TED is a media organization that posts online talks under the slogan “ideas worth spreading.” Earlier this year, Pope Francis surprised the world by digitally giving his own TED Talk at the organization’s annual conference in Vancouver. In his nearly 20-minute talk, our Holy Father challenged his listeners to ignite a much-needed revolution of tenderness in our world.

Tenderness, the Holy Father suggested, “is the love that comes close and becomes real. It is a movement that starts from our heart and reaches the eyes, the ears, and the hands. Tenderness means to use our eyes to see the other, our ears to hear the other, to listen to the children, the poor, those who are afraid of the future. To listen also to the silent cry of our common home, of our sick and polluted earth. Tenderness means to use our hands and our heart to comfort the other, to take care of those in need.”

What better time could there be to launch a revolution of tenderness than during the Advent and Christmas season? After all, the heart of Christmas is the story of God’s coming among us as a helpless baby—this is the epitome of tenderness. As Pope Francis shared, “God himself descended into Jesus to be on our level. This is the path that Jesus himself took. He

Join The Revolution of Tenderness
By Sister Constance Veit, l.s.p.

TED is a media organization that posts online talks under the slogan “ideas worth spreading.” Earlier this year, Pope Francis surprised the world by digitally giving his own TED Talk at the organization’s annual conference in Vancouver. In his nearly 20-minute talk, our Holy Father challenged his listeners to ignite a much-needed revolution of tenderness in our world.

In honor of the 100th anniversary of the Apparitions of Fatima, we look to Sunday December 10th as the day our diocese will be re-consecrated to the special care and patronage of the Blessed Virgin Mary. The year 2017 has been an extremely challenging year, both on a global scale, as well as on a local scale. Nowhere has that been more evident than in communities that have experienced natural and man-made disasters themselves. Our Diocese Stands at the front of that line. And so each of the 41 Parishes in this humble, “mission-diocese” will gather on Sunday December 10th to solemnly consecrate the entire Diocese of Santa Rosa into the Immaculate Heart of Mary, our Mother, that she may in turn become our most powerful advocate and intercessor before her Son Jesus Christ. As we cast all our cares, concerns, joys, and sorrows to “Jesus through Mary,” others

(see Consecration Day, page 4)
This month we will complete that program, with which we have been engaged for the whole of 2017, directed toward the Re-Dedication of the Diocese and Parishes of Santa Rosa to the patronage and care of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Thirty four years ago, on Sunday, May 15, 1983, Bishop Mark Hurley called for the Re-Dedication of the Diocese to the Blessed Virgin Mary in the course of “Mary’s Hour”. The ceremony was held at Saint Sebastian’s Parish in Sebastopol where Monsignor William Serado acted as the Delegate of the Bishop. Our present effort is much broader and expansive in scope.

At the beginning of this year, I asked that we take special note of the 100th Anniversary of the Apparitions of Mary at Fatima and that we work and plan for a renewal of this Dedication of the Diocese to the Blessed Virgin Mary. The dates for this Renewal of Consecration span December 8 through 12 but especially at all Masses on Saturday, December 9 and Sunday, December 10, 2017.

At the Cathedral and in those parishes where it can be arranged, a special “Mary’s Hour” Vigil will be hosted the evening of December 9, 2017. Pastors are free to host Vigils on other days as well but the official Diocesan date is December 9. During the Vigil which will last approximately one hour, we will listen to the Word of God, recite the Glorious Mysteries of the Rosary, sing a number of Marian songs and then recite the Act of Consecration. It is my hope to have as many parishes and missions as possible plan and participate in similar Vigils throughout the Diocese.

Your Pastor’s have received a copy of the Vigil planned for the Cathedral so that the ceremony can be replicated throughout the Diocese. I pray that there is broad and active participation.

For the 2017 Parish and Diocesan Consecration, I ask that the Act of Consecration, which is essentially the one used in the Diocese in 1983, be recited after all Masses. Special attention could be given to any and all who participated in the 33 Days to Morning Glory, a program of preparation. Continued use of the 33 Days Retreat is encouraged for the balance of the yearlong Centennial Celebration of the Apparition of Mary at Fatima as well as for annual Marian celebrations.

If it is not possible to attend one of the Parish Vigils, then individual families, or any gathering of the faithful, could easily come together to recite the Glorious Mysteries of the Rosary followed by the recitation of the recommended Act of Consecration. There are a variety of Approved Consecration Prayers and any of them are sufficient for this unified Diocesan Consecration but I do recommend to you, for this occasion, the Act of Consecration found below.

ACT OF CONSECRATION

O Mary, Virgin most powerful and Mother of Mercy, Queen of Heaven and Refuge of sinners: We, representing your Catholic people of the Diocese of Santa Rosa, consecrate ourselves to your Immaculate Heart. We consecrate to your very being and our whole life; all that we have, all that we love, all that we are. To thee do we give our homes, our families, our Diocese and our country. We desire that all that is in us and around us may belong to thee and that we may share in the benefits of your motherly blessing.

Holy Mary, bring help to the miserable, strength to those who mourn, to the cause of the clergy; intercede for devout women and men. May all who pay homage to your Holy Name experience your powerful help.

We fly to your patronage, O Holy Mother of God; despise not our petitions in our necessities but deliver us always from all dangers. O glorious and Blessed Virgin Mary. Amen.

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### PRIESTLY ORDINATION ANNIVERSARY

- Rev. Matthew Ittiyappara, December 21, 1967
- Rev. Diogo Baptista, December 14, 1969
- Rev. Jose Gonzalez, December 20, 1969
- Rev. Juan Carlos Chiarinoti, December 5, 1986
- Rev. Jojo Puthussery, December 9, 2002

### 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.
After the fires: Singing songs of praise amid raw reality

By Mary Jackson (World Magazine)

November 25 SANTA ROSA, Calif.—As newly married and newly saved hippies, my in-laws once lost their few possessions in a flood that submerged the tree house they built and lived in on an Oregon communal property. They have mostly laughed about this, only wishing sometimes they had retrieved more than one washed-out wedding photo.

But two weeks ago, early Monday morning, a fire consumed more than four decades of my in-laws’ possessions. Their house, built with their own hands, was one of nearly 7,700 homes and buildings that burned in Northern California’s unprecedented wildfires. Like many others, they had minutes to grab important documents and photo albums. They drove to our house as a towering blaze jumped Highway 101 and swept through their Coffey Park neighborhood.

A day later, my mother-in-law spent the afternoon searching through rubble. She returned weary but eager to show me one find: her mother’s porcelain Christmas ornaments, faded and still dusted in ash. This struck me as a picture of grace. At Christmas most of us decorate trees. As Christians, we do this not randomly but in celebration of God’s merciful plan for redemption—a Son come to earth to die for sinners, the just for the unjust, making good the destruction sin has wrought. Yet, how often do I sing “Amazing Grace” without amazement, blinded by earthly comforts and my perceived self-sufficiency. This is why author Iain Murray calls trials, afflictions, and illnesses “medicinal,” for that is often what it takes to lead us to God.

For most in Sonoma and Napa counties, that fiery October week meant multiple evacuations and close calls as the blazes neared many of our homes and neighborhoods, scorching some and sparing others. At one point, our family went to the ocean, the direction that seemed safe. I watched my in-laws walk along the smoky beach as my 2-year-old sought to keep up. I thought of the psalmist’s view of trials: “Before I was afflicted, I went astray,” “In my distress, I called upon the Lord,” and “It was good for me that I was afflicted.” Even as I felt my own uncertainty and the weight of loss, a song of praise came to my lips.

For now, we and our kids will miss the stories by my in-laws’ wood stove, canning fruit in their kitchen, science and art projects at their table—also the setting for Christmas Eve and Thanksgiving dinner spreads. My daughter will miss dancing in my mother-in-law’s garage, converted into a ballet studio that served many young dancers. They do plan to rebuild.

In flood and now in fire, though, my in-laws point to God’s merciful goodness and the promise of eternal blessings. The fire consumed a temporal “earthly dwelling,” but as the Apostle Paul writes to the Corinthians, “we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.” Indeed, we have this legacy from my in-laws and as believers, it is worth much more than material possessions.

In the weeks after the fires, we drove down familiar Santa Rosa roads, now cryptic and strangely unfamiliar, with piles of debris where homes once stood. The fires consumed my son’s Catholic school, many friends’ houses, and parks, stores, businesses, and restaurants we frequented. Many of the golden hills we usually admire are now charred.

Soon these black landscapes will sprout anew, and burnt rubble will be bulldozed away—another picture of grace. For now, they still confront us with raw reality. In our home, this has sparked conversations, like how this experience has revealed our complacency. It is easy to sing hymns but hard to see our great need, our wretched hearts.

In our area, the earth groaned, and fires consumed many of our comforts. Last Sunday my father-in-law stood before our small congregation, still wearing the same pants and shoes he wore the morning of the fire and sifting through his house’s ashen remains. I couldn’t help but think the flood prepared them for fire. Another psalm came to mind: “We went through fire and through water; yet you brought us out into a place of abundance.”

Christmas Giving

Catholic Detention Ministries is requesting donations of small individually wrapped candies and unused Christmas cards with envelopes for the use of the inmates of the Humboldt County Correctional Facility. Candies should remain in unopened store packages. This is a combined effort of the local Catholic churches to put together 375 packages, one for each inmate. This has been much appreciated by the inmates in the past. Please leave donations at the church or parish office no later than Monday, December 4th for pick up. For information or questions call Bob at 677-1952.
Lay apostolate Church Militant spoke with the pioneer of Consecration Day, director, writer and storyboard artist Angelo Libutti.

Libutti told the apostolate the inspiration for California’s consecration came to him during a 2 am–4 am Eucharistic Adoration session. While in prayer, he was struck by a profound awareness of California’s spiritual barrenness.

“Of all the states,” he said, “California is certainly the most distant from God, the least faithful to His Commandments.”

There is a deep hunger for God among many people, Libutti observed. “You can tell there is a need for something higher, a hunger for transcendence,” he said, “because of all the attempts to find it in so many denominations or false, feelings-based religions or in other things.”

“One day, they’re atheist, then five months pass by and they call themselves Buddhist, and six months later, they’ve moved on to something else. But they’re still seeking ‘Something.’”

The film industry veteran noted that in the midst of their search, many seem blind to the Truth. This, he said, is what sparked his inspiration.

“With Our Lady’s help,” he declared confidently, “we can overcome this obstacle, as Jesus gave her to all seeking ‘Something.’”

Through grassroots support, Libutti said, the movement has begun gaining rapid momentum in Los Angeles, Orange County, San Diego and San Francisco.

He shared the example of Gary Markowski, a member of the Arrowhead-Desert Valley Chapter of the Knights of Columbus, who is actively promoting the consecration across his diocese.

Markowski shared that he’s received a “very enthusiastic” response from priests in his area and hopes to enlist the support of his local ordinary, Bishop Gerald Barnes of San Bernardino.

Additionally, “Our Knights of Columbus Chapter of 58 Councils will be participating,” he said, and they are working to get the state office on board.

The consecration is attracting support from high-profile Catholics with connections to California. Confirmed participants include actor Eduardo Varasgugi; pro-life activist and Live Action founder Lila Rose; Emotional Virtue founder Sarah Swaford; evangelists Jesse Romero, Tim Staples and Patrick Coffin; musician Paul J. Kim, exorcist Fr. Chad Ripperger and groups like the American Society for the Defense of Tradition, Family and Property and Catholic Answers.

According to the program, “On Consecration Day, we urge everyone to attend Mass, pray the Rosary and the Prayer of Consecration for California.”

The prayer of consecration commits the United States as a whole, and California in particular, to the care of the Blessed Virgin Mary and begs mercy from God:

### The Consecration Prayer:

**Most Holy Trinity:** Our Father in Heaven, who chose Mary as the fairest of Your daughters; Holy Spirit, who chose Mary as Your spouse; God the Son, who chose Mary as Your mother; in union with Mary, we adore Your majesty and acknowledge Your supreme, eternal dominion and authority.

*Most Holy Trinity,* we put the United States of America, and particularly, the State of California, into the hands of Mary Immaculate in order that she may present the country and our State to You. Through her, we wish to thank You for the great resources of this land and for the freedom which has been its heritage. Through the intercession of Mary, we pray mercy on the Catholic Church in America. Grant us peace. Have mercy on our president and on all the officers of our government. Grant us a fruitful economy born of justice and charity. Have mercy on the capital and on industry and labor. Protect the family life of the nation. Guard the innocence of our children. Grant the precious gift of many religious vocations. Through the intercession of our Mother, have mercy on the sick, the poor, the tempted, sinners — on all who are in need.

