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Diocese Remains Committed to Supporting Migrants

By Fernie Cenicerros
Editor, Rio Grande Catholic

In the heart of El Paso, the Diocese stood as a beacon of hope and compassion amidst the challenges faced by migrants along the border. Led by the unwavering commitment of Bishop Mark Seitz, the Diocese of El Paso continued its dedication to aiding those seeking refuge and a new beginning in the United States.

Despite the ever-evolving challenges of immigration policies and the complexities at the border, the Diocese maintained support for five shelters catering to the needs of migrants in the El Paso area throughout 2023. These shelters are more than just physical spaces they served as sanctuaries embodying empathy, solidarity, and a welcoming embrace for individuals and families navigating the long journey toward a better life.

Bishop Mark Seitz reiterated his resolute commitment to serve migrants, recognizing the inherent dignity and humanity within each person seeking refuge. He echoed the fundamental principle of finding Christ in the faces of the poor and displaced, urging others to extend compassion and understanding to those yearning for safety and opportunity.

“In the faces of the poor migrant who flees in search of hope and a better life, we encounter Christ Himself,” Bishop Seitz affirmed. “Our duty as human beings, as people of faith, is to recognize and embrace that sacred presence in our migrant brothers and sisters, offering them compassion, support, and solidarity.”

As the diocese moves into 2024 Bishop Mark Seitz urges the Catholic community in El Paso to continue their support.

“I urge Catholics to come together in 2024 to help our migrant brothers and sisters any way they can. Support can be offered to any of our shelters, by volunteering on a regular basis or by making monetary donations to our Diocesan Border Refugee Assistance Fund.

With the unwavering determination and profound sense of empathy, the Catholic community of El Paso stood as a guiding light, inspiring all to come together in support of those in need. Through this leadership, the Diocese of El Paso continued to embody the values of compassion and humanity, remaining a pillar of strength and refuge for migrants seeking solace amid their struggles at the border.



A Venezuelan woman holds her child as she awaits a meal inside the shelter at Sacred Heart Parish in Downtown El Paso. The shelter at sacred heart marked its 1st year of continued service to migrants in December of 2023. *Photo by Patrick Craig, Special to the Rio Grande Catholic*

La diócesis continúa su compromiso de apoyo a migrantes

Por Fernie Cenicerros
Editor, Rio Grande Catholic

En el corazón de El Paso, la Diócesis se erigió como un faro de esperanza y compasión en medio de los retos a los que se enfrentan los migrantes a lo largo de la frontera. Dirigida por el compromiso inquebrantable del Obispo Mark Seitz, la Diócesis de El Paso continuó su dedicación a ayudar a aquellos que buscan refugio y un nuevo comienzo en los Estados Unidos.

A pesar de los retos en constante evolución de las políticas de inmigración y las complejidades en la frontera, la Diócesis mantuvo el apoyo a cinco refugios que atienden las necesidades

de los migrantes en el área de El Paso a lo largo de 2023. Estos refugios son algo más que espacios físicos, sirven como santuarios que encarnan la empatía, la solidaridad y un abrazo de bienvenida para las personas y familias que navegan el largo viaje hacia una vida mejor.

El obispo Mark Seitz reiteró su firme compromiso de servir a los migrantes, reconociendo la dignidad y humanidad inherentes a cada persona que busca refugio. Se hizo eco del principio fundamental de encontrar a Cristo en los rostros de los pobres y los desplazados, instando a los demás a extender la compasión y la comprensión a quienes anhelan seguridad y oportunidades.

“En el rostro del pobre emigrante que huye en busca de esperanza y de una vida mejor, encontramos a Cristo mismo”, afirmó Mons. Seitz. “Nuestro deber como seres humanos, como personas de fe, es reconocer y abrazar esa presencia sagrada en nuestros hermanos y hermanas migrantes, ofreciéndoles compasión, apoyo y solidaridad.”

A medida que la diócesis avanza hacia 2024, el Obispo Mark Seitz insta a la comunidad católica de El Paso a continuar con su apoyo.

“Insto a los católicos a unirse en 2024 para ayudar a nuestros hermanos y hermanas migrantes de cualquier manera que puedan, ofreciendo apoyo a nuestros

cinco refugios, ya sea por donación de bienes a las donaciones monetarias y por el voluntariado, podemos trabajar juntos para ofrecer apoyo de bienvenida a nuestros cinco refugios para migrantes en El Paso.

Con una determinación inquebrantable y un profundo sentido de empatía, la comunidad católica de El Paso se erigió como una luz guía, inspirando a todos a unirse en apoyo de los necesitados. A través de este liderazgo, la Diócesis de El Paso continuó encarnando los valores de compasión y humanidad, permaneciendo como un pilar de fortaleza y refugio para los migrantes que buscan consuelo en medio de sus luchas en la frontera.

Bishop Celino Consecrates His Ministry To Our Lady Of Guadalupe

An interview by
Msgr. Arturo Bañuelas

Bishop, you went to Mexico City to the Basilica de Guadalupe. Tell us about your trip?

“It has always been one of my great desires to go to the Basilica of our Blessed Mother of Guadalupe in Mexico City. God blessed me with the opportunity to go to the basilica last week. Since it was my first time there, I was totally overcome with the spiritual experience. Celebrating Mass at the main altar, as a new bishop, is a special moment I will always remember. I could feel Our Blessed Mother’s embrace of love for me.

At the end of Mass, I was able to stand before the miraculous image of our Blessed Mother and consecrate my ministry as bishop under her intercession. It was a very emotional and profound moment for me. The Basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe, a Catholic shrine, is beautiful and extraordinary place for prayer and devotion, and to feel the closeness of God. I am so grateful to God for this consecrating moment in my journey as I begin my ministry as bishop. This was my first time, but for sure, not my last.”

Were you able to visit the remarkable grounds of the Basilica?

“I was amazed by the beauty of the basilica and its grounds, and deeply touched by the profound faith of the pilgrims who visited. I witnessed thousands of people singing, bringing flowers, banners, and statues. There were matachines and mariachis, and praying in long processions. Some had walked from distant cities. Others entered the basilica on their knees in prayer. I heard indigenous groups praying in their native dialect. You could tell that everyone, especially the poor, feel welcome at the basilica. In the afternoon, I had the opportunity to join, like the other pilgrims, for more personal prayer inside the basilica.

Our Blessed Mother is the Mestizo Virgin (mixed race). The diversity of pilgrims from all over the world who came to claim Guadalupe as their mother was evidence of that. This made me feel at home; Our Lady of



Bishop Tony Celino takes time to reflect in prayer to the image of Our Lady of Guadalupe. “It was made clear to me that the Guadalupe events affirm people’s religiosity and evoke for us the mission of her message to build a temple, a new humanity that reflects God’s care, compassion, justice, and love,” Bishop Tony Said. *Photo by Msgr. Arturo Bañuelas, Special to the Rio Grande Catholic*

Guadalupe was declared the “Heavenly Patroness of the Philippines” on July 16, 1935.

