Local Parishes Minister to Homeless

By Bette Ann Fleischacker (Our Lady of Guadalupe, Windsor, CA)

As practicing Catholics, we are each on a journey to establish a meaningful, personal relationship with God. As we progress on our journey, there are many opportunities to respond to God’s commandment to love one another and to care for those in need.

The plight of a chronically-homeless person who is living on the street, under a bridge, or in a homeless encampment, is not something that is of paramount concern to the average person whose only exposure to homeless persons is via the media. If asked what should be done to address the problems associated with chronic homelessness, they may reply that they have no idea, and, as far as they can tell, most other people don’t either. If you suggest that it’s winter so we should at least provide the homeless with some type of temporary shelter, they might reply “I guess someone should do it, but it is not something I want to get” (see Minister to Homeless, page 4).

Did their efforts solve the problem of homelessness?—No. Did it accomplish anything worthwhile?—Absolutely.

Eureka’s St. Bernard Church Undergoes Major Historic Restoration

By Marc Matteoli
(Parishioner St. Bernard’s Parish, Eureka, CA)

One hundred and thirty years after construction, the iconic church of St. Bernard is just finishing a major historical restoration. In time for Easter, the theme of resurrection and rebirth will have a special meaning to the Eureka parish.

According to a brochure prepared by our former Pastor Father Eric Freed, the church was built in 1886 and is the oldest building in Eureka built by, and maintained for, its original purpose by the owners.

Over a century has passed since then and the church interior has gone through multiple paintings and re-paintings, including the original old growth redwood beams that are an important part of its architecture, and symbolic of its’ location in the heart of the redwoods. Along with this, the “newer” shag carpets had warn and needed replacing. In short, the original beauty and historic finishes and colors were gone. This, of course had not gone unnoticed and over 30

Al Kresta On the Past, Present, And Future of Catholic Radio

“We are basically champions of Catholic teaching,” says the radio host and head of Ave Maria Radio. “We’re an echo chamber for the Magisterium. You’re not going to see Catholic radio challenging the Magisterium, but we will make distinctions about prudential judgments.”

March 19, 2018 Jeanette Flood (Catholic World Report)

Al Kresta began his career as a radio talk show host in the 1980s, when he was still a Protestant pastor. He came back into the Catholic Church in 1992 and is now president and CEO of Ave Maria Radio, a Catholic nonprofit media apostolate that produces 16 radio programs and provides a wealth of online information and (see Catholic Radio, page 16)
The Cause of Our Hope

During our Liturgical Pilgrimage we are invited to deepen our personal relationship with Jesus, to see His tender mercy toward the fallen, to recognize His love in the mystery of the cross. We are invited again to repent and to have a deepened faith in the Gospel. Walking with Jesus throughout the Season of Lent is a wonderful way to make Christ more real in our lives. During Lent we do not watch as Jesus walks by but rather walk with Him! We walk with the Apostles as they make their way to that Last Supper table. We process with them to the Garden of Gethsemane and there promptly fall asleep while struggling to stay awake and watch. Over the years we watch, sometimes wholeheartedly and fully awake and many times half or perhaps fully asleep. Like the Apostles we can be scattered when we get involved in things at an all too human level and focus more on sports or entertainment or immediate gratification or on some worldly fear and fail to keep our eyes on Jesus. Like the Apostles we can be frightened at the prospect that the words and deeds of Jesus are fraudulent and that faith in Him is foolishness. As we walk this pilgrimage, especially during Lent, we experience the wondrous mystery of the tomb. With them we stoop down to look in and see the empty slab, and the tomb. With them we experience the wondrous mystery and are led to a deeper belief that the One who loves us is risen. This is our Easter pilgrimage but it is also our daily pilgrimage as we struggle against daily doubts and fears and repeatedly need the reassurance that Jesus is indeed risen. That He appeared to Simon! The faith of the Apostles grows but their faith is still to ‘understand’ and come up short. Then the news of the Resurrection arrives and we see the Apostles energized and recharged. We see Peter and John run to the tomb to prove to themselves that what had been reported to them is true. We run with them in our annual ‘Liturgical Pilgrimage’. Just as we came with the shepherds to that stable in Bethlehem to see what the angels had announced so we now come to see the empty tomb. The Apostles confirm for us that what they heard, they also saw and in seeing began to wonder if what they hoped for could be true – that Jesus is really risen from the dead! By entry into the Liturgical Pilgrimage, we run with them to the tomb. With them we stoop down to look in and see the empty slab, and the burial clothes. With them we experience the wondrous mystery and are led to a deeper belief that the One who loves us is risen. This is our Easter pilgrimage but it is also our daily pilgrimage as we struggle against daily doubts and fears and repeatedly need the reassurance that Jesus is indeed risen. That He appeared to Simon! The faith of the Apostles grows but their faith is still shrouded in mystery. They knew that Jesus had died on the cross. They knew that He had been buried. They knew where He was buried. Yet, here in the place of the tomb they find, not Jesus and not the body of Jesus, but emptiness. Their hearts are moved to wonder. Wonder is the proper response when one encounters the mysteries of God. We need the Liturgical Pilgrimage to renew our sense of wonder at the marvelous deeds of God. Without this wonder, the empty tomb and the Resurrection of Jesus become suitable subjects for theological speculation but carry no deeper meaning for us. Faith draws us to this sacred time and to these sacred, mysterious events. Faith is content to stand in wonder and awe before the God who acts so powerfully and wondrously in human history. We can speculate, with great profit, at how we would have approached the tomb. What explanations would we seek? What rationalization would we engage in? The Gospels describes the first witnesses as being half-fearful and half-overjoyed. On our pilgrimage we need to stand with them half-fearful and half-overjoyed. In this state we allow for a growth in wonder and in faith. Eventually, the Apostles and disciples lose the half-fearful part and move to being fully overjoyed.

That movement to absolute joyfulness is achieved when Jesus appears in their midst and proclaims, Peace be with you! Their skepticism, their wondering if this is a ghost before them, aids us in our pilgrimage. They have seen and heard Him but then they touch Him, see Him eat fish and then they know, in faith and wonder, that He who loved them enough to die for them upon a cross, is risen. Then we, as we walk in pilgrimage with them, also know that He who loves us enough to go to the cross for us is alive for us as we. We need this portion of our annual pilgrimage for it becomes the justification for and the cause of our hope, our joy, our faith and our whole way of life.

PRIESTLY ORDINATION ANNIVERSARY

Rev. Mgr. James Pulskamp
April 29, 1967
Rev. Robert Blake
April 23, 1977
Rev. Stephen MacPherson
April 5, 1986
Rev. Andrew Metcalf
April 5, 1986
Rev. Manuel Chavez
April 13, 1996
Rev. Aaron Bandanadnam, MF
April 5, 2004

Prayer for Priests
Gracious and loving God, we thank you for the gift of our priests. Through them, we experience your presence in the sacraments. Help our priests to be strong in their vocation. Set their souls on fire with love for your people. Grant them the wisdom, understanding, and strength they need to follow in the footsteps of Jesus. Inspire them with the vision of your Kingdom. Give them the words they need to spread the Gospel. Allow them to experience joy in their ministry. Help them to become instruments of your divine grace. We ask this through Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns as our Eternal Priest. Amen.
Cardinal Dolan says Democrats abandoned Catholics

Washington D.C., March 23 (CNA/EWTN News) - In an op-ed published Friday in the Wall Street Journal, Cardinal Timothy Dolan of the Archdiocese of New York lamented that the Democratic Party’s shifting principles have effectively shut out and alienated orthodox Catholics.

Dolan cited the Democrat’s current opposition to school choice programs and tax credits for education, along with their unwavering support for abortion rights, among the reasons why he is disappointed with the party in its current state. Dolan said believes that the Democrats of today have abandoned many of the tenets that made the party attractive to Catholics generations ago.

In the past, Dolan explained, when waves of Irish immigrants arrived in the United States, their respect for the sanctity of life and their concern for the poor led them to embrace the Democrats, who welcomed them to the party. Dolan even recounted his own grandmother warning him that, “We Catholics don’t trust those Republicans.”

“Such is no longer the case,” Dolan wrote, which is a “cause of sadness to many Catholics,” himself included.

He pointed to the party’s recent refusal to support incumbent Rep. Dan Lipinski (D-IL), who is one of the few remaining pro-life Democrats in Congress, in a tight primary race.

Lipinski, himself Catholic, narrowly won the Democratic primary this past Tuesday against a challenger who made abortion rights central to her campaign. Last April, DNC Chairman Tom Perez said in a statement that “Every Democrat, like every American, should support a woman’s right to make her own choices about her body and her health,” and that this was “not negotiable.”

Perez was criticized for this stance by party leaders, including Rep. Nancy Pelosi (D-CA). Recent polling showed just under a quarter of Democrats believe that abortion should be illegal in all or most circumstances.

Dolan was particularly critical of a proposed New York law titled the “Reproductive Health Act,” which he says would “morbidly expand” the “most radical abortion license in the country.” The New York State Assembly is overwhelmingly Democrat.

“For instance, under the proposed Reproductive Health Act, doctors would not be required to care for a baby who survives an abortion. The newborn simply would be allowed to die without any legal implications,” wrote Dolan.

What’s more, Dolan explained, is that he feels the Democrats are making it harder for low and middle-class children to get an education at a Catholic school.

“In recent years, some Democrats in the New York state Assembly repeatedly blocked education tax credit legislation, which would have helped middle-class and low-income families make the choice to select Catholic or other nonpublic schools for their children,” said Dolan. The cardinal said this type of legislation impedes the mission of these schools to serve poor, often immigrant, children.

Dolan admitted that while he has “had spats and disappointments” with politicians from both major political parties in the United States, he is particularly upset by the Democratic Party’s swing in a direction that excludes people like his grandmother.

“But it saddens me, and weakens the democracy millions of Americans cherish, when the party that once embraced Catholics now slams the door on us.”

Below is the full text of Cardinal Dolan’s Op Ed. The Democrats Abandon Catholics

By Cardinal Timothy Dolan March 22, 2018

A couple of events over the past few weeks brought to mind two towering people who had a tremendous effect on the Archdiocese of New York and the U.S. more broadly. Their witness is worth remembering, especially in this political moment.

Last Saturday’s feast of St. Patrick, the patron saint of our cathedral and archdiocese, reminded me of Archbishop John Hughes. As the first archbishop of New York (1842-64), “Dagger John” displayed dramatic reverence for the dignity of Irish immigrants. Thousands arrived daily in New York—penniless, starving and sometimes ill—only to be met with hostility, bigotry and injustice.

An immigrant himself, Hughes prophetically and vigorously defended their dignity. Because the schools he initiated Catholic schools to provide children with a good education sensitive to their religion and to prepare them as responsible, patriotic citizens. The schools worked. Many remain open to this day, their mission unchanged.

The second event was the recent funeral of a great African-American woman, Dolores Grier. A convert to Catholicism, she was named vice chancellor of the archdiocese three decades ago by Cardinal John O’Connor; she was the first layperson and first woman to hold the prestigious position. Grier was passionate about civil rights, especially in this political moment.

She never missed an opportunity to defend, lovingly but forcefully, their right to life.

Grier attributed her pro-life sensitivity to the Rev. Jesse Jackson, who preached that abortion was an act of genocide against minorities. No wonder, she often observed, abortuaries were clustered in poor black and brown neighborhoods. The statistics today confirm her observation: In 2013 there were more black babies aborted in New York City (29,007) than were born here (24,758), according to a report from the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene.

The values Archbishop Hughes and Dolores Grier cherished—the dignity and sanctity of human life, the importance of Catholic schools, the defense of a baby’s civil rights—were, and still are, widely embraced by Catholics. This often led Catholics to become loyal Democrats. I remember my own grandmother whispering to me, “We Catholics don’t trust these Republicans.”

Such is no longer the case, a cause of sadness to many Catholics, me included. The two causes so vigorously promoted by Hughes and Grier—the needs of poor and middle-class children in Catholic schools, and the right to life of the baby in the womb—largely have been rejected by the party of our youth.

The two causes so vigorously promoted by Hughes and Grier—the needs of poor and middle-class children in Catholic schools, and the right to life of the baby in the womb—largely have been rejected by the party of our youth. An esteemed pro-life Democrat in Illinois, Rep. Dan Lipinski, effectively was blacklisted by his own party. Last year, Democratic National Committee Chairman Tom Perez insisted that pro-life candidates have no place in the modern Democratic Party.

It is particularly chilly for us here in the state where Hughes and Grier proudly called their earthly home. In recent years, some Democrats in the New York state Assembly repeatedly blocked education tax credit legislation, which would have helped middle-class and low-income families make the choice to select Catholic or other nonpublic schools for their children. Opposing the bill reduces the ability of fine Catholic schools across the state to continue their mission of serving the poor, many of them immigrants.

More sobering, what is already the most radical abortion license in the country may soon be even more morbidly expanded. For instance, under the proposed Reproductive Health Act, doctors would not be required to care for a baby who survives an abortion. The newborn simply would be allowed to die without any legal implications. And abortions would be legal up to the moment of birth.

The “big tent” of the Democratic Party now seems a pup tent. Annafi Waleed, a former staffer to Hillary Clinton, recently wrote in this newspaper about her experience attending the Conservative Political Action Conference. She complimented the conservative attendees, pointing out that most made her feel welcome at their meeting. They listened attentively to her views—a courtesy, she had to admit, that would not be given to them at a meeting of political liberals.

I’m a pastor, not a politician, and I’ve certainly had spats and disappointments with politicians from both of America’s leading parties. But it saddens me, and weakens the democracy millions of Americans cherish, when the party that once embraced Catholics now slams the door on us.

To Archbishop Hughes, Dolores Grier, and Grandma Dolan, I’m sorry to have to write this. But not as sad as you are to know it is true.

Cardinal Dolan is archbishop of New York. Appeared in the March 23, 2018, print edition of the WSJ.
New Documentary Tells the Story of L’Arche, Jean Vanier, And Friendship

Denver, Colo., March 22 (CNA/EWTN News) - The French documentary “Summer in the Forest” depicts the lives of four disabled men and their unlikely friend: a philosopher born into a powerful and distinguished Canadian family, Jean Vanier.

Vanier is the founder of L’Arche, a federation of international communities for people with disabilities. The film tells the stories of four L’Arche community members, Philippe, Michel, Andre, and Patrick, while asking viewers what it means to be human, and what it means to be happy.

"What is it to be a human being? Is it the power? If it’s power then we would kill each other," Vanier said in the film, which opens in New York on March 23, and will have select showing across the country.

"See the wise and powerful lead us to ideologies, where as the weak are in the dirt. They’re not seeking power. They’re seeking friendship. It’s a message for all of us. It’s about all of us.”

Founded in France in 1964, L’Arche was among the first residential communities for people with disabilities, who at the time were often placed in insane asylums or other institutions. Today, the organization has 147 residential communities in 35 countries.

According to L’Arche’s website, Vanier focused at the heart of our societies the mentally disabled. “

The film offers insight into the daily lives of people wounded from childhood experiences during WWII, and David, a young man with Down syndrome.

Set at a L’Arche community in a forest near Paris, the film invites its viewers to take up the challenge to solve the evening meal problem for the Armory and David, a young man with Down syndrome.

One of the first problems to be solved was how to prepare the shelter meal. There was no money in the kitchen would not be available for any shelter-related activities. This would mean that the nightly meal that would be provided to clients would have to be prepared somewhere else and then transported to the Armory shelter.

