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February 2022

El Paso Diocese Ordains a Priest and Deacon

By Christopher Velasquez
Staff Writer, Rio Grande Catholic

The Diocese of El Paso was blessed to welcome a new priest and a new deacon on January 28th at St. Patrick Cathedral.

The Mass of Ordination was presided by Bishop Mark Seitz, who ordained Fr. Juan Alfonso Coronado to the priesthood and Deacon Lloyd Diviagracia to the order of deacons. Many of the faithful attended the Mass in person and via live stream.

Rev. Alfonso Coronado, whose current assignment is Our Lady of Peace in Alpine, graduated with his Masters in Theology from the University of St. Thomas in Houston and attended St. Mary's Seminary in Houston. He is overjoyed at the excitement of realizing his vocation after feeling the call as a teenager, "I discovered this beautiful vocation that the Lord put in me as a teenager," he says of his decision to become a priest.

As a seminarian in Mexico, he met Fr. Ivan Montelongo, who is now a priest in the Diocese of El Paso and at the time was in a discernment retreat. Through Fr. Ivan's encouragement, Fr. Alfonso made his way to the diocese of El Paso. Since his arrival, he has served at various parishes, studied at UTEP for two years, and finished his seminary studies.

Deacon Loyd Divinagracia, whose current assignment is at the parish of Saints Peter and Paul. He finished his Bachelor of Arts in Sacred Theology at the University of Santo Tomas in Manila, Philippines, and holds two Bachelor of Arts Majors. He then completed his Master's in Pastoral Ministry at Oblate School of Theology in San Antonio, TX.

Deacon Loyd who has experience with supporting and sharing the gospel with migrants, sees the current situation on the border as an opportunity for us to grow in our faith. "The reality of migration is at the heart of God. The situation here opens our eyes to do more and be better for our brother and sister migrants. At the end of our life being a border diocese, God perhaps will ask us what did you do to the migrants being faithful to the Gospel of Matthew," he said.

Currently, Deacon Loyd teaches confirmation at his current assignment of the parish of Saints Peter and Paul. As a transitional deacon, he is passionate about being a connecting bridge between God and people.



The Diocese of El Paso was blessed to welcome a new priest and a new deacon on January 28th at St. Patrick Cathedral. Fr. Juan Alfonso Coronado was ordained to the priesthood and Deacon Loyd Diviagracia to the order of deacons. *Photo by Rev. Miguel Briseño, OFM Conv.*

La Diócesis De El Paso Ordena Un Sacerdote Y Un Diácono

Por Christopher Velasquez
Escriptor, Rio Grande Catholic

La Diócesis de El Paso tuvo la bendición de dar la bienvenida a un nuevo sacerdote y a un nuevo diácono el 28 de enero en la Catedral de San Patricio.

La Misa de Ordenación fue presidida por el Obispo Mark Seitz, quien ordenó al Padre Juan Alfonso Coronado al sacerdocio y al Diácono Loyd Diviagracia al orden de los diáconos. Muchos fieles asistieron a la misa en persona y a través de la transmisión en directo.

El Rev. Alfonso Coronado, cuyo destino actual es Nuestra

Señora de la Paz en Alpine, se graduó con su Maestría en Teología de la Universidad de Santo Tomás en Houston y asistió al Seminario de Santa María en Houston. Está encantado con la emoción de realizar su vocación después de sentir la llamada cuando era adolescente. "Descubrí esta hermosa vocación que el Señor puso en mí cuando era adolescente", dice sobre su decisión de ser sacerdote.

Como seminarista en México, conoció al P. Iván Montelongo, que ahora es sacerdote en la Diócesis de El Paso y que en ese momento estaba en un retiro de discernimiento. Gracias al estímu-

lo del P. Iván, el P. Alfonso llegó a la diócesis de El Paso. Desde su llegada, ha servido en varias parroquias, ha estudiado en UTEP durante dos años y ha terminado sus estudios de seminario.

El diácono Loyd Divinagracia, cuyo destino actual es la parroquia de los Santos Pedro y Pablo. Terminó su licenciatura en Sagrada Teología en la Universidad de Santo Tomás en Manila, Filipinas, y tiene dos licenciaturas. Luego completó su Maestría en Ministerio Pastoral en la Escuela Oblata de Teología en San Antonio, TX.

El diácono Loyd, que tiene experiencia en apoyar y compartir el evangelio con los migrantes, ve

la situación actual en la frontera como una oportunidad para crecer en nuestra fe. "La realidad de la migración está en el corazón de Dios. La situación aquí nos abre los ojos para hacer más y ser mejores para nuestros hermanos migrantes. Al final de nuestra vida siendo una diócesis fronteriza, Dios quizás nos preguntará qué hiciste con los migrantes siendo fiel al Evangelio de Mateo", dijo.

Actualmente, el diácono Loyd enseña la confirmación en su actual asignación de la parroquia de los Santos Pedro y Pablo. Como diácono transitorio, le apasiona ser un puente de conexión entre Dios y la gente.

Editor's Note / Nota del Editor

Hello faithful reader. In 2021, Pope Francis called for all dioceses in the world to participate in the Synod on Synodality that will take place in 2023. As part of that process, the diocese will start to have listening sessions as part of the diocesan synodal path. I have asked Fr. Ivan Montelongo

go, the head of the Diocesan Synodal path to take this month's Editor's Column to discuss all things you need to know as a reader about this Phase of the Synod on Synodality.

- Fernie Ceniceros
Editor, Rio Grande Catholic

Hola fiel lector. En 2021, el Papa Francisco convocó a todas las diócesis del mundo a participar en el Sínodo sobre la Sinodalidad que se realizará en 2023. Como parte de ese proceso, la diócesis comenzará a tener sesiones de escucha como parte del camino sinodal diocesano. Le he pe-

dido al P. Iván Montelongo, responsable del camino sinodal diocesano, que ocupe la Columna del Editor de este mes para hablar de todo lo que necesitas saber como lector sobre esta fase del Sínodo de la Sinodalidad.

- Fernie Ceniceros
Editor, Rio Grande Catholic

EDITOR'S COLUMN - FR. IVAN MONTELONGO

In The Church We Walk Together

When you and I were baptized, we became part of a family: the Church. This family walks together through history toward God. We are together on a journey, a pilgrimage. And in our baptism, we were given a special gift for this journey: the Holy Spirit. We were anointed with the Spirit of Truth that lives within us, and like a GPS of sorts, guides us toward the Lord.

The Church has recognized this from the very beginning. When the first Christians were debating whether the Gentiles who embraced the faith had to follow the law of circumci-



Fr. Ivan Montelongo

sion, the Apostles convoked a gathering with the presbyters to listen to each other and to the Holy Spirit. After their

deliberations, the Apostles and presbyters, "in agreement with the whole Church" (Acts 15:22), announced to the Gentiles "the decision of the Holy Spirit and us" (Acts 15:28). This was an experience of synodality.

Synod is an ancient Greek word that means "together on the journey". This has always been the experience of the chosen People of God. When Moses led Israel out of Egypt, they journeyed together through the Red Sea and the desert until they arrived at the promised land. When the Apostles announced Christ throughout the world, they journeyed together with other Christians and established communities. Being church going forth together to announce the message of Jesus to the world. "Either the Church "goes forth" or she is not a Church; either she is on a journey always widening her space so that everyone can enter, or she is not a Church" (Pope Francis, General Audience, October 23, 2019).

The Church has always been synodal. Since the first millennium, a portion of the people of God would come together in gatherings called "synods" to discuss important matters of faith and Christian life. The

Spirit of Truth living within them guided their decisions. In keeping with this venerable tradition, Pope Francis has asked the whole Church to begin a synodal process to listen to the Spirit within us. In the Diocese of El Paso, parishes will conduct synodal consultations to listen to the Holy Spirit speaking through each of the baptized: those who go to Mass every Sunday and also those who feel far from the Church.

Stay tuned for more information on how to participate in the Synodal Path, and visit elpasodiocese.org/synod. The Church wants to hear from you!

En La Iglesia Caminamos Juntos

Cuando tú y yo fuimos bautizados, entramos a la familia de la Iglesia. En esta familia caminamos juntos hacia Dios. Estamos juntos en un mismo camino, en una peregrinación. Y en nuestro bautismo recibimos un regalo especial para este viaje: el Espíritu Santo. Fuimos ungidos con el Espíritu de la Verdad que vive en nosotros, y como un GPS, él nos guía hacia el Señor.

La Iglesia reconoció esto desde el principio. Cuando los primeros cristianos debatían si los gentiles que abrazaban la fe debían seguir la ley de la circuncisión, los apóstoles convocaron una reunión con los presbíteros para escucharse el uno al otro y al Espíritu Santo. Después de deliberar, los apóstoles y los presbíteros, "de acuerdo con

toda la Iglesia" (Hechos 15,22), anunciaron a los gentiles la decisión del "Espíritu Santo y nosotros" (Hechos 15,28). Esta fue una experiencia de sinodalidad.

Sínodo es una antigua palabra griega que significa "juntos en el camino." Esta siempre ha sido la experiencia del pueblo escogido por Dios. Cuando Moisés guió a Israel fuera de Egipto, caminaron juntos a través del Mar Rojo y del desierto hasta llegar a la tierra prometida. Cuando los apóstoles anunciaron a Cristo por todo el mundo, caminaban junto con otros cristianos y establecían comunidades. Ser iglesia es ir en salida a anunciar el mensaje de Jesús al mundo. "La Iglesia o es en salida o no es Iglesia, o está en camino, ampliando siempre su espacio



For a synodal Church
communion | participation | mission

cristiana. El Espíritu de la Verdad que estaba dentro de ellos guía sus decisiones. En línea con esta venerable tradición, el Papa Francisco ha pedido a toda la Iglesia comenzar un proceso sinodal para escuchar al Espíritu que vive entre nosotros. En la Diócesis de El Paso, las parroquias tendrán consultas sinodales para escuchar al Espíritu Santo que habla a través de cada bautizado(a): aquellos que van a misa cada domingo y también aquellos que se sienten alejados de la Iglesia.

Mantente alerta para más información sobre como participar en el Camino Sinodal, y visita elpasodiocese.org/synod. ¡La Iglesia quiere escucharte!

para que todos puedan entrar, o no es Iglesia" (Papa Francisco, Audiencia General, 23 de octubre del 2019).