We were blessed to get a private guided tour from Msgr. Eduardo Chávez Sánchez, canon of the Basilica of Guadalupe, and his co-director for the Institute of Guadalupan Studies, Marco Antonio García. They are the experts on Guadalupe. Both explained the incredible apparitions of Our Blessed Mother, the miraculous details on the Tilma, the events at Tepeyac Hill, the “ofrenda” (offering) statues, the original basilica, the Little Well Chapel (Capilla del Pocito), Juan Diego’s house, and so many other grace-filled moments of

these sacred sites. The more they talked, the more “Guadalupano” I became.

It was made clear to me that the Guadalupe events affirm people’s religiosity and evoke for us the mission of her message to build a temple, a new humanity that reflects God’s care, compassion, justice, and love.

The Basilica of our Blessed Mother of Guadalupe is one of the most sacred shrines in the world, visited by millions each year.”

Were you able to see other sites in Mexico?

“Yes, even though it was short trip, I was able to go the National Museum of Anthropology, a

must when in Mexico City. I saw the incredible architecture of the National Metropolitan Cathedral with its marvelous artwork and unique statues, the Zócalo, some ancient ruins, and other historical monuments. A highlight of the trip was going to Puebla to pray at the Rosary Chapel (Capilla del Rosario), one of the most beautiful churches in the world. The amazing retablos are world famous. Of course, I could not go to Puebla and not taste their delicious mole poblano. It was a feast.”

Are you ready to return to Mexico?

“Yes, I am. I came back to El Paso with a much greater under-

standing and appreciation of the Guadalupe events at Tepeyac, the mission our Blessed Mother calls us to, the vibrancy of the Guadalupe devotion, the centrality of Marian spirituality for Catholics, and how Guadalupe takes us to the heart of God’s love for us. I pray to return to the basilica with pilgrims from our diocese and celebrate how Christ works among us today.

I am very grateful to Frs. José Morales and Arturo Bañuelas who organized the trip to one of their favorite destinations. I know it was a very rewarding spiritual experience for all of us.

Through her intercession, pray for our diocese.”



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INSEITZ INTO THE FAITH

An End to Abortion - Our Preeminent Priority

As a 19-year-old young man in January of 1973 I was shocked and horrified when our U.S. Supreme Court came out with its “Row vs. Wade” decision in which the highest court in the land ‘discovered’ a right to privacy that, according to their thinking, trumped the right to life of an unborn child. The court went on to say that the States could each regulate the parameters of this right once the unborn child was “viable”, that is, after the child would be able to live outside the mother’s womb.

Ever since that time I have hoped and worked and prayed for the day when this irrational and unjust decision would be overturned. When the court finally struck down Roe vs. Wade last year, I was greatly relieved. Finally, it appeared, after the deaths, by some estimates, of some 60 million or more

American unborn children, the bloodshed might stop. Sadly, that proved to be wishful thinking on my part.

News of the decision appeared to unleash a well-planned firestorm of reaction. Whereas often in the past candidates and others who favored abortion said it should be rare, now they began to declare that abortion is a fundamental right, a necessary option for the fulfillment of a woman’s potential. Candidates took up the cause and with their familiar battle cry they saturated the airwaves and drowned out the voices of those who spoke to the rights of an unborn child in her or his early stages of life.

The Bishops of the United States have prepared for a new introduction to the document, “Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship”, which is being reissued this year to assist Catholic voters in the challeng-

ing moral decisions involved in our upcoming votes. In it we point out that, while many issues deserve our attention and our action as Catholic there are some moral issues that cry to heaven for our response.

That is why the Bishops reiterated, “The threat of abortion remains our preeminent priority because it directly attacks life itself, because it takes place within the sanctuary of the family, and because of the number of lives destroyed.” That word “preeminent” in regard to the abortion issue has caused consternation in some, because they somehow conclude that to suggest one particular fundamental moral issue is a first priority, downgrades our concern about other issues which also constitute attacks on the dignity of human life.

This is not the case. As the document goes on to state, “At the same time, we cannot dismiss



Bishop Mark J. Seitz



or ignore other serious threats to human life and dignity such as racism, the environmental crisis, poverty and the death penalty.” I would also hope that my ministry and that of so many of my brother bishops show that these other issues are of immense concern to us. The list of violations of human life and dignity given above is also not intended to be comprehensive. Certainly, I would also list policies regarding our treatment of immigrants that

daily lead to their deaths.

We as Catholic Christians will continue to express the clear teaching of the Church about abortion and many other violations of the human person, created in the image and likeness of God from the first moment of their existence. We will speak it in season and out until that day when we all finally learn to love our brothers and sisters as Christ has taught us.

Poner Fin Al Aborto: Nuestra Principal Prioridad

En enero de 1973, siendo un joven de 19 años, me quedé estupefacto y horrorizado cuando el Tribunal Supremo de Estados Unidos emitió su sentencia “Row contra Wade”, en la que el más alto tribunal del país “descubría” un derecho a la intimidad que, según su criterio, prevalecía sobre el derecho a la vida de un niño no nacido. El tribunal continuó diciendo que los Estados podían regular los parámetros de este derecho una vez que el niño no nacido fuera “viable”, es decir, después de que el niño pudiera vivir fuera del vientre de la madre.

Desde entonces he esperado, trabajado y rezado para que llegara el día en que se revocara esta decisión irracional e injusta. Cuando el año pasado el tribunal finalmente anuló Roe vs. Wade, sentí un gran alivio. Por fin parecía que, tras la muerte, según algunas estimaciones, de unos 60 millones o más de niños estadounidenses no nacidos, el derramamiento de sangre podría terminar. Lamentablemente, resultó ser una ilusión por mi parte.

La noticia de la decisión pareció desatar una tormenta

de reacciones bien planificadas. Mientras que en el pasado los candidatos y otras personas favorables al aborto decían que debía ser poco frecuente, ahora empezaron a declarar que el aborto es un derecho fundamental, una opción necesaria para la realización del potencial de una mujer. Los candidatos hicieron suya la causa y con su conocido grito de guerra saturaron las ondas y ahogaron las voces de quienes hablaban de los derechos de un niño no nacido en sus primeras etapas de vida.

Los Obispos de Estados Unidos han preparado una nueva introducción al documento “Formando conciencias para una ciudadanía fiel”, que se reedita este año para ayudar a los votantes católicos en las desafiantes decisiones morales que implican nuestras próximas votaciones. En ella señalamos que, aunque muchas cuestiones merecen nuestra atención y nuestra acción como católicos, hay algunas cuestiones morales que claman al cielo por nuestra respuesta.

Por eso los Obispos reiteran: “La amenaza del aborto sigue



siendo nuestra prioridad preeminente porque ataca directamente a la vida misma, porque tiene lugar dentro del santuario de la familia y por el número de vidas destruidas”. Esa palabra “preeminente” en relación con la cuestión del aborto ha causado consternación en algunos, porque de alguna

manera concluyen que sugerir que una cuestión moral fundamental en particular es una prioridad absoluta, rebaja nuestra preocupación por otras cuestiones que también constituyen ataques a la dignidad de la vida humana.

Pero no es así. Como sigue diciendo el documento: “Al

mismo tiempo, no podemos descartar o ignorar otras graves amenazas a la vida y la dignidad humanas, como el racismo, la crisis medioambiental, la pobreza y la pena de muerte”. Espero también que mi ministerio y el de tantos de mis hermanos obispos demuestre que estas otras cuestiones nos preocupan inmensamente. La lista de violaciones de la vida y la dignidad humanas que acabo de mencionar tampoco pretende ser exhaustiva. Ciertamente, también enumeraría las políticas relativas al trato que damos a los inmigrantes, que a diario conducen a su muerte.

