuss the ethics of human reproduction, the necessary starting point — as mentioned above — is the recognition that children are a gift from God and not a human right. That premise may be difficult for some to accept, but it is based on the unique sacred dignity of each human person endowed with a unique spiritual and immortal soul.

With respect to IVF, the catechism is quite clear in No. 2377, a teaching which repeats verbatim what the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith stated in *Donum Vitae* in 1987. This same teaching is expressed in Pope St. John Paul II's encyclicals *Veritatis Splendor* (1994) and *Evangelium Vitae* (1995). The Holy See has repeated this teaching with the instruction *Dignitatis Personae* (2008). All of those documents declare IVF to be immoral, and do so for a variety of reasons.

There are several moral problems with IVF. A serious problem is the disposition of "excess" embryos. Often they are left in a state of suspended animation, or even destroyed. We cannot treat human beings so callously.

Here it will be helpful to revisit what St. John Paul taught on this subject in 1995:

Orando con los salmos

“Dios actúa en los salmos de una manera que no se le permite en teología.”

Esa ocurrencia viene de Sebastian Moore y debería ser destacada en un momento en que hay menos gente que quiere orar con los salmos, porque se siente ofendida por lo que a veces encuentra en ellos. Más y más, vemos a gente que rechaza los salmos como medio de oración (o desea sanearlos), porque los salmos traen a colación asesinato, venganza, ira, violencia, guerra y patriarcado.

Algunos preguntan: ¿Cómo puedo orar con palabras rebosantes de odio, ira, violencia, proclamación de las glorias de la guerra y aplastamiento de los enemigos de uno en nombre de Dios? Para otros, el inconveniente está en cierta exaltación patriarcal que se da en los salmos, donde lo divino es masculino, y lo masculino está excesivamente deificado. Incluso para otros, la ofensa resulta estética. Su objeción: “¡Son malos poemas!”

Acaso los salmos no sean grandes poemas, e innegablemente suenan a violencia, guerra, odio a los enemigos de uno y deseo de venganza, todo en nombre de Dios. También se reconocen estar compuestos al estilo patriarcal. Pero, ¿los convierte eso en un mal lenguaje para rezar? Dejádme sugerir algo en sentido contrario.

Una de las clásicas definiciones de oración dice: “Orar es levantar la mente y el corazón a Dios”. Sencillo, claro, exacto. Se me ocurre que el verdadero problema es que, de hecho, apenas tenemos en cuenta esto cuando oramos. Más bien que levantar a Dios lo que de hecho hay en nuestras mentes y en nuestros corazones, tendemos a tratar a Dios como alguien al que necesitamos encubrir la auténtica verdad de nuestros pensamientos y sentimientos. En vez de derramar la mente y el corazón, decimos a Dios lo que pensamos que Dios quiere oír; no pensamientos asesinos, deseos de venganza ni nuestra desilusión con Dios.

Pero expresar esos sentimientos es todo lo que importa. Lo que hace a los salmos particularmente aptos



Padre Ron Rolheiser

para orar es que no esconden la verdad de Dios, sino que expresan la gama entera de nuestros verdaderos sentimientos. Proporcionan una honrada voz a lo que en realidad se traiza en nuestras mentes y corazones.

En ocasiones nos sentimos bien, y nuestro impulso espontáneo es decir palabras de alabanza y gratitud, y los salmos nos proporcionan esa voz. Hablan de la bondad de Dios en todas cosas: amor, amigos, fe, salud, comida, vino, deleite. Pero no siempre nos sentimos de esa manera. Nuestras vidas tienen también sus épocas de frío y soledad cuando la desilusión y la amargura hierven a fuego lento o hacen estragos bajo la superficie. Los salmos nos dan una voz honrada donde podemos descubrir a Dios todos esos sentimientos que hierven en la lentitud del fuego. Igualmente, hay ocasiones en que vivimos con la plena sensación de nuestra propia insuficiencia, con el hecho de que no podemos estar a tono con la confianza y el amor que se nos da. De nuevo, los salmos nos dan voz para esto, rogando a Dios que sea misericordioso y ablande nuestros corazones, nos limpie y nos dé un nuevo ímpetu.

Igualmente, hay ocasiones en que nos sentimos amargamente desilusionados con Dios y necesitamos alguna manera de expresar esto. Los salmos nos dan voz para ello (“¿Por qué estás tan callado?” “Por qué te sitúas tan lejos de mí?”), aun cuando nos hacen conscientes de que Dios no está asustado de nuestra ira y

amargura; pero, como padre amoroso, sólo desea que vayamos y hablemos de ello. Los salmos son un instrumento privilegiado para la oración, porque levantan todo el campo de nuestros pensamientos y sentimientos a Dios.

Con todo, hay algunas razones por las que luchemos contra eso. Primera, porque nuestra edad tiende a huir de la metáfora y, tomadas literalmente, algunas de las imágenes de los salmos son ofensivas. Segunda, tendemos a estar en contradicción con los sentimientos que tenemos. Es duro admitir que sentimos algunas de las cosas que a veces sentimos: grandiosidad, obsesiones sexuales, celos, amargura, paranoia, pensamientos asesinos, desilusión con Dios, dudas en nuestra fe. Demasiado frecuentemente, nuestra oración desmiente los pensamientos y sentimientos que tenemos. Eso dice a Dios lo que nosotros pensamos que Dios quiere oír. Los salmos son más honrados.