Mary, Immaculate Virgin, our Mother, Patroness of our land, we honor you and give our country and ourselves to your Sorrowful and Immaculate Heart. O Sorrowful and Immaculate Heart of Mary, pierced by the sword of sorrow prophesied by Simeon, save us from degeneration, disaster and war. Protect us from all harm. O Advocate, pray for us, that acting always according to your will and the Will of your Divine Son, we may live and die pleasing to God. Amen.

Mary, Mother of the Redeemer, your Beloved Son, Jesus, redeemed mankind. He died on the Cross so that we might live with Him and for Him. As Mother of Sorrows, you shared uniquely in His work of redemption. Please, Blessed Mother, accept our spiritual offering of Rosaries and fasts and present them to your Divine Son for us to plead our cause before Our Heavenly Father. In this way, we hope to be spared the just punishment for our souls that our State deserves from killing our unborn, sick, elderly, unwanted and for the violence, sex abuse, drugs, alcoholism, and sex trafficking we commit to others.

Please, Blessed Mother, protect our State from natural disasters and war. Intercede to defeat and claim victory over the whole Culture of Death, worldliness and help us to bring back God and the concept of family in our life, so we learn to live God’s commandments and to love our neighbor in our everyday life.

We believe that your Divine Son sheds the graces of His redemptive suffering upon the world. But as you shared most fully in His sufferings, as Our Mother of Sorrows, so now we believe that your Divine Son chooses to distribute the graces He has won for us through you as our Advocate. Therefore, we bring our needs before you in confident prayer. Amen.

California’s reputation for sin is widely known. But there are lights in the darkness. Faithful prelates like Bp. Robert Vasa in Santa Rosa and Abp. Salvatore Cordileone in San Francisco are fighting back against opponents inside and outside the Church. The Priestly Fraternity of St. Peter is now active in the dioceses of Sacramento, Los Angeles and San Diego.

San Diego is home to apologetics ministry Catholic Answers and one of the few U.S. Catholic universities faithful to the Magisterium, John Paul the Great University. To the north in Santa Paula is another: Thomas Aquinas College, which schools its students in orthodoxy through a robust great books program. Publisher Ignatius Press in San Francisco educates Catholics around the world, producing volumes of works each year.

In Napa, Catholic apologist Joseph Sciambra leads Jesus Loves Gay Men, an apostolate dedicated to leading practicing homosexual men out of their sin.

Orange County is home base for pro-life juggernaut David Daleiden’s Center for Medical Progress, whose undercover investigations have exposed Planned Parenthood’s peddling of aborted baby body parts.

Though he is under no illusions about California’s spiritual condition, Libutti hopes the consecration will help spark renewal, describing the consecration as “a first baby step for this state to return to its Catholic roots.”

“If we get a large number of people praying the Rosary and have California consecrated, this alone will be a great achievement, a great start.”

“Hopefully more people will learn about the power of the Rosary and grow as Catholics with this event,” he said, adding that “we need to have more teenagers and adult men participating to break the stereotype that praying the Rosary is something for old ladies.”

Ultimately, Libutti reflected, “[w]e just have to make it clear that this is all about the spiritual well-being of our state. We must fight for the souls of our families and ask the Lord for His mercy.”
Detroit, Mich., Nov 19 (CNA/EWTN News) - Usually, when Detroit’s Ford Field is filled with people, it’s because football fans are watching the Lions play another NFL team. But on Saturday, Nov. 18, despite the chill and the rain, more than 60,000 people from around the country filled the domed stadium for another reason—to celebrate the beatification of their friend Father Solanus Casey, who is now just one step away from canonization as a saint in the Catholic Church.

Whether they knew him in real life (he died in 1957) or only through a story or a book, many who came to the beatification Mass spoke warmly of Blessed Solanus not just as an example of faith and a powerful intercessor, but as a true friend. That was the case for Adrian Carlson, who made the trip from Lincoln, Neb. with his wife to be present for the beatification.

Born more than 30 years after Blessed Solanus’ death, Carlson never knew the friar in real life, but nevertheless, “I can honestly say I felt like I actually knew him personally,” Carlson told CNA. His devotion to Fr. Solanus began in high school, when a family friend who was dying of cancer was praying for the intercession of the then-Venerable Solanus Casey. Although the family friend passed away, Carlson’s interest was piqued in the man his friend had invoked.

“What ultimately drew me to him was his humble acceptance of God’s will,” Carlson said. “He gratefully accepted God’s will and never complained about the hardships he was given. He was always submissive to his superiors viewing them as the voice through which God chose to tell Solanus the plan for his life.”

Carlson added that he has also often “thanked God ahead of time (as Solanus would do), through intercession of Solanus Casey, for healings of small ailments for them to disappear shortly after.” It would have been enlightening to poll the audience to see how many present at the beatification had experienced Blessed Solanus’ healing intercession in their own lives, because it seemed nearly everyone had a story to tell in that regard.

Brother Richard Merling, O.F.M. Cap., a Capuchin brother based in Detroit, had the opportunity to meet Bl. Solanus in real life when he was still a teenager and had not yet discerned whether to join the same order as the friar. Merling told CNA that he first met Fr. Solanus at the age of 15. Merling’s brother had been in a car accident, and had a badly injured leg that the doctors were going to amputate.

Desperate, Merling’s mother brought the family to see Fr. Solanus at the St. Bonaventure monastery in Detroit, seeking a miracle. “He simply said oh don’t worry, everything is going to be alright,” Merling recalled.

That was 60 years ago. Merling’s brother recovered and did not need amputation, and only recently did he need amputation, and only recently recalled.

“Especially in these days, young people are searching and looking and they want to know – where do I fit in? And I think Fr. Solanus must have asked himself the same thing, where do I fit in?” Blessed Solanus worked for several years before discerning a call to religious life in his late 20s. Evans said he has “bonded” with Solanus over the fact that they both had late vocations, and he said he considers him a true friend and a powerful intercessor.

When he was young, Solanus also questioned, “God what do you want me to do?” according to Evans. “And the answer was always simple, there was no complex algorithm, it was just simple, he wanted to be holy and to touch other people and to help them find a path to holiness.” “I don’t know if we could look for a better patron, a better friend, a better advocate in heaven than Blessed Solanus,” he said. ♦
Run to Mary, Run to Jesus

By Chris Lyford

As in the natural when children are confused, in pain, and paralyzed with fear, so in the supernatural, the remedy is the same: cry out for our Mother. Mary is our refuge and strength in these times when the spirits of confusion and division seek to rip our very Church apart (as if that were possible). Mary is our comfort when we have experienced the loss of employment, housing, or most profoundly, loved ones. She is the 'perfect' human. She isn't divine, but, because of her having been saved from all sin by the merits of the Cross of Jesus Christ, she is “immaculate” in her mind, heart, and soul. And because she is The Immaculate Conception, who better to assist us in pleading our case to her Son Jesus Christ?

You do not need any special gifts to read the signs of the times these days. If you actually try to read ALL of the signs chances are you will get whiplash from trying to keep up: North Korea, dubia, wildfires, shootings, bomb attacks, credit scores, mortgages, rents, traffic, and the list goes on into our own very personal concerns.

It's too late to run. We all need to do what we can to make a significant difference. But how are we sinners going to do anything but mess things up? The moment we think we have it figured out is the moment we have placed our faith in our own puny brains, and not in Our Lord Jesus Christ. The essence of faith is trust. To trust means to “let go.” But it's not a ‘letting go’ that simply gives up in hopeless despair; it's a letting go in precisely the way we were created from all eternity to let go: to let go and ‘let God’ take over.

To let God take over means the opposite of putting it out of our minds: it means we concentrate on remaining in that ‘place of trust’ in our minds as we freely engage peacefully in every single thought, action, or reaction. Whether we are slowly working through the tangled bureaucracy of filing insurance claims, the tangled rubble from a fire, or the tangled rubble of a marriage in distress, if we have decided to entrust our lives to Jesus, our every thought must become a conference-call with the Holy Spirit.

And don't worry about the Holy Spirit having too many people to 'conference' with—He is the all-powerful, and infinite God. And the All Powerful and Infinite God is concerned with every little tangle and bump in each of our lives, and gives us His full attention because, since He is God and we are not, His relationship with each one of us is exclusive. We are His one and only, each one of us. He cares, He has a plan, and He walks with us as He walked with a young homeless couple looking for a place to rest on a cold winter's night. He walks with us, as the angels walked with Him, and He surrounds us with His love as His mother surrounded Him, and welcomed Him with great joy. Let us all welcome Him with great love and joy in every moment and every interaction of this ‘Holy-Day’ Season.

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

Pope Francis Accepts Resignation of Auxiliary Bishop Justice of San Francisco

November 16 WASHINGTON - Pope Francis has accepted the resignation of Bishop William Justice as Auxiliary Bishop of the Archdiocese of San Francisco. Bishop Justice’s resignation was accepted upon reaching the retirement age of 75.

Bishop Justice’s retirement was publicized in Washington, November 16, by Archbishop Christophe Pierre, apostolic nuncio to the United States.

William Justice was born May 8, 1942 in Lawrence, Massachusetts, and moved to San Mateo, California in 1946. He received a Bachelor of Arts from Saint Joseph College in Philosophy in 1962 and a Master of Arts degree in Philosophy from Saint Patrick College in 1964. He graduated from St. Patrick Seminary in 1968 with a Master of Divinity Degree.

On May 17, 1968 he was ordained to the priesthood by Archbishop Joseph T. McGucken.


On April 10, 2008, he was named an auxiliary bishop by Pope Benedict XVI. On May 28, 2008, he was ordained a bishop at St. Mary’s Cathedral by Archbishop George H. Niederauer.

The Archdiocese of San Francisco comprises 1,016 square miles. It has a total population of 1,776,095 people of which 441,736 or 25 percent, are Catholic. Archbishop Salvatore J. Cordileone is the current Archbishop of San Francisco.

Letters Policy

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NOTE: Views of correspondents do not necessarily reflect those of this publication.
Teach Our Children

By Julie Sparacio

I read an article recently about the remarks made by Pope Francis at the first world congress on “Child Dignity in the Digital World”. This congress was held in Rome this last October. Pope Francis’ remarks were in response to the “Declaration of Rome”—a 13 point call to action to protect children from the dangers of the internet. I was surprised to learn that there are already 800 million internet users who are minors, with 250 million more minors to be added from India in the next two years. (https://www.americamagazine.org/politics-society/2017/10/06/pope-francis-commits-church-protect-children-abuse-digital-world/)

While undoubtedly the Internet creates numerous benefits and opportunities in terms of social inclusion and educational attainment, today, content that is increasingly extreme and dehumanizing is available literally at children’s fingertips. The proliferation of social media means insidious acts, such as cyberbullying, harassment and sextortion, are becoming commonplace. (https://zenit.org/articles/call-for-action-declaration-issued-by-rome-congress-to-protect-children-from-digital-world/)

There is a lot more in the declaration—challenges to businesses, private organizations and religious institutions to step up and defend and protect our children. I have been thinking about that, about the need for organizations worldwide, to step up, change policy, place safeguards, increase awareness, and put lives before profit. While I agree, I think there is also a desperate need for we, as parents, to be the first gatekeepers.

I write often about the need to talk to our children, to pay attention, to notice how they are, and pursue the questions when we see something off. I also know how easy it is to be busy, to think we know our children so well that we slack off on the oversight. It’s easy to think my child has nice friends, gets good grades, is a star athlete, has a good job, etc.—I know I don’t need to worry about him/her, and then ease up on monitoring them.

A few months ago, I met a sweet little 8-year old who plays on online game with parent permission and oversight. He told me about another player who approached him whose player name was Sex Boy. I sincerely doubt that is another 8 year old! Even with parental oversight this guy slipped through! Stopped by the parent, thankfully, but still made contact. I have a family member who was bullied online for months. Her “friends” even took an unflattering picture of her mom that she herself had posted as a joke and turned it into a meme that they passed around the various social media sites.

Disgusting, hurtful, rude; it was mean. My family member is okay, but there was damage, to her, to her mom, and to their relationship.

What I want to address though is not the victims. Today, I want to address the perpetrators. I listen to the terrible things that are said on the news, the stories that are out there! I listen to the stories about the pervasive culture of sexual abuse and harassment that has taken place in Hollywood and Washington. It continued for decades and became part of the culture because perpetrators got away with it. We can see that attitude online. Kids say mean, nasty, sexually harassing things online and get away with it. It doesn’t stop, because they’re not stopped. I would be ashamed, disappointed, mortified if I discovered that my child had ever posted some of the things that I have seen. But how would I even know? Is the solution to be on all of their social media sites? Don’t kid yourself; they can just create private ones you know nothing about. I know ones who have done that.