Nosotros, como cristianos católicos, seguiremos expresando la clara enseñanza de la Iglesia sobre el aborto y muchas otras violaciones de la persona humana, creada a imagen y semejanza de Dios desde el primer momento de su existencia. Lo diremos a tiempo y a destiempo hasta aquel día en que finalmente aprendamos a amar a nuestros hermanos y hermanas como Cristo nos ha enseñado.

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This year, the Gospel of Mark delivers the ‘good news’ of Christ



Fr. Michael Lewis, STL

When we began a new liturgical year in Advent, we also began a new sequence of scripture readings at Mass on Sundays. This year, the second of our three-year cycle, the gospel readings come mostly from the Gospel according to Mark.

For centuries, this gospel was largely dismissed as just a summary of the Gospel of Matthew; Mark's is the shortest of all the gospels, after all. But, beginning in the 19th century, scholars began to determine that Mark's gospel was actually the first gospel to be written, observing that 90 percent of Mark's material is reproduced in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke. These three gospels that share material are commonly referred to as the “synoptic” gospels, after the Greek word for “seeing together.”

Though the gospels attributed

to Matthew, Mark, and Luke share much material, they are still distinct, having their own theological perspectives and emphases. Each was written for a particular early Christian community — Christ's message arranged, shaped, and tailored for their specific needs and concerns.

Mark's gospel is believed to have been written for a Gentile audience in Rome, probably in the late 60s of the 1st century A.D. The evidence includes that his gospel explains various Aramaic words (see Mark 3:17; 5:41; 7:11, 34; and 14:36), Greek words (see Mark 12:42 and 15:16), and Jewish customs (see Mark 7:3–4; 14:12; and 15:42), which would make sense if he were writing for a Latin-speaking, non-Jewish community in Rome. And, because Mark's gospel contains no direct reference to the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem in the year 70, it is believed to have been written beforehand.

Who was the author? The gospel itself does not say. But, the likelihood that it was written in Rome near the time of Peter's death in 64 has led many scholars — from as early as the 2nd century — to conclude that the author was one of Peter's com-

panions, perhaps even the “Mark” or “John Mark” mentioned in 1 Pet 5:13, Acts 12:12, Acts 13:5, Phlm 24, Col 4:10 and 2 Tim 4:11.

If this text was indeed written by a close disciple of Peter in Rome in the late 60s, the Christian community there was in the midst of being persecuted by the Emperor Nero and other Roman authorities. Thus, the author intended to encourage his community, bringing “good news” of Jesus Christ to supply hope. Indeed, Mark's is the only *gospel* to call itself that, a translation of a Greek word that literally means “good news.”

Accordingly, Mark's gospel has an immediacy and austerity that the other gospels do not. It begins *in situ*, not with Jesus' birth, but when he was already an adult. More of this gospel — of all the gospels, after all. But, 5 out of its 16 chapters — focus on Jesus' passion and death than any other gospel, perhaps to remind readers of the costs of Christian discipleship, but also the rewards



An icon of St. Mark the Evangelist sitting on his emblem, a lion, by Emmanuel Tzanes, 1657.

of eternal life for those who believe in the promised messiah.

Curiously, however, Jesus repeatedly tries to keep his identity as the Savior hidden throughout the gospel of Mark, a pattern referred to as the “messianic secret.” Among those he tells to keep quiet and not divulge who he is are unclean spirits (see Mark 1:25, 34; and 3:11–12), people he has healed

(Mark 1:43–44; 5:43; 7:36; 8:26), and even the disciples (Mark 8:30 and 9:9).

Another feature employed often throughout this gospel is a literary technique called intercalation, where a story is enclosed or “sandwiched” in the middle of a different story. One famous example occurs at Mark 5:21, when we begin the story of Jesus healing Jairus' daughter. At 5:25, we suddenly shift to the story of Jesus healing the hemorrhaging woman who touches his cloak. Then, at 5:35, we return to the story of Jairus' daughter, when Jesus raises her to new life.

Mark's gospel is so short that, for five weeks this summer, the series of readings from Mark will be interrupted by the “Bread of Life” discourse from the Gospel of John. But, for the rest of the year, we will be nourished by Mark's “good news” — the good news *who is* Jesus Christ, *who is* the Son of God (Mark 1:1).

Este año, el Evangelio de san Marcos presenta la “buena nueva” de Cristo

Cuando comenzamos un nuevo año litúrgico en Adviento, iniciamos también una nueva secuencia de lecturas bíblicas en las misas dominicales. Este año, el segundo de nuestro ciclo trienal, las lecturas evangélicas proceden en su mayoría del Evangelio según San Marcos.

Durante siglos, este evangelio se ha considerado un resumen del Evangelio de Mateo; al fin y al cabo, Marcos es el más corto de todos los evangelios. Pero, a partir del siglo XIX, los eruditos empezaron a determinar que el evangelio de Marcos fue en realidad el primer evangelio que se escribió, observando que el 90% del material de Marcos se reproduce en los evangelios de Mateo y Lucas. Estos tres evangelios que comparten material se conocen comúnmente como los evangelios “sinópticos”, por la palabra griega que significa “ver juntos”.

Aunque los evangelios atribui-

dos a Mateo, Marcos y Lucas comparten mucho material, siguen siendo distintos y tienen sus propias perspectivas y énfasis teológicos. Cada uno de ellos fue escrito para una determinada comunidad cristiana primitiva: el mensaje de Cristo fue adaptado, moldeado y adaptado a sus necesidades y preocupaciones específicas.

Se cree que el evangelio de Marcos fue escrito para un público gentil de Roma, probablemente a finales de la década de los 60 del siglo I d.C. La evidencia incluye que su evangelio explica varias palabras arameas (véase Marcos 3,17; 5,41; 7,11, 34; y 14,36), palabras griegas (véase Mc 12,42 y 15,16) y costumbres judías (véase Mc 7,3–4; 14,12; y 15,42), lo que tendría sentido si estuviera escribiendo para una comunidad de habla latina, no judía, de Roma. Y, como el evangelio de Marcos no contiene ninguna referencia directa a la destrucción del templo

de Jerusalén en el año 70, se cree que fue escrito con anterioridad.

¿Quién fue el autor? El propio evangelio no lo dice. Sin embargo, la probabilidad de que se escribiera en Roma cerca de la fecha de la muerte de Pedro en el año 64 ha llevado a muchos eruditos —desde el siglo II— a concluir que el autor fue uno de los compañeros de Pedro, tal vez incluso el “Marcos” o “Juan Marcos” mencionado en 1 Pe 5,13, Hch 12,12, Hch 13,5, Flm 24, Col 4,10 y 2 Tim 4,11.

Si este texto fue escrito efectivamente por un discípulo cercano de Pedro en Roma a finales de los años 60, la comunidad cristiana allí se encontraba en medio de la persecución del emperador Nerón y otras autoridades romanas. Así pues, el autor pretendía animar a su comunidad, llevando la “buena nueva” de Jesucristo para infundir esperanza. De hecho, el de Marcos es el único *evangelio* que se llama así, traducción de una palabra

griega que significa literalmente “buena nueva”.

