On Sunday, October 21, St. Vincent De Paul Parish in Petaluma hosted a special Mass for the Marian Sisters of the Diocese of Santa Rosa.

Fr. Bill Donahue, Pastor of St. Vincents, invited the Marian Sisters to attend and sing at a special Mass in their honor. All twelve of the Sisters were able to attend the 10:30 Mass.

Fr. Bill Donahue mentioned the long history of the presence of Sisters at the two St. Vincents schools. Religious Sisters were present from the inception of both schools continuing for almost 100 years.

The Marian Sisters will continue the tradition of having religious sisters present at St. Vincents well into the future.

The Marian Sisters ongoing and expanding ministry in the Diocese of Santa Rosa includes teaching at Diocesan schools, organizing and attending Diocesan school events, working in a number of Diocesan ministries, organizing and attending Diocesan youth ministry events, conducting numerous retreats and camps throughout the Diocese and ongoing presence at parishes and schools in the Diocese.

Texas Diocese Says Border Wall On Church Land Violates Religious Freedom

November 27 (Catholic News Agency)

The Diocese of Brownsville, Texas is pushing back against a government effort to use Church property to aid in the construction of the border wall along the U.S.-Mexico border.

David Garza, a lawyer for the diocese in South Texas, told the Corpus Christi Caller-Times that “it goes against the First Amendment, freedom of religion.”

The federal government has informed the dioceses that it plans to survey an estimated 67 acres of property where La Lomita Mission, is located near the Rio Grande, the Caller-Times reported. Some or all of the land may be confiscated through eminent domain for the construction of the U.S.-Mexico border wall.

A statement from the diocese said that Bishop Daniel Flores of Brownsville has already entered into several discussions with government officials regarding two

(The Marian Sisters will continue the tradition of Sister presence at St. Vincents well into the future.)

I noted last month that I had a plan to talk to all the priests of the Diocese about the matter of the release of names of priests accused of sexual abuse of minors connected with the Diocese of Santa Rosa. We had our meeting on November 6 and 7 and we had the opportunity to cover a variety of important matters. One of the things, which will be included in next month’s North Coast Catholic, is a commitment by the priests to offer one Mass each week in each of the Parishes of the Diocese for the healing of those who suffer from abuse, for conversion and just punishment for perpetrators of abuse or for strength for bishops to be holy shepherds in protecting their people. These intentions have been given to us by the leadership of the USCCB with a request that we offer prayers for these intentions for seven days. In the Diocese of Santa Rosa, beginning in January of 2019, one of these intentions will be noted in the Parish bulletin each week throughout the course of 2019. This is a proper response to the need for prayers noted last month: There is ongoing need for prayers. Prayers for healing and reconciliation. Prayers for restoration of trust. Prayers for wisdom. Prayers. Prayers. I delayed the publication of names until January for two reasons. The first reason is to give me and the priests of the Diocese time to prepare and consult about the release of names. Second, and really the more important reason, was to assure that our focus during the month of December could be devoted to a proper personal preparation for the celebration of the Coming of Jesus at Christmas. This is not intended in any way to diminish the importance of prayers and ongoing repentance for the crimes of the abuse of children.

Our preparation for Christmas is summarized in the four Sundays of Advent. The vestments are purple, showing that the season is one of reparation, penance and spiritual preparation. It is proper for us to begin the Church’s Liturgical Year, which always begins with the First Sunday of Advent, in a spirit of penitential reparation. We have a similar Season of Grace at Lent when we prepare for the great events of the Passion of the Lord and His glorious Resurrection. The Advent Season is the time for us to prepare for the celebration of that great day on which our Savior was made visible in the stable at Bethlehem. It is a time for gradual enlightenment as we approach that time about which the prophet says, “The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light!” In many ways we continue to walk in darkness.

We have in our churches the beautiful custom of the Advent Wreath. On the First Sunday of Advent one of the four candles is lit. I like to see this as the candle of enlightenment. Perhaps, in a penitential spirit we can pray with the psalmist, Lord, reveal to me by the light of Thy grace my hidden and unknown faults. Blindness to our own shortcomings is very prevalent. We often walk in darkness. The dawn from on high gradually begins to fill our hearts as we prayerfully remember how much light we have neglected and resisted. Then upon the lighting of the second candle on the Second Sunday the prayer could be, Lord I now see my need for repentance. Give me the light I need to know what to do to heal this blindness. We are still under the influence of darkness and blindness but we begin to see, however dimly, rays of hope.

The Third Sunday and the third candle, really a candle of rejoicing, is comparable to the Prodigal Son who sees his sin and his separation from his father and resolves to make amends and return to his father. It is the candle of good and wholesome resolution. I will make amends in my life. I will try to live in accord with God’s ways and God’s will. I will make a greater effort to be faithful to God in all that He calls me to do. Then, the lighting of the fourth candle on the Fourth Sunday of Advent symbolizes the carrying out of the resolution. For some this will necessarily include going to the Sacrament of Reconciliation. For some it will include a stronger resolve to set aside older, sinful patterns of life. For some, who are already striving for holiness it will be the resolve to respond even more fully to the grace of Almighty God.

May the four candles of Advent, enlighten and brighten your lives for a full and wonderful celebration of our Lord’s coming at Christmas. A most Blessed Christmas to you all! ❖
Washington D.C., Nov 26 (CNA) - Bishop Frank Rodimer and Fr. Peter Osinski were friends. Osinski was a priest in the Diocese of Camden, New Jersey. Rodimer was Bishop of Paterson, a nearby diocese, from 1978 until 2004.

For years the men rented a beach house together each summer on New Jersey’s Long Beach Island, south of Seaside and north of Atlantic City. There, for seven years in the 1980s, Osinski molested a young boy. The first year it happened, the boy was seven.

The priest was arrested in 1997. He was sentenced to ten years in prison.

In 1999, the victim settled a lawsuit against the bishop, the priest, and the priest’s diocese. Rodimer was not alleged to have committed sexual abuse, but the suit charged that the bishop had been negligent in failing to recognize what was going on.

In 2002 Rodimer apologized for failing to prevent the abuse at the beach house. He also acknowledged that he had mishandled other cases of sexual abuse involving priests of his diocese.

At the same time, he defended his decision to allow an admitted child abuser, Fr. William Cramer, to serve as a hospital chaplain from 1991 to 2002.

For much of his tenure in Paterson, Rodimer was the senior suffragan bishop of the ecclesiastical province of Newark.

At the U.S. bishops’ conference meeting in Baltimore this month, Cardinal Blase Cupich proposed that metropolitans—archbishops—should be responsible for investigating claims of misconduct or negligence against their suffragan bishops. If metropolitans are accused, the plan says, the senior suffragan bishop should investigate.

If that plan had been in place during Archbishop Theodore McCarrick’s last years in Newark, Rodimer would have been the one charged with looking into allegations against McCarrick.

Of course, Rodimer retired 14 years ago. And the fact that he was McCarrick’s senior suffragan bishop does not suggest that metropolitan and suffragan bishops are universally unqualified to address charges of sexual misconduct or administrative negligence in the life of the Church.

But Rodimer’s position as McCarrick’s one-time senior suffragan is a reminder that addressing the problems of sexual abuse, misconduct, and administrative negligence is not as simple a proposition as many Catholics, and bishops, would like it to be.

U.S. bishops have learned that lesson in recent weeks, even as responsibility for solving the problem has shifted apparently by the pope’s design, to Rome.

After several confusing and turbulent weeks in the Church, it is worth asking where reform efforts stand, and where they will be going.

Baltimore, thwarted plans, and the “metropolitan model”

It is now well-known that this month’s meeting of the U.S. bishops’ conference was unlike any USCCB meeting that had come before it. The bishops arrived in Baltimore Nov. 12 prepared to pray together, and then to vote on facets of a plan they believed would address the allegations of episcopal sexual misconduct and administrative malfeasance that have plagued the Church in recent months.

They planned to pass a code of conduct for bishops, create a whistleblower hotline, and establish an independent lay-led team of experts charged with investigating allegations made against bishops.

On Monday morning, as the meeting opened, Cardinal Daniel DiNardo, the conference president, announced that their plans had been iced—the Vatican had determined they should wait to vote until after a January retreat for U.S. bishops, and a February meeting involving the heads of bishops’ conferences from around the world.

DiNardo himself seemed stunned. Bishops and observers were confused. Many bishops felt they had to return to their dioceses with evidence that some action had been taken to address diminishing lay confidence in their ability to address the ongoing crisis.

Nevertheless, the meeting continued. By the end, at least one official action had been taken: DiNardo announced the formation of a task force, consisting of several former USCCB presidents, to assist him in assessing open questions and possible plans that arose from the meeting, in preparation for the February gathering at the Vatican.

While several open questions are part of its mandate, the main job of the task force seems to be developing two competing proposals for the investigation of bishops.

The initial plan for investigating bishops, introduced by conference leadership before the November meeting, called for a lay-led commission which could investigate allegations made against bishops who support the funding of the commission and choose to allow themselves to be investigated.

Proponents of this plan say it has the benefit of inscrutability; that leadership by independent lay experts will ensure fair and thorough evaluations of complaints, and assist the Holy See by providing accurate and impartial information. Opponents at the Baltimore meeting raised a variety of objections: that funding the commission will be expensive, that the commission might not have a sufficient number of allegations to justify staffing it, that the plan puts laity into a position of “authority” over bishops, or, conversely, that the plan does not give sufficient authority to investigators because participation is not compulsory.

After voting on that proposal was suspended, a new plan surfaced during the bishops’ meeting, introduced by Cupich. That plan would have metropolitans, or archbishops, along with their archdiocesan review boards, investigate allegations against bishops. If archbishops were accused, the senior diocesan bishop in the ecclesiastical province would investigate the plan, with assistance from his review board.

The proponents of the “metropolitan model” plan say that it appropriately involves laity, is more consistent with Catholic ecclesiology, and is notably less expensive than the alternative proposal. At least one bishop at the recent meeting said it seems more fitting for bishops to be judged by bishops. Critics of the approach say that while the plan might work in theory, it is too late for the Church to impose a policy in which bishops are responsible for overseeing investigations into other bishops; that trust has eroded in the institution and is more likely to be restored by outside, independent lay involvement. Other critics say that the plan imposes responsibility on the metropolitan he may not be prepared to fulfill, and that could lead, potentially, to legal liabilities.

Disagreement among the bishops over these proposals is not ideological. Both Cupich and Archbishop Charles Chaput support the metropolitan model, though they often have markedly divergent theological viewpoints. Most observers say that both (see Sexual Abuse Analysis, page 8)
such as making Jesse trees or putting on a Christmas play at home. Catholic families can engage more fruitfully in the seasons of Advent and Christmas.

Either we live the liturgical year with its varying seasons of joy and sorrow, work and rest, or we follow the pattern of the world, writes Helen McLoughlin in Advent and Christmas in a Catholic Home, commenting on the challenge Catholics have of being in the world but not of the world throughout the year. She wrote these profound words in the 1950s, but they are even more important today because of the general decline in Catholic family life during the last 60 years. With two parents working in many households, there is less time to spend together in spiritual life in the home. As Catholic parents, we must readjust our priorities and teach our children by living our faith, both inside and outside the home.

It seems fitting that Advent is the beginning of the liturgical calendar, for it is a season of spiritual preparation marked by an eager longing for the birth of Our Savior Jesus Christ. There are age-old Advent practices, some of which are mentioned above, which will help our children and families live closer to Christ. The practices are time-tested and proven. They teach the doctrine of redemption and develop a sense of generosity toward God (cf. Catechism, nos. 2222-26). A families strong and living faith will become their heritage and a mode to reinforce the religious practices centered in the liturgy.

Children love to anticipate, writes McLoughlin. When there are empty mangers to fill with straw for small sacrifices, when the Mary candle is a daily reminder on the dinner table, when Advent hymns are sung in the candlelight of a graceful Advent wreath, children can be drawn into the celebration of Christmas before time. That would offend their sense of honor. Older children who make Nativity sets, cut Old Testament symbols to decorate a Jesse tree, or prepare costumes for a Christmas play will find Advent all too short a time to prepare for the coming of Christ the King. These are hopeful thoughts as we prepare to incorporate some of these liturgical activities into our home life during Advent to enable us to truly celebrate Christmas. It is a shame that many do not fast during Advent, because without a fast there can really be no Christmas. Fasting and other forms of penance, such as prayer and almsgiving, help to purify our hearts and prepare us for the celebration of Christmas (cf. Catechism, no. 1434). The Church especially encourages participation at weekday Masses during Advent, because in the Eucharist we find the source and goal of our Advent preparation: Christ Himself, whose sacrifice reconciles us with God (cf. Catechism, no. 1436; Sacred Congregation of Rites, Eucharisticum Mysterium, no. 29).

The Church celebrates Christmas from Christmas Day until the Solemnity of the Epiphany, which commemorates the manifestation of Christ as the Savior of the whole world (cf. Mt. 2:1-12). The Church has also traditionally celebrated Christmas for 40 days, culminating on the Feast of the Presentation (Feb. 2). During this time, the birth of Christ is celebrated as one continuous festival. It is just as important to celebrate during the Christmas season as it is to prepare for Christmas during Advent.

The following activities are provided so that you and your family can live Advent and Christmas to the fullest.