These restrictions would mean that the type of services that could be provided to the clients would be minimal: a safe, warm dry place to spend the night, showers, a cot or mat to sleep on, a blanket, and a hot nutritious evening meal. There were obviously a lot of problems to be solved, but it was the Armory or nothing.

The Redwood Gospel Mission (RGM) is known to be minimal: a safe, warm dry place to spend the night, showers, a cot or mat to sleep on, a blanket, and a hot nutritious evening meal. There were obviously a lot of problems to be solved, but it was the Armory or nothing.

The food delivery team volunteers from OLG was referred to as “the shower lady”, donated her services every night for as long as the shelter was in operation. The food delivery volunteers from OLG was referred to as “the shower lady”, donated her services every night for as long as the shelter was in operation.

For approximately 75 days, a group of individuals, of their own free will, chose to support a winter shelter for chronically homeless individuals as their response to God’s command to care for those in need. Did their efforts solve the problem of homelessness—“No. Did it accomplish anything worthwhile?”—Absolutely. For a short period of time, a group of homeless individuals, many of whom have severe alcohol- and/or drug-related problems, often combined with mental illness, who normally are treated by many as having no value, were treated with kindness and shown respect by a group of individuals who truly care. As for the “caregivers”—“If asked, they will respond that they feel they made the right choice.”

New Directors of the Office of Family Life

I am very pleased to announce that the vacancy in the Family Life Office, created when Sister Caritas Marie moved to the Development Office, has been filled. Deacon David Gould and Carlin Gould of Sonoma have been asked and have enthusiastically responded to my request that they serve the Diocese as Directors of Family Life for the Diocese. The will have an Office at the Chancery and will spend some time here. However, they will also be spending time “on the road” making contact in Parishes.

I look forward to working more closely with David and Carlin and to having enthusiasm for various aspects of Family Life. I trust they will receive a warm welcome both here in the Chancery and “on the road” in our Parishes.
In South Sudan, ‘The Body of Christ Is Bleeding,’ Bishop Says

By Elise Harris

Vatican City, March 23 (CNA/EWTN News) - On Friday an ecumenical delegation from South Sudan met privately with Pope Francis and again invited him to visit the war-torn nation, which they said is in desperate need of hope as the situation becomes more dire.

“We are here as an ecumenical body...we came as Christians to show that the body of Christ is bleeding,” Bishop Paride Tabani told CNA March 23.

The people, he said, “[need] hope. They need healing, they are crying for peace, which cannot be brought by arms, but by love, by a sense of compassion, a spirit of love and forgiveness which God has shown to us, especially now.”

“We would like that this Easter would also be a resurrection of people from their suffering.”

Tabani, Bishop Emeritus of Torit in South Sudan, was part of a 9-person delegation from the Council of Churches of South Sudan (SSCC) who met the pope in a private March 23 audience at the Vatican.

Members of the delegation included bishops and leaders of different Christian denominations in South Sudan, including Catholics, Anglicans and Presbyterians, among others. They updated Pope Francis on several joint initiatives of the council to provide humanitarian aid and prompt international leaders to intervene in finding a solution to the conflict.

In a March 23 press briefing after the meeting, Rev. James Oyet Latansio, secretary of the SSCC, described the meeting as “familiar,” and said they sat and talked with each other about a variety of issues.

South Sudan has been plagued by civil war for more than four years. The conflict has split the young nation on several fronts, dividing those loyal to its President Salva Kiir and those loyal to former vice president Reik Macher. The conflict has also bred various divisions of militia and opposition groups.

Discussion at the Vatican meeting focused largely on the humanitarian crisis and the situation of the more than 2 million South Sudanese refugees who have fled to surrounding countries, as well as the need to fill the post of deceased bishops, some whose dioceses have been vacant for years.

They also touched on when a possible papal trip might take place. Francis had intended to visit the war-torn nation last year alongside the Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby. However, the trip was postponed due to security concerns.

According to the delegation, the pope expressed a strong desire to go, but gave no specific date.

In his comments to CNA, Bishop Tabani said the pope “is willing to go, but there have been negative reports and even in the Vatican...they told him the situation is not so good.”

In his comments to CNA, Bishop Tabani said the pope “is willing to go, but there have been negative reports and even in the Vatican...they told him the situation is not so good.”

According to Tabani, the situation on the ground is so desperate that people are nearly begging the pope to come as a sign of hope and consolation. He said that during their meeting, he reminded Francis how St. John Paul II in 1993 visited Khartoum in the midst of a violent genocide.

“That gave hope to the people, and then people became very courageous,” Tabani said, adding that with more than 2 million people are living as refugees, now is the time for another papal visit.

“People are dying from hunger, the economic situation is really bad...the people are eager to have consolation, and they are asking ‘when will the Pope come?’” he said, explaining that in the meeting, Pope Francis told the delegation that “my heart is bleeding for the people in South Sudan,” and asked them to pray that the conditions would change, allowing him to come.

More than 2 million civilians have fled the country in the four years since violence broke out. Neighboring Uganda has so far taken in more than 1 million refugees from South Sudan, leaving resources strained.

In comments to CNA, Archbishop John Baptist Okada of Guru, Uganda, who was also part of the ecumenical delegation that met the Pope, said the situation is out of control. Many people had to flee with nothing but the clothes on their backs, and the majority of refugees, who face a worsening humanitarian crisis, are women, children and elderly.

“...You have the youth who don't have enough food, they don't have enough medical support. What they get is the minimum. Some have died of malaria, some have died from other things like cholera, and then they don't have the facilities to prepare the children for the future, education,” he said.

Okada said the Ugandan government is willing to help and has pitched in with some NGOs, but lacks the resources to sustain the increasing influx of refugees while also supporting their own citizens who live in poverty.

In northern Uganda near the West Nile area, there are more than 300,000 people living in one camp, he said, explaining that this area “is the most difficult, because the government of Uganda has found itself in a certain level that it cannot afford, because its resources are also limited.”

“So to care for its own citizens and at the same time for refugees, it becomes very heavy. This is where the biggest challenge is.”

Both Bishop Tabani and Archbishop Okada voiced gratitude to Pope Francis for holding the Feb. 23 day of prayer and fasting for peace in South Sudan, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Syria.

They also asked that the pope appoint more bishops, because many bishops have died and none have been re-appointed. Tabani, who retired early to launch a project aimed at providing education to refugees and promoting peaceful coexistence, said his successor died five years ago and has not been replaced.

Tabani said that upon hearing their requests, Pope Francis did not immediately make any promises or guarantees. “He just listened,” the bishop said, adding that “it's good to be a good listener...this is what I like.”

To care for its own citizens and at the same time for refugees, it becomes very heavy. This is where the biggest challenge is.
God Is. Begin Again!

By Chris Lyford

St. Teresa of Avila used and outside the confessional to encourage her fellow Carmelites after they received the Sacrament of Reconciliation. The story goes that as the Sisters would come out of the confessional she would tell them, one after the other, “Begin again.” Are you looking back as the last hours of Lent 2018 slip into the past? “Begin again.” Pentecost is 50 days after Easter. This year we celebrate Pentecost on May 20th. Still struggling with that same sin? Through God’s infinite sea of Mercy “Begin again.” Divine Mercy Sunday is April 8th.

Are you dizzy from the constant stream of partisan politics, and socio-political strife? With the super-natural gift of patience “Begin again.”

Are you tangled up in a dreadknot of painful memories and shame? Cast it “whole” into the infinite sea of God’s healing power: “Begin again.” Are you afraid of the bad reports in the news like the fact that six of the top ten worst shootings in US history happened in the last 10 years? Turn off your screens, and begin again.

The power of God through His love has created every fiber of your being, your DNA, and even your very soul, and yet he gave you free will and stepped back permanently. We have our faith, and the God given freedom to let it languish, or throw it into the fire of possibility that each new day brings. If you have lost the spiritual fire in your life; Begin Again.

Or if you have never received an outpouring of the Holy Spirit such that you truly experience the live changing Love of God, ASK NOW.

There is a fire of God’s making beginning to spark in our Diocese; a one day retreat experienced already by our beloved Deacons, their wives, and soon many religion coordinators from our schools. The name of this gentle new opportunity is called the “God Is”

retreat. This very powerful “one day retreat” program is one of the most life changing, and effective ways to enkindle the fire of the Holy Spirit in your parish community, but most importantly, in your own heart, and in the heart of your family.

It’s time to work together to start God’s kind of Fire: Faith, Intercession, Repentance, and Evangelization. If you want to be lit up by the “Fire of God”, ask, and don’t stop asking. It took 9 days of prayer and fasting for the Holy Spirit to fall on Mary and the Apostles, don’t be surprised if it takes you a bit longer. And what happened on that Day of Pentecost? A rushing wind. And, fire. Ask for the higher gifts, and live every day with the awareness that things can happen very fast, and if you fall, always begin again. ❖

Chris Lyford is the Communications Director for the Diocese of Santa Rosa, California

Ferndale Church of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary Renovation and Restoration Project

The Ferndale Catholic community was established in 1878, and the Church of the Assumption was built in 1896. The church is located in the historic Victorian village of Ferndale, CA. The Assumption Church has been the focal point of Catholic mass and services, marriages, baptisms, and honoring the departed for over 120 years for generations of parishioners. It is a main attraction for visitors because of its age and 19th century architecture. In addition to its parishioners, the church serves as a venue for many other non-denominational and community activities.

Recently, damaged wall tiles were removed from behind the altar which revealed part of a beautiful fresco mural painted in 1896 by artist Francis Bernau. Bernau was a renowned artist whose designs and use of color mirrored the style of 17th century artwork in Rome. Interior damage caused by various earthquakes resulted in the fresco being covered with wall tiles in the 1940’s.

The last major interior repairs occurred over 40 years ago in 1976 under the direction of Father Thomas Devereaux. Since that time mitigating repairs, such as a new roof, steeple roof and flashing, stabilizing cables, painting and major leaks have been addressed. However, harsh weather, climate and earthquakes have caused serious deterioration and degradation to the structural integrity and subsequently the interior of the church. If not addressed, damage will continue at an exponential rate.

The second or subsequent phase/s would include a major church renovation and restoration project. The second or subsequent phase/s would include interior repairs such as tile repair/removal, interior plaster repair and restoration of original artwork. The church has been in contact with Eureka artist Peter Santino to restore the fresco.

True-Line Construction, Inc. provided the Church of the Assumption with a proposal addressing the scope of work necessary to restore the church to its original splendor.

The church’s current pastor, Father Mario Laguros (Father Jo), and the church’s restoration committee, has identified external and structural repairs to improve seismic and structural integrity of the east sanctuary wall behind the altar as the first phase of

Letters Policy
Email: srdiocese1@gmail.com
Write: Letters to the Editor
North Coast Catholic
985 Airway Ct., Santa Rosa, CA 95403

Name, hometown, and daytime phone number for verification required. Short letters only, no more than 150 words. Letters may be edited for clarity or space.

NOTE: Views of correspondents do not necessarily reflect those of this publication.
Don’t Be the Gap!

By Julie Sparacio

April is Child Abuse Prevention Month. I wrote about this last year—how we as a diocese do not do poster or slogan contests. We don’t talk about it a lot, we don’t put out ribbons or signs. What we do is solid, we build a figurative fence around our students.

As part of our Safe Environment requirements, every employee and every volunteer who works with children must be fingerprinted. When the results come in, anyone who has a record of violence or offences against children are banned from working with our children. As part of our contract with the Department of Justice, we get subsequent arrest information. That means if someone is arrested for certain crimes, we are able to ban or restrict their activities. This is a good thing. I was reviewing some of the subsequent arrest reports that I have received, and I was struck by the number of arrests for people who have left our organization. And many of those are for crimes against children. What that says to me is that perpetrators saw the Church as a safe place to access children, but left because they couldn’t get away with anything here. Because we are watching!

The second part of our Safe Environment requirement is the training for adults and children. I have heard stories of adults, who, because of their training, recognized and reported abuse. I have heard stories of children, who learned through our training that they could speak up, who then talked to someone they were being abused, so it could be reported and stopped.

No wonder those potential perpetrators left the Diocese. We learned what to look for, we saw, we recognized, and we reported!

Here’s the concern—we asked people to do a new training this year. We want people to keep their knowledge up to date, to keep it fresh in their minds, so should the need arise—they know what to do. Unfortunately, our diocese is the least compliant with our Safe Environment requirements that it has been in a long, long time.

I had a professor in my graduate program who said ‘watch the feet’. He meant—watch someone’s actions. We, as a diocese, talk a great deal about how important the safety and well being of our children are to us. But many, many people are non-compliant? According to the ‘watch the feet’ school of though—the words don’t match the actions. I think, perhaps, people don’t really see the value in the background check or the training. Re-read the second and third paragraphs. It is working, to keep predators out, and to stop abuse from happening. Watching a series of three videos for an hour may be a pain, but don’t you want to be armed with knowledge in case you need it? Background checks are keeping people away—don’t you think that’s a good thing?

I have said it before—we need a solid fence of protection around our children. One non-compliant person is a gap that could allow danger to sneak through. Don’t be the gap. If you have not yet done the new training it is available at www.CMGConnect.org. If you don’t remember your user name and password—email me atjsparacio@srdioce.org. If you want to know if the people at your parish or school are 100% compliant—ask me. I am happy to share that information. Let’s get it done.

US pre-synod delegates: Youth need authentic Catholic witnesses

By Hannah Brockhaus

Vatican City, March 22 (CNA/EWTN News) - The United States delegates to a pre-synod gathering in Rome this week have said they think young Catholics in the nation need—and desire—faithful and authentic accompaniment in order to live the faith and to form a relationship with Christ.

“...was the need for companionship for young people, and how there’s this real desire to meet authentic people who are authentic witnesses,” delegate Katie Prejean McGrady told CNA.

“That word [authentic] came up frequently. And then the whole concept that it didn’t matter where you were from, and it didn’t matter what the state of the Church was, young people respond far better to personal relationships and one-on-one interactions with people of faith.”

Prejean McGrady, a wife, mother, youth minister, and speaker from Louisiana, is one of four representatives—all in their 20s—who were chosen by the U.S. bishops as delegates to the Vatican’s pre-synod gathering happening ahead of the October Synod of Bishops on young people.

Prejean McGrady spoke to CNA March 21 alongside Br. Javier Hansen, FSC, a LaSallian Brother who teaches religion in El Paso; Nick Lópex, a single young adult who is the director of campus ministry for the University of Dallas; and Chris Russo, a Byzantine Catholic who works as a research technologist at a hospital in Boston.

The pre-synod gathering has included discussion among young people from all over the world as they help to prepare and edit a document which will serve as a guide for bishops during the synod. The final document will be presented Saturday, and given to the Pope at Palm Sunday Mass.

Speaking to CNA, all four delegates said that the growing number of young Americans not practicing the faith they were given is one of the major concerns they brought to the meeting, and something they would like to see addressed.

Prejean McGrady said that she thinks one reason for the disaffiliation is that many Catholics in the US were catechized in a way that merely presented “bullet points to learn or these things to do”, rather than integrating these as part of the basis for a relationship with Christ.

She also noted that it is her belief that having “companions on the journey” makes it “much easier to build that relationship.”

Delegates also expressed frustration at feeling that older generations often place the blame of youths’ disengagement from the faith on the young people themselves, and do not admit their own share in the responsibility.