La Iglesia siempre ha sido

sinodal. Desde el primer milenio, una porción del pueblo de Dios se congregaba en reuniones llamadas "sínodos" para discutir cosas importantes de fe y vida

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Catholic Schools: Faith, Excellence, Service

What struggles do our children face as they grow up in this troubled age of ours? Where do we begin? Despite the relative abundance we experience in this country young people don't seem to be happy. Many feel isolated and alone. They wonder about their identity and the meaning of their life. In never before seen numbers they take refuge from their pain in alcohol and drugs. Suicide rates are alarmingly high. They are not learning basic skills like how to write a coherent paragraph. Because of the mediocrity of their education they are often not well prepared to reach their full potential as human beings in the world.

Many of these issues reflect back to the primary cell of society, that is the family. Without a strong family life where children come to know their true identity as beloved children of God, where they receive foundational values and grow in virtue, where they develop healthy

social skills and discover the joy of service of others, children face a real uphill climb.

But the family also needs support. Parents, who are the first teachers of their children cannot form and educate them alone. They need schools that will reinforce what they have been conveying to their children and expand upon that in areas such as Faith, formation in virtues and knowledge. Parents need schools that provide a safe environment in which children can feel loved and secure. How could these factors be overestimated when we consider what children need today? Our children need schools of Faith, Excellence and Service. This happens to be the theme of Catholic Schools Week this year which began on January 30th and continues until February 5th.

We could speak about many advantages our education offers over others. We could point out that our students score well above the norm in stan-

dardized tests and the like, but what makes this undertaking so important in God's eyes is that here we have an unmatched opportunity to support families in passing on the gift of Faith and Christian values.

We all know that ours is an age of incredible moral confusion on every level of society. This moral confusion extends to our public schools where teachers are in many ways handicapped in their efforts to promote even the most basic human values. At our schools, prayer is not an occasion for a federal lawsuit, it is simply a part of the day. Values are not according to what happens to be the politically correct at the moment, they are the values of Jesus and his Church and they are woven into the fabric of everything from the classroom to the playground.

We are so blessed in El Paso to have 8 elementary and middle schools: Fr. Yermo, Loretto Academy, Most Holy Trinity, St. Joseph, St. Matthew, St. Patrick, St. Pius X, and St. Raphael. We



Bishop Mark J. Seitz



also have three high schools: Cathedral High School (boys), Fr. Yermo (coed), and Loretto Academy (girls).

What a pleasure it is for me to visit these schools and to witness the faith, joy and academic excellence that is radiated in these true treasures of our Diocese. When I attend High School Graduations I always hear a long list of the best colleges in the country into which our students have gained entrance with scholarships. That is certainly an indicator of their excellence. But what is even more important to me is that we have had a

part in preparing young people who will have a better chance to live good lives and to make this world a better place.

Many parents do not believe that they could afford a Catholic school for their children. I encourage you to look again. Visit one of our schools see for yourself. Our schools are surprisingly affordable and financial aid is available for those who still need help. There is no greater gift you could give to your child than a Catholic school education!

Escuelas Católicas: Fe, Excelencia, Servicio

A qué luchas se enfrentan nuestros hijos cuando crecen en esta época problemática? ¿Por dónde empezamos? A pesar de la relativa abundancia que experimentamos en este país, los jóvenes no parecen ser felices. Muchos se sienten aislados y solos. Se preguntan sobre su identidad y el sentido de su vida. En un número nunca visto, se refugian de su dolor en el alcohol y las drogas. Las tasas de suicidio son alarmantemente altas. No aprenden habilidades básicas como la de escribir un párrafo coherente. Debido a la mediocridad de su educación, a menudo no están bien preparados para alcanzar su pleno potencial como seres humanos en el mundo.

Muchos de estos problemas se reflejan en la célula primaria de la sociedad, que es la familia. Sin una vida familiar fuerte en la que los niños lleguen a conocer su verdadera identidad como hijos amados de Dios, en la que reciban valores fundacionales y crezcan en la virtud, en la que desarrollen habilidades sociales sanas y descubran la alegría del servicio a los demás, los niños se enfrentan a una verdadera cuesta arriba.

Pero la familia también necesita apoyo. Los padres, que son los primeros maestros de sus hijos, no pueden formarlos y educarlos solos. Necesitan



escuelas que refuerzen lo que han estado transmitiendo a sus hijos y lo amplíen en áreas como la fe, la formación en virtudes y el conocimiento. Los padres necesitan escuelas que proporcionen un entorno seguro en el que los niños puedan sentirse queridos y seguros. ¿Cómo se pueden sobrevalorar estos factores cuando consideramos lo que los niños necesitan hoy en día? Nuestros hijos necesitan escuelas de Fe, Excelencia y Servicio. Este es el tema de la Semana de las Escuelas Católicas de este año, que comenzó el 30 de enero y continúa hasta el 5 de febrero.

Podríamos hablar de muchas ventajas que ofrece nuestra educación sobre otras. Podríamos señalar que nuestros alumnos obtienen puntuaciones muy por encima de la norma en pruebas estandarizadas y similares, pero lo que hace que esta empresa sea tan importante a los ojos de Dios es que aquí tenemos una oportunidad inigualable de apoyar a las familias en la transmisión del don de la Fe y los valores cristianos.

Todos sabemos que la nuestra es una época de increíble confusión moral en todos los niveles de la sociedad. Esta confusión

moral se extiende a nuestras escuelas públicas, en las que los profesores se ven perjudicados de muchas maneras en sus esfuerzos por promover incluso los valores humanos más básicos. En nuestras escuelas, la oración no es una ocasión para una demanda federal, es simplemente una parte del día. Los valores no se ajustan a lo políticamente correcto del momento, son los valores de Jesús y de su Iglesia y están entrelazados en el tejido de todo, desde el aula hasta el patio de recreo.

Somos tan afortunados en El Paso de tener 8 escuelas prima-

rias y secundarias: Padre Yermo, Academia Loretto, Santísima Trinidad, San José, San Mateo, San Patricio, San Pío X y San Rafael. También tenemos tres escuelas secundarias: Cathedral High School (chicos), P. Yermo (mixto), y Loretto Academy (chicas).

Qué placer es para mí visitar estas escuelas y ser testigo de la fe, la alegría y la excelencia académica que se irradiá en estos verdaderos tesoros de nuestra Diócesis. Cuando asisto a las graduaciones de los institutos, siempre escucho una larga lista de las mejores universidades del país a las que nuestros alumnos han accedido con becas. Eso es ciertamente un indicador de su excelencia. Pero lo que es aún más importante para mí es que hemos tenido una parte en la preparación de los jóvenes que tendrán una mejor oportunidad de vivir una buena vida y hacer de este mundo un lugar mejor.

Muchos padres no creen que puedan permitirse una escuela católica para sus hijos. Les animo a que vuelvan a mirar. Visite una de nuestras escuelas y compruébelo usted mismo. Nuestras escuelas son sorprendentemente asequibles y hay ayudas financieras disponibles para aquellos que todavía necesitan ayuda. No hay mejor regalo que un colegio católico para sus hijos.



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Twenty-Two Admitted To Candidacy For The Permanent Diaconate

By Christopher Velasquez
Staff Writer, Rio Grande Catholic

Twenty-two men received the Rite of Admission to Candidacy for Holy Orders during the Mass celebrated by Bishop Mark Seitz on Friday, January 14 at St. Patrick Cathedral. The Mass marked an important milestone in their journey through discernment.

"Bishop Mark Seitz has called them to be candidates for the permanent diaconate and now they formally begin the process of preparation," said Deacon Cardenas, Director of the Permanent Diaconate.

Bishop Seitz asked the candidates to open their hearts and pray on their vocation in his homily. "You will need to open your hearts and dedicate yourself to this work and continue to ask God, "what your good plan for my life is?" Is it to be a Deacon? Or is it not? You have to open that possibility and you have to come to trust that the Church will be praying that the spirit will guide her in her discernment about your vocation as well."

Reaching this important step



Twenty-two men received the Rite of Admission and were admitted to candidacy to Holy Orders during the Candidacy Mass celebrated by Bishop Mark Seitz on Friday, January 14 at St. Patrick Cathedral.
Photo by Fernie Ceniceros

in the formation process included a year of discernment called aspirancy. There is an extensive screening process during this stage in which a wife's support

is required as the sacrament of marriage takes priority. For a whole year, candidates participated in discernment sessions that included having various speakers

and presenters providing them with information on the vocation of the Permanent Deacon. There were also two religious retreats to ensure that they were prepared

to take a step towards candidacy.

The Candidacy Mass was one of the first formal steps in their formation, but there is still much to be done before ordination. They are currently studying with the University of Saint Thomas, where they will undertake pastoral studies. What follows are four years consisting of formation seminars, academic courses, annual retreats, and parish assignments.

"We will have deacons that are very well prepared and that will serve our community with a lot of love as the Lord asks," Deacon Cardenas said. As a ministry of service, the Permanent Diaconate collaborates in responding to the diocese's ministerial needs, providing oversight with policies, a conciliation process, and a support network for ordained deacons.

Those who feel a calling to the diaconate are encouraged to contact their parish priest. Within two years, the diocese will begin the process of recruitment, says Deacon Cardenas.

Veintidós Admitidos Como Candidatos Al Diaconado Permanente

Por Christopher Velasquez
Escritor, Rio Grande Catholic

Veintidós hombres recibieron el Rito de Admisión a las Órdenes Sagradas durante la Misa celebrada por el Obispo Mark Seitz el viernes 14 de enero en la Catedral de San Patricio. La misa marcó un hito importante en su camino de discernimiento.

"El Obispo Mark Seitz los ha llamado a ser candidatos al diaconado permanente y ahora comienzan formalmente el proceso de preparación", dijo el Diácono Cárdenas, Director del

Diaconado Permanente.

El Obispo Seitz pidió a los candidatos que abrieran sus corazones y rezaran sobre su vocación en su homilía. "Tendrán que abrir sus corazones y dedicarse a este trabajo y seguir preguntando a Dios, "¿cuál es tu buen plan para mi vida?". ¿Es ser diácono? ¿O no lo es? Tienes que abrir esa posibilidad y tienes que llegar a confiar en que la Iglesia estará rezando para que el espíritu la guíe en su discernimiento sobre tu vocación también".