Orar con total honradez es un reto. Kathleen Norris lo indica así: Si oras con regularidad, “no hay manera de que puedas hacerlo adecuadamente. No siempre vas a trasnochar ni menos aún tener pensamientos santos. Tampoco vas a llevar tus mejores vestidos, sino los que no estén en el cesto de la ropa sucia. Vienes al gran ‘libro de la alabanza’ de la Biblia atravesando todas situaciones de ánimo y condiciones de vida y, mientras te sientes como en el infierno, cantas a pesar de todo. Para sorpresa tuya, encuentras que los salmos no desmienten tus verdaderos sentimientos, sino te permiten reflejarlos adecuadamente delante de Dios y de todos”. Los aforismos para sentirse bien que manifiestan cómo pensamos que deberíamos sentirnos, no son sustitutos del realismo terreno de los salmos, que expresan cómo a veces nos sentimos en realidad. Cualquiera que levantara la mente y el corazón a Dios sin mencionar nunca sentimientos de amargura, celos, venganza, odio y guerra, debería escribir eslóganes para tarjetas de felicitación y no ser consejero espiritual de nadie.

¿Qué enseña la Iglesia Católica sobre la Presencia Real de Cristo en la Eucaristía en relación con las denominaciones protestantes?

Por Jenna Marie Cooper
OSV News

P: ¿Qué enseña actualmente la Iglesia sobre la Presencia Real en otras denominaciones? Recuerdo que en algún momento la Iglesia Católica también reconocía la Presencia Real en los luteranos y anglicanos. ¿Sigue siendo válida esa postura? ¿Y qué hay de otras denominaciones?"

R: En primer lugar, es importante recordar que la enseñanza católica sobre la "presencia real" en la Eucaristía implica la creencia de que, durante la Misa, cuando el sacerdote reza la oración de consagración, el pan y el vino se convierten literalmente en el cuerpo y la sangre de Cristo.

Desde sus comienzos, la doctrina de la Presencia Real ha sido uno de los principales dogmas de fe para la Iglesia Católica. Por ejemplo, en el Evangelio de San Juan, Jesús mismo afirma: "En verdad, en verdad les digo: si no

comen la carne del Hijo del hombre y no beben su sangre, no tienen vida en ustedes. ... Porque mi carne es verdadera comida, y mi sangre es verdadera bebida". (Ver Jn 6,53.55)

Años más tarde, en la Edad Media, teólogos escolásticos como Santo Tomás de Aquino fueron capaces de explicar esta enseñanza en términos filosóficos más técnicos. En concreto, "transubstanciación" es la palabra que utilizamos para referirnos a lo que ocurre cuando el pan y el vino se convierten en el cuerpo y la sangre de Cristo durante la Misa. Es decir, la "sustancia" (básicamente, la naturaleza esencial, la identidad o el "ser" de una cosa) cambia, aunque los "accidentes" (es decir, las cualidades físicas observables) del pan y el vino permanecen iguales.

Durante la Reforma Protestante y posteriormente, la gran mayoría de las denominaciones protestantes se distanciaron de la teología sacramental característica de la Iglesia Católica. La mayoría de estas denominaciones re-

chazaron la idea de la Presencia Real en la Eucaristía; es decir, si realizaban alguna práctica similar a la sagrada Comunión, era simplemente para recordar de manera simbólica la Última Cena. Si la denominación en cuestión no reconoce la Presencia Real, es lógico que la Iglesia católica tampoco lo haga.

Como usted señala, existen algunas excepciones notables, como en el caso de los anglicanos y luteranos. La Iglesia de Inglaterra se estableció más sobre premisas organizativas y políticas que teológicas. La idea era que el monarca de Inglaterra debía ser considerado como el jefe de la Iglesia en ese país. Si bien el anglicanismo ha evolucionado con el tiempo y tiene varias ramas (como la Iglesia Episcopal en los Estados Unidos) que pueden tener creencias diferentes, inicialmente los anglicanos no rechazaron explícitamente la doctrina de la Presencia Real en la Eucaristía. Del mismo modo, a pesar de que Martín

Véase EUCARISTÍA, Página 19

Deja que Dios elija tu Cuaresma

"¿A qué estás renunciando durante la Cuaresma?" Para muchos católicos, la pregunta aparece casi automáticamente, incluso antes de que la última caja de adornos navideños haya sido empaquetada y guardada. Como alguien que pasó la mayor parte de mi vida en esa categoría y con esa multitud, creo que es porque la Cuaresma puede parecer una competencia, un maratón espiritual de 40 días con ganadores y perdedores.

Me parecía que cada Miércoles de Ceniza la Iglesia presentaba la santidad personal como un desafío. Pensé que el punto era aceptarlo y hacer todo lo que estuviera a mi alcance para sobresalir en lograrlo. Mi naturaleza competitiva significa que siempre he estado más que dispuesta a aceptar cualquier desafío. Vivir la fe no fue la excepción.

Ésa es una de las razones por las que pensé que cuanto más exigente y extenuante fuera la Cuaresma, mejor. Era una cuestión de simple lógica. Si el ayuno de los viernes demostraba mi amor por Dios, entonces el ayuno de los miércoles y viernes lo demostraría aún más. Si rezar una novena era bueno, dos o tres tenían que ser aún más beneficiosas. Cada vez que oía hablar del sacrificio de otra persona, subía la apuesta para mí. Si alguien dejaba el café, me comprometía a beber sólo agua. Cuando alguien que conocía dejaba el chocolate (y siempre había alguien que lo hacía), intentaba dejar los dulces de todo tipo. Hubo años en los que incluso ponía piedritas o palillos de dientes en las suelas de mis zapatos para la temporada. Nada era demasiado para mí.

Y ese era el problema. Al hacer todas esas cosas, no logré captar el objetivo de las prácticas y disciplinas penitenciales de la Cuaresma. No me di cuenta de que, como



Jaymie Stuart Wolfe
OSV News

nada era demasiado, nada sería suficiente. En lugar de aceptar mis debilidades, traté de vivir mi vida espiritual más allá de mis posibilidades y de la medida de mis fuerzas. Y esos esfuerzos nunca produjeron el fruto del arrepentimiento en mi vida. Por el contrario, me dejaban exhausta y adolorida. Con el tiempo, finalmente reconocí que intensificar las prácticas penitenciales en preparación para la Pascua no se trata de demostrar superioridad espiritual. Como resultado, decidí renunciar a renunciar a cosas durante la Cuaresma.