En consecuencia, el evangelio de Marcos tiene una inmediatez y austeridad que no tienen los demás evangelios. Comienza *in situ*, no con el nacimiento de Jesús, sino cuando ya era adulto. La mayor parte de este evangelio —5 de sus 16 capítulos— se centra en la pasión y muerte de Jesús que cualquier otro evangelio, quizá para recordar a los lectores los costes del discipulado cristiano, pero también la recompensa de la vida eterna para quienes crean en el mesías prometido.

Curiosamente, sin embargo, Jesús intenta repetidamente mantener oculta su identidad como Salvador a lo largo del evangelio de Marcos, un patrón denominado “secreto mesiánico”. Entre las personas a las que manda callar y no divulgar quién es están los espíritus inmundos (véase Marcos 1,25, 34; y 3,11–12), las personas a las que ha curado (Marcos 1,43–44; 5,43; 7,36; 8,26) e

incluso los discípulos (Marcos 8,30 y 9,9).

Otra característica empleada con frecuencia a lo largo de este evangelio es una técnica literaria llamada intercalación, en la que un relato se encierra o “empareda” en medio de otro relato diferente. Un ejemplo famoso ocurre en Marcos 5,21, cuando comenzamos la historia de Jesús curando a la hija de Jairo. En 5,25, de repente pasamos a la historia de Jesús curando a la mujer con hemorragia que toca su manto. Luego, en 5,35, volvemos a la historia de la hija de Jairo, cuando Jesús la resucita.

El evangelio de Marcos es tan breve que, durante cinco semanas de este verano, la serie de lecturas de Marcos se verá interrumpida por el discurso “Pan de vida” del evangelio de Juan. Pero, durante el resto del año, nos nutriremos de la “buena nueva” de Marcos: la buena nueva *quién es* Jesucristo, *quién es* el Hijo de Dios (Mc 1,1).



The Shepherd's Corner Gifts & Books

Hours of Operation:

Monday & Tuesday 5:00 pm to 7:00 pm

Wednesday - Friday 9 am -12 pm

Saturday 3rd and 4th Saturday 10 am -1pm

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



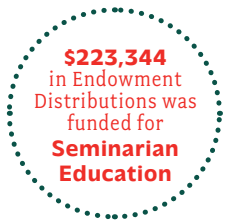
CATHOLIC LEGACY FUND

Dei Gratia Award

Dr. Manuel and Maureen de la Rosa were honored with the 8th Annual Dei Gratia Award for their extraordinary service and contributions to the Diocese of El Paso and our Catholic community.



\$223,344 awarded in scholarships



110 endowed funds



Goal **25 MILLION**

New Fund Established

Sisters in Action Fund in memory of Sister Antonia de Mariat



17th Annual Foundation of Faith Event:

Here I Am, Lord, with Fr. Chase Hilgenbrinck was held at the Starlight Event Center and raised \$224,676!!



\$3,500 was raised on **El Paso Giving Day** in support of the Sisters in Action Fund!

STEWARDSHIP

The Catholic Foundation's Stewardship program successfully created resources to invite the community back to the Eucharist, helped churches welcome back parishioners, recognized the good works of the El Paso Catholic community, inspired Stewardship, and conducted the Mass Attendance Count.

DIOCESAN STEWARDSHIP CONFERENCE: IMPACTING LIVES THROUGH SERVICE

Supported by:



Carlos Proaño, Diocesan Director of Stewardship and Development from the Diocese of San Jose taught our Diocese the meaning of Stewardship and the importance of giving to our parishes. Bishop Mark Seitz, Fr. Mariano Lopez, Deacon Jesus Cardenas, Arturo Adame offered presentations for the conference.

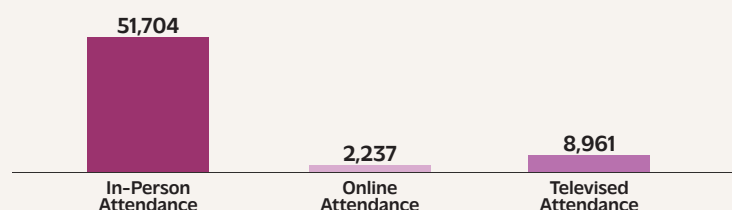


6th Annual Steward of the Year

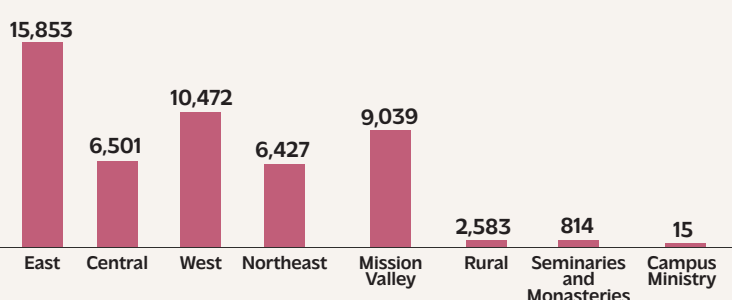
2023 Steward of the Year – Guadalupe Gonzalez, parishioner of San Antonio de Padua Parish who has exceptionally served in the ministry of bereavement with her gifts and talents, demonstrating a Stewardship way of life of: PRAY, SERVE and GIVE.

2023 Mass Attendance Count

On average, **62,902** individuals attended Mass in In-person, Televised and Online on the weekends of Oct 14 & 15 and 21 & 22, 2023



Mass attendance by Vicariates



STEWARDSHIP OF THE YEAR 2023

Category Winners:

- St. John of God Ministry of Health
Ma. Elena Hernandez
All Saints Parish
- San Juan Diego Ministry of Communication and Evangelization
Isaac Esparza
San Antonio de Padua Parish
- St. John Baptist of La Salle Ministry of Education and Religious Formation
Sr. Maria Hernandez
Diocesan Office of Catholic Schools
- St. Toribio Romo Ministry of Refugees and Immigrants
Sofia Escobar
Loretto Academy
- St. Mother Teresa of Calcutta Ministry to the Poor
Genevieve Bassham
St. Mary's Catholic Church, Marfa, TX
- Blessed Carlos Acutis Ministry of Youth and Young Adults
Gabriel Saucedo
Cathedral High School

Virtual Event for Clergy



Tim O' Malley, University of Notre Dame renowned theologian offered a virtual presentation "Pastoral Implications for Clergy on the Eucharist Revival." for the Clergy of El Paso in November.



CATHOLIC MINISTRY APPEAL



NOURISHING
our **FAMILY**
of **FAITH**

Thank you for all you do to help further the mission and ministries of the Church in the Diocese of El Paso. With your gracious support, we can make such a substantial impact. By the Grace of God, we raised 93% of our \$1.9 Million goal for 2023. Please prayerfully consider donating to the 2024 Progress Annual Ministry Appeal at **2024PROGRESS-AMA.ORG!**

Gracias por todo lo que hacen para ayudar a promover la misión y los ministerios de la Iglesia en la Diócesis de El Paso. Con su amable apoyo, podemos tener un impacto tan sustancial. Por la gracia de Dios, recaudamos 93% de nuestra meta de \$ 1.9 millones para 2023. ¡Por favor, considere en oración donar a la 2024 Progreso Campana Anual para los Ministerios en **2024PROGRESS-AMA.ORG!**



Seminarian & Deacon Formation

Our diocese is blessed with an abundance of seminarians. Thanks to your generous donations, we are able to ensure that they receive quality formation and education as they become holy priests for the Diocese of El Paso.

