Pope Makes Landmark Visit to Sri Lanka, Philippines

From CNA/EWTN and other news sources

Vatican City—When Pope Francis landed on the small island nation of Sri Lanka for the start of a seven-day visit here and to the Philippines, the reception that greeted him was one befitting a king.

President Maithripala Sirisena and Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith as well as 40 elephants greeted him at the airport. The road from the airport to the capital of Colombo is 14 miles long, the equivalent of 246 football fields. Except for a handful of patches here and there, the route was packed with onlookers and well-wishers, and His Holiness stopped to wave to them. The road was four miles long, the equivalent of 64 football fields. Except for a handful of patches here and there, the route was packed with onlookers and well-wishers, and His Holiness stopped to wave to them. This caused him to cancel a long-planned meeting with the nation's bishops.

In his first speech, His Holiness encouraged Sri Lankans to “live as one family.”

“Whenever people listen to one another humbly and openly, their shared values and aspirations become all the more apparent,” he said.

From 1983-2009, Sri Lanka experienced a devastating civil war between the Sinhalese majority and the Tamil minority over Tamil desires for a separate nation in the country’s northeastern region. Between 60,000-100,000 people died in the conflict. After reaching Colombo, the Holy Father took part in an interreligious meeting with Buddhist leaders, who represent the vast majority of Sri Lanka’s people (Christians account for just 8 percent of the 20.4 million citizens). This was historic because when Pope St. John Paul II visited the country in 1995, not one Buddhist religious leader would meet with him.

Tensions between the Buddhist majority and the Tamil, largely Hindu minority contributed to the civil war, and the Pope in his message to the meeting said religion should never be used as a weapon of war.

These tensions were seen in the previous week’s presidential elections where President Mahinda Rajapaksa, who had (see Pope’s Visit, p. 7)

Mario Cuomo, 1932–2015: His Controversial Legacy

New York City (National Catholic Register)—Mario Cuomo, the former three-term governor of New York who sought to justify Catholic lawmakers’ tolerance of abortion rights, died on January 1. He was 82.

Cuomo served as New York’s governor from 1983 to 1995 and emerged as the standard bearer of his party’s liberal wing. But he resisted efforts to make him a candidate for president and also turned down President Bill Clinton’s proposal that he be nominated for a seat on the United States Supreme Court.

A Catholic politician who quoted Thomas Aquinas, challenged Ronald Reagan’s optimistic vision of economic opportunity in America, and cited the Church’s moral doctrine as he vetoed legislation enacting the death penalty, Cuomo’s policy positions and rhetoric often resonated with his fellow believers.

Yet even as the New York governor inspired intense loyalty from the Democratic Party base, he also drew criticism from Catholic and pro-life leaders for his stance on abortion, articulated in a landmark 1984 speech at the University of Notre Dame.

(see Mario Cuomo, p. 8)

Blessed Junípero Serra’s Canonization Announced

Vatican City (CNA/EWTN News)—In a surprise addition to his September 22-27 trip to the United States this fall for the World Meeting of Families 2015, Pope Francis will canonize the founder of California’s first missions, Bl. Junípero Serra, OFM.

The canonization will occur September 23 in Washington, DC.

“In September, God willing, I will canonize Junípero Serra in the United States,” declared Pope Francis aboard his flight from Sri Lanka to Manila during his recent pastoral visit to the two countries. Bl. Junípero lived in what is now California in the late 1700s. The Spanish missionary founded the first nine of California’s twenty-one eventual missions. He worked tirelessly with the Native Americans and is said to have baptized more than 6,000 people and confirmed 5,000.

“He was the evangelizer of the west in the United States,” declared Pope Francis aboard his flight from Sri Lanka to Manila during his recent pastoral visit to the two countries.

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(see Serra, p. 3)

Incoming Principal Meets Tragic End

Dublin, California—On December 16, Justin-Siena High School in Napa announced it had hired as its next principal Herman Shum, assistant principal at Saint Mary’s College High School in Berkeley. He would take office around July 1 of this year.

Sadly that will not happen. Shum, a Dublin resident, died Saturday, December 27, on a rural road between Livermore and San Ramon during a bicycle ride with the Northern California chapter of the International Christian Cycling Club, of which he was a member.

Dublin Patch reported he “was riding at the back of the pack and crossed over to the other side of the road, likely to avoid a crash between cyclists ahead of him, CHP officials said. He was then ejected off his bike and landed on the road, where a Peterbilt truck swerved to avoid the bicyclists but struck and killed him.”

As a mark of the respect with which people regarded him, a memorial fund established via the Internet for his children’s college education raised $50,000 in 24 hours.

The Contra Costa Times reported, “Herman was the love of my life,” his wife Janelle wrote on the page. “He loved his two daughters (Nikki and Monika) more than you could know.”

(see Incoming Principal, p. 9)
Recuerde Cómo las Cenizas se Sienten

Cuaresma, el tiempo de cenizas-a-cenizas del año litúrgico. La penitencia, mortificación, vestimentos morados, la oración, el ayuno, la abstención, la privación, la desolación, la abnegación, la purificación, el cilicio y la ceniza. Aún, si, las cenizas. Recuerde miércoles, Miércoles de Ceniza, la ceniza, esa sensación de tierra seca que le aplican a la persona en la iglesia. Se sienten.

La vida como hoy la conocemos se está pasando, pero hay otra vida, una vida mejor, una vida eterna. Pasar lo que pase en el espíritu, y le comunica al alma un mensaje importante. Muy profundo se impresiona en la mente, se penetra la mente, y le comunica al alma un mensaje importante.

La Ceniza, la ceniza, esa sensación de tierra seca que le aplican a la persona en la iglesia. Se sienten. Las cenizas, especialmente durante el curso de la Cuaresma. La penitencia, mortificación, vestimentos morados, la oración, el ayuno, la abstención, la privación, la desolación, la abnegación, la purificación, el cilicio y la ceniza. Las cenizas, especialmente durante el curso de la Cuaresma.

Las cenizas no son agradables, no están destinadas a serlo. Las cenizas del Miércoles de Ceniza vienen y van y desaparecen rápidamente, pero tienen que continuar persiguiéndolas a lo largo de la vida. Las cenizas, especialmente durante el curso de la Cuaresma.

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Algunas de las prácticas espirituales que se nos piden en Cuaresma son: la oración, el ayuno, la abstención, la privación, la desolación, la abnegación, la purificación, el cilicio y la ceniza. Las cenizas, especialmente durante el curso de la Cuaresma.

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by Katie Uemura

"Now it is your opportunity to step courageously into your future to become the people God wants you to be, to be of influence for good in the lives of many who will depend on your friendship and love" (Fr. Eric Freed, June 2002).

These words mean as much to me today as they did all those years ago. It wasn't until after his death that Fr. Eric's words came back to me. Rummaging through all my papers, pictures, and books from elementary school, looking for anything to bring back memories of the friend I missed so much, I found the letter he wrote to us, his only graduating class from St. Mary School in Arcata. The whole letter means so much to me, but these few sentences stuck in my mind and heart for the weeks and months to come. Reading these words over and over, thinking of all the things I have overcome, all the different paths I have wandered, and all the friends I've made over the years. I came to realize that I have unknowingly lived by Fr. Eric's words every day.

Feeling beyond blessed, I knew I had to do something to honor such a loving and inspirational friend. Thinking about how much Japan and the Japanese culture meant to Fr. Eric, how excited he was to teach all those he met about the land he loved so much, it was there, staring me right in the face, the two golden origami paper cranes Fr. Eric had given me those years ago, and I knew right away what I wanted to do.

Fold 1,000 origami paper cranes in his honor. Paper cranes are a symbol of peace, good luck, and long life throughout Japan.

I quickly realized that folding 1,000 cranes by myself was a ridiculous task to accomplish by the time of his memorial Mass on January 5. I spread the word of what I was doing and why. Four days later we had hundreds of paper cranes of all sizes and colors.

Fr. Freed Remembered One Year On

Catholics do not now—nor have they ever—believed that once anyone dies, they automatically go to heaven. After all, if we die in a state of mortal sin, we will go to hell (CCC 1034-37, 1961). Even if we die in a state of grace, there is the distinct possibility that we will spend time in purgatory (CCC 1030-32).

The Bible and the Church both teach us that when we live with Christ through the sacraments, we will live with Him. But even as a student and a Jansenist, I had difficulty understanding how many are not living (much less dying) with those.

This is where the Apostle for the Dying comes in. His members pray every day for God's mercy upon the dying throughout the world, especially those who die suddenly, violently, in despair, or alone with no one to pray for them. The salvation of souls is an urgent need in our world today. Jesus told St. Faustina, "Pray as much as you can for the dying...Be assured that the eternal salvation of certain souls in their final moment depends on your prayers" (Diary: Divine Mercy in My Soul, no. 1777).

Our Lady of Fatima said, "Many souls go Hell because no one prays for them." These are powerful words worth pondering. The dying are the most forgotten souls. We can help them now, praying daily or weekly either at home, in church, at Adoration, at hospice, or with a weekly prayer group.

There are many intercessory prayers to choose from:

- Prayers from the Holy Hour Devotion for the Dying booklet
- The Rosary
- The Chaplet of Divine Mercy
- Words of Comfort for the Dying booklet, which includes prayers and meditations to be said at the bedside of the dying

Our Lady of Fatima said, "Many souls go Hell because no one prays for them.

For the Glory of God and the Good of Souls

- Our Lady of Mt. Carmel
- Meditations on the Five Wounds of Christ
- St. Joseph, Patron of the Dying
- St. Michael the Archangel
- Prayers for Those in Purgatory

To learn more about how you can become a missionary to those "in their final agony" without even leaving your home, visit www.apostolateforthedying.org or call 513-922-0370.

Katie Uemura was a student and friend of Fr. Freed.
Welcome to the month of candles, love, and ashes. Candles because of Candelmas, February 2, and the blessing of thorns with them on the Feast of St. Blaise, February 3. Love, well, February 14, the Feast of St. Valentine (file under the heading of, "Duh").

And ashes because Ash Wednesday is February 18. (For those of you playing along at home, that puts Easter on April 5.)

This issue has a paucity of Lenten related material. That was not the design. There is enough to get you started, though, namely a piece on how to make a good confession.

We will have much more in March.

However, we had intended to place a large Lenten spread in this issue, much as we had for Advent and Christmas.

However the proverbial (and pestilential) technical problems got in the way, namely something called “ransomware.”

Have you heard of this? I am convinced there is an especially, exquisitely delicious place in hell for those who die with this sin unrepented on their souls.

According to howtogeek.com, “Ransomware is a type of malware that tries to extort money from you. One of the nastiest examples, CryptoLocker, takes your files hostage and holds them for ransom, forcing you to pay hundreds of dollars to regain access.

“Most malware is no longer created by bored teenagers looking to cause some chaos. Much of the current malware is now produced by organized crime for profit and is becoming increasingly sophisticated.”

As you may have guessed, ransomware somehow got to my computer. Not CryptoLocker, though. Had wormware. “Wormware is now produced by organized crime for profit and holds them for ransom, forcing you to pay hundreds of dollars to regain access.”

“Malware is no longer created by bored teenagers looking to cause some chaos. Much of the current malware is now produced by organized crime for profit and is becoming increasingly sophisticated.”

But whether the virus(es) did what CryptoLocker does. However the virus(es) did what CryptoLocker does. I saw a pop-up screen that in the form of a counting-me, “You may as well pay the ransom.” Mine was the it been that, the people at Santa Rosa Computer told me had for Advent and Christmas.

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According to howtogeek.com, notes the “ransomware could encrypt the files on your connected backup drive or on your network share if you have full write access.”

Or you can do as my friend Fr. Francis Gayam, chaplain at Santa Rosa Memorial Hospital suggests, “Buy an Apple.” Speaking of Father, in March he leaves the North Coast after five years and returns to his native India, namely his hometown of Hyderabad, back to his family’s comforts, and his own parish. He has been a good servant here, and he will be missed. Godspeed, Father.

Already gone is our benefits coordinator Amy McCaffrey, who took early retirement last month to care for her parents in Washington state. Again, Godspeed.

At the same time, we welcome back Fr. John Boettcher, who will serve as director of a new office in the curia, the Department of Evangelization and Spirituality, the purpose of which is to increase both.

May you have a blessed and fruitful Lent! Oh, and when you’re done with the issue, consider giving it to someone else to read. Thanks.

Letters to the Editor

Thank you so much for including that wonderful column by William McKenna, MS, on the connection between faith and modern psychology. It might have been helpful to clarify that IPS stands for the Institute for Psychological Sciences, a Catholic university graduation school offering master’s and doctoral degrees. It is located in Arlington, VA.

Steve Mullen
Santa Rosa, CA

Letters Policy

Email: dioceseofsantarosa@yahoo.com
Write: Letters to the Editor
North Coast Catholic
595 Airway Ct.
Santa Rosa, CA 95403

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

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

March 30, 2015

NAC—The Pontifical North American College, a seminary. Often called the West Point of the North American Church, many American and Canadian bishops and cardinals have studied at the NAC (pro. “knack”). It is situated on a large hill overlooking the Vatican.

Stigmata—From the Greek stigmata, meaning “mark,” this word describes the wounds some saints get, which correlate to Christ’s wounds, such as those on the head, in the wrists and feet, even in the chest or on the shoulder. They are usually visible and cause the recipient much pain. The Church has recorded some 300 stigmata cases, the overwhelming majority of them women such as St. Catherine of Siena, St. Rita, and St. Rose of Viterbo. The two most famous male stigmatists were Sts. Francis of Assisi and Pio of Pietrelcina.

Bl. Giuseppe Alimanno, Feast: February 16

Bl. Domenico Lentini, Feast: February 25
In June 2002, the United States bishops signed the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People. This requires each diocese to participate in an annual audit to verify compliance with child protection measures. The Diocese of Santa Rosa recently learned that, once again, we are in compliance with the Charter’s requirements. This should be something to celebrate. Instead I feel very uncomfortable.

Why? Because the Charter says we are compliant even if we are only mostly there. It doesn’t require 100 percent. I am uncomfortable because we are not 100 percent compliant.

Throughout the diocese, there are parishes and schools where employees and volunteers have not been fingerprinted and background checked. There are people who have never completed our training, in spite of their having volunteered for some time. The goal is not to pass the audit. The goal is to protect children. As long as there are parishes and schools that are compliant, as long as there are employees and volunteers who have not had background checks, we have holes in the fence of protection we have built to protect the children of the diocese.

