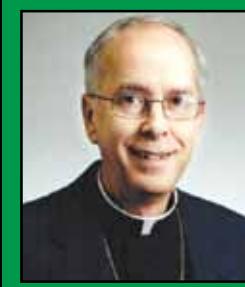


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InSeitz- Into The Faith
It's Not About Liberal or
Conservative,
It's About Discipleship
Pg. 3

VOL.26 NUMBER 4

SERVING 646,340 CATHOLICS IN THE DIOCESE OF EL PASO

AUGUST 2017 - 1

SPECIAL INSERT: *Bishop Seitz'* *Pastoral Letter* *on Migration*

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to the Journey of
Sisterhood**
pg. 9 & 16

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**Bishop Mark
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Mexico City**
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Bishop Seitz' Issues Pastoral Letter on Migration Sorrow and Mourning Flee Away

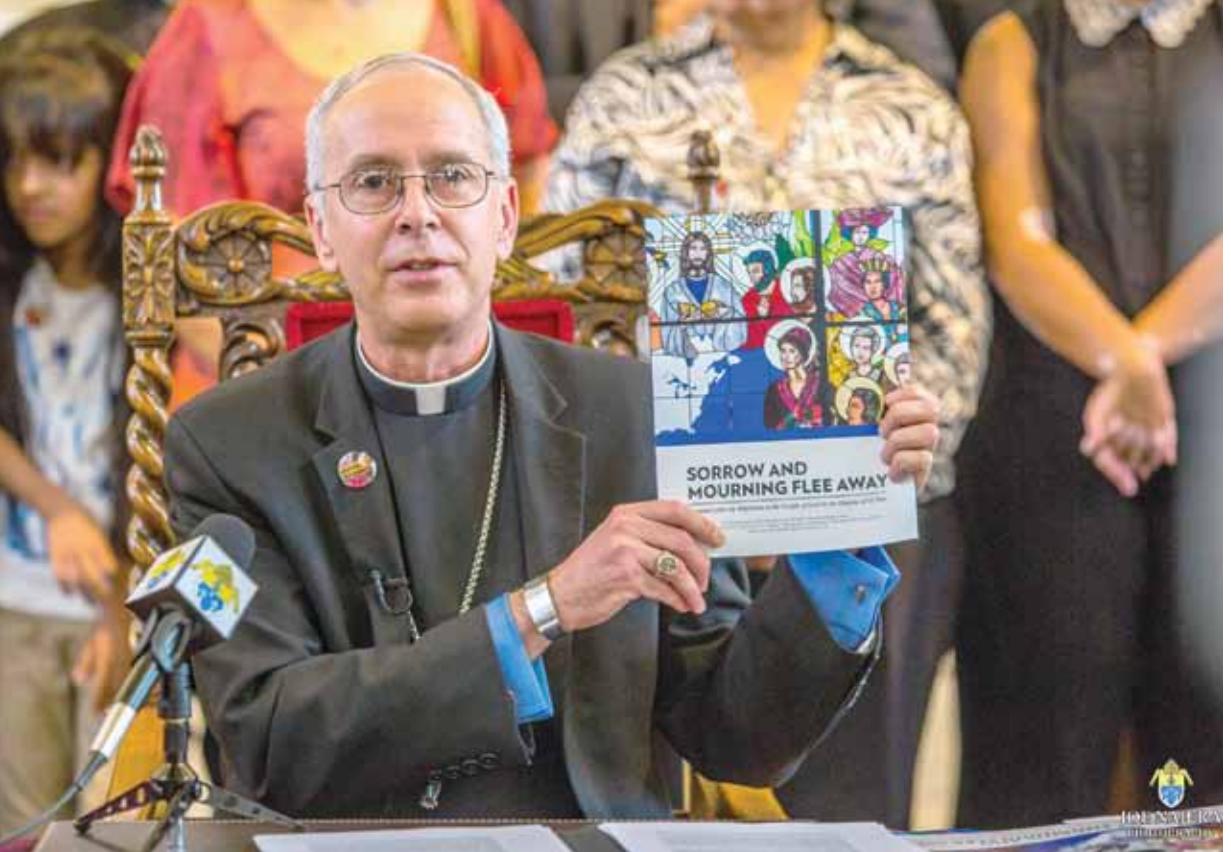
By: Dylan Corbett, Executive Director, Hope Brdr Institute

In a ceremony framed by dancing, celebration and prayer, Bishop Mark J. Seitz of the Diocese of El Paso released his first pastoral letter, *Sorrow and Mourning Flee Away*, a moving reflection on the contemporary challenges of migration. The promulgation took place at the Church of the Sacred Heart in El Paso's Segundo Barrio neighborhood on June 18.

Addressed to "the People of God in the Diocese of El Paso", the letter applies the teaching of the Bible and the insights of the Catholic social teaching tradition to the realities of border life and describes the unique strengths of El Paso's identity as a border community. The pastoral letter includes strong calls to action to El Paso's parishes and priests, laypersons, educators, lawmakers, law enforcement officers and others to build a community respectful of human dignity and to work for immigration reform.

Surrounded by migrant families and priests from parishes throughout the diocese, Bishop Seitz signed copies of the pastoral letter in English and Spanish and addressed local reporters before presenting copies to church and community representatives. In comments to the media and the many present for the promulgation ceremony, the bishop spoke about the inspiration and timeliness of Sorrow and Mourning Flee Away given the current polarized political climate. While noting that he "did not intend to write a political document", the bishop emphasized the need of the Church to speak out on behalf of and stand in solidarity with those on the margins of society, including "the unborn, those in poverty and migrants."

Summarizing the main points in his pastoral letter, Bishop Seitz stressed



Bishop Seitz Holds Up His Pastoral Letter, "Sorrow and Mourning Flee Away" at the Letter's Signing Ceremony at Sacred Heart Catholic Church on July 18, 2017.

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Continued on Page 5

ENCUENTRO WITH A DREAMER

By: Nancy Ramos, Rio Grande Catholic Editor

In Bishop's Pastoral Letter on Migration he encourages us all to reach out and experience an "encuentro" with one of our migrant brothers or sisters. An encuentro is a blessing, an experience, which allows for sharing and for getting to know first hand what our migrant brothers and sisters are living.

Roberto Valadez Peña is a Senior Sociology Major at UTEP destined for greatness and is graduating December of this year. He pays his college tuition out of his own pocket and does not rely on loans or any type of financial aid. He is a graduate of Hanks High School and R.E.L Washington Elementary. Roberto is one of two children born to his parents. Like 80% of El Paso he is Hispanic. He speaks both English and Spanish and he likes the Oakland Raiders. His favorite places in El Paso are historic downtown, the mountains of McKelligton Canyon and UTEP where he says he can feel his future. He has never been to Mexico. As a matter of fact because of his previous status, the first time Roberto left El Paso was when he was twenty two years old.

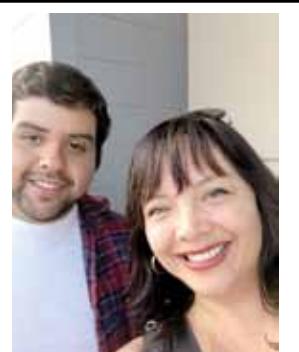
Roberto loves this

country with all his "Corazon" and plans to contribute to his community by becoming a Sociologist and an active agent of social change. He works to support himself and helps his family. He has lived in El Paso for the last twenty three years and he is only twenty four years old. He is a well rounded outspoken millennial with courage most people twice his age lack and I had the privilege of getting to know him.

You see Roberto is one of close to 800,000 DREAMers in the country that could soon face deportation if Texas Attorney General Paxton and nine other state Attorney Generals have their way. As per the reports, this group of states will sue the Trump administration if they do not rescind an existing Obama executive order regarding DACA by a September 5, 2017 deadline. The Deferred Action for Children Arrivals temporarily protects individuals like Roberto brought to this country illegally as children from being deported. Keep in mind though that not all childhood arrivals qualify as beneficiaries of the program, you have to apply and be designated as a beneficiary by the Department of Homeland Security. Roberto

applied, paid a fee and is now one of those beneficiaries.

Roberto came to the U.S. as an infant with his two parents and five-year-old sister. All of his family of four came to El Paso and stayed to make a life on this side of the border as undocumented residents in search of better economic opportunities.



Nancy Ramos-Director/Editor

Like many families in El Paso, migrant or not, the Valadez family struggled financially to make ends meet. Both of his parents worked outside the home, his mom at a restaurant and his dad as a tile setter. He and his sister could attend school despite being undocumented, as federal law requires school districts to

allow. He told me "There was always that uncertainty knowing my parents were out there working and something really could happen. Especially my dad, he worked construction and would meet downtown everyday by the border, there was always that thought of...hope everything is ok."

Roberto said he grew up like everyone else he knows, like a regular kid in El Paso with friends, video games, cartoons and school but he had a secret identity. About growing up undocumented Roberto says "We weren't vocal about it so there's always that being in the shadows, not telling anyone. Which in a way is hiding your real identity." In high school Roberto never told anyone he was undocumented and not until he was in college did he tell a professor. "I didn't actually come out until I was twenty one. It was actually to one of my Sociology professors. It was for a paper about your identity and connecting it to social inequality so I took that as a perfect opportunity to kind of come out and wrote it." Roberto said after that paper he started to share his secret status with other people. He said it made him feel better, somehow

liberated. "Now I'm fully open about it, I tell everyone", Roberto enthusiastically proclaims. Roberto says he didn't like feeling as if he had to hide who he really was just because he was not born here. Roberto reminds me "I am an El Pasoan, a Miner and a DREAMer. I pledged allegiance to the flag, I learned the history of this country and I learned how to be an American. School was my safe place."

Listening to Roberto made me realize just how common Roberto's story really is for all of us. Roberto is my classmate, my next-door neighbor, my teammate and he is the kid at the skate park down the street. His family reminded me of the typical El Paso working class family with kids we all probably grew up with and like the many students that are in today's El Paso schools.

Roberto works diligently for the cause of the DREAMers and towards justice for immigrants at UTEP. He helped launch the *Education Not Deportation* campaign at UTEP, which is a coalition of student groups and other community members actively organizing to make the university a sanctuary campus. This coalition is organizing to host Know Your Rights workshops and to educate staff and faculty about how to better protect students. This campaign is national and opposes deportation of community members. This campaign embraces for me as a Catholic, a very familiar message.

Roberto says the topic of immigration is at the forefront now more than ever and sometimes there are students at UTEP that do not agree with the E.N.D. campaign message. He says many tell him, "Get back in line like everyone else" or they say things like, "Well my parents came here legally." Roberto feels he belongs here at UTEP just as much as those that make the comments. Recently Roberto launched *Soñando Juntos* which is a local advocacy organization looking to empower and support DREAMers in El Paso and its surrounding areas.

His family currently is a mixed status family, which for many DREAMers is common. Being that his family has been here for so long their status has changed over the years. His sister has since become a citizen and his parents, sponsored by her, are now permanent residents. He is the first one in his family on track to get a college degree and he looks forward to getting his degree later this year if the U.S. government allows it. His sister can sponsor him but the sibling-sponsored process is taking between 18 and 20 years. His parents are working on getting their citizenship but according to Roberto they are still a few years away. When he thinks about the possibility of deportation he knows he would not stay in Mexico. He says he would move to Canada or Europe. If DACA were to be terminated today, he is the only one out of his immediate family that migrated illegally together twenty three years ago who could be deported.

For me I am saddened at the loss of opportunity for Roberto and for our community if this should come to fruition. I asked Roberto if he could speak to the Catholics of El Paso what would be his message? Roberto answers, "Jesus was an immigrant and as a child he too fled with his family for safety and a better life. Jesus was a person of love that wants us to treat each other fairly and with love. I would ask them to be compassionate and sympathize because that's what Jesus would do."

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It's Not About Liberal or Conservative: It's About Discipleship

Folks may wonder why I, a gringo who grew up in Wisconsin, would find myself as one of the more outspoken people in the Church in the United States on questions regarding the treatment of immigrants, particularly the undocumented. Perhaps they think I grew up a flaming liberal who happened to find his way into the Church.

I don't find the labels "conservative" and "liberal" very helpful. The truth is, the criterion for these categories changes regularly. Whatever these terms mean today is different from what they meant 20 years ago or will mean 20 years from now. They have varying meanings from country to country, too. That said, I don't think I would have fit any definition of a liberal at any point in my life.

To give an example, one of the social justice issues on which I have been most outspoken has been abortion. I have protested and prayed and marched, and I've worked with crisis pregnancy centers. I will always speak out in defense of the life of the innocent unborn child. I try to base my convictions not on any ideological divide but upon the Gospel and the principles that come to us through the 2,000 years of Spirit-guided teaching of the Church. I love the beauty and utter consistency of this teaching. Because of its source, I also find this teaching much more reliable than any conclusion I would come to on my own.

The Church professes the dignity of the

human person from womb to tomb and at every point in between. This dignity doesn't depend upon where a person may be, in the womb or out, within our country or not. It doesn't depend upon their status, whether they are rich or poor, male or female, with documents or without. These distinctions may have some usefulness, but they do not touch upon the fundamental worth of the person. The teachings of Jesus are far more than nice-sounding phrases or slogans.

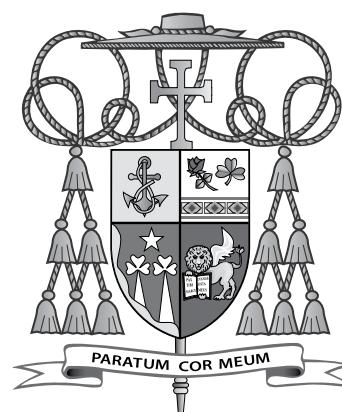
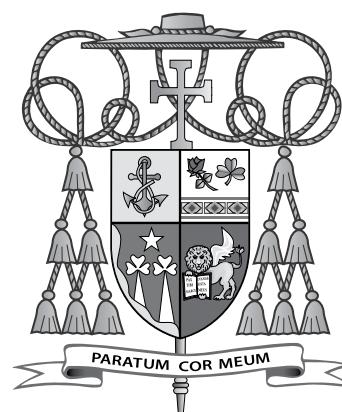
Jesus calls us to apply and live them. So when Jesus says that we're not simply to love those who love us, pointing out that the pagans do as much, it's clear that as his disciples we're to love even our enemies, to really love them! He is serious. And if we should love even our enemies, how much more so are we called to love the poor, vulnerable and unloved?

This brings me back to my involvement in the cause of those who have come to our country without documents. There is really nothing complicated about it. I have heard the Lord's call. I have also had the opportunity to know many of these immigrants personally and to hear their stories, to know their human dignity and their goodness...and to love them.

What more need be said?

Bp. Mark

By
Bishop
Mark J. Seitz



La gente puede preguntarse por qué yo, un gringo que creció en Wisconsin, es que se encuentra siendo una de las personas que habla más abiertamente y francamente en la Iglesia en los Estados Unidos, sobre las cuestiones relacionadas con el tratamiento de los inmigrantes, en particular los indocumentados. Quizás ellos piensan que yo crecí como un flameante liberal, que de pronto encontró su camino en la iglesia.

Yo no encuentro las etiquetas de "conservador" y de "liberal" muy útiles. La verdad es que el criterio para estas categorías cambia regularmente. Lo que estos términos significan hoy es diferente de lo que significaron hace 20 años o, de lo que significarán dentro de 20 años a partir de hoy. Existen diferentes significados de un país a otro. Dicho esto, yo no creo que encaje en ninguna de las diferentes definiciones como liberal en cualquier momento de mi vida.

Por ejemplo, uno de los temas de justicia social en los que he participado amplia y francamente ha sido el aborto. He protestado, rezado, marchado y he trabajado en centros de embarazos en crisis. Yo siempre hablaré en defensa de la vida del inocente niño por nacer. Trato de basar mis convicciones, no en una división ideológica, sino en el Evangelio y los principios que nos llegan a través de los 2,000 años de enseñanza, guiada por el Espíritu en la Iglesia. Amo la belleza y la consistencia absoluta de esta enseñanza. Debido a su fuente, también encuentro esta enseñanza mucho más confiable que cualquier conclusión que yo pueda encontrar por mi cuenta.

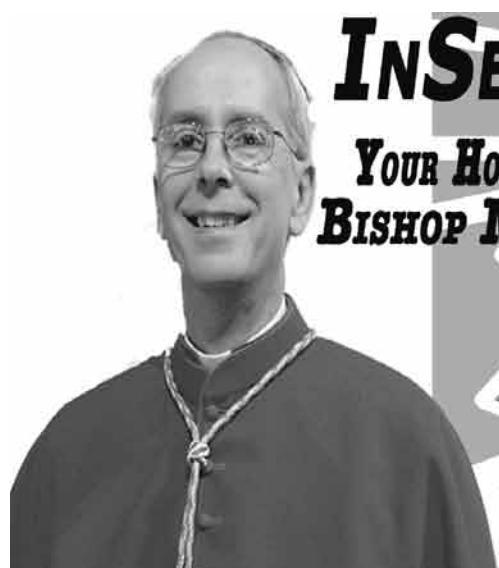
La Iglesia profesa la dignidad de la persona humana desde el vientre, hasta la tumba y en cualesquier punto intermedio. Esta dignidad no depende de donde la persona esté, ya sea en el vientre o fuera de él, ya sea dentro de nuestro país o fuera de él. No depende de su estatus; ricos o pobres, hombres o mujeres, con documentos o sin ellos. Estas distinciones pueden tener alguna utilidad, pero no tocan el valor fundamental de la persona. Las enseñanzas de Jesús son mucho más que bonitas frases o eslóganes.

Jesús nos llama a aplicarlos y a vivirlos. Así que cuando Jesús nos dice que no solo debemos simplemente de amar a los que nos aman, señalando a los paganos quienes hacen lo mismo, está claro que como sus discípulos, debemos de amar incluso a nuestros enemigos, ¡amarlos de verdad! El habla en serio. Y si debemos de amar a nuestros enemigos, ¿cuánto más nos llama El a amar a los pobres, vulnerables y no amados?

Esto me regresa hacia mi involucramiento en la causa de aquellos que han venido a nuestro país sin documentos. Realmente no hay nada complicado al respecto. Solo he escuchado el llamado del Señor. También he tenido la oportunidad de conocer a muchos de estos inmigrantes personalmente y escuchar sus historias, conocer su dignidad humana y su bondad... y amarlos.

¿Qué más necesita ser dicho?

Obispo Mark



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Diocesan Home Missions Collection Helps Our Neediest Parishes

This Diocesan Home Missions Special Collection will be held on the weekend of August 26 and 27, 2017.

The Diocesan Home Missions Appeal allows area Catholics to support their local community. The Diocesan Home Missions Appeal helps fund diocesan evangelization efforts, parish education programs, seminarian education, and lay ministry training. In

addition, a portion of the collection is returned to the Diocese of El Paso to be used for priest salary subsidies for needy parishes, especially those located in the rural areas of our diocese.

Thank you so much for your support and remember on the weekend of August 26 and 27, 2017, please contribute generously to this worthy cause which helps our churches in need.

Las Misiones Hogar Católico Ayudan Nuestras Parroquias Más Necesitadas

La Colecta Especial de las Misiones Domésticas Diocesanas se llevará a cabo el sábado, 26 de Agosto y el domingo, 27 de Agosto de 2017.

El llamado para las misiones Domésticas Diocesanas les permite a los católicos del área apoyar a su comunidad local. El llamado ayuda a proporcionar fondos para los esfuerzos diocesanos de evangelización, programas parroquiales de educación, educación para seminaristas, y el entrenamiento ministerial

para laicos. Además, una parte de la colección se regresa a la Diócesis de El Paso para ser usada para subsidios salariales de los sacerdotes en las parroquias más necesitadas, especialmente aquellas ubicadas en las áreas rurales de nuestra diócesis.

Gracias por su apoyo y recuerden que en el fin de semana del 26 y 27 de Agosto del 2017, por favor de contribuir a esta digna causa la cual ayuda a nuestras parroquias necesitadas.

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Continued from page 1

the need to "celebrate the strengths and unique identity" of El Paso as a border community shaped by the reality of migration, lifting up the region as "a living experiment in the welcoming and inculcation of peoples." He also spoke to the need to "reject narratives that paint our border as a place of chaos, violence and mayhem." Stating that border communities bear the brunt of a broken immigration system, the bishop noted that "no one can deny the moral consequences of a system that divides families, detains human beings for profit, compromises our country's commitment to asylum seekers, and forces people to their death in the desert."



**Men and Women Religious
Listened in Support**

Bishop Seitz described the importance of seeing past the abstractions of political debates and getting to know the names and faces of those affected by a broken immigration system, especially children and families. He spoke strongly against viewing wall building and mass deportation as solutions to a broken immigration system.

After saying that "law should ensure the sanctity of all life" and that "laws and policies that do not respect human dignity must be changed," the bishop made a strong case for the

need for lawmakers to enact comprehensive immigration reform. In the absence of such reform, Bishop Seitz called for a national moratorium on the detention and deportation of migrants who pose no danger to the community.

After signing his pastoral letter, Bishop Seitz presented ceremonial copies to Father Pablo Matta, representing the clergy of the Diocese of El Paso; Bishop Ricardo Ramirez, representing the Diocese of Las Cruces; and Father Javier Calvillo, representing the Diocese of Ciudad Juarez. The bishop also presented copies to members of the El Paso City Council and County Commissioners Court in attendance; Mr. Marcos Bucio, the Mexican Consul General; Dr. Diana Natalicio, president of the University of Texas at El Paso; Mr. Ruben Garcia of El Paso's Annunciation House; representatives of the media; and to leaders of local community organizations.

Earlier in the day, the bishop shared breakfast with a number of migrant families and priests, where he spoke to them about the inspiration for his pastoral letter as well as the Church's concern for migrants in the current political climate. During the breakfast, many migrant families shared their stories of coming to the United States in search of better lives.

One of the families present, parishioners at Sacred Heart Church, was mentioned by Bishop Seitz in his pastoral letter. Rosa Margarita, an El Paso schoolteacher brought to the United States as a child, and her mother, Rosa Maria, a parish leader and caretaker for those with disabilities, described the challenges of living as a family without legal status as well as the opportunities for work and to contribute to their faith



Bishop Seitz Signs Pastoral Letter



Diocesan Commission on Migration and Parish Families Stand in Support of Bishop Seitz

community which they have encountered in El Paso. A married couple described the fears of living with a new law in Texas, SB4, which will permit local police to check the immigration status of those they may detain or arrest.

Following the signing ceremony, Bishop Seitz spoke to national advocates for immigration reform, journalists and theologians during a video-

conference. The bishop addressed the need for immigration reform that respects border communities. He also sharply rebuked state lawmakers who have called for a rollback of protections from deportation for those who were brought to the United States as children, also known as Dreamers.

During the video-conference, Bishop Seitz described the actions that will be undertaken by the

Hope Border Institute. The bishop addressed the need for immigration reform that respects border communities. He also sharply rebuked state lawmakers who have called for a rollback of protections from deportation for those who were brought to the United States as children, also known as Dreamers.

In remarks during the signing ceremony, Bishop Seitz also emphasized that the promulgation of his pastoral letter was not the end, but "just the beginning of a long-term process to respond to the needs of migrants



Father Rafael Garcia, S.J. and Vicar General Father Ben Flores stand behind Bishop Seitz with Parish Families

conference organized by the

Diocese of El Paso to better respond to the needs of the migrant community. These include the establishment of a new Soñador Fund, which will provide tuition assistance to migrant families in order for them to send their children to Catholic schools; the establishment of a new Diocesan Commission on Migration; and the establishment of a new program of leadership development for parish leaders involved in migrant ministry, the result of a new partnership between the Tepeyac Institute and the Hope Border Institute.

Bishop Seitz also announced that in order to preserve a sense of reverence within Catholic churches and schools, agents of Border

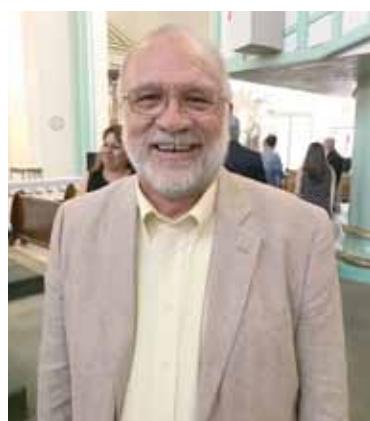
and migrant families in the Diocese of El Paso." He asked church and community representatives present to do their part to build a more humane border and thanked them for their efforts on behalf of migrants, noting that he "could never have imagined how generous El Paso would be in welcoming immigrants" when he arrived to El Paso as bishop four years ago.

Following the ceremony, the bishop, together with clergy and migrant families, joined community leaders and those involved in ministry to migrants in the diocese for a reception sponsored by the Hope Border Institute.

NEW LEADERS- EL PASO CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

El Paso Catholic Schools

Diocese of El Paso named Steve Sanchez as Interim Superintendent for the El Paso Catholic Schools. Mr. Sanchez comes to El Paso Catholic Schools with an extensive background and significant career in education. He served as Interim Director of Employee Benefits and Risk Management for the Ysleta Independent School District prior to his retirement in 2012. He also served for three years as Director of Curriculum and Instruction in the Office of Education for the Diocese of El Paso. Mr. Sanchez has taught on both the elementary and high school levels. He has also been a principal both in public schools and Catholic schools in the El Paso region.



El Paso Catholic Schools
Interim Principal
Steve Sanchez

Mr. Steve Sanchez currently sits on the Diocesan Blue Ribbon Committee for the El Paso Catholic Schools and serves on the Cathedral High School Board of Directors. He and his family are active in their home parish, St. Matthews Catholic Church.

