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Migrant Surge in the Borderland, Diocese Opens Shelters

El Paso, TX - In the month of December, El Paso saw a surge of migrants as the lifting of Title 42 approached. With shelters at capacity and resources stretched thin, the Diocese continues to work to provide aid and support to those in need.

Many of these recent migrants have been forced to sleep at the airport or camp outside of bus stations until they can travel to their intended destination.

Despite the challenges, the Diocese has provided shelter and refuge throughout El Paso at five shelters throughout the city. As the winter weather sets in the needs of these migrants are only growing. The Diocese is working to ensure that no one is left out in the cold.

Bishop Mark J. Seitz has emphasized the importance of the church opening their hearts and providing refuge to migrants in El Paso.

“As a people of faith, it is our duty to love and care for our neighbors, especially those who are most vulnerable. The migrants coming to El Paso are seeking safety, security, and a better life for themselves and their families. It is Christ’s call to offer them the hospitality and compassion that is at the heart of our faith. We must open our hearts and our doors to these men, women, and children, and allow them to find refuge,” Bishop Seitz said. “We must remember that we are all brothers and sisters, children of the same loving God,” he added.

In response to the surge of migrants in El Paso and the removal of Title 42 on the border, the Diocese of El Paso worked to open two additional shelters in the area. The diocese had already operated five shelters in the region, which provide temporary housing, meals, and other necessities to migrants in need.

The additional shelters will help to meet the growing demand for housing and support as more and more migrants arrive in El Paso seeking refuge. The Diocese is partnering with El Paso County, The City of El Paso and other border organizations. They hope to recruit more volunteers to help operate the shelters and provide assistance to migrants.

This is an ongoing story, and we will continue to provide updates as more details develop. The Diocese of El Paso and the community are working together to meet the needs of migrants in the region, and we will continue to bring you the latest information on its efforts.



Migrants await shelter and food outside of Sacred Heart Church in Downtown El Paso. In the month of December, El Paso saw a surge of migrants as the lifting of Title 42 approached. With shelters at capacity and resources stretched thin, the Diocese continues to work to provide aid and support to those in need. *Photo by Patrick Craig, Special to the Rio Grande Catholic*

Aumento de migrantes en la frontera, la diócesis abre albergues

El Paso, TX - Durante las últimas dos semanas, El Paso ha visto una oleada de migrantes a medida que se acerca el levantamiento del Título 42. Con los albergues a su máxima capacidad y los recursos al límite, la Diócesis está trabajando para proporcionar ayuda y apoyo a los necesitados.

Muchos de estos migrantes recientes se han visto obligados a dormir en el aeropuerto o acampar fuera de las estaciones de autobuses hasta que puedan viajar a su destino previsto.

A pesar de los desafíos, la Diócesis ha proporcionado refugio y cobijo en El Paso en cinco refugios repartidos por toda la ciudad. Con la llegada del invierno, las necesidades de estos

inmigrantes no hacen más que aumentar. La Diócesis está trabajando para asegurar que nadie se quede fuera en el frío.

El Obispo Mark J. Seitz ha hecho hincapié en la importancia de que la iglesia abra sus corazones y proporcione refugio a los migrantes en El Paso.

“Como pueblo de fe, es nuestro deber amar y cuidar a nuestro prójimo, especialmente a los más vulnerables. Los migrantes que llegan a El Paso buscan seguridad y una vida mejor para ellos y sus familias. Es la llamada de Cristo a ofrecerles la hospitalidad y la compasión que están en el corazón de nuestra fe. Debemos abrir nuestros corazones y nuestras puertas a estos hombres,

mujeres y niños, y permitirles encontrar refugio”, dijo el obispo Seitz. “Debemos recordar que todos somos hermanos y hermanas, hijos del mismo Dios amoroso”, añadió.

En respuesta a la oleada de migrantes en El Paso y la retirada pendiente del Título 42 en la frontera, la Diócesis de El Paso está trabajando para abrir dos refugios adicionales en la zona. La diócesis ya gestiona cinco refugios en la región, que proporcionan alojamiento temporal, comidas y otras necesidades a los migrantes necesitados.

Los refugios adicionales ayudarán a satisfacer la creciente demanda de alojamiento y apoyo a medida que más y más

migrantes llegan a El Paso en busca de refugio. La diócesis está colaborando con el condado de El Paso, la ciudad de El Paso y otras organizaciones fronterizas, y espera reclutar a más voluntarios para ayudar a gestionar los refugios y prestar asistencia a los migrantes.

Esta es una historia en curso, y seguiremos proporcionando actualizaciones a medida que se desarrollen más detalles. La Diócesis de El Paso y la comunidad están trabajando juntos para satisfacer las necesidades de los migrantes en la región, y vamos a seguir para ofrecerle la información más reciente sobre sus esfuerzos.

EDITOR'S COLUMN - FERNIE CENICEROS

To Pray Like a Child

As an adult, I often struggled to apprehend what Jesus meant when he said we should be like little children. When I became a parent, I began to grasp the deeper meaning behind Jesus' words.

Early in December, my youngest daughter Evie was scheduled to have a procedure to have tubes installed in her ears to help with her recurrent ear infections. The night before the procedure, my oldest daughter Annie, having just learned about Our Lady of Guadalupe, offered her prayer for Evie and her sister's procedure. She also prayed for all of us. She asked that we all be okay



Fernie Cenicerros

and have a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year and asked

Mother Mary to ask Jesus to make sure all of this happened.

My wife and I were shocked to hear her prayer; it was full of hope and love for her sister and everyone in her life. Her generosity and kindness in her prayer brought us both to tears. She meant every single word. Once Annie was in bed, my wife and I sat and discussed what we had just witnessed. Not only did she ask in sincere humility, but she also knew without prompting that when she was asking Mother Mary and was asking that she intercede for Evie to her son Our Lord Jesus. We were shocked!

My daughter taught us what it

truly means to have faith without conditions. Annie taught us humility when asking our Lord for our needs in prayer. She taught us that the simplest prayer could be just as effective as any long-winded prayer, sometimes even more effective.

Evie went on to have her procedure with no issues, thank God; however, to Annie, that God answered her prayer. Now it's my job as her parent to ensure that our family and everyone around us have a beautiful new year! My job as her parent is to keep true to her innocent faith. In our family's everyday hustle of the week, I need to

apply the lesson my daughter taught me; To love without condition, to pray to God with humility and love, and to enjoy the small things in life!

Happy New Year to all, and may the new year bring joy and love, be assured that my daughter Annie included all of you in her prayer!

Orar como un niño



De adulto, a veces me costaba entender lo que Jesús quería decir cuando afirmaba que debíamos ser como niños pequeños. Cuando fui madre, empecé a comprender el significado más profundo de las palabras de Jesús.

A principios de diciembre, mi hija menor, Evie, tenía que someterse a una intervención para que le instalaran tubos en los oídos con el fin de aliviar sus infecciones de oído recurrentes. La noche antes de la intervención, mi hija mayor, Annie,

que acababa de conocer a Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe, rezó por Evie y por la intervención de su hermana. Sin embargo, también rezó por todos nosotros. Pidió que todos estuviéramos bien y que tuviéramos una Feliz Navidad y un Próspero Año Nuevo y le pidió a la Madre María que le pidiera a Jesús que se asegurara de que todo esto sucediera.

A mi mujer y a mí nos impresionó escuchar su oración, llena de esperanza y amor por su hermana y por todos los que formaban parte de su vida. Su

generosidad y bondad en la oración nos hizo llorar a los dos. Lo decía en serio. Una vez que Annie estuvo en la cama, mi esposa y yo nos sentamos y hablamos de lo que acabábamos de presenciar. No sólo lo pedía con sincera humildad, sino que también sabía que cuando se lo pedía a la Madre María, le estaba pidiendo que intercediera por Evie ante su hijo Nuestro Señor Jesús. ¡Nos quedamos de piedra!

Mi hija nos enseñó lo que significa realmente tener fe sin condiciones. Annie nos enseñó

la humildad a la hora de pedir al Señor por nuestras necesidades en la oración. Ella nos enseñó que la oración más simple puede ser tan efectiva como cualquier oración larga, a veces incluso más efectiva.