Most weeks I receive arrest notices for people who have been fingerprinted for the Diocese of Santa Rosa. Most of the offenses are minor, but some are very serious. Some involve offenses against children, some involve violence and weapons, and some involve drugs (e.g., possession with intent to sell). Some are serious offenses that rightly disqualify individuals from working or volunteering with minors in the diocese. These are offenses that have been committed by a handful of people who were fingerprinted for the diocese. What is happening with those who are not fingerprinted? Who knows?

The training we offer is designed to be another layer of protection around the children. It won’t completely eradicate the evil amongst us, but it will give us the knowledge and tools we need to arm ourselves in the fight for our most innocent.

I am delighted to tell you that our new training is now available through our diocesan website. If you work or volunteer in our diocese, you can immediately take the training. It is not necessary to wait until your safe environment coordinator tells you to. Go to:

http://www.santarosacatholic.org/ the_diocese/child_and_youth_protection/safe_environment

Every employee and all volunteers who have regular contact with children are required to complete this training as soon as possible. It should take about one hour to complete. In addition to completing the training, if you have not yet been fingerprinted, please become so immediately. If our goal is to protect children, we must all do our part. If you are not compliant with the requirements—you are…part of…of the…problem. Please: Become part of the solution!

Ask the Institute of Psychological Studies (IPS)

Advisory from psychological experts, drawing on Catholic faith and modern psychology

QUESTION: “I expect so much of myself each new year. How do I make my resolutions last?”

RESPONSE: It happens every New Year. Lists get made, goals get set, and resolutions are firm.

This New Year I had the unique experience of being in Death Valley with my family. There was very little access to modern conveniences such as cell phone reception, satellite television, and a solid Internet connection. Therefore I had a lot of time to think over my New Year’s resolutions. How would I make sure my mind endured longer than six weeks? I came to understand a vital piece to the resolution puzzle.

Making resolutions is futile unless you first resolve to acquire the particular virtues that are necessary to propel you toward and support your resolutions. There has to be a foundation, a grounding in virtue.

What psychologically is needed for a person to grow in virtue? The book Positive Psychology (Peterson & Seligman, 2004) provides a three-tiered system to answer this question. It defines virtue as a core characteristic that is universally valued. The first tier consists of the actual virtues, while the second consists of certain characteristic strengths that a person can focus on gaining in order to ultimately attain a particular virtue. Finally there are situational themes that are habits that manifest themselves during certain circumstances.

An example displaying this system could be the virtue of fortitude. According to Peterson and Seligman, the character strength that accompanies this virtue is valor. Therefore if a person resolves this year to become more courageous, they should focus on acts of valor. A person should then set for the right reason.

Each of us desires to improve ourselves this coming year. Such an aspiration is theoretically and psychologically good. However we need to set ourselves up for success. Making New Year’s resolutions without the virtues necessary to bring them to fruition will only leave us feeling upset and inadequate.

We not only need a goal and a plan of attack, we need the tools necessary to flourish. Those tools are the virtues we acquire by doing the right thing, at the right time, and for the right reason.

This month’s response is from William McKenna, MS, clinical extern at the IPS Center for Psychological Services. Have a practical question related to psychology and faith? Write to askips@spciences.edu.

Guarding the Vulnerable
Julie Sparacio is director of Child and Youth Protection.

Should We Celebrate? Not Yet...

BL. Antoni Leszczewicz, MFC, martyr. Feast: February 17

Revelado en hostia consagrada. La ciencia se une a la fe: tejido vivir del corazón

Marzo 8
La ciencia se une a la fe: tejido vivir del corazón

Marzo 8
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BL. Antoni Leszczewicz, MFC, martyr. Feast: February 17
Picture you’re a small child who loves your mommy or daddy. Imagine never being able to hold them, to have them hold you or your hand crossing the street, to have them not be there when you get that owie, and not tuck you in at night, say your prayers with you, or give you a kiss.

Sadly that is the lot of 200,000 California children whose parents are incarcerated. While the parents may deserve their punishment, the children suffer just as much if not more. This is where Get On the Bus comes in. Two women religious from Los Angeles founded the organization in 2000 after visiting a women’s prison in Chowchilla and asking inmates for the most difficult thing about imprisonment. Almost all said, “Not seeing my children.”

The two Sisters decided to do something, and thus Get On the Bus began. That year one bus with fifteen children traveled to Chowchilla for Mother’s Day. By 2006, GOTB had reached northern California and had 56 buses throughout the state visiting the two women’s prisons in Chowchilla.

In the last four years GOTB has expanded to include fathers for Father’s Day, visiting the men’s facilities near Soledad, California. This year marks our diocese’s tenth year assisting with the program.

**Answering a Tremendous Need**

Visiting a parent in prison can lessen the impact of parental incarceration on the child, strengthen family bonds, and lower the parents’ recidivism rate.

The greatest barrier for most family visits is distance, followed by finances, and transportation. With no cost to the participating families, GOTB supplies chartered buses to and from the prison along with all meals during travel. It also provides chaperones for children who have no adult to accompany them and gives assistance in all other areas, as well.

Of course while it is free to the children, it isn’t free to the program. Each bus costs $4,000. GOTB relies upon volunteers for prayer and spiritual support, making family visits to complete state required paperwork, providing meals for the day of the visit, and many other functions. All of this takes time, talent, and treasure.

Volunteer donations fund each bus, driver, insurance, and gasoline. Funds also provide for the extra prison staff needed to supervise the increased number of visitors. All of this enables each family to have a table to themselves, allowing hugs, kisses, and much needed conversations, especially for young teenagers.

One great way to assist is to organize a fund drive in your neighborhood, school, church, or organization. Event partners are recognized!

- Those who donate $2,000 by April 1 get a logo on the GOTB t-shirt.
- Those who donate $550 by April 1 are named on the t-shirt.

Donations are tax deductible (tax ID number 68-0547196). Donate online at getonthebus.us or mail donations to Get On the Bus, 6400 Laurel Canyon, Ste. 302, North Hollywood, CA 91606. If you wish to specifically help cover the Diocese of Santa Rosa’s two buses, it is very important to note “For BUS U” on your check’s memo line.

To volunteer or learn more about this marvelous program, please call Joan Warner (707-968-9179) or John Storm (707-479-5424).

An informational meeting will take place at Resurrection Church, 303 Stoney Point Rd., Santa Rosa, CA 95401, on Saturday, February 14 at 1pm. New volunteers will team with veterans and will be assigned in accordance with their particular interests and talents.

**2015 Hope Works Wonder Tour Dates**

Join Catholic Charities for a tour of our programs, meet some of the people it serves, and learn about all the ways it serves our community.

While the tours last only an hour, the experience lasts a lifetime.

And the King will say to them in reply, “Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of Mine, you did for Me” (Matt 25:40).

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Unless otherwise noted, all tours begin at 12pm.

**Editor’s note:** If there is any possible way you can take this tour, do yourself a favor and take it. You are likely to be amazed. Many people including this writer have been, surprisingly so.
led the country for 10 years and brought the civil war to an end, lost to Sirisena, his former health minister, in a close, contentious election. Much of Sirisena’s support arose out of religious minorities’ lingering dislike of Rajapaksa.

The surprisingly calm and transition of authority was largely due to Pope Francis’ presence so soon after the elections took place, Cardinal Gnananayagam said. On Wednesday, January 14, His Holiness canonized the “apostle of India,” St. Joseph Vaz (see story on p. 12). He then traveled to the Shrine of Our Lady of Rosary in Madhu, near the boyhood home of Calistogas Fr. Angelo Peries.

In remarks the Holy Father spoke on the country’s brutal, decades-long civil war and pointed to the Mother of God as the ultimate witness of forgiveness. “In this difficult effort to forgive and find peace, Mary is always here to encourage us, to guide us, to lead us,” the Pope said.

Just as she forgave her Son’s killers at the foot of His cross … so now she wants to guide Sri Lankans to greater reconciliation so that the balm of God’s pardon and mercy may bring true healing to all.

That same day the government announced that in keeping with the Pope’s call for forgiveness, it had released more than 600 men and women from prison. The released prisoners “were minor offenders and those above the age of 75,” prisons spokesman Thushara Upuldeniya said.

Before leaving for the Philippines early on January 15, His Holiness stopped at the Benedict XVI Cultural Institute in Bolawalana, where he blessed the Chapel of Our Lady of Lanka. Cardinal Ranjith created the institute as a clearing house for agencies who are helping rebuild the country. During his by now ritual in-flight news conferences, Francis spoke to the Charlie Hebdo massacre the previous week, saying that the world “has the right to kill on the name of God, freedom of expression has its limits.”

“You cannot provoke. You cannot insult the faith of others. You cannot make fun of the faith.” Pope Francis said. If you do, you “can expect a punch.”

The diaspora was a reference to attempts to open marriage organization.... As a family, we have to be very clear, prepared and socially active and played a key role in the peaceful transition of power.

The Church was also an active opponent of President Aquino’s advocacy of a controversial “reproductive health” bill enacted in 2012 that gave government assistance to women who undergo abortion. The legislation mandated government-sanctioned sex education for adults, middle school, and high school students, as well as a population control program that includes fully subsidized contraceptives under government health insurance.

Last year the Supreme Court of the Philippines struck down portions of the bill including provisions allowing minors access to birth control without parental consent and requirements that infringed on the religious freedom of institutions and individuals that objected to providing information about contraceptives.

While Pope Francis did not address the legislation directly, he made clear the impact of the family’s role in passing on Christian values and renewing society.

“We know how difficult it is for our democracies today to preserve and defend such basic human values as respect for the inviolable dignity of each human person, respect for the rights of conscience and religious freedom, and respect for the inalienable right to life, beginning with that of the unborn and extending to that of the elderly and infirm,” he said.

Following this the Holy Father travelled to Manila’s Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception Cathedral for Holy Mass with bishops, priests, Religious, and seminarians.

“Do you love me?”—Tend my sheep (John 21:15-17).” Jesus words to Peter … are the first words I speak to you,” he told congregants. “These words remind us of something essential. All pastoral ministry is born of love. All consecrated life is a sign of Christ’s reconciling love. Like St. Thérèse, in the variety of our vocations, each of us is called, in some way, to love in the heart of the Church.”

Later Francis observed, “To be an ambassador for Christ means above all to invite everyone to a renewed personal encounter with the Lord Jesus…. As ambassadors for Christ, we—bishops, priests, and Religious—ought to be the first to welcome His reconciling grace into our hearts.”

“St. Paul’s words are very clear in this means. It means rejecting worldly perspectives and seeing all things anew in the light of Christ. It means being the first to examine our consciences, to acknowledge our failings and sins, and to embrace the path of constant conversion. How can we proclaim the regenerate and liberating power of the Cross to others if ourselves refuse to allow the word of God to shake our complacency, our fear of change, our petty compromises with the ways of this world, our ‘spiritual worldliness?’

“For us priests and consecrated persons, conversion to the newness of the gospel entails a daily encounter with the Lord in prayer. The saints teach us that this is the source of all apostolic zeal!”

Immediately after changing, the Pontiff walked “very simply” outside the cathedral’s main doors by himself, turned left, and went into the courtyard of a house where a group of street children was waiting.

The youngsters, who numbered around 250, “were street children, scavenger children, children in slums and mentally challenged youth. Some of them have been abused, even sexually,” a priest explained, recapitulating how the Pope “was welcomed by the kids on the street even before he entered.”

Next His Holiness met with a gathering of families where he urged them to stand for what St. John Paul called the Culture of Life.

“Be attentive, be attentive with the new ideological colonization…. As a family, we have to be very clear, prepared and strong to say ‘no’ to these attempts of ideological colonization of the family,” which a papal spokesman later confirmed was a reference to attempts to open marriage to homosexuals.

Liking today’s challenge to that faced by a predecessor, Francis said, “I think of Bl. Paul VI. In a moment of that challenge of the growth of populations, he had the strength to defend openness to life. He knew the difficulties that families experienced, and that’s why in [Humanae Vitae], he expressed compassion for particular cases.

“Paul VI was courageous, he was a good pastor, and he warned his sheep about the wolves that were approaching. And from the heavens, he blesses us today. Our world needs good and strong families to overcome these threats!”

One of the top morbid images came the next day from the Holy Father’s Mass for the people on the island of Leyte in the city of Tacloban, which had been the epicenter of December 23rd’s Typhoon Hayan. An outdoor liturgy, it was celebrated before 200,000-plus people in a driving rain and 100 degrees.

“The Pope set aside his prepared homily. He told the crowd—many of whom were left with nothing after the typhoon—that Christians have in Jesus a Lord Who is “capable of crying with us, capable of walking with us in the most difficult moments of life.”

“We have the security of knowing that we are not going to weaken in our faith because Jesus has been there before us… In His passion, He assumed all our pain,” he added.

Sad, 27-year-old Kristel Padasas died when speaker scaffolding fell on her before Mass began.

“The rain grew steadily worse, with winds gusting to 80 mph, and later that day, weather forced Francis to cut short his stay on Leyte.

Back in Manila on Sunday, the Pope held a rally with youth and heard the testimony of a formerly homeless boy and girl. Later he told the teens and young adults that a society inundated in information should embrace God’s loving surprises.

“If you only have information, then the element of surprise is gone,” he said. “God surprises us. Let us allow ourselves to be surprised by God.”

After this, Francis celebrated the closing Mass of his trip before forming his Holy Mass with priests, bishops, and other practitioners of the largest papal event in history. During the Philippines’ World Youth Day 1995, St. John Paul had celebrated Mass before 5 million.

“The Christ Child, explained Pope Francis in his homily, “reminds us of the importance of protecting our family and those larger families which are the Church, God’s family, and the world, our human family.”

“Sadly in our day the family all too often needs to be protected against insidious attacks and programs contrary to all that we hold true and sacred, all that is most beautiful and noble in our culture.”

Later in his sermon the Pope acknowledged that, surrounded by troubles and difficulties, we may be tempted given up.

“It seems that the promises of the gospel do not apply; they are unreal.”

However, the real threat is the lie of Satan, who often “hides his snares behind the appearance of sophistication, the allure of being ‘modern,’ ‘like everyone else,’” Pope Francis explained.

“(Satan) distracts us with the promise of ephemeral pleasures, superficial pastimes. And so we squander our God-give gifts by tinkering with gadgets. We squander our money and drinking. We turn in on ourselves. We forget to remain focused on the things that really matter. We forget to remain, at heart, children of God.”

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But Cuomo’s death did not discourage criticism of his fate-ful decision to justify support for abortion rights. Cuomo’s 1984 Notre Dame speech was “the single most influential statement about abortion by any Catholic figure since St. Pius X,” wrote R.R. Reno, editor of First Things magazine, told the Register.