Entonces, desde hace más de una década, he dejado que Dios elija lo que renuncio durante la Cuaresma. Y ha elegido algunas auténticas maravillas. Las cosas que Dios me ha invitado a sacrificar me han desafiado a un nivel mucho más profundo porque requieren más fe de la que puedo reunir por mi cuenta. Este enfoque ha marcado una diferencia real en lo que obtengo de las prácticas de Cuaresma porque Dios sabe mejor que yo lo que necesito. Está feliz de mostrarme todas las cosas que he permitido que ocupen su lugar. Y está más que dispuesto a revelar el panteón de ídolos que hay en mi corazón,

especialmente cuando estoy convencida de que no tengo ninguno.

La verdad es que las cruces que solía elegir, incluso las más difíciles, todavía estaban bajo mi control, simplemente porque era yo quien las elegía. A veces requirieron una disciplina significativa de mi parte, pero también alimentaron mi orgullo. Por el contrario, mudarme al otro lado del país, enfrentar un problema de salud, o perder la seguridad financiera me debilita. Y esa es la única manera en que puedo saber realmente en qué he estado parada todo el tiempo.

Dios entiende precisamente lo que será necesario para que cada uno de nosotros confíe en él, acepte su gracia, y confiemos más plenamente en él.

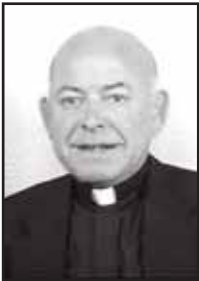
Como escribió San Francisco de Sales: "El Dios eterno ha previsto en su sabiduría desde la eternidad la cruz que ahora nos presenta como regalo de lo más íntimo de su corazón. Esta cruz que te envía ahora, la ha considerado con sus ojos omniscientes, comprendido con su mente divina, probado con su sabia justicia, calentado con brazos amorosos, y pesado con sus propias manos para ver que no sea ni un centímetro demasiado grande ni un gramo demasiado pesado para ti. La ha bendecido con su santo nombre, la ungió con su gracia, la perfumó con su consuelo, y, mirándote por última vez a ti y a tu coraje, te la envió desde el cielo, un saludo especial de Dios para ti, una limosna del amor misericordioso de Dios".

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Water for peace

The annual World Water Day is celebrated on March 22, 2024. This day focuses on the gratitude we owe our great God for the life-giving gift of water, which is necessary for all life as we know it on planet Earth. This is a day of thanksgiving, and for each and all on planet Earth to examine how we are using, or perhaps, sadly abusing and wasting, this wonderful gift, individually, in our families, in each and every community, and at a local, state, and national level. World Water Day is a United Nations (UN) observance coordinated by UN Water. Every year, it raises awareness of a major water-related issue and inspires action to tackle the water and sanitation crisis. World Water Day is one of two special ecology days, the other being Earth Day, which is celebrated in April. While each is celebrated separately, there is a natural and essential connection between the two as water is a main component of planet Earth.



**Bishop Emeritus
Michael D.
Pfeifer, OMI**

Diocese of
San Angelo

Two special ecology days

Pope Francis, in two major statements on the environment, brings out how these two ecology days focus on our common home, planet Earth, and reminds us that the web of life is one. These two special creation days celebrate the beauty and wonder of God’s creation which has its origin in a plan of love and truth. This love in nature surrounds us and is nothing more and nothing less than God’s work of art, the divine gallery.

Water for peace

The theme for this year’s World Water Day, as given to us by UN Water, is “Leveraging water for peace and prosperity.” Put simply, World Water Day is called “Water for Peace.” As we review history, we readily see that water can create peace or spark conflict. When water is scarce or polluted, or when people have unequal or no access, tensions can rise between communities and countries. The UN reminds us that more than 3 billion people worldwide depend on water that crosses national borders. Yet, out of 153 countries that share rivers, lakes, and aquifers with their neighbors, only 24 countries report having cooperation agreements for all their shared water.

Without water we die

Various other studies point out the sad and thirsty fact that tens of millions of our fellow human beings on planet Earth lack clean drinking water every day. Without water, we die. No one can know the infinite importance of a tiny drop of water better than a man in the desert! This number will continue to increase because, as populations grow, water will become increasingly important in the fight against poverty and the deterioration of the environment. Water scarcity is an increasing problem on every continent, with the poor countries most badly affected. Where there is peaceful cooperation around water then it can flow into peaceful cooperation in all sectors. By working together to balance everyone’s human rights and needs, water can be a stabilizing force and a catalyst for sustainable development.

The spiritual significance of water

Safe drinking water and sanitation are fundamental to the good nutrition, health, and dignity of all. Water is also crucial for food production and food preparation by people at home as well as by formal and informal food vendors. Water is also essential for industries and economic growth. Clean water is a foundational element that enables all of our work. Water also holds great spiritual significance in many cultures and religions around the world. It is often seen as a symbol of purity, cleansing, and rebirth. In various spiritual practices, water is used in rituals such as baptism, purification ceremonies, and as a representation of the divine. As we reflect on our creation story given to us in Genesis, we readily see that water was an essential part of the whole creative process.

We all have a part to play

World Water Day is a United Nations observance which calls us every year to raise awareness of major water-related issues and inspires action to tackle the water and sanitation crisis. We all have a part to play. UN Water encourages us as individuals, as families, and as communities to use water more carefully and to reduce stress on the environment and water’s infrastructure. We can also hold elected officials, companies, organizations, and others to account for their obligations and promises on water. In our working lives, we can also ensure that all our activities are done responsibly and protect water resources and ecosystems, according to the law. We begin by showing our concern for the cleanliness and sanitation of the bodies of water nearest to us — our homes, ponds, streams, rivers, lakes, and aquifers.