(see Catholic Witnesses, page 8)
years ago the Pastor and parishioners developed a vision to restore its historic appearance.

The project has been a dream of the Parish since Father Loren Allen was in charge in the 1990s. The renovation and restoration project has been done in stages, with the painting of the exteriors of both St. Bernard and St. Joseph churches done in 2001, funded by a Parish sponsored plan called “Gallon by Gallon”. This program was successful, but insufficient for the challenges of upgrading the interiors.

Not knowing how far to go, or what would be needed, the Parish Council turned to Parishioner Penny Eskra, who was a design consultant and had been involved in the renovation of Eureka landmark, the Ingomar Club. The club had been redoing wallpapers, carpet and paint. The Ingomar Club had employed a local artist, Peter Santino, with experience in Italy and New York in restorative painting, plastering, faux wood graining and redwood shellacked woodwork. Penny had little problem in convincing the Council that Santino was “THE expert in the field of period painting” and was very fortunately a local artist. He was brought in for consultation.

At first Santino was hired to work on the rectory, an Edwardian AUlding in 1910 next door to St. Bernard Parish. There he refinished the woodwork using faux graining. He also re-plastered and reinforced the plaster walls and painted surfaces in the rectory. Dr. Kim and Sile Bauriedel led the wall paper project and Louise Goff, a local wallpaper expert was hired to replace the many worn wall papers with period appropriate wallpapers.

The parishioners were quite satisfied with this work and the hope was to continue and refinish the church. Using the Gallon by Gallon funds, Santino was brought in to redo one “bay” of St. Bernard Church to get a sense of what a new interior might look like. The golden hue color choices and other touches of Santino’s choir loft work met with unanimous approval by parishioners. When the loft was finished the Parish wanted to complete the job. At this time Father Allen was sent to Occidental and replaced by Father Eric Freed. Penny Eskra also moved from the area. She was replaced by Gailey Browning, also a design consultant. The Parish remained committed to the restoration but, it was clear that the Parish did not have the funds to do so. The scaffolding to reach the fifty-foot ceilings itself would cost over $100,000 and would have to be installed in stages as the work was completed.

The Parish celebrated its 125th anniversary in 2011 when the parish was under the care of Father Eric Freed. Inspired by the beauty of its architecture, Father Freed researched the liturgical history of each of its many very colorful and artistic gothic stained-glass windows. He pilloled up the Gallon by Gallon funds for three-page brochures that told the story of each window and described the meaning of their symbols, icons, and design. This brochure was timely and was used for a Jubilee in 2012.

Unfortunately, the tragedy of Father Eric’s death would intervene with subsequent restoration plans. In addition, another issue would interrupt any further fund raiser for the project. It was fire safety. At the time of the tragedy of the loss of Father, the vulnerability the church could face in a fire had become a stark reality. It was clear that the first priority should be to install a sprinkler system. This would also cost $54,000. In time a solution would present itself. The Parish received a major donation from an anonymous Parishioner. Also, in 2016, the Parish was able to sell a property in Eureka that had been gifted by a Parishioner. The proceeds from the real estate sale were sufficient enough to set aside a portion for St. Bernard Church restoration.

With historic preservation, the sprinkler system was installed and the council again returned to their vision to bring back the original beauty of the Church and help display its magnificence. Finally, twenty-five years since the restoration of the Rectory and after years of planning and dreaming and fund raising the final phase began on the first of August 2017.

The original wood grain finishes on the beams and pews have been brought back to life, gold leaf has been applied to the tall ceilings, the plaster walls have been repaired, and the original beauty of the Church and its historic quality have been restored. It is hoped that it will be completed by this Easter.

In addition to the leadership and vision of Father Allen and Father Freed, and the advice and historical research of both Penny Eskra and Gailey Browning, and the dedicated efforts of the Parish council and its President, Merle McDougall, the program owes its success to a very important individual, Peter Santino, and his singular artistic: (see sidebar below)

So, for the small Parish of St. Bernard in Eureka, the theme of re-creation, in a city rich in architecture of all kinds and eras. Recognizing the abilities Santino showed wanted him to focus on historic preservation. His trust paid off and the company began to do projects in many of the finest homes in the city, including the home of Jackie Onassis.

After refining his skills in plastering, texturing, wood grain, gold leaf, and painting, Santino again wanted to challenge himself. He responded to an advertisement from Florence, Italy from a “Dutchman” who was renovating a 500-year-old stone house with a terracotta roof in the hills of Tuscany. He liked Santino’s work and helped him get a work permit and set him up with a studio and a salary. This project lasted two years in which time Santino became more of an expert in historic preservation, including the application of gold leaf, the skills of a journeyman plasterer, and the other fine arts required in historical preservation.

Santino has felt inspired by the work on St. Bernard Church. Working so closely with every surface in the church and spending many hours there he has come to see the building in a new light. After seven months working on the project Santino remarked, “It is a building probably built by workman of every faith who did their best work. These men were working at the highest level in their craft, the plaster work and the carpentry were done at the peak of their ability. I see it wherever I work here. It is all well done, carefully done. People did their best work here, perhaps knowing it would last 100 years.”

In a remarkable placement of talent and ability, based on years of work in the field, Peter Santino was found here at the right time to, as he has said, “bring back the original beauty and help display this magnificent building.”

April 4: Feast of Annunciation

(Catholic Witnesses, cont. from page 7)

Russo said that people to whom he’s spoken are “very distressed about disaffiliation in the Church,” but those “who ask why young people are no longer involved in the Church, are the same people who then criticize, saying, ‘oh, well, you’re too young to understand or to express an opinion.’”

Lopez agreed that it often feels like older generations think young people “don’t care” or are “too distracted,” but he takes hope in the fact that bishops are making an effort to listen to young people. He also expressed his desire that adults outside the hierarchy will also be inspired to listen more.

The four acknowledged that disaffiliation is also a problem in other parts of the world, and that it is not the only challenge young Americans have in common with youth in other parts of the globe.

They noted the increase in mental illness, the effects of media, and pornography use, in particular.

Because the meeting’s participants come from different backgrounds, including different religions, Prejean McGrady said that not everyone in attendance has had a positive view of the Church. But in general, the discussions have been instructive and focused on cooperating with the Church, not tearing it down.

She said that she thinks there’s great hope “because we were already brought to the table. I think that the bishops appealing to us, saying we want to know how to meet you face-to-face.”

Br. Javier expressed the desire that the same sort of discussions happening at the pre-synod meeting could take place on a national or local level, creating a conduit for communication with young people.

In the end, the delegates all emphasized that young people are both the future of the Church and the Church now.

Russo also requested that the world continue to pray for everyone involved in the Synod. “This is only an initial step—this isn’t the be-all-end-all,” he said. “This isn’t ending, this is something so, so much bigger. We have to talk to our communities… we’re the Church.”

April 4: Feast of Annunciation

(Catholic Witnesses, cont. from page 7)

Russo said that people to whom he’s spoken are “very distressed about disaffiliation in the Church,” but those “who ask why young people are no longer involved in the Church, are the same people who then criticize, saying, ‘oh, well, you’re too young to understand or to express an opinion.’”

Lopez agreed that it often feels like older generations think young people “don’t care” or are “too distracted,” but he takes hope in the fact that bishops are making an effort to listen to young people. He also expressed his desire that adults outside the hierarchy will also be inspired to listen more.

The four acknowledged that disaffiliation is also a problem in other parts of the world, and that it is not the only challenge young Americans have in common with youth in other parts of the globe.

They noted the increase in mental illness, the effects of media, and pornography use, in particular.

Because the meeting’s participants come from different backgrounds, including different religions, Prejean McGrady said that not everyone in attendance has had a positive view of the Church. But in general, the discussions have been instructive and focused on cooperating with the Church, not tearing it down.

She said that she thinks there’s great hope “because we were already brought to the table. I think that the bishops appealing to us, saying we want to know how to meet you face-to-face.”

Br. Javier expressed the desire that the same sort of discussions happening at the pre-synod meeting could take place on a national or local level, creating a conduit for communication with young people.

In the end, the delegates all emphasized that young people are both the future of the Church and the Church now.

Russo also requested that the world continue to pray for everyone involved in the Synod. “This is only an initial step—this isn’t the be-all-end-all,” he said. “This isn’t ending, this is something so, so much bigger. We have to talk to our communities… we’re the Church.”
Lessons I learned about sharing the faith from St. John Paul II and Bishop Robert Barron

"Today, many priests try to be like the kids. We were trying to be like him."

—Stanislaw Rybkı, recalling St. John Paul II as a young Catholic priest and youth leader

Recently, I found myself in a discussion with the impressive daughter of some family friends. A bright high school student and standout athlete, she is always willing to talk with me about what she is reading, the status of her college applications and the evolution of her career aspirations. So as we ranged over various and sundry topics, we found ourselves landing on her busy schedule packed with volunteer work, a weekend job, sports and the Catholic youth group.

"Do you enjoy going to the youth group?" I asked.

Oh, yeah. It's great. The people who go are very engaged. They have fun, but take their faith seriously. That's why I go to XXXXXXX parish."

"You go to XXXXXXX for youth group?" I asked.

"But why don't you go to your home parish?"

"It just seems like most of the kids aren't that into it. They feel like they are forced into being there, not that they want to be there."

Then, we went on to discuss the differences she perceived between the youth offerings at her home parish and her chosen parish. Was this more of an issue of a disinterested cohort of kids or was it a flagging strategy at evangelizing by youth ministers? When it came down to her decision, it seemed that her home parish was more about games and entertainment whereas her chosen parish for youth group, while recognizing the need to engage the teenagers socially, sought to deepen their holiness through Mass, service and deeper intellectual/spiritual reading and discussion.

I smiled with a bit of a furrowed brow.

It reminded me of something my good friend told me years ago about his own kids' confirmation and youth group experiences at his own parish. "It's basically balloons and puppet theater. That's not what they need. The leaders seem so intent on entertaining the kids—on ensuring that they are having a good time—that they have lost the missionary sense of cultivating their faith."

But perhaps teenagers aren't ready for that gravity of faith? Perhaps we should just focus on the fellowship and save the deeper message for another day?

Bah.

Bishop Robert Barron demolished this reasoning in his recent Erasmus Lecture when he observed, "Accompaniment" was a way of "walking with" young people, of helping them unveil their humanity by living through their problems with them...In Wojtyla's view, this was a way a priest lived out his vocation to be an alter Christus, "another Christ"... God himself had accompanied human beings into the most extreme situation resulting from bad human choices—death—through his divine choice to be redeemer as well as creator. That is what happened on the cross of Christ. The cross was the final justification for a pastoral strategy of accompaniment."

And so Fr. Wojtyla would hike and kayak and camp and eat with the youth. At fitting moments, he would share long passages of literature and poetry that crystallized a larger spiritual point. He encouraged honesty and respect, charity and kindness. He tackled topics of controversy and nuances of doctrine. He listened thoughtfully and explained patiently. But he was anything but woolly-headed; he was lovingly demanding. He encouraged these young Catholics to challenge themselves to think better, to do better, to be better. Those to whom much has been given, much will be expected. As the oppressive Communist political system demanded an all-consuming ideological worldview, Fr. Wojtyla pointed to a better way. Don't have Christ on your list of priorities; let him BE your priority. Don't look for Jesus in the world; let Jesus be the lens through which you look at the world.

And while Fr. Wojtyla was warm and approachable, Weigel writes, "There was a reserve about him that his friends honored. He was not a "buddy," although he was a close friend, and neither he nor they pretended to a false familiarity... [One of the youths], Stanislaw Rybkı summed up this dimension of their relationship, and Wojtyla's style, by observing, "Today, many priests try to be like the kids. We were trying to be like him."

And what did the young Catholics say about Fr. Wojtyla? As Weigel would describe, "He had mastered the art of listening."

"He was always interested."

"He didn't impose, but he did demand."

"He is a good man."

This is what young people want. This is what they need. A model who teaches and challenges, who supports and corrects, who recognizes the dignity of young men and young women and their infinite capacity for God. It sounds like something my friend's daughter found at one parish, but not at another. Accompaniment. That's what the Catholic youth need... Not balloons and puppet theater. ✶
Humanae Vitae 50 Years

(Reprint by permission of the Catholic San Francisco Newspaper)

This is a first in a series of articles on the 50th anniversary of the encyclical Humanae Vitae. We will begin with a piece by Mary Davenport, on the topic of our modern medical understanding of fertility. The series will consider a variety of perspectives, beginning with modern science, but also including cultural and sociological aspects, dynamics of the couple's relationship, concerns about fertility, infertility and childbearing, as well as the theology which underlies the document.

February: Intro/Ed Hopfner The science of fertility: Dr Mary Davenport.

July: Humanae Vitae 50 years later; what have we learned? Dr Janet Smith.

In July 1968, not long after the “Summer of Love” in San Francisco, Pope Paul VI issued his encyclical Humanae Vitae (“On Human Life”), sometimes known as the “Birth Control encyclical.” It was greeted within less than 24 hours by an unprecedented statement of rejection on the front page of the New York Times, headed “Catholic experts in strong dissent” and signed by nearly 100 Catholic theologians.

In the 50 years since the encyclical was issued it has remained one of the most controversial documents in Church history. Even Pope Benedict thought that the encyclical could have been improved, since it failed to explain the “why” of the Church’s teaching (though Pope John Paul II later did so in his Theology of the Body). On the other hand, Pope Francis has repeatedly insisted that “we need to return to the message of Humanae Vitae,” most recently in his own encyclical Amoris Laetitia (“The Joy of Love”).

In his earlier groundbreaking encyclical on the environment, Laudato Si (“On Care for our Common Home”), the Pope reminds us that authentic human development “presumes full respect for the human person, must also be concerned for the world around us and ‘take into account the nature of each being.’” Care for the environment means care for each other, and our respecting our own human nature.

In particular, says the Holy Father, we must acknowledge “the relationship between human life and the moral law, inscribed in our nature.”

“We must acknowledge the relationship between human life and the moral law, inscribed in our nature.”

On the other hand, “thinking that we enjoy absolute power over our own bodies turns, often subtly, into thinking that we enjoy absolute power over creation. Learning to accept our body, to care for it and to respect its fullest meaning, is an essential element of any genuine human ecology.” We cannot respect our environment if we do not respect our own design.

Francis reminds us that “in a particular way, the Encyclical Humanae Vitae brought out the intrinsic bond between conjugal love and the generation of life.” Marriage is ordered not only to the unity of the couple, but to a love that goes outward, most often in the bearing and raising of children. While marriage and childrearing are often challenging, he encourages (with the encyclical) “the use of methods based on the ‘laws of nature’ since these methods (such as Natural Family Planning, or NFP) ‘respect the bodies of the spouses, encourage tenderness between them and favour the education of an authentic freedom.’” As a loving father does, he insists that “Greater emphasis needs to be placed on the fact that children are a wonderful gift from God and a joy for parents and the Church.”

What makes this short document (barely a dozen typewritten pages) so hotly contested? It makes several predictions - have the last 50 years supported or contradicted Pope Paul’s forecast? Is Pope Francis correct, that “the teaching of the Encyclical Humanae Vitae… ought to be taken up anew, in order to counter a mentality that is often hostile to life…” Is Humanae Vitae still relevant in a culture of hook-ups and Tinder?