Mr. Sanchez will help our El Paso Catholic Schools move forward into the future as we continue to provide unparalleled formation in the life of faith and virtue as well as a superior academic curriculum for our youth in the Diocese of El Paso. Congratulations Mr. Sanchez.

Cathedral High School

Cathedral High School announced Pamela Cook Howard to the position of Principal. As the twenty-fourth principal in CHS history, Ms. Howard brings many gifts and talents to the Cathedral Irish community. Her extensive background as an educator includes Horizon High School principal, Frank Macias Elementary School principal, Burleson Elementary School principal, Executive Director of Administration at Manor ISD in Manor, Texas and Assistant Superintendent at El Paso ISD. Ms. Howard is a native of El Paso. She holds a BA in Education from

UT Austin and a Masters in Educational Leadership from UT El Paso. She holds Texas Teaching Certificates in Education and Special Education as well as a Mid Management Administrative Certificate. Ms. Howard was previously at Manor ISD as the Executive Director of Special Programs. She began her career as a special education teacher at Rusk Elementary in El Paso, TX. She has traveled and taught all over the world and is happy to be home. Ms. Howard is also a proud alumna of Loretto Academy.

"Of all the positions I've had in my 37 years of experience I feel incredibly blessed to begin a new journey in a place that is filled with our Catholic traditions and excellence", said Ms. Howard.

Loretto Academy

Loretto Academy has named Mr. Homero Silva as new Principal. Mr. Silva has a long successful history as an



Cathedral Principal
Pamela Cook Howard

educator over the last twenty-eight years and comes to Loretto Academy with a strong track record of implementing processes to ensure success. He is a Cathedral High School Graduate, earned his Bachelor and Masters in Education from UTEP and Doctorate from NMSU. Mr. Silva's early career began as a teacher at Lydia Patterson and then eventually as a teacher in the Ysleta ISD. He was Principal at Anthony Elementary, Anthony Middle School, Ysleta Elementary Eastwood Knolls International School and most recently at Ysleta Middle School. Mr. Silva experienced consistent success with public school state assessments and TAKS testing and has been known for revitalizing schools to reach the highest levels of academic performance. "I have been closely connected to Catholic schools most of my life. I was a student in Catholic

elementary, middle, high school and university schools. I have also had the opportunity to work for public schools for 28 years as a teacher, professional development specialist, and as an administrator in elementary and secondary settings. I anticipate the opportunity to strengthen our community by finding a good balance from my experience as an educator", shared Mr. Silva.



Loretto Principal Mr. Homero Silva

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ST. RAPHAEL'S SCHOOL
INAUGURAL DINNER AND DANCE FUNDRAISER

A Night at the Sunset

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 29, 2017
7:00 P.M. TO 1:00 A.M.

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GAMES
8:30 P.M. | **SILENT**
AUCTION
9:30 P.M.

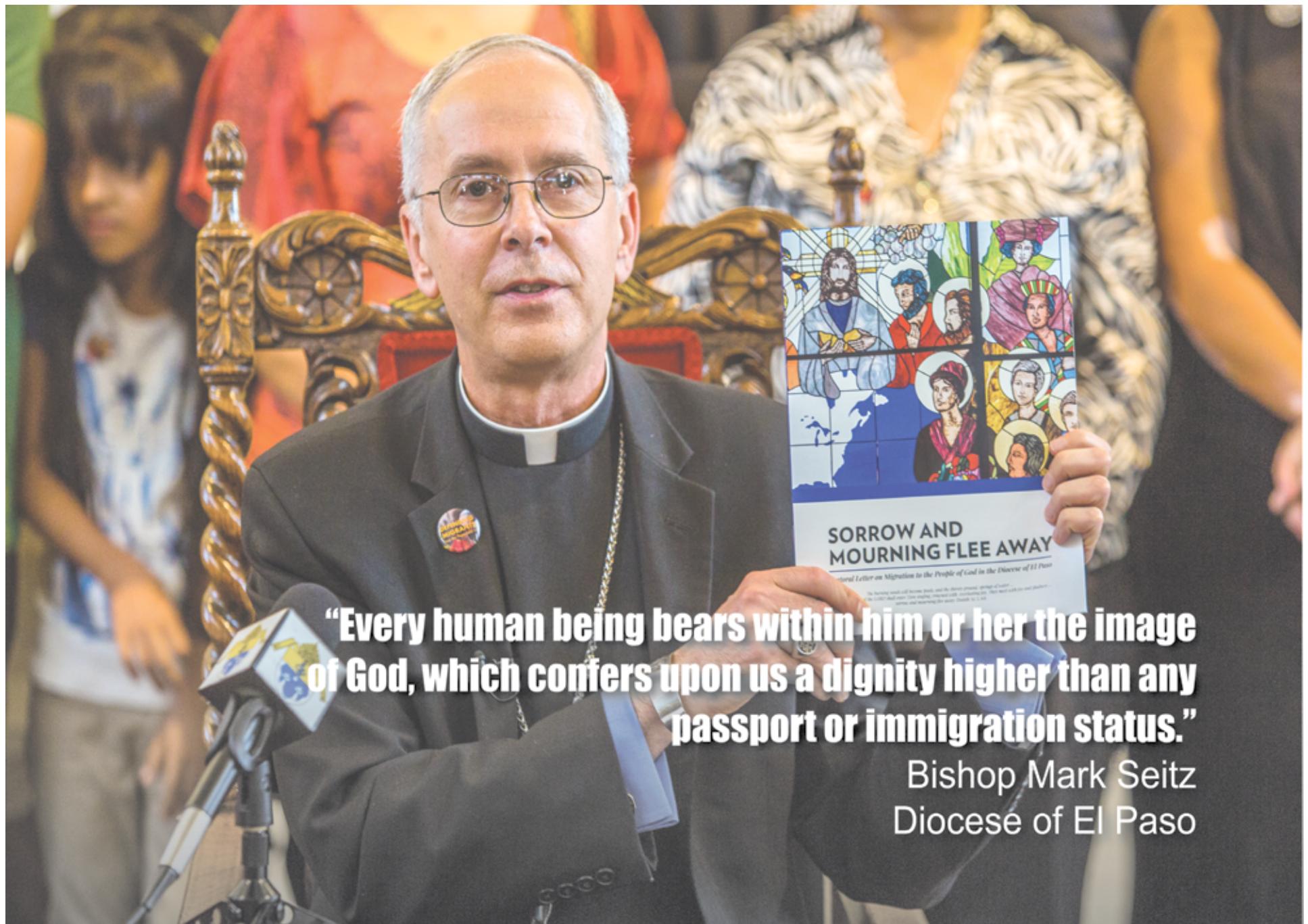
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NEWS AROUND THE CATHOLIC SCHOOLS



St. Raphael Catholic School

St. Raphael School is ready to start the 2017-2018 school year. We look forward to more extensive use of our technology in our classrooms. Students Pre-kinder to 4th grade will have access to one of our two COWs (Computers On Wheels cart). Students 5th - 8th grade will be making more use of their mobile device in the classrooms with our BYOD program. Students first day is Monday, August 7th, 2017. We will have Parent Information Night on Thursday, August 3rd in the church. It will start at 6:00 p.m.



This is for our new families and returning families.

Plan to join us for an exciting night at St. Raphael School's Inaugural Dinner & Dance Fundraiser "A Night at the Sunset". This will take place on Friday, September 29, 2017 from 7:00 p.m. to 1:00 a.m. at the 150 Sunset Event Center. The address is 150 Sunset Event Road. The fun night will include cocktails, dinner, casino games, silent auction and live music by The Tejas Band. Ticket cost are \$100 Single, \$175 per couple, \$1,500 for 10 guests. You may purchase tickets at the school front office (915) 598-2241 or by calling (915) 491-7952. All proceeds benefit St. Raphael School.

We have open house any time Monday - Friday. Summer hours are 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. You may call the front office to schedule a school tour at (915) 598-2241.



Our Lady of the Valley Catholic School

Our Lady of the Valley School continued making renovations to its library that were started during April's school break. In July, the second phase of the project began and was completed. This included outlining and painting trees leading into a



"Reading Forest" area, adding scenery from the "Jungle Book", and repainting the walls. School staff and students from Del Valle and Hanks High School assisted with the project including former OLV School alumni. The school had renovations done to some classrooms also. Kindergarten teacher, Samantha Gomez, fifth grade teacher, Mirta Anchondo, and eighth grade teacher, Myra Lujan, volunteered their time and talent to paint their classrooms and give them an updated look with vibrant colors. Ms. Gomez also reconfigured the kindergarten classroom, emptied and cleaned out the small play room and made it into a reading room.

OLV School will continue to provide guitar classes in partnership with Ysleta High School. Sixth through eighth grade students will be able to participate in guitar classes at the high school on a weekly basis. A "Makerspace" club will be introduced this 2017-2018 school year for all grades to participate in after school. A "makerspace" is a place where students get together to make things using various tools which may include crafting, woodworking, robotics, sewing, and more. Staff attended a summer conference and gained the knowledge to help start the "makerspace" which uses creative ways for students to design, experiment, and build while getting engaged in crafting, science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) concepts. Ultimately, the "Makerspace" club will provide a learning environment where students can come together in community, share materials, be creative, and learn new skills. Additionally, a robotics club will be introduced for

students from sixth through eighth grade to participate in afterschool.

The OLV School cafeteria completed their participation in the Summer Free Lunch program. Free lunch was offered to students in any of the school's camps or enrichment program and any other children 18 years of age or younger in the surrounding area as well as to surrounding day cares. Additionally, lunch was transported to several city recreation centers that provided camps and or child care. These included Armijo, Pavo Real, Gary del Palacio, Marty Robbins, and Carolina centers. Approximately 500 children were served free lunch daily up to August 4, 2017.

OLV School's principal, Cynthia Vargas, school board members, Gilbert Salazar, Melissa Munoz, Lori Nanez, Luis Chavez, and activities coordinator, Martha Matta, worked diligently through June and July promoting the school. Arrangements were made with Cristo Rey Church, Sts. Peter & Paul Church, Corpus Christi Church, Our Lady of Mount Carmel, and St. Stephen Church as well as Our Lady of the Valley Parish to address their communities about the benefits of a Catholic education and having Our Lady of the Valley School accessible and available to them. An information table was set up at the churches and school brochures were distributed to perspective families.

Presentations promoting the school at other parishes including Mother Cabrini and St. Mark Church will be made in the month of August. Our Lady of the Valley School is deeply appreciative to its neighboring parishes for extending their arms and opening their doors to assist in spreading the word about the benefits of Catholic education.

Registration is open for the 2017-2018 school year from 4K – eighth grade. To schedule a tour or for more information, please call the school office Monday – Friday, 8:00 am – 2:00pm at (915)859-6448 or visit www.olvschoolep.org or www.facebook.com/OLVCatholicSchool.

Loretto Academy

Loretto Academy Student Body (Pre-Kinder through 12th grade) Ceremonial Blessing for the beginning of the 2017 -

2018 school year to be held at Loretto Chapel, 1300 Hardaway, El Paso, Texas, 79903 on Monday, August 7, 2017, at 8:40 a.m. All students, faculty, and staff members will gather at the front steps of the Loretto Chapel for a new school year opening ceremony. Sister Buffy, President of the Academy, together with Mr. Homer Silva, Principal of the Middle and High School, and Ms. Jane German, Principal of the co-ed Elementary School, will welcome all students with a special prayer, blessing, and class cheers.



St Pius Catholic School

Rapper Priest to Perform

Fr. Stan Fortuna, a rapping priest from New York, will perform at a concert scheduled for 7:30 pm, Saturday, September 9, 2017 at St. Pius X Catholic Church. The event is being organized as a fundraiser for St. Pius X Catholic School. The hoodie-wearing Franciscan priest, with a YouTube Channel, Fr. Fortuna was a jazz musician before becoming a priest. He studied with the legendary Lennie Tristano and has played some of the most prestigious venues in jazz such as Birdland, Lincoln Center and Town Hall. With Peter Prisco and Peter Scattaretico, he formed the jazz trio Scola Tristano.

His performance entertains individuals of all ages, but is a favorite among the youth. They are impressed by someone who has taken the faith in a different way and who's really trying to use it to help others. For example, have you ever prayed the rosary to hip hop music? In fact, his spiritual preaching is done in

numerous genres, from jazz to pop.

Fr. Stan Fortuna is a Roman Catholic priest and one of the eight founding members of the Community of the Franciscan Friars of the Renewal (established in 1987 in the Archdiocese of New York under Cardinal John O'Connor).

Fr. Stan worked in Spanish Harlem during his formation years and discovered the improvisational nature of 'rap'. With the encouragement of his community, he developed an affinity for this art form using it and other musical genres to reach out to the less fortunate and beyond. Fr. Stan has since released over 20 CD's in various genres as well as DVDs and books through Francesco productions, his registered 501(c)3 non-profit organization (www.francescoproductions.com). He travels internationally to preach and give concerts with proceeds going towards his and the CFRs work with the poor. A feature documentary has been produced on his life and work entitled "Sent" which was released in 2016.

Ticket Information:
Tickets are \$20 and can be purchased at St. Pius X Catholic Church Rectory and St. Pius School. All proceeds from this event will go to support St. Pius X Catholic School, which has provided Catholic academic excellence to the border community for over 60 years. The school and church are located at 1007 Geronimo, El Paso, TX 79905. School office hours are 7:30 a.m. to 4 p.m., Monday through Friday. The Rectory is open Monday 9 am to Noon and 2 pm to 5 pm and Tuesday-Friday 8 am to Noon and 2 pm to 6 pm. A limited number of tickets will be sold.

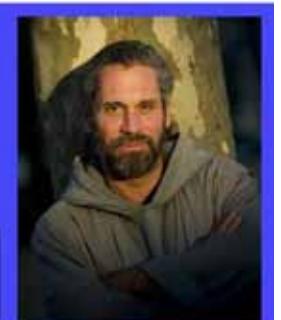
For further information please contact the school at (915) 772-6598 or the Rectory at 772-3226. After hours contact number is 915-204-6747.

Fr. Stan Fortuna, C.F.R.

September 9, 2017

7:30 PM

St. Pius X Catholic Church
1050 N. Clark,
El Paso, TX 79905



"Fr. Stan has his finger on the pulse of the youth. He is able to bring the message of the Gospel in a cultural form that is comprehensible to them!"
- Fr. Benedict Groeschel, C.F.R.



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WOMEN SAY YES TO THE JOURNEY OF SISTERHOOD

By: Sister Janet Gildea, SC, Liason for Women Religious

Who would become a Catholic woman religious today? Does anyone do that anymore? Some very interesting answers to these questions can be found in the stories of faith-filled young women right here in our diocese.

A desire to be totally given to God as the primary commitment of one's life is first of all God's initiative. The awareness that "maybe God is offering this life to me" can be a big surprise and even scary! Wasn't that Mary's wondering response to the angel? "How can this be?" Me?

For Whitney Schielitz, who will soon become a novice with the Sisters of Charity of Cincinnati, the possibility of a call to religious life came in her late twenties. During graduate school in Kentucky it was her evangelical Christian

Eventually Whitney took the first step of the process to become a Sister, moving to the formation community of the Sisters of Charity in Anthony, NM. Living in community for almost two years while serving in volunteer ministries at Villa Maria Home for Women and Proyecto Santo Niño in Anapra, Mexico, Whitney is now ready to return to Cincinnati for the next stage of the discernment process: Novitiate!

Sisters Belen Martan of Cd. Juarez and Karina Alvarez of Oakland, CA moved to the wide open spaces of Chaparral, NM in order to enter into the novitiate of the Dominican Sisters of the Christian Doctrine. Novitiate is a time prescribed by the Church to provide study of theology and other themes particular to the spirit or history of

vows of Sisters Belen and Karina. They are called "simple" vows not because they are somehow less of a commitment but because they are for one year. The newly professed Sisters will live the consecrated life alongside their Dominican Sisters, now wearing the black veil that indicates they are no longer "beginners" in the tradition of St. Dominic.

They will be missioned for the apostolate of their congregation which was founded in Mexico in 1948 for the catechesis of children and adults. Their beloved foundress, Mother Leonor Banqueriza Figueroa, still survives and inspires the new generations of Dominican Sisters of the Christian Doctrine. This was very evident in the vibrant community which will welcome additional novices this fall in Chaparral

as well as five postulants! Two of the new arrivals are from Cd. Juarez, one from El Paso, one from California and one from Kansas. The Sisters are relocating their initial formation community to the St. Albert convent near the Dominican Retreat Center in the Lower Valley.

Sister Tracey Horan, a Sister of Providence of St. Mary of the Woods, Indiana, professed first vows

at the Motherhouse of the congregation on June 25. "Miss Horan" taught seventh and eighth grade math at St. Pius X during the 2011-2013 academic years. She came to El Paso with a "maybe" in her heart about the call to religious life. Having spent a summer volunteering with the Sisters of Charity in the colonias at La Clinica Guadalupana after high school, she decided to reconnect with the Sisters



Sisters of Charity (left to right: Sisters Janet Gildea, Tracy Kemme, Andrea Koverman and Romina Sapinoso) celebrate the vows of Sister Tracey Horan as a Sister of Providence

friends who brought her to a new relationship with Jesus. Her Catholic aunts invited her to complete her sacraments through the RCIA. Then the opportunity to attend a Martha Dinner sponsored by the Archdiocese of Cincinnati brought her in contact with Catholic Sisters. She struck up a conversation with the Sisters of Charity of Cincinnati and the next thing she knew, she was invited to a Super Bowl party at the Motherhouse! Getting to know the Sisters, spending time with them in service, prayer and play, and having the opportunities to discern with other young adult women allowed Whitney the time to grow in faith and openness to her calling.

the religious congregation. Mostly though, novitiate is a sacred time of deep listening to God in order to know whether the call to become a Sister is one's heart's desire. That is why the location of the novitiate community and some limitations on contact with family, friends and social media are more important. Many congregations extend the novitiate for two years in order to provide sufficient time of preparation for the first commitment of vows of poverty, chastity and obedience.

On Saturday, July 8 the church at St. Thomas More in Chaparral was full of Dominican Sisters, family and parishioners to witness the profession of simple

and take advantage of the opportunity to live in community and teach while

Church is enriched by the commitment of these women who have passed through



Sister Belen and Karina with Dominican Sisters of Christian Doctrine on the day of first profession of vows

observing religious life with "no strings attached". The experience deepened Tracey's awareness and understanding of her calling and she actually ended up entering a different congregation. Sisters of Charity were present to celebrate her commitment as a Sister of Providence! Sister Tracey is a community organizer for the rights of immigrants in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis.

The life of the global

our diocese on their journey of discernment. When we pray for vocations at the end of each Eucharistic liturgy, remember to give thanks for these Sisters, their families and their congregations who have been so generous in sharing them with our diocese. And remember to ask the God of the harvest to keep waking up the desire to serve not only here but "to the ends of the earth"!

Español en Pagina 16

Arts, Crafts and Collectibles Fair



**Saturday, Sept 9th, 2017 - 9:00 AM to 7:00 PM
Sunday, Sept 10th, 2017 – 8:00 AM to 3:00 PM**

**Christ the Savior Catholic Church
5301 Wadsworth, El Paso, TX 79924
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Diocese offers assistance for victims of sexual abuse
Bishop Mark J. Seitz invites anyone who has been a victim of sexual abuse by a priest, deacon, religious or any minister of the church, to contact the Victims Assistance Coordinator, Mrs. Susan Martinez, LCSW, at (915) 872-8465 or the Chancery, (915) 872-8407. The Church desires the healing of anyone that has been harmed.

La Diócesis ofrece asistencia a las víctimas de abuso sexual

El Obispo Mark J. Seitz invita a cualquier persona que haya sido víctima de abuso sexual por un sacerdote, diácono, religioso o ministro de la iglesia, para que se comunique con la Coordinadora de Asistencia a Víctimas, Sra. Susan Martínez, LCSW, al teléfono 872-8465 o con la Cancillería a, 872-8407. La Iglesia desea sanar a toda persona que haya sido lastimada.

ST. MARK CATHOLIC CHURCH CELEBRATES 25 YEARS

By: Deacon Jesus Cardenas, Tepeyac Institute

The parish was established July 1st 1992, at the same time and on the same day as St. Luke, St. Juan Diego and San Felipe de Jesus. Saint Mark was under the leadership of its first pastor and founder Father Leonides Rivero. At the time it was difficult to begin a new parish on the eastside of

was used for catechism classes and even for evangelization retreats; masses were celebrated in the living room. The gym was a good place to accommodate the growing number of parishioners. A van that was donated to the parish was always loaded with folding chairs that were transported to

Peña and the dedication of the building in 1996 was celebrated by Bishop Armando X. Ochoa. It was in this building that additional masses were scheduled so as to eventually have one anticipatory mass on Saturday and four masses on Sunday.

The community continued growing steadily and the three classrooms in the Parish Hall were quickly and consistently filled. There eventually was a need for more space in order to provide catechesis classes for the hundreds of children and young parishioners receiving sacramental preparation. The community grew tight and Sundays after mass, groups of parishioners would gather outside the parish enjoying one another's company as well savoring delicious food...

all the while more people were coming to mass.

With bazaars and other fundraising efforts, the community collected enough funds to initiate the largest project of the community, The Sanctuary. The ground breaking ceremony took place on the Feast of the Baptism of Our Lord 2002 and was presided over by Bishop Ochoa. In order to accommodate the increasing number of parishioners, in

1998 a new mass was started for the tremendous overflow of attendance to the last Spanish mass. The mass attendance was so large that some parishioners had to participate in the Sunday mass celebration outside the building. The dedication of the new sanctuary took place on April 21 2004 with a big celebration presided by Bishop Ochoa. The Sanctuary is so large that it can accommodate 1,200 people attending mass.

At the very beginning, mass attendance looked anemic because the site was so large, that 500 people made the church look empty.

Eventually the priority shifted to enhancing religious formation because there were

into the next mass. In 2014, then new Bishop Mark J. Seitz relocated several pastors of some of the parishes in the city and Monsignor Arturo Bañuelas was assigned to St. Mark. Upon his arrival, Father Arturo encouraged all ministers to be trained and certified by the Tepeyac Institute. In order to have many ministers installed, the Parish Hall was dedicated to the formation classes with participation of over 400 ministers.

St. Mark's experienced exponential growth and most masses were standing room only. The council decided to approve two more masses in Spanish, one on Saturday and the other late on Sunday. Both



Groundbreaking for the Parish Hall

El Paso but with the vibrant growth on that side of town the need became evident. The first step for the community building the church was to acquire a rectory to give the community a place to gather. The rectory was located at John Weir St. and the first Mass was celebrated at the Benito Martinez School Gym on July 16 1992. Masses during the week were celebrated at the rectory until the hall was built. The garage of the rectory

the school every week for the masses.

In the beginning St. Mark's had two masses, but as time went on more masses were added. Fundraisers like the selling fruit, enchiladas, menudo and even organizing charreadas, the community collected enough funds to begin the construction of the current Parish Hall. The ground breaking ceremony was presided over by Bishop

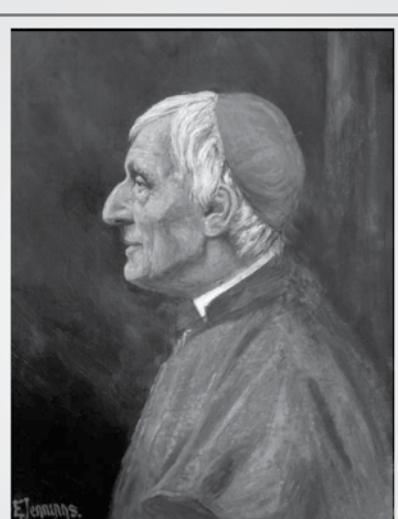


Groundbreaking for the Religious Formation Building

Catholic Campus Ministry/Newman Center

SUNDAY MASS

2230 N. OREGON ST. EL PASO TEXAS 79902
915-838-0300



"To live is to change, and to be perfect is to have changed often"
~Cardinal Newman

Catholic Campus Ministry will start up Sunday masses on August 13, 2017 at 6 p.m. and continuing on throughout the semester. All UTEP & community college students, family and friends are invited to celebrate the Eucharist on Sunday evenings followed by fellowship in the center. Come be a part of a young adult community and get to know what Catholic Campus Ministry is all about.

SEE YOU THERE!

around 1,600 children and teens attending catechetical formation. When the community celebrated 15 years in 2007, leaders started a project to build more classrooms but funds were needed for the construction. The monies were saved and in 2010 Bishop Armando Ochoa broke ground for the new catechetical building. This building was completed and blessed in May 2011. Immediately after the renovation of the parish hall and construction of the new offices began.

In October 2010, Father Leo had a car accident. The Parochial Vicar, Father Jose Morales had to take charge of the parish hall project. After more than 18 years of serving the community of St. Mark, Father Leo was assigned to another parish on September 11, 2011. A new pastor was assigned to the community, Father Raul Trigueros who brought the Radio Guadalupana to the community.