Advent wreath: The Advent wreath, which has German origins, is probably the most recognized Advent custom. It is a wreath made of evergreens that is bound to a circle of wire. It symbolizes the many years from Adam to Christ in which the world awaited its Redeemer; it also represents the years that we have awaited His second and final coming. The wreath holds four equally spaced candles, the three purple ones sit on the penitential Sundays and a pink one for Gaudete, the joyful third Sunday in Advent. There are many available prayers and hymns found in the reading list that can accompany your personal Advent wreath ceremony.

The empty manger: Each child may have his own individual manger, or there may be one manger for the whole family. The idea is that when acts of service, sacrifice, or kindness are done in honor of Baby Jesus as a birthday present, the child receives a piece of straw to put into the manger. Then, on Christmas morning, Baby Jesus is placed in the manger. Encourage your children to make Jesus bed as comfortable as possible through their good deeds. In the process, explain Christs incomparable self-gift at Christmas and Easter that enables us to be part of Gods family.

The Jesse tree: The Jesse tree tells about Christs ancestry through symbols and relates Scripture to salvation history, progressing from creation to the birth of Christ. The tree can be made on a poster board with the symbols glued on, or on an actual tree. For further information read, Advent and Christmas in a Catholic Home.

St. Nicholas Day: The feast of St. Nicholas is on Dec. 6th. It is a highlight of the Advent season. Each child puts out a shoe the night before St. Nicholas Day in the hope that the kind bishop with his miter, staff, and bag of gifts will pay a visit. The current Santa Claus is modeled after St. Nicholas, but commercialism has tarnished the true story. Many families give gifts on both Dec. 6 and Christmas. Read about St. Nicholas in your favorite saints book.

The Christ candle: Any large white candle can be used for the Christ candle. The idea is to decorate it with symbols for Christ. Use old Christmas cards, sequins, holly, etc. The candle can be lit on Christmas Eve to show that the Light of the World has arrived. Then continue to light the Christ candle throughout the year at Sunday dinner to remind your family of our waiting for Christ, as well as celebrating His birth and Resurrection.

The Mary candle: Some families have the custom of decorating the Christ candle with a blue veil on December 8th, the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception. On this great feast, others place a candle with a blue ribbon before a statue or picture of the Blessed Virgin, whose yes to God enabled our Lords coming at Christmas. The candle is lit during meal times to serve as a delightful reminder of Marys eager expectation of the Light of the World. It can also serve as a reminder to each family member to keep their own light of grace burning as a preparation for Christs coming.

St. Lucy cakes: The feast of St. Lucy, virgin and martyr, is on December 13th. This marks the opening of the Christmas season in Sweden. Her life story can be found in most saints books, as can the recipe for the traditional cakes. The symbolism is rich and her life story worthwhile reading.

The Nativity scene: This is the event in which the entire family shares setting up the Christmas manger. Mary and Joseph should be far off traveling and their approach to Bethlehem can be adjusted daily. Older children can make life-size Nativity models, carve them, cut them out from cardboard, or set up pre-made figurines. The creative ideas are without limit. Make sure to place the Nativity scene where many can admire the childrens efforts to give God glory.

Christmas baking: There are many recipe books available to find great traditional Christmas baking ideas. (See recommended reading below.) The baking usually starts around December 20th. As Christmas approaches, the house will smell of baking and fresh wreaths. The glory of Christmas is at hand! Move the manger to a focal point, add lights to the Nativity to be lighted on Christmas Eve, and anticipate together.

Blessing of the tree: More and more frequently families are blessing their Christmas trees. It is good to remind children that the tree relates to many aspects of our faith. For example, we are reminded that our first parents were not allowed to eat from one tree, and that Christ paid the great price for our redemption by hanging on a tree (cf. Acts 5:29-32).

There are many different stories which attempt to explain why we use a tree at Christmas. For instance, St. Boniface in the eighth century gave the balsam fir tree to the Druids in place of the oak tree, the symbol of their idol. He said, The fir tree is the wood of peace, the sign of an endless life with its evergreen branches. It points to heaven. It will never shelter deeds of blood, but rather be filled with loving gifts and rites of kindness.

There are more stories and blessings included in McLoughlins Advent and Christmas in a Catholic Home. A family can also participate in Advent through daily Mass, the Liturgy of the Hours, or at least by following the weekday Mass readings at home, as the Church anticipates her Saviors coming, and then His early life following Christmas. A family that participates together in Mass and other activities during the Advent and Christmas seasons will grow closer in Christ. The Reason for the Season and give a great witness to friends and relatives.
Report: ‘Aggressive Nationalism’ Fueling Threats to Religious Minorities

Washington D.C., Nov 26 (CNA/EWTN News) - “Aggressive nationalism” is a principal driver of violence and intimidation targeting religious minorities in certain parts of the world, according to the international papal charity Aid to the Church in Need (ACN).

The charity last week accused a “religiously illiterate West” of ignoring the plight of religious minorities primarily in Africa, the Middle East, and Asia, saying that “most Western governments” have failed to provide adequate aid to those persecuted and to migrants.

ACN’s Nov. 22 report, Religious Freedom in the World 2018, is based on a 25-month review of all 196 of the world’s nations. The report highlights 38 nations with significant religious freedom violations, and in more than half of those countries, conditions for religious minorities have deteriorated since 2016.

“Pope Francis, as well as his immediate predecessors, have all stressed that religious freedom is a fundamental human right rooted in the dignity of man,” Thomas Heine-Geldern, executive president of ACN, said in a statement.

“It is the purpose of this report to draw worldwide attention to this intrinsic link between religious freedom and human dignity.”

The report states that more than 60 percent of the world’s population lives in a country where “the right to religious freedom is obstructed or denied outright.”

Religious freedom violations perpetrated by state actors and authoritarian regimes, the report notes, resulted in more countries showing a decline in religious liberty this year compared to 2016. ACN calls this phenomenon “ultra-nationalism.”

“Violent and systematic intimidation of religious minority groups has led to them being branded as disloyal aliens and threatening to the state,” the report reads.

One such country is China, where the increasingly authoritarian Communist government has recently been cracking down on religious minorities, despite a provisional September deal with the Vatican on the appointment of Catholic bishops.

In other countries, such as Russia and Kyrgyzstan, worsening intolerance toward religious minorities meant the countries were placed in ACN’s “Discrimination” category for the first time.

For other countries, including North Korea, Saudi Arabia, Yemen and Eritrea, “the situation [for religious minorities] was already so bad, it could scarcely get any worse,” the report reads.

Islamic extremism, fueled by conflict between Sunni and Shia Islam, accounted for the persecution faced by minorities in 22 of the 38 countries highlighted. Though Islamist violence has lessened in countries like Tanzania and Kenya, the authors of the report assert that media reports have focused mainly on the Islamist threat from ISIS and its affiliates, while ignoring the spread of Islamist groups elsewhere in Africa, the Middle East, and Asia. At the same time, the report argues that Islamophobia in the West has increased, partly because of terrorist attacks and the ongoing migrant crisis.

“There are some like the Rohingya Muslims, whose plight has received due attention in the West, but so many others—such as Christians in Nigeria, Ahmadis in Pakistan and Baha’is in Iran—feel abandoned by the West where religious freedom has slipped down the human rights priority rankings,” the report reads.

Sexual abuse of women by extremist groups in Africa, the Middle East and parts of India was an issue of particular importance highlighted by the report.

ACN, founded in 1947, has been a papal charity that plans to survey an estimated 67 acres of property where La Lomita Mission, is located near the Rio Grande, the Caller-Times reported. Some or all of the land may be confiscated through eminent domain for the construction of the U.S.-Mexico border wall.

A statement from the diocese said that Bishop Daniel Flores of Brownsville has already entered into several discussions with government officials regarding two properties owned by the diocese in Hidalgo County.

“The bishop has the greatest respect for the responsibilities of the men and women involved in border security, in his judgment, church property should not be used for the purposes of building a border wall,” read the statement.

“Such a structure would limit the freedom of the Church to exercise her mission in the Rio Grande Valley, and would in fact be a sign contrary to the Church’s mission. Thus, in principle, the bishop does not consent to use church property to construct a border wall.”

Garza argued that the U.S. Department of Homeland Security should not be able to confiscate the diocese’s property. He said the land is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and is a public place of worship.

“La Lomita Chapel is a sacred building destined for divine worship to which the faithful have a right of access for divine worship, especially its public exercise,” he said, according to the Caller-Times.

Originally built in 1865 by Oblate Missionaries, La Lomita was the half-way point between the cities of Roma and Brownsville. A flood destroyed the original chapel building, but it was rebuilt in 1899. According to the National Parks Service, La Lomita was a major contributor to the foundation of Mission, the surrounding town.
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 supernatu- ral, 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 “immacu- late” 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 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 whirlash from trying to keep up: wildfires, shootings, bombs, 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 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 hope- less 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

Free Catholic School Tuition Offered to Kids Displaced by Camp Fire

By Mary Rezac

Sacramento, Calif., Nov 27 (CNA) - After 17 days of scorching more than 150,000 acres in northern California, the Camp Fire—one of the states deadliest and most destructive wildfires on record—has finally been contained.

The fire killed at least 88 people, but that number is expected to rise as nearly 300 people are still unac- counted for. It destroyed some 14,000 residencies and left the town of Paradise, in Butte County, essentially non-existent.

Paradise sits in the northern part of the Diocese of Sacramento. Before the fire was even fully contained, the department of schools for the diocese announced that it would be offering free tuition at its Catholic schools for any Butte County students displaced by the wildfire.

“Paradise it not that small of a city. It has—or had— nearly 30,000 inhabitants, so the fire left around 4,000 school kids displaced, without any schools to go back to,” said Lincoln Snyder, executive director of schools for the Diocese of Sacramento, told CNA.

About 90 percent of Paradise is completely burned, and “what remains probably isn’t going to be usable for a long time,” he said.

After meeting with the school board and Bishop Jaime Soto, the diocese announced last week that any open spots in diocesan Catholic schools would be offered to displaced Camp Fire students at no cost to the families.

Funds are being collected through a page on the diocesan website. The appeal for the campaign states that while the exact need is difficult to predict at the moment, the funds collected will go to helping these new students, as well as the students already in area Catholic schools who have lost their homes in the fire.

“Many families have lost nearly everything in this fire, and being back in a school can be a major sta- bilizing force in a child’s life. Some classes in some of our schools could accommodate more students, and we have thus decided to open those seats to affected families who find themselves near those schools,” he said.

“Though our schools are funded by tuition, we will enroll displaced Butte County students at no cost to the family for the remainder of the academic year.”

So far, Snyder told CNA that they have already been able to enroll sev- eral displaced students in Catholic schools, and that the diocese can accommodate dozens or even hun- dreds of displaced students, though the number of open seats per school varies.

“We’ve had several students apply and we’re making good on the offer, and we’re excited to be able to offer these open spots to the students who’ve been displaced,” he said.

After meeting with the school board and Bishop Jaime Soto, the diocese announced last week that any open spots in diocesan Catholic schools would be offered to displaced Camp Fire students at no cost to the families.

A diocesan fundraiser for displaced students, and will cover all school expenses including uniforms, back- packs, field trip money, hot lunches, and any other school-related costs.

“We are heartbroken over the devastation the Camp Fire has caused, and the number of families it has left displaced in its wake. We understand that it may be a long time before students can return to their schools and classrooms in the city of Paradise, and we would like to help by opening up our schools to Butte County students, grades Preschool—12, who have been displaced by the fires,” Snyder said in a press release announcing the offer.
Young Man Healed by Padre Pio Recounts Story of Miraculous Cure

Madrid, Spain, Nov 19 (ACI Prensa) - Matteo Pio Colella was just 7 years old when he contracted a deadly disease. Doctors believed there was no hope for the boy, but he made a full recovery. His cure was the miracle that paved the way for the canonization of St. Padre Pio by Pope John Paul II in June 2002.

Colella, now 27, gave an exclusive interview to ACI Prensa, CNA’s Spanish language sister agency, on the occasion of the pre-release of the film “El Misterio del Padre Pio” (The Mystery of Padre Pio) in Madrid.

The documentary is directed by writer and filmmaker José María Zavala and includes Colella’s testimony.

“During the coma,” Colella recounted, “I saw Padre Pio in a dream on my right and three angels on the left…”

On Jan. 20, 2000, Colella was diagnosed with acute fulminating meningitis, caused by bacteria. The disease had affected his kidneys, his respiratory system and blood clotting. He was immediately admitted to the hospital founded by Padre Pio, the “Casa Sollievo della Sofferenza” (Home for the Relief of Suffering), located in San Giovanni Rotondo where the saint’s (see Miraculous Cure, page 11)

"I wasn’t feeling well,” he recalled. “I told my mother that I didn’t want to go to school, but she made me go because at that time I didn’t like school. That same night, when my mother came to say goodnight, I didn’t recognize her, and so they immediately took me to the hospital.”

On the other hand, if you discover that the situation is much more severe, you must intervene. This doesn’t mean bring out the Bears, but it does mean sitting down with your child’s school teacher or administrator. It is important to alert them to the situation so that they can be more aware and act quickly. It is important to work together with them as a team to help resolve this situation and ensure the safety of your child. Should the situation not resolve itself, and you believe that your child is in danger, do not hesitate to bring in the authorities.