The encyclical begins with the words “The transmission of human life is a most serious role in which married people collaborate freely and responsibly with God the Creator. It has always been a source of great joy to them, even though it sometimes entails many difficulties and hardships.” For this 50th anniversary, Archbishop Cordileone has asked us to look at both the encyclical and its teaching on love, sexuality, marriage, fertility, and procreation, and the ‘serious role’ married couples play in God’s plan. I also encourage you to read the document itself – most estimates are that barely one Catholic in 100 has actually read it, yet it is short, profound, and well worth the time invested. ◆
California Student Organizes School Walkout to Protest Abortion

By Mairead McArdle March 23 (National Review)

A California student will lead a school walkout on April 11 to protest abortion, just a few weeks after his school joined others across the country in walkouts protesting gun violence.

Rocklin High School student Brandon Gillespie wanted to see whether his school’s administration practiced a double standard for what student protests they are willing to approve.

“Along with being a movement commemorating the millions of children who fell victim to abortion, this movement is one that stands for all students’ right to freedoms of speech and assembly,” the 17-year-old said in an interview with National Review.

Gillespie will meet with the principal of the school on Friday and is asking for the same accommodation the gun-control protesters asked for: a 17-minute walkout at 10 a.m. But the high-schooler and his group say they will go ahead with their pro-life walkout whether or not the school recognizes their right to protest.

He hopes to promote nationwide awareness about abortion, especially the “cruel injustices taking place at Planned Parenthood,” and he is encouraging students across the country to join him, using the hashtag #Life on social media.

“We hope this movement inspires all students nationwide, regardless of their view on the abortion issue, to stand up for what they believe in,” he said.

Gillespie got the idea from his history teacher, Juli-anne Benzel.

Benzel was put on paid administrative leave after she suggested the school might have a double standard for what protests are acceptable.

The mother of five, who has taught at the school for 20 years and had a previously spotless record, was told not to come to work and given no time frame for the break. She told National Review that she believes the only reason she was allowed back at her job was the outrage of the community, which rallied to her side. Her punishment has also created a “climate of fear” among the other teachers, she added.

“I’m thrilled that he’s going to not only actively engage, but also that he’s going to challenge. He literally is trying to answer my question,” Benzel said of Gillespie.

She said she hopes the event will get the national attention it deserves.

Gillespie said the abortion walkout is a direct response to the school’s handling of Benzel’s situation, and is asking the administration to apologize to her publicly.

One student has already objected to the walkout, saying that unlike the country’s school-shooting epidemic, abortion has nothing to do with school or Rocklin’s students.

“They have their First Amendment, they can go protest about that anytime anywhere,” said Naeirika Neev, editor of the school newspaper. Neev is promoting the gun-control initiative in the newspaper but has avoided saying anything against abortion.

An ominous sign for the pro-life protesters is that Rocklin High School has a history of blocking anti-abortion events. The school previously shut down a group handing out pro-life pamphlets across the street from its campus, Benzel remembered.

Walkout to Protest Abortion

Comments

“Brandon Gillespie is a terrific example of the passion this pro-life generation has, and his courageous effort to draw attention to the reality that more lives have been lost in our generation to abortion than all other causes should be national news,” Students for Life of America president Kristan Hawkins said in a statement to National Review. “Having opened the door to student-led walkouts as a way to express a political or cultural viewpoint, schools cannot shut that door to pro-life students who also are moved by the loss of life and horrific realities of the toll of abortion….Pro-life students deserve the same respect and accommodation that anti-gun student activists experienced.”

A Vocation of Mercy

By Sister Constance Veit, LSP

I grew up Catholic without ever hearing about the Divine Mercy devotion, which the Church celebrates annually on the after Easter. Even after I had learned about it, I didn’t understand it. A few Sisters in my community placed great confidence in the Divine Mercy image and chaplet, but it never really appealed to me. “Why focus on the sorrowful passion and wounds of Christ when we should be singing our Easter Alleluias?” I wondered.

Even when Saint John Paul II proclaimed that the whole Church would celebrate the second Sunday of Easter as Divine Mercy Sunday, I didn’t grasp the beauty and relevance of this devotion — or how much I needed it. It took a few more years and several bumps in life’s “school of hard knocks” to bring me to an understanding of just how precious the Divine Mercy devotion is.

Thanks to some very compelling words of Pope Francis, I began to turn to God’s unflagging love as Divine Mercy. In front of the well-known image of the risen Jesus with one hand raised in blessing and the other pointing to his heart, I prayed, “Lord, in a thousand and a thousand ways I have shunned your love, yet here I am once more, to renew my covenant with you. I need you. Save me once again, Lord, take me once more into your redeeming embrace.” (Evangelii Gaudium, n. 3).

Since I turned to Divine Mercy as a life force, I’ve learned that the devotion includes two primary elements — to trust in God’s merciful love and to practice acts of mercy. It’s that simple — trust in mercy and be merciful. Our Foundress, Saint Jeanne Jugan based her life on these two pillars even though she passed away more than 50 years before Our Lord revealed the Divine Mercy message to a young Polish nun named Sister Faustina.

In our congregation we tend to speak of trust in terms of confidence in Divine Providence, but Saint Jeanne Jugan’s trust extended well beyond the provision of material goods. She entrusted her whole life to God, whom she encountered as Love in the tabernacle, in the poor and in her own heart. The following bit of advice to the young Little Sisters testifies to her complete trust in God:

“Jesus is waiting for you in the chapel. Go and find him when your strength and patience are giving out, when you feel lonely and helpless. Say to him: ‘You know well what is happening, my dear Jesus. I have only you, Come to my aid.’ And then go your way. And don’t worry about knowing how you are going to manage. It is enough to have told our good Lord.

(see Vocation of Mercy, page 20)
April is Child Abuse Prevention Month

March 22, 2018 (California Catholic Conference)

According to childhelp.org, each day between four and seven children tragically lose their lives to child abuse in the U.S., and a report of child abuse is made every 10 seconds. This includes instances of abuse, neglect, and child trafficking in every city across America.

Since 1983, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services has dedicated April as Child Abuse Prevention Month, when communities should rededicate themselves to being supportive of families, and play an active role in preventing child abuse and neglect as well as taking positive action to promote child and family well being.

On Friday, April 13, the USCCB will promote a Call to Prayer. Dioceses and parishes can consider promoting that day for prayer and sacrifice for this intention: “We pray that God may grant those affected by abuse in any way the courage to tell their story and seek healing.”

There are also available op-eds and other resources that dioceses and parishes can use to promote Child Abuse Prevention Month including sample social media posts, bulletin inserts, and Prayers for the Faithful. The web address to access these resources is: http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/child-and-youth-protection/child-abuse-prevention-month.cfm

The USCCB will be hosting rosaries and prayers dedicated to stopping child abuse. On Friday, April 6th at 11 am Pacific Time, the staff of the USCCB will gather to pray a Rosary to Our Lady with special intentions for victims/survivors of abuse and the defense of the vulnerable. The Rosary will be streamed live on the USCCB Facebook and Twitter pages to encourage public participation.

To learn the signs of child abuse and what to do if you suspect abuse is taking place, visit this website: https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/preventing/preventionmonth/

Your participation is vital in this month-long campaign. Every child is worth the effort.

❖

Child & Youth Protection

If you or someone you know has been harmed by sexual misconduct by clergy, a Church employee, or volunteer, please contact:
Julie Sparacio, Director
Child and Youth Protection
707-566-3309
jsparacio@srdiocese.org

Rite of Adult Confirmation

Pentecost Sunday, May 20, 2018

For Additional Information Contact:
Diocese of Santa Rosa Department of Religious Education
(707) 566-3366
dre@srdiocese.org
**THE LIGHT ENTRUSTED TO YOU**

*Keeping the Flame of Faith Alive*

John Wood

We keep the flame of our faith alive by sharing it with others. John Wood wrote this practical, inspiring primer that explains the Catholic faith in engaging lessons that can be applied to everyday life. He illustrates how Catholicism has the power to form ordinary people into extraordinary Christians - saints. Using life experiences, stories, movies, songs, and sports, he illuminates the wisdom of Catholicism and equips us to share it with others, especially our own children.

LEYP . . . Sewn Softcover, $18.95

"With engaging clarity, this book offers a refreshing representation of the timeless Catholic faith. In underscoring the daily wrestle with faith, Wood presents a text to help us both live the faith and ensure its transmission to our posterity." — Curtis Mitch, Founder, FOCUS

**DEFYING GRAVITY**

*How Choosing Joy Lifted My Family from Death to Life*

Joe Sikorra

A powerful, deeply moving story of a family's hopes and dreams being shattered by a terrible nightmare, and how they responded to it. Told by the father, a popular Catholic radio host and marriage counselor, it shows how he and his wife dealt with the shocking revelation that their two young children had a rare, neurological and vicious fatal disease. He tells how, what seemed to be a story of death and tragedy, was turned into one of hope, love and joy found in the midst of incredible struggle — an outcome that only a loving, merciful God could provide.

DGRAP . . . Sewn Softcover, $16.95

"Joe Sikorra is a natural-born story teller, a talent that explodes across each page of his book. This powerful, poignant, inspirational account of his own, sometimes deeply painful, experiences of divine providence proves the wisdom of the adage: "Let go, and let God." — Patrick Madrid, Host, The Patrick Madrid Show

**CAUSE OF OUR JOY**

*Walking Day by Day with Our Lady*

Mother Mary Francis, P.C.C.

A beautiful book of meditations on Our Lady based on the Litany of the Blessed Virgin and on her Magnificat prayer. It also presents reflections for all the major feasts of Mary, as well as poetry centered on the Mother of God. These meditations come from the profound prayer of a holy contemplative Poor Clare nun, inspired by the Holy Spirit. Acclaimed spiritual writer Mother Mary Francis speaks with an intimate familiarity of the Mother of God, and you will feel that same closeness to Mary after reading these soul stirring reflections.

CJOYP . . . Sewn Softcover, $15.95

"It is obvious that the mind and heart of Mother Mary Francis have been deeply enriched by her meditations on Our Lady. It will do the same for any reader of her book, truly “Walking Day by Day with Our Lady” and the joy that would bring!" — Mother Assumpta Long, O.P., Superior, Dominican Sisters of Mary, Mother of the Eucharist
“Paul, Apostle of Christ” Depicts The Extraordinary Faith of Ordinary People

Without being didactic or heavy-handed, the movie ably depicts the centrality of the Resurrection in the thought and life of St. Paul.

March 23, 2018 Carl E. Olson Film & Music (Catholic World Report)

The Apostle Paul, writes Anglican scholar N.T. Wright in his new biography of the most famous and widely discussed convert to Christianity, might dispute the suggestion that he himself changed the world; Jesus, he would have said, had already done that. But what he said about Jesus, and about God, the world, and what it means to be genuinely human, was creative and compelling—and controversial, in his own day and ever after. Nothing would ever be quite the same again.

Paul’s writings make up just eighty or so pages, which Wright notes is less than any solitary dialogue by Plato or treatise by Aristotle. Why, then, have countless books, articles, and monographs been written about Paul’s life, epistles, and thought? While the new movie Paul, Apostle of Christ does not try to answer that question, it provides a hint of an answer while indicating, in a rather low-key but often compelling way, why Paul is just as challenging and, yes, relevant as he was nearly two thousand years ago.

To the credit of the writer and director Andrew Wyatt, the film does not aim to be epic or even, in many ways, intensely dramatic. This has been a point of criticism in some reviews; I suggest they are missing the point, which is to depict the daily struggles of an extraordinary man among ordinary people living a radical faith in a death-dealing, soul-crushing culture—specifically, the city of Rome in the year A.D. 67, not too long after the crazed emperor Nero had accused the Christians of starting the great fire of Rome. Much has been made, quite rightly, about the film’s focus on the persecution of Roman Christians under Nero, which is related, in some ways, to the very real persecution of Christians today, especially at the hand of various radical Islamic groups and movements. (The movie is dedicated “to all who have been persecuted for their faith.”)

But to focus on this alone would miss a key point made early in the film by Priscilla (Joanne Whalley), who tells the evangelist Luke (Jim Caviezel), “We are the only light left in this city!” She says so in the midst of a struggling group of first generation Christians who are frightened, perplexed, and even doubting. Wyatt and crew, fronted by the strong acting of Caviezel and James Faulkner (Paul), choose to focus on the small details and subtle struggles, emphasizing how the daily choice to follow Christ must be rooted in an abiding, even struggling, faith. Wyatt recently about the film, I asked him if it was fair to say it is a more intimate drama aimed at capturing the inner struggles of both Christians and non-Christians in ancient Rome. That’s very fair,” he replied, “Not to downplay what others [filmmakers] are trying. But epics can lose the humanity. In this film, you do get to know the personal struggle of what these people are dealing with.”

Not that the film is devoid of drama or tension. The brutality of Roman rule is depicted efficiently and effectively; the general callousness toward women and children is contrasted with the care and charity shown by the Christians. Paul, who is in chains in Mamertine Prison, is not just weary, but beaten down in every possible sense. His isolation can be heard in his own words, in his second letter to Timothy: “Luke alone is with me” (2 Tim 4:11). That simple line, in fact, was an inspiration for the film, which quotes heavily from Paul’s writings, mostly simple line, in fact, was an inspiration for the film, which quotes heavily from Paul’s writings, mostly.

One of the key narratives in the film involves Mauritius, the Roman prefect in charge of Mamertine, whose young daughter is near death due to a mysterious illness. Mauritius repeatedly beseeches the gods for aid, but to no avail. His wife, Irenia (Antonia Campbell-Hughes), believes that his uncharacteristic generosity toward Paul and Luke may be the cause for silence from the heavens. When Paul suggests the prefect have the physician Luke look at his daughter, the Roman scoffs, “I will not anger the gods by bringing a Christian to my home.” All indications point to a dramatic and miraculous resolution; thankfully, the film stays the course, emphasizing again how faith and “ordinary” life are not only compatible but completely sympathetic.

Without being didactic or heavy-handed, the movie ably depicts the centrality of the Resurrection in the thought and life of Paul, not only through an effective flashback to his encounter with Christ on the road to Damascus, but also in an exchange with Mauritius that echoes contemporary debates. “You keep saying truth, truth”, says Mauritius sarcastically to the two Christian leaders, as a sort of mimicry of Pilate before Christ. “But it is only truth according to you.” Mauritius shows himself to be as much a post-modern relativist as an ancient pagan, desperately appealing to dead gods while smirking at the startling, revolutionary faith of men and women who are willing to die for a mysterious Jewish rabbi.

“Christ who is Truth rose from the dead,” replies Luke, “but there are many who still do not believe.” Paul adds: “Men do not die for things they doubt. … It does not take an intelligent man to look around and see that the world is missing something.” The world still groans, longing for the fullness of Truth (cf. Rom 8:22), but far too many still refuse to look into the empty tomb or to contemplate the simple question: why would the followers of The Way willingly suffer and die for Christ unless there really was something to the Christian belief in the Resurrection?