Fencing the grounds and placing gates soon became a priority in those years. The community was so large that there were discussions about a new community for Las Tierras. The vibrant community was asking for more spiritual growth and was ready for the next step. Due to the congestion after masses the schedules for Sunday were adjusted to allow people enough time to leave after mass and avoid crashing into other parishioners coming

masses are full to this day. The outside of the church and courtyard developed colorfully to include more flowers, colorful details around the installations and a beautiful fountain at the entrance of the church. In 2015, Father Arturo and a group of parishioners visited Guadalajara for the completion of the fountain project. During the trip Father Arturo mentioned during a car ride that he was only missing an image of Our Lady of Guadalupe to complete his goals for his first year. The driver of the vehicle asked: "One like that?" In front of them was a beautiful cantera statue of the virgin, 30 feet high. Father Arturo was finally convinced about having a statue and the Parish ministry council approved. After a year and a half, the Shrine of La Morenita was completed and on December 11, 2016 the shrine was blessed by our Bishop Mark Seitz.

After 25 years, it is hard to believe that the small community gathering in a garage sitting on folding chairs has grown to over 7,000 people coming to mass every weekend. St. Mark's continues as a welcoming community growing not only in size, but also in spirituality. We are very proud of the fruits of this community including Father Mark Salas, Seminarian Peter Venegas, Sister Alejandra Sandoval, and me.

CONSIDERING THE OPTIONS FOR INFERTILE COUPLES

When Catholic couples experience trouble getting pregnant, they often seek medical help and begin to research what options are available to them. A number of moral considerations and questions generally emerge during this process: Why are techniques like in vitro fertilization (IVF) considered immoral? What approaches will the Church allow us to try? What does our infertility mean, spiritually and personally, in the face of our fervent but frustrated desire for a baby?

When a couple, after having non-contraceptive sexual intercourse for a year or more, begins to investigate whether there are issues related to infertility, some medical professionals simply encourage them to turn to the infertility industry and try IVF or a related technique like artificial insemination. These approaches, however, raise a host of moral concerns, including that they substitute an act of "production" for the act of marital self-giving, allow a third party outside the marriage to become the cause of the conception, often require masturbation, and may result in significant "collateral damage," including embryo destruction, embryo freezing and disruptive effects on a woman's physiology from the powerful super-ovulatory drugs used during the procedures.

It can be helpful to keep in mind a particular "rule of thumb" for determining whether a procedure is morally acceptable: treatments that assist the marital act are permissible, while those that replace, or substitute for, the marital act raise serious moral objections. The ideal approach to resolving infertility involves identifying the underlying causes (endometriosis? fallopian tube blockage? problems ovulating? etc.) and addressing those causes so that marital intercourse can now result in a conception.

While this may seem sensible and even obvious, many obstetricians and gynecologists today do not offer much more than a cursory workup or exam prior to recommending that the couple approach a fertility clinic and employ their services to produce a baby via IVF. Couples ought instead to look into techniques that can methodically diagnose and heal the underlying reasons for infertility, like FEMM (Fertility Education & Medical Management, <https://femmhealth.org>) pioneered by Dr. Pilar Vigil, or NaProTechnology (Natural Procreative Technology, see <http://www.naprotechnology.com>), led by Dr. Tom Hilgers. Both are Catholic ob/gyns with great track records in helping to resolve underlying infertility

issues and helping couples to conceive naturally.

NaPro has been around a little longer and employs a range of approaches which may include, for example, hormonal modulation of menstrual cycle irregularities; surgical correction of fallopian tube damage or occlusions; fertility drugs to help a woman's ovaries to release eggs; Viagra or other approaches to address erectile dysfunction; correcting penile structural defects such as hypospadias; addressing premature ejaculation; using NFP (natural family planning) to observe naturally occurring signs of fertility during the woman's cycle to time intercourse; using LTOT (low tubal ovum transfer), in which eggs are retrieved and transplanted into the uterus or fallopian tube at a point likely to result in fertilization following the marital act; and surgical resolution of endometriosis. Dr. Hilgers has formed and trained a number of other physicians who work as independent NaProTechnology specialists in the U.S. and abroad. FEMM is building a similar network.

On the other hand, a number of other widely-available techniques, instead of assisting the marital act, end up replacing it with another kind of act altogether, namely, an act of "producing" or "manufacturing" children in



*Making Sense
Out of
Bioethics*

Fr. Tad Pacholczyk

lives.

Although these solutions do not take away all the grief, they are a means by which God helps to draw good out of their situation. By these means, couples are challenged to "think outside the box" and enter into the mysterious designs of God within their marriage. By stepping away from a desire to conceive and raise biological children of their own, couples facing irresolvable infertility can discover new and unexpected paths to marital fruitfulness, paths that bring great blessings to others, and that can lead to abiding joy and marital fulfillment.

Rev. Tadeusz Pacholczyk, Ph.D. earned his doctorate in neuroscience from Yale and did post-doctoral work at Harvard. He is a priest of the diocese of Fall River, MA, and serves as the Director of Education at The National Catholic Bioethics Center in Philadelphia. See www.ncbcenter.org



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FATHER RON: A LIVING HOPE

By: House of Hope and Rio Grande Catholic

Sacred Heart's Father Ron Gonzales' story about his adoption and search for birth family is a true testament to the Truth that God can take one person's sacrifice and transform it into a blessing for another.

At a young age, Father Ron Gonzales found out the truth about his birth and was told he was adopted. Up until that point he says he felt like he was living a normal life with his caring parents and sister in Santa Fe, New Mexico. This revelation shook his world so drastically that it led him into deep despair and into a sea of abandonment issues. "I am going to kill myself," Father Ron began to say as a child. He could not stop questioning, "Why was I put up for adoption?" Father Ron's family felt therapy would help him work through his feelings and afterward he resigned himself to his situation. He learned to shift his focus away from the question of "Why?" and instead concentrate on the fact that he had been adopted into a wonderful family who cared and loved him and his sister, who they learned was adopted as well. His adoptive parents provided both of them with an environment filled with boundless possibilities and opportunities.

Father Ron buried the questions of "Why?" for quite some time but as he entered his discernment process to become a Jesuit Priest, his Aunt Margaret from Phoenix, AZ shared with him a story during one of his visits to her home in 1997. She handed him two small portraits of a young girl and boy, telling him, "These are the children of

Hermelinda Ortiz." Hermelinda had been Aunt Margaret's live-in housekeeper of many years. As his aunt reminisced, she proceeded to let him know that Hermelinda was his and his sister's biological mother. After that visit with his aunt, Father Ron realized he had more siblings and possibly relatives somewhere in California or Mexico. He noticed the name "Dimas Cuevas" on the back of one of the photos and thought, "Oh so I have a last name, Cuevas!" After this visit to his aunt's house, he decided not to pursue it further. And just like his questions of "Why?" he boxed them up and put away the pictures.

Years later when his Aunt Margaret was dying of cancer, he felt he was losing his connection to his birth family. Father Ron says he thought, "There goes my door; there goes my connection." In preparation for his Aunt Margaret's funeral, his sister began looking through pictures and, once again, Father Ron revisited those photos of his birth family. This time, in 2012 at the age of 45, he thought, "Wait a minute, we now have Facebook, we now have Google! I think I may have just found my door!" He said, "When I returned to San Antonio, I looked up 'Dimas Cuevas' and lo and behold, what came back was a young man of twenty two!" After viewing pictures from Facebook, he decided he was going to reach out. This 22-year-old Dimas turned out to be son of the first Dimas and nephew to Father Ron. It was a Facebook search and post that led to the eventual contact

with his biological brother, then a biological sister, and finally his biological mother.

It turns out, Aunt Margaret had introduced the possibility of adoption to Hermelinda when she faced the unplanned pregnancy that was Father Ron. Hermelinda was a widow with three small children in Mexico who traveled to the United States to find work to provide for her family, when a sexual assault resulted in pregnancy of Father Ron. Meanwhile, his Aunt Margaret's Sister, Cora, and Husband, Alfonso, were unable to have children, so she suggested to Hermelinda that the couple would make wonderful parents. She said it would be a blessing for the couple to be able to adopt her child and Hermelinda courageously chose the loving option of adoption.

The answers had finally found Father Ron. To this day he has not met his biological mother in person but has spoken to her over the phone. He says, "My desire was just to thank her and to connect with our siblings." Father Ron has expressed to his biological mother his deep gratitude towards her for choosing life for him even in the face of dire circumstances. He wanted her to know he was raised by a wonderful family and was blessed with a wonderful life. Father Ron wanted Hermelinda to know she should free herself of any guilt or disappointment for her actions. Father Ron added that he is going to California this month and his birth mother now resides with his sister in Los

Angeles. He says he may try to connect with his family, however, he feels his goal has already been accomplished. He simply wanted to tell her thank you, and the Lord helped him to do exactly that.

Father Ron mentioned that God surprised him and Hermelinda with one more blessing. Hermelinda shared with him how she had always carried a deep desire that one of her sons become a priest! Father Ron says this grace of finding his birth family is not an experience to be hidden, but it is one to change us and be shared to help others.

He added, "There are many, many, many families that want to love and share their families and lives with a child. Ironically for whatever reason they are not able to have a child. It seems to me...it's possible and most likely that God has provided a means of a young lady's sacrifice for nine months to be a blessing for another. At the same time that sacrifice for the good of another, for another being, will come back four fold, five fold later on."

God does all things well and restores all to fullness. God can take personal sacrifices and use them to bless others in wonderful and mysterious ways. Hope abounds in Christ and He is always faithful. Should you or



Father Ron with His Pictures

someone you know ever face an unplanned pregnancy, know that there is always Hope. And in that hope, many blessings for all.

House of Hope is a local pregnancy crisis center, which has served El Paso for fifteen years. Adoption is one of the life-affirming options they provide to women in crisis. Next month, House of Hope is holding a Gala to detail exciting news related to a new affiliation with the Guiding Star Project. Details of the expansion of service and their new mission will be announced at the no-charge Gala, featuring former Planned Parenthood director turned Catholic speaker and author Abby Johnson. For more information on the center or the Gala, please call 915-544-9600 or visit www.GuidingStarElPaso.org

Abby Johnson

FORMER PLANNED PARENTHOOD DIRECTOR

GALA

THURSDAY SEPT 7 7:00 p m

MAJOR ANNOUNCEMENT!

After 15 years serving El Paso, we are excited to be hosting this special Gala which will be unlike anything we have ever done before. Don't miss our big announcement that will be an absolute game-changer for our region!



GUIDINGSTAR
el paso

House of Hope
Pregnancy Resource Medical Center

Lighting the way to a Culture of Life!



ABBY JOHNSON has always had a fierce determination to help women in need. It was this desire that both led Abby to a career with *Planned Parenthood*, and later caused her to flee the organization and become an outspoken advocate for women and unborn children. During her eight years with *Planned Parenthood*, Abby quickly rose in the organization's ranks and became a clinic director. She was increasingly disturbed by what she witnessed. Still, Abby loved the women that entered her clinic and her fellow workers. Despite a growing unrest within her, she stayed on and strove to serve women in crisis. All of that changed on September 26, 2009 when a traumatic event occurred at work and the full realization what she had dedicated her life to washed over Abby and a dramatic transformation took place. The media was, and continues to be, intensely interested in Abby's story as well as her new efforts. She is a frequently requested guest on national television and the author of the nationally best-selling book, *Unplanned*, which chronicles both her experiences within *Planned Parenthood* and her dramatic exit. Today, Abby travels across the globe sharing her story and educating the public on women's issues. She is the founder of the ministry *And Then There Were None* and lives in Texas with her husband and seven precious children, including twin girls just born this May.

NO CHARGE FOR GENERAL ADMISSION!

All are invited for this Gala dinner, amazing program, and big announcement at no charge! *Tickets are required and seating is limited*, so get your tickets online ASAP!

VIP RECEPTION FOR TABLE SPONSORS

Table sponsors receive VIP tickets to a private reception with best-selling author and international speaker Abby Johnson, VIP seating for tables of ten, special recognition, and more!

Traducción al español está disponible. Por favor solicite en el momento de RSVP.

Centennial Hall, Ft. Bliss | Contact: 915-544-9600 | info@houseofhope-elp.org

FOR TICKETS, VIP SPONSORSHIPS, AND MORE INFORMATION, VISIT
www.GuidingStarElPaso.org

RESULTS FROM THE SPRING MASS ATTENDANCE COUNT 2017

By: Karina Sandoval, Stewardship Coordinator

The Foundation for the Diocese of El Paso would like to thank all pastors, administrators, parish secretaries, hospitality ministers and volunteers for their participation in the Spring Mass Attendance Count 2017.

During the spring count weekend of May 20-21, 76,242 individuals attended Mass. Of these, 32,791 attended Mass in English, while 41,234 attended Mass in Spanish, 1,958 individuals attended Bilingual

Masses and 259 individuals attended the Latin Rite Mass at Immaculate Conception Church. The Eastside Vicariate had the highest number of parishioners attending Mass, followed by the Westside Vicariate and the

Mission Valley Vicariate.

The next Mass Attendance Count will be held in October. The results from the Mass Attendance Counts help both parishes and the diocese with pastoral outreach and

planning. If you have questions or would like to know more about the Mass Attendance Counts, please contact the Office of Stewardship at 915-872-8412, Karina Sandoval, Stewardship Coordinator.

RESULTADOS CONTEO DE ASISTENCIA EN MISA DE PRIMAVERA 2017

Por: Karina Sandoval, Coordinadora en Corresponsabilidad

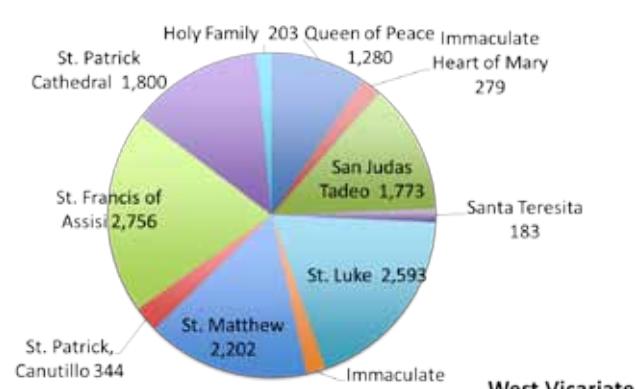
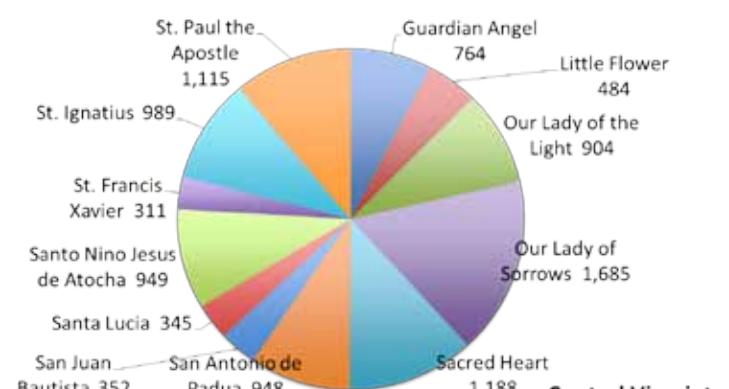
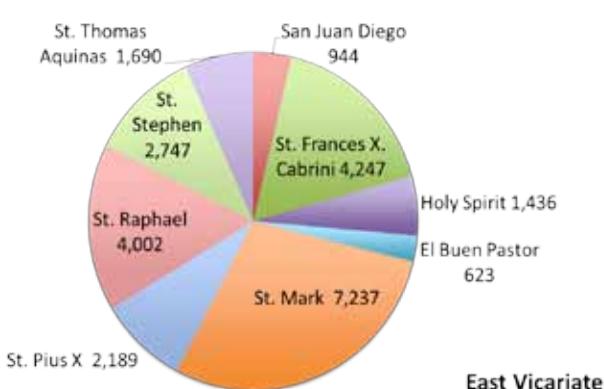
La Fundación para la Diócesis del Paso le gustaría agradecer a todos los sacerdotes, administradores, secretarías de las parroquias, ministros de hospitalidad y voluntarios por su participación en el Conteo de Asistencia en Misa de Primavera 2017.

Durante el conteo de primavera del fin de semana del 20 y 21 de Mayo, 76,242 individuos asistieron a Misa. De este numero 32,791 asistieron a Misa en Ingles, 41,234 asistieron a Misa en Español y 1,958 individuos a Misas en Bilingüe y solo 259

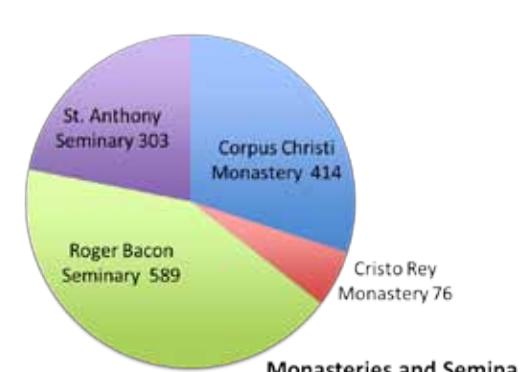
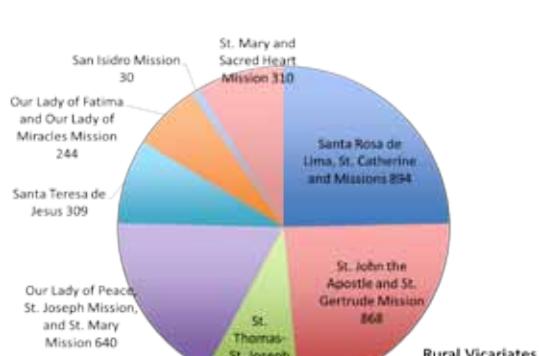
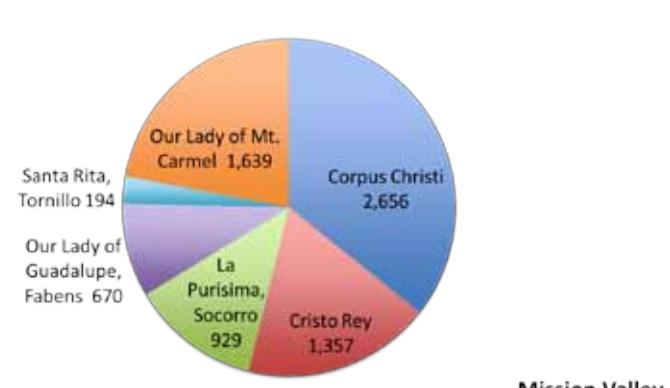
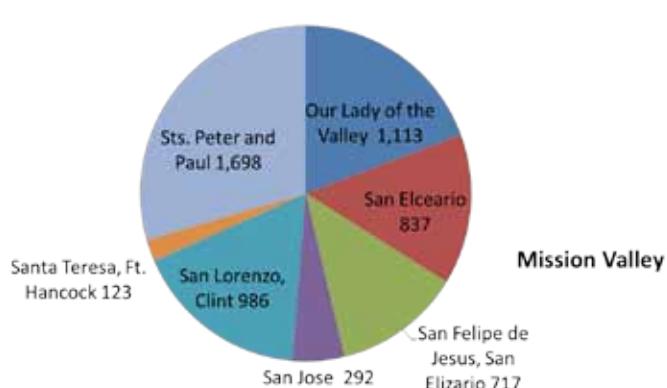
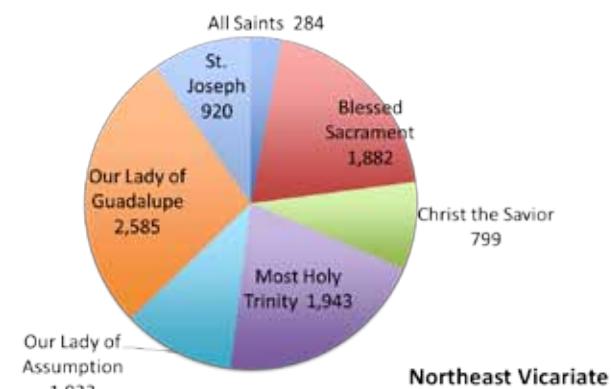
asistieron a Misa en el Rito Latín en la Parroquia de la Inmaculada Concepción. El Vicariato del Este fue el que obtuvo el número más grande de asistentes en misa de toda la diócesis, seguido por el Vicariato del Oeste y Mission Valley.

El siguiente conteo de Asistencia en Misa será en Octubre del 2017. Los resultados de los Conteos de Asistencia en Misa ayudan al Centro Pastoral como a las parroquias para futuras planeaciones y servicios pastorales. Si tienen alguna

pregunta o quisieran saber más sobre los Conteos de Asistencia en Misa, favor de contactar a la Oficina de Corresponsabilidad al 915-872-8412 con Karina Sandoval, Coordinador de Corresponsabilidad.



STEWARDSHIP OFFICE
Foundation for the Diocese of El Paso
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Karina Sandoval | Stewardship Coordinator
915.872.8412 | ksandoval@elpasodiocese.org



SAN MARCO IGLESIA CATOLICA CELEBRA 25 AÑOS

Por: Diacono Jesus Cardenas, Tepeyac Institute

La parroquia fue establecida el 1ero de Julio de 1992, al mismo tiempo y en el mismo día que San Lucas, San Juan Diego y San Felipe de Jesus. San Marcos estaba bajo el liderazgo del primer pastor y fundador Padre Leónides Rivero. Fue difícil empezar una nueva parroquia en el lado este de El Paso, pero con su vibrante crecimiento, la necesidad estaba allí. El primer paso de la comunidad fue adquirir una rectoría para iniciar el proceso de reunión comunitaria. La rectoría

preparación sacramental. Cada domingo después de misa, un grupo de parroquianos se quedaban fuera del salón parroquial y la construcción de nuevas oficinas; debido a que en octubre del 2010 el Padre Leo sufrió un accidente automovilístico, el vicario parroquial, Padre Jose Morales, estuvo a cargo de dicho proyecto. Después de más de 18 años de servicio a la comunidad de San Marcos, el Padre Leo fue asignado a otra parroquia el 11 de Septiembre del 2011. Un nuevo pastor fue asignado a la comunidad, el Padre Raúl Trigueros, quien trajo consigo la Radio Guadalupana a la comunidad.

Poniendo una cerca y portones a la propiedad fue la prioridad en esos años. La comunidad era tan grande que hubo discusiones sobre una nueva comunidad para Las Tierras. La vibrante comunidad pedía más crecimiento espiritual y estaba lista para el siguiente paso. Debido a los congestionamientos después de misa, los horarios de misas dominicales fueron ajustados para permitir que saliera la gente de una misa y dejara el estacionamiento para la siguiente sin tener que estar chocando unos con otros.

En el 2014, nuestro nuevo Obispo Mark J. Seitz relocalizo a varios pastores de lagunas parroquias en la ciudad, y Monseñor Arturo Bañuelas fue asignado a San Marcos por 6 años. A su arribo, el Padre Arturo inicio pidiendo a todos los ministros que se entrenaran y certificaran en el Instituto Tepeyac. Para poder lograr instalar todos estos ministros, el salón parroquial se dedicó a las clases de formación con la participación de más de 400 ministros.

estaba localizada en la calle John Weir y la primera misa se celebró en el Gimnasio de la Escuela Benito Martínez el 16 de Julio de 1992. Las misas durante la semana se celebraron en la rectoría hasta que se construyó el salón. La cochera de la rectoría se usaba para clases de catecismo y hasta para retiros de evangelización; las misas se celebraban en la sala de la rectoría. El gimnasio fue un buen lugar para acomodar el creciente número de parroquianos, y una van donada a la parroquia estaba siempre cargada de sillas plegadizas que



Confirmations at the Benito Martinez School

se llevaban a la escuela cada semana para las misas. Al principio había dos misas cada domingo, pero más tarde hubo que agregar más. Vendiendo fruta, enchiladas, menudo, y hasta organizando charreadas, la comunidad junto los fondos suficientes para empezar la construcción del Salón Parroquial. La ceremonia de la primera piedra fue presidida por el Obispo Peña, y la dedicación del edificio fue celebrada en 1996 por el Obispo Armando X. Ochoa. En este edificio se agregaron más misas hasta tener una misa anticipatoria el sábado y 4 misas el domingo.

La comunidad continuó creciendo constantemente y los 3 salones de clases del Salón Parroquial fueron rápidamente saturados, así que hubo la necesidad de tener más espacio para poder proporcionar la catequesis a los cientos de niños y jóvenes recibiendo su

participando en la celebración dominical aun afuera del edificio.

La dedicación del nuevo santuario se llevó a cabo el

21 de abril del 2004, con una gran celebración presidida por el Obispo Armando Ochoa. El edificio es tan grande que tiene capacidad para 1,200 personas asistiendo a misa. Al principio, parecía que no iba mucha gente a misa porque el lugar era tan grande, que 500 personas hacían que la iglesia se viera vacía. En ese momento, la prioridad se movió a la formación religiosa porque había alrededor de 1,600 jóvenes y niños tomando formación catequética.