Llegar a este importante paso en el proceso de formación

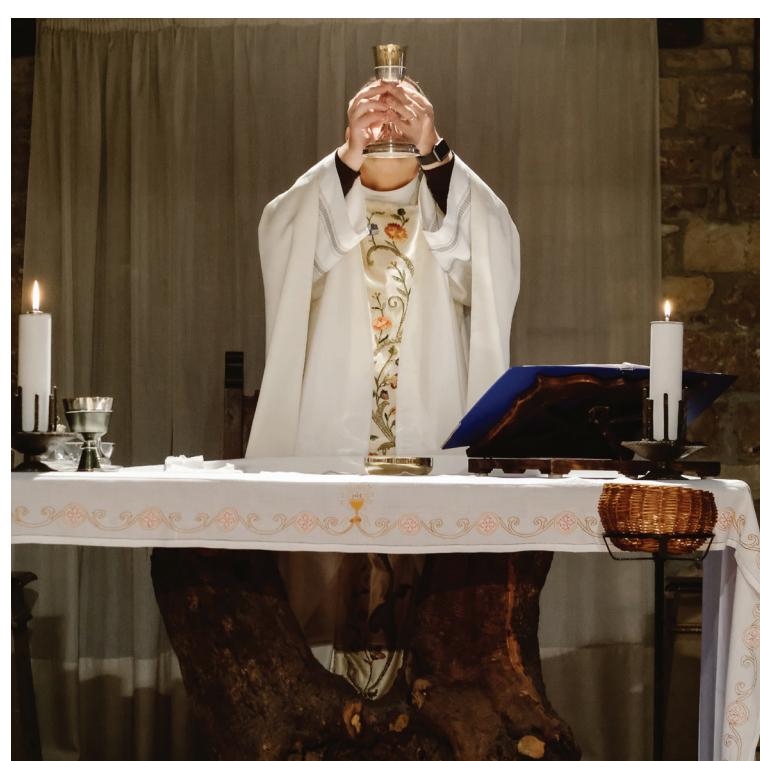
incluye un año de discernimiento llamado aspirantado. Durante esta etapa hay un amplio proceso de selección en el que se requiere el apoyo de la esposa, ya que el sacramento del matrimonio tiene prioridad. Durante todo un año, los candidatos participaron en sesiones de discernimiento que incluían tener varios oradores y presentadores que les proporcionaban información sobre la vocación del Diácono Permanente. También hubo dos retiros religiosos para asegurarse de que estaban preparados para dar el paso hacia la candidatura.

La Misa de Candidatura fue uno de los primeros pasos formales en su formación, pero aún queda mucho por hacer antes de la ordenación. Actualmente están estudiando en la Universidad de Santo Tomás, donde realizarán estudios pastorales. Lo que sigue son cuatro años que consisten en seminarios de formación, cursos académicos, retiros anuales y asignaciones parroquiales.

"Tendremos diáconos muy bien preparados y que servirán a nuestra comunidad con mucho amor como lo pide el Señor", dijo el diácono Cárdenas. Como

ministerio de servicio, el Diaconado Permanente colabora en la respuesta a las necesidades ministeriales de la diócesis, supervisando con políticas, un proceso de conciliación y una red de apoyo para los diáconos ordenados.

Se anima a quienes sientan la llamada al diaconado a ponerse en contacto con su párroco. Dentro de dos años, la diócesis comenzará el proceso de reclutamiento, dice el diácono Cárdenas.



HAPPY BIRTHDAY, FATHER!

Fr. Peter Precourt, AA	2/4
Fr. Mariano Lopez	2/14
Fr. Valentin Corta, MNM	2/14
Fr. Salvador Augilera	2/22
Fr. Miguel Cervantes (Retired)	2/19



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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 Victim's Assistance Coordinator, Mrs. Susan Martinez LCSW, at (915) 872-8465 or the Office of the Chancery, (915) 872-8407. The Church desires the healing of anyone that has been harmed.

La diócesis ofrece asistencia a las víctimas de abusos sexuales

El Obispo Mark J. Seitz invita a cualquier persona que haya sido víctima de abuso sexual por parte de un sacerdote, diácono, religioso o cualquier ministro de la iglesia, a contactar a la Coordinadora de Asistencia a las Víctimas, la Sra. Susan Martínez LCSW, al (915) 872-8465 o a la Oficina de la Cancillería, (915) 872-8407. La Iglesia desea la curación de cualquiera que haya sido dañado.

General Minister of The Order of Friars Minor Conventional Visits Southwest

By Christopher Velasquez
Staff Writer, Rio Grande Catholic

This past December, the Franciscan Friars of the Diocese of El Paso welcomed Friar Carlos Trovareli, the Minister General of their religious family, to the Holy Cross Retreat Center in Mesilla Park, New Mexico.

Friar Carlos oversees all of the Conventional Franciscans worldwide and visited to witness the provincial friars' work and learn about their ministry in the Southwest.

Father Miguel Briseño, OFM Conv, the pastor of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel, stated that "Each of the provincials was asked to pick a location, and they chose El Paso because of the multi-faceted elements that we have both in El Paso and Las Cruces. Here in El Paso in Mt. Carmel, you have the Tigua ministry along with the Valley and Campus Ministry, and in Las Cruces, there is the retreat in Tortugas." The trip from Friar Carlos marked his first visit to the United States as Minister General.

Friar Carlos describes his visit in an interview on the Friars Minor Conventional website by saying, "The word I would choose to describe what I'm seeing,



This past December, the Franciscan Friars of the Diocese of El Paso welcomed Friar Carlos Trovareli (First row second from left), the Minister General of their religious family, to the Holy Cross Retreat Center in Mesilla Park, New Mexico. *Photo by Fr. Miguel Briseño, OFM Conv.*

right now, is the word "utopia." This word has a meaning that I would like to use, that I like very much, and that is: to bring into

existence what does not yet exist. Thus, here you are, it seems to me, living and working in this area. True, this area has a long

history that goes back many years and it has many vibrant cultures." Fr. Miguel agrees and is happy to share his province's

uniqueness "The American, Tigua and Hispanic cultures bring a richness to our church." Fr. Miguel also stated the importance of the minister general's visit. "The whole sense of being among the Friars was very important. He is the successor of St. Francis; there have been those elected after St. Francis, and he follows in the footsteps of those individuals."

There is the possibility that Friar Carlos may return to the Southwest soon as the Four Provinces of the U.S. have their chapters in April. The "chapters serve as a means of promoting the reform of religious life.

The Order of Friars Minor Conventional [OFM Conv] is one of the three branches that make up the First Order of St. Francis. In the spirit of their founder, the Franciscans have answered the Church's call to minister to the poor and those in need for hundreds of years. Franciscan friars have served and continue to serve in parishes, schools, religious orders, shelters, nursing homes, and many more essential service roles. The order is divided into various provinces to which friars are affiliated.

Ministro General de la Orden de los Frailes Menores Convencional Visita

Por Christopher Velasquez
Escritor, Rio Grande Catholic

El pasado mes de diciembre, los frailes franciscanos de la Diócesis de El Paso dieron la bienvenida a Fray Carlos Trovareli, el Ministro General de su familia religiosa, al Centro de Retiros Santa Cruz en Mesilla Park, Nuevo México.

Fray Carlos supervisa todos los franciscanos convencionales en todo el mundo y visitó para presenciar el trabajo de los frailes provinciales y aprender sobre su ministerio en el suroeste.

El padre Miguel Briseño, OFM Conv, párroco de Nuestra Señora del Monte Carmelo, declaró que "Se pidió a cada uno de los provinciales que eligiera un lugar, y eligieron El Paso por los elementos multifacéticos que tenemos tanto en El Paso como en Las Cruces. Aquí en El Paso, en el Monte Carmelo, tienes el ministerio de Tigua junto con el Valle y la Pastoral Universitaria, y en Las Cruces, está el retiro en Tortugas". El viaje de Fray Carlos marcó su primera visita a los Estados Unidos como Ministro General.

Fray Carlos describe su visita

en una entrevista en el sitio web de los Hermanos Menores Convencionales diciendo: "La palabra que elegiría para describir lo que estoy viendo, en este momento, es la palabra "utopía". Esta palabra tiene un significado que me gustaría utilizar, que me gusta mucho, y es: traer a la existencia lo que todavía no existe. Así pues, me parece que usted está aquí, viviendo y trabajando en esta zona. Es cierto que esta zona tiene una larga historia que se remonta a muchos años atrás y tiene muchas culturas vibrantes". El P. Miguel está de acuerdo y se alegra de compartir la singularidad de su provincia: "Las culturas americana, tigua e hispana aportan una riqueza a nuestra iglesia". El P. Miguel también ha manifestado la importancia de la visita del ministro general. "El sentido de estar entre los frailes fue muy importante. Es el sucesor de San Francisco; ha habido elegidos después de San Francisco, y él sigue los pasos de esas personas".

Existe la posibilidad de que Fray Carlos regrese pronto al Suroeste, ya que las Cuatro Provincias de Estados Unidos celebran sus capítulos en abril.



El pasado mes de diciembre, los frailes franciscanos de la Diócesis de El Paso dieron la bienvenida a Fray Carlos Trovareli, el Ministro General de su familia religiosa, al Centro de Retiros Santa Cruz en Mesilla Park, Nuevo México. *Foto por el Fr. Miguel Briseño, OFM Conv.*

Los "capítulos sirven como medio para promover la reforma de la vida religiosa".

La Orden de Frailes Menores Convencionales [OFM Conv] es una de las tres ramas que componen la Primera Orden

de San Francisco. Siguiendo el espíritu de su fundador, los franciscanos han respondido a la llamada de la Iglesia para atender a los pobres y a los necesitados durante cientos de años. Los frailes franciscanos han servido

y siguen sirviendo en parroquias, escuelas, órdenes religiosas, albergues, residencias de ancianos y muchas otras funciones de servicio esenciales. La orden está dividida en varias provincias a las que los frailes están afiliados.

The Shepherd's Corner

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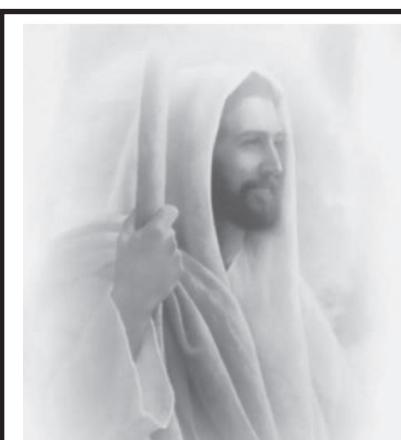
Wednesday - Friday 9 am -12 pm

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Saturday 5 - 6

Sunday 10 am - 2:30 pm & 4:30 pm - 6:00 pm

St. Luke Catholic Church
930 E. Redd Road, El Paso Texas 79912



Peace, Love and Dialogue

By Abi Ray
Hope Border Institute

The church throughout the world observes the World Day of Peace every year on January 1st, the Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God.

In his message for this year's World Day of Peace, Pope Francis lifts up the importance of dialogue in the work of peacebuilding. He pays special attention to one way we can all be peacemakers in daily life, by making time for real conversation between the young and the old. This is what the pope calls 'intergenerational dialogue'.