How to use water for peace

We all need to unite around water and use water for peace, laying the foundations of a more stable and prosperous tomorrow. UN Water gives us three guiding principles of how to use water for peace.

- Water Cooperation should be inclusive. Water resources serve and are affected by multiple stakeholders, including civil society, government (national and local), indigenous people, the media, the private sector, and the scientific community at multiple levels.

Catholic Voices

How to find our true identity

By Sister Alicia Torres
OSV News

Who am I?
This question lurks at the core of every human heart. So often the real answer is blurred by responses we so readily grasp after, and yet time and again fail to satisfy. One response in particular, I think, gnaws at so many of us today: "I am important."
Of course human beings have inherent value. Created in God's image and likeness, our value is inestimable. Yet, when we focus too much on that value, we miss the big picture that our heart longs to see.

Consider the typical "getting to know you" questions.
"What do you do?"
"Where did you go to school?"
"Where do you live now?"
"What do you do for fun?"

Such questions can fill an awkward silence and help us learn about a person, but they can also help evaluate that person's place in the social hierarchy.
Last year, I was invited to a networking event. As I waited to check in, the man standing behind me began to make conversation with me. He was kind and eager to meet people and make connections. But once I revealed by my answers to his questions that I wasn't in the "in crowd," he politely stepped away from the conversation.

It was a fascinating experience for me. I wasn't offended and understood how eager the people at the event were to make the most of their experience and make as many connections as possible.
But it raised the question for me: "With whom are we ultimately trying to connect?"
A dear friend of mine was recently describing a piece of art that had really moved him. It was an image of Jesus, sitting in the midst of a schoolroom surrounded by children. Some were close to Jesus, affectionate and intimate, while others were gathered round that inner circle, gazing with desire. Still others were far off, yet not outside the room. What he loved about the artwork was that he could identify

with one little boy in particular, and how that child so evidently longed to be near Jesus.
I am important, but that means nothing unless I know I am loved.
The only way to confirm we are loved is if we know we are children of God. Because of this relationship, everything else in our world becomes true, good and beautiful. Our identity in Christ makes our accomplishments meaningful, our relationships enjoyable, and our wildest dreams at least fun to think about, if not completely possible!
Our identity as children of God is confirmed and nourished above all in our celebration of the Eucharist. At the moment we make the sign of the cross, not only does the Mass begin, but as I sign myself, I am reminded of my identity — that I am made in the image of God, a trinity of persons bound in a relationship of self-giving love. As the Mass continues, I am drawn into deeper communion with the God who loves me, hearing his word, spoken for me, witnessing his offering, prepared for me at the hands of the priest, and gazing upon his hidden presence in a tiny white host, given, completely, for me.
He gives himself to me, and I, in turn, can give myself to him. In the end, I don't really want to know if I am important, and neither does anyone else. What I want to know is if I am loved. And if it is true — that love is at the core of my identity — then all truly shall be well.

And what about that big picture? The image that I see in my mind's eye, and that my heart is drawn to contemplate, is of a little girl smiling, cheerful, with rosy cheeks and a tiny brown teddy bear being held tenderly in the arms of Jesus, her head resting upon his heart. And that little girl is me. And when I can truly see that little girl, I know the answer to the question, "Who am I?" The answer is, "I am loved."

Sister Alicia Torres is an executive team member for the National Eucharistic Revival, editor of the Heart of the Revival e-newsletter and a member of the Franciscans of the Eucharist of Chicago, a religious community that carries out the mission of the church through service to the poor, evangelization, and teaching.

A Eucharistic Word: Viaticum, food for the journey

The days of the Covid-19 lockdown were a great opportunity to show love for those around us. And that was particularly true in the face of so much suffering and so many difficulties we encountered.
Like so many others, my family had its share of crosses to bear at that time. My grandpa faced death with bladder cancer, spending almost a year at home in hospice care. My grandma began her own Calvary of sorts as she carried the cross of rapid cognitive and physical deterioration from Alzheimer's disease. The circumstances of her situation made taking up residence at a care home necessary, made worse by the lockdowns and the distance we had to keep from her and those with whom she lived. My grandparents certainly carried great crosses from 2020-2022, as did so many in the world. And for those of us around them, it was a gift to help carry those crosses.

For me, it was a special privilege and joy to help them carry their crosses by bringing them the Eucharist in their infirmity. Given the inability for clergy to enter homes and institutions for regular distribution of the sacrament, I made provisions with proper authorities to ensure my grandparents would not entirely do without holy Communion as they journeyed to death. Those occasions were certainly an opportunity for them to be strengthened and nourished by the sacrament's graces. They were a gift for me too, as those surrounding the sick and dying are recipients of the church's care and ministry too.
"Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him on the last day," Christ said (Jn 6:54). Given the centrality of that reality for the sick and dying, the church has long prioritized the distribution of holy Communion for them. Family and friends should take special care to ensure the local parish or institution's pastoral care staff is alerted to this purpose. If nothing else, one's pastor can be asked to permit the family to bring holy Communion to their loved one.
Each of us will receive holy Communion one last time. In the course of sickness and death, the final reception of holy Communion before death is called viaticum, which means food for the



Michael R. Heinlein
OSV News

journey. Viaticum unites the dying person intimately with Christ in his passover from death to life. In ordinary circumstances, this should be arranged with attentiveness to the person's condition when there is at least a little time to spare. When it can be difficult for the dying person to receive holy Communion, it is a consolation to remember that the fruits of the last Communion we've received do not have an expiration date and remain living, effective, and fruitful still. A spiritual communion could be recited with or for the dying person. Given its importance, greatest care should be taken that family and friends don't wait too long to request viaticum.
Even amid my grandma's own cognitive decline, it always amazed me to see how hardwired the faith remained internally. Even as receiving holy Communion became difficult for her at the end, there were glimmers of her awareness that shone through the darkness of her illness, such as when she instinctively made the sign of the cross before receiving the sacrament or would respond "Amen" unprompted. As I had the gift of witnessing that, it was hard not to grow in awe of our faith and the deep-rooted reality for believers that we cherish and desire the life Christ offers us in his Body and Blood. And he brings his grace to those who cling to that hope as they make their final push carrying his cross. And I found that grace came to those of us, who, like Mary, Simon, or Veronica, were privileged to help them along the way.