Nothing would ever be quite the same again. Which bring me back to the persecution of the early Christians. Why were they so often persecuted, maligned, and even executed? In large part, it was because of who they refused to worship and Who they insisted on worshiping; it was because of their renunciation of the empire and their embrace of the Kingdom. As Bishop Robert Barron has emphasized:

From the beginning of his public work, Jesus is opposed, often violently, and that opposition culminates in his crucifixion at the hands of the Roman governor, who with delicious irony places on the cross a sign indicating that Jesus is king: “This is the King of the Jews.” The baby wrapped in swaddling clothes and the criminal dying on a cross are both meant as a taunt, a challenge, a turning upside down of our expectations. This was indeed subversive. The Romans were fine with the Christians worshiping Jesus, as long as they also worshiped the Roman gods. As the New Testament scholar Larry Hurtado puts it in Destroyer (see Paul, Apostle of Christ, page 20)
U.S. Catholic Bishops’ Chairmen Deeply Disappointed by Congress’ Failure to Enact the Conscience Protection Act

March 22, 2018 Washington Cardinal Timothy M. Dolan of New York, chair of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops’ (USCCB) Committee on Pro-Life Activities, and Archbishop Joseph E. Kurtz of Louisville, chair of the USCCB’s Committee for Religious Liberty, reacted with deep disappointment to the news that a very modest but critical piece of legislation—the Conscience Protection Act—was not included in the 2018 appropriations bill just released by Congress. The full statement follows:

“The failure of Congress to include the Conscience Protection Act in the 2018 omnibus appropriations bill is deeply disappointing. The CPA is an extraordinarily modest bill that proposes almost no change to existing conscience protection laws on abortion—laws that receive wide public and bi-partisan support. The CPA simply proposes to provide victims of discrimination with the ability to defend their rights in court to help ensure that no one is forced to participate in abortion. Those inside and outside of Congress who worked to defeat the CPA have placed themselves squarely into the category of extremists who insist that all Americans must be forced to participate in the violent act of abortion. We call on Congress not to give up until this critical legislation is enacted.”

Chairman of U.S. Bishops’ Pro-Life Committee Issues Statement Supporting Pro-Life Pregnancy Centers as Important Free Speech Case Begins

March 20, 2018 WASHINGTON—Cardinal Timothy M. Dolan of New York, chair of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) Committee on Pro-Life Activities, issued the following statement praising the work of pro-life pregnancy centers on the occasion of oral arguments being heard today by the U.S. Supreme Court in NIFLA v. Becerra. Cardinal Dolan’s full statement follows:

“Pro-life pregnancy centers embody everything that is right and good in our nation: generosity, compassion and love that is offered to support both mother and child. But rather than applauding and encouraging the selfless and life-affirming work of these centers, some governments want to force them to provide free advertising for the violent act of abortion in direct violation of their pro-life convictions and the First Amendment. The United States Supreme Court cannot let this happen. We pray that the Court will do the right thing and uphold our fundamental right to free speech when it decides this case.”

The USCCB and several other groups filed a friend-of-the-court brief before the Supreme Court supporting the pro-life pregnancy centers in this important free speech case. The other groups are the California Catholic Conference, the Catholic Health Association of the United States, the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, the Christian Legal Society and Agudath Israel of America. The full text of the brief is available online: http://www.usccb.org/about/general-counsel/amicus-briefs/upload/NIFLA-Amicus-2018-01-13F.pdf

Kentucky Senate Votes to Restrict Common Abortion Procedure

Frankfort, KY. March 24 (CNA/EWTN News) - The Kentucky State Senate passed a bill Thursday that would ban dilation and evacuation abortions after the 11th week of pregnancy, with the exception of a medical emergency.

Were this bill to become law, it would be one of the most restrictive abortion laws in the US.

The bill passed overwhelmingly in the state’s Senate March 22, with 31 votes in favor and only five against. Now the bill will move to the House of Representatives, where it will once again be voted on. An earlier version of the age bill also passed by a wide margin in the state’s House.

Kentucky Gov. Matt Bevin (R) is pro-life and is likely to sign the law once it reaches his desk. This, however, will not happen for at least a few more days as both the state House and Senate are on recess until Tuesday.

“We welcome any effort to highlight the gruesome nature of abortion, and work towards the day when all unborn life is respected and welcomed into the world,” Jason Hall, executive director of the Kentucky Catholic Conference, told Catholic News Agency.

Dilation and evacuation is used in 16 percent of abortions in Kentucky. It is mainly used during the second trimester of pregnancy.

Kentucky has one abortion clinic in the entire state, which was nearly closed last year.

If this bill were to become law, it would most likely face legal opposition from pro-abortion groups before it could actually be enforced. Similar abortion restrictions in Mississippi, Texas, Alabama, and Oklahoma have been struck down.

International

Young People Bring Faith, Simplicity to Meditations for Papal Via Crucis

Rome, Italy March 25 (CNA/EWTN News) - As the Vatican gears up for the Synod on youth in October, Pope Francis has chosen a group of Italian high school students to write the meditations for his Good Friday Way of the Cross at the Colosseum.

The Pope tasked religion teacher Andrea Monda with choosing and coordinating the 15 students, who attend a classical high school in Rome.

Marta Croppo, 18, is writing the meditation for the 14th station, when Christ’s body was laid in the tomb. She told CNA March 23 that she thinks Pope Francis wanted young people to write the meditations because of their simplicity and their ability “to communicate another type of message to the world.”

“We are not scholars, and we do not have a theological degree or something like that,” she noted. Therefore, this is “a great occasion for us to talk with simplicity,” relying on our experience of faith and religion in daily life.

Croppo said that in her meditation she did not want to speak about a social problem or “send a message to youth,” but to reflect on more existential themes. “I wanted to emphasize the human side of Jesus, because he is God, but he is human as well,” she said.

“He has suffered, and he has died just like us, so I wanted to talk about this aspect and the fact that he’s very near, [that] he comprehends deeply our condition of suffering and of sorrow.”

In the 10th station Jesus is stripped of his garments. Greta Giglio, 18, said that in her reflection on this station she tried to address present issues, such as immigration, because “immigrants, like Christ in that specific moment, come lacking everything.”

Monda said that he sees the Pope’s choice to entrust young people with the Via Crucis reflections as being in line with the greater focus of his pontificate, “trying to give a voice to those who have no voice.”

In Monda’s view, young people are also often at the peripheries. But Pope Francis says not to speak only about youth or to youth, but to “let the youth talk and then listen to them.”

The last time the reflections for the Via Crucis were written by young people was in 2013, when Benedict XVI asked youth from Lebanon to write them after visiting the country the previous September.

Those meditations were written by 45 young Lebanese between the ages of 17 and 30 and were focused on unity and peace between Christians and Muslims.

In 2017 the meditations were written by French biblical scholar Anne-Marie Pelletier, who was the fourth woman to do so after St. John Paul II first started the practice, inviting Mother Anna Maria Canopi from the Benedictine abbey “Mater Ecclesiae” in 1993.

In recent years they have mostly been penned by Italian bishops; notably, in 2015, they were written by Bishop Emeritus Renato Corti of Novara, who preached the final Lenten spiritual exercises for St. John Paul II the week before his April 2, 2005 death.

The Roman tradition of holding the Way of the Cross at the Colosseum on Good Friday goes back to the pontificate of Benedict XIV, who died in 1758.

After dying out for a period, the tradition was revived in 1964 by Bl. Paul VI, while under St. John Paul II the Way of the Cross at the Colosseum became a worldwide television event; the Pope himself used to carry the cross.

Now the cross is usually carried by individuals and families—including religious and laity—from around the world.

The Pope personally selects who writes the meditations for the stations, and the choice can indicate issues the Pope wants to zero in on.

In 2017, the Via Crucis at the Colosseum was attended by around 20,000 people.

Australian Court Hears Further Testimony in Cardinal Pell Abuse Hearing

Melbourne, Australia March 24 (CNA/EWTN News) - New accusations were brought forward and others were dropped this week, during a pre-trial hearing in an Australian court regarding abuse allegedly committed by Cardinal George Pell.

The committal hearing for the Prefect of the Secretariat for the Economy took place at the Melbourne Magistrate Court, and will allow magistrate Belina Wallington to determine whether there is enough evidence for a jury trial.

The total number of charges brought against Pell are not public, although some of the charges previously brought against Pell date as far back as 1961. In January, a key charge against Pell was dropped after the complainant died of leukemia.

Pell, 76, is being represented by four lawyers and intends to plead not guilty if his case goes to trial. He has said that “the whole idea of sexual abuse is abhorrent to me.”

Last summer, Pope Francis granted Pell a leave of absence from his duties as prefect of the Secretariat for the Economy while the claims are investigated. Pell is also a member of the Pope’s council of nine cardinal advisers.

Prosecutors said March 23 that some charges against Pell will be dropped because a witness is unable to tes
and there ought to be more awareness, more pro-
job and, and provided material assistance.
seven-year-old child.
all the love, the emotional support, to be able to have
Chile United Foundation. “They gave me everything,
cancer, she went through a difficult pregnancy
and their children, but the recently passed abortion
law also requires government support for women who
choose to continue with a pregnancy.
Initiatives like Chile United’s celebration demon-
strate that it is necessary to “continue working day
and night with more effort than ever to be there for
the woman in that crucial moment,” Veronica Hoffman,
executive director of Chile United, told ACI Prensa,
the Spanish-language news partner of CNA.
“When you give emotional support, welcome, and
 accompany the women decide to continue with preg-
nancy,” Hoffman said.
“What we are calling for today is to strengthen
support programs nationwide,” she added.
Chile United has programs of support for women
and their children, but the recently passed abortion
law also requires government support for women who
chose to continue with a pregnancy.
The Chile United Foundation has been working
for 19 years for the development of social and cul-
tural values for human progress in the country. Their
efforts include a support program for women in crisis
pregnancies, which has supported the birth of some
5,000 children, such as Yasna Gonzalez’s child.
Yasna told ACI Prensa that after overcoming cervi-
cal cancer, she went through a difficult pregnancy
with her fourth child when she was 43. Her husband
and some of the children reproached her, and even
her boss at work advised her to abort.
In a moment of anguish, she said she found the
Chile United Foundation. “They gave me everything,
set the pace—it could be process. But the truth about pur-
gatory; it’s just the Church’s thinking that it could
be a place—it could be process. But the truth about pur-
gatory is still absolutely true. In fact, there’s been a little devel-
ment going on; there was lack of clarity as to what
authentic Catholic doctrine was. This goes back to
the fights over Humane Vitae and documents of the
Second Vatican Council. People would talk about the
“spirit” of the Council, but they would not read the
documents of the Council.
So, for instance, when I was making my way back
to Catholicism, I was told that the Catholic Church
no longer believed in purgatory, that Mary wasn’t that
big a deal, that the Catholic Church no longer thought
that it was the one true Church. In all these things,
there’s a tiny element of truth. But we do believe in
purgatory; it’s just the Church’s thinking that it could
be place—it could be process. But the truth about pur-
gatory is still absolutely true; that hasn’t changed. The Blessed
Mother: well, yes, there was a scaling back, a little bit,
of Marian devotion, but that was because the Second
Vatican Council saw the Blessed Mother in relation-
ship to the entire Church. Rather than a separate
document on Mariology, they included her under the
document on the Church, Lumen Gentium. But
none of the Marian dogmas changed, for heaven’s
sake; there’s still the Immaculate Conception, bodily
assumption, perpetual virginity—all those things are
still absolutely true. In fact, there’s been a little develop-
ment in Marian theology, with co-Redemptrix and
things of that sort.
So, people were confused, and one of the reasons
Mother Angelica was such a vital force for good is
because she was committed to making sure she taught
in league with the Magisterium, and when she offered
to make programming available, many Catholic laity,
who knew their brothers and sisters were confused,
helped clarify what authentic Catholic teaching
is.
The secondary motivation was they wanted to do
the work of exhortation and encouragement. So I like
to say: Catholic radio edifies, it evangelizes, it edu-
cates, it encourages, it exorts, it engages the world,
and … on occasion, we entertain. I’m not real big on
resources. His own show, “Kresta in the Afternoon”,
demonstrates his dedication to giving a balanced
assessment of “the things that matter most.”
With such a long and varied career in radio, Kresta
is in an excellent position to comment on Catholic
radio today. He recently spoke with CWR about his
work in radio.
CWR: In 1996, WDEO, operated by Ave Maria Radio,
became the first Catholic radio station to air EWTN
programming full-time. How many EWTN-affiliated
Catholic radio stations are there now?
AK: The number that’s commonly used is 350, but
it’s been growing; I’ve heard people say 400. There
was an explosion of Catholic radio stations over the
last five years.
CWR: What caused that?
Kresta: A lot of low-powered FM stations. The FCC
opened the band up, so people could begin applying
for low-powered FM stations, and a lot of people did that.
CWR: So some Catholic stations are not EWTN-
affiliated?
Kresta: As I understand it, we’ve got 570 Catholic
stations on the air—as of last month—and then there
are 60 under construction or being modified.
You may not know this—but at the beginning, many
bishops were very suspicious of Catholic radio, and it
took a while for the ice to thaw. Some of them didn’t
particularly like Mother Angelica’s style, so they were
releutant to support stations that were raising money
to put on EWTN programming.
But that has changed, almost night and day, over 20
years. I can see where I love, in southeast Michigan.
When I first came to Ann Arbor in 1997, I began
having lunch with local priests in the vicariate, and
at that time we had about six priests, of 20 or so, who
were actively opposed to what we were doing. I mean
they would speak unkindly of us to their congrega-
tions; they would write bulletins sometimes. That
was in 1997-98. I was at a priest appreciation dinner,
about 2-3 years ago now, and it dawned on me that
I don’t know a single priest in this vicariate—except
one retired guy—who is actively opposed to what
we’re doing now. Most people are very supportive. So
things have changed in 20 years; it’s been really great.
CWR: There are many more Protestant stations than
Catholic—
Kresta: Yes, absolutely.
CWR: Why is that?
Kresta: It’s another good question. First, Protestants
vastly outnumber Catholics in America. Conse-
quence is they generate more churches, bookstores,
television and radio stations.
Another reason is that many of the Protestant-
Evangelical stations are for-profit enterprises. Up
until the rise of contemporary Christian music, they
charged local preachers and national preachers. So
programs would pay significant money to be on these
stations. In the 1980s, Crawford Broadcasting decided
to actually go heavy into selling advertising, and they
began eliminating some of the teaching programs; Don
Crawford was a real innovator there and did very
well. When I worked for Crawford Broadcasting, we
didn’t raise funds from our listeners; we got results for
our advertisers. That’s actually how our success was
determined: how many calls did the advertisers get
from your listeners? So there’s a commercial incen-
tive to the Evangelical stations, so that’s one thing.
Catholics never went that route.
The third reason I would say is—the sad truth is
that—Evangelical Protestantism is more innovative,
it’s more energized; it’s more entrepreneurial—that’s
the key word. It’s more entrepreneurial than the
Catholic culture. I mean, the laity are only begin-
ing to take co-responsibility for the Church now in
Catholicism.
Mother Angelica began making programming
available for free, and she just wanted lay people—or
anybody—to go buy stations or lease stations, and
she’d provide the programming. So there is no
financial incentive for Catholic laity to start stations.
Catholics still started stations because they wanted to
be an echo chamber for the Magisterium. Catholic
radio grew up to make sure that magisterial teaching
was accessible all day, all week, to Catholic listen-
ers. That’s really what drove people. Everybody
who started Catholic radio stations got into it to make
sure that the messages were orthodox. Our problem
would be creativity—trying to create a program. The
next generation might have trouble with orthodoxy, or
they might have to fight over it, but this first genera-
tion, that’s not a problem.
CWR: What need or needs in the Church is Catholic
radio trying to help meet?
Kresta: There’s absolutely no doubt that Catholic
radio’s principal mission has been catechesis. It’s
a concern that many Catholics had after the Second
Vatican Council. There was a lot of experimenta-
tion going on; there was lack of clarity as to what
authentic Catholic doctrine was. This goes back to
the fights over Humane Vitae and documents of the
Second Vatican Council. People would talk about the
“spirit” of the Council, but they would not read the
documents of the Council.
So, for instance, when I was making my way back
to Catholicism, I was told that the Catholic Church
no longer believed in purgatory, that Mary wasn’t that
big a deal, that the Catholic Church no longer thought
that it was the one true Church. In all these things,
there’s a tiny element of truth. But we do believe in
purgatory; it’s just the Church’s thinking that it could
be place—it could be process. But the truth about pur-
gatory is still absolutely true; that hasn’t changed. The Blessed
Mother: well, yes, there was a scaling back, a little bit,
of Marian devotion, but that was because the Second
Vatican Council saw the Blessed Mother in relation-
ship to the entire Church. Rather than a separate
document on Mariology, they included her under the
document on the Church, Lumen Gentium. But
none of the Marian dogmas changed, for heaven’s
sake; there’s still the Immaculate Conception, bodily
assumption, perpetual virginity—all those things are
still absolutely true. In fact, there’s been a little develop-
ment in Marian theology, with co-Redemptrix and
things of that sort.
So, people were confused, and one of the reasons
Mother Angelica was such a vital force for good is
because she was committed to making sure she taught
in league with the Magisterium, and when she offered
to make programming available, many Catholic laity,
who knew their brothers and sisters were confused,
helped clarify what authentic Catholic teaching
is.
The secondary motivation was they wanted to do
the work of exhortation and encouragement. So I like
to say: Catholic radio edifies, it evangelizes, it edu-
cates, it encourages, it exorts, it engages the world,
and … on occasion, we entertain. I’m not real big on

(North Coast Catholic, cont. from page 15)
the entertainment, but on occasion, we can be funny.