45 Deacon Candidates

11 Seminarians



Formación de Seminaristas y Diáconos

Nuestra diócesis ha sido bendecida con una gran cantidad de seminaristas. Gracias a sus generosas donaciones, podremos asegurarnos de que reciban una formación y educación de calidad, a medida que se convierten en santos sacerdotes de la Diócesis de El Paso.

45 Candidatos a diáconos

11 Seminaristas

Pastoral Outreach

Returning God's Gifts helps us follow the teachings of Pope Francis by reaching out to those in need.

1,228 families helped by Catholic Counseling Services.

1,500 College Students at UTEP and Sul Ross University participate in the Catholic Campus Ministry.

8,500 Families served by the programs of the Marriage and Family Life Ministry.

5,500 Catholics were reached by the programs of the Peace and Justice Ministry.



Alcance Pastoral

Devolver los Dones que Dios nos ha dado nos ayuda a seguir las enseñanzas del Papa Francisco, al acercarnos a los necesitados.

1,228 familias ayudados por Servicio Católico de Consejería.

1,500 universitarios de UTEP y Sul Ross University participan en Ministerio Católico Universitario.

8,500 Familias atendidas por los programas del Ministerio de Matrimonios y Vida Familiar.

5,500 católicos atendidos por los programas del Ministerio de Paz y Justicia.

Evangelization

The Catholic Ministry Appeal ensures that the Spirit brings about evangelization in the life of the Church and in the Church's sharing of the Gospel with others.

35,000 Families receive the Rio Grande Catholic newspaper, Social Media and Televised Mass through the Communications Ministry.

174 Local youth and young adults attended World Youth Day 2023.

5,100 Children, youth and young adults participate in the activities of the Youth and Young Adult Ministry.



Evangelización

La Campaña de Progreso garantiza que el Espíritu promueva la evangelización en la vida de la Iglesia y en el intercambio de la Iglesia con otros.

35,000 familias reciben el periódico católico Rio Grande, los medios sociales y la misa televisada a través del Ministerio de Comunicaciones.

174 jóvenes y adultos jóvenes locales asistieron a el día Mundial de la Juventud 2023.

5,100 Niños, jóvenes, y adultos jóvenes, participan en las actividades del Ministerio de Juventud y Adultos Jóvenes.

Education and Formation

Donating to the Catholic Ministry Appeal ensures that we are able to continue the religious education of our children and you.

36,000 Children, youth and adults are served by the office of Religious Formation.

2,366 Students enrolled in Catholic schools.

1,708 Individuals taking courses from the Tepeyac Institute.



Educación y Formación

La Campaña de Progreso asegura que podamos continuar con la educación religiosa de nuestros hijos y de usted.

36,000 Niños, jóvenes, y adultos son atendidos por la oficina de Formación Religiosa.

2,366 Estudiantes inscritos en escuelas católicas.

1,708 Personas que reciben cursos del Instituto Tepeyac.

LEAVE A LEGACY GIVING THAT GROWS




PLANNED GIVING to the Catholic Foundation allows you to share the **blessings** you have received by **investing** in the mission of our Church and making a smart and generous financial decision that will **benefit future Catholics** in the Diocese of El Paso.


Freewill Is For You!


WRITE YOUR WILL


Save Your Loved Ones Stress and Costs

Get peace of mind

 Just 20 minutes to create or update your legally binding will.

 Create your will and leave a gift to your Church, a Ministry, or Catholic School.

 Choose who gets your property, name guardians for your children, provide a home for your pets, and more.

 Finalize the forms you need to complete your will.

LEARN MORE ABOUT CREATING YOUR WILL TODAY!

WE NEED TO TALK ...

 **START A NAMED FUND**

 **REMEMBER THE CATHOLIC FOUNDATION IN YOUR WILL OR TRUST**

 **DESIGNATE YOUR GIFTS**

Create Your Legacy Today!

BY MAIL



EMAIL



OR PHONE



Our Catholic Community's Future...
what inspires you?



 **2023 \$3,261,950 IN BEQUESTS**

YOUR PARTNER IN CHARITABLE GIVING

FRIENDS OF THE FOUNDATION AMIGOS DE LA FUNDACIÓN



Sign Up for Recurring Giving

To become a friend call us today at (915) 872-8412

Regístrate para las transferencias automáticas

Para convertirse en un amigo llámenos al (915) 872-8412

CUSTOMIZED FOR YOU!

With payments month to month, becoming a Friend of the Foundation fits any budget.



¡A TU MEDIDA!

Con pagos mes tras mes nos adaptamos a cualquier presupuesto de los amigos de la Fundación.

NO HASSLE!

Friends of the Foundation donate automatically – no annoying reminder emails or needing to re-enter your credit card information every month! It's easy to change your donation amount and you can cancel at any time.

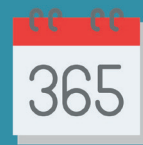


¡SIN MOLESTIA!

Los amigos de la Fundación donan automáticamente sin recordatorios o la necesidad de volver a ingresar la información de su tarjeta de crédito mes tras mes, es fácil cambiar la cantidad de su donacion y puede cancelar en cualquier momento.

IMPACT ALL YEAR LONG!

Friends of the Foundation make a difference every day, not just during popular times. You become a friend we can count on!



¡IMPACTO TODO EL AÑO!

Los amigos de la Fundación hacen la diferencia cada día no solo durante tiempos populares, te conviertes en un amigo en el que podemos confiar.