Pope Francis has spoken often about the importance of dialogue between young persons and the elderly. He says that older generations, with their wisdom and experience, are like the 'roots of our trees' and he compares the youth, with their creativity and energy, to the 'buds and foliage.' Without one, you cannot have the other.

Intergenerational dialogue is a fancy way of saying that the young and old need to listen to and learn from one another. Building solidarity between generations, for the pope, is one way of building peace in our communities and beyond.

Over the past two years, we have seen how the Covid-19 pandemic has fallen particularly hard on the elderly. The loss of our parents and grandparents, our aunts and uncles, to the virus has left a hole in our families, in our parishes and in our communities that can never be replaced.

If anything, the pandemic has reminded us of the importance of being present to our elders, listening again to their stories and the knowledge that comes from long life, conserving the recipes of traditional foods and the customs and traditions that connect us to our past, and recognizing the debt of gratitude we owe for



the sacrifices and achievements of our ancestors. The wisdom and perspective of the old can help ground us and remind us of what is really important.

Young people are also a gift. They bring our communities new energy, different ways of thinking and courage to meet the challenges of the present. As in the past, young people are at the forefront of addressing society's most pressing challenges and are especially sensitive to injustice and the need to protect the environment, our common home.

In order to move forward and build a more just society as well

as promote the vitality of our parish communities, we need both the depth that our elders bring and the bold dreams of the young.

Intergenerational dialogue starts at home and in the family, by making sure that daily life includes time for parents and children to be together. That means disconnecting from technology every now and then, making sure that we enjoy one another's company around the dining room table, making time for grandparents and our elderly family members, and honoring family traditions.

We can also make space for these occasions in our parishes. Young people should be able to share their thirst for justice, their tech savvy and their imaginative ways of doing things. But they need to be invited and welcomed. Our parishes should be intentional about developing the talent of our young persons by inviting them into ministries, giving them opportunities to exercise genuine leadership, and really paying attention to what they have to say.

As we continue along the synodal journey, perhaps we can be more intentional about creating spaces for the young and the

old to listen to one another. As Saint Paul says, each member of the Body of Christ is important and has something beautiful to contribute. In a synodal church, we meet Christ in the wisdom, experience, creativity and dreams of one another.

By building intergenerational solidarity through dialogue, we can make great strides towards a world that is more just and build real peace.

Abi Ray is the director of formation and engagement at the Hope Border Institute. For more ways to get involved, visit www.hopeborder.org.

Paz, Amor y Diálogo

Por Abi Ray
Hope Border Institute

La Iglesia en todo el mundo celebra la Jornada Mundial de la Paz cada año el 1 de enero, solemnidad de María, Madre de Dios.

En su mensaje para la Jornada Mundial de la Paz de este año, el Papa Francisco destaca la importancia del diálogo en la labor de construcción de la paz. Presta especial atención a un modo en que todos podemos ser constructores de la paz en la vida cotidiana, dedicando tiempo a una verdadera conversación entre los jóvenes y los mayores. Esto es lo que el Papa llama "diálogo intergeneracional".

El Papa Francisco ha hablado a menudo de la importancia del diálogo entre los jóvenes y los ancianos. Dice que las generaciones mayores, con su sabiduría y experiencia, son como las "raíces de nuestros árboles" y compara a los jóvenes, con su

creatividad y energía, con los "brotes y el follaje". Sin una, no se puede tener la otra.

El diálogo intergeneracional es una forma elegante de decir que los jóvenes y los mayores deben escucharse y aprender unos de otros. Para el Papa, la construcción de la solidaridad entre generaciones es una forma de construir la paz en nuestras comunidades y más allá.

En los últimos dos años, hemos visto cómo la pandemia de Covid-19 se ha cebado especialmente con las personas mayores. La pérdida de nuestros padres y abuelos, nuestros tíos y tíos, a causa del virus ha dejado un hueco en nuestras familias, en nuestras parroquias y en nuestras comunidades que nunca podrá ser reemplazado.

En todo caso, la pandemia nos ha recordado la importancia de estar presentes con nuestros mayores, de volver a escuchar sus historias y los conocimientos que se derivan de una larga

vida, de conservar las recetas de los alimentos tradicionales y las costumbres y tradiciones que nos conectan con nuestro pasado, y de reconocer la deuda de gratitud que tenemos por los sacrificios y logros de nuestros antepasados. La sabiduría y la perspectiva de los ancianos pueden ayudarnos a afianzarnos y recordarnos lo que es realmente importante.

Los jóvenes también son un regalo. Aportan a nuestras comunidades nueva energía, diferentes formas de pensar y valor para afrontar los retos del presente. Al igual que en el pasado, los jóvenes están en primera línea para afrontar los retos más acuciantes de la sociedad y son especialmente sensibles a la injusticia y a la necesidad de proteger el medio ambiente, nuestra casa común.

Para avanzar y construir una sociedad más justa, así como para promover la vitalidad de nuestras comunidades parroquiales, necesitamos tanto la

profundidad que aportan nuestros mayores como los audaces sueños de los jóvenes.

El diálogo intergeneracional comienza en el hogar y en la familia, asegurando que la vida diaria incluya tiempo para que padres e hijos estén juntos. Eso significa desconectarse de la tecnología de vez en cuando, asegurarse de que disfrutamos de la compañía de unos y otros en torno a la mesa del comedor, dedicar tiempo a los abuelos y a nuestros familiares mayores, y honrar las tradiciones familiares.

También podemos dar cabida a estas ocasiones en nuestras parroquias. Los jóvenes deberían poder compartir su sed de justicia, sus conocimientos tecnológicos y sus formas imaginativas de hacer las cosas. Pero deben ser invitados y acogidos. Nuestras parroquias deben ser intencionales en el desarrollo del talento de nuestros jóvenes invitándolos a los ministerios, dándoles oportunidades de ejercer un liderazgo

genuino, y prestando realmente atención a lo que tienen que decir.

A medida que avanzamos en el camino sinodal, tal vez podamos ser más intencionales en la creación de espacios para que los jóvenes y los mayores se escuchen mutuamente. Como dice San Pablo, cada miembro del Cuerpo de Cristo es importante y tiene algo hermoso que aportar. En una iglesia sinodal, encontramos a Cristo en la sabiduría, la experiencia, la creatividad y los sueños de unos y otros.

Al construir la solidaridad intergeneracional a través del diálogo, podemos dar grandes pasos hacia un mundo más justo y construir una paz real.

Abi Ray es la directora de formación y compromiso del Instituto Fronterizo de la Esperanza. Para conocer más formas de participar, visite www.hopeborder.org.

Unity And Communion Are Expressed In Our Full Participation



Fr. Michael Lewis, STL

The high point of our celebration of Mass is, of course, Holy Communion — the moment when we unite ourselves to Christ as we take and eat his Body and Blood. But this moment is not a private one. Indeed, the purpose of Holy Communion is to make us sharers and participants in his Body and Blood to form a single body, the Church. In this way, the Eucharist renews, strengthens, and deepens the unity of the Church. But it's not the only way we express unity in the liturgy.

When we celebrate any liturgy — whether the Mass or one of the sacraments, for example — it is by definition a shared activity of public worship. As Paul Turner writes, “We join in the liturgy because we are a community, but the reverse is also true: without the liturgy, we are not a community at all.” But how do we express liturgically that which binds our community together?

It starts with the “full, conscious, and active participation” of the faithful in each liturgy, the “right and duty” of each Catholic by virtue of their baptism, according to the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*. This is more than simply answering the priest when it’s the assembly’s “turn.” It also involves participating in the acclamations and responses at Mass, whether said or sung; joining in the singing at Mass, even if your voice isn’t perfect;

and participating together in the actions and gestures that are part of community worship.

When done well, all these ways of participating exemplify and model the unity that is inherent in every liturgical celebration. Yet, there are some who prefer to stress their own private inclinations or arbitrary choices rather than participate fully in the Church’s liturgy. This choice is not only to their spiritual detriment, it also deprives the community of a fuller sense of unity, which is particularly discordant when it happens in the midst of celebrating the sacrament of unity, the Eucharist.

Take, for example, the gesture of the assembly after the *Agnus Dei* or “Lamb of God” is sung. In the Diocese of El Paso, the assembly then can either kneel or stand until the Communion Procession begins. However, there should be unity in the assembly’s

posture; the entire assembly should be doing the same thing. As the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* reminds us, “A common bodily posture, to be observed by all those taking part, is a sign of the unity of the members of the Christian community gathered together for the Sacred Liturgy, for it expresses the intentions and spiritual attitude of the participants and also fosters them.”

After receiving Communion, individuals may kneel to pray quietly for some time, but should then join the rest of the assembly standing and singing the Communion Hymn, “its purpose being to express the spiritual union of the communicants by means of the unity of their voices, … and to bring out more clearly the ‘communitarian’ character of the procession to receive the Eucharist,” the GIRM explains. Though some view the

Communion Hymn as a distracting intrusion into their private prayer, the opposite is true when one neglects to participate in the outward expressions of communion that make up the Church’s liturgy.

After all, receiving the Body and Blood of Christ necessarily establishes communion between the members of the Body of Christ. Our voices, actions, gestures, and posture during the liturgy should make evident this unity, and indeed we pray it to be so multiple times during the Mass.

As we pray in the Rite of Peace, may Christ graciously grant his Church peace and unity in accordance with his will. And as Eucharistic Prayer III implores, may we, who are nourished by the Body and Blood of the Son and filled with his Holy Spirit, “become one body, one spirit in Christ.”

La Unidad Y La Comunión Se Expresan En Nuestra Plena Participación

El punto culminante de nuestra celebración de la Misa es, por supuesto, la Sagrada Comunión, el momento en que nos unimos a Cristo al tomar y comer su Cuerpo y su Sangre. Pero este momento no es privado. De hecho, el propósito de la Sagrada Comunión es hacernos participes de su Cuerpo y Sangre para formar un solo cuerpo, la Iglesia. De este modo, la Eucaristía renueva, fortalece y profundiza la unidad de la Iglesia. Pero no es la única forma de expresar la unidad en la liturgia.

Cuando celebramos cualquier liturgia —ya sea la Misa o uno de los sacramentos, por ejemplo— es por definición una actividad compartida de culto público. Como escribe Paul Turner, “Nos unimos a la liturgia porque somos comunidad: lo contrario también es cierto: sin liturgia, no somos comunidad”. Pero, ¿cómo expresamos litúrgicamente aquello que une a nuestra comunidad?