**CWR: Why is radio such a powerful medium to reach people with the Church’s teachings?**

**Kresta:** People can listen anonymously. You can get questions answered by just listening, and nobody has to know you’re searching. It’s in the car; it’s portable. So I think Catholic radio can be a game-changer. I think we need to have a strong board to make sure it continues into the next generation. That board needs to be working with the local parishes. Your donors come from your listeners, and you’ve got to be getting your listeners locally.

That’s what the new evangelization is about: it’s getting Catholics who’ve been maybe somewhat compliant, but not especially catechized … to awaken to their faith, to own their faith, to say, “I’m engaged; I’m on fire; I am a disciple.” In studies done by Matthew Kelly and Sherry Weddell, we’ve told that only 6-9 percent of American Catholics consider themselves engaged, or dynamic, or on fire, or disciples. That’s a small percentage! And that’s where the work has to go. And that can only be done locally: you’ve got to have boots on the ground locally, challenging fellow Catholics.

We have to focus on relationships with priests in order to get the word out about Catholic radio. In order to get people who are attending Mass, but not necessarily doing much more. Turning them into listeners really is a way of disciple-making. If a person finds out about Catholic radio and starts listening to Catholic radio, they have clarity about the faith, they have competent exhortation to live it faithfully, they begin to appreciate the idea of the domestic church, they begin to understand the co-responsibility of the laity, they begin to read the Catechism—all those things come alive for them.

**CWR:** Sounds like Catholic radio has the potential to be a game-changer for Catholics.

**Kresta:** Absolutely! I think Catholic radio is one of the most exciting developments in the post-conciliar Church. We started with four stations in 1997 up to 60 under construction. EWTN has 350-400 affiliates. So, if you develop strong local communities of Catholics who understand themselves as engaged, as disciples, these are going to be outgoing people who are sharing their faith in a variety of ways. They’ll give testimony; they’ll hand out books; they’ll invite people to parish missions. Catholic radio supports those throughout the whole week, so that they’re not dependent on Sunday to Sunday. You see in 20 years what’s happened … and it’s entirely lay-driven. I like it because it’s focused on the Magisterium. It’s not renegade Catholics—of the liberal variety or a radical traditional variety. These are engaged—you might call them “evangelical” Catholics.

So I think Catholic radio can be a game-changer. I think we’re going to see even more, even numerical decline in Catholicism, for the time being: there are a lot of people drifting away right now. Catholic radio might be able to change that. What I know we can do is take people who are not yet awakened, the many Catholics out there who were raised in the Church and do attend fairly faithfully but haven’t yet heard Jesus say, “Follow me” and said, “That’s my path; that’s my Savior; that’s my Lord, and I’m going to own this.” But I think we’re going to see a lot more of that. And we’re going to be seeing continued spiritual growth. We’re going to see a greater and greater percentage of the laity joyfully affirm the faith and be active in living it and sharing it.
La Razón de Nuestra Esperanza

Durante nuestra Peregrinación Litúrgica estamos invitados a profundizar en nuestra relación personal con Jesús, para ver su gran misericordia hacia el caído, para reconocer su amor en el misterio de la cruz. Una vez más estamos siendo invitados al arrepenamiento y a profundizar nuestra fe en el Evangelio. Caminando con Jesús durante el Tiempo de Cuaresma es una manera maravillosa de hacer a Cristo más real en nuestras vidas. Durante la Cuaresma no vemos a Jesús caminar sino más bien ¡caminamos con El! Vamos con los Apóstoles en su camino a la mesa de la Última Cena. Procesamos con ellos al Huerto de Getsemaní y al igual que ellos nos quedamos dormidos mientras luchamos por estar despiertos y vigilantes. A lo largo de los años estamos vigilantes, a veces sin reservas y totalmente despiertos y muchas veces medio dormidos o quizás profundamente dormidos.

Así como los Apóstoles podemos dispersarnos cuando los soldados vienen por Jesús. Podemos dispersarnos como los Apóstoles cuando nos involucramos demasiado en cosas de nivel humano y nos enfocamos más en deportes, entretenimientos, en satisfacciones inmediatas o en adicciones a las drogas. Los puntos más débiles y frecuentes en el ser humano, el diablo busca en cada persona, precisamente cuando uno se encuentra con los misterios de Dios. Necesitamos la Peregrinación Litúrgica para renovar nuestro sentido de asombro en las obras maravillosas de Dios. Sin este asombro, la tumba vacía y la Resurrección de Jesús se convierten en temas adecuados para especulación teológica sin llevar ningún significado profundo. La fe nos trae a este tiempo sagrado, con eventos misteriosos. La fe es contenida en maravillas y asombro ante el Dios que actúa tan poderoso y maravillosamente en la historia humana. Podemos especular, con gran beneficio, en cómo nos habríamos acercado a la tumba. ¿Qué explicaciones pediríamos? ¿Qué racionamiento buscariamos? El Evangelio describe que los primeros testigos estaban medio temerosos y medio contentos. En nuestra peregrinación necesitamos estar así como ellos, medio temerosos y medio contentos. Estar en ese estado nos permite un crecimiento de maravilla y de fe. Al final, los apóstoles y discípulos pierden el temor y pasan a estar completamente contentos y jubilosos.

Esa transformación de alegría absoluta se logra cuando Jesús aparece en medio de ellos y proclama, ¡Que la paz esté con ustedes! Su escepticismo, la duda de si era un fantasma que estaba delante de ellos, nos ayuda en nuestro peregrinaje. Ellos le han visto y le han oído pero luego lo tocan, lo ven comer pescado y entienden que Él que nos ama lo suficiente como para morir por ellos en una cruz, había resucitado. Entonces nosotros, al caminar en peregrinación con él, también sabemos que Él nos ama tanto como para ir a la cruz por nosotros también está vivo para nosotros. Necesitamos este día para nuestra peregrinación anual ya que se convierte en la justificación y la causa de nuestra esperanza, nuestro gozo, nuestra fe y toda nuestra vida.

Puede El Diablo Leer Nuestros Pensamientos?

Preguntas Al Diácono Mario

Pregunta: Jorge Mendoza, Misión Dolores

Puede el diablo saber que es lo que uno está pensando en cierto momento de nuestra vida?

La respuesta es simple: Absolutamente No!

Siendo una criatura espiritual, el diablo, No entiende que esta pasando por nuestra mente y en nuestro Corazón; él solamente puede suponer a través de Observar nuestro comportamiento.

Y esto, No es una complicada operación para el diablo, teniendo en cuenta que tiene, una inteligencia extremadamente fina.

Por ejemplo: Si una persona joven, por “Curiosidad”, comienza a experimentar y a fumar marihuana, el demonio puede deducir que el futuro, este joven va a querer experimentar más. El demonio puede hacerlo mucho más fuerte como es la cocaína. Y el diablo va a trabajar buscando la mejor estrategia, para hacer caer a este joven en las adicciones a las drogas.

En otras palabras: De lo que leemos, miramos, decimos y experimentamos, y también de las compañías o amigos que escogemos, de todo todo esto, el diablo puede Discernir donde te va a tentar y en qué momento en particular. Esto es lo que el diablo hace, y él tiene mucha paciencia!

Recordemos un pasaje de la primera carta de San Pedro:

(1 Pedro 5:8-9) que dice: “Hermanos y hermanas, estén sobrios, y estén vigilantes, porque su enemigo, el diablo roba como un león rugiente, buscando a quien devorar…¡RESISTE! Firme en la Fe, y el diablo Huira de ti!”

Como vemos, el diablo ronda alrededor de cada uno de nosotros, buscando el punto más débil donde devorarnos.

La palabra “donde” es importante:

El diablo busca en cada persona, precisamente por sus puntos más débiles y Trabaja diseñando sus mejores estrategias, creando sus próximas ocasiones de pecado!

Es importante, hacer notar que:

Ya será la persona elegida como blanco, que ella misma, en su Libertad, cometerá el pecado, después de haber sido bien “cocinada” por la tentación de Satanás.

Los puntos más débiles y frecuentes en el ser humano son, antes y ahora, los mismos: El orgullo, el dinero, y el sexo.

Y estamos bien claro, No hay ninguna edad límite (vea Nuestros Pensamientos, pagina 20)
Noticias en Español

Alientan A No Aceptar “Limosnas Y Migajas” De Candidatos En México
CIUDAD DE MÉXICO (ACI Prensa) - A pocos meses de las elecciones federales en México, un líder de la defensa de la vida y la familia en México alentó a no aceptar las “limosnas y migajas” que ofrecen los candidatos.

Entrevistado en el programa Más que Noticias, de Radio Católica Mundial EWTN, Marcial Padilla, Director de Conciencia y Participación (ConParticipación), explicó que el panorama electoral en México este año “es un escenario complejo”, y lamentó que “a medida que se ha ido acercando el momento de las elecciones, lo que hemos ido viendo es que los candidatos y los partidos tienen ido formando alianzas que realmente no dibujan una propuesta sino dibujan intereses entre ellos”.

Los mexicanos votarán este 1 de julio por un nuevo presidente, 128 senadores y 500 diputados federales.

Padilla recordó que una encuesta realizada por ConParticipación evidenció que los mexicanos sienten “la soledad política y a los gobernantes lejos. Los sentimos pensando solo en sus intereses”.

Entonces cuando elegimos a uno pensamos que ese es el bueno y todos los demás los vemos malsos y eso es renunciar a nuestra ciudadanía”, señaló. “Para el director de ConParticipación “lo que tenemos que hacer los ciudadanos es invertir el juego y que sean ellos los que apuesten por nosotros, no nosotros los que apostemos por ellos”.

“Son ellos los que tienen que darse cuenta de nuestro valor, no comprar barato nuestro voto ni nuestra ciudadanía, en los valores fundamentales y en todo el entramado de la responsabilidad social”.

Padilla destacó que es clave que los mexicanos dejen “de pensar o actuar en base a personas y empe- zar a actuar en base a la agenda de los ciudadanos: qué es lo que yo quiero, qué es lo que yo necesito, y exigirlo”.

Es importante, subrayó, “dejar de aceptar lo que nos den, esas limosnas, esas migajas que nos dan”.

El director de ConParticipación precisó además que “los ciudadanos tenemos no solamente la esperanza, sino la certeza de que vamos a tener el México que nosotros construyamos”.

“En la sociedad tenemos muchos instrumentos para participar en la articulación de una agenda ciu- dadana, más allá de los partidos políticos”.

“La asociación en la que me encuentro, Conciencia y Participación o ConParticipación, es uno de los muchos instrumentos que tenemos los ciudadanos para, sin involucrarnos en un juego de partidos, tener voz y articulación para nuestra agenda y exigirla a los gobernantes”, dijo.

¿Un Católico Puede Creer En Las “Buenas Vibras” Y La “Energía”? REDACCIÓN CENTRAL (ACI Prensa) - Con ocasi- ón del equinoccio de primavera, en países como México se realizan diversos rituales paganos en busca de “buenas vibras” y “energía”. ¿Pero los católicos creemos en este tipo de ritos?

En un artículo publicado en el Sistema Informativo de la Arquidiócesis de México (SIAME), titulado “Las ‘buenas vibras’”, el P. Sergio Román explicó que ritos como ir a las pirámides mayas y aztecas en busca de “energías” y renovación “no son tradiciones verdaderas, sino supercherías inventadas hace unos cuantos años y que se han difundido en el pueblo católico, necesitado de algo sobrenatural en su vida alejada de la Iglesia”.

El P. Román lamentó que “todos esos adoradores del sol y de la ‘madrecita tierra’, se supone, son católicos, que por desconocimiento de su propia religión han caído, como inocentes palomitas, en el abismo de los charlatanes. Son, la mayoría, católicos practicando ritos paganos”.

“Los creadores no creemos en las ‘buenas vibras’ ni en la ‘energía’, sino que ‘hablamos de los dones que Dios da, y los llamamos gracias. La gracia fortifica al hombre, pero no lo anula. No es una fuerza ciega que guía su destino’.

El sacerdote señaló que mientras algunos turistas, principalmente extranjeros, visitan los monumentos arqueológicos por un interés histórico y astronómico, “la mayoría son personas reunidas para un culto pagano en el cual, vestidos de blanco o con trajes supuestamente prehispánicos, ‘cargan de energía’ y reciben las ‘buenas vibras’ del sol primaveral”.

“No faltan las danzas y la música con raros instrumentos inventados o copiados de códices, atribuye a la naturaleza el poder mismo de Dios. Enormes piedras y que se haga justicia pero “no atropello”.

El P. Román subrayó que “mi destino no está escrito en las estrellas; mi destino lo hago yo con toda mi libertad y, si lo deseo, con la ayuda de Dios”. Defendamos La Familia, Alienta Cardenal A Nuevo Presidente Del Perú LIMA (ACI Prensa) - El Arzobispo de Lima y Pri- mado del Perú, Cardenal Juan Luis Cipriani, alentó al nuevo Presidente Martín Vizcarra, a defender la familia y erradicar la ideología de género del país, que es promovida por instituciones internacionales como la ONU.

Vizcarra asumió la presidencia del Perú el viernes 23 de marzo luego que el ahorro Ex Presidente, Pedro Pablo Kuczynski, renunciara al cargo.

En su primer mensaje al país desde el Congreso de la República, Vizcarra describió la crisis política actual, pidió a todos trabajar unidos por el país, y reforzó que se concentrará en las áreas de la edu- cación, la salud y el empleo.