Evie tuvo su procedimiento sin problemas, gracias a Dios; sin embargo, para Annie, esa fue una oración respondida por Dios a ella. Con eso, ¡ahora es mi trabajo como su madre asegurarme de que nuestra familia y todos los que nos rodean tengan un hermoso año nuevo! Mi trabajo como

su madre es mantenerme fiel a su inocente fe. En el ajetreo cotidiano de nuestra familia, tengo que aplicar la lección que mi hija me enseñó: amar sin condiciones, rezar a Dios con humildad y amor, y disfrutar de las pequeñas cosas de la vida.

Feliz Año Nuevo a todos, y que el nuevo año traiga alegría y amor, ¡tened por seguro que mi hija Annie os incluyó a todos en su oración!

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What's it like to get public praise from the Pope?: Bishop tells us

On November 28, 2022, Bishop Mark Seitz of El Paso woke up to a pleasant surprise. As he checked his Twitter account he saw that he had been cited in an interview as an example of a “good pastor,” who “grasps all the contradictions” of his diocese and “carries them forward.”

The 68-year-old Bishop was shocked to discover that the person praising him was Pope Francis himself in an interview with America Media.

Bishop Seitz, who has been leading the Diocese of El Paso since 2013, spoke to Aleteia about what it was like

being complimented by the Pontiff and how he envisions his role as a pastor in this complex diocese on the border between Mexico and the United States.

How did you find out about the Pope's comments and what was your reaction to this praise?

Bishop Seitz: It was quite a startling thing to awaken to. I was not expecting it at all and I was shocked. I went through a whole spectrum of emotions when I heard the Holy Father had mentioned my name. I feel very honored and somewhat embarrassed to be singled out in that way for my ministry. I admire the work of so many of my brother bishops in the United States and elsewhere so it is certainly very humbling to think I would be mentioned, when so many others could be.

Pope Francis said you are a man who “grasps all the contradictions” of the region you are in. Can you paint a picture of your area and the issues that affect it?

Bishop Seitz: It is a rather unique place. I think we are perhaps the largest binational community in the world because we have the El Paso area, which consists of about 850,000 people and then Ciudad Juárez on the other side, which has a population of 1.5 million or more. The [Rio Grande] river has been the border through the centuries and it never really did much to separate us; now even less so as there is almost no water left, it is ankle deep most of the time. Unfortunately we do have a very foreboding fence now that divides us, sometimes with barbed wire on top. We are still really

interconnected though: Our children go to school on both sides, people work on both sides. Also the pride of belonging to both nations is something rather special about this region.

It is a place, as the name El Paso would suggest, of welcome, where people are passing through. That is part of our DNA: to receive and welcome people. One can see what can happen when a border area isn't a place of confrontation, as most people see it, but a place of encounter. In El Paso we have an opportunity to reflect on the ideal the Church presents of being a community that transcends borders; where we can recognize every person, no matter their origin, race or religion, as brothers and sisters. While we recognize the right and value of nations having lines that delineate where this state ends and the other begins, I think we also recognize here, better than in most places, that there are even more important things that unite us, than those who separate us.

While we recognize the right and value of nations having lines that delineate where this state ends and the other begins, I think we also recognize here, better than in most places, that there are even more important things that unite us, than those who separate us.

In the interview, Pope Francis highlighted that bishops should be pastors, rather than ideologues. In a politically charged region like yours, how

do you think a bishop can focus on being a pastor, while paying the right attention to the needs of his faithful?

Bishop Seitz: The main thing is that we have to remember who we are, that indeed we are pastors, we are servants of the Gospel. While many of our actions may be interpreted as political, by people who see everything as political, we have to be focused on listening to Jesus and his teaching through the Church. That connection will come through for those who are willing to see. That is what I am trying to do. I can't allow myself to be afraid of speaking because I think there will be political pushback.

By the same token though, I am not a politician, I am not running for office or developing laws. I am simply trying to speak to what the teaching of the Church is and to express those underlying principles that should guide the conscience of those who are developing laws and policies on behalf of the nation.

I am also trying to form my people to be fully Christian, which is not easy today, neither for the people nor for the bishop. I am trying to do work, which I feel so privileged to do, and I am so edified that the Pope would highlight that that's my ministry because it is exactly what my aspiration is.

Migration and identity are themes and issues that Pope Francis pays close attention to. Do you think this is also a rea-

son why he may have singled you out in the interview?

Bishop Seitz: Yes, I am certain that it is something that keeps this region very much in the Pope's consciousness. Having also been here to the border himself [during his 2016 trip to Mexico], I think he feels a certain closeness.

The Catholic Church has had a long history of working on this border. I have really tried to highlight the importance of this to help challenge the narratives that are so prominent here in our country that say “those people coming are a threat to us”; “it is an invasion”; “criminals are crossing the border”; etc. The vast vast majority of those who come are certainly not criminals. They are just people looking to escape life threatening situations and find a place where they can live and raise their families in peace. To characterize a whole group of people based on a very small percentage, who really should be stopped at the border, is not very fair. We have really tried to tell our story from the border and perhaps it came to the Pope's attention.

Pope Francis said you carry forward the difficulties of your diocese as a pastor. What do you think inspires you in your role as a Bishop and helps you stay focused on your mission?

Bishop Seitz: Well I think it has been more and more clear to me that this work would be impossible without the help of God. The problems that we are

dealing with in the world today and which are part of our society, such as the tsunami of secularization, the loss of faith, the tendency to view everything as the politics of the day, the anger, hurt and violence experienced and so on, make it very challenging to be a pastor. They bring me to my knees, literally. I need to spend time to keep my spiritual life focused, if I am going to continue to do this work and not be discouraged or embittered, but be a joyful servant in this midst of this broken world.

Did the Pope's words make you feel encouraged in your mission?

Bishop Seitz: Absolutely, he has been such an encouragement for me in my ministry both in terms of his teaching in general but also in the different ways he has supported me in this mission. It is just something that I would have never imagined to have come my way. In a certain sense it worries me a little bit because I ask myself: Is God preparing me for something even more challenging than what I am facing now, by receiving this affirmation as I go forward?

I don't know but I am just hopeful that I can serve God. Much of what the Pope said is aspirational to me, not that I have accomplished it, but as what I would like to be.

So, thank you Holy Father!

¿Cómo es recibir elogios públicos del Papa? Nos lo cuenta un obispo

El 28 de noviembre de 2022, el obispo de El Paso, Mark Seitz, se despertó con una agradable sorpresa. Al consultar su cuenta de Twitter vio que había sido citado en una entrevista como ejemplo de “buen pastor”, que “capta todas las contradicciones” de su diócesis y “las

lleva adelante.” El obispo, de 68 años, se sorprendió al descubrir que la persona que le elogiaba era el propio Papa Francisco en una entrevista con America Media.

Monseñor Seitz, al frente de la diócesis de El Paso desde 2013, habló con Aleteia sobre cómo fue recibir el

cumplido del Pontífice y cómo se imagina su papel como pastor en esta compleja diócesis en la frontera entre México y Estados Unidos.

¿Cómo se enteró de los comentarios del Papa y cuál fue su reacción ante este elogio?

Mons. Seitz: Fue un despertar bastante sorprendente. No me lo esperaba en absoluto y me quedé estupefacto. Pasé por todo un espectro de emociones cuando oí que el Santo Padre había mencionado mi nombre. Me siento muy honrado y algo avergonzado de que se me haya señalado de esa manera por mi ministerio. Admiro el trabajo de muchos de mis hermanos obispos en Estados Unidos y en otros lugares, por lo que es ciertamente muy humilde pensar que se me mencione, cuando tantos otros podrían hacerlo.

El Papa Francisco dijo que usted es un hombre que “capta todas las contradicciones” de la región en la que se encuentra. ¿Puede describirnos su región y los problemas que la afectan?