Cuando la comunidad celebró 15 años en el 2007, los líderes iniciaron un proyecto para construir más salones de

clases, pero necesitábamos los fondos en ahorros para iniciar la construcción. El dinero fue ahorrado y en el 2010 el Obispo Armando Ochoa puso la primera piedra del nuevo edificio catequético. Este edificio se completó y bendijo en mayo del 2011,

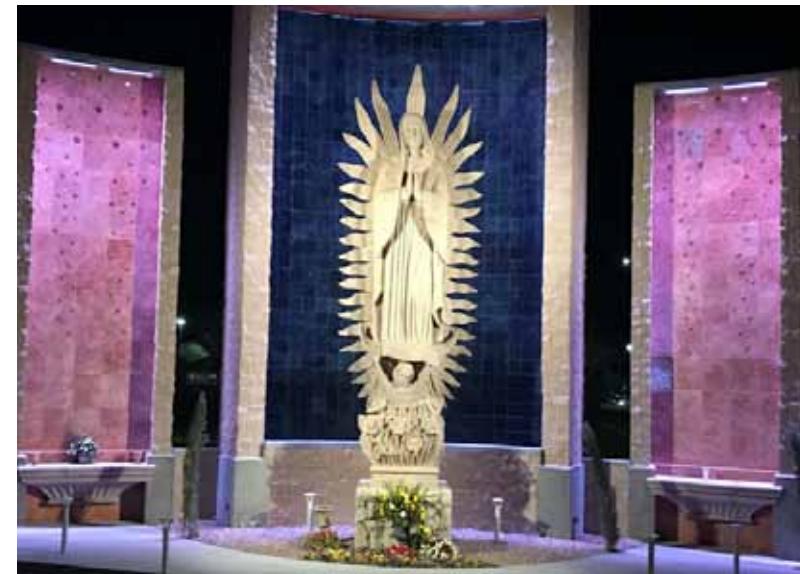


Building the Sanctuary

proyecto de la fuente, y en una conversación el Padre Arturo menciono que solo le faltaba una imagen de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe para completar las metas de su primer año. El conductor del vehículo le preguntó: "una, ¿así como esta?" frente a nosotros estaba una hermosa estatua de cantera de 10 metros de altura. Convencimos al Padre Arturo sobre la estatua y el consejo ministerial de la parroquia apoyo muchísimo. Después de un año y medio, la gruta de La Morenita estaba completa y pagada; el 11 de diciembre la gruta fue bendecida por nuestro Obispo Mark Seitz. Despues de 25 años, es difícil imaginarse que una pequeña

comunidad que se reunía en la cochera, sentados en sillas plegadizas, siendo ahora una comunidad que ha crecido a más de 7,000 feligreses que vienen a misa cada fin de semana, una comunidad calurosa que ha crecido no solo en tamaño, sino también en espiritualidad. Estamos orgullosos de los frutos de la comunidad que son el Padre Mark Salas, el seminarista Peter Venegas, la hermana religiosa Alejandra Sandoval, y un servidor.

English on Page 10



Shrine to Our Lady of Guadalupe

KERMES 2017

- Our Lady of Sorrows August 5,6
- San Lorenzo August 10,11,12 & 13
- Our Lady of The Valley Aug. 18,19,20
- Cristo Rey August 25, 26, 27

ARTS & CRAFTS

Christ the Savior Sept. 9, 10

BAZAAR 2017

- Mother Cabrini September 8,9 & 10
- San Elizario September 15, 16, 17
- El Buen Pastor September 15, 16,17
- La Purisima September 29, 30, Oct 1,2
- Santa Teresa September 30
- Fiesta del Sagrado Corazon Oct. 27, 28, 29

EL APACHE

LAS MUJERES DICEN "SÍ!" LA JORNADA VOCACIONAL PARA RELIGIOSAS DE HOY

Por: Sister Janet Gildea, SC, Liason for Women Religious

¿Quién elegiría hoy ser una religiosa católica consagrada? ¿Alguien hace eso? Algunas respuestas muy interesantes a estas preguntas se pueden encontrar en las historias de mujeres jóvenes llenas de fe aquí mismo en nuestra diócesis.

El deseo de ser totalmente entregado a Dios como el compromiso primordial de la propia vida es ante todo la iniciativa de Dios. La conciencia de que "tal vez Dios me está ofreciendo esta vida" puede ser una gran sorpresa e incluso miedo! ¿No era aquella maravillosa respuesta de María al ángel? "¿Cómo puede ser esto?" ¿Yo?

Para Whitney Schielitz, que pronto se convertirá en una novicia con las Hermanas de la Caridad de Cincinnati, la posibilidad de un llamado a la vida religiosa llegó a los veinte años. Durante la escuela de posgrado en Kentucky fueron sus amigos evangélicos cristianos quienes la llevaron a una nueva relación con Jesús. Sus tíos católicos la invitaron a completar sus sacramentos a través de la RCIA. Entonces la oportunidad de asistir a una Cena Marta patrocinada por la Arquidiócesis de Cincinnati la trajo en contacto con las Hermanas Católicas. Empezó

una conversación con las Hermanas de la Caridad de Cincinnati y lo siguiente que ella sabía, fue invitada a una fiesta del Super Bowl en la Casa Madre! Conocer a las Hermanas, pasar tiempo con ellas en el servicio, la oración y el juego, y tener la oportunidad de discernir con otras mujeres adultas jóvenes le permitió a Whitney el tiempo para crecer en la fe y la apertura a su vocación.

Eventualmente Whitney dio el primer paso del proceso para convertirse en una Hermana, moviéndose a la comunidad de formación de las Hermanas de la Caridad en Anthony, NM. Viviendo en la comunidad por casi dos años, mientras que sirviendo en ministerios de voluntariado en Villa María Hogar para Mujeres y Proyecto Santo Niño en Anapra, México, Whitney está ahora listo para regresar a Cincinnati para la siguiente etapa del proceso de discernimiento: ¡Noviciado!

Las Hermanas Belen Martan de Cd. Juárez y Karina Álvarez, de Oakland, CA, se trasladaron a los amplios espacios de Chaparral, Nuevo México, para entrar en el noviciado de las Hermanas Dominicas de la Doctrina Cristiana. El noviciado es un



Whitney Schielitz with children at Proyecto Santo Niño in Rancho Anapra

tiempo prescrito por la Iglesia para estudiar la teología y otros temas particulares del espíritu o la historia de la congregación religiosa.

Principalmente, el noviciado es un tiempo sagrado de profunda escucha de Dios para saber si el llamado a convertirse en una Hermana es el deseo de un corazón. Es por eso que la ubicación de la comunidad del noviciado y algunas limitaciones en el contacto con la familia, amigos y medios sociales son más importantes. Muchas congregaciones extienden el noviciado por dos años para proveer suficiente tiempo de preparación para el primer compromiso de votos de pobreza, castidad y obediencia.

El sábado 8 de julio la iglesia de Santo Tomás More en Chaparral estaba llena de Hermanas Dominicas, familiares y feligreses para presenciar la profesión de votos simples de las Hermanas Belén y Karina. Se les llama "simples" votos no porque son de alguna manera menos de un compromiso, sino porque son por un año. Las Hermanas de reciente profesión vivirán la vida consagrada junto a sus Hermanas Dominicas, ahora con el velo negro que indica que ya no son "principiantes" en la tradición de Santo Domingo.

Ellas serán misionadas para el apostolado de su congregación que fue fundada en México en 1948 para la catequesis de niños y adultos. Su amada fundadora, la Madre Leonor Banqueriza Figueroa, todavía sobrevive e inspira a las nuevas generaciones de Hermanas Dominicas de la Doctrina Cristiana. Esto fue muy evidente en la comunidad vibrante que dará la bienvenida a novicias adicionales este otoño en Chaparral, así como cinco postulantes! Dos de los recién llegados son de Cd. Juárez, una de El Paso, una de California y otra de Kansas. Las Hermanas están trasladando su comunidad de formación inicial al convento de San Alberto Magno cerca del Centro de Retiros Dominica

en el Valle Bajo.

La Hermana Tracey Horan, una Hermana de la Providencia de Santa María de los Bosques, Indiana, profesó sus primeros votos en la Casa Madre de la congregación el 25 de junio. "La Señorita Horan" enseñó matemáticas de séptimo y octavo grado en San Pío X durante el 2011-2013 años académicos. Ella vino a El Paso con un "tal vez" en su corazón sobre el llamado a la vida religiosa. Después de un verano de voluntariado con las Hermanas de la Caridad en las colonias de La Clínica Guadalupana después del bachillerato, decidió reconnectarse con las Hermanas y aprovechar la oportunidad de vivir en comunidad y enseñar observando la vida religiosa sin obligación de entrar la congregación. La experiencia profundizó la conciencia de Tracey y la comprensión de su vocación y ella realmente terminó entrando en una congregación diferente. ¡Hermanas de la Caridad estaban presentes para celebrar su compromiso como Hermana de la Providencia! Sister Tracey es un organizador comunitario para los derechos de los inmigrantes en la Arquidiócesis de Indianápolis.

La vida de la Iglesia global se enriquece con el compromiso de estas mujeres que han pasado por nuestra diócesis en su camino de discernimiento. Cuando oramos para las vocaciones al final de cada liturgia eucarística, recuerden dar las gracias por estas Hermanas, sus familias y sus congregaciones que han sido tan generosas al compartirlas con nuestra diócesis. ¡Y acuérdese de pedir al Dios de la cosecha que despierte el deseo de servir no sólo aquí, sino hasta los confines de la tierra!

Our Lady of Mount Carmel

Our Lady of Mount Carmel Cemetery is the only cemetery in El Paso established specifically to serve the Catholic community. In your greatest need, Our Lady of Mount Carmel is an extension of the parish family that provides services and support to help you manage the difficult decisions and many practical details that come with end-of-life arrangements.

Cementerio de Nuestra Señora de Monte Carmelo

El cementerio de Nuestra Señora de Monte Carmelo es el único cementerio en El Paso establecido específicamente para servir a la comunidad Católica. Cuando usted más lo necesite, el Cementerio de Monte Carmelo es una extensión de la familia parroquial que proporciona servicios y apoyo para ayudarle a tomar las decisiones difíciles y detalles de los arreglos prácticos que vienen al final de la vida.



Facilities and Services

Our Lady of Mount Carmel offers a full range of options:

- * Intimate chapel for on-site services
- * Traditional burials, in-ground or in a mausoleum
- * Internment of cremated remains in the columbarium or the chapel
- * Peaceful, well-kept grounds maintained with environmentally-responsible reclaimed water

Aside from the immediate need services available at Our Lady of Mount Carmel, staff members can provide assistance with arrangements for future needs

401 S. Zaragoza Rd * Ph. 860-0606

One in a series of informational presentations

English on Page 6

MyParish App Launches on August 26 and 27

Free Smartphone App Will Help You Receive Communications from Your Parish

By: Karina Sandoval, Stewardship Coordinator

The Diocese of El Paso is proud to announce the launch of myParish App for our Catholic community in El Paso.

MyParish App is a product of Diocesan Publications that connects parishes and parishioners at the forefront of technology.

Parishioners who download myParish App through their smartphones (Android and iPhones) will be able to check Mass times,

confessional times, bulletin announcements, homilies, daily readings, prayers and more that will help you to stay in close contact with your home parish.

Through myParish app, parishioners also will have the opportunity to access issues of *The Rio Grande Catholic* newspaper and listen to our local Catholic radio station, *The Bridge*.

You can also follow Bishop Seitz's blog and receive

messages from your pastor.

On the weekend of August 26 and 27, 2017, you will have the opportunity to download for free myParish App to your smartphone through the app store on your phone.

What are you waiting for? Text App to phone number 88202 or visit myparishapp.com to download and discover the many features that myParish App has to offer.



Lanzamiento de la Aplicación My Parish Agosto 26 y 27

La aplicación gratis para Smart Phones le ayudará a estar en comunicación con su Parroquia

Por: Karina Sandoval, Coordinadora en Corresponsabilidad

La Diócesis del Paso se enorgullece en anunciar el lanzamiento de la aplicación My Parish para nuestra comunidad Católica del Paso.

La aplicación My Parish es un producto de Diocesan Publications que conecta a las parroquias y los feligreses a la vanguardia de la tecnología.

Los feligreses que descarguen la aplicación de My Parish a través de sus teléfonos (Android y Iphone)

podrán revisar horarios de Misa y de confesiones, anuncios del boletín, homilías, lecturas diarias, oraciones y mas iconos que le darán la oportunidad de estar en contacto con su parroquia.

También los feligreses tendrán la oportunidad de leer el periódico The Rio Grande Catholic y escuchar nuestra estación de radio local, The Bridge. También pueden seguir el blog de nuestro

Sr. Obispo Mark J. Seitz y recibir mensajes de su Pastor.

Usted tendrá la oportunidad de descargar gratis la aplicación My Parish el fin de semana de Agosto 26 y 27 por medio de la tienda de aplicaciones de su teléfono.

Que estas esperando? Manda un texto al numero 88202 o visita myparishapp.com para descargar y descubrir las diferentes funciones que ofrece la aplicación My Parish.



Damian A. Maureira, SFO, MSW

Spiritual Guidance

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BISHOP SEITZ CELEBRATES MASS AT BASILICA

IX Diocesan Pilgrimage

By: Deacon Jesus Cardenas, Tepeyac Institute

Last month we had a wonderful time in the pilgrimage to visit the Basilica of Guadalupe and the hill of the Cubilete (Christ the King hill). For the first travel agents who coordinated the trip. We were not able to accommodate the more than 250 pilgrims into one plane, so there were three different planes flying the pilgrims to

show at Teotihuacan. The experience was amazing because the show uses this magnificent pyramid as screen. On it they project the history of the tribes that settled in this part of the country. Walking the streets of this magical city at night with all its beautiful lighting is an unforgettable experience.

By Tuesday morning, all pilgrims had arrived and we were ready for a quick tour of the historical center of the city. After seeing all this wonderful architecture we were ready to go to the Chapultepec castle where we encountered the magic of old Mexico as influenced by the French and American wars. The shaping of the country under the foreign invasions is noticeable in the modern culture of Mexico. From there we went walking to the National Museum of Anthropology and History. We only had time to visit one of the chambers: Mexican culture. Seeing the icons,

shapes and their concepts of divinity was a fascinating learning lesson for all of us. At the end of the day we visited the Suomaya Museum where we were pleasantly surprised at the private collections of Carlos Slim, who is sharing them with all the Mexican people. The colors and textures of these foreign countries was also evident in the museum and in comparison to the traditional Mexican crafts of art. With a better understanding of the indigenous peoples suffering after the conquest, we then visited La Morenita at the Basilica. The mass was celebrated by our Bishop Most Reverend Mark

Seitz and was truly beautiful and enlightening. During his mass he encouraged us to ask ourselves if our faith was big enough or if we needed to have someone "show us something in order to believe". If we



Deacon Cardenas, Father Mena and Father Trigueros celebrate mass at Cubilete Hill

time, we flew from Juarez to Mexico, and we arrived in just two and a half hours. We were greeted in Mexico City by the

the capital of Mexico.

The first two groups had the opportunity of experiencing the laser light



Holy Family Church
(Relic of Blessed Father Pro)

needed someone to show us something Bishop Seitz asked us to lift our eyes to the ayate (Juan Diego's cloak made of cactus fiber) and believe! We were embraced by her sight, and her beautiful eyes talked to us comforting all pain, and easing any difficulties. This was indeed a beautiful encounter with our mother.

We started Thursday with an early mass at the Holy Family church. It was there in front of the relics of Blessed Miguel Agustin Pro that Father Trigueros celebrated a beautiful mass on the Feast of St. Peter and St. Paul. During the celebration, I received the gift of a first degree relic ex-ossibus (a piece of bone) to bring to the community of St. Mark that is celebrating 25 years. After mass we continued our journey to Guanajuato and stopped at San Miguel de Allende where under the rain, we enjoyed this beautiful city, its traditions and its colorful landscape.

Friday was a day of traveling up the hill to the Cristo Rey statue in memory of the Cristeros. The journey was beautiful and when we arrived, dozens of young college students were around us, who came to thank God for the end of their semester. We shared the space with them and enjoyed their drum and trumpet band. At the Sanctuary of Guadalupe, just under the Cristo Rey statue, Father Antonio Mena presided over a beautiful celebration where he shared with us all the challenges, dates and names of the people involved in the construction of this magnificent monument.

Saturday was the day to return home for some of the pilgrims, while others continued to enjoy the wonderful creation of God on the beaches of Cancun. It was a good journey of faith and all the pilgrims came home with a deeper knowledge of their faith. Blessed be God!

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OBISPO SEITZ CELEBRA MISA EN LA BASILICA

4ta Peregrinación Diocesana

Por: Diacono Jesus Cardenas, Tepeyac Institute

El mes pasado pasamos un tiempo maravilloso en la peregrinación para visitar la Basílica de Guadalupe y el Cerro del Cubilete (cerro de Cristo Rey). Por primera vez, volamos de Juárez a México, en 2 ½ horas ya estábamos allí. Fuimos recibidos en la Ciudad de México por los agentes de viaje que coordinaron el viaje. Como no pudimos acomodar a todos los más de 250 peregrinos en un solo avión, hubo tres aviones diferentes que volaron a los peregrinos a la Ciudad de México.

Los primeros dos grupos tuvieron la oportunidad de experimentar el espectáculo de luces laser de Teotihuacán. La experiencia fue maravillosa porque usando la pirámide gigante como pantalla, proyectaron la historia de las tribus que se instalaron en esa parte del país. Caminando las calles de la ciudad en la noche con esa bella iluminación, fue una experiencia inolvidable.

Para el martes en la mañana, ya habían llegado todos los peregrinos, así que estábamos listos para un rápido recorrido por el Centro Histórico de la ciudad. Después de ver esas maravillosas construcciones, estábamos listos para ir al Castillo de Chapultepec donde encontramos la magia del México antiguo que fue influenciado por las guerras francesa y norteamericana. La forma que tomo el país bajo las invasiones extranjeras es tangible en la cultura moderna de México. Caminamos de allí al Museo Nacional de Antropología e Historia. Solo tuvimos tiempo para visitar un de los pabellones: La cultura Mexica. Viendo los iconos, formas y sus conceptos de divinidad fue una interesante lección educativa para todos nosotros. Para completar el día, visitamos el Museo Suomaya donde fuimos agradablemente sorprendidos con las colecciones privadas de Carlos Slim, quien las está compartiendo con el pueblo mexicano. Los colores

y texturas de otros países fueron evidentes al compararlos con el propio arte de México.

Con un mejor entendimiento del sufrimiento de los pueblos indígenas después de la conquista, visitamos a La Morenita en la Basílica, y la misa celebrada por nuestro obispo Mark Seitz fue hermosa e ilustrativa. Nos preguntamos si nuestra fe es lo suficientemente grande o si necesitamos que alguien "nos enseñe algo para creer", en ese caso, el obispo Seitz nos pidió que levantáramos los ojos al ayate y ¡creyéramos!

Fuimos abrazados por su mirada, y sus hermosos ojos nos



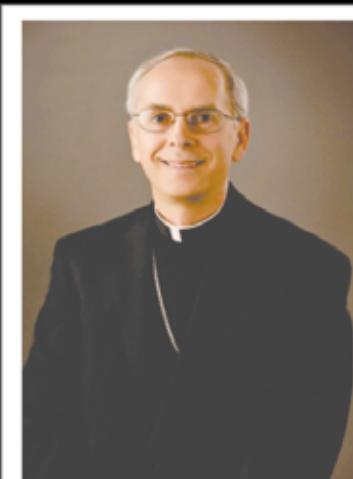
Bishop Celebrates Mass at the Basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe

nombres de las personas involucradas en tan magnífico monumento.

El sábado fue el día de retorno a casa para algunos peregrinos, mientras que otros continuaron a disfrutar la maravillosa creación de Dios en las playas de Cancún. Fue un buen viaje de fe, y los peregrinos volvieron a casa con un conocimiento expandido de su fe, ¡Bendito sea Dios!



El Paso Pilgrims at the Basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe



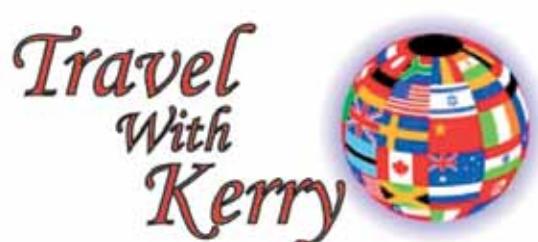
Dear Families of the Diocese of El Paso,

I take this opportunity to extend an invitation from Cardinal Kevin Farrell, Prefect of the Holy See's new office for Laity, Family and Life, and the Archbishop of Dublin, Diarmuid Martin to join families from around the world in taking part in the Ninth World Meeting of Families in Dublin, Ireland from August 21st through the 26th of 2018.

The World Meeting of Families will be a time to share the faith experiences of families from many parts of the world as well as a time to collaborate on the challenges and celebrations of day-to-day Catholic family life. This is a wonderful opportunity for the entire Church to deepen its reflection on the Pope's words in "Amoris Laetitia", seeing the family as a vital resource for sharing the message of God's love with the world.

May the Holy Family always guide, bless and strengthen you and your families.

In Christ, Most Reverend Mark J. Seitz, D.D.
Bishop of El Paso



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A TIME TO BE REBORN

By: Fr. Mariano Lopez, Director-Vocation Office

The monsoon season in the border region brings abundant rains and an opportunity for renewal. The mountains, which are traditionally brown with hints of faded green, experience a transformation. For a few days the Franklin Mountains become a vivid green and many desert plants, such as the ocotillo, begin to blossom in bright colors. The season brings about new life and renewal.

The desert's renewal is expressive of a renewal that our seminarians experience during the summer months. They are in the process of completing participation in varied formation experiences that are different from their ordinary experience of formation throughout the year. In many ways, the traditional life of a seminarian throughout the academic year mirrors the life of a monk. They often live and study in the same location and make frequent trips to the chapel for community prayer. The house where they live (seminary) has certain disciplines and practices that they must participate in and they are evaluated according to their ability to fulfill their commitments. They do, occasionally, leave the premises for a movie or for a time out in the town, but studies in theology and philosophy are time consuming and there is great dedication that must be spent within seminary as they pick up their books eagerly. Between the months of August and May our seminarians find themselves in this setting.

During the summer months, the diocese takes advantage of the school break to place the seminarians in varied summer

different communities of our diocese. Others are assigned to hospital ministry, and an accompanying process of

people as a future priest.

"One of my most challenging experiences this summer has been to accompany the family



This summer, Luis Rodarte taught the altar servers at Saint Patrick Cathedral about the different details involved in altar serving at mass.

assignments that provide unique opportunities for formation. Some seminarians are assigned to a parish (or diocesan ministry) immersion experience and to the mentorship of a pastor/supervisor whom they shadow. Seminarians are assigned to parishes they have not served in so that they may come to know the richness in diversity of the

reflection, in order to develop the ability and sensitivity to minister to God's holy people in illness and impending death. All seminarians of our diocese must participate in a ten-week spirituality program at Creighton University in Omaha, Nebraska. They foster their love for Jesus and learn how to relate to him and to his

members of a child who died in front of me, but I learned that I was able to be present to them and that I can serve God's people in very difficult moments," shared seminarian Ivan Montelongo. Seminarian Luis Rodarte shared that "Helping Saint Patrick Cathedral to train their altar servers has been a blessing. I was also able

to help Father Trini Fuentez to develop electronic forms for inner office use when it comes to different procedures." Participating in the Institute for Priestly Formation in Omaha, Nebraska has been enriching for seminarian Alfonso Coronado who shared, "I am grateful for this time and for the opportunity to learn so many things. I have been able to discover so many things about God and about my vocation this summer." Overall, the change of pace has been fruitful for the seminarians. As they share their testimony of how the formation has been of benefit, it is a blessing to visualize how God is giving them many gifts in abundance. In due season, their formation will lead many of them to the altar of God in order to consecrate their lives to him as future priests. God will bless his people as they find new and creative ways to share the wisdom, faith and love they have received with those who search for guidance and refuge in God through the ministry of the priest. We have many days and years to wait until we see their vocations realized. Yet, as we await this time of fulfillment, we are already seeing the first fruits of God's grace that has been abundant in their summer formation experiences.

As a people of God in the Diocese of El Paso, we would like for our seminarians to know that your diocese walks with you and anticipates the fulfillment of God's work in you for his glory!

UN TIEMPO PARA RENACER

Por: Padre Mariano Lopez, Director-Oficina de Vocaciones

La temporada del monzón en nuestra región trae abundantes lluvias y una posible renovación. Las montañas, que tradicionalmente son cafés con toques de verde pálido, viven una transformación. Por algunos días, las Montañas Franklin enverdecen y muchas plantas desérticas, como el ocotillo, comienzan a brotar con colores brillantes. Esta temporada trae vida nueva y renovación.