Truthfully, I think it’s more basic than that. We have to teach our children to respect themselves and to respect others. We have to model and demonstrate what that looks like, what that sounds like. If I am rude to the guy who cut in front of me in the checkout line, guess what my children will think is acceptable behavior? When my teens were learning to drive and someone cut them off, I used to say “Now honey, you don’t know what their rush is.” What if their Grandma is really sick in the hospital and they are trying to get there in time?” Yes that came back to bite me when I got mad when some driver cut me off!! If my children grow up with a Mom who is rude and disrespectful, whether I am talking to someone or about them, then it should come as no surprise to me if that is how my children behave. If I model compassion, if I encourage my children to put themselves in someone else’s shoes, I believe that they are much less likely to engage in bullying behavior.

Lastly, and most importantly, we must take our children to church. We must teach them to love God, that Jesus set the ultimate example of how to behave towards ourselves and others. We must teach them that we are all called by God to be lights in the world. If they don’t know God, and have a relationship with Jesus, none of that will have meaning. Then, we have to live it ourselves in order for our children to absorb it.

WU. S. Bishops Vote for Conference Secretary, Chairman and Chairmen-Elect of Six Committees at Fall General Assembly in Baltimore

November 14, 2017 WASHINGTON - The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) gathering in Baltimore for today’s 2017 General Assembly have elected a new conference secretary-elect along with a new chairman of the Committee for Religious Liberty and chairman-elect of five additional standing committees.

Archbishop Allen H. Vigneron, Archdiocese of Detroit has been elected as secretary-elect for the USCCB on the ballot with 96 votes over Archbishop Paul S. Coakley, Archdiocese of Oklahoma City who received 88 votes.

Additionally, Archbishop Joseph E. Kurtz, Archdiocese of Louisville, has been elected as chairman of the Committee for Religious Liberty in a 113 to 86 vote over Archbishop Jerome E. Listecki, Archdiocese of Milwaukee.

The five chairman-elect are:
Bishop Michael F. Burbidge, Diocese of Arlington, as chairman-elect of the Committee on Communications in a 116 to 70 vote over Bishop John O. Barres, Diocese of Rockville Centre.
Bishop Nelson J. Pérez, Diocese of Cleveland, as chairman-elect of the Committee on Cultural Diversity in the Church in a 102 to 77 vote over Bishop Shelton J. Fabe, Diocese of Houma-Thibodaux.
Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades, Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend as chairman-elect of the Committee on Doctrine in a 110 to 95 vote over Bishop Daniel E. Thomas, Diocese of Toledo.
Bishop Joseph R. Cistone, Diocese of Saginaw as chairman-elect of the Committee on National Collections in a 124 to 65 vote over Archbishop Michael O. Jackels, Archdiocese of Dubuque.
Bishop Joseph F. Naumann, Archdiocese of Kansas City, Kansas, as chairman-elect of the Committee on Pro-Life Activities in a 96 to 82 vote over Cardinal Blase J. Cupich, Archdiocese of Chicago.

The secretary-elect and the five committee chairman-elect will serve one year before beginning three-year terms at the conclusion of the bishops’ 2018 Fall General Assembly.
November 9th, NEW YORK - In an address on Wednesday to the National Assembly of Filipino Priests USA in Houston, Texas, Archbishop Charles Chaput of Philadelphia said the controversies over *Amoris Laetitia* have “obscured much of the good in the document.”

Titled “*Amoris Laetitia and the Nature of Mercy*,” Chaput’s remarks focused on three major areas: “the pastoral challenges *Amoris Laetitia* seeks to address; the pastoral challenges the text itself may seem to create; and how we as priests need to respond as ‘missionaries of mercy.’”

*Amoris Laetitia,* Francis’s landmark apostolic exhortation on marriage and family life, is the outcome document resulting from two Synods on the Family called by Francis in 2014 and 2015. Chaput’s remarks were delivered at the third annual gathering of Filipino priests, aimed to promote more effective pastoral leadership.

“Papal documents are always important,” said Chaput. “But—if we can be candid for a moment—some have the energy of a lead brick. *Amoris Laetitia* is very different. It has passages of great wisdom and beauty on marriage and on family life. And it has other passages that have caused some obvious controversy.”

The majority of the controversy surrounding *Amoris Laetitia* has been over Francis’s cautious opening of communion for divorced and remarried Catholics. While Chaput did not directly address this in his speech, he did cite the guidelines for the implementation of *Amoris Laetitia* released by the archdiocese of Philadelphia in which he maintained that communion for divorced and remarried Catholics should only be permitted if the couple agrees to live chastely.

“Ground Zero is this: For Christians, sexual intimacy outside a valid marriage can never be morally legitimate.”

Chaput said part of that comes with the attacks on the man who inspired it!

So, as you help ignite the revolution of tenderness, consider the words of a priest. “We all need each other. And so, please, think of yourself as a priest. ‘We all need each other.’”

Chaput ended his remarks with a reminder: “*Amoris Laetitia* seeks to address the needs of the family; and how we as priests need to respond as ‘missionaries of mercy.’”

*Chaput: Controversies Have Obscured The ‘Great Wisdom and Beauty’ of ‘Amoris’*

By Christopher White (Crux Now)

(Revolution of Tenderness, cont. from page 1)
“Many Millennials Think Bush Killed More Than Stalin.” Such was the surreal subject head sitting in my email box one morning. “#$$%!” wrote a colleague in response. “This is mind-boggling…This is scary, scary.”

It sure is. It also isn’t surprising. Such profound, disturbing ignorance is a direct result of what Americans have learned about communism in our horrid system of education, from high schools to colleges. The failure is massive.

According to a stunning new report by the Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation, one-third of Millennials (32%) “believe more people were killed under George W. Bush than under Joseph Stalin.” And it isn’t just those silly Millennials that we like to view as clueless. One in four Americans generally (26%) believe more people were killed under Bush than Stalin.

That is breathtaking. Truly incredible.

That rather sickening finding was just one by the Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation, which has the noble objective of trying to correct America’s ignoble ignorance of the crimes of communism.

Among the basic facts that every American should know: At least 100 million people have died under communist governments. That ghastly number, tabulated two decades ago by The Black Book of Communism, the seminal work on the subject by Harvard University Press, is actually conservative. For instance, the Black Book recorded merely 20 million dead in the Soviet Union. Alexander Yakovlev, one of Mikhail Gorbachev’s top aides, was given the official task of trying to quantify the victims. In a 2002 book published by Yale University Press, A Century of Violence in Soviet Russia, Yakovlev estimated that Stalin alone “annihilated … sixty to seventy million people”—figures consistent with those estimated by Alexander Solzhenitsyn, among others.

Similar levels of bloodshed were wrought by China’s Mao Tse-tung, who was responsible for the deaths of 65 million, according to the Black Book, and possibly more than 70 million, according to more recent biographical studies. And then there were the killing fields of North Korea, Cambodia, Cuba, Ethiopia, Eastern Europe, Africa, and more. Really, the death generated by communist governments over the last 100 years is likely closer to 140 million.

For a sense of proportion, Hitler’s mad genocide against Jews, Gypsies, Slavs, the mentally disabled, the elderly, the handicapped, and others he deemed “misfits,” was approximately 10 million (six million of them Jews). The combined dead from World Wars I and II—the most destructive conflicts in human history—was 50-60 million. Communism’s body count surpasses both world wars combined and probably doubled.

And yet, Americans’ knowledge of this vast sea of destruction is atrocious, which brings me back to the Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation.

The foundation is seeking to document this ignorance on a regular basis via its first Annual Report on U.S. Attitudes Towards Socialism. According to the report, the vast majority of Americans (75%) underestimate the number of people killed by communist regimes, and a strong majority (68%) believe that Hitler killed more people than Stalin. Death tallies aside, not only do they not see Stalin for the killer he was, but their views on communism are not terribly negative.

Just 37 percent of Millennials had a “very unfavorable” view of communism. One quarter (25%) of Millennials have a “favorable” view of Vladimir Lenin, namesake of Marxism-Leninism, the vicious architect and godfather of the Bolshevik totalitarian state. And 42% of Millennials are flatly “unfamiliar” with Mao Tse-tung.

It gets worse: 64% of Americans agree with Karl Marx’s classic credo that underpins communist philosophy: “from each according to his abilities, to each according to his needs.”

Thus, it’s not surprising that close to half (45 percent) of Americans aged 16 to 20 (first-time voters in this presidential election) said they would vote for a socialist, and 21 percent would vote for a communist. Of course, that’s reflected in what happened in 2016, as Bernie Sanders, a lifelong self-professed “socialist,” received 13 million votes in the Democratic primary. To give you a sense of that number’s significance, Donald Trump got 14 million votes in the Republican primary, and that was a record for a Republican primary.

This is not a failure to teach history; it is a failure to teach communist and socialist history. We haven’t neglected to teach that Nazism was evil, that Hitler was a mass-murderer, that fascism is bad. We long ago failed when it came to teaching the crimes of fascism and Nazism. They do a bang-up job with Hitler’s crimes, but not Stalin’s.

And the result is seen in this study. You reap what you sow. More death under George W. Bush than Joseph Stalin? Good grief, comrade.
Duct Tape for Jesus

By Daniel J. Demers

Guerneville, CA Oct 2017 - This is a story that it is right for all the wrong reasons and wrong for all the right reasons. It is about Harry Siegel, a likeable local thug who died in 2015.

In July, 2014 Guerneville’s St. Elizabeth’s Catholic Church was burglarized and robbed. The burglars broke a stained glass window to enter the church in the early morning hours. They stole money for the poor from an offering box, a silver-gold crucifix, holy water aspersillum (wand), an incense thurible and several religious clothing items. The crime was reported to the local Sheriff’s office. The town was outraged that anyone would vandalize, let alone steal, from a church.

It turned out that the thieves were a couple of homeless men. Apparently, as it turned out one of the perpetrators, Nick, boasted about the break-in with his confederate Paul. In fairness the vast majority of the local homeless, themselves, were livid about the thefts.

Harry Siegel lived in the Guerneville area all his life. He spent nearly a third of his fifty-eight years in and out of San Quentin—mostly for drug related crimes. He was particularly proud that he held the record for the highest recidivism of anyone from Sonoma County. His record, largely due to parole violations, had returned him forty-three times to the Big House. He claimed he had problems with authority figures which was the root cause of his recidivism. “Jesus had problems with authority figures, too,” he told me once with a sly smile. It was his unorthodox way of connecting with the Lord.

Known to locals as “Big Harry”—he was 6’8”, muscular and rugged and Frankenstinian. His hands were the size of Easter hams and he was quick to use them collecting drug dealer debts. Big Harry was intimidating. He was never known to be religious but, for some reason, when he heard about the church theft he was incensed.

Harry was like a flame attracting moths—in this case the various street people, vagabonds and homeless men and women. Big Harry was the de facto mayor of this soft underbelly of the town. All the street people wanted to brag they were his friend. It was important to count Harry as your friend.

Unknown to local sheriff or church authorities, Harry broadcast to this local population that he was looking for Paul and Nick. For two weeks the thieves moved from camp to camp to avoid Harry but their movements were diligently reported by Harry’s street people. He finally found Nick sleeping behind the dumpster of a local coffee shop. Cornered, Nick acknowledged his involvement and gave up Paul who had disposed of the stolen goods. When Harry confronted Paul, he refused to snitch and give up the fence who purchased the stolen religious items. You know the idiom: “honor among thieves.”

Harry had had decades of experience with reluctant hoodlums. Towering over the thief, Harry told Paul to strip naked. He then duct-taped him to a tree. He told Paul to think about it, he’d be back in a couple of hours.

When he returned, Harry calmly asked the thief again if he was prepared to rat-out the possessor of the stolen goods. Again Paul refused. Harry ripped the duct tape off—Harry said he liked doing that because it hurt so much. He then re-taped him and threw him into the trunk of his car and drove into a vacant lot with rutted roads. There he did a series of high-speed donuts. After five minutes of this vehicular torture, Harry opened the trunk and looked down on the bloodied, black-and-blue Paul. Without hesitation Paul gave up the old man who had bought the purloined articles. It turned out the buyer was an old guy who liked to dress up and make believe he was a priest.

The goods were quickly returned to St. Elizabeth’s. Now Harry figured Paul had been punished enough with the duct taping and donuts. Nick was another story. Harry slapped Nick with that big hand—a slap that was heard across the town. It really hurt. Further he was instructed to go before the church’s congregation and apologize. Alas, before that happened, Sheriff’s deputies picked the duo up and charged them with multiple petty crimes. Neither have been seen in town since.

In the end the stolen items were returned and Guerneville Glass’ Bill Aguirre repaired the stained glass window gratis—he genuflected first. Justice had been done—albeit the vigilant way. Big Harry made it simple and just. He is missed.

His hands were the size of Easter hams and he was quick to use them collecting drug dealer debts.

December 26: St. Stephen
ACT OF CONSECRATION

O Mary, Virgin most powerful and Mother of Mercy, Queen of Heaven and Refuge of sinners:
We, representing your Catholic people of the Diocese of Santa Rosa, consecrate ourselves to your Immaculate Heart.