Obispo Seitz: Es un lugar bastante singular. Creo que quizá seamos la mayor comunidad binacional del mundo, porque tenemos la zona de El Paso, que cuenta con unas 850.000 personas, y Ciudad Juárez al otro lado, que tiene una

población de 1,5 millones o más. El río Grande ha sido la frontera a lo largo de los siglos y nunca ha hecho mucho por separarnos; ahora aún menos, ya que casi no queda agua, llega hasta los tobillos la mayor parte del tiempo. Por desgracia, ahora tenemos una valla muy premonitoria que nos separa, a veces con alambre de espino encima. Sin embargo, estamos muy interconectados: Nuestros hijos van a la escuela en ambos lados, la gente trabaja en ambos lados. Además, el orgullo de pertenecer a ambas naciones es algo muy especial en esta región.

Es un lugar, como sugiere el nombre de El Paso, de acogida, donde la gente está de paso. Eso forma parte de nuestro ADN: recibir y acoger a la gente. Uno puede ver lo que puede ocurrir cuando una zona fronteriza no es un lugar de confrontación, como lo ve la mayoría de la gente, sino un lugar de encuentro. En El Paso tenemos la oportunidad de reflexionar sobre el ideal que presenta la Iglesia de ser una comunidad que trasciende las fronteras; donde podemos reconocer a cada persona, sin

importar su origen, raza o religión, como hermanos y hermanas.

Aunque reconocemos el derecho y el valor de que las naciones tengan líneas que delimiten dónde acaba este Estado y empieza el otro, creo que también reconocemos aquí, mejor que en la mayoría de los lugares, que hay cosas aún más importantes que nos unen, que las que nos separan.

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En la entrevista, el Papa Francisco destacó que los obispos deben ser pastores, más que ideólogos. En una región políticamente tan cargada como la suya, ¿cómo cree que un obispo puede centrarse en ser pastor, prestando al mismo tiempo la debida atención a las necesidades de sus fieles?

Obispo Seitz: Lo principal es

que tenemos que recordar quiénes somos, que efectivamente somos pastores, somos servidores del Evangelio. Aunque muchas de nuestras acciones puedan ser interpretadas como políticas, por personas que ven todo como político, tenemos que centrarnos en escuchar a Jesús y su enseñanza a través de la Iglesia. Esa conexión aparecerá para aquellos que estén dispuestos a ver. Eso es lo que intento hacer. No puedo permitirme tener miedo de hablar porque creo que habrá un rechazo político.

Sin embargo, no soy político, no me presento a las elecciones ni elaboro leyes. Simplemente intento hablar de lo que enseña la Iglesia y expresar los principios subyacentes que deben guiar la conciencia de quienes elaboran leyes y políticas en nombre de la nación.

También intento formar a mi pueblo para que sea plenamente cristiano, lo que no es fácil hoy en día, ni para el pueblo ni para el obispo. Estoy tratando de hacer un trabajo, que me siento tan privilegiado de hacer, y estoy tan edificado que el Papa destaque que ese es mi ministerio porque es ex-

actamente lo que es mi aspiración.

La migración y la identidad son temas y cuestiones a los que el Papa Francisco presta mucha atención. ¿Cree que también por eso le ha señalado a usted en la entrevista?

Mons. Seitz: Sí, estoy seguro de que es algo que mantiene a esta región muy presente en la conciencia del Papa. Habiendo estado él mismo en la frontera [durante su viaje a México en 2016], creo que siente cierta cercanía.

La Iglesia católica lleva mucho tiempo trabajando en esta frontera. Realmente he tratado de destacar la importancia de esto para ayudar a desafiar las narrativas que son tan prominentes aquí en nuestro país que dicen “esas personas que vienen son una amenaza para nosotros”; “es una invasión”; “los criminales están cruzando la frontera”; etc. La inmensa mayoría de los que vienen no son delincuentes. Sólo son personas que buscan escapar de situaciones que ponen en peligro su vida y encontrar un lugar donde vivir y criar a sus

Bishop's Hike for Life Draws Near 20k in Donations

By Fernie Ceniceros
Editor, Rio Grande Catholic

On Saturday, December 10th, the Bishop's Hike for Life fundraiser was held at Mt. Cristo Rey. The event aimed to raise funds for local organizations that support pregnant women and their families.

According to Deacon Danny Bejarano, one of the Organizers and the Director of Marriage and Family Life for the Diocese, the event was a huge success. "We had a great turnout, with over 400 hikers participating," he said. "The weather was perfect, and everyone had a great time."

The hike, which began at the base of Mt. Cristo Rey and climbed to the top of the mountain, offered stunning views of the surrounding area. Hikers included youth and catholic school students.

Bishop Seitz, who hosted the hike, has been committed to supporting pro-life organizations since his days as a seminarian and throughout his priesthood for more than 40 years.

Bishop Seitz has a long history

of supporting pro-life organizations. "I remember participating in the early Hike for Life events in Dallas," he said. "We would hike around a lake that was about 10 miles around, and we would do it twice! It was a great way to raise awareness and support for pro-life causes, but hiking up a mountain is definitely a much better experience."

Bishop Seitz also spoke about the beauty of the statue at the Summit of Mt. Cristo Rey. "The statue of Mt. Cristo Rey is a powerful symbol of the love and compassion that Jesus has for the people of our region," he said. "Standing at the top of the mountain and looking out over El Paso, Ciudad Juarez, and Las Cruces, I hope it offers a sense of awe and gratitude for the blessings that God has given us."

The Bishop's Hike for Life was just one of several events organized by the Diocese of El Paso to support organizations that provide assistance to pregnant women and their families. Through events like these, the Diocese is working to create a culture of life in El Paso and to



On Saturday, December 10th, the Bishop's Hike for Life fundraiser was held at Mt. Cristo Rey. The event aimed to raise funds for local organizations that support pregnant women and their families. *Photo by Emily Montelongo*

promote the value and dignity of every human person.

In addition to being a fun and enjoyable event, the Bishop's Hike for Life was also a huge success in terms of fundraising. According to Deacon Bejarano, the event was able to exceed its goal of raising \$10,000, with the final tally coming in at close to \$20,000.

"We are overwhelmed by the generosity of our community," said Deacon Bejarano. "The funds raised will go a long way in helping organizations that support pregnant women and their families, and we are grateful for everyone who supported the event."

The success of the Bishop's Hike for Life is a testament to

the strong sense of community and commitment to life in the El Paso area. It is clear that the people of El Paso are willing to come together and support important causes, and the Diocese is grateful for the outpouring of support.

La Caminata por la Vida de los Obispos atrae cerca de 20 mil en donaciones

Por Fernie Ceniceros
Editor, Rio Grande Catholic

El sábado 10 de diciembre se celebró en el Monte Cristo Rey la Caminata del Obispo por la Vida, para recaudar fondos. El evento tenía como objetivo recaudar fondos para las organizaciones locales que apoyan a las mujeres embarazadas y sus familias.

Según el Diácono Danny Bejarano, uno de los organizadores y el Director de Matrimonio y Vida Familiar de la Diócesis, el evento fue un gran éxito. "Tuvimos una gran participación, con más de 400 excursionistas", dijo. "El tiempo fue perfecto, y todo el mundo se lo pasó muy bien".

La caminata, que comenzó en la base del monte Cristo Rey y ascendió hasta la cima de la montaña, ofreció unas vistas impresionantes de los alrededores. Los participantes pudieron disfrutar de la belleza del paisaje desértico y recaudar fondos para una buena causa.

El Obispo Seitz, anfitrión de la caminata, se ha comprometido a apoyar a las organizaciones provida desde sus días de seminarista y a lo largo de su sacerdocio durante más de 40 años. El Obispo Seitz tiene un largo historial de apoyo a las organizaciones provida. "Recuerdo haber participado en los primeros eventos de Hike for Life en Dallas", dijo. "Caminábamos

alrededor de un lago de unos 16 kilómetros, ¡y lo hacíamos dos veces! Era una forma estupenda de concienciar y apoyar las causas provida, pero subir una montaña es sin duda una experiencia mucho mejor."