All of this is reactionary, something to do—after the fact. What can we do before the fact? We can teach our children to be kind, to be compassionate. We can also teach our children to be confident. A constant reminder that they are made in the image and likeness of God, that He doesn't make ‘junk’, that He has a purpose for them and for their life. This isn’t about the every child gets a trophy argument, this is about teaching our child, at every opportunity, that they are loved and valued. Not just by their families but by He who created them. The world will pick at their personal armor. Other children do not have their things or go to favorite places, avoids intimidating or mistreating somebody weaker or in more vulnerable situation.

The problem with these definitions is that for some children, teasing feels an awful lot like bullying. Some children can handle teasing, have a way of laughing it off, a way of not letting those verbal darts penetrate their personal armor. Other children do not have or never developed that skill and every teasing remark, every laugh AT the child, penetrates, wounds, and leaves scars. As parents, we see that stuff happening to our sweet babies and the Mama and Papa Bear want to come roaring out. I get that. The problem with that approach is that it is based on your emotional reaction to the story and satisfies your need to protect and defend. What it may not allow is the opportunity for growth for your child, the opportunity to develop new skills, new confidence, and the valuable opportunity for empowerment for your child. It is times like this when we as parents need to remember the long term goal—we want to raise healthy, happy, mature, productive adults, who love God and know how to get along in the world. So before the Bears leap—think—is this going to help toward that goal?

On the other hand, bullying is much more serious, more sinister, and more dangerous. While both bullying and teasing can have long term, lasting effects on the child, the scars from bullying go deeper and can have a deeper impact. The difficulty is determining the difference. Some experts argue that the difference is intention—bullies intend to cause harm, while teasing is supposed to be no harm, just fun/funny.

If your child displays behavior changes that are concerning, more withdrawn, not wanting to do previously favorite things or go favorite places, avoids former friendships, has difficulty sleeping, loss or change of appetite—these are all signs that need to be examined. You must talk to your child, carefully, supportively, attempt to uncover what has changed in their world. There are experts that recommend, in the case of teasing, that parents stay out of it, or have a discreet conversation with your child’s teacher. Perhaps brainstorm with your child for possible solutions or things the child can do to help resolve this. It is important, depending on the severity of course, that the child be given the opportunity to change and grow, and the support they need to do that.

Bullying

By Julie Sparacio

For the last several decades, at least, there has been an emphasis on bullying incidents, long term effects and bullying prevention programs. This is all good. The world has changed so much in the last decades and what many of us saw or experienced as bullying (back in the day) is not what is occurring now. With the onslaught of various social media platforms, the opportunities to bully another have multiplied exponentially! Parents have a tough time knowing how to protect their child, or how to manage their child’s behavior if their child is the bully. What worked back then, does not necessarily work today.

First, I think it’s important to understand what bullying is and what it isn’t. According to an article in Psychology Today, teasing is defined as:

To make fun of somebody, either playfully or maliciously, deliberately annoy somebody or irritate a person or an animal, to persuade somebody by coaxing.

Bullying, on the other hand is defined in the same article as:

Intimidation of a weaker person, the process of intimidating or mistreating somebody weaker or in more vulnerable situation.

The problem with these definitions is that for some children, teasing feels an awful lot like bullying. Some children can handle teasing, have a way of laughing it off, a way of not letting those verbal darts penetrate their personal armor. Other children do not have or never developed that skill and every teasing remark, every laugh AT the child, penetrates, wounds, and leaves scars. As parents, we see that stuff happening to our sweet babies and the Mama and Papa Bear want to come roaring out. I get that. The problem with that approach is that it is based on your emotional reaction to the story and satisfies your need to protect and defend. What it may not allow is the opportunity for growth for your child, the opportunity to develop new skills, new confidence, and the valuable opportunity for empowerment for your child. It is times like this when we as parents need to remember the long term goal—we want to raise healthy, happy, mature, productive adults, who love God and know how to get along in the world. So before the Bears leap—think—is this going to help toward that goal?

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plains have strengths and weaknesses that should be explored before any plan is recommended or implemented. The task force will take up that exploration. Its conclusions will be submitted to DiNardo before the February meeting.

The task force’s work could prove to be for naught, if the pope, Vatican officials, or the meeting’s planning committee already know what they hope to see come from the meeting. Cupich, who was appointed by Pope Francis, said recently that the meeting will work to accomplish some “specific outcomes that reflect the mind of Pope Francis.”

It is not certain that the pope supports the metropolitan plan proposed by Cupich, and publicly floated in August by Cardinal Donald Wuerl, but the appointment of Cupich to the meeting’s planning committee seems to suggest that the pope supports at least the cardinal’s basic approach.

Still, of concern to many American Catholics at this point are not the specifics of any initiative undertaken, but rather that the Vatican does something concrete and direct, and soon, to demonstrate that sexual coercion and abuse are intolerable, as is episcopal administrative negligence.

At the outset, some bishops have said that while the pope’s apparent reticence to commit to a particular plan is concerning, it is also important that such a serious matter be addressed wisely and prudently, so that policies implemented hastily are not subsequently revoked.

For many American Catholics, however, the Vatican’s reticence to allow action seems to reflect a so-called paralysis of analysis. Some worry that episcopal malfeasance will go on unaddressed long after the February meeting— that while the pope seeks global consensus, reform in the U.S. will remain at a standstill.

Some note that while talks are on hiatus, bishops accused of negligence or misconduct, among them Bishop Richard Malone of Buffalo and Bishop Michael Hoeppner of Crookston, do not seem to be the subjects of ecclesiastical inquiries into their status.

This situation, they say, will lead to increasingly diminished confidence in the Church’s capacity to reform itself, and increasingly stronger support for the intervention of civil authorities.

These echoes of the crisis tell us that there has yet been little evidence of a canonical process for McCarrick, a situation to which global media outlets have remained attentive.

It is frustration about McCarrick that seems to have fueled much of the criticism from lay Catholics of the U.S. bishops. While the stalled policy reform can be attributed to the Vatican, many Catholics have expressed discouragement at a perceived lack of commitment from bishops to press for answers on McCarrick.

Commentators and some bishops seemed especially frustrated that the USCCB failed to pass a resolution encouraging the Vatican to release all legally permissible documents related to McCarrick’s alleged misconduct.

During debate, some bishops said the resolution was unnecessary because the Vatican had already pledged to release a summary report of its own internal investigation of documents related to McCarrick. One bishop said the resolution could be interpreted as an expression of distrust in the Vatican. Some bishops seemed uneasy about seeming to publicly pressure the Vatican, especially since previous efforts to that effect by conference leadership had been rebuffed.

But one bishop told CNA that debate over the resolution got “lost in the weeds,” and lost sight of the symbolic importance of the resolution to Catholics hoping to see an act of solidarity and leadership from their bishops, a collective affirmation of the importance of the McCarrick investigation. After the Vatican’s suspension of policy votes, the bishop said, Catholics wanted to feel that their bishops continue to press for answers, that they are not afraid of what might be discovered.

The resolution, however, failed by a wide margin.

What’s coming

These are unpredictable times in the life of the Church, shaped by events with little precedent. But four points seem clear about the months to come.

The first is that the February meeting is unlikely to conclude with the adoption of reform policies. Cupich has said the meeting will be the start of a process—given that the meeting is scheduled to last for only three days, it seems impossible to expect any policies to be adopted or promulgated. This will probably enflame a new round of frustration among U.S. Catholics, and many U.S. bishops, who perceive an urgent need to debate and decide on reform policy.

While a slower process might indeed lead to better, more well-constructed policies, there will be a price to pay for the pace, and it will be measured in the costs of civil investigations, lawsuits, and possible indictments, and in the number of disaffected Catholics who lose faith in the Church while they wait.

The second is that the episcopal conference now seems unlikely to remain the principal method of communication between the Vatican and the U.S. bishops. The pope has rebuffed several public requests from conference leadership for an apostolic visitation into McCarrick, and publicly rebuffed, at the very last minute, their plan to vote on reform policies. And it is telling that Francis appointed Cupich, who is not a part of the conference’s elected leadership, to help plan a meeting for the elected leaders of conferences around the world, and to represent the U.S. in the planning group.

The pope has previously appointed Cupich to accompany elected U.S. representatives to Vatican meetings, including the 2015 synod on the family and the 2018 synod on youth. The pope has again affirmed his trust in Chicago’s archbishop, who, in light of that trust, and his appointment to February planning committee, will be more frequently seen as an unofficial but important bridge, and interpreter, between Rome and the U.S.

Next, it seems obvious that Catholics will continue to call for action from the U.S. Church’s leadership, as will civil authorities. Their call is likely to grow more impatient. Calls to withhold financial support from diocesan apostolates are likely to continue, although few observers expect such calls to have a serious impact on the bottom line for most dioceses. Far more likely to have serious financial and operational impact on the Church will be the decisions of the U.S. Attorney and state attorneys general—indictments or litigation could have both domestic and Vatican consequences.

Finally, there is one positive development worth noting. During the recent bishops’ meeting, DiNardo offered several opportunities for bishops to speak candidly about the sexual abuse crisis and their experiences. Some bishops spoke very personally about their own needs, their concerns, their shortcomings, and their hopes. Cardinal Joseph Tobin spoke earnestly, as did Archbishop George Lucas, Bishop Andrew Cozzens, and several others. Some bishops told CNA they sensed the Holy Spirit prompting a more fraternal exchange, a new openness to more human engagement, and even disagreement, on the floor of the meeting.

It would be a strange development if the sexual abuse crisis ushered in a new era of episcopal candor, and a more discerning mode of operation for the bishops’ conference. But as the past few weeks have demonstrated, “strange developments” are the ordinary course of affairs for the Church. What will come next remains to be seen.

While the bishop has the greatest respect for the responsibilities of the men and women involved in border security, in his judgment, church property should not be used for the purposes of building a border wall.”
Family Life Office:
Happy New Year! Happy Advent!

This is such a wonderful time of the year filled with anticipation, joy, excitement, and expectations. What is Advent? It is the beginning of the new liturgical year, a season in which the Church focuses on the coming of Christ into the world. It is a time of waiting and preparation just as Mary did in anticipation of the birth of her Son, Jesus. As Catholics, how do you and your family celebrate Advent and prepare for Christ’s coming? Do you go on long journeys as the Holy Family did? Or do you stay close to home? Would you like to share some family activities that you can do at home with your family—young and old.

One activity is to decorate a “Jesse Tree.” A Jesse Tree tells us about our salvation history and all the key people that lead us to Christ’s birth. Each day you learn about a different person and hang a paper image of that person or their symbol on a tree. What a wonderful way to learn our Old Testament stories. (http://www.catholicinspired.com/2015/11/printable-jesse-tree-ornaments-free-and.html).

Do you have an Advent wreath? A circle with four candle holders is covered in greenery. Three purple and one rose candle are placed in the holders. On the first Sunday of Advent a purple candle is lit, on the second Sunday 2 purple candles, on the third Sunday (Gaudete Sunday) add the rose and on the fourth Sunday, the last purple. There are many resources to find prayers and scripture readings for each day as you light the candles (try www.churchyear.net). The light increases each week until we receive the Light of Christ on Christmas. On Christmas night light a white Christ candle. We always have dinner by candle light during Advent.

Do you set up a crèche or manger scene? Build the anticipation. Do NOT put baby Jesus in until Christmas morning. We also have the three kings. They start out in another room, move closer each day but, do not arrive at the crèche until January 6, Epiphany, the Feast of the Three Kings.

There are also many saints to celebrate during this season. December 6 is St. Nicholas (Santa Claus) Day. I always bake Speculaas cookies in the shape of Santa for that day in my German tradition. December 8, is the Feast of the Immaculate Conception. Make sure you attend mass as this is a holy day of obligation. We remember St. Juan Diego on December 9, to whom Our Lady imprinted the famous image of Our Lady of Guadalupe on his tilma. December 12 is the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupel, one of the patron saints of the Americas. Our Hispanic communities in many parishes offer activities in which to participate for this feast day! And finally, December 13 is St. Lucia (Lucy) Day. Look these up! It’s fun and interesting to learn about our Catholic saints.

As we prepare our homes and our churches for the coming of Christ, don’t forget to prepare yourself. Traditionally Advent is a time of penance and fasting too. Think about that when you are attending all the parties and doing your traditional holiday cooking and baking! This is a wonderful time to go to confession so your soul is prepared for the coming of Christ too.

One more thing, remember the Christmas season begins on Christmas Eve and lasts until the Baptism of the Lord, January 13, 2019. So enjoy your Advent and then enjoy the Christmas season. Joy to the world and all you holy families!

Great resource: Catholic All Year by Kendra Tierney

Ask FLO: Can I have that Speculaas cookie recipe?

Answer: I get this asked a lot. My mom always baked many different kinds of Christmas cookies, and this was one of my favorites. I bake these to hand out to our RCIA class when we teach a class on the Liturgical Year. They are a delicious thin crispy spiced cookie! Kids can definitely help with using cookie cutters to make all sorts of Christmas shapes.

In a bowl mix the flour, spices, baking powder and salt. Set aside. In a large bowl beat the butter, sugar and egg until the mixture is very light and fluffy. With a wooden spoon, stir in half the flour mixture and almonds, mixing with your hands if necessary. Rerate dough covered for several hours. Lightly grease cookie sheet or use parchment paper. Remove ¼ of the dough and roll out to 1/8” thick. Cut with cookie cutter. Gentle place on cookie sheet and bake in 350° oven 10-12 minutes or until golden brown. Do the same with the rest of the dough. This makes about 4 dozen, depending on the size of the cookie. When cool, store in a tightly covered glass container in a cool dry place for several weeks. (They never last that long in our house! Deacon Dave is a cookie monster when it comes to my Christmas cookies!) Enjoy!