Comienza con la “participación plena, consciente y activa” de los fieles en cada liturgia, “derecho y obligación” de cada católico en virtud de su bautismo, según la *Constitución sobre la Sagrada Liturgia*. Esto es algo más que responder al sacerdote cuando es el “turno” de la asamblea. También implica participar en las aclamaciones y respuestas de la Misa, ya sean dichas o cantadas; unirse a los cantos de la Misa, incluso si la voz no es perfecta; y participar juntos en las acciones y gestos que forman parte del culto comunitario.

Cuando se hace bien, todas estas formas de participación ejemplifican y modelan la unidad inherente a toda celebración litúrgica. Sin embargo, hay quienes prefieren acentuar sus propias inclinaciones privadas o sus elecciones arbitrarias en lugar de participar plenamente en la liturgia de la Iglesia. Esta elección no sólo les perjudica espiritualmente,



sino que priva a la comunidad de un sentido más pleno de la unidad, que es particularmente discordante cuando se produce en medio de la celebración del sacramento de la unidad, la Eucaristía.

Tomemos, por ejemplo, el gesto de la asamblea tras el canto del *Agnus Dei* o “Cordeiro de Dios”. En la Diócesis de El Paso, la asamblea puede entonces arrodillarse o permanecer de pie hasta que comience la Procesión de la Comunión. Sin embargo, debe haber unidad en la postura de la asamblea; toda la asamblea

debe hacer lo mismo. Como nos recuerda la *Instrucción General del Misal Romano*, “La uniformidad de las posturas, que debe ser observada por todos participantes, es signo de la unidad de los miembros de la comunidad cristiana congregados para la sagrada Liturgia: expresa y promueve, en efecto, la intención y los sentimientos de los participantes”.

Después de recibir la Comunión, los individuos pueden arrodillarse para rezar en silencio durante algún tiempo, pero luego deben unirse al resto de la asamblea de pie y cantando

el canto de la Comunión, “que debe expresar, por la unión de las voces, la unión espiritual de quienes comulgán, … y esclarecer mejor la índole ‘comunitaria’ de la procesión para recibir la Eucaristía”, explica la IGMR. Aunque algunos ven el canto de la Comunión como una intrusión que distrae en su oración privada, lo cierto es lo contrario cuando se descuida la participación en las expresiones externas de comunión que componen la liturgia de la Iglesia.

Después de todo, recibir el Cuerpo y la Sangre de Cristo establece necesariamente la

comunión entre los miembros del Cuerpo de Cristo. Nuestras voces, acciones, gestos y posturas durante la liturgia deberían hacer evidente esta unidad, y de hecho rezamos para que así sea en múltiples ocasiones durante la Misa.

Como rezamos en el Rito de la Paz, que Cristo, conforme a su palabra, concédele la paz y la unidad a su Iglesia. Y como implora la Plegaria Eucarística III, que nosotros, fortalecidos con el Cuerpo y la Sangre del Hijo y llenos de su Espíritu Santo, “formemos en Cristo un solo cuerpo y un solo espíritu”.



Janet M. Crowe

Have you ever wished you could take back words spoken in anger? Do something differently? Change your reaction to a difficult situation? Think it through rather than acting in haste or panic? Go back in time? Take it back and get a do over?

There is a young woman in southern New Mexico who, I'm sure, wishes she could do just that. She did what most would consider an unthinkable act. She tossed her living newborn baby in a dumpster.

However, rather than rush to condemn her, let's look at this tragic situation from another perspective. A young woman, a teenager, has just given birth, possibly by herself, alone, without any help or assistance from anyone. She's in pain. She's frightened. She simply wants it to go away, for her life to go back to the way it was a day or month or year before. In a panic she does the unthink-

able.

Now, let's ask the important questions? Why didn't the young woman know about the Safe Haven Law which allows her to safely relinquish her baby to a hospital or fire station without any criminal repercussions against her or her actions? Why didn't someone recognize that she was pregnant and might need help? Where were her family members, her friends, or even school or work administrators who might have noticed that she needed help? Where were the people who could have helped her make a better decision for herself and her baby?

When I saw and heard this tragic story on the News, I cried and my mind silently screamed out those same questions. No answers came. Then I passed by a mirror.

A mirror. I cried again.

Where was I when she cried in her pillow at night? Why didn't I recognize the signs of distress on her face, in her body language, in her hesitation to interact? How could I have been so wrapped up in my own life, my own problems – large or small, it didn't matter – that I did not even look at someone enough to see if she needed help. Was I so busy with my own life that I could not hear

her quiet cries for help? Did I turn away rather than acknowledge that she desperately needed my help? Am I oblivious to the pain and suffering of those around me? Why?

Why? I yelled at the mirror. Why? Because I can't rescue everyone. Because I have responsibilities of my own, a family of my own to care for. Because I'm not able to offer my home to a stranger who needs a safe place to stay. Because there are so many people who need help and I can't possibly help every one of them. Because I am afraid of being taken advantage of, having someone take the resources that I have worked hard to obtain when that person doesn't really need help, they just want a handout. Because I see people who really do need help but I don't know what I can do to help them.

Why? Because I am just one person. I am just me. I have no expertise in recognizing what someone needs or how to help them. I have no knowledge of the resources available to help someone. I can't just give away all that I've earned, it wouldn't help anyway, there are so many people who need help. I am just one person. I am just me.

If she could just go back in time. Receive a second chance.

Think it through. Take it back and get a do over.

If I could just go back in time and recognize that she needed help. If I could offer her a chance to see that she is not alone. If I could give her time so that together we could find the help she needed to overcome whatever obstacles she is facing. If I could help her find a real solution for both her and her baby, she would not need to take it back.

How? The mirror was taunting me. How, I cried? I am just one person. How could I do any of that?

How? Because I am not just one person. I am part of a community filled with people and organizations willing and eager to help women in distress. I don't know about available resources, but there are people who do and who would arrange for her to receive whatever assistance she needs. However, just as I cannot do everything to help everyone, they need me, too.

We are brothers and sisters in God's large family. He has made each of us with unique and wonderful talents. No one is more important than the other. No one's talent is better than someone else's. But each one is needed. Hands to lift one another up. Shoulders to help

carry someone's burden. Feet to help a person walk on the path toward real help rather than empty promises. Legs to go and find the help that is needed. We are one body especially when we share God's love with those who need to feel His love in a world where they feel alone and desperate. We can be the mirror of God's love.

How do we reflect the perfect love of God through our meager, unworthy selves? We try. We give what we can and then we stretch a little bit further and give a little bit more. Time and talents. There are organizations – such as Guiding Star and Southwest Coalition for Life and the Diocese Reverence for Life – that are already set up and willing to help women in crisis. They simply need us.

We can't go back in time to help the young woman in southern New Mexico. Would you help her if you could? There are many more just like her here in El Paso who desperately need our help. Here is our second chance. Let's take it and change a tragic ending into a happy beginning!

MAKING SENSE OF BIOETHICS

The Ethics of Pig to Human Organ Transplants



Fr. Tad Pacholczyk

Early this year, a Maryland man suffering from severe heart failure underwent a new experimental procedure, receiving a pig heart transplant. His medical team had determined he would be a poor candidate for a human heart transplant or for an artificial heart, so he was offered the opportunity to participate in a novel treatment using a genetically modified pig's heart.

The pig had been specially bred and modified with DNA edits to increase the likelihood of successful transplantation. Three genes of the pig that contribute to the rapid antibody-mediated rejection of pig organs by humans were "knocked out." Six human genes that would produce "human protective proteins" and improve immune acceptance of the pig heart were also inserted into the pig's genome. An additional gene knockout was done to prevent the pig's heart from becoming too large.

The transplantation of animal

organs into humans is known as "xenotransplantation" and is a new field that appears poised to expand rapidly in the future. Xenotransplantation can be ethical as long as pilot studies are performed in animals ahead of use in humans, safety issues are carefully addressed, the benefits of the transplantation procedure outweigh the burdens, and risks are reasonably limited.

While we have a duty to treat animals well and should try to avoid causing them undue suffering, it's also clear that human beings have been given by God a legitimate dominion over members of the animal kingdom. Animal trials have always been key to launching new therapies in humans.

Pig organ transplants into baboons and other non-human primates have been taking place for decades. These transplants have become more beneficial and less risky over time, especially as tailored genetic modifications have been introduced into the pigs. Xenotransplantation offers an important advantage over traditional human-to-human transplants: the opportunity to modify the donor organ, rather than only modifying the recipient through suppressing his or her immune system.

In the early days of implanting pig organs into non-human

primates, researchers faced the serious problem of immediate organ destruction due to hyperacute rejection, with the failure time being measured in minutes, rather than hours or days. Hyperacute rejection occurred because the baboon's immune system recognized a carbohydrate molecule on the surface of the pig organ. By knocking out the troublesome carbohydrate molecule via genetic engineering, and relying on additional immune-suppression techniques, scientists were able to extend significantly the survival times of transplanted pig organs in baboons, in some studies up to nearly three years.

The very complex changes made in the genetically-engineered pigs, when coupled with continued advances in immune-suppression strategies in organ recipients, led to the realization that it might finally be possible to attempt implantation of a genetically-modified pig heart into a human patient.

In the future, additional and more sophisticated genetic engineering of source animals and the use of new immunosuppressive agents in recipients should further improve compatibility and decrease the chances of xenotransplant rejection.

Still, it should be noted that there are other potential con-

cerns besides organ rejection. Animal retroviruses or diseases could potentially be transmitted to humans when they receive an animal organ. Some have argued, however, that by maintaining strict control over how animals are housed, fed and bred for organ procurement, scientists can achieve a greater degree of assurance in terms of minimizing their exposure to pathogens through the highly biosecure laboratory conditions the animals are raised in; meanwhile, for human organ donors, detailed knowledge of individual exposure profiles may not be available.

Surveys and focus groups assessing attitudes to xenotransplantation generally report public support for the use of pig organs. Such surveys also suggest that many Christians, Jews and Muslims would consider xenotransplantation to be acceptable as a life-saving measure. Some people object to the use of animals, but the fact that more than 100 million pigs in the US are slaughtered annually for human food production lessens for most the concerns around using them to alleviate the chronic shortages of life-saving organs. Thousands of people die every year on waiting lists for human organs.

Moreover, if pig organ

transplants into humans were to become standardized and widely available, this could also significantly reduce the illegal trade in human organs like kidneys, where the poor and disadvantaged are often victimized.

Even though remarkable advancements have been made in "neutering" pig organs so they no longer provoke a powerful immune response in humans, and striking progress has been made in extending survival times for xenografts, there are sure to be many more twists and turns along the road of getting our immune systems to cooperate fully with implanted animal organs.

Recent forays into xenotransplantation offer a significant first step on the long journey from yesterday's "scientifically unimaginable," to today's "barely achievable," to tomorrow's basic "standard of care."