La experiencia de nuestros seminaristas durante el verano refleja la experiencia de renovación que vemos en el desierto. Ellos están en un proceso de participar en diversas experiencias que son muy diferentes a su rutina durante la mayoría del año. De muchas formas, su vida tradicional de seminaristas durante el año académico parece la vida de un monje. Frecuentemente viven y estudian en la misma ubicación y hacen visitas frecuentes a la capilla, en el mismo lugar, para rezar en comunidad. La casa donde viven (seminario) tiene ciertas disciplinas y prácticas en las que deben participar y son evaluados según su habilidad de cumplir con los compromisos que tienen. Ocionalmente, les toca salir a ver una película o

a pasear en la ciudad, pero los estudios en teología y filosofía exigen mucho tiempo y necesitan dedicar gran tiempo a su estudio. Entre los meses de agosto y mayo nuestros seminaristas se encuentran en este ambiente. Durante los meses de verano, la diócesis aprovecha que hay receso de clases para asignar a las seminaristas a diferentes experiencias formativas. Algunos seminaristas son asignados a parroquias (o ministerios diocesanos) para una experiencia de inmersión y bajo la guía de un supervisor/párroco a quien acompañan. Los seminaristas están asignados a parroquias donde no han servido para que lleguen a conocer la riqueza en diversidad de las diferentes comunidades de nuestra diócesis. Otros son asignados al ministerio en hospital, que está acompañado por un proceso de reflexión, para poder desarrollar la habilidad y sensibilidad para servir al pueblo santo de Dios en momentos de enfermedad y muerte próxima. Todos los seminaristas de nuestra diócesis participan en un programa de diez-semanas de espiritualidad en la Universidad de Creighton en Omaha, Nebraska. Allí nutren su amor por Jesús y

aprenden a vivir íntimamente con él y con su pueblo como un futuro sacerdote. "Una de mis experiencias más difíciles este verano ha sido acompañar a los familiares de un niño que murió frente a mí, pero aprendí que pude acompañarlos y que podré servir al pueblo de Dios en momentos difíciles," compartió el seminarista Iván Montelongo. El seminarista Luis Rodarte compartió que "Ayudar a la Catedral de San Patricio a capacitar a sus monaguillos ha sido una bendición. También pude ayudar al Padre Trini Fuentez a desarrollar unas formas electrónicas para el uso interno de la oficina." Participar en el Instituto de Formación Sacerdotal en Omaha, Nebraska ha sido muy enriquecedor para el seminarista Alfonso Coronado quien compartió, "Estoy agradecido por este tiempo y por la oportunidad de aprender tantas cosas. He descubierto muchas cosas sobre Dios y sobre mi vocación este verano." En general, el

cambio de ambiente ha dado mucho fruto para nuestros seminaristas. Al compartir su testimonio sobre como la formación les ha beneficiado, es una bendición visualizar como Dios les está dando abundantes dones. En su tiempo, la formación los llevará al altar de Dios a consagrar sus vidas a él como futuros sacerdotes. Dios bendecirá a su pueblo

del ministerio del sacerdote. Faltan muchos días y años para ver su vocación realizada. Sin embargo, al anticipar este tiempo de plenitud, ya estamos viendo los primeros frutos de la gracia de Dios, que ha sido abundante en sus experiencias de verano.

¡Como pueblo de Dios en la Diócesis de El Paso, nos gustaría que nuestros



Seminarians Alfonso Coronado, Cesar Garcia, Peter Venegas, Sergio Legarreta and Wilbert Colas (not pictured) participate in summer spirituality program in Omaha, Nebraska.

cuando ellos busquen maneras creativas y nuevas de compartir esta sabiduría, fe y amor con aquellos que buscan guía y refugio en el Señor por medio

seminaristas sepan que su diócesis los acompaña y anticipa el cumplimiento de la obra de Dios en ustedes para gloria Suya!

DIOS NO HACE BASURA

El Señor es siempre original, trabaja sobre modelos propios sin copiar ningún artífice anterior. Crea con amorosa originalidad el corazón el corazón de los hombres y mujeres, sus mentes, sus huellas digitales, el color de sus ojos y su capacidad de entrega y de victoria. Dios no acostumbra hacer a los hombres y mujeres con papel de carbón. Somos únicos e irrepetibles, no existe en el mundo nadie igual a ti, eres único y original. Dios no hace basura. Pensar o decir: "Yo no valgo nada, pretender ser víctimas, que te tengan lastima, inscribirnos en un sindicato de llorones, levantarse quejándose y en la noche ir a la cama lamentándose, salir a buscar el dolor o "mantener sufrimientos imaginarios", considerar que todo lo que nos gusta es pecado, es malo y engorda es hacer de la vida un "valle de lagrimas y lamentos". Dios nos creo para ser felices, gozar la vida, vivir bien y hacer el bien ayudando a los demás.

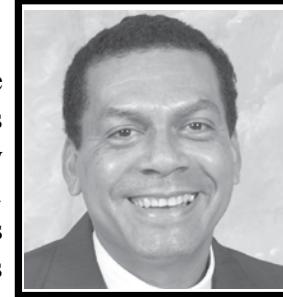
Años pasados, Stanley Coopermith, de la universidad de California, tuvo la curiosidad de por que algunas personas tienen éxito, mientras otras con los mismos talentos y oportunidades fracasan? Para contentar su pregunta, el hizo una investigación entre 1,700 estudiantes por seis años, haciendo un seguimiento en sus etapas de crecimiento y estudios.

Lo que encontró fue interesante. El factor más importante que contribuía al éxito o al fracaso era la autoestima. Una persona con una autoestima positiva es capaz de tener éxito una persona con una autoestima negativa es capaz de fracaso. Si nosotros nos percibimos valiosos o nos amamos, nosotros muy probablemente tendremos éxito en lo que hagamos, pero si nos percibimos que no valemos y no nos queremos a nosotros mismos, probablemente fracasamos. La autoimagen que tengamos de sí mismos es la llave de nuestro éxito o fracaso, no solo profesionalmente sino también como cristianos. Hay muchas personas que tienen una autoimagen negativa de sí mismos, tratan de impresionar a otros pero no se quieren a sí mismos, se exciben en facebook proyectando un delirio de grandeza, un afán de querer ser famosos pero se sienten poca cosa, inseguros de sí mismos. Junto a esta baja autoimagen, también tienen un autoconcepto negativo, que puede venir desde su niñez, en su crianza, no tienen una buena opinión o concepto bueno de si mismo piensan que merecen poco o nada de Dios y de los demás, su autovaloración es también negativa "no valgo nada". Que puedes ofrecer o esperar de la vida si piensan que no mereces nada? La imagen está de moda, por eso hay mucha gente que

no le gusta sus orejas o su nariz y se las quieren cambiar con las cirugías estéticas. Las que tienen mucho quieren poco y las que tienen poco quieren mucho... Hay gente que tiene miedo de mirarse al espejo porque no les gusta cómo se ven. Nadie es culpable de la cara que tiene sino de la cara que haces. Tiene que aprender a quererte como eres, tener confianza en ti mismo, creer en lo que eres y puedes, en lo que Dios te ha dado y puesto en ti.

Porque somos verdaderamente valiosos y debemos amarnos a nosotros mismos? Primero porque soy hijo de Dios. El me creo por amor, a su imagen y semejanza. Cuando experimente el rechazo, desprecio, la tristeza, dificultades... Mi primer pensamiento debe ser: Soy hijo de Dios, no soy cualquier cosa, todos somos hijos de Dios, aunque algunos no lo sepan ni lo acepten... Segundo: Que significa ser hijo de Dios? Que El esta antes que yo, El me amo primero, me dio la vida, antes que ser hijo de Julianito y Fulanita soy hijo de Dios; ninguna palabra, gesto o acción me deprime o causa tristeza. Nada ni nadie podrá quitarme lo que soy, hijo de Dios. Que te dejo tu novio o tu esposo, no se hunda en la tristeza; Dios bendice alguna veces, perdidas, desgracias, quitándonos personas o cosas, que a la larga

nos libera de relaciones tóxicas y problemáticas. Hay algunas ganancias que son



echar, de estar con Dios. Ni aunque nos portemos como hijos pródigos (Lc. 15, 11-31). Dios nos protege y nos educa, todo padre corrige a sus hijos y que no los corrija los corregirán en la calle (Hbr. 12, 7). Dios nos crea libres, para que cada uno decida lo que quiera. La vida es la construcción de mis decisiones. (Deut. 30, 15-20). No culpemos a Dios de nuestras decisiones, tú decides con quien casarte, como divertirte, como conducir... Si un estudiante pierde un examen o el curso no es culpa de Dios... O como dice la canción: "Porque se fue, por que murió, porque el Señor me la quito..." Venia al amanecer, borracho y se accidentó y murió la novia... Vivimos en un mundo donde nadie quiere reglas, consideran que la libertad es indeterminismo. Piensa lo que haces con tu libertad, debemos ser responsables porque un día daremos cuenta a Dios de nuestra vida (Gn. 2, 17). Todos somos valiosos y amados de Dios. "Yo los he amado como el Padre me ama a mí. (Jn. 15, 9; 11, 17; Is. 43, 1-18). Si recuerda cada mañana que te despierte: "Soy hijo de Dios" tendrá la fuerza y la dignidad para lograr todo lo que quieras ser. Animo!

Vida del Espíritu
por el Padre Wilson Cuevas

WHAT WILL WE DO FOR THE LEAST OF HIS CHILDREN

"Mom," cried Susana, "did you see that poor little boy on the news who was abandoned by his mom in a derelict shopping center? It's amazing how many people have called in to try to adopt and care for the little guy."

"Yes, so many people wondered how anyone could dump their child at an empty building without making sure he was safe and cared for by responsible guardians," responded Susana's mother. "However, only a few people asked what dreadful situation made abandonment seem the only solution. Even fewer wondered how they could have helped before the situation became so hopeless to make the parent that desperate."

"What are you saying?" asked Susana. "Didn't you see his sad eyes? They drilled right into my soul and made me want to help him even though I know I'm not able to accept the responsibility of a homeless child."

"Seeing a real person with our hearts as well as our

eyes can certainly awaken the humanity hiding behind our busy lives and the piles of bills to be paid," agreed Mom. "Too bad we can't see a preborn baby and marvel at the miracle of his development hidden away in his mother's womb. Maybe then more of us would also rush to save both baby and mother from the evil of abortion."

"Why is it so easy to feel that abortion is someone else's problem?" Susana asked, shaking her head. "Since the pro-life side is rarely allowed any media coverage except when being attacked by the pro-abortion side, no one is aware of the organizations that need our support to continue helping women care for their babies. Tax dollars are usually given to pro-abortion groups rather than pro-life angels."

"None of us can answer every cry for help in today's world, and I am the first to admit that there are many ways to answer God's call," Mom said. "However, I do believe that everyone can

and should learn how an issue affects us and those around us. Then we can decide to what extent we are called to help. Sometimes, our hearts are called to become involved in other issues, but by educating ourselves we can also bear witness to the sanctity of life simply through positive everyday reinforcement that all life is precious from conception to when God calls us back home to Him."

"In our confirmation retreat, a guy asked how we will know if we are doing enough to satisfy the One who will judge us on the last day?" Susana said. "On that day will we ask, 'Lord, when did we see you in desperate need of being rescued from death?' Will God smile at us and answer, 'Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least children of mine, you did for me' Or will he condemn us by saying, 'Amen, I say to you, what you did not do for one of these least ones, you did not do for me.' It's not that I worry about being judged after death

as much as I must live with my own conscience now and make sure that I am doing what I can for those who need me the most."

"Prayer and aware," Mom smiled and then explained. "We must first pray for God's guidance. Then we must make ourselves aware by learning the facts behind all the rhetoric and accepting the opportunities to witness to



Sidewalk Jesus
by
Janet M. Crowe

God's truth."

Susana hugged her mother and said, "A wonderful way to do both is to attend the House of Hope dinner on September 7th. I put your name down for four tickets, Mom."

"A new hope lights the night."
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The El Paso Diocese is expecting 6 new seminarians next year. We need your help to ensure that we are able to support them both in prayer and financially. We currently have 21 seminarians studying at schools across the country; Assumption (Texas), St. Mary's (Texas), Mundelein (Illinois), Conception College (Missouri), Sacred Heart (Wisconsin), and St. Charles Borromeo Seminary (El Paso).

This year, we welcomed a new priest, Father Cong Vo and two new Deacons. Their education was made possible by the grace of your prayers. The seminarians you support will become diocesan priests and remain in El Paso to help us with our growing parish communities and growing faith. So when you help

seminarians, you are investing in the future of the Catholic Church in the Diocese of El Paso.

Our goal is to continue to increase the number of seminarians in our program and eventually have 40 students in formation. The additional support of our community will ensure that we are able to fully support the 77 parishes and missions in our diocese. Our seminarians need your help; please consider making a donation to the Progress Appeal to ensure the continued education of our seminarians.

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La Diócesis de El Paso espera tener 6 nuevos seminaristas para el año próximo. Necesitamos de su ayuda para poder apoyarlos, tanto en oración como financieramente. Actualmente tenemos 21 seminaristas que estudian en las siguientes Universidades a través de la Nación: Asunción (Texas), Santa María (Texas), Mundelein (Illinois), Colegio Concepción (Missouri), Sagrado Corazón (Wisconsin) y en el Seminario San Carlos Borromeo (El Paso).

Este año le dimos la bienvenida a un nuevo sacerdote; el padre Cong Vo y a dos nuevos diáconos. Su educación fue posible por la gracia de vuestras oraciones. Los seminaristas que ustedes apoyan se convertirán en sacerdotes diocesanos y permanecerán en El Paso para ayudarnos con

nuestra fe y las crecientes comunidades parroquiales. Así que cuando usted ayuda a los seminaristas, usted está invirtiendo en el futuro de la Iglesia Católica en la Diócesis de El Paso.

Nuestro objetivo es continuar aumentando el número de seminaristas en nuestro programa y eventualmente tener 40 estudiantes en formación. El apoyo adicional de nuestra comunidad garantizará que podamos apoyar plenamente a las 77 parroquias y misiones de nuestra diócesis.

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11TH ANNUAL FOUNDATION OF FAITH DINNER

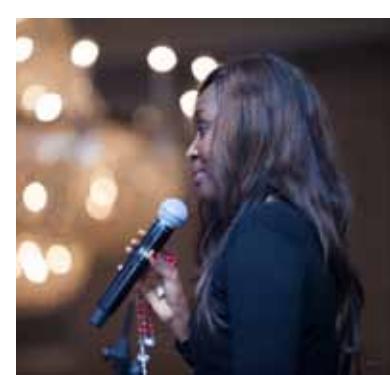
By: Sofia Larkin, Major Gifts Officer, Foundation for the Diocese of El Paso

The 11th Annual Foundation of Faith Dinner: Journey to Faith is set for Thursday, September 21, 2017



Fr. Jonathan Morris and Noemi Brady

at the El Paso Convention Center from 5-9pm, with



Immaculee Ilibagiza

cocktails and heavy hors

d'oeuvres beginning at 5pm. The evening includes the cocktail reception with a silent auction for Catholic schools, a seated dinner with wine, Dei Gratia Award presentation honoring Rudy and Elvia Miles, an exciting live auction, and our keynote speaker, Tom Leopold. Tickets are \$100 per person or \$1,000 for a table of 10 at fodinner.org.

The Foundation for the Diocese of El Paso will also host *An Intimate Evening* with Tom Leopold on Wednesday, September 20 at 6pm at a private home. Sponsorships of \$2,500 and up provide you with invitations to attend this special event, which includes dinner, wine, and one-on-one time with our keynote speaker.

Tom Leopold, veteran comedy writer of such hit TV shows as Seinfeld, Cheers, and Will and Grace, has been making audiences laugh for over four decades. Now he's keeping audiences

entertained as the co-host with Father Leo Patalinghug on "Entertaining Truth" on the Catholic Channel of Sirius XM. This former secular Jew and recent Catholic convert is a sought after speaker for his hilariously heartfelt and poignant performance lecture, "A Comedy Writer Finds God: My Journey to Faith, One Laugh at a Time". In 2014 he was honored with the Christopher Spirit Award by the Christophers, a nonprofit



**Most Rev. Mark J. Seitz,
D.D., Bishop of El Paso**

organization rooted in the Judeo-Christian tradition of service to God and humanity.

Leopold's funny and moving Catholic conversion story has been featured in The Catholic Herald, Our Sunday Visitor, Catholic News Service, National Catholic Reporter, American Catholic, The Lay Catholic, CatholicMom.com, and on America: National Catholic Review, EWTN, Global Catholic Network, American Catholic Relevant Radio, and Hail Satire.

We wish to thank our sponsors in advance: Dr. & Mrs. J. Manuel "Manny" and Maureen de la Rosa (Gold), Baron Chemical and Bowling Family Charitable (Silver), Mr. & Mrs. Javier and Linda Caro, the Kenedy Memorial Foundation, The Lemaster Group at Morgan Stanley, TVO Hospitality, and Travel with Kerry (Bronze). If you would like the opportunity to participate in this event, please visit fodinner.org or call the Catholic Foundation at 915.872.8412.

The Foundation for the Diocese of El Paso makes



**Dr. J. Manuel "Manny" de la Rosa &
Rev. Msgr. Francis J. Smith, P.A.**

a measurable impact on the lives of thousands of people in our community. Proceeds from this event will support the work of the Foundation in sustaining the long-term needs of the ministries, parishes and schools of our diocese and help us carry out God's work in our community.

You can reach Major Gifts Officer Sofia Larkin at 915.872.8412 or slarkin@elpasodiocese.org. The Foundation for the Diocese of El Paso is located at 499 St. Matthews Street and office hours are Monday – Friday, 9-12, 1-5, and by appointment.

Bishop Mark Seitz Establishes Soñador Scholarship Fund

Most Reverend Mark J. Seitz, D.D., Bishop of El Paso, announced the establishment of the Soñador Fund, managed by the Foundation for the Diocese of El Paso, at a press conference and unveiling of his Pastoral Letter on Migration to the People of God in the Diocese of El Paso.

Bishop Seitz believes strongly in educating our children on the border and is committed to their success. By his example and leadership, he fosters a deep appreciation for the diversity that immigrants bring to our cultural experience.

Gifts supporting the Soñador Fund will provide life changing opportunities for deserving students and migrant children to attend El Paso's Catholic schools.

Catholic schools are founded on Gospel values. They are places where everyone is welcome, including the most disadvantaged members of our communities. A Catholic education is inclusive, tolerant, challenging academically, faith-filled, and holistic. Students are taught a sense of their own worth as individuals as well as a commitment to serving society.

The Foundation for the Diocese of El Paso was established in 2001 to support the growing needs of our Catholic community. The Foundation currently manages 81 separate endowment funds for diocesan charities, ministries, parishes, and schools. Of

these, 24 funds, including the Bishop's Scholarship Fund and the Soñador Fund, are designated for Catholic schools. Each one of El Paso's Catholic schools has at least one endowed fund for scholarships. Their combined total is \$6.6 million.

Every spring, the

Foundation distributes 4% of the fund's value to schools. Building our Catholic schools' endowment funds to \$12 million will generate \$480,000 annually to support Catholic education.

The Foundation is awarding \$187,575 in scholarship aid to 82 students

for the 2017-2018 school year, including 11 Hunt Scholars. In

For more information or to contribute to the Soñador Fund, visit elpasodiocesefoundation.org or contact Major Gifts Officer Sofia Larkin at the Foundation at 915.872.8412..



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- AUG 10 - ACTS - ST RAPHAEL CHURCH (WOMEN/ENGLISH) 915-598-3431
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*Sorrow and Mourning Flee Away
Pastoral Letter on Migration
To the People of God in the Diocese of El Paso*



By
Most Reverend
Mark J. Seitz, D.D.
Bishop of El Paso





The burning sands will become pools, and the thirsty ground, springs of water ... And the ransomed of the LORD shall enter Zion singing, crowned with everlasting joy; they meet with joy and gladness, sorrow and mourning flee away.

(Isaiah 35: 7, 10)

INTRODUCTION

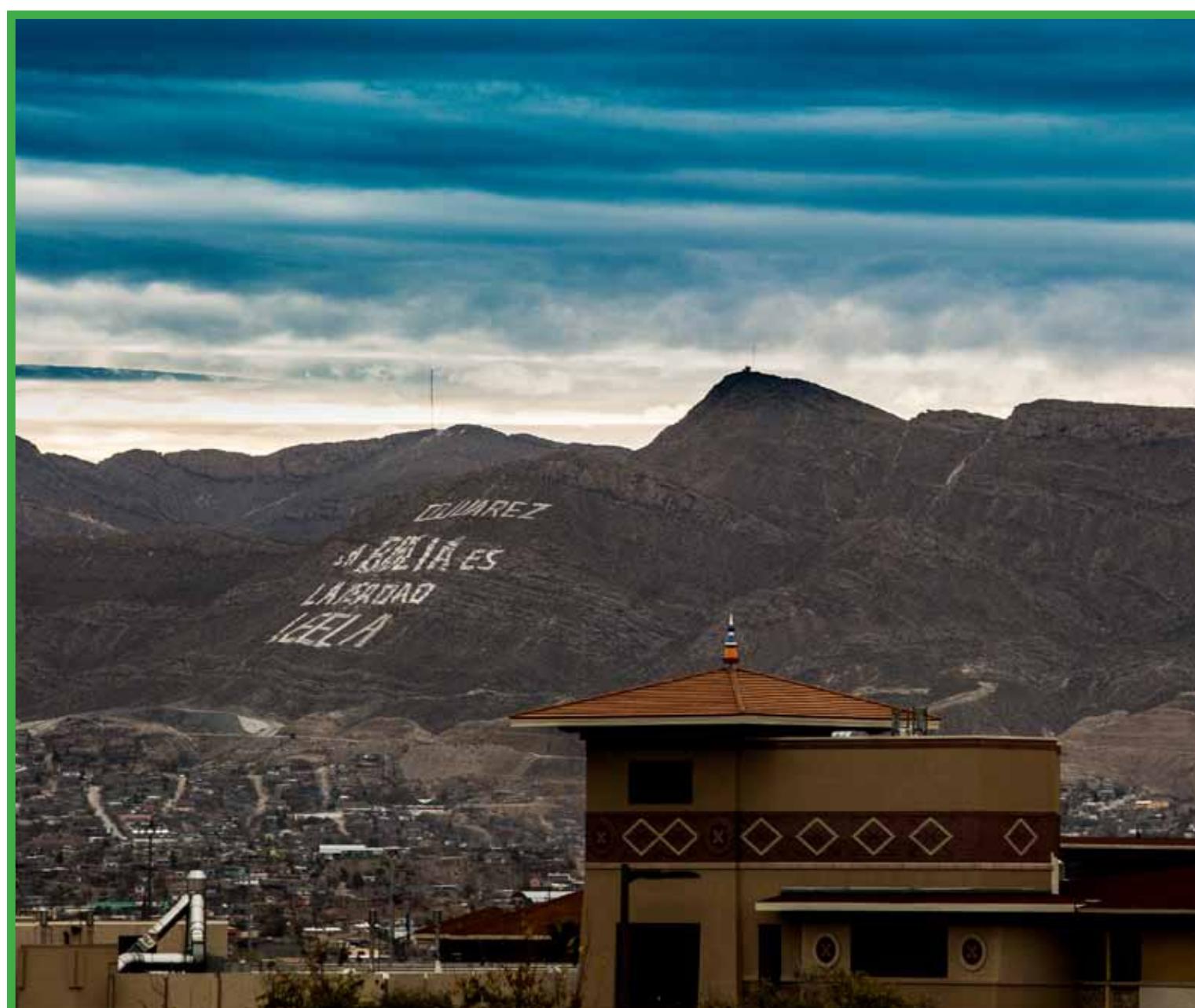
1. Four years ago, I came to the Chihuahuan Desert to take up the responsibility given to me by Pope Francis to steward the Church of God in El Paso. I came as a migrant to a community of migrants. Since then, I have seen your works, your faith, your charity and your endurance. I have shared in your challenges: the difficulties of raising a family today, anxieties about the future that tempt our young people, and the loneliness that burdens the old. Even in the midst of these struggles, with the burning sands and thirsty ground of summer, in the faith of the people of El Paso I have seen *sorrow and mourning flee*.

2. The Lord hears the cry of the poor (cf. Ps. 34: 7). Since Jesus announced Good News to the poor, our Church has been called to stand with the suffering. The Church must illuminate the challenges of the moment with the light of the Gospel, pointing out what reflects the Kingdom of God and what does not. As I write this letter to you, we are living in trying times as a country and migrants are living through a dark night of fear and uncertainty. Our border community knows the reality of a broken immigration system. As your pastor, I cannot ignore the stumbling block of a system that causes so much suffering among God's people. Misguided policies and walls are widening the divide between us and our sister city of Ciudad Juárez, deportations are separating parents from children, and harsh political rhetoric is causing fear in our parishes and neighborhoods. It is with this in mind that I feel it important to write to you now.

3. Our broken system of immigration is a wound on this border community. It is a scandal to the Body of Christ in El Paso. As Christians, our mission is to announce the Kingdom in the midst of a world "which often goes astray and needs to be encouraged, given hope and strengthened on the way."¹ As God's people here on the border, we are called to transform this desert, making refreshing pools of the burning sands of injustice and quenching the thirst of the oppressed. In this letter to you, the People of God in El Paso, I invite you to consider the challenges of a system which is breaking apart our community and to reflect upon how God is asking us to respond. In bold and specific ways, I wish to grow in our commitment to charity and justice on our border and towards our migrant brothers and sisters.



Immigrant Jesus statue with traditional zarape at St. Pius Catholic Church in El Paso Texas.



The view of Ciudad Juarez from the steps of the University of Texas at El Paso.



A child gazes into Ciudad Juarez from El Paso during the Border Mass celebrated by both cities on the banks of the Rio Grande river.



NAMING OUR REALITY

Our Unique Border Identity

4. God has richly blessed our border community. We reject narratives that paint our border as a place of chaos, violence and mayhem. As a community deeply shaped by the reality of migration, we celebrate our strengths and unique identity, as well as its safety and security, even when others would belittle the contribution of migrants and falsely portray the reality of the border. Our border brings together cultures, peoples and countries. We are united in family, fiesta and faith. As one of the largest binational border communities in the world, migration is a part of our DNA. The vast majority here have strong ties across the border in Mexico, particularly in Ciudad Juárez. With our brothers and sisters across the bridge, we speak the same language. We wake up each morning to the same beautiful mountains, we dance to the rhythm of mariachis, and we share burritos and champurrado. With San Juan Diego, we stand together under the mantle of Our Lady of Guadalupe.