—Carlin & Deacon Dave Gould, Family Life Office

National Appeal Supports Elderly Catholic Sisters, Brothers and Religious Order Priests

The annual Retirement Fund for Religious collection will be held Dec. 8-9 in the Diocese of Santa Rosa. Coordinated by the National Religious Retirement Office (NRRO) in Washington, the appeal benefits 31,000 elderly Catholic sisters, brothers and religious order priests.

The Diocese of Santa Rosa donated $43,871.97 to the last collection. In 2018, Redwoods Monastery, whose central house is located in the diocese, received financial support made possible by the

Retirement Fund for Religious. Almost 94 percent of donations aid senior religious and their communities, with the remaining funds used for administration and promotion of the national appeal.

The 2017 collection raised just over $28 million, and the NRRO disbursed $25 million to 360 religious communities for the direct care of elderly members. Communities combine these funds with their own income and savings to help furnish necessities such as medications and nursing care. Throughout the year, additional funding is allocated for congregations with critical needs and for retirement planning and educational resources.

Religious communities apply annually for financial support from the national collection, and distributions are sent to each eligible community’s central house. Although women and men religious often minister outside their home dioceses, they may benefit from the allocations disbursed to their individual (see Elderly Catholics, page 13)
An Opportunity for Reflection

By Bette Ann Fleischacker, Parishioner at Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish

On December 12th of this year, Our Lady of Guadalupe will celebrate the 25th anniversary of the dedication of our church building. The parish has been in existence for much longer than 25 years. However, this anniversary year provides an opportunity to stop and reflect on who we are as a parish and how, as a community of God’s children, we are responding to His directive to love one another and care for those in need.

How does one define “those in need”? There are many categories of “need”, the most obvious one being persons who, for whatever reason, cannot provide the basic essentials such as food, housing, clothing, etc. for themselves and/or their family members. But there are also other “needs”. The “needs” of older individuals when health issues cause them to become isolated. The “needs” of individuals who are in search of a meaning for their lives and wonder if the Catholic faith is still relevant.

If we can define “those in need” then we should evaluate how well we, as a parish community, are responding to those needs.

At this point we need to take a look at how our parish is organized. We have a large number of the traditional ministries. Some of these ministries have been around for a long time and others have been developed more recently. The work of most of these ministries is focused on providing service to individuals within our parish family and does not involve interaction with outside organizations. Examples: “Providing rides to church”, offering “study groups”, “taking communion to the home bound”, “RCIA”, etc.

We are also involved in some programs that involve outside organizations, and these programs would be considered pretty traditional for any Catholic parish. Examples: Our parish supports a “feed the hungry” program which provides food to anyone living in Windsor and also provides space in our parking lot to the Redwood Food Bank so that they can distribute food in support of several of their programs. Our SVdP group, provides used clothing and rent support on-site, and also provides volunteers to support the SVdP used clothing store.

Our Peace and Justice ministry partners with an outside organization to host an annual “Health Fair” that is open to everyone. Last year, we were involved with multiple organizations in support of the Winter Homeless Shelter at the Armory in Santa Rosa—we are doing it again this year. Catholic Charities provides many opportunities for parish participation—we respond to some but there are many more programs that need our participation.

But there are many other needs in our community that are not being met. To significantly impact those in need in our community, whether it involves designing and implementing a program of assistance, or providing volunteers, or undertaking fundraising to support such a program, it requires the efforts of multiple organizations working together.

As Catholics, we must reach out to other organizations and work together to care for “those in need”. We need individuals within our parish to recognize that we each have a personal responsibility to make this happen. We need to take the initiative and stop waiting for someone else to tell us what to do.

On this the 25th anniversary of the dedication of our church building, as we reflect on who we are as a parish, and how, as a community of God’s children, we are responding to His directive to love one another and to care for those in need, we have much to feel good about, but we still have a long way to go.
Legatus Will Not Collect 2019 Tithe to Holy See

Washington D.C., Nov 19 (CNA/EWTN News) - A U.S.-based organization of Catholic business executives has decided not to collect from its members the portion of their dues that would constitute its 2019 donation to the Holy See.

Legatus, an organization of Catholic business leaders, had announced in September that it was placing its annual donation to the Holy See in escrow until it can receive clarification on questions of financial accountability.

Thomas Monaghan, chairman of Legatus, wrote its member Nov. 16 asking them to continue to pray “for the Church and all of our leaders,” as “it is evident that it is going to take time for the current crisis in the Church to be addressed to the point where the Board believes the reinstatement of our annual tithe would be prudent.”

For that reason, he said, the board of governors has decided “to forego collecting the annual tithe represented in your 2019 dues.”

“For those who have already submitted their dues, the National Office will refund the appropriate amount earmarked for the Holy See contribution in a timely fashion,” he said. “For those who have not yet remitted your dues, new invoices will be sent.”

Monaghan noted that the tithe to the Holy See “has been an important part of Legatus membership” and the board therefore intends “to reinstate this practice once we have sufficient communication regarding the specific accountability related to the use of these funds.”

“The Board will revisit this topic by the fall of 2019 in order to chart a plan related to the 2020 dues,” he stated.

“Legatus continues to pledge its devotion to and solidarity with Holy Mother Church; this is a time when we need to live the mission of Legatus more than ever,” Monaghan wrote.

He concluded his letter urging members to “continue to pray for healing and courage for the Church.”

According to the Wall Street Journal, Legatus’ 2018 tithe to the Holy See would have been about $820,000. When announcing the decision in September to withhold the tithe, Monaghan said that members had raised questions “specifically pertaining to how it is being used, and what financial accountability exists within the Vatican for such charitable contributions.”

“Legatus has begun a dialogue along these lines, and in the meantime has decided to place the Holy See annual tithe in escrow, pending further determination,” he said.

Questions of Vatican financial accountability had been raised earlier this year by the Papal Foundation, a U.S.-based organization that offers grants to support the global work of the Holy Father.

In February, some members of the organization sharply criticized a request from the Holy See for $25 million for a Church-owned hospital that had been plagued by fraud and embezzlement scandals. Grants from the Papal Foundation are normally no more than $200,000 and generally go toward initiatives to help the poor in developing nations.

Artists Begin Work On Vatican Christmas Nativity — Out of Sand

Vatican City, Nov 17 (CNA/EWTN News) - The Vatican’s nativity scene will be a little bit different this year. In a departure from the traditional Neapolitan or Maltese figures of recent years, the scene of Christ’s birth will be entirely sculpted from sand.

Beginning Nov. 17, four artists are beginning their work in St. Peter’s Square, crafting nearly 46,000 cubic feet of sand, equal to around 700 tons, into a grand “Sand Nativity.”

The creators, who have been sculpting sand nativities in the Italian town of Jesolo for years, say on their website that the goal is “to build the largest sand nativity in Christendom in the center of Rome in order to provide moments of authentic and joyful contemplation to all those who love Christmas.”

A partnership between the mayor of Jesolo and Patriarch Francesco Moraglia of Venice is what brought the famous sand sculptures to the Vatican for Christmas 2018.

The Jesolo sand, as it is called, was brought to the square from the Dolomites, a mountain range in northeastern Italy near Jesolo. The four sculptors who will transform the shapeless mounds into the traditional figures of Jesus’ birth hail from Holland, Russia, the Czech Republic, and the United States.

Phase one of construction will begin with a large pyramid of sand; spaces will then be dug into the sides and the sand compacted. A few days later, a protective structure will be built around the sand. The true sculpting phase will begin Nov. 21 and go until the first week of December.

In the final 48 hours, which will be Dec. 5-6, the final touches will be placed, before the big reveal Dec. 7, the same day as the annual lighting ceremony of the St. Peter’s Square Christmas tree.

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The tradition to have a tree in St. Peter’s Square was begun by Pope St. John Paul II in 1982. This year’s tree comes from the Forest of Canesglio in northern Italy, which is near the Dolomites.

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1/3 St. Genevieve ❖ 1/4 St. Elizabeth Ann Seton ❖ 1/5 St. John Neumann Saint Thomas Aquinas

NORTH COAST CATHOLIC / DECEMBER 2018 / www.srdiocese.org
New Documentary Shows Individual, Societal Threat of Pornography

By Perry West

Washington D.C., Nov 25 (CNA) - The non-profit group Fight the New Drug has released a three-part documentary to raise a greater awareness of the damage caused by pornography.

The film, “Brain, Heart, World,” was released Nov. 12. Each episode is about 30 minutes long and explores a different realm in which pornography causes harm.

Currently in a soft release, the film is expected to be promoted more starting early next year.

Clay Olsen, president and co-founder of Fight the New Drug, expressed hope that the film would be able to influence a wider audience than the reach of seminars and presentations.

“We started Fight the New Drug 10 years ago and the intention has always been to bring education and awareness to the younger generation, to help them make more educated decisions on the topic, knowing that this was an issue that was impacting a generation like no other generation in human history,” he told CNA.

“We believe that this [movie] format will be able to reach individuals more quickly and in the medium in which they are more accustomed to learning.”

Olsen said the documentary looks at three major areas in which pornography causes harm—the mind, human relationships, and society.

“[Episode] one focuses on the brain, educates individuals on the potential harmful impact of pornography to individuals and neurologically. Episode two is on the heart and impact to relationships, connections, and love. [The last episode,] the world, explores the larger societal impact of pornography and what we can do to combat it collectively.”

He said the movie has been viewed by family members at home, students at universities, parishioners at churches, and members of other organizations. The initial feedback from viewers of different religions, political parties, ages, and cultures, has been “phenomenal,” he said.

So far, various themes from the film have resonated with viewers. Some people, he said, were surprised by the last episode, which showed the dark reality of pornography’s role in human trafficking. Many people do not realize the extent of pornography’s grip on the modern culture, he explained.

“It really has more to do with where they are at in their life and their interests and maybe personal experiences that have made them more curious about a particular topic. That’s really what we were hoping for—that each episode would be able to connect with different people for different reasons.”

Olsen said the movie—and the organization as a whole—are less about fighting against something and more about fighting to build something. He said the necessary reaction to pornography needs to be a collective push for a healthier life.

“We must engage, we must step in and help raise the collective awareness of our communities and our culture so we can create a groundswell of momentum toward more healthy living, healthy relationships, and healthy society,” he said.

“Rather than fighting against pornography, Fight the New Drug and this documentary is far more about fighting for real love, real connection, and real relationships.”

[Editor’s note: go to the website www.brainheartworld.org and you can watch the three-part series by entering your name, age, and email address. This is one of the most well produced, and informed documentaries I have ever seen! Everyone who wants to end the scourge of pornography, and sex trafficking will be inspired, and informed.]

The Mission Cooperative Program

By Deacon Gary Moore

Every summer the Diocese of Santa Rosa plays an important role in connecting the parishes throughout the diocese with the Catholic Church in other parts of the world through the mission cooperative program (MCP). The MCP was conceived in the 1930’s in the United States as an organized way to help mission-sending groups solicit funds for their mission efforts and to give them the opportunity to appeal for vocations and financial support for their religious communities. The primary goal of this program is to nurture and awareness, love and support of the missionary church.

The MCP offers mission organizations, dioceses and religious congregations to apply for mission appeals at our parishes so that every member of our diocese can participate in helping the people of the worldwide and universal Church. The Diocese Director of Missions receives over 300 applications per year from countries around the world. From those initial letters of application, approximately 25 mission appeals are screen and visits coordinated and scheduled with the pastor of each parish. The pastors ensure the missionaries adhere and conform to our (see Mission Program, page 17)
What Is It Like to Be an Underground Chinese Seminarian?

Beijing, China (Nov 24 ACI Prensa) - Wang Jie (a fictional name) is a deacon belonging to the Chinese underground Church. He has spent several years studying in Europe, and for security reasons cannot use his real name, since Chinese authorities may not let him reenter his country if they knew he is preparing to become a priest.

The seminarian shared his story recently with media. He was born in China “in an area where most of the people are pagan.” None of his family members were Catholic, and in fact his parents “had never even heard the word ‘Christianity.’”

But one day his mother fell ill. They found what they believed to be a medical center with a cross on it. It was actually a church, where a nun received them. After his mother recovered, Wang’s parents returned to thank the woman for caring for her. “We see it as a miracle so we would know the faith. God guided us to his house.”

In a sense, the conversion was natural, because his parents were already practicing charity and trying to help others in any way they could. Wang’s entire family was baptized when he was eight years old. His family joined the underground Catholic Church. They could not openly practice their faith, as the government only recognized the “Patriotic Church” controlled by the Communist Party.

When Wang’s mother became pregnant again, they faced a challenge. The one-child policy, which was in effect at the time, prohibited families from having a second child. But as Catholics, his parents refused to abort. They looked for a way to avoid the heavy penalties imposed by the Communist government on families with more than one child. “When my sister was born, we found a family that had just had another child, and we registered them as if they were twins. In fact, my sister doesn’t have my same last name [as I do] but that of the other family because according to those documents they are siblings,” he said.