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 and www.father tad.com.



Padre Wilson Cuevas

Igual que muchos de ustedes, apuesto por un 2022 esperanzador. Mi esperanza para este año nuevo esta primero en Dios, en la ciencia y en que el ser humano, al final de cuentas hace cualquier cosa para sobrevivir, porque como decía Gonzalo Arango: “vivir es superior a cualquier fracaso”. Y una vez más viene a mi recuerdo una canción preciosa de Violeta Parra, que de jóvenes cantábamos con pasión y delirio: “Gracias a la Vida que me ha dado tanto, me ha dado la risa y también el llanto”. Puedo reconocer ahora con gratitud que es mas lo que he reido que lo que he llorado; “Para quejarme tendría que estar muerto” dijo Gonzalo Arango antes de esta queja.

Quisiera proponerles que juntos nos fijáramos para el 2022 grandes cambios positivos para nuestras vidas y el entorno donde vivimos e interactuamos. No podemos negar que estos dos últimos años fueron muy difíciles para la humanidad, la pandemia ha matado a mas de cinco millones de personas y contagiado a otros 270 millones, si la variante Delta era rápida, la O micrón lo es más y amenaza con extenderse a todo el planeta. Pero la vida sigue, el cómo es lo que debemos descifrar.

Estamos obligados a cumplir con tantos roles y a la vez debemos enfrentar tal cantidad de presiones y expectativas, que a veces es complicado un enfoque claro en lo que verdaderamente queremos. El primer paso para generar cambios es hacer un



análisis consciente del presente. Esto no implica quedarnos sentados ruminando y lamentando, sino aterrizando sobre el sitio en el cual estamos parados. Quizás las tres siguientes preguntas nos puedan ayudar en este análisis.

La primera; ¿QUÉ ME ESTA FUNCIONANDO? Aceptar y felicitarse por los aspectos de la vida que van bien. Este simple hecho ayuda a iniciar un proceso futuro, con un enfoque positivo. Todos tenemos algo por lo cual nos sentimos orgullosos o logros que podemos atribuirnos (sin prepotencia, pero con orgullo) tal vez reafirmarnos que somos buenos padres, hijos amorosos

o dedicados a ayudar o servir a miembros de la familia o de su comunidad parroquial o festejar nuestros éxitos laborales o celebrar el aniversario de parejas o el cumpleaños de vida. Lo importante es afirmar lo que hacemos bien y si es posible seguir haciéndolo cada vez mejor. Esta pregunta nos ahorra el tiempo y la energía que exige “arreglar” lo que no está dañado.

La segunda; ¿QUÉ NECESITO DEJAR DE HACER YA? Esta es una pregunta difícil, pues exige someterse a la sinceridad más cruda con uno mismo. Casi todos sabemos cuáles son esos actos y actitudes que nos perjudi-

can, pero que preferimos ignorar. Es más fácil meter la cabeza bajo la tierra como aveSTRUZ, que afrontar la verdad. Para algunos puede ser no excederse con el alcohol, para otros combatir la adicción al trabajo, para muchos dejar de ser pesimistas o hacer un alto con las palabras crueles a los seres queridos. Otros debemos dejar atrás la mentalidad de victimas y no ser más pasivos o sumisos ante la vida. Esta pregunta, básicamente nos prepara para la acción.

La tercera; ¿QUÉ TENGO QUE EMPEZAR A HACER EN ESTE MOMENTO? Una pregunta crucial porque abstraе

de la reflexión y nos aterraza en los actos concretos. No hay lugar a ambigüedades ni a dudas. Es hora de elaborar un plan de trabajo o un mapa mental detallado que plasme la vida que queremos obtener. Tal vez se trate de buscar un trabajo nuevo, salir de una mala relación o arriesgarse a empezar una nueva, pasar más tiempo con su pareja o en familia; cuidar más su salud física y mental, tomar más tiempo con sus amigos o practicar un deporte o empezar un nuevo proyecto, e incluso dedicarse más tiempo a mirar hacia dentro de sí mismo. Esta pregunta nos lleva a dar los primeros pasos para cambiar lo malo y crear todo aquello que soñamos.

Estoy seguro que con estos tres interrogantes respondidos con sinceridad y amor por uno mismo, serán una efectiva estrategia para vivir el 2022 como el mejor año de muchos años de su vida o por lo menos el doble de bueno que el año pasado. No es que los tiempos sean malos, el tiempo como la vida es lo que dedicamos a hacer o decidir en nuestra vida y en nuestro tiempo. La sabiduría popular nos enseña en frases cortar dosis muy significativas e iluminadoras: “Siembra vientos y cosecha las tempestades”; “Lo que siembras cosecharás”; “Quien piensa mal, mal vive”; “No sabes lo bien que estas hasta que las cosas empeoran”; “No hay mal que por bien no venga”; “De dos males, Dios nos concede el menos mal”; “Más rápido cae un mentiroso que un cojo”. Estos refranes de la sabiduría popular son centellas de luz para nuestras mentes, para saber y entender mejor como vivir más linda la vida. ¡La decisión es tuya!

All That We Are Together

Like many of you, I am betting on a hopeful 2022. My hope for this new year is first in God, in science and in the fact that human beings, at the end of the day, will do anything to survive, because as Gonzalo Arango used to say: “living is superior to any failure”. And once again I am reminded of a beautiful song by Violeta Parra, which we used to sing with passion and delirium when we were young: “Thanks to Life that has given me so much, it has given me laughter and also tears”. I can now recognize with gratitude that I have laughed more than I have cried; “To complain I would have to be dead” said Gonzalo Arango before this complaint.

I would like to propose that together we set for 2022 great positive changes for our lives and the environment where we live and interact. We cannot deny that these last two years have been very difficult for humanity, the pandemic has killed more than

five million people and infected another 270 million, if the Delta variant was fast, the Omicron variant is even faster and threatens to spread to the entire planet. But life goes on, the how is what we must decipher.

We are obliged to fulfill so many roles and at the same time face so many pressures and expectations that it is sometimes difficult to focus clearly on what we really want. The first step to generate changes is to make a conscious analysis of the present. This does not imply sitting around ruminating and lamenting, but rather grounding ourselves in where we stand. Perhaps the following three questions can help us in this analysis.

The first; WHAT IS WORKING FOR ME? Accept and congratulate yourself for the aspects of your life that are going well. This simple fact helps to initiate a future process, with a positive approach. We all have something to be proud of or accomplish-

ments that we can take credit for (without arrogance, but with pride) perhaps reaffirming that we are good parents, loving children or dedicated to helping or serving family members or your parish community or celebrating our work successes or celebrating a couple’s anniversary or life’s birthday. The important thing is to affirm what we do well and if possible continue to do it better and better. This question saves us the time and energy it takes to “fix” what is not broken.

The second; WHAT DO I NEED TO STOP DOING NOW? This is a difficult question, because it requires us to submit to the rawest sincerity with ourselves. Almost all of us know what are those acts and attitudes that harm us, but which we prefer to ignore. It is easier to bury our heads in the sand like an ostrich than to face the truth. For some it may be not to overindulge in alcohol, for others to fight work-

aholism, for many to stop being pessimistic or to put a stop to cruel words to loved ones. Others of us must leave behind the victim mentality and no longer be passive or submissive in the face of life. This question basically prepares us for action.

The third one; WHAT DO I HAVE TO START DOING NOW? A crucial question because it abstracts from reflection and lands us in concrete acts. There is no room for ambiguity or doubt. It is time to draw up a work plan or a detailed mental map that captures the life we want to achieve. Perhaps it is to look for a new job, get out of a bad relationship or risk starting a new one, spend more time with your partner or family, take better care of your physical and mental health, spend more time with your friends or practice a sport or start a new project, and even dedicate more time to look inside yourself. This question leads us to take the first steps to

change the bad and create everything we dream of.

I am sure that with these three questions answered with sincerity and love for oneself, they will be an effective strategy to live 2022 as the best year of many years of your life or at least twice as good as last year. It is not that times are bad, time like life is what we dedicate to do or decide in our life and in our time. Popular wisdom teaches us in very meaningful and enlightening phrases: “Sow the winds and reap the storms”; “What you sow, you shall reap”; “He who thinks evil, lives evil”; “You do not know how good you are until things get worse”; “There is no evil for good”; “Of two evils, God grants us the lesser evil”; “A liar falls faster than a lame man”. These sayings of popular wisdom are sparkles of light for our minds, to know and understand better how to live life more beautifully. The choice is yours!

Celebrating the 3 Year Lauch of the Capital Campaign

By Christie Rodriguez
Capital Campaign Coordinator

We are a blessed community. Our role as stewards of Catholic ministry is to help others, bringing them to experience the love of Christ our Lord. Our actions, efforts, and service should be in anticipation of reaping the eternal harvest of heaven and hope for a glorious resurrection. During Ordinary Time in early February, we reflect on the hope that our deeds and actions may glorify God and may leave a legacy for our faith – long after we join our Heavenly Father. The remaining days of February bring us into the Lenten season – a time of penance, humility, and recognition of our short fallings. We give alms, we fast, we give up simple luxuries, and we prepare for the celebration of the life and legacy of Christ, who lives within each of us. This theme of preparation is significant as we look to conclude our active fundraising for the We Are the Body of Christ Campaign.

February 2022 marks three years, since we launched our campaign in early 2019, before our “new normal”. Over 5,000 families in our Diocese have graciously shared their gifts for the church of tomorrow and have collectively raised more than \$12 million – what an incredible testament to the strength and generosity of our



faithful community! Our goal is to raise \$18 million and we are making exceptional progress towards this! Funds raised through the campaign directly support four programs to ensure the future of the Diocese remains strong: Seminarian/Diaconate Education and Formation; Catholic Education and Religious Formation; Parish Emergency Assistance; and Strengthening Parishes at the Local Level.

While our Diocese cele-

brates 107 years this year, our Catholic presence in El Paso far predates this - our historic missions, like the Socorro Mission of La Purisima, remind us that the first faithful, bold families laid the foundation for our thriving community today. Leaving an enduring legacy by faithful action and intent is precisely what Fr. Emanuel Alcazar heralded during his Commitment Weekends at La Purisima. Fr. invited his community to join those first

families who boldly founded the mission in 1682, articulated the necessity of preserving our historic missions - and raised over \$125,000! Funds raised will support La Purisima’s Master Plan to ensure the mission continues to build God’s kingdom for the next 340 years!

