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THE RIO GRANDE CATHOLIC

Vol. 30, No. 1

Celebrating 30 Years serving the Diocese of El Paso

January 2021

New Pastoral Care Ministries Established for Sick

By Fernie Ceniceros
Editor, Rio Grande Catholic

The Diocese of El Paso announced reopening to Phase 3 in time for Christmas, as well as three new initiatives as part of its commitment to the ministry of pastoral care for the sick and dying.

Under the direction of Bishop Mark Seitz, churches in El Paso County re-opened to Phase 3 Protocol for Church Gatherings During The Time of Pandemic in El Paso County effective December 24, 2020.

Phase 3 allows churches to gather at 25 percent capacity where disinfection and social distancing norms are strictly followed in order to resume gatherings for Sunday Mass. Gatherings at 25% capacity for Mass on weekdays, baptisms, Eucharistic exposition for 1–2 hours, and prayer during the day are permitted as well during Phase 3. Funeral Masses, services in funeral homes and weddings remain suspended within Phase 3.

The diocese also announced a new set of pastoral care initiatives to benefit the sick and dying in El Paso County. These include, an emergency pastoral care hotline that will be offered for the sick and dying, giving them access to a priest 24 hours a day 7 days a week. The Hotline was made live in early December of 2020.

Representatives are able to direct calls to priests or deacons who can promptly respond to a sick person's need for prayer or the sacraments. 915-834-9006 was made available for anyone — family members or medical personnel — to call when a priest or deacon is urgently needed anywhere in El Paso County. First priority is given to contacting the pastor of the person who is ill, COVID patients will be referred to priests who have been specially trained for this ministry.

Along with the Pastoral Care Hotline, Bishop Seitz assigned three priests of the Diocese of El Paso to directly minister to patients suffering from COVID-19. Fr. Michael Lewis, Vicar of St. Mark Parish, Fr. Ivan Montelongo, Vicar of St. Raphael Parish, and Fr. Miguel Perez, Vicar of St. Patrick Cathedral and Holy Family parish were assigned to the COVID-19 ministry. Bishop Seitz released the priests from their pastoral



Father Miguel Perez, Parochial Vicar for St. Patrick Cathedral, Fr. Michael Lewis, Parochial Vicar for St. Mark Parish and Fr. Ivan Montelongo, Parochial Vicar for St. Raphael Parish have been named to full time pastoral care for COVID-19 patients in the Diocese of El Paso, *Photo by Fernie Ceniceros*

Se establecen nuevos ministerios de cuidado pastoral para enfermos

Por Fernie Ceniceros
Editor, Rio Grande Catholic

La Diócesis de El Paso anunció la reapertura de la fase 3 a tiempo para la Navidad, así como tres nuevas iniciativas como parte de su compromiso con el ministerio de atención pastoral a los enfermos y moribundos.

Bajo la dirección del obispo Mark Seitz, las iglesias del condado de El Paso reabrieron a la fase 3 del Protocolo para las reuniones de la iglesia durante la época de la pandemia en el condado de El Paso a partir del 24 de diciembre de 2020.

La fase 3 permite a las iglesias reunirse con una capacidad del 25 por ciento donde la desinfección y las normas de distanciamiento social se siguen estrictamente para reanudar las reuniones para la misa dominical. Reuniones a una capacidad del 25% para la misa en días de semana, bautismos, exposición eucarística durante 1-2 horas, y la oración durante el día tam-

bien están permitidas durante la fase 3. Las misas funerarias, los servicios en las funerarias y las bodas permanecen suspendidos en la Fase 3.

La diócesis también anunció un nuevo conjunto de iniciativas de cuidado pastoral para beneficiar a los enfermos y moribundos en el condado de El Paso. Estas incluyen, una línea telefónica de atención pastoral que se ofrecerá a los enfermos y moribundos, dándoles acceso a un sacerdote 24 horas al día 7 días a la semana. La línea de atención se puso en marcha a principios de diciembre de 2020.

Los representantes diocesanos pueden dirigir las llamadas a los sacerdotes o diáconos que pueden responder rápidamente a la necesidad de oración o de los sacramentos de un enfermo. 915-834-9006 se puso a disposición de cualquier persona - miembros de la familia o personal médico - para llamar cuando un sacerdote o diácono es necesario en cualquier lugar del Condado de El Paso. La primera priori-

dad es contactar al pastor de la persona enferma, los pacientes de COVID serán referidos a sacerdotes que han sido especialmente entrenados para este ministerio.

Junto con la línea de atención pastoral, el obispo Seitz asignó a tres sacerdotes de la diócesis de El Paso para atender directamente a los pacientes que sufren de COVID-19. El Padre Michael Lewis, Vicario de la Parroquia de San Marcos, el Padre Ivan Montelongo, Vicario de la Parroquia de San Rafael, y el Padre Miguel, Vicario de la Catedral de San Patricio y de la Parroquia de la Sagrada Familia fueron asignados al ministerio de COVID-19. El Obispo Seitz liberó a los sacerdotes de sus asignaciones pastorales para poder atender este ministerio a tiempo completo.

“Durante los próximos tres meses, y mientras sea necesario, serán liberados por mí y por sus párrocos para concentrar su ministerio en llevar los sacramentos, la oración y el consejo espiritual

a aquellos que tienen el coronavirus y a sus familias”, dijo el obispo Seitz. “También colaborarán con los profesionales de la salud de la región para ofrecer apoyo espiritual a los que están en primera línea cuidando a los enfermos”, añadió.

Por último, la diócesis está en proceso de ofrecer visitas pastorales virtuales a los enfermos. El programa se está llevando a cabo actualmente de forma experimental en el campus Transmountain de los Hospitales de Providence. Los pacientes podrán conectarse virtualmente con un sacerdote o diácono para una visita corta, una oración o una lectura inspiradora de las sagradas escrituras.

“Al comenzar a reunirnos de nuevo durante las vacaciones de Navidad y Año Nuevo, pido a todo el pueblo de Dios que se una a nuestro clero rezando por los enfermos, por los que cuidan de ellos y por los que se enfrentan habitualmente a los riesgos inherentes a este santo trabajo”, dijo el obispo Seitz.

Happy New Year

A year ago, if someone had stopped and told me all that was about to occur in 2020, I'm not entirely sure how I would have answered. It appears that this particular opening to my editor's column might border on cliché, but to those of you readers that may think that, I will challenge you to ask yourself the same question; I can assure you, you would answer the same way.

Thankfully, as of this article's



Fernie Ceniceros

writing, my family and I have been blessed not to have been

afflicted by 2020 and its ills. I know many of us cannot say that, to them, I can assure you that you have been in my prayers throughout this whole tremendous year.

As we enter 2021, I would like all of you to know that we at the Rio Grande Catholic are working hard for you every month as we produce a quality newspaper. That said, this new year marks a fantastic milestone of longevity for the Rio Grande Catholic. In

May of this year, we celebrate 30 years of serving you, the faithful members of our Church in El Paso Diocese.

As we move into our 30th anniversary, I will ask former editors of the paper that are still with us to share their thoughts on serving here at the Rio Grande Catholic. We are incredibly excited and hope that you can join us in celebrating this milestone.

I want to take this opportunity to thank all of you faith-

ful readers for being with us throughout the last 30 years. Accept my pledge to continue serving you as I always have in this role as your editor. Please feel free to reach out to me via email at communications@elpasodiocese.org if you have any concerns about your Rio Grande Catholic.

Happy New Year to all of you. May the Lord God continue to shed his blessings on you this new year.

Feliz Año Nuevo

Hace un año, si alguien se hubiera detenido y me hubiera dicho todo lo que iba a ocurrir en 2020, no estoy del todo seguro de cómo habría respondido. Parece que esta apertura particular a la columna de mi editor puede rayar en el cliché, pero para aquellos de ustedes, lectores, que puedan pensar eso, los desafiaré a que se hagan la misma pregunta; puedo asegurarles que responderían de la misma manera.

Afortunadamente, en el momento de escribir este artículo, mi familia y yo hemos sido bendecidos por no haber sido afectados por el 2020 y sus males. Sé que muchos de nosotros no podemos decir que, a ellos, puedo asegurarles que han estado en mis oraciones

durante todo este tremendo año.

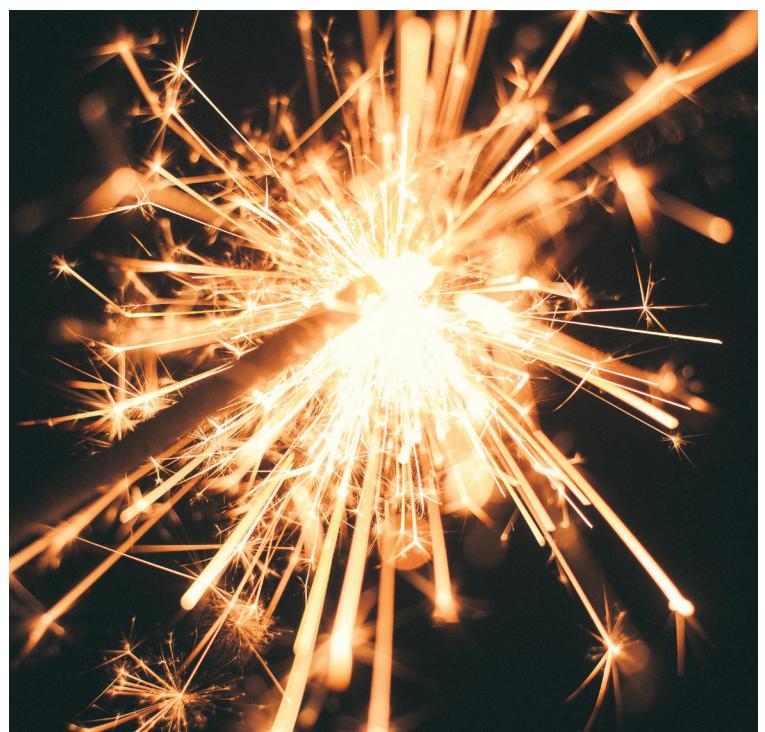
Al entrar en el 2021, me gustaría que todos ustedes sepan que nosotros en la Católica de Río Grande estamos trabajando duro para ustedes cada mes mientras producimos un periódico de calidad. Dicho esto, este nuevo año marca un fantástico hito de longevidad para el católico de Río Grande. En mayo de este año, celebramos 30 años de servicio a ustedes, los fieles de nuestra Iglesia en la Diócesis de El Paso.