Eventually, his parents befriended a priest who was a rector of the seminary. The rector explained that the seminarians had to move every three to four months to avoid being discovered by the authorities. “My parents offered them our house, they could live on the ground floor and we on the top floor,” he said.

For the next 10 years, seminarians were living intermittently on the ground floor of the house. Touching by their example, Wang felt a call to the seminary. He made the final decision after accompanying one of the seminarians to give some catechism lessons.

“When I returned home, it was as if something had set my heart on fire, I told my parents I wanted to be a priest. I had that seed of a vocation in my heart,” he said. “Now I’m a deacon and no words can express the profound joy I have in my heart.”

The seminarian said that even though he is studying in Europe, his desire is to return to China as soon as possible to preach the Gospel there.

Life as a Chinese Catholic is difficult. Mass is celebrated in family homes, and people must be careful not to talk about their faith explicitly, because the authorities could be listening.

“God gave the key to the papacy to Saint Peter and to me to help others in any way they could. We are overwhelmed by the ongoing generosity of God. ”

“Donations to the Retirement Fund for Religious orders have a far-reaching impact,” said Presentation Sister Stephanie Still, the NRRO’s executive director. “Most importantly, they help communities care for aging members, but they also underwrite initiatives aimed at addressing the underlying causes of the funding shortages.”

Religious orders are financially autonomous and thus responsible for the support of all members. Traditionally, Catholic sisters, brothers, and religious order priests—known collectively as women and men religious—served for little to no pay. Today, hundreds of orders lack sufficient retirement savings. Of 547 communities providing data to the NRRO, only 4 percent are adequately funded for retirement. Compounding the financial crisis are the rising cost of care and the increasing number of those needing care.

Catholic bishops of the United States initiated the national collection in 1988 to help address the deficit in retirement funding among U.S. religious communities. Since the collection was launched, U.S. Catholics have donated $844 million to the appeal, helping many communities stabilize their retirement outlook.

“We are overwhelmed by the ongoing generosity toward the annual appeal and by the love and thanksgiving for the service of our elder religious,” said Sister Still. “Our office is committed to stewarding these funds in ways that help religious communities care for older members while continuing to serve the People of God.”

Visit retiredreligious.org to learn more. 
February Meeting On Abuse to Have ‘Synodal Dimension,’ Child Protection Expert Says

By Hannah Brockhaus

Vatican City, Nov 23 (CNA/EWTN News) - The approach of Pope Francis’ meeting of bishops in February, on the topic of abuse prevention in the Church, will reflect the synodal journey, Fr. Hans Zollner told Vatican Media Friday.

In a Nov. 23 interview, Zollner—who is a member of the four-person planning committee for the Feb. 21-24 summit—said the meeting “is very important for the Church” and “it is necessary that the awareness of a synodal journey be shared—cum Petro et sub Petro.”

Referring to the “consultative” phase of meeting planning, which is being launched soon, Zollner told the Vatican news outlet that “it is necessary that [the meeting] be prepared well, and that it involve all of the Episcopal Conferences right away.”

This phase, he said, should include sharing of “information, reflections, the spirit of prayer and penance, and proposals for new concrete actions.”

He also stated that the work bishops’ conferences have already done to craft anti-abuse measures will have a “fundamental place” at the Vatican summit.

Zollner, a child protection expert, is a member of the Pontifical Council for the Protection of Minors (PCPM) and president of the Center for the Protection of Minors at the Pontifical Gregorian University.

Nov. 23 he was named a member of the organizing committee for the Vatican meeting on abuse prevention, which will be attended by Pope Francis, the presidents of the world’s bishops’ conferences, the leaders of the Eastern Catholic Churches, and heads of certain Vatican offices.

Pope Francis designated Zollner the contact person for the organizing committee.

Part of the consultative work going on during the planning phase of the meeting—which also involves some clergy sex abuse survivors and members of the PCPM—is to collect together “and better harmonize,” the experiences of the bishops’ conferences, he said.

“The Holy Father has convoked the meeting in February—an unprecedented decision—precisely because he is aware that the protection of minors is a fundamental priority for the Church, for its mission, and not only for its credibility,” Zollner said.

During the meeting itself, the structure will provide “for the freest and most fruitful encounter possible,” and will include prayer, reflection, analysis, and proposals. Pope Francis will be present at all of the working sessions, recalling the “synodal experience,” Zollner said.

The planning stage includes several concrete steps under the direction of the pope, he noted. One of these steps is sending a questionnaire to the episcopal invitees to hear about their experiences and challenges.

The organizing committee will also prep foundational documents for the meeting’s participants.

Zollner acknowledged that the expectations for the meeting are incredibly high in some corners of the Church, and said he believes these expectations are reasonable “given the gravity of the scandal that has shocked and wounded so many people, believers and non-believers, in so many countries.”

He pointed to what he sees as evidence of the pope and the Vatican’s commitment to the issue in Francis’ Aug. 20 letter “to the People of God,” and in the Holy See’s Oct. 6 letter on Archbishop Theodore McCarrick.

“The Holy Father has convoked the meeting in February—an unprecedented decision—precisely because he is aware that the protection of minors is a fundamental priority for the Church, for its mission, and not only for its credibility,” he said. ✤
Gunman Kills One at Catholic Store In Missouri
By Christine Rousselle
St. Louis, Mo., Nov 20 (CNA/EWTN News) - A gunman remains on the loose after shooting a woman and sexually assaulting another at the Catholic Supply of St. Louis retail store in Ballwin, Mo. on Monday afternoon. Ballwin is a suburb of St. Louis.

The woman killed was identified on Tuesday as Jamie Schmidt, from the nearby town of House Springs. Schmidt was a customer in the store at the time of the attack. She was shot in the head by the assailant, and died after being transported to the hospital in critical condition. She was 53.

Schmidt is survived by her husband and three children.

In an emotional tribute posted on Facebook, her husband Gregg Schmidt remembered his wife's singing voice and encouraged everyone to share feelings of love at every opportunity.

"Folks, I had my own Mother of Dragons but she was taken from us today," said Schmidt.

"I still don't know how to feel yet. I do know one thing for sure. Hug your friends and family and tell them you love them every time you get the chance. I didn't get to say goodbye and that hurts pretty bad. She was my angel, my partner, my best friend and the love of my life. I'm sorry if you never got to hear her sing recently because it gave me chills. I probably won't be on Facebook much for awhile but to hear her sing recently because it gave me chills."

The suspect is described as a white male, between the ages of 45 and 50, 5'7”, with a heavyset build. He is not believed to have known Schmidt, and police think the attack was random.

Catholic Supply of St. Louis released a statement saying that they were "shocked and saddened" by the "senseless tragedy" that occurred at the chain's West County location Nov. 19. They asked for prayers for the victims and their families.

Catholic Supply of St. Louis' three locations were closed on Tuesday and will reopen Wednesday, said Schmidt.

"We are cooperating fully with the ongoing police investigation, and we will share details as appropriate. We appreciate your patience, grace and prayers during this difficult time."

Archbishop Robert Carlson of St. Louis also weighed in with a statement, saying that the archdiocese's hearts went out to the victims of the "horrible tragedy" at the store.

"We join with civil authorities asking for the community's assistance in apprehending the culprit of this crime," said Carlson in the statement released to Facebook.

Carlson also instructed parishes throughout the archdiocese to offer prayers for those affected by the shooting and for an end to violence.

As a precaution, two area schools canceled classes on Tuesday due to security fears stemming from the shooting.

CUA Social Work Dean Resigns Over Kavanaugh Tweets
Washington D.C., Nov 26 (CNA) - A professor at The Catholic University of America has resigned as head of the university's social work department, after a controversy followed his September tweets about sexual assault allegations against Supreme Court Justice Brett Kavanaugh.

Will Rainford, dean of the National Catholic School of Social Service, a department of the university, will take a sabbatical during the 2019 spring semester, and then return to teaching duties at the university.

Rainford has been dean of the social work program since 2013. He was suspended in October after a series of tweets criticizing women who had accused Kavanaugh, then still a nominee to the Court, of sexual assault. The twitter handle used, @NCSSSDean, referred to Rainford's role at the university.

"Rainford's tweets of the past week are unaccept-able," CUA president John Garvey said in Sept. 28 statement.

"We should expect any opinion he expresses about sexual assault to be thoughtful, constructive, and reflective of the values of Catholic University, par- ticularly in communications from the account handle @NCSSSDean."

In a Nov. 21 statement accepting Rainford's resignation as dean, Garvey praised "Dr. Rainford's commitment to the Catholic mission of the school. Early on he made a particularly difficult decision to disassociate from the National Association of Social Workers, which advocates for access to abortion, a position that is contrary to the mission and values of The Catholic University of America."

Garvey announced that in light of Rainford's resignation, he "will order an environmental assessment to examine the current operations, direction, and atmosphere of the school and address the challenge of maintaining a distinctly Catholic approach to the field of social work."

International

Christians in Ukraine Ask for Prayer as Tensions with Russia Escalate
Kyiv, Ukraine, Nov 26 (CNA/EWTN News) - As the Ukrainian parliament voted to introduce martial law after Russian forces seized three of its naval vessels, Christians in the country are asking for prayer and solidarity to de-escalate the conflict.

Russia captured three Ukrainian vessels together with their 23 crew members Nov. 25 in the Kerch Strait, between Crimea and Russia's Taman Peninsula. Crimea, a Ukrainian territory, was annexed by Russia in 2014.

Ukraine's parliament voted Nov. 26 to impose martial law in 10 oblasts, most of them bordering Russia, for 30 days beginning Nov. 28. Martial law allows military rule and the restriction of rights, including the freedoms of assembly and expression.

In response to the situation, the Baptist Union of Ukraine has asked that Christians around the world pray for Ukraine, for its protection and for the protection of ministers who serve in areas of occupation and military conflict.

"We don't know all the details of what happened," said Igor Bandura, First Vice President of the Baptist Union of Ukraine, or what are the intentions of Russian president Vladimir Putin. "But the situation is extremely serious. We are asking for your prayer for our situation in Ukraine as we believe in our Christian solidarity."

Some have noted the religious dimension of Russian actions.

"The Russian Orthodox Church has broken off relations with Constantinople and is ready to defend its 'canonical territories' by any means," said Michael Cherenkov, Mission Eurasia's Executive Field Director.

"Ukrainian Baptist churches in the occupied terri-tories are outlawed as extremists. And in Russia itself, the persecution of evangelical believers is intensifying. All of this suggests that Russia is preparing for a big war in which the religious factor will have a major role," Cherenkov observed.

Ukraine called the Nov. 25 incident in the Kerch strait an "act of aggression" on the part of Russia.

The three vessels captured were going from Odessa to Mariupol, in the Sea of Azov – a seaport only accessible by the Kerch strait. Russia claimed the boats had illegally entered its territorial waters, and fired on the Ukrainian vessels. Three Ukrainian crewmen have been hospitalized, according to the Kyiv Post.

Pro-Russian separatists in eastern Ukraine have been fighting government forces since April 2014, shortly after the Russian annexation of Crimea. The conflict has killed more than 10,000 people, and displaced more than 1 million.

Power Is a Service' Congo Archbishop Tells Candidates
Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Nov 26 (CNA) - The Archbishop of Kinshasa has urged politicians to preserve national unity and practice leadership as service ahead of upcoming elections in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Archbishop Fridolin Ambongo Besungu, O.F.M. Cap., made the comments during an open-air Mass on the feast of Christ the King.

Addressing a crowd of several thousand, including two major presidential candidates, Ambongo said that "Christ the King delivers a prophetic message - power is a service, humble services to others for their accomplishment," as he denounced sectarianism and political violence.

Ambongo was installed as Archbishop of Kinshasa three weeks ago, replacing Cardinal Laurent Monsen-gwo Pasinya, who also serves as a member of Pope Francis' C9 Council of Cardinal Advisors.

Among those in the crowd were rival presidential candidates Martin Fayulu and Emmanuel Ramazani Shadary.

Shadary, a self-described "fervent Christian" and practicing Catholic, has stated that he has "placed his campaign in God's hands." Shadary is also the preferred candidate and would-be successor of outgoing President Joseph Kabila.

Fayulu, a leading opposition candidate, attends a Protestant church.

The vote, scheduled for 23 December, would see the first new leadership in the Congo since President Joseph Kabila acceded to office in 2001. President Kabila has been the subject of protest and criticism from the general population and from Church leaders. This year, 15 people were killed while attending peaceful, Church-organized rallies against
Annual Santa Rosa Woman of the Year Celebration

Santa Rosa Diocesan Council of Catholic Women held their Annual Women of the Year Celebration on the 101st Anniversary of Fatima, October 13. This year, the event was hosted by St. James Women’s Group, Petaluma. In attendance were Bishop Robert Vasa, who offered Mass for us, Fr. Steve Canny, our Spiritual Advisor, and the Marian Sisters of Santa Rosa who shared their beautiful voices in song. In honor of the anniversary of Fatima, we prayed the rosary before Mass.