5. Providence has blessed the peoples, lands and mountains of the Chihuahuan Desert, a place of constant migration. Our desert has been home to indigenous communities, like the Ysleta del Sur Pueblo, or Tigua, since time immemorial. These communities have a long and honorable legacy of trade, self-government and free movement of peoples which has shaped our border region for centuries, although their rights have not always been respected. So as not to repeat the errors of the past, we should “educate new generations not to turn their back on our ‘neighbors’ and everything around us.”²

In 1598, before even the first Thanksgiving in New England, a Holy Mass of Thanksgiving was celebrated by Spanish migrants in San Elizario, the first seat of El Paso County. The migrant colonists feasted together with members of the Manso indigenous tribe. Paso del Norte, the one community founded on the banks of the Rio Grande that has become the two cities of El Paso and Ciudad Juárez, grew as an important stop on the Camino Real, connecting Santa Fe with Mexico City.

Migrants from the then-Republic of Texas and from United States would soon increase our numbers. Workers from as far away as Ireland and China arrived to build the railroad running through El Paso that would connect the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. El Pasoans welcomed those fleeing dangers at the time of the Mexican Revolution and during the Cristero War. Many of those living in Ciudad Juárez found safety in our city, including priests, religious and seminarians. In those years the saintly Chihuahuayan priest, Pedro de Jesus Maldonado, was ordained in our Cathedral of St. Patrick, and was later canonized as one of the Mexican Martyrs.

During the Second World War, *braceros* came to tend our fields and crops. At the end of the last century, another generation of migrants from Mexico came with hopes for a better future after massive displacements caused by changing trade relations. Many have arrived here from other parts of the country, having come to serve at Fort Bliss and then deciding to stay in our beautiful region, which quickly makes one feel at home. We continue to receive survivors of violence, poverty and persecution from countries around the world that look to us for safety and refuge. New Americans revitalize our community with the values of faith, family and hard work.

6. Even in hardships, reversals and disappointments, the Spirit has been at work in this long history of migrations, moving hearts to hospitality, rewarding hope with opportunities for work, and

building harmony in diversity. Our Chihuahuan Desert has been a powerful place of encounter, where a true culture of *encuentro* has taken root and allowed flowers of life, culture and faith to bloom even in the driest of sands. The Church’s work of evangelization takes place within this great drama, announcing words of blessing, affirming life and pointing to the Kingdom. We are servants on the patient journey towards the civilization of love that the Spirit is preparing for all humanity.

7. As a border community, we have a unique vocation to demonstrate the Christian virtue of hospitality. I am humbled by the charity and initiative of our people in welcoming the stranger. Our diocese is blessed with heroic individuals, families, pastors, religious, parishes and institutions that spend themselves in service to migrants and refugees. For nearly forty years, Annunciation House has welcomed thousands fleeing conflict, hunger and persecution. Parishes and convents have opened their doors in unprecedented ways to those who continue to arrive to our border from Mexico, Central America, Brazil, Cuba, Haiti and so many other countries.

Our people advocate for just laws and against the militarization of our border. Our Diocesan Migrant & Refugee Services fulfills a critical community need in providing legal services. The newly arrived learn English in our parish halls, receive food and clothing from parish pantries and *despensas*, and are accompanied to bus stations and the airport by volunteers. Know Your Rights trainings are offered after Mass and new citizens register to vote for the first time. Volunteers offer words of comfort to those in immigrant detention and parish RICO ministries offer faith formation and celebrate the birthdays and quinceañeras of detained unaccompanied minors. There is no distinction between documented and undocumented when together we receive the Bread of Life in our chapels and churches.

In all these works, we see how Christ continues to unite himself to humanity in our time. As your bishop, I have much for which to be grateful.

A Broken System of Immigration

8. Not everyone sees our broken immigration system in the same way. Yet we can all agree that the present system is not functioning adequately. The moral consequences of this system for our brothers and sisters simply cannot be ignored. Pope Francis often says that “realities are more important than ideas”³. No one can deny the terrible human impacts of a system that divides families, permits some to detain human beings for profit, and compromises our nation’s historic commitment to the refugee and asylum seeker. The burning sands of our desert are an unmarked grave for too many migrants who have died attempting to cross. Increased militarization and more walls will only make this journey even more dangerous.

Our border community bears disproportionately the burdens of a broken system. I am shepherd of a diocese with multiple immigrant detention centers that hold untold numbers of human beings every night, where anguish multiplies and hope is dimmed. I am pastor of a diocese divided by walls and checkpoints that separate individuals from loved ones. I am bishop of a flock frightened by the flashing lights of police cars in the rearview mirror, who wonder if this family outing or that drive home from work will be the last. I am spiritual father to thousands of Border Patrol and ICE agents, who put their lives on the line to stem the flow of weapons and drugs and those who carry them. Many agents are troubled in conscience by divisive political rhetoric and new edicts coming from Washington, DC. I am a citizen of a community where children worry whether mom or dad will be there when they return from school. In this situation, daily I ask the Lord to give me the right words to console, to denounce injustice and announce redemption.

9. Recently we have witnessed indefensible, hateful words towards our neighbors in Mexico, the demonization of migrants, even of those children known as Dreamers, and destructive language about our border. This year, enforcement actions have escalated and the deportation of those with no criminal record has increased. Distrust has grown between communities and those who enforce our nation’s laws. We have seen asylum seekers, even journalists fleeing for their lives, now put into detention as a matter of course. We have heard threats that migrant children may be separated from their mothers at the border. Here in Texas, community policing efforts essential for our safety are threatened by a new law, SB4, which will authorize local officers to serve as immigration agents, raising the spectre of a mass deportation force.

Though our Church has been clear about the imperative to solve this perennial problem, our elected leaders have not yet mustered the moral courage to enact permanent, comprehensive immigration reform. Still migrants are treated, as Pope Francis says, as “pawns on the chessboard of humanity”⁴. Their labor and talents are exploited but they are denied the protections of the law and are scapegoated for our social and economic ills.

CONFRONTING OUR REALITY

The Teaching of the Church on Migration

10. Who can forget the moving visit of Pope Francis to the Rio Grande last year? I remember the faces of the many migrants, survivors of violence, workers and unaccompanied minors -- our "Pope Francis V.I.P.'s" -- who greeted the Holy Father in the name of El Paso community, and indeed the entire United States, as he approached the Rio Grande. I cannot but think that theirs were the faces of the American dream, signed with struggle but pregnant with hope. The haunting chant of the *Requiem aeternam*, the Church's prayer for the dead, sung by the choir as the pope approached the border fence to pray for those who died in the desert, never to realize their earthly dreams, should sear our memory. His plea for an end to the tragedy of forced migration was clear - "No more death! No more exploitation!"⁵

11. Pope Francis expressed the Church's entire teaching on migration in that moment on the Rio Grande: encounter, conversion and compassion. This teaching rests on ancient foundations. The Old Testament is clear: "You shall treat the alien who resides with you no differently than the natives born among you; you shall love the alien as yourself; for you too were once aliens in the land of Egypt" (*Lev. 19:34*). Jesus himself was a refugee on the flight into Egypt (cf. *Mt. 2:13-23*). We know that God stands on the side of migrants, and "is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared a city for them" (*Heb. 11:16*). Every human being bears within him or her the image of God, which confers upon us a dignity higher than any passport or immigration status. On account of this dignity, the Church has long recognized the first right of persons not to migrate, but to stay in their community of origin. But when that has become impossible, the Church also recognizes *the right to migrate*.⁶ While countries have a duty to ensure that immigration is orderly and safe, this responsibility can never serve as a pretext to build walls and shut the door to migrants and refugees.

12. Law should be at the service of human beings and should ensure the sanctity of all life. Laws that do not respect human dignity and ensure due process must be changed. While respect for the rule of law is essential, we recognize that our true "citizenship is in heaven" (*Phil. 3:20*), and so we judge earthly law, including our immigration laws, according to a higher criterion. As Martin Luther King, Jr. wrote from the Birmingham jail, quoting St. Thomas Aquinas, "an unjust law is a human law that is not rooted in eternal law and natural law."⁷ We must also beware of those "doctors of the law", the scribes and Pharisees of our day, who self-righteously hold others to a standard they would never apply to themselves. They attempt to enforce minutiae of the law meanwhile ignoring the unbearable burdens they are laying on children and families (cf. *Matt. 23: 1-23*).

The Need for Comprehensive Immigration Reform

13. Building walls, deploying a mass deportation force and militarizing our border are not long-term solutions to the challenges of migration. Only comprehensive immigration reform will bring lasting solutions. In our country, the United States Conference of Bishops has been the most consistent advocate for migrants and for comprehensive immigration reform, with its work deeply rooted in biblical teaching and the papal magisterium, including the teaching of popes Francis, Benedict XVI and John Paul II. Comprehensive immigration reform should include the following:

- Nations that enjoy the peace, prosperity and security that we do must ensure that there are sufficient legal avenues for migrants workers and their families, who fill important roles in our economy, to migrate in a safe and orderly way.

- Reforming our immigration system means putting families first. We should end deportation practices that separate families and adopt a system that prioritizes family unity. It can currently take decades for families to be reunited through today's burdensome and expensive system.

- As a country, we are involved in the drivers of migration, through things like unfair trade policies, our addiction to drugs and even climate change. Lawmakers should address the root causes of migration and promote sustainable economic development abroad, which will allow our brothers and sisters to remain in their home countries and support themselves and their families in safety.

- Comprehensive immigration reform will provide security while still allowing for the orderly entry of people into our country, especially those fleeing for their lives. As millions are brought out of the shadows and given the chance to regularize their situation, law enforcement officials will be able to focus on those who are truly a threat to our communities.

14. We will never build a utopia in this broken world of ours. Guarding mere passing possessions is not our goal. We serve a

God of abundance who provides for the needs of those who serve Him with charity and generosity. We trust that God did not create a world lacking room for all at the banquet of life. By remembering our ultimate destiny and trusting in He who accompanies us we can recognize that our generous service here prepares us for the Kingdom to come.

The Power of 'Encuentro'

15. While the teaching of the Church on migration is rich and persuasive, nothing can substitute for personal experience. I remember that as a parish priest, I would often travel to Honduras to minister to a sister parish there. The extreme poverty in which the people lived was like nothing we in this country could imagine and the violence was pervasive. There I met a committed member of the parish, Delia, a mother of five girls and a boy, a beautiful but very poor family. Her 16-year-old daughter, Irma, would beg me to bring her to the United States. One day, the daughter decided to make the journey on her own. She ended up in a detention center in South Texas.

Years later, her younger sister, Aura, also made the difficult decision to come. I received a phone call telling me that Aura, just 24-years-old, was in detention in El Paso. She had crossed the bridge from Ciudad Juárez. She was alive, thank God, but she didn't survive the trip without serious physical and psychological wounds. Aura had been forced into slavery by a gang in Honduras, made to suffer unspeakable cruelty. She had to choose between continued enslavement and leaving her sick mother. When she made the agonizing decision to flee, she was kept locked in a compartment under a bus, forced to inhale toxic fumes for hours on end. She escaped and made it through the nightmare of the desert all the way to our border. But after escaping from criminals, here in the land where she hoped she would be safe she was treated like a criminal, put behind bars in immigrant detention.

Sadly, Aura isn't alone in her experience. We who minister along the border know the stories of the those who continue to come fleeing violence, hunger and countries destabilized in no small part because of our insatiable appetite for drugs. For some, deportation back to those situations may even be a death sentence. We will fix our broken immigration system the day we stop seeing people like Aura with fear and with stony hearts. Aura is your neighbor! Aura is your sister!

16. I remember, too, the faces of those who bravely told their migration stories in our Cathedral during our *Witness to Dignity & Solidarity*, held together with our civic and interfaith community earlier this year. We heard the voices of Dreamers, asylum seekers and migrant families. I remember Rosa, a mother of three children and grandmother of four, who crossed the border without documents nearly 30 years ago. Rosa is a pillar of the Segundo Barrio neighborhood and as well as an untiring volunteer at our Sacred Heart Parish. Because Rosa's husband was deported a long time ago, she faced the challenge of raising a family on her own, working long days cleaning homes and caring for those with disabilities. She has raised a strong and beautiful family. Her daughter, Rosa, is a committed teacher in our public schools and her son, Jesus, is a hardworking engineer. Who can deny that our community would be diminished without the faith, hard work and contributions of Rosa and her family?

17. These moments of encounter with our migrant brothers and sisters can be occasions for conversion. More and more people go about their daily lives today as if God did not exist. This growing indifference towards God seems to exist side by side with a growing coldness towards the poor and suffering, *as if they did not exist*.



Pope Francis waves to and blesses his faithful immigrant audience attending his Juarez mass across the river in El Paso.



In times of anguish and confusion we ask- *where is God?* But the Gospel teaches us that we will find Him among the poor and excluded, in their “struggle for survival” which “contains within it a profound understanding of life which often includes a deep religious sense.”⁸ As our Holy Father says, the poor “have much to teach us. We need to let ourselves be evangelized by them.”⁹

Migrants are prophetic in their lived testimony to values increasingly sidelined in today’s culture: faith, life and family. And they wake us from our indifference, opening our eyes to the injustices of globalization and “an economy of exclusion and inequality.”¹⁰ I am convinced that the depth of faith of our people and the vitality of our parishes are owed in no small part to our community’s generosity in welcoming the stranger and the option we make for the poor.

18. There may be those who question whether in these reflections I am not substituting politics for the teaching of the Church. I answer that as a pastor my duty is to the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Our migrant brothers and sisters, those who worship in our churches, minister in our parishes, study in our schools, labor in the fields, serve in our armed forces … each of them today is living in a desert of anxiety and isolation. For many of those who continue to come to our border, they are not just seeking a better life, but life itself. Our Christian community is called to journey with them in their anxiety and pain on the road to liberation, away from sorrow and mourning and on the road to a future of joy and gladness. God wishes to save his people today, by making a new history. We are called to action!

T RANSFORMING OUR REALITY

19. We must continue to show compassion and attend to the material and spiritual needs of the tens of thousands of undocumented migrants in our diocese and to those who continue to arrive at our border. Our solidarity must be effective. In order to examine the question of migration in the light of a changing political climate and to assist me in discerning a path forward for our diocese towards deeper solidarity, I am establishing a Diocesan Commission on Migration. We know that as a Church we “cannot and must not remain on the sidelines in the fight for justice.”¹¹ This pastoral letter is an important milestone in that work, but I hope it is just a beginning of a deeper solidarity with the poor and excluded.

20. To Our Migrant Brothers and Sisters, We Stand With You!
As your bishop, I pledge my commitment to stand with you in this time of anxiety and fear. I promise to hear you, celebrate with you, break bread with you, pray with you and weep with you. You possess a dignity that no earthly law or court can take away. Your families enrich our community and strengthen our parishes. Your perseverance, dedication and enthusiasm for a better future renew our hope. In this time of trial, remember that our one hope is Jesus Christ, whose grace is sufficient for us and whose power is perfected in weakness (cf. 2 Cor. 12:9). Know that the Church of El Paso is with you, defends and affirms your human dignity, and advocates for your rights.

As one example of this commitment, I am establishing a new *Soñador Fund* to offer financial assistance to children of our migrant families to attend our Catholic schools. I will begin this new scholarship fund with a personal contribution. Historically, Catholic education has been one of the most effective means of empowering migrants and helping them to integrate into our community and country. Catholic schools in the Diocese of El Paso have transformed lives and I am committed to growing this legacy. I invite those with means to assist me in increasing this vital support for our children.

21. To Our Priests and Parishes, Advocate for Migrants!

Our parishes should be places where migrants are welcomed and strengthened in their faith. Our faith community is also called to announce the Good News of the Kingdom, shaping the terms of public debate for a more just society and witnessing to the values of mercy, justice and truth. Our parishes should be hubs of prayer, study and dialogue, where Catholics can get involved in the work of building a more humane border through education and advocacy.

We must continue to denounce the evil of family separation, the militarization of our border communities, for-profit immigrant detention, the mistreatment of asylum seekers and the disparagement of our Muslim brothers and sisters. We must address the plague of substance abuse afflicting our people, the confusion and depression that push our children to drugs, and the drug trafficking destabilizing Mexico and Central America, driving migration to our border. We must confront the injustice of a global economy of exclusion that forces maquila workers in Ciudad Juárez to earn among the lowest factory wages in Mexico. We must work to overcome the polarization tearing our communities apart.

The Commission on Migration will work with parishes to intensify our advocacy, particularly through the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops’ Justice for Immigrants Campaign. An intensive formation program will be offered through Tepeyac Institute to develop leaders to serve as members of parish advocacy and rapid response teams for families affected by deportation or detention. Together with our neighbors and other faith groups, we must engage our elected leaders as well as the leaders of local law enforcement and immigration enforcement agencies to promote the common good.

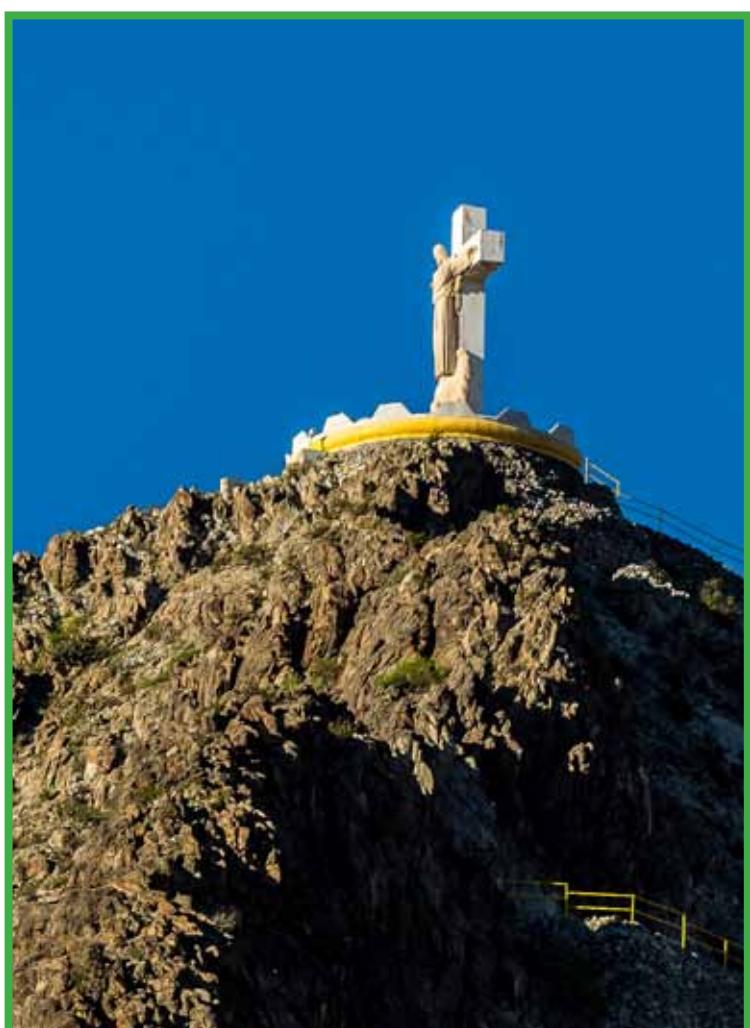
22. To Our Faithful, Get Engaged Locally! I call on the faithful to get even more deeply involved in the many works of charity and justice undertaken daily on behalf of migrants within our diocese. The work of Annunciation House and the efforts of Diocesan Migrant & Refugee Services are a source of pride for our community. I also commend the work of the Casa del Migrante in Ciudad Juárez, which shelters and feeds those newly arriving to our border and those who have been deported. Many of our local community organizations have been supported by the Catholic Campaign for Human Development and have proven themselves to be effective advocates for human dignity and the rights of migrants. Everyday our parishes provide support and spiritual nourishment to migrants in ways that often go unnoticed. All of us can assist in this great work by getting involved as volunteers and through our support.

23. To Law Enforcement and Immigration Enforcement Agents, Thank You! Know that your dedication and bravery in serving our community and protecting our country are appreciated. Local law enforcement representatives have taken important stands in prioritizing community policing and limiting participation in immigration enforcement. Even in the face of SB4, I hope the positive gains of local law enforcement in engaging migrant communities will not be lost.

Those who administer our nation’s immigration laws daily face difficult and sometimes dangerous situations. I appeal to you, do not ignore the obligations of conscience! Treat all you encounter with dignity and respect and with the American values of fairness and justice. To agents who work in the field, remember that those whom you encounter in your work are your brothers and sisters, children of God. No human being is illegal! I promise to pray for your daily safe return to your homes and families.

To those in leadership in Border Patrol and U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, I appeal to your dedication to the noble ideals in the Constitution of equal treatment under the law and due process. While I would not offer false expectations of protection to those without legal immigration status, it is my pastoral duty to ensure that our churches and Catholic schools remain places of unity, hospitality and reverence.

Thus, I have instructed our diocesan counsel to send a memorandum to pastors and Catholic school principals indicating to them that agents of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement and Border Patrol are to be respectfully told that they are not to enter church premises to execute enforcement actions without a warrant signed by a judge if there is not a situation of imminent danger.



Dedicated in 1940, this 29 foot limestone monument to Christ is visible from both sides of the border and serves as a shrine to thousands of faithful in the El Paso, Juarez and Southern New Mexico area.

I count on your goodwill in maintaining respect for sensitive locations like places of worship, hospitals and schools and in preserving public order. I promise my collaboration and sincere wishes for a continued productive relationship and exchange of viewpoints on behalf of the common good of this community.

24. To Our Community Leaders, We Pledge to Work With You! El Paso is blessed with many advocates who work everyday to build a better border community. To our elected leaders, we promise to collaborate with you in building a society where the rights of every human person are respected and to support you in taking courageous stances on behalf of the common good and in defense of the poor.

To our teachers, we thank you for making classrooms places where all our children feel safe and supported. To those in the media, I thank you for conveying truthful and critical information to the community. To the many borderland ecumenical and interfaith leaders, I am proud of our common witness to the power of faith to move hearts to justice and I look forward to working with you to advance the core commitments of our faith traditions to hospitality and welcoming the stranger.

25. To Those Outside Our Border Community, Come and See! The portrait of our border depicted in the media and promoted by those in faraway capitals is often inaccurate and driven more by private interest than interest in the truth. Our border is beautiful, rich in history and culture, faith and natural wonder. This is a place where people of many cultures, languages and nationalities coexist and thrive. I invite young people, volunteers, attorneys and other professionals to spend time with us in service opportunities available through our many church and community organizations.

I ask lawmakers and policymakers in other parts of the country to end the demonization of our border, our border residents and migrants. Migrants and migration are not problems to be solved, but are rather “a great resource for humanity’s development.”¹² Millions of people here on our border and throughout our country are praying for you and for a resolution to our broken system. In the meantime, I add my voice to those calling for a moratorium on the deportation of non-violent immigrants until as a country we arrive at consensus and reform. The voice of border communities must be taken into consideration in the shaping of border enforcement policies and in debates on immigration reform. Let us reject a mindset of hostility and work together in generous cooperation for the common good.

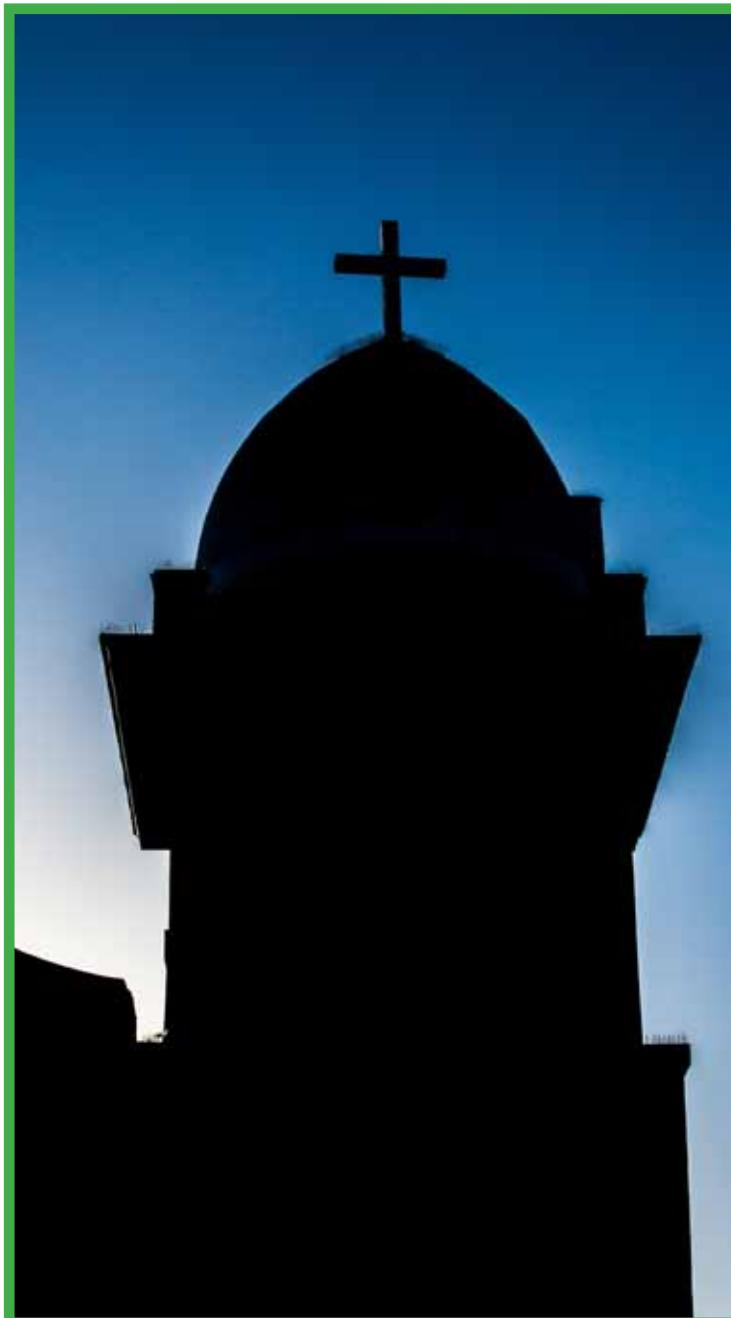
CONCLUSION

We belong to “a Church without frontiers, a Church which considers herself mother to all.”¹³ Every year, the faithful of Ciudad Juárez, Las Cruces and El Paso come together to celebrate the Border Mass. We find ourselves divided by a fence or a river, by an economy of exclusion or unjust migration policies. Yet, even in the midst of all that divides us, the Border Mass is a joyful reminder that the Eucharistic Christ is building a New Humanity, leading all of us together to the New Jerusalem. Our Lady of Guadalupe inspires in us a vision of the Americas as a great Temple for God’s people, where the *ransomed of the LORD shall enter Zion singing, crowned with everlasting joy*.