“With a reputation as a serious Catholic, Cuomo’s jus-tification for abortion rights effectively ended the debate about abortion in the Democratic Party. His speech implied that no thinking Catholic concerned about the common good would object to unrestricted legal access to abortion.” Reno also suggested that Cuomo’s argument “empowered abortion-rights advocates to silence what remained of Catholic dissent in the Democratic Party. [Pennsylvania’s late Catholic pro-life Gov.] Bob Casey could be prohibited from speaking to the 1992 Democratic convention in large part because Cuomo had provided the ‘official’ Catholic Democratic pro-abortion position.”

Cuomo defended his tolerance for legal abortion, in part, by arguing that Roe v. Wade secured a new consensus and, consequently, he felt could not impose his religious beliefs on nonbelievers in clear violation of the constitutional principles he had sworn to uphold, never mind that abor-tion was never a religious issue but rather one of basic human rights.

That new reformation was articulated by a compel-ling public speaker who sought to lead his party on matters of economic justice. “He was a tenacious debater and a spellbinding speaker at a time when political oratory seemed to be shrinking to the size of the television set,” noted Cuomo’s obituary in The New York Times, which cited Cuomo’s riposte to President Reagan’s description of America as ‘a shining city on a hill.’”

“Mr. President,” said Cuomo during his keynote address at the 1984 Democratic Party Convention, “you ought to know that this nation is more a ‘tale of two cities’ than it is just a ‘shining city on a hill.’”

Catholic Criticism
But Cuomo’s detractors argued the governor had adopted a selective, morally inconsistent approach to hot-button social issues. He opposed capital punishment, despite strong support for the practice among his constituents in New York State. Yet he still insisted that respect for public consensus had led him to accommodate legal abortion.


“This is why we call them inalienable rights. He relied on the 15-year-old rhetoric of Planned Parenthood [that] we’re trying to impose our morality on others. The Supreme Court didn’t establish a consensus, it destroyed one.”

In 1984, then-Archbishop John O’Connor of New York challenged Cuomo’s stance. “You have to uphold the law, the Constitution says,” said O’Connor. “It does not say that you must agree with the law or that you cannot work to change the law.”


Maria Maffuci, the editor of The Human Life Review, expressed some unease that the journal’s print issue with Marlin’s article was released at the time of Cuomo’s death, although the article was posted online in Sep-tember. “I don’t wish him ill at all,” Maffucci told the Register.

“But his legacy in this area has been a dangerous one” for

Possible Site of Jesus’ Trial Uncovered in the Holy Land
Jerusalem (CNA/EWTN News) — Archeologists believe they may have discovered the place where Jesus’ trial before Pontius Pilate took place in Jerusalem.

In an effort to expand The Tower of David Museum, archaeologists began excavating an adjacent, abandoned prison building, the Washington Post reports. As they stripped away layers of the prison floor, they realized they were likely uncovering a missing link in the puzzle of the Holy Land’s history.

Although the discovery began over a decade ago, the site is now being opened to the public for the millions of religious pilgrims that flock to the area every year.

For those Christians who care about accuracy in regards to historical facts, this is very forceful,” Yisca Harani, an expert on Christianity and pilgrimage to the Holy Land, told the Washington Post. “For others, however, those who come for the general mental exercise of being in Jerusalem, they don’t care as long as [their journey] ends in Golgotha, the site of the Crucifixion.”

Most Christian pilgrims to the Holy Land walk the path of the Stations of the Cross, known as the Via Dolorosa (Latin for “Way of Sorrows”), which currently does not include the Tower of David Museum or the trial site.

Although it may not be added to the path right away, museum workers hope it becomes a standard stop for visiting Christians.

Scholars and theologians cannot say with certainty whether this site is where the trial took place, but it seems to check out in many ways. According to the Gospels, Jesus was tried before Pilate in the praetorium, a Latin term for a general’s tent within a Roman encampment. Some believe this praetorium would rather be on the site of the former Roman military barracks.

But others, such as archeology professor Shimon Gibson with the University of North Carolina at Charlotte, are almost certain the trial would have occurred somewhere within Herod’s palace compound located in the western part of the city, which is where the Tower of David museum and the abandoned prison are located.

The new site also fits a detail in the Gospel of John which describe the trial as taking place on The Pavement, or in Hebrew, Gal‘bat’ha (John 19:13), as well as a description in Mark 15:16, which describe Jesus as being led away inside the palace.

There is, of course, no inscription stating it happened here, but everything — archeological, historical and gospel accounts—all falls into place and makes sense,” Gibson told the Washington Post.

Fr. David Pileggi, rector of Christ Church, an Anglican congregation near the museum, told the publication the discovery fits “what everyone expected all along, that the trial took place near the Tower of David.”
Nonsense on 60 Minutes

by George Weigel

60 Minutes prides itself on challenging conventional wisdom, discomfiting the comfortable, kicking shibboleths in the shins, and opening new arguments. No such challenge, alas, was evident in the program’s recent segment on Pope Francis, which aired last December 28.

One of the principal interviewees in that piece was Robert Mickens, formerly of the London-based Tablet and currently of the National Catholic Reporter. Here’s a part of what Mickens had to say about the “Francis Effect.”

“What he has done is he’s opened up discussion in the Church. There had been no discussion on issues like birth control, about premarital sex, about divorce and remarried Catholics. None whatsoever. There’s been no discussion for the last probably 35 years on that …”

Now if there’s anything self-evident about Mickens’ claim, it’s that it’s self-evidently not true.

For far longer than 35 years, there has been intense “discussion” in the Catholic Church on the issues Mickens cited. Moreover, intense dissent from Catholic teaching on these questions has been central to that discussion: dissent in virtually every theology department in every prestigious Catholic university in North America and western Europe; in professional theological societies and Catholic publications in certain episcopacies.

What Robert Mickens and similarly-situated Catholics are really complaining about when they say there’s been “no discussion” on these issues is that they’ve lost the argument. The Church’s teaching authority has declined to repeal Catholic settled moral understandings about the morally appropriate means of family planning, the nature of human love, and the indissolubility of marriage by taking the counsel of those who have different (and defective) ideas on those matters.

Constant harping on all this by the self-identified “progressive” wing of the Catholic Church strikes me as a tacit confession of intellectual impotence.

Pope Francis is trying to put serious questions on the Church’s agenda. Those questions are at the center of this pontificate, questions such as:

• How does the Church more effectively proclaim the “yes” that underwrites the “no” Catholicism must say on occasion?
• How does the Church teach the truth about marriage and the family in a culture which imagines that everything in the human condition can be changed by human willfulness?
• How does the Church offer those wounded by the sexual revolution the medicine of the divine mercy, so that those healed by mercy can come to know the truth about love?

Yet those questions often go unexplored when Catholic “progressives” scratch those 1960s itches again and again and again. How does such scratching advance the missionary and pastoral agenda the Pope laid out in Evangelii Gaudium?

60 Minutes would have had a much livelier program if Pelley had questioned Mickens’ claim that there’s been “no discussion” of contraception, divorce, and premarital sex in the Catholic Church for 35 years. He could easily have done so by showing Mr. Mickens the fare regularly on tap in the newspaper for which Mickens writes. But that didn’t happen. The shibboleths stood, and a potentially fascinating discussion of how Catholic progressives are responding to Pope Francis’ most urgent challenges to the Church was stillborn.

And viewers were left, at the end of the day, with a cartoon Pope and a cartoon Church: not exactly the kind of groundbuilding journalism of which 60 Minutes boasts.

Cardinal George Dropped From Cancer Drug Trial, Asks for Prayers

Chicago (CNA/EWTN News) — The recently retired archbishop of Chicago Francis Cardinal George has requested continued prayers following his being dropped from a cancer drug’s clinical trial after it was determined to be ineffective for him.

“He is at peace, but he counts on everyone’s prayers that he might be of service to the Lord and His Church in the time left to him, ” the Archdiocese of Chicago said in a December 31 statement.

“Cardinal George would like to thank all those who have been praying for him, and asks them to continue to do so. You and those you love are remembered in his prayers as well.”

The 77-year-old cardinal and archbishop emeritus of Chicago had been taking part in a clinical trial conducted by University of Chicago Medicine, while also being cared for by Loyola University Hospital. The drug, from the pharmaceutical company Genentech, is designed to help the body’s immune system recognize and attack cancerous cells, the Chicago Sun-Times reports. Tests indicated the drug had not been effective for the cardinal.

The archdiocese said physicians and others overseeing the treatment of the cardinal have assured him the information gathered in the trial will benefit others. His Eminence will meet with doctors to discuss his cancer’s side effects. At present it has not spread to any vital organs.

The cardinal was first diagnosed with bladder cancer in 2006. He then underwent a five-hour operation at age 69 to remove his bladder, prostate gland, and sections of his ureters, the tubes connecting the kidneys to the bladder.

In August 2012, doctors discovered cancerous cells had returned to his kidney and to a nodule in his liver. Last year, the cardinal said the cancer “will most probably eventually be the cause of my death.”

Cardinal George headed the archdiocese from 1997 to 2014, when Archbishop Blase Cupich succeeded him. His Eminence was the first Chicago native to become the city’s archbishop.
Wax On, Wax OFF!

by Mara Russo

This past holiday season brought more to our family than just tidings of comfort and joy. In fact, it brought lots of other things, namely fevers, aches, chills, doctor visits, and enough antibiotics to cure an elephant of any disease in the world.

Our pharmacist began to wear a HazMat suit when he handed us our prescriptions.

On the bright side, we got a lovely fruit basket and note informing us our health misfortunes helped provide our doctors' staffs rather generous employee bonuses (or was that Russo-induced hardship pay?).

That said, I am pleased to report that now, nearly two months after our ordeal began, everyone is healthy.

On the other hand, physical recovery was only half the battle.

As the thick fog of germ-induced lethargy lifted, we beheld the wasteland that was once our home before us. It looked like an off-campus fraternity house at the University of Waste Management.

As I looked in the mirror while dressing for a recent job interview, I realized the house wasn’t the only thing that had suffered neglect. In fact, if my eyebrows were any closer together, I would have had a strong resemblance to a certain character on Sesame Street.

Gentle readers, it was time to pull out the big guns.

It was time to wax.

Once the wax melted into a spreadable, golden goo, I took what appeared to be a miniature spackling knife and began attempting to turn myself—or at least my eyebrows—into Audrey Hepburn. Apparently, though, if the wax is too runny, it can be, well, problematic. I swept at the underside of my Erneste Borgnine-esque brow and stood in frozen terror as the wax dripped in slow motion.


My interview was in less than an hour! I panicked, and without thinking, ripped off the now hardened wax… as well as over half my eyebrow. I also still had a big hardened glob of this stuff defiantly clinging to a third of my lower lashes. Before I tackled that, I needed to “even up” the other brow. Although the second brow was less stripped than the first, I was grateful to own an eyebrow pencil, as now I was the proud owner of a set of very scary, almost-not-there eyebrows.

To paraphrase the late stand-up comedian John Pinette, when you see someone with no eyebrows, you don’t know what’s wrong, you just know something ain’t right.

I am pleased to report I removed the glob of wax from my lashes with minimal eyelash loss (and maximum tear production).

So why am I relating such a humbling grooming experience?

My little mishap came not from defective wax but from the speed at which I had attempted to handle what I now call “Brow-gate.”

I panicked. Instead of slowing down and patiently doing something a little less drastic, I came charging like a bull.

The same thing happens whenever I find I have gotten a little spiritually lazy, say when my attentiveness at Mass regularly wanes or my prayer life shrinks.

With my reactive temperament, I panic. Then I try to turn things around, instead of calling out to the Father to help me find my way back.

I’m not sure what Our Lord would’ve said about my eyebrows. Now that I think about it, though, they probably wouldn’t matter to Him one bit.❖

Mara Russo is an only slightly insane wife, mother of six, and youth retreat leader.

Pope: “To Be a Mother Is a Great Treasure”

Vatican City (National Catholic Register)—During his January 7 General Audience, Pope Francis lamented how mothers “are often underappreciated, saying they are key players in fighting against an individualistic, self-centered society.

“To be a mother is a great treasure. Mothers, in their unconditional and sacrificial love for their children, are the antidote to individualism; they are the greatest enemies of difficulty to encounter the tenderness, dedication, and moral strength of our mothers.

“To be a mother is a gift, the Pope said, and he explained that through their sacrifices, mothers assist in helping society to overcome its self-centered tendencies, as well as its lack of openness, generosity, and concern for others. “In this sense, motherhood is more than childbearing; it is a life choice entailing sacrifice, respect for life, and commitment to passing on those human and religious values that are essential for a healthy society,” he said. 

Pope Francis then drew attention to the phrase “martyrdom of mothers” coined by the Servant of God Archbishop Rafaela Ybarra y Arámbarri and child; Feast: Feb 23

This maternal martyrdom, the Pontiff noted, consists of a mother’s ability to offer herself in silence, prayer, and total surrender to her motherly duties “without any fanfare.”

A mother’s sensitivity “to all that threatens human life and welfare is a source of enrichment for society and the Church,” he said, observing how it is common in moments of difficulty to encounter the tenderness, dedication, and moral strength of our mothers.

“It is they, mothers, who often give the first roots of the Faith, the ones that permeate deepest. Without them, not only would the faithful be lost, but also a good part of the deepest fire of our faith,” he explained. He concluded by asking those present to join him in thanking all mothers “for what they are and for all that they give to the Church and to our world.”❖

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The Presentation; Feast: February 2

Ven. Rafaela Ybarra y Arimbarri and child; Feast: Feb 23
Gift Shops for Catholics in the Diocese

by Samuel T. Crump, Sr.

It is difficult to believe, but there are only three gift and book stores carrying Catholic items in our diocese. The Santa Rosa area has two of them. The other is in Napa. (For our friends up north, perhaps there is an opportunity right in front of you.)

One Santa Rosa store is Simply Sacred Books & Gifts located at 1791 Marlow Road. Michelle and Chad Davis founded their business in 2007. She had worked as a labor and delivery nurse, and he still serves as an ER nurse at Santa Rosa Memorial Hospital. They had regularly shopped at Interfaith Books & Gifts, a store many area residents still remember. When it closed Mrs. Davis’ mom recommended they open a store.

“I prayed on all of it because I didn’t have business experience,” said Mrs. Davis, “but I knew God had the answers.”

After going on retreat she knew what to do. Subsequently her parents moved here from Monterey so they could help out.