Your gift to the Catholic Foundation automatically renews

Change Or Quit Any Time!
No More Renew By Mail Forms

Tu regalo a la Fundación se renueva automáticamente

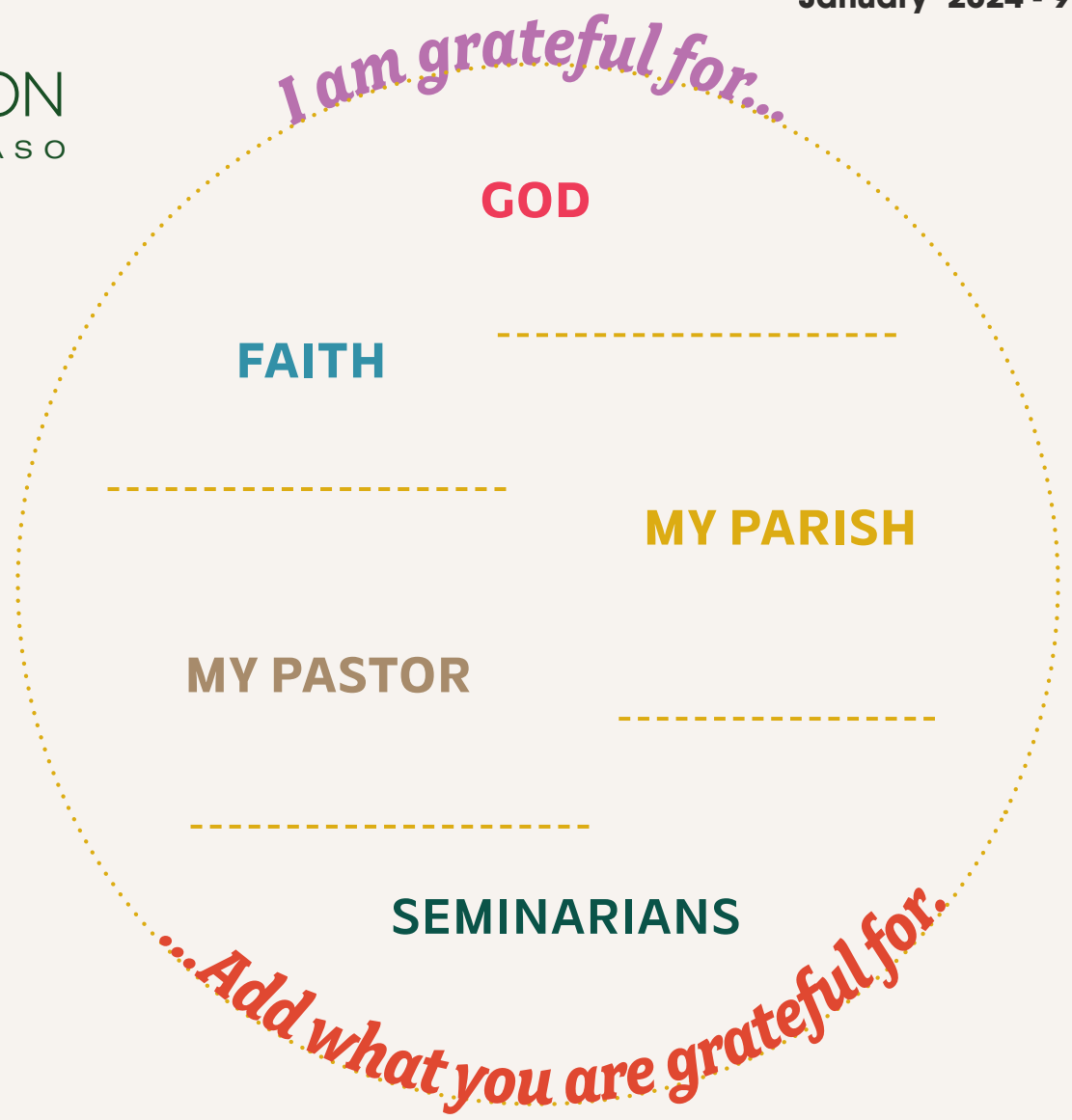
¡Puedes cancelar en cualquier momento!
No más formas de renovación



WE ARE GRATEFUL FOR YOU!

The Catholic Foundation is grateful for the opportunity to serve our donors, in helping them give back to God for their blessings. For over 20 years, the Catholic Foundation has raised funds to provide for the needs of our parishes, ministries, charities and schools in the Diocese of El Paso and we are honored to continue to serve, educate, inspire, and provide ways in which our Catholic community can grow and thrive. We cannot do our work without you and we look forward to serving you in the future.

With Gratitude,
Your Catholic Foundation



Pray



Serve



Give



Seek like the Magi



Janet M. Crowe

Happy New Year! Happy feast of the Epiphany!

A new year, a new beginning, a fresh start, another chance to do better. Epiphany, manifestation, revelation, insight, understanding are words calling us to action. How?

God reveals His only Son to those who seek Him – to magi or wise men from the east who follow a bright star, to those along the shores of the Jordan River when John baptizes Jesus, to a select few at a wedding feast. How does God reveal Himself to us? How do we celebrate Epiphany?

Each new year, each new day brings us another chance to lift our eyes and our hearts to Heaven, to follow the Star so that we might find the true Light of Love and reveal that light in our daily lives and in all that we do. That is my hope and my plan for this new year with its blank canvas laid out before me.

So how do I start this journey? I have no map, no instruction manual, and I certainly am not

good at following stars. So, I guess, I begin at the beginning.

Believe like Mary who said “Yes” to the Archangel Gabriel at the Annunciation. She must have had questions and concerns about the angel’s words, but she was willing to believe in God. For nine precious months she was able to cherish the preborn Jesus in her womb, in the same way that all pregnant women are able to have that remarkably personal and secret relationship with their preborn children. Mary’s life was not easy, neither before nor after Jesus was born. Yet, even when Simeon foretold that her soul would be pierced with a sword, Mary believed she could rely on God. Lord, help me to believe like Mary.

Trust like Joseph who followed the guidance received in a dream and took Mary into his home as his wife. How many people would wake from a night’s dream and act on that dream knowing they would face humiliation and scorn from those around them? Joseph trusted in God. Joseph trusted in Mary. More than once, we hear how Joseph trusted that God was sending him a message of ways to protect Mary and her son. Joseph loved Jesus as his own son, and, while God wouldn’t always send him directions in a dream, Joseph trusted that God would always be with him and his precious family throughout their life’s journey. Lord, help



me to trust like Joseph.

Hope like the shepherds who left their flocks and rushed to see the miracle that the angels proclaimed. Hope had carried God’s people through centuries of waiting for the Messiah. How could the shepherds hope that the long-awaited king of kings would really come to them since they were poor, simple men, rather than rich and learned scholars of God’s law? They hoped because God’s angelic heralds told them to go and see. So, they did. They rushed to a humble and lowly dwelling place for livestock and witnessed the newborn baby lying in a manger just as the angels had revealed. Not only did they simply go and see this amazing sight, the shepherds went forth to share this good news, this hope of salvation, to all the people who would listen. Lord, help me to hope like the shepherds.

Seek like the Magi who took the risk to follow a star as it guided their way to the new king. How far did they travel, continuing day after day, still believing, still trusting, still hoping that they would find the newborn king? Why would they travel so far to seek a child who would not, in their lifetimes, become their king nor rule their nations? They were wise, they were filled with the Spirit of God, they were messengers to us today. Lord, help me to seek the truth, the light of Your love; help me to seek like the Magi.

Worship like the angels who filled the sky with their light and their songs of praise and adoration. So often, my prayers are more about requests – help me, heal me, lead me, hear me. I forget that I am not speaking to a genie who grants wishes. I am speaking to the Almighty Creator of the universe, Salvation of the

world, my Savior, my God. As close as the angels are to God every day, they still marvel at His wonders and His love. Help me, Lord, to worship like angels so that I might know You and understand how blessed I am to be loved by You.

Love like Jesus who, although He is God’s only begotten Son, chose to become a human being like us in all ways except sin. Our goal is supposed to be to follow Jesus and to try to become like Him. Yet, Jesus wanted to share His love for us by becoming like us, by being one of us, by caring for us. If God’s Son can give up everything to care for us lowly sinners, maybe I can follow His ways and care more actively for others also. Maybe the Epiphany is about giving us the insight and understanding into how Jesus would want us to go out and seek ways to care for all of God’s children, the people we meet every day. Maybe we are meant to manifest God’s love to others which would also bring us closer to God in our own lives. Remember the old saying: “WWJD?” “What would Jesus do?” Is that our Epiphany? Help me, Lord, to love like Jesus.

Believe like Mary. Trust like Joseph. Hope like Shepherds. Seek like Wise Men. Worship like Angels. Love like Jesus.

Maybe we do have a map, directions, a plan, and a goal for this year.