El Obispo Seitz también habló de la belleza de la estatua en la cima del Monte Cristo Rey. "La estatua del Monte Cristo Rey es un poderoso símbolo del amor y la compasión que Jesús tiene por la gente de nuestra región", dijo. "De pie en la cima de la montaña y mirando hacia El Paso, Ciudad Juárez y Las Cruces, espero que ofrezca un sentido de asombro y gratitud por las bendiciones que Dios nos ha dado".

La Caminata del Obispo por la

Vida fue sólo uno de varios eventos organizados por la Diócesis de El Paso para apoyar a las organizaciones que prestan asistencia a las mujeres embarazadas y sus familias. A través de eventos como estos, la Diócesis está trabajando para crear una cultura de la vida en El Paso y para promover el valor y la dignidad de cada persona humana.

Además de ser un evento divertido y agradable, la Caminata del Obispo por la Vida también fue un gran éxito en términos de recaudación de fondos. Según el Diácono Bejarano, el evento fue capaz de superar su objetivo de recaudar 10.000 dólares, con el recuento final llegando a cerca de 20.000 dólares.

"Estamos afortunados por la generosidad de nuestra comunidad", dijo el diácono Bejarano. "Los fondos recaudados serán de gran ayuda para las organizaciones que apoyan a las mujeres embarazadas y sus familias, y estamos agradecidos por todos los que apoyaron el evento".

El éxito de la Caminata del Obispo por la Vida es un testimonio del fuerte sentido de comunidad y compromiso con la vida en la zona de El Paso. Está claro que la gente de El Paso está dispuesta a unirse y apoyar causas importantes, y la Diócesis está agradecida por la avalancha de apoyo.

Continuada de pg 3

un grupo de personas basándose en un porcentaje muy pequeño, que realmente debería ser detenido en la frontera, no es muy justo. Realmente hemos intentado contar nuestra historia desde la frontera y tal vez haya llamado la atención del Papa.

El Papa Francisco dijo que usted lleva adelante las dificul-

tades de su diócesis como pastor. ¿Qué cree que le inspira en su papel de obispo y le ayuda a mantenerse centrado en su misión?

Monseñor Seitz: Bueno, creo que cada vez tengo más claro que este trabajo sería imposible sin la ayuda de Dios. Los problemas a los que nos enfrentamos en el mundo actual y que forman parte de nuestra sociedad, como el tsunami de

la secularización, la pérdida de la fe, la tendencia a verlo todo como la política del momento, la ira, el dolor y la violencia que se viven, etc., hacen que sea todo un reto ser pastor. Me ponen de rodillas, literalmente. Necesito dedicar tiempo a mantener centrada mi vida espiritual, si quiero seguir haciendo este trabajo y no desanimarme ni amargarme, sino ser un servidor alegre en medio de este mundo

roto.

¿Le han animado las palabras del Papa en su misión?

Mons. Seitz: Absolutamente, ha sido un gran estímulo para mí en mi ministerio, tanto por sus enseñanzas en general como por las distintas formas en que me ha apoyado en esta misión. Es algo que nunca habría imaginado que se me presentaría. En cierto sentido me preocupa un poco porque me

pregunto: ¿Me está preparando Dios para algo aún más desafiante que lo que estoy afrontando ahora, al recibir esta afirmación a medida que avanzo?

No lo sé, pero tengo la esperanza de poder servir a Dios. Mucho de lo que dijo el Papa es una aspiración para mí, no porque lo haya logrado, sino como lo que me gustaría ser.

Así que, ¡gracias Santo Padre!



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

ORDINATION ANNIVERSARY (CORRECTION)

Fr. Aplolinar Samboni	Dec 6, 2014
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New Year, New Opportunities

By Patrick Guiliani
Hope Border Institute

The start of a new year is always a time to think about the different resolutions we might take on to improve our lives and strive to be better, more compassionate people.

Every year on January 1, the Catholic Church marks the World Day of Peace with a message from the Pope on the vital work of building peace. In his 2018 Message for the World Day of Peace, the Holy Father wrote that, "peace is the foundation and pathway to a dignified future for all". This includes migrants and refugees fleeing violence and

seeking safety.

We Catholics have a responsibility to work towards creating a world of peace and understanding. This starts with our own actions – how we treat others, how we speak and what we stand for. Peace does not always come easy, but it is always worth striving for.

This year I invite us all to become informed about the issue at hand and make our voices heard in calling for an end to asylum-denying policies that may be implemented. These policies have led to heartbreaking stories of families being denied access to safety and security. These individuals are often the most

vulnerable, fleeing violence and oppressive regimes in search of a better life for themselves and their families.

We have seen firsthand the impact that we can have as a community. Parishes come together every day to provide temporary shelter and a warm meal to those stopping in El Paso along their journey to be reunited with family and friends. As a community, El Paso joined together to provide food and jackets to people who had been released to the streets with nowhere else to turn.

As we enter a new year let us not wallow in hopelessness but instead organize together to cre-

ate a world that welcomes those on the move and treats them with dignity and respect. I invite everyone to look to see how you can get involved at your parish, in the diocese or with other organizations locally. Building a world of peace can be done by each one of us in our day-to-day lives. By becoming agents of God's love and working to accompany people on the move we can do our part.

Let us use this New Year as an opportunity to become channels of God's mercy and grace in our world, and continue to join Pope Francis in his mission for peace and justice by striving for a more just immigration system that re-

spects human rights and ensures that no one is left behind.

Patrick Guiliani is the communications specialist at the Hope Border Institute. The Hope Border Institute brings the perspective of Catholic social teaching to bear on the realities unique to our US-Mexico border region. Through a robust program of research and policy work, leadership development and action, we work to build justice and deepen solidarity across the borderlands. For more ways to get involved and support people on the move, visit www.hopeborder.org.

Special Collections for January 2023

Special Collection for Retirement Fund for Priests

A Special Collection will be held on Saturday, January 7 and Sunday, January 8, 2023 for the Retirement Fund for Priests.

The Clergy Retirement Program provides financial support to those members of the clergy who are over age 65. The Diocese of El Paso faces three challenges with respect to its diocesan clergy. This special collection provides assistance for the retirement of our priests, particularly for the very aged with special needs.

Collection for the Latin America Fund

There will be a Special Offering on Saturday, January 21 and Sunday, January 22, 2023 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 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. To learn more, please visit www.usccb.org/latin-america.

Colecta Especial para el Fondo de Jubilación de los Sacerdotes

El sábado 7 y el domingo 8 de enero de 2023 se celebrará una Colecta Especial para el Fondo de Jubilación de los Sacerdotes.

El Programa de Jubilación del Clero proporciona apoyo financiero a aquellos miembros del clero que son mayores de 65 años. La Diócesis de El Paso enfrenta tres retos con respecto a su clero diocesano. Esta colecta especial proporciona ayuda para la jubilación de nuestros sacerdotes, particularmente para los más ancianos con necesidades especiales.

Colecta para el Fondo de América Latina

Habrará una Ofrenda Especial el sábado 21 de enero y el domingo

22 de enero de 2023 para la Colecta para el Fondo Latinoamericano (CLA)

Con la ayuda de esta colecta, y en cooperación con los obispos de Estados Unidos y América Latina, se otorgan donaciones para apoyar las vastas necesidades de las Iglesias locales en América Latina y el Caribe, especialmente en las áreas de evangelización, programas pastorales y formación de laicos, religiosos y seminaristas, así como pastoral juvenil y catequesis. Para más información, visite www.usccb.org/latin-america



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Foundation Welcomes Meece Family Fund Seminarian Education

By **Sofia Larkin**
Former Major Gifts Officer

The Catholic Foundation welcomes a new Named Fund: The Meece Family Fund in memory of Al and Gracie Adkins†.

Tom and Andrea (Andi) Meece established this fund after attending a cultivation event which explained the great blessing our diocese is experiencing in a record number of young men who have answered God's call to serve in the priesthood. But with that blessing comes a responsibility for our faith community to help support, spiritually and financially, these young men who will one day be our parish pastors; and where would our Church be without our priests and sacraments?