Now celebrating their eighth year in business, they recently doubled their space to 1,800 square feet. This expansion has allowed them to carry more Spanish language items and supplies for churches such as candles, altar bread, and palms for Palm Sunday. Another service they offer of the products, which can make gifts more personal. Their website simplysacredbooksandgifts.net is mostly informational but it does prompt a lot of phone orders.

“God has humbled me,” said Mrs. Davis. “It’s amazing we are still here after seven years. I see a lot more people remember. When it closed Mrs. Davis’ mom recommended they open a store.

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Now celebrating their eighth year in business, they recently doubled their space to 1,800 square feet. This expansion has allowed them to carry more Spanish language items and supplies for churches such as candles, altar bread, and palms for Palm Sunday. Another service they provide is customized engraving, imprinting, and embroidery of the products, which can make gifts more personal. Their website simplysacredbooksandgifts.net is mostly informational but it does prompt a lot of phone orders.

“God has humbled me,” said Mrs. Davis. “It’s amazing we are still here after seven years. I see a lot more people walking into the store. I see more hopefulness.”

Cathedral Books & Gifts also has its genesis in Interfaith’s demise. Open for business for 20 years and closed in 2007, the new bookstore opened in 2008, and for a very small community. “That didn’t last long, however, as Jan Blanchard of St. Eugene Cathedral contacted them in 2008 about a new opportunity. Ms. Blanchard asked the Kieps if they would help open Cathedral Books & Gifts. Mrs. Kiep says she agreed to do it “as an apostolate” for the benefit of the cathedral community.”

The new bookstore opened in 2008, and for a very small space it carries an excellent variety of items. The biggest sellers are Catholic books, Bibles, and missals. They also sell music CDs, DVDs, statues, medals, and religious jewelry. Ms. Kiep observes their website, steugenes.com/giftshop.php, is really just for information, not sales. However parishioners’ preference for Internet sites such as Amazon over brick-and-mortar stores concerns her. While she understands the appeal, she hopes they will remember that shopping at her store helps the cathedral.

Ms. Kiep says she and employee Mary Hart run the shop, assisted by several volunteers.

The customers make it all worthwhile, says Mrs. Kiep. “A lot of people share their stories of faith with me, and that is a big part of our [apostolate] here,” she said.

Finally, the folks in Napa have a great selection in Saint Joseph Store, located at 1389 California Way. Joseph Sciambra opened the shop in 2004, and it is augmented by an excellent website, saintjosephstore.com.

Mr. Sciambra says the business is very dependent on sales around Catholic holidays such as Christmas and Easter and also sacraments such as First Holy Communion and baptism. Interestingly, he estimates 40 percent of sales come from customers seeking Spanish language items. He said sacramental items such as rosaries, scapulars, and saints medals sell more than books and other items.

About half his customers are repeat business, and he doesn’t advertise anymore because it did not seem to be effective. “Word of mouth is how people find us,” said Mr. Sciambra. His hopes for the future are to expand into a bigger space. “God willing,” he said.

It seems Catholics in the southern part of the diocese are well served by these three stores. The owners would be most appreciative if all parishioners stopped by and purchased some items to strengthen their own faith or as a gift for a loved one.

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California Bishops Thank Catholic Groups Serving Undocumented Minors

SACRAMENTO—California Catholic Conference Executive Director Edward “Ned” Dolejsi issued the following statement in response to the announcement from the California Department of Social Services that Catholic social service organizations are among those selected to receive state funding to provide legal assistance to unaccompanied undocumented minors:

“Congratulations and heartfelt thanks are due Catholic Charities of California, Inc., and the University of San Francisco Immigration Law Clinical Program for being among the few selected to provide legal assistance to unaccompanied undocumented minors,” said Dolejsi. “It is very generous of the State of California to use this funding to help these desperate children facing complicated legal challenges.”

“Their assistance will be virtual for the State of California to use this funding to help these desperate children facing complicated legal challenges.”

“Catholic groups have been there to help these children long before the situation became a news story and we are still there. Catholic organizations have always provided the humanitarian response and will continue to do so, long after the news media has moved on,” explained Dolejsi. “As the critical need for comprehensive immigration reform languishes, providing the legal assistance these children are entitled to under current Federal law is fair and just. They are not pawns to be used in a debate but children in need of our help.”

Catholic Charities of California will provide legal assistance through its agencies and their respective immigration programs located at: Catholic Charities of the East Bay, Catholic Charities CYO (San Francisco), Catholic Charities Diocese of Monterey, and Catholic Charities of Los Angeles. To view the Department of Social Services’ award announcement, including a list of all recipients, visit: http://www.cdss.ca.gov/refugee-program/PG3685.htm.

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St. Paul Miki and Companions; Feast: February 6
Colombo, Sri Lanka (CNA/EWTN News)—On January 14, Pope Francis canonized Joseph Vaz, “the apostle of Sri Lanka,” praising the seventeenth century priest’s love for the Sri Lankan people, his “missionary zeal,” and his example for all Christians.

Hundreds of thousands of people attended the canonization Mass, which featured a hymn composed by Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church in Calistoga’s pastor Fr. Angelito Peries. Father is a native of Sri Lanka.

Vaz (1651-1711) was an Indian-born priest of the Oratory of St. Philip Neri. He founded the Oratory of the Holy Cross of Miracles in the Indian region of Goa, then journeyed to Sri Lanka at a time when Catholics were suffering persecution under the country’s Calvinist Dutch rulers.

Due to the threat of persecution, the priest dressed as a beggar and would visit secret meetings of Catholics, often at night, to bring them the Eucharist and other sacraments.

“He’s efforts provided spiritual and moral strength to the beleaguered Catholic population,” Pope Francis said, also praising the saint’s efforts to serve the ill during a smallpox epidemic.

In his homily, the Pope said, “St. Joseph knew how to offer the truth and the beauty of the gospel in a multi-religious context with respect, dedication, perseverance, and humility. This is also the way for the followers of Jesus today.

“He teaches us how to go out to the peripheries, to make Jesus Christ everywhere known and loved, “ he said.

Commenting on the canonization, Fr. Peries said, “It’s a great thing. He becomes the local saint for the entire country. I’m thankful to God we have a saint who worked there. He did his work very quietly and sometimes in hiding because he could be killed. But slowly, slowly he transplanted the Faith there. We should never water down the central message of the Gospel, the passion, death, and resurrection of Christ.”

The secular press’ reaction was perhaps predictable.

For instance, the Associated Press wrote, “When Pope Francis canonizes Sri Lanka’s first saint ... he’ll again prove he has little tolerance for pointless rules as he skirts the Vatican’s normal saint-making regulations.

“While the Church traditionally requires two miracles for sainthood, the Vatican never confirmed a second attributed to the intercession of Vaz, who is credited with reviving Catholicism during anti-Catholic persecution by Dutch colonizers. Rather, Francis simply signed off on a decision taken by the Vatican’s saint-making office that Vaz warranted canonization.”

As renowned religion reporter Terry Mattingly noted, however, the Church “has never required evidence of miracles when ... the person died as a martyr, either by execution or under the duress of a lifetime of persecution and suffering.

In other words, the Pope [followed] one of several traditions that lead to canonization ... What is rebellious about that? What rules did he thrust aside in his supposed march to modernity?”

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St. Joseph Vaz, the Apostle of Sri Lanka.

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Eucharistic Miracles
LIVING HEART TISSUE REVEALED IN CONSECRATED HOST

**English:**
Saturday, March 7th
11:00 a.m.

**Spanish:**
Saturday, March 7th
2:00 p.m.*

*FOLLOWING THE NOON MASS IN SPANISH

**St. John The Baptist Catholic Church**
960 Caymus Street, Napa, CA 94559

Ricardo Castañon Gomez, Ph.D. is a former atheist who sought to use science to refute mystical phenomena. Following years of his own research, he became a convert to the Catholic faith. Based in Bolivia, he now travels worldwide to lecture about his work. At this exclusive event, he will address the preponderance of scientific evidence in support of Christ’s real presence in the Holy Eucharist.

Oh, how I love Your law! It is my meditation all the day.
Your commandment makes me wiser than my enemies, for it is ever with me. I have more understanding than all my teachers, for Your testimonies are my meditation. I understand more than the aged, for I keep Your precepts. I hold back my feet from every evil way in order to keep Your word. I do not turn aside from Your ordinances, for You have taught me. How sweet are Your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth! Through Your precepts I get understanding; therefore I hate every false way.

Ps 119[118]:97-104

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Free Will Offering of $10/Person or $20/Family
Free Parking: Pearl St. Garage – 1100 Pearl St., Napa & in Church Parking Lot
Presented by St. Apollinaris Catholic Church – Evangelization Committee
More information at www.stapollinaris.org/miracles.html
Noted Speaker Comes to Napa

by Eileen Mize, special to NCC

Napa—On October 28, Justin-Siena High School hosted a special program in conjunction with the school’s “One School, One Book” program.

The presentation was on Justin-Siena’s summer reading selection, Strength in What Remains by Tracy Kidder. The nonfiction account of Village Health Works’ founding, it chronicles the journey of Deogratias “Deo” Niyizonkiza. As a young medical student, Niyizonkiza fled war-torn Burundi, migrated to the United States, and then returned home to found the only modern health center in the region.

He was mentored by Dr. Paul Farmer, the subject of Kidder’s earlier book, Mountains Beyond Mountains. Strength in What Remains is compelling for its exploration of faith issues, global perspectives, and strong social justice themes.

Last year was Justin-Siena’s third year of the “One School, One Book” program.

Braves Dominates NCS

Led by Coach Richard Cotruvo, the Justin-Siena High School Braves finished their football season 11-3, including a 6-1 league record, to win the North Coast Section title.

Justin-Siena Theatre Produces Children’s Classic

Napa—Justin-Siena High School featured its first production of children’s theatre when it recently presented Charlotte’s Web.

The Children’s Literature Association named this work “the best American children’s book of the past 200 years,” and Joseph Robinette, working with the advice of its author EB White, has created a play that captures this work in what several audience members said was both a thrilling and utterly practical theatrical presentation.

This beautiful stage version of this American classic reminded everyone why Wilbur is “some pig!”

Holy Family Catholic Church

Dedicated to the advancement of our religion through education, community outreach, and other beneficial activities to the community.

Mass Times:

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<th>Day</th>
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<tr>
<td>Saturday</td>
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We need your time, talents and treasure to build God’s newest church in the valley!

Pastor/Administrator: Fr. Frederick K.A. Kutubebi

101 Antonina Ave, American Canyon, CA 94503
707-645-9331 707-731-1637 (FAX)
www.holyfamilycatholicchurch-amcan.org
What I Gave Up for Lent

According to Catholic.org, here is what some of our fellow faithful gave up for Lent last year. Maybe it will inspire you!

For 40 days, I gave myself over to listening and learning and asking questions and making suggestions. I learned so much! It made me a better employee and a much more tolerant person.

I gave up yeast rolls and cheese Danish.

I followed fasting and abstinence on Good Friday better than ever before.

Everyone gave up something they really liked to do or enjoy this Lent.

• My 8-year-old daughter gave up ketchup, which was really hard because she loves it with almost every meal.
• My 10-year-old daughter gave up being the cause of any fight with her younger sister and made an effort to lend an extra hand to everyone in the family and with her friends, and she was very successful with that.
• I myself enjoy splitting with my spouse a glass of beer or wine with dinner. However no alcohol for Lent, and we kept it up just fine.

I gave up everything I enjoy eating on regular basis. For example, candy, chips, soda, cookies, chocolate, snacks of other kinds (e.g., nuts and crackers). I'm surprised that I actually made it. You feel strong once you know you can stay away from temptation.

I deactivated my Facebook account.

This Lent season I am giving up meat from Ash Wednesday until Easter just as always, every Lenten season. It is just how I do it. I find it cleans my soul and leads me to repentance.

I gave up all music except Christian music.

I'm Catholic, but I have never given up anything for Lent until this year. I decided to give up music. The first week in, I didn't think I'd make it. But I have, and it's given me a chance to get closer to God.

I have given up myself. I have studied the sins and looked at myself so I can truly recognize my sins. This in turn has shown me how much of a sacrifice Jesus made for us. This Lenten season has opened my eyes, and I I am not Catholic (yet). But for the past two years I have given up something for Lent. Last year I gave up soda. I haven't had one since. This year I have given up meat. I only stumbled three times, but I am still going. Lent has helped me give up something that I did not realize I didn't need. Next year it will be dairy products.

Sixteen Steps for a Good Confession for Lent

by Father Steve Schulz

1. Prayerfully prepare. It's considerate to those waiting in line behind you, especially if they need to confess in order to receive.
2. Prepare with an examination of conscience. Many are available. There are ones based on the Ten Commandments: the virtues; your particular vocation; for adults; for children; etc. Two general questions should lead to specifics: In what ways did I sin? In what way(s) did I fail to do the good I should have?
3. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you. Think about what you've made friends with that keeps you from a true friendship with God. Greed? Pride? Selfishness? Being lukewarm? Lust? Fear? Too much bacon? (Is that even possible?) Seriously, think about your sins with respect to who or what you have favored more than God.
4. Be ready to repent. "I'm done with this, that, and the other thing. I want to change, and I trust in the Lord to help me!" Let that be your disposition going in. Your faith and repentance open your heart to God's healing power!
5. Go to confession! Do it. God promises mercy. He doesn't promise tomorrow.
6. Start by saying, "Bless me, Father, for I have sinned, it has been X days/weeks/months/years/decades since my last confession, and these are my sins..."
7. State your sins, in kind and in number if it is a serious sin. If it's been a while since your last confession and you don't remember the exact number, you can give some approximation, such as, "often, "more than I can remember," or "fortnightly." Venial sins should be confessed by habit, but with serious (i.e., mortal) sin, don't hold even a single one back! Put it all before the Lord. Trust Him. No sin is un forgivable as long as we repent.
8. It is not necessary to tell your life story since your last confession, give yourself advice, or expect hours of therapy. Confession isn't meant to change your life's circumstances. It is meant to give you a new heart so you can "put on" the mind of Christ.
9. You don't have to say, "My biggest sin is..." because it is probably not. Your biggest sin is probably the same as mine: the same as most people: We don't trust God enough.
10. Nor should you say, "I need to be better about X" because your dear priest can't tell if that is a sin of omission (something you failed to do) or commission (something you did). Further it doesn't sound like you're repenting of anything.
11. Or "and I know that's wrong" because we know all sin is wrong.
12. Don't tell the priest other peoples' sins unless you want to do other peoples' penances. "For your penance pray three Our Fathers. For your wife's penance make a pilgrimage to Ephesus on your knees, and when you return, eat that fruitcake she made for Christmas."
13. One last very important "don't." Don't give in to fear! There is nothing any of us can do that will make God love us any less! In confession there is no judgment, just mercy. (I probably should have led with that.)
14. When you're finished, land the plane. "For these and all my sins I am truly sorry," or suchlike. If you just stop talking, the priest thinks you're still thinking or you died.
15. Glorify the Lord's mercy. If you want to be forgiven, healed, and freed, the Lord will do all that and much besides. Trust in His mercy! Know who you are: God's own child!
16. Last thing: If the priest says, "The Lord has freed you from your sins, go in peace," don't say, "You, too." Instead say something such as, "God bless you, Father." "Thank you, Father, I really appreciate it, and may God (continue to) bless you in your vocation;" "Know that I will pray for you, too, Father."
Murdered priest honored
On December 31 at St. Bernard Church in Eureka, Bishop Robert F. Vasa, pastor Fr. Thomas Diaz, and hundreds of parishioners participated in a one-year anniversary Mass in honor of Fr. Eric Freed, whom an assaulter murdered last year early on New Year’s Day.