Michael R. Heinlein is author of Glorifying Christ: The Life of Cardinal Francis E. George, O.M.I. and a promised member of the Association of Pauline Cooperators.

Catholic Voices

A Rosary Garden, Part II:
The Luminous Mysteries

This is the second of a five-part series on creating a rosary garden for your home or parish; each month I present a group of Mysteries and list a companion plant for each meditation, concluding in May. In this way you can plan or build your rosary garden, one step at a time.

This month we will consider the Luminous Mysteries — also known as the mysteries of light — meditations that were instituted in 2002 by Pope St. John Paul II in his apostolic letter *Rosarium Virginis Mariae*. These are mysteries that open us up to ponder how the light of God is manifested through Jesus, the Light of the World.

The rosary is a greatly favored prayer that evokes a sense of time, place, and peace as we meditate through the pater and mater beads. The word rosary comes from the Latin word "*rosarium*", meaning rose garden, then came to mean "a garden of prayers" leading to the printing of a prayer book, "*hortulus animae*", that literally meant "little garden of the soul." It was during the fifteenth century that the rosary evolved into its present form.

You may decide that rather than create a large four-part rosary garden, a plant or two from each mystery is sufficient for a smaller "Marian garden."

There are dozens of plants familiar to us in their Christian symbolisms, but how they may be used often depends on region and culture. I've tried to narrow things down to only one plant per meditation, useful in many regions. You may know of other plants that will fit just as well within the theme and are more suitable for your USDA Hardiness Zone.

The Luminous Mysteries:

The Baptism in the Jordan — Gratitude for Faith: The columbine is one of the more familiar plants in Christian symbolism. Its common name indicates a bird, from the Greek "*kolymbos*" for "small bird," It is symbolic of the Holy Spirit. All four gospel writers, when describing the baptism of Jesus, speak of the Holy Spirit descending "like a dove."

The botanical name "*Aquilegia*" touches on how water beads up on the leaves, reminding us of the waters of baptism. The plant develops solid roots, as the rosary helps us be more rooted in our faith.

The Wedding Feast at Cana — Fidelity: This first miracle through Jesus is closely associated with grapes as he changed water into wine. This miracle also centers on fidelity, not only the promise of fidelity in marriage but also to God's plan, to his mother and her request, who intercedes for us as she did for the couple, and of those whose hearts were opened by this miracle. "*Myrtus communis*" is symbolic of fidelity.

The myrtle In Christianity is an emblem of the marriage bonds — the vows of love, chastity, and fidelity. In ancient times it was common to weave crowns of myrtle for brides and grooms, and for branches to be carried or placed in the sanctuary during re-



Margaret Rose Realy
OSV News

ligious vows. Legend has it that when Mary and Joseph were married, she wore a wreath of the sacred myrtle braided with roses on her head.

The Proclamation of the Kingdom of God — Desire for Holiness: this is the time that the Gospel is being preached — the Sermon on the Mount, when Jesus encourages repentance and offers forgiveness of sins. The crocus represents forgiveness.

For Christians, the spring-flowering crocus, "*Crocus vernus*" is symbolic with making amends and forgiveness following a wrongdoing, and is also known — as are a few other plants — as the "Penitent's Rose." The crocus represents the eternal soul which blooms when we, through love, are forgiven.

The Transfiguration — Spiritual Courage: Here we learn of Jesus being supported and changed in preparation to his surrender of his earthly life. In the modern language of flowers, the butterfly weed, "*Asclepias tuberosa*," is indicative of letting go.

Butterflies live only a few weeks to a few months, reminding us that life is short. When we think of death we are reminded of our own metamorphosis, letting go of a previous life on earth for the freedom of a life in eternity with God. It takes great spiritual courage to trust in a conversion from a physical life to a spiritual one.

Institution of the Eucharist — Love of Eucharistic Christ: Basil, "*Ocimum basilicum*", is known as the holy Communion plant. Its name comes from the Greek word for royal, or kingly, "*basileios*."

On holy days, basil, with its deep purple flowers symbolic of suffering, was often strewn at the foot of a cross as well as strung on Communion rails. This plant has been a sign of love for centuries; God's love for us and our love of him.

Rosary garden colors for the Luminous Mysteries are traditionally purples or deep burgundies, but yellow and white are also used as representations of the colors of light.

Next month, we'll cover the Sorrowful Mysteries.

Margaret Rose Realy is a Benedictine Oblate and the author of A Garden Catechism: 100 Plants in Christian Tradition and How to Grow Them (OSV, 2022).

Don't wait too long to baptize your baby

By Cardinal Timothy Dolan
OSV News

I just celebrated my birthday. Twenty days after I entered the world, I was carried by my godparents to Immaculate Conception Parish in Maplewood, Missouri, to be baptized by the pastor, Father John Ryan.

Mom told me she and dad were nervous because they had waited almost three weeks instead of the expected two, and feared they would be scolded!

How things have changed! Now, we priests are christening "babies" sometimes a year old. While I hardly propose returning to the two-to-three-week expectation — as laudable as I consider that — I do wonder if we are now waiting way too long to baptize our babies.