This thought resonated with Tom and Andi, so the commitment was made to support seminarian education. The fund is in memory of Tom's aunt and uncle, Gracie and Al Adkins†, who, as native El Pasoans and

devout cradle Catholics, were an inspiration to all who knew them. They were not just Aunt and Uncle but mentors, friends, godparents to the Meece kids, Matthew and Megan, and pillars of the Meece and Adkins families and our community.

Al and Gracie's legacy of faith and giving will continue to be remembered through this endowed fund. May our seminarians be nurtured and blessed by this token of generosity and love.

"We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give." — Winston Churchill

Please consider a gift in honor of your favorite fund. You can contribute with a credit card at catholicfoundationelpaso.org, or mail your check to the Catholic Foundation, 499 St. Matthews Street, Building G, El Paso, Texas 79907, Memo: Fund Name.



The Catholic Foundation welcomes a new Named Fund: The Meece Family Fund in memory of Al and Gracie Adkins†. Photo Courtesy Catholic Foundation

We Are The Body of Christ

By **Martha Marmolejo**
Pledge Fulfillment Specialist

January 9th, we celebrate the baptism of Christ in the Jordan. This is the second epiphany, or manifestation, of the Lord. The past, the present, and the future are made manifest in this epiphany. The Baptism in the Jordan returns to the great Christmas theme of 'Christification,' Jesus of Nazareth's spiritual anointing, His presentation as the Anointed One par excellence, the Messiah or the One sent by the Father for the salvation of humanity. He is the second man (1 Cor 15:47) or the last Adam (1 Cor 15:45) that comes to repair the first Adam's guilt. He does this as the Lamb of God that takes away our sins. Catholic Culture

But, why did Jesus Christ need to be baptized? That is the exact question that came out of John the Baptist's mouth when Jesus came forward to be baptized in the Jordan River. He knew Jesus was the Messiah, the savior of the world. So, John asked, "I

need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?" Matthew 3:14

John makes an excellent point. If John's baptism was a baptism of repentance, what sin did Jesus commit that required his repentance? There wasn't one! He was perfect! He had never sinned! Between John and Jesus, if one of them needed to be baptized, certainly that someone was John.

Jesus had a hidden purpose as He was baptized. He was a symbol and a sign to John and all of us, future generations of believers. Jesus answered John, "Let it be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness." Matthew 3:15

Jesus knew that He was the Lamb of God. He truly took our place in every way as the ultimate atonement for sin and death. His sacrifice changed history forever, for He came to give and teach us the ultimate word of love.

So, let us rejoice in the glory of His name and His tremendous and faithful delivery of pure



unselfish love! Let us give Him thanks for all that He has done for us.

And as we give thanks, we also want to thank the bishop's capital campaign; We are The Body of Christ, and all its faithful believers in the atonement of Jesus Christ, our savior. Because we are on our way to preparing for our church's immediate and future needs, as Jesus Christ Himself did back then.

Our community continues its support of the church as we continue sending more priests and deacons out to prepare to be our immediate future shepherds. Our church continues its religious formation and education as it strives to strengthen our parish communities in faith, foundation, and existence.

Thanks to 7,360 faithful, generous parishioners out of 40,390, the Campaign continues flourish-

ing by fulfilling its commitment. We have now raised the amount of \$14,839,051.62 in pledges of \$4,400,308.00 in payments.

Please, do not hesitate to reach out to Martha Marmolejo, Pledge Fulfillment Specialist, for the We Are the Body of Christ, Capital Campaign at 915-872-8412 ext. 137 or email at mmarmolejo@elpasodiocese.org

Somos El Cuerpo de Cristo

Martha Marmolejo
Especialista en Cumplimiento

El 9 de enero, celebramos el bautismo de Cristo en el Jordán. Esta es la segunda epifanía o manifestación del Señor en donde el pasado, el presente y el futuro se manifiestan en esta epifanía. El Bautismo en el Jordán vuelve al gran tema navideño de la 'Cristificación', la unción espiritual de Jesús de Nazaret, su presentación como el Ungido por excelencia, el Mesías o el Enviado del Padre para la salvación de la humanidad. Es el segundo hombre (1 Cor 15,47) o el último Adán (1 Cor 15,45) que viene a reparar la culpa del primer Adán. Lo hace como el Cordero de Dios que quita nues-

tros pecados. Cultura Católica

Pero, ¿por qué Jesucristo necesitaba ser bautizado? Esa es exactamente la pregunta que salió de la boca de Juan el Bautista cuando Jesús se acercó para ser bautizado en el río Jordán. Sabía que Jesús era el Mesías, el salvador del mundo, entonces, Juan le preguntó: "Necesito ser bautizado por ti, ¿y tú vienes a mí?" Mateo 3:14

Juan hace una excelente pregunta; Si el bautismo de Juan fue un bautismo de arrepentimiento, ¿qué pecado cometió Jesús que requirió su arrepentimiento? ¡No había uno! ¡Él era perfecto! ¡Él nunca había pecado! Entre Juan y Jesús, si uno de ellos necesitaba ser bautizado, ciertamente ese alguien

era Juan.

Jesús tenía un propósito oculto cuando fue bautizado. Él fue un símbolo y una señal para Juan y para todos nosotros, futuras generaciones de creyentes. Jesús le respondió a Juan: "Déjalo ahora, porque así conviene que cumplamos toda justicia". Mateo 3:15

Jesús sabía que Él era el Corde-ro de Dios. Él realmente tomó nuestro lugar en todos los sentidos como la expiación final por el pecado y la muerte. Su sacrificio cambió la historia para siempre, pues vino a darnos y, a enseñarnos la definitiva palabra de amor.

¡Así que regocijémonos en la gloria de Su nombre y Su tremenda y fiel entrega de puro amor desinteresado! Démosle

gracias por todo lo que ha hecho por nosotros.

Y hoy, al dar gracias, también queremos agradecer a la campaña capital del Señor Obispo; Somos El Cuerpo de Cristo, y a todos sus fieles creyentes en la expiación de Jesucristo, nuestro salvador. Porque estamos en camino de prepararnos para las necesidades inmediatas y futuras de nuestra iglesia, como lo hizo Jesucristo mismo en aquel entonces.

Nuestra comunidad continúa apoyando a la iglesia mientras continuamos enviando más sacerdotes y diáconos a su preparación para ser nuestros futuros pastores inmediatos. Nuestra iglesia continúa su formación y educación religiosa mientras se esfuerza por

fortalecer nuestras comunidades parroquiales en fe, fundamento y existencia.

Gracias a 7,360 fieles y generosos feligreses de 40.390 en nuestra comunidad, la Campaña sigue floreciendo y cumpliendo su compromiso. La fecha de hoy, recaudado la cantidad de \$14,839,051.62 en promesas de compromiso y \$4,400,308.00 en pagos.

Por favor, no dude en comunicarse con Martha Marmolejo, Especialista en Cumplimiento de Promesas, para la Campaña Capital Somos el Cuerpo de Cristo al 915-872-8412 ext. 137 o correo electrónico a mmarmolejo@elpasodiocese.org.

Matthew's Gospel Tells Jesus' Life Story, Making Disciples Of Us



Fr. Michael Lewis, STL

When the Church's liturgical calendar began anew on the First Sunday of Advent, the three-year cycle of readings proclaimed at Mass on Sundays also began anew. This year, Year A, focuses on the Gospel according to Matthew.

Once thought to be the first gospel written, Matthew was the gospel most often quoted by early Christian writers, who made copious use of the numerous teachings and sayings of Jesus that Matthew amply features — more than any other gospel. However, Matthew's abundant use of Mark's gospel suggests that Mark's was actually the first gospel to be written. In fact, Matthew incorporates about 80 percent of Mark's gospel, but also adds much material from the collection of Jesus' sayings labelled "Q" (short for *quelle*, German for "source"), along with additional details and color that are uniquely Matthew's.