While parishes like La Purisima are a testament to our enduring strength, our Catholic faith in West Texas continues to grow each year. In fact, at St. John Paul II, Fr. Federico

Franco celebrated Commitment Weekend and honored the parish community’s new legacy and recent founding in Mission Valley in 2019 – looking to reciprocate the deeds, sacrifices, and legacy of prior generations of families at Santa Lucia and San Jose parishes. Fr. invited his parishioners to pay it forward by similarly laying a foundation for the next generation and the community’s efforts raised more than \$88,000! From historic missions to our newest parishes, our faithful community is bold, vibrant, and uniquely beautiful.

We are blessed. While the pandemic continues to change how we live our lives, we must remember that the Holy Spirit continues to pour blessings into our hearts and into our lives – whether we realize it or not! As Catholics, we are encouraged to bless others by our deeds, actions, and service. In fact, St. Paul the Apostle stated in 1 Thessalonians 1:3, “We remember before our God and Father your work produced by faith, your labor prompted by love, and your endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ”. May our humble efforts be fruitful.

We invite you to prayerfully consider supporting the campaign for our future ministry in El Paso. For more information, please visit our website: www.bodyofchristcampaign.com or call (915) 872-8412, Ext 137.

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We've helped our community save more than \$19.5 million in tax-preparation fees — you, too, could do more with your tax refund with VITA's help. Don't delay! Service is first come, first served.

Find a VITA site near you, see the dates and times, and get a list of what to bring** by visiting freetaxeselpaso.org or by dialing 211.

The 2022 Progress: Catholic Ministry Appeal is Underway

By Linda Caro
CEO, Catholic Foundation

The Catholic Foundation for the Diocese of El Paso is proud to announce the launch of the 2022 Progress: Catholic Ministry Appeal. The Catholic Ministry Appeal is an annual diocesan-wide fundraising campaign to support the work of 15 ministries of the Diocese of El Paso.

Through this appeal, Catholics are provided the opportunity to help reach a \$1.9 million goal that will allow our ministries to continue God's work, support God's children, and to build His kingdom. This year's theme, Growing in Faith, Giving in Love is about expanding our faithfulness and our hearts to those most in need.

In 2021, 6,336 generous donors came together to reach \$1,960,780 in pledges towards the \$1.9 million goal! The gifts provided through this effort fund vital financial support for 15 diocesan ministries, including those providing crucial outreach in the areas of ministerial, community and pastoral services, along with Catholic education, spiritual formation, and evangelization.

"During this time of uncertainty, the Catholic Ministry Appeal continues to sustain our ministries and services in the Diocese of El Paso," said Bishop Mark Seitz. "Our Catholic reach is extensive, our



The Catholic Ministry Appeal supports 15 diocesan ministries, including those providing crucial outreach in the areas of ministerial, community and pastoral services, along with Catholic education, spiritual formation, and evangelization. Ministry Director, Jose Castrellon speaks to a supporter of the Catholic Ministry Appeal, *Photo by Fernie Ceniceros*

Catholic commitment is strong, and our readiness to serve others continues through these difficult times. Your prayerful and sacrificial support will play a central role in impacting the lives of those served. We invite

you to learn more about the ministries and services of the Diocese of El Paso; strengthen your faith and to give in love to our brothers and sisters in their time of need."

Due to the COVID-19

pandemic, many of the 2021 Progress: Catholic Ministry Appeal activities were delayed and conducted virtually and through mail. This year, the Catholic Ministry Appeal Kick-off and the Pew Commitment

Weekends will be conducted the last week of March and the first week in April.

"In 2021, we were unsure of the success the Catholic Ministry Appeal would have in a pandemic situation however, we learned a lot about the devotion our Catholic community has for the essential programs of our Diocesan ministries," said Linda Caro, Chief Operating Officer for the Catholic Foundation. "These programs provide many benefits to our children through religious formation and preparation of sacraments, to educating our future priests and deacons so that the future leadership of our parishes is strong. The ministries support those in need of healing and growing in their marriage, family and individual support through counseling services; they help the elderly, the marginalized, the poor, they strengthen the faith of our youth and young adults, and provides ministry training for those who serve our parish communities. We are counting on our most faithful to recognize the difference they will make in the Catholic church and we are grateful for the generosity of donors."

For more information, or to donate, go to: <https://www.elpasodiocesefoundation.org/donate-to-a-fund/progress-2022> or call the Catholic Foundation at (915) 872-8412.

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2 THESSALONIANS 1:3

 **CATHOLIC FOUNDATION
FOR THE DIOCESE OF EL PASO**

2022PROGRESS.ORG

Special Collection for Retirement Fund for Priests

This is reminder of the Special Offering to be held on Saturday, February 12 and Sunday, February 13, 2022 for the Retirement Fund for Priests.

The Clergy Retirement Program provides financial support to those members of the clergy who are over age 65. The Diocese of El Paso faces three challenges with respect to its diocesan clergy. First, we must insure the recruitment and training of new clergy to meet the future needs of the Church. Second, we must provide for our clergy in need of assistance during emergencies, such as medical crises. Third, we must provide for the retirement of our priests, particularly for the very aged with special needs.

Thank you for your support.

La Ofrenda Especial para el Fondo de la Jubilación de Sacerdotes

Este es un recordatorio de la Ofrenda Especial Anual que se llevará a cabo el sábado 12 de febrero y el domingo, 13 de febrero del 2022 para el fondo de la Jubilación de Sacerdotes.

El fondo de la jubilación de sacerdotes provee ayuda financiera a los sacerdotes que tienen más de 65 años de edad. Este esfuerzo ayuda a sus hermanos sacerdotes, quienes son ancianos, están enfermos y están jubilados. La Diócesis de El Paso enfrenta tres retos con respecto al clero diocesano. Primeramente, debemos asegurar el reclutamiento y educación de nuestros seminaristas, así cumpliremos con las futuras necesidades de la Iglesia. Segundo, el poder ayudar a nuestros sacerdotes en caso de una emergencia, por ejemplo, como una crisis médica y por último proveer un fondo de jubilación para nuestros sacerdotes, especialmente para los de tercera edad con padecimientos médicos.

Gracias por su apoyo.

Free Virtual Event by the Catholic Foundation

By Karina Sandoval
Stewardship Coordinator

The Catholic Foundation will offer a free virtual event on Wednesday, February 9 featuring a presentation by Dr. Tim O'Malley, Theology professor from the University of Notre Dame, The Presence of Love: We Are Meant to be Present to the Lord and to

One Another will explore the theology of the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist, and how we are called to be present to the Lord and to one another in our parish communities in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Dr. O'Malley will explain the doctrine and pastoral perspective of the Eucharist and will offer an invitation to return to the pews,

according to the recent Diocesan Mass attendance count from El Paso, more than 15,000 individuals view Mass in television or in social media.

Dr. Tim O' Malley is the director of education at the McGrath Institute for Church Life and academic director of the Notre Dame Center for Liturgy. He holds a concurrent appointment

in the Department of Theology at the University of Notre Dame.

Free virtual event

The Presence of Love: We Are Meant to be Present to the Lord and to One Another

Tim O' Malley, Ph.D.

Wednesday, February 9, 2022

7:00 pm- 8:00 pm

Register here: ksandoval@catholicfoundationelpaso.org

Zoom link provided upon registration

For more information, contact Karina Sandoval, Stewardship Coordinator at ksandoval@catholicfoundationelpaso.org or at 915-872-8412.

Evento Virtual Gratuito De La Fundación Católica

Por Karina Sandoval
Coordinadora de Mayordomía

La Fundación Católica ofrecerá un evento virtual gratuito el miércoles 9 de febrero con una presentación de Tim O'Malley, profesor de Teología de la Universidad de Notre Dame, La presencia del amor: We Are Meant to be Present to the Lord

and to One Another explorará la teología de la presencia real de Cristo en la Eucaristía, y cómo estamos llamados a estar presentes al Señor y a los demás en nuestras comunidades parroquiales en medio de la pandemia del COVID-19.

Tim explicará la doctrina y la perspectiva pastoral de la Eucaristía y ofrecerá una invitación

a volver a los bancos, según el reciente recuento de asistencia a la Misa Diocesana de El Paso, más de 15.000 personas ven la Misa en la televisión o en los medios sociales.

Tim O' Malley es el director de educación del Instituto McGrath para la Vida en la Iglesia y director académico del Centro de Liturgia de Notre Dame. Tiene

un nombramiento simultáneo en el Departamento de Teología de la Universidad de Notre Dame.

**Evento virtual gratuito

La presencia del amor: Debemos estar presentes para el Señor y para los demás

Dr. Tim O' Malley

Miércoles, 9 de febrero de

2022

7:00 pm- 8:00 pm

Inscríbete aquí: ksandoval@catholicfoundationelpaso.org

Se proporcionará un enlace de zoom al momento de la inscripción

Para más información, póngase en contacto con Karina Sandoval, coordinadora de administración, en ksandoval@catholicfoundationelpaso.org o en el 915-872-8412.

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*does not measure,
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The Catholic Foundation is honored to announce the Saint Teresa of Calcutta Pro-Life Fund, created by an anonymous donor to help relieve the burdens of expectant parents and provide support for Pro-Life initiatives. They chose to name the fund after Mother Teresa because she devoted her life to recognizing the dignity in the poorest and most vulnerable people, often unborn children.

7th Annual Dei Gratia Honoree Announced

By Sofia Larkin
Major Gifts Officer

Rev. Richard A. "Rick" Matty† will be honored posthumously with the Dei Gratia Award at the 16th Annual Foundation of Faith Event: Building the Kingdom on September 22, 2022. Father Matty's family will accept the award on his behalf.

Father Matty was chosen as the 2020 recipient of the Catholic Foundation's Dei Gratia Award, but the event went virtual for two years due to the pandemic. The 2022 in-person event will give Father Rick's family, and the diocesan community, an opportunity to come together to celebrate his life and legacy.

The Dei Gratia Award, Latin for "By the Grace of God", recognizes an individual, couple, or organization for their servant leadership, outstanding contribution to the Diocese of El Paso and our Catholic community, and their dedication to being good stewards of God's grace.

Father Matty was dynamic, energetic, and a powerful force



Rev. Richard A. "Rick" Matty† will be honored posthumously with the Dei Gratia Award at the 16th Annual Foundation of Faith Event: Building the Kingdom on September 22, 2022. *Photo Courtesy of the Catholic Foundation for the Diocese of El Paso.*

for good. He is one of the men credited with bringing the ACTS movement to El Paso, and was a great leader in interfaith dialogue.

He helped start Diocesan Migrant & Refugee Services (DMRS), and was integral in establishing a medical mission in Chiapas with Dr. Charlie Gutierrez and others.