We're beyond, happily, the fear that came from worrying the baby might die before the sacrament and thus be denied heaven. That's not the healthiest reason to expedite baptism. But, considering the infinite value of this powerful sacrament, shouldn't we make the baptism of a baby a high priority, at least within the first two to three months after birth?

Parents certainly don't postpone visits to the pediatrician and proper vaccinations for the bodily health of our treasured new life. That's good. Shouldn't we be eager to have our babies receive the immense spiritual gifts of the treasured little baby, as soon as possible?

What are these benefits? Yes, the cleansing from original sin, but also the recognition of divine adoption, the welcome of the baby into the supernatural family of the church and the graces of protection and interior strength of the tiny infant. The little one is fragile, helpless, unaware of the mystery and majesty of the

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Elmo and the challenge of Lent

For two or three days in January, a furry red muppet's concern for the well-being of his followers became news, dominating Twitter, now "X," and sparking discussions from National Public Radio to cable news.

When the commotion died down, I was left thinking about how Ash Wednesday was very near and maybe this strange little episode had something to say about Lent.

On Jan. 29, Elmo from Sesame Street posted a simple tweet: "Elmo is just checking in. How is everybody doing?"

What followed was a deluge of replies, a lot of jokes, but such a large volume of cries of despair and angst that the official Sesame Street account felt compelled to tweet out mental health resources.

A lot of people made it plain they were doing very badly.

Elmo has been a staple of Sesame Street since the 1980s. My children grew up with Elmo as a backdrop to childhood. Elmo is — perpetually — three-and-a-half years old, and apparently the "and a half" is important because toddlers like to use that half to make them feel older, sort of the reverse of their grandparents being "sixtyish" for years.

Elmo is kind and curious, a bit naïve, and, if I had to guess, a favorite in the stuffed toy menagerie. I mean, who wants to cuddle with Oscar the Grouch at bedtime?



Effie Caldarola
OSV News

It would never occur to me to follow Elmo on Twitter, but it didn't take long for the responses to Elmo to explode in my feed. My kids sent me funny replies, but then I started to notice the sad and troubled ones. Even the White House weighed in, with President Biden's post reading, "We have to be there for each other, offer our help to a neighbor in need, and above all else, ask for help when we need it."

As the uproar subsided, I continued my annual quest for what to "do" for Lent. We all know the trilogy: fasting, almsgiving, prayer. But those expressions of anguish kept calling me.

"Fasting" may mean, for some, giving up a food item. For me, I like the idea of "attachments" of which St. Ignatius of Loyola spoke. What am I attached to which prevents me from giving myself wholeheartedly to God? Money? Security? My appearance? Selfishness with my time? Gossip? Obsessive scrolling on my phone? There are endless attachments from which we could fast during Lent.

Almsgiving is a little more clearcut. Give more to the poor, sacrificially. If you combine this giving with fasting, all the better. Love those fancy coffee drinks? Love to buy clothes? Give them up and give every dime saved to Catholic Relief Services or Catholic Charities.

Prayer? Make it a priority, not something you do when you "find" time. Dietrich Bonhoeffer said, "Be silent at the beginning of the day, because God should have the first word."

So where does Elmo fit in? As I studied my Lenten "to dos," I realized that much of them were inward-looking. Maybe I should also look outward, to the way Jesus led his life amid the crowds, being aware of the needs of others, the need for healing, right up until he gave his very life for me.


Maybe it's my turn to think of someone each day to turn to and say, "Just checking in. How are you doing?" And then, most importantly, listen to the response. People are anxious about war, climate change, ruptures within our political life and within our own families. People have lost faith and lost heart.

There's a broken world out there this Lent. Just ask Elmo.

Effie Caldarola is a wife, mom and grandmother who received her master's degree in pastoral ministry from Seattle University.

Cartoon Corner






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PFEIFER

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• Water cooperation should be cross-sectoral. Bringing together water, energy, agriculture, environment, and others helps to better manage trade-offs and can amplify the benefits that accrue from collective action while also safeguarding ecosystems. Multilevel government systems are the key ways to deliver legitimate, equitable, and sustainable outcomes.

• Water cooperation should also be action-oriented. The benefits that cooperative processes can offer communities, sectors, ecosystems, and countries across the sustainable development goals. They can only be realized if concrete steps are taken to address funding and financing gaps, insufficient and inaccessible data that result in poorly coordinated and uneven power relationships among stakeholders, and slow the use of innovative practices and technologies. Early and efficient cooperation over water resources can also prevent water from being a trigger, a weapon in times of conflict. Working toward the establishment of formal arrangements is key for long term, successful cooperation.

World Water Day reminds us that water is the basic essential for all life. The water management and resource distribution ethic of this gift must be guided by consideration for the common good for the people of the world and the natural systems, for the planet itself. Pope Francis reminds us that the Earth, with the beautiful gift of water, is the common home of humanity, the one we will pass on to the next generation.

Texas executes death-row inmate despite allegations of false testimony at trial

HUNTSVILLE, Texas (OSV News) — Ivan Cantu, a Texas man, was executed Feb. 28 despite claims that his 2001 conviction for killing James Mosqueda and Amy Kitchen, his cousin and his cousin's fiancée, was based on false testimony. In a statement issued through the group MoveOn, Sister Helen Prejean, who became an advocate for and spiritual advisor to Cantu during his incarceration, said, "We took up the cause of this man because mistakes were made at his trial." Collin County Prosecutor Greg Willis said in a statement, "After over two decades of multiple state and federal courts comprehensively reviewing his conviction, Ivan Cantu has finally met with justice tonight." But multiple jurors from Cantu's original trial have said they don't support execution, the *Texas Tribune* reported. Cantu's case garnered national attention after allegations that false testimony contributed to his conviction. More than 145,000 people signed an online petition calling for a stay of his execution. One such advocate was reality television star Kim Kardashian, who has previously expressed interest in overturning cases with allegations of wrongful convictions. Kardashian circulated the petition prior to Cantu's execution, and afterwards wrote on X that Cantu was "Someone I believe is an innocent man." The Catholic Church teaches that the death penalty is incompatible with the sanctity of human life.