Al entrar en nuestro 30 aniversario, pediré a los antiguos editores del periódico que aún están con nosotros que comparten sus ideas sobre el servicio aquí en el Rio Grande Católico. Estamos increíblemente emocionados y espe-

ramos que puedan unirse a nosotros para celebrar este hito.

Quiero aprovechar esta oportunidad para agradecer a todos ustedes, fieles lectores, por estar con nosotros durante los últimos 30 años. Acepten mi promesa de seguir sirviéndoles como siempre lo he hecho en este papel de su editor. Por favor, síntanse libres de contactarme por correo electrónico a communications@elpasodiocese.org si tienen alguna preocupación sobre su católico de Río Grande.

Feliz Año Nuevo a todos ustedes. Que el Señor Dios continúe derramando sus bendiciones sobre ustedes en este nuevo año.



THE RIO GRANDE CATHOLIC

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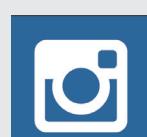
www.elpasodiocese.org
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THE RIO GRANDE CATHOLIC (ISSN#1079-9621) is published monthly for \$12.00 per year by the Office of Communications, Diocese of El Paso, 499 St. Matthews St., El Paso, TX 79907, Phone: (915) 872-8414, Fax: (915) 872-8435. "PERIODICALS POSTAGE PAID AT EL PASO TX." POSTMASTER: Send changes of address to: **THE RIO GRANDE CATHOLIC**, 499 St. Matthews St., El Paso TX, 79907

THE RIO GRANDE CATHOLIC is a monthly newspaper assisting the Bishop of the Diocese of El Paso by communicating the events and themes of the faith life of the local and universal church through news reports, features, columns and photographs. Articles and photographs become the property of **THE RIO GRANDE CATHOLIC**. If photos are on loan to the newspaper, please enclose a stamped self-addressed envelope for their return.
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The Year of Our Lord 2021

Happy 2021! The joy we feel bringing in the new year is primarily based upon our joy at getting beyond the very difficult year of 2020 and 2019 before that!

What will 2021 hold for us? Unless we witness the coming of Jesus in this year I believe I can assure you that we will see new challenges and difficulties. I don't want to sound like a pessimist. I am only making an observation based upon what the Church has observed about the time in which we are living. This time from the Ascension of Christ until the Second Coming is a time in which the saving work of Jesus is being applied to our broken lives and our wounded world.

Many of us live with the unconscious expectation that if we just figure it out, if we just do it right, if we just work hard enough, the time will come when we will live in a blissful utopia. The truth is that utopia is not coming. The cross is planted deeply within the soil of our lives and it will not disappear.

We have lived in a fortunate place and some of us have experienced an uncommon number of blessings in our lives that have left us with the illusion that heaven is here on earth. It is only an illusion and that illusion has been punctured by this very difficult world-wide Pandemic. Although we have the assurance that these vaccines are going to bring the Pandemic under control

it is likely that this crisis could get worse before we can breathe more freely. It will take years before the economic consequences are behind us.

Now, these reflections may leave you feeling like I am trying to burst your New Year's bubble. That is not the case. Underneath the superficial appearance of these earthly realities, there is very good news. God is awakening us from our unconscious illusions and reminding us that when we encounter the cross we also encounter the reason for our hope. God's grace is even more present when the cross is most heavy. When we realize that we are called to focus our efforts on cooperating with that grace we can prepare this broken world to



Bishop Mark J. Seitz

be ready to welcome the Lord when he comes.

We will face no challenge, no difficulty, no trial in this year from which God cannot bring good. And so, we hear the words of Jesus, so oft repeated, "Do not be afraid. I am with you."

Let's move forward into 2021

not looking for any mere earthly notion of victory or success. Let's set our sights on a much more lasting goal. Emmanuel, "God-with-us" has been revealed in his Nativity and Epiphany. 2021 will be a good year!

El Año de Nuestro Señor 2021



Feliz 2021! La alegría que sentimos al traer el nuevo año se basa principalmente en nuestra alegría de ir más allá del muy difícil año de 2020 y 2019 antes de eso!

¿Qué nos deparará el 2021? A menos que seamos testigos de la venida de Jesús en este año, creo que puedo asegurarles que veremos nuevos retos y dificultades. No quiero sonar como un pesimista. Sólo hago una observación basada en lo que la Iglesia ha observado sobre el tiempo en que vivimos. Este tiempo desde la Ascensión de

Cristo hasta la Segunda Venida es un tiempo en el que la obra salvadora de Jesús se aplica a nuestras vidas rotas y a nuestro mundo herido.

Muchos de nosotros vivimos con la expectativa inconsciente de que si lo resolvemos, si lo hacemos bien, si trabajamos lo suficiente, llegará el momento en que viviremos en una utopía dichosa. La verdad es que la utopía no está llegando. La cruz está plantada profundamente en el suelo de nuestras vidas y no desaparecerá.

Hemos vivido en un lugar afortunado y algunos de nosotros

hemos experimentado un número poco común de bendiciones en nuestras vidas que nos han dejado con la ilusión de que el cielo está aquí en la tierra. Es sólo una ilusión y esa ilusión ha sido perforada por esta muy difícil pandemia mundial. Aunque tenemos la seguridad de que estas vacunas van a controlar la pandemia, es probable que esta crisis pueda empeorar antes de que podamos respirar más libremente. Pasarán años antes de que las consecuencias económicas queden atrás.

Ahora, estas reflexiones pueden dejarte con la sensación

de que estoy tratando de reventar tu burbuja de Año Nuevo. No es así. Bajo la apariencia superficial de estas realidades terrenales, hay muy buenas noticias. Dios nos está despertando de nuestras ilusiones inconscientes y nos recuerda que cuando nos encontramos con la cruz también encontramos la razón de nuestra esperanza.

La gracia de Dios está aún más presente cuando la cruz es más pesada. Cuando nos damos cuenta de que estamos llamados a centrar nuestros esfuerzos en cooperar con esa gracia podemos preparar este mundo roto para estar listos para

acoger al Señor cuando venga.

No nos enfrentaremos a ningún reto, ni a ninguna dificultad, ni a ninguna prueba en este año de la que Dios no pueda traer el bien. Y así, escuchamos las palabras de Jesús, tan repetidas, "No tengas miedo. Yo estoy contigo".

Avancemos hacia el 2021 sin buscar ninguna noción terrenal de victoria o éxito. Pongamos nuestras miras en un objetivo mucho más duradero. Emmanuel, "Dios con nosotros" ha sido revelado en su nacimiento y epifanía. ¡El 2021 será un buen año!

Diocese Mourns the Sudden Death of Father Stephen Peters

By Fernie Ceniceros
Editor, Diocese of El Paso

Retired Priest, Fr. Stephen Peters passed away suddenly on December 15 as a result of Heart Failure.

Fr. Peters, 79, served at various assignments throughout his priestly ministry. Fr Peters' assignments included: St. Patrick Cathedral, Holy Cross in Las Cruces, Director of Vocations, Vice Rector and Rector of St. Charles Seminary, St. Raphael, Director of Finance, and Blessed Sacrament. He also served on the Diocesan Review Board



Retired Priest, Fr. Stephen Peters has died suddenly on December 15 as a result of Heart Failure. *Photo Courtesy of The Diocese of El Paso.*

and various other Diocesan Boards until the present day.

Fr. Peters was born on January 10, 1941 and was ordained to the priesthood on May 25, 1967. Fr. Peters retired in September of 2011 after 44 years of service to the Diocese of El Paso.

"I am deeply saddened by the sudden loss of Fr. Stephen Peters. He served the community of God in El Paso with great fervor and immense dedication for 44 years," Bishop Seitz said. "We have lost a great priest and my prayers today are for the eternal repose of his

soul and the repose of the souls of all the faithful departed," he concluded.

"Father Peters will be greatly missed, most especially in our Community of Blessed Sacrament, Fr. Benjamin Flores-Ruiz, Pastor of Blessed Sacrament said.

"He ministered with great love and devotion to the Blessed Sacrament Community for many years and the parishioners here continue to pray for him on his recent passing," Fr. Flores-Ruiz ended.

La Diócesis Lamenta La Muerte Abrupta Del Padre Stephen Peters

Por Fernie Ceniceros
Editor, Diocese of El Paso

El sacerdote retirado, el Padre Stephen Peters ha muerto repentinamente el 15 de diciembre como consecuencia de un fallo cardíaco.