It was with great pleasure that the honorees were presented with their tributes:

Sheila Almuqist, St. James Women’s Group – Petaluma
Juanita Hernandez, St. Peter Church – Cloverdale
Ann Hill, St. Sebastian’s Y.L.I.#116 – Sebastopol
Frances (Fran) McNatt, St. Francis Solano Church – Sonoma
Marilyn Miller, Holy Spirit Catholic Church Women’s Club – Santa Rosa
Shirley Reed, St. John Y.L.I. #26 – Napa
Teri Schmidt, Our Lady of Guadalupe (Madonnas) – Windsor
Eleanore (Ellie) Steffens, St. Joseph Women’s Guild Altar Society – Cotati
Cristina Wadsworth, Star of the Valley Church – (Oakmont) Santa Rosa
Rose Marie Woodruff, St. Vincent de Paul Church – Petaluma

As the two-year term of office had been completed, new Board Officers were installed at the luncheon. In her welcome as new President, Cindy Cunningham invited the women present to join SRDCCW in promoting Our Lady through the rosary. In collaboration and friendship with the Marian Sisters of Santa Rosa, the SRDCCW will be hosting a Day of Reflection on May 4th, 2019: “Our Lady’s Guide to Femininity”. Please save the date, details coming soon!

If anyone is interested in learning more or participating more fully in the activities of the Diocesan Council of Women, please contact Cindy at 707-592-9833. Our ethic is to Support, Empower and Educate women through friendship and solidarity.

During this in Chinese bishop has reportedly been taken into custody by the government and is undergoing “isolation and indoctrination.”

This is Peter Shao Zhumin’s fifth arrest in just two years as a bishop. Chinese police have recently been detaining priests loyal to the underground Catholic Church nationwide.

Pope Francis appointed Shao Bishop of Wenzhou in September 2016. Shao had previously endured an 11-month detention beginning in September 2006, after he and another priest returned from a pilgrimage to Europe and were charged with “illegal exit.” He was detained again during April 2017, ostensibly to prevent him from celebrating the Triduum and Easter liturgies, which would have been his first time as head of the diocese.

Shao was also arrested in May 2017. La Croix International reported at the time he was summoned by the government’s religious bureau May 18, and released the following April.

Bishop Shao has now been missing for several days. During this most recent detention, Asia News reported, the Chinese police have pressured Shao to join the Chinese Patriotic Catholic Association, the Communist Party-supported body that seeks to manage the Church in China independently of the Vatican.

The Church in mainland China has been divided for some 60 years between the underground Church, which is persecuted and whose episcopal appointments are frequently not acknowledged by Chinese authorities, and the government-sanctioned Chinese Patriotic Catholic Association.

Chinese officials have not yet offered any information about Shao’s whereabouts.

Reports of the destruction or desecration of Catholic churches and shrines have come from across China, including the provinces of Hebei, Henan, Guizhou, Shaanxi, and Shandong.

A Sept. 22 agreement between the Holy See and Beijing was intended to normalize the situation of China’s Catholics and unify the underground Church and the Patriotic Association.

The agreement has been broadly criticized by human rights groups and some Church leaders, including Cardinal Joseph Zen Ze-kiun, Bishop Emeritus of Hong Kong.

Since the agreement in September, two CPCA bishops were invited to attend the synod on youth. These men are “known to be close to the Chinese government,” and their attendance at the synod is “an insult to the good bishops of China,” Cardinal Zen said.

At Least 42 Dead in Cathedral Attack in Central African Republic

Alindao, Central African Republic, Nov 16 (CNA/EWTNews) - At least 42 people have died in an attack Thursday on the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart in Alindao, in the Central African Republic, according to local reports.

At least one priest was among those killed in the Nov. 15 attack. Some unofficial estimates have said the death toll could reach as high as 100. Many of the people killed were refugees sheltering at the Church.

The CAR has suffered violence since December 2012, when several bands of mainly Muslim rebel groups formed an alliance, taking the name Seleka, and seized power.

In reaction to the Seleka’s attacks, some Central Africans formed self-defense groups called anti-balaka. Some of these groups, mainly composed of Christians, began attacking Muslims out of revenge, and the conflict took on a sectarian character.

According to reports from Aid to the Church in Need, ex-Seleka forces attacked the cathedral, reportedly in retaliation for a Muslim who was killed the day prior by anti-balaka.

The priest killed in the attack was vicar general of the diocese, Abbe Blaise Mada. Aid to the Church in Need added that some reports have said second priest, Father Celestine Ngoumbango, was also killed, but this has not been confirmed.

Houses in the neighborhood were also looted and burned.

Many Catholic churches in the country provide refuge to Muslims and Christians alike fleeing violence, including churches in the Diocese of Bangassou, some 140 miles to the east of Alindao, where several Catholic institutions have taken in displaced Muslims who face violence at the hand of anti-balaka.

Anti-balaka killed more than 100 Muslims in Bangassou in May 2017 before United Nations peacekeepers intervened, and since then the city’s Petit Seminaire Saint Louis has been home to about 1,600 displaced Muslims. Another 2,000 Muslims have taken refuge at St. Peter Claver Cathedral in Bangassou.

The CAR held a general election in 2015-16 which installed a new government, but militant groups continue to terrorize local populations. Thousands of people have been killed in the violence, and at least a million have been displaced. At least half of Central Africans depend on humanitarian aid, the U.N. reports.

Pope Francis visited the CAR during his trip to Africa in 2015, and urged the country’s leaders to work for peace and reconciliation.

Three priests were killed in CAR this year prior to yesterday’s Cathedral attack.
Claim of Creating Genetically-Edited Babies Prompts Ethics Dispute

November 27 (Catholic News Agency)

A Chinese scientist says he has created the first genetically edited babies, a claim that has led members of the scientific community to raise serious ethical concerns.

Chinese researcher He Jiankui claims that he altered embryos for seven couples, resulting in one twin pregnancy so far. There is no independent confirmation of this claim, the Associated Press noted.

He says his goal was to edit embryos to give them the ability to resist HIV infection, by disabling the CCR5 gene, which allows HIV to enter a cell.

The researcher says he used a technology known as CRISPR to edit sections of the human genome, performing the procedure on embryonic humans. The technology, which selectively "snips" and trims areas of the genome and replaces it with strands of desired DNA, has previously been used on adult humans and other species. CRISPR technology has only recently been used to treat deadly diseases in adults, and limited experiments have been performed on animals.

Scientists have been divided in their response to the claim, with some praising the goal of eliminating HIV and others warning that such human experimenta- tion is risky and unethical.

Dr. Kiran Musunuru, an expert on gene editing at the University of Pennsylvania, called the reported procedure "an experiment on human beings that is not morally or ethically defensible," according to the Associated Press.

Musunuru noted that if the procedure successfully disabled the CCR5 gene, it would leave the individual at increased risk of other medical complications, including contracting West Nile virus and dying from the flu.

Critics have also questioned whether participants fully understood what they were agreeing to, and have noted that He did not give official notice of his work until long after he had begun.

He, however, said he told participants that the procedure was experimental and carried risks. He said he would provide insurance for the children created through the project. The researcher said he believes the technology can help families, and that it is his duty to develop the technology and then let society decide what to do with it.

Early last year, CNN spoke to John DiCamillo, an ethicist at the National Catholic Bioethics Center, about the ethics surrounding CRISPR technology in general. He stressed that Catholics do not need to automatically consider all gene editing to be problematic, but “need to be attentive to where the dangers are.”

Gene editing may be morally legitimate, DiCamillo said, when used for “a directly therapeutic purpose for a particular patient in question, and if we’re sure we’re going to limit whatever changes to this person.” He pointed to gene therapy trials for disorders such as sickle cell disease and cancer that show promise for treating difficult disorders.

For research on embryos to be ethical, therapies should be ordered to treating and benefitting “that particular embryo, not just for garnering scientific knowledge or seeing what’s going to happen,” DiCamillo said. He condemned policies that see destruction of embryonic persons as a back-up if research does not go as planned, as well as current U.S. policies that require destruction of human embryos as standard procedure.

Another potential problem is editing genes for non-medical reasons, for example to enhance vision or intelligence.

“There’s any number of things that we could do to change the qualities of human beings themselves and make them, in a sense, super-humans … this is something that would also be an ethical problem on the horizon,” he warned.

Since the technology is so new, patients or their descendants could experience a range of “unintend- ed, perhaps harmful, side effects that can now be transmitted, inherited by other individuals down the line,” DiCamillo said. An embryo who experi- ences gene modification—such as those the Chinese researcher He claims to have altered—could also carry and pass on edited genes.

Last summer, researchers in Oregon announced that they had successfully altered genes in a human embryo for the first time in the United States.

Fr. Tadeusz Pacholczyk, director of education for the National Catholic Bioethics Center, warned at the time that the experiment was contrary to the dignity of the human person.

“Very young humans have been created in vitro and treated not as ends, but as mere means or research fodder to achieve particular investigative goals,” he said.

Son’s body; if conception is achieved with these cells, it is nearly always through in vitro methods. This practice of in vitro fertilization is held by the Church to be ethically unacceptable because it dissociates procreation from the integrally personal context of the conjugal act.

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(Mission Program, cont. from page 12)

diocesan policies and procedures for soliciting funds and act as hosts for the missionary visit. Our diocese has hosted missionaries from Africa, Southeast Asia, South America, Central America, and most recently even China. We have built close relationships with representatives from many orders and religious communities.

Every year, the generosity of the people of our diocese is truly remarkable. The funds that are collected are sent directly to the missionary organization for immediate use to support a variety of projects and life saving efforts throughout the world. We have helped to rebuild churches, feed starving people, sponsor schools, establish health facilities within leper communities, bring fresh water to villages that have none, and sponsored many seminarians. We can proudly say that approximately 98% of all money collected will be sent directly to the mission and

will be immediately available to apply to countless humanitarian efforts.

It is important to remember that all these efforts are not simply aid efforts. They are all conducted with dual purposes of helping people in desperate need, while spreading God’s love, our Catholic Faith, and the growth of the Church. The scripture about Jesus’ multiplication of the loaves and fishes teaches us a valuable lesson. Jesus shows us that you can’t spread the faith when people are starving or in terrible need, you have to take care of their bodily requirements so they can be ready to receive the word of God.

We have currently five priests who serve our parishes and came to us from these missionary dioceses and organizations that you help support every year. They create a vital link between the groups that visit our diocese for the mission coop program and are tangible representatives as to the benefits and the miracles that your ongoing generosity and prayers create.

❖
Mencioné el mes pasado que tenía planeado hablar con todos los sacerdotes de la Diócesis sobre el tema de dar a conocer los nombres de los sacerdotes acusados en la diócesis de Santa Rosa. Tuvimos nuestra reunión el 6 y 7 de Noviembre y tuvimos la oportunidad de cubrir una variedad de asuntos importantes. Una de las cosas, que se incluirá en el Católico de la Costa Norte el próximo mes, es un compromiso por los sacerdotes de ofrecer una Misa cada semana en cada una de las Parroquias de la Diócesis por la sanación de las personas que han sufrido de abuso, por la conversión y un justo castigo para los depredadores, y por fortaleza para los obispos para que puedan ser santos pastores protegiendo a su pueblo. Estas intenciones nos han sido dadas por el liderazgo de la Conferencia Episcopal con la solicitud de que ofrezcamos oraciones por estas intenciones durante siete días. En la diócesis de Santa Rosa, a partir de Enero por dos razones. La primera razón es Oración. Oración. Oración.

Nuestra preparación para la Navidad se resume en los cuatro Domingos de Adviento. Los ornamentos son de color púrpura, demostrando que la temporada es de reparación, penitencia y preparación espiritual. Es adecuado comenzar el Año Litúrgico de la Iglesia, que siempre comienza con el primer Domingo de Adviento, en un espíritu de reparación penitencial. Tenemos una Temporada de Gracia similar en Cuaresma, cuando nos preparamos para los grandes acontecimientos de la Pascua del Señor y su Gloriosa Resurrección. El tiempo de Adviento es el tiempo para poder prepararse para la celebración del gran día en que nuestro Salvador se hizo visible en el establo de Belén. Es un momento de iluminación gradual mientras nos acercamos a ese momento que el Profeta dice, “¡El pueblo que caminaba en las tinieblas ha visto una gran luz!” En muchos sentidos seguimos caminando en la obscuridad.

Tenemos en nuestras iglesias la hermosa costumbre de la Corona de Adviento. El primer Domingo de Adviento es el tiempo de arrepentimiento. Para algunos, esto incluirá el deseo de ir al Sacramento de la Reconciliación. Para otros, la oración podría ser, Señor ahora veo mi necesidad de arrepentimiento. Dame la luz que necesito para saber qué hacer para curar esta ceguera. Estamos todavía bajo la influencia de la oscuridad y la ceguera pero comenzamos a ver, aunque muy débilmente, los rayos de esperanza.

El Tercer Domingo de Adviento simboliza la realización de la resolución. Para algunos esto incluirá la necesidad de ir al Sacramento de la Reconciliación. Para algunos incluirá una determinación más fuerte de dejar una vida de patrones de pecado. Para algunos, que ya luchan por la santidad será tomar la decisión de responder más plenamente a la Gracia de Dios Todopoderoso.

que las cuatro velas de Adviento, iluminen y alegren sus vidas para una completa y maravillosa celebración de la venida de Nuestro Señor en Navidad, y que en verdad sea Navidad para todos!

Gomez, afirmó que una de las esperanzas que tiene el Arzobispo de Los Ángeles (Estados Unidos), Mons. José Redacción Central (ACI Prensa) - El Arzobispo dedicado especialmente a las familias mexicanas. por las Vocaciones para el 24 de noviembre de 2019, organizada por el Seminario de Tlanepantla 5ª Carrera por las Vocaciones este 25 de noviembre. Finalizar la competencia se anunció la 6ª Carrera por las Vocaciones para el 24 de noviembre de 2019, dedicada especialmente a las familias mexicanas.