Yet Matthew's gospel is more than just a compendium of Jesus' teachings and sayings. Rather,

it is a thoughtfully composed narrative work, clearly written to tell the life story of Jesus Christ, the promised messiah who was foretold by the prophets. Though attributed to one of the Twelve Apostles — the tax collector named Matthew in this gospel (Mt 9:9–13, 10:3) but Levi in others (Mk 2:13–14; Lk 5:27–28) — it is unlikely that apostle was the gospel's author, since an eye-witness would have had no need to include so much material from Mark, who was not. Rather, it was probably written by a Jewish Christian, who was erudite in Greek, sometime between 80 and 90 A.D., a half-century after Jesus' resurrection and ascension. Naming the author "Matthew" leaves open the possibility that the source of the gospel's unique material is indeed the apostle. But the name could also simply be a nod to the similar Greek word *matheteuo*, which means "to make a disciple of."

The author's Jewishness is apparent throughout this gospel as he presents Jesus as the fulfillment of the promises made in the Hebrew Scriptures. For example, Jesus' ancestry is traced from Abraham through King David (Mt 1:1) and Jesus restricts the disciples' mission to just "the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Mt 10:5–6). Despite this continuity with Judaism, the author nonetheless signals that Jesus'



disciples have separated from it, for there are frequent references to "the Jews" and "their synagogues." Christians are treated, therefore, as a group wholly different from the practitioners of Judaism in Matthew's time (see Mt 28:15, 4:23, and 9:35, for example).

Structurally, Matthew organizes the many sayings and

teachings of Jesus into five main discourses, or sermons, that are each preceded by narrative descriptions of Jesus' healings, miracles, and other activity. These discourses are the Sermon on the Mount (5:1–7:29), which centers on righteousness, which is doing the will of the Father; the Missionary Discourse (10:1–42), where Jesus sends the

disciples out on mission with his power and authority; the Parables Discourse (13:1–52), which serves as a commentary on Jesus' rejection by the Pharisees and scribes detailed throughout the gospel; the Discourse on Life in the Church (18:1–35), which teaches how members should act in Jesus' Church (a word that only Matthew's gospel uses); and the Eschatological Discourse or Discourse on the Future (24:1–25:46), delivered in Jerusalem just before the gospel's climax, Jesus' passion, death, and resurrection (26:1–28:30). From these rich tapestries of Jesus' ministry and teachings, we get the most complete presentations of the Beatitudes (5:3–12), the Lord's Prayer (6:9–13), and the institution of the Eucharist (26:26–28).

As we listen to the Gospel according to Matthew over the next year, listen for its telltale characteristics: how this gospel helps us discover Jesus as the one who fulfills the Scriptures; how this gospel helps us to know Jesus as the Master, yet also meek and humble of heart; how this gospel helps us put Jesus' teachings into practice as members of his Church. As we hear it proclaimed and as we reflect on it in our hearts, we allow the words of the gospel to truly make disciples of us.

El Evangelio De Mateo Narra La Vida De Jesús, Haciéndonos Discípulos

Cuando el calendario litúrgico de la Iglesia comenzó de nuevo el primer domingo de Adviento, también comenzó de nuevo el ciclo trienal de lecturas proclamadas en las Misas dominicales. Este año, el Año A, se centra en el evangelio según San Mateo.

Mateo fue el evangelio más citado por los primeros escritores cristianos, que utilizaron profusamente las numerosas enseñanzas y dichos de Jesús que Mateo recoge ampliamente, más que ningún otro evangelio. Sin embargo, el abundante uso que hace Mateo del evangelio de Marcos sugiere que, en realidad, el de Marcos fue el primer evangelio que se escribió. De hecho, Mateo incorpora alrededor del 80% del evangelio de Marcos, pero también añade mucho material de la colección de dichos de Jesús etiquetada como "Q" (abreviatura de *quelle*, "fuente" en alemán), junto con detalles y color adicionales que son exclusivamente de Mateo.

Sin embargo, el Evangelio de Mateo es algo más que un compendio de las enseñanzas y dichos de Jesús. Más bien, es una obra narrativa cuidadosamente compuesta, claramente escrita para contar la vida de Jesucristo, el mesías prometido que fue predicho por los profetas. Aunque se atribuye a uno de los Doce Apóstoles — el recaudador de impuestos llamado Mateo en este evangelio (Mt 9,9-13; 10,3), pero Leví en otros (Mc 2,13-14; Lc 5,27-28)— es poco probable que ese apóstol fuera el autor del evangelio, ya que un testigo presencial no habría tenido necesidad de incluir tanto material de Marcos, que no lo era. Más bien, es probable que lo escribiera un cristiano judío, erudito en griego, en algún momento entre los años 80 y 90 d.C., medio siglo después de la resurrección y ascensión de Jesús. Nombrar al autor "Mateo" deja abierta la posibilidad de que la fuente del material único

del evangelio sea realmente el apóstol. Pero el nombre también podría ser simplemente un guiño a la palabra griega similar *matheteuo*, que significa "convertir en discípulo".

El judaísmo del autor es evidente a lo largo de este evangelio, pues presenta a Jesús como el cumplimiento de las promesas hechas en las Escrituras hebreas. Por ejemplo, la ascendencia de Jesús se remonta a Abraham a través del rey David (Mt 1,1) y Jesús limita la misión de los discípulos únicamente a "las ovejas perdidas de la casa de Israel" (10,5-6). A pesar de esta continuidad con el judaísmo, el autor señala que los discípulos de Jesús se han separado de él, pues hay frecuentes referencias a "los judíos" y "sus sinagogas". Los cristianos son tratados, por tanto, como un grupo totalmente distinto de los practicantes del judaísmo en la época de Mateo (véanse Mt 28,15; 4,23 y 9,35 por ejemplo).

Estructuralmente, Mateo organiza los numerosos dichos y enseñanzas de Jesús en cinco discursos principales, o sermones, precedidos cada uno de ellos por descripciones narrativas de las curaciones, milagros y otras actividades de Jesús. Estos discursos son el Sermón de la montaña (5,1-7,29), que se centra en la rectitud, que consiste en hacer la voluntad del Padre; el Discurso misionero (10,1-42), en el que Jesús envía a los discípulos en misión con su poder y autoridad; el Discurso en parábolas sobre el reino de Dios (13,1-52), que sirve como comentario sobre el rechazo de Jesús por parte de los fariseos y escribas que se detalla a lo largo del evangelio; el Discurso eclesial (18,1-35), que enseña cómo deben actuar los miembros de la Iglesia de Jesús (palabra que sólo utiliza el evangelio de Mateo); y el Discurso escatológico o acerca del final (24,1-25,46), pronunciado en Jerusalén justo

antes del clímax del evangelio, la pasión, muerte y resurrección de Jesús (26,1-28,30). De estos ricos tapices del ministerio y las enseñanzas de Jesús, obtenemos las presentaciones más completas de las Bienaventuranzas (5,3-12), el Padre Nuestro (6,9-13) y la institución de la Eucaristía (26,26-28).

Cuando escuchemos el Evangelio según San Mateo durante el próximo año, presta atención a sus características reveladoras: cómo este evangelio nos ayuda a descubrir a Jesús como el que cumple las Escrituras; cómo este evangelio nos ayuda a conocer a Jesús como el Maestro, aunque también manso y humilde de corazón; cómo este evangelio nos ayuda a poner en práctica las enseñanzas de Jesús como miembros de su Iglesia. Al oírlo proclamar y al reflexionar sobre él en nuestros corazones, permitimos que las palabras del Evangelio nos conviertan realmente en discípulos.



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



SIDEWALK JESUS

Star Lights Our Way



Janet M. Crowe

I look up into the night sky, gazing in wonder at the vastness of the sky and the multitude of stars. How is it that the magi saw one particular star, even if it was a new star much brighter than normal, and knew that it heralded a miracle? How does someone follow a star? How does a star “go before them” to lead the way? Why would they follow a star?

Faith. Trust. Courage. Hope. Promise.

Do I have those things? I know that I am lacking. How do I become stronger?

Look at Mary. She had those qualities even as a young woman. Betrothed to a kind and gentle man whom she cared for deeply, her life was a promise of happiness and comfort. Yet, she barely hesitated to accept the angel’s call which would throw her entire world upside down, changing and possibly destroying everything she had hoped for.