El Padre Peters, de 79 años, sirvió en varias misiones a lo largo de su carrera sacerdotal. Las

misiones del P. Peters incluyeron: Catedral de San Patricio, Santa Cruz en Las Cruces, Director de Vocaciones, Vicerrector y Rector del Seminario de San Carlos, San Rafael, Director de Finanzas, y el Santísimo Sacramento. También fue miembro de la Junta de Revisión Diocesana y de varias otras Juntas Diocesanas hasta el día de hoy.

El P. Peters nació el 10 de enero de 1941 y fue ordenado sacerdote el 25 de mayo de 1967. El P. Peters se retiró en septiembre de 2011 después de 44 años de servicio en la Diócesis de El Paso.

"Me entristece profundamente la repentina pérdida del P. Stephen Peters. Sirvió a la comunidad de Dios en El Paso con

gran fervor e inmensa dedicación durante 44 años", dijo el Obispo Seitz. "Hemos perdido a un gran sacerdote y mis oraciones de hoy son por el eterno descanso de su alma y el descanso de las almas de todos los fieles difuntos", concluyó.

"El Padre Peters será muy extrañado, muy especialmente en nuestra Comunidad del Santí-

simo Sacramento, dijo el Padre Benjamín Flores-Ruiz, Pastor del Santísimo Sacramento.

"Él sirvió fervientemente a la Comunidad del Santísimo Sacramento durante muchos años y los feligreses de aquí siguen rezando por él en su reciente fallecimiento", concluyó el P. Flores-Ruiz.

- Continued from Pastoral Care

assignments to be able to tend to this ministry full time.

"For the next three months, and as long as is needed, they are being released by me and by their pastors to concentrate their ministry on bringing the sacraments, prayer and spiritual counsel to those who have the coronavirus and to their families," Bishop Seitz said. "They will also collaborate with the region's health care professionals to offer spiritual support to those on the front lines caring for the sick," he added.

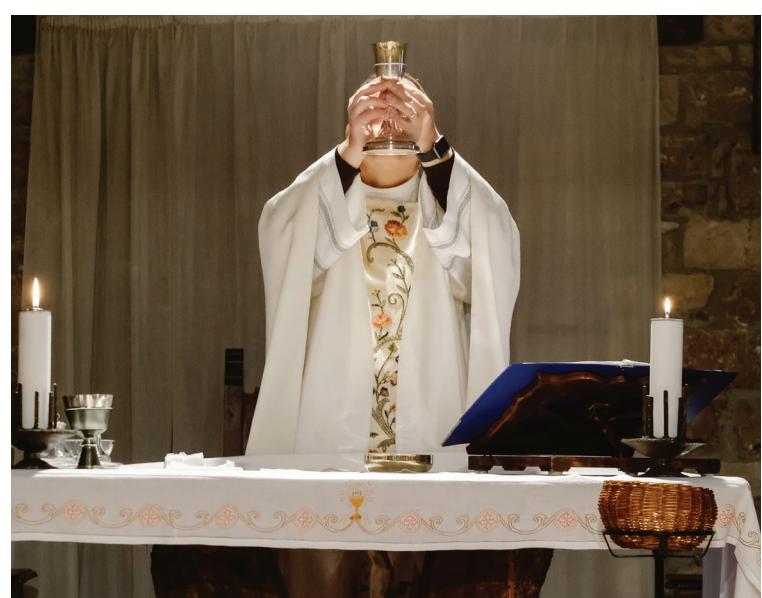
Finally, the diocese is in the process of providing virtual pastoral visits to the sick. The

program is currently being piloted at the Hospitals of Providence Transmountain campus. Patients will be able to connect virtually with a priest or deacon for a short visit, prayer or inspirational reading from the sacred scriptures.

"As we begin to re-gather over the Christmas holiday into the New Year, I ask that all the people of God to join our clergy by praying for the sick, for those who care for the sick, and for those who routinely face the risks inherent in this holy work," Bishop Seitz said.



915-834-9006 was made available for anyone in case of an emergency for family members or medical personnel to call when a priest or deacon is needed anywhere in El Paso County. *Photo by Fernie Ceniceros*



HAPPY BIRTHDAY, FATHER!

Federico Franco, OSM	1/6
Bishop Mark Joseph Seitz	1/10
Trinidad Fuentez	1/10
Rafael Garcia, SJ	1/18
Charles Rajan Michael (Extern)	1/19
Hector Chicas (OP)	1/20
Angel M Maldonado (OSM)	1/22
Fr. Jose Alcocer	1/23



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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By Sofia Larkin
Major Gifts Officer

Andrea Tirres, a 1995 graduate of Loretto Academy (Stanford, 1999; UT Austin, 2003) came back to El Paso because she loves it here. Even after going away to college, attending graduate school, and working in California, she stayed connected to El Paso and ultimately made the decision to come home and contribute directly to the city that formed her.

Like everyone living through the pandemic, Andrea has worried about her family, friends, and community, so she used her expertise and passion to write the COVID 915 Pledge. Her hope and prayer is that “our abuelos, fathers, mothers, tíos, co-workers, primos, compañeros, children, and neighbors can plan for a future that is once again filled with laughter, abrazos, dancing, and pachangas for the young and old in our community.” Andrea wrote the pledge because the pandemic has had such a profound impact on our residents and healthcare workers. She describes the impact



Andrea Tirres, a 1995 graduate of Loretto Academy (Stanford, 1999; UT Austin, 2003), *Photo Courtesy of Andrea Tirres*

as crushing and adds, “COVID is bold. We are bolder.”

Andrea shared, “El Paso is known as the ‘Sun City’. More recently, we have been called the ‘epicenter’ and ‘ground zero’ of

the pandemic in the US. We have undeniably shown in the past how we face challenges and are a beacon for life and light. Let’s keep it that way. We are El Paso Strong!” As an act of steward-

ship, Andrea wrote the Pandemic Pledge as a way to demonstrate steadfast commitment to our brothers and sisters, and to provide a centralized location for important COVID resources.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) provides extensive information on keeping safe, including communication resources in Spanish: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/holidays.html>

Reduce the Risk covers how to reduce multiple risks from COVID to mental health, including resources in Spanish: https://www.texmed.org/uploadedFiles/Current/2016_Public_Health/Infectious_Diseases/309193%20Risk%20Assessment%20Chart%20V2_FINAL.pdf

El Paso Strong offers various resources related to COVID-19, including testing locations: <http://epstrong.org/takethepledge.php>

Make a Change for the El Paso community and engage on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/TakeThePledge915>

Together in Christ, responding to COVID-19. #ElPasoStrong

You can reach Major Gifts Officer Sofia Larkin at slarkin@elpasodiocese.org or 915.872.8412. The Foundation for the Diocese of El Paso is located at 499 St. Matthews Street.

Una Promesa De Pandemia

Por Sofia Larkin
Major Gifts Officer

Andrea Tirres, graduada en 1995 de la Academia Loretto (Stanford, 1999; UT Austin, 2003) regresó a El Paso porque le encanta estar aquí. Incluso después de ir a la universidad, asistir a la escuela de posgrado y trabajar en California, se mantuvo conectada con El Paso y finalmente tomó la decisión de volver a casa y contribuir directamente a la ciudad que la formó.

Como todo el mundo que ha vivido la pandemia, Andrea se ha preocupado por su familia, sus amigos y su comunidad, por lo que utilizó su experiencia y su pasión para escribir la Promesa de COVID 915. Su esperanza y oración es que “nuestros abuelos, padres, madres, tíos, compañeros de trabajo, primos, compañeros, niños y vecinos puedan planear un futuro que vuelva a estar lleno de risas, abrazos, bailes y pachangas para los jóvenes y viejos de nuestra comunidad”. Andrea escribió el compromiso porque la pandemia ha tenido un impacto tan profundo en nuestros residentes y trabajadores de la salud. Ella describe el impacto como aplastante y añade, “COVID es audaz. Nosotros somos más audaces”.

Andrea compartió, “El Paso es conocido como la ‘Ciudad del Sol’. Más recientemente, hemos sido llamados el ‘epicentro’ y la ‘zona cero’ de la pandemia en los Estados Unidos. Hemos demostrado innegablemente en el pasado cómo nos enfrentamos a los desafíos y somos un faro para la vida y la luz. Mantengámoslo así. ¡Somos El Paso Fuerte!” Como un acto de administración, Andrea escribió la Promesa de Pandemia como una forma de demostrar un compromiso firme con nuestros hermanos y hermanas, y para proporcionar una ubicación centralizada para los recursos importantes de COVID.

Los Centros para el Control y la Prevención de Enfermedades (CDC) proporcionan amplia información sobre cómo mantenerse seguros, incluyendo recursos de comunicación en español: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/holidays.html>

Reducir el riesgo cubre cómo reducir los múltiples riesgos de COVID para la salud mental, incluyendo recursos en español: https://www.texmed.org/uploadedFiles/Current/2016_Public_Health/Infectious_Dis-eases/309193%20Risk%20Assessment%20Chart%20V2_FINAL.pdf



El Paso Strong ofrece varios recursos relacionados con COVID-19, incluyendo lugares de prueba: <http://epstrong.org/takethepledge.php>

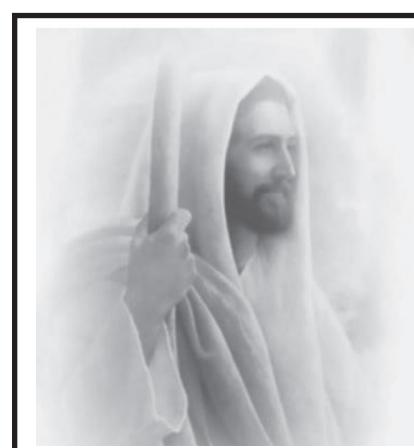
Haz un cambio para la comunidad de El Paso y participa en

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/TakeThePledge915>

Juntos en Cristo, respondiendo a COVID-19. #ElPasoStrong

Puede comunicarse con la Oficial de Regalos Mayores Sofia Larkin en slarkin@elpasodiocese.org

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Eight Elderly Religious Sisters Die Of Coronavirus In Wisconsin

CNA Staff, Dec 19, 2020 / 04:01 am MT (CNA).- Eight elderly religious sisters died of COVID-19 complications in one week at a retirement home for the School Sisters of Notre Dame near Milwaukee.