Contemos Las Historias De Las Buenas Obras De La Iglesia, Alienta Arzobispo REDACCIÓN CENTRAL (ACI Prensa) - El Arzobispo de Los Ángeles (Estados Unidos), Mons. José Gomez, afirmó que una de las esperanzas que tiene en su ministerio episcopal es que “podamos narrar todas las historias de las buenas obras” que se realizan en la Iglesia.

“Una de las esperanzas que tengo en cuanto a mi ministerio es que podamos narrar todas las historias de las buenas obras que se están realizando en nuestras comunidades”, escribió el Prelado en su última carta mensual titulada “Los católicos de Los Ángeles hacen un impacto”.

“Escuchamos tantas historias de dolor y de tragedias. Esto es la materia de nuestras noticias cotidianas. Pero cada día, en alguna de nuestras comunidades, se cuenta otra historia”.

“Es la historia de esas personas que dan a los demás, que sirven a los necesitados; es la historia de las personas que muestran amor y amabilidad en detalles pequeños y con frecuencia ocultos”, resaltó el Arzobispo de origen mexicano que dirige la jurisdicción eclesiástica más grande de Estados Unidos.

Mons. Gomez recordó que hace unos días estuvo en Baltimore en la asamblea general de los obispos en la que se trató sobre los abusos sexuales en la Iglesia y ante lo cual se propone un momento de renovación con la “nueva colaboración entre los laicos y los obispos”.

“Como cristianos, tenemos el deber de llevar a los pobres a Jesús. Y eso lo hacemos yendo a los pobres, atendiéndolos como lo hizo Jesús”, dijo. Mons. Gomez aseguró que son muchas las historias buenas en la Iglesia, de gente que hace bien “con un corazón abierto”.

Con más de 300 mil personas atendidas en 2017, continuó, “los católicos de Los Ángeles hacemos un impacto. ¿Es la verdad? Y ese es el nombre de una nueva iniciativa que hemos inaugurado aquí para alentar a más de nosotros a comprometernos en trabajar como voluntarios, dedicando parte de nuestro tiempo en servir a los necesitados”.

“Los animo a que visiten nuestro nuevo sitio web, lacatholics.org, y que participen. El servir a los pobres es nuestro hermoso deber. Y como los santos nos lo recuerdan, al servir a los pobres tenemos un encuentro privilegiado con Jesucristo”, resaltó el Arzobispo.

Para concluir, el Arzobispo de Los Ángeles alentó a pedirle a “nuestra Santísima Madre María que nos atienda como lo hizo Jesús”, dijo. Mons. Gomez recordó que hace unos días estuvo en el Arzobispado de origen mexicano que dirige la jurisdicción eclesiástica más grande de Estados Unidos.

En el numeral 93 Karol Wojtyla escribió que el martirio “tiene un valor extraordinario a fin de que las mismas comunidades eclesiales no se caigan en la crisis más peligrosa que puede afectar al hombre: una intención buena o determinadas circunstancias particulares pueden atenuar su malicia, pero no pueden suprimirla: son actos irremediablemente malos, por sí y en sí mismos no son ordenables a Dios y al bien de la persona”.

“Y a no se trata de contestaciones parciales y oca- sionales, sino que, partiendo de determinadas con- sideraciones que se alcanzan en la vida de la persona, con relación a su fin último, destacó. En la parte final del texto, el Papa peregrino comentaba que “a veces, en las discusiones sobre los nuevos y complejos problemas morales, puede parecer como si la moral cristiana fuese en sí misma demasiado difícil: ardua para ser comprendida y casi imposible de practicar”.

“Debemos plantearnos la cuestión de si lo que seriamente honesto o justificable como elección”.

Por otra parte, la intención es buena cuando apunta al verdadero bien de la persona con relación a su fin último”, destacó. En la parte final del texto, el Papa peregrino comentaba que “a veces, en las discusiones sobre los nuevos y complejos problemas morales, puede parecer como si la moral cristiana fuese en sí misma demasiado difícil: ardua para ser comprendida y casi imposible de practicar”.

“Esto es falso, porque –en términos de sencillez evangélica– consiste fundamentalmente en el seguimiento de Jesucristo, en el abandonarse a Él, en el dejarse transformar por su gracia y ser renovados por su misericordia, que se alcanzan en la vida de comunión de su Iglesia”.

“Con la luz del Espíritu, cualquier persona puede entenderlo, incluso la menos erudita, sobre todo quien sabe conservar un ‘corazón entero’ indígena”. El objetivo de la Veritatis splendor

“Hoy se hace necesario reflexionar sobre el con- junto de la enseñanza moral de la Iglesia, con el fin preciso de recordar algunas verdades fundamentales de la doctrina católica, que, en el contexto actual corren el riesgo de ser deformadas o negadas”, escribió el santo al iniciar su encíclica.

“En efecto, ha venido a crearse una nueva situac- ción dentro de la misma comunidad cristiana, en la que se difunden muchas dudas y objeciones de orden humano y psicológico, social y cultural, religioso e incluso específicamente teológico, sobre las enseñanzas morales de la Iglesia”, señaló.

“Ya no se trata de contenciones parciales y oca- sionales, sino que, partiendo de determinadas con- cepciones antropológicas y éticas, se pone en tela de

(vea Noticias en Español, página 20)
6 Recomendaciones De La Iglesia Para Vivir El Adviento

REDACCIÓN CENTRAL (ACI Prensa) - El Adviento es un tiempo de preparación para recibir la Navidad, donde celebramos el nacimiento de Jesucristo; y para vivirlo correctamente, es que el Vaticano ha elaborado una serie de recomendaciones.

Las recomendaciones que presentamos a continuación figuran en el Capítulo IV del Directorio sobre la Piedad Popular y la Liturgia, elaborado por la Congregación para el Culto Divino y la Disciplina de los Sacramentos de la Santa Sede y publicado en el año 2002.

1. Meditar sobre la fe y humildad de María
El Vaticano recordó que durante el Adviento “la Liturgia celebra con frecuencia y de modo ejemplar a la Virgen María”, especialmente en la Solemnidad de la Inmaculada Concepción, que se celebra el 8 de diciembre.

La Santa Sede recomendó rezar la Novena a la Inmaculada Concepción. Esta inició el 29 de noviembre y puede encontrarla AQUÍ.

2. No caer en el consumismo
La Santa Sede advirtió que en la actualidad los valores del Adviento se ven “amenazados por la costumbre de convertir la preparación a la Navidad en una ‘operación comercial’ llena de propuestas vacías, procedentes de una sociedad consumista”.

Por ello, recomendaron orar y meditar para no olvidar el sentido del Adviento y celebrar el nacimiento de Jesús “en un clima de sobriedad y de sencillez alegre, y con una actitud de solidaridad para con los pobres y marginados”.

3. Que toda la familia arme el pesebre de Belén
La Santa Sede recomendó que toda la familia participe en el armado del pesebre porque es una oportunidad para que “entren en contacto con el misterio de la Navidad”.

Invitaron a que “se recojan en un momento de oración o de lectura de las páginas bíblicas referidas al episodio del nacimiento de Jesús”.

4. Rezar la Novena de Navidad
El Directorio sobre la Piedad Popular y la Liturgia indica que la Novena de Navidad es un ejercicio de piedad valioso que ayuda a preparar el corazón en los días previos a la celebración del nacimiento del Niño Jesús.

Destacaron que es una práctica antigua que “nació para comunicar a los fieles las riquezas de una Liturgia a la cual no tenían fácil acceso”.

La Novena de Navidad inicia el 16 de diciembre y termina el 24 de diciembre. Puede encontrarla AQUÍ.

5. Profundizar en las lecturas bíblicas que invitan a la conversión
La Santa Sede recomendó profundizar en los pasajes bíblicos que se leerán durante el Adviento porque invitan a la conversión “mediante la voz de los profetas y sobre todo de Juan Bautista”.

Recordaron que “Dios mantenía, mediante las profecías, la esperanza de Israel en la venida del Mesías” y que “está sólidamente enraizada en el pueblo cristiano la conciencia de la larga espera que precedió a la venida del Salvador”.

6. Participar en el rezo de la Corona de Adviento y las Posadas
El Vaticano indicó que el rezo de la corona y el encendido de sus cuatro velas se ha “convertido en un símbolo del Adviento en los hogares cristianos”.

Destacaron que en el encendido de cada vela, correspondiente a los cuatro dominios de Adviento, se recuerdan “las diversas etapas de la historia de la salvación antes de Cristo”.

También invitaron a participar en la celebración de las “Posadas”, una “tradición española y latinoamericana” que representa “el camino de José y María hacia Belén, y su búsqueda de un lugar acogedor para el nacimiento de Jesús”.

(Noticias en Español, cont. de página 19)

juicio, de modo global y sistemático, el patrimonio moral. En la base se encuentra el influjo, más o menos velado, de corrientes de pensamiento que terminan por erradicar la libertad humana de su relación esencial y constitutiva con la vida”, advirtió.

Con este tipo de pensamiento, escribió, “se rechaza la doctrina tradicional sobre la ley natural y sobre la universalidad y permanente validez de sus preceptos; se consideran simplemente inaceptables algunas enseñanzas morales de la Iglesia; se opina que el mismo Magisterio no debe intervenir en cuestiones morales más que para ‘exhortar a las conciencias’ y ‘proponer los valores’ en los que cada uno basará sus decisiones y opciones de vida”.

San Juan Pablo II respondía a una tendencia generalizada que pone “en duda el nexo intrínseco e indivisible entre fe y moral, como si solo en relación con la fe se debieran decidir la pertenencia a la Iglesia y su unidad interna, mientras que se podría tolerar en el ámbito moral un pluralismo de opiniones y de comportamientos, dejados al juicio de la conciencia subjetiva individual o a la diversidad de condiciones sociales y culturales”.

Ante esta crisis, recordaba el Papa polaco, otra importante respuesta de la Iglesia se plasmó en el Catecismo de la Iglesia Católica que “contiene una exposición completa y sistemática de la doctrina moral cristiana” y “presenta la vida moral de los creyentes en sus fundamentos y en sus múltiples contenidos como vida de ‘los hijos de Dios’”.

Con el aporte del Catecismo, “la encíclica Vertitatis splendor se limitó a afrontar ‘algunas cuestiones fundamentales de la enseñanza moral de la Iglesia, bajo la forma de un necesario discernimiento sobre problemas controvertidos entre los estudiosos de la ética y de la teología moral’”.

“Este es el objeto específico de la presente encíclica, la cual trata de exponer, sobre los problemas discutidos, las razones de una enseñanza moral basada en la sagrada Escritura y en la Tradición viva de la Iglesia, poniendo de relieve, al mismo tiempo, los presupuestos y consecuencias de las contestaciones de que ha sido objeto tal enseñanza”.
‘13 Reasons Why’ Could Influence Suicidal Teens, Says Study

By Christine Rousselle

Washington D.C., Nov 23 (CNA) - A new study from the University of Michigan warns that the popular—and controversial—Netflix show “13 Reasons Why” could influence teens who are considering suicide.

The show, which is an adaptation of the 2007 Jay Asher young adult novel of the same name, tells the story of 17-year-old Hannah Baker and the aftermath of her suicide. Baker left behind a series of audiotapes she had recorded prior to her death implicating people she said were the reasons why she chose to end her life.

When the show was released on Netflix last year, it was criticized for its on-screen depiction of suicide and the overall tone of the series. Catholic leaders urgeded “extreme caution” regarding the show, and Suicide Awareness Voices of Education, a nonprofit that aims to prevent suicide, said that they feared the show may do “more harm than good.”

The show’s second season, which was released in May, was shown with a disclaimer that instructed younger viewers to watch the show with an adult and to seek help if they had suicidal thoughts.

Now, a recently-published study supports some of these fears. The study “13 Reasons Why: Viewing Patterns and Perceived Impact Among Youths at Risk of Suicide,” published Nov. 21 in Psychiatry Online, surveyed 87 suicidal teenagers aged 13 to 17 who were taken to the emergency department.

As part of the survey, teens were asked 44 questions related to the show, including who they watched it with and how they were influenced by its story. If a person reported that they had not previously heard of the show, they were not asked any more questions in order to avoid drawing attention to the series.

Of the 87 people surveyed, 43 of them said that they had watched at least one episode of the show. Of those who had watched the show, 21 of them said that they believed it heightened their suicide risk.

While the lead author of the study Victor Hong, M.D. admits that these findings do not definitively prove anything about a risk of suicide, “it confirms that we should definitely be concerned about its impact on impressionable and vulnerable youth,” he said.

“Few believe this type of media exposure will take kids who are not depressed and make them suicidal,” said Hong. Instead, “the concern is about how this may negatively impact youth who are already teetering on the edge.”

Although Netflix encouraged teens to watch the show with an adult, the University of Michigan study showed that very few parents had actually watched the show, and some did not know their children were watching. The study showed that 84 percent of those who watched the show had watched it alone, and they were more likely to discuss the program with their peers, instead of their parents.

Teens who strongly identified with the character of Baker were more likely to say that the show increased their risk of attempting suicide.