SULLIMAN

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easy ways”:

“When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit upon his glorious throne, and all the nations will be assembled before him. And he will separate them one from another, as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will place the sheep on his right and the goats on his left. Then the king will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father. Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me, naked and you clothed me, ill and you cared for me, in prison and you visited me.’ Then the righteous will answer him and say, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? When did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? When did we see you ill or in prison, and visit you?’ And the king will say to them in

reply, ‘Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me’” (Mt 25:31–40). The “good thief” who himself was in great agony, thought first of someone else who was “ill and he cared for them,” but this time it was Jesus himself! In saying, “This day you will be with me in Paradise,” Jesus teaches one last time how important it is to love, serve, and sacrifice for others in this life, regardless of the suffering we ourselves might be experiencing. Jesus exemplifies this when, while experiencing the excruciating pain of the cross, he says “Father, forgive them, they know not what they do” (Lk 23:34). And again, “When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple there whom he loved, he said to his mother, ‘Woman, behold, your son.’ Then he said to the disciple, ‘Behold, your mother.’ And from that hour the disciple took her into his home” (Jn 19:26–27).

And while we are used to hearing that Jesus was crucified between two thieves, there were actually three thieves crucified on Calvary. The greatest thief was the one in the middle who robbed death from the stranglehold of fear and preoccupation with this world that it had held over mankind ever since the disobedience of Eve and

Adam brought death into the world. Confirming what the empty tomb of Jesus had “stolen,” Paul (1 Cor 15:50–55) would later write, “This I declare, brothers: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I tell you a mystery. We shall not all fall asleep, but we will all be changed, in an instant, in the blink of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For that which is corruptible must clothe itself with incorruptibility, and that which is mortal must clothe itself with immortality. And when this which is corruptible clothes itself with incorruptibility and this which is mortal clothes itself with immortality, then the word that is written shall come about:

‘Death is swallowed up in victory.
Where, O death, is your victory?
Where, O death, is your sting?’”

Dr. James Sulliman has 50 years’ experience in individual, marriage, and family therapy. He is also the Abilene-area pro-life coordinator for the Diocese of San Angelo.

IVF

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"The various techniques of artificial reproduction, which would seem to be at the service of life and which are frequently used with this intention, actually open the door to new threats against life. Apart from the fact that they are morally unacceptable, since they separate procreation from the fully human context of the conjugal act, these techniques have a high rate of failure: not just failure in relation to fertilization but with regard to the subsequent development of the embryo, which is exposed to the risk of death, generally within a very short space of time. Furthermore, the number of embryos produced is often greater than that needed for implantation in the woman's womb, and these so-called spare embryos are then destroyed or used for research which, under the pretext of scientific or medical progress, in fact reduces human life to the level of simple 'biological material' to be

freely disposed of."

There seem to be four ways to treat the embryos, but not all of them are ethical:

- 1) Use them for research. This is clearly wrong because it constitutes the direct killing of human life. No matter how good the intention of the research, this would always be wrong.
- 2) Do nothing and eventually they will die. (They deteriorate even while frozen.) This seems unsatisfactory.
- 3) Thaw them, let them die and bury them. This also seems unsatisfactory, for all human life deserves to be cared for. How could it be moral or ethical to bury alive a living human being?
- 4) Implant them in the mother or in another woman willing to adopt the child and bring them to term. Implanting them in the mother is the best course of action at this point, but unlikely in many cases. As for adoption and implantation, reputable, trustworthy, and orthodox moral theologians have different opinions about adoption of the embryos. But there seems to be a growing consensus that

it could be ethical and even "heroic" to adopt a frozen embryo, although that action would not be morally obligatory for anyone.

However, implantation (adopted or not) is not free of ethical concerns: It constitutes a material cooperation in the business of IVF, which is intrinsically evil in the first place, although the implantation could be allowed under the principle of double effect.

The only answer to this dilemma is to prohibit IVF. In the words of Bishop Elio Sgreccia, a former president of the Pontifical Academy of Life who died in 2019: "The practice of *in vitro* fertilization must be stopped. It only encourages the production of frozen embryos, and freezing embryos is utilitarianism without mercy. When you start a wrong procedure like this, any solution is wrong and sad."

Father Francis J. Hoffman, aka "Father Rocky," is the executive director and CEO of Relevant Radio and a priest of Opus Dei.

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EUCARISTÍA

Continúa de Página 15

Lutero no enseñaba el concepto católico de la transubstanciación, sí creía en la idea similar de la "consustanciación", en la que la "sustancia" del cuerpo y la sangre de Cristo coexiste con la "sustancia" del simple pan y el vino después de la consagración.

Hoy en día, la Iglesia Católica no reconoce la Presencia Real en la Eucaristía dentro de ninguna denominación protestante. Esto se debe a que, incluso en aquellas que llaman a su clero "sacerdotes", no creemos que estos líderes hayan sido ordenados a través de la sucesión apostólica. En otras palabras, como católicos, sostenemos que todos nuestros obispos, así como los sacerdotes que ellos ordenan como ministros, fueron a su vez ordenados por otros obispos formando así una cadena ininterrumpida que se remonta a los primeros obispos: los apóstoles. Estos últimos recibieron su vocación y autoridad directamente de Jesús, quien les otorgó el poder de consagrar la Eucaristía. Dicha autoridad fue transmitida a sus sucesores de manera exclusiva, y no puede ser adquirida de ninguna otra forma.