"Even though they're older and most of the sisters that did go to God are in their late 80s, 90s ... we didn't expect them to go... so quickly," Sister Debra Marie Sciano, the provincial leader for School Sisters of Notre Dame Central Pacific Province, told the Associated Press. "So it was just very difficult for us."

"We believe that each of these sisters, and all the sisters, really, they've made a difference in this world," Sciano said. "I just think it's important that people know

that, and that they were committed up until the end of their lives."

Sisters Rose M. Feess and Mary Elva Wiesner both died Dec. 9. Sister Dorothy MacIntyre died Dec. 11. Sister Mary Alexius Portz died Dec. 13, and Sisters Cynthia Borman, Joan Emily Kaul, Lillia Langreck and Michael Marie Laux all died Dec. 14 at Notre Dame of Elm Grove.

Notre Dame of Elm Grove, home to about 100 sisters, had not had a case of COVID-19 in nine months. On Thanksgiving Day, the congregation learned that a sister had tested positive, despite the many precautions in place.

All the sisters worked as

educators, while some were missionaries, musicians, or peace and justice workers. One sister was a published poet, while another was a retired teacher and principal who had worked summers in South Dakota on a Native American reservation, the Associated Press said.

"Every one of our sisters is really important," Sciano told TMJ4, the Milwaukee NBC television affiliate. "Not only to us, but we feel they have touched thousands of lives we'll never be aware of."

Wiesner loved to teach children the sacraments, and would cheerfully sing with them. Portz, a musician, continued to give music lessons into her 80s. Borman would do repair

work around her church, while Langreck was active in racial and social justice work. She took part in Milwaukee marches for fair housing and integrated busing.

Communities of elderly religious, along with nursing homes, have suffered especially in the coronavirus epidemic.

In July, 13 sisters died at a convent near Detroit. The facility has not had additional cases since it lost some 20% of its residents. Deena Swank, communications director for the Felician Sisters of North America, told the Associated Press that they are eager to have the sisters vaccinated when possible.

Seven sisters died at a Maryknoll center in New York.

At least six sisters died at Our

Lady of the Angels convent in Greenfield, Wisconsin, which provides memory care for members of the School Sisters of St. Francis and the School Sisters of Notre Dame.

Sciano said she is not aware that anyone at the Notre Dame of Elm Grove residence is on a priority list for vaccines, the Associated Press said. Administrators are seeking to order vaccines for the future.

The retirement home at Notre Dame Elm Grove dates back to 1859, when it was originally used as an orphanage for area children. Mother Caroline Friess, the foundress of the School Sisters of Notre Dame in America, is buried in its cemetery.

Ocho religiosas mayores de edad mueren por el virus de COVID-19 en Wisconsin

CNA Staff, Dec 19, 2020 / 04:01 am MT (CNA) Ocho religiosas mayores murieron por complicaciones de COVID-19 en una semana en una casa de retiro de las Hermanas Escolares de Notre Dame cerca de Milwaukee.

"A pesar de que son mayores y la mayoría de las hermanas que acudieron a Dios están a finales de los 80, 90... no esperábamos que se fueran... tan rápido", dijo a Associated Press la hermana Debra Marie Sciano, líder provincial de las School Sisters de Notre Dame Central Pacific Province. "Así que fue muy difícil para nosotras".

"Creemos que cada una de estas hermanas, y todas las hermanas, realmente, han hecho una diferencia en este mundo", dijo Sciano. "Creo que es importante que la gente lo sepa, y que se

comprometieron hasta el final de sus vidas."

Las hermanas Rose M. Feess y Mary Elva Wiesner murieron el 9 de diciembre. La hermana Dorothy MacIntyre murió el 11 de diciembre. La hermana Mary Alexius Portz murió el 13 de diciembre, y las hermanas Cynthia Borman, Joan Emily Kaul, Lillia Langreck y Michael Marie Laux murieron el 14 de diciembre en Notre Dame of Elm Grove.

Notre Dame of Elm Grove, hogar de unas 100 hermanas, no había tenido un caso de COVID-19 en nueve meses. El día de Acción de Gracias, la congregación supo que una hermana había dado positivo, a pesar de las precauciones tomadas.

Todas las hermanas trabajaban como educadoras, mientras que algunas eran misioneras, músicas

o trabajadoras de la paz y la justicia. Una hermana era una poetisa publicada, mientras que otra era una maestra y directora jubilada que había trabajado los veranos en Dakota del Sur en una reservación de nativos americanos, dijo la Associated Press.

"Cada una de nuestras hermanas es realmente importante", dijo Sciano a TMJ4, la filial de televisión de Milwaukee NBC. "No sólo para nosotras, sino que sentimos que han tocado miles de vidas de las que nunca seremos conscientes."

A Wiesner le encantaba enseñar a los niños los sacramentos, y cantaba alegramente con ellos. Portz, un músico, continuó dando lecciones de música hasta los 80 años. Borman hacía trabajos de reparación en su iglesia, mientras que Langreck se dedicaba a la

justicia racial y social. Participó en las marchas de Milwaukee por la vivienda justa y el transporte público integrado.

Las comunidades de ancianos religiosos, junto con los hogares de ancianos, han sufrido especialmente en la epidemia de coronavirus.

En julio, 13 hermanas murieron en un convento cerca de Detroit. El centro no ha tenido más casos desde que perdió un 20% de sus residentes. Deena Swank, directora de comunicaciones de las Hermanas Felicianas de América del Norte, dijo a Associated Press que están ansiosas por vacunar a las hermanas cuando sea posible.

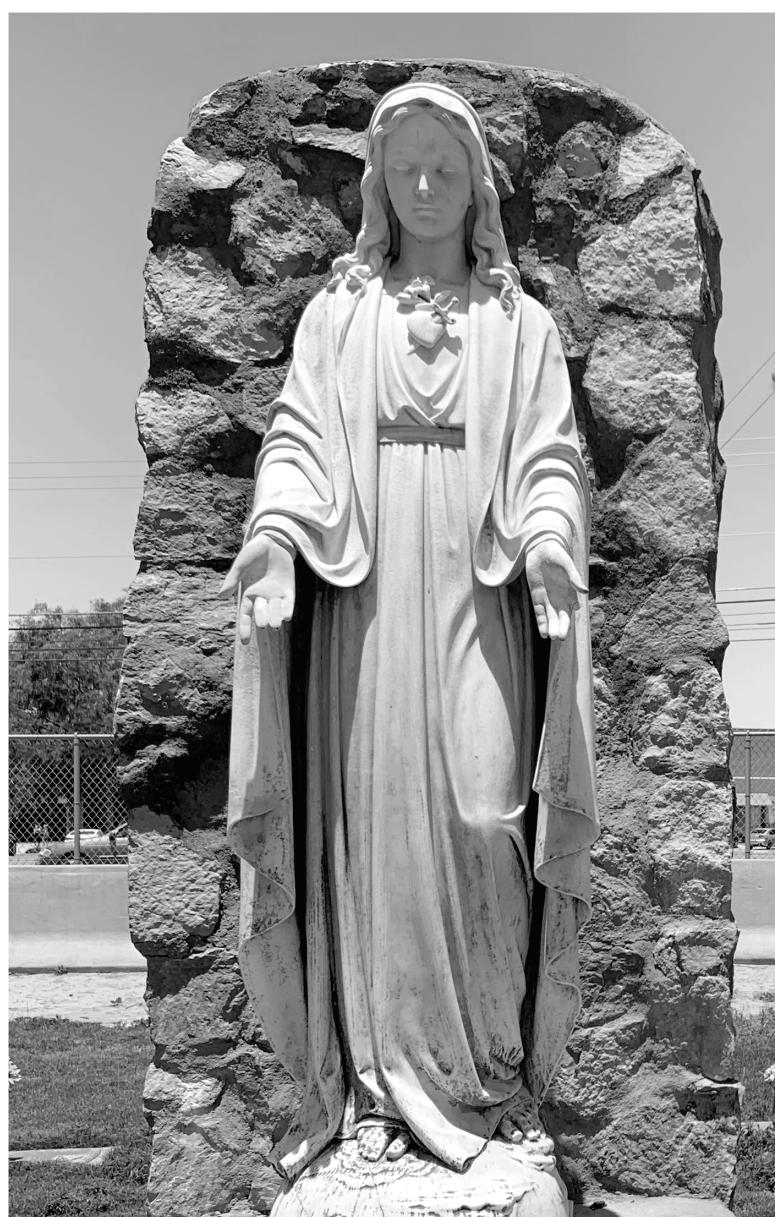
Siete hermanas murieron en un centro de Maryknoll en Nueva York.

Al menos seis hermanas mu-

rieron en el convento de Nuestra Señora de los Ángeles en Greenfield, Wisconsin, que proporciona cuidados de memoria a los miembros de las Hermanas Escolares de San Francisco y las Hermanas Escolares de Notre Dame.