“I was most edified by the desire of the people of Eureka,” said Bishop Vasa, to “honor Fr. Freed’s memory by host- ing a New Year’s Eve prayer vigil, a social gathering, a midnight Rosary, and a New Year’s Day Mass. Everything was beautifully and respectfully arranged to give those who still feel the loss of Fr. Eric an opportunity to remember, in remembering to rejoice, and in rejoicing to thank God for the great gift of priesthood and especially the priesthood of Fr. Freed.”

Fr. Freed’s alleged murderer, Gary Lee Bullock, has seen requests for continuance of his case—which was to have start- ed in August 2014—granted three times. It is now due to start March 23. At issue is the defense’s attempt to find an expert witness.

Bullock has pled not guilty to all counts against him.

St. Vincent Debate Team dominates
Last month, the St. Vincent de Paul High School debate team earned the most successful turn- out result in school history at the Gonzaga Invitational Tourna- ment. Adam Martin, Sky Doble, Kylie Clark, and Julia Hunter all earned bids to the Tournament of Champions (TOC) by closing out the final round of the Gonzaga tournament. This means that the school’s male and female teams tied for first place out of 100-plus debaters from over eight states. Clark and Hunter set a St. Vincent’s record by being the first all- female team to earn a bid to the TOC.

Doble came in third overall, with Martin placing first, which earned him a full scholarship to Gonzaga’s summer program. Kylie Clark also was second place at the Gonzaga Invitational Tournament of Champions. Clark and Doble earned a first round bid to the TOC, with Martin and Doble earning a first round bid to the TOC. This means that the Gonzaga debate team, with Martin and Doble earning a first round bid to the TOC, with Martin and Doble earning a first round bid to the TOC.

Busy times for local ICF chapters
Diocesan chapters of the Italian Catholic Federation have been very busy over the last few months.

Number 12 in Napa recently appointed Br. Paul McCarty as its new chaplain. Number 18 in Santa Rosa named a recent graduate of Santa Clara University as its new chaplain. Number 13, located in Sonoma county, named a new chaplain.

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St. Anthony, meet St. Vincent
Every day St. Anthony’s Kitchen in San Francisco provides 2,500-3,000 meals to the indigent in its dining hall. It also supports a recovery center, medical clinic, and a clothing store. Furthermore, St. Anthony’s provides a comprehensive justice education program for schools and professionals.

Such experiences bring awareness about the challenges that exist for an entire community in San Francisco. For eight consecutive years, St. Vincent de Paul High School theology teacher Teri Scott has brought the juniors in her Social Justice class to St. Anthony’s. She feels this is very important for them.

Throughout this opportunity, she says, “The kids are immersed in their truly unique way of living with individu- als facing various forms of adversity in their lives.”

SVHS students recently spent their day serving guests in the dining hall, visiting and playing games with the elderly, and providing assistance in the clothing store.

Teri Scott says social workers come away from the day with greater awareness about the many ways they can contribute to various communities in need.

Cardinal Newman gives
Cardinal Newman High School Community Service Coordinator Anne Del Monte reports that “Advent was a bustling and busy time” on the Santa Rosa campus.

Through the school’s longstanding annual “Adopt a Family Program,” in conjunction with its Community Based Service Learning (CBSL) course, students help pro- vide gifts for residents of the Family Support Center run by Catholic Charities.

For instance one small eight-year-old boy and Center resident wants to play in his school’s orchestra but could not afford the violin that matched his small size.

Many families at the center cannot afford cars and so rely on bicycles to get to work and other appointments, yet they often cannot afford these.

Not only did the CBSLs find a way donate the needed violin, but one generous CNHS family donated 18 bikes to the Center. Before they were gifted, however, a CNHS teacher who is an avid cyclist effected repairs and made some other necessary changes to the bikes to look as new as possible. Teachers, staff, and the Sonoma County Sheriff’s Department also bought helmets for each bike.

In all, Del Monte says, “Our generous community made an abundant Christmas for 40 families living in the Family Support Center specific to their Christmas list requests.”

Dorothy Day

St. Francis Solano School have participated in a writing contest sponsored by the Veterans of Foreign Wars. This year students from a half-dozen counties submitted over 350 entries. Each wrote on this year’s theme, “Why I Appreciate America’s Veterans.” Eighth graders Liza Moore and Alex Kirley won first place awards, while Luigi Albano-DiDio reached the podium with his third place prize. They and their families were honored at an awards banquet in late January.

Then on Friday, January 16, several fourth, fifth, and sixth grade students participated in a spelling bee. Repre- senting fourth grade were Sam Cutting and Luke Orlando, and in fifth grade Gabriel Centurion and Riko Gillman, and sixth grade spellers were Emma Routhier and Sophia Strand. All six competed for forty minutes. Each did very well, with Emma Routhier and Luke Orlando earning the right to representing school at the South Sonoma County Spelling Bee on February 4.

National New coordinator of Dorothy Day’s cause is social justice veteran

New York (Catholic New York)—The cause for the canon- ization of the Servant of God Dorothy Day has recently gained momentum as the Archdiocese of New York hired a coordinator to pull together her vast trove of writings and line up witnesses to be interviewed for the diocesan phase of the campaign.

Jeff Korgen has been involved in the Church social justice ministry for a long time at Catholic Charities and in other capacities.

“He is an organizer, and right now most of what’s needed for the diocesan phase is organizing all of the materials and all of the wit- nesses,” explained George Horton, director of Catho- lic Charities’ Department of Social and Community Relations.

In 2000, the late John Cardinal O’Connor formally requested the Holy See’s Congregation for the Causes of Saints to consider Dorothy Day for canonization. Upon the congregation’s approval, she was officially declared a “Servant of God.” At the time Cardinal O’Connor acknowled- ged that some might object to him taking up the cause for Ms. Day, a journalist, social activist and devout Catholic convert who worked with fellow activist Peter Maurin to establish the Catholic Worker Movement.

“Her letters have long been my contention that Dorothy Day is a saint—not a gingerbread saint nor a holy card saint—but a modern day devoted daughter of the Church,” wrote Cardinal O’Connor in making his case in March 2000, “a daughter who shunned personal aggrandizement and wished that her work and the work of those who labored at her side on behalf of the poor, might be the hallmark of her life rather than her own self.”

Catholic celebrities boycott Catholic group because group is Catholic

Catholic celebrities have been free to proclaim their religious beliefs, a Catholic group has said after prominent Catholics spurned its summit because of the group’s stance on homosexuality.

“At its core, this issue is about the freedom of Legatus mem- bers—in fact all Catholics, and by extension people of any reli- gion—to have the freedom to exercise their religious beliefs, which includes the ability to gather together and discuss their faith,” the Catholic group Legatus said in a statement.

In mid-January, the speakers—Fox News Channel anchor Bret Baier, actor Gary Sinise, and Molton Coors Brewing Chairman Pete Coors—withdraw their slots at the upcoming Legatus 2015 Summit. They expressed concerns over the group’s stance on homosexuality, which is same as the Catholic Church’s teaching.

Legatus is a Catholic group of business leaders that seeks to “integrate the three key areas of a Catholic business leader’s life—faith, family, and business.”

“We have great respect for Bret Baier, Peter Coors, and
Gary Sinise and regret our members will not have the opportunity to hear about all the good work they are doing," Legatus said.

Church teaching on homosexuality is about unconditional love and dialogue, contrary to accusations leveled by critics, the group added.

"Legatus embraces all that the Catholic Church teaches—nothing more, nothing less. Of course, at the core of all that the Church teaches is Christ's unconditional love for every man and woman."

"Church teachings on same-sex attractions are not intended to marginalize the individuals who experience them. On the contrary, the Church wants to reach out to these individuals—as well as all who will enter into dialogue about its teachings—and help them to understand why the Church teaches what it does."

Baier is the anchor of FNC's Special Report, Pete Coors is chair of Molson Coors, and Gary Sinise is an actor who has starred in Apollo 13, Forrest Gump, and The Green Mile.

In a statement, Sinise explained he wanted to avoid controversy in his mission of serving the troops.

"For me, faith has been a catalyst for my mission to honor the men and women who serve in our nation's military," Sinise stated. "I don't want my mission—which is designed to be unifying—to be disrupted by these or any controversies," he added, citing "controversy surrounding some of the [summit] participants."

Baier withdrew because "of the controversy surrounding some editorial stances in the organization's magazine," according to an FNC spokesperson.

Legatus explained that its support of Church teaching should not be controversial.

"LGBT groups should not feel threatened by our organization, whose mission is to study, live, and spread our faith according to the teachings of the Catholic Church," the group said.

Last year it was Catholic comedian Bob Newhart who backed out of speaking to Legatus' conference because the group supports Church teaching.

International

World's oldest Catholic bishop dies
Paris (National Catholic Register)—Retired French Bishop Géry Leuliet, the world's oldest Catholic bishop, passed away New Year's Day at 104 years.

Bishop Leuliet, who retired from the French Diocese of Amiens, died at the John XXIIII Home in northern France, where he had lived for several years. He had been a priest for nearly 81 years.

Born on January 12, 1910, in the city of Richebourg Étoupe, he studied at St. Berlin School and at the seminary of the Diocese of Arras. He received holy orders on July 8, 1933, at age 23.

Fr. Leuliet was named bishop of Amiens by Pope St. John XXIIII and was consecrated a bishop on May 9, 1963.

He took part in the Second Vatican Council and worked to implement the Council in his See. He also served as president of the French bishops' Committee on Rural Life from 1965-71.

Bishop Leuliet retired in 1985 at age 75. He was buried on January 7 at the Cathedral Basilica of Our Lady of Amiens.

The title of oldest living bishop is now held by retired Archbishop Peter Leo Gerety of Newark, New Jersey, who is 102.

Malawian Bishop Dies in Car Accident
Mzuzu, Malawi (CNA/EWTN News)—Catholics in south-east African nation of Malawi are mourning the death of Bishop Joseph Mukasa Zuza of Mzuzu, who died in a car crash on Thursday at the age of 59.

The communications secretary of the Malawi bishops conference, Fr. Andrew Kaufa, confirmed the death to CNA on January 15.

The bishop was driving himself along the Chikangawa-Nhanguwa road, returning to Mzuzu, and his car rolled several times. He was rushed to the hospital in Mzuzu, where he died.

In addition to having been Bishop of Mzuzu, in Malawi's north, Bishop Zuza had been president of the Catholic Bishops Conference of Malawi since 2011.

Steering the Malawi bishops conference, Bishop Zuza spoke out for justice and upholding the marginalized, slamming the roots of the socio-economic problems of Malawi, which attracted politicians' criticism.

Bishop Zuza participated in the Extraordinary Synod on the Family that concluded last October, where he spoke up for Catholic teaching on family and sought to uphold the sanctity of the Sacrament of marriage.

A proponent of culture and traditions, the African prelate had expressed concerns over Western influence affecting African culture, particularly on the issues of homosexuality and same-sex marriage.

Pope appoints abuse survivor to Church panel
London (The Guardian)—Pope Francis has appointed Peter Saunders, 57, a former teacher who left his profession in 1995 to form the National Association for People Abused in Childhood.

"Saunders ... was abused as a child for more than five years by two priests, a teacher, and a member of his family. "I have been a thorn in the side of the Catholic Church for some years. When I was called to see if I would be prepared to meet the Pope it didn't take me very long to say yes," said Saunders.

"When I met him in July and started conversing with him, I told him the Church needed to get its act together, that it needed to support survivors and to do more to protect children. I said to the Pope I would [return] to see him, but I never dreamed I would be invited back to join his commission."

"The first full meeting is expected to be held at the Vatican this month. The commission has been set up to support survivors of abuse and to protect children from future abuse."

"Saunders said he would fly to Rome for the commission's inaugural meeting. He intends to use his role to make sure there was a change in the way the Church behaved towards victims."

"I am going to raise issues around the cover-ups of the past, and also to say that victims' organizations need some serious funding. I want to try and help change the Church for the better."

"I believe in God. I hope in God. I love. I want to live and die for God."—Ven. Henriette Delille

Did You Know?

The Church in the United States currently has beatification causes for four black Catholics:

- Ven. Pierre Toussant (Archdiocese of New York). He was a slave who learned how to dress hair, and became so good at it, that he became relatively well-off. With his savings, he bought his freedom. What his customers really came for, though, was not so much his excellent skill with hair but his sagacious insight and advice.

- The Servant of God Mother Mary Lange (Archdiocese of Baltimore). Foundress of the Oblate Sisters of Providence.

- The Servant of God Fr. Augustus Tolton (Archdiocese of Chicago). A former slave, he became the US's first black priest. However he had to go to Rome to receive training and education because no diocese or religious order would accept a "negro" aspirant.

- Ven. Henriette Delille (Archdiocese of New Orleans). The illegitimate offspring of a wealthy white father and a free black woman, it was quite common then for black women to become mistresses since it offered them a lifestyle they otherwise could not attain. Both of Ven. Henriette's parents encouraged her to follow in her mother's footsteps. She rejected their counsel, however, and instead became a professed virgin and foundress of a religious order, the Sisters of the Holy Family.

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50 years ago this month …

February 3: Santa Rosa’s first ordinary Bishop Leo Maher dedicated the St. Barbara Rest Home, which was run by a Hungarian society of women religious, the Daughters of the Most Holy Savior.