Sin embargo, nosotros como católicos creemos que, a pesar de que las Iglesias Ortodoxas Orientales no están en comunión con el Papa en Roma, tienen una comprensión casi idéntica de los sacramentos. Además, sus sacerdotes y obispos reciben la ordenación a través de la sucesión apostólica. Por lo tanto, para los católicos, sus sacramentos son considerados válidos y, por lo tanto, también reconocemos la Presencia Real cuando celebran la Eucaristía.

Jenna Marie Cooper, licenciada en derecho canónico, es una virgen consagrada y canonista. Su columna se publica semanalmente en OSV News y está abierta a recibir sus preguntas en CatholicQA@osv.com.

DOLAN

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sacrament. That's fitting, since it's all pure, unmerited gift. We're all "little ones" in God's eyes.

I recognize that baptism is also, beautifully, a time of family celebration and gathering, and that, these days, since families are scattered, it can take a while to gather everybody. But we shouldn't wait too long!

During Lent, we recall our own baptism, and rejoice that tens of thousands of adults throughout the country, catechumens and candidates, are in the final preparation for their initiation into the life of Christ at the Easter Vigil, when we all renew our promises. But these are adults ... let's not wait so long for babies!

A pastor told me of a call from a parent wanting to register her 2-year-old in the parish's popular and crowded school. The pastor asked if the child were christened. "Not yet," replied the parent. "Well, first things first," the pastor replied. "Let's take care of the sacrament."

No, I'm not saying we should ever deny a child at any stage this epic sacrament. God forbid! But, it does rattle me when the "baby" can walk up to the baptismal font!

Cardinal Timothy M. Dolan is the archbishop of New York.

SYNOD

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asked the dicastery for religious to revise *Mutuae Relationes*, a set of directives issued jointly with the then-Congregation for Bishops in 1978 to provide guidance to bishops and religious in their relationship. Pope Francis has said the norms need revision to ensure religious are not treated simply as employees or human resources for a diocese and to ensure that the orders' autonomy does not lead them to activities in conflict with a local church.

The synod assembly also called for "a thorough review of formation for ordained ministry in view of the missionary and synodal dimensions of the church." Assembly members said that involves "reviewing the *Ratio Fundamentalis* that determines how formation is structured."

The *Ratio Fundamentalis* was last updated in late 2016 and provides guidelines for preparing men for the Latin-rite priesthood and ensuring their continuing education, training and support.

SÍNODO

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Iglesia', propuestas en el documento 'Mutuae Relationes' del 1978. Proponemos que tal revisión se haga con estilo sinodal, incluyendo a todos los que están implicados".

En varias ocasiones tras su elección en 2013, el Papa Francisco dijo que había pedido al dicasterio para los religiosos que revisara "Mutuae Relationes", un conjunto de directrices emitidas conjuntamente con la entonces Congregación para los Obispos en 1978 para orientar a los obispos y religiosos en su relación. El Papa Francisco ha dicho que las normas necesitan una revisión para garantizar que los religiosos y las religiosas no sean tratados simplemente como empleados o recursos humanos de una diócesis y para asegurar que la autonomía de las órdenes no les lleve a actividades en conflicto con una Iglesia local.

La asamblea sinodal también pidió "una revisión a fondo de la formación para el ministerio ordenado en vista de las dimensiones misionera y sinodal de la Iglesia". Los miembros de la asamblea dijeron que eso implica "la revisión de la 'Ratio Fundamentalis' en la que está determinado su perfil (de formación)".

La "Ratio Fundamentalis" se actualizó por última vez a finales de 2016 y proporciona directrices para preparar a los hombres para el sacerdocio de rito latino y garantizar su educación continua, capacitación y apoyo.

O'CONNOR

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he may well be forced to take ever more violent means to get this vision across to this hostile audience."

In 1960, the Dominican Servants of Relief for Incurable Cancer, a religious order founded by Nathaniel Hawthorne's daughter, Rose, that operated a cancer home in Atlanta, approached O'Connor with a request to write a book about a girl

with a disfiguring facial tumor whom the sisters had sheltered until her death at the age of 12. The sisters were deeply impressed by her courage and good spirits and wanted the world to know about her.

O'Connor told them they should write the book themselves, but she negotiated its publication and wrote the introduction.

The volume appeared in 1961 as *A Memoir of Mary Anne*. Reflecting its author's own experience, her introduction is an extraordinary testimony of faith.

"One of the tendencies of our age is to use the suffering of children to discredit the goodness of God," she wrote, "and once you have discredited his goodness, you are done with him." In earlier times, people viewed unmerited suffering with "the blind, prophetic, unsentimental eye of acceptance, which is to say, of faith." But now "we govern by tenderness" — tenderness divorced from its source in Christ — which "ends in forced labor camps and in the fumes of the gas chamber." Today, perhaps, she would add

abortion to that list.

O'Connor died of kidney failure brought on by lupus shortly after midnight Aug. 3, 1964. Her volume *The Complete Stories* received the National Book Award for Fiction in 1972.

Russell Shaw, a veteran journalist and writer, is the author of more than 20 books, including three novels. His latest book is Revitalizing Catholicism in America: Nine Tasks for Every Catholic (OSV).

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Bishops of border dioceses meet in San Angelo

Bishops and other representatives from the dioceses along the Texas-Mexico border met Feb. 28 to March 1 at Christ the King Retreat Center. Dubbed the “Tex-Mex Border Bishops,” the group meets regularly to discuss matters of common concern.

This year’s meeting included a presentation by Celina Marquez of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops Migration and Refugee Services (pictured at right).

The Texas dioceses along the border include the Archdiocese of San Antonio and the Dioceses of El Paso, San Angelo, Laredo, and Brownsville. The dioceses on the Mexican side of the border represented at the meeting were the Archdiocese of Monterrey and the Dioceses of Ciudad Juarez, Saltillo, Piedras Negras, and Matamoros.



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