Sciano dijo que no sabe que nadie en la residencia de Notre Dame de Elm Grove está en una lista de prioridad para las vacunas, dijo la Associated Press. Los administradores están buscando ordenar vacunas para el futuro.

La residencia de ancianos de Notre Dame Elm Grove se remonta a 1859, cuando se utilizó originalmente como un orfanato para los niños del área. La Madre Caroline Friess, la fundadora de las Hermanas Educadoras de Notre Dame en América, está enterrada en su cementerio.



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St. Joseph The Worker Was Once Out Of Work, Too

By Kevin Jones
Catholic News Agency

Denver Newsroom, Dec 22, 2020 / 04:00 pm MT (CNA).- With mass unemployment still high as the coronavirus pandemic drags on, Catholics can look to St. Joseph as a special intercessor, two priests said.

Citing the Holy Family's escape to Egypt, devotional writer Father Donald Calloway said St. Joseph is "very empathetic" towards those suffering unemployment.

"He himself at some point would have been unemployed in the Flight to Egypt," the priest told CNA. "They had to pack up everything and go to a foreign country with nothing. They didn't plan on that."

Calloway, author of the book "Consecration to St. Joseph: The Wonders of Our Spiritual Father," is an Ohio-based priest of the Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception.

He suggested that St. Joseph "at some point was surely quite concerned: how is he going to find work in a foreign country, not knowing the language, not knowing the people?"



Some 20.6 million Americans filed for unemployment benefits in late November, according to recent reports. Many others are working from home under coronavirus travel restrictions, while countless workers face workplaces where they may be at risk of contracting the coronavirus and taking it home to their families.

Father Sinclair Oubre, a labor advocate, similarly thought of the Flight into Egypt as a period of joblessness for St. Joseph—and also a period that showed an

example of virtues.

"He remains focused: stay open, continue to struggle, do not get broken down. He was able to build up a livelihood for him and his family," said Oubre. "For those who are unemployed, St. Joseph gives us a model of not allowing the difficulties of life to crush one's spirit, but rather trusting in God's providence, and in adding to that providence our own attitude and strong work ethic."

Oubre is pastoral moderator of

the Catholic Labor Network and the Beaumont diocese's director of the Apostleship of the Seas, which serves seafarers and others in sea-based work.

Calloway reflected that most people in life are workers, whether outside or at a desk.

"They can find a model in St. Joseph the Worker," he said. "No matter what your work is, you can bring God into it and it can be beneficial to you, your family, and society as a whole."

Oubre said there is much to learn from reflecting upon how St. Joseph's work nurtured and protected the Virgin Mary and Jesus, and so was a form of sanctification of the world.

"If Joseph did not do what he did, there was no way the Virgin Mary, a pregnant single maiden, could have survived in that environment," Oubre said.

"We come to realize that the work that we do is not just for this world, but rather we can work to help build the kingdom of God," he continued. "The work that we do cares for our family members and our children and helps build up the future generations that are there."

Calloway warned against "ide-

ologies of what work should be."

"It can become enslavement. People can turn into workaholics. There's a misunderstanding of what work is meant to be," he said.

St Joseph gave dignity to work "because, as the one chosen to be the earthly father of Jesus, he taught the Son of God to do manual labor," said Calloway. "He was entrusted with teaching the son of God a trade, to be a carpenter."

"We're not called to be slaves to a trade, or to find our ultimate meaning of life in our work, but to allow our work to glorify God, to build up the human community, to be a source of joy to everyone," he continued. "The fruit of your labor is meant to be enjoyed by yourself and others, but not at the expense of harming others or depriving them of a just wage or overworking them, or having working conditions that are beyond human dignity."

Oubre found a similar lesson, saying "our work is always at the service of our family, our community, our society, of the world itself."

En un tiempo, San José el Obrero También Estuvo Sin Trabajar

Por Kevin Jones
Catholic News Agency

Denver Newsroom, Dec 22, 2020 / 04:00 pm MT (CNA).- Con el desempleo masivo todavía alto mientras la pandemia del coronavirus se prolonga, los católicos pueden mirar a San José como un intercesor especial, dijeron dos sacerdotes.

Citando la fuga de la Sagrada Familia a Egipto, el devoto escritor Padre Donald Calloway dijo que San José es "muy empático" con los que sufren el desempleo.

"Él mismo en algún momento habría estado desempleado en el Vuelo a Egipto", dijo el sacerdote a la CNA. "Tuvieron que empacar todo e irse a un país extranjero sin nada. No lo habían planeado".

Calloway, autor del libro "Consagración a San José: Las maravillas de nuestro Padre Espiritual", es un sacerdote de los Padres Marianos de la Inmaculada Concepción con sede en Ohio.

Sugirió que San José "en algún momento se preocupó bastante: ¿cómo va a encontrar trabajo en un país extranjero, sin conocer el idioma, sin conocer a la gente?"

Unos 20,6 millones de americanos solicitaron el subsidio de desempleo a finales de noviembre, según informes recientes. Muchos otros trabajan desde casa bajo las restricciones de viaje del coronavirus, mientras que innumerables trabajadores se enfrentan a lugares de trabajo donde pueden correr el riesgo de contraer el coronavirus y llevárselo a sus familias.

El padre Sinclair Oubre, un defensor de los trabajadores, pensó de manera similar en la huida a Egipto como un período de desempleo para San José y también un período que mostró un ejemplo de virtudes.

"Él permanece enfocado: permanece abierto, continúa luchando, no se desbarata. Fue capaz de construir un medio de vida para él y su familia", dijo

Oubre. "Para aquellos que están desempleados, San José nos da un modelo de no permitir que las dificultades de la vida aplasten el espíritu de uno, sino más bien confiar en la providencia de Dios, y en añadir a esa providencia nuestra propia actitud y una fuerte ética de trabajo".

Oubre es moderador pastoral de la Red Católica de Trabajo y director del Apostolado de los Mares de la diócesis de Beaumont, que sirve a los marineros y a otros en el trabajo en el mar.

Calloway reflexionó que la mayoría de las personas en la vida son trabajadores, ya sea afuera o en un escritorio.

"Pueden encontrar un modelo en San José Obrero", dijo. "No importa cuál sea tu trabajo, puedes traer a Dios en él y puede ser beneficioso para ti, tu familia y la sociedad en su conjunto".

Oubre dijo que hay mucho que aprender al reflexionar sobre cómo el trabajo de San José nutrió y protegió a la Virgen María

y a Jesús, y así fue una forma de santificación del mundo.

"Si José no hizo lo que hizo, no había manera de que la Virgen María, una doncella soltera embarazada, pudiera haber sobrevivido en ese entorno", dijo Oubre.

"Nos damos cuenta de que el trabajo que hacemos no es sólo para este mundo, sino que podemos trabajar para ayudar a construir el reino de Dios", continuó. "El trabajo que hacemos cuida de los miembros de nuestra familia y de nuestros hijos y ayuda a construir las futuras generaciones que están allí."

Calloway advirtió contra "las ideologías de lo que debería ser el trabajo".

"Puede convertirse en una esclavitud. La gente puede convertirse en adictos al trabajo. Hay un malentendido de lo que el trabajo debe ser", dijo.

San José le dio dignidad al trabajo "porque, como el elegido para ser el padre terrenal de

Jesús, enseñó al Hijo de Dios a hacer trabajos manuales", dijo Calloway. "Se le confió la tarea de enseñar al Hijo de Dios un oficio, el de carpintero."

"No estamos llamados a ser esclavos de un oficio, o a encontrar nuestro último significado de vida en nuestro trabajo, sino a permitir que nuestro trabajo glorifique a Dios, construya la comunidad humana, sea una fuente de alegría para todos", continuó. "El fruto de tu trabajo está destinado a ser disfrutado por tí mismo y por los demás, pero no a costa de perjudicar a los demás o de privarlos de un salario justo o de trabajar en exceso, o de tener condiciones de trabajo que estén más allá de la dignidad humana".

Oubre encontró una lección similar, diciendo "nuestro trabajo está siempre al servicio de nuestra familia, nuestra comunidad, nuestra sociedad, del mundo mismo."

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Deacon Candidates

19
Seminarians

4
Religious Sisters



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

- 1,500** College students at UTEP and Sul Ross State University participate in the Catholic Campus Ministry
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- 6,000** Children, youth and young adults participate in the activities of the Youth and Young Adult Ministry

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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. Además, nuestras Hermanas Religiosas también son apoyadas por la Campaña de Progreso en su viaje para servir a Dios y a nuestra diócesis.

18
Candidatos al Diaconado

20
Seminaristas

4
Religious Sisters

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- 7,000** Familias son atendidas por los programas del Ministerio de Matrimonio y Vida Familiar
- 6,000** Niños, jóvenes y jóvenes adultos participan en las actividades del Ministerio de Jóvenes y Jóvenes Adultos



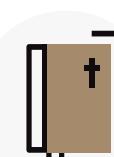
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5,500
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5,100
Youth and young adults attend the Southwest Youth Conference



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5,500
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5,100
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Educación y Formación

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20,000
Niños inscritos en programas de catequesis parroquial

2,500
Estudiantes matriculados en escuelas católicas

3,870
Personas tomando cursos del Instituto Tepeyac



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More than 20 Catholic school students drew inspiring pictures of God. Their drawings are part of the Drawing God Virtual Museum. You can see them at drawing-god.com.



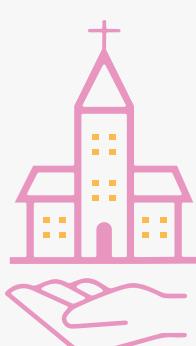
The Gospel Going Viral

Fr. Tony, Fr. Victorino, Fr. Iván, Nathan Stell and Guillermo Tajonar shared what the St. Raphael Parish team is doing to connect with the community and bring Christ to our lives during the pandemic.