If you are struggling with suicidal thoughts, ask for help from someone you can trust and/or call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-8255 (available 24 hours everyday). To find Catholic counseling in your area, contact your local priest, diocese or local branch of Catholic Charities.

Follow Mary’s ‘Yes,’ Pope Says Ahead of World Youth Day

By Hannah Brockhaus

Vatican City, Nov 21 (CNA/EWTN News) - Serving others first requires listening to God in prayer, so that one can give the same ‘yes’ to God’s will that Mary gave, Pope Francis said in a message for World Youth Day 2019.

“To be at the service of others does not only mean to be ready for action. It means also to be in conversation with God with an attitude of listening, just like Mary,” the pope said in a video message Nov. 20.

“[Mary] listened to what the angel said to her and then she responded,” he said. “It is by relating to God in the silence of our hearts that we discover our identity and the vocation to which God is calling us.”

Whether one’s vocation is marriage, consecrated life, or the priesthood—all these are ways of following Jesus,” he stated. “The important thing is to discover what God wants from us and to be brave enough to say ‘yes’.”

Pope Francis will visit the small Central American country of Panama in January for World Youth Day, an international gathering of young people which was begun by Pope St. John Paul II in 1985. Ordinarily held sometime in the summer months, in 2019 it will take place Jan. 22-27, to avoid Panama’s rainy season.

In 2019, the theme for World Youth Day is Mary’s fiat from the Gospel of Luke: “I am the servant of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word.”

In his message in anticipation of the event, Francis said there are many young people, both believers and non-believers, who have the desire to do something good for others, especially for the suffering.

“This is a strength in young people, a strength that all of you possess. It is a strength that can change the world,” he underlined.

God’s plan is “meant to make our lives fruitful and produce many smiles and happy hearts. To respond to God positively is to take a first step towards being happy and towards making many people happy,” he said.

“May Our Lady be with you on this pilgrimage,” he concluded, “and may her example encourage you to...”

(see World Youth Day, page 22)
December 2nd
Celebrate Advent with us!
The Catholic Cursillo Movement of the Diocese of Santa Rosa invites all Catholics to celebrate the Advent season by attending a grand Christmas Ultreya on December 1, 2 – 4 p.m. at St. Elizabeth Seton Church, 4595 Snyder Lane, Rohnert Park. It will be festive with Christmas caroling! Ultreya means “moving forward,” and these gatherings help to move Catholics forward by helping them to learn and practice spiritual skills that will help them walk more closely with Jesus Christ and other Christians. Those who want to know more about the Catholic Cursillo Movement and those who have already lived a Cursillo weekend are invited to attend this special holiday event. For further information call Molly Touchette at 707-292-8389 or Olga Dorado at 707-755-0022.

December 7th - 9th
Rachael’s Vineyard Retreat
Abortion left you with a broken heart? If you or someone you love is hurting after abortion, discover God’s healing love through a Rachael’s Vineyard retreat. Peace, hope, & joy await! Upcoming retreat: December 7 – 9, 2018. rachelsvineyard@gmail.com or call (707) 799-6950 for confidential info and registration. International web site: rachelsvineyard.org

December 9th
25th Anniversary Mass Our Lady of Guadalupe Windsor
This December marks the 25th anniversary of the dedication of Our Lady of Guadalupe church building. In celebration of this milestone, on December 9th, we are holding a series of events to provide an opportunity for all OLG parishioners to come together and celebrate the history of our church. We will begin at 10:00am with a breakfast featuring traditional Hispanic food and a carnival with games and prizes. The carnival will last until shortly before the start of a very special bi-lingual mass. The mass will begin at 1:30pm.

The next day will begin with Mass with local priests, three homilies, and one Angelus during the five days where he should arrive shortly before noon Jan. 29. Volunteers of World Youth Day in the Rommel Fernandez Center Plaza and pick you up after the walk near Justin Herman Plaza. The logistics of parking can be difficult so taking the bus is a great and easy way to go! The following parish locations are sites that will have a bus for the 2019 Walk for Life:
- St. John the Baptist, Napa 226-9370
- St. Apollinaris, Napa 257-2555
- St. Eugene’s, Santa Rosa 542-6984
- St. James, Petaluma (coordinated by the Family Life Office 566-3305)

So make your plans to attend the 2019 Walk for Life West Coast in San Francisco on Saturday, January 26th! For complete information about the Walk for Life, visit www.walkforlifewc.com. To see a brief video on the Walk for Life, go to YouTube and search for: 3DEA9jN00g

February 2nd - 5th
NCCW Catholic Social Ministry Gathering
The 2019 Catholic Social Ministry Gathering Omni Shoreham Hotel in Washington, D.C. The Catholic Social Ministry Gathering is organized by the Department of Justice, Peace and Human Development in collaboration with 7 other USCCB departments and 15 national Catholic organizations. This central gathering of Catholic social ministry leaders in the U.S. annually brings together hundreds of Catholic social ministry leaders to focus on issues related to social justice and to pressur current domestic and global challenges relating to poverty, war, injustice and the promotion of human life and dignity. Visit our CSMG Highlights page to learn more. www.usccb.org

Ongoing
Thursdays 5:30pm “Pray for Priests” prayer group St. Sebastian Parish
Is God calling you to enrich your prayer life in the very meaningful way? If so, you are welcome to come to our parish “Pray for Priests” prayer group on Thursdays, 7-8 p.m. in St. Sebastian’s church. Weekly attendance is not a requirement, join us when you can.

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

(Continued from page 21)

The same day he will meet with the bishops of Central America. The official opening of World Youth Day at Santa Maria La Antigua field will take place that afternoon.

Friday, January 25, the pope’s schedule will begin with the celebration of a penitential liturgy with young detainees at a juvenile detention center and in the afternoon, he will lead the Way of the Cross for the young people of World Youth Day in Santa Maria La Antigua field.

The next day will begin with Mass with local priests, consecrated, and members of lay movements. At this Mass there will be a dedication of the altar of the Cathedral Basilica of Santa Maria la Antigua. That day Pope Francis will eat lunch with the semi-narians of the Major Seminary of San Jose, followed by a prayer vigil with youth in San Juan Pablo II field in Metro Park.

His final day, Sunday, Jan. 27, Francis will celebrate Mass for World Youth Day at 8 a.m. in the same park as the prior evening’s prayer vigil.

He will afterward visit a home for the needy, called “Good Samaritan House,” where he will lead the Angelus. His final speech will be in a meeting with the volunteers of World Youth Day in the Rommel Fernandez stadium before departing Panama for Rome, where he should arrive shortly before noon Jan. 29.

Pope Francis will give a total of seven speeches, three homilies, and one Angelus during the five days he is in Panama. ❖
Youth & Young Adult News

January 12th
Day-Retreat at St. Vincent School for Boys, in Marinwood
9:30am - 4pm (includes lunch) All adults that work with young people are welcomed. Parents, Catechists, Teachers, Administrators, Coaches, and Ministers are encouraged in a day of reflection, renewal, fellowship, and conversation and reconciliation (Confession & Adoration).
Retreat Leader: John Beaulieu. From Franciscan University, Steubenville. John has over 30 years experience in youth ministry, including NET ministries, professor at Steubenville, director of Outreach, and retreat facilitator. Go to: http://www.srdiocese.org/youth_ministry/retreats

Catholics Ask Governor to Commute Death Row before He Leaves Office

Sacramento, CA November 19th (California Catholic Conference)
The following is a letter delivered by the California Catholic Conference to Governor Brown's office.

Representatives from Catholic and other organizations opposed to the death penalty delivered nearly six thousand letters to Governor Jerry Brown today asking him to commute the sentences of the hundreds of men and women on death row before he leaves office.

Earlier in the year, the Catechism of the Catholic Church was updated to reflect the official teaching of the church that the death penalty is “inadmissible.” State-sanctioned execution is a violent rejection of the inherent dignity of human beings, inconsistently applied across demographic groups and no longer necessary to protect society given modern correctional techniques.

Governor Jerry Brown, with just weeks left in office, has an opportunity to address this appalling inequity in California’s justice system by commuting the sentences of many on death row to life imprisonment. He can grant clemency to many of the nearly 750 people sentenced to die in California, or he can issue an executive order halting executions. In either case, the Golden State—which has more people on death row than any other state—can join the 19 other states in the Union who do not use the death penalty.

Catholics Against the Death Penalty, People of Faith Working Against the Death Penalty, the Catholic Mobilizing Network to End the Use of the Death Penalty and other groups such as Death Penalty Focus are all pleading with the Governor to take bold action in his last few weeks.

Presenting the letters to the Governor’s office were Marciano Avilla, Diocese of San Bernardino; Sr. Mary Sean Hodges, Californians Against the Death Penalty; and Magdaleno Rose-Avila, Death Penalty Focus.

(see Commute Death Row, page 24)
Adult Faith Formation & Certification 2019

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- Adult Formation $150.00/person fee entire program, includes some books (not interested in certification)
- Basic Catechist (BC) $150.00/person for entire program, includes some books.
- Master Catechist (MC) $175.00/person for entire program, includes some books. (In-depth study, advance seminar & teaching practicum, Prerequisites: Basic Catechist Certification)
- For those interested in dropping in $20 person/class, not including books.
- There will be various books available to purchase. The Class fee does not include all books.
- Those who wish to attend and are not interested in receiving a California Certificate are welcome, but must register.
- Class can be used as credit towards Catechist Recertification.
- Complete an Application to register in the Adult formation or California Catechist Process.

Sponsored by the Diocesan Department of Religious Education

For Registration & an Application contact Carmen Auenens:
drc@srdiocese.org (707) 566-3366 www.santarosacatholic.org

**PROGRAMA**

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- Formación para adultos $150.00/person fee entire program, includes some books. No estás interesado en la certificación.
- Catequista básico (BC) $150.00/persono para toda la serie. Algunos libros están incluidos.
- Catequista Maestro (MC) $175.00/persona para toda la serie. Algunos libros están incluidos. (Estudio en profundidad, seminario avanzado y practica docente. Requiere Certificado básico).
- Para aquellos interesados en ir a solamente una clase el costo es $20 por clase, no incluye los libros.
- Habrá varios libros disponibles para comprar. La tarifa de la clase no incluye el costo de estos libros.
- Aquellos que deseen asistir y no están interesados en recibir un certificado de catequista los incluimos, pero se debe registrar.
- La clase se puede utilizar para la recertificación del catequista.
- Lléveno una solicitud para iniciar el proceso de certificación de catequista o registro para clase.

Patrocinado por el Departamento de Educación Religiosa

Para más información o para registrarse, póngase en contacto con Carmen Perez Auenens:
drc@srdiocese.org (707) 566-3366 www.santarosacatholic.org

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(Commute Death Row, cont. from page 23)

Sean Hodges, Catholics Against the Death Penalty (CADP); Maria Jose Flores, California Catholic Conference; and Magdaleno Rose-Avila, Death Penalty Focus, California.

Statement from Fr. Chris Ponnet, Co Chair of CADP. Board member Death Penalty Focus and California People of Faith against the Death Penalty, commented on the letters:

“Catholic Against the Death Penalty was formed to bring Catholic values to the public conversations for the ballot initiatives in California to end the death penalty. In 2016, despite the loss of Prop 62 and the passage of Prop 66, we celebrated the growing numbers of Californians in support of abolition. Our role within the Catholic Church was to educate residents and to advocate for the voices of victims and their families who want justice without the death penalty.

At the end of 2017, we began working on a petition to present to Governor Brown for him to follow the example and words of his father Governor Pat Brown, who wrote his book Public Justice, Private Mercy: “Beyond its horror and inhumanity, it has neither protected the innocent nor deterred the wicked.”

“The nearly 6,000 letters we have collected that will be presented today (November 19, 2018) to Governor Brown reflect many hours of work at the 2018 Religious Ed Congress, the Diocese of San Bernardino, many religious community members and the local efforts of Death Penalty Focus, California People of Faith and Catholics Against the Death Penalty.

“We request the Governor before his term ends in the coming weeks, to consider the words of his father and the updated Catholic Catechism to say the death penalty is “inadmissible” for Catholics to support and we are called by faith to work for abolition. We hope Governor Brown, trained by Jesuits, will consider his legacy of respect for restorative justice. We trust he knows that killing to punish killings only make us as State killers also.

“We thank all who helped make these nearly 6,000 personal statements of life and restorative justice become a real call for action under the law. Governor Brown—do the right thing.

“Under the law, commute as many of those on death row as possible. Life without parole is seen by many as worst that the death penalty but it means we as society will not be killers. It will leave open the possibility of redemption for those who are guilty of heinous crimes. It also eliminates the ongoing reality of the innocent being executed by the State of California. We trust you will join us at this time in history and move California closer to abolition. And we pray that California, with the largest death row, will be an example for the United States.”

For information contact Fr Chris Ponnet Co Chair CADP, CPE, DPF St Camillus and Pax Christi So California, 323 719-7411

“Consistency in the abhorrence of violence is the hallmark of the Church’s teaching on the death penalty.... state-sanctioned killing diminishes us all, the application of capital punishment is flawed and inconsistent, and that the state has other ways of punishing criminals.” US Conference of Catholic Bishops.

“The Death Penalty is inadmissible because it is an attack on the inviolability and dignity of the person..... the Church will work with determination for its abolition worldwide.” Pope Francis 2018