Look at Joseph. He loved Mary, but in an instant everything he had planned for their future had turned sour. Mary was pregnant and not with his child. Even in his pain, he planned to quietly divorce her so that no harm would come to her. How

could he understand? And then, how could he trust a dream? Yet, he did.

There were no instruction manuals on how to follow a star, how to become a mother to God’s own Son, how to be a loving husband and suitable father to the Son of God. None of them could rely on daily texts or telephone calls to God to ask what they should do next.

The magi must have encountered ridicule and criticism for leaving their homes on a whim. How could they explain their reason for following the star which others considered to be nonsensical? How did they keep their faith when clouds covered the sky or a sandstorm caused them to feel lost? Yet, they continued on a journey when sometimes it felt like only they could see the truth.

Is it much different for us today? Obviously, we are not in the same league as Mary, Joseph, or even the magi. However, aren’t we called to follow God’s plan? We can’t see the star. No angel has visited us or spoken to us in a dream. Yet, we can listen to our hearts to know the right thing to do, what God would want us to do.

Every birth of every child is a star to light our way to Him. How we treat each child, both before and after birth, determines whether we are testifying to the light. Are we passing on that light to others or snuffing out the light the way those in power tried to snuff out the light in Bethlehem?

Three wise men came to honor a special newborn baby. They



brought gifts not only to signify the child’s importance to the world but also to help the family. Every baby brings his or her unique gifts to the world. Every child’s parents need help at one time or another. Many mothers need our help before they even understand that they have already become mothers. Do we look up to Heaven and ask God to guide our actions toward these mothers and preborn children in need? Or do we turn away from the light of God’s love and reject God’s gift of the sanctity of every human life?

God doesn’t make mistakes.

God creates masterpieces. The conception of each and every child comes with a complete set of scientific blueprints for the child’s development for the first nine months of the child’s life and for every month afterward for the child’s entire life. God also creates a promise and a plan within each child and the way that child will bless this world.

It is up to each of us as Christians, or Christ followers, to help the child’s mother to see the importance of her child and to help her see the sparkling star that lights her way and her child’s way through life. Shall we be a

guiding star or will we become the darkness of a cloudy night?

In January we celebrate the Epiphany. We also celebrate Sanctity of Human Life Sunday. Let us show the world that wise men and women still follow that star toward God’s Son in whose image and likeness every child is conceived. Let us be that wise in honoring and celebrating the blessing of each child. Let us light up someone’s life with kindness and love. Let us be guiding stars!

MAKING SENSE OF BIOETHICS

Did I Make the Right Choices as Dad was Dying?



Fr. Tad Pacholczyk

Sometimes people will contact the National Catholic Bioethics Center (NCBC) wondering if the decisions they made on behalf of a dying family member were the right ones. The NCBC provides a free Ethics Consultation Service where individuals can ask questions and seek guidance about ethics and medical decisions.

Some who call are interested in reviewing the details of how a loved one died, along with the advice they were given by doctors, nurses, hospice workers, family members and friends. While their loved one may have died months or even years earlier, they may still be unsure or unsettled about the treatment decisions they made.

End of life situations are not easy to sort out. Important practical details and medical facts

may no longer be available or may have been forgotten with the passage of time. Sometimes family members may have disagreed with each other or were feuding about how best to proceed, or may not have wanted to seek out expert advice or guidance, so the decisions they made might have been hasty or under duress.

A friend once spoke to me about a young man who had shared with her some details about his father’s death. He told her that as he looked back on it, he had doubts that he had made the right decisions as his dad became more debilitated. He felt he had failed his dad because of the limited kinds of care he ended up authorizing on his behalf. My friend sought to reassure him that he really shouldn’t be troubled about it, because she couldn’t imagine that he would have done anything but his best under the circumstances, and so his dad likely had received very good care.

When she recounted the story to me, I asked, “But how would you actually know that his dad received good care and that the son really did make the right choices? Objectively speaking,

the son may be right that some of the decisions were poorly made or selfish or otherwise flawed.” I asked her whether her first instinct may have been to try to soothe his feelings and emotions, rather than considering the specific medical and ethical concerns he was raising.

I continued and offered: Maybe he really does need to discuss the facts of the case as best he remembers them. Perhaps he might benefit from bringing some of his concerns to the Sacrament of Confession. Assuming his concerns have some basis, even while acknowledging the uncertainties in his own decision making, such a step would help him find needed healing. By turning to the infinite mercy of God, and “clearing the decks” with the Lord in this manner, he would be strengthened to move forward in a new way without continually having to look over his shoulder and wonder endlessly about whether he did right by his dad. Finding a sense of peace and resolution in this way is important, and his father, now long deceased, would, we could presume, want to see that kind of healing for his son as well.

My friend was intrigued by my comments and acknowledged that her first inclination had been to try to palliate and calm the situation by mostly talking around the issues and concerns he had raised. On further reflection, she could see the value of dealing more directly with those concerns so he could find a real measure of closure.

Dying well, of course, is a profound grace, not only for the person who passes on, but for all who are left behind. To die well does not imply that we have to use every medical treatment that may be available. We are required only to use those medical treatments or procedures that are deemed reasonable or “ordinary.” In other words, we should avail ourselves of those treatments that offer us more benefits than burdens.

It can be challenging to find useful and reliable sources of information to assist us as we try to make informed decisions about complex health care situations that may arise as death approaches.

I typically recommend these resources from the NCBC: (1) some of my writings on End of

Life Decision-Making available at Tiny.one/EOL-decisions, (2) a newly-released video, entitled *The Gift of Dying Well*, available at Vimeo.com/bioethicsvideos, and (3) the NCBC’s Catholic Guide to End-of-Life Decisions available at Tiny.one/NCBC-Guide.

Our efforts to lovingly support our family members through the dying process and to make careful and morally correct decisions on their behalf as they decline in health are very important. Those committed efforts are signs of our desire to be faithful to the beautiful bonds of love connecting us to our dear ones and to the Lord of life. Therefore, we should never be afraid to seek counsel and to avail ourselves of the Church’s wisdom in these areas.

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.

Creer Y Ver



Padre Wilson Cuevas

Un niño que estaba dibujando un retrato; su profesor se acercó y le dijo: Es un retrato interesante. Dime que es lo que estas dibujando? el niño respondió es “un retrato de Dios”. Entonces el profesor dijo: “Pero nadie sabe cómo es Dios”. El niño le dijo: “Lo sabrá cuando lo haya terminado”. Esta historia me recuerda, a una catequista, que esta explicándole a sus estudiantes, las cualidades y virtudes de Jesucristo; cuando ella termino la explicación uno de los niños le dijo. “Yo conozco a ese hombre, el vive por mi casa y es exacto como usted, lo describió. Es muy bueno, amable, quiere mucho a los

niños, juega con ellos y siempre lleva dulces en su bolsillo.

Se ve que ese niño había conocido a un verdadero cristiano, que seguramente era su vecino, que le resultaba tan parecido a Jesucristo. Al punto que con toda seguridad, afirmaba, “YO LO HE VISTO, vive cerca de mi casa”. Esto mismo debería decirse de todos nosotros los cristianos, que nos parecemos mucho con Cristo, exactitos, porque tenemos sus cualidades y sus virtudes, porque nos gusta ayudar y servir a los demás, porque tratamos bien a todos, porque somos motivo de alegría y felicidad para quienes se relacionan con nosotros.

En la Navidad, parece que la felicidad estuviera más cerca de nosotros. Si algún extraterrestre, nos observara desde el firmamento, nos miraría reír, abrazarnos, comer, celebrar y llenar nuestras casas de luces y regalos; de

música y buenos deseos y ver que por lo menos en esta época del año, dejamos de pelear, de discutir, de estar tristes y por el contrario estamos contentos y llenos de dicha... Porque nuestra historia es una lucha continua y repetida por ser felices o al menos de aparentar serlo. De ahí que cada mañana aguardemos la llegada del Mesías, que nos traiga la alegría y la paz, que tanto deseamos.