MAKING SENSE OF BIOETHICS

The Ethics of Neuroimplants and Brain-Computer Interfaces



Fr. Tad Pacholczyk

Neuralink, a company run by Elon Musk, announced in September that it had received approval to implant wireless brain-computer interfaces (BCI) into human volunteers.

A BCI is a neural device that translates a person’s brain activity into external responses, enabling, for example, the movement of a prosthetic limb via brain signals.

The goal of Musk’s study is to enable people with paralysis to use their thoughts to control external devices, especially computers, through the BCI.

While this end is clearly worthwhile, some future uses of BCI technology will probably not be equally praiseworthy, and some foreseeable applications of this technology will likely be unethical.

In an MIT Technology Review article, Professor John Donoghue at Brown University mentions how as a child he spent time in a wheelchair, which later motivat-

ed him to try to help individuals who were paralyzed.

One time after he delivered a speech at Google, he was surprised to encounter an engineer who was an avid gamer who wanted to know if it would be possible to have a “third thumb.”

“That’s taking things to an extreme,” commented Donoghue. “I don’t want to implant electrodes into people so they can be better gamers. I always challenge all of these ideas because I don’t see what it gets you. But I don’t dismiss it, either... that is what is driving people. It’s the cool factor, that you could have this new interface.”

Restoring lost function offers an obvious benefit, but enhancing people’s abilities beyond their typical talents raises ethical concerns. When it comes to “therapies” vs. “enhancements,” the former will generally be OK, but the latter will often be problematic.

Yet such a distinction, for all its usefulness, still falls short.

For example, consider a hypothetical device that, when implanted into the brain of a person with advanced dementia, would improve his or her ability to remember and recall facts at a level similar to pre-dementia times. Suppose further that in a healthy person, the same device would confer a new ability, the

power of a photographic memory. Would this mean it would be ethical to use it for the dementia patient, but not for the healthy one?

Suppose there were a BCI that not only improved hand-to-eye coordination and motor control for Parkinson’s patients having movement deficits, but also improved the acuity and coordination of healthy athletes, so a professional pitcher could now throw a baseball even more accurately. Would it be OK to use the BCI for the Parkinson’s patient but not for the athlete?

What if the therapeutic implant for the Parkinson’s patient not only restored his ability to move in a coordinated way, but also gave him the ability to play baseball essentially as a professional, something he had never been able to do at any point prior in his life?

The apparent blurring of the distinction between therapy and enhancement by BCIs can become complicated to sort out.

As BCIs become more sophisticated, they may be able to capture and interpret more and more intimate aspects of a person’s thoughts. When it comes to the collection of brain data from sensors, it seems fitting to require that such data be protected like other medical information. The confidentiality of our neurodata

will need to be assured, even as we seek to safeguard and expand the notion of mental privacy.

What if students in the future had BCIs that allowed for the monitoring of the pupils’ attention in class by scanning or recording their brain activity? What if workers in a factory could be monitored in this way for lapses of attention? Could BCIs enable the modulation of sleep patterns, so employees could be made to put in extra hours of work time?

It seems that coercive scenarios involving BCIs might arise relatively easily.

What about the non-voluntary implantation of BCIs, enabling control of some individuals by others without their consent? One could envision forced implantation of chips to “neuter” a criminal’s bad behavior, for example.

Furthermore, the degree to which a neuroimplant would interfere with human autonomy would be vital to assessing its morality. A BCI might serve to increase or decrease human autonomy. If someone addicted to drugs, for example, received a brain implant that generated specific stimulation patterns to break his addiction, this could be therapeutic and helpful. But what if the setting were adjusted, and it instead became possible to dial

in an electrically-induced “high” that provided an experience far more intense than any illegal drug?

Using BCIs to mimic the effects of recreational drugs, or to pursue more intense erotic experiences, for example, by directed neural stimulation, could contribute to the enslaving of future generations through novel addictive behaviors, generating a raft of new concerns. Moral objections invariably arise any time men and women experience a loss of freedom or “personal agency” on account of addictions or other compulsive behaviors.

In sum, while BCIs could offer important medical and therapeutic uses in the future, they also are poised for dubious or clearly immoral uses. Careful ethical discernment around selective deployment of this technology, therefore, will be essential going forward.

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.fathertad.com.

Las Pequeñas Cosas Son Las Grandes Cosas!



Padre Wilson Cuevas

Un amigo Sacerdote fue destinado por sus superiores a la ciudad de San José, Costa Rica, a los pocos días de llegar, se monto en un autobús para ir al centro de la ciudad. Al sentarse, descubrió que el chofer le había dado una moneda de 25 centavos de más en el cambio. Mientras consideraba que hacer, pensó para sí mismo: Bah!, olvídale, son solo 25 centavos. Quien va a preocuparse por tan poca cantidad? Pero cuando llego a su parada, se detuvo y pensándolo de nuevo, decidió darle la moneda al conductor diciéndole: Tome, me dio usted 25 centavos de más. El conductor, con una sonrisa, le respondió: Se que es el nuevo Sacerdote de mi Parroquia hace tiempo que abandone a la Iglesia y estoy planteándome volver. Y quería ver lo que hacia usted si yo le daba cambio de más. Se bajo el Sacerdote sacudiéndose por dentro y pensó: Oh Dios! por poco te vendo por 25 centavos. Es impresionante la importancia que pueden tener las cosas pequeñas “veinticinco centavos” pudieron marcar la vida de un hombre, e incluso la salvación de su alma. Cuanto bien hace un cristiano coherente con su fe en todas las facetas de su vida! No se puede ser cristiano de “quita y pon”: En unas cosas si y en otras cosas no. Hay algún recoveco en mi vida que no esté marcado y dirigido por mi fe? Hoy, en concreto, ha sido la luz de la Fe

la que ilumino todos mis actos?

Las pequeñas cosas de la vida parecen carecer de importancia. Sin embargo, las pequeñas cosas pueden tener una tremenda importancia por sus consecuencias. El éxito resulta de multiplicar las cosas pequeñas (Mt. 25, 23). De hecho, he descubierto que, en muchos sentidos, las pequeñas cosas son las grandes cosas. Comer de un modo saludable garantiza microvictorias en tu plan nutricional y mejora exponencialmente tu salud con el paso del tiempo. Realizar pequeños actos de disciplina como madrugar, hacer ejercicios, leer buenos libros; tener conversaciones con personas que nos inspiran con su modo de vivir, de ver y analizar la vida, nos ayuda a ampliar nuestras fronteras mentales. Ser amable en todo momento, ser responsable en su trabajo y cumplir todas sus promesas, pueden parecer cosas insignificantes, pero toda acción tiene consecuencias, y hacer esas pequeñas cosas propicia un liderazgo y un éxito extraordinario cuando se producen a lo largo de toda tu vida.