February 11: The diocese extended its food relief for the heavily flooded northern counties, which saw 300 families displaced in the Hoopa-Orleans area alone. The then-St. Anthony Mission church in Hoopa (now dedicated to St. Kateri Tekakwitha) had been under as much as eight feet of water, and it took then-pastor Msgr. William Serado and a team of five three days to clear the mud of church.

February 18: Hanna Center boys prayed for the eternal rest of singer Nat “King” Cole, who had recorded three public service announcements for the Center and had died on Monday, February 15.

February 28: Bishop Maher dedicated the “new” St. Rose Church. That same day, His Grace visited the St. Barbara Rest Home for its first open house, hosted by Elizabeth Macomber, Mrs. Gino Bucchieneri, and Mrs. Fred J. Basso.

30 years ago …

A second collection taken up in diocesan parishes plus donations by local school children raised over $40,000 for starvation and drought relief in Ethiopia.

Students at St. Bernard, Eureka, and St. John the Baptist, Napa, were introduced to newfangled machines the size of suitcases called personal computers.

St. Vincent de Paul High School in Petaluma received donations by local school children of singer Nat “King” Cole, who had recorded three public service announcements for the Center.

The Redwood Crozier reported that on January 27, some 200 people and then-Bishop John T. Steinbock gathered to dedicate Catholic Charities’ Family Support Center in Santa Rosa.

Brendan Welsh, then a sixth grader at St. Helena School and an altar server at Our Lady of Perpetual Help in Calistoga became one of nine winners in a nationwide contest sponsored by It’s Our World, the students newspaper of the Holy Childhood Association. Brennan’s essay’s theme was, “If I could change the world.”

15 years ago …

St. Cecilia Seymour, OSU, received the Archbishop’s Award for Excellence in Catholic Education.

Rachel McKee, an eighth grade student at Kolbe Academy, Napa, won first place in the national MARCH FOR LIFE essay contest. Seventh grade student Benjamin Bisconer won third place for a pro-life themed poem.

St. Rose Church dedication; Bishop Steinbeck at far right

“Newfangled machines”

“Family Support Center dedication; Bishop Steinbeck at far right”

Brendan Welsh

Sr. Cecelia Seymour

“The future is in your hearts and in your hands. God is entrusting to you the task, at once difficult and uplifting, of working with Him in the building of the civilization of love.”

—St. John Paul II

The diocese held its first ever Encuentro Diocesano at St. Joseph Church, Cotati, as “part of a national program … to serve the religious and educational needs of Hispanic Catholics …”

A “Principals’ Council” was “formed to serve as a joint planning forum and a channel of communications with” the diocesan Department of Catholic Schools, then under the direction of Sr. Ann Patricia O’Connor.

25 years ago

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Retired Santa Rosa Bishop Mark J. Hurley made national news with his criticism of then-presidential candidate Al Gore for his “negative portrayal of private schools … in a TV campaign ad against vouchers.”

St. Barbara’s Rest Home Dedication Nat King Cole, Jr.

St. Rose Church

“The Easily Shunned” by Elisabeth Anthony

In some ways, I’m just like many of you. I sincerely want to give everything to the Lord through our awesome Catholic faith.

Unlike most of you, though, whether it be through fear, depression, anxiety, or any number of factors, I find I can’t. And while my story is unique, my situation isn’t.

I was not mentally prepared when I got pregnant two months into college by a man I didn’t love (and who several months later, despite effort and countless prayers, I still don’t). But I thought marrying the father of my child and becoming a Catholic, however, were the right things to do.

And in many ways, the time since then has been amazing. I am in awe of the things God has done for and through me, especially with raising multiple children, including several with special needs. It hasn’t been easy, but by His grace, I am still standing and stronger.

Or at least I stood before and I stand now. In between, however, I broke down. I became weaker and less resilient. Each day I experienced extreme insomnia, building anxiety, and unsettling depression. I felt scared and threatened.

Worse, I thought, As a good Catholic woman, I can’t be this way. I have to stay strong in order to fulfill God’s will for my family. My very large brood needs that.

I didn’t understand what was happening. It wasn’t as though I could check out. I had kids to raise and a household to hold together. I had to deny and push through. “So much to do.” Tons of prayer didn’t help. I could not “snap out of it,” nor was “offering it up” effective. I had chemical imbalances in my brain that couldn’t be “prayed away.”

Finally my Catholic doctor started me on anti-depressants and sleep meds so I could be the mother I needed to be. So I could be responsible. So I could function under the uncompromised load God gave me.

Even now, though, nothing is easy. Often it seems to get worse, and I don’t understand it. Why aren’t these meds working? What is really wrong with me? Why can’t anyone help? I don’t feel fit to care for others adequately. I need someone to care for me.

Most wouldn’t necessarily notice this inner turmoil. It’s because of the mask I wear. I have to. My children need that from me. The mask only does so much, though. Sometimes it does nothing at all. And the kids have suffered for it. No child remains unscathed by parental depression or emotional impairment. The guilt that wracks me only perpetuates the problem.

So does the fact that many are not only ignorant but ashamed, embarrassed to associate with someone with my condition. It scares them.

They aren’t scared of those with a measurable physical condition. Someone with a chronic or congenital illness receives sympathy. Many pains are taken to make sure they are comfortable and receive compassionate care. Few think to blame them for their condition or treat them as subhuman, even when through bad choices they “deserve” their illness.

But for some reason, the “immeasurable” mental or emotional disorders get looked upon with skepticism, blame, doubt.

Once in confession a priest told me my depression was a direct result of my sins, to “go and sin no more,” and all will be well.

There is a general societal stigma towards mental illness of any sort, born from an apparent belief that every clinically depressed person could be a loose cannon who should be feared. “They could go off at any moment!” even though depressives are quite in tune with their condition. Anyone with a disorder is quite willing to prevent an episode.

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Humble Service

This year Pope Francis has asked consecrated persons to “wake up the world” with their “prophetic and countercultural witness.”

This might sound like a tall order, but religious life is, by its very nature, countercultural. For us Little Sisters of the Poor, giving the kind of witness our Holy Father is calling for means being faithful to the spirit of our foundress, St. Jeanne Jugan.

She lived her vocation without illusions: “Call me now the humble servant of the poor,” she told an old friend soon after she began welcoming the needy elderly into her home.

Humility and servanthood. I can’t imagine two more countercultural values! Even Christ’s first disciples squabbled about who was the greatest among them!

Today radical feminism and a secularized culture make the concept of humble service somewhat incomprehensible. Taking the last place, letting others have the credit for a job well-done, or putting others’ needs before one’s own, such acts are seen as servile, demeaning, even unhealthy.

A young woman in discernment once told me, “I really like your community, except for the humility thing.” I’ve had plenty of chances to tease her about this over the years, because she did in fact become a Little Sister of the Poor!

On the other hand, a fellow religious recently voiced her concern that if we see ourselves as bending down to serve others, we risk getting caught in an attitude of condescension toward those less fortunate.

The antidote to this temptation is simple: When we accept the yoke of service in imitation of Christ, Who was gentle and humble of heart, we cannot be vain. Christ teaches that servanthood is the greatest demonstration of love, not pride.

Before He gave His life for His friends, Jesus washed their feet and told them, “I have given you an example. As I have done for you, so you must do.”

These words are for Christians of all ages, but none more so than those in religious life.

“If on the one hand the consecrated life contemplates the sublime mystery of the Word in the bosom of the Father (cf. John 1:1),” St. John Paul II once wrote, “on the other hand it follows the Word Who became flesh (cf. John 1:14), lowering Himself, humbling Himself in order to serve others” (Vita Consecrata, no. 75).

Writing to the whole Church in The Joy of the Gospel, our current Holy Father articulated a beautiful vision:

“True love is always contemplative, and permits us to serve the other not out of necessity or vanity, but rather because he or she is beautiful above and beyond mere appearances: ‘The love by which we find the other pleasing leads us to offer him something freely.’ The poor person, when loved, ‘is esteemed as of great value,’ and this is what makes the authentic option for the poor differ from any other ideology, from any attempt to exploit the poor for one’s own personal or political interest … Only this will ensure that ‘in every Christian community the poor feel at home....’” (no. 199).

Making “the poor feel at home.” I find St. Jeanne in these words. I also sense in them the countercultural witness we Little Sisters of the Poor are called to offer the world during this Year of Consecrated Life. We have received a priceless gift in the charism of St. Jeanne and the call to follow her. At the same time we know that without God’s grace we can do nothing. Please pray for all religious, that we will live our charism authentically and offer the world a prophetic witness of God’s merciful love.

Sr. Constance serves as Communications director for the Little Sisters of the Poor.

Filipina Dominican Nuns Hoping for Founder’s Beatification

Manila (The Philippine Star)—A nearly 400-year-old congregation of Dominican nuns is hoping the global Catholic Church hierarchy will declare sanctity for Mother Francisca de Fuentes who lived and offered services to the poor during the 1600s.

After marrying at a young age and being widowed shortly after, the childless Francisca decided to spend her time reaching out to the needy “even if she had [nothing] for herself,” Enginco said.

Long before the modern phenomenon of human trafficking, Francisca took under her wing women and children left out on the streets, providing them with protection and education.

She joined the Dominicans in 1682, although she took Francisca for her religious name because of her devotion to St. Francis of Assisi.
Durante su homilía, el Cardenal abordó la fiesta de la Epifanía y explicó que “la figura central de los magos simboliza a todo hombre y mujer que con verdadera sabiduría y con sincero corazón se dejan guiar por los signos que Dios les envía, cumpliendo así lo que el mismo Jesús dirá: ‘Muchos de oriente y de occidente vendrán y se sentarán en la mesa del Reino.’

En ese sentido, recordó que “la salvación es para todas las razas, para todas las culturas, para todas las edades y para todos los tiempos. Nadie puede sentirse excluido de este llamado a la fe y a la salvación en Cristo-Epifanía.”

“Pero la fe no se impone. La fe es un regalo que Dios da y supone la aceptación libre y generosa,” aclaró y puntualizó que “evidentemente el que acepta a Jesús también acepta su doctrina y acepta el camino que él señala para llegar a la vida eterna.”

El Arzobispo explicó que para tener el encuentro personal con Cristo es necesario dejarse llevar por las señales que el Espíritu de Dios envía. “Este es el misterioso poder de los signos, del cual no hablamos hoy el Evangelio, los magos supieron leer y seguir esos signos; los discípulos de Emaús también se dejaron llevar por los signos, pues aunque su corazón ardía cuando iban por el camino y escuchaban la explicación de las Escrituras, sin embargo reconocieron a su Señor en la fracción del pan. Este gesto simbólico y sacramental, que hoy cayera el velo de sus ojos y reconocieran al Resucitado,” indicó.

Su Eminencia señaló que es importante participar de la Eucaristía con verdadera fe para así reconocer a Cristo Pan de Vida. “Cuando es la fe la que nos trae a la Eucaristía nuestra celebración se convierte en una gran luz en nuestro caminar, nos transmite una paz y una alegría que nadie nos puede quitar, porque realiza en nosotros un verdadero encuentro con Cristo que es nuestra salvación,” aseguró.

“Emoción y alegría” de Obispos de México por nuevo Cardenal

Mons. Alberto Suárez Inda

México, DF (ACI/EWTN Noticias)—La Conferencia del Episcopado Mexicano (CEM) expresó su “emoción y alegría” por el anuncio del Papa Francisco de la próxima creación como Cardenal del Arzobispo de Morelia, México, Mons. Alberto Suárez Inda.

El anuncio lo realizó el Papa Francisco hoy, tras el rezo del Ángelus dominical, en la Plaza de San Pedro. El Con- sideratorio en el que será creado Cardenal Mons. Suárez Inda se realizará el 14 de febrero de este año.

Junto al arzobispo de Morelia serán creados otros 19 Cardenales.

En un comunicado difundido hoy, los obispos de México expresaron su agradecimiento “con Dios Nuestro Señor por este don,” al tiempo que manifestaron “nuestra gratitud al Papa Francisco por este gesto de amor y cercanía a nuestra patria.”

La CEM felicitó además “a la Arquidiócesis de Morelia por esta distinción y pedimos a Santa María de Guadalupe que interceda por nuestro nuevo Cardenal, cuya generosa labor pastoral reconocemos con gratitud.”

Cardenal Rivera: El que acepta a Jesús también acepta su doctrina

México, El (EAC)—El Arzobispo de México (México), Norberto Cardenal Rivera Carrera, afirmó durante la Misa dominical que quien acepta a Cristo también “acepta su doctrina” y el camino que Él señala; además afirmó que los reyes magos simbolizan a los hombres y mujeres que con corazón sincero buscan a Jesús.

Según el Sistema Informativo de la Arquidiócesis de México (SIAME), el Purpurado también aprovechó para celebrar la designación de 20 nuevos cardenales, anunciada por el Papa Francisco y que incluye a tres latinoamericanos, entre ellos el Arzobispo de Morelia (México), Mons. Alberto Suárez Inda.

Norberto Cardinal Rivera
Wait: You Mean St. Valentine Actually Existed?

Whether we have someone on our arm or count ourselves among the perpetually dateless, none of us can escape noticing that St. Valentine’s Day is upon us. But why do we have this celebration, and who was St. Valentine? Did he really exist?

He did, although very little is known about him except that he was a martyr and was buried in Rome near the Milvian Bridge, on which Constantine defeated Maxentius in 312 AD to become emperor, which eventually led to Christianity’s permanent legalization.

Depending on the story, Valentine was one of two people, the first a priest in Rome, the second a bishop of Terni, Italy, both of whom were buried on the same road. Because he would not stop preaching Christ’s life, death, and resurrection, the pagans captured and dragged the latter some 60 miles from Terni to the Eternal City. There he was tortured and beaten to death on February 14, 273 AD, outside the Flaminian Gate on the Via Flaminia. His corpse eventually returned home.

The story of the other Valentine is substantially the same, except that its setting is entirely within Rome. The other difference is that this Valentine was also arrested for witnessing Christian weddings for soldiers, supposedly because Emperor Claudius II did not allow soldiers marry (the historical record shows the opposite). To “remind these men of their vows and God’s love, Saint Valentine is said to have cut hearts from parchment.”

Further additions to the legend say he cured the blind Julia, daughter of his jailer Asterius. The miracle so astounded Asterius, he and his entire household received baptism. Reportedly Valentine fell in love with the maiden Julia, and on his last night on earth, the saint wore her professing his eternal love and signed the epistle, “Your Valentine.”

Perhaps this is how he came to be associated with courtly love, and by the fourteenth century, authors such as Geoffroy Chaucer coupled observance of the saint’s feast with notions of romance. Also people medieval times thought mid-February represented mating time for birds. This likely had a role in pairing the martyr with eros, that is, romantic love.