May these bonds of charity continue to grow and inflame our hearts. May we take up new and prophetic actions to bring about the Kingdom of justice, truth and reconciliation in order to transform this desert, so that *the burning sands will become pools, and the thirsty ground, springs of water*.

Given this day, the 18th of July, in the year of our Lord 2017.

+Mark Joseph Seitz
Bishop of El Paso



Mission de San Antonio de la Ysleta Sur is considered the first and oldest mission established in the State of Texas and the second oldest continually active parish in the United States. This Mission resides in the heart of the Tigua Indian community, where culture and faith run strong.

PRAAYER FOR MIGRANTS

O Lord, just as the Prophet Isaiah did in his time, so we in this time share your vision of hope.

We, too, have experienced the burning sands and thirsty ground of human indifference and exclusion.

We mourn the suffering of our brothers and sisters from Latin America and elsewhere forced by violence, corruption and misery to leave family and everything they treasure to seek a chance at life here in our blest land.

But we know, Lord, that you yourself are a migrant. You experienced the trials of the refugee, having fled as a child with your parents, Joseph and Mary, to Egypt.

We know your special love for those with no other possession but one another, and you.

Move our hearts, Lord, and the hearts of our leaders to love them as you do, to love them with your love, to be your love for migrants at the doorway of our country.

Fill our hearts with your compassion. Help us to know that by loving in this way we will not be depending on our limited resources but upon the abundance of the One who with a simple blessing provided a banquet for five thousand with five small loaves of bread and two fish.

Fill us with joy and gladness as we become witnesses of your transforming work. You who call forth life from nothing and make the desert bloom, save those who call upon you. Ransom them and fill them with your joy. Accompany them with the intercession of Our Lady of Guadalupe, with San Toribio Romo, with our own San Pedro De Jesus Maldonado and all the Saints. And grant that one day we who have served them here may migrate with them to the Kingdom where you live and reign forever and ever.

Amen!

¹FRANCIS, Apostolic Exhortation Evangelii Gaudium (24 November 2013),¹¹⁴ ²FRANCIS, Address to the Joint Session of the United States Congress (2015).³ Apostolic Exhortation Evangelii Gaudium (24 November 2013), 231.⁴ Message for the World Day of Migrants and Refugees (2014).⁵ Homily at Mass at Ciudad Juárez Fairgrounds (17 February 2016).⁶ Cf. JOHN XXIII, Encyclical Letter Pacem in Terris (11 April 1963), 106.⁷ I Have a Dream: Writings and Speeches that Changed the World. Ed. James M. Washington (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1992), 89.⁸ Apostolic Exhortation Evangelii Gaudium (24 November 2013), 72.⁹ Ibid. 198.¹⁰ Ibid. 53.¹¹ BENEDICT XVI, Encyclical Letter Deus Caritas Est (25 December 2005), 28.¹² BENEDICT XVI, Address, Angelus (14 January 2007).¹³ FRANCIS, Apostolic Exhortation Evangelii Gaudium (24 November 2013), 210. Scripture texts in this work are taken from the New American Bible, revised edition © 2010, 1991, 1986, 1970 Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, Washington, D.C. and are used by permission of the copyright owner. All Rights Reserved. No part of the New American Bible may be reproduced in any form without permission in writing from the copyright owner. Other photos by Joe Najera.



El páramo se convertirá en estanque y la tierra sedienta, en manantial. Los rescatados por el Señor vendrán a Sión con cánticos de júbilo, coronados de perpetua alegría; serán su escolta el gozo y la dicha, porque la pena y la aflicción habrán terminado.

(Isaías 35,7.10)

INTRODUCCIÓN

1. Hace cuatro años, vine al Desierto de Chihuahua para asumir la responsabilidad que me encomendara el Papa Francisco para guiar la Iglesia de Dios en El Paso. Llegué como migrante a una comunidad de migrantes. Desde entonces, he visto el trabajo de ustedes, su fe, su caridad y su perseverancia. Conozco sus retos, como las dificultades de sacar adelante una familia en la actualidad, las ansiedades acerca del futuro que tientan a nuestros jóvenes y la soledad con la que cargan los ancianos. Aún en medio de estas luchas, entre el páramo y la tierra sedienta, he visto la pena y la aflicción terminarse en la fe del pueblo de El Paso.

2. El Señor escucha el clamor de los pobres (cf. *Sal. 34,7*). Desde que Jesús anunció la Buena Nueva a los pobres, nuestra Iglesia ha sido llamada a solidarizarse con los que sufren. La Iglesia debe iluminar los retos del momento con la luz del Evangelio, señalando lo que el Reino de Dios refleja y lo que no. Mientras les escribo esta carta, estamos viviendo tiempos difíciles como país y los migrantes están viviendo a través de una noche oscura, de miedo e incertidumbre. Nuestra comunidad fronteriza conoce muy bien la realidad de un sistema migratorio quebrado. Como pastor

no puedo ignorar la piedra de tropiezo de un sistema que causa tanto sufrimiento al pueblo de Dios. Los muros y las políticas equivocadas están ampliando la división entre nosotros y nuestra hermana Ciudad Juárez, las deportaciones están separando a los padres de sus hijos y la dura retórica política está generando miedo en nuestras parroquias y vecindarios. Es con esto en mente que siento la importancia de escribirles en este momento.

3. Nuestro sistema de inmigración quebrado es una herida en esta comunidad fronteriza. Es un escándalo hacia el Cuerpo de Cristo aquí en El Paso. Como cristianos, nuestra misión es anunciar el Reino en medio de un mundo «que a menudo se pierde, necesitado de tener respuestas que alienten, que den esperanza, que den nuevo vigor en el camino.»¹ Como Pueblo de Dios aquí en la frontera, estamos llamados a transformar este desierto, construyendo manantiales refrescantes de sus páramos para así saciar la sed de los oprimidos. En esta carta dirigida a ustedes, el Pueblo de Dios en El Paso, les invito a considerar los retos de un sistema que está dividiendo nuestra comunidad y reflexionar cómo Dios nos está pidiendo una respuesta. Resaltado y de manera específica, es mi deseo renovar nuestro compromiso de caridad y justicia en nuestra frontera hacia nuestros hermanos y hermanas migrantes.



A los matachines seguido se les llama los “Soldados de la Virgen”, ellos danzan el 12 de diciembre para honrar a la Virgen de Guadalupe, patrona de México.



NOMBRANDO NUESTRA REALIDAD

Nuestra identidad fronteriza única

4. Dios ha bendecido ricamente a nuestra comunidad fronteriza. Rechazamos narrativas que pintan nuestra frontera como un lugar de caos, violencia y escándalo. Como comunidad profundamente moldeada por la realidad de la migración, celebramos nuestra fortaleza y nuestra identidad única, así como su seguridad, aún cuando otros menosprecien la contribución de los migrantes y caractericen de manera errónea la realidad de la frontera. Nuestra frontera reúne culturas, personas y países. Estamos unidos en familia, fiesta y fe. Como una de las comunidades fronterizas binacionales más grandes en el mundo, la migración es parte de nuestro ADN. La gran mayoría aquí tiene fuertes vínculos con México a través de la frontera, particularmente en Ciudad Juárez. Con nuestros hermanos al otro lado del puente, hablamos el mismo idioma. Nos levantamos cada mañana viendo las mismas hermosas montañas, bailamos al son de los mariachis y compartimos burritos y champurrado. Con San Juan Diego, estamos juntos bajo el manto protector de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe.

5. La Providencia ha bendecido los pueblos, tierras y montañas del desierto de Chihuahua, un lugar de constante migración. Nuestro desierto ha sido casa de comunidades indígenas, como Ysleta del Sur Pueblo (o Tigua), desde tiempos inmemoriales. Estas comunidades han dejado un largo y respetable legado de comercio, autogobierno y libre circulación de personas que ha marcado esta región fronteriza durante siglos, aunque sus derechos no siempre han sido respetados. Para no repetir los errores del pasado, debemos formar «las nuevas generaciones, con una educación que no puede dar nunca la espalda a los ‘vecinos’, a todo lo que nos rodea.»²

En 1598, antes del primer día de Acción de Gracias en Nueva Inglaterra, fue celebrada por los migrantes españoles, una Santa Misa de Acción de Gracias en San Elizario, la primera sede del condado de El Paso. Los colonizadores migrantes festejaron juntos con miembros de la tribu indígena Manso. Paso del Norte, la única comunidad fundada en las orillas del Río Grande y que se ha convertido en las dos ciudades de El Paso y Ciudad Juárez, creció como una parada importante en el Camino Real, conectando Santa Fe con la Ciudad de México.

Los migrantes de la entonces república de Texas y de Estados Unidos incrementarían pronto nuestros números. Trabajadores de muy lejos como Irlanda y China llegaron para construir el ferrocarril que atraviesa El Paso y que conectaría los océanos Atlántico y Pacífico. Los paseños dieron la bienvenida a aquellos

que huían de los peligros de la Revolución Mexicana y durante la Cristiada. Muchos de los que vivían en Ciudad Juárez encontraron seguridad en nuestra ciudad, incluyendo sacerdotes, religiosos y seminaristas. En aquellos años el sacerdote santo chihuahuense, Pedro de Jesús Maldonado, fue ordenado en nuestra Catedral de San Patricio, y luego canonizado como uno de los mártires mexicanos.

Durante la Segunda Guerra Mundial, los braceros vinieron para atender nuestros campos y cultivos. A fines del siglo pasado, otra generación de migrantes vino de México con la esperanza de un futuro mejor, después de los desplazamientos masivos causados por las cambiantes relaciones comerciales. Muchos han llegado aquí de otras partes del país, han venido para servir en Fort Bliss y luego deciden quedarse en nuestra bella región, lo que rápidamente hace que uno se sienta como en casa. Seguimos recibiendo sobrevivientes de la violencia, pobreza y persecución de países de todo el mundo que buscan seguridad y refugio. Nuevos estadounidenses revitalizan nuestra comunidad con valores de fe, familia y trabajo duro.

6. A pesar de las dificultades, los cambios y las desilusiones, el Espíritu ha estado trabajando en esta larga historia de migraciones, moviendo los corazones a la hospitalidad, recompensando la esperanza con oportunidades de trabajo y construyendo la armonía en la diversidad. Nuestro desierto de Chihuahua ha sido un lugar poderoso de encuentro, en donde se ha arraigado la verdadera cultura del encuentro, lo que ha dado frutos de vida, cultura y fe, que han brotado en las arenas más secas. La obra evangelizadora de la Iglesia tiene lugar dentro de este gran drama, anunciando palabras de bendición, afirmando la vida y dirigiéndose al Reino. Nosotros somos los siervos en el paciente viaje hacia la civilización del amor que el Espíritu está preparando para toda la humanidad.

7. Como ciudad fronteriza, tenemos una vocación única de demostrar la virtud cristiana de la hospitalidad. Estoy maravillado por la caridad y la iniciativa de nuestra gente en dar la bienvenida al extranjero. Nuestra diócesis es bendecida con personas heroicas, familias, pastores, religiosos, parroquias e instituciones que se dedican al servicio de los migrantes y refugiados. Durante casi cuarenta años, la Casa Anunciación ha acogido a miles de personas que huyen del conflicto, el hambre y la persecución. Parroquias y conventos han abierto sus puertas de manera sin precedentes a aquellos que continúan llegando a nuestra frontera desde México, Centroamérica, Brasil, Cuba, Haití y muchos otros países.

Nuestra gente aboga por leyes justas y en contra de la militarización de nuestra frontera. Nuestro centro de Servicios Diocesanos para Migrantes y Refugiados (DMRS por sus siglas en inglés) cumple con una necesidad crítica de proveer servicios legales a la comunidad. Los recién llegados aprenden inglés en los salones de nuestras parroquias, reciben comida y ropa de sus despensas



El Padre Rahm, el “Padre de la Bicicleta”, es mostrado en un mural hecho por Francisco Delgado y ubicado detrás de la Iglesia del Sagrado Corazón, en El Paso, Texas.

y son acompañados por voluntarios a las estaciones de autobuses y al aeropuerto. Los Entrenamientos Conozca sus Derechos se ofrecen después de la misa y se registran nuevos ciudadanos para que voten por primera vez. Los voluntarios ofrecen palabras de consuelo a los que se encuentran en centros de detención de migrantes y los miembros de los ministerios RICO de las parroquias ofrecen formación de fe y celebran los cumpleaños y quinceañeras de los menores detenidos no acompañados. No hay distinción entre documentados e indocumentados cuando juntos recibimos el Pan de Vida en nuestras capillas e iglesias.

En todas estas obras, vemos cómo Cristo sigue uniéndose a la humanidad en nuestro tiempo. Como su obispo, tengo mucho por lo que estar agradecido.

edictos que vienen de Washington, DC. Soy ciudadano de una comunidad donde los niños se preocupan si mamá o papá estarán allí cuando regresen de la escuela. En esta situación, cada día pido al Señor que me dé las palabras correctas para consolar, denunciar la injusticia y anunciar la redención.

9. Recientemente hemos presenciado la demonización de los migrantes, y escuchado palabras de odio hacia nuestros vecinos de México y un lenguaje destructivo sobre nuestra frontera. Este año, las acciones severas para la aplicación de la ley han aumentado y las deportaciones de aquellos sin antecedentes penales han aumentado. La desconfianza ha crecido entre las comunidades y los que hacen cumplir las leyes. Hemos visto a los solicitantes de asilo, incluso a los periodistas huyendo por



“Juarense y Poderosa” mural en Ciudad Juárez, justo al otro lado de la frontera de El Paso, Texas, por el artista “El Mac” y basado en las fotos de una joven de Juárez, llamada Diana, quien perdió a su madre al ser ella secuestrada.



Un sistema de inmigración quebrado

8. Dentro de nuestra comunidad tal vez no todo el mundo verá de la misma manera el sistema quebrado de migración; sin embargo, todos pueden estar de acuerdo en que el mismo no está funcionando adecuadamente. Las consecuencias morales de este sistema para nuestros hermanos y hermanas no pueden ser ignoradas. Como suele decir el Papa Francisco, «la realidad es más importante que la idea»³. Nadie puede negar los terribles impactos humanos de un sistema que divide a las familias, que permite a algunos detener a los seres humanos con fines de lucro, y que pone en riesgo el compromiso histórico de nuestra nación con el refugiado y solicitante de asilo. Las arenas ardientes de nuestro desierto son una tumba anónima para demasiados migrantes que han muerto intentando cruzar. El aumento de la militarización y la construcción de más muros sólo harán que este viaje sea aún más peligroso.

Soy pastor de una diócesis con múltiples centros de detención de migrantes que tienen un número incalculable de seres humanos cada noche, donde la angustia se multiplica y la esperanza se atenúa. Soy pastor de una diócesis dividida por muros y puestos de control que separan a las personas de sus seres queridos. Soy obispo de un rebaño asustado por las luces intermitentes de los coches de policía en el espejo retrovisor, que se preguntan si esta excursión familiar o ese regreso a casa del trabajo será el último. Soy padre espiritual de miles de agentes de la Patrulla Fronteriza y del ICE, quienes ponen diariamente sus vidas en la línea para detener el flujo de armas y drogas y a los que las transportan. Muchos agentes están preocupados a conciencia por la retórica política divisoria y los nuevos

sus vidas, que ahora son puestos en centros de detención como un hecho normal. Hemos escuchado amenazas de que los niños migrantes podrían ser separados de sus madres en la frontera. Aquí en Texas, los programas policiales comunitarios esenciales para nuestra seguridad están siendo amenazados por una nueva ley, la SB4, que autorizará a oficiales locales a servir como agentes de inmigración, incrementando el temor de una fuerza de deportación masiva.

Aunque nuestra Iglesia ha sido clara sobre el imperativo de resolver este problema perenne, nuestros líderes electos aún no han reunido el valor moral para promulgar una reforma migratoria permanente y comprensiva. Aun así, los migrantes son tratados, como dice el Papa Francisco, como «peones en el tablero de ajedrez de la humanidad»⁴. Su trabajo y sus talentos son explotados, pero se les niega la protección de la ley y son chivos expiatorios para nuestros males sociales y económicos.



El mural “Ánimo Sín Fronteras” ubicado en el centro de El Paso y elaborado por el artista “El Mac” se basa en las fotos de un hombre llamado Melchor Flores, quien ha estado luchando para obtener respuesta y justicia para su hijo, el cual fue recogido por la policía en Nuevo León, México, en el año 2009 y desde entonces está desaparecido.



CONFRONTANDO NUESTRA REALIDAD

La enseñanza de la Iglesia sobre la migración

10. ¿Quién puede olvidar la emotiva visita del Papa Francisco al Río Grande el año pasado? Recuerdo los rostros de muchos migrantes, sobrevivientes de la violencia, obreros y menores no acompañados - nuestros *VIPs* de *Papa Francisco* - que saludaron al Santo Padre en nombre de la comunidad de El Paso y de hecho de todo Estados Unidos, cuando él se acercó al Río Grande. No puedo más que pensar que los suyos eran los rostros del sueño americano, marcados por la lucha pero llenos de esperanza. El canto del *Requiem aeternam*, la oración de la Iglesia por los muertos, cantado por el coro mientras el Papa se acercó a la valla para orar por los que murieron en el desierto y que nunca pudieron realizar sus sueños terrenales, debió marcar nuestra memoria. Su petición de que se ponga fin a la tragedia de la migración forzada fue clara: «¡No más muerte! ¡No más explotación!»⁵

11. En ese momento en el Río Grande, el Papa Francisco expresó toda la enseñanza de la Iglesia sobre la migración: encuentro, conversión y compasión. Esta enseñanza descansa sobre bases antiguas. El Antiguo Testamento es claro: «Al forastero que reside junto a ustedes, le mirarán como a uno de su pueblo y lo amarás como a ti mismo; pues forasteros fueron ustedes en la tierra de Egipto» (*Lev. 19,34*). Jesús mismo fue refugiado en la fuga hacia Egipto (cf. *Mt. 2,13-23*). Sabemos que Dios está al lado de los migrantes y «no se avergüenza de ser llamado su Dios, porque les tenía preparada una ciudad» (*Heb. 11,16*). Todo ser humano lleva en sí la imagen de Dios, que nos confiere una dignidad más alta que cualquier pasaporte o estatus migratorio. Debido a esta dignidad, la Iglesia ha reconocido durante mucho tiempo el primer derecho de las personas a no emigrar, sino a permanecer en su comunidad de origen. Pero cuando eso se ha vuelto



Familias separadas por la frontera entre México y los Estados Unidos se abrazan durante unos minutos en el evento, "Abrazos no Murallas".

imposible, la Iglesia también reconoce el *derecho a emigrar*.⁶ Si bien los países tienen el deber de garantizar que la migración sea ordenada y segura, esta responsabilidad nunca puede servir como pretexto para construir muros y cerrar la puerta a los migrantes y refugiados.

12. La ley debe estar al servicio de los seres humanos y debería asegurar la santidad de toda vida. Las leyes que no respeten la dignidad humana y garanticen el debido proceso deben ser cambiadas. Si bien el respeto al Estado de derecho es esencial, reconocemos que nosotros «somos ciudadanos del cielo» (*Fil. 3,20*), y así juzgamos la ley terrenal, incluyendo nuestras leyes de inmigración, de acuerdo a un criterio más alto. Como escribió Martin Luther King, Jr. desde la cárcel de Birmingham, citando a Santo Tomás de Aquino, «una ley injusta es una ley humana que no está enraizada en la ley eterna y la ley natural.»⁷ Debemos también estar atentos de aquellos «doctores de la ley», los escribas y fariseos de nuestros días, que auto-justificadamente mantienen a los demás a un nivel que nunca se aplicaran a sí mismos. Tratan de hacer cumplir las minucias de la ley mientras ignoran las cargas insopitables que ponen sobre los niños y familias (cf. *Mt. 23,1-23*).

La necesidad de una reforma migratoria comprensiva

13. Construir muros, desplegar una fuerza de deportación masiva y militarizar nuestra frontera no son soluciones a largo plazo para los desafíos de la migración. Sólo una reforma migratoria comprensiva brindará soluciones duraderas. En nuestro país, el ente defensor más consistente de los migrantes y de una reforma migratoria comprensiva ha sido la Conferencia de Obispos Católicos de Estados Unidos, con su trabajo profundamente arraigado en la enseñanza bíblica y en el magisterio papal, incluyendo la enseñanza de Papa Francisco, Papa Benedicto XVI y Papa Juan Pablo II. Una reforma migratoria comprensiva deberá incluir lo siguiente:

- *Las naciones como la nuestra, que disfrutan de paz, prosperidad y seguridad deberán asegurarse de que haya suficientes vías legales para que los trabajadores migratorios y sus familias, que desempeñan funciones importantes en nuestra economía, migren de manera segura y ordenada.*

- *Reformar nuestro sistema de inmigración también significa poner a las familias en primer lugar. Deberíamos poner fin a las prácticas de deportación que separan a las familias y adoptar un sistema que priorice la unidad familiar. En la actualidad puede llevar décadas para que las familias sean reunidas a través del sistema complicado y costoso de hoy en día.*

- *Como país, también estamos involucrados en los impulsores de la migración, a través de políticas comerciales injustas, nuestra adicción a las drogas e incluso el cambio climático. Por lo tanto, nuestros legisladores también deberán abordar las causas raíz de la migración y promover el desarrollo económico sostenible en el extranjero, lo cual permitirá a nuestros hermanos y hermanas a permanecer viviendo en sus países de origen con mejores condiciones de vida.*

- *Una reforma migratoria comprensiva nos dará más seguridad, ya que millones saldrían de vivir en la sombra porque se les daría la oportunidad de regularizar su situación. Esto permitiría a los oficiales encargados de hacer cumplir la ley, de centrarse en aquellos que son verdaderamente una amenaza para nuestras comunidades.*

14. Nunca construiremos una utopía en este nuestro mundo roto.

No es nuestro objetivo cuidar las simples posesiones pasajeras. Servimos a un Dios de abundancia que provee las necesidades de aquellos que le sirven con caridad y generosidad. Confiamos en que Dios no creó un mundo sin espacio para todos en el banquete de la vida. Recordando nuestro destino final y confiando en Él que nos acompaña, podemos reconocer que nuestro generoso servicio aquí nos prepara para el Reino venidero.

El poder del 'encuentro'

15. Si bien la enseñanza de la Iglesia sobre la migración es rica y persuasiva, nada puede sustituir la experiencia personal. Recuerdo que como párroco, a menudo viajaba a Honduras para ministrar en una parroquia hermana. La pobreza extrema en la que vivía la gente era algo que no pudíramos imaginar en este país y la violencia era omnipresente. Ahí conocí a una miembro comprometida de la parroquia, Delia, una madre de cinco niñas y un niño, una familia hermosa pero muy pobre. Su hija de 16 años, Irma, me rogaba que la trajera a los Estados Unidos. Un día, Irma decidió hacer el viaje por su cuenta. Ella terminó en un centro de detención en el sur de Texas.

Años más tarde, su hermana menor, Aura, también tomó la difícil decisión de venir. Recibí una llamada telefónica diciéndome que Aura, apenas de 24 años de edad, estaba detenida en El Paso. Había cruzado el puente desde Ciudad Juárez. Estaba viva, gracias a Dios, pero sobrevivió al viaje con heridas físicas y psicológicas graves. Aura ya había sido obligada a la esclavitud por una mara en Honduras, lo cual le hizo sufrir una crueldad indescriptible. Tenía que escoger entre esa esclavitud o dejar a su madre enferma. Cuando tomó la agonizante decisión de huir, la mantuvieron encerrada en un compartimiento bajo un autobús, obligada a inhalar humos tóxicos durante horas y horas. Escapó y atravesó la pesadilla del desierto en camino a nuestra frontera. Pero después de escapar de los criminales, aquí en la tierra donde esperaba estar segura, fue tratada como a una criminal, puesta tras las rejas en un centro de detención.

Lamentablemente, Aura no está sola en su experiencia. Nosotros, ministros que trabajamos a lo largo de la frontera, conocemos las historias de los que continúan llegando, huyendo de la violencia, el hambre y de países desestabilizados, debido en gran parte a nuestro insaciable apetito por las drogas. Para algunos, la deportación de regreso a esas situaciones puede incluso ser una sentencia de muerte. Arreglaremos nuestro sistema de inmigración quebrado el día en que dejemos de ver a la gente como Aura, con miedo y con corazón de piedra. ¡Aura es tu vecina! ¡Aura es tu hermana!