We consecrate to you our very being and our whole life; all that we have, all that we love, all that we are. To thee do we give our homes, our families, our Diocese and our country. We desire that all that is in us and around us may belong to you and that we may share in the benefits of your motherly blessing.

Holy Mary, bring help to the miserable, strength to those who mourn. Plead the cause of the clergy; intercede for devout women and men. May all who pay homage to your Holy Name experience your powerful help.

We fly to your patronage, O Holy Mother of God; despise not our petitions in our necessities but deliver us always from all dangers, O glorious and Blessed Virgin Mary.
Amen.

This priest says Adoration has made Juarez a Safer City

Juarez, Mexico, Nov 22, 2017 (CNA/EWTN News)

Juarez, located in the state of Chihuahua in northern Mexico, was considered from 2008 to 2010 to be one of the most dangerous cities in the world, due to drug trafficking violence and the constant struggles for power and territory between the cartels.

However, the city of 1.3 million inhabitants dropped off this list thanks to a significant decrease in the number of homicides: from 3,766 in 2010 to 256 in 2015.

Although this drop can be credited to an improvement in the work of local authorities, for Fr. Patrico Hileman—a priest responsible for establishing Perpetual Adoration chapels in Latin America—there is a much deeper reason: Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament.

“When a parish adores God day and night, the city is transformed,” Fr. Hileman said.

The priest told Radio María Argentina that in 2013 the missionaries opened the first Perpetual Adoration Chapel in Juarez. At that time “40 people a day were dying because two drug gangs were fighting over the city to move drugs into the United States.” It was the Juarez and Sinaloa cartels, whose former leader Joaquín “el Chapo” Guzmán Loera was recently extradited from Mexico to the United States.

Fr. Hileman recalled that “the parishes were saying that the war wasn’t ending because a group of soldiers were with one gang and the police were with the other one. They were killing people, burning houses down so they would leave, fighting over the city.”

One of the parishes that was “desperate” asked the missionaries to open a Perpetual Adoration chapel because they assured that “only Jesus is going to save us from this, only Jesus can give us security.”

The missionaries only took three days to establish the first Perpetual Adoration chapel in Juarez.

Fr. Hileman told how one day, when the city was under a state of siege, a lady was on her way to the chapel to do her Holy Hour at 3:00 in the morning, when she was intercepted by six soldiers who asked her where she was heading.

When the woman told them that she was going to “the little chapel” the uniformed men asked her what place, because everything was closed at that hour. Then the woman proposed they accompany her to see for themselves.

When they got to the chapel, the soldiers found “six women making the Holy Hour at the 3:00 in the morning,” Fr. Hileman said.

At that moment the lady said to the soldiers: “Do you think you’re protecting us? We are praying for you 24 hours a day.”

One of the uniformed men fell down holding his weapon, “crying in front of the Blessed Sacrament. The next day at 3:00 in the morning they saw him in civilian clothes doing a Holy Hour, crying oceans of tears,” he said.

Two months after the chapel was opened, the pastor “calls us and says to us: Father, since the chapel was opened there has not been one death in Juarez, it’s been two months since anyone has died.”

“We put up ten little chapels in a year,” Fr. Hileman said.

As if that were not enough, “at that time they were going to close the seminary because there were only eight seminarians and now there are 88. The bishop told me me that these seminarians had participated in the Holy Hours.”

Fr. Hileman pointed out that “that is what Jesus does in a parish” when people understand that “we find security in Christ.”

He also noted that “the greatest miracles occur in the early hours of the morning.”

The early morning “is when you’re most at peace, when you hear God better, your mind, your heart is more tranquil, you’re there alone for God. If you are generous with Jesus, he is a thousand times more generous with you,” Fr. Hileman said. ❖
IGNATIUS OF LOYOLA
This movie on the founder of the Jesuits is a thrilling look at the real man behind the legend. In his quest to become a heroic knight, Ignatius stares death in the face repeatedly after his leg is shattered by a cannonball in battle. In his sufferings he learns to see God working in his life, shaping the self-obsessed sinner into the passionate soldier-saint. Many special features, and Collector’s Booklet. DVD 101-M . . . 126 min, $24.95

MOTHER TERESA
Olivia Hussey illuminates the life of the saint of Calcutta, a selfless missionary who brought hope and love to the poorest of the poor. The movie examines the key moments of her life from childhood in Albania to her calling as a nun, the decision to leave her order, and her founding the Missionaries of Charity to serve the poor around the world. Original full-length 177 minute film not seen before on DVD. DVD MT2-M . . . 177 mins., $19.95

MARY OF NAZARETH
An epic motion picture on the life of Mary, mother of Christ, from her childhood through the Resurrection of Jesus. Filmed in Europe with outstanding cinematography, a strong cast, and a majestic music score. Actress Alissa Jung gives a compelling and inspired portrayal of Mary. Two-Disc Collector’s Edition. Includes many Special Features, 24 page Collector’s Booklet & Study Guide; and more. DVD MONA-M . . . 2 discs, 153 min., $24.95

THE 13TH DAY
In a world torn apart by persecution and war, three children from Fatima, Portugal in 1917 were chosen by God to receive a powerful message of hope and healing for the world. Based on the memoirs of seer Sr. Lucia Santos and other eye-witness accounts, this acclaimed movie dramatizes the true story of the shepherd children who were visited by the Virgin Mary, culminating in the famous Miracle of the Sun. DVD 13D-M . . . 85 mins., $19.95

PADRE PIO - Miracle Man
Starring Sergio Castellitto as St. Padre Pio, this movie captures the Capuchin friar’s intense faith and devotion, and his deep concern for the spiritual and physical suffering of others. It reveals the amazing spiritual gifts he had (stigmata, bi-location, healing, etc.) as it portrays the dramatic events in Padre’s life from his childhood and through 50 years as a friar. In Italian with English subtitles, or English dubbed track. DVD PPMM-M . . . 200 min, $19.95

POPE JOHN PAUL II
This film follows Karol Wojtyla’s journey from his youth in Poland through the last days of his Papacy. It explores how he touched millions of people and changed the face of the Church and the world. Jon Voight stars as the Pope in a powerful performance, and Cary Elwes shines as the young Karol. Shot on location in Rome and Poland, this is the definitive film on the life of St. John Paul II. DVD PJP2-M . . . 180 min, $19.95

JOAN OF ARC
Leelee Sobieski shines as the legendary young warrior and saint who, at seventeen, led one of the greatest military campaigns for freedom in world history. With an all-star cast, glorious cinematography and scenery, Joan of Arc is a riveting epic film of faith, inspiration, triumph and tears. Also stars Peter O’Toole, Robert Loggia, Jacqueline Bisset, Peter Strauss, Maximillian Schell, Powers Boothe, Shirley MacLaine. DVD JATV2-M . . . 180 minutes, $19.95

CLARE AND FRANCIS
A beautiful epic feature film on the lives of St. Clare and St. Francis of Assisi. Shot on location in Italy, film stars Mary Petruolo and Ettore Bassi give inspiring, authentic performances as Clare, the daughter of a patrician family, and Francis, the son of a rich merchant, who leave all to follow Christ. The definitive film on these great saints who founded new religious orders that helped change the world. DVD CF-M . . . 200 mins, $19.95
Five Things to Look for During Francis’ Trip to Burma, Bangladesh

by Elise Harris

Yangon, Burma, Nov 27 (CNA/EWTN News) - On Monday Pope Francis touched down in Yangon for what will likely be a politically charged and religiously significant six-day trip bringing him to both Burma and Bangladesh as the two countries face an escalating refugee crisis.

Pope Francis is in Burma and Bangladesh Nov. 27-Dec. 2, in what is now his third tour of Asia since his election in 2013. It is the first papal visit to Burma, the Holy See having established formal diplomatic relations with the country earlier this year.

His visit to Bangladesh, however, is the second time a Pope has visited, the first being St. John Paul II in 1986. Bl. Pope Paul VI made a brief stop in the territory in 1970, when it was still East Pakistan.

Throughout his six-day visit, Pope Francis will give 11 speeches total: five in Burma, consisting of three formal speeches and two homilies, and six in Bangladesh, counting five official speeches and one homily.

On the plane ride over, Francis told journalists he hopes it will be a fruitful visit. Here are a few key things for which to keep an eye out as things move forward.

The Pope's meetings with Burmese civil and military authorities

This trip is one of the most diplomatically complicated international voyages Pope Francis taken so far, so much so that Vatican Spokesman Greg Burke described the trip to journalists as being “very interesting diplomatically” in last week's briefing on the visit.

Aside from the very small Catholic population in each country, political circumstances in Burma have been precarious for years, as they are in the midst of a transition from military leadership to diplomacy.

The country is also called Myanmar, and while the Vatican uses this name in their official diplomatic correspondence, ‘Myanmar’ is considered by the U.S. government and many democracy activists to have been illegally imposed on the country by its military dictatorship.

Burma functioned as a military dictatorship for more than 50 years, until democratic reforms began taking root in 2011. In November 2015, Aung San Suu Kyi and her party, the National League for Democracy, were elected by an overwhelming majority, putting an end to a five-decade military dictatorship.

Aung San Suu Kyi and her party had also won the election in 1990, but the results weren’t recognized by the military government, and she was put under house arrest. However, despite her success in 2015, she is still barred from officially becoming president, and holds the title of “State Counsellor” and Foreign Minister, while a close associate is acting as president.

Despite emerging signs of democratic reform in Burma, the military still wields considerable political authority, including the appointment of cabinet ministers, and one-quarter of the nation’s legislature.

A key element of the Pope’s visit to watch for, then, is his formal meetings with both Aung San Suu Kyi Nov. 28, and his meeting with Min Aung Hlaing, commander-in-chief of the country’s armed forces.

The meeting with Min Aung Hlaing wasn’t initially on the Pope’s schedule; however, during a recent visit to Rome Cardinal Charles Maung Bo of Yangon recommended that a meeting with the military leader be added.

Pope Francis took the cardinal's advice and scheduled the meeting for Nov. 30 at the archbishop’s house in Yangon, where he is staying while in Burma. However, the meeting was bumped up, and took place on the first day of Francis’ visit, shortly after he landed.

Lasting a total of 15 minutes, including conversation via interpreters and an exchange of gifts, the private encounter was the Pope’s first official meeting of the trip. Several of Min Aung Hlaing’s deputies were present.

According to Burke, the two spoke of “the great responsibility of the country’s authorities in this moment of transition.”

Min Aung Hlaing said on Twitter that he told Pope Francis, “there’s no religious discrimination” in the country, and “there is the freedom of religion.”

That Francis bumped the trip to the first day of his visit, when nothing else was scheduled, is noteworthy, and will be important to keep in mind as he meets with Aung San Suu Kyi, the president, and civil authorities Nov. 28. His words during the meeting are sure to carry a weighty significance.

The term ‘Rohingya’

With this political backdrop in mind, another thing to look out for is whether or not Pope Francis will use the term Rohingya to describe the largely Muslim ethnic group who reside in Burma’s Rakhine State.

His visit comes amid an uptick in state-sponsored violence against the Rohingya, which in recent months has reached staggering levels, causing the United Nations to declare the situation “a textbook example of ethnic cleansing.”

With an increase in persecution in their home country, many of the Rohingya have fled to neighboring Bangladesh, with millions camping along the border as refugees. More than 600,000 Rohingya have fled Burma for Bangladesh in recent months.

However, despite widespread use of the term Rohingya in the international community, the term is controversial within Burma.

The Burmese government refuses to use the term, and considers them illegal immigrants from Bangladesh. They have been denied citizenship since Burma gained independence in 1948.

Because of the touchy nature of the term, Cardinal Bo also suggested to the Pope that he refrain from using the word on the ground, arguing that extremists in the area are trying to rouse the population by using the term, making the risk of a new interreligious conflict ever-more present, with Christians in the crossfire.

According to Bo, the correct term to use is “Muslims of the Rakhine State.” He also stressed that other minorities in Burmese territory face persecution and displacement, including the Kachin, Kahn, and

(see Francis’ Trip, page 16)
As We Remember Our Beloved Dead
(November 2017 Eureka St. Bernard's Academy)

Durint the month of November as we remember our beloved dead, St. Bernard's Academy in Eureka head its annual prayer service for All Souls Day at St. Bernard's Cemetery. Youth ranging from 12-18 years old gathered together amid clouds of incense to pray an Office for the Dead in the cemetery chapel, and followed by praying a rosary together encircling the graves of our deceased priests in a cold, brisk wind. "It was cool praying the rosary altogether in a circle like that. I felt they could hear us," said sophomore Jake Fairfield.

"I was impressed at how well the kids knew the rosary, how attentive they were, and how moving the ceremony was," said Fr. Bernard D'Sa, administrator of St. Bernard's and Sacred Heart Parishes. "I didn't expect that kids would like this kind of thing, especially in the cold!"