Father Matty created the St. Patrick Cathedral Historic Preservation Fund, a permanent endowed fund to provide funding for preservation and restoration in perpetuity. He replaced the Cathedral's organ after it was destroyed when hit by lightning for the second time in 1997, and, at the time of his death, the St. Patrick Cathedral School gym building and library projects, and the St. Patrick Cathedral ministry center, were close to completion.

Mark your calendar for this wonderful celebration on Thursday, September 22, 2022.

to purchase tickets, tables, and sponsorships, visit sofevent.org or contact the Catholic Foundation at (915) 872-8412.

Foundation Welcomes Five New Funds to the Legacy Fund

By Sofia Larkin
Major Gifts Officer

The Catholic Foundation is honored to welcome five new Named Funds to the Catholic Legacy Fund. An anonymous donor created the Named Funds as a legacy for their children and grandchildren. The permanent endowed funds will provide support in perpetuity.

The Catholic Foundation uses endowed funds to support the long-term needs of parishes, schools, ministries, and charities.

The funds are the Salve Regina Fund for Immaculate Conception, Saint Maria Goretti Fund for Most Holy Trinity Catholic School, Reverend Monsignor David Fierro Fund for Retired Priest Appreciation, San Pedro de Jesús Maldonado Fund for Seminarian Education, and the Santa Clara de Asís Fund for St. Anthony Seminary.

Donors can create a Named Fund with a gift or pledge of

\$10,000 or more over a five-year period benefiting the parish, school, ministry or charity of your choice. Donors establishing a Named Fund with the Catholic Foundation become members of the Bishop's Legacy Circle.

The Catholic Foundation is a nonprofit community foundation established in 2001 committed to growing philanthropy in the Diocese of El Paso. In 2001, 122 seed donors contributed \$177,000 to create a Catholic Foundation. Today, the Catholic Foundation manages six programs and helps improve the lives of thousands of people and strengthen their faith.

The Catholic Legacy Fund, the Catholic Foundation's endowment program, reached \$22 million in 2021 on its way to our short-term goal of \$25 million. A fund of this size will generate \$1 million in annual distributions. The Catholic Foundation manages 103 separate endowed funds to provide continual resources



for years to come.

Your prayer, service, and giving makes this important work possible and fulfilling.

To create your legacy, contact

Major Gifts Officer Sofia Larkin at 915.872.8412 or slarkin@catholicfoundationelpaso.org. The Catholic Foundation is located at the Catholic Pasto-

ral Center at 499 St. Matthews Street in Building G. Office hours are Monday – Friday from 9am – 5pm and by appointment.

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KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Rev. Dr. James Hanvey, S.J.

Father Hanvey heads the Secretariat for the Service of the Faith, Curia of the Society of Jesus

PANELISTS

Fr. Joe Tetlow, S.J.

Internationally recognized authority on Ignatian Spirituality, Author, Retreat Director

Fr. Mark Thibodeaux, S.J.

Author, Spiritual Director, Retreat Director, Pastor

Vinita Hampton Wright

Author, Editor, Retreat Director, Spiritual Director

Cardinal Czerny: World Leprosy Day A Chance To Be ‘United In Dignity’

The Prefect of the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development releases a message for World Leprosy Day, and calls on the Church never to let stigma and discrimination divide her members.

By Devin Watkins
Vatican News Agency

Marking the 69th World Leprosy Day on Sunday, Cardinal Michael Czerny has expressed the Church’s solidarity with people who live with Hansen’s Disease.

The Prefect of the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development sent a message to Church leaders and all people of good will, reflecting on the theme chosen for this year’s commemoration: “United in Dignity”.

The Cardinal noted that leprosy has been on the decline since a multidrug therapy was introduced in the 1980s, but said the tropical disease is still devastating and neglected.

“Beyond the daunting physical challenges associated with leprosy, the discouraging reality of stigma remains a formidable obstacle to total health and healing.”

Over the past year, over 127,000 cases of Hansen’s Disease were reported, with many cases leading to long-term complications.

Around 3-4 million people live with the visible impairments or deformities due to the disease, according to the World Health Organization.

‘United in Dignity’

Cardinal Czerny affirmed the right of people with leprosy to live in dignity, without discrimination.

He said stigma negatively affects the whole person, demeaning their spiritual and physical aspects.

“People with leprosy often bear a double burden; not only do they have to cope with the physical reality of the disease, but ‘many people with leprosy experience anxiety, depression,



Artistic depiction of Jesus touching and healing a man with leprosy

psychological distress, isolation and suicidal ideation.’’

Fruitful creativity

The Cardinal also recalled Pope Francis’ encyclical *Fratelli tutti*, in which he urges everyone to embrace the suffering of our brothers and sisters and not remain indifferent.

“It is our common human dignity that knits us together as one.

Jesus Christ teaches us this significant reality by His words, and even more so by His example.”

The Covid-19 pandemic, noted Cardinal Czerny, has made accessing healthcare even more difficult. However, he added, “no pandemic can change the dignity of the human person nor his or her inviolable worth and value in society”.

Being united in dignity, said the Cardinal, will result in fruitful creativity “that enables communities and individuals to recognize the value of every person, especially those who suffer from illness and disability.”

God-given value

Cardinal Czerny wrapped up his message for World Leprosy Day with a reminder that the

medicine and technology to treat Hansen’s Disease exists and should be made more available to those who need it.

“May Our Lady, Help of the Sick, continue to intercede for us, that we may recognize in all persons that unique dignity and value that God has entrusted to the human family,” he prayed.

Cardenal Czerny: El Día Mundial de la Lepra es una oportunidad para estar “unidos en la dignidad”

El Prefecto del Dicasterio para la Promoción del Desarrollo Humano Integral publica un mensaje para el Día Mundial de la Lepra, y pide a la Iglesia que no deje que el estigma y la discriminación dividan a sus miembros.

Por Devin Watkins
Agencia de Noticias del Vaticano

Con motivo del 69º Día Mundial de la Lepra, el cardenal Michael Czerny ha expresado la solidaridad de la Iglesia con las personas que viven con la enfermedad de Hansen.

El Prefecto del Dicasterio para la Promoción del Desarrollo Humano Integral envió un mensaje a los líderes de la Iglesia y a todas las personas de buena voluntad, reflexionando sobre el tema elegido para la conmemoración de este año: “Unidos en la dignidad”.

El cardenal señaló que la lepra ha disminuido desde que se introdujo una terapia multimedica-mentosa en la década de 1980,

pero dijo que la enfermedad tropical sigue siendo devastadora y está desatendida.

“Más allá de los desalentadores retos físicos asociados a la lepra, la desalentadora realidad del estigma sigue siendo un formidable obstáculo para la salud y la curación totales”.

Durante el año pasado se registraron más de 127.000 casos de la enfermedad de Hansen, y muchos de ellos dieron lugar a complicaciones a largo plazo.

Alrededor de 3 ó 4 millones de personas viven con las deficiencias o deformidades visibles debidas a la enfermedad, según la Organización Mundial de la Salud.

Unidos en la dignidad

El cardenal Czerny afirmó el

derecho de las personas con lepra a vivir con dignidad, sin discriminación.

Dijo que el estigma afecta negativamente a toda la persona, degradando sus aspectos espirituales y físicos.

“Las personas con lepra a menudo soportan una doble carga; no sólo tienen que hacer frente a la realidad física de la enfermedad, sino que ‘muchas personas con lepra experimentan ansiedad, depresión, angustia psicológica, aislamiento e ideación suicida’”.

Creatividad fructífera

El cardenal también ha recordado la encíclica del Papa Francisco *Fratelli tutti*, en la que insta a todos a abrazar el sufrimiento de nuestros hermanos

y hermanas y a no permanecer indiferentes.

“Es nuestra común dignidad humana la que nos une como uno solo. Jesucristo nos enseña esta significativa realidad con sus palabras, y aún más con su ejemplo”.

La pandemia de Covid-19, señaló el cardenal Czerny, ha dificultado aún más el acceso a la asistencia sanitaria. Sin embargo, añadió, “ninguna pandemia puede cambiar la dignidad de la persona humana ni su valor inviolable en la sociedad”.

Estar Unidos en la dignidad, dijo el cardenal, dará lugar a una creatividad fructífera “que permita a las comunidades y a los individuos reconocer el valor de cada persona, especialmente

de los que sufren enfermedades y discapacidades”.

Un valor dado por Dios

El cardenal Czerny concluyó su mensaje para el Día Mundial de la Lepra con un recordatorio de que la medicina y la tecnología para tratar la enfermedad de Hansen existen y deben ponerse más a disposición de quienes las necesitan.

“Que Nuestra Señora, Auxilio de los Enfermos, siga intercediendo por nosotros, para que reconozcamos en todas las personas esa dignidad y valor únicos que Dios ha confiado a la familia humana”, rezó.

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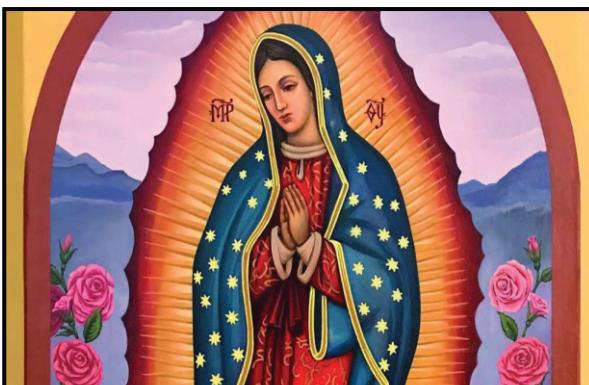
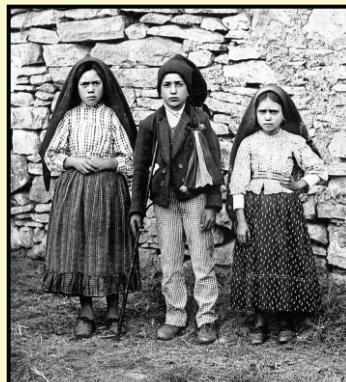
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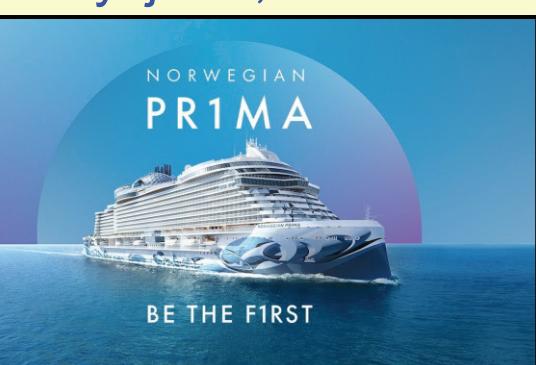
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