Love Thy Neighbor

Bishop Mark offered prayers to the staff and volunteers at El Pasoans Fighting Hunger, a nonprofit assisting entities throughout the city with a massive effort to feed thousands.



My Sunday Parish Offertory

The Catholic Foundation set up online giving for parish Sunday collections called **My Sunday Parish Offertory** beginning on March 19, 2020 to provide support to churches and pastors.



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Olga Church, a parishioner at St. Mary's Catholic Church in Marfa was chosen as the **2020 Steward of the Year**. Olga's example of faith and service in times of fear and uncertainty helps us all to remember that grace overflows, even during the most challenging times.

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In this extraordinary year, there is an incredible amount of gratitude and a longing for connection. What we miss most are not the material things but rather a good conversation, getting together with friends and family, a hug, attending Mass in person and receiving the sacraments. Life has been simplified. At the same time, many of our brothers and sisters are experiencing stress, loss and grief. We need each other more than ever. For that very reason, thank you for being a part of our extended family and for your continued support of prayer, service, and giving. During these uncertain times, there is one thing that hasn't and won't change: our commitment to improving the lives of people in the Diocese of El Paso. Your unwavering generosity, especially during this difficult time, is an inspiration. You make this important work possible and we couldn't do it without you. Wishing you a blessed and Happy New Year!

Your Catholic Foundation Family

La Fundación para la Diócesis de El Paso quisiera aprovechar esta oportunidad para expresar nuestro más profundo agradecimiento.

En este año extraordinario, hay una cantidad increíble de gratitud y un anhelo de cercanía. Lo que más extrañamos no son las cosas materiales sino una buena conversación, reunirnos con amigos y familiares, un abrazo, asistir a Misa en persona y recibir los sacramentos. La vida se ha simplificado. Al mismo tiempo, muchos de nuestros hermanos y hermanas están experimentando estrés, pérdida y dolor. Nos necesitamos más que nunca. Por esa misma razón, gracias por ser parte de nuestra familia extendida y por su continuo apoyo de oración, servicio y generosidad. Durante estos tiempos de incertidumbre, hay una cosa que no ha cambiado y no cambiará: nuestro compromiso de mejorar la vida de las personas en la Diócesis de El Paso. Su generosidad inquebrantable, especialmente durante este momento difícil, es una inspiración. Usted hace posible este importante trabajo y no podríamos hacerlo sin usted. ¡Le deseamos un feliz y bendecido año nuevo!

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**¡PREPÁRESE PARA CELEBRAR
20° ANIVERSARIO 2021!**

Who Do They See?



Janet M. Crowe

My all-time favorite song for any season of the year has to be "Mary, did you know?" The song asks the mother of Jesus whether she knew, at her child's birth, of the wondrous things He would do in His life. Considering the trust Mary had in God the Father, she probably did not feel a need to know exactly how her son would complete His ministry here on Earth. However, I have no question about the answer to one line in which the song asks whether Mary knew "when you kiss your little baby, you kissed the face of God".

I know in my heart that if I had heard the song years ago when I held my newborn babies in my arms, I would not have hesitated for a moment before saying, "Yes, absolutely." I knew when I kissed my little earthbound angels that I was kissing the face of God. Of course, Jesus Christ was the only begotten Son of God, and my children were definitely not Jesus.

However, we know that each and every human being is created in the image and likeness of God. Every time I held my own precious children in my arms, I would gaze in awe at their seashell-shaped ears, cupid's bow mouths and the tiny pearl-like toes on their little feet. If I had any doubt at all, their eyes completely melted my heart with every look, and I knew that these little people revealed the face of God.

As newborn babies grow up into toddlers and then teens and adults, we tend to lose sight of the face of God in the people we see in our homes, on the street, in the stores and at our workplaces. Being dutiful Catholic Christians we try, sometimes, to see God's face in the homeless person asking for money, in the migrant seeking refuge, or in the images printed on the letters mailed to us from a multitude of charitable organizations requesting donations.

Yes, each person is a child of God and every man, woman and child is made in the image and likeness of God, and the Church teaches us to treat our brothers and sisters with the same respect that we would give to Jesus Himself. It is not easy, however, to see the face of God reflected in the person who cuts us off in traffic, flashing rude gestures at us. Being kind to the person who is stabbing us in the back at the office is certainly difficult. Even trying to allocate our resources to help those less fortunate while managing our own family's needs can be challenging. Sometimes we wonder, do we still need to try to see a reflection of



God's face in the people we meet every day as we make our way through life?

Well, yes, we do. But there is an even more important question we need to ask ourselves. "Do the people we meet see a reflection of God's face when they see us?"

Do we treat every person, whether the CEO or the janitor, with the same respect with which we would treat Jesus? Do we believe that the life of a homeless vagrant is as valuable as the life of a wealthy doctor? Do we judge the unmarried teenager who becomes pregnant as being sinful and deserving of the obstacles she must overcome, or do we recognize that since God has been patient with our own mistakes, we should try to help her become the strong and loving mother God meant her to be?

Do we reflect God's image in what we do?

By our actions, do we give sight to those who are too blind to see, and show that love and respect go hand in hand with how we prefer to help others rather than judge them? Do we enable the deaf to hear the message of

God's love when we stand up for what is right, by building others up rather than putting them down, by complimenting rather than gossiping?

When someone loses faith in themselves, do we feel bigger and better than they are, or do we reach out our hands to help them up? Do we look down on those in need, or do we help the lame to walk again by supporting their efforts along the path God has planned for them?

We are not the One who can stretch out His almighty hand

and calm a storm, but do we even try to calm the storms of discord we see among those around us? By our actions, do we promote peace, acceptance and love, or do we stir up the waters of hatred, rejection and conflict?

In all likelihood, none of us will ever rule any nations, but do we ever stop to consider that we are capable of changing the world by treating every person with respect? Rather than complaining about what is wrong with the world, will we try to become the change we wish to

see in the world?

When others look at us, do they see someone trying to help those around us? When others listen to our words, do they hear encouragement and love for everyone we meet? When people see our hands, do they see helping hands, supportive arms, and sympathetic shoulders?

When others see us, hear us, and watch what we do, will they see the face of God in us?

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Padre Wilson Cuevas

"Ya quiero que este año termine!". Es lo que le he oido decir a mucha gente. Por supuesto que este ha sido un año terrible como nunca antes habíamos vivido. Esta pandemia del coronavirus ha causado una cascada de crisis a todos los niveles e instancias de la vida, del trabajo de la economía, han colapsados los sistemas hospitalarios de salud, las iglesias se quedaron vacías, los lugares turísticos sin visitantes... Una verdadera tragedia que nos ha afectado a todos... Pero en medio de este panorama de crisis e incertidumbre hemos aprendido grandes lecciones de la vida y nos vamos adaptando a los nuevos retos y condiciones de la convivencia humana. El ecosistema se ha recuperado, ha disminuido la contaminación, la naturaleza y los animales se han visto menos agredidos. Esta gran crisis es una GRAN OPORTUNIDAD PARA QUE LOS SERES HUMANOS CAMBIEMOS, si no lo hacemos ahora, ya no queda más que el juicio final. Estamos muy esperanzados en una VACUNA, y los científicos han emprendido un maratón a la velocidad, luz para atender esta solicitud unánime de los gobiernos de las naciones y de sus habitantes. Ya se tienen algunas vacunas en circulación, ya se están aplicando a las personas en mayores riesgos y sin duda será una gran ayuda para enfrentar este enemigo común de la humanidad.

El Jardín De Las Vacunas

No tenemos que conformarnos con todos los sufrimientos y dificultades que nos ha traído esta pandemia. No podemos conformarnos con una vacuna, que entre otras cosas no es mágico ni milagroso, como todo lo que hacemos los humanos tiene sus cosas buenas y sus contraindicaciones. Hay muchas cosas que podemos elegir hacer, que mejoren nuestra calidad de vida y de convivencia. Entender que tenemos un mundo de posibilidades para vivir mejor. No resinaros a pensar "Oh, podía ser peor..." O los que pronostican que vendrán peores virus. Tenemos que darnos cuenta que la voluntad de Dios, manifestada en Cristo es: "Yo he venido para que tengan vida y la tengan en abundancia" (Jn. 10,10)." Dios no solo quiere que estemos vivos, sino además que disfrutemos el gozo de estar vivos y que cada día vivimos mejor!

Este año de la pandemia, me ha servido para reflexionar, para compartir y experimentar el cariño, la generosidad de muchas personas y algunas con especiales detalles. Como saben que me fascina leer, me regalaron el famoso libro el JARDÍN DEL AMADO, son parábolas con enseñanzas del Maestro a su discípulo, la tercera parábola es "El discípulo y los gusanos" El lugar donde cavo encontré gusanos que le parecieron horribles y tiro fuera del Jardín del amado. Todo lo que sembró quedo estéril y sin frutos; porque esas criaturas que le parecieron repugnantes a los discípulos, ellas sirven para fertilizar la tierra permitiendo que el aire penetre hasta las raíces de las plantas y luego tragan y digieren la tierra de manera que las plantas puedan de ello extraer su alimento; sin ellas ninguna planta puede crecer, así



que ya ves que estas criaturas que tan repugnantes te parecen son de importante utilidad para el jardín del amado tanto como nosotros mismos.