As Dn. Dance Farrell, a teacher at Saint Bernard's asked the students, "Do any of you remember Fr. Eric Freed?", most of the youthful crowd shot up their hands, and later shared stories of their favorite memories of times with Fr. Eric, while memories were shared by parents and friends of all the other priests interred there. "I miss Fr. Eric, he was a wonderful man.," said Sabrina Gardner, a sophomore. "It loved that we got to spend time remembering him as a community; we miss him very much."

After some time praying together, each of the students went off to leave flowers and dress up the graves of their families and friends, and spent some time praying for them before heading back to school to finish out there day. "I don't think I ever had the chance to really spend time in a graveyard, and it was special going with my mom to visit our family."

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EWTN Global Catholic Network, in its 37th year, is the largest religious media network in the world. EWTN's 11 TV channels are broadcast in multiple languages 24 hours a day, seven days a week to over 270 million television households in more than 145 countries and territories. EWTN platforms also include radio services transmitted through SIRIUSXM, iHeart Radio, and over 500 domestic and international AM & FM radio affiliates; a worldwide shortwave radio service; the largest Catholic website in the U.S.; electronic and print news services, including Catholic News Agency, "The National Catholic Register" newspaper, and several global news wire services; as well as EWTN Publishing, its book publishing division.

Dioceses Of Nashville, Jefferson City Get New Bishops
by Elise Harris

Vatican City, Nov 21 (CNA/EWTN News) - On Tuesday, the Vatican announced Pope Francis' appoint-ment of Fr. Shawn McKnight as the next bishop of the Diocese of Jefferson City, and Msgr. Mark Spalding as the new leader of the Diocese of Nashville.

In a Nov. 21 statement coinciding with the Vatican announcement, Fr. Michael Johnston, who until now has served as Apostolic Administrator for the Nashville diocese, voiced his gratitude to both Pope Francis for the appointment, and to Msgr. Spalding himself for his "generosity" in accepting the role.

Johnston described Spalding as "a man filled with enthusiasm and excitement" for his new responsibilities, and someone who has "a strong work ethic, a deep love for the Lord and his people, and a great desire to lead and serve."

"He has already expressed such a keen interest in learning about the Diocese of Nashville, in listening to our needs and our hopes and dreams, and then discerning the direction the Holy Spirit wishes to take us," Johnston said. "With God's gift to him of this spirit of service and willingness to lead us, we are truly blessed."

Spalding, 52, who until now has served the Archdiocese of Louisville as Vicar General and pastor of Holy Trinity parish and Holy Name parish, was born Jan. 13, 1965, in Lebanon, Ky. After graduating from Bethlehem High School Bardstown, he entered St. Meinrad Seminary in Indiana and was ordained a priest Aug. 3, 1991, in the St. Joseph Proto-Cathedral of Bardstown.

Before his ordination, he studied from 1987-1991 at the American University in Louvain, Belgium, where he obtained a master's degree in religious studies and a licentiate in canon law.

Since then, he has served at a number of parish assignments, including associate pastor at St. Joseph and chaplain at Bethlehem High School in Bardstown, associate pastor at St. Augustine in Lebanon, Ky., associate pastor at St. Margaret Mary in Louisville and pastor of Immaculate Conception in LaGrange.

Since 2011 he has served the Archdiocese of Louisville as Vicar General. His ordination and installation as Bishop of Nashville will take place Feb. 2, 2018, at Sagrado Corazón in the Catholic Pastoral Center on McGavock Pike.

In his comments on Msgr. Spalding's appointment, Johnston said Louisville would be losing a "fine priest," but offered his assurance that the bishop-elect would be "loved and cared for" as he begins his new role.

Fr. McKnight, who was born in Wichita, Kan. In 1968, got a degree in biochemistry from the University of Dallas before entering seminary in 1990.

He carried out his seminary studies at the Pontifical "Josephinum" College in Columbus, Ohio, and was ordained a priest May 28, 1994, for the Diocese of Wichita.

The bishop-elect then obtained a licentiate and doctorate degree in sacramental theology from the Pontifical Atheneum of St. Anselm in Rome and published several articles on relevant pastoral and sacramental themes, finishing his studies in 2001.

After his ordination, he served the diocese in various pastoral, teaching and diocesan roles, the most recent being pastor of the Church of the Magdalen Parish in Wichita.

From 2000-2005, McKnight served as Director of diocesan Divine Worship and was a diocesan consultant and a member of the Presbyteral Council. From 2005-2010 he was a faculty member at Saint Meinrad Seminary working in the formation of permanent deacons.

After, from 2010-2015, the bishop-elect served as Executive Director of the USCCB's Office for Clergy and Consecrated Life. In 2015, he was assigned to the Church of the Magdalen parish, where he has served until now.
Walk for Life West Coast, January 27th

The 14th annual Pacific Coast Walk for Life will take place in San Francisco on Saturday, January 27th, 2018. The St. Eugene's Knights of Columbus, Council 4930 has organized a bus for the event. The bus will leave St. Eugene's parking lot at 8:00 am. Mass will be offered before the walk at St. Mary's Cathedral. At 1:30pm, the Walk down Market Street begins. Afterwards, participants will walk the few blocks to our awaiting bus which will return everyone to St. Eugene's in the late afternoon. The cost is $27 per person. In order to reserve a seat on the bus, send a $27 check, made out to “Knights of Columbus” with your contact information (must include e-mail address) to: Knights of Columbus, 3485D Airway Dr. Santa Rosa, CA 95403. You will receive an email confirmation of receipt of your check. Payment must be received no later than Wed., 1/10/18. Reservations are on a first come basis. Questions? Call Michael Flanagan at 579-8982.

(News Briefs, cont. from page 15)

International

John Paul II relic given to 2019 World Youth Day by Wlodzimierz Redzioch
Vatican City, Nov 20 (CNA/EWTN News) - At a Nov. 17 ceremony at the Polish Embassy to the Holy See, Ambassador Janusz Kotanski delivered a relic of Pope St. John Paul II to Panama’s Ambassador to the Holy See, Miroslava Rosas Vargas. The relic is a gift from Cardinal Stanislaw Dziwisz to the Church in Panama, as it prepares to host the 2019 World Youth Day.

John Paul II created World Youth Day in 1985 to harness the energy of young people and encourage them to participate in his call for a “new evangelization.” The first World Youth Day gathering took place in Rome in 1986. The gatherings, held every three years, draw millions of participants from around the world. The late Pope also created a special “youth section” within the Vatican’s Pontifical Council for Laity, charged with coordinating World Youth Days.

In attendance at the ceremony delivering the relic were Polish Cardinal Stanislaw Wysoko, former head of the Pontifical Council for Laity and organizer of World Youth Day; Panamanian Cardinal José Luis Lacunza, and Hondurian Cardinal Oscar Rodríguez Maradiaga, archbishop of Tegucigalpa and coordinator of the Council of Cardinals called by Pope Francis to advise him in the government of the Church. Cardinal Maradiaga’s presence was a reminder to many of the 2019 World Youth Day’s regional importance.

During the ceremony Cardinal Ryko called John Paul II the “Pope of the youth,” because of the focus on young people that defined his papacy and his pastoral ministry. Ambassador Kotanski expressed hope that World Youth Day in Panama would continue the “renewed springtime of the Church” called for by the late Pope. He also noted that Polish youth have begun a prayer campaign for the success of the 2019 World Youth Day, and expressed hope that the prayer campaign and relic would be a bridge between Central American and Europe.

Ambassador Vargas of Panama remarked that “to host World Youth Day is a great privilege.” The ambassador’s memories of John Paul II included “the sweet and profound look, typical of the saints, the invitation to dialogue and to communication, the faith and missionary zeal so that humanity can live in a better world.”

John Paul II’s “values, his principles and his love live still,” Vargas added, giving thanks that the late Pope “will be always present in the prayers of us all.”

(see Francis’ Trip, page 24)

Shahn peoples, yet their plight often goes unreported.
Burke said the recent worsening of the humanitarian situation in Burma will be a strong element of the Pope’s visit, and that Francis is coming “at a key time” in this sense.
However, while the situation of the Rohingya has escalated in over the past few months, Burke said it wasn’t the primary reason for the Pope’s visit. “The trip was going to happen anyway,” he said. Recent developments have now “drawn attention to it, but it was going to happen anyway”.
Burke himself used term “Rohingya” to describe the persecuted Muslim minority, saying “it’s not a forbidden term” in the Vatican, and the Pope himself has used it before. But Cardinal Bo made a suggestion that Francis “took into account,” he said, adding, “we’ll see together” whether or not Pope Francis uses the term during his visit.

Interreligious encounters
Throughout his visit, Pope Francis will have several moments of interreligious encounter, with Rohingya Muslims also participating. Combine this with that fact that Burma is a majority Buddhist country and Bangladesh majority Muslim, and these meetings will be of special interest.
Of importance is a private meeting of interreligious leaders scheduled to take place Nov. 28 at the archbishop’s residence in Yangon, which wasn’t initially on the Pope’s slate, but was also added upon the suggestion of Cardinal Bo.
Thou there is not yet a list of who will participate, Bo said around 15 leaders will be present representing Christians, Buddhists, Hindus, and Muslims, including the likely presence of a member of the Rohingya community.
On the same day Francis will also meet with members of the “Sangha,” the Supreme Council of Buddhist clergy in the country. Catholics in Burma are a small minority, making up just 1.3 percent of a population of nearly 52 million.

Pope Francis will also meet with Rohingya Muslims during a Dec. 1 interreligious encounter in Bangladesh where five testimonies are expected to be given. Muslims, Buddhists, Hindus, and Christians will all be present for the gathering.
In Bangladesh, 86 percent of the population practices Islam. The 375,000 Catholics there represent less than 0.2 of the total population.

Words to the Catholic community
As is by now well-known, Pope Francis has a special affinity for the peripheries. Both Burma and Bangladesh fall into this category ecclesiastically speaking, as well as economically. Bangladesh is among the poorest countries in the world, with nearly 30 percent of the population living under the poverty line.

Francis already boosted the profile of these nations

January 1: Solemnity of Mary Mother of God
Across Ireland, Catholics pray rosary to strengthen pro-life cause

Dublin, Ireland, Nov 28 (CNA/EWTN News)

Hundreds of groups of Catholics gathered across the island of Ireland on Sunday to pray the Rosary for the preservation of the Catholic faith and for the defense of life against the threat of abortion.

"Firstly, we thank Christ our King, and the Most Immaculate Heart of Mary, Queen of Ireland for all the graces and blessings," Rosary on the Coast for Life and Faith organizers said on the group’s Facebook page Nov. 27. "From the bottom of our hearts we humbly thank everyone who organized one of the 300 plus locations around the coastlines of our beautiful country."

"We are incredibly grateful to each and every one of you, that braved the elements to pray for the protection of life, from conception to natural death, and for the preservation and increase in faith in Ireland," they said.

The events took place both in Northern Ireland, which is legally part of the United Kingdom, and in the Republic of Ireland at 2:30 p.m. Sunday afternoon, the feast of Christ the King.

Secular tendencies have increased in Ireland, especially in the Republic.

The Republic of Ireland’s national constitution recognizes the right to life of the unborn child under the Eighth Amendment, approved in a 1983 referendum by 67 percent of voters. However, the amendment has been targeted for repeal by pro-abortion rights advocates, and public opinion appears to have shifted against it.

Unlike other parts of the U.K., Northern Ireland’s laws only permit abortion in cases where a woman’s life is at risk, or where there is a permanent or serious risk to her mental or physical health. Pro-abortion activists are working to make these laws more permissive.

One organizer of the all-Ireland rosary, Kathy Sinnott, co-hosts EWTN’s Celtic Connections radio show. She spoke with the National Catholic Register ahead of the event.

"Whatever happens in one half is going to affect the whole," she said. "In terms of the threat to life, we’re one island."

She also reflected on the prayer intention for the preservation of faith.

"If our faith is strong, we wouldn’t be even looking at abortion," she said, adding that organizers want "the blossoming of the faith, once again, in the hearts, in the souls, in the minds and in the lives of the Irish."

Organizers cited various motives for the event, including the 100th anniversary year of the Our Lady of Fatima apparitions; a 33-day personal consecration to the Immaculate Heart of Mary that is currently ongoing; and the Polish and Italian versions of the Rosary on the Borders. ♦

Miracle Sign of Hope Amidst the Ashes

A Letter detailing one of the many ‘signs of hope’ stories from the October fires:

Dear Bishop Vasa,

After reading your update on the little fire in and the miracles about places that were saved, I thought you would like to hear our story.

In 1980 a few devoted persons to the Blessed Mother decided to consecrate the Napa Valley to her Immaculate Heart. We were living at a mountain top property on Mt. Veeder Road which we had named “Maryhill” in her honor.

On that December day we had gathered together two novices from the nearby Carmelite Monastery, a Christian Brother, Rev. Frank Miller, pastor of St. John the Baptist church in Yountville, and several lay people and their children.