While most of the saint’s relics reside at Whitefriars, Dublin, Ireland’s Carmelite church, his skull and some bones have rested in the Roman church of Santa Maria in Cosmedin (in Beauty) near the Circus Maximus since 1836. That was the year they were taken here in solemn procession from the catacombs, where a Mass for the young and those in love was celebrated. In the years thereafter on Valentine’s feast, these relics are specially exhibited, the skull adorned with flowers.

The custom of observing courtly love on February 14 has spread to every continent. In Europe, lovers and children receive St. Valentine Keys “as a romantic symbol and an invitation to unlock the giver’s heart.” We still have a Valentine card Duke Charles of Orléans wrote his wife the fifteenth century. So while the exchange of greetings and cards dates to at least that time, these were handwritten. In the nineteenth century, mass-printed cards came into vogue.

In certain parts is also a concern. In Iran, producing or printing anything Valentine-related is banned. Indonesia, the world’s most populous Muslim nation, chooses to treat the holiday as a fad that will eventually fade.

If you find yourself in Pakistan, however, no worries. And in Singapore, not a Muslim country, people spend up to $500 on holiday-related items and activities. And whereas it is usually men who buy women chocolate on this day, it is the other way around in Korea (although men give their ladies non-chocolate sweets). On April 14 (aka, Black Day), those who received nothing gather at restaurants and eat black noodles to bemoan their rotten situation.

Regardless of how it is popularly celebrated, much of this in even in nominally Catholic countries gets away from the feast’s purpose.

There is absolutely nothing wrong, of course, with a day that honors courtly love. However as Christians let us not forget the primary reason for the feast, a man named Valentine (from the Latin valens, meaning worthy, strong, powerful) who stood with courage for his faith and laid down his life rather than deny it.

That is something we can all celebrate.

Trusting in God for All Things: A True Love Story

by Father S. Moses Brown

A few months ago I had the honor of celebrating the wedding of José Luis Salvador Rodríguez and Gabriela Muñoz. Their story made an impact because it reminded me that God’s plans are different from our plans.

They both have much interest in the things of God. Besides having this in common, both were widowed.

They thought that their marital life was over when their previous spouses died. But our God is the God of surprises, and He surprised them with new love. Frequently God accomplishes His will in silence and in the interior of our hearts. Their love grew but without the other one’s knowing. This love made both pray to know God’s will for their life in front of the Blessed Sacrament. They both wanted that the other person also had the desire to put God first in all things.

Eventually they began to date and realized God wanted them to marry. The pure love they had for each other was put there by God to unite them together in holy matrimony again. No one can know God’s complete will, but we can accept His will when it is manifest in our life.

At their wedding, they both served as lectors. Since they first met in this context, it seemed fitting. He read from Tobit, because he had read the same reading at his parents’ fiftieth wedding anniversary some years ago. She read from Sirach because it contains a description of the perfect woman, and she wants to be that perfect woman to the praise of our God. When we put God first, He can really surprise us.

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Fr. Brown serves as parochial vicar of St. Rose Church.

Mr. and Mrs. Rodriguez
Only for Owners of the Lonely Hearts Club? 50,000 Fill San Francisco Streets in Walk for Life

by NCC Staff

It’s that time of year again. Yes, Lent is upon us, but that is not what this article is about.

Rather “that time of year” in this instance refers to St. Valentine’s Day, probably the most hated and most loved holiday on our calendar.

It is loved by those in love and revel in the romance typically associated with the day. It is hated by just about everyone else, particularly those who want to love but who, absent a willing member of the opposite sex, find themselves staring right into the ugly face of their loneliness and deep desire for connection.

Aristotle taught that man is a social being and only in his proper sphere when associated with his fellow man. The Church, too, teaches that mankind is made for relationship (Gaudium et Spes, no. 12), and that our earthly relationships are meant to point us to that heav-

enly relationship with the Trinity the righteous will enjoy for eternity.

So for some of us when we find ourselves alone, romantically speaking—especially on a festival that seems to implicitly yell, “You’re a loser if you don’t have a date tonight!”—there’s a good reason it feels discomfiting.

Some will do nothing about this state of affairs. They will tacitly accept their alienation from the bonds ordained by God for men and women and many will bemoan their “fate” about how they can never meet anyone while doing so.

Others, however, will take destiny into their own hands, thus, exemplifying the dictum of St. Augustine: “Pray as if everything depends on God; act as if everything depends on you.”

And how will they do this? Online dating sites.

While not for everyone, these are an increasingly popu-
lar way for people to meet one another. One reason is that with less and less leisure time, meeting that special someone can be very difficult. With the number of people using them, entrepreneurs have created dating sites of just about every type imaginable.

The problem is that with growth in the number of sites has come growth in the number of bogus outfits, com-
panies that promise the opportunity to meet those who share similar interests but who actually only provide an easy way to part with your money.

The good news, though, is that there are several businesses that are not only legitimate, they work off of sometimes very detailed algorithms to match clients with their best matches. Amongst these are Match.com, eHarmony.com, CatholicMatch.com, and AveMariaSingles.com.

All have the same uncomplicated set-up. The first-time user begins by filling out a basic questionnaire about their likes, dislikes, personality traits, preferences, lifestyle, profession, education, and such.

For instance, eHarmony has as one of its questions, “How well does each of the following describe you? I try to accommodate the other person’s position.” The member then picks one of 10 dots on a spectrum that ranges from “Not at all” to “Somewhat” to “Very well.”

Since the Catholic dating sites know their users are there to meet fellow Catholics, they also ask some faith-

based questions such as, “Do you accept Church teaching on the Eucharist,” “... contraception,” “... the sanctity of life,” “... papal infallibility,” “... premartial sex,” “... the Immaculate Conception,” and so on.

All will also have some variation of an “About Me” sec-
tion, where the person is allowed to describe themselves, their favorite things, activities, foods, music, read-
ing preferences, etc.

At the end of the process, members are encouraged to post pictures of themselves.

Creating a profile through this process—which can last five to thirty minutes—is generally free.

What isn’t necessarily free is putting this information to use. The sites allow clients to search for potential matches. But because these businesses exist to make a profit, that usually is where the free part ends. Say a user finds someone who looks like “Mr./Miss Right” and they want to contact them or otherwise express an interest in establishing contact. That often costs.

The prices aren’t outrageous, especially if the member is banking on being able to find their soul mate. Then it’s a good investment. But none of them are cheap.

Take for instance one site. The user can pay $29.95 for one month, $19.95 per month for three months, or $12.49 per month for six months. Typically one pays all at once, not on a monthly basis. So the second option here would cost $59.85, billed to the credit card on file, and the price of the third would be $74.94.

eHarmony.com is one of the few outfits that does allow people to pay in increments, but that is only for their second-tier plan, which is 13.95 per month for six months, billed in three installments of $27.90. The rest of their options, however, require all fees at once. And unlike other sites, your plan dictates how many people you can contact.

In the Second Vatican Council document Gaudium et Spes, the Church teaches that “unless [man] relates himself to others he cannot live nor develop his potential” (no. 12). This is true no matter what our voca-

tion, obviously, but it is especially so for the married life.

And so, if dating service is perfect—and some are even morally dangerous and should be avoided in order not to jeopardize one’s soul—most do offer a way for people to meet that otherwise would not happen.

P. Brown serve como vicario parroquial de St. Rose Church.

Confiando en Dios por Todas las Cosas: Una Historia de Amor Verdadero

by Father S. Moses Brown

Tuve el honor de celebrar la boda de José Luis Salvador Rodríguez y Gabriela Muñoz hace algunos meses. Su his-

toria me impactó mucho porque muestra los planes de nuestro Dios son diferentes que nosotros.

Tienen mucha interés en las cosas de Dios, éste es lo que tienen en común y que los dos son visados. Pensaban que su vida matrimonial terminó con la muerte de sus esposos, pero nuestro Dios es el Dios de sorpresas. Y les sorprendió con nuevo amor.

Ellos dos tenían la actitud de aceptar la voluntad de Dios pero podemos aceptarla cuando es pleno.

En su boda, lueyaron porque se conocieron en el mismo contexto. Lo leyó de Tobías porque lo leyó en el aniversa-
io del matrimonio de cincuenta años de sus padres hace algunos años. Ella decidió leer de Siracide porque contiene una descripción de la mujer perfecta y ella quiere ser la mujer perfecta para dar alabanza a nuestro Dios.

Cuando ponemos Dios en primer de todo, El puede dar surpresa grandes.

50,000 Fill San Francisco Streets in Walk for Life

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Tenso de tristezas de personas marcharon en el centro de San Francisco, cantando, “We are the pro-life generation” en el Novena anual Walk for Life West Coast, el mayor pro-life demostración en el oeste de los Estados Unidos.

The walk is held on the Saturday closest to January 22, 1973, the anniversary of the United States Supreme Court’s Roe v: Wade decision that legalized abortion. This year’s march drew more than 50,000 people.

“We are a war on women but we are not declaring war: We have come to set women free!” declaró Walk for Life rally speaker Joy Pinto.

“The civil rights movement of this present age is the pro-life movement, and we are nearing our victory and we cannot compromise,” declaró walk speaker Rev. Clenard Childress Jr., fundador de Blackgenocide.org y un ministro en Montclair, New Jersey.

Many began the day at St. Mary Cathedral where San Francisco Archbishop Salvatore J. Cordileone, Bishop Robert F. Vasa and others conmemoraron el anual Walk for Life Mass.

Archbishop Cordileone told the standing room only crowd of nearly 5,000, “Our goal is not a legal one nor it is a political one. Our goal is a spiritual one: to build a culture of life.

“My young people, you are the pro-life generation,” Archbishop Cordileone said, noting that once again a majority of those present were young, adding “Let us be clear. Our ideology is pro-life and pro-woman. The two go together.”

The apostolic nuncio, the Vatican’s diplomatic represen-
tative to the United States, Archbishop Carlo Maria Viganò told the tens of thousands gathered at Civic Center, “It is possible the only one without freedom of speech is the unborn. They have no right to see the light.”

Archiepiscop Vigano read “warm greetings and close-

ness in prayer” from Pope Francis to the crowd at Civic Center. The Vatican message of support concluded, “For truly as the theme of this year’s walk makes clear, life is the choice and the protection of this fundamental human right together with the firm rejection of all violations of human dignity are essential conditions of the building of a just and inclusive society.”

Other speakers included Julia Holcomb, who told the story of her abortion during a relationship as a teenager with Aerosmith lead singer Steven Tyler, and Rebekah Buel, who shared how a new technique allowed her to save her unborn baby even after taking the first RU486 pill.

From January 30, 2015 issue of Catholic San Francisco

La vida es marco cada vez más importante y las parejas que vienen a mí para hacer un matrimonio de cincuenta años de sus padres hacen algunos años. Ella decidió leer de Sirácide porque contiene una descripción de la mujer perfecta y ella quiere ser la mujer perfecta para dar alabanza a nuestro Dios.

Cuando ponemos Dios en primer de todo, El puede dar sorpresas grandes.
NFL GM Speaks of Playoffs, Parenting, and Padre Pio

Indianapolis (National Catholic Register)—At Purdue University in the early 1990s, Ryan Grigson was going down the wrong path. The ways of the world had taken precedence over the ways of the gospel for the 6’6, 290 lb. tight end and offensive tackle for his school’s football team, the Boilermakers. Yet Grigson received a wake-up call that changed his life. He was almost fatally injured during a game and then spent weeks at the hospital in intensive care. Faced with his own mortality, Grigson became much more open to the fullness of the Gospel. After being released from the hospital, Grigson completed his collegiate career as a captain of the Boilermakers and then played two seasons professionally. Not wanting to leave a game that had been part of his life for many years, he embarked upon an administrative career in professional football. The Highland, Ind., native worked as a scout with the St. Louis Rams and the Philadelphia Eagles, and in January 2012, the Indianapolis Colts made him their general manager. The team had posted a 2-14 record in 2011, but under Grigson’s management, they have registered three straight 11-5 seasons and have gotten progressively better. As the Colts prepared to take on the Broncos on January 11, Grigson, a 42-year-old father of six, fielded questions from Register correspondent Trent Beattie.

What do you like most about working in the NFL?
The best thing about being in the NFL is competing and game. The injury [a hit to his abdomen, which resulted in terminal brain cancer] was left with two young sons to need tough love as a kid, and the clergy and faculty at I attended Our Lady of Grace School in Highland, Ind., and I’m extremely grateful for that. Whether it’s seeing her pray the Rosary every single night, but as a youngster, you space out and don’t pay attention sometimes. Yet looking back, I think you still take away something subconsciously, even when you’re just sitting there. You’re hearing the word of God, being in His presence and receiving Him in the Eucha- rist. Those cumulative days at Mass helped to mold my faith at its earliest stages, and I’m extremely grateful for that.

Was there a particularly tough time in your adult life that your faith got you through?
Without a doubt, I would say the toughest time was at Purdue in 1992, when I got seriously hurt in a football game. The injury was a fractured pelvis, which resulted in pancreatitis, kidney failure, and then pneumonia) almost cost me my life, and then it put me in the hospital for a long time. For a good while, I was on machines in intensive care, and my body was so beat up. But my spirit was willing, so it was a time I feel God used to truly get my attention.

I had been a young kid away from home and slowly going down a wrong path. But during my time in the hospital and afterward, I really had a thirst for Scripture, and I opened up my heart and mind completely to the Good News. I prayed more than ever before and just had a better sense of what it means to be a Christian man. You hear the expression that there’s faith in foxholes. The hospital stay was kind of the same. Because when you’re faced with being that sick, I don’t care who you are, you want to go to heaven and not the other destination. So being in the hospital was a wake-up call for me, and I was certainly changed forever because of it. What I learned in the hospital is we are nothing without God, and there is no hope when He is out of the equation. However, no matter the state of your soul or your current state of affairs, if you’re still alive and willing to bring Him into the equation, He can make everything right.

What are some of your favorite aspects of the Catholic Church?
I love the sacraments, especially the sanctity of the Mass. I’ve also recently been trying to go to confession more often. I find it healing to speak to someone about faults and mistakes. It is humbling, and it isn’t easy to do, especially when it’s face-to-face, but it is cleansing and therapeutic, making it worth the effort.

I also appreciate the traditions and the history of our Church. I’ve always marveled at the unbroken succession of popes since St. Peter the Apostle. Whenever the Church has gone through turbulent things in my lifetime, I’ve found solace in the fact that incredible history and deep roots are there.