Según informa el Arzobispado de Lima, el sábado 24 de marzo y en la inauguración de un auditorio del Hogar Gladys, que asiste a madres en situacio- nes vulnerables, el Cardenal Cipriani resaltó que “la familia es el centro de toda sociedad y por lo tanto debe recibir un apoyo para que la mamá pueda atender a sus hijos, para que el papá pueda atender a sus hijos, para que los tienen una familia numerosa puedan atender a sus hijos y para que no haya esa tendencia de estar siempre atacándola”.

El Cardenal destacó también que la familia está conformada por “un matrimonio formado por hombre y mujer; y de ahí salen unos hijos. Yo no discuto con nadie pero así lo ha querido Dios”.

“Entonces veo que el Presidente tiene una hermosa familia, tiene 20 años de casado, 4 hijos y una nieta. Me da la impresión que es un hombre provista y por lo tanto lo que tenemos que hacer entre todos, no solo el Presidente, es dar una educación en los cole- gios donde se privilegie a las personas, los valores morales”.

El Arzobispo hizo votos luego para que “no este mos discutiendo la ideología de género que es una tendencia que no es buena para la educación pero está promovida por Naciones Unidas y por unas ONGs”.

El Purpurado dijo asimismo que “lo que más me ha impresionado –y lo digo con toda franqueza– es su humildad, su sencillez. Ha asumido el rol que le toca y con mucha sencillez le ha dicho a todos los peruanos: basta de discusiones, basta de estar peleándonos, trabajemos unidos”.

“Esto me recuerda a la visita del Papa Francisco cuando todo el país se puso de pie unidos por la esperanza, que el Presidente encuentre esa colabo- ración de todos”, aseguró.

Sobre el Hogar Gladys, el Cardenal refirió que “es una maravilla estar aquí, en este hogar, que lo que hace es salvar vidas, ayudar a las mamás que están en dificultades a recibir a sus hijos”.

En su opinión, es algo muy bonito “impulsar justamente a quienes tienen ese riesgo del aborto. Les brindamos un hogar y una atención de salud, de educación, de ayuda espiritual para que de esa manera apoyemos la vida y a la mujer. Esto es lo grandioso de esta obra”.

Al ser consultado sobre la situación del ex presiden- te Pedro Pablo Kuczynski, el Cardenal pidió que “no se haga leña del árbol caído de manera tan llamativa”.

El P. Román advirtió que “todo ese neopaganismo, sostenedor en parte por ‘raíces indígenas’ y, por otro lado, por la globalización, ‘entró por la puerta grande a un México católico que sufre de una falta de evange- lización grave, gravísima. Y aquí ha hecho su agosto”.

“El neopaganismo es una tendencia religiosa mun- dial que pugna por ‘lo natural’: no importa el nombre que disctugu con nadie pero así lo ha querido Dios”.

El sacerdote señaló que mientras algunos turistas, principalmente extranjeros, visitan los monumentos arqueológicos por un interés histórico y astronómico, “la mayoría son personas reunidas para un culto pagano en el cual, vestidos de blanco o con trajes supuestamente prehispánicos, se ‘cargan de energía’ y reciben las ‘buenas vibras’ del sol primaveral”.

“Esto me recuerda a la visita del Papa Francisco cuando todo el país se puso de pie unidos por la esperanza, que el Presidente encuentra esa colabo- ración de todos”, aseguró.

Sobre el Hogar Gladys, el Cardenal refirió que “es una maravilla estar aquí, en este hogar, que lo que hace es salvar vidas, ayudar a las mamás que están en dificultades a recibir a sus hijos”.

En su opinión, es algo muy bonito “impulsar justamente a quienes tienen ese riesgo del aborto. Les brindamos un hogar y una atención de salud, de educación, de ayuda espiritual para que de esa manera apoyemos la vida y a la mujer. Esto es lo grandioso de esta obra”.

Al ser consultado sobre la situación del ex presiden- te Pedro Pablo Kuczynski, el Cardenal pidió que “no se haga leña del árbol caído de manera tan llamativa”.

Y que se haga justicia pero “no atropello”.

(vea Noticias, página 20)
of the Gods: Early Christian Distinctiveness in the Roman World (Baylor University Press, 2017), the key neuralgic issue between Christians and their critics and opponents in those early centuries was worship … [The] pagans demanded specifically that Christians should worship the traditional gods. Recall that pagans such as Celsus were willing to tolerate Christians and their other various objectionable features, if only they would worship the traditional gods. But Christians were noted as typically refusing to do so, declaring that they worshiped only the one biblical deity and, still more offensively, that everyone ought to do likewise.

As Hurtado goes on to argue, this was for both Christians and pagans a deeply religious issue, for both recognized that their specific beliefs were in direct conflict with one another, especially since for the early Christians the “key concern of fidelity to the one true God [was] set over against what they saw as the the many false and unworthy deities of the day.”

This, for me, is a core strength of Paul, Apostle of Christ, for it depicts, in a compelling and artistically satisfying way, the contrast between empty faith in the paganism of the faith in Jesus Christ, “the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep” (1 Cor 15:20). It is important to remember those who are persecuted; it is just as important that we know why and for Whom they are persecuted. “But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ has not been raised; if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain” (1 Cor 15:13-14).

Carl E. Olson is editor of Catholic World Report and Ignatius Insight. He is the author of Did Jesus Really Rise from the Dead?, Will Catholics Be “Left Behind”, co-editor/contributor to Called To Be the Children of God, co-author of The Da Vinci Hoax (Ignatius), and author of the “Catholicism” and “Priest Prophet King” Study Guides for Word on Fire. He is also a contributor to “Our Sunday Visitor” newspaper, “The Catholic Answer” magazine, “The Catholic Herald”, “National Catholic Register”, “Chronicles”, and other publications.  

(Nuestros Pensamientos, cont. de página 18)
para el pecado!

Un padre le decía a los que se iban a confesar, de alguna forma bromeando, y en serio, que sus tentaciones terminarían solamente 5 minutos después de haber tomado el último suspiro de vida!

Por lo tanto, nunca debes de esperar, o tener la esperanza de que en la edad de la vejez, estarás exentos del pecado! ¿O que las tentaciones del pecado desaparecerán?

Un vicio que es cultivado en la juventud, No esperes que va a disminuir o desaparecer por sí mismo en la vejez, sin algún tipo de trabajo e intervención.

La firme voluntad y resolución de combatir, contra el pecado. Tiene que ser cultivada, todos los días...... incluso hasta el final de nuestros días!!!

Los demonios guardan su distancia de la persona que se nutre, de la Santa Misa: De la Palabra de Dios y de la Sagrada Eucaristía, la persona que educa su Fe, quien frecuenta el Sacramento de la Confesión, y quien desea vivir devotamente buscando mantenerse Cerca De Dios!

¿Por qué?

Poniéndolo simplemente, el diablo oda a Dios, y le tiene terror a cualquier cosa que incluso, pueda tener el olor a santidad, el olor a lo sagrado.

Si pensamos en esto, podemos recordar periodos de nuestra existencia en los cuales hemos intensificado, nuestra vida espiritual interior y nos hemos sentimos más Fuertes para resistir a las Tentaciones.

Hermanos y hermanas: La Victoria es nuestra…Resiste! a las Tentaciones del demonio…para que el anda cerca del Señor...la derrota No es una opción…  

(ZUNIGA es Diácono de Misión Dolores)

(Frendale Church, cont. from page 6)
of the Assumption with a proposal addressing the scope of work necessary to restore the church to its original splendor.

A generous grant from the Bertha Russ Lytle Foundation and a matching amount from the church’s maintenance fund allowed phase one work to begin. This work has included stabilizing the east main sanctuary wall, which helps protect the large stained-glass window, installing a concrete grade beam to bear the weight of the wall, insulation, installation of plywood shearing and a vapor ground cover to protect against dampness and mold.

As phase one work comes to a completion, the second phase is estimated to be approximately $100,000. The Assumption Church has long been the recipient of the community’s generosity and welcomes donations for this worthy project.

The goal of the parish is to restore the Church of the Assumption to its original beauty and grace and insure its continuance as a beacon of faith.  

(Noticias en Español, cont. de página 19)

Obispos De Argentina Ante El Aborto: Toda Vida Vale
BUENOS AIRES (ACI Prensa) - Ante el debate impulsado por algunos grupos en Argentina que buscan la liberalización del aborto, los obispos del país recuerdan que “toda vida vale”.

Los obispos se adhieren así a la iniciativa lanzada en ocasión de la Gran Marcha por la Vida que este domingo 25 de marzo se realiza en diversas ciudades de Argentina.

El Arzobispo de Mercedes Luján, Mons. Agustín Radzirzani; y su Obispo Auxiliar, Mons. Jorge Eduardo Scheing, participaron de la iniciativa y señalaron en un comunicado enviado a ACI Prensa que “la vida depende de Dios y hay vida desde el instante de la concepción”.

“Al mismo tiempo nos duele la muerte de tantas hermanas nuestras por causa de abortos clandestinos. Sabemos y somos testigos del sufrimiento de esas mujeres y estamos llamados por Jesús a tratarlas con ternura”.

El desafío de este tiempo, resaltan, “es no renunciar a cuidar a los más débiles es decir: A los niños por nacer, a las mamás, a los enfermos, a los más pobres. Que nadie nos robe el derecho a proteger la vida en todas sus manifestaciones y aprender a cuidarnos los unos a los otros. Piadamos al Señor ilumine a los legisladores para que determinen leyes que defendan siempre la vida”. 

Por su parte, el Presidente de la Conferencia Episcopal Argentina, Mons. Oscar Ojea, señaló brevemente que “defender la vida es servir la vida”.

De otro lado, el Arzobispo de Rosario, Mons. Eduardo Eliseo Martín, animó a los argentinos a sumarse a la iniciativa y escribió en su cuenta de Twitter: “Este Domingo de Ramos súmate a este gesto por la vida”.

El pasado 20 de marzo comenzó el debate del proyecto de ley de aborto en la Cámara de Diputados de Argentina, un proyecto presentado por séptima vez, que lleva el nombre de ley de “Interrupción Voluntaria del Embarazo” (IVE).

El Presidente de Argentina, Mauricio Macri, conformó una comisión para redactar la reforma del Código Penal que, entre otros temas, modificaría el artículo 86 para ampliar las causales del aborto.

Diversos grupos provida anunciaron la realización de diversas marchas en todo el país, siendo la principal la que se realizará esta tarde en Buenos Aires.

Ciudades como Mendoza, Corrientes, Mar de Plata, Catamarca, Córdoba, Tucumán, Santa Fe, Santiago del Estero y muchas más también manifestarán su deseo de defender la vida desde la concepción hasta la muerte natural.
What The ‘Great Firewall’ Might Signal for Vatican-China Deal

By Courtney Grogan

Washington D.C., March 23 (CNA/EWTN News) - As the Chinese government tightens control over Christian groups in the country, experts caution that Beijing is positioned to further restrict religious freedom, using the model of government-run social media.

While introducing more restrictive rules on religious practice, President Xi Jinping’s repeatedly stated goal has been the “Sinicization” of religions, or to diffuse “religious theories with Chinese character” into the five official religions supervised by the government, including the Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association.

On March 22, China instituted a major change in its religious oversight by abolishing the State Administration for Religious Affairs and shifting direct control to the Chinese Communist Party’s United Front Work Department (UFWD). As a result, the Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association will now be under the day-to-day direct supervision of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). This is similar to another bureaucratic change in China earlier this week, that gave the CCP direct control of movies, television, books, and radio.

“They are folding the state into the party … It is one thing when the party does that with regards to the media, but there is something particularly ironic now in the sense that you have a department of an avowedly Marxist atheist communist party that is going to be managing religious affairs,” said Freedom House’s Senior Research Analyst for East Asia, Sarah Cook.

“Now the Bishops’ Conference is even less explicitly autonomous and more clearly directly managed by an atheist communist party department,” said Cook. This change could result in more pressure for religious entities in China to make clear that their first and foremost allegiance is to the party and not to their religion.

The UFWD is the CCP’s “soft power” instrument for “winning the hearts and minds” for China’s political goals at home and abroad, according to the Financial Times. It seeks to manage groups outside of the CCP, including Hong Kong, Taiwan, Tibet, Xinjiang, ethnic minorities, and religious groups.

The UFWD is “basically trying to make sure that these entities are following the party line even though they are not part of the communist party itself,” explained Cook.

China has long been known for its strict control of information, through means including internet access restriction and the creation of alternative social media platforms that are completely controlled by government surveillance and censorship.

So while Twitter is inaccessible in China — blocked along with Google, Facebook, and YouTube by “the Great Firewall” — one can express himself in 140 characters or fewer on the Chinese website “Sina Weibo” instead, as long as the message is not critical of President Xi Jinping.

Critics fear this model could increasingly be adopted in the realm of religion as well.

The Vatican has been in negotiations with Xi’s regime on the appointment of bishops. Some speculate an agreement will resemble the Vatican’s deal with Vietnam, in which the Holy See picks bishops from a selection of candidates proposed by the episcopal conference, which, as of this week, is more directly controlled by the CCP.

As the Vatican considers the possibility of a deal with the Chinese regime, China-watchers are warning technology companies that engaging directly with the Chinese government could lead to their complicity with censorship and surveillance, or lead to the arrest of Chinese citizens.

One early example of this was Yahoo, which provided sensitive information about writers to the Chinese authorities. More recently, Apple removed VPN software that helped Chinese citizens circumvent its Great Firewall from its China App Store.

Formerly, technology companies had good faith that by going in there [China] they really were helping to provide these open platforms for communication … It would be very difficult to make that argument right now,” explained Shanthi Kalathil, the director of the International Forum for Democracy Studies at a panel on PEN America’s new report on social media censorship on March 19.

“All of the trends are pointing in a negative direction. The intent of the Chinese government is clear that anybody that does go in will absolutely not have the space to provide what these companies may profess to be providing on paper. We know enough now about both the censorship machine as well as Xi Jinping’s intentions—I think that’s been made quite clear,” continued Kalathil, referring to the increase in censorship, surveillance, and punishment of Chinese social media users in the past three years.

China has increasingly used its control of domestic social media alternatives to criminalize internet users who express dissenting opinions.

In China, people talk about how “it used to be that we would have a chance yet to learn about Caritas Village, check out our project website at www.buildcaritasvillage.org, to learn more about how Caritas Village will be a place where homeless children, veterans, seniors, and other neighbors find home.

If you would like to take a tour of the future site of Caritas Village, contact me at rkendall@srcharities.org or 707-308-4797.

Caritas Village:
A Place to Find Home

By Rebecca Kendall

Last night’s message was loud and clear: Build Caritas Village.

Neighbors, supporters, and staff joined the City of Santa Rosa at the first public meeting about Catholic Charities proposed new campus designed to help people find and keep housing.

Thank you to those of you who came and voiced support for this much-needed answer to the city’s housing and homelessness crisis. We appreciate your willingness to take a bold stance on behalf of our most vulnerable neighbors. If you would like to attend future meetings as a supporter, go to https://www.caritas-village.org/volunteer to sign up!

Understandingly, there are questions to be addressed about things like historic buildings, traffic, and parking, and Catholic Charities is committed to working with the City as they evaluate the concerns and make recommendations.

If you haven’t had a chance yet to learn about Caritas Village, check out our project website at www.buildcaritasvillage.org, to learn more about how Caritas Village will be a place where homeless children, veterans, seniors, and other neighbors find home.

If you would like to take a tour of the future site of Caritas Village, contact me at rkendall@srcharities.org or 707-308-4797.