It was on the highest knoll on the 4.5 acre property, overlooking a landscape of the low mountains. We said a simple consecration of the Napa Valley.

In 2014, it became clear that my husband could no longer take care of the property. It meant cutting and splitting wood for the fire, and trucking in water each week for our needs as the property did not come with a productive well or spring that could produce water for our family of seven. It was the job of our young son, now Fr. Christopher Crotty, to keep up the wood pile.

Sadly, we left “Maryhill” and the memories of a dozen or more “May Crowning” held in our redwood grove. (One year as many as 200 had come to honor Our Lady there, enjoy the pot luck lunch which followed and a swim in the pool for the children.) The “Mary” we traditionally crowned was one Mr. Crotty had found at the Calistoga dumps. After restoring her and placing her in a niche in the grove, we found she was the original statue from the old St. John the Baptist church in Napa.

In 2014 our children had grown, and we moved to a small home in Napa at the foot of the hill going up to our old home. We named the small home, “Maryhaven,” which seemed appropriate for our retirement years.

We always had feared fires in the 38 years at “Maryhill” and were close to evacuation twice in that time. This Oct. 8th, the week of the celebrations for the 100th apparition of Fatima, the tremendous fire was a reality. And, although, we were no longer the owners/proprietors of “Maryhill,” it didn’t keep us from being fearful for its safety. It housed our family memories.

Several weeks after the devastating fire of 2017, my daughter and I drove up and tentatively approached the beloved home-place. Just before the curve which normally welcomed us home, we saw the first of the destruction of homes. But, lo and behold... there was our old home. We liked to quote, “Let me live in a house by the side of the road and be a friend to man.”

The place seemed deserted and so we ventured out...and then saw all the damage done by the huge conflagration. No structures other than the wee home were standing. My husband’s cherished workshop and added storage shed, the pool house, the pump house represented by piles of ash and... the blackened redwood trees where once Our Lady reigned.

And then my daughter saw, at the foot of the knoll where once we consecrated the Valley, a small wooden nook only a little more than a foot high with a stained little statue of Mary, which we had inadvertently left behind eight years ago. Neither was destroyed. Mary’s little hiding place stood there amidst a hillside of ash.

And so, our brave little house survived, though 7 homes and a winery in close vicinity were burned to the ground.

Another story to add to that of the Sciambra’s exquisite chapel atop Atlas Peak and the story of Mr. Grich’s home. “Mike” Grich is quoted as saying, “I believe that God and the Blessed Mother helped the firefighter heroes in their battle with the flames and protected my house from burning down.”

We would add “Amen” to that. ♦

—Margaret Crotty, Napa, CA
Consagración Diocesana y Parroquial 2017

Este mes completamos el programa, con el que hemos estado participando por todo el 2017, dirigido a la Re-dedicación de la Diócesis y las Parroquias de Santa Rosa al cuidado y protección de la Santísima Virgen María. Hace treinta y cuatro años, el Domingo 15 de Mayo de 1983, el Obispo Mark Hurley hizo el llamado a la Re-dedicación de la Diócesis a la Santísima Virgen por medio de la “Hora a María.” La ceremonia se celebró en la Parroquia de San Sebastián en Sebastopol en donde Monseñor William Serado fue el delegado del Señor Obispo. Nuestro esfuerzo actual es mucho más amplio y extenso.

A principios de este año, pedí poner atención especial al 100 Aniversario de las apariciones de María en Fátima, y que trabajáramos y planificáramos la renovación de esta Dedicación de la Diócesis a la Santísima Virgen María. Los fines para esta renovación de consagración serán del 8 al 12 de Diciembre, especialmente en todas las misas del Sábado 9 y Domingo 10 de Diciembre del 2017.

En Catedral, y en aquellas parroquias donde sea posible, se celebrará la Vigilia de la “Hora a María” la noche del 9 de Diciembre del 2017. Los Párrocos tienen la libertad de celebrar la Vigilia en otro día, pero el día oficial en la Diócesis es el 9 de Diciembre. Durante la Vigilia; que durará aproximadamente una hora; escucharemos la Palabra de Dios, recitaremos los Misterios Gloriosos del Santo Rosario, cantaremos himnos Marianos y recitaremos el Acto de Consagración, y tengamos esperanza de que la mayoría de parroquias y misiones planifiquen participar, en lo posible, en Vigilias similares en toda la Diócesis. Cada Párroco ha recibido una copia de la Vigilia programada para Catedral, de esta manera puede ser reproducida a través de la Diócesis. Hago oración para que haya una participación amplia y activa para la Consagración Diocesana y Parroquial del 2017, les pido que el Acto de Consagración, el cual fue el que se hizo en la Diócesis en 1983, sea recitado después de cada Misa. Les pido a todos, especialmente a los que participaron en el programa de preparación de 33 días de Gloria Matutina, continúen el uso de 33 días de Retiro por el tiempo restante de la Celebración del Centenario de las apariciones de María en Fátima, así como en las celebraciones Marianas anuales. Si no es posible asistir a una de las Vigilias Parroquiales, las familias, o cualquier grupo de fieles, pueden unirse a rezar los Misterios Gloriosos del Rosario y seguir recitar el Acto de Consagración recomendado. Hay una variedad de Oraciones de Consagración Aprobadas y cualquiera de ellas es suficiente para una Consagración Diocesana, pero reco- miendo, en esta ocasión, la oración que se encuentra abajo.

ACTO DE CONSAGRACIÓN

Oh María, Virgen poderosa y Madre de Misericordia, Reina del Cielo y refugio de los pecadores: nosotros, representantes de tu pueblo Católico en la Diócesis de Santa Rosa, nos consagraremos a tu Inmaculado Corazón. Consagraremos nuestro ser y toda nuestra vida; todo lo que poseemos, todo lo que amamos, todo lo que somos. Te ofrecemos nuestros hogares, nuestras familias, nuestra Diócesis y nuestro país. Deseamos que todo lo que está en nuestro interior y a nuestro alrededor te pertenezca y que podamos compartir los beneficios de tu bendición maternal. Santa María, consuela a los tristes y a los que lloran. Aboga por la causa del clero; intercede por los hombres y mujeres devotas. Que todos los que rinden homenaje a tu Santo Nombre puedan experimentar tu ayuda poderosa.

Nos acogemos a tu protección, oh Santa Madre de Dios; no desprecies nuestras suplicas en nuestras necesidades antes bien libramos de todo peligro, oh Gloriosa y Bendita Virgen María. Amén.❖

Cardenal denuncia ideología de género y advierte que hijos no son producto de laboratorio

MADRID (ACI/Actual) - El Presidente de la Conferencia Episcopal Española, Cardenal Ricardo Blázquez, rechazó la ideología de género y las técnicas reproductivas en el discurso inaugural de la CX Asamblea Plenaria de la Conferencia Episcopal Española.

La Conferencia Episcopal Española (CEE) está reunida en Madrid con motivo de la CX Asamblea Plenaria. El presidente de la Conferencia Episcopal y Arzobispo de Valladolid, Cardenal Ricardo Blázquez, dio el discurso inaugural en el que ha rechazado la ideología de género y las técnicas reproductivas que convierten a los hijos en un “producto de laboratorio”, tal y como ha recogido Europa Press.

Uno de los asuntos que abordarán, según ha precisado Cardenal Blázquez, será el “desafío” de la “ideología de género, que niega la diferencia y la reciprocidad natural de hombre y mujer” y “vacía el fundamento antropológico de la familia”. Además, ha avisado de que esta ideología se traslada a “leyes y proyectos educativos”.

En concreto, se ha referido a las nuevas técnicas reproductivas producto de la “revolución biotecnológica” que desvinculan el acto generativo de la relación sexual entre hombre y mujer.

“Desaparece la relación personal en la transmisión de la vida de un ser humano; en lugar de generación deberíamos hablar de producto de laboratorio, con la consiguiente cosificación del ser humano”, ha advertido, al tiempo que ha añadido que “la paternidad y maternidad no son realidades que el hombre pueda componer o descomponer a su arbitrio”.

Así, ha pedido que los avances técnicos que se han conseguido en los últimos tiempos no lleven a los (vea Cardenal denuncia ideología, pagina 20)
BUENOS AIRES (ACI) - Entre el 18 y 20 de noviembre, más de 600 personas participaron en el V Congreso Missionero Nacional (Comina), en la ciudad de Neuquén, Argentina, y se comprometieron a reforzar su trabajo por una “Iglesia en salida”.

A través de una carta, el Papa Francisco expresó su saludo a los misioneros y manifestó su deseo de que el evento haga a sus participantes “crescer en espíritu misionero, con esa actitud de salir de sí mismos para anunciar a Jesús”.

“No tengan miedo, cuando hay amor a Jesucristo crece este deseo de hacerlo conocer, de llevar su amor a todos, con el entusiasmo que viene de la fe”, agregó. El Obispo, nunciador en Ciudad del Vaticano, Mons. Fernando Croxatto, fue el anfitrión del encuentro que llevó por lema “Argentina en misión, el Evangelio es alegría”.

En la Eucaristía de cierre Mons. Croxatto dijo que Jesucristo “a mantenernos firmes, llenos de valor, a preferir incluso la muerte antes que fallarle al Señor”, “a no traicionar al amor, a no callar nuestro anuncio”.

“El verdadero misionero que nunca deja de ser discípulo, sabe que Jesucristo camina con él, habla con él, respeta con él, trabaja con él”, agregó.

“La misión es salir para detenerse, es andar por parajes, pueblos, ciudades, realidades sociales, los areópagos modernos. Pero no solo pasando, sino deteniéndose. Dejando que no detengan para acercarnos, para mirar a los que gritan desde las orillas”, sostuvo.

En su homilía, el Prelado oró para “que nos demos cuenta cuando estamos cayendo en la mayor amenaza que es ese gris pragmatismo de la vida cotidiana de la Iglesia, en la cual aparentemente todo procede con normalidad, pero en realidad la fe se va desgastando y degenerando en mezquindad”.

“Haznos ver siempre que la fe en vos, el Hijo de Dios, es inseparable del don de nosotros mismos, dueños de casas y padres de niños ciudadanos de ese país regresen a su hogar”.

“Esta decisión devastará muchas familias con miembros (beneficiarios del) TPS, incluyendo a aquellas con niños ciudadanos de Estados Unidos”, dijo Mons. Joe Vásquez, Obispo de Austin, Texas, y Presidente del Comité de Migración de la USCCB, señaló que la decisión de cancelar el TPS para Haití es “profundamente preocupante”, pues “Haití no está aún en una posición en la que pueda aceptar segura el retorno de los aproximadamente 50 mil haitianos que han recibido el TPS”.

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Dado lo anterior, los distintos grupos diaconales misioneros renovaron su compromiso para crear espacios de “encontrar con Cristo a través de la Eucaristía y la Palabra de Dios; acrecentar la formación misionera en todos los ámbitos pastorales; y favorecer los vínculos de comunión y el trabajo en equipo para un testimonio misionero fecundo”.

Por último, “acreditar el encuentro con los pobres y revitalizar espacios de difusión, formación y acompañamiento de las vocaciones ad gentes”, precisaron.

“Profundamente preocupante” que Estados Unidos cancele TPS para Haití, dicen Obispos

WASHINGTON D.C. (ACI) - Los Obispos de Estados Unidos calificaron de “profundamente preocupante” que el gobierno del país haya cancelado el Estatuto de Protección Temporal (TPS) para Haití.

El 20 de noviembre, el Departamento de Seguridad Nacional de Estados Unidos anunció la cancelación del TPS para Haití, y dio un plazo de alrededor de 18 meses para que los beneficiarios –alrededor de 50 mil haitianos– regresen a su país o encuentren una solución a su situación migratoria.

Haití es considerado el país más pobre de América y uno de los más pobres del mundo. Un terremoto de 7 grados en 2010 agravió aún más su situación.

El TPS, explicó la Conferencia de Obispos Católicos de Estados Unidos (USCCB, por sus siglas en inglés) en un comunicado, es “un programa de migración humanitaria temporal, renovable y legalmente autorizado que permite que individuos permanezcan y trabajen legalmente en Estados Unidos durante un periodo en el que se considera inseguro para los ciudadanos de ese país regresen a su hogar”.

Mons. Joe Vásquez, Obispo de Austin, Texas, y Presidente del Comité de Migración de la USCCB, señaló que la decisión de cancelar el TPS para Haití es “profundamente preocupante”, pues “Haití no está aún en una posición en la que pueda aceptar segura el retorno de los aproximadamente 50 mil haitianos que han recibido el TPS”.