No pretendamos corregir a Dios, a sus planes y a todo lo que ha creado. Todo tiene su razón de ser, aunque muchas veces no lo comprendamos. Procedamos con inteligencia y sabiduría, recordemos este consejo del apóstol Pablo: "No impidan la acción del Espíritu Santo; examinenlo todo y quedense con lo bueno". Nuestras vidas cambian cuando nuestros hábitos cambian. Cambian para bien con buenos hábitos y para mal con hábitos destructivos. La oración diaria es un hábito esencial de la vida, que establece la base sobre la cual pueden surgir muchos otros grandes hábitos prácticos y espirituales. Ustedes se ponen en oración a Dios para que los ilumine en la decisiones importantes de su vida?

Nuestro mundo ha cambiado drásticamente. La gente se siente confundida y ha perdido la confianza en casi todo. Estamos atormentados de información por todos los medios sociales, que incrementan la incertidumbre, la ansiedad y el miedo al contagio del coronavirus. Las noticias que ya están disponibles seis vacunas para distribuir las y aplicarlas ha sido una noticia refrescante para todos. Esta mañana viendo la noticias de los camiones refrigerados que llevaban las vacunas a diferentes estados, la gente aplaudía y sonreía con la

esperanza de vivir por medio de la vacuna. Todas las naciones esperan y están haciendo los trámites con los laboratorios y compañías para comprar millones de vacunas para su población. Como siempre, nunca estamos de acuerdo los seres humanos, también hay un significativo número de personas que no creen ni quieren ponerse la vacuna por las razones que no creen en su efectividad, que puede afectar el sistema inmunológico del cuerpo, que puede tener otras secuelas contra la salud y el bienestar, que quienes se pongan la vacuna tienen que seguirse poniendo cada cierto tiempo, a fin de no sufrir peores secuelas.

Es un riesgo que cada uno tendrá que decidir. Y como dice el apóstol San Pablo: "Examínenlo todo y quedense con lo bueno". Y en otro texto nos dice: "Donde abunda el mal, sobre abunda la cura". Como cristianos acerquémonos a Cristo médico Divino del Cuerpo y del alma y pidámosle que nos ponga la vacuna del Amor, la vacuna de la Paciencia, la vacuna de Generosidad, la vacuna del Perdón, la vacuna de la Fe, la vacuna de la Verdad. Estas vacunas nos hacen seres maravilloso, extraordinarios y auténticos para SANAR AL MUNDO DE TODOS SUS MALES! "Que por su dolorosa Pasión, ten misericordia de nosotros y del mundo entero!" Así sea.

FELIZ AÑO NUEVO 2021

The Garden Of Vaccines

"I really want this year to end!" It's what I've heard a lot of people say. Of course this has been a terrible year, one like we had never experienced before. This pandemic of the coronavirus has caused a cascading crisis at all levels and instances of life, of employment, the economy, it has collapsed hospital systems, health, churches are empty, tourist sights are without visitors ... A true tragedy that has affected us all... But in the midst of this panorama of crisis and uncertainty, we have learned great life lessons and we are adapting to the new challenges and conditions of human coexistence. The ecosystem has recovered, and decreased the contamination; nature and animals have been attacked less. This great crisis is a GREAT OPPORTUNITY FOR HUMAN BEINGS TO CHANGE; if we don't do it now, there is nothing left but the final judgment. We are waiting full of hope for a vaccine, and scientists have embarked on a lightning-speed marathon to attend to this concern by unanimous governments of nations and their people. Already there are some vaccines in circulation, and are already being applied to people most

at risk, and without a doubt will be a great help to face this common enemy of humanity.

We do not have to settle for all the suffering and difficulties that the pandemic has brought us. We cannot be content just with a vaccine, which among other things is neither magical nor miraculous, like everything we humans create it has its good points and its contraindications. There are many things we can choose to do that improve our quality of life and coexistence. Understand that we have a world of possibilities to live better. We cannot resign ourselves thinking "Oh well, it could be worse ..." Or those that predict worse viruses will come. We have to realize that God's will, manifested in Christ is: "I have come that they may have life and have it in abundance" (Jn. 10, 10).

God not only wants us to be alive, but also to enjoy the wonder of being alive and that each day may be better for us!

This year of the pandemic has helped me to reflect, to share and experience the affection and generosity of many people and some with special designs. Since they know that I am so very fond

of reading they gifted me with the famous book GARDEN OF THE BELOVED, which contains parables with teachings of the Master to his disciple; and the third parable is "The Disciple and the Worms". In the place where he dug he found worms that seemed horrible to him and he threw them all out from the Garden of his beloved. All that he sowed remained sterile and fruitless; because those creatures that the disciple found disgusting, served to fertilize the earth allowing air to penetrate to the roots of the plants and they swallow and digest the soil so that the plants can extract their food from it; without them no plant can grow. "So you see that these creatures that are so disgusting to you are very important for the garden of the beloved as well as for ourselves."

Let us not try to correct God, his plans and everything he has created. Everything has its reason for being, although many times we do not understand it. Let's proceed with intelligence and wisdom, remembering this advice from the apostle Paul "do not impede the action of the Holy Spirit; examine everything and keep the good

things. "Our lives change when our habits change. They change for the better with good habits and for worse with destructive habits. Daily prayer is an essential habit of life, which establishes the basis from which many other great practical and spiritual habits can emerge. Do you put forth your prayer to God that He may enlighten the important decisions of your life?

Our world has changed dramatically. People feel confused and have lost confidence in almost everything. We are inundated with information from all social media, which increases uncertainty, anxiety and fear of the contagion from the coronavirus. The news that six vaccines are now available to distribute and be applied has been refreshing news for everyone. This morning watching the news of the refrigerated trucks taking the vaccines to different states, people applauded and smiled with hope of overcoming the virus by means of the vaccine. All nations expect and are having negotiations with laboratories and companies to buy millions of vaccines for their population. But like always, we humans are never in total agreement; there

is also a significant number of persons who do not believe or want to get the vaccine because they do not believe in its effectiveness, being that it could affect the body's immune system, that it might cause other consequences on one's health and welfare, that those who take the vaccine have to continue getting it every so often in order not to suffer worse consequences.

It is a risk that each one of us has to decide. And as the Apostle Saint Paul says: "Do not impede the action of the Holy Spirit; examine everything and keep what is good" (I Tel. 5, 19-20). And in another text he tells us: "where evil abounds, healing abounds." As Christians, let us draw near to Christ, the Divine healer of body and soul, and ask him to give us the vaccine of Love, the vaccine of Patience, the vaccine of Generosity, the vaccine of Forgiveness, the vaccine of Faith, the vaccine of Truth. These vaccines make us wonderful human beings, extraordinary and authentic to HEAL THE WORLD OF ALL ITS ILLS! " For the sake of His Sorrowful Passion, have mercy on us and on the whole world!" Amen.

HAPPY NEW YEAR 2021

MAKING SENSE OF BIOETHICS

Must Catholics Refuse a COVID-19 Vaccine Made With a Cell Line from an Abortion?



Fr. Tad Pacholczyk

In the wake of announcements from multiple pharmaceutical companies about safe and effective COVID-19 vaccines, many are expressing ethical doubts about whether it is OK to take these vaccines. Do Catholics have a moral duty to decline an inoculation if it was unethically produced using a cell line that came from an abortion?

The short answer is “no.” This has been discussed and explained in several magisterial church documents in recent years.

In 2008, for example, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith reminded us in the Instruction *Dignitas Personae* that:

“Grave reasons may be morally proportionate to justify the use of such ‘biological material.’ Thus, for example, danger to the health of children could permit parents to use a vaccine which was developed using cell lines of illicit origin, while keeping in mind that everyone has the duty to make known their disagreement and to ask that their healthcare system make other types of vaccines available.”

For a serious reason, therefore, Catholics may receive a COVID-19 vaccine having an association with abortion, and a serious reason could include a threat to one’s health and well being. Those who are elderly or who face co-morbidities like diabetes, obesity or other significant health conditions are among the highest risk groups for adverse outcomes from infection, and would clearly have a serious reason.

Included below is information comparing some of the COVID-19 vaccine candidates that may become available in the U.S. in terms of their association with abortion-derived cell lines, helpfully collated by the Charlotte Lozier Institute and alphabetically arranged:

Vaccines from Moderna and

COVID-19 Vaccine Candidates in the U.S. & Association with Abortion-Derived Cell Lines

Company/Sponsor	Abortion-Derived Cell Line Used in Vaccine Development/Production?	Abortion-Derived Cell Line Used in Vaccine Laboratory Testing?	“Ethical Profile”
Altimmune	Yes	?	Poor
Arcturus Therapeutics	No	Yes	Good
AstraZeneca/University of Oxford	Yes	Yes	Very Poor
Immunity Bio & NantKwest	Yes	Yes	Very Poor
Inovio Pharmaceuticals	No	Yes	Good
Janssen Res/Johnson & Johnson	Yes	Yes	Very Poor
Merck and IAVI	No	?	Good
Moderna	No	Yes	Good
Novavax	No	Yes	Good
Pfizer/BioNTech	No	Yes	Good
Sanofi & GSK Protein Sciences	No	?	Good
Sanofi Pasteur/Translate Bio	No	Yes	Good
Sorrento [“T-viva-19”]	No	No	Very Good
Univ. of Pittsburgh	Yes	?	Poor
Vaxart	Yes	?	Poor

Pfizer are likely to be among the first to receive emergency approval in the U.S., and do not rely on cell lines from abortions in the manufacturing process. As such, they appear to be good candidates for Catholics to use. There is a problem that a cell line from a 1972 abortion was used to carry out some ancillary testing of those vaccines, but the fact that zero material derived from any cell line from an abortion is present in these vaccines, that is to say, inside the syringe which actually jabs the patient, is sufficient in the minds of most to assuage any concern over using them, even if problematic laboratory testing may have taken place along the way.