He tenido la fortuna de contar con algunos y magníficos mentores en mi vida. Mi abuelo Felipe, siempre valoraba mis progresos y me felicitaba por mis avances académicos. Su generosidad me hizo sentir más grande de lo que era y mejor de lo que soy. Su sinceridad y la honestidad de su vida, hacia que me sintiera mas esforzado a prestarle mucha atención a cada cosa que me decía. Cuando iba a ingresar al Seminario, le pregunte: Cual es el consejo más grande que me puede dar de cara a mi futuro de llegar a ser un buen Sacerdote? El guardo silencio unos minutos y después respondió con



sinceridad: “Se siempre amable, Wilson. Oh, es muy importante. Se siempre amable” Y a continuación hizo algo que jamás había hecho en los años que lo conocía; se acerco y me dio un abrazo, mientras añadía: “Te quiero, Wilson”. Tres meses después mi querido e inolvidable abuelo falleció. El día de mi ordenación Sacerdotal, no estaba mi abuelo pero su consejo estaba en mi memoria. “Se siempre amable, eso es muy importante”, me comprometí con Dios a ser lo mejor que pueda y tratar a cada persona con cortesía y respeto.

Durante 42 años de Ministerio he ayudado a las personas y comunidades como Sacerdote y amigos. He tenido el honor de ser mentor de muchas personas; si me preguntan quien ha sido la principal influencia de mi vida, yo te diría: “Es fácil: Mi madre”, una mujer amorosa con todos, con mucha fe en Dios y una generosidad extraordinaria. Por si sirve de ayuda, quiero compartir

la mejor lección que he aprendido de mi madre. Es una enseñanza simplemente y profundamente simple (como todas las grandes verdades) “Sirve a los demás”!

Muchos en esta época de incertidumbre se comportan de una manera egoísta, soberbia e indigna que perjudique a nuestra sociedad, denigra de la Iglesia y degrada el planeta. Muchos han olvidado que en realidad pertenecemos a una misma familia, en un planeta muy insignificante, en un universo con doscientos mil millones de galaxias y dos billones de estrellas. Muchos miden el triunfo en función de la cantidad de riqueza acumulada. Hoy en día parece que lo económico se ha convertido en el criterio absoluto no solo de la política sino de todo nuestro actuar. Las conductas elementalmente humanas, basadas en el amor al prójimo, son cada vez más difíciles. La ayuda a los enfermos, a los pobres y a los ancianos se mide con criterios

económicos. Hay que calcularlo, hay que poder pagarlo, tiene que compensar el gasto. Qué pasa con eso que la riqueza fluye cuando aumentar el valor de lo que das a los demás; incrementa tu compromiso de ayudar a los demás, ya sean parientes, amigos, vecinos o auténticos desconocidos. Las recompensas más generosas como la felicidad, la serenidad y el creciente amor propio son frutos de saber que estás viviendo tu vida para llevar a cabo una misión mucho más grande que tú mismo.

“Sirve a los demás” nos dijo mi madre a mis hermanos y a mí. Lo repetía con frecuencia. Y veíamos que lo practicaba a diario con sus vecinos, parientes y necesitados. “Ese es el secreto de una buena vida, hijos”. Aprovechemos nuestros días, reduciendo el odio y las divisiones en nuestra cultural actual y lo sustituya la buena voluntad hacia todos!

The Little Things Are The Big Things!

A priest friend of mine was assigned by his superiors to the city of San José, Costa Rica, and a few days after arriving, he got on a bus to the city’s center. As he sat down, he discovered that the driver had given him a quarter too much in change. As he considered what to do, he thought: Bah, forget it, it’s only 25 cents. Who’s going to worry about such a small amount? But when he got to his stop, he stopped and thinking again, he decided to give the coin to the driver saying: Here, you gave me 25 cents too much. With a smile, the driver replied, “I know you are the new priest in my parish; I left the Church long ago and am thinking of returning. And I wanted to see what you would do if I gave you extra change. The priest sat down shaking inside and thought, “Oh my God, I almost sold you for 25 cents. It is amazing how important small things can be. “Twenty-five cents” could mark a man’s life and even his soul’s salvation. How much good does a Christian who is consistent with his faith do in all facets of his life? It is not possible to be a

Christian of “remove and put”: In some things, yes, and in other things, no. There are some nooks and crannies in my life. Is there any nook and cranny in my life that is not marked and directed by my faith? Today, in particular, has the light of faith illuminated all my actions?

The little things in life seem to be unimportant. However, the little things can have tremendous importance because of their consequences. Success results from multiplying the little stuff (Mt. 25:23). I have found that, in many ways, the little things are the big things. Eating healthily guarantees micro-victories in your nutritional plan and exponentially improves your health. Performing small acts of discipline such as getting up early, exercising, reading good books, having conversations with people who inspire us with their way of living, and seeing and analyzing life helps us to expand our mental boundaries. Being kind at all times, responsible in your work, and fulfilling all your promises may seem insignificant. Still, every action has conse-

quences, and doing those little things leads to leadership and extraordinary success when they occur throughout your life.

I have been fortunate to have had some great mentors in my life. My grandfather, Philip, always appreciated my progress and congratulated me on my academic advancements. His generosity made me feel more significant and better than I am. His sincerity and the honesty of his life made me feel more obliged to pay close attention to everything he told me. When I was about to enter the Seminary, I asked him: What is the most excellent advice you can give me for my future of becoming a good priest? He was silent for a few minutes and answered sincerely: “Always be kind, Wilson. Oh, it’s essential. And then he did something he had never done in all the years I had known him; he reached over and hugged me, adding, “I love you, Wilson. Three months later, my beloved and unforgettable grandfather passed away. On the day of my Priestly ordination, my grandfather was not there, but his advice

was in my memory. “Always be kind, that is very important.” I committed to God to be my best and treat everyone with courtesy and respect.

During 42 years of ministry, I have helped people and communities as a Priest and friend. I have had the honor of mentoring many people; if you ask me who has been the primary influence in my life, I would say: “It’s easy: My mother,” a loving woman to everyone, with great faith in God and extraordinary generosity. I want to share the best lesson I have learned from my mother. It is a straightforward and profoundly simple teaching (like all great truths): “Serve others”!

Many in this age of uncertainty behave in a selfish, arrogant, and unworthy manner that harms our society, denigrates the Church, and degrades the planet. Many have forgotten that we belong to the same family on a very insignificant planet in a universe with two hundred billion galaxies and two trillion stars. Many measure success in terms of the amount of accumulated wealth. Today, economics has become the abso-

lute criterion of politics and all our actions. Elementary human conduct, based on love of neighbor, is becoming increasingly difficult. Helping the sick, the poor, and the elderly is measured by economic criteria. It has to be calculated; it has to be affordable; it has to compensate for the expense. What happens is that wealth flows when you increase the value of what you give to others; it increases your commitment to help others, whether they are relatives, friends, neighbors, or absolute strangers. The most generous rewards, such as happiness, serenity, and growing self-love, are the fruits of knowing that you are living your life to accomplish a mission far more significant than yourself.

“Serve others,” my mother told my siblings and me. She repeated it often. We would see her practice it daily with her neighbors, relatives, and those in need. “That’s the secret to a good life, children.” Let us seize our days, reducing the hatred and divisions in our current culture and replacing it with goodwill toward all!



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HAPPY BIRTHDAY, FATHER!

- | | |
|--------------------------------|--------|
| Fr. Federico Franco, OSM | Jan 6 |
| Bishop Mark Seitz | Jan 10 |
| Fr. Wilbert Colas | Jan 14 |
| Fr. Rafael Garcia, SJ | Jan 18 |
| Fr. Charles Rajan Michael, OCD | Jan 19 |
| Fr. Hector Chicas, OP | Jan 20 |
| Fr. Angel M. Maldonado | Jan 22 |



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.



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