Miles Piden Al FBI Investigar a Planned Parenthood Por Tráfico De Órganos De Bebés

WASHINGTON D.C. (ACI) - Más de 8 mil personas han firmado una campaña pidiendo al Buró Federal de Investigaciones de Denominación Unidas (FBI, por sus siglas en inglés) que investigue a la multinacional Planned Parenthood, acusada de tráfico con órganos de bebés abortados en sus instalaciones.

Recientemente, la prensa estadounidense informó que el FBI “está considerando” realizar una investigación a Planned Parenthood.

Desde julio de 2015, una serie de videos producto de una investigación del Centro para el Progreso Médico (CMP, Center for Medical Progress) apuntó a que en diversas clínicas de la multinacional del aborto en Estados Unidos se vende tejidos y órganos de bebés abortados.

Planned Parenthood ha negado la acusación y ha asegurado que el dinero que ha recibido de universidades y empresas privadas no fue un pago, sino que cubría los costos de empaquetado y envío de las muestras.

La compra o venta de tejidos humanos fetales es un delito federal en Estados Unidos, y tiene una pena de hasta 10 años en cárcel o una multa de hasta medio millón de dólares.

En su informe final, presentado el 4 de enero, el panel de investigación del Comité de Energía y Comercio de la Cámara de Representantes de Estados Unidos realizó una serie de acusaciones sobre posibles abusos y prácticas criminales de Planned Parenthood.

Las acusaciones fueron remitidas a las autoridades judiciales estadounidenses.

Además, desde que comenzó la polémica, al menos 15 estados del país han cortado el financiamiento con fondos públicos a Planned Parenthood.

Por último, “acrecentar el encuentro con los pobres y revitalizar espacios de difusión, formación y acompañamiento de las vocaciones ad gentes”, precisaron.

Asimismo, detectaron dificultades en la comunicación, falta de comunión, clericalismo, signos de cansancio, desinterés, falta de pasión en la tarea evangelizadora, resistencia al cambio y “falta de confianza en la eficacia del Evangelio”.

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hombres a “conciliar los límites de la dignidad del hombre”.

Además, sobre la ideología de género, ha dicho que reconocen “el influjo que la cultura y los costumbres han tenido y tienen sobre la familia, el matrimonio y la relación entre varón y mujer”, pero ha precisado que esto “es muy distinto de pretender separar el sexo como hecho biológico del género como hecho cultural”.

“La sexualidad binaria, masculina y femenina, tiene como fin la donación íntima y la transmisión de la vida. Aunque el género tenga un fuerte componente cultural, no es independiente del sexo. No es acertado, consiguientemente, afirmar que exprese subordinación de la mujer el que conciba, geste y alumubre a los hijos; como no indica privación el que el varón no realice esas actividades vitales”, ha argumentado.

En cualquier caso, ha defendido que hombres y mujeres son “iguales en dignidad” y “nadie debe ser ni privilegiado ni postergado”. “La diferencia está ordenada a la complementariedad y no a la discriminación”, ha indicado.

En este sentido, ha condenado la violencia machista y ha lamentado que, cuando un hombre, por amor a Dios y por la ley y se hace raza para el futuro”, comentó el Papa. En contraposición con esa raíz perversa se encuentra por tanto “esta otra que da la vida para hacer crecer el futuro”.

“Se necesita discernir las novedades. ¿Esta novedad es del Señor, viene del Espíritu Santo, viene de la raíz de Dios o esta novedad viene de una raíz perversa? Antes era un pecado matar a los niños, ahora se puede hacer, no hay tanto problema, es una novedad perversa”.

“Hay diferencias claras, como ha hecho Dios, la creación se respetaba, pero hoy somos un poco mecánicos, las cosas no son tan diferentes y se mezclan las cosas”, aseguró.

La novedad de Dios no es “un negociado” mientras que “las colonizaciones ideológicas y culturales solo miran el presente, reniegan del pasado y no miran el futuro. Viven el momento, no en el tiempo, y por eso no pueden prometernos nada”.

“Con esta actitud de hacer a todos iguales y eliminar las diferencias cometen un pecado muy grande de blasfemia contra el Dios creador”. “Cada vez que llega una colonización cultural e ideológica se peca contra Dios creador porque se quiere cambiar la Creación como la ha hecho Él. Y contra este hecho que a lo largo de la historia ha acaecido tantas veces solo hay una medicina: el testimonio, es decir, el martirio”.

“Si, diálogo con aquellos que piensan de otra manera, pero mi testimonio es este, según la ley de Dios”, dijo el Papa.

Eleazar pensaba “en la herencia de su propio testimonio” que “para los jóvenes es una promesa de fecundidad”. Francisco concluyó deseando que el testimonio de este santo “nos ayude en momentos de confusión ante las colonizaciones culturales y espirituales que nos proponen”.

Cantante Católico Secuestrado Atribuye Su Liberación Al Poder De Dios

RÍO DE JANEIRO (ACI) - Tony Allyson es un cantante católico que el pasado 11 de noviembre fue víctima de un “secuestro relámpago” en Brasil y que el testimonio en las redes sociales de cómo “la mano de Dios” lo protegió. En un video publicado en su página de Facebook, Allyson narró que en la noche del sábado 11 de noviembre, él y sus músicos viajaban por la carretera hacia la ciudad de Ouro Velho, en el estado de Paraíba, cuando su vehículo fue interceptado por el auto de un grupo de asaltantes.

“Salieron dos hombres fuertemente armados. Los cuatro estaban armados. Dos se quedaron en la puerta del auto y los dos subieron a la van.Pidieron al conductor que siguiera a su carro blanco y ellos nos llevaron a un sendero de tierra. Creo que ya era un procedimiento que tenían”, indicó el cantante brasileño.

Relató que los criminales que estaban dentro de la van “nos pidieron que levantáramos las manos, que miráramos al suelo y no los miráramos de ninguna manera. Hicimos eso y yo comencé a orar, comencé a clamar al Espíritu Santo”.

Durante el camino al sendero, los rehenes les dijeron a los delincuentes que ellos eran una banda de música católica, que Tony Allyson era un cantante católico y que estaba dentro del vehículo, e incluso les mostraron un disco suyo.

“Yo estaba en el asiento trasero de la van, clamando a la Santa de Jesús, al Espíritu Santo, a la intercesión de la Virgen María. Ellos notaron que estábamos orando y que éramos una banda católica, que yo era un cantante católico” recordó. Entonces, “ellos cambiaron completamente su forma de tratarnos, pararon de gritar. Uno de los asaltantes dijo que no habrían nada con nosotros”.

En un determinado lugar del camino de tierra, los criminales pidieron al conductor parar el auto, hicieron que todos bajaran del vehículo y los revisaron.

Luego “nos dijeron que entráramos en la van y nos vayamos”. “Como si se trataran de un milagro, ellos no robaron nada, ni nuestros celulares ni el dinero”, expresó Allyson.

El cantante afirmó que decidió narrar este suceso en las redes sociales porque el caso fue difundido por los medios locales y porque quería “contar cómo Dios actúa en nuestras vidas”. “En esos momentos, nos sentíamos muy impotentes, muy mal, y el Señor actuó en nuestro favor. Fue algo increíble, fue algo maravilloso la liberación que vivimos”, manifestó.

Resaltó que “en todo eso vemos que la mano de Dios nos protegió, nos liberó, la mano del Señor cuidó de nosotros”.

Tony Allyson concluyó su relato diciendo que “Dios siempre está con nosotros, Él nos ampara y cuida de nosotros. Nunca se sientan solos, nunca se sientan desamparados por Dios”.

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(Imágenes, cont. de pagina 18)
Pope: Couples need help Forming, Following their Consciences

By Cindy Wooden (Catholic News Service)

VATICAN CITY - Marriage and family life are blessings for individuals and for society, but both are filled with difficult choices that Catholic couples must be helped to face prayerfully and in the light of their consciences, Pope Francis said.

Unfortunately, too many people today confuse a rightly formed conscience with personal preferences dominated by selfishness, the pope said in a video message to an Italian meeting on “Amoris Laetitia,” his exhortation on the family.

“The contemporary world risks confusing the primacy of conscience, which is always to be respected, with the exclusive autonomy of the individual” even when the individual’s decisions impact his or her marriage and family life, the pope said.

Repeating a remark he had made to the Pontifical Academy for Life, Pope Francis said, “There are those who even speak of ‘egolatry,’ that is, the true worship of the ego on whose altar everything, including the dearest affections, are sacrificed.”

Confusing conscience with selfishness “is not harmless,” the pope said. “This is a ‘pollution’ that corrodes souls and confounds minds and hearts, producing false illusions.”

The conference sponsored by the Italian bishops’ conference was focused on “conscience and norm” in Pope Francis’ apostolic exhortation.

Diagnosing problems in the church’s outreach to married couples and families, Pope Francis had written, “We have long thought that simply by stressing doctrinal, bioethical and moral issues, without encouraging openness to grace, we were providing sufficient support to families, strengthening the marriage bond and giving meaning to marital life.”

“We also find it hard to make room for the consciences of the faithful, who very often respond as best they can to the Gospel amid their limitations, and are capable of carrying out their own discernment in complex situations,” he wrote in “Amoris Laetitia.”

“We have been called to form consciences, not to replace them.”

In his message to the meeting Nov. 11 in Rome, Pope Francis said the Catholic Church must strengthen its programs “to respond to the desire for family that emerges in the soul of the young generations” and to help couples once they are married.

“Love between a man and a woman is obviously among the most generative human experiences; it is the leaven of a culture of encounter, and introduces to the present world an injection of sociality,” he said.

Marriage and family life are “the most effective antidote against the individualism that currently runs rampant,” he said, but it does not do one any good to pretend that marriage and family life are free from situations requiring difficult choices.

“In the domestic reality, sometimes there are concrete knots to be addressed with prudent conscience on the part of each,” he said. “It is important that spouses, parents, not be left alone, but accompanied in their commitment to applying the Gospel to the concreteness of life.”

Conscience, he said, always has God’s desire for the human person as its ultimate reference point.

“In the very depths of each one of us, there is a place wherein the ‘Mystery’ reveals itself, and illuminates the person, making the person the protagonist of his story,” he said. “Conscience, as the Second Vatican Council recalls, is this ‘most secret core and sanctuary of a man. There he is alone with God, whose voice echoes in his depths.”

Each Christian, the pope said, must be “vigilant so that in this kind of tabernacle there is no lack of divine grace, which illuminates and strengthens married love and the parental mission.”

Polish Lawmakers Consider Closing Shops On Sundays

Warsaw, Poland, Nov 27 (CNA/EWTN News) - Poland could gradually end Sunday shopping in the next three years, if lawmakers approve a bill under consideration in the national legislature.

Backers of the legislation want to make it possible for workers to spend more time with their families, the British magazine The Catholic Herald reports.

The bill was initially supported by trade unions, then received support from the Law and Justice Party, sponsored by the Solidarity trade union collected 350,000 signatures for a legislative process.

In his 1991 encyclical Centissimus Annus, Pope St. John Paul II, a Polish citizen, suggested that nations ask “whether existing laws and the practice of industrialized societies effectively ensure, in our own day, the exercise of [the] basic right to Sunday rest.”

There have been at least three attempts on such a ban in Poland in the last 20 years. One survey indicated that only 30 percent of Polish voters supported the ban, while 62 percent opposed it, Agence France Press said.

A similar ban put forward in Hungary proved to be unpopular when it was enacted in 2015. The law was largely rolled back in 2016.
this is at St. Rose are through the Monday evening preparing itself for the consecration. Two ways to do Bishop Robert Vasa will consecrate the diocese to Morning Glory’ll St. Rose – Santa Rosa Parish Retreat “33 Days to December 10th throughout the Diocese. sing a number of Marian hymns and then recite the approximately one hour, we will listen to the Word of December 9, 2017. During the Vigil, which will last 9 and Sunday, December 10, 2017. At the Cathedral 12 but especially at all Masses on Saturday, December 9th and Sunday, December 10, 2017. At the Cathedral and in those parishes where it can be arranged, a special “Mary’s Hour” Vigil will be hosted the evening of December 9, 2017. During the Vigil, which will last approximately one hour, we will listen to the Word of God, recite the Glorious Mysteries of the Rosary, sing a number of Marian hymns and then recite the Act of Consecration. It is the hope of the Bishop to have as many parishes as possible join in such a Vigil throughout the Diocese. December 10th St. Rose – Santa Rosa Parish Retreat “33 Days to Morning Glory” Bishop Robert Vasa will consecrate the diocese to the Blessed Mother on December 10. Each parish is preparing itself for the consecration. Two ways to do this is at St. Rose are through the Monday evening retreat in the convent fireside room from 7:00-8:30 p.m. (continues every Monday until December 4). No need to register, just drop in. The other way to prepare is by reading the book “22 Days to Morning Glory” at home. Copies are in the church wall pockets.