If we end up facing a choice among multiple COVID-19 vaccines of similar or equal safety and efficacy, as appears likely, it will clearly be preferable to choose alternatives with a better ethical profile, i.e. those not associated with, or less associated with, material derived from abortions.

Suppose, however, that two new vaccines both appeared to be safe during clinical trials. The first vaccine had no association with abortion, but was only 35% effective at protecting from COVID-19, while the second was more than 90% effective, but was manufactured using a cell line derived from an abortion. In such a case, again, we could choose the significantly more effective version for the serious reason of danger to our health.

Relying on cell lines from abortions to manufacture a COVID-19 vaccine provokes strong moral objections and some can and will refuse the vaccines on these grounds. While it is a personal decision of conscience as to whether or not to accept a vaccine, it is important to be clear that the Church, for her part, does not require us to decline it on such grounds in the face of serious reasons, as in the situation of an elderly person or someone with multiple health issues who faces significant risks if they

were to contract COVID-19. This fact, of course, in no way absolves or diminishes the serious wrongdoing of those who used cell lines from abortions to make vaccines in the first place.

Any time we decide to receive an unethically produced vaccine, moreover, we should push back. We need to do our part in applying pressure on the manufacturer, perhaps by sending an e-mail indicating our objection to the fact that their vaccine was produced using ethically controversial cell sources, and requesting that they reformulate it using alternative, non-abortion-related cell sources. Alternatively, we might write a letter to the editor of our local paper pointing out the injustice of being morally coerced to rely on these cell sources, or take other steps to educate and inform others.

Such efforts help expand public awareness of the problem and apply real pressure for change. Such efforts can be more effective (and require

more authentic determination on our part) than merely “digging in our heels” or “taking a stand” and refusing to get vaccinated, which has the negative effect of subjecting us, and others around us, to heightened risk from various diseases.

While it is too early to know which COVID-19 vaccines will end up becoming available in the U.S., the pandemic is certain to elevate the profile of abortion-related ethical concerns among the public to a degree not previously seen, offering a unique opportunity to push for the elimination of these cell lines from future biomedical research and pharmaceutical development projects.

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.

FROM ALL OF US AT THE DIOCESE OF EL PASO

Happy New Year!

May the Lord God Bless all of you in the Year of Our Lord 2021

Judge Killed By Mafia To Be Beatified

By Courtney Mares
Catholic News Agency

Vatican City, Dec 22, 2020 / 06:30 am MT (CNA).- Pope Francis has recognized the martyrdom of Rosario Livatino, a judge who was brutally killed by the mafia on his commute to work at a courthouse in Sicily thirty years ago.

The Vatican Congregation for the Causes of Saints announced Dec. 22 that the pope had approved a decree of Livatino's martyrdom "in hatred of the faith," paving the way for the judge's beatification.

Before his murder at the age of 37 on Sept. 21, 1990, Livatino spoke as a young lawyer about the intersection between the law and faith.

"The duty of the magistrate is to decide; however, to decide is also to choose... And it is precisely in this choosing in order to decide, in deciding so as to put things in order, that the judge who believes may find a relationship with God. It is a direct relationship, because to administer justice is to realize oneself, to pray, to dedicate oneself to God. It is an indirect relationship, mediated by love for the person under judgment," Livatino said at a conference in 1986.

"However, believers and non-believers must, in the moment of judging, dismiss all vanity and above all pride; they must feel the full weight of power entrusted to their hands, a weight all the greater because power is exercised in freedom and autonomy. And this task will be the lighter the more the judge humbly senses his own weaknesses," he said.

Livatino's convictions about his vocation within the legal profes-



Pope Francis has recognized the martyrdom of Rosario Livatino, a judge who was brutally killed by the mafia on his commute to work at a courthouse in Sicily thirty years ago. **Photo is Public Domain**

sion and commitment to justice were tested at a time when the mafia demanded a weak judiciary in Sicily.

For a decade he worked as a prosecutor dealing with the criminal activity of the mafia throughout the 1980s and confronted what Italians later called the "Tangentopoli," or the corrupt system of mafia bribes and kickbacks given for public works contracts.

Livatino went on to serve as a judge at the Court of Agrigento in 1989. He was driving unescorted toward the Agrigento courthouse when another car hit him, sending him off the road. He ran from the crashed vehicle into a field, but was shot in the back and then killed with more gunshots.

After his death, a Bible full of notations was found in his desk, where he always kept a crucifix.

On a pastoral visit to Sicily in 1993, Pope John Paul II called Livatino a "martyr of justice and indirectly of faith."

Cardinal Francesco Montenegro, the current archbishop of Agrigento, told Italian media on the 30th anniversary of Livatino's death that the judge was dedicated "not only to the cause of human justice, but to the Christian faith."

"The strength of this faith was the cornerstone of his life as an operator of justice," the cardinal told the Italian SIR news agency Sept. 21.

"Livatino was killed because he was prosecuting the mafia gangs by preventing their criminal activity, where they would have demanded weak judicial management. A service that he carried out with a strong sense of justice that came from his faith," he said.

The courthouse where Livatino used to work in Agrigento also organized a conference over the weekend marking the anniversary of his death.

"Remembering Rosario Livatino ... means urging the whole community to join forces and lay the foundations for a future no longer burdened by mafia loans," Roberto Fico, president of the chamber, said at the event Sept. 19, according to La Repubblica.

"And it means strengthening the determination -- which continues to animate so many judges and members of the police on the front line against organized crime -- to want to do their duty at all costs."

Pope Francis expressed his support this year for an initiative aimed at countering mafia organizations' use of the figure of the Blessed Virgin Mary to promote submission to the will of the mafia boss.

A working group organized by the Pontifical International Marian Academy brought together about 40 Church and civil leaders to address the abuse of Marian devotions by mafia organizations, who use her figure to wield power and exert control.

The pope previously met with the Anti-Mafia Parliamentary Commission on the anniversary of Livatino's death in 2017. On that occasion, he said that dismantling the mafia begins with a political commitment to social justice and economic reform.

The pope said that corrupt organizations can serve as an alternative social structure which roots itself in areas where justice and human rights are lacking. Corruption, he noted, "always finds a way to justify itself, presenting itself as the 'normal' condition, the solution for those who are

'shrewd,' the way to reach one's goals."

On the same day that Pope Francis recognized Livatino's martyrdom, the pope also approved a decree by the Congregation for the Causes of Saints declaring the heroic virtue of seven other people, including an Italian priest Fr. Antonio Seghezzi, who helped the resistance against the Nazis and died in Dachau in 1945.

The heroic virtue of Fr. Bernardo Antonini, an Italian priest who served as a missionary in the Soviet Union and died in Kazakhstan in 2002 was also recognized, along with a 16th century bishop of Michoacán, Vasco de Quiroga, Italian Servant of Mary Msgr. Bernardino Piccinelli (1905-1984), a Polish Salesian priest Fr. Ignazio Stuchlý (1869-1953), and Spanish priest Fr. Vincent González Suárez (1817-1851).

The congregation also declared Sr. Rosa Staltari, an Italian religious sister with the Congregation Daughters of Mary, the Most Holy, Co-Redemptrix (1951-1974) to have had heroic virtue.

Before his death, Judge Livatino wrote: "Justice is necessary, but not sufficient, and can and must be overcome by the law of charity which is the law of love, love of neighbor and God."

"And once more it will be the law of love, the vivifying strength of faith, that will solve the problem at its roots. Let's remember Jesus' words to the adulterous woman: 'Let him who is without sin cast the first stone.' By these words, he indicated the deep reason of our difficulty: sin is shadow; in order to judge there is need of light, and no man is absolute light himself."

Collection for the Latin America Fund

There will be a Special Offering on Saturday, January 23 and Sunday, January 24, 2021 for the Collection for the Latin America Fund (CLA).

For fifty years, the Church in the United States has been actively assisting the Collection for the Latin America Fund previously known as the Church in Latin America Fund. With the aid of this collection, and in cooperation with the bishops of the United States and Latin America, grants are made to support the vast needs of the local Churches in Latin America and the Caribbean, especially in the areas of evangelization, pastoral programs, and formation of laity, religious and seminarians, as well as youth ministry and catechesis.

On the weekend of January 23 and January 24, 2021 please take the opportunity to contribute to this worthy cause which benefits the Church in Latin America. Thank you for your support. To learn more, please visit www.usccb.org/latin-america.

La Ofrenda Especial para la Iglesia en América Latina

Habrá una Ofrenda Especial Anual el sábado, 23 de enero y el domingo, 24 de enero para la Iglesia en América Latina.

Durante cincuenta años, la Iglesia en los Estados Unidos ayuda activamente a la Iglesia en América Latina. Con la ayuda de esta ofrenda, y en cooperación con los obispos de los Estados Unidos y en América Latina, se obtienen concesiones para sostener las necesidades tan vastas de las Iglesias locales en América Latina y en el Caribe, especialmente en las áreas de evangelización, de los programas pastorales, y de la formación de los laicos, las religiosas y los seminaristas, al igual que el ministerio de jóvenes y el catequesis.

En el fin de semana del 23 y 24 de enero del 2021, por favor dé se la oportunidad de contribuir a esta digna causa la cual benefician la iglesia de América Latina. Para más información, por favor, visite www.usccb.org/latin-america



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