16. Recuerdo también los rostros de aquellos que con valentía contaron sus historias de migración en nuestra Catedral, durante el evento *Testimonio de Dignidad y Solidaridad*, celebrado a principios de este año junto con nuestra comunidad cívica e interreligiosa. Escuchamos las voces de los Soñadores (Dreamers), solicitantes de asilo y familias migrantes. Recuerdo

a Rosa, una madre de tres hijos y abuela de cuatro, que cruzó la frontera sin documentos hace casi 30 años. Rosa es un pilar del vecindario Segundo Barrio y también una incansable voluntaria en la Parroquia del Sagrado Corazón. Debido a que el esposo de Rosa fue deportado hace muchos años, se enfrentó sola al reto de criar una familia, trabajando largas jornadas limpiando casas y cuidando a personas con discapacidad. Ella ha criado una familia fuerte y hermosa. Su hija, Rosa, es una maestra comprometida en nuestras escuelas públicas y su hijo, Jesús, es un ingeniero muy dedicado. ¿Quién puede negar que nuestra comunidad sea disminuida sin la fe, el trabajo duro y las contribuciones de Rosa y su familia?

17. Estos momentos de encuentro con nuestros hermanos y hermanas migrantes pueden ser ocasiones para la conversión. En la actualidad, más y más personas viven cotidianamente como si Dios no existiera. Esta creciente indiferencia hacia Dios existe a veces junto a una frialdad cada vez mayor hacia los pobres y los sufrientes, como si ellos no existieran.

En tiempos de angustia y confusión nos preguntamos, *¿Dónde está Dios?* Pero el Evangelio nos enseña que lo encontraremos entre los pobres y excluidos, quienes «luchan por sobrevivir ... y en esas luchas se esconde un sentido profundo de la existencia que suele entrañar también un hondo sentido religioso.»⁸ Como dice nuestro Santo Padre, los pobres «tienen mucho que enseñarnos ... Es necesario que todos nos dejemos evangelizar por ellos.»⁹

Los migrantes son proféticos en su testimonio vivido de valores cada vez más marginados en la cultura actual: la fe, la vida y la familia. Y nos despiertan de la indiferencia, abriéndonos los ojos a las injusticias de la globalización y a «una economía de exclusión y de inequidad»¹⁰. Estoy convencido de que la profundidad de la fe de nuestro pueblo y la vitalidad de nuestras parroquias se deben en gran parte a la generosidad de nuestra comunidad en dar la bienvenida al extranjero y a la opción que hacemos por los pobres.

18. Pudieran haber algunos que se pregunten si en estas reflexiones no estoy sustituyendo la política por la enseñanza de la Iglesia. Respondo que, como pastor mi deber es hacia el Evangelio de Jesucristo.

Nuestros hermanos y hermanas migrantes, los que oran en nuestras iglesias, ministran en nuestras parroquias, estudian en nuestras escuelas, trabajan en los campos, sirven en nuestras fuerzas armadas ... cada uno de ellos hoy vive en un desierto de ansiedad y aislamiento. Muchos de aquellos que continúan viendo a nuestra frontera, no solo buscan una vida mejor sino la vida misma. Nuestra comunidad cristiana está llamada a acompañarlos en su angustia y dolor en el camino hacia la liberación, lejos de la tristeza y del duelo y en el camino hacia un futuro de gozo y alegría. Dios desea salvar a su pueblo hoy, haciendo una nueva historia. ¡Estamos llamados a la acción!



La Campaña de Registro de Votantes de El Instituto Esperanza registra a nuevos americanos.



TRANSFORMANDO NUESTRA REALIDAD

19. Debemos continuar mostrando compasión y atender las necesidades materiales y espirituales de las decenas de miles de migrantes indocumentados en nuestra diócesis y de aquellos que continúan llegando a nuestra frontera. Para examinar la cuestión de la migración a la luz de un clima político cambiante y así ayudarme a discernir un camino para nuestra diócesis hacia una solidaridad más profunda, estoy creando una Comisión Diocesana de Migración. Nuestra solidaridad debe ser efectiva. Sabemos que la Iglesia «tampoco puede ni debe quedarse al margen en la lucha por la justicia.» Esta carta pastoral es un hito importante en ese trabajo, pero espero que sea sólo el comienzo de una solidaridad más profunda con los pobres y excluidos.

20. **A nuestros hermanos y hermanas migrantes: ¡Estamos con ustedes!** Como su obispo, me comprometo a estar con ustedes en este tiempo de ansiedad y miedo. Prometo escucharlos, celebrar con ustedes, compartir el pan con ustedes, orar con ustedes y llorar con ustedes. Ustedes tienen una dignidad que ninguna ley o tribunal terrenal puede quitarles. Sus familias enriquecen nuestra comunidad y fortalecen nuestras parroquias. Su perseverancia, dedicación y entusiasmo por un futuro mejor renuevan nuestra esperanza. En esta época de prueba, recuerden que nuestra única esperanza es Jesucristo, cuya gracia es suficiente para nosotros y cuyo poder se manifiesta en la debilidad (cf. 2 Cor. 12,9). Sepan que la Iglesia de El Paso está con ustedes, defiende y afirma su dignidad humana, y aboga por sus derechos.

Como parte de este compromiso, estoy creando el *Fondo Soñador* para ofrecer asistencia financiera a los niños y niñas de nuestras familias migrantes para que asistan a nuestras escuelas católicas. Comenzaré este nuevo fondo de becas con una contribución personal. Históricamente, la educación católica ha sido uno de los medios más eficaces para empoderar a los migrantes y ayudarles a integrarlos en nuestra comunidad y en nuestro país. Las escuelas católicas de la Diócesis de El Paso han transformado vidas y estoy comprometido a hacer crecer este legado. Invito a aquellos que tengan la capacidad financiera para ayudarme a aumentar este apoyo vital para nuestros niños.

21. **A nuestros sacerdotes y parroquias, ¡Aboguemos por los migrantes!** Nuestras parroquias deben ser lugares donde los migrantes sean bienvenidos y fortalecidos en su fe. Nuestra comunidad de fe también está llamada a anunciar la Buena Nueva del Reino, redireccionando los términos del debate público para una sociedad más justa y presenciando los valores de la misericordia, la justicia y la verdad. Nuestras parroquias deben ser centros de oración, estudio y diálogo, en donde los católicos puedan involucrarse en la construcción de una frontera más humana a través de la educación y la incidencia pública.

Debemos seguir denunciando el mal de la separación de las familias, la militarización de nuestras comunidades fronterizas, la detención con fines de lucro de los migrantes, el maltrato a los solicitantes de asilo y el menosprecio a nuestros hermanos y hermanas musulmanes. Debemos enfrentar la plaga de abuso de sustancias que afecta a nuestro pueblo, la confusión y la depresión

que empujan a nuestros niños hacia las drogas, y el tráfico de drogas que está desestabilizando a México y Centroamérica, impulsando la migración hacia nuestra frontera. Debemos enfrentar la injusticia de una economía global de la exclusión que obliga a los trabajadores maquiladores de Ciudad Juárez a ganar uno de los salarios de fábrica más bajos en México. Debemos trabajar para superar la polarización que está desgarrando nuestras comunidades.

La Comisión de Migración trabajará con las parroquias para intensificar nuestra defensa, particularmente a través de la Campaña de Justicia para los Migrantes de la Conferencia de los Obispos Católicos de los Estados Unidos. Se ofrecerá un programa de formación intensiva a través del Instituto Tepeyac dedicado a desarrollar líderes de grupos parroquiales. Estos se dedicarán a la incidencia pública y de brindar asistencia a familias afectadas por la deportación o la detención. Junto con nuestros vecinos y otros grupos religiosos, debemos dialogar con nuestros líderes electos, así como con los líderes de las agencias locales de cumplimiento de la ley y de inmigración, para promover el bien común.

22. **A nuestros fieles: ¡Comprométanse localmente!** Hago un llamado a los fieles para que se involucren aún más en las numerosas obras de caridad y justicia que se realizan diariamente en favor de los migrantes dentro de nuestra diócesis. El trabajo de Casa Anunciación y los esfuerzos del centro de Servicios Diocesanos para Migrantes y Refugiados (DMRS por sus siglas en inglés) son una fuente de orgullo para nuestra comunidad. También reconozco la labor de la Casa del Migrante en Ciudad Juárez, que alberga y alimenta a los recién llegados a nuestra frontera y a los que han sido deportados. Muchas de nuestras organizaciones comunitarias locales han sido apoyadas por la Campaña Católica para el Desarrollo Humano (CCHD por sus siglas en inglés) y han demostrado ser defensoras efectivas de la dignidad humana y los derechos de los migrantes. Todos los días nuestras parroquias brindan apoyo y alimento espiritual a los migrantes en formas que a menudo pasan desapercibidas. Todos nosotros podemos apoyar este gran trabajo involucrándonos como voluntarios y con nuestro aporte económico.

23. **A los policías locales y a los agentes de inmigración: ¡Gracias!** Sepan que su dedicación y valentía en servir a nuestra comunidad y proteger nuestro país son apreciadas. Oficiales locales de la ley han tomado posturas importantes en la priorización de la policía comunitaria y en limitar la participación de los policías en la aplicación de la ley de inmigración. Aún frente a la SB4, espero que los logros obtenidos a través de la cooperación de los policías y alguaciles locales con las comunidades migrantes no se pierdan.

Los agentes que aplican las leyes de inmigración de nuestra nación enfrentan diariamente situaciones difíciles y a veces peligrosas. Les ruego, ¡no ignoren las obligaciones de la conciencia! Traten a cada persona que encuentren, con dignidad y respeto y con los valores estadounidenses de equidad y justicia. A los agentes que trabajan en el campo, recuerden que las personas que encuentran durante el desarrollo de su misión son sus hermanos y hermanas, hijos de Dios. ¡Ningún ser humano es ilegal! Les prometo orar por su regreso diario y seguro a sus hogares y familias.

A los que dirigen la Patrulla Fronteriza (Border Patrol) y el Servicio de Inmigración y Control de Aduanas (ICE), apelo a su compromiso con los nobles ideales de la Constitución de igualdad de trato bajo la ley y el debido proceso. Aunque yo no ofrecería falsas expectativas de protección a los que no tienen un estatus migratorio legal, es mi deber pastoral velar para que nuestros templos y escuelas católicas sigan siendo lugares de unidad, hospitalidad y reverencia.

Por lo tanto, he dado instrucciones a nuestro abogado diocesano para que envíe un memorándum a los párrocos y directores de escuelas católicas, comunicando que deben indicarles respetuosamente a los agentes de la Patrulla Fronteriza y al Servicio de Inmigración y Control de Aduanas que estos no pueden entrar en la propiedad de la iglesia para ejecutar acciones coercitivas sin una orden judicial, excepto en caso de situación de peligro inminente.

Confío en su buena voluntad de mantener el respeto por localidades sensibles como escuelas y hospitales así como a lugares de culto, y en preservar el orden público. Prometo mi colaboración y mis sinceros deseos por una relación productiva continua y el intercambio de puntos de vista en beneficio del bien común de esta comunidad.

24. **A nuestros líderes comunitarios: ¡Nos comprometemos a trabajar con ustedes!** El Paso es una ciudad bendecida con muchos defensores que trabajan todos los días para construir una mejor comunidad fronteriza. A nuestros líderes electos,



La Iglesia Católica San Marcos alberga un santuario de cascadas que guarda celosamente una estatua de 30 pies de Nuestra Virgen de Guadalupe.

prometemos colaborar con ustedes en la construcción de una sociedad en donde se respeten los derechos de cada persona y apoyarlos a asumir posiciones valientes en nombre del bien común y en defensa de los pobres. A nuestros maestros, les agradecemos por hacer de los salones de clase lugares en donde todos nuestros niños se sientan seguros y apoyados. A los medios de comunicación, les doy las gracias por transmitir información veraz y crítica a la comunidad. A los muchos líderes ecuménicos e interreligiosos aquí en la frontera, estoy orgulloso de nuestro testimonio común del poder de la fe para mover los corazones a la justicia; espero trabajar con ustedes para avanzar los compromisos centrales de nuestras tradiciones de fe a la hospitalidad y dar acogida al extraño.

25. A los que están fuera de nuestra comunidad fronteriza, ¡Vengan a ver! El retrato de la frontera presentado por los medios de comunicación y promovido por aquellos en las capitales lejanas, es a menudo impreciso y motivado más por intereses privados que por el interés en la verdad. Nuestra frontera es hermosa, rica en historia y cultura, fe y maravilla natural. Este es un lugar donde personas de muchas culturas, idiomas y nacionalidades coexisten y prosperan. Invito a jóvenes, voluntarios, abogados y otros profesionales a compartir su tiempo con nosotros, en oportunidades de servicio disponibles a través de muchas organizaciones de la iglesia y la comunidad.

Pido a los legisladores y a los encargados de formular políticas en otras partes del país, que pongan fin a la demonización de nuestra frontera, de nuestros residentes fronterizos y de los migrantes. Los migrantes y la migración no son problemas a resolverse, sino más bien «un gran recurso para el camino de la humanidad.»¹² Millones de personas en nuestra frontera y en todo el país están orando por ustedes y por una resolución a nuestro sistema quebrado. Mientras tanto, añado mi voz a los que piden un alto a la deportación de los migrantes no violentos, hasta que logremos un consenso nacional y la reforma. La voz de nuestras comunidades debe tomarse en cuenta en la formulación de las políticas fronterizas y en los debates sobre la reforma migratoria. Rechacemos una mentalidad de hostilidad y trabajemos juntos en cooperación generosa para el bien común.

CONCLUSIÓN

26. Pertenecemos a «una Iglesia sin fronteras que se siente madre de todos.»¹³ Cada año, los feligreses de Ciudad Juárez, Las Cruces y El Paso se reúnen para celebrar la Misa Fronteriza. Nos encontramos divididos quizás por una valla o un río, por una economía de exclusión o políticas injustas de migración. Sin embargo, aún en medio de todo lo que nos separa, la misa fronteriza es un alegre recordatorio de que el Cristo Eucárstico está construyendo una Nueva Humanidad, llevándonos a todos juntos hacia la Nueva Jerusalén. Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe nos inspira una visión de las Américas como un gran Templo para el pueblo de Dios, donde los rescatados por el Señor vendrán a Sión con cánticos de júbilo, coronados de perpetua alegría.

Que estos vínculos de caridad continúen creciendo e inflamen nuestros corazones. Que tomemos nuevas y proféticas acciones para lograr el Reino de la justicia, la verdad y la reconciliación para transformar este desierto y que *el páramo se convierta en estanque y la tierra sedienta, en manantial.*

Dada el dieciocho de julio del año dos mil diecisiete.

**+Mark Joseph Seitz
Obispo de El Paso**

ORACIÓN POR LOS MIGRANTES

Oh Señor, como lo hiciera el profeta Isaías en su tiempo, así nosotros hoy compartimos tu visión de esperanza.

Nosotros también hemos experimentado las arenas ardientes y el suelo sediento de la indiferencia y la exclusión humana.

Lloramos el sufrimiento de nuestros hermanos y hermanas latinoamericanos y de otros lugares, forzados por la violencia, la corrupción y la miseria a abandonar la familia y todo lo que atesoran para buscar una oportunidad de vida aquí en nuestra tierra bendita.

Pero sabemos, Señor, que tú mismo eres migrante. Tú experimentaste las pruebas del refugiado, habiendo huído siendo un niño, con tus padres José y María a Egipto.

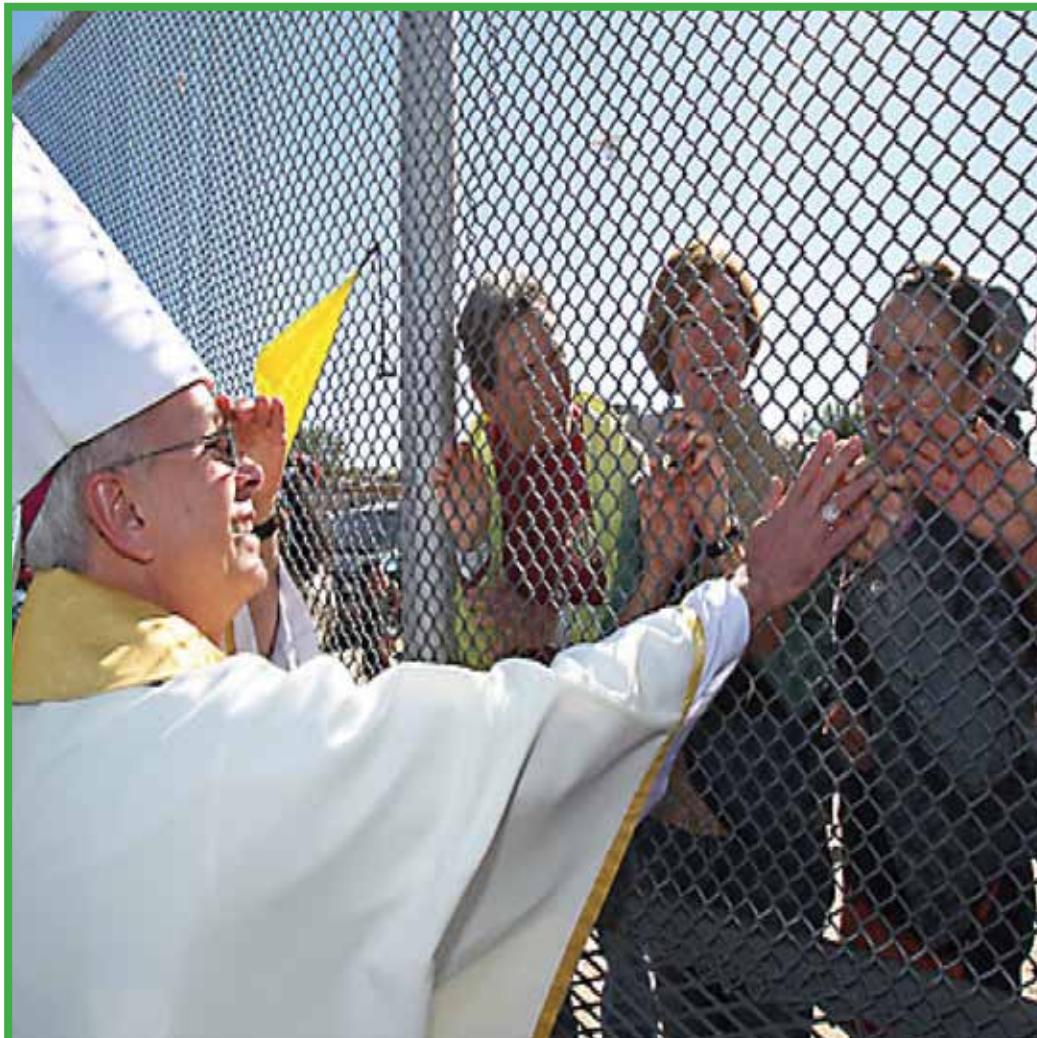
Sabemos de tu amor especial por aquellos que no tienen otra posesión, sino el uno al otro y a Ti.

Mueve Señor nuestros corazones y los de nuestros líderes, para amarlos como Tú los amas, amarlos con tu amor, que seamos tu amor por los migrantes en la puerta de nuestro país.

Llena nuestros corazones de tu compasión. Ayúdanos a saber que, amando de esta manera no dependeremos de nuestros recursos limitados, sino de la abundancia de Aquel que con una simple bendición proporcionó un banquete a cinco mil con cinco pequeños panes y dos peces.

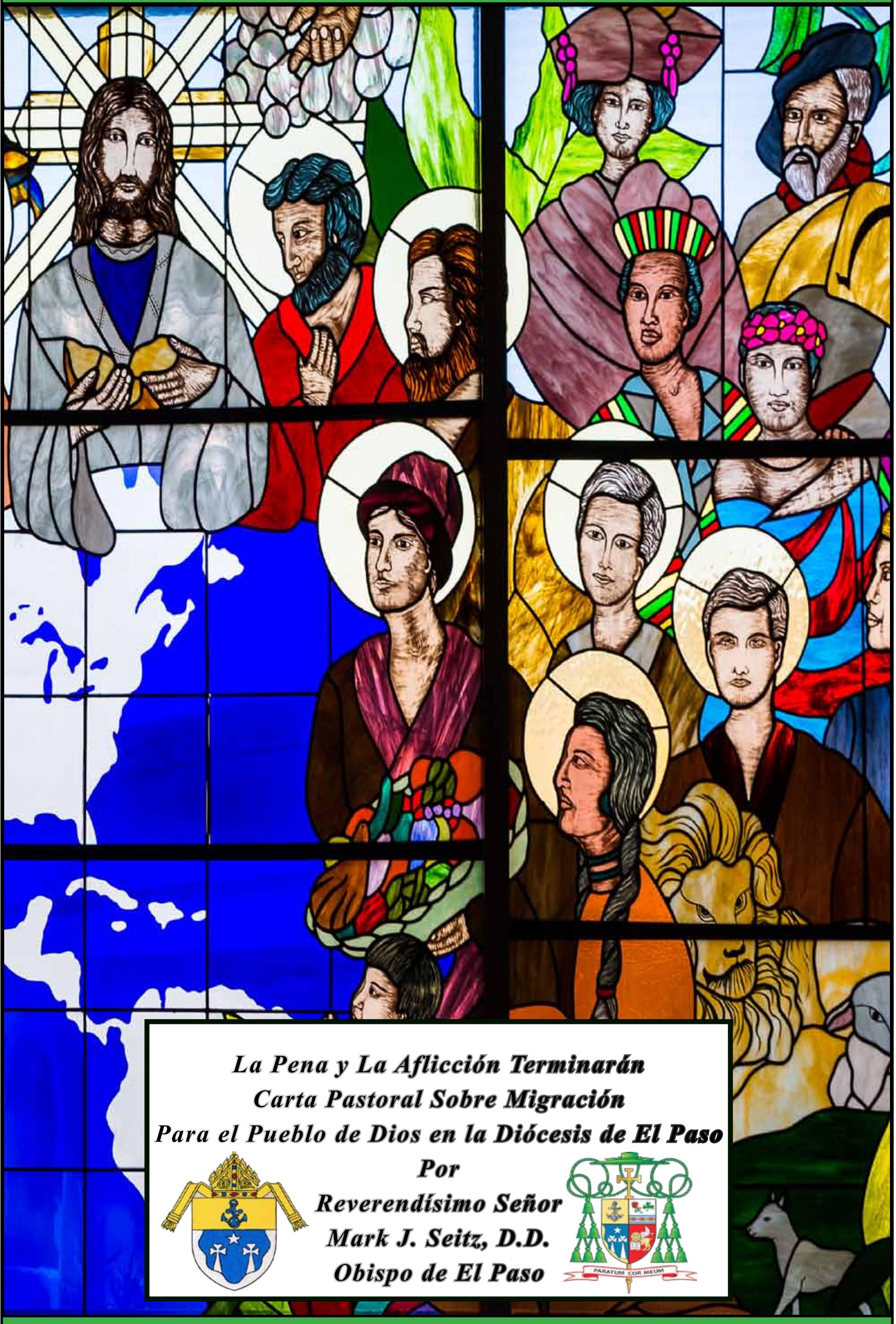
Llénanos de gozo y alegría mientras somos testigos de tu trabajo transformador. Tú que creas la vida de la nada y haces florecer el desierto, salva a los que te invocan. Rescátalos y lléналos con su alegría. Acompáñalos con la intercesión de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe, San Toribio Romo, con nuestro propio San Pedro De Jesús Maldonado y todos los Santos. Y concédenos que los que un día los hemos servido aquí en la tierra, podamos emigrar con ellos al Reino donde vives y reinas por los siglos de los siglos.

¡Amen!



El Obispo Mark J. Seitz de El Paso, Texas, toca las manos de la gente en México, después de una Misa Fronteriza, cerca de Sunland Park, N.M., justo en el borde de la frontera entre los Estados Unidos y México. (Foto de CNS / Bob Roller)

¹FRANCISCO, Exhort. ap. *Evangelii gaudium* (24 noviembre 2013), 114. ²FRANCISCO, Discurso al Congreso de los Estados Unidos de América (2015). ³Exhort. ap. *Evangelii gaudium* (24 noviembre 2013), 231. ⁴Mensaje para la Jornada Mundial del Emigrante y del Refugiado (2014). ⁵Homilia durante la Santa Misa en la Área de la feria de Ciudad Juárez (17 febrero 2016). ⁶Cf. JUAN XXIII, Carta enc. *Pacem in terris* (11 abril 1963), 106. ⁷I Have a Dream: Writings and Speeches that Changed the World. Ed. James M. Washington (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1992), 89. (Traducción personal). ⁸Exhort. ap. *Evangelii gaudium* (24 noviembre 2013), 72. ⁹Ibid. 198. ¹⁰Ibid. 53. ¹¹BENEDICTO XVI, Carta enc. *Deus caritas est* (25 diciembre 2005), 28. ¹²BENEDICTO XVI, Discurso, *Ángelus* (14 enero 2007). ¹³FRANCISCO, Exhort. ap. *Evangelii gaudium* (24 noviembre 2013), 210. Traducción por Luz Magdalena Del Valle. Los textos de la Sagrada Escritura utilizados en esta obra han sido tomados de los Leccionarios I, II y III, propiedad de la Comisión Episcopal de Pastoral Litúrgica de la Conferencia Episcopal Mexicana, copyright © 1987, quinta edición de septiembre de 2011. Todos los derechos reservados. Otros fotos por Joe Najera.



*La Pena y La Aflicción Terminarán
Carta Pastoral Sobre Migración
Para el Pueblo de Dios en la Diócesis de El Paso
Por
Reverendísimo Señor
Mark J. Seitz, D.D.
Obispo de El Paso*