December 15th Sign of Hope Mass All are invited to attend a Mass offered for those affected by the fires. The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass will be celebrated by Bishop Robert Vasa at the Cathedral of St. Eugene on Friday, December 15 at 6:00 p.m. The parish communities of St. Eugene, St. Rose, Resurrection, Holy Spirit and Star of the Valley rejoice at this opportunity to come together as a larger community to pray for healing and the strength to rebuilt the greater Santa Rosa community. A reception will follow the Mass in the McGrath Center. Please RSVP to Marty McCormick at mcmccormickloans.com.

December 17th Advent Concert Doug, James & Dana Couey-Harman Dec 17th at 7 p.m. at St. Joseph Church in Cotati. The concert is free, but goodwill offerings are gratefully accepted.

December 21st St. Francis Solano School Christmas Pageant January 3rd Catholic Cursillo fellowship gathering 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 January 3rd from 6-8 pm at St. Eugene’s in Santa Rosa.

Join us on January 20th from 2-4 pm at St. Elizabeth Seton in Rohnert Park. Our 2018 weekends are scheduled: June 7-10 Men’s Cursillo Weekend, August 2-5 Women’s Cursillo Weekend. For further information call Debbie Simonson in Petaluma at 904-463-1070 or Priscilla Silvey in Napa at 707-567-7957.

January 12th “Women of the Year” Celebration Saint Apollinaris Church Napa 11:00am Mass celebrated by Bishop Robert F. Vasa, followed by the presentation of certificates and luncheon. Anyone who has sent in their reservation please contact Connie Lynch Sorenson @ 707-823-7378. srdccwgloria@hotmail.com

January 27th “Women of the Year” Celebration Saint Apollinaris Church Napa The 14th annual Pacific Coast Walk for Life will take place in San Francisco on Saturday, Jan. 27th, 2018. The St. Eugene’s Knights of Columbus, Council 4930 has organized a bus for the event. The bus will leave St. Eugene’s parking lot at 8:00 am. Mass will be offered before the walk at St. Mary’s Cathedral. At 1:30 pm, the Walk down Market Street begins. Afterwards, participants will walk the few block “s to our awaiting bus which will return everyone to St. Eugene’s in the late afternoon. The cost is $27 per person. In order to reserve a seat on the bus, send a $27 check, made out to “Knights of Columbus” with your contact information (must include e-mail address) address to: Knights of Columbus, 348JD Airway Dr. Santa Rosa, CA 95403. You will receive an email confirmation of receipt of you check. Payment must be received no later than Wed., 1/10/18. Reservations are on a first come basis. Questions? Call Michael Flanagan at 579-8982.

Ongoing in North Diocese Christ the King Church, McKinleyville Weekdays: Monday Mass 9:00am Tuesday Communion Service 9:00am. Friday Adoration 3:00pm followed by Mass 4:00pm Saint Kateri Tekakwitha Mission, Hoopa: Sunday Mass 11:00am HSV 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 Through Feb 15th Knights of Columbus Bible Study: St. Eugene The Bible Timeline is a Catholic Bible study that takes you on a journey through the entire Bible so that you can discover the amazing story woven throughout all of Scripture. The study will include a series of 24 videos presented by Jeff Cavins. The study begins on Monday, Oct. 2nd in the Parish Life Center, Hope room. The class is from 6:30 to 8:30 pm every Monday evening through February 15th. The work-books are $35 each. For more information, please contact Greg De Gennaro at 707-494-5969 or by e-mail gregoryrd@sonic.net

First Saturdays: Oakville House of Prayer (Carmelite Monastery) Morning of Recollection every first Saturday of the month; Spiritual Talk 9-10am; Confessions 10-11 am; Mass 11:00 am. Confessions (English/Spanish) Mondays and Fridays: 10-12pm, 3-5pm, 8-9pm. Church Hours; Chapel opens at 7:00 am. Closes at 9:00 p.m. only on Mondays and Fridays. All other days Church closes at 6:00 p.m. 20 Mount Carmel Drive, Oakville, CA 95494-2454 oakvillecarmelites.org.Weekday Mass 8:00 am. Monday – Saturday (except for on First Saturdays when Mass is at 11:00 am.) Sunday Mass 9:00 am. Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament 5:00 pm - 5:45 pm. 5:45 pm. Benediction. All are invited please silence cell phones in the Chapel.

To have your calendar event listed please email us! Srdiocese1@gmail.com
Hail Mary, Hidden Grace.

By Stephen Morris, Youth and Young Adult Ministry Director

Merry Christmas. My gift to you is a movie reflection. This year we saw lights strung up with care a bit earlier than usual and holiday wishes started as soon as Halloween candy was consumed. I believe we are all simply done with 2017. Done with fires, shootings, floods, and yelling at one another. We're collectively jumping into the deep end of the most wonderful time of year.

Therefore my gift is a hidden grace, among the weeds of suffering. I used to teach my students to look for such “Signal Graces”—moments when God metaphorically taps us on the shoulder to remind us of his covenant of love for us (perhaps some of you have felt more than a tap). I believe I’ve found one of these graces in the movie “Hidden Figures.”

The movie celebrates all that is good in humanity, at a time period of tremendous race and gender inequality. My favorite line comes at the beginning of the movie when the three main characters receive a police escort to NASA and one of the women shouts, “Three Negro women chasing a white police officer down a highway in Hampton, Virginia in 1961. Ladies, that there is a God-ordained miracle!”

These women wave a flag stitched in hope attached to a pole of Christ’s mercy… something we all need to celebrate right now.

Our nation, communities, and personal brokenness don’t define us—we’ve all been pushed aside and felt not good enough—but if you consider this time of year magical, then this movie is for you. Rather than division and demoralization, “Hidden Figures” celebrates the good in other. Brilliant black women are heralded for being the best version of themselves and supported by white men who only saw them as BRILLIANT.

Amen for a time period in America when minority females could seize such an opportunity. This story is a victory for Christ within all of us. “Hidden Figures” is an important history lesson to renew this Christmas season, we shall not be categorized, stereotyped, or belittled we shall celebrate ALL of us made in the image and likeness of God.

All of us should pause and appreciate our creator this Christmas as well as the strength of his handmaid, Mary. The courage and resolve Mary exemplified as the Mother of God makes her grace our first “Hidden Figure.”

I certainly hope that you have some time this Christmas to turn to her and appreciate the grace she bestowed upon us and the light of Christ within us.

Please God continue to bless America and our religious freedoms and diversity. Merry Christmas.

St. Helena Catholic School Fourth Graders Say Thank You!

Mary Galas, St Helena Catholic School fourth grade teacher, led the Thank You! poster project created by the school’s students and hung on their school gate during the recent massive fires in our counties. Signed by every student, teacher and staff member, the art work and messages reflected the gratitude to the firefighters, law enforcement and first responders.

“Our students and staff travel from surrounding communities, so we have families in every fire,” said Mary Herboth, Principal. “The parents of two of our families are first responders with law enforcement, so those children experienced the fire in an even more frightening way.”

Many families were evacuated, parents lost work, and one family, the Johnston’s, owners of Helena View winery, lost their home, winery and 25 years of wine-making history. But still, examples of generosity and hope abound, such as school family parents, Ernesto and Xochitl Martinez who hosted an appreciation dinner at their restaurant, Market St. Helena for first responders. Throughout all the tragedy and turmoil of the past weeks, students, teachers, and staff remain grateful, optimistic and strong in their faith.

Christ In Our Recovery

Steu benville Speaker DJ Bernal With NET Ministries

DJ Bernal shared his testimony at St. Eugene’s Nov 2nd nearly a month after the fires. Teens and parents gathered at St. Eugene’s Becker Center with Steubenville speaker DJ Bernal. The evening celebrated “Christ in our Recovery”—God’s healing in our suffering, a resolution to hope. Bernal highlighted the story of Naomi from the book of Ruth, and the importance of her sticking by Ruth in the face of disaster. He challenged the audience to appreciate that “God has a plan for us” which he believes is a rejuvenation of families and community. Bishop Vasa began the evening with a powerful message of “what we found” in our recovery, and NET Ministries joined the crowd offering fellowship and hospitality.
Advent Activities and Blessings for The Home

Advent Wreath
A member of the family lights one or more candles depending on the Sunday in Advent being observed. (On First Sunday, Leader asks God’s blessing on the Wreath)

Advent Wreath blessing
O God, by your word all things are made holy. We offer to you this Advent Wreath, which we ask you to bless. Help us to use it to prepare our hearts for the great coming of your Son, and help us to receive him into our hearts with joy. Amen.

Each Day
Leader: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.
All: Thanks be to God.
Leader: Rejoice: The Lord is at hand.
All: Come, Lord Jesus!
Leader: (Reads Bible passage suggested for the day)
All: Glory be to the Father and to the Son; and to the Holy Spirit as in the beginning, so now, and forever. Amen.
Leader: The peace of the Lord be with you.
All: And with your spirit.
Leader: Let us pray. (The prayer for the week is said in unison. Additional prayers may be said for the Church, the family, those in trouble, etc.)
All: Lord’s Prayer
Leader: The almighty and merciful Lord, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, bless us and keep us. Amen. Family member extinguishes candles

Prayers for the weeks in Advent

First week in Advent
Almighty God, be in our midst to cast away all works of darkness which separate us from you. In your great mercy, forgive all the things we have done that we should not have done; and all things we failed to do that we should have done; and teach us to live as children of God. This we ask in the Name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Second week in Advent
Our Father, pour your love into our hearts so that we may love more fully all those whom you love. Help us to be understanding of the needs of others, as you were understanding of the needs of all men and sent your Son Jesus Christ to redeem us. This we ask in the Name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Third week in Advent
Oh God, who sent prophets to prepare the way for the coming of your Son: help us to hear their warning and their message of great joy which was given for all people; so that at the Birthday of your Son, our Redeemer, we may receive Him more joyfully into our hearts. This we ask in the Name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Fourth week in Advent
Blessed God, we await the coming of your Son our Savior. In this last week of our waiting, bring us to greater love of our family by learning to give to one another greater respect and honor; that our homes may be happy, joyful places into which thy Son, Jesus Christ may come. Amen.

Other Advent Activities and Blessings

Advent Calendars
Christian Advent calendars help us prepare for Christmas.

The Christmas Manger
A family advent project can be building a Christmas Manger scene. Some materials that may be used are pictures glued on plywood and cut out, cookie, soap or plaster-of-paris nativity figures, or a felt board nativity scene. We can encourage our children’s efforts by placing their work where it can be admired.

The Empty Manger
During Advent, a wooden manger is placed beside each child’s bed or one for household. At bedtime, children receive a piece of straw for each kind deed they did in Jesus’ honor. On Christmas morning the children find they have prepared a place for the infant Jesus.

Hearts for Jesus
Large hearts are cut out of construction paper and children receive small star stickers for each good deed done for Jesus. On Christmas Eve the children wrap the hearts for Jesus and place them under the manger scene at mass to give Jesus the gift of their hearts.

Stir up Sunday
A British tradition of stirring up a batch of Christmas cake (fruit cake or plum pudding) filled with good things because Christ will bring good things of heaven to us. The cake is prepared ahead of time and each person takes a turn stirring the batter as the following prayer of the church is read:

“Stir up thy might, we beg Thee, Oh Lord, and come so that we may escape through thy protection and be saved by thy help from the dangers that threaten us because of our sins. Who lives and reigns forever and ever”, Amen. The cake is baked and saved until Christmas.

(1st and 2nd Week of Advent)
by appointing the first-ever cardinals, giving Cardinal Bo a red hat in 2015, and elevating Cardinal D’Rozario of Dhaka in November 2016.

With Christians being a small minority in both Burma and Bangladesh, the Pope’s appointments were considered an encouragement for the small Catholic populations, and his visit is seen as a further sign of his closeness to a demographic that also faces discrimination in the area.

Christians in Burma also face blatant persecution, which some fear could increase if the Pope offends the government regarding the Rohingya.

Last year the United States Commission on Religious Freedom issued two separate reports on Burma, one of which focused on the plight of the Rohingya, and the second, titled “Hidden Plight: Christian Minorities in Burma,” highlighted the discrimination and persecution Christians face.

Encounters with youth
The Pope’s visits to both Burma and Bangladesh will be closed with meetings with the countries’ youth. According to Burke, this was a decision the Pope himself made in order to show that they are an essential part of the Church, and that in each country, it is “a young Church with hope.”

In his meetings with youth, the Pope typically tosses his prepared remarks after listening to testimonies and speaks more freely and casually to the youth as he tries to enter into the raw reality faced by the local population, giving them a message of hope and some instructions for the future.

In messages sent to both countries ahead of his visit, Pope Francis said he was coming to spread the Gospel and to bring a message of peace, forgiveness, and reconciliation.

Though he will likely offer paternal advice to priests and religious, the meeting with youth is where his more pastoral side is most likely to come out stronger, and where he will likely go beyond the politics in order to offer a message of hope, peace and reconciliation for youth to carry forward into the future.