Para unos la felicidad en casarse; para otros en separarse. El realizar un viaje a Hawái; el ser nombrado como juez o embajador; cambiar de carro; terminar la casa campestre; recibir por fin la jubilación; recuperar la salud o la libertad; drogarse o emborracharse; el regreso de un familiar que se había ausentado de la familia; terminar los estudios profesionales o especializarse... Ser feliz es una frase multiforme, que cobija desde el sonajero que un niño mongólico agita en su cuna, hasta el cohete que se acerca a los anillos de Saturno. Pero nuestra FE, de cristianos, tiene una palabra sobre la felicidad; la tiene y muy concreta: DIOS ESTA AQUÍ, no viene a aniquilar nuestra existencia, sino a perfeccionarla. Viene a enseñarnos como ser felices, en el matrimonio, como luchar para superar los conflictos familiares; nos anima a cumplir fielmente nuestra vocación y compromisos familiares y sociales; nos señala el valor relativo de un automóvil o tener una casa o un negocio; nos añade a la jubilación el gozo del deber cumplido. Nos aclara que la televisión, el internet, las redes sociales, los cargos, el dinero, el vestido y todo lo demás, valen la pena, si no apagan otros bienes más esenciales...

Se ha dicho que “la mucha ciencia acerca a Dios y la poca ciencia aleja de Él”. La poca ciencia junto con la soberbia de creer que se sabe todo, aleja de



Dios. La verdadera ciencia es el conocimiento del universo. Y el universo es obra, creación de Dios. La FE es el asentimiento a la Palabra de Dios. No puede haber contradicción entre lo que Dios dice y lo que hace. El conocimiento de lo que Dios ha hecho - ciencia - no puede contradecir lo que Dios a dicho - fe -. El desconocimiento o el error en cuanto al universo o a nuestra propia vida, - falsa ciencia - si que puede y debe ser contrario a lo que Dios dijo. Y a la inversa: el desconocimiento o el error en cuanto a lo que Dios dijo - falsa fe - también debe ser contrario a lo que Dios hizo - verdadera ciencia -. En consecuencia si vemos oposición entre ciencia y fe o es falsa nuestra ciencia o es errónea nuestra fe.

Alguien pregunto a Enrique

Fabre, entomólogo francés de fama mundial, el hombre que más sabía de insectos, “el observador incomparable” en expresión de Darwin... Alguien le pregunto cuando cumplía sus ochenta y siete años en 1910, fue objeto de un justo homenaje, si creía en Dios. No, respondió en su ingenio juguetón. No “creo” en Dios. Lo “veo” en todas partes. La creación del universo es el primer libro que escribió Dios, allí hasta el más ciego e incrédulo lo puede ver, oír y creer en El. Pero como dice el dicho: “No hay peor ciego que el que no quiere ver”. O Como aquella madre de tres hijos que decía, “yo veía crecer mi pancita, sabía que estaba embarazada, que está creciendo dentro de mí un nuevo ser, pero como estaba formándose, era cosa que solo lo sabía

y hacia Dios dentro de mí. El fue formando su cerebro, los ojos, oídos, el corazón y todo lo demás en el cuerpo de mis preciosos hijos. Solo tengo amor, gratitud y fe en mi Dios”. Admirable reflexión de esta madre, que me hace pensar y creer más en las maravilla que Dios hace por cada uno de nosotros. Basta que te mires a ti mismo para que veas y crear en Dios. Tú eres una de sus preciosas obras magistrales. Que maravilloso celebrar la Navidad que es DIOS CON NOSOTROS, EMMANUEL, y nosotros con El. Esta es la clave que nos abre la puerta al nuevo año 2023 con una actitud de amor, fe y gratitud con nuestro Dios. Animo!

Believe and See

It is clear that this child had met a faithful Christian, who was undoubtedly his neighbor and seemed so similar to Jesus Christ in his eyes. To the point that with all certainty, he affirmed,

“I HAVE SEEN HIM; he lives near my house.” The same should be said of all Christians, that we are very similar to Christ, precisely like Him, because we have his qualities and virtues because we like to help and serve others. After all, we treat everyone kindly because we are a source of joy and happiness for those whom we encounter.

At Christmas, happiness should be closer to us. If any extraterrestrial observed us from the sky, he would watch us laugh, hug each other, eat, celebrate, and fill our houses with lights and gifts; and music and good wishes, and see that at least at this time of the year, we stop fighting, arguing, being sad and instead we are happy and full of joy. Because our history is a con-

tinuous and repeated one, to be satisfied or pretend to be. Hence every morning, we wait for the arrival of the Messiah so that he may bring us joy and peace, which we desire so much.

For some, happiness in getting married; for others to separate; to take a trip to Hawaii; to be appointed a judge or ambassador; change cars; finish a second home in the country; to finally reach retirement; regain health or freedom; to get high or drunk; to welcome back a relative who had been absent from the family; to finish professional or specialized studies. Being happy is a multi-form phrase that covers the rattle that a transfixed child shakes in his cradle to the rocket approaching Saturn’s rings.

But our FAITH, as Christians, has a word about happiness; it is there, and it is very concrete: GOD IS HERE; he does not come to eradicate our existence, but to perfect it. He comes to teach us how to be happy in mar-

riage, how to fight to overcome family problems; he encourages us to fulfill our vocation and family and social commitments faithfully; he tells us the relative value of a car or having a house or a business; the joy of a duty accomplished after retirement. He clarifies that television, the internet, social networks, position, money, clothing, and everything else are worth something if they don’t replace other more essential goods.

It has been said that “too much knowledge brings God closer, and little knowledge drives him away.” A little science and the arrogance of believing that one knows everything distances us from God. Actual science is the knowledge of the universe. And the universe is the work and creation of God. Faith is an acknowledgment of the Word of God. There can be no contradiction between what God says and what he does. Knowledge of what God has made, science,

cannot contradict what God has said, faith. Ignorance or error regarding the universe or even our own life, that is, false science, can and should be contrary to what God said. And conversely, ignorance or error as to what God said, false faith, must also be contrary to what God did, actual science. Consequently, if we see an opposition between science and faith, either our science is false, or our faith is wrong.

Someone asked Enrique Fabre, world-famous French entomologist, the man who was an insect expert, “the incomparable observer” in Darwin’s expression... Someone asked when he turned eighty-seven years of age in 1910 and was awarded a fitting tribute if he believed in God. No, he replied with his playful wit, “I do not believe in God. I see God everywhere.” The creation of the universe is the first book God wrote; even the blindest and incredulous can see, hear and believe in it. But as the saying

goes: “There are none so blind as those that will not see.” Or like that mother of three children who said, “I saw my tummy grow, I knew that I was pregnant, that a new being was growing inside me, but how it was being formed only God knew what he was creating inside me. He was forming the brain, the eyes, the ears, the heart, and everything else in my precious children. I only have love, gratitude, and faith in my God”. This admirable reflection from this mother makes me realize the wonders God bestows on each of us. It is enough for each of us to look at ourselves to see and believe in God. Each one of us is a masterful creation. How wonderful to celebrate the Birth of Our Lord Emmanuel, GOD WITH US, and us with him. This key opens the n

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JUAN 6:35

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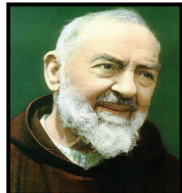
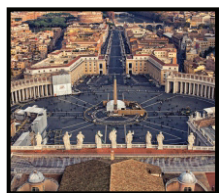
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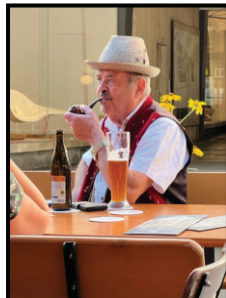
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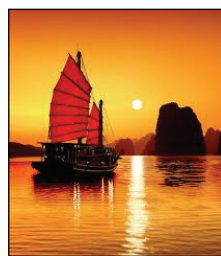
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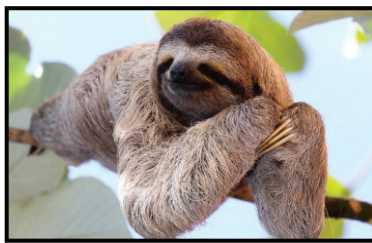
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