One aspect of Church history is found in sacred archi- tecture. I’m not opposed to new church buildings, but I am traditional at my core, and I personally like being in some of those beautiful, old churches when I pray. When it comes to places of worship, I want to be in one that looks worthy of housing Christ’s body and his blood.

I heard you have a devotion to Padre Pio. How did that come about?
I was especially drawn to Padre Pio because of the stigmata. If someone bears the wounds of Christ, I figure he or she is obviously close to him or he chose that person for a special mission. The phenomenon of stigmata is a fascinating topic, and Padre Pio’s whole life is fascinating. He also endeared himself to me for the simple fact that he liked to enjoy cold beers with friends. There was a normalcy and humanness about him, despite his extraordinary life and circumstances.

Even since I was given a lives-of-the-saints book as a kid, I’ve been fascinated by those holy men and women. In many cases, they were very ordinary people who became extraordinary because they let God fully reign in their hearts and minds. This complete surrender is inspiring, and, while it is certainly a challenge, it is what we are all called to do.

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PRIESTLY ORDINATION ANNIVERSARIES

FEBRUARY 2015

Fr. David Galeana
1/13/12 Eureka, CA
Fr. Louis Nichols
2/2/60 Mendocino, CA
Fr. John Boettcher
2/2/91 Santa Rosa, CA
Fr. Balassawmy Govindu
2/7/77 Arcata, CA
Fr. John McCormick
2/7/99 retired, San Ysidro, CA
Fr. Robert Benjamin
2/12/00 retired, Santa Rosa, CA
Fr. Francis Gayam
2/14/78 Healdsburg, CA
Fr. Mark Kristy, OCD
2/23/85 Oakville, CA

Havana (CNA/EWTN News)—The Vatican played a criti- cal role behind a prisoner exchange and a groundbreaking new policy between United States and Cuba, senior Obama Administration officials said.

“Very importantly, the Vatican played a role in this as well,” a senior administration official said in a White House conference call with reporters on the prisoner exchange between the US and Cuba and the opening of new relations between the two. Pope Francis made a personal appeal to the presidents of both countries in a letter asking them to “resolve the case of Alan Gross and the case of the three Cubans who have been imprisoned here in the United States and also encouraging the United States and Cuba to pursue a closer relationship,” the official added.

The White House announced a prisoner exchange with Cuba on Wednesday, as well as a top-level shift in the rela- tionship between the countries, which for decades has been marked by an embargo and lack of formal diplomatic relations.

The countries will try to work together to fight Ebola and on issues of migration, counter-terrorism, and drug- trafficking, a senior administration official explained.

Officials of the Obama Administration “fully expect” there to be “strong differences” between the countries, but leadership believes “engagement is a better tool than isolation.”

The US will continue to push for better human rights in Cuba, the administration officials maintained. The new policy is “not lessening our emphasis on human rights, on democracy,” one official said, adding, “Our emphasis on human rights will be just as strong and we believe more effective under this policy.”

A meeting between the Pope and U.S. President Barack Obama is also expected as Francis’ personal appeal, an official said, noting that Cuba was also the first Pope hailing from Latin America.

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The Vatican Secretariat of State release a communique confirming the Pope’s “warm congratulations” for the Obama administration’s “courageous move” which for decades has been marked by an embargo and lack of formal diplomatic relations.

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The Vatican Secretariat of State release a communique relating Pope Francis’ “warm congratulations” for the decision “to establish diplomatic relations, with the aim of overcoming, in the interest of the citizens of both countries, the difficulties which have marked their recent history.”

“The Holy See will continue to assure its support for initiatives which both nations will undertake to strengthen their bilateral relations and promote the well-being of their respective citizens.”

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Pope Helps US, Cuba Reconcile
Love Actually
by Stephen Morris

St. Valentine’s Day is upon us. Cue your favorite love songs, movies, and hashtags. We’ve flipped the calendar and “gotten over” Christmas, but we now pause on February 14th for some odd known reason… I used to manage a greeting card company, so I can assure you it’s kinda’ a scam. I also used to teach Church history…sorry, there’s no saint-love-story.

So, what are we actually celebrating?

Our comfortable American-consumer-oriented-if-it-feels-good-do-it society has embraced this day to celebrate LOVE. Oh Love, oh how we love, love.

But this concept of actually celebrating love with chocolate, balloons, flowers, etc…does it have merit? Is romantic, “capital L” love such a big deal that it deserves its own day? Put another way, is that the love that’s worth celebrating?

We’re very familiar with the word “love.” We use it relentlessly.

While showing a Double-Double from In-N-Out into our face, we mumble, “I love this burger.” During fourth period, two high school students text, “OMG love u!” When a buddy suddenly tackles the other and says, “I love you, man.” When a parent kisses their sleeping child’s forehead, they whisper, “I love you.”

Love is complicated in its many forms. Greeks have four different words for it: agape, eros, storge, and philia (unconditional, romantic, familial, and friendship). So, yes, it’s right to honor love, but let’s be Greeks about it and not merely superficial consumers of Hallmark cards, candlelit dinners, and See’s chocolates (although Scotch-mallows are crazy sick good).

Greeks recognize origins: God is Love. God gave us love. He possesses love in all its fullness (Catechism 218-221). As St. John noted in 1 John 4:8, “Whoever is without love does not know God, for God is love.” He shares part of His very nature with us. And through that sharing we are called to in turn share (even with those people we cannot stand) in order to fully exercise the gift.

I’m reminded of this gift of transcendent love, in my vocation of husband and father. In fact I’ve learned more about my relationship with God and His love for me through these two roles than I have from any theological study. He has planted our ability to love, to be loved, and seek His love deep within the heart. Our Creator is astounding. A concept as complex as love, His has gently laced it within our hearts to open as a rose in bloom.

With God, we don’t need to dress it up or spend a day peeling petals off a flower asking whether He “loves me.” We know He does, and if we pause long enough (thank you, February 14), we can hear Him speak to our heart. We know He does, and if we pause long enough (thank you, February 14), we can hear Him speak to our heart. We know He does, and if we pause long enough (thank you, February 14), we can hear Him speak to our heart.

For further study: Catechism 2366-2370 and Humanae Vitae. ❖

A Minute in the Church: Contraception

One of the biggest problems that many people, both Catholic and non-Catholic alike, have with the Church is its unwavering stance against the use of artificial contraception. The Catechism of the Catholic Church, citing Bl. Pope Paul VI’s encyclical Humanae Vitae, calls any act of artificial contraception “intrinsically evil.”

Strong words! So what does the Bible say?

Nowhere in the scriptures will you find a defense of such birth control. On the contrary, read what happens to Onan, a practitioner of contraception in Genesis 38:9-10. In contrast, Psalm 127 says that children are a blessing, “a gift from the Lord, the fruit of the womb a reward” (v. 3).

The Catechism speaks of the “unitive” and “procreative” aspects of the marriage act. Take away either of these, and we are outside of the natural moral law. Per Scripture the Church has always taught God alone opens and closes the womb (cf. Gen 29:31, 30:22 et al). When we use artificial contraception, we close ourselves to God’s will—to His gift, His blessing—in this area of our lives. As Christians we need to let God be God over every aspect of our lives. So as unpopular as it may be, this always has been and always will be the teaching of the Catholic Church.

But hey, sometimes the gospel is tough to live with.

For further study: Catechism 2366-2370 and Humanae Vitae. ❖

A Minute in the Church and A Minute in the Church, Volume II are available at www.GusLloyd.com.

St. Francis Student Visits Washington, DC

Special to NCC by Marco Della Santina

The weekend of November 7, I took a trip to Washington, DC, for a Food Allergy Teen Summit hosted by FARE (Food Allergy Research and Education), and it was amazing. It was nice to meet teens from all over the country who also have food allergies and experiences similar to mine.

Professional swimmer and Olympic gold medalist Dana Vollmer spoke about her success as an athlete despite her food allergies. There were panels on healthy eating, safety ideas, and tips on how to manage our condition as we enter high school and college. The best part, though, was meeting new friends.

When the conference ended, I went to the big city of Washington, DC! Before the trip, we had contacted our congressman, Rep. Mike Thompson (D-Napa), and his staff arranged for our tour of the Capitol. It took us through all of the Capitol’s public parts including Statuary Hall, the Rotunda, and some of the older historic rooms that became too small for the congressmen as the country grew. Plus we got to sit in the House of Representatives’ gallery, which was really interesting.

In order to get around the Capitol, we walked through the underground tunnels that connect it with its numerous office buildings. We couldn’t get into the White House tour, but we went to the Visitors Center and had an interactive tour there instead.

Afterward we visited the Museum of American History and then the National Air and Space Museum, both part of the Smithsonian.

Since part of my trip was on Veteran’s Day, we saw veterans from several wars. At the World War II Memorial, I met the man who played “Taps” during the ceremony there.

Additionally we visited the Vietnam Memorial, where a lot of people were looking for family members whose names were on the wall. Next we went to the Korean War Memorial, which made me feel like I was there because it features life-sized statues of soldiers with scared looks on their faces.

We also visited the Washington Monument and the Lincoln and Jefferson memorials. I really enjoyed looking at all of the architecture in the city and the different designs at the memorials.

As an eighth grader, when we study government, I’ll understand it better now. ❖

Marco Della Santina attends St. Francis de Solano School in Sonoma.

NORTH COAST CATHOLIC / FEBRUARY 2015/ www.srdiocese.org 23
Special to North Coast Catholic

Arcata—On a Saturday a few weeks before Christmas at 11 am, seven Catholic Humboldt State University students gathered at the Newman Center with Director Regina Fosnaugh and her three assistants, arming themselves with Breaking Bread missals and Christmas music leaflets for the purpose of caroling and delivering Yuletide cheer.

Students and alumni prayed and caroled around the shimmering Humboldt Bay into Eureka. Former Newman resident and HSU music graduate Andrew Rutledge agreed to join the crew in Eureka after receiving a call from Fosnaugh.

With Jesus’ words “I was sick, and you visited Me” (Matt 25:36) faintly playing in their minds, they entered the first nursing home, Pacific Healthcare and Rehabilitation Center.

The performance was shaky at first, but with Rutledge conducting the group and Fosnaugh’s flute to keep the group on key, soon the group was singing beautifully. They then moved to the rooms with the residents who could not come out, singing and playing as they went. One resident even said, “Oh, you are HSU students? I thought you were professional singers!”

They then moved to the rooms with the residents who could not come out, singing and playing as they went. One resident even said, “Oh, you are HSU students? I thought you were professional singers!”

Fosnaugh’s 3-month-old “assistant” brought delighted smiles to the faces of the residents, who sang along to “Silent Night,” “We Three Kings,” and “Away in the Manger.” The student’s favorites were ”I Saw Three Ships,” “Feliz Navidad,” and “O Tannenbaum.”

The Newman Club also caroled at Eureka’s Granada Health and Rehabilitation Center.

Students came away from the experience inebriated with the joy of having put smiles on the faces of the sick and elderly while sharing the news about their involvement. Will you reach out to the emotionally or distressted in your community? If not you, then who?  

Humboldt State University Newman Center Carolling at Nursing Homes

www.santarosacatholic.org

Sponsored by the Diocesan Department of Religious Education

1/27/2015

Adults Formación de fe y Certificación 2015
Dos ubicaciones/lugares: Fort Bragg y Eureka

FORMACION CATEQUISTA BASICA
dirección: Our Lady of Good Counsel Church
285 S. Harold St., Fort Bragg, CA
Sábado: 9:00AM - 3:00PM

- Se anunciara Orientación, Introducción, Espiritualidad y metodología.
- 3 de enero 2015 Credo I - IV
- 7 de febrero Liturgía y Sacramentos I - IV
- 18 de abril La vida en Cristo, formación de la Consciencia y la doctrina social católica.
- 20 de junio La oración cristiana y observaciones.

FORMACION CATEQUISTA BASICA
dirección: St. Bernard Catholic School
222 Dollison St., School Library, Eureka, CA
Viernes: 6:30pm - 8:30pm
Sábado: 9:00am - 3:00pm

- 20 y 21 de marzo 2015 Orientación, Introducción, Espiritualidad y metodología.
- 1 y 2 de mayo Credo I - IV
- 24 y 25 de julio Liturgia y Sacramentos I - IV
- 18 y 19 de septiembre La vida en Cristo, formación de la Consciencia y la doctrina social católica.
- 23 y 24 de octubre La oración cristiana y observaciones.

Lunch 12pm - 1pm (On your own or bring a bag lunch)
* Basic Catechist $100.00/person for entire program. Includes all classes/topics.
* There will be various books available for purchase. The class fee does not include the fee for these books.
* For those interested in dropping in $20 person/class.
* Class can be used as credit towards Catechist Recertification.
* Those who wish to attend and are not interested in receiving a California Basic Catechist Certificate are welcome.
* Complete an application to begin the California Basic Catechist Process.

To apply & for registrations, contact: Carmen Aanenson
dre@srdiocese.org
(707) 566-3366 Fax (707) 542-9702
www.santarosacatholic.org

Easily Shunned, cont.)

We fear it because it happens. Others witness this and don’t want to give anyone cause for thinking of them that way, so they go without help and progressively feel unable to cope. Often they blame themselves, increasing the toxic shame.

Whatsoever you do to the least of these …

What can be done? First all Christians, if true, should read and reread the Gospels and internalize Jesus’ words about the lepers, outcasts, “sinners,” the “least of these,” the accused, and the broken-hearted being closest to God.

Secondly each parish community should make it a priority to form a support group of practicing, faithful, but struggling Catholics who can relate to and reach out to one another safely and offer support in dark times.

This would give parishioners an opportunity to follow our Holy Father’s counsel and actually get out there and serve the wounded, to help heal, and not just complain about the world’s problems. Get educated on the causes of mental illness and ways to assist those with this condition.

To know they aren’t alone and can count on helpful, non-judgmental support will show the mentally ill there is hope. It would help them to stop hiding behind their masks and trust that the Church really is a family that uplifts and builds up and ministers to its wounded.

Will you reach out to the emotionally or distressed in your community? If not you, then who?  

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- Feb 7 Liturgia y Sacramentos I - IV
- Apr 18 Life in Christ, Conscience Formation & Cath. Social Teaching
- Jun 20 Christian Prayer, Observation & make up

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- May 1 & 2 Credo I - IV
- July 24 & 25 Liturgia y Sacramentos I - IV
- Sup 18 & 19 Life in Christ, Conscience Formation & Cath. Social Teaching
- Oct 23 & 24 Christian Prayer, Observation & make up

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