Rebecca Kendall, Caritas Village Campaign Director, Catholic Charities.
April 4th & 21st
Catholic Cursillo Fellowship Gathering
Want a Catholic friend? Come join us. Develop friendships, enjoy singing and fellowship, hear how other Catholics are living their life of holiness and pray as a group before the Blessed Sacrament. Fellowship gatherings of Catholics are held twice a month. Catholic Cursillo is a movement within the Catholic Church based on friendship. We would love to be your friend. Join us on April 4th from 6-8pm at St. Eugene’s in Santa Rosa. Join us on April 21st from 2-4pm at St. Elizabeth Seton in Rohnert Park. 

Our 2018 weekends have been scheduled. For further information call Debbie Simonson in Petaluma at 904-463-1070 or Pricilla Silvey in Napa at 707-567-7957
Our website is: http://www.catholiccursillomovementofsantarosa.com/

April 14th
The Annunciation of the Lord
(Was transferred to Monday, April 9, 2018, because March 25 is Palm Sunday).

April 14th
EWTN Gathering at St. Eugene
You are cordially invited to join us for a special EWTN gathering at The Cathedral of Saint Eugene in Santa Rosa CA. The gathering will be held on Saturday, April 14th, from 8am until 11:30am You will have the opportunity to learn about strategies to spread the Word of God, and Jim Pinto will send a special message from the studios in Alabama. Don’t miss this opportunity to share with us at this special gathering.
We have limited spots available, so hurry to confirm your attendance! To confirm your attendance, please send an email to Monica Marin: mmarin@ewtn.com or call to 205-354-5820

April 14th
St. Bernard's High School Alumni Hall of Fame Dinner
The dinner will be held at 58HS Auditorium, Sat, April 14th. Reservations required. Call Julie Green-Winburn 707-725-3254. All proceeds fund scholarships to students attending St. Bernard's High School.

April 14th
St. Francis Solano Catholic School
All You Need Is Love Spring Fling And Auction Join Us! A benefit & auction to support the students of St. Francis Solano school. Tickets are available in the school office and online at http://events.reodysauction.com/stfrancissolanoschool/2018

April 22nd
Fathers of Faith Series
Kolbe Academy & Trinity Prep 2055 Redwood Rd, Napa. An Introduction to the Lives & Teachings of the Church Fathers by Fr. Gary Sumpter. From September 21, 2017 to June 28, 2018 7:30 pm, Join us for an inspiring series one evening a month on Thursdays. Who were the early Christians? What did they believe, teach, and often die for? Is our faith today the same as the faith they professed? These are some of the basic themes to be covered in this 10-part series. Among the Church Fathers to be discussed will be Clement of Rome, Ignatius of Antioch, Cyril of Jerusalem, Justin Martyr, Leo the Great, Gregory Nazianzen, Athanasius, Irenaeus, Cyprian, Basil, and more. Talks will be on the following Thursday nights at 7:30pm: April 26, May 31, June 28. No Charge. Donations gratefully accepted.

May 2nd & 19th
Catholic Cursillo fellowship gathering
Want a Catholic friend? Come join us. Develop friendships, enjoy singing and fellowship, hear how other Catholics are living their life of holiness and pray as a group before the Blessed Sacrament. Fellowship gatherings of Catholics are held twice a month.
Catholic Cursillo is a movement within the Catholic Church based on friendship. We would love to be your friend. Join us on May 2nd from 6-8pm at St. Eugene’s in Santa Rosa.
Join us on May 19th from 2-4pm at St. Elizabeth Seton in Rohnert Park.
Our 2018 weekends have been scheduled. For further information call Debbie Simonson in Petaluma at 904-463-1070 or Pricilla Silvey in Napa at 707-567-7957
Our website is: http://www.catholiccursillomovementofsantarosa.com/

Youth and Young Adult Ministry Upcoming Dates:
June 28 - July 1st Youth on A Mission at St. Mary’s College in Moraga Leadership Training. Summer Mission Trips:
1. Homeless with Betty Chin in Eureka (tdb dates in July)
2. Building Homes with Hope City in Middletown - contact Tim: tim@hcrn.info

Ongoing in North Diocese
Christ the King Church Parish, McKinleyville
Weekdays: Monday Mass 9am Friday Adoration 3pm followed by Mass 4pm

Saint Kateri Tekakwitha Mission, Hoopa:
Sunday Mass 11:30am, HSU Newman Center, 700 Union St. Arcata: Sunday Mass 5:30pm followed by supper & learning about Catholicism.

St. Mary’s Arcata
Fr. Pacheco will be celebrating Latin Masses every Sunday. The first Sunday of the month will be at 6:30am, and all the following Sundays of the month will be at 1:30pm.

Prolife Rosary
Each Saturday at 7:30am at the corner of Walford Ave & Wilson St in Eureka.

Ongoing in South Diocese
First Saturdays: Oakville House of Prayer
(Carmelite Monastery)
Morning of Recollection every first Saturday of the month; Confessions 10-11am; Mass 11am. Confessions (English/Spanish) Mondays and Fridays: 10-12pm, 3-5pm, 8-9pm. Church Hours: Chapel opens at 7am. Closes at 9pm. only on Mondays and Fridays. Weekday Mass 8am. Monday - Saturday (except for on First Saturdays when Mass is at 11am) Sunday Mass 9am.
Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament 5pm - 5:45pm Benediction. All are invited.
All other days Church closes at 6pm, 20 Mount Carmel Drive, Oakville, CA 707-944-2454 oakvillecarmelites.org.

To have your calendar event listed please email us! Srdiocese1@gmail.com

The National Council of Catholic Women Unites Schools in Holy Land with U.S. Schools
(Washington, D.C. March 5th)

The National Council of Catholic Women (NCCW) is delighted to announce the first school pairing in our project to enhance knowledge of the daily life of Catholics in the Holy Land. This came about at the request of Catholic women in the Holy Land who indicated that they wanted to increase awareness in the U.S. of the constraints under which Catholics live in the Holy Land. The presence of these “living stones” in the land where Christ walked is diminishing rapidly due to discrimination in jobs, confiscation of their ancestral lands, and difficulty in obtaining passes for travel such as from Bethlehem or Nazareth to Jerusalem.

NCCW President Maribeth Stewart noted, “As they told us, in Bethlehem going to Jerusalem is a dream for most of them. We determined that a very effective way to assure them that we know and care about them and pray for them is to begin a program with our USA Catholic schools and their Franciscan schools in the Holy Land. The students will share this experience with their families and friends and this will help reassure them that we indeed think of and pray for our sisters and brothers in that ancient troubled land.”

The Franciscans suggested that the first school to participate would be Terra Sancta College in Bethlehem that has students from preschool through High School and that we should concentrate first on the grammar school ages. Accordingly, we are very happy to announce that Saint Lawrence School in West Haven, CT, with grades from pre-K - 8, was selected as the USA school paired with Terra Sancta!

After securing the very willing cooperation of the administration and teachers at both schools, an initial exchange has begun with the lower grades sending drawings and the upper grades letters. We are very pleased to note that the exchanges worked very well and that the students are now actively engaged in learning about each other and their daily activities. The letters reveal, in a charming way, the similarities of students despite where they live. Sports, hobbies, school, religion, and family life figure in exchanges from both sides. We look forward to further exchanges and to expanding the program to encompass more schools in the US and the Holy Land through the Service Commission of the National Council of Catholic Women. For more information or to interview NCCW President, Maribeth Stewart Blogaowski, please call 703-224-0990 or email lbennett@nccw.org.
The Santa Rosa diocese held our first Youth Day on March 11th at Cardinal Newman high school. The event was a true “spring forward” metaphorically and literally. Adults were challenged to rouse teens on a day-light savings morning, and ready them for an 11am kick off. They were successful, nearly 900 students showed up.

The event combined a Catholic hip hop artist, teen testimonies, inspirational speakers, Christian rock band, Marian Sisters singing hymns, Eucharistic Adoration, long Confession lines, and Mass with Bishop Vasa…. Santa Rosa’s first ever Youth Day packed a punch! Literally. When gym doors opened, people were met with a flood of lights and sound. Many adults turned back around because it was just “too much for my ears to handle” while the students basked in their comfortable concert setting.

Catholic rapper Joe Melendrez jumped and danced the students into a frenzy with his lyrics and beat. His songs “Sacred” and “Kingdom Come” challenged everyone to match two worlds--theology and hip hop. While some uncomfortable with an entirely new way to pray, others stood high with phones glowing, recording every second of this phenomenon.

However, the hype and energy of the day didn’t start in the gym, it started out on the streets and in the parking lots as the Cardinal Newman football team and other volunteers spun signs, shouted hellos, and slapped welcoming hi-fives to everyone who came. And they came from everywhere. Bus loads from Napa, Ukiah, and Windsor alongside carpools from Ft. Bragg and parishes across the diocese. Our largest pilgrims came from St. Vincent and St. Rose parishes.

The electricity of the day and the joy of the celebration was accentuated by inspirational speakers that challenged everyone to be a “Light of Hope,” a theme that was discerned and affirmed by the day’s Gospel reading—John 3:16. The encouraging messages were not merely from the stage however, social media platforms were incorporated to stay connected with participants. Our journey to be a “Light of Hope” is a daily walk, not merely one celebratory Sunday.

You’re welcome to join us and receive a weekly text through Easter that emphasizes our “Light of Hope” theme by conducting a call and response (perhaps the gym setting inspired a rally to break out) as students chanted “We Can” when Bishop called for them to move forward in this world and become defenders of the faith.

For more information, pictures and stories see www.sryouth.org, connect on Facebook or Instagram, or check out posts from hip hop artist @joemelendrez—hear what students had to say of the event. Many attendees already have posted to Joe #sryouthday. “I learned that we are all special in our own way and God created us to be our own unique person”, “I learned you need to be quiet enough to hear Gods acts through people. You are truly inspiring” - “The concert was also dope bc it was a good way to kick off the day” and then noted “God has a plan for everything I am going through and that I need to put more trust in him and put him first by adding more prayer in my life.”

Top left: Students silhouetted in front of the enormous video screen during the song “Sacred”. Top right: Newman Seniors Beau Barrington, Steven Zichichi, and Haley Robertson shared their testimony. Middle left: Students engaged in the “Voice of Hope” card writing project. Middle right: Joe Melendrez surrounded by students on stage. Bottom left: Bridge Christian Worship band. Bottom right: Fr. Moses Brown elevating our “Light of Hope” in Eucharistic Adoration.

The rock-concert hype of the day was a bit shocking, but it could not compare to the incredible silence of the gym during Adoration. All were breathlessly reverent before our Lord in the Eucharist.

Long Confession lines with Fr. Ron, Fr. Eliseo, Fr. Sean, and Fr. David Galeana needed to be broken up to begin Mass. Even Bishop Vasa saddled up a picnic table to hear and heal teens. Bishop then led his priests into the gym for the pinnacle celebration of our faith, The Mass. His homily brilliantly illuminated the “Light of Hope” theme by conducting a call and response—hear what students had to say of the event. Many attendees already have posted to Joe #sryouthday. “I learned that we are all special in our own way and God created us to be our own unique person”, “I learned you need to be quiet enough to hear Gods acts through people. You are truly inspiring” - “The concert was also dope bc it was a good way to kick off the day” and then noted “God has a plan for everything I am going through and that I need to put more trust in him and put him first by adding more prayer in my life.”

Mercy Center Burlingame | 650.340.7474 | www.mercy-center.org
Nothing Can Stifle the Joy of the Gospel, Pope Says on Palm Sunday

By Elise Harris

Vatican City, March 25 (CNA/EWTN News) - Jesus was the first target of “fake news” spread by those who wanted spin and twist his message for their own benefit, Pope Francis said Palm Sunday, but stressed that despite the pride and skepticism of some, nothing can dampen the joy of Christ’s message or his Resurrection.

On the cross, Jesus died “crying out his love for each of us: young and old, saints and sinners, the people of his times and of our own,” the Pope said March 25.

“We have been saved by his cross,” and despite the coldness and skepticism of some, “no one can repress the joy of the Gospel; no one, in any situation whatsoever, is far from the Father’s merciful gaze.”

Pope Francis spoke to pilgrims present for his Palm Sunday Mass in St. Peter’s Square. He began the liturgy at the obelisk in the center of the square, where he blessed the palms and olives to be used in the celebration. He then processed to the main altar and began Mass.

Palm Sunday also coincided with the diocesan celebration of World Youth Day, which this year holds the theme “Do not be afraid Mary, for you have found favor with God.”

It also marked the end of the March 19-24 synodal meeting in Rome, which gathered some 300 youth from around the world and drew participation from an additional 15,000 on social media. The event served as a precursor for the October synod of bishops on “Young people, faith and the discernment of vocation.”

At the end of Sunday’s liturgy, young people presented Pope Francis with their conclusions, which were compiled into a 16-page final document based on discussions held throughout the week.

In his homily, Pope Francis said the account of Jesus’ entrance into Jerusalem evokes a range of different and at times contradictory sentiments, including love and hatred, self-sacrifice and indifference; the joy of those who welcome Jesus and the bitterness of those who want him crucified.

The sense of love and joy conveyed in the passage is reminiscent of all those “living on the edges” of society or who have been “left behind and overlooked,” but who have also been touched, healed or forgiven by God in some way.

In contrast, this joy, Francis said, is a source of “scandal” for those who consider themselves faithful to the law and its precepts, and it is “unbearable for those hardened against pain, suffering and misery.”

“How hard it is for the comfortable and the self-righteous to understand the joy and the celebration of God’s mercy! How hard it is for those who trust only in themselves, and look down on others, to share in this joy.”

The cry of those who shout “crucify him!” the Pope said, is the voice “armed with disparagement, slander and false witness. It is the voice of those who twist reality and invent stories for their own benefit, without concern for the good name of other.”

Francis said people with this attitude have no problem “spinning facts” and making Jesus look like a criminal. As a result “hope is demolished, dreams are killed, joy is suppressed; the heart is shielded and charity grows cold.”

However, faced people who have this attitude, the best remedy, the Pope said, “is to look at Christ’s cross and let ourselves be challenged by his final cry,” which Jesus made as he died for each and every person.

Looking to the cross means to challenge and question oneself about one’s actions and choices, including the sensitivity to those who are experiencing difficulty, the Pope said, asking: “Where is our heart focused? Does Jesus Christ continue to be a source of joy and praise in our heart, or does its priorities and concerns make us ashamed to look at sinners, the least and forgotten?”

Speaking directly to the young people present, Pope Francis said that like the Pharisees who told Jesus to “rebuke your disciples,” there are also people who try to silence and exclude the youth.

“There are many ways to silence young people and make them invisible. Many ways to anesthetize them, to make them keep quiet, ask nothing, question nothing. There are many ways to sedate them, to keep them from getting involved, to make their dreams flat and dreary, petty and plaintive,” he said.

However, pointing to Jesus’ response that “if these were silent, the very stones would cry out,” Francis told youth not to give into the pressure to stay quiet, because “you have it in you to shout.”

“It is up to you not to keep quiet,” he said, and “even if others keep quiet, if we older people and leaders keep quiet, if the whole world keeps quiet and loses its joy, I ask you: Will you cry out?”

After Mass Pope Francis led pilgrims in praying the Angelus, asking that Mary would help each person to live Holy Week well. “From her we learn the interior silence, the gaze of the heart and loving faith to follow Jesus on the path of the cross, which leads to the joyful light of the Resurrection.”